

BOOK REVIEW

K. Kuča (ed.), V. Kučová, A. Salašová, I. Vorel, M. Weber *et al.*: LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ZONES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC. National Heritage Institute, Prague, Czech Republic, 2015, 511 p., ISBN 978-80-7480-045-0 [in Czech]

At the landscape-ecological conference in Prague, 1998 ("Nature and Culture in Landscape Ecology. Experiences for the 3rd Millennium") Bob Bunce used the following words in his presentation: "Europe has a unique range of cultural landscapes because of its diversity of environments, people and its long history of settlement. These landscapes are currently threatened by many pressures from urbanisation to land abandonment and agricultural intensification..." (Bunce, 1999). Then he declared four main requirements necessary for basic information store supporting any effective treatment of landscapes. Emphasis in his contribution was placed on stratified classification system because a fundamental problem in the assessment of landscape character is that landscapes vary continuously as they are the product of many interacting factors. Landscape Conservation Zones in the Czech Republic represent such a classification result based on the interdisciplinary team work and they offer quite new freshly formed tool for distinguishing valuable cultural segments of landscape in this territory and for careful approach to them.

Historical landscapes are substantial subject of the reviewed book with all the joined attributes and shaping features, such as "landscape memory", "genius loci" or "landscape soul". However, the concept is based on valid legislative. The book includes descriptions of 24 Landscape Conservation Zones (some of them are awaiting the official confirmation and establishment - the difference from classical nature conservation categories is apparent: they cover most of valuable sites predominantly in the form of nature reserves and protected areas). The first Landscape Conservation Zones have been declared in the Czech Republic in 1992. They represent a specific category of territorial systems as a combination of protected features - with both cultural and historical values. Simultaneously, in most Landscape Conservation Zones, natural values are possessed, too. Among attributes used for delimitation could belong not only rare composition of particular landscape or continuous history of agriculture or local economy, but also relic mining, workshop industry or terrain important for the remembrance of historical battles.

The essence of the publication is a consistent introduction and presentation of historical development of landscape as well as vanished landscape values in the set of all Landscape Conservation Zones. Preceding research included collection of existing and supplemented data together with new findings, field survey, synthesis of hard data with wider context of shaping the cultural landscape. The illustrations of the book are rich, selected segments of the old maps are present and current photographs are included, too. History and architecture play the main role which becomes apparent in landscapes sustaining traditional ways of life, agriculture and/or economies. Living in healthy landscapes with multi-layered potential implying from their continuity and sustainability is a topical matter of public interest and the authors therefore pay attention to the relationships between the European landscape convention (implemented by the Czech Republic in 2004) and practice. The extension of cultural landscape protection in Central and Eastern Europe is becoming more prominent and we wish the authors' team to keep their effort in transdisciplinary collaboration (participating representatives of the Czech Technical University, Mendel University, Institute of Landscape and Ornamental Gardening and National Heritage Institute) within similar projects potentially leading to edition of publications like this.

In analogy with the start of this text there is possible to cite another author from above mentioned collection of the conference papers where we can detect source, context and

developmental shift in the landscape assessment: "Naturalness'... is effectively indivisible from cultural influences. Natural phenomena and natural resources find definition in culture and we should understand the scientific and political constructs which underlie our perceptions (Machlis, 1992 in Bridgewater & Bridgewater, 1999).

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REFERENCES

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Bunce, R.G.H., (1999): A framework for the analysis of cultural landscapes in Europe. In: Kovář P. [ed.]: *Nature and Culture in Landscape Ecology* (Experiences for the 3rd Millennium) (p. 69-73), The Karolinum Press, Prague.

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