

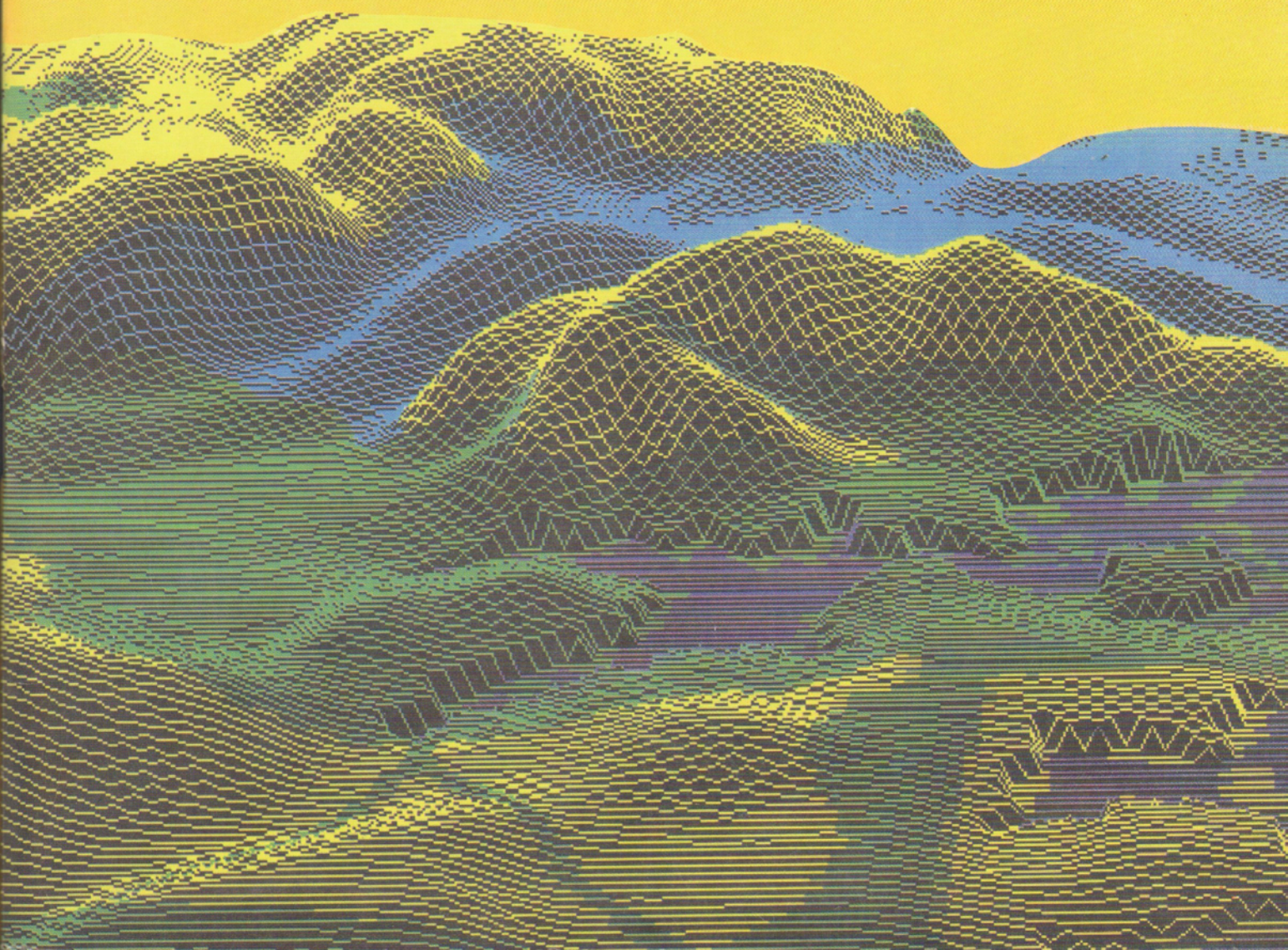
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IN MEMORIAM Dr. VLADIMÍR VLČEK (28 October, 1938 - 25 June, 1994)

Jan LACINA

Towards the end of this April, we were wandering with Vladimír VLČEK across the Dyje floodplain at the far end of Břeclav. Spring was culminating in the floodplain landscape. Wings of storks and buzzards were casting their passing shadows into the wide of meadows. Mud of peat bogs was blooming with snowflakes and bog milkweeds. Young leaves of ramson in the floodplain forest undergrowth suddenly yielded their dazing scent under our steps. We lied in young and fresh grasses right on the line of Pohansko - site of a fortified settlement of the former Great Moravian Empire- sucking in strength of Mother Earth at full draughts. We were delighted that we again succeeded in escaping the merciless and hurried time of the town. We knew that this was again one of those exceptional days thanks to which it was possible for us to still survive within the city walls.

Those twenty years of our joint studies and investigations in the nature could see many of these wonderful days spent in Moravian, Bohemian and even German landscapes. Nevertheless, it was the floodplain landscape of South Moravia, which was closest to Vladimír's heart. It had attracted him since his childhood when he visited these places to fish many times with his father and brothers. It was not only his sizeable grey beard which commanded natural respect, but above all his deep knowledge of riverine landscape dynamics to which he devoted a considerable part of his scientific work that will always rank Vladimír VLČEK side by side with the greatest personalities in the gallery of SouthMoravian heroes. He belonged to those scientists and artists who not only loved the viniferous South Moravia, but also attempted at resolving some problems of the region, often notwithstanding official opinions and requirements. He would not have been able to act in another way. This was his landscape in which he launched his studies as a member of the creative group of Jan ŠMARDA, botanist and landscape biologist - irreconcilable adversary to technocratic water management measures.

It is a matter of course that this memorable April day did not only mean carefree walks in the spring nature. Vladimir had been appointed to become one of major people responsible for the programme of revitalization of the Dyje River below the hydroengineering work Nové Mlýny. From the straightened river stream we hurried to cut-off meanders with kingfishers. With Vladimír, it was quite easy to perceive both natural and aesthetic values of the landscape at the same time. With his engagement, inquiring mind and exceptional capacity of understanding the landscape in all its complex relationships, Vladimír was a geographer in the genuine sense of the word. Incidentally, he also belonged to senior experts of geographical workplaces at the Academy of Sciences - without interruption from the beginning of the sixties. Even in Mid-June, only a couple of days before he died, he was eager to develop his revitalization ideas being down on the hospital bed.

He died, and there is a pervading emptiness after him. Because Doctor of natural sciences Vladimír VLČEK, local patriot of his native Brno neighbourhood Královo Pole, was not only a prominent Moravian expert at hydrology of surface and karst waters, caring husband, father and grandfather, in his young days also a successful sportsman and the first league coach. First of all, he was a great friend. He was an individual with whom it was relieving to be in harmony. He was water with which it was a pleasure to flow along and wildly ignore stream banks from time to time.

I have not met a man in my life who would have been more sensitive, in order to help others, he had no time for his own problems. We used to say that he was given a special gift of saying a couple of wise words at the right place and at the right time. It was a matter of course for him to communicate in similar way with anybody of good moral standard-be

it an intellectual, artist, bricklayer or tramp. What he really could not stand were people with crooked characters.

He loved music and was an excellent singer, too. His heroic voice used to be heard in many a pub and wine cellar. He was very good at joining sad individuals into one joyfully sounding community.

My friend Vladimír, thank you for having been able to share your life with us in that very special way. We shall never forget.



Photo: Jindřich Grepl