

MEETINGS

SOUTH MORAVIAN LANDSCAPES

A guide to excursion for participants Commemoration of 60 years

J. E. Purkyně University in Brno held on may 22nd, 1979

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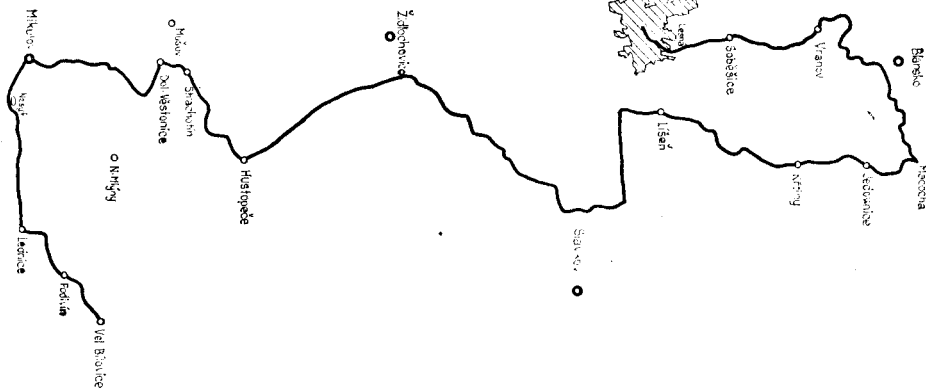
1. From the centre of the Brno-city full of activities, e.g. services, administrative bodies, schools, cultural and social institutions, sports facilities, parks and historical sights, the route of excursion was leading to modern housing estate called "Lesná" with 25,000 residents — an example of socialist environmental and social management. To view backward from here offers the most of Brno urban and suburban landscape situated in transitional space between the Czech Highland and the Carpathians — quite different natural and cultural landscapes, woodland in the north and west, rural in the east and south.

2. We kept on moving through the granitoid margin of the Czech Highland covered brown soils (cambisols) with mixed forests suitable for economic and environmental use. The surroundings of villages are agriculturally used as arable land. The landscape serves for leisure and recreation being not far from Brno. Soběšice village is known as sporting shooting-range, grand prix in September on the occasion of the Brno international trade fair. Vranov village has an early baroque church, and not far from here, on the right side of the road, is a motorcross terrain.

3. Through the deeply incised valleys of tributaries and the Svitava—river, densely forested with high scenic value of landscape segments, nevertheless very difficult for communication (railway tunnels, serpentines) we came to district centre — Blansko with various industries (turbines, machine tools, electronics, duplicators etc.). It has modern residential part built after 1948 in the time of socialist construction.

4. We followed the streamlet Punkva cut in granite canyon, passing ČKD machinery factory named after Bulgarian communist G. Dimitrov — his statue can be seen on the side just in a small square. And behind the small weir there is a change in rocks from granites to limestones. Landscape in changing having picturesque features — we are in Moravian Karst. Looking at canyon slopes we can see the remnants of caves, indicating former levels of the riverlet, maybe river, Punkva and limestone walls of white colour. The canyon divides at the Skalní mlýn (Rock Mill) into two karst canyons: Pustý (Wilderness) žleb (canyon), and Suchý (Dry) žleb, we go through it to the Macocha Abyss. The name is given after an old story on bad stepmother (macecha) who threw off her step-son there. But he accidentally fastened on shrub growing at the abyss wall, and woodmen hearing his cry saved him and angrily punished threw step-mother there. The abyss has a form of sand glass, its upper part is the remnant of an old valley, the lower one being a remnant of gigantic dome of the cave. It is 138 metres deep, two small lakes (siphones) are situated on the bottom — they belong to waters of Punkva flowing underground. Not far from upper bridge at the abyss is another view down to Pustý žleb as a part of karst landscape. The Moravian Karst is proclaimed as a protected area for its high natural, historical, recreational, and scientific value, being important in economic sense, too. It is much frequented for its caves, grottoes, sunken rivers, stalaktite and stalagmite formations, scenery. The recreational centre is situated on its margin — Jedovnice village with ponds, sports facilities, accomodational possibilities etc. Lots of tourists paths start here, including not only sceneries, but they are used for environmental education, too. Passing the forested landscape we came to Křtiny village known its marble quarries, baroque cathedral (G. Santini), research workplace for forests management.

5. We continued through the forest landscape complex back to Brno passing its suburban area in Líšeň. Not far from here the remnants of primeval cultures, Celtic and Roman settlement Staré Zámky (Old Castles) mentioned by Ptolemaios as Meliodunon. New modern tractor factory can be seen on the right, it cooperates with Polish ones. Landscape shape is changing again. Forested area is turned into agricultural landscape, intensively used. The town of Brno is reaching



here its communications: highway (in construction), airport in an interesting suburban transport landscape.

6. And now we were moving in the borders of the battle field from 1805 when Napoleon Bonaparte defeated Russian and Austrian armies (Battle of Austerlitz). The best view on the beattle field is from the hill Žurán — Napoleon's command point, by the way well known archeological place. On the near hill Pracký kopec was in 1909—1912 built the "Peace Tumulus" and the Museum of the Battle, a collection and exhibition commemorating this event.

7. We were going on agricultural landscape, it has been cultivating since Neolit, finding lots of historical artefacts, tools, settlement and other human response. Contemporary land use is implemented by cooperative farms based on socialist ownerships, scientific agrotechnical and breeding methods, modern management connected with computers, research institutes, etc., thanks to new social relations. Cereals, sugar beet, vegetables prevail, and on the slopes orchards, vineyards. Testing new stretch of highway Praha—Brno—Bratislava we were reaching Hustopeče town, industrial and agricultural subdistrict centre.

8. Leaving Hustopeče town we were coming to the landscape of flood plains forests of the Dyje and the Svratka rivers. Preventing form every year floods, the research was realized following the improvement of natural resources management (soils, water climate). Not long ago, since 1975, construction cascade of three dams has been started, they are called after villages where the walls are localized: Mušov, Věstonice, Nové Mlýny. The whole area is about 36 km², they prevent from floods, providing water for irrigation (450 km²), recreational possibilities, protected reservation for inland water birds, etc. The remnants of old historical cultures are protected: Pavlov village mammoth hunters' settlement, Dolní Věstonice village — famous Věstonice Venus and paleolithic culture, Strachotín village — Great Moravian settlement, Mušov village — Roman military camp.

9. The route ascended from the valley bottom to the Pavlovské Hills, called Pálava, too, built from limestone creating Carpathian klippen with specific karst landscape. Pálava is a distinct dominant of the Southern Moravia with high scenic value for perception, protected as a reservation for recreation, leisure and scientific research. Reaching the saddle point of Pálava range we descended to historical town — Mikulov. It is an urban reservation with dominant baroque mannor from the beginning of 18th century, renaissance city and church houses. In the years 1798—1804 J. E. Purkyně studied in Piarist collodge here. Mikulov town is a centre of South Moravian viniculture.

10. Leaving Mikulov (beautiful view backward) we continued along hilly landscape, used agriculturally, to Lednice town. On the right side we can see a series of fishponds with the largest Moravian one called Nesyt, area 3.22 km² and 3 other ones, area from 0.5 to 1.1 km². The fishponds are a protected natural reservation important for birds. Several romantic buildings are situated in their surroundings. We are in very fertile rural landscape, soils are mollisols (Chernozems) on Neogene sediments, the drought is the only dissadvantage though. Little Lednice town is very popular as a tourist place for its neogothic mannor (1846—1858), forest-park with exotic trees, minaret, 60 metres high in Arabian style (1798—1802), large green-house with subtropical and tropical flora. Whole the landscape near Lednice has a form of parkland and serves for experiments managed by Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry in Brno.

11. We finished our excursion going through the Podivín town having food industry, agriculture, building materials, to Velké Bílovice village known its plant, animal and grapes production. It offered us a wine cellar and thanks to our colleagues from faculty who changed their profession for that evening to style folk music performance we spent pleasant evening — the end of the excursion (The map of the route is enclosed.).