Landscape Archaeology between Art and Science

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1.3 Principles of preservation and recalling of memory traces in an industrial landscape: A case study of decayed monument recreation in the brown-coal mining area of Bílina, Czech Republic

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ABSTRACT

The landscape of north-western Bohemia covers the area between the towns of Duchcov, Most and Bílina and its immense historical value could hardly be overestimated. Unfortunately the landscape was heavily hit by the industrial era of coal mining (especially on the surface) and it was exfoliated on a large scale. Mining is in decline, and we are facing the task of restoring almost annihilated landscapes, including their memory traces. It is important to summarize the possibilities and methods of recalling, or ‘re-creating’ landscape memory, and even to search for new ones.

The paper works with the symbols of a specific predicative value – ‘minor landscape monument’, e.g. crosses, statues, small wayside chapels, etc. These widely disappeared because of brown-coal mining in the mining area of Bílina, and thus are endowed with extended symbolic strength. The leading idea of this project of preservation and recalling of memory traces in an industrial landscape is that of regarding small landscape monuments as the main source of historical identity and an equally essential tool for re-creating it. This project was worked out as a case study investigating the decayed small monuments as well as their re-calling in the strip-mine area of Bílina. The retrieval of information regarding essential cultural, historical, and natural values as well as a general development plan were implemented on the basis of multi-disciplinary cooperation including philosophy, cultural heritage theory, landscape architecture, landscape planning and horticulture. As a result ‘the principles of preservation and recalling of memory traces’ themselves were proposed as the general attitude to the preservation and recalling of historically precious areas within industrial, deeply changed landscapes afflicted by aberrations of modernity.

A methodical procedure has been thus evolved to be used for a wide range of landscapes of high historical value that have been roughly modified by industrial activities.
KEYWORDS

Middle Ages, modernity, post-modernity, landscape memory, minor landmark (small landscape monuments), cultural heritage theory, industrial landscape, landscape planning

AREA DESCRIPTION

The north Bohemian brown-coal basin covers the area between the Krušné hory mountains (Erzgebirge) and České středohoří (Central Czech Highlands). The land was heavily hit by the industrial era of coal mining, which dates back at least 200 years in this area. Today, coal mining has declined. The Bílina Mine, one of the last persisting active mines, covering an area of 7,441.59 ha, produces boiler coal with annual production of 9 million tons and with 50 million m³ of overburden soils stripped (Bílina Mines, 2009). The core area is situated behind the western border of the active mine, between the villages of Mariánské Radčice and Lom (fig. 1) and it is supposed to be the ‘Bílina Nord Mine Multifunctional Open-Air Museum’ (Hájek et al. 2009).

Figure 1. Orthophotomap of the area (@GEODIS Brno, Ltd.): Krušné hory mountains in the north-western part. Bílina Mine, one of the last active mines, covering the area of 7,441.59 ha. The Bílina Nord Mine Multifunctional Open-Air Museum is proposed in the core area. ArcGIS map: Matáková 2009.
The immense historical value of the area between the towns of Duchcov (Dux), Most (Brücks) and Bílina (Bilin) could hardly be overestimated (fig. 2). The basic landscape structure is derived from the early Gothic period in association with the mission of the Cistercian Monastery in Osek (Ossegg). The Baroque layout of the landscape is at least of the same importance; moreover, pilgrimage routes create an obvious axis within the landscape structure. The pilgrimage route Mariánské Radčice (Maria Ratschitz) – Libkovic (Liquitz) – Hrdlovka (Herrlich) – Osek (Ossegg) was created just within the framework of foundation of the monastery in Osek (Ossegg). Another landscape-forming axis is the route between Osek (Ossegg) and Duchcov (Dux), which became the centre of the domain in the 15th century. Dux later became the property of the Waldsteins and this enabled successive remodelling of the landscape structures, namely axes and viewpoints. The pilgrim’s site of Mariánské Radčice (Maria-Radschitz) with Hněvín Castle above the city of Most form a unique part of the view axis, spreading within the landscape (fig. 3). A unique archaeological site is situated nearby. Archaeological excavations from the partially destroyed village of Světec are considered to be among the most beautiful archaeological excavation collections from the 6th century in Central Europe. The excavations were presented on the occasion of the exhibition ‘Schaufenster, der erste: Kelten und Germanen an der Elbe’ in Dresden in 2009 (Poppová 2009). The 18th century was a turning point, since that was when the brown coal mining developed and
is still going on now. The onset of mining changed the landscape quite substantially. The landscape was heavily hit by the industrial era of coal mining (especially on the surface) and exfoliated on a large scale.

**EXCLUSIVENESS**

Two forces oppose each other within the Bílina Mine landscape. On the one hand the landscape is one of the most precious in terms of its historical values. On the other hand its inner sense and the task are rather modern: you see remnants of villages and towns, abolished due to coal mining requirements (fig. 4), you see immense sites of mine dumps as well as the profiles of baggers and excavators in the background of the big mountains of the Krušné hory (Erzgebirge) and České středohoří (Central Czech Highlands) nearby. These contrasts between the Middle Ages and modernity, and modernity and post-modernity are considered to be the main source of exclusiveness of the area; moreover these opposing principles merge into each other, fighting each other, paying deference to each other. The contrast as a message is highly visible, and therefore symbolically strong. The proposed ‘Bílina Nord Mine Multifunctional Open-Air Museum’ in close contact with the active Bílina strip-mine itself is therefore a fortunate idea highlighting commemorative functions of the landscape and merging them together with other possible functions, especially recreational. There is no effort on the part of this submitted project to put the industrial development aside, to define it as principles going astray, as principles fallen into oblivion.

**GOALS**

The sense of the ‘Bílina Nord Mine Multifunctional Open-Air Museum’ landscape project is focused on two main goals: to enhance the quality of the environment especially for local people and, above all, from
the point of view of this contribution, to recall the lost landscape memory. The common theory of recultivation is worked-out in detail, but the same cannot be said about the ‘recultivation’ of cultural traces. Outlined project principles are a small contribution to the general methodology of ‘recultivation of cultural traces’ and could be used on other landscapes too. In general it has to be said in advance: To restore almost annihilated landscapes absolutely, including their memory, cultural and historical traces, is not possible because the landscape itself represents ‘Change’, fully linked with time and entropy.

**SUMMARY OF INTRODUCTORY ANALYSES AND EVALUATIONS**

The methodical process of introductory analyses and evaluations is linked to the common principles of landscape character assessment that are in use in the Czech Republic (Salašová 2007, Bukáček & Matějka 1999, Löw & Michal 2003). For the purpose of the presented case study, several steps have been proposed for a comprehensive evaluation:

- Analysis of contemporary landscape layout values
- Analysis of visual and perceptive characteristics (fig. 5)
- Analysis of vegetation layer
- Registering of historical and cultural values
- Registering of the road system
- Evaluation according to criteria (visual and perceptive characteristics, vegetation, historical and cultural values, etc.)
The restoration of a landscape of such uniqueness raises a number of methodological issues. Theoretically, research and design principles rest on the question of how one area, though familiar, could be the heir of old living networks and stories of a different, though familiar area. In our approach we regard minor landscape monuments as those which could represent the entire fund of lost monuments. Why do we think that small landscape monuments fully deserve to bear such a broad task? The answer is given by the theory of landscape and cultural heritage theory. They gather, rally, concentrate the meanings, randomly scattered within the landscape, in one spot (place = topos). Their outstanding feature seems to be a tight bond with the venue as their highest value, and maybe more than big monuments they express the harmony of death, change and the eternity of habitual rather than extraordinary landscapes. Therefore they could be seen as a good tool for restoring the memory traces of landscapes and landscapes themselves if, of course, the landscape contains such minor monuments, mostly of catholic origin. But very rarely, if ever, is there landscape which deserves this name that is bare and inexpressive regarding symbols, whether visible, or archaeological.

Re-creation will not take place in the original venues, thus another scientific issue arises: whether to re-create the monuments through the exact space symmetry or symbolical symmetry in the designed area of the multifunctional open-air museum? Another methodological problem rests in the way of re-creating them: whether to utilise the full shapes and material identity, or to work only with a symbolic glimpse of the previous shapes. But these are questions for the next step of the research as well as analysis and survey of architectural values and vegetations that determine the venues worthy of installation of re-created monuments, filling the criteria regarding the symbolic value, visual value, etc. To sum up the results to date: The so-called re-calling of decayed or destroyed minor monuments from the areas exfoliated by mining, as a method of remembering the landscape as such, is an important methodological step put forward, explained and evidenced by the scientific team.

Forty-nine minor landmarks that were originally situated in the area and disappeared as a consequence of brown coal mining have been discovered and identified. The method of investigation was based on the analysis of old maps and archive materials (fig. 6) and supplemented with field surveys. From the total number 49 of identified disappeared minor monuments, old pictures of 20 of them were discovered (see table 1 and figs. 7, 8, 9). Pictures often do not provide enough information to gain full knowledge of each monument, though great effort was exerted to obtain them.
### Table 1: Examples from the inventory of identified disappeared minor monuments within the Bilina Mine region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified disappeared minor landmarks, basic description</th>
<th>The previous site</th>
<th>Picture available?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statue of St. John of Nepomuk (date of origin unknown) (fig.7)</td>
<td>Libkovice (Liquitz)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptistry from the Church of St. Michael, 1666</td>
<td>Libkovice (Liquitz)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron cross on a stone socle 1739</td>
<td>Libkovice (Liquitz)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four baroque pilgrimage chapels (date of origin unknown)</td>
<td>On the way from Libkovice (Liquitz) to Mariánské Radčice (Maria Radschitz)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two columns (one with embossment, second with statue) (date of origin unknown)</td>
<td>Libkovice (Liquitz), next to cemetery</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A stone for resting, 1674</td>
<td>Hrdlovka (Herrlich)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remnant of the so-called Hofmann’s Cross (date of origin unknown) (fig.8)</td>
<td>Hrdlovka (Herrlich)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baroque Chapel of St. Mary (date of origin unknown) (fig.9)</td>
<td>Hrdlovka (Herrlich), next to Rieger’s Inn</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altar stone (date of origin unknown)</td>
<td>Hrdlovka (Herrlich)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindermann’s Chapel (date of origin unknown)</td>
<td>Hrdlovka (Herrlich)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross in Osek (Osseg) (date of origin unknown)</td>
<td>Hrdlovka (Herrlich) to Lom (Bruch)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone cross (date of origin unknown)</td>
<td>Hrdlovka (Herrlich), by sulphur spring</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two crosses (or chapels) (date of origin unknown)</td>
<td>Neighbourhood of Nový Dvůr (Neuhof)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round column made from sand-stone (1550)</td>
<td>The road from Liptice (Liptitz)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plague column (date of origin unknown)</td>
<td>The road from Duchcov (Dux) to Liptice (Liptitz)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A minor remark: Regarding the reconnaissance of frequent occurrence of minor monuments, the pilgrimage route from the Osek Monastery to the Mariánské Radčice holy shrine should be mentioned again. Through this medieval route, which now leads through thoroughly changed scenery, a legend about ‘Change’ and ‘the Landscape’ could be narrated, in some sense martyrological, but as a whole prone to the future.

Table 1: Examples from the inventory of identified disappeared minor monuments within the Bilina Mine region (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified disappeared minor landmarks, basic description</th>
<th>The previous site</th>
<th>Picture available?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rectangular column of St. Mary made from sand-stone (1550)</td>
<td>The road from Duchcov to Teplice (Toeplitz)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round plague column (date of origin unknown)</td>
<td>The road from Duchcov (Dux)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross (date of origin unknown)</td>
<td>The road from Duchcov (Dux) to Bilina (Bilin)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round column (date of origin unknown)</td>
<td>The road from Duchcov (Dux) to Bilina (Bilin)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road-toll column (date of origin unknown)</td>
<td>The way from Duchcov (Dux) to Bilina (Bilin)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Jan Hus Memorial (date of origin unknown)</td>
<td>Břežánky, (Briesen), the village square</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Kaiser Joseph II Memorial (date of origin unknown)</td>
<td>Hrdlovka (Herrlich)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The T. G. Masaryk Memorial (the era of the first Czechoslovak Republic)</td>
<td>Libkovice (Liquitz), village square</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nelson Mine Disaster Memorial (1934)</td>
<td>Hrdlovka (Herrlich)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone fountain, 1737</td>
<td>Hrdlovka (Herrlich)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ‘Štengr’ sulphur spring (date of origin unknown)</td>
<td>Hrdlovka (Herrlich)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3 Principles of Preservation and Recalling of Memory Traces in an Industrial Landscape

Figure 6. Register of historical and cultural values, register of road system based on analysis of old maps and archive materials. Part of the Map of the historical communication network and minor landmarks (Hájek et al. 2009), ArcGIS map: Matáková 2009. See also the full colour section in this book.

Figure 7. Statue of St John of Nepomuk, archive material, Přerovský 2009.

Figure 8. Remnant of the so-called Hofmann’s Cross, archive material Přerovský 2009.

Figure 9. The baroque Chapel of St Mary, archive material Přerovský 2009.
The landscape perceptions are closely interconnected with explications of the landscape. The symbols, inherited images as well as personal experiences enable this. The small landscape monuments determine the landscape as well explaining it. The landscape memory is founded in the presence of the firm points within the landscape, especially static ones (Sádlo, 2005, 226). The landscape is represented by symbols that are eloquent and absolute. The Czech landscape with its different meanings is concentrated into symbols, monuments defined by the ‘place’, topos (from the Greek τόπος). These topos monuments (crosses, chapels, statues, milestones, etc.) have topos in their designation (Hájek & Bukačová 2004). Minor landmarks are considered to be unique elements identifying European cultural landscapes (fig.10).

**KEY: MINOR LANDMARK**

Research and design principles of vanished landscapes restoration require thorough debate at international level. The principles of this approach, as discussed in this paper, were thoroughly discussed at the Institut für Landespflege (Konold 2007, Langarová 2009), Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg (Germany) and at the Department of Landscape Planning, Mendel University in Brno (Czech Republic).
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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