

Historical Consciousness of German Travellers to Bohemia (1750–1850)

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In 1823 and 1824 Weimar monthly fashion and culture magazine *Journal für Literatur, Kunst, Luxus und Mode* published a series of letters from a journey to Prague entitled *Reisenotizen über Prag. Aus Briefen von Cäcilia*.¹ The anonymous author-ess of the travelogue was Amalie Ludecus, a step-daughter of the then popular writer Karoline Ludecus. Under the influence of her family and friends (including Karl August Böttiger, Johann Gottfried Herder, Johan Wolfgang Goethe and other members of the Weimar cultural circle) Amalie launched her literary career and became a regular contributor to the German periodicals. In her travel notes about Prague she focused on architecture, cultural and social life and described the most popular visitors' sites. Trying to capture the local atmosphere she pointed out the extraordinary historic character of Bohemia's capital: „Es gibt in Deutschland, ja in Europa wenig Städte, in denen jeder Stein so lebhaft geschichtliche Erinnerungen weckt, und zur Seele des Menschen ein so ernstes, mahnendes Wort spräche, als eben Prag.“²

Ludecus was not the only German author who in the first half of the nineteenth century commented on the strong presence of past in Bohemia. The visit of Bohemia evoked historical reminiscences also in other travellers. Analysing the German travel literature about Bohemia published between 1750 and 1850, present article aims to identify such geographical sites that were associated with important historical events and were part of the collective memory of German travellers.

Collective memory represents an essential segment of collective identity. Despite occasional criticism advocating unique and individual nature of remembrance, contemporary cultural science regards the concept as a valuable method for understanding the process of communities' and identities' formation. Memory shared by certain social group has been often described as an effective instrument for strengthening its collective identity. It establishes who does and who does not belong

1 Anonym [Ludecus, Amalie], *Reisenotizen über Prag. Aus Briefen von Cäcilia*, in: *Journal für Literatur, Kunst, Luxus und Mode* 38 (1823), No. 79, pp. 649–652; No. 80, pp. 660–663; No. 83, pp. 682–684; No. 118, pp. 964–966; No. 119, pp. 970–973; No. 120, pp. 978 — 982; No. 121, pp. 988–990 and 39 (1824), No. 70, pp. 554–557; No. 71, pp. 562–564; No. 72, pp. 570–573; No. 73, pp. 577–580.

2 *Ibid.*, 38 (1823), No. 79, p. 651.

to a community and it promotes its unity.³ Similarly to identities, collective memories are approached through their constructivist character and their dependence on symbols embedded in narratives, rituals, images and places.⁴ In historical perspective, collective identity is supported by the knowledge of a shared past and shared understanding of history reflected in the individual and the collective historical consciousness.⁵

When incorporated in collective memory the geographical sites acquire a significant meaning. It is the collective memory that “contributes to peoples’ material and symbolic understanding of place through shared knowledges of buildings, streets, historical events, and other particularities of the place”.⁶ Considering the constructivist nature of collective remembrance, the understanding of places varies in time and is dependent on dominant narratives in a community.⁷ The same principle applies to historical meanings and interpretations ascribed to geographical places. They are also subject to change and though set in the past, their importance and perception is always determined by the demands of the present.⁸

One of the attractions of travelling is to visit places of historical significance. Though the encounter with historical sites does not create a universal form of response in all travellers, it evokes similar memories in those who share the same historical knowledge and are able to set it in the same interpretative framework.⁹

3 Jan Assmann, *Collective Memory and Cultural Identity*, *New German Critique*, No. 65, 1995, pp. 125–133, here p. 130.

4 Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit: Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik*, München 2006, S. 21–31.

5 On historical consciousness, see, for example, Christian Emden — David Midgley (eds.), *Cultural Memory and Historical Consciousness in the German-Speaking World Since 1500*, Bern 2004; Peter Seixas (ed.), *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, Toronto — Buffalo — London 2004; Eric Langenbacher — Yossi Shain (eds.), *Power and the Past: Collective Memory and International Relations*, Washington, D. C. 2010.

6 Kelly Baker, *Identity, Memory and Place*, *The Word Hoard* 1, 2012, Iss. 1, Article 4, S. 26; available at <http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=wordhoard> (15. 10. 2013).

7 On the interplay of space, place and identity, see, for example, David Harvey, *From Space to Place and Back Again: Reflections on the Condition of Postmodernity*. In: John Bird — Barry Curtis — Tim Putnam (eds.), *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*, London 1993; Anssi Paasi, *Territories, Boundaries and Consciousness. The Changing Geographies of the Finnish-Russian border*, Chichester — New York 1996; Jörg Döring — Tristan Thielmann, *Spatial Turn. Das Raumparadigma in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften*, Bielefeld 2008.

8 A. Assmann, p. 16.

9 On the interpretation of travellers’s experience and travel literature, see, for example, Antoni Mączak — Hans Jürgen Teuteberg (eds.), *Reiseberichte als Quellen europäischer Kulturgeschichte. Aufgaben und Möglichkeiten der historischen Reiseforschung*, (Wolfenbütteler Forschungen 21), Wolfenbüttel 1982; Peter J. Brenner, *Reisebericht in der deutschen Literatur. Ein Forschungsüberblick als Vorstudie zu einer Gattungsgeschichte*, Tübingen 1990; Arndt Bauerkämper — Hans Erich Bödeker — Berenhard Struck (eds.),

Taking into account the connection between collective memory and collective identity, the present article examines the historical memories of travellers from German states who visited Bohemia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It assesses their interpretations of historical sites and historical events; and it considers the role played by historical memory in promotion of collective identity. Focusing on the period of one hundred years between 1750 and 1850 allows us to analyse the transformation of historical memories and to study it in the context of emerging national identities. Consequently, the article explores the possible tendencies of the travellers and authors of the travel literature to set the separate historical remembrances in a broader interpretative framework of a collective (e.g. national) historical narrative.

“REISEZIEL BÖHMEN”: GERMAN TRAVELLERS IN BOHEMIA BETWEEN 1750 AND 1850

The mid-eighteenth century witnessed an important social change in travelling. Throughout the early modern period it was especially the nobility who had the means and leisure to spend long months on tours through famous Italian and French towns. However, this monopoly was disrupted during the eighteenth century and the gradual growth of a railway network in the first half of the nineteenth century made travelling accessible to a greater part of population. By the mid-nineteenth century most travellers were middle-class men (and also women), who often published accounts of their travel experience.¹⁰

For most of the later eighteenth century Bohemia was comparatively neglected as a destination for travellers.¹¹ Unlike France or Italy, it was a transit place visited mainly as a stop on a longer journey through central European countries. The only exceptions were the spa towns in western and northwestern Bohemia among which Karlovy Vary (Karslbud) attracted guests from all over Europe. However, the outbreak of wars with revolutionary France limited the travel across the continent and trav-

Die Welt erfahren: Reisen als kulturelle Begegnung von 1780 bis heute, Frankfurt am Main 2004; Tilman Fischer, *Reiseziel England: ein Beitrag zur Poetik der Reisebeschreibung und zur Topik der Moderne (1830–1870)*, (Philologische Studien und Quellen 184), Berlin 2004; Glenn Hooper — Tim Youngs (eds.), *Perspectives on Travel Writing*, Aldershot 2004; Bernhard Struck, *Nicht West — nicht Ost. Frankreich und Polen in der Wahrnehmung deutscher Reisender zwischen 1750 und 1850*, Göttingen 2006.

- 10 On the transformation of travel in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see, for example, Klaus Beyrer, *Die Postkutschenreise*, Tübingen 1985; Antoni Mączak, *Travel in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge 1995; Milan Hlavačka Milan, *Cestování v éře dostavníku*, Praha 1996 and *Dějiny dopravy v českých zemích v období průmyslové revoluce*, Praha 1990.
- 11 On detailed analyses of Bohemia as a travel destination and on sociocultural profile of the German travellers to Bohemia, see Martina Power, *Hory a moře mezi „námi“*. Vnímání hranic a prostoru v německé a britské cestopisné literatuře o Čechách a Irsku (1750–1850), Praha 2013 (Forthcoming).

ellers were forced to seek a replacement for the popular French and Italian resorts. Patriotism and practical reasons encouraged many of them to explore the less known parts of their fatherland and to look for closer and more accessible destinations. The growing interest in such regions inspired travellers from German territorial states to tour Bohemia. With the increasing number of German visitors not only steadily popular Karlovy Vary but also other places (such as Prague and the mountainous border regions) became part of travellers' itineraries.

The routes adopted by travellers were in many respects predetermined. Their choice depended on the existing network of roads, stagecoach lines and railways. As a transit destination Bohemia was most often visited during a more extensive journey from Dresden to Vienna, passing the towns of Ústí nad Labem (Aussig), Lovosice (Lobositz), Velvary (Welwarn), Prague, Kolín (Kolin), Čáslav (Czaslau), Havlíčkův Brod (Deutschbrod) and Znojmo (Znaim). To travel from Prague to Austrian capital, travellers could choose also the road via Tábor (Tabor) and České Budějovice (Budweis) to Linz. For visitors from Prussia the most popular route included Frýdlant (Friedland), Liberec (Reichenberg), Mladá Boleslav (Jungbunzlau), Stará Boleslav (Altbunzlau) to Prague; and those travelling from Bavaria took the rout via Cheb (Eger) and Plzeň (Pilsen) to Prague. The limited choice of travel routes affected also the possibility of sightseeing and reduced the individuality of travellers' experience.

Yet the perception of visited places depends rather on the observer than on their actual physical appearance. To interpret the travellers' descriptions and evaluations it is therefore necessary to analyse also their attitudes, values and sociocultural profiles. Owing to the general social transformation of travel, most of the German travellers who between 1750 and 1850 visited Bohemia and published their travel accounts belonged to the middle class. Though the majority came from the neighbouring states (mostly Saxony and Prussia), some were of a more distant geographical origin (such as those from Braunschweig or Holstein). Many had a university education that they acquired usually at the northern German universities in Göttingen, Halle or Leipzig. Representing the so-called Bildungsbürgertum, the travellers were well acquainted with the contemporary state of learning and were able to set their individual travel experience in a broader context of general knowledge. As suggested by their geographical origin and places of education, most of them identified with the cultural region of the northern German Protestant states. Considering their sociocultural profile, the travellers formed relatively homogenous group. It remains to be established whether this group shared also the same historical consciousness.

PRAGUE MYTHS AND LEGENDS IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The neglect of Bohemia as a travel destination lasting till the late eighteenth century went hand in hand with a low interest in its history. The only account of Bohemia's main historical events given in German travel literature of the mid-eighteenth century was contained in the account of Johann Georg Keyßler's description of his

journey through the German states, Bohemia, Hungary and Switzerland (1741).¹² Keyßler's travelogue (which in style resembled an encyclopaedia) introduced the history of Bohemia in the section dedicated to the description of Prague. While passing the most important sights in the capital, Keyßler unfolded the history of the whole country.

Keyßler pointed out the site of the Defenestration of Prague in 1618, and highlighted the position of the two monuments erected to commemorate the survival of the imperial regents thrown from the window. Crossing the bridge over the river Vltava, he paid attention to the statue of John of Nepomuk and the crowds of people kneeling in front of it. Nepomuk was introduced as the legendary confessor of the wife of Wenceslaus IV. Though pressed by the king, Nepomuk preserved the queen's Seal of Confession and was punished by drowning in the Vltava. Corresponding to the manner of his martyrdom, Nepomuk became the patron saint of the bridges and Keyßler predicted that in a few years time it would be impossible to find in Bohemia a bridge without his statue. To document Nepomuk's enormous popularity among the Catholic population of Austrian monarchy, Keyßler commented on the commercial success of prints sold in 1724 after the pregnancy of the empress Elizabeth Christine had been announced. Conveying the wish for a male heir and the absolute belief in the saint's power, the print pictured Nepomuk bringing a newborn prince down from the clouds. A short eulogizing verse accompanied the whole scene:

„Seht doch der heilige Nepomuc.
Macht hier ein treflich Meisterstück.“

Despite failing to secure the male heir in the reigning Habsburg family (princess Maria Amalia was born in 1724), John of Nepomuk was canonized in 1729 and it was Keyßler's belief that Bohemia had to spend a considerable sum of money to defend Nepomuk's cause in Rome.¹³

Continuing to the Old Town Square, Keyßler pointed out the bridge tower with a Latin inscription commemorating the fight of Prague citizens and students with the Swedish soldiers in 1648. In the Old Town, he led his readers through the Jesuit College in Klementinum, across the Old Town Square to the Church of Our Lady in front of Týn. Both places were connected with the life of Danish mathematician and astronomer Tycho de Brahe, whose tomb in Týn Church was among the most popular visitor attractions.

Keyßler's visit to Prague ended at Vyšehrad where he reflected on the local legends. The first explained the presence of three broken columns that at the time stood at the Church of SS Peter and Paul. The columns were dropped here by the devil that lost his wager with the local priest. The second "laughable" legend concerned the

12 Johann Georg Keyssler, *Neuste Reisen durch Teutschland, Böhmen, Ungarn, die Schweiz, Italien und Lothringen, worinn der Zustand und dass Merkwürdigste dieser Länder beschrieben und vermittelst der natürlichen, gelehrten und politischen Geschichte [...] erläutert wird*, 2 vols., Hannover 1740-1741.

13 *Ibid.* [2nd edition: Hannover 1751], 2. vol., S. 1288.

sandstone sarcophagus that was said to belong to St. Longinus, a Roman centurion who pierced Jesus in his side by a spear. According to the legend the body of St. Longinus arrived to Vyšehrad on the river Vltava in the stone sarcophagus that served as a boat. The incredibility of this story was in Keyßler's opinion matched only by the Russian legend about St. Nicholas who was believed to arrive to Russia across the sea on a millstone. The Vyšehrad legends about duchess Libussa and the squire Horymír whose life was saved by his fateful horse Šemík were similarly condemned and the fact that they lived on not only in the popular imagination but also in scholarly works was considered to be most disturbing. As a whole, Keyßler considered the population in Bohemia to be extremely superstitious and credulous, even in comparison to the Catholics in other countries. He found it difficult to believe that "not such a long time ago Bohemia professed a religious tolerance and the ancestors of present inhabitants were mainly Protestants".¹⁴

In general, Keyßler's attitude to Bohemia's and Prague's history was rather detached. He introduced it largely as a mixture of myths, legends and Catholic superstitions, making only a few points of reference with which he and his readers could identify. These points included the Thirty Years War, whose beginning and end were marked by Prague events, and the personality of Tycho Brahe, whose merit as a scientist was well appreciated by the Enlightened German travellers.¹⁵ Keyßler's travelogue was a great commercial success and between 1740 and 1774 it was published in several editions.¹⁶ The section about Prague served for most of the second half of the eighteenth century as both the travel guide for further visitors and the template for subsequent descriptions of local sights and history.¹⁷ The perception of Prague changed only in the early nineteenth century when both its historicity and mythology became more appreciated.

REMEMBERING FAMOUS HISTORICAL PERSONALITIES

The historical figure that in the second half of the eighteenth century attracted the biggest attention among the German visitors to Bohemia was undoubtedly John of Nepomuk. Already after entering Bohemia the Protestant travellers were astonished to see the number of religious statues and images. Braunschweig medical doctor Franz Hyronimus Brückmann who travelled to Karlovy Vary in 1784 made following observation immediately after crossing the boundary between Saxony and Bohe-

¹⁴ Ibid., S. 1296–1297.

¹⁵ Karl Gottlob Küttner, *Reise durch Deutschland, Dänemark, Schweden, Norwegen und einen Theil von Italien, in den Jahren 1797. 1798. 1799*, 4 vols., Leipzig 1804, here 3. vol., S. 94–95.

¹⁶ Winfried Siebers, *Johann Georg Keyssler und die Reisbeschreibung der Frühaufklärung*, Würzburg 2009, S. 33.

¹⁷ Johann Peter Willebrand, *Des Herrn Justizrath Johann Peter Willebrand historische Berichte und practische Anmerkungen auf Reisen in Deutschland*. Neue vermehrte u. verbesserte Aufl., Leipzig 1769, S. 308.

mia: „Vorher habe ich noch dies zu sagen, sobald man in Böhmen fährt, sieht man fast überall den heiligen Nepomuk als den bekannten Schutzpatron dieses Reiches, den Heiland am Kreuz, die heilige Maria, und eine Menge andere Heilige, oder auch nur hölzerne Stangen (wo vermuthlich die Heiligen sich aus Unwillen vor dem üblen Wetter zur Erde herabgelassen haben) auf eine traurige Art, und so erbärmlich auf Holz gemalt, oder geschnitzelt, paradiren.“

The majority of the travellers accepted Nepomuk as the unfortunate confessor of the queen who was tortured to death by King Wenceslaus IV, and who had become in recent years the “protective god” of Bohemia.¹⁸ Fresh and more detailed information was revealed only in the travelogue *Ausführliche Nachrichten über Böhmen* (1794) by the Prussian army doctor and writer Johann Joseph Kausch, who drew extensively from the work of Bohemian scholars such as the priest, historian and geographer Jaroslav Schaller, and the professor of law at the university in Prague, Josef Anton Riegger.¹⁹

Like other visitors to Bohemia, Kausch was overwhelmed by the omnipresent statues and symbols associated with the cult of John of Nepomuk. However, Kausch’s knowledge of the latest historiography gave him an opportunity to go deeper than simply relate the traditional legend about the Seal of Confession. Citing the treatises by Jaroslav Schaller, Ignatz Cornova, Gelasius Dobner and Frantz Pubitschka, he touched on the contemporary discussion on Nepomuk’s life and legend.²⁰ He favoured the version supported by Schaller who considered the story of queen’s confession as a mere fable. He believed that John of Pomuck was the vicar-general tortured and thrown in the Vltava by servants of Wenceslaus IV in 1393 for taking the side of the archbishop of Prague in a conflict between the king and the archbishop over appointing a new abbot in the abbey of Kladruba. Kausch also introduced the version advocated by the piarist monk and historian Gelasius Dobner who regarded John of Nepomuk as both the vicar-general and the martyr guarding the Seal of Confession as well as the version defended by historian Franz Pubitschka who believed in the existence of two Johns of Nepomuk punished by king Wenceslaus — the queen’s confessor in 1383 and the defender of the authority of the archbishop in 1393.²¹

The reason why Kausch acquainted his readers with the contemporary debate on Nepomuk was not only to inform them about the life of the saint whose statues they would meet almost everywhere if they decided to visit Bohemia: he also tried to correct the opinion of many Protestant scholars about the low state of learning among their Catholic counterparts. By pointing to the debate he presented the Bohemian historians (who were often Catholic clerics) as “practised in liberal arts and capable of critical historical thinking”.²² The signs of Nepomuk’s cult (especially his lavishly decorated silver tomb in St Vitus Cathedral) did not cease to astonish and sometimes irritate the Protestant travellers. Yet, their awareness of both the fictitious character

18 Keyssler, S. 1288.

19 Johann Joseph Kausch, *Ausführliche Nachrichte über Böhmen*, Salzburg 1794.

20 On further information about Nepomuk’s life, legend and canonization see Vít Vlnas, *Jan Nepomucký, česká legenda*, Praha 1993.

21 Kausch, S. 229–231.

22 *Ibid.*, S. 232.

of the queen's confessor and the real existence of the vicar-general increased and from the turn of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries they began to accept John of Nepomuk not as a mere Catholic fabrication but also as a historic figure.²³

Apart from John of Nepomuk, the German travellers paid only slight attention to personalities of Bohemian history. Those who visited Karlovy Vary noted its foundation by the emperor Charles IV. However, they were more interested in the legend that described Charles discovering the mineral springs during a stag hunt in the local forest than in his historical credit as an emperor.²⁴ Again the only exception was Johann Kausch who commented on the different perception of Charles IV in Bohemia and in the Holy Roman Empire. While he appreciated the importance and impact of Charles' reign in Bohemia, he criticized the emperor's excessive religiosity and his lack of interest in the welfare of the empire.²⁵

The situation changed at the end of the eighteenth century when the German travellers discovered a new source of interest. Visits to Cheb (Eger) in western Bohemia, Friedland castle in northern Bohemia and Prague's Little Quarter became readily associated with remembrance of the leader of the imperial army in the Thirty Years War, Albrecht of Wallenstein. In Cheb the travellers were drawn to the town hall where Wallenstein was assassinated in 1634. Here they admired the halberd with which he was supposedly killed and his portrait (by Anthonis van Dyck) that hung next to the images of Habsburg emperors. According to Saxon lawyer and poet Karl Fridrich Kretschmann, who visited Eger in 1797, Wallenstein's portrait simply radiated his strong personality and iron will: „Welch ein Mann! Welch ein Blick, mit dem er auf die an der Wand befestigten Abschilderungen der Leopolde, Josephe, Karle, herabsieht, die, in ihrem vollen Königsprunke gemahlt, wundersam gegen jenen eisernen Mann abstechen.“²⁶

Visitors to Friedland castle, bought by Wallenstein in 1622, were similarly impressed. The castle gallery also provided a portrait of Wallenstein (by Christian Kaufersch) that displayed yet another side of his personality — the obsession with astrology.²⁷

The significance of places associated with life of Wallenstein increased especially after the publication of the trilogy of dramas *Wallensteins Lager*, *Die Piccolomini* and

23 Johann Nikolaus Becker, *Fragmente aus dem Tagebuche eines reisenden Neu-Franken*. Nach der Erstausgabe von 1798 neu herausgegeben und mit einem Nachwort und Erläuterungen versehen von Wolfgang Griep, Bremen 1985, S. 117; Gottfried Daniel Stein, *Reise durch Sachsen, Böhmen, Mähren nach Wien und Schlesien, so wie die Donaureise von Ulm bis Preßburg*, Leipzig 1828, S. 113–115.

24 Friedrich Christoph Joachim Schulz, *Reise eines Liefländers von Riga nach Warschau, durch Südpreußen, über Breslau, Dresden, Karlsbad, Bayreuth, Nürnberg, Regensburg, München, Salzburg, Linz, Wien und Klagenfurt, nach Botzen in Tyrol*, 7 vols., Berlin 1795–1796, here 5. vol., S. 57.

25 Kausch, S. 10–11.

26 Karl Fridrich Kretschmann, *Reise nach den Badeörtern Karlsbad, Eger und Töplitz, im Jahr 1797*. In *Briefen*, Leipzig 1798, S. 243.

27 Friedrich Albert Krug von Nidda, *Lokal-Umriss kleiner Reisen von Friedrich Krug v. Nidda*, 2 vols., Halle 1825–1826, here 1. vol., S. 18–19.

Wallensteins Tod by Friedrich Schiller. The importance of Schiller's work for the revival of Wallenstein's fame is undeniable. According to Leopold Ranke Schiller became Wallenstein's Homer and it was Schiller who brought Wallenstein's long forgotten fate back to life.²⁸ The response to the drama is apparent also in the German travelogues. Bavarian lawyer Christian Müller, who visited Bohemia in 1812, recalled scenes from the trilogy while he travelled from Lovosice to Prague through flat countryside that did not offer many opportunities for sightseeing:

„Nun ging es auf der immer sanft aufwärtslaufenden Ebene lustig gegen Prag. Bilder aus Wallenstein und Piccolomini machten mir den langweiligen Weg auf der endlosen Fläche zur interessantesten Bühne, auf der eine Gestalt nach der andern lebend hervortrat und die lieben, vertrauten Worte des Dichters sprach.“²⁹

Schiller's tragedy affected also Julius Fischer who spent several days in Prague in 1801. He stood for a long time in a deep contemplation in front of Wallenstein palace in Little Quarter reflecting on Wallenstein's military abilities, pride and lack of political judgment that brought on him the death of a rebel.³⁰

Though Schiller's literary work promoted the interest in Wallenstein and turned Cheb and Friedland into increasingly visited places of memory, the outcome of encountering the real setting of historical events was not always satisfactory. Bavarian liberal journalist Friedrich Mayer visited the town hall in Cheb during his journey through the Austrian monarchy in 1830s. He was deeply disappointed by the appearance of the scene of the tragedy, which differed significantly from the picture drawn by his imagination from reading Schiller. The first floor of the town hall was rather dark and it was just possible to fantasize about the "terrible act". Yet, the rooms on the second floor were very bright and modern, with one of them featuring a cage with singing canary and a lap dog on a sofa, making it impossible for Mayer to experience the atmosphere of the murder: „Durch diesen Besuch verlor ich ein gutes Stück romantischer Stimmung, der lange Corridor und die hohen, gewölbten Säle meiner Imagination schrumpften zu einem modernen Boudoir ein, an der historischen Wahrheit giengen Schiller's poetische Situationen zu Grunde.“³¹

Schiller's *Wallenstein* was not the only literary work that promoted the popularity of a certain historical figure. Franz Grillparzer's drama *König Ottokars Glück und Ende* (written in 1823) had a similar impact (though admittedly to a lesser extent). Although Grillparzer was loose with his historical facts, his play helped to focus attention on the personality of Ottokar II. Reminiscences were kindled especially by the visit of the burial place of Bohemian kings in St. Vitus Cathedral. Impressed by

28 Steffan Davies, *The Wallenstein Figure in German Literature and Historiography 1790–1920*, London 2009, S. 1. See also Josef Pekař, *Valdštejn 1630–1634. Dějiny valdštejnského spiknutí*, 2 vols., Praha 1933–1934, here 1. vol., 1933, p. 22.

29 Christian Müller, *Reise vom Berlin nach Paris im Jahre 1812 durch Preußen, Sachsen, Oesterreich, Baiern, Würtemberg und die Rheinlande*. In *Briefen*, Mainz 1815, S. 315.

30 Julius Wilhelm Fischer, *Reisen durch Oesterreich, Ungarn, Steyermark, Venedig, Böhmen und Mähren, in den Jahren 1801 und 1802*, 3 vols., Wien 1803, here 3. vol., S. 85–87.

31 Friedrich Mayer, *Wanderleben in Bayern, Ober- und Unterösterreich, Ungarn, Mähren und Böhmen*, 2 vols., Nürnberg 1838, here 2. vol., S. 361–362.

the story of the King Ottokar's tragic death, travellers came to see Ottokar's tomb and recalled his rise to power, the struggle with Rudolph of Habsburg and the fall of the proud man that marked also the "fall of the proud kingdom of Bohemia."³² Thus, works of literature and drama heightened German travellers' interest in locations with strong relevant historical associations, such as Cheb and royal places of internment, and integrated these sites in their historical consciousness.

BOHEMIA AS A BATTLEFIELD AND FORTRESS

Many tourists who visited Bohemia at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries commented on the violent nature of Bohemian history. In the context of the French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, the travellers recalled also past military conflicts and perceived certain sites in Bohemia as reminders of the troubled times.³³ Such reflections were frequently stimulated by the omnipresent castle ruins:

„Böhmen ist reich an Ruinen, an Trümmern von alten Bürgen. Der Hussitenkrieg zerstörte bereits manchen alten stattlichen Rittersitz und was er noch verschont hatte, wurde von den Schweden im 30jährigen Kriege vernichtet.“³⁴

To the romantic pilgrims the ruins represented a welcome addition to the landscape. Karl Friedrich Kretschmann, who belonged to a circle around German poet Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock and who wrote poems in the bardic style, admired the ruin of a castle *Andělská Hora* (Engelhaus) near Karlovy Vary: „Ich kam bei Engelhaus vorbei, wo sich ein zerstörtes Bergschloß zeigt, das auf einem grauen isolirten Felsen ungemein romantisch gelegen ist. Ueberhaupt besitzt wohl Böhmen fast mehr als sonst irgendein anders Land, einen Ueberfluß an dergleichen zertrümmerten Bergfesten, die äußerst mahlerisch, und die Aussichten von da ganz vortrefflich sind.“³⁵

Yet, not everyone was an admirer of romantic landscape and appreciated the impact of the Hussite war in the same way as Kretschmann. Some were convinced that Bohemia did not recover from the devastating raids of Hussite armies until contemporary times.³⁶ Even in 1830s the castle ruins in Bohemia were still perceived as a reminder of the "religious fanaticism of the Hussite era".³⁷ Even though some travellers condemned the violent nature of the Hussite rebellion, many of them expressed an interest in the famous Hussite military leader, Jan Žižka of Trocnov. The

32 Heinrich Laube, *Reisenovellen*, 6 vols., Mainheim 1834–1837, here 4. vol., 1836, S. 85–87.

33 Vít Vlnas, *Čechy, Praha a říšskoněmemecký patriotismus napoleonské doby. Marginalia k tématu*. In: Zdeněk Hojda — Roman Prahel (eds.), *Mezi časy... Kultura a umění v českých zemích kolem roku 1800*, Praha 2000, S. 155–164, here p. 152.

34 Gustav Rösler [pseudonym for Becker, Wilhelm Gottfried], *Meine grosse Reise von Leipzig nach Oesterreich*, Leipzig 1835, S. 29.

35 Kretschmann, S. 252.

36 Kausch, S. 15.

37 Karl Friedrich von Strombeck, *Darstellungen aus meinem Leben und aus meiner Zeit*, 8. vols., Braunschweig 1833–1840, here 7. vol., 1839, S. 313.

most popular places linked to his life included the town of Tábora (Tabor) in southern Bohemia, founded by the Hussites as a religious commune; a field near the town Havlíčkův Brod (Deutschbrod), where in 1422 the army led by then already blind Žižka defeated the crusaders and seized the town; and Čáslav (Tschaslau), where the famous commander was buried.³⁸

Though increasingly reflected, the historical importance of Hussite movement could not match the significance of more recent conflicts: the Thirty Years War, the War of the Austrian Succession and above all the Seven Years War. The visit of Čáslav was therefore primarily associated with the battle fought at the nearby hamlet of Chotusice (Chotusitz) in 1742; Žižka's burial place was only of secondary interest. Many German travellers perceived the battle of Chotusice as one of the early triumphs of Frederick the Great over the Austrian army. They visited the main square in Čáslav where the "hero gave his commands after the battle" and reported that "even today local inhabitants pronounced Frederick's name with respect".³⁹

However, the real attractions were the battlefields of the Seven Years War. The battle of Lovosice (Lowositz), fought in 1756, was recalled on the way from Saxony to Prague, and the battle of Kolín (Kollin) on the way from Prague to Vienna.⁴⁰ The battle of Kolín in 1757 belonged to one of the Frederick's military failures and the Austrian troops under the marshal Leopold Daun forced the Prussian army to retreat with heavy losses on both sides. The travellers mostly commented on the high number of casualties and recalled the "peculiar feeling" they had when they stood on the "blood-stained ground" of the battlefield.⁴¹ However, some of them (especially those coming from Saxony) could not hide their satisfaction that "Frederick for once burned his fingers".⁴²

If the events of the Seven Years War strengthened the image of Bohemia as a permanent battlefield, the Napoleonic wars changed this perception and showed Bohemia also as an effective fortress. Close to the Saxon-Bohemian border and just beside the road from Dresden to Prague was the scene of the battle of Chlumec (Kulm), fought in 1813, in which the Prussian, Austrian and Russian troops defeated the French army. Though it was one of the less important battles of the Napoleonic wars, the German travellers valued it as a salvation for the anti-French coalition

38 Wilhelm Müller, *Briefe an deutsche Freunde von einer Reise durch Italien über Sachsen, Böhmen und Oesterreich 1820 und 1821 geschrieben und als Skizzen zum Gemälde unserer Zeit [...]*, 2 vols., Altona 1824, here 1. vol., S. 187; Stein, S. 187; Rösler, S. 55; Johann Heinrich Meynier, *Reise durch Deutschland. Ein Unterhaltungsbuch für die Jugend zur Beförderung der Vaterlandskunde*, 2 vols. Leipzig 1837, here 2. vol., S. 330.

39 *Ibid.*, S. 331.

40 See, for example, Julius Fischer, S. 179; Cölln, Wien und Berlin in Parallele. *Nebst Bemerkungen auf einer Reise von Berlin nach Wien durch Schlesien über die Felder des Krieges*, Amsterdam — Leipzig 1808, S. 54; Müller, Christian, S. 334; Stein, S. 187; Meynier, S. 334 and Rösler, S. 37.

41 Mayer, S. 284.

42 Gottlieb Hiller, *Meine Reise durch einen Theil von Sachsen, Böhmen, Oesterreich und Ungarn*, Köthen 1808, S. 175.

and not many of them missed the opportunity to visit the battlefield.⁴³ Descriptions of the three monuments erected here in the first half of the nineteenth century to commemorate the Prussian, Austrian and Russian soldiers became so repetitive that they were exposed to ridicule. The visit of Chlumec was paraphrased in the satirical travelogue *Hans-Jörgels Badereise* [Hans-Jörgel's spa journey] written by Austrian writer Johann Baptist Weis. The hero of the book, Hans Jörgl, longed to see the well-known monuments, but bad weather stopped him from having the pleasure: „Zum Unglück ist, wie wir fortg'fahren seyn, ein solcher Nebl eintreten, daß von der ganzen Gegend nix z'sehn war. Der Schwager kann sich denken, wie leid mir war, wie ich bei Arbessau vorbeig'fahren bin, und von den drei Denkmählern für die gebliebenen Preußen und Russen, und für'n Fürsten Colloredo im Nebl nur wie ein Schatten g'sehn hab. Es ist ein Invalid da, der die Stellungen und die ganze Schlacht sehr gut erklärt, aber was wär mir mit einer Erklärung im Nebl g'holfen g'wesen? I hab mich tröst, ich wird's anschauen, wann ich z'ruckfahr, und leider hat's da g'regnt, wie wann ein eigener Unglückstern auf'n Cumerfeld für mich aufgegungen wär.“⁴⁴

The frequent remembrance of the battle in the travel literature indicates the important position the victory of the united Prussian, Russian and Austrian armies at Chlumec occupied in the minds of the German travellers. It placed Bohemia in the centre of political events that deeply concerned them and that were part of their shared historical memory. Sites associated with the War of the Austrian Succession and the Seven Years War — such as Čáslav, Lovosice and Kolín — established a similar importance as places fixed in the German historical awareness. Yet, while these battles confirmed a perception of Bohemia as a “blood-stained ground”, the battle of Chlumec in 1813 cast the kingdom in a new light, “as a strong castle that stopped Napoleon's progress and saved the fate of Germany”.⁴⁵

PRAGUE'S CONFLICTING HISTORIES IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

As suggested by the reflection of the military conflicts of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, the history of Bohemia became perceived as set in a historical

⁴³ See, for example, Johann Ludwig Deinhardstein, *Skizzen einer Reise von Wien über Prag, Teplitz, Dresden, Berlin, Leipzig, Weimer, Frankfurt am Main, Darmstadt, Heidelberg [...], Linz, und von dort nach Wien zurück, in Briefen an einen Freund*, Wien 1831, S. 27; Rösler, S. 25–26; Krug von Nidda, S. 102; Karl von Hailbronner, *Cartons aus der Reise-mappe eines deutschen Touristen*, 3 vols., Stuttgart — Tübingen 1837, here 2. vol., S. 255 and Laube, S. 98–99.

⁴⁴ Johann Baptist Weis, *Hans-Jörgels Badereise, oder Abenteuer auf einer Fahrt von Wien nach Hradisch, Luhatschowith, Brünn, Leitomischl, Czaslau, Prag, [...]*. In *Briefen an seinen Schwager Maxel in Feselau*, 2 vols., Wien 1842, here 2. vol., S. 27–28.

⁴⁵ Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen, *Briefe in die Heimat aus Deutschland, der Schweiz und Italien*, 4 vols., Breslau 1818–1821, here 1. vol., 1818, S. 23.

framework with which the German travellers identified. At the outset of the nineteenth century German intellectuals formulated new definitions of German territory that were supposed to supersede the administrative and political links associated with the Holy Roman Empire (dissolved in 1806) and to overcome the fragmentation of the German territorial states.⁴⁶ An inseparable component of promoting German unity and patriotism at the time of Napoleonic wars was an activation of an interest in the German history.⁴⁷ Since the German national theorists included Bohemia in the geographical area that they defined as German territory,⁴⁸ the history of Bohemia regained importance and was subjected to new interpretations stressing the historical links between Bohemia and German states. The most suitable place for uncovering the German elements in Bohemian history was Prague, where traces of many different historical periods had accumulated.

Similarly to other places in Bohemia, Prague abounded in sites that in the German travellers revived the memories of both recent and old military events. Just before they reached the city, the travellers coming from the north-east passed the scene of the battle of Prague, fought on 6 May 1757 between Prussia and Austria. Though the Prussian army emerged from the battlefield victorious, the event was not commemorated as a Prussian success, but as a place of tragedy. The Prussian army lost here one of its most famous leaders, Generalfeldmarschall von Schwerin, and Frederick the Great therefore paid very high price for his victory.⁴⁹ Another site related to this early stage of the Seven Years War was the summer castle Hvězda (Stern) located in a game reserve close to White Mountain. Frederick the Great found here his accommodation before the battle of Prague and this occasion was still remembered by an inscription on a stone where he reputedly rested:

„Hier an dem Stein, von Stahl und Kugeln frei,
Saß Friedrich, Preußens kühnster Held,
Und maß von hier der Hauptstadt Fall!
Nun dient der Platz im grünen Mai
Nur sanfter Ruh', fern vom Geräusch der Welt,
Und Schatten deckt ihn überall.“⁵⁰

Reminiscences of such conflicts were stimulated especially by observing Prague's hilly landscape. The White Mountain was the scene of the battle marking the beginning of the war that “over thirty years exhausted and bled to death the population of Ger-

46 Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Reden an die deutsche Nation*, Berlin, 1808;), 408; See also Dann, Otto, *Nation und Nationalismus in Deutschland, 1770–1990*, München 1996, S. 68.

47 Reinhart Koselleck — Otto Brunner — Werner Conze (eds.), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, 8 vols., Stuttgart 1972–1997, here 7. vol., 1992, term „Volk, Nation“, S. 342–347.

48 Ernst Moritz Arndt, *Rhein, Deutschlands Strom, nicht aber Deutschlands Gränze*, Leipzig, 1813, S. 10.

49 Meynier, S. 336.

50 Stein, S. 176; See also Fischer, S. 121–122.

many, Austria, Bohemia, Hungary and other countries".⁵¹ Meanwhile, Tábora hill near the river Rokytka and Vítkov Hill were both associated with different stages of the battle of Prague and the latter also with the victory of the Hussites over the army of king Sigismund in 1420.⁵²

The impressions from battlefields blended with the feelings aroused during the walks through the medieval parts of the town and visits of the gothic and baroque churches and palaces. Prague was therefore perceived as a city where the travellers "encountered history on every cobble-stone".⁵³ Christian Müller, who visited Prague in 1812, summed up the historic attractions of Prague in few sentences: „Wer sagt, daß der Anblick Prag's von der Nordseite eine der reizend und imposantesten Städte-Ansichten sey, die man immer nur sehen könne, der lügt und übertreibt nicht. Das fand ich heute, vorzüglich in dem Augenblicke, wo die Abendsonne die Gipfel des Ziska-, des Tabor-, und des Weißenbergs, so wie den Ratschin mit glühendem Golde überzog, und in der Tiefe zwischen den romantischen Höhen die große, alterthümliche Stadt mit ihren zahllosen Thürmen, Kirchen und kolossalen Pallästen in dunkler geröthetem Tone da lag.“⁵⁴

Some of the German travellers derived information on Bohemian history not only from the work of German authors but also from texts written by Czech historians, such as František Martin Pelcl, Josef Dobrovský and František Palacký. Some — often accomplished scholars — even had personal contacts with representatives of the Czech intellectual elite. Professor of history at the universities in Berlin and Wrocław Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen was excited to meet Josef Dobrovský during his stay in Karlovy Vary in 1816 and considered him to be the most learned Bohemian scholar. The meeting with Dobrovský confirmed Hagen's opinion on Bohemian history that he formed previously during his discussion with German historian Karl Ludwig Woltmann, who lived in Prague at the time. According to Woltmann (and, later, František Palacký),⁵⁵ Bohemian history was shaped by the dynamic of Czech-German coexistence. Inspired by the idea Hagen looked for traces of the Czech-German cultural exchange and found enough evidence in the old Czech legends that had their equivalent in German mythology.⁵⁶

While the historiography elaborated the theme of Czech-German "contacts and conflicts", the German travellers who visited Bohemia in the later decades of the first half of the nineteenth century were more aware of the struggles between the two national groups than of their mutual cultural exchanges. The incompatible nature of Czech-German relationship was apparent particularly in Prague. It was reflected

51 Ibid., S. 63

52 Stein, S. 170.

53 Mayer, S. 293.

54 Christian Müller, S. 316–317.

55 František Kutnar — Jaroslav Marek, *Přehledné dějiny českého a slovenského dějepisectví*, Praha 1997, p. 181.

56 Hagen referred especially to the legend about the squire Horymír and his horse Šemík that bore similarities with the German legend about Wittich and his horse Schimming. Hagen, S. 18–21.

in and reinforced by the German travellers' relationship to Bohemia and its capital. By the beginning of the nineteenth century Prague was frequently described as "one of the most beautiful cities in Germany" and some even traced the foundation of the town to Marobud, leader of the Germanic tribe of Marcomanni who inhabited Bohemia before the arrival of the Slavs.⁵⁷

The claim of the German travellers over Prague was challenged by the protagonists of the Czech national movement. German professional travel writer Johan Georg Kohl remembered from his visit of Prague in the early 1840s a disturbing encounter with a Czech national enthusiast who became infuriated that Prague should be considered a German town. The man composed himself only when Kohl recited him all verses of the German song *Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland?* to assure him that it did not mention Bohemia.⁵⁸ As evident from Kohl's experience, the contention over the national character of Prague intensified in the first half of the nineteenth century. Thus, it was ultimately the national conflict (not Prague's historicity) that the German travellers regarded as its most characteristic feature. Amalie Ludecus, to whom Prague conveyed so many historical memories, concluded her description of this city in a similar vein: „Hauptstadt [Prag] eines in der Staatenreihe nicht unbeträchtlichen Reichs, wechselte es oft seine Beherrscher. Slaven und Germanen bevölkerten es. Die in den Grundelementen verschiedenen Stämme wollten sich nicht recht mischen, und gingen nicht immer ruhig und einig neben einander her, indem bald dieser, bald jener die Oberhand gewann. Entzündete der Streit um die Herrschaft schon die Gemüther, bewaffnete er die nächsten Verwandten wider einander; so geschah dieß auf eine furchtbarere Weise in dem verderblichsten aller Kriege, dem der Meinungen: Prag trägt betrübte Spuren davon, mehr als von seiner größern herrlichen Zeit.“⁵⁹

CONCLUSION

For most of the second half of the eighteenth century the German travellers only showed interest in aspects of Bohemian history with which they could identify. They were impressed at the strength of Nepomuk's cult; however, unsurprisingly given that the majority of them were Protestant, their evaluation of the Catholic saint was not sympathetic. A similar attitude was held towards the Czech myths and legends that seemed to prove the superstitious nature of Catholic society in Bohemia. Most of

⁵⁷ Küttner, S. 91; Krug von Nidda, S. 116.

⁵⁸ Johann Georg Kohl, *Hundert Tage auf Reisen in den österreichischen Staaten*, 5 vols., Dresden — Leipzig 1842, here 1. vol, S. 39. The song was composed in 1813 by Ernst Moritz Arndt. Although Arndt did not include Bohemia explicitly in his song, he considered it an inseparable part of Germany; this is apparent from his publication referred to above (see note 48). See also Martina Power, *From Indirect to Direct Comparison: Bohemian-Irish Analogies in German and British Travel Writing, c. 1750–1850*. In: Gerald Power — Ondřej Pilný (eds.), *Ireland and the Czech Lands. Contacts and comparisons in History and culture*, Oxford — Bern — Berlin 2014 (Forthcoming).

⁵⁹ Anonym [Ludecus], 38 (1823), No. 79, S. 651.

the German visitors found only a few traces of historical memories which they could share. Sites associated with the Thirty Years War (such as Prague Castle) or the personality of Tycho de Brahe (such as Týn Church) were, therefore, among the main attractions.

Enthusiasm for the history of Bohemia increased at the turn of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, especially due to the influence of literature, such as Schiller's Wallenstein trilogy. These texts were at the time read by whole intellectual elite (to which the travellers belonged) and formed their historic consciousness. Of even more importance was the general transformation of the German relationship to Bohemia. In the first decades of the nineteenth century Bohemia became increasingly perceived as a legitimate part of the German territory and therefore its history needed to be set in a broader interpretative framework. While touring historical sites, the travellers found enough material to stress the close connection between Bohemian and German history. The battlefields of the Seven Years War and the Napoleonic wars were important evidence of a shared past. However, in the context of a rising Czech national movement that produced its own version of Bohemian history, the German claim over the history of Bohemia was seriously challenged. As suggested also by the contested perceptions of Prague, its history — as well as the whole history of Bohemia — was becoming a field of conflict rather than coexistence.