

Navigating Nature's Transitions: the Bohemian Forest and Its Temporalities in Early Tourist Literature

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Abstract

The article analyses the temporalities attributed by tourism-related literature to transitions of the environment of the Bohemian Forest in the second half of the long 19th century, with a special focus on the gales and bark beetle outbreak that occurred in the 1860s and 1870s. The expansion of both individual and organised tourism in the region from the late 1870s aligned with its economic decline, which followed a period of rapid development associated with eliminating the damage caused by the outbreak, an occurrence that severely affected the health of the forest and the inhabitants of the Bohemian Forest region. The article suggests that tourism acted as a resilience strategy, enabling adaptation to socio-economic uncertainties engendered by living in a more-than-human world. In addition to nationalist motives, the perception of nature and its transitions played a key role in the establishment of tourism in the region, which was often characterised by its forests.

Keywords

tourism history, guidebooks, the Bohemian Forest, nature, forest, bark beetle

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Introduction

“In the spring of 1874, alarm was spreading in the press: ‘Šumava [the Bohemian Forest] is heading for disaster, the bark beetle is destroying all its forests!’ Those who know Šumava can imagine what it would be without its forests – something we do not even know how to imagine, something against which both our emotions and our imaginations rebel. Šumava is Šumava only by virtue of its forests and primeval forests – and therefore it may explain the sensation that arose when the cool Šumava, in late summer, once again opened itself hospitably to travellers, and when from the ridges of its majestic hills, and from the banks of its romantic lakes, and from the shady bosom of its murmuring forests, the nervous call of tourists came: ‘Hurry here, those of you who still want to catch a glimpse of the magnificent picture of the former Šumava, those of you who want to witness this reverend work of nature in the decay of a great catastrophe! We bid farewell to the historic, glorious Šumava!’”^{1,2}

This paragraph from an article entitled “Na Šumavu!” (To the Bohemian Forest!) by Czech journalist and politician Servác Heller, which was published in 1880 in the magazine *Květy*, expresses one of the few notions that directly connect the bark beetle outbreak of the 1870s with the development of tourism in the region of the Bohemian Forest (*Šumava* in Czech, *Böhmerwald* in German). However, the ideas it outlines, relating to the character of the landscape, its transition, and the uncertainties of its future, appear very frequently in sources associated with the tourist movement of the time.

This article analyses the temporalities attributed by tourist literature to nature’s transitions in the region of the Bohemian Forest in the second half

1 All translations to English in this article are the author’s own; the original quotes in Czech or German are transcribed in the footnotes. The English appellation for the region – the Bohemian Forest – is used throughout the article except for this example, where the Czech word *Šumava* is used, as the word forest would have to appear several times in one sentence.

2 „*Na jaře 1874 rozlehl se tiskem poplach: ‚Šumavě hrozí záhuba, kůrovec zničí všechny její lesy!‘ Kdo Šumavu zná, dovede si představit, čím by byla bez lesů – něčím, co si neumíme ani představit, proti čemu se vzpírají i cit náš i naše fantasie. Šumava jest Šumavou jen svými lesy a pralesy, i lze si tudíž vysvětliti sensaci, kteráž nastala, když chladná Šumava pokročilým létem opět se hostinsky rozevřela cestujícím a když s hřebenů majestátních vrchů, od břehů romantických jezírek i ze stinného lůna šumných jejích hvozďů se ozvalo nervosní volání turistů: ‚Spějte rychle sem, kdož ještě zastihnouti chcete velkolepý obraz bývalé Šumavy, kdož zřítí chcete to velebné dílo přírody v úpadku veliké katastrofy! Loučíme se s historickou, slavnou Šumavou!’“*

of the long 19th century, with a special focus on the gales and the bark beetle outbreak that occurred in the 1860s and 1870s. The gales of 1868 and 1870 were the two most disastrous in the context of the Czech lands in the 19th century (Brázdil et al. 2018), although there were also a notable series of gales in the 1830s (Faktorová – Hořejší 2023: 23–24). Due to severity of the damage caused, especially to the region of the Bohemian Forest (Brázdil et al. 2018: 1213), these events had a significant impact on the emerging tourism in the area.

The subject of the analysis is texts related to early tourism, of which guidebooks form the principal source, with articles in *Časopis turistů*³ and other magazines or works of literary fiction that had a connection to the tourist movement of that time, specifically the works of Karel Klostermann, an honorary member of the Czech Tourist Club, providing a wider context.

Although the region can be considered transnational, with many mountain peaks and other tourist destinations located in the proximity of the state border between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the German Empire, this analysis only uses source materials produced in Bohemia (both in Czech and German languages). The analysis is based on a total of 17 guidebooks published between 1878 and 1910. This includes various types of books that were published for different purposes, with some publications falling into several of those categories. There are guidebooks that were part of a series containing volumes published for other regions of the Czech lands (Borovský – Krejčí 1883; Šumava [1903]; Kafka 1904). Several guidebooks were published by either Czech or German nationalist organisations in order to support tourism in the region (Průvodčí 1884; Führer 1888; Bašta 1909; Leimbigler 1910). Some books can be considered rather essays on regional history, biology and geography (Zeithammer 1896 and 1902) than classic guidebooks, although most of the publications in question also cover these topics.

The expertise of the principal authors also varies, as they were people from such diverse professions as a forester (Chadt 1883), an estate manager (Zeithammer 1896 and 1902), a museum employee (Kafka 1904), a botanist (Willkomm 1878), high school teachers (Cimrhanzl 1878; Patera 1889 and 1893) and railway inspectors (Pascher 1878; Möchel 1878). Nevertheless, in general, it can be said that the authors were mostly members of the educated middle and upper middle classes from the wider region. It is

3 *Časopis turistů* (Tourist Magazine) was a monthly periodical (after 1904 issued at a frequency of 10–11 times per year) of the Czech/Czechoslovak Tourist Club (*Klub českých/československých turistů*). The magazine was founded in 1889, a year after the establishment of the Club, and was published under this name until 1948. Today, it is published under the title *Turista*.

not uncommon that a book has other authors who contributed in other ways, such as writing a foreword (Krejčí in Pascher 1978 and Cimrhanzl 1878; Klostermann in Zeithammer 1896) or creating a map (Hanel in Vogel 1901). In some cases, the authors are unknown (Průvodčí 1884; Führer 1888; Vilímkův průvodce 1905). There is also a certain degree of intertextuality in the guidebooks, for example, Cimrhanzl (1878) explicitly states that his guidebook is based on that of Pascher from the same year (Fig. 2 and 3).

The publications were analysed using qualitative methodology, mainly content analysis (Krippendorff 2019) and discourse analysis (Jørgensen – Phillips 2002). The tourist narratives on nature, landscape, and mountains were thematically examined and the concepts of time and the critical events were analysed in terms of their meaning in the semantic context.

The main objective of this study is to determine the different temporalities that the tourist literature uses to describe transitions happening in the natural environment. Temporalities provide an important and well-established perspective in historical research in general (Champion 2019); in recent years, there has also been a growing focus on time and temporalities within historically oriented research on travel (e.g. Henrikson – Kullberg 2021; Hunter 2023), although these accounts focus on travelogues rather than guidebooks.

In ecological anthropology, recent research has explored the concept of multiple temporalities in relation to posthumanism and the diverse temporal rhythms inherent in nature-culture relationships (Fitz-Henry 2017). Inspired by this approach, this study intends to deconstruct the categories of natural time and historical time (Cardoso Jr. et al. 2023), which reinforce the opposition between nature and culture, and to use the example of landscape transitions and their perceived temporalities to explore how the nature-culture continuum and the associated spatial hierarchies are constructed within the tourist discourse in the early period of high modernity.

Early tourism in the Bohemian Forest and beyond

As previously mentioned, the first three guides to the region published in the Czech lands date from 1878, although the organised tourism movement in the region emerged first during the 1880s and its emergence was intertwined with the growing nationalist tendencies in society at that time. In 1884, two contesting Bohemian nationalist organisations were founded – the German *Deutscher Böhmerwaldbund* and the Czech *Národní jednota pošumavská*, some of whose activities were also aimed at promoting tourism in the region from a nationalist position. In 1888, Vilém Kurz senior, a member of the *Národní jednota pošumavská*, helped to found the *Klub českých turistů* (Czech Tourist Club). Since mountain

ranges, including the Bohemian Forest range, often constitute national borders, tourism, mountaineering, and other sports activities played an important role in gaining symbolic control over these contested spaces (Debarbieux – Rudaz 2015: 69).

Previous scholarship on the topic has reviewed these nationalist roots in depth. Pieter Judson drew a link between tourism, nationalism, and consumption in the Bohemian Forest region (though his conclusions are valid for the entire Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and beyond). On the basis of his research on the promotion and financial support of the passion play in the town of Höritz/Hořice na Šumavě by the *Deutscher Böhmerwaldbund*, he argued that nationalist political activists attempted “to harness both the propaganda and economic potentials of the relatively new tourism industry to nationalist goals by making nationalists out of tourist consumers” (Judson 2007: 142). Eduard Maur intertwined tourism in the Bohemian Forest with a larger narrative about the origins and development of historical memory associated with the “sacred mountains” of the Czechs and the role of this memory in the formation of national consciousness (Maur 2006). Martin Pelc wrote a compelling monography on the history of German tourist clubs in the Czech lands. Not only did he focus on the intersections of tourism and nationalism or political preferences, he offered a nuanced picture of organised tourism in the Bohemian context from its emergence until the Second World War (Pelc 2009). The topic of tourism in Central Eastern Europe with the example of the transnational region of the Giant Mountains has been also researched by Stanislav Holubec within the project *Central European Mountains Krkonoše 1890–1950: Modernity, Tourism, Nationalism* (Holubec 2022; 2024).

The Giant Mountains (*Krkonoše* in Czech, *Riesengebirge* in German) were also the research object of the 2021 study by Karel Stibrál and Veronika Faktorová. They focused on the parallels in the aesthetical perception of the Alps and the Giant Mountains around the turn of the 19th century and its role in establishing tourist interest in the region (Stibrál – Faktorová 2021). The comparison between the Alps and other Central European mountain regions occurred often on this symbolic level (Zückert 2014) – with regard to the Bohemian Forest, the comparison with the Alps can be found especially in German-language publications (Führer 1888: preface – unnumbered; Zeithammer 1896: 10 and 78). The Czech-language guidebooks prefer to use the Giant Mountains as a reference (Vilímkův průvodce 1905: 1; Cimrhanzl 1878: preface – unnumbered; Bašta 1909: 5). Apart from the symbolic level, this cross-referencing (or rather a string of references from the Alps to the Giant Mountains to the Bohemian Forest) points also to the gradual development of interest in mountain areas.

The Alps are regarded as both a blueprint for the development of tourism and the perception of the mountain landscape in Central Europe (see Stibral – Faktorová 2021; Zückert 2014; Holubec 2024: 353). Initially mostly visited by British travellers, the Alps were the first mountains in Central Europe to be “discovered” and used for tourism and sports (Keller 2015). Furthermore, it was the birthplace of the first tourist clubs, which frequently served as models for other tourist clubs across Central Europe. The “discovery” of the Alps in the course of the 18th century also marks a change in the perception of mountain regions insofar as the attitude toward them, especially in the literature, shifted from viewing them as something sombre and dangerous to glorious and splendid (Nicolson 1997).

During the 19th century, it is possible to observe a gradual shift from romanticism to realism, which is also evident in the depiction and general conceptualisation of nature and the landscape, as well as the increasingly strong influence of the natural sciences. The advances made in geography and biology, along with the emphasis placed on history, led to the growing significance of time as opposed to space in European culture, which also encompasses the perception of the natural environment. In addition to the spatial dimension, the landscape and nature in general also gain the temporal dimension – both cyclical and linear (Stibral 2019: 336–337). The temporal dimension is especially significant in representations of environmental disasters (Williamson – Courtney 2018), which also seems to be the case with the perception of the Bohemian Forest.

Tourists and the transitions of the forest

The interest of individual travellers in the Bohemian Forest can be traced back more than two decades before the establishment of the Czech Tourist Club, in association with a guidebook (Hoffmann 1861) that was published in Passau in the 1860s. The first guidebook to the Bohemian Forest written in the Czech language was published in 1878 (Cirmhanzl 1878), which was followed by several others in the subsequent 30 years. The preface of this guidebook compares it to other Bohemian mountain ranges and states that although they have their own particular merits, none compares to the Bohemian Forest with its crystal rock masses and the extensiveness and lushness of its woods. Later in the text, the author even claims it to be the largest forest in central Europe (Cirmhanzl 1878: V–VI). Similarly, the preface to another guidebook, published in German in 1888 by the nationalist *Deutscher Böhmerwaldbund* in Budweis (České Budějovice), begins with the sentence: “Among all the mountains of Europe, the Bohemian Forest

is distinguished by the greatness and magnificence of its forests.”⁴ (Führer 1888: preface – unnumbered)

For the Bohemian forest region, the forest aspect seems to be its distinctive factor. Most of the Czech and German guidebooks, other tourism-related literature and the *Heimatkunde* publications from the end of the 19th century emphasize its woods and forests as the main characteristic feature. This importance can be traced even further back – to the emergence of its name. In the *Chronica Boemorum* from the 12th century, the region is referred to simply as “a forest” (Maur 2006: 28). The Czech name Šumava, which comes from the 17th century, is derived from the Proto-Slavic word *šuma* meaning “a dense forest” (Lutterer – Šrámek 2004: 253). Similarly, the word “forest” (in German *Wald*) can be found in the German and English names for the region – *der Böhmerwald* and the Bohemian Forest.

The gales of 1868 and 1870 (see Svoboda et al. 2012 and Brázdil et al. 2018) and the subsequent spread of the bark beetle in the 1870s therefore showed how fragile an assigned identity of a region can be when its principal feature is considered its forest. In comparison to a mountain range, which hardly ever changes in the course of a human life, a forest, even its most cultivated forms, is a complex assemblage of countless more-than-human life forms and is therefore subject to constant change. In most cases – and the Bohemian Forest of the late 19th century is no exception in this regard – the changes it undergoes are also influenced by a broad spectrum of human activities, such as logging, planting, hunting, and foraging, and also building, maintaining, and the use of infrastructure, to name but a few.

Viewed through the lens of modern society, the majority of transformations occurring within, or more accurately, to the forest, may be characterized as cyclical in nature. They often depend on the time of the day or the year, in conjunction with the, although unpredictable, expectable influences of the weather and climate. The various forms of human exploitation of the forest appear to adapt to this cyclical time, for example, there is a certain preferred time of day for foraging, as there is a certain time of the year for planting new trees, and there is the close season when it is forbidden to hunt animals that are breeding. This alignment with the rhythms of the natural world can be perceived as a concession, particularly within the modern paradigm that emphasizes cultural dominance over nature. However, it is also a strategic approach aimed at exerting influence over the extent of the ongoing transitions.

4 „Unter allen Gebirgen Mitteleuropas ist der Böhmerwald durch die Grösse und Herrlichkeit seiner Forste ausgezeichnet.“

Tourist activities are no exception with regard to their adherence to the cyclical rhythm. Most of the guidebooks to the Bohemian Forest contain instructions and recommendations on the time of year to travel, most often recommended between June and September (e.g., Führer 1888: LXVIII; Borovský – Krejčí 1883: 10; Bašta 1909: 55). This limitation was not determined by the inability to enjoy the beauty of nature in other seasons, as was evidenced by the later expansion of winter tourism in the Bohemian Forest in the interwar period. The reason was again the sense of having control over the changes occurring in nature and the possibility to anticipate and deal with them, given the limited material resources and infrastructure of that time, while still ensuring a certain level of comfort.

Probably the most popular Czech guidebook to the region during the 19th century was *Řivnáčův Průvodce po Šumavě* from 1888. In recommending the best time to travel it states:

“To the Bohemian Forest, at least that part where there are good roads and forest paths [...], we can travel comfortably as early as the beginning of June (in the most favourable [weather] conditions even in the second half of May). However, at that time there is still a lot of snow at high altitudes and in ravines, and the forest ground and even the paths are waterlogged and the marshland is completely inaccessible. Yet the full mountain streams and rivers, rolling and roaring through the rocky, usually precipitous watercourses, provide an utterly charming picture that is rarely seen in the later months, perhaps only after sudden heavy downpours.” (Borovský – Krejčí 1883: 5)⁵

The mention of rivers underlines another important feature where the changes and transitions of nature and tourist interest in it intersect, namely its fleetingness. This is underlined, for example, in a landscape description in a guidebook published by the Czech nationalist organization *Národní jednota pošumavská* in 1909, which states: “Anyone who has been in the Bohemian Forest a few times will admit that the one specific area has made a new impression on them on each occasion, one that was different from

5 „Do Šumavy, aspoň do té části, kde jsou dobré silnice a lesní cesty [...], můžeme se za pohody již na počátku června (v nejpříznivějším případě v druhé polovici května) vydati, ovšem leží v té době ve vysokých polohách a v roklich často ještě hojně sněhu, lesní půda, ba i cesty jsou vodou nasáklé a místa bažinatá docela nepřístupná. Za to však plně bystřiny a potoky, valící se s hukotem kamenitým, obyčejně srážným řečištěm, poskytují obraz přepůsobný, který v pozdějších měsících zřídka kdy, jen po náhlých prudkých lijavcích udá se nám spatřiti.“

the previous visit.”⁶ (Bašta 1909: 119) The sources admit that fleetingness is part of the appeal of the region. Yet again, it is a question of the extent and predictability of those changes.

Gales and the bark beetle outbreak as events

The gales and the bark beetle outbreak stand out from this pattern. In Czech and German sources, they are both described as either “a disaster” or “a calamity” (e.g., Zeithammer 1896: 59; Borovský – Krejčí 1883: 5). They are destructive and unprecedented. The aforementioned changes and transitions of the landscape character were considered natural and – although sometimes restrictive – beautiful and desirable. Within the tourist literature, they are part of a self-organising nature, a wilderness, one which is here to be enjoyed by the human eye, but which rarely ever influences the human world.

The gales and the bark beetle outbreak seem to have the character of events. They are usually dated – the tourist literature and newspaper articles speak mostly of the gale of 1870 (and sometimes an earlier one of 1868). The bark beetle outbreak is usually either linked to that or dated to 1873 and 1874 (e.g., Bašta 1909: 69). Apart from their influence on the natural world, their intersections with the human world, especially their economic and social consequences for the region, are emphasized.

A prime example of the exceptional status of these transitions is evident in the book *Land und Leute des Böhmerwaldes* (The Country and the People of the Bohemian Forest) from 1896, which was published in Czech as *Šumava, kraj a lid* in 1902. The author, Leopold Zeithammer, was the manager of the Schwarzenberg estate (and father to Viktorin Zeithammer, who became one of the best-known figures in the tourist movement in the region and who wrote many texts about the Bohemian Forest) and his book, although not a guidebook by definition but rather a geographical and demographical popularizing study of the region, became popular also among tourists. Although the other chapters are rather general and present an overview, there is a separate chapter devoted entirely to the “storm disasters of 1868 and 1870 and the bark beetle calamity”⁷ (Zeithammer 1896: 59). Thus, he regards them as exceptional events, which can be singled out from the descriptions of the past and present of the region that are intended to have an enduring validity.

The introduction to the German edition of Zeithammer’s book was written by the popular writer Karel (or Karl) Klostermann. He refers to

6 „Kdo byl na Šumavě několikrát dozná, že jedna a táž partie učinila naň při každé návštěvě nový, od předešlého se lišící dojem.“

7 „Sturmkatastrophen vom Jahre 1868 und 1870 und die Borkenkäfer-Calamität.“

an older book *Der Böhmerwald, Natur und Mensch* (The Bohemian Forest – Nature and Men) from 1860:

“The book is thoroughly and interestingly written like few others. But almost 40 years have passed and much, very much, has changed, especially the economic conditions, mostly because of the big gale catastrophe of 1870 and the following bark beetle calamity. The railways now lead to the Bohemian Forest [...description of routes]. A network of roads runs through the mountains everywhere. All of this affects its [the region’s] economic circumstances, draws it out of its previous seclusion, and brings it into contact with the outside world.” (Klostermann 1896: 7–8)⁸

While he does not explicitly mention tourism, the new infrastructure, established to enable the intensive logging following the gales and the bark beetle outbreak, naturally helped the development of tourism in the region. Almost all of the hiking trails suggested in the guidebooks start at one of the train stations; one of the very first guidebooks to the region published in the Czech lands, *Der Führer auf der Bahn Pilsen–Eisenstein–Deggendorf und in den Böhmerwald* (The Guide to the Pilsen–Eisenstein–Deggendorf and to the Bohemian Forest) from 1878 is even conceived directly on the basis of the newly opened railway route (Möchel 1878).

In a way, tourism can therefore be seen as a mechanism of overcoming economic uncertainty resulting from living in a more-than-human world. The uncertainty was first caused by the spread of the bark beetle – the public awareness at that time did not emphasize the role of humans and forest management (De Groot et al. 2019) in the outbreak – then by the excessive logging which demanded new infrastructure, foreign workers, and regional development, and finally by the subsequent decline of this sudden boom of economic activity.

The Bohemian Forest in journalism and fiction

It is also possible to argue that the journalistic interest in the gales and bark beetle outbreaks in the 1870s influenced the development of tourism

8 „Ein Buch, gründlich und interessant geschrieben, wie selten eines; aber seither sind fast vierzig Jahre vergangen, und viel, sehr viel hat sich geändert; namentlich die wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse sind andere geworden, zumal mit der grossen Windbruchkatastrophe von 1870 und der darauf folgenden Borkenkäfercalamität. Eisenbahnen münden ein in den Böhmerwald [...]. Ein Netz von Strassen durchzieht überall das Gebirge. Das alles wirkt ein auf die wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse, zieht ihn hervor aus seiner bisherigen Abgeschlossenheit, bringt ihn mit der Aussenwelt in Verbindung.“

in this previously not very well-known area. In 1873, a series of reportages under the title “Listy ze Šumavy” (Letters from the Bohemian Forest) by Bohumil Havlasa was published in the literary magazine *Lumír* (commissioned by the editor Servác Heller). The series was followed by an article by Heller entitled “Spousta šumavská – List na památku bývalé Šumavy” (The Devastation of the Bohemian Forest – A Letter to Commemorate the Former Bohemian Forest). In literary scholar Martin Tomášek’s account, Heller had become aware of how the transitions of the landscape would influence the way of life of its inhabitants and also the aesthetic potential of the Bohemian Forest for literary fiction (Tomášek 2010: 122).

Although they attempt to convey their travel experiences to readers, both Havlasa and Heller do not specifically mention tourism. Heller does so only in his subsequent article entitled “Na Šumavu!” from 1880, cited in the introduction, which takes the form of a reportage and at the same time a patriotically oriented agitation for the development of tourism. Apart from in Heller’s text, the link between tourism and the bark beetle outbreak can also be found in the feuilleton “Šumava v zimě” (The Bohemian Forest in Winter), which was written for the Catholic-oriented newspaper *Čech* by Antonín Hosínský in 1895. He describes the differences between summer, when many tourists visit Šumava, and winter, when there is the misery that follows the clearing of a large part of the forest due to the storm of 1872 and the bark beetle.

The everyday lives of the local inhabitants and their entanglements with the environment became the main objective of the literary prose of Karel Klostermann. His books played a key role in popularizing the Bohemian Forest among the general public – both Czech- and German-speaking inhabitants, given the fact that he was bilingual and published in both languages – as well as within the structures of the Czech Tourist Club. Klostermann was a member of the Czech Tourist Club and gave several lectures for its local branches. He also took part as a guest of honour in one of the Club’s first centrally organised excursions, which took place in August 1893 in the Bohemian Forest. One of his novels was even reviewed in the Club’s magazine, which normally reviewed only guidebooks and travelogues (Pátek 1891: 14).⁹

According to the research of the linguist Michal Hořejší, Klostermann also helped to establish the popular narrative of the death of the “old Bohemian Forest” following the gales and the bark beetle outbreak. Klostermann uses the Czech word *prales* – an old-growth (or primeval) forest – in his

9 It was a review of his first collection of short stories written in German – *Böhmerwald-Skizzen* (1890).

descriptions of the Bohemian Forest landscape to induce a “sense of something that is majestic and ancient and has been left structurally unchanged for centuries” (Hořejší 2019: 19). It thus fulfils the idea that, although most of it is covered by cultivated forest, the Bohemian Forest evokes the archetypal image of an “indigenous wilderness” rather than an agriculturally maintained landscape (Stibral et al. 2010: 208). The gale of 1870 is therefore depicted in his works as an almost unnatural, fatal phenomenon.

Further analysis proves that Klostermann’s descriptions of the environment were inconsistent. Although in his general portrayals of the region, he emphasises the stability and beauty of the former Bohemian Forest and depicts the gales of 1870 as an unprecedented catastrophe, his local depictions often undermine this narrative (Fig. 4). He also uses the word *prales* ambiguously, to mean both the old-growth, untouched forest and simply a majestic and aesthetically pleasing forest (Hořejší 2017).

An exceptional case: Boubín forest

The Czech word *prales* – and its German equivalent *Urwald* – also appears in the guidebooks and other tourism-related sources. However, while Klostermann’s prose uses it to describe the Bohemian Forest in general, the sources refer mainly to one specific place – the forest of Boubín/Kubany, sometimes referred to as Lukenský/Lucken. It is the oldest officially protected natural area in the Bohemian Forest. The protection was granted by the former landowner, nobleman Johann Adolf II of Schwarzenberg, in 1858 (Šimková 2023).

The remarkable character of the Boubín forest is also reflected in the fact that one of the region’s first guidebooks is dedicated solely to it. *Průvodce do pralesa (Lucken) a na Boubín* (Guidebook to the Lucken Forest and to Boubín) was written in 1883 by the forester Jan Chadt. Describing his motivation in the introduction, he states “Having accompanied many tourists to the forest and to Boubín, I have often been asked if there is any written record relating to this forest”¹⁰ (Chadt 1883: 3). At the end of the book, he highlights the growing tourist interest in the Boubín forest with reference to the records in the visitors’ book: between 1858 and 1882, there were at least 600 visitors from various European countries as well as from Siberia, America and Australia (Chadt 1883: 16). It is important to note that the majority of the visitors in question were most likely other foresters or botany experts. Even so, it does not mean that it was not an attractive place for

10 „Doprovázejí mnohé turisty do pralesa a na Boubín, byl jsem často tázán, jest-li není nějaký spis jednající o pralesě tomto.“

other groups of visitors. The Boubín forest is mentioned in several other guidebooks to the region, often even with an illustration (e.g., Führer 1888: 206–207, Fig. 6) or a photograph (e.g., Leimbirger 1910: 206).

The Boubín forest was visited as a part of the programme of the aforementioned Czech Tourist Club excursion in the summer of 1893. A report of the excursion in the Club's magazine describes the route through the Boubín forest, remarking that “in some places [there are] dead giant trees and memorials of the bark beetle's doom, and elsewhere perhaps thousand-year-old decayed tree trunks”¹¹ (Časopis turistů 1893: 297). Traces of the bark beetle in the Boubín forest appear in several other travelogues, but also in a rather positive way that affirms the ancient status of the Boubín forest. With its exceptionality, on account of the fact that it was deliberately excluded from logging, it seems that the Boubín forest defies the division between temporalities attributed to natural processes and those attributed to the human world that are applicable to the rest of the region, which still serves as an agrarian forest. In this particular area, the bark beetle is considered part of a natural transition rather than a disastrous occurrence.

Conclusion

The aim of the study was to explore the various ways in which tourist literature portrays transitions in the natural environment through different temporal perspectives. Tourist literature serves as a case study for researching the perception of landscape transitions. The analysis of the interplay between temporal constructs and spatial hierarchies in guidebooks and other tourism-related literature indicates the means and limits of relating to the (natural) environment in the context of Central European society around the turn of the 20th century.

In general, the depictions of the nature of the Bohemian Forest do not deviate from the customs of the time. Guidebooks compare this mountain range with the Alps (the cradle of European tourism and “discovering” mountains in general) and the Giant Mountains (the highest mountain range in the Czech lands with highly developed tourism). Through personalities (such as Karel Klostermann) and the way of imagining the landscape, there are intertextual connections between tourist guides, fiction, and reportage journalism. Tourist literature contributes to the idea of the forest as a wilderness, although, for the most part, the region is an agrarian forest. Despite the appeal of the image of wild nature, not all natural

11 „... tu mezi odumřelými velikány a pamětníky zhouby kůrovcové, onde zas po tisíciletých snad kmenech na dřť zpráchnivělých.“

processes and landscape transitions are depicted in the same way – the fundamental difference is evident in the temporality attributed to them.

There are two main ways of looking at the landscape transitions from the perspective of the early “nature-based” tourism in the region. First, some transitions happen in cyclical time. They are regarded as nature’s own and mostly predictable, although a slight degree of uncertainty continues to exist and is part of the landscape’s appeal to tourists. Second, some transitions have the character of a historical event. They are described as unexpected, unprecedented, and novel. Because of the uncertainty they brought, they are embedded in the modern human world and its lineal temporality, which means they happen at a specific point in time, and their impact on society and economics is well documented. Unlike the “positive” cyclical transitions, they are described as “disasters”, “calamities” or “doom”.

However, there are still places where they are allowed to exist as a part of the natural, cyclical order, such as the Boubín forest. The exceptional case of the Boubín forest demonstrates that the perception of temporalities attributed to landscape transitions is also bounded in space and creates a hierarchy dependent on the aspect of where a given space lies on the culture-nature axis. This particular area, on account of its exclusion from logging, is seen as nature’s own and the bark beetle outbreak is accepted as a natural factor; in the rest of the region, the outbreak seems to cross the boundary of the natural world and becomes an event of the human world. Tourism helps to establish and nourish this hierarchy of spaces, and yet it also offers a solution to the uncertainty that the rapid landscape transitions such as the bark beetle outbreak can bring to the cultivated natural environment such as an agrarian forest – it is a different way of economic utilization. The development of tourism can therefore be regarded as a resilience strategy, enabling adaptation to socio-economic uncertainties brought about by living in a more-than-human world.

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Figure 1 The cover illustration of Heller's article „Na Šumavu!“ (To the Bohemian Forest!) in *Květy* shows a typical topos for the Bohemian Forest – trunks of dead trees.

Available at: <https://www.digitalniknihovna.cz/nkp/uuid/uuid:86b0355e-13a1-45df-853f-56b4b924b1e8>



Figure 2 Karl Pascher's *Führer durch den Böhmerwald* (Guide to the Bohemian Forest), 1878.

Available at: <https://kramerius.kvkli.cz/uuid/uuid:fc894038-62a4-11e5-ab99-001b21d0d3a4>

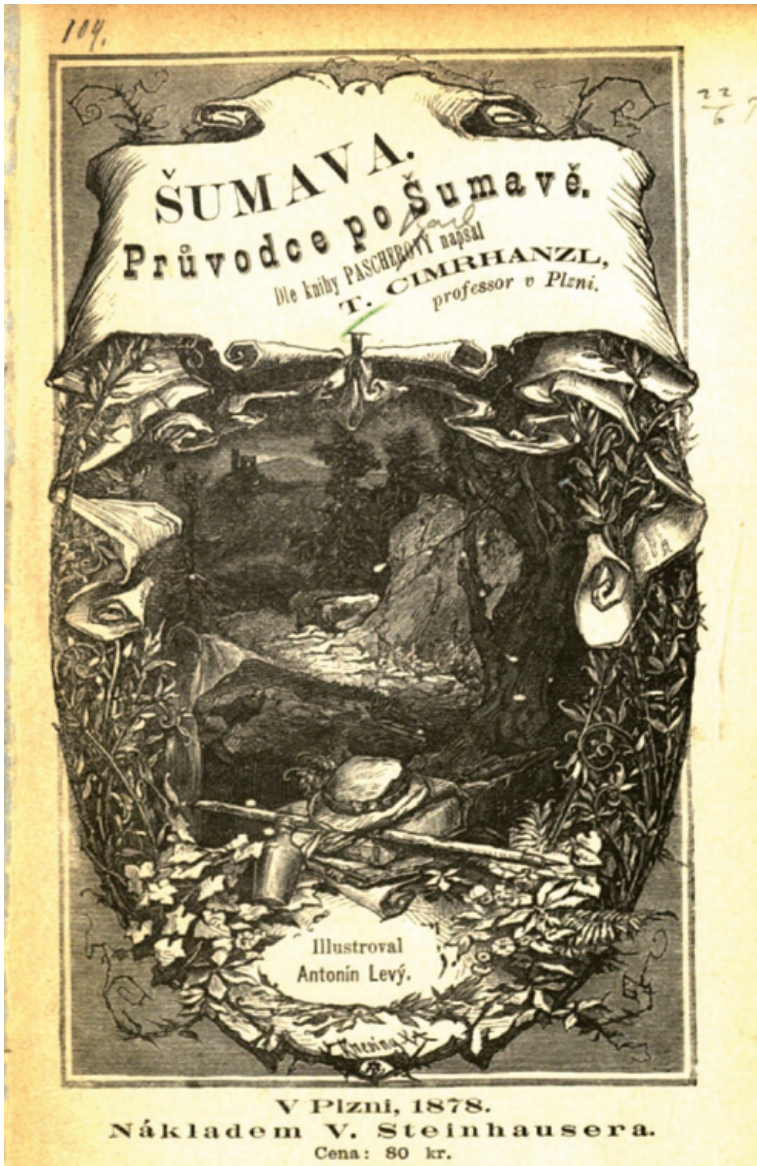


Figure 3 Cover of the first Czech language guidebook to the region (*Průvodce po Šumavě*), written by Tomáš Cimrhanzl in 1878. The illustration as well as the subtitle indicate a direct inspiration by the German guidebook by Karl Pascher, published in the same year.

Available at: <https://ndk.cz/uuid/uuid:fedfb1f0-bc86-11e4-ba2b-5ef3fc9bb22f>



Figure 4 The cover illustration of Klostermann's first short story collection (*Böhmerwald-Skizzen*), published in German in 1890, features both the „living“ and the „dead“ forest following the gales and the bark beetle outbreak.

Available at: <https://ndk.cz/view/uuid:94f78630-2daf-11de-b64c-000d606f5dc6?page=uuid:dc73eda0-7b4e-11e7-8b50-001018b5eb5c>



Figure 5 Illustration of the Boubín Forest in *Führer durch den Böhmerwald* (1888).
Available at: <https://ndk.cz/uuid/uuid:d347a560-13f6-11e7-981b-005056825209>



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