



Via Bohemica





Opoj

Majcichov

Sered'

Dolná  
Streda

Pavlice

Hoste

Abrahám

Pusté  
Úľany

Velká Mača

Malá Mača

Gáň

Váhovce

Šoporňa

Štrkovec

Sládkovičovo

Galanta

Kajal

Matúškovo

Topolnica

Dlhá  
n/Váhom

Kráľová  
nad Váhom

Šaľa

Diakovce

Tešedíkovo

Velké  
Úľany

Košúty

Čierny  
Brod

Mostová

Čierna  
Voda

Vozokany

Horné Saliby

Dolné Saliby

Tomášikovo

Jahodná

Kráľov Brod

Potônske  
Lúky

Malý Dunaj

Stará Čierna voda

Salibský Dudvák

# Via Bohemica

*The brochure explores the history and importance of the Czech Route, which connected Prague and Buda from the Middle Ages. In peacetime, it served international trade, during war time, it was used as a military route. It was lifted to be a main trade route by Charles Robert Hungarian King and John of Luxembourg Czech King between 1335 and 1336 during their negotiations in Visegrad. Since it avoided Vienna, it was the basis of their alliance against Austria.*

*The official road followed the traces of the previously used roads. In the historical Hungary, the route live its golden age during the 14th and the 15th centuries. For defense, Hungarian kings build forts and castle systems. Traders could travel freely along the route, all kinds of arbitrary customs and tariffs were prohibited.*



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The territory of the Local Action Group Stará Čierna voda (hereinafter as LAG Stará Čierna voda) is situated in the Danube Lowland in Trnava county, on the territory of Galanta district (the communities of Dolné Saliby, Horné Saliby, Kráľov Brod, Tomášikovo and Vozokany) and Dunajská Streda district (the community of Jahodná).

The territory of the Local Action Group Dudváh (hereinafter as: LAG Dudváh) is situated in the Danube Lowland in Trnava county, on the territory of Galanta district (the communities of Čierna Voda, Čierny Brod, Dolná Streda, Gáň, Kajal, Košúty, Malá Mača, Matúškovo, Mostová, Topoľnica, Váhovce, Veľká Mača).

The Local Action Group Moravský kras (with 55 communities) is situated in the south side of Drahaný Hills, which is surrounded by Brno, Blansko, Boskovice and Vyškov.

**Európsky poľnohospodársky fond pre rozvoj vidieka:**  
Európa investujúca do vidieckych oblastí



Spolufinancované EÚ



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Via Bohemica is the project of LEADER Cooperation Programme, which was published with the assistance of LAG Stará Čierna voda, LAG Dudváh and LAG Moravský kras with the support of Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (Measure 4.2: Implementation of Cooperation Projects in 2013).

The cover shows the photo of Charles Robert's letter issued on 6 January 1336 regulating trade in the Czech Route (Brno archive).

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# Introduction



*The Cross from the Great Moravia  
fortification in Velká Mača*

People living in our territories as well as visitors and tourists do not notice the signs of our past when walking around. Their aim is to enjoy natural beauties and exploit the richness of the country for their own relaxation and for maintaining or improving their health.

They do not think about the fact that our ancestors living in this territory did an enormous thing; they created the conditions of peaceful life full of prosperity both for themselves and for future generations.

It is the duty of everyone to love his or her native country, protect its values and inform everyone interested in it. It is commendable that this task was completed by the project partners of two countries, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, who

are linked not only by common past but also by a common trade route, the Czech Road also called as Via Bohemica.

How was this trade route created? The answer can be found in the historical deeds of ancient times.

The trade route from Buda heading for Bohemia through the current territory of western Slovakia was called the Czech Road (Via Bohemica) from the 11th century. The renewal and importance of the road was declared by the monarch Charles Robert in his deed on 6 January 1336, the Feast of the Three Kings.

Some historians date its creation back to the 11th century AD; others back to the period of the formation of Great Moravia, or the Roman period of our region's history. It is very likely that all of them are right. It is about as old as the population of Central Europe.



*Venus from Dolná Streda*

# Roads and Communications in the History of our Regions

When we hear or read about the Czech Road, it rarely comes to our mind that it is connected with the oldest memories of population migration and searching for new forms and means of living. Its name definitely had a purpose.

Since ancient times, our territory, and thus the middle of Europe, has been linked with searching for and occupying new territories. These assumptions are proved by scattered archaeological excavations along rivers and old roads, places of ford crossings or rock gates.

On the right bank of the river Váh, along the shipyard the bones of a Neanderthal woman were discovered in the sand near the water.

This finding dates about 50000 years back to the past. Several bones and teeth of mammoths



*Forehead bone of a Neanderthal found in Šaľa*

were found as well, together with other Pleistocene mammals such as huge deer and forest elephants.

Exposed sites from Middle Paleolithic and Neolithic are neither accidental, nor rare in this region. These include sites in the city of Šaľa, the villages of Gáň, Dolná Streda, Veľká Mača and the city of Sered' (Mačianske and Seredské hills).



*Mammoth tooth - from the sediment of the river Váh*

Tracks of stone industry were found in these sites, which support the above assumptions about ancient settlements. It is significant that these places are always connected by a road network that has been preserved up to the present time.

Travelling and transport have represented one of the most basic human activities since ancient times. In the busiest places these distant roads led to settlements emerged, which served as trade centres and a place of safe relaxation and rest for travellers.



*Travelling by carriage in the Middle Ages (mural from Manta Castle, Piemont, Italy)*





*Travelling by carriage in the Middle Ages (mural from Manta Castle, Piedmont, Italy)*

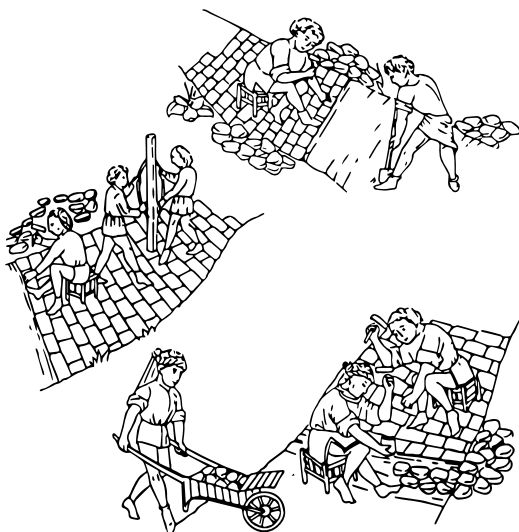
A significant change in the southern part of Europe occurred in the Roman period, when Roman emperors paid great attention to the construction of roads. The most important roads were strengthened, regularly maintained and in certain places sometimes even paved.

In the early Middle Ages, the development of road networks followed the comparatively stable directions of remote roads, some of which have survived since prehistoric times. Transport network consisted of long distance routes, linking

centres with neighbouring countries and with major European centres and local paths connecting further settlements. They were created gradually according to administrative, commercial and military needs with respect to natural conditions, the nature and permeability of the terrain. Roads led, as far as it was possible, through the most easily manageable terrain, they passed lowland sections at a reasonable distance from sources of water, but avoiding marshes.

Crossroads were marked by wooden bars, later Christian cross symbols, images and statues of saints, and wayside chapels. In relation to the payment for building and repairing roads, bridges, weirs and fords, tolls were collected; there was customs duty incumbent upon the ruler for goods imported across the borders. Watercourses were crossed by fords or ferries, bridges were very rare.

The directions roads, as developed during the early Middle Ages, were preserved during the following period, though certain changes occurred during colonization and establishment of cities, when the density of roads increased and sometimes there were certain adjustments of the directions of long-distance routes. The system of



*Paving a road - illustration in a script from the Middle Ages, 1448*





*The royal seal of Charles Robert on a letter issued on 6 January 1336 (the City Archive of Brno)*

land routes was developed from the 14th century – roads were extended and their maintenance was improved. In order to avoid robberies and attacks, a regulation was introduced in 1361 on cutting out forests on both sides of the routes at a distance of “a stone’s throw”. The development of trade led to the increase in traffic and also to the expansion of transport jobs. Already in the 13th and 14th century, besides traders with their own wagons, commercial traffic was ensured by hired carters as well, and from the 15th century also by freight forwarders.

From the 15th century wagons with front axle swivel started to be produced, and from the turn of the 15th and 16th century lighter wagons for passenger transportation were introduced – the so called carriages. However, travelling on horses and mules remained the most prevailing modes of passenger transportation.

In the 18th century, according to the French model, paved roads started to be built.

The economic development, the industrial revolution and the overall scientific and technological progress, were connected with the fundamental transformation of the transport network.

Railways emerged as a new transport phenomenon in the second quarter of the 19th century and the basis of the railway network was formed during the 1850s – 1870s. They enabled a faster and larger transport of people and materials as well as industrial products over long distances.



*Contemporary ideas about possible dangers and creatures attacking travellers (Dis ouventurlich buch bewiset wye von einer frouwen genant Melusina, 1474)\**



*Contemporary ideas about possible dangers and creatures attacking travellers (Dis ouventurlich buch bewiset wye von einer frouwen genant Melusina, 1474)\**

# Via Bohemica in the Context of Central Europe



*King Louis the Great, the son of Charles Robert (statue in the Kings' Promenade, Čečejovce, Slovakia)*



*Charles Robert (statue in the Kings' Promenade, Čečejovce, Slovakia)*

The road was created in the middle of the 1330s. The Czech king John of Luxembourg found himself being surrounded by enemies from almost all sides. The Bavarian Wittelsbach family led by Emperor Louis, the Austrian Habsburgs and the Polish king Casimir were all standing against him.

After the death of Pope Boniface VIII the relationship between John of Luxembourg and the Bavarian Emperor Louis got worse and a turnover of power politics occurred. Their relationship then completely escalated after the death of Henry of Carinthia, who died on 2 April 1335 without a male and due to this reason the right to inherit belonged to John Henry, the son of John of Luxembourg, who was the husband of Henry's only heiress Margaret. However, the territory of Henry of Carinthia – Carinthia, Carniola and Tyrol, which represented strategic links with Italy, were also desired by the Bavarian Wittelsbach family and the Austrian Habsburgs, who finally owned it due to the emperor's legacy at the expense of the Luxembourgs.

Hostility to the Polish King lasted for a long time, its cause was the fight for the Polish crown, because John of Luxembourg as one of the successor of the last members of the Premyslid dynasty, who were both Czech and Polish kings, also had a claim for the Polish crown and among other titles he used the title of the Polish King even though it meant only a formal expression of and not real government. Although in 1327-1329 John of Luxembourg managed to connect the majority of Silesian principalities to the Czech Kingdom, the main Polish territories still remained outside his field of power.

However, in 1335 with the assistance of his son Duke Charles, John of Luxembourg managed to avert impending danger by concluding alliance with the Polish King Casimir the Great and later with the Hungarian King Charles Robert.

First, Duke Charles managed to sign a peace agreement with Casimir in Sandomier on 28 May. After further negotiations, on 24 August 1335 interlocutory peace treaty was agreed in Trencin by the representatives of the Polish King and John of Luxembourg and his son Charles with the condition that king John forever renounces the use of the title of Polish King and Casimir the Great renounces all claims to Silesian principalities. A further agreement



was signed by the Hungarian king Charles Robert as the mediator of negotiations in November 1335 in Visegrad; John of Luxembourg definitely gave up all claims for the Polish kingdom and for which Casimir undertook to preserve peace with the Czech King; this contract was reiterated by both monarchs in March 1337, the Trecin contracts were ratified by Casimir the Great on 9 January 1339, when he definitely gave up all claims to the Silesian principalities.

One part of the mentioned agreement was the establishment of a new long-distance trade route from Hungary through Moravia and to Bohemia and then leading to Nuremberg. The document of Charles Robert dating back to 6 January 1336 includes the list of places through which traders from Bohemia and Moravia need to travel from the Hungarian borders to Trnava and then thence back to Buda.

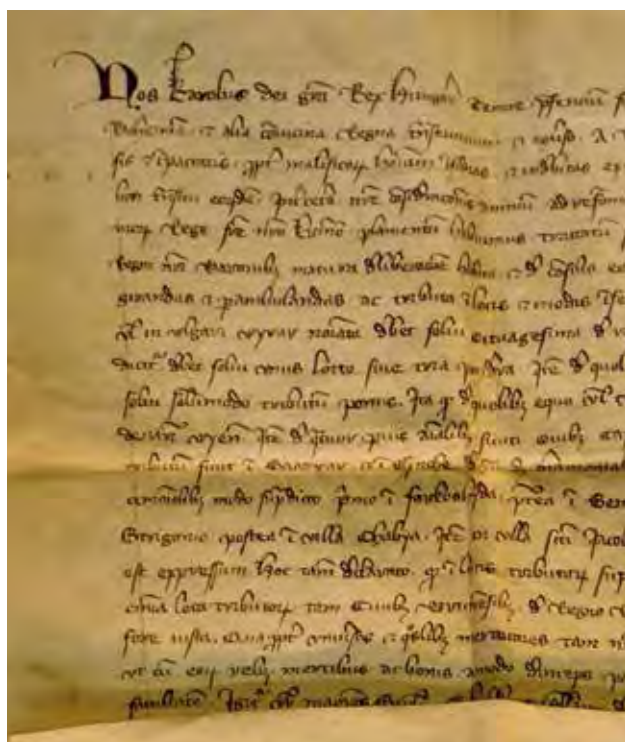
By this alliance the Hungarian Anjou and the Czech Luxembourg family committed themselves to mutual military aid, whether it is partial assistance in case of attacking invasions or helping the other country in case the ally is attacked by an enemy. There is no doubt that the agreement was directed primarily against the Habsburgs, it was made explicit by the provision which allowed neither John nor Charles Robert to conclude peace separately with them. There was another provision directed against the Austrian Habsburgs. Hungarian trade relations with the West passed mostly along the Danube through Vienna, which became an important centre of trade and this position was also secured by various privileges and closely guarded the right of storage. King John tried to change this and weaken the position of Vienna and consequently of the Austrian territory in international trade; by the agreement with the Hungarian King he attempted to transfer trade from Germany to Hungary through Bohemia and



*King Sigismund of Luxembourg, the grandson of John of Luxembourg and the youngest son of Charles IV Czech King*

Moravia. Brno had a significant place in this trade route, similarly to Vienna; however, it had the advantage of greater freedom and smaller storage restrictions for foreign traders. The plan was magnificent and it would definitely cause serious problems to Austria, but it could only be carried out by persuading German traders to use this route. It was necessary to negotiate not only with the imperial cities on securing benefits that would compete with the concessions of the Vienna trade, but it was all about overcoming various local obstacles in the Czech and Hungarian territories, such as the duties of coronation lords, for example the archbishop of Esztergom and old recipients of shares at Czech customs points, the interests of home traders and many others. Some surviving documents reveal that in the next period on both

the Czech and the Hungarian sides there were several serious efforts for the new trade route involving Prague citizens intending to create a real consortium with a couple of imperial towns, “traders of the Czech Kingdom and its commercial associates”. The route from Moravia to Pest went through the territory of the Archbishop of Esztergom, so in 1337 messengers went to see him - one townsman from Mainz, Augsburg and Nuremberg and two Prague citizens - with the request of tariff reduction, which was promised by the archbishop. The Vienna law did not allow German traders to transport goods to Hungary, just like Hungarian traders could not import from



*Fragment from the deed of King Charles Robert from 6 January 1336 (the City Archive of Brno)\**

German territories. Foreign traders had to leave and sell the goods in Vienna, which eventually led to overcharging products. In 1336 John of Luxembourg attempted to weaken the position of Vienna and consequently of the Habsburgs in international trade and move the western-eastern trade route through the Czech territory, where he planned

Brno to take the place of Vienna. King John could offer benefits to foreign traders and invite them to use the new route, but he could not prevent them from using the old one, so there was no significant change in trade diversion to the Czech territory. During his reign, Charles IV attempted to control the Danube trade route by gaining the Donaustauf castle on the Danube near Regensburg, however, even this act was not enough to bring the expected result so Charles IV was forced to give up the castle together with his great plan.

The Visegrad agreement was the basis of this attempt and intended to bring a major twist in the central power situation, by finding a proper foothold in the eastern alliance for the planned fight with the Habsburgs and the Emperor. The success of this fight might have ensured for the Luxembourgs not only the endangered Carinthian inheritance, but it would have caused far-reaching consequences in the Empire's policy. As it seems, King John accepted these changes during the Visegrad negotiations with his Hungarian ally, apparently because of a higher goal, which was obtaining the Roman crown for his dynasty again. It is evidenced by the deed of Charles Robert dated 3 September 1335, which stipulated that the contract was valid not only if John stayed in his current royal position but „even if he was uplifted to another noble status and honour”. There is no doubt that here he had the position of an emperor in mind. However, the plan was not fulfilled, also due to the failure to maintain the friendly association concluded in 1335 between the Czech and the Hungarian king. The trade route established by the current political situation and strategic plans of John of Luxembourg did not receive priority over the route going through the Danube valley, and despite another attempt to revive it later, it remained a secondary route.



# Via Bohemica in the Territory of Slovakia and the Czech Republic



*Mesolithic stone tools, Sered' group  
sauveterriemu (Slovakia)*

Many territories located along the route of the Czech road were significant since prehistoric times. The earliest period is documented by prehistoric cemeteries and settlements from the middle Palaeolithic and Neolithic periods not only in the Slovak but also the Czech territories of the Czech route. In Slovakia these include sites in Šaľa, in the villages of Gáň and Veľká Mača, in Sered' (Máčadské and Seredské hills). Near the Šintava ford a couple of villages were found with inhabitants living in the Stone Age. Their main activities included gathering crops and later also cultivation of land. The remains of settlements have been preserved on the highest sand highlands, islands in the inundation of the river Váh, previously known as sand dunes and hills. The most well-known are Seredské and Mačianske hills. Stone industry was found at these sites, which proves the existence of ancient settlements. It is remark-

able and at the same time the most important that these localities are connected by a network of communication, which has been preserved until today. Similarly to southern Slovakia, Moravia was also the place of remote roads and paths since the ancient times.

The Morava River was the axis of movement, along which ancient communication was led and which was later called the Amber Route. The Boskovická brázda represented one of the oldest routes of long-distance trade since prehistoric times. There is evidence of long-distance trade al-



*The archeological excavation of the Mača Hills  
in 1995 (The History of Sered', 2002)*



*The contemporary view of the archeological  
excavations in Veľká Mača*



*The Esterházy Castle Šintava and the city of Sered' in a contemporary woodcut from 1666 (Hungarian National Museum, Budapest)*



*The former Šintava ford today*



*The plan of the bridge over the river Váh near Sered' from 1863-1864, the crossroads of the Czech route in front of and behind the Šintava ford (The History of Sered', 2002)*

ready from the Palaeolithic period; instead of domestic stone materials hunters frequently used northern flints and silicates of the Krakow-Czestochowa upland, which definitely reflects the usage of long-distance trade routes. In subsequent periods, the lowland area of this territory was still densely populated, based on archaeological findings, mainly imports, we can assume that the existence of a long-distance route was an important factor in the development of settlements in the given area.

A more detailed picture of long-distance trade and transport in Boskovice can be made on the basis of written sources. The oldest place indicated in ancient sources is Strevinta mentioned by Claudius Ptolemy. The reference to the area comes from the mid-second century, but it rather documents an earlier state – the period of the early Iron Age, when Morava was inhabited by Celtic tribes. Strevinta represented an important focal point on the route from Vindobona to the mouth of the river Oder. Most probably it is the area in the land register of Bořitov. One of the most important Celtic stations was the Old Fort on the Drahaný Highlands. It was a typical trade station, which was not closed due to violent attacks, but it was voluntarily abandoned as the result of decline in long-distance trade.

During the period of Great Moravia, there was again a very important route going through the Boskovická brázda, its significance is evidenced by fortifications that controlled mainly the area of Malá Haná (Velké Opatovice, Mařín, Biskupice). This route was a major artery of the early Middle Ages, which connected not only Bohemia with Moravia, but also Moravia with the Baltic. In the Middle Ages the majority of important communication routes in southern Moravia went through Brno. In the second third of the 13th century, Brno became a royal town and a major communication



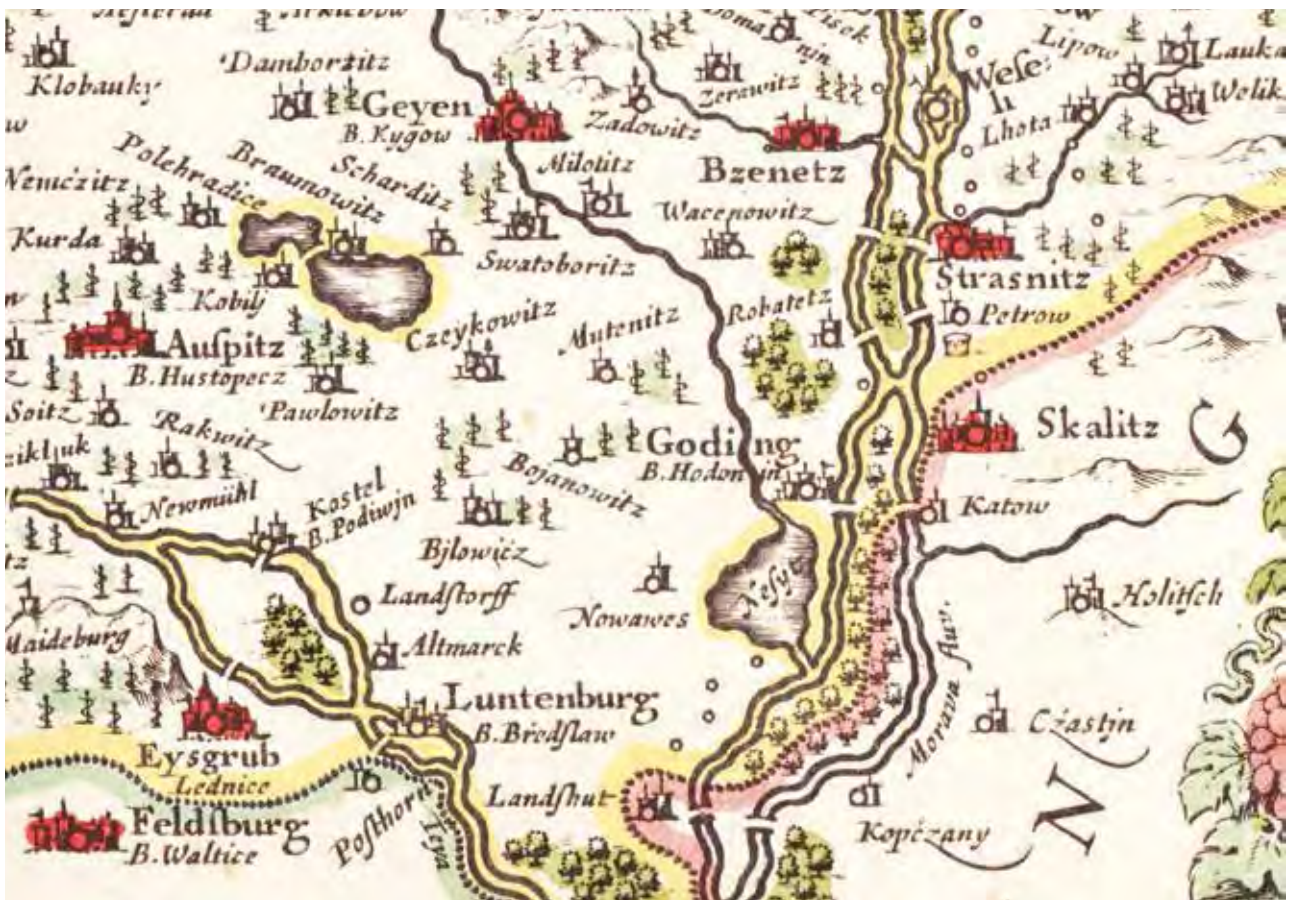
knot in Moravia, which remained until modern times. This was the starting point, at latest from the period before Great Moravia, the main connecting line of southern Moravia and Bohemia – the so called Trstenická path. This path led from Brno to the north heading for Lipůvka, Černá Hora, Svitávka, Svojanov and Litomyšl.



*The banks of the river Morava in Hodonín (Veduta Hofferiana, the collection of Great Moravia towns)\**



*The so-called „directing stone” by the Czech route near the village of Lažany, the Czech Republic*



*Hodonín and Skalica in the map of Comenius, 1680*



## Trade History in the Slovak and Czech Part of Via Bohemica



*The town gate and fortification of Hodonín  
(Veduta Hofferiana, the collection of Great  
Moravia towns, 1720)\**



*King Sigismund of Luxembourg on the road  
(Ulrich von Richental Chronik des Konstanzer  
Konzils)\**

The Czech route passed places and centres in Hungary such as Buda – Budapest – Ostrihom – Štúrovo – Nové Zámky – Dvory nad Žitavou – Tvrdošovce – Sereď (Šintava) – Trnava – Trstín – Buková – Prievaly – Cerové – Lieskové – Jablonica – Senica – Šaštín-Stráže – Holíč – Skalica. There is an old connection, which turned away from the main Czech route near Senec heading for Moravia through Nové Mesto nad Váhom, with a branch to Myjava, Cerové Lieskové – Strání – Slavkov – Uherský Brod – Uherské Hradište.

The route from Hungary came to Moravia from two directions – the so called Czech route led through Senica, Holíč and Hodonín, however the main route went through Šaštín and Brodské to Lanžhot. On both routes, however, the flow of the Morava River meant a serious obstacle, which was divided into two arms which were united again at the place where the river Dyje flowed into them. Crossings over the Morava river, both arms, are indicated for example in the Moravia map of Comenius. To make transportation easier, a bridge was built on its western arm charging customs duty. The river Morava was also a customs border, customs duty was charged on the Hungarian side in Holíč and Šaštín, in Moravia on the Hodonín Bridge and Lanžhote. Both routes were also used for transporting livestock.

Another old trading settlement lying on the road to Hungary was Měnin. It had an advantageous position between Cézava and the Golden Stream (Říčka), which protected the settlement both in the west and the east. On the top of the spur there was a church, urban character was demonstrated by the large rectangular court, which used to be a marketplace. Měnin was a legal cen-



tre as well providing legal advice in cases of dispute for the surrounding towns – Hustopeč, Pohorelice and Ivančice. Měnin was originally a feudal property, it was given to Eliška Rejčka in 1321 by king John of Luxembourg and which she devoted to the establishment of Cistercian monastery in Old Brno.

A second route came to Měnina from Hungary leading through Lanžhot, Břeclav, Podivín and Hustopeče. In 1333 it was ordered by John of Luxembourg that all traders coming from Austria had to travel through Brno and not Měnin. Similar regulation issued by Charles IV. in 1348 for merchants from Austria, Poland and Hungary, repeated it again in 1373 Duke John Henry. A similar regulation was issued by Charles IV in 1348 for merchants from Austria, Poland and Hungary, which was repeated in 1373 by Duke John Jindřich. The road continued toward Brno through Turany and Černovice to the ford across the river Svítavy; here it was joined by the road from Brno to Olomouc. Not far away, near the gallows, which stood here on a small hill, drapers, merchants and craftsmen were assaulted and robbed here in the 1343. The road further led to the today's route of Křenova Street and entered Brno through the Jewish gate.

In 1243 urban privileges were granted to Brno by King Wenceslas I. and it became a city, it also



*Inn in Letovice, the so called „Travellers' Inn”, by the Czech route, the Czech Republic*



*Carthusian monastery in Brno-King's Field, by the road to Bohemia*

became an important centre of crafts and trade in South Moravia and gradually became a regional centre of trade and a centre of international trade. The oldest city marketplace was situated in the place of today's Zelný market, historically called as Horný market, the second marketplace – Dolný market was situated in today's Square of Liberty near the closed church of St. Nicholas.

When the city was born, traders were mostly foreigners; home citizens became traders only when handicraft and agricultural production could create overproduction of goods. The first domestic traders were merchants who were selling the goods brought by foreign merchants in tiny shops, and after a certain time the most enterprising merchants of this group became traders operating in international trade.

Since the 13th century, Brno held market rights, weekly markets and annual fairs were determined. In 1293, Václav II. declared that during market days any citizen from any city can bring goods to the city and during non-market days goods can be sold only by townspeople and residents of suburbs. The beginning of the market was always announced by hanging out the market sign, in the morning only townspeople could buy goods for their own use and some craftsmen, in then in the afternoon commuting citizens and home and foreign traffickers could buy as well. Brno also



*The statue of St. Ann on the Trstenice road in Řečkovice*



*„Traveller's Inn” in the Czech route near Sebranice, the Czech Republic*

intended to become an international trade centre. In 1323, king John of Luxembourg prohibited selling and importing cloth for sale outside the royal cities from Ypres, Ghent, Brussels and other cities, with the exception of ordinary ones. In 1333, he ordered that merchants from the Austrian territory did not go through Blučina and Měnín,

but through Brno. On the other hand, he allowed the citizens of Brno to transport goods to Bohemia by any route they wish.

In accordance with the peace agreements with the Polish and the Hungarian king, the Hungarian king Charles Robert issued a deed on 6 January 1336 in which he determined the route of the so called Czech route, on which Brno was supposed to be an important trade centre with a warehouse of goods as a competitor of Vienna. King John also tried to persuade traders from Frankfurt to use the Bohemian trade route through Prague and Brno and then to Poland or Hungary by stating that this route is under the protection of the Czech, Polish and Hungarian king.

From Brno to Bohemia, traders had to use the route called Trstěnická Road, which was the most important road of the old Czech State. The name Trstěnická Road was first used by Hermenegild Jireček. Vladislav's deed for Litomyšl Premonstratensians from the year 1167 talk about “porta terrae que dicitur Natrztenici” – a gate called ‘Na Trstenici’. The transport direction of the road in one case is determined by provenance of imported salt – sal ungaricum.

The Trstěnická Road started at the Brno marketplace with northerly direction, left the fortified city through the Běhounská gate and continued along Králové Poľo (1247) around the Carthusian monastery and then led along some state highway route of today. Before the end of the 13th century the town of Černá Hora was established on the route of the road. Another, historically older location opposite to Čierna Hora was Bořítov. Due to its position, Bořítov represented an important location during all prehistoric periods. During the Great Moravian period, intense metal processing and ironworks took place in the town. After the collapse of the Great Moravian Empire the town did not cease to exist. The inhabitants





*Road section in Černá Hora on a military map from 1764-1768*

only transferred their homes from open, intensively cultivated agricultural positions in a southerly direction to a more divided terrain, where they built a burial place and the church of St. George.

The road from Bořítov also continued around Chlumov and Sebranice, as evidenced by the deed dated back to 1043, in fact coming from the 13th century, which was presented by the Bilinsky castellan Eppo to the Benedictine monastery in Břevnov, and led to Svitávka.

Above the village of Svitávka there was a huge hill with a walled fortification, which was inhabited from the 11th century to the late 13th century. A fortress was built in the same position in the 15th century. Svitávka was on the Moravian side opposite to gate of Trstenice, where there were customs, a market and the Church of John the Baptist. Long distance routes from Brno (from Hungary and Austria) and from Olomouc (from Silesia and Poland) converged here, which then went through Malá Hana.

The old version of the name of the market settlement is documented as Switawia (1201, falzum 1289) and in Switauis (1221), which is Svitava or Svitavy. After the town Svitavy was established, for more clear distinction the name was changed

to Svitávka - Switawia minor. The meeting point of 3 routes is mentioned in historical documents, in the deed of King Přemysl Otakar I about the local monastery, issued in Svitávka in 1221, written a couple of days after the meeting in Schatzberg in the beginning of June 1221, when the king's cortege and the cortege of the Olomouc bishop Robert were travelling home and parted at the town's gate.

This document proves that the crossing of three routes in Svitávka existed already in 1221, which went through Letovice and Křetinský valley to Prague and dents of Malá Hana to Olomouc.



*Archeological excavations at Svitávka*



*Coins found at the fort of Svitávka*

There was the original system of two gates and one road between them. Change occurred at the time of the transformation of roads to roads for wheeled traffic, rapid colonization led to the multiplication and specialization of roads, but also to the abandonment of defence equipment, which after the dispute between the Czech and Moravian Přemysl families was over became unnecessary. Between 1221 and 1250 a new route is created from Prague to Brno through the colonized Kunštátsko.

Several fees and taxes were charged along the routes for their usage, protection and tolls. The first documented information on tax collection dates back to 1002 and is indicated in the deed of foundation of the Benedictine monastery of St. Martin on the Pannonhalma hill (Pannonhalma – in

Hungary). The Benedictine abbey was founded in 1001 by Stephen I, the first king of Hungary. By this deed, the king provided the abbey with property. It lists ten settlements including the territory of Wag (Váh), which lies near the river Váh. They are: FIZEG, BÁLVÁNYOS, TEMIRDI, CHIMUDI, WISETCHÁ, VOUISIAN, MURIN, COURTOU, WAG, POZSONY. The deed also stated that one third of taxes on each existing and future property belonged to the monastery.

In another deed from 1006 King Stephen I gives estates, vineyards and dozens of villages neighbouring the castle Nitra to the priests of the Holy Roman Church, who were called the capitular canons of the church of St. Emmeram.

In 1075 King Geza I., king of Hungary, formerly Duke, was built at the Hron (in Hronský



*The fresco of St. Christopher, the patron saint of travellers, from 1160 (the Church of St. George in Bořitov, the Czech Republic)*



*The bottom part of the St. Christopher fresco from the 1160s (the Church of St. George, Bořitov, the Czech Republic)*



Benadik) church and he set up monastery, which gave sustenance to the property and benefits from the taxes, levies and tolls. In 1075 King Geza I, king of Hungary, formerly a Duke built a church near the river Hron (in Hronský Beňadik) and established a monastery, which was provided with further properties, benefits from taxes, levies and tolls. In 1111, the Hungarian King Kálmán specifies the property of Zobor Abbey in a deed and lists villages and estates belonging to the abbey.

The deed mentions settlements that already existed during that period such as Gan (today



*The coins of Ferdinand I (1526-1564), Kutná Hora, one-sided white coin (Sintava castle, 2006)*



*Gothic and Renaissance seals found in the Sintava castle, 2006*

called Gáň). Furthermore, it lists the names of the thirty most important inhabitants of Nitra, including the names of Una, Bača, Deda and Kača. The last two were the sons of the regional governor, Buken, and lived in Nitra.

The deed of King Kálmán from 1113, called Zobor deed also mentions settlements, their borders, natural places such as rivers, lakes, ponds, names of meadows, forests and hills together with the names of their owners and the names of the castles they belonged to. It names 108 settlements altogether. The most significant ones are Gáň, Hetmín, Vozokany, Veča, Dlhá nad Váhom, Trnovec nad Váhom, Horný Jatov, Kopčany, Jarok,

Mučeníky, Horná Kráľova, Neded, Vlčany, Nekye, Bohdanovce, Madunice, Boleráz, Hlohovec, Pečeňady, Piešťany. Taxes were paid and oblata collected from their properties.

Property inventories, statements and documents give an overview of taxes and fees, but also of the places that existed during that time. The privileges of Šaľa pri Váhu are also solved in the dispute between Gervazy, bishop of Nitra and Mojžiš, governor of Nitra from 1105 to 1116. Mojžiš intended to take away the assets of Šaľa, which



*The coins of Ferdinand II (1619-1637), Vratislav coins from 1637 (Sintava castle, 2006)*



*Travelling traders (Dis ouventurlich buch bewiset wye von einer frouwen genant Melusina, 1474)\**

was the property of the Monastery of St. Martin in Pannonhalma. It was even ordered to resolve the dispute by incandescent iron (iron court) in Esztergom. The court did not take place, but the borders of the property, first donated by King Stephen I, were settled in front of witnesses.

Since the amount of taxes and rents was not the same everywhere, the rights and privileges of villeins were violated. There were disagreements on lent horses and forced labour other than laid down.

Let us return to the period when markets were held. Many villages or towns have the word 'market' or the day it was held in their names even today. These are for example: Horná Streda, Dolná Streda nad Váhom, Dunajská Streda, Štvrtok na Ostrove, Trhové Mýto. Towns and villages were under the supervision and control of the landlord, who granted permissions, and taxes had to be paid to him both for the imported and exported goods.

Taxes of tolls on transport across the river Váh were in Šintava, Dolné and Horné Saliby, across the river Dudváh and bridge tolls in Nyárhíd. Taxes were also collected on used and protected roads. Other fees and taxes set and collected by tax collectors (the surname Výberčí – Collector – has been preserved up to now in the area of Dvory nad Žitavou), included taxes for the support of monasteries and abbeys in Nitra, Diakovce, Pannonhalma and elsewhere. The protection of traders and the opportunity of selling their goods were ensured by the privilege of holding markets and fairs and the right of storing goods for a certain field i.e. storage right.

Along the Slovak section of the Czech route the following roads and routes along rivers were used for transporting goods: from the Danube through Váh and its tributaries Small Danube, Čierna Voda and Dudváh. Utilization possibilities of the tributaries of Derne and Šárd were in terms of their low channel depth limited to lightweight boats. They were primarily used for the import and transport of harvested products, catching and transporting freshwater fish, keeping geese, ducks, and feeding cattle transported to markets. They served for the drainage of fields after the flooding of Váh and Dudváh. It is also indicated by the coats of arms of the region's municipalities. Professions, activities and crafts were common motifs of municipality seals.

Roads that crossed the region were used since ancient times, going among marshes and hills and also near rivers. They can be followed according to inhabited settlements, villages, towns, marketplaces or passageways. There were wells along them for horses, cattle, and especially trade caravans. In case of enemy occupation or natural floods new advantageous diversions and crossings were created. Many of these routes are documented in the records of wars and other con-





*Postal lines in the 16th century, some of the sections copied the Czech route as well*

flicts. Although only a little information has been preserved, it is proved by graves and excavated cemeteries. They reflect conflicts, mutual understanding, creating new communities and family relationships.

During the Middle Ages, Europe was fragmented into several smaller feudal states. The delivering and reporting system of the age was provided mostly by official messengers, but unofficial people also had an irreplaceable role, such as carters, merchants, pilgrims, etc. The court, i.e. the ruler employed messengers, who were part of the court and enjoyed a number of benefits. The postal network in Austria and later all over the Holy Roman Empire under the authority of Emperor Maximilian I. Habsburg (1493-1519) was managed by the members of the old merchant family Taxis.

The fundamentals of postal reform in Hungary were created during the reign of Ferdinand I. Habsburg after 1526. He ordered Anton Taxis to establish regular passenger transport from Vienna to Buda in 1528 (on the right bank of the Danube)

and from Vienna to Pragu in 1529. Passenger transport from Vienna to Bratislava was established only in 1531. By this the old trade routes - Zadunajská, Jantárová and the Czech route were linked with the Royal route Via Magna.

Around the mid-19th century a horse railway was built in Slovakia. The first was the horse railway from Bratislava to Trnava (1 June 1846), later lengthened in 1846 to Sereď. By 19 October 1845 a route was built to Šenkvice (7,5 km), by 1 December 1845 to Báhoň (7.5 km), by 29th December 1845 to Cífer (4 km) and by 1 June 1846 to Trnava (9 km). The additionally planned section Trnava - Sereď (15 km) was put into operation on 1 November 1846, it ended at a wooden bridge by Váh and was used for transferring goods. Sereď belonged to Šintava, an important trade centre. It was famous for its markets and traditional fairs of cattle. The river Váh was crossed by a small bridge, with several rafts at its foot carrying wood, boards, wooden dishes and the products of mountainous regions (cheese, sheep cheese).



*The yard of the horse railway station in Trnava (the first Hungarian horse railway from Bratislava to Trnava 1840-1872, 1993)*



*The building of the station of the first horse railway (the first Hungarian horse railway from Bratislava to Trnava 1840-1872, 1993)*

Sereď supplied the whole surrounding area with wood and salt. There were several water mills on Váh. It was possible to go to Kerestúr (Križovany nad Dudváhom) two months after the route to Trnava was finished. Bratislava became the first railway station in Hungary.

During the largest expansion of industry and agriculture in particular, there was a stronger need for transporting large quantities of goods, raw materials and waste. The largest and most progressive business entity in the region was the sugar

factory in Sládkovičovo (Diószeg). It was owned by prominent entrepreneurs from Vienna, the Guttman and a Moravian family Kuffner. They established a joint stock company manufacturing sugar. They initiated the building of local sugar beet field railways. They primarily used draft animals, horses and oxen, which were available in farms and relatively cheap. Later, this function was taken over by steam engines. At first it was built in the length of 29 km. It was later modernized, it consisted of fixed rail upper parts from portable rails, where necessary, it was dismantled and compiled in the field. They served at harvest and when taking away waste and also taking manure onto fields. The total length of all branches was about 50 km and by being linked to the main railway line it had another 50 km. It is possible to identify the particular stations: Station 1. Diosek, 2. Záhrada Mária, 3. Nový Dvor, 4. Poros majer, 5. Pusté Úľany, 6. Tárnok, 7. Abrahám, 8. Jelení majer, 9. Lúčný Dvor, 10. Jurajov Dvor, 11. Veľký Fedýmeš, 12. Hajmáš, 13. Mostová, 14. Čierna Voda, 15. Košúty, 16. Raoul (Čierny) majer, 17. distillery Galanta, 18. Galanta, 19. Terezov majer, 20. Garažd majer, 21. Únovce, 22. Nebojsa, 23. Gán, 24. Barakoň, 25. Bibic majer, 26. Dolná Lúka, 27. Dögös majer, 28. distillery Hrušov (the contemporary territory of the village Horné Saliby),



*The map of railway tracks of the sugar factory in Sládkovičovo (The Baron of Kuffner de Dioszegh and the Sugar Factory, 2009)*



29. Szigeti major, 30. distillery Panské pole, 31. Pašienky, 32. Porboka major.

Just like in Slovakia, roads in the Czech Republic also underwent several changes during the centuries, their routes were changed, sections across forests were illuminated and their maintenance was improved. After the Prussian – Saxon war it became evident how important the quality of roads was for the movements of troops, so in 1752 a thorough repair of roads started from Brno through Montenegro to Letovice. The road was later called “imperial”. During these road constructions, certain sections were diverted and the old road disappeared. The route of the old road is testified by old crosses and wayside columns. In 1527 state post was introduced in Bohemia. Until then all transport of mail was carried out by foramen and occasional messengers (merchants, journeymen, monks and other travellers), both



*The head part of a trading invoice from the early 20th century*

regular walking messengers and messengers on horseback, who were paid by feudal offices, land lords and municipal administrations, but also by guilds, monasteries and large merchant houses.

State post was characterized by regular changes of horses and permanently determined stations. The first postal route in our territory led from Prague to Vienna. At first, postal connection served



*A postcard sent in the early 20th century from Černá Hora to Hungary, back side*

the needs of the ruler and ensured correspondence between the court and offices.

Regular postal connection was established in Moravia in the period 1608-1610. The regular change of horses was introduced at postal stations, with the distance of about 15 km between them; this system allowed a faster transport of letters for both public and private purposes. There were two main postal routes going through Moravia from Vienna, one to Prague and one through Brno and Olomouc to Vratislav.

As mentioned above, terrestrial network paths gradually gained more and more branches, some routes were changed according to the terrain and accessibility, and new industrial and trade centres were created. In Bohemia, all routes headed for Prague from all directions.



*The horse railway bridge near Hrnčiarovce (the first Hungarian horse railway from Bratislava to Trnava 1840-1872, 1993)*

# Via Bohemica in the 21st Century and Its Influence on the Region's Development



*Belfry, Malá Mača*



*The Roman Catholic Church of the Holy Family, Gáň*

The way economic and industrial life was shaped in the past in our regions is repeated in the present as well. Villages and towns are constantly developing. Road networks are concentrated in many cases, replicating old, trodden and customary routes. Roads connect traders and people who intend to find out more about other countries and traditions.

On the Slovak section of the Czech route it is recommended to visit the Baroque-Classical castle and park in Tomášikovo built in 1760, in Košúty the renovated castle of the Abrahámffy family. In Gáň there is a reconstructed mansion from the early 17th century.

The oldest Roman churches can be visited in Čierny Brod, Gáň and Malá Mača. Wooden belfries are found in Malá Mača and Čierny Brod.

In Matúškovo there is a restored house of folk dwelling with an exhibition. In Veľká Mača there is a museum focusing on the development of the village and its surrounding area from the Mesolithic. It was built in 1996.

Thermal parks are one of the most popular sights in the region, they can be found in Horné Saliby.

One of the most significant sights of the Danube regions is its water mills. Water wheel mills can be found in Tomášikovo and Jahodná. It is documented that there were 7 ship mills near Jelka. The mill that exists today, it originally belonged to Jozef Németh. He received permission for rebuilding it into a wheel mill in 1899. In the early 20th century there were 11 wheel mills in the Small Danube section near Tomášikovo. The cur-



rent wheel mill was built by Ján Maticza, the grandfather of the last owner. The mill building has been preserved in its original condition, without any interference with the construction and complete milling equipment. The last modernization was carried out in 1940 and it was in operation until 1960. There is a steam mill in Dolné Saliby and in Dolná Streda. The artificial mill company of Karol Kajos was established in Dolné Saliby in 1920 with Lajos Pónya. It was built in the middle of the village; its director was Sándor Kajos. There were 10 employees. The owner of the mill in Dolná Streda was Pavel Linke, and 7 people worked there.

The Danubian Lowland, a region with warm climate and agricultural tradition, offers a number of gastronomic events. Visitors can taste genuine pastries, cakes and other products from local bakeries and confectioneries. There are several competitions and exhibitions of pastries and also fruit.

In the Czech section of the Czech route visitors are invited to see Bořitov. It is worth visiting the Church of St. George with its Roman paintings. Close to Bořitov there is Velký and Malý Chlum. Anyone interested can thus get acquainted not only with the geological development of the country, the unique paleontological sites, but they can also look around the scenic countryside of the Boskovická brázda from the local observation tower. Černá Hora is another historically significant place. Its castle is an important monument; it is used for social services, though it is not open to the public. The local brewery with a museum is very popular among tourists, it shows the old brewing tradition in the region. Above the crossroads of old trade routes stood the Svitava fort with customs, which has not been preserved.

Tourists can also visit the Letovice castle, the history of which started to be written in the 14th century, a period when the usage of trade routes



*The Roman Catholic Church of St. Margaret, Malá Mača*



*Baroque-Classical Castle in Tomášikovo*



*The Ábrahámffy Castle in Košúty*



*The exhibition of Slovak folk dwelling in the Lowlands, Matúškovo*



*Noble mansion in Gáň*



*The area of the thermal park in Horné Saliby, the thermal borehole was created in the 1950s*



*Water wheel mill, Tomášikovo*

required military protection. During their travel, visitors can stop for a drink in restaurants that follow old traditions - Formanka v Lipůvke and Zlatá studňa in Sebranice.

In Boskovice, on the border of Boskovická brázda and Dražanská hills, tourists can meet architectural monuments – castles, forts and the Jewish quarter. Similarly, several other towns and villages recall the history of the Czech route - Velké Opatovice, Mestečko Trnávka, Jevíčko, Lysice.

Roads already used in prehistoric times are also important - for example, Moravian Karst with unique prehistoric findings in the local world-famous cave complex. The Moravian Karst is also notable for its thousands of years of tradition in the processing of iron. The town of Rájec – Jestřebí with its castle built in Rococo-Classical style is the part of the oldest settlement, it documents the tradition of industrial enterprise in modern times. Further notable cities include Blansko with its Church of St. Martin and the Renaissance castle.



*Belfry, Čierny Brod - Hegy*





*Ship mills in the river Váh near Sered' before World War II. The history of the milling industry is connected with agriculture and the development of peasant civilization. Water mills can be divided into three categories from the point of view of hydrographic features: land, circling and river mills. Land mills usually stood near smaller rivers and had a firm building. In our territories, the most popular mills included ship mills and wheel mills. The equipment of ship mills was placed on 2 firmly connected boats. They floated down the river and were connected with the riverbanks by beams and ropes. The statistics from 1875 reveal that there were 204 floating mills on the river Váh. (Photo: the private collection of Rastislav Petrovič, Mgr. arch.)*



*The Gothic Church of St. Catherine in Svatá Kateřina*



*The Roman Catholic Church of St. George, Bořitov*



*Castle in Rájec nad Svitavou*



*The pilgrimage church of the name of Virgin Mary in Křtiny*

## Conclusion

The publication points out that the country is not only made of natural components, but also history, which reflects human activities. The Danube region, just like Boskovická brázda or Svitava basin, is the reflection of human culture from prehistoric times to the present. Many places reveal traces of the past through natural, architectural, technical and cultural attractions.

Places connected with history and tradition are parts of cultural inheritance. However, this inheritance cannot be presented as a mere set of monuments. It is equally important to point out the connections between buildings, human creations, manufacturing technology and natural conditions for the development of human culture. This publication notes not only settlements, but also pavements and transportation routes. The country itself is a broad context, which shows the correlation of the geological and natural features of millennial human action.

The publication introduces the surrounding of one of the most important historical routes in the territories of the Czech and the Slovak Republic – the Czech route. A route that crossed state bor-

ders. Many sections of this transport connector are used even today, both on the Slovak and on the Czech side.

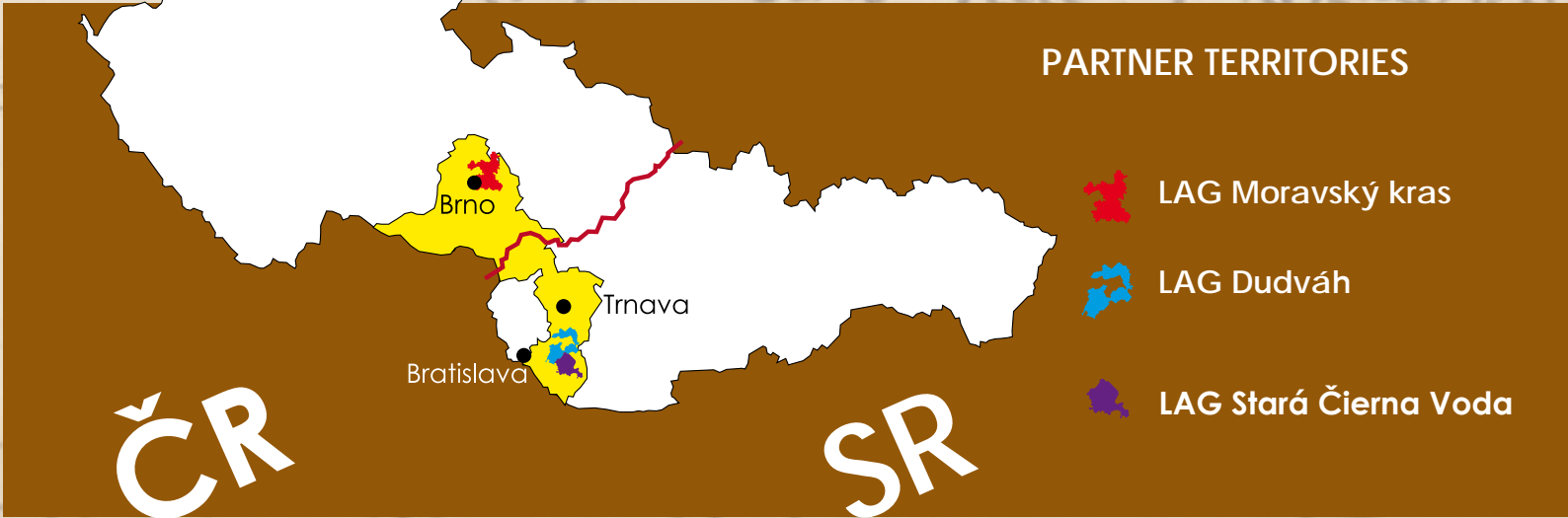
The Czech route reflects several historical periods. Historical monuments can bring valuable insights not only for experts and scholars, but also for students and tourists. Several monuments are presented in the form of educational or entertainment programmes.

The publication presents the most significant milestones and a brief historical development of the Czech route. It concentrates mainly on two areas of historical routes: on the Slovak side on the Danube Lowland, on the Czech side on the area of Boskovická brázda from Brno to Jevíčko and the Svitava basin from Rájec - Jestřebí to Svitava.

On one hand, the publication looks for facts and documents of human culture in the past, but on the other hand it investigates the contemporary documents of the Czech route in the present. The book is in fact an invitation to the regions of LAG Stará Čierna voda and LAG Dudváh in Slovakia and LAG Moravian Karst in the Czech Republic.



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... tributoy fere hacten et ass'modo disueta  
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 manomialbz tantu. Itē a ciuitate Tyrnauie  
 pñda. Itē i Semprey. Itē in villis archiep̃i Strigoni  
 in villa scti Jacobi q castro vnde cride et i porta  
 loris tributorum supradictis nullas fieri debeant reliquias  
 vinetibz de Regno Bohemie q nre ciuibz Tyrnauie  
 mercatores tam nri et Bohemie q alior Regnor  
 amodo Princeps pacifice secuta et absq omi impedimento  
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