

Review of the habilitation thesis

Religiózní Krajina Česka jakou součást širších kulturněgeografických procesů

submitted by Tomáš Havlíček, Ph.D.

The habilitation thesis consists of a 33 page introduction into the selected research field “The religious landscape in Czechia” in the Czech language and of nine articles published between 2005 and 2018, one in Czech (with an English summary) and eight in English. T. Havlíček is the sole author of four of the articles whereas five articles were written together with one or two collaborators. Three of the articles were published in international and two in Czech journals while of the books of which the other four articles are chapters, three are international (published in UK, Germany and Netherlands) and one published in Czechia. Three articles were published in SSCI-listed journals (Geografie, Scottish Geographical Journal and Social & Cultural Geography).

Without doubt, the articles show, that T. Havlíček is the leading scientist in Czechia in the field of the geography of religion. All articles are about the religious landscape in the Czech Republic. Most of them concentrate on the geographical distribution and the historical and sociological reasons for this distribution as well as the changes in time of this distributions and their reasons. For the latter, the rapid increase of secularisation which occurred in most parts of the country after World War II is most notable, making Czechia, together with East Germany and Estonia, one of the most secularized European countries. In recent years, however, a new trend of post-secularity can be observed: While traditional denominations continue to shrink, new religious groups rise, either due to immigration or to evangelization.


T. Havlíček does not, however, look at the religious landscape of the Czech state as a whole only. He also works on a larger scale and looks at the religious landscape of Prague (Havlíček/Klingorová 2018) as well as at that of five different small rural areas (Havlíček/Hupková 2013). This combination of macro- and micro-studies is fully developed in the religious atlas of Czechia (Havlíček et al. 2017) which is a very commendable work, giving a survey of the religious landscape in a statistical sense for the whole country (the spatial distribution of the adherents of the different religions and denominations) as well as the description and interpretation of ten selected model areas, including a register and mapping of ca. 1500 sacral sites therein.

Although all articles of the habilitation thesis treat the religious landscape in Czechia only, T. Havlíček puts his research into the context of the international theoretical development in the field of geography of religion in a very knowledgeable way. This is shown in the first part of the thesis. Here T. Havlíček greatly benefits from the fact that he is (besides Prof. Knippenberg, Amsterdam, and the reviewer) one of the three founding members of the informal study group on the Changing religious landscape of Europe which has been organizing ten international colloquia in eight European countries between 2003 and 2016 – the eleventh one being staged in Prague in June 2019 by him and his collaborators. Additionally, T. Havlíček has been in close contact with the *Arbeitskreis Religionsgeographie* of the *Deutsche Geographische Gesellschaft* and with the Geography of Religions and Belief Systems (GORABS) Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers for many years.

There is one minor formal shortcoming in the thesis: Some references which are mentioned in the text of the 33-page introduction are missing in the list of references, e.g. Henkel 2011, Matthew 2001, Tomka 2001, Wunder 2005. But this does not at all diminish the value of it.

I definitively regard T. Havlíček's research as presented in his habilitation thesis worth of him be awarded a "docent" position.

Heidelberg, April 24, 2019


Prof. Dr. Reinhard Henkel