

Abstract

In the light of archive materials, the thesis deals with impacts of human activities on peat bogs within the present Třeboňsko Protected Landscape Area (PLA). Owing to the fact that the first Rosenberg manor and-after a short pause caused by confiscations of property of Bohemian nobility following after the Revolt of the Estates and Battle of Bílá Hora-then the Schwarzenberg manor continually existed on this territory until the 20th century, the majority of available historical materials are concentrated in the Třeboň State Archives. Only a small part of the documents concerning the property of noblemen of Hradec, whose manor reached Třeboňsko PLA in its northeast part, are filed in the Jindřichův Hradec State Archives. The only missing materials are of course materials concerning a small part of Vitoraz area which for centuries belonged to Lower Austria and joined the former Czechoslovak Republic as late as 1920.

As economic activities impacting the process of alterations of not only peat bogs but the entire landscape are closely connected with the political and economic situation, I have divided the whole time over which man has been affecting Třeboň area landscape, into 10 uneven periods. They separate the events that fundamentally changed the situation and resulted in a new status modifying the major part of the matters characterizing the preceding period.

Peatlands of the Třeboň region are ancient ecosystems whose development in the Postglacial Period was analyzed in numerous pollen analyses of the Czech palaeoecologists. From the oldest period of time, only modest archaeological evidence is available, showing that Třeboň region, except for the northern margin of PLA, was basically unpopulated during the whole of primeval ages. The only exception is a recently discovered mesolithic settlement which existed at a lake today extinct and partly flooded by Schwarzenberg pond.

Almost no evidence of the oldest period of Třeboň region colonization is available. The presence of man in early periods of settlement is mostly demonstrated only by pollens of cereals and weeds detected locally in top part of peat profiles. The extinction and alteration of peat bogs in this period can be deduced from records of pond build-ups and other water modifications. Giving rise to an extensive system of ponds together with ensuring water for their filling markedly altered the hydrology of the entire landscape and also impacted peat bogs near or farer from these water management structures, having partly allowed some wetlands to be also used as meadows and forests.

Plans of economic exploitation of large peat bogs of Třeboň region were appearing approx. from the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, during which they were mostly realized. This period also shows the richest stock of maps and documents contained in the archives. The most intensive economic exploitation of peat bogs lasted approx. until the end of World War I. In those times, peat was predominantly used as fuel. However, its consumption was gradually dropping with the liquidation of obsolete glass-works, iron mills, and also in competition with coal. Even a larger impact on the original condition of peat bogs was afforestation of extensive drained areas or their alteration to yielding meadows. In the period between World War I and II, peat was extracted particularly for agricultural and to a smaller extent for balneal purposes. Abundant documentary material shows permanent difficulties with sales in this kind of business. Of course, a number of archive materials documenting the period of recent 60 years are available. After World War II, exploitation of peat bogs continued, using much more efficient mechanization. Only inconsiderable remainder of peat bogs was intended to be protected, predominant part was planned to be extracted or altered to forests and yielding meadows. Extracted peat was mainly used in agriculture.

A substantial upturn occurred only after the collapse of totalitarian regime. For the first time in the long history of Třeboň region development, the protection of peat bogs and wetlands in general became a priority. At the majority of them, extraction was terminated and their most valuable parts are protected as natural reserves or natural monuments. Peat for gardening purposes is only extracted at the deposits of Branná and Hrdlořezy. Small quantities of peat material for balneal purposes are extracted to the south of Třeboň in Hrádeček forest district.

On the basis of the facts found in the archival materials I tried to do pollen analysis of the peat-bog profile. My aim was to find in the pollen spectrum and so prove the existence of some facts from the archival materials. I tried to find the evidence of very late colonization of this area and at the same time to prove the rise of the peat-bog in recent past, which partly happened due to human activities.