

Iconographic Sources of Swedish Campaign in 1647 in Bohemia in Multidisciplinary Research

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Extended Abstract

Iconographic sources depicting Thirty Years' War battlefields in the Czech lands can be found in historical graphic works printed in the most comprehensive documentary publication of the 17th century, the *Theatrum Europaeum*. Swedish campaign of the year 1647 left behind the most numerous and best preserved traces in the landscape of the Czech lands. The paper focuses primarily on engravings related to war events at the locations of Cheb, Třebel and Teplá in western Bohemia. It presents interim results of interdisciplinary research the transformed landscape of the Thirty Years' War in today's Czech Republic using these iconographic sources (more to this in (Janata, Zimová 2013), which involves the combination of archaeology, history and art history with tools of spatial analyses, digital terrain modelling and new possibilities of airborne laser scanning data processing. This research is linked to the complex archaeological and historical research of the former Třebel battlefield from the year 1647 (Matoušek 2006; Grabolle et al. 2009), which emphasized the possibilities and significance of the specific and narrative value of iconographic sources.

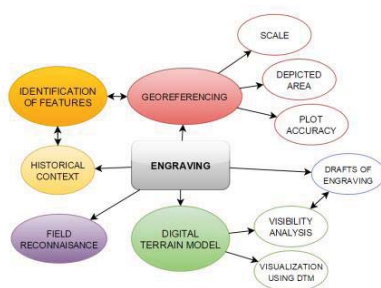


Figure 1. Research methods and their relations.

The processing of engravings (as shown in Fig. 1) involves several individual activities slightly different for various engravings depending on their properties. The process methodology may involve following steps:

Identification of features in engravings and putting them into historical context, which is a connected process. To do so, descriptions linked to the image of the situation (e.g. legends, accompanying depictions, etc.) and, more importantly, documentary publications from the period can be used, which often describe the course of battles in sufficient detail. Elements of the image such as various settlements or individual buildings, bodies of water or roads networks can all be used to georeference the engraving to other cartographic sources, which is crucial for further analysis.

Further, visibility analyses are performed using the digital terrain model which serves to reconstruct height conditions of the depicted landscape and to identify the points from which the authors of the engravings may have created their source drawings. With the help of terrain models, we can verify the possibilities of visibility from individual elevated standpoints.

Using several methods, the scale number of engravings is estimated. Usually by establishing an approximate scale for various directions (two are sufficient in practice), in case of a sufficient amount of points a map of contour lines of the scale number may be constructed. The engravings primarily show a medium scale ranging from 1 : 8,000 to 1 : 25,000.

The engravings might have served not only as documentary images of the battle scene, but also as plans of the construction of fortification systems or tactical planning. The project is highly original in terms of Central European studies as it takes an interdisciplinary approach aiming to combine written, cartographic, archaeological, iconographic and environmental sources with systematic co-operation within a broad spectrum of research fields.

This paper was financially supported by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic, grant No. GA15-03380S.

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