

HISTORICAL CONTEXTS AND DEVELOPMENT PATHS OF LATVIAN LANDSCAPES

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The report focuses on the history of Latvian landscape development. Brief background information on natural and historical conditions has been given as well as on the landscape development path in the course of time. The conclusion is that this process can be characterised as interchanging of fractures and stabilisation periods in landscape development. Fractures are always connected with sharp changes in political, economical and social conditions. During the 20th century, four major fractures have affected Latvian landscapes and peoples' lives, which is shown in provided landscape time scale. The issue is addressed about the connection between the stages in landscape development, which is manifested as inheritance and which can also be reversible. Peoples' presence in landscapes has been emphasised, as well as the significance of peoples' activities in the landscape development process, which allows to speak about activity landscapes.

I have had the opportunity over more than 50 years, in various ways, to conduct research on Latvia's landscapes, or to use the landscape approach in other forms of research. But apart from that — having lived in these landscapes for a longer time, to see fractures and changes, evaluating their causal relationship and seeking explanations as well. This is the foundation for a system of views to be gradually developed, which brings us possibly closer to understanding of the essence of Latvia's landscapes.

From here on — about Latvia's landscapes.

Background information

I will draw your attention only to those moments or facts, which seem significant specifically in the context of landscape history, or which have influenced and influence some attitude toward this as well. This relates to

history, nature and people, that together and through extended interaction actually create a landscape's history.

History

The presence of people in the territory within the borders of the current Latvian state began after the glacial retreat, in a period when the Baltic ice lake existed. The first settlements were related to the archaeological period. Initially, Palaeolithic and Mesolithic (8500–4500 BC) settlements appeared, after that — Neolithic ones creating a number of localizations, mainly next to lakes.

Changes in the economic development and along with this — development in the distribution of population took place two thousand years BC, when animal husbandry and agriculture began to develop requiring larger areas of land.

During that time, settled places —

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hill-forts and non-fortified settlements — developed in places where larger areas of land were available, as opposed to the shores of lakes which were used earlier.

Later, in the 5th–10th centuries, the Baltic tribes (Cours, Zemgaliens, Selonians, Latgalians), the Baltic Finnish people (Livs and Estonians) separated off in the Baltic region, and the regions they lived in and their localization has in broad strokes remained with us even until today. Latvians and Livs are the two primary nations in the Latvian state.

Before the invasion by the German Crusaders in the 12th century, territorial formations existed in the territory of Latvia — there were settled lands and areas around castles, the names of which have been retained even today in place names. In 1198, the Holy Wars against the Baltic peoples began, which only finished at the end of the 13th century in the territory of Latvia. The conquered Latvian and Estonian lands became known as Livonia.

During the 13th century, battles between the Order of the Brothers of the Sword (Livonian) and the Christian Church's formations took place for political influence, as a result of which the land was divided up into spheres of influence. New elements appeared in landscapes — stone castles, cities, churches and roads for traffic connecting the centres which had been created.

Over the next centuries, a battle for influence took place between the West and the East. This was accompanied by wars, often very long ones, which devastated the land and people. During that time, Latvia's territory (actually, the whole Baltic region) became marked as a border region, where the interests of the West and the East met, which is still observed even in today's political landscape.

After the 16th and 17th century wars, the almost routine division of the Polish super power took place in 1629 and a new nation-

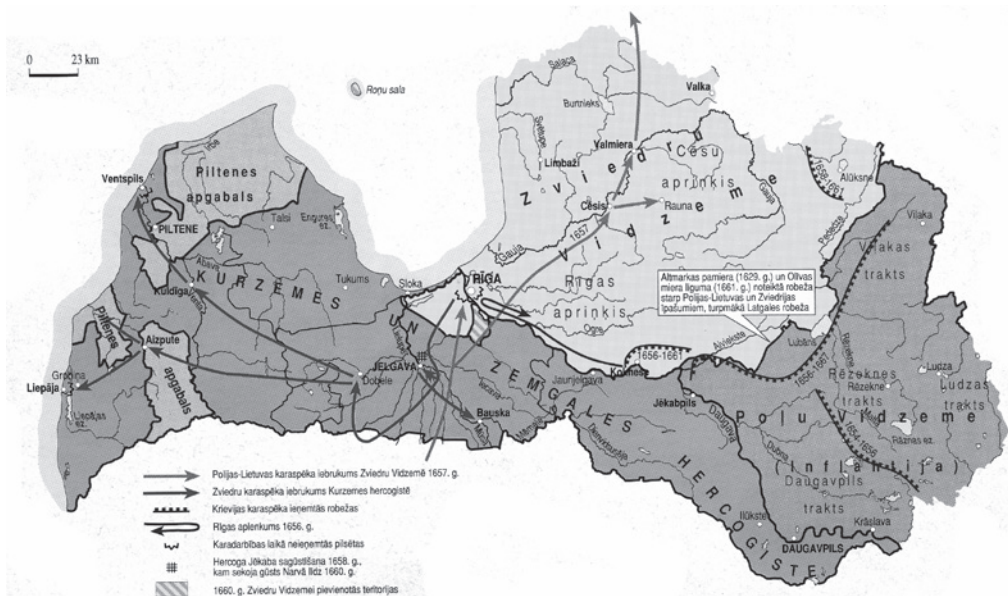


Fig. 1. Political processes after Polish–Swedish War, 17th and 18th century (Latvijas vēstures atlants, 1998)

al or territorial administrative structure was developed (Fig. 1). It had a long lasting and continuing influence over all of Latvia's later history. Namely, today's Latvian territory was split up into three parts, three national formations, which fell under different masters: the Duchy of Courland (Kurzeme) and Zemgale (a vassal nation of Poland–Lithuania), Swedish Vidzeme (under the control of Sweden) and Polish Vidzeme or Inflantia (under the control of Poland–Lithuania).

Interestingly, the Duchy of Courland period, especially during the rule of Duke Jacob, remained in people's memory, just like the Swedish times in Vidzeme. Later, after the recurring wars of the 18th century, these national formations were incorporated into Czarist Russia as separate provinces: in 1721 — Vidzeme, in 1772 — Latgale, in 1795 — Kurzeme.

After the First World War, in 1918, Latvia became an independent nation. Kurzeme, Vidzeme and Latgale made up their territorial foundation, and are symbolized by the three stars of Latvia which crown the Freedom Monument. Later Kurzeme, Vidzeme and Latgale were considered as cultural historic counties being the custodians of their regional characteristics. Many generations have felt and still feel belonging to one of these counties.

Latvia's border position kept influencing events in the 20th century as well. It is known that the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact was signed in 1939, but in June 1940, Soviet Russia's armed forces entered Latvia, and Latvia was incorporated into the Soviet Union. The Second World War started soon, which was followed by life under the Soviet system, until the renewal of independence in 1990 and 1991.

Nature

Nature conditions, particularly the development of climatic conditions and the relief of Latvia's territory, are connected with

the great retreat of the ice cover and the formation of the Baltic Sea. The shore of the Baltic Ice Lake is a significant environmental border, which separates the sea coast as an original formation in today's landscape structure.

At various depths under the quaternary deposits, there are Devonian deposits. From the landscape aspect, the border of the distribution of the reddish Devonian sandstone is significant. Sandstone outcrops in river valleys and in places on the sea coast provide evidence of this.

Rolling highlands and flat lowlands lying in the west–east direction stand out in the Latvian territory's relief. Various deposits — clayish moraine, sand etc. shape the surface of the land. Together with the variety and changes in the relief from place to place, a large variety of ecological conditions form the land's surface. These also determine the landscape's biologically diverse character and visual features.

We live in a mixed forest zone, and humans have cut down forests here from times immemorial to form clearings and living spaces. That is why in the context of landscape one should speak not just of a forest zone, but a fields–forest zone. The significant presence of forest, not only in the past, but also today (about 50% forest) affects and in many places determines the landscape's visual image.

People

People have lived on the territory of Latvia for thousands of years. When compared to the lifetime of a person this period of time is too great to conceive. An insight into the most ancient times is provided by archeologically excavated materials and reconstructions based on these. For example, on the Neolithic and Mesolithic settlements by Lake Lubāns, which were significantly populated in the distant past. Another example, relating to a later time, is the reconstruction of the village built on Lake Āraiši island.

However, we cannot find answers to some other questions through information from archaeological investigations: how did they feel in their homes, their farms or settlements, and later — for hundreds of years as serfs? From where did they get their creative energy? How was our cultural heritage created — the oral folklore, craft work and country farmsteads?

Observations of people have been preserved in chronicles, letters and travel notes. Still up until the 19th century, there were mainly the views of foreigners. Researchers of cultural history indicate that there are two types of written sources. The first express quite a belittling attitude, emphasizing poverty and a low level of culture, but the others — empathy towards people's harsh living circumstances and a desire to help them.

Without getting into discussions about this emotional theme, it seems important to emphasize one unchanging sign, which characterizes people over the whole course of history. Namely, this is work, activity. It is specifically people's economic and domestic activity (the home, existentially necessary activities), later — a specialized economic activity, which has been the creative force creating landscapes, and which over the passing ages has also maintained the landscapes, facilitating their renewal through centuries. This has also created everything that the Lithuanian researcher Alfonsas Basalykas, in his time, called the landscape's cultural robe (people's constructions, crafts, work tools, clothing etc.) and which has been an object of ethnographic research already for many centuries.

In 18th century description of a Latgale's manor's inventory, the simple words — "farmers in the field" and in the autumn "farmers collect the harvest" — attracted attention. This was the presence of people in landscapes, a direct connection, which, alongside their physical strength and endurance, also required a capacity to observe, analyze and search for new methods. The

word *dzīvot* (to live) is a synonym for the word *strādāt* (to work) in one of the Kurzeme dialects. However, as soon as a person in the landscape is deprived of the ability to work, or a person declines to, a process of changes inescapably begins (both in the landscape and the person).

Bearing in mind people's role and activity in the creation and maintenance processes of the landscape, the landscapes we see today can be called **activity landscapes**.

Perhaps the fact that today work is perceived as a way of ensuring our existence, that a specialization of activities has taken place, and that these are no longer so closely linked with specific places affects our deepest understanding of the human notion of work.

Earlier, in the 1970s and 1980s, researchers discussed the fact that in forest zone situations landscapes were maintained by two conflicting processes: 'anthropogenization' or the overall effect of people's activities, and 'renaturalization' or building up of the landscape and changes of its structure under the influence of natural forces, in other words, restoration of the forest. These processes affect and determine the localization of landscapes which are at various stages and often subjected to other influences (location by cities, outskirts effect and others). It should be noted that renaturalization processes dominate in large areas specifically during transitional periods, for example, after wars.

Overall landscape development pace

Research reveals that the overall pace of landscape development is not even and upward in the sense that the changes that are occurring, or have taken place in each period, can be evaluated as progressive.

In it (in the pace of development) periods of stabilization can be observed, when concordance has developed (in the landscape's spatial structure, cycles of activity, interrela-

tionships etc.) between the dominating economic and activity form, on the one hand, and various conditions (legislation, ownership relations etc.), on the other hand. Every so often these are disturbed by drastic changes in political, economic, or social life. They are *points of fracture*, followed inescapably by changes in landscape (population distribution, land use etc.). But after some time, adaptation to the new circumstances occurs, life stabilizes, and as a consequence, the landscape structure stabilizes in a new image.

It has not been studied how much time is required for the landscape structure to adapt to new relationships. Furthermore, it is doubtful whether it can be even feasibly or sufficiently reconstructed, as it is not possible to retrospectively conduct research in an environment which is already different now, when compared to one from an earlier time. Judging by how the transformation in the landscape in Latvia occurred during the 20th century (and it was possible to observe and document this), the stabilization period could be about 40–50 years.

In evaluating the accessible historical information methods and scope in the specific situation of Latvia, I would like to discuss

two landscape history periods — the archive landscape history period and the people's landscape history period (Fig. 2). However, there is not and cannot be a strict border between them; in truth there is a transition period — from the abolition of serfdom in the 1817–1861 period (differently in various parts of Latvia) until the first decades of the 20th century, defined by the First World War and Latvia gaining its national independence. In essence, while the manor's feudal system continued to exist, after the abolition of serfdom peasants gained the right to buy land for their next generations. With this people's real inclusion in landscapes began, in the creation or maintenance of which they had already previously participated.

The archive landscape history period — this obviously is a somewhat pictorial label. Importantly, it is the existence or non-existence of specifically archival material which is the factor influencing or determining availability of facts, the method of interpretation or its breadth, the level of likelihood of any conclusions, or even the possibility of any research at all.

In Latvia's circumstances, the acceptable plausibility level of the pace of overall landscape development (based more

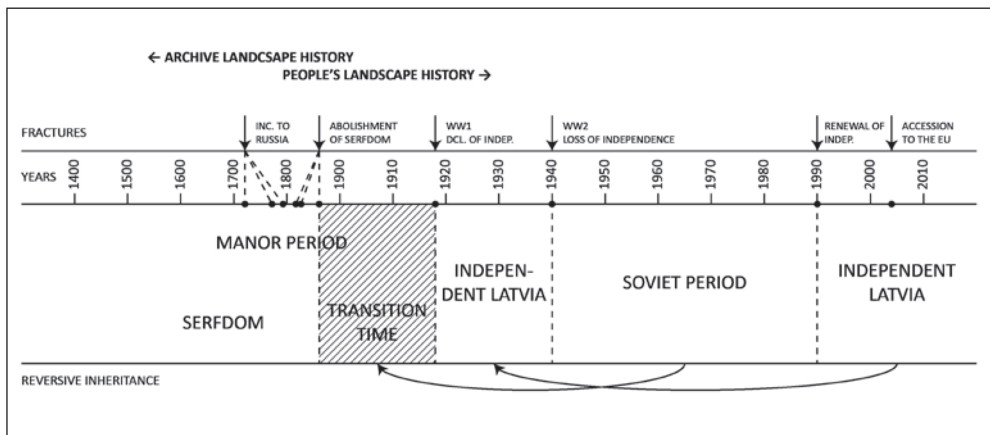


Fig. 2. The time scale of the landscape of Latvia

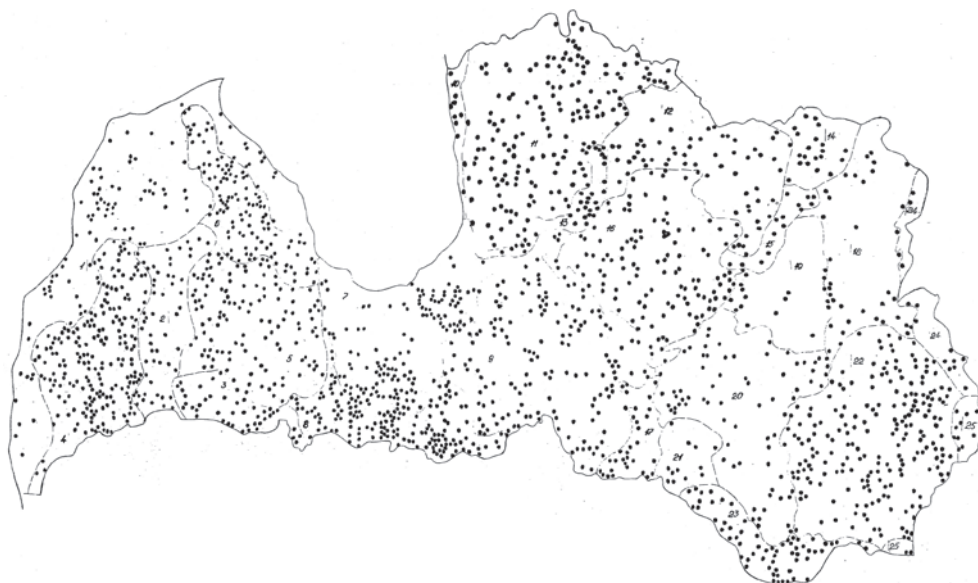


Fig. 3. Swedish cadastral map of Vidzeme, 1686. Fragment (LVVA, 6828. f.)

on today's experience and imagination, synthesizing information available from various sources) can only be described since the 15th–16th centuries, but more believably — since the turn of the 17th–18th centuries. The oldest, as yet unclear, notions about the possible pattern of landscapes (activity landscapes!) are provided by 18th and 19th century medium- or fine-scale general or topographical maps. However, from old maps one can find out about population distribution more specifically. As an example, the Vidzeme general map (Fig. 3) can be mentioned, which was made in 1686 — including manors, churches, taverns and the main roads of the time.

For that matter, specific site landscape development research possibilities, from the view of that time period, are directly connected with the existence of ancient maps. They are to be detailed to the degree that not only the site itself, but also the site conditions can be identified. Such maps have only been accessible to us since the 17th

century and only the Vidzeme section. Later, since the 19th century, a variety of data was collected in manor maps, as well as in land purchase documents.

The essence of the people's landscape history period is that with the changing centuries and changes that have taken place in society and in the landscape (without calling them this way, but more so — the surroundings, the places) at least in the mid 20th century these were still in people's memories. This is also confirmed by oral history research. I can speak for myself as well — I recall the stories of my grandparents and parents, and myself in the real events of the 20th century.

Therefore, it is the presence of real people, recognizable generations and people, collected information and memories, which create a feeling of identity and presence as a whole. The presence of people in landscapes varies over time — they are not just doing field work, but also having recreation (planned summer house places since the

19th century), it is life in cities and indirect participation in their creation, and also the presence of researchers.

People would like to see one of the first or ancient landscapes, however, it is not possible, since these landscapes are illusory for us. In addition, one must take into account the fact, that later centuries changed the first landscapes, wiped out the information collected. Only certain types of anchorages have been preserved — hills which were once the site of forts, ancient settlement places and burial sites. They participate in today's landscape in the status of cultural monuments, often being quite attractive.

One can get a more realistic idea about the pace of Latvia's landscape history in later centuries, in what we call the manor period (Fig. 4). Without getting into detailed explanations, the period from the mid 15th century (according to historians, it was

during this period that manors were set up and serfdom was established) until the beginning of the 1920s is described in the scheme, when land reform was implemented in independent Latvia.

There are cities, villages, farmsteads (each with its own homestead name), manor centres with parks and gardens in landscapes in the manor period. Many manor centres, especially these in the 18th and 19th century, were architectural models of their time, and this concerns also the parks. These were modern landscapes of their time, although quite localized.

During this period, farming land and large forest areas were territorially set apart. There is reason to believe that in the manor period spatial localization of landscapes already occurred. Historical sources provide evidence that manors as territories were comprised of two parts: the manor lands themselves,



Fig. 4. Manor centres at the beginning of the 20th century (from personal archive)

which were mainly concentrated around the manor centres, and peasant lands, with individual farmsteads (later these were called old farmsteads). Many manors had also a third part — huge forest tracts.

Later, in the 1920s and 1930s, in the manor lands the new farmsteads were developed but in the peasant lands area the old farmsteads were an evidence of old rural landscapes. In the second half of the 19th century the land in these areas was purchased, and one can find the purchased farming land's measurement plans in the archives, too.

A different example of spatial differentiation: villages in Latgale, which were local centres of settlement and also centres of a wider territory. Each village was provided with a certain amount of land (these could vary widely), but the centre was a compact group of homesteads. Often the homesteads were arranged in a linear fashion along a road/street. The rest of the areas outside the centres were divided up among the residents, each having a defined number of narrow fields (the number of these per owner could exceed a hundred), which were called *šņores* (strips). This is a feature of Latgale, which existed until land reform in the 1920s and 1930s.

Obviously, real life is more complex — over the centuries there were wars and periods of starvation, as well as other events which crucially affected people, their lives and work, and alongside this, also landscapes. One can assume that in the history renaturalization or anthropogenization processes frequently dominated in landscapes, furthermore — contrasting in their territorial manifestation. In other words, there was uninterrupted spatial differentiation creating new rural and forest landscapes, wiping out the previous ones.

Two significant fractures in Latvia's history and landscape history are connected with the 19th century. The first one is in-

corporation of Latvia's territories into Czarist Russia (Vidzeme in 1721, Kurzeme in 1795, Latgale in 1772) and the second — the abolition of serfdom (Kurzeme in 1817, Vidzeme in 1819, Latgale in 1861). After incorporation, Russia's legal system was introduced intensively, the regulatory acts or administrative instructions were manifold and often very detailed.

As already mentioned, after abolition of serfdom, purchase of land for the next generations began, and old farmsteads, which had in most cases already existed for a long time, became quite established in the country, but belonged to others. (Due to their visual shape and the information accumulated in them over the centuries, in 2009, country farmsteads were declared as part of Latvia's cultural heritage.)

During that time, a large class of landless peasants developed, especially in Kurzeme. To be without land meant the same as being homeless. Therefore, solutions were sought for — they stayed at various places on the lands owned by other people (farmers' landholdings, in forests, on the coast — even in sand dunes), but already at manors in the 18th century, especially at crown manors, where land was subdivided for building small households, where, over time, new settled centres developed. Obviously, that affected landscapes — both visually, as well as ecologically — creating new settled landscapes.

Events of the 20th century yet intensified this, and the consequences have remained until today. In accordance with this, the time scale in the scheme changes — decades instead of centuries. Furthermore, the discussion is not only about changes in the structure and pattern of the landscape, but also (or mainly) about people, who have lived through all of this, maintained their memories forming a collective memory. Thus, the people's landscape history period has begun.

The first fracture in the 20th century was

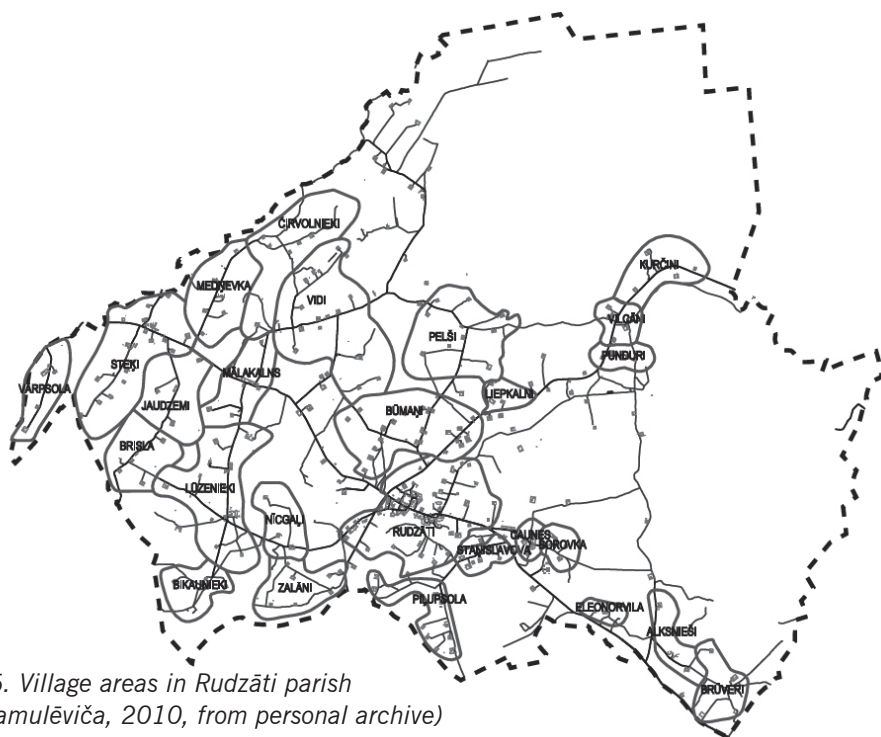


Fig. 5. Village areas in Rudzāti parish
(A. Samulēviča, 2010, from personal archive)

the First World War, and immediately after this, in 1918, Latvia gained its national independence. War brought great destruction — in 1920, on average about 29% of arable land remained untilled in Latvia, but in several districts this figure was about 40% and more than 55%. Of the total number of rural buildings, about 25% were seriously damaged, including in that amount 10% which were completely (Skujenieks, 1927).

Founding of an independent nation provided hope and unleashed creative spirit. The most significant event was land reform, and with this the feudal period legally ceased to exist. Manor lands were included in the nation's land reserves, divided up and new farmsteads were established. During that time, land was also provided for the needs of towns and less inhabited centres (villages, hamlets) — their territories were broadened and land was subdivided into

building blocks. Cities' spatial contours were developed and have largely remained the same until now. It is interesting that the first city construction projects were developed by rural surveyors.

In broad brush strokes, the overall spatial structure in the territory of Latvia changed as well during that period. Principally, this is influenced by legal drawing up of tracts of state forest, as well as a noticeable reduction in forest acreage for the broadening of agricultural land expanses. It turned out that the land to be subdivided in rural areas was smaller than the number of people requesting land, and that is why in many places new farmsteads received forest land (the 20th century land grab began!). Forests were allocated for obtaining wood materials, for construction needs, as well as for firewood.

It should be noted that in Latgale land reform proceeded differently, since there a

subdivision of village/hamlet land took place between the existing users, and homesteads/buildings were transferred from the centre to the allocated farmsteads. The farms created were generally small, on average about 10 ha. The transfer of farms substantially altered the rural landscapes — dispersed settlements were created. However, memories of life in hamlets in some form have remained up until today. One can find evidence for this, for example, in the hamlet area map for Rudzāti rural municipality produced basing on people's memories (Fig. 5).

During this period, creation of new landscapes took place in all areas where subdivided new farmsteads were concentrated more intensely.

The overall situation in Latvia was affected by the fact that new farmsteads' territorial division was largely uneven. This was affected by various circumstances — both the variety of manors themselves, the land resources available for subdivision, the number of people requesting land etc. In addition, on average a little over 13% of the new farmsteads did not have any buildings. It has not currently been determined whether there were some regions with more new farmsteads lacking buildings than in other regions. But in places where new farmsteads were built they became a new element in the rural landscape structure, and are still recognizable by their visual pattern.

Broadly, the localization and spatial structure of the rural landscape from the manor period was retained. The old farmsteads and manor centres were maintained in the landscapes, preserving the significance of the visual accent and the road network. Manor centre ownership forms and the subsequent use were quite distinctively different. Some remained in the hands of their existing owners, but with land reduced to 50–100 ha, which was considered to be the average size of a farmer's landholding. Some went into state ownership for different purposes (rural

model farms, schools, other cultural needs etc.).

The next 20th century *fracture* was the loss of the nation's independence in 1940 and Latvia's incorporation into the Soviet Union, which was linked to the Second World War. That was a tragic fracture as it is connected with the deportation of people — both before, and after the war. As it will be seen later, life in the Soviet system has affected people in many different ways.

Beginning with the end of the war until 1990, under the influence of the Soviet power, different economic and social policies, using a variety of instruments — fixing output, control, and centralized planning — were purposefully implemented. The main development being nationalization of land and property and creation of kolkhozes (collective farms) and sovhozes (state farms). During that time, Latvia's landscape grossly changed, and significant spatial differentiation took place as well. Generally, forest acreage was increased, the size of land devoted to agriculture was decreased, and individual farms in rural landscapes disappeared: in the period from 1950 to 1985, their number decreased twice, and if destruction from the Second World War is included — even more (Strods, 1992). In many regions the loss of individual farms was much greater than on the average, and this is evident visually.

The composition of residents in rural areas changed. This was affected both by immigrants from other USSR republics, as well as internal migration within Latvia's borders. In turn this was promoted by the existing centralized work appointment system, to which university graduates were subject. With this the local cultural background also changed — immigrants brought in with them experience gained elsewhere.

But the creation of a planned new landscape took place that was based on different political decisions. This is a significant difference compared with previous periods, and

it has left impact on people's consciousness. The new landscape developed in the broad drained land tracts. They were open, without farm homesteads (they were torn down, together with gardens and tree plantings), bunches of trees and the small landscape elements which form a landscape's spatial structure, the landscape's cultural robe disappeared. Reclaimed landscapes truly were already unified landscapes, which wiped out possible differences in the landscape structure and pattern in various Latvian regions. During this time, the issue of landscape's ecological optimization appeared in landscape research, that is, to use the wide drainage work as a tool in the creation of an ecologically favourable landscape, or even — to create techniques for rehabilitation or stabilization of destructive landscapes (Fig. 6).

A new idea was creation of villages and concentrating people within them, creation of newly settled landscapes. That was the beginning of the development of progressive rural urbanization.

When compared to previous periods,

during this time, ruins as an element in landscapes became more and more frequently encountered — that is both in manor centres and abandoned individual farm sites. We came to watch how an abandoned farmstead turned into ruins within a year or two.

An unusual event was appearance of various military structures in strategically significant places, mostly along the sea coast, which was once the Soviet Union's western border. In total more than 100 000 ha of farmed land was taken over for military needs, farmsteads were destroyed and people were transferred to other places. Even now the contours of the former large firing ranges and their after effects are still there (Latvija — PSRS karabāze, 2006). During that time, a variety of military structures were concentrated in cities (Rīga, Ventspils, Liepāja and others), as well as in new closed military settlements of various sizes in different places — basically new cities, which are now not needed by anyone, but continue to exist as a legacy of the past.

In evaluating the situation, the conclusion

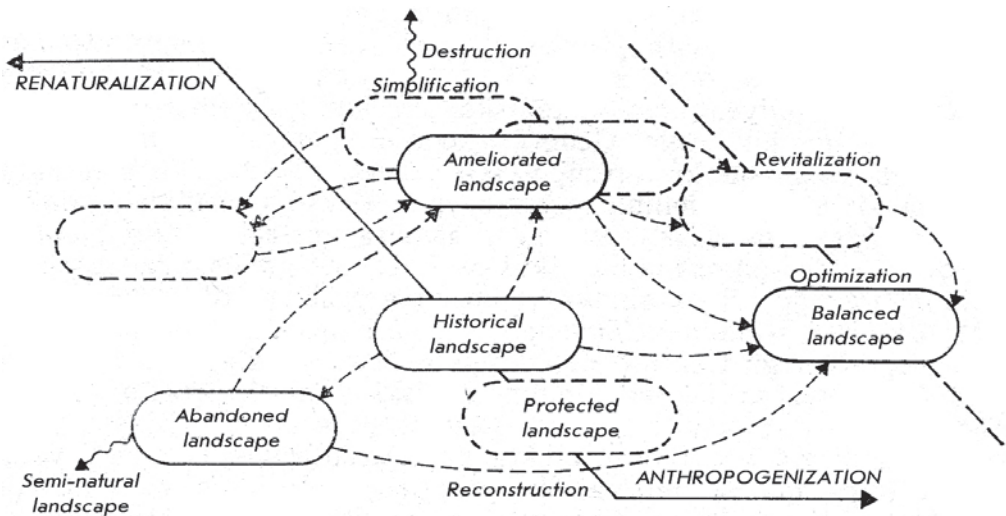


Fig. 6. Development courses of agricultural landscape (A. Melluma, 1992, from personal archive)

is to be made that towards the end of the 1990s the landscape structure had stabilized (this did not happen during the 20 years of the first independence period). Possible evidence of this fact could be that the large landscapes of drained tracts of land are currently emotionally being accepted as an asset, a beautiful one, even though during the period of the drainage work the community protested against them. These evaluations are made by different generations.

The next fracture was Latvia's regaining its national independence in 1990–1991. A new landscape development period followed this, the first condition of which was land reform again — restoration of previous land titles took place, and reorganization of land use on different legal and economic foundations. Initially, there was enthusiasm, for a return to the situation which was interrupted by the occupation and war. But everything had changed — and a return turned out to be only partly possible. To a large degree, this was connected with the implementation of land reform, which took place against the background of changes made during the Soviet years — large tracts of drained land, villages, with farmsteads bought in good faith etc. But the reality was that it had occurred on the land of previous owners. Furthermore, the relationship between rural and city residents had changed: during the first period of reform, about 70% lived in rural areas, but this proportion had reduced to 30%. An interesting fact is provided by the breakdown of requests for land holdings — as a fact the majority of requests came from people living in Rīga.

Even though 22 years have passed (which is longer than the first period of independence), landscapes continue to change, being in a transitional process. In some regions forests and scrubland visually dominate in abandoned agricultural fields, on abandoned farmsteads. These are places with few inhabitants where a renaturalization process

is currently taking place. For that matter in other places land is being intensively utilized, especially large tracts of drained land and traditional agricultural areas. Intensive use has also affected forests, both state and private ones.

In some places one can observe the development of new landscapes which are associated with new development trends. For example, tourism and recreation sites in rural areas are being developed, the old manor buildings are being restored, the so-called aestheticized rural areas are being developed, and even wind generator parks appear in the new landscapes next to towns.

The joining of Latvia to the European Union in 2004 was a fracture in its own way, probably, not so radical as many previous ones. It could be said that it has its own role as a catalyst, but it is still premature to say in what way it is really being expressed and how this is reflected in landscapes. Still it is interesting to clarify the trends; how the direct effect of Europe's agricultural and environmental protection policies manifests itself, how it is reflected in landscapes, and what sort of after effects could be expected from this.

Such is an insight into landscape formation and development over the passage of the centuries.

In summary, attention should be focussed on the inheritance phenomenon. Formerly, we saw that not only landscape spaces are passed on from one landscape development period to the next one, but also various formations — artefacts, natural structures — which have developed during its existence. Therefore, it could be said that today's landscape is at the same time old and new — formations which have formed and functioned at different times have been accumulated in it, even though their meaning changes over time. For example, hill-forts and ancient settlements become archaeological monuments. Or even — buildings which are not

required or suited to the times become ruins. Generally, the landscape's repository function materializes in this way over the centuries and in the end is a necessary condition to be able to deliberate about landscapes, about the interaction of nature and people and the expression of the latter at various times and on various places, and finally, to be able to research landscape history.

However, reflexive or reversible inheritance features attract one's attention. For example, the land policy implemented during the years of Soviet power in a way returned us to the manor period, as the kolkhozes and sovhozes that were created were like the private and crown manors in terms of their acreage and work organization. People within this system were workers (carrying out their tasks), often alienated from those places and landscapes where they were living. In addition, class divisions were brought in: they were considered workers in sovhozes, not farmers, in other words they were compared to those working in factories. It should be noted that the Latvian historian Edgars Dunsdorfs (Dunsdorfs, 1983), who lived in the diaspora, spoke of red manors in this context.

Creation of planned rural villages in the 1970s and 1980s, concentration of people into villages is also a reversible inheritance. This could especially be said about Latgale, as people there only left their villages about 50 years ago (farmstead names did not even get a chance to be consolidated in many places during this time).

Other reversible inheritance took place through land reform after the renewal of nation's independence, when properties were returned against the background of the previous period's reorganization, and they were just as small, if not even smaller, than those gained during the land reform of the first independence period.

Currently, the reversible inheritance trends are expressed in relation to manors, but only to the preserved buildings in their

former centres. A new attitude can be seen in contrast to the dominating negative attitudes (at least during the 20th century) of former times (as the manor personified negative aspects of the previous centuries) — manors are becoming places to relax, even homes. At the same time, the manor buildings where schools were established after the 1920s–1930s land reforms, are being abandoned and are beginning to deteriorate.

The pace of landscape development also provides evidence for the fact that new landscape development took place at the same time as inheritance, stimulated by the pace of overall social and economic development, new knowledge and possibilities and new forms of activity. In essence, the new landscapes developed on the background of the previous ones, bringing new objects into them, changing the previous spatial structure and visual pattern. This was already discussed previously.

“ ‘Change and recurrence’ — in these words the history of the Universe as well as that of individual people and nations is stated” — this was written by German writer and publicist Garlībs Merķelis (Merķelis, 1969) at the end of the 18th century, a person who lived in Latvia, and whose work and conclusions influenced public opinion, not only during his lifetime but also afterwards.

Territorial/spatial view

Previously we looked at the pace of landscape development from the historical point of view. In this context, landscape as an object is associated more with a fluid process, with facts, and only through thoughts — could specific places be different for each of us. But landscapes are spatial formations, or in cartographic expression — territorial formations. They form an uninterrupted surface, the pattern of which depends both on environmental circumstances and on territorial features of people's activities.

Such a view is related to landscape as a space/territory, to its delimitation from other landscapes. That is how we encounter the main problem — various landscape scales and dimensions exist here. Such problems will be differently solved in academic research and planning tasks, for example, also in landscape protection projects.

Quite a while ago I could not keep away from thinking about what the transition could be like from the overall point of view — in landscape history's period of flux, without the attachments of a specific place — to a territorial/spatial view. In the 1970s and 1980s, landscape research saw promotion, both in relation to landscape ecology (mainly rural landscapes) and to landscape protection (nature and national parks were established as well as areas of landscape to be protected). The goal set for the research established that landscapes should be viewed as spaces/territories, that people/people's activity should not be excluded from them. It turned out that academic landscape research methods did not really support this goal, which was based more on descriptions of environmental conditions (this, in turn, was to a large degree determined by the dominating political doctrines). That is why various methods were tried out, however, in concordance with the practical direction of the research. Without delving deeply into specific aspects, I will focus on only two main conclusions.

First, landscapes are such obvious formations that the characteristic features and differences of their pattern are easily perceived by nearly every person, and that is why it is possible to use simple approaches, including typological ones.

Second, people are closely connected to places (notably, currently this connection has become weaker, but it still exists virtually, in one's thoughts), and that is why it is possible (and even necessary) to focus one's attention on the landscape of a specific place,

its history, which in reality is a person's landscape.

In discussions with people I have come to learn that the feeling for landscapes is not the same for everyone — there are hills and plains people, valley and sea coast people. For example, in Kurzeme, those who live further from the coast are called *arāji* (ploughmen), but those who live by the sea *jūrmalnieki* (beach people) (in the Liv language, *rāndalist*). It is possible that the archetypal connection with the landscape in which many generations live and also take part in its creation, appears in this way.

Conclusion

In the previously demonstrated landscapes development scheme the time scale is open in both directions — both in the deepest past and into the distant future. What meaning does the present — or time, or place have? The present — these are also real landscapes, which exist now and in various ways interact with people, with society, create conceptions, attitudes. They imply simultaneously the landscape as a whole and each specific, separate landscape as a space, as a place. Landscapes are simultaneously old and new. In their own way they reflect generational relationships, and in this sense one can talk of landscapes as an inheritance. This means a certain responsibility, and how should this be understood in the context of landscape change?

Contemplation about real landscapes, their meaning for today's society, about the old and the new in them, was especially motivated by a specific example. The discussion was about the landscape space by Viešūra Lake in Vidzeme, which has attracted attention in recent years with provocative new development. I have known the mentioned landscape for almost 50 years. Its old visual structure and its changes have remained in my memory. This is all supplemented by archival history facts, plus — here they become real and present. I perceived changes

in the landscape as self-evident; they reflected events over time, and the landscape in truth became an evidence of these. Furthermore, the specific landscape space is located in a specially protected territory, the aim of which was direct protection of the landscape. This was through my initiative in the 1970s.

But all this changed at the moment when a real conflict developed between the interests of nature protection and new development. The crux of it — dissatisfaction arose in the community with the changes happening to the landscape and their scope. The existing laws on nature protection, which stated that substantially transforming the characteristic landscape is not permitted, were used as the motivator. Discussions about the meaning of the words “substantially transforming” and a “characteristic landscape” are still continuing.

A number of questions arose, which are not only of a practical, operational nature, but are much deeper. In reality the discussion is about landscape history research, about its interpretation and effect on today's practices, as well as about the responsibility of researchers. This particularly applies to concepts of landscape protection, which only seem simple on the surface. For example — to ban or allow some activities — moreover using only today's view in relation to the currently observable landscape without evaluating its historical and ecological context. Consequently — the discussion again is about activity, only this is not a

real activity in the landscape, but in some way a normative, institutionalized activity (prescribed by legislation!).

Returning to the time scale of landscape development, I'd like to draw reader's attention to openness in the future direction, which means continuation, new approaches and research methods. Perhaps signs have already appeared in today's real landscapes which provide evidence of the fact that we can expect great changes in the future? Perhaps new generations of researchers will evaluate the past 20 years in Latvia — a dynamic, crucial, at times unpredictable time of change — as only a transition period towards some other more stable time? These are the questions.

Again — “change and recurrence”.

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