
Series Editor Preface

Landforms and landscapes vary enormously across the Earth, from high mountains to endless plains. At a smaller scale, nature often surprises us creating shapes which look improbable. Many physical landscapes are so immensely beautiful that they receive the highest possible recognition—they hold the status of World Heritage Sites. Apart from often being immensely scenic, landscapes tell stories which not uncommonly can be traced back in time for tens of million years and include unique geological events such as meteorite impacts. In addition, many landscapes owe their appearance and harmony not solely to the natural forces. For centuries, and even millennia, they have been shaped by humans, who have modified hill slopes, river courses and coastlines, and erected structures which often blend with the natural landforms to form inseparable entities.

These landscapes are studied by geomorphology—‘the science of scenery’—a part of earth sciences that focuses on landforms, their assemblages, surface and subsurface processes that moulded them in the past and that change them today. To show the importance of geomorphology in understanding the landscape, and to present the beauty and diversity of the geomorphological sceneries across the world, we have launched a book series called *World Geomorphological Landscapes*. It aims to be a scientific library of monographs that present and explain physical landscapes, focusing on both representative and uniquely spectacular examples. Each book will contain details on geomorphology of a particular country or a geographically coherent region. This volume presents the impressive geodiversity of the Czech Republic. This Central European country may seem small but it hosts a very wide range of landscapes and landforms, the origin of which can be traced back to the Mesozoic. Among geomorphic highlights of the Czech Republic are block-faulted mountains with elevated planation surfaces and the evidence of past mountain glaciation, karst plateaus, deep fluvial canyons, astounding ‘rock cities’ in sandstone, flysch mountain ranges affected by huge landslides, and many others. They are presented and illustrated through carefully selected 25 examples from the entire country.

The *World Geomorphological Landscapes* series is produced under the scientific patronage of the International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG)—a society that brings together geomorphologists from all around the world. The IAG was established in 1989 and is an independent scientific association affiliated with the International Geographical Union (IGU) and the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS). Among its main aims are to promote geomorphology and to foster dissemination of geomorphological knowledge. I believe that this lavishly illustrated series, which keeps to the scientific rigour, is the most appropriate means to fulfil these aims and to serve the geoscientific community. To this end, my great thanks go to Tomáš Pánek and Jan Hradecký for agreeing to coordinate this volume. I am also very grateful to all individual authors who accepted invitations to contribute and delivered fine contributions which collectively show how varied and geomorphologically rich even a relatively small country can be.

For me, to write the preface to the Czech Republic volume is of particular pleasure. Living just across the border, I consider this country—within an easy reach of a day trip—as part of my homeland. I was fortunate to be able to see many geomorphological landscapes of this

country myself and even to carry out some research. A little evidence of this involvement is my own modest contribution to this volume, regarding the granite landscape of Jizerské hory, in the northern part of the country.

I hope that the book will convince the readers that a little geomorphological paradise is located right in the heart of Europe.

Piotr Migoń

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