

*Marián Žabenský, Silvia Letavajová und Jaroslav Čukan: Die deutsche kulturelle Minderheit in Deutsch Proben (Nitrianske Pravno) und Umgebung. (Schriften zur Kulturwissenschaft, Bd. 130.) Verlag Dr. Kovač. Hamburg 2023. 95 S., Ill., Kt. ISBN 978-3-339-13800-2. (€ 59,90.)* – The temporal disparity of the arrival of different groups of German population led to the geographical heterogeneity of the German settlement in Slovakia. In general, three basic settlement areas (Bratislava and surroundings, Hauerland, Spiš) were formed on Slovak territory, which were inhabited by a significant number of the Slovak Germans. From the title of the publication itself, it is obvious that its authors focus on the former settlement area of Hauerland (also called Kremnitz-Deutschproben Sprachinsel), which was located in central Slovakia. The subjects of the research are the specific sites of Nitrianske Pravno (Deutsch Proben, Deutschproben; until 1946 slowak. Nemecké Pravno), Solka (Bettelsdorf), Vyšehradné (Beneschhau), Malinová (Zeche), Chvojníca (Fundstollen), Tužina (Schmiedshau), and Kľačno (Gaidel). After the obligatory introduction, containing a summary of the main objectives, methodological and theoretical approaches and definitions of selected concepts that are further worked with in the monograph, the core of the publication is followed by three chapters, which are logically connected to each other and thus form a relatively coherent mosaic of the studied issues. The key ambition of the authors is to create an interdisciplinary work, which in its interdisciplinary complexity draws on geography, cultural geography, cultural history, cultural studies, ethnology and even geology. The first chapter describes the historical genesis of the German settlement of the studied area from the earliest times to the rapid demise of the settlement after the end of World War II. On the basis of the available materials (written sources, secondary literature) it is evident that the historical beginnings of German settlement in the wider surroundings of Nemecké Pravno date back to the fourteenth century. The very arrival of migrants from German-speaking countries was related to the exploitation of the country's natural resources (wood, minerals). Similarly, the authors describe in this chapter the theme of seasonal work abroad undertaken by the German population of the Hauerland, which was prompted by the stagnation of the local economy and the decline of the feudal system during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The second chapter focuses on the resettlement and expulsion of the German population after 1945. In this chapter, the authors work with the theoretical concepts of collective memory and cultural trauma, using oral history. The interviews thus provide an historical excursion into a dramatic period during which families were separated, lives and property were lost, people suffered persecution by state authorities and, last but not least, the German settlement suddenly disappeared. The final chapter describes the current status and selected cultural elements of the studied areas. The authors admit that nowadays, the former almost purely German settlement area is generally assimilated by the surrounding population of Slovak origin. This led to a gradual loss of German identity for most of the families who remained living in Slovakia after World War II. An integral part of both ethnic and local (German) identity was the language, or rather a specific German dialect. The authors can show that the use of the specific dialect has almost disappeared from the public life of the local population and its knowledge is limited to only a few members of the older generation. The preservation of German tradition in the area is mainly the responsibility of local museums and the cooperation of individuals or groups with the Carpathian-German Association. Using a wide range of theoretical and methodological approaches, the monograph offers an interdisciplinary perspective on the topic of the German population in Slovakia. The main positive aspect of the publication is that its authors offer a relatively comprehensive view of the historical development, cultural processes and the current state of the former German localities in the area of Nemecké Pravno without romanticization. Its content can also serve as a teaching aid or a tourist-historical guide.

Tрнава

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