

TOPOGRAPHY

1. Landform, relief; 2. branch of geography, which describes and examines the shape of the earth's surface, relief and other observable celestial bodies; 3. in a literary work, a variation of the description of a particular place that is especially common in a realistic novel; the type of map of the world presented. (Latin *topographia*, Greek *topographein*; *topos* - place, *graphos* - description)

Topography in a broader, geographical sense describes vegetation characteristic of a given area, anthropogenic features (related to human activity), also elements of local culture (especially those visible in works or objects influencing the character of the area – e.g. village buildings, type of buildings, sculptures in the forest, bridges, etc.) or history. The purpose of topography is to define the geographical position of selected places (objects), their longitude and latitude, altitude above sea level, determine distances and angles of inclination, name, identify and indicate types of places, identify and describe typical landscape or plant vegetation features typical for a given place. An auxiliary science of topography is cartography, which creates topographic maps (graphical representations of terrain forms together with collections of systematised information on the surface of the earth, its natural features and those created by the hand of humans). These maps usually show the contour lines of the described object, provide information about water reservoirs, river lines (indicating their location in three dimensions, i.e. depth, in the case of hills – indicating the height), forest area, built-up area and other features of interest.

The topography of the city is called the city plan, which consists of a street network, a plan of buildings and structures important for orientation in the city (churches, monuments, hospitals, museums, etc.), a transport network to facilitate movement (e.g. tram and bus lines, etc.).

Topography can be an auxiliary science for other sciences (and areas of human activity), e.g. describing the dependence of economy types or demographic conditions on the terrain or following the processes of human adaptation to the environment.

Topography is connected with the phenomenon of topographical experience, meaning commitment, abandonment of the viewpoint in favour of "entering" the landscape, experiencing the landscape with all senses (not only visually), inhabiting, creating the area (Frydryczak). Thanks to topographical experience, the area ceases to be a view and acquires social, cultural and private meanings. Topography in this sense refers to the recognition of directions and places, filling them with content, entwining the area with a grid of senses, although on the map they can still be read as objectively existing, specific points in space. Understood in this way, it helps us to orient ourselves in the field, creates a mental map ("in the head" map).

[M. G.]

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