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8 RESUMÉ

The Beginnings of Mediaeval Colonization of the Bohemian Section of the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands (Excursus: Prehistoric Agricultural Finds in Pelhřimov and Jihlava Districts)

Prehistory

Although the observed area situated between Bohemia and Moravia does not count among “traditional” settlement ones, the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands bear witness to human existence from early prehistory onwards.

The earliest finds come from the Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic. The most frequent among them are Neolithic and Eneolithic artefacts, followed by finds from late prehistory. To this day, no finds from the early Middle Ages have been recorded. Naturally, the amount of information corresponds to the state of research. Thanks to the efforts of archaeologists and local collectors willing to share information, the collection of finds has been steadily expanding.

The Palaeolithic and Mesolithic finds might be interpreted as evidence of hunters’ points. The Světlá nad Sázavou – Na Bradle location with a collection of 171 items of chipped industry makes a convincing example; another large collection of stone chipped industry comes from Horní Cerekev. From the Neolithic onwards, some finds can be possibly interpreted as evidence of seasonal grazing and the driving of cattle to remote pastures. The occurrence of prehistoric artefacts at locations that are not quite convenient for agriculture outside the Czech Republic (the Alps, Schwarzwald) is often explained in this manner.

Another interpretation might be associated with the acquisition of materials for the manufacture of stone chipped tools, as was the case of the settlement near Kněžice (Jihlava district)¹.

In late prehistory, the exploitation of secondary sources of gold in the Pacov and Humpolec regions cannot be ruled out. This speculation is supported by the connection between Hallstatt and La Tene finds and gold deposits. Yet any reliable evidence concerning prehistoric gold mining is missing.

A change in the exploitation of the observed area probably did not occur until the early Middle Ages, or at least there exist written records from this period that give a more precise idea of the region’s past. Until the late 1230s, when the mining of polymetallic ores started in the Havlíčkův Brod and Jihlava regions, the observed area was only peripheral. The borderland between Bohemia and Moravia possibly resembled “a deep primeval forest that separated Bohemia from its sister, Moravia, in a broad belt, and was almost deserted, only illuminated by

several enclaves, guard posts and fortified places found chiefly along the existing routes“ (*Urban 2003*, 78). This fitting description, however, deserves a more detailed analysis. In the article, the subject is addressed through four theme circles that appear crucial for certain development phases of the observed region: Forest, Routes, Gold and Colonization.

Forest

Apart from timber and firewood the forest also provided resources that were no less important for the functioning of the society such as charcoal, tar, resin and honey. Cattle grazed in forests, and they were also used for hunting, a favourite pastime of medieval aristocracy. At the onset of colonization, the “military and defensive” function of the deep forest in the central sections of the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands, i.e. between Bohemia and Moravia, was still vital.

Systematic interference in forests accompanied colonization and occurred from the 12th century onwards. Thanks to environmental analyses it has been proved that mainly fir and beech forests were exploited in the earliest phase, in some cases also containing spruces and pines. The make-up of tree and plant species is reflected (relatively in accord with the results of environmental analyses) in the names of settlements recorded in 1203 – Buchowa, Smirchowecz (CDB II, p. 31, no. 33), as well as in 1226 – Bucow, Lizcowici, Wreznik and Borek (CDB II, p. 275, no. 281).

The shape of the landscape was fundamentally affected by activities associated with the mining and processing of polymetallic ores (from the late 1230s onward). A massive deforestation of the area over a short period of time is presumed, caused by demand for charcoal on the part of mining and metallurgy works.

Routes

Routes passing through the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands presumably existed since prehistory.

A more concrete picture arises in the 12th century. In all probability, the network of communications was even denser than can be proved today, and written records from the period only mention some of the routes.

A route known as *Haberská cesta* is probably the most popular communication conveyed by historical literature. Kosmas the chronicler described it in 1101 as “narrow and very constricted” (FRB II, 149). The importance of this route has recently been subject to new research. It appears that Kosmas’s comment can be indeed accepted for the 12th century and for the early 13th century, and *Haberská cesta* can be thus deleted from the list of the main land routes. Its importance only grew from the mid-13th century onwards when it came to link two

¹ Possible exploitation of local crystal by the Moravian Painted Ware culture has been pointed out (*Vokáč 2004*).

major mining centres, Jihlava and (Havlíčkův) Brod. The fact that the course of the *que vocatur Nahaber* route was employed in 1233 for the demarcation of the Borek forest border does not say much about its size and importance, nor about the frequency of movement on this route.

The same document from 1233 also features the *Humpolecká cesta* route, *via Humpolcensis, qua itur in Moraviam* (CDB III, pp. 43–44, no. 43), also demarcating the border of the Borek forest.

The *Želivská cesta* route, *antiqua via, que conducit ad Seleu*, is mentioned in 1178. This route marked the western border of the Svatavin újezd area (CDB I, no. 287, p. 253).

The Čáslav and Brno regions were linked by a communication referred to in literature as *Libická cesta* (*via Lubetina*). It is recorded in a document from the 1140s that also mentions people called *straz* whose duty was to maintain order on the route (CDB I, p. 164, no. 158).

Gold

The Bohemian-Moravian Highlands contain three main areas with the occurrence of primary and secondary deposits of gold: Humpolec, Pacov and Želetava regions. All of them were exploited in the past. In some cases (Želiv, Zlátenka) there exists a spatial connection between finds from late prehistory (Hallstatt, La Tene) and terrain relics of gold mining, yet no direct evidence of prehistoric mining is available.

The earliest evidence of gold mining in the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands has been revealed through the analysis of the profile of the Březina stream alluvial plain, in the Česká Bělá cadastral zone. A worked wooden plank was excavated in the depth of about two metres from the terrain level, possibly a part of mining equipment. Calibrated radiocarbon dating derived from a wood sample spans the years 1016–1155. The wood was found in a layer with gold. Although this unique find will have to be verified by excavations at further locations, it appears that the beginnings of gold mining in the region can be indeed placed in the 12th century.

The discovery of gold and the outset of its exploitation in the Želetava region are sought in the 12th century and the first third of the 13th century. A trunk of a silver fir (*Abies alba*) was found during research into a rampart in the Předín cadastral zone, the felling of which has been dendrochronologically dated to 1209. The layer also contained wood with traces of burning and possibly working.

Colonization

Systematic colonization of the Bohemian part of the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands started in the 1140s when the area also began to feature in written sources. The earliest colonized section was probably **Svatavin újezd**, reputedly donated to the **Vyšehrad Chapter** in Prague by Queen Svatava of Poland (1046/48–1126). The area is first mentioned as *circuitus* in 1178 (CDB I, no. 287, p. 253). The name *Svatavin újezd* is recorded in a document of 1352 in which King Charles IV confirms its holding to the Vyšehrad Chapter, and which also lists the locations on its territory. However, the document does not convey anything about the settlement of the area in

the 12th and 13th centuries. After 1219 the Vyšehrad Chapter acquired the territory neighbouring on Svatavin újezd, **újezd Zahradka** (*Zaradcham, et circuitus*, CDB II, no. 374, p. 409). The colonization of the area is evidenced, among other things, by the Church of St. Vitus in an eponymous location. Archaeological research has revealed two Romanesque construction phases on the site.

The Olomouc bishopric owned, before the mid-12th century, the **Libický újezd** area (*circuitus de Lubac*). Bishop Jindřich Zdík had Prince Vladislav II confirm, in a decree issued between 1146 and 1148, the bishopric's ownership of the area (CDB I, no. 158, pp. 163–165). The earliest building phase of the Church of St. Giles in Libice nad Doubravou is dated to the second half of the 12th century (*Škabrada–Smetánka 1975a*, 178–181, 238–239).

Větrný Jeníkov is another location associated with the Olomouc bishopric. According to the chronicler Jarloch, Bishop Jindřich Zdík spent Christmas 1149 there (FRB II, p. 490). Although Jarloch's writings do not mention whether the location was owned by the bishop or not, it would be hardly surprising. Let us note here that the Olomouc bishopric also held property in other locations in the Bohemian part of the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands. One example is a farmstead in Jezbořice (Chrudim district), purchased from Olomouc fief holders by Olomouc Bishop Jan II (1104–1126) in the early 12th century. Thanks to its convenient situation on a route between Bohemia and the Olomouc region it could play the part of a travelling station (CDB I, no. 115, p. 121; *Žemlička 2002*, 158). Another episcopal farmstead on the Czech side of the borderland was Lozice u Luže, where the latest research has placed the ambush of Jindřich Zdík in 1145 (*Bolina 2003*). This opens up a space for speculations concerning the Olomouc bishop's involvement in the protection of the eastern border of the Czech principedom in the 1140s (in the case of Libický újezd the existence of guards is explicitly mentioned).

The history of settlement in the **Želiv** area goes back before the mid-12th century. An eponymous location, újezd Želiv,² is recorded as *predium Seleu* in a document of 1144 (CDB I, no. 138, p. 142). *Predium Seleu* was originally owned by a Czech prince who donated it, together with unspecified facilities, to the Prague bishopric, as a compensation for the loss of Podivín. The Prague bishop established a **Benedictine monastery** in Želiv in the same year (the Benedictines were replaced by the **Premonstratensians** in 1149). The area on which the monastery complex was built had possibly not been completely deserted; there probably existed an earlier settlement around a farmstead. The colonization of the area thus started in 1144 at the latest, and its outcome is illustrated by a document of Pope Honorius III from 1226 that lists 64 toponyms. Locations colonized before 1226 were predominantly connected with the Želivka river, Hejnický potok and Jankovský potok streams (including their tributaries). The main European watershed was transgressed, and the River Jihlava came to demarcate the land border in 1226. Thirty seven locations can be identified with contemporary towns and villages, i.e. they can be easily located in today's cadastres. However, it is obvious that not all of the locations mentioned

2 The term *újezd, circuitus*, only comes from Jarloch (FRB II, p. 489).

in the pope's document are situated in the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands. The majority of the identified locations are found at 500–600m above sea level, yet some also lie at 600m. It is currently unfeasible to determine which locations came into existence through Benedictine colonization (1144–1149), which through Premonstratensian colonization (1149–1226) and which had been part of the 1144 donation.

Červená Řečice, situated approximately 4km south-west of Želiv, probably became the central Prague bishopric holding in this part of the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands in 1144. A skeletal burial ground with graves containing S-shaped rings excavated in the courtyard of the Červená Řečice castle does not rule out an earlier, now non-existent, sacred building that might have been part of an episcopal administration centre. The territory presumably held by the Prague bishopric chiefly includes the settlement area south of Pelhřimov. This supposition is based on a document issued on the occasion of the consecration of the Church of St. Lawrence in **Rynárec** in 1203 (CDB II, no. 33, p. 31). 19 locations can be more or less exactly placed. On the other hand, the question of the age of the Church of St. Vitus in **Pelhřimov** has not been clearly answered. Although an earlier settlement by a ford can be presumed, the construction of a church is placed in the period around the mid-13th century.

The establishment of a Benedictine monastery in **Vilémov** is sought in the 12th century (its existence is confirmed in 1160). There is not much information about the property situation of the monastery from its establishment until the first half of the 13th century. The monastery probably participated in the colonization of the Železné Hory mountains in the **Bojanovský újezd** area.

The **Order of the Teutonic Knights** owned property in the observed area in the first third of the 13th century. The order possibly built the Church of St. Nicholas in **Humpolec** and the Church of St. John the Baptist in **Jihlava** (the latter included an infirmary). The order sold both buildings and several villages in the Jihlava region to the Premonstratensians in Želiv in 1233. The Teutonic Knights returned to the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands in 1242 when they acquired from Jan of Polná, apart from patronage over the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Polná, the territory of the Slubický les forest, where they established a dominion with a centre in **Krucemburk** (the order held the territory until 1321). In the case of the Slubický les forest, the mid-13th century colonization reached areas situated 550m above sea level and higher.

Apart from the Premonstratensians from Želiv, Premonstratensians from the monastery in **Znojmo-Louka** were active on the Bohemian side of the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands. In 1227 they bought, from the Bitov demesne administrator Petr, **Lovětínský újezd** (*circuitum quendam nomine Lovetin*, CDB II, no. 305, pp. 303–304) spreading between Lovětín in the east and Kamenice nad Lipou in the west.

Activities of aristocratic families also played an important part in the colonization of the area, alongside church institutions. They are demonstrated, for example, by the architecture of churches employing Romanesque building elements. This category includes Jan of Polná who probably constructed the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in **Polná** (the church positively existed in 1242 when its patronage passed to the Order of the Teutonic Knights). The seat of the nobleman

Nimír (Nimirus de Posna) mentioned in 1235 (CDB III/1, no. 103, p. 122) is possibly associated with **Pošná**, near Pacov, and the Church of St. Bartholomew. Bedřich of **Hořepník** (Bedrich de Horupnik, CDB IV/1, no. 240, p. 413) and Markvart of **Onšov** (Markwart de Onsov, CDB IV/1, no. 240, p. 413) are mentioned in 1252. Rapota of **Buřenice** was appointed Prague Castle burgrave in 1279.

Another group comprises stone churches the builders of which are unknown: the Church of St. Wenceslas in **Chřenovice** consecrated in 1227–1236, the Church of St. Vojtěch in **Havlíčkův Brod**, possibly from the second half of the 12th century, the Church of St. James the Greater in **Křeč** (around 1240), the Church of St. James the Greater in **Chotěboř** (second quarter of the 13th century), and probably also the Gothic Church of St. Bartholomew in **Hněvkovice** featuring a Romanesque window from the second half of the 12th century. The Church of St. Mary Magdalene in **Pařížov** (second half of the 12th century) and the Church of St. John the Baptist in **Běstvína** (second quarter of the 12th century) situated beyond the Vysočina Region border might have been constructed by the aristocracy, and might have also belonged to larger settlement units.

The merging of colonists from Bohemia and Moravia – and the first known property disputes – occurred on the River Jihlava as early as the 1220s–1230s (see the dispute over the Borek forest). Several years later, at the end of the 1230s, silver was discovered in the Highlands, giving rise to an influx of new settlers. Towns were established in proximity of some earlier settlements and the settlement network became denser. This marked the beginning of the final phase of transformation that started in the area a hundred years before.