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**Břeclav - Pohansko VII., The church cemetery in the north-eastern suburb : summary**

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# Břeclav – Pohansko VII.

## The Church Cemetery in the North-eastern Suburb

### Summary

The excavation of the church cemetery in the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko near Břeclav took place between 2008 and 2012 as part of long-term systematic research into the site which is considered to be on a par with the most important centres of Great Moravia. The field work followed after the unexpected and surprising discovery of an early medieval rotunda which is the second religious structure to be uncovered at Pohansko (Macháček – Balcárková – Čáp *et al.* 2014).

The new research activities in the north-eastern suburb can be divided into three main excavation areas – the Great Moravian rotunda, the church cemetery and the adjoining residential and/or production precinct of the whole settlement area. So far, the greatest attention has been paid to the church which, after the quarter of a century that has passed since the last similar find, augmented the unique and historically valuable group of the earliest religious and stone-wall architecture within the territory of the Czech Republic. The discovery has been comprehensively covered by a number of dedicated studies (Čáp – Dresler – Macháček *et al.* 2010; Macháček 2011; Macháček – Balcárková – Čáp *et al.* 2014). The excavation of the settlement related to the church has not yet been completed and as such is only marginally mentioned in this monograph. The main focus is aimed at the cemetery where excavation work finished in 2012. The necropolis falls within the category of church cemeteries as defined by Bořivoj Dostál (Dostál 1966, 15–17), and thus belongs to the group of the most valuable funeral heritage monuments from the period of Great Moravia. Its publication signifies the end of the second stage of the most recent archaeological research in the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko.

The principal aim of the present book is to publish the complete archaeological field documentation which together with the description of finds constitutes the content of an extensive catalogue. This forms the core of the whole monograph. However, alongside the above mentioned data the reader will also find an analytical and a synthetic section in the book. Detailed descriptions analyse in particular the funeral rites, the individual categories of artefacts and the vertical and horizontal spatial relationships in the cemetery. The completed analyses are followed by a final synthesis of the data.

During our research we strove to come to an understanding of the broader historical context behind the origins of the Christian church, the purpose of this shrine, social characteristics of the community, which buried its dead inside and around the church and, last but not least, to provide a detailed timeline of the events. The concrete research goals were formulated in several basic questions:

In what period did burials take place in the surroundings of the rotunda in the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko and how precisely can this interval be defined in terms of relative and absolute chronology?

What was the social status of the community which buried its dead at the rotunda?

Are we able to identify the inner social structure of this community?

What was the role of the north-eastern suburb with the church and a cemetery within the whole of the Great Moravian agglomeration at Pohansko? What purpose did the rotunda serve?

Can we link the archaeological features uncovered in the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko with concrete social processes taking place in early medieval Europe – such as the establishment of the oldest dynasties of local aristocracy?

The book is the result of a collaborative effort by a great number of colleagues involved in the research from Masaryk University in Brno and other institutions in the Czech Republic and abroad. Archaeological excavation directly on the site was carried out by the staff and students of the Institute of Archaeology and Museology at

the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University as part of practical instruction in field excavation, with financial support from the research project of the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic, reg. No. P405/12/0111, and specific research tasks of Masaryk University. The research was also greatly contributed to by foreign expeditions – the University of Florida (USA) led by Professor Florin Curta and Czech American Archaeological Field School led by Dr. Michael Dietz and Dr. John Staeck from the College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn (USA).

### **The characteristics of the church cemetery in the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko near Břeclav**

The north-eastern suburb, where the studied cemetery is situated at Pohansko, forms an oval, slightly raised area (ca 2,7 ha), surrounded by cut-off meanders of the Dyje and its floodplain. It is the northern protrusion of a sandy-gravel elevation, strongly affected by the erosive action of the Dyje, which flows around and through the whole of Pohansko from south to north. The suburb is separated from the central part of the agglomeration by a destroyed fortification. Within the north-eastern suburb, the second church and the cemetery precinct are situated on a slight elevation being the third highest point at Pohansko after the first church in the Magnate Court and the eastern part of the suburb excavated earlier.

With its 152 graves (and 154 buried individuals) the cemetery falls within the group of large cemeteries from the Middle Hillfort Period (*Dostál 1966*, 10). The excavated set of skeletal remains was perfectly preserved and particularly the skeletons of adult individuals were lifted with a minimum of damage or absence of parts of the skeleton. It was thanks to this very good state of preservation that the set of skeletons became the subject of intensive anthropological research, which until then concentrated on the anthropological and taphonomic characteristics of the population on the site. In total we identified 97 non-adult and 58 adult individuals. The largest percentage established was the Infans Ib category (i.e. between 1 and 6,9 years of life; totalling 34% individuals). The second most frequent category was the group of adults between 35 and 49,5 years of life (totalling 19%). On the contrary, the least numerous group were finds from the foetal period, i.e. from conception to birth (1%). The demographic profile obtained of the age of the individuals from the cemetery at the second church does not essentially deviate from the age structure observed in cemeteries at other locations at Pohansko. Sex estimation was carried out in 88% of cases. It shows that male graves have a higher frequency in the cemetery at the second church (56%) than female graves (44%) – with a resulting ratio of roughly 1,12. However, their ratio does not significantly deviate from equal frequencies of men and women. Therefore, it does not seem that it would be significantly biased to the benefit of a particular sex, although based on the statistical data in today's population the representation of men and women is reversed.

Regarding the total extent of the cemetery we can state that it has been almost completely exposed. It covers an area of roughly 710 m<sup>2</sup>, whereby from north to south it measures ca 35 m and from east to west about 25 m. It is oriented alongside the main axis of the church which runs from SW to NE. The majority of the graves also observe this direction. When burials started there the cemetery precinct was probably delimited by an enclosure of which only the palisade trench has been preserved. During the research only parts of it were identified and explored. The examined and hypothetically reconstructed corners of the trench lead towards the main points of the compass. The trench has the shape of a trapezium with sides of 20 m (SE), 19 m (SW), 18 m (NW) and 15 m (NE) and a total area of ca 336 m<sup>2</sup>. The graves are situated both inside and outside this area, respecting its north-western and south-eastern border. However, the south-western and north-eastern boundary is overlapped by several graves, which means that the enclosure served its function only in the earlier phases of the existence of the cemetery.

A rectangular shape of pit clearly dominated in the graves. By their dimensions they usually match the size of the corpse. Exceptions occur very rarely at the cemetery, but when they do they are very conspicuous, such as the unusually big pits (the largest in the cemetery) with a woman interred without grave goods (H 154), in a prestigious location next to the southern wall of the church. She was very likely in direct relationship with the men and children from the interior of the rotunda. In the cemetery around the second church we register several types of grave pit construction utilizing stone and wood as the basic materials. The intentional adjustment of grave pits include complete or nearly complete stone lining around the grave perimeter (27x), lining of the pit with human bones (1x together in combination with stone), stone cases (2x), flat stone cover (five confirmed covers) and a wooden improvement of the bottom in the form of a pad/board (13x), on which either the corpse or a wooden case were laid. Only in four cases are the structures mixed, specifically stones with the negative of a wooden construction (2x), stones in combination with human bones (1x) and a stone cover with the negative of a wooden structure (1x). A combination of grave pit constructions with the primary hollow space (7x) is much more frequent. Graves containing inner construction are mostly concentrated close to the rotunda.

A particular characteristic of the cemetery in the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko is the stone covers of the grave pits. A stone cover or its probable occurrence were identified in the majority of cases only north of the rotunda. Graves with a clearly outlined stone cover included five occurrences. In nine graves the find context was not quite clear, such as where the stone structure lay between two graves and partly overlapped both or where there is doubt that the cover was intentional. Another category contains graves in which the hypothetical stone cover was determined based on the reconstruction of the Great Moravian walk-on horizon by means of overlaying the individual digitised documentation levels (seven graves). The graves with a stone cover (and the nine unclear cases) were oriented mostly in the infrequently occurring W–E direction.

The dominant internment in the cemetery at the second church in the north-eastern suburb is the standard position on the back with arms alongside the body and the lower limbs stretched out. Deviations which are tolerated within the definition of the standard position include flexing in the elbow, different variants of arm placement or slight bending in the knees and various directions of the feet in the lower limbs. The only clear exception is the woman from grave H 84 situated north of the church who lay on her right side with slightly flexed lower limbs.

During the research on the necropolis we discovered reverently buried human bones, interred regardless of anatomical order, which originated from graves disrupted by a later burial. They are secondary burials of human remains. A total of seven similar contexts were identified in the cemetery, but only in five of them can we speak of an intentional secondary burial. In the remaining two cases bones from an earlier burial were pushed to the side of the grave pit which was re-used for a new burial or the bones from a disrupted older grave were used for the construction of the grave pit of a new burial. The phenomenon of secondary burials in the form of a bone deposit has also been observed in other early medieval cemeteries. They occur more often in church cemeteries where the space for burials was more restricted, and therefore the older graves could be disrupted more frequently, but they are also observed in the rural cemeteries. The occurrence of the bone deposits in the cemeteries from the end of the 9th and in the 10th century may be connected with the influence of Christian teachings on funeral rites. Respectful behaviour to the remains of people from a given community became a custom.

However, the cemetery also yielded so-called pagan elements in the funeral rites, among which we count the presence of a vessel in the grave, which may have held food offerings in the form of a beverage or meal. A total of five graves with a pot were identified in the north-eastern suburb. Pottery was part of the grave goods of two children, two men and one woman. High-quality pottery turned on a potter's wheel was found in two graves. Low-quality inferior fired goods were unearthed in three graves. From certain indications it is possible to propose the hypothesis that pottery serving merely as a container of food offerings was produced solely for the funerary purposes, while pottery used in the rituals during a burial came from standard kitchenware and after the end of the ceremony was ritually damaged.

Artefacts were found in the cemetery around the rotunda at Pohansko in 66 graves, which represent 43% of all 154 burials. However, we can mark objects from only 61 graves (39,6%) as intentional gifts or part of the costume of the deceased individual, supposing we disregard more or less random finds from the grave pit fill.

The most valuable finds include jewellery – in particular earrings. In the church cemetery of the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko we found 38 ear-rings, or temple rings, 18 of them made of silver and 20 of bronze (in five cases gilded bronze), originating from 16 graves. From the typological-chronological and material point of view the earrings can be classified into three groups: magnificent silver or bronze gilded jewellery of the so-called Veligrad type (earlier also described as Byzantine-Oriental), simpler bronze jewellery of the Danubian type and silver temple rings.

Typical Great Moravian jewellery is represented by gombiks. In the church cemetery of the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko the finds included ten of them in six graves, or eleven items if we accept that a small lead button (3,9% of all burials) is a gombik. According to their material the new finds at Pohansko can be divided into two basic groups – metal gombiks (six or seven items) and glass gombiks (four items). The metal items were made of bronze/copper with a lower content of tin (up to 2–4%), in four cases decorated by gilding. One small button was made of tin.

The jewellery found in the graves in the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko was subjected to specialized material analyses. We applied two basic methods: X-Ray Fluorescence Spectrometry (XRF) and Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM). Thanks to the employment of up-to-date analytical methods (XRF, SEM) we managed to identify several important trends in the technologies used in the making of jewellery. It shows that the same material was used in the making of typologically identical jewellery found in a single grave. Apparently it reflects the specific production of the individual workshops and its transformations over time. In silver jewellery one

of the key criteria is the content of gold in silver alloys. Among the jewellery made of copper and its alloys we also identified – alongside almost pure metal – bronze and lead, or tin, brass. A special phenomenon is gilding. Mercury, which accompanied gold in all cases, clearly indicates that the jewellery was gilded by fire using amalgam – an alloy of mercury and gold. We also succeeded in providing evidence of the use of hard silver solder. The typology and the material and the technological analysis suggest a remarkable correspondence between jewellery from early Přemyslid Bohemia and jewellery from Pohansko, which is due to similar dating and the cultural links between both regions.

The site also yielded 24 glass beads of two basic types: they are either representatives of the large heterogeneous group of segmented beads and olive-shaped beads. In the fill of grave H 133 we registered another, less frequent type – a monochrome small disc bead. A rarity is a small biconical bead made of radiolarial marlstone turned limestone, hence a material which was used for making stone whorls at Pohansko.

Other finds were connected with the faith of the deceased, or served as apotropaic protection. The only find in grave H 134, a lead pendant in the form of a cross, is of extraordinary significance. The pendant has the shape of a simple Latin cross with rounded ends of the crossbar. A small oval hanging eye is situated on the top of the vertical bar. An iron kaptorga (amulet container) was part of the grave goods of a non-adult individual from grave H 95. It was a small case worn around the neck – part of a necklace assembled from glass segmented and olive-shaped beads which was accompanied by two pendants from tertiary fossil shells. The cemetery around the second church in the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko also contained jingle bells as grave goods of a child (Infant Ib) from grave 197. They may have worked as an amulet protecting the bearer against evil forces, black magic or spirits.

Men's grave goods tend to include weapons and parts of riding gear. Among the important Great Moravian necropolises the cemetery at the rotunda in the north-eastern suburb at Pohanska is rather below average with regard to these finds. None of the graves yielded a sword and the militaria are represented solely by two axes. Even strap-ends are absent although in Moravia they were important symbols of the male elite. Only horsemen with spurs are represented more frequently, their four graves constituting 2,6% of all burials. In three graves the spurs were originally situated in a functional position on the feet of the dead. They were complemented by metalwork from the spur belt fittings. In grave H 168 the spurs were laid out of their working position. According to the traditional scheme, the spurs from the cemetery near the rotunda can be classified into two basic categories: the majority belong to the common type IA, but one pair represents a chronologically important group of spurs with long pricks. Spurs with pricks of extraordinary length (4,3 – 5 cm) from grave H 105 in the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko are exceptional in other aspects as well. In the grave they were combined with a nomadic axe. Apart from the shank set into the arch of the yoke, which is the longest of all the Great Moravian examples known to us, they also feature unique plates (ends of yokes) of slim shield-like shape, decorated with moulded ribs. So far there has not been any parallel known from our territory. We have, however, exact analogies in Slovenia – from the hillfort at Gradišče nad Bašljem.

The two axes from graves H 60 and H 105 represent the only examples of weapons in the cemetery. The axe from grave H 60 is a typical Great Moravian bearded axe and belongs to type IB. The small axe from grave H 105 is a much more interesting weapon both chronologically and in broader cultural-historical terms. Its form makes it significantly different from the battle axes of the Great Moravians. It has a very short blade, but a relatively high trapezoid body and a straight symmetrical edge. The axe's length is merely 10,6 cm. X-ray imaging revealed that it was richly decorated on the surface. Given its shape and dimensions we might call it fokos – a specific type of the nomadic axe. From the 10th century onwards weapons of a similar nature appeared in Eastern Europe or even further where they travelled together with Euro-Asian nomads. Geographically the closest parallels to axes with a short trapezoid body can be found among the archaeological heritage from the Carpathian basin, where they are considered weapons from the period of the Hungarian conquest of the land.

The most frequently occurring finds include knives (37 items) found in 31 graves (20% of all graves). Cases interpreted as so-called “scalpels” were also classified as knives. Grave H 78 contained a bronze handle of a scalpel, while in grave H 95 there was probably an iron blade. In six examples the blades were identified as having fullers, which reduce the necessary quantity of the blade material used and improve its strength. The best-preserved fullers are on knives from grave H 114, which were plated with thin copper sheet-metal. They are two more examples belonging to the specific group of luxury knives, which are known to us from other locations within Pohansko and a few other early medieval sites confirmed as residences of contemporary elites.

Miscellaneous finds in the church cemetery in the north-eastern suburb comprise a graver with three tips, a metal needle and an antler box with a richly decorated surface. A very specific object is a flat bronze handle or case of trapezoid shape, which originates from grave H 166 in the interior of the rotunda. We are aware of

analogies of this object from various places at the eastern periphery of the Carolingian world. In Great Moravia, apart from Pohansko, two examples were also found in Mikulčice and one in Sady near Uherské Hradiště and in Rajhradice. One example comes from the Carpathian basin from a grave at the Church of Saint Hadrian in Zalávár. While the question concerning their function has not yet been resolved, it is obvious that the objects under discussion played an extraordinary role of great significance in the culture of Great Moravia as the find context suggests. They have been unearthed during excavations of sacred architecture and church cemeteries, often in graves situated in prestigious locations – in the interior (two cases) or immediately next to the outer wall of churches (two or three cases).

In some contexts there were textiles preserved in corrosion products of metal artefacts. Fragments of textile were identified in a total of 11 samples from seven graves. In a total of nine cases we managed to determine the type of weave. In six cases it was a plain weave, one was a linen weave with a pattern and traces of a 2/1 twill weave were identified on two objects. The raw material from which the cloth was made was successfully determined in three cases. For the first time we managed to identify textiles made from the fibres of nettles in the period of the Early Middle Ages within the Czech lands. The other materials were flax and wool.

### **In what period did burials take place in the surroundings of the rotunda in the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko and how precisely can this interval be defined in terms of relative and absolute chronology?**

The dating of the cemetery received special attention in our work. We tried to address this problem with the assistance of several different, mutually independent methods and afterwards compare their results. We started by field observations, in particular vertical and horizontal stratigraphy, which was important to relative chronology, and by the actual grave finds, which we dated *per analogiam*. For the validation of our results we used radiocarbon dating of skeletal remains.

On the site of the church cemetery in the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko we examined graves, settlement features and palisade grooves, which in many cases are in a mutual stratigraphic relationship. Among 154 graves in the cemetery only a third (56 graves) were free of any stratigraphic relationship. The other 98 graves were either disrupted by another grave, or they themselves disrupt a grave, a feature or a palisade trench. All graves respect the church foundations and there is not a single grave at any level that is overlapped by a settlement feature of a palisade trench from the Early Middle Ages. From the ground plan it is obvious that settlement features and palisade trenches are always superimposed by graves, and are therefore the oldest in the examined area. Based on the vertical stratigraphic relationships the overall development of the cemetery can be reconstructed in the following way. The oldest layer is made up of settlement features. The church foundations and the palisade trench of the cemetery enclosure are probably later, but a direct stratigraphic relationship between them and the settlement features (mostly pits) was not observed. We conclude they were in a mutual relationship only on the basis of the reconstructed trajectory of the trench in the north-eastern section, where the palisade hypothetically passed over settlement features 141 and 142. Another chronological layer on the site was formed by graves inside the enclosure, which stratigraphically belong to an older group of graves. It is followed by graves which superimposed this group, or disrupted the no longer functional enclosure of the cemetery.

For a discussion of the beginnings of the cemetery and during its synchronization with other parts of the residential agglomeration in Pohansko it is important that the graves always overlapped settlement pits. The dating is based on the logical premise that finds from the settlement features must be earlier than the graves superimposed over them. For the funeral activities in the north-eastern suburb we can determine the *terminus post quem* in this way. There were in total eleven settlement objects disrupted by the graves on the site (features n. 126, 130, 134, 137, 139, 141, 142, 144, 161, 162 and 163). Their dating is based primarily on pottery and a statistical method – Principal Component Analysis (PCA). By the factor score values all the datable features from the north-eastern suburb were classified as belonging either to the Prague-type culture or the Hillfort Period (SVP\_126) or the High Great Moravian phase (SVP\_130, SVP\_134, SVP\_137 and SVP\_142). With tolerable uncertainty we can also date some other features in which the small number of unearthed shards did not permit the application of a statistical method, thanks to the presence of characteristic pottery in their fill. The individual chronological periods had already been assigned absolute data earlier with the assistance of wider analogies and dendrochronological analyses. While the first group falls within the broad period from the 6th to the 8th/9th century, the High Great Moravian period is dated within the narrow interval between the last quarter of the 9th century and the beginning of the 10th century. Pottery of the so-called Mikulčice circle with

grooved lips, which is the leading type in this group, is dated in the same way in neighbouring Mikulčice. The above findings are important for assessing the funeral activities around the rotunda in the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko. They cannot be earlier than the given period. According to vertical stratigraphy and settlement pottery dating, people were buried there from the end of the 9th century or the beginning of the next century in several subsequent phases. As this finding suggests the cemetery at the rotunda existed towards the very end of Great Moravian Pohansko with a probable extension to the Post-Great Moravian period.

The modelling of the horizontal development of burials is based on the premise that the church was built first and only afterwards would people be buried inside and around it. At the beginning funeral activities took place within the cemetery enclosure. In the next phase the enclosure was broken through and burying continued further away in the surroundings. We classified stratigraphically later graves as the second phase, although some of them are situated in the vicinity of the church. The final phase of burials is represented by graves in the northern part of the cemetery with predominantly W-E orientation. These graves are not stratigraphically disrupted by those from the first or the second phase. In general it can be said that the spatial distribution of chronologically sensitive finds in the cemetery around the second church does not exhibit evidence of a development in terms of its area. The cemetery very likely existed for only a short period of time.

The dating of the funeral activities around the rotunda at Pohansko can be determined with greater precision if we use some artefacts. In general, the finds tend to be grouped in two basic chronological horizons – Great Moravian and Post-Great Moravian.

From the finds in the graves it seems that the funeral activities in the surroundings of the second church at Pohansko started sometime in the second half of the 9th century, most probably not before its last quarter. The decisive factor for the dating in question is the occurrence of the varieties of Great Moravian earrings of the Veligrad type which L. Galuška describes as part of the “fashion of those in power” from the end of Great Moravia. We also know analogical examples from the environment of early medieval Bohemian elites – mainly from the cemetery in the Lumbe Garden on Prague Castle. According to the key finds from the graves the end of funerary activities in the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko falls within the first half of the 10th century, possibly exceeding to its second part. The most important finds included here are those of silver temple rings, which are in three cases terminated by an eye and in one case by an S-shaped end. The occurrence of lead buttons with an eye on a tall neck with moulded decoration partly reaches into the Post-Great Moravian period as well. Grave H 105 of a juvenile individual which combines two late elements – an old Hungarian war axe/fokos and spurs with a very long prick – is very important for the dating of the Post-Great Moravian horizon. The axe testifies to the penetration of nomadic cultural elements into the Great Moravian environment which could not have happened earlier than at the end of the 9th or the beginning of the 10th century, but probably even a little later. The late dating of grave H 106 is underpinned by spurs of the Bašelj type with extreme pricks up to 5 cm long. This is quite common in spurs from the 10th century in Bohemia and Germany, but very unusual in Great Moravian examples from the 9th century. Spurs having similar parameters have not so far been known at any Great Moravian site. Surprisingly, grave H 105, which based on a typological-chronological point of view appears to be one of the latest on the whole site, belongs to the earlier graves within the group of graves dated by the radiocarbon method. But the radiocarbon data does not exclude the possibility that the young man buried there could have died as late as the 10th century.

Radiocarbon dating was undertaken primarily in order to validate our archaeological data using an independent scientific method. We gradually dated graves H 105, H 117, H 136, H 143, H 153 and H 154. All of the analyses were carried out in the radiocarbon laboratory in Poznań (Poznań Radiocarbon Laboratory, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań). Every time two samples were taken from each skeleton for analysis. Calibration was made using the OxCal program and the InCal13 calibration curve. If dates have been converted into calendar years with a probability of 95,4% (2 sigma), then the dead were buried within the interval from the end of the 8th century to the end of the first quarter of the 11th century. However, this dating is too wide due to the existence of the so-called plateau in the calibration curve for the 9th century. Although a lower probability level of 68,2% might narrow down the estimated interval, in one of the variants the earliest graves are ordered from as early as the end of the 8th century under the effect of the calibration curve plateau. Given the overall chronological development and the site context the more veritable of the proposed intervals are those which correspond with the end of the 9th and the first half of the 10th century. The fluctuation of the calibration curve enables alternative dating of the skeletons. The first variant presumes the beginning of the burials in the last quarter of the 9th century and the end at the end of the first quarter of the 10th century at the latest. The

second variant then places the beginning of the burials, based on the analysed graves, to the end of the first quarter of the 10th century at the earliest and the end of the burials not earlier than the beginning of the last quarter of the 10th century, or as late as the first quarter of the 11th century. However, we should always take into consideration the option that the actual time when a particular individual died may fall between these intervals. With only small modifications, both variants preserve the relative age of the skeletons under investigation.

The latest, or the last, deceased individual from the group of analysed skeletons is the woman from grave H 136, who at the 68,2% probability level could have died within the interval between 970–1016. Given the compact result, we can use here an even higher probability level (95,4%). According to this variant the woman died either between 899–923, or much more likely within the years 947–1020. Grave H 136 was situated at the northernmost edge of the cemetery, and although it contained a piece of silver jewellery of the Great Moravian (Veligrad) type, in terms of horizontal stratigraphy it is one of the very last in the cemetery. The old man from grave H 153 in the interior of the rotunda, who we identify as the founder of the church, could have died, based on radiocarbon dating (at the 68,2% probability level), in the period between 893–904 (12,8%) or 917–967 (55,4%).

If we sum up the results of all the dating methods that we applied during the evaluation of the cemetery from the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko, we can state that the burials took place there in the period from the end (last quarter) of the 9th century to the mid-10th century. However, it cannot be completely ruled out that some of the last burials were made there as late as the second half of the 10th century. The cemetery served members of three generations of a single community.

### **What was the role played by the north-eastern suburb with the church and cemetery within the Great Moravian agglomeration at Pohansko? What purpose did the rotunda serve? What was the social status of the community which buried its dead at the rotunda?**

To understand the status of the community which buried its dead at the rotunda in the north-eastern suburb, we must first perform basic synchronization with the other precincts at Pohansko, above all with the so-called Magnate Court, where the first church with its related cemetery were situated. The whole of this residential precinct is interpreted as an early medieval *palatium* – one of the seats of the Great Moravian ruler. It is necessary to determine whether the two necropolises overlapped in time and, if so, how long this concurrence lasted. The result of this comparison is important both with regard to dating and for the historical-social interpretation of the two nearby churches and communities which buried their dead around them.

We discovered that at least 33 graves from the cemetery at the first church contained finds which are typologically identical with objects from around the rotunda in the north-eastern suburb. Both necropolises were therefore very likely concurrent over a certain period of time. How long this period was is not easy to estimate. We can only base the estimation on data from the vertical and horizontal stratigraphy of the cemetery at the first church. Apparently, according to the finds in the graves the church cemetery in the north-eastern suburb was established at the moment when burials in the area of the Magnate Court had already been taking place for some time. The beginning of the burials at the rotunda (and probably the origin of the second church) cannot be placed earlier than the period when the great reconstruction of the Magnate Court was undertaken and its later palisade erected. However, even a later dating cannot be ruled out. Both cemeteries then co-existed side by side. The question remains of whether burials at the rotunda lasted a little longer in the end, as might be suggested by more significant finds from the Post-Great Moravian horizon, or whether both necropolises ended at the same time during the 10th century. The answer could be suggested, for example, by radiocarbon dating of greater series of samples from both necropolises and their subsequent comparison.

In terms of the quantity and the quality of the finds from the graves the cemetery in the north-eastern suburb does not reach the standard of the top Great Moravian sites. Even the cemetery at the first church at Pohansko, which was part of the so-called Magnate Court or the ruler's *palatium*, was significantly richer and more extensive. Gold jewellery and graves with swords are completely missing in the north-eastern suburb. Also, there are more graves with spurs at the first church indicating the presence of warriors on horseback who belonged to the elite at that time. These differences can be explained in two ways. What seems to be the more probable variant is that the community burying its dead at the rotunda did not attain such a social status as the people belonging to the Magnates Court, who were interred in the surroundings of a more splendid sanctuary. We cannot, however, refute the version that the cemetery in the north-eastern suburb is a little later and burials



were made there at a time when the custom of placing gifts in graves was not so widespread. A combination of both factors is also possible.

Obviously, the graves from the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko cannot be directly compared with the cemetery at the Magnate Court, nor with the other central necropolises of Great Moravia, such as the church cemeteries at the basilica, the double-apse rotunda and the first church in Mikulčice or the cemeteries at Sady, Na Špitálkách and Na Valách in the Uherské Hradiště – Staré Město agglomeration. There we register both finds of gold jewellery and graves with swords or numerous burials with spurs. These sites differ from the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko both in the higher social status of part of the elites, who buried their dead there, and by their earlier dating.

While the cemetery at the rotunda at Pohansko does not figure among the richest sites of Great Moravia, it does not belong among the poorest either. This is particularly striking in comparison with the church cemeteries whose existence falls within the last decades of the 9th and the beginning of the 10th century. The comparison shows that the cemetery in the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko was completely on par with the other representatives of the specific group of necropolises which emerged near the latest Great Moravian or the earliest Přemyslid churches sometime towards the end of the 9th century. Although the cemeteries in their surroundings were generally smaller in area than at Pohansko, the relative representation of jewellery and weapons is quite similar. The community with burials around the rotunda at Pohansko left behind funerary heritage which by and large corresponds in its nature with the known cemeteries of the Christianised Central European elite from the 8th to the 10th century, although not from the top tiers of the contemporary social pyramid. The specific position of the cemetery in the north-eastern suburb within this group is mainly related to the find of the graves *infra ecclesiam*, which indicate the presence of highly privileged people.

One of these persons was clearly the man from grave H 153, situated in a prestigious position on the main axis of the church. The grave is exceptional in its trapezoid shape and additional careful lining of its walls with low dry stone masonry, consisting of two rows of stones one above another. The lining has been preserved from two thirds, while a part of it was secondarily damaged probably at a later time. In the cemetery at the second church the careful finish of the pit in grave H 153 is quite exceptional. No other grave of an adult individual from this cemetery has the grave constructed in this way. When a similar form does appear then it is only in children's graves. In the other cemeteries at Pohansko similar complete stone lining in graves of adult individuals was not observed either. In addition, the man from H 153 was exceptional for his extraordinary physical constitution, which distinguished him from the rest of the population buried in the surroundings of the rotunda (*Macháček – Balcárková – Čáp et al. 2014; Sládek in print*). The significance of grave H 153 resulting from its dominant position within the whole cemetery is not diminished by the fact that the person interred in the grave had no grave goods. This is nothing unusual in Great Moravian graves in church interiors (*Galuska 1996*), although exceptionally rich graves may appear between them as well (*Ungermaň – Kavánová 2010, 71–86, Taf. 11.*). We consider the man from grave H 153 to be the founder of the church (*Macháček – Balcárková – Čáp et al. 2014, 145*). The burials inside the rotunda interior may have also been related to the group of graves situated on the south-east side of the building, generally thought to be the most prestigious in the vicinity of medieval churches. The dominant feature among them is grave H 154 adjacent on the outer side to the church wall, where it lies in the same line with men's graves from the interior. Although it is the deepest and largest grave in the whole cemetery, it was the burial place of a young woman without any grave goods. However, of all the women in the population she was by far the tallest, which makes her position similar to the dominant male individual in the rotunda, to whom she is also linked by practically identical radiocarbon dating. It seems that we encounter here a group of people of exceptional social position who were distinguished from the rest of the population both by an exclusive access to the sanctuary and by their physical constitution – probably the founder of the church and his closest family.

It is obvious, however, that the all burials around the rotunda (152 graves with buried individuals) were not solely the blood-related relatives of the church founder, but that it was a much larger community related to it in some way – a whole early medieval *familia*.

### **Are we able to identify the inner social structure of the community which buried its dead at the rotunda in the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko?**

From the results of our research we concluded that the man interred in the proprietary church in the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko was its founder while his *familia* members were buried in the surrounding cemetery. An

early medieval *familia* formed a structure more complex than a (core/nuclear) family as we usually understand it today. The term that captures the best the essence of the basic social unit of the Middle Ages is a household. Although it was the husband and wife with their children who stood in the middle of the *familia*, it was equally constituted by the servants, farmhands and other persons dependent on them, as well as a wider circle of relatives such as siblings, uncles and aunts. The highest authority was always the male head of the family (“*pater familias*”), who decided about all the people living under one roof or anywhere on the family property. The position of the master of the house in relation to all the other adult and free men in the local community was decisive for the social status of the whole *familia* subordinated to his authority. There were considerable differences between the individual *familias* regarding their social status. The ones that were well-off were the households of the *principes* and other leaders of the local communities. At the beginning the local “aristocracy” and their graves did not stand apart from the common society and shared necropolises. This was to be changed later, at the end of the Merovingian and the beginning of the Carolingian period. Considerable social differences existed even inside the *familias*. According to Heiko Steuer, the male component of the household of a highly positioned nobleman of the Merovingian period comprised the head of the family, his sons or brothers and his retinue – graves of these people contained plentiful finds in the form of weapons or parts of costume and other grave goods. The poor graves, on the other hand, were those of servants with a lower social and legal status (Steuer 1982, 519–521).

Judging from the number of graves and the dating of the cemetery we estimate that the community which buried its dead at the rotunda in the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko numbered about 50–70 individuals, which correlates with a large early medieval *familia*, possibly extended by other associated, but to a certain extent autonomous groups.

The community, which buried its deceased at the rotunda in the suburb, exhibits a more natural demographic composition than, for example, the cemetery in the Magnate Court where men’s graves clearly prevailed. An analysis of the inner structure shows that the man buried in the rotunda was the *pater familias* – its founder as well as some of his offspring and possibly the priest from the proprietary church. A number of generations of other members of the core family – women, children and blood relations – were buried on a prestigious location of the cemetery south of the rotunda. A few graves with spurs were also found in the vicinity of the church. They were probably members of the retinue of the nobleman from the rotunda who found there the place of their final rest together with their families. A special district behind the apse served for burials of socially better-situated children of the *familia*. Other children’s graves accumulated at the entrance to the cemetery. Not all people enjoyed the right to the consecrated and enclosed ground of the church cemetery. Some of them remained outside, buried alongside the cemetery enclosure or in a special detached group. However, the finds from the graves indicate they were not people of lower social status. More likely, they could not or did not want to be buried at the church for ideological or religious reasons. Some of the other graves could even have belonged to foreigners associated with the *familia*. Graves of people, mostly women, from the lowest ranks of the social hierarchy were situated on the edges of the cemetery. In general, we do not find greater numbers of burials at the rotunda which could be clearly linked with servants, slaves and other socially marginalized groups. These people may have been buried way outside the church cemetery on less prestigious locations in the settlement. We know similar burials, including from the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko, where there were at least 50 of them. At the end of the existence of the cemetery the burial rite changed and the traditional structures disintegrated.

Following a wider comparison and an analysis of the inner structure it can be stated that in principle the cemetery at the rotunda as a whole does not differ from other necropolises in Central Europe with early medieval burials of the elite and the people around them. We assume that the church cemetery in the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko served a branched-out *familia* of a nobleman, in whom we can see the beneficiary or officer of the Great Moravian ruler, whose seat could have been the so-called Magnate Court in the central part of Pohansko. If our deliberations are correct, at Pohansko we discovered the cemetery of one of our oldest aristocratic families, whose name and further fate unfortunately remain forgotten.

### **Can we link the archaeological features uncovered in the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko with concrete social processes taking place in early medieval Europe – such as the establishment of the oldest aristocratic dynasties?**

We presume that the rotunda in the suburb provides evidence of the emancipation of one of the early aristocratic Great Moravian families, which built this sanctuary as its proprietary church. This term, in German “*Eigenkirche*”, denotes a church which was owned by a person or group of persons. The ownership, or tenure, was

extended both on the building of the church and its furnishings and the land with other accessories, the right to levy tithes and other church fees. The patron of the church could also appoint his own priest (Wood 2006, 1).

The position of the church founder, who must have been in all respects an extraordinary man, inside the Great Moravian society has not so far been clarified. In early medieval Bavaria the builders of churches were recruited, if we disregard the ruler, both from the free and hereditary owners of allodial titles to land and from important beneficiaries (for the term beneficiary see e.g. Jan 2006, 192; Jan 2009, 461–472) – officials, members of the retinue, and other highly positioned persons who, in the service to dukes or kings, held various offices or *beneficium* (Wood 2006, 34). In our case we should take into consideration both alternatives.

If he had been a beneficiary of the Great Moravian duke, then in the context of Pohansko he would have most probably held the function of governor/warden of the castle, for whom the title of *castellanus* (Jan 2009, 471; Wihoda 2010, 260–265) became common in Central Europe in the 12th century. In the 7th to the 9th century in West and North Europe these officials emerged in the environment of large emporia or wiks, merchant and artisan centres, where they represented the interests of the king and his fiscus. This was the case, for example, at Hedeby – an important trade centre on the boundary between the Empire and the Viking world, where they were called “*comes vic*” (Wikgraf). They are also known from other places where they were named “*Wicgerefa*” (London, the year 685), “*praefectus vici*” (Birka), “*praefectus emporii Quentowic*” (Quentowic, between 858–868), etc. Their primary engagement was to levy customs and maintain order and peace within the settlement. In wartime they also took care of the security of the emporium (Jankuhn 1986, 140, 204–205, 212–215).

The governors, prefects or castellans lived off both the benefits which arose from their office (they could acquire a share in various fines, participate in organizing long-distance trade, and later levy customs, a toll, etc.), however, according to Libor Jan, they also acquired property of land originally lent to them through their office, which even as late as the 11th and 12th century was in principal not hereditary but could have a lot in common with a fief (Jan 2009, 469). It was a scheme based on which the landed gentry was slowly constituted including our lands. After all, this is documented in the well-known and often discussed report on the conflict between the governor of Lštění Castle and, later, Bílina, Mstíš, with Wratislaus II, recorded in his chronicle by Cosmas (Žemlička 1997, 201–242; Klápště 2005, 48–52; Jan 2007, 873–902). Mstíš, called by Cosmas “*comes urbis Beline*”, was probably a very cruel man as, on the orders of Duke Spitignew, he kept imprisoned his captive sister-in-law, the wife of the later Duke and King Wratislaus, “*every night tying her leg to his leg by a shackle*”. At the same time he must have been very able as he was appointed to the administration of two important Přemyslid castles. This is also admitted by Cosmas when he writes that the son of Bor was “*a man of great courage and even greater eloquence and no less prudence*”. He showed his courage by asking Wratislaus, whose wife he had so humiliated, to kindly “*come to a celebratory ... consecration*” of the church that Mstíš ordered to be built with permission by the previous duke “*to honour Saint Peter the Apostle*” in Bílina. The duke intriguingly enough agreed, but only to get his revenge on Mstíš, which the governor, in spite of his prudence, did not envisage “*...and expressing great thanks to the duke, he merrily departed to make the necessary preparations for a great feast*”.

The whole of the ensuing story is told by Cosmas as follows: “*The duke and the bishop arrived, and as soon as the church in the suburb was consecrated, the duke walked up to the castle for dinner and the castle governor together with the bishop also sat down to the feast tables in the governor’s courtyard in front of the church. During the dinner a messenger arrived and whispered to him: “Castle administration has been removed from you and given to the son of Všebor, Kojat;” who at that time was the first at the duke’s court. To which the castle governor answered: “He is the duke and the lord, let him do with his castle whatever he pleases. But what my church has today, the duke does not have the power to take away.” But had he not fled the same night following advice from the bishop and with his assistance, he would have certainly lost his eyes and his leg which he once tied to the leg of the duke’s wife.*” So wrote Cosmas on the events which took place in 1061 (Cosmas Pragensis Chronica Bohemorum, ed. B. Bretholz, MGH SS II, Berolini 1923; Hrdina – Bláhová – Fiala 1972, 102).

Although there is a gap of more than 150 years between Mstíš and our man from the rotunda, one cannot avoid the impression that both shared similar traits. Thanks to their physical constitution the deceased man from grave H. 153 must have commanded respect and certainly excelled with heroic deeds on the battlefield. Given his advanced age, which only a small section of the contemporary population lived to (according to the anthropologist V. Sládek he was among the three oldest people in the whole cemetery at the rotunda), he must have also been experienced and had foresight. But, most importantly, like Mstíš, he had a proprietary church in the castle suburb that, as I expect, was under his governance.

At the end of the 9th century he began to build his family dominium in the symbolic centre of the suburb at Pohansko. He erected it outside the fortified area and the sphere of the ducal power. When the Great Moravian ruler arrived at Pohansko, he probably feasted, just as Wratislaus of the Přemyslids at Bílina, in his own palace (*in palatio ducis*) that we identify with the excavated Magnate Court with a splendid church inside the fortifica-

tion, while the governor must have been satisfied with a more modest church in the suburb (*ecclesia, que est sita in suburbio*). The question is whether he also did not fall into disfavour, as could be suggested by some interventions in his skeleton, which the anthropologists interpret as evidence of decapitation (*Sládek in print*). His skull lay in the grave in a strange position, standing on its base, and three neck vertebrae were missing, which indicates that it could have been secondarily manipulated post mortem. But he did not flee from Pohansko as even after his tragic end he was buried with the last respects in “his” church among his closest relatives. The surroundings of the rotunda were then the place of last rest for the other members of the family, servants and other people from the wide circle of those dependent on him, whom we might term an early medieval *familia* (Scholkmann 1997, 455–464; Hassenpflug 1999, 227; Smith 2005, 86–87). Armed members of his retinue with their families may also have belonged there. Separate cemeteries where members of the noble family are buried together with persons in a dependent position (servants) have been known from as early as the Merovingian period in Belgium (e.g. Beerlegem) and Germany (Niederstotzingen, Kircheim/Ries, Großhöbing). German archaeologists consider these cemeteries a significant phenomenon which very likely testifies to the early aristocracy ruling over people (Burzler 2000, 138–140; Böhme 2008, 26–36).

At the time of the beginnings of Christianisation the construction of the church had extraordinary symbolic significance linked with great social capital. In the first place, it was to manifest the rising prestige of the builder (Klápsťe 2005, 48–50), who tried to emulate the ruler with his funding. While the second church at Pohansko did not reach the standard of the temple from the Magnate Court that we consider to be a ducal “*palatium*” (Macháček 2008, 107–125), it was nevertheless a prestigious edifice, in particular when the church was one of the few buildings in this part of early medieval Europe built in stone.

The process during which members of the early medieval elite began to separate themselves from the majority society and buried their dead either in separated cemeteries, or directly in churches, started sometime during the 6th century west of the Rhine. As one of the first, the Merovingian King Clovis I was buried in the Paris Church of St Genevieve in 511. This custom became gradually accepted throughout the Frankish Empire where it spread from west to east. By the mid-7th century the line demarcating burials *infra ecclesiam* moved forward as far as the river Lech. In the second half of the 7th century the new custom also became distributed throughout Bavaria and Switzerland, where it peaked sometime at the turn of the 7th and the 8th century (Böhme 1996, 477–507; Burzler 2000, 90–91). With Christianisation and, most significantly, the deep transformation of society burials into the sanctified ground in churches continued to spread further east, until in the 9th century they also appeared in our territory. As with the Frankish elites from the Merovingian period, in Moravia hundreds of years later the early aristocracy may have found inspiration in their rulers. In both cases, people who were allowed special treatment as part of the funerary cult must have enjoyed earlier exceptional privileges and thus attained extraordinary social status. An analysis of the epitaphs on tombstones that we know from the western environment enables us to specify what constituted this special status. People who could be buried in churches *ad sanctos* (near holy relics) and did not directly belong to the members of the ruling dynasty or the clerics were typified by: 1) noble birth; 2) recognition by society and wide acceptance among the population; 3) wealth; 4) Christian morals; 5) occasionally holding a high office (Böhme 2008, 26–30). It is likely that this group of people included our man from the rotunda who was the head of the *familia*, whose members were buried around his church.

Another step in learning about the north-eastern suburb at Pohansko was the excavation carried out outside the cemetery. Although thematically it does not belong in this book, it is necessary to mention it at least marginally, as its results to a considerable extent verify our previous conclusions. The aim of the subsequent research was nothing other than finding the residence in which the owner of the church lived with his family. Locations similar to those described by Cosmas in his account of how the castle governor Mstiš of Břlína feasted with the bishop “*in his courtyard in front of the church*”. The Latin original reads: “*in sua curte, que fuit ante ecclesiam*” (Cosmas Pragensis Chronica Bohemorum, ed. B. Bretholz, MGH SS II, Berolini 1923; Hrdina – Bláhová – Fiala 1972). The term “*curtis*” and its analysis from the archaeological point of view was the subject of study years ago by A. Hejna and B. Dostál (Hejna 1965, 513–583; Dostál 1975, 253–259). They claimed in unison that this residential settlement form was imported here from the West, where the Frankish manor with the court continued the ancient building tradition. According to them, they were independent settlement and economic units, part of which was also the abode of the owner. A *curtis* was not fortified, only enclosed by a palisade or a woven fence. There were a number of buildings inside the enclosure – apart from the mansion of the lord (*casa domincata*) many outbuildings, such as various granaries, cellars, kitchens, warehouses, bakeries (*pistrinum*), etc. As opposed to more splendid and complex pfalzes the residential aspect required for the courtly presentation of the ruler

was not so accentuated.

The new archaeological fieldwork directly followed the excavation of the church cemetery in 2013. Although it has not finished yet, the first campaigns yielded finds indicating that the sought-for residence of the man from the rotunda was discovered. Overall we excavated there an area of 1,484 m<sup>2</sup> during three years. The residential part was separated from the church cemetery in the south by an empty corridor ca 4 m wide. We assume that it was here that the road leading towards the hypothetical entrance to the inner fortified section of the agglomeration was situated. Within the area we identified remains of a palisade enclosure, above-ground and often multi-space houses, workshop buildings, large ovens – probably from the bakery (*pistrinum*), sunken-floored dwellings with an exceptional set of iron tools, which have belonged to the inventory of the *curtis* and most importantly surface feature with walled corner, similar to the residential buildings from the Magnate Court, where they are interpreted as the duke's dwellings – *caminata* (Dostál 1975, 64, 281–282, 299–300; Macháček 2008).

All over the area of the examined settlement, in particular on the level of the original early medieval surface or in the fill of settlement pits, we uncovered finds that we relate to the presence of the elites. Most significantly we should mention a crossguard and a pommel of a sword, spurs, tips of arrows, bronze rings, a lead ingot, a piece of decorated silver sheet metal, belt-ends and loops, grinding wheels for the sword sharpening, etc. Outstanding finds such as the polyhedric faceted pearl from mountain crystal, which has analogies as far as the far-away Jordan (Eger – Khalil 2013, 156–181), glass beads, parts of a chain mail, spurs, etc., were concentrated primarily in the wider surroundings of the building with the walled corner. The picture is made complete by an extraordinarily high share of game in the osteological material, including trophy animals, such as bears.

The present state of knowledge allows us to state that an elite group of people initially probably headed by the man buried in the rotunda lived and buried their dead in the north-eastern suburb at the end of the 9th and maybe in the first decades of the next century. The man could have originally been the governor of a ducal castle, surrounded by members of his *familia*. This man could have been in possession of some landed property and real estates, such as possibly the *curtis* in the suburb, but certainly the church in which he was buried himself. At the same time he was in possession of such property which enabled him to own the church, which must have been very costly even in the Early Middle Ages. I therefore assume that, along the line of the deliberations of J. Klápště, we could consider the man from the rotunda to be a member of the aristocracy, hence a man whose social position was supported by land ownership (Klápště 2005, 28). If our deliberations are correct, the man from the rotunda with his relatives who were buried in his vicinity would represent one of the oldest aristocratic families in our land – not just people of noble birth from an important family or warriors from the duke's retinue who won their position through bravery in the battlefield, but owners of a church and a court.

Our finds from Pohansko and the interpretation models that we have developed on their basis could be of great significance for the study of an important historical process, which German medievalists call the nobilification of medieval society (Burzler 2000, 171–174). We believe that as such they will become an important part of a new theory on the early medieval society of Great Moravia.

## CATALOGUE OF GRAVES AND FINDS

### CATALOGUE STRUCTURE

The catalogue of the early medieval church cemetery in the north-eastern suburb of the Great Moravian settlement agglomeration at Břeclav – Pohansko contains data on 152 graves with 154 archaeological identified individuals excavated between 2008 and 2012. The numbering of the graves continues the sequence of numbers from the previous campaigns on the site of the north-eastern suburb in 1960, 1968, 1970–72, 1975 and 1977 during which a total of 50 graves were uncovered. In 2008 the first grave to be unearthed was numbered H 51.

The catalogue comprises of four basic sections: 1 a structured description in words accompanied by basic plans of the graves in relation to their immediate surroundings; 2 tables with drawings of the skeletons and finds from the individual contexts belonging both to grave goods and grave fill (tab. 1–56); 3 tables with photographs of the objects found in the graves (grave goods, fill, X-ray images of selected artefacts, tab. 57–70); and 4 photographic tables compiled from field photographic documentation (tab. 71–133).

The graves are described using structured text. The record of each grave contains the following data: location of the grave within the cemetery (distance of the grave from the centre of the rotunda and its position relative

to the church, fig. 144), stratigraphic situation, grave pit and its modifications, basic anthropological data on the skeletal remains and a detailed description in words of the grave goods. The individual records are based on all types of field documentation of the excavations and the database sources of the Institute of Archaeology and Museology. Data on the individual graves and grave assemblages are maintained in a simple system which records the basic find context:

Grave number (tab. No.)

Year of excavation:

Square:

Grave distance from rotunda and grave position relative to rotunda:

Context numbers:

Stratigraphic relationship:

Fill:

Finds from fill:

Grave pit:

Grave pit modifications / coffin:

Buried individual:

Grave goods: (position of individual artefacts)

Artefact descriptions:

Note:

The text section lists different types of archaeological feature. First and foremost, they are graves bearing the designation H (e.g. H 123). If, during excavation, a human bone was unearthed without an apparent relationship to the funeral context, it is marked as an isolated bone, abbreviation IK, with the relevant sequence number (e.g. IK 54). The numbering of the isolated bones is continuous and the individual campaigns follow one after another. The excavation within the cemetery area included settlement features marked with the standard designation – obj. (feature) – and the numbering of the past campaigns is again ordered sequentially (e.g. obj. 133). The same procedure has been adopted for postholes (designation KJ). The remains of what was probably the original enclosure of the cemetery area, today manifested as a shallow palisade trench, are marked with a capital Z, followed by the trench number without a gap (e.g. Z01, Z03). A peculiarity of the excavation in the north-eastern suburb is the introduction of the non-specific remains/records (fakt), abbreviation F (e.g. F 11, F 135). It designates an anthropogenic impact in the earth or a geological formation. The remain-number is given to every feature identified during excavation. After determining the type of the archaeological complex the remain-number is assigned with the specific number of the feature – grave, settlement feature, posthole, trench, etc. The remain-numbers are further used in geodetic surveys and in geodatabases. The remains of anthropogenic impacts which could not be specified clearly or in greater detail continue to be registered only under the remain-number.

Each text record is accompanied by a plan of the grave. The graphic depiction of the grave contains the basic outlines of the grave pit and the skeleton and marking of the identified positive and negative constructions and modifications in the grave pits. Settlement features or graves which occurred in superposition with another grave are sketched in basic outlines only (features: black line without fill, graves: black line with grey fill). However, in the picture they do not depict the actual stratigraphic situation (over/under), it is merely to illustrate the density of the graves in the cemetery or, alternatively, to document the changes in using the examined space over time.

Certain rules also apply to the tables with drawings of graves depicting grave goods. The graves are sequenced by the following key: first, graves with the occurrence of grave goods or artefacts in the fill (excluding pottery shards); next, graves without grave goods but with well-preserved skeletons; and finally, burials of small children with poorly preserved skeletons or considerably damaged dislocated graves with a minimum of skeletal material.

For each grave only the skeleton without the grave pit and with the identified grave goods is depicted. The top left corner of the table contains the symbol for the gender determined by anthropological analysis of the skeletal material. Woman and man are designated by the well-established pictograms, while a child is marked by a grey disc and undetermined gender by a question-mark.

Artefacts unearthed outside the stratified position (fill, finds made during sieving and flotation) are illustrated without showing a direct relationship with the skeleton. Given the scale of depiction, small objects, such as earrings, beads, gombíks, etc., are represented only by a geometrical shape or a symbol; finds with larger dimensions, such as an axe, knife, spur, are digitised in the plan at a given scale to the skeleton. Artefacts found underneath a bone, which could not be documented at the level of the extracted skeleton, have a special desig-

nation: small finds are represented by a symbol in grey and larger objects by hatching.

Symbols designating small objects:

- equilateral triangle standing on base: earring
- equilateral triangle standing on tip: needle
- circle: gombík (button)
- square: bead, pierced shells used as pendant
- five-pointed star: kaptorga (amulet case)
- cross: cross-shaped pendant
- Saint Andrew's cross (x): small loops, strap-ends and buckles
- annulus: ring
- snowflake: jingle bell (globular-shaped bell)

In the photographic tables compiled from field documentation the photographs used were nearly always taken from a slanted angle. The graves are sequenced in an ascending order by grave number.