

ARCHEOLOGICKÝ ÚSTAV AKADEMIE VĚD ČESKÉ REPUBLIKY V BRNĚ

# PŘEHLED VÝZKUMŮ

60-2



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100 Státní archeologický ústav 100 let moderní archeologie v českých zemích

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**Adresa redakce**  
**Address**

Archeologický ústav AV ČR, Brno, v. v. i.  
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602 00 Brno  
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E-mail: pv@arub.cz  
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# Obsah

<b>Studie a krátké články</b> <b>Case Studies and Short Articles</b> <b>Studien und kurze Artikel</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Balázs Komoróczy, Marek Vlach, Michaela Zelíková, Jozef Sedláček, Pavla Růžičková</i> <b>Revize stavu archeologických komponent v trati Drnholec „Holenická pole“ pomocí prospekčních a málo invazivních výzkumných metod</b>	<b>9</b>
<i>Šárka Krupičková, Estelle Ottenwelter, Helena Březinová</i> <b>Exact evidences of the use of spherical buttons (gombíky): two case studies from Moravian finds</b>	<b>57</b>
<i>Michaela Látková, Mária Hajnalová, Miroslav Havlík</i> <b>Grape vine and viticulture tradition in Mikulčice</b>	<b>79</b>
<i>Pavel Kouřil, Jana Gryc</i> <b>Czech Silesia in the Early Middle Ages</b>	<b>93</b>
<i>Aleksandra Pankiewicz</i> <b>An attempt to identify places associated with trade and exchange in early medieval strongholds in the example of Ostrów Tumski in Wrocław</b>	<b>145</b>
<i>Pavel Šlězár, Karel Faltýnek</i> <b>Románský kostel sv. Prokopa v Lošticích. Příspěvek k počátkům moravské šlechty</b>	<b>161</b>
<i>Jiří Šindelář, Lumír Poláček, Šárka Krupičková</i> <b>Doporučená metodika fotodokumentace v archeologii pro následné metrické analýzy obrazu</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>Přehled výzkumů na Moravě a ve Slezsku 2018</b> <b>Overview of Excavations in Moravia and Silesia 2018</b> <b>Übersicht den Grabungen in Mähren und Schlesien 2018</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>Středověk a novověk, Middle Ages and Modern Times, Mittelalter und Neuzeit</b>	
Adamov (okr. Blansko) . . . . .	227
Bítov (okr. Znojmo) . . . . .	227
Blansko (k. ú. Hořice u Blanska, okr. Blansko) . . . . .	228
Blučina (okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	230
Brno (okr. Brno-město) . . . . .	230
Brno (k. ú. Město Brno, okr. Brno-město) . . . . .	231
Brno (k. ú. Staré Brno, okr. Brno-město) . . . . .	238
Brno (k. ú. Štýřice, okr. Brno-město) . . . . .	241
Brno (k. ú. Trnitá, okr. Brno-město) . . . . .	241
Brno (k. ú. Líšeň, okr. Brno-město) . . . . .	249
Brno (k. ú. Maloměřice, okr. Brno-město) . . . . .	250
Brno (k. ú. Trnitá, okr. Brno-město) . . . . .	251
Brno (k. ú. Útěchov u Brna, okr. Brno-město) . . . . .	254
Brtnice (okr. Jihlava) . . . . .	255
Brumovice (okr. Břeclav) . . . . .	255
Břest (okr. Kroměříž) . . . . .	255
Březina (k. ú. Březina u Křtin, okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	256
Březolupy (okr. Uherské Hradiště) . . . . .	256
Bučovice (okr. Vyškov) . . . . .	257

Bystřice pod Hostýnem (okr. Kroměříž) . . . . .	258
Dobroslavice (okr. Opava) . . . . .	258
Dolní Bečva (okr. Vsetín) . . . . .	259
Drnholec (okr. Břeclav) . . . . .	259
Drnholec (okr. Břeclav) . . . . .	260
Dukovany (okr. Třebíč) . . . . .	260
Hluboké Dvory (okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	261
Hlučín (okr. Opava) . . . . .	261
Hoštejn (okr. Šumperk) . . . . .	262
Hradec nad Moravicí (okr. Opava) . . . . .	264
Hustopeče (k. ú. Hustopeče u Brna, okr. Břeclav) . . . . .	265
Chotěbuz (okr. Karviná) . . . . .	265
Ivančice (okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	266
Ivančice (okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	266
Jamolice (okr. Znojmo) . . . . .	267
Jedovnice (okr. Blansko) . . . . .	269
Jihlava (okr. Jihlava) . . . . .	269
Jimramov (okres Žďár nad Sázavou) . . . . .	273
Jiříkov (k. ú. Sovinec, okr. Bruntál) . . . . .	274
Klentnice (okr. Břeclav) . . . . .	277
Kralice na Hané (okr. Prostějov) . . . . .	277
Kralice nad Oslavou (okr. Třebíč) . . . . .	277
Krnov (k. ú. Krnov-Horní Předměstí, okr. Bruntál) . . . . .	277
Kuřim (okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	279
Kyjovice (k. ú. Kyjovice ve Slezsku, okr. Opava) . . . . .	279
Lažánky (okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	280
Lichnov (k. ú. Lichnov u Bruntálu, okr. Bruntál) . . . . .	281
Litovel (okr. Olomouc) . . . . .	281
Loštice (okr. Šumperk) . . . . .	282
Loučka (k. ú. Loučka u Valašského Meziříčí, okr. Vsetín) . . . . .	283
Lysice (okr. Blansko) . . . . .	284
Mikulčice (okr. Hodonín) . . . . .	284
Mohelno (okr. Třebíč) . . . . .	286
Mokrá-Horákov (k. ú. Mokrá u Brna, okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	287
Mokrá-Horákov (k. ú. Horákov, okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	287
Nový Šaldorf-Sedlešovice (k. ú. Sedlešovice, okr. Znojmo) . . . . .	288
Olomouc (k. ú. Olomouc-město, okr. Olomouc) . . . . .	289
Olomouc (k. ú. Olomouc-město, okr. Olomouc) . . . . .	289
Olšany u Prostějova (okr. Prostějov) . . . . .	293
Opava (k. ú. Kateřinky u Opavy, okr. Opava) . . . . .	294
Ořechov (okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	294
Oskava (k. ú. Bedřichov u Oskavy, okr. Šumperk) . . . . .	295
Oslavany (okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	295
Ostrava (k. ú. Moravská Ostrava, okr. Ostrava-město) . . . . .	296
Ostrava (k. ú. Nová Ves u Ostravy, okr. Ostrava-město) . . . . .	297
Prostějov (okr. Prostějov) . . . . .	298
Prostějov (okr. Prostějov) . . . . .	298
Rajhrad (okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	299
Rosice (k. ú. Rosice u Brna, okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	299
Rymice (okr. Kroměříž) . . . . .	299
Senetářov (okr. Blansko) . . . . .	299
Slatinice (okr. Olomouc) . . . . .	300
Staré Město (k. ú. Staré Město u Uherského Hradiště, okr. Uherské Hradiště) . . . . .	300
Syrovice (okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	302
Tišnov (okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	303
Tišnov (okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	303
Tišnov (okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	303
Uherské Hradiště (okr. Uherské Hradiště) . . . . .	304
Uherský Brod (okr. Uherské Hradiště) . . . . .	305

Uhřice (k. ú. Uhřice u Kyjova, okr. Hodonín) . . . . .	306
Valašské Meziříčí (k. ú. Valašské Meziříčí-město, okr. Vsetín) . . . . .	306
Valašské Meziříčí (k. ú. Valašské Meziříčí-město, okr. Vsetín) . . . . .	306
Velehrad (okr. Uherské Hradiště) . . . . .	307
Velká Bystřice (okr. Olomouc) . . . . .	307
Velké Pavlovice (okr. Břeclav) . . . . .	308
Velké Pavlovice (okr. Břeclav) . . . . .	309
Veselí nad Moravou (okr. Hodonín) . . . . .	311
Vranov (k. ú. Vranov u Brna, okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	312
Vranov (k. ú. Vranov u Brna, okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	313
Vyškov (okr. Vyškov) . . . . .	313
Vyškov (okr. Vyškov) . . . . .	313
Zlechov (okr. Uherské Hradiště) . . . . .	314
Zlín (k. ú. Malenovice u Zlína, okr. Zlín) . . . . .	315
Znojmo (k. ú. Znojmo-město, okr. Znojmo) . . . . .	316
Znojmo (k. ú. Znojmo-město, okr. Znojmo) . . . . .	316
Židlochovice (okr. Brno-venkov) . . . . .	317
<b>Zprávy o činnosti, Reports, Berichte . . . . .</b>	<b>321</b>

STUDIE A KRÁTKÉ ČLÁNKY  
CASE STUDIES AND SHORT ARTICLES  
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## CZECH SILESIA IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

## ČESKÉ SLEZSKO V RANÉM STŘEDOVĚKU

PAVEL KOUŘIL, JANA GRYC

**Abstract**

*This study summarizes the current state of archaeological knowledge of Slavic settlement in the so-called Czech Silesia that is currently regarded as the southern part of the historical Upper Silesia located mostly in the territory of today's Poland. It is in this region that the Slavic tribe of the Golensizi mentioned by the so-called Bavarian Geographer is generally agreed to have settled. The study focuses on the period between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> centuries as older records of Slavic presence are now known yet. It is not only based on results of previous research, but also brings in new findings. Three basic settlement components are monitored: strongholds, burial grounds and open settlements, which together make up an interconnected structure. Attention is paid mainly to localities where a long-term archaeological research was carried out and that provided us with material of good informative value. The aim of this study is to offer a historical interpretation of events that happened in the region during the aforementioned period.*

**Keywords**

*Czech Silesia – Early Middle Ages – archaeological findings – strongholds – burial grounds – open settlements*

For many years, the Slavic settlement of the Czech region of Upper Silesia failed to arouse the interest and attention of the relevant authorities who were responsible for conducting archaeological research within the Czech lands as well as professional and amateur individuals interested in archaeology. There were several reasons for this indifference. Primarily was the fact that in the past, until the end of the Second World War, the area in question was populated to a large extent by the German-speaking population<sup>1</sup>. After the end of the war, Czechoslovak archaeology became fascinated, especially in Moravia, by surprising findings and discoveries, especially in the South Moravian area (the Great Moravian period), where most of its work was concentrated. Despite this, Silesia did not go unnoticed although the vast majority of cases tended to be examining and fact-finding activities (Opava-Kylešovice, Chotěbuz-Podobora, Hradec nad Moravicí, Víno near Slezské Rudoltice, Ostrava-Koblov, Hněvošice, Úvalno), while systematic activities were extremely exceptional (Stěbořice). Thus, the resources became richer although, in comparison to the rich Moravian valleys, the lack of balanced knowledge became even more significant. For a long time, the fact that the results of the Silesian research were only published partially and often without any broader archaeological-historical context was a considerable handicap. At the same time, as a natural consequence, theoretical

research began to stagnate at a time when the region was missing archaeologists who would usually focus on this period. Conditions for a gradual change began to form from the end of the 1970s when scientists focused on the Early Middle Ages grew stronger in numbers and when the systematic research of a Slavic stronghold fortification above the Olše River in Chotěbuz (which continues to this day) commenced. This resulted in an array of partial studies followed in the mid 1990s by the first synthesis, based on the



Location of the study area on a map of Europe.  
*Poloha studované oblasti na mapě Evropy.*



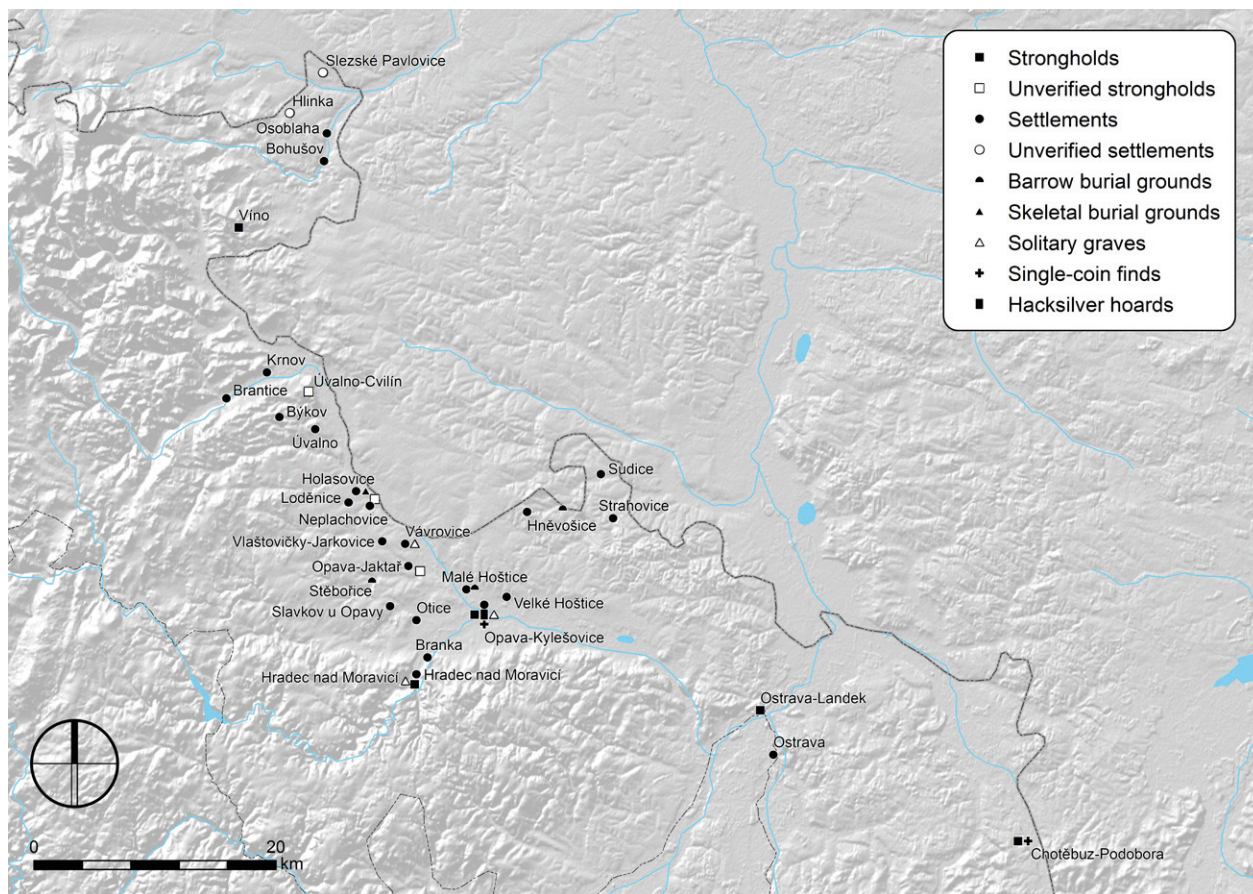


Fig. 1. Map with highlighted early medieval localities in the territory of Czech Silesia (P. Kouřil, M. Vlach).

Obr. 1. Mapa s vyznačením raně středověkých lokalit na území českého Slezska (P. Kouřil, M. Vlach).

knowledge of that time, that attempted to capture the complexity of the development of the Slavic settlement of Czech Silesia from the arrival of the Slavs until the period of the major structural changes in the course of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Kouřil 1994, all significant literature with respect to the theme and locations known at that time are specified there). The extension of the research locations coupled with greater knowledge enabled to determine and elaborate a whole range of new views of the Early Medieval history of areas situated north of the Moravian Gate and to formulate new questions and new objectives regarding the research (e.g. Kouřil 2004, 55–76; Kouřil, Gryc 2011, 2014; Antonín et al. 2012, 95–193; Kouřil, Tymonová 2013). In this context, it should be taken into account that for many centuries, this region was a component of a much more extensive indivisible whole that in modern times was eventually divided by an artificial border and that in many ways, the development in the period that we are following was identical or very similar; this also needs to be considered when evaluating the issue of the study. The current engagement of Polish archaeology in Upper Silesia is not particularly significant with regard to the Slavic period. However, its success and the results achieved to date provide a solid

base to build on and compare (synoptically including comprehensive literature e.g. Foltyn 1998; 2000; 2013, 239–291; Boroń, Foltyn 2011, 5–37; namely the work by M. Parczewski from 1982 still remains valid).

In this study, we have tried to objectively present the current knowledge of the Slavic settlement on the Czech side of today's Czech-Polish state border i.e. on the territory of the Moravian-Silesian region and partially in the Olomouc region in the period defined by the 8<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> centuries; evidence of an earlier Slavic presence is lacking there. This will be based on the existing results and outputs completed and only partially published or completely new topical materials. It is clear that it will be necessary to also take into account and respond to the relevant Polish works. However, our objective and intent are not to evaluate in detail the Polish contribution to the given theme. We understand that it is impossible to strictly separate three basic settlement components i.e. the strongholds, open settlements and burial grounds that form a mutually interlinked structure. However, we shall first deal with the most explored component that is the fortifications that will be completed with information on rural settlements and necropolises. We will focus on

the location where extensive archaeological research has been undertaken and materials found that have provided good informational value (Fig. 1).

## Strongholds

A system of relatively well preserved Slavic strongholds on the territory of the whole of Upper Silesia has attracted the attention of many researchers, specifically archaeologists and historians, for more than a century (for example, Jisl 1952b, 33–64; Parczewski 1982; Szydłowski, Abłamowicz 1990, 201–207; Abłamowicz 1991a, 107–121; Kouřil 1994, 11–51; Szydłowski 1995, 30; Moździoch 1998a, 275–291; Foltyn 2000, 30–46; Gryc 2004; Jaworski 2005, Kouřil, Gryc 2011, 211–243; in this regard, older literature mainly written in German is reflected). Up to the present day, approximately 14 definite and 6–9 probable sites of this type have been identified and partially verified. Some of these have already been processed in greater detail in relation to the site activities. An anonymous compilation, possibly from the late 9<sup>th</sup> century, from a Bavarian Geographer gives an orientation list of settlements and countries north of the central Danube River that places the tribes of Opolans, Golensizi and the so-called Lupiglaa in this area. The first two tribes can be quite easily connected to the southern Oder River basin, where it results from a short commentary that the Opolans were reputedly controlling twenty municipal fortifications and the Golensizi were controlling five. These were perhaps a form of urban administrative fortified tribal centres. From this perspective, the number of strongholds (centres) anticipated generally corresponds to the situation described by the geographer. The actual status, however, is somewhat complicated by a third tribe – the Lupiglaa who are localised by some researchers in the area of interest – (among these are the Bílá, Osoblaha and Stradunia streams?) that is attributed with as many as thirty so-called civitates; however, it cannot contain so many fortifications, if these are actually civitates, (cf. e.g. Horák, Trávníček 1956, 53–55; Szydłowski 1993, 17–18; Kouřil 1994, 166, there is older literature with references; Kouřil 1998a, 57–67; Kouřil et al. 2000, 401–402). Thus, in Czech Silesia, the following strongholds can be included: from west to east, these are Víno near Slezské Rudoltice, Hradec nad Moravicí, Opava-Kylešovice, Ostrava-Landek and Chotěbuz-Podobora; Úvalno-Cvilín, Opava-Jaktař and Holasovice are uncertain as their material culture relics are not conclusive and there are no other relics discovered in the potential early medieval fortification systems that could be considered as fortified settlements.

**Chotěbuz-Podobora** close to Český Těšín is one of the best examined early medieval fortified hilltop sites in the Czech lands where systematic archaeological research has been conducted for more than thir-

ty years (Fig. 2). It is situated in the narrow northern forefront of the Moravian Gate, an important line connecting southern and northern Europe in the close vicinity of the current Czech-Polish state border. Erected at a strategically convenient place near a ford across the Olše River, it guards the exit from the corridor near the eastern edge and the end of the route running along the Vistula and Nida Rivers to the Krakow region and further to the east; the western passage of the forefront was guarded and controlled by an equally well-placed fortification at the top of the Landek hill in Ostrava-Koblov situated some 30 km to the west under which a branch of the main routes was downstream to the northwest, to the Baltic Sea (Kouřil 1994, 36–42; Kouřil 1996, 46–55; Kouřil 1998b, 349–358; Kouřil 2001, 158–163; Kouřil, Gryc 2014, 129–133). Both fortified settlements form part of a group of Upper Silesia strongholds, most likely determining Golensizi tribal oikumene; on the Polish side, Lubomia, Skoczów, Kamieniec, Będzin and possibly also Komorno belong among them; on the Czech side, apart from those already mentioned, also Víno and Hradec nad Moravicí. Some 15 km in the eastern direction from Chotěbuz (almost at the springs of the Vistula River), a one-piece fortification in Skoczów-Międzyświeć was situated (Szydłowski 1961, 201–207; Szydłowski 1962, 81–84; Szydłowski 1964a, 53–56; Szydłowski 1964b, 72–74), an excellently protected two-piece Lubomia that was found approximately 40 km northwest (Szydłowski 1968, 271–275; Szydłowski 1969, 75–79; Szydłowski 1970a, 173–191; Szydłowski 1970b, 69–104; Szydłowski 1974, 205–222; Szydłowski 1982, 215–223; Szydłowski, Pierzyna 1970; Pierzyna 1970, 105–146). There was also an undivided Kamieniec, at a distant 75 km (Szydłowski 1965, 50–55; Abłamowicz 1991b, 207–218) and most likely a two-piece stronghold in Będzin some 85 km away, (last collectively Rogaczewska 2004, 283–300; Rogaczewska 2005, 103) if looking from the mouth of the Moravian Gate that was projected far away to the north. At approximately the same distance (65 and 85 km, respectively), this time to the west of Chotěbuz, two locations in the Czech territory were constructed – Hradec and Víno.

An extensive and highly fortified stronghold in Lubomia, an area that exceeds the other fortifications several times, was the administrative, military, economic and probably also the cultural centre of this tribal unit; the presence of an elite is witnessed by the unique nature of the buildings and by a rich collection of spurs (mainly spurs with hooks), finest militaria and other major findings (cf. Kouřil, Gryc 2011, 211–243; Boroń, Foltyn 2011, 20–22). Other fortifications were grouped in an imaginary ring around it, built in highly exposed and visually advantageous positions at key access positions towards the central stronghold. They had a relatively small area and were predominantly not segmented. They lacked a distinct rear defence and arranged its operation and logistics separately;



**Fig. 2.** Chotěbuz-Podobora. LiDAR data: State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre, G5, map sheet CTES93-94 (P. Kouřil, M. Vlach).

**Obr. 2.** Chotěbuz-Podobora. Lidarový snímek hradiska. Český úřad zeměměřičský a katastrální, G5, mapový list CTE593-94 (P. Kouřil, M. Vlach).

they did not create the mainstay of the settlement in the proper meaning of the word usually associated with open settlements. The dominant guarding, control, monitoring and in some cases the refugial nature of these strongholds is quite evident, representing antennae projected into the directions from which danger could be anticipated. In almost all of them, items were discovered signalling the presence of a socially privileged community, namely mounted warriors, while massive fire layers were noted pointing to a violent and most likely abrupt ending.

Returning to Chotěbuz, it consists of three geographically mutually descending steps – the highest placed acropolis and two suburbia with unusually well-preserved ramparts and trenches; the inner area amounts to 1.8 ha, and segments examined to date represent less than 20% of the total area. It can be noted that in the late Bronze Age and Hallstatt period, the Slavic settlement was possibly preceded by an originally unfortified or only slightly fenced settlement that gradually – most probably under pressure from nomads coming from the east – transformed into the



**Fig. 3.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (research season 2009). First bailey, traces of stakes of the inner palisade. Photo J. Gryc

**Obr. 3.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (výzkum 2009). První předhradí, stopy po kůlech vnitřní palisády. Foto J. Gryc.

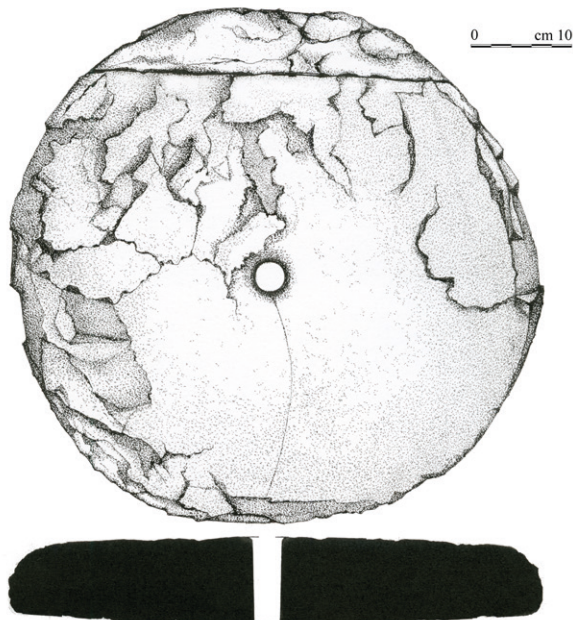
fortified element. However, this was only its smaller part, better protected by nature – today's acropolis was separated from the other area by an 8.5 m wide poured rampart without any internal structure that was determined on both sides with river nuggets and a subsequent trench; both fortification elements were subsequently also used by the Slavs. In the initial stage of the Slavic presence, in the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, this could have been the rising of the top of the rampart and a simple attachment to a palisade ring (at regular intervals, post holes of 40–50 cm diameter). Later, a proper wooden wall was constructed with log cells placed close to each other in the length of approximately 60 m, with gravel-earth filling and a gate slightly protruding from the arch of the wall body. The dimensions of the individual chambers at both sides of the entrance that appeared to be doubled were ca 2.0 × 2.0 m; the total width of the wall was approximately 4.0 m. Oak was primarily used with a smaller amount of fir wood for the construction. The only date obtained by means of dendrochronology suggests, with major caution that the wooden structure could have originated as late as sometime after 871. Its existence is also evidenced by a large quantity of both large and small pieces of daub with prints of logs and chopped boards – planks. It needs to be stressed that with the exception of a simple berm made up of river nuggets that cannot be proven in all sections, no stone elements were present there. A subsequent wide moat with a tube-shaped bottom separating the acropolis from the first bailey was cut out in the gravel terrace of the Olše River at a depth against the surface of the bailey reaching almost 5 m.

The smallish fortified Hallstatt district though, was not sufficient for the more numerous Slavic community and therefore, in the course of the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> and especially in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, two more premises (two suburbias) were artificially separated from the terrain and added. No protective structure was fully completed for the second one. Doubtful in terms of implementation, though, were also the strategic reasons following on from the general configuration of the local terrain. The first bailey was encircled on the western and southern sides with a 197 m long and 5 m wide rampart of poured sand and soil without any internal structure that was reinforced on both sides with a palisade of massive fir poles with a diameter of 20–40 cm arranged tightly next to each other (Fig. 3). At a height of approximately two meters, the palisade wall was ended on the inner side of the rampart (at least in certain sections and at the same time it was anchored with 3–4 cm thick planks and half logs towards the body and forming an 80–90 cm high gallery that could have been used for walking. We cannot exclude that in certain segments river nuggets could have been used for reinforcement. The situation in higher positions on the top of the rampart cannot currently be fully explained. However, frequent large caked up pieces of

clay with prints of logs and planks of an almost scoriaceous character indicate that they must have been components of massive wooden structures. It can be noted further that post holes were recorded relatively frequently at a distance of 60–80 cm in front of the palisade in regular intervals following the course of the palisade. The poles situated there could have been both a part of the support system safeguarding the internal wall of the rampart from splitting and also could have carried simple sheds opening into the area of the bailey under which economic and manufacturing activities

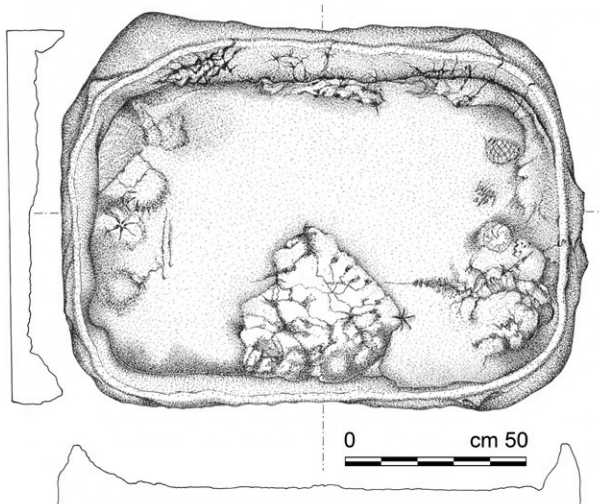
were carried out. The moat had a sharp ogival shape and so far no relicts of burnt woods have been registered in its filling. The opposite, at the present time a heavily damaged eastern side close to the foot where the river ran was safeguarded by only a small, partially already sliding, insignificant poured rampart with an existing width of approximately 3 m at the foot, again without any internal reinforcement, 3 m wide and 1 m deep shallow ditch connected to it. These un-traditionally arranged defence elements can be found at various other Upper Silesian cites (e.g. Landek, Komorno, Lędziny etc.).

An unfinished, 150 m long rampart delimiting the second bailey was also lacking any internal structure. It was quite low and so far, its fixation with a possible palisade wall or walls or other reinforcement elements was not observed. Its original width can only be guessed to be at 4–5 m, the subsequent external moat



**Fig. 4.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (research season 2008). First bailey, quern stone – quern in situ. Photo J. Gryc, drawing J. Grieblerová.

**Obr. 4.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (výzkum 2008). První předhradí, kamenný žernov – ležák v poloze in situ. Foto J. Gryc, kresba J. Grieblerová.



**Fig. 5.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (research season 2008). First bailey, roasting clay pan in situ. Photo J. Gryc, drawing J. Grieblerová.

**Obr. 5.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (výzkum 2008). První předhradí, pražnice v poloze in situ. Foto J. Gryc, kresba J. Grieblerová.

with a basin-shaped bottom is current at a depth of 3 m under the current top of the rampart.

In addition, a small and low rampart ca 22 m long and 3–4 m wide at the foot with a protruding, shallow moat on the inner side was noted on the gentler north-east slope behind the acropolis, already outside the premises of the stronghold proper. It was poured from river sand and small gravel and the rampart had no internal structure either. During the excavations, no reliable dating material was obtained, therefore, its time and cultural classification are not fully clear.

With regard to the communication scheme, it can be anticipated that the main access road led from the south along the edge of the river terrace to the area of the second bailey then over the bridge across the moat entered through the gate to the first bailey. From there it maintained the suggested north-southern direction and possibly by bridging the ditch between this area and the acropolis again through a gated building, this time slightly protruding from the front of the rampart where it led into its premises. So far though, the anticipated branching within the individual sections of the stronghold has not been able to be identified.

We have an idea about the internal organisation and the buildings, but it is highly uncertain if this could be referred to as an urban-planning concept. The local elite could have been concentrated in the best-protected place – on the northern edge of the acropolis. This is suggested not only by the character of the findings themselves but also by the remains of burnt wooden structures that possibly result from the

pole and log type above-ground houses, some of which contained stone ovens (secondary use of quern stones as well), and also from the wood and soil rampart. Apart from this, there are all kinds of features in the acropolis itself – settlement, manufacturing, economic, operational, separate fireplaces etc. However, they do not show any system or order in their arrangement but are randomly scattered over the surface.

There is a slightly different situation in the first bailey where there is an evident concentration of various features along the inner wall of the rampart. A positive sign is that the manufacturing and economic devices left there were related to blacksmithery (slag, ceramic tuyeres, axe-shaped ingot, etc.), textiles (spindle whorls, scissors) drying, browning and milling of corn (burnt grains, roasting clay pans, quern stones, large vessels; Fig. 4, 5), stabling of livestock (primitive cowsheds with burnt animal skeletons; Fig. 6) etc. A particular feature projected into the area of the bailey may be, with a certain amount of caution, considered to be a cult feature. The feature interpreted as an above-ground granary with a clay panelled floor in an orthogonal shape (ca 6/7 x 4/5 m) with walls daubed with clay (the daub had prints of barks as well as wickerwork) is definitely of note; millet, oats, common wheat and spelt- wheat predominated among the burnt grain while threshing was absent. It seems that the entire central area of this most extensive part of the stronghold was, with exception, free of houses and may have served as a type of assembly place both for the inhabitants of the stronghold and its immediate vicinity and their most valuable property – livestock.



**Fig. 6.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (research season 2009). First bailey, burnt skeletons of domestic animals; A – pregnant cow, B – sheep/goats, C – pig, D – dog. Photo J. Gryc.

**Obr. 6.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (výzkum 2009). První předhradí, spálené skelety domácích zvířat; A – březí kráva, B – ovce/kozy, C – prase, D – pes. Foto J. Gryc.

In the central stronghold in Lubomia is a purpose-built agglomeration of even higher quality. By omitting its earlier stage that may have been represented by a lightly fortified settlement with features of different character distributed in an unorganised manner, then later, within the fortified premises, are at least three districts separated by their purpose. The first is presented by a settlement formation with predominantly log houses (including the hall structure) arranged in a line at the inner foot of an insignificant bulwark of the acropolis (namely at the north-eastern passage near the gate). With their gables as well as possibly the entrance gate, they were oriented towards the central area where they appeared at regular distances and were completed with economic features situated without an obvious system. Due to the quality of the findings it is thought that this was where the local elite resided. The second district is characterised as

economic-residential (in the south-eastern part where a feature was discovered that may with caution be interpreted as a kind of granary) and the third as production-residential (in the north-western section), predominantly in the western part of the acropolis with findings of iron slag or slag related to glass production were also concentrated along with animal bones (waste premises, Szydłowski 1970a, 178, 183–184; Szydłowski 1974, 219). The central part of the acropolis was empty without any traces of buildings. With respect to the bailey, only sporadic traces of residential activities were recorded; this part of the stronghold possibly served as a refuge (Szydłowski 1974, 218).

In Międzywiec, the development was similar to that of Lubomia where a regular stronghold was preceded by a slightly fortified settlement. The features of the different functions dominated by stake structures

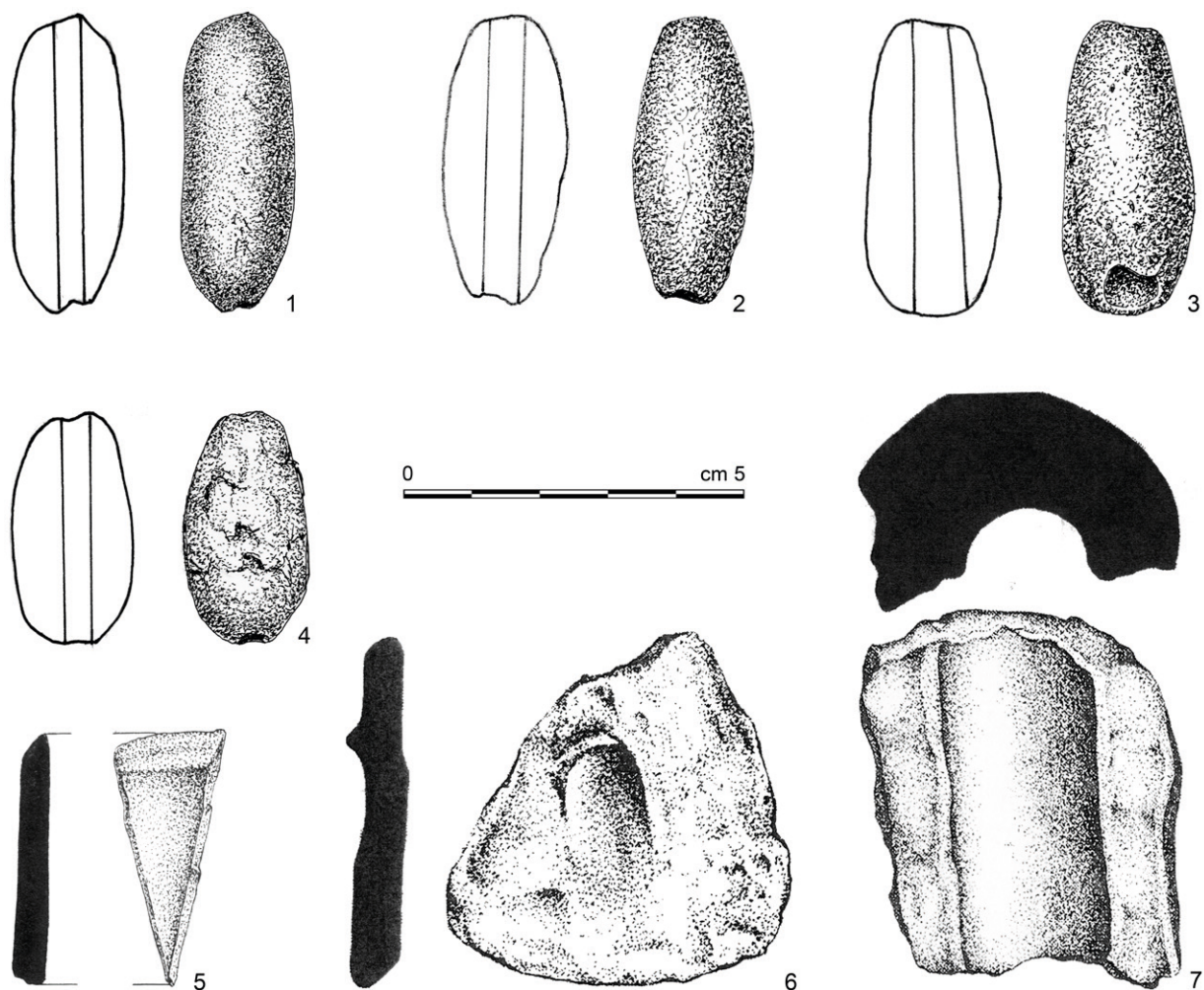


Fig. 7. Chotěbuz-Podobora (research seasons 1982, 1987, 1994, 2003, 2009, 2010, 2011). Ceramic fishing net sinkers (1–4), ceramic potter's blade (5–6), tuyere (7). Drawing J. Grieblová.

Obr. 7. Chotěbuz-Podobora (výzkumné sezóny 1982, 1987, 1994, 2003, 2009, 2010, 2011). Keramické zátěže rybářských sítí (1–4), keramické hrnčířské čepel (5–6), keramická dyzna (7). Kresba J. Grieblerová.

were again concentrated along the ramparts at the inner wall. This was quite rare and most probably, these houses were built without any plan. It is not quite clear whether the centre of the stronghold was empty (Szydłowski 1964a, 54–55; Szydłowski 1964b, 73–74). The same principle including the time sequence – an early medieval settlement – stronghold was also in Kamienec (predominantly waste pits, fireplaces, sunken houses) in this respect, there is little that can be said about the other observed locations.

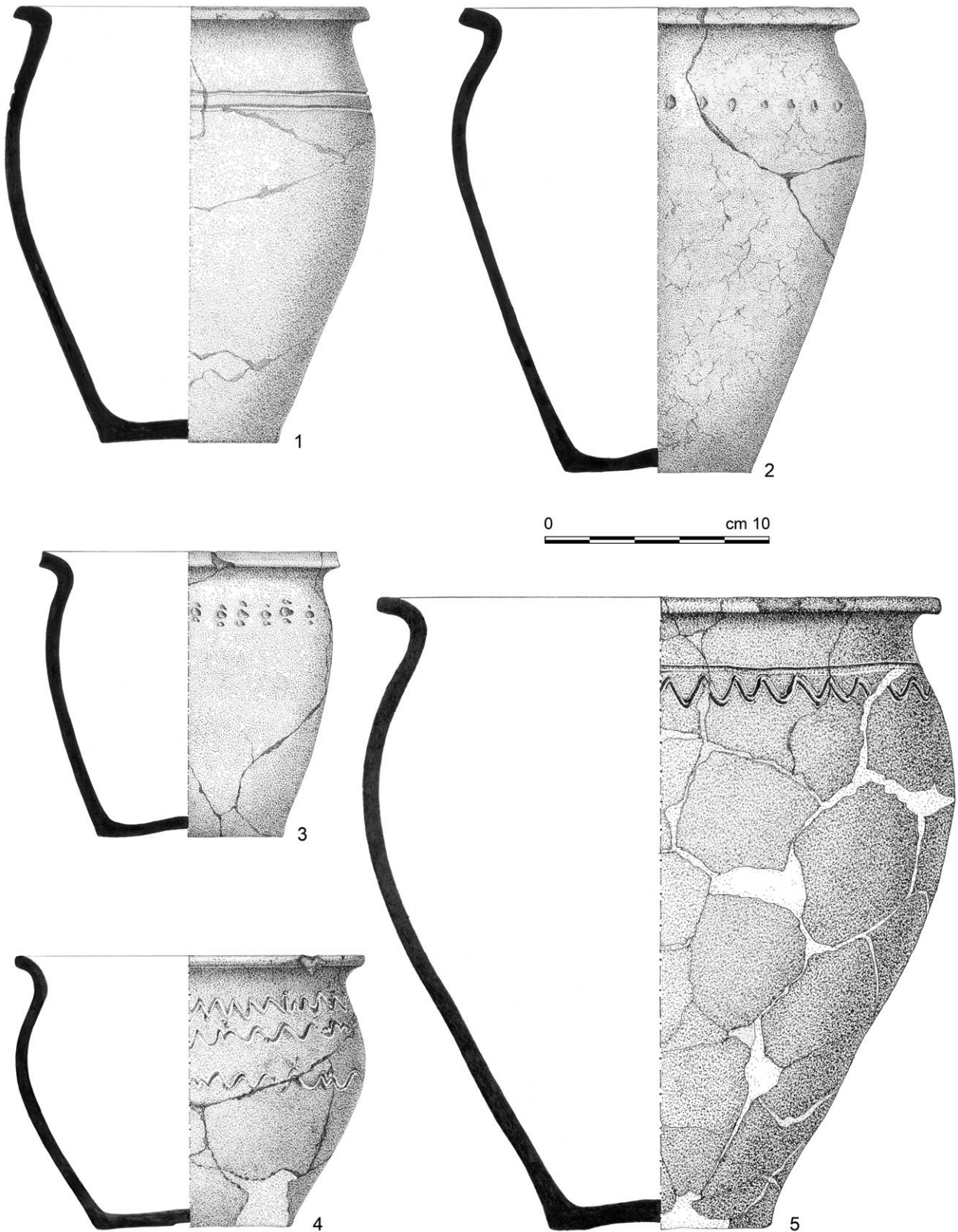
Generally, it can be observed that with respect to the features functioning as residences, the stake structure was predominant at the strongholds either with walls that were pleached and daubed on both sides or with what was probably a groove-and-tongue joint log type structure. The traditional sunken houses were only found in isolated cases, in one case in Chotěbuz, with a clear entrance corridor. Oval or irregular shapes with a beaten floor clearly predominated among the uncovered and only slightly sunken plans; orthogonal forms were less frequent. The floor working consisted of only treading or packing, and only two features in Lubomia had the floor covered with panels (Szydłowski 1974, 212, 218). In many cases the presence of heating equipment is missing or cannot be positively identified. With respect to the shape of the roofs, the saddle-backed type was absolutely predominant. In the minority of cases, there were hip or pavilion types of roof while the pent scheme was applied in economic and primarily production features. From very fine cinders that covered all the floor features and partially the sunken walls in Chotěbuz, it is assumed that the cover was mainly straw and maybe reed. In isolated cases there are diversely situated daub blocks; however, it is not sure whether they are related to the structure of the ceilings or the walls.

Material culture in Chotěbuz is quite uniform and only slightly diverse. The ceramic production represented by home-made manufacturing is absolutely predominated by pot shapes while bowls are hardly represented. However, the number of roasting clay pans (tubs, baths) has increased in certain cases that were discovered in situ. This basic composition is completed with spindle whorls (frequently also stone whorls as well), ceramic fishing net sinkers, tuyeres, a potter's blade (Fig. 7) and pieces of daub with different profiles. Unfortunately, the stratigraphic situation in the site does not provide very many closed (found) assemblages that would allow to more precisely characterise the development of the local pottery production. This is because a large majority of this type of material comes from the settlement layers or features where there is contamination and which, apart from the pottery, have not actually yielded any other artefacts that enable more precise dating. From the total amount of several thousand listed early Medieval fragments and complete vessels, the majority are connected to the earlier stage of the Slavic

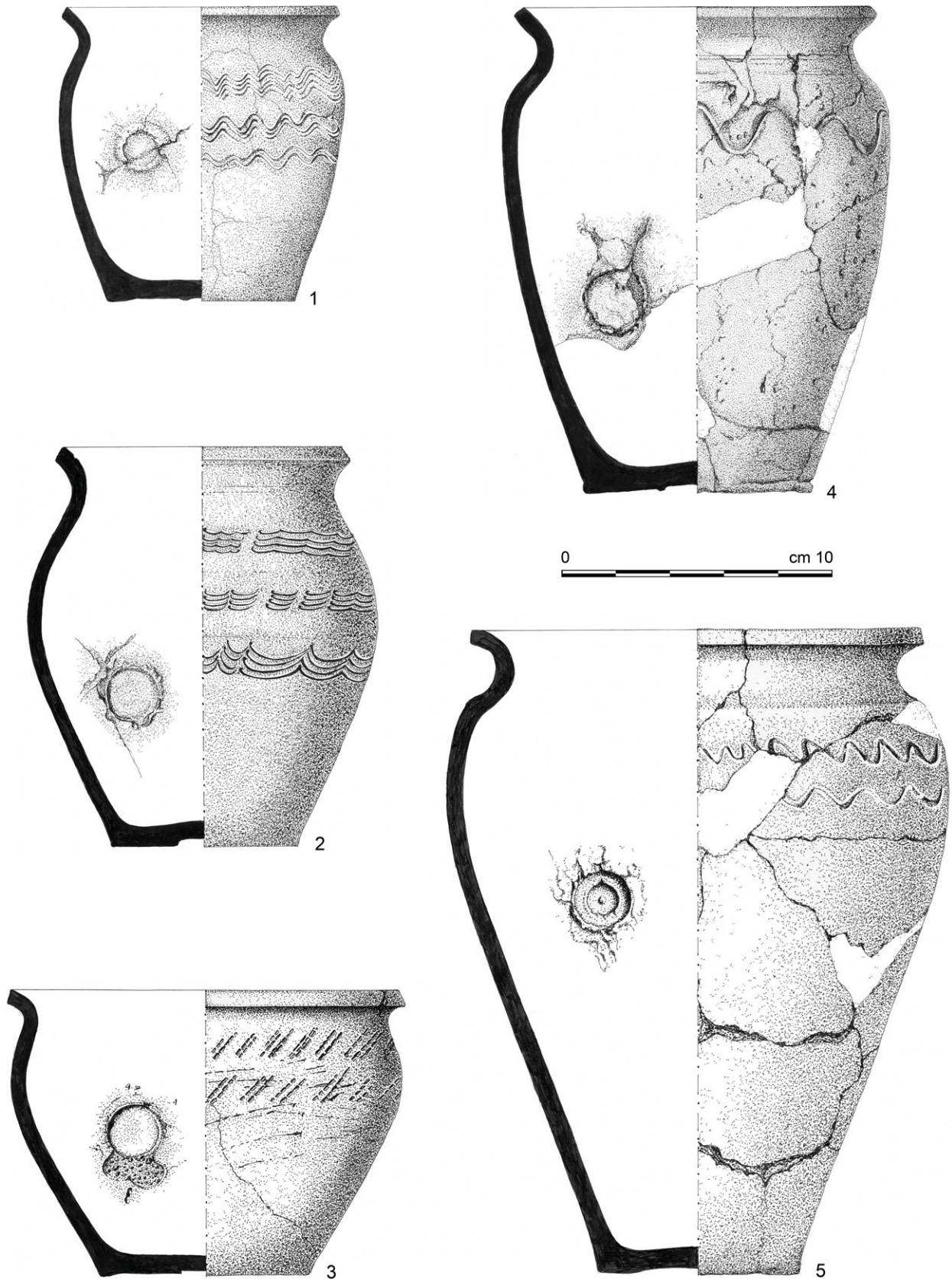
settlement (second half of the 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century) while approximately 10% is represented by pottery from the later stage (end of the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> century). In the general characteristics of the earlier stage, it can be noted that slimmer forms are predominant with maximum convexity situated around the upper third of the body with an insignificant, often evenly reduced neck while the rims show mature outlines (Fig. 8, 9, 10). They are markedly convex in shape with a predominance of conically or cylindrically bevelled rims. In addition, simple rounded forms, cone-shaped or cylindrical rimmed can be found in this range; tall, almost calyxous-shaped rims connected to the bulkier shapes with the maximum convexity below the upper third of the body classified as from a later period. All vessels bear the marks of hand building/coiling usually reaching half of the body while some are coiled only in the peripheral parts. The surface is usually slightly coarsened or smooth. Bases are usually flat or slightly concave, often with traces of breezing, the thickness of which is usually greater than the thickness of the actual vessel. Some pots carry a technical mark – a print of the potter's wheel axis – usually situated eccentrically, 2–3 cm in diameter and not very noticeable. In isolated cases, there are plastic marks made in the low relief. In most cases, these symbols in the shape of a simple cross inscribed in a circle indicate fairly low quality; the square-shaped marks are made much more carefully. Decoration is most frequently limited to the upper part of the body and often only consists of a simple combination of a comb-shaped stroke ornament and a circumferential groove or a comb-shaped wave and a comb-shape. However, there are specimens with rich decorations where all types of decorations have been used on one vessel (comb-shaped strokes, different types of waves and grooves) and the ornaments evenly cover the upper, and often, also the lower parts. In isolated cases, there is decorating with a plastic trim (subsequently ornamented with a comb-shaped wave or comb-shaped punches) or decoration of the external as well as the internal side of the rim. There are also shapes without any decoration that can be identified as so-called smooth pottery that is present, although not too frequently, in other Upper Silesian sites (Pankiewicz 2012, 117).

For instance, feature No. 175 from this time period uncovered in the northern part of the acropolis belongs to a relatively closed complex of better quality. An oval feature, the filling of which was formed with carbonaceous to cinereous soil with smaller stones secondarily burnt on the bottom of which there were three incomplete skeletons of small pigs (Fig. 11), produced a rich collection of pottery and a small piece of ironwork with a rectangular central opening and a rivet encircled with a brass astragal wire that is unusual for this peripheral environment. As a working theory, it is possible that this fitting could have been a component of a leather clamp or a cloth pouch that hung from the waist (Fig. 12; cf. Dostál 1966, 139, grave No. 4 from

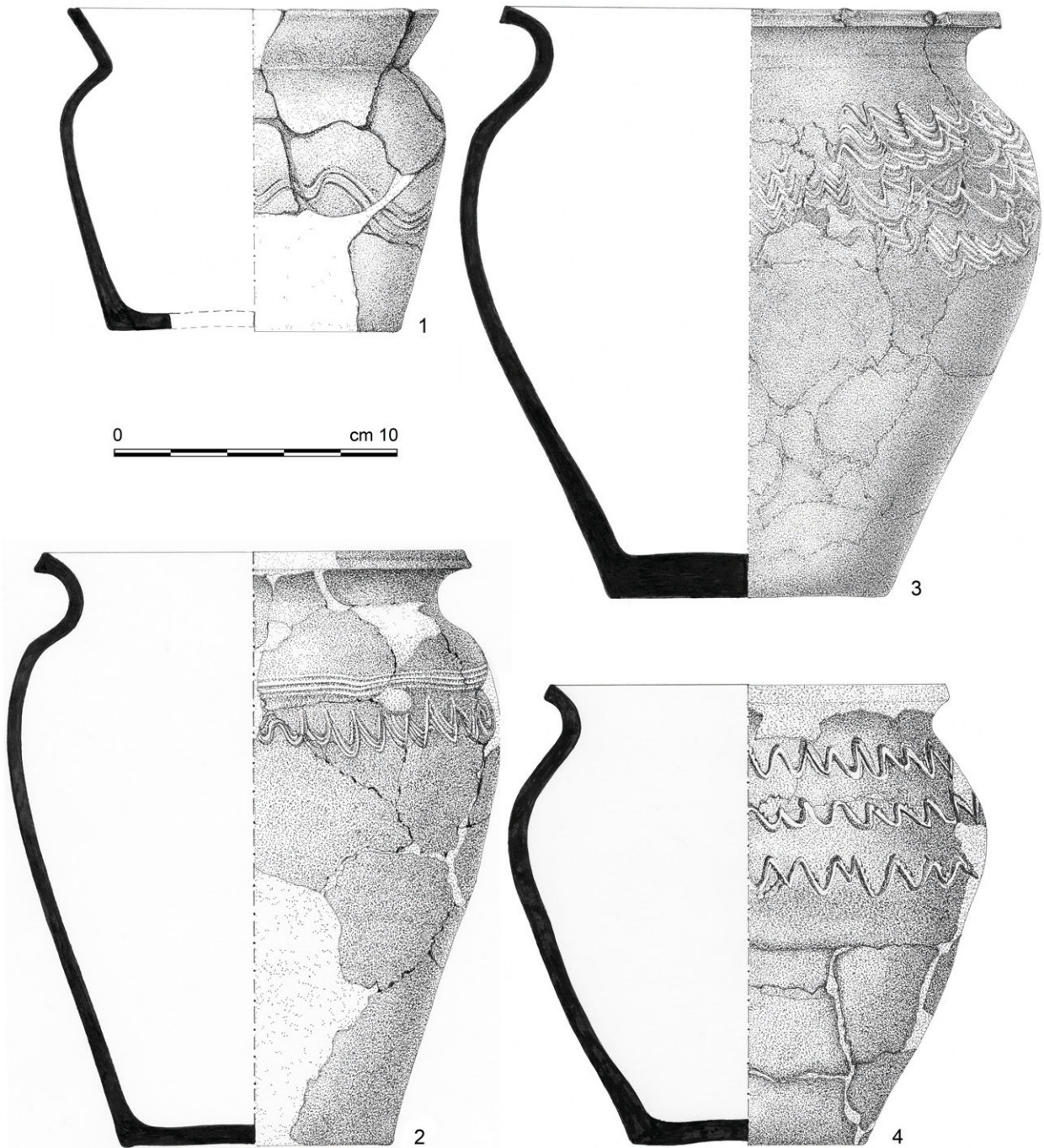




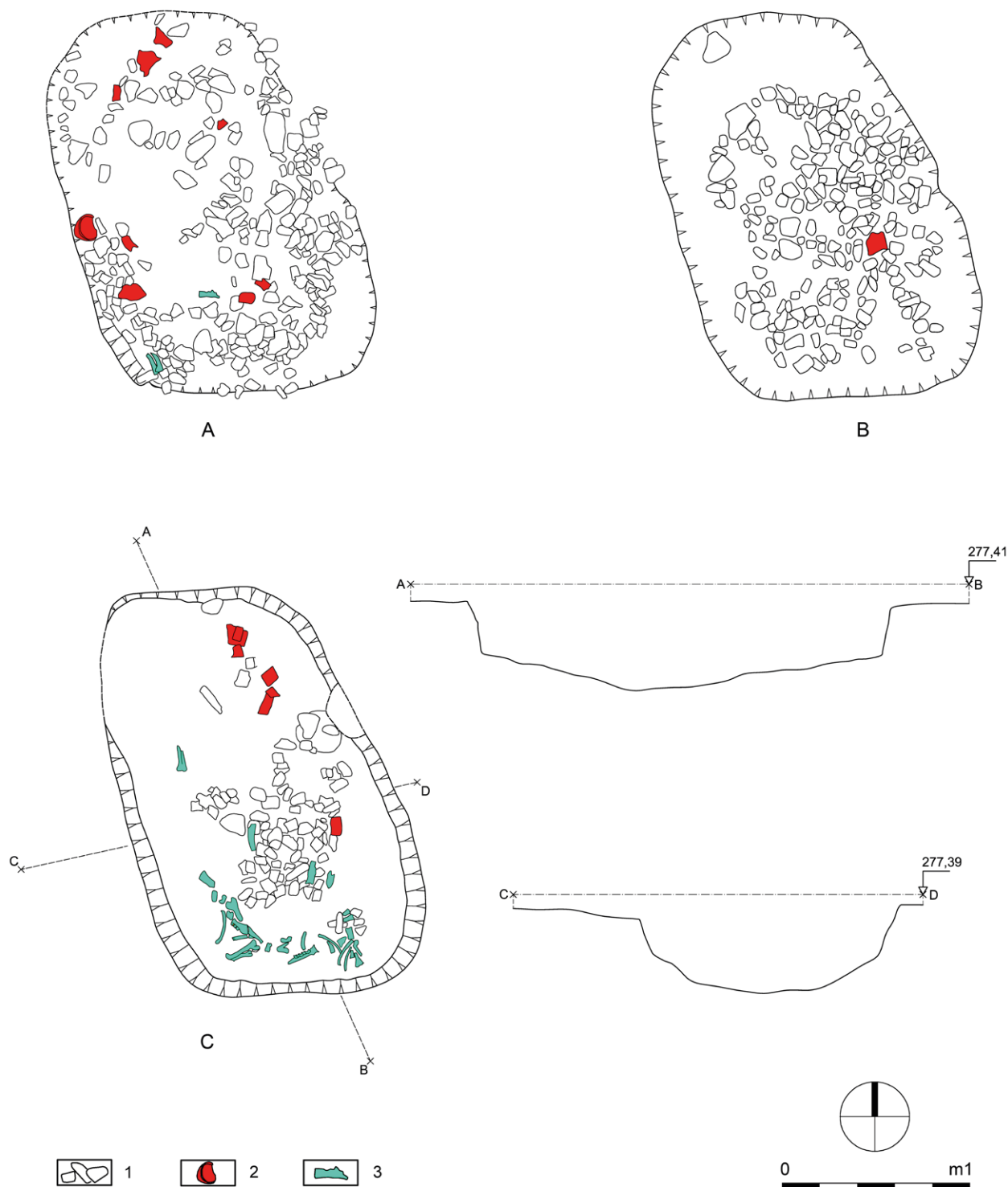
**Fig. 8.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (research seasons 1994, 2008, 2010). Ceramic vessels (1–5). Drawing J. Grieblerová.  
**Obr. 8.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (výzkumné sezóny 1994, 2008, 2010). Keramické nádoby (1–5). Kresba J. Grieblerová.



**Fig. 9.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (research season 2008). Ceramic vessels (1–5). Drawing J. Grieblerová.  
**Obr. 9.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (research season 2008). Keramické nádoby (1–5). Kresba J. Grieblerová.

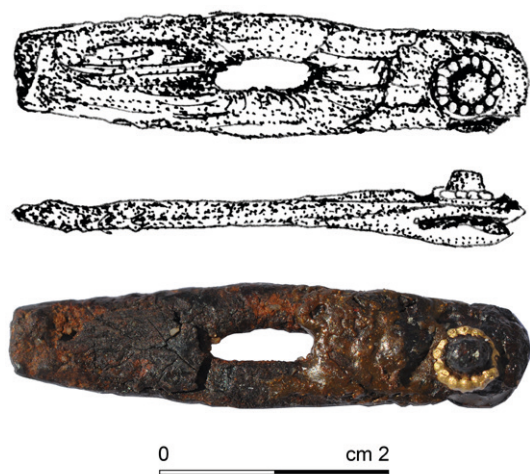


**Fig. 10.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (research seasons 2010, 2013, 2014). Ceramic vessels (1–4). Drawing J. Griesslerová.  
**Obr. 10.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (výzkumné sezóny 2010, 2013, 2014). Keramické nádoby (1–4). Kresba J. Griesslerová.



**Fig. 11.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (research season 2006). Acropolis, feature No. 175 with burnt skeletons of three little pigs; 1 - stones, 2 - daub, 3 - bones. Drawing J. Gryc.

**Obr. 11.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (výzkum 2006). Akropole, objekt č. 175 se spálenými skelety tří prasátek; 1 - kameny, 2 - mazanice, 3 - kosti. Kresba J. Gryc.



**Fig. 12.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (research seasons 2006). Acropolis, feature No. 175, fitting of the cloth pouch (?). Drawing J. Grieblerová, photo J. Foltýn.

**Obr. 12.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (výzkum 2006). Akropole, objekt č. 175, kování sumky (?). Kresba J. Grieblerová, foto J. Foltýn.

Lanžhot). The complex contained almost two hundred pottery fragments from which three small vessels could be fully reconstructed next to relatively larger pots with a maximum convexity of almost 25 cm in diameter. The majority of the pottery was made of medium coarse ceramic material tempered with an admixture of small stones, most frequently crushed teschenite, with dimensions of 1–3 mm. The rims showed a fully matured profilation with a distinct prevalence of cornice-like and cylindrically truncated rims. They were decorated with comb-like waves, a combination of comb-like strips and wave-like waves or simple waves in combination with circumferential grooves; no comb-like stroke was discovered (Fig. 13). In this complex, pottery from the so-called 4<sup>th</sup> group is completely missing (Kouřil 1994, 139) that is connected to the very end of the earlier stage of the settlement and which is usually in situations such as this buried under the destruction of the rampart of the first bailey and, to a lesser extent, at the acropolis (Fig. 14). It is interesting that this pottery suggestively resembles the distinctive, typologically specific small pottery group documented in Pohansko near Břeclav, designated 1a (Dostál 1975, 160–161; Dostál 1994, 225) or A (Macháček 2001, 137–138; Macháček et al. 2016, 138–139), which probably comprised a very contained time period, and to a marginal extent the Blučina pottery finds (information kindly provided by M. Mazuch; Klanica 1985, 519; Mazuch 2013). Although chiefly dated to the final decades of the 9<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, this type of pottery differs from the Chotěbuz pottery finds presented in this paper in that it is of a coarser clay material made by low-quality

firing, producing a sandwich effect. The pottery has been tentatively linked with the military elements of the population that lived there, as, especially in residential buildings, the excavated items were almost exclusively found alongside militaria, equestrian equipment and other attributes of high social status (Pokorná 2011, 89–103; Macháček et al. 2016, 139). No parallels have been found in Silesia, although some of the – probably somewhat younger pottery fragments from the nearby Skoczów stronghold show certain similarities (Pankiewicz 2012, 213–214), although not with respect to the central stronghold in Lubomia and other key localities in the region. On the other hand, the finds correspond with a number of different artefacts from Chotěbuz and possibly also Lubomia, for which a southern provenance is assumed (see below). However, unequivocal proof of these two occurring together has yet to materialise.

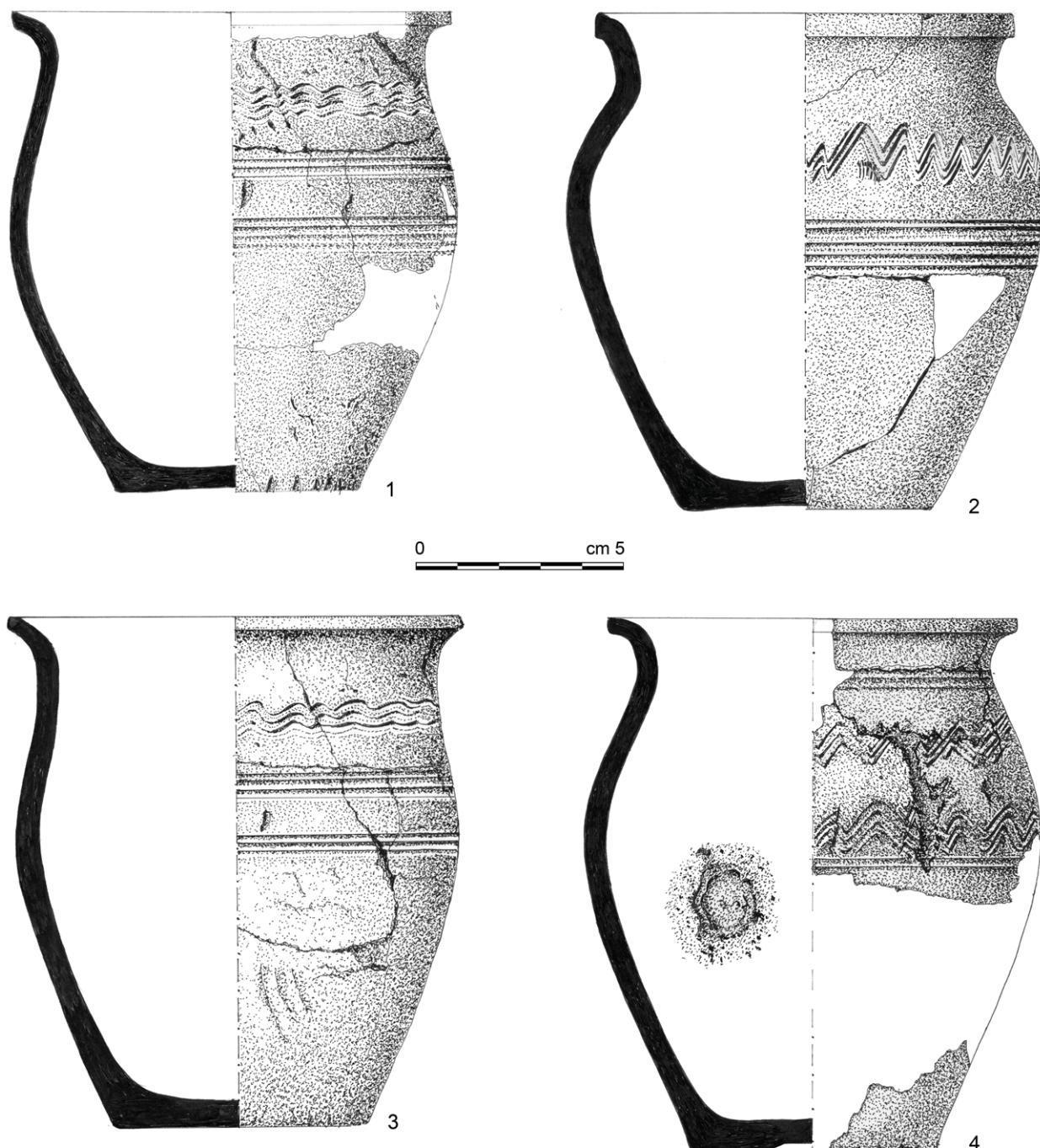
It is very special, and in a way, uniform pottery represented by only a small number of fragments and shapes that can be reconstructed. The ceramic material used for its production is fine-grained, rather sporadically contaminated with an admixture of smaller stones, hard burnt to reddish brown or ochre and carefully coiled almost to the bottom of the vessel. The bases are usually flat or slightly concave and reinforced in the centre without any stamps. The cylindrical and cone-shaped rims are formed with a pulled lower (less often upper) edge and sometimes subsequently decorated with a groove or wavy line. The entire bodies of the vessels in the monitored group – these are exclusively pots – are covered with circumferential lines or grooves and in isolated cases are completed by a comb-shaped wave line positioned tightly above the accentuated neck. It can be noted that this pottery was also recorded in the ceramic material from a newly discovered settlement near the eastern foot of the stronghold. This settlement, however, did not last long; it ceased to exist some time at the turn of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century and was covered with massive flood layers.

With regard to common metal items, it can be realistically expected that most of these were produced on site. The scores of kilograms of iron slag accompanying the metallurgical and smithery processes clearly evidence this. In addition, the outcrops of poor quality ores (pelosiderite ores) in the immediate base of the stronghold are still evident today and some of the uncovered features at the acropolis and in the suburbia can be connected to the iron processing.

However, certain militaria (so-called bearded axes), equestrian and equine equipment (spurs with plates, stirrup irons, bridles, buckles) as well as a collection of bronze, partially silver plated earrings and bronze rings including a bead of blown glass uncovered in a specific find context at the first bailey definitely profess to the southern (Great Moravian) milieu

(Fig. 15). Quern stones from the southern provenience were found in this area. These are made of mica schist and in the context of this, there were also large storage ceramic shapes with a plastic trim, bottle shaped forms with stamps on the bases and graphite pottery that suggest southern influences.

Items made of antlers and bones were not found here at all; however, quern stones and quern stone parts are relatively frequent. Particularly noticeable is a higher quantity of whetstones made from material from the Jeseníky area. Quern stones (millstones) together with finds of carbonized grain (a winter wheat



**Fig. 13.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (research season 2006). Acropolis, feature No. 175, ceramic vessels (1-4). Drawing J. Grieblerová.

**Obr. 13.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (výzkum 2006). Akropole, objekt č. 175, Keramické nádoby (1-4). Kresba J. Grieblerová.

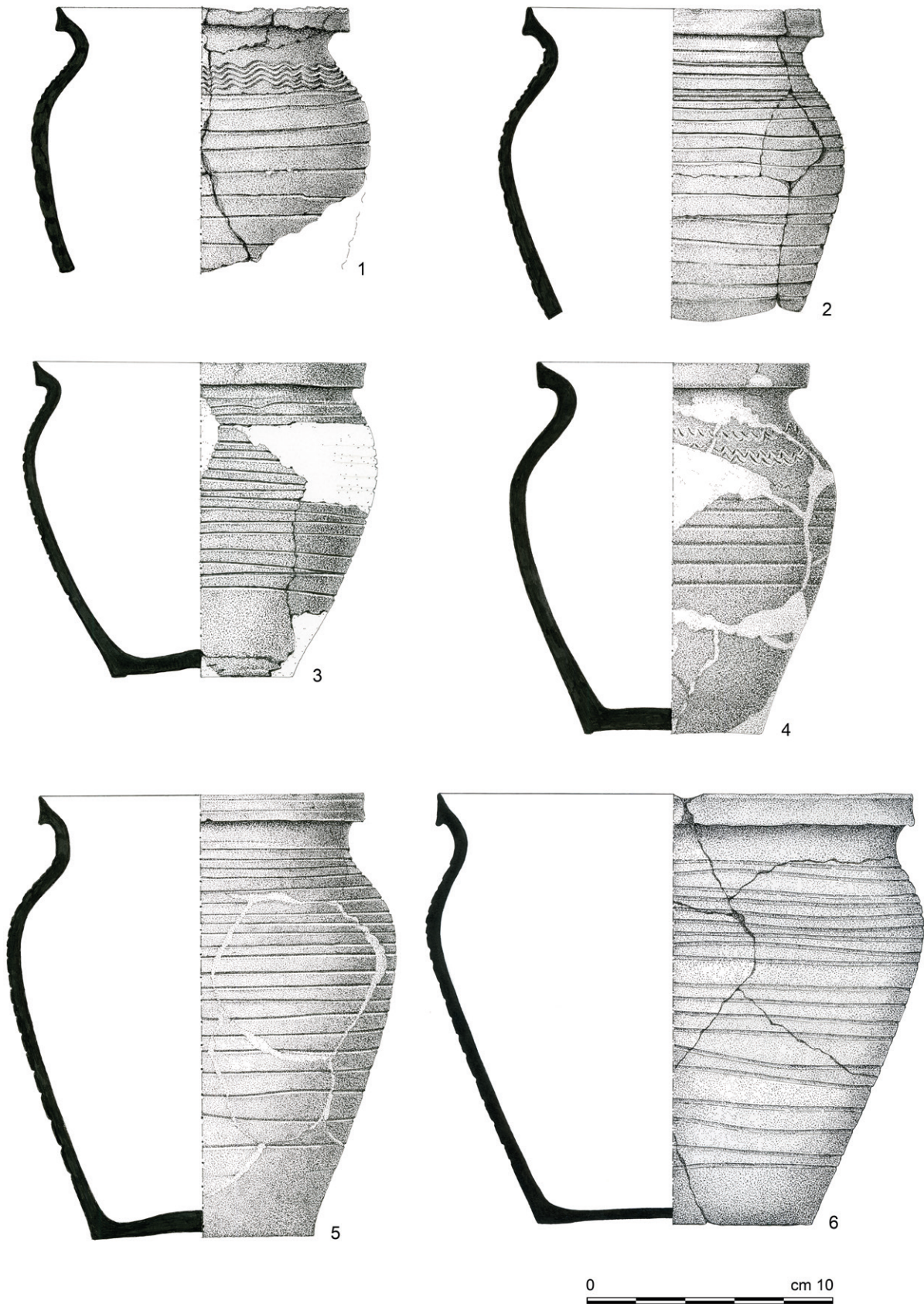
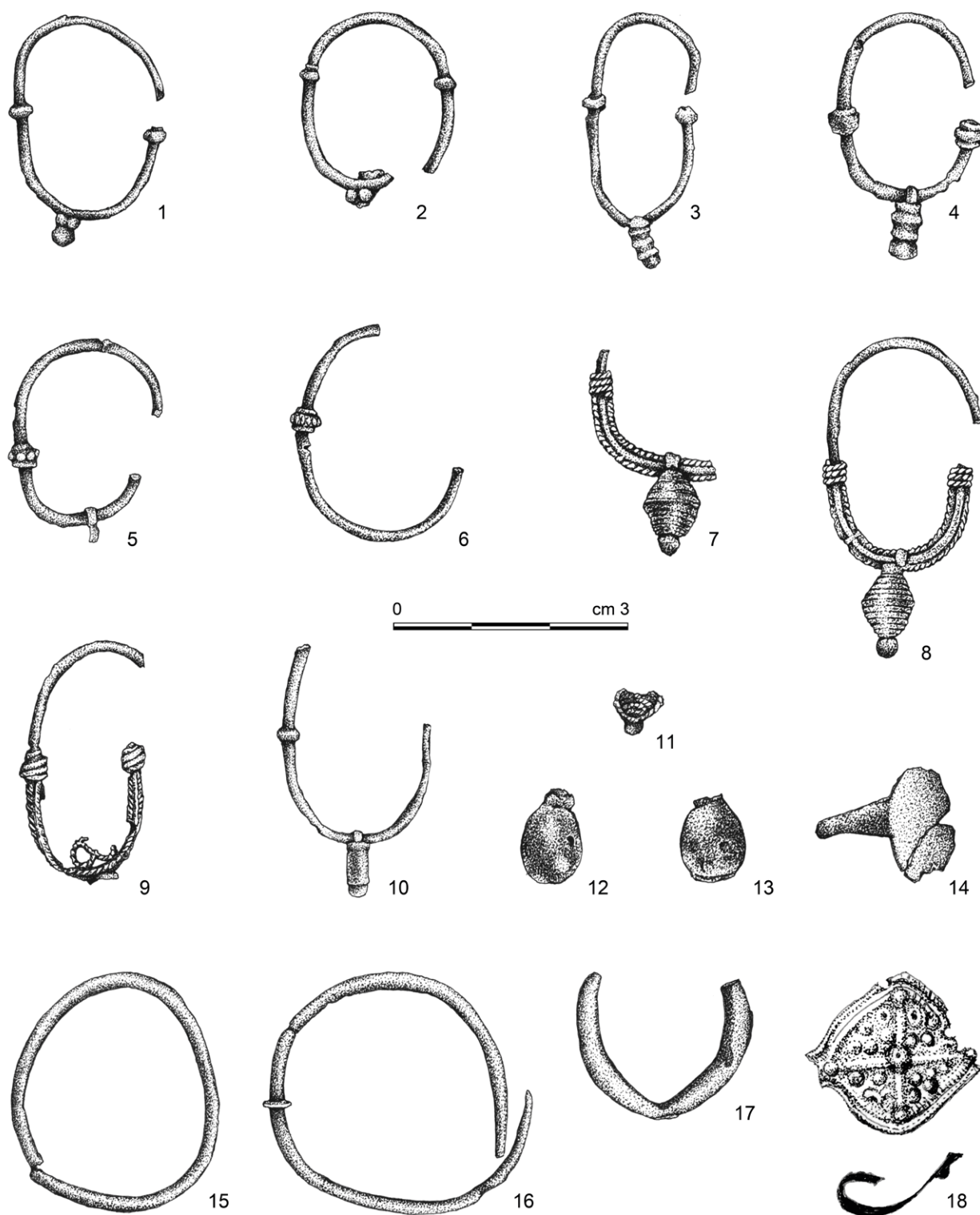


Fig. 14. Chotěbuz-Podobora (research seasons 1994, 2008, 2012). First bailey, the so-called fourth ceramic group (1-6). Drawing J. Grieblerová.

**Obr. 14.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (výzkumné sezóny 1994, 2008, 2012). První předhradí, tzv. čtvrtá keramická skupina (1-6). Kresba J. Grieblerová.



**Fig. 15.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (research seasons 1994, 2010). First bailey, bronze and silver-plated bronze earrings (1–17), lead finger-ring (18). Drawing J. Grieblerová.

**Obr. 15.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (výzkumné sezóny 1994, 2010). První předhradí, bronzové a bronzové postříbené náušnice (1–17), olověný štítkový prsten (18). Kresba J. Grieblerová.



– spring cereal system was used: common wheat, club wheat (*Triticum compactum*), two-grained wheat, winter barley, foxtail millet, millet, oats), peas and cultivated flax, a small ploughshare, sickles, shackles, so-called shepherd's shears and large rectangular roasting clay pans are evidence of relatively mature agricultural production and the self-sufficiency of the population residing at the stronghold. Since there are no known satellite open settlements, with the exception of Lubomia, to which logistic processes could relate, these activities had to be carried out directly at the strongholds (which is most likely highly improbable) or in areas that were more or less in a close contact with their fortification systems. Such activity was identified in Chotěbuz at several places behind the rampart including features with burned grains or iron slag. It resulted from the analysis of the osteological material that the nutrition of the stronghold residents was based, inter alia, on breeding domestic animals where cattle were consumed the most followed by pigs and goats/sheep. Hunting evidently had a marginal role. Indeed, a similar situation including a composition of sorts was observed in nearby Lubomia. As a rare find that evokes the elite environment then there was the first find of the skeletal remains of a greyhound which is, according to the mitochondrial DNA analysis, a relative of the English greyhound (Svobodová et al. 2015, 17–24). Without a doubt, fishing (ceramic weights for fishing nets) and the picking of wild plants (e.g. walnuts) were also commonplace here.

It has already been mentioned that an unusual concentration of southern origin artefacts with analogies in the Great Moravian cultural sphere that surpassed local production was noted in the Chotěbuz stronghold. This is an unusual issue in an area north of the Moravian Gate. Especially typical are combat axes, spurs with plates, stirrup irons, bits and bronze and silver jewellery considered to be exclusive products where corresponding items have never been found of the same quality and quantity in any of the local strongholds. The presence of these cannot be explained by exchange, spoils of war or gradual nonviolent acculturation. Rather, together with the rampart with a chamber structure made in the last quarter of the 9<sup>th</sup> century and unknown in other sites of the region, plus the dendrochronological data indicating the survival of the fortification until the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the theory of a direct engagement of Moravians at this specific site and in the broader upper Oder River basin is supported.

With a certain amount of caution, the circumstantial evidence could be considered as a manifestation of targeted Moravian pressure to the north under the reign of Prince Svatopluk I. (871–894), who was able to mount major raids in the years following the peace treaty with Louis the Germane in Forchheim in 874. It can therefore not be excluded that this zone may have been paralysed and pacified in relation to the

campaign of the Moravian troops against the Vistula River tribal league before the death of Archbishop Methodius in 885 as suggested indirectly by one of the most credible written sources of that time regarding the territory – The life of Saint Methodius. With differing opinions of how real this act was, it has both advocates and opponents. This, however, could have been a single intervention or a time-limited intervention that may not have left any significant traces in archaeological sources.

Naturally, the question remains open as to where any potential Moravian expansion may have reached, whether it was limited to gaining control of the decisive strategic territory – a wider forefront of the Moravian Gate. This would correspond not only to the observed extinction of the local fortification but also the unfinished sections of the rampart systems in some of these (Lubomia, Skoczów, Chotěbuz-Podobora). In any case, though, the local tribal structure was significantly damaged by the anticipated violent attack to such an extent that revitalisation and consolidation never occurred. An exception is possibly Chotěbuz that guarded the exit from the passage that undoubtedly had the highest strategic value out of all the local strongholds for the objectives of the conquerors and the multiple layout that enabled a flexible defence. Therefore, it did not have to be wiped out and destroyed so instead was occupied by the new hegemon and used as an important base to safeguard Moravian presence and Moravian interests. Its final decline most likely only occurred after the collapse and decline of the central territories of Great Moravia in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century when it was not feasible anymore to efficiently monitor the distant periphery from the centre and when the local centrifugal forces could not have been stopped. A massive, fire-caused burnt to red layer as thick as several centimetres was identified at the first bailey and thus provides evidence of the violent extinction of the stronghold. The archaeological material that it contains, although primarily the material which it had buried, may be based on current knowledge (mainly of pottery) and predominantly dated to the course of the 9<sup>th</sup> century with a possible overlap with the next century. Many ceramic artefacts, though, are undoubtedly earlier, most probably from the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> century and correspond to radiocarbon calibrated data from the acropolis and specifically from the first bailey. The notion that the location may well have survived until the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century or its first decade is in a way also supported by two forms of dendrochronological data from the local palisade, with a certain reservation (the growth ring and sapwood are absent under the bark) that shows evidence of cutting trees after 907 or in 906. Subsequently, life at the stronghold stopped for several decades and only gradually reappeared in the last decades of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, even though it never reached its former dynamic and ceased to exist entire-

ly during the first half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Under the given political situation, the nearby location moved tightly above the right bank of the Olše River, at Góra Zamkowa in what today is Polish Cieszyn and actually proved to be more vital. A new fortification was formed there in the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century on earlier prehistoric and possibly early medieval foundations that over time became a major centre of one of the originating Piast fortification complexes in Silesia.

So why was did a new activation of the settlement occur in the final stages of the millennium after such a long hiatus? It is thought that the cause of this may have been the situation that arose due to the loss of the Czech positions in Lesser Poland (and naturally also in Silesia). Hypothetically, it can be said that after the destruction of Těšín Stronghold by the Piast troops of Bolesław I the Brave at the very end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the border in this exposed contact zone was stabilized, evidently temporarily, on the Olše River. It was this scenario that could have been the reason why the Přemyslids, for a certain period of time, revitalised the Chotěbuz stronghold. Material culture, namely pottery (predominantly graphitic pottery was almost non-existent on the Polish site) shows deeper relations with Moravia although more precise dating is uncertain within the framework of the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. On the other hand, there are metallic artefacts available as well as some ceramic shapes that have incontestable relations to the northern or north-eastern environment. Equally acceptable, although again conditionally, is that the fortifications in today's Polish Cieszyn were destroyed to such an extent that they could not have been used at the given time and therefore the Poles, in relation to the occupation of Moravia, renewed the function of nearby Chotěbuz and in particular the smallest and best-protected part – the acropolis. This may also explain the incoming mass of (Moravian) graphite pottery and the presence of iambs of eastern origin (spindle whorls made from Ovruč shale, beads, padlock key, etc.). A much more prosaic explanation related to the previous possibility may be, though quite a logical assumption, is that for strategic reasons, apart from Těšín Stronghold, the Piasts, also occupied Chotěbuz so that it could not be potentially used by the enemy when they were led by the effort to also form an important base on the opposite river bank. The anticipated presence of the elite (also the military elite) is signalled by many high-quality finds (with respect to this issue, the detailed and relevant references from Kouřil, Gryc 2014, namely 133–158). Provided it is anticipated that Brave maintained his position in Moravia until the beginning of the 1020s through to its end when Prince Oldřich (1012–1034) incorporated it to Bohemia (1029?) (however, it is not known how extensive this Moravia actually was), then it can be said that regarding the Northern forefront of the Moravian Gate that the southern wing of the stronghold of the former Golensizi oikumena (Chotěbuz, Landek as well

as Hradec) remained functional there in the case of the two first-mentioned strongholds, at least until the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

The power balance that emerged was only disturbed by the Polish statehood crisis in the 1030s connected to the popular uprising, the pagan reaction and the destruction of relics in the state buildings. The subsequent invasion of Poland (1039) by Břetislav I. (1034–1055) and his success including territorial gains only stressed this situation. If it follows from the brief reference in the *Annales Altahenses* from 1041 that he could only protect the so-called “*duas regiones*” from the invasions that captured the Wrocław and Opole regions (and sometimes also the Golensizi region), it is quite possible that he also controlled the northern approaches to Moravia and therefore also the Těšín enclave with its probable centre on Góra Zamkowa. It is uncertain for how long he was able to hold it since Polish Kazimierz I. (1034–1058) ousted the Czech garrisons shortly before 1054 (Krzemieńska 1999, 361–371; Kouřil et al. 2000, 405–406). A settlement at the Chotěbuz stronghold appears to also belong to this period (possibly in a non-violent way) while the fortification in Cieszyn regains importance and is characterised by long-term dynamic development.

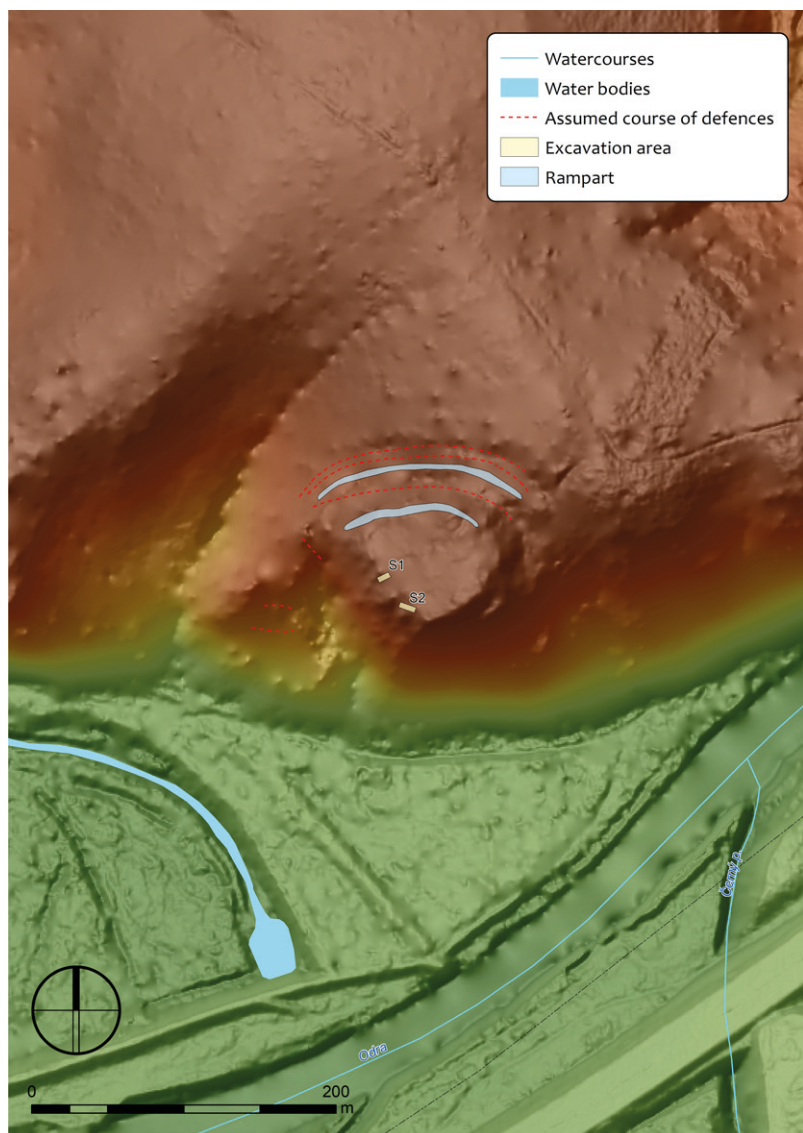
If proceeding towards the west, there is a small, one-part fortification on a hilltop called **Landek** situated above the confluence of the Oder and Ostravice Rivers (Fig. 16). Underneath, there was probably a crossroads leading to the east, south and along the Oder River to the north and which, apart from this location, also safeguarded an old crossing at the nearby connection of the Oder River with the Olše River near what is today known as Bohumín. The site that was markedly damaged by the construction of a medieval castle (13<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries) has been evaluated several times, both partially and comprehensively (Kouřil 1994, 36–42; Kouřil 1996, 46–55; Kouřil 2001, 158–163). Apart from other findings, a demise burned horizon was observed along with many local ceramic artefacts, mainly from the earlier stage of the settlement (8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> century) bears evident traces of secondary burning; it also appears that this stronghold could have been destroyed in the last decades of the 9<sup>th</sup> century in relation to pressure from Mojmir into the area north of the Moravian Gate (Kouřil 1994, 166; Kouřil, Gryc 2011, 235). The undivided and uneven core with frequent depressions, caused mainly by the settling in the High Middle Ages, has an irregular oval shape and covers an area of approximately 0.61 ha. Therefore, it belongs among the middle-sized fortifications. On the northern most easily accessible side, it was further protected by a 158 m long and 17–18 m wide rampart at the foot that still looks impressive today. However, a section of its body has not been uncovered as yet and therefore nothing is known of its internal structure. Indications of a smaller rampart are also visible at the

northern edge of the core itself (the central plate) that was separated from the main rampart by a deep and wide moat (detailed topography of the site cf. Kouřil 1994, 36–38). Such a defence system is also known from other early medieval sites of the Silesia region.

Short-term test excavations in the course of the second half of the twentieth century have only yielded partial information on the basis of which it can be noted that the earliest stronghold was erected possibly as early as at the turn of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries and as already mentioned, it was most probably captured during the same military campaign as nearby Chotěbuz, that is in the last decades of the same century. It seems that after a short time, a settlement followed in the course of the last third of the tenth century after the earlier residential horizon that remained until the 11<sup>th</sup> century. It is, however, unsure as to how far its later limit went and how the life at the stronghold came to an end is unknown. The later ceramic artefacts (12<sup>th</sup> – middle 13<sup>th</sup> century) have been

missed until now so it cannot be excluded that the site could have been deserted until the construction of the stone castle during the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

It is assumed that the area near the confluence under the stronghold was waterlogged in the west direction as far as the town of Hlučín, at least until the 10<sup>th</sup> century (although more likely for even longer) and was wooded and unsuitable for settlement; in the eastern direction, the Moravian-Silesian border line deep forest stretched out with the nearest settlement in the Těšín enclave (Opravil 1974, 117–118; Janák, Kouřil 1991, 209). So far, the only evidence of Slavic presence, apart from the fortified area, are the relics of anthropogenic activities in the places of the later historic centre of the city of Ostrava (on the left bank of the Ostravice River) that are, with a certain reservation, tied to the 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries (Zezula et al. 2009, 543–546; Malík et al. 2007, 501, indistinct pottery fragments) although more likely with the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Zezula 2003, 30–32; Zezula 2004, 234, pottery



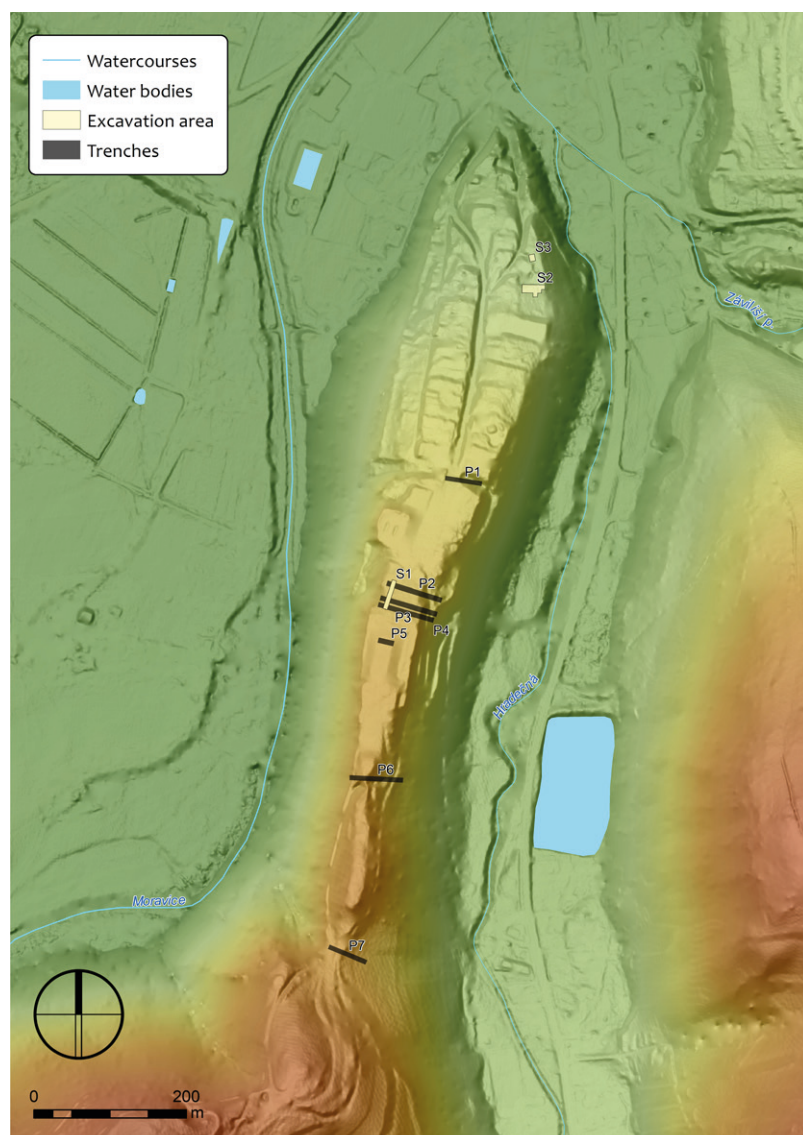
**Fig. 16.** Landek (Ostrava-Koblov). LiDAR data: State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre, G5, map sheet BOHU88, BOHU89 (P. Kouřil, M. Vlach).

**Obr. 16.** Landek (Ostrava-Koblov). Lidarový snímek hradiska. Český úřad zeměměřičský a katastrální, G5, mapový list BOHU88, BOHU89 (P. Kouřil, M. Vlach).

and a temple ring spliced from bronze wires). For the whole period of its existence, the fortification evidently lacked a more significant rearward safeguard that must have showed in its more difficult operations and logistics. This handicap was, however, offset by the key position of the stronghold in the exposed and visually favourable location above the central road that allowed permanent control of the western exit from the Moravian Gate. The guard and monitoring functions were, therefore, its determining factor.

Undoubtedly, the stronghold in **Hradec nad Moravicí** ranks among the major and determining fortifications of Czech Silesia situated south of the historic centre of its western part, the town of Opava (Fig. 17). An elongated promontory above the confluence of the Moravice and Hradečná Rivers above an old road starting in the Olomouc agglomeration and flowing to the north to the Polish flatlands was settled by the Slavic population from the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> century although the existence of the stronghold in this period

is not reliably evidenced. Information obtained in relatively frequent, but still only preliminarily evaluated, archaeological researches conducted in the sites of today's chateau complex positively evidence a continuous, uninterrupted continuity of the settlement until the origination of the stone-Gothic castle around the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and further until the present day. However, the continuous and unbroken development of the site obliterated the earliest elements of its settlement. Finds of material culture mainly from the intact layers are represented more by pottery and less by metal items as the prevailing artefacts from the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Objects from the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries are only represented rather marginally and in isolated cases, even earlier fragments can be noted. However, a significant item is comprised of osteological and paleobotanical material (Opravil 1992, 91–104; Kouřil 1994, 18–32; Kouřil et al. 2000, 174–192). The settlement of the 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries is evidently concentrated on the tip of the promontory descending towards the north from which, inter alia, several graves are known



**Fig. 17.** Hradec nad Moravicí. LiDAR data: State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre, G5, map sheet HBEN07, HBEN08, OPAV97, OPAV98 (P. Kouřil, M. Vlach).

**Obr. 17.** Hradec nad Moravicí. Lidarový snímek hradiska. Český úřad zeměměřičský a katastrální, G5, mapový list HBEN07, HBEN08, OPAV97, OPAV98 (P. Kouřil, M. Vlach).

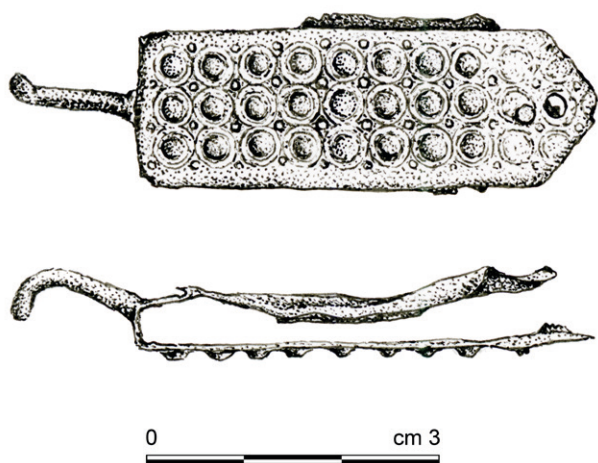
(see below) as well as, for example, an iron buckle with the silver tausia of western provenance that is possibly related to the securing for an under knee binding and dated somewhere in the middle of the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century and a black discoid bead made from drawn glass from the Middle Hillfort Period (Kouřil 1994, 30–31) and a younger bronze clasp (Fig. 18). The rich archaeological material is evidence of a thriving lifestyle and definite long-distance contacts.

Seven archeologically recognised ditches transversely intersecting the Hradec promontory of which one is positively of prehistoric origin are evidence of a premeditated defence system in the individual development stages of the stronghold. Relics of a single partially preserved but destroyed crushed rampart possibly with a stone front mantle (preserved length 22.4 m, max. width 8.4 m, max. width of the peak 0.8 m, current height 1.1 m) are still evident in front the broadest and deepest ditch marked P1 (width exceeding 13 m, max. today's depth ca 4 m) on its northern side and it can possibly be ascribed to some of the earlier stages of the local Slavic settlement. Only ditch No. 5 (P5), almost 8.0 m wide captured by a 2.5 m test probe in the northern part of the courtyard of the so-called Bílý zámek (White Castle) traversing the ridge in the narrowest place can be dated to the Later Stronghold Period (Janák 1989, 61–68). The ditch cut into the rock taper; the bottom, though, has not been reached (max. depth 1.0–1.2 m), its internal wall showed signs of burning to the depth of 0.2–0.4 m. The filling was formed with local greywacke (including isolated fitted stones) burned

at high temperature to slag or glass form with traces of black burnt soil mixed with tiny cinders. Research has not found any potential relics of the palisade rampart. However, the established situation supports exploration of the existence of a massive barrier with the major use of wooden, most probably oak, components since the temperature that recast the stones, according to the analysis, reached over 1000 °C. The majority of these stones had large dimensions and theoretically, could have come from the filling of chambers or could have been a component of the front mantle. The only find was a spear melted with heat with a burnt print of a textile structure melted on a piece of greywacke that is irrelevant for potential chronological thought. It follows from the noted situation that the ditch is older than the first building stage of the stone castle (second quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century) and that it was possibly filled-in in relation to its establishment, even though this could have happened earlier.

The Hradec fortification played a crucial role in the power arrangement at the Moravian-Silesian borderland. From conquering the Golensizi region by the Great Moravian expansion with the beginnings possibly as early as around the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century (Kouřil 2004, 55–76) it remained with only a few and relatively short breaks, in Czech hands as an important solitary border stronghold with a significant customs function. Its weak economic base was, despite the relatively long distance from the economic base of the central Přerov province, possibly the reason why it was in its centre (maybe already before the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century) and was allocated landed property. At the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, after the origination of the Golensizi (later Opava) provinces it became its military and administrative centre with all the other derived functions (Kouřil et al. 2000, 413–415; Procházka 2011, 614–617, literature available on the theme).

Within view of Hradec, in the northern direction (ca 8 km), another Slavic stronghold is situated that is mentioned in literature as the **Opava-Kylešovice** stronghold (Fig. 19). This is a one-piece fortification founded in a swampy terrain in a meander limited by the Opava River and its right-bank tributaries (Moravice and Strouha Rivers), that is unusual for this location in this region. The oval layout was spanned by the ring of the rampart with a base as wide as 18.0 m and a predicted original height of ca 6.0–8.0 m. The basic constructional elements of the rampart were formed by clay and gravel interlaid most probably by bidirectional grate construction – separate stacks of beams underlain by perpendicular beams, where two or three vertical round-timber walls reinforcing its load bearing mass could not be excluded. The external foot was fixed with a front stone mantle, or rather by the so-called *lawa* (Polish term; in more detail Novotný 1962, 65–80, Kouřil 1994, 33–35; Procházka 2009a,



**Fig 18.** Hradec nad Moravicí (research season 1956). Bronze clasp from the Late Hillfort Period. Drawing H. Pravdová

**Obr. 18.** Hradec nad Moravicí (výzkum 1956). Mladohradištní bronzová záponka. Kresba H. Pravdová.

150–152). The placing of the stronghold as well as the method of construction point to northern Polish influences where fortifications built with this method of using waterlogged locations close to watercourses were common and trusted. Based on the above-mentioned facts and the analysis of archaeological artefacts, (see further) it is, therefore, evident that in this case it is not an original “Golensizi” tribal centre of the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century but a later site related to the Piast engagement in this area.

With regard to material culture, the archaeological research conducted in 1946–1947 and in 1965 yielded mostly pottery fragments. No metal artefact was recovered. Their classification suggested that the entire set can be dated somewhere in the course of the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> century although it is not yet clear so far, how deep. For certain fragments (e.g. those that have a trim but also others) there are parallels, for example, in Přerov complexes dated to the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> and early decades of

the 11<sup>th</sup> century (Procházka 2009b, 158–159), there is a certain parallel from the same time horizon as in Olomouc (Dohnal 2001; 2005) and pottery production from Hradec (Kouřil 1994, 20–29). Unusually, rare graphite goods were found there as well as typical pottery with cylindrical rims that clearly indicates Polish influences. The pottery that would correspond to the 12<sup>th</sup> century and which, if dated correctly, is already known from, for example, Hradec (Novotný 1959, 450–451; Kouřil 1994, 20) is not found there. Even later fragments were only rarely recorded in the test pit in the 1960s and may be related to the activities of the High Middle Ages (13<sup>th</sup> century) after the decline of the stronghold (analysis of the entire set cf. Kouřil, Gryc 2014, 120–129).

A slightly modified view of the origin and development of the site and material context uses a research review that was conducted in 2015 and 2016 as its core. So far, only the preliminarily evaluated results (a thick 5.5 m formation has been captured) show evidence of a multi-stage development of the fortification in the above-mentioned time period (Fig. 20). This corresponds to relics of material culture, namely pottery artefacts (this time with an important share of graphitic goods) including the chalice-type rim profiles of the later stage, typical for the Prague production network (!) as well as white pottery and other shapes characteristic for the northern milieu. The unique finds of hack-silver must be emphasised – an incomplete dirham of the Būyids Dynasty (Rukn ad-Dawla 946–974), denarii of the Emperor Otto I. (936/962–973) minted in Cologne and in Mainz, a fragment of the so-called Otto-Adelheid Pfennig (after the year 983/4) and part of a silver stick of a triangle section. There was also a spherical bimetallic hallmarked weight of northern origin connected to the long-distance trade while the weighing of hack-silver was related to these findings. A surprising finding was the uncovering of a male skeleton grave with a stone lining that has analogies in the northern or north-eastern milieu as well some close sites (Fig. 21; Hradec, see further). Already partially processed osteological finds show a significant predominance of local fauna dominated by cattle with a smaller proportion of domestic pig as well as sheep/goats. Game is represented by red deer while among the rarer finds are the remains of what is possibly another species of the European sea sturgeon – a fish that is appreciated for its high-quality meat and caviar that migrates each year from the Baltic Sea against the flow of the major rivers to its spawning grounds. Archaeobotanical material yielded nine types of crop grown (cereal and legume), one technical crop (Cultivated Flax) and 42 taxons of wild-growing crop types (Kouřil, Gryc 2018, 185–213).



**Fig. 19.** Opava-Kylešovice. LiDAR data: State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre, G5, map sheet OPAV74, OPAV75 (P. Kouřil, M. Vlach).

**Obr. 19.** Opava-Kylešovice. Lidarový snímek hradiska. Český úřad zeměměřičský a katastrální, G5, mapový list OPAV74, OPAV75 (P. Kouřil, M. Vlach).

In relation to the above-mentioned silver fragments and the hallmarked weight, the so-called Komárov hoard or its fragment that was recovered outside the

fortified area during the stream regulation of the influx of the Moravice River to Opava River in 1881 should also be mentioned. This is a chopped or hack-silver hoard that accumulates this metal and mostly found in northern areas, primarily in the territory of what is today Poland as well as in the western and eastern directions from there as well as in Scandinavia. The treasure containing silver statues (only a sculpture survived that possibly represents a lamb – Agnus Dei), coins and originally possibly jewellery was hidden some time at the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century when the earliest preserved denarii were minted around the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century; the latest one is from 1002 (last review analysis see Michnová et al. 2010, 98–126). The find

obviously documents life activities along the ancient route leading from north to south, more or less along and following the flow of the Oder River and falls into the time of the Piast sovereignty over this territory. The analysis stresses the importance of the Kylešovice stronghold as, inter alia, a key local trading emporium.

Dendrochronological analyses of approx. 30 samples of oak wood showed that the stronghold was built no later than the 960s. Construction of the ramparts, i.e. the combination of hooked construction with grates, suggests a connection to northern regions of Greater Poland. However, finds of bronze belt fittings (approx. 15 pieces) also prove the engagement of elites coming from east of the Czech lands (mainly Russia, Belarus, Ukraine). Therefore, it was these foreign elites – either the military or tradesmen who could have even served the first Piasts – that participated in its construction. The fortification may have been destroyed around the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century or in early 12<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps as a result of frequent Czech-Polish conflicts that were extremely common in this contact region. It may be these war events that are related to the human splint bone recognised in the osteological material. It has to be said, though, that it could have been earlier when it is anticipated that after signing the Quedlinburg treaty in 1054, a small



**Fig. 20.** Opava-Kylešovice (research season 2016). Test trench S2, section No. 6, level No. 16, layer of grates, photo J. Gryc.

**Obr. 20.** Opava-Kylešovice (výzkum 2016). Sonda S2, úsek č. 6, úroveň č. 16, vrstva roštů, foto J. Gryc.



**Fig. 21.** Opava-Kylešovice (research season 2015). Test trench S2, section No. 3, grave No. 1/3, photo J. Gryc.

**Obr. 21.** Opava-Kylešovice (výzkum 2015). Sonda S2, úsek č. 3, hrob č. 1/3, foto J. Gryc.

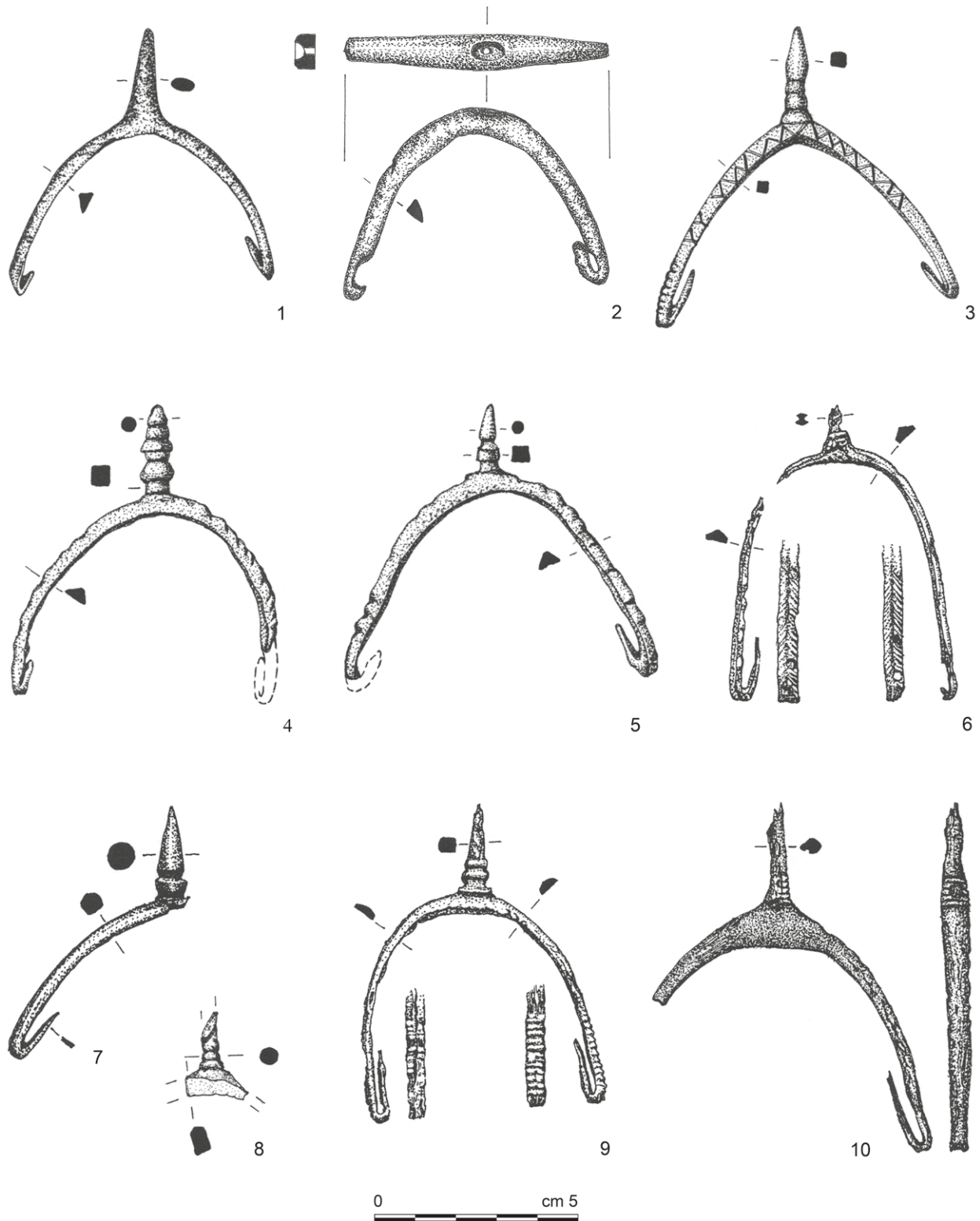
enclave in the neighbourhood of Hradec in the Golensizi region remained in Czech hands (Wihoda 1997a, 39; Krzemińska 1999, 370).

The mutual position of Hradec and Kylešovice and their relations to the Piast castellan system are still not very clear. Since the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century until the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the territory of Silesia was covered with 23 castellan strongholds (fortifications) of which the majority were founded at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. In the second half of this century, this network was already fully completed and fortified where it is characteristic that a higher density can be observed in the southern parts of the country (namely in Lower Silesia) in touch with the Přemyslid centre of power. The so-called Grodziec golęszycki is usually classified as this type of site and in Polish literature is primarily identified as Hradec nad Moravicí, even though it is known that this period was only short (Parczewski 1982, 125; Moździoch 1990, 18–19, there other literature). However, it is not at Racibórz all clear whether Hradec really was this Piast caste. Since it is beyond dispute that no later than 1039 when Břetislav I. temporarily took control of the Wrocław and Opole regions (Krzemińska 1979, 69–70 though, it was thought to be the Wrocław and Golensizi regions; Wihoda 1997b, 6–7; Janák, Kouřil 2001, 380), it fell under Czech administration and remained there permanently. It cannot be excluded that the Přemyslid dynasty was able to defend it after it lost its positions in Silesia and Lesser Poland in the final decades of the 10<sup>th</sup> century and therefore, around the turn of the millennium (or maybe a little earlier) as a counterweight a new stronghold was built in nearby Kylešovice in the Polish style and related to the activities of the Polish ruler. However, in the period of Bolesław Brave's conquest of Moravia, the two locations must have coexisted in a close cooperation next to each other. Theoretically, the Kylešovice stronghold could have fulfilled the function of the Castellan fortification for some time, although it is known (or rather anticipated) that no later than at the turn of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries it already ceased to exist although it did not need to be fully functional at that time anymore. This is possibly why it could not have been the Gradice golensicezke already mentioned in the Papal Bull of Pope Adrian IV. from 1155, not even if this denomination is in plural, as it is sometimes considered (Moździoch 1998b, 101–109; the author considers Racibórz, Koźle and Toszek to be these strongholds of the Golensizi tribe). Holasovice was also quite frequently considered (e.g. Bakala 2002, 53–69 together with Gradice positively identifies them and there are other references to the same considerations) however, most probably they were not this centre since the terrain configuration there is unclear and unconvincing to such an extent and archaeological sources so fragmented that at the present time they do not allow such interpretation — they only

acknowledge a certain importance of the site in the course of the late 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Possibly, it was the unclear and constantly changing situation in this highly exposed territory at the Moravian-Silesian border that led the compilers of the document to generally refer to the Golensizi tribe stronghold rather than a specific stronghold.

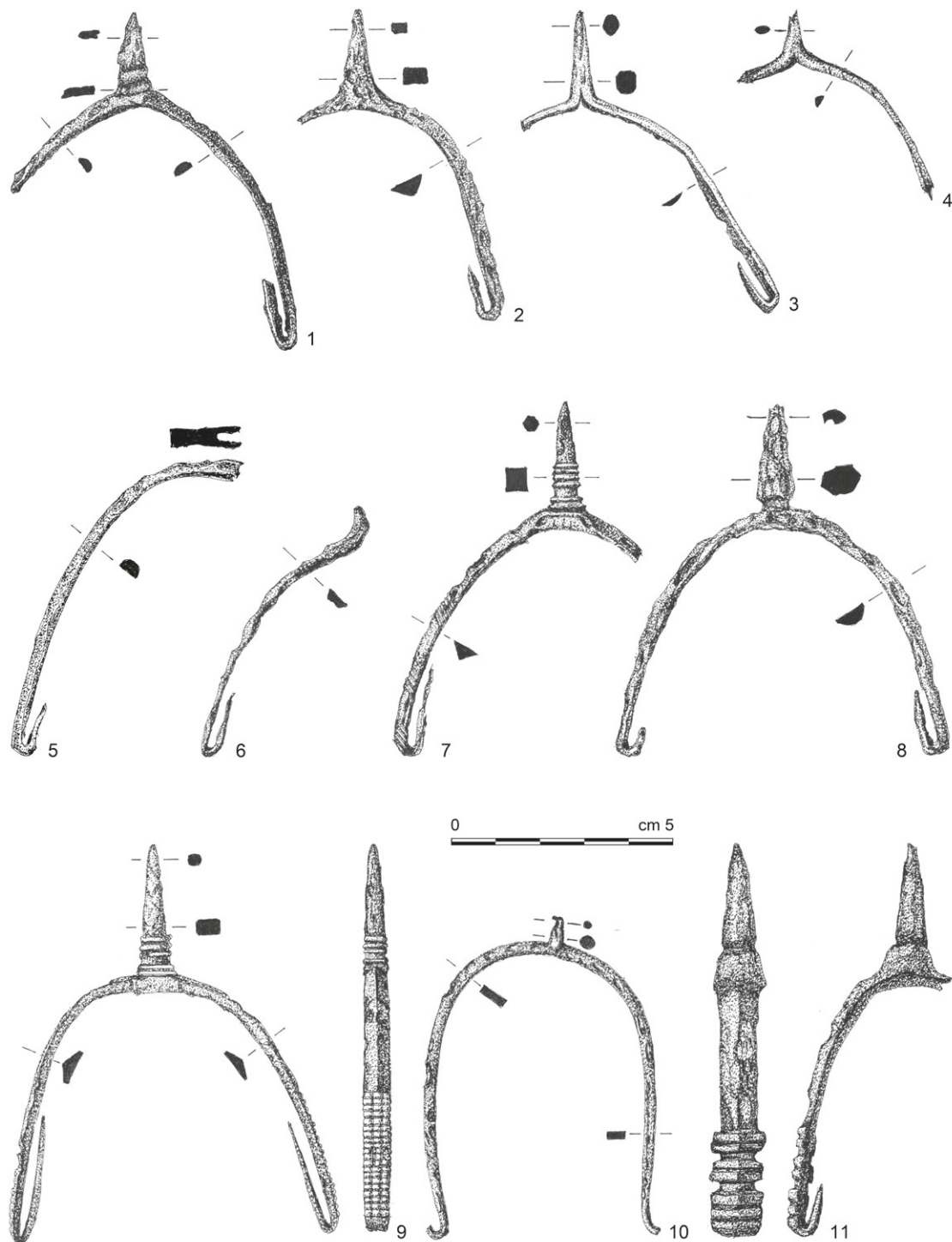
The stronghold situated furthest west of the territory of our interest is **Víno near Slezské Rudoltice** in the Osoblaha region that was one of the last eastern forelands in the foothills of the Hrubý Jeseník mountain range with good control of a predominantly flat area around Hlubčice/Głubczyce (Fig. 22); in detail Kouřil 1994, 11–17, there, comprehensive literature).<sup>2</sup> A relatively well-hidden site that is difficult to access was enclosed by a triple rampart at the north-east side (V1–V3) delimiting the internal area of 0.5 ha; the fourth rampart (V4) that was oriented the same bordered a smallish bailey (0.37 ha). Sections made through all four ramparts have yielded the following information. Ramparts marked V1 and V2, originally ca 2 m wide were built using quarried stones and gravels mixed with brown soil; remnants of wooden components or traces of fire were not recorded (or identified). An identical situation was also observed at V4, the corpus of which predominantly consisted of tinier gravel; the primary width was approximately about 2 m. It is anticipated that due to the considered width and volume of the destroyed mass that the approximate height of all three ramparts was 3 m. An internal structure was only noticed in the V3 rampart, the top of which was covered with a layer of burnt stones bearing prints of chopped wood and having a scoriaceous to glasslike nature. The stone body of the rampart was bedded dry and burnt to such a degree that the individual pieces had almost a coke-like structure and were placed on oak timbers or round timbers at a distance of approximately 25 cm from each other. This grate-like structure was possibly anchored in the frontal stone mantle and burned entirely through; burned woods were better preserved at the base of the rampart. In this case, it is thought that its width could have been 2–3 m and its height exceeds the limit of three metres. Relics of burned through beams recovered during the cleaning of used test pits (research conducted in 1960) in 2010, were not suitable for dendrochronological analyses. However, two samples were subjected to radiocarbon dating C 14 (Poznań Radiocarbon Laboratory) – one on the rampart structure, another from the area in front of the frontal mantle. The data obtained was calibrated according to a new IntCal13 calibration set (Reimer, P. J. et al. 2013). In the first case, at the very beginning of the radiocarbon plate the 1 sigma is 720 ± 31 AD (85%) and the 2 sigma 723 ± 55 AD (89%) which is relatively precise, although quite early dating. In the second case, the so-called big radiocarbon plateau was encountered; therefore, the following dating is basically inapplicable: the 1 sigma is 899 ± 133 AD (90%) and the 2 sigma 962 ± 196 AD (98%).





**Fig. 23.** Iron spurs with hooks from Upper Silesian localities. Lubomia (1–7), Kamieniec (8), Międzywiecie (9), Chotěbuz-Podobora (10). 1–5 after Foltyn 1998, 8 – after Ablamowicz 1991a, 10 – after Kouřil 2007a; 6, 7, 9 according to the original drawn by J. Griesslerová.

**Obr. 23.** Železné ostruhy s háčky z hornoslezských lokalit. Lubomia (1–7), Kamieniec (8), Międzywiecie (9), Chotěbuz-Podobora (10). 1–5 podle Foltyn 1998, 8 – podle Ablamowicz 1991a, 10 – podle Kouřil 2007a; 6, 7, 9 kresba J. Griesslerová.



**Fig. 24.** Víno near Slezské Rudoltice. Iron spurs with hooks (1-11). Drawing J. Grieblerová.

**Obr. 24.** Víno u Slezských Rudoltic. Železné ostruhy s háčky (1-11). Kresba J. Grieblerová.

The test pit research conducted in 1960 yielded several pottery fragments that most probably date to the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> centuries, a complete quern stone (quern and hand stone), however, no metal artefact (Kouřil 1994, 13–14). In this regard, a similar situation was also noted at other nearby sites where metallic finds could be counted on the fingers of one hand (cf. Parczewski 1982). The situation, however, has changed rapidly with the mass spread and use of metal detectors and their illegal use at archaeological sites. Invasions of self-appointed “archaeologists” to the stronghold in Víno have reached such intensity that the remaining metal artefacts had to be professionally recovered. It was clear that they were primarily interested in artefacts made of non-ferrous or precious metals when iron products or fragments, provided these were not attractive pieces, were kept and dropped on site. This was the reason why the entire area of the acropolis and bailey was divided into strips 2 m wide on which careful detection, measuring, collecting and photographic documentation of all (also recent) artefacts was carried out. The same type of examination was also conducted on the slopes of the fortification. In this way, almost 300 relevant items were obtained although it is not known how many are currently in private hands; however, this number will not be insignificant.

The area of the entire fortification de facto lacks a cultural layer. Artefacts are situated immediately under the sod on the rocky subsoil and in places, a very thin layer of soil burned to red with small pieces of daub is visible that possibly indicates above-ground wooden structures. The assortment of metallic artefacts is surprisingly rich and represents a whole range of individual categories of these types of relics (Kouřil 2017, 53–80). Spurs, specifically spurs with hooks related to the equipment of horsemen in the Silesian environment (not only there, though) are rare findings (Fig. 23). The local collection of eleven artefacts of the given type thus represents so far (together with more than seven items from the stronghold in Lubomia) the most extensive collection not only within the territory studied by ourselves but also within entire Silesia (Fig. 24). All the spurs, with just one exception, have incurved hoods and are forged, again with a single exception, with an inserted prick made of one piece of iron rod. Apart from simply made forms of common smithery work there are also more ostentatiously made spurs with decorated or shaped shanks in addition to the prick. In total, 24–25 spurs with hooks known to be from the Upper Silesian fortified centres clearly contrast with the situation in the southern areas of Lower Silesia where relics of this nature (as well as militaria and other elements of horse and rider equipment) are usually quite scarce. They evidence the existence of the local separating elite, its strength and readiness to participate in power at a time when above-tribal structures were gradually being formed. It can be said that it is the Moravian

material where parallels and affinities to the artefacts discovered on this site are found and also that the sites are a part of the anticipated Golensizi domain in the broader northern forefront of the Moravian Gate.

Bits and parts that positively point to the eastern nomadic environment (!) appear quite frequently. A further point of interest is a set of almost 30 points of longbow arrow heads, however, only with the socket and wings and in isolated cases with a wreathed neck. From the other militaria, there are axes where their use could have been universal. There was no opportunity to observe the recovered spears and other heads. There were also available agricultural tools (sickles, ploughshares) wood working tools, different types of buckles, fishing hooks, bodkins and a Silesian type bowl, a so-called ingot similar to a spearhead and part of a stone grinding tool for sharpening weapons and knives. Almost 80 artefacts were retrieved – either entire or in fragments – and they positively demonstrate in line with reality the most extended metal artefact in daily use and as universal tools. Furthermore, the late Avar cast bronze fitting with palmette decoration on the hallmarked background representing the protection of the male belt perforation must be mentioned that may be dated, the same as the above-mentioned spurs, somewhere to the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> and first decades of the 9<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 25). With respect to the fact that chronologically later artefacts are lacking (e.g. spurs with plates) on the site, it is expected that the stronghold lost its function no sooner than around the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. This could have occurred as a result of the Moravian expansion into the northern territories and due to fighting among the tribes.



Fig. 25. Víno near Slezské Rudoltice. The so-called Avar cast bronze mount. Drawing J. Grieblerová, photo J. Foltýn.

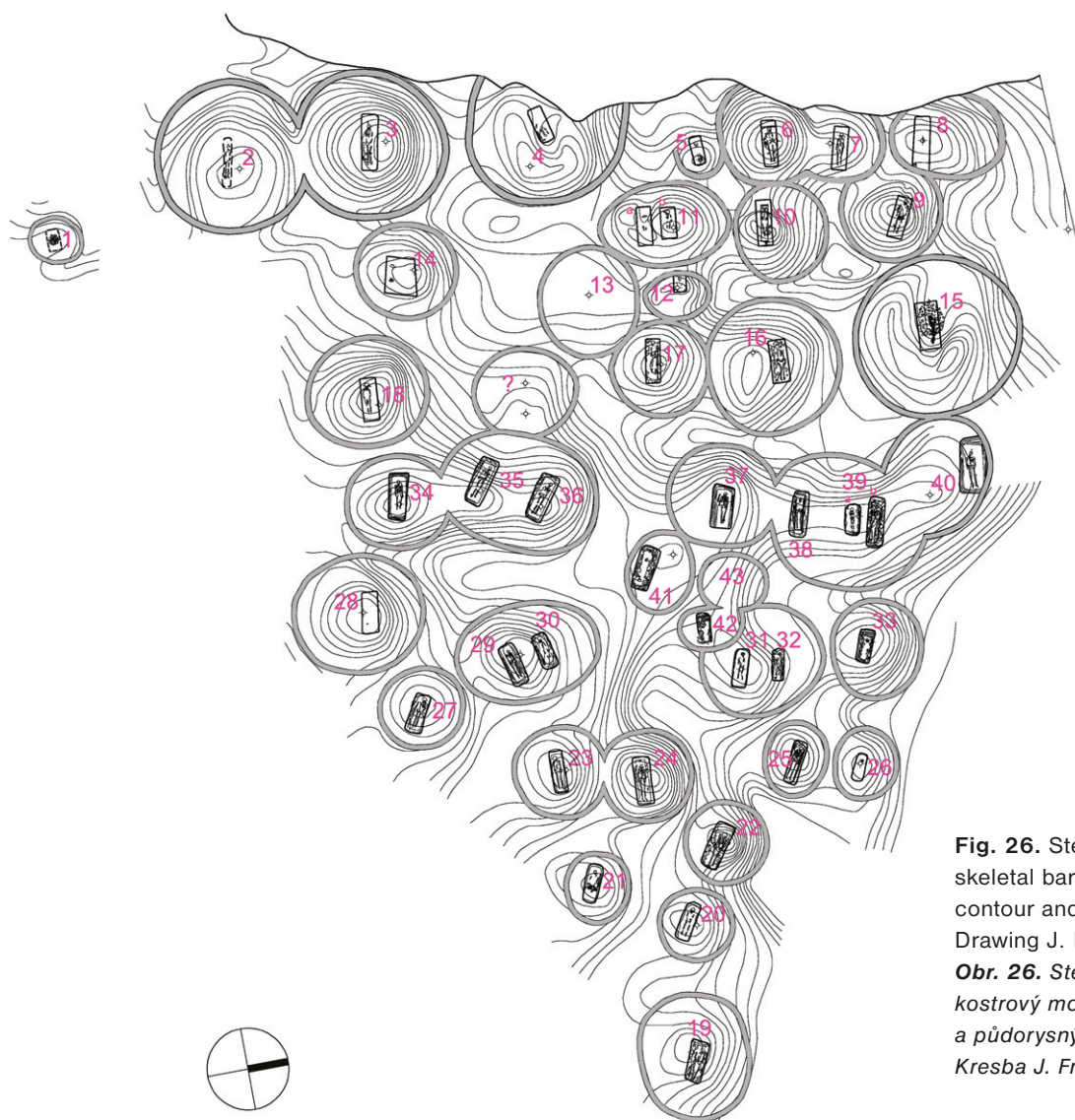
Obr. 25. Víno u Slezských Rudoltic. Tzv. avarské lité bronzové kování. Kresba J. Grieblerová, foto J. Foltýn.

## Burial grounds and solitary graves

For a long time, there was only a single burial ground in the territory for study, which was a skeletal barrow burial ground in Stěbořice near Opava that was recently fully compiled (Kouřil, Tymonová 2013) and there were also solitary graves or group graves scattered on the Hradec promontory (Kouřil 1994, 66–68; 2004, 55–76). A barrow burial ground from the end of the middle bronze period in Hněvošice was known where either skeletal graves of the Slavic population were inserted into the filling of the individual tumuli or small holes were dug in the covering containing ash and in isolated cases contam-

inated with tiny Slavic fragments (in detail Kouřil 1994, 68–70; Dąbrowska 1969, 269–276; Zoll-Adamikowa 1975, 218). Relatively recently, due to the terrain regulations of the traditional road connecting Opava and Ostrava (via Hlučín) another part of the skeletal necropolis was uncovered in Malé Hoštice (Juchelka 2010, 102–108; Kouřil, Tymonová 2013, 155) and finally, the fourth cemetery or its section was discovered in the cadastre of Holasovice that are frequently mentioned in literature. Solitary early medieval graves were recorded during the research in Hradec nad Moravicí, Vávrovice and most recently also, as we have already mentioned, at the stronghold in Kylešovice.

## STĚBOŘICE - HÁJ



**Fig. 26.** Stěbořice. Slavonic skeletal barrow burial ground, contour and ground plan.

Drawing J. Fritsch.

**Obr. 26.** Stěbořice. Slovanský kostrový mohylník, vrstevnicový a půdorysný plán.

Kresba J. Fritsch.

0 5 10 15 20 25 m30

Examination of a skeletal barrow burial ground in **Stěbořice** situated on a gentle slope above a small watercourse that was first mentioned in literature at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was conducted with breaks between 1952 and 1961 (Fig. 26). Forty-three barrows under which no more than 48 individuals were laid were examined, although a part of the burial ground was destroyed by a stone quarry at the beginning of the last century. In the western half of the necropolis, fills were arranged into continuous rows generally oriented in the north – south direction; the arrangement in the eastern half was more irregular, the barrows showed indications of several groups. Tumuli usually had a round or slightly oval base with the diameter oscillating in intervals of two to eight metres; the existing height oscillated between 0.5 to 1.2 m. They were filled up with soil obtained in close proximity and from the material obtained during the digging of the burial pits cut into the rocky subsoil. They lacked any internal structure and their volume oscillated between 2.3 to 26.5 m<sup>3</sup> when the biggest barrows towered above the graves of the warriors. It is expected that they were piled up without major difficulties during the burial ceremony although more time was definitely required for the labour intensive cutting of the grave pit itself. Efforts to reinforce the base of the future grave were noted; however, in many cases, it was reduced to the area of the burial pit.

In the predominant part of the barrow fills are organic artefacts (cinders, pieces of burned wood) as well as artefacts of inorganic (mainly pottery) origin; some of these can be put in context with rituals and ceremonies performed during the funeral act. It appears that burned logs formed a component of the funeral pyres that glowed to communicate with the sacral district at the time of ceremonies, however, in certain cases these were kindled in close proximity to the dug graves. In relation to the funeral ceremonies, the stronghold pottery got into the barrow bodies randomly (with the exception of vessels deposited directly with the body) with no clear coherent procedure – more as a result of momentary considerations and decisions of the survivors. Still, it can be noted that its concentration prevails in the eastern halves of the fills that may have had a ritual meaning. In the absolute majority of cases, these are highly ground round and abraded fragments that must have laid somewhere in the settlement for a long time and exposed to a whole range of negative impacts. These fragments come from different vessels that were broken during the act into very small pieces with miniature dimensions individually or in clusters (also primarily intact vessels) at once or successively thrown into the barrow bodies and graves. It can be noted that one more time horizon can be observed in the covers of certain barrows, that is a High Middle Age horizon (pottery fragments, iron buckle) corresponding to the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is realistic to think that it was in this particular

period when the unusual group of mounds attracted the attention of the local population and for reasons unknown, secondary interventions into their bodies occurred there.

With the exception of two barrows that covered two graves that had possibly been dug up and then covered up simultaneously, one grave pit was always placed under the barrow fills. When erecting, it was evident that attempts had been made for the graves to remain in the central position under the hilltop. The fills for the graves had a different consistency and in about one-half of them, at different height levels and also by the skeleton, cinders and smaller pieces of burned wood were found; similarly, hard wood dominated with oak predominantly used in the fills. It is of interest that large quantities of subgraywacke and slate pieces (plates) from the quarried pits were not very sacredly “laid” and instead thrown directly onto the deceased. It is not clear if by this act there is some form of anti-vampire practice. At least it is possible to explain the anthropologically recognised and relatively frequent post-mortem interventions on male, female and children’s skulls. A typical feature of those who were affected in this post-mortem act is that they appear to be poor with no personal belongings. On the other hand, some of the graves in this group have a rocky lining around the deceased, particularly in connection with the regularly closed coffin. Therefore, it may be that while knowing that the proposed notion is hypothetical, these are efforts to fully inter the deceased and from this point of view, the secondary deformation of the skull, especially in those who were buried in coffins where it could not have been caused by a rock fall, appear to be intentional. Deliberate (targeted) breaking or crushing of the skull has been, apart from other post-mortem interventions, observed in the Moravian-Slovak territory in many medieval and (Great Moravian) cemeteries where the remaining part of the skeleton remains quite well preserved.

Almost one-third of the graves indicated a wooden lining or coffins without the use of any iron components. In some graves, usually those of adult women, wooden elements were combined with a full or partial stone lining. The grave pits were generally of standard dimensions although the graves of warriors showed the maximum values and the depth and therefore also the cubage (more than 4 m<sup>3</sup>). Except for sporadic exceptions, the deceased were buried with their skull facing the west, in a position on their back with their hands along the body and feet stretched. Most probably, they were placed into the graves wound into cloth sheets – the petrified remnants of which survived on certain metal artefacts. The majority of the deceased were equipped for their last journey in the standard manner i.e. with a relatively varied set of items where the composition corresponded to what we know from the traditional Great Moravian

burial grounds – barrow burial grounds or common flat skeletal burials. The classification, categorization and analysis of these relics generally undergo a long and so far incomplete development process that has been searching for the optimal answer to the fundamental question about their relation to the deceased with the emphasis on the functional side of the individual artefacts. The Stěbořice barrow burial ground has thus yielded the following groups of relics of a material culture: weapons (axes, arrowheads), harness parts (spurs and spur sets, under knee binding), jewellery (earrings, beads, rings), objects in daily use (knives, strike-a-light, flint stones, buckles, bucket fittings), other items (that can be specified only with difficulty) and pottery (mainly entire vessels).

By combining archaeological, anthropological, and molecular genetic observation, the probable conclusion is reached that 15 burials may be attributed to the male population (Fig. 27), 25 to the female population (Fig. 28) with the remaining skeletons mostly children. It was impossible to recognise the sex. Representation of adult and immature individuals was evenly balanced; the frequency of the children's graves corresponds to the period standard. Anthropological analyses proved that more than two thirds of the local population died before they reached age 40; the highest mortality was between age 35 and 50. The elder deceased were not buried on the barrow burial grounds, which is surprising as in a way, there were more frequent feminine components although some of the unidentified burials may have belonged to the males in the community. The composition of the sex of the deceased does not quite correspond to the standard population sample of the given period. The average height of men with a middle robust figure varied around 165 cm; in females with a mainly gracile body structure it was around 162 cm and individuals with dolichocranial skulls were in a slight majority. This small difference in height between the two sexes is not usual (mainly found at central sites).

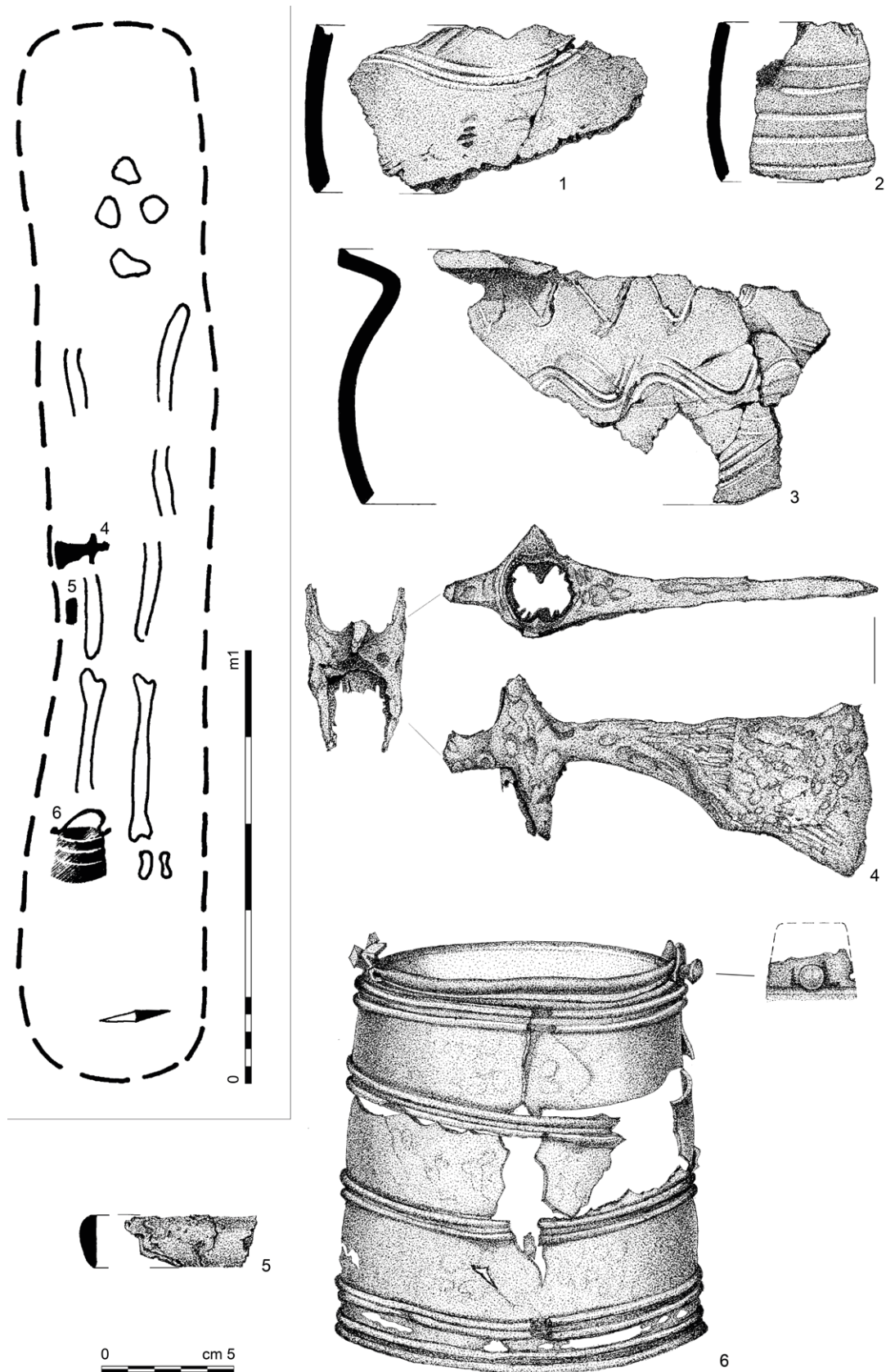
Dislocation of the individual graves within the barrow burial grounds suggests that children's graves were with a few exceptions concentrated in the central part; female graves were significantly more present in the eastern or south-eastern parts with male graves in the western half. The majority of male fills were much larger and it seems as if from at least two sides – western and northern – where the terrain falls sharply into the valley with a watercourse, lined the edge of the necropolis and thus “protected” the dead in the internal area.

Generally, the archaeological research yielded almost 190 finds, from which some (components for riding equipment, female jewellery, pottery) have strong evidential value. Specifically based on the analysis of these items, it can be conditionally concluded that

the beginning of burials may be dated somewhere in the late third quarter of the 9<sup>th</sup> century and the end possibly at the turn of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries in the early stages of that century. The burial ground thus should have lasted 25–30/35 years. The skeletal rite, the method of placing the deceased, the evident uniform ideological compactness of the entire burial act-ritual, exclusiveness and uniqueness of material culture, is a phenomena very far removed from the local milieu speak in the meaning that it was not the local, domestic population that buried its deceased there but a foreign component, a foreign element that undoubtedly could not have been anybody else but newcomers who were evidently moving from the central areas of Great Moravia. This is something that had already been indicated earlier (Jisl 1952a, 17) and quite distinctly noted by earlier literature (first particularly Parczewski 1982, 101–109, 112–113, 127; Parczewski 2006, 195) and lately also some other authors (Boroń, Foltyn 2011, 12; Antonín et al. 2012, 111–112; synoptically Jaworski 2012a, 148–156). The barrow burial ground in Stěbořice is essentially a true picture of similar necropolises typical for the centre of Mojmir's territory (in particular for the area of south-eastern Moravia) transferred to a new distant milieu – refer to the Moravian-west Slovakian barrow burial ground with a clear predominance of skeletal barrow burial grounds when disregarding the Silesian barrow burial ground that is characteristic in different parameters (Lutovský 1989, 61, 64, 67).

Provided the proposed dating is correct, it must have occurred at the time when Great Moravia was still able to expand when Svatopluk's rule successfully spread into the northern territories then later into Silesia and maybe into Lesser Poland. It is not thought that in this case this would be a late “landing” from the very end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century or even the beginning of the following century when groups of denizens, frustrated by the unstable situation in the central areas of the empire could have started to move to and beyond the periphery into areas where there was no imminent threat from Hungary. It must be stressed once again that this territory is attributed to the Golensizi tribe who most likely inhabited the southern part of the Glubczyce Heights and what is today known as Opavian Silesia and possibly Tesin Silesia (in terms of synoptic localisation and the summary of the existing opinions Boroń, Foltyn 2011, 6–8). By studying the map of the early medieval settlement of the Upper Oder basin region, a distinct settlement concentration can be observed in the Opava River basin and its tributaries. It is in this area where also other sites are situated that can safely be assigned the attribute “Great Moravian” (see below).

Returning to the Stěbořice barrow burial ground, its existence is a considerable distance from the “old settlement territory”, which raises many fundamental



**Fig. 27.** Stěbořice (research season 1952). Finds from the grave under the barrow No. 2 (1-6). Drawing J. Griesslerová.

**Obr. 27.** Stěbořice (výzkum 1952). Nálezy z hrobu pod mohylou č. 2 (1-6). Kresba J. Griesslerová.

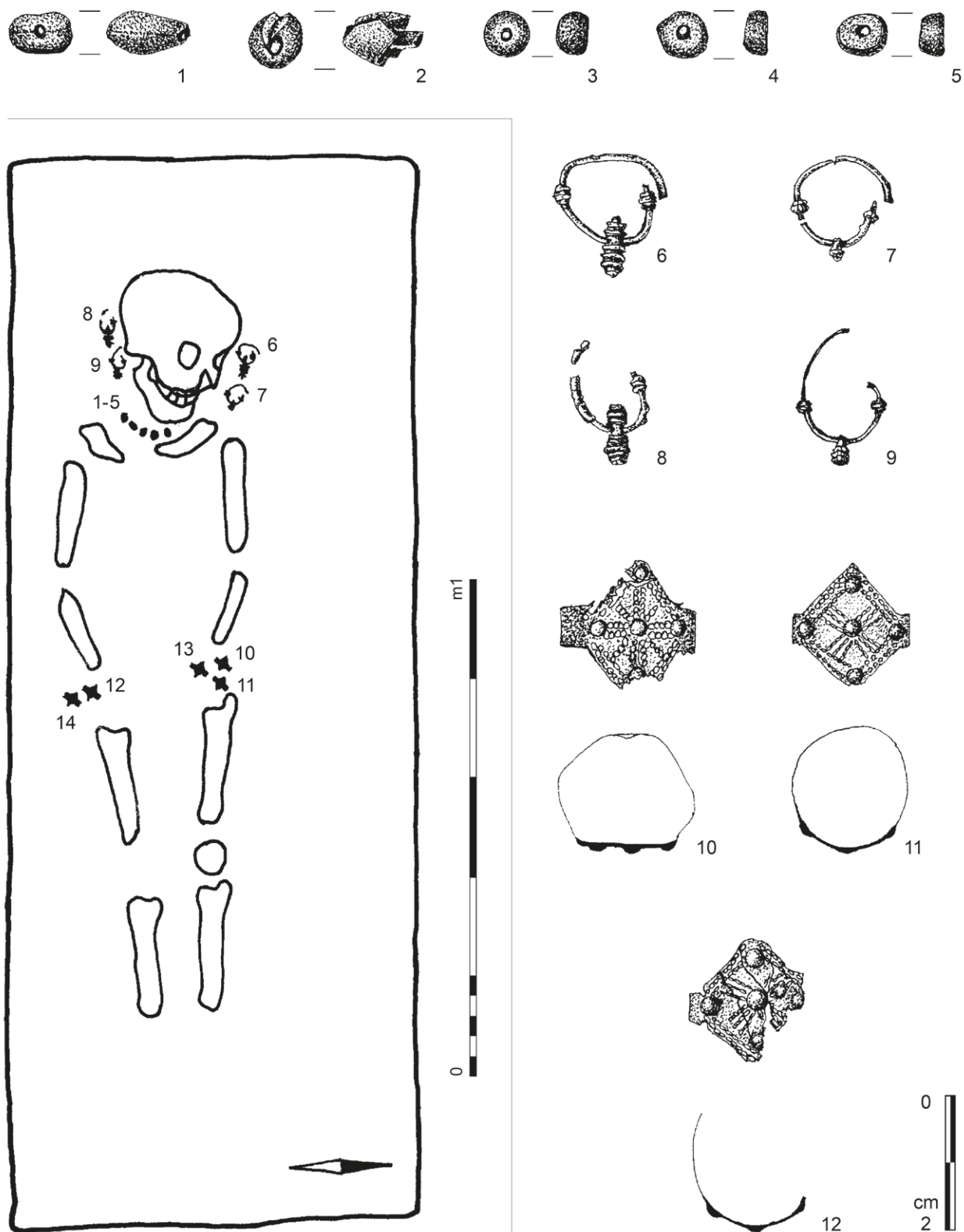


Fig. 28. Stěbořice (research season 1953). Finds from the grave under the barrow No. 18. Drawing J. Grieblerová.  
 Obr. 28. Stěbořice (výzkum 1953). Nálezy z hrobu pod mohylou č. 18. Kresba J. Grieblerová.



questions that cannot be comprehensively and definitely answered and instead, only a hypothetical interpretation provided – although it should be attempted. The primary questions are without doubt – by whom and when was the community that had been performing the burials sent there? What were their tasks and objectives? Why did they settle exactly there? Where did the community have its base? What did they live on? How many of them were there? What values did they have? What relations did they have with the local population? How long did they remain there and what was their potential legacy?

In the previous text, it was indicated with attempts to evidence it, that these “ethnic Moravians” relocated there at the time of the blossoming and territorial expansion of the empire, possibly at the very beginning of the reign of Svatopluk although, an even earlier arrival cannot be excluded. The conditions for establishment were formed as early as the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century (Hradec). In our opinion, this was not a spontaneous “individual” activity caused by uneasy circumstances in the key agglomerations of Mojmir’s domain at the end of its existence but a deliberated, centrally planned and more broadly established act where the objective in the initial stage was to gain control over the Golensizi tribal territory or the Upper Odra River basin in the broader sense of the word. However, we do not know on which principle and in which manner these relocations were organised, how they were conducted in reality, whether they were relocations of complete communities or if individual members were “recruited” from further places and from different social environments. We do not know either, whether they were led by members of the aristocracy that were beginning to develop or whether they were led from the centre, from the ruler’s circle and by people authorized by his “office”; they might have been the *proceres* (*župani*) mentioned in sources who used efficient machinery and perhaps led and administered individually entrusted territories and safeguarded this expansion (Třeštík 1997, 288–289). However, to take control of a new territory and eventually dominate, a well-equipped garrison was needed with high level of organisation and a permanent presence to ensure entrusted tasks. These could have been e.g. trouble-free securing of deliveries of an agricultural nature, maybe furs primarily through the control and redistribution of mineral resources (primarily iron) from the nearby polymetallic Jeseníky mountain range or the supply of cheap labour, recently thought to be slaves (Fig. 29), as one of the fundamental exports of Great Moravia during the reign of Svatopluk (e.g. Třeštík 2000, 52–53; McCormick 2002, 171–180; Macháček 2015, 478–481; critical comment on this Galuška 2003, 75–86 or Profantová, Profant 2014, 130–131). The high percentage of riders buried in comparison to the number of graves does not contradict the theories expressed; rather, it legitimises them. Only

this extensive method, supported by continuous raids on neighbours and the enforcement of paying regular tithes could, inter alia, safeguard the functioning and development of Mojmir’s territories. Provided our line of thinking is correct, the military garrison including family members must have had feedback to its original “mother” milieu and kept more or less regular contact with it.

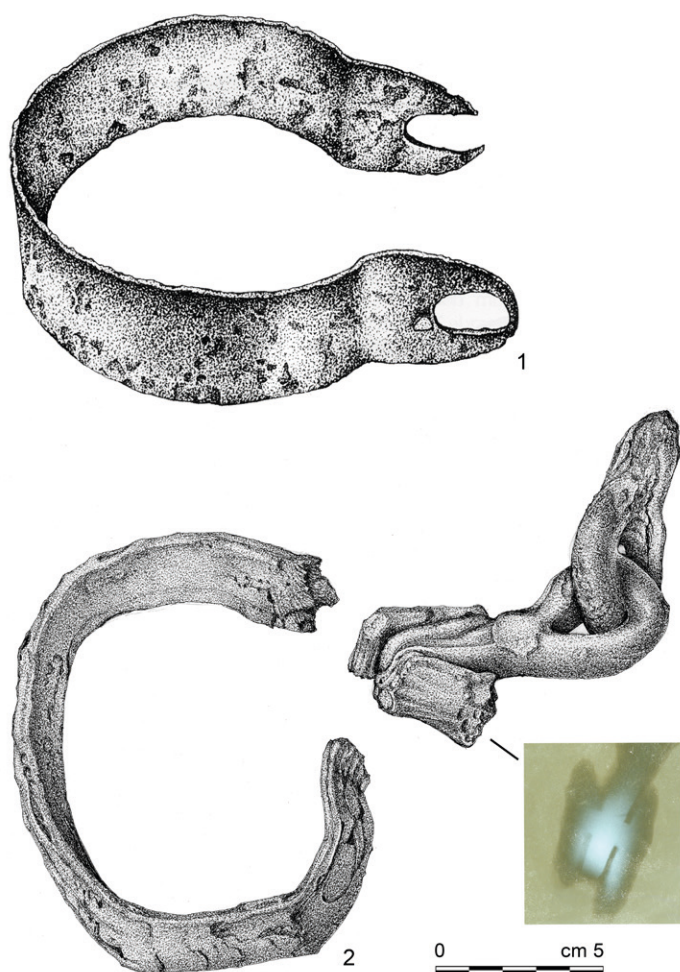
Such steps, though, almost certainly did not have the approval of the local elite (at least not all of them) that could be related to the destruction of the stronghold close to Stěbořice in Víno near Slezské Rudoltice, as was previously listed as one of the options. Other relatively close fortifications on both the Czech and Polish side of today’s border have not been examined intensively enough for us to be able to come to similar reflections. Furthermore, it must be emphasized that the settlement of the rural nature was primarily concentrated in the narrow belt along the Opava River (between Hlučín and Krnov), further in the section between Kožle and Racibórz and only in isolated cases did it reach as a diaspora the higher locations of the Głubczyce Heights (Kouřil, Gryc 2011, 238–239).

One of the unsolved issues of the barrow burial ground in Stěbořice is that the relevant settlement area and an adequate base regarding this barrow burial ground, which could also help its chronological categorization, is still unknown. As already pointed out, there is the possible existence of a fortification at so-called Kostelní kopec in Opava-Jaktař situated in the dominant and advantageous position near the Opava River in the fork of the routes leading to the north and west — the opportune configuration of the terrain and sparse ceramic artefacts that can be in general features dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> century enable this consideration (Kouřil 1994, 43–46). Even though the given place is situated the nearest to the necropolis in Stěbořice, the distance of the settlement to the burial ground of approximately 4 km is still quite unusual in the Slavic world (Zoll-Adamikowa 1979, 17) even though we cannot entirely exclude this relation. Since it was from these strategic positions from where the communication gateway could be easily controllable, it would be surprising if this was not used. However, a recently recognised (and unfinished) rampart doubled at places with a subsequent shallow moat close to the barrow burial ground that stretches east–west for almost 300 m and limits part of the promontory in an arch-like manner (in the present time, quite substantially drawn) above the water course could indicate that under its protection, the Stěbořice commonality lived and fulfilled its function. With regard to the existence of ceramic fragments from the period of the complex of Lusatian culture in the area of the cemetery, it is possible that the mentioned fortification elements in their initial stage belong to this time period (Kouřil 2005, 51–52).

Anthropological analyses suggest that with the existing scope of the uncovered burial ground and its anticipated duration of 25–30 years, the size of the group that was burying their dead there could have been 37 to 45 people. However, should the examined part represent only two-thirds of its original surface area, the number of people can be guessed at 55 to 70 and in the case of double the extent there could have been 70 to 90 peoples (Gejvall 1960). This would have been quite a large group that was active here in the period in question. However, what was the group's everyday activity? What did they live on and what did they do? To answer these questions much may be suggested by anthropology if only conditionally. A high percentage of the deceased men and women had a distinct flattening of the long bones in their bodies suggesting that certain muscular groups in the relevant area were exposed to an extreme load for a long time. However, there are also other factors that may contribute to this (e.g. genetics). The aforementioned extreme load would primarily be a mechanical load as the likely cause of such changes. In men, this could have been for example, the long-term riding of horses and for women, regular working in the field. It can, therefore, be suggested that the nutrition for the community could have been provided both from allow-

ances secured by the armed retinue, the group's own agricultural production and by breeding farm animals.

Out of 48 burials, less than a third had very poor equipment, which corresponds to the findings from other similar types of necropolises (cf. Dostál 1957, 37–74; Dostál 1966). However, in Stěbořice only 3 male burials fell into this category, the remaining belonging to females. It is interesting that out of these 14 poor graves, 9 had wooden components (lining or coffin) or stone panelling or a combination of both these elements — this is quite a high number with a total number of 20 burials arranged in this way. It has been mentioned that in some burials the deceased had post-mortem interventions on their skulls although it can not be definitely stated if this was intentional or was random damage. Alternatively, the possibility that these are burials of individuals who, due to their different religious concepts and maybe under the influence of Christianity, personal items were not placed into their graves cannot be dismissed. The fact is, however, that in their material culture (if we ignore the possible interpretation of the so-called Greek crosses on a silver drum-shaped earring as a Christian symbol — and if so, the question is whether those who wore them actually realised this), no exact



**Fig. 29.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (research seasons 1993, 2012). First bailey, feature No. 96, iron handcuffs (1); trench S 56, square unit No. 2, context 0102, probably iron handcuffs (2). Drawing J. Grieblerová.

**Obr. 29.** Chotěbuz-Podobora (výzkumné sezóny 1993, 2012). První předhradí, objekt č. 96, železná pouta (1); sonda S 56, čtverec č. 2., kontext 0102, pravděpodobně železná pouta (2). Kresba J. Grieblerová.

evidence of this new faith. Sometimes the stone lining of the deceased is connected to the beginnings of Christianity that evokes the original placing of Christ's body in the cave. This naturally does not mean that even those individuals who were buried with relatively expensive items were not inclined towards Christianity or that two parallel religions could not have co-existed in Stěbořice, although this is really just speculation. Most probably, the structure of the burial ground and the items in each grave reflects the social stratification of the burying community where the relation to the southern depressions is obvious. It can be said the skeletal rite influenced or accelerated the transfer from cremating bodies to burying the uncremated bodies of the domestic population (in detail with relevant literature Kouřil, Tymonová 2013, 152–159).

We have advised that scattered burials were also recorded at the Hradec nad Moravicí promontory. In addition, the relatively old name of the local street Na hrobkách (translated as 'Tombs') strongly evokes the existence of graves that earlier times were continuously destroyed due to ground shaping; in the collection at the local school, only one iron spear and two flat iron belts allegedly from two graves disturbed in this manner have been preserved (Kouřil 1994, 66–67). A rescue archaeological research conducted in this area uncovered three other solitary burials from which the male warrior's grave can be classified as above-standard (Fig. 30). The individual was placed in the coffin on his back and equipped for his last journey with a typical heavy Moravian axe (the so-called bearded axe), a precious slim spear with wings, unique Biskupija-Crkvina spurs with the corresponding fittings, under-knee bindings and a waist pouch filled with expensive items (Fig. 31); by the feet was a vessel with characteristic decoration. There was also the incisor from an ox, the animal which embodied strength. A detailed analysis of the inventory deduced that parallels to the mentioned artefacts can be, inter alia, seen primarily in the central sites of the South-Moravian area and the grave dates somewhere into the course of the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, most probably the second quarter. Within the local milieu, it appears to be an absolute anomaly, when the nearest analogy, even though not of comparable quality, can be found some time later at the barrow burial ground in Stěbořice. It provides proof that the buried individual was without doubt quite high up in the hierarchy of that time and it is thought that he was either directly a Moravian exponent or, less probably, a prominent member of the local (Golensizi) elite to whom the insignia of power and status were "entrusted" (spear and spurs as symbols of the statute) and to whom the control over territory newly conquered by Moravians was entrusted. It can be further added that close to the buried man, a child burial was identified without any gifts but with an identical orientation

of the skeleton, which was almost completely eroded. However, the filling for the grave pit contained a bowl that could be reconstructed in entirety and that the dating corresponds to the equipment in the warrior's grave (in detail Kouřil 2004, 55–76).

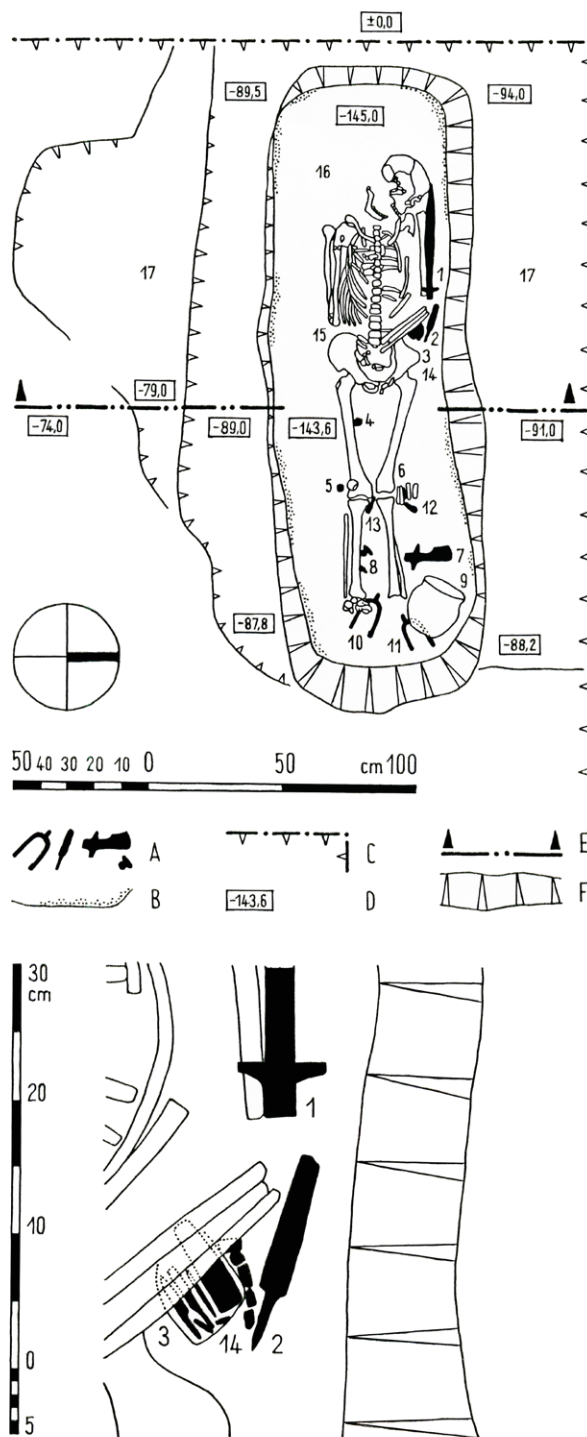
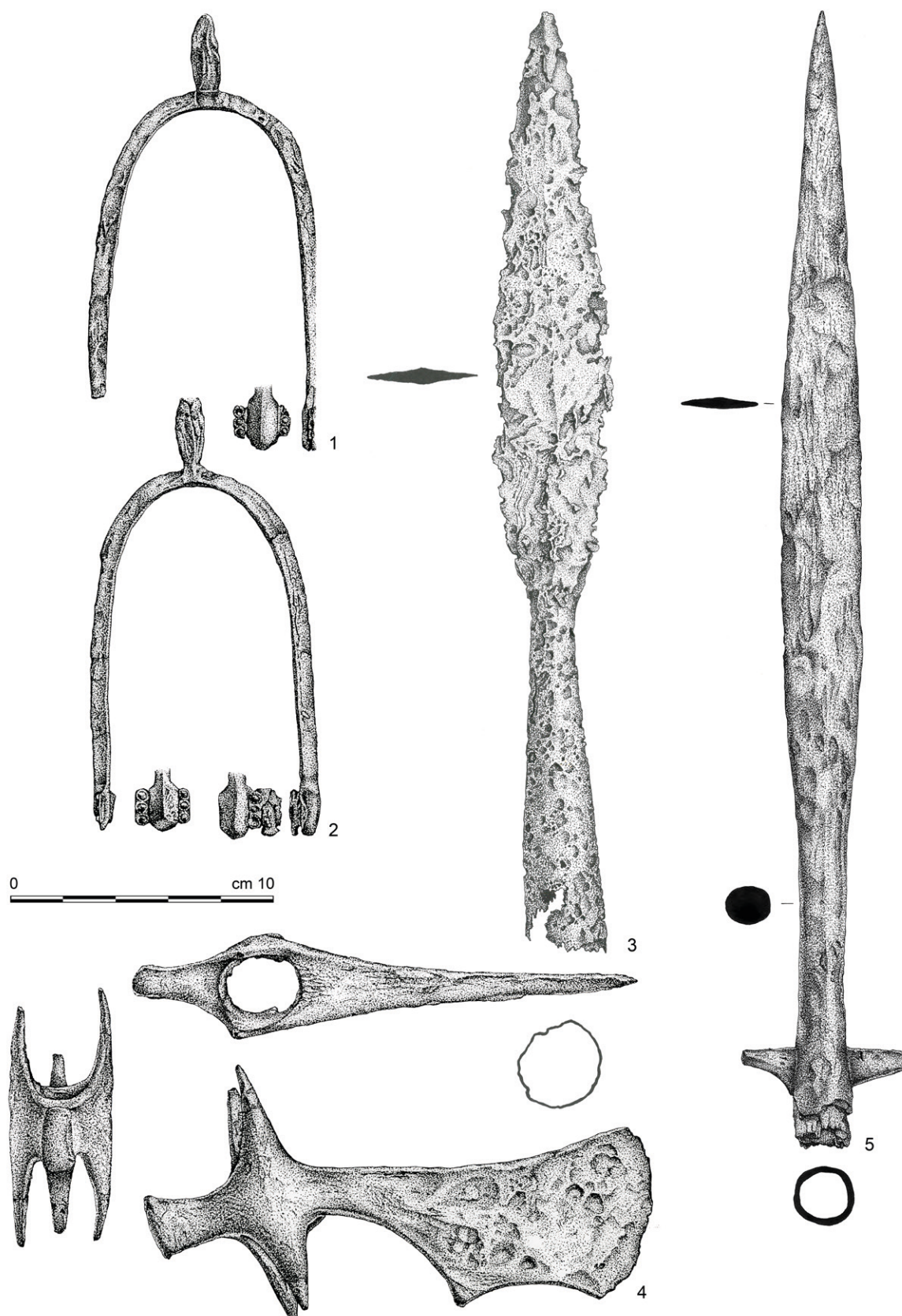


Fig. 30. Hradec nad Moravicí (research season 1999). Warrior's grave No. 1. Drawing Z. Špičák.  
 Obr. 30. Hradec nad Moravicí (výzkum 1999).  
 Bojovnický hrob č. 1. Kresba Z. Špičák.



**Fig. 31.** Hradec nad Moravicí (research season 1999). Finds from the grave goods of the warrior's grave No. 1 (1-4); earlier solitary find from the site "Na hrobkách" (5). Drawing J. Grieblarová.

**Obr. 31.** Hradec nad Moravicí (výzkum 1999). Nálezy z výbavy bojovnického hrobu č. 1 (1-4); starší solitérní nález z polohy „Na hrobkách“ (5). Kresba J. Grieblarová.

One more child's skeletal grave situated alone was recorded not far from both of the above-mentioned graves in the area of the church school. Although laid sacredly, the heavily damaged skeleton lay in a shallow grave pit with, unusually, the head facing the north; the pit had a lining and had originally been covered with a layer of stones. The child at the age of the infant II category was buried without any gifts — only one Late Stronghold period pottery fragment was identified in the filling under the skeleton; given the fact that the burial was not secondarily disturbed (but also with regard to the nature and arrangement of the grave pit) it can be expected that it is a matter of the 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> century (Stabrava 1999, 326; Stabrava 2000, 166). In a way, the grave evokes the already annotated burial from the Kylešovice stronghold.

Another Great Moravian skeletal burial ground, or part of it, was uncovered in the cadastre of **Malé Hoštice**, today part of the city of Opava (Fig. 32). The necropolis was situated on an elevated dominant area some 100–200 m away from the settlement situated in a lower position and surrounded on both sides by a small unnamed watercourse. In total, 17 graves were examined there, however, no skeletal remains survived with all skeletons being completely decomposed; in exceptional cases, only the teeth remained and an imprint of the skull at the bottom of the grave. Grave pits were more or less an oblong shape with a staircase-shaped recess and in many cases with an evident wood lining of the walls. Individual graves were organised into somewhat freer lines running in the northeast–southwest direction; the deceased were thus placed with their head facing north-west. Due to the relatively large distances between the individual graves, it cannot be excluded that the individual graves were originally covered with barrows. It is highly probable that the burial ground continued into the area that has not been explored by digging; however, due to the refusal of the plot owner, this could not be further explored.

Generally, grave items were not very expensive; four graves did not have any gifts, in four other graves, there was only a small knife and in five cases, a ceramic vessel was given to the dead for their last journey, two of which also included a small knife. An incomplete, silver type of what was probably a grape-shaped earring with the bottom arc decorated with granulation a glass bead torso with segments placed into the grave of a child was a solitaire. The remaining three graves yielded clear evidence of its cultural and chronological categorization. These were male warrior graves in the central part of the cemetery where the basic items were an axe (bearded axe), a knife and a small bucket placed at the feet or behind the head; these basic attributes were complemented by a sharpening steel or a sickle or an iron brooch (Fig. 33). It is thought that this burial ground can be dated somewhere in the

course of the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, most likely at the very end, to the beginning of the tenth century; this also corresponds to the mature ceramic gifts (e.g. with a sign on the bottom) that in many cases synchronise with the pottery fragments from the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century raised from the shallow sunken grave above the Slavic features of the nearby settlement (Fig. 34). Eight of these features have been identified; they are irregularly shaped and apart from pottery also contain daub with a print of chopped up wood and several bones or teeth. Their function is a mystery although some (the larger oval ones without any traces of heating equipment) may possibly be residential features (Kouřil 2009, 9–10).

A part of the skeletal burial ground has been quite recently excavated in the cadastre of exposed **Holasovice**. Fourteen very shallow graves were identified, mostly oriented in east-west direction. Authors of the research do not rule out the possibility that this burial ground might have been a row pattern cemetery („Reihengräberfeld“) with at least nine rows of graves. More than a half of

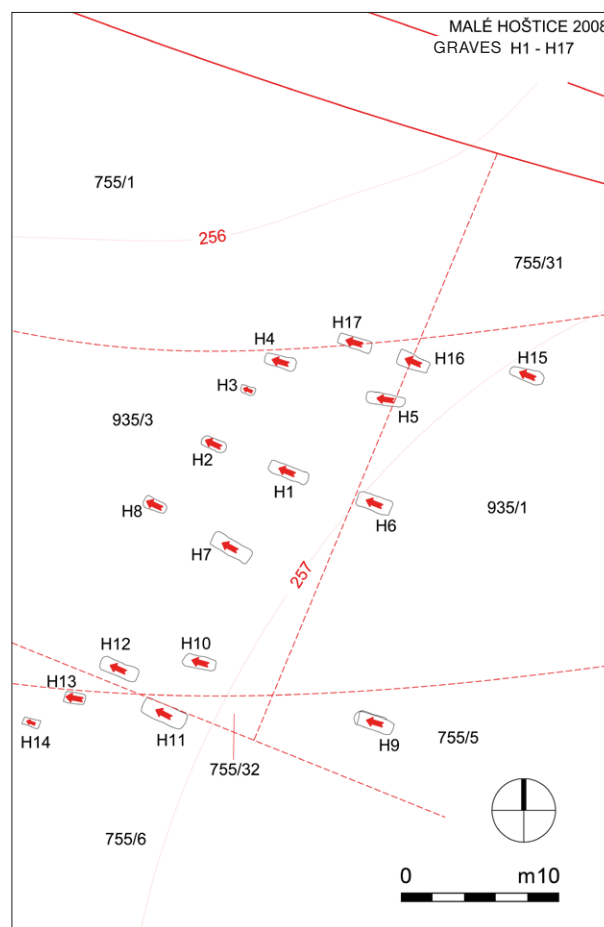


Fig. 32. Opava – Malé Hoštice (research season 2008). Plan of the burial ground. Drawing J. Fritsch.

Obr. 32. Opava – Malé Hoštice (výzkum 2008). Plánek pohřebišť. Kresba J. Fritsch.

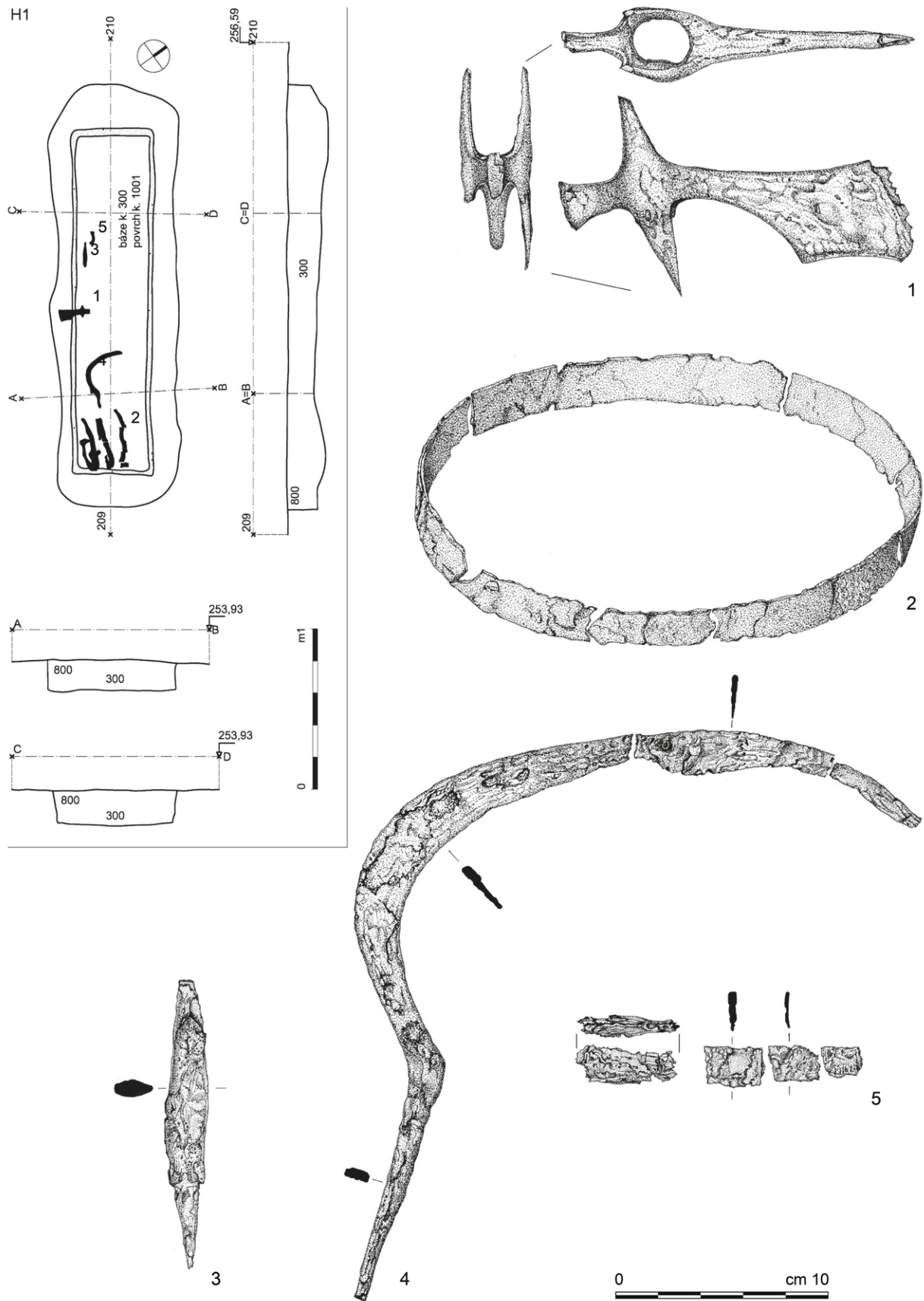


Fig. 33. Opava – Malé Hoštice (research season 2008). Grave No. 1. Drawing J. Grieblerová.

Obr. 33. Opava – Malé Hoštice (výzkum 2008). Hrob č. 1. Kresba J. Grieblerová.

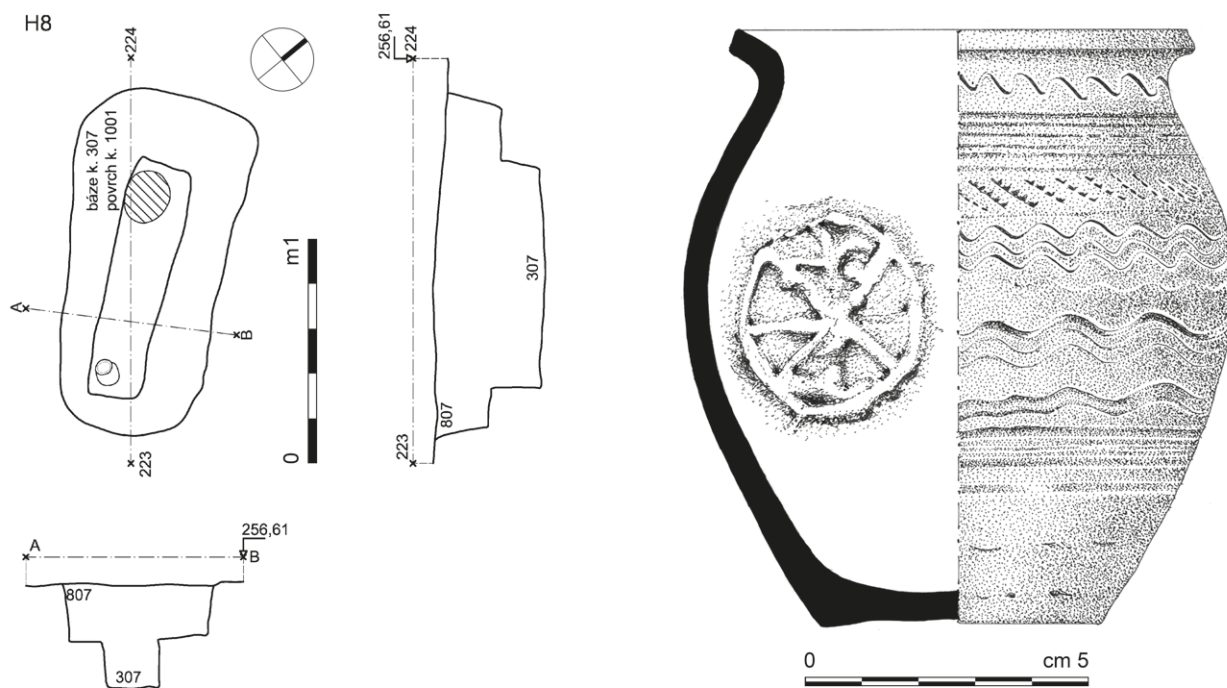


Fig. 34. Opava – Malé Hoštice (research season 2008). Grave No. 8. Drawing J. Grieblerová.

Obr. 34. Opava – Malé Hoštice (výzkum 2008). Hrob č. 8. Kresba J. Grieblerová.

the uncovered burials contained accompanying material such as a knife, a strike-a-light with flint stones, a fish hook, a small bucket, a ceramic vessel, or S-shaped silver temple rings (Hlas 2013, 192; Hlas, Marešová 2017, 273–292). With respect to our current knowledge, the proposed dating of the burial ground to the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century and on into the 11 century seems acceptable, although the years towards the end of this chronological frame appear somewhat more likely. In the context of the above-mentioned facts, it should be mentioned that several graves (so far not published in detail) had already been noted in the late 1950s during research of the Holasovice church that dates to the 12<sup>th</sup> or to the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and that even earlier, in the 1920s, a linear skeletal burial ground was captured in the stronghold area (?) from which it is possible a bronze temple ring with a larger diameter came. Neither can the theory that a silver ring with a crystal that was discovered in Holasovice could have originally been placed at this exact site be excluded (Šikulová 1993, 13–16; Kouřil, 1994, 68, there further literature).

Finally, there is a lonely funeral complex from nearby Vávrovice. The skeleton of an adult male lay on his back with his head pointing northwest (same as in the case of burials in Holasovice) and his hands alongside the body. By the skull were two dislocated arrowheads (one with wings and a socket, the other

leaf shaped with a thorn) along with an iron knife by his left side. The burial is dated into a fairly wide time span limited from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, the poorly-preserved remains of the skeleton of a small child were identified behind the head of the dead; however, the question is whether there is a time connection to this very burial or whether they belong to the earlier horizon of the settlement from the late stone age or early bronze age from which scores of burials are known (Hlas 2015, 300–301).

## Rural settlements

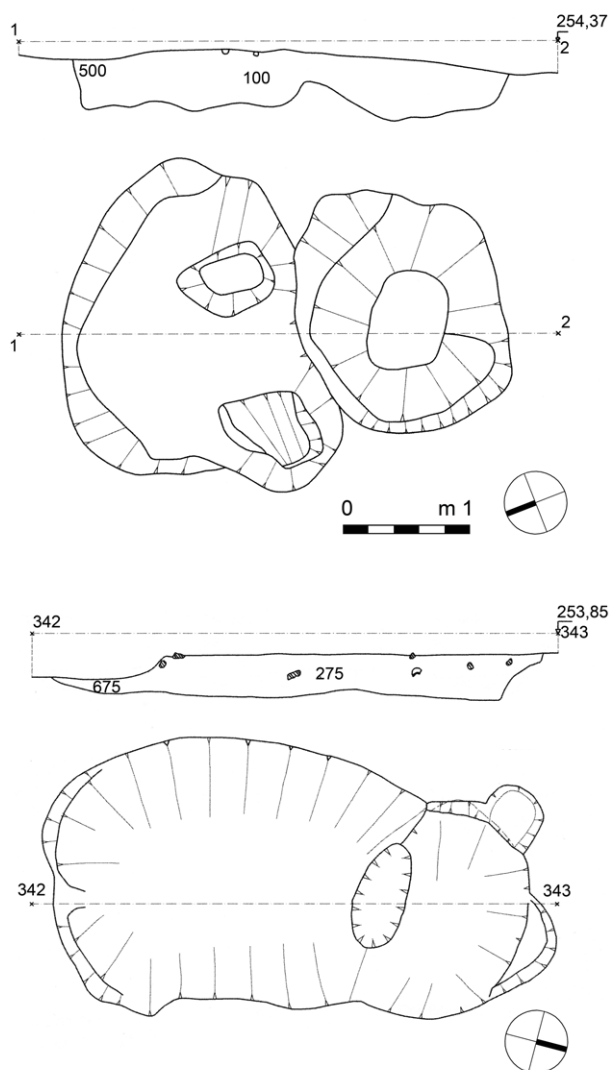
Open settlements that logically formed the basic and most frequently represented form of a settlement structure were not, unfortunately, largely explored. In this respect, the status noted at the end of the last millennium has not changed very much (Kouřil 1994) even though the number of sites with evidence of early medieval settlements has slightly grown although in most cases, these were locations identified on the grounds of the surface collection (often on already known cadastres). In better cases, there were individual features examined within the more extensive rescue research of polycultural districts. The principal issue is that due to the mechanical removal of overburden the majority of cases deal only with predominantly shallowly sunken areas so their potential above-ground

structural elements were regularly missed. As a result, positive features prevail that can be classified as late as the later stages of the Early Middle Ages (10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries), although nothing can be added about their position within the settlement at that time. By way of illustration, some of the material available with relatively good evidence value can be outlined.

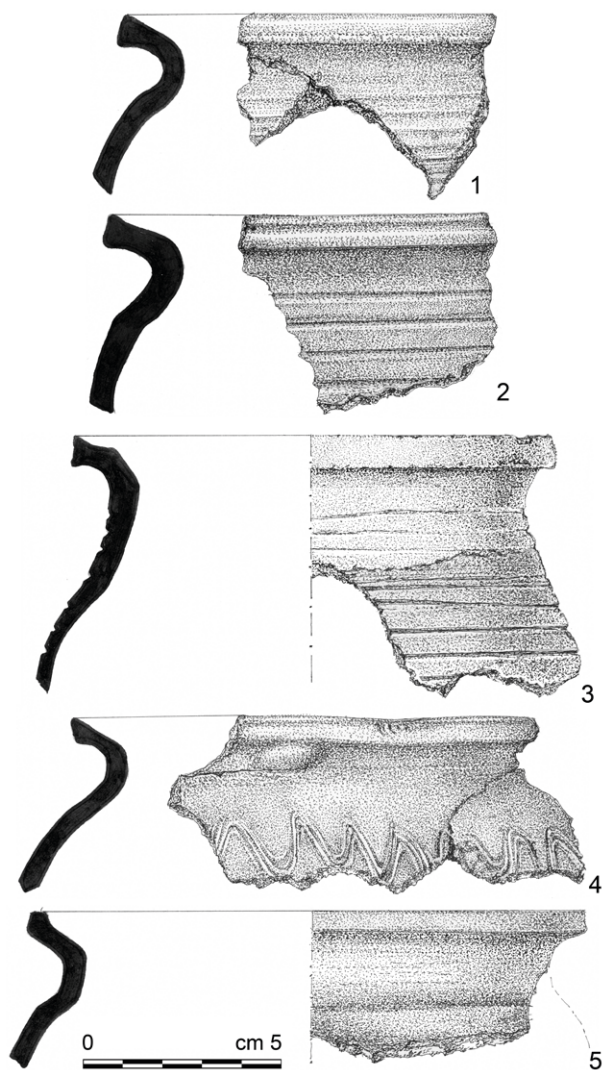
Namely, two shallow sunken oval pits with a monolithic filling in the cadastre of **Opava-Kylešovice** with the shape and dimensions of what may be features of residential character (No. 500 and 675; Fig. 35). This classification could be attested by the fully presented finds and exclusively by pottery fragments (56 and

70 units, full shapes are not available; Fig. 36, 37), or possibly with regularly shaped, smoothed elongated whetstones of fine-grained rock, some of which is in the Opole class. However, there is no heating equipment (although this was not always able to be identified) and evidence of flush or otherwise profiled pieces of daub with imprints of planks, logs and wicker from the potential structures etc. The pottery bears the characteristics of typical Young Stronghold production (10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century) although in exceptional cases, earlier items can be found there.

Equally, an incomplete uncovered feature from nearby **Neplachovice** (Fig. 38) is the monolithic filling that contained pottery artefacts of a similar character



**Fig. 35.** Opava-Kylešovice (research season 2007). Feature No. 500 and No. 675. Drawing J. Grieblerová.  
**Obr. 35.** Opava-Kylešovice (výzkum 2007). Objekt č. 500 a č. 675. Kresba J. Grieblerová.



**Fig. 36.** Opava-Kylešovice (research season 2007). Feature No. 675, ceramic finds (1–5). Drawing J. Grieblerová.  
**Obr. 36.** Opava-Kylešovice (výzkum 2007). Objekt č. 675, keramické nálezy (1–5). Kresba J. Grieblerová.



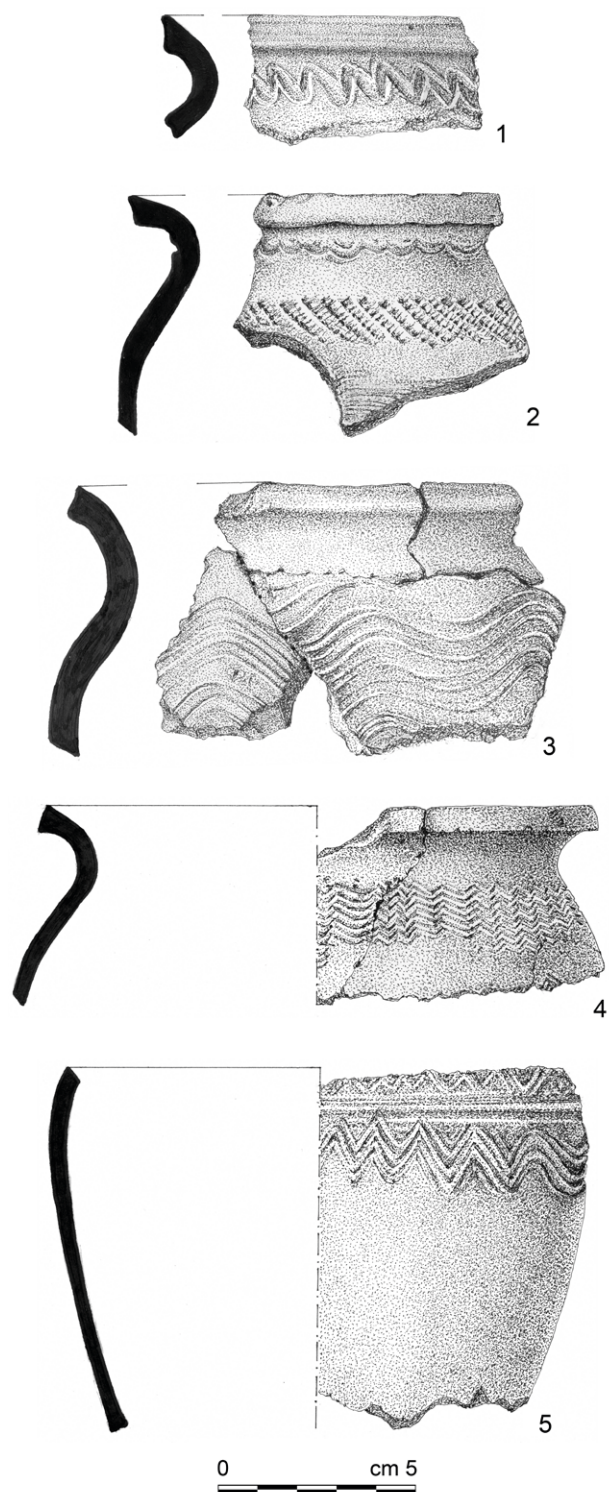


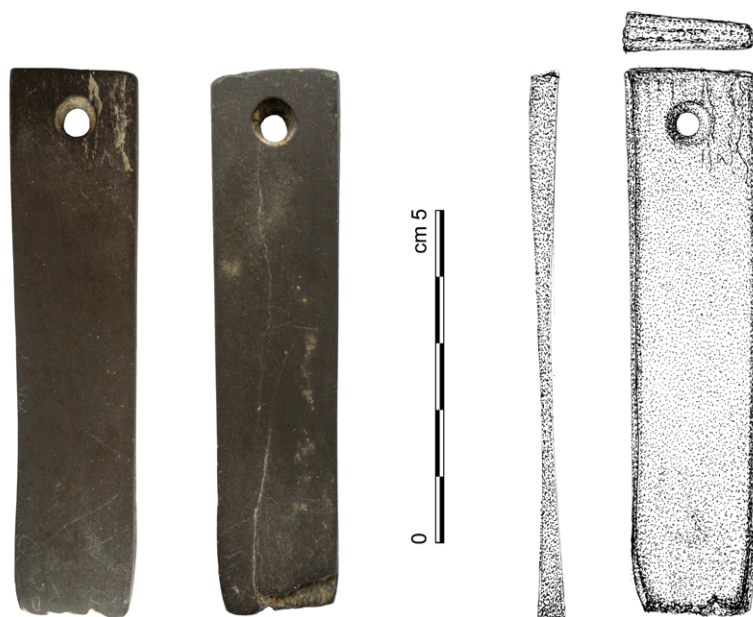
Fig. 37. Opava-Kylešovice (research season 2007). Feature No. 500, ceramic finds (1–5). Drawing J. Grieblerová.

**Obr. 37.** Opava-Kylešovice (výzkum 2007). Objekt č. 500, keramické nálezy (1–5). Kresba J. Grieblerová.

(possibly a little later – 11<sup>th</sup> century some with grains of graphite, also so called white pottery; Fig. 39) can be used as one of the above-mentioned examples (51 units) as well as the bones of domestic animals (ox, sheep/goat) considered to be domestic waste along with well made and well preserved whetstone with an opening for hanging from the waist of phyllitic matasilstone or phyllite; the initial material may come from the area of Hrubý Jeseník although its Scandinavian origin cannot be excluded either. Such whetstones are frequently discovered in the areas north of the territory examined by ourselves (Lisowska 2013, 101–126; also Parczewski 1982, 87) although so far, they are not too frequent in the Moravian milieu (Procházka 2017, 247–249). In a rather more sunken eastern part of the feature where more stones were concentrated, then with caution, then maybe a fireplace again. Though, there are no finds of daub that could apart from other elements, indicate the anticipated above-ground structures.

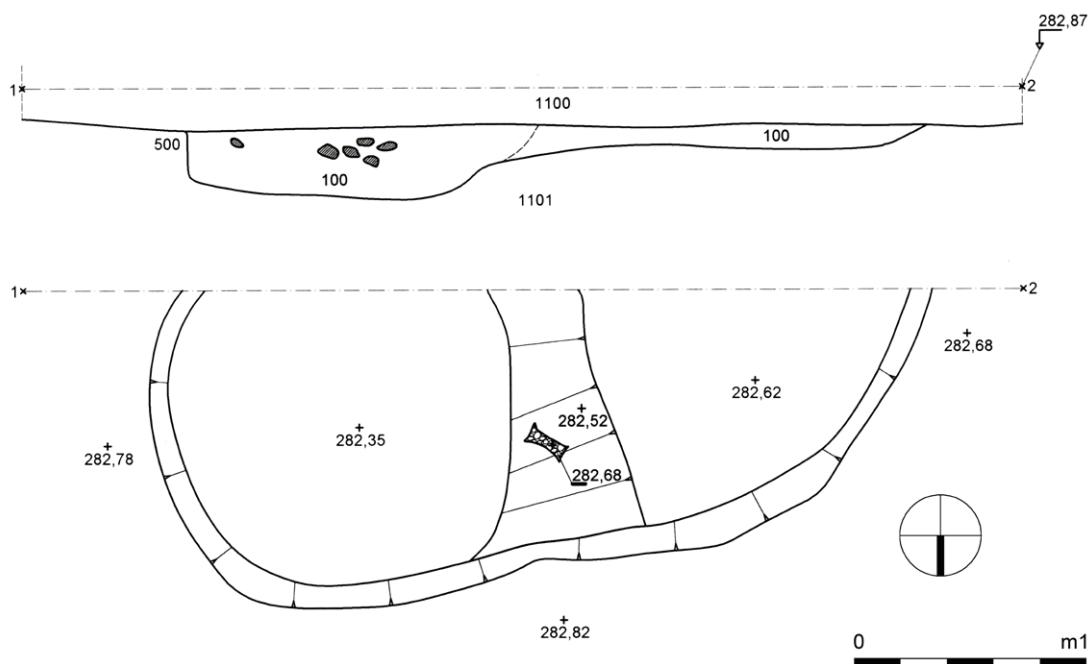
### Final summary

To summarise and evaluate the knowledge of the Early Medieval settlements of the territory that today is known as Czech Silesia, the following can be noted. The earliest evidence of Slavic presence must, in line with our current level of knowledge, be placed no sooner than somewhere in the course of the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century as suggested by the archaeological material and rare radiocarbon data. This specifically applies to the strongholds of Hradec nad Moravicí, Chotěbuz-Podobora and Váno near Slezské Rudoltice (Kouřil 1994, 30–31; Kouřil, Gryc 2011, 239) that have yielded the most convincing evidence for the considered dating. In the case of the third stronghold, then the dating suggested earlier based primarily on the evaluation of some pottery artefacts (Kouřil 1994, 14) has had to be abandoned. We believe that the studied territory can be identified with the Golensizi tribal oikumena as a more or less continuous development that was possibly only interrupted by potential intertribal conflicts (to this e.g. Poleski 2013, 181). This was principally disrupted and basically irreversibly changed (by gradual) Moravian expansion, the beginnings of which can be followed from around the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. In this first stage of the conquest, Opava Silesia was conquered, and in the second phase, a little later, possibly from the turn of 870s and 880s, Těšín Silesia. A logical presumption also suggests that it was by breaching the Moravian Gate by which Svatopluk I. (871–894) conducted this conquest, although the theory that the already earlier occupied Opava region could have served as the starting point for the conquering of the above-mentioned area cannot be eliminated. The most feasible advancement would thus seem through a basically lightly wooded free terrain in a slight arch in the eastern direction towards Racibórz, Wodzisław Śląski, Těšín and Skoczów since the territory between



**Fig. 38.** Neplachovice (research season 2016). Feature No. 500, whetstone. Drawing J. Grieblerová, photo J. Foltýn

**Obr. 38.** Neplachovice (výzkum 2016). Objekt č. 500, kamenný brousek. Kresba J. Grieblerová, foto J. Foltýn.



Hlučín up to the confluence of the Oder and Ostravice Rivers was, as already mentioned, water-logged, wooded and unsuitable to residential activities and further to the east, to the Těšín enclave, the Moravian-Silesian boundary thick forest was only passable with difficulties. The Moravian presence, no matter how episodic from the time point of view, was not an accidental event but a programmed expansion, a controlled conquest of new territories the dependence of which on the centre was not a formal matter. However, to secure territorial gains and to achieve their maximum expiation, well-functioning and well-structured repressive machinery was required that could not have been concentrated in only one place area but had to cover and safeguard the key and strategic points of the

conquered territory. From this point of view, the existing four undisputable “Great Moravian” sites (Hradec, Stěbořice, Malé Hoštice and Chotěbuz) appear in relation to the rather sparsely populated and thereby also controllable Golensizi domain to be quite sufficient. However, it cannot be excluded that primarily north of today’s Czech-Polish border, further archaeological evidence of the presence of groups coming from the core of Moravia that serve as a reminder of the Great Moravian engagement in this area can be expected (regarding the potential intervention of Moravians in Silesia last Jaworski 2012b, 209–234).

So far, it is not precisely known what happened after the collapse of the key centres and agglomerations

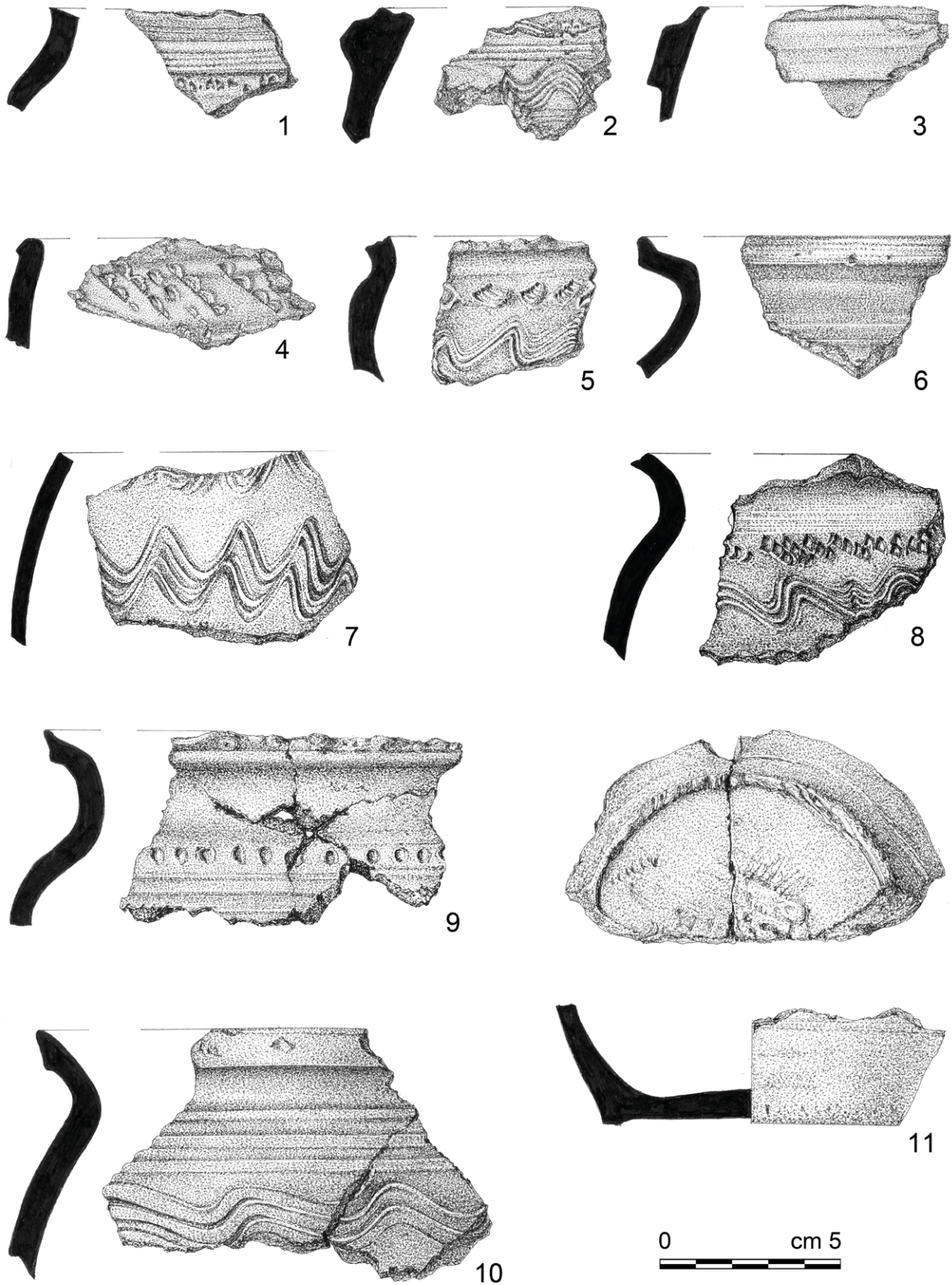


Fig. 39. Neplachovice (research season 2016). Feature No. 500, ceramic finds (1-11), drawing J. Grieblerová.  
Obr. 39. Neplachovice (výzkum 2016). Objekt č. 500, keramické nálezy (1-11), kresba J. Grieblerová.

of Mojmir's Moravia in the peripheral areas (including Silesia), how the local community, namely the Moravian enclaves, perceived the tragic events of the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and to what extent they noticed them and how they reacted to them. It appears that in the area of our interest, any traces that would enable to consider the survival of their inhabitants vanishes around this point in time. It is anticipated that they could have moved along the Oder River up to the north and northwest or they could have merged with the local population or even could have returned (mainly the warriors) to their original homeland to help in fighting external and internal enemies at the time of the crisis (Kouřil, Tymonová 2013, 158). However, the detailed analysis of the burial ground in Malé Hoštice that is under way suggests counting on the survival of the "Moravian component" deeper into the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Also the existence of lineal skeletal necropolises that are not situated by a church in the 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> centuries containing small diameter silver and bronze S-shaped temple rings including wire forms in Holasovice, later also in Tworków near Racibórz (Dębski 2014, 231–285, there is also a traditional bucket with iron bands) and Kornice ibidem (not published, kindly provided by the research head, Mr. M. Furmanek) in all of Silesia is generally quite scarce (cf. e.g. Wachowski 1975; 2000, 54–55) evidence of possible deeper relations towards the southern milieu. This is provided that the method of placing the dead inspired by Moravian relations and traditions or through the Czech influence during the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century is uncertain so far. We cannot, though, a priori exclude that the primary Moravian intervention could have established the foundations of a uniform cultural sphere maintained deep into the High Middle Ages.

In the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Opava and Těšín regions, as well as the neighbouring Racibórz and Głubczyce regions, became a field of discord and permanent conflicts between the entrenching Přemyslid state and Piast Poland. Naturally, this must have been reflected in the character and layout of their settlement structure that shows stagnation, if not regress, particularly for rural settlements and partially for the fortified settlements. This situation only started to change gradually from the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century when the settlement network became denser and stabilized (Gryc 2004, 84–85; Foltyn 2006, 154–158) and when the Golensizi (later Opava) provinces slowly formed (Wihoda 1997a; 1997b); however, although this period of time may be thoroughly interesting in terms of the region, it does come outside the scope of this contribution.

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## Notes

- 1 At this point, the rather biased and nationalistic work by K. Schirmeisen „Die Vorzeit des mähr.-ostrauer Raumes“ Mährisch Ostrau 1943 can be mentioned.
- 2 Two close strongholds situated on today's Polish territory that are sometimes considered as early Medieval sites (Mokre and Naczęślawice) cannot possibly be treated in this manner, cf. Kaźmierczyk et al. 1977, 304–305, 315–321; Parczewski 1982, 150.

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*Informator Wojewódzkiego Konserwatora Zabytków Archeologicznych na województwo katowickie za lata 1966–1970*, 36–51.

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## Resumé

Studie přehledně shrnuje aktuální stav archeologického poznání slovanského osídlení tzv. českého Slezska (tj. Těšínského a Opavského Slezska), jež v současnosti představuje jižní část historického útvaru Horního Slezska, nacházejícího se z větší části na dnešním polském území. Jde o oblast, do které je vcelku konsensuálně lokalizován slovanský kmen Holasiců, zmiňovaný tzv. Geografem bavorským, jemuž je tu připisováno pět hradských obcí, snad jakýchsi sídelně správních, zřejmě opevněných kmenových center. Soustředí se na časový úsek vymezený 8.–10./11. stoletím, když starší doklady slovanské přítomnosti tu nejsou prozatím známy. Opírá se o dosavadní výsledky výzkumu, které doplňuje o jen částečně zveřejněné či zcela nové aktuální materiály. Sleduje především tři základní sídelní komponenty, tj. hradiska (představující v současnosti nejlépe prozkoumanou složku), pohřebiště a otevřená sídliště,

tvořící vzájemně provázanou strukturu. Cílí zejména na ty lokality, na nichž byl prováděn dlouhodobější archeologický výzkum, a které poskytly materií s dobrou vypovídací hodnotou. Pokouší se o historický výklad událostí regionu ve výše vymezeném časovém rámci s důrazem položeným na předpokládaný velkomoravský zásah i angažmá cizích elit při výstavbě země v navazující časové periodě. Reflektuje pochopitelně i výsledky polského bádání, neboť vývoj v období, které sleduje, byl v mnoha směrech podobný anebo totožný.

## **Contacts**

### **Pavel Kouřil**

Archeologický ústav AV ČR, Brno, v. v. i.  
Čechyňská 363/19  
CZ-602 00 Brno  
kouril@arub.cz

### **Jana Gryc**

Archeologický ústav AV ČR, Brno, v. v. i.  
Opavské pracoviště  
Nádražní okruh 33  
CZ-746 01 Opava  
janaslowioczek@seznam.cz

**BALÁZS KOMORÓCZY, MAREK VLACH, MICHAELA ZELÍKOVÁ, JOZEF SEDLÁČEK,  
PAVLA RŮŽIČKOVÁ**

REVIZE STAVU ARCHEOLOGICKÝCH KOMPONENT V TRATI DRNHOLEC „HOLENICKÁ POLE“  
POMOCÍ PROSPEKČNÍCH A MÁLO INVAZIVNÍCH VÝZKUMNÝCH METOD

**ŠÁRKA KRUPIČKOVÁ, ESTELLE OTTENWELTER, HELENA BŘEZINOVÁ**

EXACT EVIDENCES OF THE USE OF SPHERICAL BUTTONS (GOMBÍKY): TWO CASE STUDIES  
FROM MORAVIAN FINDS

**MICHAELA LÁTKOVÁ, MÁRIA HAJNALOVÁ, MIROSLAV HAVLÍK**

GRAPE VINE AND VITICULTURE TRADITION IN MIKULČICE

**PAVEL KOUŘIL, JANA GRYC**

CZECH SILESIA IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

**ALEKSANDRA PANKIEWICZ**

AN ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY PLACES ASSOCIATED WITH TRADE AND EXCHANGE  
IN EARLY MEDIEVAL STRONGHOLDS IN THE EXAMPLE OF OSTRÓW TUMSKI IN WROCLAW

**PAVEL ŠLÉZAR, KAREL FALTÝNEK**

ROMÁNSKÝ KOSTEL SV. PROKOPA V LOŠTICÍCH. PŘÍSPĚVEK K POČÁTKŮM MORAVSKÉ ŠLECHTY

**JIŘÍ ŠINDELÁŘ, LUMÍR POLÁČEK, ŠÁRKA KRUPIČKOVÁ**

DOPORUČENÁ METODIKA FOTODOKUMENTACE V ARCHEOLOGII PRO NÁSLEDNÉ METRICKÉ  
ANALÝZY OBRAZU

