Early medieval centre in Pohansko near Břeclav/Lundeburg: *munitio, emporium or palatium* of the rulers of Moravia?

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The majority of historians from Central Europe assume that a political entity existed in the ninth century within the territory of modern Moravia, the eastern half of the Czech Republic.\(^1\) The name of this entity was coined by adopting a term from the work *De administrando Imperio* by the tenth century Byzantine emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus. The term was “megale Moravia”.\(^2\) From a host of written sources that mention the Moravians, the most important undoubtedly include the Frankish annals, in particular the Annals of Fulda and saints’ lives, of which the outstanding ones are the Old-Slavonic biographies of Constantine (Cyril) and his brother Methodius. Also essential is the correspondence between the Moravian rulers and the Popes and Byzantine emperors as well as the travelogues of the Jewish-Arabic merchants.\(^3\) Unfortunately, despite their variety the written sources on Great Moravia tend to be relatively difficult to interpret and sometimes give rise to academic debate.\(^4\) Nevertheless, all historians agree that in the ninth century a powerful political entity emerged in the eastern part of Central Europe, which gradually became a respected and integral part of the civilization of post-Roman Europe. Through the memorable *Privilege Industriae tue* of Pope John VIII of 880 the Moravian ruler and all his people came under the immediate protection of the Roman Curia,\(^5\) thus formally attaining a position in Europe similar to that of, for example, the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Alfred the Great.

The history of Great Moravia, as we know it from the written sources, is, above all, a history of military conflicts with the neighbouring East Frankish Empire. However, it is also a period of unexpected cultural growth of the whole region symbolized by the activities of the Byzantine mission and the creation of original Slavic literature.\(^6\)

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2. Great or Old Moravia (Bowlus 1995, 9).
5. Třeštík 2000, 301.
The above mentioned aspects of the development of Great Moravia are reflected in the rich archaeological finds from the ongoing systematic field excavations that started in the 1950s. In Moravia and Slovakia the investigation was focused mainly on the extensive early medieval agglomerations (Fig. 1), with stone-built religious architecture, massive fortifications, rich graves of the local elite and evidence of intense craftsmanship and long-distance trade. One of the agglomerations that stand out is Pohansko near Břeclav, a site exceptional both for its status and function within early medieval Moravia, and the extent of our archaeological knowledge about it. The in-depth knowledge that we have gained is due to large-scale field excavations, modern processing using state-of-the-art computer technology and across the board multidisciplinary collaboration.

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In this paper I would like to start by considering the significance of the whole early medieval agglomeration in Pohansko based on the results of earlier and more recent investigations. The findings will then be used as a starting-point for a broader comparison of Pohansko with related sites in western and northern Europe where social developments similar to that of Great Moravia in the early Middle Ages can be expected.

The early medieval centre at Břeclav-Pohansko lies on the Moravian-Austrian border in the south-easternmost corner of the Czech Republic, in an area of floodplain forests above the confluence of the Morava and Dyje Rivers. Knowledge of it comes primarily from archaeological excavations, carried out at the site since 1958 by the Institute of Archaeology & Museology of the Philosophical Faculty of Masaryk University in Brno. Archaeological research at the site has been underway since 1958 and has uncovered a wealth of artefacts, providing insight into early medieval society and culture. In that time, 140,731 m² have been excavated (Pl. 22), uncovering 1,346 settlement features, 872 graves with skeletal remains, 55 cremations and thousands of post holes. More than 200,000 artefacts have been inventoried from the excavations here.

The excavations carried out have identified, first of all, a settlement from the time of the great Slavic migration from the sixth century to the first half of the tenth century. Evidence of an early Slavic settlement from the sixth to eighth century was preserved in the northern part of the site. This was clearly an agricultural colony of the nucleated type, and it was associated with a cremation cemetery of 55 graves.8

The fortification was built sometime in the ninth century. The easily visible vallum is all that remains of a shell rampart with a stone facing wall, earth fill and internal wooden walls. The fortification is 2 km long and was originally about 6 m wide. It encloses an area of some 28 ha and is the largest fortification in the central part of Great Moravia.9

A magnate’s court was found within the enclosure in the north-west part of the site. This was a rectangular settlement formation of around 1 ha, surrounded by a wooden palisade, and built in two phases in the ninth century. Within the court, a sacral area containing a church and cemetery was divided from the magnate’s residential dwelling, large wooden halls (a meeting place for armed retainers or important members of Great Moravian society) and an economic area. In sum, there were some 50 features. The church was surrounded by a cemetery with graves rich in artefacts. In the ninth century, members of court society were buried here. Of the 407 graves excavated, 4 contained swords, 8 axes, 32 spurs and 46 gold and silver jewellery according to the Byzantino-Oriental fashion. The court presents us with one of the forms of an early medieval ruler’s residence.10

8 Dostál 1982a; idem 1985.
9 Idem 1979; idem 1984; Macháček 2001a, 283.
10 Dostál 1975; Macháček 2001a.
The other area within the enclosure was occupied by craftsmen. Different places of this area have been excavated. The presence of various crafts can be established from the finds of tools, raw materials and semi-finished products. The features formed groups divided by open areas or fences; in these a craft settlement was developed.\(^\text{11}\) The character of the burials which occur in small groups or lie isolated in the craft area indicates that these were the graves of members of the lowest social status.\(^\text{12}\)

Significant settlement activity has also been identified in the baileys. Nine hectares of the Great Moravian settlement area in the southern bailey have been surveyed. In all, 436 settlement features have been identified, of which almost a quarter were common Slavic sunken huts with stone hearths in the corners. After finds of equestrian equipment such as spurs or stirrups, we believe that armed retainers lived here. In the southern bailey there were more than 200 graves in which also weapons (sword, axes, spears) and spurs appeared; this is clearly linked to a dislocation of retainers in this area.\(^\text{13}\)

In the ninth century the early medieval agglomeration in Pohansko covered an area of approximately 50-60 ha. Archaeological investigations or geophysical measurements identified remains showing intense settlement activity within the whole area. The number of local inhabitants must have been quite large, although the exact numbers are difficult to establish. At any rate, Pohansko cannot be considered self-sufficient, especially in terms of food production. Situated in the floodplain of the Dyje (Thaya), the

\(^{11}\) Dostál 1993; Macháček 2002.
\(^{12}\) Dostál 1982b; *idem* 1993.
\(^{13}\) Vignatiová 1980; 1992.
immediate surroundings of Pohansko were hardly suitable for agricultural production even in the Middle Ages. As a result, a network of agricultural settlements arose in the environs of the Pohansko, in the area where the floodplain borders with the river terraces (Fig. 2), in order to supply the populous centre.\textsuperscript{14} Some of those settlements have been partly examined. In addition to pithouses they contain underground silos for grain (grain pits), that are lacking among the buildings in Pohansko.\textsuperscript{15}

The dating of the Great Moravian centre in Pohansko has been established by examining typical artefacts. Judging from the finds of weapons, decorative belt ends, jewellery or pottery there can be no doubt that the early medieval centre in Pohansko reached its zenith sometime in the ninth century. Given the problems related to the unfinished chronological-typological system of finds from the Great Moravia period we are, at present, not capable of providing a more exact dating. Attempts to estimate the total duration of its existence are equally difficult. The last remains of the reduced settlement go back to sometime in the first half of the tenth century when the site was permanently abandoned.

In solving the chronological issues we have recently been helped by results from dendrochronological analysis.\textsuperscript{16} For the time being, we have only one reliable date available from Pohansko, that of 882\textsuperscript{17}, when the wooden construction of a well in the craftsmen’s precinct was built (Fig. 3). Around this date we expect that the most dramatic growth in the local settlement happened. This is supported by the workmanship of the local pottery, based on which the development in Great Moravia was divided into

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Fig_3.png}
\caption{Dendrochronologically dated well from craftsmen’s precinct in Pohansko}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{14} Goláň/Kučera/Macháček 2003; Goláň/Macháček 2004.
\textsuperscript{15} Macháček 2001b.
\textsuperscript{16} Poláček/Dvorská 1999.
\textsuperscript{17} According to Jitka Dvorská, Brno, 2001.
two main phases. Most of the features in the craftsmen’s dwellings may be ascribed to
the later phase, to which the dendrochronologically dated well also belongs.

Let us now consider the discoveries made in Pohansko within a broader context
and compare it with similar sites from the other parts of early medieval Europe.

There can be no doubt that the centre of the early medieval agglomeration in Po-
hansko is the so-called court of a magnate (Fig. 4).18 As had been pointed out many
times it resembles the best examples of Carolingian-Ottonian structures of a residential
*cum* representative nature. Striking structural parallels can be found between the court in
Pohansko and the so-called *palatia* – centres of royal palace complexes from the Carol-
ingian-Ottonian period. These are groups of buildings that included the royal residence,
chapel and a hall.19 They were situated within a relatively large, specially enclosed or
fortified area. The *palatium* (court of a magnate) in Pohansko has a markedly similar
appearance to the building structures of the early phase Ottonian royal palace complexes
in Tilleda, Grone and, possibly, the sites close to royal palace complexes in Elten and
Gebesee.20 The decisive factor in the comparison is the relative position of the different
elements of the *palatium*. The church, which is usually situated close to the entrance in
the Carolingian-Ottonian royal palace complexes (as in Pohansko), is adjoined by the
royal residential buildings. These are all very similar in nature in the above mentioned
sites, being mostly isolated, neighbouring houses of a relatively small size, standing next
to one another in a row behind the church. The significant characteristic is their close
relationship to the church.21 The building of the (assembly) hall, which is yet another
important component of the royal palace complex, was used for congregation on special
occasions. Investigations carried out on the German sites show that the smaller varieties
of the large assembly buildings were about 9 m wide and over 20 m long,22 which roughly
corresponds with the structures uncovered in Pohansko.23 In Pohansko, and in Tilleda,
Grone and Gebesee the large above-ground assembly buildings within the *palatium* are
found on the side opposite to the church and the residential buildings. An extensive,
empty, undeveloped area is situated between the two clusters of buildings (Fig. 5).

The court in Pohansko was enclosed by a massive, almost square-shaped palisade
separating it from the remaining area within the fort. A similar form is known from the
Carolingian-Ottonian royal palace complexes, where the *palatium* proper was isolated
from the bailey with evidence of craft production. From the ninth century the baileys
would be enclosed within their own fortification.24 They bear comparison to the settlement

18 Dostál 1975.
19 Binding 1996, 64.
22 *Idem* 1996, 59, 64.
23 Macháček 2001a, 281.
24 Binding 1996, 25, 64, 163, 171, 175, 181, 186, 190, 193.
of craftsmen also found within the fortification in Pohansko. Similar craftsmen’s precincts were identified, for example, in the royal palace complexes in Tilleda, Helfta, Mühlhausen or Gebesee and are also mentioned in *Capitulare de villis* from 800.\textsuperscript{25} The personnel of the Carolingian royal courts consisted mainly of the serfs (*servi*), who were mostly women (*serviles feminae*). This corresponds with the situation in Pohansko, where, in the craftsmen’s precinct, graves of its inhabitants scattered individually or in small clusters contained very poor grave goods. As the masculinity index indicates, women significantly outnumbered men.

Just as in the Carolingian-Ottonian royal palace complexes, Pohansko received its supplies from the small agricultural settlements scattered throughout its agricultural environs. The settlements specialized in growing grain crops but also delivered meat to the centre. This is supported by the results of osteological analyses and the distribution of the main species of domesticated animals. While in the *palatium* in Pohansko the domesticated pig clearly prevails (47\%), in the investigated agricultural settlement the ratio of pigs, cows, and sheep is basically equal.

Fig. 5. Court of a magnate (*palatium*) in Pohansko and some early Ottonian royal palace complexes (same scale)
Based on the above mentioned findings it seems that, from the formal viewpoint, Pohansko corresponds to the residencies of early medieval rulers. It may have been modelled on the Carolingian royal palace complex, which still remains archaeologically obscure. It might have been built by one of the Moravian rulers as *imitatio imperii*\(^\text{26}\), since we have very good reason to assume that they spent part of their youth in Bavaria at one of the royal residencies there.\(^\text{27}\)

Pohansko was at the same time highly important militarily. This is evident from the fact that its massive fortification was the largest enclosed fortification in Great Moravia. The area surrounded by the rampart in Pohansko exceeds many times that of the most fortified German royal palace complexes known to us.\(^\text{28}\) The construction of the two-kilometre-long fortification (Fig. 6) must have been a very complex project in terms

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\(^{26}\) Gabriel 1986, 360-362.  
\(^{27}\) E.g. Kučera 1986, 71-72.  
\(^{28}\) Macháček 2001a, 283, fig. 6.
of logistics. This is corroborated by the fact that sandstone and limestone needed for building the facing apron wall were imported from a great distance. A geological analysis confirmed that the construction material came from the south-western part of the White Carpathian mountain range. The quarries were 25 km away from Pohansko.\footnote{Štelcl 1971, 5-9, 12-13.}

Pohansko was conceived as a massive Great Moravian fortress from the very beginning. The buildings within it were built at the same time as the rampart and were adapted to fit within the complex as the orientation and layout of the internal built-up area copying the rampart confirms. In the northern section the layout matches the orientation and shape of the inner bailey of the palatium and a special cult fencing, which in the early stage of the court’s existence accommodated the church.\footnote{Macháček/Pleterski 2000.} In the investigated part of the craftsmen’s precinct the post-hole and sunken structures as well as graves are arranged alongside the rampart or at a right angle to it. Where the rampart turns, the internal layout also changes its orientation.

The massive fortification was of cardinal importance to the existence of the large centre. Far from being merely a protection against the enemy, it also served as a barrier against the natural elements. A computer-based digital elevation model (DEM) clearly shows that, given the surrounding terrain level, the southeast section of the fort was extremely low (Pl. 23). In a floodplain this means acute danger during floods. Bearing in mind that archaeological excavation in the area provided evidence that it was extensively populated, the rampart must have acted as effective protection against floods. Without it, the early medieval Pohansko would not have been able to withstand the natural elements or military assaults.

Protection against the enemy was ensured both passively – through the fortification – and actively – by concentrating military forces ready for action in the vicinity of the fort. Evidence of the permanent presence of a large group of people who did not engage in agriculture or crafts abounds in the southern bailey.\footnote{Vignatiová 1980; \textit{idem} 1992.} The area yields numerous finds confirming the presence of cavalry (Fig. 7) – mostly objects that can be classified as horseman’s gear (stirrups, bits and spurs). For every 100 settlement structures in the southern bailey, there are 5.2 objects related to horseman’s accessories. This is almost twice as many as within the craftsmen’s precinct inside the fort where it is only 2.8 objects (Graph 1). At the same time, the number of production tools found in that area was relatively low compared to the craftsmen’s settlement. For every 100 settlement structures in the southern bailey there are 7.7 whorls (Graph 2) or 22.5 bone awls (Graph 3), while within the craftsmen’s precinct, it is almost three times that amount (21 whorls and 58 bone awls). The profound differences between the dwellings of the warriors from the southern bailey and the craftsmen residing inside the fort are also striking. While in the southern bailey simple Slavic pithouses, common in the surrounding agricultural
settlements, clearly dominate, they are a rare find inside the ramparts. In the craftsmen’s precinct they make up 3.4% of all the sunk structures, while in the southern bailey it is 23% (Graph 4). The pithouses in the southern bailey are laid out to form either rows or to encompass a circular centre (Fig. 8).

The situation established in the southern bailey in Pohansko is by no means exceptional. It is similar to the conditions in early medieval Meißen, which is well documented by both written and archaeological sources.32 This strategically placed castle of the German kings was founded in 929 in the territory of Slavic tribes. It was frequently a target of military campaigns. Written reports inform us that the suburbium was inhabited by cavalry of a lower social status with their families. Their task was to defend the castle.

against hostile attacks. Failing to hold the *suburbium* during a Polish attack in 1015, they were forced to retreat inside the *akropolis*. The archaeological excavation of the *suburbium* reveals that in the tenth and eleventh centuries simple dwellings, lining the roads, were erected using boards or wickerwork while evidence of craftsmanship or extensive storage facilities is completely missing. The finds were made up by an overwhelming number of horseshoes.

For the Moravians, the strategic role of Pohansko, where the military defence was organized along the same lines as in Meißen, was immense. We are also informed about the need for and existence of massive forts within Great Moravia by historical reports. For example, the mention in the Annals of Fulda concerning the “Rastislav’s unspeakable stronghold, unlike those of yore”, being the scene of battles between the
Moravians and the Frankish armies led by Charles – the youngest son of Louis the German – is well-known. Unfortunately, the annals do not reveal the name or location of the fort.\textsuperscript{33}

From the strategic point of view, fortifications at the confluence of rivers, being the key nodes of any communication network, were an extremely important element in the defence against the advancing enemy. The Annals of Fulda inform us of fights near Dowine, situated at the confluence of the Morava and the Danube.\textsuperscript{34} Another key location of the Moravian defence was 60 km to the north where the Morava is joined by the Dyje. There, the enemy advancing from the southwest along the right bank of the Morava was forced to wade through the river. It was at exactly that location, guarding the access to the central areas of Great Moravia, where Pohansko was situated (see Fig. 1).

Fortunately, contacts of Great Moravia with the world around it were not exclusively restricted to those of a military nature. Written sources tell us of merchants coming to Moravia to take part in the well-known market mentioned, among others, in the so-called tariff of Raffelstetten of 904 or in some Arabic sources. The goods that

\textsuperscript{33} Bowlus 1995, 161; Wolfram 1987, 362.

\textsuperscript{34} Idem 1987, 286; Štefaničová 2000, 327-328.
were in such great demand, transported from Moravia mostly to Spain or via Venice to the Middle East, were in fact slaves.\textsuperscript{35} The other exported “commodities” included, for example, wax, honey or horses.\textsuperscript{36} In the opposite direction, to Moravia, long-distance trade consisted of supplies of luxurious objects.\textsuperscript{37} Some finds from Pohansko can be considered as imports arriving from the west or the south-east. To name but a few, they include swords with a damask-steel blade,\textsuperscript{38} or some components of belt sets, such as belt ends embellished with coloured enamel\textsuperscript{39} or silk.\textsuperscript{40} While these exclusive objects may have found their way to Pohansko as gifts or loot, this possibility may be completely ruled out in the case of another group of imports. It is represented by raw materials and everyday objects of which some were transported from a much shorter distance. A typical example can be seen in grindstones made of various minerals and brought in from several different directions, as confirmed by a petrographical analysis of a collection of 207 grindstones.\textsuperscript{41} A majority (62 \%) comes from mica schist, the resources of which were situated 60 km north-west of Pohansko. The second largest group of grindstones (14 \%) were made of rhyolite, quarried in the mountain ranges 150 km east. Material coming from afar was also used to manufacture stone whorls or crude graphite added to pottery products.\textsuperscript{42} Lead, imported much less frequently, is another raw material used in the non-ferrous metal metallurgy. In Pohansko it is found in the form of talents (Fig. 9) or accretions.\textsuperscript{43} There were also precious metals processed on the site in the early Middle Ages, as confirmed by the find of a crucible with remains

\textsuperscript{35} E.g. McCormick 2001, 691, 767, 774; \textit{idem} 2002.
\textsuperscript{36} E.g. Warnke 1987.
\textsuperscript{38} Vignatiová 1993.
\textsuperscript{39} Kalousek 1971, 147-148, tab. 42; Wieczorek/Hinz 2000, 234-235.
\textsuperscript{40} Kostelníková 1980.
\textsuperscript{41} Giliková 1997.
\textsuperscript{42} Dostál 1998.
\textsuperscript{43} \textit{idem} 1990; Macháček 2002.
of silver. However, we know nothing about the form in which gold and silver reached Moravia. Coins are extremely rare, and no raw materials in form of talents have been uncovered. Yet, given the frequent finds of Great Moravian jewellery, one can assume that there was an abundant flow of precious metals to Moravia.

What could have been the role of Pohansko in the transfer of goods within Great Moravia? An answer to this question may be revealed by new excavations complemented by extensive geophysical measurements (Pl. 24). It was found that the build-up inside the fortification exhibits remarkable formal similarity with the settlement structure of the important *emporia* examined in western and northern Europe. The fundamental element of that structure is a unified design of urban planning, which could only have been enforced by a higher authority – the ruler or his representative. The sites develop very quickly thanks to enormous investments through which they endeavour to gain control over the local production and distribution. There can be no doubt they are

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45 Poláček 2000a, 147.
permanently inhabited urban-type settlements. They can be distinguished by the street layout, built to a plan within a pre-defined grid overlying the former cluster structure. Examples include Löddeköpinge, Haithabu, or the Anglo-Saxon Hamwic (Fig. 10) and the Frisian Dorestad.

It seems that the build-up in the *emporia* allocates too much space and extends over an unusually large area, compared to later medieval standards. Sites of this type (such as Hamwic/Southampton – 45 ha) may be 40 to 50 times bigger than other settlements in the settlement hierarchy (agglomeration in Pohansko: 50-60 ha; fortified area: 28 ha). We are not quite certain whether the merchants stayed in the settlements or whether they pitched their tents or makeshift shelters in the immediate surroundings of the *emporia*, as later descriptions suggest. It is, however, almost certain that they were outnumbered by the local craftsmen who settled there to cater for the needs of the local elite and foreign merchants. The ruler controls the important hubs of long-distance trade either directly or through his agents. Written sources mention, for example, the *villa regalis* in Hamwic or in Ipswich. The Dane Godfred was involved in initiating the settlement in Haithabu and the Norwegian *emporium* Kaupang was also subject
to control by the king. In contrast to Pohansko most of these structures have not been archaeologically identified. We can conjecture the presence of a royal or chief authority, however, from a clearly organized build-up.46

In Pohansko, the basic unit of the build-up is a plot or a homestead rectangular in shape the sides of which are delimited by sunken structures, post-hole buildings or palisades (Fig. 11). They had a similar orientation and shape as the *palatium* but covered a much smaller area. While the ruler’s court took up an area of around 1 ha, the plots of the other inhabitants of the fort were up to 10 times smaller. Their average

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area (0.13 ha) actually matches the dimensions of early medieval farmsteads known from the Aleman environment. Some parcels in Pohansko also included a small burial ground (Fig. 12).

Judging by the finds originating from such settlement structures, mostly craftsmen lived and worked there. The finds include, for example, remains of smithies, with evidence of both smithing tools, and concentrations of production waste – slag. We also know the products of the workshops such as armory rings. Non-ferrous metal metallurgy is represented by finds of crucibles and raw materials. Very intensive textile production is embodied by weights for horizontal looms, whorls and bone awls concentrated mainly in the long, sunken structures (Fig. 13). Analogies can be found, for example, in the bailey of the Ottonian royal palace complex in Tilleda, where they are interpreted as the so-called gynaeceum. Other crafts are disclosed by

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48 Dostál 1993; Macháček 2002.  
49 Donat 1996, 131; Dostál 1986, 132-134; Gockel 2000, 553; Grimm 1990, 49-54; Winkelmann 1977, 111.  
50 Dostál 1990; Macháček 2002.
finds of woodworking tools or waste from the production of bone and antler objects. The overall picture of a production centre is rounded off by frequent wells, \(^5\) a common feature also in the western *emporia*. In contrast to the southern bailey, the residential function was provided either by post-hole buildings (Fig. 14) or above-ground, possibly double-room, houses. Merchants arriving at Pohansko may have stayed in tents or makeshift shelters. Free space available for allocation to the temporary inhabitants is found in the area south of the palatium, where geophysical measurements detected no large, sunken structures. It could have also served as a rounding up area for the slaves who were to be sold.\(^5\)

As opposed to the large *emporia* in western and northern Europe, Pohansko yields only small quantities of real imports brought in through long-distance trade. We should bear in mind though, that their presence or non-presence in the archaeological context depends on a number of factors, such as the length of the merchant’s stay or the value and nature of the imported artefacts.\(^5\) As an example, imports to Moravia contained hardly any pottery as it was produced in sufficient quantities and excellent quality. One need also consider the fact that the so-called Amber Trail, that Pohansko is situated on, lost its original purpose in the early Middle Ages. The trail ends in Moravia and in Lower Austria (Fig. 15).\(^5\) In a way, it was a terminal where the merchants had only little left from their initial load purchased at the beginning of their journey.\(^5\) The goods they were after in Moravia were thus exchanged for a general trade equivalent, that is precious metals and luxurious cloths, rather than other goods. But even that would be transferred quite quickly within Great Moravia under the mechanisms of redistribution and is found where the social elite tend to concentrate rather than in the place of actual business transactions.

Given its strategic position at the entrance to the central areas of Great Moravia, Pohansko may have taken on the role of the so-called port of trade, according to K. Polanyi.\(^5\) These were specific neutral locations which offered security to foreign merchants, as well as storage facilities, law enforcement and contracts for the goods traded. It seems that western merchants were familiar with Pohansko, it was the only one of the important Moravian centres that was also given a German name – Lauentenburch.\(^5\) Slightly modified, it was later used as the German name of the nearby town Brčelav – Lundenburg.

Summing up the considerations presented so far, we can draw the following conclusions. The early medieval centre in Pohansko was built to a unified design of urban

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52 Hodges 1982, 57.
54 This refers to the so-called “Tröpfelmodell” of long-distance trade according to Steuer 1987, Abb. 25.
55 E.g. Polanyi 1971.
56 Třeštík 1988.
57 Hodges 1982, 27, 187-188.
Fig. 14. Post-hole buildings and structures from craftsmen’s precinct in the Forest Nursery in Pohansko
planning on the site of an agricultural settlement that was earlier and inconsequential. Situated at a strategic location where Moravia could be accessed by foreign armies and merchants, it had the task of providing military protection and controlling long-distance trade. At the same time, it was a location with the concentrated production of professional craftsmen. Sites of this type could only be built by a man in possession of the highest authority in the country – the ruler. He also had one of his residencies there, modelled on a Carolingian royal palace complex. The Moravian ruler made such a huge investment in the extensive agglomeration in Pohansko in an attempt to achieve emancipation. This is related to the fact that Moravia in the ninth century found itself in the stage of the so-called cyclical chiefdoms. The term is used by R. Hodges to refer to the transition between a traditional chiefdom and a state whereby the central power is being consolidated and takes control over the economy in the regions.\(^57\) The system undergoes transformation until the chief accumulates enough wealth required for separation from the rest of the community. The whole process is accompanied by the “mobilization” of wealth through which the chief consolidates his status and assists in the emergence of the ruling elites. Another typical attribute is the effort to establish tight control over

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58 Poulík 1975; Poláček 2000b, 317-319.
his own and the neighbouring territories, which is often only temporary in nature. The logical consequence of such a development is the rise of the *emporia*, fortifications and separate royal residences. In Pohansko, all three functions merged into one. It is, at the same time, a *munitio*, *emporium*, and *palatium* of the Moravian ruler.

Pohansko may also be viewed as a settlement complementary to the most important centre in Great Moravia in Mikulčice, situated a mere 16 km away (Fig. 1). This was very likely the principal seat of the royal and religious power and a place where the members of the top ranking social strata held their property. This is confirmed by the remains of twelve churches and a massive concentration of prestigious objects uncovered during the 50 years of systematic archaeological excavation. Pohansko and Mikulčice form a characteristic pair, such as for example Winchester and Hamwic in the early medieval Wessex.

The structural resemblance between the early medieval centres in Great Moravia, the Anglo-Saxon kingdom and the Viking world is not incidental. It is not related to a direct implantation of models among geographically remote regions. Rather, they were a reaction to the emergence of the Carolingian empire that integrated the developed territories of the former Roman provinces. As a result of the process, social organisations were established on its western, northern and eastern limits which respond independently yet in similar fashion to the identical impulses coming from the empire.

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