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Slaveni, Moravci i podrijetlo velikomoravskih elita

Ovo istraživanje proučava arheološke nalaze koji dokumentiraju prisutnost slavenskih elita prije nastanka Velike Moravske. Dijelovi pojasne garniture takozvanog avarskog tipa i ukrasni elementi konjske orme s teritorija srednjeg Podunavlja zapravo su pronađeni izvan avarskog teritorija, a takvi su nalazi često uključivali i ostruge sa završetcima krakova u obliku kuke. Cilj istraživanja je objasniti povezanost ovih artefakata ne samo s Avarima, nego prije svega s onim elitama koje će kasnije postati nosioci moći Velike Moravske. Također, na temelju rezultata prostorne analize, naselja koja su bila obuhvaćena istraživanjem su klasificirana te je identificirana i posebna zona naseljavanja. Uspostavljanje ovih poveznica omogućava stoga izraziti uvjerenje da i velikomoravske elite i kulturna sfera u kojoj su djelovale imaju korijene koji sežu u predvelikomoravsko razdoblje.

Ključne riječi: rani srednji vijek, predvelikomoravsko razdoblje, srednje Podunavlje, slavenske elite.

Slavs, Moravians and the Origin of Great Moravian Elites

This research examined archaeological finds documenting the presence of Slavic elites prior to the emergence of Great Moravia. In the Central Danubian region, so-called Avar-type belt components and decorative horse harness elements have, in fact, been found outside Avar territory in settlement contexts that repeatedly also included hooked spurs. The objective was to explain how these artefacts were connected not only with the Avars, but above all with those elites who would later become the bearers of Great Moravian power. Additionally, based on the results of a spatial analysis, the affected settlements were classified and the specific settlement zone was also identified. The established connections thus allow us to express the conviction that both the Great Moravian elites and the cultural sphere in which they operated have roots extending back into the pre-Great Moravian period.

Keywords: Early Middle Ages, pre-Great Moravian period, Central Danubian region, Slavic elites.

Iako je podrijetlo velikomoravskih elita usko povezano s Moravcima, sačuvani dokumenti ne pružaju *origo gentis* ovog slavenskog plemena.¹ Moravci se u pisanim izvorima ne spominju sve do 822. godine.² Prema tome, na pitanje koliko daleko sežu korijeni ovih elita može se odgovoriti samo analizom arheoloških izvora iz predvelikomoravskog razdoblja koji obuhvaćaju zemljopisno područje srednjeg Podunavlja, koje se prostire sjeverno od rijeke Dunava.

Materijalna kultura

Od svih kategorija koje pripadaju ranosrednjovjekovnoj materijalnoj kulturi, pretpostavlja se da postoji posebno snažna veza između važnih metalnih artefakata i društvenih elita.³ U predvelikomoravskom razdoblju takvi predmeti uključuju ostruge sa završecima krakova u obliku kuke, višedijelne pojasne garniture i ukrasne elemente konjske orme.

Te pojasne garniture i brončani okovi konjske orme u biti su pokazatelji jedne kulturne tradicije nadahnute Bizantom, što je vidljivo u metalurškim procesima obojenih metala koji su korišteni u njihovoj proizvodnji i umjetničkoj izvedbi.⁴ Premda su se ovi artefakti dugo smatrali karakterističnima za avarsku kulturnu sferu,⁵ nedavno smo, na temelju nalaza iz središnje Bohemije i južne Moravske, uspjeli dokumentirati njihovu proizvodnju u kulturno-geografskom okruženju koje se proteže izvan područja naseljavanja Avara.⁶ Veći broj takvih nalaza zabilježen je u srednjem Podunavlju, kojem je područje Bohemije u tom pogledu vrlo slično.⁷

Iako su ostruge i spomenuti dijelovi konjske orme povezani istom aktivnošću, postoji značajna razlika između ovih dviju kategorija materijalne kulture: ostruge, kao dijelovi jahaće opreme, vrlo su rijetko prilozi u avarskim grobovima.⁸ Budući da ostruge sa završecima krakova u obliku kuke nisu zabilježene među nalazima poznatim iz inhumacijskih ukopa datiranih u velikomoravsko razdoblje,

While the origins of Great Moravian elites are closely tied to the Moravians, no surviving documents have provided the *origo gentis* of this Slavic tribe.¹ Moravians are not mentioned in written sources until the year 822.² As such, the question of how far back the roots of these elites stretch can only be answered from an analysis of archaeological sources from the pre-Great Moravian period covering the geographical area of the Central Danubian region spreading north of the Danube River.

Material culture

Of all the categories of early medieval material culture, a strong connection between significant metal artefacts with elites can be assumed.³ In the pre-Great Moravian period, such products include hooked spurs as well as multi-part belt components and decorative horse harness elements.

These belt sets and horse harness decorations are essentially manifestations of a single cultural tradition inspired by Byzantium, as defined by the non-ferrous metallurgical processes used in their production and their artistic rendering.⁴ Although these artefacts were long considered characteristic of the Avar cultural sphere,⁵ only recently have we been able to document their production to a cultural-geographical environment that extends beyond the Avar settlement zone based on finds from central Bohemia and southern Moravia.⁶ An accumulation of such finds has been recorded in the Central Danubian region, to which the territory of Bohemia is very similar in this regard.⁷

Despite the fact that spurs and the aforementioned horse harness parts are related to the same activity, there is one fundamental difference between these two categories of material culture: spurs are parts of riding gear that were very rarely deposited in Avar graves.⁸ Since hooked spurs are not represented among finds known from inhumation

¹ Lysý 2014, str. 81–82.

² Třeštík 2001, str. 107, 271.

³ Hasil *et al.* 2022.

⁴ Daim 2000; Daim 2010; Eichert, Mehofer 2013; Macháček *et al.* 2024.

⁵ Zábojník 2005, str. 103–104; Zábojník 2011; Zábojník 2020, str. 175, 178.

⁶ Macháček *et al.* 2021; Profantová *et al.* 2020; Profantová 2022.

⁷ Zábojník 2010, str. 186, 189.

⁸ Jakubčínová 2017, str. 101; Zábojník 2020, str. 176–177.

¹ Lysý 2014, pp. 81–82.

² Třeštík 2001, pp. 107, 271.

³ Hasil *et alii* 2022.

⁴ Daim 2000; Daim 2010; Eichert, Mehofer 2013; Macháček *et alii* 2024.

⁵ Zábojník 2005, pp. 103–104; Zábojník 2011; Zábojník 2020, pp. 175, 178.

⁶ Macháček *et alii* 2021; Profantová *et alii* 2020; Profantová 2022.

⁷ Zábojník 2010, pp. 186, 189.

⁸ Jakubčínová 2017, p. 101; Zábojník 2020, pp. 176, 177.

ovaj tip ostruge vezuje se isključivo za raniju epohu.⁹ Inventar nalaza ostruga sa završetcima krakova u obliku kuke obuhvaća i lijevane artefakte od obojenih metala kao i obične primjerke od kovanog željeza.¹⁰ Iako se željezo obično ne povezuje s elitom, u kontekstu opreme za jahanje korištene u ranom srednjem vijeku, postoje opravdani razlozi za drukčije razmatranje. Pisani izvori koji dokumentiraju uvjete među Slavenima spominju konje kao rijetke životinje, ponekad čak i izravno povezane s vladarom.¹¹ Srednjoeuropski nalazi brončanih ostruga sa završetcima krakova u obliku kuke i završetcima savijenim prema unutra koncentrirani su u Boheimiji i srednjem Podunavlju.¹² Zajedničko obilježje ovih nalaza je usporediv sastav legure bakra, koji je karakterističan ne samo za južnu Europu nego i za kulturnu sferu Avara.¹³

Naselja elitnih skupina

Gotovo svi značajni metalni artefakti, uključujući i slučajne nalaze, koji su zabilježeni u srednjem Podunavlju mogu se smatrati nalazima povezanim s naseljima, te je na temelju njih moguće i identificirati naselja, bila ona elitna ili barem mjesta gdje su elite bile prisutne u više navrata. Možda se upravo nalazišta poznata po ostrugama sa završetcima krakova u obliku kuke i nalazima bizantsko-avarskih brončanih okova mogu povezati s naseljima slavonske elite.¹⁴ Ovi nam kriteriji također omogućuju isključiti lokalitete sa slučajnim nalazima (sl. 1).

Identificirana naselja klasificirana su na temelju geomorfološke strukture okolnog terena kao visinska ili nizinska, neovisno o nadmorskoj visini samog mjesta. Visinska naselja bila su strateški smještena na rubu brežuljkastog terena ili u uskom planinskom pojasu, ali uvijek u blizini ravnih dijelova nizine.¹⁵ Iako su se područja ranijih utvrđenih naselja ponovno koristila na nekoliko lokacija, osim možda kad je riječ o Bojná-Žihl'avniku ili

tion burials dated to the Great Moravian period, this type of spur is associated exclusively with the earlier epoch.⁹ The find inventory of hooked spurs includes both cast artefacts produced from non-ferrous metals as well as basic forged iron artefacts.¹⁰ While iron is not usually associated with elites under such circumstances, in the case of riding gear used in the Early Middle Ages, there are good reasons to think otherwise. Written sources documenting the conditions among the Slavs depict horses as rare animals, occasionally even directly in connection with the ruler.¹¹ Central European finds of bronze hooked spurs with terminals bent inside are concentrated in Bohemia and the Central Danubian region.¹² The common feature uniting these finds is the comparable composition of the copper alloy, which is typical not only for southern Europe but also for the Avar cultural sphere.¹³

Elite settlements

Nearly all significant metal artefacts, including stray finds, known from the Central Danubian region can be designated as settlement finds. This creates an opportunity to identify settlements based on these artefacts – elite settlements or at least sites where elites were repeatedly present. Perhaps it is precisely the sites known for hooked spurs as well as finds of Byzantine-Avar bronze castings that can be identified with Slavic elite settlements.¹⁴ These criteria allow us to exclude locations with random finds (Fig. 1).

The identified settlements were classified based on the geomorphological structure of their surrounding terrain as hilltop or lowland, regardless of site elevation. Hilltop settlements were strategically located on the edge of hilly terrain or in a narrow strip of mountains, but always close to the flat parts of the lowlands.¹⁵ Although the areas of earli-

⁹ Galuška 2013, str. 47; Profantová 1994, str. 61.

¹⁰ Profantová 1994, str. 60–69, 71.

¹¹ Miechowicz 2023, str. 54.

¹² Kouřil 2019.

¹³ Janowski 2017, str. 183–184.

¹⁴ Profantová 2016, str. 7.

¹⁵ Bojná-Valy, Bojná-Žihl'avník (Jakubčinová 2017; Robak 2017), Brno-Líšeň (Kouřil 2019), Ježkovice (Kouřil 2017), Klátova Nová Ves (Robak, Pieta 2016), Radslavice (Staňa 1964), Roštín (Kouřil 2019; Profantová 2016), Smolenice, Svätý Jur (Jakubčinová 2017), Theras (Lindinger, Obenaus 2021) i Znojmo (Dresler 2003/2004).

⁹ Galuška 2013, p. 47; Profantová 1994, p. 61.

¹⁰ Profantová 1994, pp. 60–69, 71.

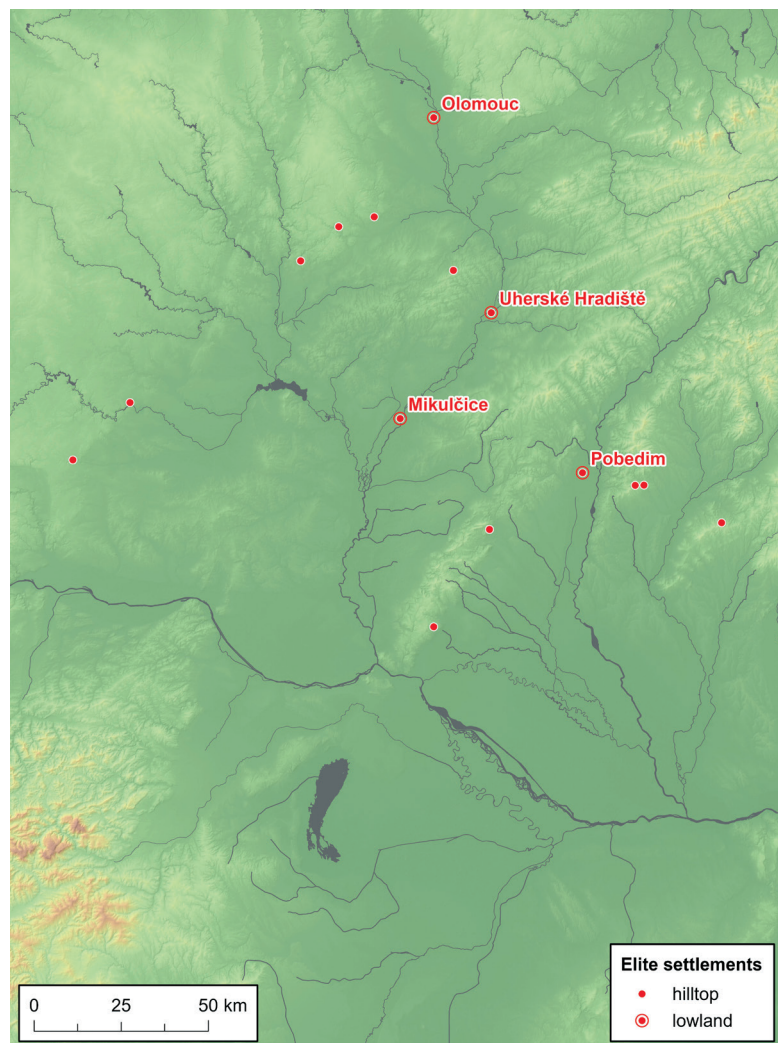
¹¹ Miechowicz 2023, p. 54.

¹² Kouřil 2019.

¹³ Janowski 2017, pp. 183–184.

¹⁴ Profantová 2016, p. 7.

¹⁵ Bojná-Valy, Bojná-Žihl'avník (Jakubčinová 2017; Robak 2017); Brno-Líšeň (Kouřil 2019); Ježkovice (Kouřil 2017); Klátova Nová Ves (Robak, Pieta 2016); Radslavice (Staňa 1964); Roštín (Kouřil 2019; Profantová 2016); Smolenice, Svätý Jur (Jakubčinová 2017); Theras (Lindinger, Obenaus 2021), Znojmo (Dresler 2003–2004).



Sl. 1. Karta srednjeg Podunavlja koja prikazuje predvelikomoravska naselja elitnih skupina, mjesta na kojima su pronađene ostruge sa završetcima krakova u obliku kuke i bizantsko-avarski brončani okovi.

Fig. 1 Map of the Central Danubian region, showing pre-Great Moravian elite settlements: sites where both hooked spurs and Byzantine-Avar bronze castings have been found.

Brno-Líšeň,¹⁶ obrambeni objekti koji odgovaraju relevantnom horizontu naselja nedostaju. S druge strane, nizinska naselja nalazila su se na prostranim ravnicama u blizini glavnih vodotoka, odnosno blizu rijeka Morave i Váha, na području koje je predmet ovog istraživanja.¹⁷ Kao i kod visinskih naselja,

¹⁶ Bojná-Žihl'avník (Pieta 2017, str. 11, 32; Pieta, Robak 2023, str. 111; Robak 2017, str. 53; Ruttkay 2017, str. 307–308), Brno-Líšeň (Procházka 2009, str. 152–159; Procházka *et al.* 2011, str. 458), ali moguće i Radslavice (Procházka 2009, str. 198–201, 255).

¹⁷ Mikulčice, Olomouc-Povel (Kouřil 2019), Pobedim (Jakubčinová 2017) i Uherské Hradiště (Galuška 2013).

er fortified settlements were reused at several locations, perhaps except for Bojná-Žihl'avník or Brno-Líšeň,¹⁶ defensive structures corresponding to the relevant settlement horizon are missing. In contrast, lowland settlements were located in the wide-open plains in connection with dominant watercourses, i.e. the Morava and Váh rivers in the studied area.¹⁷ Similarly, as in the case of hilltop settlements, none of them were documented as having the remains of fortifications built in the pre-Great Moravian period.¹⁸ It is perhaps precisely these missing fortifications that can be considered a fundamental feature distinguishing the Central Danubian region from Bohemia in the studied period.¹⁹

Settlement zone

The classification of settlements with archaeologically documented presence of pre-Great Moravian elites into hilltop and lowland suggests that the different terrains predetermined different roles, but given that they were all part of a complex settlement structure located in proximity to the Avar settlement zone, efforts to interpret them correctly require contextualisation.

Most of the settlements from the Early Middle Ages that have been uncovered to date in the Central Danubian region have been dated only roughly. Narrowing the time period represented by local settlement is therefore better facilitated by examining its burial grounds. Flat cremation graves or cemeteries are typical for the early phase of the Early Middle Ages.²⁰ Chronologically, the pre-Great Moravian period corresponds to a time when Prague-type pottery was no longer used as urns, to horizon IV in the ceramic production chronology of the earlier phase of the Early Middle Ages, elaborated by G. Fusek.²¹

¹⁶ Bojná-Žihl'avník (Pieta 2017, pp. 11, 32; Pieta, Robak 2023, p. 111; Robak 2017, p. 53; Ruttkay 2017, pp. 307–308), Brno-Líšeň (Procházka 2009, pp. 152–159; Procházka *et alii* 2011, p. 458), but potentially also Radslavice (Procházka 2009, pp. 198–201, 255).

¹⁷ Mikulčice, Olomouc-Povel (Kouřil 2019); Pobedim (Jakubčinová 2017); Uherské Hradiště (Galuška 2013).

¹⁸ König 2022a, p. 56.

¹⁹ Profantová 2020; Profantová *et alii* 2020; Vích *et alii* 2021.

²⁰ König 2022b, pp. 38–40.

²¹ Fusek 2013, pp. 146–148.

u nijednom od njih nisu dokumentirani ostatci utvrda izgrađenih u predvelikomoravskom razdoblju,¹⁸ pa se možda upravo izostajanje tih utvrda može smatrati temeljnom značajkom koja razlikuje srednje Podunavlje od Bohemije u ovom razdoblju.¹⁹

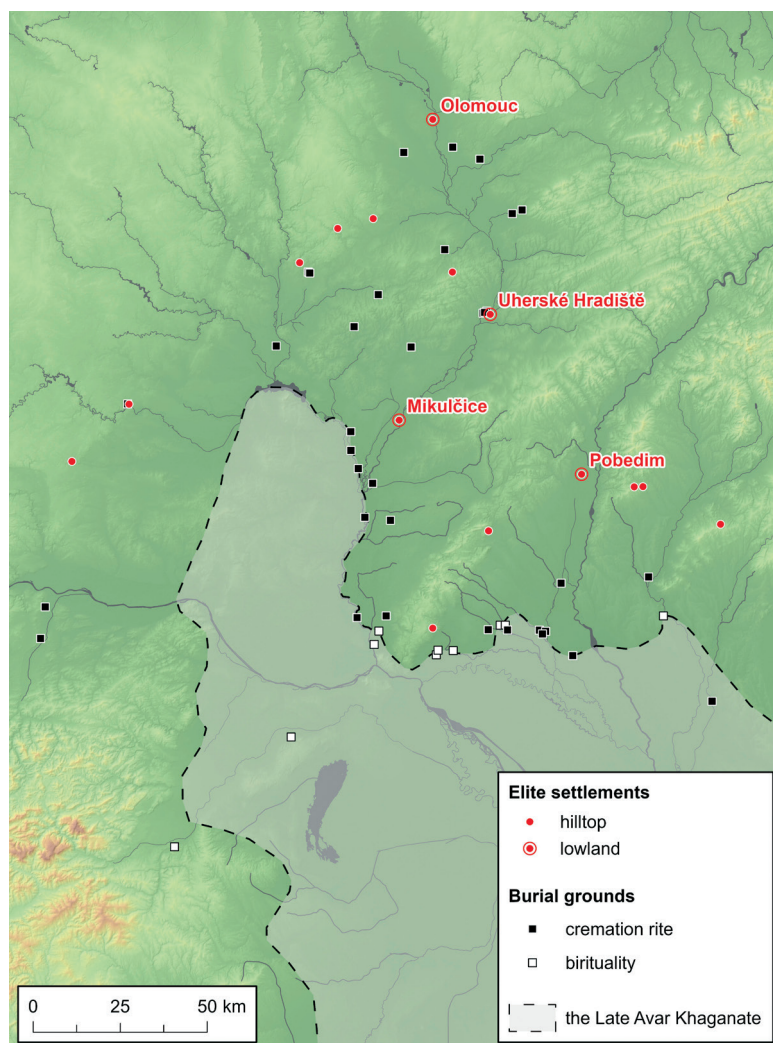
Područje naselja

Klasifikacija naselja na visinska i nizinska, u kojima je prisutnost predvelikomoravske elite arheološki dokumentirana, sugerira da su različiti tereni unaprijed odredili različite uloge. No, s obzirom da su sva ta naselja bila dio složene naseobinske strukture smještene u blizini avarske zone naseljavanja, potrebna je kontekstualizacija kako bi ih se ispravno tumačilo.

Većina ranosrednjovjekovnih naselja koja su do danas otkrivena u srednjem Podunavlju samo je okvirno datirana. Kod preciznijeg određivanja vremenskog razdoblja kojem pojedino naselje pripada od pomoći može biti analiza njegova groblja. Za ranu fazu ranog srednjeg vijeka karakteristični su ravni paljevinski grobovi ili groblja.²⁰ Predvelikomoravsko razdoblje odgovara vremenu kada se keramika praškog tipa više nije koristila kao urne, odnosno do horizonta IV u kronologiji keramičke proizvodnje ranije faze ranog srednjeg vijeka, koju je predložio G. Fusek.²¹

Rasprostranjenost ravnih paljevinskih groblja u srednjem Podunavlju u skladu je s prostornim širenjem naselja povezanih s elitnim skupinama, te oni zajedno predstavljaju naseobinsku strukturu koja se može identificirati s jedinstvenom zonom naseljavanja koja se proteže na teritoriju grubo definiranom rijekama Traisnom i Nitrom (sl. 2).

Pojas Malih i Bijelih Karpata otprilike se proteže kroz središnji dio ove zone dijeleći je na dva područja naseljavanja. Visinska naselja, osim u središnjoj Moravskoj gdje još nisu zabilježena, čine zamišljene granične linije ove zone iz triju smjerova, dok je južna granica označena ravnim kosturnim grobovima ili biritualnim grobljima karakterističnim za stanovništvo tzv. kasnoavarskog Kaganata.²² Međutim, mnogi paljevinski grobovi ili groblja nalaze se duž iste linije kao i ta groblja. Ova prostorna korelacija ukazuje ne samo na povećanu koncentraciju



Sl. 2. Karta srednjeg Podunavlja s prikazom slavenske zone naseljavanja u predvelikomoravskom razdoblju. Osjenčano područje označava zone rasprostranjenosti inhumacijskih ukopa povezanih s tzv. kasnim Avarskim Kaganatom.

Fig. 2 Map of the Central Danubian region, showing pre-Great Moravian Slavic settlement zone.

The shaded area corresponds to the zone of distribution of inhumation burials associated with the so-called late Avar khaganate.

As the distribution of flat cremation cemeteries in the Central Danubian region is consistent with the spatial expansion of settlements associated with elites, together they represent a settlement structure that can be identified with a distinctive settlement zone spreading in terms of longitude in the territory roughly defined by the Traisen and Nitra rivers (Fig. 2).

The belt of the Small and White Carpathians stretches roughly across its centre, dividing it into two settlement chambers. With the exception of central Moravia, where they are not yet recorded,

¹⁸ König 2022a, str. 56.

¹⁹ Profantová 2020; Profantová *et al.* 2020; Vich *et al.* 2021.

²⁰ König 2022b, str. 38–40.

²¹ Fusek 2013, str. 146–148.

²² Zábojník 1999, str. 154–155; Zábojník 2009, str. 9.

ciju stanovništva koje živi u zoni međukulturnog kontakta već i na njihov miran suživot. Indirektan pokazatelj takvog suživota može se pronaći i u običaju gradnje nizinskih naselja u otvorenom krajoliku bez obrambenih struktura.

Kompleksna središta

Sva poznata nizinska naselja elitnih skupina pokazuju neposrednu prostornu povezanost s kasnijim središtima Velike Moravske. Slijedeći načela utvrđene metode retrogradnog postupka, potrebno je utvrditi postoji li uzrok zbog kojeg su se predvelikomoravska naselja elita razvila u kompleksna središta u Velikoj Moravskoj. Budući da nije potrebno locirati ta naselja, već samo potvrditi njihovu funkciju kao središta, njihov centralni potencijal najbolje je procijeniti na temelju moguće funkcionalne uloge.

E. Gringmuth-Dallmer pretpostavio je da su u tadašnjim srednjoeuropskim uvjetima kompleksna središta trebala ispunjavati pet funkcija. Naime, njihova uloga i svrha bila je administrativna, sigurnosna, obrtnička i proizvodna te trgovačka i kulturna.²³ Na temelju arheoloških nalaza, dvije od ovih funkcija mogu se izravno povezati s proučavanjem naseljima. Administrativna uloga očituje se u zabilježenoj prisutnosti nositelja vlasti odnosno vladajućih članova elita, dok je trgovina uglavnom povezana s uvezenim predmetima pronađenim među nalazima. Do danas jedini jasan dokaz u tom smislu dolazi s nalazišta Olomouc-Povel,²⁴ gdje su pronađeni dokazi trgovinske aktivnosti uvjerljiviji od onih u velikomoravskim Mikulčicama, što je prilično iznenađujuće.²⁵

Za razliku od prethodnih dviju funkcija, dokumentiranje ostalih funkcija zahtijevalo je primjenu interpretativnog pristupa. Budući da u srednjem Podunavlju nisu građene utvrde, sigurnosna ili vojna funkcija naselja ne može se dokazati. Ipak, to je moguće objasniti time što je pod vojnom hegemonijom Avara privrženost kaganatu bila jamstvo sigurnosti. Na primjeru austrijskog Podunavlja poznato je da je avarska vojska djelovala daleko izvan granica Panonske nizine i kontrolirala teritorij sve do rijeke Ennsa.²⁶ Specijalizirana obrtnička proizvodnja koja se odvijala unutar istraživanih naselja dosad

hilltop settlements demarcate the imaginary border lines of this zone from three directions. The remaining southern boundary is marked by flat inhumation or bi-ritual burial grounds characteristic of the population of the so-called late Avar khaganate.²² However, many cremation graves or burial grounds are also located in one line with these cemeteries. The described spatial correlation documents not only the increased concentration of the population living in the cross-cultural contact zone, but also their peaceful coexistence. Additional indirect evidence of this is the habit of building lowland settlements in the open landscape without the protection of defensive structures.

Complex centres

All known lowland elite settlements show an immediate spatial connection with later Great Moravian centres. Following the principles of the established method of retrograde procedure, it is necessary to determine whether there is a causal connection that links the development of pre-Great Moravian elite settlements into complex centres in Great Moravia. As it is not necessary to locate these settlements, but only to verify whether they actually served as centres, the proper way is to assess the potential of their centrality on the basis of the functions they could fulfil.

E. Gringmuth-Dallmer posited that in the Central European conditions of the time, the complex centres were to have fulfilled the following five functions: administration; security; craft and industry; trade; and cult.²³ Directly on the basis of archaeological finds, two of these functions can be assigned to the affected settlements. The administrative role is indicated by the documented presence of holders of power – ruling members of the elite. In terms of trade, it is mostly associated with imports among the finds. To date, clear evidence in this sense comes only from the site of Olomouc-Povel.²⁴ Surprisingly, there is more convincing evidence there than for the example we have from Great Moravian Mikulčice.²⁵

In contrast to the previous two functions, it was necessary to take an explicitly interpretive approach to documenting the others. Since fortifications were

²³ Gringmuth-Dallmer 1996.

²⁴ Kočár *et al.* 2016, str. 550.

²⁵ Poláček 2007.

²⁶ Pohl 2018, str. 372–376.

²² Zábojník 1999, pp. 154–155; Zábojník 2009, p. 9.

²³ Gringmuth-Dallmer 1996.

²⁴ Kočár *et alii* 2016, p. 550.

²⁵ Poláček 2007.

je potvrđena samo na lokalitetu Olomouc-Povel,²⁷ a pretpostavlja se da se odvijala i u Mikulčicama, ali ondje je samo neizravno dokumentirana.²⁸ Nadalje, specijalizirana proizvodnja zabilježena je i na lokalitetu izvan jednog takvog naselja elita,²⁹ pa je moguće da se u tim slučajevima obrtnička proizvodnja odvijala prema načelu uslužnih naselja, koja su poznata isključivo s područja srednjoeuropskih Slavena.³⁰

Dokazivanje posljednje funkcije, one religijske, pomoću arheoloških nalaza i na temelju inventara iz povijesnih izvora, međutim, predstavlja problem. Nalazi iz srednjeg Podunavlja za koje se smatra da uvjerljivo ukazuju na centralizirani poganski kult povezuju se tek s kasnijim razdobljima.³¹ Ipak, brdo Olomouc, kao dominantno, stjenovito uzvišenje s izvorima vode iz pukotina, smješteno u blizini neotkrivenog naselja, svakako zadovoljava osnovne uvjete za ispunjavanje kultne funkcije.³²

Značajka centralnosti razmatranih naselja može se ocijeniti i na temelju njihove prostorne rasprostranjenosti. Prema W. Christallerovoj klasifikaciji triju tipova hijerarhije naselja, koji se temelje na različitim načelima, situacija u srednjem Podunavlju je u skladu s onim koji proizlazi iz transportnog principa.³³ Tri naselja ravnomjerno su pokrivala regionalni prometni koridor duž Moravske, koji se obično povezuje s dijelom tzv. jantarnog puta,³⁴ dok se četvrto naselje nalazilo na staroj ruti koja povezuje područje rijeke Nitre s područjem rijeke Morave i završava u Uherskom Hradištu.³⁵ Vrlo je vjerojatno da je ova ruta bila dio dužeg puta iz Panonske nizine koji je zaobilazio Dunav sa sjevera.

Visinska naselja

Fenomen visinskih naselja odstupa od zaključka koji je donesen na temelju ostalih sastavnica naseobinske strukture, a koji se tiče mirnog suživota sta-

not built in the Central Danubian region, the security or military function of the settlements cannot be proven. Nevertheless, a possible explanation is that, under the military hegemony of the Avars, attachment to the khaganate was a guarantee of safety. From the example of Austrian Danubian region, it is known that the Avar army operated far beyond the Carpathian Basin and controlled the territory reaching as far as the Enns River.²⁶ A specialised craft production carried out immediately at the discussed settlements has been confirmed thus far only at the Olomouc-Povel site,²⁷ and is assumed at Mikulčice, but only indirectly documented.²⁸ On the other hand, it is also documented at a site that was not located in the area of such an elite settlement.²⁹ And yet, a possible explanation still exists – the organisation of craft production based on the functioning principle of service settlements, which are known exclusively from the zone of the Central European Slavs.³⁰

Demonstrating the last of the functions – religious – by means of archaeological finds, however, is problematic based on the source inventory. In the Central Danubian region, finds thought to be convincing manifestations of a centralised pagan cult are only associated with the later period.³¹ In any case, Olomouc Hill – a dominant rocky elevation with springs of fissured water located near an uncovered settlement, definitely satisfies the prerequisites for fulfilling a cult function.³²

The character of the centrality of the discussed settlements can also be evaluated on the basis of their spatial distribution. According to the three types of settlement hierarchies distinguished by W. Christaller, that correspond to different principles, the situation in the Central Danubian region is consistent with the one resulting from the transportation principle.³³ Three settlements evenly covered the region-wide travel corridor running along Moravia commonly associated with a section of the

²⁷ Bláha 1988, str. 165.

²⁸ Kouřil 2019, str. 192.

²⁹ Macháček *et al.* 2021.

³⁰ Kučera 1970; Třeštík 2005, str. 229–236.

³¹ Budući da se značajke iz Mikulčica danas više ne smatraju relevantnima (Hladík 2010; Mazuch 2010), u razmatranje se mogu uzeti i dvije kružne građevine, odnosno njihove vidljive rupe od stupova u Břeclav-Pohanskom (Dostál 1992, str. 13–15; Macháček, Pleterski 2000, str. 12–14).

³² Šlézar 2023, str. 61–65.

³³ Christaller 1933, str. 79–81.

³⁴ Bolina *et al.* 2022.

³⁵ Cendelin, Bolina 2015, str. 249, 259.

²⁶ Pohl 2018, pp. 372–376.

²⁷ Bláha 1988, p. 165.

²⁸ Kouřil 2019, p. 192.

²⁹ Macháček *et alii* 2021.

³⁰ Kučera 1970; Třeštík 2005, pp. 229–236.

³¹ Since the features from Mikulčice are no longer regarded as relevant today (Hladík 2010; Mazuch 2010), two circular post-hole structures from Břeclav-Pohansko can be considered (Dostál 1992, pp. 13–15; Macháček, Pleterski 2000, pp. 12–14).

³² Šlézar 2023, pp. 61–65.

³³ Christaller 1933, pp. 79–81.

novništva srednjeg Podunavlja i Avara. Pisani izvori također idu u prilog mišljenjima da su ta visinska naselja možda služila kao privremena skloništa na teško pristupačnim terenima.³⁶ Nedostatak utvrda sugerira da su ova mjesta korištena intenzivno, ali kroz kraće vremensko razdoblje. Uz Franke, i Avari se smatralo prijateljom te se, u razdoblju nakon vojnog pohoda Karla Velikog na Avarski Kaganat, u pisanim izvorima više puta spominju borbe između Slavena i Avara.³⁷

Kontinuitet elite

Slika dobivena na osnovi arheoloških nalaza sugerira postojanje zasebne zone naselja u srednjem Podunavlju, kulturnu sferu s vlastitim elitama koja je tijekom 8. stoljeća bila u bliskoj vezi s Avarskim Kaganatom. Premda položaji većine velikomoravskih središta odgovaraju rezidencijama tih elita, moguća međuovisnost društvenog razvoja dvaju razdoblja mogla bi biti samo rezultat procesa koji su prethodili pokršćavanju svih Moravaca 831. godine.³⁸

C. Cioffi-Revilla definirao je stabilnu značajku procesa koji dovode do većeg stupnja društveno-političke složenosti, a njegovi modeli predloženi su prvenstveno za zajednice iz prapovijesti ili ranog povijesnog razdoblja.³⁹ Također je prepoznao obrazac koji se ponavlja, a koji uključuje poticaj situacijske promjene, potom krizu te naposljetku kolektivni odgovor zajednice koja je time pogođena. Ako su poduzeti koraci bili učinkoviti, društvo je možda pretrpjelo promjene, ali je ipak opstalo. Primjer zajednice pogođene promjenom koja međutim nije opstala u proučavanom razdoblju su Avari.⁴⁰ No, s obzirom da sličan raspad društva nema potvrdu u arheološkim nalazima u srednjem Podunavlju, možemo pretpostaviti da je tamo razvoj događaja tekao drukčije.

Vojna prisutnost Franaka u Panonskoj nizini dovela je do destabilizacije odnosa snaga unutar Avarskog Kaganata. Unatoč naporima avarskih elita da učvrste svoju moć, naposljetku i uz pomoć samih Franaka, novi vojno aktivni politički čimbenik – Slaveni – spriječio je povratak na stari poredak. Na temelju prostornog konteksta i kasnijeg razvoja,

Amber Trail,³⁴ while the fourth was situated on the old route connecting the Nitra River region with the Morava River region ending in Uherské Hradiště.³⁵ It is highly likely that it was part of a long-distance route from the Carpathian Basin bypassing the Danube from the north.

Hilltop settlements

The phenomenon of hilltop settlements stands in contrast to what we deduce on the basis of the other components of the settlement structure, the peaceful coexistence of the population of the Central Danubian region with the Avars. Written sources also support the belief that these could have been places providing temporary refuge in less accessible terrain.³⁶ The absence of fortifications could reflect the fact that the affected locations were visited in an intensive yet relatively short period of time. In addition to the Franks, the Avars are also regarded as a source of threat. In the period following Charlemagne's military campaign against the Avar khaganate, fights between Slavs and Avars are repeatedly mentioned in written sources.³⁷

Continuity of the elite

The image assembled from archaeological finds suggests the existence of a separate settlement zone, a cultural sphere with its own elites, which existed in close connection with the Avar khaganate in the Central Danubian region during the 8th century. Although the locations of most Great Moravian centres correspond to the residences of these elites, the possible interdependence of the social development of the two periods could only be the result of the processes preceding the baptism of *all Moravians* in 831.³⁸

C. Cioffi-Revilla defined the stable character of processes leading to a greater degree of social-political complexity, proposed primarily for communities from prehistory or the early historical period.³⁹ He recognised a recurring pattern involving a stimulus bringing about situational change, subsequent crisis, and collective response(s) by the affected community. If the steps taken were effective, the society may have undergone changes but nev-

³⁶ Parczewski 2005, str. 31.

³⁷ Pohl 2018, str. 387–389.

³⁸ Třeštík 2001, str. 117–121, 128–130.

³⁹ Cioffi-Revilla 2005.

⁴⁰ Daim 2003, str. 514–515.

³⁴ Bolina *et alii* 2022.

³⁵ Cendelin, Bolina 2015, pp. 249, 259.

³⁶ Parczewski 2005, p. 31.

³⁷ Pohl 2018, pp. 387–389.

³⁸ Třeštík 2001, pp. 117–121, 128–130.

³⁹ Cioffi-Revilla 2005.

jasno je da su ti Slaveni bili prvenstveno iz srednjeg Podunavlja.⁴¹ Njihove uspješne vojne operacije više govore u prilog njihovoj stabilnosti, nego što su odraz unutarnje krize koju je avarska zajednica pretrpjela. Pojava novog, neovisnog političkog čimbenika u slavenskom okruženju pretpostavljala je formiranje plemena.⁴² Ovaj razvoj događaja ugrubo bi značio da su slavenske elite, koje su do tada postojale pod avarskom vlašću, preuzele vlast nakon što je kagan ubijen bez priznatog nasljednika.⁴³ Iako se razmatra mogućnost prisutnosti drugog slavenskog plemena na ovom području, sa sigurnošću možemo govoriti jedino o Moravcima.⁴⁴

Prema teoriji C. Cioffi-Reville o nastanku složenih društava, formiranje plemena doista je omogućilo uspješnu prilagodbu, ali je očito bilo učinkovito samo u otporu protiv Avara. Ubrzo nakon toga donesena je odluka koja je nosila još veći društveni rizik, a to je prihvaćanje kršćanstva,⁴⁵ čime je poganski *gens* postao kršćanski *regnum*. Vjerojatno nije slučajnost da je pokršćavanje svih Moravaca uslijedilo nedugo nakon franačke administrativne reforme istočnih teritorija Bavarske 828. godine, kada avarska moć više nije predstavljala prijetnju.⁴⁶

Zaključak

Korijeni velikomoravskih elita sežu duboko u prethodno povijesno razdoblje. I prije nego što je pleme Moravaca uopće utemeljeno, u srednjem Podunavlju postojala je slavenska zona naseljavanja s domaćim elitama koje su djelovale pod avarskim nadzorom. Moć tih elita proizašla je iz kontrole nad prostorom kroz koji su prolazile važne i duge trgovačke rute, posebno moravski dio jantarnog puta i pravac kroz Bijele Karpate koji se s njim spajao s istoka. Te su elite bile aktivne prvenstveno u južnoj i središnjoj Moravskoj, ali i na susjednom području Donje Austrije te u jugozapadnoj Slovačkoj, područjima u neposrednoj blizini zone koju su naseljavali Avari.

Slavenske elite živjele su u neutvrđenim središtima smještenim uzduž dugih trgovačkih putova i bile su pod kontrolom avarskoga kagana (unutar

ertheless survived. An example of a community affected by change that did not survive in the studied period is the Avars.⁴⁰ But since a similar decay is not reflected in archaeological finds in the Central Danubian region, we have reason to assume the opposite development.

The military presence of the Franks in the Carpathian Basin led to the destabilisation of power relations within the Avar khaganate. Despite efforts of the Avar elites to consolidate power, eventually with the help of the Franks, a new militarily active political agent – the Slavs – prevented the return of the old order. On the basis of spatial contexts and later developments, it is clear that these Slavs were primarily from the Central Danubian region.⁴¹ Successful military operations by the Slavs speak in favour of their stability rather than the internal crisis that the community of Avars was experiencing. The arrival of a new independent political agent in the Slavic environment presupposed the constitution of a tribe.⁴² The outlined development would roughly mean that the Slavic elites, who existed until then under Avar rule, assumed power themselves after the khagan was killed without a recognised successor.⁴³ Although the presence of another Slavic tribe in this area is also considered, only the Moravians can be counted on with certainty.⁴⁴

In the sense of C. Cioffi-Revilla's theory on the emergence of complex societies, the formation of a tribe did indeed lead to a successful adaptation, but it was apparently effective only in resisting the Avars. This was soon followed by a decision associated with an even greater social risk – the adoption of Christianity,⁴⁵ and pagan *gens* was transformed into the Christian *regnum*. It is probably no coincidence that the baptism of *all Moravians* came shortly after the Franks' administrative reform of the eastern territories of Bavaria in 828, when Avar power no longer had to be reckoned with.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Pohl 2018, str. 389.

⁴² Třeštík 1997, str. 59–61.

⁴³ Pohl 2018, str. 354, 361, 387.

⁴⁴ Baláž 2016; Lysý 2014, str. 82–107; Steinhübel 2020, str. 110–114; Třeštík 2001, str. 132–135.

⁴⁵ Třeštík 2001, str. 129–130.

⁴⁶ Pohl 2018, str. 389.

⁴⁰ Daim 2003, pp. 514–515.

⁴¹ Pohl 2018, p. 389.

⁴² Třeštík 1997, pp. 59–61.

⁴³ Pohl 2018, pp. 354, 361, 387.

⁴⁴ Baláž 2016; Lysý 2014, pp. 82–107; Steinhübel 2020, pp. 110–114; Třeštík 2001, pp. 132–135.

⁴⁵ Třeštík 2001, pp. 129–130.

⁴⁶ Pohl 2018, p. 389.

dometa njegove vojske). Uz prihode od trgovine s udaljenim mjestima, ove su elitne skupine također imale pristup proizvodima lokalnih, specijaliziranih obrtnika. S obzirom na to da tijekom predvelikomoravskog razdoblja obrtničke djelatnosti općenito još nisu bile koncentrirane u središtima, pretpostavlja se da je proizvodnja bila organizirana po drukčijem modelu. Iako se smatra da su uslužna naselja osnovana najranije tijekom velikomoravskog razdoblja, ovo istraživanje sugerira mogućnost da su ona nastala i ranije. Je li možda vjerojatnije da su velikomoravski vladari došli na ideju za takvu organizaciju, unatoč tome što su živjeli u doba kada su trendovi u tom smislu bili potpuno suprotni?

Kraj avarske hegemonije bio je poticaj za formiranje nove sile u srednjem Podunavlju – plemena Moravaca. Iako je to bio uspjeh lokalnih elita, njihova moć bila je učinkovita samo dok su Avari još bili na vlasti u blizini. Ubrzo nakon reorganizacije uprave nad zemljama istočno od Ennsa biskup Passaua pokrstio je sve Moravce, a velikomoravski kršćanski *regnum* zamijenio je poganski *gens*. Elite su nastavile nastanjivati ista mjesta, ali su izvorna naselja doživjela temeljne transformacije. Tako su u svim naseljima izgrađena velika utvrđena područja, a u slučaju Olomouca i Pobedima došlo i do premještanja čitavih naselja na obližnje lokacije. Osim toga, osnovana su i nova naselja središnjeg tipa, kao što su Břeclav-Pohansko i Nitra. Ta središta postupno su se sve više naseljavala, a koncentracija obrtničke proizvodnje je rasla. Međutim, obveze stanovništva prema predstavnicima vlasti koji su boravili u središtima zadržale su se u obliku uslužnih naselja, koja su u srednjoj Europi doživjela procvat uglavnom u kasnijim fazama srednjeg vijeka.

U povijesti srednjeg Podunavlja ostaje neriješeno pitanje obreda grobnih humaka, odnosno u kojoj mjeri ovaj fenomen odražava moguće društvene promjene na tom prostoru u predvelikomoravskom razdoblju. Iako još uvijek ne možemo donijeti konačne zaključke, barem sa sigurnošću možemo reći da je riječ o fenomenu koji je neravnomjerno rasprostranjen i da se, štoviše, proteže izvan proučavanog geografskog prostora i dokumentiranog razdoblja.

Conclusion

The roots of Great Moravian elites extend deep into the previous historical period. Before the tribe of the Moravians was even constituted, there was a Slavic settlement zone in the Central Danubian region with domestic elites who were under the watchful eyes of the Avars. The standing of these elites was derived from control over the space, through which trails served as important long-distance trade routes. First and foremost, it was the Moravian section of the Amber Trail, but the route passing through the White Carpathians and connecting to it from the east was also important. These elites were active primarily in southern and central Moravia, but also in the adjacent area of Lower Austria and southwestern Slovakia located in the immediate vicinity of the zone of Avar settlement.

Slavic elites resided at unfortified centres situated along long-distance trade routes and were under the control of the Avar khagan (within range of his army). In addition to the profits from long-distance trade, these elites were also able to acquire items produced by specialised craftsmen in their domestic environment. Since during pre-Great Moravian period craft activities were generally not concentrated in the centres yet, this production must have been organised on a different principle. While service settlements are thought to have been established during the Great Moravian period at the earliest, this research suggests that service settlements might have been introduced earlier. Is it perhaps more likely that Great Moravian rulers living in an era when trends in this direction were quite the opposite came up with the idea for such invention?

The end of Avar hegemony was the impulse that led to the constitution of a new power in the Central Danubian region – the tribe of Moravians. Although a successful undertaking by the local elites, it was only effective while the Avars were still in power nearby. Shortly after the reorganisation of the administration of the lands east of the Enns, *all Moravians* were baptised by the bishop of Passau and the pagan *gens* was replaced by the Great Moravian Christian *regnum*. The elites continued to inhabit the same sites, but the original settlements underwent a fundamental transformation. Vast fortified areas were built on all of them, while in the case of Olomouc and Pobedim, there was also a translocation of settlement to a nearby location. In addition to them, central-type settlements such

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as Břeclav-Pohansko and Nitra were newly established. The centres gradually became more prominently populated settlements with concentrated craft production. However, the obligations of the population to the representatives of power residing in the centres were preserved in the form of service settlements, which thrived in Central Europe mostly during the following stages of the Middle Ages.

Remaining unresolved for now in the history of the Central Danubian region is the issue of the burial mound rite, i.e. the question of how much this phenomenon reflects possible social changes that could have taken place there during the pre-Great Moravian period. For now, we can at least say with certainty that it is a phenomenon that is spread unevenly and, moreover, one that extends beyond both the studied geographical space and the documented period.

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