

This doctoral thesis presents the study of the rural milieu in the Later Middle Ages and the Early New Ages, especially with regard to its economic and settlement aspects. As a useful source of specific information we chose enclaves of margins since they are connected with contrasting settlement situation. This contrast served us well as a starting point for a discussion of more general features.

The dissertation is divided into four parts. The first part deals with general problems of intensive agricultural exploitation of margins. In the second part, we bring forward a concrete example and discuss agricultural systems, which were employed on the enclave from the Early New Ages, namely, on the aeolian sands near Sadská (Central Bohemia). The third part is devoted to the beginnings of the medieval settlements in this particular region. This part of our research we based on written sources. The subject of the fourth part is the analysis of all relief remains represented by the deserted medieval village Kří (near Sadská) situated on the aeolian sands. It was this deserted village, together with the interest in relief remains of medieval settlements hitherto preserved in the landscape, that gave incentive to write this dissertation.

The broader temporal range of the topic was determined by two facts. Firstly, the intensive agricultural exploitation of margins is connected with the High and Later Middle Ages, particularly with the development of such socio-cultural and economic systems, which enabled peasants to put up with failures of risky agricultural strategies. Secondly, it was necessary to extend the period of interest into the Early New Ages, since only then we find enough of sufficient sources. The agricultural production was based on the same or very similar principles during the whole period of our interest. This period, however, is not considered as a static one.