

## The Early Medieval Settlement at Hrdlovka

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### Abstract

An early medieval settlement at Hrdlovka (Teplice county, Northwest Bohemia) has been investigated by means of a large-scale rescue excavation in the foreground of a brown-coal quarry in the years 1989 – 1994. The evaluation of the results has been made possible thanks to financial support from the Grant Agency of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in the years 2002 – 2004 (project no. IAA8002201).

The settlement is exceptional thanks to the preservation of the original cultural layer, a long-time settlement of the area all through the early Middle Ages, and the possibility to incorporate the settlement in the context of localities in the microregions of Lomský potok and Loučenský potok where excavations were carried out over a long period of time. From the point of view of historical topography, the settlement can be identified with the village of Dubany which was owned by the Cistercian monastery at Osek in the 13th century.

During the excavation, the method of the field research had gradually become more exact and led to the uncovering of a so-called cultural layer in a graticule, with a documentation of finds *in situ*. About a tenth of the 10-hectare area of the settlement has been researched.

The ceramic corpus divides the chronology of the settlement into six stages (marked as A-E, from early Slavonic to late hill fort) and the analysis of the ceramics suggests partial changes in the regional typology. In a broader context, the tracking of the distribution of regional ceramics leads to a hypothesis of a Czech occupation of the present-day region of Meißen in the first half of the 10th century.

The life of the settlement can be reconstructed by means of views of houses and farmsteads within one period of time; the development of its inner structure can be reconstructed for the whole time of its existence. A multiproxy approach using a selection of data provided by natural science has made it possible to observe the functional division of the areas and led to some basic reflections on the settlement's economy and its economy's development. Specialised production in a broader socio-economic context has been researched thoroughly.

The concluding considerations reflect on research methodology concerning similar early medieval settlements.