

Early medieval strongholds (fortified centres) were dominating elements in early medieval society. They usually served as multi-functional centres of political power, administration, trade, cult, military organization, etc. There were many people residing in such strongholds who did not take part on agricultural production, for example the ducal family, soldiers, and craftsmen. Strongholds played an important role in the process of the formation of early medieval Czech state in the 9th and the 10th century. The early medieval centre is assumed to have been a great consumer of food (non-productive elites), human labour (construction of fortification), raw materials (wood, iron ore), etc. The needs of early medieval strongholds are usually characterised as “very large”, but always without any proper context of comparison. It is impossible to understand the economy of a centre without a knowledge of its needs and capacity of its hinterland. The centre and its hinterland is one indivisible system, which has to be balanced.