

THE CHRISTIANISATION OF BOHEMIA AND MORAVIA *

Petr Sommer – Dušan Třeštík – Josef Žemlička – Eva Doležalová

The territory of what is now Czech Republic consists of essentially two lands, Bohemia and Moravia. Moravia was appended to the domains of the Bohemian princes shortly after 935, and definitively after 1020, but previously the two lands were independent units. It is therefore necessary to treat the Christianisation of Moravia and Bohemia as two separate chapters, even though there were intensive mutual influences between the two lands.

In the pagan era up to the ninth century the situation in Bohemia (and perhaps also in Moravia and among the Western Slavs as a whole) was characterised by a certain division of power between the people and the princes. Fundamentally, the princes were elected, and thus deposable. The Slavic princes were at first under the cultural influence of the Avar empire, then gradually came into contact with the Frankish aristocracy, which was already Christian. The Slavic princes started to be attracted by the culture of Christianity, but this culture was not yet acceptable for their people. Some princes could therefore, at the most, accept Christianity as a “private” religion. This was the first stage of Christianisation, documented more in Moravia than in Bohemia.

Very little is known of Czech paganism, because of the rapid and effective Christianisation. From the later sources it may be inferred that the Czechs had the same pantheon as other Slavs.¹ The cult relicts include, in particular, sites of pagan sacrifice, known mainly from Moravia. Two such sites have been found at Mikulčice, which was apparently the primary stronghold of the Moravians. The first site was a rectangular post enclosure with a ritual horse burial and a cemetery, in the vicinity of which various anomalies were found, such as a burial of human limbs. The enclosure was in use from the end of the eighth until at least the mid-ninth century, that is, even after the “official” conversion of

* Revised and extended version of a paper presented at the interdisciplinary workshop “Religion and State Formation – Comparative Perspectives from Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages” (Budapest, 5–7 March, 2006), organized by the Department of Medieval Studies and the Religious Studies Program of CEU), and the Center for Medieval Studies of the University of Bergen (Norway).

¹ For evidence, see: Lubor Niederle, *Život starých Slovanů: Víra a náboženství* (The life of old Slavs: Faith and Religion), (second ed., Prague: Bursík a Kohout, 1924). = *Slovanské starožitnosti* 2, No. 1.

Moravia.² The other site of non-Christian cult at Mikulčice is defined by a ring-shaped ditch in which fires used to be lit; it lies close to the buildings of Christian churches. Other pagan cult places in Moravia were found in Chotěbuz-Podbora and at Pohansko near Břeclav.³ The so-called “blessed pool” at Stará Kouřim was a pagan sanctuary in Bohemia. The multiple fire sites in this area bear witness to cult activities.⁴ In Prague, the most recent research has identified the existence of a sacred precinct, enclosed by a ditch, on the “acropolis” of the later castle.⁵ The rise was called Žiži, which may be related to burnt offerings. Of greater importance, however, was a stone throne which stood nearby and on which, until the end of the twelfth century, Czech princes were enthroned.

Other pagan cult features undeniably existed in association with cemeteries and funerary rites. However, these finds are difficult to interpret. The written sources, too, are silent on the subject of pagan cults in Bohemia and Moravia, not least because even the earliest of them come from as late as the second half of the tenth and the eleventh centuries. In these sources, references to pagan cults are vague, and mainly refer to a reverence for natural objects and sacred groves. In Bohemia there are also convincing traces of a cult of mountains.⁶

² See the articles of Zdeněk Klanica, “Mikulčice-Klášteřísko,” *Památky archeologické* 86 (1985): 474–539; “Slovanský templ, palác a kostel” (The Slavic temple, palace, and church), in *Rodná země Sborník k 100. výročí Muzejní a vlastivědné společnosti v Brně a k 60 narozeninám PhDr. Vladimíra Nekudy, CSc.* (Memorial volume to the 100th anniversary of the Museum and Homeland Studie Society in Brno and the 60th birthday of Dr. Vladimír Nekuda, Ph.D., CSc.) (Brno: Muzejní a vlasti vědná společnost v Brně, 1988), 156–167; and “Religion und Kult, ihr Reflex in archäologischen Quellen,” in *Grossmähren und die Anfänge der tschechoslowakischen Staatlichkeit*, ed. Josef Poulík and Bohuslav Chropovský (Prague: Academia, 1986), 150–152 (hereafter: Klanica, “Religion”).

³ Pavel Kouřil, *Slovanské osídlení českého Slezska* (Slavic colonisation of Czech Silesia) (Brno, Český Těšín: Archeologický ústav Akademie věd České Republiky, 1994), 71–167. For general information on Moravian “places of sacrifice,” see Zdeněk Měřinský, *České země od příchodu Slovanů po Velkou Moravu I* (The Czech lands from the arrival of Slavs up to Great Moravia I), (Prague: Libri, 2002), 531–564.

⁴ Miloš Šolle, *Stará Kouřim a projevy velkomoravské hmotné kultury v Čechách* (Old Kouřim and manifestations of Great Moravian material culture), (Prague: Academia, 1966), 136–146.

⁵ Jan Frolík, “Pražský hrad v raném středověku” (Prague castle in the early Middle Ages), in *Přemyslovský stát kolem roku 1000. Na paměť knížete Boleslava II*, ed. Luboš Polanský, Jiří Sláma, Dušan Třeštík, (Prague: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2000), 101–120.

⁶ Břetislav II in 1092 “...lucos sive arbores, quas in multis locis colebat vulgus...extirpavit... Item et supersticiosas instituciones, quas villani, adhuc semipagani...

This is related to Mount Říp, regarded as the ideal centre of the land, from which the land was occupied by the first Czech settlers. In the tenth century a church was built on the summit of the hill, evidently to Christianize the place.

Hence, the most outstanding remnants of Czech paganism are myths. These were written down and refashioned in the tenth and subsequent centuries, especially by Cosmas, a canon and deacon of the Chapter of Prague, in his *Chronica Boemorum* around 1120.⁷ A central place in Czech mythology is occupied by the story of the first prince, the divine Přemysl the Ploughman, who was called upon by the female seer (and probably also goddess) Libuše,

observabant, offerentes libamina super fontes mactabant victimas et demonibus immolabant, item... sepulturas fiebant in silvis et in campis... scenas ex gentili ritu faciebant...;” Cosmas, *Chronica Boemorum* (hereafter: Cosmas, *Chronica*) II. 1, 161. On these “scenas” see Stanisław Urbańczyk, “Ze studiów nad dawną religię Słowian (Komentarz do “Kroniki czeskiej” Kosmasa kn. III. 1)” (From studies on the old religion of the Slavs. A commentary on the *Bohemian Chronicle* by Cosmas, book III. 1), *Slavia Antiqua* 27 (1980): 191–195. The situation prior to Christianity is characterized by Cosmas in the introduction to his work as “...multi villani velut pagani, hic latices seu ignes colit, iste lucos et arbores aut lapides adorat, ille montibus sive collibus litat, alius, que ipse fecit, idola surda et muta rogat et orat, ut domum suam et se ipsum regant.” *Chronica Boemorum*, ed. Bertold Bretholz, *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum* I. 3, MGH SS rer. germ. NS 2, (Berlin, 1923), 10. The text of Cosmas is, however, compiled from Sedulius Scotus, *Carmen paschale* I, 259 and Donatus, *Commentarius ad Terentii Phormionem*, 682, which suggests it is not a testimony of facts but rather of literary education.

⁷ Recently on all of these mythical tales cf. Dušan Třeštík, “Moravský biskup roku 976” (The Moravian bishop in the year 976), in *Ad vitam et honorem. Profesoru Jaroslavu Mezníkovu přátelé a žáci k pětasedmdesátým narozeninám* (Ad vitam et honorem. To Professor Jaroslav Mezník on his 75th birthday from his friends and students), ed. Tomáš Borovský, Libor Jan and Martin Wihoda, (Brno: Matice moravská, 2003), 211–220, with bibliography. See also the following articles of Jacek Banaszkiewicz: “Königliche Karrieren von Hirten, Gärtner und Pflüger. Zu einem mittelalterlichen Erzählschema vom Erwerb der Königsherrschaft (die Sagen von Johannes Agnus, Přemysl, Ina, Wamba und Dagobert),” *Saeculum* 3/4 (1982), 265–286; “Les lieux du pouvoir dans le haut Moyen Age, in *Lieux du pouvoir au Moyen Age et à l’époque moderne*, ed. Michał Tymowski, (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1995), 11–28; *Podanie o Piaście i Popielu* (The tradition on Piast and Popiel), (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1986); *Polskie dzieje bajeczne mistrza Wincentego Kadłubka* (Polish mythical history according to Master Wincenty Kadłubek), (Wrocław: Leopoldinum, 1998); and “Slawische Sagen ‘de origine gentis.’ (al-Masudi, Nestor, Kadłubek, Kosmas) – Dioskurische Matrizen der Überlieferungen,” *Mediaevalia Historica Bohemica* 3 (1993): 29–58.

which culminated in their “sacred marriage.”⁸ The old myth was appropriated (correctly or not) in the tenth century by the dynasty of the Prague princes, claiming their descent from Přemysl.

In the second stage of Christianisation, an “official” baptism of the ruling prince took place and, through him, of the entire land. The ruling prince then imposed Christianity on his people, in most cases using force. Christianisation also meant the reorganisation of the structures of power—destruction of the old tribal institutions and construction of the state. Christianisation was thus inseparably bound to the emergence of the state. Part of the motivation on the side of the ruler (or rulers) was to make the country acceptable as a member of the society of Christian states.

The Moravians, led by their Prince Mojmir I, received “official” baptism in 831 from the hands of Reginhar, Bishop of Passau,⁹ a decision probably made by an assembly of princes. The Moravians evidently wanted to strengthen their position with respect to the Frankish Empire. Symptomatically, their baptism was seen by the Franks as a “rebellion.” Their king, Louis the German, deposed Mojmir I and set Mojmir’s nephew, Rostislav, in his place. From that time on, Moravia was under the rule of a single sovereign of Mojmir’s family.¹⁰ However, Moravian sovereigns, unlike the Přemyslids in Bohemia, the Piasts in Poland or the Árpáds in Hungary, were not “absolute” rulers: a significant role was retained by the assembly of “all Moravians.” The Moravian state came into being not by a one-sided usurpation of power by Mojmir I, but through his collaboration with the other princes.

However, Moravian Christianity was still weak. The distant bishop of Passau was only represented in Moravia by an archdeacon, and this was not enough. The composition of the clergy was heterogeneous: there were priests

⁸ “Vita et passio S. Wenczelai et S. Ludmilae, ave eius,” in *Kristiánova legenda – Legenda Christiani*, ed. Jaroslav Ludvíkovský (Prague: Vyšehrad, 1978), chapter 2, 16–18 (hereafter: Christian, *Legenda*); Cosmas, *Chronica* I, chapters 4–9, 9–22.

⁹ *Notae de episcopis Pataviensibus*, for the year 831, ed. Georg Waitz, MGH SS 25, 623: “Regenharius episcopus Matavorum baptizat omnes Moravos;” *Historia episcoporum Pataviensium et ducum Bavarie*, for the year 838,” MGH SS 25, 620: “Reinharius archiepiscopus Laureacensis et Pataviensis, apostolus Maravorum, obit;” *Bernardi Cremifarensis Historiae* for the years 813–838, MGH SS 25, 655: “Item Renharius episcopus baptizat omnes Moravos.” See also Dušan Třeštík, *Vznik Velké Moravy. Moravané, Čechové a střední Evropa v letech 781–871* (The origin of Great Moravia. Moravians, Czechs and Central Europe in the years 781–871), (Prague: Lidové Noviny, 2001), 117–118.

¹⁰ *Annales Fuldenses sive Annales regni Francorum orientalis*, ed. Friedrich Kurze, MGH SS rer. germ. 7 (Hanover, 1891), 73.



The Christianisation of Bohemia and Moravia

from Bavaria, from the area around Venice, and from Dalmatian towns.¹¹ Some historians think that this was due to activities of various missions, while others assume that the Moravians themselves actively sought priests for their churches, including the necessary equipment, books, relics, and other implements.¹² These priests of different background and custom preached differently, set differing penances, observed feasts and fasts in different ways and treated marital affairs variously. For the Christianity of the period, which needed disciplining rituals, this was unacceptable. The problem was made worse by the apoplectic stroke suffered by Bishop Hartwig of Passau in 860. The bishopric started to collapse. Therefore, the Moravian ruler, Rostislav, turned first to Rome. Having met with no success, he asked “for teachers” from Constantinople. In 863, or more likely 864 (the year is uncertain),¹³ the Byzantine Emperor Michael III sent two brothers, Constantine and Methodius. They undertook the task assigned to them by using the Slavonic language for both teaching and liturgy.¹⁴ Their task has been successfully completed by 867 and the brothers left Moravia. In Rome they managed to obtain from Pope Adrian II *a posteriori* the approval for the use of the Slavonic script and the ordination of Methodius and several of Constantine’s pupils as priests. Constantine died in Rome in 869, while Methodius was named the Archbishop of Pannonia, with a titular seat at

¹¹ Rostislav’s letter to Nicholas III (*Life of Methodius* (old Slavic), chap. 5, ed. Radoslav Večerka, in MMFH II, 134–163, esp. 144): “Many teachers—Christians—have come to us from Italy, and from Greece, and from Germany, who teach us differently. But we Slavs are a simple folk and we have no-one who would teach us truly and guide us regularly. Thus, good ruler, send such men to us who can order us rightly in all things.”

¹² It is necessary to understand that this was all very expensive, and even impossible in the under-developed Eastern Frankish Empire. When, in 867, Louis the German sent a mission to Bulgaria led by Ermanarich, Bishop of Passau, it was found that it was not possible to collect enough books or other equipment for the mission from the whole empire. Louis was forced to ask his brother Charles for help, and the latter was able, in his Western Frankish Empire, to obtain everything necessary. *Annales Bertiniani* for the year 866, 86.

¹³ Josef Cibulka, “Der Zeitpunkt der Ankunft der Brüder Konstantin-Cyrellus und Methodius in Mähren,” *Byzantinoslavica* 26 (1965): 318–364; Vojtěch Tkděčik, “Datum příchodu slovanských apoštolů na Moravu” (The date of coming of Slavic Apostles to Moravia), *Slavia* 38 (1969): 542–551.

¹⁴ Among contemporaries and in the later tradition, attention was mostly—and rightly—drawn to Constantine’s invention of a Slavonic script, ideally matching Slavonic phonetics (attempts at using vernaculars having previously faltered on the unsuitability of Latin to express the sounds of the language), and not to the fact that the two brothers wrote in and translated into the Slavonic language.

Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovica in Serbia) and the actual seat at Zalavár in Hungary. However, the Bavarian bishops, who had ancient rights to Pannonia, captured him and put him in jail somewhere in Swabia.

In the middle of the ninth century Moravia was briefly occupied by the Franks. Another Moravian prince, Svatopluk, Rostislav's nephew, ultimately emerged victorious from the conflict and was able to restore the Moravian state. In 871, immediately after coming to power, he expelled the Frankish priests and tried to restore the Moravian Church. He turned to Rome and, at his request, Pope John VIII recalled the Pannonian Archbishop Methodius from his Swabian prison. In 873, Methodius was installed as papal legate in Moravia. Moravia thus became the seat of the Archbishopric of Pannonia—a territory which Svatopluk did not hold, and a title which the Franks did not recognise. Methodius' main task was to re-establish the Moravian Church. Success came in 880, when Svatopluk received the Moravian archbishopric from Pope John VIII, with Methodius at its head. The new archbishop, however, faced opposition in the person of Wiching, Bishop of Nitra. The pretext was mainly the Slavonic liturgy. This dispute came to a head after Methodius' death in 885, when Svatopluk, tired of the incessant arguments, had all of Methodius' adherents expelled from his domains, while in the meantime the pope definitively forbade the use of the Slavonic liturgy. Methodius' students fled, to Bulgaria in particular, where they founded a new centre of Slavic education. The fate of the Moravian Church after 885 is obscure. The Moravian archbishopric was formally renewed, but it is not known whether or not the new archbishop (whose name is unknown) ever took up his office. In 906 Great Moravia collapsed under the assault of the Magyars.¹⁵ It seems that this event was followed by some kind of a pagan backlash.¹⁶

Turning to Bohemia, the first, "private" phase of Christianisation in Bohemia is unknown, while the second stage happened twice. The annals of Fulda say that fourteen Bohemian princes were baptized at Regensburg in 845. Similarly to the Moravians, they also expected that they could better avert the

¹⁵ On the date, see Dušan Třeštík, "Kdy zanikla Velká Morava?" (When did Great Moravia perish?) *Studia Mediaevalia Pragensia* 2 (1991): 7–27.

¹⁶ The only direct evidence comes from a pagan place of sacrifice at Pohansko, which was created on the ruins of the church on the site. At the end of the tenth century, the legendist Christian (*Legenda*, chapter 1, 16) claimed that the fall of Moravia was caused by the "evil" Svatopluk (Christian recognizes two of that name, the "evil" and the "good"): "membra sua, scilicet plebem populumque suum, partim Christo, partim dyabolo servire exhibuit." This meant that Svatopluk not only tolerated paganism, but also permitted the pagan cult. This is evidently not a direct Moravian tradition, but a highly distorted tradition among Methodius' pupils in Bulgaria.

pressure of the East Frankish Empire if they were baptised. Louis the German, however, attacked Christian Moravia the very next year. The disappointed Czechs reacted immediately, attacking Louis' forces as they returned from Moravia through Bohemia. This was an inglorious end to the first Czech experiment with Christianity. It remained only half completed and left no traces.

The Central Bohemian princely family of the Přemyslids finally accepted baptism with lasting impact on Great Moravia, probably in 884. This was a political baptism. After his conquest of Bohemia (in perhaps 883), the Moravian ruler, Svatopluk, chose the Central Bohemian Prince Bořivoj from among the many Bohemian princes and installed him as a kind of regent in Bohemia. Bořivoj was baptised along with his retinue. He built a church at Levý Hradec near Prague on returning home and later also a church of the Virgin at Prague Castle.¹⁷ In contrast to Moravia, the formal baptism of Bořivoj met with strong resistance in Bohemia, even among the other princes.

A decisive period of Christianisation came later, in the 890s, during the reign of Svatopluk I, who brought his father's revolution to a climax by building a kind of territorial government in Central Bohemia, resting on local strongholds.¹⁸ A church was built in each stronghold with its own archdeacon and a group of priests. A difficult problem then arose: how to obtain sufficient numbers of priests. In this respect, the collapse of Great Moravia in 906 was advantageous for Bohemian Christianity. Among the refugees from Moravia

¹⁷ Christian, *Legenda*, chapter 2, 16–24. For a detailed analysis, see Dušan Třeštík, “Bořivoj und Svatopluk. Die Entstehung des böhmischen Staates und Grossmähren,” in *Grossmähren und die Anfänge der tschechoslowakischen Staatlichkeit*, ed. Josef Poulík and Bohuslav Chropovský (Prague: Akademia, 1986), 311–344; *Počátky Přemyslovců. Vstup Čechů do dějin (530–935)* (The beginnings of the Přemyslids. The entry of Czechs into history [530–935]), (Prague: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 1997), 312–313 (hereafter: Třeštík, *Počátky Přemyslovců*). The legend *Crescente fide* (Bavarian recension) on page 183 proclaims that the first Christian prince in Bohemia was Svatopluk, Bořivoj's son, who subjugated the Přemyslid domains to the bishopric in Regensburg (without saying where and by whom he was baptised), but this is evidently a polemic of the Bavarian clergy against the domestic tradition of Bořivoj's baptism by Methodius, which the Bavarian Church did not recognize.

¹⁸ See the following articles by Jiří Sláma: “K počátkům hradske organizace v Čechách” (On the beginnings of the stronghold system in Bohemia), in *Typologie raně feudálních slovanských států* (The typology of early feudal slavic states), ed. Josef Žemlička (Prague: Ústav československých a světových dějin, 1987), 175–190 (hereafter: J. Sláma: “K počátkům”); *Střední Čechy v raném středověku III: Archeologie o počátcích přemyslovskeho státu* (Central Bohemia in the early Middle Ages III: Archaeology on the beginnings of the Přemyslid state), (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1988), 71–72 (hereafter: J. Sláma: *Střední Čechy*).

there were priests seeking safety in Bohemia. In this way, a separate Bohemian provincial Church was formed at the turn of the tenth century, without any major influence from Regensburg. Bohemia was regarded as a Christian land, but this was because the other princes acknowledged the supreme government of the Christian Přemyslids. In reality, these other princes were neither really dependent on the Přemyslids nor Christians.

The situation remained unchanged under the rule of the next two princes, Spytihněv's brother, Vratislav, and Vratislav's son, Wenceslas the Saint. Everything changed after the murder of St. Wenceslas at Stará Boleslav in 935 and the coming to power of Boleslav I. The first act of Boleslav was the elimination of the other Bohemian principalities.¹⁹ In essence this was nothing more than an extension of the network of subordinate strongholds across the whole of Bohemia. Boleslav I established about 20 churches at his new administrative centres.²⁰ The process was not a gradual one, but rather a single act of Christianisation, organised by the prince himself. We may assume that, in many aspects, this was similar to what happened in Moravia under Rostislav before the mission of Constantine and Methodius.

However, without a bishop Christianisation could not advance any further. A solution emerged when Boleslav took control over at least a part of Moravia shortly after 935. Moravia was then a devastated region, but still had its archbishopric—even if it had no archbishop, no priests and no believers. All that was needed was to restore Methodius' diocese by naming a bishop to the old and still extant Moravian see. Pope John XIII in fact received requests for three new bishoprics, two requested by Boleslav for Moravia and Prague, and the third by his brother-in-law Mieszko I for Gniezno in Poland. In 965 Mieszko took Boleslav's daughter, Dobrava, as his wife and was baptized in the following year. A bishop named Jordan appeared in Gniezno. He was, however, only a bishop by ordination and not by office. Ultimately, in 968, Jordan was appointed bishop at his seat in Gniezno, and the pope also consented to the other bishoprics, one in Prague and the other in Olomouc, the main stronghold of Přemyslid Moravia. For Bohemia this was not the end of the matter, as it was also necessary to obtain the agreement of Michael, bishop of Regensburg, and the Roman emperor. Somewhat surprisingly, the two new dioceses were made subject to Mainz and not Salzburg, as might have been expected. The two

¹⁹ *Die Sachsengeschichte des Widukind von Korvei II 3 (Widukindi monachi Corbeiensis Rerum gestarum Saxonicarum libri III)*, MGH SS rer. germ. 60, ed. Paul Hirsch, Hans and Eberhard Lohmann. (Hanover, 1935), 67–80. See Třeštík, *Počátky Přemyslovců*, 435–436, with bibliography; J. Sláma, *Střední Čechy*, 80–81, and “K počátkům,” 182–183.

²⁰ Cosmas, *Chronica* I. 22, 42.



The Christianisation of Bohemia and Moravia

bishops—in Prague, Dietmar, a monk from the Saxon monastery at Corvey, and in Moravia a bishop whose name is unknown—were ordained in January 976. The restored Moravian bishopric was not the diocese of Olomouc, but the diocese of Moravia, bearing the title of Methodius’ old see. The Moravian diocese seems not to have survived the death of its first bishop. Sometime after 983 it was taken under the administration of the second bishop of Prague, Adalbert-Vojtěch, who thus became the lord of a huge territory, stretching from the Fichtelgebirge in the west to the Bug River in the east.²¹ Adalbert then undertook extensive missionary activity comprising also the surrounding lands, especially Hungary. He placed his confidence in the grandiose project of his friend, Emperor Otto III, of incorporating Slavic and Hungarian lands into Otto’s new empire. In 982, Adalbert was elected bishop of Prague, not in Prague itself, but at the seemingly less important site of Levý Hradec, because it was the place where “Christianity began in Bohemia,” with the foundation of the very first church in Bohemian territory, established by Bořivoj after his baptism in Moravia. Another “Great Moravian” motif in this plan was the grant of the land of Bohemia to St. Peter, as Svatopluk did with Moravia in 880. This was imitated by the Polish Mieszko I in 990²² and apparently also by Stephen of Hungary.²³ In this way, the new Central European states came under the “protection” of the pope. It gave the newcomers necessary legitimacy, and made them equal to the other members of the society of Christian states and nations. In Otto’s project for a new empire, this was a bond to the papacy, while the analogous bond to the empire was to be guaranteed by the royal title of the rulers of these new states. None of these plans, however, became reality in Bohemia. The Bohemian domains fell apart at the beginning of the 990s and the project of the archbishopric was not realised, in contrast to Poland and

²¹ See also the articles by Dušan Třeštík: “Vojtěch a formování střední Evropy” (St. Adalbert in the forming of Central Europe), in *Svatý Vojtěch, Čechové a Evropa*, ed. Dušan Třeštík and Josef Žemlička (Prague: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 1998), 81–108, and “Von Svatopluk zu Boleslaw Chrobry: Die Entstehung Mitteleuropas aus der Kraft des Tatsächlichen und aus einer Idee,” in *The Neighbours of Poland in the 10th Century*, ed. Przemysław Urbańczyk (Warsaw: Polska Akademia Nauk, Instytut Archeologii i Etnologii, 2000), 111–145.

²² This is the famous *Dagome iudex*. On Adalbert’s involvement in this affair see Charlotte Warnke, “Ursachen und Voraussetzungen der Schenkung Polens an den heiligen Petrus,” in *Europa Slavica – Europa Orientalis. Festschrift für Herbert Ludat zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Klaus-Detlev Grothusen and Klaus Zernack (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1980), 127–177.

²³ *Das Register Gregors VII*, II, 13, ed. Erich Caspar, MGH Epistolae selectae 2 (second ed., 1955), 145.

Hungary, which obtained their first archbishoprics in the year 1000. The project only survived as a political idea, and the Czech Lands had to wait for their archdiocese until as late as 1344.

Evidence for the Christianisation process comes not just from the written record but also from archaeological findings. For Moravia prior to the baptism of the ruler, that is, before 831, several sacred structures (for example at Modrá near Velehrad),²⁴ are considered to bear witness to the first private contacts with Christianity. For the ninth century, the evidence comes, in particular, from jewellery bearing Christian symbols (for example, belt end-pieces in the shape of ecclesiastical codices from Mikulčice and Pohansko), from items with Christian imagery (for example, an end-piece depicting a bishop), from items directly related to the Christian cult (for example, a silver cross from the cemetery at Mikulčice), and from new sacred buildings. Some of these artefacts may have appeared in Moravia and Slovakia as early as the first third of the ninth century.

The arrival of Christianity in the lands of the Great Moravian Empire was associated with influences from the Salzburg archdiocese and its suffragan bishoprics in Passau and Regensburg. Evidence supporting this also comes from archaeological finds, such as a necklace with lead missionary crosses of Passau provenience from the cemetery at Dolní Věstonice.²⁵ Another influence came from the patriarchate of Aquileia, reflected in particular in a number of Great Moravian ecclesiastical structures. The same influences were also characteristic of Great Moravian Christianity at the time of Constantine and Methodius.

In Bohemia, the situation is less well documented. Among the earliest evidence for local contacts with Christianity are the grave goods from a princely grave in Kolín, which amongst other things, include a Carolingian liturgical chalice—perhaps a baptismal gift.²⁶ Jewellery bearing the symbol of the cross was discovered in the cemetery at Prague Castle.²⁷ It was made in Bohemian domestic workshops but was influenced by Great Moravia.

The church buildings erected in the Great Moravian Empire and in Bohemia during the ninth century were generally simple round or rectangular structures. Logically, they are encountered exclusively at sites that played an

²⁴ On the dating, see Klanica, “Religion,” 138–139.

²⁵ Klanica, “Religion,” 149.

²⁶ Michal Lutovský, “Kolínský knížecí hrob: ad fontes” (The princely grave in Kolín: *ad fontes*), *Sborník Národního muzea v Praze, řada A – Historie* 48 (1994): 37–76.

²⁷ Karel Sklenář and Jiří Sláma, “Nález slovanských kostrových hrobů v bývalé Královské zahradě Pražského hradu v roce 1837” (The find of Slavic skeleton burials in the former Royal Garden of Prague castle in 1837), *Archeologické rozhledy* 28 (1976): 659–665, 720.



The Christianisation of Bohemia and Moravia

important role in the administration and organisation of the lands concerned. Excavations made on Great Moravian sites over the last fifty years have unearthed a series of structures at Mikulčice, Staré Město, Pohansko and Modrá near Velehrad. The earlier suggestion that a contribution to the building of these structures was made by Scottish/Irish missionaries has not been confirmed. There were southern cultural influences associated with the appearance of the church complex at Sady near Uherské Hradiště and with the Great Moravian rotunda and church no. 10 at Mikulčice. Great Moravian church buildings became, at least initially, an inspiration for the creation of sacred structures in Bohemia, for example, at Levý Hradec, Prague Castle, and Budeč.

The last aspect to be mentioned here is the relation between the ruler and the Church. It seems evident that the initiative in Christianisation was taken by the local rulers, both in Moravia and in Bohemia. This is the reason why the position of Church dignitaries, whether archdeacons or bishops, was so subordinate. The established opinion of historians is that local Church dignitaries were rather officers of the prince or of local stronghold stewards. The system of state and Church administration was based on a network of strongholds. It developed in Moravia and was also applied in Bohemia. It was not the Church that could have created such a system, but the ruler, who employed priests in his “secular” administration. The archdeacon of each stronghold was effectively subject to the local stronghold steward.²⁸ On a higher level, the local bishop was, to a great extent, a chaplain to the prince. The bishop’s tithes initially came not from the believers, but from the prince’s chamber. It was the prince himself, and not the bishop, who founded churches in the strongholds, allotted priests to them, and ensured that the latter had means of support and liturgical books. Continuing research into the history of Church in the Czech lands will shed new light on this picture.

²⁸ Josef Žemlička, *Čechy v době knížecí (1034–1198)* (Bohemia in the era of princes [1034–1198]), (Prague: Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, 1997), 180.