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Review of dissertation by dr. Rudolf Procházka “Hrad Přerov v raném středověku (9.-11. století) a počátky mladohradištní hmotné kultury”, Archeologický ústav AV ČR, Brno, Brno 2017 (= Spisy Archeologického ústavu AV ČR Brno 54), 547 s., ISBN 978-80-7524-002-6

Dr Rudolf Procházka, a long-time member of the Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, is a well-known researcher of the early Middle Ages of Central Europe. He is appreciated for his numerous important publications, active participation in international scientific conferences, and involvement in numerous excavations.

He was both the director of many fieldworks and, later on, the desired consultant for them. One of the results of his publishing activity is the work under review.

The publication reviewed is 547 pages long (including about 370 by Rudolf Procházka) and is a comprehensive study of valuable excavation sources acquired during the 1984-1987 excavations in Přerov (excavations led by Čeněk Staňa) and later. The remains of an early medieval stronghold dating from the 10th to the 11th century were discovered.

The work has a structure typical for the archaeological site monographs. It is divided into 18 chapters.

After a short introduction and overview of the natural environment of the investigated region (ch. 1 and 2), the author presents the history and methods of research on the site (ch. 3 and 4). The information contained in the chapters on the history of the research allows the reader to understand how difficult the work was for the author due to the slightly different methodology of the excavations at that time and the fragmentary character of the documentation he analysed.

Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the numerous stratigraphic units discovered during the excavations at Horní náměstí, Nos. 8 and 9. In the case of some of these excavations (chapter 5), an additional difficulty was posed because the building works carried out there contributed to the destruction of

most of the layers from the younger phase of the early Middle Ages. Only the lower part of settlement layers from the first half of the 11th century, and layers from older phases survived (p. 20).

While working out the former research results, the author had to cope with the problems of identifying stratigraphic units and monuments described in the documentation. The result of this painstaking work is the list of stratigraphic units included at the end of the chapter. This seemingly modest catalogue consists of a table occupying as many as 20 pages (pp. 45-65) and the Harris matrix presented on page 24. Only those researchers who were forced to analyse and publish archaeological materials from past research can appreciate the immensity of the author's effort, which resulted in many important conclusions for the current state of knowledge on the early Middle Ages of Central Europe.

Rudolf Procházka did similar work for the excavations on the Horní namestí 21 plot (chapter 6). Here, too, despite the difficulty of synchronising the layers associated with the rampart structures discovered there, the author handled himself excellently, resulting in a description of the stratigraphic units (6.4) on pages 77-88.

The author's final assessment of the traces of settlement from the 2nd half of the 9th and the first half of the 10th century is that they are of low intensity, but he rightly points out that further research is needed to identify this horizon. In chapter 10, concerning the period from the end of the 10th to the first half of the 11th century, more attention was paid to the discovered fortifications whose wooden beams have been preserved in relatively good condition. According to Rudolf Procházka, the fortifications of Přerov are qualitatively comparable to the defences of the Polish strongholds of the 10th-12th centuries and the hypothetical reconstruction of the stronghold area (1.3 ha) makes it possible to categorise it as one of the largest Piast strongholds of that time.

After a short presentation of the methods of analysing pottery (Chapter 7), the author analysed the finds from each chronological phase (Chapters 8, 9, 10).

Despite the difficulties in synchronising layers and finds, the author presents a coherent analysis of the pottery, the most numerous archaeological finds occurring on early medieval sites. The author's significant experience and knowledge of the early medieval period material sources were confirmed in the chapters devoted to the contextual typological and chronological analysis of ceramic

and portable finds (Chapters 8 and 10). The comparative analyses, which constitute a significant part of the reflections on ceramics, ideally allow us to understand the technological transformations during this period.

In his research on early medieval ceramics, the author extensively uses the experience of other researchers, both Polish, mainly Paweł Rzeźnik (classification of the form of vessels) and Czech, in the person of Jiří Mahaček (classification of decoration of vessels). However, he applies the achievements of his colleagues originally and creatively. He briefly describes his methodological approach to ceramic analysis in Chapter 7. In my opinion, this is a reasonable approach from the point of view of an attempt to organise the ceramic material and an attempt to evaluate and reconstruct the trends of changes in ceramics that occurred during the Early Middle Ages. The analytical parts of the chapter on ceramics, in which the author compares the studied collections with collections from other Czech sites, demonstrate his excellent orientation towards the problems of early medieval ceramics (pp. 96-113).

The analysis of the pottery assemblage was undoubtedly complicated due to its high degree of fragmentation (page 91). Despite that, it has to be said that both in the middle and younger phase, it is a very detailed analysis with numerous references to analogous finds from other sites in Moravia, Bohemia, Silesia and Central Europe.

The author did an impressive job in this respect. As in the case of the detailed analysis of stratigraphic units, which resulted in the catalogue of layers, so in the case of movable finds, we can see the accuracy of the author's analytical work, who, demonstrating an excellent knowledge of the literature, presents his conclusions precisely and convincingly. Finally, the whole extensive passus devoted to the comparative analysis of early medieval ceramics from the most extensively studied sites of Central Europe is an excellent compendium of knowledge on the Early Middle Ages in this region, which, if expanded with appropriate illustrations, could form a separate, excellent work.

The excursus on the interpretation of movable sources in the context of the everyday life of the stronghold inhabitants is also very interesting (10.5).

Chapter 11 summarises the research on the early medieval agglomeration of Přerov. It results, among other things, in Figures 91 and 92, which summarise the results of carefully conducted research

concerning archaeological research into the early medieval period in Přerov and its surroundings to date.

Chapter 12 is the chapter in which the author tries to define the role of the Přerov stronghold in the process of political development of early medieval Europe. Without going into the details of the arguments based on written and archaeological sources concerning the political situation of Moravia and Silesia at that time, it is worth emphasising that this part of the work is a great pleasure to read, recovering one's breath after the necessary, but complicated analyses of the pottery or stratigraphy. This subchapter confirms the author's excellent orientation in the state of archaeological and historical discussion. The result of these considerations is chapter 13 devoted to the Polish episode in the history of the early Middle Ages of this region as visible in the archaeological sources discovered in the area of northern Moravia and the Přerov stronghold itself.

The work ends with an English résumé and an extensive list of the literature used, and a list of illustrations and their authors.

An essential part of the work is also the appendices presenting the natural analyses of the finds, which, however, are already authored by other researchers. In part, numbered 18, Rudolf Procházka just explained in detail the system of pottery description and the criteria applied in the analysis, which became the basis for the interpretation (pp. 361-367).

The reviewed volume is undoubtedly a long-awaited publication of interesting archaeological materials from the Přerov stronghold known only from occasional articles. Assessing the work from the methodological point of view and in terms of formal criteria, I consider the methods applied by the author to be fully adequate to the analysed material.

Rudolf Procházka is one of the leading experts on medieval monuments in Moravia as well as Central Europe. The issues dealt with in his publication are undoubtedly crucial in the current discussion of the political and economic history of Central Europe at the turn of the first and second millennium after the birth of Christ.

The structure of the work is precise and logical. The basic problem of the work is presented clearly. We receive a detailed publication of research results in descriptions and comparative analysis of stratigraphic units and the mobile sources discovered in them, which was not easy due to the

condition of old documentation and the methods applied at that time. Thanks to the author, it was possible to recover these seemingly lost data for science and interpret them successfully. This definitive study of the historical materials will long remain a point of reference for researchers of the early Middle Ages of Central Europe.

The candidate for habilitation is very well informed in the literature of the subject, both Czech and international. In my opinion, this is a world-class scientific work and undoubtedly meets the standards expected of a habilitation thesis.

In positively evaluating the publication, I cannot forget to mention the substantial scientific output of Rudolf Procházka, his excellent experience in field research and the positive results of his conducted projects. He is undoubtedly a very hard-working and distinguished researcher of the early Middle Ages of Central Europe and, as such, undoubtedly deserves to be acknowledged for his enormous output.

Considering the above, I find the publication presented for review as a work that meet the standard requirements placed on habilitation thesis in the field.

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