

TWO CAROLINGIAN STRAP-ENDS ON EXHIBITION IN ŽELIEZOVCE (OKR. LEVICE / SK)

The Mestské múzeum a pamätná izba Franza Schuberta (Municipal Museum and Franz Schubert Memorial Chamber) in Želiezovce (okr. Levice/SK) in southern Slovakia has, besides memorabilia relating to Schubert and the Esterházy de Galantha family, an abundant collection of archaeological and numismatic finds originating mainly from the vicinity of the town. In 2015, several new artefacts were added to the collection, including two early medieval strap-ends. The aim of this paper is to present the items and to conduct a chronological and typological analysis.

DESCRIPTION

According to the information obtained from the finder, the two items were discovered close to each other (about 20m apart) in a field located to the west of Želiezovce (**fig. 1**). The larger fitting resembles a shield and is 4.1 cm × 2.4 cm in dimension (**figs 2, 1; 3, 1**). It is made of bronze¹, and the decorative element on the front was made with the chip-carving technique. The ornament consists of two symmetrical floral vines stemming from a single point. The obverse of the fitting is gilded. The reverse side is undecorated and not covered with gold. Typologically, the fitting could relate to Class B-4 of Carolingian type strap-ends, which includes U-shaped items². The fitting was secured using four rivets, now missing, unfortunately. The upper right corner is broken. There is also another damage, for example, numerous fissures and scratches, mainly on the reverse side of the plate.

The smaller fitting is 2.3 cm × 1.1 cm (**figs 2, 2; 3, 2**). It is rectangular with rounded corners and has a decorated tip with an inset. It is made of gilded bronze³, and both sides of the item are gilded. The ornament consists of numerous etchings and six openings. It resembles the folded wings of a bird seen from above. The fitting was secured using two (preserved) bronze rivets and, from the bottom, a copper plate. Typologically, the fitting could belong to Class A-1 fittings with an inset⁴.

TYOLOGY AND CHRONOLOGY

The two fittings from Želiezovce were the decorated ends of small straps – pieces of equipment and attire typical of Frankish (Carolingian) nobility and warriors⁵. Before Carolingian military fashion came to Middle Europe at the turn of the 8th and 9th century, Slavic elites had occasionally used single Avar (or Byzantine but obtained via the Avars) fittings to decorate their belts or other straps, but not in such a rich, luscious manner like the Avars themselves⁶. Cultural, political, and military expansion (accompanied by the conversion to Christianity) of the Carolingian Empire to the east since the end of the 8th century brought western fashion to the territories inhabited by the Slavs. Elements such as strap decorations were then adopted by the local cultures and introduced so enthusiastically into the local milieu that in some areas they gradually became familiar pieces of male attire⁷. Strap fittings that are mimicking Carolingian originals found in archaeological assemblages are thought to be one of the distinctive features of the Great Moravian culture⁸. The Great

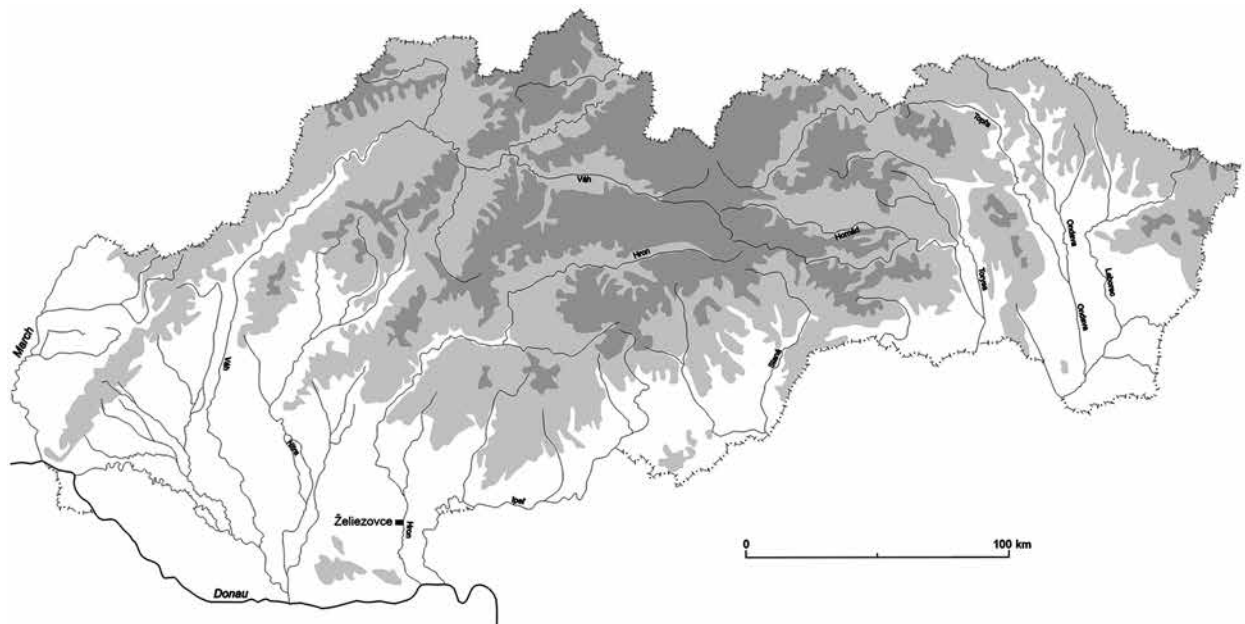


Fig. 1 Location of the town of Želiezovce (okr. Levice/SK). – ● approximate location of the finds. – (Map source Archeologický ústav SAV, Map © 2017 Google; elaborated by Z. Robak).



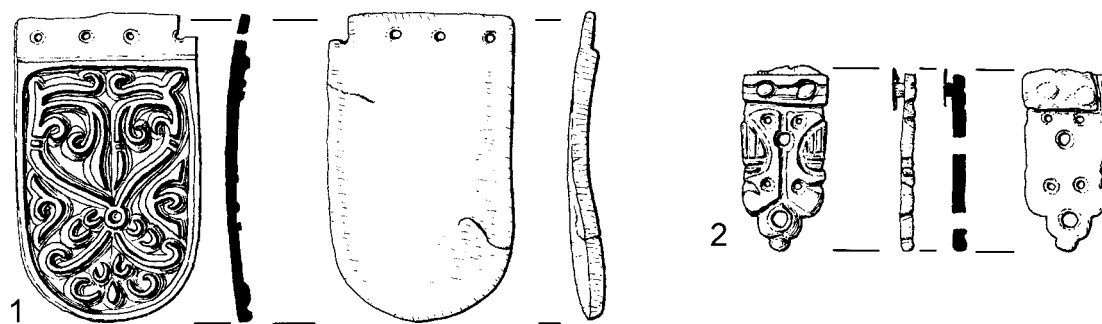


Fig. 3 The fittings from Želiezovce (okr. Levice/SK). – 1-2 gilded bronze. – (Drawings Ž. Nagyová). – Scale 1:1.

Moravians had the custom of depositing items in skeletal burials; consequently, finds of archaeological assemblages containing artefacts (such as strap fittings) associated with that culture have become a good source of evidence that can be used to support theories relating to the research on Carolingian type strap fittings⁹.

There is little doubt as to the chronology and origins of the larger fitting. It is a typical example of a U-shaped strap-end (Class B-4) decorated with the Carolingian plant style generally used in Western European stylistics during the 9th century. The plant style can be traced back to the commencement of the construction of the Palace Chapel in Aachen, in around 786-787¹⁰, and the creation of the Godescalc Evangelistary in about 781, although its mature form is associated with the reign of Louis the Pious¹¹. The main decorative motifs applied in the Carolingian plant style included palmettes, rosettes, acanthus leaves and stems, lilies, and all kinds of tendrils, particularly vines. The early plant style phase, especially at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries, is characterised by a perceptible dualism. This could still be observed in the first quarter of the 9th century – more or less up until the time the acanthus stem motif became popular in the mid-third of the 9th century. Some unique richly decorated items were ornamented with realistic plant motifs and were often copies of those used in architectural details or illuminated manuscripts¹². Interestingly, the earliest examples of this variation are only found among items thought to be small pieces of art manufactured in workshops and scriptoria associated with the court of Charles the Great. These include pyxides, reliquaries, and luxury objects¹³. Other small craft items evolved alongside, but most of them, either out of necessity or insufficient technical or artistic skills, were simpler and cheaper although still responded to customers' demand. These were copies of common simple motifs such as chip-carved hooked volutes¹⁴.

The strap-end from Želiezovce is of a high quality, as is evident in the diligence with which it was made and the realism and precision of the plant ornament, and therefore, it seems appropriate to establish whether any similar objects exist among comparable luxury items. One such example is a series of strap fittings decorated with plant motifs including pieces found in graves 190/50 and 223/51 in Staré Město (okr. Uherské Hradiště/CZ), grave 22 in Modrá (okr. Uherské Hradiště/CZ), and grave 120 in Stará Kouřim (okr. Kolín/CZ)¹⁵. Fittings decorated with an almost identical pattern were discovered in grave 55 at Stará Kouřim (figs 4; 5, 1)¹⁶. These and trapezoidal buckles are most probably elements from puttees. In addition, the grave contained the remains of iron plate spurs with side rivets, as well as matching iron buckles, a sword, an incomplete sword set with a trefoil fitting and a flagpole ferrule, a knife, and a small bucket.

Fig. 2 The fittings from Želiezovce (okr. Levice/SK). – 1-2 gilded bronze. – (Photos P. Polka; elaborated by Z. Robak). – Scale 2:1.

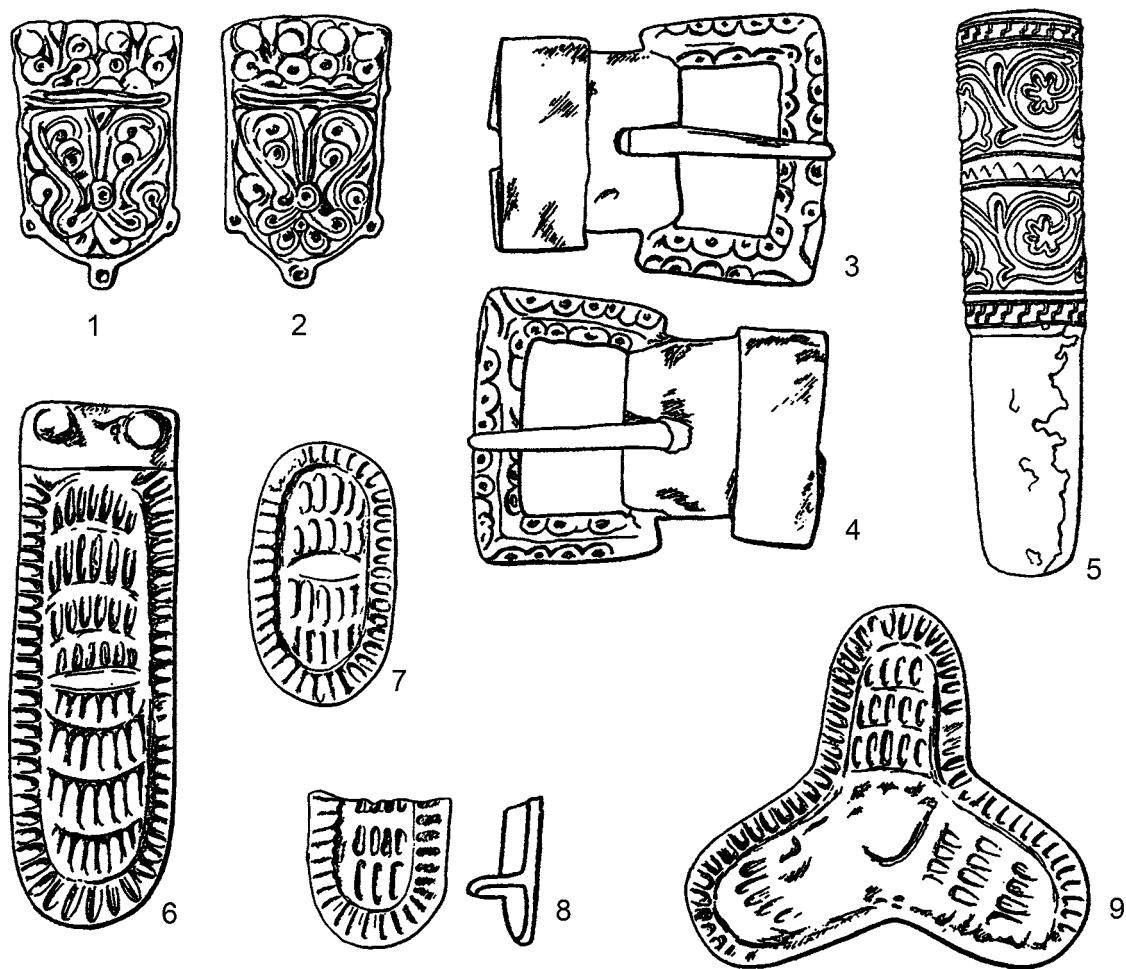


Fig. 4 Stará Kouřim, grave 55 (okr. Kolín/CZ): **1-4** puttees. – **5** flagpole bottom ferrule. – **6-9** sword belt set. – 1-5 gilded bronze. – (After Profantová 2011, fig. 10; scale corrected). – 1-4. 6-9 scale 1:1; 5 scale 1:2.



Fig. 5 Stará Kouřim (okr. Kolín/CZ). Gilded bronze fittings: **1** grave 55. – **2** *suburbium*. – (After Wamers 2005, 170; Profantová 2016b, fig. 4, 7). – Scale 1:1.

A strap fitting of a different type, but decorated with a similar motif, was found in the *suburbium* at Stará Kouřim (fig. 5, 2)¹⁷.

The elite grave at Stará Kouřim is one of the earliest skeletal graves in this burial ground and dates back to around the mid-9th century¹⁸. It contained only Carolingian items¹⁹. Their stylistic and typological features (U-shaped fittings, trapezoidal buckle frames) suggest that they may date back to the first half of the 9th century, perhaps the second quarter²⁰. It was at that time when large U-shaped strap-ends and sword sets with a trefoil fitting started to gain popularity among Carolingian elites. Ultimately, these artefacts

would replace the relatively small fittings decorated in the Tassilo Chalice Style (or a related style) characteristic particularly of the last third of the 8th century and the initial two or three decades of the 9th century²¹. Around that time the characteristic decoration used on fittings – small insets located at the tip of the item – also disappeared. Traces of it can still be seen on the fittings from Stará Kouřim, allowing us to place them in the period when the fashion for fittings with an inset was gradually disappearing. The similarities between the artefact from Želiezovce and the fittings from Stará Kouřim leave us in no doubt that this item should be dated as having been made in the first half of the 9th century, possibly the second quarter.

The second (smaller) strap-end from Želiezovce is also typical of a group of items belonging to the Carolingian culture. It is a small narrow strap-end that has a characteristic inset and was possibly used to fasten a spur. Chronologically, the type of narrow Carolingian strap-ends decorated with an inset (Class A-1), including the smaller exemplar from Želiezovce, is directly linked to the chronology of the Tassilo Chalice Style. Small strap fittings make up half of all the strap fittings decorated in this style, and belong to the largest typological family of all items in this style²². Moreover, fittings decorated in the Tassilo Chalice Style account for half of all the known exemplars that contain an inset²³. Such fittings were linked not only with this style; this form was used for popular items that had been in use earlier, around the mid-8th century and also later when the Tassilo Chalice Style was no longer fashionable. Narrow strap-ends decorated with an inset reached their greatest popularity in the Carolingian Empire, in the second half of the 8th century and at the beginning of the 9th century. Although it is possible that they were still in use in the first third of the 9th century and remained during the first half of the 9th century²⁴. The youngest examples of narrow strap fittings with an inset, however, bear traces of the early plant style²⁵, which was most likely a consequence of new decorative patterns being applied to the type of decoration commonly used at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries. Occasionally, insets are found on typologically younger, large U-shaped fittings (such as the item from Stará Kouřim and a fitting from grave 618 in Birka [Stockholm län/S]²⁶), but generally, the tendency to decorate strap fittings with an inset disappeared along with the Tassilo Chalice Style and the popularisation of the plant style.

However, compared to the most fittings with an inset, the exemplar from Želiezovce is far from typical. The first anomaly is the form of openwork, not commonly found in the Carolingian strap fitting styles – either from the early or late Carolingian periods – but in one-off examples. The second is that the ornament cannot be directly classified as either plant or animal. It has proved difficult to find other similar items that match the distinctiveness of the decorative method. Only three of the thousands of various Carolingian strap fittings described in the literature appear to be stylistically consistent with the artefact analysed here. The first one is a strap fitting from Ollendorf (Lkr. Sömmerda/D)²⁷, decorated with openwork and Tassilo Chalice Style motifs. The second is a strap-end from Domburg (prov. Zeeland/NL) decorated with an openwork inset²⁸. The third is close to a small strap-end found in the remains of a metallurgical workshop at the monastery of Corvey (Kr. Höxter/D; **fig. 6, 1**)²⁹. Similar to the fitting from Želiezovce, its obverse side is decorated with symmetrically arranged etches depicting wings or leaves. The middle part is additionally decorated with small openings. Also the method of fastening the fitting to a strap – with two rivets – is similar. The assemblage contained another small strap-end similarly decorated with openwork, but without an inset (**fig. 6, 2**).

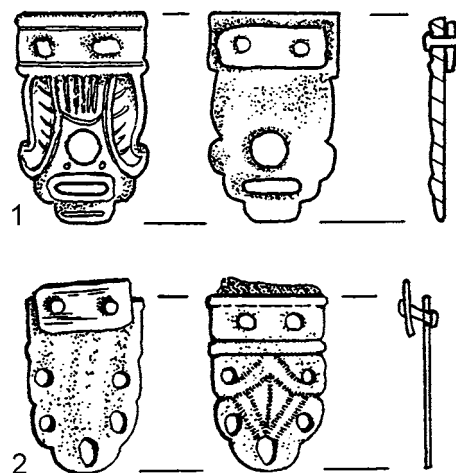


Fig. 6 Corvey (Kr. Höxter/D). Two strap-ends (1-2). – (After Stephan 1994, fig. 8, 2-3). – Scale 1:1.



Fig. 7 Stuttgart Psalter (c. 820-830), fol. 72r: Image of a warrior heading to the city (cf. Ps. 60: 11). Magnifications show two strap-ends. – (Source CC-BY-SA © Württembergische Landesbibliothek Stuttgart, <http://digital.wlb-stuttgart.de>; Cod. bibl. fol. 23).

The Corvey finds are important indicators of the chronology of the fitting from Želiezovce and of the chronology of Carolingian fittings with insets generally, because we know the exact dates when the Nova Corbeia abbey was located in Villa Huxori³⁰, and therefore we can assume that the workshop was not established before 822. And although we cannot be sure that the workshop did not exist before the abbey was built, other finds from this complex confirm links to the first half of the 9th century³¹.

The fittings discovered in the workshop in Corvey served as scrap material for recasting³². The presence of the rivets and the plate fastening the strap leave no doubt that the items were not new or produced locally and that they were no longer in use. Therefore, it is impossible to determine whether such objects were still commonly used (as decoration) when the workshop was in operation. But it proves that in the first half of the 9th century they were still being used, at least as valuable recycling materials. A similar hypothesis concerning items decorated in the Tassilo Chalice Style has been put forward by E. Wamers³³, and it may explain the presence of similar relics in Viking burials in Scandinavia. This dating appears to be correct, because – as already mentioned – the previous belief that small fittings with an inset (in some ways similar to the overlapping set of items decorated using the Tassilo Chalice Style) were no longer in use at the end of the 8th century has now largely been replaced by the theory that they were still in use in the first third of the 9th century³⁴. The stylistic and typological features of the smaller fitting from Želiezovce could be dated to the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries or the first third of the 9th century. Consequently, we are dealing with a relatively late example of a Class A-1 fitting. It seems quite likely that such items were still used as material resources until the end of the first half of the 9th century.

But a question still remains: could both these stylistically different fittings have been used simultaneously or even have come from a single set? The dating of both artefacts based on their typology strongly supports the latter hypothesis. But a far more convincing explanation is found in the Stuttgart Psalter (fol. 14r), which features identical types of fittings used as the components of a horse's harness (**fig. 7**). The Psalter dates back to around 820-830 and its illustrations faithfully depict contemporary Frankish weaponry, and therefore further support the chronology of the items given above. If the information provided by the finder is correct, the two fittings could be elements of a single set or have been deposited in a grave later destroyed.

THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

We know of more than 80 examples of different variations of fittings with an inset (cf. **annexe**) from Europe³⁵. Half of these come from the territories of the Carolingian Empire. A significant concentration of such finds has also been recorded in Slovenia and Croatia, where they have been discovered in several elite burials linked to the older phase of the Biskupija-Crkvina Horizon.

The archaeological knowledge on the Carolingian culture would suggest that there is a connection between the number of such artefacts found and areas where an intense military or political activity has been recorded. A similar observation can be made regarding other categories of early Carolingian finds, for example, various items decorated in the Tassilo Chalice Style (including many fittings with an inset) or in the early plant style, and generally early Carolingian swords and eyelet spurs in which fittings with an inset were fastening components³⁶.

Even a cursory glance at the map clearly indicates that strap fittings with insets from the eastern borderlands of the Carolingian Empire and outside were found in areas where Carolingian troops were operated in the last third of the 8th century and the first two to three decades of the 9th century (**figs 8-9**). This also applies to areas belonging to the Obotrites and Croats who at that time accepted the Frankish authority and cooperated with the Carolingian army³⁷.

The image obtained from the archaeological evidence fits in with the historical knowledge of the political and military expansion of the Carolingian Empire at the end of the 8th century and the first third of the 9th century (**fig. 9**). The flow of early Carolingian imports into Southern Pannonia and Dalmatia is clearly associated with the onset of the war against the Avars in 788 (or in 791 to be precise), as well as conflicts with the Slavs inhabiting Southern Pannonia, and the rivalry with Byzantium over the dominance of the Adriatic region and in the Balkans. The concentration of weapons and armaments (but also liturgical objects) of the early Carolingian type found in what is now Slovenia, Slavonia, and Croatia is directly linked to the fact that these territories were part of the sphere of influence of the Carolingian Empire³⁸ and that Carolingian troops were present there in around 800. We should, therefore, assume that this was not merely a temporary incursion, but rather the permanent presence of a small body of troops, Carolingian officials, and church officials who controlled these areas³⁹. Often weaponry and elements of the equestrian equipment were exchanged between representatives of the elites⁴⁰ as ceremonial gifts. It seems likely, then, that Carolingian fashion and customs quickly became popular among the local nobility and warriors. Adopting Carolingian methods of indicating social status would increase their chances of being accepted by their Carolingian counterparts. The graves in the church in Biskupija-Crkvina (Šibenik-Knin/HR), although rich in Carolingian type decorations and weapons, are most likely to be the burials of members of the local elites and not of Carolingian officials⁴¹.

The fact that early Carolingian artefacts have been found in the Bohemian Basin probably reflects the political situation and cultural development of the Bohemian tribes at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries. The presence of large groups of Carolingian troops in the Bohemian Basin can be traced back to 791 (the Avar wars) and also to 805 and 806, when the Franks subordinated the Bohemian tribes⁴². One can assume that during battles, a considerable number of Carolingian type military items⁴³ were brought into the Bohemian Basin, although we have no reason to believe that any of the Carolingian troops stayed there permanently. Unfortunately, we do not know whether these relatively large quantities of Carolingian elements of equestrian attire ended up there as a consequence of a military action or whether at the beginning of the 9th century the Bohemian elites already favoured the Carolingian military fashion or simply adopted useful and attractive elements of the equipment that fell into their hands. The archaeological knowledge is incomplete because skeletal graves did not become customary in the Bohemian Basin until the mid-9th century. How-

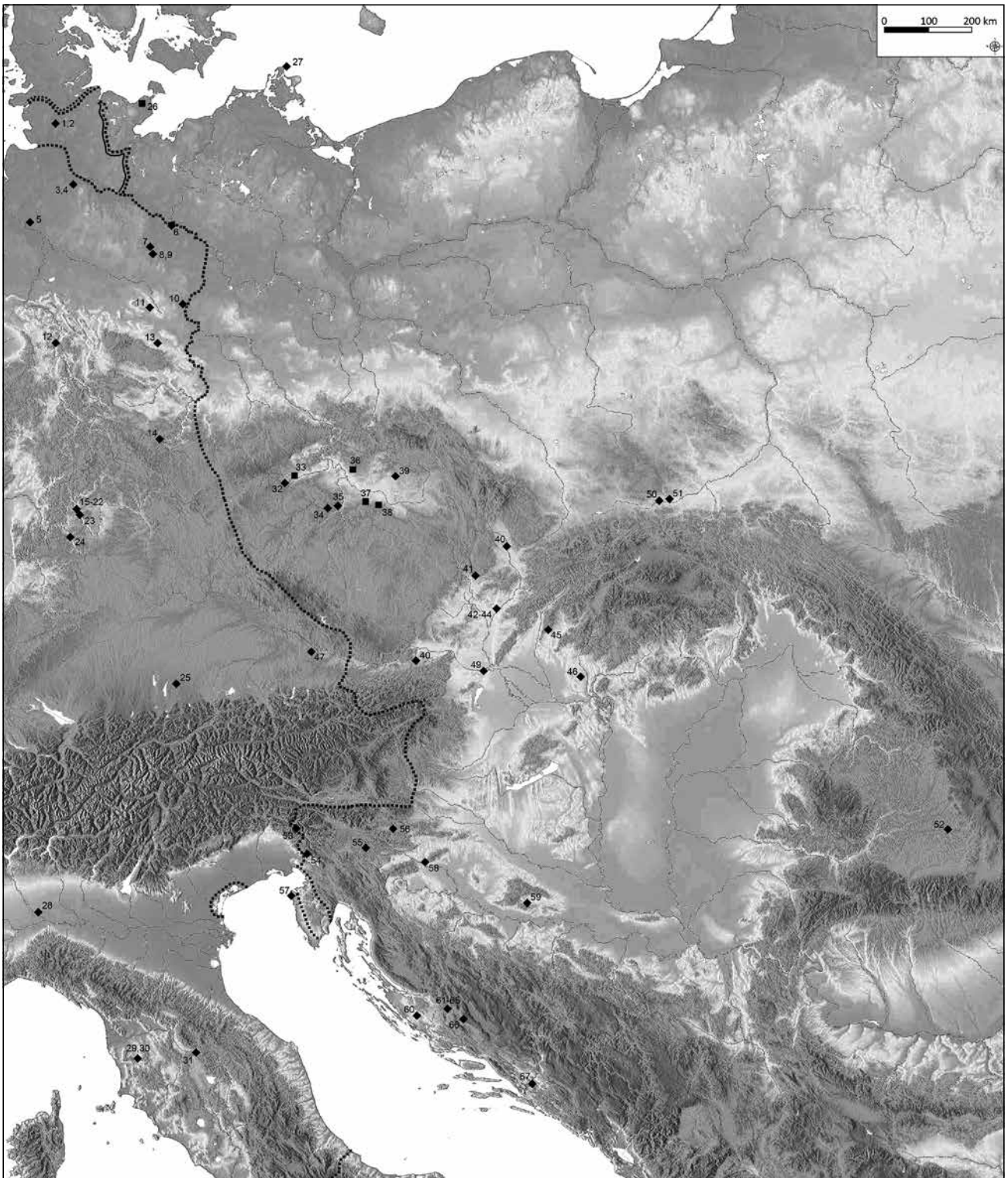


Fig. 8 Finds of Carolingian strap-ends with an inset from the Slavic territories and eastern parts of the Carolingian Empire. – ◆ early Carolingian strap-ends with an inset; ■ fittings of a late Carolingian type with an inset as an archaic element; xxx eastern border of the Carolingian Empire in 790/791; xxx *limes Saxoniae*. – Numbers see **annexe**; numbers 68-90 are not included on the map. – (Map Z. Robak).

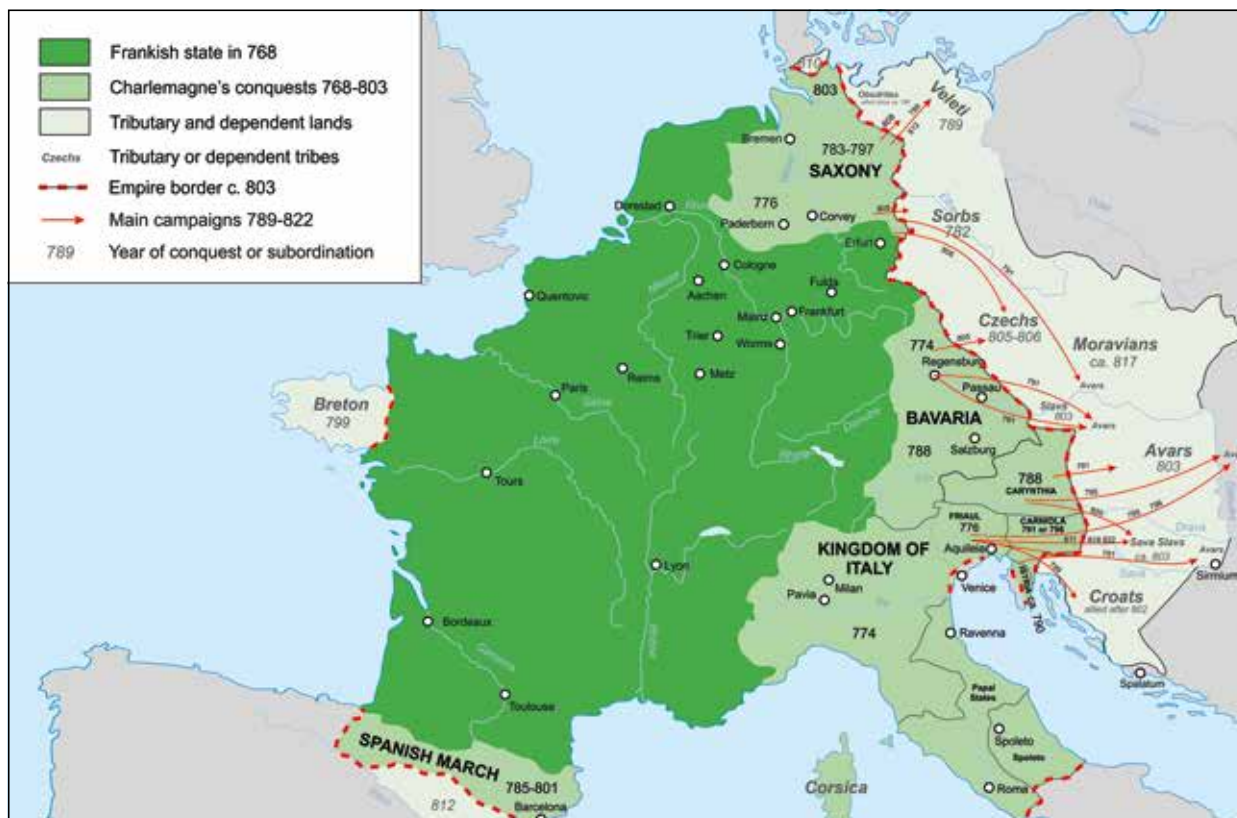


Fig. 9 The Frankish Empire at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries. – (Contour map CC-BY-SA 3.0 © Wikipedia.org; elaborated by Z. Robak).

ever, the skeletal burial sites at Stará Kouřim and Nymburk (Středočeský kraj/CZ) most likely of the Bohemian elites who had just converted to Christianity, date back to the end of the first half of the 9th century⁴⁴, leaving us in no doubt that Carolingian military fashion had already spread there to some extent. Occasionally, items of the early Carolingian type have been discovered in areas in the Middle Danube Basin. Unlike artefacts found in the Dalmatian lands, objects known from Slovakia and Moravia are usually stray finds of simple undecorated items made of iron, mainly strap fittings⁴⁵. The Carolingians did not engage in political and missionary activity in the Middle Danube Basin until slightly later on (second and third decades of the 9th century)⁴⁶, which led to more items of a later style being found in Moravia and Slovakia, particularly those decorated with the early plant style. It is possible, however, that this wave of Carolingian artefacts also contained older but still attractive objects. It is probably no coincidence that this wave began around the same time as the Moravians, who are described in historical sources as allies of the Empire, emerged on the historical stage (822) and converted to Christianity (831)⁴⁷. One can assume that the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Empire and the voluntary reorientation of the Moravians »westwards« led to the adoption of customs and elements of attire typical of the Carolingian nobility (as in Pannonia and Dalmatia earlier on). Unlike in the areas of Croatia and Bohemia, Frankish troops did not operate in today's Moravia and Slovakia before 846, although there were some representatives of the Frankish elites, as part of diplomatic actions or the process of Christianisation⁴⁸. The adoption of the Carolingian use of attire to indicate social status was most likely purely cultural and a result of both necessity and the aspirations of the Moravian elites.

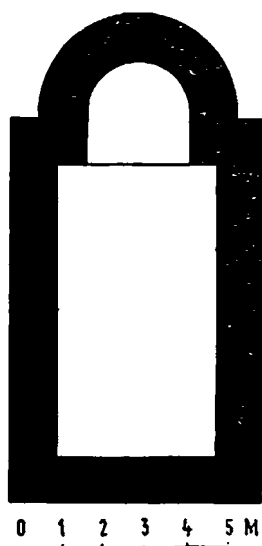


Fig. 10 Želiezovce »Kostolná« (okr. Levice/SK). Foundations of the Romanesque church found in 1932. – (After Mencil 1937, fig. 21).

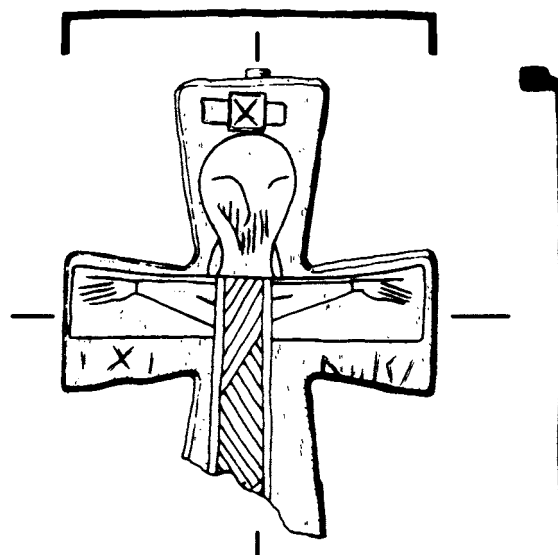


Fig. 12 Želiezovce (okr. Levice/SK). Byzantine-type engolpion. – Bronze. – (Drawing Ž. Nagyová). – Scale 1:1.

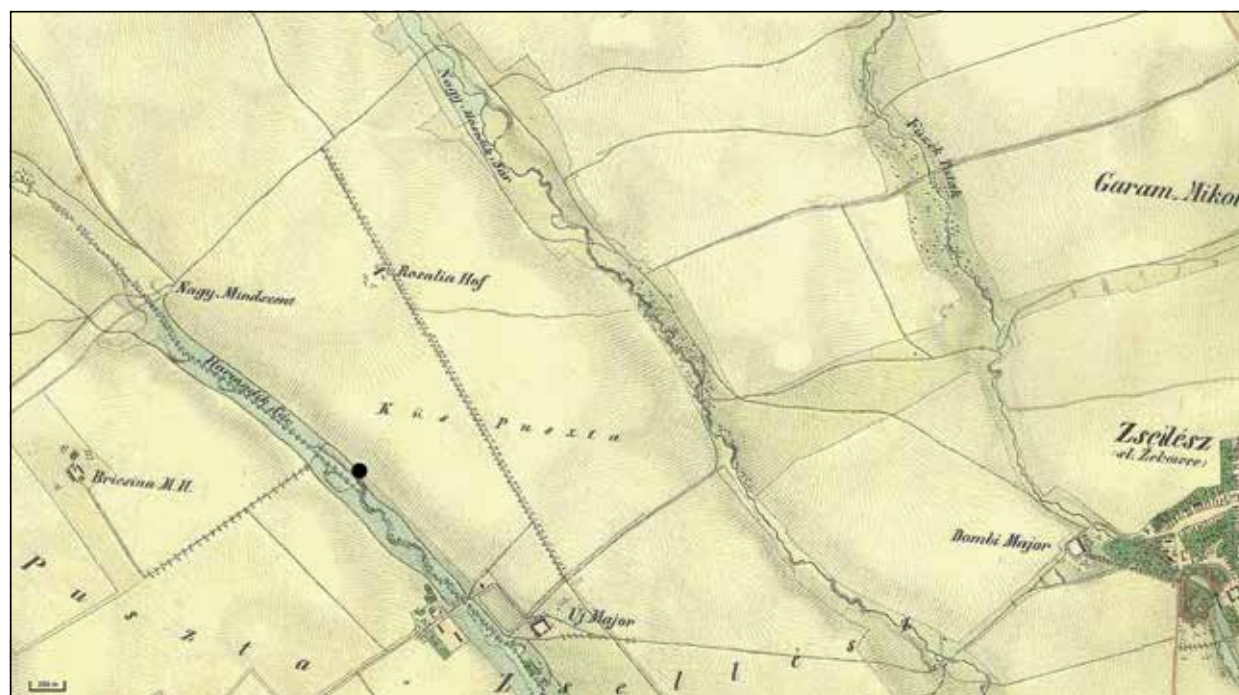


Fig. 11 Austro-Hungarian military map »Franziseische Landesaufnahme 1806-1869«. – ● approximate location of the finds. – (Map source <http://geoportal.gov.sk>; elaborated by Z. Robak).

During the Avar wars, the Frankish military was not active in the area of Želiezovce, where the two fittings come from. This area formed the northern border of the Avar Khaganate, but it seems unlikely to have been conquered by the Franks at the beginning of the 9th century; their dominance was limited to the western parts of Pannonia⁴⁹ – despite it being nominally part of *provincia Avarorum*, established in 803⁵⁰. Furthermore, it seems unlikely that it was an area of any missionary activities targeted at the Avars. After the col-

lapse of the monolithic political structure of the Khaganate in 795, it remained under the control of a local Avar centre located in what is now Komárno/SK. The presence of elements characteristic of the Carolingian culture should be linked to the Slavic expansion from the north (most likely from around Nitra) into the former Avar areas located to the north of the Danube. This process may have started in the first or second decade of the 9th century and is echoed in Avar capcanus Theodorus' complaint that the Slavs had expelled him from his seat in 805⁵¹.

THE ŽELIEZOVCE-KOSTOLNÁ SITE

No archaeological investigation has been conducted thus far in the area the finds come from⁵². In 1932, however, during work in fields located to the west of the town Želiezovce, the foundations of a Romanesque church with an apse were discovered and later documented by V. Mencl. When the foundations were being dug out, eight graves (five adults and three children) came to light, thought to come from the modern era. Some of the graves (we do not know which) contained metal artefacts. A drawing of the foundations forms part of a study by V. Mencl (**fig. 10**), who concluded that the church had originated prior to or in the 12th century⁵³.

Unfortunately, the precise location of the church remains unknown. Until recently the identification was made more complicated by the fact that V. Mencl made an error when writing down the name of the abandoned village. He used the name Velký Vincent (Great Vincent), and it was under this name that the site was referred to in the literature⁵⁴. It was not until a recent study of the archive by Pavel Polka⁵⁵ that it transpired that the name of the now non-existent village is Nagy-Mindszent (Great All Saints), historical references to which exist from the beginning of the 14th century to the beginning of the 19th century⁵⁶. The location of the village is indicated on an Austro-Hungarian military map from the first half of the 19th century (**fig. 11**)⁵⁷. The name is probably linked to the original patron of the church⁵⁸, which still exists in local memory in references to the area as »Kostolná« (Slovak adjective from »church«). The reconstruction of the location of the church is, therefore, consistent with that of the site, within which were found the two fittings and other early medieval artefacts, including a bronze reliquary Byzantine-type cross (**fig. 12**) dating back to the 10th or 11th century⁵⁹. Hence one naturally wonders whether the village and/or church may in fact date back to earlier than the 12th century. Pottery finds excavated from the fields to the west of the town point to the possibility that a settlement may have existed here in the 9th century⁶⁰. More tangible evidence for this comes from a woman's grave found in the vicinity of Želiezovce manor (Dombimajor?)⁶¹, which contains pottery and ornaments that could date to that period.

CONCLUSIONS

So far no site has been identified⁶² in the Želiezovce area that could have served as a local power centre prior to the mid-11th century when references to numerous villages began to appear in written sources; nonetheless, these two fittings can be chronologically dated to the 9th century. A Great Moravian fortified settlement in Bíňa (okr. Nové Zámky/SK), a few kilometres away, has been dated to the end of the 9th century, although the results of radiocarbon analyses of a skeletal burial ground and rampart fragments suggest that it is earlier and can be dated to the beginning or the first half of the 9th century⁶³. Therefore, the history of the fortified settlement may tell us something about the inclusion of territories in what is now southern Slovakia within the political entity created by the Slavs inhabiting the Nitra Basin in the first decades of the

9th century, either as part of their own »policy« or under some degree of coercion by their cousins from Moravia. It may be that the finds from Želiezovce will produce some kind of material evidence for this process.

Certainly, the location where the items have been discovered requires archaeological exploration. The category to which the finds from the site belong suggests that some of the early medieval elites either lived or were buried there. It may still be possible to locate the as yet unknown centre of power that would become part of the political entity that later became Great Moravia. Recent finds from excavations being carried out at the fortified settlement in Bíňa may also provide some important information since the proximity of the two sites would suggest that the location in Želiezovce could have belonged to the Bíňa »agglomeration«. Finally, the information we possess seems to support the hypothesis that these two artefacts are from the first half of the 9th century and we cannot rule out the possibility that they were part of a single assemblage. This is particularly the case given that the illustrations in the Stuttgart Psalter would suggest that there is a precedence for this.

ANNEXE: CAROLINGIAN FITTINGS WITH AN INSET (SEE FIG. 8)

1. Bendorf, grave A, Kr. Rendsburg-Eckernförde/D (Gabriel 1981, 247)
2. Bendorf, grave B, Kr. Rendsburg-Eckernförde/D (Gabriel 1981, 249)
3. Ketzendorf, grave 170, Lkr. Stade/D (Thieme 1983, 74-75)
4. Ketzendorf, grave 1, Lkr. Stade/D (Thieme 1983, 82)
5. Bremen-Mahndorf/D (Giesler 1974, list 2 no. 20; Aouni 1999, fig. 10)
6. Meetschow, Lkr. Lüchow-Dannenberg/D (Schneeweiss 2012, fig. 4, 3)
7. Kuhfelde, grave, Lkr. Salzwedel/D (Giesler 1974, list 2 no. 27)
8. Hohenheningen, Lkr. Salzwedel/D (Giesler 1974, list 2 no. 24)
9. Hohenheningen, Lkr. Salzwedel/D (Giesler 1974, list 2 no. 25)
10. Barleben, Lkr. Börde/D (Giesler 1974, list 2 no. 19)
11. Reinsdorf-Hohnsleben, grave, Lkr. Helmstedt/D (Giesler 1974, list 2 no. 33)
12. Corvey/Höxter/D (Stephan 1994, fig. 8, 3)
13. Quedlinburg, grave 33, Lkr. Harz/D (Stein 1967, pl. 65, 9)
14. Sundremda, grave 27, Lkr. Saalfeld-Rudolfstadt/D (Giesler 1974, list 2 no. 34)
15. Karlburg, Lkr. Main-Spessart/D (Wamers 1994a, list 2 no. 36a)
16. Karlburg, Lkr. Main-Spessart/D (Wamser 1992, fig. 25, 9)
17. Karlburg, Lkr. Main-Spessart/D (Wamser 1992, fig. 25, 10)
18. Karlburg, Lkr. Main-Spessart/D (Wamser 1992, fig. 25, 11)
19. Karlburg, Lkr. Main-Spessart/D (Wamser 1992, fig. 25, 18)
20. Karlburg, Lkr. Main-Spessart/D (Obst 2008, 93)
21. Karlburg, Lkr. Main-Spessart/D (Obst 2008, 93)
22. Karlburg, Lkr. Main-Spessart/D (Obst 2008, 307)
23. Zellingen, Lkr. Main-Spessart/D (Obst 2008, 248)
24. Tauberbischofsheim, Main-Tauber-Kreis/D (Wamser 1992, fig. 33; Lennartsson 1997-1998, fig. 12a)
25. Kleindingharding, grave, Lkr. Wolfratshausen/D (Giesler 1974, list 2 no. 26)
26. Starigard-Oldenburg, Kr. Ostholstein/D (Gabriel 1986, fig. 7, 2; Robak 2014, pl. III, 7)
27. Arkona-Putgarten, Lkr. Vorpommern-Rügen/D (Berlekamp 1974, fig. 19 r; Robak 2015, fig. 2, 10)
28. Pavia/I, vicinity (Nawroth 2007, cat. no. VIII.19.3)
29. Volterra, prov. Pisa/I (Giesler 1974, list 2 no. 37a)
30. Volterra, prov. Pisa/I (Giesler 1974, list 2 no. 37b)
31. Arezzo/I (Giesler 1974, fig. 3, 18)
32. Rubín-Dolánky, okr. Louny/CZ (Robak 2015, fig. 2, 4)

33. Žatec, okr. Louny/CZ (Profantová 2011, fig. 9, 4; Robak 2014, pl. XII, 12)
34. Svatý Jan pod Skalou, okr. Beroun/CZ (Profantová 2016b, 33; 2017, fig. 5, 1)
35. Praha-Kosoř, okr. Praha-západ/CZ (Profantová 2016b, 33; 2017, fig. 4, 15)
36. Hradsko u Mšena, okr. Mělník/CZ (Lutovský 2013)
37. Tismice, okr. Kolín/CZ (Profantová 2011, 81 fig. 8, 4; Robak 2014, pl. XII, 11)
38. Stará Kouřim, okr. Kolín/CZ (Šolle 1966, pl. XXV, 2a; Robak 2014, pl. XIII, 4a)
39. Češov, okr. Jičín/CZ (Profantová 1999; Robak 2015, fig. 2, 1)
40. Olomouc-Povel, okr. Olomouc/CZ (Profantová 1992; Robak 2015, fig. 2, 5)
41. Brno-Líšeň, okr. Brno-město/CZ (Kalčík 2012; Robak 2015, fig. 2, 13)
42. Mikulčice, grave 108/II, okr. Hodonín/CZ (Robak 2015, fig. 2, 6)
43. Mikulčice, okr. Hodonín/CZ (Robak 2015, fig. 2, 7)
44. Mikulčice, okr. Hodonín/CZ (Robak 2015, fig. 2, 8)
45. Bojná-Valy, okr. Topolčany/SK (Robak 2015, fig. 2, 9)
46. Želiezovce, okr. Levice/SK (fig. 2, 2)
47. Prambachkirchen, Bez. Eferding/A (Tovornik 1993)
48. Pottenbrunn, Stadt St. Pölten/A (Blesl 2012, fig. 83; Robak 2014, pl. V, 7)
49. Petronell, Bez. Bruck an der Leitha/A (Stadler 1989, fig. 1419; Robak 2014, pl. V, 13)
50. Kraków-Wawel, woj. małopolskie/PL (Zoll-Adamikowa 1998; Robak 2015, fig. 2, 11)
51. Kraków-Nowa Huta-Mogiła, woj. małopolskie/PL (Poleski 2013, fig. 97, 6; Robak 2015, fig. 2, 12)
52. Cristuru Secuiesc, jud. Harghita/RO (Nevizánsky/Prohászka 2016)
53. Tonovcov grad, obč. Kobarid/SLO (Karo 2012, pl. 2, 1; Robak 2014, pl. LXXXI, 3)
54. Gojače-Boršt, grave 5, obč. Ajdovščina/SLO (Karo 2012, pl. 2, 4; Robak 2014, pl. LXXVIII, 7a)
55. Sv. Lambert, obč. Ivančna Gorica/SLO (Karo 2012, pl. 2, 2; Robak 2014, pl. LXXXI, 4)
56. Celje/SLO (Karo 2012, pl. 2, 3; Robak 2014, pl. LXXVIII, 6)
57. Sipar, Istria/HR (Robak 2014, pl. LXXVI, 4)
58. Podsused, grave, Zagreb/HR (Vinski 1981, pl. IX, 4-5; Robak 2014, pl. LXXVI, 1a-b)
59. Požeski Brestovac, Požega-Slavonia/HR (Robak 2014, pl. LXXVI, 2)
60. Morpolača, grave B, Zadar/HR (Jelovina 1986, pl. VI, 67; Robak 2014, pl. LXXII, 1a)
61. Biskupija-Crkvina, grave 1, Šibenik-Knin/HR (Jelovina 1986, pl. I, 2; Robak 2014, pl. LIX, 1a)
62. Biskupija-Crkvina, grave 4, Šibenik-Knin/HR (Jelovina 1986, pl. III, 31; Robak 2014, pl. LX, 1c)
63. Biskupija-Crkvina, »prince grave«, Šibenik-Knin/HR (Jelovina 1986, pl. VI, 74. 78; Robak 2014, pl. LXV, 1a-b)
64. Biskupija-Crkvina, Šibenik-Knin/HR (Jelovina 1986, pl. XI, 140; Robak 2014, pl. LXVI, 4)
65. Biskupija-Crkvina, Šibenik-Knin/HR (Jelovina 1986, pl. XI, 141; Robak 2014, pl. LXVI, 5)
66. Koljane-Slankovac, Split-Dalmatia/HR (Milošević 2016, pl. 15, 1)
67. Mogorjelo, Herzegovina-Neretva/BIH (Werner 1960-1961, pl. I, 3; Robak 2014, pl. LXXI, 5)
68. Nordloher Tief bei Apen, Lkr. Ammerland/D (Aouni 1999, 176)
69. Oldorf, Lkr. Friesland/D (Schmid 1999, fig. 10)
70. Schortens, grave 217, Lkr. Friesland/D (Rötting 1999, fig. 13a)
71. Schortens, grave 222, Lkr. Friesland/D (Rötting 1999, fig. 13b-c)
72. Trier/D, grave 181 (Schulze-Dörrlamm 2009b, fig. 33, 3)
73. Worms/D, grave (Giesler 1974, list 2 no. 35)
74. Drijgoten (Hamme), prov. Oost-Vlaanderen/B (Wamers 1994a, list 2 no. 22)
75. Liège-St. Lambert, grave 11, prov. Liège/B (Giesler 1974, list 2 no. 28; Schulze-Dörrlamm 1998, fig. 3, 1)
76. Domburg, prov. Zeeland/NL (Capelle 1974, no. 311)
77. Haamstede-Schouwen, prov. Zeeland/NL (Giesler 1974, list 2 no. 23)
78. London/GB (Smith 1923, 106 fig. 131, 2)
79. London/GB (Ager 1995; Wamers 1994a, list 2 no. 90)
80. Rosny, dép. Seine-Saint-Denis/F (Sander 2007, pl. 29, 1)

81. Verdun-Dieue »La Potence«, dép. Meuse/F (Lennartsson 1997-1998, fig. 9)
82. Birka, grave 618, Stockholm län/S (Wamers 1985, pl. 38, 6)
83. Vienna/A, museum (Wamers 2011, fig. 4, 2-3)
84. Florence/I, museum (Werner 1960-1961, pl. II, 3)
85. Perugia/I, museum (Schulze-Dörrlamm 2009a, fig. 31)

86. Unknown place (Fremersdorf 1953, 28; Wamers 1994a, list 2 no. 79)
87. Unknown place (Giesler 1974, list 2 no. 36; Wamers 1994a, list 2 no. 84)
88. Unknown place (Giesler 1974, list 2 no. 38; Wamers 1994a, list 2 no. 81)
89. Unknown place (Giesler 1974, list 2 no. 39; Wamers 1994a, list 2 no. 82)
90. Unknown place (Haseloff 1951, 38 fig. 26 pl. 15, 9)

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Notes

- 1) The average values of the XRF analyses were calculated from three measurements taken using a Niton XL3t GOLDD+ portable spectrometer at various points on the reverse of the item: Cu 83.05 %; Sn 7.04 %; Pb 3.72 %; Fe 6.36 % (present only in two measurements).
- 2) Robak 2013, 59-69.
- 3) Because the entire fitting is gilded and rather small, the spectrometric analysis of its composition – even where the gold layer has worn away – was distorted by the presence of gold. Once the pure gold had been eliminated from the composition obtained during the measuring process, it seemed highly probable that the alloy it was made of contained about 90 % copper. However, we should keep in mind that this result very likely contains copper that was used in the gilding.
- 4) Robak 2013, 48-55.
- 5) Bartel 2002-2003. – Wamers 2011. – Robak 2013; 2014.
- 6) Daim 2000; 2001. – Galuška 2013, 13-97.
- 7) Ungerman 2001; 2002. – Robak 2013.
- 8) In this context, the term »Great Moravian« is used only to describe the material culture characteristic of the Slavs inhabiting what are now areas of Moravia and Slovakia between the turn of the first and second quarter of the 9th century and the first half of the 10th century, and avoiding unnecessary debates about whether it should be categorised into the early or late period (see Robak 2013, 199; 2017). I accept that although it is a common derivation of the historical term »Great Moravia«, which designates a political entity that existed between 833 or 846 – depending on the perspective – and 907 or 924, it is not an adequate term as the lifespan of »Great Moravian« material culture does not exactly match with that of the political entity.
- 9) Robak 2013; 2014.
- 10) Pawelec 1990, 154.
- 11) Wamers 1993, 42; 2008, 48-49.
- 12) Wamers 1991, 128-132.
- 13) Wamers 2005.
- 14) Robak 2013, 158-161.
- 15) Kouřil 2014, 315. 338. 369. 374.
- 16) Šolle 1966, 73. 260. – Profantová 2011, fig. 10. – Lutovský/Košta 2014, fig. 64. – Wamers 2005, 170.
- 17) Profantová 2016b, fig. 3, 7.
- 18) Profantová 2001, 330.
- 19) In the Czech, Slovak, and Polish literature (especially the older research, but still used as an argument in the debate) we can often encounter information that fittings from grave 55 at Stará Kouřim as well as similar items decorated with the early plant style found in territories of former Czechoslovakia were evidence of the »evolution of the Slavic craft at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries, briefly described as a continuation of the Avar (Avar-Slavic) casting tradition enriched with strong Carolingian influences« (see, e. g. Lutovský/Košta 2014, 130-131). The authors of this older research were not perturbed by the fact that these items were identical or very similar to Carolingian objects discovered in Western Europe or in Scandinavia, where one would not expect to find examples of an alleged Avar-Slavic casting tradition. This concept – never formalised into a theory – is most often referred to as the Blatnica-Mikulčice Horizon, phase or style. Today, the Blatnica-Mikulčice

- Horizon no longer has explanatory power as a scientific theory (Robak 2017).
- 20) Robak 2013, 59-60. 87-88. – Wamers 1994b, 22-23; 2005, 170.
 - 21) Robak 2013, 140-143. 158-159.
 - 22) Robak 2015, fig. 1 list 2.
 - 23) Robak 2014, list 1.
 - 24) Wamers 1994a, 36. – Robak 2013, 48-55 esp. 48-49.
 - 25) e.g. Profantová 2011, fig. 8, 4. – Schulze-Dörrlamm 2009a, fig. 31. – Schmid 1999, figs 10-11.
 - 26) Wamers 1985.
 - 27) Küßner 2015, 204.
 - 28) Capelle 1974, no. 311.
 - 29) Stephan 1994, 214 fig. 8, 3.
 - 30) Kasten 1985, 145.
 - 31) Stephan 1994, 215-216.
 - 32) Ibidem.
 - 33) Wamers 1994a, 35-36; 2011, 69.
 - 34) Robak 2013, 49.
 - 35) Giesler 1974. – Robak 2014, list 2.
 - 36) Robak 2015; in print.
 - 37) Polek 2007. – Dzino 2010, 182-187.
 - 38) See: Dzino 2010, 182-187; Štih 2010, 132-133. – The territories of what is now Slovenia (Carniola) had most likely been conquered in 791 during the first phase of the Avar wars (or possibly in 795/796, during the second phase); nonetheless, in 820 military interventions were necessary to retain the lands. The Posavian and Dalmatian Croats were Frankish allies from around 803. Officially, the Frankish domination over these territories was confirmed in 812 in a covenant with Byzantium signed in Aachen. In reality, though, by 812 Dalmatia had already been under the jurisdiction of the dukes of Friuli for several years. The nature of this dominance is questionable, as Dalmatian Croatia, unlike Carniola, never officially became part of the Carolingian Empire.
 - 39) As D. Třeštík states: »Priests seemed to be [...] a kind of addition to precious spurs and swords« (Třeštík 2009, 180, translated by Z. Robak). – The arduous presence of the Franks as well as Louis the Pius's failure to respond to the Slavic complaints led to the rebellion of Ljudevit Posavski in 819-822 (Štih 2010, 105).
 - 40) Wamers 1994b.
 - 41) Petrinec/Jurčević 2015, 349. 352.
 - 42) Třeštík 2009, 75-83. 95-118.
 - 43) In a study conducted in 2013 (Robak 2013, 192) I analysed a small series of Carolingian artefacts from Bohemia, but in the past few years we have recorded a significant increase in finds turned up by metal detectors in amateur explorations (see: Profantová 2016a).
 - 44) Profantová 2016b, 642.
 - 45) Robak 2015, fig. 2.
 - 46) Třeštík 2009, 177-183.
 - 47) Robak 2013, 191-202. 209; in print.
 - 48) Třeštík 2009, 178.
 - 49) Polek 2007, 256-257.
 - 50) Pohl 2002, 322-323. – Třeštík 2009, 177. – Wolfram 2001, 239-244.
 - 51) Třeštík 2009, 92-94. – Polek 2007, 258-267.
 - 52) In 1952, field surveys led to the discovery of early medieval pottery. A report is currently held in the archives of the Archeologický ústav in Nitra under reference number 283/52ns.
 - 53) Mencl 1937, 140. A copy of the site inspection record is held in the archives of the Archeologický ústav in Nitra under reference number 339/56ns, unfortunately lacking photographic evidence. – A photograph taken by V. Mencl in Želiezovce has been preserved in the archives of the Pamiatkový úrad Slovenskej Republiky in Bratislava under reference number T1042/5.
 - 54) Habovštiak 1985, 325.
 - 55) Polka 2017.
 - 56) Györfy 1966, 460-461. – Crusius 1809, 364.
 - 57) Furthermore, it seems that in his description from 1937 V. Mencl made a mistake with the compass points.
 - 58) In the Kingdom of Hungary towns and villages whose names contained *-mindszent(h)* usually had a church dedicated to All Saints.
 - 59) Megay 1961. – Szatmári 1995, 232-234. – Some researchers (Kolník 1994; Hanuliak/Pieta 2014) have made attempts to produce an earlier chronology of similar types of artefacts tying this in with the mission of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Moravia. Engolpions of this type have been found in Old Hungarian burial grounds (Szatmári 1995), but not in Great Moravian burial grounds.
 - 60) Pichlerová/Tomčíková 1995, 98.
 - 61) Mitscha-Märheim/Pittioni 1934, 165. 172 pl. 10, 1-4.
 - 62) Püszpöki Nagy 1976, 56-62.
 - 63) Henning/Ruttikay 2011, 273-278. – Ruttikay et al. 2017.

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Zusammenfassung / Summary / Résumé

Zwei karolingische Riemenzungen ausgestellt in Želiezovce (okr. Levice/SK)

Zwei Riemenzungen aus dem Städtischen Museum von Želiezovce werden in diesem Beitrag untersucht. Sie wurden 2015 eng beieinander in einem Feld westlich der Stadt gefunden. Der größere Beschlag besteht aus Bronze, und die vergoldete Schauseite ist in Kerbschnitttechnik verziert. Es handelt sich um eine typische U-förmige Riemenzunge mit karolingischem Pflanzendekor. Die Ähnlichkeiten zwischen dem Fundstück aus Želiezovce und den Beschlägen aus einem Elitegrab bei Stará Kouřim (okr. Kolín/CZ) lässt eine zweifelsfreie Datierung in die erste Hälfte des 9. Jahrhunderts zu, möglicherweise in das zweite Viertel. Auch der kleinere Beschlag besteht aus vergoldeter Bronze, in diesem Fall sind beide Seiten vergoldet. Er weist einen charakteristischen Einsatz und Durchbruchmuster auf. Stilistisch und typologisch

gehört der kleinere Beschlag von Želiezovce wohl an die Wende vom 8. zum 9. Jahrhundert oder in das erste Drittel des 9. Jahrhunderts.

Die ähnliche Datierung der beiden Stücke, die auf typologischem Weg gewonnen wurde, sowie Darstellungen im Stuttgarter Psalter unterstützen die Hypothese, dass die Riemenzungen zusammen getragen wurden oder sogar zur selben Garnitur gehörten. Zukünftige archäologische Forschungen werden zeigen, ob diese Funde im Zusammenhang mit den 1932 entdeckten Fundamenten der frühmittelalterlichen Kirche und mit anderen frühmittelalterlichen Funden aus der Gegend von Želiezovce-Kostolná stehen. Möglicherweise lässt sich hier ein mittelalterliches lokales Zentrum identifizieren, das bisher unbekannt war.

Übersetzung: M. Struck

Two Carolingian Strap-ends on Exhibition in Želiezovce (okr. Levice/SK)

In this paper, the author analyses two strap-ends from the Municipal Museum of Želiezovce. They were found in 2015, close to each other, in a field located to the west of the town. The larger fitting is made of bronze and the decorative element on the front was done using the chip-carving technique. The obverse of the fitting is gilded. It is a typical example of a U-shaped strap-end decorated in the Carolingian plant style. The similarities between the artefact from Želiezovce and the fittings from the elite grave in Stará Kouřim (okr. Kolín/CZ) leave us in no doubt that this item should be dated to the first half of the 9th century, possibly the second quarter. The smaller fitting is also made of bronze, but both sides of the item are gilded. It has a characteristic inset and openwork decoration. The stylistic and typological features of the smaller fitting from Želiezovce could be dated to the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries or the first third of the 9th century.

The dating of both artefacts based on their typology, as well as images decorating the Stuttgart Psalter, strongly supports the hypothesis that the fittings could have been worn together or even have come from a single set. Future archaeological research will show whether these items are related to the foundations of the early medieval church discovered in 1932 and to other early medieval finds from Želiezovce-Kostolná area. It seems possible to identify an unknown early medieval local centre.

Deux ferrets carolingiens exposés à Želiezovce (okr. Levice/SK)

Dans cet article, l'auteur analyse deux attaches du Musée municipal de Želiezovce. Ils ont été trouvés en 2015, proches les uns des autres, dans un champ situé à l'ouest de la ville. Le ferret le plus grand est en bronze et l'élément décoratif frontal a été réalisé avec la technique de la sculpture sur copeaux. L'avers de l'armature est doré. Il s'agit d'un exemple typique d'un embout en forme de U décoré dans le style végétal carolingien. Les similitudes entre l'artefact de Želiezovce et les accessoires de la tombe d'élite de Stará Kouřim (okr. Kolín/CZ) ne laissent aucun doute sur le fait que cet objet devrait être daté de la première moitié du 9^e siècle, peut-être du deuxième quart. Le plus petit ferret est également en bronze doré, mais les deux côtés de l'objet sont dorés. Il présente une décoration en médaillon et ajourée caractéristique. Les caractéristiques stylistiques et typologiques du petit ferret de Želiezovce pourraient être datées du début des 8^e et 9^e siècles ou du premier tiers du 9^e siècle.

La datation des deux artefacts sur la base de leur typologie, ainsi que des enluminures décorant le Psautier de Stuttgart, soutiennent fortement l'hypothèse que les ferrets auraient pu être utilisés simultanément ou même provenir d'un seul ensemble. Les recherches archéologiques futures montreront si ces objets sont liés aux fondations de l'église du début du Moyen Âge découverte en 1932 et à d'autres découvertes du début du Moyen Âge dans la région de Želiezovce-Kostolná. Il semble possible de proposer d'identifier ici un centre local du début du Moyen Âge inconnu.

Traduction: L. Bernard

Schlüsselwörter / Keywords / Mots clés

Slowakei / Frühes Mittelalter / Karolingerzeit / Gürtel / Kunst / Kirche
Slovakia / Early Middle Ages / Carolingian period / belt / art / church
Slovaquie / Haut Moyen Âge / période carolingienne / ceinture / art / église

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