

Circular, Semi-circular and Oval Villages in the Czech Republic

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1. Introduction

Throughout today's Czech Republic there are large numbers of rural settlements characterised by their different sizes and plan view types. These diverse homesteads, hamlets and villages also have different plot arrangements, i.e. the division of cultivated land around them. In Czech, the noun "plužina" is used, which was derived from the word "plough". There was a close connection between the settlement layout and how the land was used. This depended, and still depends, on many conditions which may be described as external or internal, tangible or intangible. Some of them are easy to describe, even now, whereas others are not. Sometimes it is not even possible to describe those conditions in detailed historical research, because there are several centuries of interval. Natural conditions are among the most significant conditions, and they are represented by landform, including water bodies and climate. Apart from the locality itself, the time of origin was also very important for the resulting form, if one excludes later developments. Social circumstances cannot be left out either, with a majority of them not being verified in fieldwork or archives. Nevertheless, considerable social differences are easy to observe even now.

2. Scope and method: appellation, cadastral maps, land register and photos

Even though all the outline conditions are related, only village typology will be emphasised, including the point of view of time which, especially in the case of the oldest settlements, can be just indicative. The classification was carried out with respect to a set structure which was stabilised during the 20th century thanks to many theoretical works. These works were carried out by research workers from various professions (within the domain of heritage preservation and sustainable development: conservationists, art historians, archaeologists, architects, town/village planners; the domain of social sciences: anthropologists/ethnographers/ethnologists, historians; and the domain of natural sciences: climatologists, geographers, geologists, hydrogeologists, etc) and show heterogeneity. For this reason, and taking into account the scope, only the repre-

sentative characteristics will be described with a focus on circular, oval, and semi-circular villages.[1][2][3][4][5][6][7]

2.1 Definition

First of all, it is important to mention the term *rundling*, the definition of which is not always unambiguous. In most cases, this is encyclopaedically described as a primitive form of the circular village, mainly in Germany, typical of settlements in the Germanic-Slav contact zone in the early medieval period.¹ They were archaeologically uncovered primarily in the Polabian Slavs area.² They have also been known as Elbe Slavs or Wends. These circular villages "were founded in the 12th century, on land that had not been previously cultivated (...) in the form of a half circle or a horseshoe shape, with the wide entrance to the central village green opening out to the fields."³ Furthermore, the *rundling* is characterised by a more or less regular circle plan view of the village green and one access track at first.[8][9] The German term *rundling* is sometimes directly used in English as a *rundling*, which resembles the non-existent English word "roundling" (round + l + ing form). By extension, some older researchers⁴ have also included the other plan views in rounded villages on condition that they have, or used to have, the central arrangement with the possibility of the radial division. Except for the circle, another regular or irregular shape also belongs to this broad group. Curved or polygon geometric figures may be primarily mentioned, such as the ellipse, the oval, the star, or even the square or rectangle with similar sides having more or less rounded vertexes. The shapes derived or reshaped from a circle naturally belong to the rounded villages or circular villages in the narrower meaning, like the semi-circular, pear-like or horseshoe-like shape. Each group consisting of identical shapes may be understood as a subset of the set which is generally known as rounded, or more frequently, circular villages.

2.2 Terminology

In relation to the terminology, it may be observed that a morphology true to form term was used to express the circumference. Examples include a circular village, circolare villaggio, village circulaire – Rundling, Runddorf, Rundlingsdorf, rond – kulowc, okolnica, wies okragla, okrougla vas,



Fig. 1: Okrouhlice Village, originally Wokrauhlitz (Benešov District, Central Bohemian Region, Central Bohemia), map of the 2nd Military Survey between 1842 and 1852 [© Austrian State Archive, www.mapy.cz]

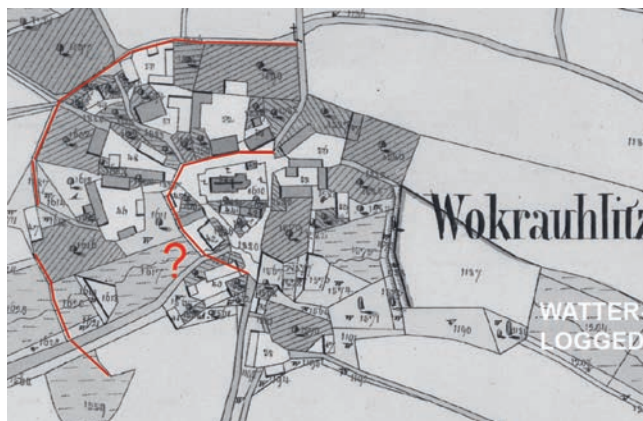


Fig. 2 Okrouhlice Village, Stable Cadastre of 1841 [© State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre, www.cuzk.cz]. The first written record was in 1352; the elevation is 410 metres.

and okrouhlice.⁵ Although the elementary form is always rounded, there are many differences in terms of placement, arrangement, and area of individual fields. In relation to this, there are also differences between the size and position of the outbuildings and farm rooms in the house.

The above-mentioned terms also appear among place names, i.e. toponyms derived from a topographical shape or feature. Therefore, this appellation can be found in the names of some villages, although their original layout no longer exists. In the Czech Republic, there are several villages as well as hills or ponds named Okrouhlice, which is the Czech word of feminine grammatical gender meaning a rounded or circular village. This word was derived from the adjective “okrouhlý”, i.e. rounded, by adding a suffix, as in Okrouhlá, Okrouhlé, Okrouhlík (the masculine gender), or Okrouhlo (the neuter gender).[10] To be complete, Okrouhlík is also an elevated geomorphologic formation, specifically the rocky core of a meander which was left after a watercourse was straightened.

2.3 Maps

The basic method used was research into easily accessible historical maps, especially maps of the 2nd Military Survey⁶ [Franzische Landesaufnahme] and Stable Cadastre⁷ [Franzischer Kataster], including the land registers. These maps were largely made during the first half of the 19th century. Because of this, they preceded the overwhelming majority of the irreversible changes associated with the Industrial Revolution, previously commenced and proceeding in the rural areas as well. These maps also came before the war and the post-war events of the 20th century. The reason for using these maps is self-evident, since older or accurate and applicable maps are usually not available, particularly for villages. Aside from this, it is generally known that these maps often preserved the medieval arrangement of the villages, although not necessarily the oldest arrangement, i.e. the one corresponding to the date of the original founding. The buildings themselves are of course more recent. Even more substantial

changes can be observed in the surrounding cultivated land, including the fundamental arrangement.

Aerial and satellite photographs were also indispensable for a better understanding of the plan view arrangement and were therefore extensively used, both older black and white photos⁸ as well as recent colour orthophotos merged to orthophotomaps⁹.

2.4 Field research

The above-mentioned extrinsic sources were accompanied by studies of hypothetical archaeological reconstructions and field research. The research, however, brought maps into focus on the grounds of credible illustrations which displayed a coherent form, thus enabling conclusions to be drawn despite the lingering lack of clarity.

3. Analogy and broad relations: round forms

3.1 Early Middle Ages – fortified settlements

Although the oldest settlements are unknown in detail, the absence of villages in today’s definition is generally associated in the Czech Republic with the 10th century. Nevertheless, there is much evidence about elevated or low fortified settlements that served, besides many other things, as refuges from the prehistoric period up to the Early Middle Ages. In our context, it is important to mention the *gord*, a medieval West Slavic fortified settlement also known as a Slavic *burgwall*.¹⁰ There is a relation to the Germanic word *gard* and *graft* and a connection to the Proto-Slavic word *gordъ* which meant town, later differentiated into *grad*, *gard*, *gorod*. Furthermore, in Czech there is a guard (*garda*), a fortified settlement (*g>h*, *hradiště*), a castle (*hrad*) and a fenced area (*ohrada*), including a garden (*zahrada*).¹ Although there is no direct connection to the later villages, many of these fortified settlements were ring-shaped. This natural form could be conditioned by a hill, a man-made mound, or a promontory as well as a watercourse. According to this, the fortification was also char-

acterised by a round, oval or polygonal plan view. This could have been a palisade, a rampart, or a moat, or alternatively a combination of any of these. Inside this fortification, a group of wooden houses would have been built, either in rows or in circles. Just as a matter of interest, the leading theory by Meibeyer believes that circular villages in the Wendland “were developed by the then Germanic nobility as suitable for small groups of mainly Slavic farm-settlers...A continuation of Slavic settlement perhaps in a new Germanic form remains therefore a possibility”.¹² This would be indicated by the small size of the villages. Either way, the Slavs were likely used to this layout plan, since it was historically close to them.

In the cases of large tribe fortified settlements, there is also evidence of an inside delimited court belonging to the ruler, high nobleman, or church dignitary after the adoption of Christianity.

Apart from these, some enclosed small fortified settlements emerged outside, related by lineage and farming activity. Nearby there were fences for livestock, still kept under the open sky. In the surrounding areas of small settlements, there were small irregular fields, pastures, and especially deep forests. Slavic family settlements also had a round or oval form, not only for defensive reasons, which can sometimes be perceptible or expected from plot boundaries, and paths go around them to the present day. Although these family settlements terminated with the start of the feudal system, some of them became the foundation for the earliest villages. Despite the ground plan divisions, they are still identifiable in today’s plan view and are evident in the patronymic name of the site.¹³ The polygonal arrangement of gardens and buildings may be particularly noticeable, although significantly more recent. These buildings may border the original circumference from the outside or inside. Except for this, it was possible to document the small family settlements through archaeological sites at the locations of the manors that followed later.

3.2 High Middle Ages – castles, fortified houses, towns and villages

There are also castles and fortified houses dating back to the High Middle Ages which are documented and sometimes even preserved. Fortified houses are representative of a manor house and can be understood as a small rural stronghold built by the lower nobility. There are several types, for instance some older ones with no tower and where small buildings were placed along the circumferential wall with a round ground plan.¹⁴ Fortified houses were inseparable from the rural areas and land tenure.

Religious, social, and agricultural changes were characterised by a fundamental transformation of the settlement arrangement from the layout point of view and quite often even from the location point of view. Aside from the total restructuring of the early medieval villages, new ones were founded in sparsely inhabited or uninhabited areas with a higher elevation. This was usually related to slash-and-burn or cut and stump treatment of the forests outside the old tribal areas settled since prehistoric times. In a very simplified way, after the “internal” colonisation which took place during the 11th

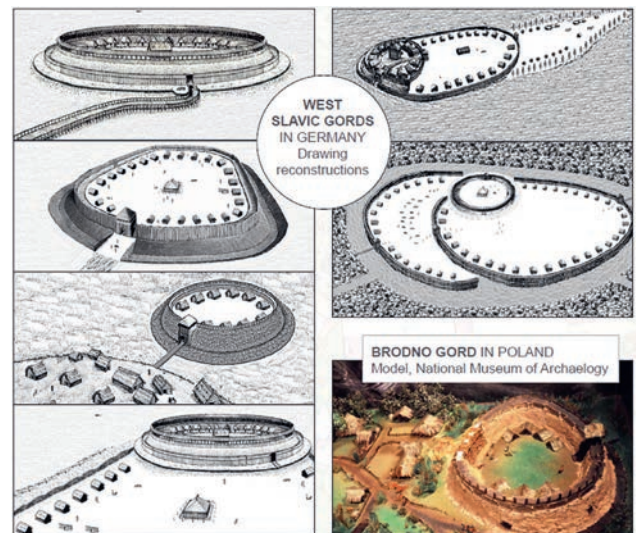


Fig. 3 Left: *Burgwallinsel Hanfwerder Neubrandenburg, mittelslawische Burg, Burgwall englischer Garten/Penzin Mecklenburg Vorpommern*, right: *Burgwall Ravensburg, Burgwallinsel Peterow*, below right: *Brodno Gord Poland* [© National Museum of Archaeology in Warsaw, www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polabian_Slavs] [https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polabští_Slované]

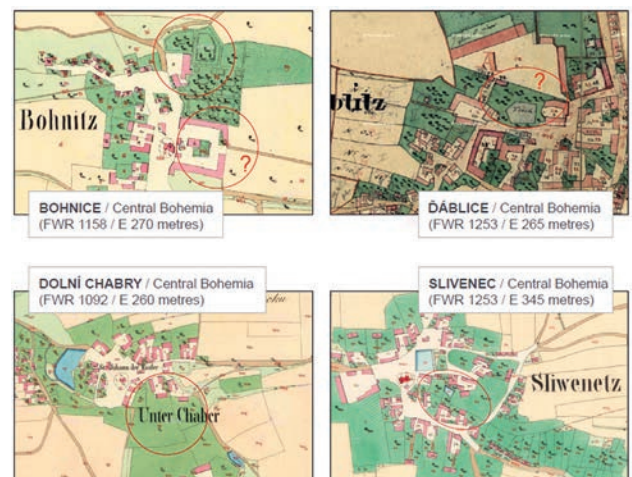


Fig. 4 *Stable Cadastre maps show villages of early mediaeval origin where there was evidence of a Slavic family settlement. Near these settlements, having a rounded ground plan, Romanesque or Early Gothic churches were usually built later. From the top left Bohnice, Dáblice, Dolní Chabry and Slivenec* [© State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre, www.cuzk.cz] The first written records are in the same order 1158, 1253, 1092 and 1253, the elevations are 270, 265, 260 and 345 metres.

and 12th centuries, it was mainly the “external” or “great” or “German” (in the case of Central Europe) colonisation during the 13th and first half of the 14th centuries, in some places even earlier. Except for farming colonisation (derived from the Latin word “colonus”, meaning peasant), mining colonisation was also known. Monasteries played an important role



Fig. 5 Martinice Village (Benešov District, Central Bohemian Region, Central Bohemia). Today's photo shows uncovered ruins of the fortified settlement dating back to the 13th century [© Seznam, www.mapy.cz, Dasyk, 2005]



Fig. 6 Orthophoto of the medieval stronghold in Kestřany (Písek District, South Bohemian Region) dating back to the second half of the 13th century [© Seznam, www.mapy.cz]



Fig. 7 Nepomyšl Village (Louny District, Ústí nad Labem Region, North-western Bohemia). Renaissance palace that emerged from Gothic fortified houses, condition in 2012 [© Martin Čerňanský, www.lidova-architektura.cz]

before and during both colonisations. However, a new way was used by employing locators. Some settlers began to settle under the German code of law – the *ius teutonicum* (*emphyteusis*).^{15 16} The new villages, later with the added attribute “villages of colonisation“, were named after the founder or derived from a topographical shape or feature. Sometimes, the adjective “new” was directly used in connection with the word describing the settlement of colonisation, such as a castle, village, or meyerhof (see captions – *New Castle – Neuburg, New Village – Neudorf, New Farm – Neuhof* etc). It seems interesting to compare this type of new villages and the towns which were founded by King Ottokar II of Bohemia (or his brother). In the case of the newly founded towns, the round ground plan with radial arrangement was not used at all, although it was well-known in what was then Western Europe (France, northern Italy). Only fortifications had a round form, often corresponding with a hill or river instead of a town square or block of houses. There is the sporadic exception, such as the town of Nymburk (*Nimburg* or *Neuenburg an der Elbe*) characterised by its fan-shaped plan view. This top view remotely resembles western urban plans.¹⁷

4. Core: circular, semi-circular and oval villages

After the indispensable familiarisation with the oldest history of rural settlements and broad relationships, the paper will focus mainly on circular, oval, and semi-circular villages. It will describe the villages of the High Middle Ages and of modern times which were usually founded on flat terrain in new clearings. Because of the ideal geometrical shape, characterised by an equal distance from the centre, the building sites and plots were quite easily measured out. The reality, however, was much more complicated. Even though all these villages have the same type of plan view, they show some significant differences on a number of counts.

4.1 Mediaeval circular villages with irregular and regular plan view

Circular villages belong to the greater category of villages with a village green. Their designation is derived from the top view, alternatively from the village green’s circumference which has a regular or irregular shape. This form was created by initially arranging buildings around an open space. The actual size of the village green depended on the number of settlers; more precisely on the specific setting and the number of homesteads, taking into account their social and economic status. These were converted to the width of the delimited building sites, including a possible side garden or a space for an access track or driveway. We must not forget the then unit of measurement nor survey systems. In some circular settlements, there was just one access road which would enclose the village green, as will be shown later. The closure could be helpful for the pastureland and for leaving the livestock outside overnight. It also fulfilled a defence function, at least against wild animals, also enhanced by the “fortification” of barns and high enclosing walls. Some wooden barns, however, were built further in the back garden, separately due to



Fig. 8 A scene from the “Saxon Mirror” (Survey of Saxon Law) shows a locator in a hat during the German East settling around 1300. In the upper part, the locator is receiving the foundation charter from the landlord, then the settlers clear the forest and build houses. In the lower part, the locator acts as the village judge [© Eike von Repgow, *Heidelberger Sachsenspiegel*, Cod. Pal. Germ. 164, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ostsiedlung>, <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg164>]

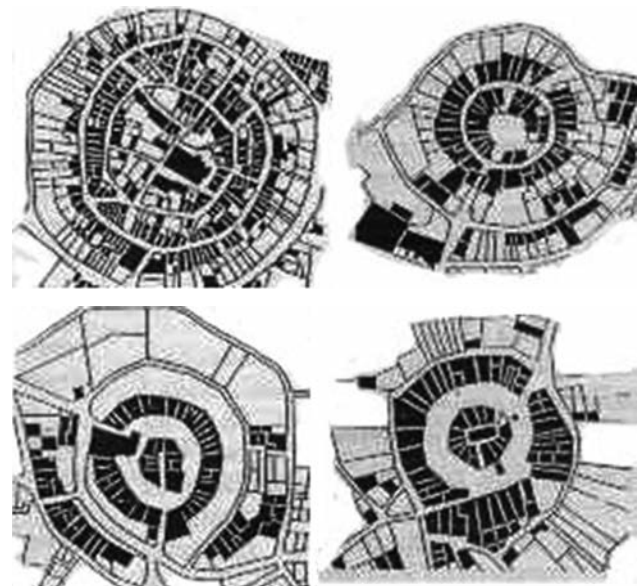


Fig. 9 Examples of small towns and villages in France, now called *circulades* [© http://www.midi-france.info/030600_circulades.htm]

anti-fire measures; a defensive function cannot be supposed here. This role was probably fulfilled by the strength of the buildings themselves, namely granaries and especially older churches built on a raised hillock in the case of early medi-

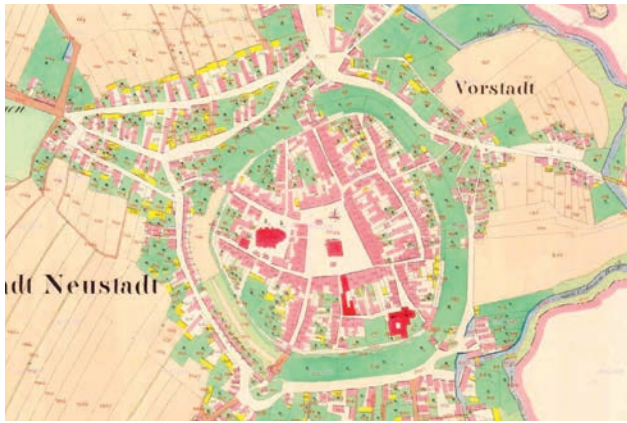


Fig. 10 Uničov Town, in German Mährisch Neustadt (Olomouc District, Olomouc Region, Central Moravia), Stable Cadastre of 1833 [© State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre, www.cuzk.cz]. The first written record was in 1213 on the site of Slavic settlement which could be a part of water fortified settlements from the period of Great Moravia.

Fig. 11 Uničov Town, in German Mährisch Neustadt (Olomouc District, Olomouc Region, Central Moravia), today's orthophoto [© Seznam, www.mapy.cz].

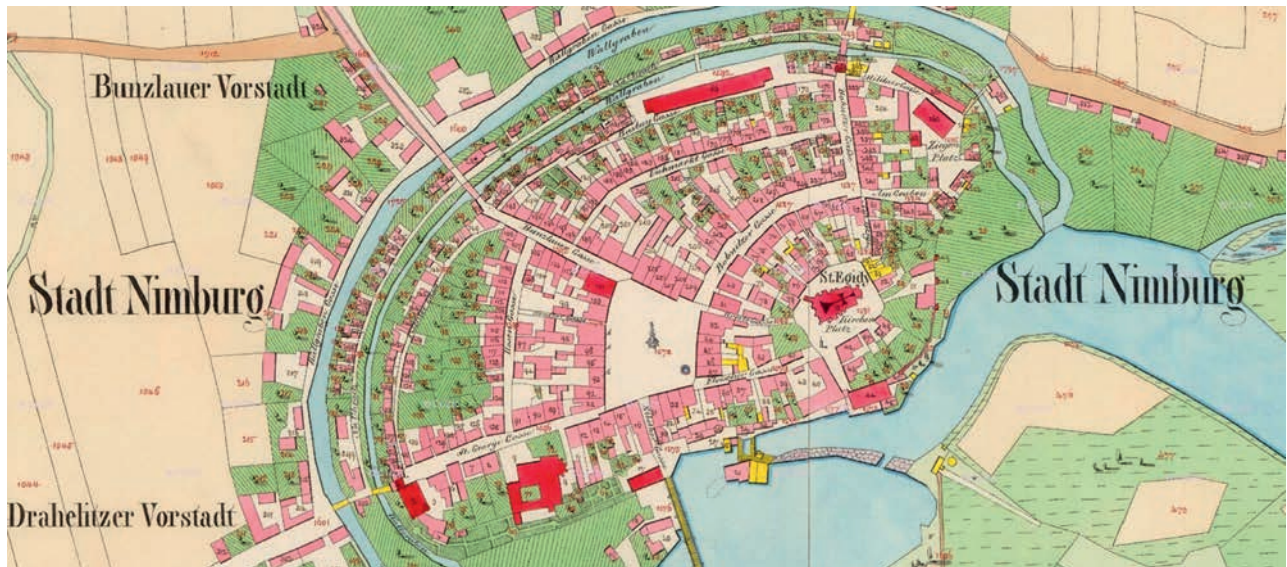


Fig. 12 Nymburk Town, in German Nimburg or Neuenburg an der Elbe (Nymburk District, Central Bohemian Region, central Bohemia), Stable Cadastre map of 1843 [© State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre, www.cuzk.cz]. The first written record was in 1275.



Figs. 13 and 14 Slatina Village (Litoměřice District, Ústí nad Labem Region, north Bohemia), Stable Cadastre of 1843 [© State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre, www.cuzk.cz] and today's colour orthophoto [© Seznam, www.mapy.cz]. The first written record was in 1057, but was founded anew during the 13th century. The church of St. John of Nepomuk was built in 1384, its tower in 1595, then rebuilt in 1746. The elevation is 180 metres.

aeval villages. All of the villages researched had no such church, however, or this church was built on the flat village green at a later time.

4.2 Built-up area and buildings

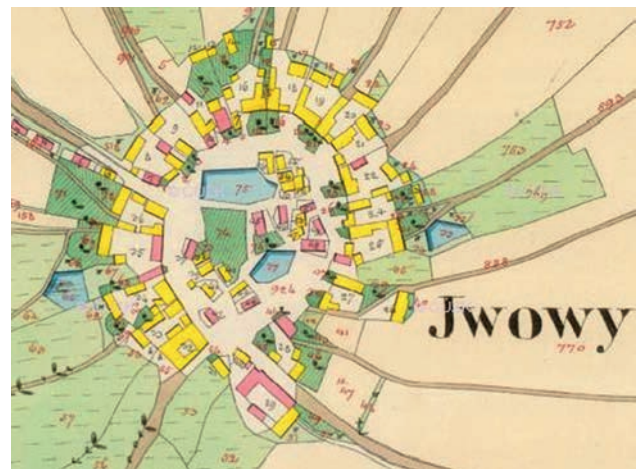
A comparison of early medieval settlements with high mediaeval villages shows many differences, not only regarding the location, size, organisation, and proximity of the Romanesque church. The fundamental building site and farming unit is the farmstead. This farmstead consists of a farmhouse and outbuildings, where the farm buildings surround a more or less regular courtyard. It seems that the shortened L- or U-shaped ground plan became predominant. In this respect, the round villages were no exception. Because the high mediaeval buildings have not been preserved, with a few exceptions, the current state of affairs will be described. Nevertheless, it is beyond doubt that there is a connection between the former and present layout, although there are exceptions in certain individual buildings. As a general rule, the farmhouse is close to the village green and sometimes includes a more recent front garden. If there is adequate width, there may also be a granary at the front as another important farm building. The farmhouse and granary usually take up a gable position to the village green, connected by a front wall with a gate and door. This position can change to a side orientation or as a result of roofing over the courtyard entry. Behind the house and granary, just farm rooms or separate farm buildings such as storerooms, stables, etc are attached. At the back of the farm yard or garden, alternatively in the middle, there is a barn built crosswise. The built-up area was sometimes surrounded by fruit gardens or by an unpaved ring roadway.

4.3 Cultivated land and plots

In comparison with early medieval villages, there are also many differences regarding the field arrangement. This was related to the poorer soil fertility owing to the higher elevation. Thus the necessity of economical farming led to a new organisation. In contradistinction to the small and irregular fields called “blocks”, the new high medieval villages of the colonisation period have large regular fields called “tracks of land or large/vast field”. The way they were arranged was also absolutely new and consisted in the periodical arranging of vast fields, usually separated by boundary ridges (linear cairns, baulks) and unpaved roads. Whenever the buildings held round or segmental positions, the fields were wedge-shaped with a fan-shaped arrangement; otherwise, they were parallel. The field lanes¹⁸ or strips were laid out directly behind the farmsteads and therefore had the same number and a similar size (except the property of the reeve as the mayor of a village). Lesser differences could also depend on the fertility of the soil. These large fields were narrow and very long, because it was difficult to turn the animal-powered plough. Each farmer’s field could have its own piece of forest behind it which was used for foraging, firewood, or building material despite the distance. They often extended to the cadastre boundary line, comprised natural barriers or borders such as watercourses, forests, etc. At this end, the tracks of the field were widest, while the narrowest were towards the



Fig. 15 Slatina Village (Litoměřice District, Ústí nad Labem Region, north Bohemia), photo showing the state in 2005 [© Martin Čerňanský, www.lidova-architektura.cz]



Figs. 16 Jivoví Village, in German Iwowy (Žďár nad Sázavou District, Vysočina Region, Bohemian-Moravian Highlands), Stable Cadastre map of 1835 [© State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre, www.cuzk.cz]. The first written record was in 1200, at that time in the possession of the Cistercian monastery in Žďár nad Sázavou. The elevation is 550 metres.



Figs. 17 Jivoví Village, in German Iwowy, today’s colour orthophoto [© Seznam, www.mapy.cz]

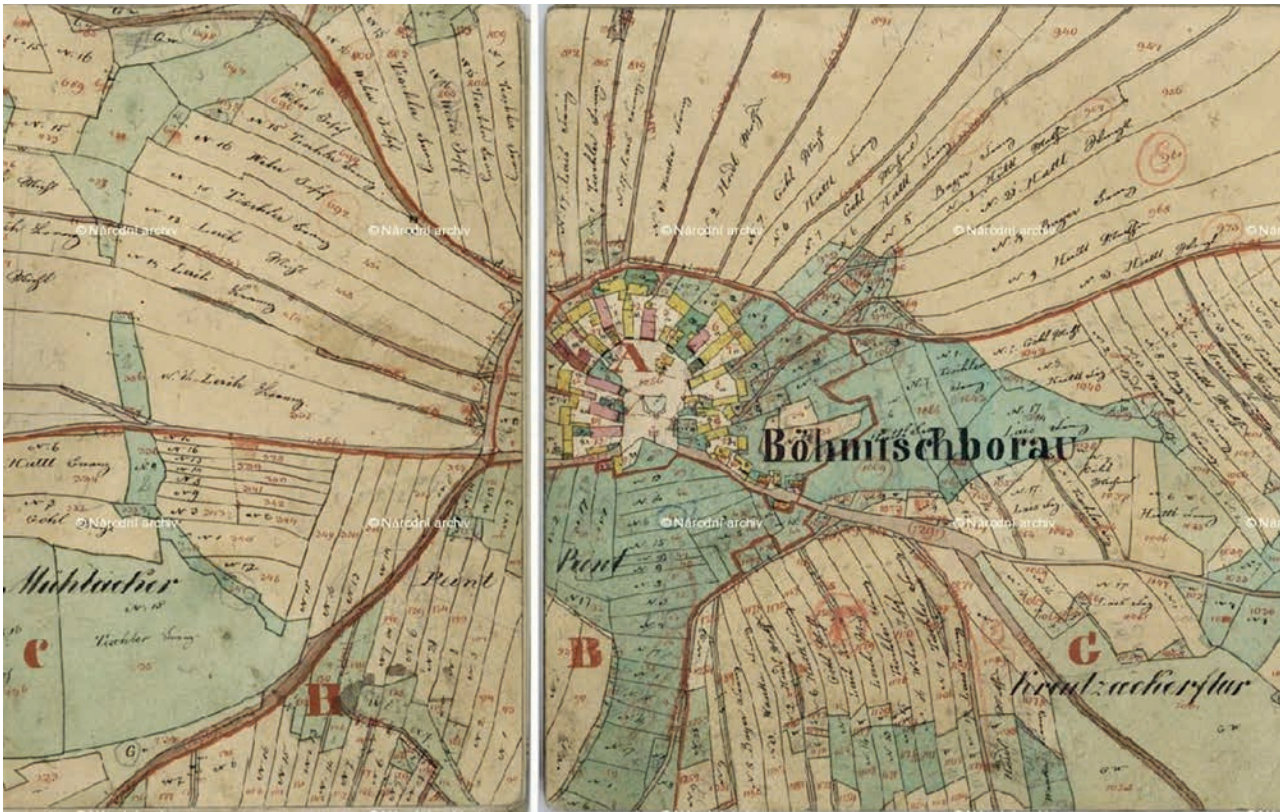


Fig. 18 Beranov Village, originally Böhmischorau, Český Boranow (Cheb District, Karlovy Vary Region, West Bohemia), Stable Cadastre maps [© State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre, www.cuzk.cz]. The first written records were in 1233, at that time in the possession of the Cistercian monastery in Teplá.



Fig. 20 Beranovka Village (Cheb District, Karlovy Vary Region, West Bohemia), black and white orthophoto from 1956/57 [© Military Geographical and Hydrometeorological Institute Dobruška, www.kontaminace.cenia.cz]

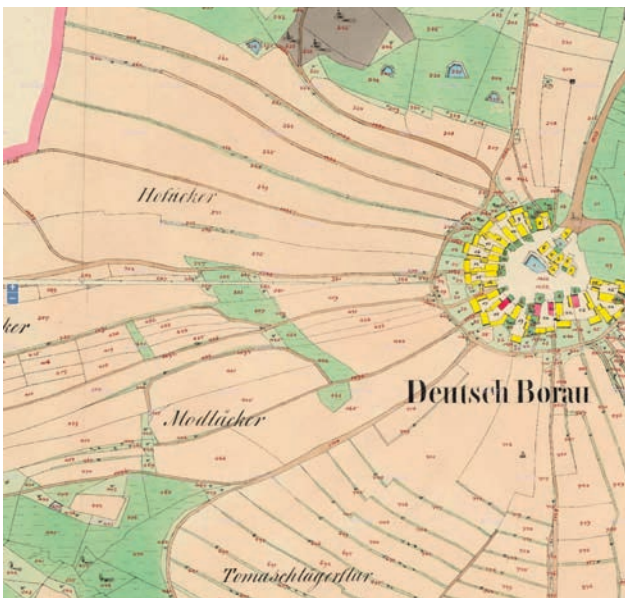
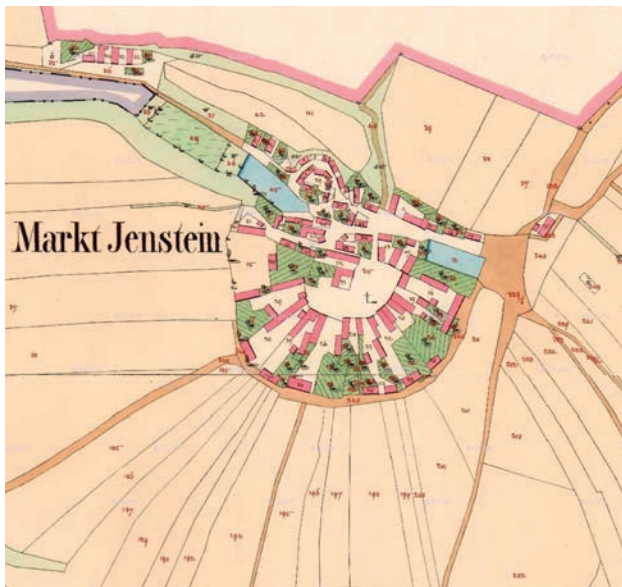


Fig. 19 Beranovka Village, originally Deutsch Borau, Německý Boranow (Cheb District, Karlovy Vary Region, West Bohemia), the Imperial Imprint of Stable Cadastre map of 1839 [© State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre, www.cuzk.cz]



Fig. 21 Beranov Village (Cheb District, Karlovy Vary Region, West Bohemia), today's colour orthophoto [© Seznam, www.mapy.cz]



Figs. 22 and 23 Jenštejn Village, in German Jenstein, *Jenssteyn* (Pražská východní část, Středočeský územní úřad, Středočeský územní úřad), *Stable Cadastre of 1841* [© State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre, www.cuzk.cz] and today's colour orthophoto [© Seznam, www.mapy.cz]. The first written record was in 1368 as a settlement around the water castle (1341) in possession of *Jenčik of Janovice*, a court officer. The elevation is 230 metres.

village. For that reason, a longitudinal division of this field into halves was often not possible in the event of a property change, either. After all, there were no free building sites among the existing farmsteads. The original arrangement could remain in existence, provided that the boundary ridge and unpaved roads were not ploughed over during the socialist period of collective farming.

4.4 Village green

A village green was and is the centre of the entire settlement up to the present, although its function has changed over time. In the past, the village green was mainly for farming use. It was used as pastureland for livestock and thus was common property. Later there were utility gardens of individual farmers and were surrounded by fences on all sides. These gardens almost ceased to exist once in contrast to the late gardens which were founded right below the front facade of almost every house. The front gardens, also called ornamental gardens, were and still are covered by culinary or medicinal herbs and flowers planted beneath the windows facing the village green. Until today, a large public grass plot can be found here, often with trees like fruit trees, lindens, or chestnuts. These trees grew around a pond whose water could be used by the settlers, for livestock and in the case of fire. The risk of fire was higher for the older wooden buildings, especially those with an open fireplace. The combustible buildings were marked in yellow in the Stable Cadastre maps.

4.5 Development inside and outside the village green

In addition to the above-mentioned natural objects, a sacral building was rarely built in the village square, albeit at a

later time. It could be a small church or chapel, or merely a statue and crucifix. After the First and Second World Wars, monuments to the fallen were added. Aside from this, the village square was often used as a site for new public buildings such as schools or pubs and very often for small houses. These small houses were built for newly independent family members or for newcomers. Apart from the building site inside the public village square, the authority or the father would also detach a piece of arable land. In comparison with peasants, their initial landed property was small, sometimes just a small garden. Among others, the division of farmsteads was allowed by the letters patent. Given the insufficient area of the village green, these small houses were also built along the road at the margin of the old village centre. An important piece of information about the development may be given by the house numbering, provided it was not changed later.

4.6 Extinction or transformation

While centuries of development within the village green and along the roadway have not changed the basic historical arrangement, unfortunately, some other events have – these were particularly natural or human disasters during which some of the villages were completely or partly destroyed or abandoned. Historically speaking, the Hussite Wars (1419–1434) and the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) were the most tragic. In the event of partial destruction, a large aristocratic farm (manor farm estate, *meyerhof*) may have been built at this place. During the 20th century, World War I (1914–1918) and World War II (1939–1945) brought about many ruins. Factually, the villages were destroyed by unintentional or intentional fires and by floods during their existence as well. A

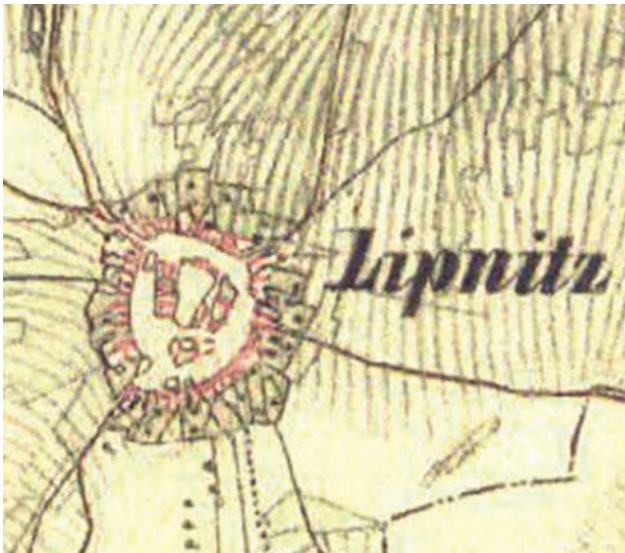


Fig. 24 Lipnice Village, in German Lipnitz (Plzeň-jih District, Plzeň Region, South-west Bohemia), Map of the 2nd Military Survey between 1842-1852 [© Austrian State Archive, www.mapy.cz]. The first written record was in 1391 as Nová Ves nad Poříčím Village, which was renamed later. The elevation is 495 metres.



Fig. 25 Lipnice Village (Plzeň-jih District, Plzeň Region, South-west Bohemia), today's colour orthophoto [© Seznam, www.mapy.cz]

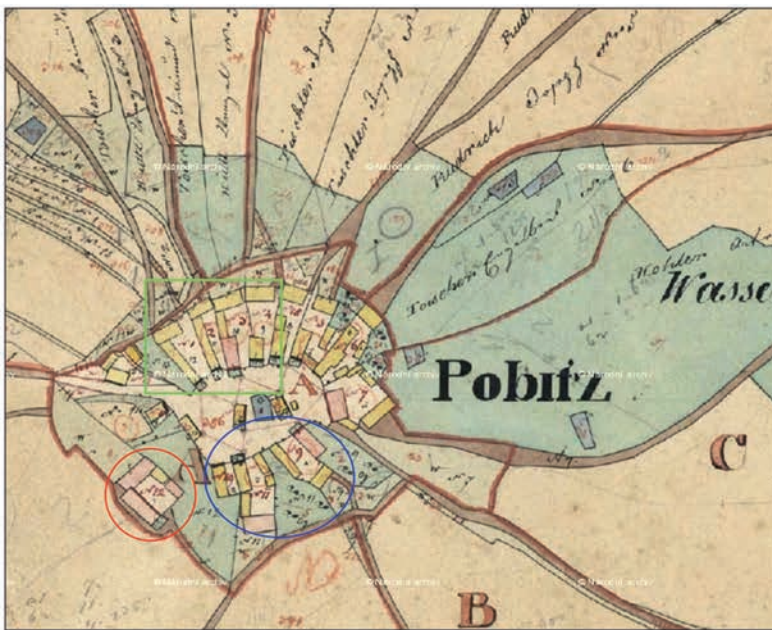


Fig. 26 Babice Village, originally Pobitz (Cheb District, Karlovy Vary Region, West Bohemia), indication draft of Stable Cadastre map of 1839 [© State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre, www.cuzk.cz] and schematic drawing from memory [© Anton Punzet, http://www.hamelika.cz/?cz_babice%2C414]. The first written record was in 1273; the elevation is 710 metres.

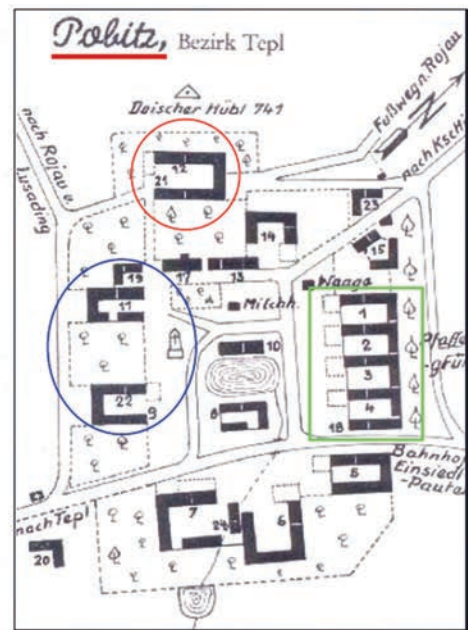


Fig. 27 Babice Village (Cheb District, Karlovy Vary Region, West Bohemia), today's colour orthophoto [© Seznam, www.mapy.cz]





Fig. 28 Bažantov Village, originally Wosant (Tachov District, Plzeň Region, West Bohemia), indication draft of Stable Cadastre map of 1838 [© State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre, www.cuzk.cz]. The first written record was in 1357; the elevation is 675 metres.



Fig. 29 Bažantov Village (Tachov District, Plzeň Region, West Bohemia), today's colour orthophoto [© Seznam, www.mapy.cz].

lack of renewal or a reconstruction of the buildings themselves are also an associated factor. Many historical buildings or entire villages were left without maintenance as a consequence of resident displacement, in particular of the German populace and national minorities from the borderlands or language enclaves from the inlands.

A great number of these abandoned buildings, as well as many more, were torn down as a result of the post-war zone along the national borders, military training areas, and coal mining in northern Bohemia and Silesia. Many buildings fell victim to new dams or the construction of new houses on the same building site. All these cases led to irreversible changes of the historical arrangement, sometimes beyond recognition. Not even the hypothetical reconstruction of the situation corresponding with the time of origin is possible, although there are older maps and land registers. The problem is that these documents are not old enough for this purpose. Except for this, there was a whole range of villages with a village green often mixed with other types. A comparison with other villages of the same type can be helpful in general terms.

4.7 Inception of circular villages with regular plan view of modern times

New villages from the modern age were usually founded on a very regular layout in terms of the buildings themselves and the division of land. The plots had a small area; therefore the farm buildings were also small. Technical drawings drawn by trained planners came usually before the survey *in situ*. Baroque compositions became particularly expressive and were characterised by an axial symmetry. Based on one or more axes of symmetry, most of the buildings took up their position as did the palace or hospital premises. The main axis usually corresponded with the access road. The small fruit gardens could also be subordinated to this symmetry, while the surrounding landscape was subordinated to an intentional aesthetic organisation, albeit to a somewhat lesser

extent. Except for the round plan view, the polygonal layout could be used, e.g. hexagon or octagon.

5. Conclusion: protection and urban planning

Circular, semi-circular and oval villages provide inseparable evidence of the historical colonisation in the present-day Czech Republic. They also represent a striking type of settlement layout plan which merits due diligence. For that reason, the protection of the plan view arrangement and historical buildings is important from the perspective of historic preservation and spatial planning. Despite the long history of organised heritage care and protection in today's Czech Republic, the protection and conservation of the villages have remained outside the general interest for a long time. The legal protection of monuments of vernacular architecture, at first only individually, came only in relation to the adoption of the long-prepared Act No. 22/1958 Coll. on cultural monuments. Under this act, three of the above-mentioned circular villages (Byšičky, Lipnice, and Vápensko) were declared immovable monuments, although this was not about individual buildings but the plan view with the village green. These villages are now listed in the premises category. The passing of the new Conservation Act No. 20/1987 Coll. on national heritage preservation meant important organisational and legislative changes, but not for the villages. More important were the changes brought about by the Velvet Revolution in 1989 which signified a turning point in the attitude of the official authorities to rural settlements and to vernacular architecture in general. Following the model of historic town centres, well-preserved villages started to be declared protected areas from 1990. Protected areas include conservation areas and zones with collections of vernacular architecture including possible buffer zones. [11] Some of these are the above-mentioned circular villages, namely Beranov, Lipnice (this time as a zone), Nová Ves (Jindřichův Hradec District), and Slatina.

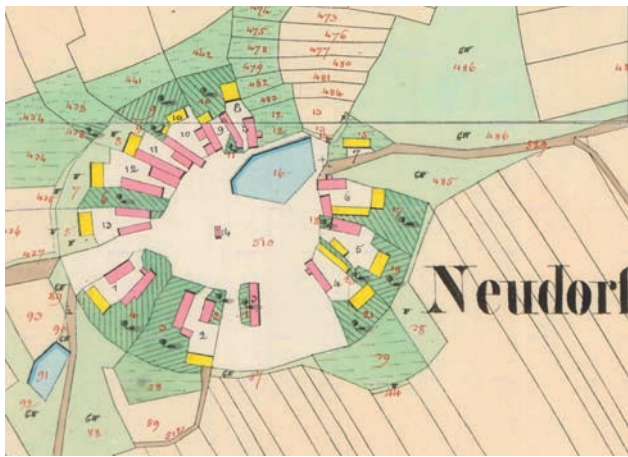


Fig. 30 Nová ves Village, originally Neudorf, Nowawes (Plzeň-jih District, Plzeň Region, west Bohemia), indication draft of Stable Cadastre map of 1838 [© State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre, www.cuzk.cz]. The first written record was in 1591 (sometimes stated 1652), at that time in the possession of the Premonstratensian monastery in Chotěšov. The St. John's chapel was built in the middle of the village in the first half of the 19th century. The elevation is 350 metres.

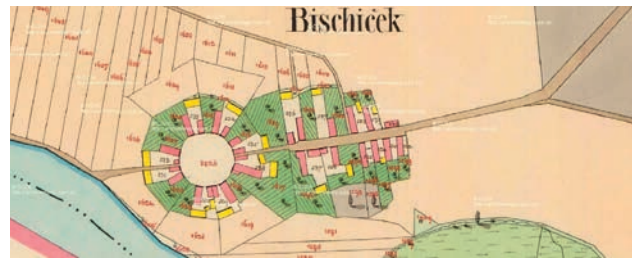
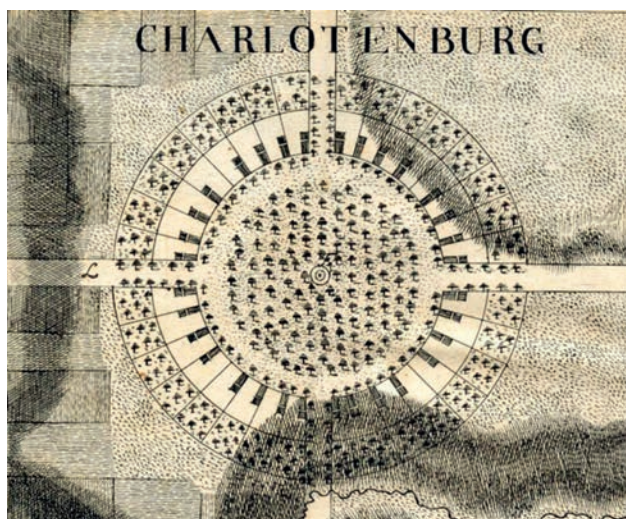


Fig. 34 Vápensko Village (Nymburk District, Central Bohemian Region), today's colour orthophoto [© Seznam, www.mapy.cz]. The first written record was in 1720; the elevation is around 200 metres.

Fig. 35 Nová Ves Village (Jindřichův Hradec District, South Bohemian Region), the Imperial Imprint of Stable Cadastre map of 1828 [© State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre, www.cuzk.cz]. The first written record was in 1804; the elevation is 525 metres.

Figs. 31–33 Byšičky Village (Nymburk District, Central Bohemian Region), indication draft of Stable Cadastre map of 1838 [© State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre, www.cuzk.cz], today's colour orthophoto [© Seznam, www.mapy.cz] and photo from 2005 [© Martin Čerňanský, www.lidova-architektura.cz]. The first written record was in 1546, but it related to the old village. The new village was founded in 1717 by Count Franz Anton von Sporck. The pseudo-Gothic St. Wenceslas' chapel was built in the middle of the village in 1888, surrounded by four legacy trees. The elevation is 175 metres.



Figs. 36 and 37 Șarlota Village, Charlottenburg (Timiș County, Banat, ROMANIA), drawing of the plan [© <http://www.pressalert.ro/2015/04/charlottenburg-satul-unic-din-romania-vezi-istoria-completa-a-locurilor/>] and aerial photo [© <http://viziteaza-romania.com>]. The village was founded in 1771. There is a church in the village square.

In the case of unprotected villages, public interest in cultural heritage preservation is significantly represented in Act No. 183/2006 Coll. on spatial planning and building regulations. One of the stated national priorities is “to protect and develop natural, civilisation and cultural values of areas including urbanistic, architectonic and archaeological heritage in the public interest”. As always, the reality is much more complicated and the requirement of sustainable settlement development in the form of buildings at locations and of architectural forms without conflict is difficult to follow through.

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- ⁵ Compare also in Czech kruh, in English ring, circle, round, in German Kreis, Zirkel, Ring, in French cercle, rond etc.
- ⁶ Austrian State Archive, <http://www.mapy.cz>.
- ⁷ State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre, <http://www.archivnimapy.cuzk.cz>.
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- ¹⁴ The round ground plan is also known in the case of individual buildings such as rotundas.
- ¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Bohemia.
- ¹⁶ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ostsiedlung>.
- ¹⁷ HAUSEROVÁ, M., Česká města ve středověku, <http://www.prostorad.cz/dejiny/roman/mesta/strmesta.htm>.
- ¹⁸ In Czech a similar term is used: polní lán.