The Emergence of the Bohemian State
East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450

General Editor
Florin Curta

VOLUME 13
The Emergence of the Bohemian State

By

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The emergence of state, and the earliest history of statehood, is a topic of research to which I have dedicated my entire professional life. The fact is, nonetheless, that my efforts have long been concentrated on a quite different aspect of the history of humankind – that of the emergence of cuneiform civilization in the ancient Orient, specifically southwestern Asia.

There is a Czech proverb which says that ‘blood is not water’. My study of the beginnings of literate history led me to deliberate upon what was happening at this time in my own homeland, now the Czech Republic, comprising what was once the medieval duchy, and then kingdom, of Bohemia. The temptation to publicly state my views on the subject grew stronger and stronger as I heeded the famous words of Martin Buber: ‘If you have found out something, you should find the courage to say it aloud.’

At this time, I was contacted by Messrs. Břetislav Daněk and Filip Outrata, editors of the Vyšehrad publishing house in Prague, who asked me whether I would like to write a book about the emergence of the state of Bohemia. Having enjoyed working with them during the publication of my earlier book on Duke Boleslav II, I hesitated only briefly. The decision to put my long-held thoughts into writing was made.

After the publication of my book in the Czech language, I had the honor of meeting Florin Curta, of the University of North Florida, when he visited this country on a research tour in 2007. Although we had met before in the U. S. A. in 2005, it was during his visit to the Czech Republic that we had more time to discuss the problems involved in studying the early medieval history of this part of Europe. I was greatly impressed by his breadth of vision, his deep appreciation of historical problems, and especially by his profound understanding of the role of archeology in such undertakings.

It was Florin who suggested that the Brill publishing house be approached with regard to translating my book into English. There, the matter fell into the capable hands of Mr. Julian Deahl and Ms. Marcella Mulder, and so it was that this new edition of my earlier book, incorporating results of my work since 2007, came into being.
This is the product that I now present to my esteemed readers, and I sincerely hope that the time you spend perusing my work will be considered well-spent.

Works of this kind, evolving over decades of research and deliberation, make it rather difficult to ascribe the origin of particular ideas to definite moments in time, or even to people who might have inspired them. I will thus acknowledge here all the friends, colleagues and partners to whom I feel in any way indebted in the writing of this book.

I conducted most of my research in two Institutes of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, and, since 1993, the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic – Archeological and Oriental. I owe my greatest debt of gratitude to my masters and tutors at the Archeological Institute who instilled in me the essentials of the discipline of archeology, and its relation to history – Messrs. Zdeněk Smetánka and Miroslav Richter. I profited greatly from discussions with my learned friends and colleagues Martin Tomášek, Jan Frolik, Naďa Profantová, Kateřina Tomková, Petra Maříková-Vlčková and Jan Mařík.

At the Oriental Institute, I acknowledge my debt of gratitude to my learned friends and colleagues Jiří Prosecký, the late Blahoslav Hruška, and Jan Filipský. For technical assistance with the preparation of the manuscript I am obliged to my learned friend and colleague, L’ubica Obuchová.

The years that I spent at my alma mater, Charles University in Prague, are equally valued. I trained in its Philosophical Faculty, and have long been active in its Faculty of Education. I am grateful to my masters and tutors Jiří Sláma, Miroslav Buchvaldek, Jan Filip, Lubor Matouš, Vladimír Souček and František Graus, the greatest influences of my student years. I greatly appreciate the continued help and inspiration of my learned friends and colleagues Kateřina Charvátová, Jan Klápště, Petr Čornej, Jana Kepartová, Alena Mišková, Lenka Bobková, Jan Zdichyne, Martin Bažil and Petr Kubín.

I learned a lot from those who, like me, study Bohemian history, whether at the Historical Institute of our Academy of Sciences, or at the newly established Center for Medieval Studies (Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and Charles University, Prague). I am grateful to Petr Sommer, František Šmahel, the late Dušan Třeštík, Josef Žemlička, David Kalhous and Dana Dvořáčková-Malá.

I have always profited greatly from my contacts, connections and interactions with the Masaryk University at Brno, Moravia.
FOREWORD

I acknowledge my debt of gratitude to Vladimír Podborský, Zdeněk Měřínský, Jiří Macháček, Inna Mateiciucová and Šimon Ungermann from that Institution.

I also acknowledge and appreciate the kindly help and cooperation of my learned friends and colleagues abroad. These include the above mentioned Florin Curta of the University of North Florida, and Touraj Daryayee of the University of California at Irvine, California, U. S. A. Other colleagues who assisted in various ways and should be thanked here are Patrick Périn of the National Museum of Antiquities at St.-Germain-en-Laye in France, Gabriel Martinez-Gros of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris, France, and Sophie Makariou of the Musée du Louvre also in Paris, France.

A research undertaking of this type must necessarily depend on the generous support of sponsoring bodies both at home and abroad. In 2003–2004, I had the good fortune to be able to spend a year at the University Museum of Archeology and Anthropology of the University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia, U. S. A., as a Fulbright grantee (John William Fulbright Foundation, Prague office, grant no. 2003-28-02). In the following year, I could return to this Institution (which, owing to the kindness and amiability of my colleagues there, I came to adopt as ‘mine’) thanks to a research grant from the American Philosophical Society at Philadelphia (2005 Franklin Grant). I also received assistance from the Grant Agency of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic at Prague (grant no. A8021401), and from the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic (grant 404/08/J013). I am most grateful to these Institutions for their support of my research.

In 2008, I could tackle a whole series of problems relating to the topics included in this book thanks to a sojourn at the Université de Paris - Pantéon-Sorbonne (Paris IV), and also at the Section des Sciences Historiques et Philologiques of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris, France. I am most grateful to my learned friend and colleague Ludvík Kalus of both the above mentioned Institutions for his kind assistance in all matters connected with my stay in Paris. The present work constitutes a research output of a grant project of the Grant Agency of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in Prague No. IAA 8000 20804.

It goes without saying that in acknowledging my debts of gratitude to all those who have helped me, I wish to point out that all the errors and inconsistencies in this book are mine alone.
Those who probably paid the highest price for this book are members of my own family. I feel a great debt of gratitude towards Kateřina Charvátová, my wife, lifelong companion and colleague, to my sons Jan and Ondřej, and to my daughters-in-law Lenka and Eva. Antonín (Anthony), our first grandson, has recalled for us the long forgotten joys of parenthood. To them all I give my heartfelt thanks, and beg their forgiveness if, absorbed too much with early medieval problems, I neglected any important message that they had for me.

Prague, June 2009
01: A gold ring found at Čáslav-Hrádek, Bohemia. Made in Italy or the Rhineland sometime between the end of the sixth and the end of the seventh-century, lost at Hrádek in the early ninth-century (Charvát 1997a, 24 Fig. 1).

02: The Emperor Constantine rewarded those who had helped him to the throne by giving them rings with the inscription FIDEM CONSTANTINO (‘fidelity to Constantine’). Did the king of the Alamanni, Crocus, possibly Krok of the ancient sagas of Bohemia, also wear one? (Fuchs 1997, 119).

03: The sixth to seventh-century settlement site of Roztoky near Prague included this house, No. 926. A series of curving post-hole lines in the corner opposite the stone-built kiln may represent traces of an ancient sleeping platform (Kuna-Profantová et al. 2005, 409 Fig. 159).

04: A bone handle found in feature 449 at Roztoky (Kuna-Profantová et al. 2005, 469 Fig. 219: 8).

05: The compositional principle of the Roztoky bone handle decoration is the same as that of this gilt silver belt chape (strap-end mount), dating to around 530. It was discovered in the grave of an Alamannic lady of rank at the site of Schwenningen in southwestern Germany. In this manner, the earliest medieval culture of Bohemia shows signs of the influences to which it was exposed (Fuchs 1997, 299–300).

06: A bone comb from Roztoky (Kuna-Profantová et al. 2005, 484 Fig. 234: 7).

07: This map shows the diffusion of bone combs throughout sixth to seventh-century Bohemia. In their original homeland, Slavs did not use such items; they became familiar with them only after they had settled down in regions where bone combs were used. The map thus exposes the particular zone of contact between the newcomers and the resident population – in other words, it documents the region in which the earliest BOHEMI are to be sought (Kuna-Profantová et al. 2005, 195 Fig. 80).
08: Finds from a Migration-period grave at Roztoky (possibly sixth-century). Point of a Frankish angon on the left (Pič 1909, 38).

09: This carving of a horseman comes from a rock relief showing the enthronement of the Sasanian ruler Khusrav II Aparviz (590–628) at Taq-i Bostan by present-day Kermanshah, Iran. The dignitary wears a robe of luxury cloth, displaying medallions depicting animals, and a nomad-type waist-belt with hanging straps, set with their own chapes (strap-end mounts). This is how the Avar kaganate elite probably dressed.

10: This portrait of a Sasanian queen is probably representative of the appearance of the earliest medieval elites of Bohemia. The type of earrings worn by the queen have been discovered in Bohemia and Moravia: Měřínský 2002, 525, middle of the lowest row (Lukonin 1979, 154 Fig. 28).

11: This portrayal of Samo, the Frankish merchant, by the Bohemian painter Mikoláš Aleš (1852–1913) owes much to nineteenth-century ideas about the national past. The dignitary wears a Balkan style of dress, with a pendant around his neck which has proved to be a Hallstatt-age brooch of the seventh and eighth centuries B.C. Samo’s staff of office has been modeled on a pendant found at the Býčí-Skála cave in the Moravian Karst region, and dates from the sixth pre-Christian century. However Samo might have looked, this depiction is probably not particularly historically accurate (Sklenář 2003, 269).

12: This is what an eighth-century barrow cemetery may have looked like; the site is Kožlí by Orlík (Lutovský 1996a).

13: Two crematory urns, as excavated in a sixth to eighth-century cemetery at Přítluky by Břeclav (Měřínský 2002, 100).

14: Amphorae with ridges, probably originally brought into Bohemia by Frisian merchants as Rhenish wine containers from the end of the eighth to the tenth-century (Profantová 2000, 652 Fig. 4).

15: Exquisite gold Avar belt accessories, from a hoard find discovered at Vrap, Albania (Swoboda 1991, 598, Fig. 377).

16: Dolní-Dunajovice, Moravia, grave No. 7. This person was buried with a splendid nomad-type waist-belt; its position on the body, indicated by its metal accessories, was revealed by meticulous excavation procedure. (Měřínský 2002, 349).
17: Hooked spurs from eighth-century layers at the site of Mikulčice, Moravia (Měřínský 2002, 256).

18: These horse-harness decorations (phalerae) from eighth-century Mikulčice, Moravia, clearly show the warrior ethos of the period, depicting lions, wolves and dogs baring their teeth in a menacing manner (Měřínský 2002, 458).

19: A sample of luxury gold tableware found at Sănnicolau Mare (one-time Nagyszentmiklós), Romania, from the late eighth-century (Böhner-Ellmers-Weidemann 1970, p. 173).

20: Meticulous excavation of this Polish cremation-rite funerary barrow revealed vestiges of the pyre on which the body was burned (Zoll-Adamikowa 1982, 89 Abb. 1).

21a: A large chape (strap-end mount) from Pohořelice, Moravia, most probably of eighth-century origin (Profantová 1992, Taf. 33 : B).

21b: A belt mount depicting fights between a dragon and a reptile, and with a pendant showing a human head emanating rays of light, most probably a likeness of the Iranian deity Mihr (Mithra) from the hill-fort of Kal, in the district of Jičín (Profantová-Kalferst 1999, 321, Fig. 4 : 5).

21c and d: Bohemian and Moravian iconography of the eighth and ninth-century finds parallels in seal impressions from the late Sasanian and post-Sasanian site of Qasr-i Abu Nasr. These include a depiction of a bird with Sasanian royal ribbons (pativa) around its neck (Frye 1973, No. 39), and also a composition of a plant motif flanked by two birds (Frye 1973, No. 328). Both motifs may be combined in the image borne by a chape from Mikulčice, shown in Figure 23 on page 91.

22: The image of Kal seems to have been inspired by icons of Mihr (Mithra), on his heavenly chariot and emanating rays of light, such as this one from the Akdepe site, Turkmenistan (Gubaev-Loginov-Nikitin 1996, Pl. XIV : 1.3).

23: An eighth-century chape (strap-end mount) from Mikulčice. Two birds, displaying the Sasanian royal ribbons (pativa), flank the central plant motif (Měřínský 2002, 249).

24: This is one of the pages of a book listing several thousand ninth-century benefactors of the Benedictine abbey of Reichenau, to whose memory the monks dedicated their prayers and services (Zentralbibliothek Zürich, Ms. Rh. hist. 27). Among them, this is the only entry written in
Greek script by a practiced hand and giving six personal names: Methodios, Leon, Ignatios, Ioakin, Symeon and perhaps the Slavic name of Dragais. Does the entry commemorate the sojourn of Methodius, archbishop of Sirmium and Moravia, who stayed in an unidentified imperial monastery in 870–873?

25: A waist-belt clasp and its chape (strap-end mount) from ninth to tenth-century graves at Kouřim (Šolle 1984, 151 Fig. 62).

26: A sample of objects found in an elite double interment at Kolín-nad-Labem, dating from the second half of the ninth-century (Lutovský 1996b).

27: Part of the funerary accouterments of a lady of rank buried under a funerary barrow at Želénky near Duchcov, Bohemia (Bláhová-Frolík-Profantová 1999, 227).

28: This western Frankish coin, minted at Melle, Aquitania, between the years 845 and 850, turned up at the hill-fort of Praha-Šárka (Sláma 1988, 59 Fig. 23).

29. A reconstruction of Prague Castle in the early tenth-century. Numbers denote Christian churches: 1 – Virgin Mary; 2 – St. Guy; 3 – St. George. Saint George’s nunnery bears the number 6. The elite residences shown are the bishop’s house (No. 4) and the ducal palace (No. 5). The Žiži hillock, where we presume offerings were made, was situated on the top of a rocky outcrop between the bishop’s house (No. 4) and St. Guy’s church (No. 2). The ducal stone throne, the ancient columna mundi, is most probably to be sought close to the ducal palace (No. 5) (Frolík 2000).

30: An air view of the Kouřim (Stará-Kouřim) hill-fort (Kolínsko 17).

31: This is an early ninth-century loop-shaped sword-belt accessory from Čáslav, which also depicts a fight between a dragon and a reptile as a symbol of the conflict between good and evil (Profantová 1991, 37 Fig. 1: 1).

32: Main types of female jewelery of ninth to tenth-century Bohemia (Šolle 1984, 180 Fig. 85).

33: A number of early ninth-century belt mounts bear the motif of a ridge with dense parallel incisions, perpendicular to the longer axis of the mount. The examples shown here were found at Žinkovy, Bohemia, Pohansko by Břeclav, Moravia, and Libice-nad-Cidlinou, Bohemia
(upper row, from left to right). Related examples have turned up at the Hungarian sites of Szegvar and Hajdudorog (lower row, also from left to right) (Charvát 2000, 136 Fig. 8 a 9).

34: The motif of ridges with dense parallel incisions, perpendicular to the longer axis of the mount, have turned up among northern Iranian finds from sites referred to as ‘Amlash’ (Charvát 2000, 137 Fig. 10).

35: A bronze likeness of the crucified Christ from the church of the Virgin Mary at Prague Castle. Southern Germany or the Rhineland, late tenth-century (Kubková 1997, 403 Fig. 1a).

36: A Bohemian lead coin (?) with the inscriptions VACLAV CNIZ and PRAGA CIVITA, found in a tenth-century context in the central part of a castle at Kazan’ (Staraya Kazan’) (Numismatické listy 1999/4, p. 107, Fig. 3).

37: Slave shackles from the vicinity of Verdun (Mourat 2001, 280).

38: Vojtěch or Adalbert, the second bishop of Prague, reproaches Duke Boleslav II for the sale of Christian slaves to non-Christians. Bronze door of the Gniezno cathedral, Poland, dating to the 1170s and possibly originating from a workshop in the Lower Rhineland.

39: A map of Bohemia before 930 by Jiří Sláma. The original Přemyslid realms in central Bohemia are indicated by crossed lines. Dark dots denote major fortifications in the rest of Bohemia (Sláma 1988, 81 Fig. 29).

40: A map of early medieval Bohemia by Jiří Sláma. Dark squares with toponyms show centers of Přemyslid castle administration, the establishment of which is assumed to have been initiated by Boleslav I (935–972). Small, dark dots in their vicinity indicate earlier fortifications, which were presumably deserted when the new Přemyslid centers were built (Sláma 1988, 83 Fig. 30).

41: We know virtually nothing about the emergence of the Jewish community in Bohemia. Yet the inhabitants of Prague, and later on, of other major sites in Bohemia, must have come into contact with people like this gentleman, whose face was carved in stone by a Greek or Roman artist, possibly in the tenth-century (Beazley 2002, No. 97, p. 63 and Pl. 20).

42: The assumed route of Ibrahim ibn Ya`qub’s voyage through Europe (Třeštík 1992, 11).

44: Dating from before 995, these vestiges of an inscription (or inscriptions) from Libice-nad-Cidlinou in Bohemia were originally interpreted as belonging to a tombstone. They are, however, more likely to represent the remains of a church inscription, perhaps of a dedicatory character (Turek 1982, 139, Figs. 46 and 47).

45: A coin struck by Emma, dowager queen, at Mělník, Bohemia, before 1006 (Sláma 1988, 44 Fig. 17).


47: An engraved reproduction of the illustration to psalm 66 from the psalter that belonged to Emma, queen of France, originally deposited at the library of St. Remi, Rheims, France. Probably 979–986 (Crivello 2001, Fig. 15 between pp. 192 and 193).


49: Eleventh to twelfth-century fortifications guarding the Moravian-Austrian border along the Dyje (Thaya) river. The situation of these forts is striking. At least some of them date from the time of Břetislav I (1034–1055), possibly even from his Moravian governorate. They thus constitute an early example of deliberate strategical design to protect the frontiers of the duchy (Peška-Unger 1993, 145 Abb. 7).
# LIST OF COLOR ILLUSTRATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01.</td>
<td>A page from the <em>Notitia dignitatum</em>, a late Roman list of army detachments, command offices and the supporting logistical apparatus of the imperial army. Early fifth-century A.D. The second emblem from the left in the uppermost row belongs to the <em>Marcomanni</em> (L’Or des Princes Barbares p. 24, fol. 115).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.</td>
<td>A statue of a warrior dated to 550–577 A.D. Hebei Regional Museum, China. An authentic depiction of a nomad warrior, evoking the appearance of the Avars as they came to eastern Europe (Hebei, Pl. 56).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03.</td>
<td>The so-called Dagobert’s throne, a Roman seat of office (<em>sella curulis</em>) with ninth-century additions (Périn-Feffer 1985, 81, Pl. 2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.</td>
<td>A saddle-cloth showing a pheasant with a Sasanian royal ribbon (<em>pativa</em>) around its neck. Central Asia, most probably Sogd, eighth or ninth-century. Eastern motifs probably came to Bohemia and Moravia by means of such carriers (Otavsky 1998, 16 Abb. 2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.</td>
<td>The title page of St. Matthew’s Gospel, most probably showing the four evangelists. Book of Deer, tenth to twelfth-century. Originally in the library of John Moore, bishop of Ely (+ 1714). Purchased and donated to Cambridge University by King George I. Cambridge University Library, MS. Ii.6.32, fol. 1v. We must not forget that the exquisite medieval manuscripts being exhibited throughout Europe were by no means the only products of early medieval scribal art. It may be that many a newly converted European Christian took advice and counsel from books of this character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.</td>
<td>A set of jewelry found in one of the richest interments at Libice-nad-Cidlinou, Bohemia. Church cemetery, before 1050, probably tenth-century. Spherical silver buttons (<em>gombíky</em>) with granulation crosses and a kaptorga locket decorated with horse figures, all with granulated patterns, are accompanied by amber and carnelian beads.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
08: St. Helen’s crypt in the Church of Holy Sepulcher, Jerusalem. After a 1839 lithography by David Roberts. From the tenth-century, the holy city of Jerusalem, where Jesus Christ lived and taught during his earthly life, was a center of pilgrimage for many European Christians, including Bohemians from at least the eleventh-century.
CHAPTER 1

THE SEVENTH-CENTURY: BEFORE THE GATES OF EUROPE

‘Look, you have cast out Love!
What Gods are these
You bid me please?
The Three in One, the One in Three? Not so!
To my own gods I go.
It may be they shall give me greater ease
Than your cold Christ and tangled Trinities.’

All of us instinctively desire that we – natives of our homelands, whatever name these may bear – can claim to have lived in the countries of our birth from time immemorial, from the moment ‘when it all began’. Needless to say, such an assumption is understandable, but its truth cannot be established. Of course, the population of Europe, which has grown first at a natural and later at an industrial pace, has not experienced any serious collapse or large-scale transformations since prehistoric times. On the other hand, it would be hard to claim that sheer weight of numbers says very much. The key act in self-identification by social bodies in Europe was always those claims made by its elites, whatever their origins – often they lay outside – which the non-elites viewed as most persuasive. It was men and women of standing, respect and consequence who focused the hearts, minds and consciences of whatever social group acknowledged them by rallying behind those who gave them a new, ethnic, social, and ultimately national, identity. This happened regardless of whether such elites were of domestic or foreign origin. It was social agents that built new nations; and linguistic affiliations, biological kinship, a common gene pool did not. Indeed, even blood ties wither, grow old and decrepit and lose vitality, if they are not re-invigorated by other factors that frequently come from outside.

It has been observed that areas that are culturally homogenous frequently mask a surprising heterogeneity in the biological substrate of their populations. Again, we should note that it is an underlying cultural pattern, maintained above all by an (elite) language and religion, which makes identities and nations survive. Let us examine how an ethnic community – and this, if we wish, can include many nations – is defined