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Current state of knowledge of high medieval fortifications in the Broumov region. The Benedictine Order as a builder of fortified settlements

Abstract

In the middle of the 13th century, the Broumov region (Bohemia) passed to the possession of the Benedictine Order (Břevnov Monastery in Prague). The centre of the area became Broumov, consisting of a town and a provostry, later a monastery. The Benedictine Order is associated with the high medieval colonization of the region. During the High Middle Ages, a system of villages and regularly measured-out fields was established here. However, the colonization activity of the Order also included the construction of several fortifications, which perished relatively soon. The aim of the paper is to present the current state of research on the local medieval fortifications. In addition to the well-known fortified provostry located in Broumov, there is a castle near Božanov. During the archaeological survey, two more hitherto unknown medieval fortifications were recently discovered (near Šonov and Studená Voda).

Key words: Middle Ages, colonization, fortifications, Benedictine Order

Introduction

The beginnings of formation of the high medieval settlement network in the Broumov region can be associated with the Benedictines from Břevnov (Fig. 1). Although we are partly informed about this process by later copies of documents and partly also by forgeries (falsifications of original documents from a later period), it is possible, at least on a basic information level using the available sources, to reconstruct the process of gradual formation of two monastic settlement domains – Police and Broumov regions (Šrámek 2013). The Police estate is supposed to have been donated to the Benedictines by the King of Bohemia as early as 1213 (Friedrich 1912, 399–401). During the reign of King Ottokar II of Bohemia, a letter from 1253 states for the first time that the Order also held the property *extra Hemi*, i.e.,

behind the Broumov Walls ridge (Broumovské stěny) in the Broumov region (Šebánek, Dušková 1962, 483, 484). Later, in 1256, Broumov itself is mentioned as a *villa forensis* held by Abbot Martin (Šebánek, Dušková 1974, 138, 258). Until the end of the reign of King Ottokar II, the villages of Bohdašín, Božanov, Hynčice, Křinice and Martínkovice are mentioned in the Police and Broumov regions (Šebánek, Dušková 1974, 106, 107, 137, 138, 173).

In the period after the death of King Ottokar II in the Battle on the Marchfeld (26 August 1278), the Břevnov colonization enterprise was temporarily threatened. At that time, the Police and Broumov regions passed to the administration of the Duke of Silesia, Henry IV Probus. However, on the basis of the duke's will, after his death in 1290, these territorial possessions returned to the property of the Order (Jurek 1994, 79–99; Musil 2016, 159). At that time, the Břevnov convent was already led by Abbot Bavor of Nečtiny. It can be rightly assumed that during the tenure of the energetic abbot, further steps were taken to stabilize the area and expand the settlement oikumene. In 1296, a fortified place (*municio*) is mentioned directly in Broumov and the local burgrave is also mentioned (Emler 1882,

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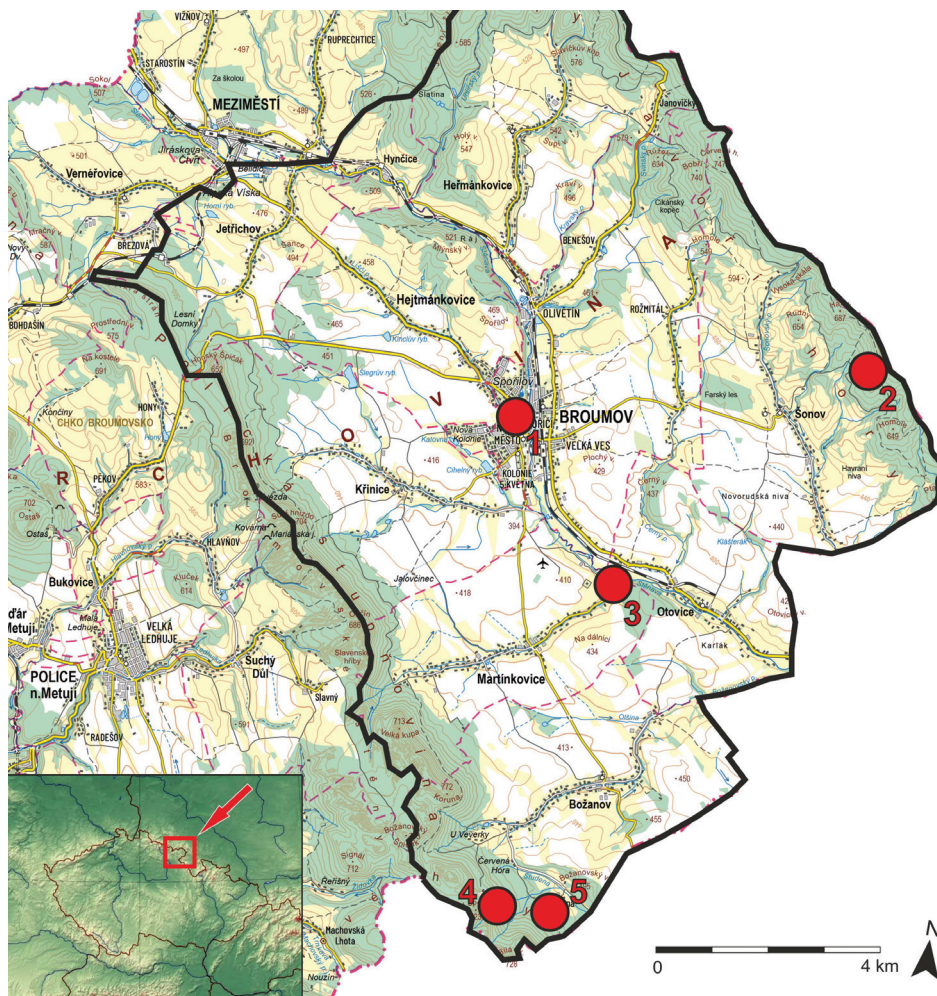


Fig. 1. Broumov region and the location of the sites mentioned in the text:
 1) castle, town and provostry of Broumov,
 2) fortification above Šonov,
 3) stone tower in Martínkovice,
 4) castle near Božanov,
 5) fortification above Studená Voda.
 The border of the Broumov domain in 1406 is highlighted (elaborated by P. Drnovský)

Il. 1. Region Broumova i położenie miejsc wymienionych w tekście:

- 1) zamek, miasto i prepozytura Broumova,
 - 2) fortyfikacje nad Šonovem,
 - 3) kamienna wieża w Martínkovicach,
 - 4) zamek koło Božanova,
 - 5) fortyfikacje nad Studeną Vodą.
- Zaznaczono granicę domeny Broumova w 1406 r. (oprac. P. Drnovský)

743, 744). His presence at the beginning of the 14th century proved to be beneficial, as in 1300 there was an uprising of the Broumov reeves. The revolt was suppressed by the abbot's brother Vyšemír of Nečtiny. It is true that the only source of information about the severity of the fights is a letter of complaint by Abbot Bavor, so we can only work with his view of the matter, but the extent of the unrests was evidently considerable (Emler 1882, 1207–1209). The town of Broumov was attacked and burned down, the abbot calculates the damage at a total of 200 talents of silver. Within these events, the village of Šonov is mentioned for the first time, as it was completely destroyed by the rebels (*incendio cremarent*). The historian Rudolf Urbánek (1948, 505, 506) saw the reason for the dispute between the abbot and the reeves in the curtailment of their rights and burdening them with other obligations. František Musil (2016, 159, 160) views this event in a similar way. After the rebellion was suppressed, the situation has stabilized. This state of affairs was only disrupted during the reign of John of Luxembourg, who pledged the area to the Kłodzko nobles, the brothers Wolfram and Maciej (Matthias) of Pannwitz. Unfortunately, we again know this episode from only one record, namely from the revocation of the original pledge deed, which was issued by King John during his stay in Italy in July 1331 at the request of Abbot Bavor (Emler 1890, 690). The deed also states that after the death

of both brothers, the territory should return to the hands of the Order. The second brother, Wolfram, died in 1347 and the domains thus passed to the possession of the Benedictines again. Their claims to this territory were later confirmed by King Charles IV. In 1348, he endowed Broumov with town rights (Haas 1954, 97, 98) and three years later, the abbot had the king grant him a privilege that encompassed all older documents, including the already mentioned forgeries (Musil 2016, 163–165).

Overview of fortified sites

Castle and provostry in Broumov

In the north-eastern part of Broumov, a fortification was built at the end of the 13th century. It is first mentioned as a *municio* in 1296, when the Abbot of Břevnov appointed Konrad of Sulz as a castellan who was to ensure the protection of Broumov. Under the next burgrave Vyšemír of Nečtiny (brother of Abbot Bavor), the fortification was already mentioned as *castrum*. In 1300, the castle was damaged during the uprising of reeves. From the years 1296–1306, accounts from the reconstruction of the site have been preserved. The renewed castle also became the seat of the Broumov Provostry. The location was significantly changed by later building modifications. To learn

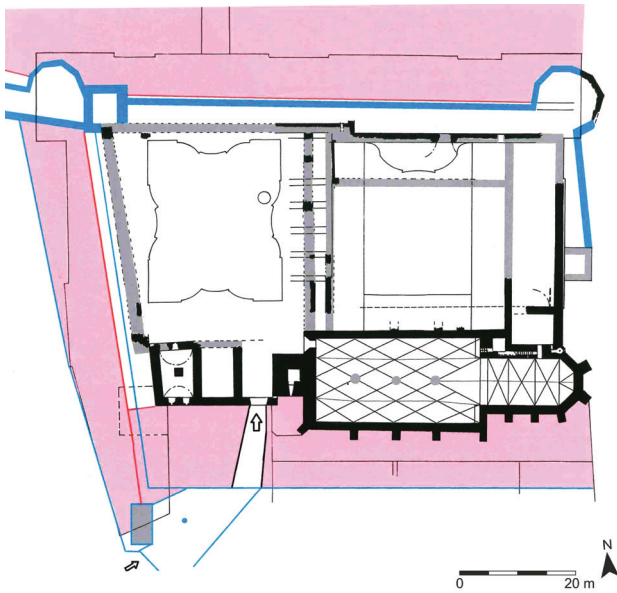


Fig. 2. Broumov, ground plan of the provostry premises.
Black – medieval constructions, blue – the course of the town walls,
pink – the course of the moat
(after: Slavík 2017, 270, pic. 10, modified)

II. 2. Broumov, plan terenu siedziby prepozytury.

Czarny – zabudowa średniowieczna,
niebieski – przebieg murów miejskich, różowy – przebieg fosy
(oprac. na podstawie: Slavík 2017, 270, pic. 10, zmodyfikowane)



Fig. 3. Broumov, view of the provostry premises
from the northeast, state as before 1660
(after: Slavík 2017, 265, pic. 3, modified)

II. 3. Broumov, widok na siedzibę prepozytury
od północnego wschodu, stan sprzed 1660 r.

(oprac. na podstawie: Slavík 2017, 265, pic. 3, zmodyfikowane)

about the appearance of the monastic castle, depictions of the area before the Baroque reconstruction and the results of building-historical surveys are important (Slavík 2014; 2017). The rectangular layout of the castle was protected on two sides by steep slopes falling to the Sřenava River. A moat was built opposite the town. On the southern side, there was a three-nave church with a tower added to the western façade. Another tower was located on the northern side of the presbytery. In the north-western part of the complex, there was a third tower protruding from the perimeter wall. Part of the area was fortified with a zwinger wall supplemented by a pair of bastions. Remnants of the medieval walls of the castle are now incorporated into the Baroque convent (Figs. 2, 3).

Fortification near Božanov (Raubschloss)

Božanov Castle was built on a narrow ridge, the slopes of which are naturally and deliberately used as a defensive element. Except for the northern side, the castle was surrounded by a moat and a rampart. At the southern side of the residence, the moat reaches its greatest depth of 3.5 m and a maximum width of 8 m. The site is fortified with a combination of an outer earthen embankment and a ditch (Fig. 4). The layout of the residence was three-part. The inner ward of the castle has an approximately oval shape with the dimensions of 15 × 43 m. In 1991, Jiří Sigl (1991) carried out archaeological research here. The main results include the detected presence of wooden buildings within the inner ward of the castle. Collapsed dry-stone structures were found. Further information was obtained during

surface collecting carried out in the 1990s (Drnovský, Mazáčková and Šrámek 2019). The assemblage of finds can be chronologically dated from the 2nd half of the 13th century to the beginning of the 14th century. The compo-

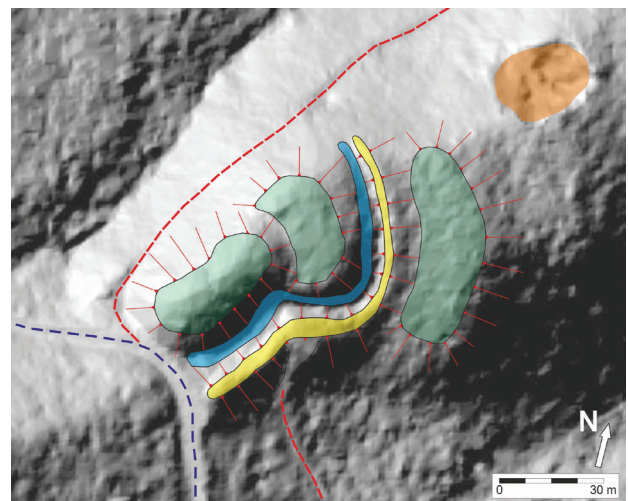


Fig. 4. Božanov, site plan.

Green – the inner ward and the baileys,
blue – the bottom of the ditch, yellow – the crown of the rampart,
brown – sandstone quarry (probably modern age).

The red dashed line indicates older roads,
the blue dashed line is a modern road (elaborated by P. Drnovský)

II. 4. Božanov, plan sytuacyjny.

Zielony – wewnętrzny dziedziniec i mury obronne,
niebieski – dno fosy, żółty – korona wału,
brązowy – kamieniołom piaskowca (prawdopodobnie epoka nowożytna).
Czerwona linia przerywana oznacza starsze drogi,
niebieska linia przerywana oznacza drogę współczesną
(oprac. P. Drnovský)

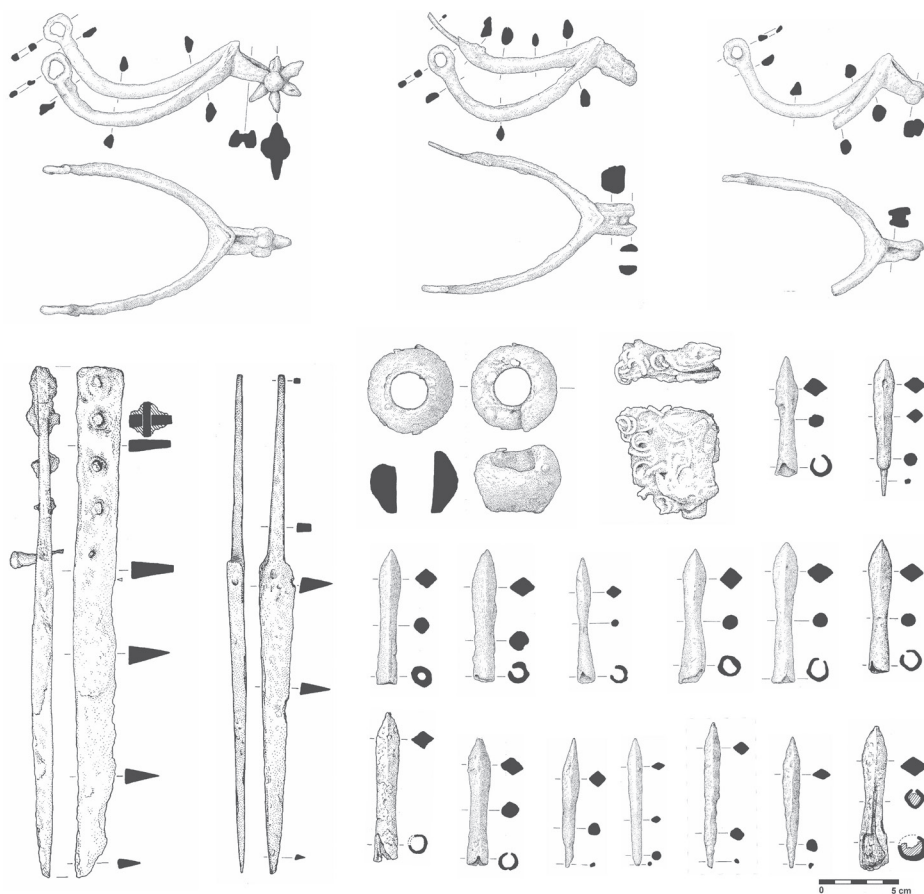


Fig. 5. Božanov, selection of metal finds, militaria and rider's equipment (after: Drnovský, Mazáčková and Šrámek 2019, modified)

Il. 5. Božanov, wybór znalezisk metalowych, militariów i wyposażenia jeźdźca (oprac. na podstawie: Drnovský, Mazáčková i Šrámek 2019, zmodyfikowane)

sition of the finds corresponds to the presence of a military garrison (Fig. 5). They include militaria and objects associated with horse stabling and rider's equipment. A violent termination of the castle's operation is evidenced in particular by an extensive set of arrowheads and projectiles from various contexts in the vicinity of the castle. Given the extent of the site and especially its location outside

the settlement area, an administrative function cannot be considered. From the site, it was possible to oversee the entrance to the Broumov Basin from the east and, thanks to its location, it was clearly visible from the neighbouring estates at a considerable distance.

Fortification near Šonov

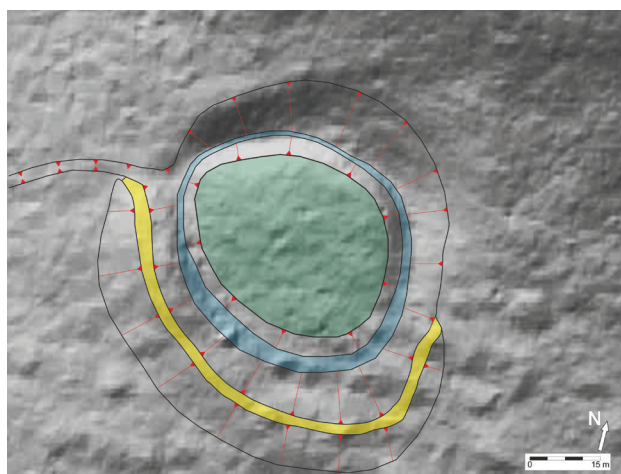


Fig. 6. Fortification near Šonov, site plan.

Green – the inner ward and the baileys; blue – the bottom of the ditch; yellow – the crown of the rampart (elaborated by P. Drnovský)

Il. 6. Fortyfikacja w pobliżu Šonova, plan sytuacyjny.

Zielony – wewnętrzny dziedziniec i mury obronne; niebieski – dno fosy; żółty – korona wału (oprac. P. Drnovský)

The site is located in the cadastral municipality of Šonov. The character of the site is determined by its location on the southern slope of the Šonov ridge, from the hilltops of which it is less than 90 m away. In the sloping terrain, a circular ditch was dug, which encloses the oval core of the fortification. The central part of the site measures 36 m in the north-south axis and 47 m in the west-east axis. The width of the perimeter ditch fluctuates. It is widest on the northern side, where it is dug into the adjacent slope and reaches a width of up to 11 m. No surface relics of building structures were observed in the area of the oval inner ward (Fig. 6). In the first half of 2022, several surface collections were carried out at the site with the aim to obtain archaeological finds that would help to clarify the operation period of the castle. The few metal finds can generally be classified as high medieval or modern. The question of why the fortification was established cannot be answered with certainty in the current state of knowledge. The first option is that it was built within the scope of consolidating the property structures of the Benedictines from Broumov. The second possible reason of why the fortification above Šonov was built can be related to prospecting efforts re-

lated to gold mining. The presence of gold can be inferred from old toponyms and it was also predicted by schlich prospection. In both of the above options, it is likely that the site was not fully completed (Drnovský 2023b).

Fortification near Božanov – Studená Voda

The site is located in the south-eastern corner of the cadastral municipality of Božanov near the border with Poland. The fortification consists of a ditch that partially encloses the oval inner ward. The outer edge of the ditch is connected to the rampart. The ditch does not encircle the entire inner ward of the fortification. The dimensions of the core are approximately 32×27 m. The width of the ditch varies between 6 and 4 m, with the eastern part being wider. The course of the ditch is disrupted by a ramp-like entrance corridor that leads to the south-western part of the inner ward (Fig. 7). Surface prospecting did not yield any artefacts. The construction of the newly discovered medieval fortification near the village of Božanov, or the settlement of Studená Voda, was probably not completed. This is indicated by the unfinished perimeter ditch and the existence of an unexcavated part of the ditch at the point of entry. The theory of the incompleteness of the site is also supported by the absence of ceramic and metal finds (Drnovský, Hejhal 2024).

Stone tower – Martínkovice

The building was located in the village of Martínkovice. We learn about its construction from a description by the Abbot of the Břevnov Monastery, Bavor of Nečtiny, who had it built at the beginning of the 14th century (*turri lapidea in villa Martini*). Its price is estimated in the document at six talents of silver. Its location cannot be exactly determined today, although at the beginning of the 20th century it is still stated that the hill opposite the church would be called *Turmwiese* (Tower Meadow). In the document, we can also find a mention of the restoration of the local farmyard in the same village (Cechner 1930, 218; Emler 1882, 1202, 1203; Žemlička 2014, 141). The role

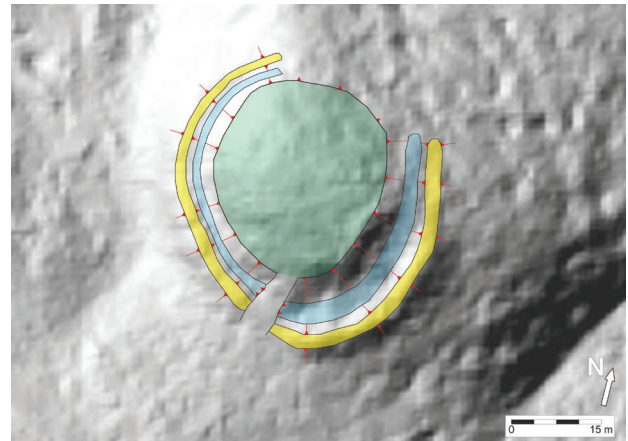


Fig. 7. Fortification near Studená Voda, site plan. Green – the inner ward and the baileys, blue – the bottom of the ditch, yellow – the crown of the rampart (elaborated by P. Drnovský)

Il. 7. Fortyfikacja w pobliżu miejscowości Studená Voda, plan sytuacyjny. Zielony – wewnętrzny dziedziniec i mury obronne, niebieski – dno fosy, żółty – korona wału (oprac. P. Drnovský)

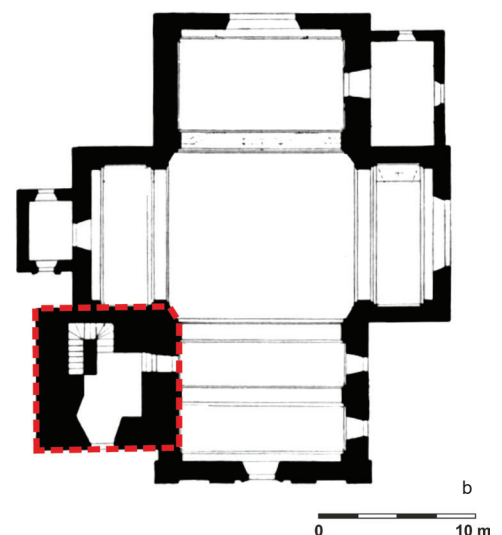
of the tower is unclear. It may have been a checkpoint at the main road near the border between the Broumov and Kłodzko regions. However, we cannot ignore the possibility that Abbot Bavor of Nečtiny just unclearly mentioned the construction of the tower of the local church in the record. Still, the form of the record is more indicative of a separate free-standing tower than of a church tower. In the case of the construction of a church, the abbot would probably choose a different form of written record. The existence of the church in Martínkovice is first documented as late as 1384. However, it is possible that the abbot's tower was secondarily used and incorporated into the construction of the Gothic phase of the church (Fig. 8).

Conclusion

If we summarize the testimony of written sources, it can be stated that the continuous settlement and the formation of a high medieval settlement network in the Broumov

Fig. 8. Church of St Martin in Martínkovice:
a) photo of the site as after 1900,
b) ground plan of the Baroque church with an older incorporated tower, marked with a dashed line (after: Cechner 1930, 218–221, pic. 273, 276, modified)

Il. 8. Kościół św. Marcina w Martínkovicach:
a) zdjęcie wykonane po 1900 r.,
b) rzut przyziemia kościoła barokowego ze starszą wkomponowaną wieżą, oznaczoną linią przerywaną (na podstawie: Cechner 1930, 218–221, obr. 273, 276, zmodyfikowane)



region can be associated with the colonization efforts of the abbots from Břevnov based on the local centres in Police and Broumov. The origin of all the fortifications described above can probably be associated with the Benedictine Order. We do not suppose that the pledge owners (Duke Henry IV Probus and the brothers of Pannwitz) would have built these residences during the temporary possession. Of the fortified settlements presented, we have contemporary written sources only for the castle, which was located directly in Broumov. The report on the stone tower in Martínkovice is unclear.

The development of the formation and stabilization of the monastic domain was reflected in the trends of founding the individual sites (Drnovský 2023a). From the beginning, Broumov was the central location – there was a town, a provostry and since the 1290s also a fortified residence. Probably at the beginning of the 2nd half of the 13th century, fortified sites were established to help stabilize the newly colonized landscape and demarcate the borders with the neighbouring Kłodzko region. These sites were located near Šonov and Studená Voda. The fortification at Studená Voda was not completed, probably due to the temporary territorial loss of the Broumov region to the Duke of Silesia, Henry IV Probus. Similarly, the fortification above Šonov also was probably abandoned. In this case, however, the demise could be related to an unsuccessful prospecting effort to mine gold. At the end, after regaining the Broumov region, the Benedictines had a castle built above Božanov. It is located only 820 m from the unfinished for-

tification near Studená Voda. It was founded in a strategically more advantageous location. Unlike the previous two locations, the castle near Božanov has a three-part layout: in addition to the inner ward, it also has two baileys. Its full completion and operation are evidenced by numerous pottery and metal finds. Finds of militaria in its vicinity testify to the violent demise of the castle. The position was probably conquered during the uprising of the Broumov reeves against their Benedictine manorial lords. During the fights, the castle and town of Broumov were burned down, and we can find a mention of burning down the village of Šonov as well.

After the rebellion was suppressed, the Abbot of Břevnov Monastery, Bavor of Nečtiny, decided to fundamentally rebuild the provostry, including the castle. Since the fortification above Božanov proved to be difficult to defend, it was not renewed. The fact that after 1300 and the suppression of the rebellion the position of the Benedictines in the Broumov region was so strong that it was not necessary to keep this seat as a foothold of their domains may also have played a role in this. The main portion of the investments was spent on the construction of a fortified settlement in Broumov. The castle and provostry, together with the fortified town, created a sufficiently solid foothold. During the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period, no further fortifications were built in the Broumov region.

Translated by
Jana Kličová

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Streszczenie

Obecny stan wiedzy na temat późnośredniowiecznych umocnień w regionie Broumova. Benedyktyni jako budowniczy grodów obronnych

W połowie XIII w. region Broumova (Czechy) przeszedł w posiadanie zakonu benedyktynów (klasztor Břevnov w Pradze). Centrum obszaru stał się Broumov, składający się z miasta i prepozytury, później klasztoru. Zakon benedyktynów jest związany z kolonizacją regionu w okresie późnego średniowiecza. W tym czasie utworzono tu system wiosek i regularnie mierzonych pól. Jednak działalność kolonizacyjna zakonu obejmowała również budowę kilku fortyfikacji, które stosunkowo szybko uległy zniszczeniu. Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie aktualnego stanu badań nad lokalnymi średniowiecznymi fortyfikacjami. Oprócz znanej ufortyfikowanej prepozytury znajdującej się w Broumowie, w pobliżu Božanova znajduje się zamek. Podczas badań archeologicznych niedawno odkryto dwie kolejne nieznanne dotąd średniowieczne fortyfikacje (w pobliżu Šonova i miejscowości Studená Voda).

Słowa kluczowe: średniowiecze, kolonizacja, fortyfikacje, zakon benedyktynów

