



ARCHAEOLOGICAL OPEN-AIR MUSEUM

„Great Moravian fortified settlement in Central Morava River Basin“ in Modrá (Uherské Hradiště region)

Modrá – a village in the Slovácko region is known mainly for its adventure area with an archaeological open-air museum, Living Water and an aurochs enclosure. On June 20, 2024, the Treasury of Great Moravia was added to the above attractions; it was built within the framework of the cross-border project INTERREG V-A, together with the Slovak Republic, called „Common heritage from the Romans to the jewels of Great Moravia“. On the Czech side, the project was carried out by the municipality of Modrá and the expert guarantor was the Moravian Museum Brno, and on the Slovak side, the municipality of Cífer in the Trnava Region, professionally cooperating with the Institute of Archaeology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Nitra.



TREASURY OF GREAT MORAVIA

EXHIBITION GREAT MORAVIAN ELITES

Showcase 4 – necklaces, metal beads, gold and silver pendants in the form of lunulas, rings, clasps and also a small antique carnelian gema set in a silver pendant from grave 4 in Modrá, which also represents the logo of the entire Treasury of Great Moravia.

Showcase 5 – globular buttons. These are ornaments and at the same time statutory symbols of the Moravians, worn on the dress on the place of collarbones. The dominant feature are the golden double-walled globular buttons from the rich grave 505 from Mikulčice and a set of other globular buttons, mainly from Břeclav-Pohansko and Staré Město.

Showcase 6 – children (girls) from noble families. Jewellery and ornaments, e.g. a necklace braided from silver wires with a hanging reliquary from grave 167/51 from Staré Město and a set of silver earrings and globular buttons from grave 256 from Břeclav-Pohansko.

Showcase 7 – view of the face of a magnate from the period of Great Moravia created in the Laboratory of anthropological reconstruction of the Moravian Museum on the basis of a skull from grave 122/59 in Uherské Hradiště-Sady.

Showcase 8 – introduction to the male elite. A man's skull, a knife with gold scabbard fittings from grave 23/49 from Staré Město, and a unique belt end from Břeclav-Pohansko, all decorated with gold and enamel, gold globular buttons from Mikulčice.

Showcase 9 – noble belts and knee straps. Magnificent gilded or silver belt ends and buckles, clasps in the shape of birds from graves 248, 380 and 390 in Mikulčice, grave 13 from Břeclav-Pohansko and grave 22 in Modrá.

Showcase 10 – militaria. Scientific reconstructions of magnate swords from the workshop of Patrick Bárta and a set of original finds from grave 223/51 from Staré Město with a sword decorated with inlay, i.e. hammering wires of coloured and precious metals into the surface of its guard and pommel and with a blade forged using the damask method. The latter is based on alternating laying of plates of soft and hard steel in the form of a package, which after forging creates a hard and at the same time flexible base of a quality blade.



Showcase 11 – horsemanship as a part of the life of magnates. Magnificent decorated spurs and other related objects from graves 224/51 from Staré Město and 433 from Mikulčice, scientific reconstruction of a spur from the first mentioned grave.

Showcase 12 – children (boys) from noble families. Small decorated spurs from grave 225 from Břeclav-Pohansko, gold globular buttons and small bronze fittings of knee straps from graves 19/59 and 127/62 from Uherské Hradiště-Sady.

At the junction of the corridors leading to the exit from the treasury there is a final presentation, which has the appearance of an earth niche. It contains a reconstruction of the finding situation of two skeletal graves documenting that during the construction of the treasury archaeologists and anthropologists from the Moravian Museum made very interesting discoveries from the early Middle Ages and prehistoric times. At the same time, the graves from the 9th century are an evidence that people who created and used the same objects as those contained in the exhibition lived and were buried on the site of the treasury.

EXHIBITION GREAT MORAVIAN ELITES

The exhibition contains a unique set of exhibits that has been displayed only on special occasions, and only in large museums and representative spaces of major European cities – most recently in 2015 in Brno, Prague, Bratislava and Gniezno, Poland, before that in London, Paris, Berlin, Stockholm, Athens and Moscow, and now in Modrá. The exhibition Great Moravian Elites was prepared by the Moravian Museum in cooperation with the municipality of Modrá, the Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Brno, the Institute of Archaeology and Museology of the Faculty of Arts / Masaryk University and the Institute of Archaeology / Slovak Academy of Sciences in Nitra. The author of the theme, libretto and script of the exhibition is doc. PhDr. Luděk Galuška, CSc., archaeologist and researcher of the Moravian Museum. The exhibition will run until November 30, 2024. For 2025, the Moravian Museum, again in cooperation with the municipality of Modrá and other memory and scientific institutions, will prepare a new exhibition, certainly no less interesting.

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TREASURY OF GREAT MORAVIA

The Treasury of Great Moravia is an extensive underground structure sensitively incorporated into the area of the archaeological open-air museum in such a way that the visitor is not aware of its existence. It is accessed from the interior of the stone princely palace in the upper part of the archaeological open-air museum. The treasury takes the form of a circular space with a diameter of 20 m, along the inner perimeter of which stretches a ramp along which visitors descend into the main exhibition hall. It is equipped with 12 cylindrical showcases capable of accommodating and protecting even the most precious artefacts on display. The exit from the treasury leads to the lower part of the archaeological open-air museum.

Behind the entrance turnstiles there is a space equipped with a wall-mounted model of a rider with a bird of prey, the so-called Falconer. It represents an enlargement of a silver plaque found in Staré Město and one of the best-known motifs characterizing Great Moravia – the first power structure with elements of a state on the territory of the Central European Slavs with its centre in Moravia (833–906).

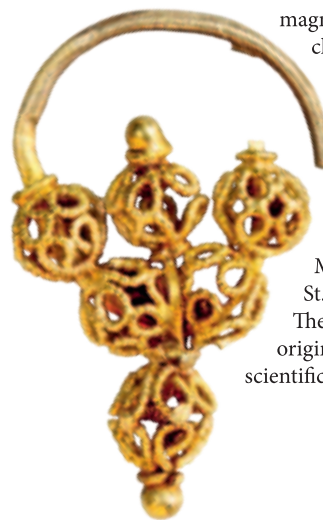
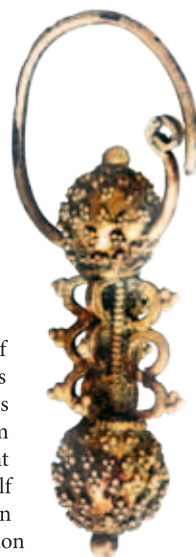
From here, you enter the perimeter ramp with three niches, built-in spaces equipped with statues and audio-visual effects, in which the princely rulers of Great Moravia are presented.



Niche N1 – in 833, the historically first known prince of the Moravians, Mojmir, exiled Pribina, the ruler of the Nitra region. On the sides of the niche there are period depictions – a magnate from the time of the king and emperor Charlemagne (768/774–814), and a priest with a model of the church.

Niche N2 – the second Moravian prince Rostislav resists the attack of Ludwig II, the German (843–876), king of the East Frankish Empire. It is a symbolic scene from 855, when the Moravians actually successfully defended themselves against the attacks of the Franks and Bavarians. On the sides of the niche there is a detachment of Frankish cavalry warriors and the conquest of the city in the 40s of the 9th century.

Niche N3 – the third and most important ruler of Great Moravia, prince Svatopluk, with his family: his second wife Gisela, his older son Mojmir II and his younger son Svatopluk II. It is a symbolic scene from the year 880, when Great Moravia was an important power factor in Central Europe and Svatopluk himself was designated by the Roman Pope as the „only son of Peter“ and taken with his people under the protection of the Holy See. The scene is accompanied by a depiction of Svatopluk's contemporary, the West Frankish king Charles II, the Bald (823–877), with his advisors, protectors and monks.



The statues in the niches were created on the basis of people living today. Their faces depict the faces of contemporaries, not of the above-mentioned historical figures, which applies mainly to Moravian princes, because their period depictions – if they existed at all – have not been preserved. However, the overall appearance of the statues, their clothing, accessories, footwear, weapons and protective armour or jewellery and other decorations, was created on the basis of archaeological sources, rarely also figural depictions, so we consider it realistic.

The presentation of the Great Moravian princes is both a part of the treasury and the opening exhibition called **GREAT MORAVIAN ELITES**. It presents magnificent products of early medieval arts and crafts discovered in the graves of magnates and members of their families in the church burial grounds of the central fortified settlements of Great Moravia – in Staré Město „Na Valách“, on the Heights of St. Methodius in Uherské Hradiště-Sady, at the 3rd church in Mikulčice and at the 1st church in Břeclav-Pohansko. One find comes from Bojná in Slovakia, the other five directly from Modrá, i.e. from the graves at the Church of St. John only 100 m away from the treasury. The exhibited collection contains a total of 200 original objects from the 9th century and 5 new scientific reconstructions.

EXHIBITION GREAT MORAVIAN ELITES

The exhibition GREAT MORAVIAN ELITES is thematically divided into two basic parts. In showcases 2 to 6 there is a section dedicated to female elites, i.e. wives and daughters of magnates, in showcases 8 to 12 there is a section dedicated to male elites, i.e. magnates and their sons. The imaginary axis between the two parts is represented by the central showcase 1 and showcase 7. The presentation concept of the showcases of both parts of the exhibition is very similar. Each showcase contains one to three finding units, i.e. all objects found in one grave, which are accompanied by sets of selected items of the same type or appearance to which the display case is dedicated, e.g. earrings.



Showcase 1 – a unique bell and a hanging heart of a bell from Bojná in Slovakia, as well as a copy of the bell.

Showcase 2 – an introduction to the women's elite. A woman's skull, a long necklace, a ring and gold and silver earrings from the grave 209/59 of the so-called Princess of Uherské Hradiště-Sady, made by granulation and filigree methods (granulation composes balls into various patterns on the surface of decorated objects, e.g. globular buttons, the filigree method is used to create earring baskets from thin wires or to hem other decorative elements).

Showcase 3 – earrings, the most common piece of jewellery for women. A total of 42 magnificent earrings and other ornaments, dominated by gold pieces from grave 282/49 from Staré Město and silver specimens from grave 158 from Břeclav-Pohansko.

