

NEW FINDS OF EARLY MEDIEVAL LEAD RHOMBIC CROSS PENDANTS FROM MORAVIA¹

Their Possible Genesis and Importance

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The article is devoted to new finds of cast early medieval lead rhombic cross pendants decorated with crosshatched ornament from Moravia, which are regarded as *Taufgeschenke* – christening gifts. It is likely that these artefacts were meant to evoke the schematised body of the Saviour. In the vast majority of cases, they are part of necklaces belonging to sexually intact little girls and young ladies buried in rural cemeteries. Most probably, they were based on older simple rhombus-shaped pendants-amulets, which were eventually incorporated into the newly emerging religion and thus acquired a new quality. Their conspicuous concentration in the vicinity of the Mikulčice central site suggests that this area could have been one of the key Christianisation centres in Great Moravia. After the demise of this power-political unit, they completely disappeared from the group of devotional objects. Chronologically, they are synchronised with the final decades of the 9th c. and the beginning of the 10th c.

Keywords: Czech republic (Moravia), 9th/10th c., Great Moravia, Christianisation, rhombic cross pendant.

Finds of small early medieval artefacts related to the beginnings of the evangelisation process in central Europe are not exactly the most common among archaeological record. The same is true for areas north of the Middle Danube region, where a power-political structure gradually formed, especially in the course of the 9th c., which was given the name Great Moravia. Artefacts are available from its core (lower and partially also Middle Morava River region) and especially from central sites (Mikulčice, Staré Město, Pohansko near Břeclav) that are undoubtedly linked to the emerging Christianisation. A primary position among these objects is clearly held by crosses of various types and styles as distinctive and visible symbols of the acceptance of the new faith and signs of piety. About a decade ago we provided a sort of summary of these representatives of the newly emerging religion, stating that we have nearly four dozen specimens from the Moravian area, despite the fact that not all of them had been

published (Kouřil 2014, 104).² A clear predominance is seen with Bernhardsthal-type lead pendant crosses,³ especially rhombic lead cross pendants of the Velké Bílovice, Mutěnice and Windegge style (Kouřil 2014, 107–111), and it is precisely two new finds belonging to this largest group that are the subject of this article (Fig. 1).

In general, these are highly schematised, in all known cases cast lead devotionals of relatively small dimensions, which are characterised by a rhombic body filled with dense regular oblique crosshatching creating rhombic fields (indicating Christocentrism), whereas the reverse is always completely smooth; a rendering with an Early Christian origin (Kobielus 2000). It is possible that they share a common origin with Bernhardsthal crosses, but whether they represent their simplified derivative (the current consensus) is not entirely certain (see below). They typically have deltoid arm terminals, with the upper vertical

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² This primarily concerns Mikulčice crosses from settlement contexts found with metal detectors, two of which were recently depicted in a guide to the Mikulčice site. Specifically, this is a small undecorated lead processional cross and a lead encolpium of the Byzantine type depicting the Saviour (Poláček 2018a, 104, 105).

³ The group of eight crosses of this type known so far from Moravia (4), Slovakia (1) and Lower Austria (3) now includes the relatively recently published incomplete specimen from the important east Bohemian stronghold of Libice nad Cidlinou connected to the princely Slavník family (Maříková Kubková 2014); its ties to the Moravian milieu are obvious. Crosses made in this way are associated with lower Church dignitaries or secular persons with a higher social status.



Fig. 1. Map with marked sites with finds of lead rhombic cross pendants. 1 – Čejč; 2 – Dolní Věstonice; 3 – Gars-Thunau; 4 – Maissau; 5 – Mikulčice; 6 – Mutěnice; 7 – Pohansko u Břeclavi; 8 – Prušánky; 9 – Brno-Líšeň-Staré Zámky; 10 – Velké Bílovice; 11 – Windegg (author M. Vlach).

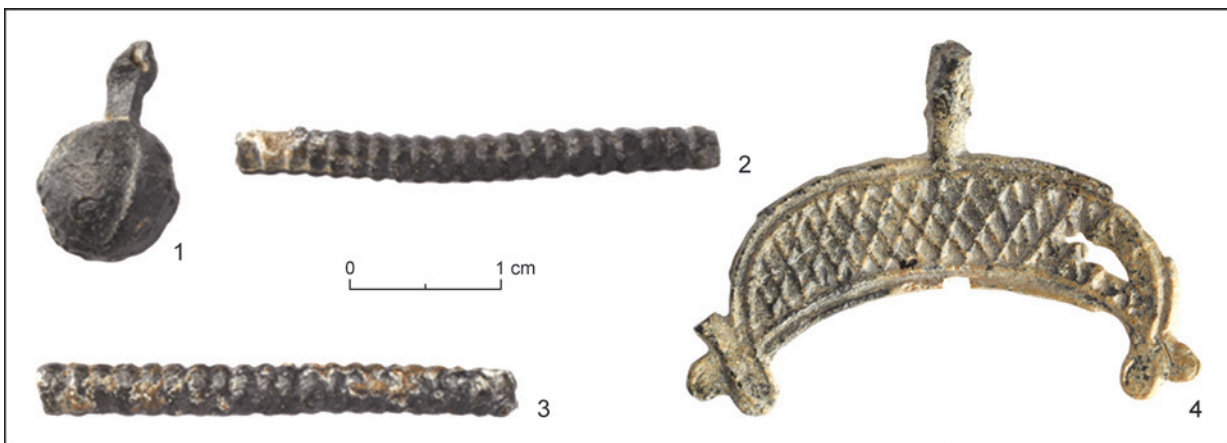


Fig. 2. Dolní Věstonice, grave 535. 1 – lead button; 2, 3 – lead beads; 4 – lead crescent pendant.

arm sometimes being elongated, reinforced and perforated; a very thin cord was threaded through this hole, by means of which the cross pendant was strung onto a necklace, where they are commonly accompanied by other cast lead ornaments, be they thin segmented beads or globular buttons

(or pendants) with an eyelet on a high neck and usually with simple decoration (Fig. 2; 3; 4: 2, 4).³ These necklaces also included a crescent pendant, sometimes also with crosshatching, though they were not combined with the studied type of cross pendant in Moravia (Kouřil 2008, 71–73; Měřínský

³ It appears that this is a specific local product exclusively characteristic of the very centre of Mojmirid Moravia in the period of its gradual decline, whose possible relationship with the Old Hungarian or Bijelo-Brdo culture sphere is still rather vague and uncertain (Kouřil 2008, 71–73). Its globular form is always clamped at the spot of the maximum circumference by two crossing relief bands (decorated with small dimples), which look like an equilateral cross from front and back view.

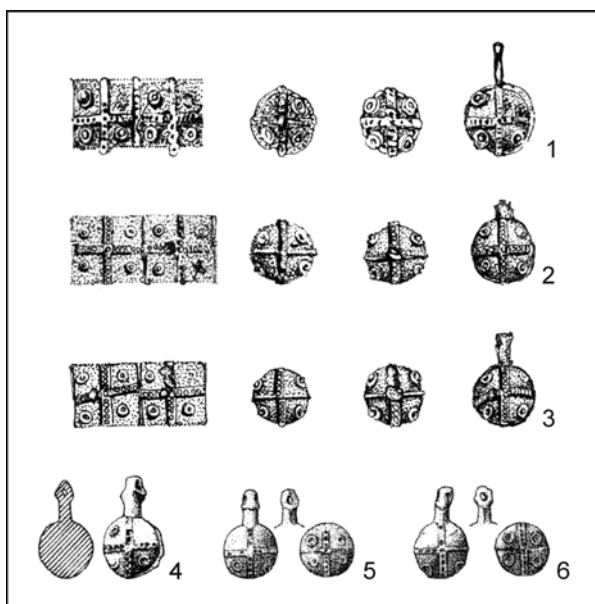


Fig. 3. Lead globular buttons (pendants). 1 – Mikulčice, church 8, grave 10; 2, 3 – Staré Město-Na valách, grave 209/AZ; 4 – Dolní Věstonice-Na pískách, grave 535; 5, 6 – Břeclav-Pohansko (northeast bailey), grave 10a. Without scale.

1988).⁴ The joint presence of two rhombic cross pendants, lead beads and a very small yet not very artfully rendered two-pointed crosshatched crescent pendant was recorded in Lower Austrian Maissau (*Kultus/Ruß/Schmitsberger* 2009, 329; *Nowotny* 2012, 510; *Ruß* 2018, 147). Necklaces assembled in this way were found only in the graves of little girls and young ladies buried in rural cemeteries in the hinterland of Great Moravian centres. XRF analyses conducted to date have shown that individual sets of lead ornaments, including cross pendants (differing from one another) were made at the same time from absolutely identical or highly similar materials, indicating the high probability of coming from a single workshop. From a chronological perspective, they are synchronised with the final decades of the 9th c. and the beginning of the 10th c. (their occurrence in the first third of the 10th c. cannot be ruled out).

In the published work from 2014, we stated that the crosses formed in this way (with the exception of Pohansko – the southwest extramural and settlement in Mutěnice) occur only in rural cemeteries; however, in the case of the new specimens presented here, we are in a completely different situation. Both cross pendants were discovered at prominent Great Moravian strongholds – in Mikulčice (the presumed centre of Great Moravia) and Staré Zámky in Brno-Líšeň.

The first of these was acquired during a metal detector survey in the surface layer in the fortified outer bailey of the Mikulčice stronghold and today is the lone specimen of this type of cross pendant found at the site (Fig. 5: 1).⁵ The craftsmanship is relatively good and the surface is divided into around 25 diagonally arranged fields; the back side is smooth. It can be confidently assigned to the relatively more common Velké Bílovice variant and was cast from almost pure lead (99.847%). The Mikulčice fortification (and its immediate hinterland) was very probably definitively destroyed as the result of the military activities of the Old Hungarians sometime in the second half of the first decade of the 10th c. (?), and it was in this period at the latest that the presented cross pendant was probably also lost (*Kouřil* 2019, 74–79). And although post-Great Moravian settlement activities are proven in Mikulčice even in the late 10th to 13th c., compared to the previous development they are more or less marginal and, moreover, they have not been recorded at all at the place where the devotional was obtained (*Kouřil* 2019, 78, 79; *Poláček* 2018b, 90, 91).

The second cross pendant comes from the central part of the Staré Zámky stronghold, from a surface survey without the use of a metal detector (Fig. 5: 2).⁶ Although the cross is not entirely symmetrically cast, it is the only one of the 19 known specimens (Fig. 6)⁷ that does not have its front surface divided by oblique crosshatching, but rather by horizontal-vertical crosshatching respecting the right-angled intersecting axes of the cross pendant. We can perhaps designate this style and other possible discoveries of a similar

⁴ Only in grave no. 481 from Dolní Věstonice was a lead crosshatched crescent pendant along with a Bernhardsthal-type cross and two blue glass beads part of a broken necklace (*Měřínský* 1988, 141; *Poulik* 1950, 26, 31); the largest Moravian 'rural' cemetery of a collecting nature produced a total of seven crescent pendants, which in all cases were parts of necklaces from children's burials (2 silver, 1 cast bronze, 2 cast lead and 2 iron; *Ungerma* 2007, 228).

⁵ I thank L. Poláček for making this find available for study.

⁶ I am indebted to A. Romanovský for handing over the cross discovered back in 2006 to the Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Brno.

⁷ *E. Nowotny* (2018, 164) notes that another lightly damaged cross pendant (missing one arm with the perforation) found in Lower Austrian Thunau stronghold (Gars-Ober Holzwiess) is presented in a permanent exhibit at the château in Asparn/Zaya. This artefact remains unpublished and, based on the photographs and information provided by the researcher (for which I am extremely grateful), we can probably identify it as the Velké Bílovice variant. This random find was made in the vicinity of the latest (final) phase of the local cemetery; we can recall that a lead equilateral Bernhardsthal-type cross also comes from the settlement context of the site.



Fig. 4. Necklaces. 1 – Dolní Věstonice, grave 45/46, necklace with glass beads and bronze crescent pendant; 2 – Dolní Věstonice, grave 467, necklace consisting of glass beads, lead crosses and pearls; 3 – Mikulčice, church 2, grave 1, necklace with glass beads and bronze crescent pendant; 4 – Dolní Věstonice, grave 651, necklace consisting of lead crosses and lead beads; 5 – Prušánky, grave 103, necklace consisting of lead crosses and lead beads.

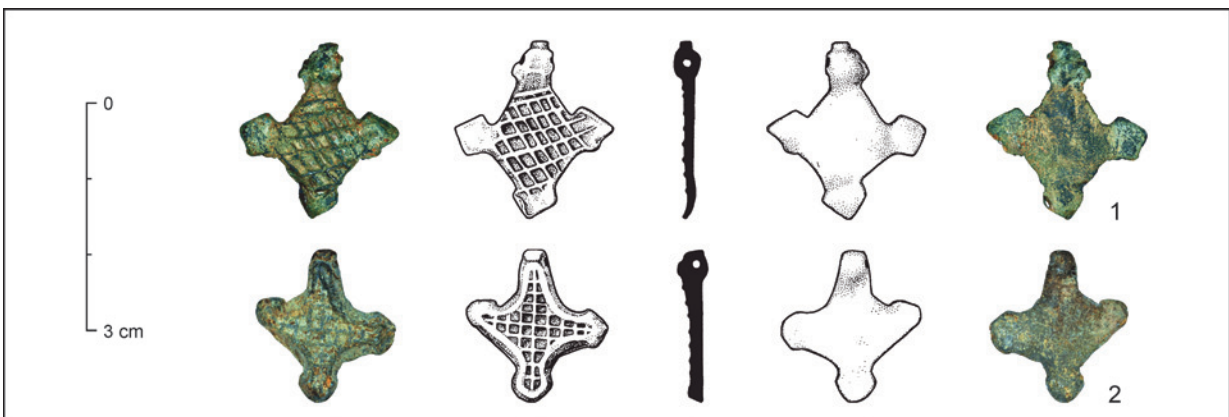


Fig. 5. Lead rhombic cross pendants. 1 – Mikulčice; 2 – Brno-Líšeň-Staré Zámky.

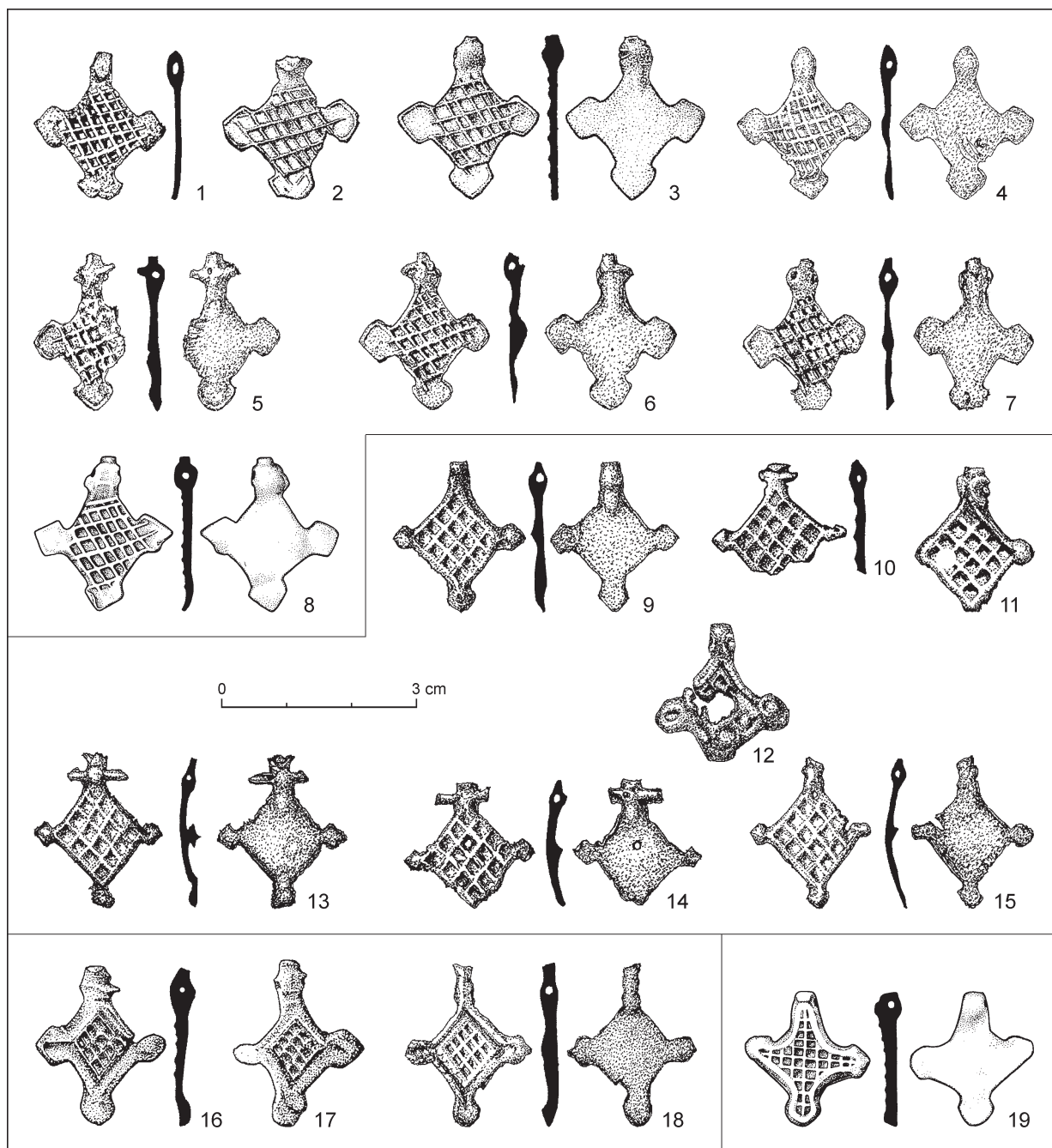


Fig. 6. Lead rhombic cross pendants. 1 – Břeclav-Pohansko; 2, 3 – Velké Bílovice; 4–7 – Dolní Věstonice; 8 – Mikulčice; 9 – Mutěnice; 10 – Velké Bílovice; 11, 12 – Maissau; 13–15 – Prušánky; 16, 17 – Windegg; 18 – Čejč; 19 – Brno-Líšeň-Staré Zámky (1–8 – Velké Bílovice variant; 9–15 – Mutěnice variant; 16–18 – Windegg variant; 19 – Staré Zámky variant).

character as the 'Staré Zámky variant'. As with the find from Mikulčice, the material was essentially pure lead (99.632%). The site with a long tradition and an undoubtedly central function was at the very beginning of the second millennium also perceptively impacted by Hungarian attacks, after which its standing and importance in the existing settlement structure was heavily marginalised, if not completely suppressed. Nevertheless, the

final decades of the 10th c. were again marked by a certain renewed settlement lasting in various intensities up to the 11th/12th c. (Kalčík 2015, 193; Kouřil 2019, 82; Měřínský 2014). Despite being found as solitaires without additional accompanying material, both cross pendants, in line with previously published conclusions, can be dated to the aforementioned time segment (last quarter of the 9th c. – first decades of the 10th c.).

Taking a closer look at the distribution of this type of devotional, it is evident that they are concentrated mainly in the lower Morava River region and the Thaya River region (Pohansko near Břeclav, Velké Bílovice, Dolní Věstonice, Prušánky, Čejč, Mutěnice, Mikulčice), which means that the cross pendant from Staré Zámky is the northernmost Moravian find. The Austrian sites of Maissau and especially Windegg on the left bank of the Danube are relatively quite remote from this grouping, i.e. in an area settled in this period mainly by Slavs; the studied artefacts have not been found in Transdanubia (right bank) and are likewise not known from Bavaria. It is believed that missions spreading the word of God among the Slavs, i.e. also in the Austrian Danube region and in Moravia, originated mainly from the sphere of the Archdiocese of Salzburg and the Passau, possibly Freising or Regensburg (?) diocese, but also, for example, from Aquileia (*Galuška/Kouřil 2016; Kalhous 2021; Vavřínek 2021, 9–11*). However, it is not unequivocally proven that this specific tangible evidence of the acceptance of Christ came with the missionaries, even if it can be assumed.

It is on the basis of this premise that current research leans towards the opinion that the lead crosses represent 'Taufgeschenke', which were given at baptism to the new believers (*Friesinger 1976, 55; 1975–1977, 107; Friesinger H./Friesinger I. 1977, 107, 109; Měřínský 1988, 136*). However, it is interesting from this perspective that they are present, as previously mentioned, only in the female graves, exclusively in the *infans* or *juvenis* category and not in the group of mature women;⁸ they are also absent in the graves of male representatives. Of course, this can be partly explained by the fact that men usually did not wear necklaces, with a few exceptions,⁹ but the fact that such a sacrament has not been recorded in any of the male graves is very strange and cannot, in our opinion, be explained by the current state of research. There were undoubtedly a number of converts even among men. The four cross pendants of the studied type obtained outside of grave units (Mikulčice, Pohansko, Staré Zámky, Mutěnice)

and the circumstances of their discovery clearly indicate that they are lost items and that they could also have been worn separately (?). While we again do not know whether they were worn only by members of the female gender or also by male representatives, we cannot rule out (and it seems quite likely) that this type of pendant was intended exclusively for representatives of the female gender (see below).

Crescent pendants, three-pointed or two-pointed, were undoubtedly dominant elements of necklaces, representing their main and typically centrally placed component (Fig. 4: 1, 3). The genesis of this type of artefact, clearly with an apotropaic function from the very beginning and whose magic power was to repel evil and fully protect its wearer, stretches deep into prehistory (Bronze Age). As such, it was a pagan protective amulet (a talisman for good luck and also for decoration) probably related mainly to the lunar cult and used by both sexes. It is thought that among other things it could influence and secure female fertility (in detail in *Chorvátová 1998; Małachowska 1998, especially 70–74*). They gradually reached the Slavic milieu, among other destinations, from the antique world, especially from the Mediterranean, but also from Asia Minor (Byzantium in general; cf. e.g. *Khamayko 2012, 506–516*). In our area of interest, crescent pendants appear in the 8th, especially the 9th (especially its second half) and 10th c., before disappearing suddenly from the grave inventory (cf. e.g. *Profantová 2010*). Their presence together with Christian symbols testifies to their considerable popularity, but also to their acceptance by the emerging faith.¹⁰

We advised that the studied type of cross pendant was found with such a crescent pendant on a necklace in only one case (Maissau). All the more surprising then is the recently published burial of a young woman (grave no. 3, without a more detailed determination of age) from a rescue excavation of part of a small cemetery in Sânpaul in Romanian Transylvania dated to the middle or early second half of the 5th c. and placed in context with the Gepid population of a higher rank (*Grumeza/*

⁸ Such is the case not only in Moravia but also at both Austrian sites (*Kultus/Ruß/Schmitsberger 2010, 332; Tovornik 1977, 33–35*).

⁹ One such exception is male grave no. 850 from the hypothetical Church 11 in Mikulčice (*Poláček et al. 2021, 130*, including references).

¹⁰ Several examples of crescent pendants with Christian symbols from Western Europe and the Byzantine milieu are presented by *Š. Ungerman (2007, 229, with corresponding references)*. In Crimea (8th/9th c.) and in the sphere of eastern Slavs, we find the combination of both elements, i.e. cross and crescent pendants, in a single artistic unit (especially in the 11th–13th c.) relatively often (*Khamayko 2012, 513–515*). Their local occurrence as a consequence of cultural influence or even a direct move of part of the population from the Great Moravian zone (e.g. *Duczko 2007, 67, 68; Ilkiv et al. 2017, especially 263, 264; Rjabceva 2014; Sedov 2001, especially 342*) has recently been justifiably challenged (*Khamayko 2012, 513*). *D. Dragotă (2016)*, who most recently, based on *A. Kralovánzsky's classification (1959)*, defined eight types of crescent pendants, does not rule out that some of them could have served as amulets in female and children's/girls' graves, while others are related to the spread of Christianity from the Byzantine cultural milieu.

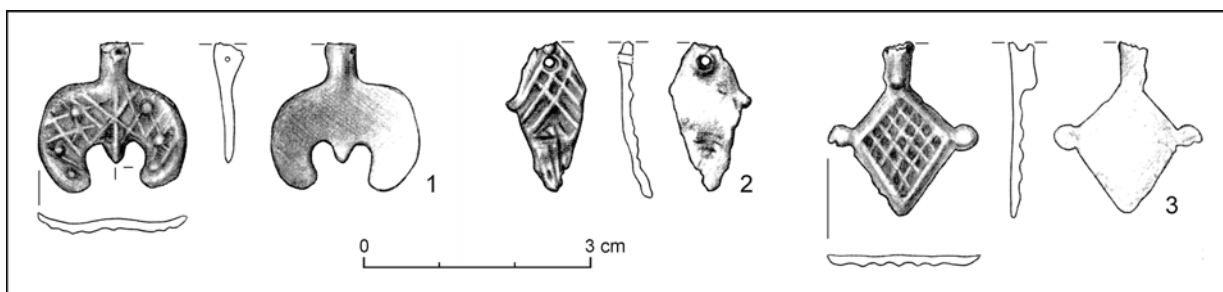


Fig. 7. Sânpaul, jud. Cluj. Lead pendants from grave 3 (after Grumeza/Cupcea 2020).

Cupcea 2020). Among other things, the buried woman was furnished with a necklace in which, in addition to nine glass beads, three ornaments cast from lead were incorporated (Fig. 7). These were a three-pointed crescent with crosshatched decoration and six small round dimples, a pendant in the shape of a fish with a perforation in its eyes and also covered with crosshatched ornament, and finally a pendant with a rhombic body shape with a regular crosshatched surface divided into 25 fields with circular protrusions in opposite corners (reinforcement is missing on the corner opposite the eyelet). It is formally and dimensionally identical to cross pendants from the Great Moravian period. The reverse sides of these artefacts, regarded here as amulets, are smooth.

The schematic rendering of the pendant in the form of a fish seems to be of key importance, as it ranks among the most prominent Christian symbols. Many of Christ's disciples were fishermen and the Saviour himself called his Apostles 'fishers of men'

(one of the attributes of the Apostle Peter was a fish).¹¹ Perhaps even the crosshatched ornament refers to this activity, even in the case of crescent pendants and simplified cross pendants,¹² if they are in fact actual crosses. A fish (ichthys) was also perceived as a cryptogram of the naming of Jesus Christ (Son of God, Saviour; *Kobielus 2002, 271–274*). As such, all three artefacts could indicate the certain relationship of the buried woman to Christianity, and these individuals could thus belong to converts who professed the Gospel and accepted a new religious identity.¹³ It is surprising and simultaneously symptomatic that crosshatched crescents and cross pendants appear, again cast in lead and appearing in necklaces, on little girls and teenage girls about 400–450 years later in the Great Moravian milieu, when we are not aware of any other case of such a burial in the stated interim period (?). However, *L. Grumeza and G. Cupcea (2020, 421)* point out special rectangular pendants made of lead, sheet metal and bone decorated on one side with crosshatched ornament from the Carpathian Basin,

¹¹ The fish was naturally used as a sign long before Christianity and symbolised, among other things, fertility and sexuality. In the eastern Mediterranean in the Bronze Age, doves and turtledoves were also associated with fertility and eroticism (cf. *Jelínek 2021, 273*, with references to relevant literature).

¹² Pendants of a simple rhombic form come from many cultures. In our period of study, they appear relatively often in the Baltic cultural sphere and occur in large numbers in Rus, especially its northwestern part, particularly in the High Middle Ages. It is not ruled out that in the period of emerging Christianity, their purpose could have been re-evaluated in a new religious context, so that they were tolerated by the church and could replace classic hanging crosses in personal use (*Kolpakova 2017, 155*). Local cast crosshatched pendants in an openwork design are very similar to the Moravian specimens, yet later (*Kolpakova 2017, 153; Rjabceva 2014, 174–176*).

¹³ In the literature, it is relatively often considered (on the basis of written sources and archaeological records) that the female members were subject to Christianisation on a larger scale than the male part of the population (on the subject e.g. *Wotoszyn 2003*, with further references there; examples from Rus' and Scandinavia from 10th c. *Androshchuk 2011, 78, 79*). In this context, let us mention that also from the territory of Bohemia, we know of three graves from the Migration Period (its late phase), in which fish-shaped pendants were found. In all cases, these were exclusively richly furnished burials of women who undoubtedly belonged to the highest class of society. The first comes from grave 2 from a small cemetery in Světec near Bílina (ca. mid-6th c.); it is a sheet-metal silver (and gilded) artefact with central decoration of semi-circles depicting fish scales (*Blažek/Lutovský 1992; Svoboda 1965, 191, 192*). The second, a sheet-metal silver heavily damaged pendant from Čelákovice-Záluží, was recovered from grave 27/XXII at the extensive burial ground. This artefact is, among other things, also decorated with semi-circles (*Droberjar 2002, 41–44; Zeman 1959, 267, 268*). Finally, a third – again sheet-metal silver pendant – was recovered from the most ostentatious grave 3 at a smaller cemetery in Mochov near Český Brod (late 5th–mid-6th c.). It is ornamented with chased triangles and semi-circles (*Droberjar 2002, 185; Zeman 1959, 267*). The period analogies are mainly known from Western European and exceptionally also Polish milieux. The differences between the above-mentioned Czech finds and the chronologically older pendant from Sânpaul are evident (especially in the material used, the technique of execution, and the decoration). These pendants are likely associated with Christianity; however, we cannot certainly state if their bearers were real Christians who understood the symbolic meaning (cf. *Svoboda 1965, 192*).

which were recorded again exclusively in female graves in cemeteries dated from the 8th to the middle of the 9th c. (on the finds in detail with reference to possible older models in *Vida 2002*, 183; *2009*, 267);¹⁴ these small artefacts are most often attributed the status of amulets.

Taking a closer look at all Moravian and Austrian burials with the studied type of cross pendants, we can state that their grave goods were mostly rather average, only rarely slightly above average. And yet, with just one exception, none of these burials contained osteological material (eggshells in Čejč). This unique grave was the burial of a young girl, roughly seven years of age, in Windegg. If the determination was correct, a dove skeleton and pottery vessel were found by her leg (*Tovornik 1977*, 34).¹⁵ While it could be a coincidence, but it does not have to be, since the dove, a symbol of peace and love, innocence and purified soul, is linked to the act of baptism; the Holy Spirit was to have appeared as a dove at Christ's baptism (e.g. *Becker 2002*, 82; *Biedermann 2008*, 100; *Fouilloux et al. 1990*, 72; *Haag 1970*, 1712; *Studený 1992*, 86–88; *Testa 1962*, 412–416). Therefore, if we assume that the buried girl was baptised and consecrated to the new faith sometime before her death, the presence of a dove symbolising the Holy Spirit among the newly baptised may not appear out of place among the grave goods (?); the dove, alone among birds, was also given to God as a peace offering.

The knowledge and considerations above regarding the issue of lead rhombic cross pendants lead us to some conditional conclusions, to a certain extent of a speculative nature. We believe that these popular rhombic pendants – amulets (as well as e.g. crescent pendants) were gradually accepted and incorporated into the newly emerging religion and thus acquired a new quality (cf. note 12; also, *Ungerma 2007*, 228, 229, with several references). It was most likely crosshatched ornament that gave the pendants a hallmark of a Christian nature, even though they also continued to bear, at least in the initial phase, their original ethos – their original function and significance. As such,

one of these primary functions could have been the support and preservation of human reproduction, thus explaining their exclusive occurrence in female graves, in the graves of sexually untouched girls (*virgo intacta*). It is probable that the pendants with crosshatched ornament were meant to evoke the schematised body of the Saviour, since it is on Bernhardsthal-type crosses that his torso (robe) is depicted in this manner. Of course, it can then also be admitted that it was probably rhombic cross pendants¹⁶ that influenced the artistic conception of these equilateral specimens (*crux quadrata*) and not the other way around, as currently believed. It should also be emphasised that after the fall of Great Moravia, in contrast to the eastern European area, they completely disappeared from the group of devotional artefacts.

Their striking concentration in the vicinity of the Mikulčice central site¹⁷ suggests that this may have been one of the key centres of Christianisation and that the primary impulses for their production and spread (possibly also to the Austrian Danube region) and then for production in a rural milieu may have come from there. If the chronology of these cross pendants is correct, and there is no reason to doubt it with the current state of knowledge, then it can be assumed that we can probably associate most of them with the situation that arose after the death of Methodius (885) and the expulsion of his disciples (probably not all of them) when the Western form of Christianity reasserted itself in full (?).¹⁸ On the other hand, we cannot ignore the fact that some indications, such as e.g. the geometric crosshatching covering the crosses or crescents or the equilateral shape of crosses with the figure of the Saviour and its stylistic rendering must also be seen in the context of the Byzantine cultural sphere (e.g. *Bačal/Kolník 2010*, 112). More intensive evangelisation efforts undoubtedly also received support in connection with the request of Prince Mojmir II (894–905/906) addressed to the Pope concerning the appointment of new dignitaries to head vacant Moravian bish-

¹⁴ We can also point out the discovery of a two-faced stone mould dated to the 6th–7th c., which was used to cast – among other things – small crosses, crescent pendants or oval pendants decorated with crosshatching. This suggests that not only the crosses (which is obvious) but also the other above-mentioned objects could be associated with the newly emerging evangelisation process. The mould was found at the Dichiseni site, Romania (Lower Danube area; cf. *Tănase 2021*, 102, 301).

¹⁵ Meat offerings at Moravian early medieval (Great Moravian) cemeteries were dominated relatively often by domesticated fowl; in Prušánky, for example, it was represented in nearly 78% of all graves evaluated in this way (chicken, hen, less often cock), especially among juvenile individuals (chicken) – cf. *Kratochvíl 2006*, 269–277.

¹⁶ As a result, the significant strengthening and stretching of all four corners gives them a shape approaching the shape of a cross, as we see it in an even more pronounced form in later Old Russian specimens, thus differing from the 'prototype' from Sânpaul.

¹⁷ This basically applies to all types of crosses recorded to date; it can be assumed that especially the late lead specimens were created in some of the jewellery workshops in Mikulčice (*Klanica 1993*, 218; *Kouřil 2014*, 112).

¹⁸ Let us add that, like the Bernhardsthal-type crosses, they are not found in the important and relatively nearby Staré Město – Uherské Hradiště agglomeration with significant Christianisation potential, nor in other parts of the Mojmirid domain.

oprics. In 900, the legates of Pope John IX arrived from Rome and installed an archbishop and three bishops in Moravia. The seat of one of these high-ranking clerics was undoubtedly Mikulčice, a site with the largest concentration of sacred buildings and small objects of a Christian nature related to missionary activity in Great Moravia.

Note: After the submission of this article, a fragment of a rhombic cross pendant was found during the processing of the archaeological material from the 2016 excavation, which was carried out on the acropolis of the Mikulčice stronghold (Dolní Valy site); the total number of these devotional objects is therefore 21.

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Nové nálezy raně středověkých olovených rombických křížků z Moravy

Jejich možná geneze a význam

Pavel Kouřil

SOUHRN

Příspěvek je věnován novým nálezům odlévaných raně středověkých olovených rombických křížků – závěsků zdobených síťovaným ornamentem (schematizované tělo Spasitele) z území Moravy. Jde o první exempláře (s výjimkou Pohanska u Břeclavi) pocházející z významných lokalit centrálního charakteru – Mikulčice a Starých Zámek, a nikoliv z venkovských nekropolí představujících jejich typické nálezové prostředí. Tam jsou v naprosté většině případů součástí náhrdelníků malých děvčátek a mladých dívek (kategorie *infans*, případně *juvenis*), ani v jednom případě nebyly zaznamenány u zralých žen, zcela pak chybí v hrobech zástupců mužského pohlaví. V současnosti je v různém stavu zachovalosti známo 21 exemplářů těchto drobných devocionálií, nápadně se koncentrujících především v okruhu mikulčického ústředí, kde zřejmě musíme hledat jedno z klíčových center christianizace na Velké Moravě. Po zániku tohoto mocensko-politického útvaru se ze skupiny křesťanských památek, na rozdíl od východoevropského prostoru, zcela vytrácejí. Z chronologického

hlediska jsou synchronizovány se závěrečnými dekadami 9. a počátky 10. století.

V převaze jsou pokládány za tzv. *Taufgeschenke*, které byly, jako výrazné a viditelné symboly nové víry, dávány konvertitům vyznávajícím evangelium a akceptujícím novou náboženskou identitu. Vycházely velmi pravděpodobně z oblíbených starších jednoduchých kosočtverečných závěsků-amuletů procházejících v předkřesťanském období mnoha kulturami, které byly postupně (stejně jako např. lunice) začleňovány do nově se prosazujícího náboženství a získávaly tak novou kvalitu. Byl to patrně především síťovaný ornament (naznačení Kristocentricky), který jim měl dodávat punc křesťanského charakteru, přitom však stále nesly, jistě alespoň v počáteční fázi, i svůj původní étos, svoji původní funkci a význam. Jednou z těchto primárních funkcí mohlo být i podpoření reprodukce a zachování lidského rodu, proto jejich výskyt pouze v hrobech femininní části populace, v hrobech pohlavně ještě nedotčených dívek (*virgo intacta*).

Obr. 1. Mapa s vyznačenými lokalitami s nálezy olovených rombických křížků. 1 – Čejč; 2 – Dolní Věstonice; 3 – Gars-Thunau; 4 – Maissau; 5 – Mikulčice; 6 – Mutěnice; 7 – Pohansko u Břeclavi; 8 – Prušánky; 9 – Brno-Líšeň-Staré Zámky; 10 – Velké Bílovice; 11 – Windegg (autor M. Vlach).

Obr. 2. Dolní Věstonice, hrob 535. 1 – olovený gombík; 2, 3 – olovené korálky; 4 – olovený lunicovitý přívěsek.

Obr. 3. Olovené kulovité gombíky (přívěsky). 1 – Mikulčice, kostel 8, hrob 10; 2, 3 – Staré Město-Na valách, hrob 209/AZ; 4 – Dolní Věstonice-Na pískách, hrob 535; 5, 6 – Břeclav-Pohansko (severovýchodní předhradí), hrob 10a. Bez měřítka.

Obr. 4. Náhrdelníky. 1 – Dolní Věstonice, hrob 45/46, náhrdelník se skleněnými korálky a bronzovým lunicovitým přívěskem; 2 – Dolní Věstonice, hrob 467, náhrdelník ze skleněných korálků, olovených křížků

a perel; 3 – Mikulčice, kostel 2, hrob 1, náhrdelník se skleněnými korálky a bronzovým lunicovitým přívěskem; 4 – Dolní Věstonice, hrob 651, náhrdelník z olovených křížků a olovených korálků; 5 – Prušánky, hrob 103, náhrdelník sestávající z olovených křížků a olovených korálků.

Obr. 5. Olovené rombické křížky. 1 – Mikulčice; 2 – Brno-Líšeň-Staré Zámky.

Obr. 6. Olovené rombické křížky. 1 – Břeclav-Pohansko; 2, 3 – Velké Bílovice; 4–7 – Dolní Věstonice; 8 – Mikulčice; 9 – Mutěnice; 10 – Velké Bílovice; 11, 12 – Maissau; 13–15 – Prušánky; 16, 17 – Windegg; 18 – Čejč; 19 – Brno-Líšeň-Staré Zámky (1–8 – varianta Velké Bílovice; 9–15 – varianta Mutěnice; 16–18 – varianta Windegg; 19 – varianta Staré Zámky).

Obr. 7. Sânpaul, jud. Cluj. Olovené závěsky z hrobu 3 (dle Grumeza/Cupcea 2020).

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