

of the Great Moravian Empire that was inhabited as early as in the 7th century and ramparted in the 9th century. The settlement was one of the main hillforts of Great of foundations of a building with a length of 25 m and a width of 9 m, which experts consider to be a princely palace, were discovered at the hillfort archaeological site. In addition, remains of a three-aisled church – basilica, another 11 churches, tens of workshops and hundreds of cabin-like houses have been documented. More than 2,500 graves were also recorded. The archaeological site occupies an area of 100 hectares. Various objects - jewellery, weapons, tools, wooden house and bridge structures, and oak-wood dugout canoes were also found at the site. The most significant finds are displayed in the local museum. Visitor trails equipped with information boards pass through the

ohansko Hillfort, Břeclav

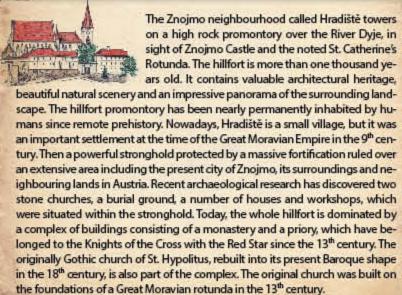


Pohansko Hillfort is situated some 2.5 km south of Břeclav in a flood-plain forest over the confluence of the Rivers Morava and Dyje. It is one of the most remarkable early medieval monuments, not only in the Czech Republic, but also in Central Europe. Archaeological research has discovered dispersed finds coming from various prehistoric periods, but, above all else, continual settlement

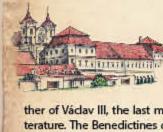
from the beginning of Slavic expansion (6th century) to the early 10th century has been proved. One of the most important discoveries is a stockaded noble farmstead. A church with a burial ground is to be found on its premises. A second church (rotunda) is to be found at the north-east outer bailey. In addition, evidence of the presence of nobility, craftsmen and farmers was found at the hillfort. At present, a visitor to the hillfort can see a permanent exhibition displaying the way of life of early medieval society, which is located at the Empire manor house in Pohansko. While visiting the hillfort itself, visitors can spot outlined foundations of the farmstead church, a re-construction of an early medieval house - earth-house, and a pagan ritual place. An attentive observer can also see remains of the hillfort's central fortification.

archaeological site, which is dominated by a 30 m tall observation tower.

St. Hypolitus' Hillfort, Castle, Znojmo



Benedictine Monastery, Rajhrad



Rajhrad conceal the biggest Moravian monastery library, holding more than 65,000 books. Some of them are older than the monastery itelf, which was established in about 1048, Manuscripts associated with Queen Eliška Rejčka, the second wife of King Václav II and stepmother of Václav III, the last male Přemyslid, are mature works of medieval li-

The walls of the Benedictine monastery in

Staré Zámky is a listed archaeological site,

a remarkable prehistoric hillfort situated

some 2 km northeast of Lišeň on a rock pro-

montory by Říčka Stream. The site is therefo-

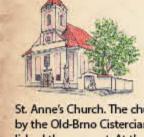
terature. The Benedictines of Rajhrad purchased two of the original tomes for eight guldens in 1828 and faithful copies of them were made for CZK 600,000 in 2010. Today, visitors can browse through them and admire their gilded illuminations. The monastery is in service again (it was occupied by the army from 1953 to 1990) and its Baroque appearance is the work of Jan Blažej Santini Eichel; the main library hall and the Church of Saints Peter and Paul are decorated with rich frescos and precious anaglyphs. The monastery is operated by the Museum of Literature in Moravia and contains permanent exhibitions as well as occasional displays mapping Moravian literary culture.

Cathedral of St. Peter and Paul, Staré Zámky Hillfort, Brno



re only accessible by a narrow pathway from the northwest. Its central part is made up of a 4-hectare triangular area which continues to a 7-hectare fan-shaped outer bailey. The site has been inhabited by humans since the end of the Upper Palaeolithic. Staré Zámky achieved its greatest prosperity during the period of the Great Moravian Empire. Slavic settlement occurred at the turn of the 7th and 8th century. The promontory was fortified by a massive wood-clay rampart with a front stone wall in the 9th century. The main entrance to the site was located in the narrowest part of the plateau. A stockaded noble farmstead was built up on the highest point of the hillfort. Part of the farmstead's stockade was a tall wooden tower that surely gave a good view of the surroundings. Findings of plastered stones suggest the existence of a building, perhaps a little church. Farm facilities and craft workshops were situated in the rear of the farmstead. The pathway led into a densely inhabited large inner bailey, which was separated by a stone rampart from an outer bailey where a skeleton burial ground has been discovered. The second bailey's rampart was formed by a mound and a moat, which are discernible to this day. The place is some 12 km north west from the best-known landmark of Brno, the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul on the Petrov hill.

Marian Pilgrimage Place, Žarošice



The Marian pilgrimage place in Zarosice is associated with the Virgin Mary statue that Queen Eliška Rejčka (1286-1335) presented to the church. The statue was originally placed in the pilgrimage Church of The Assumption of the Virgin Mary (the second church in the village); now it is located on the main altar of

St. Anne's Church. The church and the pilgrimage place were administered by the Old-Brno Cistercian Convent until 1782, when Emperor Josef II abolished the convent. At the same time, the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary was closed. Pilgrimage feasts thus moved to St. Anne's Parish Church, which was destroyed by fire in the 18th century and newly rebuilt. The statue of the Old Holy Mother of Zarošice – a blessing Virgin Mary with the infant Jesus in her arms, both of them wearing crowns – was carved out of one piece of a log by an unknown artist (approx. 1325). Pilgrimage feasts have been held in the open air since 1967. The significance of this place was enhanced in 1995 after the papal crowning of the statue of the Old Holy Mother of Zarošice by John Paul II at Svatý Kopeček u Olomouce.

Marian Pilgrimage Place, Křtiny



Krtiny, hidden away in the upper end of the karstic Josefov Valley, some 15 km northeast of Brno, is an ideal tourist and pilgrimage destination and a starting point for exploring the central part of the Moravský kras (Moravian Karst Region). Křtiny has long been an important European Marian place of pilgrimage. There have been

two churches here since the Middle Ages. The smaller one concealed in its inner rooms the "miraculous image", a Gothic statue of the Virgin Mary of Kitiny, which is said to have attracted hosts of worshippers to Krtiny since 1210. Because of pilgrims' increasing interest, the Premonstratensians of Zábrdovice thoroughly reconstructed the site in 1718 to a design of the most outstanding Czech Baroque architect. Jan Blažej Santini Aichel. He had the ambition to build a monumental church and integrate it sensitively into the landscape of Křtiny Valley. He designed an ingenious symmetric composition based on the Greek cross ground plan. Though the construction was never finished to the full extent and Santini's project was partially reworked after his death, this Baroque showpiece, called the "Pearl of Moravia", is among Santini's masterpieces. The church is open to the public all year round. It currently serves not only for important church events and unique spiritual activities, but also for attendees of musical concerts and admirers of architecture and history.

. Clement's Hillfort, Osvětiman



St. Clement's Hillfort (Klimentek) is a pilgrimage place, a national heritage monument and an archaeological site. It is situated some 17 km west of Staré Město and was built up on a wooded hill in southwest Chřiby near the village of Osvětimany. A pilgrimage takes place there every year on Pentecost. Its convenient and well-pro-

tected position on the ancient trade route connecting the lowland region along the River Morava and the Brno region was known to settlers as early as in the period of the Great Moravian Empire. The first stage of the hillfort's construction began in the middle of the 9th century. After the decline of Great Moravia, the settlement's area shrank and the hillfort was abandoned in the early 12th century at the latest. It was again inhabited between the 14th and 16th centuries. St. Clement's Church stood on the top plateau and its remains were discovered by archaeologists in 1958. It is said the relics of St. Clement were enshrined there before St. Constantine and St. Methodius moved them to Rome. Nowadays, the remains of the foundation walls are outlined in the ground. The recent chapel of St. Clement stands nearby.

elehrad Pilgrimage Place



Velehrad is a frequent destination for pilgrims in the Czech Republic. The place possesses a powerful atmosphere and spiritual wealth and is sought after for its calming nature in the current hectic times. Velehrad is, however, not only a historical monument, but also a lively spiritual and cultural centre all year round. It is a destination for religious pilgrimages, a venue for music performances, educa-

tional workshops and folklore events. Velehrad does not attract just hosts of pilgrims, but also a wide range of inspirational artists, explorers and thinkers. Velehrad's origins date back to the early 13th century, when the first Cistercian monastery in Moravia was built here. The basilica was reconstructed in the Baroque style and is one of the biggest in the Czech Republic. It is furnished with unique Baroque benches adorned with ornamental carvings and the sarcophagus of Cardinal Tomás Špidlik. A lapidarium, excavations and corridor labyrinth are to be found in the large catacombs. The Golden Rose that Pope John Paul II presented to Velehrad is displayed therein. In this way he expressed his favour to a place that is a European cultural crossroads.

Archaeological Open-air Museum, St. John's Church, Zivá voda, Modrá



The archaeological open-air museum in Modrá is situated 7 km from Uherské Hradiště in the Chřiby foothills, at the outskirts of the village of Modrá, within sight of the Velehrad basilica. It is a reconstruction of a Great Moravian settlement dating back to the 9th century, divided into administrative, religious and working parts located in places of authentic archaeological excava-

tions. The museum demonstrates one of the most important national historical periods - the Great Moravian Empire. Its programme includes demonstrations of the way of life then, educational performances and workshops, ceramics production, bread and cake baking and metal processing. The site is enclosed with a stockade rampart, which an entrance gate and watchtowers are part of. The museum exhibits replicas of Slavic buildings such as earth-houses, half-earth houses, adobe half-timbered buildings, as well as an impressive mansion of a Great-Moravian prince or a big cabin-like building belonging to the church precincts - the school of letters and seat of the archbishop. The Modrá - Na Díle national heritage monument, including foundations of a Pre-Great Moravian little church dating back to the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries, is to be found on a hill near the open-air museum. A beautiful stone replica of it was built here. The neighbouring grounds of Živá voda offer a botanical and zoological exhibition. There you can see indigenous species of fish, such as beluga and wels catfish, as well as indigenous majestic land animals – aurochs, which were the dominant species in the local lowlands and forests at the time of the Great Moravian Empire.

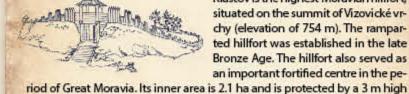
Uherské Hradiště and Staré Město



The remains of the important Great Moravian centre are mostly found under

the current urban development of two towns - Uherské Hradiště and Staré Mesto. The first Slavic settlers established their settlements in the region as early as the 6th century. The importance of the locality rose during the 8th century, when social elites settled here. Villages, workshops and burial grounds with churches gradually came into being on elevated plains on both banks of the River Morava. Individual inhabited settlements, along with their economic and farming facilities, formed the most populous conurbation of a pre -urban type (with an area of approx. 250 hectares) in Great Moravia. There are many localities with excavated church foundations and Great-Moravian burial grounds, such as "Na Valách" (Great Moravia Memorial) and "Spitálky" in Staré Město and "Špitálky" in Uherské Hradiště-Sady.

lášťov Hillfort, Vysoké Pole **



Klášťov is the highest Moravian hillfort, situated on the summit of Vizovické vrchy (elevation of 754 m). The ramparted hillfort was established in the late Bronze Age. The hillfort also served as an important fortified centre in the pe-

stone bulwark. A pit 3 m in depth and 4 m in diameter, referred to as the tank, is to be found in the south-eastern part of the hillfort. Archaeological excavations discovered tens of stores containing hundreds of pieces of, in particular, farming and work tools. The mountain likely served ritual purposes and the Slavs consecrated it to Perun, the god of thunder, storm and fire, at the time of pagan Great Moravia. Klášťov was the main central hillfort for the region of southern Valassko during the Great-Moravian period. An educational trail with eight information boards was set up on the summit of Klášťov. The boards inform visitors about the site's history and trails take them around the hill, passing by remains of the old hillfort, archaeological pits, an observatory point and a little well.

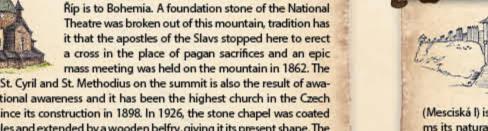
Marian Pilgrimage Place, Svatý Hostýn



Svatý Hostýn is the highest Marian pilgrimage place in Moravia and the most frequented pilgrimage place in the Czech Republic. A dominating feature of the hill of Hostýn is the Basilica of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, which was finished in 1748 and is visible from afar. The hill of Hostýn and the Marian sanctuary have been destinations for thousands of pilgrims for three centuries. A typical motif is pla-

ced over the entrance portal – a mosaic image of the Virgin Mary of St. Hostýn with a picture of a defeat of the Tatars below. The same motif is used over the altar in the basilica in the form of a statue. The remarkable Calvary designed by the architect D. Jurković consists of 13 different chapels built according to local traditional architecture and laid out northeast of the basilica. The observation tower of Franz Joseph I, placed on the second peak of Hostýn, offers a captivating view of Hostýnské vrchy (Hostýn Hills) and the surrounding landscape. The Jurkovič Hall and the Svatý Hostýn Museum are open to the public. Their displays showcase the history of Hostýn from prehistory to the present, and the local fauna is also displayed. A visitor also should not miss the Celtic earthwork, the monumental stairway and the water chapel at its foot.

hapel of St. Cyril and St. Methodius, Radhošť



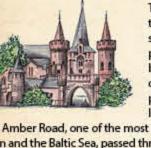
The mountain of Radhost is to Moravia what the hill of

Chapel of St. Cyril and St. Methodius on the summit is also the result of awakening national awareness and it has been the highest church in the Czech Republic since its construction in 1898. In 1926, the stone chapel was coated with shingles and extended by a wooden belfry, giving it its present shape. The original decoration includes a Wallachian Madonna triptych by A. Liebscher and stained-glass windows depicting the lives of St. Cyril and St. Methodius and other national saints. The outdoor sculpture of Cyril and Methodius was carved in 1930 by the Czech-American Albín Polášek, who also sculpted the statue of Radegast that has become an unofficial symbol of the region. The chapel's belfry functions as an observation tower and its maintenance and accessibility are provided by volunteers in the Matice Radhošťská Association.

As a Great-Moravian centre, Olomouc was situated at the crossroads of important trade routes. Thorough exploration of the city's Great-Moravian settlement is complicated, because it lies under dense, continual urban development. The hillfort was likely situated where Olomouc Castle is now, on Biskupské náměstí. The hillfort was ram-

parted. Many items belonging to elite warriors were discovered in the area of the current Biskupské náměstí and Křížkovského ulice. As an early medieval hillfort, Olomouc was in a strategic location at the crossroads of trade routes and controlled long-distance and local trade paths. This is proven by numerous finds of luxury goods, including amber. The importance and continuity of settlement is confirmed by Olomouc Castle itself, which was built on the site of the hillfort at the beginning of the 12th century. The beautiful Svatý Kopeček is 8 km from the city centre. The site is dominated by the monumental Church of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary and was established at a traditional pilgrimage place. Svatý Kopeček is currently a destination for admirers of Baroque architecture and many pilgrims, as well as being the heart of a parish where the most valued mysteries of belief take place. Olomouc is also a UNESCO site - thanks to the Holy Trinity Column.

Chateau, Hradec nad Moravicí



The region of Hradec nad Moravici is situated in the northern foothills of the Nízký Jesenik. The chateau stands out as the central point of a lengthwise promontory passed by the Moravice River to the west and Hradečná Stream to the east. Steep, in some places rocky scarps safely protected the location, which has long been inhabited.

The Amber Road, one of the most important links connecting the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea, passed through this region. One of the first buildings of the area was a Slavic hillfort, which was likely built in the period of the Great Moravian Empire in the 8th century. For four hundred years the hillfort guarded the border between Moravia and Poland, in a region called Holasovicko. A preserved written record states that a toll was collected in Hradec and sent to Olomouc, which conclusively proves that Hradec was a Great-Moravian and later Czech stronghold. The architectural chateau complex at Hradec nad Moravici is situated in a 60-hectare forest park of unique compositional and dendrologic quality and is one of the most sought-after tourist destinations in the region. It is a renowned cultural centre where many events are held

477 Archeopark, Chotěbuz-Podobora



dobora presents a replica of an upland Slavic hillfort and is built on a place where prehistoric and subsequently early nedieval fortifications were siuated. Its features try to match the results of archaeological

rcheopark Chotěbuz - Po-

settlement was established and inhabited in Chotěbuz on a river route as early as in ancient times - at the turn of the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age. The Slavs came to the region 1,200 years later, in the early medieval period. The multifunctional entry building at Archeopark Chotěbuz - Podobora, which is one of the branches of the Těšínsko Museum, was opened in April 2016. The park has continually been developed in woods near Český Těšín since 2001 and a present-day visitor can find a fortification system and various types of houses and workshops. The park's programme is focused on educational events for schools and the public. The hillfort site is open from 1 April to 30 September: during the winter season only the displays in the entry building are available. Tours always start on the hour and are guided.

Veľký vrch Hillfort, Divinka



The central hillfort is situated near the village of Divinka on Veľký vrch hill and occupies an area of more than 12 hectares. Roads connecting the region to southern, eastern and north western lands have always led along the Váh and Kysuca Rivers. The hillfort consists of fortification systems forming three separate units: an acropolis,

a summit and surrounding settlements. The region was inhabited by people of the Lusatian culture in the late Bronze Age and the La Tène culture in the Iron Age; the Slavs eventually came in the early Middle Ages during the Great-Moravian period. The hillfort has multiple ramparts and several entry gates. Deep moats were dug on the inner side of earthworks, but are less visible in the surroundings. Excavations proved the Slavs used the remains of the Bronze Age earthworks when building the fortification. The hillfort was inhabited by farmers, cattle-herders and skilful blacksmiths. Exclusive objects attesting to the presence of Great-Moravian local elite and a military troop at the hillfort were discovered. The site is situated in the woods and is accessible by a forest pathway and educational trail; some parts of the fortification are hardly discernible in the ground. A manor house from the 16th century is located in the village. A nature trail leads to the hillfort.

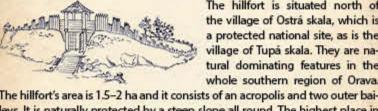
Church of Saints Cyril and Methodius, Terchová



The Church of Saints Cyril and Methodius is the biggest Slovak church consecrated to the Byzantine brothers and is the architectural dominating feature of Terchová, the village where legendary folk hero Juraj Jánošík was born. The church was built in the 1940s and is currently a tourist attraction, as well as being a place of prayer and contemplation. There is a unique wooden moving Christmas crib made by local

folk artists to be found in the church's antechapel. The crib is the second biggest of its kind in Slovakia – just after the renowned crib in the town of Rajecká Lesná. The church in Terchová, with its Cyril-Methodius consecration, is the true architectural dominating feature of the picturesque valley. The Days of Cyril and Methodius are an integral part of cultural summer events held in Terchová. In addition to the holy dimension represented by the solemn Cyril-Methodius holy mass administered on the pilgrimage summit of Oravcove, all visitors may attend the Gallery of Nature within the parish garden, numerous artistic exhibitions, concerts, scientific symposiums and other associated events.

Ostrá skala Hillfort, Vyšný Kubín



the village of Ostrá skala, which is a protected national site, as is the village of Tupá skala. They are natural dominating features in the whole southern region of Orava.

leys, It is naturally protected by a steep slope all round. The highest place in the hillfort is the acropolis, which is fortified by a horse-shoe shaped embankment. It was likely built in the La Tène period and reconstructed later in the early Middle Ages, when a wooden palisade could have stood on the summit. Several objects, especially in higher places, were found during research. There are houses and farming facilities that could date back to the 13th century. The cultural layer is thin at the location, which makes it harder to outline and identify the buildings' ground plans. An access path to the hillfort likely led through the spots where the fortifications are interrupted. The museum is to be found on the ground floor of the Municipal Office (residing in the left wing of Baroque church) and provides information about the village and its history, as well as about the related excavations.

1esciská Hillfort, Pružina



The hillfort is situated on a triangular terraced promontory of the hill of Svrčinovec over the confluence of the Mojtinský and Strážovský Brooks. It consists of two

fortifications, where the first one Mesciská I) is bigger and situated on the natural edge of the terrace that forms its natural protection. The second one (Mesciská II) is a smaller half-arch hillfort separated from the first one by a wide valley. It is protected by steep and inaccessible rocks from the west and northwest and by a steep slope to the east. The location is renowned due to the discovery of numerous early medieval iron objects, including necklaces, farming tools, wood-working tools, stirrups, spurs, bowls of a Silesian type and utensils. The location was certainly inhabited in earlier period as well, likely in the 1st century BC, which is proved by ceramic items from the Púchov culture.

Veľká and Malá Skalka, Skalka nad Váhom



Skalka pilgrimage place dates from the 11th century and conmention of a cave in Slovakia. In the 13th century, a Benedictine monastery

The first historical record of the cerns hermit Benedictines, St. Andrew Zorard and Benedict of Szkalka, who lived there in a cave and established the pilgrimage tradition. It is the first historical

densely inhabited, especially in the early Iron Age. A massive fortification forwas established in the place and served until the middle of the 16th century, ming an acropolis and two outer baileys likely dates from that period. The forwhen it was closed. Skalka bloomed again some 100 years later, when a Jesuit tification protected a settlement with its housing buildings, workshops, ritual friary occupied the place, because it had been banned from the town of Trenplace and a water tank. In the early Middle Ages, the location was inhabited čín. After the suppression of the Jesuit Order, Skalka was abandoned and graagain and the preserved fortification was used. There are many interesting finds attesting to the presence of warriors and nobility dating from the late dually fell into disrepair. Repairs and reconstruction work have been ongoing since 1989. Nowadays, it is possible to visit the sites of Malá and Veľká Skalka 8th and early 9th centuries. A small village museum offers a special exhibition focused on the settlement of Molpir Hillfort and general local history. A noted landmark in the region is Smolenický Castle, part of which is the Congress

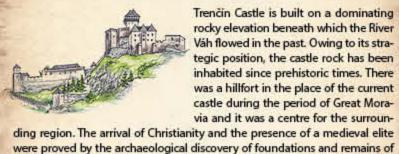
10lpír Hillfort, Smolenice

Centre of the Slovak Science Academy.

Hajíček, Trstín

Trenčín Castle, Trenčín

by a 1 km road or a 2.2 km educational trail.



Trenčin Castle is built on a dominating rocky elevation beneath which the River Váh flowed in the past. Owing to its strategic position, the castle rock has been inhabited since prehistoric times. There was a hillfort in the place of the current castle during the period of Great Moravia and it was a centre for the surroun-

walls of a unique 4-apse rotunda in the heart of the castle. The current castle has been gradually developed since the 11th century. In the beginning, it was a frontier stronghold overseeing important river fords and Carpathian gorges, which connected the northern Hungarian region with Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and Poland. It later became a regional administrative centre of the Hungarian state, a seat of frontier county government, a royal and noble district. The best-known medieval owner of the castle was Matúš Čák of Trenčín, who made it the centre of his large dominions with its own court. According to chroniclers, Matúš Čák's castle with its wealth and beauty was the equal of a royal court in the early 14th century. The castle of Trencin played an important role on Central Europe's political chessboard until the 18th century. It is currently an iconic monument in the Trenčín region.

Pobedim Hillfort



Pobedim is a type of lowland hillfort standing on a low elevation. The hillfort consists of two parts - an acropolis (area of 4.1 ha) and an outer bailey (area of ca 3.9 ha). The site was fortified all round by a chamber wood-earth structure with a front stone wall. It is assu-

the earthwork. Research discovered numerous buildings, especially situated near the earthwork. Housing buildings had the form of simple earth-houses with a stone fire in a corner. Numerous settlements were to be found in the hillfort's surroundings, some of them had a blacksmith's workshop. The hillfort was a prominent power centre, playing important organisational-administrative, trading and production roles. A local museum is located in Rolnický dům (Farmer House) and has historical furniture, traditional costumes, work tools and a collection of traditional ceramics. Visitors may explore the village history display and archaeological records of prehistoric settlement and the Slavic hillfort, which was once situated in Pobedim area.

25. Church of St. Margaret of Antioch, Kopčany



The Church of St. Margaret of Antioch dates from the 9th century and, along with the church graveyard and remains of a Great-Moravian court, represents remarkable cultural wealth attesting to the beginning and establishment of Christianity in Central and Southeast Europe. The Church of St. Margaret of Antioch in Kopčany is the sole authentic Great-Moravian church that has been preserved nearly completely

and has kept its original use and function. The church was originally part of a Slavic hillfort site near Mikulčice, where remains of foundations of churches dating from that period have been discovered. The church underwent several construction stages, but its Great-Moravian architectural essence has been maintained. Archaeological research discovered 7 graves in the church burial grounds. In order to commemorate the arrival of Cyril and Methodius to the region, a festival called Cyrilometodejská ratolesť (the Cyril-Methodius Branch) is held in the pre-Romanesque church of St. Margaret in Kopčany.

26. Monastery and Church of the Our Seven Sorrows Lady. Šaštín–Strážo



The Basilica Minor of the Our Seven Sorrows Lady in Saštin-Stráže is one of the most significant religious buildings in Slovakia. Its construction started in 1736. Tens of thousands of pilgrims visit the basilica every year, especially at Pentecost and during the Our Seven Sorrows Lady Festival (15 September). The basilica is associated with the statue

of the Our Seven Sorrows Lady, which was sculpted in 1564. After canonical examination, the statue was declared miraculous and this was confirmed by a decree issued by Pope Urban VIII. The Order of St. Paul got the statue in 1733 and its members decided to build a pilgrimage church and a monastery in the village. The church was built in the Baroque style and consecrated in 1763 in the presence of Empress Maria Theresa and Emperor Francis I. Six side altars adorned with pictures by prominent artists such as J. L. Kracker, J. I. Mildorfer and E. Hochschartner are to be found in the church. In 1964, Pope Paul VI promoted the Church of the Our Seven Sorrows Lady to a basilica minor - the

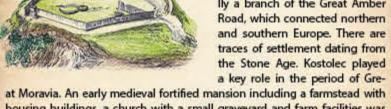
Branč Castle, Podbranč



Branč Castle, which has an area of 7,500 m², is situated in the Myjava Uplands on a small hill (480 m in elevation) over the current village of Podzámok. The castle was built in 1251-1297. As an important border castle, it guarded the western border of Hungary and roads heading to Moravia. The castle consists of 3 parts. The oldest central part of the castle was built in the middle of the 13th century; the Nyár family owned

the castle from the 16th century and built the middle and lower castles. In the beginning of the 18th century, the castle was abandoned and started to fall into disrepair. A visitor to the castle may observe the surrounding landscape, Záhorie, Malé and Biele Karpaty and even distant mountains in Austria. On the feast day of Cyril and Methodius (5 June) the Protestant Church holds a solemn mass in Branč Castle

28. Kostolec Hillfort, Ducové The hillfort is situated near im-



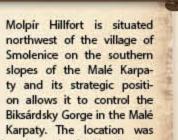
lly a branch of the Great Amber Road, which connected northern and southern Europe. There are traces of settlement dating from the Stone Age. Kostolec played a key role in the period of Gre-

portant ancient routes, especia-

housing buildings, a church with a small graveyard and farm facilities was established here. It also included a rotunda with a horseshoe-shaped apse, of which not only the foundations but also the ruined walls have survived. The farmstead was situated on a well-defendable promontory and protected by simple and doubled wood palisades combined with an earthwork and a moat. It was a governing and administrative centre ruling over farming and trade settlements in the surrounding area. Kostolec is one of the most important monuments of Great-Moravian culture in Slovakia. The location was declared a national heritage monument in 1990.

The second secon

Bratislava Castle, Bratislava



Trstin is strategically positioned near

the entrance to a sole crossing on the

so-called Czech Road and the place was

inhabited as early as the beginning of

the Middle Ages. The village immedia-

tely neighbours the Smolenický Karst

Region and is a starting point for hiking

and cycling tours to Záruby - the highest

peak of the Malé Karpaty (768 m in ele-

vation), as well as to Modra, Piešťany and

Záhorie. The Renaissance and Baroque manor house and the Parish Church

of Saints Peter and Paul built in 1763 are to be found in the village. The ol-

dest and best-known historically valuable site is the Hájiček pilgrimage place,

where a Church of the Virgin Mary, a wooden belfry and a Calvary are to be

found. A dedication to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows later replaced the ori-

ginal dedication to Saints Peter and Paul. Hajíček was in its prime especially

after 1764, when the statue of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows was moved to

a newly-built church in Sastin. After this, thousands of pilgrims from the entire

Austro-Hungarian Empire travelled to Sastin on the feast of the Nativity of the

church was built on the site of a Romanesque church in 1345. One of the bi-

ggest bells in Europe – St. Nicolas – is hung in the northern spire. In 2008, the

church was declared a basilica minor and has become a Marian pilgrimage

place in the Trnava archdiocese. The basilica's treasure is a precious historical

organ and its sound has been praised by Olivier Latry – a prominent organist

of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris – and Mikuláš Schneider-Trnavský, a renow-

tant trade and likely administrative role in the region of Lower Považie in the

period of Great Moravia. The hillfort has an area of some 3 hectares and was

situated on an important crossroads of trade routes heading from the east to

the west and from the north to the south. A massive rampart encompassed

the hillfort. Archaeological research discovered scorched layers, suggesting

as attracting craftsmen who worked there. One of the most important finds

from the Great-Moravian period is a silver Arabian coin – a dirham. The locati-

on was continually inhabited in the 13th and 14th centuries, which is attested

to by a wooden palace building, unique ceramic piping with a stone water

tank and a masonry gate. The remains of a massive embankment-moat Slavic

re its establishment, because they were attracted by a legend related to a sta-

tue of the Virgin Mary and the miraculous spring where the statue had been

found. The original monastery has not been preserved to the present. After

Joseph II abolished the monastery in 1786, it had various owners and was

eventually converted into a mansion. Only a church remained from the origi-

nal monastery - the current parish church, which has been reconstructed se-

veral times. In the beginning, it had just one aisle with an extended choir and

had no spire. It is the only preserved relic of the Order of St. Paul's monasteries

and their architecture in Slovakia. The church was converted in accordance

with various architectonic styles several times. The Baroque style prevailed

after the victory over the Ottoman Empire, when the Marian cult was revi-

ved. The Baroque Chapel of St. Anne, the Miraculous or Holy Well Chapel, the

Lourdes Cave and a Calvary are to be found in the church's neighbourhood.

The church was promoted to a basilica minor by a decree of Pope Benedict

Martin's Cathedral, Bratislava

crowned here in 1563-1830. St. Stephen's crown was put on the heads of 11

monarchs – among others on that of Maria Theresa – and eight royal wives.

These historical events are commemorated by the Crown Celebrations. Sight-

seeing tours include the Chapel of St. John the Eleemosynary with its huge

Baroque altar, the statue of St. Martin with a beggar and a bronze font. The

cathedral was graced with visit of Pope John Paul II in 1995. You can visit it all

year round. Most of the cathedral is open to the public for free.

fortification with a height of 9-11 m are to be found at the site even today.

34. Marianka Pilgrimage Place

violent destruction of the hillfort at the end of the Great-Moravian period.

Neštich Hillfort, Svätý Jur

of Majcichov near a grove

called Vlčkovský hájik. It is

oval-shaped and extends on

a slight elevation on the left

bank of the River Dudváh.

The hillfort played an impor-

Neštich Hillfort is a national heritage monu-

ment and is perched over the town of Svätý

Jur in a salient of the Malé Karpaty at an ele-

vation of 342 m. Its origin in the 8th century is

associated with the Avar khaganate culture.

The site later became an important Great-

Moravian fortified settlement. In its prime the

stronghold consisted of three fortified sites

with an area of 8.5 ha and a length of more

than 680 m. The earth-wood castle was ga-

rrisoned and provided protection to the re-

gion's inhabitants and trade caravans, as well

ages were subsequently made to it.

However, great numbers of pilgrims

had already visited to the place befo-

This cathedral is the main place of worship in

the archdiocese of Bratislava. Papal approval

for the movement of a provostal church from

the castle to the town was the reason for the

ce. Pope Innocent III granted Hungarian King

Imrich's request in 1221. Reconstruction of the

then-parish church began in the 14th century

and gave the new cathedral Gothic features.

The Cathedral's famous history is underpinned

by the fact that Hungarian monarchs were

construction of this epicarchitectonic showpie-

ned Trnava native, composer and conductor.

32 Majcichov Hillfort

Virgin Mary and Trstin became an important stop on their pilgrimage.

t. Nicolas' Basilica, Trnava

Human presence on Bratislava Castle hill dates as far back as 5,000 years ago. The hill was an acropolis of a Celtic town in the 1st century BC, when Roman builders erected a set of structures. At the turn of the 5th and 6th centuries, the Slavs inhabited

the hill and established a hillfort that became part of Great Moravia in the 9th century. They built a basilica that is currently the biggest Great Moravian church discovered in Slovakia. The hillfort was mentioned in writing in 907 in relation to a battle near Bratislava, which presaged Great Moravia's downfall. But construction work went on.

The castle palace was built as a future imperial residence in the first half of 15th century. The castle became a seat of Hungarian kings in the 16th century. The last thorough reconstruction was performed at Maria Theresa's order in the 18th century, when the castle acquired its current appearance. The castle burnt down in 1811. The current appearance is the result of two thorough reconstructions. Nowadays, the castle is home to the Slovak National Museum - Historical Museum.

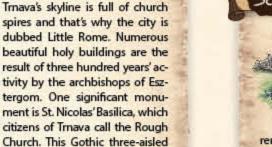
Church of the Holy Cross, Bratislava-Devín When entering this 13th century church



it is impossible to overlook the Saints Cyril and Methodius statuary, which proves the relationship of this place to the apostles' mission to Great Moravia. The originally one-aisle Romanesque ground plan of the church was gradually enlarged to a Gothic three-aisle style. The church was converted several times and so we can see traces of Romanesque, Renaissance, Gothic, Baroque and Neo

-classical architecture. The church contains the relics of St. Clement, a bishop who closely cooperated with our apostles. A large burial ground dating back to the Great-Moravian period was discovered near the church and some historians have suggested the church stood here as early as the 9th century. The finding of a tombstone with rich symbolism poses the question of whether St. Methodius was buried right there. That is to say we do not know the place of his last rest so far. The main altar of the Devin church was consecrated to the Holy Cross and its central motif is Christ's Crucifixion, which was likely made in the workshop of the renowned sculptor F. X. Messerschmidt, active

Devín Castle, Bratislava-Devín



Devin has a unique and symbolical position among other historical monuments in Slovakia. Its cultural-spiritual and political-strategic importance is attested to by archaeological finds related to the period of Great Moravia. Not only ruins of a medieval castle, but, in particular, remains of a Great-Moravian church from the second half of the 9th century

built with using Roman building materials are of historical significance. Bricks with stamps of the XIII and XIV legions were secondarily used in the masonry, and that's why the building was originally assigned to the period of the Roman Empire. The church is dated to the time of Rastislav's rule, so around 850. Its ground plan comprised four rooms with a three-apse south-facing ending. It was a holy building with surrounding burial grounds. Fragments of the church's inner walls' polychrome plaster decorated with botanical, geometric and figural motifs were found in a landfill and around the building. It could have been a proprietary church, i.e. a church combining holy and secular (housing) purposes that was used by a Devin noble. The church existed for some 60 years. Another structure with a circular ground plan and a diameter of 650 cm was discovered nearby. Historians originally considered the building to be a late-Renaissance or early-Baroque tower or windmill. Research revealed it was a religious structure dating back to the first half of the 11th century. The nearby Great-Moravian church no longer existed and it seems an early-medieval rotunda took over its function.

t. George's Rotunda, Nitrianska Blatnica



St. George's Rotunda is situated in exravilane of the village of Nitrianska Blatnica. It stands alone on a rocky promontory at the foot of Marhát Hill, surrounded by the woods of Považský Inovec. It is the only preserved witness to a long-forgotten settlement. Radiocarbon dating results date its origin back to 830 ± 40. The rotunda was built at the beginning of five centuries of settlement, which began in the early 9th century. Two noble

armsteads fortified by two palisades were discovered. The type of settlement changed in the late 10th century and houses became scattered. Archaeological finds proved the inhabited locality developed economically due to mining and processing of iron ore. After local deposits were exhausted, the settlement gradually declined and disappeared in the 13th century. Its inhabitants moved to lowlands offering better living conditions. The rotunda gradually fell into disrepair and transformed into a ruin. The rotunda's damaged walls were repaired and roofed in 1530-40. The rotunda consisted of a circular aisle and a horseshoe-shaped sanctuary-apse. The original walls were preserved at a height of 6.5 m in the aisle and 4.5 m in the apse. Since the Renaissance repair, the rotunda has been used for purposes of the Roman-Catholic Church and annual St. George pilgrimages have been held up to the present day. The exact dating has confirmed St. George's Rotunda in Nitrianska Blatnica is likely the oldest preserved standing religious building not only in Slovakia, but throughout Central Europe. The rotunda is of unique historical and cultural importance and is one of the most valuable national heritage monuments.

'aly Hillfort, Bojná



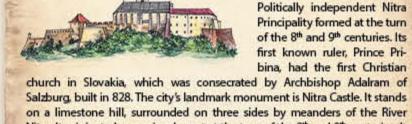
was inhabited in the 8th-9th centuries and functioned as a defence, trade and missionary centre. The presence of an intensive Christian mission operating in the Nitra region before the arrival of Saints Cyril and Methodius has been attested to by findings of gilded plaques with religious motifs showing the

The Slavic hillfort of Bojná - Valy

of one of the oldest bronze bells in Europe. Archaeological research has been conducted at the hillfort and brings new interesting finds and information each year. Visitors may see the findings and 3D visualisation of the hillfort in the Archaeological Museum of Great Moravia, which is to be found in the centre of the village of Bojná. The museum is open from 10 am to 4 pm daily. Valy Hillfort is located in quiet woods and its visitors can just relax there or take a peaceful walk in the NATURA 2000 nature preserve. The hillfort is freely accessible, but a visitor must abide by the prohibition against entering research sites. A reconstructed monumental 12-metre tall entrance gate, Slavic houses and a dome furnace are displayed where they were originally discovered.

oldest evidence of writing by Central European Slavs, as well as a unique find

Nitra Castle, Church of St. Michael the Archangel, Zobor Monastery, Nitra



ping settlements in Slovakia. Politically independent Nitra Principality formed at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries. Its irst known ruler, Prince Pribina, had the first Christian

The city Nitra is one of the

oldest continually develo-

Nitra. It originated as a princely seat at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries. It was a bishop's seat from 880. It originally extended along the entire castle hill and obtained its current appearance during Renaissance and Baroque reconstructions. One significant Great-Moravian location is Martin Hill, where the foundations of St. Martin's Church, dating from the 9th century, are to be found. An exhibition about the life of the Slavs in the period of Great Moravia is displayed in the local archaeological open-air museum. The Church of St. Michael the Archangel in Nitra - Dražovce is a preserved pre-Romanesque religious building that is attractive due to its position over the rivervalley. The St. Hippolytus Benedictine monastery situated at the foot of the Zobor Hill is the oldest monastery in Slovakia. Currently, the remains of the Baroque monastery stand there and the building is being rebuilt. Nearby of the city Nitra is the village Močenok, the centre of modern devotion to Saints Cyril and Methodius.

The second second

t. George's Church, Kostoľany pod Tribečom



pod Tribečom is a unique artistic-historical and building monument in Slovakia. Though there is evidence of older architectural pieces, none has been preserved as authentically as this church. Its ground plan is related to some Great-Moravian buildings and pre Romanesque churches in western Europe. Because of its importance to Slovak history, the church was listed

as a national heritage monument in 2009 and has become an integral part of European heritage. Fragments of Romanesque and Gothic murals in the oldest indoor parts of the church, discovered and restored in 1965, are especially valuable. The murals of pre-Romanesque style originally covered the full wall area of the choir and aisle. They were well preserved in the aisle, where the cycle of epic images is divided into two horizontal bands.

Benedictine Monastery, Hronský Beňadik



stands was inhabited as early as the period of Great Moravia. An abbey was first documented in 1075. The monument's importance is stressed by the extent of assets donated to the monastery by the Hungarian King Gejza, which are listed in the charter. The monastery was built at a strategic point called the Slovak

The hillfort is to be found on a pro-

montory where steep and rocky slo-

pes down to the valley of the River

Hron provided natural protection

from the east and partially from the

south. Its position at the southern

entrance to an important geogra-

The town of Biña is strategi-

cally positioned on the right

bank of the River Hron near

the River Váh. Natural conditi-

ons and strategic position on

crossroads of trade routes

have always attracted people

to settle here. The hillfort is si-

uated on a dominating eleva-

The hillfort is situated in

the western part of the vill-

Danube. It was positioned

on elevated and smoothly

undulating ground. The pla-

ce has been inhabited since

the Neolithic. The early-me-

age of Mužla, near the River

The place the monastery currently

Hron to mining towns. The monastery precinct had a traditional four-wing ground plan, including a cloister running around a monastic garden and a church situated on the northern side. A new church was built in the 14th century. The monastery was gradually converted to a Renaissance fort in the 16th century and stayed a fort until the end of the Ottoman invasion. The church and monastery were again repaired after a big fire in the 19th century. An early medieval hillfort is situated in the place called Beňadická skala (Beňadik Rock), which is to be found south of the monastery precinct. The hillfort likely served as a refuge and had a strategic position at the Slovak Gate.

Hrádze / Festúnok Hillfort, Tlmače-Lipník



phical formation called the Slovak Gate suggests it had an important strategic and protective function. The hillfort area was inhabited as early as the Neolithic and Hallstatt culture periods. Currently visible massive embankment fortifications dating from the 9th and 10th centuries encompassed a rectangular area of some 2.4 ha. The outer side of the palisaded embankment was strengthened with a dry-stone wall. An earth-wood structure was built behind the strengthening wall. A moat was dug out in front of the embankment, protecting the site from the north, west and partially south. An atypically designed doubled entrance gate stood in the northeast part of the site. The archaeological excavations carried out by Alois Habovštiak in 1968 brought information on housing structures situated by the inner side of the embankment. Notable fragments of prehistoric and Slavic ceramics, arrow points, axe-like grzywnas or rhyolite

ment has interfered with the location since the late 20th century.

Starý Tekov Hillfort



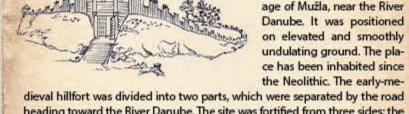
nozoic volcano and partially overed with deluvian and alluvian deposits. The geographical formation is by the River Hron in the west and the River Perecin the east. The beginnings of settlement of Stary Tekov hill date back to the Neolithic. This is indicated by numerous

findings of ceramic fragments dated to the Želiezovce and Lengyel culture groups. A present-day church stands in the middle of the hill. The church dates back to the 14th century and was built on the site of an original medieval church. An important role during the Slavic settlement period was especially played by the north-eastern, dominating part of the hill, which has an area of some 1 ha; it is associated with the principal fort. The entire site has functioned as a graveyard since 1776. The fort was built of earth and wood. There likely was a palisade in the first stage that was later replaced by a rampant made of dry-laid stones. The site diminished in importance during the 13th century and county head Imrich de Beche moved the administrative seat to Levice although, owing to tradition, administrative meetings were held in Stary Tekov during a certain period.

46. Bíňa Hillfort



ted terrace whose natural position was used for its fortification. The fortification consisted of three embankments encompassing the site with an area of 107 ha that was protected by a steep slope from the east. The embankments were made of clay without using a wooden structure or a stone wall and were encompassed by moats with a depth of 8-10 m. The current preserved height of the embankments is 8-9 m above the level of surrounding ground. A rotunda dedicated to the Twelve Apostles stands within the embankment. Numerous graves dating from the period of Great Moravia have been discovered around the rotunda; some of them, however, extend beneath the rotunda's foundations. The site's landmark is a two-spire Church of the Virgin Mary, which was part of a Premonstratensian monastery founded around 1217. Only the monastery's foundations on the western side of the church have been preserved.



heading toward the River Danube. The site was fortified from three sides; the fourth, southern side was not fortified, likely because of its position on a very steep 3-4 m high bank. The earthwork, at its core, had a width of 1.9 m and was supported by stone walls from both sides. An entrance gate was likely situated near the north-eastern corner. The hillfort's inner area was 1.74 ha and 385 housing structures and 54 skeleton graves were discovered there. The individual structures were scattered around the entire inner area of the hillfort. 79 of them were dug-in houses and were fitted with a stone or clay fireplace. The site played an important economic role during the Great Moravian period and now it is a unique archaeological site in Slovakia.

No historical images of the hillfort were available for this site, and illustration of another local monument was therefore used.

* No historical images of the hillfort were available for this site, and a universal illustration of a Great Moravian hillfort was therefore used.

St. George's Church in Kostolany

the new, independent archdiocese. Slavonic as the fourth sacred language, but also by forming works, contributing to the successful approval of Old Church works into Old Church Slavonic, writing their own literary alph abet - the Glag olitic script, translating the key liturgical mark in the European cultural heritage by in troducing a new tities. The mission of several years' duration made an indelible the creation of the national identity and formation of state en-

ring their engagement, but also later, playing a major role in had immense influence on the Slavonic peoples, not just ducultures and nations. The work of Saints Cyril and Methodius tion - literacy, Christianity, and dialogue between religions, They symbolise the fundamental values of European civilisaspiritual identity of Southern, Eastern, and Central Europe main motifin which on e can find the roots of the cultural and The life and work of Saints Cyril and Methodius constitute the expansion under Svatopluk I) and the spread of literacy and Slavonic principalities; establishment of Great Moravia and its

Central Europe (Moravia, West Slovakia, Transdanubia), with

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Modra, Mikulčice, Nitra) by Martin Peterka.

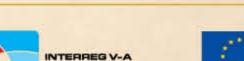
Front page photos (Bratislava-Devin, Kopčany,

Maps, graphic design, drawings,

The key benefit of their work is the evangelisation of East nore:"(Slavorum Apostoli, 2 June 1985). in a new and relevant way the unity of the Continent can igpoints of reference, which no serious attempt to reconstruct which by their strength and vitality are one of the most solid the formation of the common Christian roots of Europe, roots his encyclical, "Their work is an outstanding contribution to Cyril and Methodius As pointed out by Pope John Paull II in Route is life, activity, work, and the resulting tradition of Saints



Cyril and Methodius Route



Saints Cyril and Methodius

the Great Moravian era, with a new system of spiritual values and a new answer to our eternal questions about

panse of the Christian tradition, whether archaeological sites, places of pilgrimage or other monuments, we invite to wandering in a hospitable and picturesque country at the Moravian-Slovak border. The focal centres of cultural development in this area from the 9th century have included Olomouc, Staré Město, Uherské Hradiště, Břeclav, Mikulčice, Znojmo, Bratislava, Nitra, and Trenčín, where Slavonic hillforts once existed. For detailed information about these locations, visit www.cyril-methodius.eu, while information about the trails can be found at www.cyril-methodius.eu/trasy.

The project of Cyril and Methodius Route, an international network of sites and partners to commemorate the heritage of Great Moravia and Saints Cyril and Methodius in terms of the European cultural heritage, has been developed by an interest association of juristic persons named European Cultural Route of Saints Cyril and Methodius, established in 2013.

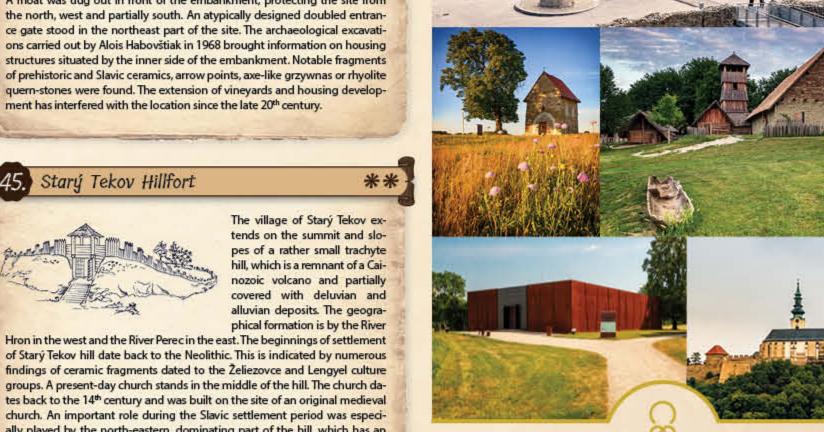












brought Christianity to Central Moravia in 863 during

the purpose of life. By visiting the places associated with the legacy of this fundamental period for the consequent as well as present development of European culture, we commemorate the respect to their heritage and the heritage of our ancestors. Presenting a number of places associated with the ex-

in Moravia and West Slovakia; Transdanubian and East-Alpine in the surrounding areas (formation of Slavonic principalities the related development of social and political organisation

The common, dominant idea behind the Cyril and Methodius

