

Primus: Empowering the Voiceless. The Role of the Rural Population in State Building and Christianisation in East-Central Europe

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Mária Vargha

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Religious Landscapes, Political Climates:
Interaction and Interference of Church
and State throughout the Middle Ages



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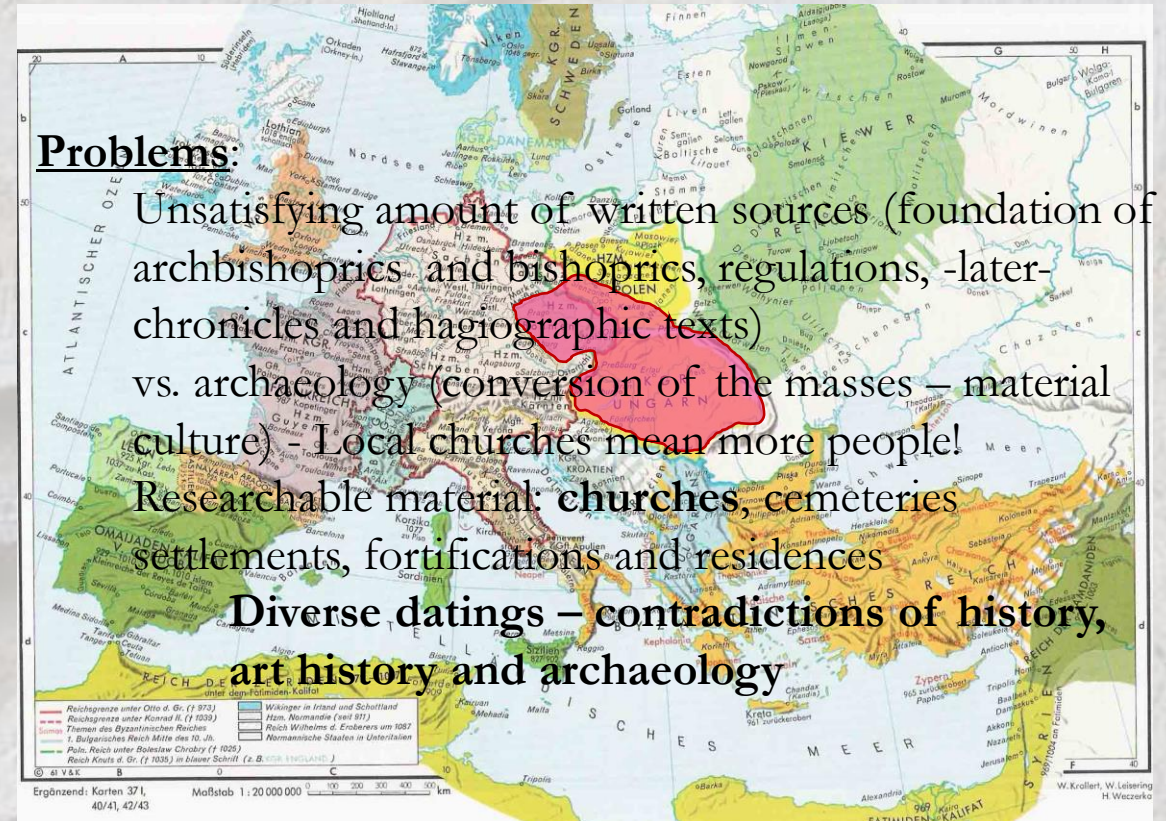
About the Project

- Funded by the PRIMUS scheme of CUNI
- 2021-2023
- Focusing on the ~11-12th c.
- **Christianisation of commoners**
- **Using material from digital archaeological archives**
- By an archeological-spatial approach
- **Teamwork** 😊
 - Ivo Štefan
 - Martin Janovský
 - Anna Chvátalová
 - TBD



- Christianisation, State Formation and the Rural Population - problems and possibilities

- Emergence of new, Christian polities on the periphery of the *Imperium Christianum*
- Similar, top-down processes in the region nearly at the same time
 - Closely attached to the process of state formation
 - Reinforcement and consolidation of the ruler's power is intertwined with Christianisation
 - Differences: diverse traditions of Christianity in different areas
 - Gradual vs. Rapid adaptation
 - Institutionalised Christianisation vs conversion
 - Difference in the level of independence
- Intensively discussed topic in historical research
 - Archaeological investigations are often driven by its results





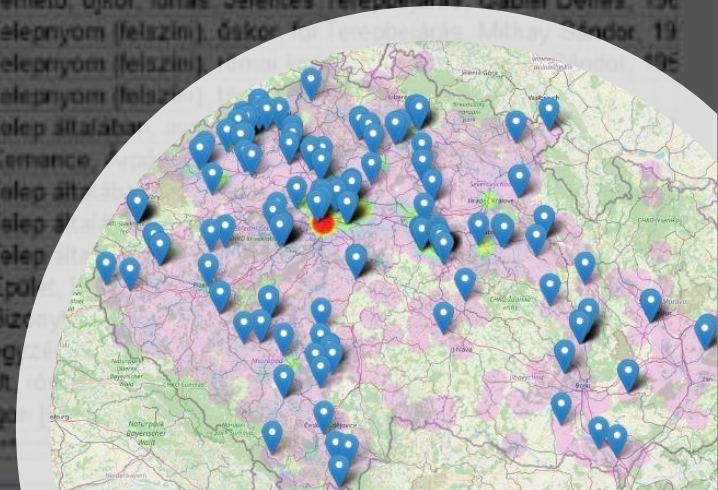
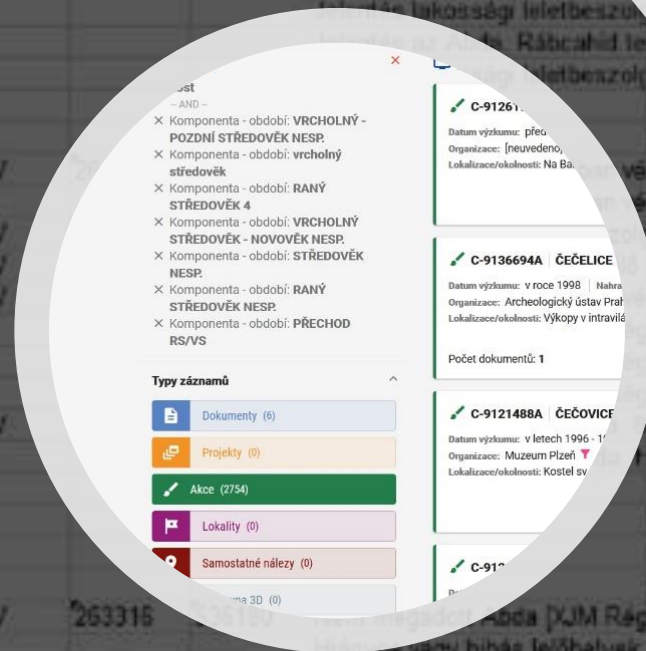
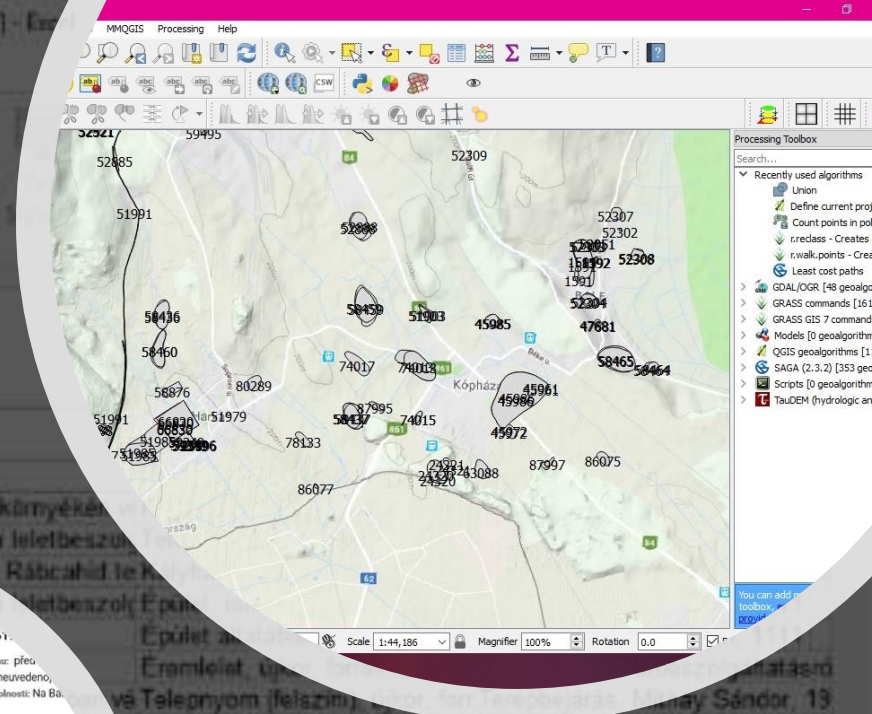
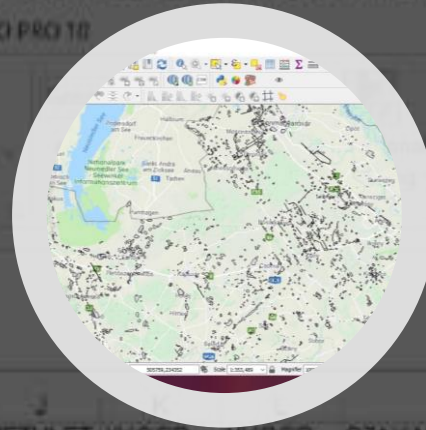
The Emergence of the Local Church system

A Spatial Approach

- Mapping of **churches**, cemeteries and strongholds that can be dated to the ~11-12th centuries
 - Problems: diverse dating: archaeological, art historical, historical
- Database – The example of Hungary
 - Joint database of archaeological and art historical collections of the churches of the area
 - 3387 record analysed for the 11-12th centuries (local churches, monasteries, field cemeteries, and strongholds)
 - Problems with the dating – taphonomy, ways of discovery, limitations of art history and archaeology, research state!
 - Still a significant amount of data – spatial arrangement can be compared to the above discussed processes

The Original Databases – Data Normalisation, Abstraction

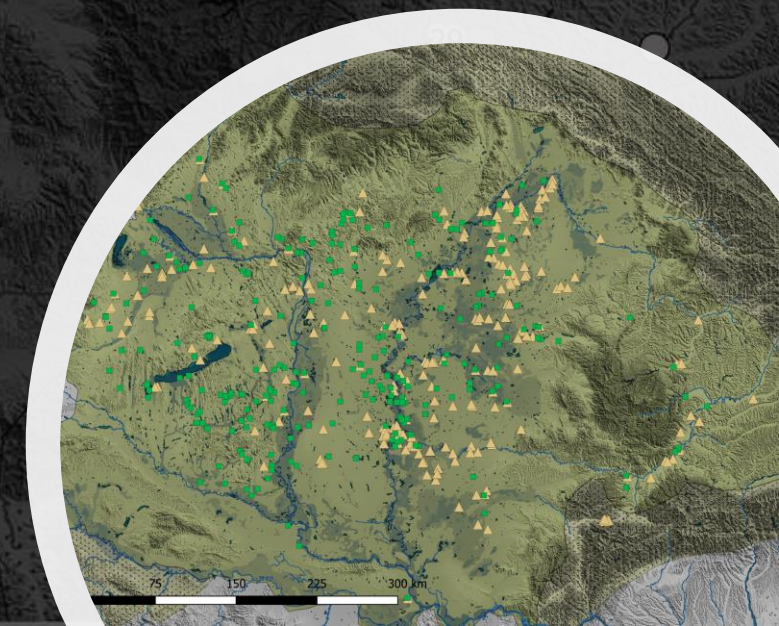
- <https://digiarchiv.aiscr.cz/home>
- <https://archeodatabase.hnm.hu/>
- <https://geoportal.nid.pl/nid/> -
Archeologiczne Zdjęcie Polski

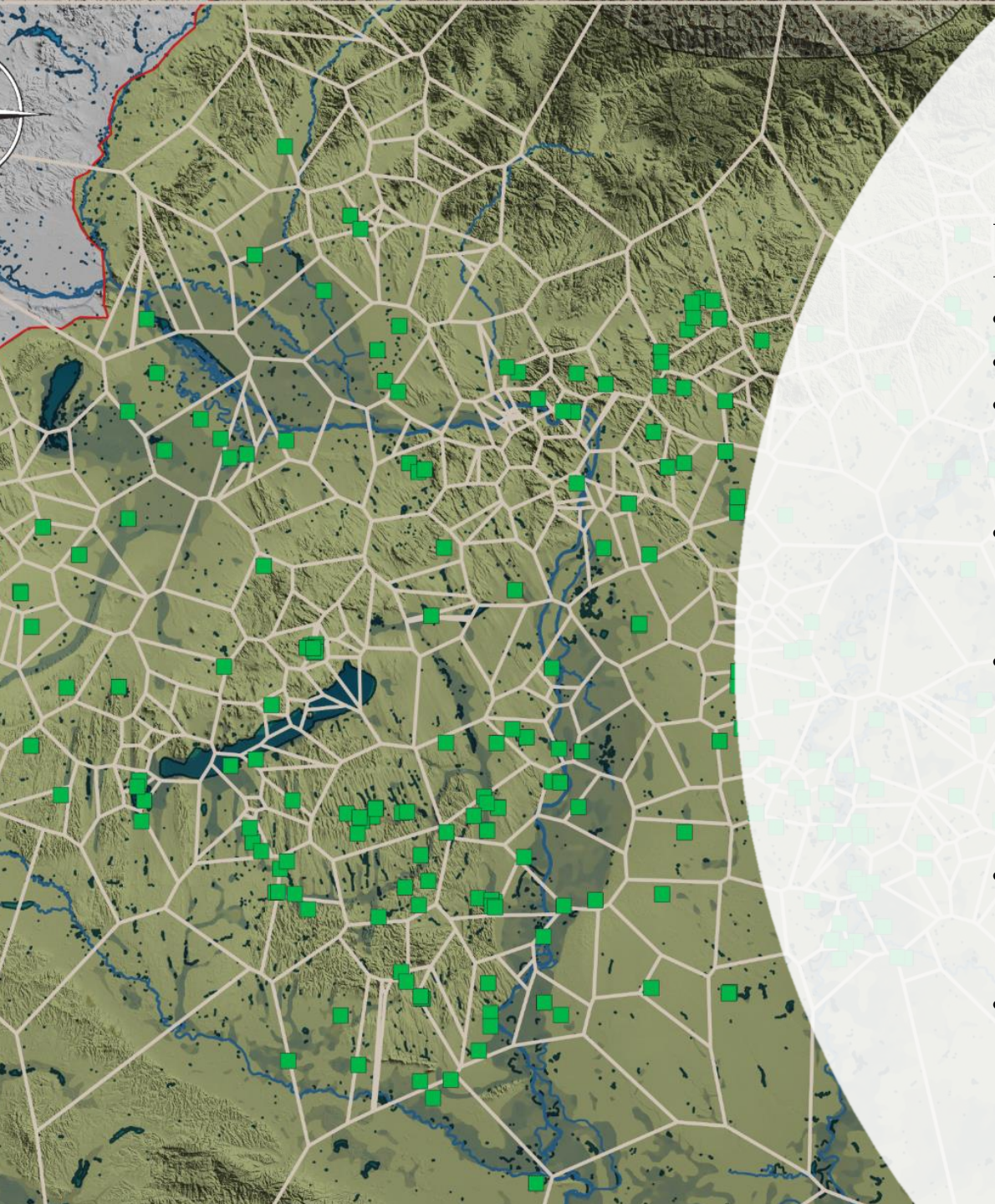


Analysis and Interpretation

Comparison of the spread of 10-12 century cemeteries, churches, monasteries and secular power centres

- Possibility to identify patterns
- Analysis of patterns





Results of the analysis

- Circles of central power
- Early churches ‘avoid’ the immediate surroundings of power centres
- Absence of churches + the smaller density of field cemeteries around castles
 - ecclesiastical institutions belonging to them most probably had pastoral functions over the castle and its neighbourhood
- Monasteries: ‘second line’ after castles
 - Inner area is less focused – might be connected to the level of Christianisation
- Even spread of churches, and their little elevated density on the middle area lacking
 - a well-design act of building up political power, and together with it the state religion on the lowest level
 - Royal curia system?
- Transitional cemeteries
 - Widespread, general situation
 - Clustering – chronology?
- **Religion was to express also the power of the new state, and its greatest power lay not in the foundation of bishoprics, but in converting the masses of commoners, and creating the local church system**

Mária Vargha
maria.vargha@ff.cuni.cz
sacriecce.ff.cuni.cz

Thank you for your
attention!



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