

PRESENTATION OF SOME EXCAVATED SITES:

LIBKOVICE (DISTR. OF MOST)

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Libkovice represents one of the most extensive large scale excavation of a medieval rural site in Bohemia. Due to coal mining activity, the village including the whole microregion faces total desertion in about 2010. Research started in 1991 when the demolition of the village had already begun, consisting of several research activities: environmental, historical, ethnological and archaeological excavations (*Nováček - Vařeka 1994*).

Libkovice was mentioned for the first time in the documentary evidence in around 1240 when a substantial part of the village ("villam Lubcowitz"), including two mills, vineyard, wood and a pond were bought by Slavko, the abbot of the Cistercian monastery in Osek (*CDB III/2*, No. 261, 356).

The archaeological investigation of the medieval settlement focuses on 6 main topics: 1) early medieval settlement pattern¹, 2) transformation of the dispersed settlement pattern and the origin of the nucleated village (perhaps two processes which can be dated to the late 12th - 14th century), 3) development of the late medieval village, its farms and standards of living, 4) the medieval parish church and the medieval and post-medieval cemetery (physical anthropology of a rural community during the 13th-18th centuries), 5) late 15th-16th century rebuilding of the village and postmedieval village (until the middle of the 19th century, when the village became industrial).

Archaeological research in 1991-1995 focused on selected plots and communal areas of the village (a total number of 92 sections were undertaken, see *Fig. 1a*). Three early medieval settlement areas (perhaps individual farmsteads) from the 7th-9th century have been identified underneath the later medieval - modern village (*Fig. 1b - 1* and 3). The late 12th-early 13th century settlement was excavated on the right bank of the stream representing possibly part of the earliest nucleus of the high - later medieval Libkovice (*Fig. 1b - 2*). The origin of the street-village appears to have been a gradual process taking place probably in the late 13th-14th century.

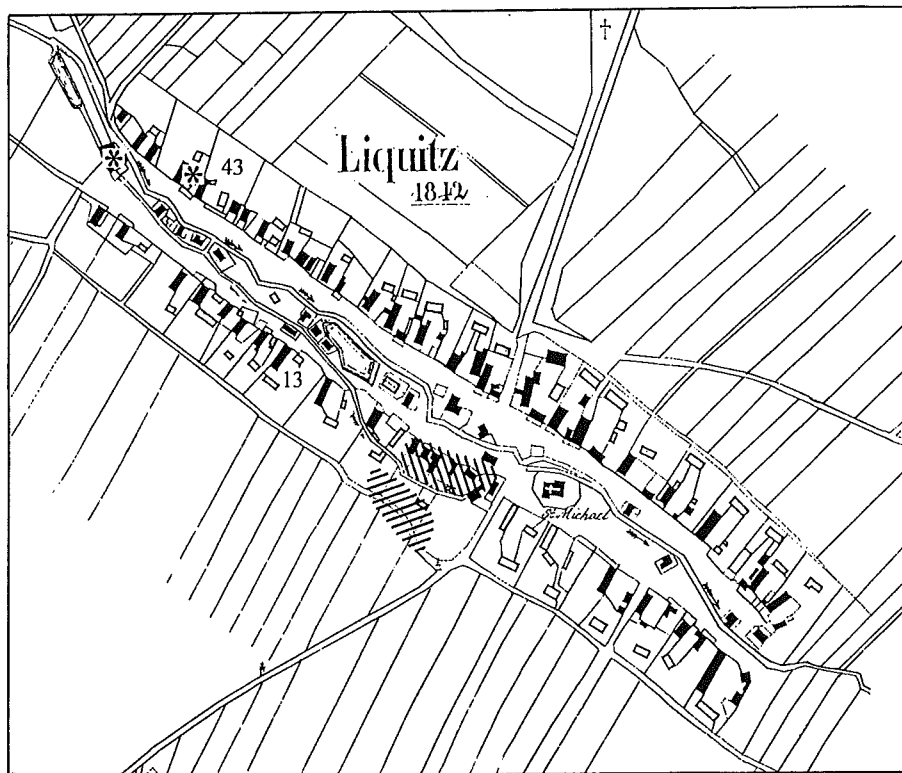
Part of the gothic parish church and adjacent cemetery were discovered in 1995 (the gothic church was demolished in the late 19th century during the building of the present church). Excavations revealed a different location of the medieval church as was previously recorded on the map from 1842 (see *Fig. 1b*). The original orientation of the church which does not correspond with the orientation of the village green represents indirect evidence for the gradual formation of the regular village plan (the church was apparently built prior to origin of the street-village).

The excavations of house plots No. 13 and 43 (*Fig. 1b - 13* and 43) provided complex evidence of the continual development of farmsteads from the 14th century to the present day (other excavated plots produced only fragmentary later medieval - postmedieval archaeological evidence due to the recent demolition of buildings). The 14th-15th century houses were situated underneath the present buildings, however, some differences in setting and size can be seen (*Fig. 2*). Also evidence for the long-term continuity of house plot boundaries have been demonstrated, esp. house plots No. 2 and No. 3 which produced later medieval post- and - wattle fence with several phases, postmedieval stone wall and recent brick wall (the distance between later medieval fence and recent wall does not overreach 30 cm).

1 In collaboration with the project "Ancient Landscape Reconstruction in North Bohemia" (*Beneš - Kuna - Peške - Zvelebil 1992*).



a



b

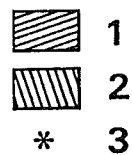


Fig. 1. Libkovic (Distr. of Most), a - the modern village plan with sections; b - plan of the village from 1842 with early medieval settlement areas (7th-9th century: 1 and 3) and the late 12th-13th century settlement area (2); 13 and 43 - excavated house plots No. 13 and 43.

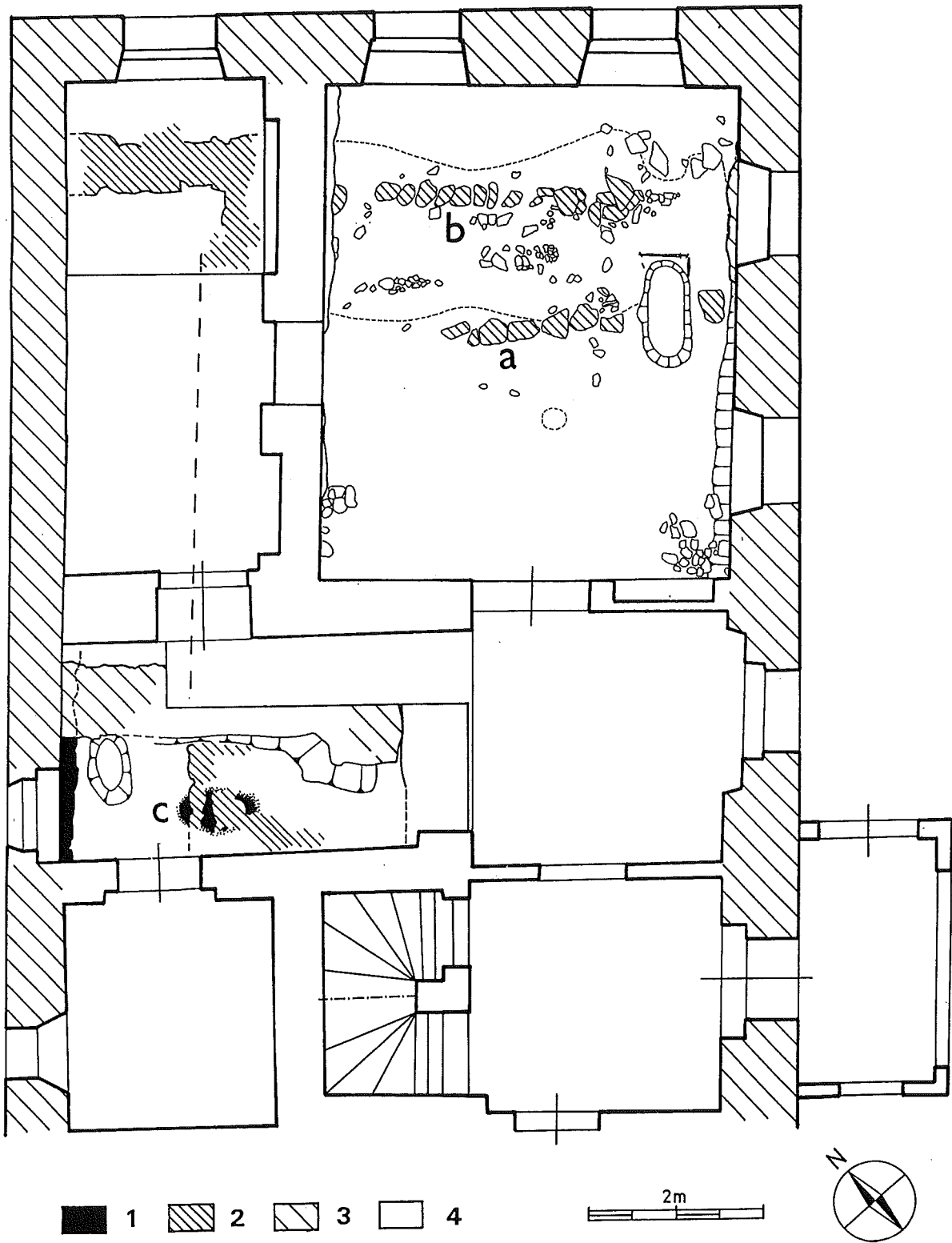


Fig. 2. Libkovice (Distr. of Most) - excavation of the house No. 13; 1: the earliest building phase (stone foundation of the house, c - hearth situated in the yard, 14th century), 2: the 2nd phase (stone foundation of the house, a and b - 2 phases of the wall dividing yard and the communal area, 15th century), 3: the postmedieval building phase, 4: modern structures.

An extensive rebuilding of the village occurred in the postmedieval period (mostly 16th-17th century). The foundations of houses remained in situ until the demolition of the village. All excavated houses were provided with stone foundations, some of them may have had massive walls and other corner - timbered or timber - framed constructions.

References

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