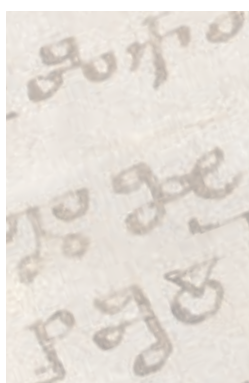
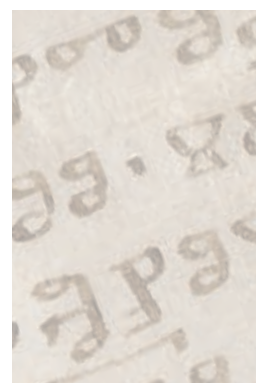
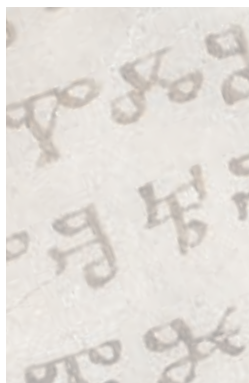


THE CYRIL AND METHODDIUS MISSION AND EUROPE

1150 Years Since the Arrival of the Thessaloniki Brothers in Great Moravia

Pavel Kouřil et al.





**VELKÁ
MORAVA**

1150 let křesťanství ve střední Evropě



Cyrl a Metoděj
1150 let

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The Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Brno

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THE BYZANTINE MISSION AND EVIDENCE OF ITS ACTIVITIES IN POHANSKO NEAR BŘECLAV

Jiří Macháček

Unlike written reports, archaeological evidence of the Cyrillo-Methodian Mission on the territory of Moravia is very sporadic. Researchers have mainly searched for traces of the activities of this mission in religious architecture, in which, however, Byzantine influences have not yet been reliably identified. This paper presents above all an attempt to solve this problem by carrying out functional analysis of building relics from Pohansko and other Great Moravian localities. The analysis is based on the reconstructed form of the Byzantine liturgy which was probably used in Moravia by Constantine and Methodius. An important and almost irreplaceable role in the variegated Eastern Rite was played by the narthex and the so-called skeuophylakion. Significant Great Moravian churches were extended by accessory buildings which may have fulfilled the function of both liturgical rooms.

Key words: Great Moravia, churches, narthex, skeuophylakion, Byzantium

Even though Christianity had already been brought to Moravia some decades before the arrival of Constantine and Methodius (*Dvorník 1970, 96–97; Třeštík 2001, 125–126; Vavřínek 1963, 37; 2013, 95–105*), the Eastern Mission and related cultural impulses are among the most interesting questions with which our historians and archaeologists have been concerned. But while the Byzantines left a deep trace in literary sources, archaeological evidence of their presence in Moravia is still somewhat misty. Besides the disputable and constantly discussed indications in the explored religious architecture, there are only several unique artefacts. Most finds whose origin has been sought in the Eastern Mediterranean area come from the territory of Uherské Hradiště and Staré Město, particularly from Sady hill. In addition to the well-known relics, such as for example a lead cross with Greek inscription from house II at “Sady” (*Galuška 1996, 112*), recently there have also appeared fragments of glass goblet lamps, which were identified in the material by Hedvika Sedláčková. Lamps played an important role in the Byzantine variant of Christian liturgy (*Galuška – Macháček – Pieta et al. 2012, 91; Młynarczyk 2006, 26*). Less certain objects of Byzantine origin are also known from Mikulčice. Among them is, for example, a gold pendant with pearls and a red glass inlay imitating almandine (*Benda 1966, Abb. 32; Wieczarek – Hinz 2000, 213*). The most conclusive evidence of activities by Constantine and Methodius was found, somewhat paradoxically, beyond Moravian territory – in Hungarian Zalavár, where Béla Szöke, conducting excavations at the seat of Pribina and Kocel, discovered fragments of a ceramic bottle with engraved Glagolitic letters (*Szöke 2010, 48–50*).

The following text is a short reflection on whether some traces of activities of the Byzantine Mission can also be identified in Pohansko near Břeclav.

Pohansko near Břeclav

Pohansko near Břeclav is among the most significant Great Moravian localities. Archaeological excavations show that it played many important roles, particularly in the field of military affairs, administration, craft production and trade (*Macháček*

2010). From the find of two early mediaeval churches, it is clearly evident that it was also a centre of religious life in the gradually Christianising society (*Čáp – Dresler – Macháček et al. 2011*). The extensive agglomeration at Pohansko undoubtedly existed at the time of the Byzantine Mission in Moravia, especially when the Moravian Church was led by Archbishop Methodius. This conclusion is based not only on a somewhat vague archaeological chronology, which has lately been undergoing a crucial revision (*Dostál 1991; Galuška 2013, 195–251; Charvátová 2004; Ungerman 2005*), but mainly on much more exact scientific methods. Several samples from Pohansko have been dated by dendrochronology, and especially the timbering of well 203 from the area of the so-called Forest Nursery has yielded high-quality dates. The well was built of wood which was felled after the year 882 (*Dresler – Humlová – Macháček et al. 2010, 114–122*), that is, shortly after the papal bull *Industriae tuae* was issued. Methodius triumphed at that time and solidified his position at the top of the Moravian Church, where he also implemented Slavonic liturgy, which had formerly been banned by the Papal Curia. In 882 he returned to Moravia from Byzantium, which he visited after 17 long years (*Vavřínek 2013, 248–249, 258–260*). However, the well, which was built at the time of major expansion of the archdiocese of Methodius and the whole of Great Moravia, was not isolated at Pohansko. It belonged to a complicated settlement structure consisting of many interlinked elements. Among them were not only homesteads of craftsmen with wells in the “Lesní školka” (Forest Nursery) and in two suburbs, but also a massive wood-and-earth fortification with a front stone revetment wall, which according to dendrochronological analysis arose as late as in the 880s or even later (*Dresler 2011, 138–139; Dresler – Humlová – Macháček et al. 2010, 124*). The most important part of Pohansko, however, was indisputably the so-called Ducal Manor – the centre of local settlement. It was an imitation of a Carolingian *palatium* and probably also one of the possible residences of the Great Moravian ruler or someone from his retinue (*Macháček 2008*). Its area, measuring about 1 ha, was enclosed by a massive square palisade which was built in at least two phases and whose protective purpose is beyond doubt (*Dostál 1969*). Within this area

we can identify several functional compounds (Dostál 1988, 283): a sacred compound with church and cemetery, residential part with single-room and multi-room houses on stone and mortar substructions, farming compound with stockyards, sheds, barns, granaries etc. and large aboveground post-built buildings and possible assembly places (Dostál 1975, 80). The overall appearance of the so-called ducal manor was mainly influenced by western patterns, and the church may have been partly inspired by the Byzantine area.

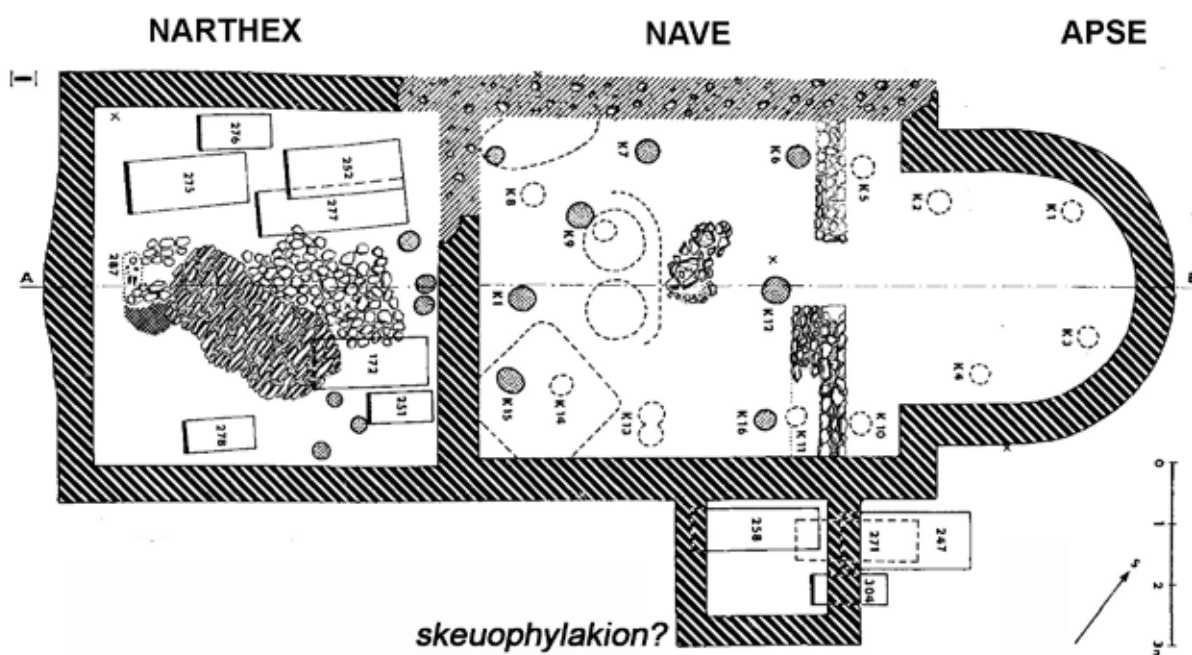
Byzantine influences in ecclesiastical architecture at Pohansko near Břeclav and other Great Moravian localities

From Pohansko we do not know any artefact which could be clearly associated with Eastern Europe or the Eastern Mediterranean area. An exception is represented by silk (Kostelníková 1973, 8–9; 1980) or brocade (Kalousek 1971, 105) from graves in the neighbourhood of the church in the ducal manor. Precious fabrics were imported to Great Moravia either from Byzantium or from Central Asia, from where they were brought by Jewish merchants travelling along the Silk Road (Charvát 1994, 114). These fabrics, however, are items of trade or gifts, which do not necessarily have anything to do with the Byzantine Mission (even though it is certainly possible, for example in the case of the gifts which were brought by Methodius returning from Constantinople; Vavřínek 2013, 260). The only potential source of information about the activities of the Byzantines at Pohansko thus remains Church No. 1, which was explored inside the ducal manor (Fig. 1). It is a single-nave building (length 18.65 m, width 7.2 m) with a well-distinguished semi-circular apse and an almost square narthex. On the south-eastern side, the nave was extended by a small annex. The church was built from quarry stone bound with lime mortar. The walls were plastered and whitewashed, and the ones in the interior were decorated

with colour paintings. In the nave there were the remains of a stone-built chancel screen with a passage in the middle (Dostál 1992; Dostál – Kalousek – Macháček 2008; Kalousek 1967). The building is one of a group of churches with semi-circular apses; Josef Pošmourný (1964, 188–194; 1971, 43–48, 56–57) had earlier tried to prove their connection to the Byzantine cultural sphere. Nevertheless, his argumentation, which was based on the implementation of a module system in the construction of churches and shape of apses, was called into question and is no longer generally accepted today (Dostál 1992, 85; Galuška – Poláček 2006, 96; Poláček 2008, 18; Vavřínek 1980, 280–281; 2013, 211).

The activity of the Cyrillo-Methodian Mission did not find any significant reflection in the ecclesiastical architecture of Great Moravia, Vladimír Vavřínek wrote (Vavřínek 2013, 213). An exception in this regard, according to him, might only be the added-on narthexes, which have already been discussed by older researchers, who emphasised their connection to the Byzantine cultural and missionary sphere (Pošmourný 1964, 191). These annexes had already appeared in the Late Antique Christian architecture of the Adriatic area, as well as in the Carolingian realm (Kotrba 1964, 340; Richter 1965, 202). Their connection with educational activity by Constantine and Methodius is possible (Vavřínek 1963, 141; 2013, 129, 213), but not definitely verified. In their interior or in the immediate neighbourhood (Uherské Hradiště – Sady, Church No. 3 in Mikulčice) there sometimes occur writing utensils – *styli* (Galuška 1996, 71; Poulik 1975, 84), which indicate a church school, but they are absent in several churches with narthexes (Staré Město – Špitálky, Pohansko). *Styli* were also found outside church vestibules, for example near the palace at Mikulčice (Poláček 2006, 8–9) or in a settlement of log houses within the complex at Sady (Galuška 1996, 71). Luděk Galuška, moreover, rightly points out that schools already existed in Moravia before the arrival of the Byzantine Mission (Galuška 1996, 71–72). Gorazd, the only Moravian disciple of the Thessalonian brothers whom we know by name, learned to read (and probably also write) in Latin from western priests (Vavřínek 2013, 129). Somewhat later, *styli* from

Fig. 1. Břeclav – Pohansko. Church No. 1. After B. Dostál 1992, 77, Fig. 74 – modified.



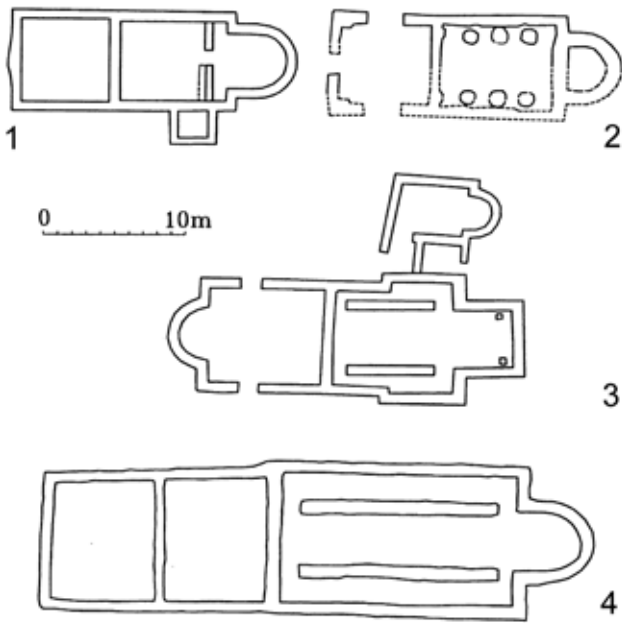


Fig. 2. Great Moravian churches with narthexes.

After L. Poláček 2008, 14, Fig. 12 – modified: 1 – Břeclav – Pohansko, Church No. 1; 2 – Staré Město – Špitálky; 3 – Uherské Hradiště – Sady; 4 – Mikulčice, Church No. 3.

the German or Danish area also came to the north-western Slavs (*Gringmuth-Dallmer 2011, 93*).

Despite these doubts I suppose that narthexes, not only at Pohansko but also at other Great Moravian localities, are indeed associated with activities by the Byzantines in Moravia. All of the four vestibules (Staré Město – Špitálky, Pohansko – Church No. 1, Uherské Hradiště – Sady¹, Mikulčice – Church/Basilica No. 3) which are known from Moravia (**Fig. 2**) are proved, or supposed, to have been added to already existing churches (*Galuška 1996, 56; Galuška – Poláček 2006, 102; Poulik 1975, 87*). In Pohansko near Břeclav it is evidenced by the clear interruption of foundation masonry by a sterile sandy-clay subsoil and some differences in the composition of mortar, F. Kalousek wrote (*Kalousek 1961, 143*). B. Dostál (*1975, 102*) adds that the narthex had slightly narrower foundations and a different type and level of the floor, and, most importantly, that the wall of the church narthex overlaid the north-eastern wing of the early phase of fortification of the ducal manor (*Dostál 1969, 207*). The construction of the narthex and the need for more space for burials in the neighbourhood of the church are considered to have caused a rebuilding of the enclosure of the manor (*Dostál 1975, 244*). The additional construction of the narthex was probably not very distant in time from the construction of the church itself, because its walls do not overlay any graves. This was also the case with the western annex of the church complex in Sady (*Galuška 1996, 60*) and to some degree also with the basilica in Mikulčice, where the partition between the narthex and atrium overlaid two graves, but the perimeter walls of annexes do not disturb any graves (*Galuška – Poláček 2006, 125*). A little more complicated is the situation in Staré Město – Špitálky. Now it is supposed that the foundations of the narthex overlay some graves, but these

graves were originally expected in the places of the side entrances to the narthex, where the masonry was allegedly interrupted (*Dostál 1992, 75–78; Galuška – Poláček 2006, 102–103*).

The exact time of construction of Great Moravian narthexes cannot be clearly determined. From a relative-chronological point of view, however, it was always a “later” phase from the time when narthexes were generally demanded. As I have already mentioned above, their construction could hardly have been instigated only by educational activity. Judging from the distribution of *styli*, disciples were most probably also educated at other places. And, above all, schools were already needed at the beginning of the Christianisation effort, maybe parallel to the construction of the earliest churches, which did not yet have narthexes. The first missions that came from the West had already educated their own disciples (*Vavřínek 2013, 105*).

The explanation why churches from the time before the arrival of the Cyrillo-Methodian Mission (e.g. *Dostál 1990, 39*) were additionally extended by vestibules must therefore be sought elsewhere. A crucial contribution to the discussion about the purpose, dating and origin of narthexes in Great Moravia was provided by an in-depth study of the liturgy of the Cyrillo-Methodian Mission by Andrej Škoviera (*Škoviera 2007*).

It is beyond doubt that the “Slavic missionaries” (also?) held church services based upon the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, which was gradually supplemented with several western elements (*Škoviera 2007, 120*). Masses were still based on the Byzantine rite, as is evident from a festive thanksgiving prayer for the completion of the Slavic translation of the Bible, which Methodius in his later years celebrated in accordance with Byzantine Liturgy, as well (*Vavřínek 2013, 261*).

The question of what such Byzantine Liturgy in Great Moravia would have looked like has already been answered by the above-mentioned Andrej Škoviera. He argues that it must have been a so-called cathedral or parochial service (Gr. *asmatiki akoluthia*), which was celebrated in town cathedrals and with which Constantine and Methodius were already familiar from Thessalonica. However, the monastic service can also be taken into consideration, because it was much simpler and the members of the mission to Moravia mostly came from the monastic milieu (*Škoviera 2007, 104–105, 120–122*). According to G. Woolfenden, it may also have been a hybrid Constantinopolitan synthesis of both the above forms (*Woolfenden 2007, 320*).

Byzantine Liturgy differs from the western one, among other things, by its *Proskomedía*, the act of preparation of the celebrating priests and offerings, and by having a small and a large entrance (*Škoviera 2007, 124*). Offerings from believers were collected before the beginning of the Divine Liturgy in a special building called a *skeuophylakion*, which was situated in the neighbourhood of the apse, on the north-eastern side of the church (*Ching – Jarzombek – Prakash 2011; Woolfenden 2007, 327; Fig. 3*). A free-standing *skeuophylakion* in the form of a round building (rotunda) can still be observed, for example, near the north-eastern corner of the Hagia Sophia Basilica (*Marinis 2010, 286, 300; Taft 1980, 49*). The divine service itself began in the narthex (or in another church, from which a procession came out). At this place antiphonal psalms were sung (by one choir in response to another). After the prayer was

¹ The theory that a so-called shared church (Ger. Doppelkirche) may have been built in Sady was recently rejected by V. Vavřínek (*Vavřínek 2013, 130*).

finished, the priests, their assistants – deacons, and believers entered the sacred space in the church nave. Here the Eucharistic liturgy was held. During mass, the deacons went out of the church to bring the offerings of bread and wine from the *skeuophylakion*. After the Eucharist was given out, the deacons took the empty vessels back to the *skeuophylakion*. It is necessary to remark that during the 9th century, after the end of the iconoclastic crisis, free-standing *skeuophylakions* gradually ceased to be built and their function passed over to side apses of the sanctuary. On the southern side there was a separate chamber where vestments and books were kept (*diakonikon*) and on the northern side there was a place for sacred vessels and offerings (*prothesis*; Mathews 1997, 31; Škoviera 2007, 108; Vavřínek 2013, 212).

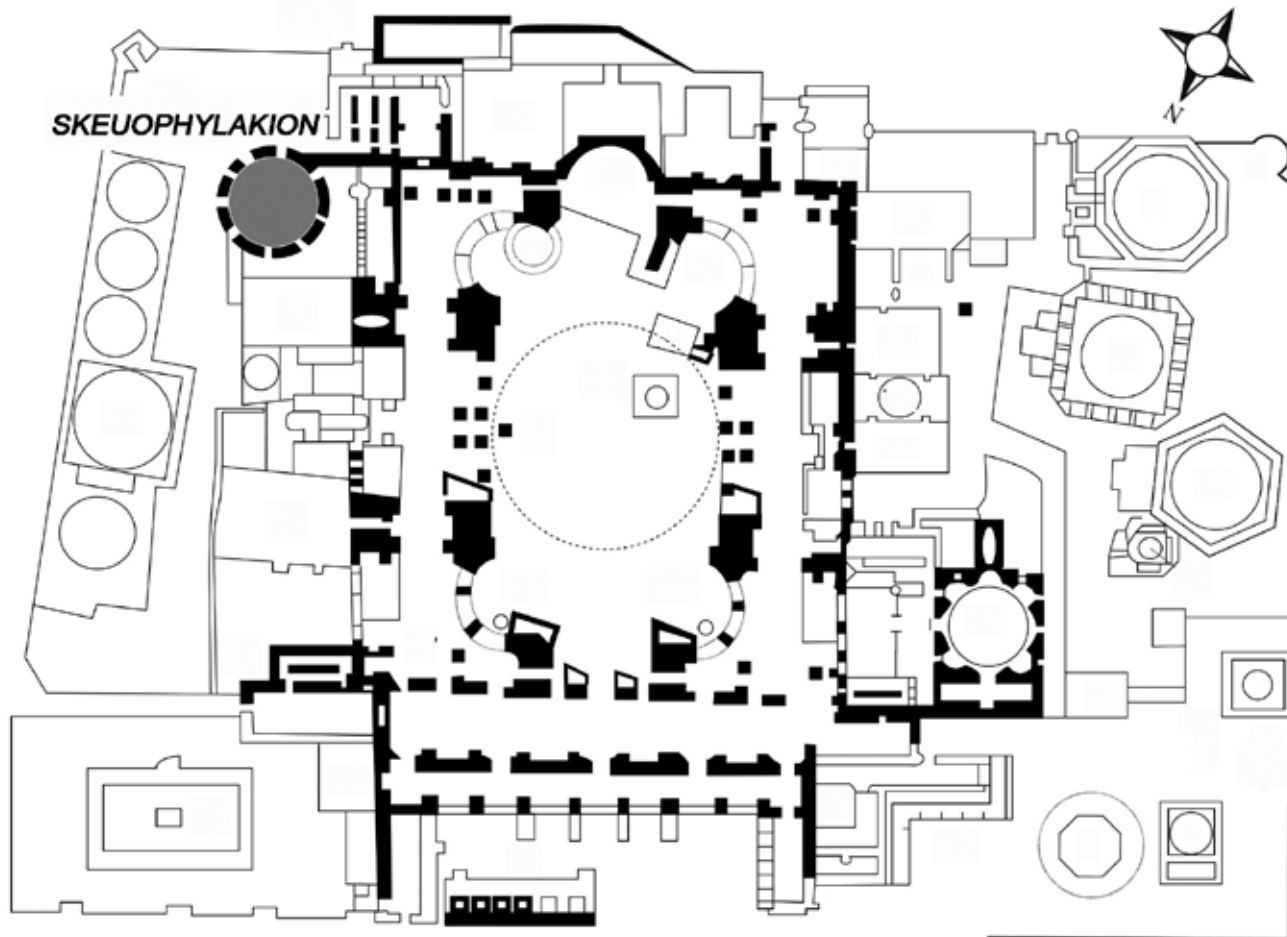
From the above description it is evident that the narthex played an important role in Byzantine religious architecture (Woolfenden 2007, 321). Its construction adapted Moravian churches to meet the liturgical needs of the Eastern Mission. The question is, when these extensive building alterations took place. It may have been immediately after the arrival of the Byzantines in Moravia (863/4), when the western priests had to abandon their own churches which they had built and consecrated. The process of the Byzantinisation of Great Moravian architecture, however, was complicated by the fact that after the defeat

of Rostislav at Dowina in 864, the Archpriest of Passau probably returned to Moravia to “lead together with the other Frankish and Latin clergymen a sharp campaign against the Byzantine missionaries” (Vavřínek 2013, 122, 126). An optimal time for alterations to churches then would not have come earlier than after the issuance of the bull *Industriae tuae* (880), which represented a striking triumph for Methodius, especially after his return from Constantinople in 882. The time interval for the construction of narthexes, however, would thus be quite short – until the death of Methodius in 885. It is not very likely that all the narthexes in Great Moravia were built within such a short time span, even though some possibility exists. This assumption could be corroborated by, for example, the above-mentioned dendrochronological dating of Pohansko, which shows that large-scale rebuilding activities took place here in the 1st half of the 880s (maybe inclusive of a new enclosure of the ducal manor and construction of a narthex; however, it is not possible to synchronise these events exactly, so all the considerations are only hypothetical).

As Vladimír Vavřínek wrote (2013, 212), in the Moravian churches we cannot find separate chambers for *prothesis* and *diakonikon*. These important components of Byzantine churches, which were placed in side apses, already anticipate more complicated, internally divided architecture. Therefore it must be taken into account that in Great Moravia with its small churches with simple layout, eastern missionaries may also have used an earlier concept based on the existence of a *skeuophylakion* as a separate room situated outside the church, where sacred vessels were kept and from where offerings – bread and wine – were brought out during the divine

Fig. 3. Hagia Sophia, Turkey.

Schematic plan showing the position of a *skeuophylakion*. After Hagia Sophia [online] – modified.



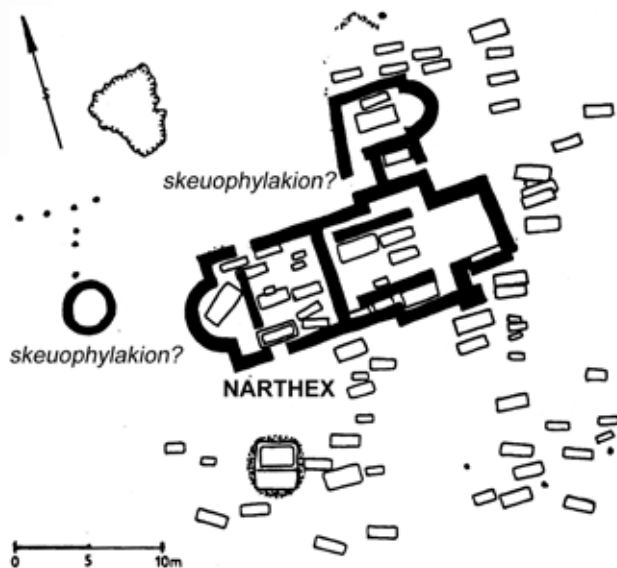


Fig. 4. Uherské Hradiště – Sady.

After L. Galuška 1996, 28, Fig. 12 – modified.

service (Rosser 2012, 151). This would be in no way surprising. According to eyewitnesses, the *skeuophylakion* in the main Constantinople church was still serving its liturgical purpose in the year 1200 (Majeska 1998, 212).

When we pay attention to Great Moravian churches with a narthex, we find that in their neighbourhood there were always some separate buildings, which may have played the role of a *skeuophylakion*. The most distinctive example of this accessory architecture is a “small church” with semi-circular apse on the northern side of the religious complex at Sady (Fig. 4). In its interior there are two grave pits, but they were dug additionally, because they disturb the original mortar floor. The northern annex did not originally serve as a funeral chapel, L. Galuška wrote. Only hypothetically, it may have been a proprietary chapel or episcopal oratory (according to V. Hrubý), but most probably “a functional annex supplementing the activity of the main church” (Galuška 1996, 68). The above characteristic would correspond best to the character of a *skeuophylakion*. At the same time it must be remarked that the northern part was probably not built until the construction of the western vestibule, in connection with alterations in its interior. This assumption, however, is based only on the similar character of the masonry of the northern “chapel” and a partition which was built additionally inside the western annex (Galuška 1996, 68). What is sure is that the northern building is older than the original church with cruciform layout, to which it is attached through a so-called funerary chamber (Galuška 1996, 65). It is also possible that the role of a *skeuophylakion* at Sady may have been played by a round building situated west of the church. Until now it has been interpreted as a baptistery. However, it lacks a sunken basin. In its shape (not size) it would correspond well to the *skeuophylakion* in the Hagia Sophia Basilica of Constantinople.

Another ecclesiastical building with a narthex and accessory buildings is “Špitálky” in Staré Město (Fig. 5: 1). From the pillars in the interior of the nave it has been inferred that the church was equipped with a domed tower. It was probably

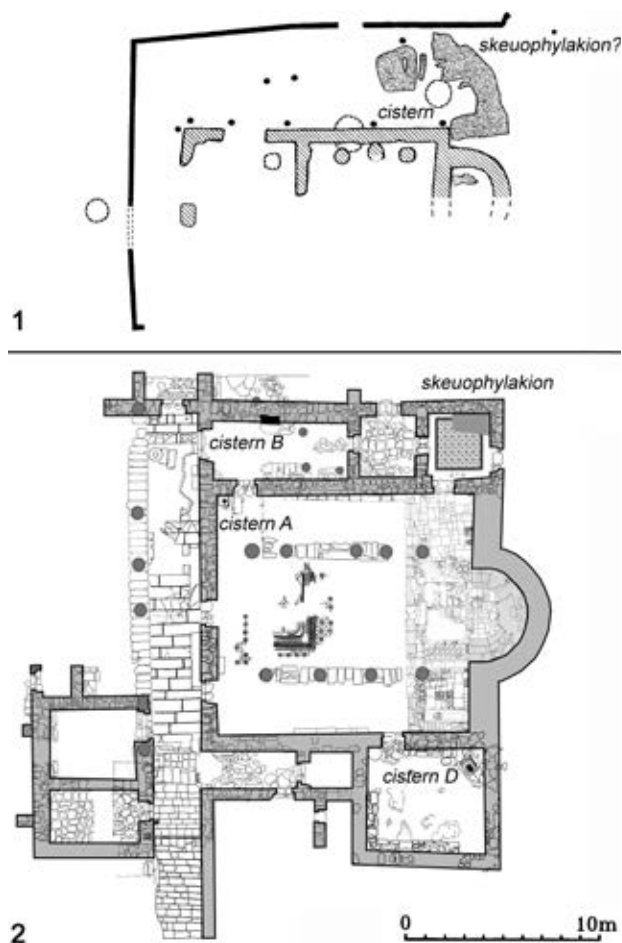


Fig. 5: 1 – Staré Město – Špitálky.

After L. Galuška – L. Poláček 2006, 102 – modified.

Obr. 5: 2 – Hippos – Sussita, Israel.

After J. Młynarczyk 2011, 282 – modified.

the constructional type in the form of an inscribed cross, which is typical of Byzantine architecture (Galuška – Poláček 2006, 102). Archaeological excavations unearthed the remains of a combined annex along the entire northern wall of the church. The annex consisted for the most part of a wooden construction (c. 2 m wide), from which the postholes are preserved (Poulik 1955, 311).² The part situated closest to the apse, however, was probably built of stone bound with mortar. The stone-built part of the annex became evident as both an irregular large mortar block and a regular round block 1.60 m in diameter. Below the mortar block there was a pit 330 cm deep, which is considered to have been the piscina of a baptistery (Klanica 1985, 116; Poulik 1950, 309–310). The find context and its description are unfortunately very unclear, so that this interpretation cannot be definitely verified. The purpose and dating of the deep pit thus remain unknown. But it could hardly have been a baptistery. The baptismal rite, which demanded the existence of separate baptisteries, died out during the 7th or at the beginning of the 8th century, and none of the examples of early mediaeval baptisteries discovered

² This construction is not related in any way to a trench on the northern and western side, which was rather a remnant of the palisade enclosure of the sacred compound (Galuška – Poláček 2006, 103).

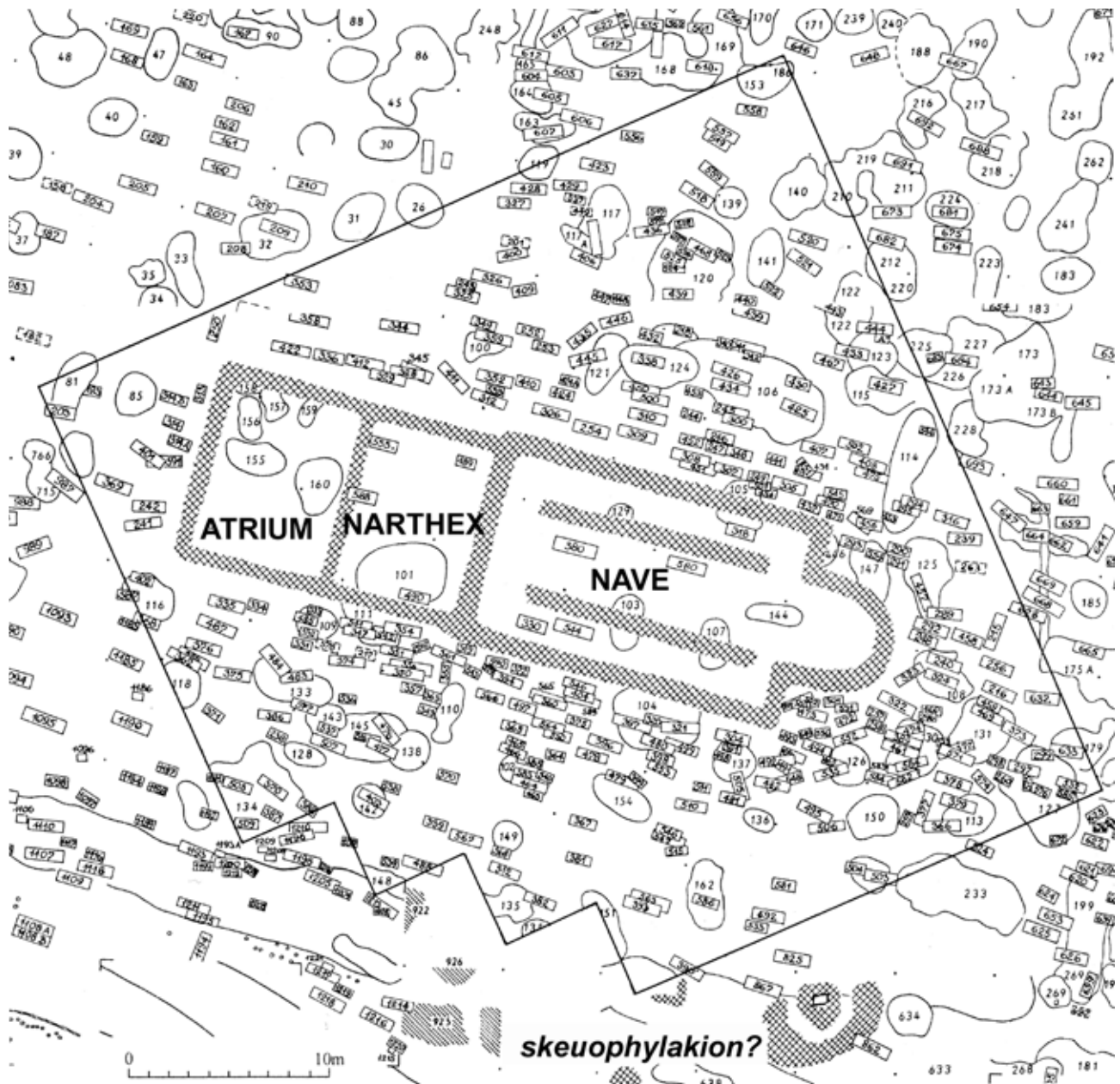


Fig. 6. Mikulčice – Church No. 3.

After L. Poláček – O. Marek 2005, 67, Fig. 44 – modified.

north of the Roman Limes, inclusive of those from the territory of Great Moravia, are indisputable (Kubková 1996, 136).

However, the northern annex and cistern can also be interpreted in a different way, based on analogies from the Byzantine milieu. In its dimensions and layout, inclusive of pillars built inside the church nave, Špitálky reminds us of the so-called Northeast Church from the Byzantine city of Hippos (Sussita; today's Golan Heights in Palestine). Archaeological excavations have been conducted there since 2002 by a team from Concordia University, St Paul (USA). The church is dated to the 5th to 7th centuries (Fig. 5: 2). A row of three narrow rooms (c. 4 m wide) is attached to the northern wall of the church nave. The last among them, closest to the apse, was a *skeuophylakion*, which provided an entrance to the nave of the church. This room was built most thoroughly; its floor was decorated with a mosaic

(Młynarczyk 2011, 264–268, fig. 265). The Northeast Church in the city of Hippos also included several deep cisterns; one of them (cistern D) was situated in a room adjacent from the outside to the south-eastern corner of the church nave – on the side opposite the *skeuophylakion* (Młynarczyk 2011, 267). Another cistern (cistern B) was even detected right in the northern part of the religious complex, in the neighbourhood of the *skeuophylakion* (North-east Church Project, online). The sacred water from cisterns in the Northeast Church of the city of Hippos may have been used for healing. Numerous cisterns and wells, eight of them examined recently by archaeological methods, were also mentioned by mediaeval reports in the main Constantinople Church of Hagia Sophia. Besides utilitarian needs they were also used for ritual purposes (Aygün 2010, 67–72). The cisterns from Great Moravian religious complexes, which may have been built here under the influence of the Byzantine Mission, probably also had a similar purpose.

Least conclusive is the existence of a *skeuophylakion* with Church No. 3 in Mikulčice (Fig. 6). The basilica with a narthex and atrium is not immediately adjoined by any side building.

Relics of stone buildings, however, were detected about 15 m south of the apse of the church. One of them has been considered a baptistery due to a well-shaped cistern with square layout (Poulik 1975, 87). This interpretation, however, can be called into question for the above-mentioned reasons (Galuška – Poláček 2006, 128). In the neighbourhood

of the building with the well there were some other ruined stone buildings (Klanica 1966, 59; 1967, 42–43), which were probably related with the nearby basilica. Among them is a building with wattlework armature and the remnant of a rectangular substruction, which was probably orientated parallel to the basilica.

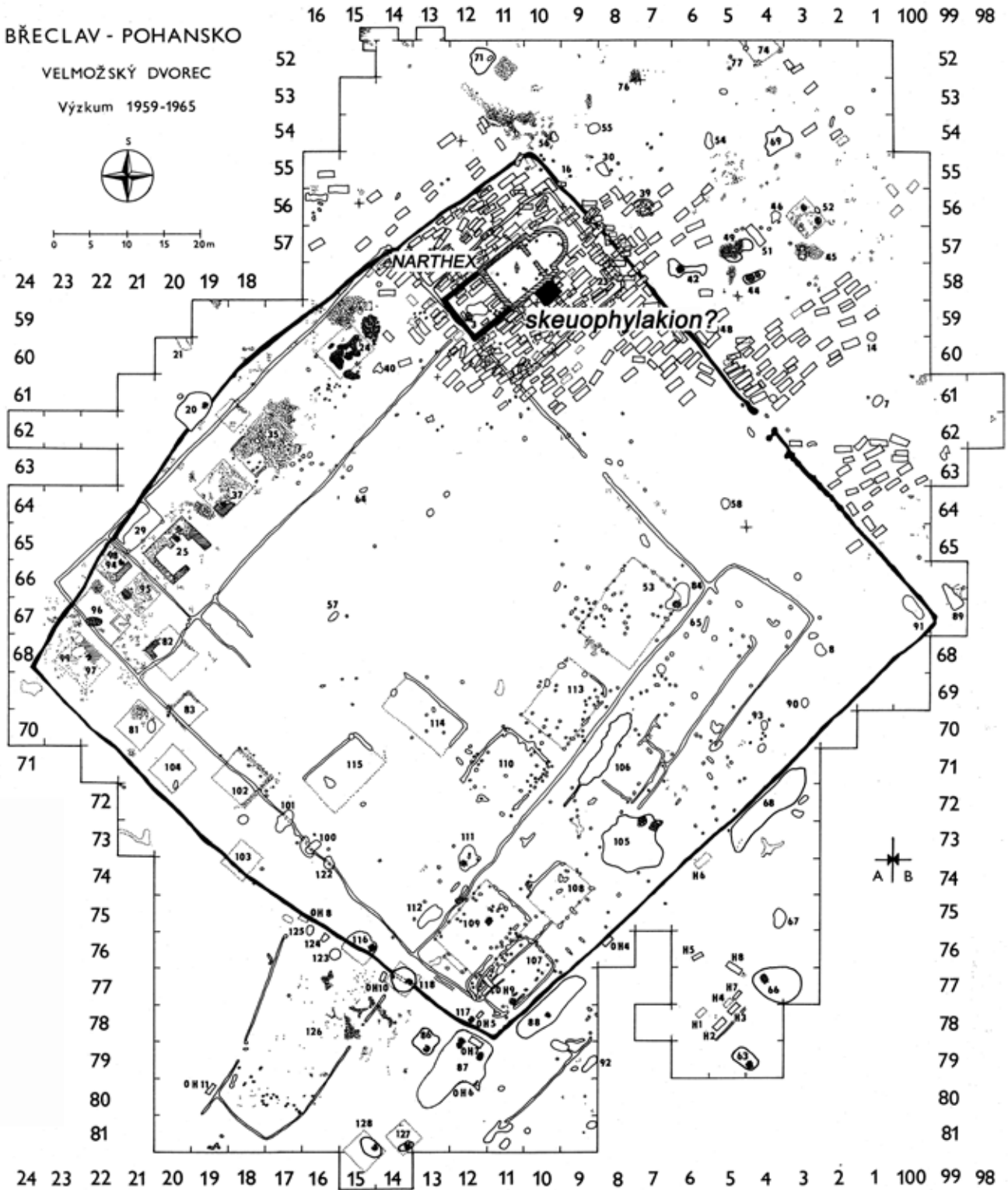


Fig. 7. Břeclav – Pohansko, Church No. 1 and the so-called ducal manor (*palatium*).

After B. Dostál 1975, 24, Fig. 23 – modified.

The role of *skeuophylakion* at Pohansko was hypothetically played by an annex on the SE side of Church No. 1 in the ducal manor (Fig. 1). It was attached to the outside of the nave, approximately at the level of a chancel screen, which separated the presbytery from the nave. A step in front of the eastern arm of the partition was maybe associated with the side entrance to the church, which was situated in the annex (Dostál 1992, 80).³ The annex, built without foundations, was a low light building (that is, not a tower, as was sometimes supposed) which arose when burials around the church had already been being conducted for a long time. The building overlaid three graves. Sometimes it was also considered to have been a sacristy or a tower (Dostál 1975, 102; Kalousek 1961, 144). This interpretation, however, was called into question by V. Kotrba and V. Richter, who considered it ahistorical or technically impossible and supposed that the annex has served some other, more significant, purpose (Kotrba 1964, 340; Richter 1965, 194). The sepulchral function suggested by Kotrba, however, is out of the question due to the stratigraphic relations between the graves and the annex. But might it indeed have been a *skeuophylakion*? An argument against is the position of the annex on the southern side of the church, which is not usual with this type of building (Fig. 7). Here, however, we must also admit the possibility that the builder had to improvise to a certain extent and adapt to the layout of the other buildings as well as to local conditions. If the *skeuophylakion* had followed the rigid rules and adjoined the northern side of the already-standing church, it would have been situated in the corner of the later phase of the palisade enclosure of the ducal manor. This position would have considerably complicated the access of processions to the deposit of offerings (Taft 1980, 53; Woolfenden 2007, 328), and visual contact between the small but important building and the centre of the manor, where believers gathered for worship, would then have been impossible (on ceremonies see Škoviera 2007, 108). The annex at the church in Pohansko thus may have been, in my opinion, a *skeuophylakion*.

Conclusion

Unlike written reports, archaeological evidence of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission on the territory of Moravia is very sporadic. Researchers dealing with this problem have based themselves mainly on exclusive artefacts and religious architecture. Byzantine influences, however, have not yet been reliably identified and the complicated problem has been intensively discussed for fifty years without any definitive conclusion (Vavřínek 2013, 212–213). Recently I have tried to solve this problem using a functional analysis of building relics from Pohansko and other Great Moravian localities. The analysis was based on a recently published essay by A. Škoviera on the Byzantine form of liturgy, which was used by Constantine and Methodius during their mission to Moravia. An important and almost irreplaceable role in the voluminous Eastern Liturgy was played by the narthex and the so-called *skeuophylakion*. Provided that we accept the existence of the Byzantine rite in Moravia, then both of these building elements must be present here.

The existence of narthexes in Great Moravian churches is beyond doubt, even though the interpretation of their purpose by individual

researchers is disputable. They have mainly been associated with the educational activity of the Byzantines. This interpretation, however, is not very conclusive, because similar activity had already been undertaken here by previous missions that had come from the West or from the Adriatic area, where narthexes also occurred. The connection between narthexes and the Byzantine Mission is mainly evidenced by the fact that these building structures were always added to older churches – and we can rightly suppose that these churches had already been built before the arrival of Constantine and Methodius (e.g. Dostál 1990, 39).

Buildings which may have played the role of a *skeuophylakion* have not yet been sought in Moravia. I have tried to show that they do exist and in individual churches they occur in combination with narthexes. Most of them are later annexes, just as it was with vestibules.

Viewed chronologically, it is interesting that narthexes were built not very long after the churches themselves. In the main, the walls of vestibules do not disturb any graves of the adjacent churchyards. Provided that the above-mentioned thesis is right and the narthexes or other accessory buildings were not built until the arrival of the Cyrillo-Methodian Mission, then churches such as, for example, the basilica of Mikulčice or Church No. 1 from Pohansko could not have been built very long before the mid-9th century. This conclusion must be verified by an in-depth analysis of material from cemeteries in their neighbourhood and by other dating methods (Galuška – Poláček 2006, 128).

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³ Cf. the direct entrance to the nave from the *skeuophylakion*, as was detected in the Northwest Church of the city of Hippos (Młynarczyk 2011, 264).

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