

TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT OF MORAVIA

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SUMMARY

Moravia arose a markgraviate in 1182 as a part of the lands of the Czech Crown. Its frontiers were roughly constituted by the catchment area of the Dyje, the Carpathians, the High and the Low Jeseník Mts. and the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands. Administratively it was first divided into castle districts, then demesnes, regions and from 1850 onwards it became a unified land. In 1927 it was connected with Czech Silesia to form Moravia-Silesia. In 1938 a great part of it was occupied by the Nazis, in 1939 the same fate met its remaining part. The pre-war state was renewed in 1945. The Silesian parts obtained their own administrative office in Ostrava. At the end of 1948 the lands were abolished and replaced by the regional administration. Thus, Moravia ceased to exist after 766 years of existence, and this situation has remained unchanged even after 1989.

1. DELIMITATION OF THE TERRITORY OF MORAVIA AND THE DEVELOPMENT UP TO THE END OF THE 10TH CENTURY

As a territorial unit Moravia has a tradition of long standing. In 1182, by the edict of the so-called Roman Emperor it became a markgraviate. Until 1949 it never lost its administrative independence (Pekař, 1921). From among the regions of our country it was populated first. Geographical conditions made settlement possible as early as 5,000 years ago. This was due to favourable climate, distribution of the forest cover, sufficient number of streams and the shortest connection along the middle reaches of the Danube to the Rhine basin a similarly advantageous connection of the north and the south. Geopolitically, too, the position of Moravia has always been very favourable. The watershed of the Morava river connects the Bohemian Massif and the Western Carpathians. The Moravian Gate is the lowest site of the main European dividing line between the Pyrenees and the Dniester. After Celtic and Marcomannian settlement, Slavs came to the Moravian territory in the late 5th and the early 6th centuries. It was the Moravian axis that contributed in the decisive way to the rise of the centres of our first state units, in the 7th century of Samo's empire and in the 9th century the Great Moravia which, at the time of its culmination, by far surpassed the framework of the historical Moravian territory (Fig. 1).

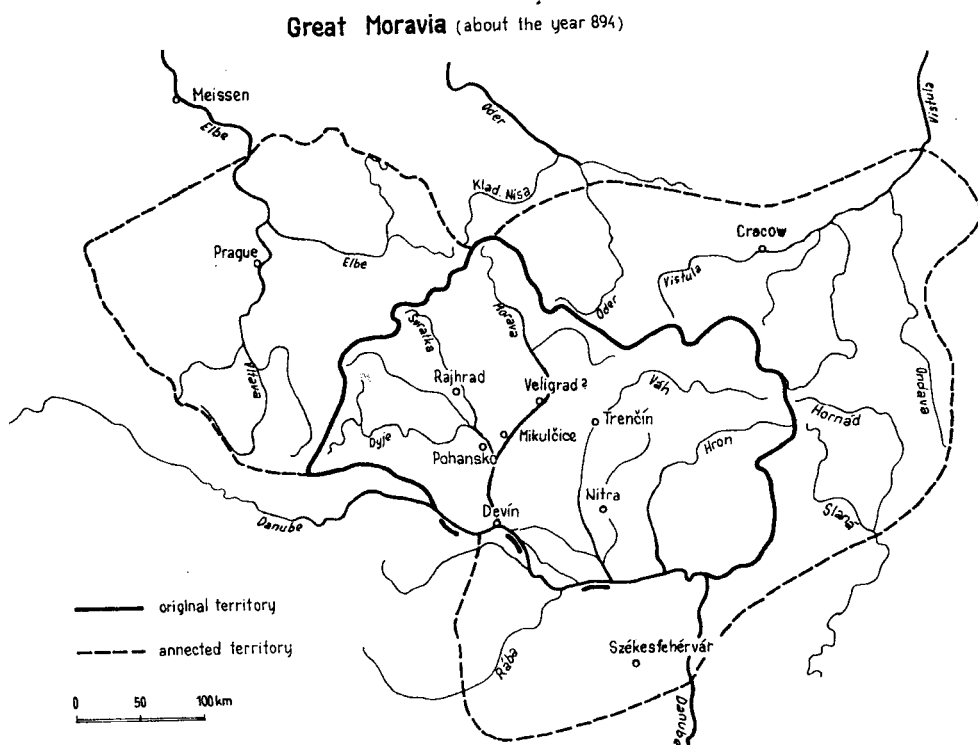


Fig. 1. Great Moravia (about the year 894)

But Moravia obtained its final shape only by the 10th century. At that time, under the pressure of the Babenbergs, the Slavonic settlement retreated from the Danube to the north, roughly to the river Dyje, and in the north Moravia starts extending its territory across the Moravian Gate to the catchment area of the river Oder (Korčák, 1938). In the end the territory of Moravia obtained its geographically natural form: in the south it is in essence delimited by the Dyje, in the east partly by the river Morava and mainly by the Carpathians, in the north by the wall of the High and the Low Jeseník Mts., in the west the frontier was for the most part formed by the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands, which is also the main European dividing line (Schulz, 1970).

2. MORAVIA FROM THE 11TH CENTURY UP TO THE END OF WORLD WAR I

From the first half of the 11th century Moravia was more closely connected with Bohemia. But it never lost its administrative independence and in the internal affairs it remained on the whole independent (Pekař, 1921). An important role was also that of the relation to the "Roman Empire of the German Nation". Its rulers often interfered

with our internal affairs. The consequence of it was the rise of the markgraviate. A peculiarity was also the division of Moravia into individual demesnes given to the younger sons of the Czech royal family under to control of the land prince. The centres were Brno, Olomouc, Znojmo, Bítov and Břeclav. In the 14th century Moravia had two centres, Olomouc and Brno, from 1645 onwards only Brno. The northern parts of Moravia, Opava and Krnov with their surroundings, started exhibiting centrifugal trends as early as at the beginning of the 14th century, particularly when Silesia became a part of the lands of the Czech Crown. Thus, the principality of Opava whose original territory reached from the rivers Odra and Ostravice up to the Pštína and Osoblaha and Prudník, became an independent principality in 1318 which, together with Krnov and surroundings fell permanently to Silesia in 1613-1622. For Moravia it was advantageous that from the mid-12th century the estates of the Olomouc bishopric acquired the character of constitutional law. Starting with the 11th century, this bishopric had its estates in the region of Osoblaha and, later on, Hlubčice. Since this territory belonged administratively to the Olomouc bishopric, it also fell under Moravian administration. These Moravian enclaves in Silesia were subject to a peculiar development. When the region of Opava separated from Moravia, the estates on its territory remained as the so-called enclaves in Moravia (Trávníček, 1966). Administratively those communities remained parts of the markgraviate of Moravia. Up to 1337 also Prudník and surroundings were also considered to be part of Moravia. Part of the bishopric of Olomouc was also Ketř and surroundings. When in 1742 Prussia gained the prevalent part of Silesia, these enclaves were separated by the state frontier. From the Moravian territory the enclave of Ketř (Katscher), despite the fact that the estates there remained in the possession of the bishopric (since 1777 archbishopric) of Olomouc. They were referred to as the so-called Prussian Moravia (Trávníček, 1966). For a short time (1478-1490) Moravia was separated from the union of the Czech Kingdom and associated to Hungary. The oldest internal administrative system was no doubt that of castles. The centre was a castle from which individual settlements were founded. In the 13th century the Church formed its own administration and a new municipal class arose. The so-called castle district started forming the foundation of the land administration. Unlike in Bohemia, the above demesnes still survived. At the end of the 13th century the following regions (Sedláček, 1891) were established: Olomouc, Brno, Znojmo, Holasovice (Opava) and they were completed by that of Přerov and Bítov (later Jihlava). In the 17th century there were five regions: Olomouc, Brno, Hradiště, Znojmo and Jihlava, in 1714 also Přerov which originated by dividing the region of Olomouc. This division persisted until 1850. In that year was Moravia divided into two regions, Brno and Olomouc. Since 1645 Brno has been the only capital of Moravia.

3. THE PERIOD OF 1918-1948

After the constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, the territory of Moravia was extended by the annexation of Valtice and surroundings and the so-called Morava-Dyje triangle by 112 km². The area of Moravia thus was 22,304 km². In 1920 the act of province administration was passed. In Moravia province centres were supposed to be Jihlava, Brno, Olomouc, Uherské Hradiště and Moravská Ostrava. But the implementation of the provinces in the Czech Lands was not materialised. A new organisation of political administration was declared in 1927. The idea of provinces was abandoned and lands as higher territorial administrative units were strengthened. At that time, by the fusion with the Czech Silesia the land Moravia-Silesia arose with the area of 26,800 km², the capital of which was Brno (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Moravia-Silesia

The Munich diktat of 29 Sept., 1938 meant losses for Moravia particularly in the south. The territory with Znojmo, Moravský Krumlov, Mikulov and Břeclav was annexed to then German province of Niederdonau, in the north the regions of Zábřeh, Svitavy, Příbor, Kopřivnice and Štramberk and practically the whole territory of our Silesia fell to "Sudetenland" (Fig. 3).

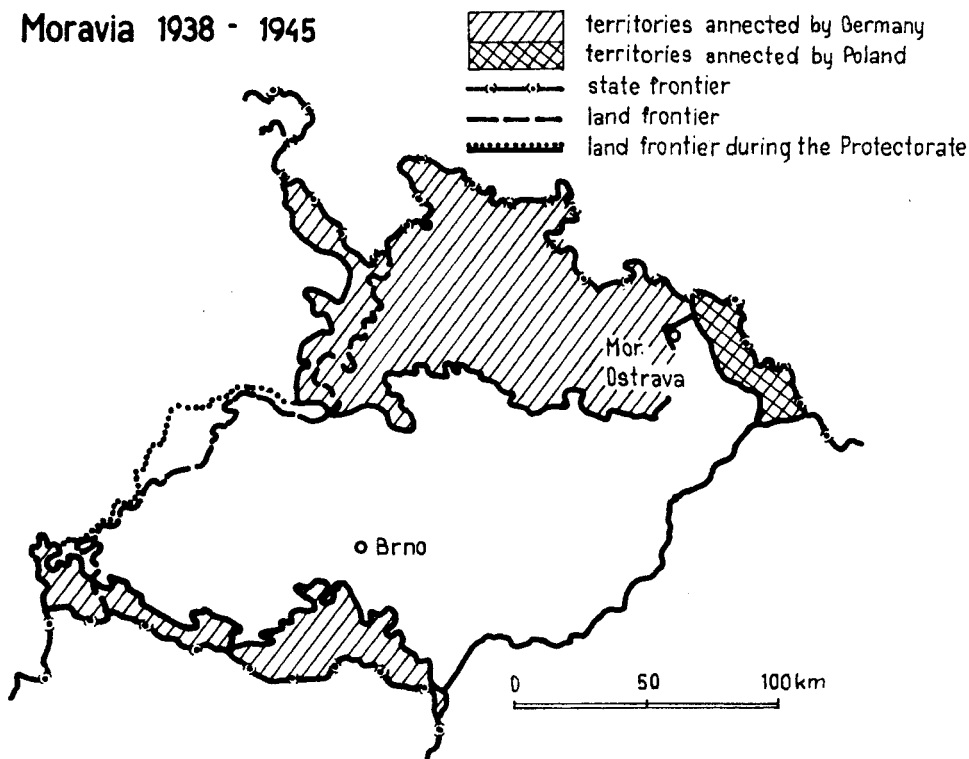


Fig. 3. Moravia 1938-1945

Its small part with Těšín was occupied by Poland. On 15 March, 1939 the remaining Moravian territory became a part of the so-called Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The juridicial bodies of the occupation administration were "Oberlandrats" which were supervising bodies over the Protectorate Moravian authorities. In May, 1939, there were seven "Oberlandrates" in Moravia: Brno, Jihlava, Kroměříž, Moravská Ostrava, Olomouc, Prostějov and Zlín; in 1940 "Oberlandrats" at Prostějov and Kroměříž were abolished. In 1945 the pre-war status was renewed with the change that the districts of Ostrava, Nový Jičín and Místek, starting with 21 May, 1945 became part of the so-called Silesian branch at Moravská Ostrava (since 28 June, 1946 the new name of Ostrava), subordinated up to the end of 1948 to the Land National Committee in Brno (Čiblár, 1953). The Land National Committees were constituted by the decree of President Beneš of 4 Dec., 1944. The Land National Committee in Brno, together with its Silesian branch, ended its activity according to Act No. 280 of 21 Dec., 1948, about the regional administration. Thus, Moravia-Silesia ceased to exist. The markgraviate of Moravia was abolished after 766 years. On the territory of Moravia

the following regions were established: Jihlava (including also a large part of former Bohemia), Brno, Gottwaldov (Zlín was renamed), Olomouc and Ostrava. By act No. 36 of 9 Apr., 1960 which became effective from 1 July, 1960, new, larger regions and districts were established in the whole country. In Moravia, however, large parts of the territory fell to the East Bohemian and South Bohemian Regions, a small part of Bohemia, on the other hand, to Moravian regions. This situation has so far been left even after November 1989, although there is a strong movement in Moravia in support of renewing traditional Moravia within the federal or land administration.

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