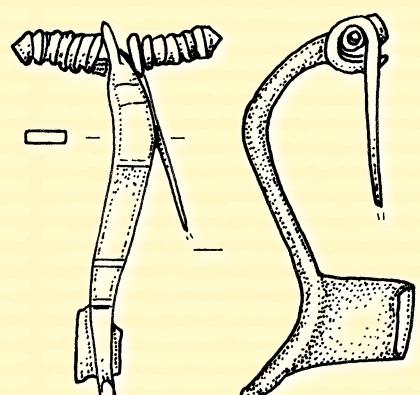




Viktoria Čistáková - Zdeněk Beneš

The Vrbová Lhota Settlement - A Case Study of Germanic Elites in the 3rd Century AD in Central Bohemia

With contributions of EDUARD DROBERJAR – JIŘÍ MILITKÝ – JIŘÍ KMOŠEK



Sídliště ve Vrbové Lhotě – příkladová studie
germánských elit 3. století n. l. ve středních Čechách

S příspěvky EDUARDA DROBERJARA – JIŘÍHO MILITKÉHO – JIŘÍHO KMOŠKA



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1. Introduction

Knowledge of the settlements of the Germanic tribes that inhabited Bohemia in the Late Roman Period remains very vague, the result of the absence of systematic excavations focused on this very issue. Naturally, this is not terribly surprising in a situation where only a few research (usually university) excavations are carried out in the territory of the Czech Republic and most of the attention, effort and time of archaeologists is devoted to development-led rescue excavations. However, their scope is dictated not by research issues, but by the plans of the builders. On the other hand, it is necessary to admit that in recent decades a large number of Roman Period settlements (or their larger or smaller sections) have been identified, thus, in essence, multiplying the 'dots on the map'. However, the problem is the inadequate publication of this find inventory. While there are also extensive investigations of Germanic settlements in Czech archaeology, often carried out in the socialist years (e.g. Mlékojedy, Kyjice, Trmice near Ústí nad Labem, etc.), these have yet to undergo professional evaluation. The reason, of course, is the large number of finds and documentation requiring an enormous amount of time, and this is therefore a task for research teams rather than individuals.

It is certainly possible to name a number of shorter articles and studies addressing a few settlement features or topics related to them. Ranking among the most important of these are Přerubenice in the Rakovník district (Zeman - Venclová - Bubeník 1998), and Tuchlovice, Kladno district (Pleiner 1959), both with evidence of metallurgical activity. However, these excavations, limited in scope, cannot shed light on the questions that archaeologists have been dealing with for decades in, e.g. northern Germany and southern Scandinavia, i.e. the structure and development of these settlements, the function of their various areas, the social stratification of their inhabitants and similar topics, the analysis of which, however, requires extensive exposed areas and a sufficient volume of the preserved source base. A bright exception is the study on the settlement from Turnov-Maškovy zahrady, which opened up the topic of estates (*Herrenhöfe*) in the Roman Period in Czech archaeology (Droberjar - Prostředník 2004, 88–94). 'Estates' represent a form of settlement, which, although it is already assumed in

the earlier period, doesn't appear more significantly until the Late Roman Period. This was a building unit enclosed by a fence or free space containing several types of structures serving a specific social group of residents, most likely one family. Among average-sized estates, those of higher socially ranked members of the community, the 'elite', stand out. It is possible to identify elite estates on the basis of formal criteria (size, structure of buildings), but also on the basis of finds usually attributed to elites (see e.g. Schuster 2003). On the one hand, we know them from the northern parts of Central Europe and Scandinavia, on the other in the Middle Danube Region not far from the Roman border (e.g. Varsik - Kolník 2021). The study of these sites in Bohemia and in Central Germany is now just in the early stage.

However, in recent years a new type of source has emerged in archaeology, one which when used with an appropriately applied research methodology makes it possible to look at the topic of Roman Period settlements from a somewhat different angle than before. These are assemblages of metal artefacts found with metal detectors, supplemented by the surface collection of other non-metal artefacts. As the drawbacks of the use of metal detectors in the hands of uncooperative amateurs have already been detailed elsewhere, this text focuses on their positive impact on archaeological research. Methodologically, it is work different from the evaluation of contexts represented by various settlement pits and the relationships between them. In this case, the artefacts are found almost exclusively in the topsoil, i.e. the upper layer of soil regularly ploughed up by agricultural machinery. In such a case, it is possible to consider this as a disturbed context into which new artefacts continue to enter, both from above in the form of simultaneous disposal, and also from below by ploughing up the still-preserved situations buried in the subsoil. The localisation of artefacts in this case also has its limits, as the speed with which artefacts move in the topsoil can be up to several metres in a few years due to ploughing (Kuna 2004, 305, 320). These are definitely the weak points of the archaeological data obtained in this way. Strong points, on the other hand, include the high informative value of some metal artefacts, namely personal jewellery, parts of clothing,

coins, possibly fragments of Roman-provincial imports, etc. It has already been documented many times that these artefacts are mainly found in topsoil/on the top of the sunken features, a result of the way they left the world of living culture, usually by surface loss rather than deposition in archaeological features. Compared to the most common category of finds – fragments of ceramic vessels – they usually carry more specifically defined chronological information, but also culturally social data about their original owners. Ideally, they supplement standard archaeological research, but in reality, these assemblages today largely provide the only data on settlement sites that have yet to undergo excavation.

The archaeological site presented here and the finds obtained from it offer a case that differs in several respects from most other known settlements from the Roman Period in Bohemia. First and foremost, it is a site that was discovered in a sense at the 'right time' for archaeology, because it was not 'mined' for years by uncooperative treasure hunters with detectors. Instead, it was investigated relatively soon after its discovery, and

we can therefore assume that many of the larger artefacts came into our possession. The second fortunate aspect is that this is a 'monocultural' site, i.e. one with almost no finds from other periods, as is common at most other locations. This means that even artefacts that are difficult to identify probably belong to the period under study – a relatively narrow period of time, even within the Roman Period. And the final significant point that sets this site apart from many others is the fact that a relatively large number of artefacts associated with the presence of the social elite have been found here. The assemblage of finds from the Vrbová Lhota site thus provides us with a unique opportunity to study the settlement of high-ranking members of Germanic society in central Bohemia in the 3rd century AD. Unlike a number of residences of local elites of similar age, documented mainly in Northern Europe by standard large-scale excavations, we can thus study this settlement at the moment without any destructive intervention below the topsoil level. In a sense, this is only the first step in the study of this site.

2. Find context

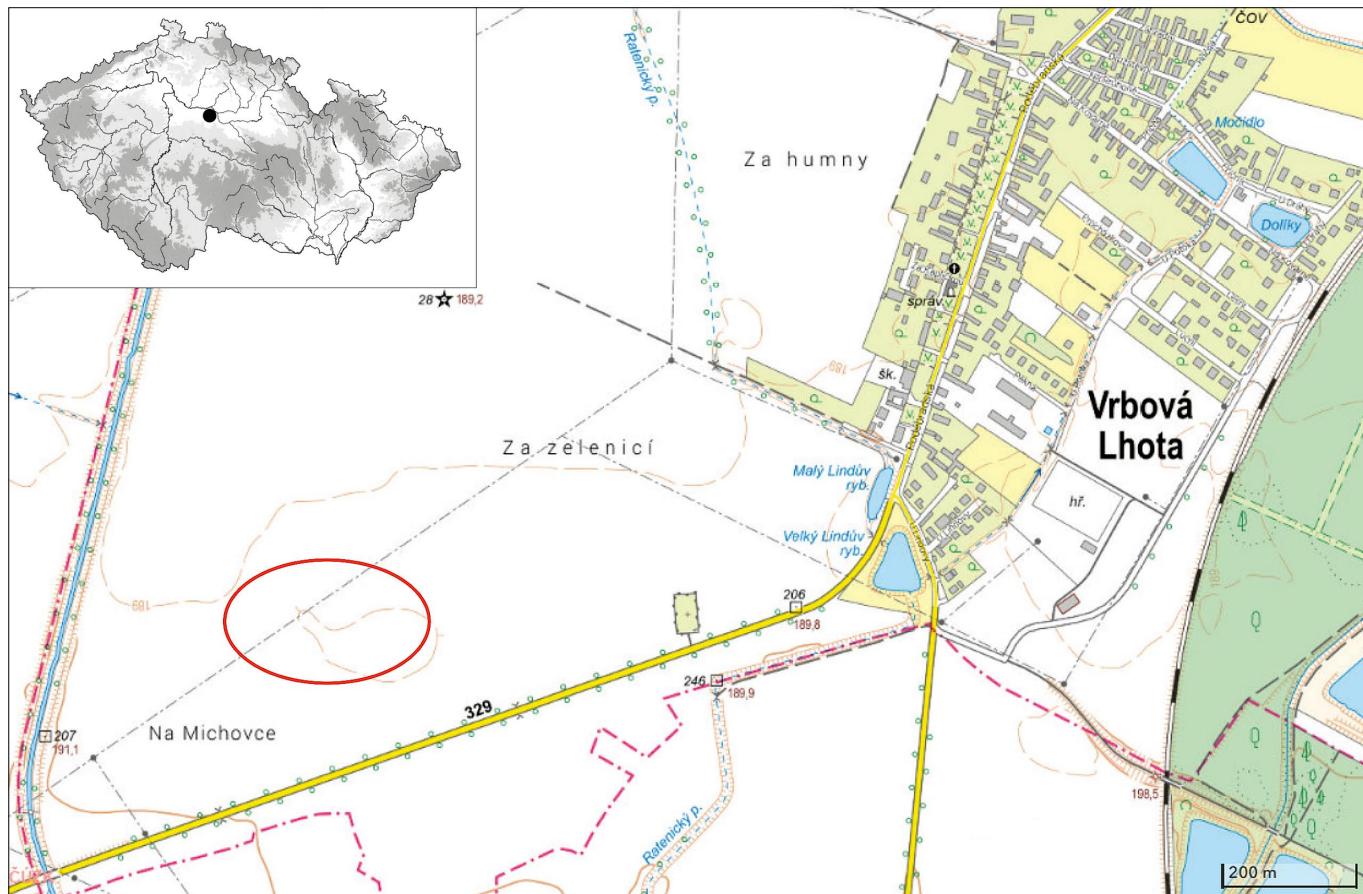


Fig. 1. Vrbová Lhota, distr. Nymburk. Site location on the map of the Czech Republic on the Basic topographic map (1 : 10 000). Source: <https://ags.cuzk.cz/geopohlizec/>

Obr. 1. Vrbová Lhota, okr. Nymburk. Poloha lokality na fyzické mapě České republiky (1 : 10 000). Zdroj: <https://ags.cuzk.cz/geopohlizec/>

This text presents the results of the field investigation conducted by the National Museum in 2019–2021 at the Na Michovce location in the cadastral territory of Vrbová Lhota in the Nymburk district (Fig. 1). As such, it followed up on the discovery of this site in 2012 and a subsequent verification survey the following year, when surface finds were not yet localised using GPS (Droberjar 2018, 74). During the next investigation in September and October 2020 and August 2021, individual finds (mainly metal) were already localised, and it was this precise localisation that served to estimate the extent of the site at approximately 5.5 to 6.5 ha.¹ Another research question was whether

the concentrations of finds from the same chronological sections are concentrated in a certain place, which could help answer the question of the development of the settlement. The answer, however, is negative, as the deposition of artefacts was quite inhomogeneous and does not provide any useful information regarding the chronological development of the settlement. This is rather a logical result of post-depositional processes associated with agricultural activity, which we also observe at other sites (Hanáková 2023, 88). Another question was whether, based on the distribution of individual groups of artefacts (coins, non-ferrous metallurgy waste, Roman imports and silver

1) The team of authors would like to take this opportunity to thank all volunteer amateur collaborators who participated in the surface survey of this site, both in the discovery phase and

during organised prospecting in 2020 and 2021. Without their commitment and skills, it would be impossible to investigate such a large area in a high-quality manner.

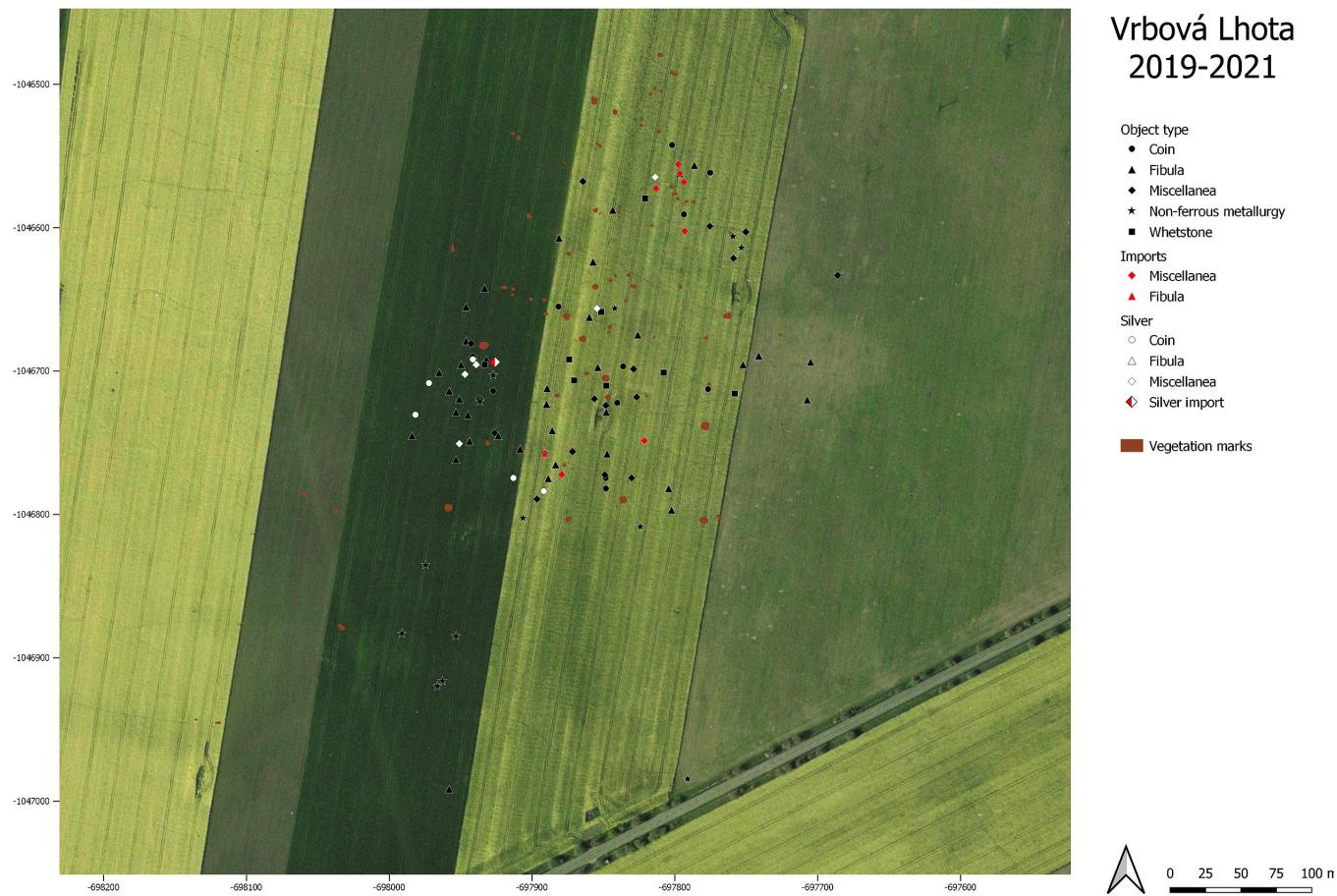


Fig. 2. Vrbová Lhota, distr. Nymburk. Distribution of find types according to prospections 2020–2021. Created by J. Souček.

Obr. 2. Vrbová Lhota, okr. Nymburk. Distribuční mapa nálezových kategorií na základě prospekcí z let 2020–2021. Vytvořil J. Souček.

artefacts), we can localise certain settlement components (see Fig. 2). Even in this case, results are biased by the movement of artefacts by agricultural activity. The presence of non-ferrous metallurgy waste at the southwestern edge of the settlement may suggest the presumed location of a metalworking workshop in this area. On the other hand, fragments of whetstones are concentrated in the central part of the site. Pottery fragments were collected using the total pickup method.² In the area of the greatest concentration of ceramic fragments (ceramic scatter), five squares measuring 25 × 25 metres were marked out. The goal of the total pickup method was the comprehensive collection of archaeological material from the demarcated area and its subsequent qualitative and quantitative (weight and number of fragments) processing (for more, see Sobotková *et al.* 2010); (Fig. 3).

2) The visualisation of collection squares was supplemented with surface vegetation marks, which can indicate subsurface preserved archaeological structures. However, the attached images show that the greatest concentration of ceramic scatter does not completely correspond to the area of the greatest occurrence of visible vegetation marks.

The site is located on almost completely flat terrain, at 189.2 m above sea level, on the right bank of the now regulated Výrovka Stream. The slight elevation, which once at least partially protected the Roman Period settlement from the changing water regime of the Elbe and Výrovka, is now almost indiscernible due to the influence of mechanised agriculture. That it is a settlement and not a burial site is evident both from the range of artefacts found (e.g. coins, whetstones, etc.), but also from aerial photographs documenting characteristic settlement features. The older finds were added to the new ones for publication purposes and are part of the National Museum's collections.³

3) This work was financially supported by Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic (DKRVO 2019–2023/17.II.b. National Museum, 00023272).

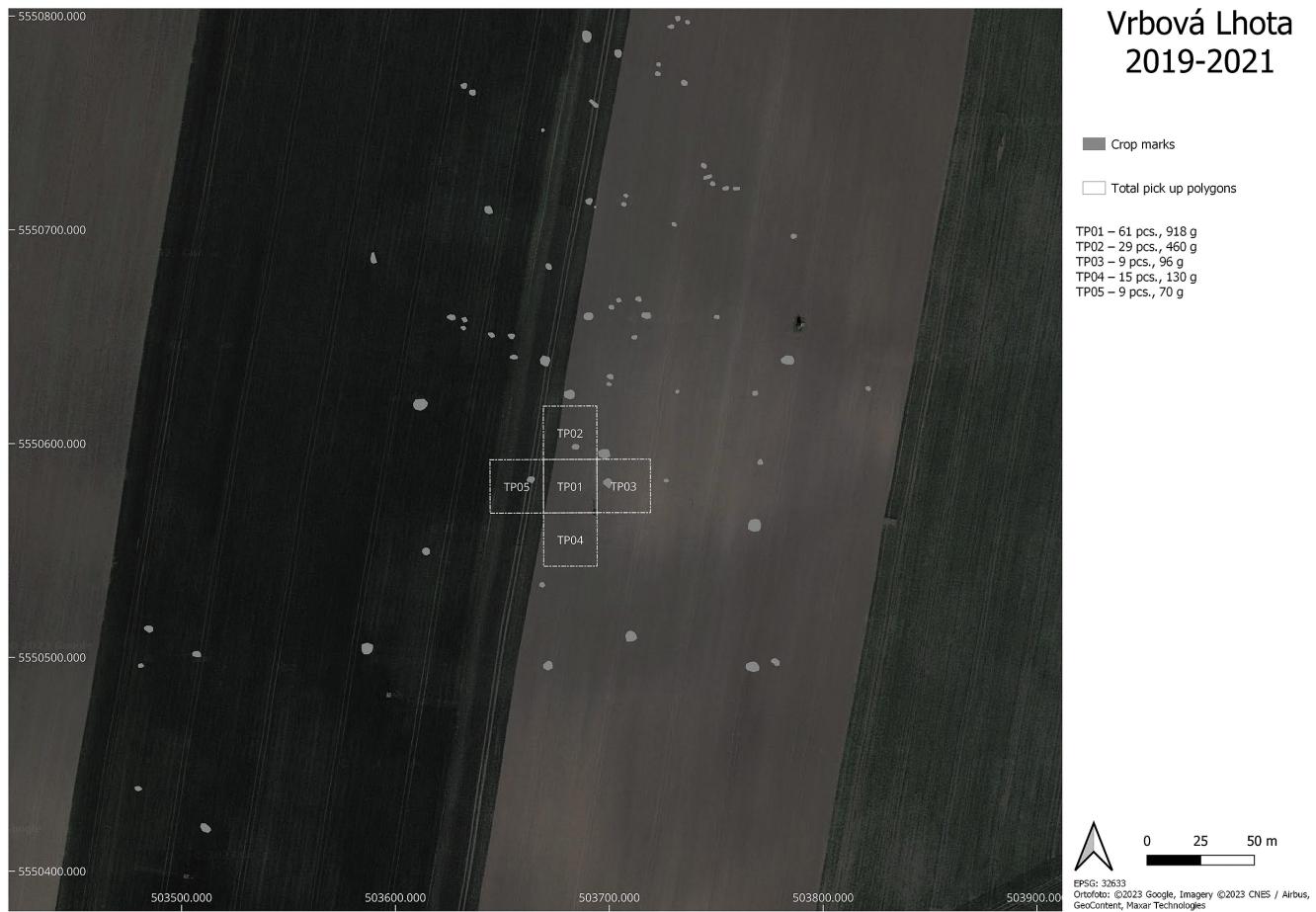


Fig. 3. Vrbová Lhota, distr. Nymburk. Total pick up polygons. Created by J. Souček.

Obr. 3. Vrbová Lhota, okr. Nymburk. Povrchový sběr nálezů metodou total pick-up. Vytvořil J. Souček.

3. Typo-chronological analysis of artefacts

(Z. Beneš – E. Droberjar – V. Čistáková)

3.1 Barbarian⁴ brooches

3.1.1 KNEE BROOCHES

Brooch H1-429957 (*Pl. 1: 1*) has a knee-shaped bow with a 90° bend with a triangular cross-section and a small, cylindrical head. The brooch can clearly be attributed to the large group of knee brooches. The brooch's cylindrical head is typical of the Almgren group V, type A 132 (*Almgren 1923, 69–70*). E. Droberjar (2012) defined several specific variants for type A 132. The closest parallel in the region is a bronze brooch from the Roman Period settlements at the Hořátev-Zvěřínek site in the Nymburk district and at Nová Ves I in the Kolín district (*Droberjar 2012a, 237, Obr. 3: 2*). Similar new (to date unpublished) finds also come from other sites in the Elbe River region in Bohemia. Still others are known from Moravia, e.g. from Vlčnov-Dolní Němcí, Ostrožská Nová Ves I and V (Uherské Hradiště district), Strážnice II and Věteřov I (Hodonín district); (*Zeman 2017, Obr. 26: 1–5*). Typologically similar to our brooch are variants with ribs (A 132a)⁵ and knee brooches with a ball on their foot (A 132c),⁶ finds of which are known from many sites in the Czech Republic.

4) Although, from an ethnic point of view, we assume the presence of various Germanic tribes (Marcomani, etc.) in the territory of Bohemia during the Roman Period, we prefer to use the term 'barbarian' rather than 'Germanic' when describing archaeological artefacts, which does not aim to precisely identify the creator and bearer of these artefacts. One of the reasons is that it is not always clear who the creator of these artefacts was. The second reason is the opinion that ethnic concepts do not reflect the reality of knowledge of material culture – they are much more a 'social construct' (e.g. *Bráther 2004, 308–318; Salač 2023*).

5) Prachovice, Pardubice district (*Vích 2010, 718, Obr. 3: 2*); Medlovice, Vyškov district (*Čižmář et al. 2009, 144–145*); Dyjákovice, Znojmo district (*Jílek/Klanicová 2009, 320–322, Obr. 3: 3*); Slatnice, Olomouc district (*Loskotová 2009, Obr. 15*); Mušov-Burgstall, Brno-venkov district (*Tejral 2015, Fig. 13: 8*); Uherský Brod II, Uherský Brod district; Věteřov II, Hodonín district; Blatnice pod Svatým Antonínkem I, Hodonín district; Strážnice II, Hodonín district; Strážnice/Petrov II, Hodonín district (*Zeman 2017, 107, Obr. 26: 6–10*).

6) Třebechovice pod Orebem, Hradec Králové district (*Horník/Kmošek 2020, Obr. 2*); Jevíčko, Svitavy district (*Droberjar 2012a, 239*); Hroznová Lhota, Hodonín district (*Zeman 2017, Obr. 26: 11*).

Fasteners of this type are concentrated in the area of the Przeworsk and Wielbark cultures, where they occur in bronze and especially iron specimens of this type. The brooches are often dated to the end of phase B2 (B2b); (*Godłowski 1984, 335–337; Andrzejowski – Cieśliński 2007, 132; Droberjar 2012a, 23*). Type A 132 brooches also appear among the Elbe River Germanic tribes, mainly north of the Middle Danube Region,⁷ where they document intercultural interactions during the Marcomannic Wars and immediately after them (*Tejral 2015, 56*). Type A 132 knee brooches in this area can be dated primarily to the late part of phase B2b up to transitional phase B2/C1 – i.e. to the period just before, during or immediately after the Marcomannic Wars (*Droberjar 2012a, 242*). Unresolved for now is their occurrence in phase C1, to which two A 132 knee brooches from an inhumation grave in Řepov are dated (*Svoboda 1948, 78, Fig. 8: 4; Peškař 1972, 90–91; Tejral 2015, 57*). In this case, the dating of the entire assemblage could be older and it would thus be possible to date the grave assemblage to B2b–B2/C1.⁸ Semi-finished A 132 brooches and their variants are also already known from Bohemia and Moravia. We can mention two semi-finished bronze brooches from Mušov-Burgstall, which are good evidence of local production during the Marcomannic Wars or just after them (*Tejral 2015, 56, 61*). Also documented is a mould for the production of these brooches from the settlement in Kočí in the Chrudim district, where it represents evidence of the local production of knee brooches in the Upper Elbe River region (*Vích – Kmošek 2020, 94–96, Fig. 2: 1, 3: 1; Horník – Kmošek 2020, 110–111*), Černčice (*Horník et al. 2020, 53, Obr. 2: 8*), and Velké Hostěrádky in Moravia (*Jagošová et al. 2021, Fig. 1: 3*).

7) East and central Bohemia, the area of the basins of the Haná and Moravá rivers, Lower Austria and southwest Slovakia (*Droberjar 2012a, 242; Tejral 2015, 56*).

8) For the purpose of this work authors is using chronological phases after *Droberjar 1999b*.

3.1.2 PLATE BROOCHES

Brooch H1-929955 (*Pl. 1: 2; 15: 7*) has a simple round shape without an accentuated edge and traces of a central rivet, suggesting that the face may have been decorated with soldered pressed sheet metal. Based on these morphological characteristics, the brooch can be classified under the Thomas A ser. 2, var. 1 type (*Thomas 1967, 26–27*). These are simple brooches made from sheet metal cut in a specific shape (from common circular to variable zoomorphic forms) and with spiral winding. They emerged from the barbarian environment and were modelled after Roman-provincial specimens, which differ in their basic technical design – their body is cast and they are often decorated with enamel or a millefiori inlay (*ibid.*, 26, 30; *Bode 1998, 321*).

Based on grave units from Bohemia and the western Germanic/Elbe River regions, this type of brooch was originally dated from the end of the 3rd century to the first half of the 4th century AD (*Thomas 1967, 26; Zeman 2017, 115–116*). But there are naturally finds that document their earlier occurrence, e.g. a find from feature 5/61 in Pobedim, Slovakia, dated to phase C1 and to the beginning of phase C2 (*Kolník 1965, 188, Obr. 3: 4*). The plate brooch from grave 49 at the burial ground in Přnov is also dated from the end of the 2nd century to the middle of the 3rd century. Similarly, an assemblage of brooches from the burial ground in Wechmar can be dated to C1–C2 (*Bode 1998, 328*). E. Keller (1974, 252) saw the main occurrence of Thomas A group brooches in phase C1. Based on grave units, it can be stated that Thomas A group brooches appear at the end of the 2nd century and remained popular through the entire 3rd century (*Kolník 1965, 188; Bode 1998, 328–331; Dušek 2001, 31*).

Simple bronze plate brooches are known from settlement finds from many Moravian and Bohemian sites, e.g. a brooch from Rakvice (*Cižmář et al. 2009, 145, Obr. 7: 9*), from Strážnice II, Veselí nad Moravou I (*Zeman 2017, Tab. 104: 2–3, 121: 16–18*), and from Krchleby in the Nymburk district (*Droberjar – Miličký 2020, 476, Obr. 6: 9*). Plate brooches with lobes on the edges are a related form. These were also found at Late Roman settlements, e.g. at Bošín (*Vích – Horník – Miličký 2021, 176, Obr. 2: 14*) and Úhřetice (*Jílek 2017, 149, Obr. 3: 8*). Two other simple plate brooches in fragmented condition come from the settlement in Plotiště nad Labem, specifically from graves 14 and 1188 (*Rybová 1979, 356, 377–378, Obr. 1: 9; 9: 10*).

3.1.3 TWO-PART BROOCHES WITH HIGH CATCH-PLATE

A total of 17 brooches with a high catch-plate are recorded from Vrbová Lhota, though many are preserved in fragments, thus preventing a more detailed description. This is one of the most common fasteners from the early phase of the Late Roman Period and is presented as a characteristic feature of phase C1 of the Roman Period already in older professional works (e.g. *Almgren 1923, 90–98, Taf. IX; Godłowski 1992, 28–32, Abb. 9*). Archaeological research in the 20th century brought a number of other efforts to classify these fasteners in detail, a complete list of which is not necessary here (cf. *Kolník 1965, 189–195; Schulte 1998; Schulte 2011, 25–36*). The foundation for other classifications is usually series 4 in Almgren group VII. Based on the course of the spring chord, these brooches can be divided into two large separate groups: brooches with a *lower spring chord* and brooches with an *upper spring chord*.

Brooches with a lower spring are far more numerous in the Elbe River region. Almgren sought prototypes for these brooches in trumpet brooches (A 112, etc.), an opinion with which T. Kolník concurred (he sees knee brooches, group V, series 9, as models for these brooches). The transition from an upper spring with a hook catch (Early Roman Period technology) to a lower spring was perhaps necessitated by the simplification of brooch construction. Around the middle of the 20th century, the majority of scholars agreed that besides certain specific variants,⁹ all were still based on Early Roman Period types, so they are often dated to the very beginning of the Late Roman Period (*Kolník 1965, 193–195*). Crossbow brooch construction (albeit on one-piece brooches) has an older tradition (e.g. ‘Roman military’ brooches A 15) and a high catch-plate (on certain types of knee brooches) also. For that matter, the construction of fasteners from two pieces already occurs with plate brooches. However, a novelty at the beginning of the Late Roman Period is the combination of these three traits, i.e. a crossbow construction, a high catch-plate and a two-piece construction on a single artefact (*Schulte 2011, 48–49, Abb. 21–22*).

The second important group is crossbow brooches with a high catch-plate and an upper spring chord. The spring chord is either attached in a hook or rests on a button. These are concentrated in the Tisza valley, Transnistria, between the Upper Dnieper and the Bug (*Kolník 1965, 191–193*). This variant is already traditionally named the ‘Sarmatian’ type in Central Europe, starting with

⁹⁾ Brooches on which the catch-plate is an extension of the bow (Almgren series 3) and ‘monstrous’ brooches (series 4).

the study by T. Kolník (*Kolník 1965*, 195–199), further studies by M. Mączyńska (*Mączyńska 2003*; *Mączyńska 2011*, 71–72) and finally in works by Romanian scholars, who, for good reasons, propose the abandonment of this misleading term (*Cociș - Bârcă 2014*, *Cociș - Bârcă 2020*). These eastern brooch variants with a high catch-plate also dominate over brooches with a lower spring in the Przeworsk culture (*Kenk 1977*, 329–333). There is a great deal of evidence for the local production of these brooches in Central Europe, especially in the Danube River Region (*Schulte 2011*, 171–177, Karte 54, Liste 40).

A relatively broad spectrum of different variants of brooches with a high catch-plate comes from Vrbová Lhota, which is a good reflection of their diversity in the entire Elbe River region. L. Schulte's first subgroup (VII 1) contains derivatives of knee brooches, more precisely 'two-piece knee brooches with a high catch-plate'. Four of these brooches (H1-429885, H1-429949, H1-429960 and H1-478013; *Pl. 1: 3–6*) are recorded in Vrbová Lhota and all essentially correspond formally to classic knee brooches, but are already two-piece (cf. *Gupte 2004*) and thus belong to Schulte subgroup 1. Further division is possible into individual 'forms', and it is possible to consider both form 1 (*Schulte 2011*, 56–60) and, in the case of brooches H1-429949 and H1-429960 (*Pl. 1: 4–5*), also forms 5a or 5b, which have a decorated foot (*ibid.*, 65–68). Typologically and also chronologically, these are potentially the earliest Almgren VII brooches and could be related to phases B2/C1 and C1a (*ibid.*, Abb. 107).

The largest and also most formally diverse group of crossbow brooches with a high catch-plate is Schulte subgroup A VII 2, brooches with an S-shaped profile. Unlike the previous group, these also occur east of the Oder River. L. Schulte divided variants according to the regions of their concentration (*Schulte 2011*, 72–73). Brooches H1-429961 and H1-429971 (*Pl. 1: 7–8*) are representatives of form 1. Typologically, these are relatively simple brooches that are only rarely decorated (at most with a fine rib at the transition from the bow to the foot) and are apparently related to Roman-provincial military brooches of the Early Roman Period (*ibid.*, 73).

Brooch H1-478035 (*Pl. 1: 10*) can be classified under form 3. This is a relatively small fastener, usually with a bow with a round cross-section. The brooch from Vrbová Lhota has a bow with bevelled side edges, but is also unusual for its rectangular foot decorated with triangular bevels on the sides (*ibid.*, 75–76). However, it is worth considering whether this brooch should not be classified under form 23, which is characterised by a heavily curved bow (*ibid.*, 118–120). Also possibly belonging to form 3 is a fragment of brooch H1-478007 (*Pl. 1: 9*), of which only the rear part of the bow with

a round cross-section with a reinforced foot bordered by transverse ribs and a catch decorated with grooves on both sides is preserved.

Nearly intact brooch H1-478043 (*Pl. 1: 11*) distinctively decorated with transverse grooves on the head and foot and lines on both sides of the catch belongs to form 6, i.e. brooches with a parabolically curved bow (*ibid.*, 79).

Form 14 represents 'classic S-shaped brooches' (*ibid.*, 95), under which specimens H1-429965 and H1-429967 (*Pl. 1: 12–13*) from Vrbová Lhota are classified. Variant 14a is then reserved for brooches with a narrower bow, which also includes our specimens. They correspond closely to classic type A 193.

Brooch H1-478031 (*Pl. 1: 14*) is a type with a trapezoidal foot A VII, 2, form 21. It differs from form 20 by the absence of decoration and an overall simpler design. In contrast to the previous variants, these brooches are typical for the Lower Rhineland and the Baltic coast, whereas they are rare in the Elbe-Germanic area. Their dating is concentrated in the late part of phase C1 (*ibid.*, 117, Abb. 77).

The fragmentarily preserved foot with a prominent catch-plate of brooch H1-429977 (*Pl. 1: 15*) can only tentatively be classified under form 26; (*ibid.*, 124–127). Thanks to the presence of a button on the head of the bow, we can often classify these brooches among the eastern group of crossbow brooches with a high catch plate and an upper spring chord (*Kolník 1965*, 195–199). From Vrbová Lhota, brooch H1-478044 with a bow with a triangular cross-section and decorated along the ridge with delicate hammered points certainly ranks among those (*Pl. 1: 16*). This brooch could belong to either form 26d or 29 (*Schulte 2011*, 124, 128–131). It is clear that the Elbe River region and eastern types of crossbow brooches with a high catch plate meet mainly in the Middle Danube Region, i.e. in Moravia, SW Slovakia and Lower Austria. The publication by T. Zeman (2017, 110–112) points out the extraordinary representation of these variants in SW Moravia. Finds of clay moulds from Pasohlávky make clear that they were also made at that site (*Tejral 2006*).

A fragment of the foot of brooch H1-429918 (*Pl. 1: 18*) can perhaps be classified under Schulte form 31 (*Schulte 2011*, 133).

L. Schulte also includes 'bird brooches' (*ibid.*, 131–133) as a special variant of his form 30. Several years ago, E. Droberjar (2018) published specimen H1-478032 from Vrbová Lhota (*Fig. 4: 1; Pl. 1: 17*) under the name Masłomęcz type as the first case thus far in Bohemia. He built on the earlier study by A. Kokowski, who regarded this type of brooch as evidence of Gothic-Sarmatian relations, in which a certain role was to be played by the Masłomęcz group in the Hrubieszów Basin in eastern Poland (*Kokowski 2003*, 277, Abb. 1). The same scholar

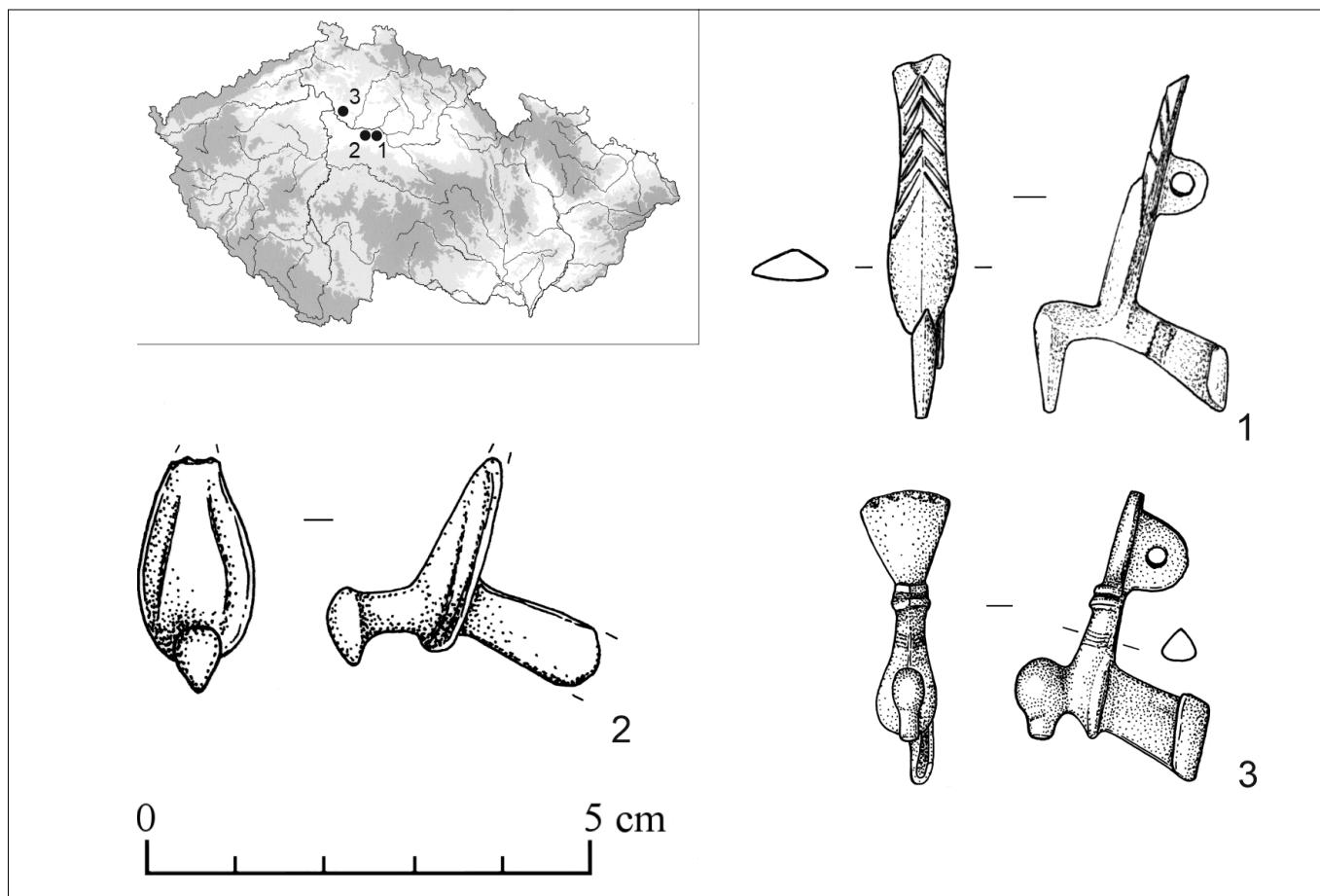


Fig. 4. Distribution of the so far known bird brooches of the Masłomęcz type in the Czech republic. 1 – Vrbová Lhota (Nymburk district), 2 – Třebestovice (Nymburk district), 3 – Čečelice (Mělník district). Copper alloys.

Fig. 4. Distribučná mapa dosud známych nálezov ptačích spon typu Masłomęcz na území České republiky. 1 – Vrbová Lhota (okr. Nymburk), 2 – Třebestovice (okr. Nymburk), 3 – Čečelice (okr. Mělník). Vše slitiny mědi.

suggested that it could be jewellery inspired by the Roman-provincial environment (Kokowski 2008, 116, 127, notes 14 and 15). Indeed, Roman-provincial 'duck' or 'pigeon' brooches represent a stylistically somewhat different, but in principle suitable, prototype (e.g. Droberjar 2018, 79–81). The brooch from Vrbová Lhota differs from them in the absence of details and a certain simplistic stylisation. These brooches are dated to phase C1a at the cemetery in Masłomęcz (Kokowski 2003, 277).¹⁰ Based on the fast growth in finds, these brooches are concentrated mainly in the area of the cultures of the 'Gothic circle' in Ukraine (Kokowski – Masurek 2021, Abb. 5; Schuster 2021, 243, Abb. 7). But the specimen from Vrbová Lhota is not even the westernmost evidence of its occurrence – a similar brooch from a surface survey in the Thuringian settlement of

10) There is also another variant of barbarian bird brooches – the Otałążka type, which has an arched bow and a relatively low catch plate (Kokowski – Masurek 2021, 226–228). A noteworthy specimen (perhaps Roman-provincial?) was recently published from the Germanic settlement in Beladice in SW Slovakia (Ruttkayová – Ruttkay 2021, Fig. 2: 1).

Bad Langensalza-Ufhoven (Schuster – Walther 2022) was recently published.¹¹ It is linked to the brooch from Vrbová Lhota by similar decoration in the form of oppositely oriented lines evidently suggesting feathers. But in recent years there have even been new finds of these brooches in Bohemia, and this work is a suitable place for their publication. This involves a fragment of a brooch from the long-known (e.g. Motyková – Sedláčková 1974) multicultural site in Třebestovice in the Nymburk district (Fig. 4: 2) and a nearly intact brooch from Čečelice in the Mělník district (Fig. 4: 3). Whereas the brooch from Třebestovice has a heavily stylised head and wings only subtly suggested, the specimen from Čečelice is more anatomically authentic and the technological execution is more consistent with Roman-provincial specimens.

Preserved brooch H1-429888 (Pl. 1: 19) can perhaps be classified among the brooches of Schulte subgroup VII 3 – i.e. brooches without a foot. While the catch plate

11) A site regarded by the authors of this short study as one of a central character (Schuster – Walther 2022, 274).

of this brooch is preserved only as a fragment, based on the regular curvature of the bow it can perhaps be classified under form 3 of this subgroup. Interesting for that matter is the fact that the strip bow is decorated on the front side with a line of hammered points along the central axis of the bow (Schulte 2011, 143–147). Subgroup VII 3 is characteristic primarily of the northern part of Central Europe, with the southernmost area of expansion in the Lower Saale Valley and Altmark (*ibid.*, 139). Although these brooches appear in phase C1, they were primarily used in C2 (*ibid.*, Abb. 107).

Although it is a comparison between different quantities of pieces, it is interesting to compare the brooches with high catch-plate from Vrbová Lhota with finds of the same group of fasteners from the Central Morava River region (Zeman 2017, 110–113). While brooches with an upper chord (the ‘Sarmatian’ variant) are rare in Vrbová Lhota, in Moravia they are a numerically stronger group than variants with a lower chord. On the other hand, Moravian sites lack Schulte’s group VII 1 brooches and form 1 of Schulte group VII 2.

3.1.4 BROOCHES WITH AN INVERTED FOOT

The emergence of Almgren group VI, series 1 brooches is tied to the northern Black Sea area. Their first workshops are often linked to Greek colonies, where they develop from the construction of Late La Tène brooches (Almgren 1923, 73; Ambroz 1966, 54; Kenk 1977, 319). In the northern Black Sea environment, brooches with an inverted foot integrate into the Chernyakhov culture environment (Ambroz 1966, 58–59). Thanks to contact between the Gothic population and the western environment, these brooches gradually spread to the territory of the Przeworsk culture (Jakubczyk 2014, 146) before subsequently expanding deeper into Central Europe (Svoboda 1948, 133–114; Frýzl 2014, 814). Several development areas can be defined for these brooches: the northern Black Sea and the Chernyakhov–Sântana de Mureş cultural complex, the Elbe–Germanic cultural circle, the area of the Przeworsk and Wielbark cultures, and the Carpathian arc (Kolník 1965, 208; Kenk 1977, 319–325, Abb. 37). The spread of these brooches from the northern Black Sea area to Central Europe is often linked to the shift of Sarmatian tribes into the Middle Danube Region. The beginning of development of one-piece brooches with an inverted foot in Central Europe can be connected with the period of the Marcomannic Wars or immediately thereafter (Kolník 1965, 209–210; Ioniță 1998, 234).

Two one-piece brooches with an inverted foot come from the Vrbová Lhota site and can be identified as type

A 158. Specimen H1-478030 (*Pl. 2: 3*) is heavily damaged and its deformed bow with a triangular cross-section with a fragment of the spring is preserved. In contrast, brooch H1-429952 (*Pl. 1: 20*) is well preserved. A 158 is a typical fastener from the Late and Final Roman Period characterised by a specific foot with a wire catch created by a simple bend of the sheet metal and the winding of the end wire around the lower part of the bow. The bow is mostly a strip bow, most often with a round, semi-circular, rectangular, or saddle-shaped cross-section. Bronze specimens are predominant in assemblages from Bohemia and Moravia, while iron A 158 brooches¹² appear less frequently. Silver brooches are rare finds. The brooch can have simple bevelled or engraved decoration concentrated on the foot. The bow is mostly undecorated or has only simple metope-like or engraved decoration (Svoboda 1948, 116–118; Zeman 1961a, 180–186; Zeman 2017, 116).

The oldest A 158 brooches from the Czech Republic can be dated to B2/C1–C1a (Peškař 1972, 111–112; Tejral 1998, 394), though they persist in barbarian territory until the Migration Period, specifically phase D2 (*ibid.*, 394).¹³ Known from phases C3 to D are large representative brooches with a length exceeding 10 cm, which were made from gold or silver (Mączyńska 2011, 74). Brooches from the transition from the Late Roman Period to the Migration Period are characterised by hammered decoration referring to the style of the Untersiebenbrunn tradition (Citterbard 2019, 26–27). Despite the broad chronological span in which A 158 brooches were used, the height of their occurrence can be sought in the first half of the 3rd century (Kolník 1965, 210; Peškař 1972, 111; Godłowski 1992, Abb. 13: 7). Suitable examples from the territory of the Przeworsk culture are A 158 brooches from the Chorula III phase (180–250 AD), into which the end fittings of belt Madyda-Legutko 3.6 in the assemblage from Vrbová Lhota fall (*Pl. 7: 9–10*); (Kenk 1977, 373, Abb. 35). A larger concentration of these brooches comes from the burial ground in Plotiště nad Labem (Rybová 1980, 172).¹⁴ A significantly greater number of these brooches are known from North Moravia, primarily thanks to the burial ground in Kostelec na Hané (79 specimens), where they are dated to the first half of the 3rd century (Zeman 1961a, 181; Peškař 1972, 111). Another concentration is found in Silesia and in the western territory of the Przeworsk culture, where nearly 800 A 158 brooches are recorded at last count (Jakubczyk 2014, 118–146; Zeman 2017, 116).

12) Iron brooches with an inverted foot are especially popular in the territory of the Przeworsk culture, where they are also characterised by a greater length (Mączyńska 2011, 74–75).

13) Here we can mention the find of an A 158 brooch in the hoard from Hřensko dated to phase D2 (Jiřík – Peškař 2008; Abb. 5: 2).

14) These are brooches from graves 309, 426, 714, 880, 1091 and 1290 (Rybová 1979).

Brooch H1-429952 (*Pl. 1: 20; 15: 6*) from Vrbová Lhota has an arched strip bow and specific decoration in the form of three semicircles on the side edges of the foot. The closest parallel is from the Lower Silesian site of Polwica (Polwica variant after *Jakubczyk 2014, 143, Taf. XXXIV: 3*). Typologically similar brooches are dated to C1b-C2 (*Jakubczyk 2014, 144-146*).

Brooch H1-429974 (*Pl. 1: 21; 15: 5*) can be identified as an A 162 type – a two-piece brooch with an inverted foot. The bow of the brooch has a semicircular arch and slightly expands towards the head; the cross-section has a three-part profile. Type A 162 brooches are known from the extensive territory of the Elbe-Germanic cultural sphere,¹⁵ where they spread from the areas of the Przeworsk and Wielbark cultures. They are also heavily distributed in the Chernyakhov-Sântana de Mureş cultural circle (*Ołędzki - Ziętek 2014, 123-131*).¹⁶ Two-piece brooches with an inverted foot are then also known from Scandinavia, especially the islands of Bornholm and Gotland, and still other specimens come from the Western Baltic cultural sphere, specifically from the areas of the Bogaczewo, Dollheim-Kovrovo and Sudovian cultures (*Mączyńska 2011, 83*). Two-piece brooches with an inverted foot are likewise well documented from Roman-provincial lands, specifically from the Middle and Lower Danube provinces, where they appear in the greatest numbers in assemblages dated to the 3rd to 4th century (*Ambroz 1966, 57-68; Petković 2010, 307-310*). The earliest finds from Dacia can in fact be dated to the second half of the 2nd century (*Diaconu 1971, 10*). Although the earliest examples of this type in Barbaricum can be linked to phase C1a, the main concentration of the occurrence of A 162 brooches is connected with phase C2 (*Godłowski 1992, 32-34; Jilek 2017, 154*). These brooches then appear until phase C3 and the beginning of the Migration Period (*Nowakowski 2001, 133; Schuster 2004, 129*). Finds of type A 162 brooches are known both from the cemetery in Plotiště nad Labem and in Kostelec na Hané (*Zeman 1961a; Rybová 1979; idem 1980*).

A 162 brooches from phase C1a are distinguished by a shorter spiral winding and a slightly flared foot. Brooch H1-429974 from Vrbová Lhota is closer to the later types dating from the end of phase C2 to C3, which are characterised by a straight foot, broad bow and a longer spring. Later specimens are also typically decorated more with bevelling and metope ornament (*Nowakowski 2001, 139; Mączyńska*

15) This mainly concerns the northern and middle Elbe River region in Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Saxony-Anhalt (*Mączyńska 2011, 81-84; Citterbard 2019, 22*).

16) It should be noted that type A 161-162 brooches are predominant in their iron variant in the area of the Przeworsk culture, whereas A 161-162 brooches in the Wielbark culture are traditionally made of bronze or silver (*Nowakowski 2001, 132-133*).

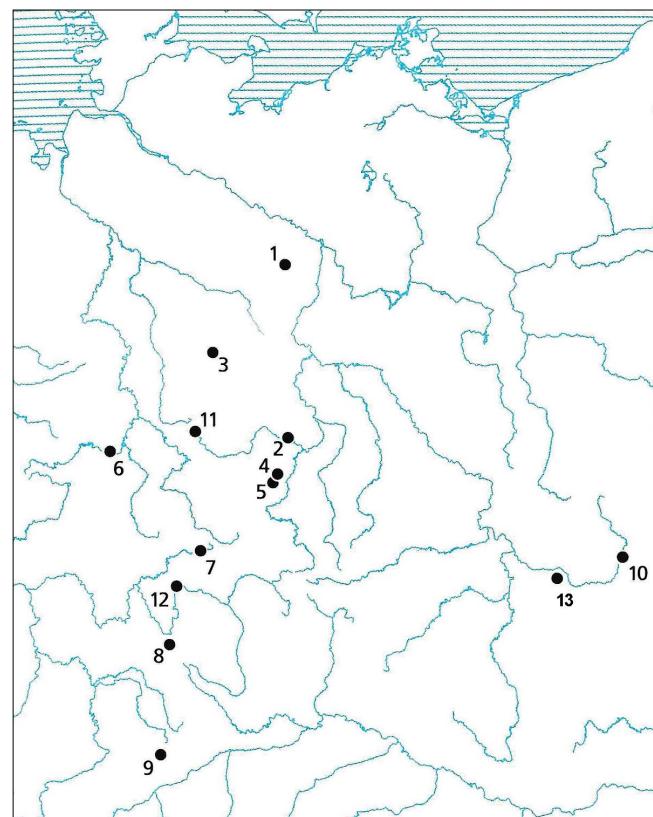


Fig. 5. Distribution of the so far known brooch of Sontheim type (after Bemm 1998, Abb. 4, added 13 – Vrbová Lhota): 1 – Kahrstedt (Saxony-Anhalt, Germany), 2 – Nebra (Saxony-Anhalt, Germany), 3 – Osterwieck (Saxony-Anhalt, Germany), 4 – Ehringsdorf (Thuringia, Germany), 5 – Großromstedt (Thuringia, Germany), 6 – Büraberg (Hesse, Germany), 7 – Bad Königshofen (Bavaria, Germany), 8 – Hopferstadt II (Bavaria, Germany), 9 – Sontheim im Stubental (Baden-Württemberg, Germany), 10 – Plotiště nad Labem (Hradec Králové district, Czech Republic), 11 – Bollstedt (Thuringia, Germany), 12 – Geldersheim (Bavaria, Germany), 13 – Vrbová Lhota (Nymburk district, Czech Republic)

Obr. 5. Distribuční mapa dosud známých exemplářů spon typu Sontheim (podle Bemm 1998, Abb. 4, doplněno o č. 13 – Vrbová Lhota): 1 – Kahrstedt (Sasko-Anhaltsko, Německo), 2 – Nebra (Sasko-Anhaltsko, Německo), 3 – Osterwieck (Sasko-Anhaltsko, Německo), 4 – Ehringsdorf (Durynsko, Německo), 5 – Großromstedt (Durynsko, Německo), 6 – Büraberg (Hesensko, Německo), 7 – Bad Königshofen (Bavorsko, Německo), 8 – Hopferstadt II (Bavorsko, Německo), 9 – Sontheim im Stubental (Bádensko-Württembersko, Německo), 10 – Plotiště nad Labem (okr. Hradec Králové, Česká republika), 11 – Bollstedt (Durynsko, Německo), 12 – Geldersheim (Bavorsko, Německo), 13 – Vrbová Lhota (okr. Nymburk, Česká republika)

2011, 82; *Citterbard 2019, 22-23*). Based on the segmentation of the bow and its decoration, the brooch from Vrbová Lhota, along with the specimen from grave 1033 in Plotiště nad Labem (*Rybová 1979, Abb. 59: 17*), can be categorised as Sontheim-type brooches – a brooch variant with an inverted foot characterised by a broad strip bow, a three-piece construction in its cross-section and simple incised or punched decoration on the central rib (*Schuster 2001, 84; Jilek 2017, 152*). The brooch from Plotiště nad Labem was originally dated by A. Rybová to the end of the 4th

century to the beginning of the 5th century (Rybavá 1976, 86–87, Obr. 2: 8). However, a comparison with German finds permits a dating to the second half of the 3rd century. Fasteners of this type are most heavily concentrated in Central Germany and partially also in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg (Bemmann 1998, 257–259, Abb. 4).¹⁷ The occurrence of Sontheim-type brooches can be interpreted as evidence of contacts between Central Germany, the Main River region, SW Germany and the Bohemian Basin (Jílek 2013, 97–98), (Fig. 5).¹⁸

Three other poorly preserved fragments can be classified among inverted foot brooches: H1-429976, H1-429979 and H1-429985 (Pl. 1: 22; 2: 2–3). However, a closer determination is not possible.

3.1.5 DERIVATIVES OF BROOCHES WITH AN INVERTED FOOT

3.1.5.1 Crossbow brooches with wedge-shaped foot

Brooches with a wedge-shaped foot belong to Almgren group VI, series 2, which are derivatives of brooches with an inverted foot (*Fibel mit festem Nadelhalter*). In the classification of O. Almgren, they correspond to types A 174–177 and are regarded as typical for the Elbe River region (Almgren 1923, 86–87). They are traditionally designated as *Elbefibeln* in Germany (Ziegel 1939, 8–9). Professional literature typically states that they date to the second half of the 3rd century and the beginning of the 4th century, with some variants persisting until the beginning of the Migration Period (Svoboda 1948, 176–181). The highpoint of the occurrence of these brooches is actually in phase C2, but their first specimens apparently date to phase C1b (Peškař 1972, 130; Godłowski 1992, 32).

While two-piece specimens predominate in Bohemia and hence demarcate the southern border of the Elbe-Germanic territory, they occur only rarely in the Middle Danube, i.e. in Moravia and SW Slovakia.¹⁹ This reflects the local development of brooches with an inverted foot and their derivatives (Zeman 1961b, 427). In Moravia, two-piece brooches with a wedge-shaped foot make up the only group of brooches with an inverted foot deriva-

tives that are also two-piece. This apparently involves an influence from the Elbe River region to the north, which is manifested mainly at the burial ground in Kostelec na Hané in its early phase (Zeman 1961a; Tejral 1975, 24–27). This shift can probably be linked to the movement of the Elbe River Germanic tribes (e.g. the Alamanni and the Juthungi) towards the SW and south, as is documented in written and epigraphic sources (Tejral 1975, 96–101; Böhme 1996, 90–91, 99, Abb. 1–2).

This relatively diverse group of brooches has been the subject of study in the past by a number of researchers attempting to typologise these brooches in various ways. M. Schulze's relatively frequently used classification from 1977 includes roughly 50 variants of these brooches and is quite disorganised. This was noticed by M. Becker (1998), who suggested ranking the characteristics of these brooches by their importance. After all, some stylistic qualities came from the production technology rather than the dictates of fashion. These technological procedures can be regionally conditioned based on a certain tradition – typically the differences between one- and two-piece brooches, or the differences between cast brooches and those hammered from sheet metal. They can also differ in the way the spring chord is attached on the head of the bow or in the type of pin catch-plate.²⁰ Working with Becker's ideas in his dissertation, C. G. Schmidt divided these brooches into eight groups primarily based on the shape of the catch-plate and the cross-section of the bow (Schmidt 2014, 98–109, Abb. 252). The material from which the brooches were made also played a role in the selection of the technological procedures. For example, decoration with pearl roundel wire, decorative cuffs (metal strips) and pressed sheet metal are typical for silver brooches, while bronze brooches are decorated only with transverse grooves and bevelled edges. A significantly simpler typology was proposed by W.-R. Teegen, who divides these 'Elbe region brooches' into types 17 and 18 (Teegen 1999, 147–154). This work also provides supporting chronological points for these individual types and their variants, which confirm the dating of these brooches already from C1b to C2, in the case of variants with a short catch (Schulze type 177) even up to the second half of the 4th century.

This is by far the largest group of brooches (35 specimens) in the Vrbová Lhota assemblage. Many of these are represented by mere fragments and only 22 pieces can be regarded as sufficiently preserved to enable a typological analysis. The only fully intact specimen is H1-429956 (Pl. 2: 11) and all of the artefacts that can be evaluated are

17) The literature also refers to this group of brooches as the Osterwieck type (Schuster 2001, 84–86, Abb. 12).

18) This fact is also supported by the occurrence of 'foreign' pottery forms at the burial ground in Plotiště nad Labem, specifically in graves 686, 966, 990 and 1033 (Jílek 2013, 97–98).

19) The only two-piece brooches in SW Slovakia are gold and silver brooches with a wedge-shaped foot from princely grave I from Stráže (Kolník 1964, 428–430).

20) This was already noted by B. Svoboda, who, however, does not take the shape of the catch-plate into account for dating purposes (Svoboda 1948, 181).

two-piece variants. It should be noted that the shape of the foot ranges from a relatively narrow pointed to a distinctly rhomboid shape. Their decoration is relatively simple and most often involves transverse groups of grooves on the bow (e.g. *Pl. 2: 7, 8, 13*), in rare cases crossed (*Pl. 3: 1*). Grooves surrounded by a bevelled field also occur (e.g. *Pl. 2: 4, 11*). A transverse rib is reserved on the transition from the bow to the foot (*Pl. 3: 1*) in few cases.

Despite the aforementioned pitfalls, a more detailed typological division was conducted according to the work of M. Schulze (1977). Six variants can be distinguished in the assemblage of brooches with a wedge-shaped foot from Vrbová Lhota.

Three specimens correspond to the Schulze 169/Schmidt 1b type: H1-429962 (*Pl. 2: 4*), H1-429972 (*Pl. 2: 5*) and H1-478008 (*Pl. 2: 6*). On the head is a round disc with an opening for the spring chord, the bow is a strip in cross-section with a slightly convex face, the catch-plate is closed. Simple decoration with transverse grooves and ribs is documented. Finds of these brooches are concentrated in the south Elbe River region down to the Middle Danube Region (Bohemia, Moravia, Bavaria). Their dating is placed in the second half of the 3rd century and around the year 300, i.e. phase C2 (Schulze 1977, 96–97). On the other hand, C. G. Schmidt sees these brooches at the beginning of the development of brooches with a wedge-shaped foot, i.e. in phase C1b to C2 (Schmidt 2014, Abb. 252).

One specimen (H1-429899), a relatively massive cast brooch with a convex face and an edge on the back belongs to the Schulze 172/Schmidt 7b type (*Pl. 2: 7*). The round disc on the head has an opening for the spring chord. The brooch is decorated with a pair of transverse grooves on the head and at the transition of the bow into the foot, which is divided by a narrow transverse rib. These brooches are spread throughout the entire Elbe River region down to the Middle Danube Region and can be dated to the second half of the 3rd century and probably still in the first half of the 4th century (*ibid.*, 98–99).

Two specimens fall under the Schulze 177/Schmidt 7c type: H1-429951 (*Pl. 2: 8*) and H1-478014 (*Pl. 2: 9*). The round disc on the head has an opening for the spring chord, the bow is triangular in cross-section or triangular with bevelled side edges. The catch-plate is open and considerably shorter than the foot. Decoration is limited to transverse grooves. Finds come from SW Germany and the broader Elbe River region. The dating covers the long period from the first half of the 3rd century to the beginning of the 5th century (*ibid.*, 101–102). One of the two gold brooches from the princely grave in Gommern (Becker 2010, 75–76, Taf. 4: 2) belongs to the Schulze 177 type. M. Becker dates these types to the second half of the 3rd century, while the Gommern grave itself is dated

to the second third of the 3rd century (*ibid.*, 347).

Four specimens belong to the Schulze 179/Schmidt 7a type: H1-429950 (*Pl. 2: 10*), H1-429956 (*Pl. 2: 11*), H1-478023 (*Pl. 2: 14*) and H1-478029 (*Pl. 2: 12*). The round disc on the head has an opening for the spring chord, the bow has a triangular cross-section and the catch-plate is closed. Decoration is limited to a transverse rib between the bow and the foot. These brooches come mainly from the south Elbe River region (Bohemia). The dating cannot be anchored by any closed unit (Schulze 1977, 103). Like the brooch (*Pl. 2: 7*) from Vrbová Lhota, a small number of two-piece specimens from SW Moravia are also characterised by a distinctively cut-out foot (Zeman 2017, Obr. 32: 1–2, 8).

Two specimens belong to the Schulze 184/cca Schmidt 5a type: H1-429889 (*Pl. 2: 13*) and H1-429948 (*Pl. 3: 1*). The chord with the spring is threaded onto the folded head of the bow, the bow is a strip in cross-section, the catch-plate is open. Decoration is composed of transverse ribs or an engraved cross on the head and a field with side bevels on the transition from the bow to the foot. Finds of these brooches are concentrated in the middle Elbe River region. Dating based on two grave units is allegedly not until the 4th century (*ibid.*, 106).

The Schulze 185/cca Schmidt 2a type is represented by the greatest number of finds (10 specimens) in Vrbová Lhota: H1-429877 (*Pl. 3: 2*), H1-429916 (*Pl. 2: 15*), H1-429958 (*Pl. 3: 3*), H1-429969 (*Pl. 2: 16*), H1-429978 (*Pl. 3: 4*), H1-429983 (*Pl. 2: 17*), H1-478004 (*Pl. 3: 5*), H1-478039 (*Pl. 3: 6*), H1-478041 (*Pl. 3: 7*) and H1-478042 (*Pl. 3: 8*). The chord with the spring is threaded onto the folded head of the bow, the bow is a strip in cross-section, the catch is closed. The uncommon decoration is limited to transverse grooves and a field with side bevels on the head of the bow. These brooches are spread throughout the entire Elbe River region and even in the Rhine-Weser area. Dating is throughout the entire 3rd century up to the beginning of the 4th century (*ibid.*, 106–107).

It appears that primarily types with a shorter unclosed catch and a triangular or otherwise distinctively protruding cross-section fall mainly in phase C3.²¹ This especially applies to types 7a–c after C. G. Schmidt (2014, Abb. 252). The length of brooches is sometimes presented as another chronological marker, with longer brooches designate as younger (Becker 2010, 345, Diagramm 1). It is clear that there is no significant disproportion in the length of preserved brooches in Vrbová Lhota. Never-

²¹⁾ The Schulze 176 variant was most recently identified by E. Droberj as a Slížany type and dated up to phase D2 of the Migration Period (Droberj – Knápek – Jarůšková 2019, 123–125). It thus probably represents the youngest variant of the brooches with a wedge-shaped foot.

theless, it is obvious that the longest is also the typologically youngest brooch – H1-429953 (*Pl. 4: 4; 15: 8*) with a rectangular foot.

3.1.5.2 Brooches with a pointed foot

Brooches with a pointed foot also belong to Almgren group VI, series 2. V. Varsik proposed subgroup VI, 2a representing brooches with a pointed foot, whereas subgroup VI, 2b is composed of brooches with a rectangular foot (Varsik 2017, 321). Single-piece variants of these brooches are characteristic of SW Slovakia and Moravia (rare exceptions are mentioned in Kolník 1965, 216). These are variants A 170 and especially A 178 in O. Almgren's study, and they were regarded as Nordic forms (Almgren 1923, 86). In Moravia, I. Peškař (1972, 118–121) distinguished one- and two-piece brooches with a pointed foot and deduced this division from regional traditions. One-piece variants occur mainly in southern Poland, the Roman provinces, the Middle Danube River Region and in the Sarmatian environment. Two-piece specimens are in fact unknown in SE Moravia (Zeman 2017, 119–120). J. Zeman had already identified their affiliation with two-piece variants, which occur mainly in the German Elbe River region and in Bohemia (Zeman 1961a, 193–195).

In terms of chronology, the beginnings of these brooches can be dated to the second third of the 3rd century (the oldest even as early as phase C1a) based on the occurrence of these brooches with fragments of terra sigillata in settlement features and in certain grave units. They disappeared before the middle of the 4th century, by which time they were already outnumbered by other derivatives of brooches with an inverted foot, especially brooches with a rectangular foot (Varsik 2017, 325–334).

Three specimens from Vrbová Lhota can be classified as brooches with a pointed foot, but only brooch H1-429954 (*Pl. 4: 2*) is preserved nearly intact. This is a two-piece bronze specimen with a heavily pointed foot with a closed triangular catch. Our brooch H1-429954 is very similar to variant A 178 from a votive assemblage from Bad Pyrmont, which also has a bevelled bow (Teegen 1999, 154–155). A very similar evaluation of Almgren group VI, series 2 brooches by M. Schulze (1977) enables the definition of this specimen as a Schulze 92 type, which the author dates to C1b–C2, with a broad distribution from southern Scandinavia through the Elbe River region to the northern Black Sea, where a second concentration of this brooch is found (Schulze 1977, 60–61, Tab. 3, Karte 4).

Two additional specimens, H1-429911 and H1-478034 (*Pl. 4: 1, 3*), from Vrbová Lhota are represented only by broken off feet with the following common features: they end with a profiled button, the transition from the bow

to the foot is decorated with wire ribbing and, above all, both are made from silver. As such, they represent a high share of specimens from precious metals for one type of brooch. It is therefore impossible to say whether these were originally one- or two-piece brooches, though the literature repeatedly expresses the opinion that two-piece brooches strongly predominate in Bohemia, thus making Bohemia similar to the German Elbe River region in this sense. T. Kolník also followed various foot terminals on one-piece brooches, i.e. simple and button foot terminals (Kolník 1965, 210–212), thus demonstrating the affinity between one-piece and two-piece variants.

3.1.5.3 Brooches with a rectangular foot

The final group of derivatives of brooches with an inverted foot is composed of fasteners that were particularly widespread in the Late Roman Period, with one-piece specimens based on one-piece brooches with an inverted foot again being typical for the Middle Danube Region (Kolník 1965, 214–216; Peškař 1972, 122–126; Tejral 1975, 52–56; Zeman 2017, 123–126). In contrast, these brooches are not particularly typical in Bohemia, and those that do occur are two-piece specimens (Svoboda 1948, 173–176). Nevertheless, the fact that no finds of them have been made to date in Eastern Bohemia is interesting (Jílek 2017).

Only one specimen, H1-429953 (*Pl. 4: 4; 15: 8*), a single piece brooch with four coils and an interesting high bow with a trapezoidal cross-section, can be classified among brooches with a rectangular foot in Vrbová Lhota. The foot and bow are fluidly connected and have the same width; the catch-plate is closed. The transition of the bow to the foot is decorated with two fine transverse grooves. Compared to certain late types of one-piece brooches with a rectangular foot as defined by J. Tejral (1985, 62–63), the brooch is lacking an offset foot and creates a more graceful impression. As such, it is similar to certain brooches from graves in Kostelec na Hané, including grave 129 (Zeman 1961a, 59–61, Obr. 25: B/b) and 396 (*ibid.*, 157, Obr. 74: C/d, f). While there are numerous brooches with a rectangular foot that is not offset, in the vast majority of cases they do not have a simple strip bow. These slender forms are typically regarded as older variants that can be dated from the second half of the 3rd century to the beginning of the 4th century (Svoboda 1948, 171–172; Kolník 1965, 216; Peškař 1972, 124; Schulze 1977, 28; Zeman 2017, 123, 125). A specimen extraordinarily similar to our brooch is a piece from grave 3 from Praha-Bubeneč, a site called U modré růže (Godłowski 1992, Abb. 12: 6), where it is presented as a typical representative of phase C3. The high bow with a trapezoidal cross-section of the brooch

from Vrbová Lhota is somewhat reminiscent of younger Moravian variants of the brooches with a rectangular foot (Peškař 1972, 124) or late Roman brooches with a button on the head.

The aforementioned typological features lead to the hypothesis that while this brooch may not go deep into the 4th century, it is nevertheless probably the youngest find in the whole assemblage and its dating falls already in the first half of the 4th century, likely already in phase C3. This is also suggested by its dimensions, if the hypothesis of a gradual increase in the size of Almgren group 6/2 brooches towards the Migration Period is valid (Becker 2010, 345, Diagram 1).

3.1.5.4 Brooches with a trapezoidal foot

This group of brooches is also commonly classified among derivatives of brooches with an inverted foot. It belongs among standard forms in the Elbe River region, but also in southern Scandinavia. In Moravia they characteristically appear at the burial ground in Kostelec na Hané (grave 205; Zeman 1961a, 97, Obr. 46: C/a) and in Hrubčice (Peškař 1972, 127). These brooches are usually dated to the very end of the 3rd century, sometimes to the following century (e.g. Schuldt 1955, 57). The specimen from Vrbová Lhota – H1-478018 (Pl. 4: 5) – can be classified as a Schulze 154 type, which the author of the typology presented as the only representative from Westerhamm and dated it to the

turn of the 4th century (Schulze 1977, 89). However, a similar brooch was also found in a grave at Gommern and is dated to the second third of the 3rd century (Becker 2010, 75–76). It is therefore not possible to date this brooch to the 4th century with certainty.

3.1.6 UNIDENTIFIABLE FRAGMENTS OF BARBARIAN BROOCHES

A total of 28 fragments of various brooches remain without a more precise typological determination, including both one-piece and two-piece specimens. In the case of one-piece specimens (H1-429968, H1-478011, H1-478015 and H1-478024 – Pl. 4: 14; 5: 1, 3, 7), it is possible to assume that they belonged to brooches with a rectangular foot, which in turn makes it possible to group them among the youngest finds from the site (though this is probably just a feeling). It is also possible to mention a fragment of two-piece brooch H1-429882 with a bronze bow with a rhomboid cross-section decorated with two transversely cut silver wires (Pl. 4: 6). As such, this brooch is similar to products with the use of silver (see Chap. 5.2.8). It is also necessary to mention nondescript flat bar H1-478025 (Pl. 5: 8), which is probably a semi-finished product of some type of two-piece crossbow brooch. If this is true, it would confirm the production of brooches on site, as the results of metallographic analyses suggest (see Chap. 5.2).

3.2 Roman-provincial brooches

The large assemblage of Germanic brooches is supplemented with three Roman fasteners – two plate (round) brooches (1 open-work, 1 enamelled) and one knee brooch. All were found in fragmented form, i.e. the spring and pin were missing. The other parts were preserved. It should be noted at the outset that all of the brooches belong to uncommon types and that they were found in Bohemia for the first time.

3.2.1 OPEN-WORK JOBST 31 A TYPE BROOCH

The first of these is a round open-work brooch with a cross motif with knobs on the arms (Pl. 5: 14), which W. Jobst (1975, 117–118, 209–210, Taf. 47: 326–331; 71: 328, 331)

includes under his type 31A based on six finds from Lauriacum. W. Jobst (*ibid.*) lists a similar brooch from Saalburg, which A. Böhme (1972, 43, Taf. 29: 1138) classifies as type 46a. Similar to one from Lauriacum (*ibid.*, Taf. 47: 331) and to ours from Vrbová Lhota, this brooch has finely rendered open-work, whereas the others are more coarsely worked. Another find of this type is a brooch from the northern Italian site of Mechel (Cles) in the province of Trento (von Campi 1885, Taf. V: 20). It is similar to the brooch from Vrbová Lhota, mainly in the presence of an engraved ring in the middle of the crossing. W. Jobst dates these brooches (1975, 117) to the 3rd century. Analogies to the cross motif with side knobs can also be found on other Roman-provincial metal industry. An example is a fitting from a balteus from the Apulum site (Ciugudean 2017, 384–385, Pl. VI: 5). Besides the spe-

cimen from Vrbová Lhota, the only known find of a Jobst 31A type brooch from Barbaricum is a fastener from the Brandenburg site of Groß Linde (*Schach-Dörges 1970, 183, Taf. 15: 5*). In the 3rd century, other types of round open-work plate brooches of Roman-provincial origin also appear in small numbers in Bohemia. A Bojović 25 var. 5 type brooch (*Bojović 1983, 66, T. XXIX: 282–283*) with a peltoid ornament or a stylised human figure (*Svoboda 1948, 99, Obr. 15: 2; Droberjar 2016, 500–501, Abb. 5: 1*) comes from Dobřichov-Třebická cemetery and is dated to the 3rd century. A Bojović 25 var. 1 type brooch (*Zeman - Venclová - Bubeník 1998, 110, 125, Obr. 11: 5; Bojović 1983, 65, T. XXIX: 276; Droberjar 2016, 501, Abb. 5: 2*) was found in a settlement feature (hut 5/93) in Přerubenice from the second half of the 3rd century. Another round open-work Cociš 25a3 type brooch was published from the settlement in Úhřetice in the Chrudim district (*Jílek - Joštová 2020, 39, 49, Tab. 30: 6*) and is dated especially to the first quarter of the 3rd century (*Cociš 2004, 126, 209, Pl. CIX: 1535*). Finally, a different open-work brooch with a swastika motif (*Militká et al. 2021, 50, 67–68, Obr. 2: 1*), a Jobst 34C type (*Jobst 1975, 123, 216, Taf. 49: 354–355*), was most recently found at the settlement in Lipany.

3.2.2 ENAMELLED PLATE BROOCH WITH SIX-POINTED STAR MOTIF

Another rare artefact is a round enamelled brooch with the motif of a six-pointed star H1-478045 (*Pl. 5: 12; 13: 2*) composed of six equilateral triangles around a central circle, or a motif in the form of a stylised hexagram. The space between the central and outer circle with triangles and with six round knobs is filled with blue enamel; enamel is not preserved in the inner circle. The only identical analogy with a star motif is a find from grave 20 at the Costedt cemetery in Westphalia belonging to the circle of Rhine-Weser Germanic tribes (*Siegmund 1996, 122, Taf. 12: 1; CRFB D 7, 169, Taf. 39: 1*), which can be dated to the first half of the 3rd century. Otherwise, similar enamelled brooches with a different six-pointed star motif with six rays of connected arches around a circle are far more common (especially in Pannonia and Sarmatia). These plate brooches belong to type Thomas b (*Thomas 1966, 131, Abb. 4*), Exner III 24 (*Exner 1941, 103, Taf. 13: 5*) or Riha 3. 15. 1 (*Riha 1979, 87, Taf. 13: 306*). Several finds are also known from the central European Suebi (e.g. *Droberjar 2016, 502, Anm. 64; Elschek 2017a, 171, Obr. 4:1; 5:1*). All of them have round knobs around the perimeter of the brooch. One enamelled Exner III 24 brooch without side

knobs on the edge (thus making it conspicuously similar to the brooch from Vrbová Lhota, even with a different rendering of the star motif) comes from the territory of the ancient Balts, from grave 12 at the cemetery in Machary (*CRFB PL 1, 71; Nowakowski 2016, 468, 471, Abb. 3: 10*). The brooch is dated to phase C1, i.e. the beginning of the 3rd century (*ibid.*). Various enamelled round plate brooches occur in Central Bohemia, e.g. east of Prague at the Germanic settlements of Velké Chvalovice: Exner III 24 type (*Droberjar 2016, 502, Abb. 6: 6*) and Tuklaty: type Exner III 33 type (*Droberjar 2016, Abb. 6: 7*).

3.2.3 MERCZI B/12 KNEE BROOCH

The third specimen is special knee brooch variant H1-429879 (*Pl. 5: 13; 13: 1*) with an arched bow, a curved foot, a rectangular head plate and an upper spring cord. It is most similar to brooches designated by M. Merczi (*2011, 21, 42–43, Táb. 14: 7–8*) as variant B/12 and classifies among Pannonian variants of knee brooches. A similar brooch to our find from Vrbová Lhota comes from a cremation grave at cemetery II of the civilian town in Brigetio (*ibid.*, Táb. 14: 8). Other Merczi B/12 brooches were published from Pannonian sites in Lower Austria – Vindobona (*Schmid 2010, 111, Taf. 22: 196*), Gattendorf (*Nowak - Schmid 1989, 293, Abb. 360*), Neckenmarkt (*Seyfried 1988, 231, Abb. 392*) and Schützen am Gebirge (*Nowak 1990, 209, Abb. 608*). Perhaps with the exception of the Schützen am Gebirge site, all of them share decoration composed of horizontal grooves on the bow. The majority have a split (forked) foot (Vrbová Lhota and Austrian finds). The brooch from Vindobona discovered at the western *canabae legionis* is dated to a broader span of time, from the Hadrian period to the beginning of the 3rd century and even later (*Schmid 2010, 111*). Kovrig 121 brooches (*Kovrig 1937, 66, Táb. XI: 121*), which are known from several other Pannonian sites (*Merczi 2012, 496–497, Táb. 7: 11*), belong to brooches with an identical construction but with different ornamentation on the bow (bevelling, quadratic knob and engraved crossing lines). Although less common Jobst 12A and 12E and Bojović 21 var. 2 and 22 var. 1 (*Droberjar 2012b*) brooches occur in Bohemia along with common Jobst 13C and 13D types among Roman-provincial knee brooches, Merczi B/12 brooches have not been found to date in either Bohemia or Moravia. As such, for now the only additional specimen in the Middle Danube Barbaricum is a find from the Roman army short-term marching camp in Závod in the Lower Morava River region, which can be easily linked to the period of the Marcomannic Wars (*Rajtár - Hüssen 2021, Abb. 5: 8*).

3.3 Pottery

Soon after the discovery of the site in Vrbová Lhota in 2013, an exploratory surface survey was conducted by archaeologist E. Droberjar, during which an assemblage of highly fragmented ploughed-up pottery was acquired. Surface pottery was also collected in subsequent years, especially during surface prospecting with metal detectors in 2020 and 2021. Individual pottery fragments were not GPS-located in any way. Only in 2021 was an attempt made to collect finds in pre-defined squares of 25×25 m using the *total pickup* method (Fig. 3).

3.3.1 GERMANIC POTTERY

Despite the relatively large number of pottery fragments, their informative value is relatively weak due to their considerable damage in the topsoil and to the low frequency of diagnostically significant individuals. In terms of the formal spectrum of vessels, at least a pot or a bowl with an inverted rim (*Pl. 10: 1*) can be reconstructed, though this is a completely continuous form in the Roman Period (and the Migration Period) and hence unsuitable for dating without preserved decoration. The extraordinary frequency of this form is evident, for example, at the chronologically contemporary settlement in Turnov-Maškovy zahrady²² (*Droberjar - Prostředník 2004*, 80, Tab. 5-9). The authors of this publication note that this form occurs commonly since the beginning of the Roman Period (e.g. *Jílek et al. 2015*, 55). A large number of rims from the same type of vessel were collected in Vrbová Lhota (*Pl. 10: 2-5, 7-11*). Simple bowls with conical walls also have low testimonial value (*Pl. 10: 18-20, 25-26*). Somewhat more interesting is a reconstructable larger fragment of a pot-shaped vessel with a heavily reinforced rim and a tapered neck (*Pl. 10: 6*), for which parallels are naturally found at the Turnov-Maškovy zahrady settlement (*Droberjar - Prostředník 2004*, Tab. 17: 7). A small fragment of a sieve (*Pl. 10: 39*) is also documented.

Due to the highly fragmented condition of the discovered potsherds, preserved decorative elements have a greater analytical weight. Among the elements common practically throughout the entire Roman Period are various types of fingertip impressions (*Pl. 10: 31, 32, 37*), although impressions in vertical columns can be regarded

as a later element (e.g. *Zeman - Venclová - Bubeník 1998*, Obr. 9: 6; *Droberjar - Prostředník 2004*, Tab. 25; *Volf et al. 2021*, 579). Also, various types of crossing and unarranged grooves (*Pl. 10: 42, 43*) can be found throughout the entire Roman Period and have no chronological or cultural importance. This also applies to shallow oval depressions, which are more or less regularly arranged (*Pl. 10: 38*). In contrast, combing, vertical (*Pl. 10: 41, 45*) or arched (*Pl. 10: 46*), is less common in the Late Roman Period. In such a case, it is possible to consider that it is a remnant from the end of the Early Roman Period or the beginning of the Late Roman Period. Similarly, various shallow grooves – horizontal, vertical or oblique (*Pl. 10: 40, 44*) – appear in phase B2 and remain popular into the Late Roman Period (e.g. *Břicháček - Košnar 1998*, 68-69). A fragment of sharply profiled shoulders of a grey colour with a horizontal plastic rib (*Pl. 11: 6*) can perhaps be included among the imports of a wheel-turned Germanic pottery, which in Bohemia is still quite a rare find. However, such a small fragment does not make it possible to decide whether it is an import from Central Germany, southern Poland, or the Middle Danube workshops.

However, several unusually decorated fragments stand out from the usual assortment of barbarian pottery decoration in Bohemia. First, these are fragments of vessels whose lower part is densely decorated in horizontal rows of stamps in the shape of cereal grains (*Pl. 10: 33*), or half arcs (*Pl. 10: 34*). Stamping similar to these cereal grain stamps can be found on the ceramic vessel from the settlements in Turnov-Maškovy zahrady (*Droberjar - Prostředník 2004*, 44, Taf. 6: 13) and Tuchlovice (*Pleiner 1959*, Obr. 24). Stamped half arcs are found in a different arrangement, e.g. on pottery from the first phase of the cemetery in Kostelec na Hané, forms derived from the lower Elbe River region (*Zeman 1961a*, 92, Obr. 43: A/a), or from the settlement site in Březno u Chomutova in NW Bohemia (*Beneš 2010*, Obr. 34: 22). However, no analogy has yet been found to the design on the fragments from Vrbová Lhota. Two fragments decorated with a double groove created by a band filled with small circular punctures are relatively interesting (*Pl. 10: 28, 36*), with one representing the rim of an S-shaped vessel. Although the band filled with punctures is typical of the early phase of the Roman Period in Bohemia, the rim profiling and surface treatment of the fragments from Vrbová Lhota testify to a different tradition. In the Elbe River region, vessels decorated in a similar manner are found at the burial ground in NW Brandenburg (*Hegewisch 2007*, Taf. 19: 94), at the cemetery in Stößen in Saxony-

²²) Turnov B site, dated by authors to C1b-C2 (*Droberjar - Prostředník 2004*, 88).

3. TYPO-CHRONOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ARTEFACTS

-Anhalt (Schmidt - Bemann 2008, Taf. 148: 113/92,2) and it is possible to encounter them even in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Schach-Dörge 1970, Abb. 48: 10, 16; 74: 3; 75: 17). However, this phenomenon cannot be defined more precisely on its own. Coming from a richly decorated vessel was a fragment with ornament combining a double horizontal groove from which chevron-shaped grooves complete with a relief navel and wedge-shaped impressions run (Pl. 10: 35). Similarly applied elements can be found in the Czech Republic again on pottery from Kostelec na Hané (Zeman 1961a, 126, Fig. 60: B/a), and a similar combination is seen, for example, at the Roten Berg cemetery in northern Saxony-Anhalt (Gall 2005, Taf. 81: 633). Finally, we can mention a shoulder fragment with a flat relief band filled with oblique impressions and emphasised on both edges of the groove (Pl. 10: 30). This has an analogy from grave 183 in Kostelec na Hané (Zeman 1961a, 83, Fig. 38: C/c), and numerous other parallels come from Late Roman Period burial grounds in the German Elbe River region (e.g. Gall 2005, Taf. 1: 6/a; 12: 88/a; 23: 164/a, etc.).²³

As far as the interpretation of these numerous ceramic fragments is concerned, we must bear in mind that they are heavily fragmented sherds for which formal analysis cannot be used. As such, it is only possible to evaluate a relatively small percentage of the overall collected finds. Nevertheless, here we will try to state the bold hypothesis that some of the pottery fragments evaluated here can connect Vrbová Lhota with the same wave of movement from the German Elbe River region, which manifested itself in Northern Moravia around the mid-3rd century in the 'Kostelec group'.²⁴ According to J. Tejral,

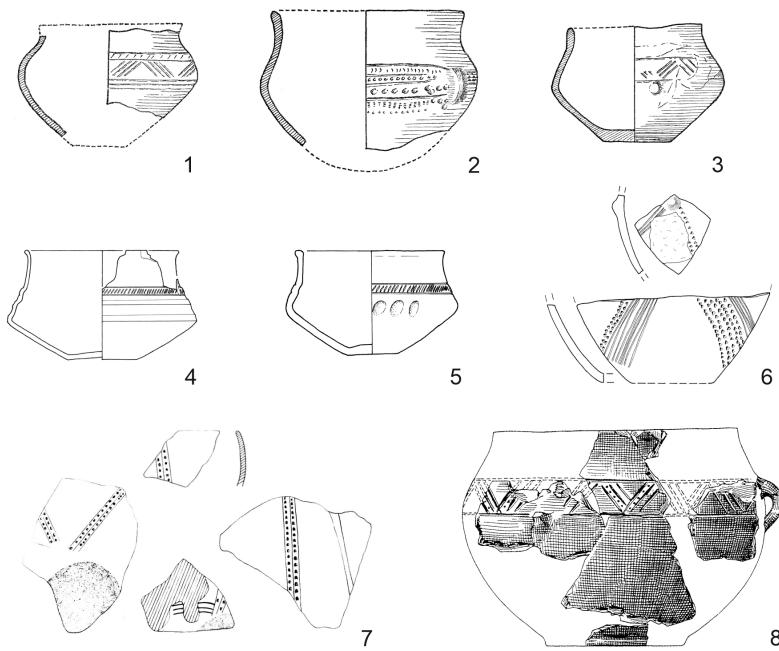


Fig. 6. Examples of pottery analogies mentioned in the text: 1 - Kostelec na Hané (Prostějov district, Czech Republic), grave 183; 2 - Kostelec na Hané, grave 197; 3 - Kostelec na Hané, grave 297; 4 - Roten Berg (Saxony-Anhalt, Germany), grave 6; 5 - Roten Berg, grave 164, 6 - Roten Berg, grave 633, 7 - Plänitz (Brandenburg, Germany), grave 94; 8 - Stößen (Saxony-Anhalt, Germany), grave 92. Without scale. 1 - after Zeman 1961, Obr. 38: C/c; 2 - after Zeman 1961, Obr. 43: A/a; 3 - after Zeman 1961, Obr. 60: B/a; 4 - after Gall 2005, Taf. 1: 6/a; 5 - after Gall 2005, Taf. 23: 164/a; 6 - after Gall 2005, Taf. 81: 633; 7 - after Hegewisch 2007, Taf. 19; 8 - after Schmidt - Bemann 2008, Taf. 148: 113/92.

Obr. 6. Příklady analogií keramických tvarů a výzdoby zmíněných v textu: 1 - Kostelec na Hané (okr. Prostějov, Česká republika), hrob 183; 2 - Kostelec na Hané, hrob 197; 3 - Kostelec na Hané, hrob 297; 4 - Roten Berg (Sasko-Anhaltsko, Německo), hrob 6; 5 - Roten Berg, hrob 164, 6 - Roten Berg, hrob 633, 7 - Plänitz (Brandenburg, Německo), hrob 94; 8 - Stößen (Sasko-Anhaltsko, Německo), hrob 92. Bez měřítka. 1 - podle Zeman 1961, Obr. 38: C/c; 2 - podle Zeman 1961, Obr. 43: A/a; 3 - podle Zeman 1961, Obr. 60: B/a; 4 - podle Gall 2005, Taf. 1: 6/a; 5 - podle Gall 2005, Taf. 23: 164/a; 6 - podle Gall 2005, Taf. 81: 633; 7 - podle Hegewisch 2007, Taf. 19; 8 - podle Schmidt - Bemann 2008, Taf. 148: 113/92.

fairly convincing analogies of products from the cemeteries of Western Mecklenburg and Eastern Holstein can be found at the burial ground in Kostelec (Tejral 1975, 17-22; *idem* 1999, 200).²⁵ It is certainly logical that after traveling along the Elbe to Northern Moravia, this cultural shift left its mark in Central Bohemia as well. After all, already in the middle of the 20th century, B. Svoboda noticed influences from the German Elbe region that manifested in some specific forms and ornamentation of pottery in Bohemia, namely pottery from Praha-Bubeneč and Tuchlovice (Svoboda 1965, 29-34). Above all, the fragment of vessel type *Knopfhenkelgefäß* from Tuchlovice represents solid evidence of import from the area east of the lower Elbe (Pleiner 1959, 190, Obr. 25; Hegewisch 2008, 110, Abb. 8: 17).

23) A number of the aforementioned decorative elements are noted by M. Hegewisch in his overview of the East Holstein pottery circle (Hegewisch 2008, Abb. 1-2).

24) The recently discovered settlement site in Mostkovice is strikingly similar to the cemetery in Kostelec due to its proximity and, above all, to the characteristic finds of pottery (Mikulková 2018, 112, Obr. 8.13).

25) It should be noted that the unequivocal connection of the pottery from Kostelec na Hané with the Holstein-Mecklenburg border has already been corrected by local researchers (Hegewisch 2008, 112-116).

3.3.2 ROMAN-PROVINCIAL POTTERY

The collection of Roman imports from Vrbová Lhota also includes five fragments of Roman-provincial pottery, though they are very nondescript and fragmented, rendering their value for further research relatively low.

3.3.2.1 Terra sigillata

E. Droberjar's surface collections produced three fragments of terra sigillata, i. e. a rim and two undecorated body fragments. The rim probably comes from a Drag 37-type bowl. The original form cannot be determined when the vessel body is undecorated. It is highly likely that the first fragment (*Pl. 11: 2*) is from Rheinzabern, whereas the origin of the other two fragments (*Pl. 11: 1, 3*) was either Rheinzabern or Westerndorf. It is certain that the three sigillata fragments from Vrbová Lhota are from three vessels. Terra sigillata from Bohemia was most recently processed by J. Halama (2018). The results of his work indicate that the share of Rheinzabern sigillata (40.5 %) is only slightly higher than central Gallic (36.7 %). Westerndorf sigillata makes up only 7.6 % of the total amount. A look at the representation of terra sigillata in the broader vicinity of Vrbová Lhota shows that finds were published from four settlements. But the majority of fragments have a Central Gallic provenance (sites of Dobřichov, Kšely and Tatce) and hence belong to the 2nd century, perhaps to its second half (Halama 2018, 21, 23–24, 35). Only one fragment from Tuklaty comes from a Drag

37-type bowl, apparently from Rheinzabern, i. e. roughly from the turn of the 3rd century (*ibid.*, 37).

3.3.2.2 Fine orange pottery

In addition to terra sigillata, two other groups of Roman-provincial pottery were also identified in the collected ceramic material, one of which is fine yellow-orange (sometimes shorted simply to 'orange') pottery or brick-coloured pottery. According to a small fragment of the rim with a groove and without signs of surface treatment or coating (*Pl. 11: 4*), a conical or hemispherical dish can be assumed (e.g. *Droberjar 1997, Taf. 94: 7; 143: 6; Kolník – Varsík – Vladár 2007, Tab. 138: 1*). This is undoubtedly pottery of Pannonian provenance, as it is the most common among the central European Suebi next to fine grey pottery (*Krekovič 1981, 363; Droberjar 1993, 66, Tab. 2; Vecko 2023, 124–126*).

3.3.2.3 Fine grey pottery

A second non-sigillata product is a fragment of a decorated vessel body from fine grey pottery (*Pl. 11: 5*). The decoration on the outer side is formed by two groups of wheel-pressed horizontal lines. While the shape of the vessel is naturally difficult to determine, it was possibly a bowl, probably a ring-shaped variant. These vessels known from numerous finds dating to the 2nd–3rd century occur primarily in Moravia and southwest Slovakia (*Krekovič 1981, 364–365; Filipová 2013*).

3.4 Bronze vessels

Fragments of bronze vessels are also represented in the assemblage of metal Roman imports, of which two can tentatively be identified typologically and four can be classified hypothetically. These are E 83 (H1-429940); (*Pl. 6: 2; 13: 9*) and E 128 (H1-429939); (*Pl. 6: 1; 13: 10*) handle attachments. An interesting finding is the joint occurrence of E 83 and E 128(?) handle attachments at the settlements in Vrbová Lhota and in Cerekvice nad Loučnou (*Víček et al. 2019, 145, 150, 185, Obr. 52: 1–2; 54: 1,3*). It is difficult to decide whether this situation signals something meaningful or is merely a coincidence, precisely because it is not entirely clear whether these are the remains of vessels that served the inhabitants of the settlement, or whether they are scrap, i.e. raw material for further processing, as M. Becker believes in some cases (2016, 17). The combination of vessels E

83 (including folding tripod) and E 128 is documented in rich grave II at Krakovany-Stráže (*Krekovič 1992, Abb. 5: 1,21; Krupa – Klčo 2015, 116, 117, 120, 121, Obr. A-767, A-774*). The joint occurrence of an E 83 bowl and an E 128 flagon at a single site or in one find assemblage is also found in the provincial environment, e.g. in the 'house of bronze vessels' in the civilian town of Lauriacum dated by a coin of Alexander Severus to 222/235 (*Sedlmayer 1999, 161; Sedlmayer 2016, 386*). Otherwise, at least in the past decade we also find fragments of bronze vessels thanks to metal-detector surveys at other barbarian Roman Period settlements, e.g. small fragments from multiple sites in Moravia (*Jílek 2012, 21–22*) and an even larger part of a vessel with other fragments from an E 140- or 142-type pan from Sedlec in Southern Bohemia (*Droberjar – Knápek – Zavřel 2018, 140, Abb. 16*).

3.4.1 HANDLE ATTACHMENT OF E 83 BOWL

Handle attachments H1-429940 (*Pl. 6: 2; 13: 9*) in the form of a grape leaf and with a stylised bird's head (beak partially broken off) come with a high degree of probability from an E 83 bowl (*Eggers 1951, 167–168, Taf. 9: 83*). An identical handle attachment was found at the aforementioned Cerekvice nad Loučnou (*Vích et al. 2019, 145, Obr. 52: 1; 54: 1*) and at other sites (*Künzl 2010, 171–175*). J. Jílek (*2012, 53–54; Vích et al. 2019, 150–152, map 1*) most recently addressed these types of bowls in the context of finds in Barbaricum. Based on their distribution, he noticed a certain concentration in the area north of the Middle Danube Region. The work of S. Künzl (*2010, 171–175, Abb. 1, Tab. 1*) focused in detail on handle attachments and also E 83/87 bowls. According to the shape of the grape leaf, the handle attachments from Vrbová Lhota can be classified as type A1, which is the most common and hence corresponds to finds from rich graves in Gommern and Nordhausen (*ibid.*). The precise shape of E 83 or E 83/87 bowls understandably cannot be determined precisely on the basis of the handle attachment; Künzl further divides it into four variants or types (1a, 1 b, 2 and 3). The three handle attachments originally on these bowls served for hanging the vessel on a tripod (e.g. *Krupa – Klčo 2015, 117*). Therefore, sometimes entire vessels of this type are found in rich graves, even with bronze tripods. The bowl and tripod set could then perhaps serve for washing hands during a celebration (e.g. *Sedlmayer 1999, 62*). E 83 bowls occurred both in Barbaricum and in the provinces, especially during the course of the 3rd century (e.g. *Quast 2009, 11; Jílek 2012, 54; Mustať 2017, 136; Vích et al. 2019, 151–152*), which is likewise consistent with the occurrence of these vessels in rich Germanic inhumation graves in C1b–C2, e.g. at Gommern (*Becker 2010, 460, Taf. 40–41*), Krakovany-Stráže, grave II (*Ondrouč 1957, 137–140, Obr. 32*), Nordhausen (*Feustel 1984, 169, Abb. 14; Taf. XV: 1; XVI; CRFB D 8,1, 91, Taf. 31*) and Zakrzów, grave I and III (*Kramarkowa 1990, Ryc. 10 and 55; Quast 2009, Abb. 27: 3*).

3.4.2 HANDLE ATTACHMENT OF E 128 FLAGON (?)

The leaf-shaped handle attachment H1-429939 with a fragment of the offset handle on the widened part (*Pl. 6: 1; 13: 10*) could come from an E 128 flagon (*Eggers 1951, 171, Taf. 11: 128*), or from certain similar types or their variants, e.g. the Boesterd 257 (*den Boesterd 1956, 70–71, Pl. XI: 257*), Radnót 75 (*Radnót 1938, Taf. XIII: 75*) or variant Tassinari 1973, 2 (*Sedlmayer 1999, 18, Taf. 6: 4*). Fragments of analogical handle attachments of E 128 flagons are found at other Roman sites, e.g. Poetovio/Ptuj (*Breščak 1982, 58, T. 15: 152*), Arae Flaviae/Rottweil (*Flügel 1994, 216, Abb. 3: 5*), Salzburg (?) (*Sedlmayer 1999, 31, Taf. 12: 10*). As with E 83 bowls, E 128 flagons in Barbaricum can be dated to the 3rd century, specifically C1a–C1b (*Sedlmayer 1999, 30–33; Jílek 2012, 62–63, Obr. 91*).

3.4.3 FRAGMENTS

The following four fragments (*Pl. 5: 15–17; 17*) can also be classified among bronze vessels with a high degree of probability. A massive bottom H1-429929, apparently from a pan (*Pl. 5: 17; 17: 2*) (e.g. *Jílek 2012, fig. 47: 3; 57: 10*), and a fragment of a handle attachment H1-429927 (*Pl. 5: 15*), stand out in particular. There is one hole for a rivet on the widened shoulders. Similar handle attachments are found on Ostland E 38 and E 39 sheet metal pails (*Eggers 1951, Taf. 5*). Although most are iron (e.g. *Jílek 2012, Obr. 34: 2*), bronze specimens are also known (e.g. *Peškař – Ludikovský 1978, Obr. 4: 9; Jílek 2012, 34*).

3.5 Roman militaria

In recent years, Roman military fittings have also been increasing significantly from detector finds at barbarian settlements in Central Bohemia – especially finds from the 2nd and 3rd centuries. However, the majority of them remain unpublished. Three new fittings from Vrbová Lhota

expand knowledge of the composition of Roman militaria from the 3rd century. While the first two artefacts are documented for the first time in Bohemia, the third (simple peltoid fitting) is apparently already known.

3.5.1 HANDLE PARTS OF SWORD, DAGGER OR KNIFE

The grip of Roman militaria H1-429941 had a boat-shaped terminal with unusual round knobs on the upper side (*Pl. 6: 6; 13: 6*). Although the majority of similar boat-shaped fittings, often with a curved end (e.g. *Farka - Wallner 1988*, 305, Abb. 729; *Hebert 1989*, 318, Abb. 735; *Farka - Schmelzenbath 1990*, Abb. 1118; *Kropf 1997*, Abb. 786), from the closest Roman-provincial environment in Austria are interpreted as parts of knives, they could also come from other artefacts. These rivet-like buttons of a boat-shaped or pyramidal form also occurred on the end of sword handles (*Biborski - Ilkjær 2006*, Abb. 114) or daggers (*Miks 2007*, 152–154, Abb. 18, Vortafel E: 4–9; Taf. 269). According to M. Biborski, pyramidal fittings of the 4th group ('special forms') date to the 3rd century, or C1b-C2 (*Biborski - Ilkjær 2006*, Abb. 114). Similar sword fittings are known from Intercisa (*Miks 2007*, 801, Taf. 269: B80,1) and Nydam. These described specimens belong to the Vieuxville type and C. Miks (2007, 853, Taf. 269: B208,7) dates them to C2-C2/C3 or even C3-D1.

3.5.2 OPEN-WORK HORSE HARNESS FITTINGS

Another remarkable find from Vrbová Lhota is small peltoid open-work fitting H1-429945 in the shape of a cross with four rivets (*Pl. 6: 8; 13: 5*). It is similar to Oldenstein 275 fittings (*Oldenstein 1976*, 137, 248, Taf. 34: 275), which, however, have four peltoid tendrils. The fitting is interpreted as part of a horse harness and comes from Feldberg *kastel* (*Schleiermacher 2000*, 184, Taf. 7: 24), which existed until 260 (*Baatz 2002*). A very similar fitting with four symmetric peltoids in the shape of a cross comes from Drnholce (distr. Břeclav) and could be dated to the end of the 2nd century AD (*Antal 2017*, 42–43, cat. number 27). Another analogy to our find is a belt fitting with two rivets with distinct internal decoration from *canabae legiōnis* in Vindobona dating roughly to the 2nd–3rd century (*Maspoli 2014*, 50–51, 108, Taf. 15: 96). A similar motif in simplified form also appears on balteus fittings from the 3rd century from Apulum (*Ciugudean 2017*, 363–366, 382, Pl. V: 10), Nydam (*Rau 2016*, 628, 633, Abb. 6) and Dura Europos (*Frisch - Toll 1949*, 67, Pl. XVII: 154). These motifs also appear on open-work brooches, e.g. from Flavia Solva (*Kropf - Nowak 2000*, 148, Taf. 64: 374). Other similar horse harness fittings are also characteristic of the 3rd century (*Bishop - Coulston 2006*, 190, Fig. 124: 2). A far more finely crafted peltoid fitting with individual

parts analogically turned towards the central plate, the Oldenstein 1134, is found on baltei with a round frame from Zugmantel (*Oldenstein 1976*, Taf. 87: 1134), in Pavlov (*Komoróczy - Vlach - Hložek 2014*, 768–771, Obr. 1: 1) and from an unknown site (*Fischer 2012*, 217, Abb. 320; *Komoróczy - Vlach - Hložek 2014*, 770).

3.5.3 OLDENSTEIN 629 SIMPLE PELTOID FITTING

Small Oldenstein 629 (*Oldenstein 1976*, 179, 261, Taf. 53: 629) peltoid fitting H1-429959 (*Pl. 6: 7; 13: 4*) with two rivets is also regarded as part of a horse harness from the 3rd century (*Bishop - Coulston 2006*, Fig. 124: 9; *Voß 2016*, 715, 732, Abb. 3: 5).²⁶ This type of fitting was already published from Bohemia from the Praha-Šárka site (*Musil 1994*, 6, Abb. 2: 9). From Moravia we can mention a surface find from Rajhradice (Brno-venkov district) that is dated to the end of the 2nd century AD (*Antal 2017*, 42–43, cat. number 56). Of course, in the case of artefacts from older publications (*Preidel 1930*, 234, Abb. 269; *Sakař 1970*, 56), when the actual find is missing, it is not entirely clear whether it is the chape of a sword scabbard (as H. Preidel and V. Sakař claim), or whether it is a fitting identical to the find from Vrbová Lhota. These simple peltoid fittings with two rivets (sometimes with just one) are relatively common in the Roman-provincial environment in the Danube River Region (e.g. *Nowak - Roth 1998*, 929, Abb. 587; *Schmidt - Nowak 1988*, Abb. 525) and in the Rhineland (e.g. *Schleiermacher 2000*, Taf. 8: 1,3–4; *Lenz 2006*, 204, Taf. 83: 861). They are also known from Barbaricum, e.g. Aubstadt (*Hoffmann 2004*, Taf. 4: 16), Hassel (*CRFB D 6*, 106, Taf. 107: 19), Leverkusen-Rheindorf (*Voß 2016*, 723, Abb. 14: 1) and Ochsenfurt-Hopferstadt (*Hoffmann 2004*, Taf. 37: 26).

²⁶ Similar small peltoid fittings were in use in the territory of Roman provinces until the 4th century AD (*Radman-Livaja 2009*, 1501)

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