

Abhandlung

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Women – Trade – Cultural Interactions in the Late Iron Age

Example of Collection of Late Iron Age finds from Lesonice, Znojmo District (Moravia)

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Zusammenfassung: Das Fundensemble aus Lesonice lässt sich im Hinblick auf die Fundumstände schwer interpretieren. Aufgrund seines Charakters nähert es sich den Grabverbänden aus dem Gebiet des nordöstlichen Barbaricum der jüngeren Vorrömischen Eisenzeit. Die untypische Lage im Gelände und das Auftreten fremder Elemente deuten auf eine mögliche Interpretation des Fundensembles als Hortfund/Opfergabe hin. Datiert wird der Fundverband vor allem aufgrund eines Gürtelhakens vom Typ Wiloch IX, der für die Stufe A2, bzw. für die Phasen A2b oder A2/A3 signifikant ist. Es handelt sich daher um eine Periode, die wir mit der Spätlatènezeit der Stufe LT D1 (oder LT D2a nach dem System von E. Droberjar) synchronisieren können. In dieser Endphase der Latènezeit in Böhmen und Mähren ist neben Gürtelhaken auch das Vorkommen von Keramik der Przeworsk-Kultur belegt. Die Präsenz solcher fremden Gegenstände interpretiert man auf verschiedene Art, die immer von der Region des Vorkommens abhängt. Die Deutung schwankt oft zwischen Handelsaktivitäten und Belegen für eine Infiltration. Aus chronologischer Sicht müssen wir konstatieren, dass der Fundverband aus Lesonice vermutlich etwas älter ist als der Horizont der Przeworsk-Funde in Mittelmähren (z. B. Dolany, Gr. 2, Dubany, Hulín-Pravčice, usw.), die in die Stufe A3 der jüngeren Vorrömischen Eisen-

zeit, bzw. in die Stufe Eggers A fallen. Mit Rücksicht auf das Vorkommen eines Gürtelhakens, der als frauenspezifisches Artefakt betrachtet wird, ermöglicht das Fundensemble aus Lesonice einige hypothetische Schlüsse zu ziehen, nämlich als a) Beleg für die Anwesenheit einer Frau aus dem Przeworsk-Oksywie-Kulturumfeld im Gebiet des heutigen Südmährens, und als b) Beleg für den Geschenkaustausch zwischen dem Gebiet der Latènekultur und dem nordöstlichen Barbaricum, sowie für c) Handelskontakte mit Bindungen zu der Bernsteinstraße.

Schlüsselworte: Mähren, Vorrömische Eiseneit, Spätlatènezeit, Oksywie-Kultur, Przeworsk-Kultur, Bestattung, Opfer/Hort, Kontakte, Bernsteinstraße

Abstract: The collection of archaeological finds from Lesonice provides a unique evidence for contacts between the Late La Tène environment in the Middle Danube region and the territory of south-eastern Poland. Problematic circumstances of finding and atypical localisation do not allow to clearly determine the find context. The article therefore discusses both possibilities – burial and hoard/offering. The assemblage of finds can be dated to stage LTD1 or LTD2a, and, according to the chronology of the Pre-Roman Period in Poland, to stage A2 or to the transition A2/A3.

Keywords: Moravia, Pre-Roman Period, Late La Tène Period, Oksywie Culture, Przeworsk Culture, burial, offering/hoard, contacts, Amber Road

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Streszczenie: Zespół zabytków z Lesonic jest trudny do jednoznacznej interpretacji z uwagi na okoliczności jego odkrycia. Swoim charakterem przypomina jednak inwentarze obiektów sepulkralnych, notowanaych na obszarze północno-wschodniego Barbaricum doby młodszego okresu przedrzymskiego. Jego nietypowe umiejscowienie w terenie oraz obecność obcych dla rodzimej tradycji elementów wskazują na możliwość interpretacji rzeczonoego zbioru znalezisk jako skarbu/ofiary. Datowanie niniejszego zespołu zabytków opiera się przede wszystkim na kłamrze

do pasa typu Wiloch IX, co pozwala go sytuować w fazie A2, względnie w podfazie A2b, tudzież na przełomie stadium A2 i A3 młodszego okresu przedrzymskiego, który to jest synchronizowany z okresem lateńskim – z fazą LT D1 (lub LT D2a według systemu E. Droberjara). U schyłku okresu lateńskiego na terenie Czech i Moraw udokumentowane jest występowanie ceramiki charakterystycznej dla kultury przeworskiej, a także klamer do pasów. Obecność takich elementów, obcych dla lokalnej tradycji kulturowej, jest różnie interpretowana i każdorazowo zależy od regionu, w którym te wystąpiły. Interpretacja jednak często oscyluje wokół aktywności handlowej oraz infiltracji kulturowej. Z chronologicznego punktu widzenia trzeba stwierdzić, że grupa znalezisk z Lesonic jest prawdopodobnie nieco starsza niż horyzont zabytków przeworskich znanych dotychczas z obszaru Moraw Środkowych (np. Dolany, Gr. 2, Dubany, Hulín-Pravčice itp.), które przynależą do horyzontu A3 młodszego okresu przedrzymskiego lub fazy A według propozycji Eggarsa. W związku z obecnością klamry do pasa, która uważana jest generalnie za artefakt bliski kobiecie, zespół znalezisk z Lesonic pozwala wysnuć pewne hipotezytyczne wnioski a) dowody na obecność kobiety z przeworsko-okszywskiego środowiska kulturowego na terenie dzisiejszych Moraw Południowych, b) dowody wymiany darów między obszarem kultury lateńskiej a północno-wschodnim Barbaricum, c) kontakty handlowe związane ze szlakiem bursztynowym.

Słowa kluczowe: Morawy, młodszy okres przedrzymski, późny okres lateński, kultura oksywska, kultura przeworska, pochówek, ofiara/skarb, kontakty, szlak bursztynowy

Shrnutí: Soubor z Lesonic je s ohledem na nálezové okolnosti obtížné interpretovat. Na základě svého charakteru má blízko k hrobovým celkům z prostředí severovýchodního barbarika mladší doby předřímské. Netypická lokalizace v terénu a zastoupení cizorodých elementů by nevyločovalo soubor interpretovat jako depot/obětinu.

Datace je možná především na základě opaskové zápony typu Wiloch IX, která je signifikantní pro stupeň A2, resp. fázi A2b, či A2/A3. Jedná se tedy o období, které můžeme synchronizovat s pozdní dobou laténskou stupně LT D1 (nebo podle systému E. Droberjara LTD2a – Droberjar 2006). V tomto období sklonku doby laténské v Čechách a na Moravě máme kromě opaskových zápon doložen také výskyt keramiky przeworské kultury (naposledy Droberjar 2019, 253–257, 284; Čížmář – Popelka 2020, 208, 211, obr. 3:7). Přítomnost těchto cizích předmětů je interpretována různě a vždy záleží na regionu výskytu. Vysvětlení se však často pohybuje od obchodních aktivit po doklady infiltrace (Salač 2008, 138). Z chronologického hlediska je nutné konstatovat,

že soubor z Lesonic je pravděpodobně nepatrně starší než horizont przeworských nálezů zjištěných na střední Moravě (např. Dolany, hr. 2, Dubany, Hulín-Pravčice, atd.), které spadají do stupně A3 mladší doby předřímské, resp. do stupně Eggars A (Tejral 2009, 169; Droberjar 2019, 258–267).

Lesonický soubor pak s ohledem na přítomnost opaskové zápony, která je považována za ženský artefakt umožňuje několik hypotetických úvah a) doklad přítomnosti ženy z przeworského-okszywského prostředí na území dnešní jižní Moravy, b) doklad výměny darů mezi oblastí laténské kultury a severovýchodním barbarikem, c) obchodní vazby navázané na jantarovou stezku.

Klíčová slova: Morava, mladší doba předřímská, pozdní doba laténská, oksywska kultura, przeworska kultura, hrob, oběť/depot, kontakty, jantarová stezka

Introduction

The La Tène settlement in the micro-region of Moravský Krumlov, District of Znojmo (CZ), is not yet mapped out in detail. Total absence of settlement is evidenced for the 4th century and partly for the 5th century BC. On the other hand, a few La Tène settlements and graves, maybe also funerary precincts, were detected¹. The peak of settlement activity falls within the Late La Tène Period (stage LT D), but our current knowledge may be influenced by the state of research.

This study introduces a new finding that was made by an amateur detectorist in Lesonice, Znojmo District, near the town of Moravský Krumlov (Fig. 1). The composition of the collection reminds of the funerary equipment of a Late Iron Age (Late Pre-Roman Period) cremation burial. However, the cremation remains themselves were not found.

The aim of this article is to introduce an interesting collection of finds. The assemblage mainly contained elements which look foreign in the Middle Danube region and in Moravia. Most parallels to them are found in the north-eastern *Barbaricum* during the Late Pre-Roman Period. This finds assemblage, which is atypical of Moravia, must be set into wider context of contacts during the Late Pre-Roman Period and its interpretation should reveal the nature of interactions between the La Tène Culture and the world of the north-eastern *Barbaricum*.

¹ Salač 2009, 28; Čížmářová 2019.

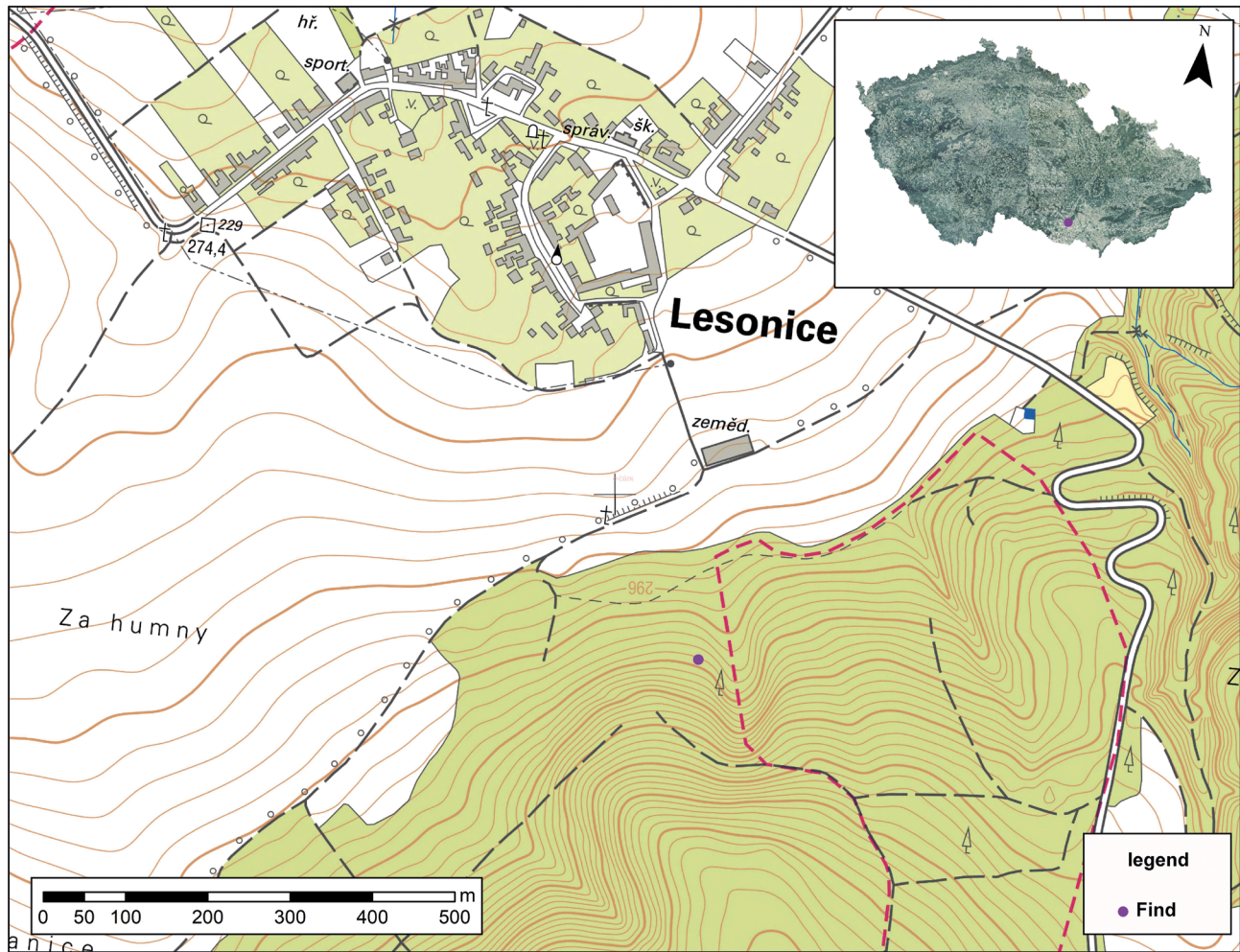


Fig. 1: Lesonice, Znojmo District, location of the find (created by M. Lanta).

Circumstances of finding

The discovery was made by Mr. Pavel Kaufman with the help of a metal detector in the wooded plot “Lesonický les” on 29 September 2015 (Fig. 1). The site is located on the northern to north-western slopes of a hill with spot height 377 metres, about 700 metres southeast of the centre of Lesonice village (48.9979189N, 16.3140431E, WGS 84). The height above sea level is 307 metres. The finds were retrieved from dry soil, from a depth of 30 centimetres below the present-day ground surface. Following the information given by the finder, the iron belt hook was found underneath pottery fragments or in their immediate neighbourhood (Fig. 2). All fragments of ceramic vessels were located at the same place – the vessels might have been placed one inside another, but this information cannot be reliably proved today. The given place and its surroundings were repeatedly investigated but no other artefacts were found. All finds are stored in the City Museum in Moravský Krumlov.

Catalogue of finds

1. Iron two-piece hinged belt hook. The ends of the arms are terminated by hooks. The surface of the arms is decorated with wriggle work lines. The decoration is arranged in two pairs of fields, which are identical on both arms. The fields closer to the hinge are filled with trios of crossed lines (hourglass motif). The other two fields closer to the hook terminals are filled with simple meander patterns. Dimensions: folded 17.3 cm; reconstructed total length: 28.3 cm, maximum width of the arms: 4.1 cm, hook length: 2.9 cm (Fig. 3,1; 4,1), accession No. 3/2021.
2. Iron straight knife with a distinct heel on one side of the blade. Dimensions: total length 14.5 cm, tang length 3.9 cm, blade length 2.6 cm (Fig. 3,2; 4,2), accession No. 4/2021.
3. Iron sickle knife with curved blade and well-distinguished curved handle. Dimensions: total length 11.3 cm, blade length 6.2 cm, blade width 1.9 cm, handle length 5.1 cm (Fig. 3,4; 4,3), accession No. 5/2021.



Fig. 2: Lesonice, Znojmo District, reconstruction of the find context after a sketch and description provided by the finder (created by M. Lanta).

4. Iron awl or a Scandinavian-type needle-shaped fire steel. The grip tang has a quadratic cross-section, the working part of the awl has an irregularly circular cross-section. Dimensions: length 12.9 cm, max. width 0.5 cm (Fig. 3,3; 4,4), accession No. 6/2021.

5. Fragment of the rim and shoulder of a thin-walled vessel with faceted rim and an “X”-shaped handle. The rim is roughly shaped into three facets. The surface is heavily eroded, originally smoothed, grey coloured. The clay is tempered with fine sand and mica. Dimensions: 7 × 5 cm, handle “X”-like extension and total length: 2.7 × 4 × 2.2 cm, reconstructed orifice diameter 16 cm (Fig. 3,5; 4,6), accession No. 7/2021.

6. Fragment of the rim and body of a deep thin-walled bowl with out-turned rim. The surface is eroded, at some places smoothed, grey coloured. The clay is tempered with fine sand and mica. Dimensions: 6.9 × 5.8 cm, reconstructed orifice diameter 19.8 cm (Fig. 3,8; 4,5), accession No. 8/2021.

7. Two fragments of a thickened, moderately out-turned rim. The surface is eroded, ochre-grey coloured. The clay is tempered with fine sand. Dimensions: 4 × 2.2 cm, 2.5 × 1.9 cm (Fig. 3,6), accession No. 9/2021. Note: Other tiny atypical ceramic fragments come from the same vessel.

8. Fragment of the rim and collar of a thin-walled vessel with thickened out-turned rim. The surface is smoothed, ochre coloured. The clay is tempered with fine sand. Dimensions: 3.4 × 3.3 cm (Fig. 3,7), accession No. 10/2021. Note: Nine other tiny atypical ceramic fragments come from the same vessel.

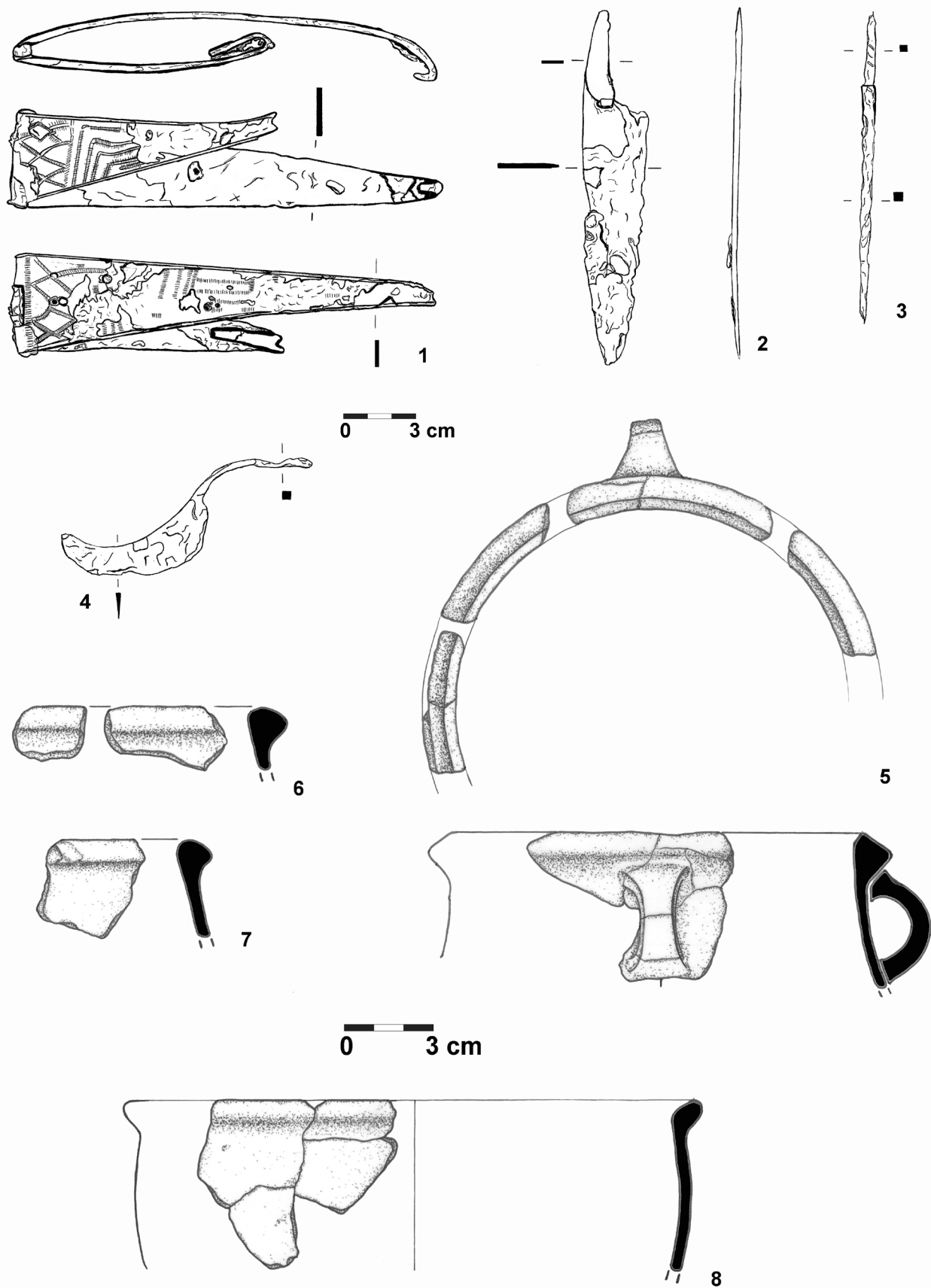


Fig. 3: Lesonice, Znojmo District, finds from the collection (1-4 – iron, 5-8 – ceramics) (drawing R. Brzicová and T. Záruba).

Artefactual analysis

Pottery

In the collection of finds, we are able to clearly distinguish four ceramic forms. The most significant is a torso of a vessel with angled (faceted) rim and a so-called “X”-shaped handle (Cat. No. 5) (Fig. 3,5). The original surface of the vessel is unfortunately not preserved, so we cannot identify its properties and finish. This fact considerably complicates any detailed determination.

However, despite these difficulties, the vessel’s dimensions let us suppose that it may have been one from the category “mug – Becher – kubek” as defined by E. Bokinić², where it resembles most the subtype D1. In the morphological system elaborated for Greater Poland, we can mainly find accordances in groups G (low vases) and H (kubki/mugs)³. When we base ourselves on the newest classification by A. Strobin⁴, the analysed vessel can be assigned to group VI (kubki), more precisely to the type VI.K.

Handled mugs are typically found among the pottery forms from the north-eastern *Barbaricum* during the Late Pre-Roman Period⁵. Handles shaped as the letter “X”, which are usually attached directly on, or immediately below, the out-turned faceted/thickened rim, are known both from the early Przeworsk Culture⁶, and from the territory of Oksywie Culture⁷. However, the classification of the rim of the vessel from Lesonice is problematic. The rim of the mug is thickened and shaped into three facets, but we were not able to find any relevant type in the Oksywie Culture⁸. There are only some form resemblances with our specimen that can be seen on rims of the following vessels: mugs from graves Nos. 1 and 200 of the cemetery at Podwiesk⁹, a mug from grave No. 170A of the cemetery at Pruszcz Gdański¹⁰, and a mug from grave No. 242 of the cemetery at Rumia¹¹.

More parallels can be seen among the rim forms in mugs of the early Przeworsk Culture. They correspond to faceted rims of type b in the classification by T. Dąbrowska¹².

So, how to date the vessel from Lesonice? The examples of Oksywie mugs (kubki) are dated to the wide interval from phase A1b/A2a to stage A3¹³. Ceramic forms of type b in early Przeworsk Culture are dated to stages A2–A3¹⁴.

Other vessels can be only roughly identified. The external surface of a fragment from a deep bowl with out-turned non-faceted rim (Cat. No. 6) (Fig. 3,8) is eroded, so that the surface finish cannot be recognised. Formal shape analogies can be followed up in the domestic Late La Tène context, e. g. in the settlements at Bořitov¹⁵ and Střelice¹⁶. Parallels with similarly shaped rim (bowls, mugs) are also known from regions outside the distribution territory of La Tène Culture, e. g. from the cemeteries at Błonia (Gr. No. 65)¹⁷, Głogów-Nosocice (Gr. No. 55)¹⁸ and Kleszewo (Gr. No. 103A)¹⁹. In the environment of settlements we can also identify deeper intermediate forms – bowls/pots with out-turned rim, which are dated to the Late Pre-Roman Period Przeworsk Culture, in particular to stages A2 and A3²⁰. The above-mentioned shape of the rim is very often observed with multiple ceramic forms (mugs, bowls, intermediate forms: bowls/pots) in various different cultural spheres (early Przeworsk Culture, see above) but also in later development of the Plaňany group of Großromstedt Culture²¹. The shapes of the remaining thin-walled fragments with thickened rims (Cat. Nos. 7–8) (Fig. 3,6–7) remind of La Tène pottery, more precisely of the everted rims on bowls and *situlae*²². When we look for the parallels in Poland, we can see remote accordance with non-faceted rims of several mugs (kubki) and bowls²³.

Iron artefacts

The iron artefacts discovered in Lesonice closely correspond with objects dated back to the Late Pre-Roman Period from the Polish territory, associated with the broadly defined Przeworsk-Oksywie sphere. However, the Oksywie component seems to be the most distinctive one, especially

2 Bokinić 2005, 116–117 Fig. 5; 2008, 150–151.

3 Machajewski/Pietrzak 2004, 92–93 Tab. IX,4; X,3.

4 Strobin 2011, 35–36 Tab. XXXVIII,2.

5 Grygiel/Stasiak 2019, 260–263.

6 Dąbrowska 1988, Tab. II–IV; Bohr 2017, 99 Fig. 3,1.

7 Bokinić 2005, 26 Taf. XXVIII:77/1; Strobin 2011, 17; 35 Fig. 5,1Ac.

8 cf. Bokinić 2008, typ. Fig. 40–45; Strobin 2011, Fig. 4.

9 Bokinić 2005, 12; 44, Tab. I,3; LXXV,1.

10 Pietrzak 1997, 31 Tab. LXI,2.

11 Ibid 1987, 61 Tab. LXXXV,242.b.

12 Dąbrowska 1988, 15 Fig. 1,b, selectively e. g. Bohr 2014, 166; 168 Fig. 9,5; Dąbrowska 1997, 29–30 /I.1.1b; ditto; I3b/62–63; 72–73, Tab.

LIV,101.9; CXXXIX,24; CLXXI,13; Mycielska/Woźniak 1988, 100; 102–103, Tab. CLXXVII,5, CLXXXI,11.

13 Bokinić 2005, 116; 2008, 150; Strobin 2011, 36.

14 Dąbrowska 1997, 102.

15 Čižmář 2003, 63 Tab. 63,4.

16 Ludikovsky 1983, 21 Tab. 18,11; Čižmářová 2004, 313.

17 Mycielska/Woźniak 1988, 49; 116 Tab. L,25; CCII,6.

18 Błażejowski/Bohr/Chrzanowska 2020, 96; 116 Tab. 63,3.

19 Woźniak 2021, 45 Tab. XLVIII,103/A.3.

20 Żychliński/Teska 2017, 257 Tab. 3,3.

21 see e. g. Jílek *et al.* 2015, 116 Tab. 52,7.

22 cf. e. g. Hlava 2007, 16; 18; 26 Fig. 2,6; 5,10; 9,12.

23 Mycielska/Woźniak 1988, 90; 117 Tab. CLIV,8; CCIII,19.

in the context of the belt hook. The remaining elements of the finds assemblage in question have their counterparts in the Oksywie Culture.

Belt hook

On top of brooches, belt hooks represent the biggest group of metal items found in the settlement territory of the Oksywie Culture. In general, they are associated with burials of women and, very rarely, men²⁴, with the exception of ring hooks. Among them, iron two-piece hinged belt hooks prevail, classified as such by J. Kostrzewski²⁵. They dominate in Pomerania and in the Lower Vistula basin²⁶. As the name suggests, they consist of two elements: triangular arms joined together by a hinge. They were classified as types IX and X, respectively, by R. Wiloch²⁷ which means that they have hooks bent inwards, in the same direction, or the hooks face each other in opposite directions²⁸ and may come decorated with various motifs. The specimen from Lesonice with raised edges (Cat. No. 1) represents variant IX as its hooks are bent in the same direction towards the inside of the belt hook (Fig. 3,1; 4,1). The surfaces are decorated with rhomboidal, rich geometric motifs and short lines, partly covering and/or filling the said motifs or forming geometric arrangements (Fig. 4,1). In the Podwiesk cemetery, two-piece hinged belt hooks with hooks facing the same direction, often decorated, occurred in 81 specimens discovered in 80 graves²⁹. The group of belt hooks (Fig. 5) decorated with engraved lines, forming an ornament richer than single edge grooves, include specimens from the already mentioned Podwiesk³⁰, as well as from Chełmno, Marusza and Nowe Dobra³¹. Two-piece clasps with hooks bent inwards in the same direction, often richly decorated, also come from the Grudziądz-Rządź cemetery³² (Fig. 5,1–2). Notably, the Chełmno area enjoys the highest concentration of this type of artefacts not only by the standards of Oksywie Culture but also of the European *Barbaricum*.

Undoubtedly, it is in the area east of the Lower Vistula where specimens decorated with geometric ornamentation

prevail, as confirmed by the finds from Bystrzec³³, Nowa Wies³⁴, Nowy Targ³⁵ and Stary Targ³⁶. Therefore, the region may have been a centre of production thereof. In the Late Pre-Roman Period, two-piece hinged belt hooks were therefore primarily used by people of the Oksywie Culture. They have been discovered in much smaller numbers in the Jastorf cultural milieu³⁷. They are disproportionately less frequent in the inventories of the Przeworsk Culture³⁸. A small number of them have also been discovered in Bohemia and Moravia³⁹. The general opinion now is that the older specimens, still associated with the initial phase of the Late Pre-Roman Period (probably its later phase), have hooks bent to inside of the belt hook. They occurred together with stepped-bow fibulae or ones provided with bronze appliqué, and corresponding with Celtic forms from stages C1 and C2 of the La Tène Period⁴⁰. Belt hooks from Chełmno area appear to have been slightly chronologically younger than the similar specimens from the Vistula basin⁴¹. In the most areas of their occurrence, they are considered typical of the A2 phase (sub-phase A2b)⁴² as they often correlate with fibulae types G/H, D/E, or K, according to J. Kostrzewski⁴³. Few hinged belt hooks were also in use during the last phase of the Late Pre-Roman Period and even in the Early Roman Period – both Type IX and Type X specimens⁴⁴ which may be an indication that they were no longer manufactured at that time⁴⁵.

Straight knife

The iron knife (Cat. No. 2) has a straight blade, whose spine passes fluently over into the tang, while the cutting edge is separated from the handle by a distinct heel (Fig. 3,2; 4,2).

²⁴ Kostrzewski 1919, 42; Bohnsack 1938, 23; Wołagiewicz 1981, 162.

²⁵ Kostrzewski 1919, 51–54 Fig. 39–40.

²⁶ Wiloch 1995; Bokinić 2008, 60–73.

²⁷ Wiloch 1995.

²⁸ see Kostrzewski 1919, Fig. 39–40.

²⁹ Bokinić 2005, 98–99; 2008, 60–61.

³⁰ e. g. Bokinić 2005, 28; 38–39; 46; 63 Tab. XXXIX/88,4; LXVII/160/160,11; LXXVII/216,3; CXII/322,6.

³¹ Bokinić 2008, 61.

³² see e. g. Kurzyńska 2020, 61; 66–67; 81–82; 117–118 Tab. 17/9,4; 22/26,4; 22/29,2; 22/31,1; 78/15,10; 143/310,1; 201/310,1; 201/315,1.

³³ Heym 1959/61 Fig. 7,9.11.17.23.

³⁴ Ibid 1959/61, Fig. 3,3.

³⁵ Fudzińska/Fudziński 2013, Tab. XLVII/310,2.

³⁶ Heym 1959/61, 144.

³⁷ Grygiel 2018, 190.

³⁸ Lewczuk 1997, 41–42; Dąbrowska 2008, 38; Woźniak 2021, 38 Tab. XXXI,3; Mistewicz/Maciałowicz/Woźniak 2021, 53–55; 135–138 Tab. XVI,5.

³⁹ Čižmář 1990, 313; 2003, 105; Bochnak/Golánová 2010, 171 Fig. 9,1–3.

⁴⁰ Grygiel 2018, 191.

⁴¹ Teska 2022, in press.

⁴² Hachmann 1961, 236; Wołagiewicz 1981, Tab. XX,21; Wiloch 1995, 18.

⁴³ Kostrzewski 1919, Fig. 4–5; 7–8,21; see Wiloch 1995, Tab. 4; Bokinić 2008, Tab. 16; Woźniak 2021, 38, Tab. XXXI,1–3; Mistewicz/Maciałowicz/Woźniak 2021, 53–55; 139 Tab. XVI,1–3.

⁴⁴ see e. g. Bokinić 2005, 25–26 Tab. XXIX/75,3; Bokinić/Budynek/Pro-nobis 2020, 68 Tab. XXVI/59,4.

⁴⁵ Bokinić 2008, 73.



Fig. 4: Lesonice, Znojmo District, finds from the collection (photo L. Vojtěchovský).

This design makes it similar to type I.2 in the classification of straight knives of the Oksywie Culture by E. Bokiniec⁴⁶. It also falls within the type Ia, identified by T. Dąbrowska in relation to knives of the Przeworsk Culture⁴⁷. In the area of origin of the Oksywie Culture, knives of this type have been known from the cemeteries in Czarnów, Brodnica-Michałów and Grudziądz-Rządź⁴⁸. On the other hand, in the right-bank Lower Vistula basin, the type I knives represent a small fraction of all these finds. Indeed, the variety I.2 is represented by only a single stray find from the Oksywie Culture settlement at Jeziernik⁴⁹. Similar specimens were also discovered in Western Pomerania⁵⁰. Knives of the variant in question have been discovered in large numbers in a Przeworsk Culture cemetery in Kamieńczyk⁵¹, although they are also known from other sites of that culture⁵². As for the iron tools and toilet instruments in the Oksywie Culture cemeteries, knives were the most frequent grave goods. However, while in the Chełmno region isolated cases have already been traced to the end of the A1 phase, in the remaining settlement territory they did not occur until the A2 phase. In the right-bank Lower Vistula basin, straight knives were used during phases A2 and A3 and even in a transitional horizon to the Early Roman Period (A3/B1). This coincides with the dating of variant I.2, the occurrence of which has been attributed to phases A2 and A3 of the Late Pre-Roman Period. Furthermore, in the Vistula basin, straight knives were not discovered in pit graves and correlate exclusively with urn graves⁵³. This is in contrast with the Chełmno area where the proportion of urn and pit graves (where the knives in question were discovered) is 32 % and 68 %, respectively, and is strictly related to graves with weapons⁵⁴. At the Kamieńczyk site, on the other hand, type Ia straight knives are mostly dated to the Late Pre-Roman period. The artefacts in question occurred here together with varieties A, C, D, H, K or M fibulae⁵⁵ according to J. Kostrzewski⁵⁶ where they mainly represented inventories of pit graves. In Łęgonice Małe, on the other hand,

they were accompanied by objects specific to both phases A3 and B1 of the Roman Period⁵⁷, as variant Ia knives have also been sporadically discovered in graves from the Early Roman Period⁵⁸.

Sickle knife

In literature on the subject, sickle-shaped knives are considered indicators of the Late Pre-Roman Period⁵⁹. A small metal sickle knife from Lesonice (Cat. No. 3), with a raised blade tip, represents a form with a handle bent slightly downwards (Fig. 3.4; 4.3). According to J. Kostrzewski's typology, it is similar to variant Ila⁶⁰ although its end is not terminated with a flat, oval circle or coiled into a loop (Fig. 6). However, the end of the specimen's handle, with a quadrilateral cross-section, appears to be somewhat flattened and possibly it has not survived in its entirety (Fig. 4.3). Unlike type I, knives of the Ila variety are not very common in the Oksywie Culture, although they are known from sites located both on the right bank of the Vistula – in Czarnów, Grudziądz-Rządź, Podwiesiek⁶¹, and on the left bank of the river – in Gostkowo, Konikowo, Mierzym, Niemica, Parsęcko and Rumia⁶², in the Polish Pomerania zone.

Nevertheless, these are generally single specimens. So far, the largest collection seems to have been discovered in Grudziądz-Rządź. A certainly identified specimen from Podwiesiek is accurately dated with a variant H fibula, according to J. Kostrzewski⁶³ which places it in the middle phase of the Late Pre-Roman Period. Knives of the variant in question were also used later, generally from stage A2 to stage B1 of the Roman Period⁶⁴ which may be indicated by the objects from Grudziądz-Rządź⁶⁵ and Małe Czyste⁶⁶.

This was, in fact, suggested by J. Kostrzewski⁶⁷ who emphasised that the variant discussed here was also a common form in the Roman Period, among both East and West Germanic tribes. In the Przeworsk Culture, classical types I–IV sickle knives with a curved handle accompanied artefacts

⁴⁶ Ibid. 92–93; typ. Fig. 21.

⁴⁷ Dąbrowska 1997, 95.

⁴⁸ Bokiniec 2008, 92 Tab. XIX,4.

⁴⁹ Teska 2022, in press.

⁵⁰ see Machajewski 2001, 33 Tab. XVI/75,4.

⁵¹ Dąbrowska 1997, 95.

⁵² see, e. g. Machajewski/Rogalski 2016, 57; Kordowska/Kowalska 2018, 54–55 Tab. XX/26AC11; XXXIII/35,2; XXXIX/42,11a–b.

⁵³ Teska 2022, in press.

⁵⁴ see Bokiniec 2008, 93 Aneks A.3.

⁵⁵ Dąbrowska 1997, 16; 24; 25–26; 33–34; 72 Taf. XIV/26,1–2; XV/28,1–2.4; XVI/29,1–2; XXXV/69,1–4; XLI/79,1–2.7; LXIV/119,1.5; LXV/120,2.5; CLXVI/363,1–2.6, CLXIX/364,1–2.

⁵⁶ Kostrzewski 1919, Fig. 1; 3–4; 8; 21; 23.

⁵⁷ Kordowska/Kowalska 2018, 23–25; 29; 31–33; 37.

⁵⁸ cf. Czarnecka 2007, 88.

⁵⁹ Kostrzewski 1919, 153–157; Dąbrowska 2008, 61–62.

⁶⁰ Kostrzewski 1919, 154–155 Fig. 150.

⁶¹ see Bokiniec 2005, 71; 103 Tab. CXXX/376,5; 2008, 90 Tab. XIX,2; Kurzyńska 2020, 90; 122; 129; 201 Tab. 91/18,7; 93/43,1.13; 93/45,5; 94/44,9; 146/343,1; 182/833,6; 187,4.

⁶² Bokiniec 2008, Aneks A.3.

⁶³ Kostrzewski 1919, Fig. 8.

⁶⁴ Bokiniec 2005, 71.

⁶⁵ Kurzyńska 2020, 122; 129; 201.

⁶⁶ Bokiniec/Budynek/Pronobis 2020, 63; 110 Tab. XV/41,9.

⁶⁷ Kostrzewski 1919, 155.

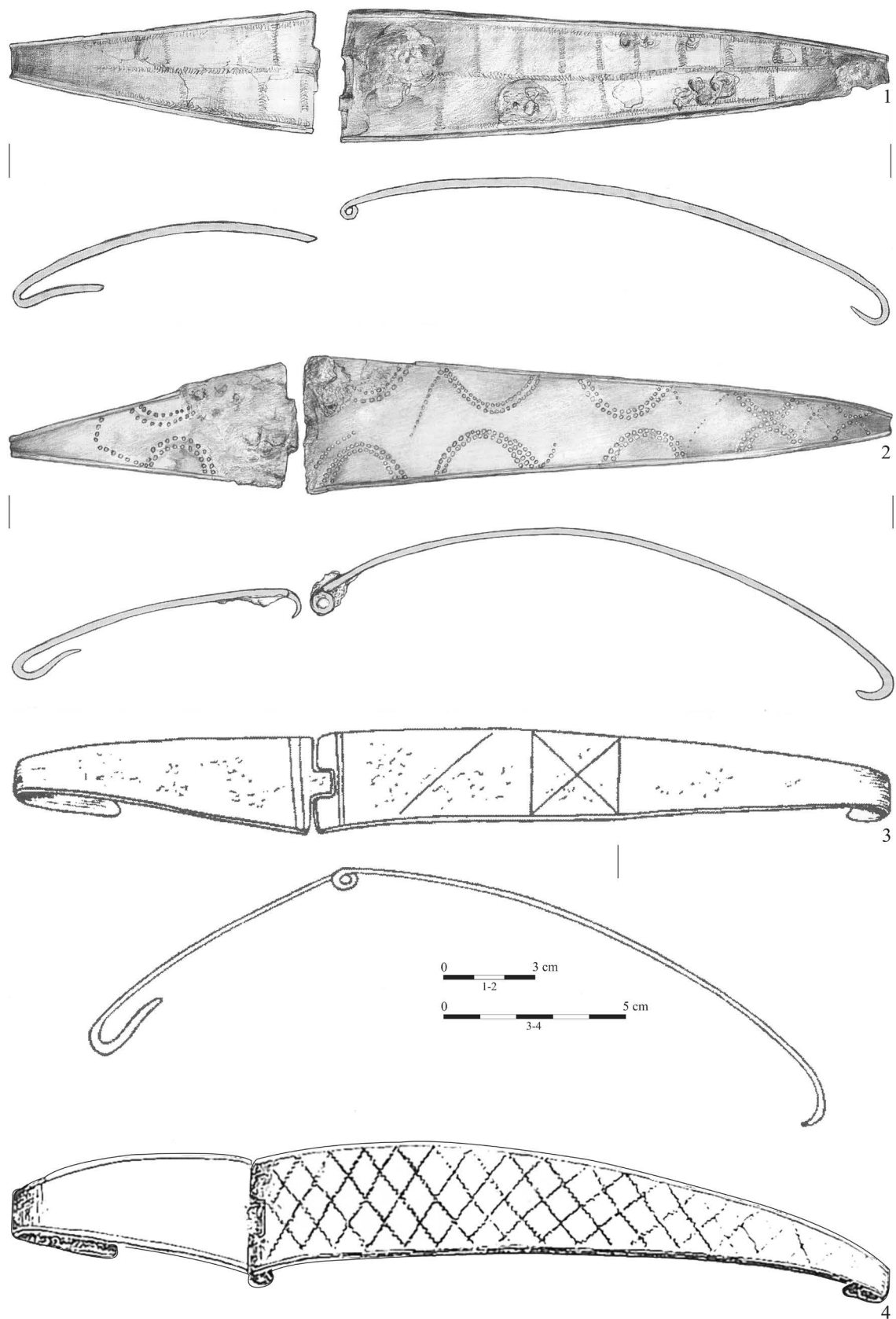


Fig. 5: Analogies of decorated belt hooks Wiloch type IX from the Polish territory: 1 – Grudziądz-Rządź, grave 310; 2 – Grudziądz-Rządź, grave 315; 3 – Nowa Wieś, grave 45; 4 – Bystrzec, grave 62; iron (after M. Kurzyńska 2020 – 1–2; W. Heym 1959/61 – 3–4).

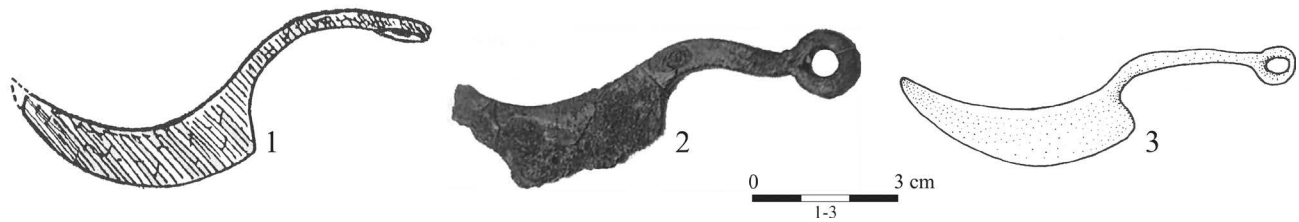


Fig. 6: Analogies of sickle knives from the Polish territory: 1 – Szlichtyngowa, grave 1; 2 – Grudziądz-Rządź, grave 833; 3 – Podwiesk, grave 376; iron (after J. Kostrzewski 1919 – 1; M. Kurzyńska 2020 – 2; E. Bokinić 2005 – 3).

categorised as female-specific objects, such as belt hooks and spindle whorls. They prevailed especially in A2 phase of the Late Pre-Roman Period⁶⁸. However, in *Barbaricum* they have also been uncovered together with pieces of armament⁶⁹.

Stitching awl / needle-shaped fire steel?

Among the iron artefacts from Lesonice, there also was a narrow, needle-shaped form (Cat. No. 4), seemingly (?) similar to an awl⁷⁰ but slightly wider, with a quadrangular cross-section (Fig. 3,3; 4,4).

It cannot be resolved whether the analysed artefact is indeed an awl or perhaps a Scandinavian-type fire steel. If we assume, however, that it is an awl with a quadrilateral cross-section and a partly chipped-off (?) working part (Fig. 4,4), it is nothing unusual when compared to the objects known from the Przeworsk-Oksywie sphere, although they seem to be better documented in the inventories of the Przeworsk Culture.

Stitching awls do not have dating qualities although they are sometimes regarded female-specific grave goods⁷¹. Indeed, in the Przeworsk Culture, they are very often accompanied by belt hooks, sickle knives, spindle whorls and needles⁷². In the Oksywie Culture, on the other hand, belt hooks, small knives with sickle blade, spindle whorls and, less commonly, needles and awls, are commonly regarded objects associated with women⁷³. In the Warsaw-Wilanów cemetery, awls occurred in sets with spindle whorls and even knives and/or sickle knives⁷⁴, as was the case in

Wesołki⁷⁵. They have been rarely uncovered with pieces of armament or weapons⁷⁶. However, in the Brzyno cemetery, an iron stitching awl occurred together with military equipment, in a grave dated to stage A3⁷⁷. Fragments of two other awls, recovered from the same site and dated to A2/A3 stage, were accompanied by a regular knife and a sickle knife⁷⁸. If, on the other hand, we assume that the object in question represents a needle-shaped fire steel, it probably originally consisted of two parts: an iron shaft – it has a square cross-section along its entire length and a sharply pointed, albeit chipped-off (?) working part, but is slightly wider in the middle than at the ends – and a handle from organic material, probably from wood, antler or leather⁷⁹. This part, however, has not survived to the present day. Similarly, no flint or other striking stone has been found which, together with the mentioned fire steel, in theory should have represented a classical firemaking set⁸⁰. The needle-shaped fire steels mentioned here were probably carried on long straps attached to the belt⁸¹. It is also assumed that they were a part of men's personal possessions⁸². However, fire-striking tools are also known to have been placed in women's graves⁸³.

The find discussed here is an evidence for the second basic type of fire strikers found in *Barbaricum* and known primarily from marshes in northern Europe (Thorsbjerg, Nydam, Vimose) but associated with the Roman Period. As many as 124 Scandinavian firemaking sets have been discovered at the famous Illerup Ådal site (Platz A)⁸⁴. Outside the Scandinavian zone they also occurred in Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia where, however, they were not very

⁶⁸ Dąbrowska 2008, 62.

⁶⁹ Hachmann 1956, 15.

⁷⁰ cf. Tackenberg 1925, 30.

⁷¹ Dąbrowska 2008, 62; Machajewski/Rogalski 2016, 59.

⁷² Dąbrowska 2008, 62.

⁷³ Strobin 2014, 41.

⁷⁴ see, for example, Marciniak 1957, Tab. XXXVIII,5–8.12.13; XXXIX,9–10; XLII,13–17; LII,4–5.8; LV,4–5.

⁷⁵ Dąbrowska/Dąbrowski 1967, 42 Fig. 39,6–8.

⁷⁶ see Marciniak 1957, Tab. LXXIX,15–16.18–19.

⁷⁷ see Strobin 2021, 50–51 Tab. LXXVI/117.

⁷⁸ Strobin 2021, 25–26; 119 Tab. XVIII/23,3–4; XXIII/27,4–5.

⁷⁹ Ilkjær 1993, 243; 2007, 56.

⁸⁰ Dąbrowska 1996, 45; Ilkjær 2007, 56–59.

⁸¹ Ilkjær 1993, 354 Fig. 145; 2007, 57.

⁸² Dąbrowska 1996, 45.

⁸³ see Domański 1982, 205–207.

⁸⁴ Ilkjær 1993, 243; 255 Tab. 155–180; 2007, 59.

common, as well as in Poland⁸⁵. Scandinavian-type needle-shaped fire steels are also rare in Poland. However, they are mainly known from inventories of the Przeworsk Culture, dated back chiefly to the Early Roman Period – stage B1 (possibly B2), similar to the said finds recorded elsewhere in Central Europe⁸⁶. This chronological position is attributed to complexes from the cemetery of the Przeworsk Culture in Kamieńczyk, where the specific needle-shaped fire steels were recovered⁸⁷. They also occurred within the Przeworsk-Wielbark necropolis at Niedanów⁸⁸. As it seems, a large number of them were also recovered from the cemetery of the Przeworsk Culture in Nosocice. However, due to the archaic nature of the site, we cannot rule out that some of them were in fact awls⁸⁹. Needle-shaped fire steels also occurred in the cemetery of the Wielbark Culture at Opalenie where they are associated with phases B1 and B2⁹⁰. There are many indications that the Scandinavian-type needle-shaped fire steels were in use somewhat earlier, i. e. before the Early Roman Period. This is documented by finds from the territory of the Oksywie Culture. The firemaking tools come from the Chełmno area. A fragment of a wire-like object that may have been a needle-shaped fire steel, comes from the cemetery at Podwiesk⁹¹. The inhumation rite indicates phase A3 or early B1⁹². Other finds of this type, located in the region in question, come from Czarnów, Grudziądz-Rządź and Kowalewo, and can be associated with the end of the Late Pre-Roman Period, i. e. phase A3⁹³. Only one needle-shaped fire steel, however, lacking an organic handle, comes from the right bank of the Lower Vistula, from an urn grave on the site of Nowy Targ⁹⁴. It did not coincide with the objects playing a leading role in determining the chronology, although the form of the urn clearly indicates the Oksywie Culture. On the other hand, finds assemblages of the Oksywie Culture from Skowarcz and Pruszcz Gdański occupy an altogether unique chronological position. The inventory of the Pruszcz site contains a Scandinavian-type needle-shaped fire steel⁹⁵, accompanied by a fibula of the

E variety, according to J. Kostrzewski's classification⁹⁶ which probably places the artefact within A2 stage of the Late Pre-Roman Period. An identical dating can be attributed to the assemblage of finds from Skowarcz, although there, only a striking stone was identified⁹⁷. On the other hand, the oldest, albeit few, funerary assemblages of the Przeworsk Culture from Mazovia, which can be associated with fire-making sets, are dated back to A3 or A3/B1 phases⁹⁸.

The surroundings of Lesonice in the Late La Tène Period

The state of knowledge about La Tène settlement at the north-eastern border of Znojmo region is not satisfactory (Fig. 7). The known settlements and the majority of solitary finds are not older than from the Late La Tène Period (LT D)⁹⁹. Most of them are surface finds. In the cadastral district of Lesonice, settlement sites close to the find in question are located at the south-eastern border of the village near a public outdoor swimming pool and in the inner built-up area of the village near a bell tower¹⁰⁰. The exact location of the solitary finds is not known¹⁰¹. Other settlements from the stage LT D were detected in the nearby villages Petrovice (without further specification), Rybníky ("Pod Tupanovem") and Miroslavské Knínice ("Akáce")¹⁰². The settlement feature from Miroslavské Knínice contained pottery fragments with a high graphite content from vertically grooved *situlae*, pots, bowls and vases, a bronze Mötschwil-type fibula with back-bent foot attached to the bow¹⁰³, fragment of an iron hook nail and a blue coloured glass beaded bracelet Haevernicky type 13¹⁰⁴ with four transverse ribs¹⁰⁵. The bracelet is dated to stages LT C1–C2, the fibula had the optimum of occurrence during the stage LT C2.

85 Ibid. 1993, List 21–22.

86 Dąbrowska 1996, 46; Jonakowski 1996, 93; Czarnecka 2007, 91; see also Ilkjær 1993, List 21–22.

87 Dąbrowska 1997, 13; 54; 97 Tab. V/7,5; CXXI/247,6.

88 Ziemlińska-Odojowa 1999, 118 Tab. LXXVII/248,4; XCVII/284,2; CLXX-VI/481,4.

89 see Błażejowski/Bohr/Chrzanowska 2020, 140–141 Tab. 58; 60; 61.

90 Pietrzak 1999, 300–301 Fig. 2,3,6; 3,2; 4,4.

91 Bokiniec 2005, 75 Tab. CXXXIX/401,3.

92 see Bokiniec 2005, 75; 2008, 96.

93 Bokiniec 2008, 96 Tab. XIX,5; XXII,4.

94 Fudzińska/Fudziński 2013, 52 Tab. XXIII/155,2.

95 Pietrzak 1997, 31 Tab. LXI/170A,4.

96 Kostrzewski 1919, Fig. 5.

97 Pietrzak 1999, 299.

98 Dąbrowska 2008, 63.

99 Salaš 2009, 28.

100 Šimek 1958, 204; Grunová/Gruna 2013, 27.

101 Woldřich 1890, 162; Podborský/Vildomec 1972, 184; Čižmářová 2019, 225–226.

102 Šimek 1958, 197; 270; Podborský/Vildomec 1972, 208; 341; Meduna 1980, 158; 268; Salaš 2009, 28; Jelínková 2012, 35 Fig. 17; 18.

103 cf. Venclová ed. 2008, 107 Fig. 57:2.

104 Venclová ed. 2008, 114 Fig. 66.

105 Jelínková 2012, 114, obr. 10.

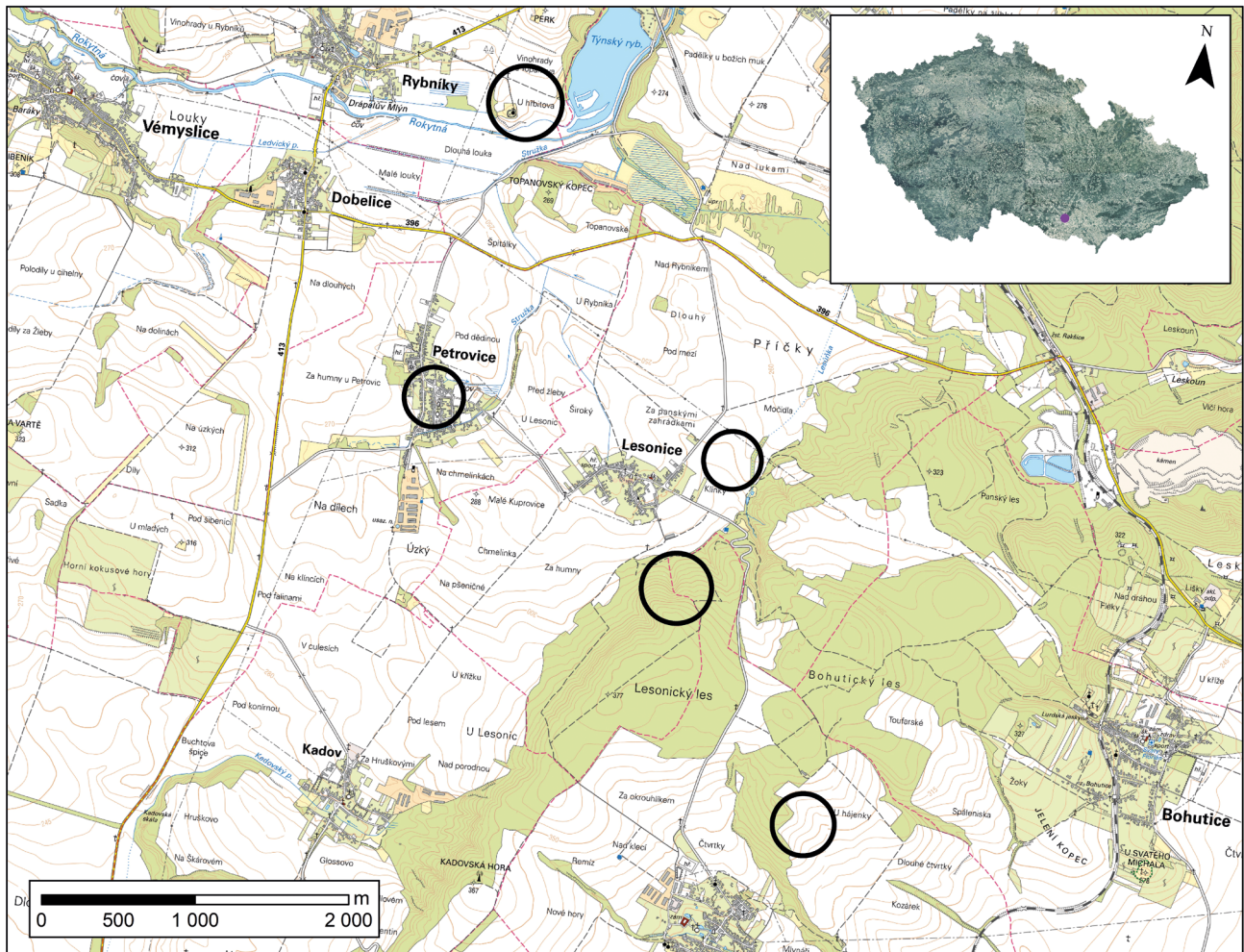


Fig. 7: La Tène finds from the surroundings of Lesonice. The findspots are marked with a black circle (created by M. Lanta after source materials from M. Kuča).

Burial or offering?

The circumstances of finding unfortunately do not enable any clear interpretation of the collection. We can critically exclude a settlement context. Following the information available, no other traces of contemporaneous settlement were detected on the site.

The theory of a funerary nature of the collection is based on distinct similarities with the composition of funerary assemblages from the north-eastern *Barbaricum*. The objects included are mainly typical of female burials, although some of them are equally frequent in men's graves as well¹⁰⁶. Finally, the objects in graves with no skeletal remains are sometimes regarded as symbolic burials. The

occurrence of grave goods of this type has not been analysed in the context of the burial customs prevailing in the Oksywie-Przeworsk sphere, although they have been recorded there. The funerary rites of the Jastorf Culture are worth noting in this aspect where the possibility of identifying 'symbolic graves' with child burials is indicated. The manner in which children were buried does not differ in this grouping from the generally prevailing funerary rites. Unlike the remains of adults, children's bones were very poorly preserved. Their texture was reminiscent of damp chalk. This degree of decomposition did not allow further anthropological analysis¹⁰⁷. This highly advanced decomposition was the reason for the 'empty urns' often found in children's graves. Perhaps, the graves in Jastorf cemeteries which did not contain any burials and are identified as possible cenotaphs, were in fact graves of children whose

¹⁰⁶ Dąbrowska 2008, 62; Machajewski/Rogalski 2016, 59; Mistewicz/Maciulowicz/Woźniak 2021, 139; 153, 155.

¹⁰⁷ Keiling 1969, 25.

deposited remains were already completely decomposed¹⁰⁸. Notably, in the Jastorf Culture, the role of the urns in children's graves was performed by the same vessels as in the graves of adults¹⁰⁹. Only in small children, the urn may have been represented by some smaller container.

Another interpretation which cannot be completely excluded is the ritual or cultic significance of the find. This explanation might be supported by the atypical location and solitary occurrence of the collection on the site. According to the information given by the finder, the assemblage was found on a hillside. The collections of finds situated on hill-sides and hilltops which remind of funerary equipments (however, often including weapons) are known from later times – from the Early and Middle Roman Periods¹¹⁰. While searching for an appropriate interpretation, we should also mention a concept that resonates in contemporary archaeology and which could be also applied to the Lesonice collection. The relationship between finds from hoards/offerings and graves has been continuously discussed by researchers. N. Myrberg¹¹¹ supposed that the luxurious artefacts, which are known from graves and hoards from the Late Migration Period to the Viking Age, have been thoroughly chosen with regard to their function and symbolism and both types of contexts were then closely interlinked. However, we cannot exclude that these items might be relics with their own history, and some of them, mainly the luxurious, exotic or otherwise exceptional ones, can be also considered the so-called objects of memory¹¹². The artefacts from Lesonice are rare in a wider context of the Late La Tène Period in Moravia. We thus cannot critically exclude this view of the collection, either.

Contacts between the north-eastern barbarian territories and Moravia during the Late Pre-Roman Period on the example of Lesonice

Attempts have been made to demonstrate that the objects recovered from Lesonice in 2015 have their close equivalents among finds typical of the Late Pre-Roman Period from the Polish territory. Undoubtedly, however, the most

distinctive 'component' of the assemblage in question is the two-piece hinged belt hook which determines the context in which the collection of artefacts discovered there should be viewed. It has already been mentioned that it was this specific clothing accessory that was used primarily by the people of the Oksywie Culture, as well as of the Oder group of the Jastorf Culture. However, in the latter case, permanent links with areas of the Oksywie Culture have been raised¹¹³. It must be therefore assumed that the centre of production of the items in question was probably in the area populated by the Oksywie Culture. The emphasis is on the Chełmno region where sickle knives, variant IIa, were also concentrated. However, the Przeworsk Culture, strongly associated with areas of northern Poland¹¹⁴, cannot be eliminated from these considerations. That area hosted finds of this type, although in much smaller numbers¹¹⁵. Both the belt hooks and the sickle knives discussed here are not only widely regarded as markers of the Late Pre-Roman Period but are also associated with women's equipment and thus treated as female-specific objects, especially when they occur beside one another, as exemplified by the Oksywie-Przeworsk structures. As it has been mentioned, awls are interpreted in a similar way. The collection of objects from Lesonice corresponds most with the equipment from female graves discovered in the north-eastern zone of *Barbaricum*. This concept does not seem to be fundamentally negated by the presence of small knives, as these are often found in graves in association with belt hooks and sickle knives, possibly also with needle-shaped fire steels. The entire inventory gives an impression of having been carefully selected, wrapping up all the elements together. It cannot be ruled out that, on top of being useful in determining the gender, as well as their undoubted utilitarian and aesthetic value, the objects also had a symbolic function, indicating unity and dissimilarity at the same time.

Underlying this thinking is an assumption that identity is represented by clothing, for it is not uncommon for objects to function as identifiers of communities¹¹⁶. "Identity can be understood as the characteristics of an individual or group, accepted and noticed by a group and a society outside it, through perceptions of dissimilarity and similarity"¹¹⁷. So it is perceived as "I – the others" and "we – they"¹¹⁸. In this case, it seems likely that identity was manifested through

¹⁰⁸ cf. Keiling 1969, 25; Domański 1975, 77.

¹⁰⁹ see Keiling 1974, Taf. 5,46; 7,64; 9,85.

¹¹⁰ Vích/Jílek 2016, 372–376; Lauermann/Lindinger 2018, 84.

¹¹¹ Myrberg 2009, 135–136.

¹¹² in detail Lund 2008, 63; Myrberg 2009, 135–138; Quast 2011, 263–265; Bradley 2017, 53–54, with further literature.

¹¹³ Bokinić 2008, 62.

¹¹⁴ Łuczkiewicz 2018.

¹¹⁵ Lewczuk 1997, 41–42; Dąbrowska 2008, 38.

¹¹⁶ see Sørensen 1997, 93.

¹¹⁷ Sørensen 1997, 94; in detail Assmann 2001, 115–117; 122–123; Brather 2004, 97–99 Fig. 14.

¹¹⁸ Lewicka 2012, 360–361.

clothing, with the aim of preserving an ancestral or perhaps even tribal consciousness and maintaining a certain tradition. This would not be an isolated case in archaeology¹¹⁹. Clothing at that time had a specific function, binding the individual to a specific clan and allowing one to discern his or her social rank¹²⁰. However, some complications arise from the analysis of pottery, which is not as homogeneous as the metal finds. In particular, two rim fragments (Cat. No. 7–8) (Fig. 3,6–7) rather refer to domestic environment of the Late La Tène Period. This situation is in no way exceptional as regards the burials of “women from foreign regions” in early historical times. In other words, the presence of objects from various different regions cannot be excluded. But this statement at the same time puts the clear or confirmed connection to the domestic source area into perspective¹²¹. Therefore, it is necessary to critically reflect upon other interpretation possibilities as well. S. Brather¹²² suggested another explanation for the Migration Period, for example the gift exchange and transport of foreign objects as “exotic items” from other remote regions. If we accept the hypothesis of a foreign woman from Lesonice, we cannot rule out that the assemblage of finds, which contains objects atypical of the local Moravian structures, is the result of a mixed marriage. It must have been a marriage where, however, the woman retained her own possessions and thereby manifested her ancestral identity or a still existing bond with the group with which she wished to identify. In these cases, when a considerable distance was involved, the nuptial ceremony must have involved migration of women and gifts, as pointed out by Tacitus¹²³. In the case of migration of women, the importance of the transfer of intangible goods can hardly be overestimated¹²⁴. It should be emphasised that the extent to which items specific to a particular area are present in other areas, indicates not only the possible routes of distribution and redistribution of wealth. Indeed, the appearance of exogenous items does not necessarily testify only to commercial exchange. It is also evidence of the maintenance of far-reaching and varied contacts or, finally, of spatial mobility, i. e. personal contacts, which are at the basis of all exchange, as was early discovered in the Bronze and Iron Ages. Categories of materials particularly useful for studying personal interactions have been distin-

guished and the directions and routes of exchange between communities outlined, even those far apart¹²⁵.

It is well possible that the contact zone between the communities living in Moravia at that time and the people inhabiting what is now Poland included the southern route, known as the Amber Road, considered to be the main and most convenient transport route, connecting the southern coasts of the Baltic Sea with *Caput Adriae*¹²⁶. The fact that the phenomenon of Laténization of the Polish territory is attributable to influences from East Bohemia, but above all from Moravia, is not without significance¹²⁷. This route can, of course, be traced with reference to the dispersion of objects of the La Tène and later of Roman nature, although from the perspective of the Late Pre-Roman Period and the Polish territory of that time, objects bearing witness to contacts with people of the La Tène Culture deserve attention even if these interactions are not fully resolved¹²⁸. However, they document the operation of presumably two branches of the mentioned route¹²⁹.

Its western branch may have played a key role in the finds from Lesonice which clearly reflect the mutual contacts that must have been maintained by communities representing the traditions of La Tène Culture and the people in the Oksywie-Przeworsk milieu. These interactions, clearly not only of commercial nature, occurred throughout the Late Pre-Roman Period, including its final phase¹³⁰, although their increased intensity is noticeable in A2 phase and also in the A2/A3 horizon¹³¹. This is of special importance given the chronology of the Lesonice site. It seems to cover the possible end of phase A2 or the turn of phases A2/A3, or the beginning of phase A3.

The Amber Road ran, of course from a certain point, through the Moravian Gate and Silesia. In the context of Bohemia and Moravia, the few finds of hinged belt hooks, discovered on the eponymous site of the Kobyly group¹³², as well as on the Moravian sites – in the settlement at Bořitov and in the *oppidum* Staré Hradisko¹³³ – come from this area. On the other hand, the cemetery in Ciecierzyn, Silesia, has drawn archaeologists' attention; it operated since the begin-

119 see e. g. Eydoux 1958, 1–32; 47; cf. Rosen-Przeworska 1961.

120 Rosen-Przeworska 1961, 73.

121 Brather 2004, 284–285.

122 Ibid. 2004, 286–287.

123 Tacitus 129–130; see also Modzelewski 2004, 159–169.

124 Bochnak 2014, 199–201.

125 see Krämer 1961, 305–315; Jockenhövel 1991, 51–61.

126 Wielowiejski 1970, 204–205; 1980; Čížmář 1998, 35–41 Fig. 5; Bochnak/Goláňová 2010, 170–171 Fig. 9,1–3; for older development, see Maciałowicz 2015, 279; Duleba/Markiewicz 2021, 537; 541.

127 Woźniak 1970; Meduna 1980, 31–35; Bednarek 1996; cf. Okulicz-Kozaryn/Nowakowski 1996.

128 Teska 2012, 171.

129 see Bochnak 2014, 191–193.

130 Ibid. 2014, 192.

131 Bokinić 2008, 243.

132 Salač 2008, 137 obr. 37,8.

133 Čížmář 1990, 313 Fig. 2,12; 2003, 105.

ning of the Late Pre-Roman Period until phase B2a of the Roman Period¹³⁴. This cemetery has yielded both materials referring to intercultural patterns developed in the La Tène Culture, and belt hooks of the variant in kind, rare in Silesia, in the number of at least several specimens¹³⁵. Similarly, we can follow up the occurrence of belt hooks Wiloch type IX in the cemetery at Głogów-Nosocice¹³⁶, which also is situated in Lower Silesia. This region seems to have been of key importance for inter-barbarian contacts during not only the Late Pre-Roman but also the Roman Period. Northern and north-eastern Greater Poland was certainly a transit area in the Pre-Roman Period, connecting Lower Silesia with Kuyavia, and further the areas along the Vistula estuary. More finds of two-piece hinged belt hooks come from this region, although they are commonly linked to the Jastorf cultural horizon¹³⁷. These finds are complemented by recent discoveries from the cemetery at Mogilno site 76, located on the border between Greater Poland and Kuyavia where two-piece hinged belt hooks, knives with a distinct heel on one side of the blade, sickle knives with curved handles, and even fire-striking utensils were found¹³⁸. The transport routes running through Kuyavia seem to raise little discussion¹³⁹. On the other hand, river crossings are assumed for the area east of the Lower Vistula which were supposed to improve contacts with the inhabitants of south-eastern shores of the Baltic¹⁴⁰. The Lower Vistula region should be considered a very specific area. This is because it was determined by trade contacts and migrations which, at least in part, reflect the local cemeteries abundant in objects of various provenance¹⁴¹. The area was certainly of importance to the network of long-distance exchange, especially between the north and south of Europe, which was possible owing to the developed craftsmanship and the level of local manufacturing¹⁴². However, we should bear in mind that the contacts between the inhabitants and the broadly defined south of Europe took place, among other things, or perhaps above all (?), through the Przeworsk Culture

milieu. However, the areas at the river Elbe have not been excluded¹⁴³.

In the light of the above, it is difficult to point unequivocally to the specific region where the artefacts representing the finds from Lesonice are supposed to have originated. The Oksywie origin of the belt hook discovered there is beyond discussion. In fact, their presence is attributed to their origin as well as the proportion of bronze belt hooks in the inventories of the Przeworsk Culture. To point exclusively to the Lower Vistula and Chełmno regions, from where two-piece hinged belt hooks are supposed to originate, is a considerable simplification. According to the adopted concept of the Amber Road, we cannot reject parts of Silesia, even in the vicinity of Ciecierzyn and Głogów-Nosocice, or Greater Poland where the hinged belt hooks were located along the Noteć River.

Conclusions

The collection from Lesonice is difficult to interpret with regard to circumstances of finding. Its overall characteristics make it similar to funerary assemblages from the north-eastern *Barbaricum* in the Late Pre-Roman Period. Atypical location in terrain and presence of foreign elements allow to likely interpret the collection as a hoard/offering.

Dating is mainly based on a belt hook Wiloch type IX, which is significant for the stage A2, more exactly the phase A2b, or the transition A2/A3. It is a period, which can be synchronised with the Late La Tène stage LT D1 (or LTD2a according to the system by E. Droberjar¹⁴⁴). Archaeological material from this final phase of the La Tène Period in Bohemia and Moravia comprises besides belt hooks also pottery of Przeworsk Culture¹⁴⁵. The presence of these foreign elements has been interpreted in various ways, always depending on the region of occurrence. The explanation often ranges from trading activities to evidence of infiltration¹⁴⁶. Seen from a chronological point of view, the collection from Lesonice is probably a little older than the horizon of Przeworsk finds from Central Moravia (e. g. Dolany, grave 2, Dubany, Hulín-Pravčice, etc.), which fall within the stage A3 of the Late Pre-Roman Period, or to stage

134 Martyniak/Pastwiński/Pazda 1997, Tab. A.

135 Ibid. 1997, 74 Tab. XXVIII/25,8; XXXI/28,6; XL/37,14; XLVI/40,4; LXX-VIII/72,6; XCVII/98,11.

136 Błażejowski/Bohr/Chrzanowska 2020, 108 Tab. 50,16; 65,5.

137 Michałowski 2005, 169–170 Fig. 7–9; 2008, 92, Fig. 14,12–13.

138 The materials were presented by the site director, Andrzej Smaruj, Ph.D., as part of the *Extra limites* seminar held in Poznań on 8. April 2022.

139 cf. Cofta-Broniewska 1979, 131–157.

140 Wielowiejski 1980, 113–114; cf. Sadowska-Topór 1996; 1998; 1999.

141 Bokinić 2008, 240.

142 Ibid. 2008, 241–247.

143 see Okulicz-Kozaryn/Nowakowski 1996, 163.

144 Droberjar 2006.

145 most recently Droberjar 2019, 253–257; 284; Čížmář/Popelka 2020, 208; 211, obr. 3,7.

146 Salač 2008, 138.

Eggers A respectively¹⁴⁷. The presence of a belt hook, which has been considered a female-specific artefact, enables to draw some hypothetical conclusions: a) evidence for the presence of a woman from the Przeworsk-Oksywie cultural environment in the territory of present-day Moravia, b) evidence for gift exchange between the territory of La Tène Culture and the north-eastern *Barbaricum*, c) trading relations associated with the Amber Road.

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