

# New finds of Early La Tène brooches in the eastern part of Bohemia

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## ABSTRACT

The finds of the La Tène A period from Bohemia known traditionally mainly from the western part of the country are enriched also by the discovery of two new brooches associated with the world of the social elite in the region of Benátky nad Jizerou and Hlušičky near Nový Bydžov in the eastern part of the country and with their regional and interregional context.

## KEYWORDS

La Tène; Early period; Eastern Bohemia; brooches; social elite; regional and interregional relations.

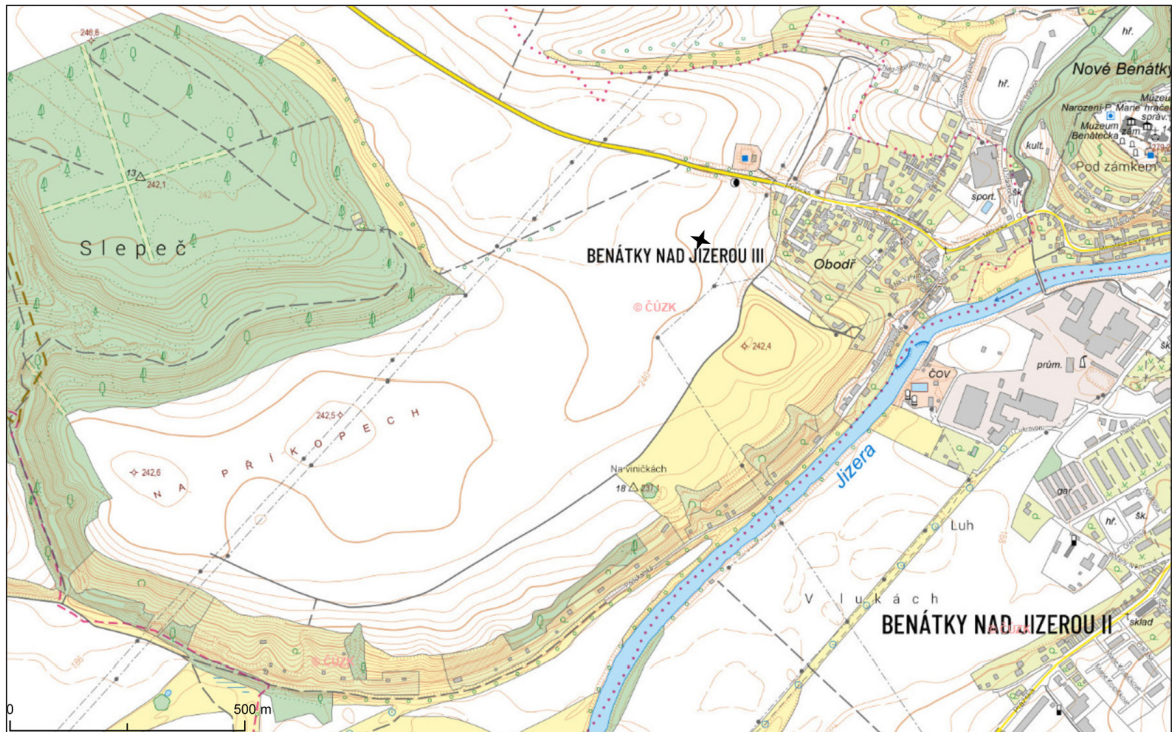
## INTRODUCTION

J. M. Bagley's seminal publication of Early La Tène art provides among other things an extensive overview of finds from Bohemia and Moravia (BAGLEY 2014, 502–510). However, this list is constantly supplemented by new discoveries. Apart from new finds arriving from the areas in which Early La Tène brooches have traditionally been found (BAGLEY 2014, Abb. 27, 31), predominantly in northwestern, western, and central Bohemia (STOLZ – SANKOT 2008; 2011; MEGAW 2015; TAPPERT – KLEMENTOVÁ – SANKOT 2020), discoveries are occurring in southern Bohemia (SANKOT *et al.* 2019; MICHÁLEK† *et al.* 2023) and recent research brought to light new finds also in the eastern half of Bohemia. This is also the case with the metal detector finds of the two bronze brooches discussed here. As in many other cases, their find circumstances are unfortunately lacking, but both finds clearly feature the standard manifestation of Early La Tène art with the motifs of a *Mischwesen* and a *Fabeltier*.

## BRONZE BROOCH FROM BENÁTKY NAD JIZEROU

### FIND CIRCUMSTANCES

The bronze brooch from Benátky nad Jizerou was found by Jitka Vytinová on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2017 during a surface survey in a field west of the town of Benátky nad Jizerou III-Obodř, towards the location Na Kopci (GPS coordinates 50.287383N, 14.8102958E). It lay at a depth of approximately 20 cm. The site is located on a high terrace above the Jizera River at 235 m above sea level, 550 m west of the Jizera River (**Fig. 1**).

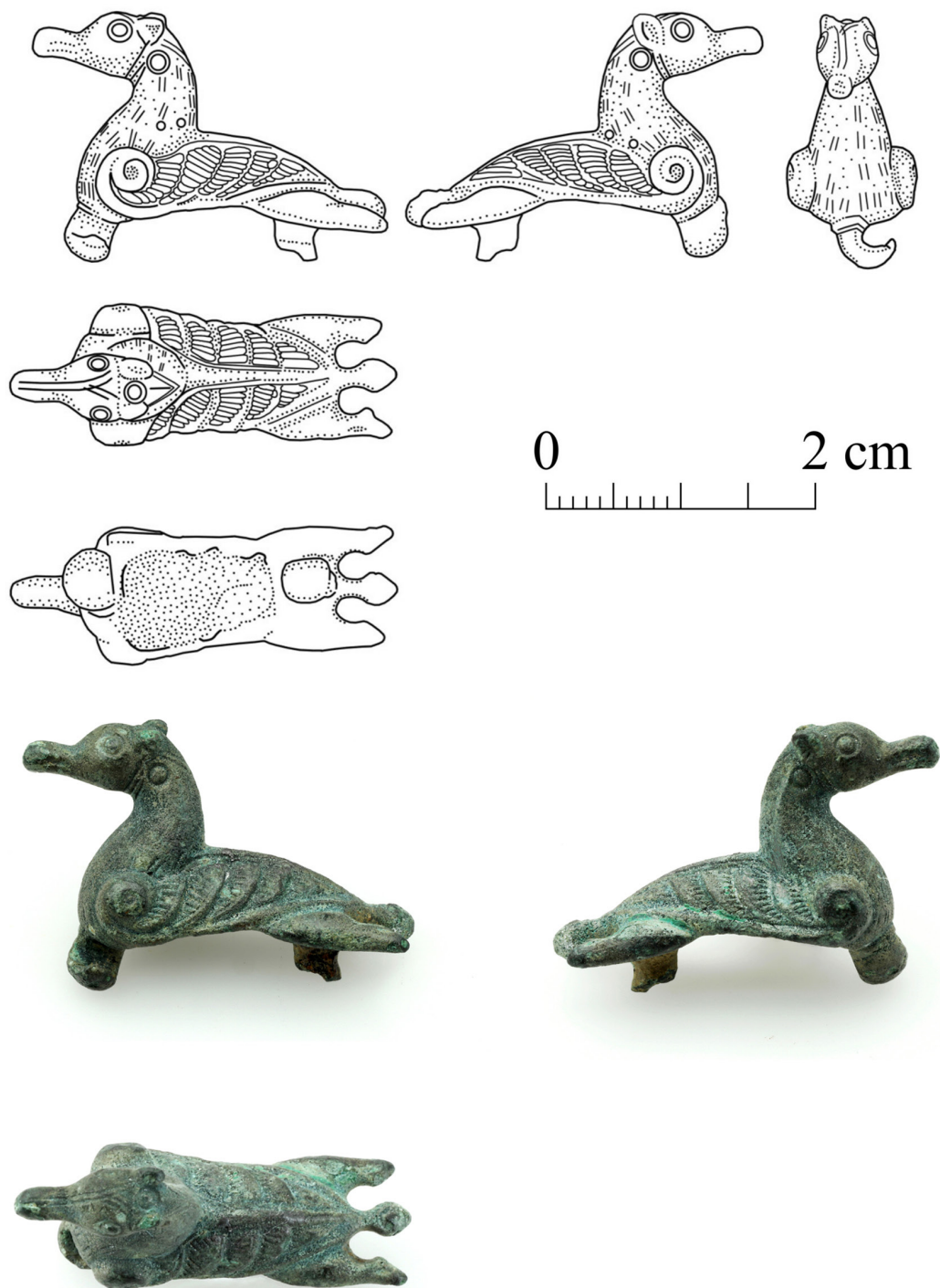


**Fig. 1: The findspot of the bronze fibula from Benátky nad Jizerou, Mladá Boleslav distr. Basemap: mapy.cz.**

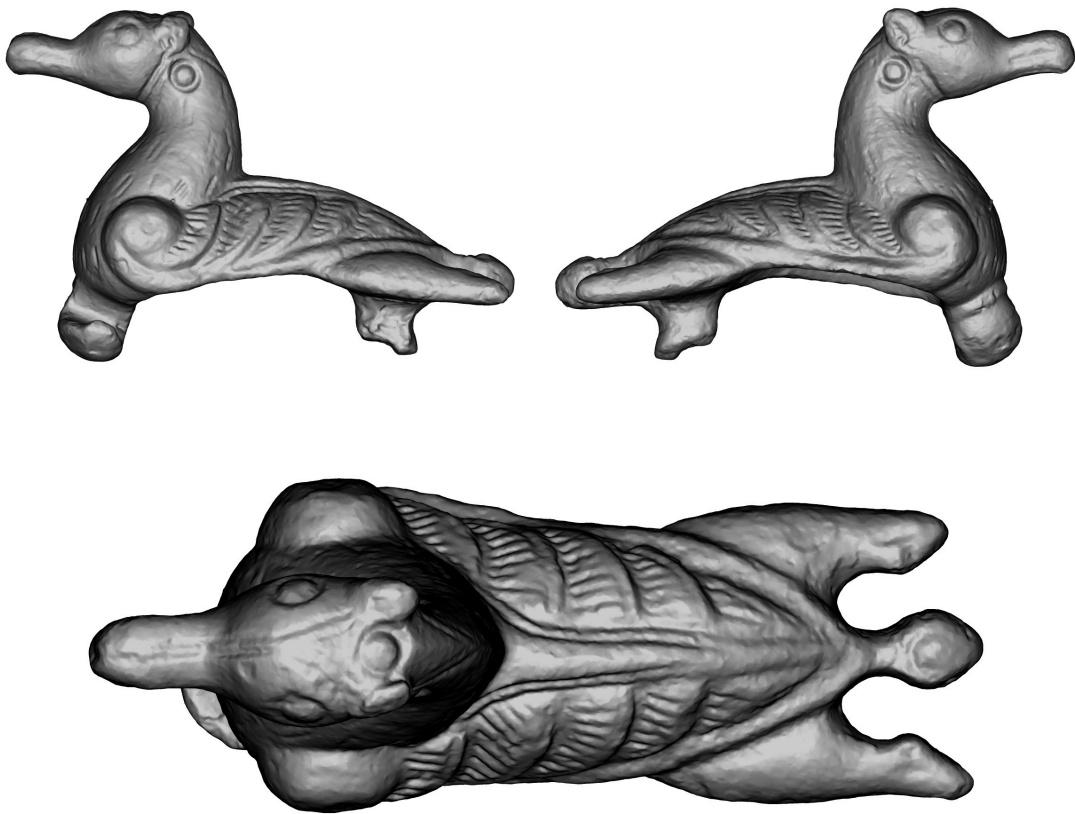
#### TYPOLOGY AND CHRONOLOGY OF THE BROOCH FROM BENÁTKY NAD JIZEROU

The cast bronze brooch (**Fig. 2-3, Pl. 2/1**) is made in the shape of a water bird with the beak curved slightly downward and the legs stretched backward. True to the principles of the *Mischwesen* depiction in the Early La Tène art, it combines a realistic representation of the basic figure (in this case the body of a water bird, probably a duck) with other realistic and mythical decorative elements. On the head of the bird there are pointed ears, in the middle of the ears and on the sides of the upper part of the neck, in the continuation below the head, there are three circular ornaments with a diameter of 1.2 mm. The engraved ornamentation forms a line with a triangular ornament on the forehead, and another triangular ornament is located on the back of the animal's head. The neck and chest are covered with pairs of vertical lines, the body of the bird on the brooch from Benátky nad Jizerou has two wings of approximately triangular shape. Each of the wings begins in the front part of the body in a relief spiral ornament and is articulated into five curved fields with perpendicular lines representing rows of feathers. A rectangular catch-piece sits on the rounded underside of the bird's chest. The back of the body is terminated by a short tail in the middle part, with legs spread on either side. The bow of the brooch is hollow inside. On the back part of the brooch there is a rectangular bar at the bottom with the remainder of the eye, originally carrying the spring axis. This, as well as the needle of the brooch, has not survived. The total length of the brooch is 26.8 mm, height 17.9 mm.

The combination of realistic and fantastic elements and their selection find many parallels among Early La Tène finds from Bohemia and beyond. Short lines covering the whole neck



**Fig. 2: Bronze brooch from Benátky nad Jizerou. Archaeological collection of the Museum of Mladá Boleslav Region. Drawing: R. Čambal, photo: A. Rývová.**



**Fig. 3: A 3D model of a bronze fibula from Benátky nad Jizerou. Author: T. Janek.**

and chest is a usual way to represent animal fur in different areas of the Early La Tène world as can be seen on the body of a bird brooch from grave 70/2 at the cemetery of the Dürrnberg near Hallein (MOOSLEITNER - PAULI - PENNINGER 1974, 32, Taf. 135:4); on the bodies of the double figurines of dogs or wolves on the rim of the beaked-flagon from Basse-Yutz (MEGAW - MEGAW 1990, pl. XI-XVa, b); on the bodies of a pair of seated bird-headed animals on a mask brooch from Parsberg (FREY 2002, fig. 143); or with semi-arched incisions on the body of a sphinx from Horné Orešany (ČAMBAL 2005, 38, 40, fig. 2).

The engraved double line creates a triangular ornament on the forehead and nape. The same pattern of a pair of symmetrically placed triangular ornaments on the forehead and nape with a central circular ornament is observed in the decoration of the brooch from grave 350 at the Dürrnberg necropolis (BAGLEY 2014, 485, Taf. 120:2). Spiral ornaments on the shoulders and hips of animals depicted have been pointed out by J. V. S. and R. Megaws (1990, 59) as a common occurrence on Early La Tène figural brooches. They cite the Parsberg brooch as a significant example (MEGAW - MEGAW 1990, pl. XXXIVb), and the spiral ornament on the shoulders and hips is also illustrated in the decoration of a mythical creature situated on the rim of a bronze flagon from grave 2, mound 1 at the Glauberg, Lkr. Wetteraukreis (FREY 1996a, 80, Abb. 93-95; BAGLEY 2014, 414, Taf. 81:2). This striking spiral ornament is depicted on the brooch from Benátky nad Jizerou in the area of the shoulder joint. A close parallel is the bronze brooch from grave 17/1984 at the Ossarn burial ground, Bezirk St. Pöllten-Land (MEGAW *et al.* 1989, Abb. 5:4, 11:1, 13:1; NEUGEBAUER 1994, 68, 70, Abb. 24:11; BAGLEY 2014, 489, Taf. 78:2). The Ossarn and the Benátky nad Jizerou examples both represent a mythical fig-

ure with horizontally ribbed wings growing from a relief spiral ornament. A similar wing articulation is attested on the sphinxes decorating the bronze belt-hook plate from mound I at the Weiskirchen burial ground, Ldkr. Merzig-Wadern (HAFFNER 1976, 21, 218, Taf. 14:5a, 157:1; BAGLEY 2014, Taf. 81:6a–b) or on the mythical creature (*Mischwesen*) on the lid of a flagon from burial 2, mound 1 at the Glauberg, Lkr. Wetteraukreis (HERRMANN 2002, 257, Abb. 251; BAGLEY 2014, 414, Taf. 82:2). The figural ornament on the brooch from grave 17/1984 in the Ossarn burial ground also includes a pointed ears motif adopted into Early La Tène period art from the Mediterranean area, where it was associated with the representation of satyrs (FREY 2012/2013, 36; BAGLEY 2014, 239, note 795; NEBELSICK 2022).

Since the brooch from grave 350 at the Dürrnberg was only published ‘*in der Aufsicht*’ (BAGLEY 2014, 485), some of its details cannot be established: for instance, it is not clear in what way the spring axis was connected to the body. The design of the catch-piece and the spring axis bar from the Benátky nad Jizerou brooch are identical to that of the brooches from the Dürrnberg burials 70/2 (MOOSLEITNER – PAULI 1974, 32, Taf. 135:4) and 96/2–4 (MOOSLEITNER – PAULI 1974, 63, Taf. 160:4–5; PAULI 1978, Abb. 11:1). It is in particular the brooch from the Dürrnberg grave 70/2 with its similar design of the wings and ribbing on the body, that can help give one an idea about the missing spring of the brooch from Benátky nad Jizerou: in the Dürrnberg brooch the spring is of a crossbow construction with an internal chord and an axle with spherical segments at its ends, commonly used on LT A products.

These structural and decorative elements also date to the end of LT A; in the chronology elaborated by Ludwig Pauli for the burial ground of the Dürrnberg they correspond to the phase II A 3 (PAULI 1978, 114, Beilage 15).

#### ON THE QUESTION OF THE EXPLANATORY VALUE OF TYPOLOGY

In a chapter on The Transformation of Communication Models (*‘Umsetzung des Kommunikationsmodells’*) Jenifer Bagley (BAGLEY 2014, 180–188) defined (among others) the iconographic category of ‘*Vögel der Gruppe I*’ with the formal criterion of a beak bent downward.<sup>1</sup> However, classifying the brooch from Benátky nad Jizerou into Bagley’s typological group ‘*Vögel I*’ would pose certain problems. In fact, most bird representations of this group with a distribution stretching from the western Rhineland to Bohemia, southwestern Slovakia, and the Austrian Alpenvorland (BAGLEY 2014, 180, Abb. 104), are only very loosely related to the brooch from Benátky nad Jizerou. Of a total of 146 brooch finds of this group listed by Bagley (2014, 180–188), most have a backward-turned head, only the above-mentioned group of four brooches from the burial ground at the Dürrnberg near Hallein is formally close to our find (BAGLEY 2014, 477, 479, 485, Taf. 120:2, 5–7). The position and ornamentation of the figure from the Benátky nad Jizerou brooch also shows a striking similarity to the brooch from Ossarn, which belongs to the category of the *Mischwesen*, combining human and animal elements in their shape (BAGLEY 2014, 489, Taf. 78:2).

These relationships to areas in the southern neighbourhood of Bohemia in the Early La Tène period (VENČLOVÁ *et al.* 2013, 164–166), are underlined by the recent discovery of a bronze plate from Plešivec with a central mask, equipped with a pair of narrow and relatively weakly curved horns. According to them, this ornament is associated with the representation of the Alpine ibex (*Capra ibex*) (STOLZ – SANKOT 2011, 389–391, fig. 4:1–4).

1 As the author herself pointed out, this criterion – primarily characteristic of birds of prey – leads to the inclusion of other types of animal ornaments in this typological group, for example, the rooster-shaped brooch from Reinheim, Lkr. Saarpfalz with finely engraved body ornamentation and further decoration with coral (BAGLEY 2014, 443, Taf. 121:3).

## SOCIAL AND SPATIAL ASPECT OF THE BROOCH FROM BENÁTKY NAD JIZEROU

The brooch from Ossarn is made of bronze and iron, decorated with amber and again fitted with a crossbow spring with a top chord and spherical segments at the ends of the brooch axis. The find of this brooch comes from an inhumation grave (17/1984) of a young woman richly furnished with jewellery and pottery (URBAN 2012, 1427-1428).

The grave 70/2 at the Dürrenberg was a burial of a 20–25-year old woman. She was equipped with eight bronze mask and bird brooches, glass beads (probably on a necklace), two bronze bracelets, a belt made of organic material with an iron belt hook and iron rings, two bronze anklets, an iron knife, and a combination of two pottery vessels – a bowl and a tall flask (MOOSLEITNER – PAULI – PENNINGER 1974, 32–33, Taf. 134C, 135). Such equipment implies a member of the highest social class of the time.

The bird brooches in grave 96 at the Dürrenberg made up part of the grave goods of three burials (MOOSLEITNER – PAULI – PENNINGER 1974, 62–64, Taf. 159B–161), including finds of a similar character to the equipment of grave 70/2. Therefore, there can be no doubt that the bronze bird brooches, under study, belong to the grave goods of the social elite, for whose needs the Early La Tène style was generally designed and produced.

The Early La Tène figurative brooch from Benátky nad Jizerou thus suggests a similar social context. In addition to the high level of workmanship of the brooch itself, it is worth pointing out the vicinity of its find spot to the traces of a square enclosure ‘with a side length of almost ten metres’, which – according to Waldhauser (2002, 146–147) – implies ‘a grave of a prominent person from the 5<sup>th</sup> century’. Similar features are a characteristic phenomenon of the (Early) La Tène civilization in Bohemia (MANGEL *et al.* 2023). Nearby there are also evident traces of probable (but as yet undated) settlement features. On the other hand, the alleged ditches of a hillfort on the nearby promontory called ‘Příkopy’ (WALDHAUSER 2002, 147) have not been documented (personal communication with R. Křivánek).

One of the most recent finds of Early La Tène art in the eastern part of Central Bohemia is a bronze figural brooch from Hradištko, Nymburk distr. (WALDHAUSER 2014). Like the brooches presented in this paper, it was discovered without precise information about its primary context. An ever-increasing number of finds clearly indicates the presence of the Early La Tène social elite in the central Elbe region<sup>2</sup> (a stamped pottery fragment with a horse motif from Kanín, Nymburk distr.: MEGAW – MEGAW 2010; a bronze Speikern-type brooch from Třebovle, Nymburk distr.: VALENTOVÁ – SANKOT 2000, 269, Abb. 2c; a rich burial from Přerov nad Labem: SANKOT 2014). The discovery of the bronze brooch from Benátky nad Jizerou, together with the previously known finds from Jabkenice (RYBOVÁ 1969, 427, fig. 5:1–2; WALDHAUSER 2002, 89, 91), broadens the area of these finds further north.

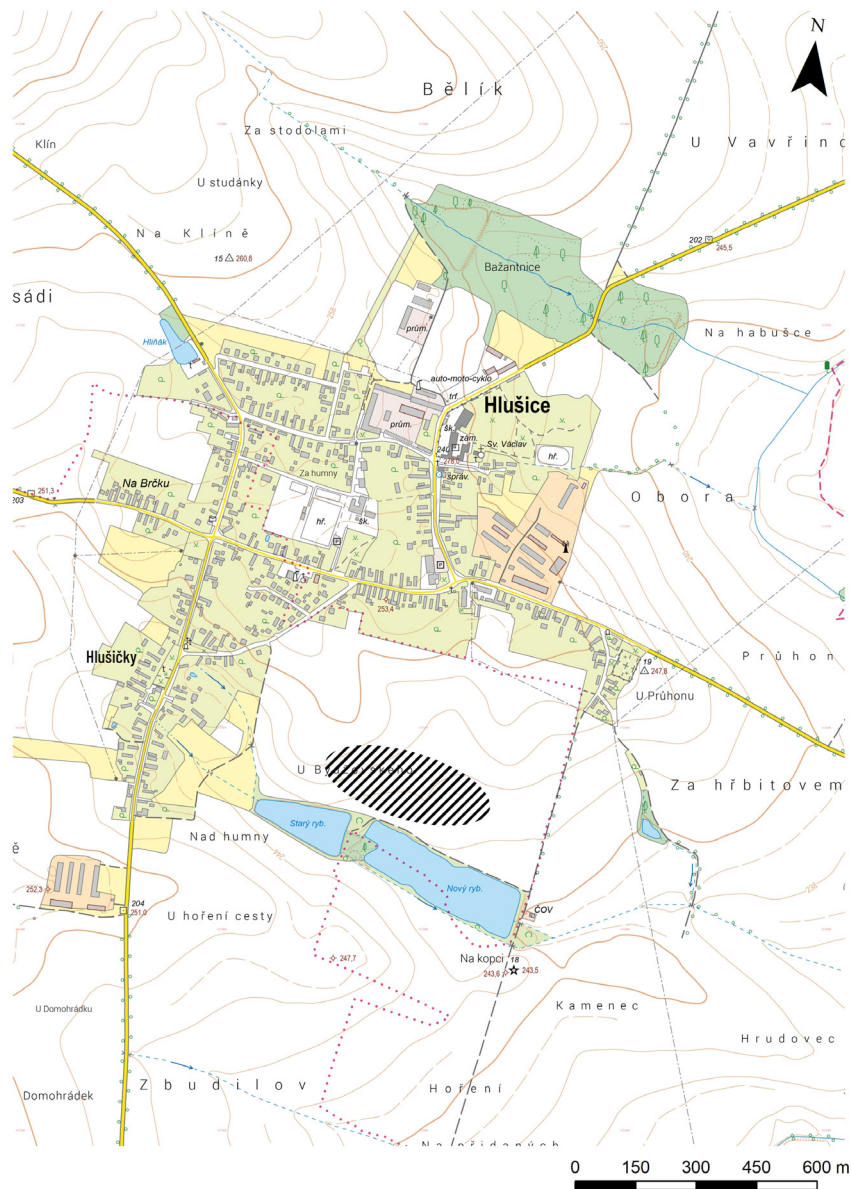
## BRONZE BROOCH FROM HLUŠIČKY, HRADEC KRÁLOVÉ DISTR.

### FIND CIRCUMSTANCES

A bronze figurative brooch (**Fig. 4**; kept in the archaeological collection of the Museum of Eastern Bohemia in Hradec Králové, inv. no. 94652) was found in 2020 by Josef Bis near the village of Hlušičky approximately 3 km west of Nový Bydžov (find spot 50.2572614N, 15.4003939E). At present, the site is located on a very gentle southern slope slanting towards a pair of ponds

2 This topic was discussed in detail by J. Waldhauser (2014, 169).

and a nameless watercourse. The altitude of the site is around 245 m above sea level. It is currently a field system. Historical maps of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>3</sup> show the site as more rugged and there were meadows in place of the later ponds. However, on the maps of the First Imperial military survey (1760s–1780s) there is a pond in approximately the same place as today and a watercourse running through it.<sup>4</sup> Therefore we can assume that the landscape has undergone a dramatic change over a relatively short period of time and therefore nothing can be said about its form in the further past.



**Fig. 4: Position of bronze fibula finding from Hlušičky, Hradec Králové dist. Basemap: ČÚZK.**

3 Including the Stable cadastre maps (1820s–1830s) and the Second (1810s–1860s) and Third (1860s–1880s) Imperial military survey.

4 <http://oldmaps.geolab.cz>

The polycultural site is known from surface surveys that have been carried out there since the 1980s (ČERNÝ 2015). A La Tène period component has been documented in two locations in the village territory – U Bydžovského and Pod Bažantnicí. The locations have been surveyed by detectorists for a long time, the first find submitted to the Museum of East Bohemia in Hradec Králové was made in 2014 by J. Skala. The finds, which have not been processed yet, include fragments of pottery, brooches, pendants, and a bracelet, all of them, however, from the later phases of the La Tène period.

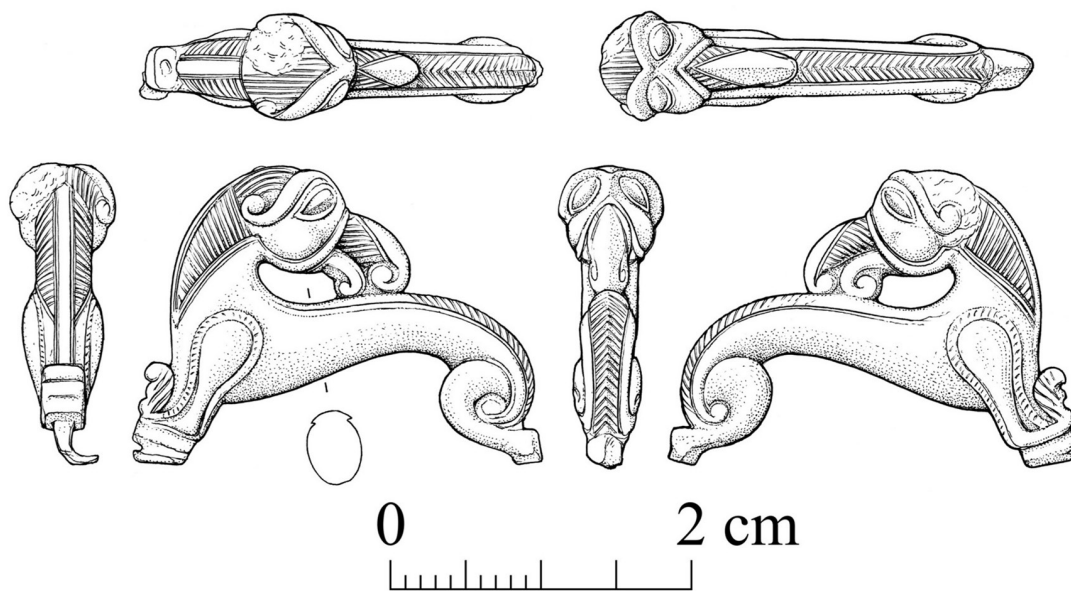
#### TYOLOGY AND CHRONOLOGY OF THE HLUŠIČKY BROOCH

The bronze brooch from Hlušičky (**Fig. 5-6, Pl. 2/2**) represents a griffin with an S-shaped body and a prominently modelled backward-turned head, a spiral-ended beak, large almond-shaped eyes, S-shaped supraorbital eyebrows, and relief hatching in triangular fields reaching from the top of the head down to the sides of the nape. The same style of hatching is present on the sides of the beak. When viewed from the front, the representation of the griffin's head above the root of the beak turns into a representation of a human mask. The upper and lower parts of the beak are bent downwards and both terminate in spirals. The head is turned backwards, the ends of the beak touching the back of the animal's S-shaped body. The back of the body is divided along its entire length by a rib which is engraved by stacked chevrons. The front leg is stylized by a broad oval upper part, again lined by a narrow finely engraved rib, and its lower narrowed part is followed by a straight foot that touches a finely ribbed leaf-shaped protrusion. The rear part of the animal's body ends in a spiral entwined with the – also spiral shaped – stylized thigh. The winding of the brooch as well as the pin are broken off. The total length of the brooch is 29 mm, the height 21.4 mm.

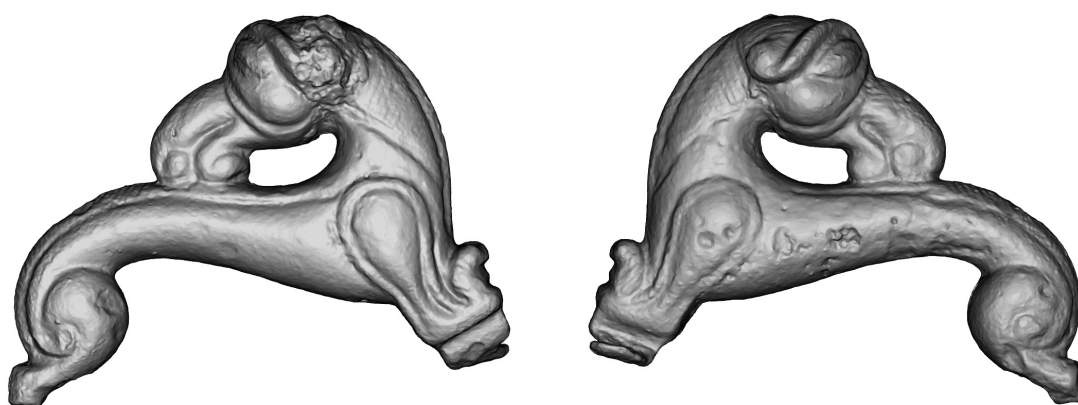
Originally P. Jacobsthal and M.A. Guggisberg searched for parallels for the motif of the head turned over the back in the Near East and among the Scythians (GUGGISBERG 1998, 558–560, Abb. 5–7). According to O.-H. Frey, the representation of the head turned backwards in La Tène art is taken from the art of the Veneto in the eastern part of northern Italy (FREY 2004, 114, fig. 2; FREY 2007, 783, Abb. 3:3–4). The motif of the wingless griffin is believed to be exclusive to Etruscan iconography (DUCEPPE-LAMARRE 2002, 68–69, fig. 5), from where it was adopted into the La Tène art, with a strong presence in the iconography of the west La Tène area, especially in the Rhineland and Marne region on both metal and pottery objects (FREY 2004, 120). The closest parallel to the overall shape of the brooch with a backward-turned head, pointed ears, form of the beak, and an S-shaped body with a back spirally outlined thigh can be found in the decorative openwork bronze fittings of a ceremonial chariot from Bad Dürkheim, Lkr. Bad Dürkheim (FREY 1996b, Abb. 4:2; BAGLEY 2014, 402, Tab. 112:1).

The backward turned head of the griffin on the brooch from Hlušičky is also characterized by prominent S-shaped brows. A strong representation of this motif of Early La Tène art of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC has been observed by J. V. S. Megaw (1965/66, 116–134, Abb. 2: F, H, J, 4B: A–I, Taf. 2:1–4, 10:1–4), and more recently by J. Bagley (2014, 113, Taf. 50–51, 53, 54, 69) in the German-French area. However, the bronze brooch from Slovenské Pravno also shows stylistic similarities (MEGAW 2012, fig. 2–3). An illustrative example from the west La Tène area is the aforementioned bronze brooch from Parsberg, which, along with the brooch from Hlušičky, contains, in addition to the prominent S-shaped eyebrows, an identical hairstyle and distinctive almond-shaped eyes (FREY 2002, 178, Abb. 143). The latter motif of almond-shaped eyes can also be observed in finds from Bohemia, for example in the design of the ram's head on the foot of the bronze brooch from Panenský Týnec (MEGAW – MEGAW 2001, fig. 111).





**Fig. 5: Drawing and photograph of the bronze fibula from Hlušičky. Archaeological collection of the Museum of Eastern Bohemia in Hradec Králové, inv.no. 94652. Drawing M. Černý, photo: J. Souček.**



**Fig. 6: 3D model of the bronze fibula from Hlušičky. Author: T. Janek.**

The brooch from Hlušičky differs in the depiction of the beak, from the widespread motif – present on brooches, decorations, belt hooks, and weapons – of a beast ‘with open mouth’ (*Tierkopfleier/Wesen mit aufgerissenem Maul* – BAGLEY 2014, 169–180, Taf. 99–119). In these cases, the jaws of the beak are heavily flared or the upper one may even be turned outwards. On the brooch from Hlušičky, however, both jaws terminating in spirals are only slightly opened, according to the spiral termination of the upper part. The same design can be seen frequently in finds from the west La Tène area, in the decoration of the flagon from grave 2 in mound 1 at the Glauberg, Lkr. Wetterauskreis (BAGLEY 2014, 414, Taf. 101:1b), the bronze disc from Cuperly, Dép. Marne (BAGLEY 2014, 460, Taf. 112:2), bronze and iron applications from Semide, Dép. Ardennes (BAGLEY 2014, 466, Taf. 112:4–5; LAMBOT – VERGER – MÉNIEL 1995, 40–49, fig. 39–50), but also from Central Europe, such as the iron belt hook from Roseldorf (HOLZER 2009, 5, Abb. A-3), bronze brooch from grave 193:2 at the Dürrenberg (BAGLEY 2014, 484, Taf. 113:5), or bronze brooch from Horné Orešany (BAZOVSKÝ 2006, figs. 2–3, 5).

The closest parallel to the overall body shape of the beast from the Hlušičky brooch with its backward-turned head, triangular ears (?), and an S-shaped body with a spirally outlined rear thigh, is the sphinx on the rim of the flagon from grave 1 in mound 1 at the Glauberg (FREY 1996a, 80, Abb. 93–95).

The depiction of the legs of mythical creatures is also important in the iconography of early La Tène art. The depiction of the foreleg with a stylized rounded upper part and a tapered lower part with a straight foot has find parallels in the depiction of the leg in the decoration of the bronze belt-hook plate from mound I at the burial ground of Weiskirchen, Ldkr. Merzig-Wadern. Also, in this case the depicted beasts are of Mediterranean descent – they are winged sphinxes (HAFFNER 1976, 21, 218, Taf. 14:5a, 157:1; BAGLEY 2014, Taf. 81:6b).

Another feature that links the brooch from Hlušičky with the Early La Tène art is the composition in which the motif on the forehead of the animal can be read as a mask. Such a motif is documented in e.g. the bronze brooch from Nová Huť, district Plzeň-North, i.e. one of the finds considered to be a local product, reflecting the tradition of the Middle Rhine area production (MEGAW – MEGAW 2001, 86, fig. 106). This design (characteristic of one group of figural brooches occurring exclusively east of the Rhine: BAGLEY 2014, 208–210), is also close to the composition of the decoration of another bronze mask brooch from eastern Bohemia, which comes from settlement feature 8/2006 in Mikulovice, Pardubice distr. Its decoration offers a similar possibility of a double reading: an animal head from the side view into a human mask when viewed from above (SEDLÁČEK – SANKOT 2013, 569, pl. 1:1–5)

## SPIRITUAL, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL ASPECTS

Nothing is known about the find circumstance of the brooch from Hlušičky.

Its decoration consists of stylistic elements, which can be found in the Early La Tène brooches of both the west La Tène area and the Danube region. In his study of stylistic connections of the bronze brooch from Slovenské Pravno, V. Megaw considered some brooches from Bohemia as possible imports from the west La Tène area while others may be local copies (MEGAW 2012, 448, fig. 3). At least two theoretical models are possible in the case of the brooch from Hlušičky.

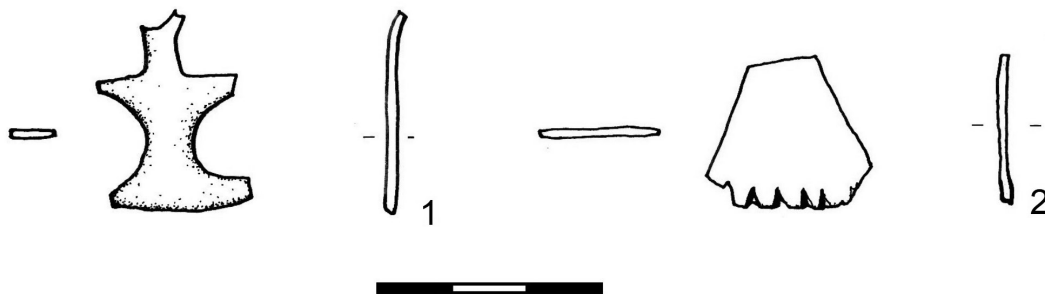
The first possibility is that the object is imported. A number of studies and analyses reconstructed the assumed communication links connecting Bohemia with the areas located to the south and southwest and leading through its territory further north westwards to Saxony and north eastwards through eastern Bohemia to Silesia (VENCLOVÁ *et al.* 2013, 163, fig. 94). This latter direction is highlighted by the northern occurrence of finds associated with Early

La Tène graves with two-wheeled chariots or parts of horse harnesses. Specifically, this includes the find of a fragment of bronze sidebar of a horse harness from Nový Bydžov (Píč 1902, tab. XX:2), a site in the vicinity of Hlušičky, as well as a hoard of bronze phalerae at Jaroměř discovered in a defunct barrow cemetery / an Early La Tène settlement (VOKOLEK – SANKOT 2001a) located in the communication corridor to Silesia (CHYTRÁČEK 1999, fig. 5). These lines of communication were evidently associated with the occurrence of Early La Tène swords identically deformed before burial (SANKOT 2003, fig. 1), which include also a deformed iron sword with a Dürrnberg-type chape and a bronze front scabbard plate discovered in grave 1/61 in Lochenice, Hradec Králové distr. (VOKOLEK – SANKOT 2001b, 470, Abb. 5A–F). It is not surprising that the morphology of the sword from Lochenice and partly also the decoration of the phalerae from Jaroměř (VOKOLEK – SANKOT 2001a, 249–250, Abb. 11–12A–B, 13E) are close to the chape type and the geometrical decorative component of the sword from grave 994 in Hallstatt (EGG – HAUSCHILD – SCHÖNFELDER 2006, 184, 187–188, 190, Abb. 8:1–3 and 12), i.e., a find from the southern part of the so-called Golden Route communication (PAULI 1974, Abb. 1). One of the hubs of the period communication system was undoubtedly the central settlement in Žehuň, Kolín distr., which was occupied for a long time from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. Situated on the border between Central and East Bohemia, it was actively involved in local and transregional trade (DANIELISOVÁ *et al.* 2018, 170). We can assume that even the bronze flat-bottomed bowl with vertical sides discovered as far away as the peripheral site of Bolkowice (woj. Dolnośląskie) is undeniably related to the transregional trade (HAUSER – SCHÖNFELDER 2014, 442, Abb. 5; CHYTRÁČEK 2015, 281, Abb. 5, 6:6).

Another possible explanation of the current scarcity of Early La Tène finds such as figural brooches in the eastern part of Bohemia, is the state of research: our knowledge of the early phase of the La Tène culture in this region has been radically changing over the last several decades. This is due to the publication of earlier assemblages (VOKOLEK – SANKOT 2001a), the excavation of new burial sites from the Late Hallstatt and Early La Tène phases of a local character (VOKOLEK – SANKOT 2001b), but also to the discovery of new open lowland settlements which provide us with an insight into the local elite milieu of the Early La Tène period. An example is the settlement in Tuněchody with the discovery of, among other things, a fragment of the spout of a clay beaked jar (TREFNÝ *et al.* 2012; MANGEL – DANIELISOVÁ – JÍLEK 2013, 31, figs. 15–18, tab. 1 below) or the settlement in Mikulovice, Pardubice distr. with the discovery of a richly decorated bronze figural brooch in feature 8/2006 (SEDLÁČEK – SANKOT 2013, 569, pl. 1:1–8). It shares with the Hlušice brooch its iconographic system in which the depiction of an animal from the side view turns into a human mask when viewed from above. Moreover, the shape of the Mikulovice brooch finds a certain echo in a group of Early Late Bronze one-piece brooches with a short spring and a foot in the form of a stylized bird's head with an elongated beak; M. Gedl traced their occurrence in the Early La Tène period exclusively in the part of Silesia adjacent to East Bohemia in the Pomeranian and Late Lusatian culture find contexts (GEDL 2004, 137–138, Taf. 68:1–3, 89A). The unique figural brooch from Mikulovice comes from a settlement feature in which it was associated with instruments for metal working, with agricultural tools, and indices of household textile production, with bone instruments, and with stamped pottery and the 'geriefte Drehscheibekeramik'. This assemblage can be linked with either the presence of a social elite or of a highly specialised craftsman (SEDLÁČEK – SANKOT 2013).

The extent and character of the Early La Tène social elite milieu in eastern Bohemia will be only established by the exploration of more sites, mainly open settlements. At the same time, one cannot overlook the hilltop site of Hradiště Osek/Sekeřice-Kostelík located only about 4 km NW of Hlušičky. It is a well-known hillfort dated to the Hallstatt period (SEDLÁČKOVÁ

1976; ČTVERÁK *et al.* 2003, 227–228), part of which was destroyed by fire (PLESL – SEDLÁČKOVÁ 1977). The first excavations in the hillfort, uncovered evidence of settlement features and an assemblage of Hallstatt period pottery and especially bone artefacts, including a bone sidebar of a bridle (SEDLÁČKOVÁ 1976, 112, figs. 2–3).<sup>5</sup> Occupation of the site to Ha D2 is dated by a find of a bronze drum fibula (TREFNÝ 2016, 147–149, obr. 6:1).



**Fig. 7: Osek/Sekeřice hillfort, Na Kostelíku. 1 - bronze hourglass-shaped pendant; 2 - bronze comb-shaped pendant. Archaeological collection of the Museum of Eastern Bohemia in Hradec Králové, inv. No. 80540 and 80539. Drawing: K. Čecháková.**

The significance of this site in another period is suggested by a few, albeit isolated finds. An hourglass-shaped pendant (**Fig. 7:1**), a type known from various sites of the Urn Field period (JIRÁŇ *ed.* 2013, 226, fig. 136:13; VOKOLEK 1999, 158, tab. 135:6–9), suggests that the Osek hillfort ranks among the numerous hillforts of the Ha B1 period. With its smaller area in a strategic location, it was intended for a stratum of the population with a higher social and economic level (JIRÁŇ *ed.* 2013, 170, 246). In the inner area of the hillfort J. Skala and his team discovered a bronze comb-shaped pendant (**Fig. 7:2**) signaling that Osek / Sekeřice retained its importance also in the Late La Tène period, while other finds testify to Early Medieval occupation (VESELÝ 2019).

## CONCLUSIONS

A. Duceppe-Lamarre's study on the representation of griffins in the Early La Tène art confirms that the absence of realism was not a deficiency of the La Tène artists but an expression of their efforts to create their own conception of figurative representation with symbolic content and their own means, which in its turn contributes to the creation of the Early La Tène artistic style (DUCEPPE-LAMARRE 2002, 69).

Its destination for a clientele from the social elite of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC is illustrated by all the above listed parallels, and can be assumed both in the case of the brooch from Benátky nad Jizerou and that found at Hlušičky.

<sup>5</sup> The finds are deposited in the Polabské Museum in Poděbrady.

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