

New finds of metal vessel elements of the La Tène period from Eastern Bohemia

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ABSTRACT

The paper aims to assess a few new finds of metal vessels from the Late La Tène sites in Eastern Bohemia. These objects are first analysed from a formal and stylistic perspective, and subsequently discussed in the context of other similar finds and their significance. The bronze vessel feet from Černčice, Rozběřice, and an unknown site which belong to the category of Mediterranean imports are discussed – along with other representatives of Late Republican toreutics – also from the point of view of the La Tène period and the Early Roman Iron Age occupation. The find from Bolehošť, on the other hand, represents an unparalleled applique in the shape of a stylised bull-head whose rendition corresponds with the West La Tène artistic approach.

KEYWORDS

La Tène period; Roman Iron Age; Eastern Bohemia; bronze vessel; import.

INTRODUCTION

Metallic vessels from the late La Tène period – no matter whether imported from the Mediterranean or locally manufactured – rank among highly attractive though numerically limited categories of artefacts. This statement holds the more true in relatively far flung and peripheral regions. Even though Eastern Bohemia was surely such a peripheral region in the centuries around the turn of the Common Era, there are still several fragments of metallic vessels which came down from this region to various museum collections during the 20th century. The majority are usually associated with the occupation of the region during the early phases of the Roman Iron Age. This picture is newly complemented by several new finds obtained through metal detector surveys over the last decade. The objective of the present paper is to publish four of these – unpublished so far – and take a fresh look at the find corpus as a whole.

THE FINDS – DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

DECORATIVE APPLIQUE FROM BOLEHOŠŤ, OKR. RYCHNOV NAD KNĚŽNOU

The find was discovered by J. Otčenášek during a metal detector survey on the 16th November 2013 in the territory of Bolehošť in a field west of the site V rybníčkách, plot no. 1027/4 (**Fig. 1:1**; WGS84 coordinates: 50.221983° N, 16.071983° E). The site located on a gentle slope at an altitude of 262–274 m.a.s.l. was discovered in 1959 during travertine quarrying which at the same time destroyed its greater part (RYBOVÁ 1968, 8). In 1986, J. Boček obtained more finds in the plots in the immediate neighbourhood of the travertine quarry (KALFERST – SIGL – VOKOLEK 1987, 4). A new wave of interest in the site arose only after 2010 when it became the focus of researchers from the Museum and Gallery of the Orlice Mountains in Rychnov nad Kněžnou

and their collaborators who undertook there a series of field-walking and metal detector surveys. Hundreds of working hours were spent on the surveys in the fields around the former travertine quarry – the site's original core.¹ Apart from evidence of activities during the La Tène period, specifically in the timespan of LT B2–D1, the site also yielded finds from the Palaeolithic, the Urnfield period, from the phases Ha D2–3 and LT A, from the later phase of the Early and from the Late Roman Iron Age, as well as from the Early and High Middle Ages.

Description: A bronze applique in the shape of a stylised bull head with horns terminating in small balls and with a pointed attachment plate (**Fig. 2:1**). There is a perforation in the attachment plate with a bronze rivet passing through, with its head decorated with two crossing grooves. On the transition between the attachment plate and the shaft, there is a horizontal groove by means of which the object was fitted onto an edge. Overall height 53 mm, height of the attachment plate 11.5 mm, width of the attachment plate ca. 11.5 mm, width of the horizontal groove ca. 2.5 mm, weight 13.0 g. Kept in the Museum and Gallery of the Orlice Mountains in Rychnov nad Kněžnou, inv. no. A527.

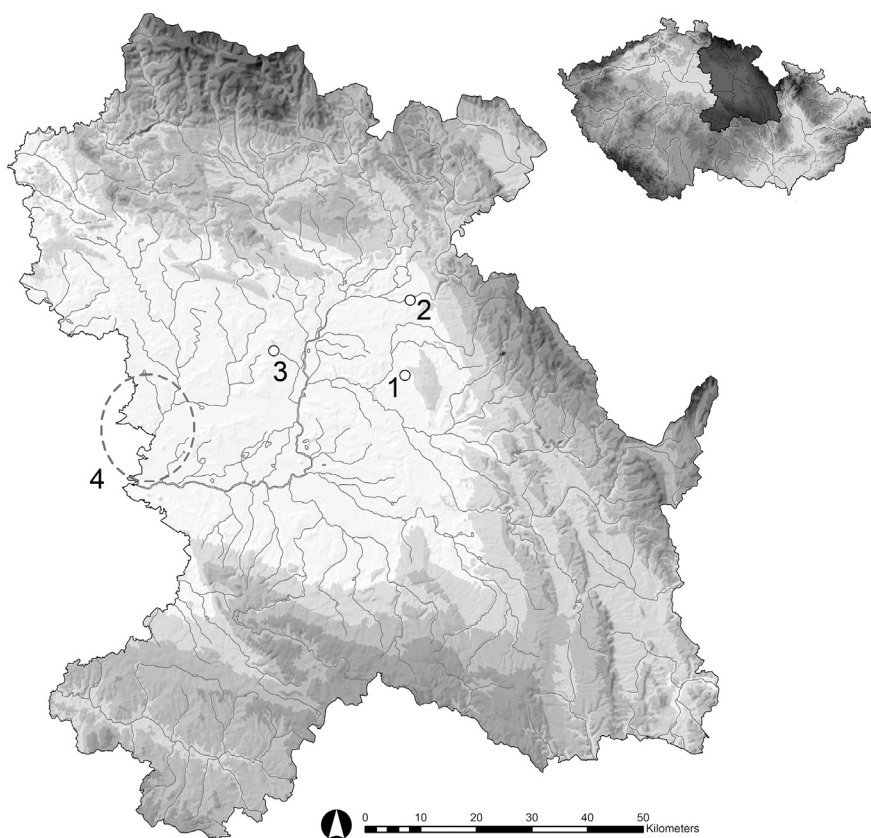


Fig. 1: New finds of La Tène period metal vessels in Eastern Bohemia. 1 - Bolehošť, okr. Rychnov nad Kněžnou; 2 - Černčice, okr. Náchod; 3 - Rozběřice, okr. Hradec Králové; 4 - unknown site, (Lovčice-surrounding, okr. Hradec Králové).

- 1 Except for the travertine outcrop in the V Rybníčkách area itself, the quarrying impacted also other adjoining plots of land. Most artefacts obtained on the surface after the end of the quarrying in the 1960s clearly ended up in their finds-spots as a result of secondary plough-soil manipulations. Nevertheless, based on the testimony of direct witnesses, such soil transfer only took place locally, i.e., no soil was bought from the outside. Therefore, there is no doubt about the origin of all the finds from the site itself.

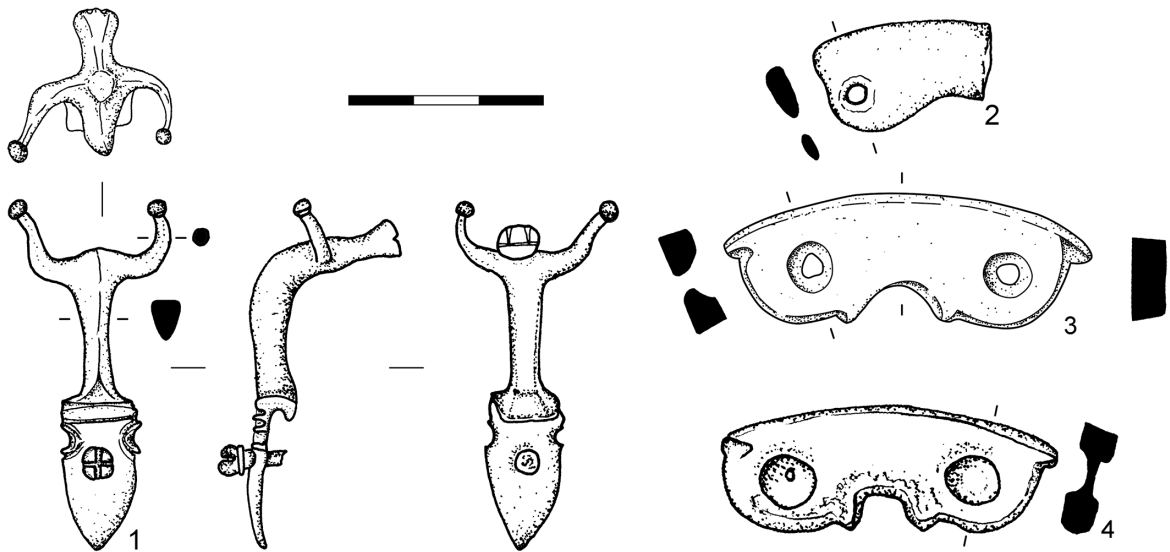


Fig. 2: New finds of La Tène period metal vessels in Eastern Bohemia. 1 - Bolehošť, okr. Rychnov nad Kněžnou; 2 - Černčice, okr. Náchod; 3 - Rozběřice, okr. Hradec Králové; 4 - unknown site, (Lovčice-surrounding, okr. Hradec Králové). Drawing T. Jošková (1-3), J. Kysela (4).

Representations of bulls rank among relatively common iconographic elements in the Iron Age (MEGAW – MEGAW 2001, 142). Depictions of stylised bull heads with the horns terminating in globular pellets are particularly relevant for our needs. They appeared in Transalpine Europe already during the Hallstatt period and some isolated pieces even date to the first centuries of the new era (SCHÖNFELDER 2009; TREFNÝ 2016, 425–428) though they are most characteristic of the final stages of the La Tène period, specifically LT C2–D (cf. overview in BOCHNAK – KIEFERLING 2009). In La Tène culture contexts, bull protomes with horns terminating in pellets can be most typically found on iron fire-dogs, forming part of hearths. Although best documented in Western Europe and the British Isles, in some rare cases they appear also further east in Central and south-eastern Europe (FEUGÈRE 2002, 423–433, 451, Abb. 4; GINOUX 2006; SCHÖNFELDER 2009, 782–783). Less common appearances of bull protomes with horns terminating in globular pellets include brooches, small statuary in metal, and decorative appliques including fittings of wooden and metallic vessels (FEUGÈRE 2002, 434–440, 451; BOCHNAK – KIEFERLING 2009, 126–131).

The date of the studied applique can be narrowed down thanks to the rivet with the head decorated with grooves which most probably originally held (not preserved) enamel inlays. Similar decorative rivets and nails appear in a number of variants – including that of two simple crossing lines – in Late La Tène contexts. Their use is, however, not limited to the final phase of the La Tène culture, corresponding in Bohemia to LT D1,² as they are documented down to the beginning of the Roman Iron Age in the phase LT D2 (VAN ENDERT 1991, 102–103; SCHÖNFELDER 2002, 216–217). When comparing the Bolehošť rivet with the classification of decorative rivet heads by V. Challet (1992, 118–123) it corresponds the best with her type 1, i.e., rivet-heads with a cruciform decoration, dated to LT D1 or the transition between LT D1 and LT D2.

² The chronological scheme of the end of the La Tène period adopted here follows the ‘South-German’ chronology, dating the end of the Bavarian, Bohemian, and Moravian oppida to the sub-phase LT D1b (FISCHER 1988; WALDHAUSER 1983).

What remains to be discussed is the function of the Bolehošť applique. This issue is, however, quite challenging due to the total absence of parallels. Thus, any interpretation can only rely on the characteristics of the artefact itself. In this respect, it is important to realize the horizontal groove over the backside of the attachment plate. Its width suggests that it was meant to be mounted on a wall rim with a thickness of less than 2 mm. This fact basically excludes from considerations any material other than metal, most likely metal sheet. Another hint is the slight (and probably intentional) curvature of the attachment plate from the sideview. It follows that the applique in question probably originally formed part of a metallic vessel with an arched wall (**Fig. 3 B**). Its likely association with the toreutics is furthermore implied by a few other appliques in the shape of a bull head (not only) with horns terminating in globular pellets which were surely or probably associated with metallic or wooden vessels dated to the final stages of the La Tène culture (**Fig. 3 A**; Bibracte: FEUGÈRE 2002, 437; Brå: MEGAW - MEGAW 2001, 142, fig. 222; Giubiasco, grave 262:³ HEIERLI 1906, 274, fig. 165; Kirmington: MAY 1971, fig. 1; Nordheim: NETH 2000, 78, Abb. 40; Oberursel-Oberstedten: MÜLLER-KARPE - MÜLLER-KARPE 1977, 49–52, Abb. 1:3, Taf. 8:1; Vienne: DÉCHELETTE 1927, 1019, fig. 691:1).

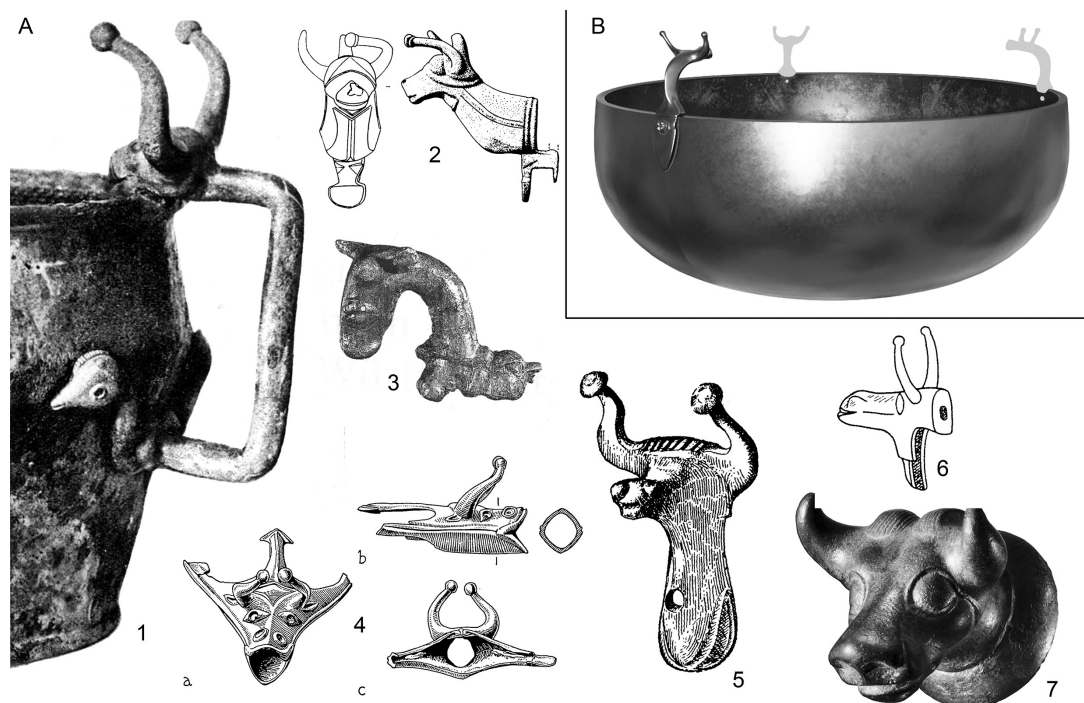


Fig. 3: A - Bronze bull-head appliques from metal and bronze vessels of the 3rd-1st century BC. 1 - Giubiasco? (HEIERLI 1906, fig. 165); 2 - Nordheim (NETH 2000, Abb. 40); 3 - Oberursel-Oberstedten (MÜLLER-KARPE - MÜLLER-KARPE 1977, Abb. 1:3); 4 - Kirmington: (MAY 1971, fig. 1); 5 - Vienne (DÉCHELETTE 1927, fig. 691:1); 6 - Bibracte (BOCHNAK - KIEFERLING 2009, ryc. 4:4); 7 - Brå (MEGAW - MEGAW 2001, fig. 222). B - hypothetical reconstruction of the Bolehošť applique mounted on a cauldron; image by P. Vrána. Not to scale.

3 The find is usually associated with the grave assemblage no. 262. For completeness' sake it should be mentioned that the authenticity of this assemblage is not certain. As a matter of fact, the excavator D. Pini only assembled the grave goods at a later point and it cannot be excluded that a part of them comes from another burial ground in Pianezzo or that they were sourced from the antiquity market (TORI *et al.* 2006, 27–28, 64, 250).

THREE VESSEL FEET FROM ČERNČICE, OKR. NÁCHOD, FROM ROZBĚŘICE,
OKR. HRADEC KRÁLOVÉ, AND FROM AN UNKNOWN SITE

The first object was discovered by R. Skácel, M. Malý, and P. Dušek during a metal detector survey in 2016 in the territory of Černčice in the Pod Černčicemi area, plot no. 517/17, WGS84 coordinates: 50.335825° N, 16.092477° E (**Fig. 1:2**). The findspot is located on a gentle north-western slope descending towards the River Metuje, at an altitude of 275–280 m.a.s.l. The site has been known since 1989 (KALFERST – SIGL – VOKOLEK 1993, 9) but attention has been paid to it mainly over the last decade when it was repeatedly subject to field-walking and metal detector surveys (overview in HORNÍK *et al.* 2020, 51–52). Based on our present state of knowledge, the site area was frequented in various periods from the Palaeolithic up to the present. Of particular significance for the discussion of the object are the finds dated to the La Tène period documenting human activities in the area in the timespan of LT B2–D1 (SUCHOŘÁROVÁ – HOLBOVÁ – KRAVCIV 2019) and those from the Early and the beginnings of the later Roman Iron Age (HORNÍK 2016, 142, 146; BLÁHA – HORNÍK – NOVÁK 2020, 190; HORNÍK *et al.* 2020).

Description: A fragment of a bronze kidney-shaped vessel foot with a hole through the preserved lobe and a side protrusion. The surface is heavily corroded (**Fig. 2:2**). Preserved length 26 mm, max. width 14 mm, thickness 2–4 mm, hole diameter 3.5 mm, reconstructed length 43 mm, approximate diameter of the external wall 100 mm, weight 7.4 g. Kept in the Museum of Eastern Bohemia in Hradec Králové, inv. no. 94240.

The other vessel foot was unearthed during a metal detector survey of the Museum of Eastern Bohemia in Hradec Králové on the 29th March 2021 in the territory of Rozběřice in the Na dlouhých area, plot no. 158/1 (**Fig. 1:3**; WGS84 coordinates: 50.264997° N, 15.744444° E). The site is located on a gentle southern slope at an altitude of 270–280 m.a.s.l., descending towards the Malouňka stream. The site has so far yielded a sizeable lot of La Tène pottery as well as non-ceramic finds dating its occupation to the time-span of LT B2–D1. Other detected chronological components include the turn of the stages B1 and C2 of the Roman Iron Age, as well as Early and High Middle Ages (MANGEL 2011, 32; TICHÝ 1999).

Description: a complete bronze kidney-shaped vessel foot with holes and side protrusions (**Fig. 2:3**). Length: 55 mm, max. width 17.6 mm, thickness 5–6 mm, hole diameter 4–5 mm, approximate diameter of the external wall 110 mm, weight 31.6 g. Kept in the Museum of Eastern Bohemia in Hradec Králové, inv. no. 95448.

The last find was discovered by J. Bažant and P. Bažant during a metal-detector survey roughly a decade ago. The exact find-spot cannot be identified any more but based on the information provided by the finders it must have been somewhere along the frontier of Central and Eastern Bohemia, most likely somewhere in the broader surrounding of Lovčice near Chlumeč nad Cidlinou, okr. Hradec Králové (**Fig. 1:4**). Even though strictly speaking its provenance from Eastern Bohemia is not certain, we find it worthy of publication here since otherwise it might be lost to scholarly attention.⁴

Description: a complete bronze kidney-shaped vessel foot with dimples and side protrusions (**Fig. 2:4**). length 52 mm, max. width 19 mm, thickness ca. 5 mm, dimple diameters 8–9 mm, approximate diameter of the external wall 120 mm, weight 30.2 g. Private collection.

All the finds correspond with bronze feet attached to bronze vessels produced in Late Republican Italy and appearing in the Late La Tène contexts as Mediterranean imports. The

4 We are grateful to J. Kysela for the information.

feet were attached to the vessels in trios by soldering. They were regularly used on situlae and jugs. Following Kyselá's terminology, the pieces from Černčice and Rozběřice can be termed as a 'kidney-shaped foot with holes' and the other one as a 'kidney-shaped foot with dimples' (Kyselá 2020, 107, fig. 35; cf. SVOBODOVÁ 1983, 668).⁵ The kidney-shaped feet – either with holes or dimples – appear almost exclusively in association with the Kelheim type jugs (BOUBE 1991, 39, note 33; Kyselá 2020, 107), only singly was it attested in a secondary use on an Aylesford type pan from the tomb B in Goebblange-Nospelt (METZLER – GAENG *et al.* 2009, 276–277, fig. 70, 243c). Their association with jugs is partly suggested also by the diameter of their outer circumference (ca. 100, 110, and 120 mm) as jug base diameters mostly range from 70 to 110 mm (BOUBE 1991; Kyselá 2014, 236; Kyselá 2020, 108). This criterion is, however, not entirely valid: the diameter of the foot and of the vessel base need not be identical, the latter often being larger.

Kelheim type jugs from which the studied find most likely comes are traditionally dated to the time span of ca. 125–70 BC (BOUBE 1991, 40; RIECKHOFF 1998, 505–510; GORECKI 2016, 190) even though in Gaul their use is documented also during the second third of the 1st century BC (BARBAU 2019, 31–32, 172–174, ill. 60, 61). As a result, they can be dated roughly to the whole of LT D1. The majority of the remaining Late Republican jug types attested in the Transalpine area can be dated to the same period (overview in BOUBE 1991). The only exception to this rule is the Ornavasso type dated to the entire 1st century BC. However, this jug type – uncommon in Central Europe – carries feet of a completely different type (Kyselá 2014, 236). The latest jug type, type Kjaerumgaard, appeared from the second half of the 1st century BC to the mid-1st century AD (BOUBE 1991, 38). The origin of the discussed feet from this type is not likely since it has not been documented in Central Europe so far (Kyselá 2020, 103). For completeness' sake we may add that Aylesford type pans can be dated – based on burial finds from northern Italy and Gaul – from ca. the late 2nd century BC to the first decades of the Augustan period (FEUGÈRE – DE MARINIS 1991, 100, 104–108; RIECKHOFF 1998, 510; BARBAU 2019, 176–177, ill. 64, 65). A similar situation can be observed further east in the Balkans (POPOVIĆ 1992, 63–64). The origin of the three feet discovered in Eastern Bohemia and discussed here from this type of vessel seems, however, quite unlikely.

DISCUSSION

A stylistic analysis of the Bolehošť applique makes us beyond any doubt classify it as an object of the ripe La Tène style (cf. MEGAW – MEGAW 2001; HARDING 2007). Even though the object itself is unique without any direct parallels, quite the opposite is true of its rendition. As a matter of fact, the depiction of a bull's head with the horns terminating in globular pellets is a common sight though it appears most often west of the Rhine and only singly east of Manching (FEUGÈRE 2002, Abb. 16; BOCHNAK – KIEFERLING 2009). Apparently, this element has its origin in the west La Tène culture area and its meaning lies in the symbolic or mythological realm. Effort has been repeatedly made to grasp its specific meaning (cf. the overview in FEUGÈRE 2002, 439–440; BOCHNAK – KIEFERLING 2009, 131–132) even though the very nature of the artefacts basically defies such an endeavour. There are, nevertheless some clues to this issue. First and foremost, there is the very clear tendency for the motif to appear in association with feasting and cooking implements (fire-dogs, as well as spits and vessels) and for the artefacts decorated with it to be often (though not exclusively) found in rich Late

5 Minor shape variations such as the absence or reduction of the side protrusions and in the slight rounding off of the section can be accounted for by surface deterioration of the foot in the ploughed upper portions of the topsoil.

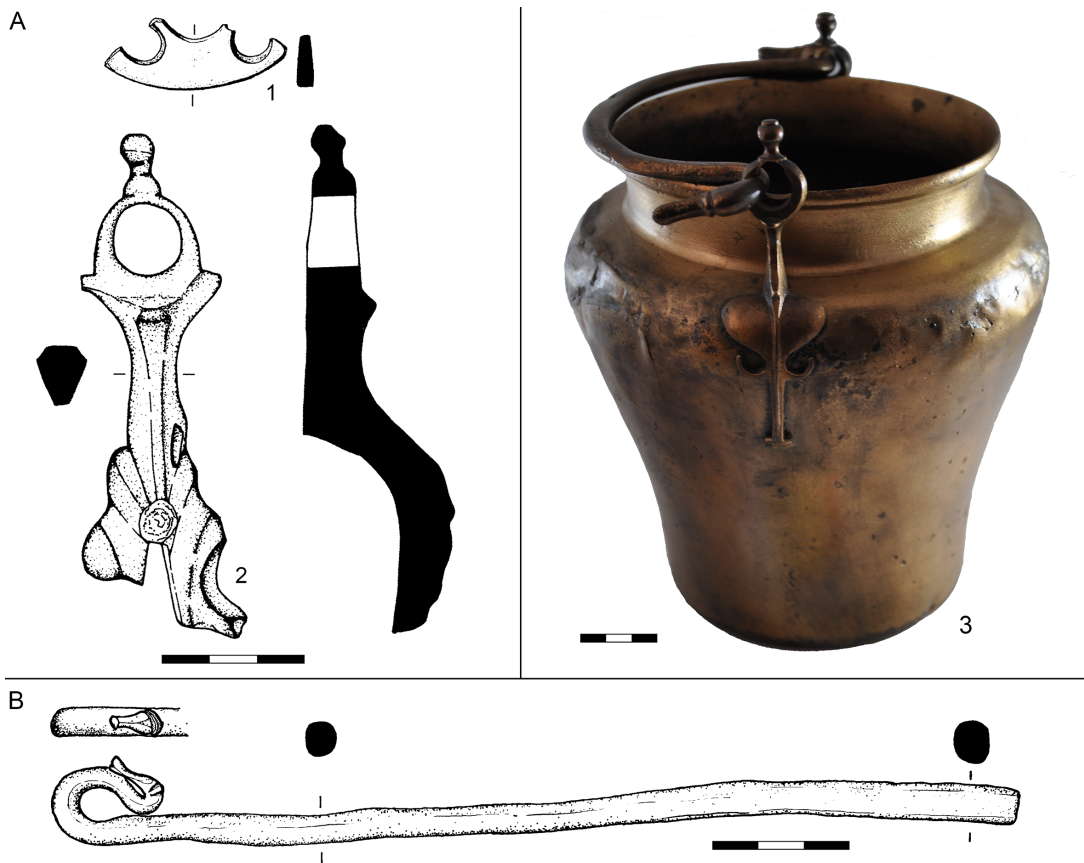
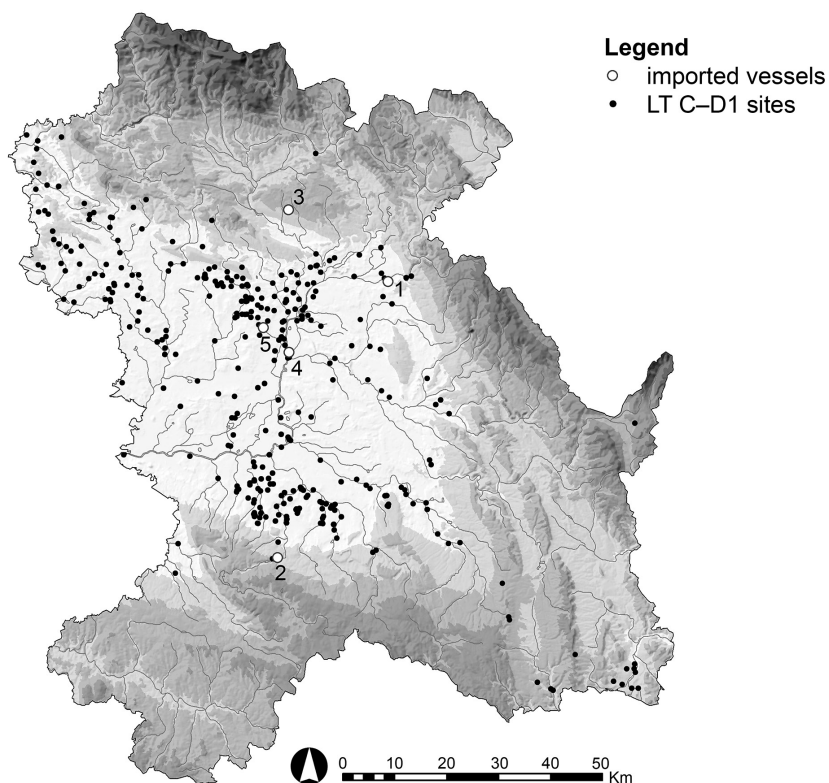


Fig. 4: A - Finds of Late Republican imported metal vessels in Eastern Bohemia. 1 - České Lhotice, okr. Chrudim (DANIELISOVÁ 2010, P4 tab. 18:3); 2 - Dvůr Králové nad Labem, okr. Trutnov (HORNÍK - JÍLEK 2018, obr. 2:1, modified); 3 - Hradec Králové, okr. Hradec Králové (photo T. Mangel). B - unfinished or deformed (?) vessel handle from Vraclav, okr. Ústí nad Orlicí (drawing T. Jošková).

La Tène period burials (e.g., Arras: GINOUX 2006, 132, tab. 3; Lexden: FOSTER 1986, 58–61, fig. 21:3; Welwyn: STEAD 1967, 57–58; La Mailleraye-sur-Seine: GINOUX 2006, 132, tab. 3). We can therefore reasonably assume that the representation of bull heads with horns terminating in globular pellets played a role in ritualised feasting and similar activities underlying self-representation of the period elite (cf. e.g., ALDHOUSE-GREEN 2005, 112; SCHÖNFELDER 2009, 782 for a similar interpretation of the fire-dogs). The specific function of the Bolehošť ‘bull’ remains uncertain and the only means for approaching it is one’s imagination.

Unlike the Bolehošť applique, the bronze vessel feet were produced in regions under the control of the Roman (Late) Republic. Broadening our scope, we can set the Černčice and Rozběřice fragments (whose find-circumstances are well documented unlike the other foot) into the context of other finds of Late Republican imports in Eastern Bohemia. Unfortunately, in most cases these objects lack clear find circumstances. The only exceptions to this rule are the vessel foot from the Late la Tène period oppidum of České Lhotice (**Fig. 4 A:1, 5:2**; DANIELISOVÁ 2010, 65, P4, tab. 18:3) and the fragment of a vessel rim – a closer classification is not possible – from an Early Roman Iron Age pit in Plotiště nad Labem (RYBOVÁ 1974, 481, obr. 1:1). The other finds – including an attachment of an E18 situla from Dvůr Králové nad Labem (**Fig. 4 A:2**), an entire E19 situla from Hradec Králové (**Fig. 4 A:3**), and the vessel foot from an unknown site (**Fig. 2:3**) – cannot be dated with any precision based only on a typological analysis. These vessel types made their appearance in Transalpine and Central Europe in the

A



B

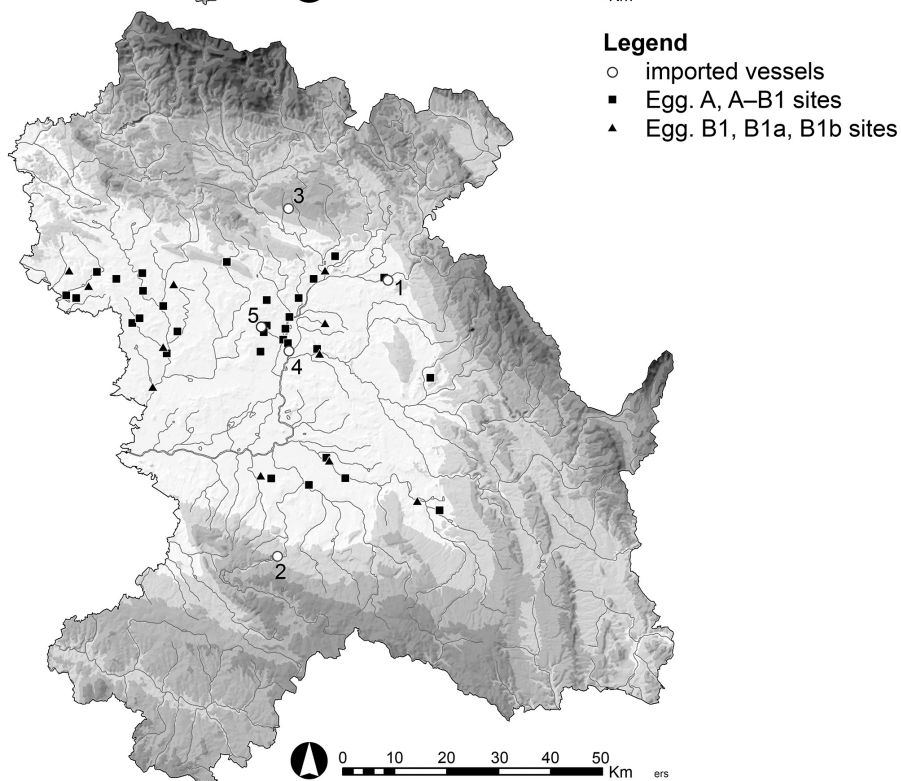


Fig. 5: Finds of Late Republican imported metal vessels in Eastern Bohemia. A - LT C1-D1 period contexts; B - Eggers A-B1 period contexts. 1 - Černčice, okr. Náchod; 2 - České Lhotice, okr. Chrudim; 3 - Dvůr Králové nad Labem, okr. Trutnov; 4 - Hradec Králové, okr. Hradec Králové; 5 - Rozběřice, okr. Hradec Králové.

stage LT D1 but – as attested by numerous finds from rich graves – remained in circulation down to the stages Eggers A–B1 (WIELOWIEJSKI 1985, 157–167, 253–256; WIELOWIEJSKI 1987, 40–42; BOLLA 1991; KARASOVÁ 2004, 9–13).

The attachment of an E18 situla from Dvůr Králové nad Labem (**Fig. 4 A:2, 5:3**; HORNÍK – JÍLEK 2018) is an isolated metal-detector find from 2016. Not only does it not come from any site but even in the broader surroundings of the find-spot there are no traces of La Tène period or Early Roman Iron Age occupation. A relatively long life of the artefact is in theory suggested by some traces of secondary repairs and modifications, such as the three iron rivets through which the object was reattached to a vessel wall (HORNÍK – JÍLEK 2018, 86). Such repairs were commonly done in the Roman provinces in order to lengthen the bronze vessels' lives (cf. an overview in JÍLEK 2012, 10–13). We may assume that by far not all imports were traded across the Roman frontier brand new – some may have arrived at their final destination only after a considerable period of time after their manufacturing. At the same time, vessels could have been mended locally as well – the craftsmen of both the La Tène period and the Roman Iron Age mastered all the necessary knowledge and skills to do so. Repairs could have been necessary for a number of reasons even on vessels which were relatively new. Without knowing the precise find context and given the present state of knowledge concerning the occupation in the broader area of Dvůr Králové nad Labem we cannot pin-point the date of the find with any precision.

Another find – this time an entire situla (**Fig. 4 A:3, 5:4**) – was discovered in the vicinity of Hradec Králové in or before 1902, though the precise find-spot is not known (ŠIMEK 1923, 63–64; SCHRÁNIL 1928, 257; PREIDEL 1930, 173, 176, Abb. 188; MOTYKOVÁ–ŠNEIDROVÁ 1963, 19; SAKAŘ 1970, 54, pl. 11:5, 16–17; KARASOVÁ 1998, 70–71; DROBERJAR 2006, 46).⁶ The settlement analysis makes it clear that both in LT C–D1 and in Eggers A–B1 the occupation in the Hradec Králové area concentrated on very similar locations on the Elbe terraces north of the city (MANGEL 2011; JÍLEK *et al.* 2015, 103–104, tab. P, obr. 20:B, 21). The occupation of both periods is characterised by roughly the same intensity. For these reasons, the date of the discussed vessel remains uncertain in this case, too.

To conclude, we can make a short critical note about an artefact unearthed by J. L. Píč at the hillfort of Vraclav (**Fig. 4 B**). It has been interpreted in the past as a handle of a metal vessel and – with varying degrees of certitude – counted among Late Republican imports in the stage A of the Roman Iron Age (e.g., MOTYKOVÁ–ŠNEIDROVÁ 1963, 66; SAKAŘ 1970, 51; KARASOVÁ 1998, 85; DROBERJAR 2006, 51, obr. 24; HORNÍK – JÍLEK 2018, 88).⁷ Its interpretation as a handle of a metal or wooden vessel seems likely even though it is difficult to decide on the grounds of the artefact's shape whether we are dealing with a semi-product (?) or a secondarily modified object. On the contrary, its cultural classification and chronology need to be revised. The handles of Late Republican situlae terminate in baluster- or bird-head-shaped finials but the hooks whose part they make are turned only once – towards the top (e.g., cf. SAKAŘ 1970, pl. II: 1, 5, X:1; KYSELA

6 K. Motyková (1963, 19) claimed it to have been found in the Elbe river-bed though this information is not mentioned either in the original collection inventory (*Seznam starožitnosti*, item no. 254) or any other earlier sources. It may only be an unsubstantiated hypothesis based – in this specific case – on the absence of any patina on the vessel surface. Such an absence of a patina need, however, not be caused only from a deposition in a water-logged environment but may also be the result of e.g. an undocumented conservation treatment etc. For more information cf. Databáze archeologické sbírky v. 4. 2. Department of Prehistory and Classical Antiquity of the National Museum. [online] http://forum.nm.cz/prehistorie/ph_ob_nov.php?idc_s=9682 last change 29th September 2020 (accessed 28th February 2021).

7 Cf. the Database of the archaeological collection v. 4. 2. Department of Prehistory and Classical Antiquity of the National Museum [online]. Available at http://forum.nm.cz/prehistorie/ph_ob.php?idc_s=7350 (accessed at 28th February 2021).

2020, fig. 23–26). The preserved end of the Vraclav artefact on the other hand is S-shaped and entirely configured as an animal head. Handles with S-shaped animal heads, sometimes even with a very similar decoration, are not unknown in La Tène culture sites: examples can be cited from e.g., the Recent/Late La Tène sites of Manching (JACOBI 1974, 133–134, 295, Taf. 35:595, 597, 603; VAN ENDERT 1991, 80–81, 132, Taf. 24:390, 394) and Berching-Pollanten (SCHÄFER 2010, 118, Taf. 53:2854). However, the classification of the Vraclav handle as a La Tène culture artefact is mainly suggested by the style of the preserved decorative finial strongly resembling the stylised ‘horse heads’ well documented among La Tène small statuary (e.g. GEBHARD 1991; ŠVECOVÁ 2004) and mainly among belt-hooks, broadly dated to LT C(–D1) (e.g. cf. BUJNA 2011, 129).⁸ The occupation of the site in the later stages of the La Tène period is evidenced also by other – so far unpublished – finds; on the contrary, artefacts dated to the Roman Iron Age are – so far – absent.⁹

All three new finds are therefore worthy new entries into the list of finds, even though only in the case of two of them the particularly precious information on their find context is preserved. The clearest picture is apparently that of the foot from Rozběřice (**Fig. 5:5**). Even though numerous settlements dated to both LT C–D1 and from the Early Roman Iron Age are documented in the broader area, the very site in question has so far produced only finds of the La Tène period. In the case of the Černčice foot, the situation is similar though not quite identical (**Fig. 5:1**). The site is located in the Metuje drainage basin in which the La Tène occupation is rather frequent (cf. overview in BEK – MANGEL – VÍCH 2017, 425–426) while finds of the Early Roman Iron Age (Eggers A–B1) are exceptional. Specifically, they include two brooches discovered at the same site as the discussed bronze vessel foot.¹⁰ However, the site yielded also a large collection of artefacts dated to LT C–D1 (SUCHOPÁROVÁ – HOLBOVÁ – KRAVCIV 2019). The presence of artefacts of both relevant periods as well as the fact that we are dealing in all cases with surface finds does not make the discussion about the date of the foot simple in any way. The only hint in this respect is the dating of the Kelheim type jugs from one of which the foot comes with all likelihood. Should this assumption be correct, the artefact almost certainly dates to the earlier of the two discussed phases.

In the final stages of the La Tène period, Mediterranean imports – including metal vessels – concentrate prevalently in the oppida and other fortified centres. By contrast, their finds are rare in assemblages from open settlements (KYSELA 2018/2019, 289; BARBAU 2019, 207–220, ill. 101–117; KYSELA 2020, 293–295). As far as kidney shaped feet are concerned, only one find can be mentioned from Karlstadt-Karlburg in Bavaria (MÖBIUS 1993, 107, Abb. 60: 9; KYSELA 2020, 111, fig. 34, 37: Ktd1). Other variants of bronze feet which, however, may be associated with other vessels (other jug types, situlae), come from the settlement of Olšovice in south Bohemia (KYSELA 2020, 108) and from the hill-top site of Karlstein in Bavaria (SEDLMAYER 1999, 112). The feet from Černčice and Rozběřice therefore represent rare cases in Central Europe of bronze jugs (or their parts) documented in a ‘rural’ milieu. A similar provenance seems likely (though unfortunately not certain) also in the case of the third find from the frontier of Eastern and Central Bohemia.

8 The absence of ears in the representation can be explained (in view of the function of the object as a handle) by a higher degree of stylisation though damage to the area in question cannot be excluded either.

9 We are grateful to David Vích, Region Museum in Vysoké Mýto, for the information.

10 Apart from the foot, an Aucissa type brooch fragment was also discovered in 2016. The assemblage was handed over to the Museum of Eastern Bohemia only a few years later and therefore it has not been taken into account in the recent overviews (SUCHOPÁROVÁ *et al.* 2019; HORNÍK *et al.* 2020). The finds from the end of the Early Roman period further include a brooch with eyelets type A48 dated to the stage Eggers B1b (HORNÍK 2016, 146, obr. 2:1; HORNÍK *et al.* 2020, 54, obr. 2:1, tab. 1).

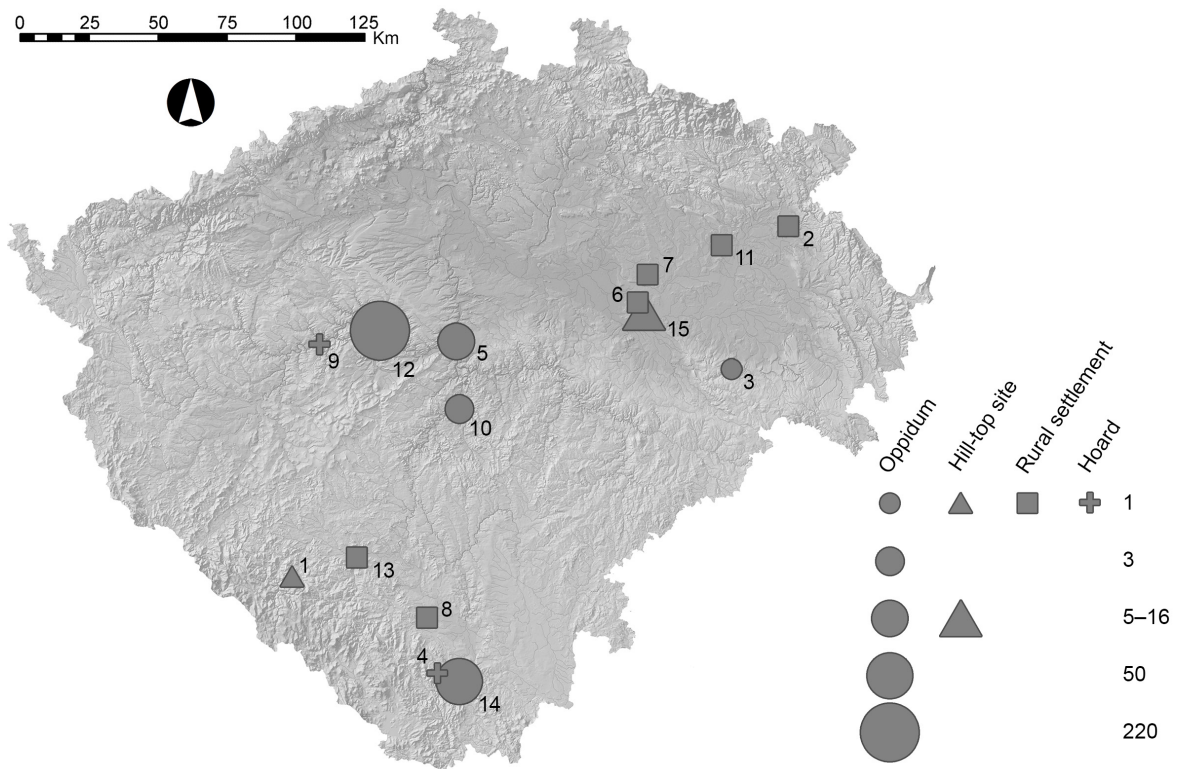


Fig. 6: Distribution of Mediterranean imports from LT C2-D1 in Bohemia in terms of their quantity and find contexts: 1 - Albrechtice-Sedlo, okr. Klatovy; 2 - Černčice, okr. Náchod; 3 - České Lhotice, okr. Chrudim; 4 - Holubov, okr. Český Krumlov; 5 - Lhota-Závist, okr. Praha-západ; 6 - Lipec, okr. Kolín; 7 - Lovčice-surrounding, okr. Hradec Králové; 8 - Olšovice, okr. Prachatic; 9 - Podmokly, okr. Rokycany; 10 - Radíč-Hrazany, okr. Příbram; 11 - Rozběřice, okr. Hradec Králové; 12 - Stradonice, okr. Beroun; 13 - Strakonice, okr. Strakonice; 14 - Třísov, okr. Český Krumlov; 15 - Týnec nad Labem-Kolo, okr. Kolín. Data from KYSELA 2020, fig. 125b, completed.

There is one more important point to be made about the new finds from Eastern Bohemia: they complete the overall picture of the southern import distribution in the Transalpine area within which they considerably augment the number of finds from otherwise underrepresented open settlements. Only three sites of this category with finds of Mediterranean imports have been recently listed in Bohemia which – in comparison with neighbouring regions – make Bohemia particularly poor in such objects found outside of oppida (cf. KYSELA 2020, 294, fig. 125b, 130). These new finds make it clear that they might be more widespread also here (**Fig. 6**). An issue worth investigating in the near future is the absence of southern imports in the intensely occupied north-western quarter of Bohemia; it is open to discussion whether it is due exclusively to the state of research. In general, it turns out, however, that thanks to the new findings, the picture documented in Bohemia becomes more similar to that observed previously in the neighbouring areas of Central Europe, both to the west (in Bavaria, Upper Austria and southern Thuringia) and to the east (in the Middle Danube area). This development changes little of the fact that Bohemia clearly found itself on the overlap between the eastern and western zone of distribution of southern imports (KYSELA 2014). Three new fragments of Kelheim type jugs signalling their western provenance further reinforce this idea. After all, this western orientation is further stressed by other indicators of long-distance contacts (MANGEL – JOŠKOVÁ – KRÁSNÝ 2019, 40–41).

What remains to be discussed is the issue of the interpretation of these sorts of finds. The recurrence of types of Mediterranean imports all over Late La Tène Europe suggests that they can best be interpreted as resulting from trade rather than individual contacts (KYSELA 2020, 307). Imported bronze vessels are primarily to be understood as luxury goods intended for an elite milieu as is clear from their recurrent presence in rich elite graves in Western Europe and Northern Italy (BOLLA – CASTOLDI 2016; SUEUR 2016; BARBAU 2019, 214–216, 281, ill. 112–114, 160; SUEUR 2018). After all, the bronze vessels occurring in the Early Roman Iron Age are considered along the same lines (cf. DROBERJAR 2006, 46–51). Finds of Mediterranean bronze vessels in open settlements or at sites with (so far?) no other evidence of human presence can be interpreted in several ways, none of which is indisputable, particularly in view of the absence of find contexts. Finds of entire vessels or their parts may broadly hint at the presence of elites or at carrying out some ritualised practices associated with elites. At the same time, however, they can only be seen as traces of those individuals involved in trade with these objects. The latter option seems particularly applicable in the cases of finds outside settlement areas or in ‘empty’ zones between settled regions. Mere fragments of vessels can, moreover, be considered to be potential hints of bronze recycling on site and – as in the previous case – transport of material to be recycled from one site to another. In that case, the vessel fragments can be seen as either raw material for recasting or as spare parts intended for secondary use on vessels in need of mending. Such reutilisation of disused vessels is attested e.g., in the oppida of Třísov (KYSELA – DANIELISOVÁ – MILITKÝ 2014, 581, 593; DANIELISOVÁ *et al.* 2017) and Bibracte (HAMM 2005, 67–68) or in somewhat later burials in the cemeteries of Giubiasco (tombs 71 and 94: PERNET – CARLEVARO *et al.* 2006, 294, 299) and Goebblange-Nospelt (tomb B: METZLER – GAENG *et al.* 2009, 276–277, fig. 70).¹¹

CONCLUSION

All the discussed artefacts are in one way or another exceptional, regardless of the uncertainties which may concern their interpretation. In the case of the Bolehošť applique it is true mainly of its very function. As to the three feet, their date is based almost exclusively on their assumed origin from the Kelheim type jugs. In spite of these precautions, classifying these objects as parts of Late La Tène period metal vessels seems highly likely at the least. With the exception of the foot from an unknown site in whose case the find context cannot be established and discussed, all importantly share their provenance from common open low-land settlements and thus significantly enlarge the – so far limited – list of metal vessels of this period discovered outside the central sites, oppida. Numerous questions concerning the role of such finds outside central sites and even in peripheral regions remain open for further research.

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11 Cf. JÍLEK 2012, 11–12 for an overview of recycling in the Roman period.

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