

Oppidum Stradonice, Josef Ladislav Píč, and Joseph Déchelette

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ABSTRACT

The discovery of a Celtic oppidum near Stradonice in Central Bohemia attracted the attention of the Czech archaeologist J. L. Píč at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and then of the French oppidum researcher J. Déchelette, who translated Píč's book on Stradonice into French. The controversy about the dating of the site was significant for further research, in which Píč tried to interpret Stradonice as the seat of the Germanic ruler Maroboduus from around the turn of the eras, while Déchelette, supported by archaeological finds, correctly identified Stradonice as a Celtic oppidum that had disappeared before the end of the 1st century BC. The article proves that both of these interpretations did not originate only then, but had a deeper tradition in Czech archaeology.

KEYWORDS

Bohemia; Stradonice; oppidum; La Tène period; Celts; Marobudum; Joseph Déchelette; Josef Ladislav Píč.

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most interesting chapter in the history of Franco-Czech archaeological relations was written at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries by two scholars joined by their interest in Celtic oppida – Joseph Déchelette and Josef Ladislav Píč. Their paths met while studying the finds from and information about Hradiště near Stradonice, the most important of the Celtic oppida in Bohemia, but they diverged on the question of the historical interpretation of this site of European importance. The main difference was that Píč, referring to historical sources, tried to interpret Stradonice as the seat of the Germanic ruler Maroboduus from around the turn of the millennium, while Déchelette, supported by archaeological findings, identified Stradonice as a Celtic oppidum that had disappeared before the end of the 1st century BC. A closer look shows that these interpretations did not arise only at the time of their collaboration, but have a deeper tradition in Czech archaeology.

Thanks to the importance of both of these scholars for the development of archaeology in their respective countries, the story of their relationship has often been the subject of interest. It was more often so with French archaeologists, who have already paid a lot of attention to Déchelette, his work, and his connections, while in Czech archaeology the interest in Píč was sidelined for decades after his opponents had the upper hand in their disputes. It is understandable that without adequate evidence from the Czech side of the story the usual French view of the period of their collaboration is somewhat simplistic. It is therefore appropriate to clarify this matter from a broader perspective.

JOSEF LADISLAV PÍČ PRIOR TO STRADONICE

Josef Ladislav Píč¹ (1847–1911) (**Fig. 1**), a private professor of history at Charles University in Prague, was the last significant student of Jan Erazim Vocel (1802–1871), who was the founder of archaeology as a discipline on its own in Bohemia and its first professor at the said university. Píč first worked as a grammar school professor of history, focusing on the more recent periods of Central and Eastern Europe. Later he decided to continue Vocel's unfinished project and write a cultural history of the Czech nation from its very beginnings. Because – like Vocel – he understood that he could not carry out such a project without first working on the prehistory of Bohemia, he concentrated vigorously on this task from the late 1880s onwards. In 1893, he became the first 'custos' (director) of the collections of prehistoric and classical archaeology at the National Museum² in Prague, which had just become an independent collection department on its own (SKLENÁŘ 2013a). He also held other important positions in Czech archaeology – with the exception of the chair of archaeology at Prague University, where Lubor Niederle (1865–1944), a generation younger than him, was habilitated at the same time.



Fig. 1: Josef Ladislav Píč in the 1890s.

Unlike the historian Píč, Niederle switched to archaeology from anthropology and sociology, which influenced his approach and caused the first controversy between them. Niederle, in close association with the purely positivist archaeologist Karel Buchtela (1864–1946) was the epicentre of the 'university school', focusing on the material side of archaeology. In contrast, Píč's aim was to paint a picture of cultural history based on archaeological sources read in the key of history – a higher goal, but one that was harder to achieve at the time.

1 On him recently KARASOVÁ – SALAČ 2003; SKLENÁŘ 2005, 438–440; SKLENÁŘ 2013a; 2013b.

2 This term is used here as a substitute of the various names of the institution used in 1818–1918. In the times of Píč and Déchelette its official title was *Museum království Českého* (the Museum of the Kingdom of Bohemia).

In constant conflict with his opponents from the 'university school' over both the overall concept and specific approaches in archaeology (SKLENÁŘ 2013b), Píč began to publish the large, lavishly illustrated volumes of his life's work, *Antiquities of Bohemia*, in 1899. Even his greatest rival called the series 'a literary feat of the first rank'. After the first two volumes, devoted to Stone Age and Bronze Age Mound cultures, Píč reached the period of the Celtic occupation of Bohemia in the third volume (Píč 1902).

France had been the centre of research on Celtic history and archaeology from the early 19th century. While in the German-speaking countries, interest in the Celts was increasingly supplanted after the mid-19th century by a nationalistic preference for the protohistoric Germans, in France the Celts/Gauls naturally remained the enduring focus of interest for archaeologists and historians alike. Apart from Celtic archaeology, only the Palaeolithic research was strongly asserted (though cultivated, of course, mainly by natural scientists), while other components of prehistory attracted much less attention.

With this on his mind, J. L. Píč travelled to the museums of Western Europe around the turn of the century (with a good knowledge of French and, of course, German) in order to learn about Celtic archaeology in its homeland before proceeding to describe the Second Iron Age in Bohemia. He first became acquainted with the francophone countries in 1896, when, after travelling through the Rhineland, he diverted via Strasbourg to Paris and Brussels, returning via Mulhouse and Besançon to Switzerland (Neuchâtel, Lausanne, Geneva, Bern, Zurich) and southern Germany.

While this journey was rather exploratory, by 1900 Píč was already cruising through France very deliberately, making very purposeful provision for works on the 'Celtic' (La Tène) part of his *Antiquities*. He only rushed through Germany to concentrate on museums and monuments along the route of Metz – Nancy – Épinal – Besançon – Dijon – Autun – Nevers – Mulins – Roanne – Lyon – Annecy – Nîmes – Narbonne – Toulouse – Clermont-Ferrand – Bourges – Orléans – Tours – Poitiers – Niort – Nantes – Vannes – Rennes – Paris – Reims – Châtillon – Troyes, returning home via Basel, Bern, and Munich.

The following year, 1901, his journey to the archaeology of the European Celts was more extensive: he went to Cologne, passed through Belgium (Liège – Namur – Brussels), crossed the Channel, went to London and then west to Dublin, and finally returned via Boulogne to Amiens – Rouen – Dieppe – Brest – Quimper – Carnac – Vannes – Angers – Paris – Bar-le-Duc – Strasbourg – Haguenau – Worms – Mainz and to Prague.

The last archaeological trip to the west, where he had already seen everything that he needed (the contents of the following volumes of *Antiquities* called rather for connections to the east), was undertaken by Píč in 1902. From Frankfurt am Main he went to Mainz – Worms – Bonn – Paris – Autun – Genève – Lausanne – Neuchâtel – Biel – Bern – Zurich – Donaueschingen – Munich, and back home.

Everywhere he went, from France to Russia, as well as at home, his extroverted, jovial, and bon vivant personality helped him forge numerous, often long-lasting friendships. The main focus of his travels was initially museums with material from Celtic inhumation graves, referred to in France as the Marne culture. Graves with identical bronze and iron furnishings had been known to Czech archaeology from the 1840s, but it was only J. E. Vocel, in his *Prehistory of the Bohemia* (WOCÉL 1866, 192–196; WOCÉL 1868) who described the bronzes from them as a group on its own and dated them to the Roman Imperial period without commenting on the ethnicity of their makers. This was the consequence of his brilliant pioneering attempt to create a chronology of bronze artefacts based on their chemical composition: he placed the La Tène period bronzes in an evolutionary sequence between the Bronze Age and 'Merovingian' artefacts, but since he – in accordance with the general opinion of his period – considered the

Čechy na úsvitě dějin.

Na základě praehistorické sbírky musea království Českého
a pramenů dějepisných

píše

Dr. J. L. Píč.

Svazek 1.

**Kostrové hroby s kulturou marnskou čili latèenskou
a Bojové v Čechách.**

Vydáno přispěním České akademie císaře Františka Josefa pro vědy, slovesnost a umění
a Společnosti Musea království Českého.

V Praze.

Nákladem vlastním. — Tiskem České grafické společnosti »Unie«.
1902.

Fig. 2: Title page of the J. L. Píč volume on the burials of the Marne (La Tène) culture in Bohemia (Píč 1902).

Bronze Age artefacts to be Celtic, the actual Celtic bronzes in Bohemia must, according to his system, have belonged to the Roman period.

About 40 years later, Píč approached the issue of a Celtic presence from a different position. He had to take into account that from the 16th century onwards, Czech chronicles and historical works considered the tribe of Boii (them being Celts was disputed until the mid-19th century) to be the earliest known ethnic group in Bohemia. Already in the Renaissance the very name of the country was believed to have derived from this ethnonym. Looking at the Czech archaeological material, Píč observed a group of inhumation graves with bronze and iron objects, corresponding both to the La Tène culture in western central Europe and to the Marne culture in France,³ attributed there to the Celts. Because he saw the centre of this culture on the Marne and the middle reaches of the Seine, where the La Tène inhumation graves had been studied for the first time on a larger scale,⁴ he set off to France.

After his return, he compiled the third volume of *Antiquities* with the subtitle *Skeletal Graves with the Marne or La Tène Culture and the Boii in Bohemia* (Píč 1902) (**Fig. 2**). This volume is in fact a comprehensive study of the history and archaeology of the Celts in Europe (including archaeological maps of Celtic Europe), and only the afterword summarizes the findings specific to Bohemia, documented by the first catalogue of the La Tène sites. To some extent, Píč thus responded to a prophecy formulated shortly before by Virchow who claimed that Bohemia would become a key area for the understanding of the Celtic issue (and their origin) in Central Europe (VIRCHOW 1895).

Píč in his monograph discussed in detail the individual types of finds from Bohemia setting them in the context of his vast knowledge gathered in European museums and in bibliography. In both senses, even though working on a broad scope from England to Hungary, French sources played a significant role – the largest number of parallels came from French museums and French literature was extensively quoted (notably MOREL 1898; MORTILLET – MORTILLET 1881). His conclusion was that (with the exception of the pottery) the inhumation graves in Bohemia show the closest affinities with the burials on the Marne (he actually found the Marne culture in Bohemia in its pure form), so that ‘there can be no doubt of their being of the same origin and of their being closely related by blood’⁵ (Píč 1902, 51).

In addition, it should be remembered that under the influence of his travels to the western half of Europe, Píč stretched the history of the Central European Celts further back into prehistory. He referred to the culture of the southern and western Bohemian burial mounds, beginning in the Middle Bronze Age and surviving, according to him, to the 4th (3rd?) century BC, to the great ‘nation that sat from Southern Bohemia to the Loire and still occupied a considerable part of Gaul in Caesar’s time’⁶ (Píč 1900, 133), i.e., broadly to the Celts. However, he did not identify it with the historical Boii whose name he attributed only to the inhumation graves characterised by the Marne or La Tène culture. He dated their arrival from their original area of the Marne culture to the central and northern part of Bohemia to around 400 BC (Píč 1902, 157–160). The main difference he saw between the two areas was, that the principal feature of Caesar’s Transalpine Gaul was the presence of towns, whereas ‘no trace of Gallic cities has yet been found in Bohemia’ (Píč 1902, 159). Yet he already knew a site in Bohemia corresponding to the concept of oppida, though he did not consider it Celtic: it was Stradonice.

3 Píč considered the term ‘La Tène’ to be appropriate only for the later phase of this culture and thus used the term Marne culture.

4 MOREL 1898; DÉCHELETTE 1914; cf. ROUALET 1978.

5 ‘...nemůže být pochybnosti o stejném jejich původu a pokrevném blízkém příbuzenství.’

6 ‘...národa, který od Lužnice až za Loiru seděl a v době Caesarově ještě značnou část Gallie zaujímal.’

STRADONICE BEFORE PÍČ AND DÉCHELETTE

The site called Hradiště (Figs. 3-6) is located about 30 km as the crow flies southwest of Prague on a prominent hill or rather a massive terrain block, rising 100 m above the right bank of the Berounka River between the villages of Stradonice and Nižbor.⁷ It became famous far beyond the borders of Bohemia by the hoard of Celtic gold coins - *Regenbogenschüsselchen* discovered in the summer of 1877 and the avalanche of archaeological finds brought to light by the subsequent 'gold rush'.



Fig. 3: Stradonice with the Hradiště (the peak on the right-hand side), view from the southeast (drawing by K. Liebscher in JIRÁSEK ed. 1903).



Fig. 4: The northern slopes of Hradiště (in the left-hand side of the picture), where the hoard of Celtic gold coins was found (drawing by K. Liebscher in JIRÁSEK ed. 1903).

7 For modern excavations cf. RYBOVÁ – DRDA 1994; for overviews cf. WALDHAUSER 2001, 464-468; ČTVERÁK *et al.* 2003, 293-298; for old excavations and finds cf. SKLENÁŘ 2011, 317-319; SKLENÁŘ 2015; SALAČ 2011, 464; HLAVA 2012, 471-472; VALENTOVÁ 2013.

The name of this massif (in its Germanized form Hradischt) thus became widely known in the La Tène culture archaeology. However, even the literature concerning the relationship between Déchelette and Píč fails to mention that the Hradiště had been a well-known site long before that and the views on its interpretation that both the above-mentioned scholars later held had long been present in previous scholarship. Therefore, it is appropriate to briefly add a historical dimension to this picture.



Fig. 5: Hradiště at Stradonice from the northeast in the 1970s (Photo by the author).

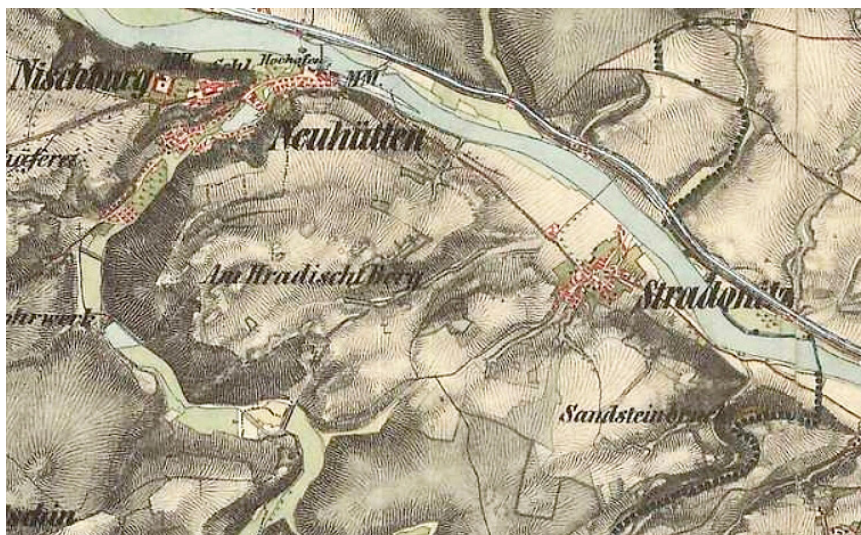


Fig. 6: Hradiště at Stradonice - detail from the map of the Second Imperial military survey (mid-19th century).

The place name Hradiště (in Czech ‘the place where the castle used to stand’, ‘the scanty remains of a castle’) is documented as early as 1538, but it is undoubtedly older and shows that the remains of prehistoric fortifications, surrounding the 90 ha large summit plateau, were already known at that time and were certainly more prominent than today. However, the site and its surroundings were better known for the relatively frequent finds of gold (Celtic)

coins, especially the extraordinary hoard of at least 7,000 pieces from the nearby village of Podmokly (1771).⁸ It was in a discussion about this find that N. A. Voigt (1771, 76), the founder of scientific numismatics in Bohemia, first mentioned the old masonry still visible at Hradiště. Among the archaeologists, Kalina von Jäthenstein (1836, 42) was the first to report on it, and from there the German literature took it up.

The above-mentioned Professor Jan Erazim Vocel,⁹ was instrumental in the exploration of Hradiště. In 1851, as the first archaeologist to visit Hradiště, he carried out a short (and unfortunately undocumented) survey of the still visible portions of the fortifications. Stradonice was thus included in the first printed archaeological map of Bohemia (SCHMITT 1856).

Shortly afterwards, the first documented excavations at Hradiště took place. In 1852 Karel Feistmantel (1819–1885), a geologist with an interest in archaeology, dug test trenches on the slopes of Hradiště and apparently came across a settlement layer or features (pits). Although nothing survived of his finds, their brief description makes their Late La Tène date evident.

However, abundant archaeological finds (including many forgeries) suddenly appeared on the antiquarian market after a hoard of about 200 Celtic coins was discovered here in the summer of 1877. The subsequent ‘gold rush’ brought hundreds of treasure hunters here, who compensated for the scarcity of coin finds by selling ‘antiquities’ at prices accessible to private collectors and antiquarians rather than unwealthy museums. Most of the finds thus disappeared abroad, although a considerable part was also acquired by collectors in Bohemia (principally the collection of Emanuel Štěpán Berger, followed by those of W. Grosse, W. Osborne, N. Lehmann, etc.) and many of them eventually found their way to the National Museum in Prague. The largest collection was accumulated by Štěpán Berger (**Fig. 7**), but the most important professional interest was that of Ludvík Šnajdr (**Fig. 8**), who carried out surface surveys at Hradiště in 1879–1881 and made the first surviving plan of the site.



Fig. 7: Emanuel Štěpán Berger.

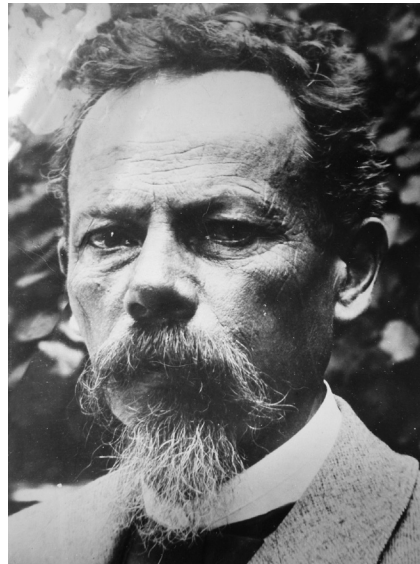


Fig. 8: Ludvík Šnajdr.

8 For an overview of the find circumstances with relevant bibliography and quotations from earlier publications cf. SKLENÁŘ 2011, 235–236.

9 For more detail on him cf. SKLENÁŘ 1981; SKLENÁŘ 2023b.

As far as the official archaeologists and institutions were concerned, the first to notice Hradiště was the Prehistoric Commission of the Imperial Academy of Sciences at Vienna. Its president, Professor Ferdinand von Hochstetter visited the site in August 1878. Although the commission included Stradonice among the first few sites to investigate in 1878, this exploration never took place, although the observations of the more expert visitors unanimously spoke of a massive and rich cultural layer. The Archaeological Committee of the National Museum in Prague had so limited financial means that they could never even think of such an undertaking. Instead, the surface of Hradiště was soon devastated by treasure and antiquity hunters to such an extent that it soon no longer appeared promising for excavation.

In any case, thanks to these finds and their collectors, the archaeological and historical classification of the Stradonice Hradiště, which until then depended only on a few objects acquired by the National Museum and the finds of gold *Regenbogenschüsselchen*, started becoming clearer.

It has become a common practice in recent scholarship to simplify the issue of the Stradonice interpretation to the statement that Píč wrongly identified the site as the Marcomanni centre of Marobudum, whereas Déchelette established it as Celtic (Laténian). In principle this is true, but the development of the interpretation of the site was somewhat more complex, and neither of the scholars was the first to come up with his view.

Already the earliest report on archaeological finds from Stradonice attributed Hradiště to the Marcomanni and considered the finds to be their loot from the Romans. It was written down by Count Eugen Černín of Chudenice in his diary in 1818 and was probably based on the information from his tutor, the 'father of Czech prehistoric research' Josef Dobrovský (SKLENÁŘ 2015, 41; SKLENÁŘ 2023a, 173).

In particular, the discovery of the 'Podmokly treasure' naturally gave rise to the question of whether Stradonice could have been the hitherto unknown Marobudon/Marobudu(u)m, the seat of the Marcomanni ruler Maroboduus/Marbod, alluded to by Tacitus (*Ann* II, 62.3 without naming it) or Claudius Ptolemy (II, 11.14). Marobudum was of considerable importance for the earliest history of Bohemia, and from time immemorial, no other site recorded in Bohemia and its surroundings in the map of Claudius Ptolemy was being searched with such a fervour. From the time of the Renaissance chronicles following Hájek of Libočany (1541, V-VIv), it was being located at the hillfort of Závist nad Vltavou immediately south of Prague (which ultimately turned out to be a Celtic oppidum). From the beginning of the 18th century, it was also identified directly with Prague and various other attempts appeared later. But already the eminent historian and numismatist of the Enlightenment period N. A. Voigt (1771, 76) was the first to declare, with reference to the discovery of the gold coins, that the ruins at the Stradonice Hradiště could be considered the remains of Maroboduus' capital.

This idea was considered by Antonín Jungmann (1824, 63-64), influenced by discussions about the finds of gold coins, which were attributed (among others) to the Boii and the Marcomanni. However, later and more critical historians left the question of the location of Marobudum undecided, beginning with the most prominent 19th century Czech historian, František Palacký, in his study of the Boii (PALACKÝ 1833, 423) and later in the first volume of his *History of the Czech Nation* (PALACKÝ 1836; 1848).

The Marcomanni line of interpretation, although archaeologically documented only from the late 1870s (VOSS 1878; OSBORNE 1880), is in fact older than the Celtic one. As a matter of fact, the *Regenbogenschüsselchen* coins were not recognized as Celtic for a long time and opinions about them varied widely until Vocel proved by his analyses that the prehistoric gold coins found in Bohemia were Celtic (WOCCEL 1850).

Thanks to the coins, Vocel was already aware of the connection between Hradiště and the Celts, but he did not associate it with the French oppida. For him, its best counterpart in light of Caesar's accounts were the fortifications of a similarly massive mountain of Vladař near Žlutice in western Bohemia (which, by the way, was already considered a Boii town by the 16th century chronicler Václav Hájek of Libočany).¹⁰ Formally the first author attributing Stradonice to the Celts was Antonín Jungmann (1824, 63–64) claiming that the hillfort stood on the Stradonice hill before Maroboduus and was inhabited by the Boii. According to him, however, the Boii, as well as the Marcomanni, were actually Slavs.

In 1865, in preparation for his life's work, *Pravěk země české (Prehistory of Bohemia)*, Vocel published a chapter on Celtic fortifications in Bohemia (his criterion for attributing a fortification to the Celts was a stone rampart), where he briefly described and discussed also Hradiště u Stradonic (WOCCEL 1865, 259–260).¹¹ He then reprinted the same text in the first section of his monograph, published a year later. There he definitively connected the Stradonice Hradiště with the Celts, more specifically with the Boii tribe documented in Bohemia by written sources and even identified it as a place of special importance in Celtic times, the principal centre of the surrounding Boii settlement. This designation was adopted by other Czech archaeologists, as well as by German archaeologists in Bohemia (DRESSLER – KIEMANN 1867, 196) and abroad (e.g. ANDREE 1871). As a result, Stradonice was considered a Celtic site at the time Píč was entering archaeology. However, the site aroused little interest because in Bohemia, unlike in France, the Celtic issue was secondary to the Slavic-Germanic archaeological antagonism. The events of 1877 and the following years, however, changed this.

The wealth of finds in the period after the discovery of the treasure quickly proved the validity of Vocel's opinion: the archaeologist Štěpán Berger, who was the first to report on the Stradonice discovery to both archaeologists and to the general public,¹² immediately stated that it was not a simple fortified area, but also 'an important place of production and therefore also of trade'.¹³ He interpreted the fact that identical finds were being found in both the higher and lower layers of the partial digs in all places of the Hradiště as evidence of undisturbed centuries long occupation though dated to a single cultural period – the Latest Iron Age – and represented by people of one nation, peasants and craftsmen who were already minting their own coins (ANONYMOUS 1877). This view was confirmed by Osborne (1880, 8, 22–23), who pointed out the similarity of the iron tools to the finds from the palafittic site of La Tène.

However, the association of the La Tène culture with the Celts was still a matter of controversy at that time. It was advocated by Gabriel de Mortillet at the Congress of Bologna in 1871, while Hans Hildebrand argued that it was originally a Celtic culture, but then partly adopted and modified by the Germans. It was finally attributed to the Celts in 1881 by Ingvald Undset, who also pointed out that the presence of the La Tène culture did not necessarily imply the presence of Celts.

The archaeologist Ludvík Šnajdr studied the site in detail in 1879–1881 and as the best local expert on prehistoric pottery, he realised that the finds from Hradiště represented a new, ceramic group hitherto unknown in Bohemia. He called it the Stradonice type and – due to the Roman elements among the Stradonice finds – dated it first to the 3rd–5th centuries AD.¹⁴

10 WOCCEL 1851; HÁJEK Z LIBOČAN 1541, XXXVIv, cit. *apud* SKLENÁŘ 2011, 367.

11 WOCCEL 1866, 135–136. Reprinted in 1868 in the complete monograph.

12 BERGER 1877; for more detail on him cf. SKLENÁŘ 2006; 2023c.

13 '... významné místo výrobní a tedy i obchodní'. W. Osborne in the same period postulated the site to be a fortified settlement of sedentary population given the total lack of weapons among the finds (OSBORNE 1878, 7; OSBORNE 1882).

14 ŠNAJDR 1879, 20: 'III. Typus Stradonice. Geglättete Gefäße auf der Scheibe geformt, Verzierungen senkrecht, Henkel und Buckel fehlen, ebenso Graphitanstrich, dafür häufig Zusatz von Graphit

Subsequently, the terms ‘the Stradonice period/phase/type’ was adopted in Bohemia as a local synonym for the entire La Tène period. It caught on better than the term ‘Duchcov/Dux period’ forged by Jan Nepomuk Woldřich (1894, 221–222). Finally, Šnajdr (1891, 67) summarized his findings and stated that the finds from Stradonice ‘feature almost universally forms of the La Tène character’ and Hradiště ‘may be rightfully called the Bohemian Bibracte’.

Josef Smolík, the leading figure of the Prague Archaeological Committee after Vocel, even declared in 1877 that a new period in Czech prehistory had been discovered. Later on, he labelled Stradonice as the most significant representative of the La Tène culture in Bohemia and, according to the minority of Roman finds in the assemblage, he concluded that this culture lasted in Bohemia from the 2nd century BC for several hundred years in contact with the Roman cultural milieu (SMOLÍK 1888, 230). Even M. Hoernes in his widely cited work on the prehistory of (European) mankind (HOERNES 1892, 644) spoke unequivocally about the La Tène period at Hradiště, but he could not decide between Celts and Germans (Fig. 9). The Czech equivalent of his work (NIEDERLE 1893, 550–551) identified Stradonice as a Boian settlement, but based on the proportion of finds of a Roman character it was dated to the period of Roman influence. All this makes it clear to what extent the cultural classification and dating of Stradonice was conditioned by the occurrence of objects resembling the material culture of the Roman provinces (already stated by HOCHSTETTER 1878), which were at that time actually the only component of the assemblage that could be dated with some precision. Břetislav Jelínek (1884, 189–190) spoke explicitly about the ‘Romano-Laténian culture’ and dated the floruit of Stradonice as a production site to the 2nd–4th centuries A.D. It is definitely worth mentioning that Gustaf Kossinna in his famous ‘Kassel lecture’ also searched for the first Germanic people in the Czech territory not only in the Dobřichov cemeteries but also in Stradonice.

This was the situation in 1893 when Josef Ladislav Píč took over the new prehistoric department of the National Museum¹⁵ and almost immediately decided to carry out an excavation at Hradiště.



Fig. 9: An illustrative selection of finds from the Stradonice Hradiště (from HOERNES 1892).

zur Masse. Bemalte Gefässe. Beigaben: Waffen von Eisen, Schmuck von Zinnbronze. Dauer III. bis V. Jahrhundert n. Chr.’ Repeated later in ŠNAJDR 1880; 1881.

¹⁵ SKLENÁŘ 2013b; 2014; in general SKLENÁŘ 2017.

JOSEF LADISLAV PÍČ AT HRADIŠTĚ

At the time of the peak of the ‘gold rush’ in Stradonice, Píč was a grammar school teacher in the town of Mladá Boleslav, quite far north of Prague, and as he himself admitted (Píč 1903, 3), he was not interested in the ‘discovery of the century’, being busy with historical work.

But having turned to archaeology and become the keeper of archaeological collections of the National Museum in Prague, he was faced with the task of creating a dignified exhibition of prehistory in the newly opened monumental building of this museum, and the old museum collection was totally insufficient for this task. Stradonice was one of the promising sources of both new material and new knowledge. At that time, Píč had already presented the Stradonice finds within the archaeological part of the so-called Bohemian Centennial exhibition in Prague in 1891 (Píč 1891b), but especially he had already penned his first significant attempt at a systematic picture of Czech prehistory and protohistory – the work *Boii, Marcomanni, and Czechs according to historical and archaeological testimony* (Píč 1890–92; 1893) – in which he labelled Stradonice as a production centre of the late La Tène period. In order to acquire material from this period for research and exhibition purposes, he attempted to excavate there for the first time in August 1894. Unfortunately, he was not very successful – it was not easy to find undisturbed parts of the site.

The insufficient documentation, characteristic of the period, prevents us from knowing much about this intervention and its results.¹⁶ No mention of Stradonice figures in Píč’s notebooks from that time either. Therefore, the main source of information is Píč’s correspondence with his friend, the architect Josef Hlávka, the founder and president of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Literature, and Arts, who showed a keen interest in archaeology. Thus, we know that after the harvest in August 1894, Píč dug at Hradiště for several days, but the rainy weather made him leave with scant findings and without gaining any exhibits for the museum. The only features recorded included a hearth and traces of bronze and iron smelting.

The surface of Hradiště was already heavily disturbed by hundreds of treasure and antiquity hunters, which is probably why a second excavation season planned for 1895,¹⁷ never took place and Píč preferred to turn his attention to an exploration of burial mounds in southern and southwestern Bohemia.

Píč’s second excavation did not take place until 1902 – again in August after the selected fields had been harvested.¹⁸ This time Píč studied the rampart plan, documented terracing walls from dry-stone masonry, similar to those he knew only from Gleichberg near Römhild in central Germany, and concluded that the fortification of Stradonice Hradiště ‘has no equal’ (as he wrote to J. Hlávka). However, he also looked at the question of cremation graves (or what he considered to be cremation graves) and concluded that there was no continuous cultural layer at Hradiště, but rather individual ‘ash pits’ and hearths, the remains of burnt buildings.

Píč marked the results of his findings in a photograph of a large model of Hradiště, which he had made for the National Museum permanent exhibition in 1899 (**Fig. 13**) and later published it in his book on Stradonice entitled *Hradiště near Stradonice as historical Marobudum* (Píč 1903, tab. I) (**Fig. 10**). This monumental publication of the most famous prehistoric site in Bohemia was not yet the last, but still the culminating volume of the whole series of Píč’s *Antiquities of the Czech Land*. His own limited excavations at Hradiště, as can be seen, did not add much to the knowledge, but it is understandable given the state of the site and the financial possibilities of the museum. The data on which the work is based is thus principally the arte-

16 For finds from this excavation cf. VALENTOVÁ 2013, 14, 18, 20.

17 National Museum, Prague, Archive: collection NM registry, box 41, no. 1144.

18 On this and the previous excavation cf. HLAVA 2012, 471–472.

Čechy na úsvitě dějin.

Na základě praehistorické sbírky musea království Českého,
praehistorické sbírky Dvorního musea ve Vídni
a pramenů dějepisných

píše

Dr. J. L. Píč.

Svazek 2.

Hradiště u Stradonic jako historické Marobudum.

Vydáno příspěvím České akademie císaře Františka Josefa pro vědy, slovesnost a umění
a Společnosti Musea království Českého.

V Praze.

Nákladem vlastním. — Tiskem České grafické společnosti »Unie«.

1903.

Fig. 10: The title page of Píč's book *Stradonice as the historical Marobudum* (Píč 1903).

facts from the collections, mainly private ones (Berger's collection was of fundamental importance here). The interpretation then relied on the unique knowledge gained during Píč's study trips to France and the Rhineland, during which he deliberately pursued the Stradonice issue and, in his own words, 'found the explanation of Stradonice' during his repeated study of the collections of the museum in St. Germain-en-Laye near Paris in 1896.

No less important, however, was the forging of the most important of Píč's numerous foreign friendships – his acquaintance with Joseph Déchelette.

JOSEPH DÉCHELETTE BETWEEN BIBRACTE AND STRADONICE

Joseph Jean Marie Déchelette (1862–1914)¹⁹ (**Fig. 11**) came from a wealthy family of textile entrepreneurs in Roanne, a town near Lyon (départ. Loire in southeastern France). He discovered archaeology through his uncle Jacques-Gabriel Bulliot, famous for his long excavations on the nearby Mont Beuvray, proving that in the Late Iron Age the hill was the site of the Celtic oppidum of Bibracte. The 'Gaulish Pompeii'²⁰ was the centre of the Haedui tribe and, together with Gergovia and Alesia, the most important 'urban' settlement of the ancient Gaul. He worked there from 1867 and after thirty years handed over the direction of the excavations to Déchelette, who took it up with great enthusiasm and led it until 1907, while studying bibliography and



Fig. 11: Joseph Déchelette.

19 On Déchelette in detail REINACH 1914; DÉCHELETTE, F. 1962, more recently BINÉTRUY 1994a; 1994b; 2000a; COLLIS 2009; PÉRE-NOGUÈS ed. 2014; OLIVIER 2019; PÉRE-NOGUÈS ed. 2019. On his international research contacts BINÉTRUY 2000b; PÉRE-NOGUÈS 2017; on his epistolar contacts PÉRE-NOGUÈS 2010a; 2010b. From the Czech perspective: ANONYMOUS 1906; SCHRÁNIL 1919; SKUTIL 1933; 1936; and mainly SKUTIL 1947. Both opinions are compared by PIERREVELCIN 2012, 43–46.

20 This is how Otto Tischler called Bibracte in his seminal work (TISCHLER 1885), in which he moreover used the finds from Stradonice as examples of Late La Tène material culture. Déchelette in his foreword to the translation of Píč's book used the term 'Pompéi protohistorique' for Stradonice.

travelling to museums with collections from the 'Gallic' period. From 1892 he administered and reformed the municipal museum (*Musée des beaux arts et d'archéologie*) in Roanne, which he transformed into a serious institution and which now bears his name. He also became vice-president of the Haeduan Society (*Société éduenne des lettres, sciences et arts*) in Autun.

During these years, Déchelette became a respected expert on Celtic archaeology and especially the oppida period. He was particularly influenced by Salomon Reinach (1858–1932) from the *Musée des Antiquités Nationales* in St. Germain-en-Laye near Paris, who described the history of Celtic archaeology in France (REINACH 1898), and Camille Jullian (1859–1933), professor of classical archaeology in Bordeaux.

In May 1899 – having left the management of the family business to devote himself entirely to the exploration of Mont Beuvray – Déchelette set out on a journey to find comparative material in the museums of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. We do not know whether he had been informed about Stradonice beforehand. What is sure, in Berlin Albert Voss, the director of the department of prehistory in the Royal Ethnological Museum (*Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde*), gave him a letter of introduction to his friend J. L. Píč. Déchelette left for Prague on the 14th May to meet Píč and spend a few days there. Píč showed him not only the collections of the National Museum in the exposition he had created in 1894–1896 (Fig. 12),²¹ but probably also the most important private Stradonice collection (Berger's), and accompanied him to the Stradonice Hradiště and other sites.



Fig. 12: Presentation of finds from Stradonice in Píč's new exhibition of Bohemian prehistory in the National Museum in Prague (from ca. 1900). A model of Hradiště made in 1899 can be seen in the foreground.

21 Déchelette stated at this occasion that the La Tène flat graves in Bohemia corresponded, apart from the pottery, completely to those of the Marne.



Fig. 13: Photograph of the model of Hradiště from Píč's exhibition with captions added for the use in the publication.

Déchelette described his impression of the Stradonice collection in the National Museum: '[...] la similitude des antiquités de Stradonice et de Bibracte m'avait très vivement frappé. J'avais éprouvé la surprise que M. Píč avait lui-même ressentie au musée de Saint-Germain devant les vitrines de Bibracte' (DÉCHELETTE 1901a; DÉCHELETTE 1904, 183-184).

From there, Déchelette went on to Vienna to see M. Hoernes and J. Szombathy with the intention of studying the collection of Stradonice finds there as well.

Immediately after his return, in June 1899, he reported on them at the 66th Congrès national de la Société française d'archéologie at Mâcon, comparing Stradonice and Mont Beuvray (DÉCHELETTE 1901a; 1904). In this small work, he gave an interpretation of the Czech word Hradiště, a description of the site, information about the finds, and expressed the opinion that the oppidum was founded in the 1st century BC and disappeared at the very end of it, at the time of the arrival of the Marcomanni in Bohemia. He summarised his opinion in one sentence: 'À travers le vaste territoire où rayonna la civilisation dite La Tène, [...] on ne saurait trouver un autre exemple d'une analogie si complète entre les types industriels de deux villes gauloises' (DÉCHELETTE 1901a; DÉCHELETTE 1904, 128). Incidentally, he was not the first to do so, although he probably did not know it: the similarity of the features and objects of Stradonice and Bibracte had already been stated by Šnajdr (1891, 67) and discussed by Hoernes (1892, 644).

In 1899 Píč did not come to Mont Beuvray, although he had been invited (he was heading to Russia). He visited Roanne the following July (Pl. 1/1), on his next big western trip. He was

welcomed by Déchelette,²² and also advised by him as to the museums and collections to visit. He went to Reims and with Déchelette's letter of introduction he studied the Léon Morel collection of Marne tombs, and to Paris with recommendations to meet Emile Cartailhac and Salomon Reinach. He was as fascinated by the similarity of the Bibracte finds, he could see in the museum at St. Germain, as Déchelette had been in Prague the year before; as he wrote a little later, 'the vessel sherds [...] at Bibracte and at Stradonice are so identical that they must have been made in the same workshop, or by the same potter, and decorated with the same wavy combing' (Píč 1908, 51).

In 1901 he travelled again in France, but did not reach the surroundings of Bibracte; he probably stopped there in 1902, the last time he was in France as an archaeologist.²³ He and Déchelette also had travel plans in common at the time: to go to England in 1901 (Píč proposed to meet him in Calais on 1st July²⁴ but then he went there alone), and to Russia with (or in order to meet there) their mutual friend, Baron de Baye, who had been practically at home in the country as an archaeologist and ethnographer since 1895 (he was looking for the origin of the Celts there). However, neither of these plans was realised.²⁵

Baron Joseph de Baye (1853–1931)²⁶ (**Fig. 14**) was another French archaeologist who maintained a lively correspondence with Píč. He was very interested in Czech finds of the 'Merovingian type' from the Migration period, which he found to his surprise in the National Museum when he came here at Christmas 1893 to study Slavic archaeology. He published



Fig. 14: Baron Joseph de Baye.

22 '[...] en votre honneur je ferai déblayer avant votre arrivée une petite longueur du rempart et une maison.' (letter from Déchelette to Píč, Roanne 12th June 1900; National Museum Prague, Archive, Collection J. L. Píč; BINÉTRUY 2000b, 149).

23 By 1911, when he went to Paris on paleographic business shortly before his death, both Stradonice and Bibracte were beyond the horizon of his interest.

24 Letter concept from Píč to Déchelette, Prague 23rd January 1901 (National Museum Prague, Archive, Collection J. L. Píč).

25 The numerous letters of Baron de Baye to Píč from the years 1893–1911 (National Museum Prague, Archive, Collection J. L. Píč, box 3, no. 102) do not refer to the Russia travel plan.

26 VATAN 2004, 26–27, 65–66.

a pamphlet about them,²⁷ looking for their affinity with the western finds attributed to the Franks, and judged that similar finds in Bohemia originated in a colony of Frankish traders who had come to Bohemia – perhaps directly as the retinue of the ruler of the Slavic tribes, Samo, who, according to the chronicler Fredegarius, was originally a Frankish merchant. Píč doubted this interpretation in his brief review of this work (Píč 1893–95), even so, de Baye was elected a member of the Archaeological Committee of Bohemia on his recommendation. However, he did not maintain his interest in finds from Bohemia and settled permanently in Russia immediately afterwards. He barely survived the revolutionary years and returned home, poor and ill, for the rest of his life.

It is a great pity that Píč did not leave any detailed testimony about his trips to France, not even any handwritten notes in his notebooks of the relevant years. It is the more so unfortunate that a number of travelogue feuilletons are preserved among his manuscripts and are a most interesting offshoot of his literary output. Most of them recount stories and observations from his travels to the East, from Slovakia through the Balkans to Constantinople, a number of them concern journeys to Russia, close to his heart, but none of them comes from the West with the exception of Germany and Italy. This extensive collection is by no means complete²⁸ – perhaps Píč would have continued his narratives had he been given more time.

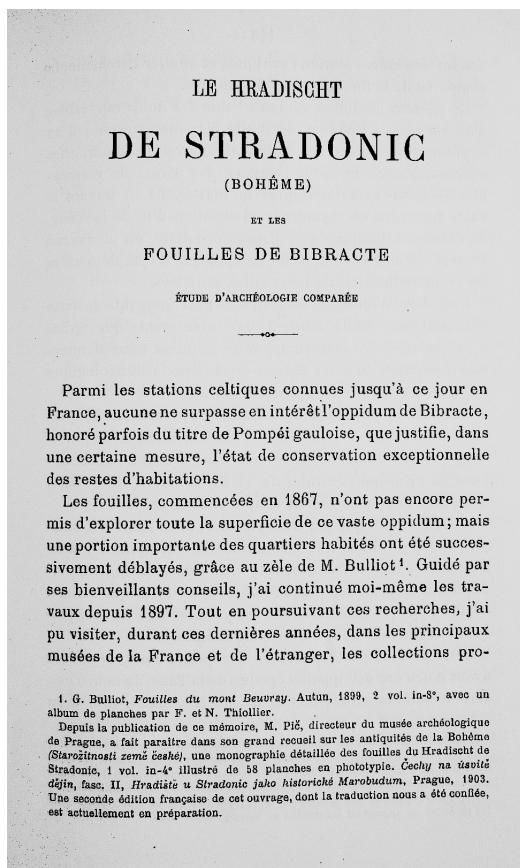


Fig. 15: *Le Hradischt de Stradonic* (DÉCHELETTE 1901a).

27 DE BAYE 1894; cf. ŠNAJDR 1903.

28 Two volumes of feuilletons on travels motivated by European archaeology and history were edited and published by the present author (Píč 2004; 2017).

STRADONICE IN THE PUBLICATIONS OF BOTH FRIENDS

While Déchelette promptly published the first information about Stradonice for the international specialists in a language other than German and included it among the counterparts of his Bibracte (**Fig. 15**),²⁹ Píč wrote a thorough monograph of this extraordinary site and published it in 1903 as the fourth volume of his *Antiquities* (Píč 1903). Here, for the first time, he provided not only a comprehensive overview of the entire find assemblage, created by so various ways and means, but also a picture of what he termed the ‘late Gallic culture’.

Píč was, of course, not the first to write about Stradonice (neither was Déchelette for that matter). However, the previous publications were almost always only partial and brief notes in newspapers and magazines – with the exception of Wilhelm Osborne, the archaeologist and collector, who lived in Prague at the times of the Stradonice ‘gold rush’ (OSBORNE 1878; 1880; 1883). The National Museum had already taken up the idea of a larger publication in 1878 at Berger’s instigation, but this never happened. A real material publication and overall assessment was still lacking – researchers were discouraged by the enormous number and variety of finds, the fact that they were scattered in various locations, and the complex problems of interpretation. Píč drew both on the collection of the National Museum and on large private collections (especially Berger’s, which the museum had acquired at the turn of the century), and on the study of the vast literature of comparative material in French and German museums. He produced a work that – archaeologically, factually, and methodologically – was idolized by his admirers and respected by his opponents.

The problem was, however, that the work was published in Czech without foreign language apparatus (this was not the custom at the time). Scholars from abroad – as evidenced by Píč’s extensive correspondence – highly appreciated the above-average richness of the illustration (a part of which were, moreover, exceptionally in colour³⁰), but the text remained inaccessible to them. Some advised him to make a German translation as soon as possible (J. Szombathy³¹) or to provide at least a summary (J. Naue) or to translate the figure captions (J. Mestorf).

An exception among them was Déchelette who was particularly linguistically gifted and mastered several languages. Having noticed a number of parallels with French material in the Bohemian collections not only in the La Tène period but also in earlier epochs he understood the importance of Bohemia for the archaeology of Europe: ‘Grâce à sa situation géographique, la Bohême, placée au centre de l’Europe, fut de tout temps pénétrée profondément par les éléments étrangers, partis souvent de directions opposées. Aussi l’étude de ses antiquités présente-t-elle un intérêt tout particulier’ (DÉCHELETTE 1901a; DÉCHELETTE 1904, 185).

While others complained about the incomprehensibility of the text of Píč’s *Antiquities*, Déchelette was able to cope with this obstacle.³² Already in the autumn of 1899, after his re-

29 DÉCHELETTE 1902; On his relation to Stradonice cf: PIERREVELCIN 2014.

30 Well before the publication of the French translation (12th May 1905) Déchelette informed Píč that illustrations of the volume that he presented at the French archaeological congress at Périgueux, aroused great admiration.

31 ‘Was wäre das erst für ein Bombenerfolg durch ganz Europa, wenn Sie ihrer Gelehrsamkeit nicht die enge Rinne der tschechischen Sprache geben müßten’ – a letter from the 13th January 1902 (National Museum Prague, Archive, collection J. L. Píč, box 11, no. 878).

32 Déchelette to Vincent Durand in June 1899 about understanding Czech: ‘Ces bohémiens s’obstinent à ne pas écrire en allemand, il me faut prendre connaissance des travaux écrits en langue tchèque’ (BINÉTRUY 2000b, 142). In letters to Píč he wrote enthusiastically: ‘En ce moment je travaille à l’étude de la langue tchèque, que je trouve très intéressante’ (Roanne, 3rd October 1899); ‘Je ne suis

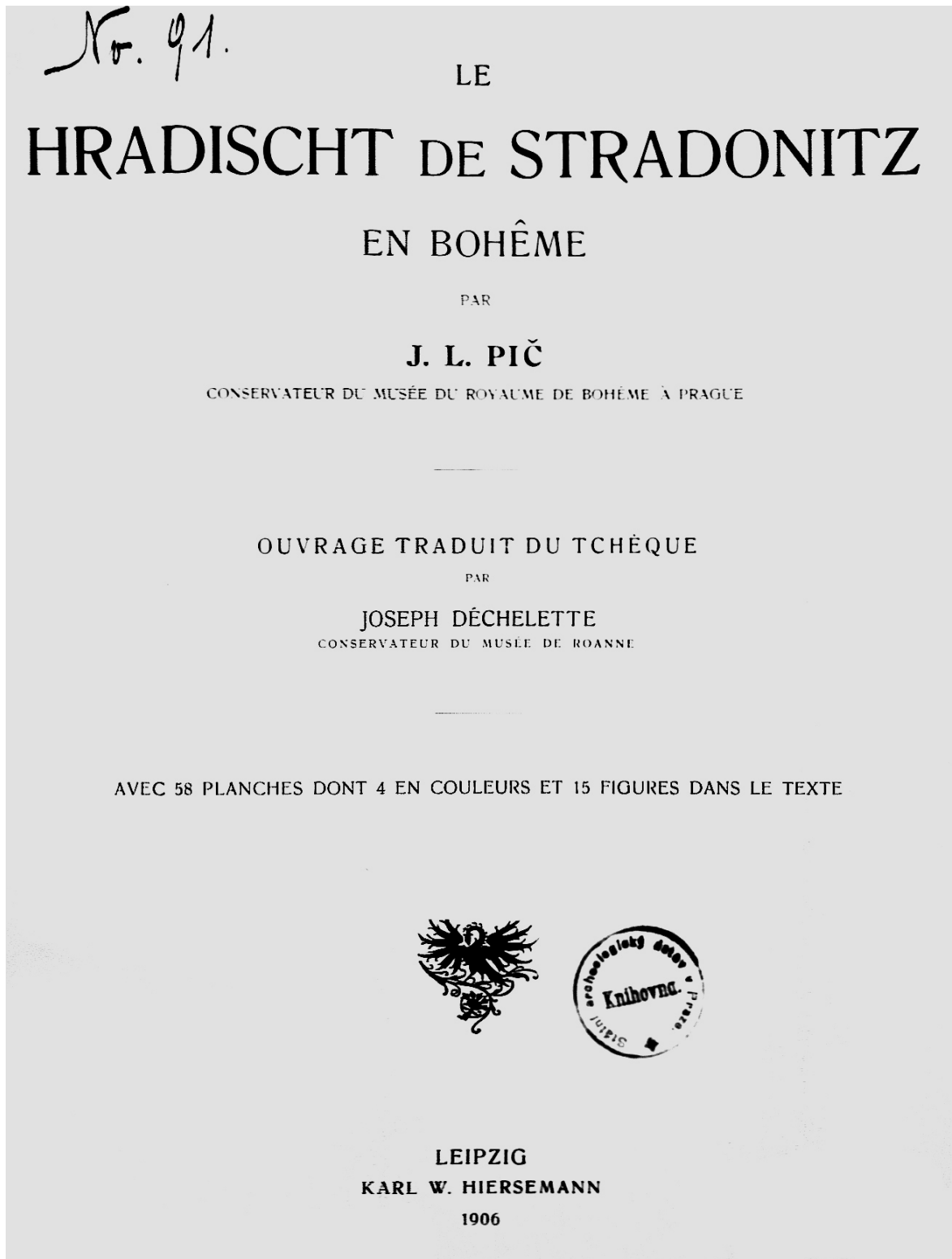


Fig. 16: Pič's book in Déchelette's translation (Pič 1906).

turn from Stradonice, he began to learn Czech, with the intention of translating Píč's book as soon as it was published (although he had some difficulty doing so because he could not find a grammar book or a large dictionary).³³ His efforts to get acquainted with such a remote area must have seemed strange to many French.³⁴ In any case he acquired at least a passive knowledge of Czech remarkably quickly, so that he was soon able to translate selected parts of Píč's book into French. He worked on its translation immediately upon its publication in 1903. In a letter to Salomon Reinach (17th March 1903), he justified his plan on the grounds that no one in Germany or England reads Czech and therefore there would certainly be interest in a French edition (PÉRÉ-NOGUÈS 2020, 62).

The translation into French (Píč 1906) (**Fig. 16**) was somewhat surprisingly published in Germany. It was so because Parisian publishers were not interested in archaeology, much less in Bohemia, and Prague printers did not have enough French typefaces. Déchelette therefore proposed a joint edition,³⁵ but at the beginning of 1904 he managed to arrange for publication by the renowned Karl W. Hiersemann publishing house in Leipzig. Píč received finished copies in February 1906. It was the first Czech archaeological publication translated abroad in 30 years since Vocel's *Prehistory of Bohemia* (that is of its second half, devoted to the Slavs).

It was, however, not a literal translation – Déchelette omitted some passages, while others were modified in accordance with his different opinion. As a matter of fact, when it came to the interpretation of Stradonice as a whole, the opinions of the two friends, hitherto in concordance on technical aspects, were at odds. Still, their disagreement remained very subtle and polite without any bitterness – unlike the polemics conducted between the two hostile camps in Czech archaeology.

'CZECH BIBRACTE' OR MAROBUDUM? THE DISPUTE OVER THE INTERPRETATION OF STRADONICE

It was evident already from the chapter on Stradonice before Píč that from the very beginning of the site's exploration two interpretations clashed: on the one hand a 'Boian city' of unknown name, on the other hand Marobudum (or Marobudum, Marobudon of Claudius Ptolemy), i.e. actually a 'Germanic town' – in contrast to Tacitus' widely quoted statement about the absence of towns among the Germans. However, only Píč had to come to terms with this tradition, since Déchelette was not burdened by the development of these controversies and approached Stradonice on the basis of his knowledge of the French oppida. Given the parallels mentioned between Stradonice and Bibracte, he had no doubt that Stradonice belonged to the same era and cultural milieu (his 'civilisation des oppida'), almost as a 'succursal

pas encore bien fort en tchéque, mais je commence à lire et dans peu de mois je lirai couramment' (Roanne, 24th October 1900) (National Museum Prague, Archive, collection J. L. Píč).

33 At the same time, however, he tried to obtain the translation of another work by Píč as testified by an interesting side-story: Karel Kučera, a Czech employee of the Austro-Hungarian Bank in Vienna, asked Píč in a letter from the 11th June 1900 to lend him a publication of his (Píč 1897) because Déchelette had asked him a month before to make a translation for him of its Chapter called *History and Archaeology*. A month later Kučera sent the text back to Píč (National Museum Prague, Archive, collection J. L. Píč, box 8, no. 530). We have no clue as to how Déchelette happened to know Kučera and why he asked him and not directly Píč.

34 J.-G. Bulliot wrote to Déchelette on the 17th May 1899: 'Mais n'est-il pas étrange, que l'explorateur de Bibracte aille échouer en Bohême pour y retrouver des ancêtres inconnus' (PÉRÉ-NOGUÈS 2020, 62).

35 A letter from Roanne 20th May 1903 – National Museum Prague, Archive, collection J. L. Píč.

of Bibracte', and attributed this fact to the direct trade links between France and central Europe via the upper Danube and Rhine regions. He joined his 1900 article on Stradonice as an appendix to his report on the excavations at Mont Beuvray in 1897–1901 (DÉCHELETTE 1904, 127–188, tab. XXIII–VI), and even inserted a chapter on Stradonice to Volume IV of his *Manuel*, devoted to the Late Iron Age (DÉCHELETTE 1914, 487–491) as a counterpart to his description of the French oppida and their material culture (on Bibracte DÉCHELETTE 1914, 454–463). He was not alone in this interpretation: for example, Camille Jullian in 1906 described Stradonice as a 'ville industrielle' and probably the main seat of the Boii (JULLIAN 1906; cf. DÉCHELETTE 1914; DÉCHELETTE 1927, 487).

For Píč, the similarity with the French oppida was also clear ('The Stradonice settlement [...] is almost a transplanted piece of Bibracte or Alesia'³⁶ – Píč 1897, 532), but he faced a different problem. As he attributed the 'Marnian culture' to the Celts-Boii and the Roman Iron Age population of Bohemia to the Slavs (which was his unfortunate ethnohistorical construction), he had nothing within Czech archaeology to connect with the Germanic Marcomanni, who according to historical accounts appeared at the turn of the eras under Marobuduuus. The extraordinary nature of Stradonice, which also contained an obvious Roman component, seemed to coincide well with the brief Marcomannic occupation, and Píč decided to link them.

In that case, however, the direct parallel with the French oppida needed to be scaled down. This gave rise to problems which would otherwise have been avoided. The dating he proposed did match the historical dates of the arrival of the Marcomanni from the west to Bohemia, and the aforementioned lack of similar finds between France and Bohemia led him to hypothesize that cultural elements identical to the French oppida were brought here by the Marcomanni from their original homeland west of the Rhine, or by Gaulish artisans arriving with them. In this way, he could explain Stradonice as a foreign, short-lived, and isolated phenomenon, ending with the departure of Marobuduuus' retinue from Bohemia. Moreover, in this way he could revive an attractive conjecture, traditional since the 18th century – the identification of Stradonice as the seat of Marobuduuus.

The idea did not occur only to him at that point. Even though at the beginning of his archaeological career, he did not consider a more precise localization of Marobuduuus possible, he soon – first cautiously (Píč 1890–92, 438; Píč 1893, LV), and later as an almost absolute certainty (Píč 1897, 533) – expressed his support for its localization at Stradonice. Apart from the archaeological grounds he argued that the fortification of Hradiště is extraordinary and differs in its character from other fortifications in Bohemia.

Píč summarized his interpretation of the Hradiště in a single sentence at the end of his work (Píč 1902, 143–144): 'The archaeological evidence therefore shows that the Marobuduuus of historical reports [...] can only be placed on the Hradiště near Stradonice [...]; in the fortified military camp at the Hradiště lay the power of Marobud, which came to its end after the town was overthrown.'

He had a number of good arguments for his interpretation at the time, and therefore it did not arouse any significant reaction, not even among his sworn opponents from the so-called 'university school'. Both sides agreed that Stradonice was an alien, external, and isolated phenomenon in the prehistory of Bohemia.

But one who did not agree with Píč's interpretation was Déchelette as Píč's opponents in Bohemia did not fail to point out with satisfaction.³⁷ He had previously completely agreed with Píč's opinion, based mainly on the collections of French museums, that the inhumation graves

36 'Stradonické hradiště [...] je takřka kus přeneseného Bibracte nebo Alesie.'

37 In Bohemia the principal criticism appeared in ŠNAJDR 1904.

in northern and central Bohemia – appearing suddenly without any local antecedent and with furnishings quite corresponding to those in the Marne and middle Seine basins – belonged to the same Marne culture and specifically to the Celtic Boii, coming from France.³⁸ Their views on the close archaeological affinity between Stradonice and Bibracte also coincided, although Déchelette's idea of the reason for this changed over time: he initially agreed with Píč's idea of a 'colony' of Haedui-Boii craftsmen among the Marcomanni, but later rejected migrations and favoured the explanation of trade between Stradonice and France within the sphere of Celtic civilization.³⁹

However, as soon as he became acquainted with Píč's hypothesis about Marobudum, he objected to it.⁴⁰ Already when he sent his 1900 brochure to Píč, he accompanied it with a friendly criticism: 'Je prends la liberté dans cet opuscule de vous présenter quelques objections en ce qui concerne la date de la destruction de Hradischt et son attribution aux Marcomans. Je vous avoue que maintenant, je suis fortement tenté de faire de Stradonic un oppidum boïen, détruit à l'arrivée de Marbod. Je suis surtout frappé de l'absence de monnaies romaines imperiales et aussi de ce que les fibules en bronze *les plus récentes* ou les plus communes de Bibracte et d'Alésia ne figurent pas à Stradonic. Pourtant, si le Hradischt a été occupé de l'an 12 à l'an 19 ap. J. C., l'occupation serait postérieure à celle de Bibracte, abandonnée vers l'an 9 avant J. C.'⁴¹ In the work he sent to Píč he justified his dating of the demise of Stradonice to the time of the Marcomanni arrival (which clearly ruled out the identification with Marobudum) in even more detail (DÉCHELETTE 1901a; DÉCHELETTE 1904, 186–187).

Píč contradicted him and other proponents of the Boii oppidum hypothesis (he did not use the term 'oppidum' himself) by saying that: their opinion corresponded to Celtic archaeology in France, but not in Bohemia (no other Celtic oppidum was known between France and Stradonice at that time); that the Celts in Bohemia did not have oppida;⁴² and that the Boii no longer dwelled in Bohemia at the time of the beginning of the settlement of Hradiště;⁴³ moreover, the Boii buried unburnt bodies, whereas the slight traces of burials at Hradiště were cremations; and finally, Stradonice lies outside the area of distribution of the Laténian (= 'Boian') inhumation graves. He summarised his arguments in a letter to Déchelette dated 21st December 1900:⁴⁴

'Votre avis, que Stradonice étaient un oppidum Boien, on peut vraiment appliquer: si le mont Beuvrai est un oppidum Aeduorum, le mont Gergovie un oppidum Arvernorum, on pourrait par analogie dire, que Stradonice est un oppidum Boiorum. Cette conclusion serait

38 Píč 1902, 158–159; DÉCHELETTE 1914, 584–586.

39 DÉCHELETTE 1901a; DÉCHELETTE 1904, 184–185; cf. ROURE – KAENEL 2019.

40 On this controversy cf. mainly PIERREVELCIN 2012, 43–46.

41 Letter from Roanne 13th October 1900 (National Museum Prague, Archive, collection J. L. Píč). Déchelette apologised again in his letter from the 9th January 1902, regretting the difference of opinions expressed in his work on the matter of the oppidum's inhabitants but stressing the difficulty of ethnic issues.

42 It is worth mentioning that already in 1845 J. E. Vocel was of the opinion that one of the Bohemian hillforts (Češov in northeastern Bohemia) resembled the French oppida in its size and massiveness, and in 1851 he presumed the same for the hillfort Vladař in western Bohemia (WOCCEL 1845, 20; WOCCEL 1851, no. 100). Late Iron Age finds have actually been discovered at Češov (though it is apparently not an oppidum), whereas at Vladař Late Iron Age occupation has not been attested convincingly down to our day.

43 Déchelette on the contrary admitted that remains of the Boii may have remained in Bohemia by the time of Marobudus' conquest in 12–10 BC (DÉCHELETTE 1901a; DÉCHELETTE 1904, 176–177).

44 Letter draft, National Museum Prague, Archive, collection J. L. Píč.

très jolie, mais il y a un petit obstacle: les Boii en quittant la Bohême sont venus en Gaule 58 av. notre air et Marobud avec les Marcomans est venu en Bohême 12–9 av. Chr., c'est à dire, il y a une différence de 50 années entre le départ des Boïens et l'arrivée de Marobud.

Après: les Boii sont représentés en archéologie par Latène I, dans une grande partie de Bohême, la culture de Stradonice, apportée du Mont Beuvrai se trouve seulement à Stradonice: les Boii étaient un peuple dominant en Bohême, Stradonice sont une épisode archéologique a un temps, ou les Boii étaient déjà disparu.' (The manuscript is reproduced precisely including the original grammar errors, only the accents were added).

Píč tried to downplay the striking parallels with Bibracte by suggesting that the La Tène component of the finds is due to artisans coming from Bibracte, who then worked (together with others who, according to Tacitus, came from Roman provincial towns) for Maroboduus' court and his warriors, not for commerce outside of Stradonice where there is no trace of their products.

Regarding chronology, Píč stated that the find assemblage contained objects from the horizon of the 'Marne or Duchcov/Dux type' brooches to the beginning of the Roman Imperial period. Drawing on recent excavations of Bibracte and especially on the chronology of the La Tène and Roman brooches valid at the time, he reckoned that the earliest elements were accidental and that the beginning of the hillfort can be placed sometime before 15–10 BC ('the objects of the Stradonice hillfort begin where Bibracte ends and Augustodunum and other Roman colonies of the Augustan period begin'), whereas its end dated before AD 25–50. Given the methodological level of the period, we should not be surprised that Píč and others did not take into account that all the finds from Stradonice came from a second or third hand, were either found accidentally or excavated quite unprofessionally without provenance information, and that it is not even guaranteed that all the pieces actually come directly from the Hradiště.⁴⁵ As a matter of fact, one could not even rule out an origin from a completely different place, given that the designation 'Stradonice' soon became a sought-after brand in the antiquities trade.

Déchelette, in the preface to his translation (Píč 1906, iii–iv), summarised Píč's interpretation as follows: 'résidence royale de Marobod, [...] mais profondément pénétrée par la civilisation celtique', but against this he clearly referred to his previous works on Stradonice as 'un oppidum boïen, fondé dans le cours du premier siècle et détruit sans doute à l'arrivée de Marobod, vers l'an 10 av. J.-C.' And it was probably mainly due to his decisive position that the Marcomannian hypothesis fell out of discussion soon after Píč's death. The last time the potential location of Marobudum at Hradiště was considered was in the 1930s by Anton Gnirs, a German archaeologist in Bohemia (cf. GNIRS 1976).

The question of the location of Marobudum has not been resolved to this day. Leaving aside the possibility that it is actually not a specific toponym, but only a generic description of Maroboduus' whereabouts, mistakenly considered to be a place name already in antiquity, the place can be looked for in Bohemia. However, the modern idea of Marobudum is that of a significant settlement and production concentration from the beginning of the earlier Roman Iron Age period rather than a town.⁴⁶

45 In 1958 a settlement dated to the recent and late La Tène period (2nd–1st century BC) but mainly to the Early Roman Iron Age (1st–2nd century AD) was excavated at the foothill of Hradiště (MOTYKOVÁ-ŠNEIDROVÁ 1962; cf. WALDHAUSER 2001, 466; DROBERJAR 2002, 314). This should be taken into account when considering the (insignificant) Roman Iron Age component which played such an important role in dating the end of occupation and in associating the site with Maroboduus.

46 On the Marobudum issue in detail cf. DOBIÁŠ 1964, 105, 143–144; more recently WALDHAUSER 2001, 16–17; DROBERJAR 2000, 56–60; DROBERJAR 2002, 172; SALAČ ed. 2008, 125.

Josef Ladislav Píč published further volumes of his *Antiquities* in a constant conflict with his domestic adversaries, although this struggle lost its vigour as the subject moved from pre-history to history and the controversial problems diminished. In 1909 a volume devoted to the archaeology of the Slavic period in Bohemia (the early Middle Ages) was published and Píč was faced with a problem which he had hitherto avoided. The Dvůr Králové and Zelená Hora manuscripts were alleged oeuvres of Old Slavic literature in Bohemia while in reality 19th century fakes. The belief in their authenticity was still alive in Czech society and was considered a kind of manifestation of national belonging. In the fierce controversy, which had been going on for many years, Píč had sided with their defenders and now had to decide whether to base the last volume on the culture of the ancient Bohemians on them or to give up on them. He devoted the last year of his life to efforts to prove their authenticity (for this he also went to Paris for the last time in September 1911, when he presented the manuscripts to the experts on medieval literature Gaston Paris, Camille Couderc, etc.). But constant ridicule from his opponents and petty administrative obstacles set off a sudden depression that put a gun in his hand at Christmas 1911.

Joseph Déchelette, who after Píč's death wrote to Salomon Reinach that Píč was his 'ami dévoué', followed him three years later. Shortly after the outbreak of war, he had already volunteered for military service on the front line – be it the Gallic sword or the modern rifle, it was still the same struggle against Germanic aggression, he wrote on 20th September 1914 to Camille Jullian. Already in the first days of October 1914, just two months after the beginning of the conflict (and a few months after the publication of the last volume of his *Manuel* dedicated to the La Tène period) he was killed as a captain of infantry of the Territorial Army leading his company into attack during the heavy fighting at Vingré (dép. Aisne, Picardy). Ironically, he was the first member of the Gesellschaft für deutsche Vorgeschichte to die in the war.

His memory was commemorated after the war in the main Czech archaeological journal by Josef Schráníl, Píč's future successor at the National Museum in Prague (SCHRÁNIL 1919).

The World War, after all, ended the life of the entire 'long' 19th century along with many of its ways to answer archaeological questions. In Bohemia, after Píč's death, the opposite camp of opinion prevailed, which thoroughly revised his views, often incorrectly from today's point of view (which was also the case for the La Tène period). As far as Stradonice was concerned, however, Píč's interpretation was almost universally agreed upon⁴⁸ and it was only in subsequent generations that opinion changed. Today Hradiště is clearly regarded as a Celtic oppidum, whose lifetime spanned from about the second half of the 2nd century to about the third quarter of the 1st century BC (LT C2–D2, but mainly D1). Joseph Déchelette was therefore correct, although his dating suffered the same fate as Píč's before: it began roughly where the present chronology ends. However, Josef Ladislav Píč will for ever be credited for providing archaeology a complete picture of this key site in his writings, and it was thanks to him that – over a century ago – Stradonice 'finally passed from museums to literature'.⁴⁹

48 Cf. ŠIMEK 1923, 31. Lubor Niederle, the leader of Píč's opponents from the 'university school of thought' did not repeat the equation Stradonice = Marobudum but he adopted Píč's chronology: 'Hradiště was a trade and perhaps even military centre in the period shortly before and after the birth of Christ since all its finds are completely uniform and belong on the one hand to the end of La Tène, on the other hand to the beginnings of Roman influence' ('Hradiště bylo obchodním a snad i vojenským střediskem v době krátce před Kr. a po Kr. narození, neboť všechny památky jsou velmi stejnorodé a patří jednak konci laténu, jednak počátkům vlivu římského': Niederle in BUCHTELA – NIEDERLE 1910, 53).

49 'Der Hradiště von Stradonice ist nun erst [...] aus den Museen in die Literatur eingeführt.' Letter from M. Hoernes to J. L. Píč, Vienna 16th March 1903 (National Museum Prague, Archive, collection J. L. Píč, box 6, no. 351). Píč briefly summarised his view of Stradonice in the handbook Píč 1908, 47–56.

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- a/ Déchelette – Píč: 26 letters, National Museum Prague, Archive, Collection J. L. Píč, box. 4, no. 195 (cf. VALENTOVÁ 2013, 9–12).
- b/ Píč – Déchelette: 30 letters, Bibliothèque du Musée des beaux arts et d'archéologie Joseph Déchelette, Roanne (cf. SKUTIL 1947; PÉRÉ-NOGUÈS 2010a; 2010b).

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