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Review of the habilitation thesis of

mag. Jaroslav Jiřík, PhD

Pohřebiště doby stěhování národů v Praze-Zličíně.

Fragment populace doby stěhování národů z pohledu typologie, chronologie a prostorových vztahů na pohřebišti

With his work Jaroslav Jiřík delivers a substantial study on Migration and Merovingian Period in Czech based on the excavations of the cemetery of the Vinařice group from Praha-Zličín, consisting of altogether 173 graves with 176 inhumations. The site is of extraordinary importance and it is not an overstatement to say that it holds a key position in the archaeology of this period. The study was provided on a wide background in terms of typology, chronology and spatial relationships at the cemetery and its significance within the Bohemian Basin and – as J. Jiřík pointed out – visible relations with the Elbian Germanic regions, the Middle Danube region, the Late Ancient Mediterranean, the Visigoths, North Africa and Scandinavia.

At approximately 250 pages the author presents the results of his investigations of the cemetery, its using and the regional/interregional connections of the group that have been used the grave yard during the 5th century AD.

The first strict chapter of analysis the author dedicates to the constructions of the graves. He divided them into three groups: graves with W-O orientation with ledges (steps), a chamber grave and graves with niches. The first are discussed in a very broad context, including Roman, Romano-Barbarian and Barbarian milieus in Austria, South Germany, and South East Europe. The old question of whether Christian influence can be grasped in the west-east orientation cannot, of course, be clarified in the context of this work. It becomes

clear once again that it is a widespread and intercultural phenomenon of the Late Antiquity/Early Middle Ages. In my opinion too little attention was drawn to the function of the ledges/steps. From Late Roman Period Scandinavian graves we know such a grave construction that is the base of an upper floor (for example for placing grave gifts), under which the deceased was placed. The "upper floor" is a quite good possibility for presentation of the deceased and its status during the funeral ceremony. The only chamber grave (grave 32) is discussed on the background of closer and farther parallels. It was, unfortunately, completely robbed what makes an interpretation difficult. The conclusion, that this object has to be seen in a context of elites burials is, in my opinion, correct. A little annotation needs to be made: at page 27 is mentioned the chamber graves from Kemathen, but without reference (at least Thomas Fischer in: *Kammergräber im Barbaricum. Zu Einflüssen und Übergangsphänomenen von der vorrömischen Eisenzeit bis in die Völkerwanderungszeit*, Neumünster/Hamburg 2014 should be mentioned). The third category comprises graves with niches. Parallels can be found in the Merovingian circle (e.g. in South and Middle Germany) which might be the result of Middle Danube foederati culture in Late Antiquity. The discussion of the parallels from closer and farther regions shows the wide horizons of the author again. Interesting is the theory that the niches were dug out after the coffin was put into the grave.

At the end of this chapter J. Jiřík discusses the phenomenon of re-opening of graves. This practice is a matter of intensive discussion throughout the last decades. Unfortunately the author at once in the title gave his interpretation of the neutral term „re-opening“ and explained in an unambiguous way as „robbery“. Maybe he paid too much attention to the work of A. Klevnäs, probably the book of Ch. Kümmel (*Ur- und frühgeschichtlicher Grabraub. Archäologische Interpretation und kulturanthropologische Erklärung*. Tübinger Schriften zur Ur- und Frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie 9, Münster 2009) was not known to him. Here he could find a lot of inspirations for other approaches to the issue.

In the next extensive chapter the material culture is discussed, starting with brooches. The analyses of the brooches once again demonstrates the author's large-scale and impressive knowledge of literature. Nevertheless there are some comments necessary. It remains discussable, if the prototypes of the Niederflorstadt/Wiesloch brooches can be seen in late Czerniakhiv forms of brooches. It should also be mentioned that on type of the

so-called late Czerniakhiv forms (fig. 13) is a typical C3/D1 brooch of the Wielbark culture – the type Gródek 47 (J. Andrzejowski/R. Prochowicz/T. Rakowski in: B. Niezabitowska-Wisniewska et alii, eds., *The turbulent epoch...*, Lublin 2008, p. 39-61). In my opinion the brooches from grave 123 – despite of the short catch-plate – is closer to the Peukendorf type (see: J. Bemann, *Anmerkungen zu einigen Kleinfunden der jüngeren Römischen Kaiserzeit und Völkerwanderungszeit aus Mitteldeutschland*. In: B. Niezabitowska-Wisniewska et alii, eds., *The turbulent epoch...*, Lublin 2008, p. 25 nn.) than to the Niederflorstadt/Wiesloch type. It seems to be completely incomprehensible to determine the two brooches from grave 57 as being close to the Rositz type brooches (which usually have five knobs, not only three, and other proportions). The typological origin of these brooches should be reconsidered.

It is not the space here and not necessary to comment each subchapter. All the discussion of the grave gifts show the author's excellent knowledge of literature and mirrors the state of the art. Sometimes the approach surprises in a positive way: For instance an interesting trap is followed by the comparison of the shape of comb's plates to the shape of the tympanum of Greco-Roman temples, what opens up new possibilities of interpretation of such artifacts. Nevertheless I miss here the reference to the book of E. Cnotliwy (*Grzebień dzwonowatego typu w Europie*. *Acta Arch. Pomoranica IV*, Szczecin 2010).

The following chapter is about the horizontal stratigraphy of the site from Praha-Zličín. The cemetery started to be used in subphase D2a, the next phase is D2b, followed by subphase D3 and then by phase D3/E. Unfortunately the author only described the using and did not place a table showing the number of graves per subphase. This would be very helpful for understanding the cemetery using intensity.

In an extensive last chapter J. Jiřík explains to us his vision of the scenario of the Migration Period in Bohemia within an European context, in relations to commodity trading, the 5th century foederati culture in the south of Bohemia and the so-called East Germanic and Elbian Germanic renaissances. In the context of the discussion of the amber finds in context of so-called amber route and the hoard of Świlcza (comprising inter alia a Wiesbaden type brooch) I modestly would like to draw attention to the newest paper concerning this

find (J. Schuster, The Świlcza hoard. An extraneous 5th century AD complex from the northern Carpathian foreland. *Wiadomości Archeologiczne* LXVII, 2016, 227–263).

All the critical words and remarks do not change the fact that the author's work is a competent study on 5th century culture in Bohemia against the background of Europe in this time. To sum up: I conclude that the work meets the requirements of a habilitation thesis and I recommend for admission to further stages of the habilitation process.

