

MOJCA JEREB, Die Bronzegefäße in Slowenien. Prähistorische Bronzefunde Abteilung II Band 19. Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 2016. € 72.00. ISBN 978-3-515-11319-9. IX + 313 pages with 2 illustrations, 10 tables, and 160 plates.

Although it was announced with great enthusiasm that several catalogues of metal items from different periods from the area of modern Slovenia were to appear in *Prähistorische Bronzefunde* (PBF) (B. TERŽAN, Conclusion. In: B. Teržan [ed.], Hoards and Individual Metal Finds from the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages in Slovenia 2. Kat. Monogr. 30 [Ljubljana 1996] 244), only individual types (swords and razors) have been published in large-scale overviews of broader geographical territories so far (A. HARDING, Die Schwerter im ehemaligen Jugoslawien. PBF IV 14 [Stuttgart 1995]; C. WEBER, Die Rasiermesser in Südosteuropa. PBF VIII 5 [Stuttgart 1996]). For this reason, the book “Die Bronzegefäße in Slowenien” by Mojca Jereb represents the first and, up to now, the only catalogue in the series presenting finds from the territory of the south-eastern alpine and pre-alpine region of modern-day Slovenia. Seen from this perspective, this work’s value is really outstanding since it presents bronze vessels – one of the most prominent treasures of Slovenia’s cultural heritage – for the first time.

This book took shape over many years and essentially presents an adapted diploma thesis completed in 2005 at the University of Ljubljana. In the introduction, Mojca Jereb explains the ‘biography’ of its creation, the continuation of work until 2009, and the individual interventions, at least to the text, all the way up to 2015 (p. V). The thesis, as well as the edition of the present publication, was supervised by Biba Teržan, whose role was decisive for its realisation. In the introduction, the author elaborates her intention to, following the model of PBF volumes involved in similar themes, process all basic forms of all bronze vessels in the discussed territory during the entire period of their use.

According to the standard PBF model, the book is divided into three parts: introductory studies (pp. 1–20), catalogue (pp. 21–126), and conclusion (pp. 127–133). The introductory studies include the geographical and natural setting, the history of research and chronological as well as artisanal circumstances, the presentation of methodology, classifications and typology applied in the work, and a special focus on the possible functions of the study in frameworks of known archaeological contexts. Furthermore, the practical purposes of the general corpus of metal vessels and their relation to situla art in the Early Iron Age are discussed. The calculation of the vessels’ volumes and assumptions of their possible contents as well as the relation between these two characteristics represent an innovative approach to an interpretation which enabled, among other things, the definition of regional artistic / artisanal centres. The text is supplemented by pictures and maps, a chronological table, and combination tables which certainly offer the data in an accessible form for future research.

The comprehensive catalogue (pp. 21–126) contains 378 catalogue units including buckets, pithoi, further situlae and their elements, cists, lids, plates, cups, strainers, ciboria, and cauldrons. The remaining types of bronze vessels are listed in a separate chapter (pp. 115–123) and fragments of (identified?) vessels can be found in the last chapter of the catalogue (pp. 123–126). With a total of 142 examples, the situlae and their fragments represent the dominant vessel form. Of these, as many as 46 are decorated in situla style. Cists, ciboria, and lids are decorated in the same style. Organised according to guidelines, the catalogue consists of a general introduction to the presented type / variant, a catalogue entry for every item, a discussion of the type’s purpose as well as the chronology and distribution of individual important types. Illustrations of all featured items are presented on 151 tables and depicted on a scale of 2:5. The typology is new and the criteria for classification are presented in the methodological part of the introductory studies

section (pp. 10–11). The division is based first on general formal categories, and then these forms are subdivided by general technological characteristics (two groups regarding the mode of production – soldered and cast vessels). Furthermore, specific characteristics are reflected in the multitude of variations determined in (sub-)variants of basic types. In the beginning of the introduction to every basic type, classification / typology tables with variants of different formal and technical characteristics are presented. 13 types of basic vessel forms reflecting different chronological and territorial proveniences are presented separately. However, the principles of division on which this selection was performed were not systematically applied. First of all, lids and strainers were included into the typology, although it is debatable whether they should be classified at all – do they fall into containers / vessels, or do they compose rather a part of the utensils? Furthermore, several vessels are represented by merely a single known example of a specific shape – some of them are determined to be individual basic forms and others are treated together as ‘other bronze vessels’ (*Sonstige Bronzegefäße*)! The latter actually comprise the most problematic category since it contains both vessels which are terminologically and typologically exactly determined but also exceptional forms and imported vessels which are in the text, unsuitably, referred to as ‘unique’. Less attention is devoted to strong influences from neighbouring cultural circles – although they were crucial for the understanding of the supply of such luxury imports and for the development and perfection of local trends which were, *nota bene*, reflected in variations of vessels and the formation of individual artistic / toreutic centres.

The conclusion (pp. 127–132) is concise, and in its essence, it repeats and (rarely) summarises what was discussed in the introductory chapter. Geographically, the observed territory is articulated with several Late Bronze and Iron Age cultures (Fig. 1 Plate 1) characterised by different cultural dynamics. Consequently, the synthesis attempt within the conclusion is, regarding different cultural aspects, too general and conservative. It is easily observable that the absolute focus in the sense of relative chronology is put on the Early Iron Age. Despite various important and indicative vessels from the Late Bronze Age Urnfield culture, these were not problematised (pp. 7–8). The Late Bronze Age is not represented on the chronological table (BA D and Ha A), and we are missing the hoards horizons, although these are the contexts from which most of the vessels and their possible fragments derive (p. 3 Tab. 1). An even greater discrepancy is present in the attempt to correlate the Iron Age chronologies of the Dolenjska and Posočje cultural groups, even though a corrected periodisation was adapted for the Dolenjska group recently; moreover, the used absolute chronology is also omitted.

Nevertheless, it must be stressed that this work, as well as all the other publications from the PBF series, proves again that typology is still a powerful tool in the organisation of facts according to chronological and / or contextual parameters (S. HANSEN [Review of]: U. L. Dietz / A. Jockenhövel (eds), *Bronzen im Spannungsfeld zwischen praktischer Nutzung und symbolischer Bedeutung. Beiträge zum internationalen Kolloquium am 9. und 10. Oktober 2008 in Münster*. PBF XX 13 [Stuttgart 2011]. *Germania* 91, 2013, 208–212). It will also be of crucial importance in attempting to interpret metal vessels to demonstrate that they could be used to correct existing chronologies. In the territory of Dolenjska, Mojca Jereb managed to persuasively demonstrate, revising the relative chronological position of several major graves (pp. 50; 55–56; 101; 109), that already in the horizon of Serpentine fibulae, we can observe the use of specific types of decorated lids, situlae, cists, cauldrons, and strainers which gain their more wide-spread use in the subsequent prosperity phases of the Early Iron Age of Dolenjska – especially in the Certosa horizon. With the latter, she confirmed the fact that the situla art has to be considered in the south-eastern Alpine territory from the end of the 7th and the 6th century BC. Contrary to present positions, and supplementing the bases postulated by S. GABROVEC (*Jugoistočna alpska regija sa zapadnom Panonijom*. In: A. Benac (ed.), *Praistorija Jugoslavenskih Zemalja. 5. Željezno doba* [Sarajevo 1987] 25–181), she

presents phases of Serpentine and Certosa fibulae and Negova helmets in a single horizon not further dividing them into two phases which were organised according to typological and stylistic divergences of fibulae (pp. 3; 7–8 Tab. 1). In addition to much earlier influences from the Celtic territories of Early La Tène culture and to the observable Scythian influences and the indicative appearance and acculturation of situla art, we can assume that the horizon of Serpentine fibulae marked one of the most dynamic periods of the Early Iron Age in the territory of Dolenjska (p. 8). In all of this, the exclusion of local toreutic workshops, especially in Dolenjska and Sv. Lucija cultural environments, is not a novelty, although it was confirmed again with more arguments in the conclusion (pp. 129–132).

The simple, fast, and clear use of the catalogue is made impossible with the avoidance of several very important and habitual segments for PBF publications. First of all, not a single closed archaeological context, which would be of exceptional importance for the question of chronology and correlation, was presented in the book. By doing this, the context of individual vessels in graves and hoards as well as individual finds – and their mutual correlation / interaction in individual periods – was completely disregarded. We are missing also a parallel chronological table of representative types and the habitual mapping typical for the selection of either most important, most represented, or international types of vessels with cultural and social value in a broader central European region (cf. Ch. JACOB, *Metallgefäße der Bronze- und Hallstattzeit in Nordwest-, West- und Süddeutschland*. PBF II 9 [Stuttgart 1995]; J. MARTIN, *Die Bronzegefäße in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Brandenburg, Berlin, Sachsen-Anhalt, Thüringen und Sachsen*. PBF II 16 [Stuttgart 2009]; S. GERLOFF, *Atlantic Cauldrons and Buckets of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages in Western Europe: With a Review of Comparable Vessels from Central Europe and Italy*. PBF II 18 [Stuttgart 2010]). In the Late Bronze and Iron Ages, metals played a central role in the life of people – not only in the physical sense but also in a wide array of different communication and cognitive processes. Among them, vessels had a truly distinct status. When these were also additionally decorated using different techniques and motives, their value surpassed every day or primary affinities. From this perspective, in this book, the situla art was suppressed; its “monuments” were reduced to no more than a rigid description using mostly out-of-date records and no special map of situla art (which could be expected) was included (pp. 18–30; 130 Tab. 6). Finally, the omission of bronze vessels from the Late Iron Age from the catalogue, and thereby their typological and chronological as well as cultural aspects, does not seem to be an adequate solution – it will have long-lasting consequences, especially for the presentation of Slovenian finds in foreign literature.

The book by Mojca Jereb is an integral supplement to pioneering works of Slovenian authors such as F. STARE (*Prazgodovinske kovinske posode iz Slovenije*. Zbornik Fil. Fak. [Ljubljana] 2, 1955, 103–236) and J. KASTELIC (*Das Situlen-Fest*. In: J. Kastelic et al. [eds], *Situlenkunst. Meistererschöpfungen prähistorischer Bronzearbeit* [Wien, München 1964] V–XVI), firmly “founded” on the traditions, studies, and syntheses of the Slovenian school of prehistoric research (T. Knez, S. Gabrovec, J. Dular, B. Teržan, etc.). It definitely achieved its goal of being a representative publication, and the Slovenian archaeological profession can be proud of it. There were numerous colleagues from different institutions in Slovenia, and neighbouring countries, which helped in the development of this book; we also have to thank the team publishing the PBF (pp. V–VI). With its form, the work does not stand out from the classical pattern profiled by the publisher. But, with the amount of collected examples, it numbers among the imposing volumes covering finds such as the vessels from Austria (G. PRÜSSING, *Die Bronzegefäße in Österreich*. PBF II 5 [Stuttgart 1991]) or western and southern Germany (cf. JACOB 1995). The advantage and perspective of the work are quickly evident – for the first time the majority of bronze vessels from a limited chronological frame from Slovenia were gathered in a single place, although the vessels decorated in situla style deserve some additional attention. With corresponding information and illustrations,

it will represent an essential resource for interpretation of this artistic orientation in Iron Age Europe. Although we could list a multitude of corrections, additions, and new data, despite these shortcomings and minor (technical) deficiencies (which cannot be seen as only the fault of the author), the present work will be of extraordinary importance for (Late) Bronze and (Early) Iron Age archaeology. Creating a turning point in the research of bronze vessels from the Pannonian to eastern Alpine and northern Italian territories, the corpus of finds from central European and eastern Hallstatt cultural circles was importantly supplemented and rounded up in a single unity.

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LOTHAR SPERBER, Studien zur spätbronzezeitlichen Chronologie im westlichen Mitteleuropa und in Westeuropa. Monographien des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Band 136. Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz 2017. € 62,-. ISBN 978-3-88467-279-2; ISSN 0171-1474. X + 333 Seiten mit 120 Abbildungen in schwarz-weiß.

Bevor im Einzelnen auf die Stärken und Schwächen des hier zu besprechenden Bandes einzugehen sein wird, sind an dieser Stelle zwei Dinge vorzuschicken, die für eine angemessene Würdigung dieser Arbeit im Auge zu behalten sind. Zum einen handelt es sich um die Ergebnisse langjähriger Studien des Autors, denen er sich aufgrund anderweitiger beruflicher Beanspruchungen immer wieder nur episodenhaft widmen konnte. Dies schlägt sich sowohl in der Breite als auch in der Tiefe der einzelnen Teilstudien nieder. Zum anderen ist zu betonen, dass es sich eben tatsächlich um Studien – man beachte den Plural – handelt, die zwar alle um einen gemeinsamen Themenkomplex kreisen, letztlich aber dennoch den Charakter von Einzelstudien nicht verleugnen können.

Wie der Autor in der Einleitung des Bandes erläutert (S. 1–2), entstanden die hier gemeinsam vorgestellten Teilstudien als Vorarbeiten zu einer Untersuchung der Flussdeponierungen am nördlichen Oberrhein, von denen sie hier jedoch weitgehend losgelöst vorgelegt werden. Dabei sind aufgrund ihrer episodenhaften Genese nicht alle Teilstudien auf dem gleichen Forschungs- bzw. Literaturstand, sondern hinken z. T. einige Jahre hinterher, worauf bei der Besprechung der einzelnen Kapitel noch näher einzugehen sein wird.

Genese und Hintergrund des Bandes begründen auch, warum die enthaltenen Teilstudien keine gleichmäßige Abdeckung der spätbronzezeitlichen Chronologie anstreben. Der Schwerpunkt liegt eindeutig auf der jüngeren und späten Spätbronzezeit (Ha B bzw. SB IIc–SB IIIb). Dies ist zum einen dem Umstand geschuldet, dass die überwiegende Mehrzahl der Flussdeponierungen am nördlichen Oberrhein in diese Zeitspanne fällt, spiegelt aber auch den Umstand wieder, dass die dendrochronologisch gestützte Feinchronologie der westalpinen Seeufersiedlungen, welche den zentralen Anker- und Ausgangspunkt des vom Autor vorgelegten Systems darstellt, eine deutlich höhere Auflösung besitzt als die Chronologie der frühen und älteren Spätbronzezeit. Dieser Primat schlägt sich, für die Leserschaft auf den ersten Blick verwirrend und von der Sache her nicht unbedingt erforderlich, auch in der Reihung der hier vorgelegten Einzelstudien nieder. Diese eröffnet mit dem Beginn der jüngeren Spätbronzezeit (S. 3–202). Die frühe und ältere Spätbronzezeit werden vom Autor erst im Nachgang (S. 203–232) und deutlich knapper behandelt. Ebenfalls zur etwas unorthodoxen Gliederung des Bandes trägt bei, dass die überregionale chronologische Vernetzung der Bronzefunde vom Autor weitestgehend an zwei Schlüsselfundkategorien festgemacht wird: den Pfahlbaumessern und den Schwertern des westlichen Urnenfelderkreises.