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THE EARLY IRON AGE ELITE AND THEIR SEAT IN THE SOUTH WEST POLAND. A CASE STUDY OF THE MILEJOWICE SITE 19, WROCŁAW DISTRICT

The paper discusses the emergence of elite within the Early Iron Age society in south western Poland taking under consideration evidence from recently discovered settlement called Milejowice site 19, partly fenced with palisade-like circular constructions. Another Silesian distinctive settlement Stary Śleszów and analogy from adjacent regions (Bohemian new discovered fortified courtyard – “Herrensitz” Opatovice nad Labem), as well as the just unearthed burial area in Silesia with richly furnished chamber graves (Domasław, Wrocław district) support the authors view of visible deep social transformations and emergence of aristocracy in south western Poland, especially in the Hallstatt C period. New archaeological finds allow seeing that the discussed elite absorb cultural influences from the east via mid-Danube and from the south through the Alpine passes and adapt the Mediterranean ideas to its own social needs. In the conclusion the authors suggest that discussed region of Poland in the light of recent discoveries can be recognized not only as highly influenced by the Hallstatt culture but as a province of it.

KEY WORDS: emergence of elite, Early Iron Age, south western Poland, new settlement pattern, Milejowice site 19, Wrocław district, Hallstatt culture

Milejowice site 19, Żórawina parish, Wrocław district, was located about 1000 m to the west from the buildings of the village of Milejowice and about 700 m to the south-east from the Krajków village (Fig. 1 and 2). In 1999 remains of a prehistoric settlement were excavated during an archaeological inspection of road works carried out during the building of the A-4 motorway (Kopiasz 2001). The same year excavations at Milejowice began and continued till 2003. The main work, most intensive and conceived on the widest scale, was conducted

in 2000 and 2001 (Bugaj *et al.* 2002; Bugaj, Gediga 2004).

The newly-built roadways of the A-4 motorway coincided with an old express road built in the 1930s, thus the site had already been destroyed and cut in two parts. The excavations, carried out on behalf of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of The Polish Academy of Sciences, Department in Wrocław, under Professor Bogusław Gediga's supervision, were conducted at the same time at those two separated areas. Both the building of the motorway

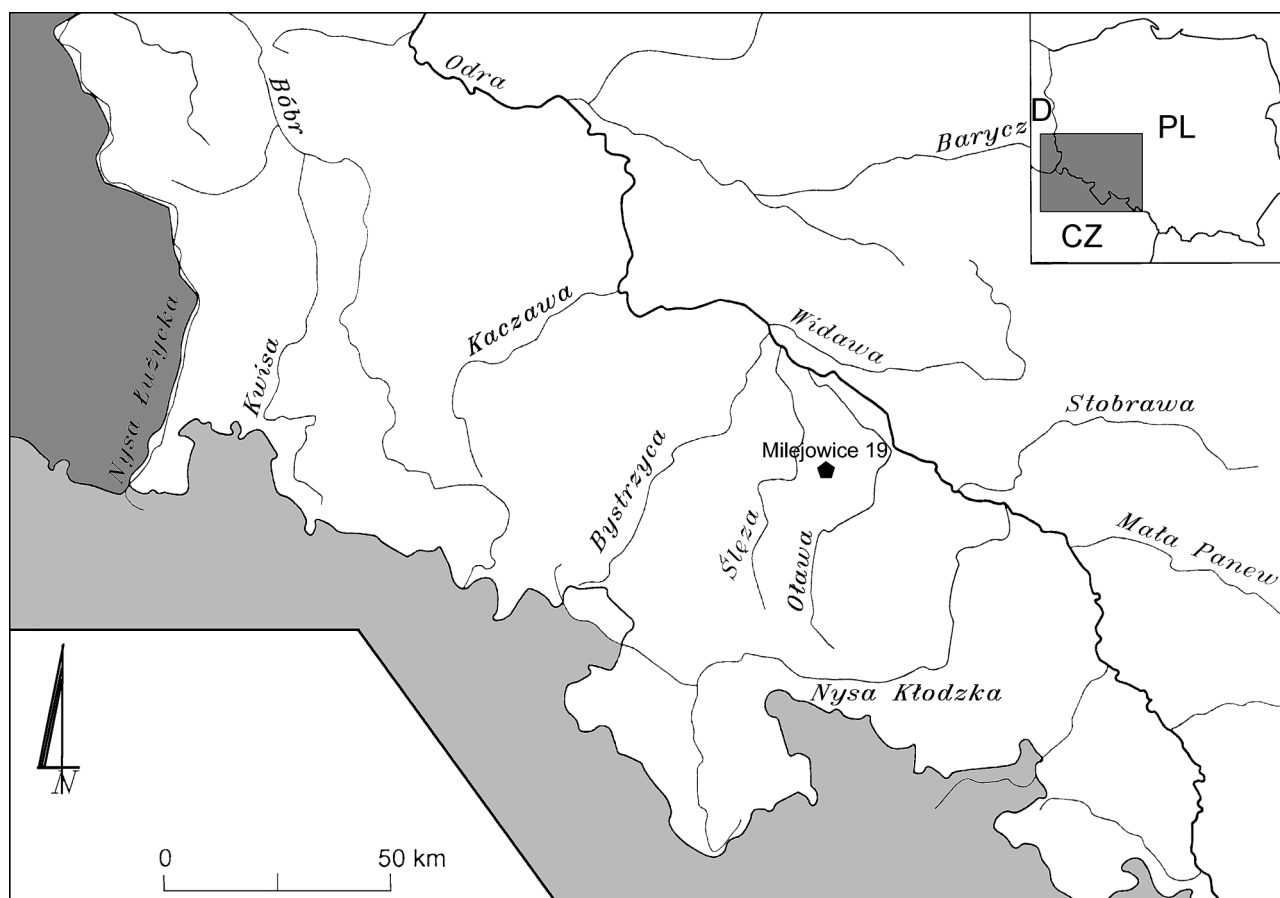


Fig. 1. Map to illustrate the location of the Milejowice site in the Lower Silesia region and Poland

and the excavations were financed by the then Agency for the Building and Exploitation of Motorways. The site received the name Milejowice 19, N belt (in the north) and Milejowice 19, S belt (in the south), while the fragment of the site excavated in 1999 was designated as belt N/99 (Fig. 3).

It must be emphasised that due to the service area planned on the motorway in this place, the unearthed area was vast – it covered about 7,5 hectares in total. After 1999, systematic excavations produced about 2700 archaeological features, yielding exceptionally valuable results for archaeology and a spectacular effect as well.

The western part of the excavated area produced the remains of a cemetery of the societies of the Únětice culture dated back to the Bronze Age Period I – 10 burials (Kopiasz 2004, 31-60; Bugaj, Kopiasz 2006, footnote 2). The vast majority of all other features and artefacts registered in the excavated area were predominantly the remains of a permanent open settlement of a society of the so-called Lusatian culture, organised in a kind of clusters of buildings and

dated back to the end of the Bronze Age, and mainly HaC period of the Early Iron Age¹. However, apart from the remains of the open settlement, Milejowice site 19 yielded also a part of the settlement that was permanent, but definitely separated with rings of fencing of a palisade-like type. It is neither a fortified nor defensive settlement, albeit to some extent the fence could have acted as an element securing and protecting those who lived within it. It seems that it was power and separate social and economic status of the inhabitants that was manifested there. We will come back to it later on.

The presence of a settlement in Milejowice is testified by the remains of timber structures erected above the ground, mostly of posthole construction (Bugaj, Gediga 2004, fig. 6-8, 16, 17; Bugaj, Kopiasz 2006, fig. 2-7, 10, 14; Bugaj 2006, 40-41, 44-

¹ Leaving aside modern or contemporary features, the biggest number of them (about 30 large pits) was recorded in the southern and western part of the S zone.

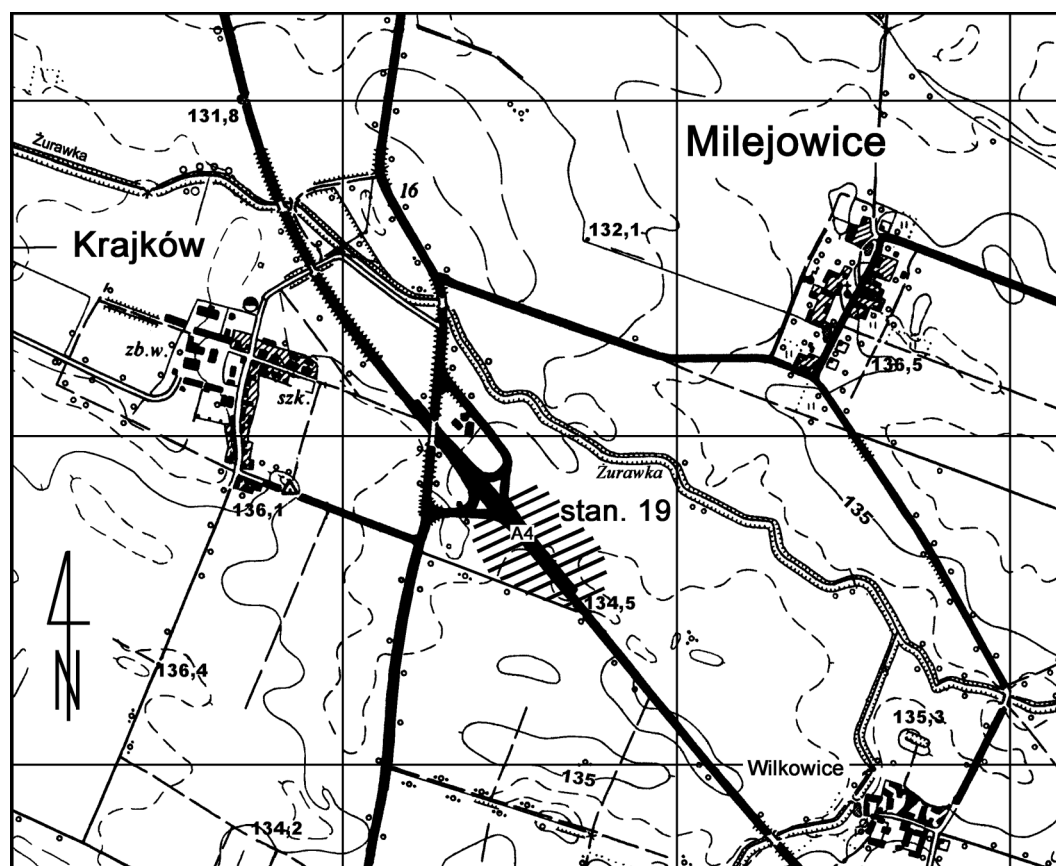


Fig. 2. The location of the settlement of Milejowice in the surrounding area

45; Kopiasz 2008, fig. 2) and a considerable accumulation of the remains of sunken structures and pits (Bugaj, Gediga 2004, fig. 2-3, 17; Bugaj, Kopiasz 2006, fig. 8-9) together with their fillings. The excavations in the vicinity of the buildings produced also five wells, four of which had timber casing preserved (Gediga *et al.* 2001, fig. 5; Bugaj *et al.* 2002, fig. 10; Bugaj, Gediga 2004, fig. 9-10, 12b; Gediga 2004a, fig. 3, 10; Bugaj 2006, 42). There are two more features that partially fell into the category of a well. The site yielded also the remains of a bronze casting workshop. A cultural layer was present at the larger part of the site, its volume ranging from a few to 30 cm. What is more, all the so-called immovable archaeological features were located in regular, separated spatial arrangements, previously unknown neither in Poland nor in the neighbouring areas.

The remains of the settlement turned out to be exceptionally interesting. They provided valuable data, among them first of all a central arrangement in the S belt, isolated and partly fenced with palisade-like constructions, visible on the general plan of the site, together with two distinct complexes of

buildings located around rectangular empty spaces in the N belt (*cf.* Fig. 3). The discoveries provided premise for the study of the social structure of the group inhabiting the settlement and for the research on the building traditions. They also enabled an attempt at carrying out the analysis in terms of socio-topography of the excavated site. Particularly the latter question, related to the spatial organisation of the settlement and to the functional arrangement of individual parts of the settlements of the societies of the Lusatian culture, has not been under thorough examination so far, due to insufficient state of knowledge of such sites not only in Poland but also in the neighbouring areas. To date, only excavations of some fortified settlements, in case of Poland particularly the fortified settlement in Biskupin², provided more premises for such studies. Thus, the settle-

² The scale of the research at site no 4 in Biskupin, Żnin district is testified by the fact that about 75% of the area of the fortified settlement has been excavated (Piotrowski 1991, 97).

ment at Milejowice site 19, excavated on a grand scale, provided very promising bases for further analyses (Gediga 2004a; Bugaj, Kopiasz 2006; Kopiasz 2007; 2008).

We have already mentioned that the features and artefacts from Milejowice 19, first of all the pottery, enabled the identification of the site as a permanent settlement site of the so-called Lusatian culture and to limit its dating to the end of the Bronze Age, and mainly to the HaC period of the Early Iron Age, albeit the settlement or its part could have lasted longer, even to the end of the Hallstatt period. Such chronology of the settlement site from Milejowice is supported by the results of dendrochronological analyses, conducted on the basis of boards from the wells excavated at the site and C¹⁴ dates derived from two samples of animal bones, which point to the years 2750±110 BP (Pazdur 2001) and 2380±35 BP (Goslar 2004). The dates from the boards from the wooden casing of 4 wells fall within the range from about (after the year) 680 till 610 BC (Krapiec 2001a; 2001b and 2003).

Apart from the exceptionally numerous pottery, the cultural layers in Milejowice yielded various other artefacts, mostly daub and animal bones. The site produced also the luxury pottery – pots with exceptional technical and decorative features, painted or with graphite used for glossing the surface or for decorations. The most spectacular kind of such pottery among the societies of the Lusatian culture are sharp, segmented vase-like pots with a globular body, conical rim and funnel-shaped neck (Bugaj *et al.* 2002, fig. 5: 2, 5; Bugaj, Gediga 2004, fig. 15: 1; Kopiasz 2008, fig. 4), together with painted pottery, appearing from the beginning of the Iron Age as a result of the influence from the Hallstatt zone. The site at Milejowice 19 produced also such artefacts as spindle whorls and loom weights, quernstones and grindstones as well as artefacts, or their fragments, made of bone, bronze and iron, together with fragments of moulds and raw materials (Bugaj *et al.* 2002, fig. 5, 6; Bugaj, Gediga 2004, fig. 13-15; Gediga 2004b, photo 9; 2005b, 55; Bugaj 2006, 43).

The remains of the settlement occupying such a vast area, namely about 7,5 hectares, dating back to the end of the Bronze Age, or rather to the Hallstatt period, raise serious question whether all the registered features functioned in this area more or less synchronically, or whether they are traces of subsequent relocations of the buildings of the settlement.

The available data, mostly pottery, does not allow more precise determination of the subsequent phases of occupation. Distinctly separated clusters of buildings suggest that, with time, as the timber houses were destroyed, the settlement was relocated, albeit we cannot exclude the possibility that for some time the whole excavated area was occupied.

Let us start presenting the site at Milejowice with describing its northern belt. Generally speaking, the excavated area may be divided into the part where the settlement was concentrated, and peripheries, with traces of various pits and postholes, sometimes in settings forming outlines of buildings (*cf.* Fig. 3). In the part of the site where the features were concentrated there are two distinct clusters of buildings, probably even three. As to the two distinct clusters, the buildings were located around empty spaces – squares, approximately 20 x 20 m and 15 x 23 m in size (Bugaj, Kopiasz 2006, fig. 3-4).

As we have already mentioned, it is difficult to say whether they functioned at the same time. The arrangement of the settlement is similar in both cases. The analyses of the timber casing of wells gave similar dates (feature no 53 in one cluster and feature no 280 in the other). What is more, but for two constructions, there were in principle no evident traces of overlapping outlines of buildings, which could testify to multiphase functioning of the site. In the light of what was said above, it seems probable that the excavated features date back to one dominant phase of the settlement. Nevertheless, we must remember that in terms of the absolute chronology, period HaC lasted more than 150 years, whereas according to various theoretical evaluations, timber buildings were used for a shorter time. Thus, we have to take into consideration the repairs of the structures, rebuilding or even erecting new constructions not far from the old ones, which happened for sure twice, but probably even more often.

One of the above mentioned distinct clusters of buildings in the N belt was situated in its south-eastern part (Fig. 4). The postholes suggested that more than ten buildings were erected here in post-hole construction around an empty square. They adjoined the space either with the narrow fronts or with the longer parts of the walls. Therefore, if we accept that a square was a central place and that the entrances were facing it, they must have been located both in the narrow and long walls of the structures (Bugaj, Kopiasz 2006, 182-185, fig. 4).

Within the cluster, east of two rectangular buildings situated along the N-S axis, a complex of pits was registered parallel to the structures. The shapes of the pits and their deposits suggest that it was a typical background area, in the form of pits dug out for procuring raw material. In this case it was loess-like dusts used for example for filling the walls of the structures. The pits were probably used secondary as rubbish pits situated outside the occupied area. It is interesting to note that in one of the pits a flat erratic block was registered, large in size, 1,8 x 1 m in width and length – feature no 141 (Fig. 4; Bugaj *et al.* 2002, fig. 7, 8; Bugaj, Gediga 2004, fig. 11; Bugaj, Kopiasz 2006, 183, fig. 4 and 184, fig. 5). It is highly possible that, with its flat shape, the boulder could have been used by the people occupying the site for some practical or even non-utilitarian purposes, although it is difficult to speculate what they were.

One of the wells excavated in Milejowice was situated on the southern edge of the series of the pits. No wooden elements of the well were preserved (feature no 150). Another well (feature no 280), with preserved square construction of the timber casing, built of simple cross construction with mortise-and-tenon joints, was located in the south-western part of the described cluster (Gediga *et al.* 2001, fig. 5; Bugaj, Gediga 2004, fig. 10a). The third well (feature no 965) was registered to the south-east, in some distance from the described regular, square cluster of buildings, and was rather a part of another complex in the N belt, situated more to the east and less evident. The construction of the rectangular wooden casing was badly preserved. Fragments of 14 boards were excavated, with daps at the ends, joint in the corners in the cross technique. The well contained pottery, animal bones and stones as well as a vessel made of bark (Bugaj, Gediga 2004, fig. 12b).

The other cluster of buildings was similar in character. The cluster, most distinctly separated and most clearly evident in the N belt of the site Milejowice 19, was situated in its north-western part (Fig. 5). A large concentration of features was registered there, mainly postholes, forming the outlines of various above the ground buildings erected around a rectangular space. In our reconstruction we propose that there were 26 of them, and in N and E part of the complex the structures were arranged in two rows (Bugaj, Kopiasz 2006, 181, fig. 3). The build-

ings were mostly rectangular and their interiors were sometimes additionally divided, albeit rarely. The construction of such a house was based on the module determined by eight main posts, and there were walls supported by additional posts. It must be emphasised that this rule is applied in the whole N belt, and was also used in the formerly described cluster. The registered constructions usually occupy the area of twenty or a bit more than 30 m². One of the structures in the most distinct cluster of the buildings occupied the area of 53 m², another one 75 m². The latter building had distinct foundation trails or traces of ground beams; a large quantity of material registered there, including a couple of grindstones, indicates some kind of economic character of the structure, which could have been used by the whole cluster. Of course other interpretations are also possible. Other large rectangular structures can be identified as regular houses, with walls, roofing, and sometimes some kind of vestibules, arcades or other annexes. It is, however, rarely possible to reconstruct them (Bugaj, Kopiasz 2006, 178-185).

Smaller buildings visible on the reconstruction, a few or a dozen or so m² in size, outlined by four or sometimes six posts, could have fulfilled various functions – they could have been workshops, barns and granaries (Krause, Wieland 1990, 225). Ethnographic analogues suggests that structures based on four-posts could have been barns, roofed but without walls, or granaries in the form of post or table platforms (Niesiołowska-Hoffman 1963, 69; Moszyński 1967, 244-246; Michalski 1983, 142).

In the southern part of the described north-western cluster from the N belt, another well was registered (feature no 53). It was the already mentioned above well, which wooden casing built of cross construction was preserved (Bugaj, Gediga 2004, fig. 9; Gediga 2004a, fig. 3; Bugaj 2006, 42). At the base of the well, the filling produced two almost complete vessels, including one with fragments of a string in the handle (Bugaj *et al.* 2002, fig. 6: 2). Other interesting finds from this cluster include also feature no 65, namely a pottery deposit, most probably a votive offering. It was a vase-shaped vessel, containing bones, other potsherds, fragments of bronze artefacts (including a fragment of an axe) and bronze raw material (Bugaj *et al.* 2002, fig. 5: 2; Gediga 2004a, fig. 4; Bugaj 2006, 44).

Describing the square cluster in the N belt of the site, it is worth noticing the outline of shallow



Fig. 4. Plan of the southeastern part of the Milejowice site 19 in the North belt of the excavated area

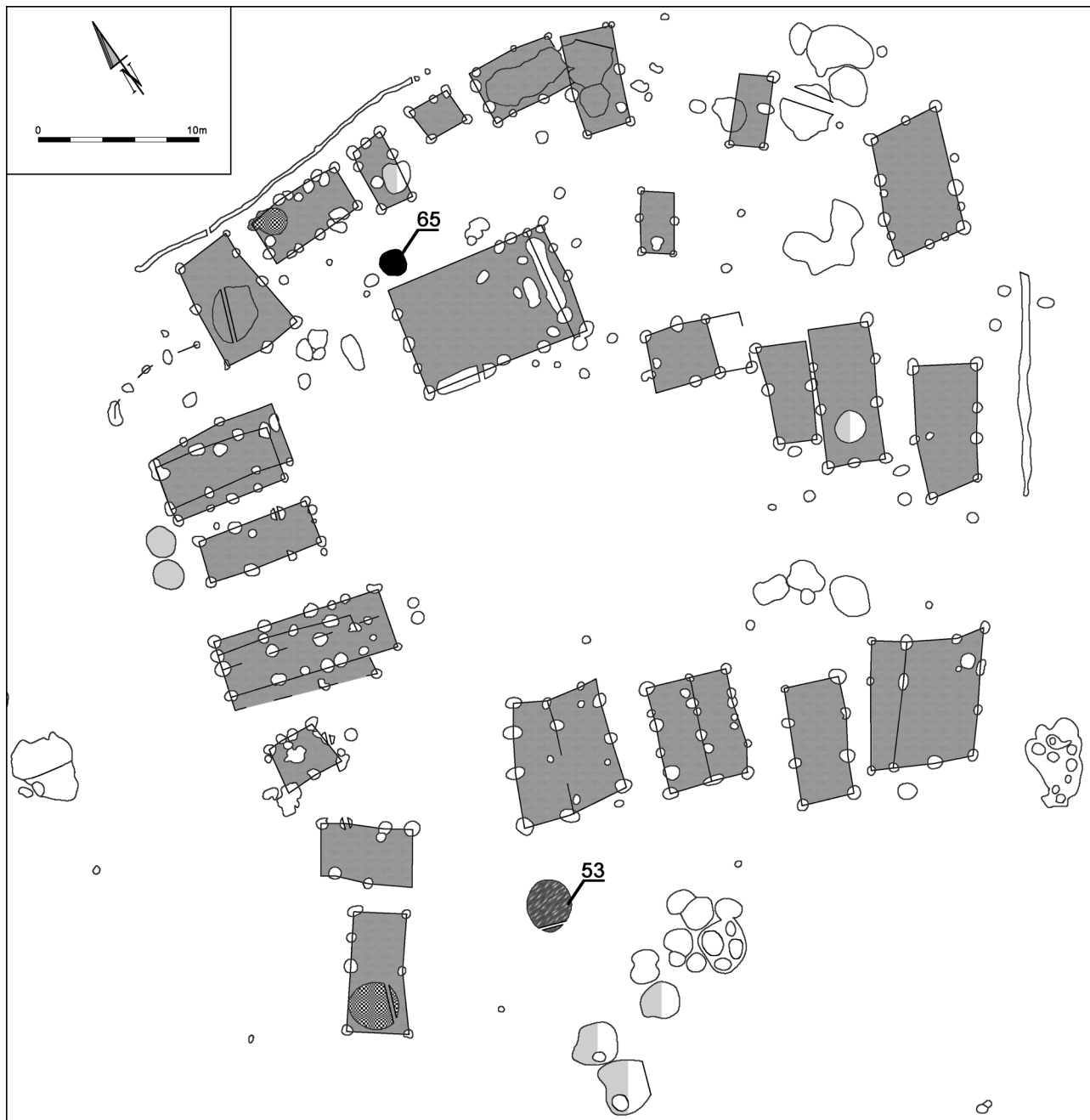


Fig. 5. Plan of the northwestern part of the Milejowice site 19 in the North belt of the excavated area

ditches, a few dozen metres long. They ran on the borders of the cluster, in its eastern and northern part, parallel to the structures built of post construction and are probably the remains of a fencing originally enclosing the cluster (*cf.* Fig. 5).

The N belt produced also other structures – sunken below ground, probably used in a similar way as buildings erected above the ground: some may have been used as houses, while others could have been used for economic purposes. They are usually

supported by one, two, three or four posts that were registered in shallow, flat-bottomed pits, quadrilateral or oval in plan. We believe they could have been half dugouts or sheds. They are found on the borders or inside the concentration of the settlement in the regular clusters (*cf.* Fig. 3).

The parts of the settlement described above can be identified as typical examples of the living sphere, where the inhabitants were involved in their daily activities. That some kind of ritual was also per-

formed here is testified by the above mentioned deposit (feature 65), probably also the boulder deposited in the cluster of pits (feature 141).

The southern part of Milejowice site 19, described as the S belt, was unearthed in the course of excavations of the whole area of the southern road of the A-4 motorway and a substantial area of the planned service area (*cf.* Fig. 3). Again, the excavated features formed distinct spatial arrangements, which could be interpreted as the remains of numerous buildings and various structures used for daily activities. The remains suggest that in the north-western part of the belt there was an open settlement, with buildings arranged around an empty space or spaces. Unfortunately, deep benches of the 1930s' road destroyed to a large extent the features deposited there.

The described part of the settlement at Milejowice in the S belt produced also a substantial number of irregular, shallow features, arranged in two groups, a smaller one and a bigger one, situated in the south-eastern part of the belt. They should be treated as contemporary with the settlement and could have originated as a result of bailing the dusty loesslike cover, probably used in building. The pits were small in depth, as probably only the shallowly deposited loesslike cover was exploited. During the modern times, people exploited also the sands and gravels deposited below, which is visible in the form of numerous pits unearthed during the excavations. They considerably destroyed the prehistoric features.

Now we would like to turn your attention to another distinct arrangement of buildings in the S belt, exceptionally interesting and unique in terms of our knowledge of the Early Iron Age settlements from Poland (Fig. 6). It was registered in the south-eastern part of the excavated area and comprised a number of features, which could be interpreted as the remains of dwelling structures and various pits. What is unique about this arrangement is that all the structures were situated in the part of the settlement surrendered by a fencing, visible in the form of two, and in the eastern part even three (four?) rings of postholes aligned one by one, forming a palisade-like construction. The excavations revealed an almost total line of the circle-shaped fencing, which outer diameter was about 85 m. The whole cluster of buildings was arranged in concentric circles (Gediga *et al.* 2001, fig. 3; Bugaj *et al.* 2002, fig. 2, 9; Bronowicki *et al.* 2003, fig. 10; Bugaj, Gediga 2004,

fig. 5, 18-19; Gediga 2004a, fig. 7; *id.* 2004b, photo 8; *id.* 2005a, 48; *id.* 2005b, fig. 9; Bugaj, Kopiasz 2006, fig. 10-12; Bugaj 2006, 40-41, 45).

In the eastern part of the described cluster three rows of the postholes ran almost parallel in the greater segment, contacting in the northern part. The contact point of the three series of postholes determined more or less the half of the outer circle encompassing the described arrangement. The maximum distance measured between the outer and central constructions numbered 11.2 m, whereas between the central and inner line approximately 4-5 m (Bugaj, Kopiasz 2006, 193). The innermost line of the fencing, registered only in the eastern part of the arrangement, was specific. Unlike the other two lines of the postholes, it was based on a trench, from 40 to 60 cm wide and about 40 cm deep from the roof of the undisturbed soil, into which the posts were sunken (Bugaj, Gediga 2004, fig. 19; Bugaj, Kopiasz 2006, fig. 12; Bugaj 2006, 45).

As far as the buildings within the circular area fenced by the ring-like constructions are concerned, we propose that there were 27 post structures erected above the ground, including houses, and features related to daily activities, and probably 10 structures sunken below ground (*cf.* Fig. 6; Bugaj, Kopiasz 2006, 196-198, fig. 10). The buildings erected above the ground occupied varied area, ranging from 6.5 to 142.5 m². The planigraphy indicates, however, that at least some of the above the ground and sunken below the ground structures could not have functioned at the same time. Hardly ever are the interiors of the buildings additionally divided. Dominant here are relatively narrow rectangular structures based on six or eight posts, as it was in the above described parts in belt N of the Milejowice settlement. Of exceptional character in comparison with other buildings surrounded by the circular constructions, is the largest structure, occupying the area of 142.5 m². Traces of double rows of posts, or arcades, were registered inside the building. Such a construction, albeit rare, has already been recorded in the area occupied by the societies of the Lusatian culture. Two, or even three structures excavated within the later occupational phase within the fortified settlement of Senftenberg are similar in construction and the proportions of the longer walls (Buck 1979, fig. 35; Michalski 1986, 72, fig. 1: 2). This largest building of the Milejowice circular arrangement could have been some kind of a social



Fig. 6. Plan of the southeastern part of the Milejowice site 19 in the South belt of the excavated area with the enclosure limited by palisade-like fencing

building or was the seat of some distinguished aristocrat.

It is worth noticing here that the spatial analysis of the already mentioned so-called luxury pottery carried out for the whole settlement at Milejowice revealed that the semi-fenced part from the northern belt (*cf.* Fig. 5) and the circular arrangement area

from the southern belt (*cf.* Fig. 6) were privileged in terms of its frequency. The clusters produced the largest number of such luxury vessels (Kopiasz 2008, 222 - 224, fig. 8).

What is more, the central part of the circular arrangement yielded two deposits – features no 901 and 902, which with high probability can be identi-

fied as votive offerings. One deposit included two ceramic vessels, one inside the other, and animal bones, while the other deposit contained a storage vessel with bowls inside, under which animal bones were recorded. It was all covered by another vessel (Bugaj *et al.* 2002, fig. 6: 1, 7-8; Gediga 2004a, fig. 8; Bugaj 2006, 44). In relation to the described circular arrangement we may mention another two deposits, or rather votive offerings. The third deposit – feature no 442, was excavated in the south-eastern part of the cluster, next to the inner line of the posts forming one of the fencings (Gediga *et al.* 2001, fig. 4; Bugaj, Gediga 2004, fig. 20; Bugaj 2006, 43). The fourth deposit was registered in the southern part of the cluster, on the outer side of the posts forming the fencing. The feature – no 1642 – included a large storage vessel and a small bowl turned upside down together with sherd of a large decorated vase with a funnel-like neck. The storage vessel contained an almost complete skeleton of a dog, pig and cattle bones, a cup turned upside down and an iron knife (Bugaj, Gediga 2004, fig. 15, 21; Bugaj, Kopiasz 2006, 196-197, fig. 13).

In the western part of the circular arrangement in the S belt, there was a well – feature number 914 – with the wooden construction of the casing preserved. The well was situated within the inner and middle line of the fencing (Bugaj *et al.* 2002, fig. 10; Bugaj, Gediga 2004, fig. 10b; Gediga 2004a, fig. 10; Bugaj 2006, 42).

A cluster of pits related to the functioning of the bronze casting workshop was registered north-east of the zone separated by circular rings (*cf.* Fig. 3). It produced for example fragments of raw material, moulds, waste products, and ready ornaments in the form of buttons and applications, including mostly ornaments of horse harness or horse trappings (Bugaj *et al.* 2001, fig. 6: 9-11; Bugaj 2006, 43). Other parts of the site yielded similar ornaments (Bugaj, Gediga 2004, fig. 14: 7; Gediga 2004b, photo 9; Gediga 2005a, 55). Analogous artefacts are registered on a wider scale in Central Europe in the context of burial finds, starting from the so called Cimmerian horizon and they occurred during the whole Hallstatt period (Chochorowski 1993, 97-102; Podborsky *et al.* 1993, 348 fig. 229: 7-9, 349 fig. 230: 8, 10, 13). It seems that decorative elements of the horse harness from Milejowice 19 should be related to the influence of the cultures from the Hallstatt circle, radiating from the area of the Czech Republic and Moravia (Bukowski 1960, 237-238).

Undoubtedly, the most intrigue and at the same time the most difficult to interpret element of the excavated area in the southern part of the Milejowice site 19 is a fragment of the settlement surrounded by a kind of circular fencing. An attempt to explain the function of this interesting construction through the comparison with analogous structures from Europe failed, as in close time and cultural context the same or similar arrangement has not been registered. The data produced by the excavations at Milejowice, first of all pottery, radiocarbon and dendrochronological dates, confirm again temporal uniformity of the described circular sphere, and it is practically the case with the whole site. Once again the data indicates the end of the Bronze Age, and first of all HaC period of the Early Iron Age (Krapiec 2001b, Goslar 2004).

Thus, if we were to indicate some analogies, we would point first to the site at Kuřim on Moravia, mostly because of temporal similarities (Či•mář 1995, 217-254; 1999, 73-80). Here, a circular feature was excavated not far from the open settlement. However there were no traces of buildings recorded inside the structure. There was only a post, ‘an obelisk’, situated in its centre, suggesting that a cult place functioned there. In Milejowice a part of the dwelling settlement was surrounded by a regularly circular fencing of the palisade-type and the research reveals that some features inside intersect with the inner rings of the fencing. It would suggest the chronological sequence of the structures within the circular arrangement. Spatial analysis and stratigraphy of intersecting postholes of the fencing and houses reveal that the outermost circle of posts was the oldest element of the whole cluster, whereas the inner rings were the result of some later rebuilding or additions within the arrangement (Bugaj, Kopiasz 2006, 198-200).

Taking into consideration the above interpretations we believe that a special zone was isolated in the area of the settlement at Milejowice site 19. It was surrounded by a neat, regularly circular construction of the palisade-type fencing. The fencing encompassed a few dozen of various buildings based on posts. The example of intersecting traces of constructions of buildings and the rows of postholes forming the fencing indicates that not all structures existed at the same time. As it has been mentioned above, the whole arrangement yielded also votive offerings and a well. Therefore, the available

data suggest that it was an occupied, albeit distinctly isolated part of the settlement, and the isolation was not aimed to have been of practical, defensive character, but symbolic, probably due to the power, exceptional social and probably economic status of its inhabitants.

Recent discoveries at the adjacent regions, especially Bohemia, have brought to light a few more similar to Milejowice sites then mentioned above Kuřim, nonetheless they are a little bit later and dated mainly to HaD1 period and show more defensive character. One that seems to be the most analogous is fortified courtyard in the type of “Herrensitz” at the site in Opatovice nad Labem, district Pardubice in East Bohemia. The site has not been published yet and the archaeological excavations are in progress there. According to the preliminary report presented by the authors of excavations³ apart from the open dwelling area in Opatovice, archaeological excavations that took place in years 2006-2007 discovered there the central enclosure limited by two lines of post holes and three smaller areas fenced by palisade. The complex was fortified. Authors suggest that the elite that grown up as the result of deep social transformations in Hallstatt Period lived there. What is more they suggest that circle enclosure places in Opatovice nad Labem and in Milejowice are together the first known evidence of elite-seats in the most western part of East Hallstatt Culture and the development of that kind of settlement led to the typical, more square in form, fortified elite-seat in Later Hallstatt D Period, that is commonly called “Herrenhof” or “Herrensitz” (Vokolek, Sedláček 2008, 65-66).

Another analogical to Milejowice settlement could be pointed out in West Bohemia – where the mountain site Štítary nad Radbuzou-Hostětice, Kr. Domašlice has been discovered. The site, dated no sooner than to HaD1, was fenced by two rows of parallel aligned palisade construction with the square enclosure inside that could be interpreted already as the typical “Herrenhof” for the local aristocracy. Evidence for various economic activities and remains of the numerous horse bones supported the

idea of exceptional importance of the place (Chytráček 2006, 243-251, fig. 1-7).

The described in this paper complex in Milejowice in our opinion is also the evident sign of the deep transformations of social relations during the Hallstatt period. At the time, leading social strata emerge. It follows the standards of the Hallstatt “aristocracy”, isolating their imposing places of living and places and forms of burials. What is more, the described cluster of the part of the settlement at Milejowice 19 fenced with palisade-like construction is already not a sole example from Poland. An analogous palisade, albeit not so developed and substantial, isolating a certain part of the settlement of the Lusatian culture dated back to the Hallstatt period, was excavated not far from Milejowice, also in the course of rescue excavations related to the building of the A-4 motorway, at the Stary Śleszów site 17, Żórawina parish, Wrocław district (Fig. 7; Gediga *et al.* 2001, 155; Grześkowiak, Kopiasz 2003; Kopiasz 2003; Gediga 2005b, fig. 8, 10; Bugaj, Kopiasz 2006, fig. 15).

That the then society, occupying mostly the western part of Poland and remaining under the strongest influence of the Hallstatt culture underwent such transformations, is supported also by burial data. Up to now there were known only few substantial example of richly furnished chamber graves dated to the Early Iron Age, above all Kietrz, Głubczyce district in Silesia (Gedl 1973) and Górzewice, Szamotuły district in Great Poland (Malinowski 1985, 297-300). From the Lower Silesia region under discussion here new archaeological finds have appeared lately. The one to mentioned is chamber grave of a warrior from Łazy, Wińsko parish, Wrocław district (Madera 1999, 2002). The other spectacular finds coming from the great urnfield cemetery of Lusatian culture has been recently discovered during large scale rescue excavations in Domasław, Wrocław district. They are dated to Middle- and Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. Archaeological works are still carried out there and the site has been presented only in preliminary reports (Gediga 2007; 2008). The part of the graveyard dated to the Early Iron Age has yielded up to now about 250 chamber burials. The dead persons were accompanied by impressively rich personal ornaments, bronze and iron armours, numerous luxury pottery with exceptional technical and decorative features, painted or with graphite used for glossing the surface or for decora-

³ Vit Vokolek and Radko Sedláček from the East-Bohemian Museum in Pardubice presented the site in June 2008 at the international conference “Rolle der wichtigen Kulturzentren in der Gestaltung des Kulturbildes Mitteleuropas in den frühen Perioden der Eisenzeit” at Biskupin.

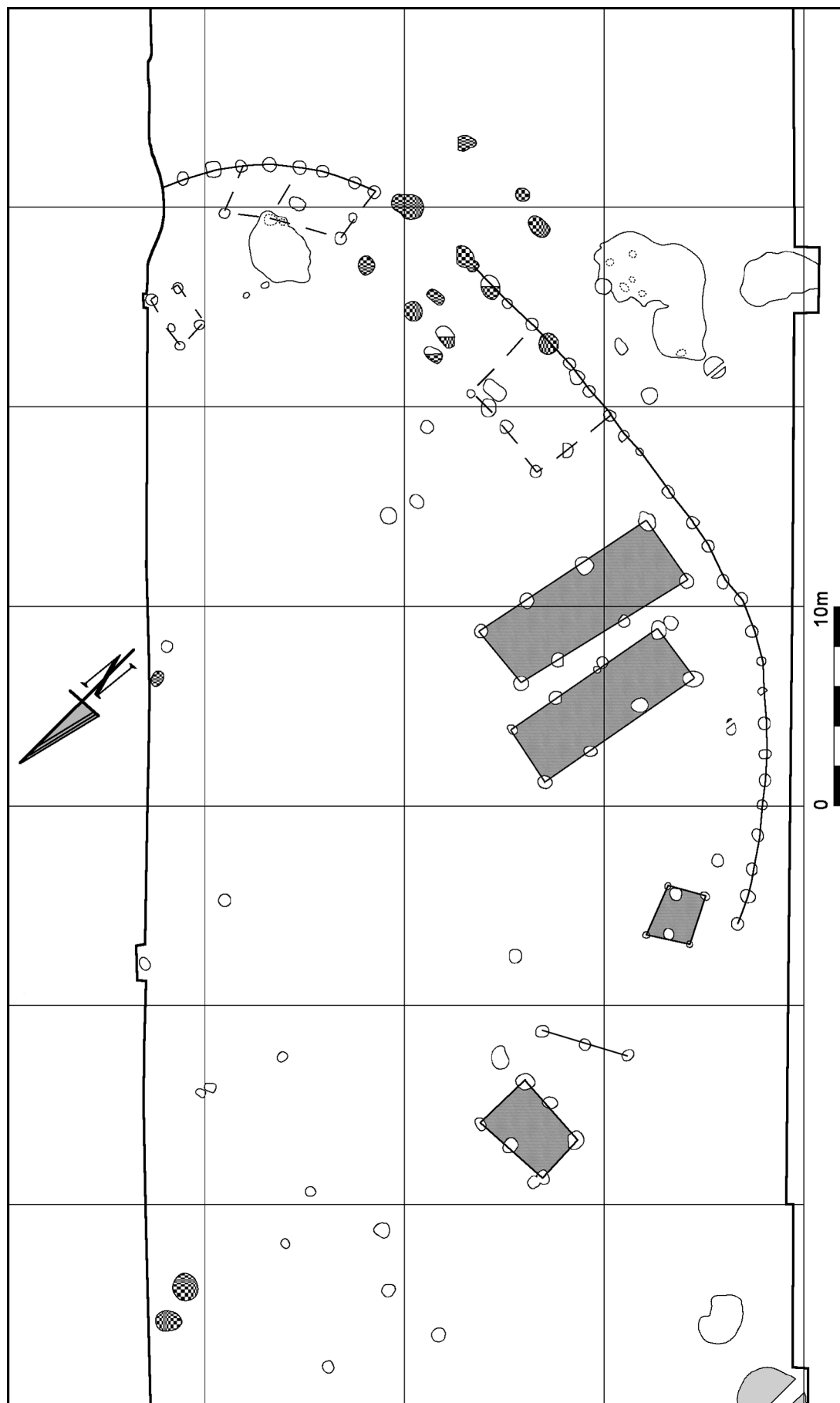


Fig. 7. Plan of the Stary Śleszów site 17 central part of the excavated area with the enclosure limited by palisade-like fencing

tions, and by the Mediterranean imports, above all the bronze Etruscan vessels (Gediga 2007, fig. 4-17).

We can conclude that the process of economic and social differentiation of the societies occupying the Polish lands in the Early Iron Age was to date testified only by a few cemeteries. Due to the possibility of conducting wide area excavations at the dwelling settlements and burial areas, recent years have brought new data that enhance our knowledge

of the social transformations in more complex way. What is more, in the light of discussed above recent discoveries from Lower Silesia we agree with the idea of B. Gediga (Gediga 2008) that these region of Poland can be recognized not only as highly influenced by the Hallstatt culture but as a province of it. What is more in B. Gediga's view it could be recognized as the North West group of the Hallstatt culture.

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