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THE ELITES IN MEDIAEVAL EUROPE
MATERIAL SOURCES OF IDENTIFICATION

ELITY W ŚREDNIOWIECZNEJ EUROPIE
MATERIALNE PODSTAWY IDENTYFIKACJI



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Scientific editors / Redakcja naukowa tomu:
Karolina Blusiewicz, Tomasz Nowakiewicz, Michał Starski, Sławomir Wadył
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Address / Adres redakcji:
„Światowit”
Uniwersytet Warszawski, Wydział Archeologii
ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28, 00-927 Warszawa
swiatowit@uw.edu.pl
[http:// www.archeologia.uw.edu.pl](http://www.archeologia.uw.edu.pl)

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Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego
02-678 Warszawa, ul. Smyczkowa 5/7
wuw@uw.edu.pl
Dział Handlowy: (+48 22) 55-31-333, dz.handlowy@uw.edu.pl
Księgarnia internetowa: www.wuw.pl

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Professor Jerzy Kruppé
9 XI 1931–9 II 2022

WSPOMNIENIE O PROFESORZE JERZYM KRUPPÉ

Dziewiątego lutego 2022 roku zmarł Profesor Jerzy Kruppé. Chociaż od jego pogrzebu upłynęło już ponad pół roku, to wspomnienie o Nim jest dla mnie wciąż żywe. Nie ukrywam, że będzie mi zatem trudno uciec od subiektywnego spojrzenia na jego osobowość i dokonania. Choć przecież trzeba zdać sobie sprawę, że każde wspomnienia o zmarłych muszą być uwarunkowane tym, kto je pisze i co przechowuje w swojej pamięci. Przywołać mogę zatem Profesora z ostatnich ponad dwudziestu lat Jego życia, w których poświęcił się pracy akademickiej w Instytucie Archeologii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego. Jest to bowiem ten etap Jego życia, w którym miałem okazję Go znać i uczyć się od Niego, a z czasem poznawać to, co było dla Niego ważne lub po prostu interesujące. Miałem wówczas i mam teraz pewność, że był On osobą wyjątkową, która nie tylko uczyła, ale także kształtowała podejście do nauki i do życia.

Profesora poznałem w 1998 roku na II roku studiów. Z perspektywy czasu nie mogę powiedzieć, abym to pierwsze spotkanie pamiętał, ale to rezultat nakładających się na to kolejnych wspomnień. Może też rok akademicki jest na tyle zwyczajny, że nie pozwala utrwalić momentów, kiedy pierwszy raz zetknęliśmy się z osobami, które później towarzyszą nam przez resztę życia. Pierwszym trwałym wspomnieniem był egzamin ustny kończący wykład z archeologii późnego średniowiecza i czasów nowożytnych. Krążyły wśród studentów opowieści, że jest to próba wymagająca i wykraczająca poza zwyczajowy czas trwania zaliczenia. Dodatkowo trzeba było wiedzieć wszystko o zabytkach nagromadzonych w pokoju 27 w starej siedzibie Instytutu Archeologii przy ul. Żwirki i Wigury. Rzeczywistość potwierdziła te przypuszczenia. Nawet więcej. Była to rozmowa o średniowieczu, która egzaminem była tylko z nazwy. Dotyczyła niemal wszystkich aspektów kultury materialnej i nie czuło się w niej stremowania rozmową i rozmówcą, ani nie liczyło pytań. Może dlatego nie pamiętam, ile godzin minęło, a wrażenie stresu, zmęczenia i emocji z czasem się zatarło. Wielokrotnie też w swoim akademickim doświadczeniu próbowałem stworzyć podobne warunki na egzaminach, ale z marnym chyba efektem względem tego pierwszego doświadczenia.

Większość osób, które pomyślnie przebrnęły przez egzamin, brała udział w wykopaliskach na zamku w Pucku. Był to wówczas jeden z ważniejszych etapów

kształcenia w specjalności archeologii późnego średniowiecza i czasów nowożytnych. W czasie gdy studiowałem, jechało tam jedynie kilka osób i samo uczestnictwo było dużym przeżyciem. Było to też miejsce szczególnych wspomnień związanych z Profesorem. Byliśmy wówczas młodymi studentami, a Profesor jawił nam się jako człowiek wiekowy. Ta różnica zacierała się jednak podczas wspólnej pracy oraz popołudniami i wieczorami spędzonymi w Kaszubie lub Kalasiu. Spędzanie czasu z prowadzącymi wykopaliska jest udziałem wielu ekspedycji archeologicznych, ale zapewne nie tylko ja mam świadomość, jak bardzo te pierwsze doświadczenia puckie były specyficzne. Nie była to bowiem tylko komitywa. Dystans pozostawał, ale czuło się zażyłość w rozmowach. Nie sposób sobie przypomnieć ich wszystkich tematów, ale dotyczyły one zarówno archeologii, jak i naszych emocji, przekonań, czy planów na przyszłość. Ta bliskość w rozmowie rozlewała się nie tylko na nasz stolik, ale na cały lokal, w którym Profesor zamieniał słowo ze znaczną częścią miejscowej społeczności, wciągając nas w lokalną wspólnotę. Zawarte tam znajomości pozostały do dziś.

Czynnością, którą Profesor najbardziej lubił na wykopaliskach, było mycie zabytków. Polecał je wszystkim, którzy chcą wiedzieć, co zostało wykopane. Dla nas był to czas pierwszych rozmów z Profesorem w cztery oczy na temat wtedy kluczowy, czyli co ma być przedmiotem pracy magisterskiej. Prezentowane wówczas nawet mgliste czy mało realne pomysły z czasem zyskiwały kształt. Jednocześnie miało się wrażenie, że samemu się na ten pomysł wpadło, a dzięki rozmowie został on po prostu skonkretyzowany. Dopiero po jakimś czasie dostrzegaliśmy, jak twórczo była to przeprowadzona rozmowa, w której dzięki Profesorowi potrafiłszy nasze pomysły nazwać. Rozmowy toczyliśmy też później na seminarium. Wówczas mieliśmy okazję docenić wartość indywidualnych spotkań, a ich atmosfera niewiele różniła się od tego, co znaliśmy z egzaminów czy wspólnego mycia zabytków.

Najwyższym wspomnieniem studenckim jest jednak praca nad tekstem pracy magisterskiej. Do dziś jest to dla mnie doświadczenie niezapomniane. Nie było łatwo spojrzeć na napisany z dumą tekst, który po korekcie usiany był nie tylko poprawkami, ale licznymi pytaniami, uwagami i komentarzami. Dla większości z nas było to swoistą próbą, z której każdy musiał jakoś wybrnąć. Na szczęście nie samemu. Wymagająca natura współ-

pracy z Profesorem współlistniała bowiem z chęcią wyjaśnienia tych wszystkich znaków zapytania. Nawet jeśli trwało to godzinami i nie było łatwe. Dzięki temu wiedzieliśmy, jak pracować dalej i dobrać słowa dla jasności wypowiedzi. Nasze prace były źródłem licznych anegdot o słowach zakazanych, jak np. „w oparciu... są pluskwy”; „w ramach... jest obraz”; „materiał zabytkowy... czy to jakaś tkanina?”. Jego cierpliwość i mądrość wspominam jednak za każdym razem, gdy zajmuję się prowadzeniem prac licencjackich i magisterskich. Była to nie tylko nauka, ale i akademickie wychowanie wpajane krok po kroku.

W czasach studenckich mało jednak zdawałem sobie sprawę z tego, z kim mamy kontakt i czego uczestnikami jesteśmy. Brałem te doświadczenia za swoje, a jednak stanowiły one swoisty kanon i własność wspólną pewnej grupy osób. Nie ograniczały się tylko do studiów, ale po latach można było dostrzec w tym szerszy zamysł. Jak rzadko w nauce mieliśmy bowiem okazję rozwijać się pod opieką osoby już w pełni ukształtowanej, nie pracującej na swoje osiągnięcia, ale rozwijającej nasze pomysły, nawet jeśli było to wsparcie przy powstawaniu pracy magisterskiej. Przegląd tytułów naszych prac pozwala chyba na próbę określenia tego, co interesowało Profesora w archeologii. Nie były to bowiem tematy czy zagadnienia mniej lub bardziej ogólnej natury. Najczęściej problem rodził się w szczególe, czy jednym zabytku wymagającym objaśnienia. Z drugiej strony jako studenci mogliśmy wówczas widzieć świat archeologii tylko z perspektywy tych pojedynczych znalezisk. Profesor, wychodząc od detalu, umożliwiał natomiast podjęcie tematów obszernych i wymagających szerokich kwerend oraz studiów. Ranga tych prac dostrzegalna jest dziś między innymi przez to, że spora ich część została opublikowana i przywoływana jest w literaturze. Zakres zainteresowań wyznaczały zatem architektura, naczynia ceramiczne, kafle, ciężarki rybackie, bańki cyrulickie, naczynia szklane, szyby okienne, wyroby drewniane, różnego rodzaju militaria, stilusy, podkówki do butów, wyroby skórzane, plomby ołowiane... czy nawet wianki i szpilki. Ich wykaz jest dla mnie nie tylko listą zagadnień, ale kryją się za nim konkretne osoby, z którymi łączyły mnie później wieloletnie znajomości. Bez wątpienia jednak krąg zagadnień, który interesował Profesora, skupiony był na Człowieku oraz otaczających i określających go rzeczach. Wiedza o tym była ważna dla Profesora i, jak się okazuje, najbardziej interesująca.

Nieodzowną częścią prowadzonych prac magisterskich była kwerenda źródeł pisanych i opracowanie kontekstu historycznego dla każdego z podejmowanych tematów. Był to zresztą jeden z najważniejszych wątków wykładów Profesora – wiedza wynikająca ze źródeł pisanych oraz to, gdzie ich szukać i jak je czytać. Nie zdawaliśmy sobie wówczas sprawy, że zyskujemy możliwość nauki nie tylko archeologii, ale archeologii historycznej. Dopiero po studiach miałem okazję zrozumieć, jak szero-

ką wiedzę historyczną miał Profesor, czemu zresztą dawał wyraz w wielu swoich publikacjach. To był ten element kanonu uprawianej przez niego archeologii, który dziś dostrzegam chyba najbardziej wyraźnie. Równocześnie osobom zafascynowanym średniowieczem wpajał zainteresowanie czasami staropolskimi, jak je nazywał, czyli archeologią i historią dawnej Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów, jej kulturą oraz przede wszystkim różnorodnością. Nie wiem, czy był to zabieg planowy, czy może wynik doświadczenia albo rozwijanych przez Niego zainteresowań. Co ciekawe, patrząc na problemy, które mnie obecnie interesują w archeologii, z biegiem czasu dostrzegam, że coraz więcej w nich tematów poświęconych czasom nowożytnym. A na poparcie tego przywołać można także zainteresowania moich Kolegów i Koleżanek, z którymi wspólnie uczęszczaliśmy na seminarium.

Moja znajomość z Profesorem trwała po skończeniu studiów. Było to zresztą udziałem wielu innych studentów, którzy obronili u Profesora pracę magisterską. Dość powiedzieć, że najczęściej było to dla nich przysłowiowym „zielonym światłem” do pracy w archeologii. Wówczas też mogliśmy poznać Go bliżej i dowiedzieć się czegoś więcej o Jego historii. Było to trudne, bo Profesor, dzieląc się z nami światem archeologicznym, unikał spraw prywatnych. Był otwarty, ale nie miał w naturze mówienia o sobie. Odkryciem było dla mnie Jego uczestnictwo w Powstaniu Warszawskim, udział w badaniach archeologicznych podczas odbudowy Warszawy czy badaniach innych ośrodków w Polsce i za granicą. Świadectwo swych szerokich kontaktów dawał właśnie często poza granicami kraju, podczas organizowanych przez Studenckie Koło Archeologii Staropolskiej objazdów na Litwie, Białorusi, Ukrainie, w Czechach i na Węgrzech. Widzieliśmy też wówczas, z jakim szacunkiem Go przyjmowano. Zdecydowanie więcej opowieści o ludziach można było od niego usłyszeć poza Warszawą, w której wszyscy byliśmy zabiegani i zbyt mało czasu poświęcaliśmy na rozmowę. Dostrzegam dziś jednak, że poza sprawami codziennymi zawsze miał czas na spotkanie, dobre słowo czy radę. Niezależnie, czy dotyczyło to kolejnych pokoleń studentów, pracowników Instytutu, czy portierów. Z tego też rodziło się niezwykle dużo anegdot, które trudno obecnie spamiętać i wyliczyć.

Uczestnictwo w badaniach i projektach prowadzonych przez Profesora pozwalało zrozumieć Jego niesza-blonowe podejście do badanych problemów. Nie myślał bowiem w sposób schematyczny, a znaczną część studiów prowadził jako złożone i kompletne rozumowanie. Można było odnieść wrażenie, że kierował się intuicją, ale Jego działanie było oparte na doświadczeniu i szerokiej wiedzy źródłowej, które pozwalały stawiać kluczowe pytania wobec minionej rzeczywistości. Z tego względu nie wszystkie zagadnienia, którymi się zajmował, zostały spisane: często istniały na papierze jedynie jako nieukończone maszynopisy, czekające na odpowiedni moment.

W swoim podejściu uczył patrzenia na przeszłość w sposób oryginalny, dostrzegając różnorodność ludzkich osobowości i wynikających z tego zachowań. Często zżymał się na nasze studenckie próby generalizowania i nadawania przesadnej rangi typologii przedmiotów. Z tego też względu w swoich największych pracach naukowych unikał jednoznacznej klasyfikacji. Może dlatego są one cały czas aktualne i nie blakną z upływem czasu.

Wszystkie te obrazy składają się na wyjątkowość Profesora – myślę, że dostrzeganą przez wszystkich, którzy mieli okazję z Nim obcować. Jego niezwykłość brała się ze zwykłych i codziennych zachowań. W tych sytuacjach był po prostu naturalny i szczery. Dotyczyło to także różnorodnych rozmów i konsultacji, w których można było liczyć na Jego opinię. Dawał wówczas wyraz temu, co jest ważne i jest istotą problemu, uciekając od spraw mniej istotnych. Był osobą przechowującą pamięć i dbającą o zachowanie źródeł nie tylko archeologicznych, ale także tych, które powstają za naszego życia.

Często okazywał swoje zdystansowanie wobec pisanych artykułów czy planowanych konferencji, ale podchodził do nich zawsze poważnie. Najbardziej dziwił nas dystans do swoich osiągnięć i publikacji – jak mawiał, „był Profesorem przez przypadek”. Na tle Jego drogi życiowej można było to zrozumieć, ale z perspektywy czasu trzeba przyznać, że jeśli tak, to w Jego przypadku słowo „profesor” powinno się odmieniać przez każdy przypadek. Spośród tych wszystkich drobiazgów kształtował w nas nawyk uczciwej pracy, dociekliwości i działania w zgodzie ze sobą. Ale zawdzięczam mu zdecydowanie więcej. Dlatego też wspomnienie o Nim, choć poważne, jest dla mnie przede wszystkim ciepłe, jakbym myślał o dzieciństwie archeologicznym, w którym możemy sobie pozwolić na przewodnika i opiekuna. Nawet jeśli czasem srogiego i bezkompromisowego, to jednak pozwalającego na lekkie przymrużenie oka i spoglądanie poza horyzont.

Michał Starski

IN MEMORIAM OF PROFESSOR JERZY KRUPPÉ

Professor Jerzy Kruppé passed away on 9 February 2022. Even though more than six months have gone by since his funeral, his memory is very much still alive, and, admittedly, it will be difficult for me to stay clear of a subjective perspective on his personality and achievements. After all, every eulogy is defined by who writes it and what they remember. What I will recall here, then, is the Professor's last twenty or so years, which he devoted to academic work at the University of Warsaw's Institute of Archaeology. It is at this stage of his life that I had the privilege to know him, learn from him, and with time discover what he found important, or simply interesting. I was sure back then, as I am now, that he was an extraordinary person who not only taught but also formed attitudes to scholarship and to life.

I met the Professor in 1998 as a second-year university student. In hindsight I cannot say that I remember this initial meeting very well, but that is because this memory overlaps with many subsequent ones. Perhaps, too, the academic year is such a plain time that it does not allow us to record the moments when we first meet the people who would accompany us for the rest of our lives. The first lasting memory was the oral exam concluding his late mediaeval and early modern archaeology class. According to legends circulating among students, this was a demanding trial, extending far beyond the usual examination time. On top of that, one also had to know all there was to know about the artefacts hoarded in Room 27 of the Institute's old seat on Żwirki i Wigury Street. The reality confirmed these speculations. More than that. An exam in name only, it was a conversation about the Middle Ages concerning all aspects of material culture, in which one neither felt jittery about the situation or the interlocutor nor counted questions. Maybe that is why I no longer remember how many hours it lasted and the nervousness, tiredness and stress I must have felt. On many occasions, I have tried to recreate these conditions during the exams I administered, but the results, I fear, have been dim in comparison with this first experience.

Most of the students who were able to wade through the exam went on to participate in excavations at Puck Castle. At that time, this was a crucial stage in the professional education of future late mediaeval and early modern archaeologists. During my university years, only a few people would take part and the very fact of par-

ticipation left a lasting impression. It was also a place of special memories connected with the Professor. Young students at the time, we perceived him as an aged man. This line would blur, however, during joint work and the afternoons and evenings spent down at the Cassubian or the Kalaś. Spending leisure time with the director is common during fieldwork, but I am probably not the only one who is aware how special the Puck experiences were. This was more than fraternity. The distance was still there, but the conversations felt intimate. It is impossible now to recall all the topics, but they concerned both archaeology and our emotions, beliefs and plans. This intimacy spread beyond our table; the Professor would chat up a considerable portion of the regulars, thereby engaging us with the local community. Some of the acquaintances made there and then have remained until today.

The Professor's favourite fieldwork activity was washing the artefacts. He recommended it to everyone who wanted to know what had been excavated. For us, this was the first opportunity to have a face-to-face talk with him on the subject we all found crucial: the topics of our master's theses. The ideas we put forward, even those vague or far-fetched, with time took shape. It always seemed to us that the idea was ours alone, and the talk just helped crystallize it. Only afterwards did we come to see how creative the Professor was in steering the conversation so as to help us verbalize our ideas. It was at that point that we realized the value of these individual encounters, whose atmosphere was much like the one we knew from exams or seminars.

Yet my most vivid student memory is working on my master's thesis. To this day, the experience is unforgettable to me. It was not easy to behold one's proudly submitted text strewn with corrections, questions, remarks and comments. For most of us, it was a trial you had to face. Luckily, you were not alone. The Professor's demanding nature co-existed with his keenness to answer all the question marks – even if this took hours and was not always easy. Owing to that, we knew how to continue our work and what words to use to achieve greater clarity. Our texts became the source of numerous anecdotes about forbidden phrases: 'underpinning the... wait, is this a coat?', 'within the frame... must be a painting', 'the very fabric of... are we talking textiles?'. Still, whenever I myself tutor bachelor or master's candidates, I am reminded of his

patience and wisdom. This was more than instruction, it was academic upbringing given one step at a time.

In my student years, I was scarcely aware exactly who we had contact with and what we participated in. I took these experiences to be my own, but in reality they were, in a sense, canonical and belonged to a group of people. They were not limited to university education, and, years later, we can see they were part of a broader vision. It is far from usual to be able to grow as an academic under the wings of a fully accomplished scholar who is focused not on building his position but on developing your ideas, even if just in the context of your master's thesis. An overview of our topics allows us to attempt to reconstruct the Professor's areas of interest within archaeology. Our initial topics were never of a general character. The research problem usually started with one artefact or one detail demanding explanation. Granted, as undergraduates, we were only able to fathom the archaeological world from the perspective of those singular finds. The Professor would transform that detail into a point of departure for a broader topic, requiring extensive research and study. The quality of the resulting theses is confirmed by the fact that many of them got published and are still referenced. In sum, they marked the scope of the Professor's interests, which encompassed architecture as well as ceramic vessels, tiles, fishing weights, barber-surgeons' cupping glass, glass vessels, window panes, wooden items, all sorts of militaria, styluses, metal heel plates, leather items, lead seals... and even garlands and pins. To me, this enumeration is not just a list of topics: each point is associated with a specific person who would later become a long-standing acquaintance. All in all, without doubt, the Professor's area of interest centred around Humans and the objects that surround and define them. This knowledge was most important to him and, as it turns out, also most captivating.

An indispensable part of all the theses he supervised was a survey of written sources and research on the historical context. This, in fact, was also one of the main themes of his lectures: what can be learned from written sources as well as where to find and how to read them. What we failed to notice at the time was that we were being introduced not just to archaeology proper but also to historical archaeology. Only once I graduated did I have the opportunity to discover the breadth of the Professor's knowledge of history, which was, incidentally, evidenced by his many publications. This was the element of his archaeological canon that I probably see most clearly today. At the same time, he instilled in people fascinated with the Middle Ages an interest in what he referred to as the Old Polish Period, by which he meant the archaeology and history of the First Polish Republic, or the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, with its rich culture and, above all, diversity. I cannot be sure whether this was a deliberate strategy on the Professor's part or whether it

resulted from his experiences and pursuits. Interestingly, when I look at archaeological problems that engage me nowadays, I notice that over time they increasingly concern the Early Modern times. The same applies to my colleagues who attended the same graduate seminar.

My acquaintance with the Professor continued after I graduated. This concerned many of those who had defended their master's theses under his supervision. Suffice it to say that for many of them, the seminar opened the gates to academia. It was post graduation that we had the chance to learn more of the Professor's story. The task proved difficult: as eager as he was to invite people into his archaeological world, he avoided private matters. Though he was an open person, speaking about himself was not in his nature. I was surprised to discover he had fought in the Warsaw Uprising, participated in the archaeological research during the post-war rebuilding of the city, and had done fieldwork in numerous other sites in Poland and abroad. This extensive contacts would often come to light during the study tours organized by the Students' Association for Old Polish Archaeology to Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, the Czech Republic and Hungary, where he was always received with utmost respect. It was away from Warsaw, where daily hustle prevented us all from engaging in longer conversations, that he was most likely to share stories about himself and others. In hindsight, however, I see that with all the everyday busyness, he would always make time to meet and offer a good word or a piece of advice – whether this concerned the successive generations of students, the staff of the Institute or the doormen. This also gave rise to countless anecdotes, far too many to remember or count.

Participating in the research projects headed by the Professor allowed one to get a sense of his unorthodox approach to the investigated subjects. His thinking was never schematic, and most of his studies followed a complex and comprehensive line of reasoning. One might be forgiven to think he was led by intuition, but in fact his work was based on experience and an extensive knowledge of sources, which allowed him to pose key questions about realities of the past. That was also the reason why not all his deliberations ended up being published: some remained typescripts, waiting for the right moment. His work taught looking at the past in an original manner which appreciates the diversity of human personalities and, consequently, behaviours. He would often grow impatient when, back in our student days, we would try to generalize or to read too much into typologies of objects. That was also why his greatest works avoid unequivocal classifications. Perhaps owing to that they remain topical rather than fade away with time.

All these images paint the picture of the Professor's uniqueness, which I think was seen by everyone who had the privilege to meet him and work with him. He was an extraordinary man, but that was due to his or-

dinary, everyday behaviour. In situations like these he was simply natural and authentic. This also applied to all kinds of talks and consultations: he was always there to offer his opinion and advice, focusing on what was the essence of the problem and steering away from less important aspects. He was a person devoted to keeping memories alive, to preserving sources, not just archaeological ones but also those arising during our lifetime. He often demonstrated distance towards the articles he was writing or conferences he was planning, though he always treated them seriously. We were most surprised at his indifference towards his own achievements and published works – he liked to repeat he was ‘an accidental

professor’. Although this is understandable in the context of his biography, time showed that he was a Professor in every meaning of the word. Through thick and thin, he instilled in us the habits of honest work, inquisitiveness and acting in harmony with ourselves. But I owe him much more. That is why my memories of him, although solemn, are also warm – as if I was remembering my archaeological childhood, a time when you can still afford to follow a mentor and guardian. One who, even if at times strict and uncompromising, allows us to look with a slight tongue in cheek and reach beyond the horizon.

Michał Starski

CHRISTOPH JAHN

Centre for Baltic and Scandinavian Archaeology (ZBSA), Schleswig
christoph.jahn@zbsa.eu
ORCID 0000-0002-0472-030X

WHEN BALTS MET VIKINGS AT THE CURONIAN LAGOON. STRATEGIES OF SOCIAL REPRESENTATION AT THE VIKING-AGE CEMETERY AT LINKUHNEN

ABSTRACT

The cemetery at Linkuhnen by River Memel had a long history of usage by local Baltic tribes, starting in the early Roman Period and continuing to the Viking Age, with the highest number of burials in the 10th–11th centuries AD. When Linkuhnen was excavated in the 1930s by German archaeologists, it was considered a Viking cemetery, since some of the grave goods (especially weaponry) seemed to bear signs of Scandinavian influences. However, the Scandinavian influence was overstated and the interaction between local Balts and Vikings was never thoroughly explained by the excavators. New research on the old excavation archives indicates that Linkuhnen was not a Viking burial ground but that incoming influences

from Scandinavia brought a shift to the internal strategies of representation by local Baltic elites. The burial rite changed from simple single cremation graves to lavishly equipped collective cremation graves for members of powerful families or military units. Another remarkable feature is the large number and ‘international’ character of weaponry in the burials, some of the highest quality (Ulfberht), while the jewellery represents local types only. Unlike other Scandinavian-influenced sites on the southern Baltic coast, the Scandinavian presence in the River Memel area only led to minor interactions between Balts and Vikings, though it had a significant impact on the local Baltic elites’ internal representation of status.

Keywords: Viking Age, East Prussia, cemetery, Scandinavians, Balts, Scalvians, Ulfberht swords

Introduction

The cemetery at Linkuhnen (Rzhevskoye, Linkūnai) by River Memel (Neman, Nemunas) in former East Prussia (Kreis Niederung), now Kaliningrad Oblast, was excavated between 1928 and 1939 by German archaeologists from the Prussia-Museum in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad), mainly by Carl Engel. The excavation results were never thoroughly published before World War II. However, Linkuhnen was considered an important Viking Age site based on two articles by Carl Engel, which mainly discussed results from the excavation campaign in 1929.¹ It needs to be emphasized that most of the graves in Linkuhnen were excavated in later campaigns,² the results of which were only perfunctorily pub-

lished in local newspaper articles and remained unknown to archaeological research. Despite the sparse data, the cemetery at Linkuhnen has been repeatedly discussed as a Scandinavian site or even as a port of trade or an *emporium* in recent archaeological literature.³ Linkuhnen can indeed be considered in the context of other Scandinavian-influenced sites on the southern Baltic coast, like Haithabu, Groß Strömkendorf, Rostock-Dierkow, Ralswiek, Menzlin, Wolin, Świłubie, Cieple, Bodzia, Truso, Wiskiauten and Grobiņa.⁴ Each of these sites has had a very different history of research, which was heavily affected by the historic events of the 20th century. The interpretation of Scandinavian-influenced objects at the southern coast of the Baltic Sea had preoccupied archaeological research both before and after World

¹ Engel 1931; 1932.

² Gossler, Jahn 2019, 69, tab. 3.

³ E.g. Wróblewski 2006, 108–110; Bogucki 2006, 94–95; 2012, 85, fig. 1; Žulkus, Bertašius 2009, 198.

⁴ Maixner 2010; Steuer 1984; Kleingärtner 2014; Biermann 2020; Stanisławski 2013; Duczko 2014; 2020; Wadył 2019; Buko 2014; Jagodziński 2015; von zur Mühlen 1975; Ibsen 2009; Petrenko, Urtāns 1995; Bogucki 2006.

War II: Do Scandinavian-influenced grave goods indicate that the buried individuals were Scandinavians, and if so, what was the interaction between those Scandinavians and the local communities?⁵

The archaeological record of the listed sites on the southern Baltic coast shows a common Scandinavian influence on the local burial rites and grave goods as well as settlement features. However, it remains difficult to compare the sites with one another, as the Scandinavians were faced with different cultural and ethnic groups between Haithabu and Grobiņa. Some places are very well studied in their entirety (e.g. Haithabu, Grobiņa), while others have either well-studied cemeteries or well-studied settlements, but the relationship between them remains somewhat unclear (e.g. Wolin, Bodzia, Truso, Wiskiauten).

The 'international' character of imports as well as hacked silver scrap, scales and weights are indicators of a network of proto-urban settlements and ports of trade (*Seehandelsplätze*) or *emporia* around the Baltic Sea, which connected Scandinavians, Slavs and Balts in a 'Baltic economic zone'.⁶ When we look at the two most prominent Viking Age sites of former East Prussia: Linkuhnen and Wiskiauten, it becomes obvious that both places are unique in their own way. Wiskiauten is a burial mound necropolis with many typical Scandinavian grave goods and burial rites. Grave goods like scales and weights as well as Arab dirhams indicate long-distance trade, even if a corresponding Scandinavian trading place has not yet been found near Wiskiauten. The cemetery at Wiskiauten is – like most of the other Scandinavian-influenced cemeteries on the southern Baltic coast – a multi-ethnic site comprising Scandinavian and local population.⁷

In Linkuhnen there are so far only very faint traces of settlement, which cannot be compared in any way with places like Haithabu, Wolin or Grobiņa. No scales or weights were found at the cemetery, the only coins from Linkuhnen date to the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD (graves 323/1933 and 342/1933).

While in Grobiņa it is quite possible to distinguish Scandinavian (Rudzukalni 1, Priediens 2) and local cemeteries (Atkalni 2, Priediens and Kapsēde), we must revisit Carl Engel's question from the 1930s: Who are the individuals buried in Linkuhnen? To answer this question, we need to take a closer look not only at the origin of the grave goods alone, but also at the specific burial rites in which the objects were laid down.

After the lost World War I and the Treaty of Versailles of 1919, the German province of East Prussia was sep-

arated from the rest of Germany. The Memel Region (Memelland, Klaipėdos kraštas) specifically was lost to Lithuania in 1923. In this heated political atmosphere, Germany reaffirmed its territorial claims against Poland in the west and Lithuania in the northeast, and in doing so also used archaeological findings for political propaganda. In the German argumentation, the Scandinavian-influenced finds of Linkuhnen showed the permanent presence of Vikings in East Prussia and 'proved' that only Germanic tribes had been settled in East Prussia at all times.⁸ In this context, it is no wonder that Carl Engel overemphasized the Scandinavian influences in Linkuhnen for political reasons.⁹ What is crucial, however, is that this overstatement from the 1930s was uncritically adopted for a long time due to a lack of published archaeological sources from Linkuhnen.

In consideration of that, the history of research at Linkuhnen was extensively reconstructed and reevaluated by the Museum of Pre- and Early History in Berlin during a research project in 2011–2014 related to the Berlin-housed mediaeval finds of the former Prussia Collection.¹⁰ This new perspective on the pre-war German research in Linkuhnen was by and large an excavation of an excavation, involving a recombination of the preserved archaeological objects and different archival sources from institutions throughout Germany, Poland, Russia, Lithuania, Latvia and Sweden. The main goal was to reconstruct and reconnect the available information about the archaeological context, burial rites and grave goods of the cemetery and to review Carl Engel's interpretations of Linkuhnen from the 1930s. The results of this research were published in 2019.¹¹

Excavations at Linkuhnen, 1928–1939 – the cemetery's stratigraphy

Linkuhnen is located about 10 km west of Tilsit (today's Sovetsk, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia), about 4.5 km southwest of the present course of River Memel, which separates the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad from Lithuania (Fig. 1). The original excavations were executed in 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1933, 1935, 1937, 1938 and 1939 by Herbert Jankuhn, Carl Engel and Fritz Jaensch. Almost 500 graves with at least 526 burials were found in a rather small area of 50 × 50 m (Fig. 2). The cemetery was in use for 1,000 years, and its occupancy can be divided into 7 phases (Fig. 3), starting at the end of the

⁵ Von zur Mühlen 1975; Bogacki *et al.* 2019.

⁶ Bogucki 2012, 85, fig. 1.

⁷ Ibsen 2009.

⁸ Steuer 2004, 426–427; Gossler, Jahn 2019, 43.

⁹ Gossler, Jahn 2019, 45–65.

¹⁰ Gossler 2013; 2014; Gossler, Jahn 2013; 2014; 2015; Jahn 2016; Jahn *et al.* 2018.

¹¹ Gossler, Jahn 2019.



Fig. 1. Location of the Linkuhnen cemetery in former East Prussia (Gossler, Jahn 2019, 4, fig. 4).

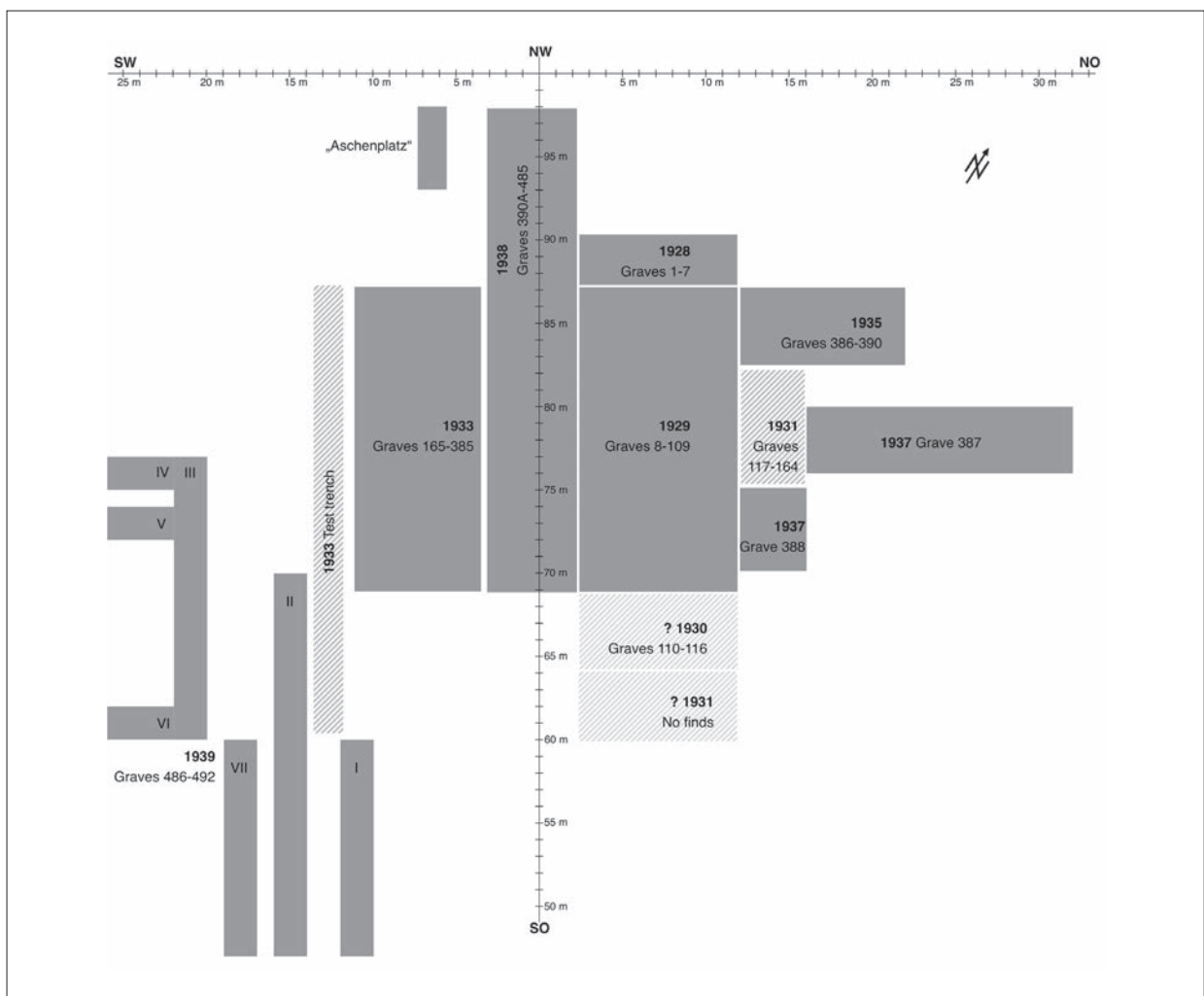


Fig. 2. Plan of the excavation area in the Linkuhnen cemetery, 1928–1939 (Gossler, Jahn 2019, 8, fig.9).

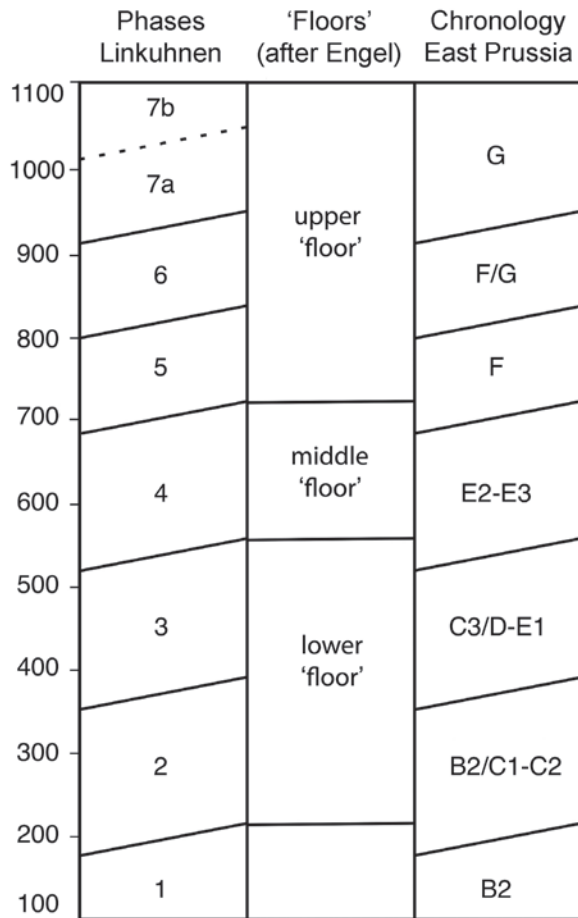


Fig. 3. Chronology of the Linkuhnen cemetery: lower, middle and upper 'floors' (*Stockwerke*) and phases 1–7 (chronology of East Prussia according to Engel 1931, 314; Gossler, Jahn 2019, 226, fig. 97).

Early Roman Period (B2) with a few cremation graves.¹² The main feature of the Linkuhnen cemetery is its stratigraphy and multi-level structure, which Carl Engel divided into so-called lower, middle and upper 'floors' (*Stockwerke*) (Figs 3 and 4).

The lowest layer at a depth of about 1.20–0.90 m was formed by the inhumation graves of the early Migration Period (phases 2–3), where tree coffins had survived in places. All the bodies were in the stretched supine position. In the male graves the buried often held weapons in their hands: spearheads lay in the right arm bent to the shoulder, the left hand was found on the handle of a sword or a dagger at the left hip or on the chest (Fig. 5). In the women's graves finger spirals, arm and neck rings, big hairpins and fibulae worn in pairs on the chest were mostly found (Fig. 6).¹³

The two upper layers were characterized by cremation burials, with the graves of the middle 'floor' at a depth of about 0.90–0.60 m containing the older cremation graves of the younger Migration Period and the transitional phase between the end of the Migration Period and the beginning of the Viking Age (phase 4). These older cremation burials often overlapped with the upper edge of the inhumation burials and contained heaps of coarse cremated remains with relatively few grave goods. Mortuary cremains and grave goods were often wrapped in cloth and interred in small wooden boxes from which wooden fragments had survived. The grave goods in the men's graves usually included an iron sword and two deformed spearheads, in the women's graves finger spirals and arm rings were found, more rarely neck rings and fibulae.¹⁴

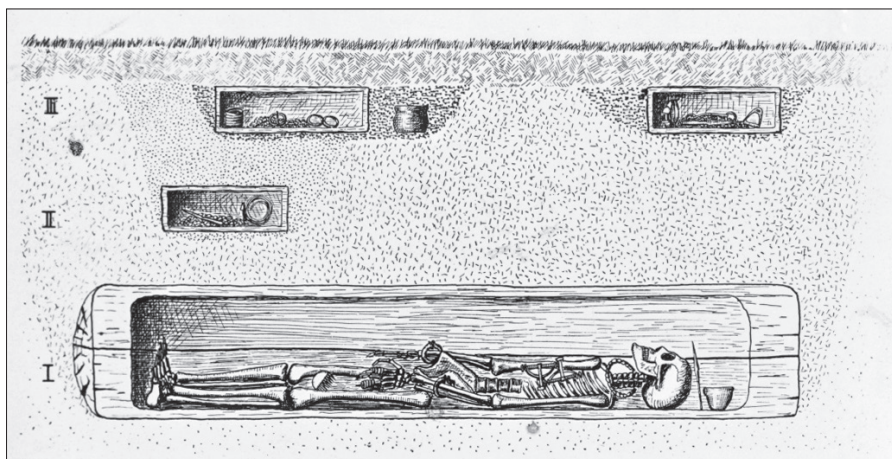


Fig. 4. Schematic representation of the stratigraphic sequence in Linkuhnen: I – lower level inhumation graves of early Migration Period; II – middle level cremation graves of late Migration Period; III – upper level cremation graves of the Viking Age (Gossler, Jahn 2019, 40, fig. 43, after Engel 1931, 315, fig. 1).

¹² Jahn 2016, 155.

¹³ Gossler, Jahn 2015, 75–77; 2019, 229–238.

¹⁴ Gossler, Jahn 2015, 78; 2019, 239–242.

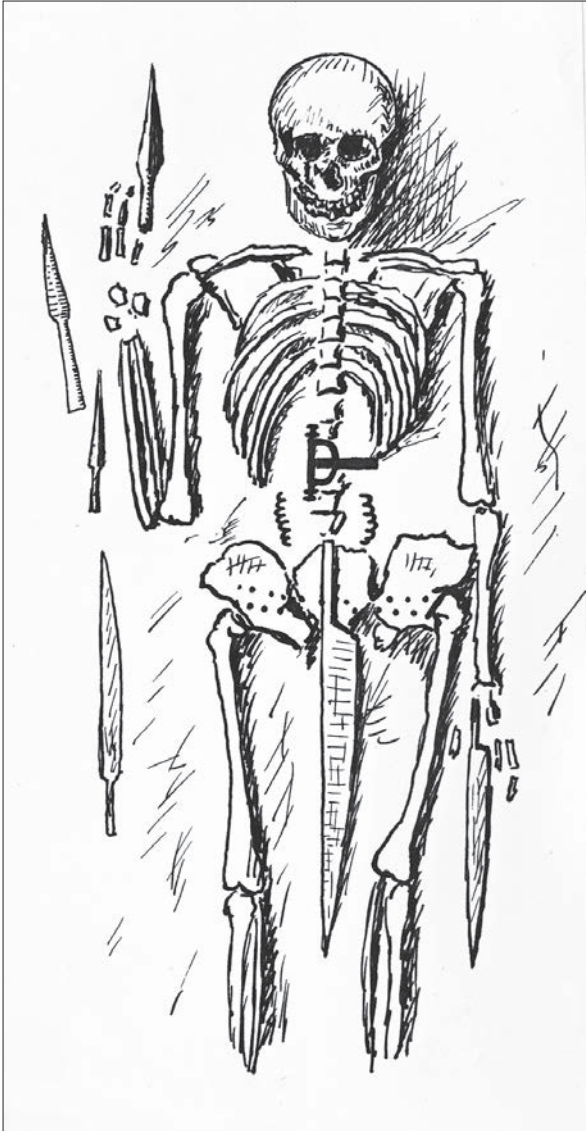


Fig. 5. Linkuhnen, male inhumation grave 104/1929 (Migration Period, 5th century) (Gossler, Jahn 2019, pl. 65, 3).

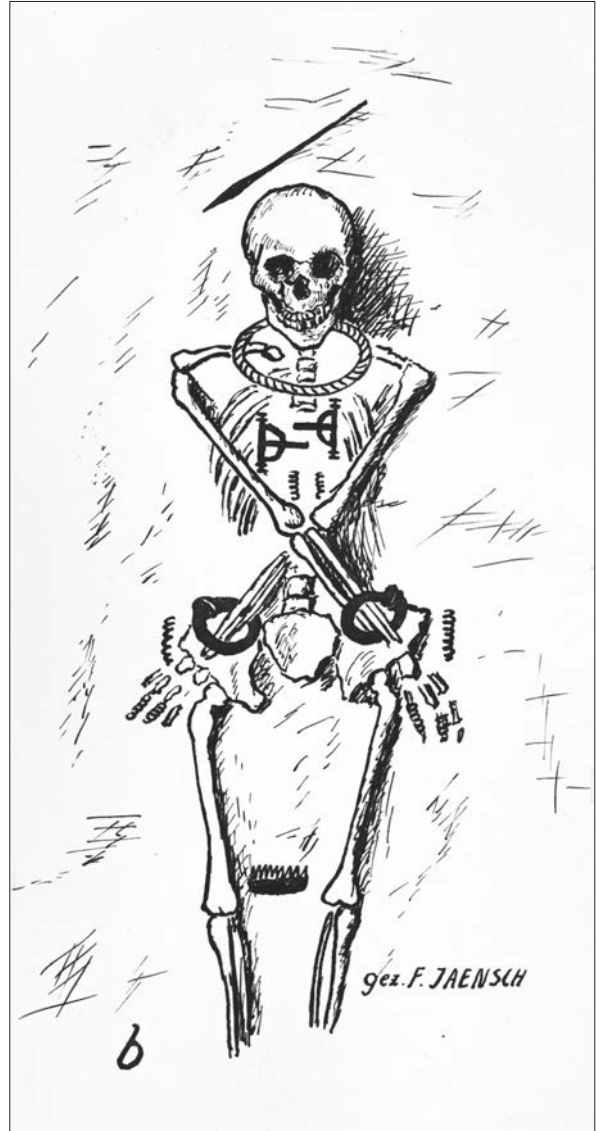


Fig. 6. Linkuhnen, female inhumation grave 52B/1929 (Migration Period, 5th/6th century) (Gossler, Jahn 2019, pl. 40, 1).

With the upper ‘floor’ of the younger cremation graves at a depth of 0.60–0.30 m (phases 5–7), the number of grave goods increased drastically, while the actual burial custom hardly changed: mainly the dimensions of the wooden boxes in which cremated remains and grave goods were placed and the size of the cremation piles increased significantly. In some of men’s graves up to six swords and over 12 spearheads were found, adorned with rich bronze ornaments. The jewellery in the women’s graves was even richer and featured finger spirals, arm rings, fibulae, breast chain pendants, neck spirals, nee-

dles and belt buckles (Fig. 7). In addition, there were spinning and weaving implements, which appeared in women’s as well as men’s graves. The men’s burials also included riding accessories, such as stirrups, bridles and spurs (Fig. 8). Horse burials, which are common on the nearby Sambia Peninsula, are rather rare in Linkuhnen.¹⁵

Weaponry of the Viking Age

The Viking Age graves on the upper ‘floor’ represent the largest portion of burials in Linkuhnen which

¹⁵ Gossler, Jahn 2015, 78–81; 2019, 242–272.

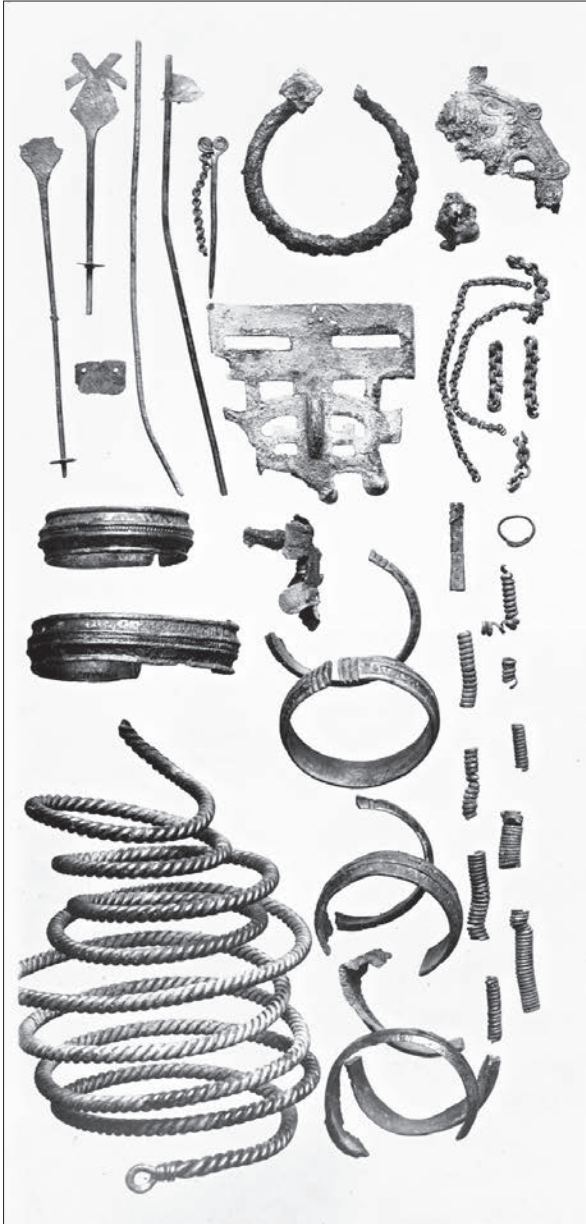


Fig. 7. Linkuhnen, female cremation grave 77/1929 (Viking Age, 10th/11th century) (Gossler, Jahn 2019, pl. 58, 2).

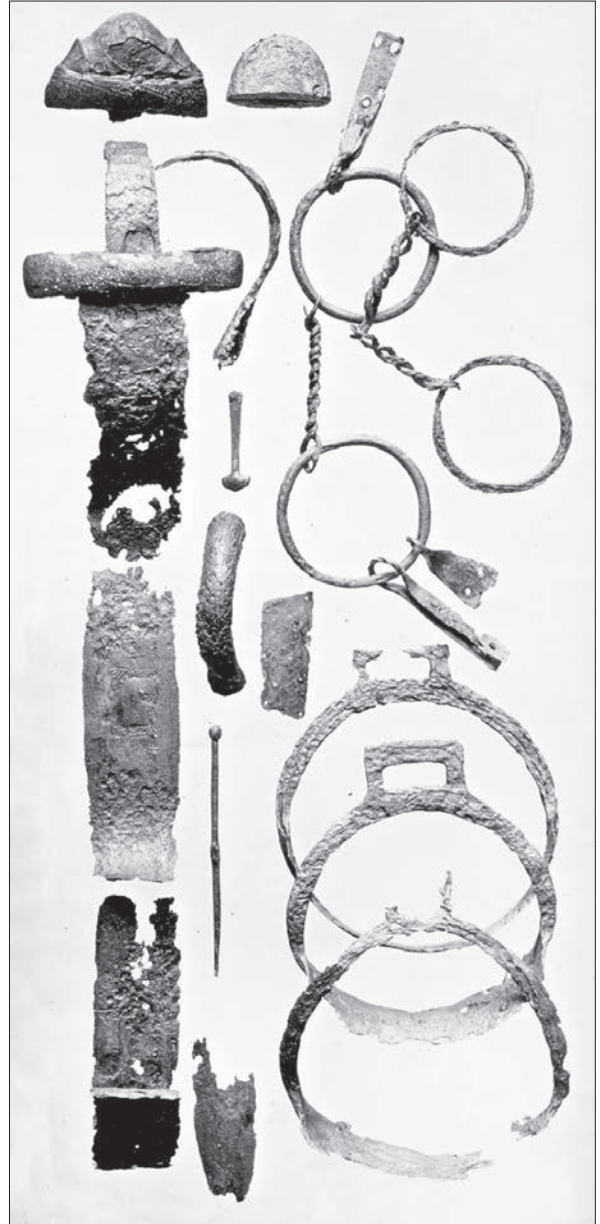


Fig. 8. Linkuhnen, male cremation grave 53/1929 (Viking Age, 10th/11th century) with an Ulfberht sword (Gossler, Jahn 2019, pl. 43, 1).

contain weaponry and riding equipment. A total number of 149 swords and sword fragments from 70 graves of the 10th–11th centuries, including nine Ulfberht blades (Fig. 9), and 373 spearheads from 108 graves were documented in the preserved excavation diaries. Inventories with one or two swords were found in about 85% of all sword graves. The remaining sword graves contained

three to four swords and sometimes even more: six swords in grave 1/1928¹⁶ and ten swords in grave 4/1928.¹⁷ On average, between three and four spearheads were unearthed in each of the graves. Equipment with one to four spearheads comprises 75% of all burials with pole weapons. Larger numbers are also found but rarely more than six spearheads (Tab. 1).

¹⁶ Gossler, Jahn 2019, pl. 2, 1–3, pl. 4, 1–2.

¹⁷ Gossler, Jahn 2019, pl. 8, 1, pl. 10, 2–3.



Fig. 9. Sword from Linkuhnen grave 53/1929 with preserved inscription: '[...] ERT' (ULFBERT) (Gossler, Jahn 2019, 67, fig. 52).

Only one grave featured an axe (grave 170/1933).¹⁸ Besides the axe, the burial contained what might be considered 'standard armament' with a sword and two spearheads. The rest of the grave goods, including a penannular brooch, a neck ring, a finger ring and a ceramic vessel, also correspond to the typical burial equipment in Linkuhnen. Axes were among the most important weapons of the Nordic warrior in Viking-Age Scandinavia. In the Western Baltic, on the other hand, they seem to have been found less frequently, as burial grounds from Sambia show.¹⁹

Regarding the frequency of swords, it can be stated that graves with more than one sword also tend to have higher numbers of spearheads. If two or more swords are found in the grave, they are almost always accompanied by just as many or more spearheads. On the other hand, if we look at the ratio of spearhead to sword finds, we notice that large numbers of pole weapons are not necessarily associated with many swords. In most cases, one or two swords occur together with the lance armament.

In individual cases, however, the discrepancy is much greater: e.g. in the well-documented grave 401/1938 the number of spearheads is 20, while only one sword was found there. High numbers of swords in combination with spearheads allow several interpretations. One is that a very extensive armament represents the warrior's elevated position among his peers, possibly he had several spare sets of equipment in his arsenal. The expenditure on weapons could also reflect the social position of his family. Furthermore, it is also conceivable that some large weapon ensembles accompanied several male individuals who were buried as part of a collective burial. In the case of tomb 401/1938, the coffin-like dimensions of the wooden cremation casket certainly suggest such a possibility. In addition to the sword-bearer represented in the tomb, warriors with only lance armament could also have been buried here.

Riding equipment of the Viking Age

In 60 graves, from the occupation phases 5–7, horse and rider equipment was found. More specifically, the items were bridles, stirrups, spurs, buckles, horse bells, bridle fittings and components of saddles. Despite several horse burials, only one 'rider's grave' could be associated with a buried horse (grave 26/1929).²⁰ The most common item of equipment is the bridle, which is documented in 45 burials. In 12 of these complexes two bridles were discovered, in graves 165/1933 and 410/1938 – three and four bridles, respectively. Most of the pieces are two- or three-part ring bridles. The presence of multiple bridles in a number of graves deserves attention: possibly they were spare sets or this burial custom symbolizes the ownership of several riding horses. Such an interpretation is perhaps supported by the fact that in some of the graves in question more than two stirrups appeared (graves 46/1929 and 53/1929 with two stirrups and three stirrups each, grave 174/1933 with two bridles and four stirrups and grave 410/1938 with four bridles and three stirrups). It is also conceivable that double or multiple riding sets represent several individuals buried in the grave. For example, grave 46/1929 with two bridles and three stirrups perhaps represents a double burial of a man and a woman due to the composition of the dress accessories (five belt buckles and strap tongues, three cruciform brooches and a crossbow ladder brooch as well as nine arm rings).²¹ Grave 410/1938 included four bridles, four swords and twelve spearheads, a large ensemble of weapons that could have belonged to at least two warriors.²²

¹⁸ Gossler, Jahn 2019, 25, fig. 30; pl. 80, 3.

¹⁹ Gossler 2014, 192–195.

²⁰ Gossler, Jahn 2019, 335.

²¹ Gossler, Jahn 2019, 359.

²² Gossler, Jahn 2019, 401.

Tab. 1. Distribution of swords and spearheads in selected graves of phases 5–7 in Linkuhnen
(Gossler, Jahn 2019, 103–105, tab. 8).

Grave	Number of swords	Number of spearheads	Phase	Grave	Number of swords	Number of spearheads	Phase
1/1928	6	8	7	163/1931	1	3	7
4 (a–i)/1928	10	15	7	167A, B/1933	1	5	7
8/1929	3	5	7b	171/1933	2	6	7a
18/1929	1	8	7	174/1933	2	5	7a
21/1929	1	6	7a	175/1933	1	3	7
25/1929	1	8	7a	177/1933	2	4	7a
29/1929	1	4	7	178/1933	2	3	7
37/1929	2	1	5	179/1933	3	7	7
42/42A/1929	2	4	7a	183/1933	1	4	7
43B/1929	2	4	7a	185/1933	3	2	7a
44/1929	2	4	7a	186/1933	1	1	6–7
46/1929	2	5	7a	188/1933	1	3	7
50/1929	3	9	7b	198C/1933	2	4	6–7
62/1929	3	3	7a	200/1933	1	3	7
69/1929	1	6	7	208/1933	1	1	5–7
71/1929	3	9	7	220/1933	1	3	5
74/1929	1	2	7b	229/1933	2	4	6–7
95/1929	1	6	6–7	311/1933	1	2	7
106/1929	2	3	7	388/1935	2	3	6–7
114 I/1930	1	6	7	unnumbered/1935	2	2	7
122/1931	1	9	7	390A/1938	–	4	7
123/1931	1	7	7	394/1938	4	6	7
124/1931	2	8	7	401/1938	1	20	7
125/1931	2	1	7	410/1938	4	12	6–7
126B/1931	1	8	6	426/1938	4	6	7
127/1931	2	2	7b	433A/1938	1	2	7
129/1931	3	1	7	445/1938	1	2	6–7
134/1931	1	3	7	468/1938	1	2	5
141/145/1931	1	3	7	471/1938	2	5	7
142/1931	1	2	7	474/1938	–	5	7a

Compared to the bridles, stirrups were found much less frequently (21 grave complexes). Mostly two pieces were found, three or more pieces are known from four graves (graves 46/1929; 53/1929; 410/1938: three stirrups; grave 174/1933: four stirrups). Only in three graves can bridle fittings and corresponding pendants in the form of bells be proven based on the excavation documents (graves 22/1929, 26/1929 and 53/1929). However, since these bridle fittings are very rare in the Linkuhnen cemetery, there seems to be a gap in the archaeological record for this element of riding equipment. Apparently, the ‘rider’s graves’ of the necropolis did not contain complete sets of horse harness.

Spurs were recovered from 27 graves, thus occurring somewhat more frequently than stirrups but less frequently than bridles. Strikingly, there are only five complete pairs of spurs, in 22 cases only a single spur was found, and two-thirds of the graves with one or more bridles show no stirrups or spurs. This ratio is hardly to be interpreted as missing information; it is rather likely that the deposition of spurs was practiced as a *pars pro toto* custom. All in all, it can be stated that complete sets of riding equipment for horse and rider were rarely found at Linkuhnen. The decision to add individual elements of equipment for horse and rider could therefore also have other reasons, possibly of a ritual or social nature. Finally, only graves 26/1929 and 62/1929 showed almost complete sets of riding equipment.²³

Weaponry and riding equipment in combination

Out of 120 weapon graves, 54 also have riding equipment, which corresponds to a share of 45%. Conversely, 90% of the complexes with riding equipment also contained weapons (54 out of 60 cases). This means that almost all riders carried weapons but only about half of all weapon-bearers were also riders. Of the 54 graves with weapons and riding accessories, 40 complexes contained bridles, which is about three-quarters. In all weapon graves with riding equipment the combination of lance armament and bridles occurs most frequently (39 graves), swords and bridles are combined somewhat less frequently (31 graves). In 30 bridle graves both types of weapons were present together. Stirrups occur in weapon graves with riding accessories less frequently than the bridles (in 18 of 54 complexes). Weapon graves with stirrups contained spearheads in all cases (18 graves), while swords were documented in only 14 graves (78%). Finally, we should take a look at the presence of spurs in weapon graves. It can be traced in 25 graves, i.e. in almost half of the 54 inventories with riding accessories and armament. The noticeable linkage of bridles, stirrups and also spurs to well-equipped weapon graves could indicate a special or higher position of the mounted warriors compared to those without riding equipment (Tab. 2).

Tab. 2. Number of graves with riding equipment combined with swords and spearheads at the Linkuhnen cemetery (phases 5–7).

	Number of swords		Number of spearheads	
	1–2	3+	1–4	5+
Number of graves with weaponry and riding gear	35	8	35	17
Number of graves with swords and bridles	23	8	–	–
Number of graves with spearheads and bridles	–	–	25	14
Number of graves with swords and stirrups	10	4	–	–
Number of graves with spearheads and stirrups	–	–	11	7
Number of graves with swords and spurs	16	5	–	–
Number of graves with spearheads and spurs	–	–	14	10

²³ Gossler, Jahn 2019, 355, 362–363.

Collective graves of local elites

In the cremation graves of the Viking Age in the upper 'floors' of Linkuhnen it is much more difficult to separate male and female inventories than in the preceding phases. The reasons for this are the abundance of grave goods and the fact that a number of cremation graves were apparently collective burials of male and female individuals. As it had been customary since the Roman Period for men to be buried not only with their weapons but also with items of costume, it is almost impossible to distinguish these from the female inventory in a collective grave, especially since both sexes apparently wore largely the same forms of jewellery. Typical female grave goods are hair combs made of bone or antler and symbolic goods in the form of miniaturized spindles and weaving boards. Chain jewellery was undoubtedly worn by both sexes, these mostly very fragmented components show no gender-specific characteristics. In most cases it is no longer possible to tell from the surviving excavation documentation how the cremated remains and the grave goods were arranged within each cremation burial, i.e. whether there were concentrations or associations of certain groups of grave goods.

In some well-documented Viking Age cremations, however, there are indications of a gender-specific dif-

ferentiation of the grave goods. The largest collective cremation grave was excavated in the 1929 campaign and, according to Carl Engel, includes burials 42/42A/1929, 43/1929, 43A/1929, 43B/1929 and 43C/1929 (all date to phase 7) (Fig. 10). Grave 43/1929 contained two pairs of fibulae, six arm rings, a spiral neck ring, bronze chain jewellery (including chain distributors, spiral rolls, pendants, spiral wire beads), a needle, a belt buckle and an amber spindle whorl. There is no evidence of weapons, the grave inventory corresponds to the spectrum of female equipment. The directly connected cremation grave 43A/1929, on the other hand, contained a spearhead, which can be regarded a male attribute, but also the following costume elements: a pair of penannular brooches, an arm ring, 19 fragments of spiral rings, two finger spirals, bronze chain jewellery (including spiral rolls and pendants), two needles (one with a horse head motif) and a hairpin. The equipment also featured a simple knife. In contrast to the woman from grave 43/1929, the man from grave 43A/1929 was equipped with a reduced set of brooch and ring jewellery. However, chain and needle jewellery was obviously present in both sexes. The addition of a hairpin is particularly remarkable. Large hairpins appeared already in female graves of the Migration Period (Fig. 6). The Viking Age hairpins are smaller in size and

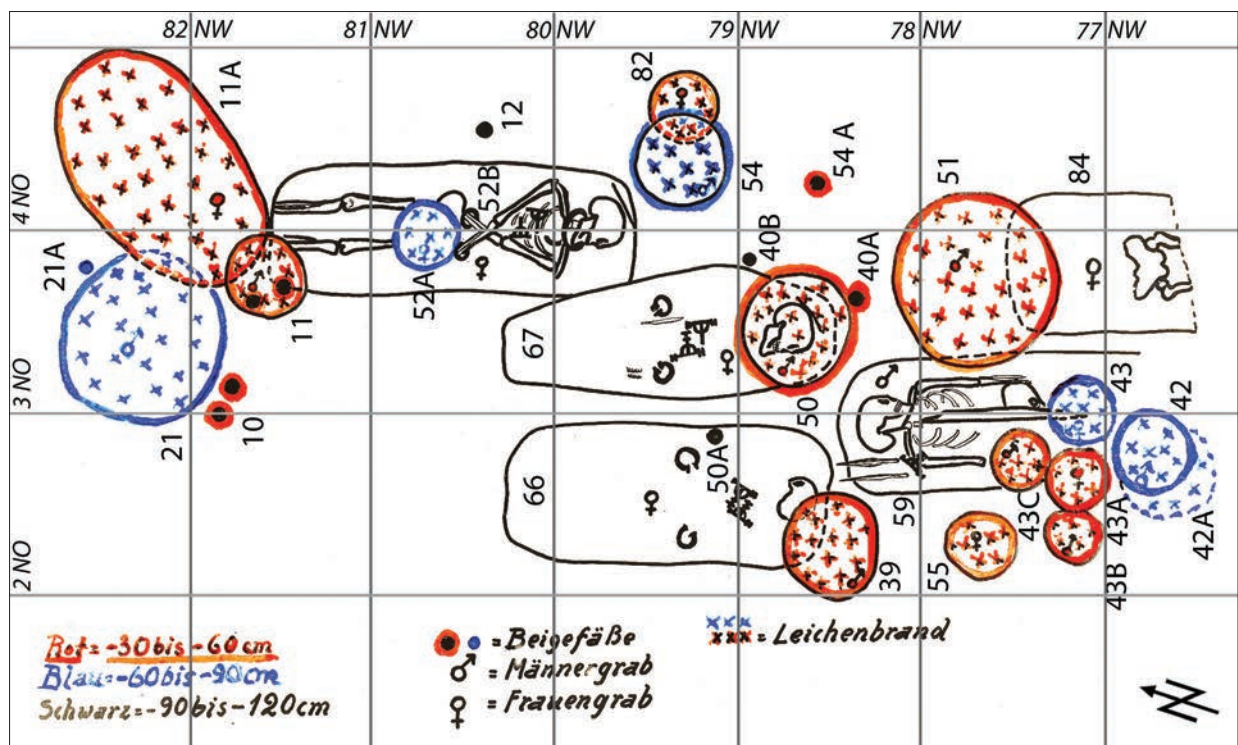


Fig. 10. Part of the 1929 excavation area of in Linkuhnen with graves 42/42A/1929, 43/1929, 43A/1929, 43B/1929 and 43C/1929 (modified original drawing). Features marked in red – graves in the 0.60–0.30 m depth range; blue – graves in the 0.90–0.60 m range; black – graves in the 1.20–0.90 m range. Beigefäße = ceramic vessels; Männergrab = male grave; Frauengrab = female grave, Leichenbrand = cremation remains (Gossler, Jahn 2019, 42, fig. 45).

may have also been used in textile manufacturing (Figs 7 and 8).²⁴ Carl Engel had pointed out that these hairpins for pinning up a long hairstyle were not only part of the women's equipment in Linkuhnen, but sometimes also appeared in male graves.²⁵

The associated cremation graves 42/42A/1929, 43B/1929 and 43C/1929 also contained weapons and costume objects. In grave 42/42A/1929 two swords, four spearheads and two spurs, two different brooches (large crossbow brooch with ring decoration and crossbow ladder brooch), eleven spiral rings and bronze chain jewellery were found. The inventory from grave 43B/1929 consisted of three swords and four spearheads, combined with two different brooches (penannular brooch and large crossbow brooch with ring decoration and remains of a chain), bronze chain jewellery and a spiral finger ring, while grave 43C/1929 contained a sword, two spurs and some remains of chain jewellery.²⁶

Another 'over-equipped' grave complex comprises graves 126A, 126B and 127/1931, with three swords, ten spearheads, a bridle, a spur, 15 fibulae, an iron needle, a hairpin, a spiral neck ring (fragments), finger rings, a bracelet (fragments), necklaces (fragments), spiral bronze pearls, amber pearls, glass beads, three bronze fittings, two knives, a bone comb, iron fragments, bronze fragments, wood fragments and textile fragments. Cremation graves 126B and 127/1931 could have been 'male' costume inventories, the 'female' components came from grave 126A/1931 (Fig. 11).²⁷

Particularly extensive sets of fibulae were documented during the 1938 excavation campaign in cremation graves 401 and 433A. The nine-piece ensemble of grave 401/1938 consisted of two crossbow fibulae, three disc fibulae and four penannular fibulae, apparently two of bronze and two of iron. Very probably, more than one individual was buried in this grave. This is also supported by the five neck rings and a total of nine knives found in the grave. The likewise extensive cremation remains from this grave were found in a coffin-like wooden box with dimensions of 1.6 × 0.5 m (Fig. 12).²⁸

Grave 433A/1938 has the richest fibula jewellery of phases 5–7. No less than 14 pieces were found here, six penannular fibulae with polyhedral terminals, two cross-shaped fibulae, two disc fibulae as well as a fragment of another fibula of unknown shape. This inventory is also likely to be a multiple burial, of at least one man and one woman (Fig. 13).²⁹

Possible evidence of several individuals may also be present if more than one neck ring appears in the grave



Fig. 11. Linkuhnen graves 126A, 126B (background) and 127/1931 (foreground) (Gossler, Jahn 2019, pl. 71, 1).

(graves 21/1929, 37/1929, 71/1929, 152/1931, 174/1933, 401/1938 and 474/1938). Likewise, several belt buckles (graves 8/1929 and 174/1933), arm rings (graves 8/1929, 25/1929, 71/1929, 401/1938, 433A/1938 and 474/1938), finger rings (grave 474/1938), needles (graves 8/1929, 74/1929, 148/1931 and 174/1933) and hairpins (graves 48/1929 and 174/1933) from one grave could be interpreted in this direction. Among the other grave goods several knives (graves 122/1931, 123/1931 and 174/1933) and drinking horns (grave 178/1933) should be named.

Not only the high number of objects is remarkable but also the considerable size of the fibulae and neck rings. The massive crossbow fibulae with ring decoration³⁰ weight about 200 grams, the spiral neck rings about 500 grams each. All the finds add up to several hundred kilograms of iron and bronze grave goods. In 1929 alone 275 kg of bronze and iron grave goods were excavated.³¹ This is remarkable for a region without any local cooper sources.

The jewellery in male and female graves, however, is almost exclusively of local origin. Combined with the burial rites, which do not reveal any burial architecture, this is the main argument that the people buried in Linkuhnen were not Scandinavians, but belonged to the local Baltic population.

²⁴ Gossler, Jahn 2019, 261–264.

²⁵ Engel 1931, 317.

²⁶ Gossler, Jahn 2019, 357–358, pl. 35, 5–7, pl. 36, 1–4.

²⁷ Gossler, Jahn 2019, 374, pl. 71, 1–2, pl. 72, 1.

²⁸ Gossler, Jahn 2019, 400, pl. 106, 1–2.

²⁹ Gossler, Jahn 2019, 404, pl. 110, 1.

³⁰ Gossler, Jahn 2019, 144, fig. 81.

³¹ Engel 1931, 315.



Fig. 12. Linkuhnen grave 401/1938: a sword, 20 spearheads, a hairpin, nine fibulae, five neck rings and neck ring fragments, three bracelets and bracelet fragments, bronze spirals, seven glass beads, five amber pearls, a pendant, necklace fragments, 28 bronze spiral berlocks, 9 knives, two whorls, a bone comb, bronze fragments, wood fragments and textile fragments (Gossler, Jahn 2019, pl. 106, 1–2).



Fig. 13. Linkuhnen grave 433A/1938: a sword, two spearheads, 14 fibulae, five bracelets, five finger rings and finger ring fragments, necklaces, belt elements, two spindles, iron fragments, bronze fragments, textile fragments, ceramics and animal teeth. All grave goods were wrapped in textile and put in a wooden box (Gossler, Jahn 2019, pl. 110, 1).

The closest comparison to Linkuhnen is the site of Viešvilė,³² situated around 40 km upstream River Memel on the Lithuanian riverside, where two Viking Age cemeteries with the related settlements and another, earlier burial ground have been discovered. In particular, the cremation graves from Necropolis I show numerous direct parallels to Linkuhnen: larger pits with a concentration of cremated remains in wooden caskets, partly wrapped in cloth; grave goods of up to six swords and up to five spearheads in one burial complex (mostly of type E according to Petersen), with the weapons usually

severely bent. Their ensembles of costume elements are also of local origin.

The wealth of the weapon grave goods in Linkuhnen is therefore by no means singular in the Memel area, although still extremely remarkable in comparison to the Prussian or Curonian settlement areas. Such a wealth of weapon grave goods is also unique in the context of other regions of the North and Baltic Seas with noticeable Viking influence. Most remarkably, Linkuhnen is the site with the most Ulfberht swords in Europe.³³ The cultural autonomy of the local burial and settlement communities at sites like Linkuhnen or Viešvilė is beyond question. On the other hand, Weapon finds from the Viking Age and burials from the Roman Period have likewise been ascertained here.³⁴ Sources from the times of the Teutonic Order record a tribe of Scalovians/Skalvians, located between Prussians, Curonians and the Lithuanian Samogitians, with the centre of their lands near Tilsit and Ragnit.³⁵ It is likely that the cemeteries at Linkuhnen and Viešvilė can be associated with this tribe. The burial rites as well as the grave goods show many specifically local patterns;³⁶ at the same time, the groups were also integrated in a transregional network which encompassed the whole of the Baltic Sea region and even included Western and Central Europe.

Conclusions

Linkuhnen is indeed an outstanding site, but of a character different from that postulated by Carl Engel. Even though there is a Scandinavian element in the types of swords and spearheads, and even in some

³² Budvydas 2007a; 2007b; 2012; 2013.

³³ Geibig 1991, 116–123.

³⁴ Von zur Mühlen 1975, pl. 11, 3; Nowakowski 2006.

³⁵ Mugurēvičs 2000.

³⁶ Wróblewski 2006, 110.

jewellery in the grave goods from Linkuhnen, this cemetery is by no means a Viking cemetery: in contrast to other Scandinavian-influenced places on the southern Baltic coast, no Scandinavians were buried in Linkuhnen. There are no Scandinavian grave structures, all Viking Age burials are built directly upon the older Migration Period burials, leaving the deeper graves intact. Linkuhnen is a graveyard of local Baltic elites, most probably Scalvians (Schalauer), who changed their strategy of social representation when Scandinavians appeared on the southern shores of the Baltic Sea and the Balts could benefit from Viking Age long-distance trade.

Many graves are most probably burials of more than one person, often being a double grave of a man and a woman or of even more individuals. The high number of weapons makes us think of groups of warriors but the combination with a variety of jewellery also suggests the representation of clans or families. However, while the weaponry has some Scandinavian character, it is important to note that the other elements of the grave goods are almost entirely of local origin. There is no typical Scandinavian women's jewellery, such as oval brooches known from Wiskiauten. Observations similar to those at Linkuhnen can be made in Lithuania in the cemetery at Viešvilė³⁷ with comparable grave goods and treatment

of weapons, but this cemetery was occupied for a much shorter time and all the grave features are generally less pronounced than in Linkuhnen.

The wealth that we see in Linkuhnen grave goods of the 10th/11th century most probably came from the strategically ideal location of Linkuhnen at the point where all the arms of River Memel (Nemunas) meet. This position allowed for controlling the traffic to and from the Curonian Lagoon and therefore between the Baltic Sea and Scandinavia. The Memel was of interest for Viking-Age Scandinavians, who travelled from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea via the Eastern European river systems. If we assume that the Memel area was part of the long-distance silver trade routes to the Arab world,³⁸ then Linkuhnen was probably not a port of trade in this system but not much more than a transit station, because no trade indicators, such as scales and weights, were found here. The inhabitants of Linkuhnen probably benefitted from this trade by ways of taxes or fees. This would explain the wealth we see in the grave goods. However, this external input did not lead to closer interaction with Scandinavians but to an extended desire of local Baltic elites to show wealth within the community by extensive disposal of metal artefacts in the burial process.

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³⁷ Budvydas 2007a; 2007b.

³⁸ Bogucki 2016, 239, fig. 17.

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MIKALAI PLAVINSKI

Faculty of Archaeology, University of Warsaw
 plavinski.arc@gmail.com
 ORCID 0000-0002-0660-7298

CHAMBER-LIKE GRAVES IN THE WEST OF THE POLATSK PRINCIPALITY. POSSIBILITIES OF INTERPRETATION IN THE CONTEXT OF EASTERN EUROPEAN ANTIQUITIES

ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the study of the elite funeral rite of the western regions of the Polatsk Principality at the turn of the 2nd millennium AD. The main attention is paid to the identification of this category of burials with chamber-like graves. The issues of the emergence of

a chamber-like funeral ritual in the west of the Polatsk land, the topography and chronology of chamber-like burials, and the origin and social status of the carriers of this tradition are considered.

Keywords: funeral rite, chamber-like graves, Polatsk Principality

The issue of identifying criteria for the elitism of burials on the basis of the nature of inventory and the characteristics of ritual actions performed in the inhumation process is among the traditional ones for archaeology. At the same time, the traditional character of this issue has by no means led to the development of some universal solution. Each past community could have its own ideas, different from those of its neighbours, about the prestige and status of a person in society and the means of its embodiment in the funeral rite.

This article is devoted to the characteristics of one of the types of high status funeral rite performed by the population of the western regions of the Polatsk Principality from the very end of the 10th to the 12th century. The question posed seems to be relevant for two reasons. First, the funeral rite of the population of the Polatsk Principality of the Old Russian period is relatively poorly studied in comparison with other regions of Rus'. Secondly, recently a number of new elite burial monuments from the era of the formation of the Old Russian state have been investigated on the territory of Eastern Europe. The materials of these excavations allow us to take a fresh look at the development of the funeral rite among residents of early urban centres and other groups

of the population who were involved in the processes of creating early state associations and transcontinental trade. The identification of new archaeological sources has led to an intensification of the discussion about the evolution of the prestigious funeral rite in Rus' and the criteria for identifying such burials.

One of the most striking types of elite burials of the era of formation and early stages of existence of the Old Russian state is the so-called chamber grave funeral rite. At the same time, despite the fact that the elite nature of Old Russian chamber graves does not raise doubts among researchers, the criteria for identifying such burials and the degree of distribution of this rite in Rus' remain controversial. For this reason, it seems necessary to turn to a brief review of the approaches to the definition of chamber graves formed in Old Russian archaeology. It should be noted that this article does not aim at an analysis of the entire existing historiography of the study of Eastern European chamber graves. Firstly, such work has already been carried out several times over the last decade.¹ Secondly, in this article we will be primarily interested in the topical issues of studying chamber graves and the current state of the discussion about the place of this type of funeral ritual in the context of Eastern

¹ Janowski 2015, 17–28; Mikhaylov 2016, 15–40; Bibikov 2020, 212–213.

European antiquities from the era of the formation of the Old Russian state and its territory.²

Criteria for Old Russian chamber graves identification

The leading specialist in the study of Old Russian chamber graves is K.A. Mikhaylov, who outlined the main results of his research in the fundamental monograph *The Elite Funeral Rite of Old Rus*.³ As a result of painstaking source study carried out over more than two decades, Mikhaylov created the most complete and detailed catalogue of Old Russian chamber graves, and determined the main characteristic features of a chamber funeral rite in Rus', its origins and chronology.

The close attention to details and strict methodology in the process of developing criteria for identifying specific types and forms of funeral rituals, characteristic of Mikhaylov, save us from the need to go into details of the features of Old Russian burials in chambers. This allows us to restrict ourselves to a brief overview of the main features of chamber graves as identified by Mikhaylov, necessary for the further presentation of the material. According to the researcher,

behind the term 'chamber graves' is a special, different than in other types of burials, funeral rite with a repeated set of ritual actions. In this rite, the main idea was embodied by the builders in the construction of a rather vast underground space, empty and closed on all sides, where the body of the deceased was placed, accompanied by a stable set of equipment.

The space was designed by the builders in the form of a wooden crypt with a roof/ceiling, walls and a floor, using the technologies of North or East European housing construction (frame, pillar structure, etc.). The grave pit where the crypt was located was quite extensive; the length-to-width ratio often ranges from 0.6 to 1.

The characteristic features of the ritual were the placement of the dead in a cell in a sitting position, as well as the paired burials of a man and a woman, the burial of a horse. ... Equally characteristic of the chamber graves was a stable set of equipment, which included frequently repeated combinations of components – a set of ornaments, weapons, horse harnesses.

After the erection of the upper ceiling, on the roof of the chamber a fire was lit for some time. ... After the completion of the ritual activities, a barrow was erected

over the crypt. Thus, the rite of burial in a chamber grave is the inhumation in a vast burial pit with a wooden crypt inside, built like an underground house.⁴

Chamber-like graves – the essence of the phenomenon and approaches to its interpretation

Such an extensive quote from the work of K.A. Mikhaylov is cited because it is impossible to talk about the phenomenon of Old Russian chamber-like graves without a clear understanding of the exact characteristics of the chamber ritual. Actually, the most important result of Mikhaylov's research is the identification of 'pure' chambers which have all the features typical of this type of burials and the determination of the period in which the ritual existed and its socio-cultural characteristics in the context of the formation of the Old Russian state. Today we can confidently say that chamber graves are associated with the necropolises of the first Old Russian towns and large trade and craft centres. The group of population that practised this ritual was closely associated with urban communities and consisted of multi-ethnic representatives of the elite of Old Russian society.⁵

At the same time, researchers of the Old Russian funeral rite have repeatedly noted that in Eastern Europe, in addition to the elite burials proper, which meet all the criteria of classic chamber graves, there is also a category of burials in the ritual of which there may be individual, often irregular, 'chamber' features. Such burials are united under the general name 'chamber-like graves' (*kvazikamera*). No clear criteria for chamber-like graves have yet been identified; however, it is widely believed that the origin of such funeral rituals is directly related to the classic chamber graves. Actually, given the secondary nature of the chamber-like ritual in relation to the chamber graves, the selection of its criteria is an extremely difficult task.

The conceptual definition of a chamber-like funeral rite was formulated by Y.M. Lesman in a work dedicated to the identification of the Scandinavian component of Old Russian material culture published after his death.⁶

According to the researcher, such burials

were performed in and without coffins, could be placed in specially built (of wood, earth, turf, stone) relatively

² This article considers only the problems of Old Russian chamber and chamber-like graves. It should be noted that over the past decade, Polish archaeologists have been enviably active in the study of the chamber funeral rite. Unfortunately, the limited size of the publication does not allow even a brief overview of the existing Polish historiography of the question. For this reason, I will only refer to the key Polish studies of chamber funeral

ritual of recent years: Buko 2016; Gardela 2013; Janowski 2015; Wadył 2019, etc.

³ Mikhaylov 2016.

⁴ Mikhaylov 2016, 40.

⁵ Mikhaylov 2016, 180–181.

⁶ Lesman 2014.

spacious rooms – chambers (the latter were most often located under the mounds of barrows, but could also be in the body of the mound, or not be associated with a barrow at all), but sometimes in small pits (corresponding to the size of the coffin or body), which were dug both in the ground before the construction of the barrow and in the already finished (sometimes earlier) mound, they could be located under the mound of the barrow, on the surface of the ground or on a bedding, etc. The corpse could be placed lying down or, less often, sitting down.⁷

Lesman believed that such burials, although not very numerous,

became widespread almost throughout the entire Old Russian territory only from the end of the 10th to first half of the 12th centuries. They are usually found in large cemeteries or large accumulations of smaller graveyards. Such burials are sometimes distinguished by the richness of inventory, occasionally including Scandinavian finds (or ones derived from Scandinavian prototypes), but this is far from the rule. Chamber graves dating from the end of the 11th and the 12th centuries are not distinguished by a particular richness of inventory.⁸

V.Y. Sobolev repeatedly turned to the study of chamber-like graves in the northwest of Russia. Based on the analysis of materials from the Novgorod land, he came to the conclusion that

the 11th century Russian society preserved the idea of chambers as a prestigious type of burials ... 11th century chamber graves are already part of a purely local Christian funeral ritual. They were built by a population hardly familiar with the details of the 'original' tradition, hence the differences in the technique and methods of their construction. ... Regarding the social status of the people buried in the chambers, it can be assumed that they were representatives of the central administration sent to key points of the Novgorod land, apparently not of local origin, and their closest relatives.⁹

According to Sobolev, chamber-like graves included both those made in large graves, where traces of wooden ceilings and/or intra-grave structures were discovered, and in-ground wooden and turf structures, the size of which exceeded the size of ordinary coffins. In the Novgorod land in the middle of the 11th and first half of the 12th centuries

society retains only a general idea of chambers, specific methods and techniques of construction are individual

and vary from one community to another, from cemetery to cemetery.¹⁰

The above definitions of chamber-like graves clearly show how difficult it is to develop the criteria for this funeral rite. These difficulties notwithstanding, in 2020 D.V. Bibikov made an attempt to classify chamber-like graves on the Dnieper Right Bank, which seems extremely interesting and promising for further development of the systematization of Old Russian chamber-like graves. The researcher identified four main types of such graves:

1) chambers with coffins. The main aspect of such burials differentiating them from classic chambers is precisely the presence of coffins;

2) overground chambers. A constructive feature of this type of chamber-like graves is the placement of the burial structure at the level of the horizon or on a bedding. Most of the burials in such overground chamber-like graves were also performed in coffins;

3) 'earthen' chambers, which are large grave pits that did not have wooden walls and floors, but had wooden ceilings, thanks to which the inner space of the grave remained uncovered with earth. In the Middle Dnieper Region and Volhynia, in all chamber-like graves of this type, the bodies of the deceased were in coffins;

4) 'large burial pits' without wooden structures. The width of such pits had to reach at least 1.4–1.5 m, and the ratio of width to length was from 0.6 to 1. Bibikov believes that the identification of chamber-like graves of this type is the most arbitrary in comparison with the first three.¹¹

As a result of the analysis of the chamber-like graves of the Dnieper Right Bank, Bibikov came to the conclusion that in the last quarter of the 10th century a number of morphologically similar structures appeared in this Old Russian region, inheriting from the classic chamber grave ritual. The beginning of the mass distribution of chamber-like graves on the territory of Volhynia is connected by Bibikov with the activities undertaken by the Kiev Prince Vladimir Syatoslavich to spread his power in the East Slavic region.¹²

In the Belarusian archaeological literature, the question of the presence of chamber-like graves in the west of the Polatsk Principality (Fig. 1: 1) was first raised by the author of the present article in the process of analyzing the results of the study of the Pahoshcha (Pahošča) barrow cemetery.¹³ Later, A.V. Voytekovich in his summary monograph dedicated to the funeral rite of the

⁷ Lesman 2014, 79.

⁸ Lesman 2014, 79.

⁹ Sobolev 1997, 276–277.

¹⁰ Sobolev 2018, 66.

¹¹ Bibikov 2020, 214–218.

¹² Bibikov 2020, 238–239.

¹³ Plavinski 2017, 156–158.



Fig. 1. 1 – Polatsk Principality on the map of Eastern Europe; 2 – cemeteries with the chamber-like graves of Belarus: 1 – Pahoshcha; 2 – Izbishcha; 3 – Charnevichy; 4 – Zabor’ye; 5 – Vitunichy; 6 – Nyabyshyna II; 7 – Byahoml’ (Marhavitsa); 8 – Slabada; 9 – Zaslaue; 10 – Zvyazda (Auhustava); 11 – Barysau (drawing by M. Plavinski).

population of the Polatsk land in the 10th–12th centuries supported the author’s conclusions.¹⁴ In addition, a common conference paper by the author and V.M. Vasiliev was devoted to substantiating the idea of the existence of a number of chamber-like graves in the western regions of the Polatsk Principality.¹⁵

Chamber-like graves in the west of the Polatsk Principality

No classic chamber graves are currently known from the territory of the Polatsk land. Actually, their presence can only be assumed in the necropolises of early main

¹⁴ Voytekho vych 2019, 33, 42.

¹⁵ Plavinskiy, Vasil’ yev 2018.

town centres.¹⁶ On the territory of the Polatsk land, these necropolises include, first of all, the barrow cemeteries of Polatsk and Viciebsk. However, the mounds of these barrows have not survived to our day. Their traces, visually perceptible on the surface, were destroyed during the expansion of the urban territory from the Middle Ages on. At the same time, an analysis of iconographic and written sources as well as some archaeological data provides grounds for reconstructing the location of these necropolises in the topographic structure of these early urban centres.¹⁷ This, in turn, allows one to hope for a future identification and study of burials that have survived below the levelled barrows.

As already noted, raising the question of identifying chamber-like graves in the western regions of the Polatsk land was prompted by the materials of the excavations of the barrow cemetery in **Pahoshcha (Pahošča)**, Braslau District, Viciebsk Region (Fig. 1: 2: 1), carried out by the author in 2005–2009.

The cemetery consisted of 15 barrows, with 11 of them containing burials which can be divided into two cultural and chronological horizons. The first of the horizons includes barrow 9, belonging to the Pskov Long Barrow Culture and dating back to the 6th–7th or 7th centuries. The second cultural and chronological horizon of the necropolis includes ten barrows containing 15 burials. The dating of this horizon fits into the timeframe of the second half of the 10th to first half of the 11th century, while its functioning seems to be most probable from the very end of the 10th to the first decades of the 11th century.¹⁸

An analysis of the funeral rite and grave goods of the second cultural and chronological horizon suggests that it was left by a community in which representatives of the princely administration occupied a dominant position, who had a certain corporate idea of the funeral ritual corresponding to their group and social status. The main features of the funeral rite of the barrow cemetery in Pahoshcha are as follows:

- in the planigraphic structure of the necropolis, the dominant position is occupied by mounds containing male inhumations with weapons – barrows 1, 5, 6, 10, 12 and 14;
- burials of adult men have similar features in terms of ritual and grave goods. All of them are oriented with their heads to the east (with slight deviations). Those buried in barrows 1, 10, 12 and 14 were placed in birch-bark coffin-like structures, which were located in large pits under the mounds and covered with

wooden ceilings. In barrows 5 and 6, birch-bark coffins with the bodies of the dead were placed in large wooden structures erected in the bases of the barrows;

- in turn, the lack of a certain standard is noticeable in the female funeral rite. Clearly, female burials have a subordinate and secondary character in comparison with male inhumations with weapons.¹⁹

The presence in Pahoshcha of burial pits covered with wooden ceiling under the mounds and wooden structures in the bases of barrows is of greatest interest in the context of pondering the existence of chamber-like graves in the Polatsk land.

The ritual of burial in a pit under a barrow can be most fully reconstructed in mound 12 (Fig. 3: 2). Initially, a round-shaped fire pit was made in the base of the mound. A burial pit measuring 3.7 × 2.8 m and 1.05 m deep was dug in it, oriented along the northwest–southeast axis (Fig. 2). The grave contained burial 2 as the main one, accompanied by burial 3 (Fig. 3: 1). The main burial – of a man of 20–25 years with a rich inventory that included two items of weaponry – was made in a coffin-like structure, consisting of a lower board or boards on which the body was laid, and, possibly, low vertical boards on the sides. This structure, with the body of the deceased placed in it, was wrapped in birch bark. To the right of the main burial (burial 2), there was burial 3 without grave goods, which belonged to an adult woman. Both skeletons are oriented with their heads to the southeast. The grave pit was covered with a ceiling of logs (Figs 2: 2; 3: 2). On this ceiling were scattered the bones and inventory of cremation burial 1, belonging to a 25–30-year-old woman. Then the mound was erected.

Similar features of the funeral rite can be traced in barrows 1, 10 and 14. In barrow 1, the burial of a man of about 30 years with a spear was placed in a pit 2.2 × 1.4 m in size and 0.6 m deep. It was located in a structure made of birch bark. The grave pit was covered with a wooden ceiling (Fig. 4).

In barrow 10, the inhumation of a man aged 49–51 was in a pit 3.5 × 1.9 m in size and 1.2 m deep. The burial, accompanied by an axe, was in a birch-bark structure similar to a coffin. The pit was also covered with a wooden ceiling (Figs 5–6).

In barrow 14, a male inhumation was placed in a pit 3 × 2 m in size and 0.8 m deep. The body of a 20–30-year-old man was in a birch bark ‘coffin’. The grave goods included an axe. As in previous cases, the pit was covered with a wooden ceiling (Fig. 7).²⁰

¹⁶ Mikhaylov 2016, 180.

¹⁷ Alekseyev 1966, 167–169; Duk, Plavinski 2006, 173–180; Duk 2010, 106–109; Plavinski, Babenka 2006, 59–60.

¹⁸ Plavinski 2017, 199–200.

¹⁹ Plavinski 2017, 7–201.

²⁰ Plavinski 2017, 13–21, 49–56, 125–131.

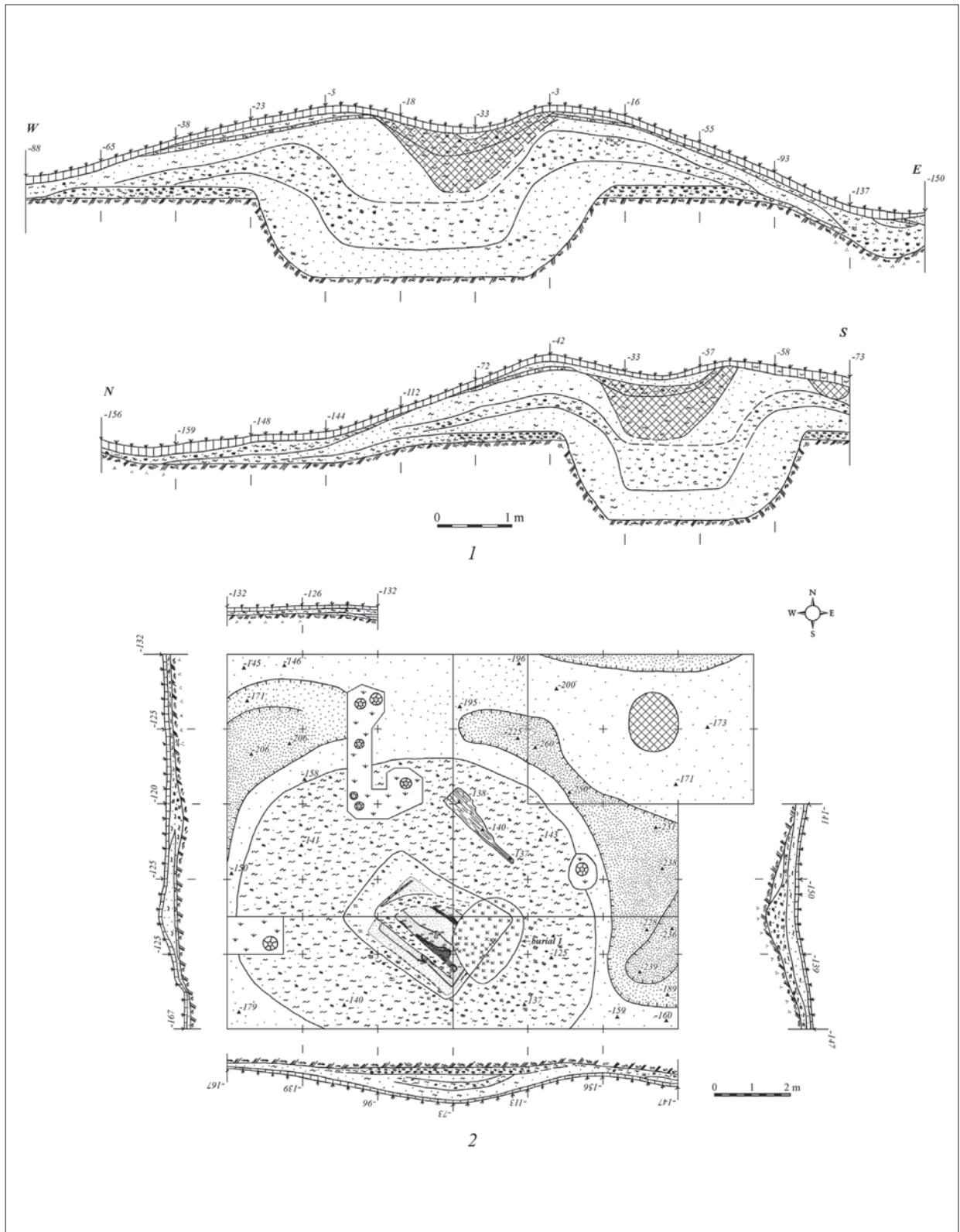


Fig. 2. Pahoshcha barrow cemetery, barrow 12: 1 – barrow sections; 2 – plan of the basic earth level (drawing by M. Plavinski).

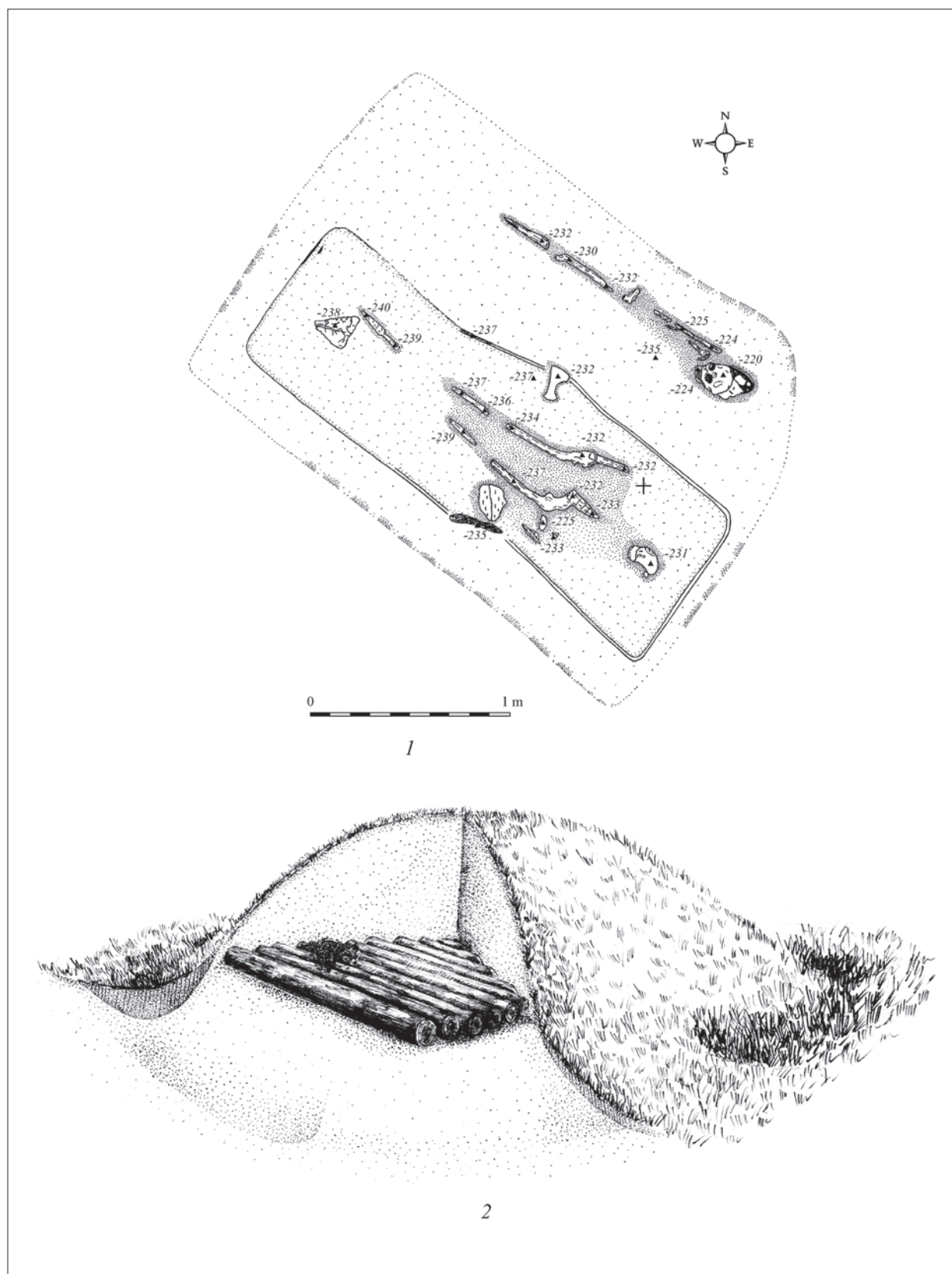


Fig. 3. Pahoshcha barrow cemetery, barrow 12: 1 – plan of burials 2 and 3 (drawing by M. Plavinski); 2 – reconstruction of the mound structure (reconstruction by M. Plavinski, drawing by M. Latyshava (Stsiapanava)).

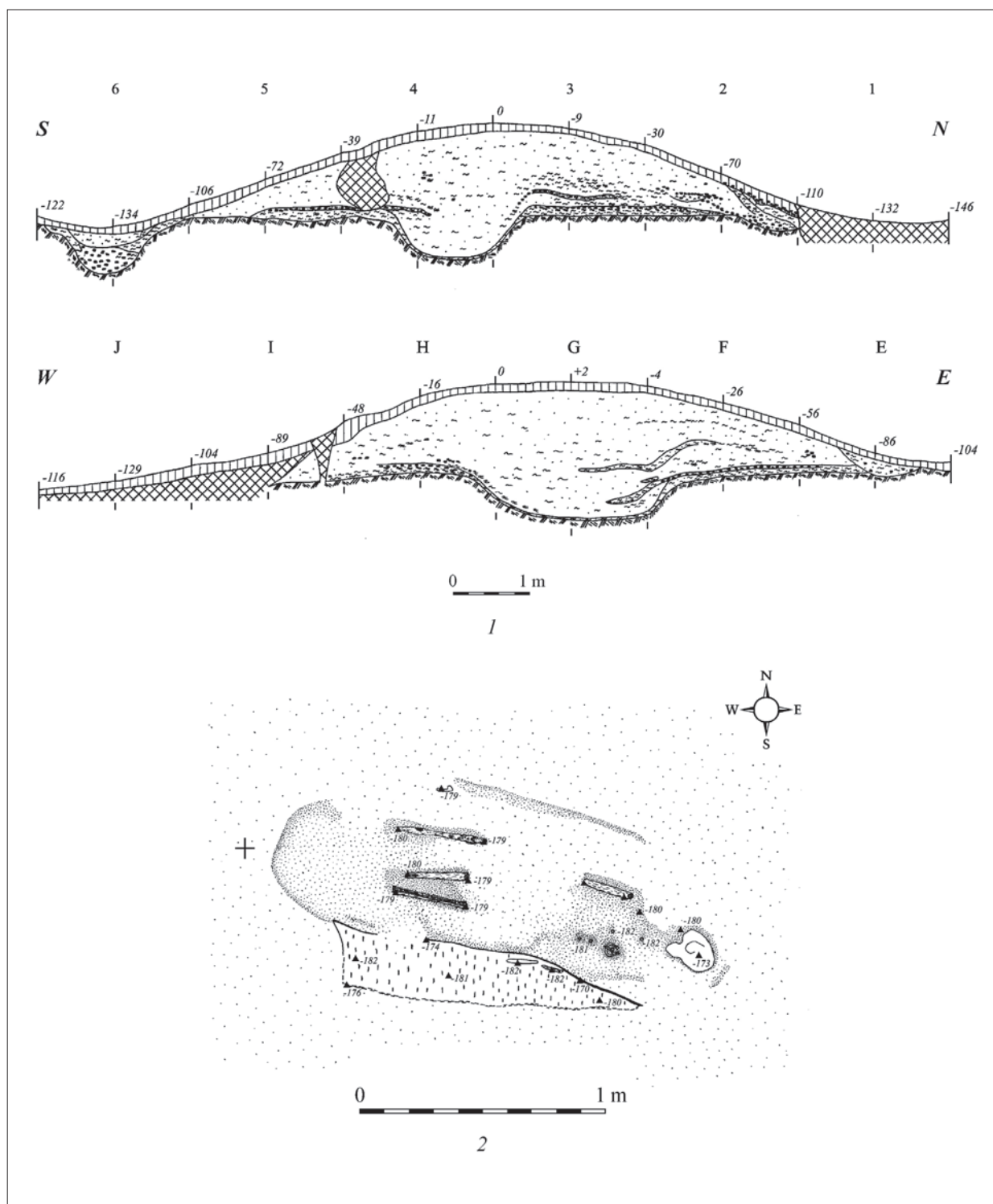


Fig. 4. Pahoshcha barrow cemetery, barrow 1: 1 – barrow sections; 2 – plan of burial (drawing by M. Plavinski).

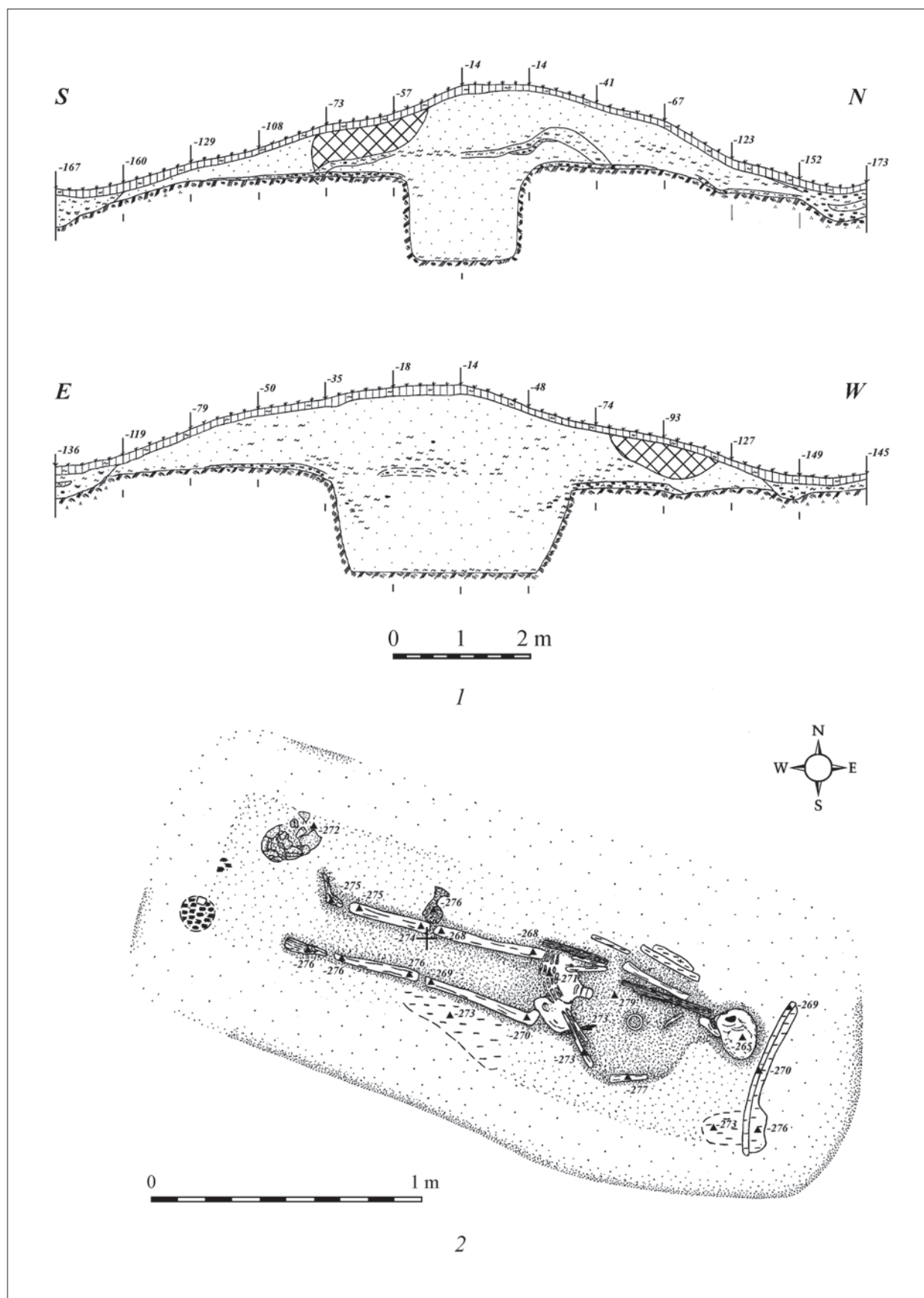


Fig. 5. Pahoshcha barrow cemetery, barrow 10: 1 – barrow sections; 2 – plan of burial (drawing by M. Plavinski).

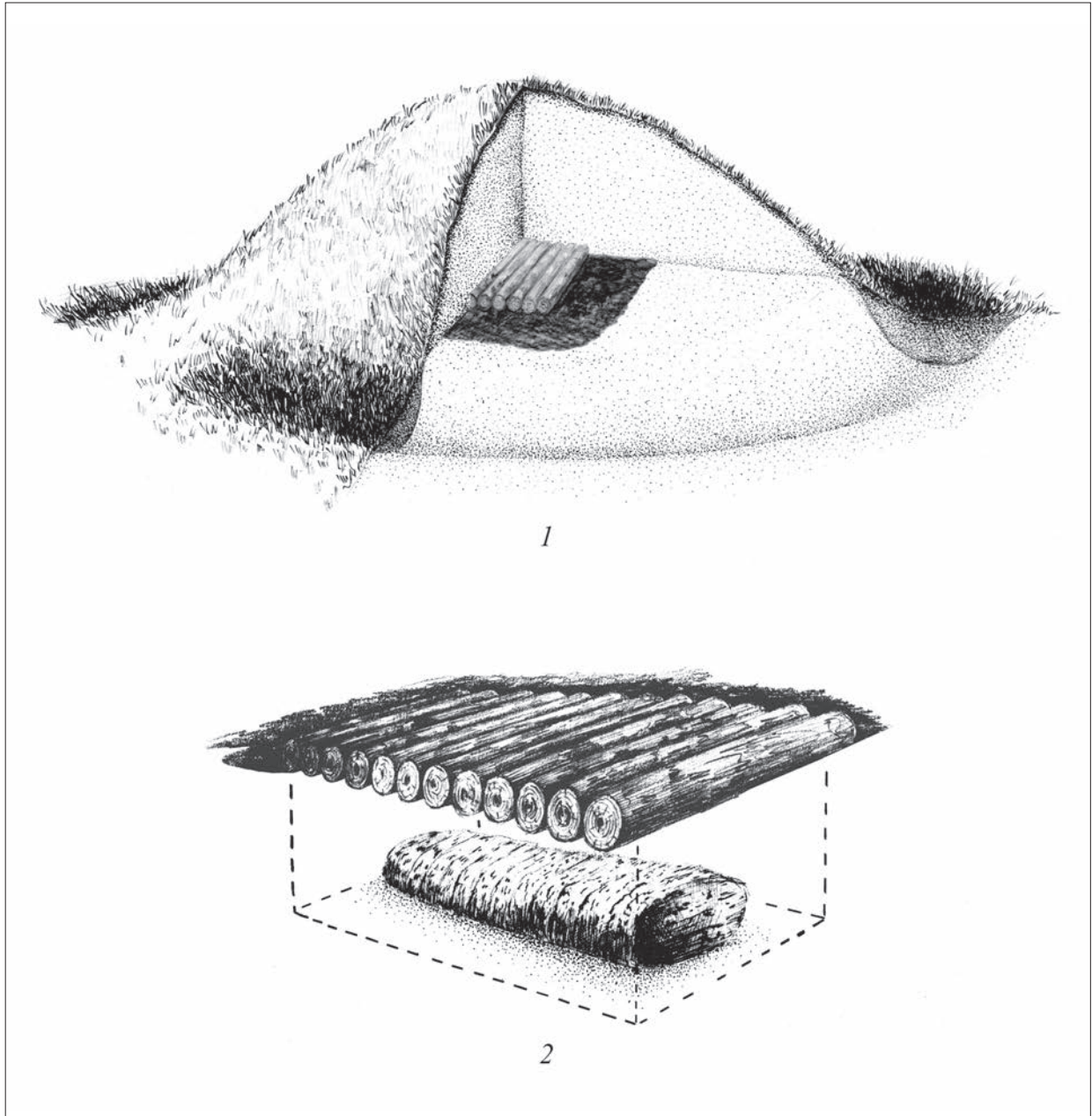


Fig. 6. Pahoshcha barrow cemetery, barrow 10: 1 – reconstruction of mound structure; 2 – reconstruction of grave pit (reconstruction by M. Plavinski, drawing by M. Latyshava (Stsiapanava)).

In all of the above barrows, inhumations were placed in burial pits, much larger in size than required by sanitary considerations. All the pits were covered with wooden ceilings in such a way that their interior space was not filled. These characteristics are fully consistent with the main idea of chamber burials – the creation of a vast empty underground space. Conversely, the absence of wooden crypts with a floor and walls inside this space does not allow a grave to be classified as a classic chamber. Accordingly, such graves can be confidently classified as chamber-like graves.

The burials in barrows 5 and 6 also represent the manifestation of the idea of creating a vast empty space in which to place the bodies of the buried; however, this space was not under but above ground, which, in turn, also allows us to consider them chamber-like graves.

In barrow 5, two inhumation burials were placed in birch bark coffins in the base of the mound (Fig. 8: 2). The bodies of the deceased were in the centre of a rectangular wooden structure, probably made of planks and oriented parallel to the burials. The width of the structure was 2.85 m, its length was more than 3 m, and the height

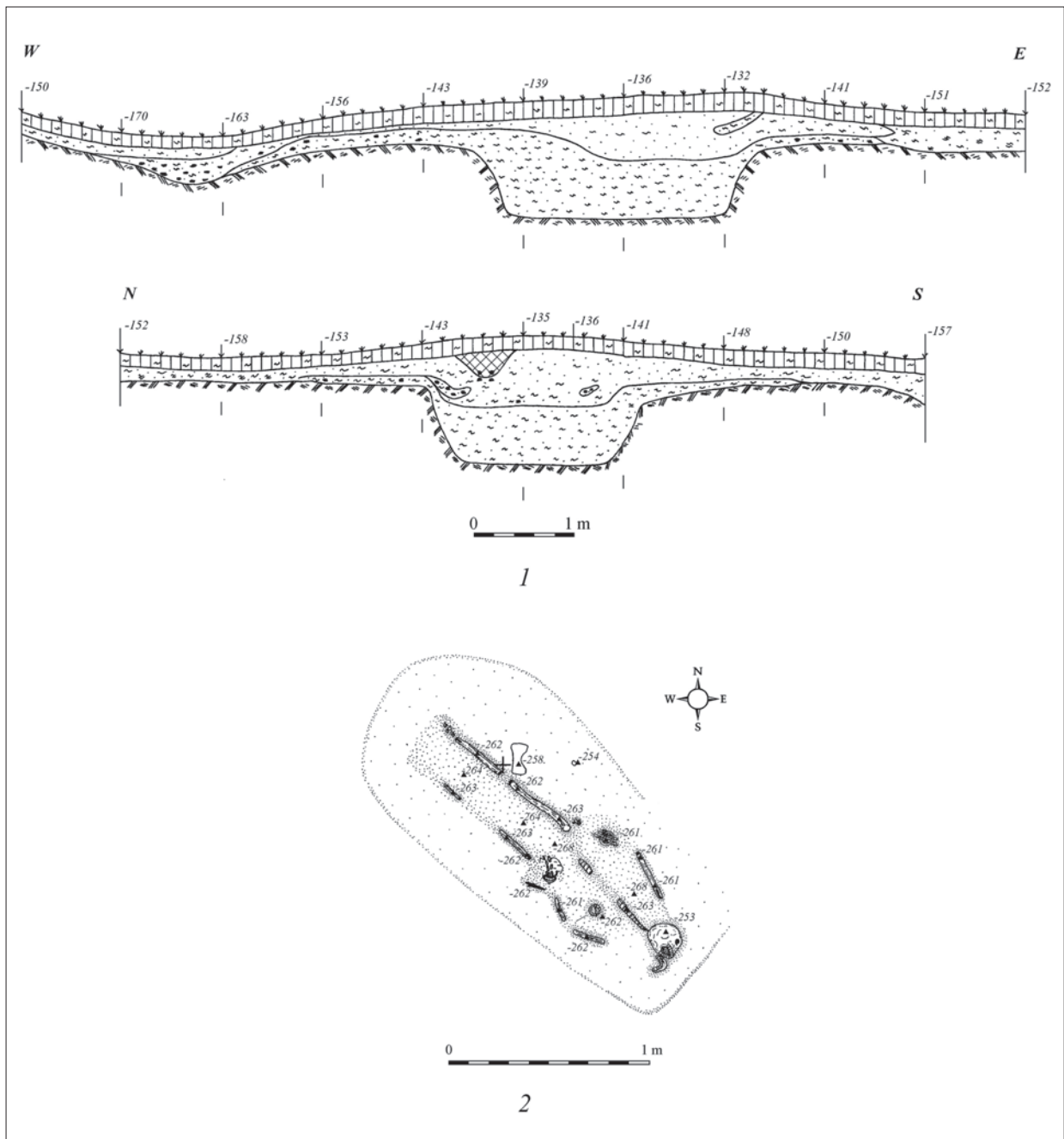


Fig. 7. Pahoshcha barrow cemetery, barrow 14: 1 – barrow sections; 2 – plan of burial (drawing by M. Plavinski).

could reach approximately 0.4–0.5 m (Fig. 9: 1). On the edge of the base of the future burial mound, an annular lining was made of pieces of turf, which was supposed to strengthen the slopes of the embankment (Fig. 9: 2).

The (main) burial 1 belonged to a man and was accompanied by rich grave goods including, among other items, balances and a set of weights, Arab dirhams and

Western European denarii, a lock, two keys, a spear and an axe. Burial 2, of a female, despite the presence of a fairly representative set of grave goods, can be counted among accompanying ones. Probably, in a certain sense, the buried woman can be considered as part of the inventory of the main male burial.²¹

²¹ Plavinski 2017, 97–123; Plavinskiy 2018.

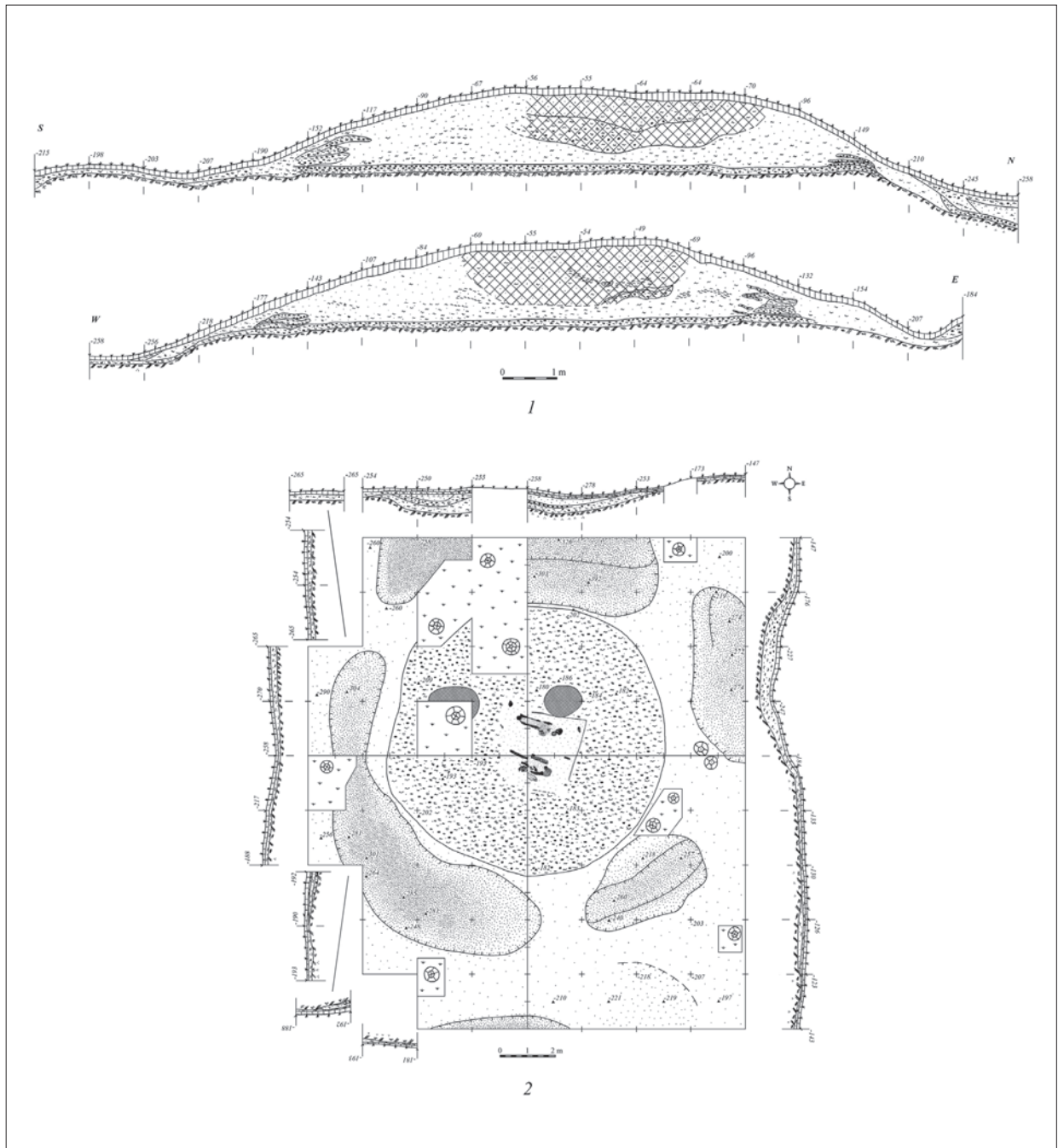


Fig. 8. Pahoshcha barrow cemetery, barrow 5: 1 – barrow sections; 2 – plan of the basic ground level (drawing by M. Plavinski).

In barrow 6, the burial of a man aged 20–30 years was found in the base. The body was in a birch bark coffin and was accompanied by a set of grave goods that included a javelin. The coffin was placed inside a wooden structure 5.5 m long, 5 m wide and up to 0.45 m high (Fig. 10).²²

The data presented allow us to believe that the members of the community who erected barrows with high status male burials in Pahoshcha had a certain idea of the chamber grave funeral rite, clearly understood its prestige and tried to reproduce it to the best of their ideas and capabilities in the form of chamber-like graves.

²² Plavinski 2017, 77–84.

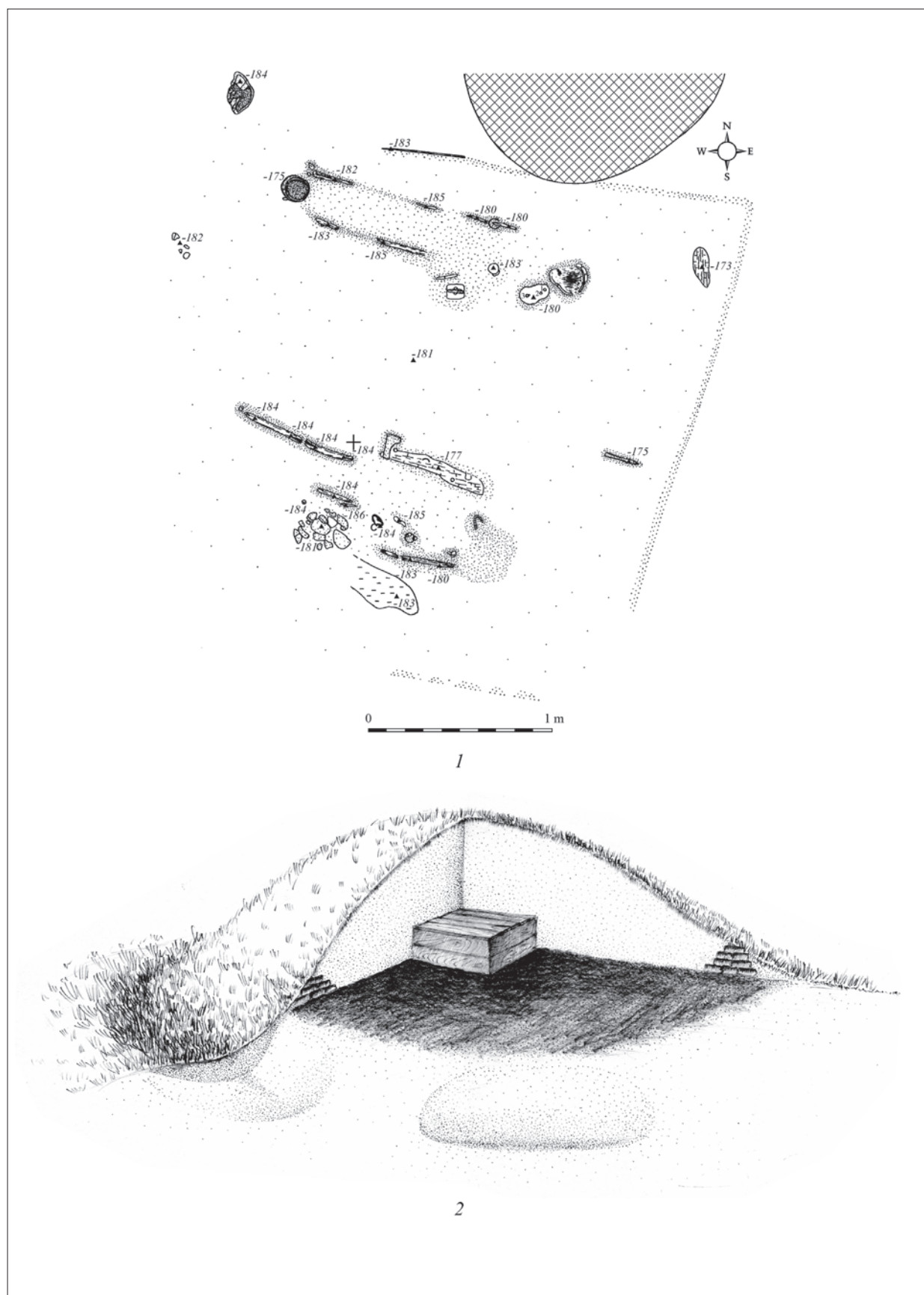


Fig. 9. Pahoshcha barrow cemetery, barrow 5: 1 – plan of burials 1 and 2 (drawing by M. Plavinski); 2 – reconstruction of mound structure (reconstruction by M. Plavinski, drawing by M. Latyshava (Stsiapanava)).

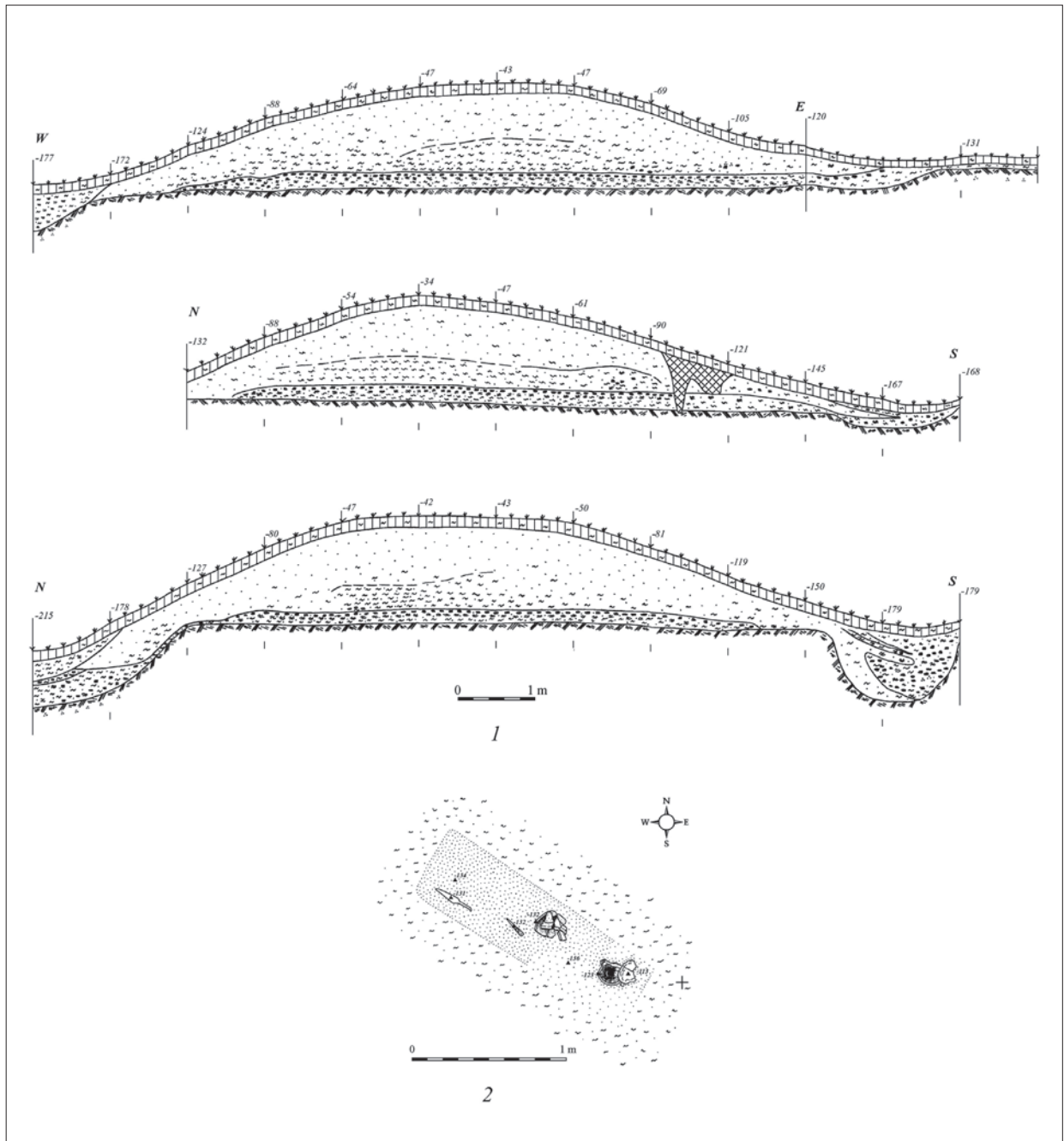


Fig. 10. Pahoshcha barrow cemetery, barrow 6: 1 – barrow sections; 2 – plan of burial (drawing by M. Plavinski).

Another necropolis in which a number of burials have been identified that meet the characteristics of chamber-like graves is the barrow cemetery in **Izbishcha (Izbišča)**, Lahoysk District, Minsk Region (Fig. 1: 2: 2). The Izbishcha necropolis is located on the right bank of River Dzvinasa (left tributary of the Vilija in its

upper reaches). This cemetery was completely explored in 1987–1990. 114 barrows were excavated in the necropolis by V.V. Kazey, V.Y. Sobal' and H.V. Shtykha²³. At first glance, the rare case of a complete study of a barrow cemetery could allow for the use of the obtained data as a basis for reliable chronological assessments and

²³ Shtykha 2008, 5–6.

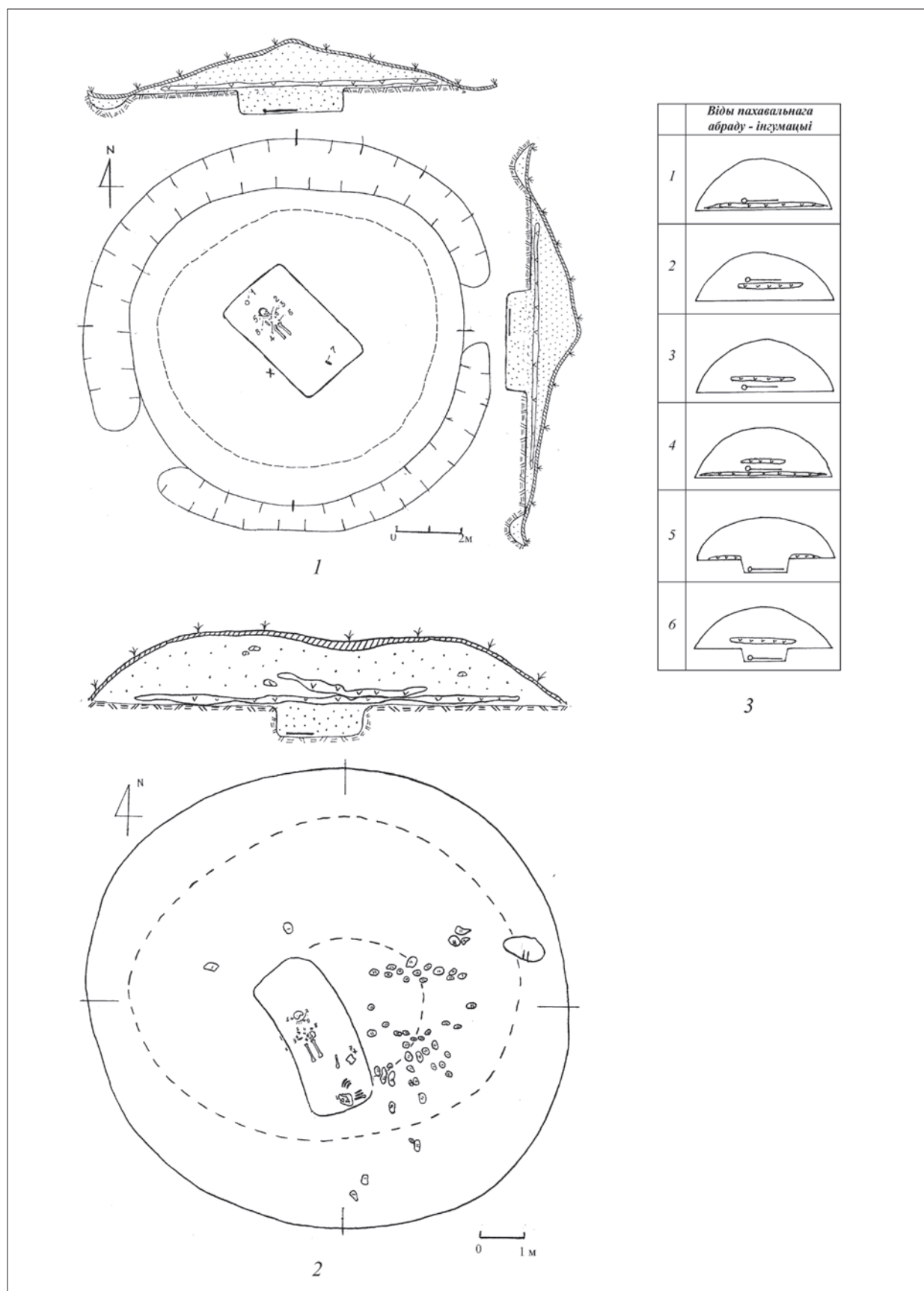


Fig. 11. Izbishcha barrow cemetery: 1 – sections and plan of the basic earth level of barrow 26; 2 – sections and plan of the basic earth level of barrow 99; 3 – typology of inhumation burials (after H. Shtykhau).

sociological observations. However, the state of the excavation reporting documentation used by H.V. Shtykhau in preparing a summary monograph about the Izbishcha cemetery,²⁴ as well as the state of preservation of collections of finds stored at the Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, do not always allow for the published data to be treated with complete confidence. Therefore, in this paper I will allow myself to give only a brief summary of the most general considerations about the existence of chamber-like burials in the Izbishcha necropolis, leaving the detailed elaboration of this issue for the future.

In considering the question of the presence of chamber-like graves in the western regions of the Polatsk land, barrows 26 and 99 are of greatest interest in the Izbishcha cemetery.

Barrow 26 contained an inhumation of a 25–30-year-old woman with her head oriented to the northwest. The woman was placed in a burial pit measuring 3.8×2.4 m with a depth of 0.7 m, covered with a wooden ceiling (Fig. 11: 1). The body was accompanied by rich grave goods, including a set of Arab dirhams, Western European denarii and Byzantine miliarensia, converted into pendants as well as other ornaments, and a metal comb.²⁵ The dating of the burial can be determined on the basis of the numismatic material within the timeframe of the beginning or the first half of the 11th century.²⁶

In barrow 99 the burial of a woman 35–40 years old, with her head oriented to the north, was located in a covered pit 3.8×1.6 m in size and 0.7 m deep (Fig. 11: 2). The burial goods featured a rich set of ornaments, including a dirham converted into pendant. It should be noted that during the excavations remains of boards were traced under the skeleton, and goat bones were found in the southeast corner of the burial pit.²⁷ The dating of the burial can be preliminarily determined within the timeframe of the late 10th to the early 11th century.²⁸

The above characteristics of barrows 26 and 99 make it possible to reliably classify them as chamber-like graves. It should be noted that in the publication of materials from the excavations in Izbishcha, H.V. Shtykhau attributed both these mounds to inhumations of type 6. The author describes this type of funeral rite as follows: 'A pit was dug into the surface of the ground, the buried person was placed in it, covered with sand (earth), then a fire was burned and a mound was erected'.²⁹ However, a careful

examination of the sections of the barrows suggests that in this case the researcher was unable to correctly interpret the stratigraphy (Fig. 11: 3). The interpretation of the ash-coal interlayers over the burial pits as the remains of their carbonized wooden ceilings seems to be more probable, especially since in the case of barrows 26 and 99 this explanation does not raise objections.

According to H.V. Shtykhau, type 6 inhumations were identified in 19 cases in Izbishcha.³⁰ Without dwelling on the description of each of these complexes, we present here only the metric characteristics of the burial pits under the barrows (Tab. 1).

It is clearly seen from the table that most of the pits under the barrows in Izbishcha are much larger than the sanitary norms for burying the bodies of the deceased require. Accordingly, the vast dimensions of the grave pits in the Izbishcha cemetery and the presence of wooden ceilings above them make it possible to raise the question of their attribution to chamber-like graves.

At the moment, the barrows explored in Pahoshcha and Izbishcha are the most striking examples of chamber-like graves in the western regions of the Polatsk land. Yet in the necropolises of the region under consideration a number of barrows can be distinguished which can also be correlated with this funeral tradition.

These monuments include, first of all, the barrow cemetery in **Charnevichy** (**Čarnievičy**), Hlybokaye District, Viciebsk Region (Fig. 1: 2: 3), the research of which was carried out in 1935 and 1937–1938 by H. Cehak-Hoľubowiczowa. A total of 79 barrows were excavated.³¹ A number of barrows excavated in the vicinity of Charnevichy contained burials according to the rite of inhumation in large pits. Unfortunately, in the article published by H. Cehak-Hoľubowicz devoted to a preliminary analysis of the results of excavations of barrow groups V and I only some sections of mounds are given and their plans are absent. The article does, however, contain data on the size of burial pits (Tab. 2).

In 1938, in group V nine burial mounds were excavated, among which barrow 6 deserves special attention, under whose mound a pit 0.8 m deep and 2.5×1.5 m in size was found, containing a male inhumation with the head oriented to the southwest. Irregular dark spots with inclusions of coal were found in the sand mound, which, judging by the published profile (Fig. 12: 1), are the remains of a grave pit ceiling.³²

²⁴ Shtykhau 2008, 5–248.

²⁵ Shtykhau 2008, 23.

²⁶ Plavinskiy 2016, 4; Sinchuk 2015, 193–194.

²⁷ Shtykhau 2008, 29.

²⁸ Plavinskiy 2016, 4.

²⁹ Shtykhau 2008, 34.

³⁰ Shtykhau 2007, 60, fig. 8; 2008, 22–29, 34.

³¹ Golubovich, Golubovich 1945, 128.

³² Cehak-Hoľubowiczowa 1939, 423, 427–428, Fig. 1.

Tab. 1. Izbishcha barrow cemetery. The size of burial pits under the barrows.

Barrow no.	The size of the burial pits under the barrows (in metres)		
	Length	Width	Depth
25	2.5	1.3	0.5
26	3.8	2.4	0.7
29	2.6	1.2	0.5
35	3.0	2.0	0.4
36	3.0	1.2	0.4
43	2.8	1.5	0.9
49	2.0	1.0	0.4
51	2.8	1.2	0.5
54	1.8	1.0	0.6
63	2.8	1.6	0.6
69	—	—	—
73	2.1	1.6	0.65
74	1.9	1.1	1.0
76	2.3	1.1	0.6
87	2.3	1.2	0.6
89	2.2	0.7	0.5
97	2.5	1.5	0.5
99	3.8	1.6	0.7
107	2.6	1.4	0.6

In the mounds of the rest of excavated group V barrows, H. Cehak-Hołubowiczowa did not record any traces that could be interpreted as the remains of burial pit ceilings. At the same time, it is obvious that some of these pits are much larger than the bodies of the dead.³³

In group I, also excavated in 1938, layers of dark sand with coal were found in the mounds of five of the seven investigated barrows (Fig. 12: 2). The presence of interlayers with coal was also noted in the filling of grave pits under these barrows.³⁴ The interlayers could also be interpreted as traces of wooden ceilings of the grave pits. However, the extremely scarce descriptions of stratigraphy available in the publication do not allow for such an assumption to be made with complete certainty.

Tab. 2. Charnevichy barrow cemetery. The size of the burial pits under the barrows.

Group no.	Barrow no.	The size of the burial pits under the barrows (in metres)		
		Length	Width	Depth
V	1	1.5	1.0	0.5
V	2	2.3	1.2	0.9
V	3	2.4	1.3	0.7
V	4	2.2	1.0	0.7
V	5	3.0	1.4	0.8
V	6	2.5	1.5	0.8
V	7	2.3	1.5	1.0
V	8	2.5	1.2	0.9
V	13	1.8	1.0	1.1
I	1	2.5	1.4	0.7
I	2	3.3	1.4	0.7
I	3	2.3	1.0	0.6
I	4	2.3	1.1	1.0
I	5	2.6	1.1	1.1
I	6	2.7	1.1	0.9
I	7	2.5	1.1	1.0

Barrow groups I and V of the Charnevichy cemetery can be preliminarily dated to the 11th century, or, in a somewhat wider timeframe, from the very end of the 10th to the 12th century. Despite the limited information at our disposal about the structural features of the mounds of the necropolis, at least one of them, barrow 6 of group V, can be quite confidently classified as a chamber-like grave. In the case of the rest of the barrows, in some mounds traces of wooden structures have been found, yet there is no certainty that they can be interpreted as the remains of burial pit ceilings. At the same time, the discovery in Charnevichy of inhumations in large burial pits that did not have ceilings above them allows us to assume with all possible caution that this necropolis is a rare example of an adoption, rethinking and local transformation of a chamber-like grave funeral rite.

The 11th–12th century barrow cemetery of **Zabor'ye (Zabor'e)** is also located in Hlybokaye District, Viciebsk

³³ Cehak-Hołubowiczowa 1939, 422–429.

³⁴ Cehak-Hołubowiczowa 1939, 430–439.

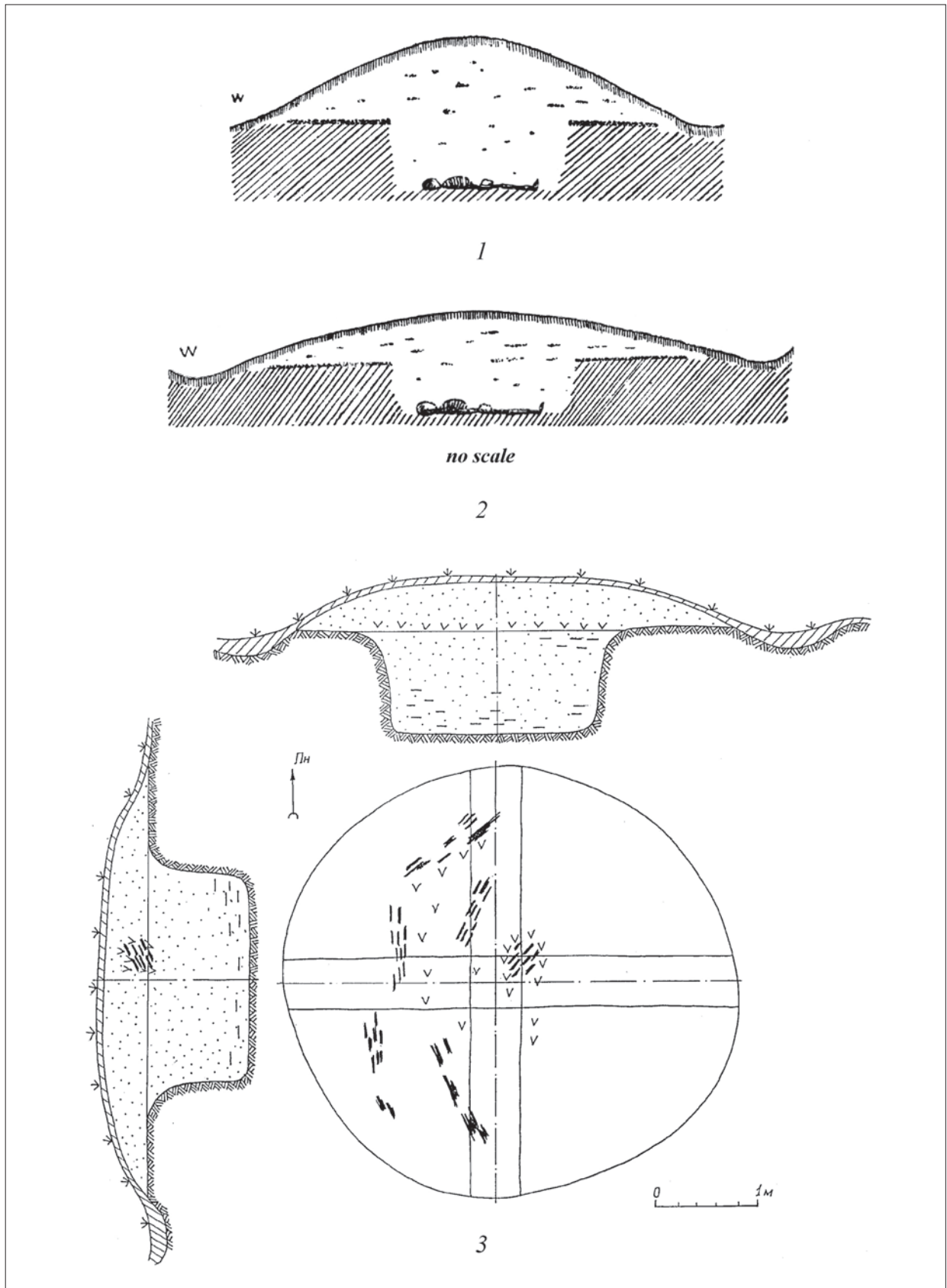


Fig. 12. Charnevichy and Zabor'ye barrow cemeteries: 1 – section of barrow 6 of group V, Charnevichy cemetery; 2 – section of barrow 5 of group I, Charnevichy cemetery; 3 – sections and plan of the basic earth level of barrow Zabor'ye cemetery (1–2 – after H. Čehak-Holubowiczowa, 3 – after L.U. Duchyts and A.V. Voytekovich).

Region (Fig. 1: 2: 4). It was investigated in 2000–2001 by L.U. Duchyts and A.V. Voytekovich. Of particular interest is barrow 7, which had relatively small dimensions: 4.4×4.2 m and a height of 0.5 m. During the excavations, it was revealed that:

Coal was found in the sandy mound. When excavating the northwest and southwest sectors, parallel remains of a wooden structure were revealed in the base. Near the centre, a coal spot with a diameter of 0.2 m was recorded. During further excavations, it turned out that this was part of a significant accumulation of coal. Most likely, there was a pillar that supported a wooden structure, which was burned before the mound was erected. There was a dark ash-coal layer all over the base of the barrow. Under the mound there was a 2×2 m pit, 1 m deep. No traces of the burial were found.³⁵

The above description of the stratigraphy, together with the sections and plan of the base of the barrow (Fig. 12: 3), makes it possible to form a certain idea of its structure. Apparently, over a fairly large and deep pit, which did not contain a burial or its remains were not revealed during the excavations, a wooden ceiling was made, supported by a vertical pillar (this structural element was not recorded on the plan and sections of the mound). However, the initial incorrect assumption that the pit was filled in and the ceiling was burned, and not carbonized in a natural way, did not allow the authors to adequately envision the structure, although its archaeological traces were recorded in sufficient detail in the course of research. The dating of barrow 7 can only be determined within the timeframe of the functioning of the Zabor'ye necropolis – the 11th–12th centuries. Despite the fact that no burial was identified under the mound, its classification as a chamber-like grave seems to be quite justified due to the presence of a vast empty space under the mound, covered with a wooden ceiling.

Several burials close in their characteristics to chamber-like graves were unearthed during excavations conducted by A.V. Voytekovich in the very upper reaches of the Byarezina, in fact, on the watershed of the Byarezina and Vilija, in the barrow cemeteries Vitunichy, Nyabyshyna II and Byahoml' (Marhavitsa). Given that the materials of these excavations were recently published by their author,³⁶ I will not consider in detail these burial complexes, but only briefly describe them and state the

reasons for considering them in the context of studying the chamber-like grave funeral rite.³⁷

The end of 10th to 12th centuries barrow cemetery in **Vitunichy (Vituničy)**, Dokshytsy District Viciebsk Region is located on the right bank of River Ponya, which is a right tributary of the Byarezina (Fig. 1: 2: 5). In 2002–2006 A.V. Voytekovich excavated 19 of the 42 barrows preserved in this cemetery.³⁸

In the mound of barrow 34 traces of a wooden ceiling were found in the form of a saturated ash-coal layer. A pit 2.4×1.4 m in size and 0.35 m deep was found under the barrow, oriented from the west to the east. Along the walls of the pit layers of ash and coal were also traced, reaching the very bottom (Fig. 13: 1), which suggests the presence of wooden walls.³⁹

In the mound of barrow 37 traces of a wooden ceiling in the form of an ash-coal layer were likewise found. Under the mound there was a burial pit 2.6×1.4 m in size and 0.3 m deep, oriented along the southwest–northeast axis. Ashes and coal were also found in the upper part of the filling of the pit, which can be interpreted as traces of subsidence of the wooden ceiling. At the bottom of the pit a female burial was found, oriented with the head to the southwest, dated by the author of the excavations to the 12th century (Fig. 13: 2).⁴⁰

It should be noted that several more barrows were explored in Vitunichy the inhumations in which were placed in pits covered with wooden ceilings (barrows 18, 22),⁴¹ but their relatively small size does not allow to confidently classify them as chamber-like graves.

The **Nyabyshyna II (Niabyšyna II)** barrow cemetery, in Dokshytsy District, Viciebsk Region, is located on the left bank of the Ponya (Fig. 1: 2: 6). The necropolis consists of 50 barrows. In 2006–2009 A.V. Voytekovich excavated here four barrows ranging from the 10th to the first half of the 12th century.⁴² Under the mound of barrow 48 a grave pit 2.5×1.2 m in size and 0.6 m deep was found, oriented along the west–east axis. In the filling of the pit a layer of wood decay was revealed, probably being traces of a wooden ceiling. In the northwest corner of the pit and in the middle of its south edge traces of pillars were recorded on which a wooden ceiling was probably laid (Fig. 14: 1).⁴³

The barrow cemetery in **Byahoml' / Marhavitsa (Biahoml' / Marhavica)**, Dokshytsy District, Viciebsk Region, is located on the right bank of the Byarezina

³⁵ Duchyts, Vaytsyakhovich 2002, 169, fig. 8.

³⁶ Voytekovich 2019, 152–267.

³⁷ I express my sincere gratitude to A.V. Voytekovich for valuable advice and comprehensive assistance in using the materials from his excavations.

³⁸ Voytekovich 2019, 164–174.

³⁹ Voytekovich 2019, 172, fig. 98.

⁴⁰ Voytekovich 2019, 173, fig. 101.

⁴¹ Voytekovich 2019, 170–171.

⁴² Voytekovich 2019, 179.

⁴³ Voytekovich 2019, 180–181, fig. 124.

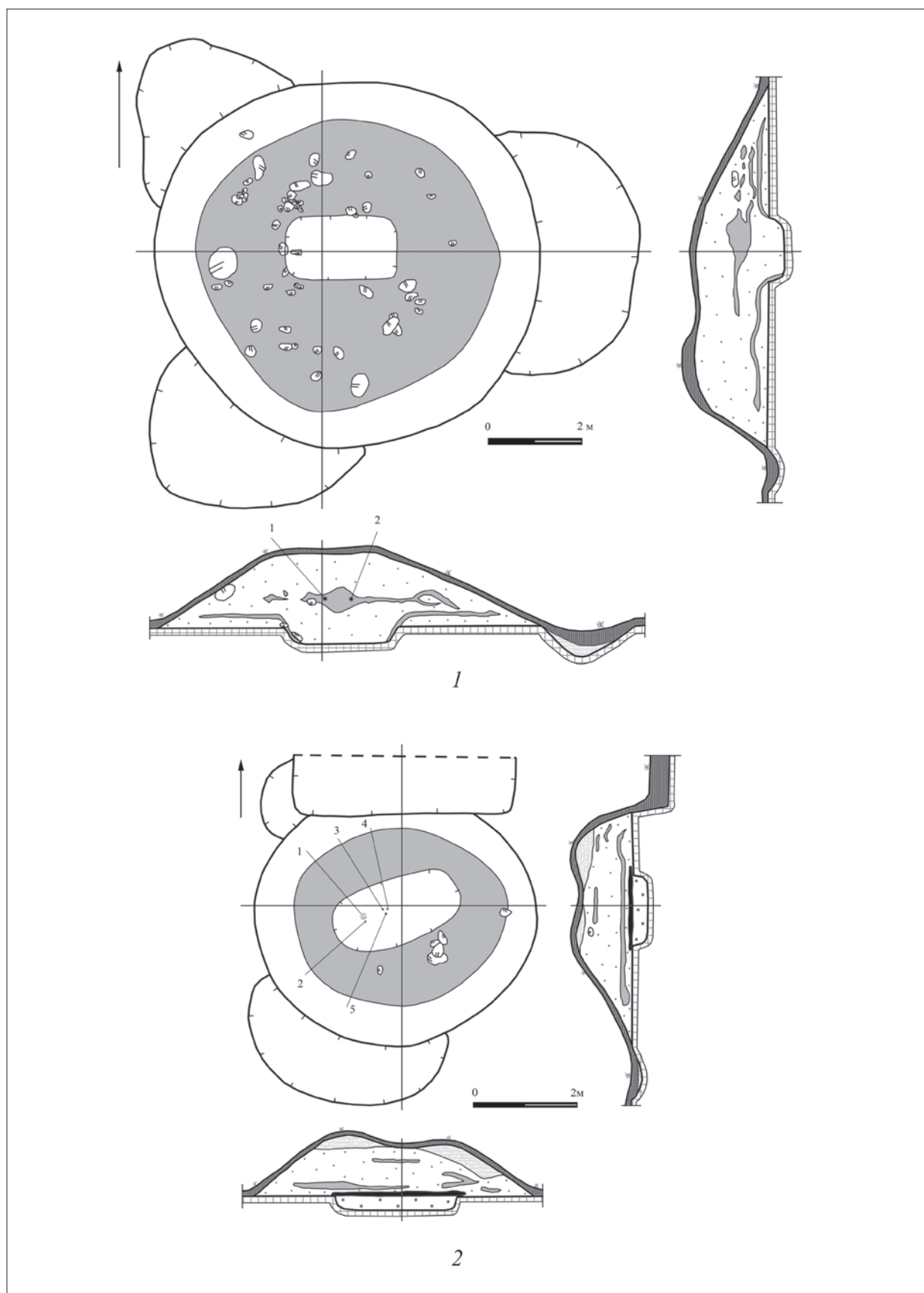


Fig. 13. Vitunichy barrow cemetery: 1 – sections and plan of the basic earth level of barrow 34; 2 – sections and plan of the basic earth level of barrow 37 (after A.V. Voytekovich).

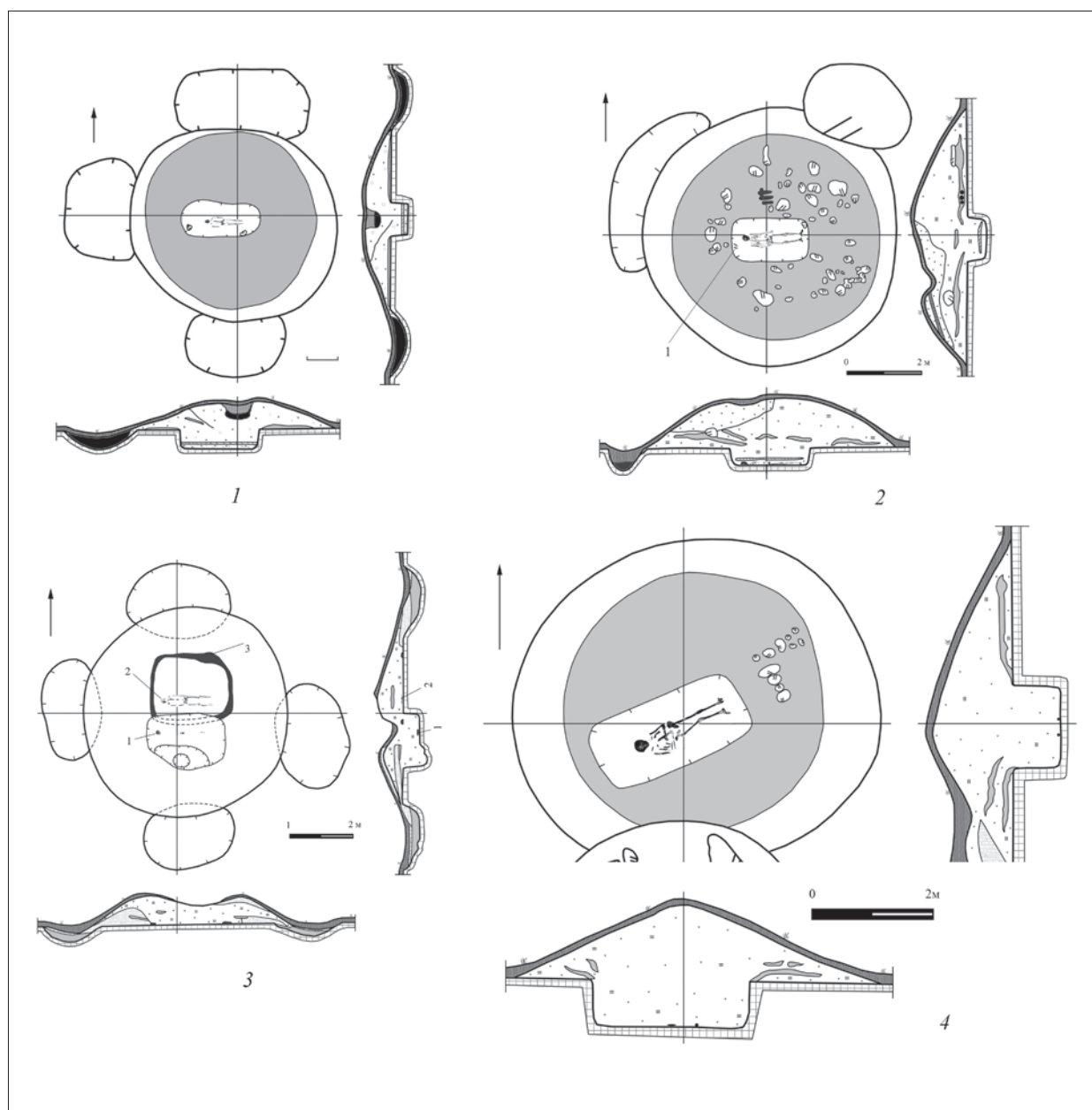


Fig. 14. 1 – Nyabyshyna II barrow cemetery, sections and plan of the basic earth level of barrow 48; 2 – Byahoml' (Marhavica) barrow cemetery, sections and plan of the basic earth level of barrow 5; 3 – Slabada barrow cemetery, sections and plan of the basic earth level of barrow 56; 4 – Zvyazda (Auhustava) barrow cemetery, sections and plan of the basic earth level of barrow 53 (after A.V. Voytekovich).

in its very upper reaches (Fig. 1: 2: 7). In 2003 A.V. Voytekovich excavated here one barrow out of the five preserved. A grave pit measuring 2.35×1.3 m and 0.5 m deep was discovered under the mound, oriented along the west–east axis. It contained a male inhumation, oriented with the head to the west, which was dated by the author of the excavations to the 12th century.

The grave pit was covered with a ceiling of wooden slabs, laid in at least two layers (Fig. 14: 2).⁴⁴

One more barrow with burials that have signs of chamber-like graves was investigated in the very upper reaches of River Dzvinasa on the outskirts of Pleshchanitsy, in the barrow cemetery in **Slabada**, Lahoyisk District, Minsk Region (Fig. 1: 2: 8). There are

⁴⁴ Voytekovich 2019, 184, Fig. 127.

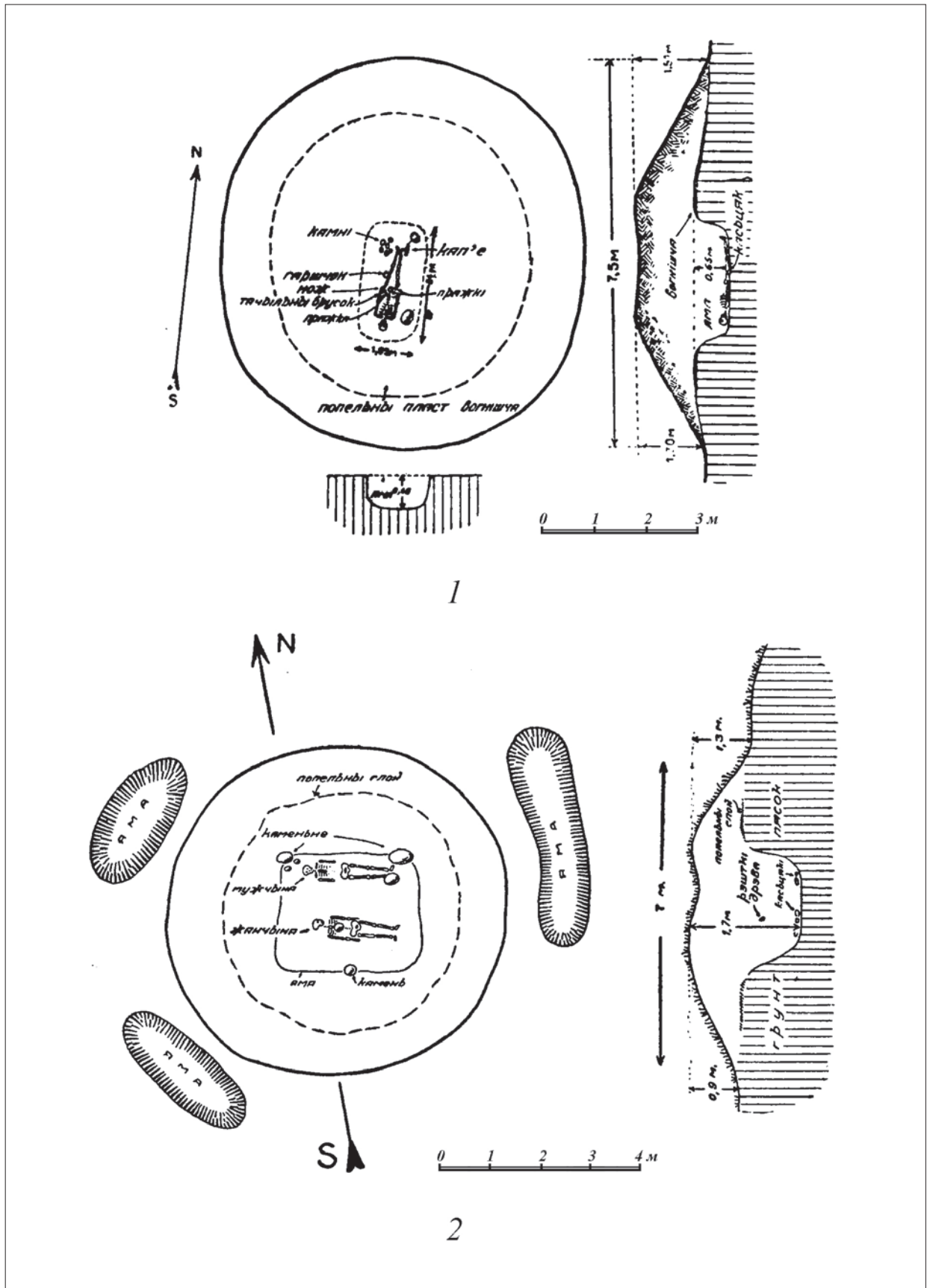


Fig. 15. Zaslauye and Barysau barrow cemeteries: 1 – sections and plan of the basic earth level of barrow 23 of group II, Zaslauye cemetery (after S.A. Dubinski); 2 – sections and plan of the basic earth level of barrow 4, Barysau cemetery (after A.M. Lyaudanski).

102 barrows in the necropolis, four of which were excavated in 2009–2010 by A.V. Voytekovich. Two burials were found in barrow 56. Burial 1 was located in a pit 2.5×1.8 m in size and 0.5 to 0.77 m deep, oriented along the west–east axis. The body of the deceased was oriented with her head to the west. At the south wall of the grave pit traces of wood decay were revealed, and above it, in the sections, remains of ceiling were traced. Burial 2 was found in the base of the barrow. The inhumation, oriented with the head to the west, was inside a rectangular wooden structure measuring 2.6 m (along the north–south axis) by 2.34 m (along the west–east axis), 0.28 m high. It should be noted that the south edge of the wooden structure covered the pit. Both burials are dated by A.V. Voytekovich to the 12th century (Fig. 14: 3).⁴⁵

In barrow 23 of group II of the cemetery in **Zaslauye (Zaslauje)**, Minsk District and Region (Fig. 1: 2: 9), A.M. Lyaudanski excavated in 1928 a male inhumation burial with the head oriented to the south. The body was placed in a pit under the mound measuring 2.4×1.25 m with a depth of 0.65 m. The fact that at the time of the erecting of the mound the pit under it was not filled with sand is evidenced by the presence of a distinct depression at the top of the barrow. At the same time, no traces of a robber pit were recorded in the section (Fig. 15: 1). A set of grave goods was found with the deceased, including a javelin. Judging by the description by S.A. Dubinski, the body of the buried was in a wooden coffin.⁴⁶ The dating of the barrow can be preliminarily determined within the timeframe of the 11th century.

At the end of the review of the Polatsk land burials which can be considered in the context of chamber-like graves traditions, two more monuments located in the central regions of the principality should be mentioned. The first of them is the barrow cemetery in **Zvyazda / Auhustava (Zviyazda / Aūhustava)**, Lepel' District, Viciebsk region (Fig. 1: 2: 10), located on the shore of Lake Teklits. In total, there are 95 barrows in the necropolis, of which 13 were excavated in 2001–2003 by A.V. Voytekovich.⁴⁷ In barrow 53 an inhumation burial was located in a pit oriented along the southwest–northeast axis, which had a size of 2.6×1.2 m and was 0.8 m deep (Fig. 14: 4). Traces of sagging ceiling are clearly seen in the sections of the mound. In addition, a thin layer of decayed organic matter was found under the body, laid with his head to the southwest. The barrow is dated to the 12th century.⁴⁸

Finally, mention should be made of barrow 4 of the **Barysau (Barysau)** cemetery, Minsk Region (Fig. 1: 2: 11), investigated by A.M. Lyaudanski in 1928.⁴⁹ The barrow contained a paired inhumation burial without grave goods in a pit. The skeletons of a man and a woman were oriented with their heads to the west (Fig. 15: 2). The dimensions of the burial pit are not given in the publication; however, judging by the provided scale, its length reached approximately 3 m, the width was about 2.3 m, and the depth reached up to 1.1 m. The researcher noted that: 'Traces of coniferous tree wood up to 5 cm thick were preserved on top of the bones and on the sides, along the pit. It is possible that the pit with the corpses was lined with wooden planks, or that a log structure was built in the pit for the buried'.⁵⁰ A.M. Lyaudanski also writes that: 'At the top, along the edges of the pit, there were stones. Several stones were found in the pit, in the mound and above the bones. One stone lay on the bones of the man's legs'.⁵¹ Judging by the above description, the double burial was located in an empty pit covered with wood. This is supported not only by the identification of a layer of wood decay above the bones, but also by the presence of wood residues in the upper part of the filling of the pit, visible in the section, and the revealing of a stone on the leg bones of the man, which, most likely, could have got there as a result of subsidence of the sand from the mound into the hollow grave pit after the rotting of the wooden ceiling. The lack of inventory does not allow us to narrowly date this barrow. Its dating can be determined only within the chronological limits of the functioning of the entire necropolis in the late 11th to 12th centuries.⁵²

Conclusions

The reviewed material shows that individual groups living in the western regions of the Polatsk land practised burials according to the rite of inhumation in chamber-like graves starting from the very end of the 10th or the beginning of the 11th century. The practice is recorded throughout the 11th century and may have continued into the 12th century. The first barrows with chamber-like graves were erected in the cemeteries in Pahoshcha (the very end of the 10th to the first decades of the 11th century) and Izbishcha (the first half of the 11th century). The set of grave goods in these early chamber-like graves makes

⁴⁵ Voytekovich 2019, 181–182.

⁴⁶ Dubinski 1928, 254–255.

⁴⁷ Voytekovich 2019, 152.

⁴⁸ Voytekovich 2019, 154, 156.

⁴⁹ I express my sincere gratitude to M.V. Vasileu, research fellow of the Department of Archeology, Numismatics and Weapons

of the National Historical Museum of the Republic of Belarus, who kindly drew my attention to this burial complex.

⁵⁰ Lyaudanski 1930, 258.

⁵¹ Lyaudanski 1930, 258.

⁵² Lyaudanski 1930, 257–258, 261.

it possible to identify them as rich burials. This suggests that members of the communities who buried their dead in such a way apparently perceived the construction of chamber-like graves as a reflection of their high status.

Isolated chamber-like graves have been found almost along the entire western border of the Polatsk Principality (Fig. 1: 2). At the same time, their highest concentration is observed in the upper reaches of the Vilija and Byarezina. The vast majority of chamber-like graves belong to the type of earthen chambers. The second known type is ground chambers, although those are very few and found only in Pahoshcha and Slaboda.

The first chamber-like graves appeared in necropolises which belonged to the population of local administrative centres that arose on the western borders of the Polatsk Principality in the late 10th to early 11th centuries, when the Polatsk land became part of the Rurik dynasty's realm during the reign of Vladimir Svyatoslavich. It can be rather cautiously assumed that the spread of ideas about the burial of the dead in chamber-like graves and the prestige of this funeral rite in the west of the Polatsk land could be linked with the movement of certain groups of the population to this region, associated with the performance of certain administrative functions. It is currently not possible to establish the source region

these people could hail from. In all probability, however, this region could be some Old Russian territory where a chamber-like grave funeral rite was known at the end of the 10th century.

Barrows with chamber-like graves in the west of the Polatsk land can be considered as a peculiar and rather rare type of funeral rite of the local borderland elites, who could strive to emphasize their special status, different from that of the surrounding rural population, by building mounds under which the bodies of the dead were placed in large pits or ground structures with wooden ceilings.

Later, during the 11th century, the chamber-like funeral rite in the western regions of the Polatsk Principality probably did not develop independently. Separate known chamber-like graves of the 11th and 12th centuries are not particularly large in size, and the burials made in them are not accompanied by rich grave goods or there may be no grave goods at all. Probably, the idea of the prestigious nature of the chamber-like funeral rite was slowly lost, and its criteria became blurred. This, in turn, led either to the disappearance of chamber-like rituals, or to their transformation and merger with the Christian rite of burial of the dead in ordinary grave pits, which gradually spread throughout the territory of Old Rus'.

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LUDWIKA JOŃCZYK

Faculty of Archaeology, University of Warsaw
 ludwika.sawicka@uw.edu.pl
 ORCID 0000-0003-0036-3998

KAROL ŻOŁĘDZIOWSKI

State Archaeological Museum in Warsaw
 karol.zoledziowski@gmail.com
 ORCID 0000-0003-4580-5622

ELITE BURDEN. *TOTENKRONE*-TYPE NECKLACES FROM THE 'MOSIĘŻYSKO' CEMETERY IN SZURPIŁY

ABSTRACT

The paper discusses necklaces from the Mosiężysko cemetery in the settlement complex in Szurpiły (Suwałki District). All of them represent the *Totenkrone* type, characteristic of the Pruthenian lands. The stylistic features,

spatial distribution within the Pruthenian lands as well as in other parts of Europe, way of manufacture, purpose and chronology of these necklaces are discussed.

Keywords: Mosiężysko cemetery, Szurpiły, Totenkrone, Pruthenia

Necklaces from Szurpiły

The vast settlement complex in Szurpiły (pow. Suwałki / Suwałki District) is no question a place of elite nature. This centre flourished in the 9th–13th centuries, a period that is considered the Early Middle Ages in this area (Fig. 1). A mighty stronghold, surrounded with three rings of ramparts, and its accompanying settlements are impressive with regard to the extent of the premises and the complex engineering works that took place during the construction of this centre. This complex also yielded an enormous number of finds, including many imported and unique artefacts.¹

Among the archaeological sites in Szurpiły there is a flat cremation cemetery (Fig. 1: 2, marked with the red circle). The site was discovered in 2008 during a field survey with metal detectors. An unusual concentration of metal finds was found at that time, including many pieces of necklaces. A concentration of finds of necklace terminals was one of the reasons behind the decision to open a trench in this place several months thereafter. The site was excavated in 2008–2011, and it was deter-

mined to be a cemetery. This place is known locally as 'Mosiężysko' ('Brass Ground') and, true to that name, ca. 3,500 metal artefacts were discovered there.² No grave assemblages were recorded, and all grave goods with burnt human bones were scattered within the humus layer. It seems that the bodies were burnt in the cemetery area and left on the surface. All of the finds (ornaments, dress accessories, tools, weapons, horseman's equipment and pottery) were badly destroyed by cutting and breaking, and burned. Based on the C14 dating of five pieces of burned human bones, as well as on the stylistic and chronological analysis of metal objects, the cemetery is dated to the 12th–13th centuries.³

The most numerous group among the discovered finds are necklace fragments whose bands are twisted from three bronze wires. Fourteen fragments of necklace terminals were found altogether, including nine bar-shaped (Pl. 1: 1–9) and five oval ones (Pl. 1: 10–12). Inside one of fragmentarily preserved artefacts there are impressions of bronze wires of the band (Pl. 1: 11; Fig. 2). Dimensions of oval terminals in the discussed

¹ Engel 2020; Jończyk, Gołębiowska-Tobiasz 2021; Żołądzowski *et al.* 2021.

² Jończyk 2015, 235–239.

³ For more about the site see Jończyk 2022.

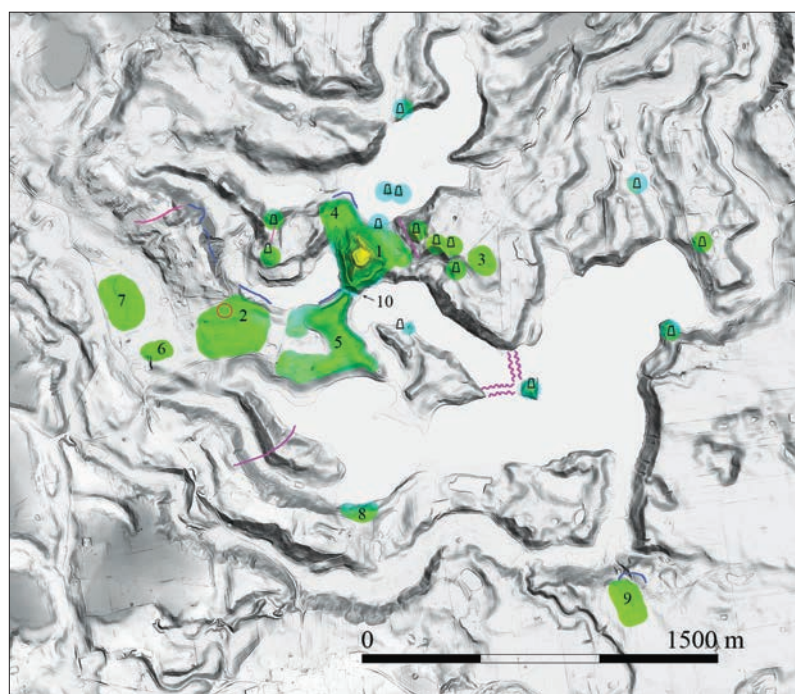


Fig. 1. Sites dated to the Early Middle Ages in the Szurpiły settlement complex. The Mosiężysko cemetery is marked with a red circle, dykes are marked with purple zigzag lines, intentionally steepened slopes are marked with blue lines. Watchtower mounds are marked with trapeziums. 1 – ‘Góra Zamkowa’ (‘Castle Hill’) hillfort; 2 – Mosiężysko settlement and cemetery; 3–9 – settlements; 10 – canal between the Kluczyisko Lake and the Jodel Bay (image by L. Jończyk, based on Engel 2020, tab. I with additions).

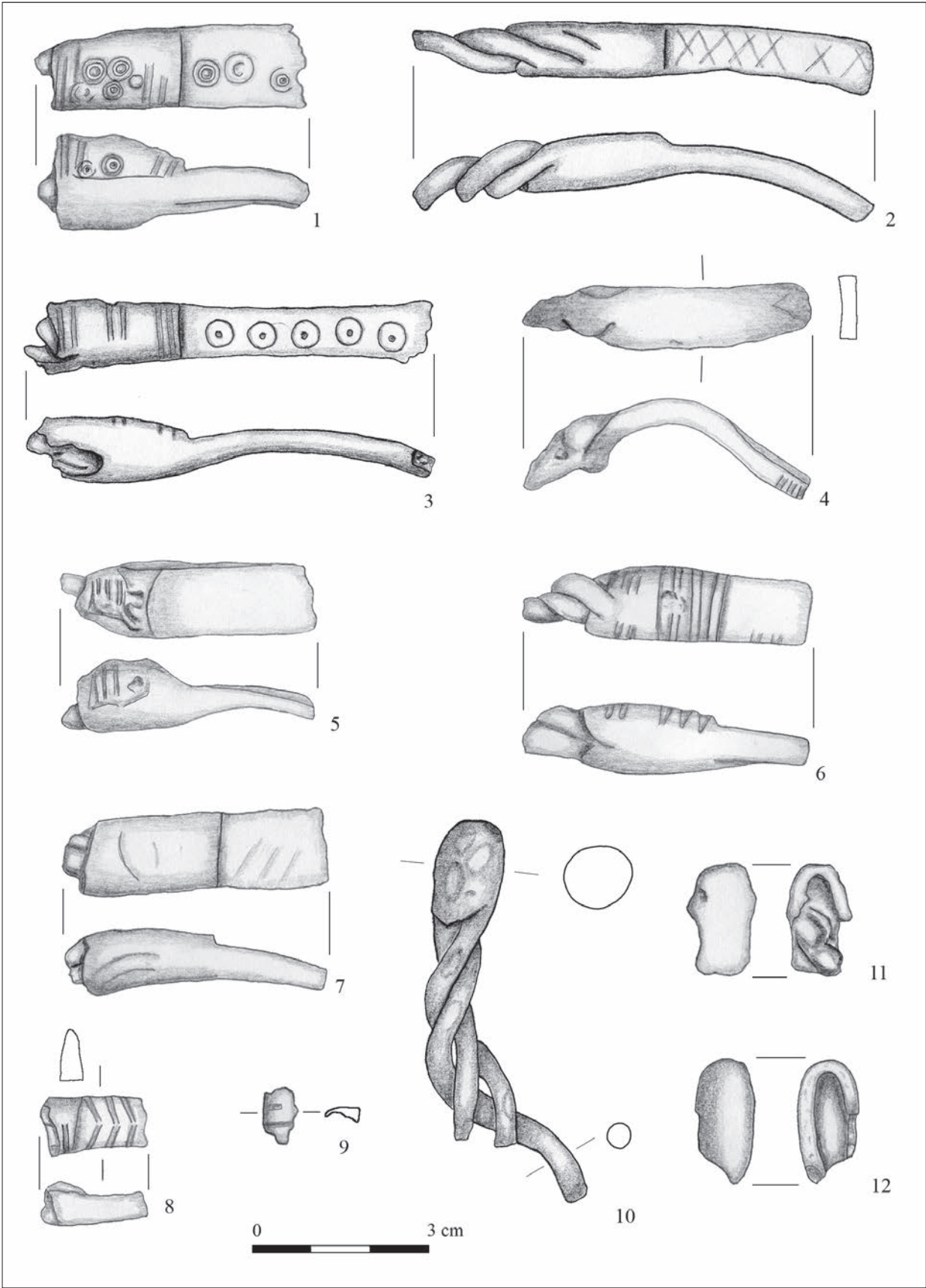


Fig. 2. Microscopic photo of wire imprints inside necklace terminal (image by K. Żołędziowski).

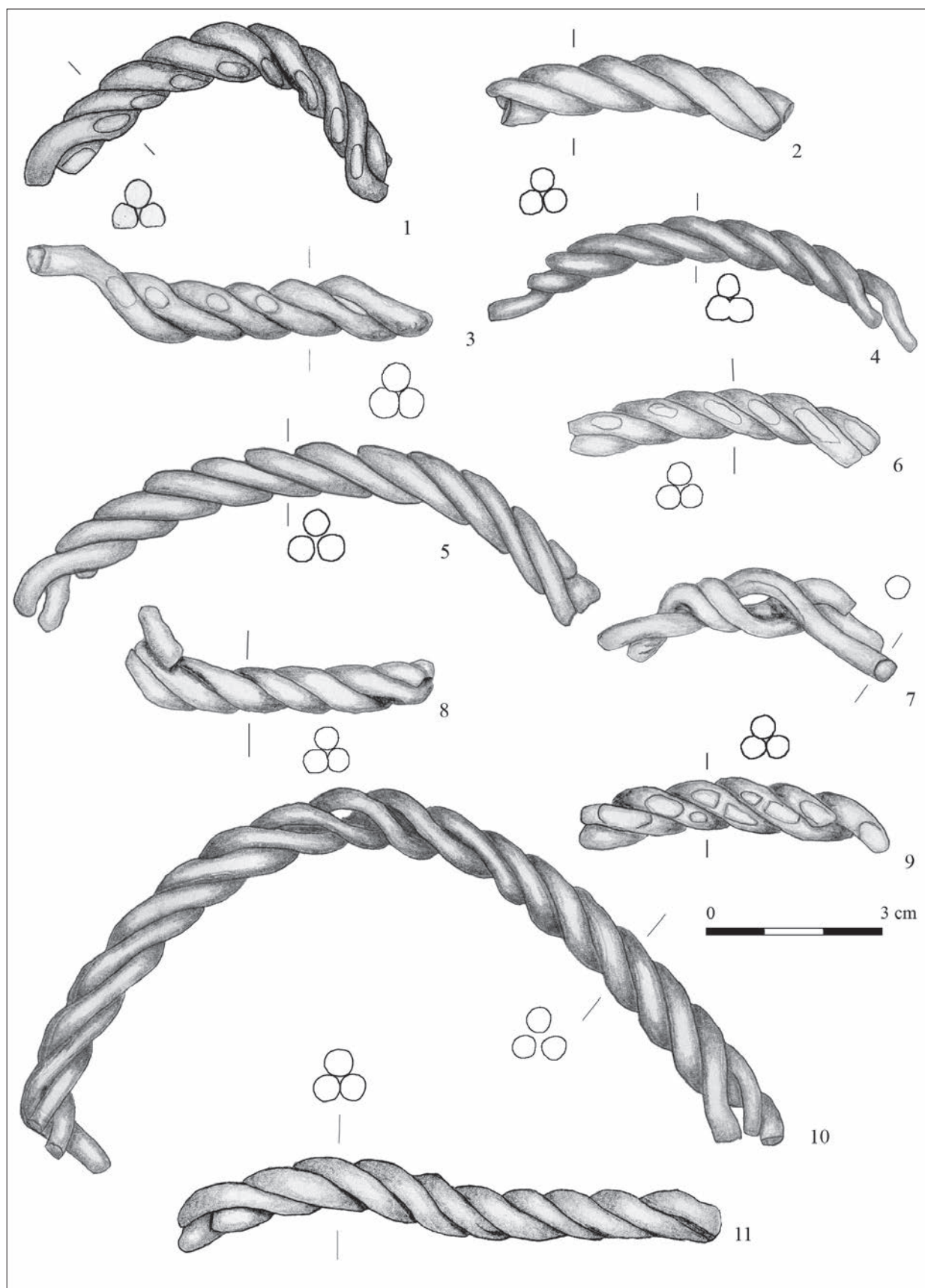
material are pretty standardized: ca. 2 cm in length and 1 cm in diameter. Bar-shaped terminals are composed of two parts: a base that is round in cross-section and was fastened onto the band, and a small bar that is rectangular in cross-section at the end of the terminal. When seen from above, these bars are rectangular or tongue-shaped. Three relatively well-preserved terminals of this kind are provided with bars which are 3.5–4 cm long and 0.7–1 cm wide (Pl. 1: 2–4). The widths of terminals which survived in a worse condition are greater and they oscillate between 1.2 and 1.4 cm (Pl. 1: 5–7). While oval terminals in the discussed assemblage are always plain, flat parts of bar-shaped terminals are often ornamented with

punched dots or incisions. The latter were sometimes also used as ornaments of bases of such terminals. Five finds of this type were found in the course of excavation works, while the remaining nine were discovered during field surveys (Fig. 3).

Another group of necklaces that was found in high numbers at the site are band fragments (Pl. 2). 110 band fragments that were twisted from three bronze wires were found altogether, including 33 within the trench. These are fragments with standardized diameters. Within the group of relatively well-preserved finds, 82% were in the range of 7–10 mm, 7% had diameters of 6–7 mm, while 8% were in the range of 11–12 mm. There are considerable differences concerning the fragments' length. The smallest find was merely 5 mm long while the longest one was 13.25 cm long. Tiny finds which do not exceed 2 cm comprise 17% of the entire assemblage. There is a clear preponderance of finds which are 2–4 cm long, and such artefacts account for slightly more than a half (52%) of the assemblage. Larger finds are rarer: 18% are 4–6 cm long, 8% oscillate between 6 and 8 cm, and only three artefacts are longer (8–13 cm). All the fragments were cut off or broken off. Traces of both of these methods of destruction were identified during microscopic analysis. Almost all finds bear traces of contact with high temperature of various intensity (they are partially or completely melted), and in three cases there were two fragments that were melted together. In a few other cases it can be seen that the twist lost its compactness and individual wires became separated (Pl. 2: 7, 10). In the case of 21 fragments only two out of the original three



Pl. 1. Necklace terminals.



Pl. 2. Band fragments.

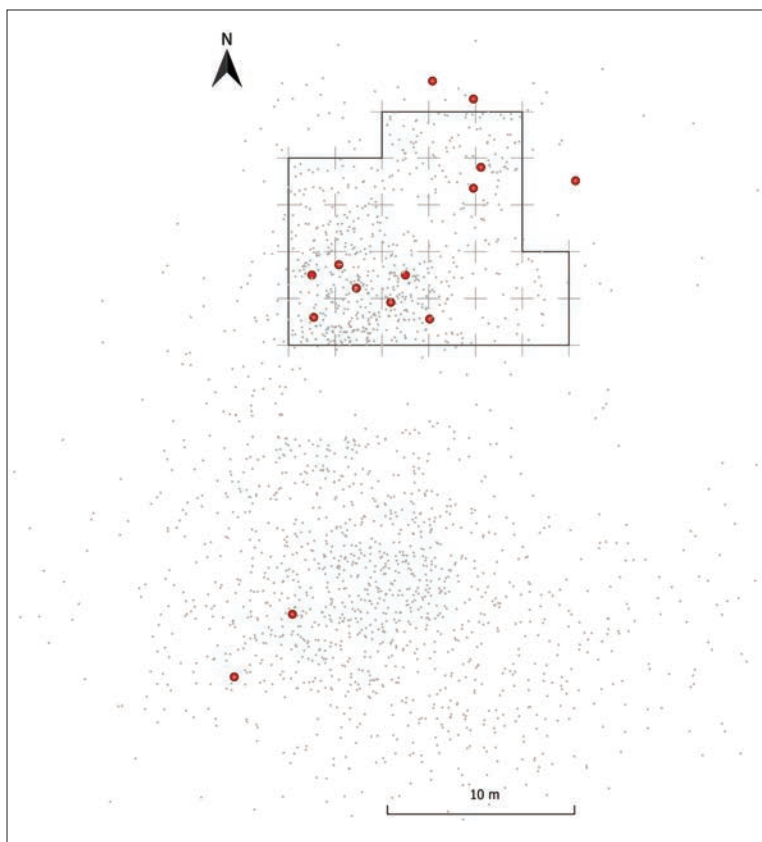


Fig. 3. Distribution of terminals of *Totenkrone*-type necklaces against the background of finds with 3D location within the cemetery (image by L. Jończyk).



Fig. 4. Microscopic photo of traces of hammering of the necklace's plan (image by K. Żołędziowski).

wires in the twist survived. Thirteen fragments bear traces of hammering of the necklace's plan (Pl. 2: 1, 3, 6, 9; Fig. 4). The find-places of band fragments at the site suggest their homogeneous distribution (Fig. 5).

The largest group of necklace parts are fragments of twisted bronze wires (Fig. 6). It is also the most numerous category of finds from Mosiężysko in general.

1,749 such fragments were found altogether, including 848 within the trench. Their diameters are standardized: in 65% cases it is 4–4.5 mm, and in 16% cases the diameters are 5–5.5 mm. Narrower artefacts are clearly more sporadic: in 11% cases the diameters are 3–3.5 mm, and ten fragments fall within the range of 2–2.5 mm. The number of wires with larger diameters is 29, and in a majority of cases the increased diameter is a result of contact with high temperature. Analogously to band fragments, individual wires were also cut off or broken off. Concerning their length, the greatest number of finds are between 10.5 and 20 mm long (57%). Slightly shorter (5–10 mm) and slightly longer (20.5–30 mm) finds comprise 19% and 18% of the assemblage, respectively. Only 4% of wires were 31–40 mm long. Twelve finds were shorter than 5 mm, including the two shortest ones, which were 0.9 mm long. Only nine wires were longer than 41 mm, the longest one being 68 mm long. As in the case of band fragments, the wires are also evenly distributed on the site's surface (Fig. 7). A trace left by a failed attempt at cutting through was noticed on one fragment. Two wires were additionally ornamented with incisions (Fig. 6: 3), and 328 (18%) bore traces of hammering of the necklace's plan (Fig. 6: 1, 2).

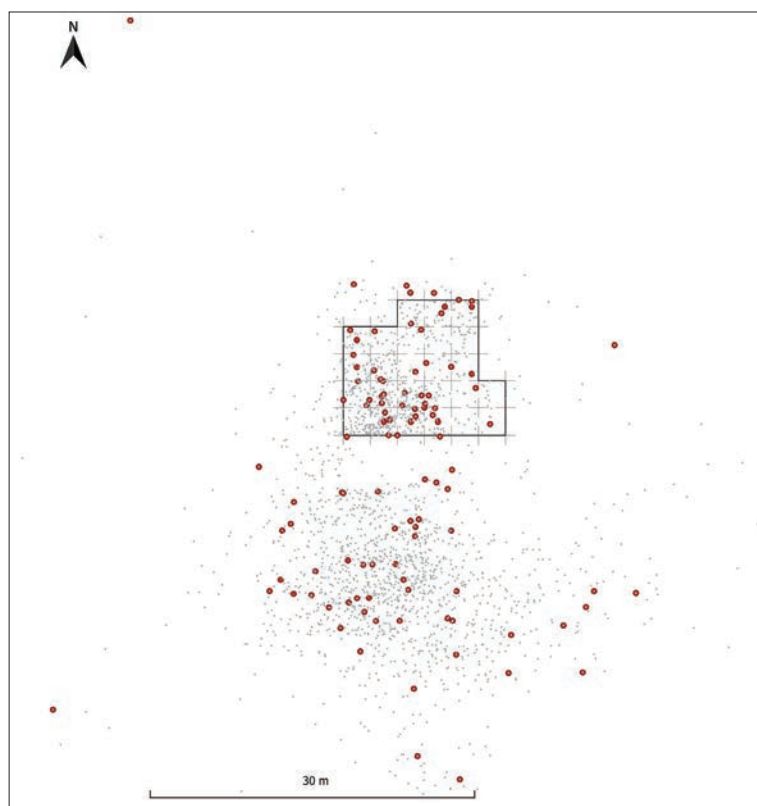


Fig. 5. Distribution of necklace band fragments against the background of finds with 3D location within the cemetery (image by L. Jończyk).

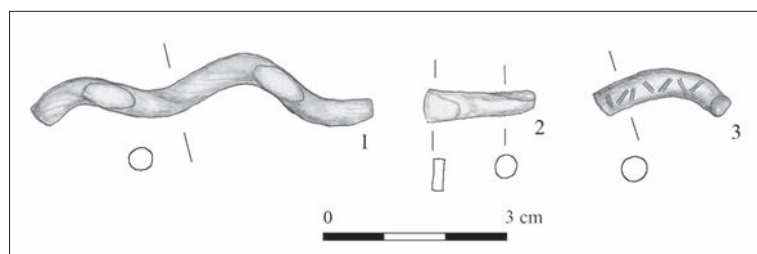


Fig. 6. Wire fragments from untwined necklaces (image by L. Jończyk).

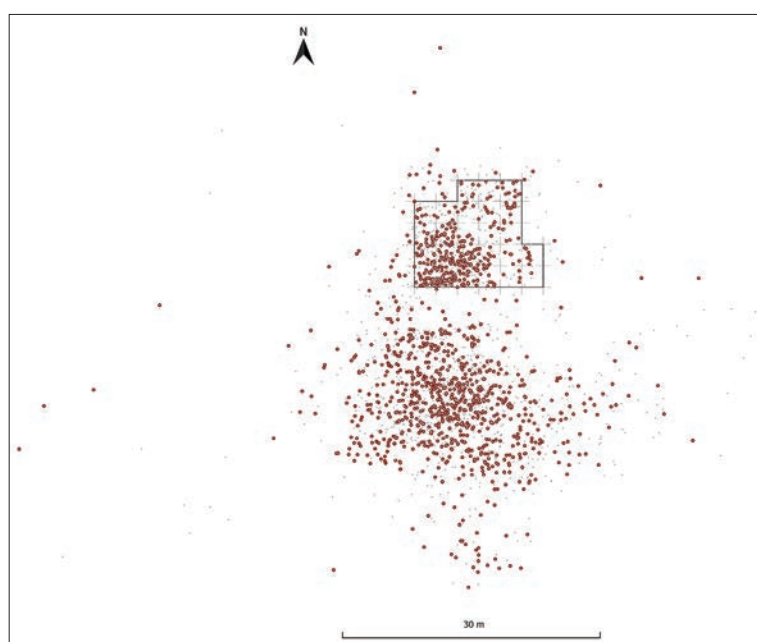


Fig. 7. Distribution of fragments of twisted wires against the background of finds with 3D location within the cemetery (image by L. Jończyk).

Way of manufacture

On the basis of the gathered finds it is possible to draw credible conclusions on the technology of manufacture of such ornaments. The basis probably consisted of cast rods. By means of drawing the rods through a drawing die, a wire with a round cross-section and a diameter of ca. 3–4 mm was obtained. The use of this process is testified to by lengthwise grooves that can be seen on a great number of wires and that are characteristic of this technology (Figs 6: 1; 8, 9).⁴ Such traces could be macroscopically identified on merely two artefacts, while in the remaining cases they could only be observed microscopically. Experiments that were carried out demonstrated that in order to produce a necklace with seven coils it was necessary to use three wires which were ca. 5 m long. They were annealed in order to soften them and were then twisted around their axis.⁵ Due to a relatively large diameter of the wires, this procedure required firm grip and considerable strength. It is not very probable that pincers that are widely known from early mediaeval blacksmithing and goldsmithing workshops could be used for this purpose. Pincers could perform well for twisting shorter segments of thin wires, where such great strength was not required.⁶ Regrettably, written sources dealing with old goldsmithing techniques do not contain much data on how such works were carried out. In the course of experimental work it turned out that two wooden planks that were ca. 1 m long were both the most effective and the simplest solution. Openings were drilled

in them mid-length; the wire could be put through them and its terminals could be bent. Two persons are necessary for the manufacture of a necklace with the use of such planks. One person gradually twists the wires by means of turning the plank, while the other holds the necklace's end and strains the twisted band, thus securing even twist (Fig. 10).⁷ As mentioned above, the band fragments that were discovered at the site bear numerous traces of hammering and flattening (Figs 4; 6: 1, 2). Some of these procedures can be perhaps related to an attempt at levelling the twist's unevenness.

The analysis of the necklaces' terminals demonstrated that they were cast directly onto the band. This is implied by wire impressions that can be seen on the internal sides of broken fragments of terminals (Pl. 1: 11, Fig. 2). The lost-wax technology may have been used for this purpose.⁸ Wire ends were covered with wax that was then formed to the required shape. A layer of leaned clay was put on such a model and an inlet was left in it. After the mould had been dried and fired, it was filled with molten metal, which filled spaces between individual wires, thus securing a tight connection between the band and the cast terminal (Fig. 9). The terminal that was formed in such a way was processed by grinding, so that the final shape could be obtained. Then, the terminal was ornamented using dyes or by means of incising.

Four fragments of necklaces underwent analyses of their chemical composition using the SEM-EDX method. The analyses were carried out by Dr Ewelina Miśta-Jakubowska from the National Centre of Nuclear



Fig. 8. Microscopic photo of traces of wire drawing on draw plate (image by K. Żołędziowski).

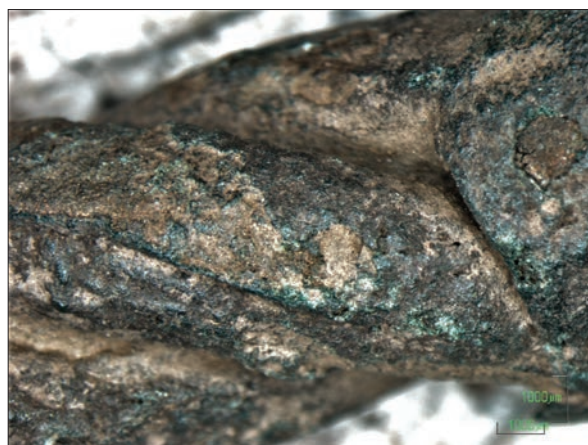


Fig. 9. Microscopic photo of a joint between a band ending and a necklace terminal. Traces of wire drawing on draw plate are also visible (image by K. Żołędziowski).

⁴ Whitfield 1990, 24–25; Żołędziowski 2013, 77.

⁵ Dobrzański 2008, 97, 190; Jopkiewicz, Kubica 1982, 14–22.

⁶ Ohlhaver 1939, 55–67; Heindel 1993, 364–365; Zemitis 2015, 135–136; Anteins 1960, 21, 32.

⁷ Żołędziowski 2018, 219.

⁸ Strobin, Żołędziowski 2021, 122.



Fig. 10. Experimental twisting of necklace band using wooden planks (image by K. Żołędziowski).

Research in Świerk (Tab. 1). All the examined artefacts were made of multi-component alloys of copper with heterogeneous composition, which may imply the use of scrap metal. A necklace fragment with the inventory no. 4202/11 is an especially interesting example (Pl. 1: 10).

In this case, the composition of two out of three wires and that of the oval terminal were analyzed (Tab. 1: 1–3). The analysis demonstrated that each of these parts was made of raw material from different remeltings. Differences in the alloy composition are so great that they also translate into differences in colours of individual parts of the necklace that could be seen with the naked eye. What is more, the alloy that was used for the terminal was composed of 66% lead and merely 14% copper. A question must be asked whether this was an intentional procedure applied by the craftsman who wanted to obtain an additional artistic effect in the form of intertwined wires of different colours. Alternatively, it can also be attributed to problems with raw materials faced by the workshop where such ornaments were manufactured. Bearing in mind the high content of lead which had a negative impact on the ductility of the processed wires, it seems more probable to relate this phenomenon to problems with supply of good quality raw material. The remaining three fragments (Tab. 1: 4–6) that were analyzed were made of homogeneous material with a high content of copper.

Tab. 1. Results of analyses of the chemical composition of necklace fragments from the Mosiężysko cemetery (E. Miśta-Jakubowska).

	Artefact	Cu	Sn	Zn	Pb	As	Ag	Fe	Bi	Ni	Total
1.	necklace terminal, no. 4202/11	14,14	2,00	1,26	66,44	7,66	–	2,64	5,86	–	100,00
2.	band fragment I, no. 4202/11	88,32	2,10	1,69	3,55	2,04	0,35	0,77	0,82	0,35	100,00
3.	band fragment II, no. 4202/11	76,79	9,60	2,24	7,09	1,89	–	1,16	1,23	–	100,00
4.	band fragment, no. 30/08	87,37	3,62	4,73	3,09	0,15	0,18	0,24	0,45	0,18	100,00
5.	necklace terminal, no. 1150/09	91,27	1,67	2,54	2,55	0,67	–	0,67	0,48	0,16	100,00
6.	necklace terminal no. 55/08	91,76	3,18	2,81	0,53	–	0,36	0,22	0,98	0,17	100,00

Totenkron-type necklaces⁹

The artefacts that were discussed above are fragments of *Totenkron*-type necklaces. These, as mentioned above, are the most numerous category of finds from Mosiężysko. Their total number is 1,888 and their to-

tal weight is 3,563.8 g. They constitute 53% of all special finds. The term '*Totenkron*-type necklaces' refers to large, spiral and multi-coil necklaces whose bands were twisted from three bronze wires.¹⁰ The coil diameter is larger in the lower part and smaller in the upper one. Therefore, such necklaces have a somewhat conical shape

⁹ We are very grateful to Mirosław Hoffmann and Kacper Martyka from Museum of Warmia and Masuria in Olsztyn and to Povilas Blaževičius and Gytis Grižas from the National

Museum of Lithuania for the possibility to study necklaces kept in these museums.

¹⁰ Bogucki 2001, 35.



Fig. 11. *Totenkrone*-type necklace in the collection of the Prussia Sammlung (Prussian Collection) of the Museum of Pre- and Early History in Berlin (image by L. Jończyk).

in the lateral view (Fig. 11). They are provided with very remarkable terminals: one is oval and is located in the lower part of the necklace, while the other is bar-shaped and can be found in the necklace's upper part. Both were sometimes ornamented with punched dots, incisions or engraved lines; however, bar-shaped terminals were ornamented much more often. The name '*Totenkrone*', initially in the form '*corona funebris*', appeared in the early 18th century, when the first recorded discoveries of ornaments of this kind were made.¹¹

It is difficult to assess the number of the necklaces that were deposited in Mosiężysko. Eight fragments of bar-shaped terminals mark the minimum number (Pl. 1: 1–8), while the ninth one (Pl. 1: 9) is so small that it may have been part of one of the aforementioned eight. The weights of ten entirely preserved finds of this type are known. They oscillate between 1,060 and 2,050 g, with the average weight at 1,476 g.¹² Comparing this with the weight of all the necklace fragments from Mosiężysko, it can be concluded that the fragments that were discovered at the site constitute a small fraction (about 24%) of the minimum number of eight artefacts that were deposited here. Even if it is assumed that all lumps of molten bronze come from necklaces only, this share will increase to merely 40%. There are no grounds to determine now whether this is a result of insufficient recognition of the site or of the fact that the necklaces were already incomplete at the time of their deposition in the cemetery.

Totenkrone-type necklaces are a Pruthenian variant of an ornament that was very popular among all Balt and some Finno-Ugric peoples. The highest number of finds from Lithuania and Latvia are artefacts that were made in an identical manner. On the other hand, these were single-coil and ended with loops. Multi-coil necklaces with loops first appeared upon the Lower Neman and from this territory they spread to Courland (especially its northern, Latvian part) and to Pruthenia, where the *Totenkrone* type originated. What made it different from other Baltic multi-coil necklaces were cast terminals and the narrowing of the entire ornament's diameter toward the top.¹³

According to a list published by Harri Moora, in the pre-war collection of the Prussia Museum in Königsberg there were finds from the following localities: Auglitten (Kr. Bartenstein), Gerdauen (Kr. Gerdauen), Klein Dexe (Kr. Pr. Eylau), Kleinhof-Tapiau (Kr. Wehlau), Liebstadt (Kr. Mohrunen), Liekeim (Kr. Bartenstein), Löbertshof (Kr. Labiau), Medenau (Kr. Fischhausen), Mülsen (Kr. Fischhausen), Pobethen (Kr. Fischhausen), Powunden (Kr. Pr. Holland), Dagutschen (Kr. Goldap), Staatzen (Kr. Treuburg), Syndau¹⁴ (Kr. Fischhausen), Unterplehnen (Kr. Rastenburg), Szittkehmen (Kr. Goldap), Zohpen (Kr. Wehlau) and seven from unknown places within the borders of Ostpreußen.¹⁵ Today, it is impossible to verify whether all these necklaces in fact had characteristic terminals. However, the cases for which more detailed data or artefact images are known

¹¹ Rhode 1728, 309–311.

¹² We know the weights of eight finds which are in the collection of the Prussia Sammlung: Gerdauen PM Pr 12864: 1,060 g; Unterplehnen PM Pr 12570: 1,075 g; Unterplehnen PM Pr 11143: 1,191 g; Pr 6640: 1,521 g; Gerdauen PM Pr 21127: 1,560 g; Pr 6638: 1,581 g; Gerdauen PM Pr 12933: 1,679 g; Gerdauen PM Pr 21126: 2,050 g as well as the weight of a necklace from

Otmuchów: 1,850 g (Richter 1931, 242) and a necklace from grave 65 in Równina Dolna (in Museum of Warmia and Masuria): 1.2 kg.

¹³ Moora 1939; Tõnisson 1974, 148; Šnore 1996, 118.

¹⁴ Find now kept in Museum of Warmia and Masuria.

¹⁵ Moora 1939, 234.

confirm a hypothesis that the finds mentioned by Moora belonged to the Pruthenian *Totenkrone* type. This researcher was not familiar with a band fragment with an oval end from Sorthenen (Kr. Fischhausen), kept today in Museum of Warmia and Masuria (cat. no. 674/72)¹⁶ and finds kept in other museums than the Königsberg one: a distorted necklace found in Otmuchów¹⁷ (Nysa District) or a find of unknown provenance, now stored in the District Museum in Toruń.¹⁸ After WWII new fragments and entire artefacts of ornaments of this type were discovered in Równina Dolna¹⁹ (Kętrzyn District), in the stronghold in Jegliniec (Suwałki District), in the settlement of Targowisko in Szurpiły which neighbours the Mosiężysko cemetery, as well as in cemeteries in Krukówek (Suwałki District), Cigoniškiai (raj. Alytus) and Vampenieši II in the island of Dole (nov. Salaspils).²⁰ A stray find was discovered lately on the building site in Lidzbark Warmiński (Lidzbark Warmiński District).²¹ It has 6 coils and a bar-shaped end.

The oval terminals of the aforementioned necklaces are similar. They are generally not decorated and an ornament can be seen only on two artefacts from Gerdaugen

which are now in the Prussia Sammlung.²² On the first find there is an ornament of oblique incisions, while the other is decorated with punched dots (finds no. V, 474, 9003a). More differences can be seen among bar-shaped terminals. Their common trait is a round cross-section of the base and a remarkable bend of the bar, which can be seen in the lateral view and which continues the curvature of the coil. When seen from above, these terminals are long and either oval-ended (these pieces are also termed tongue-shaped terminals) or pointed. In two cases (both from Szurpiły, one from the discussed cemetery and the other from its vicinity) the terminals are rectangular (Pl. 1: 2, Fig. 12: 2). The necklace from Vampenieši II is equipped with a trapezoid terminal²³ (Fig. 12: 1). This part of necklaces is usually ornamented with punched dots, incisions or a combination of both these methods. So far, plain artefacts have solely been known from Szurpiły (Fig. 12: 3).

In literature it is possible to find information on finds of *Totenkrone*-type necklaces in other places, too. Concerning a necklace from Garbno²⁴ (Kętrzyn District), there is only a late 19th century mention that is difficult to

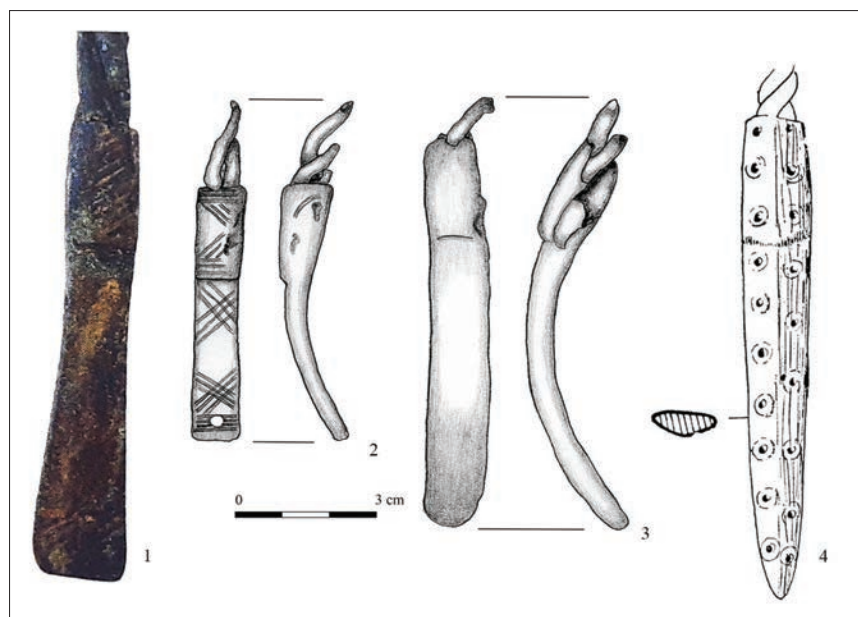


Fig. 12. Various kinds of terminals of *Totenkrone*-type necklaces: 1 – Vampenieši II, 2–3 – Szurpiły, 4 – Równina Dolna (image by L. Jończyk: 1 after Spirģis 2008, 77, fig. 118; 4 after Odoj 1958, pl. XXIII: 2).

¹⁶ Before 1945 finds from Sorthenen were kept in Prussia Museum. It is difficult to explain the lack of information about this find in Harri Moora's paper. Perhaps the necklace was found after the visit of the Estonian researcher in Königsberg.

¹⁷ Richter 1931.

¹⁸ Bokinić, Uziembło 1999, 217.

¹⁹ Before WWII this site was known under the name Unterplehnen and was subject to examinations.

²⁰ Odoj 1956; 1958; Spirģis 2008, 277, Fig. 118; Žemantauskaitė, Fediajevas 2018; Engel, Siemaszko 2019, 306.

²¹ Find kept in the Museum of Warmia and Masuria.

²² Pr 21126, Pr 21127. All references to the Prussia Sammlung concern an on-line database, available at <https://recherche.smb.museum/>.

²³ We consider this a find of the *Totenkrone* and not the Kievan variant (dealt with below), due to the length of the terminal and the oval shape of its base.

²⁴ Bogucki 2001, 39.

unequivocally interpret without an illustration or a more detailed description. A mention of loop-shaped terminals of finds from Alt Wehlau (ray. Gvardeysk) excludes them from the *Totenkron*e type.²⁵ The same concerns the necklace from Dąbrowa (Bartoszyce District), which also has loop-shaped terminals.²⁶ Doubts are also provoked by the identification of a find from Porębek (Kętrzyn District) as a *Totenkron*e terminal.²⁷ The artefact from Porębek is significantly smaller and narrower (it is ca. 5 mm wide, while the standard width of terminals is about 1 cm). It was made from a flat-convex 1.5 mm thick metal sheet and is equipped with 2 openings. This has no analogues among the discussed type of ornaments. What also calls for verification is a frequently mentioned necklace from the locality of Chojna (Rawicz District). Information on the discovery of a *Totenkron*e artefact in this place was given in a paper by Jerzy Antoniewicz, but with no reference to a source.²⁸ Then, this supposition became part of the academic discourse.²⁹ Jerzy Antoniewicz discussed the grounds behind it in another publication, with a reference to a paper by Zdzisław Rajewski.³⁰ Rajewski's source of information was the catalogue of an exhibition in the Kaiser Friedrich-Museum in Poznań. This catalogue contains a description of an ornament from grave 6 in the Lusatian Culture cemetery in the locality of Chojno (not: Chojna), Rawicz District. This ornament is a necklace made from bronze wire with joint hook-shaped terminals which was discovered in an assemblage from the turn of the Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age.³¹ Therefore, it is not a *Totenkron*e-type artefact.

Six necklaces that are very similar to the *Totenkron*e type were found in the territory of Kievan Rus'. Two are known from the cemetery in Ostriv (ray. Rokitne), two from Kiev³² and one each from the vicinity of Kanev (ray. Kanev) and from an unknown locality, perhaps from the vicinity of Trostyanets' (ray. Kanev).³³ These are also multi-coil ornaments, whose bands were made from two or three bronze wires; however, their terminals are somewhat different. The main difference consists in the form of the base of the bar-shaped terminal. In this group, the terminal's base is angular. Additionally, only in the case of one artefact the coils' diameter decreases toward

the top, while the coils of the remaining necklaces are of even diameters. Furthermore, the form of the bar-shaped terminals of the Kievan variant also differs from that of typical *Totenkron*e examples: they are shorter, rectangular (the pieces from Ostriv, the vicinity of Trostyanets' and Kiev), trapezoid (the piece from the vicinity of Kanev), or resemble a fishtail (the other piece from Ostriv). The terminals are ornamented with punched dots, incisions and geometric decorations. All these artefacts, except for the find from Kiev, were also equipped with an opening. This trait, in turn, is exceptional among Pruthenian artefacts (only one find of this kind is known from Szurpiły – Fig. 12: 2). In this group, it is only in the case of the necklace from the vicinity of Kanev that both terminals survived. The other terminal is not oval (as in the case of *Totenkron*e necklaces), but loop-shaped. A stylistic affinity of the necklaces from Ukraine and the classic *Totenkron*e artefacts is beyond doubt. On the other hand, there are notable differences, which have already been stressed by Ukrainian researchers.³⁴ These differences do not allow for the Ukrainian finds to be classified into one type.

It is very possible that pieces of a Kievan-variant necklace were found at the cemetery in Nendriniai (raj. Marijampolė),³⁵ where many horse graves, four human graves and a considerable number of stray finds were excavated. Based on the artefacts, the site can be dated to the Migration Period and the Early Middle Ages (ca. 10th–11th century). One of the stray finds is a fragment of a bar-shaped necklace terminal with an angular base (Fig. 13: 1). Another object from Nendriniai is a coupler (Fig. 13: 2), similar to couplers on the Kievan-variant necklaces from Ostriv, Kiev and from the unknown locality as well as to the coupler on the band fragment from Żytkiejmy (Gołdap District), which is the only currently known coupler on a classic *Totenkron*e necklace.³⁶ Although the object from Nendriniai is slightly melted, a characteristic cylinder with bronze wires inside can be recognized.

On the map depicting the spatial distribution of the discussed ornaments there is a clear concentration between the Great Masurian Lakes and the Neman (Fig. 14: 2, 3, 5, 7, 19, 21, 25). According to the

²⁵ Cf. Voluev 1999, 398; Bogucki 2001, 35.

²⁶ Bogucki 2001, 37.

²⁷ Wadył 2020, 184, pl. 1e.

²⁸ Antoniewicz 1958, 153.

²⁹ Bogucki 2001, 37; Engel 2020, 167.

³⁰ Antoniewicz 1955, 259, note 112; Rajewski 1937, 32.

³¹ Blume 1909, 125–126.

³² In earlier literature one of the Kiev finds (published with an image) was classified into the Pruthenian *Totenkron*e type, in spite of stylistic differences (Antoniewicz 1958, 153; Bogucki 2001, 38).

³³ Sluchaynyya nakhodki i priobreteniya 1909, 124–125, fig. 177; Rybakov 1948, fig. 87; Baranov, Ivakin 2020, fig. 18: 1; Osypenko, Hrytsyk 2020; Dyachenko 2021, 65, fig. 3: 1, 2.

³⁴ Osypenko, Hrytsyk 2020, 345.

³⁵ The site was only curtly mentioned in literature (Merkevičius 1968). The finds are kept in the National Museum of Lithuania.

³⁶ Karger 1958, 397, fig. 90; Engel 2020, 324, fig. 150; Osypenko, Hrytsyk 2020, 342, fig. 1: 2b, 2d, 343, fig. 1b, 2a, 3a; Dyachenko 2021, 66, figs 3: 1, 2.



Fig. 13. Two pieces of the Kievan-variant necklace from Nendriniai (image by L. Jończyk).

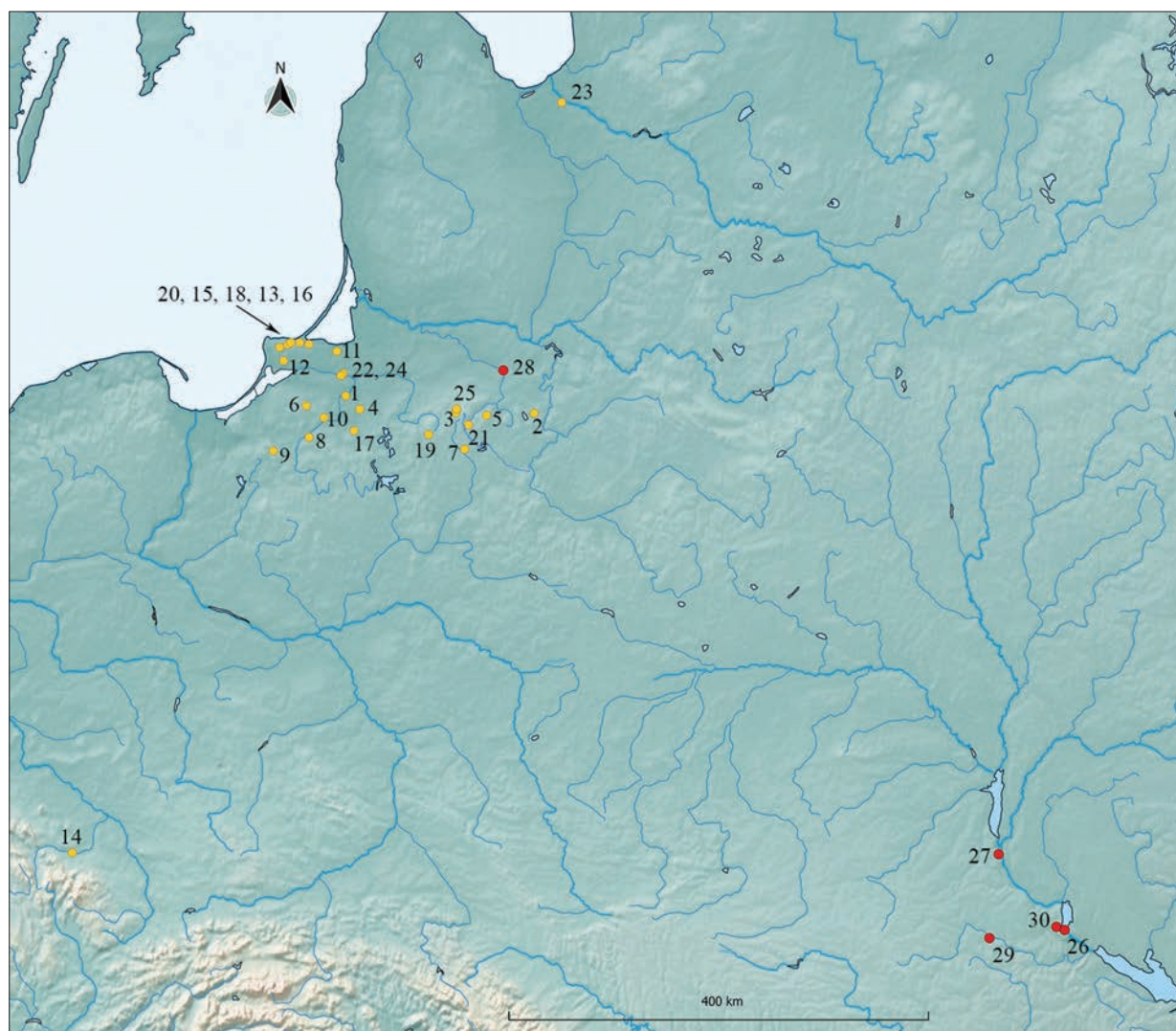


Fig. 14. Distribution of *Totenkrone*-type (yellow dots) and Kievan-variant necklaces (red dots): 1 – Auglitten, 2 – Cigoniškiai, 3 – Dagucie, 4 – Gerdauen, 5 – Jegliniec, 6 – Klein Dexen, 7 – Krukówek, 8 – Lidzbark Warmiński, 9 – Liebstadt, 10 – Liekeim, 11 – Löbertshof, 12 – Medenau, 13 – Mülsen, 14 – Otmuchów, 15 – Pobethen, 16 – Powunden, 17 – Równina Dolna, 18 – Sorthenen, 19 – Stacze, 20 – Syndau, 21 – Szurpiły, 22 – Tapiau, 23 – Vampenieši, 24 – Zohpen, 25 – Żytkiejmy, 26 – Kaniów, 27 – Kiev, 28 – Nendriniai, 29 – Ostriv, 30 – Trostyanets' (image by L. Jończyk).

historical sources, in 13th century these lands were inhabited by the Yatvings. In this area *Totenkrone* is the only type of necklaces known from the Early Middle Ages. To the west of this territory, these ornaments are also popular at Sambian sites and along the Łyna, but they are not the only necklace type there. Individual finds from distant regions (Otmuchów and Vampenieši, Fig. 14: 14, 23) should be considered imports from the Pruthenian lands. Necklaces of the Kievan variant form a compact group, both with regard to stylistic traits and spatial distribution – with the one exception in Nendriniai (Fig. 14: 26–30).

Despite the numerous finds of the discussed necklaces, it is difficult to draw conclusions concerning their purpose and chronology. This is due to the fact that the majority of the artefacts are stray finds. Concerning artefacts from presently known grave contexts, such finds were discovered only in Zohpen, in three burials in Równina Dolna, in the course of examinations led by Romuald Odoj (two stray finds are known from pre-WWII works), and at Vampenieši II. Although grave assemblages from Gerdauen were also discovered to feature similar necklaces, the author describing them uses a general term 'Broncespiralring' and gives the number of coils, while omitting the crucial description of terminals.³⁷ We know that among the finds from Gerdauen there were *Totenkrone*-type necklaces as well as those which ended with loops,³⁸ since artefacts of both types have survived in the Prussia Sammlung.³⁹ The number of the necklaces found in Gerdauen was very high: 17 were unearthed in graves,⁴⁰ and at least 14 found their way to the Prussia Museum as stray finds, not to mention other necklaces that survived in fragments.⁴¹ Harri Moora said that 14 necklaces from Gerdauen belonged to the *Totenkrone* type; regrettably, we do not know which of the aforementioned ones were meant.

A woman with a *Totenkrone*-type necklace, an ornamental iron sheet, a ring and a bracelet was buried in grave 158 in Zohpen.⁴² On the basis of observations made by Artur Hennig, it is possible to assume that the necklaces (of both types) found at Gerdauen were in all probability also parts of women's furnishings. On the other hand, it cannot be excluded that men wearing such necklaces were likewise buried there in individual cases.

This conclusion was drawn on the basis of co-occurring finds, as in none of the three possible men's graves the skeletons were preserved well enough to render sex assessment possible.⁴³ This observation is confirmed by burials from Równina Dolna. In this case, a necklace in grave 29 occurred together with a necklace of glass beads, two rings, a horseshoe-shaped fibula with figure-eight terminals, a knife and two bracteates. In grave 65 such a necklace was found with an earring, a ring and a horseshoe-shaped fibula with figure-eight terminals.⁴⁴ On the basis of their furnishings, these burials can also be considered women's. The furnishings of burial 43, where, apart from a necklace, a horseshoe-shaped fibula with figure-eight terminals and remains of at least two bracteates were found, are not unambiguous.⁴⁵ However, the presence of the fibula of the same kind as in the two aforementioned graves seems to confirm an assumption of a female attribution of *Totenkrone*-type necklaces. A woman was in all probability also interred in grave 57 at Vampenieši II.

A necklace from Liekeim was perhaps found in a man's grave. This artefact was handed to the collection of the Prussia Gesellschaft in Königsberg in late 1876 as a gift from a landowner Steppuhn.⁴⁶ In the spring of 1877, the same donor granted a sword to the Gesellschaft, claiming that it had been discovered 'in the immediate vicinity' of a skeleton on whose neck the aforementioned necklace had been found.⁴⁷ On this basis, it is not possible to conclude that we are dealing with one and the same grave assemblage. However, such a possibility can be taken into consideration.

The scant data on find contexts of *Totenkrone*-type necklaces is also a serious impediment in establishing their chronology. The earliest known find was discovered in the destroyed grave 57 at Vampenieši II. Apart from the necklace, it only contained a pendant-chain holder. On the basis of the latter find the assemblage was dated to the second half of the 11th or the 12th century.⁴⁸ Necklace fragments from the stronghold in Jegliniec were found in an assemblage of bronze ornaments from the 12th century.⁴⁹ Graves 29 and 43 from Równina Dolna are reliable markers, as they contained bracteates that were minted from ca. 1290 to 1410.⁵⁰ Coins from the years 1352–1413 were also found at Gerdauen.⁵¹ Together with all other

³⁷ Hennig 1879, 308–313.

³⁸ Hennig 1879, 315.

³⁹ Pr 12863–12865, 12933, 12934, 12937, 12960, 12969, 12971, 21126, 21227.

⁴⁰ Hennig 1879, 315.

⁴¹ Steffenhagen 1867, 88; Bujack 1877c, 647; 1889, 284–285; 1891a, 19; 1891b, 4.

⁴² Heym 1938, 110.

⁴³ Hennig 1879, 315–316.

⁴⁴ Odoj 1958, 129, 140.

⁴⁵ Odoj 1958, 134.

⁴⁶ Bujack 1877a, 186.

⁴⁷ Bujack 1877b, 499.

⁴⁸ Spigis 2008, 277.

⁴⁹ Engel 2020, 167.

⁵⁰ Gupieniec 1958, 157–159; Bogucki 2001, 35.

⁵¹ Bogucki 2001, 36.

finds that were acquired there, this defines the chronology of the site as the 14th century. The case of Zohpen is analogous, as the group of inhumation graves, including grave 158 with the *Totenkrone*-type necklace, was dated to the 14th century ('Stufe I') on the basis of bracteates that were found in one of these graves.⁵² A similar chronology ('Ordenszeit') was proposed by Harri Moora for the necklaces he discussed.⁵³

It is possible that the chronology of necklaces of the Kievan variant is earlier, although this group does not contain too many reliable markers, either. The only premise allowing one to define the period of their use are the necklaces from Ostriv. Even though they were not dated in a precise manner, in their case it is possible to rely on a relatively narrow chronology of the site, which is dated to the first half of the 11th century.⁵⁴ This could putatively imply that it is in Rus' that prototypes of necklaces of this kind should be searched for. However, such an assumption is disproved by the necklaces' stylistic traits, which are very typical of Balts and Baltic Finno-Ugrians. In fact, these traits were so radically alien to Slavs that the necklace from Kiev, which was the earliest discovery of this variant, was initially believed to be a semi-product that was prepared by the goldsmith for the purpose of manufacture of 'normal' necklaces.⁵⁵ The finds from Nendriniai can also be dated to a similar period (ca. 10th–11th centuries).

This notable chronological discrepancy is in all probability due to reasons other than a difference in the period when the necklaces were used. In the light of the most recent state of research, the highest number of *Totenkrone*-type necklaces are known from the territory between the Great Masurian Lakes and the Neman. As mentioned above, they are the only type of necklaces in this area. In cemeteries that have been examined in the recent years (Mosiężysko, Krukówek) they are a dominant category of finds, although we find their fragments only, due to the local funeral rites. What is more, it is difficult to isolate grave assemblages here and part of these finds can be only generally dated on the basis of the general chronology of the site. These finds are still being processed and there are no summarizing observations. The chronology of Mosiężysko is defined as the 12th–13th centuries, while Krukówek is dated to the 10th–13th centuries.⁵⁶ The same applies to pre-WWII discoveries (Degucie, Żytkiejmy and Stacze, mentioned as: Dagutschen, Szittkehmen and Staatzen by Harri Moora), which can be only generally dated to the period between the 11th and 13th centuries on the basis of all finds that are known from these sites. Therefore, it cannot be

excluded that the finds in question were in use in this region as early as in the 11th century. What prevents us from indicating the moment of their appearance is the local funeral rite and the resulting state of research. This problem disappeared after the Pruthenian lands were conquered by the Teutonic Order and the Pruthenians adopted inhumation burial rites. After this change took place, necklaces commenced to be deposited intact and in compact assemblages. Therefore, the highest number of finds with known context and easily identifiable chronology actually come from the 14th century.

On the basis of this scant data it is possible to carefully propose that the shape of necklace terminals was a trait that was subject to changes over time. The earliest artefacts are equipped with rectangular or trapezoid terminals (Vampenieši II and the representatives of the Kievan variant), while the latest ones are acutely chamfered (Równina Dolna). There is no data that would allow for even an approximate establishment of the chronology of tongue-shaped terminals. It can only be supposed that these were in vogue in the period between the remaining two types.

It is remarkable that such necklaces are most often found in fragments. In the case of cremation cemeteries this can be explained by the funeral rites that were in use. However, a similar phenomenon was also observed in inhumation graves. What can be found there are entire necklaces, but also incomplete ones, with one terminal having been cut off. In graves 29 and 43 at Równina Dolna there were two necklaces without bar-shaped terminals. The first one survived in the form of seven coils and the upper terminal was broken off. The other one was composed of merely three coils, and one of the band ends was broken off and filed off smooth.⁵⁷ The same concerns the necklace from Lidzbark Warmiński, on which the broken end is also filed off smooth. This procedure may imply a further use of the necklace after it was divided. Analogously, among the surviving necklaces from Gerdaun there were four entirely preserved and five that survived partially, not to mention numerous smaller band fragments. Different numbers of necklace coils prevent us from determining how large the missing parts of these ornaments are. It cannot be said, either, whether it was only the terminal that was cut off or whether it also applied to the adjoining parts of the band. The fact that fragments of *Totenkrone* necklaces, be it terminals alone or bands, are often found in settlement contexts implies that the latter possibility is more probable. It is difficult to define the aim of such actions. On the other

⁵² Heym 1938, 110–112.

⁵³ Moora 1939, 234.

⁵⁴ Dyachenko 2021, 60.

⁵⁵ Rybakov 1948, 331; Karger 1958, 396.

⁵⁶ Engel, Siemaszko 2019, 307.

⁵⁷ Odoj 1958, 129, 134.

hand, as was already mentioned above, part of necklaces bear traits of joining separate bands with the use of characteristic couplers. It is impossible now to determine whether this was a way to repair an accidentally damaged ornament or perhaps a part that had been previously cut off for some reason was fastened again. The considerable frequency of these items' fragmentary survival has long puzzled researchers. It was actually the first discoverers of such ornaments that paid attention to numerous finds of fragments of such necklaces and tried to explain the phenomenon of fragmentation.⁵⁸

The discussed necklaces were elite ornaments, which is demonstrated by the sheer value of the raw material, although they were attributes of the upper middle class (using modern terminology) rather than of aristocracy. As many other luxurious artefacts, they were very impractical. Experiments have confirmed the intuitive opinions that an ornament of this type rendered daily activities, and even the simplest actions, quite difficult. What was, then, the basic role of such necklaces? There is no doubt that they were markers of prestige and wealth. Today, it is difficult to say in what circumstances they were worn, apart from being deposited into graves. The fact that subsequent parts were being cut off may imply that they were considered some sort of capital. Similar

practices are mentioned in the narrative by Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān ibn al-ʿAbbās ibn Rāšid ibn Ḥammād, who discussed customs of the Rus' population related to jewellery of similar kind:

Around their necks they [women – L.J., K.Ż.] wear bands of gold and silver. Whenever a man's wealth reaches ten thousand dirhams, he has a band made for his wife; if it reaches twenty thousand dirhams, he has two bands made for her – for every ten thousand more, he gives another band to his wife. Sometimes one woman may wear many bands around her neck.⁵⁹

This observation made by the Arab traveller comes from the 10th century. No *Totenkrone*-type necklaces are known from that time, and in the light of the available data such ornaments may have appeared about a hundred years thereafter. However, the very idea that jewellery in the Early Middle Ages may have been used for wealth storing seems very probable. On the other hand, further in-depth research is needed to unequivocally demonstrate that the Pruthenians perceived their remarkable multi-coil necklaces in the same manner. This research must be combined with complex statistical processing of the discussed finds, especially those discovered in settlements.

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⁵⁸ Helwing 1717, 91–92.

⁵⁹ Montgomery 2000, 6–7 (for a Polish translation, see Kmietowicz *et al.* 1985, 110).

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MAREK FLOREK

Institute of Archaeology, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin
 marek.florek@mail.umcs.pl
 ORCID 0000-0002-9917-710X

WEALTH OF INHABITANTS OF SANDOMIERZ AND NEIGHBOURING SETTLEMENTS IN THE 11TH–12TH CENTURIES IN THE LIGHT OF CEMETERY MATERIALS

ABSTRACT

It is debatable to what extent so-called grave goods (items intentionally deposited in burials) reflect the actual level of prosperity of people inhumed in early mediæval graves. The same applies to the types of the burial features in which they were inhumed. Whether the deceased were supplied with particular items or not – and if so, what kind of goods they were – might have resulted, for example, from the extent to which Christianity (having a unifying influence on funerary rituals) was accepted, as well as from local customs or even family traditions, the actual wealth of the buried people and individual decisions as to whether their opulence should be manifested or not. In Sandomierz, between the end of the 10th and the middle of the 12th century, there were

at least three non-churchyard row cemeteries. We know 20 other burial sites of this type located in the radius of 20 km from the town. An analysis of materials found in them (grave goods) indicated that in the discussed time the wealth of Sandomierz residents was similar to that of people living in the neighbouring settlements dated to the same period. This assumption, however, is not necessarily correct, because the lack of considerable differences between grave inventories might have resulted from local burial customs followed at that time. Another question is whether such customs were a continuation of earlier local traditions or whether they were shaped by the embracing of elements of Christian funerary rituals. Finally, it is also possible that they resulted from both factors.

Keywords: Sandomierz, cemeteries, Early Middle Ages, wealth of residents

Introduction

Sandomierz was most probably established in the last quarter of the 10th century, after the annexation of new lands – extending between the Świętokrzyskie (Holy Cross) Mountains and the Rivers Pilica and Vistula – to the country of Mieszko I. At first probably destined to be a bridgehead for further expansion to the east and south,¹ at the turn of the 12th century it became – in the eyes of the contemporaries, or in any case according to the anonymous author of the 'Polish Chronicle' – one of the main centres of the state, or at least of its southern part. This is because the chronicler, when discussing events of 1098, referred to the town – along with Kraków and Wrocław – as *sedes regni principalis*, one of the main 'capitals' of the kingdom.²

It is striking that the considerable – at least according to the chronicler – importance of Sandomierz at that time has practically no bearing on what we know about it from other written sources. At the end of the 11th century, Sandomierz consisted of the stronghold, the adjacent borough and open settlements (accompanied by cemeteries) on the neighbouring hills.³ The hillfort itself, regardless of where it was placed – there are two different hypotheses as to its location during that time: on the Castle Hill⁴ or on the so-called Gostomianum Hill⁵ – was relatively small, having a surface slightly greater than 0.5 ha. Beside the so-called rectangular pit on the Gostomianum Hill – interpreted as the remains of a wooden residential tower⁶ – no traces of habitable buildings dated to earlier than the second half of the 12th century have been discovered

¹ Buko 1998, 83–84; 2005, 236–239.

² Knoll, Schaer 2003, 134–148; also Lalik 1993, 50; Wasilewski 1999, 57–58; Wyrzowski 1999, 19; 2019, 169.

³ Florek 2005, 23–30; 2014, 7.

⁴ Buko 1998, 56–60.

⁵ Florek 2005, 25–26.

⁶ Tabaczyńska 1996, 105–106; Rysiewski 2000, 567.

so far. What is more, all indications are that before the middle, or even the end of the 11th century, not a single church was erected in Sandomierz.⁷

Thus, we should consider if the particular importance of the town in the 11th and 12th centuries was reflected by the material status of its residents, higher than, for instance, that of people inhabiting the neighbouring settlements.

The state of research of the early mediaeval settlements located in the vicinity of Sandomierz is clearly insufficient. Only the settlements in Kaczyce (Lipnik Gmina/Commune),⁸ Głazów (Obrazów Commune),⁹ Zawichost-Podgórze (Zawichost Commune)¹⁰ and the one from so-called Żmigród in Opatów (Opatów Commune)¹¹ have been excavated – but to a limited extent. Thus, the practically sole method of comparing the wealth of Sandomierz residents with that of people inhabiting the neighbouring settlements relies on materials discovered in the cemeteries – on what is found in graves and was intentionally deposited together with the dead, and especially, what is referred to as grave goods.

Maria Miśkiewicz – in her paper from 50 years ago dedicated to burial rites followed in early mediaeval inhumation cemeteries – divided items discovered in graves into two categories: direct equipment (adornments and clothing elements in which dead people had been buried) and grave goods. The latter category includes ‘weaponry, knives, everyday use items, coins and magic artefacts’.¹² By and large, this division remains valid. Still, in the case of small knives and artefacts used to strike fire (flint strike-a-lights and firesteels or other iron items that could have substituted them) – when their locations in graves indicate that they were worn attached to the belt or on the neck, it appears that they were rather clothing elements, regardless of their practical functions. Thus they should be treated as direct goods, and not grave goods in the strict sense. Therefore, taking into account a certain arbitrariness of Miśkiewicz’s category, we will refer to all objects deliberately deposited in graves as grave goods.

In the light of the above, we will refer to objects, and sometimes even animals or people, purposely deposited in graves together with the inhumed people – irrespective of the reasons behind placing them there (which, in any case, are usually unclear) – as to grave goods. These may be items belonging to the buried people, associated with them, artefacts which according to the mourners should have been taken by them or could no longer be used by the living. Such offerings – including food, and some-

times people and animals – were supposed to be useful for the dead in the netherworld, or at least to help them in reaching it. This group includes devotional articles and amulets. The category of grave goods also includes artefacts deposited in graves during burial ceremonies – which were supposed to be signs informing the living about the identities and social ranks of the buried – as well as gifts deposited as tokens of respect or memory by the mourners.

There are many possible interpretations of depositing different items in graves together with the buried people. As mentioned before, they are most often unclear to us. We need to bear in mind that graves can include items that were not intentionally deposited. Usually, those got to burial pits by accident after the obsequies and can come from earlier or later times than the graves. There are also other cases which not always can be easily interpreted. Arrowheads discovered in graves can serve as an example here. They might have been lodged in the bodies of the buried people – most probably being the cause of their death – and not extracted afterwards. This is the case in two graves from the cemetery located on the Old Town Hill in Sandomierz, where arrowheads were embedded in the spines of the people buried in these funerary features.¹³ Here, their interpretation is obvious. A different situation is when we find an arrowhead among the bones of a buried individual. It is difficult to determine if it is a fragment of an arrow lodged in the soft tissue of the inhumed person – being the reason of his or her death – or if it was purposely deposited in the grave, for example, as a gift or symbol of the buried individual’s affiliation to the warrior class. Another possible explanation is that such an arrowhead got inside with the soil used to refill the grave. The same can be said about such items as knives, sickles, large nails etc. They might have been funerary offerings or equipment used by the buried people on their way to the netherworld, but we cannot rule out the possibility that they got to their graves as a result of performing so-called ‘anti-vampire’ measures, like those recorded in many early mediaeval cemeteries.¹⁴

The extent to which grave goods and forms of graves reflect the actual material standing of people inhumed in early mediaeval burials is debatable. During the discussed period – in the 11th and 12th centuries AD – whether graves were equipped or not (and if so, with what items) depended on many factors, such as local customs concerning the ways of burying the dead, the extent to which Christianity was accepted (as it played

⁷ Florek 2017.

⁸ Buko 2000; 2003.

⁹ Florek 2020.

¹⁰ Balcer 1966.

¹¹ Florek 2000; Wysocki 2013.

¹² Miśkiewicz 1969, 249.

¹³ Cf. Florek 2019a, 40; Florek, Stempin 2019, 88–89.

¹⁴ Cf. Żydok 2004; Gardela 2012; Gardela, Kajokowski 2013.

a unifying role in funerary rites) or the actual wealth of the buried people. A certain role might also have been played by family traditions and individual decisions to manifest, for example, the wealth of the buried individuals (or that of their families or mourners), as well as exceptional grief caused by the death of a close person. The latter situation appears to be especially pertinent in the case of certain child burials, equipped above standard with adornments and sometimes also with other artefacts, which appears to stand contrary to the position of a child in mediaeval society. On the other hand, when discussing inventories and forms of graves in the context of Christian funerary rituals, we need to bear in mind that Christianity encompasses two partly contradictory doctrines.¹⁵ The sources of the first can be traced in the ambivalent attitude of this religion toward the body or, in a broader context, to the material world. The body is treated as the prison of the spirit or soul. At the same time it is treated as 'the temple of the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor. 6:19).¹⁶ Also the material world itself – including goods and wealth in general – were believed to distract people from God, and to make it difficult for them to connect with him or even to be an obstacle on their way to salvation. Here, we can quote the words of Christ that 'it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for someone rich to enter the kingdom of Heaven' (Matt. 19:24). This sentiment was echoed by the lack of care paid to graves as well as to the ways of burying the dead and to what would happen to the body – typical not only of early Christianity – in keeping with the expression 'for dust you are and to dust you shall return' from the Book of Genesis (Gen. 3:19).

As a consequence, the forms of burial and funerary features of even very wealthy people can be ostentatiously modest. They can be simple earth graves containing bodies wrapped only in shrouds – in imitation of the Christ – or lacking any signs that would attest to the social standing of the buried people (except for the possible choice concerning the location of the grave), etc. On the other hand, Christian funerary customs – with the exception of their earliest stages – are still characterised by the desire to manifest the identities of the buried people (which was adopted from pagan traditions), including their social and material standing, as well as the feeling of loss and grief shared by the mourners. This manifestation might have consisted, for example, in inhuming the deceased in ceremonial robes reflecting their social functions, as well as with the insignia of power and other items indicating the posts held by them during their lives or their social positions (this group of artefacts includes

weaponry). Such feelings might also have been expressed by depositing in graves items that the buried people simply liked or were attached to. Although it is possible that they were sometimes the same types of items as those found in pagan graves, what counted was the intention (purpose) of such procedures. They were not supposed to serve the buried people in the afterlife – this motivation for furnishing graves was condemned by the Church – but to show who the dead individuals were and to manifest the feeling of loss after their death. Another factor is the Christian conviction that wealth, fortune and high social standing are the proof of God's grace, evidence of his protection, and as such, are good by definition. Thus, presenting the riches of deceased individuals during funerary ceremonies would be the confirmation of special favours bestowed on them by God during their lives.

Most often, it is very difficult to establish the intentions behind furnishing early mediaeval graves with different items. Consequently, there is a high risk of error in determining – based on discovered inventories – whether a given grave was created for a Christian or a pagan, as well as whether it was intended for someone rich or poor.

Bearing in mind all the above-presented stipulations, we can assume that in the case of the Early Middle Ages and relatively small, dense territories – where we can assume similar extents of accepting Christianity as well as relatively uniform traditions and customs of local populations – grave inventories from cemeteries should reflect the wealth of the buried people. At the same time, certain visible deviations from local standards of furnishing graves can indicate a foreign origin of certain individuals or of whole groups. They can also reflect their special standing in a given society.

Early mediaeval cemeteries from Sandomierz and its vicinity

On the territory of early mediaeval Sandomierz, between the end of the 10th and the middle of the 12th century, there were at least three non-churchyard row cemeteries. They are located on the Town Hill, Old Town Hill and so-called Reformackie Hill (Fig. 1).

The cemetery on the Town Hill was in use from the turn of the 11th century – at any rate, its earliest graves were dated to this period – to the end of the 11th century, or even somewhat longer. At its greatest extent, it covered the northern and middle part of the hill, reaching the site occupied today by the market square. In 1286, the location of the town in this place resulted in the destruction

¹⁵ Cf. Dzieduszyccy, Wrzesiński 2005, 311–312.

¹⁶ All Bible quotations are taken from the New Jerusalem Bible (NJB).

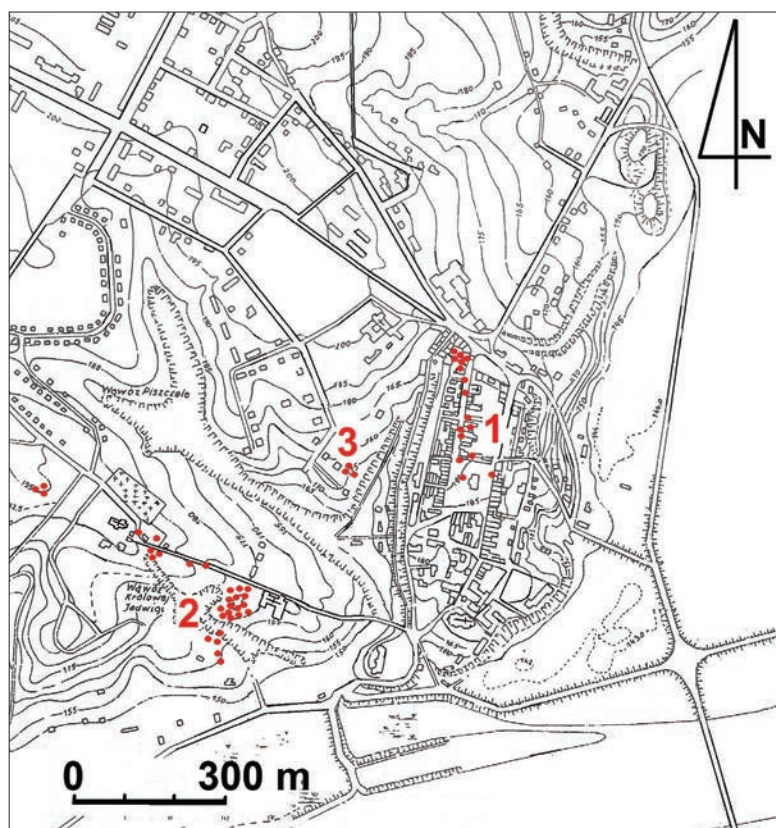


Fig. 1. Early mediaeval cemeteries in Sandomierz: 1 – cemetery on the Town Hill; 2 – cemetery on the Old Town Hill; 3 – cemetery on the Reformackie Hill (image by M. Florek).

of the greater part of the cemetery by later buildings. The site is known for many serendipitous discoveries – the first documented finds in the vicinity of the town hall were made as early as in mid-19th century – and rescue excavations conducted between 2013 and 2015.¹⁷ The latter led to the identifying of the cemetery's oldest part and several graves whose forms resemble so-called chamber tombs. Admittedly, no classical wooden chambers were found inside, but the burial pits dug into the loess were evidently larger than those of other graves from Sandomierz, and the people buried inside of them were laid in wooden coffins (boxes). What is more, at least in one case (grave no. 9, discovered in 2015), the walls of the structure were timbered and it was surrounded with a palisade.¹⁸ In total, we know of at least 17 graves from the cemetery on the Town Hill that were dated from the turn of the 11th century to the end of the 11th century. Ten of them (almost 60%) were equipped with grave goods.

The next cemetery, located on the Old Town Hill, comes from more or less the same period. Its earliest known grave was dated to the end of the 10th century.¹⁹

The cemetery ceased to be used in the 12th century, when the first churches – of St John and St James the Apostle – started functioning in the adjacent settlement (and first churchyards along with them). Nevertheless, we cannot rule out the possibility that people were still sporadically buried there in the Late Middle Ages.²⁰ The cemetery encompassed a considerable part of the hill, from its top to the middle part of the slope that descends to the valley of the Vistula, more or less to the site where the Dominican Order monastery was erected in the first half of the 13th century.²¹ The cemetery is mainly known from excavations carried out in the years 1928–1929 by Józef Żurowski. Their results were published in 1969 by Jerzy Gąsowski.²² The actual number of early mediaeval graves discovered then is not certain. Different sources mention 173, 185 or even 228 excavated features.²³ In later years, ten other graves from the same cemetery were recorded – one in 1971, two in 2002, one in 2006, three in 2011 and three in 2016.²⁴ An unspecified, albeit considerable, number of graves were destroyed as a result of performing different field and construction works, including the

¹⁷ Florek 2012; Bajka, Florek 2015; Bajka *et al.* 2016.

¹⁸ Bajka, Florek 2015; Błaszczuk *et al.* 2018.

¹⁹ Florek 2019a, 49.

²⁰ Florek 2012, 48–52.

²¹ Florek 2019a, 48–50.

²² Gąsowski 1969, 399–434.

²³ Cf. Florek 2019a, 39–40.

²⁴ Florek 2019a, 42–44.

building of the Catholic Secondary School in the early 1930s. We have some precise information about slightly more than 180 graves from this cemetery, 80 of which (ca. 40%) were furnished with grave goods.

The third burial ground – known from only two serendipitously discovered graves without inventories – was located on the so-called Reformackie Hill.²⁵

As we can see, over 200 graves on which we have some additional information have been discovered in the three above-presented non-churchyard cemeteries. Ninety of them (45%) were equipped with inventories. Nevertheless, in only 31 funerary features (ca. 15%) these were not items of personal use.

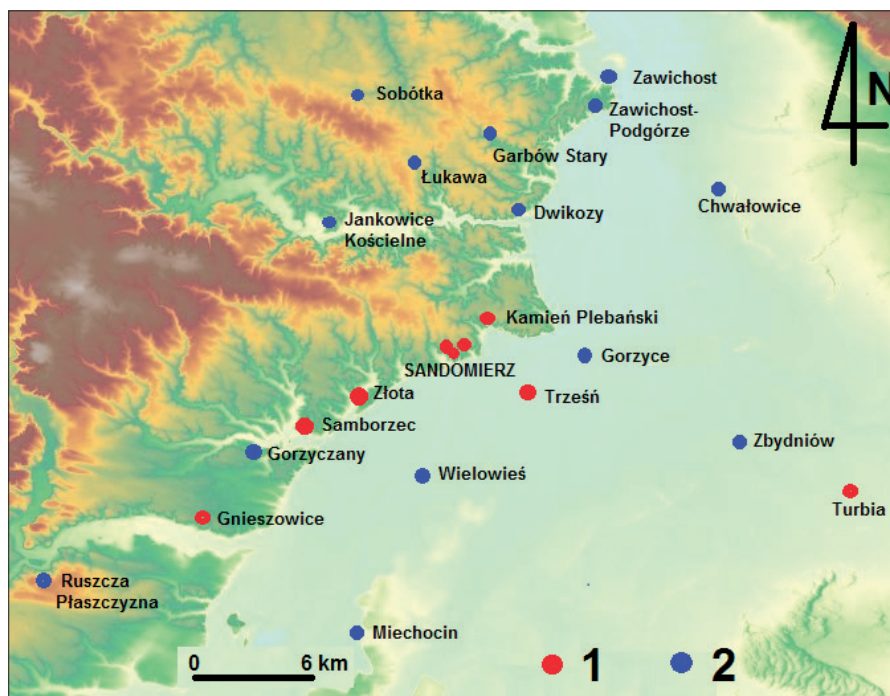
Twenty attested or supposed inhumation non-churchyard cemeteries, dating to the period from the end of the 10th to the beginning of the 12th century, are known from the nearest vicinity of Sandomierz – territories located no more than about 20 km from the town (Fig. 2). Six of them were excavated to different extents. These are the burial grounds in Gnieszowice, Samborzec, Kamień Plebański, Trześń, Turbia, Zawichost-Podgórze and Złota.²⁶

In Kamień Plebański – which is today part of Sandomierz – 12 graves were researched. Five of them

(46%) were equipped with personal goods.²⁷ In the serendipitously discovered cemetery from Gnieszowice, nine graves were analyzed. Five of them (55%) were equipped with inventories.²⁸ In Trześń, seven out of 14 discovered graves (50%) were furnished with personal goods.²⁹ In Turbia, no more than two graves were found – both with inventories.³⁰ Only one grave was discovered in Zawichost-Podgórze, but it contained a battle-axe.³¹ Part of the cemetery in Złota with 23 graves was re-searched as early as in the interwar period. Sixteen of the excavated funerary features (70%) contained inventories.³² The greatest number of graves (68) were excavated in Samborzec. Forty-one of them (60%) contained inventories.³³ As we can see, we have information concerning about 129 graves from six cemeteries located near Sandomierz. Seventy-seven of them (almost 60% of the total number) were equipped.

We know about items discovered in graves from five other cemeteries, located in Dwikozy, Garbów Stary, Ruszcza-Płaszczyna, Tarnobrzeg-Miechocin and Zawichost. Nevertheless, we do not know anything about the number of burials at these sites and it is impossible to attribute particular inventories to specific graves.

Fig. 2. Early mediaeval cemeteries located in the vicinity of Sandomierz: 1 – excavated cemeteries; 2 – cemeteries known only from serendipitous finds (image by M. Florek).



²⁵ Florek 2012, 48.

²⁶ Florek 2004, 326–328.

²⁷ Florek 2016.

²⁸ Gardawski, Miskiewicz 1956.

²⁹ Florek *et al.* 2000.

³⁰ Zoll-Adamikowa 1966, 116.

³¹ Balcer 1966, 370–373.

³² Gąsowski 1953.

³³ Bartys 1936; Sarama 1956.

Grave inventories from early mediaeval graves discovered in Sandomierz and in its vicinity

Both the cemeteries discovered in Sandomierz and those from the neighbouring areas contained the same categories of items – this statement concerns direct (personal) goods as well as funerary offerings.

The most common category of personal equipment – found in both male and female graves – are knives. In Sandomierz they occurred in 30 graves. In two cases knives – together with firesteels and strike-a-lights – were elements of sets used for striking fire. Of those, however, the set found in one of the oldest – dated to the turn of the 11th century – and most richly equipped graves from the cemetery on the Town Hill was deposited on the lid of the coffin (box) containing the body. The set should, therefore, be considered as a gift rather than an element of personal equipment. Knives were discovered in 51 excavated graves from the cemeteries located in the vicinity of Sandomierz. In one grave from Złota a knife was found together with a firesteel and a flint strike-a-light, and was most probably an element of a set used for striking fire. We also know that knives were found in graves from Ruszcza-Płaszczyna, Dwikozy and Garbów Stary.

The second most numerous artefact category are temple rings. They were made of silver, tin alloys or copper alloys.³⁴ Temple rings made of copper alloys were sometimes silver-plated. Most often, such artefacts are hollow, with smaller specimens also made of wire. Sporadically, they are woven of fine wire, or hollow with ornaments composed of fine pieces of wire soldered with the use of a technique resembling filigree. All in all, they represent different variants of type III, especially IIIB and IIIC, according to the classification by K. Musianowicz.³⁵ Temple rings were discovered in 28 graves from Sandomierz and 28 features from six cemeteries located in its vicinity. Most often, they occurred in pairs (two specimens). Less frequently archaeologists found one, three or four such artefacts. In single cases there were even more such adornments in a single grave, but their number did not exceed ten. We know that temple rings were discovered in an unspecified number of graves from Dwikozy, Garbów Stary and Tarnobrzeg-Miechocin.

Glass beads, beads made of semi-precious stones or (in extremely rare cases) of metals, discovered as elements of necklaces or other adornments, but sometimes occurring individually, were found in 17 graves from Sandomierz and in nine graves from cemeteries located in its vicinity (7% of all the analyzed funerary features). We know that

they occurred in at least one grave from Garbów Stary. The same applies to the burial ground in Zawichost.

Metal band rings (circles) – silver or copper alloys, made of wire, hollow or woven of fine wire pieces – as well as those made of glass were discovered in 17 graves from Sandomierz and in nine graves from the cemeteries located in its vicinity. Not all of them should be considered finger adornments, which is indicated by their locations in graves. Such artefacts occur in graves individually or in pairs (in the latter case each adornment is usually made of different material).

The remaining artefacts considered personal equipment (adornments and clothing elements) were discovered in single graves. A so-called lyre-shaped belt buckle occurred only in one grave from Sandomierz, in the burial ground on the Old Town Hill. What is interesting, at least four belt elements of this type were found on the territory of the neighbouring settlement dated to the same time as this cemetery. A single lyre-shaped belt buckle occurred in three graves from cemeteries located outside Sandomierz – in Samborzec, Kamień Plebański and Garbów Stary. Horseshoe-shaped fibulae (copper alloy, one with an iron needle) were discovered in only two graves dated to the earliest phase of the cemetery on the Town Hill in Sandomierz. At the same time, so-called ringed pins (brooches with a long needle) – which must have played a similar function – occurred in only two graves from the cemeteries in Złota and Ruszcza-Płaszczyna.

Artefacts representing other adornment categories are basically single specimens. For example, a necklace woven of copper alloy wire was discovered in a grave from the burial ground located on the Old Town Hill in Sandomierz. A necklace made of fine silver wires occurred in a grave from the cemetery in Złota. Pendants made of animal teeth and shells – possibly used as amulets rather than adornments – were found in two graves from Sandomierz and in two features from burial grounds located near the town (in Samborzec and Gnieszowice).

It should be stressed that there were generally no adornments of considerable value discovered in the Sandomierz cemeteries or in those from the vicinity of the town. They are represented only by a silver open bracelet with ends in the form of stylised animal heads and by a silver *kaptorga* ornamented with filigree – both discovered in graves from the cemetery on the Old Town Hill in Sandomierz – as well as by a silver-plated copper alloy medallion with a representation of an imaginary animal found in the cemetery in Ruszcza-Płaszczyna.

The other group of inventories – funerary offerings in a broad sense – is composed of items deposited in graves

³⁴ According to unpublished chemical analyses, the temple rings described as silver are made of an alloy containing mainly tin.

³⁵ Musianowicz 1949, 132–155.

together with the buried people. As mentioned before, the aims of these actions may be different and usually difficult if not impossible to interpret today. Items included in this category and discovered in the cemeteries located in Sandomierz and in its vicinity include coins, spindle whorls, vessels (both clay pots and wooden buckets), possibly also fragments of clay vessels, weaponry, animal bones (probably remains of meat foods) and – very rarely – other items.

Single coins (only in one case two specimens were found in a single grave) – mainly dated to the second half of the 11th century – were discovered in Sandomierz in ten graves. They also occurred in five graves from three burial grounds located in the vicinity of the town (nearly 4% of the total number) – in one grave from Turbia, one from Złota and three from Samborzec. We know that such artefacts were also elements of grave inventories from Ruszcza-Płaszczyna. As ritual functions are often attributed to them,³⁶ coins do not appear to be good indicators of the wealth of the buried people.

The second most numerous category of grave goods is represented by clay vessels and wooden buckets. In the case of the latter, the preserved elements are metal bands, fittings and handles. They occur in both male and female graves. We do not know whether such artefacts constituted gifts in and of themselves or if they were mainly used as containers with food and drinks for the buried people to be used on their way to the afterworld. In this regard, we should bear in mind that in two funerary features (graves 6 and 8, discovered in 2013–2015 at the cemetery on the Town Hill), clay vessel were found in a kind of wooden boxes or compartments located in the corners of the discovered coffins, as if in order to additionally secure them.

Clay vessels occurred in seven graves from Sandomierz and in five funerary features from burial sites located outside the town – four in Złota and one in Samborzec. Three clay containers were found – as we assume – in three different graves come from the serendipitously discovered cemetery in Garbów Stary. At the same time, buckets with metal fittings occurred in two graves from Sandomierz (both were found on the Old Town Hill), three from Samborzec and one from Gnieszowice.

In the case of fragments of clay vessels – from the cemeteries in Sandomierz and those located in its vicinity – we cannot be certain whether they were intentionally deposited or if they got there by accident (usually some time later).

Another category of grave goods is represented by weaponry (battle-axes and arrowheads exclusively). It is worth noting that militaria occurring in the graves from Sandomierz and its vicinity – just as across the whole

Lesser Poland region – are much less common than in Central Poland, Greater Poland and Mazovia. Certainly, this lack of weaponry does not mean that none of the buried people were warriors.³⁷

Battle-axes occurred in only one grave in Sandomierz, one in Złota and one in Zawichost-Podgórze. The latter, serendipitously discovered funerary feature was probably part of an inhumation cemetery whose precise location is unfortunately impossible to determine with certainty. One or two iron arrowheads from one of the graves in Złota should probably be considered as intentionally deposited. On the other hand, the arrowheads lodged in the spines of two people buried in the burial ground on the Old Town Hill in Sandomierz were most probably the cause of their deaths and not elements of grave inventories.

Everyday use items – aside from spindle whorls – were exceptionally rare among grave goods. A hone occurred in a grave from Samborzec, an ornamented bone needle case was also found in Samborzec. An artefact referred to as a fishhook was discovered in the cemetery in Gnieszowice. Spindle whorls come from five graves located in Sandomierz – three from the cemetery on the Old Town Hill and two from the burial ground on the Town Hill. Spindle whorls are usually thought to have been deposited in female graves, but one of the artefacts found on the Town Hill occurred in a funerary feature in which a man had been buried (grave 9). Another item of this type was also found in one of the two graves from Turbia. The above-discussed artefacts conclude the list of the grave goods found in the early mediaeval cemeteries located in Sandomierz and its vicinity.

Conclusions: Wealth of the people residing in Sandomierz and the neighbouring settlements during the 11th and 12th centuries in the light of the materials yielded by the cemeteries

In comparison with similar cemeteries from Greater Poland, Pomerania, Central Poland or Mazovia dated to the same period, the burial grounds discovered in Sandomierz and its surroundings – just as those from other parts of Lesser Poland – appear to be remarkably modest in regard to the percentage of the furnished graves and, especially, the number and quality of items deposited as elements of grave inventories. This applies to both personal equipment – including adornments and clothing elements – and (perhaps especially) items

³⁶ Cf. Miechowicz 2011; Wachowski 1992.

³⁷ Cf. Sikora 2014.

offered to the buried people and deposited with them in their graves (e.g. weaponry). What is more, in the case of the graves located in the vicinity of Sandomierz and containing various artefacts – including vessels and weapons – we have reasons to suspect that they contain the remains of people who came there from elsewhere and followed funerary traditions that differed from the local customs.³⁸ This fact indicates that the regional funerary rituals prevalent during the 11th–12th centuries and limited to Sandomierz and its vicinity – or, more generally, to the whole region of Lesser Poland – did not involve equipping the dead with different items or burying them in ceremonial clothing or – in the case of women – inhuming them with their adornments (or these rites included such elements, but to a modest extent). If this was the case, we should attempt to decide what the reasons behind this fact might have been. There are several plausible answers. It appears that we can rule out the possibilities that people residing in Sandomierz and its surroundings were relatively poorer than their contemporaries inhabiting other parts of Poland or that the graves of people representing the local elites have simply not been discovered so far: it appears that grave 19 from the burial ground in Kraków-Zakrzówek³⁹ and grave 9 from the cemetery on the Town Hill in Sandomierz⁴⁰ can be considered elite burials, albeit rather because of their forms and not due to their inventories. It is more probable that the discussed fact results from the early spread of Christian funerary rites, which were adopted with the introduction of the skeletal rite (abandoning cremation and accepting inhumation). Nevertheless, we need to point out that the transition from cremation – which had been popular across this territory – to inhumation, accompanied by Christian-type burial rites, did not necessarily mean the conversion of the whole population to Christianity.⁴¹ In fact, there are indications that the actual acceptance of Christianity by the populations of Sandomierz and the neighbouring settlements took place relatively late, most probably not sooner than in the 12th century.⁴² We cannot exclude that the custom of furnishing graves with modest inventories or not equipping them at all is just the continuation of

earlier burial rites prevalent across this territory in pagan times. The great majority of the analyzed early mediaeval cremation graves from the vicinity of Sandomierz, as well as of those from other parts of Lesser Poland, were furnished neither with personal equipment (adornments, clothing elements) nor with grave offerings.⁴³ It is also possible that both factors had an influence on this state of affairs – the earlier pagan tradition of not equipping graves with inventories, or equipping them in a modest way, was amplified by Christian funerary customs during the time of transition from cremation to inhumation.

The comparison of the inventories of the 11th and 12th century graves from Sandomierz with those discovered in the vicinity of the town compels us to state that in both groups burials furnished with equipment make up about half of the discovered features, and that so-called direct goods – clothing elements, adornments and knives – are predominant. There are no major differences concerning the categories (types) or number of artefacts discovered in the graves. Items not being personal goods (artefacts that can be included in the broad category of funerary offerings) – vessels (both containers made of clay and wooden buckets) and sporadically weaponry or other artefacts – were found only in burials from the earliest phases of the cemeteries, dated to the turn of the 11th century, as well as in those from the 11th century. At the same time, there are many signs that at least some of them are graves of people who arrived to this region from other territories.

Therefore, grave inventories seem to indicate that the wealth levels of Sandomierz residents and of people from the neighbouring settlements buried in non-churchyard cemeteries were similar, but this assumption is not conclusive. The lack of differences in the grave inventories may be simply the result of the contemporary local customs prevalent in Sandomierz and in its neighbourhood. Another question is whether such customs were the continuation of earlier regional traditions, whether they resulted from adopting Christian funerary rites, or whether both factors influenced this state of affairs.

Translated by Piotr Moskala

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³⁸ Cf. Florek 2004; 2019b; Błaszczuk *et al.* 2018.

³⁹ Cf. Błaszczuk *et al.* 2015, further literature therein.

⁴⁰ Bajka, Florek 2015.

⁴¹ Cf. Florek 2015.

⁴² Florek 2019b.

⁴³ Cf. Zoll-Adamikowa 1979; Florek 2011.

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MAŁGORZATA GRUPA

Institute of Archaeology, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń
mgrupa@umk.pl
ORCID 0000-0001-5128-9754

TOMASZ KOZŁOWSKI

Institute of Archaeology, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń
kozlow@umk.pl
ORCID 0000-0001-5242-6095

SELECTED DETERMINANTS OF SOCIAL POSITION AND ELITISM IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDIES OF THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

ABSTRACT

Issues related to luxury relics such as silk textiles were associated in most early medieval discoveries with the movement of Viking groups from north to south and back. These priceless relics were found on burial grounds, and their owners undoubtedly belonged to the economic elite of the population. Parallel anthropological studies

were carried out to see if this elitism is corroborated by individual morphological characteristics of the deceased persons. However, no significant differences defining the elitism of the studied individuals were uncovered. It is the grave furnishings – silk fabrics in particular – that are the most important element in this regard.

Keywords: silk, textiles, Middle Ages, social position, elites

It is extremely difficult to define univocally social elitism as a term, because determinants of belonging to the social elite are not always clear and they change over time. On the one hand, they may belong to the material sphere: exceptional wealth, which can be depicted in preserved artefacts, and is readable in archaeological material. On the other hand, they may be absolutely elusive and not appear on a cultural level, like spiritual values, associated frequently with transcendence and religion (e.g. being a man of God), and personal character features – corresponding with education level, abilities and unique experience possessed but also inherited, where elitism is a consequence of birth in a defined social group.

In archaeology and historical anthropology elitism is difficult to trace, it can only be inferred indirectly. It can be assumed, for instance, that it is manifested by an exposed burial location and/or some peculiarities of the burial ceremony and grave goods. Sometimes we

find indicators of morphological skeleton characteristics evidencing better economic conditions of progressive ontogenetic development during the childhood of a certain individual – in particular when compared to the expression level of the same properties in other population representatives, regarded as average ones. These features include body height and proportions (read from the length of long limb bones), sexual dimorphism¹ and absence of phenotypic skeletal stress markers.² While positioning a person on a historical social gradient, we can also look at some bone survival modifications, like the biomechanical skeleton burden, being a result of predominant forms of physical professional activities.³ Death at an advanced age can also be evidence that this particular individual's life passed in relatively safe and favorable conditions, or at least not in ones negative for his or her health.⁴ All these criteria, however, require a reference to the realities of the period, life

¹ Kozak 1998, 6–7.

² Kozłowski 2012, 14.

³ Kozłowski 1999, 79; Molleson 2007, 6; M. Grupa, Kozłowski 2009, 183.

⁴ Kozak 1998, 7.

environment, particular population features and properties of the biocultural system in which a studied individual had been living.

Our diagnosis may also be influenced by interpretative mistakes regarding the artefacts excavated in graves, which can concern their eschatological meaning, function, origin and even the defining material they were made of, but can also consist in ignoring their existence completely by a modern researcher.

The research carried out in the last century in the areas of early mediaeval fortified settlements and cemeteries has provided sources on the basis of which it is possible to attempt a narrative. These findings are supplemented by a small number of written sources of very varying reliability.⁵ However, let us leave the evaluation and interpretation of written sources to historians.

The article presents some qualitative and quantitative aspects of early mediaeval silk textiles excavated in Polish territories. We concentrate on examples coming from selected cemeteries situated in Vistulan Pomerania – two graves from Kaldus/Culmine (10th–13th c.) and a site located on the opposite bank of the Vistula, in Gruczno (12th–14th c.) (Fig. 1). Evaluating and analyzing the excavated material, the archaeologists concentrated mainly on discussing the unique and exceptionally expensive silk artefacts found in the graves, which due to their delicate and fragile character rarely preserved in earthen burials. Indeed, there is no doubt that due to their high price⁶ and luxurious character, possessing and using silk textiles can signify economic elitism and exceptional wealth. A feature of our research, however, is that we examined both textile and osteological material coming from those sites.

Silk appeared in Poland at the turn of the 11th century,⁷ initially as clothing accessories, in the form of bands and lining for finishing clothes edges and head ornaments. Three centuries later, the originally popular woolen and linen robes and cloaks were replaced among members the highest social class – rulers and courtiers

– by ones made of silk. A silk robe was an explicit symbol of the wealth and power possessed. This continued throughout the ages, hence silk was excavated in the rulers' burials from different periods.⁸

Silk textile fragments were, then, discovered next to metal and glass artefacts and wooden relics of grave framings, but were not always correctly identified, which in consequence falsified the interpretation of grave contents and obscured the exclusiveness of the finds. Most of the textile fragments were found on female skulls and were about 2 cm wide. By the 1980s, some of them were directly interpreted as 'linen',⁹ the others were identified as samite, fabric weaved with golden thread.¹⁰ These bands occurred most often with temple rings, called 'czółko'.¹¹

An example of a silk temple ring was excavated in Gruczno in grave 247 (Fig. 2) in burial ground 1, dating from the 12th century.¹² In a burial of an adult woman, on the scale of the frontal bone – in its middle part, a little above the frontal eminence – fragments of textile (silk band fragments with a geometrical pattern depicting a griffon) have preserved (Fig. 3c). It should be remarked that the grave was exceptionally richly equipped, which suggested an attribution to a representative of the highest local social circle. Apart from the temple ring mentioned above, the grave also contained: a knife, two other temple rings, a bead, a ring, and an unidentified metal object.¹³ We can also remark that in Gruczno relics of silk were likewise excavated in a younger burial place from the 13th–14th century, in a grave of an adult person (Fig. 3d) (burial ground 2, grave 921). Unfortunately, the bones of the dead deposited in those graves have not preserved in a good condition, which was an obstacle in their detailed anthropological analysis. However, the excavated bones are not distinguished by any particular features. Therefore, if the bones had been excavated without rich material equipment, and, above all, if the silk had not been correctly interpreted, the skeletons would not have been attributed to a representative of the elite.

⁵ Ibn Rosteh 1977; Ibn Fadlan 1985; Frankopan 2015. It was the Vikings who mostly imported luxury goods into northern Europe. For more on the prices of silk fabrics, slaves and dirham treasures, see the following publications: Rybakov 1948, 339–340; Lewicki 1956; Duczko 2006; M. Grupa 2009a; 2018; Adamczyk 2018.

⁶ A 2-cm-wide band made of silk with a pattern of metal thread cost more or less as much as an iron helmet, chain armour and a sword with a belt (Crowfoot, Chadwick Hawkes 1967, 59, 62; M. Grupa 2009a, 218).

⁷ Although the silk found in the Wolin stratification is said to date to the 9th century, the authors believe that this hypothesis should be approached with great caution. Current research on Wolin will perhaps verify the earlier findings.

⁸ Turska 1989; M. Grupa 2009b.

⁹ Boguwolski, Hyss 2005, 21; Bojarski 2020, 408. Flax textiles preserve exceptionally rarely in earthen deposits. In our climatic zone they usually decompose within 5–10 years (M. Grupa 2009a, 220).

¹⁰ Bender *et al.* 1957, 169–189; Belniak *et al.* 1961; Rauhut 1956, 78–81; Kóčka-Krenz 1993, 41.

¹¹ Temple rings and 'czółko' were common female headdresses in the Slavic region (Kóčka-Krenz 1993, 42). Their different sizes and types are being excavated practically all around Central Europe, starting with Balkan Peninsula (Croatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina) and finishing with Estonia and Latvia (Nowosad *et al.* 2018, 82).

¹² M. Grupa 2009a, 215.

¹³ Boguwolski, Hyss 2005, 21.

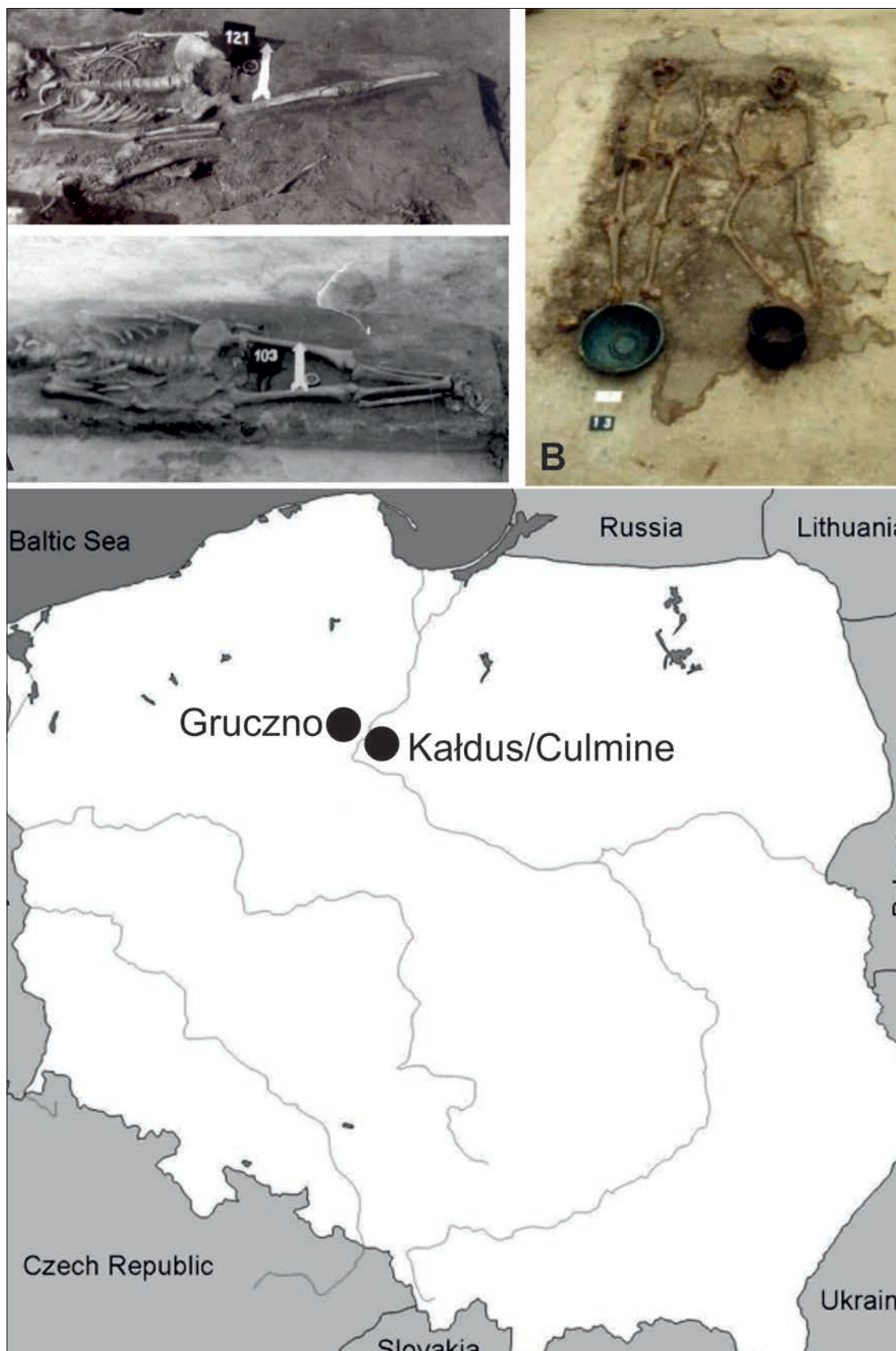


Fig. 1. Location of Gruczno and Kałdus on the map of Poland: A – burials in Gruczno (photo by A. Florkowski); B – double richly furnished grave in Kałdus/Culmine (archives of UMK).

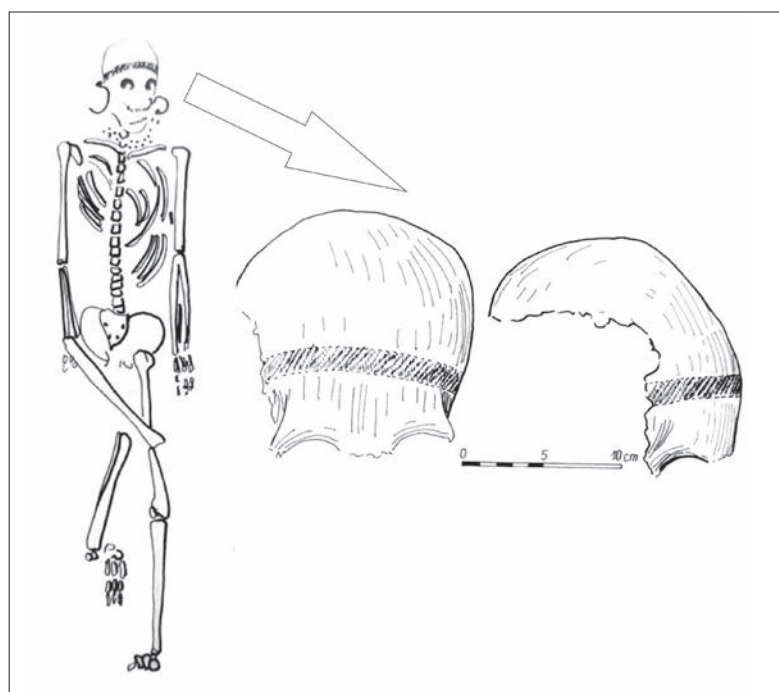


Fig. 2. Skeleton of an adult woman from grave 247 at the cemetery in Gruczno (site 1). Relics of a silk band on the frontal skull bone (after Boguwolski and Hyss 2005).

Fragments of silk were also excavated in the cemetery in Kałdus (sites 1, 2, and 4), in Vistulan Pomerania. The graves are dated to the 10th to 11th century.¹⁴ Burials containing identified silk textiles include: grave 90/98, belonging to a female who died at the age 22–35 (Figs 4, 5); grave 87/01, being a burial of a young woman (25–30 years old at the moment of death); grave 272/01, belonging to a female of similar age as in grave 290 (Fig. 3b). Grave 76 (site 4), of an adult individual of unidentified sex, apart from four fragments of a silk band (with relics of metal braid readable only under a microscope), also contained a processed flint and an iron knife. Textile bands excavated outside graves belong to very rare finds. In the Kałdus settlement (site 2), a 10-mm-wide band rolled up tightly (Fig. 3a) was excavated, which could have been used as the lining of a neck opening or sleeves or as a temple ring. In the case of Kałdus, grave 90/98 mentioned above is particularly interesting because it contained not only a silk band with a pattern usual in Europe (insects – namely, butterflies – Fig. 3f) but also 1,252 glass beads and one made of crystal, two temple rings, a bronze tin, a nail, a ring and an iron knife in a case¹⁵ with bronze fittings. The beads' composition

around the skull suggests that they had been used as headdresses. In contrast, the ones situated under the mandible could have been a necklace accentuating the husband's wealth, as beads and strings were not only ornaments but also manifestations of the family fortune.

It must be stated, however, that taking osteological criteria into account, it is impossible to observe any significant morphological features of the elite character in those individuals. On the other hand, the examined bones did not bear any signs of pathological characteristics resulting from nourishment deficiency, traumas during the lifetime or chronic diseases. These facts may correspond with elite character, but not necessarily so. The age of death can also be classified as average for this population.

Analyses of temple rings excavated in Poland and bands originating from Scandinavia indicate two basic techniques of their manufacturing – using reed and tablet looms (both techniques known in Europe since prehistoric times).¹⁶ Examining early mediaeval finds, we can see both techniques used simultaneously in one object. Bands from Brześć Kujawski,¹⁷ Gdańsk,¹⁸ Gruczno,¹⁹ Kałdus,²⁰ Pień,²¹ Czekanów,²² and Gródek Nadbużny²³ were made that way²⁴ and the used weave was called *samitum*.²⁵

¹⁴ Chudziak 2010; Bojarski 2020.

¹⁵ Unfortunately, the leather was destroyed completely.

¹⁶ M. Grupa 2012, 153–157.

¹⁷ Moszczyński 1990, 131–135.

¹⁸ Kamińska, Nahlík 1958, 106–111.

¹⁹ M. Grupa 2009a, 215.

²⁰ M. Grupa 2006, 141–143; 2007a, 108–111; 2007b, 276–278; Bojarski *et al.* 2010, 462, 466, 494, 529.

²¹ Janowski 2015, 105; M. Grupa 2018, 249; 2020, 367–375.

²² Zawadzka-Antosik 2003, 329.

²³ Cybulska *et al.* 2018, 743.

²⁴ M. Grupa 2012, 155.

²⁵ Maik 1988, 86; 1991, 69; M. Grupa 2006: 141; 2007a, 109–110.

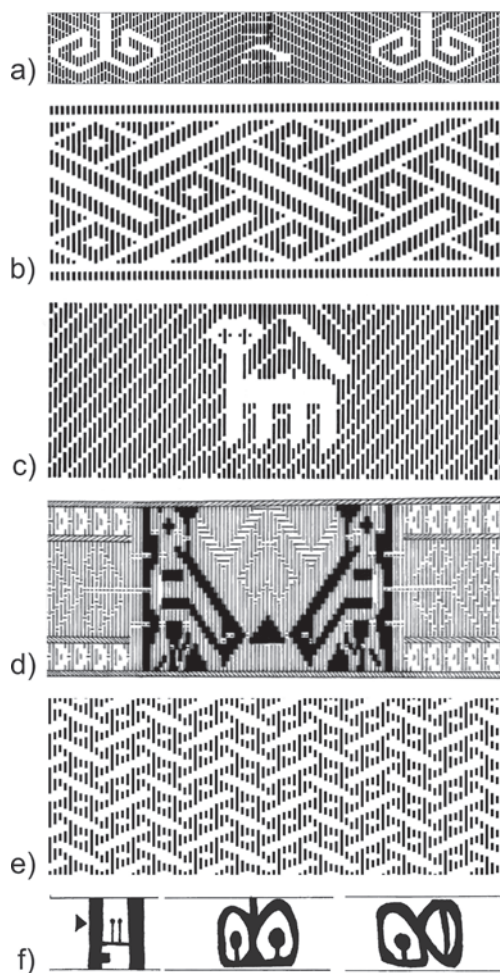


Fig. 3. Registry of decorative patterns on early mediaeval bands: a, b, f – Kałdus; c, d – Gruczno; e – Pień (drawing by M. Grupa, D. Grupa).

The *samitum* weave usually had the second weft as the one shaping a pattern on a tape, and the pattern itself varied from a simple geometrical one (Figs 3b, e) to images of different stylized animals: griffons (Figs 3a, c, d) and butterflies (Fig. 3f), or unidentified patterns.²⁶ Besides woven bands, the researchers also found silk



Fig. 4. Kałdus, skull from grave 90/98 with silk temple band *in situ* (archives of UMK).

fragments with embroidery made with silk thread. The earliest examples in the Polish lands were reported in Gródek Nadbużny. One of them had embroidery made with golden thread, representing branches with leaves separated by arcades. The other had a basic motif of colourful circles surrounded by a border of winding branches. The ornament was embroidered on silk textile lined with leather, 3.7 cm wide.²⁷ Bartkiewicz supposes that it could have been a collar-necklace, but also a headdress of a temple ring type. In its construction, the band resembled the relics of a temple ring excavated in the burial place in Skrwilno,²⁸ but instead of embroidery, that band had brass-plate floral appliques. The headdresses from Płonkovo²⁹ might have been manufactured similarly.³⁰

At a site at Czekanowo, Sokołów Podlaski Powiat/ District (site 1, so-called Turkish graves), explored in 1983, a female grave (died aged 25–30) contained textile fragments resting on the left clavicle and cervical vertebrae.³¹ Two silk fragments sewn together, sized 4.2 × 9.3 cm (diagonal weave, rows) and 4.2 × 1.7 cm (plain 1/1 weave), were lined with a 1.8-cm-wide silk band,³² called *samitum* in the publication. The textiles situated inside were

²⁶ M. Grupa 2006, 141–143; 2007a, 108–111; 2007b, 276–278; 2009a, 215. Publications concerning the material from Niewiarowo-Sochy and Złota Sandomierska include the descriptions: ‘a belt of samitum’ and ‘textile with a gold thread’. Most probably they were textiles with ornament shaped with an additional weft or warp with metal braiding.

²⁷ Gutkowska-Rychlewska 1968, 270; Bartkiewicz 1979, 14–15.

²⁸ Chudziakowa 1972, 152–153.

²⁹ In Płonkovo the researchers did not excavate any textiles or signs thereof, but two skulls were found with brass plate ap-

pliques, in the middle of which there were holes for an ellipsoid link to a small tin pendant; a similar find was also recorded in Skrwilno (Nowosad *et al.* 2018, 82–83).

³⁰ Nowosad *et al.* 2018, 83.

³¹ Zawadzka-Antosik 2003, 327–333.

³² Zawadzka-Antosik informs us that it is a pure double textile, with double warp, but not if it is a fragment cut from a bigger piece or a separate band (if a warp is mentioned, it means that the weaving edge is known) which resembles bands with geometrical pattern excavated in Kałdus (M. Grupa 2007a, 108–110).

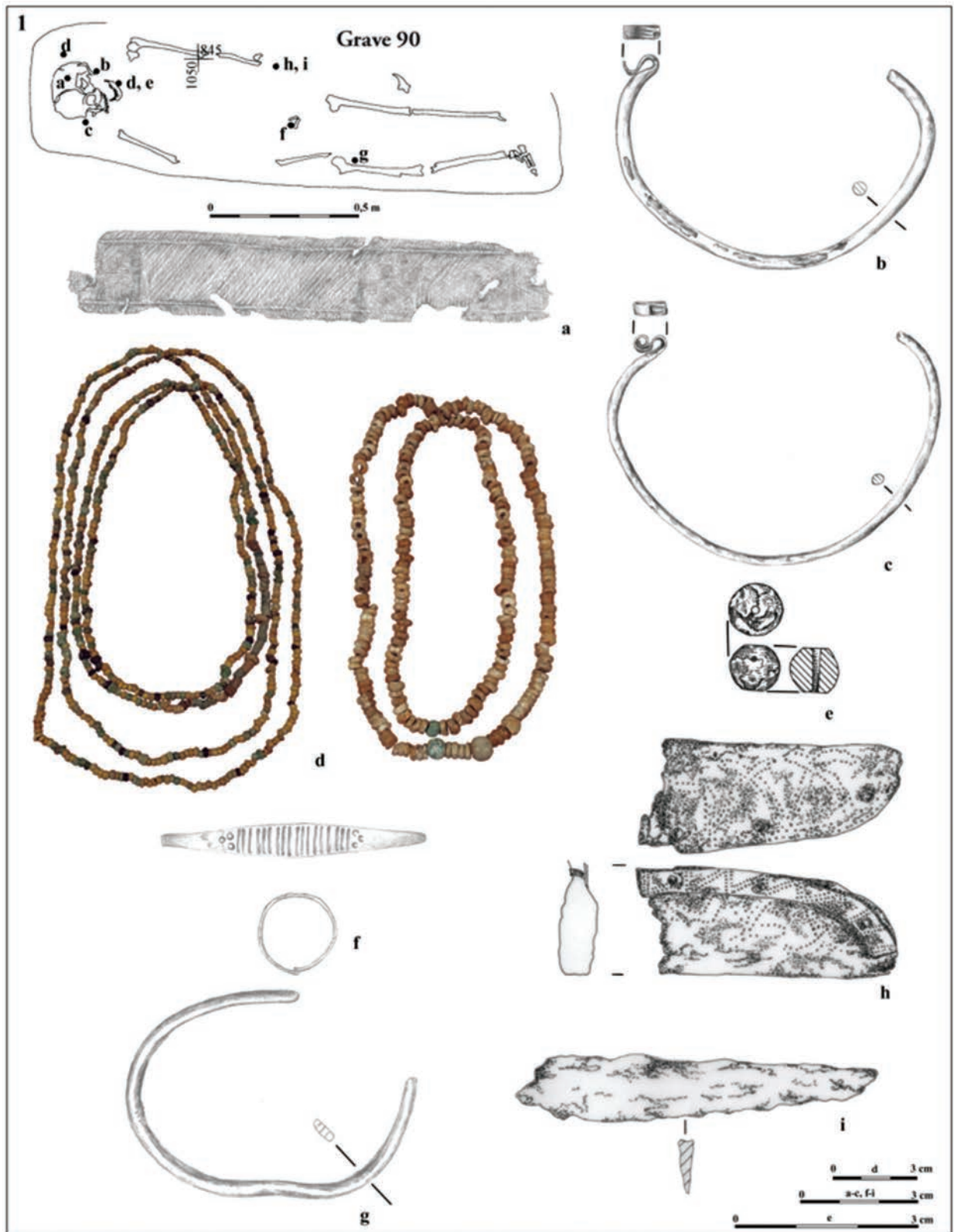


Fig. 5. Equipment of grave 90/98: a – silk temple band with a ‘butterflies’ ornament; b, c – temple rings; d – bead strings; e – bead of crystal; f – ring; g – bronze wire; h – leather case fitting; i – a fragment of an iron knife (archives of UMK).



Fig. 6. Pień, a close-up of a long interweaving shaping a pattern (photo by D. Grupa).

additionally embroidered using silk thread with a metal braid. The whole structure was placed on a piece of birch bark, and the most probably bronze buttons must have been stitched along the rim, since they were found in the textile's closest vicinity. A similar structure – textile appliques on birch bark – was found in Stara Riazan',³³ where this element was called a collar. The grave in Stara Riazan' is dated to the 12th century and is classified as a ducal grave.

A textile fragment excavated in Gdańsk-Oliwa, in a grave dating from the 13th century, can be interpreted similarly. Here the ornament was also shaped using thread with a metal braid,³⁴ but it is difficult to establish if it was a separate band or a cut textile fragment.

Not all bands were used as temple rings or lining of clothes rims. Near the pelvis of a dead child from the cemetery in Pień near Bydgoszcz, a band with geometrical ornament reminding rhomboid patterns from Kałdus was excavated (Fig. 3e). The band's both ends were fitted with gilded tins, decorated with small spherical bells. These types of bells were usually fixed to various belts, textile or leather, but the band from Pień belongs to exceptionally luxurious grave goods. The child may have been dressed in a big linen robe reaching at least its ankles and the silk belt with golden ornament was a particularly elegant and expensive accessory. The male grave from the same site (grave 15) contained on the bottom of a bronze bowl a piece of silk textile in plain 1/1 weave. Microscope analyses revealed a very delicate pattern created by longer interlaces – two neighbouring warp threads were drawn

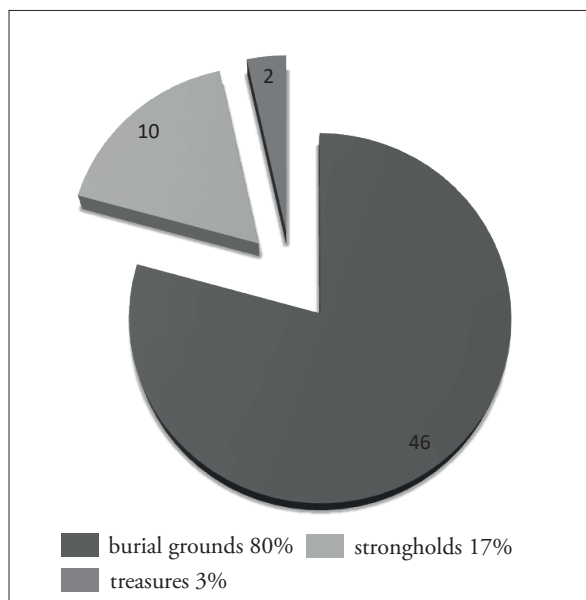


Fig. 7. Character of the early mediaeval site/deposit in which relics of silk fabrics were excavated (compiled by M. Grupa, T. Kozłowski).

through five threads of weft (Fig. 6). Despite its rich and varied furnishings, which included an iron axe tinctured with silver and copper, a wooden bucket with iron bands, a wooden scoop, perhaps a wooden plate, a whetstone made of phyllite, and an iron knife,³⁵ it should be noted that it was the silk fabric that was its most valuable item.³⁶

Silk merchants also reached 11th-century Wrocław, where 7 fragments of this fabric were found in a pagan temple. In this case, they were also fabrics with very different weaves (1/1, 3/1, combined) and different thread densities per 1 cm.³⁷

It should also be added that apart from the material from burial grounds, silk textiles were excavated at the stronghold sites, as well: in Opole, Gdańsk, and Wolin (Fig. 7).³⁸ The treasures, containing, among other elements, Arabic coins, sometimes jewellery, and textiles, belong to unique finds. This coexistence of silk and items of substantial worth in the same deposits evidences that the value of silk textiles was high and they were accumulated and protected like gold and precious jewels. We can quote here examples of treasures from Olbrachtówek and Sokołowo,³⁹ which unequivocally indicate a high value of the silk textiles brought to the territory of present Poland.

³³ Zawadzka-Antosik 2003, 329.

³⁴ Maik 1988, 86.

³⁵ Janowski 2015, 105.

³⁶ M. Grupa 2018: 249; 2020, 369–372, 379.

³⁷ Maik 2007, 192–194.

³⁸ Kamińska, Nahlik 1958; Maik 1986; 1988; 1991.

³⁹ D. Grupa 2013, 304; D. Grupa, M. Grupa 2014; M. Grupa 2014, 132–133. Similar artifacts were excavated not only in Poland. In Lõhavere, Estonia, a container of birch bark was unearthed, containing weaving tools (tablets), double-balanced scale made of bronze, jewellery as well as textiles: woolen, linen and silk. Silk items included a 1-cm-wide band, tablet-woven

They consisted of silk fragments of various sizes with plain 1/1 weave, hidden together with coins in ceramic vessels.

There is no doubt that silk textile relics have a significant if not the key meaning for defining social status. They might be treated as an indicator of belonging to the economic elite and this was probably the case even in the early Middle Ages. This refers in particular to burials, which deliver the majority of that type of archaeological material. As excavation data indicate, silks can also accompany other archaeological objects, although much more rarely.

To sum up, we must take into account that elitism cannot always be confirmed by methods like the anthropological study of preserved bone relics. High social sta-

tus being manifested in material resources, like silk clothing, does not have to correspond with osteological determinants of above-average living conditions. Therefore, grave goods including silk fabrics have an exceptional research value. These delicate relics should be paid particular attention during fieldwork and, later on, laboratory examinations. Taking into account the quality of excavated textiles and the variety of ornaments, we can state that early mediaeval burial rites emphasized the social position of the deceased person, which also underlined the distinction and privileges of representatives of the highest class. That was the way of shaping 'court fashion', which probably existed also in the early mediaeval communities of Kałdus and Gruczno.

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RYTIS JONAITIS

The Lithuanian Institute of History
archjonaitis@gmail.com
ORCID 0000-0003-1079-330X

IRMA KAPLŪNAITĖ

The Lithuanian Institute of History
irma.kaplunaite@gmail.com
ORCID 0000-0002-4406-8248

THE MEDIAEVAL CEMETERY AT 6 BOKŠTO ST. – THE ORTHODOX COMMUNITY'S SOCIAL ARENA IN VILNIUS

ABSTRACT

Each burial site is a reflection of the community that left it; thus the burial rite features allow assumptions to be made about the society, its social structure, its distribution of power, the social status and economic situation of the deceased, and possible gender and age differences. The Bokšto St. inhumation cemetery, which dates to the last third of the 13th – early 15th centuries, is unique in the context of mediaeval Vilnius due to being a Christian cemetery that appeared while Lithuania was still a pagan country. It is primarily a place where the Orthodox community could demonstrate its religious affiliation in pagan Vilnius by burying its dead in accord-

ance with its own traditions. This cemetery also reflects the community's internal features and was a place where its members could interact, i.e. a social arena. Therefore, investigation of the cemetery's various elements and its burial rites allows for hypotheses to be made not only about the community's religious affiliation but also about its social structure, its connections, cultural environment and distribution of power, as well as allowing one to talk about past traditions and rituals. The wealth of assembled information makes it possible to examine this cemetery as a place that reflects the traditions of not only death but also of life.

Keywords: mediaeval Vilnius, Christianity, funeral rites, community, social arena

Introduction

Each burial site reflects the community that left it. Its analysis can provide diverse information about the people buried there. It can be said that burial rites encompass the entire cycle of human life and memory. Increasingly, various burial sites are no longer just described by emphasizing the burial rite and especially the grave goods, the aim instead being to refer to the rite to provide broader conclusions about the society in question, its social structure, distribution of power, and even more elusive things, like feelings. As noted by researcher Heinrich Härke (2001), a cemetery can be seen as a place for the disposal of the

dead, but also as a place of memory, rituals, emotions, property, perception of mortality, etc.¹

It is thought that a burial site's investigation can reveal the attitude towards the living and the dead, the in- and out-group, culture and nature, order and chaos, the present and the future.² Although archaeology does not directly reflect former liturgy, or does so only slightly, the study of various burial rite aspects allows one to make assumptions about the deceased's social status, economic situation, and possible gender and age-related characteristics. Once the deep significance of burial rite traditions for mediaeval communities is understood, their study becomes even more important. First of all, the burial rites demonstrate

¹ Härke 2001, 11–19.

² Nilsson Stutz 2015, 2.

faith and rituals. Secondly, burial sites are a reflection of the society and thus many works that investigate cemeteries use the terms 'social arena' and 'social mirror' to describe them.³ Of course, one cannot state that burials directly reflect the social organization of the community, as this would be an oversimplified model.⁴ Therefore, as in every other instance where a burial site is investigated, it is important to include every possible context the analysis.

A study can become even more informative when the analyzed site is somehow exceptional. The inhumation cemetery discovered at 6 Bokšto St. bears such a distinction in the context of mediaeval Vilnius. Dating to the last third of the 13th – early 15th centuries, it is ascribable to the Orthodox community living in Vilnius. Thus, it was a Christian cemetery founded when Lithuania was still a pagan country (its official Catholic baptism occurring in 1387) where cremation burials prevailed. All the excavation material from this cemetery is presented in a book by the authors of this article.⁵ We came across the concept of 'social arena' while writing the monograph. However, at that time we did not yet develop this concept, as we paid more attention in the book to the presentation of the material itself, the historical context and various issues of burial rites in Lithuania (transition from cremation to inhumation). Yet the idea of analyzing the cemetery as a reflection of society was not forgotten. This is how this article was born.

Due to the exceptional historical circumstances, the analysis of the Bokšto St. cemetery may reveal not only various internal features of its community but also, due to the cemetery's very presence in a pagan city, the community's uniqueness and otherness. The question arises as to how the people who buried their dead there viewed this cemetery. Was it a place for them to demonstrate their faith? Or their strength, economic power, social status, gender, age, or other differences? This article will, therefore, examine the Bokšto St. cemetery in two ways: from an external and an internal perspective. First as a place where the Orthodox community could demonstrate its religious faith in pagan Vilnius by burying their members in accordance with their own traditions, then as a reflection of the community's internal features, a place where its members interacted, i.e. a social arena. Thus, the investigation of the cemetery's various elements and its burial rites allows for hypotheses to be made not only about the community's religious affiliation but also about its social structure, its connections, the cultural environment, and the distribution of power as well as allowing for a discussion of past traditions, rituals, etc.

The sources and state of the research

The state of the research into the Orthodox community in 13th–14th-century Vilnius and its burial rites is currently shaped by several factors. The first one is the lack of historical data. The earliest stage in Vilnius's founding and development, as well as this entire period in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania generally, is poorly covered in written sources. For example, while Vilnius was first mentioned in 1323 in the letters of the Grand Duke Gediminas of Lithuania,⁶ the first mention of Civitas Rutenica, its Orthodox suburb, appeared only in 1383 in Wigand of Marburg's *Chronica nova Prutenica*.⁷ More detailed knowledge about Vilnius's early Orthodox community, especially its burial rites and the special features of everyday life, has not survived. It should be noted that until the beginning of the archaeological research at this location in 2005, nothing was known about any cemetery on Bokšto St.

A second problem affecting the state of the research is more subjective. Lithuanian historiography often emphasizes that Lithuania was the last pagan country in Europe. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the greater attention focused on the pagan legacy perhaps diverts attention somewhat from the life of the country's Christian immigrants. While historians have broadly investigated these topics,⁸ they focus more on the political history and Christianity's spread than on daily life and especially burial rites.

In addition, even works dedicated to the investigation of burial rites and specific cemeteries usually focus on the cemetery material and various features of the burial rites in them, only rarely examining a site from a social perspective, thereby reflecting the social structure, social relationships, rituals, etc. of the community that left it. The study of these aspects is usually limited to an age and gender group analysis and a study of the grave goods. The 2018 book by archaeologist Mindaugas Bertašius on the long-term investigation of the Iron Age cemetery in Marvelė, Kaunas District, should be mentioned as an exception in this regard.⁹ Unlike most works that publish cemetery research material, it provides a deeper assessment of the social issues and an analysis of the Marvelė community's cultural environment, social relationships, etc.

Due to the lack of similar literature for our topic, we will primarily rely directly on the research material in analyzing the Bokšto St. burial site from a social perspective. This object has been extremely well studied, the investigation's entire history and material having

³ E.g. Härke 2001, 11–19.

⁴ This position is criticized in historiography, cf. Williams 2007, 5.

⁵ Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020.

⁶ Gedimino laiškai 2003, 47.

⁷ Marburgietis 1999, 185.

⁸ Baronas 2000; 2010; 2014; Baronas, Rowell 2015.

⁹ Bertašius 2018.

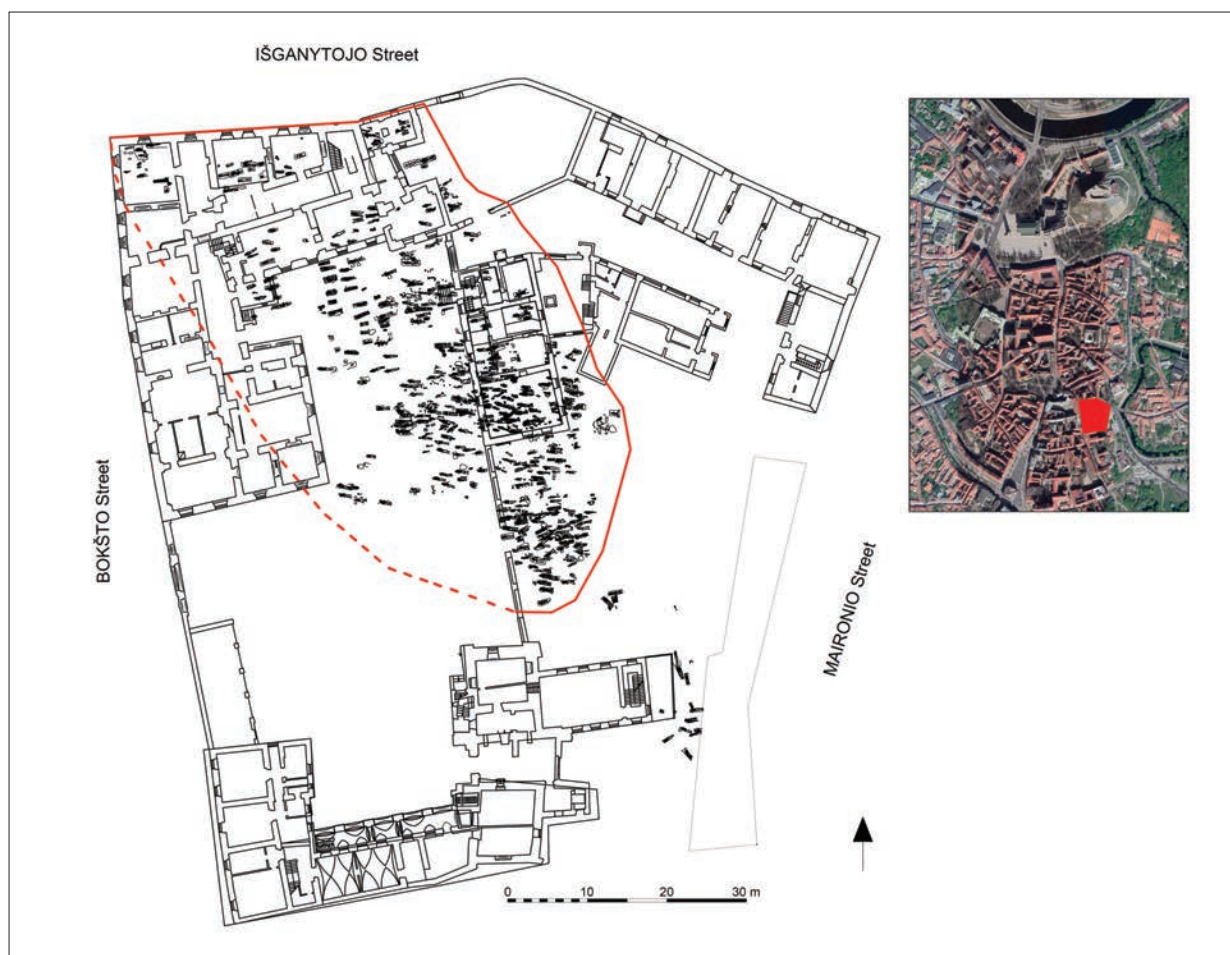


Fig. 1. The cemetery on Bokšto Street in Vilnius with its conjectured boundaries marked in red (Google Earth Pro map of Vilnius modified by I. Kaplūnaitė).

been presented in a monograph by the present authors.¹⁰ The wealth of assembled information allows us to examine this cemetery as a place that reflects the traditions of not only death but also of life.

The old cemetery at 6 Bokšto St. in Vilnius

In 2005 a previously unknown mediaeval burial site was discovered in the eastern part of the present-day Vilnius Old Town (Fig. 1). Archaeological excavations were carried out there intermittently until late 2014.¹¹ During that period, the old cemetery was almost com-

pletely excavated and various interdisciplinary studies were conducted, all of the material being published.¹² Below are some key research points.

A total area of 7,000 m² was excavated, the cemetery occupying roughly 2,500 m² of it.¹³ Rich, 1.5–7 m thick, 14th–20th-century layers with abundant finds and the remnants of structures from various periods were excavated above the cemetery. The burials, 533 in all, discovered in the old cemetery reflect all the traditional features of Christian burial rites: east–west-oriented inhumations (head to the west); grave goods consisting of jewellery but no weapons or tools; and burials in wooden coffins and/or coffin-imitating structures, often on several horizons, one above another (Fig. 2).

¹⁰ Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020.

¹¹ In 2005 a field evaluation was conducted there (Sarcevičius 2006), preceded by excavations in 2006–2007, 2009–2011, 2012, and 2014 (Jonaitis 2009; 2018; Kaplūnaitė 2014; 2016).

¹² Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020.

¹³ Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020, 122.



Fig. 2. A moment in the investigation of the Bokšto St. cemetery. Building 3, room 5 (photo taken from the north by R. Jonaitis).

The cemetery is distinguished by sparse but exceptionally ornate grave goods, i.e. skillfully made jewellery, most of which is typical of Slavs rather than Lithuanians, but with some local features. This jewellery reflects both cultural influences and immigration, while its presence shows the spread of fashion. Of the discovered artefacts, the 21 chaplets (headdress accessories in the form of diadems, made of metal plates, sometimes with beads), the majority of them silver and gilded, stand out for their ornateness¹⁴ (Figs 3–6), as do the various types of rings: bands, signet rings, and those with a braided head, glass stones, wide heads, or a channel head¹⁵ (Fig. 7). Until the 13th century, the chaplet tradition was unknown in Lithuania. Such ornate 13th–14th-century chaplets have been discovered in Lithuania primarily in the Kernavė-Kriveikiškis¹⁶ and Vilnius's Bokšto St. urban cemeteries.¹⁷ The tradition of making chaplets and the fashion of wearing them probably arrived in Lithuanian territory from the lands of Galicia and Volhynia together with the first Orthodox Christians.¹⁸ Later, after the introduction of Christianity, they spread throughout ethnic Lithuania (but only items of inferior quality). Rings with glass stones, six of which were found in the Bokšto St. cemetery, also stand out for their unique production. Similar items have been found in the Kernavė-Kriveikiškis cem-



Fig. 3. Chaplet (silver and tin alloy, gilded). Grave no. 15 (photos by A. Blažys).

etery¹⁹ and at least one is known from Jatvingian cemeteries.²⁰ Rings of this type are local production, i.e. local jewellery characteristic of east Lithuania.²¹ According to Gintautas Vėlius, who excavated the Kernavė-Kriveikiškis cemetery, the artisan who made these rings was familiar with the Slavic 'school' of jewellery-making.²² He is likely to have not been a local.

The Bokšto St. cemetery dates to the last third of the 13th – early 15th centuries, as evidenced by the material as a whole, the stratigraphy, and the radiocarbon data.²³ Thus, it began to be used at least a century before Lithuania's official Catholic baptism in 1387. Based on

¹⁴ Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020, 205.

¹⁵ Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020, 229.

¹⁶ Kernavė-Kriveikiškis and Vilnius's Bokšto St. cemeteries are often compared due to the similarity of their material. The Kriveikiškis cemetery in Kernavė, Lithuania's first capital, is slightly earlier than the Bokšto St. cemetery but also has inhumations, predominantly east–west-oriented. Kernavė's researchers posit that these are Jatvingian burials (Luchtanas, Vėlius 1996; Vėlius 2005; 2009), other researchers – that they could

be Orthodox Christian burials (Zabiela 1998; Dubonis 2009; Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020).

¹⁷ Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020, 216.

¹⁸ Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020, 216.

¹⁹ Vėlius 2005.

²⁰ Kviatkovskaja 1998.

²¹ Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020, 232.

²² Vėlius 2005, 73.

²³ 27 samples were dated (Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020, 261–268).



Fig. 4. Chaplet (silver and tin alloy, gilded). Grave no. 58 (photos by A. Blažys).

the knowledge from historical sources and information provided by archaeological material, it is thought that Vilnius's Orthodox community, which had its own suburb, called *Civitas Ruthenica* in the written sources, buried its dead there. This community was located in the eastern part of present-day Vilnius Old Town, by the roads leading to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's eastern Ruthenian lands.²⁴ The Ruthenians, like the pagans, were vassals of the grand dukes. In addition, some of those buried in the cemetery may have been Vilnius-born descendants of immigrants, still others – local pagans who had adopted the Orthodox faith.

The Orthodox community in pagan Vilnius

To better understand the Bokšto St. cemetery, it is important to explore Vilnius's Orthodox community in



Fig. 5. Chaplet (silver, gilded). Grave no. 106 (photos by A. Blažys, I. Kaplūnaitė).

more detail, paying special attention to the circumstances under which it emerged and how the city's other, pagan residents saw it, questions an archaeological analysis and the historical context can shed some light on.

During the period under discussion, Lithuania lay between two branches of Christianity: Catholic in the West and Orthodox in the East. Its relationship with the Catholics, particularly with the Teutonic Order seated in Poland, was far from friendly. The Crusaders and their

²⁴ The part of Vilnius inhabited by Orthodox Christians is presented in detail in the dissertation of one of the authors of this monograph (Jonaitis 2013).



Fig. 6. Chaplet (silver, gilded; glass beads). Grave no. 428 (photo by A. Blažys).

northern branch, the Brothers of the Sword, were inclined to 'baptise' pagans with 'fire and sword'.²⁵ Meanwhile, some Ruthenians had become vassals of Lithuania's grand dukes when lands inhabited by Orthodox Christians were annexed during the southeast expansion of the second half of the 13th century.²⁶ Favourable conditions for immigrants to settle had always existed, especially in newly forming cities, but Lithuania encouraged even greater immigration from the second half of the 13th century after the urban development processes picked up.

Although it has been emphasized that at the state level, Lithuania's grand dukes primarily sought Catholic baptism, Orthodoxy perhaps being seen by them as the less attractive religion of their conquered subjects,²⁷ nevertheless, it is thought that the latter denomination was viewed more favourably by ordinary denizens.²⁸ For example, in the mid-14th century Orthodox priest Nestor was free to perform his rites in the presence of the ruler and in the city itself.²⁹ What is more, the oldest stratum of Lithuanian Christian terms is said to consist of borrowings from Ruthenian.³⁰ Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that Orthodox Christians did not come to Vilnius due to the country's Christianization (just as Catholics were not invited for that reason). The settling of Christians in pagan Vilnius should be connected with the need to raise the state's economy, trade, and military capability levels, not the spread of faith.³¹

In the last decades of the 13th and first decades of the 14th centuries, Vilnius became hugely attractive for settlers. The closeness of the grand duke's court must have been especially enticing for Ruthenian merchants and artisans due to the new opportunities it offered them. The rulers themselves were definitely interested in the presence of skilled craftsmen and the possibility of easy access to luxury goods, quality and innovation having probably always been in greatest demand in the immediate vicinity



Fig. 7. Examples of rings from the Bokšto St. Cemetery: 1 – grave no. 21 (silver, gilded); 2–3 – grave no. 58 (silver); 4 – grave no. 76 (silver); 5 – grave no. 92 (silver, enamel); 6 – grave no. 106 (silver) (photos by A. Baltėnas).

²⁵ In fact, the peaceful Catholic missions, their activities in the still pagan country, and the heightened need for Catholics as skilled workers and long-distance trade representatives have recently been stressed ever more heavily (e.g. Baronas *et al.* 2011, 290).

²⁶ Already circa the 12th century some of the Slavic colonized lands (Vaukavysk, Slonim, Novogrudok) had been annexed by

Lithuania. Lithuania's grand dukes continued this tradition in the 13th–14th centuries (Baronas, Rowell 2015, 150–158).

²⁷ Baronas, Rowell 2015, 149–174.

²⁸ Nikžentaitis 1996, 18–26.

²⁹ Baronas 2004, 162.

³⁰ Gudavičius 1999, 187.

³¹ Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020, 284.

of a ruler. Alongside the chance for profit, less desirable reasons, such as captivity, must have also existed.³² In addition, given the situation at the time and the constant demand for military forces, it is understandable that warriors were needed,³³ creating another potential reason to settle in Vilnius: possible service in the grand duke's army.³⁴ Nevertheless, the most desirable immigrant element, like in many cities, must have admittedly been merchants and craftsmen who brought with them goods and know-how.³⁵

As is typical for a city, Vilnius had been a multicultural entity from the very beginning. Lithuania's grand dukes understood the benefits of immigrants for the city's economic and trade situation, regardless of their religion, and therefore invited them to the developing Vilnius and the surrounding areas.³⁶ In order for Christians to go to a foreign city, however, they needed certain security guarantees and the opportunity to profess their faith, which was a vital part of everyday mediaeval life.

It is possible to talk about mediaeval Vilnius as an auspicious place in this last regard. The city allowed several different communities to live partly together, partly separately: the zoning of territories has been noticeable in Vilnius from the very beginning of its development, the topographic situation being very favourable for this (Fig. 8). At the turn of the 14th century, the zoning had already taken place, allowing the co-existence of three communities: pagan, Orthodox, and Catholic. Such a co-habitation by members of different faiths in a single city is distinctive of not just Vilnius, but also, and especially, of border areas. It can be said that Central and Eastern Europeans have always lived with the idea of a diversity of religious rituals³⁷ as they were forced to learn to maintain ties with people of different faiths.

In the case of Vilnius, as well as the whole of Lithuania, as was already mentioned, Christians were not desired as missionaries or spreaders of religion.³⁸ Nor did they settle there as colonists.³⁹ It can be said that the case of Vilnius was more like a situation of a mixed city being created, where no exceptional communities existed, all of them participating in the city's life. Other examples of this can be seen in Polish cities like Kraków, where Poles lived beside Germans and Jews,⁴⁰ and Lviv (Ukraine), inhabited by Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Muslims (Tatars), and



Fig. 8. Vilnius's 14th-century zones: 1 – Gediminas Hill (or the Upper Castle); 2 – The Crooked Castle (or Curvum Castrum); 3 – The Lower Castle (including the earliest Catholic mission); 4 – Pagans; 5 – Civitas Rutenica; 6 – German Town (Google Earth Pro Map modified by I. Kaplūnaitė).

Jews.⁴¹ It should be noted, however, that a Christian denomination was already established in Poland, Hungary, and Ukraine, while Vilnius was still ruled by pagan grand dukes at that time. This situation must have led to a slightly different relationship between the three communities and affected the situation in the city.

Due to this coexistence of three religions, mediaeval Vilnius is often considered a tolerant city. No archaeological data or historical sources suggest any conflicts occurred between these communities in pagan Vilnius. One cannot talk about any fortification of the Christian-inhabited area or a need on the part of the groups to defend themselves from one another. While it can be noted

³² Baronas 2004, 163.

³³ The Lithuanian rulers' bid to supply their military forces was successful (Baronas 2014, 59).

³⁴ Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020, 285.

³⁵ Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020, 285

³⁶ Cf. e.g. the letters of the Grand Duke Gediminas of Lithuania, in which he invites Westerners to Vilnius (Gedimino laiškai 2003).

³⁷ Crăciun, Fulton 2011, 11.

³⁸ This situation was more common in the Scandinavian countries (e.g. Urbańczyk 2003).

³⁹ Unlike in present-day Latvia (known as Livonia), which was occupied by the Teutonic Order (Selart 2009).

⁴⁰ For more on the multinational nature of mediaeval Polish cities, see Sowina 2007.

⁴¹ Hrytsak 2000, 50.

that no conflicts have been recorded between the communities, nor have any signs of friendship. One can assume that tolerance and a more pragmatic approach prevailed.

That one Christian community, the Orthodox, was able to freely profess their faith in the still pagan city is also shown by the material in the Bokšto St. cemetery. As was previously mentioned, the cemetery is distinguished by all the features of Christian burial rites.⁴²

The cemetery as a 'social mirror' of the community

By burying their dead in the cemetery in accordance with their traditions, members of the Orthodox community were able to express their adherence to the Christian faith which separated them from the pagans. But an analysis of the various burial rite features, elements, grave structures, cemetery layout, and the geography shows not only their religious beliefs but also the community's special internal features, social organization, social relationships, and even family institutions, etc. For example, it has been noted in historiography that if men were buried separately from the women in a cemetery, the situation of men and women was likely to have been very unequal in that community.⁴³ In such cases, the position of women was generally low. In addition, complex grave good placement traditions are thought to be more characteristic of societies with an unstable social hierarchy.⁴⁴ Thus, in order to follow the reflections of social organization at a burial site, it is necessary to examine both the burial rite features in a broad sense and the location and interrelationships of the burials.

However, even when examining a cemetery as a community's social arena, a place of activity, one cannot stray far from the religious aspect, since religion influenced mediaeval burial rite traditions as well as everyday life to an exceptional extent. As noted, although the immortality of the soul was emphasized, a large proportion of believers were enthralled by the literal vision of the body's resurrection,⁴⁵ which left its mark on funeral rituals and on preparing the body for eternal life. A direct, visible continuum existed between the body in the grave and the soul in the purgatory,⁴⁶ the burial ritual and body's preparation being an attempt to preserve the

gender, social, and other differences for all eternity.⁴⁷ The Christian worldview modified the older burial customs. For example, while earlier traditions focused on luxurious grave structures and grave goods, Christianity burial rites stressed modesty and simplicity. Thus, in analyzing Christian burials, it is important to note that the absence of grave goods or their modesty no longer speaks to a person's social position or family wealth, the simplicity of a grave's structure even perhaps symbolizing the societally desirable trait of great faith. Nevertheless, even where the burial rites had been simplified and equalized, other ways were sought to emphasize a person's uniqueness and legacy. A church cemetery's structure is thought to reflect the community's social relations.⁴⁸ For example, people of higher status are buried closer to the church. Thus, a burial site can often be examined as a place where social and/or political power is demonstrated through various symbols.⁴⁹ Other burial rite features can also provide knowledge about the community's social structure, ties, and age group differences.

A cemetery, then, can be considered the place a community consciously designated for the 'disposal' of the dead⁵⁰ but in addition to this practical purpose, it also had a symbolic and social significance – and for that reason was an integral part of the landscape. In some traditions, burial sites were hidden from outside eyes, in others they were more on display. Christianity is characterized by a 'closer' relationship between the living and the dead.⁵¹ In cities, a cemetery's location can show where the urban centre/periphery was during the time it was used and what the directions of growth were. For Christianity, as for most other religions, the presence of water near the burial site was significant, and cemeteries were often established on hills at picturesque locations.

Therefore, the Bokšto St. cemetery must be assessed in the whole context of Vilnius by taking into account the city's topography. It was found that the cemetery's location and boundaries were greatly influenced by the natural conditions and terrain. The investigated plot is on the east side of present-day Vilnius Old Town, on one of the terraces in the upper part of the amphitheatre.⁵² The cemetery is located in a picturesque area in a square right next to the top of the steep slopes of River Vilnia, just 40–70 m west of the current riverbed.⁵³ Its location on Bokšto St. is also significant in respect to the city

⁴² Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020, 111–192; Kaplūnaitė 2021, 85–92.

⁴³ Härke 2001, 26.

⁴⁴ Härke 2001, 24–25.

⁴⁵ Bynum 1995, xviii.

⁴⁶ Gilchrist 2015.

⁴⁷ Bynum thoroughly examines bodily resurrection and Western Christianity's attitude to it (Bynum 1995).

⁴⁸ Jonsson 2009, 119.

⁴⁹ Härke 2001, 9.

⁵⁰ Härke 2001, 11.

⁵¹ Zadora-Rio 2003, 7.

⁵² For more information on Vilnius's historical landscape, see Morkūnaitė 2010.

⁵³ During the period of the cemetery's use the river was even closer, flowing at the site of present-day Maironis Street (cf. Valionienė 2019, 276–297, figs 30–40).

itself. The burial site began to be used during the founding of Vilnius in the last decades of the 13th century. Initially, it was on the city's periphery, about 600 m southeast of the castle grounds, but within a few decades the city was approaching it. Nevertheless, from the very beginning the castle grounds and the so-called *Curvum Castrum*, the earliest inhabited parts of Vilnius, enjoyed easy access to the burial site⁵⁴ via one of the city's earliest streets, which intersected both local and intercity roads.⁵⁵ This placement allows one to hypothesize about the Orthodox community's situation in the city. The cemetery's location was chosen to be convenient, scenic, and allowing for sufficiently easy expansion. There is no reason to talk about any need to hide the cemetery from unfriendly eyes, which seems to demonstrate that no hostile attitude existed towards the city's Orthodox Christians, who were able to freely demonstrate their faith.

When investigating a community that once used a cemetery, great emphasis is often placed on the religious building. The social status, property, sex, and age of the interred individuals is judged on the basis of the geography of the graves, i.e. their place in relation to the building (inside it or in the adjacent graveyard and in the latter case on which side of it).⁵⁶ But this poses a problem in our case because no building was found in the Bokšto St. cemetery and perhaps none ever existed.⁵⁷ It is, therefore, impossible to study the community's social structure like in churchyard cemeteries, i.e. by considering a grave's location relative to the temple, or to say which part of the cemetery could have been symbolically considered more prestigious. It is possible, however, to study the relationships between the graves, i.e. their position in respect to one another, which allows for discussing possible differences in social status, gender, and age as well as the principle of family burials.

An analysis of the cemetery's layout identified the highest burial intensity in the central and southeast parts (Fig. 1), where the burials were very close to one another, and even occurring one above another. This concentration should be associated with the cemetery's likely earliest parts. On the periphery, meanwhile, the numbers decline and the distances between graves grow greater. In the Kernavė-Kriveikiškis cemetery, a certain regularity was established: the closer to the cemetery's centre,

the older the buried individuals.⁵⁸ According to Vėlius, who investigated the Kriveikiškis cemetery, its central part could have been understood as the prerogative of the community's more deserving elderly members.⁵⁹ However, no such regularity has been established on Bokšto St.: children, infant, and even newborn burials have been found near adults throughout the cemetery. Thus, it is impossible to speak about a more pronounced differentiation of the community according to the age of the deceased, or at least about reflections of such a distribution in the burial layout.

Another element that emerged in the layout of the Bokšto St. cemetery is the presence of some north-south-oriented rows of graves (Fig. 1), numbering from a few burials to a dozen or even several dozen. As these rows have an almost identical direction and run parallel to one another, the cemetery must have had a common system and been at least somewhat planned, which suggests that it was regulated and supervised, with gaps, i.e. passages or tracks, left between the graves. In addition, the presence of these neat rows attests that some sort of marking existed on the ground's surface.⁶⁰ In fact, there are instances where the burials disturbed one another. We think that this may have occurred due to the site's relatively long use (at least 150 years) and the resulting lack of space, or, for example, the desire to bury relatives nearby, like in modern cemeteries.

Further examination of this cemetery's reflection of social structure requires a discussion of multiple burials in the same pit or gravesite. Graves were repeatedly found that contained two (in some cases three) individuals, sometimes with a layer of soil between the burials, showing that they had been made at different times, and sometimes with the burials almost directly above one another, other times with a greater offset and a only partial overlapping. Instances were also identified where the remains lay side-by-side, presumably in the same grave, or a group of several burials lay beside and/or atop one another. Most of such multiple burials were found in the oldest part of the cemetery.

The cemetery has many instances where the remains of two or more individuals are very close to one another, i.e. next to each other at the same or different depths, but without disturbing one another. In other words, the

⁵⁴ Cf. Valionienė 2019, 152–155.

⁵⁵ For a reconstruction of the road network, see Valionienė 2019, 93–102, 150–155.

⁵⁶ For example, in churchyard cemeteries grave concentrations are usually found in more 'prestigious' locations (Dawes, Magilton 1980, 10).

⁵⁷ It has been speculated that the cemetery may have been beside the Orthodox Church of the Nativity, but no excavation has

found any trace of it; it is possible that the cemetery did not belong to a specific church and the cemetery plot was consecrated due to its adjacency to other nearby churches (Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020, 109–110).

⁵⁸ Vėlius 2005, 34.

⁵⁹ Vėlius 2005, 34.

⁶⁰ Conversely, if a chaotic arrangement is seen, no permanent signs probably existed on the ground's surface (Kenzler 2015, 155).



Fig. 9. A group of graves: no. 235. Adolescent (15–18 years of age); no. 244. Child (6–10); no. 245. Child (5–9); no. 246. Male (30–39); no. 256. Child (4–6) (photo by I. Kaplūnaitė).

nearby grave must have been known and an effort been made not to disturb it. Their analysis in terms of age and sex revealed no regularities, i.e. the individuals were the same or different sexes and of various age group combinations. We assume that such graves could contain a whole family or several of its members (Fig. 9), like in modern cemeteries. Such burials can be considered a reflection of kinship and family organization where the dead of one immediate or extended family are buried at one gravesite. An example from this cemetery is a group of four burials (nos 213, 214, 215 and 222) that was found in one probable gravesite: a 30–39-year-old male, 15–20 cm above his abdomen the bones of a newborn, to his right and at a similar depth a female slightly over the age of 50, and above her a 30–39-year-old female. Since their DNA was not tested, it can only be hypothesized that a family: a husband, a wife, an infant, and an elderly woman, perhaps the mother of one of the spouses, had been interred there in a single gravesite.

The cemetery has graves where the bones of a second person, usually a child or newborn, are found beside the primary occupant (Fig. 10). The hypothesis in such cases is that this little member of the community was buried together with a parent (or grandparent?). In at least some cases, this could perhaps be a mother who died in childbirth and her newborn. Children, possibly siblings, have also been found buried together in such double graves.

Burial in the same grave pit or gravesite not only reflects the institution of the family or reveals strong kin-

ship ties, but is also associated with the Christian burial. The desire to be buried only in consecrated ground leads to a lack of space, especially in cities, and results in burials on several horizons.⁶¹ Thus, it must be acknowledged that the identification of family burials can sometimes be questionable as the burials in the cemetery were fairly dense and so at least some could have simply accidentally ended up near one another. Conversely, close relatives might not have been buried close together. DNA testing would be needed for a more in-depth analysis.

The understanding of the community behind a burial site is supplemented by an analysis of child burials, of which the Bokšto St. cemetery has a large number (totalling 26% of all the burials): various-aged children up to age 14, infants, and even newborns. It has been noted that these are scattered throughout the cemetery, so the assumption was made that minors were buried beside their parents or other loved ones. It is also especially important that such burials are identical to those of adults, at least in respect to archaeologically detectable elements.⁶² This implies that the investigated community adhered to the Christian burial rite principle that children, especially older ones, are considered full members of the community.

Another notable feature of mediaeval cemeteries is a concentration of child burials, often on one side of the churchyard.⁶³ The Bokšto St. cemetery also has several more or less concentrated groups of such child burials. However, in every case adult burials occur among these

⁶¹ Buko 2008, 398.

⁶² The funeral liturgy, which is not reflected in the archaeological material, could have differed.

⁶³ For example, it was noted that in mediaeval England the western part of a church or churchyard was more often allocated for child burials (Gilchrist 2012, 206).



Fig. 10. Burials nos 405 (infant) and 408 (adult male) (photo by R. Jonaitis).

graves, so it is impossible to say that the child burial groups are spatially separated. These concentrations are perhaps connected with simultaneous deaths or the burial of close relatives.

Several remote burial concentrations provided interesting insights into the life of the community that left the cemetery. A short distance from the cemetery's main area, which is located at the top of a slope, another 17 burials were discovered on the slope itself and even below it. These mostly contained individuals over the age of 40 and therefore already quite mature. Many of them have been diagnosed with various fractures, bruises, inflammations, and extremely poor teeth.⁶⁴ It is hypothesized that these people were deliberately buried on one side as outcasts, e.g. suicides, criminals, and the unbaptised. It is known that Christian tradition forbade the burying of criminals in churchyards and community cemeteries, other places having been designated for their burial.⁶⁵ Such people are, in some cases recorded throughout Christian Europe, buried in a kneeling position with their hands bound and with their heads cut off.⁶⁶ It must be said that the burials we discuss bear the same burial rite features as those in the main part, the principal difference being their more remote location and that some lack an east-west orientation.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the assumption cannot be rejected that these individuals had, for some reason, been pushed out of the community, their more remote burial site being an expression of that.

Grave goods are distinguished in archaeology as one of the most frequently investigated elements in terms of the status of the dead. But, as has already been mentioned, they are no longer a major source of information in Christian burial rites, because the placement of grave goods is not typical of this religion. Here, the grave goods are usually only ornaments, devotional items, and dress accessories. Grave goods were discovered in 53 of the 537 burials in the Bokšto St. cemetery, i.e. in 10% of cases. Jewellery predominated: chaplet (diadem) plates, earrings, temple ornaments (Fig. 11), necklaces, bracelets, and various types of rings. As mentioned above, some of the finds are quite exceptional and of good quality. Most of the chaplets are made of gilded silver and tin alloy (Figs 3–6). The rings are usually made of silver (Figs 7: 2–6), one was gilded (Fig. 7: 1). Some of the jewellery has analogues in material from Lithuania, Ukraine, Belarus and Russia, while others are unique. For example, no analogue was found for the ring (grave no. 21) which was made of silver, gilded by amalgam (Fig. 7: 1).

Jewellery items were the main finds in female burials. Only three small knives, symbolic keys, and a key for a cylinder lock were additionally found in the burials of women of all ages. It needs to be noted that knives were typical only of female burials in the Bokšto St. cemetery. Symbolically, a knife, a sharp object, could have been intended to protect the dead (or protect oneself from the dead?). The custom of burying an unbaptized child

⁶⁴ For the bioarchaeological investigation of the remains, see the appendix written by Kozakaitė, Brindzaitė, Miliauskienė, and Jankauskas in the Bokšto St. cemetery monograph (Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė, 2020, 494–535).

⁶⁵ Riisøy 2015, 52.

⁶⁶ Riisøy 2015, 52.

⁶⁷ Eight burials were oriented N–S, three S–N, two NW–SE, and one SW–NE (Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020, 169).



Fig. 11. Temple ornament (silver, gilded). Grave no. 179 (photo by A. Blažys).

with a knife in order to protect him/her from evil was established in an Orthodox cemetery in SE Estonia.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, both there and in the Bokšto St. cemetery, women were more often buried with knives.⁶⁹ Such knives were small, being most likely used in everyday activities and in the home.

After analyzing the grave goods discovered in the Bokšto St. cemetery, another rule became clear: jewellery (rings and chaplets) predominate in the burials of adult women, even those who were already quite mature⁷⁰ (often over 40 or even 50 years of age). Ornaments are, in their turn, more often discovered in female child burials, which allows one to speculate that not only was the status of a girl, an expectant mother, important to the community that buried their dead in the cemetery, so, too, was that of an already mature woman. Only seven grave good finds were discovered in male burials: rings, belt elements, pouch remnants, and a brooch fragment. This should probably be associated with the community's religious affiliation: weapons and tools no longer being placed in Christian graves. It must be said that, like in the female burials, almost all of the males buried with the finds are older, aged 35–45. Perhaps the presence of grave goods in their burials can be associated with a better social or pecuniary status? The finds, however, are too rare to support such an assumption. As for the child burials, it should be noted that both crosses found in the cemetery were in the graves of small children. Perhaps the crosses could be understood as additional protection for the smallest and weakest individuals, the newly baptized?

The analysis of the distribution of grave goods in the cemetery has shown them to be slightly more common in its earliest, central part, the grave goods in the peripheral burials being found in smaller numbers and dating to the post-mid-14th century period. Although some of the burials with jewellery are more closely concentrated, this is likely to be a demonstration of chronology rather than social differences or economic status, namely of jewellery being more common in chronologically earlier graves. In addition, burials of individuals of both sexes without any grave goods are found beside the richer burials with grave goods.

The investigation of other burial rite elements did not reveal any obvious manifestations of social status or power in the cemetery. It must be emphasized once again that all of the burial rite features traditionally associated with Christianity predominate here: east–west-oriented grave pit burials in an extended position with the hands usually on the chest or abdomen, few grave goods, and sometimes several burial horizons. In some cases, wooden constructions were used: planks, not fastened with nails, but placed around, above, and under the body.⁷¹

Therefore, in summarizing the Bokšto St. cemetery data, it can be said that it was extremely difficult to identify possible manifestations of social status, power, and wealth, as no clear-cut features identified the burials of more affluent individuals who were perhaps more influential in the community's daily life. The necropolis contains no crypts (the appearance of which is more characteristic of a later period, the 15th century) or luxuriously furnished graves, graves with wooden structures being common throughout the cemetery and typical of both sexes of all ages. The investigation was complicated by the cemetery's lack of an established connection with any religious building. Thus, it is impossible to talk about elite graves or more prestigious locations. It should be emphasized that the burials display regularity in respect to gender or age group, male and female burials being evenly distributed throughout, found side by side and also together with child burials. All in all, no noticeable differences occurred between the sexes and age groups, at least in the choice of grave location.

The burial analysis was supplemented by anthropological data, which established that the adult-child ratio in the Bokšto St. cemetery corresponds to the classical mortality model structure, where children comprise about a third of all deaths and the male-female ratio is close to 1:1.⁷² It can be said that the community corresponds

⁶⁸ Mägi 2002, 132.

⁶⁹ Four females: three adult and one adolescent of indeterminate age were interred with knives (Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020, 252, tab. 3).

⁷⁰ A total of 26 rings, 12 chaplets, and three earrings were found in female burials (Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020, 252, tab. 3).

⁷¹ Traces of planks were discovered in about a quarter of the burials (Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020, 146).

⁷² Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020, Appendix 2, 500.

to the traditional notions of mediaeval urban life: many of the studied individuals showed signs of malnutrition (anemia, scurvy), various infectious diseases, poor oral hygiene, trauma, fractures, and even violent incidents.⁷³

This situation allows for the assumption to be made that the community that buried its dead in the cemetery may have been fairly homogeneous in societal terms. While some graves stand out for their uniquely high-quality jewellery finds, they are not distinguished by any other burial features, burial material or location within the cemetery. Therefore, there is not enough data to talk about possible 'elite' graves. Perhaps burials with such finds may be associated with richer burghers. However, their number is very small.

There was also no clear demonstration of economic power. Therefore, one can probably talk about a group of ordinary citizens, united by one faith, and with minor social stratification. As is known from the historical context, the Orthodox Christians who settled in early Vilnius must have been mostly ordinary people and craftsmen, which is reflected in the Bokšto St. cemetery.

Conclusion

The Bokšto St. Cemetery was a Christian burial site in Vilnius where the Orthodox community in this pagan city was able to express its religious faith by burying its dead in accordance with this religion's traditions. In examining the cemetery as a reflection of this community, it must be stated that it is this religious affiliation that is the most pronounced element: the analysis revealed almost none more prominent differences in social and economic status, gender, and age. The burial site reflects a community of ordinary citizens and is characterized by a rather unified burial style, in which differences are not readily obvious. Several female graves with high-quality jewellery – rings and gilded silver chaplets – could be associated rather with richer burghers than nobility. Individuals of different genders and ages were buried side by side and so the principle of family burial was probably employed.

Of course, the status differences may have been more pronounced during the funeral, perhaps having been reflected in the liturgy or the ceremony itself. However, without written sources, it is impossible to talk about

such elements as preparing the body for eternal life, saying goodbye to the dead in the home, praying, escorting the body to the cemetery, etc. Archaeology is able to reflect only that part of the former traditions that has left physical traces.

Nevertheless, some insights can be made about the community that buried its dead in the Bokšto St. cemetery and its traditions. It was determined that the cemetery's archaeologically visible burial rite features and elements are very similar in the burials of individuals of all ages and genders. The same burial orientation was identified and the same grave elements were found. Thus, the burial of the dead used the same tradition, following at least some of the same rituals that were uniform for men, women, adolescents, and children. In addition, not only child but also infant and newborn burials are archaeologically indistinct from adult burials, a feature primarily associated with Christian traditions. It should also be noted that the relatively richer burials (where jewellery was found) do not differ in their construction from any of the others, i.e. it was not established that burials containing grave goods are exceptional in any other way. All of this suggests that burial construction in the community in question did not depend on the status of the deceased (or his/her relatives), a situation reflecting the attitude introduced by Christianity where the modesty of a grave symbolizes great faith rather than great poverty. On the other hand, it is possible to speculate that the community that buried its dead here was fairly uniform in its composition and status, even if, judging by the exclusive jewellery, it may have included several more affluent burgher families.

The uniformity of the burial rite tradition as well as the orderliness of the cemetery's layout (rows of graves with a fairly precise orientation) allow for the assumption to be made that burial there was regulated, with someone supervising the cemetery and the burial procedures. In the absence of written sources containing information about the first Christian cemeteries in Vilnius, it is impossible to identify things not reflected in archaeology, e.g. the relationships between the families buried in the cemetery, whether they cooperated in conducting burials, who oversaw the burial arrangements, etc. It is, however, known that Vilnius had Orthodox churches and priests who may have ensured that a uniform funeral liturgy was followed.⁷⁴

⁷³ Jonaitis, Kaplūnaitė 2020, Appendix 2, 494–535.

⁷⁴ In Poland the clergy have been obligated since the 13th century to participate in the burial process and to oversee the observance of the ritual (Buko 2008, 399).

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MAREK FLOREK

Institute of Archaeology, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin
marek.florek@mail.umcs.pl
ORCID 0000-0002-9917-710X.

STEĆAK TOMBSTONES AS A SOURCE FOR RESEARCH ON MEDIAEVAL BOSNIAN ELITES

ABSTRACT

The term *stećak* (pl. *stećci*) is used in the Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian languages to refer to mediaeval monolithic tombstones from Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well from the nearby territories of Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro. Their number is estimated at between 50,000 and almost 70,000. The earliest preserved *stećci* come from the 12th century, whereas the latest date to the beginning of the 16th century. Their forms vary, but most often they have the shape of a slab, vertical or horizontal monolith, or stylized cross. Some of them have images – engraved or carved in low relief – representing, e.g., weaponry, people, animals, genre scenes (hunting, fighting, dancing), various symbols and ornaments, and – very seldom – short inscriptions. In the past, they were attributed to the followers of the Bogomil heresy or the

stock-breeding Vlachs, they were also regarded as original products of the mediaeval Bosnian population – created independently from external influences and models, as a sign of the revival of the traditional Slavic pagan beliefs dating back to the times of the Indo-European community. According to the currently prevalent assumption, *stećci* – with their forms and symbols – fit the broad trend of European sepulchral art referring to the ethos of chivalry and Christianity, but at the same time they were a means used to manifest the distinctive character of the local elites and groups aspiring to be included in them. The images present on *stećci* – especially genre scenes and heraldic motifs – are an invaluable source of information about the culture and life of local elites in mediaeval Bosnia.

Keywords: Bosnia, *stećak* tombstones, Middle Ages, elites

The term *stećak* (pl. *stećci*) is used in the Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian languages to refer to mediaeval tombstones – dated from the 12th to the 16th century – known from Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as from the adjacent territories of Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro (Fig. 1). In the folk tradition of the Southern Slavs and in earlier literature, they were called *grčki grobovi* ('Greek graves'), due to the fact that some of them resemble sarcophagi from Late Antiquity (preserved in considerable numbers across the Balkans), as well as *mramori* or *mašeti*.¹ Since some of the discussed tombstones are horizontal slabs, certain Croatian archaeologists postulate that the term *stećak* should be substituted with the word *kamik* ('stone'), which would denote all types of such monuments.²

The earliest preserved *stećci* have been dated to the 12th century, whereas the latest come from the beginning of the 16th century, that is from the time after the conquest of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Turks and the conversion of the local population to Islam.³

Stećci are a unique type of monument and generally have no direct analogues in European sepulchral art from the Middle Ages. Their exceptional character was due to several factors. The first one is their number. We know of over 3,100 necropolises with *stećci*, including almost 2,700 from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The estimated number of such tombstones ranges from 50,000 to 70,000.⁴ This wide range results from the fact that certain late mediaeval tombstones from Dalmatia – especially those from the vicinities of Šibenik and Trogir – are not included in

¹ Bešlić 2004, 13.

² Kužić 1999, 175–177; 2001, 259–265.

³ Andelić 1984, 490; Bešlić 2004, 175–176; Lovrenović 2009, 56–61.

⁴ Bešlić 1971, 43; 1982, 67; Dizdar 2018a, 139; Wenzel 1965, 13.



Fig. 1. Distribution of the most important cemeteries with *stećak* tombstones: 1 – modern country boundaries; 2 – boundaries of Bosnia at the end of the 14th century; 3 – cemeteries with *stećak* tombstones (image by M. Florek).

the discussed group by certain scholars, even though their forms and ornaments directly correspond to those of *stećci*. On the other hand, late *stećci* in the form of stelae – widespread in Bosnia – are often difficult to distinguish from Muslim tombstones called *nišan*, especially because sometimes both types can be found in the same cemetery. Nevertheless, even if we accept the lowest estimate – that is, 50,000 *stećci* – they remain without any doubt the most numerous group of preserved European tombstones from the Middle Ages, despite having been erected over a span of less than 400 years.

The cemeteries containing *stećci* are distinguished from other burial grounds of the mediaeval and early modern periods by their location. This fact was noticed already by travellers describing them at the end of the 16th century. In mediaeval Europe, it was customary to establish cemeteries near Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, within towns or villages (*apud ecclesiam, intra muros*). Meanwhile, almost all of the graveyards with *stećci* are situated at some distance from towns and villages (at least modern ones) and not linked with any religious buildings (Figs 2–4). Certain *stećci* from Dalmatia are the only exceptions in this regard.

We can distinguish six types of *stećci* with respect to their forms.⁵ The first is represented by slabs, usually rectangular. The largest reach dimensions of over 2.5 × 3 m and a thickness of up to 40 cm (Fig. 5). The second type are cuboidal monoliths – vertical or horizontal – known in the Bosnian language as *sanduk* (Fig. 6). The height of some of them exceeds 2 m. The third type is represented by so-called sarcophagus-like

tombstones, known in the Bosnian language as *sljemensjaci* or *sarkofazi*. Nevertheless, contrary to the actual ancient sarcophagi, such monuments are monolithic blocks that do not have space for the body (Fig. 7). Their length usually varies from 1.5 to 2 m, whereas their width ranges between 70 and 100 cm. Their height is diverse – the lowest monoliths measure less than 40 cm, whereas the highest exceed 80 cm. Another type is represented by tombstones referred to as ‘crosses’ (*krstače*). This term denotes tombstones in the shape of Latin crosses – whose arms have flat, semi-circular or triangular ends – as well as crosses in the shape of the letter Tau (T), those resembling schematic human figures with arms spread to the sides, and forms with reduced lateral arms and the upper part of a semi-circular or circular shape (Figs 8–10). The fifth type are stelae (*stubovi*) (Fig. 11). One form the stelae take is that of vertical, flat and relatively narrow slabs – having the shape of a rectangle or, less frequently, trapezoid or long hexagon whose upper edge can be flat, but sometimes has a semi-circular shape (convex or concave). The other form are slender cuboids, sometimes topped with a pyramidal roof. It is the stelae included in the last-mentioned type which are very similar to Muslim tombstones known as *nišan*. Thus, as was said before, it is difficult to tell the difference between the monuments representing these two groups. The last type are so-called amorphous tombstones, unworked or only slightly worked stones, vertical or horizontal and having different sizes. It should be mentioned that tombstones representing various types sometimes occur in the same cemetery.

⁵ Bešliagić 1982, 84–115; 2004, 75–113.



Fig. 2. Cemetery in Slivno Ravno – Prović, Croatia (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 3. Cemetery in Radimlja, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 4. Cemetery in Boljuni, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 5. Slab-shaped *stećak* tombstone. Cemetery in Radimlja, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 6. *Stećak* tombstone of the *sanduk* type. Cemetery in Radimlja, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 7. Sarcophagus-like *stećci*. Cemetery in Perucac, Serbia (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 8. Cross-shaped *stećak* tombstone. National Museum in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 9. Cross-shaped *stećak*. Cemetery in Boljuni, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 10. Cross-shaped *stećak*. Cemetery in Bistro, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 11. Stela-shaped *stećak*. National Museum in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).

The most numerous are the *sanduk*-type tombstones. They constitute ca. 62% of all the known monuments of this type. The second most popular gravestones are those in the form of slabs (over 23% of the total number). The sarcophagus-like tombstones (*sljemenjaci*) represent almost 9% of the total number; stelae – ca. 4%; crosses – ca. 0.5%. All the amorphous tombstones constitute less than 1.5%.

It is usually believed that the earliest – basic, so to speak – type are the slab-shaped *stećci* that appeared in Croatia and Bosnia as early as in the 12th century. The *sanduk*-type tombstones became popular in the 14th century, whereas the sarcophagus-like gravestones (*sljemenjaci*) started being common in the 15th century. The *stećci* in the form of crosses and stelae are believed to have become widespread in the middle of the 15th century, whereas the stelae having the shape of narrow, slender cuboids gained popularity at the end of the 15th and during the 16th century, which is associated with the conquest of the Balkans by the Ottoman Turks and the appearance of Muslim tombstones (*nišan*), to which the narrow stelae appear to refer. At the same time, the earlier tombstone types continued being used.⁶

Graves marked with *stećak* tombstones have various forms. They can be simple burials with bodies deposited in small rectangular pits – directly in the ground or in coffins – or large rectangular pits containing wooden sarcophagi – sometimes double, where the larger contains the smaller – topped with gable roofs. Some graves have the form of stone linings or chests made of stone slabs. There are no correlations between the grave forms and the tombstone types.

It is estimated that only ca. 8–9% of the whole group of tombstones referred to as *stećci* are decorated with different motifs – engraved or carved in low relief.⁷ The cross-shaped gravestones are the most commonly ornamented (ca. 65% of their total number). The remaining types were decorated much less often. About 18.5% of the sarcophagus-like stones (*sljemenjaci*), 14.5% of the stelae, 7.5% of the *sanduk*-type tombstones and less than 6% of the slab tombstones are ornamented. It bears noting, however, that there are considerable differences in the percentages of decorated tombstones from particular necropolises. There are cemeteries where not a single tombstone is ornamented, whereas others have most of such monuments adorned this way. Only on single tombstones – less than 0.5% of their total number – are there inscriptions in a variant of the Cyrillic script called the Bosnian Cyrillic (*Bosančica*), informing about who



Fig. 12. *Stećak* tombstones ornamented with decorative bands. Cemetery in Smokovljani – Sv. Vid, Croatia (photo by M. Florek).

the buried persons were or having a devotional character. We also know of several slabs from Croatia whose forms strictly correspond to *stećci*, but which have inscriptions in the Latin or Glagolitic alphabet. Nevertheless, Bosnian archaeologists do not associate them with the discussed group of tombstones.

The images present on the discussed type of tombstones were classified in various ways by scholars dealing with *stećci*.⁸ Without going into details of particular classifications, we can distinguish several groups: geometric motifs and decorative bands (borderlines) (Fig. 12); architectural motifs, including images of buildings (Fig. 13); crosses (Fig. 14); astral motifs, crescents, rosettes, rings, circles, spirals (Figs 15–17); vegetal motifs, including grape bunches and lilies (Figs 18–19); weaponry, especially swords and shields (Fig. 20) and, less frequently, tools; birds and such animals as deer, horse, dog, snake, viper and – seldom – others (Figs 21–23); images of people – presented individually or in pairs – including people in a worshipping pose or holding different items (Figs 24–25) and depiction of heads, torsos or hands only; genre scenes, including images of riders, sometimes referred to as cavalcades (Fig. 26), hunting scenes (Fig. 27), tournaments and fights (Fig. 28) and people dancing the *kolo* ('circle') dance (Fig. 29). It should be stressed that a single tombstone is usually covered not with a single motif or ornament type, but with their different combinations and variations (Fig. 30).

Stećci, because of their number, as well as due to the fact that their great majority occur – at least today –

⁶ Andelić 1984, 490; Bešliagić 2004, 175–176; Lovrenović 2009, 56–61.

⁷ Bešliagić 1971, 50; 1982, 130.

⁸ Andelić 1984, 488; Bešliagić 1982, 131–139; Lovrenović 2009, 62–67; Wenzel 1965, 11–15.



Fig. 13. *Stećak* tombstone decorated with architectural motifs (arcades). Cemetery in Radimlja, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 14. *Stećak* tombstone decorated with a cross motif. Cemetery in Topolo, Croatia (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 15. *Stećak* tombstone decorated with astral motifs. Town Museum in Makarska, Croatia (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 16. *Stećak* tombstone decorated with spiral motifs. National Museum in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 17. *Stećak* tombstone decorated with a rosette motif. Cemetery in Boljuni, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 18. *Stećak* tombstone decorated with a motif of a stylized lily. Cemetery in Provec – Cista Provo, Croatia (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 19. *Stećak* tombstone decorated with a grape bunch motif. Cemetery in Boljuni, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).

in necropolises removed from Orthodox churches and inhabited places, and especially on account of their forms and visibly symbolic ornamental motifs – attracted the attention of Western European travellers visiting the Balkans already in the 16th century. In later times they became the subject of interest of voyagers from other countries, as well. One of the early voyagers interested in *stećak* tombstones was the Polish nobleman Aleksander Sapieha. In the years 1802–1803, he travelled across

Dalmatia and the Balkans. During the trip, he visited, among other places, several necropolises near Stolac in Herzegovina – including probably the largest of them, located in a village called Radimlja. According to Sapieha, the majority of these cemeteries were from pre-Roman times. He suspected that the tombstones were the result of Celtic, Egyptian and Parthian influences, although he also saw in them elements linked with European chivalric culture.⁹



Fig. 20. *Stećak* tombstone with an image of a shield and sword. Cemetery in Radimlja, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).

⁹ Sapieha 1811, 188–195.



Fig. 21. *Stećak* tombstone with an image of snakes (vipers). Cemetery in Bistrina, Croatia (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 23. *Stećak* tombstone with images of animals. Cemetery in Boljuni, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 24. *Stećak* tombstone with images of human figures (buried person with the family?). Cemetery in Radimlja, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 22. *Stećak* tombstone with images of animals (bottom) and dancing scenes (top). Cemetery in Radimlja, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 25. *Stećak* tombstone with an image of a human figure. National Museum in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 26. *Stećak* tombstone with an image of riders (so-called cavalcade). Cemetery in Radimlja, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 27. *Stećak* tombstone with an image of bear hunting. Cemetery in Dubravka, Croatia (photo by M. Florek).

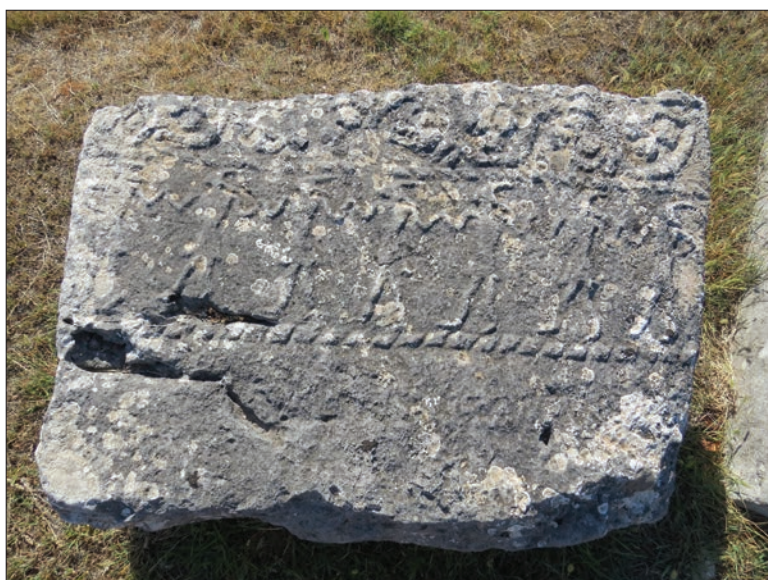


Fig. 28. *Stećak* tombstone with a tournament scene. National Museum in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 29. *Stećak* tombstone with an image representing the *kolo* dance. Cemetery in Topolo, Croatia (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 30. *Stećak* tombstone at the cemetery in Smokovljani – Vlaske Grobi (Croatia) (photo by M. Florek).

Attempts to explain the meaning of *stećci* – made over the last 200 years – have led to formulating several hypotheses concerning their origin and character and attempting to explain the symbolism of the ornaments and images covering them. All these assumptions refer – to a greater or lesser extent – to different aspects of the complicated history, as well as to the ethnic and religious diversity, of the Balkans during the Middle Ages. Their starting point was the analysis and interpretation of the ornamental motifs and images present on the tombstones.

The first hypothesis, proposed by Arthur Evans (later known mainly for his research at Knossos on Crete), was formulated after his stay in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1875, and then developed by other scholars. It links *stećci* with the Bogomil/Patarene heresy, which is believed to have been favoured by the Bosnian rulers.¹⁰ The Bogomils were a sect with Manichean roots created in the 10th century and operating in Bulgaria and Macedonia. According to Church sources, it was created by the monk Bogomil, but he was probably a fictitious person, and

¹⁰ Evans 1876; Truhelka 1892; Soloviev 1956; 1959; Challet 1965; Mandić 1966; Benac 1967.

the name of the sect derives from the designation 'dear to God', as the members of the sect called themselves. The doctrine of the Bogomils, which stemmed from Manichean dualism, remains poorly known. Supposedly, its followers believed that God had had two sons: Satanael and Logos. Satanael, having revolted against his father, created the world. In order to liberate people, God sent Logos, that is Jesus, who is currently substituted by the Holy Spirit. It is alleged that the Bogomils recognized only the New Testament, but they did not believe in the role of the Sacraments and rejected the cult of the saints, Virgin Mary and holy images, performing liturgy in churches, Church holidays and the Ecclesiastical hierarchy. Neither did the Bogomils recognize the Cross as the symbol of Christ's passion. It is assumed that they also questioned the contemporary social relations. In the 11th century, they reached Bosnia. Western sources refer to this Bosnian faction of the sect as the 'Patarenes'. They became particularly popular in towns on the Adriatic, which – via Venice – were influenced at that time by the Cathar heresy. It appears that the Bogomils considerably affected the local Church. Some scholars even state that a heretic Bogomil/Patареne church of a national character was created in Bosnia.¹¹ After the Ottoman conquest almost the entire population of Bosnia converted to Islam, which led to lack of resistance against the Turkish rule, contrary to what happened in Bulgaria, Greece and especially Serbia. A small group of the sect's followers probably remained in hiding until the 19th century, officially declaring their adherence to Islam.

The supposed association of *stećci* with the Bogomils was indicated by the facts that cemeteries with such tombstones are usually located far from religious facilities and that the stones themselves lack the motif of the cross interpreted as the symbol of Christ's passion. If such elements occur, they are in a deformed shape. The 'Bogomil hypothesis' became highly popular – possibly owing to Evans's prestige – and it still has its followers.¹² Nevertheless, as early as in the 1930s, it was discovered that not all *stećci* can be linked with the Bogomils, whereas in the territory of the main activity of the sect – in Bulgaria – there no such tombstones at all.¹³ Yet one can still come across the statement – especially in popular publications – that *stećci* are Bogomil tombstones.

The second hypothesis associates *stećci* with the Vlachs – referred to in mediaeval and modern sources from the Balkans as the *Vlasi*, *Morlaci* or *Mavrovlas* – who were the descendants of the partly Romanized indig-

enous populations of Dalmatia and the Balkans (Illyrians and Thracians).¹⁴ This ethnos is believed to have survived until the Middle Ages in the borderlands between Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria, from where – in the 12th century – its representatives began to migrate in different directions, reaching such areas as Bosnia and Croatia, Macedonia, Greece, Romania, as well as the Polish and Ruthenian Carpathians. Arguments supporting this assumption include the fact that the majority of cemeteries with *stećak* tombstones are located in mountainous areas, the simultaneous appearance of *stećci* and the Vlachs in Bosnia, the *stećci* images being linked with pastoral lifestyle – cavalcades, riders, hunting scenes – and the identity of motifs known from *stećci* and ethnographic materials associated with the Vlachs, like the rosette, crescent, lily.

According to the third hypothesis – which is supported today by the majority of scholars from Bosnia and Herzegovina researching this problem, including the most famous one, Štefik Bešlić – the forms of *stećci*, as well as the symbols of the images and ornamental motifs covering them, indicate that these tombstones should be considered original products of the Slavic population inhabiting the territory of Bosnia in the Middle Ages, created without the influence of external models.¹⁵

A somewhat different version of this hypothesis stipulates that *stećci* – with their forms and decorations – indicate the continued existence of traditional Slavic pagan beliefs, whose roots can be traced to the times of the Indo-European community, among Croats and Serbs inhabiting the territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina after the Turkish conquest.¹⁶ The symbols and genre scenes present on the surfaces of such stones are interpreted similarly in both cases. The spiral and wavy line are considered to represent living water. Stars, circles, rosettes, crescents might have been lunar and astral symbols. Dancing scenes and parades of the dead walking to the afterlife or dancing demons, as well as images of hunting and duels, possibly symbolize mythological scenes. Representations of fantastic animals might be interpreted as images of demons or deities. Trees might symbolise the World Axis (*axis mundi*) or the tree of life. Images of humans might represent gods. For example, the scene of an archer shooting at a deer present on the famous tombstone from Donje Zgošće, which is displayed in the National Museum in Sarajevo (Fig. 31), is supposed to represent not an ordinary hunting scene, but the celestial archer – Svetovit – chasing a deer – a symbol of the Orion constel-

¹¹ Dragojlović 1987; Spyra 1987; Petrović 1995; Imamović 1997; Fine 2007; Mužić 2008.

¹² Cf. Kutzli 1977; 2019.

¹³ Molé 1961a, 136.

¹⁴ Wenzel 1962; Mandić 1966; Milošević 1991; Mužić 2009; Vemić 2011.

¹⁵ Bešlić 1982; Zorić 1984.

¹⁶ Kužić 2002; Mužić 2009; Viduša 2014.



Fig. 31. *Stećak* tombstone from Donje Zgošće (Replica in front of the National Museum in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina) with images of a cavalcade (top) and hunting (bottom) (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 32. *Stećak* tombstone representing the 'tree of life' and deities or demons in the guise of animals. Cemetery in Boljuni, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).

lation. Similarly, the image of a man hunting a bear present on a tombstone from Hutovo in Bosnia is not that of a common person, but of Perun killing Veles in the guise of a bear. Also certain human figures with circular heads – for example those from Radimlja in Herzegovina – are sometimes interpreted as images of Svetovit – with the head standing for the all-seeing Sun – or Orion, the divine archer. A *sanduk*-type tombstone from Boljuni in Herzegovina (Fig. 32) is believed to be ornamented with the image of the tree of life, the symbol of the World Axis (*axis mundi*). On its one side, there is a representation of a winged snake which possibly stands for Zmaj, a Slavic chthonic and celestial deity. On the other side of the tree, one can see an unspecified animal, perhaps a symbol of Veles (Volos). According to other interpretations, the winged snake is the demon Aždaha, whereas the other creature is Belbog (Bielbog – 'white god') fighting the serpent and presented in the guise of a lion. Images from a tombstone from Brotice in Dalmatia, where imaginary animals were presented next to dancing and hunting scenes (Fig. 33), are sometimes similarly interpreted as representing the fight between Zmaj and Aždaha in the guise of an eagle. The latter is supposed to be depicted as a snake in another scene, whereas other animals represent minor demons or mythical characters.¹⁷

Scholars interpreting *stećci* as reflecting Proto-Slavic and Indo-European beliefs sometimes refer to so-called

Old Prussian 'baba' stones from northeastern Poland, similar sculptures from Ukraine and images present on the so-called Zbruch Svetovid.¹⁸ Whereas the analogies to the Old Prussian and steppe 'baba' stones are at least disputable, the way of presenting human figures, dancing scenes, weaponry and animals on the Zbruch idol are indeed similar to those present on *stećci*.

Still, it appears that the origins of *stećci* and the images covering them are much more complicated and should be investigated in the broad context of European history as a unique manner in which the culture of mediaeval Bosnia was manifested. Thus, we can consider it a result of merging different local post-Antique, Slavic and Wallachian traditions with the Bogomil/Patarene ideas, Christian symbolism, and especially with European chivalric culture.¹⁹

The slab-shaped tombstones, which are considered the original form of *stećci*, were popular throughout mediaeval Europe. On the other hand, the equally early amorphous forms of *stećci* find their closest analogues in the tombstones (ornamented with the images of bows and arrows) from the cemetery in Radomyšl near Strakonice (southern Bohemia), which is dated to the 12th–13th centuries.²⁰ Late Antique sarcophagi – which can still be found in many places across the whole Balkans – were probably the model for the sarcophagus-like *stećci*. Still, we need to bear in mind that the former were used as containers

¹⁷ Viduša 2014, 143–263.

¹⁸ Bešliagić 1982, 284.

¹⁹ Miletić 1982; Lovrenović 2009; Uglešić, Vučić 2014; Dizdar 2018a, 2018b.

²⁰ Nechvátal 1999; 2019, 21–35.



Fig. 33. *Stećak* tombstone with images of mythical animals (demons), dancing and animals. Cemetery in Brotice, Croatia (photo by M. Florek).

for bodies, whereas *stećci* were monolithic tombstones. What is more, there are 12th and 13th century tombstones from Western Europe – e.g. Sweden and England – that resemble to a great degree the sarcophagus-like *stećci* in their form and the way they are ornamented (e.g. arcades carved in low relief).²¹

It is more difficult to find analogies for the tombstones in the form of great cuboids and for the majority of the so-called crosses, especially those resembling stylized human figures and those with reduced lateral arms and round end of the vertical beam. On the other hand, the *stećci* in the form of stelae, which were the latest type, might have been in fact modelled on Muslim *nišan* tombstones.

The images of dead people, heraldic representations, weaponry and hunting scenes, fights, tournaments, groups of riders etc., as well as the majority of animal and vegetal motifs (e.g. lilies) occurring on *stećci* find their analogues in works of mediaeval art from Western and Central Europe, although not necessarily in images present on tombstones.²² Yet they do not occur anywhere else in such numbers and compositions. Even the lack or only occasional occurrence of the cross does not appear to be unusual, as this motif is rarely present on mediaeval tombstones from the rest of Europe, as well.

What distinguishes the majority of the images present on *stećci* from those occurring on Western and Central European tombstones is above all their characteristic style. We can debate whether it is an expression of their provincialism in relation to Western European

art, resulting from isolation and conservatism, combined with primitivism, which in turn reflected the skill level of the tombstone makers, as certain scholars believe.²³ There is also the possibility – a hypothesis popular especially among the younger generation of Croatian researchers – that this style was consciously adopted and developed, syncretically merging the local Roman provincial, Byzantine, Slavic and Wallachian traditions with Western European Romanesque and Gothic art.²⁴

The prime of the '*stećci* art' – appearance of their most characteristic forms along with a whole set of decorative motifs and images – occurred during the 14th and in the first half of the 15th centuries. This was also the time when Bosnia, ruled by the Kotromanić dynasty, gained full independence after a period of nominal rule of Hungary. In 1377 Tvrtko I, previously holding the title of ban, was crowned king. Later he struggled to maintain his rule in the face of the Turkish expansion. The distribution of *stećci* significantly overlaps with the greatest territorial extent of the state ruled by Tvrtko I and his successors. Besides Bosnia and Herzegovina, it included certain parts of Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro – together with the Dalmatian shore from Kotor in the south to Zadar in the north.²⁵ On the one hand, *stećci* – with their forms and symbols – correspond to the general trend of Western European sepulchral art linked with the chivalric ethos and Christianity. On the other, they could have been a manifestation of the local distinctiveness, originally associated with attempts to emancipate the territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina from Byzantium,

²¹ Palameta 2004; 2020.

²² Basler 1972; Mazrak 2012; Vučić 2013; Palameta 1995; 2004; 2020.

²³ Molé 1961b, 154.

²⁴ Andelić 1984, 487–491.

²⁵ Andelić 1984, Ančić 1997; 2005; Imamović 1997.

and later Serbia, Croatia and finally Hungary, and then with maintaining independence by the successors of King Tvrtko I. This is possibly the reason of the popularity enjoyed by the Bogomil/Patarene heresy, which gained new listeners and promoters not only from the lowest social classes but also from among the aristocracy and representatives of the Bosnian Church attempting to preserve their distinctiveness against the contradictory influences of the Papacy and Byzantium, Hungary, Venice, Serbia and Bulgaria. The fact that virtually the whole population of Bosnia and Herzegovina converted to Islam without resistance in a very short time after the Turkish conquest, between 1463 and 1481 – contrary to what can be said about such lands as Greece, Serbia or Bulgaria – indicates that Christianity was shallowly rooted in the local society, also among the elites.

Stećci, together with their decorations – images of weaponry, human figures and genre scenes (hunting, fighting, tournaments, dancing, horse cavalcades) – are an invaluable source of information on life in mediaeval Bosnia and especially on its elites: the knightly class and groups aspiring to join it. The number of preserved tombstones indicated that the knightly class and groups emulating its lifestyle – including burial customs – must have been considerably large. What is more, it appears that the material statuses of both social strata were similar. This statement seems to be confirmed by the fact that after the Turkish conquest, the Bosnian population – similarly to that of the nearby Albania – became a peasant society based on a clan system. As was mentioned above, the fast conversion of nearly the entire Bosnian population to Islam also indicates the infirmity of the local Church structures and only superficial reception of Christianity by the Slavs inhabiting this territory.

One of the most frequent motifs present on *stećci*, which can be associated with the knightly class, are the sword and shield.²⁶ They occur in various arrangements – individually, in pairs (sword + shield, although there is one tombstone with a whole set composed of a sword, shield and knight's belt) and together with other motifs, as well as in genre scenes. Shields may be presented as elements of defensive weaponry or simply as heraldic coats of arms that indicate the family and lineage to which the buried person belonged. There are different types of such artefacts depicted on the discussed tombstones, from almond-shaped ones, resembling the so-called Norman shields, to triangular *Manesse*-type shields, oval, rectangular, rectangular with a semicircular cutout for a lance – pavises used by heavy cavalry, although some images on such tombstones present them as used also by infan-



Fig. 34. Scene of deer hunting. Tombstone at the cemetery in Provec – Cista Provo, Croatia (photo by M. Florek).

trymen – to trapezoid shields with a notch, so-called Hungarian or hussar shields, which became popular in the 16th century.

Except various swords and shields, there are also other types of cold weapons: daggers, poniards, sabres – sometimes together with shields – and less frequently: spears, battle-axes, bludgeons, maces and bows. These images indicate that weaponry – at least personal – used across the Balkans in the Middle Ages did not differ from that used in other parts of Europe.²⁷

The genre scenes on *stećci* are interesting for scholars researching the chivalric culture of Bosnia. Such images do not have any analogues in the mediaeval sepulchral art from other parts of Europe, but they can be easily found on frescos and tapestries decorating the walls of castles and manors. The majority of genre scenes present hunting. Judging from the number of such images, the most popular type was deer hunting. Scenes showing this activity appear on over 160 tombstones. Hunting boars – the second most numerous representation of this type – can be found on only 11 stones, whereas bear hunting appears on only four. Deer were usually hunted on horseback, with a spear or some other type of pole weapon, but sometimes the portrayed hunters use swords (Fig. 34). Much less numerous are images of a walking

²⁶ Florek 2016, 146–163.

²⁷ Ćurčić 1944; Škrivanić 1957; Sijarić 2004; 2012; 2014; Florek 2016.



Fig. 35. Scene of deer hunting. Tombstone at the cemetery in Radimlja, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 36. Scene of hunting with a falcon. Tombstone at the cemetery in Gabrili, Croatia (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 37. Combat scene. Tombstone at the cemetery in Radimlja, Bosnia and Herzegovina (photo by M. Florek).



Fig. 38. Image representing the *kolo* dance. Tombstone displayed at the Town Museum in Makarska, Croatia (photo by M. Florek).

hunter with a bow. Furthermore, there are scenes of a hunting rider with a spear accompanied by a walking bowman. Falcons and dogs were also employed in chasing deer by mounted men using spears and swords as well as by walking archers (Figs 35–36). When hunting a boar or bear, mounted or walking hunters used spears, and were sometimes accompanied by dogs.

Less numerous are the images of fighting and tournaments (Fig. 37). The schematic character of many battle scenes makes it impossible to state whether they represent real combat or its re-enactment during a chivalry tournament. There are almost 60 tombstones with such images – mainly from Herzegovina. In the background of the tournament scenes there are often architectural elements (arcades), which suggests that they were organized in cloistered castle courtyards. The most frequent are the images of two fighting mounted knights, where both are using lances, spears or swords. Between them there is often a standing human figure (sometimes there are two), which directly indicates that these are tournament scenes. There are also images of men fighting on horseback and observed by people standing on the walls of some structure – most probably a castle. There are scenes of combat between two foot warriors, where both use swords or one fights with a sword and the other uses a bow. One can also find images of a duel between a mounted man with a spear or lance and a foot warrior using a bow or sword. On the other hand, images presenting more than two fighting persons are relatively rare.

The so-called cavalcades, representations of riders – usually carrying weapons and sometimes accompanied by foot soldiers and dogs – are in some way associated with the scenes of tournaments and fights (and possibly with hunting scenes).

A particularly interesting category of genre scenes are those interpreted as depicting dancing (Fig. 38). Some scholars assume that they may represent a traditional Slavic dance called the *kolo*, which is still performed in the Balkans. According to other interpretations, they are images of a courtly group dance similar to the Western European *carole* or *Kronentanz*. It is difficult to decide which of the two theories is correct, as the folk *kolo* dance and the medieval courtly *carole* derive from the same root – a ritual circle dance. There are also attempts to interpret these scenes as symbols/representations of the ‘Dance of Death’, which was popular in late mediaeval iconography, or as rather pagan images of souls travelling to the afterlife.

Although in the scenes of dancing, as well in several tournament scenes, women were presented next to men, the knightly world of mediaeval Bosnia was notably masculine. There are no tombstones with images representing a woman only. Still, it should be stressed that generally, there are only a few human figures that can be interpreted as the images of the individuals buried under the stones. When a man and a woman are presented on the same tombstone – with the exception of the above-mentioned dancing scenes – the woman is much smaller (the same applies to children). Contrary to those from Western Europe, there are no tombstones of married couples where both buried individuals are presented in a similar way.

Interestingly enough, the genre scenes occurring on *stećci* do not include representations of a religious or devotional character. There are no images indicating that members of a clergy were buried under some of the tombstones. We can only guess to what extent this fact resulted from the popularity of the Bogomil/Patarene

heresy and to what degree it was caused by the more modest role of the Church in mediaeval Bosnia in comparison with other parts of Europe.

Stećci continued to be erected in cemeteries located throughout the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina some time after the Turkish conquest. This applies not only to the stelae, imitating Muslim *nišan* tombstones, but also to slabs and cubical monoliths. On the other hand, ornamental motifs typical of earlier *stećci* and un-

known to Ottoman art appeared on Muslim *nišan* stones. The custom of ornamenting tombstones, which by that time had only the form of slabs, with motifs typical of *stećci*, including images of weaponry (especially swords and shields), survived for the longest time (at least until the end of the 17th century) in the coastal towns of Dalmatia that had been part of the Bosnian Kingdom during the Middle Ages and were not subjected to the Ottoman rule.

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BOGUSZ WASIK

The Malbork Castle Museum

b.wasik@zamek.malbork.pl

ORCID 0000-0002-2968-3015

CASTLES IN THE TEUTONIC ORDER STATE IN PRUSSIA AS MEDIUM OF IDEOLOGY AND MANIFESTATION OF POWER

ABSTRACT

The article concentrates on an analysis of the forms of castles erected by the Teutonic Order in their conquered domain in Prussia, which were a medium of ideas and manifestation of symbols. The most significant forms were structures of the castell type. That type of fortresses, which had been built since the Antiquity, usually associated with strong centralized state authority and used as a sign of the power propaganda, was later adopted in Western Europe. The Teutonic Knights adjusted that castle type to their needs in the 1270s and 1280s as a sign of the state and the centralized idea of the knight-monks' authority. Repetitiveness and perfect geometric architectonic forms depicted the character of their rulership, modelled after the Divine Order, and their role as *milites Christi*, defenders of Christianity. Towers were another

construction element with a strong semantic charge as a sign and symbol of feudal power. The beginnings of tower-type residences date back to the 10th century Normandy, from where they spread around Europe in the following centuries. Habitable towers were also used by the Teutonic Order, who built them in 14th century as residences of some lower rank officials. Erecting a palace for the grand masters in Malbork at the end of the 14th century, they also referred to the form of donjon as a symbol of a sovereign and a ruler seat. The castle in Sztum was a result of yet another tradition – a residence situated nearby the capital as a leisure and hunting place for the overlord. That was an expression of court culture and a sign of prestige of a ruler – in this case, the grand master.

Keywords: castles, Teutonic Knights, Prussia, architecture, Middle Ages, ideology, power

Mediaeval Europe was divided into monarchies and rulerships, whose inhabitants were attributed to various levels of feudal hierarchy, in accordance with the division into the rulers, fighters, the ones who prayed and the ones who worked. The building of seats, adequate to the position and within financial means, was one of the distinguishing determinants of the elite (kings, dukes, aristocracy and knights). The structures they erected – wooden or brick castles – were not only to provide safety to patricians and knights (and inhabitants of their domains), but also to demonstrate the owners' social position in the mediaeval society. In these special conditions of mediaeval Europe, as a consequence of a transformation of the mass crusade movement that started at the end of the 11th century with the initial goal of pushing back the Muslims from the Holy Land and regaining the

territory for Christianity, the Order of Brothers of the German House of Saint Mary in Jerusalem, called the Teutonic Knights, created a state situated along the Baltic Sea coasts. In the conquered territory, they established an effectively functioning monastic state with knight-monks as its elite. To justify their activities and existence in the conquered pagan lands of Prussia, they had to work out and implement an ideology which referred to both spiritual and secular aspects of their work. Erecting castles was one of the propaganda means of upholding their ideology and manifesting their power.¹

From about 1230 onwards progress in the monk-knights' expansion was marked by erecting numerous strongholds around the country. From about half of the 13th century single wood and earth fortresses started to be transformed into brick ones. However, they were in

¹ Cf. Kutzner 1995; Kwiatkowski 2019.

the beginning simple irregularly planned structures, and even though, based on source data, we are able to indicate in them, like in wood and earth structures, the presence of basic elements necessary for leading the knights' monastic life (chapels), their uncomplicated architectonic forms were dictated first of all by utilitarian and military factors.² The fact of the building and presence of a stronghold network in the occupied area was in itself a demonstration of power, and only later, after the conquest was completed and the new state and territorial power stabilized and consolidated (from the 1270s–1280s), did the Teutonic castle architecture become a clear medium of ideology expression. The process was influenced by the fact that these years were the period of settlement development, when fights and destruction had finished and the Order was able to obtain solid financial foundation and infrastructure, and create conditions to invite specialists.³ Before that, a lack of properly developed local structures had forced the Knights to use mainly supplies coming from their bailiwicks from the Reich territories and papal donations, and the financial contributions from knights and clergy for the Knights' participation in the Crusades.⁴ It should also be remembered that the Order had to share the financial means between urgent needs of the Holy Land and fights in Prussia, and its highest authorities did not focus much on Prussian problems. Needs of the remote property along the Baltic coast were of secondary interest, even during the crisis related to the great Prussian uprising (under Grand Master Heinrich von Hohenlohe). The situation changed a little in the times of Grand Master Poppo von Osterna, who upon taking office in 1252 directed all his attention and care to the Baltic properties of the Order.⁵ Therefore, the moment of erecting the first brick strongholds (Toruń, Starogród, Balga) is not at all accidental. Yet more intensive brick architecture development in Prussia (deprived of such building traditions) was impossible at that time.⁶

From the 1270s/1280s, we can observe a quick development of monumental architecture in Prussia, and compared to the first decades of the Teutonic Order's functioning on the coasts of the Baltic Sea, a clear change is seen both in architectonic forms and the building techniques – in terms of quality as well as quantity. A decision of crucial significance made in the discussed period, influencing the later homogeneous picture of castle architecture in Prussia, was adapting the structure of a castell type, which became the most typical form of

a commander castle (convent house) in the Teutonic state (Fig. 1). We should offer a precise definition of a castell type. Until recently, the meaning of the term had not been univocal in Polish literature and not necessarily identical with the way it functions in European castelology. The definition had concerned, e.g., 'a castle or its central sector being a fortified habitable house of an office holder or a feudal lord',⁷ but also forms of defensive manors of Hungarian origin.⁸ However, in the last years, castell as a castle type, also in Poland, has attracted greater interest.⁹ European research did not always define the object clearly, either.¹⁰ The most precise definition that depicts the basic features of the structure seems to be that given by Patrick Schicht, who says that a castell is a regular, usually rectangular, secular monumental structure, whose circumferential defensive walls are accented by numerous towers or tower-like fortifications.¹¹ This list should be completed with the structure's stronghold character.

In Prussia, we can distinguish some groups/types of castells, referring more or less to the buildings' chronology and various detailed secondary features. Generally, the oldest ones, from the 1270s–1280s, were erected along the Vistula Lagoon coasts (Malbork, Brandenburg, Königsberg, Lochstedt), and the next, parallel concentration was created in Chełmno Land (Papowo Biskupie, Lipienek, Rogóźno). In the first half of the 14th century several so-called classic castells, with their complete, majestic and sophisticated forms are built (Gniew, Radzyń Chełmiński, Brodnica). From about the second quarter of the century subsequent regular castles are being erected in various parts of Prussia, which with time get more simplified forms (e.g. Czluchów, Ostróda). Ragneta was the last commandery seat of that type, erected in the very beginning of the 15th century. In ideal version, castles had a regular square or rectangular floor plan and four wings, and from the courtyard side they were connected with a brick or wooden cloister, enabling communication. The oldest ones (from the Vistula Lagoon) were not planned in the beginning as four-winged structures, and in the case of later buildings, the complete architectonic plan could end up not being fulfilled due to various reasons (e.g. in Barciany). Castells from the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th century did not have big towers in the corners, only small turrets placed directly on circumferential walls (e.g. Golub) or, at most, forming slight projections (Malbork, Papowo

² Arszyski 1995a, 123–138; Wasik 2016b; 2018b; 2018d, 218–223.

³ Cf. Wasik 2016c, 116–120.

⁴ Biskup, Labuda 1988, 189.

⁵ Morton 2018, 146–154, 159–160, 170–171.

⁶ Arszyski 1995a, 200–214.

⁷ Słownik 2006, 180.

⁸ Bogdanowski 2002, 525.

⁹ Cf. Kajzer, Olszacki 2011; Olszacki 2011.

¹⁰ Schicht 2018, 9–10.

¹¹ Schicht 2018, 10.

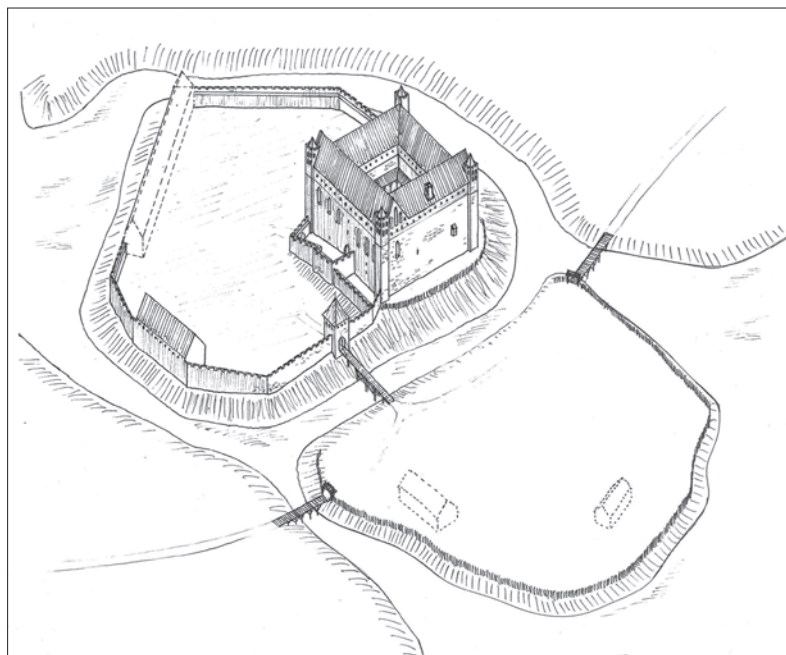


Fig. 1. Papowo Biskupie. Reconstruction of the castle's appearance in the first half of the 14th century (drawing by B. Wasik).

Biskupie). Some of these castles were also equipped with corner main towers of a *bergfried* fighting-tower type. The classic castells which followed had bigger, quadrangular corner towers, partly pushed forward, and the presence of a *bergfried* became a rule. In late castells those elements were abandoned, reducing the castell to a cubic block, composed of four wings, without any clear vertical accents.¹² One common feature was interior character and function divisions. The biggest part of a typical commander castle was placed upon cellars beneath, which served the functions of a household and supply storage. Similar functions were designed for the ground floor rooms, where kitchens, a brewery and a bakery were located. The main representative and habitable functions were served by rooms on the first floor, in particular those located in the wing rooming the chapel, and a neighbouring castle central hall – a refectory, heated with a hypocaustum system. The first floors of the other wings contained, among other facilities, the knights bedrooms (dormitories). The higher floors were occupied by storage facilities and defensive equipment.¹³

The structure described above is the complete form of a Teutonic castell, being a seat of commanders and the knight-monks, but the model was also used and

accepted around Prussia for other purposes. In a reduced form (with fewer wings and single towers) castell-type structures were erected as seats of officials of lower rank (*pflegers*, *vogts*), serving local administrative functions (e.g. the castle in Działdowo).¹⁴

Researchers have long been intrigued by the problem of the genesis and original conceptions of the Teutonic castell prototype. Generally, opinions on the subject fall into two groups: the castell type was shaped locally, in Prussia, without any external models,¹⁵ or it was influenced by an external prototype, transferred more or less directly from different places and regions. Some assumptions in the latter regard included direct Ancient Roman traditions of legion encampments,¹⁶ Middle Eastern castles,¹⁷ castles in Thuringia, Saxony,¹⁸ Spain,¹⁹ castles of Frederick II Hohenstauf from southern Italy and Sicily,²⁰ or strongholds of Bohemian King Přemysl Ottokar II.²¹ Influences of monastic architecture, Cistercian in particular, were also indicated.²² In the last decades, discussions have taken into account a possibility of interaction and combining various influences, like southern Italian castles (of the kind erected by Hohenstauf) and Norman donjons in England, emphasizing simultaneously that the final model was elaborated in the Teutonic Knights'

¹² Torbus 1998, 88–247; 2014, 93–284; cf. Wasik 2020b.

¹³ Józwiak, Trupinda 2012, 257–421.

¹⁴ Herrmann 2007, 80–81.

¹⁵ Clasen 1927, 187–194; Lindemann 1938; 1951.

¹⁶ Frycz 1978, 31–33.

¹⁷ Steinbrecht 1915, 438; cf. Arszyski 1995a, 59; 1995b, 111–112.

¹⁸ Lindemann 1938; 1951.

¹⁹ Holst 1981.

²⁰ Dehio 1905.

²¹ Durdík 1993.

²² Incl. Steinbrecht 1915, 438; Torbus 1998, 297; 2014, 349.

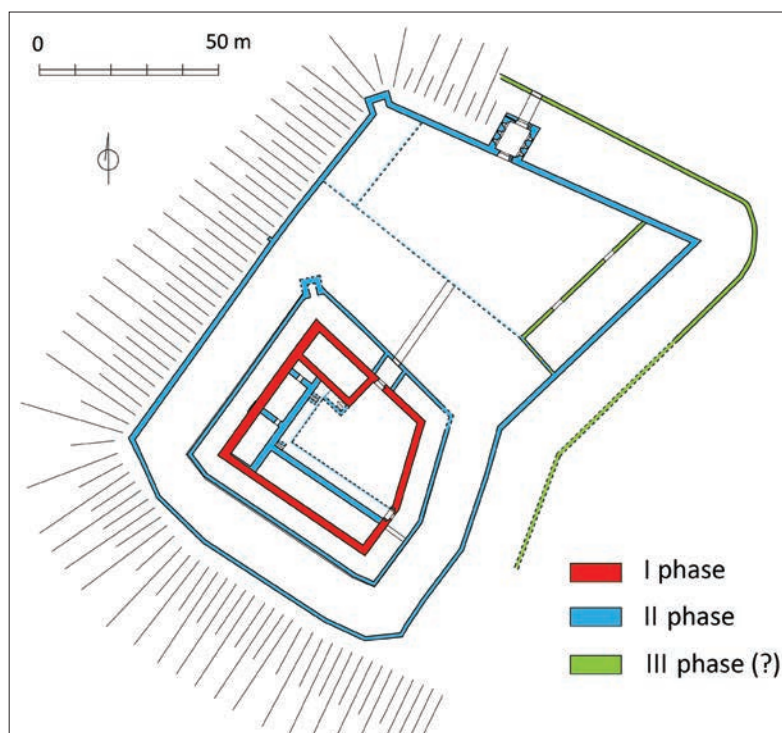


Fig. 2. Bierzysłowo. The castle building phases (drawing by B. Wasik).

circles – in Prussia or in the Reich.²³ The importance of wider semantic ideas of the castell as foundations related to a program of strong central authority²⁴ was also pointed out. Other researchers associate that factor both with influences of monastic architecture and the local model created by the knights inhabiting Prussia.²⁵

According to present knowledge, the castell type appeared in Prussia quite suddenly in the 1270s–1280s. Therefore, we must reject the evolutionary conception of shaping a regular commander castle in Prussia presented by Karl Heinz Clasen.²⁶ Earlier, irregular structures had a very simple arrangement with only one brick building. Their redevelopment into two- or three-winged castles with cloistered courtyards was a later treatment, made after accepting the castell type (Fig. 2), and due to that fact, is an element of the Prussian castell project and evidence of intentional conception of adapting the castell type in Prussia.²⁷ Difficulties with estimating the precise chronology make it impossible to name the first

object or objects of that type. A group of strongholds from the Vistula Lagoon area are regarded to be the oldest regular castles.²⁸ Erecting a castle in Malbork started about 1274²⁹ or, more probably, at the end of the 1270s. In 1279 the Teutonic knights from Zantyr³⁰ moved to Malbork. Until recently the erecting of the Brandenburg (Pokarmin) Castle was thought to have commenced early, in the 1260s.³¹ New studies indicate, however, that the local commandery was created as late as 1283–1284, and that was probably the time when the brick castle was built.³² A precise dating of the castell in Königsberg is impossible at present. Some sources inform about unspecified brick elements of the castle existing in 1263. The erection of the castell itself is generally dated to between 1275 and 1312.³³ Taking into account the established chronology of the oldest castells of the Vistula Lagoon, the process of erecting commander castles in Chełmno Land³⁴ started more or less at the same time, with the oldest castles in Papowo Biskupie (Fig. 1), Lipienek and

²³ Kutzner 1995, 45; 1996, 206; Pospieszny 2004, 154–156; 2009, 77–80.

²⁴ Skibiński 1994; Arsyński 1995a, 66–69, 73; 1995b, 115–117.

²⁵ Herrmann 2007, 194–199; 2009; Torbus 1998, 296–297; 2014, 348–351.

²⁶ Clasen 1927, 13–127.

²⁷ Wasik 2016a, 245–271, 319; 2018d; 2020b, 123–125.

²⁸ Torbus 1998, 88–124.

²⁹ Pospieszny 2014, 25–33.

³⁰ Jóźwiak, Trupinda 2011, 53; Torbus 2014, 109–110.

³¹ Torbus 1998, 372.

³² Erecting a spacious castell structure before the establishment of a commandery would not be justified; Jóźwiak 2001, 61–64; Jóźwiak, Trupinda 2019, 107–112.

³³ Jóźwiak, Trupinda 2020b, 128–129; Torbus 1998, 455; 2014, 132–133.

³⁴ Torbus 1998, 124–144; 2014, 141–144.

Rogóžno. The first of those was built as the seat of a commandery established between 1279 and 1284. The brick structure did not replace any earlier wood and earth stronghold, so we can assume that the original castell was erected in that period. It was already functioning in some form in 1287.³⁵ Discussing the other two locations, we do not have at our disposal any precise source data. Erecting a brick castle in Lipienek started probably due to the commander office of Chełmno Land being moved there in 1285; the development used as the base fragments of a wood and earth stronghold destroyed in 1277, but it is difficult to state if its reconstruction started around 1285 or earlier. It seems, however, that proper living and working conditions needed to be arranged for the commander before his moving there, so we can suggest the investment began in the first half of the 1280s.³⁶ A similar period, around 1285, when the commandery was established, is estimated as the commencement of erecting the castle in Rogóžno.³⁷

There was also an opinion, put forward first and foremost by Kazimierz Pospieszny, that the castle in Elbląg was the oldest quadrangular regular commandery castle – and the model for other Teutonic castles in Prussia.³⁸ The researchers sharing that opinion indicated also that the erecting process started early – in the 1250s or 1260s – and that the castle's rich chapel furnishing patterns, made in local workshops and dating from that period (ca. 1250–1270), were imitated later, while building other castles along the Vistula Lagoon coasts.³⁹ Marian Kutzner reached that conclusion upon examining a collection of architectonic detail fragments, which, however, apart from the supposition that it comes from the castle, is deprived of any precise context. The details were deposited in the rubble filling the outhouse cellar and came probably from German archaeological works carried out in 1914 in the area of the outer bailey.⁴⁰ Apart from characteristic elements such as fragments of figures, which can be associated with a chapel, it is not possible to attribute these details to particular parts and rooms of the castle, therefore drawing any general conclusions concerning all the complex of the high castle should be treated cautiously. A very early dating of two figure fragments was based on their better technical quality compared to sculptures from the Golden Gate in Malbork, which in the researchers'

opinion must indicate that the Elbląg details are older.⁴¹ Dating those details and the whole development as far back as the mid-13th century seems improbable, taking into account the circumstances and conditions of Prussia of that time.⁴² The problems with dating the Elbląg sculptures based on their fragments were also touched upon by Anna Błażejewska,⁴³ whose analyses move their chronology to about 1270–1280. The other details, fragments of more serially produced pieces, like ribbed fittings (heads with a pear profile and trapezoids), are regarded as typical forms used in other Prussian castles of the end of the 13th and the first half of the 14th centuries.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, we must state that the castle in Elbląg, being the seat of the country masters from 1251, despite all the above doubts and unclear opinions, must have been one of the oldest ones erected in the brick technique in Prussia – dating probably from about the mid-13th century, the same time as castles in Toruń, Starogród and Balga.⁴⁵ There is no knowledge as to what form it had then. It should be remarked that analysis of the details discussed above indicates in fact their stylistic and technical characteristics and not the castle's form. During archaeological exploration in the area of the outer bailey, three stages of the wooden lower ward from the second half of 13th century were distinguished (with the wooden character of the enclosure still kept – at least partially – in the beginning of 14th century).⁴⁶ In the context of this article's subject, we must look closer again at the reliability of the opinion quoted above concerning the regular form of the high castle, because the view provokes justified doubts of some researchers.⁴⁷ The reconstruction of the high castle arrangement is based on a few wall fragments of northern, southern and southwestern structures, excavated over a vast area in the 1930s and 1980s⁴⁸ (Fig. 3). We are also able to estimate a supposed location of relics belonging to western part of the high castle, excavated in 1875.⁴⁹ The finds give a general idea of the high castle span, but do not deliver grounds for a detailed reconstruction of its plan and conclusions concerning its look. Little is unfortunately known on the object's architecture from the very poor information in written sources.⁵⁰ First and the foremost, perceiving the high castle in Elbląg as a regular structure,⁵¹ based on our knowledge on the subject, should be treated as a misuse, omitting some facts in order to adjust them to a preconceived

³⁵ Józwiak, Trupinda 2020a, 138–139; Wasik 2020d, 91.

³⁶ Józwiak, Trupinda 2020a, 135–136; Wasik 2020d, 86.

³⁷ Józwiak 1997, 169, 247; Torbus 2014, 152–153.

³⁸ Pospieszny 2014, 35–36, 116–118.

³⁹ Kutzner 1997, 62–77.

⁴⁰ Kutzner 1997, 59–60.

⁴¹ Kutzner 1997, 62–64.

⁴² Cf. Wasik 2016c, 115–118.

⁴³ Błażejewska 2012, 102–105.

⁴⁴ Cf. Kutzner 1997, 70–71; Wasik 2016a, 160–163, in annex, 19–29.

⁴⁵ Torbus 2014, 95.

⁴⁶ Marcinkowski *et al.* 2013.

⁴⁷ Józwiak, Trupinda 2015, 198; Torbus 2014, 99.

⁴⁸ Nawroński 1986, 93–95, 98–103.

⁴⁹ Rynkiewicz-Domino 2012, 205.

⁵⁰ Józwiak, Trupinda 2015, 199–202.

⁵¹ Pospieszny 2014, 37–39; Rynkiewicz-Domino 2012, 205–206.

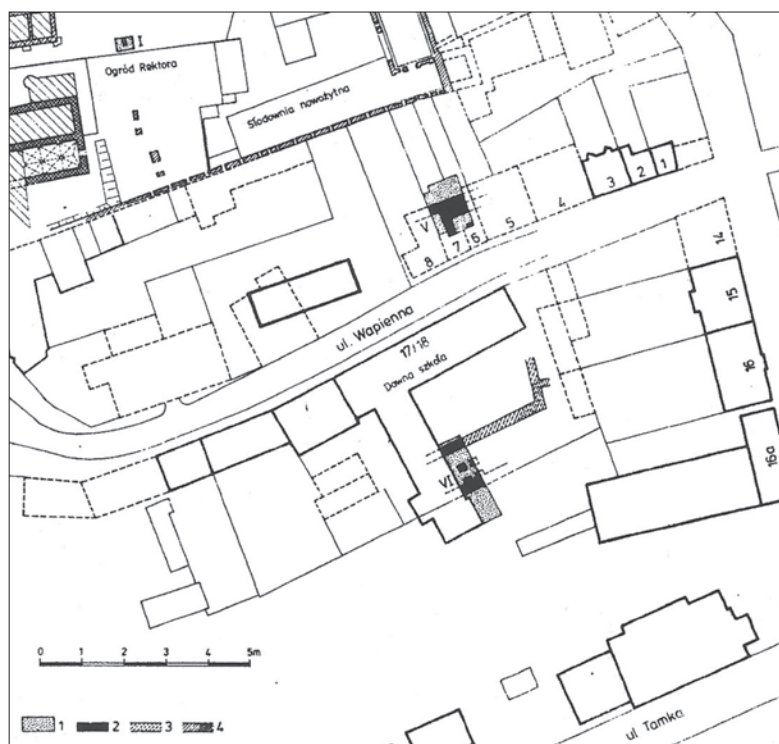


Fig. 3. Elbląg. Plan of the high castle area: 1 – archaeological excavations carried out after 1945; 2 – mediaeval walls uncovered in the excavations; 3 – presumed course of the walls uncovered in 1936–1939; 4 – existing walls or determined sections of mediaeval walls (by Nawroński 1986).

opinion – the only excavated corner of the structure has an obtuse angle, not the right angle. The divergence is bigger than was indicated by Kazimierz Pospieszny,⁵² and it was impossible to correct at a higher level, as the researcher wished. Therefore, the high castle in Elbląg was not a regular castell. At the best, it had a trapezoid floor plan, but even this hypothesis, due to single wall fragments scattered around a big space, is anything but certain. We cannot exclude, for instance, that the western corner of the northern wing was situated at the right angle to its lengthened walls, which would cause a bend of the western curtain and a pentagonal plan of the castle circumference, as it is in the case of castles in Grudziądz and Bierzgłowo (Fig. 2). We should also remark that before large-scale archaeological and architectonic research was conducted, based only on tiny fragments of excavated walls, the high castle in Toruń had also been interpreted as a four-winged structure, which turned out to be false.⁵³ There is no ground to assume a priori that the Elbląg castle had four full-sized wings, since we know only the width of the southern one. A similar situation is observed in the case of the cloister, known from the relics by the southern building and written sources – did the gallery run all around the courtyard, or was it erected by

just parts of the building?⁵⁴ The basic mistake is to treat the high castle as a homogeneous structure, because in the light of recent studies, the earliest brick commandery castles in Prussia had a very complex building history. They were completed in several phases and stages, and the final effect had not been anticipated during the original structure erection. In the beginning they were castles consisting of circumferential walls and a single brick building. The last examples of that type were still being created as late as in the 1270s–1280s. These irregular commandery castles obtained their final forms in a later period – the times when castles were being erected in Chełmno Land and along the Vistula Lagoon. But even then, despite using elements making them resemble regular structures, they had their own varied architectonic forms, consisting of two or three big wings, frequently accompanied by lower ones, serving as storage facilities. Cloisters were also built in these objects only by central buildings and not around the courtyard.⁵⁵ Similar complications can be expected also in the case of the Elbląg complex, which calls for carefulness while drawing conclusions concerning the general castle architecture based solely on the inventory of finds, without detailed knowledge of their original context. However, the general stylistic groups distinguished

⁵² In reality, the angle is 104°, not 95°, as Kazimierz Pospieszny indicated; Pospieszny 2014, 39.

⁵³ Steinbrecht 1885, 19.

⁵⁴ Józwiak, Trupinda 2015, 199; Nawroński 1986, 93–95.

⁵⁵ Wasik 2016a, 245–271; 2016b, 244–251; 2018b, 175–182; 2018d; 2020b, 123–125; 2020d, 55–61, 68–76.

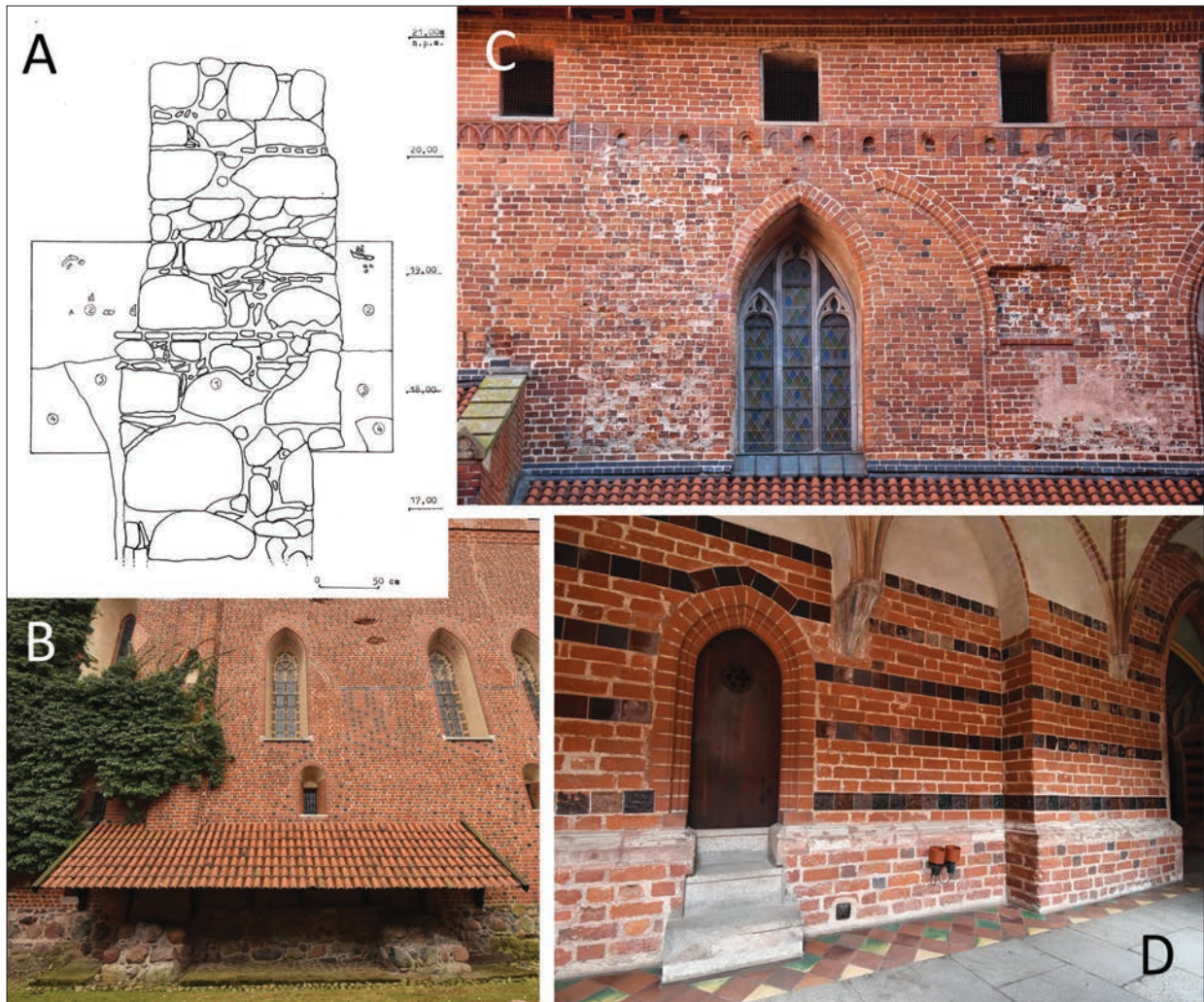


Fig. 4. Malbork. High castle: A – the foundation of the buttress at the northern facade of the castell (Sawicki 2003); B – foundations of unfinished buttresses at the northern facade of the castell; C – traces of demolished buttresses on the courtyard facade of the northern wing; D – the chapel plinth on the first floor of the cloister (photo by B. Wasik).

by Marian Kutzner, dating from the second half of the 13th century, the 13th–14th centuries and the first half of the 14th century, respectively,⁵⁶ seem to correspond with the general periods of transformations and erecting of other irregular castles. To draw more precise conclusions on this specific castle, especially given its significance among the objects of the period, gradual and well planned archaeological and architectonic research is necessary.

Thinking about the beginnings of a castell type in Prussia, one should pay more attention to the intriguing inconsistency and untypical solutions observed in the first stages of erecting the castle in Malbork. The castell had not been planned in the beginning as a four-winged

structure and it was completed in stages, rather standard ones for that type of castles in Prussia.⁵⁷ Though changes and corrections made during construction can be observed also in other castles, in the case of Malbork they seem to go beyond the standard practices. First of all, the main (northern) castle wing was originally supposed to be strengthened with massive buttresses, which are not met in other objects of that type (Fig. 4). While erecting foundations of the walls, the builders planned to make two buttresses on the axis of the northern castell wall. A solid foundation of one of them, with plinths extending downwards, was excavated in 2002.⁵⁸ The method was not continued above the foundations, leaving only a brick lesene

⁵⁶ Kutzner 1997, 62.

⁵⁷ Cf. Wasik 2018a.

⁵⁸ Sawicki 2003.

in place of the eastern buttress. Two buttresses from the courtyard side were built, but during further works on the wing they were dismantled, leaving a sign of them in the form of strips above the cloister, and the fact that they had been a part of the original concept is evidenced by an arcade frieze adjusted so as to make it narrower. What is surprising is that at the level of the cloister on the first floor we cannot observe any signs of dismantling the buttresses on the external face of the wall. Therefore, we can deduce that they probably had gaps in the form of an arcade (flying buttresses), forming walkways along the walls. That solution broke the rule of a solid body and compactness, characteristic of Teutonic castells. There are also other elements suggesting a lack of determination and experience of the builders. For example, examining the trench located in the gate passage,⁵⁹ at the level of the foundations, the toothing out of an undefined foundation wall, running at a different angle, was reported. On the first floor of the central wing, another team of builders had to correct a partition between the chapel and the refectory, because originally it had been designed faultily and it did not serve the required load-bearing function between the rooms of various vault levels, which was a standard arrangement in later castells. Architectonic studies detected also a change to a building team more skilled in erecting sacral structures. The builders used, among other elements, a decorative plinth and a cornice in a part of the first floor facade from the courtyard (cloister) at the chapel level (Fig. 4D), thus accentuating the presence of a castle church situated there, as if it had been a structure standing on the ground level.⁶⁰ Using that plinth and the buttresses discussed earlier has no analogues in other preserved castells. These untypical solutions, corrections, and building team changes seem to indicate that at the very beginning of the castle building process it was being performed by masters not skilled in castle erecting. What is more, the use of elements not met anywhere else seems to prove that a clear and precise pattern of a Teutonic castell did not exist at that time yet, and the constructors, having obtained from an investor general directions concerning the shape, looked for forms and solutions themselves. Based on all that knowledge, we can risk the conclusion that it was the castle in Malbork which was erected as the first castell form in Prussia. As such, it would have been a visible sign of the Teutonic power, erected at the border of a recent enemy – the Pomeranian Duchy.

However, due to inaccuracy in dating the first castells, another situation is possible. Because the chronological span between various investments could be minimal,⁶¹ and the castells of Chełmno Land are diametrically different in style from those of the Vistula Lagoon, it is possible that two parallel independent building centres operated in Prussia, with various attitudes towards the general form of a castell as outlined by investors. Consequently, teams erecting the first regular castles in Chełmno Land (Papowo Biskupie or Lipienek) at the very beginning would have created compact uniformed structures, corresponding with the Teutonic Knights' needs and the castles from the Lagoon were adjusted to 'Chełmno standards' later on, giving them cubic forms (removing buttresses in Malbork) and four wings. The proposition that the structures erected in Chełmno Land and the Vistula Lagoon were being completed in parallel as two separated centres of creating the first castells, and further, that the Chełmno model came to be chosen as the obligatory type can also be evidenced, apart from stylistic differences, by the result of analyses of the *ad quadratum* design. The same pattern of geometrical design was observed in early castells from Chełmno Land and in later regular castles (Fig. 5), while in reference to castles from the Vistula Lagoon the results are doubtful and it rather seems that another system was applied there.⁶²

The sudden appearance of new forms in various parts of the Teutonic state in Prussia, and the fact that older, sometimes incomplete irregular castles were simultaneously adjusted to them (Fig. 2), suggest that accepting a new model was the authorities' intentional decision. What was the motivation and genesis of accepting that form as a seat of the commandery? We should quote here a remark of Szczęśny Skibiński, who rightly claimed that exact formal and stylistic analyses in fact allowed the researchers to establish the origins of building teams, and not the genesis of the castell model.⁶³ They identified northern German and Cistercian builders, but the structures with which we are concerned were formally castells and not monasteries,⁶⁴ and this is not changed by the fact that they were inhabited by knight-monks and that the four-winged layout suited their lifestyle. Compact, cubic and symmetrical castells differ in their crucial elements from monastery forms (with a church and protruding enclosures), which are located around the yard but scattered and asymmetric. The other difference are the sto-

⁵⁹ Sawicki 2003.

⁶⁰ Jesionowski 2004, 22; 2006a, 74; 2006b, 72; 2016, 161–162; Kąsinowski 2010, 44.

⁶¹ Taking into account chronological spans fluctuation, the time difference between the commencement of works on the castle Malbork and the castells in Papowo Biskupie and Lipienek could have been several years, but accepting the closest dates, it

is possible that these investments started practically at the same time (about 1280).

⁶² Wasik 2016a, 49–59; 2018a, 43, 47, 49; 2020e, 539, 544, 549.

⁶³ Skibiński 1994, 29.

⁶⁴ Cf. Arszczyński 1993; Clasen 1927, 209–210; Frycz 1978, 20–21; Herrmann 2009.

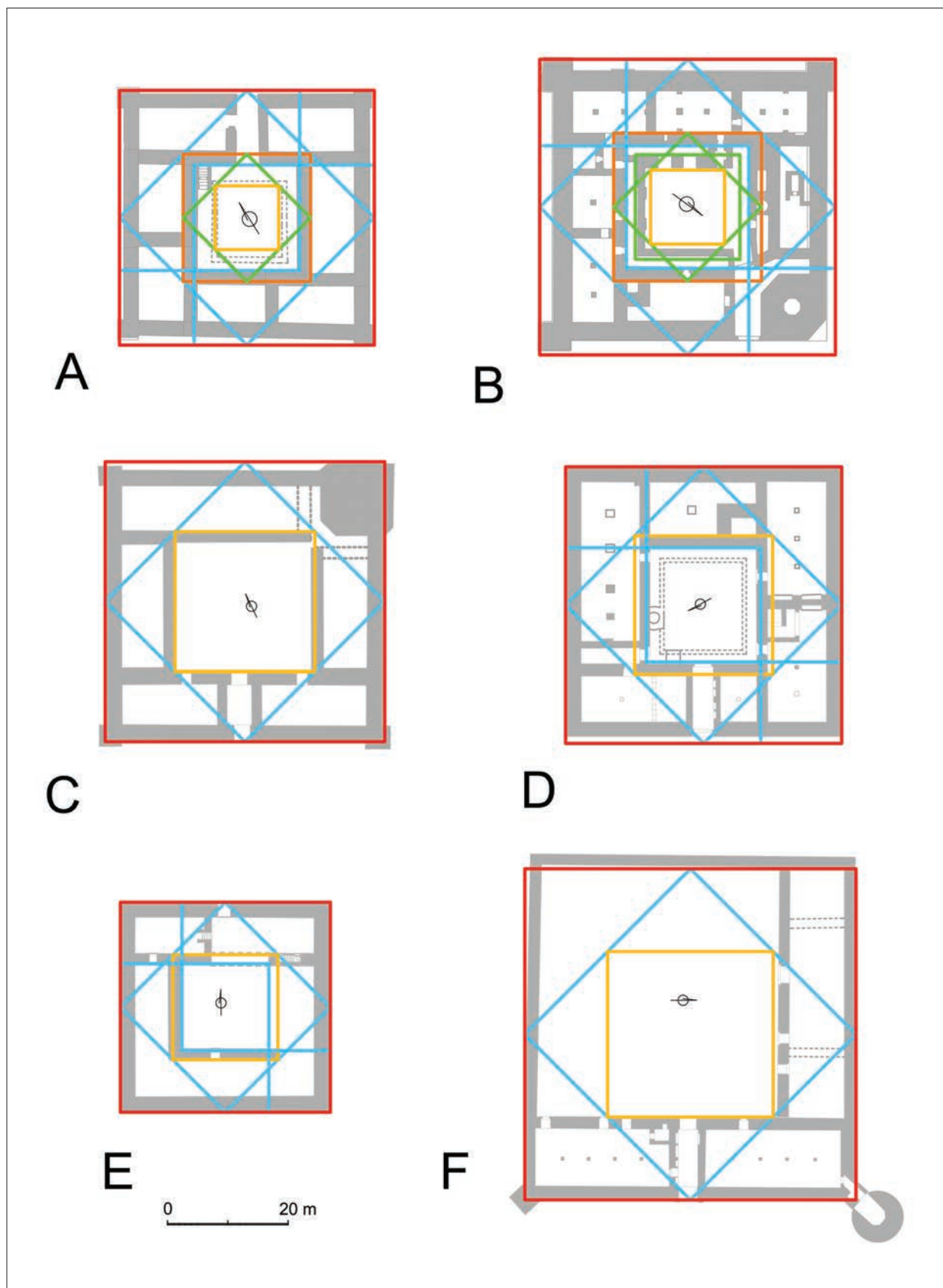


Fig. 5. Examples of *ad quadratum* designing of Teutonic castles from different periods: A – Papowo Biskupie (about 1280–1300); B – Brodnica (second quarter of the 14th century); C – Gniew (first quarter of the 14th century); D – Ostróda (mid-14th century); E – Mała Nieszawka (second half of the 14th century); F – Barciany (fourth quarter of the 14th century) (drawing by B. Wasik).

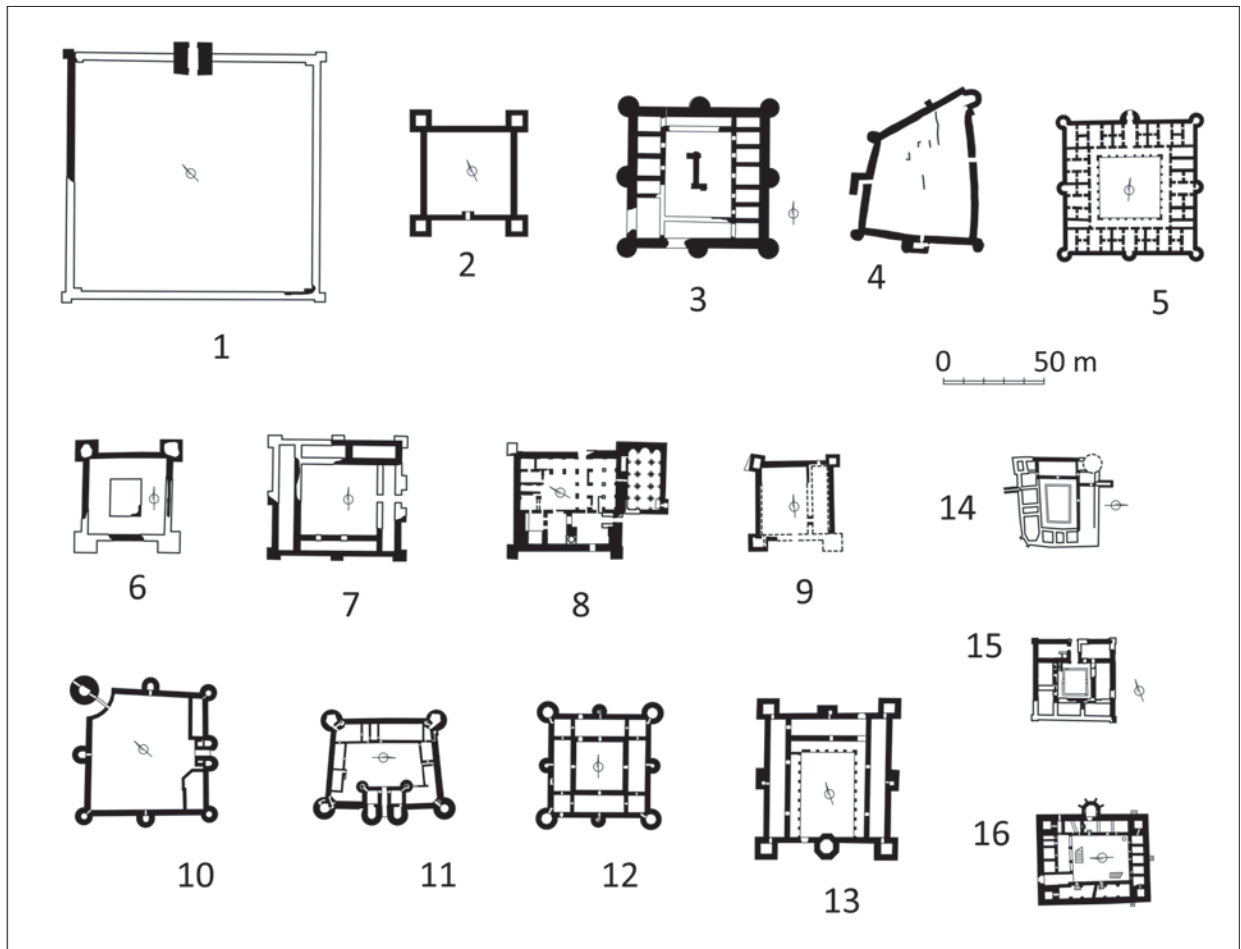


Fig. 6. Examples of castells from different periods, cultures and regions: 1 – Zawiyet Umm el Rakham (Egypt, 19th Dynasty); 2 – Zarai (Roman Empire, Tunisia, 6th century); 3 – Farashband (Sasanid Iran, 5th century?); 4 – Marakoul (Sudan, 6th–7th century); 5 – Usaïs (Umayyad Caliphate, Syria, about 705–715); 6 – Blanchegardle (Israel, first half of the 12th century); 7 – Baldwins Castle (Israel, first half of the 12th century); 8 – Bethgibelin (Israel, late Antiquity – 1134–1136); 9 – Castellum Regis (Israel, first half of the 12th century); 10 – Dourdan (France, before 1222); 11 – Harlech (Wales, 1283–1290); 12 – Catania (Italy, after 1239); 13 – Augusta (Italy, after 1232); 14 – Písek (Bohemia, mid-13th century); 15 – Papowo Biskupie (Poland, about 1280–1300); 16 – Diósgyőr (Hungary, about 1360) (drawing and additions by B. Wasik, sources: 1–3, 5–7, 10–13: Schicht 2018; 4: Łopaciuk *et al.* 2014; 14: Durdík 1994; 15: Wasik 2016a; 16: Olszacki 2011).

reys' functions. In Teutonic castles, unlike in monasteries, the central residential and representational rooms typical of those structures, including the central reception hall (in Teutonic castles – a refectory), are situated on the first floor. The presence of spacious chapels is not reason enough to attribute to the castles the architectonic features of a monastery, because such temples were also standard in, e.g., castles of Bohemian kings.⁶⁵ Admittedly, the Middle East saw the continuation of a tradition of building castells from the Antiquity to the Middle Ages, but in Western Europe the tradition of erecting this type

of strongholds collapsed together with the decline of the Western Roman Empire.⁶⁶ Western European knights had contact with structures of that type in the Middle East during the first crusades, not only using the old existing ones, but erecting new castells in the 12th century, e.g. in the Ascalon area⁶⁷ (Fig. 6). Quadrangular castles with quadrangular corner towers and peripheral enclosures were utilized by the knights orders, but they were not the only types used by them and frequently those objects had not been erected by them (like Bethgibelin used by the Knights Hospitaller). The Teutonic Knights

⁶⁵ Cf. Durdík, Bolina 2001, 18–29, 52–62; Záruba 2014, 79–180.

⁶⁶ Schicht 2018, 532–544, 595–598.

⁶⁷ Kennedy 2015, 55–57, 63–65; Schicht 2018, 546.

were also donated this type of a stronghold in 1220 (*Castellum Regis*). Alas, after the Crusaders' defeat at the end of the 12th century and the loss of the majority of territories, the regular castell type was given up, due to the development of the military art and siege techniques. In the 13th century castells were generally replaced by the new, irregularly planned hilltop castles with elaborate fortification systems. The Teutonic Knights also left *Castellum Regis*, moving to Monfort, representing a different stronghold type.⁶⁸ The model of a regular castle, therefore, could not have been transferred directly from the Holy Land to Prussia, where colonization opened with a period of constructing wood and earth strongholds and irregular structures, and castells only appeared a few decades later. There is no doubt, however, that contacts from the 12th century initiated erecting the first castells in Western Europe – in the beginning in the domains of the Normans and Plantagenets and in Spain.⁶⁹ We can observe a certain regularity through the centuries – castells were erected by strong centralized territorial authorities. Apart from military values, these repeated forms manifested power with their monumental and theatrical character. In Europe, from about 1200 and during all the 13th century, castells were built in the properties of monarchs who wished to fulfil centralistic programmes: King Philip Augustus in France, Frederick II Hohenstauf – first in the Rhineland and later in Sicily and the south of Italy – King Přemysl Ottokar II in Bohemia, and Edward I in Wales, Scotland and Ireland⁷⁰ (Fig. 6). That semantics differentiated castells from the seats of aristocrats and knights predominant until then, namely, donjons, which as domiciles of particular aristocratic houses referred to a higher individualism, but at the same time were smaller and cheaper to build. Against the background of 13th century Europe, we can probably see the reasons for accepting a castell model by the Teutonic Order in Prussia. That form perfectly suited the Corporation's needs in building a centralized rulership. Teutonic castles are characterized by a consequence in using a repeatable form with a greater geometrical symmetry and mutual compatibility than in other discussed building types (Fig. 7). This depicted perfectly the monolithic character of the Order being a compact elite of the country, and also projected a sense of order. A number of similar monumental castells scattered around the state of Teutonic Prussia were a clear sign of the state idea and the centrally governed domain of knight-monks. It was

a unique state and unique governing elite – both secular and spiritual, *milites Christi*, whose destiny was to defend the believers and fight against the enemies of Christianity. They built in Prussia the ideal Divine Order, symbolized by their ideal castles. Apart from this earthly meaning, in the Order propaganda the castells gained also an additional one – with their geometrical symmetry and harmony, they depicted the celestial realm. Monolithic and majestic in form, strengthened with fortified elements like wall walks, crenellation at the tops of towers and huge *bergfrieds*,⁷¹ the Teutonic castles were perceived not only as seats of the landlords but also as strongholds of Christ's knights, defending Christianity from the infernal powers. The symbolism and semantics of a castell, worked out in the 1270s–1280s, was so strongly related to self-perception, ideology and power demonstration as well as to the role of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia that castles of that type were erected for about 130 years.⁷² We must not omit the question of Teutonic castles' defensive value, with the presence of protruding corner towers, enabling flank defence. At the end of the 12th century, developments in siege techniques in the Middle East caused a gradual replacement, based probably on Armenian builders' experience, of quadrangular towers with round ones, more resistant to bombardment and tunnelling into, and reducing the size of the blind spot. That type of towers also became a feature of so-called French castells of Philip Augustus, was accepted by English kings and built in the Rhineland.⁷³ Bohemia and the neighbouring lands shaped their own Central European type castells (castles of Přemysl Ottokar II), which, according to older traditions, were still equipped with quadrangular towers, but, contrary to, e.g., southern Italian castles, those were not significantly projected from the walls and therefore did not meet the requirements of flank defence.⁷⁴ This was probably a result of the fact that the siege technique in Central Europe was not developed as much as in the Middle East and Western Europe. Deficiencies in effective flank defence characterize also Teutonic castells. In Prussia, corner towers are even more reduced (Figs 1, 7), so much so that in the oldest castells they had only forms of delicately accentuated, avant-corps corner turrets, sometimes so small that they had no interior at all (Papowo Biskupie, Malbork), or in some cases put up simply on tops of circumferential wall corners (Golub). Only in later castells (Gniew, Radzyń Chełmiński) did a little bigger corner towers appear, but from about the

⁶⁸ Boas 2006, 116–122, 125–126; Kennedy 2015, 84, 169–171.

⁶⁹ Schicht 2018, 546, 551, 599.

⁷⁰ Schicht 2018, 552–573, 599–602.

⁷¹ This was the intention behind the form of towers in Brodnica and probably in Gdańsk (Torbus 2014, 197–198, 230).

⁷² Kutzner 1995, 44–64; Kwiatkowski 2012, 85–87, 103–104; 2019, 68–76; Pospieszny 2009, 80; Skibiński 1994, 32–35.

⁷³ Durdík 1994, 9–14; Kennedy 2015, 151–153; Schicht 2018, 551, 599.

⁷⁴ Durdík 1994, 140–141.

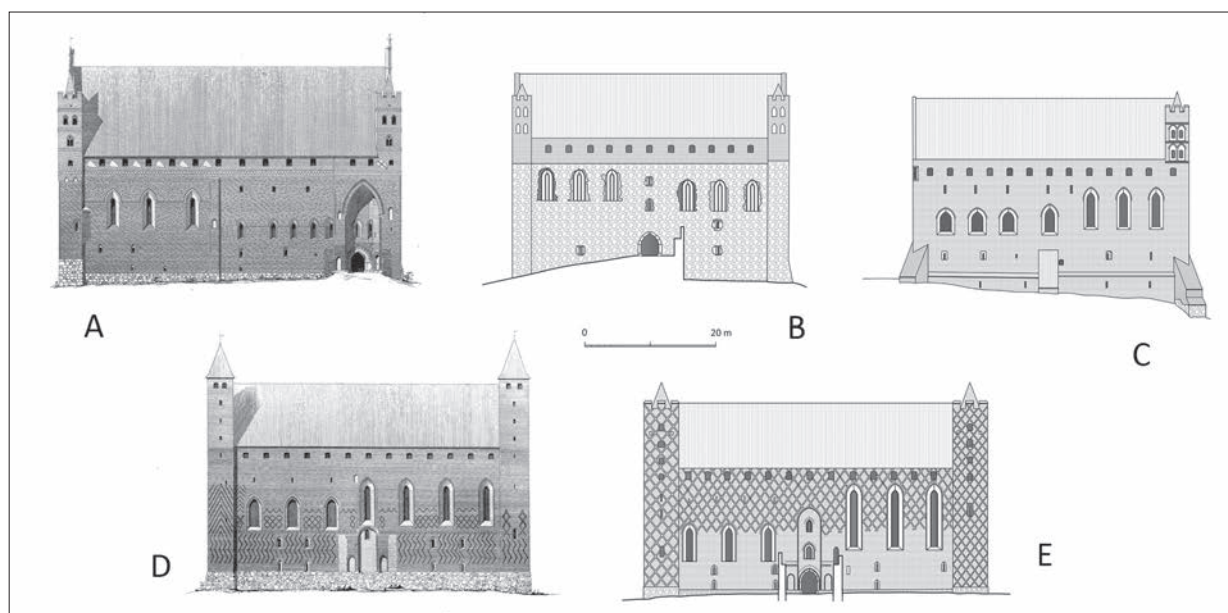


Fig. 7. Facades of the main wings of the Teutonic Knights' castles: A – Malbork (after Steinbrecht 1888); B – Papowo Biskupie; C – Golub; D – Gniew; E – Radzyń Chełmiński (drawing by B. Wasik).

half of the 14th century they were in fact abandoned completely, *de facto* reducing the castells to peripheral four-winged buildings (Ostróda, Ragneta). This is further evidence of the ideological significance of the castell model, whereby its defensive character is more symbolic than real. It should be pointed out, however, that castells in Prussia were being erected after the conquest and heavy fighting had finished – at a time of rulership flourishing. They were first of all representative seats and symbols of power and administration. Giving up the latest defensive solutions did not result from a lack of possibilities or technical ignorance of the Order, as evidenced by the example of the more defensive Świecie Castle, or the quick modernization of fortifications from the end of the 14th century, when the threat of a more intense war became real again.⁷⁵

Thinking about the motivation behind adopting a castell model in Prussia, we must remember that it took place in the period of the decline of the last Crusaders' enclaves in the Holy Land. These events had impact on the significant growth of the Order's Prussian properties.⁷⁶ Simultaneously, when influence of the members of the Order's Prussian branch increased, the role of the grand master during the elections of the country masters diminished. Aspirations of Prussian Teutonic dignitaries increased, as well, and they concerned not only subser-

vient territories, but also the whole corporation,⁷⁷ which eventually led to moving the seat of the highest Order authority from Venice to Malbork. The process did not occur without obstacles, though. Grand Master Siegfried von Feuchtwangen, who arrived in Prussia in 1309, remained in fact in the shadows of local dignitaries, while his successor Karl von Trier was in conflict with them and ultimately left Prussia. As a result, Malbork became a permanent seat of grand masters as late as from 1324.⁷⁸ All that background and the fact that the castell model was introduced only in the Order's Prussian domains can indicate that the flourishing of castle-building in Prussia after about 1280 should be discussed in the context of the growing importance and aspirations of the emancipating Prussian branch of the Order but not of the Order as a whole. It can suggest that the choice of the castell type as a means of self-determination and ideology manifestation was made in the circle of the local Prussian master.

Direct inspiration for adapting a castell model could have come from Bohemia, since the organization units of the Order's Prussian branch were united in the 13th century with those in Bohemia and in effect there was a long tradition of Bohemian-Prussian contact.⁷⁹ Teutonic castell structures share with Central European models, e.g., the above-mentioned limited possibilities of flank defence, much more developed in other castles

⁷⁵ Torbus 2000, 64–68.

⁷⁶ Arsyński 2010, 14; Skibiński 1994, 34.

⁷⁷ Józwiak 2001, 30, 34, 38–39, 85.

⁷⁸ Józwiak 2001, 86; Józwiak, Trupinda 2011, 157–159.

⁷⁹ Jan 2013, 105–112; Józwiak 2001, 22–23.

of that type.⁸⁰ Recent research has also shown similarity in the organizing of circulation spaces in Bohemian and Teutonic castles, based on cloisters with access to particular rooms on the floor. In southern Italy, the castles' walkways system was solved differently and communication between rooms ran directly – a cloister was of secondary meaning and was not always present in the structures. Vertical circulation (through the cloister and not rooms of the ground floors and corner towers) was identical in Teutonic and Bohemian castles, but different than in ones erected by Hohenstauf. The latter, contrary to Bohemian and Teutonic structures, had no clearly separated chapels.⁸¹ But despite all these similarities with Central European castles, the Teutonic structures are much more homogeneous, ideal in their geometry and compact, so it is probably a local creative adaptation in the spirit of the castell tradition infused with Central European solutions.

The Teutonic architecture's influence on the beholder was achieved by its form, worked out by adept teams of builders, because erecting these monumental structures required highly qualified specialists and advanced brick manufacturing technology. The brickmaking mastery was manifested in transforming the techniques from monk to Gothic bond at the turn of the 13th century, but also applying full brick walls instead of ones constructed of a core made of rubble encased in mortar. The huge investments and wide range of building works were a sign of the Order's wealth and power. A repeatable construction schedule was worked out. Castells as a rule were usually constructed in a new location, which was favourable for matching their regular forms (with some exceptions, as confirmed by recent research in Lipienek, but also when encountering difficult conditions, like the presence of older earthen fortifications, but even then the builders strove to implement standard techniques). When castles were being erected on hilltops, the constructors paid exceptional attention to keeping the plan geometrical (Golub, Rogóźno). The perfectly geometrical and repeatable proportions were obtained by using the *ad quadratum* method (Fig. 5). Enormous earthworks were also undertaken to make big embankments to raise a building over the area, boosting not only its defensive value but also the architectonic effect.⁸²

Four-winged castells became characteristic bearers of the authority semantics in Prussia to such an extent that in the 14th century they were adopted also by the

Church dignitaries. Interestingly, however, while the Teutonic Order emphasized the role of the Corporation as unshakeable *milites Christi*, demonstrated by monolithic powerful castles with clearly readable military accents in the form of huge *bergfrieds*, the auto-presentation of the Church hierarchy, being de facto the feudal power in diocese domains, used similar symbolic forms, but focused more on the residences' manorial character. When the structures were equipped with central towers, as the castles in Kwidzyn or in Lidzbark Warmiński, they were of more symbolic than military/defensive character. In Lidzbark and Wąbrzeźno we can also observe placing representative stairs and ceremonial passage leading to the first floor with representative halls and residential rooms. Castells of the Church notables are characterized by greater individuality, but due to the poorer financial condition of their founders, comparing them to the castells of the Order is inadequate, because worse builders had to be employed and difficulties were often faced in completing the buildings in originally planned forms.⁸³

The culture of mediaeval Europe registered also other built structures bearing symbolic meanings, namely, the tower, which predated the castell. The tower became a *pars pro toto* of a castle and a symbol of the feudal lord, his social position and authority. There were, of course, various kinds of towers, which can be divided into: strictly defensive structures (*bergfrieds*) and residential towers (*donjons*).⁸⁴ *Bergfrieds* as a symbol of authority and the sovereign appeared as well in later castell plans, which led to an overlapping of the semantics of both forms (a high tower stood centrally in the seat of Philip Augustus in Île de la Cité in Paris, in the castle of Frederick II Hoentauf in Augusta⁸⁵ (Fig. 6: 13), and in many Teutonic castells).⁸⁶ A dwelling tower, on the other hand, became the simplest form of a castle. One building concentrated residential, representative and defensive elements, so it was economically attractive, functional and by its vertical character was a perfect manifestation of a feudal lord's position. The habitable and representative functions were more important than defensive purposes.⁸⁷ The beginnings of donjons (first wooden and then stone ones) go back to 10th century France, although the dating of the early mottes is not precise. Wooden towers erected on hills, and soon stone donjons, spread around France, England, Sicily and the south of Italy due to the Normans activities. The development of that type of buildings took place in the 11th–12th centuries. Around the Reich, first dwelling

⁸⁰ Cf. Durdík 1993.

⁸¹ Hobl 2020; in print.

⁸² More in: Wasik 2016a, 2018a, 2020d, 80–81.

⁸³ Wasik 2020e, 549–554.

⁸⁴ Jakimowicz 1979, 44, 59–61; Kajzer 2002, 47–49; Kajzer, Olszacki, 2012, 167.

⁸⁵ Schicht 2018, 554, 561.

⁸⁶ Torbus 2014, 353–354.

⁸⁷ Jaszczek 1996, 4; Jakimowicz 1979, 44; Lasek 2009, 171.



Fig. 8. Byblos (Lebanon). An example of a 12th century donjon in the Latin State in Outremer (photo by B. Wasik).

towers appeared as early as in the 10th–11th centuries, but their dynamic growth was registered in the mid-13th century, together with the weakening of the Emperor's position.⁸⁸ The same type of a feudal residence was introduced and transformed by European Crusaders also in the Holy Land, where it became a common form of a knight residence and a fortress (Fig. 8). Habitable towers were also erected by knight orders and they served as watchtowers along the pilgrimage routes, but also as centres of land property administration (e.g. Chastel Blanc / Safita of the Knights Templars). One example of a Teutonic tower of this kind is situated in Kirbat al-Manhata. It probably served the function of controlling and protecting a local quarry during construction works in the nearby castle in Montfort, and after completing that investment, it was dismantled.⁸⁹ The Teutonic Knights also used a tower-type residence in some seats in Germany and Bohemia, including Koblenz, Beuggen and Bradlo⁹⁰ (Fig. 9A). The last castle, built in the end of 13th or in the 14th century, resembles early brick castles from Prussia in its spatial arrangement. Another example is the original building of the castle in Pokrzywno from the 1270s–1280s – its short projection and limited surface let us suppose that the construction had originally been planned as a vertical one⁹¹ (Fig. 9B). The fact that during their conquest of Prussia the Knights built also wooden towers is evidenced by the information concerning the castle in Bierzgłowo,

in which in the 1260s the defenders were hiding from the Prussian tribes.⁹² On the other hand, bigger castles were better for commandery seats, and the castells described above were preferred in that capacity.

Starting in the 1320s–1330s, the Teutonic state saw a change in the types of administrative structures being created. The new units (*vogt*, *pfleger*) were subjected directly to the grand masters and supported the central treasury. Therefore they became more desired than commanderies, established before that time.⁹³ The castles being the new centres were seats of officials and not of convents, and one of small castle patterns was just a tower seat. It was a perfect residence for a single official and towers of this type were established throughout Europe due to their association with feudal power. Generally, these objects can be divided into two categories – simple dwelling towers and tower houses.⁹⁴ An example of the former is the *pfleger's* seat in Elk. First certain information concerning the brick building comes from 1398 (it was completed in 1406).⁹⁵ The structure was a central element of a wood and earth castle situated on an island and it was erected on the plan of a short rectangle sized 16.5 × 12 m, equipped with cellars and four overground storeys⁹⁶ – all with wooden ceilings. Archaeological explorations have given grounds to conclude that it had an additional half-timbered upper floor. The functional division was typical of that type of buildings – the ground

⁸⁸ Kajzer, Olszacki 2012, 167–169; Lasek 2013, 27–32, 263–272.

⁸⁹ Boas 2006, 108–112; Kennedy 2015, 58–63, 101–107; Stanzl 2012, 376.

⁹⁰ Durdík 2000, 79; Liessem 2004, 104–110.

⁹¹ Wasik 2016b, 247, 252.

⁹² Piotr z Dusburga 2004, 135.

⁹³ Józwiak 2001, 137–138.

⁹⁴ Piotr Lasek tried recently to systematize the unprecise terminology functioning in the Polish literature (Lasek 2011; 2013, 279).

⁹⁵ Herman 2015a, 13–15; 2015b, 25–29; Wilde 1988, 127.

⁹⁶ We are not certain if all four were brick structures from the very beginning. The research author does not exclude that initially only two storeys were made of brick, although the first option seems to be more convincing (Herman 2015a, 34–35).

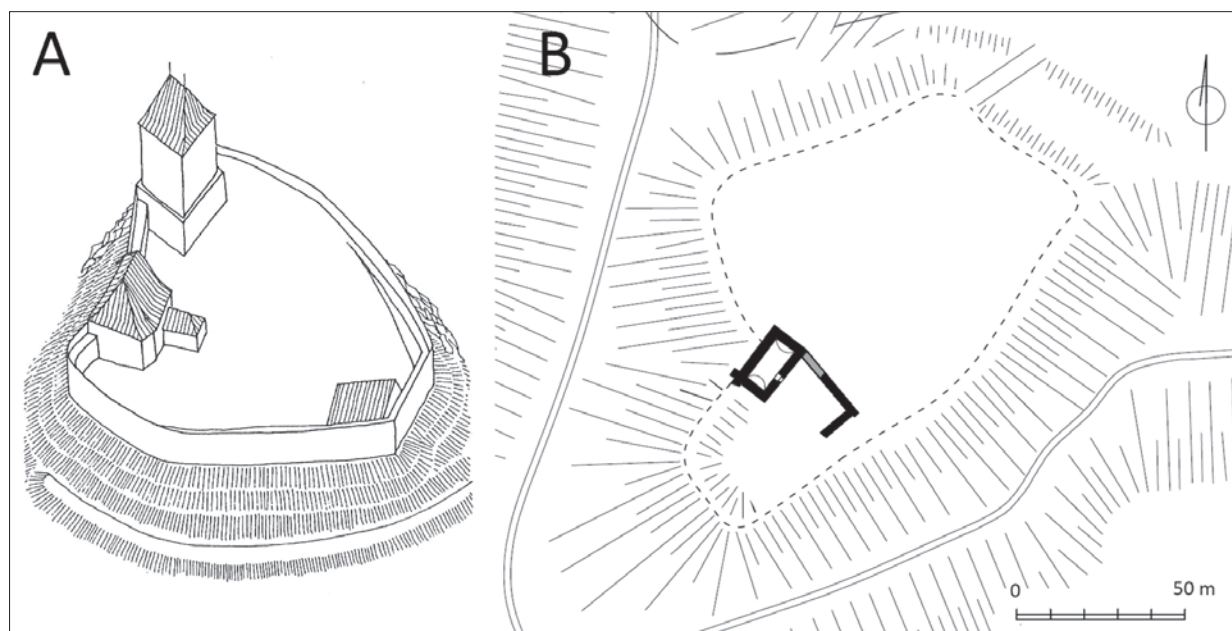


Fig. 9. Bradlo: A – reconstruction of the appearance of the late 13th century Teutonic castle in Bohemia (Durdík 2004) and Pokrzywno; B – Teutonic castle in Chelmno Land in the first stage in the late 13th century (Wasik 2016a).

floor served as the household domain (including kitchens), the first floor roomed a representative hall. The entrance was placed at the height of the first floor, accessible via stairs located in the thickness of the north-eastern wall.⁹⁷ Apart from brick towers, there were also structures made of wood and timber frame, resembling those from the seat of *pflegers* in Pień – a building from the beginning of 14th century.⁹⁸

The other group of tower seats refers to more massive objects – tower houses (*Festes Haus* or *Hohen Haus*).⁹⁹ The castles in Unisław (*pfleger's* seat) and Sątoczno (originally a commandery but from 1347 – a seat of the forests official) can be regarded as the oldest objects of that type appearing in Prussia. The building of both can be dated to around the second quarter to half of the 14th century, corresponding to the period when this type of objects were constructed in German and Bohemian lands (e.g. Dražice, Litovice).¹⁰⁰ The tower house in Sątoczno was erected on a hilltop with a rectangular plan (sized 26.3 × 16.1 m, with the western wall slightly diverged). Its poor state of preservation does not allow us to reconstruct internal divisions accurately.¹⁰¹ The central

element of the castle in Unisław, recently unearthed, was, on the contrary, a spacious building with floor plan size of about 16 × 30 m, occupying the whole southwestern part of the plot. In the explored section, the researchers did not identify any cellars, and similarly to Sątoczno, the internal divisions are not identified. The building's proportions indicate a tower house construction, but moderate wall thickness (1.7 m) in relation to its volume make us suppose that only the ground floor, which served standard domestic functions, and the first floor, being the residence of the *pfleger* and rooming a reception hall, were executed in brickwork. The upper storeys (warehouse and defensive area) may have been constructed in timber framing.¹⁰² Other examples of that type are later and were probably erected during the fourth quarter of 14th and the beginning of 15th century (Giżycko, Nowy Jasiniec,¹⁰³ Bezląwki and Puck). The tower houses in Nowy Jasiniec and Giżycko (Fig. 10) are massive structures with thick walls (2–2.6 m), with a plan of a short rectangle (22.6 × 12.8 m and 22 × 14.5 m, respectively). The Giżycko building is three storeys high, the one in Nowy Jasiniec also had a (half-timbered) fourth storey as

⁹⁷ Herman 2015a, 31–38, 71; 2015b, 33–39; Wilde 1988, 129.

⁹⁸ Poliński 2013, 20–24, 170–177.

⁹⁹ Lasek 2011, 38–39.

¹⁰⁰ Lasek 2011, 39; 2013, 164–165.

¹⁰¹ Andrzejewski, Kajzer 2005, 201–202.

¹⁰² Wasik 2018c, 54–56; 2020d, 46–48.

¹⁰³ Some researchers claim that the bottom stone part of the tower house in Nowy Jasiniec had been erected by Pomeranian dukes even before 1309 (Nawrocki 1966, 29–30). However, this seems very improbable and the sole fact that this part of the structure was made of stone cannot be a convincing argument, because that building technique was also applied elsewhere in Teutonic Prussia.

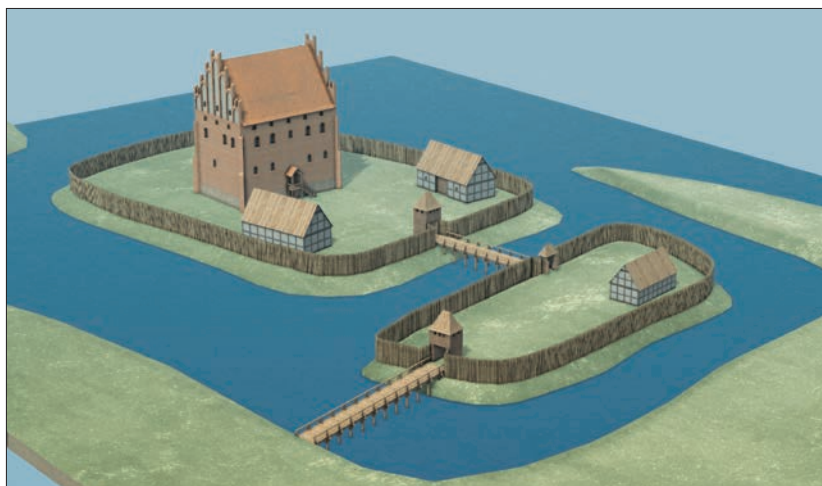


Fig. 10. Giżycko. Reconstruction of the appearance of the castle at the end of the 14th century (digital reconstruction by P. Moszczyński, concept by B. Wasik).

a result of a 16th century redevelopment, although it can be supposed that the new structure replaced the old mediaeval one.¹⁰⁴ The older cellars located under the palace in Jegławki, as presented in popular science literature, let us suppose that a tower house with similar proportions and size was also located there.¹⁰⁵ An analysis made by Grzegorz Białuński would have us reject that interpretation, though, and identify those cellars rather with an early modern manor, although that question certainly requires further research.¹⁰⁶ The tower houses in Beżławki and Puck, in turn, had more elongated floor plans (25.6 × 11.8 m and 22.5 × 10.5 m, respectively). The building in Beżławki originally had as many as four or five storeys,¹⁰⁷ while the one in Puck was probably a three-storey house. It was mentioned as a tower in an early modern description.¹⁰⁸ The quoted buildings usually had more or less expanded wood and earth embankments and baileys.

Chronologically later Teutonic tower houses were being erected simultaneously with rapid development of this type of structures in the Polish Crown (mainly founded by patricians and knights, e.g. in Bydlin, Gołańcz, Szubin).¹⁰⁹ Reviewing castles of that period, we find an interesting example of the castle in Sadłowo, in Dobrzyń Land, which has a particular formal resemblance to tower houses of Teutonic officials discussed earlier, and was probably constructed by a Prussian building team.¹¹⁰ The fact confirms the universal character of that structure type as a seat of a feudal.

The semantics of the tower as a symbol of a sovereign and of feudal authority was also used by grand masters when expanding the palace in the state residence in Malbork. It is a very successful combination of a donjon and a palace, devised during building works performed in the last decades of 14th century.¹¹¹ Its protruding and perfectly elaborated western tower house was a clear symbol of power of the grand master, who was in fact the ruler of Prussia (Fig. 11). Choosing that form of the seat as a power manifestation was not at all accidental. The 14th century brought the development of court life in Europe and the revival of donjons as rulers' residences. They were built by the most eminent personalities of that period – the Pope in Avignon, the Emperor in Karlstein, the King of France in Vincennes (Fig. 12). Between the 80s and 90s of that century the residential royal Danish Tower in the Wawel Castle was also erected.¹¹²

The 14th century development of chivalrous and court culture was associated with an affirmation of joy and optimism, with their rituals and grand ceremonial way of life, but also with a simultaneous crisis of ancient values. The Church had sacralized the old male-military values of knighthood, the embodiment of which were the Crusades, but condemned the wish of earthly joys. Now the pleasures of warfare, hunting, admiring nature and courtship had won. Combined with theatricality and power affirmation they are depicted in rulers' investments, as in the case of Karlstein of Charles IV, the Holy Roman Emperor.¹¹³

¹⁰⁴ Herrmann 2007, 577; Lasek 2013, 189; Kajzer *et al.* 2001, 175; Nawrocki 1966, 30.

¹⁰⁵ Jackiewicz-Garniec, Garniec 2006, 164–165.

¹⁰⁶ Białuński 2013.

¹⁰⁷ Brillowski 2013, 124–128; Wólkowski 2013, 111–112.

¹⁰⁸ Kruppé, Milewska 2014, 38–45, 59–60.

¹⁰⁹ Lasek 2013, 151–168, 275–276.

¹¹⁰ Kajzer, Pietrzak 2004, 263.

¹¹¹ Herrmann 2019, 69–325; Jarzewicz 2006, 164–165; Jóźwiak, Trupinda 2011, 205–209; Torbus 2014, 327–332.

¹¹² Kajzer, Olszacki 2012, 180–183, 192–194.

¹¹³ Duby 1983, 207–210, 251–259.



Fig. 11. Malbork. The Grand Masters Palace from the west (photo by B. Wasik).

Element of that theatricality and chivalrous ritual of life appeared also in creating new military orders, e.g. the Order of the Blue Garter, founded by Edward III of England in reference to the Knights of the Round Table. The form taken from religious brotherhoods was to serve secular rituals and the order members were to represent and propagate the new etiquette.¹¹⁴ Symptoms of court culture and theatricality can be also observed in the Teutonic Order state in Prussia, for instance in holding the cyclical 'Lithuanian cruises' for the European knighthood.¹¹⁵ Another example is the siege of the castle in Złotoria in 1409, when the Teutonic Knights invited women and girls from Toruń, transforming the capturing of the stronghold into a performance.¹¹⁶ The court culture was also expressed in the growing importance of comfort in residences, which can be observed in Prussian



Fig. 12. Vincennes. Hunting scene with the castle in the background (*Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tr%C3%AAs_Riches_Heures_du_Duc_de_Berry, accessed: 10.12.2021).

architecture, in both the castles of the Church hierarchs and the residences of the grand masters.¹¹⁷ Following these patterns, and reacting to the simultaneous decline of the monastic rule,¹¹⁸ the Order started building separate houses for commanders and dignitaries, placed in the baileys of the castles.¹¹⁹

The other sign of the courtly way of life of the 14th century elites was that many European rulers erected residences situated outside capitals. Meant to offer escape from the noisy urban life into nature, the residences were frequently surrounded by gardens or nearby woods, and featured menageries with exotic animals, but also local fauna, for hunting. We can list a number of such residences, including Visegrád of Louis I of Hungary, French Vincennes of Charles V the Wise (Fig. 12) or in the Polish Crown – Łobzów and Niepołomice of Casimir III the Great.¹²⁰ Not to be outdone by lay monarchs, in the 1370s, the grand master of the Teutonic Order decided to erect his own residence in Sztum (Fig. 13), situated not far from Malbork. Thanks to research of the recent years, we

¹¹⁴ Duby 1983, 250–251.

¹¹⁵ Kwiatkowski 2016, 129.

¹¹⁶ Długosz 2009, 38.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Szweđa 2019.

¹¹⁸ Biskup, Labuda 1986, 380.

¹¹⁹ Jóźwiak, Trupinda 2012, 110–248; Torbus 2014, 284; Wasik 2020a, 237–240.

¹²⁰ Duby 1983, 259, 266–270; Olszacki 2010, 721–722, 727–729.

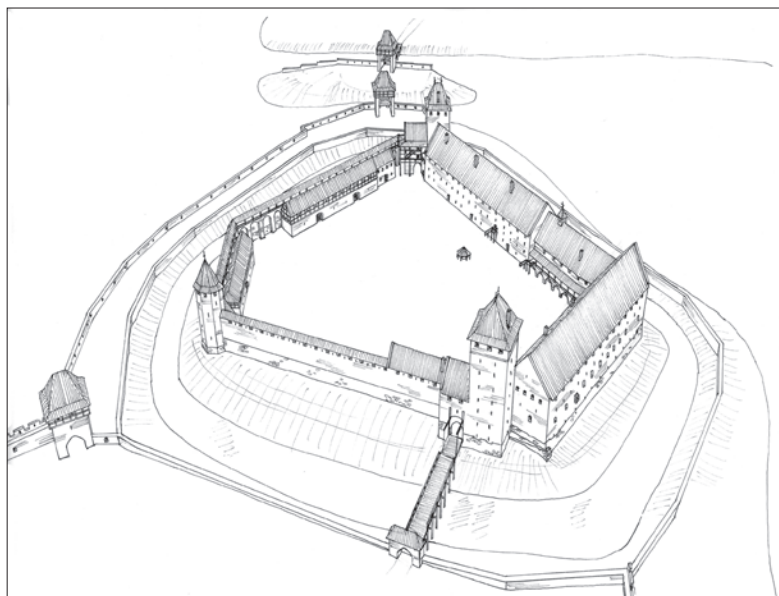


Fig. 13. Sztum. Reconstruction of the appearance of the castle around 1420 based on research from 2019–2021 (drawing by B. Wasik).

have more knowledge on the object.¹²¹ It was a one-segment structure with an irregular plan, situated between two lakes. Apart from a central house being a seat of the *vogt* and residential buildings, it included the residence of the grand master. Two big gates led to the castle from the west and east, which was senseless from the defensive point of view, but served representative purposes. The residence's architecture referred to the old symbolism of the tower (like in, e.g., Vincennes), placing three tall towers along the circumferential wall, only one of which had any real defensive values (the military significance of the other two was limited, since they had thin walls and included dwelling rooms). The general function of these towers at the end of 14th century was only representative: manifesting authority, because from the military point of view, they were already anachronistic. Sources inform us that from the 1390s on the grand masters visited the castle in Sztum very often and in various seasons of the year. It must have been a comfortable and safe location, as one of the Teutonic officials encouraged the grand master to take shelter there during an epidemic.¹²² The castle was erected nearby forest complexes, and although monastic rules prohibited hunting, the Knights did not obey them. Being the land owners, they controlled all rights concerning hunting in Prussia, and with time (in the 14th–15th centuries) the prohibition was limited, and some exceptions introduced. Source evidence confirming participation in hunting of the Order dignitaries has been preserved from the times of Grand Master Dietrich

von Altenburg (1335–1341) and Sztum is pointed out as one of the places being a hunting base. It is known that in 1408 the Sztum area hosted Grand Master Ulrich von Jungingen, who hunted there. Moreover, from at least 1401 to 1420, when it was moved to Malbork, a menagerie functioned at the Sztum Castle, providing the game for hunting for grand masters and their guests. Stag and moose were generally kept, and the game was specially brought, e.g., from the Czluchów commandery. We also have information about keeping exotic animals, like monkeys.¹²³

Observing the Teutonic state in Prussia between the 14th and 15th centuries, we are able to register co-occurrence of various forms of castles, with older and newer semantics, serving the manifestation of ideology and of the ruler's status. The last commandery castles were still being built (Ragneta), directed in particular to knights migrating here from the West, to demonstrate the local order, an efficiently functioning, well-organized centralized state, ruled by the united Corporation of the military order, protecting the Christian oecumene and fighting against infernal powers. At the same time, many official's seats got tower forms, emphasizing the secular prerogatives of the Teutonic administration, and the grand masters, following the trends of 14th century European culture, built a grand palace in their Malbork seat and a residence in the nearby Sztum, where they could lead comfortable court life and host eminent visitors, in keeping with their power as rulers of Prussia.

¹²¹ Wasik 2020a; 2020c.

¹²² Józwiak, Trupinda 2017, 35, 38; Neitmann 1990, 67–68.

¹²³ Militzer 1997, 326–343, 352–357.

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ARTUR BOGUSZEWICZ

Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology

University of Wrocław

artur.boguszewicz@uwr.edu.pl

ORCID 0000-0001-7304-0853

ON IDENTIFYING CHIVALRIC CULTURE. AN OUTLINE OF RESEARCH ISSUE

ABSTRACT

The article is an attempt to capture the chivalric culture on the basis of various activities of the nobility, as reconstructed by an analysis of written records as well as artefacts discovered mainly in Silesian castles during archaeological research. In order to objectify the results of this research, the concept of habitus proposed by sociologist of culture Pierre Bourdieu and his continuators

was used. This approach redirects focus to the question of a range of capitals – economic, social, cultural, and others – which were at the disposal of the lord of the castle, discernible on the basis of the analysis of archaeological materials and written records. The possibility of converting them into symbolic capital is identified here with the culture of chivalry.

Keywords: chivalric culture, mediaeval Silesia, castles, archaeology, Pierre Bourdieu, habitus, symbolic capital

Even though the term ‘chivalric culture’ is well established in the Polish language, anyone trying to find its definition rooted in the local system of notions is bound to fail. This, however, has never discouraged some researchers, who – without any in-depth methodological reflection – indulge in narratives which – based on arbitrarily selected sources – illustrate their authors’ subjective concepts. This approach might be recognized as ‘substantive’ if it were not to a great extent grounded in popular notions, which – in turn – are rooted in literary tradition, from the chivalric epic or troubadour poetry to the decidedly more inspiring role of historical or gothic novels and their modern-day spin-offs. This text is an attempt to define the notion employing appropriate research tools so as to impart an objective character to the conclusions drawn in the process.

In order to clarify the literal meaning of the latter element of the notion ‘chivalric culture’ we may resort to one of many definitions of culture, e.g. that proposed by Clifford Geertz, who views it as ‘[...] a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms, by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life’.¹ A problem arises when attempting to interpret the other element of the notion, i.e. ‘chivalry’.

This is pointed out by Werner Paravicini, who, viewing it from the perspective of Western- and Central-European realities, concludes that the notion ‘knight’ is unclear due to its ambiguity, as it refers to a social function, the office held, legal status as well as an idea.² Availing himself of Gerard Labuda’s study, he attempts to define the notion of chivalric-courtly culture, which – referring to the achievements of classic ethnology – he recognizes as a typical cultural phenomenon comprising: tradition, innovation, reception and diffusion. In mediaeval Central Europe, i.e. in the German lands, it appeared as a result of adoption of foreign patterns. In this view its potential innovation was determined by the geographical factor and would have been primarily based on diffusion and acculturation rather than constituting an autonomous occurrence. In his characteristic of the chivalric-courtly culture he also distinguishes – among other elements – a set of status symbols reflecting the system of values inherent in a mediaeval society. First of all, he mentions the attire, then gestures and speech, the courtly meal, broadly conceived cavalryman’s weaponry – primarily the sword and belt, bearing various symbolic meanings. He also highlights the role played by a castle as the place of residence. Further status symbols involve the way of spending leisure time, especially hunting the big game (a class privilege of the nobility), hunting with

¹ Geertz 1973, 89.

² Paravicini 1999, 3–4.

hounds and falcons, and participating in all kinds of fun and games. Finally, he mentions the question of gold and silver, seen both as precious metals and colours reserved for the highest class of the mediaeval society.

At least some of the status symbols listed above may be attributed to the sphere of material culture, thus enabling the use of the potential offered by the research methods of archaeology to broaden the source basis. Of significance here is Jürg Tauber's systematization of the data acquired during the excavations carried out in 11th–14th-century fortifications in north-western Switzerland.³ Characteristically, he adopted *expressis verbis* the assumption that the mere fact that the artefacts he studied were located in a castle by default rendered them elements of 'chivalric culture'. Leaving aside the author's analyses of the settlement context, the architecture and infrastructure of the strongholds as well as some of the artefacts found in castles, let us take a closer look at the categories of finds directly identified with the nobility (*aldige Komponente*). The artefacts which the researcher identified as the 'noble component' included elements of horse trapping and riding gear, such as horseshoes, combs, bits, stirrups and spurs; these were followed by weaponry – the most frequently found elements of defensive armament were fragments of chain mail, armour plates (discovered less frequently) and – exceptionally – helmets. Offensive weaponry was represented by numerous finds of heads of arrows and bolts as well as swords, daggers and spearheads. In addition to these, the 'noble component' was represented by the artefacts used during various leisure activities, such as musical instruments as well as balls, dice, spillikins and chess pieces used in games.

Christoph Krauskopf's monograph *Tric-Trac, Trense, Treichel* might be regarded a specific detailed summary of the results of research carried out by representatives of various disciplines who focused on the material culture of the nobility in the 13th and 14th centuries.⁴ On the basis of the movable material discovered in the castles in Switzerland as well as in southern and central Germany, he distinguished 47 functional groups of various artefacts. The analysis did not culminate in any more profound reflection on the 'noble' character of the finds, which was probably taken for granted, considering the fact that they were excavated within the strongholds' limits. According to the author, only some decorations prove

that the nobility adopted literary or ethical models characteristic of knighthood.⁵ Additionally, among the movable material he identifies as the nobility's status symbols: decorations and elements of horse trapping from 'precious', i.e. non-ferrous, metals, swords (rarely found) and their fragments as well as the material evidence of ways of spending leisure time, mainly hunting. However, as he was quite correct to conclude, the most significant status symbol of the nobility and at the same time the evidence of stratification within this social class was the form of the family seat and its furnishing.⁶

Yet we must not ignore many factors responsible for the fact that the castle and the artefacts discovered there cannot be unambiguously related to the culture of the nobility, a chief one being the diversification and transformation of the castle form throughout centuries. In this regard, the question of the origins of noblemen's castles and the impact of fortification rights in Silesia, Poland and Central Europe is a debatable issue.⁷ There is well substantiated evidence that the reception of the ideas forming the basis of chivalric culture that affect the ethic of this social group significantly preceded the emergence of architectural solutions typical of castles in this part of Europe.⁸ This is seen in the fact that the elites adopted the idea of *militia Christi* very early on, which resulted in their participation in the crusade movement and donations for the military orders, which intensified especially after the Second Crusade.⁹ An example of this phenomenon in Silesia is the seat of the Order of Malta founded in Tyniec nad Ślężą (Fig. 1) by the family of Awdaniec, or possibly Wilczek/Wilczyc, between 1170 and 1189,¹⁰ and – a short time later – in Strzegom by the family of Strzegom-Illikowicz before 1203.¹¹

A separate issue, evident particularly in the Late Middle Ages, when castles had already become widespread in Central-Eastern Europe, are the changes of ownership. Not only were the castles taken over by the representatives of various social groups, e.g. ecclesiastical institutions or burghers, but they were also converted or even rebuilt from scratch. An especially complex question are the intentions behind that.

The bishops of Wrocław erected the castle in Otmuchów in order to strengthen their territorial rule in the land of Nysa-Otmuchów, which caused fierce objections from Henry IV of Wrocław and Bolko I of Fürstenberg.¹² Among the burghers who erected castles

³ Tauber 1985, 588–623.

⁴ Krauskopf 2005.

⁵ Krauskopf 2005, 22–23.

⁶ Krauskopf 2005, 119–122.

⁷ Boguszewicz 2012; Gawlas 2017; Nowakowski 2017, 245–250.

⁸ Vauchez 1996, 46–52; Cardini 1990, 76–81; Flori 2003, 161–209.

⁹ Gładysz 2002.

¹⁰ Starnawska 1999, 39–40; Heś 2007, 124–132; Legendziewicz 2013.

¹¹ Starnawska 1999, 46–48; Heś 2007, 132–134.

¹² Goliński 2005; Boguszewicz 2010a, 120–124.



Fig. 1. The commandery of the Order of Saint John in Tyniec nad Ślężą. The body of the building from the 14th century (photo by A. Boguszewicz).

at the beginning of the modern period some undoubtedly did so to elevate their status, which is exemplified by the residence in Wojnowice (Fig. 2) built in 1513–1560 by the Boner family¹³ or the investments made by the Saurmann family in 1518 in the castle in Jelcz and in 1523 in Smolec.¹⁴ However, it seems that most burghers of Wrocław who bought landed property outside the city, which is confirmed by the sources from the 13th century onwards, had reasons other than simply to elevate their social standing. Admittedly, the properties included defensive fortifications of the motte type, whose residential comfort seemed questionable even to the contemporaries, but they also had features like farms, which could bring additional income. Profits could also be generated by purchase and resale of the property. This at least seems a plausible explanation of frequent changes of ownership between representatives of burgher and noble families, as was the case of Złotniki,¹⁵ Sołtysowice¹⁶ and Strachowice¹⁷ near Wrocław. Economic factors were quite probably behind the purchase of the property in Gajków (Fig. 3) in 1344 by a partnership formed by the nobleman Konrad Schellendorf and the Wrocław patrician Jan Reste, who – *nota bene* – had been addressed as *miles* since the 1320s.¹⁸

This issue also involves the interpretation of archaeological finds excavated in castles, which – due to their location – are usually automatically treated as evidence of chivalric culture. This stereotypical approach often concerns the artefacts identified as the ‘noble component’ mentioned above. It is also accompanied by a subjective

interpretation of a certain category of finds as belonging to the elite and testifying to the high living standards of a castle’s residents, solely due to the fact that they are rarely ever present among the artefacts discovered during archaeological excavations. A unique opportunity to verify this view arose when Mateusz Goliński published the lists of pledges, debentures and Jewish property made in 1453 in Wrocław during a pogrom and judicial murder.¹⁹ The data, concerning the first half of the 15th century, prove that the clients of the Jewish usurers came from all estates of the Christian society, even though their majority were the burghers and nobility. The pawned movable goods included attire, table and bed linen, cloth, girdles, haberdashery, devotional objects, jewellery and decorations, weapons and tools, tableware and metal vessels.

The analysis of these materials failed to prove that there were any substantial differences in the range and value of the goods pledged with lenders by the burghers and nobility. However, there were differences in the elements of attire pledged by women and men, as seen in the descriptions of items like girdles. Comparison of these objects with the finds discovered during archaeological excavations also yields interesting conclusions. Artefacts made of precious metals are only exceptionally rarely excavated as – due to their relatively high value – they were often pledged with usurers. In the experience of the archaeologists excavating mediaeval towns and castles, gold rings with precious stones were lost extremely rarely. Equally rare are metal vessels, which is sometimes interpreted

¹³ Kutzner 1990.

¹⁴ Zlat 1990, 79–80.

¹⁵ Nowakowski 2017, 213–214, 477–478.

¹⁶ Nowakowski 2017, 212–213, 431–432.

¹⁷ Nowakowski 2017, 210, 438.

¹⁸ Nowakowski 2017, 209, 295; Wójcik 2018, 652.

¹⁹ Goliński 2006.



Fig. 2. The castle in Wojnowice, built in 1513–1560 by the Boner family (photo by A. Boguszewicz).



Fig. 3. The motte in Gajków (photo by A. Boguszewicz).

as a proof of their high value. However, the documents quoted above reveal that these items were very frequently pawned, the value of metal vessels approximating that of bed linen sheets – the objects most often pledged with lenders.²⁰ Another reason for the absence of metal vessels among the excavated artefacts is the relative durability of the material which they were made of – even after a vessel was seriously damaged, the metal could still be re-melted.

Confrontation of these lists of movables with castle inventories in the context of the ‘noble component’ mentioned above leads to especially interesting conclusions, as exemplified by the frequently mentioned girdles and elements of weaponry, whose metal parts are also present among the artefacts excavated in castles.²¹

An undecorated belt was often listed together with a knife, which suggests that they constituted a set, pos-

sibly with an unmentioned scabbard. The price offered by usurers was not high, ranging between 2 and 4 groschen.²² Compared with these, the girdles described as ‘silver’ or ‘gold-plated silver’ constitute an altogether separate category; they were possibly made from leather or textile straps with metal mounts, the latter usually silver – often gold-plated. These girdles were quite valuable and – like in the case of other expensive pledges – their value was set in guilders. However, the prices varied greatly, ranging from 2 to 15 guilders.²³ From the point of view of social divisions, it is interesting that girdles differed in form depending on the gender of their owners. This, however, did not affect their prices and a woman’s silver girdle could reach a high value of 8 guilders. On the other hand, there are no mentions of a burgher’s, nobleman’s or knight’s girdle being pledged. There is

²⁰ Goliński 2006, 122–123, 130–132.

²¹ Boguszewicz 2015.

²² Goliński 2006, 152, no. 37; 162, no. 165.

²³ Goliński 2006, 129.



Fig. 4. Copper alloy strap-ends: a – from Silesia (exact location unknown); b – from Miłochowice (photo by T. Gašior).



Fig. 5. Copper alloy strap-end. The castle on top of the Ślęża Mountain (photo by A. Boguszewicz).

only one mention of a '*knecht*' (boy's / farm worker's / mercenary's?) girdle – ungilded, with such characteristic features as mounts and a letter.²⁴

The quoted data prove that despite the symbolic significance of the girdle, no conclusive opinion can be formed concerning its owner's social stratum, even if the girdles displaying precious metal decorations do undoubtedly testify to his or her economic status. This is especially important in the case of archaeological finds, frequently all too hastily recognized as elements of the 'noble component' and sometimes even the remains of a 'nobleman's girdle'. Occasional discoveries of the objects made of precious metals in settlements, especially castles, resulted in attributing nearly all objects carefully made from non-ferrous metals, such as richly decorated strap-ends and mounts from copper alloys (Figs 4–5), to the higher stratum of the mediaeval society. However, it follows from the document mentioned above that such elements could have been characteristic of the girdle considered by the contemporaries as typical of a *knecht*.

Yet the question of attributing mounts made of non-ferrous metals to lower social strata seems more ambiguous, which is exemplified by bronze strap-ends displaying noblemen's coats of arms (Fig. 6). It is also quite probable that in everyday life, or – especially – in combat, even representatives of the highest social stratum wore girdles and belts of very good quality but without elements made from precious metals. It should be noted that polished mounts made of copper alloys could imitate gold, which fulfilled their owners' aspirations.

The issue of class affiliation also involves the interpretation of non-heraldic symbols displayed on girdles. Characteristically, metal applications in the form of

letters, engraved monograms or acronyms became very popular in the 15th century. Even though they are sometimes identified as elements representing chivalric culture and courtly love, they actually constitute devotional symbols.²⁵ The most frequently encountered is the miniscule letter 'm', sometimes multiplied (Figs 4b, 7a), which may refer to Mary, Christ's mother, the Christogram 'IHS' (Fig. 7b), and majuscule 'A' (Fig. 8) or miniscule 'a' as the abbreviation of the Hail Mary address *Ave Maria*.

Leaving aside the question of literacy of the 15th century Central European society and its awareness of the messages conveyed by the discussed decorations, monograms and acronyms were universally used in the period, especially those bearing devotional meanings. Their primary application were strap-ends decorations, which – characteristically – were similar in shape, despite diversified form of the mounts themselves.²⁶ They certainly belonged to people involved in soldiering, irrespective of their social origins, which is evidenced by the considerable frequency of finds of this kind in castles, in the layers identified as battlegrounds that formed in the wake of sieges. It is thus quite probable that the initials and monograms may have played a devotional and apotropaic role for their owners.

As far as weaponry is concerned, the nature of the objects pledged with Jewish lenders was different. First of all, they occurred in sets and – secondly – certain items are missing from the lists, e.g. firearms, which in the mid-15th century must have been commonly used by the burghers of Wrocław.

It is impossible to conclude whether knives – mentioned frequently yet highly laconically – constituted elements of weaponry. Some were described as 'big' (*groß*

²⁴ Goliński 2006, 163, no. 177.

²⁵ A different interpretation of these symbols was proposed by Krzysztof Wachowski, who identified them as elements representing courtly love. He interpreted the monogram 'm' as an ab-

breviation of MINNE and 'A', 'a' as an abbreviation of AMOR (Wachowski 2013, 51–52, 78–80).

²⁶ Dufranes 2020, 21–33.



Fig. 6. Copper alloy strap-end with engraved coat of arms. Rogowiec Castle (photo by A. Boguszewicz, drawing by N. Lenkow).

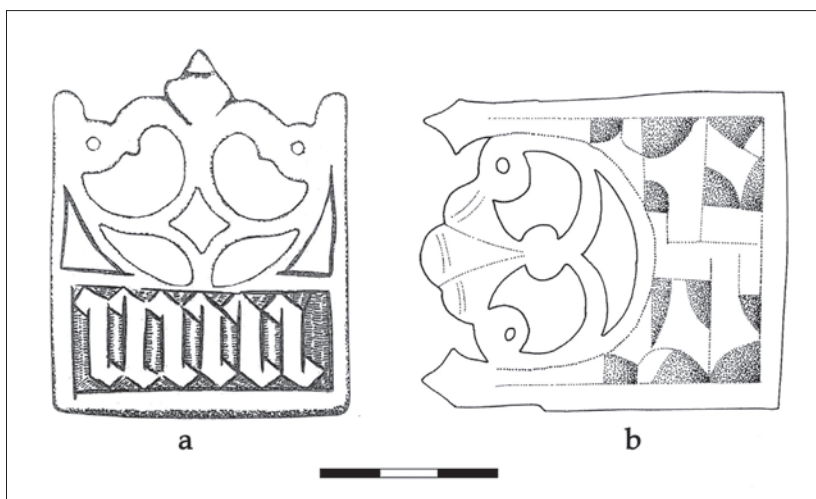


Fig. 7. Copper alloy strap-ends with engraved black letters 'mm' and 'IHS': a – Brzeznica; b – Szczerba Castle (drawing by N. Lenkow).

meß(er)), which may indicate that they were one-handed swords (Polish *kord*).²⁷ The most often pawned elements of weaponry were crossbows, sometimes accompanied by cases, quivers and bolts. There are also swords (*swert*)²⁸ and elements of defensive armament, usually listed as *pantczir*,²⁹ which may have denoted universally used chain mails or brigandines.



Fig. 8. Copper alloy mount with the majuscule 'A'. The castle on Ostrówek in Opole (photo by Archive of IAiE PAN in Wrocław).

The prices of crossbows varied greatly, which probably resulted from the quality of the equipment prone to wear and tear, and ranged between 6 groschen and 1 guilder.³⁰ A quiver with bolts was priced at 3 groschen. The prices of swords were very diversified, which may point to the inaccuracy of their laconic descriptions, comprising diametrically different types in one category. Thus, there were swords worth 8 groschen and a sword which together with a quiver and crossbow bolts was priced at 4 guilders. A body armour was worth 1.5 guilder, while the one accompanied by a damask jacket (*jope*) reached the price of 3 guilders.³¹

The analysis of the lists of pawned goods prompts the conclusion that despite the high price offered by the usurers, elements of weaponry were rarely pledged. In the case of burghers it may mean that they obeyed the orders of the municipal council requiring every member of the community to be equipped with basic weaponry: firearms, polearms and blunt weapons.³² These data also do not reveal any substantial differences between the armament of burghers and nobility; however, there is one interesting detail: while the nobility pledged crossbows and armour, no mentions of swords have been recorded. Rather than being a coincidence, this fact may prove that the nobility attached greater significance to swords as a symbol of their class affiliation, strengthened by family tradition.

Contrary to the sparse information about elements of armament in the lists of pledges, debentures and

²⁷ Goliński 2006, 130, 154–155, nos 58, 72; Marek 2008, 45–67.

²⁸ Goliński 2006, 170, no. 259; 178, no. 361.

²⁹ Goliński 2006, 165, no. 197.

³⁰ Goliński 2006, 130.

³¹ Goliński 2006, 185, no. 436.

³² Goliński 1990; 2006, 105.



Fig. 9. Crossbow bolt heads. Rogowiec Castle (photo by A. Boguszewicz).

Jewish property made in 1453, this category of artefacts is quite abundant in Silesian castles, found in the battle-grounds – sites of sieges from the war of Silesian succession in the second half of the 15th century.³³ Especially interesting is the evidence of use of firearms, absent in the preceding century. It comprises fragments of burst hand cannon barrels and numerous missiles: from small calibre lead bullets to medium and large calibre cylindrical missiles from the same material, to stone balls shot from large calibre mortars in an attempt to destroy the walls of a besieged castle. The most numerous of the excavated artefacts are crossbow bolt heads, which still predominated on the period's battlefield (Fig. 9). The Jewish lenders were not interested in the heads, or to be more precise – bolts, unless they came as a set together with a decorative quiver. These were accompanied among the battleground finds by numerous elements of horse trapping and riding gear (bits, stirrups and spurs), which usurers also refused to take. Interestingly, the range of the finds and their

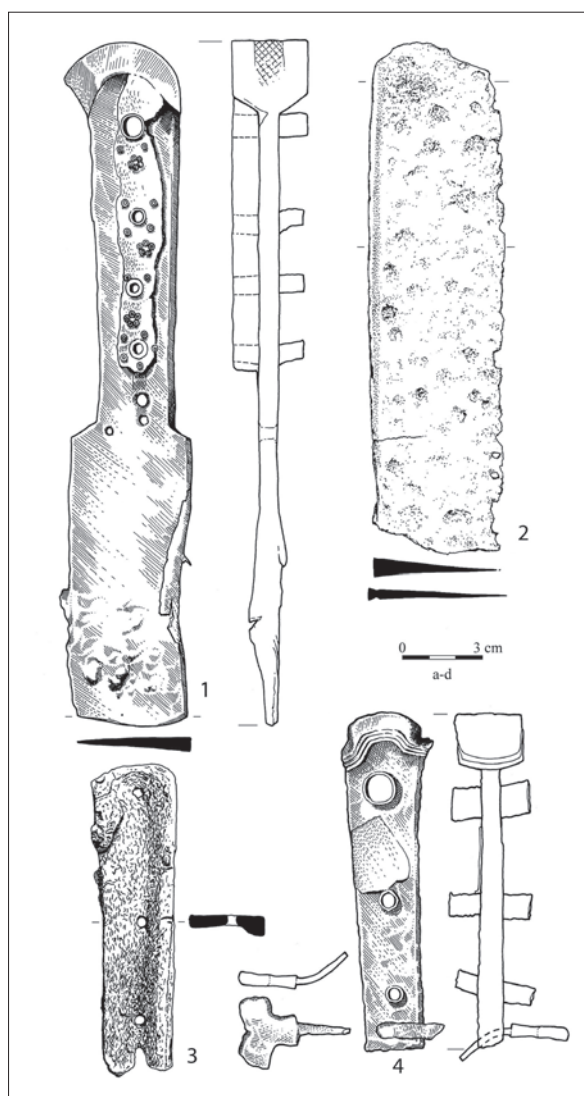


Fig. 10. Fragments of one-handed swords. Rogowiec Castle (drawing by N. Lenkow).

mass occurrence has a completely egalitarian character. A crossbow was a basic weapon not only for the burghers but also for the peasants obliged to render services for local castles.³⁴ On the other hand, classification of numerous fragments of one-handed swords discovered in castles and probably registered by lenders as 'big knives' remains an open question (Fig. 10). Their plebeian nature is reflected in German (*Bauernwehr/Hauswehr*), yet in the 15th century they were evidently very popular with all social strata as a versatile and relatively cheap weapon. Its practicality was especially appreciated in cavalry formations: it was considerably more convenient than an ordinary sword and its merits were also appreciated in

³³ Boguszewicz 2010b; 2018a.

³⁴ Kouřil *et al.* 2000, 210.

later times, when sabres became more popular. This is substantiated by the sentences from Mączyński's dictionary (1564): '*kord, jezdecki miecz*' ('a one-handed sword is a cavalryman's weapon') and from Rysiński's collection of proverbs (1619): 1) '*Kord broń, szabla strój*' ('A one-handed sword – a weapon, a sabre – decorative attire'). 2) '*Kord do boju, szabla do stroju*' ('A one-handed sword for the battle, a sabre to dress up'), quoted in Gloger's Old Polish Encyclopaedia.³⁵

Problems with identifying the manifestations of chivalric, courtly-chivalric or, alternatively, noble culture on the basis of written sources and archaeological discoveries may by all means be overcome when a broader social context of this phenomenon is taken into consideration. In the case of the castle seen as a point of reference, it would require analyzing the relations existing between various groups of its residents implementing elements of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of sociology of culture. In this respect an analysis of the artefacts excavated in castles should focus on defining the habitus of the lord of the castle, i.e. his inherent patterns of thought, behaviour and taste.³⁶ Thus, the analysis of the issue cannot be limited to mere identification of the function of individual buildings, appliances and objects and attributing them to particular social groups. They need to be perceived in the context of the structure which Bourdieu calls the field, which encompasses the residents of the castle and the landed property that belonged to it, or possibly more distant neighbours when the influences of the castle exceeded the boundaries of its lord's estate. The most important character, the *acteur*, was the stronghold's owner, who – at least in Silesia in the 15th century – was considered a member of a separate group of feudal lords known as 'lords of castles'.³⁷ In the contemporary sources written in German they were referred to as *Schloßherren*³⁸ and in those written in Latin as *castellani*.³⁹ Thanks to his position, 'the lord of the castle' structuralized all the castle's residents as well as those living in the surrounding estate and further away. Another very helpful tool is an analysis of various manifestations of his activity and that of his dependants from the perspective of the notion of symbolic capital, which comprises a number of smaller capitals (cultural, economic, social, legal and many others).⁴⁰ Thus perceived, symbolic capital would be tantamount to the (usually ambiguous and vague) notion of chivalric culture.

From this perspective, the objects mentioned in the lists of pledges, debentures and Jewish property may be

seen as evidence of the economic capital of the nobility and burghers. The differences between the capitals of both groups were not significant, while the only differences in social capital, reflected in their attitudes to individual categories of objects, e.g. weaponry, are so nuanced that they are practically imperceptible. However, the same categories of objects represented by the artefacts retrieved in castles take on a different meaning. An exceptional amassment of elements of weaponry is evidence of the ongoing military operations and therefore it is of no significance that they were typical, mass-produced objects, like crossbow bolt heads. The most important fact is that the battleground was there because the lord of the castle was able to concentrate a number of capitals in his hands, most notably legal and, more broadly, social capital, which enabled him to defend the stronghold and its surrounding infrastructure. The battleground, the effect of a long-lasting siege, appeared because the stronghold had been appropriately fortified, which was possible thanks to the lord's cultural and economic capitals – without them neither he nor his advisors would have had indispensable knowledge of defensive structures and means to finance the investment. Once again his social capital, and the political capital included therein, enabled him to summon the defenders from among his subjects and partners representing similar political views. In this context the support from the rulers pursuing their own policies was also of extraordinary significance. Economic and cultural capitals should be mentioned here once more, as they enabled the lord to arm and command the mobilized men. Ultimately, the lord of the castle was able to concentrate all these capitals in his hands and convert them into the symbolic capital enabling him to implement symbolic violence.⁴¹ But for him, none of the besieged castle's residents would have taken the risk of its defence, which entailed injuries or even loss of life.

It would seem that the example above should exhaust the question of building symbolic capital by the lord of the castle, but there were also other forms of activity of a more peaceful nature, less obvious from the perspective of the research of chivalric-courtly culture, e.g. economic activity. In this context an especially interesting phenomenon are specialized workshops operating in castles, like metallurgical workshops functioning independently of smithies, such as the one discovered in the castle in Wierzbna near Świdnica.⁴² The site, whose chronology goes back to the third quarter of the 13th century, is one of the oldest nobleman's castles in Silesia. Its residential

³⁵ Gloger 1958, 82.

³⁶ Bourdieu 1984, 101–103, 169–170; 1977, 78–87.

³⁷ Jurek 2004, 416.

³⁸ CDS 27, nos 21, 23.

³⁹ Häufler 1932, 110.

⁴⁰ Bourdieu 1984, 175–176; 1990, 112–121.

⁴¹ Bourdieu 1990, 122–134.

⁴² Boguszewicz 2005, 285–292; 2012, 124–128; Jurek 2006.

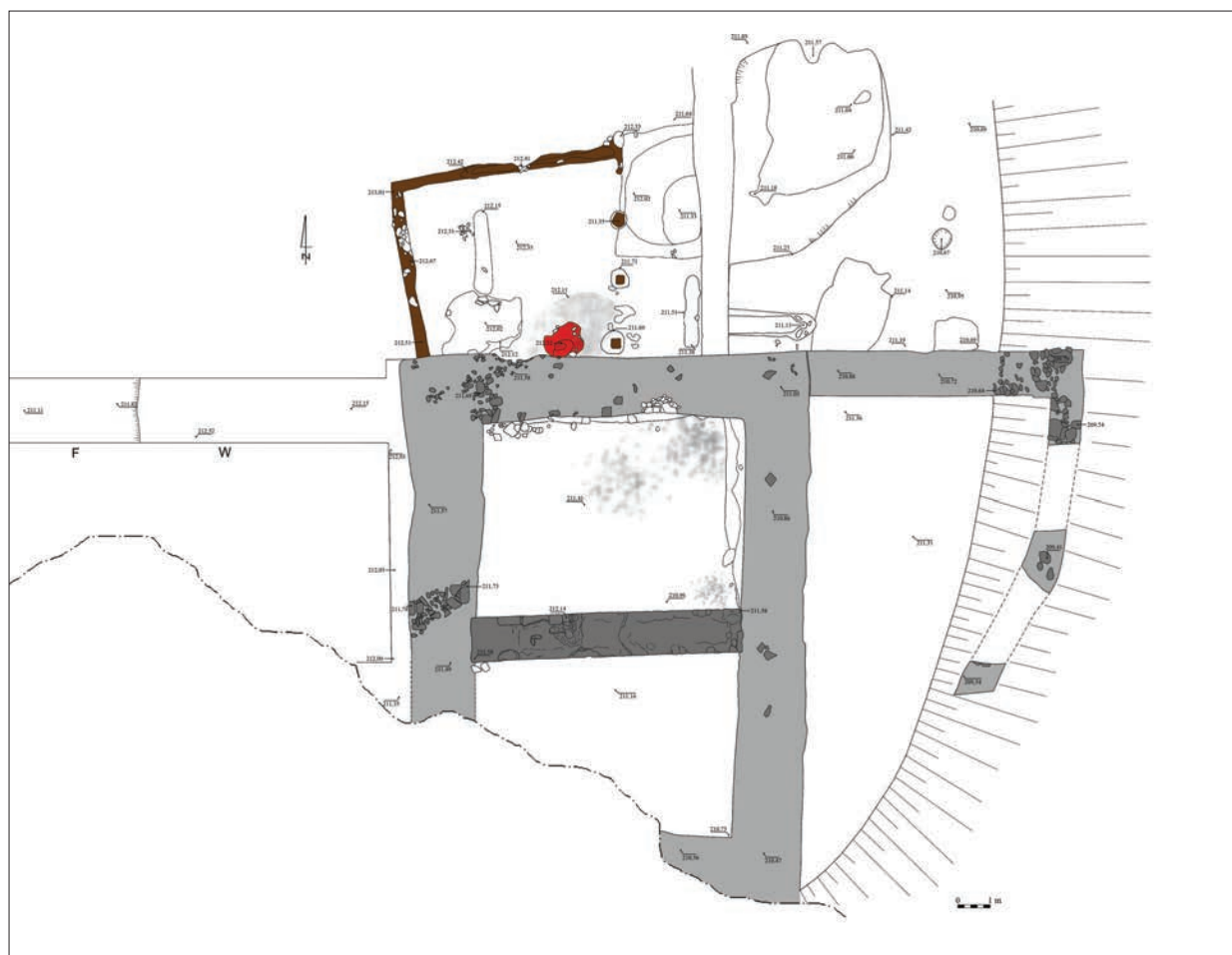


Fig. 11. The castle in Wierzbna in the second half of the 13th century (drawing by N. Lenkow).

part was formed by a dwelling tower with a small inner courtyard surrounded by a wall (Fig. 11). The economic facilities were situated in the outer courtyard, surrounded by a rampart and a moat. The only utility object with-in it functioning at the initial stages of the castle's existence in the second half of the 13th century was a wooden outbuilding with traces of a hearth. The object's cultural layers yielded tools, such as a light hammer, fragments of melting pots, semi-finished products and production waste from copper alloy (Fig. 12), which proves that it was a workshop processing non-ferrous metals. Quite significantly, the employed craftsman was highly qualified: not only did he emulate the patterns developed elsewhere but also created unique ones himself, which is substantiated by the find of a bar of copper alloy bearing an engraved heraldic eagle (Fig. 12a).

Correct interpretation of this artefact requires an analysis of the stronghold's immediate surroundings.

Performing primarily the residential function, it was situated on the edge of the village, while its economic infrastructure consisted of an unfortified manor house owned by the lords and a church situated nearby, founded by the castle's owners, and it is there that the objects indispensable for the functioning of a feudal seat, such as a smithy, stables and cowsheds, were probably situated.⁴³ Due to the social status of the lords of Wierzbna, who had their own retinue, burgrave and notary, the workshop mentioned above cannot be interpreted solely as an element of economic activity aimed at increasing economic capital. Its location directly next to the residence testified, on the one hand, to the craftsman's high social standing and on the other – to the aspirations of the feudal lords, who took the liberty of acting like rulers by employing goldsmiths. It was this group of craftsmen, working directly for the rulers, who acquired special privileges and had their workshops located within castle walls.⁴⁴ Thus, their

⁴³ Bogusiewicz 2005, 292–296.

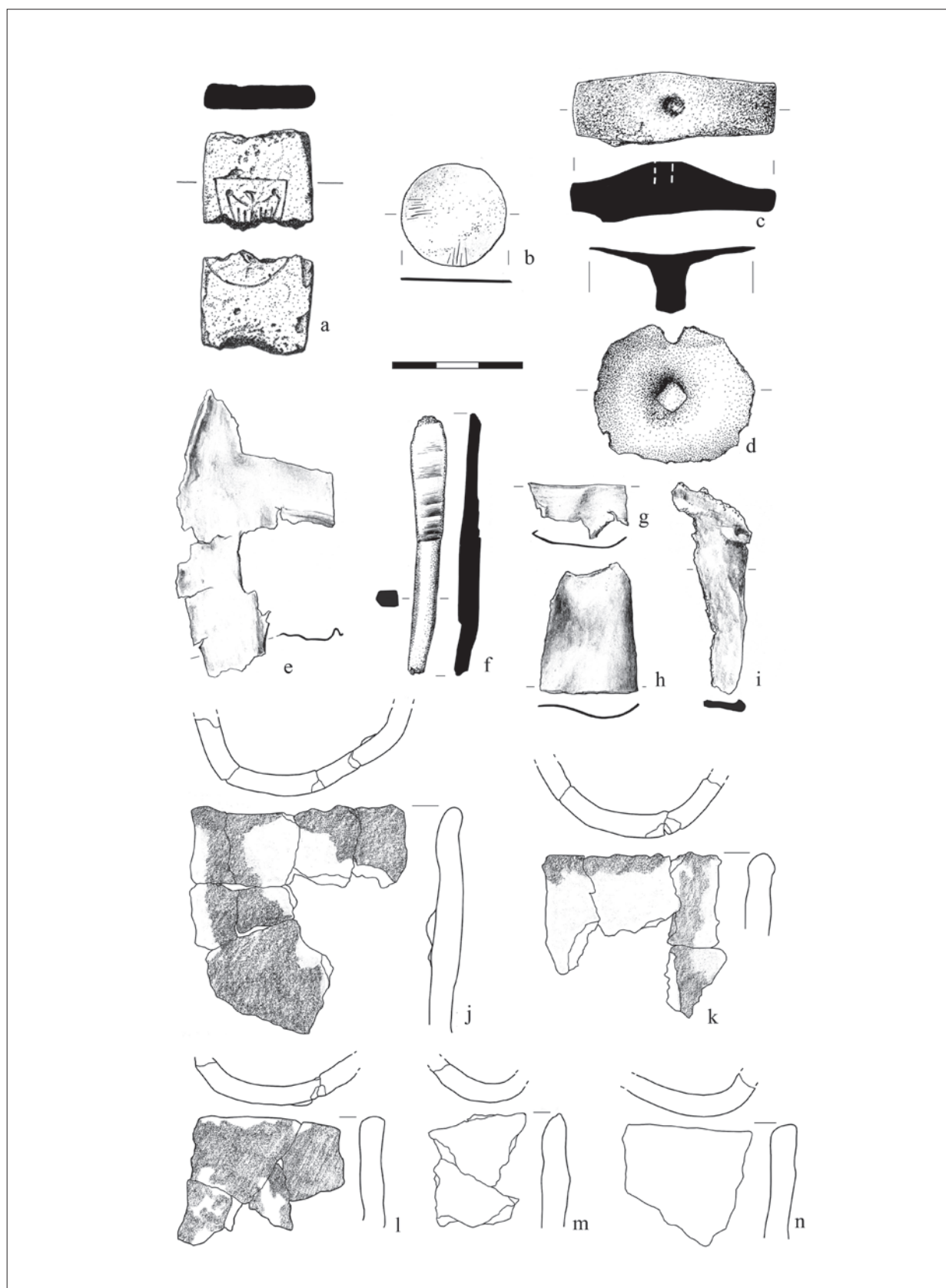


Fig. 12. Traces of a non-ferrous metal workshop from the castle in Wierzbna: a – bar of copper alloy bearing an engraved heraldic eagle; c – light hammer; b, d–h – semi-finished products and production waste from copper alloy; j–n – fragments of melting pots (drawing by N. Lenkow).



Fig. 13. Strzelin, St Gotard Church with relics of a rotunda in the lower parts of the tower. Foundation of the lords of Strzelin from the 12th/13th century (state as of 2006, photo by A. Boguszewicz).

presence and work should be considered an element of cultural capital, which was directly converted into symbolic capital.

An example of the most advanced form of economic activity of exceptional complexity, which required considerable investment, was the promotion of settlement by founding villages and towns under German law. In both cases it involved, to a greater or lesser extent, assuming the prerogative of territorial rule. This phenomenon is best illustrated by the creation of their own territorial rule by the bishops of Wrocław in the land of Nysa-Otmuchów, which was opposed in vain by the Piast dukes.⁴⁵ Quite understandably, the greatest number of towns was founded in Silesia by the highest stratum of the nobility during the crisis of ducal power following the invasion of the Mongol army in 1241. It was then that urban centres were founded by the family of Pogorzale in Grodków and Lewin⁴⁶ and later, in the 1280s, in Przeworno.⁴⁷ Quite probably, shortly before 1264, Strzelin (Fig. 13) was founded by the lords of the same name.⁴⁸ These private towns were soon taken over or marginalized in the second half of the 13th century by the Piast dukes, who perceived them as competition to their own network of urban centres.

However, not all private foundations were subject to the hostile takeover by the Piast dukes, which is exemplified by the initiatives on the part of the Jeleńczyk family.⁴⁹ Before 1288 they founded a town in Prusice, which they had owned from at least the mid-13th cen-

tury.⁵⁰ However, in the early 14th century they began to gradually sell this poorly developing urban centre to the representatives of other noble families and Piast dukes. A yet another example was the fate of the Jeleńczyk family estate in Prochowice, where they had been present from the end of the 13th century.⁵¹ Taking advantage of relative weakness of the competing lines of Piasts of Legnica and Głogów, they took over a border settlement complex on the lower Kaczawa, which consisted of a ducal castle and the surrounding settlements as well as the town of Las. These they merged into one settlement centre named Prochowice (Fig. 14). However, despite lack of competition from the dukes of Legnica and the town's undisturbed development, they eventually had to sell the heavily indebted Prochowice estate to the dukes of Legnica in 1383. It seems that in this case the financial ruin was caused by the lords of Prochowice living beyond their means. They had their own court with a burgrave, vassals among the local knights and a chaplain, but the greatest burden may have been excessive investment in erecting the castle or possibly municipal fortifications, which was recorded in 1374.

The example of Prochowice and other instances of founding towns by the nobility recorded earlier seem to confirm the thesis put forward by Tomasz Jurek that the predominating motive was not the intention to further the economic development of the estate but to demonstrate the lord's own power equalling that of dukes.⁵² Consequently, the primacy of cultural capital (erecting

⁴⁴ Blaschitz, Krabath 2004, 743.

⁴⁵ Goliński 2005; Boguszewicz 2010a, 120–133.

⁴⁶ Jurek 2002, 89–93, 95–96; 2005.

⁴⁷ Jurek 2002, 93–95; Adamska 2019, 157.

⁴⁸ Jurek 2002, 93; Adamska 2019, 151–154.

⁴⁹ Jurek 1992.

⁵⁰ Eysymontt 2009, 482–484.

⁵¹ Boguszewicz 2018b.

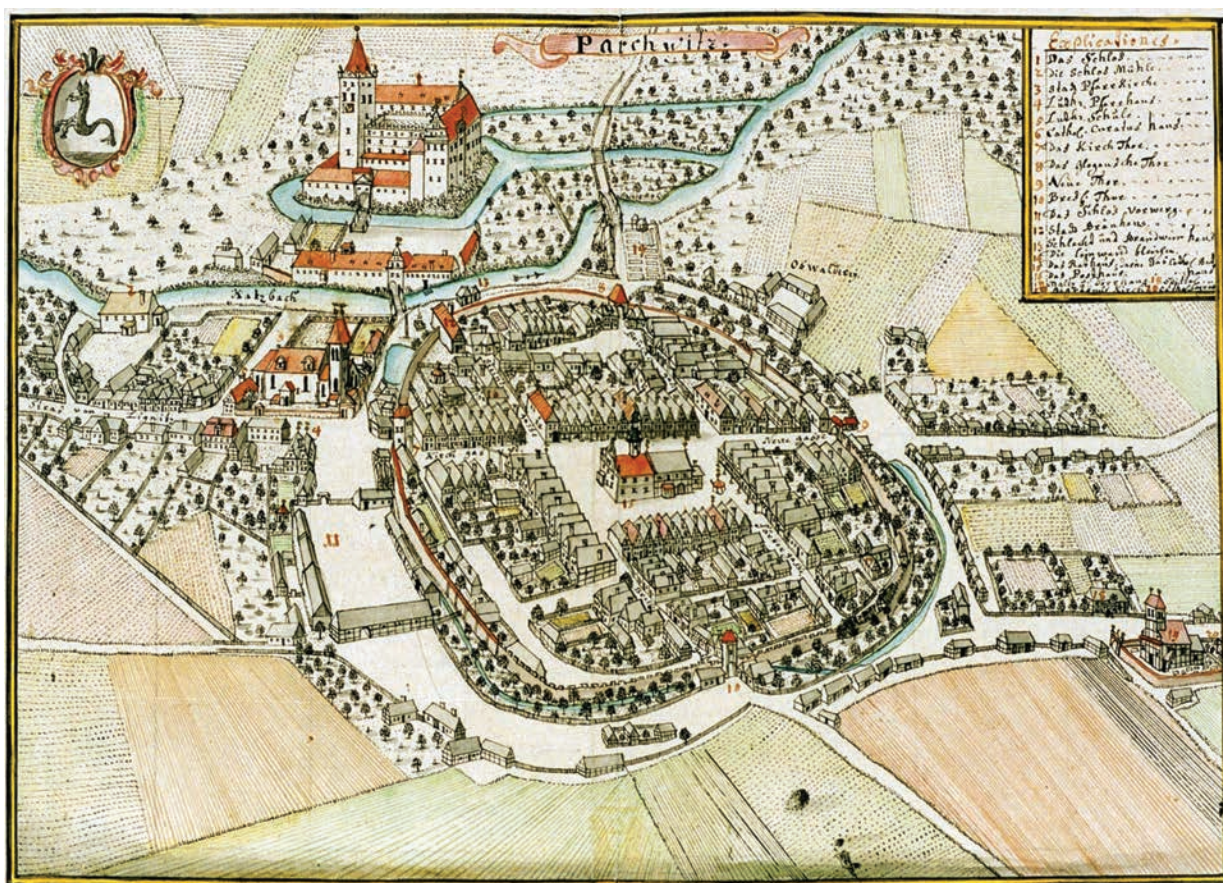


Fig. 14. Prochowice Castle and Town. View by F.B. Werner from around the mid-18th century (Biblioteka Uniwersytecka we Wrocławiu, Oddział Rękopisów, sygn. Akc. 1848/1094, Bd. 2, fol. 130–131).

castles and city walls) over weak social and economic capitals (the competition from economically stronger ducal towns) resulted in a failure to build or solidify symbolic capital (decline of towns or their takeover by the dukes).

The quoted examples of the nobility's economic endeavours, which are not exhaustive, not only deviate from the stereotypical image of the mediaeval knight-hood, but also exceed the range of activities identified as typical of courtly-chivalric culture. What is more, they testify to a versatility of activities which enabled the nobility to participate actively in social life, to keep up with and even initiate changes. Undoubtedly, this versatility and readiness to embrace new phenomena was based on close cooperation with representatives of many social and professional groups. The diversity and intensity of their efforts, seen from the angle of archaeological artefacts excavated in castles, attests to the position of the lord of the

castle. It was also him who converted a number of capitals (economic, social and cultural) into symbolic capital.

This brings to mind the phenomenon of 'cultural omnivorousness',⁵³ or – less harshly put – 'cultural mobility',⁵⁴ which the continuators of Pierre Bourdieu's thought observed in modern elites. However, considering the various activities connected with 'chivalric culture' mentioned above, it becomes obvious that this phenomenon has a very long history. When compared with representatives of modern-day elites, the position of mediaeval nobility would approximate that of broadly conceived creative circles. Founding towns and villages, participating in the creation of art, they were not just consumers of complete products of culture but were instrumental in their emergence and to an extent affected their ultimate form, which perfectly corresponds with a reflection voiced by Bonnie K. Erickson, who pointed out that 'cultural mobility' offers the elites an insight into

⁵² Jurek 2002, 97.

⁵³ Peterson 1992; Peterson, Simkus 1992.

⁵⁴ Emission 2003.

various social groups and enables the use of versatile tools enhancing interaction. In this context the significance of social capital becomes obvious.⁵⁵ All this leads to the conclusion that 'cultural mobility' serving the purpose of increasing social capital is a universal phenomenon. Both now and in the Middle Ages, or at any other time, it facilitates acquiring a dominating position in an imperceptible but universally acceptable way by imposing symbolic violence. The role of social capital emphasized

here, perhaps even greater than that of cultural capital, and of the conversion of both these capitals into the symbolic one, is undoubtedly among the more significant elements constituting the social phenomenon identified as chivalric – or courtly-chivalric – culture. However, it bears stressing that similar social phenomena promoting the domination of the elites are universal and are by no means restricted to the Middle Ages.

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⁵⁵ Erickson 1996.

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MARCIN MAJEWSKI

Institute of History, Chair of Archaeology, University of Szczecin

marcin.majewski@usz.edu.pl

ORCID 0000-0001-8404-3347

GRAPEN LUTTICK UND GRODT. PRODUCTION AND USE OF BRONZE THREE-LEGGED CAULDRONS, OR GRAPENS, IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES AND EARLY MODERN TIMES – EXAMPLE OF WESTERN POMERANIA

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the latest archaeological research into the casting and marking of bronze three-legged cauldrons (*Grapens*) in the Baltic Sea Region. It offers a detailed analysis of production centres in Western Pomerania, which have not as of yet been the subject of interest of a wide circle of scholars, and presents the results of recent archaeological excavations in Stargard that revealed further workshops specializing in the produc-

tion of cauldrons. Their functioning was associated with two *Grapengiessers*, Jochim and Jacob Ingerman, who were active in the first half of the 16th century. Moreover, the article also deals with the activity of other founders in relation to other centres in the Baltic Sea Region on the basis of historical sources and bells which have survived down to our times.

Keywords: Baltic Sea Region, Hanseatic League, Western Pomerania, Late Middle Ages, Early Modern times, bell founding, bronze three-legged cauldrons (*Grapens*)

Introduction

A cauldron (three-legged pot) with two handles cast in bronze (*Grapen*) was one of the most popular cooking pots in Northern Europe in the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern times.¹ It was placed directly over an open fire or hung over it using an iron rod, which can be seen in numerous iconographic sources dating back to the Late Middle Ages.² Its form was similar to earthenware pipkins – cooking pots with spheroidal bottoms and three feet. The beginnings of bronze cauldron casting date back to ca. 1200 and the production process itself has been the subject of numerous studies.³ Archaeological excavations have revealed many remains which prove their production. The craftsmen engaged in it, called *Grapengiessers*, were mentioned in historical sources since the mid-13th century. The founding of bronze vessels of this type flourished in the Baltic Sea Region. Among the members of the Hanseatic League, it was primarily Lübeck which was associated with being the production place of cauldrons, as well as other objects made of bronze, including

baptismal fonts, incense burners and candle holders. Meanwhile parts of Pomerania, with such towns as Stralsund, Greifswald, Szczecin and Stargard, also played an important part in the production.

Archaeological excavations in cauldron production sites in the Baltic Sea Region

Archaeological remains of workshops where bronze pots were produced have so far been unearthed in Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Poland (Fig. 1). In Visby on Gotland over 5,000 fragments of cast forms used for the production of cauldrons were excavated, out of which 2,000 show traces of contact with cast objects. The workshop located there, unfortunately not the subject of thorough archaeological excavations, functioned from the second half of the 13th century. Cauldrons produced in that location measured from 12 cm to 33 cm in diameter; however, the biggest number of unearthed remains was of cauldrons measuring 23 cm in diameter, which could

¹ Hasse 1981, 66–67.

² Drescher [1982], 163–169.

³ Vellev 1988; 1998; Thomas, Bourgarit 2014; Drescher 2017, among other authors.

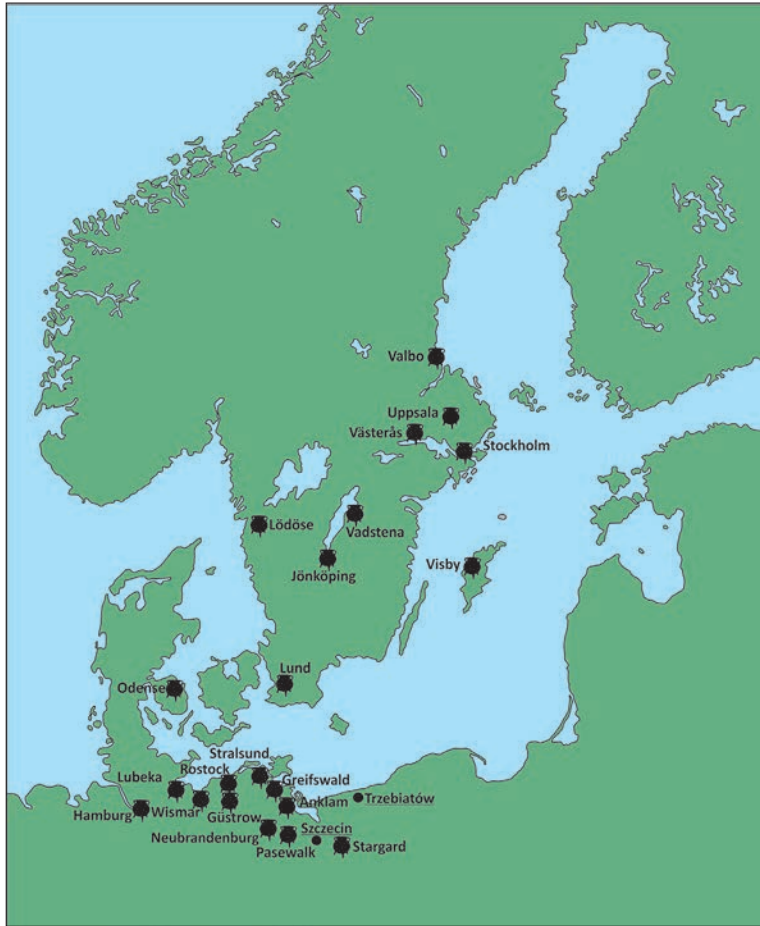


Fig. 1. Archaeological sites with remains of workshops where *Grapens* were produced (marked with a *Grapen* symbol) and places on the Baltic coast where the activity of *Grapengiessers* is confirmed only by historical sources (marked with a dot, with the place name underlined) (according to Vilsteren *et al.* 2019, 205, fig. 4 and the author's research, drawing by C. Rysz).

hold from 4 to 4.5 litres.⁴ The first written sources which provide information on cauldron casting in Visby date back to ca. 1350, and records which date back to the period from 1485 to 1487 mention two *Grapengiessers*: Stena and Geraudher.⁵ In Jönköping cauldron casts which came from different workshops were excavated in eastern and western parts of the town in layers dating back to the period from the 14th to the 17th century. Remains of bottom moulds and other refuse, the chronology of which was dated to the second quarter and the end of the 17th century, were excavated on one of the plots. In 1696 the owner of the property was a *Grapengiesser* by the name of Anders Jöransson.⁶ So far, almost ten sites indicating the locations of workshops have been unearthed in Västerås, two of which were active in the Late Middle Ages. A further workshop which dates back to the 17th century specialized not only in cauldrons but also small items. The surviving

historical sources allow for the conclusion that in the period from the 15th to the 17th century four or five workshops carried out their activity simultaneously.⁷ It was also in this town that the remains of a workshop in which tin jugs were produced were uncovered; it was active at the turn of the 14th century near the cathedral.⁸ A well preserved foundry was unearthed in Uppsala; excavations revealed buildings, archaeological features, tools and production waste (almost 3,000 fragments of moulds), and the activity of the foundry in the period from the 14th/15th to the 15th/16th century was linked to people known from historical sources.⁹ Further late mediaeval foundries in which cauldrons were cast were located in Lund, Vadstena, Valbo, Stockholm and Lödöse. Publications regarding some of these sites are still insufficient.¹⁰

The only workshop in which cauldrons were cast that has been the subject of thorough archaeological

⁴ Engeström 1974; Anund 1997, 22; Skyllberg, Anund 2003, 20; Zerbe 2006, 574–575.

⁵ Engeström 1974, 62–63.

⁶ Anund 1997, 23; Bramstäng Plura *et al.* 2013, 102–104.

⁷ Anund 1997, 23; Bergold, Bäck 2007.

⁸ Ros 2012.

⁹ Anund *et al.* 1992; Anund 1997, 22–23; Skyllberg, Anund 2003, 20.

¹⁰ Anund 1997, 23; Anund 2000; Keller 2015, 59–60.

excavations in contemporary Denmark was uncovered in the vicinity of a Dominican monastery in Odense. The excavation works, carried out over two seasons, revealed founding equipment and numerous fragments of moulds which were used mainly for the production of cauldrons. The workshop was active around the year 1300.¹¹

The biggest number of unearthened workshops which specialized in casting cauldrons was discovered in northern Germany. The remains of dozens of workshops were unearthened on the coast stretching from Hamburg to Anklam. A workshop active in the first half of the 13th century was excavated in Lübeck, with furnaces for drying moulds, a pit filled with clay for the production of moulds and half-finished products. According to rough estimates, as many as 300 cauldrons could have been produced there, along with candle holders, incense burners, elements of belts and garment decorations. Two other mediaeval workshops in which cauldrons were produced were also discovered in Lübeck.¹²

Further foundries were located in Rostock, where deposits of bronze scrap to be melted and numerous pieces of moulds used for the casting of cauldrons were uncovered. Just like in Lübeck, garment ornaments and decorations were also produced there.¹³ The remains of a pit used for bell founding and of moulds used for cauldron casting were uncovered in a plot located in the vicinity of defence walls in the neighbouring Güstrow. Some of them display a drawing of a municipal coat of arms used for the marking of bronze vessels which has been unknown until now. The workshop functioned in the second half of the 14th century.¹⁴ Additionally, a mediaeval pit filled with fragments of moulds used for casting bronze cauldrons was uncovered in Wismar.¹⁵

The largest number of cauldron production remains was uncovered in Stralsund and Greifswald, in a total of ten locations. Archaeological excavations allow for the dating of the beginning of this activity, which was quite intensive throughout the following century, to the end of the 13th century. Numerous pieces of forms bear municipal coats of arms of Stralsund and Greifswald, as well as the house mark of the founder (Fig. 7).¹⁶ A late mediaeval pit with remains of cast cauldrons, one of which dis-

played the house mark of a pewter smith, was unearthened in Anklam. A further trace of such production found in this town were casts and other production waste which date back to the turn of the 16th century, uncovered in the cellar of one of the houses located in the market square. The activity was also confirmed by written sources.¹⁷

The remains of a *Grapengiesser's* workshop dating back to the mid-14th century were uncovered in Pasewalk. Apart from remains of casts, an unspecified technical device used in the workshop was also found. One of the fragments displayed the house mark of the master *Grapengiesser*.¹⁸ Apart from late mediaeval fragments of casts, a well-preserved founding pit with the bottom part of a *Grapen* mould dating back to the end of the 14th or the beginning of the 15th century was uncovered in Neubrandenburg.¹⁹

***Grapengiessers* in Fore Pomerania and Western Pomerania in light of historical sources**

Craftsmen who specialized in the casting of bronze cauldrons were mentioned in written sources in major Pomeranian towns relatively early on. A representative of the trade was known in Stralsund as early as in 1278. Shortly after 1300 a *Hermannus fusor ollarum*²⁰ appeared in Greifswald; *Henricus ollarum fusor* was mentioned in Szczecin in 1306.²¹ In light of the 1533 Guild Statutes of Szczecin, which were allegedly agreed in an oral form already in 1313, metal craftsmen were associated in one guild. It comprised blacksmiths, whitesmiths, sword makers, cutlers, nail makers, coppersmiths, armourers and *Grapengiessers*. Learning the trade took two years, whereupon a journeyman who could provide proof of his competence by producing the masterpiece: a cauldron, mortar or roasting pan, could rise to the status of a master. One of the streets of Szczecin was named after the *Grapengiessers*; in 1351 it was called *platea olifusorum* and later *gropengeterstrate*.²² Apart from producing three-legged pots, *Grapengiessers* would also cast other bronze objects, among them bells. Two bells which

¹¹ Vellev 1988; 1998.

¹² Gläser, Mührenberg 1998; Mührenberg 2000, 225–228; Drescher 2017; Wywrot-Wyszkowska 2019b, 60–61.

¹³ H. Schäfer, C. Schäfer 1994, 150–152; Mulsow 2000a, 209; 2000b, 256; H. Schäfer 2000b, 65; Rütz 2005, 296; Mulsow 2006, 294–296; Wywrot-Wyszkowska 2019b, 61–65.

¹⁴ Fries 2012; 2014, 108–109, 114.

¹⁵ H. Schäfer 2000b, 65.

¹⁶ Stralsund: Kaute, H. Schäfer 2000, 201; Samariter 2000, 243–244; H. Schäfer 2000a; 2000b; Ansorge 2005a, 127–128; 2005b; Samariter 2005, 717, fig. 104; Brüggemann 2016;

Greifswald: H. Schäfer 1995; 1996, 146; Ansorge 1998, 161; Ansorge, Rütz 1999, 308–310; H. Schäfer 2000b, 65; Rütz 2002, 94–96; 2005, 298–299; Ansorge 2006; Kaute, Manske 2017, 370; Wywrot-Wyszkowska 2019b, 65–69.

¹⁷ Hoche, Fries 2004; Popp 2010, 484.

¹⁸ Hoffmann 2006.

¹⁹ Kaute 2006; Ansorge 2010, 384.

²⁰ Rütz 2005, 295.

²¹ Mangelsdorf 1990, 270.

²² Blümcke 1884, 108–109.



Fig. 2. Engraved decorations with images of *Grapens* on bells in Western Pomerania: 1 – Bodzęcin, Goleniów District, 14th/15th centuries (drawing by C. Rysz); 2 – Mechowo, Kamień Pomorski District, 1423 (photo by B. Bubnowicz).

survived down to our times in the region of Goleniów and Kamień Pomorski might have been founded by *Grapengiessers* alone. A craftsman signed the waist of the bell in Bodzęcin, which dates back to the turn of the 14th century, with a house mark and put a picture of a cauldron decorated with triple lines running around and a lily growing out of it (Fig. 2: 1).²³ It would be difficult to contest the opinion of the authors of a catalogue of historical monuments who assumed it to be the canting arms of the German family von Grape (Grapen).²⁴ The seal belonging to Peter Grape, which was published in 1481, shows a visual representation of three cauldrons and it was the canting arms used by the family until the 18th century.²⁵ A vessel with a lily, in this case a characteristic cauldron, needs to be considered a symbol of St Mary. In another bell, which was founded for a village church in Mechowo in 1423, apart from the house mark of the founder and an inscription with two names: Haso Rugge (founder)²⁶ and Hermen Grape (funder), there is a picture of St Catherine standing in front of two cauldrons of different sizes holding one of her attributes in her hand: a sword (Fig. 2: 2). One of the cauldrons is decorated with triple and the other with double lines. In this case, again, there is the name of a member of House Grape, which might explain the depiction of a cauldron. However, the connection of the decoration with the craftsman, who possibly was simply a *Grapengiesser*, needs to be considered as well.

Both bell decorations – which were engraved in negative (German *Ritzzeichnung*) in the clay mould – became positive, intricate pictures after the founding process was completed.²⁷ Using the same technique, *Grapengiessers* would decorate the body of a pot with lines running around it, putting on a house mark and municipal coat of arms. The bell in Sokolniki near Maszewo is signed with the plaque of the craftsman, Martin Kukuch (Kukuck), who founded the bell in 1485 (Fig. 8: 12). Apart from the name and surname of the master founder, there is also a sign in the form of a double plaque. According to Marceli Tureczek, it represents a bell and a three-legged pot,²⁸ yet the picture was not cast sufficiently well and can raise some interpretive controversy.

Stargard is a centre of cauldron-casting in Western Pomerania that is most widely represented in historical sources. The oldest written records which mention *Grapengiessers* in Western Pomerania date back to the 15th and the beginning of the 16th century. Founders participated in fund-raising activities for the Kalands Brethren and St Mary's Church. They included *Hans Horne*, *Martinus Mathei* (Marten Matties), *Marten Scholchin*, *Mathias Bockholt* and *Jacob Iugerman* (Ingberman). Hans Horne is known to have founded only three bells which he signed with his name and surname. They were founded between 1487 and 1501 and were hung in village churches in the areas of Stargard and Goleniów. Marten Mathei (Matties) is known to have signed two bells,

²³ Bells cast by him survived down to our times in two churches: Łoźnica and Węgorza, Goleniów District.

²⁴ On the opposite side of the bell is an image of an ox head with a star on the forehead depicted on a coat of arms shield; authors of the catalogue associated it with the canting arms for the German family von Schwan. However, as the family name itself seems to be indicating, it is the swan that is used in their arms. The picture of the ox head on the bell may indicate that

the bellfounder came from Mecklenburg. Cf. Bronisch, Ohle 1939, 100–101.

²⁵ Bagmihl 1847, 155–158, tab. LIII.

²⁶ In literature the bellfounder is referred to as Hans Rugge, cf. Bronisch, Ohle 1939, 150, or Andreas (sic!) Rugge, cf. Poettgen 2010, 51.

²⁷ Cf. Schulze 2006.

²⁸ Tureczek 2015, 95.

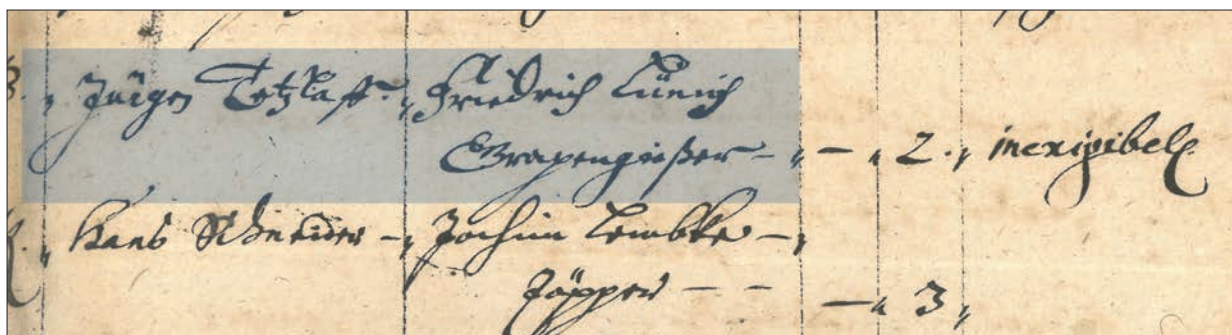


Fig. 3. *Grapengiesser* Friedrich Lünich mentioned in the list of property owners in Trzebiatów, 1665 (State Archive, Szczecin: Archives of the Dukes of Szczecin, Ref. No. I/4908).

which were founded for village churches in the areas of Świdwin and Kołobrzeg in 1505 and 1508, with his name, surname and house mark (Fig. 8: 20). Judging by the house mark, he might have also been a co-founder of the big bell in St John the Baptist Church in Stargard, which was cast in 1464 (Fig. 8: 8c). Information about two further *Grapengiessers*, Jochim and Jacob Ingerman, dates back to 1506–1542. We do not know anything about the relationship between the two master craftsmen. Perhaps Jochim was Jacob's father. The former founded bells for village churches in the areas of Choszczno, Goleniów, Łobez, Gryfice and possibly Wałcz between 1506 and 1525. The latter, Jacob, founded bells for village churches in the areas of Stargard, Goleniów and Drawsko Pomorskie between 1529 and 1542. Both signed their bells with their name and surname, their surname only or with the house mark (Fig. 8: 14–16). Further founders from Stargard would consistently use a crafts name other than *grapenger*, namely *klockenger*, i.e. bell founder.²⁹

Nevertheless, that did not mean that those master craftsmen would cease to produce cauldrons. In fact, since the mid-16th century the term *Grapengiesser* did not come up in West Pomeranian historical sources. The name of Henning Grape,³⁰ a founder who carried out activity in the area of Koszalin and in the borderland of Pomerania and Greater Poland at the turn of the 17th century, sounds interesting. It could indicate that either he or his predecessor also produced cauldrons.³¹

The departure from calling founders *Grapengiessers* is in line with the general tendency known from other regions.³² Therefore, the case which occurred in Trzebiatów in 1665 seems quite peculiar. Namely, following the

inspection of a property, the occupation of its owner, Friedrich Lünich (Lünig, Lunick), was noted down as *Grapengiesser* (Fig. 3).³³ The previous owner of the property occupied by F. Lünich was also a *Grapengiesser*, Jürgen Tetzlaff. Until recently their work was thought to be relevant to bell founding only: we know that J. Tetzlaff founded bells between 1609 and 1633, when he produced a few bells for village churches in the areas of Goleniów, Stargard, Świdwin, Szczecinek, Kamień Pomorski and Gryfice, while F. Lünich founded bells for village churches in the areas of Trzebiatów and Gryfice between 1645 and 1664.³⁴

Archaeological traces of the work of *Grapengiessers* in Stargard

So far, Stargard is the only centre in West Pomerania where traces of the work of *Grapengiessers* have been discovered during archaeological excavations. In the front part of a plot situated in the corner of one of the centrally located town quarters, a well-preserved workshop which specialized in the casting of cauldrons was uncovered several years ago. It functioned from the second half of the 13th until the third quarter of the 14th century. The dig revealed remains of a square brick furnace used for melting metal, a store of clay used for making moulds and over 1,700 pieces of moulds. Objects filled with moulds, the cross sections of which were either rectangles or circles, would indicate a production process which was carried out around the furnace. The outer and inner moulds were of cauldrons from 14 to 27 cm in diameter. The

²⁹ Majewski 2005, 49–55.

³⁰ The same craftsman also appears in inscriptions on bells as: Hennick, Henninck Kgrape.

³¹ Bells which he founded are known from the period from 1589 to 1606; Poettgen 2010, 21 narrowed down his activity to 1590–1601; Tureczek 2011, 320–323, 350–351 also mentions his bells.

³² Wiechmann [1999], 168.

³³ State Archive, Szczecin: Archives of the Dukes of Szczecin, Ref. No. I/4908.

³⁴ Cf. Majewski 2011.



Fig. 4. Selected *Grapen* cast moulds from Stargard, first half of the 16th century (photo by M. Szeremeta).

finds also included several fragments of moulds used for casting candle holders and bells. Pieces of old cauldrons, which were probably scraps to be used for melting down, were excavated on the plot, as well. There were no house marks of craftsmen, decorations or inscriptions.³⁵

In the area located on the outskirts, to the northeast of the medieval town, where St James's Chapel was until the reformation, almost 4,500 heavily fragmented moulds which were used for the production of cauldrons were excavated. Unfortunately, the area was seriously distorted, since it was used as an auxiliary graveyard of St Mary's parish. Clusters of moulds, charcoal and minor remains of bronze alloy were best preserved in spaces between graves. Numerous pieces of moulds were found in necrosol. The remains of a small space paved with stone, pieces of brick and fascine were also uncovered; it was probably an area used for some temporary structure, such as a shed. The functioning of both the revealed building and the workshop from which the bronze alloy remains were found was dated to the first half of the 16th century; however, due to lack of any tangible structure that would indicate cauldron-casting *in situ*, it seems impossible to conclude whether there was a casting workshop next to the building or whether waste which was a by-product of founding activity carried out somewhere in town was brought there.³⁶ The remains of the engraved house mark of the craftsman were noted on two pieces of inner moulds.³⁷

Further traces of cauldron-casting activity were uncovered during archaeological excavations which

were carried out in one of the quarters located in the north-eastern part of the town. A total of 2,179 pieces of moulds were recovered; they were deposited in charcoal-rich layers in the back patch of one of the quarter's corner plots. Scattered remains of moulds were also located in the front part of the plot. The well preserved pieces included elements of shaped legs, pouring spouts and plugs which closed the pouring channels of cauldron moulds (Fig. 4). On the surface of the latter, three hollows were formed which enabled the putting on and raising of plugs with three fingers. The cross sections of the cauldron legs were either rectangles or polygons, and their surface was often decorated with grooves. The remains of an outer mould show the engraved house mark of the craftsman.³⁸ The fact that there are no characteristic 'nest' clusters of pieces of clay moulds that would indicate the place where cauldrons were cast allows for the conclusion that the production waste was brought in so as to harden the ground and that this happened in the first half of the 16th century.

All archaeological remains of the workshops where cauldrons and other bronze objects were cast indicate a quick adoption of the founding craft in Stargard, which took place simultaneously with the granting of the town charter in the 13th century. The remains of the uncovered workshop and moulds from that period correspond to many similar ones which are to be found in other towns on the Baltic coast, such as Lübeck, Rostock or Stralsund. It is worth noting that among waste from workshops which carried out activity in Stargard in the first half of the 16th century, more variety in the shapes of cauldron legs can be observed than in the case of earlier items (Fig. 5). Clay used for moulds was also better prepared, the moulds themselves were more precise and the craftsmen would give the full cauldron moulds individual workshop characteristics, such as kneading the edges of leg moulds or shaping high, cylinder spouts and profiled plugs.

Two shaft furnaces unearthed during excavations in the Old Town market square also indicate an intensive founding activity in mediaeval Stargard. The first furnace was built on an oval plan. Its preserved outer dimensions were 1.2 × 0.8 m. The walls and the bottom were made of clay, which was burnt on the inside of the furnace. Twelve holes – the remains of the poles surrounding it – were also recorded. The other furnace was of a similar structure; however, it was considerably smaller in size, measuring 0.6 × 0.4 m. There was a drain hole in the bottom of both furnaces. A pit with refuse deposits

³⁵ Majewski 2013; Wywrot-Wyszkowska 2019b, 69–70.

³⁶ Cf. notes on the subject by Wywrot-Wyszkowska 2019a, 108.

³⁷ Sil, Burdziej 2015.

³⁸ Stań 2016; Wojciechowska, Szeremeta 2020, 9–10.

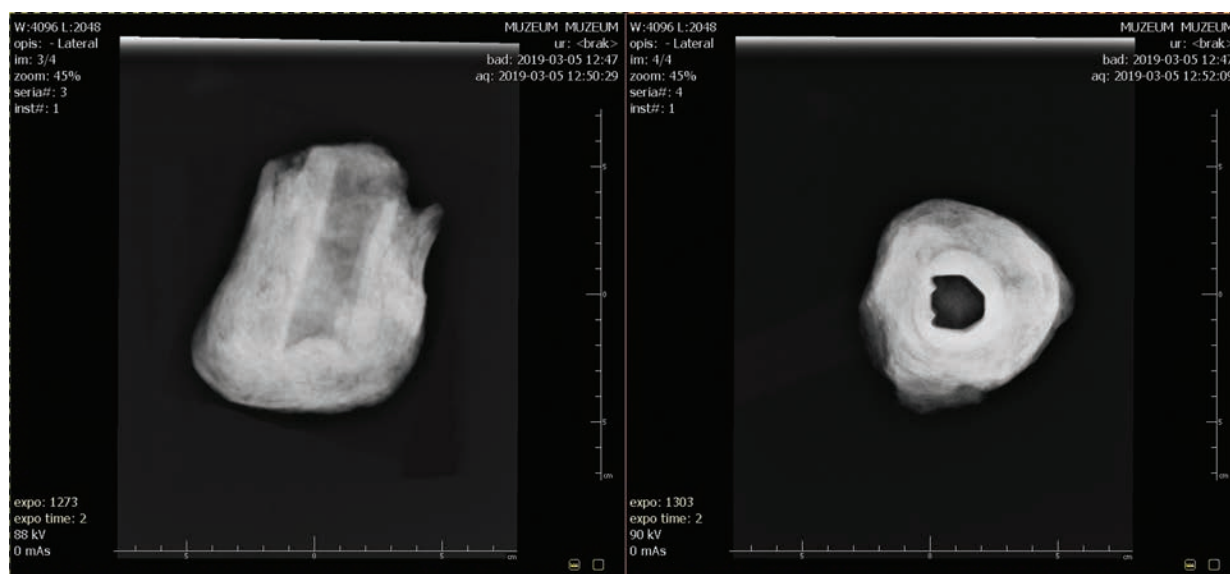


Fig. 5. X-ray image of a *Grapen* leg mould from Stargard, first half of the 16th century (image by A. Ławnikowski).

containing abundant remains of charcoal and bronze alloy was unearthed in its immediate vicinity (Fig. 6).³⁹ Both structures are the remains of the so-called shaft furnaces which were used for melting bronze. During the first stage of the construction process, an oval shape was staked out and then enclosed with a wall made of wattle (German *Korbofen*). The inner basis and sides of the furnace were made of clay. Two holes were made in the walls. Halfway up the wall of the structure there was a hole for pumping air, at the bottom there was a drain hole for channelling away the alloy. Such structures are characteristic of the oldest type of furnaces that were used for melting metal. The remains of furnaces which have been unearthed so far in Corvey, Konstanz, Kückhausen, Nienover, Ossendorf-Twiste, Schwerte and Trondheim are of a similar shape and size to those discovered in Stargard. They are dated to the period from the 8th/9th to the 13th century.⁴⁰ Younger remnants of structures of this type are located in Wismar, where the remains of as many as ten shaft furnaces dating back to the period from the 14th to the 17th century were unearthed in the yard of the dukes of Mecklenburg.⁴¹ In a context similar to the one in Stargard, the remains of three furnaces were uncovered in Ribnitz. They were unearthed during archaeological excavations which were also carried out in the market square. The furnaces' construction is dated to the period between the second half of the 13th and the turn of the

15th century.⁴² Another similar case is Neukalen, located near Demmin, where a furnace was unearthed between the town hall and a church.⁴³

In total, traces of founding activity which date back to the period between the second half of the 13th and the middle of the 16th century were unearthed in three sites



Fig. 6. Remains of alloys and bronze scrap registered next to shaft furnaces in the Old Market in Stargard, first half of the 14th century (photo by M. Tureczek).

³⁹ An analysis of the pieces of metal and lump of raw material from this deposit is presented in Tab. 1.

⁴⁰ Krabath 2002, 117, 133, 135–136.

⁴¹ Rütz 2005, 297.

⁴² Konze, Rütz 2008a, 353–354; 2008b, 155–161.

⁴³ Darjes 2012, 460–461.

in Stargard. Basically, the activity of the craftsmen concentrated mainly on the production of cauldrons; however, they would also produce candle holders and bells. It could be assumed that furnaces located in the market square in Stargard were used for founding bells primarily by *Grapengiessers*. This is indicated by the analysis of metal samples collected there, some of which show similarities to alloys used in the production of cauldrons. Considering that the construction of St Mary's parish church in Stargard was completed at that time, it is possible that its two bells, measuring a bit more than a metre in diameter at the lip, were founded here at the turn of the first and second quarters of the 14th century. Numerous archaeological excavations confirm that bells were often founded in the immediate vicinity of the church.⁴⁴

Sourcing bronze components and wood for the production of three-legged cauldrons

In the Middle Ages and Early Modern times copper ore was mined in Central Europe, primarily in the area of the Upper and the Lower Harz, Mansfeld, Upper Saxony, Vogtland, Thuringia, Fichtelgebirge, Tyrol, Carinthia, Bohemia and Moravia, Slovakia, and Transylvania. Tin, which is the necessary element of tin bronze alloys, was transported from Bohemia and Saxony, and sometimes from the British Isles.⁴⁵ At the turn of the 14th century the majority of copper mined in Hungary-controlled central Slovakia was exported north. There were two major routes: one via Orava, Kraków and Gdańsk or via Žilina, Cieszyn, Wrocław and further down River Oder to Szczecin. The other, land route ran through Greater Poland to Szczecin and further to Lübeck and Hamburg bypassing Sund.

Copper mined in Sweden and Hungary dominated Hanseatic markets, which in fact meant markets along the Baltic coast. The centre of raw material sourcing located near contemporary Falun kept flourishing from the beginning of the 1370s, which made Lübeck the central market for sharing and transporting Swedish copper until ca. 1620. Copper from Hungary also had a considerable, albeit smaller, share in Lübeck trade. The situation in Gdańsk was different at that time: the city was one of major trade partners of Sweden, but it bought copper from Sweden only in exceptional cases. Gdańsk primarily used copper from Hungary; we also know that

from 1474 to 1476 the tin for the city was purchased via Szczecin.⁴⁶

Due to a dispute over the staple right which started in the middle of the 14th century between Kraków and Wrocław, Louis I of Hungary considered a trade routed via Košice to Wrocław and further down River Oder via Frankfurt to Szczecin as an alternative one for transporting the copper mined in Spiš. A trade war between the Teutonic Order and Poland, in turn, caused the trade routes from Kraków to Prussia and Gdańsk via Toruń to close, and merchants had to travel via Poznań and the New March. These events made Duke Bogisław VI of Pomerania accord the market rights to merchants from Poland, Hungary, Lithuania and Russia and lower the customs duty in 1390. Soon, the Hanseatic towns of Stralsund, Anklam and Greifswald did the same. A few months later Polish King Władysław II Jagiełło accorded rights to merchants from the Duchy of Pomerania, from places such as Stralsund, Greifswald, Anklam, Szczecin and Gartz (Oder), as well as Lübeck, Hamburg, Rostock, Wismar, Frankfurt (Oder), Gorzów and other towns and cities which were members of the Hanseatic League. The rights set, among other provisions, a duty on copper, lead and tin, and prescribed a new trade route from Szczecin down River Warta or a land route via Poznań.⁴⁷ At the beginning of the 17th century, most raw materials from Frankfurt were transported along the newly constructed channel between Rivers Oder and Havel and further down the Elbe to Hamburg.⁴⁸

The sourcing of tin, which was used by pewters in Lübeck, Lüneburg, Stralsund and Gdańsk, was a slightly different matter. It was mined mostly in England, and since the 16th century, also in the Ore Mountains.⁴⁹ The fact that this raw material was transported to Western Pomerania from that region is mentioned in sources which date back to the beginning of the 17th century. Tin for the production of a new bell in Chojna was brought from Altenburg, while that for a bell in Stargard came from Leipzig.⁵⁰

In the second half of the 16th century lead, which appeared in alloys used for the production of cauldrons as an alternative to precious tin, was imported to Baltic ports from England. The process continued until the beginning of the 17th century, when all export of this raw material from the British Isles stopped.⁵¹

The oldest Szczecin customs tariffs, which date back to ca. 1255, mention copper brought from 'far away'. According to the city's customs book (*Pfundzollbuch*),⁵²

⁴⁴ Cf. König 2002.

⁴⁵ Dziekoński 1963, 59–114; Molenda 1989, 810.

⁴⁶ Lesiński 1975, 25.

⁴⁷ Irsigler 1979, 19–21.

⁴⁸ Molenda 1989, 813.

⁴⁹ Zins 1967, 205; Irsigler 1979, 27.

⁵⁰ Büttow 1937, 23–27; Redlin 1896, 28–32.

⁵¹ Zins 1967, 204–205.

⁵² Kehn 1968, 173, 225.

in the 14th century copper sourced in Hungary was transported from Szczecin to Lübeck. Documents from Early Modern times give scarce information on duty levied on raw materials or finished foundry products. In 1560 the duty levied on one hundredweight of copper and tin transported to Szczecin up River Oder was 10 pfennigs, while for lead it was 3 pfennigs.⁵³ In 1573 the duty on one hundredweight of tin was 8 shillings, similarly to a hundredweight of cauldrons made of bronze (*Grapenzeug*) or brass (*Messings grapen*). Seven years later the customs duty for one hundredweight of half-finished founded product for the casting of cauldrons or bells (*Grapen-oder Klockspeise*) in Stargard and Pyrzyce remained at the same level.⁵⁴ Between 1606 and 1613 in Szczecin the duty on one hundredweight of Swedish copper was 12 shillings, one hundredweight of Hungarian copper – 4 shillings, and one hundredweight of lead – 1 shilling. In 1615 the tax levied on the sale of one hundredweight of bronze cauldrons (*Grapenzeug*) was 4 shillings.⁵⁵

Imported raw material was processed in hammer mills, which we know were used in Greifswald, Szczecin, Stargard and Słupsk.⁵⁶ The so-called *Grapspeise* was processed by the smiths themselves. However, the simplest and the most popular method was the recycling of metals, which is proven by numerous finds of bronze scrap unearthed in foundry sites. They include mostly broken cauldrons: their feet, fragments of walls and spouts. A similar procedure was followed during the production of bells, where bronze, copper or tin scrap was willingly collected by public donation.⁵⁷

Analyses of fragments of cauldrons unearthed during archaeological excavations in Stargard indicate that tin- and lead-based bronze alloys were used for their production (Tab. 1). Different samples taken from the same object show an uneven distribution of metals in the alloy. Particularly visible here is gravity segregation in the case of lead, which could be the result of a quick and uneven hardening process. Arsenic and antimony are important components of the alloy, which negatively affected the plastic properties of copper, but increased the resistance of the walls of the cauldron to high temperatures. Other, mainly alloy, metals correspond to the results of analy-

ses of bronze cauldrons from the area of northwestern Germany, where the share of tin was 0.45%, and lead ranged from 2.62% to 12.80%.⁵⁸ Interesting data is provided by analyses of the samples collected in the area of shaft furnaces unearthed in the Old Market, some of which display similarities to alloys used for the production of bells,⁵⁹ and some to those used for producing cauldrons. Quite different in this context are the results of the metal analysis of the mount of a lavabo handle (?) which was uncovered accidentally in the area of Stargard, and which needs to be classified as bronze due to the dominating element of zinc and copper, the share of the latter being more than 80%.⁶⁰ However, the object was imported, not produced locally. Its final interpretation, due to the lack of archaeological context at the time at which it was excavated and the lack of direct analogy, is insufficient. It only allows for a general dating to the 15th century (?).⁶¹

Charcoal and wood were used as fuel for drying moulds and the preparation of alloy. This is confirmed directly by the remains of workshops uncovered during archaeological excavations. The analysis of charcoal unearthed in the vicinity of shaft furnaces in the Old Market in Stargard revealed the species of wood of the highest energy content, namely: oak *Quercus sp.*, common hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* L. and common beech *Fagus sylvatica* L.⁶² It is possible that such good wood was no longer available in the vicinity of the town from the Late Middle Ages on, which is confirmed by historical information from 1614 about a Stargard founder, Jochim II Karstede, who transported beech wood to dry the bell mould and melt metal from a locality almost 40 kilometres away from the town.⁶³

The marking of cauldrons and the issue of their use

Some three-legged bronze cauldrons which date back to the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern times bear the house mark of the producer and the coat of arms of the town in which the founders carried out their work. This

⁵³ Tureczek 2015, 171.

⁵⁴ State Archive, Szczecin: Manuscripts and Legacies, Ref. No. 1335; for more on half-finished cast products in the Middle Ages and Early Modern times, cf. Werner 1977, 153.

⁵⁵ Blümcke 1908, 31, 100.

⁵⁶ State Archive, Szczecin: The collection of Martin Wehrmann, Ref. No. 96; Wachowiak 1981, 143; Molenda 1989, 802; Rütz 2005, 295.

⁵⁷ Wywrot-Wyszkowska 2019b, 75.

⁵⁸ Tureczek 2015, 178; Gan 2016, 357–358; Drescher 2017, 123–132.

⁵⁹ Cf. Gan 2017, 160.

⁶⁰ The analysis of chemical composition was carried out by Paweł Gan, M.A., from the Bio- and Archeometric Laboratory of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw.

⁶¹ Cf. similar interpretation problem with regard to the discovery of a brass lavabo: Russow 2018.

⁶² Rennwanz 2017, 224.

⁶³ State Archive, Szczecin: The collection of Martin Wehrmann, Ref. No. 96.

Tab. 1. Results of metal analyses of *Grapens*, production waste collected in foundries, and other objects made of copper alloy uncovered in Stargard.

No.	CL No.	Accession No.	Cu	Sn	Pb	Al	Si	Ti	Cr	Mn	Fe	Ni	Zn	As	Ag	Sb	Au	S	P	Bibliography
1	–	321/Gm/Kw/S	53,86	17,52	17,18	–	–	–	–	–	2,03	–	7,41	–	–	–	–	–	–	Tureczek 2015, 594
2	–	273/Gm/Kw/S	77,58	4,02	7,9	0,05	0,08	–	–	–	0,23	–	0,32	–	–	4,1	–	0,1	–	Tureczek 2015, 595
3	–	129/J/Kw/S	58,62	17,91	18,26	–	–	–	0,1	–	2,21	0,2	0,26	–	–	–	–	–	–	Tureczek 2015, 595
4	–	91/J/Kw/S	57,96	18,17	19,19	–	0,01	–	3,39	–	0,32	0,2	0,3	–	–	–	–	–	–	Tureczek 2015, 595
5	19354	174/IIb/A/S	73,67	5,98	13,46	0	0,06	0,01	0,08	0,1	0,27	1,1	0	2,4	0,08	2,85	0	0	–	Gan 2016, 362
6	19361	251/IIa/A/S	79,02	4,49	9,93	0,06	0	0,07	0	0	0,05	0,7	0,19	2,57	0,02	2,91	0,01	0	–	Gan 2016, 362
7	19356	224/IIb/A/S	80,04	3,98	6,56	0,04	0	0,09	0	0	0,72	1,1	0,56	3,22	0,11	3,56	0	0,01	–	Gan 2016, 362
8	19361	525/IIb/A/S	82,02	3,43	8,31	0,07	0	0	0	0,1	0,15	0,5	0	2,11	0,2	3,09	0	0	–	Gan 2016, 362
9	19653	10/R/P	48,88	47,28	1,25	–	–	–	–	–	0,06	0,1	0,65	0,43	0,18	1,17	–	–	1	Gan 2017, 164
10	19654	11/R/P	96,69	0,48	0,09	0,23	1,33	0,03	0	0	0,1	0,2	0	0,71	0,05	0	0	0,06	0	Gan 2017, 164
11	19654	11/R/P	19,02	65,64	0,44	1,14	5,29	1,08	0,1	0	0,66	0,2	0,52	0,88	0	4,67	0,21	0,07	0	Gan 2017, 164
12	19655	12/R/P	36,36	49,37	5,69	0,22	2,37	0,39	0,09	0,1	2,26	0,1	0,26	2,16	0	0	0,06	0	0,58	Gan 2017, 164
13	19655	12/R/P	71,42	22,73	1,35	0,11	0,16	0,24	0	0	0,21	0,3	0	0,81	0,02	2,68	0	0	0	Gan 2017, 164
14	19657	35/R/S	62,57	23,91	9,37	0,09	0	0,14	0,07	0	0,28	0	0,08	0,27	0,08	2,5	0,63	0	0	Gan 2017, 164
15	19675	48/R/S	69,91	24,41	1,19	0,18	0,04	0,28	0	0,1	0,02	0,3	0	1,02	0	2,77	0	0,03	0	Gan 2017, 164
16	19683	38/R/S	76,03	2,39	17,02	0,04	0	0	0	0	0,21	0,4	0,6	1,41	0	1,94	0	0	0	Gan 2017, 164
17	19685	40/R/S	72,01	21,94	1,39	0,16	0,02	0,21	0,11	0	0,04	0,4	0,07	0,65	0,25	2,77	0	0	0	Gan 2017, 164
18	19659	237/R/S	86,83	3,23	1,99	0,07	0,02	0	0,03	0	0,2	0,3	5,72	1,31	0	0,33	0	0	0	Gan 2017, 164
19	20125	D/A/31	80,31	1,29	1,26	–	0,02	–	–	0	0,51	0,2	16,1	0,05	0,01	0,07	–	0,05	0,18	–

(Note: X-ray microanalysis was applied in the analysis of items 1–4; samples were subject to earlier preparation by mechanical sanding and polishing of microsections and thereafter by etching with Mt15Cu agent; item 18 was described by the author of the analysis as a fragment of a pot / *Grapen*; however, the profile and thickness of the walls seem to indicate it is a part of a bell waist.)

is usually connected to the regulations which were passed during three conventions of Hanseatic League members in 1354, 1368 and 1375. They mainly concerned the production, marking and trading of cauldrons. The towns and cities of Wismar, Rostock, Stralsund, Greifswald, Szczecin and Hamburg, which participated in the conventions under the leadership of Lübeck, undertook, among other things, to observe the quality of the alloy, mark the products with the house mark of the producer and the coat of arms of the town, and, moreover, that no master would employ more than two journeymen and two apprentices.⁶⁴ Similar regulations applied in Flanders towns, as attested to by a mark with a shield divided into four quarters (*party per cross*) and the house mark of the craftsman which appeared on a pot from Mechelen.⁶⁵

Despite the Hanseatic regulations, however, a third of the total number of 200 known cauldrons from the period from the 14th to the 16th century bears neither the house mark of the craftsman nor the coat of arms of the town. The remaining pots bear markings indicating their origin: from Lübeck, Stralsund, Greifswald, Bremen and Lüneburg. A craftsman from Lübeck by the name of Gerhard Kranemann placed his house mark and an element from the coat of arms of Lübeck on a baptismal font and a bell which date back to 1357 and 1391, respectively. Thanks to this recognized mark, he has also been identified as the producer of three cauldrons and a frying pan.⁶⁶

The results of archaeological excavations carried out in foundries in Wismar, Stralsund (Fig. 7), Greifswald (Fig. 7), Anklam (Fig. 7) and Stargard (Fig. 9), which were active from the second half of the 14th to the mid-16th century, indicate a partial marking of products. Engraved markings could be found on outer and inner clay moulds. Most often they were placed on the inner or the outer side of the cast, where the inlet of alloy joined the body or on parts close to the bottom of the pot. Coats of arms of Lübeck and Stralsund were recognized relatively early and then confirmed by archaeological finds. In the case of Lübeck it is a shield partitioned by a horizontal line into two fields (*party per fess*), in Stralsund it is a perpendicular arrow (*Strela* in Polabian) pointing upwards, whereas in Greifswald the town sign is a shield partitioned by horizontal lines into three fields (*tierced per fess*). Hans Drescher associated with the latter town the sign of a shield partitioned by horizontal lines into three fields with crosshatching covering the upper and bottom fields.⁶⁷ However, none of the coats of arms of Greifswald which have been found until now show crosshatching.

The coat of arms of Güstrow (Fig. 7), which did not take part in the Hanseatic conventions mentioned above, but which adopted its own regulations setting forth the principles of cauldron-marking, was unknown until recently. It is a shield partitioned into three fields in a Y shape (*party per pall*) with a circle in the middle.⁶⁸ With regard to such Pomeranian towns as Anklam, Pasewalk (Fig. 7) and Stargard, only house marks are known; the towns were not parties to conventions which imposed regulations governing cauldron-marking. This in itself, however, does not mean that they did not also use their coats of arms, which is proven by the example of Güstrow.

The above review indicates that markings which were used by *Grapengiessers* were elements of the coat of arms of the town in which a craftsman produced his goods or another town mark used by other metal craftsmen, as well. A combination of the coat of arms of the town and the house mark of the craftsman is observed in the markings of pewter and gold goods, but heraldic elements of seals and coins struck by individual centres were also of importance as patterns. Therefore, it could be assumed that producers of cauldrons in Szczecin could use a shield partitioned by a horizontal line into two fields, each emblazoned with a square, just as on former town banner or, what is more complicated when working with a mould, a head of a griffin or a head of a griffin wearing a crown. In Pasewalk it could have been three griffin heads in a shield divided into three parts with the upper one *tierced per pale*; in Anklam – an arrow similar to the one in Stralsund; while in Stargard – a shield partitioned with horizontal lines into three parts (*tierced per fess*), or a six-pointed star.

Unfortunately, only a few *Grapengiessers* could be identified on the basis of the house marks they left behind. Thanks to that kind of marking, it was possible to date objects and point to a specific production centre more precisely. In Western Pomerania this concerned two workshops unearthed in Stargard. House marks recorded on moulds were ascribed to Jochim and Jacob Ingerman, who, as was mentioned above, were known as bell founders active in the years 1506–1542 (Fig. 9).⁶⁹ Both Ingerman craftsmen marked their products with their name or house mark or their house mark as well as name, as exemplified on village church bells in the areas of Choszczno, Łobez and Nowogard. Like on cauldron moulds, the house mark appears on the bells in two versions. It takes on the form of a cross with arms of equal length, where the horizontal arms are supplemented with lines of length identical to that of each of the arms but

⁶⁴ Wywrot-Wyszkowska 2019b, 72, and older literature therein.

⁶⁵ Drescher 1968b, 27.

⁶⁶ Drescher 2017, 11.

⁶⁷ Drescher 1969.

⁶⁸ Fries 2014, 109.

⁶⁹ Majewski 2005, 51–52, 114–121.

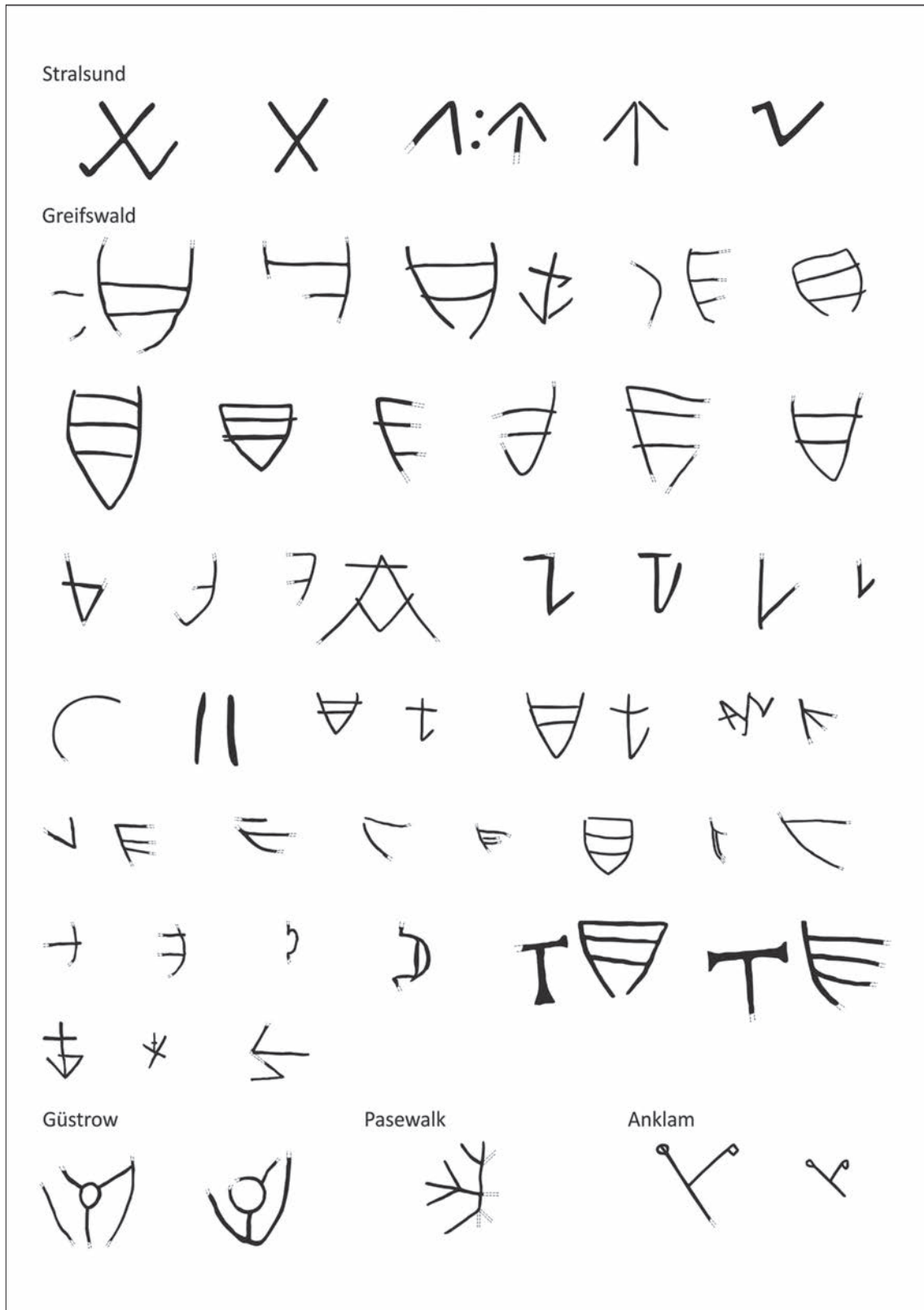


Fig. 7. Coats of arms and house marks of craftsmen from Stralsund, Greifswald, Güstrow, Pasewalk and Anklam registered on cast moulds of *Grapens* uncovered during archaeological excavations and on a *Grapen* piece. Stralsund according to: Ansorge 2005a, 128, fig. 11; 2005b; Rütz 2005, 299, fig. 11; Samariter 2005, 717, fig. 104; Brüggemann 2016, 459, fig. 348; Greifswald according to: H. Schäfer 1995, 163–165, figs 10–12; 1999, 655, fig. 145; Rütz 2002, 162, fig. 36; 2005, 299, fig. 11; Kaute, Manske 2017, 371, fig. 264; Güstrow according to: Fries 2014, 109, fig. 2; Anklam according to: Hoche, Fries 2004, 578, fig. 66; Pasewalk according to: Hoffmann 2006, 445, fig. 99 (drawing by C. Rysz).

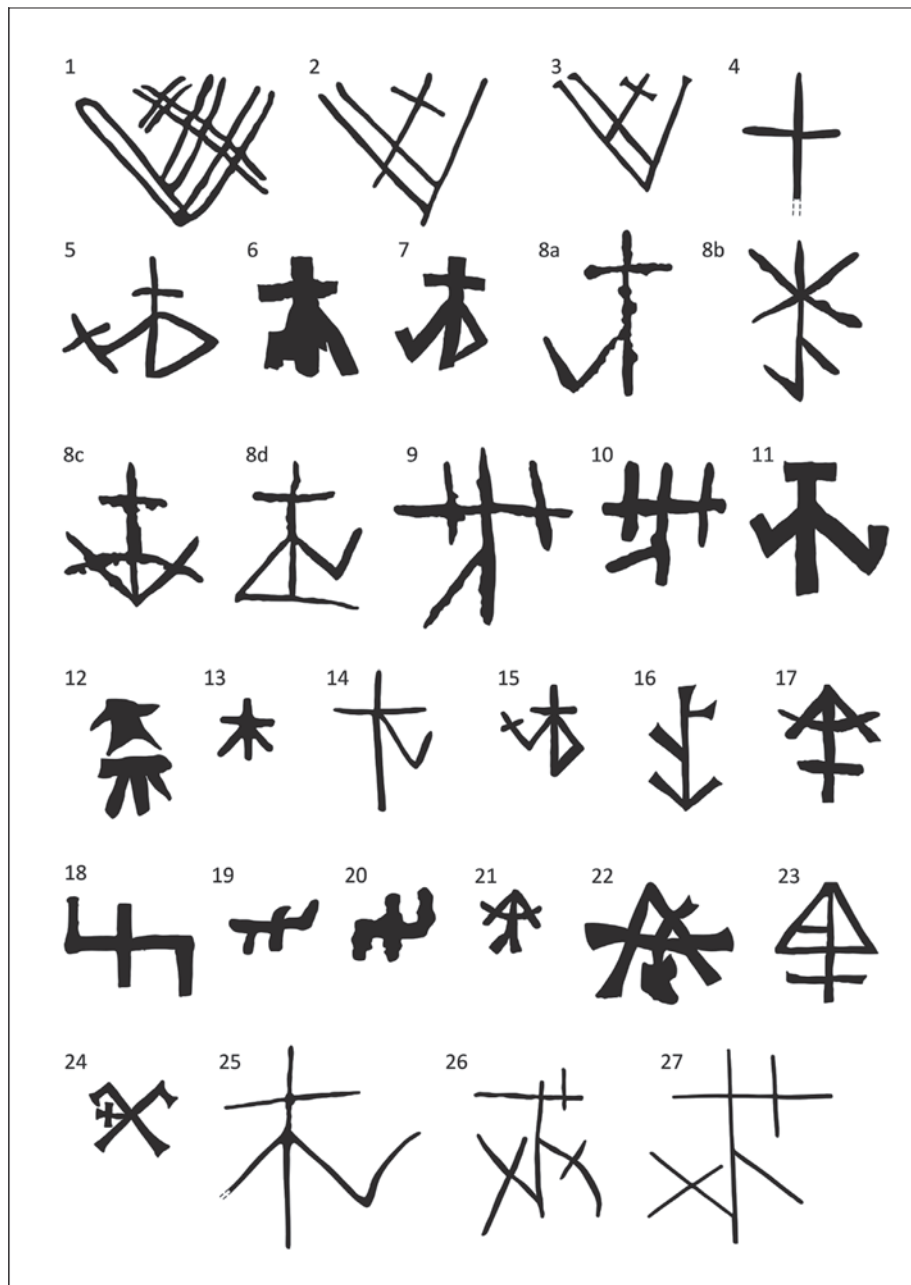


Fig. 8. House marks of *Grapengiessers* from West Pomerania, 14th–16th centuries: 1 – Łoźnica, Goleniów District, bell, 14th/15th centuries; 2 – Bodzęcin, Goleniów District, bell, 14th/15th centuries; 3 – Węgorza, Goleniów District, bell, 14th/15th centuries; 4 – Kamień Pomorski (surrounding area), Kamień Pomorski History Museum, Ref. No. MHZK/H/264, *Grapen*, 14th/15th centuries; 5 – Mechowo, Kamień Pomorski District, bell, Haso Rogge, 1423; 6 – Obromino, Pyrzyce District, bell, 1443; 7 – Słodkówko, Stargard District, bell, 1448; 8a–8b – Stargard, St John the Baptist Church, bell, 1464; 8c – Stargard, St John the Baptist Church, bell, Martinus Mathei, 1464; 8d – Stargard, St John the Baptist Church, bell, 1464; 9 – Kłodzino, Pyrzyce District, bell, 1479; 10 – Redostowo, Goleniów District, bell, ca. 1480; 11 – Mechowo, Pyrzyce District, bell, 1480; 12 – Sokolniki, Goleniów District, bell, Martin Kukuch, 1485; 13 – Rzystnowo, Goleniów District, bell, 15th century; 14 – Lublino, Stargard District, bell, 15th century; 15 – Suliborek, Choszczno District, bell, 1502; 16 – Rzecko, Choszczno District, bell, Merten Jacob, 1504; 17 – Niemierze, Kołobrzeg District, bell, Martinus Mathei, 1505; 18 – Stradzewo, Choszczno District, bell, Jochim Ingerman, 1525; 19 – Łosośnica, Łobez District, bell, Jacob Ingerman, second quarter of the 16th century; 20 – Karsk, Goleniów District, bell, Jacob Ingerman, 1532; 21 – Kościuszki, Goleniów District, bell, 1532; 22 – Porost, Koszalin District, bell, Diderick Beckmann, 1581; 23 – Place unknown, National Museum in Szczecin, Ref. No. MNS/Rz-460, mortar, Rolof Klassen, 1584; 24 – Kółki, Choszczno District, bell, Jacob Stelmaker, 1586; 25 – Place unknown, National Museum in Szczecin, Ref. No. MNS/A-12829, cauldron, 16th/17th centuries; 26 – Suchań, Stargard District, Museum of Archaeology and History in Stargard, Ref. No. MS/A/397/6, cauldron, Jochim II Karstede (?), 16th/17th centuries; 27 – Stargard, skillet, Jochim II Karstede (?), 16th/17th centuries, archival data, National Museum in Szczecin, Department of Archaeology, Ref. No. 1588 (drawing by C. Rysz).

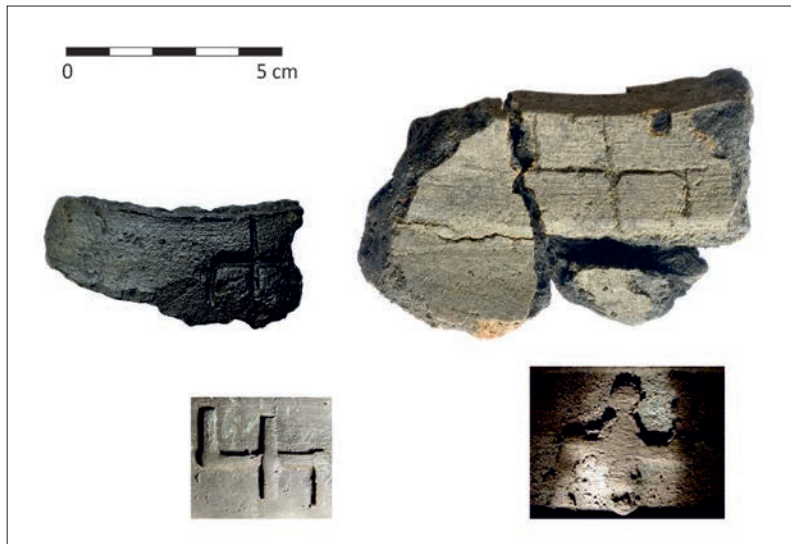


Fig. 9. Fragments of *Grapen* moulds with house marks from archaeological excavations in Stargard and house marks of Jochim Ingerman and Jacob Ingermann on bells from Stradzewo, Choszczno District, 1525, and from Karsk, Goleniów District, 1532 (photo by M. Majewski, M. Szeremeta).

extending at the right angle: up from the left arm and down from the right arm – or *vice versa* in the second variant. At the present stage of research we are unable to tell whether one house mark belonged to Jochim and the other to Jacob.

It is possible that the marking of goods was one of the conditions of their sale, a proof of payment of duty and a sign of their quality. Some of the cauldrons were sold on the local market, some were exported to other centres. A good example of such a practice are the numerous finds of bronze vessels preserved in museum collections with the coats of arms of Lübeck and Stralsund which were used in households located in neighbouring areas of those towns, but also further away, in Danish Jutland, Funen, Zealand and Skåne.⁷⁰

Many bells which date back to the period from the 14th to the 16th century were identified in areas where there were towns known for the production of cauldrons, which, just like bells, bear house marks.⁷¹ The founders were in most cases local *Grapengiessers*. This is exactly the case in Stargard, where four *Grapengiessers* from the turn of the 15th century were also bell founders.⁷² It can by no means be excluded that masters from other centres would cast bells for towns which were located at a considerable distance from their home town. This practice seems to be confirmed by a bell in the village church in Ołobok near Świebodzin, which was most probably founded in an unknown location in Western Pomerania by a craftsman from Lübeck at the turn of the 14th century.⁷³ The place of its origin is indicated by a house mark and a shield

partitioned by a horizontal line into two fields (*party per pale*) – the coat of arms of Lübeck (Fig. 10), which, as we saw, was also a marking used on cauldrons. It is not known how the bell came to that location: it was probably transported from Lübeck by sea; however, it is also possible that the itinerant craftsman founded the bell close to the church for which it was cast. It is not excluded that another *Grapengiesser* from Lübeck who was also occasionally active in Pomerania was among the founders of the great bell for St John the Baptist Church in Stargard, which dates back to 1464. One of the four house marks left on the waist was recognized almost two decades ago and ascribed to a *Grapengiesser* from Stargard, Martinus Mathei (Marten Matties).⁷⁴ Other two house marks have not yet been decoded, nor have any analogous marks been found. The final house mark on the bell is known from two cauldrons bearing the coat of arms of Lübeck and dated to the middle or second half of the 15th century, which are now in the collections of the Altonaer Museum in Hamburg and the Viborg Museum.⁷⁵ Therefore, one of the makers of the Stargard bell can be associated with Lübeck. Interestingly, the year in which such the spectacular instrument was founded, the weight of which is about 4.5 tons, coincided with the signing of a peace treaty between Stargard and Szczecin in Anklam, which ended a ten-year war over sea trade between the two cities. This was possible thanks to many years of mediation by other members of the Hanseatic League. Already in 1458 Lübeck made attempts to mitigate the dispute, showing its support for Stargard. A year later Stargard filed many

⁷⁰ Drescher 1969, 313; Ansorge 2005a, 127.

⁷¹ Cf. Buggenthin 1998.

⁷² Majewski 2005, 49–52.

⁷³ Tureczek 2015, 92.

⁷⁴ Majewski 2005, 49.

⁷⁵ Drescher 1967, 57–58; 1968a, 165; 1968b, 28; 1969, 305.



Fig. 10. Coat of arms of Lübeck and a house mark on a bell in Ołobok, Świebodzin District, 14th/15th centuries (drawing by C. Rysz).

complaints against Szczecin with Lübeck, and in 1460 Lübeck protected convoys of Stargard boats to its port.⁷⁶ Perhaps this alliance between the two cities also resulted in a master from Lübeck being one of the founders of such an exquisite masterpiece for Stargard.

Apart from house marks of recognized *Grapengiessers*, at least several bells, bronze mortars and cauldrons with house marks which could not be ascribed to any known producers have also survived to our times (Fig. 8). The unfinished inventory of bells in Western Pomerania prevents us from establishing the chronology of pots which have identical markings. Cauldrons often became parts of museum collections in the 19th and 20th centuries, when archaeologists were not interested in the archaeological context of the find but the artefact itself.⁷⁷ Therefore, the one and only chance to push forward studies on West Pomeranian *Grapengiessers* is to catalogue all known cauldrons and bells.

One of the aims of cauldron-marking which were set in the second half of the 14th century was to observe the quality of the alloy. However, all metal analyses which have been published so far show a considerable share of lead and arsenic in the alloy used for the production of pots. Obviously, such a composition of metals, considering the long time for which the vessels, those used for cooking anyway, were subjected to heating, could not have had a positive influence on the health of their users; just as in the case of glazed earthenware in which dishes including vinegar were served, one of the components was lead monoxide. Studies have shown that it must have had a strong toxic effect.⁷⁸

It is not likely that late mediaeval and early modern users of bronze cauldrons were aware of the harmful effect of food prepared in such pots. What they were aware of, however, was the financial value of bronze pots. Vessels of this type appeared in inventories, which also indicates the scale of their distribution in the society. The estate of Pomeranian Duchess Sophia (1434–1497) included, among other things, two mortars (*moser*) and one brass lavabo (*missinges hantvat*), 15 cauldrons and one vessel described as *schottelgrapen*.⁷⁹ The inventory of the Szadzko Castle made in 1505 included one *grote nige schottel-grapen*, three further *kleine koken-grapene* and one *moyser mit einer kule*.⁸⁰ An inventory of Szczecin townsman Severin Frederici, made in 1538, included seven small and big cauldrons (*Grapen luttick und grodt*).⁸¹ The inventory of Lukas Brinck, the Mayor of Stargard, made in 1586, included 31 bronze three-legged cauldrons and four cauldrons cast in bronze (*Grapenkeßel*) which were stored in a granary with many other copper-alloy objects. The house inventory also listed, among other things, a mortar without pestle (*Meuser ohne Keule*), two cauldrons and one baking tray (*Bradtpfanne*). The estate of Michell Egers, a Stargard townsman, made in 1603, included 30 cauldrons, small and large (*Grapen klein und groß*), and one cauldron with a handle (*Grapentiegel*),⁸² whereas the inventory of the castle of the Order of St John in Swobnica near Gryfino, made in 1560, included only one large cauldron (*großen Grapen*).⁸³ While stocktaking the effects of the Otto Jageteufel Collegium in Szczecin in 1597, three large cauldrons and one small were noted.⁸⁴

Bronze cauldrons were used to deposit valuables, which not only protected precious items, but also raised the value of the deposit. A cauldron provided more durable packaging than ceramics, wood or a piece of cloth, and ensured the contents could be retrieved safely. Coins or objects so safeguarded were uncovered in abundance in the east of Scotland, in Rhineland, east of the Ruhr, in northern Germany and (in biggest numbers) in Denmark; their chronology ranges from the end of the 13th to the first half of the 15th century. Nevertheless, as a rule cauldrons filled with valuables were deposited until the 17th century.⁸⁵ An ideal example of such a practice is a hoard in a cauldron uncovered in a plot at 3 Targ Rybny Street in Szczecin, which included 358 coins, 7 coin fragments, 304 costume accessories and pieces of

⁷⁶ Gaziński 1993.

⁷⁷ Cf. National Museum in Szczecin, Department of Archaeology, Ref. No. 1588; Kosegarten 1856–1857, 50–51; Zuwachs der Sammlungen 1894; Majewski 2003, 66–69.

⁷⁸ Cf. Rasmussen *et al.* 2015.

⁷⁹ Bülow 1879b, 463.

⁸⁰ Wehrmann 1901, 285.

⁸¹ Bülow 1880, 214.

⁸² State Archive, Szczecin: Imperial (Reich) Chamber Court, Ref. No. 558.

⁸³ Bülow 1879a, 28.

⁸⁴ Wehrmann 1899, 37.

⁸⁵ Keller 2015, 33–34.

jewellery, and a cauldron.⁸⁶ A hoard consisting of only coins in a cauldron was uncovered decades ago in the area of Drawsko Pomorskie. Unfortunately, the treasure was dispersed and only the cauldron was subject to publication.⁸⁷

Cauldrons were hidden for fear of spoliation. Naturally, the reason was the value of the vessel and the alloy it was made from. Some cauldrons, especially those recovered from wet contexts, i.e. rivers, ponds, lakes and marshes, are considered to have been ritual offerings made while performing acts of white magic.⁸⁸ A cauldron dating back to the turn of the 15th century which was recovered from the seabed off the coast near Kamień Pomorski might be evidence of such a practice.⁸⁹ Alternatively, single cauldrons hidden individually or together with copper cauldrons and tin crockery were hidden for fear of theft.⁹⁰ Such deposits, which date back to the period from the 14th to the 17th century, are quite common in areas in which war operations or acts of banditry occurred. This was the case of a hoard consisting of five bowls, two tin churns and a bronze cauldron without legs, which was uncovered in Suchań near Stargard. All tin vessels bear the house marks of pewter makers who were active at the turn of the 16th century; on the bottom of the cauldron there is a house mark which might be related in some way to Jochim II Karstede, a bell-founder from Stargard.⁹¹ The deposit might have been buried in 1627 or later, during the 'Thirty Years' War, which wrought havoc on West Pomerania.⁹² A set of five copper cauldrons and two three-legged cauldrons hidden in a former mill pond in Gützkow near Greifswald seems to be related to the same period.⁹³

Conclusions

The foundries uncovered in the course of archaeological excavations in towns located on the Baltic coast operated in the period from the 13th to the 17th century. Their activity was particularly intense in north German centres. Archaeological remains of their work can be seen primarily in the assemblage of fragments of clay moulds used for the production of cauldrons. Some of the uncovered workshops also dealt in casting garment decorations and ornaments, incense burners and candle holders.

Information about *Grapengiessers* in Pomerania coincides with the appearance and growth of new towns.

This points to the spread of craftsmanship and its increased importance for the economy. The oldest records of *Grapengiessers* in Western Pomerania come from Szczecin and date back to the beginning of the 14th century. Records of craftsmen specializing in this trade in Stargard appear no sooner than two centuries later. As a rule, the founders called *Grapengiessers* were consigned to oblivion in the middle of the 16th century. However, as an example from Trzebiatów in the second half of the 17th century shows, professionals thus called continued to carry out their activity and cast cauldrons in provincial localities beyond that point.

So far, remains of founding industry have been uncovered in three locations in Stargard. The operation of the workshops is dated to the period from the second half of the 13th to the middle of the 16th century. By and large, the activity of craftsmen concentrated on the production of cauldrons, but they also made candle holders and bells. It could be assumed that furnaces uncovered in the Old Market in Stargard are the remains of bell founding activity, which was usually performed by *Grapengiessers* at that time. This is indicated, among other things, by metal analysis of the samples collected in that locality, some of which show similarities to alloys used for the production of cauldrons. It is possible that two bells, measuring a bit more than a metre in diameter at the lip each, made for St Mary's parish church, which was completed at that time, were founded here at the turn of the first and second quarters of the 14th century. As the results of numerous archaeological excavations show, bells were often founded in the immediate vicinity of churches.⁹⁴

The raw material used for the production of cauldrons in Western Pomerania was sourced from Sweden and Hungary (copper) and England and the Ore Mountains (tin). Recycling of used bronze and tin vessels also played a major role. Metal analyses indicate that the percentage of major metals in alloys used in Western Pomerania corresponds to the results of analyses of cauldrons from north-western Germany. An analysis of the charcoal unearthed by the furnaces has shown that the species of wood used were those of the highest energy content, namely: oak, common hornbeam and common beech.

Thanks to archaeological sources, it was possible to extend the database of municipal coats of arms and house marks which were found on cauldrons. Especially prominent in this context are the examples from Stralsund and

⁸⁶ Frankowska-Makała 2004a; 2004b; 2006; Słowiński, Wilgocki 2004.

⁸⁷ Majewski 2006, 287.

⁸⁸ Cf. van Vilsteren 1998; 2000a; 2000b; van Vilsteren, Jöns 2013.

⁸⁹ The item can also come from a wreck. It was caught in a fisherman's nest and scrapped; eventually retrieved, it was included in the collection of Kamień Pomorski History Museum.

⁹⁰ Auler, Hupka 2012, 121.

⁹¹ Cf. Lemcke 1906, 42, 215; cf. a mark on a skillet uncovered in Stargard ca. 1889, National Museum in Szczecin, Department of Archeology, Ref. No. 1588.

⁹² Majewski *et al.* 2016.

⁹³ Metzen, Schirren 2014.

⁹⁴ Cf. König 2002.

Greifswald. House marks on moulds were also excavated in other towns (Anklam, Pasewalk and Stargard), along with municipal coats of arms which had been unknown previously, such as that of Güstrow. The process of product-marking is related to the regulations passed by Hanseatic towns and cities in the second half of the 14th century. It should be noted, however, that not all products were marked.

One of the distinguishing features of cauldrons was the financial value of bronze alloy of which the pots were made. Therefore, they were meticulously noted in inventories and carried as a precious possessions over long distances, as shown by the example of *Grapens* found in Săulești and Baraolt in Romania, which is connected to the German colonization of the region.⁹⁵ Moreover, cauldrons were deposited in the ground for safe-keeping in times of uncertainty, with precious contents placed inside the pot, in sets with other metal vessels, or individually.

Western Pomerania has so far been found to be easternmost locality on the Baltic coast where cauldrons were produced. Until now, no traces of cauldron production have been discovered in Szczecin; however, producers of

pots are recorded in that city as early as at the beginning of the 14th century.

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⁹⁵ Poppa 2010.

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BEATA JURKIEWICZ

University of Warsaw
lunula.beata@gmail.comNORTH OR SOUTH? NEW FINDS OF FIREDOGS FROM WESTERN MAZOVIA
IN CONTEXT, WITH A CATALOGUE OF ALL POLISH FIREDOG FINDS¹

ABSTRACT

Clay exhibits described as firedogs or fire wolves are found all over Europe in the area of influence of the Jastorf and Poienęști-Lukaševka cultures from the pre-Roman period. Firedogs are found/identified more and more often on the territory of Poland. This paper

offers a catalogue of all the 22 finds identified so far. The analysis of decorative motifs found on fire wolves unearthed in Poland indicates greater connections with the Jastorf culture from the Jutland area.

Keywords: firedogs, Przeworsk culture, Jastorf culture, pre-Roman period

Among the characteristic artefacts associated with the Jastorf culture are clay objects described in Polish literature as firedogs (*psy ogniowe*) or fire wolves (*wilki ogniowe*), sometimes also firegoats (*kozy ogniowe*), in German literature as *Feuerböcke*, and in Danish as *ildbukke* or *lerblokke*.² For the purposes of this article, we will use the term firedogs. These are forms of chenet-type figurines and coasters, often found in association with ornamented clay altars.³ Their origin goes back to Greek traditions. They spread in the Celtic, Scythian and Dacian worlds,⁴ as well as in the Germanic cultural area. Pre-Roman period firedogs are found in Northern Germany, Denmark, southern Sweden, Poland, Romania, Moldova and Ukraine.⁵ These finds, apart from the native areas occupied by the Jastorf culture, coincide with the areas where settlement related to this archaeological culture is confirmed. Their function is not entirely clear. Usually they are interpreted as objects of a cult nature; however, it is also noted that they could have served as tools for preparing meals or even as 'hot water bottles'.⁶ Here, less

carefully made specimens are pointed out, often found in pairs near fireplaces in residential buildings.⁷

Firedogs found in the native areas of Jastorf culture, in Jutland, and in the areas occupied by the Poienęști-Lukaševka culture were studied by researchers of these regions.⁸ Carl Becker described two main groups of such figurines that occur in Jutland in what he identified as phases I–III (Fig. 1). The first group consists of objects in the form of cuboids of various proportions. Objects from the second group are more elongated, with a horns-like ending on one side.⁹ In Jutland both the engraved ornament and the stamp ornament firedogs are registered.¹⁰ Mircea Babeș, keeping the division into two types of this kind of objects, additionally separated three varieties of each type.¹¹ Type I (also described as Borosești type) consists of pyramidal (trapezoid) quadrilateral supports, with flat or sunken top. Bases of this type can be full (versions 2 and 3¹²) – or openwork, with large oval holes in the walls (version 1¹³). Type II (Ghelăiești type) firedogs are usually elongated cuboids with a more or less stylized

¹ The article was prepared as part of the research project *Western Mazovia in the pre-Roman period as an area of dynamic settlement and cultural changes*, carried out at the Faculty of Archaeology, University of Warsaw thanks to the grant from the National Science Centre (Preludium 8, 2014/15/N/HS3/01149).

² Becker 1961.

³ See Makiewicz 1976.

⁴ Woźniak 1974, 133; Makiewicz 1987, 96–107; Dąbrowska 1988, 186–188.

⁵ Becker 1961, pls 4c, 11c, 28g, 29g, 58g–h; Babeș 1993, 77, fig. 22; Pachkova 1983, 13, fig. 12: 7–10.

⁶ Iarmulski 2022, 272; Moser, Biermann 2018, 137–138.

⁷ J. Jensen 2013, 676–677.

⁸ Becker 1961, 221–222; Babeș 1993, 76–79; Iarmulski 2016, 489; Iarmulski 2020, 76–78.

⁹ Becker 1961, 221–222, 230–232, 341.

¹⁰ Becker 1961, pl. 58g–h.

¹¹ Babeș 1993, 76–79.

¹² Babeș 1993, pl. 20: 14.

¹³ Babeș 1993, pls 16: 1; 17: 9.

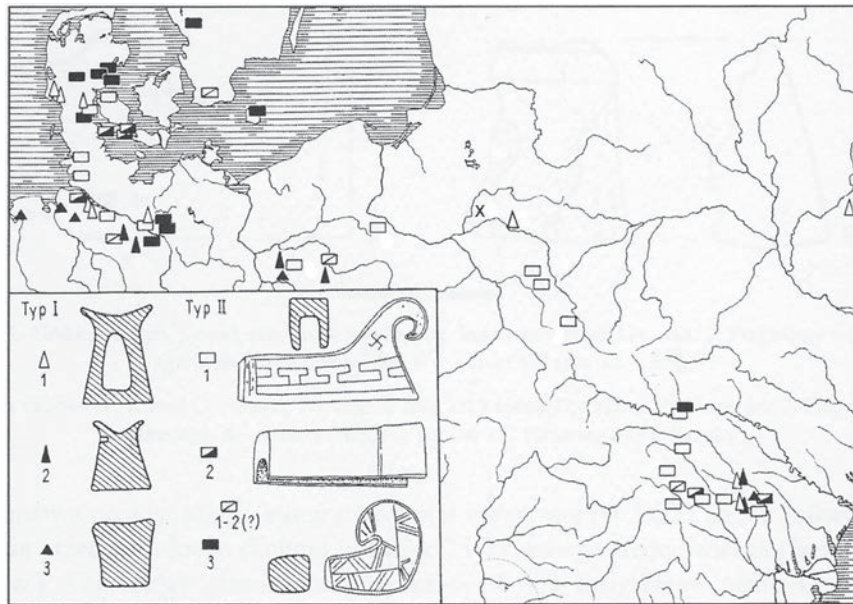


Fig. 1. Typology of firedogs according to M. Babeș, supplemented with new finds by Iarmulschi (2020, fig. 11).

animal head at one end.¹⁴ Objects of the second type are often covered with an engraved geometrical ornament, which sometimes takes on the form of elaborate decorative motifs (version 1).

The typology created by M. Babeș is more complex than C. Becker's, and most studies on firedog finds from Poland refer to the first one. At this point, however, we should pay attention to some differences in forms occurring in the areas analyzed by C. Becker and M. Babeș. In Jutland figurines of Becker's first type are mainly massive, brick forms, sometimes decorated with an engraved and imprinted ornament.¹⁵ Such forms are also commonly found in northern Germany.¹⁶ Specimens with horns are predominantly full forms (without separate legs), with no engravings¹⁷ or occasionally decorated with engraved lines.¹⁸ In northern Germany, among the horned objects, the full forms also dominate, and the decoration is made up of motifs of engraved lines with sporadic round imprints.¹⁹ It is also worth to mention that there are different forms, described by N. Thomsen,²⁰ which resemble upside-down vessels. These firedogs are usually oval in cross-section and have round holes on both of the oppo-

site longer sides as well as additional holes at the bottom. The upper part is flat or shaped like horns. Such forms are not included in M. Babeș's typology.²¹

Based on the finds catalogued by Babeș and Vasile Iarmulschi,²² it can be seen that in the Poienest-Lukaševka culture area, trapezoidal forms with full or concave bases (type I: 2 and 3²³) as well as those with holes and openwork (type I: 1²⁴) are more common within type I. Among type II objects, most of the cited finds have separate legs and a gutter-like, rectangular hole.²⁵ Almost all specimens of this type are decorated with engraved lines, in many cases with complex motifs.²⁶ The meander motifs characteristic of type II are not found on firedogs from Jutland. In the areas of Poienest-Lukaševka culture there are no firedogs with ornaments imprinted with stamps. It seems that these regional preferences regarding the form of firedogs and their decoration in Jutland and Moldova can be very helpful in determining the directions of cultural influences in the younger pre-Roman period in Poland. Yet the problems mentioned above require a detailed analysis of firedog finds from the whole Europe, which goes beyond the scope of this article.

¹⁴ Babeș 1993, pl. 25: 3–5.

¹⁵ Becker 1961, pl. 58g, h; Haberman 1997, 8, Fig. 7; O. Jensen *et al.* 2013, 25–26.

¹⁶ See Moser, Biermann 2018, figs 4–5, 14, 15.

¹⁷ Becker 1961, pls 4c; 11f; 1971, figs 3, 4, 5.

¹⁸ Becker 1961, pl. 29g.

¹⁹ Moser, Biermann 2018, 129, figs 2–3.

²⁰ Thomsen 1951.

²¹ Perhaps an analogy to this type is a fire wolf found in Borosești (Babeș 1993, pl. 17: 6). However, the drawing provided by Babeș does not allow for unequivocal assignment to this type.

²² Iarmulschi 2016, 490, fig. 16; 2020, 76–78.

²³ Babeș 1993, pls 17: 8, 10; 20: 14; Iarmulschi 2020, 169, pl. 16: 8.10, 171, pl. 18: 11, 171, pl. 18: 6.

²⁴ Babeș 1993, pls 16: 1; 17: 9; 20: 15; Iarmulschi 2020, 167, pl. 14: 1.

²⁵ Babeș 1993, pls 17: 11; 22: 12; 25: 3–5; 26: 51; Iarmulschi 2020, 169, pl. 16: 12, 184, pl. 31: 3–5, 190, pl. 37: 18–19.

²⁶ Babeș 1993, pls 17: 11; 22: 12; 25: 3–5; Iarmulschi 2020, 169, pl. 16: 11, 176, pl. 23: 3, 183, pl. 30: 42, 184, pl. 31: 3–5, 194, pl. 41: 10.

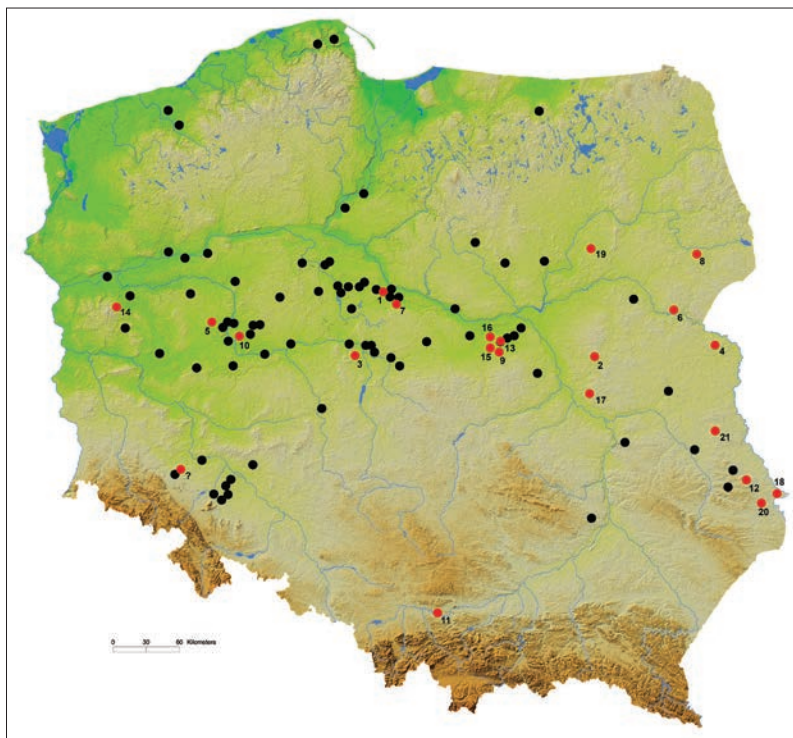


Fig. 2. Firedog finds in Poland (red) against the background of settlements of Jastorf culture (black) (according to Grygiel 2015; Bryńczak 2017, with the author's additions). Numbers correspond to the catalogue at the end of the article.

Until recently, clay firedogs were sporadically found in Poland. This state of research may also have to do with problems with identifying such finds. Due to the similarity of the forms, they are sometimes mistaken for pans/plates but also for clumps of clay from floors or walls.²⁷ In earlier studies by Teresa Dąbrowska²⁸ and Mircea Babeş,²⁹ the only mentioned Polish finds are those from Werbkowice-Kotorów and Drohiczyń-Kozarówka.

Recently there has been a significant increase in the source base regarding the occurrence of firedog figurines in Poland. Up to today firedogs have been registered in 22 sites, where at least 50 fragments of this kind of objects have been found³⁰ (Fig. 2). Previous studies show that firedog finds are characteristic of settlement sites. The only exception are the specimens discovered at the cemetery in Drohiczyń-Kozarówka.³¹

In the area of western Mazovia some objects have also been registered which, taking into account the above-mentioned reservations, can be interpreted as firedogs. A total of ten fragments of objects in this category were discovered at three sites – Nowy Drzewicz, Izdebnio Kościelne and Morgi.³²

The largest assembly of these items was discovered at the Jastorf culture settlement in Nowy Drzewicz. All eight fragments of objects identified as firedogs were found in the cultural layer (Pl. 4: 15.1–15.8). It is possible that these fragments come from one specimen or several similar ones, but none could be fully reconstructed.³³ Despite their considerable damage, it is most likely that all are fragments of a type II item according to Babeş. Particularly interesting is the ornamentation. All fragments are decorated with an engraved ornament in the form of multiplied lines and triangle-shaped stamp impressions.

In the settlement at Morgi one find described as a firedog was discovered in object no. 55 (Pl. 3: 13). This is a non-characteristic, inconspicuous element, which is probably a fragment of Babeş's type I stand.³⁴ Similar ones were discovered in Drohiczyń-Kozarówka,³⁵ although there are doubts as to the accuracy of the presented reconstruction (Pl. 1: 6.1–6.2). The find from Morgi is dated, on the basis of a collection of pottery from object 55, to phase A2 (perhaps earlier section of this period), which seems consistent with the dating of the graves from Drohiczyń to phases A1–A2.³⁶

²⁷ Dąbrowska 1988, 186–188, figs 186–187.

²⁸ Dąbrowska 1988.

²⁹ Babeş 1993.

³⁰ Full details of the finds are to be found in the catalogue at the end of the article.

³¹ Dąbrowska 1978, 63, tab. I: 1, 17; 1988, 187; 2008, 96.

³² Galewski, Michalak 2011; Machajewski, Rozen 2016; Dłubakowski, Jurkiewicz 2010.

³³ Galewski, Michalak 2011, fig. 217; Galewski 2015, 220, fig. 13.

³⁴ Dłubakowski, Jurkiewicz 2010, 69, fig. 17: 1.

³⁵ Dąbrowska 1978, 78, tab. I: 1.17.

³⁶ Dąbrowska 1988, 188.

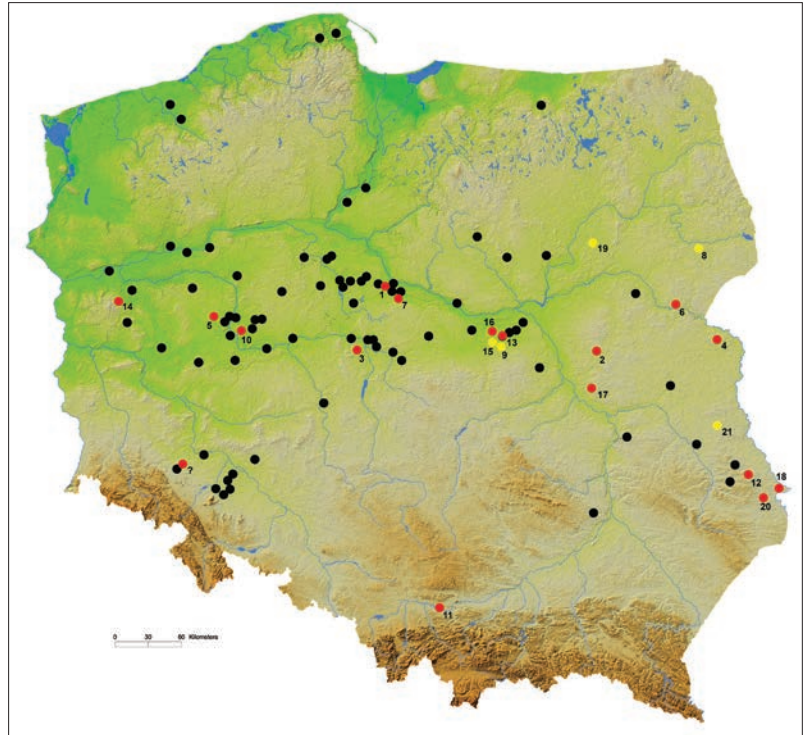


Fig. 3. Firedogs decorated with an engraved ornament of straight lines and zigzags (red), combined with triangle-shaped stamp impressions (yellow) (based on Grygiel 2015, 128, fig. 1; Bryńczak 2017 with the author's additions).

The interpretation of a fragment of a ceramic find from the settlement of Jastorf culture in Izdebno Kościelne is problematic (Pl. 1: 9). This fragment, discovered in object C596, was described as the bottom part of a vessel;³⁷ however, the analysis of the drawing suggests that it may be a fragment of a firedog (although some doubts may arise due to insufficient wall thickness). On the fragment from Izdebno Kościelne, an ornament made with a triangular stamp is visible. Ornaments of this type are rare in the Polish Lowlands during this period and never occur on the bottom part of a vessel. Analogous imprints of the triangular stamp occur on the fragments of aforementioned firedogs from Nowy Drzewicz. Hence, if the interpretation of this specimen is correct, then we may be dealing with a firedog of a similar form.

Summing up, in western Mazovia mainly fragments of firedogs of Babeș's type II have been found. Due to the degree of their fragmentation, it is impossible to reconstruct their full form and to attribute them to specific variants. Special attention should be paid to the ornamentation of these finds. As I mentioned above, the motifs made with triangular-shaped stamp impressions appear on vessels from the younger pre-Roman period in Poland only sporadically. This type of decoration was registered on firedogs from five settlements from Poland:

Izdebno Kościelne, Nowy Drzewicz, Tomasze, Haćki and Wytyczno (Fig. 3). A sixth find of a firedog decorated in this way might be a fragment from Werbkowice-Kotorów. This small fragment is decorated with imprints, but its state of preservation does not allow us to determine the shape of the stamp (Pl. 4: 20). The closest analogy for the find from Werbkowice-Kotorów is the Haćki specimen, where the larger portion of a firedog decorated with such an ornament was found³⁸ and it might be attributed to Babeș type II (Pl. 1: 8). At the settlement in Wytyczno at least two fragments of figures decorated in this way were registered (Pl. 4: 21.1–21.2).³⁹ On the figurines from Wytyczno the decorative motif consists of lines and rows made with a triangle-shaped stamp. A similar object is also known from the settlement in Tomasze (Pl. 4: 19), where a fragment of a firedog, decorated with the imprints of triangular stamps, was found in the cultural layer.⁴⁰

Analyzing the discoveries of firedogs from the area of present-day Poland, it is important to compare them with those made in areas occupied by Jastorf culture and Poienęști-Lukaševka culture. In the case of finds from western Mazovia special attention is drawn to the fact that the firedogs discovered here have decorations with stylistic features characteristic of the southern Jutland

³⁷ Machajewski, Rozen 2016, 74, tab. 51: 1.

³⁸ Kobylński, Szymański 2005, 55, fig. 13; 2015, 123, fig. 17.

³⁹ Mazurek 2001, 53, fig. 4: 31, 32.

⁴⁰ Prochowicz 2017, 352, tab. I: 2.



Fig. 4. Firedogs decorated with an engraved ornament in the form of straight lines and zigzags combined with triangle-shaped stamp imprints. 1–2 – Boplands 33 (Becker 1961, pl. 58g–h).

zone. The closest analogies are visible among the specimens described by Becker and dated to phase II (Fig. 4).⁴¹ According to Becker, it is in this phase that stamp decorations appeared on firedogs.⁴² At the same time, it should be noted that no such decorations were registered on the Poienęști-Lukaševka sites. In this connection, it can be concluded that the firedogs from western Mazovia and the analogous finds from Tomasz, Haćki and Wytoczno show closer affinity to figurines from Denmark.

Looking at all the firedogs found in Poland, it can be seen that there are no finds resembling specimens of Babeș's type II: 1, with a refined zoomorphic form and extensive decorative motifs (e.g. engraved meander-shaped decorations – see Fig. 1), characteristic of the Poienęști-Lukaševka culture.⁴³ Only on the specimen from Nowa Wieś was the swastika motif recorded, which also occurs on firedogs from Ghelăiești.⁴⁴ Unlike them, however, the firedog from Nowa Wieś was carelessly decorated, with the pattern not finished. All in all, then, we observe the presence of decorations characteristic of Jastorf culture from the Jutland area, with almost complete absence of ornaments characteristic of Poienęști-Lukaševka culture. The observations made here are another contribution to the discussion on the directions of cultural changes in the younger pre-Roman period in the area of contemporary Poland.

Catalogue:

1. Brześć Kujawski, sites 3–5, Włocławek Powiat/ District, Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship; settlement

1. Unknown number of clay firedog fragments. No detailed data.

A Jastorf culture settlement.

Bibliography: Information from list 1 according to Grygiel 2015, 155.

2. Chyżyny, site 4, Mińsk District, Mazovian Voivodeship; settlement

1. A firedog fragment measuring $4 \times 3.2 \times 1.6$ cm. Three preserved surfaces. Decoration in the form of horizontal etched lines and slanting short pointed lines placed in between them. Clay with numerous admixtures of fine-grained and medium-grained crushed mineral stone. Worn surfaces, but careful smoothing is visible.

A settlement from a younger pre-Roman period.

Bibliography: Bryńczak 2017, 267, fig. 2c; Grygiel 2018, 466.

3. Daniszew, sites 18 and 19, Kolno District, Greater Poland Voivodeship; settlement

1. Fragment of a type I: 1 firedog from object no. 75, which is not functionally defined. Preserved dimensions:

⁴¹ Becker 1961, tab. 58g, h.

⁴² Becker 1961, 230–232.

⁴³ Babeș 1993, pl. 25: 3, 5.

⁴⁴ Babeș 1993, pl. 25: 3, 5.

5.8 × 4.7 cm. Top wall thickness: 1–1.1 cm, side wall thickness: 0.7 cm. Made of clay with a mineral admixture (sand, gravel) with granulation of 1–2.5 mm. Both sides carefully smoothed. Possibly slip-painted before firing. Burned under oxidative conditions, one-coloured fracture, with a thin layer of engobe. Signs of use, mechanical wear and sooting visible on the outer side. Coarse fabric prints preserved under the paint.

A settlement from the younger pre-Roman period with ceramics from the Jastorf and Przeworsk cultures.⁴⁵

Bibliography: Michałowski *et al.* 2018, 494, 496, figs 2, 4.

4. Dobryń Mały, site 7, Bielsk District, Lublin Voivodeship; settlement

Three fragments of clay spoons found on the site. No detailed information.

The settlement is dated to phases A1–A2 of the pre-Roman period, with materials of Przeworsk and Jastorf cultures.

Bibliography: Bienia, Żółkowski 1994.

5. Dopiewo, site 29, Poznań District, Greater Poland Voivodeship; settlement

1. Fragment of a clay figurine of undetermined type. According to the drawing, the height is 5 cm and the thickness – about 3 cm. No detailed description of the item.

Note: A problem of identifying the place where the monument was found: According to the unpublished study, the fragment of a firedog figurine was found in object 130/D123. It should, therefore, be included in Fig. 27: 5 (page 724 of the typescript). However, according to Fig. 36: 5, the firedog comes from object D92. Until the full publication, there is no certainty as to the location of the firedog and hence the attribution of the accompanying vessels.

A settlement from a younger pre-Roman period, dated to phases A1–A2, with materials from Przeworsk and Jastorf cultures.

Bibliography: Bednarczyk *et al.* 2006, 724, fig. 27: 5.

6. Drohiczyn-Kozarówka, Siemiatycze District, Podlasie Voivodeship; cemetery

Two fragments of firedogs found in graves nos I and III,⁴⁶ both of type I: 1.

1. The figurine from grave I is made of fine-grained clay. Smooth, brown surfaces. Wall thickness: 0.5–0.6 cm; downward-tapering foot, dimensions: 0.5 × 0.7 cm.

Note: The firedog from grave I is shown differently in the drawings, therefore the original drawing from Dąbrowska 1978 has been taken into account.

2. The figurine from grave III is made of fine-grained clay. Smooth, brown surfaces. The wall thickness is 0.4–0.6 cm.

Bibliography: Szmit 1921, 65; Dąbrowska 1978, 78; 1988, 187–188, fig. 15; 2008, 97; Michałowski, Teska 2012, 326.

7. Grabkowo, sites 7 and 8, Włocławek District, Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship; settlement

Two fragments of firedogs figurines – type II: 1.

1. A fragment with flat, carefully smoothed surfaces and light brown colour. Preserved dimensions: 4 × 5 cm. Clay with a mineral admixture, fine- and medium-grained crushed stone. Object 285 – medium-sized pit (diameter: 1.6 m; depth: 0.36 m). 297 pottery fragments.

2. Fragment of a triangular, brick-red firedog. Preserved dimensions: 4 × 2.5 cm. The surface is carefully smoothed. Clay with a mineral admixture, medium-grain crushed stone. A fragment of decoration in the form of engraved lines has been preserved. Object 332 – remains of an overground building, area: ca. 60 m². 27 pottery fragments.

A Jastorf culture settlement.

Bibliography: Michałowski, Teska 2012, 320–325, 322, fig. 2.

8. Haćki, site 1, Bielsk Podlaski District, Podlasie Voivodeship; settlement

1. One firedog of Babeś's type II found in a pit. No detailed data.

A Jastorf culture settlement.

Bibliography: Kobyliński, Szymański 2005, 55, fig. 13; 2015, 123, fig. 17.

9. Izdebnko Kościelne, site 1, Grodzisk Mazowiecki District, Mazovian Voivodeship; settlement

⁴⁵ At the settlement Przeworsk culture finds were discovered, with dating ranging from phase A3 of the younger pre-Roman period to the Migration Period (Michałowski *et al.* 2018, 404).

⁴⁶ Michałowski and Teska (2012, 326) point out that the function of object/grave no. 1 is problematic. According to the author of the primary publication (Szmit 1921), the inventory of object no. 1 could belong to two graves. The hypothesizes that the original burial (no. 1a) is from the younger pre-Roman peri-

od (the author points to the La Tène period), and in the Roman period a pit (no. 1b) was dug for another burial (Szmit 1921, 65). According to Dąbrowska (1978, 63), the Roman period grave could have been dug next to the younger one, damaging it only partially. The younger grave, perhaps skeletal, is located slightly north of grave 1a. Unfortunately, there is no information regarding the part of object no. 1 from which the 'firedog' figurine comes.

1. A possible fragment of the firedog (type II), discovered in object C596. Smooth surfaces have a light brown colour. Clay with an admixture of fine-grained sand. Decoration in the form of at least two lines of stamped triangles.

A Jastorf culture settlement.

Bibliography: Machajewski, Rozen 2016, 156, fig. 51: 1.

10. Jeziory Małe, site 30, Środa District, Greater Poland Voivodeship; settlement

1. A firedog (type I: 1) found in pit no. 15. Height: 15 cm, width: 15 cm, wall width: approx. 4 cm. Conical shape, with a circular base and a flat upper surface in the shape of a narrowed triangle. There are three holes below the narrowing, approx. 4 cm wide. Clay with a large admixture of fine sand and coarse crushed stone. Light brick surface colour with a rough texture.

A Jastorf culture settlement.

Bibliography: Machajewski, Pietrzak 2015, 407, fig. 2.

11. Kraków-Wyciąże, site 5, Kraków District, Lesser Poland Voivodeship; settlement

Two fragments of firedogs – single finds.

1. A fragment of a pyramidal clay object with a hole. Height: 5 cm, base dimensions: 9.4 × 5 cm, hole diameter approx. 4 cm. Brown, smoothed surfaces. Clay with an admixture of chamotte. Are 154/1951, 80–90 cm deep – probably the remains of a destroyed pit of the second phase of the Tyniec group.

2. A pyramidal clay object with a hole. Carefully modelled base, damaged in the upper part. Retained height: 8 cm, dimensions of the base: 6.5 × 6.5 cm. Surfaces very well-smoothed, slightly shiny. Clay with an admixture of chamotte. Are 159/1951, 40 cm deep.

Bibliography: Woźniak, Poleska 1999, 384–385, 388, 394, figs 3p, r.

12. Leszczany, site 3, Żmudź District, Lublin Voivodeship; settlement

1. A possible fragment of a firedog (type II).

A multicultural settlement including Jastorf culture.

Bibliography: Mazurek 1995, 240, fig. 12g.

13. Morgi, site 9, Nasielsk District, Mazovian Voivodeship; settlement

1. A fragment of a firedog of Babęs's type I, found in feature no. 55, dated to phase A2 of the younger pre-Roman period.

A Jastorf culture settlement.

Bibliography: Dłubakowski, Jurkiewicz 2010, 69, fig. 17: 1.

14. Nowa Wieś, sites 1 and 12, Międzyrzec District, Lubusz Voivodeship; settlement

Fourteen fragments of firedogs.

1. A firedog with a massive body and low legs. Height: 6 cm, length: 3.5 cm, width at the bottom: 7 cm, width in the upper part: 6.4 cm. Strongly smoothed surfaces, brown colour. Type I: 2. Found in object no. 28, site 12, with three non-characteristic fragments of Przeworsk culture ceramics.

2. A 5.5 cm thick cuboid firedog. On one wall there is an ornament with an engraved decorative swastika motif. Type I: 3. Found in object no. 128 with pottery of the Lusatian culture.

3–14. Twelve fragments in the form of oblong, narrow cuboids found in the cultural layer: ten specimens from site 1; two specimens from site 12. All made of fine clay with fine-grained admixture, surfaces well-smoothed. According to the authors, all of type II.

A Jastorf culture settlement.

Bibliography: Dzieduszycki *et al.* 1998.

15. Nowy Drzewicz, site 5, Wiskitki District, Mazovian Voivodeship; settlement

1–8. Eight fragments of type II firedogs – loose finds from ares 147, 167 (3 pcs), 180 (2 pcs) and 191 (2 pcs). Engraved ornament in the form of multiplied lines and rectangles, with triangular stamp imprints. There is no data on the technique and surface finish.

A multicultural settlement including Jastorf culture.

Bibliography: Galewski, Michalak 2011, 468–469, fig. 217; Galewski 2015, 220, fig. 13.

16. Nowy Łuszczewek, Błonie District, Mazovian Voivodeship; settlement

1. One fragment of a firedog's leg from object no 20. Pottery of Jastorf culture from phase A2/A3 of the younger pre-Roman period was found in the same object.

A multicultural settlement including Przeworsk and Jastorf cultures.

Bibliography: Orłowska 2015.

17. Oronne, sites 1 and 2, Garwolin District, Mazovian Voivodeship; settlement

1. A single fragment of a firedog's leg. According to the description, the preserved length is 3.5 cm. According to the drawing, the dimensions of the preserved fragment are: length: approx. 4 cm, height: approx. 3 cm, thickness: 2.5 cm. Light brown surface.

A multicultural settlement including Przeworsk and Jastorf cultures.

Bibliography: Czarnecka 2012, 123, 132, fig. 12: 14.

18. Strzyżów, Hrubieszów District, Lublin Voivodeship; settlement

1. One fragment of a firedog mentioned in the literature – no illustration.

A multicultural settlement including Jastorf culture.

Bibliography: Dąbrowska 1994, 73.

19. Tomasze, site 4, Ostrołęka District, Mazovian Voivodeship; settlement and cemetery

1. A fragment of a firedog, found in the cultural layer, similar to type II (Ghelăiești).

A multicultural settlement, younger pre-Roman period.

Bibliography: Prochowicz 2017, 343, pl. I: 2.

20. Werbkowice-Kotorów, site 1, Werbkowice District, Lublin Voivodeship; settlement

1. A fragment of type II firedog in pit no. 61. Made of clay with an admixture of fine-grained crushed stone and sand. Surfaces carefully polished. Decoration in the form of an engraved ornament and stamp imprints.

A multicultural settlement including Jastorf culture.

Bibliography: Dąbrowska, Liana 1963, 50, 57, fig. 8e.

21. Wytyczno, site 5, Urszulin District, Lublin Voivodeship; settlement

According to the description of Mazurek (2001), seven fragments of firedogs (type II) were discovered at the site.

1. One fragment of a figurine from object no. 13. Preserved decoration consist of engraved lines and zig-zags as well as prints of a triangular stamp.

2. One fragment from the cultural layer. Decorated with engraved lines and rows of prints in the shape of a triangle.

3–7. The remaining fragments come from the cultural layer. No more detailed data on them.

A multicultural settlement including Jastorf culture.

Bibliography: Mazurek 2001, 53, fig. 4: 31–32; 1994, 84, figs 1: 9, 8; 1996, 22, pl. VIII: 5–6.

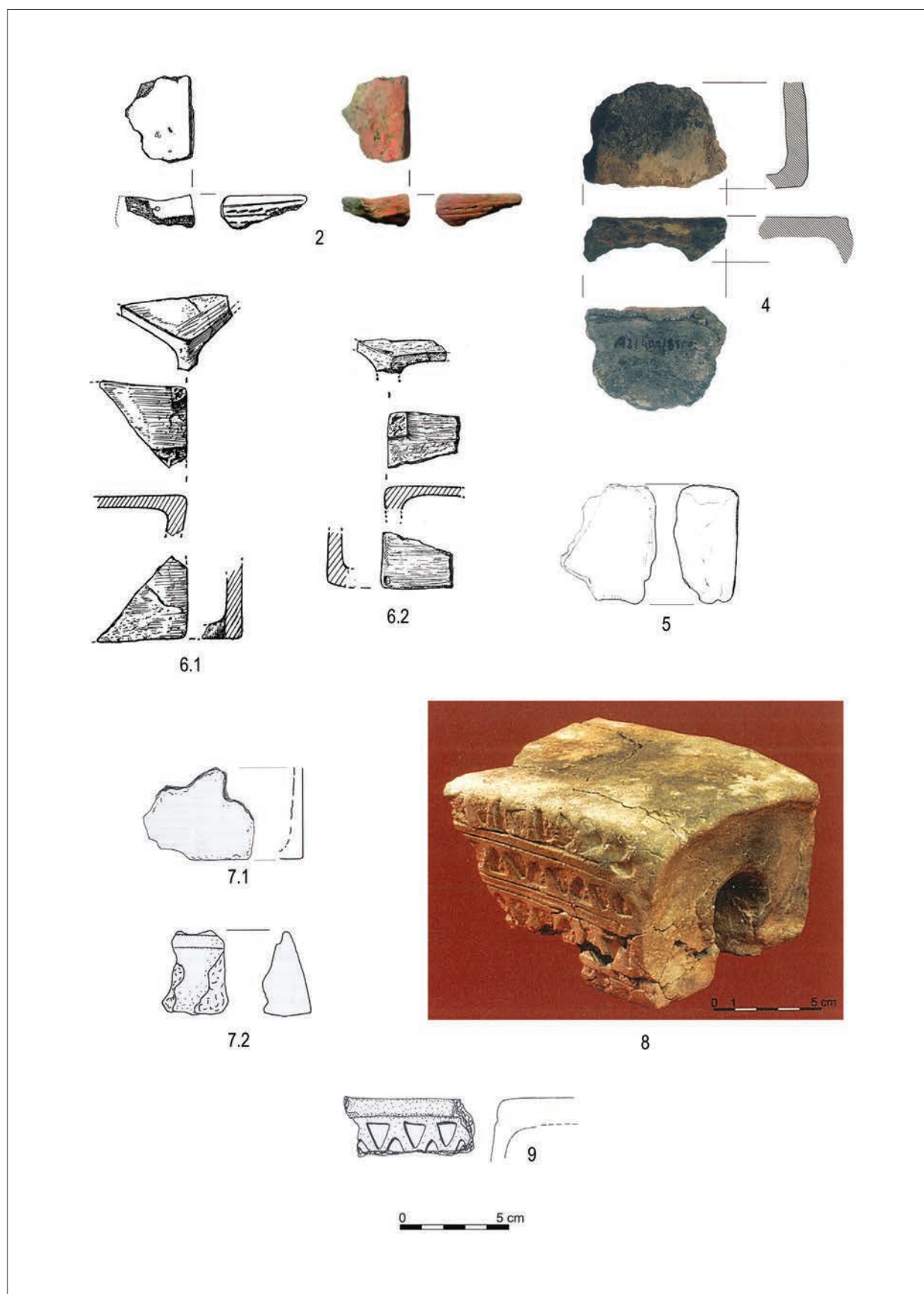
22. Wierzchowice, site 2, Jawor District, Lower Silesian Voivodeship; settlement

According to Grygiel (2015, 157, list 1), a fragment of a clay firedog was found at this site. In the cited source publication (Kendelewicz 2006) this object was described as a weaving weight. The preserved fragment raises doubts as to its interpretation.

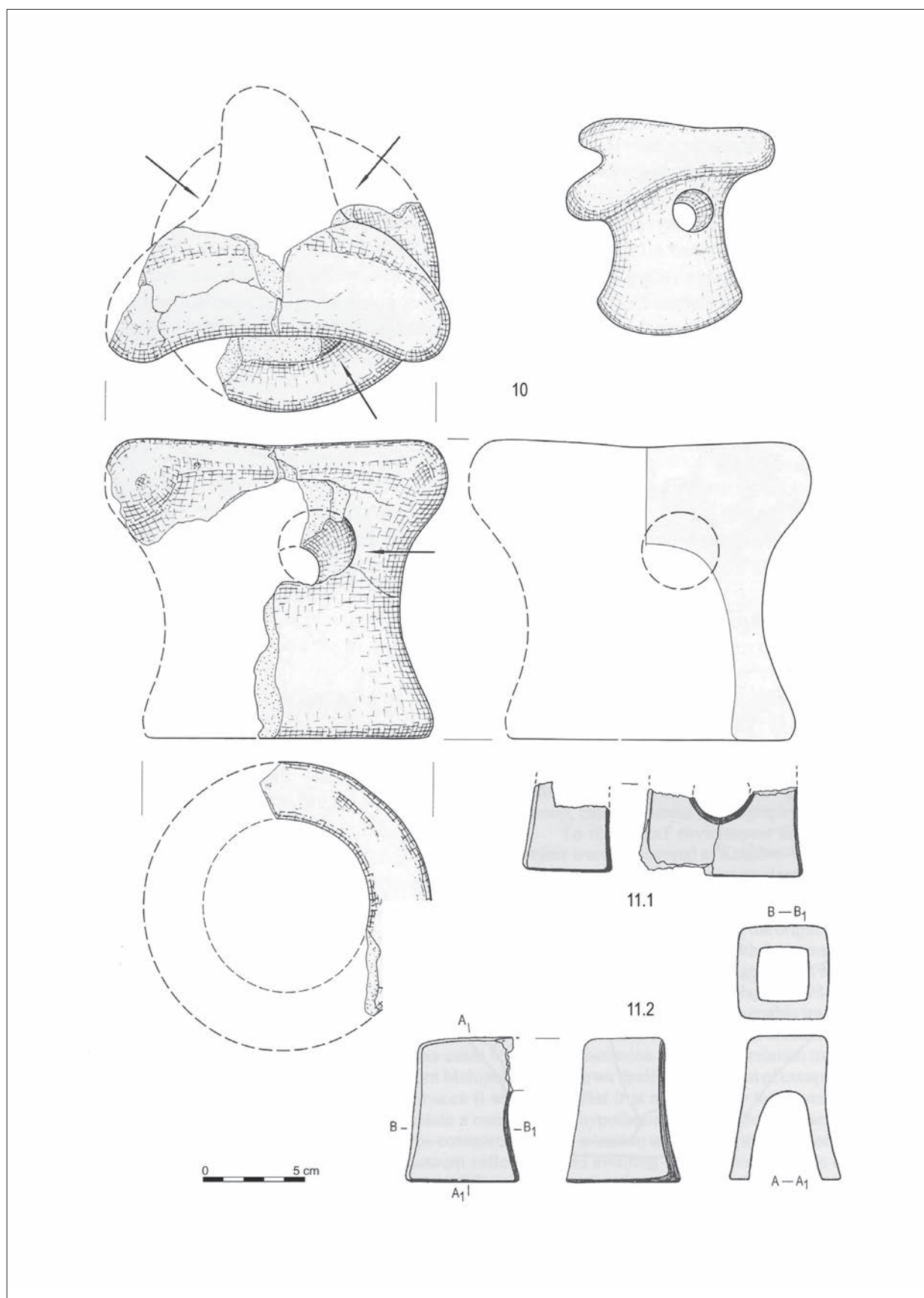
Note: Supposed firedog. No detailed data.

A multicultural settlement including Przeworsk culture.

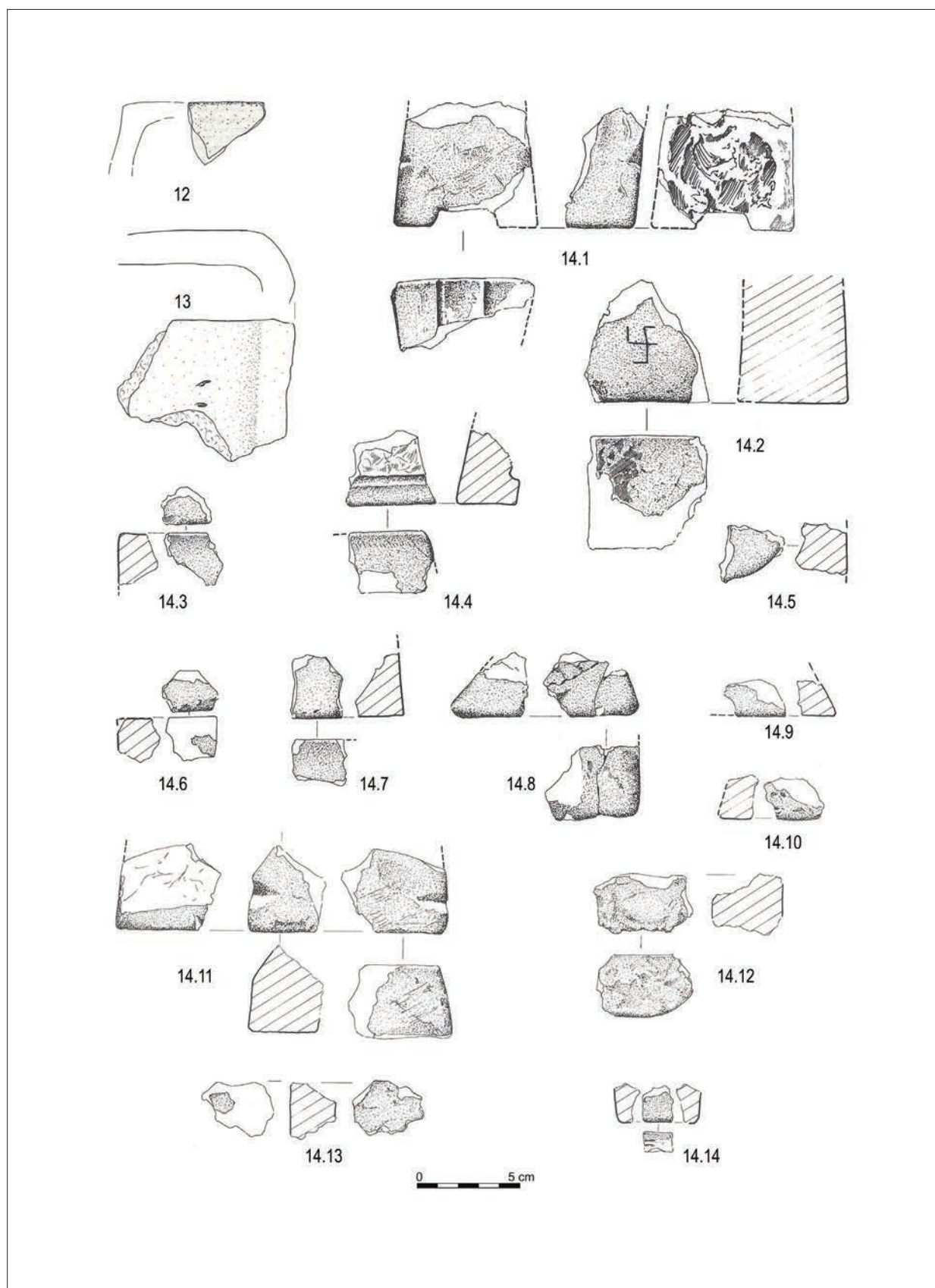
Bibliography: Grygiel 2015, 157, list 1; Kendelewicz 2006, 321, fig. 7: 13.



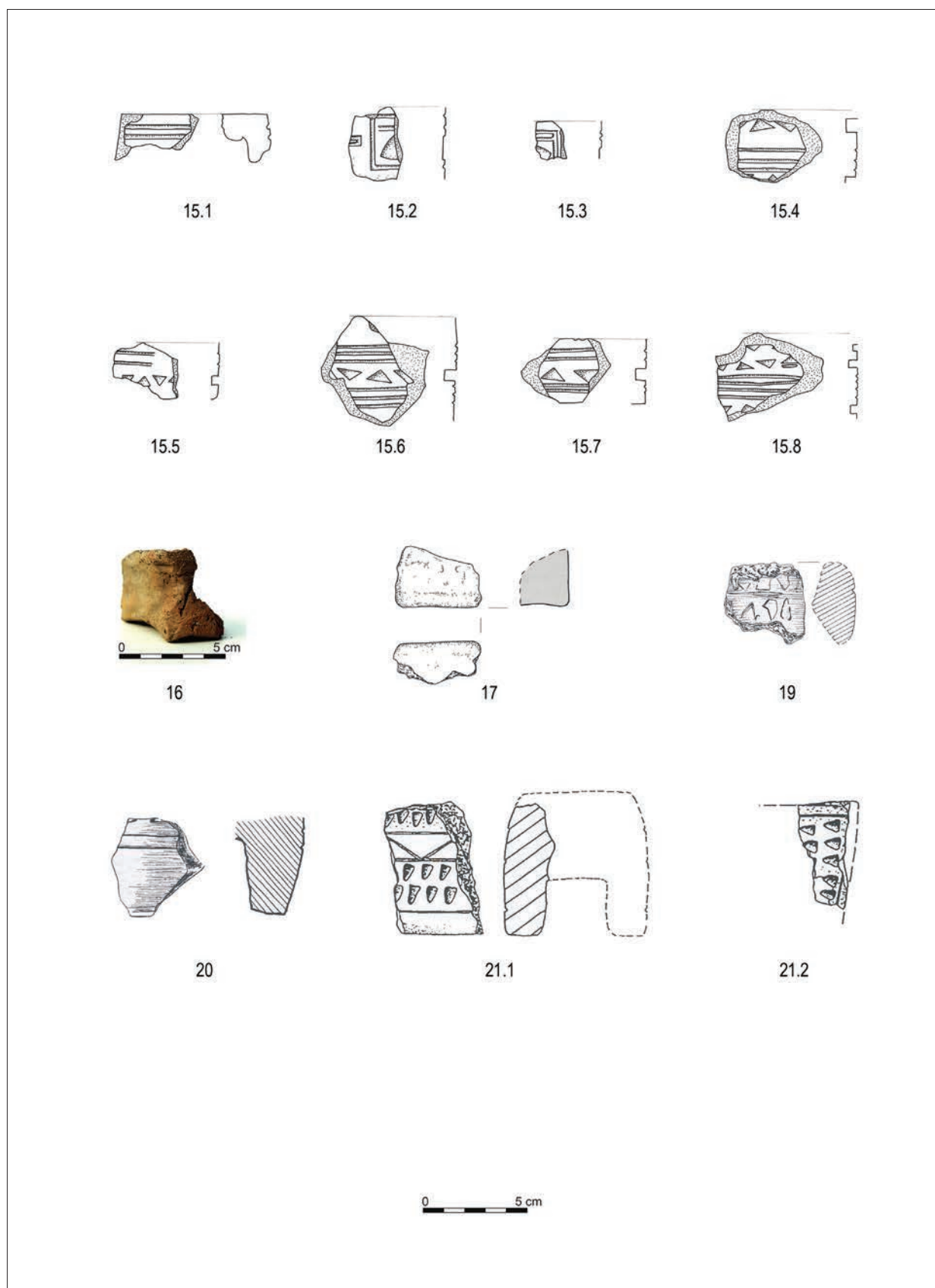
Pl. 1. Firedogs from Poland. Numbering as in the catalogue: 2 – Chyżyny; 3 – Daniszew; 5 – Dopiewo; 6 – Drohiczyn-Kozarówka; 7 – Grabkowo; 8 – Haćki; 9 – Izdebno Kościelne.



Pl. 2. Firedogs from Poland. Numbering as in the catalogue: 10 – Jeziory Małe; 11 – Kraków-Wyciąże.



Pl. 3. Firedogs from Poland. Numbering as in the catalogue: 12 – Leszczany; 13 – Morgi; 14 – Nowa Wieś.



Pl. 4. Firedogs from Poland. Numbering as in the catalogue: 15 – Nowy Drzewicz; 16 – Nowy Łuszczewek; 17 – Oronne; 19 – Tomasze; 20 – Werbkowice-Kotorów; 21 – Wytyczno.

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