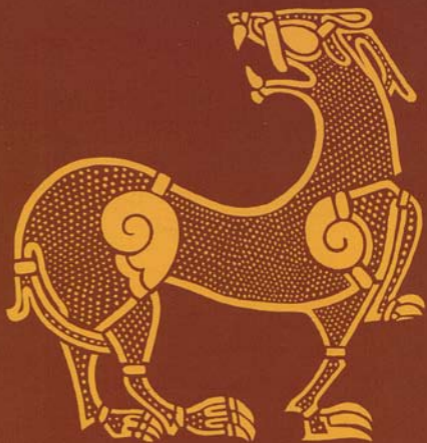


INTERDISCIPLINARY MEDIEVAL STUDIES

II



SCANDINAVIAN CULTURE
in Medieval Poland



SCANDINAVIAN CULTURE IN MEDIEVAL POLAND

edited by

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Roots of Truso

Coastal areas, estuaries of great rivers and lagoons were always, both in the distant past as well as nowadays, exceptional places. Such areas over centuries attracted the most dynamic and energetic groups of people. They were very attractive areas for settlement as well as for craft and commerce. In the past, one of these areas was the region of the mouth of the Vistula River, lands lying around the Vistula Lagoon and Družno Lake. Truso, founded in the late 8th century by Scandinavian incomers on the shores of Družno Lake (Fig. 1), was – like growing up around this emporium settlement – visible evidence of this.

Events and historical processes occurring at the mouth of the Vistula River were reflected in the written sources. The names of tribes and peoples living in this region over the centuries, sometimes describing very specific characteristics of them, were recorded in these sources. Comparing these records with material traces left by the ancient inhabitants of these areas, we have the possibility to identify these names archaeologically. We have to remember, however, that speaking about ethnic relations based on archaeological sources can raise an understandable objection or even an accusation of over-interpretation (see Topolski 2000, 65–73). We know many examples of homogeneous archaeological cultures, which included several peoples, who were quite different genetically and linguistically. Therefore, it is difficult in any case to put an equal sign between “archaeological culture” and “ethnos”. In the discussion on this topic, a frequently raised question relates to the scope of research issues, in what may be considered the material culture. The question discussed is whether the material culture is the right area in which to look for indicators of “ethnic self-determination” or “cultural identity”. According to this line of discussion, there is a thesis that these concepts do not leave tangible and clear traces within material culture, and “*ethnicity is a specific and accidental phenomenon, a result of special processes – a manifestation of group identity*” (Webart 2000, 153, 157).

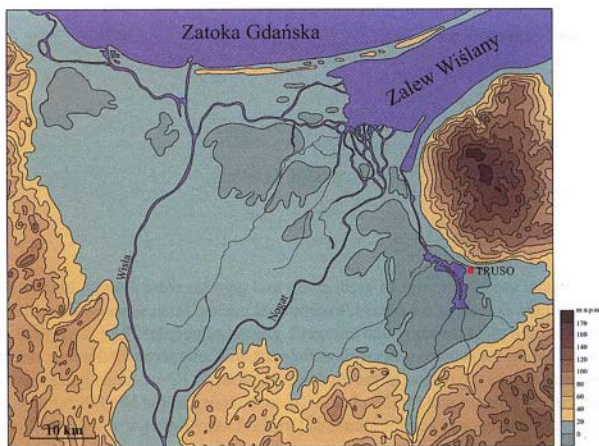


Fig. 1. Location of Trusów on the background of a contemporary hydrographical and altitude map of the mouth of the Vistula River region.

The above quoted statements testify in how a different sphere from “material culture”, what can be defined by the term “ethnic group” functions. The question puzzling archaeologists is whether between these two concepts, it is possible to find a common space, and this question remains open, although some directions of research in this area have already been partly indicated. They are related to archaeologically perceptible differences or similarities between material products or settlement behaviour that may be a medium of information in the field of socially observable characteristics of culture. In addition, such a material aspect has to be considered when looking for indicators of cultural and ethnic identity (Urbańczyk 2000, 137–146). Archaeologically perceptible similarities or differences in the forms of artefacts, their decoration, burial rites as well as the shape and structure of settlement units, can also be seen as such an indicator. On the other hand, they had an impact on the development of a sense of separateness of a group and its

recognition by other communities. Particularly in the case of the same types of material products and burial rites that we can find no purely functional explanation, this approach seems justified. This, therefore, is that which allows for the distinction between our – stranger, a self-determination of belonging to a particular group, is also reflected in the physical characteristics of specific material products, or else – characteristics of these products, under the assumption of their common occurrence in specific areas, are one of these factors participating in this self-determination.

These remarks, concerning the validity of attempts to reach the ethnic sphere through archaeological research, also show that all identifications in this area, especially for very distant past periods, may have only the status of more or less probable hypotheses.

Despite these conditions, the need for an ethnic comment in the case of the Vistula River mouth region is obvious. We feel obliged to do this because of the large weight of discussions, statements and hypotheses these issues have left in historical and archaeological literature. The majority of statements relating to the broad area of the mouth of the Vistula River concerned in fact the area between the Vistula and the Pasłęka Rivers, and the issues they raised, in a large part, focused on the ethnic identity of groups residing there in antiquity, the Migration period and the early Middle Ages. The problem of the presence of Germanic tribes, the Goths and the Gepids, then the Western Balts and the Slavs as well as other south-Scandinavian and Baltic peoples in the area has been discussed. Each of the aforementioned ethnic groups had to leave concrete, perceptible traces of its presence. Therefore, this area has a unique value and importance for this type of research.

Starting with a review of written sources, attention must be paid to the question, discussed earlier in literature, of the existence of some interpretative models characteristic for ancient science (Kolendo 1981, 68–69), traces of which are to be found also, in my opinion in the early medieval and medieval sources. They are associated with the cumulative – adding new data to old, instead of replacing it – the nature of knowledge. The theory of the Vistula River as playing the role of a border, dividing the Barbaricum into two parts, is considered in one of these models. The source of this model is often derived from the concept of a map of the world based on the materials of Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa (Kolendo 1987, 195–196).

On this map, displayed in Rome in the Campus Martius after the death of Agrippa¹, the river “Vistula” was marked. As is clear from this map, the Vis-

¹ This map had been placed in the portico (Porticus Vipsania) on the Field of Mars (Campus Martius) by order of the Emperor Octavian Augustus (Gaius Iulius Caesar Octavianus) in 12 BC. To this map, Agrippa added a geographical comment that is not preserved.

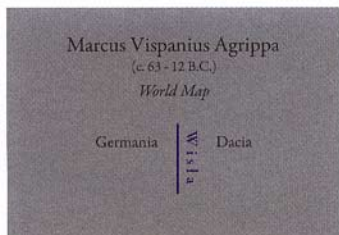


Fig. 2. Schematic representation of the mouth of the Vistula River region based on the "Map of the World" of Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa.

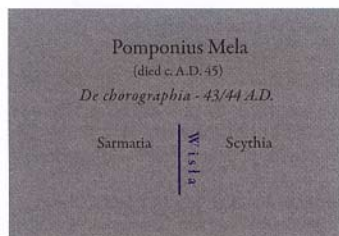


Fig. 3. Schematic representation of the mouth of the Vistula River region based on information from the "Descriptive Geography" of Pomponius Mela.

tula was the only physiographical feature in Central Europe that was well-known to the Romans and separated Germania lying to the west from Dacia located to the east (Fig. 2)². This division was applied by Pomponius Mela, a Roman geographer from the 1st century AD, who wrote *De chorographia* (Descriptive Geography), where the Vistula River separated Sarmatia from Scythia (Fig. 3), and Pliny the Elder, Roman scholar and author, who in his work *Historia naturalis* (Natural History) placed Germania at the mouth of the Vistula River and located the Sarmatians, the Scirii and Veneti eastwards from the Vistula (Fig. 4). In this work, Pliny described an official expedition of a Roman eques for amber, which took place during the reign of Nero (54–68 AD).

"From *Carnuntum* in Pannonia, to the coasts of Germany from which the amber is brought, is a distance of about six hundred miles, a fact which has been only very recently ascertained; and there is still living a member of the equestrian order, who was sent thither by Ju-

lianus, the manager of the gladiatorial exhibitions for the Emperor Nero, to procure a supply of this article. Traversing the coasts of that country and visiting the various markets there, he brought back amber, in such vast quantities, as to admit the nets, which are used for protecting the podium against the wild beasts, being studded with amber.

² Germania and Dacia marked on the Agrippa's map, according to J. Kolendo meant, "lands then inhabited by the two most dangerous opponents of the Romans, who knew the enemy from the south and west or south-east. Hence the concept of border role of the Vistula River, the only known physiographical feature in Central Europe" (1987, 196).

The arms too, the litters, and all the other apparatus, were, on one day, decorated with nothing but amber, a different kind of display being made each day that these spectacles were exhibited. The largest piece of amber that this personage brought to Rome was thirteen pounds in weight (4.25 kg).

Analyzing the text, it can be assumed that the eques' expedition could have reached at least to the mouth of the Vistula River and possibly even to the amber rich Sambia Peninsula. In the early Roman influence period, when the Wielbark culture developed, encompassing amongst others, the whole area of the mouth of the Vistula River and the Elbląg Upland, the areas to the east of the Pasłęka River were occupied by the Bogaczewska culture and the Dollkeim-Kovrovo culture (Nowakowski 2008, 227). They belonged to the so-called West Baltic cultural circle (Nowakowski 1991, 42–66).

A reflection of this configuration may be remarks found in *Germania* (*De origine et situ Germanorum*), the first independent ethnographical monograph of foreign tribes in Latin literature, written by the greatest Roman historian Tacitus. We find a description of peoples inhabiting areas between the Rhine and the Vistula. Although the name of the latter river does not appear in *Germania*, but taking into account the order of described peoples (e.g. *Gotones* i.e. the Goths, immediately after these Tacitus mentions the tribes of the Lugii union – *Lugiorum nomen*, which were located in the areas occupied by the Przeworsk culture) and

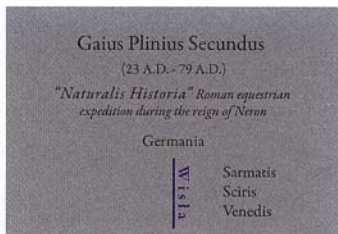


Fig. 4. Schematic representation of the mouth of the Vistula River region based on the "Natural History" of Pliny the Elder.

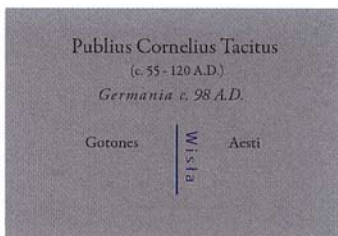


Fig. 5. Schematic representation of the mouth of the Vistula River region based on information from the "Germania" of Tacitus.

information about them (for example the exploitation of amber by the Aestii), the Goths may be very likely placed on the lower Vistula and north-east from the Aestii (Fig. 5). The Goths are usually identified with the Wielbark culture, while the Aestii are identified with the Dollkeim-Kovrovo culture, which in the Roman influence period neighboured the Wielbark culture to the west (Nowakowski 2006, 19–21). Taking into consideration the cultures distinguished by archaeologists in the area, and their relationship with the names of the peoples mentioned by Tacitus, such a border was not the Vistula but the Pasłęka River.

The description of the Aestii in Tacitus' *Germania* is exceptional both by its length and by the concreteness of its information. Undoubtedly, this was due to the occurrence of amber in the areas inhabited by these people, and the popularity of this fossil resin among the Romans (Kolendo 1987, 197–198).

"On the right shore of the Suevic sea dwell the tribes of the Aestii, whose dress and customs are the same of the Suevi, but their language more resembles the British. They worship the mother of the gods; and as the symbol of their superstition, they carry about them the figures of wild boars. This serves them in place of armour and every other defence: it renders the votary of the goddess safe even in the midst of foes. Their weapons are chiefly clubs, iron being little used among them. They cultivate corn and other fruits of the earth with more industry than German indolence commonly exerts. They even explore the sea; and are they only people who gather amber, which by them is called glesum, and is collected among the shallows and upon the shore. With the usual indifference of barbarians, they have not inquired or ascertained from what natural object or by what means it is produced. It long lay disregarded amidst other things thrown up by the sea, till our luxury gave it a name. Useless to them, they gather it in the rough; bring it unwrought; and wonder at the price they receive" (Tacitus, *Germania*, chapter 45).

The inclusion of the Aestii with the Germans by Tacitus seems strange, because at the same time, the author provides information about their linguistic distinctiveness. This remark thus proves the presence of a linguistic border between the Germans and the Aestii (Kolendo 1987, 197–200).

The Alexandrian geographer Claudius Ptolemy in his *Geography (Geographike hyphegesis)* also provided information about the mouth of the Vistula. The Vistula River separated Germania from European Sarmatia (Fig. 6). Ptolemy mentioned, as living in the area of the mouth of the Vistula, the Goths (*Gythones*), the Galindians (*Galindai*) identified with the Bogaczewska culture (Nowakowski 2006, 22–23), the Sudovians (*Sudinoi*), and also the Veneti, who lived in European Sarmatia on the ocean's coast. One of the proposed locations for the Veneti

is that they lived in a small but very important territory between the lower Vistula River and the eastern border of the Wielbark culture. It was pointed out that the information about this people may refer to the Aestii, whom Ptolemy did not mention in his work (Kolendo 1987, 202). Ptolemy placed the Veltae, Ossi, and Carbones further east. The interpretation of these names is quite difficult and there are in that respect differences of opinion (Łowmiański 1963; Łowmiański 1964; Powierski 1965, 161–183; Kolendo 1987, 201–203). The subsequent acquisition of the two names – Veneti and Veltae by the Slavs is also significant.

At the beginning of the late Roman period, the range of the Wielbark culture shifted towards the south-east. Related with the expansion of this culture into the areas eastward from the Bug River, the Polesia, Volhynia, and further into the territory of the Dnieper Ukraine, is a significant depopulation of the areas westwards from the Vistula and the simultaneous increase in population density eastwards from the Vistula, there is even a perceptible extension into the Warmia area (Godłowski, Okulicz 1981, 50–51). A part of the *Getica*³ of the Roman historian Jordanes probably refers to this period (Fig. 7). The *Getica*, written at the turn of 550–551, discusses the earlier history of the Goths and the Gepids dating back several

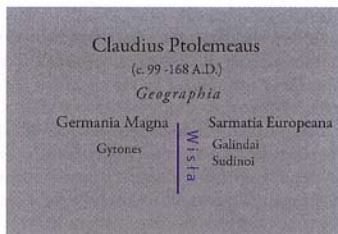


Fig. 6. Schematic representation of the mouth of the Vistula River region based on information from the "Geography" of Ptolemy.

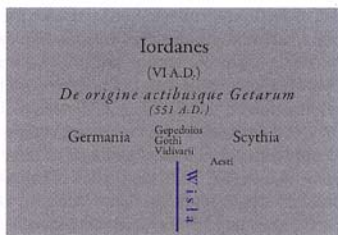


Fig. 7. Schematic representation of the mouth of the Vistula River region based on information from the "Getica" of Jordanes.

³ This is an excerpt (summary) in 60 chapters from 12 books of the Gothic History of the Roman historian Cassiodorus (Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus, around 490–about 583). His work did not survive to our times.

centuries (Strzelczyk 1984; Zwolski 1984). Jordanes described the Vistula as a border river, separating Germania located to the west from Scythia to the east. In this account, for example, there is information about the Gepids living “*on the island surrounded by the shoals of the river Viscla (Vistula)*”, which they called Gepedojos.

This island has been recently identified with the Elbląg Upland (Okulicz-Kozaryn 1992, 140), the only large elevation in this region with steep natural slopes. The upland is clearly distinguished from the surrounding Żuławy lowlands and Drużno Lake to the south and west, from the Vistula Lagoon to the north and from the boggy valley of the Pasłęka River to the east. With different hydrological conditions in the period in question in the Vistula estuary (see Kasprzycka 1999), it could be viewed as a large island – the Upland still gives such an impression, especially when seen from the Vistula Lagoon, the Żuławy or Drużno Lake. It is therefore very likely that Elbląg Upland should be identified with Gepedojos Island as mentioned by Jordanes. A dense settlement of the Wielbark culture, which is well recognised in the area, developed from the second half of the 1st century to the end of the third century AD, creating a territorial unit having “every characteristics of a small tribe”, is identified with the Gepids (Okulicz-Kozaryn 1992, 139–140).

These are at present the most fully documented hypotheses concerning the identification of places and names provided by Jordanes, especially since further information on the Gepids and Gepedojos Island given in the *Getica* might be logically associated with archaeological material. Jordanes writes that after the Gepids departure towards “better lands”, the island was occupied by the Vidivarii (*gens Vidivaria*)⁴. This information refers probably to the time partially contemporaneous with Jordanes, thus to the early or mid-6th century.

Commenting on this record in terms of the present knowledge gained through archaeological research, some significant moments in the history of settlement in the region should be evident, which we may compare with the historian’s remarks. The radical change that occurred in relations on the eastern bank of the middle Vistula River associated with the disappearance of the Przeworsk culture and the emergence there of the Wielbark culture around the second century AD, is clearly visible in the archaeological record. This seems to be a confirmation of the Goths’ migration to the Scythian land of Oium during the reign of Filimer. This is interpreted as a shift in the first wave of Goths and is associated with the final breaking at the end of the 3rd and in the 4th century of, “*a certain barrier separating, in the early Roman period, the areas of the Central European cultural province from the areas located to the east of the Vistula*” (Godłowski,

⁴ On the interpretation of these people see, among others G. Labuda 1960, 96–109; G. Labuda 1999, 34–35, 50–51.

Okulicz 1981, 56). A slow decline in use of the Wielbark culture burial grounds (which can be observed from the mid-3rd century, the graveyards being eventually abandoned about the mid-4th century) can be linked with the Gepids leaving the Elbląg Upland.

The convergence of the Gothic tradition noted by Jordanes, describing the Goths' migration to the south, with the aforementioned shift of the Wielbark culture population starting at the lower Vistula River is very significant.

The small burial grounds with "intergermanic" features from this area dated to the 4th–5th centuries, and a unique saturation of late Roman and early Byzantine gold coin finds (the 5th – the first decades of the 6th century), are so far the only tangible archaeological proof of settlement that can be identified with the Vidivarii (Godłowski 1981, 112; Kokowski 1999, 23–24) (Figs. 8, 9, 10).

Perhaps this group should be linked with the first West Baltic burial grounds, established there from the second half of the 5th century as well as jewellery of Scandinavian origin found in some graves (Okulicz-Kozaryn 1981, 40–41; Okulicz-Kozaryn 1992, 140; Okulicz-Kozaryn 1999, 137–138). We would have, in this case, the explicit confirmation of the multi-ethnicity of the Vidivarii, as highlighted by Jordanes: "*they gathered there from various peoples (ex diversis nationibus), as if in one shelter and created a tribe (gentem fecisse)*". Jordanes mentions the Aestii as their eastern neighbours – "*the people peacefully natured by all means*" (*Getica*, III, 36).

The above examples show that the boundary between the individual "peoples" mentioned in written sources and identified with archaeological cultures were actually located in the area broadly treated as the estuary of the Vistula River, but the river itself was never such a border. Over at least five hundred years (1st–6th century), this border was initially created by the Elbląg and Dzierzgoń Rivers and later by the Pasłęka River.

Completing the overview of the ancient written sources on the area in question, it is worth mentioning a letter from king Theodoric to the Aestii (dated to 523–526), commencing with the words: "*King Theodoric (salutes) Hestii*" (Cassiodorus: *Variae*. V2). The letter, drafted by Cassiodorus, should be probably regarded as "*an abstract pattern of a kind of erudite diplomatic writing*" (Nowakowski 2006, 28–29). The rhetoric of the letter makes it "*totally incomprehensible to the recipients*" (Kolendo 1998, 137). However, we cannot rule out the possibility that the impulse to compose Theodoric's letter was an attempt to renew the ancient trading/political relations undertaken by the Aestii. In this case, the exceptional durability of the relationship between the amber providing areas of the lands of the former Imperium Romanum should be emphasized. Has the



Fig. 8. Młoteczno (Hammersdorf) gm. Braniewo, a part of the so-called "hoard" (source of illustrations: Bursche 1998 – photographs of the surviving medallion's plaster casts taken by A. Bursche, Plate M14; Hilberg 2009, p. 159, Fig. 5.58). 1 – gold radial-headed bow brooch (*Bügelfibel*) studded with garnets, made in the "polychromic" style similar to brooches of the Szilágy-Somlyó-Untersiebenbrunn group – second half of the 4th – beginning of the 5th century AD (Godłowski 1981, p. 79). 2 – gold chain, weighing 16.2 g, consisting of 29 figure of eight-shaped links and a fastener similar to an artefact from Airan in Normandy which linked two brooches dated to the first decades of the 5th century AD (Bursche 1998, p. 77, footnote 209); 3a – gold medallion' obverse of Constantius II – bust wearing a laurel wreath, draped cloak and armour. The medallion is

fitted with a loop, slightly worn, minted in Constantinople (335–336 AD), weight 43 g, diameter 49.5 mm; 3b – gold medallion’s reverse of Constantius II (the description of the medallion’s, Bursche 1998, p. 237, pos. 14); 4–6 – three gold bucket-shaped pendants from the end of the 3rd or early 4th century – no. 5, weight 6.3 g, no. 6, weight 6.1 g. For a more detailed description see Bursche 1998 pp. 76–79, 237, pos. 14 (also older literature, see Ciolek 2001, p. 119, pos. 177).



Fig. 9. Młoteczno (Hammersdorf) gm. Braniewo, a part of the so-called “hoard” (source of illustrations: Kulakov 2007). 1 (a, b) – gold necklace of the Scandinavian type with slightly widened tips, decorated with stamped crescents and grooves (diameter 13 cm; weight: 991.5 g – after Kulakov 2010, p. 279). 2 (a, b) – gold necklace of the Scandinavian type with slightly widened tips, decorated with stamped crescents and grooves (diameter 15 cm; weight: 549.4 g – after Kulakov 2010, p. 279). This type of necklaces is dated to the period from the end of the 5th to the first quarter of the 6th century (Godłowski 1981, pp. 94–96; Bursche 1998, p. 78; Cieśliński 2008, p. 124). It has also been suggested that the dating of these artefacts should be to the 4th or possibly to the beginning of the 5th century (Andersson 1995, pp. 94–96; Kulakov 2010, pp. 279–281). For a more detailed description see Bursche 1998 pp. 76–79, 237, pos. 14 – also the older literature.

Ostrogoths' state taken over the Roman tradition of the amber trade? We have no direct evidence for this, although some form of contacts between southern Europe and the Barbaricum, during the developed Migration Period, may be confirmed by the aforementioned numerous finds of solidus and other rich imported goods from the 5th and early 6th centuries. An example may be finds from the burial ground in Warnikam – wheel thrown jugs, a glass beaker from the Rhineland or horse tack resembling artefacts from the 'chieftains' graves in the Gepids' state in Transylvania (Nowakowski 2006, 29).

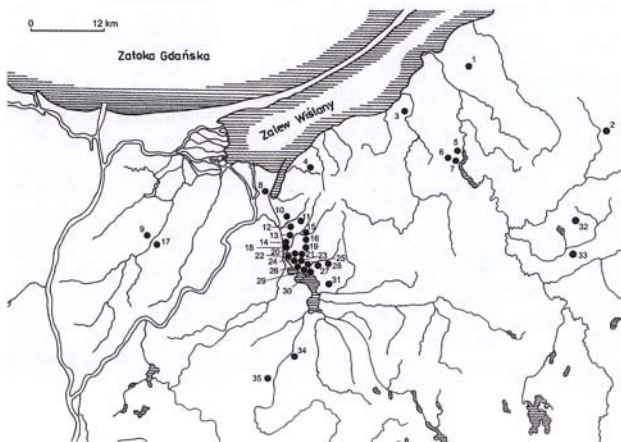


Fig. 10. Map of areas located eastwards from the lower Vistula River with locations of finds of late Roman and early Byzantine gold coins.

Number after the map no. 1	FIND LOCATION	FIND CATEGORY	ISSUER (in hoard for the youngest specimen)	FACE VALUE	DATE OF ISSUE (in hoard for the youngest specimen)
1.	Młoteczno	Votive find	Constantius II	Medallion	335–336
2.	Nalaby	Single find	Theodosius II	Solidus	408–450
3.	Frombork	Founder's hoard (1)	Theodosius II	Solidus	408–450
4.	Łęcze	Single find	Anastasius I	Solidus	491–518
5.	Trąbki	Hoard I (96)	Valentinian III	Solidus	425–455
6.	Trąbki	Hoard II (43)	Valentinian III	Solidus	425–455
7.	Trąbki	Single find	Theodosius II (Galla Placidia)	Solidus	408–450
8.	Kępa Rybacka	Single find	Anastasius I	Solidus	491–518
9.	Tuja	Single find	Undetermined	Solidus	4th/5th century
10.	Elbląg	Single find	Undetermined	Solidus	5th century
11.	Elbląg	Single find	Theodosius II	Solidus	408–450
12.	Elbląg	Single find	Anthemius	Solidus	467–472
13.	Elbląg	Single find	Theodosius II	Solidus	408–450
14.	Elbląg	Single find	Honorius	Solidus	395–402 or after 422
15.	Elbląg	Hoard (3)	Leo I	Solidus	462, or: 466, 471, 473
16.	Elbląg	Hoard (3)	Anastasius I	Solidus	491–518
18.	Elbląg – Pole Nowomiejskie	Single find from burial ground	Theodosius II	Solidus	408–450
19.	Elbląg – Dębica	Single find?	Leo I	Solidus	462 or 466
20.	Gronowo Górne	Single find /hoard?	Theodosius II	Solidus	441–450
21.	Gronowo Górne	Single find /hoard?	Libius Severus	Solidus	461–465
22.	Gronowo Górne	Single find /hoard?	Leo I	Solidus	457–474
23.	Gronowo Górne	Single find /hoard?	Valentinian III	Solidus	424–455
24.	Gronowo Górne*	Single find /hoard?	Undetermined	Solidus	5th century
25.	Gronowo Górne	Single find /hoard?	Valentinian III	Solidus	430–445
26.	Gronowo Górne	Single find /hoard?	Theodosius II	Solidus	408–450
27.	Nowina	Hoard of gold coins?	Undetermined	Solidi	5th–6th century
28.	Czechowo	Hoard? (2)	Theodosius II	Solidus	430–440
29.	Przezmark	Single find	Valentinian III	Solidus	425–455
31.	Komorowo Żuławskie	Single find	Theodosius I	Solidus	379–395
34.	Stare Dolno	Single find	Valentinian III	Solidus	425–455
35.	Bagart	Single find	Theodosius II	Solidus	408–450

*There is a high probability that the information is duplicated (Ciolek 2001, 86).

Table 1. List of finds of gold coins and medallions eastwards from the lower Vistula River – explanation of Fig. 10.

The most chronologically uniform and culturally perceptible group of archaeological sites in the area in question in the 5th–7th/8th centuries are burial grounds (Fig. 13). Their founders were undoubtedly “emigrants from tribal groups of the Sambians and Nantangians because they brought with them a complete model of burial rites” (Okulicz-Kozaryn 1997, 471–474). Especially distinctive here are rich burials, containing – apart from human cremations – also horse inhumations. These contained, among others, crossbow bronze brooches with crossbars on the bows and decorative knobs at the ends of the spring axles (the *Armbrustsprossenfibeln* – Fig. 14), bronze disc brooches, bronze or silver wire bracelets, remains of rich warriors’ belts which consisted of bronze buckles with openwork fittings and openwork rectangular plates, and lancet-shaped strap-ends (in many cases decorated with stamped triangle patterns) creating a complete belt set.

Weapons were also common grave goods found in these burials. These included iron single-edged swords, often parade ones, with scabbards covered with embossed silver plates (Dorr 1915; Urbańczyk 1978), iron javelin heads and spurs. Horse inhumations usually had rich horse tack, which consisted of bridles with bronze, or silver mounts decorated with rosette or stamped triangle motifs (Jagodziński 1997, catalogue no. 6, 20, 22, 33, 34, 38, 48, 50, 57, 62, 63, 81, 112, 115, 117, 147, 152, 169, 173, 259, 277, 429, 439, 487, figs. 6–11). Iron or bronze horse bits (a silver horse bit with a plate decorated with gold foil was recovered from a burial ground in ul. Moniuszki, formerly *Scharnhorststraße* in Elbląg) and leather saddles formed the whole set of grave goods of burials of so-called horsemen/knights.

A very characteristic feature of these burials was biconical pottery vessels whose forms have their closest analogies among Nantangians and Sambians vessels (Fig. 15). In addition, some burials contained drinking horns inlaid with decorated silver plate.

The above examples of grave goods create a very homogeneous picture in terms of style and complete in terms of cultural behaviour, of a cultural unit distinguished from Prussian lands and defined by the term “the Elbląg group” – this term was introduced into literature by J. Okulicz (1973, 471–474). The aforementioned examples of the Elbląg group grave goods are characteristic of “phase E2” of the Aestii settlement (Godłowski 1981; Kowalski 2000).

It is also characterized by the occurrence of a large number of artefacts of Scandinavian or Western European provenance (Fig. 12). The burial ground discovered in ul. Moniuszki (*Scharnhorststraße*) yielded, among others, a bronze equal-armed brooch, found in grave no. 265, dated to the second half of the 6th century or early 7th century (Ehrlich 1937a, 275, fig. 7.b; Żak 1962, 257, fig. 57.1).

Tafel IX.



gez. D. Schmalok, Eßling.

Gräberfeld bei Pr. Holland.

Fig. 11. Examples of grave goods from the Ests (Aestii) burial ground in Pasłęk dated to the second half of the 5th century (source of illustrations: Ehrlich 1923): a – beaker with separate base, resembling vessels discovered on the burial ground from the 3rd–4th century in Wackern Kr. Pr. Eylau (Nowakowski 1996, Taf. 55 – 10, 14) – now Yelanovka, Bagrationovsk District of Kaliningrad Oblast, Russian Federation; b – biconical vessel resembling Sambian – Nantangian forms; l – crossbow, cross-bars type brooch (*Schlusskreuzfibeln*) m – equal-arm band brooch; n–p – brooches with plates on the heads.



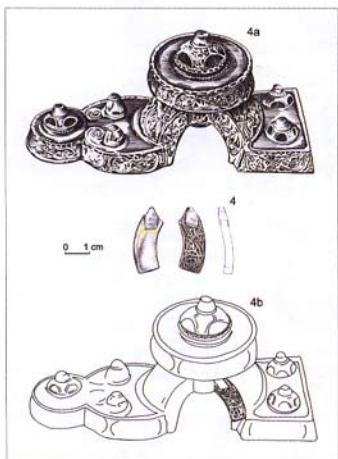
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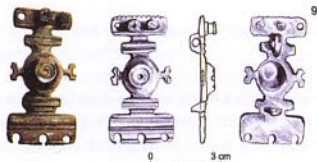
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Fig. 12. Selection of Elbląg group artefacts of Scandinavian or Western European origin (6th–7th century). 1 – Truso, a fragment of an equal-arm brooch, decorated with knot pattern, made in the cutting technique – *Vendel* style. Bronze, preserved length 3 cm, width 2.2 cm; 2 – Truso, equal-arm brooch with domed bow. Bronze, length 4.2 cm, weight 8.78 g; 3 – Truso, beak-shaped brooch with a profiled flat bow cast in a front mould together with bowstring, bronze, length 3 cm, width 3 cm; 4 – Truso, pendant made of a fragment of bow of a Gotland brooch, bronze with traces of gilding, height 2.9 cm, width 1.0 cm; 4a – Gotland disc brooch with high bow – *Bügelscheibenfibel*, 4b – the outline of Gotland brooch with a specified place on the bow, from which was cut a part converted to a pendant; 5 – Nowinka, grave no. 38, beak-shaped brooch with a profiled flat bow cast in a front mould together with bowstring (*Schnabelfibel*), bronze, length 4.6 cm; 6 – Nowinka, grave no. 41, brooch with an S-shaped plate in the shape of a stylized, S-shaped snake with an animal head on one end, bronze, diameter 2.9 cm; 7 – Nowinka, grave no. 23, two-plated brooch with a conically made bow in the form of staggered overlapping discs; 8 – Nowinka, grave no. 41, brooch with an S-shaped plate with modelled animal head; 9 – Sakówko gm. Pasiłek, equal-arm brooch, a kind of ‘hybrid’ – containing both Baltic elements, amongst others the so-called “rungs”, rectangular plates that resemble the Est/Prussian style of multiple combs/rungs brooches (no. 10 in this figure) as well as Scandinavian elements such as the design of the brooch itself in the form of an equal-arm brooch with a dome in the middle – only in terms of design it is related to the two-plated brooches with conically formed bows (no. 7 in this figure), which are considered as examples of early Scandinavian influences. 10 – Nowinka, grave no. 17, Est/Prussian crossbow brooch with cross-bars on the bow and decorative knobs on the tips of the spring axle (*Armbrustsprossenfibeln*) – on the burial ground in Nowinka see Kontny, Okulicz-Kozaryn, Pietrzak 2011, there are also detailed description and interpretation of the brooches in this figure from Nowinka.

An analogy for this specimen is a brooch from Aken (Petersen 1939, 79, fig. 115.a; Żak 1962, 257), as well as numerous finds from Zealand from port locations around Roskilde Fjord (Ulriksen 1998, 97, figs. 84; 103, figs. 89; 111, figs. 100; 163, fig. 120). Other finds that can be associated with the early Scandinavian influences from this burial ground are: a Gotland brooch with a rectangular head and a knob on the bow (late 7th century), three other Gotland brooches, a tip of a belt fitting originating in Gotland (Ehrlich 1937a, 271, fig. 7, 272, fig. 8) and a buckle with a widened base in the form of a plate, decorated on the surface with stamped triangle motifs (Godłowski 1981, 116, fig. 31)⁵ Early Scandinavian imports discovered in other burial grounds include a Gotland strap-end from Chojnowo (*Konradswalde*), dated to about 600 AD (Neugebauer 1934, 321,

⁵ Erroneously described as the buckle from Żulawka. See in this regard: Kontny, Okulicz-Kozaryn, Pietrzak 2011, 77, footnote 54.

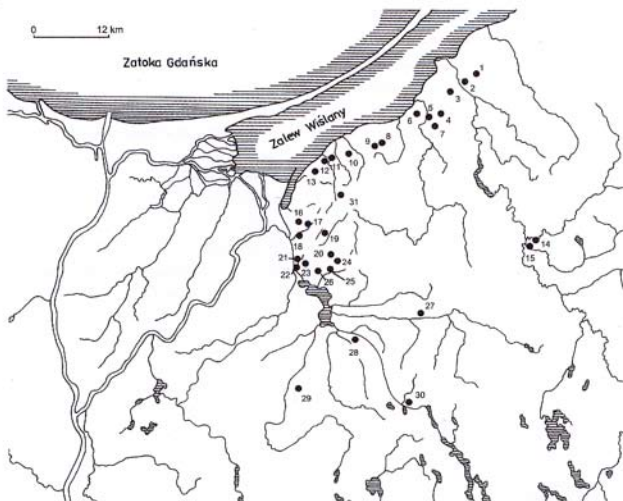
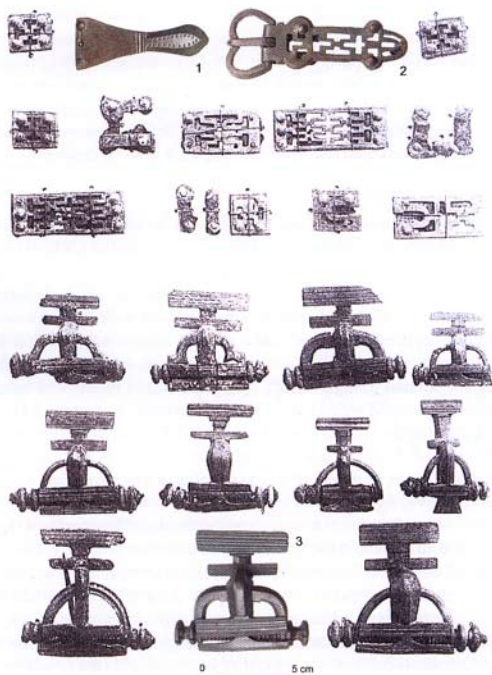


Fig. 13. Settlement features between the Vistula and Pasłęka Rivers from the 5th/6th to the 8th century (Jagodziński, 1997). 1. Młoteczno (*Hammersdorf*), burial ground – 5th/6th – the first half of the 6th century; 2. Braniewo (*Braunsberg*), burial ground – 7th–8th century; 3. Podgórze (*Huntenberg*), burial ground – 5th–6th, 7th–8th century; 4. Garbina (*Willenberg*), burial ground – 4th/5th–6th century, 7th–8th century? 5. Bogdany (*Sonnenberg*), stronghold – 7th–8th century; 6. Frombork (*Frauenberg*), burial ground – 7th–8th century? 7. Biedkowo (*Betkendorf*), burial ground – 6th–12th century? 8. Chojnowo (*Konradswalde*), burial ground – 5th–7th century; 9. Chojnowo (*Konradswalde*), burial ground – 6th–8th century; 10. Nowinka (*Neuendorf*), burial ground – 6th–7th century; 11. Kikoly (*Kickelhof*), burial ground – 7th–8th century; 12. Pęklewo (*Panklau, Karlsberg*), burial ground – 4th–5th century; 13. Łęcze (Lenzen), burial ground – 6th–8th century; 14. Osetnik (*Wusen*), burial ground, settlement – 6th–8th century; 15. Osetnik (*Wusen*), settlement – 5th–8th century; 16. Bielany Wielkie (*Gr. Bieland*), stronghold – 6th–9th century; 17. Elbląg-Kamionka (*Elbing-Benkenstein*), burial ground – 6th–8th century; 18. Elbląg ul. Moniuszki (*Scharnhorststraße*), burial ground – 6th–8th century; 19. Stagnity (*Stagnitten*), settlement – 5th–6th century; 20. Gronowskie Pustki (*Grunauer-*

wiſten), settlement – 6th–8th century? 21. Elbląg-Pole Nowomiejskie (*Elbing-Neustädterfeld*), settlement – 6th–8th century; 22. Elbląg-Pole Nowomiejskie (*Elbing-Neustädterfeld*), settlement – 7th–8th century; 23. Elbląg-Pole Nowomiejskie (*Elbing-Neustädterfeld*), burial ground – 6th–8th century, 8th/9th–10th century; 24. Sierpin (*Serpin*), burial ground – 6th–7th century; 25. Czechowo (*Bohmischgut*), settlement – 5th–6th century; 26. Gronowo Górne (*Grunau Höhe*), burial ground – 6th–8th century? 27. Pasłęk (*Pr. Holland*), burial ground – 5th–8th century; 28. Jelonki (*Hirschfeld*), burial ground – 7th–8th century; 29. Kwietniewo (*Blumenau, Königs Blumenau*), burial ground – 6th–8th century; 30. Drulity (*Draulitten*), burial ground – 5th–7th century; 31. Ogrodniki (*Baumgarth*), burial ground – 6th–8th century.

fig. 70.3c), and five brooches known to me with Scandinavian links (amongst others of the Bornholm type) from Nowinka (Godłowski 1981, 112–114, figs. 28, 29; Pietrzak 1977, 153, fig. 3.b) – a two-plated brooch with a conically made bow in the form of staggered overlapping discs (grave no. 23); a brooch with an S-shaped plate with modelled animal head; a brooch with an S-shaped plate in the shape of a stylized, S-shaped snake with an animal head (both from grave no. 41); a brooch with a profiled bow, cast in a mould, decorated with characteristic stamped pointed triangle motifs (grave no. 38); a two-plated brooch with a raised bow, decorated with a row of stamped triangles (grave no. 83) – Fig. 12. Almost identical to these items from Nowinka is a two-plated brooch with a raised bow that was also found in the burial ground in Łęczce in grave no. 29 (Dorr 1898, 20, fig. I.34). A fragment of a bronze balance was also found in this burial ground (Dorr 1898, fig. 3.18).

The earliest medieval text concerning the region of the mouth of the Vistula River also informs us about the border role of this river (Fig. 16). It was written in Old English about 890, an updated and expanded version of the chorography of Paulus Orosius (from around 417) written by the King of Wessex Alfred the Great (872–899). Orosius, writing his greatest work *Historiarum Adversus paganos libri VII* (seven books of histories against the pagans), whose introduction was a brief geographical description of the then known world (the so-called *chorography*), did not take into account the land between the Rhine and the Vistula. King Alfred the Great not only translated the Orosius' text, but also expanded it, including concrete data regarding this particular area using information provided by, among others, Wulfstan. This Anglo-Saxon sailor, who was probably an important figure in the court of king Alfred the Great of Wessex, sailed between Danish Haede (Hedeby) and the port of Truso at the mouth of the Vistula River in the last decade of the 9th century.



Lithdruck Meisenbach Wiegand & Co. Berlin.

Fig. 14. Lęcze (Lenzen) – burial ground in “Srebrna Góra” (Silberberg) – examples of grave goods. Source of illustrations: Dorr 1898, Taf. II – on the copy of the original Plate were three contemporary photographs of artefacts preserved in the Muzeum Archeologiczno-Historyczne in Elbląg: 1 – lance-shaped strap-end, 2 – buckle with openwork mount, 3 – crossbow brooch with cross-bars on the bow and decorative knobs on the tips of the spring axle (*Armbrustsprossenfibeln*).

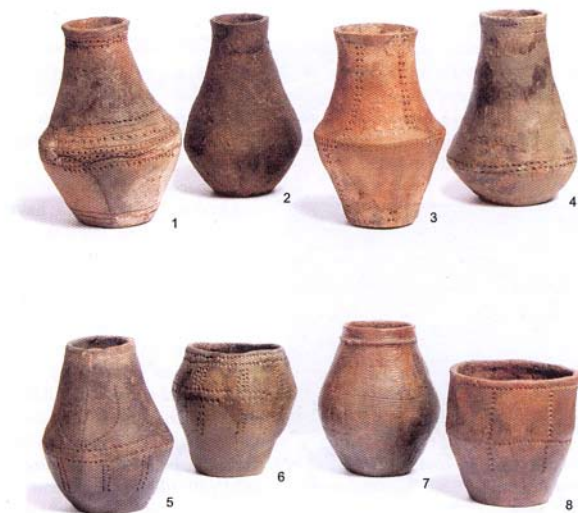


Fig. 15. Nowinka, gm. Tolkmicko – examples of biconical vessels. 1 – grave no. 83; 2 – grave no. 27; 3 – grave no. 41; 4 – grave no. 120; 5 – grave no. 120; 6 – grave No. 127; 7 – grave no. 148; 8 – grave no. 26 (see Kontny, Okulicz-Kozaryn, Pietrzak 2011).

In Wulfstan's record, apart from information on the settlement and social structure of the Aestii-Prussians and their funeral rites, there is also information on ethnic relations at that time in the Baltic Sea basin.

“Wulfstan said that he travelled from the Heaths [Hedeby], that he was in Truso in seven days and nights, that the boat was all the way running under sail. Wendland was on his starboard side, and on his port side were Langeland and Lolland and Falster and Skane, and these lands are all subject [or belong] to Denmark. And then the land of the Burgendas was on our port side and they

have their own king. Then after the land of the Burgendas there were on our port side these lands, which are called first island of the people of Blekinge and More and Oland and Gotland, and these lands are subject to the Swear. And Wendland was on our starboard side all the way to the mouth of the Vistula. This Vistula is a very large river and it separates Witland and Wendland, and the abovementioned Witland belongs [or is subject] to the Ests, and the Vistula extends out of Wendland and extends into Estlake, and this Estlake is at least fifteen miles broad” (Janet Bately 2010, 15).

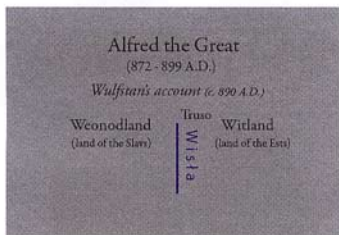


Fig. 16. Schematic representation of the mouth of the Vistula River region based on information from Wulfstan's "Report".

Archaeological excavations undertaken in this area have shown that in the late 8th and early 9th century cremation burials occurred, which up to then had only been known from Elbląg, with grave goods mainly consisting of jewellery and weapons of Scandinavian origin (Fig. 17). In the burial ground in Elbląg-Kępa Północna (*Kämmerei-Sandland*) among others: a silver ring of Scandinavian type decorated with filigree; fragments of bronze weighing pans decorated with a star-shaped, six-petalled rosette were found, and from this

set there was also a partially melted balance's arm. In addition, these finds described by Robert Dorr, "two bronze weights in the shape of a flattened sphere with embossed circles on flat surfaces." Were also recovered. This description undoubtedly concerns spherical weights with planes that have iron cores and bronze coats, probably of type B after Steuer (Dorr 1894, 70; Ehrlich 1932, 418–419, fig. 15). Dorr's report states that it was possible only to save a few pit cremation graves from this burial ground. The cremation pits also contained, apart from the aforementioned artefacts, burnt human bones mixed with fragments of early medieval pottery and charcoal as well as a fragment of an iron knife blade. The report also provides the first information about the discovery of similar cremation grave pits, situated about 1 km northwards from Kępa Północna – in *Pangritz Colonie*, now Elbląg-Zawada (Dorr 1894, 70–71). Finds from this burial ground included two heart-shaped bronze belt fittings and a fragment of a decorated

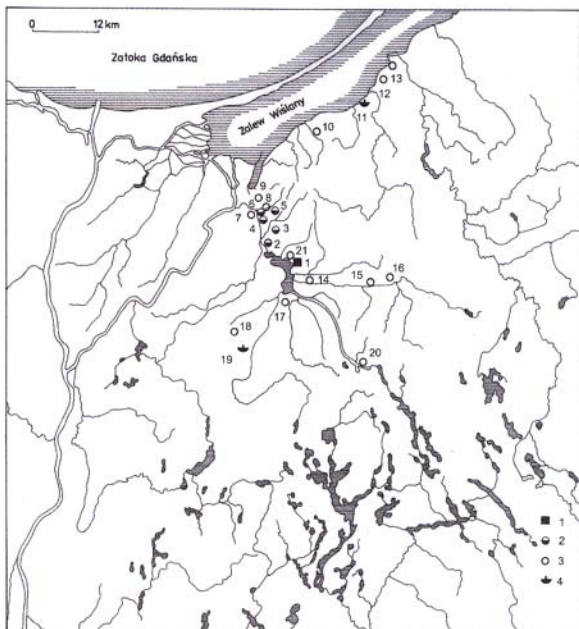


Fig. 17. Traces of Scandinavian colonization and penetration in the area of Drużno Lake and the Vistula River lagoon – edited by M. F. Jagodziński. Legend: 1 – Truso, 2 – burial grounds with Scandinavian graves, 3 – weapons, jewellery and everyday objects of Scandinavian origin, found as single finds or excavated from settlements or strongholds; 4 – wrecks of boats interpreted as Scandinavian ones. List of sites shown on the map: 1. Janów Pomorski/Truso; 2. Elbląg-Pole Nowomiejskie (*Neustädterfeld*); 3. Elbląg-Winnica (*Weingarten*); 4. Elbląg-Kępa Północna (*Kämmerei-Sandland*); 5. Elbląg Kamionka-Żytno (*Benkenstein-Freiwalde*); 6. Elbląg-Zawada (*Pangritz-Colonie*); 7. The Elbląg River – iron spearhead of type “B” after Petersen; 8. The Elbląg River, between the former shipyard and the Jagiellonian canal branch – iron spearhead of type “E” after Petersen; 9. The Elbląg River – iron spearhead of type “E” after Petersen; 10.

Tolknicko (stronghold) – jewellery and weapons of Scandinavian origin; 11. Frombork – planked boat wreck; 12. Sądkowo – Viking sword; 13. Braniewo (the Pasłęka River estuary to the Vistula River lagoon) – iron spearhead or Viking sword? 14. Wężina – iron sword of type “α” after Nadolski; 15. Kupin – iron spearhead of Viking type; 16. Robity (settlement) – parts of weapons, jewellery and everyday items of Scandinavian origin; 17. Studzianki (the Dzierzgoń River) – iron sword of type I after Nadolski; 18. Jasna – iron sword; 19. Bągart – 2 planked boats; 20. Awajki (burial ground?) – iron sword with inscription on the blade Ulfber(th); 21. Janów Pomorski (*Hansdorf*– Truso settlement?) – iron axe of type III after Nadolski.

bronze buckle (Ehrlich 1932, 419, figs. 16.a, c). From another Elbląg burial ground, discovered in the Winnica quarter (*Weingarten, Pulverhaus*), bronze belt fittings – an openwork belt-end, a strap-end⁶ and a plate with a wavy-shaped lower edge were recovered (Dorr 1894, 70–71; Ehrlich 1932, 419, figs. 16.d, f).

In all these burial grounds, in graves included into the younger period of the early Middle Ages, pottery commonly classified as Slavic type, hand-made (often decorated with wavy lines) as well as wheel-made, linked directly with Slav influences was a frequent occurrence.

Among the other finds of Scandinavian origin the following should be mentioned in particular: two Viking axes discovered in the northern rampart of the stronghold in Tolknicko as well as a fragment of a bronze bracelet of Viking type (Jagodziński 1997, 34–35, pos. 61, fig. 15.1); an iron axe of type III after Nadolski, found in Janów Pomorski (Jagodziński 2010, 57–58, fig. 49);⁷ a sword scabbard fitting from Myślęcín (Kleemann 1938, 32, fig. 5.w), an iron sword of type “T” after J. Petersen, with an inscription “Ulfber (th)” on the pommel from Awajki (Fig. 18.3),⁸ and discovered during dredging of the Elbląg River, iron spearheads: of type B and two of type after E by J. Petersen, one of which had decoration on the socket – oblique and vertical ogive shaped grooves (Jagodziński 1997, 50–51, pos. 104; 71, pos. 159; 72, pos. 160 – the older literature). Finds, which are commonly, especially in the interwar period, linked with the presence of Scandinavians in the area, were discovered in the late 19th century, in the remains of three wrecks of keel-planked boats, from Bągart (two wrecks) and Frombork (Ossowski 2009, 579–594; Jagodziński 2010, 115–126).

⁶ Luckily, these artefacts survived World War II and are now held in the Muzeum Archeologiczno-Historyczne in Elbląg.

⁷ It is very likely that this axe was discovered in the settlement in Janów (*Hansdorf*) identified with Truso during the digging of drainage ditches, which cut the entire area of the settlement.

⁸ It is very likely that the sword came from a destroyed grave – it was found under a stone structure (Jagodziński, 1997, 165–166, pos. 438).

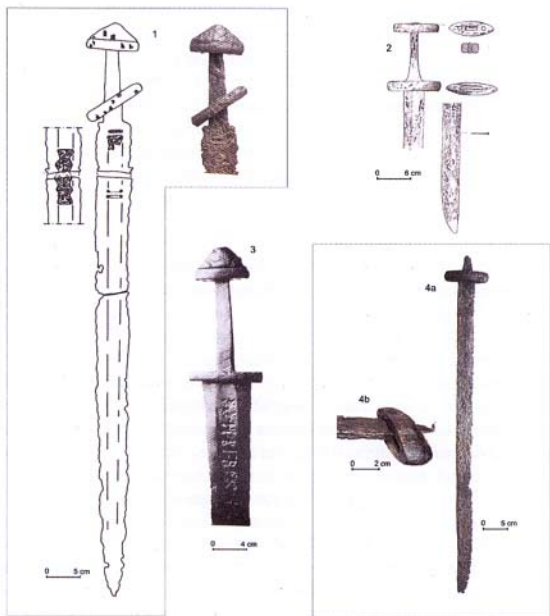


Fig. 18. Swords found in the area of Truso. 1 – Elbląg-Pole Nowomiejskie (*Neustädterfeld*), iron sword of type H after Petersen with marking on both sides of the blade in the form of welded steel bands in an oblique pattern (Kirpičnikov, Jagodziński 2006, pp. 437–442). 2 – Studzianki (*Kühlborn*), gm. Markusy, iron sword of type H–J after Petersen (Langenheim, 1933, pp. 266–267, Abb. 5). 3 – Awajki (*Awecken*), iron sword of type T II after Petersen with the inscription on the blade “Ulfber(th)” (Kossina 1929, p. 307, Abb 10; Langenheim 1933, pp. 266, 279). 4 – Orsy, gm. Górowo Iławeckie, iron sword of type H (?) after Petersen – held in the Muzeum Warmii i Mazur in Olsztyn.

The most significant discovery made in the interwar period that prompted a discussion on the Scandinavian presence in the region of the mouth of the Vistula River, which was participated in by many European archaeologists, was an early medieval burial ground in Pole Nowomiejskie (*Neustädterfeld*) in Elbląg. The burial ground is located in the southern part of this quarter that borders with Żuławy Wiślane – nowadays, it is the area of Kilińskiego, Skrzydlata and Lotnicza streets. The discovery was made on December 31st 1936, during the construction of a housing estate by the Schichau Company. Systematic excavations began in January 1937 and continued until 1939. We do not know the exact number of discovered graves and the last report, published by W. Neugebauer, mentions about 50 cremation burials (1975, 18). Some of them (35 graves) were rich female burials with Scandinavian jewellery, some – Prussian male burials.

Regarding the Prussian graves, we have the most complete data on grave no. 40a, a human cremation and an accompanying horse inhumation burial, both contained grave goods. In the cremation pit grave the following items were found: an iron seax (61 cm long), two bronze spurs, two bronze rings, a bronze tongs, a whetstone and a small clay vessel decorated with fingernail impressions on the rim. The horse burial yielded the remains of a bridle in the form of bronze rectangular plates, an iron buckle and an iron horse bit. The remaining Prussian finds were never published entirely, and based only on brief remarks made when discussing the Scandinavian assemblages; it is known that they were probably analogous to the graves in burial grounds located in the northern parts of Elbląg, discovered in among other places in Kamionka-Żytno – *Benkenstein* quarter in Królewiecka street – *Königsbergerstraße* and in Moniuszki street – *Scharnhorststraße* (Dorr 1914, 2–26; Ehrlich 1937a, 268–277). More detailed analysis was performed on the burials with Scandinavian grave goods, although publications on this subject should be considered preliminary, showing only a selection of the richest burials (Ehrlich 1937b, 1–17; Neugebauer 1937, 19–28). How this happened is partly explained by B. Ehrlich's report on research activities conducted by the Municipal Museum in Elbląg in 1936–1939. It says that over four years, from 1936 to 1939 “*the excavations began in early spring and lasted almost without break until winter. Each year, field research was conducted for about 250 days*”. Almost all that time and energy were absorbed by the excavations, which resulted in the neglect of conservation, inventory and scientific studies (Ehrlich 1941, 141). Due to the disappearance of the majority of the research documentation, this burial ground has to be considered largely lost and cannot answer a very important question concerning the relationship between the Prussian and Viking burials. Moreover, the almost complete lack of data on other features from this site, probably related

to settlements from the early Iron Age, the Roman influence period⁹ and the early Middle Ages, makes it impossible to properly assess the cultural changes taking place there in a broader chronological perspective.

Under these circumstances, it remains only to discuss the partially published Viking graves. Among them are three of the richest burials, which were described hastily and without proper documentation. These are graves nos. 7¹⁰, 23¹¹ and 41¹² (Fig. 19). As can be deduced from the partially reconstructed graves' inventories (given here in the footnotes), as well as from the description of the other artefacts (many of which have come from burials destroyed during the construction works), they contain mostly two or three chains, originally worn on the chest (the exception is grave no. 41 where there were seven such chains), which were connected on the shoulders by means of special hooks with brooches of various kinds – equal-armed ones, oval, high framed brooches (*Schnallen mit hohem Rahmen*) and also, as was the case in grave no. 41, with bronze “bell-shaped” pendants. In these graves a large number of bronze bracelets and keys made of bronze, which usually were worn as decorative/symbolic pendants, were discovered. In addition, necklaces of glass, bronze, bone beads and cowrie shells had been placed in the graves. Two box brooches were also found in this burial ground (*Dosenspanne*).

Very interesting, both in terms of territorial and chronological aspects are the analogies that can be found for these find from Pole Nowomiejskie. The closest ones for the box brooches are the artefacts from the Viking burial ground in Grobin. The graves, with very similar grave goods, were discovered by B. Nerman (1931, 195 and following), who pointed out their close ties with Gotland (Nerman 1931; Neugebauer 1938, 3).

Moreover, the majority of the remaining Elbląg finds may be linked with this island. These are, apart from the box brooches, the high framed brooches, the

⁹ In many cases, the Prussian and Viking graves truncated the settlement pits. According to W. Neugebauer, 120 early Germanic features, among others, from a settlement dated to the mid-1st century AD were discovered (1944, 154).

¹⁰ Grave no. 7 contained, among others: one whole and a fragment of a rectangular openwork brooch, two bronze chains made of double links, two hooked chains' ends (one preserved in fragments), five bronze bracelets and a box brooch (Neugebauer 1938, 3, fig. 4; 1944, 156, fig. 2).

¹¹ Grave no. 23 contained, among others: two oval brooches, to which were attached by means of hooks (one survived) two bronze chains made of double links, and two bronze bracelets, including one with a wavy motif decoration (Neugebauer 1944, 157, fig. 3).

¹² Grave no. 41 was discovered 20 cm below ground level. It had a circular shape in plan with a diameter of 50 to 70 cm and a depth of 30 cm. The fill of the pit was an intensely black soil with a large quantity of burnt human bones, and during excavation, the outlines of the skull and the mandible could still be recognised. The grave goods were: two bronze brooches in the shape of animal heads with iron pins, two bronze “bell-shaped” pendants, their lower edges had seven holes for attaching chains, probably seven bronze chains (the majority of them survived only in the form of melted fragments), a necklace consisting of 90–100 beads (glass, bronze), a bronze openwork disc (a pendant?) decorated with a stylized animal motif, two oblong bronze pendants with openwork plates, a box brooch (decorated, for example, with small human heads), six bracelets including a broad one and a tweezers for hair (Neugebauer 1939/1944, 158, fig. 4; Nerman, 1958, 191, figs. 275–278).

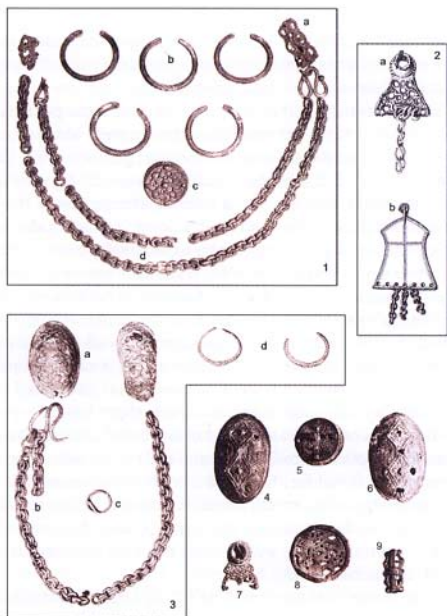


Fig. 19. Elbląg-Pole Nowomiejskie (*Neustädterfeld*), examples of grave goods in female Scandinavian burials. 1 – Grave no. 7: two rectangular openwork brooches (one survived in fragment – a), two bronze chains made of double links – d, two hooked chain fasteners (one survived in fragment), five bronze bracelets – b, one box brooch – c (after Gloger 1943, p. 206, Abb. 69). 2 – Grave no. 41: bronze bell-shaped pendant with fragment of a bronze chain – a; bronze bell-shaped pendant with fragments of three bronze chains – b. 3 – Grave no. 23: two oval brooches – a, two bronze chains made of double links (one survived in fragment) – b, one ring made of bronze braided wire – c, two bronze bracelets (one with wave motif) – d; 4 – oval brooch from a destroyed grave; 5 – box brooch from a destroyed grave; 6 – oval brooch from a destroyed grave; 7 – high framed brooch (*Schnallen mit hohem Rahmen*); 8 – openwork disc pendant (*Scheibenanhänger*) from grave no. 41; 9 – rectangular openwork brooch from grave no. 41.

bell-shaped chain plates, the “animal” brooches and keys as well as the disc pendant (*Scheibenanhänger*) found in grave no. 41 (Fig. 19.8), for which the closest analogy was also found in Gotland. The aforementioned jewellery, according to B. Nerman, is characteristic for Gotland graves dated to about 600–800 and for finds from the burial ground in Grobin (Nerman – period IV and V), dated to about 700–about 800 (1958, 188–193, figs. 275–279). More than a dozen other artefacts, e.g. tortoise brooches, have analogies in central Sweden (Petersen 1928, fig 37.1; Paulsen 1933, 54 ff., fig. 19.1). As pointed out by Neugebauer “the small forms of the oval (tortoise) brooches occur so frequently in Birka in central Sweden that they were named after this town” (*Ovale Birkaspange*). At least three pairs of such artefacts from Elbląg should be dated to the 9th century (Figs. 19.3, 4, 6). The other jewellery found there, e.g. bracelets and bead necklaces are forms commonly found in Scandinavia. According to this scholar, Baltic features can be found on the rectangular openwork brooches and small hooked pendants found in the Elbląg graves¹³.

In the summarising the available information about the discovery of the Scandinavian graves in the burial ground in Pole Nowomiejskie, the clear difference, as pointed out by German and Swedish archaeologists, observed in the burial forms as well as in the grave goods in contrast to the nearest Viking burial ground in Kaup-Wiskiauten in Sambia, should be emphasized¹⁴. Firstly, inhumation burials under mounds were prevalent there, while in Elbląg we are dealing only with cremation burials without mounds. The grave goods from Kaup have links with artefacts found on the Swedish mainland, while the Elbląg jewellery usually has analogies in artefacts from the burial grounds in Grobin and in Gotland. The dating of these finds is based mainly on the chronology of Birger Nerman, which he developed for Gotland and Grobin. Therefore, some of Elbląg’s Viking graves were dated to the 8th century, the largest number of them to the 9th century and some to the 10th century (Neugebauer 1938, 156; von zur Mühlen 1975; Duczko 1997, 204–205). In my opinion, the above assemblages and single artefacts from destroyed graves in Pole Nowomiejskie, represent forms especially characteristic for the period from the mid-8th century to the mid-9th or the late 9th century. Taking into account the fact that the majority of the graves were not published, it should be assumed that within this group of burials were ones from the second half of the 9th and from the 10th century (?).

According to above information, there are indications about the directions from which the artefacts could have arrived, that is Gotland for the older period,

¹³ See the analogies: Nerman 1931, fig. 6; Gaerte 1929, figs. 255.c, c, 283.c.

¹⁴ About the latest research on this burial ground see: V.I. Kulakov 2005, 55–79.

dominated by the characteristic Gotland forms, and Sweden for the younger period, when in turn the central Sweden forms were prevalent.

After World War II, yet another discovery was made in the burial ground. In 1957, during gardening work at Lotnicza St. no. 38, an assemblage of iron artefacts was uncovered, which consisted of a well-preserved spearhead (of type "E" after J. Petersen), a fragment of another spearhead (a part of a blade) a fragment of a knife and a sword (Haftka 1973, 21–32). According to the finder, the remains of a human skeleton were also found in situ. The sword was bent in four places and broken into three parts. Under detailed examination and microscopic analysis, it was revealed that the sword had been subjected to a high temperature (Mazur, Nosek 1973, 4–19). However, given the vague context of the discovery (no archaeologist was present on the site), it is difficult to establish beyond reasonable doubt, whether the weapon came from a cremation or inhumation grave. The sword is of type "H" after J. Petersen. It has interesting marking on both sides of the blade, an arrangement of welded steel bands in an oblique pattern (Fig. 18.1). According to A.N. Kirpičnikov, this pattern should be considered a decorative sign (mark) of a producer – blacksmith (master) of the weapon (Kirpičnikov, Jagodziński 2006, 437–442). Marks composed of obliquely arranged bands are a typical feature of many early medieval swords and are usually associated with a producer or workshop's name. In the case of the Elbląg sword, the smith doubled that mark, placing it on both sides of the blade, but resisted giving his own name. Marks on both sides, similar to those on the Elbląg sword, occur very rarely¹⁵ and may be evidence for the local manner of marking weapons. This dissimilarity is also apparent in the decoration on the hilt, where the grooved surfaces of the pommel and crossguard were inlaid with a thin brass wire. All this, according to Kirpichnikov, indicates that the sword may have come from local workshops. This thesis seems to be confirmed by finds of swords' parts from Truso which indicate the possibility of sword production in this emporium (Biborski, Jagodziński, Pudło, Stępiński, Żabiński 2010, 19–70; Jagodziński 2010, 168–174).

The burial ground, where this sword was found, is located near the western edge of the Elbląg Upland, i.e. in the central part of the area from which almost all Scandinavian weapon finds, recorded for the areas located between the Vistula and Pasłęka Rivers, come from in the period from the 9th to the 10th/11th centuries (Fig. 17). This fact was often linked with the borderline character of the area, separating the Slavic and Prussian settlements. In light of current knowledge, the

¹⁵ Similar marks were found, among others, on two swords held in the Museum of the University of Trondheim (T.11916 b, T.15825) and on a sword from the Museum of the University of Oslo (C.17315). These swords are dated to the 9th–10th century.

lands situated along the Vistula Lagoon, surrounding Drużno Lake to the east as well as the south-western edges of the Elbląg Upland as far as the Dzierzgoń River valley should be classified as border areas (Jagodziński 1998, 159–197). It should be also noted that this highlighted zone is the western edge of the occurrence of the Aestii burial grounds (with a clearly visible addition of Scandinavian elements) of the Elbląg group and, their continuation in the 8th–10th centuries, Prussian-Scandinavian burial grounds of the Elbląg concentration. This issue has also a wider dimension related to another feature of this area. Apart from occurrence here of an exceptional concentration of Scandinavian and Western European elements, which could be associated with the multi-ethnic character of the settlement, the importance of this area for long-distance trade should be emphasized, which is clearly confirmed by the rise in this region of an important centre of commerce and craft – Truso.

At this point a very interesting hypothesis of J. Okulicz-Kozaryn should be recalled that links the name of the people *Vidivarii* reported by Jordanes, with the name of the land *Wit* (*Witland*) provided by Wulfstan. Both remarks concern the densely populated edges of the Elbląg Upland (Okulicz-Kozaryn 1999, 137–138). Therefore, it would be, a “separate territorial unit with its own political, economic and cultural identity, having a centuries-old tradition of a vibrant centre, characterized by interregional contacts with the Baltic zone”, whose origins are in the late Roman influence period and the beginning of the Migration Period (see the aforementioned hypotheses of this author concerning the *Gepedojos* island and the *Vidivarii*). This scholar also pointed out the special position of this region within interregional contacts in the Baltic Sea area, which was also evident in the early Middle Ages (Scandinavian settlement, the rise of Truso).

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