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ARCHAEOLOGY, MAINLY POLISH, IN THE CURRENT DISCUSSION ON THE ETHNOGENESIS OF THE SLAVS**

Abstract. This paper is an attempt at outlining the current state of discussion about the ethnogenesis of the Slavs, mainly within the framework of Polish scientific research, with particular consideration of archaeological theories, both in terms of their differences as well as any similarities. The discussion covers the allochthonic theory (which is predominant in the science), autochthonic theory, as well as the concept defined by an American archaeologist, Florin Curta, which falls outside these two main discourses. The rationale proposed within this paper could support the resumption of a harmonious discussion among the archaeologists on the problem of the ethnogenesis of the Slavs.

Keywords: ethnogenesis of the Slavs, archaeology, history, social sciences, autochthonic theory, allochthonic theory, neo-autochthonic theory, Florin Curta (an alternative for the ethnogenesis theory in “traditional” archaeological discourse), the Veneti/Venethi, the Sclaveni/Sklaveni, the Antes.

I. BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

The issue of the ethnogenesis of the Slavs is one of these research questions which inspire the archaeologists (including the Polish ones) to contribute to a long-standing scientific discussion, the outcomes of which continue to divide the scientific community. This heated and also highly emotional dispute regarding the ethnogenesis of the Slavs which arose in Polish archaeology in the last years has arrived at a point in which a progressive exchange of views (following a maxim that there are only the convinced and not-yet-convinced scholars), was made

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difficult, to say the least¹. Thus, this paper aims to present the current state of the debate of the ethnogenesis of the Slavs, mainly in the Polish research, with particular consideration of archaeological theories, both in terms of their differences as well as any similarities. This is because the author believes, perhaps naively, that in any dispute, the emotional quarrel can be replaced by a harmonious exchange of thoughts, without any detriment to the merits of the discussion.

Before we dive into the main subject, I would like to briefly present my standpoint on ethnogenesis, which stems from the findings of the scholars dealing with this issue, referred in this paper. This will allow the reader to judge to what extent the text before their eyes is an intersubjective approach and to what extent it is a balanced statement.

So the author of this paper is a proponent of the neo-autochthonic theory of the ethnogenesis of the Slavs, especially supporting the version that assumes the ethno-cultural consciousness, social structures and language of the early Slavs were developed in the processes (including acculturation, migration and Slavisation) that took place in different time periods, including longer ones, generally in the area between the middle-lower Dnieper and middle Oder rivers in at least two centres of cultural crystallization. These processes resulted in the emergence of three major groups of culture and social consciousness of the early Slavs, clearly formed already in the sixth century AD within the territory mentioned above: the Antes, the Sclaveni or Sklavenoi and the Vistula Veneti. In this 6th-century ethno-cultural setting – in accordance with the account of Jordanes (*De origine actibusque Getarum*, chapters 34; 35; 119) cited below (see chapter II), whose information we read in a manner similar to Dušan Třeštík's interpretation (2008, p. 23 ff.) – the Sclaveni group lived in the central part (in wide strips of land on both sides of the Carpathian arc) in relation to the Eastern European Antes (a Slavicized multi-ethnic and multicultural group in the upper Dnieper and Dniester interfluvium with a periphery) and the Central European Veneti (generally in the middle Vistula and Oder interfluvium with enclaves [?] in Pomerania). The name of this latter Slavic group, perpetuated in late antique written sources, is an exonym; it was given to the community by its Germanic neighbours. The “Veneti” themselves – at least from the mid-6th century AD – had a sense of belonging to the great community of the Sklaveni, that is, the Slavs.

While in the 19th century the issue of the ethnogenesis of the Slavs, i.e. the origin of the mentioned people as an ethnic (linguistic) group, troubled primarily historians and linguists already in the following century, especially in its second

¹ For the state of the more recent discussion of the ethnogenesis of the Slavs in Polish archaeology, with particular reference to polemical approaches, see Barford 2003, pp. 121-150.

half, as well as at the beginning of the current century, the archaeologists from Central and Eastern Europe actively joined the discussion on the ethnogenesis and topogenesis of the Slavs². Among those researchers there was a large group of archaeologists from Poland: Józef Kostrzewski, Aleksander Gardawski, Witold Hensel, Konrad Jażdżewski, Wojciech Kóčka, Stanisław Kurnatowski, Lech Leciejewicz, Stanisław Tabaczyński, Jan Żak, Tadeusz Makiewicz, Kazimierz Godłowski, Michał Parczewski and Marek Dulinicz. The scholarly contributions of the above-mentioned researchers to the field of archaeology concerned with exploring ethnic issues are indeed remarkable. In this regard, let us just note that with their knowledge and methodological reflection they contributed to the establishment of the archaeological concepts of ethnogenesis of the Slavs that are currently prevailing in science (not only in Poland), including the model of research on ethnic issues through archaeology. Let us add that we are referring here to concepts (in the sense of scientific theories) or aspects of research that have found their way into the main currents of the multidisciplinary discussion about the seats of the Slavs before their final dispersal in the lands of central-eastern and southern Europe between the 7th and 8th centuries AD.³

The particular growth of interest in this issue observed in the 20th century among researchers from the central part of the continent was not only caused by scientific factors (cf. Urbańczyk 2006; Grzesik 2008). While in the countries of northern or western Europe studies of ethnogenesis sought either to establish the roots of a given nation⁴ or to determine the origins of people who had played a significant role in the history of Europe (e.g. the Greeks, Celts, and Germans), in the case of the Slavic states (especially Poland), whose independence after

² In science, the concept of ethnogenesis is understood as a process resulting in the formation of either the *ethnos* of a particular ethnic group or the ethnic group itself, although the latter view is not universally shared. Let us add that the definition of ethnogenesis has not been unified so far. The most general understanding of the term is the origin of a particular people. However, researchers are divided by the understanding of the term 'ethnos', as well as by whether it is the most important determinant of an ethnic group (Kwaśniewski 1987). For our considerations, the definition of ethnos established in 1973 by Guy Nicolas seems instructive: "[...] it is first and foremost a relatively compact and durable social community, rooted in the past with a more or less mythical character; this group has its own name, customs, system of values, more generally its own language; it maintains itself as different from its neighbours" (quoted after Labuda 1992, p. 105). On ethnos (ethnicon), ethnicity and ethnogenesis, see also Makiewicz 2005, pp. 15-16 (the decisive significance of the linguistic criterion is emphasised); Posern-Zieliński 2005, p. 81 ff. The term 'topogenesis of the Slavs', in the sense of the original territory of the people, was introduced into the literature by Gerard Labuda (see Labuda 1981, p. 199 ff.). The issue was already known to the science before, although it was considered as one of the immanent problems of ethnogenesis, without being separated into a distinct thread of research. On this basis some researchers (e.g. Lech Leciejewicz) even doubt the sense of separating the issue of the original territory of the community from the studies on ethnogenesis.

³ For summary overview of these concepts see Kara 2009, pp. 327-331; Jasiński 2020b, pp. 14-23.

⁴ This was done as an attempt to identify the causes and mechanisms of the formation of this kind of union as a fully historical entity, with a distinctive cultural model and a specific social structure.

a long period of political non-existence was only restored at the end of the World War I, the scientific findings concerning the ethnogenesis of the Slavs served to confirm their right to political sovereignty. It was also an important issue for the then revived states to prove the prehistoric and historical rights to the so-called ethnic territories. Let us remind that until 1945 the above-mentioned findings were questioned by German scientific circles, especially by historiography and archaeology – the humanities which are clearly politically indoctrinated, not shying away from nationalistic or even chauvinistic approaches (see also Kurnatowska and Kurnatowski 2002). In Poland, the research on the ethnogenesis of the Slavs gained particular importance in the interwar period (1918-1939), as well as after 1945, in relation to an attempt at “historical” integration into the Polish People’s Republic of the lands taken away from the German Reich (this concerned the territories which had been settled by Slavs in the Middle Ages and belonged to the Piast monarchy). Polish researchers, such as the archaeologist Józef Kostrzewski or the historians Kazimierz Tymieniecki and Zygmunt Wojciechowski, who argued against the theses of German scientists in the pre-war period, even regarded this action as a moral and patriotic duty of any Polish scholar⁵. This situation lasted until the 1960s; to this day, however, we can observe a specific character of ethnogenesology research in the central and eastern part of Europe, clearly visible in relation to the ethnic group of the Slavs as well as the Germans, the Balts and even the Celts. It is related to the association of the ethnogenesis of given people, treated as a social process occurring over a certain period of time, with a specific territory⁶. This is because an important purpose of ethnogenesology is to establish the original seat of a group of people, which, depending on the methodological assumptions of the theory, is seen as the initial area of demographic and territorial expansion of an ethnic group or as the so-called cradle, i.e. an area identified with the nucleus of a community. On this basis, the importance of topogenesis has been emphasised in Polish science since the 1970s in studies on the ethnogenesis of the Slavs (Labuda 1977; Labuda 1981; Hensel 1989, p. 25 ff.; see also Jasiński 2020b, pp. 61-87). This line of research attempts to locate and spatially determine the seat or seats of the Slavs from before their dispersal recorded in written sources, although it should be noted that the actual location of the initial area of the ethnic group is an issue that divides researchers, even among the supporters of the auto- or allochthonic theory of Slav ethnogenesis, which is discussed below.

Important elements of the studies conducted in Poland on the ethnogenesis of the Slavs are the theoretical considerations, which include the problem of acculturation. It is also worth to note the methodologically successful attempts to

⁵ On Prof. Józef Kostrzewski as a socially committed citizen and patriot see Prinke 2014.

⁶ Cf. Minta-Tworzowska 2015. Instructive examples can be found in the following works: Jązdżewski 1949; Jązdżewski 1981, p. 285 ff.; Krüger (ed.) 1986-1988. For a discussion of ethnogenesis as a scientific discipline, see below.

present the reconstructed processes in integrated models of dia- and synchronic phenomena, found not only in the works of social scientists, but also the representatives of historical studies, including archaeology (prehistory) (Tabaczyński 1971; Tabaczyński 1998; Tabaczyński 1973; Konopka 1978; Mamzer 2005; Minta-Tworzowska 2015; in the works cited there is an extensive selection of Anglo-Saxon literature on the subject). This places Polish ethnogenesology as a scientific discipline proposed in the 1970s by the medieval archaeologist Witold Hensel (1974/1975; 1989) in the more general tendencies of contemporary Western European science, especially Anglo-Saxon, where the study of ethnogenesis has been to a large extent dominated by theoretical approaches, inspired by the findings of ethnology and cultural anthropology. Similarly as in more recent works of Polish researchers, they emphasize the connection between ethnicity and complex social and cultural processes occurring over time. In the views of Anglo-Saxon scholars, as well as among some Polish archaeologists, one can also observe a complete identification of ethnogenesis with the process in its strict sense. These approaches, unlike the findings of positivist scholars from the second half of the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries, emphasise the impossibility of conflating the ethnogenesis with a single social phenomenon, including the ethnos as a permanent and unchangeable phenomenon, also in terms of culture and language.

English-speaking researchers currently distinguish between two definitions of ethnogenesis (see Minta-Tworzowska 2015, pp. 159-160, further literature therein). According to the first, called “primary ethnogenesis”, the emergence of an ethnos (i.e. an ethnic group identical to a gens, as a group of people or tribe was designated in antiquity and the early Middle Ages) is explained by a model of so-called primordial (original, innate) ethnicity. In this model, the kinship system is a fundamental factor, determining the permanent nature of ethnicity. This view holds that a person is born a Slav, for example, and the resulting ethnic conditioning, including the ‘core’ of culture, remains essentially unchanged throughout their whole life. The alternative definition of ethnogenesis, shared by the Anglo-Saxon researchers is known as “secondary ethnogenesis”, and it treats it as a continuous process, resulting in the emergence of ethnic consciousness, which is not permanent, but rather takes on different, ever-changing faces as a result of the influence of various cultural, social, economic and political stimuli. And in turn, these forms of ethnicity determine the identity of the community.

While the first methodological approach is in fact typical for the so-called positivist cultural and historical archaeology, the second is consistent with the views that reconstruct social reality according to processual and post-processual⁷ archaeology. Let us note that the last two academic archaeological approaches are shifting away from the reconstruction of the social past based on an evolutionary paradigm of development. It is worth to quote here the definition of ethnogenesis

⁷ On scientific directions in archaeology see Marciniak 2012, p. 39 ff., *ibid.* further literature.

formulated by the Polish physical anthropologist, Janusz Piontek, in connection with his palaeodemographic research on Slavs (described below). This definition evidently refers to the above-mentioned conceptions.

This researcher understands ethnogenesis as “[...] the process of shaping of a certain variation in terms of morphological, demographic, social, economic or ideological structure or any other trait of a group of people (or all those characteristics together and in relation to each other) due to the phenomenon of adaptation of a social and cultural system to the environmental conditions. This variation is formed in a process that takes place as a result of the influence of a set of biological and cultural factors on the system (disintegrating the system or integrating it), appropriately related to each other and hierarchically structured”. It is also significant that “[...] the cultural equipment of a system remains in a certain relation to environmental conditions. Thus, we assume that the mechanism of natural selection is accompanied by adaptive changes revealed in both biological and cultural traits of the sociocultural system. [...] Previous studies have shown that the stages of sociocultural development correspond to certain specific types of relations between the above-mentioned elements of the system. They are related to the adoption of a specific adaptation strategy by human groups [...]. We understand this term as a socially generated, and coded in the ideological steering subsystem, concept of shaping the human-environment (natural and cultural) relationship, which is composed of a set of basic cognitive principles, expressing the human attitude to the perceived and analysed reality. In the case of the Slavic system, this is an expansionist concept, leading to a significant broadening of the ecumene it occupies” (Piontek 1992, pp. 285-286). This aspect of the ethnogenesis of the Slavs, visible not only in the case of the mentioned ethnic group, is discussed further in this paper.

Considering the observations laid out above, one should note that the ethnogenesology research is primarily based on the written sources and linguistic data (see Łowmiański 1963, p. 22 ff.; Leciejewicz 1989, p. 22 ff.; Gołąb 2004, p. 11 ff.; Makiewicz 2005, p. 9-16; Kolendo and Płóciennik 2015, p. 14 ff.; Bursche, Hines and Zapolska [ed.] 2020, p. 74-136 [chapters 2 – P. Heather; 3 – M. Wołoszyn]; Jasiński 2020b). The first, considered mainly in historical studies, provide information on ethnonyms or pseudoethnonyms. They indicate the existence of a historically confirmed community’s identity, which was also recognized by its neighbours, and expressed through language, phenotype (physical appearance) or culture and religion, or possibly even through political ties. They indicate that the community’s identity already existed historically, and was also recognised by its neighbours, and expressed through language, phenotype (physical appearance) and/or culture and religion, or possibly even through political ties. Usually, these accounts also make it possible to establish, with varying degrees of precision, the location of the community recorded in the source, which is achieved by topogenetic studies. Let us remind that this field of research – together with ethnogenesis – allows the

scientists to reconstruct the historical process of separation, differentiation and formation of ethnic groups, i.e. *gentes* (peoples).

Linguistic sources, on the other hand, inform us about the existence of forms of internal communication, typical for the community, which is what we understand by the language with semantic meaning. This is achieved by historical comparative studies of the languages, supported by research into their grammar and vocabulary, as well as by attempts at the ethnic identification of mountain names (oronyms), river and reservoir names (hydronyms), names of towns and cities (oikonoms), botanical names (phytonyms) and animal names (zoonoms) (see Babik 2012, p. 838 ff., further literature therein; Warchoł 2003-2004, pp. 559-569). The conclusions drawn on this basis are useful especially in studies of the topogenesis of peoples, due to the spatial (chorological) aspect of linguistic sources. The latter are also used in studies on ethnogenesis, although the possibilities of their chronology and periodisation are rather limited. Let us add that according to some linguists (e.g. Ludwik Zabrocki [1963], Zbigniew Gołąb [1987; 2004, p. 11 ff.], Witold Mańczak [1987]), historians (e.g. Henryk Łowmiański [1963, p. 24 ff.], Gerard Labuda [1992, p. 105-106]) and archaeologists (e.g. Kazimierz Godłowski [1979, pp. 26-27]), language is the basic or even the only ethnic indicator of a community. This standpoint can be accepted, albeit only under a certain condition.

Inasmuch as findings of the historical ethnology, supported by the information from ancient and medieval written sources⁸ lead us to a thesis that the language constitutes a highly important, even fundamental criterion of ethnicity, they also indicate that it is not the only one. This is because ethnicity is a derivative of social consciousness⁹, which in the case of ancient and early-medieval peoples was primarily shaped by a sense of kinship. It resulted both from biological relations and from mythical or religious relations, which were very significant at that time (the belief assuming descent from a so-called common ancestor)¹⁰. According to

⁸ E.g. Tacitus, *Germania*, chapter 46, pp. 96-97, *ibid.* the issue of Bastarnae (Peucini).

⁹ Cf. Znaniecki 1990, pp. 122 ff., 265 ff.; Kobyliński 2005, p. 304; Kasperski 2017, p. 25 ff.; Szykiewicz 2013, p. 185. In the last cited work, in relation to the Monguori ethnic group, classified as a Mongolian linguistic grouping and now living in northwestern China, it is stated that “[o]n the periphery of the distinctively Monguori area, there are communities that are ethnically indeterminate and show no ambition to define their status. More explicit is the tendency to adapt to Chinese culture, accompanied by a rejection of the Mongolian option. These efforts were supported by creative works in the field of mythologisation”. The cited situation resembles to some extent the “ethnological” case of peoples, e.g. the above-mentioned Bastarnae (Peucini), also the Veneti, as briefly as enigmatically characterised by Tacitus in his work *Germania* (chapter 46, pp. 96-97), in his description of the borderland between Suevia and Sarmatia. Tacitus hesitates whether to classify these peoples as Germans or Sarmatians, ultimately pointing to the Germanic peoples as being closer to them in certain aspects of culture.

¹⁰ See Olędzki 2020, p. 17, where an important statement for our considerations is made: “Tribes [...] were usually characterised by much weaker bonds with the occupied territory, which they could eventually [...] abandon and emigrate. ‘Nation’ and ‘tribe’ are thus to a large extent differentiated by

more recent views, the integration of the so-called *gentes* was determined not only by the narrower kinship – ancestral, but also by the broader kinship – mythical and ethnic. Together, they allowed the community, identified with a particular land and a particular group of people, to adapt foreign individuals or families, and to liberate slaves (these individuals were placed under the care of the group, and formally under the care of its “head”) (see Wenskus 1961; Zientara 1985, p. 19 ff.; Třeštík 2008, p. 17 ff.; Modzelewski 2004, p. 185 ff.). The more extensive exposure of the *gentes* to the outsiders and external influences resulted in a gradual transformation of traditional structures, as old socio-cultural relations and arrangements were replaced by the new ones, no longer based solely on family lineage. These circumstances, in turn, determined the integration of cultural criteria into the ethnic consciousness. These include the lifestyle and related aspects of the so-called material culture (e.g. construction, pottery), then religion, magic, law and customs – being part of the so-called symbolic culture system, as well as warfare techniques, which, however, in terms of ethnical indicators of a community, were secondary to the language and the ethnic and mythical bonds¹¹.

Despite the widely shared belief in the very important contribution of culture (especially symbolic culture and language as its element) in shaping peoples’ ethnic consciousness, the results of analyses by physical anthropologists, which are obtained from the study of human skeletal materials retrieved using the archaeological method, are also significant for the results of discussions on the ethnogenesis (see Piontek, Iwanek and Segeda 2008, p. 9 ff.; Piontek 2013; further literature in both works). Thanks to the anthropological studies, supported by

a specific type of consciousness and self-identification, in the case of the nation based on history, [...] while in the case of the tribe on the usually mythologised genealogy of tribal leaders and glorified heroes, as well as on the strength of cultural and religious customs supported by their own customary law”. Elsewhere in the cited work (p. 18), the researcher refers to the concept of the so-called kernel of tradition (*Kernstradition*) formulated by the German historian Reinhard Wenskus. In this case, it is pointed out that it is possible for a political group not to lose its ethnic identity in a situation of fundamental cultural changes that occur in this community; in exceptional situations, the said ethnic identity may even be strengthened.

¹¹ At this point, it is worth noting the works of historian Tomasz Jasiński, published in 2020, where in the analytical inquiries about the ancient origins of the Slavs (the author sees it in the area of the Black Sea forest-steppe), exceptional research significance was given to linguistic sources (Jasiński 2020a; Jasiński 2020b). This refers to Slavic linguistic borrowings from “Iranian religious terminology together with elements of Zarathushtra’s religious reform” (Jasiński 2020b, p. 87). The researcher stated elsewhere in the cited work (p. 24) that “[...] neither linguistic nor archaeological methods, nor the analysis of the accounts of geographers or ancient historians brings us closer to a consensus on the original seat of the Slavs”. Although we do not identify with the final conclusions of the study (we consider the removal of the lands between the Bug and Oder rivers from the area of the original settlement of Proto-Slavs/Slavs to be an unjustified opinion), we do consider Tomasz Jasiński’s inclusion within the scope of the study of certain (linguistic) sources of symbolic culture as significant for the issue of the ethnogenesis of the Slavs, and their comparative analysis by means of etymology to be a scientifically promising development. In this context see also Gołąb 1987, p. 72 ff., which presents similar aspects of linguistic research on the ethnogenesis of Slavs.

modern nuclear research methods and the results of laboratory biochemical tests (e.g. analyses of fossil DNA or the content of stable isotopes in tooth enamel), it is possible to assess the persistence of a biological substrate within the borders of the studied territory. To this extent, they make it possible to establish the continuity or discontinuity of settlement in the studied area over a certain period of time. And the archaeological studies allow identifying the chronology in anthropological research, by verifying its findings with the help of absolute physical, chemical and natural dating. The results of anthropological analyses, just as paleodemographic data, are used in the debate on the topogenesis of peoples. They also allow the anthropologists to join a broader scientific discussion concerning the mechanisms of ethnogenesis of the studied peoples, reconstructed by archaeology.

In this context, let us note that in the discussed group of sources, which are of significant cognitive importance for the ethnogenesology, archaeological findings inform solely about the sociocultural conditions of the ethnogenetic process, including the accompanying transformations of the sociocultural system. The aforementioned phenomena are reconstructed by the retrospective and comparative method in the form of diachronic and synchronic functional systems, identical with the so-called archaeological culture. These systems are examined on the basis of theoretical and cognitive models, recently more and more often considering the so-called “humanistic coefficient”, proposed in 1922 by the sociologist of culture, Florian Znaniecki (Znaniecki 1922, p. 33; see also Kurnatowska and Kurnatowski 2012, p. 24 ff.). According to the definition of this coefficient, social culture is a multi-level structure, consisting of empirical facts, which form a specific structure depended on factors created and maintained by these facts. Considering that, it is recommended to study culture in a systemic way, that is, in the context of its contemporary reality.

While in the older literature on that topic the archaeological culture was consistently identified in a straightforward way (!) with ethnicity, especially with language, the more recent literature quite often deviates from this approach. In these works, the ethnicity, as we have already mentioned, is treated as a derivative of social consciousness. For modern archaeology (prehistory), these issues remain accessible only at the level of identifying systems of symbolic culture, including the culture of elites (this applies, among others, to funerary practices/sepulchral rituals – on this subject Abramowicz 1962, p. 107; Kara 2001, pp. 121-122; see also Bursche, Hines and Zapolska [eds] 2020, pp. 333-369 [chapter 8 – H. Machajewski, J. Schuster]). These systems are reconstructed through a multidimensional, comparative, often multidisciplinary analysis of archaeological sources. It should be noted that this is not a belief shared universally, including in archaeology. Indeed, some scholars deny archaeology’s credibility in terms of ethnic findings (see e.g. Wenskus 1961; Mamzer 1999; Mamzer 2012; for a different position see e.g., Abramowicz 1962; Jażdżewski 1969). On the other hand, the importance of the results of archaeological analyses in the discussion of the continuation or

discontinuation of settlements and culture on a given territory is not questioned (see Żak 1984/1985).

Given the above, just for the sake of clarity, let us recall that modern archaeology – because of its subject matter, embedded not so much in the historical sciences as rather in the social and historical sciences – interprets the acquired fossil sources using its own research methods. They make it possible to reconstruct mainly the social, ideational and cultural aspects of the past, but in combination with written sources, historical linguistic sources and data from physical anthropology research, it is possible to reveal also its cultural and ethnic side. Archaeology usually presents its conclusions in the form of more or less well-argued hypotheses, which researchers consciously or unconsciously construct according to the assumptions of a particular scientific paradigm. These hypotheses are the foundation of theories, while the validity of their conclusions and methods of their formulation are verified by subsequent generations of researchers in accordance with the current level of knowledge (see Abramowicz 1962; Kurnatowska, Kurnatowski 2012). The cultural and social past reconstructed in this way is not the same as the portrayal of the complete reality of the studied historical episode, due to the accidental and usually ‘silent’ nature of archaeological sources and their fragmentary nature. The mentioned circumstances also contribute to the hypothetical nature of the findings of archaeology. Let us add that the level of confidence in the conclusions formulated by archaeology/prahistory increases as the information of written sources about the studied historical episode increases¹². Although the social and cultural past constituted a complex system, subject to the constant changes, the archaeology in its studies does not reconstruct this system as a structural whole. It only presents its fragments in the form of reconstructed functional and spatial systems.

It should be emphasised that none of the scientific disciplines listed above can make independent judgements on the ethnogenesis of a particular people. Archaeology only provides information on the variation in settlements and socio-cultural systems traced within a specific territory and in specific time periods. The examined systems become ethnically significant only if there is a convincing (in terms of chronology and territory) correlation between the archaeological data and the reliable information of written sources on the location of specific peoples, as we indicated above. It is worth quoting here the opinion of the already cited medieval historian, Henryk Łowmiański, according to whom “(t)he ethnic interpretation of archaeological data is in many cases justified by objective facts and can render serious services to researchers, but under control of linguistic data and written sources” (Łowmiański 1963, pp. 25-26). Let us add that the ethnic interpretation

¹² See Marek Olędzki’s instructive remarks in this regard (2020, pp. 10-20, especially footnote 2), which the researcher made in connection with his discussion of ethno-cultural issues of the Oder and Vistula basin lands in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages.

of linguistic or ethnographic sources also requires particular caution, if only because they are not as “sensitive” in terms of chronology as archaeological sources. On the other hand, the written sources concerning the ethnogenesis of the Slavs are usually very enigmatic, and therefore in the literature on the subject one can often find different interpretations of the information included in the same message; sometimes it is even possible to find hastily formulated approaches without adequate scientific reflection. The potential of physical anthropology in ethnogenesology research has been presented above¹³.

In this situation, a significant scientific development in ethnogenesology is guaranteed by integrated multidisciplinary research, which respects the autonomy of inference of the different scientific disciplines involved in the project. In these studies, the findings of archaeology are verified by the findings of other disciplines involved in ethnogenesis studies. In Polish science, such initiatives have a tradition dating back to the second half of the 20th century. Let us not forget that the necessity to establish ethnogenesology as a scientific discipline dealing with the issue of ethnogenesis of the Slavs was already raised in the 1970s and 1980s by the archaeologist Witold Hensel (1974/1975; 1989).

II. ETHNOGENESIS OF THE SLAVS ACCORDING TO ALLOCHTHONIC THEORY

The problem of ethnogenesis of the Slavs is currently considered within the framework of two competing scientific concepts – autochthonic and allochthonic – which were formulated almost simultaneously in the 1970s directly by archaeologists or with their active participation. They are both opposed to the idea of the American archaeologist of Romanian origin, Florin Curta, introduced into the literature at the beginning of the present century, in which the process of ethnogenesis of the Slavs, as understood by the theories listed above, is denied. The author’s description of the more recent views of scholars (mainly Polish) begins with a presentation of the allochthonic theory, as its findings currently dominate in science, not only in Poland, and not only in archaeology.

The aforesaid concept was formulated by the eminent Krakow archaeologist Kazimierz Godłowski¹⁴, partly in reference to the findings of another researcher

¹³ A project of this kind is currently being carried out in Poznań. It includes integrated archaeological, historical, anthropological and genomic research concerning, among other things, the ethno-cultural situation on the Oder and Vistula lands at the turn of antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Cf. Handschuh et al. 2016. On the roles of modern archaeology in the reconstruction of prehistoric, proto- and early historic societies, from the perspective of cultural anthropology, see Posern-Zieliński 1997, pp. 105-111.

¹⁴ Godłowski 2000b (1976); Godłowski 1979; Godłowski 1983. Kazimierz Godłowski spoke about the research potential of archaeology in ethnic issues already in the 1960s, in a polemic with the archaeologist Aleksander Gardawski – see Godłowski 1962; in this work he also presented the methodical and methodological basis of his views.

from the Krakow community, the ethnographer Kazimierz Moszyński, and to the views of the German archaeologist, Joachim Werner. It is currently being developed further by the research team of the so-called Krakow or Krakow-Warsaw historical school. Some of the most distinguished representatives of this school include the medieval archaeologist Michał Parczewski, a student of Kazimierz Godłowski, and Marek Dulnicz, also a medieval archaeologist, who tragically died in 2010. The school brings together a group of specialists (the backbone of which are historians specialising in prehistory), whose views – stemming from Godłowski's¹⁵ idea – are opposed to the findings of those scholars who, following the Poznań archaeologist Józef Kostrzewski (which gave rise to the term of “Poznań school of prehistory” that is also sometimes used), share an autochthonic point of view regarding the topogenesis of the Slavs on the lands between the Odra and Dnieper rivers¹⁶.

Let us recall that according to Joachim Werner, the cradle of the Slavs was limited to the area of the basins of the upper Dnieper, Desna, Niemen and Dvina (Werner 1972). Its boundaries were determined by the coverage of the archaeological cultures of Kolochin and Bantserovshchina-Tushemlya, dated to the end of the 4th and 5th centuries AD. According to Werner, in the 6th and 7th centuries, the area of the upper Dnieper basin was almost completely depopulated due to the migration of the Slavic peoples to the south and south-west. This part of Joachim Werner's idea, as well as the proposed dating of the above archaeological cultures exclusively to the 4th and 5th centuries, was rejected by Kazimierz Godłowski (1979, pp. 21-22). On the other hand, Michał Parczewski considered the attempt to link the culture of Bantserovshchina-Tushemlya with the Slavic ethnos a debatable move (Parczewski 1998, pp. 39, 41).

However, what proved crucial for Kazimierz Godłowski's views on the ethnogenesis of the Slavs, and consequently for the findings of the whole Krakow-Warsaw school, were the works of Kazimierz Moszyński (1957; 1962).

Among other things, they included a cogent negation of the ethnic method, which was most consistently introduced into archaeology in the first half of the 20th century by the German linguist Gustaf Kossinna (1911). The method involved correlating archaeological cultures with ethnic groups known from ancient and/or early-medieval written sources, which were attributed to a common language and culture, and on this basis they were assigned to specific ethnic and cultural circles, using the method of settlement archaeology. This method, based on a spatial

¹⁵ In this context it is worth to mention the two most recent, multi-author syntheses on the archaeology of the turn of antiquity and Middle Ages in the area of Oder and Vistula river basins, which evidently represent Kazimierz Godłowski's views not only in the findings and conclusions, but also in the conceptualization of the problem – see Bursche, Kowalski, Rogalski (eds) 2017, p. 8 ff.; Bursche, Hines and Zapolska (eds) 2020, p. 1 ff.; further literature in the works cited.

¹⁶ Cf. Niewęgłowski 2000; Parczewski 2005b. During Godłowski's lifetime, the researchers who polemicized with his views came mainly from Łódź research centre: Abramowicz 1962, p. 103-112; Jażdżewski 1980, p. 195-212. The last one was a student of Józef Kostrzewski.

analysis of identically dated finds with common formal and typological as well as stylistic and cultural features, made it possible to link the mentioned circles to a settlement territory with clearly marked boundaries. According to Kossinna, it enabled the observation of the range of boundaries of an ethno-cultural circle over a long (usually approximate) period of time: from the Neolithic or Bronze Age to the Middle Ages (on this subject Jażdżewski 1969 as part of a critique of the methods and views of Gustaf Kossinna; Żak 1989-1990, pp. 78-82; Kurnatowska and Kurnatowski 2002, p. 98).

In contrast, using data from ethnography, historical ethnology, historiography and linguistics, Moszyński stated: 1/ “the extent of one culture, which is capable of leaving fossil traces in the ground, may include in itself a couple or even more extents of various languages”; 2/ “conversely, the extent of one language may include a couple or more extents of various cultures”; 3/ “the boundaries of a given language and of a given culture, although similar, may not coincide, but rather diverge more or less”; 4/ “the borders in question may coincide only along a part of their course, and beyond that may diverge very considerably or even completely”; 5/ “the cultures in a given area may not form separate, more or less closed entities, and their relation to the languages used in that area, which form clear, separate ranges, may vary greatly” (Moszyński 1957, p. 13; Moszyński 1962, p. 93; quoted after: Godłowski 2000a, p. 60). The views quoted above clearly show some similarities to the findings of a German archaeologist, Ernst Wahle, who already in the 1940s criticised the settlement and archeo-ethno-geographical method of Gustaf Kossinna and the conclusions that were formulated on its basis (Wahle 1941).

Kazimierz Moszyński also expressed a negative opinion on ethnic theories shared by the scholars from the Poznań scientific community. This concerned especially Józef Kostrzewski’s views inspired by Gustaf Kossinna’s ethnic method. He denied Kostrzewski’s claim that the original Proto-Slavic settlements were located in the Oder and Vistula basins. According to him, these settlements (which he considered to be the secondary cradle of the Proto-Slavs, in relation to the primary one – the Asian) were located in the territory of the middle Dnieper basin and Volhynia. This area was defined by Moszyński as the starting point of the great Slavic migration, which began in the 5th-7th centuries AD and moved west, also to the areas of the Vistula River basin. This version of Kazimierz Moszyński’s concept, including his criticism of Gustaf Kossinna’s methods of ethnic research, was clearly reflected in the views of researchers who shared the allochthonic theory of Slav ethnogenesis, especially in the works of Kazimierz Godłowski. (Let us note, for the sake of accuracy, that the criticized ethnic method of Gustaf Kossinna is still quite commonly used, although not always consciously, by archaeologists and historians who have different theories on the origin of the Slavs¹⁷; the

¹⁷ For Gustaf Kossinna’s concepts and research methods, as well as their impact on the more recent views of the archaeologists, see Ołędzki 2020, pp. 12-15. It should be emphasized that Kossinna’s

concept of the eastern origin of the Proto-Slavs/Slavs was modified by Kazimierz Moszyński shortly before his death¹⁸).

In its findings, the Krakow-Warsaw research school considers the role of written sources to be superior in the process of identifying former ethnic groupings (see Parczewski 2005a, p. 65 ff., detailing methodological basis of the views). This assumption is considered to be the foundation of the correctness of their conclusions, and therefore the findings formulated at this level are treated as primary in relation to the findings made at the next two levels of argumentation. The second is connected with the palaeoethnological characteristics of all communities, without exception, settling the Baltic-Pontic Intermarium in the 1st-6th centuries AD. The information obtained in this way is confronted by allochthonists – as part of comparative research – with the model of an indisputably early Slavic culture of the 5th/6th-7th centuries, defined on the basis of an analysis of historical and archaeological sources. The third and final level of argumentation is the reconstruction of “the chronology and course of ‘extinction’ of archaeological relic complexes, hypothetically defined as pre-Slavic, a disappearance occurring in [...] the area from the Sea of Azov [...] to the North Sea in the period from the end of the 4th to the 7th centuries AD” (Parczewski 2005a, pp. 68-69) (see **Fig. 1**). This phenomenon, in turn, is confronted with historical information about the course of the Migration Period in the late 4th to 6th centuries, especially in the context of the migration of the inhabitants of Eastern and Central Europe.

According to the allochthonic concept thus formulated, the motherland of the Slavs was in the eastern parts Europe, in the area of the upper Dnieper Ukraine, where in the 4th century AD (i.e. at the end of antiquity), in the forest and swamp-forest zone, the so-called Kyiv culture (also called the Kyiv type of post-Zarubinc culture complex) was formed, regarded by Kazimierz Godłowski as the predecessor of the early-Slavic culture¹⁹. It is believed that the founders of this culture also penetrated the adjacent section of the forest-steppe to the south. In the 5th century AD, according to allochthonists, there was an expansion of the

research methods, despite serious criticisms, do maintain scientific qualities. This means they can be applied in archaeology, and used to formulate conclusions, but only on certain conditions. This was done by Józef Kostrzewski, among others.

¹⁸ The monograph, issued after the author's death, titled *O sposobach badania kultury materialnej Prasłowian (On the methods of studying the material heritage of early Slavs)* (Wrocław 1962), contains the statement of Kazimierz Moszyński, suggesting the territories of the Proto-Slavs were extended in the 1st half of the 1st millennium AD to the areas of Oder and Vistula basins. This change of view was duly noted by Józef Kostrzewski, who actively argued with Moszyński's ideas (Kostrzewski 1963). However, according to Kazimierz Godłowski, the change in the author's views noted in that book was only a misunderstanding, caused by the posthumous editing of an unfinished work (Godłowski 2000a, p. 62).

¹⁹ An instructive overview of the findings concerning the location of the original Slavic settlements, as seen from the so-called Krakow-Warsaw research school, is offered by Parczewski 2005a, p. 69 ff.; see also Godłowski 1979, pp. 16-27; in addition also Gavritukhin 2005.

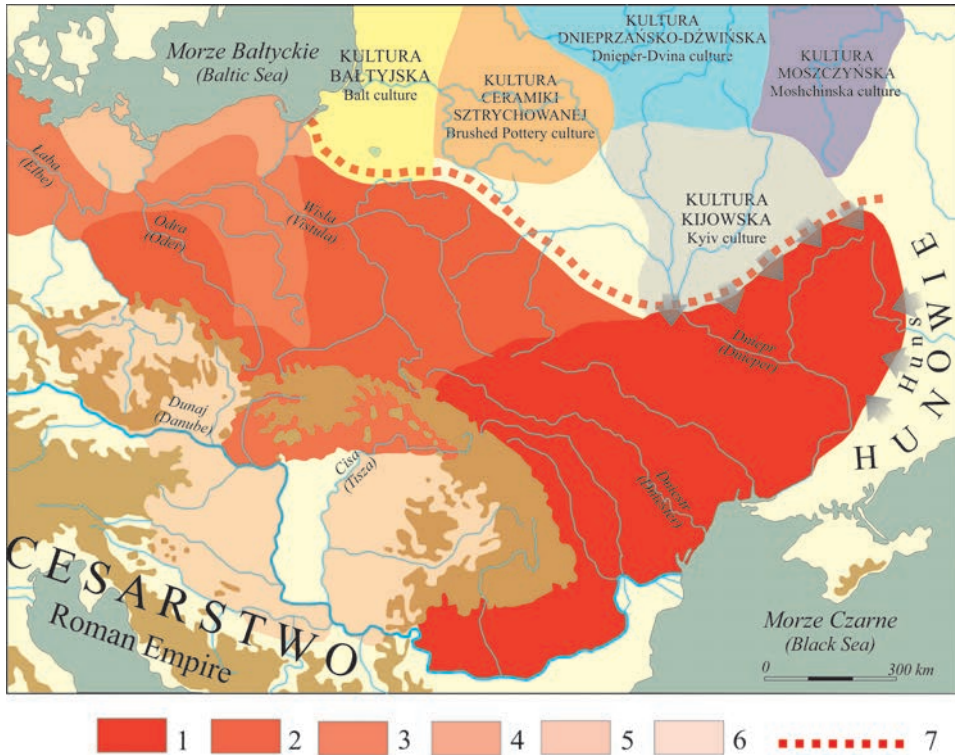


Fig. 1. The direction of the shifting wave of the disappearance of archaeological cultures in the area between the Black and Baltic Seas during the Migration Period according to allochthonists, on the basis of studies by Kazimierz Godłowski (1 – c. 4th/5th c. AD; 2 – 1st half of the 5th c. AD; 3 – c. 5th/6th c. AD; 4 – end of the 1st quarter of the 6th c. AD; 5 – mid 6th c. AD; 6 – beginning of the 7th c. AD; 7 – northern border of the lands affected by the disappearance of ancient cultures).

Digital processing (with modification) Joanna Sawicka according to Parczewski 2005a, p. 71, Fig. 3

Slavic birthplace into the forest-field and forest-steppe parts of present-day Ukraine. From that “moment” the area of dense early-Slavic settlement – delineated by the relics of the archaeological Prague, Penkovka, Kolochin, and Bantserovshchina-Tushemlya cultures (the connection of the last two with the Slavic ethnos is in the first case probable, in the second presumed) – covered the areas of the upper and middle Dnieper basin, as well as the upper and middle Boh and Dniester basins, probably reaching the upper sections of the Niemen and Dvina in the north (Parczewski 1998, p. 33 ff., Fig. 3) (see **Fig. 2:2**). It is assumed that among the communities settling in the middle Dnieper basin in the 5th century AD, the Slavic language emerged from the older Balto-Slavic community, presumably

accompanied by the crystallization of the so-called pure Slavic culture, materialized in the Prague and Penkovka archaeological cultures²⁰.

It is pointed out that the people of these cultures presented a similar civilization model, manifested in the sedentary lifestyle and preference for agricultural activities²¹. The latter includes animal husbandry (mainly cattle, as well as goats and sheep) and farming, mainly reliant on sowing proso millet. Most of the settlements were large or medium sized and were located on the higher parts of the river floodplain, delineated by buildings arranged either in rows or forming clusters with a more or less distinct form. Common findings include the relics of quadrangular dwellings clearly dug into the ground (so-called dugouts) with a stone oven or hearth in the corner. They usually had a small, corridor-like entrance and wooden walls of mostly log or post-and-beam construction that carried a thatched roof. The roof may also have rested directly on the ground (**Fig. 3:II**).

An important designator of the so-called material (utilitarian) culture of the two archaeological units mentioned above are the undecorated clay vessels, made by hand (without the use of a potter's wheel) as part of domestic industry or specialized handicraft, probably seasonal. The Prague culture was dominated by narrow-bottomed, medium-sized pots with an S-shaped profile or an egg-shaped form, and a slightly tilted spout with a rounded or horizontally beveled edge (**Fig. 4**). The relics of the settlements of Penkovka culture, on the other hand, apart from the pots described above which were less numerous, contained pottery containers of various sized (also small ones), usually wide-mouthed, slightly profiled or biconical. They have a pronounced kink in the middle of the body and a slightly sloping spout. Only the area of the Prague culture is known for a small number of cremation pit graves, sometimes containing a clay urn.

It is emphasised that the culture of both archaeological units described above was rather limited, and in their model (especially in terms of the so-called material culture), they show no analogies – according to the allochthonists – to the cultures of the peoples occupying the same territories at the end of antiquity (Godłowski 1979, p. 8 ff.). The observed differences in the two culture models, ancient and early-medieval are believed to indicate a lack of genetic links between the early-medieval Prague and Penkovka cultures and the late antique cultural legacy. It should be noted, however, that both the vessels and dwellings discovered

²⁰ These cultures are named after archaeological sites near Prague in the Czech Republic and Penkovka town in southern Ukraine, where typical forms of settlements, buildings, and pottery for both cultures were discovered. The hypothesis of a late formation of the Slavic language (the first half of the 1st millennium AD) and a relatively close in time split of the Proto-Slavs/Slavs into three basic ethno-territorial groups (Western, Eastern, and Southern) is supported by Hanna Popowska-Taborska (1991; 1998, p. 29). A different view on the late origins of the Slavic language was developed by Zbigniew Babik (2001, p. 11 ff.; see also Babik 2012, pp. 844-850).

²¹ For the description of Prague and Penkovka archaeological cultures, see Rusanova 1973; Rusanova 1976; Godłowski 1979, pp. 8-16; Baran 1998; Kobyliński 1998; Kobyliński 2005.

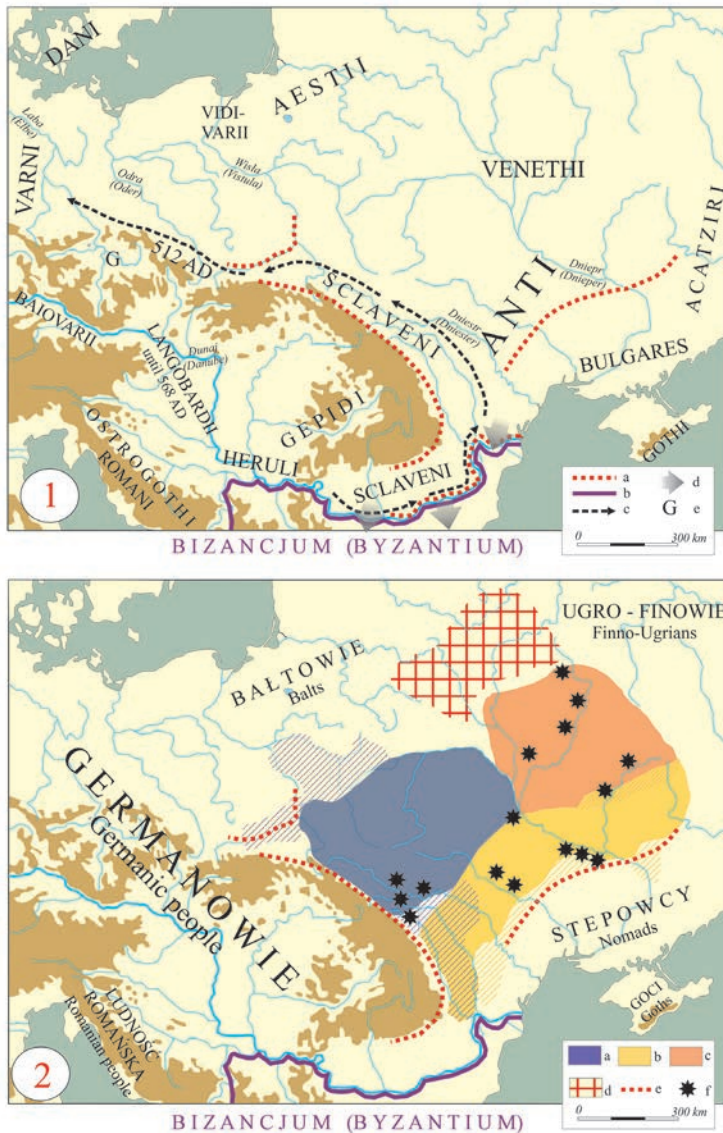


Fig. 2. Locations of Slavic territories in the 1st half of the 6th c. AD in East-Central Europe according to allochthonists (**Image 1:** a – the identified range of Slavic territories; b – the northern border of the Byzantine Empire; c – an assumed migration route of the Germanic Heruli tribe around 520 AD; d – directions of plundering Slavic invasions of the Byzantine Empire; e – location of a Germanic people of unknown name; **Image 2:** a – Prague archaeological culture; b – Penkovka archaeological culture; c – Kolochin archaeological culture; d – Bantserovshchina-Tushemlya culture; e – range of the Slavic territory according to written sources; f – assemblages of early Slavic culture dated most probably to the 5th c. AD).

Digital processing (with modification) Joanna Sawicka according to Parczewski 2005a, p. 69, Fig. 1

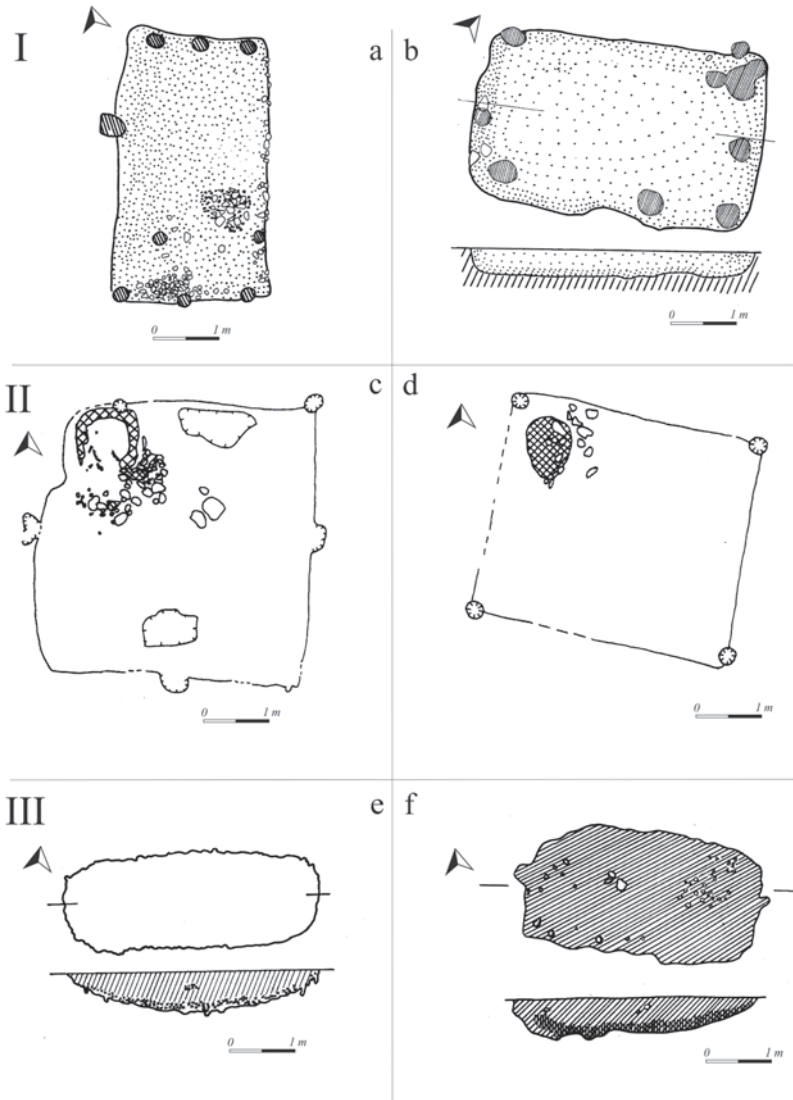


Fig. 3. Level plans of building relics: **I** – buildings slightly sunk in the ground, dating to the Roman Period (a – Olewin, Łódź voivodeship, hut no. 2; b – Danków, Silesian voivodeship, feature no. 177); **II** – buildings sunk in the ground with an oven in the corner (so-called Prague-type dugouts), dating to the early Middle Ages (c – Świerczów Kolonia, Lublin voivodeship; d – Lublin-Czwartek, Lublin voivodeship, hut no. 18); **III** – buildings slightly sunk in the ground, the so-called “tub-shaped” (oval), from the beginning of the Early Middle Ages (e – Nowiny, Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship, feature no. 8; f – Szeligi, Mazovian voivodeship, site 2, feature no. 4).

Digital processing (with modification) Joanna Sawicka according to Kobylński 2005, p. 302, Fig. 9A-B; 302, Fig. 10; 303, Fig. 11D-E

in the relics of settlements of the two mentioned cultures from the beginning of the Middle Ages show close correspondence with archaeological finds from the late Roman influence period in terms of form, style and manufacturing technique. This applies to the “prototypes” of the so-called Prague pots, discovered in the relics of the so-called Przeworsk and Wielbark cultures from the area of the Vistula basin and the adjacent western periphery of Eastern Europe. For the same reasons, it is worth noting the “prototypes” of quadrangular half-dugouts, which are known from the Black Sea lands of southern Ukraine – from the late-antique settlements of the people of Cherniakhiv culture. There are also certain similarities with the material culture of the so-called post- and late-Zarubincets complex of cultures from the borderland of present-day Belarus and Ukraine that date back to the 4th century AD (where the “prototypes” of the so-called Penkovka pottery were found). This has prompted some Russian and Ukrainian researchers to look for the origins of the Prague and Penkovka cultures, among others, in the aforementioned cultures of late antiquity (Sedov 1970, p. 63 ff.; Rusanova 1973; Baran 1978; Baran 1989; Baran 1998).

Kazimierz Godłowski took a different stance on this issue, although he also noticed the above-mentioned parallels between the cultures of the earliest Slavic groups and the Przeworsk, Wielbark and Cherniakhiv cultures. However, in the context of establishing the genesis of the early-Slavic culture, he assigned the significance only to the similarity that he noticed in the civilizational and cultural models of the late- and post-Zarubincets cultural “block” of the end of antiquity and the early-medieval Prague, Penkovka and Kolochin cultures (Godłowski 1979, p. 8 ff.; Godłowski 1983).

Kazimierz Godłowski’s views on the eastern origins of early Slavic culture are currently shared by the majority of researchers who deal with that subject, especially by archaeologists from Central and Eastern Europe²². Therefore, let us note

²² A different view on the location of the Slavic ancient homeland has recently been presented by Tomasz Jasiński (2020a; 2020b). He is a medieval historian who deals with the problems of historical linguistics; in his findings he also uses interpretations of archaeological sources. It should be stressed that Tomasz Jasiński’s idea is in line with the theory about the Eastern European origin of the Slavs, which is identical with the theory shared by Kazimierz Godłowski about the allochthonism of this people on the lands of the Oder and Vistula basins. Nevertheless, he negates Godłowski’s basic findings on the ethnogenesis of the Slavs. Thus, according to Tomasz Jasiński, “The area of the Kyiv culture cannot be regarded as the ancient homeland of the Slavs; it was located mainly on the left (upper and middle) bank of the Dnieper. This area would not effectively separate the Baltics from the Iranians, and in addition lay within the area of Baltic hydronymy. Since this land, with the exception of the southern parts, was located outside the forest-steppe, the population that lived there would have been unable to achieve the level of demographic growth allowing it to populate the entire central and southern areas of Europe. Contrary to Kazimierz Godłowski’s assumptions, it was the territory of Cherniakhiv culture, specifically in the area of the Podolia and Dnieper Ukraine region, where in the 3rd, and especially in the 4th century AD, the spiritual culture (cremation and burials without livestock) and material culture (half-dugouts with an oven and pottery similar to that of Prague culture) of the Slavs was formed, and manifested itself in the first centuries of the second half of the first

that allochthonists cautiously identify the archaeological Kolochin culture with the Veneti, listed in the middle of the 6th century AD by Jordanes in the so-called “narrower ethno-cultural sense”. The Penkovka culture is associated with the Antes mentioned by Jordanes, who were said to have settled in region of Dniester river basin, and the archaeological Prague culture with the Sklavins described by Jordanes, whose settlements are thought to have been established in the mid-6th century AD at the latest, in the Ciscarpathia region as far as the Vistula River sources (**Fig. 2:1**).

At this point, a longer digression is necessary. Archaeology owes these findings to the Latin historian Jordanes, who in 551 AD published the treatise *De origine actibusque Getarum* (The Origin and Deeds of the Goths), which contained, among other things, the first reliable historically documented information about the Slavs. They describe the divisions of this people, originally known collectively as the Veneti (Wenedi), into ethno-cultural groupings (large tribes and tribal groups), which inhabited certain territories in Central and Eastern Europe.

Thus, in chapters 34 and 35 of the aforementioned work, Jordanes noted: *Within these rivers lies Dacia, encircled by the lofty Alps (Carpathian Mountains – note by M.K.) as by a crown. Near their left ridge, which inclines toward the north, and beginning at the source of the Vistula, the populous race of the Venethi (Veneti/Wenedi – M.K.) dwell, occupying a great expanse of land. Though their names are now dispersed amid various clans and places, yet they are chiefly called Sclaveni and Antes. The abode of the Sclaveni extends from the city of Noviodunum (Noviedunum/Novietunum – according to the latest findings of Dušan Třeštík [2008, p. 26] it refers to the present town of Drnovo, located in the eastern Slovenia, over Sava river, to the west from Ljubljana – note by M.K.) and the lake called Mursianus (lacus Mursianus/stagnus Morsianus – according to Třeštík [2008, p. 26] it refers to muds stretching south from the mouth of the Drava River, between the present-day towns of Osijek and Vinkovci in eastern Croatia – note by M.K.), to the Danaster (Dniester River – M.K.) and northward as far as the Vistula (Viscla – note by M.K.). They have swamps and forests for their cities. The Antes, who are the bravest of these peoples dwelling in the curve of the sea of Pontus (Black Sea – note by M.K.) spread from the Danaster to the Danaper (Dnieper River – M.K.) rivers that are many days' journey apart (see Jordanes, pp. 59-60, chapters 34-35, for quote in the translation by Charles C. Mierow; see also Zwolski 1984, p. 96, chapters 34-35 [Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum / O pochodzeniu i czynach Gotów*] and page 148, including a comment to chapter 35).*

millennium AD in vast areas of eastern, southern, and central Europe” (Jasiński 2020b, p. 87). So far, the cited views have not provoked a scientific discussion, but we believe this situation is only temporary.

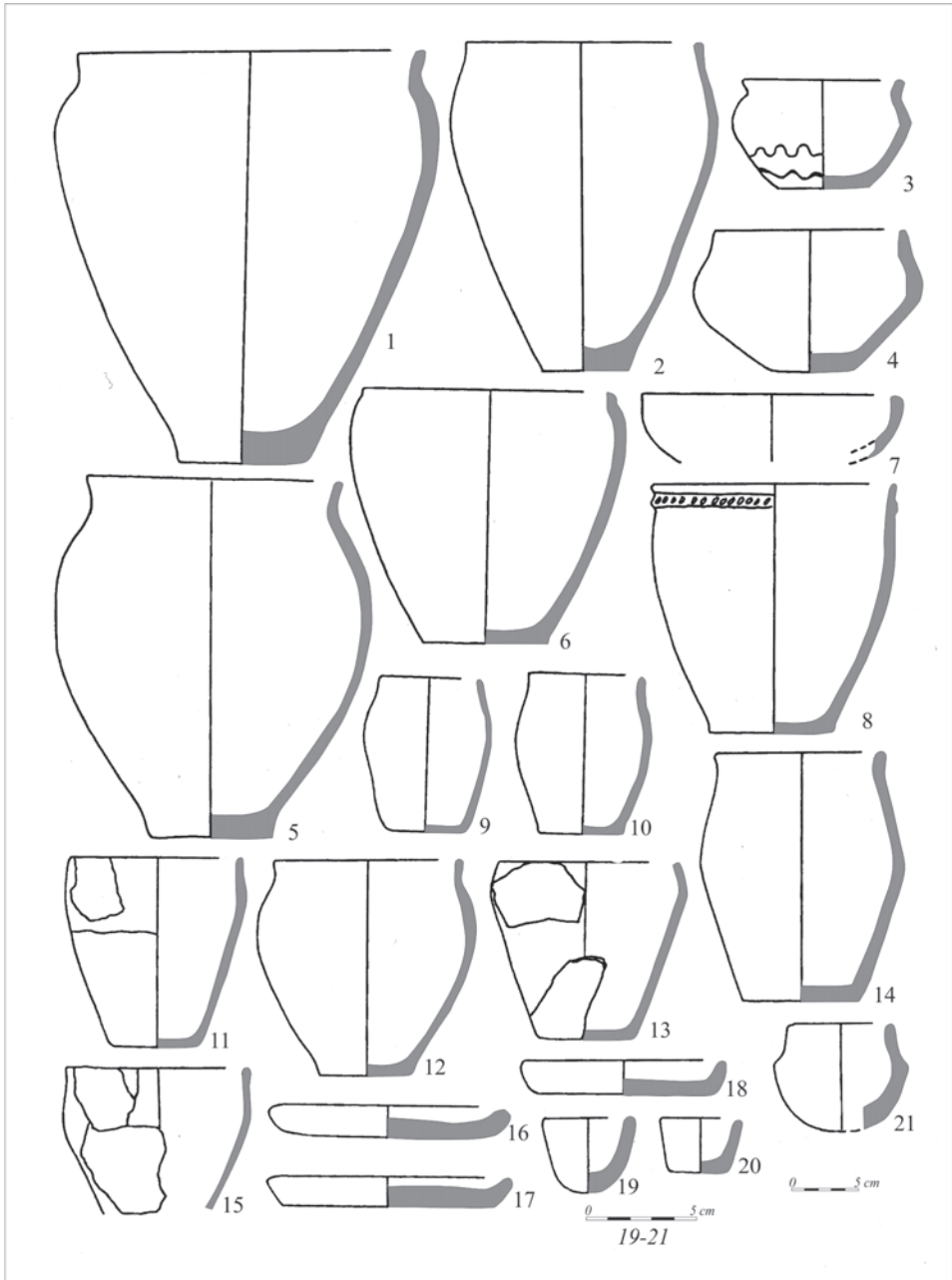


Fig. 4. A selection of handmade clay vessels of the so-called Prague type from archaeological sites discovered in the territory of Belarus.

Digital processing (with modification) Joanna Sawicka according to Vergej 2005, p. 491, Fig. 2

It should be noted that, according to the Czech historian Dušan Třeštík, the information recorded by Jordanes in chapters 34 and 35 of his work reflects the geographical and political situation in the region of the northern (Danubian) border of the Byzantine Empire in the period after 546 AD (**Fig. 5**). Jordanes obtained this knowledge from the analysis of a map from the mid-6th century AD that no longer exists, as Dušan Třeštík demonstrated in his analysis (Třeštík 2008, pp. 23-28; see also Měřínský 2009, p. 51 ff.).

In another part (chapter 119) of *De origine actibusque Getarum* treatise, Jordanes noted: *After the slaughter of the Heruli, Hermanaric (king of the German Ostrogoths, died around 375 AD – note by M.K.) also took arms against the Venethi. This people, though despised in war, was strong in numbers and tried to resist him. [...] These people, as we started to say at the beginning of our account or catalogue of nations, though off-shoots from one stock, have now three names, that is, Venethi, Antes and Sclaveni* (see Jordanes, pp. 84-85, chapter 119, quote translated by Charles C. Mierow).

It is widely believed that Jordanes took this information from Cassiodorus' work *Gothic History*, written between 526 and 533 AD. For scholars who share allochthonic views on the ethnogenesis of the Slavs, this source reference is important for determining the original location of this people. Its interpretation (regarding the vicinity of the Veneti and the Ostrogoths from the area of the Black Sea), supported by information taken from Tacitus' work *Germania* (chapter 46) about the eastern location of the Veneti²³, allowed the allochthonists (both historians and archaeologists) to place the populous Slavic tribe of the Veneti, listed by Jordanes in chapter 34 of his work, far east of the Vistula, in the immediate vicinity of the Balts, within the western periphery of Eastern Europe (Kolendo 1984, pp. 650-651; see also Machinskij, Tikhanova 1976; Parczewski 2005a, p. 69, Fig. 1; Jasiński 2020b, pp. 23, 80).

Setting aside the rest of the argument, it should already be emphasized that this concept is to some extent undermined by the cited findings of Dušan Třeštík. It is believed that the Veneti people recorded by Jordanes (in a narrower 6th-century ethnic sense) should be located north of the source of the Vistula River, within an extensive territory (suggested are the areas between Oder and Vistula rivers). Třeštík was led to this conclusion by an analysis of the content of chapters 34, 35 and 119 of the treatise *De origine actibusque Getarum*, conducted, among others, for consistency with the information contained in the so-called map of Jordanes, which he also confronted with the historical description of the migration of the Heruli in 512 AD from the middle Danube to their homeland in Scandinavia

²³ Contrary to Jordanes, Tacitus classified the Veneti he described as a Germanic tribe, albeit solely on the basis of specific (selective) cultural traits (see note 9).

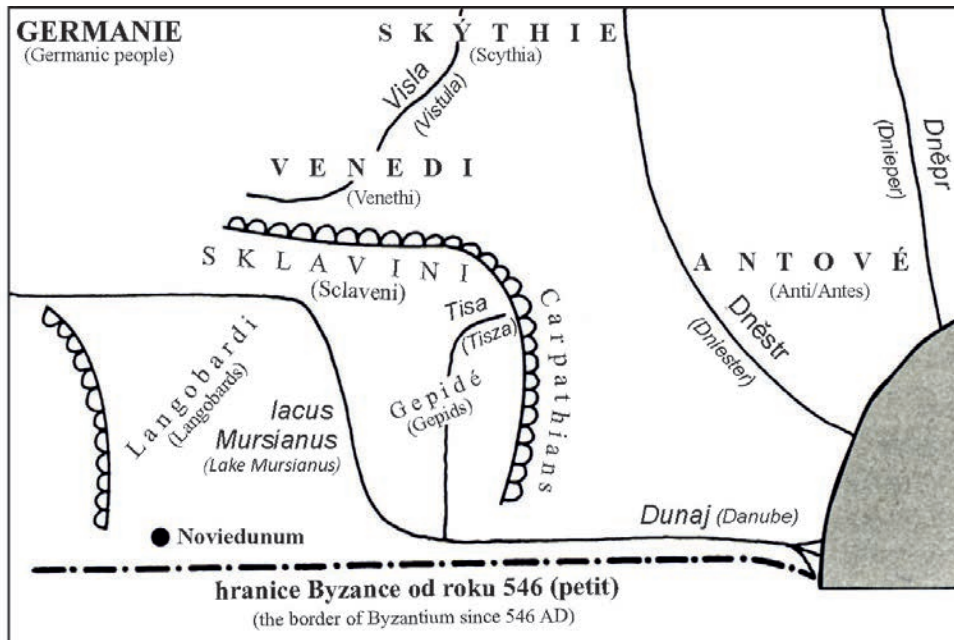


Fig. 5. The location of the Venethi, Sclaveni and Antes groups on the so-called Jordanes Map as reconstructed by Dušan Třeštík.

Digital processing (with modification) by Magda Miciak according to Třeštík 2008, Figure on p. 27

(Třeštík 2008, pp. 24-27, 34-35)²⁴. These findings are highly important for the problems of early Slavic history, which is why we will address them later in this paper.

So far, the interpretation of Dušan Třeštík has not been discussed in the Polish literature on the subject.

Returning to the interrupted stream of considerations, let us note that according to allochthonists, the territory of the upper and middle Dnieper, or upper and middle Boh and Dniester, which was native to the Slavs, was the starting point for the great, several-phase migration of this people (as a community not so much of an ethnic, but of a cultural-communicative nature). This process settled vast areas of Central Europe (in this case, the Oder and Vistula basins, the Carpathian Basin, eastern Polabia, Thuringia, and the Alpine foothills), as well as much of the Balkans (Godłowski 1979, p. 27 ff.; Parczewski 2005a, p. 72 ff.; see also

²⁴ See also Kurnatowska 1974, p. 52, Fig. 1; Baran 1998, pp. 40-41. In these works, especially the first one, the location of Vistula Veneti, Sklaveni, and Antes is similar to the one indicated by Třeštík (see Fig. 5; 6). Dušan Třeštík's theory has not been widely approved by Czech researchers (cf. Měřínský 2009, pp. 62-63).

Szymański 2000). The great migration of the Slavs is believed to have begun in the 2nd half of the 5th century AD, most likely after 454, after defeat of the Huns in the Battle of Nedao in Pannonia and rapid collapse of their empire; this migration continued for at least the next two centuries (**Fig. 7**). It began in a spatially compact homeland of about 300,000 km² (the territories of present-day Belarus, the Black Sea coastal part of Ukraine with the western borderland of present-day Russia) and ultimately led to the Slavisation of about 20% of the early-medieval European ecumene (Godłowski 1979, p. 20). These findings, especially the identification of the above-mentioned starting area as a territory sufficient for the great, several-wave Slavic migration, are not supported, from the paleodemographic research perspective, by the archaeologist Stanisław Kurnatowski and the physical anthropologist Janusz Piontek²⁵.

According to the allochthonic theory, the lands that were first occupied by the Slavic grounds, already at the end of 5th and beginning of 6th centuries, were located between the Bug and Vistula rivers and in certain parts of Lower Silesia (Parczewski 1988b, p. 106). At the end of the 6th or in the 7th century begun the occupation of the territory of Central Poland, Greater Poland with Kuyavia and Lubusz land, and Pomerania. Slavisation of these areas is connected with the archaeological Sukow-Dziedzice culture, which, according to allochthonists,

²⁵ Kurnatowski 1977, pp. 36-37; Kurnatowska and Kurnatowski 2012, pp. 39-40; Piontek 1992, pp. 295-297; Piontek and Dąbrowski 2005. In the context of the aforementioned polemic, it is also worth reading a very interesting text by Andrzej Pleszczyński (2020). Based on the written sources, the author discusses cases of cultural and ethnic changes in Europe, which occurred within the same biological population and were triggered by relatively small, well-organised groups of socially, culturally and ethnically motivated newcomers. Let us add that some historians or linguists propose an even smaller area, interpreted as the starting territory of the Slavic migration in the 5th/6th-7th centuries AD. See e.g. Jasiński 2020b, p. 61 ff. According to Tomasz Jasiński in the group of factors determining the high dynamics of the expansion of early Slavs in the Eastern, Central and Southern Europe, the role of cultivation of fertile chernozem in the area of the ancient homeland of the Slavs is emphasized, which the above-mentioned researcher locates within the borders of the Black Sea forest-steppe, assuming that the original core of crystallization of the Slavic culture is even more narrowed spatially: this time to the lands of the Podolia and Dnieper Ukraine region. This concept still needs to be reviewed by paleodemographers and economic historians before it can be fully evaluated. However, it can be already observed that the farming in the area of Black Sea forest steppe in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and then in the Tsardom of Russia did not lead to a demographic explosion in these states. In tsarist Russia, the trend of continuous and pronounced population growth did not actually occur until the 18th century, as a result of the agrarian colonization of vast areas of the Donets and Volga steppes, areas of the so-called virgin chernozem of southern Siberia, and as a result of the conquest of the Crimea with its fertile buffer zone, initiated two centuries earlier. It is pointed out that the process of the said colonization proceeded uninterrupted over the following centuries – stimulated by the central state authorities – along a “wedge” based on the western part of the so-called forest zone, and turned with its apex in the south-eastern direction, into the regions of the steppe. In this case, it was necessary to permanently expand the cultivated area due to the extensive farming model (Pipes 2006, pp. 13-15). In this context, it is also worth bringing to mind the vast, arable chernozem fields of the present-day Ukraine, previously belonging to Poland, which were incorporated into Russia in the second half of the 18th century as a result of the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

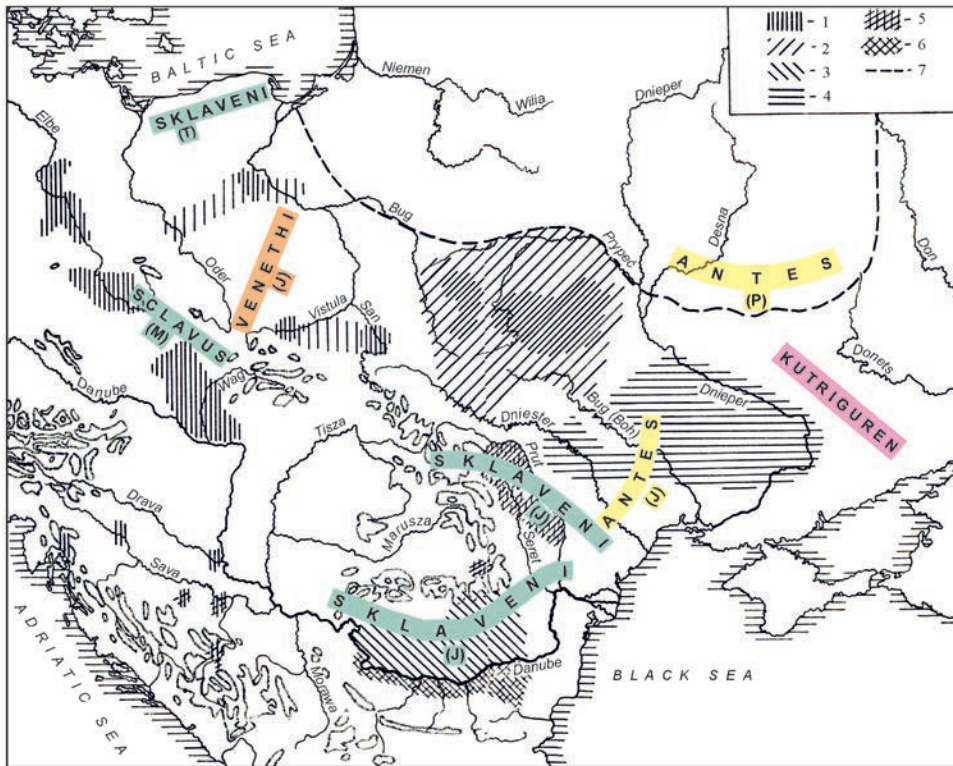


Fig. 6. The location of the Venethi, Sclaveni/Sklaveni and Antes groups around the mid-6th century AD based on written sources correlated with archaeological sources (state of archaeological research the 1960s/70s), according to Zofia Hilczer-Kurnatowska.

Digital processing (with modification) by Magda Miciak according to Kurnatowska 1974, p. 52, Fig. 1

Legend: 1 – distribution zone of archaeological findings of the Prague culture; 2 – distribution zone of archaeological findings of the Korchak culture; 3 – distribution zone of archaeological findings of the Ipotești-Cindești culture; 4 – distribution zone of archaeological findings of the Penkovka culture; 5 – distribution zone of archaeological findings of the Suceava-Șipot culture; 6 – distribution zone of archaeological findings of the Popina culture; 7 – southern boundary of the Balts tribes extent (according to V.V. Sedov); (J) – according to Jordanes; (M) – according to Martin of Bračara; (P) – according to Procopius of Caesarea; (T) – according to Theophylactos Simocattes

represents a specific, younger stage of the transformed Prague culture (Dulnicz 2001, p. 206 ff.; Dulnicz 2005; Parczewski 2005a, p. 72 ff.) (**Fig. 8**).

The beginnings of the early Middle Ages in the Oder and Vistula basins are associated by archaeologists-allochthonists with the crystallization of early Slavic culture in the aforementioned territory, previously occupied by only Germanic or Germanic and ethnically indeterminate populations. This process – preceded by at least 100 years of ethno-cultural hiatus, caused by a mass emigration of people from the Polish lands at the end of antiquity to the territories of the Roman

Empire – was to proceed in two stages. The earliest occupation, according to Jordanes' account of the Sclaveni settlements described above (see Plezia 1952, p. 59; Zwolski 1984, pp. 96, 111), which allochthonists interpret differently than Dušan Třeštík (2008, p. 17 ff.), concerned the territories of southern Poland, mainly the upper Vistula basin. According to archaeological sources, these territories are considered by researchers to be part of the so-called Prague cultural province, and their colonization is connected with Slavic groups coming from the East. In the second stage the areas "located further north – up to the Baltic coast" were settled (Szymański 2000, p. 361), including the lands of Greater Poland which are of interest to us. According to Michał Parczewski, the colonisation of the new area was generally completed around the turn of the 6th and 7th centuries, as evidenced in the account by the Byzantine historian Theophylact Simocatta of three Sclaveni envoys arriving at the Danube around 591 AD from the Western Ocean (Parczewski 1988b, p. 102 ff.; Parczewski 1998, p. 36; Szymański 2000, p. 361; for an edition of the source see Labuda 1999, p. 74, document no. 35; Θεοφύλακτος, pp. 284-287, volume VI, chapter 2)²⁶.

These findings were recently slightly corrected by Marek Dulnicz (2001, p. 206 ff.; 2005). Based on the results of a re-examination of the archaeological materials from the north-western parts of the Slavic lands, suggesting a reconsideration of the dating of the oldest phase of the Slavic culture on this territory (including, among others, Polabia), he concludes that the beginning of the early-Slavic (meaning early-medieval) settlement in Greater Poland, Kuyavia, Lubusz land and Pomerania took place later, only in the 7th century. The researcher believes that the north-western areas of Poland, including the Warta and Oder river basins which according to Kazimierz Godłowski (1979, p. 39) had no dense forms of settlement²⁷, were actually inhabited in stages by groups of Slavs of various sizes, coming from the central and northern parts of Polabia. It should be added that Dulnicz rejected Theophylact's account as unreliable in comparison with the results of more recent archaeological research of Slavic settlements on the Baltic Sea, which was strongly disagreed with by the medievalist Gerard Labuda, who pointed to the incompatibility of this view with the methodology of historical research (Dulnicz 2001, p. 206; Dulnicz 2005, p. 515; Labuda 2002, p. [920])²⁸.

²⁶ The event described by Theophylact is dated and placed differently by Marian Plezia (1952, p. 102, note 8): the year 595, the coast of the Sea of Marmara, west of Constantinople. Let us explain that, according to Theophylact's account, the Sklaveni envoys first came to the Danube, to the khagan of Avar, in order to cross over to Thrace, from where, around 591, they made their way to the Sea of Marmara, to the military camp of Emperor Maurice, where they were captured by the guards.

²⁷ It should be noted that Godłowski did, however, admit the existence of larger enclaves of pre-Slavic population in the Kuyavia area until the beginning of the 6th century.

²⁸ Recently, Marcin Wołoszyn has also regarded the account of Theophylact Simocatta as an account devoid of the value of historical testimony (cf. Wołoszyn 2014, p. 171). However, this is not a commonly held opinion (cf. Prostko-Prostyński 2015).



Fig. 7. Distribution of Slavs in Europe in the 8th century AD according to allochthonists (1 – area of compact settlement; 2 – periphery and ethnically mixed areas).

Digital processing (with modification) Joanna Sawicka according to Parczewski 2005a, p. 73, Fig. 4

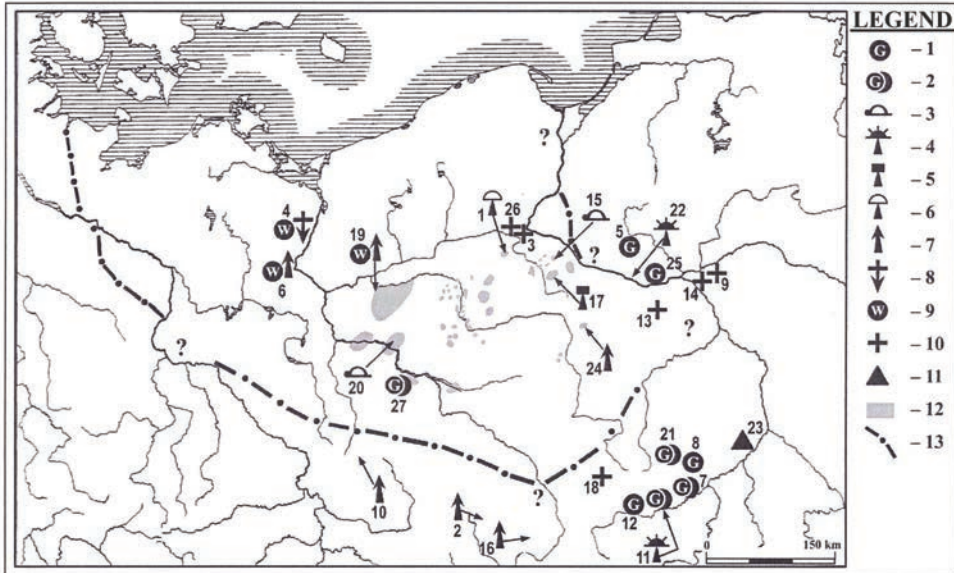


Fig. 8. Approximate range of the so-called Sukow culture (according to Marek Dulinić) against the background of settlement clusters from the early Middle Ages in Greater Poland, Lubusz land, Kuyavia and Central Poland. The following are marked: cremation cemeteries from the beginning of the early Middle Ages discovered in Poland, so-called sedimentary sites from the beginning of the early Middle Ages with finds of combs and/or fibulae found in the area, as well as military finds from the early and middle Merovingian period from the Oder and Vistula basin (24 – from a ritual and cult site?; the rest are so-called loose finds): **1** – Biskupin, site 4, Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship; **2** – Böhmischdorf, Bez. Freiwaldau (now Česká Ves, the Czech Republic); **3** – Bydgoszcz-Łoskoń, site 383, Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship; **4** – Friedrichsthal, Kr. Angermünde (Germany); **5** – Grodnia (near Sierpc) site 2, Mazovian voivodship; **6** – Hermersdorf, Kr. Lebus (Germany); **7** – Igołomia (near Krakow), site 1, Lesser Poland voivodship; **8** – Jakuszowice, site 2, Świętokrzyskie voivodship; **9** – Józefów, Masovian voivodship; **10** – Karpniki, site Krzyżna Góra (Sokolec castle), Lower Silesian voivodship (formerly Fischbach. Kr. Hirschberg); **11** – Krakow-Nowa Huta-Mogiła, site 1, Lesser Poland voivodship; **12** – Krakow-Nowa Huta-Wyciąże, site 5B, Lesser Poland voivodship; **13** – Międzybórz, Mazovian voivodship; **14** – Nieporęt, Mazovian voivodship; **15** – Nowiny, site 1, Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodship; **16** – Pochmühl b. Lobenstein, Bez. Troppau (now Pocheň, the Czech Republic); **17** – Radziejów, site 5, Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodship; **18** – Siemonia, site 8, Silesian voivodship; **19** – Skwierzyna, Lubusz voivodship (formerly Schwerin a.W.); **20** – Smolno Wielkie, site 1, Lubuskie voivodship; **21** – Szarbia, site 1, Świętokrzyskie voivodship; **22** – Szeli-gi, site 1, Masovian voivodship; **23** – Trzebieszawice, site 1, Świętokrzyskie voivodship; **24** – Tum pod Łęczycą, site 1 (so-called “stronghold” clump), Łódź voivodship; **25** – Wyszogród, site 2a, Masovian voivodship; **26** – Zaczysko, site 1, Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodship; **27** – Żukowice (near Głogów), site 1, 9, Lower Silesian voivodship. The association of the weapon finds listed under numbers 2, 4, 6, 10, 16, 19 with the Merovingian period has been established by Petersen (1939, pp. 129, 175); in more recent literature (Marek 2008) finds 2 and 10 are dated to the late Middle Ages.

According to Kara 2009, p. 65, Fig. 1

The cultural peculiarities of the described zone, evident in archaeological sources, have led researchers – irrespective of the findings concerning the original topogenesis of the Slavs – to distinguish in this territory (including Pomerania, Greater Poland, Kuyavia, Lubusz land and the northern part of Lower Silesia) the so-called 2nd province of the early Slavic culture, called the Sukow, Sukow-Dziedzice or Sukow-Szeligi cultural zone, or the “northern zone”²⁹. The purpose of the adopted numbering is to reflect the genetic relationship of the mentioned area to the so-called 1st zone, called the Prague province (from the finds from the area of Prague in the Czech Republic, which was referred to earlier). In contrast to the proponents of the autochthonic concept, allochthonists perceive the vast Sukow province – which, apart from the lands of north-western Poland, includes the territories of present-day Brandenburg, Wendland, Mecklenburg and Wagria (Germany) – as definitely younger than the neighbouring area, known as Prague province. Generally, when considering the basins of Oder and Vistula rivers, the latter province is placed in the strip of southern lands and in Mazovia (with the exception of the Płock area) (cf. Łosiński 2000, p. 16; Szymański 2000, p. 361; Dulnicz 2005, pp. 521-523, Fig. 7). The shift in the dating of formation of the native model of early-medieval culture observed in the above-mentioned regions – interpreted either as a derivative of the shift of early Slavic populations towards the west (Michał Parczewski), or from the Polabia to the Oder basin (Marek Dulnicz) – according to Parczewski is supposed to be about 50, and according to Dulnicz even up to about 100 years.

Irrespective of their views on the ethnogenesis of the Slavs, scholars regard the above-mentioned settlement-cultural systems – the so-called Prague and Sukow systems – as the substrate of already established settlement-cultural tribal systems,

Legend (to Fig. 8): 1 – antler comb; 2 – at least 2 antler combs; 3 – bronze fibula of “Roman” design; 4 – bronze fibula with a so-called five-finger head, from the turn of the Antiquity and Middle Ages; 5 – bronze fibula with a rectangular head, from the Migration Period; 6 – bronze fibula with an openwork, zoomorphic head, from the Migration Period; 7 – iron javelin head of anglo type or angoid, or a hoard (?) of spearheads/javelin heads with Merovignan analogies (no. 10); 8 – two separate deposits of the elements of the sword scabbards (so-called spatha sword type); 9 – from water or a marshy bog; 10 – flat cremation cemetery; urned cemetery or a flat urned burial; 11 – cremation tumulus cemetery; 12 – a settlement dating back to the early Middle Ages; 13 – the border of the Sukow culture with undetermined sections

²⁹ For more information on the second stream of the development of Slavic culture or on the so-called northern zone, see Parczewski 1988a, pp. 97-105; Parczewski 1989, p. 47 ff.; Leciejewicz 1989, pp. 42-43. For more information on Sukow cultural province (the name comes from the town of Sukow in Mecklenburg – German, Kr. Güstrow) see Dulnicz 2005; Parczewski 2017, p. 64; Biermann 2003, for dating of early Slavic settlements in Polabia. The concept of the 2nd zone of early Slavic culture was introduced to literature by the Czech archaeologist, Jiří Zeman (1979).

which appeared in the Oder and Vistula basins at the latest in the 8th century (Parczewski 1988b, p. 106; Dulinicz 2001, p. 206 ff.)³⁰ (**Fig. 9**).

An important role in the dating of both settlement-cultural systems (zones) is played by the pottery assemblages identified there archaeologically. They constitute the basic component of the inventories of finds from that period.

The first zone, the so-called Prague zone, which by allochthonists is identified with the oldest early-medieval settlement-cultural system of the Polish lands, is to be characterised by sets of completely hand-made, undecorated pottery, dominated by the so-called Prague-type pots described above, which may be exceptionally accompanied by single, ornamented pots, usually representing good quality craft-work. These – sporadically found in assemblages from the Lesser Poland area – are interpreted as Germanic “imports” (Parczewski 1988b, p. 70 ff.; Parczewski 1989, p. 45). It should be added that apart from the pottery assemblages described above, the quadrangular dugouts, usually with a stone oven or hearth in the corner, are also regarded as cultural markers of the so-called Prague settlement zone. There are also some traces of very few cremation pit graves with burials in clay urns located within the boundaries of this zone. They are treated as another indicator of the so-called Prague cultural zone.

Archaeological pottery assemblages with a so-called progressive technical and stylistic structure (Kurnatowska 1984; Parczewski 1989, p. 44 ff.; Dulinicz 2001, p. 46 ff.; further literature in both works) are considered to be indicative of the **Sukow cultural zone** which, according to allochthonists is genetically secondary to the parent province of Prague. They contain small, yet already statistically visible quantities of vessel fragments (usually around 5%) of varying levels of craftsmanship, sometimes ornamented and turned on the potter’s wheel, mainly in the upper part (among them there are also better quality items from artisan workshops) (**Fig. 10**). Fragments of this type of vessels coexist with numerically dominant fragments of entirely hand-made pots, which represent the traditional branch of native pottery. With the passing of time (the second half of the 7th-9th c.) their share in the examined collections gradually decreases in favour of pottery made on the wheel and rimmed, often also ornamented. Therefore, the so-called mixed ceramic assemblages described above are considered to be important indicators for dating the origins of the Sukow zone.

The presence of a rimmed pottery in the mentioned zone, in the absence of this type of products in the Prague culture, is explained by allochthonists by the adaptation of a progressive pottery technique by migrating Slavic groups. The adoption of this technique – including the form of the vessels and their decoration

³⁰ Recently, Michał Parczewski stated that “In the light of archaeological data, the lands of western and northern Poland were conquered later than the south-eastern part of the country. This probably occurred during the 6th c., and in some areas only in the next century. The barely noticeable remains of the settlement in this area from the 2nd half of the 6th?-8th centuries, also discovered on the western side of the Oder, are called the Sukow culture [...]” (Parczewski 2017, p. 64).

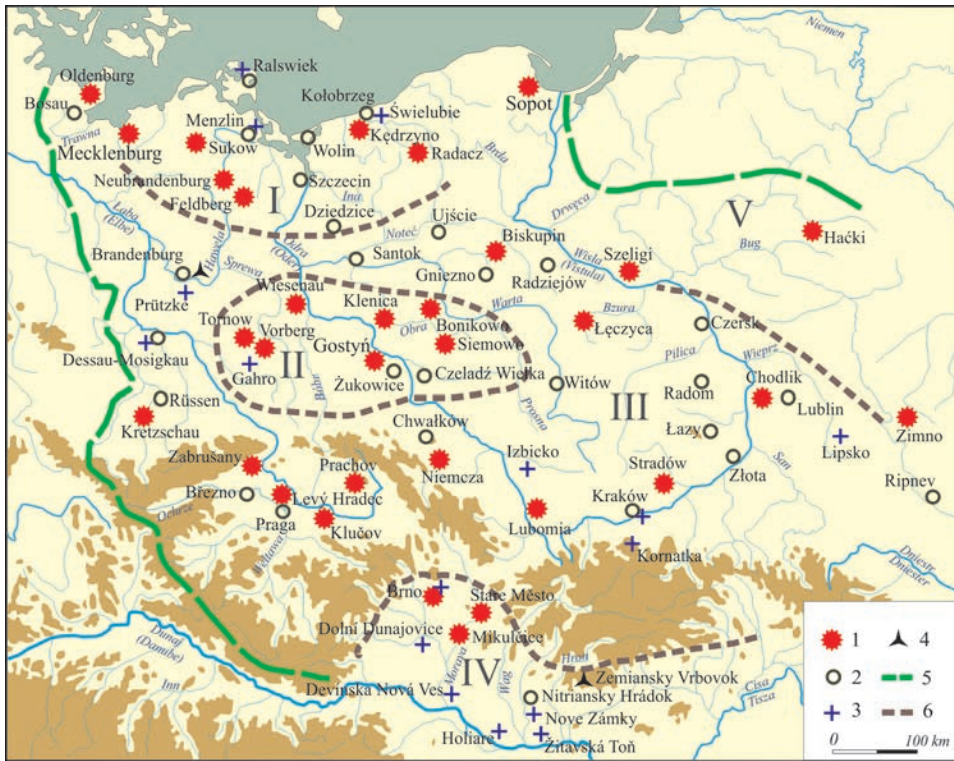


Fig. 9. Archaeological settlement-cultural zones of the early Middle Ages in the area of Western Slavic territories in the so-called tribal period (7th-9th c.), together with major archaeological sites from this period.

Digital processing (with modification) Joanna Sawicka according to Leciejewicz 1989, p. 55, Fig. 4

Legend: 1 – so-called concave stronghold; 2 – so-called open settlement; 3 – cemetery; 4 – hoard; 5 – extent of settlement of Western Slavs; 6 – borders of archaeological settlement-cultural zones; I – the so-called Feldberg-Kędrzyno zone; II – the so-called Tornow-Klenica zone; III – the so-called Rüssen-Chodlik zone (so-called post-Prague zone); IV – the so-called Devínská Nová Ves zone (so-called Avaro-Slav zone); V – the so-called Szeligi-Zimmo zone

– was supposed to have taken place in the Danube basin no earlier than the 6th/7th century AD (Parczewski 1988b, p. 74; Parczewski 1989, p. 45 ff.)³¹. The extent to which the new skills were learned caused the Western Slavs to develop both the specialised pottery, as well as the “barbarized”, more amateur, essentially handmade

³¹ The few radiocarbon dating of archaeological samples (animal bones) that have been discovered in the early-Slavic culture assemblages in Moravia (Czech Republic) do not rule out the possibility of the existence of Slavic settlement in this area as early as the 2nd half of the 6th century AD, or perhaps even around the middle of the century (see Macháček et al. 2021, pp. 3, 5 and Fig. 2 [with caption under Fig. 3]). Dating was performed using ¹⁴C AMS method.

pottery. This applies in both cases to production based on the reproduction or modification of a foreign pattern, which originated in provincial-Roman workshops from the Danube region (e.g. Danube type of vessels, Rüssen type of vessels) or in workshops operating in the Frankish state (Feldberg type of vessels, Tornow type of vessels). It should be added that allochthonists have ruled out the possibility of the survival of local Late Roman craft traditions on Polish lands, regardless of the territorially diverse extent of the settlement-cultural hiatus between antiquity and the Middle Ages (Godłowski 1979, p. 38; Parczewski 1988b, p. 74). For the same reasons, the objects from the period of Roman influences found in the early-medieval layering have lost the chronological values for these researchers. It should be noted that most of such finds have been interpreted as elements of a secondary context (e.g. wheel-thrown ceramics, so-called greyware). On the other hand, the vessels, which mark the traditional trend of pottery in the Sukow area, are considered to be the so-called Prague forms or closer or further variants of the forms found in the Prague cultural province. They were to be created as a result of contacts of migrating Slavic groups (the bringers of the mentioned culture) with foreign cultures: provincial-Byzantine, provincial-Roman, Germanic and Avar culture.

The differences between the so-called Sukow and Praga settlement-cultural zones are not limited to the presence of different ceramics assemblages in both groups.

For example, in the Sukow area archaeology has so far recorded no burials dating from the very beginning of the Middle Ages. On the other hand, the archaeologically identified fragments of settlements from the Greater Poland and Pomerania, i.e. from the area of the so-called Sukow cultural zone, dated by archaeology to the early Middle Ages, revealed a building type different from that preferred by the population of the so-called Prague zone. This applies to the so-called tub-shaped features popular in the Sukow zone, which resemble a relatively shallow, bowl-shaped hollow (usually up to 0.5 m) with a rectangular, oval or irregular horizontal outline (cf. Kobyliński 1988, p. 102 ff.; Parczewski 1989, p. 47 ff.; Szymański 2000, p. 363 ff.; Dulinicz 2001, p. 120 ff.; Cygan 2006, p. 62 ff.) (**Fig. 3:III**). At least some of them were dwellings with a stone hearth inside and a wooden ground part with a log-house construction, a post and log construction, a pole construction or, in case of smaller settlements, in a form of a light (primitive) construction in the form of a hut or a yurt (?). The predominant view in the literature is that the surface area of these assumptions was usually larger than the aforementioned pit, located centrally and probably serving as a cellar or extensive hearth 'pit' with various utilitarian purposes. There are also known cases of the "tub-shaped" features (some of them probably of a farming function), whose outline coincides with the outline of the relics of load-bearing walls, but in these situations the heating device used with this type of building was located outside its perimeter, in the immediate vicinity. Here we have a different situation from

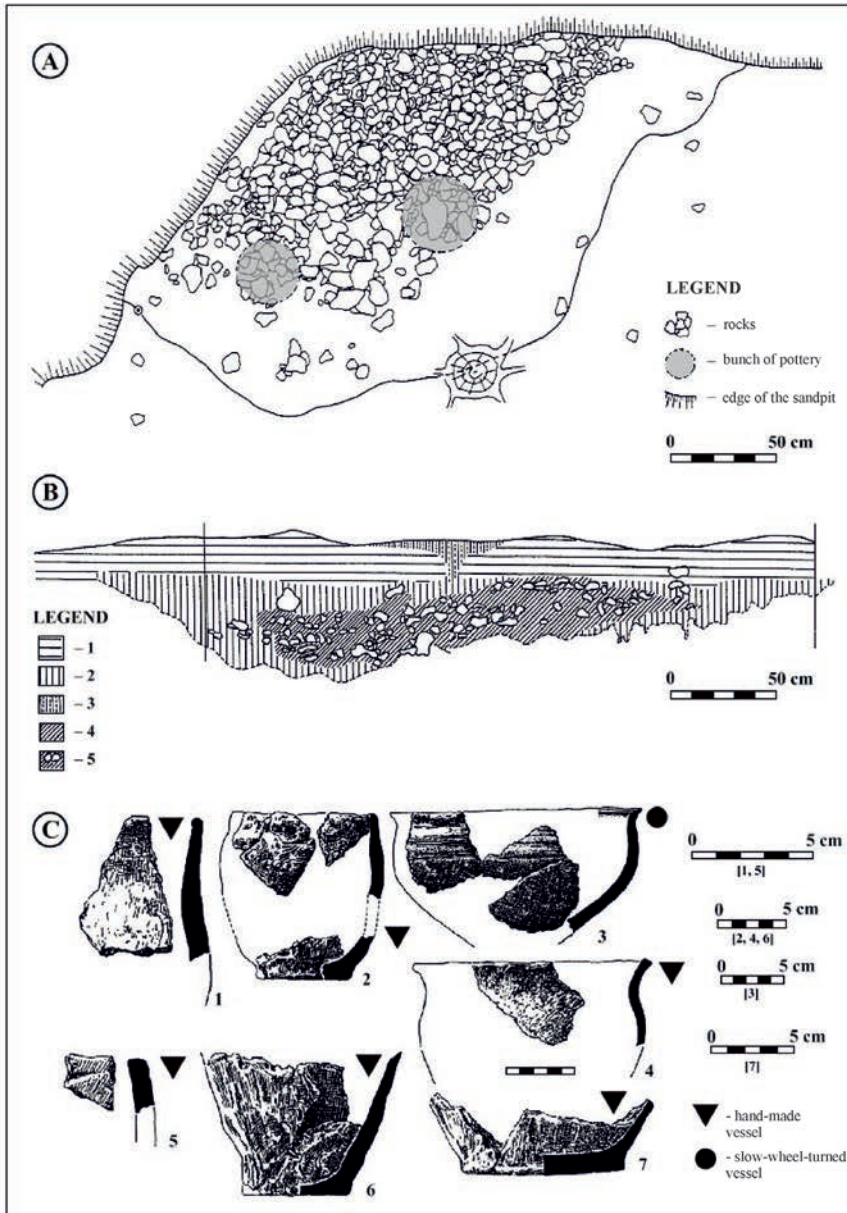


Fig. 10. Buków, site 1, Zielona Góra District, Lubusz Voivodeship. **A** – level plan of the preserved part of feature no. 1; **B** – profile of feature no. 1; **C** – selection of ceramics from feature no. 1 (typical of the so-called Sukow culture).

According to Kara 2009, p. 190, Fig. 56 (with modification)

Legend: 1 – forest humus; 2 – pit filling (humus); 3 – site of uprooted tree; 4 – humus with burnt remains; 5 – fieldstones, including broken and mostly burnt stones

that observed in the Prague cultural province, where the hearth was located inside house, usually in its corner.

More recent studies on the problems of the beginnings of early-medieval settlement in the Warta river basin, taking into account a wider comparative context, have confirmed the views of researchers, who tend to classify the area of the present Greater Poland, Lubusz land and Kuyavia as belonging to the so-called Sukow zone of early Slavic culture, separate from the so-called Praga province, with simultaneous doubts as to the accuracy of the name of both zones and the chronological consistency of the Sukow zone (e.g. Parczewski 1989, p. 47; Dulinicz 2005, pp. 520-523, Fig. 7). Metrical analysis of the materials, including those recently discovered in the Lubusz region, supported by a series of absolute dates made, among others, using the ^{14}C AMS or thermoluminescence methods for groups of vascular ceramic finds from the Greater Poland and the Lubusz region (which do not exclude the option that some of these assemblages were formed in 6th c. AD – see Gruszka 2011, pp. 126-130; Michalska-Nawrocka, Szczepaniak and Krzyszowski 2012, pp. 67-69, Tables 1-2, Fig. 5; Gruszka, Pawlak and Pawlak 2013, p. 177, Tables 1-2; Kara 2016, pp. 80-100) suggests, however, to be more cautious in using the pattern of development of early-medieval cultures of Central Europe. Let us remind that the so-called Prague zone is in this case considered as the older one (this view is shared by, among others: Parczewski 1988b, p. 102 ff.; Parczewski 2017, p. 64; Dulinicz 2001, p. 206 ff.; Dulinicz 2005). Furthermore, it is assumed that there is a “genetic” relationship between the two provinces of early Slavic culture, with the secondary character of Sukow culture being a temporal modification of the “Prague” core, induced by foreign cultural and civilisational factors. However, as the eminent Poznań archaeologist Władysław Łosiński, who died recently, aptly remarked, it is difficult, if only for the lack of a major series of absolute dates which would unquestionably confirm the view quoted above, “to consider as conclusively proven the claim about a chronological gap between early Slavic sites associated with both cultural provinces” (Łosiński 2000, p. 16). In this situation, the spatial-functional relationship between the Sukow and Prague settlement-cultural zones, basically based only on the typologically established metrics of the vascular ceramic assemblages, does not necessarily represent a derivative of the development of the “Prague” cultural core. It is worth to refer once again to the observations of Władysław Łosiński, who sees the two genetically distinct but essentially contemporary cultural systems in the oldest early-medieval settlement on Polish lands. Thus, he considered the lands of southern Poland (mainly Lesser Poland) – in agreement with the findings of Michał Parczewski – to be a territory occupied at an early stage by the representatives of the so-called Prague culture who came from the East. Whereas, the areas located further north in the Oder and Vistula basins, including Greater Poland and the Lubusz region, were, according to Łosiński, settled at that time by groups of Slavs who had been there since the end of antiquity; therefore, they carried on some of the skills and

patterns from the previous era (Łosiński 2000, p. 16). It should be noted that the quoted view was formulated by an archaeologist representing the allochthonic approach.

According to more recent allochthonic ideas, the Slavic colonisation of the remaining territories – eventually forming the area of western and southern Slavdom – was stretched over the next two centuries. It should be added that according to the views of the Krakow-Warsaw school, the Polish lands gradually settled by the Slavs at the beginning of the Middle Ages (2nd half of the 5th-7th centuries), as well as the Carpathian Basin (although to a smaller extent) and Polabia were depopulated areas. In the case of the lands between the Bug and Oder rivers, between the middle of the 4th and the beginning of the 5th centuries AD, these areas were abandoned by their former inhabitants, mainly Germanic peoples, as mentioned above.

Thus, between the oldest Slavic settlement and the final stage of ancient settlement there was a hiatus, although recently the archaeologists (referring to the view of Kazimierz Godłowski already signalled by us) have accepted the possibility of smaller or larger enclaves of “ancient” population functioning in the Polish lands at least until the middle of the 6th c. AD, among others, in the Parsęta river basin in Western Pomerania, in Central Poland, as well as in Greater Poland (**Fig. 11**) and in Kuyavia, where even the “threshold” of the 7th century is indicated as the end of existence of communities representing the late antique model of culture (see Abramek, Makiewicz 2004, p. 319; Żychliński 2008; Machajewski 2017; Machajewski 2018; Bursche, Hines, Zapolska [eds] 2020, pp. 469-499 [chapter 13 – M. Rudnicki, M. Rudnicki]). The presence of limited in size groups of Germanic people is emphasised. They are sometimes referred to as the “Vandal stragglers/remnants” (in reference to the historical Vandal tribe, which is more and more often connected by researchers with the archaeologically confirmed settlement of the so-called Przeworsk culture on Polish lands)³². It is believed that the above-mentioned remnants of Germanic groups survived in their settlements the “moment” of the influx of Slavic people (representing a typical model of social culture continued into the early Middle Ages) into the Vistula basin, who gradually expanded into the “borders” of the new lands from the western areas of eastern Europe. The eventual fate of these “Vandal remnants” on Polish soil (which could include emigration, acculturation, extinction, extinction) is not specified by researchers. It is only enigmatically stated that “The archaeological data make a strong case for the depopulation of the Przeworsk Culture territory at the beginning of the 5th c., so that within that half-century only the very last of this population could have remained in place, their fate sealed by the expansion of the

³² See Rudnicki 2017, p. 51. The rationale for the identification of the Przeworsk culture population with the Vandal tribes, especially with the Siling and Hasding Vandals, is discussed by Michałowski 2015, pp. 29-30, *ibid.* further literature.

Stanowisko [Site]	Nr obiektu [Feature nr.]	Rodzaj materiału [Type of material]	Daty [Dates]			Ilość kolagenu [Amount of collagen] [%]
			niekalibrowane [before calibration]	kalibrowane [calibrated]		
				prawdopodobieństwo [probability] 68,2%	prawdopodobieństwo [probability] 95,4%	
Giecz 21-22	820	kości zwierzęce [animal bones]	1590±30 BP	420 – 540 AD	410 – 550 AD	1,9
	1087		1680±35 BP	260 – 420 AD	250 – 430 AD	3,0
	1137		1500±35 BP	535 – 610 AD	430 – 650 AD	1,5
	1160		1735±35 BP	245 – 345 AD	230 – 410 AD	3,2
	1447		1725±35 BP	250 – 380 AD	230 – 410 AD	5,7
Cieśle 11	105	kości zwierzęce [animal bones]	1710±30 BP	250 – 390 AD	250 – 410 AD	2,3
	237		1665±30 BP	340 – 420 AD	250 – 440 AD	2,2
	330		1505±30 BP	540 – 600 AD	430 – 640 AD	1,3
	428		200±30 BP	1650 – 1960 AD	1640 – 1960 AD	0,9
	500	węgiel drzewny [charcoal]	1650±35 BP	340 – 430 AD	260 – 540 AD	

Fig. 11 (table). Radiocarbon dating (^{14}C AMS) of archaeological samples from a settlement of the Przeworsk culture from the late Roman Period and the Migration Period from Giecz, sites no. 21-22, Środa Wielkopolska District, Greater Poland Voivodeship, and Cieśle, site no. 11, Poznań District, Greater Poland Voivodeship (the dating was done by the Poznań Radiocarbon Laboratory).

Digital processing (with modification) by Magda Miciak according to Żychliński 2008, p. 353, Table 1

Explanations to the table: BP – the conventional radiocarbon age (with its associated measurement error) of an archaeological sample measured from 1950 backwards and designated as *Before Present*; AD – the calibrated calendar age of an archaeological sample within the range of absolute chronology and determined in *Anno Domini*

Slavs” (Bursche, Hines and Zapolska [eds] 2020, p. 466 [chapter 12 – M. Mączyńska])³³.

To support the thesis of depopulation of the Oder and Vistula basin lands at the turn of antiquity and the Middle Ages, as a *sine qua non* condition for the

³³ In the context of the cited remarks, one should note the opinion of Marcin and Mirosław Rudnicki (co-authors of the cited publication), who do not exclude the possibility of the presence of Germanic groups in the Kuyavia area, who were settled there from late antiquity until the “moment” when the Piasts built their local state structures (Bursche, Hines, Zapolska [eds] 2020, pp. 498-499 [chapter 13 – M. Rudnicki, M. Rudnicki]). They even suspect a significant participation of the mentioned population in the establishment of the Kuyavian “core” of that state, and seek confirmation of this “fact” in the account of a German written source from the end of the 10th century (Gerhard von Augsburg, *Vita Sancti Uodalrici* II, 22), where Prince Mieszko I (ca. 960-992) is described as *dux Wandalorum, miscio nomine*. Contrary to more recent historians’ findings, where the symbolic connotations of this record are emphasised (Pleszczyński 2008, pp. 82 and 74, footnote 298, *ibid.* written source cited; see also Banaszekiewicz 1998, p. 65 ff.), Marcin Rudnicki reads it literally (Rudnicki 2017, p. 56). Let us add that also the results of archaeological studies on the beginnings of the Piast state do not confirm the hypothesis of Mieszko’s Vandal regnum (cf. Kurnatowska 2002, p. 10 ff.; Kara 2009, p. 63 ff.).

occurrence of eastern migration of the Slavic population to the mentioned territory, allochthonists refer to the results of linguistic and palaeobotanical analyses.

And thus, the results of the research of the German linguist Jürgen Udolph, concerning the hydronymics of the Polish lands, are considered symptomatic, as they are in line with the findings of archaeology concerning the oldest phase of colonisation of the lands between the Bug and Oder rivers by communities identified with the early Slavic culture. According to the same researcher, the aforementioned hydronymics shows a predominance of pre-Slavic names, while clearly Slavic names are to be concentrated in Lesser Poland and Lower Silesia (**Fig. 12**). These findings were recently criticised by the Polish linguist Zbigniew Babik, who negated not only the conclusions, but also the methodology of Jürgen Udolph's research (Udolph 1979; Udolph 1990; Babik 2001, p. 60 ff., see also Makiewicz 2008, pp. 9-23, 39).

In turn, the depopulation of the Vistula lands during the Migration Period is supposed to be confirmed, according to archaeologists-allochthonists, by a clear decrease in the share of cultivated plants in the recorded spectra, accompanied by an increase in the frequency of pollen of herbaceous plants, especially the European hornbeam (cf. Tobolski 2005), revealed in the pollen diagrams for the area of Greater Poland and Kuyavia in the 2nd half of the 4th-6th centuries AD. Nevertheless, the above findings cannot be generalised, even in relation to the macro-region. As an example, let us note the pollen diagram made in the village of Nowiny in eastern Kuyavia (Dąbrowa Biskupia municipality, Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship), which indicated no settlement gap between antiquity and the Middle Ages. It should be added that relics of a settlement dating to the beginning of the Middle Ages were discovered in the above-mentioned location, where ceramics of the so-called Prague type were found, among others (Godłowski 1979, p. 39; Parczewski 1988b, pp. 174-177; Dulinicz 2001, p. 225). In turn, the decrease in anthropogenic pressure, including agricultural activity, recorded in the local natural environment for the Migration Period (Noryśkiewicz 1995), established by palynologists for the Biskupin area (Gąsawa municipality, Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship), could have been caused by factors connected with the depopulation process (in the sense of a considerable reduction in the number of settlements), combined with a change in the location of farmland. The indications of this sort of situation in the turn of antiquity and the Middle Ages (5th-7th centuries) were found, among others, in the area of present-day Germany (Kara 2009, p. 70, footnote 477; Nösler, Wolters 2009, pp. 372-378; Kurnatowska and Kurnatowski 2012, p. 41).

The allochthonic theory of the ethnogenesis of the Slavs, although dominating in the sciences, is not universally shared. Before proceeding further, it is worth noting that the possibility of the formation of a coherent, wide-ranging social culture in the course of a long-distance migration, which is assumed by the allochthonic theory, among others, in relation to the genesis of the early Slavic culture

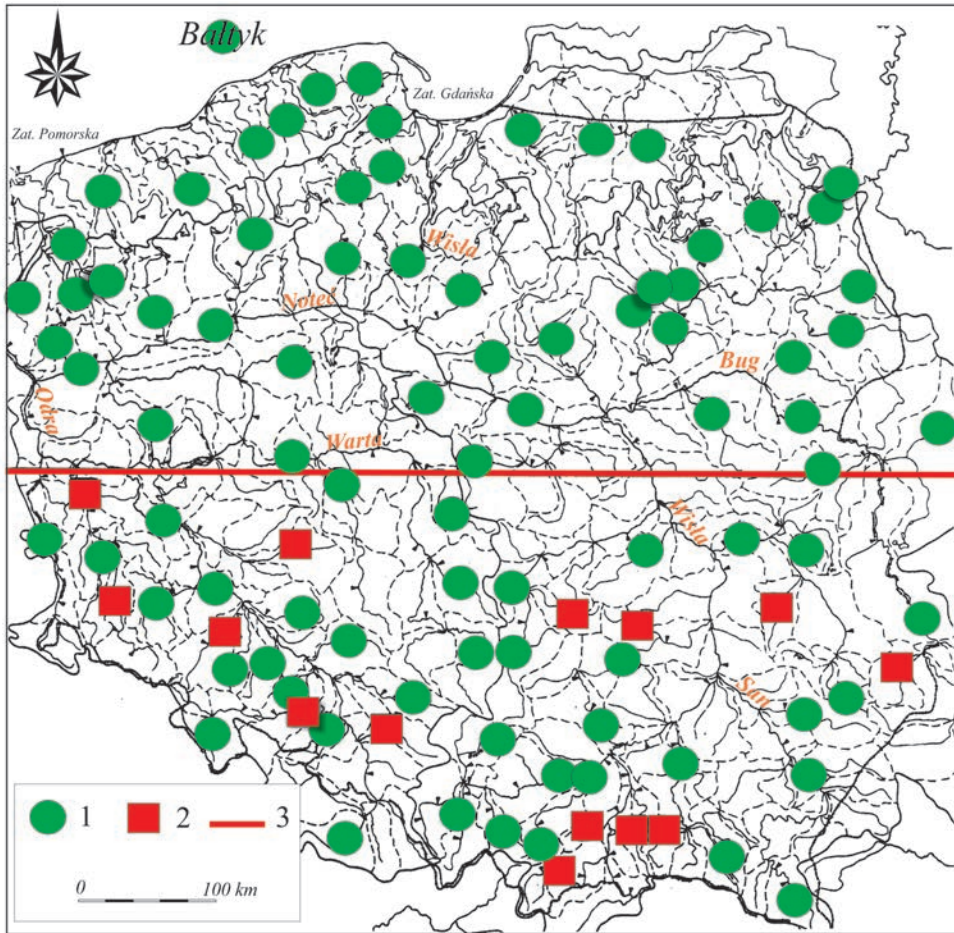


Fig. 12. Hydronyms of Polish lands according to Jürgen Udolph (1 – pre-Slavic name; 2 – Slavic name; 3 – the northern boundary of occurrence of hydronyms of Slavic origin). Digital processing (with modification) by Joanna Sawicka according to Leciejewicz 2005, p. 245, Fig. 1

Explanations to the Fig.: Bałtyk – Baltic Sea; Odra – Oder; Wisła – Vistula; Zat. Gdańska – Gdańsk Bay; Zat. Pomorska – Pomeranian Bay

of Sukow-Dziedzice, raises some doubts among researchers. Significant findings on this matter were provided by the research of the ethnogenesis and expansion of Bantu peoples (a community now inhabiting central and southern Africa), carried out with the participation of British archaeologists. They demonstrated that “referring to migration and expansion as major culture-forming factors, treated by many scholars as a means to address the troubling difficulties of explaining the process of ethnogenesis and expansion of Bantu peoples, completely fails as a model of

causal explanation. Migration, similarly to evolutionary and diffusion processes accompanying the development of Bantu, as well as acculturation of local population substrates, was only a segment of a broader phenomenon of creating a new culture” (Tabaczyński 1973, p. 212; see also Tabaczyński 1971, where he considers the archaeological theory of culture and models of its study, also in the context of the phenomenon of culture change). Based on this, it is suggested that the model of culture change should be considered on the basis of processual approaches and not only historical-cultural and migrationist ones. These studies have also confirmed the possibility of analysing material (utilitarian) culture in terms of its possible relations to a specific ethno-cultural group. Such relations, reflecting not only cultural, but also linguistic, and to some extent anthropological distinctiveness of smaller groups within a larger tribal community, were found by the analysis of the diversity of pottery assemblages of peoples belonging to the Bantu linguistic family (Tabaczyński 1998, p. 89). The parallels between this situation and the early Slavic culture which can be drawn in this case, regardless of the differences in time, civilisational development and ecosystem, are rather puzzling.

III. ETHNOGENESIS OF THE SLAVS ACCORDING TO AUTOCHTHONIC THEORY

Opposite to the views of allochthonists is the so-called neo-autochthonic concept of the ethnogenesis of the Slavs, which assumes the existence of the so-called Proto-Slavic phase deeply rooted in prehistory. It should be noted that the 1970s saw a final reformulation of the so-called autochthonic concept of the ethnogenesis of the Slavs, which had its roots in pre-war findings, including archaeological ones, and in terms of ideas referred to some extent to the views of 19th century researchers, into a new autochthonic theory based on the model of comprehensive studies. An important contribution to the modification of the theory of ethnogenesis was provided by the archaeologist Witold Hensel, a student of the leading Polish autochthonist, Józef Kostrzewski (Hensel 1972; Hensel 1973; Hensel 1974/1975; Hensel 1978; Hensel 1980, p. 499 ff.; Hensel 1989, containing the theoretical basis for the postulated ethnogenesology). However, it is worth noting that tendencies in this direction were noticeable even earlier, both among archaeologists (Aleksander Gardawski), linguists (Tadeusz Lehr-Splawiński, Jerzy Nalepa) and historians (Kazimierz Tymieniecki, Henryk Łowmiański, Gerard Labuda)³⁴. Witold Hensel's views were further developed by his students, especially Lech Leciejewicz (1989, p. 22 ff.; 1997; 1998; 2000, pp. 45 ff., 144 ff.; 2002; 2005; 2008, pp. 81-85). Let us add that the mentioned concept is still accepted in science, although not as widely as before and not always in its original version. Recently,

³⁴ See Lehr-Splawiński 1961; Gardawski 1968; Nalepa 1968; Labuda 1977, p. 11 ff., including works by Tymieniecki and Łowmiański relevant to this subject.

significant modifications or re-evaluations of some of its findings have been revealed.

The views that are of interest to us – for the first time relating to the palaeodemographic estimates (the research of Stanisław Kurnatowski mentioned above, and of Janusz Piontek, carried out a bit later) – have been presented in the form of a hypothesis, treated as the most probable from those accepted at that time.

In contrast to earlier findings, the discussed concept of the origin of the Slavs interprets the relations ethnicon-language-culture in a different way, and the very process of ethnogenesis, despite retaining its evolutionist character, is no longer treated as a permanent linear development. This is because it is assumed that there were periodic territorial and demographic regressions in the development of the Proto-Slavic culture, which could eventually lead to a secondary re-Slavisation of certain territories. It is also indicated that there were highly probable cases of cohabitation of the Slavs with the neighbouring peoples (e.g. with the Germans) in wide borderland strips, which could eventually lead to acculturation or assimilation. It is argued that the cultural transformations constituting ethnogenesis did not have to run in parallel with linguistic transformations, and that specific social cultures could be multi-ethnic and not necessarily associated with a single linguistic community (this remark also applies to archaeological cultures; on this topic Kara 2009, pp. 327-331, *ibid.* further literature).

In this view, the ethnogenesis of the Slavs is a long-term process, rooted in prehistory and based on a cycle of settlement-cultural transformations. It was, however, closely linked to waves of migration of Indo-European peoples, who already spoke specific languages, namely, the so-called Old European peoples identified with the so-called Venetic linguistic community (now denied by the linguist Zbigniew Babik), and then the Germanic, Baltic and Slavic peoples (Babik 2001, pp. 22 ff., 60 ff.)³⁵. In the Bronze Age, between 1300 and 900 BC, according to archaeologists-autochthonists, the original Slavic tribe was formed in the middle Dnieper basin, a process that preceded the break-up of the Balto-Slavic community. While the Balts moved from the middle Oka to the north-west, in the region of the Baltic Sea, the Slavic tribes penetrated in waves into the Vistula basin and by the early Iron Age had conquered the areas between the Vistula and Oder rivers. These events led to the formation of the so-called final cradle of the Slavs, which from then on consisted of two united areas: the original lands of the central Dnieper Ukraine and the secondarily conquered territories between the Oder and

³⁵ By negating the presence of Old European names, Zbigniew Babik at the same time ruled out the existence of Venetic names, which are considered by science to be characteristic of the language of the so-called Vistula Veneti people, allegedly settled over vast areas of Europe, including the lands of the Vistula basin in the pre-Slavic period (Babik 2012, p. 844). The concept of an old and pan-European “Veneti people” is an important element of the ethnic studies of the historian Henryk Łowmiański (1963, p. 33 ff.) or the archaeologists Witold Hensel (1978) or Ryszard Wołagiewicz (1981, pp. 79-102). They accept the idea that the local (Vistula) Veneti groups were Slavicised.

Vistula rivers. The territories of the upper Dnieper basin, regarded by the proponents of the allochthonic model of Slav ethnogenesis as a part of the Slavic people's motherland, were excluded from consideration because of the presence of the original Baltic hydronymy, noted by Russian linguists (Vladimir Toporov and Oleg Trubachev). According to autochthonic researchers (including Polish linguist Jerzy Nalepa), this suggests that Slavisation of these lands took place only in the early Middle Ages (Toporov and Trubachev 1962; Nalepa 2004; Nalepa 2007) (Fig. 13).

The geographically compact territory, delimited by the Oder and the middle Dnieper rivers, is linked by the neo-autochthonic approach to a large people with an agrarian cultural model, mentioned by the late antique written sources under the name of the Veneti³⁶. The agrarian nature of the culture of the medieval Slavs was particularly pointed out by Lech Leciejewicz, an eminent Polish archaeologist and medievalist who died several years ago. Let us remind that the Slavs were identified with the name of the Veneti by neighbouring peoples, primarily Germans, as well as by ancient writers discussing the borderland between Germania and Sarmatia, known mainly through Germanic tribes (see Łowmiański 1963, p. 97 ff., containing the analysis of written sources; see also Strzelczyk 2006, p. 13 ff.; Kolendo and Płóciennik 2015, p. 43 ff.).

In more recent literature, following Reinhard Wenskus and Jacek Banaszkiewicz, this name is considered to be an exonym coined by the Germans to describe the Slavs as a whole people (Wenskus 1961; Banaszkiewicz 1998, p. 85 ff.)³⁷. Most probably it was also understood in this way by late Roman intellectuals. The proper name for the Slavs, as a kind of mega-community, was to be "*Slawenowie*" ("Slaveni"), which Byzantine sources recorded in accordance with the rules of Greek phonetics as *Sclavini*, *Sclaveni*. This is a new proposition, recently publicised by the Poznań archaeologist Tadeusz Makiewicz, drawing on the findings of the Byzantinists Johannes Koder and Gottfried Schramm (Makiewicz 2008, pp. 30, 33-37, 40, *ibid.* further literature).

At the same time the above-mentioned territory is regarded by neo-autochthonists as an area of transformation of local late antique (proto-Slavic) cultures into early Slavic cultures, which in archaeological terms is connected: in the case of the eastern segment of the Slavic motherland with the Zarubinetz – Cherniakhiv – Kyiv – Penkovka – Prague culture sequence, and in the case of the western

³⁶ See Leciejewicz 1989, p. 22 ff.; Leciejewicz 1997; Leciejewicz 1998; Prostko-Prostyński 2009, p. 360 ff., with a strong polemic against the views of Jerzy Kolendo, who advocated the eastern location of the Veneti. Let us add that in the earlier works of the autochthonists, the Elbe-Vistula-Bug territory, usually referred to as the Oder-Vistula territory, was identified with the native area of the Proto-Slavs (cf. Kara 2009, pp. 327-329, *ibid.* further literature).

³⁷ See also Makiewicz 2008, pp. 23-34, 39-40; Leciejewicz 2002, p. 7; Babik 2012, pp. 843-844: "[...] the 'name of the Veneti', from a certain point in time used (at least by some neighbours) to denote societies speaking a proto-Slavic language, formerly was used to identify the communities in which ethnic transformations took place in a manner 'imperceptible' to their Germanic neighbours" (quote p. 844).



Fig. 13. The location of the Venethi/Veneti in Central and Eastern Europe in the 1st half of the 1st millennium AD, according to neo-autochtonists (1 – zones of the oldest Slavic hydronyms according to Tadeusz Lehr-Splawiński; 2 – border of the Roman Empire [*limes Romanus*]).

Digital processing (with modification) by Joanna Sawicka according to Leciejewicz 1989, p. 24, Fig. 1

segment of the same motherland with the Przeworsk culture (and possibly Baltic Dębczyńska group) – Sukow culture sequence (Leciejewicz 1989, p. 22 ff.; Leciejewicz 2002, p. 5 ff.; Leciejewicz 2005)³⁸. This cycle of transformation within the eastern segment is dated to the second half of the 5th century, while for the western segment to the 6th century. Traces of the so-called **Prague archaeological culture** in the Oder and Vistula basins are increasingly recognised by neo-autochthonists – in line with the allochthonic concept – as the result of the colonisation of eastern, central and southern Polish lands by early Slavic communities coming from the eastern part of Europe. It was supposed to take place as a consequence of a serious depopulation of the lands of the Oder and Vistula basins at the turn of antiquity and the Middle Ages (Łosiński 2000, p. 16).

It is emphasised that from the turn of the 6th and 7th centuries the territory between the Bug and Oder Rivers was the starting point for many waves of migration of the early Slavic population to the Elbe, Thuringia, the western Balkans and probably also to the Alpine Foothills (**Fig. 14**), which involved groupings of varying sizes, including relatively small ones (Kurnatowska 2004, p. 204 ff.; see also Třeštík 2008, pp. 49-50). In the Danube basin and the Balkans, they experienced a variety of cultural contacts with local (post-Roman) and immigrant (Germanic, nomadic) populations, leading to acculturation and Slavisation of various ethnic elements. These developments are seen by modern archaeology as the phenomenon of the spread of early Slavic culture, including settlement, in the areas of Europe. The participation of early Slavic peoples from the southwestern “borderlands” of Eastern Europe in the colonisation of the Balkans and the Danubian territories is also indicated, including the Antes poelpe mentioned by Jordanes, whose traces in the 6th and early 7th centuries in the eastern part of the Danubian Limes, in the Byzantine Scythia Minor province, are confirmed by archaeology (Kurnatowska 2004, p. 205). Let us add that in the case of the Antes, it is considered that on the south-eastern periphery of the Slavic world functioned a multi-ethnic conglomerate with a significant share of Slavs (Kurnatowska 1974; Kurnatowska 1977, p. 25 ff.; Hilczer-Kurnatowska 1986; Strzelczyk 1987; Szymański 1996; Makiewicz 2008, pp. 37-38, 40). While in the first period supremacy in this grouping was supposed to belong to nomads of Iranian origin, over time it got Slavicized and disappeared. Let us recall that according to allochthonists this was one of the three main early Slavic groupings.

Despite the depopulation of the Polish lands during the Migration Period, evident, for example, in demographic estimates (Kurnatowski 1977), proponents of the neo-autochthonic concept consistently claim this area was continuously settled between antiquity and the already evidently Slavic Middle Ages. They also believe in the continuation of certain cultural phenomena, regardless of the civilisational

³⁸ In the case of the communities of the Przeworsk culture, the phenomenon of Laténisation and the cultural influence of Germanic peoples are emphasised.



Fig. 14. Dispersion of Slavs (Sclaveni and Antes groups) around the mid-6th century AD according to neo-autochtonists (1 – migration directions; 2 – northern border of the Byzantine Empire).

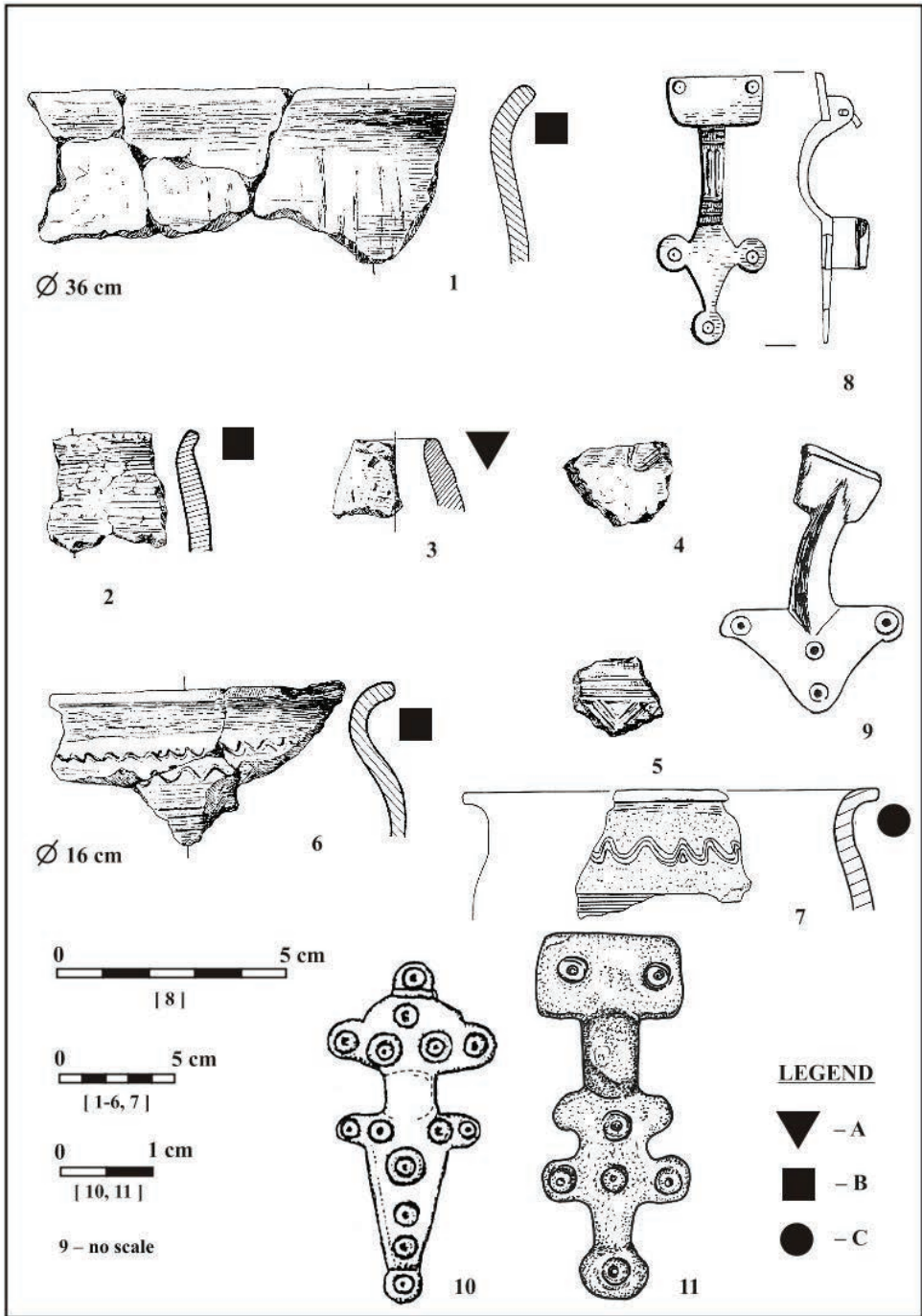
Digital processing (with modification) by Joanna Sawicka according to Leciejewicz 1989, p. 37, Fig. 2

collapse at that time confirmed by archaeology, caused by the disappearance of cultural and political contacts between Central European *barbaricum* and the Roman Empire.

As an example it is pointed out that, on the one hand, the radiocarbon findings show a clear connection between finds typical for the Migration Period and the relics of extensive settlements of the people of the Przeworsk culture dated to the 5th and at least the 1st half of the 6th century AD, and, on the other hand, that the finds of the early Slavic so-called **Sukow/Sukow-Dziedzice culture** are associated with the period between the 6th and at least the end of the 7th century. The findings described above come from the archaeological sites from Central Poland, Greater Poland, Lubusz land and the northern part of Lower Silesia³⁹. Particularly noteworthy are the luxurious items of armour, costume and toiletries from the Middle Danube Basin and the early and middle Merovingian cultures found in the assemblages of early Slavic culture. It is also emphasised that the relics of early Slavic settlements contained pieces of the so-called late antique service ceramics. These finds are treated as testimony to the survival of contacts of the population of the Oder and Vistula basin region with the area of late antique/post-antique civilisations inhabiting the lands along the Roman *limes*⁴⁰ (**Fig. 15; 16**). In the case of the so-called late-antique pottery, also referred to as coarse or pseudo-medieval

³⁹ For absolute dating of early-medieval vascular ceramic assemblages from the Greater Poland and Lubusz area, see Gruszka 2011, pp. 126-130; Michalska Nawrocka, Szczepaniak, Krzyszowski 2012, pp. 67-69, Tables 1-2, Fig. 5; Gruszka, Pawlak, Pawlak 2013, p. 177, Tables 1-2; Kara 2016, pp. 80-100. It is interesting that the ¹⁴C AMS dating obtained for the early Middle Ages (allowing for the 6th century AD in the chronological considerations) corresponds with some radiocarbon dating of archaeological samples (mainly bones) recovered in recent years from relics of settlements of the Przeworsk culture from the vicinity of Poznań and Giecz (Dominowo commune, Środa Wielkopolska district). Based on the analysis of archaeological material, these settlements are connected with the younger stages of the Roman influence period and with the older and younger phase of the Migration Period (Żychliński 2008, pp. 352-353, 359) (see **Fig. 11**). It is assumed that these settlements ceased to be used in the 6th century AD (Żychliński 2008, pp. 359-360; Michałowski 2015, p. 15 ff.). Let us note that in the vicinity of Poznań these settlements were discovered, among others, in the area of the settlements of the Slavic population, which archaeology dates to the early phases of the early Middle Ages (the area of Lake Niepruszewskie; the area of the Michałowka river basin, especially the areas of the present-day Poznań-Spławie, lying on the eastern side of the Warta, opposite to Poznań-Starołęka, Poznań-Dębiec and Luboń – on this topic Kara 2016, p. 80 ff., *ibid.* further literature). Let us add that according to Daniel Żychliński (2008, p. 360) “the Migration Period (in the area of central Greater Poland – note: M.K.) was not the moment of the disappearance of the Przeworsk group, but rather of its further dynamic development [...] in modified cultural circumstances”.

⁴⁰ Kara 2009, p. 63 ff., *ibid.* further literature; Gruszka, Gunia and Kara 2017; Andrałojć et al. 2018, p. 7 ff. The latest work presents the information about a so-called “central place” (emporium?) located near Rogoźno in northern central Greater Poland, in the vicinity of a ford on the Welna river (a tributary of the Warta river), where numerous luxurious “imports” from Scandinavia, England, the so-called Western Baltic cultural circle, as well as from the lands of the Elbe and Danube regions were found. These finds have been dated to the late Roman period, the Migration Period and the oldest stage of the early Middle Ages (including the older Avar period). Among the discoveries from this sites were the features with early-Slavic vascular pottery of Sukow-Dziedzice type.



pottery, recently analysed in detail by Tadeusz Makiewicz, the problem concerns technically advanced forms brought to the southern parts of the Oder and Vistula basin in the period from the end of the 4th century to the end of the 1st quarter of the 7th century AD from eastern Alpine areas, probably by means of the so-called itinerant potters. It is believed that they introduced the workshop production, continued in the Polish lands in the early Middle Ages, as evidenced by findings from archaeological assemblages of the Sukow culture (Makiewicz 2005, pp. 24-28, further literature therein; Żychliński 2008, pp. 359-360 and Fig. 26:12-14; see also Hilcerówna 1967, p. 62 ff.; Kurnatowska 2008; Nösler, Wolters 2009, pp. 379-387, there information about the possible continuation in the 6th/7th century AD of older pottery traditions in the Elbe and Weser basins [Germany]). Let us add that the home area of the so-called late-antique ceramics, identical with the lands of the middle-upper Danube basin, is the territory from which researchers derive also a significant part of the luxurious objects mentioned above discovered in the Oder and Vistula basins.

In the context of the ethnogenesis of the Slavs, these findings are of considerable importance. Together with already mentioned radiocarbon dating, on one hand they suggest a lack of settlement hiatus on the territory of present-day Greater Poland, Lubusz land and northern parts of Lower Silesia. On the other hand, they allow assuming that in this area, a longer process of cultural changes occurred and its crystallization (not to be confused with a beginning!) in the scope of the archaeologically studied early-medieval Sukow culture, could have occurred already in the second half of the 6th c. AD (see Fig. 17). Let us note that in this case we are talking about the area which in the cited analysis by Dušan Třeštík was considered to be a probable area of settlement of the Vistula Veneti people in the 6th century. It should also be recalled, that according to Michał Parczewski and Marek Dulnicz – representatives of the so-called Krakow-Warsaw school – archaeological

Fig. 15. Radziejów, site no. 5, Radziejów District, Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship. A selection of finds from pit no. 10 (8 – from the existing pit ceiling; 3 – from the pit fill, depth 0-0.2 m; 4-5 – from the pit fill, depth 0.2-0.4 m; 1, 2, 6 – from the pit fill, depth 0.6-0.7 m) discovered on the site: **1-4** – the so-called traditional pottery; **5** – potsherd of the so-called late antique clay vessel?; **6** – potsherd of the so-called late antique clay vessel; **8** – damaged bronze brooch with analogies to fibulae (**9** – Novi Banovci, Slavonia, Croatia, from the settlement area connected with the Gepids; **10** – Hemmingen, Kr. Ludwigsburg, Baden-Württemberg, Germany, Merovingian culture, grave from the 1st half of the 6th century; **11** – Frénouville, dép. Calvados, Normandy, France, Merovingian culture, grave from the end of the 5th/1st half of the 6th century), and to the vessel marked with the number 6 (**7** – the so-called late antique vessel from the settlement from the Migration Period found in Byków, site no. 2, Lower Silesian Voivodeship).

According to Kara 2009, p. 119, Fig. 29 (with modification)

Legend: A – hand-made vessel; B – top-thrown vessel; C – fully-thrown vessel (?)

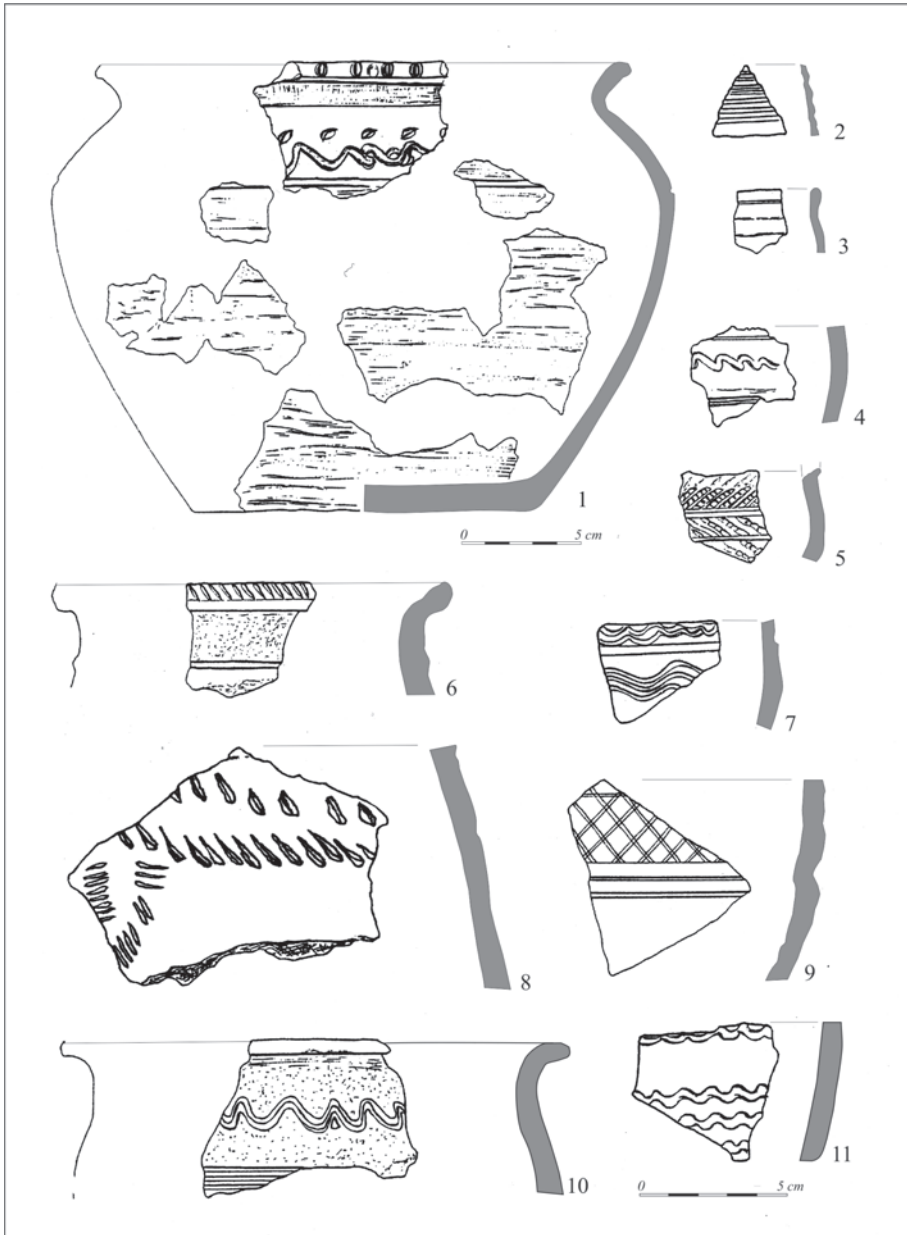


Fig. 16. A selection of vascular pottery from Lower Silesia area from the Migration Period (Byków, site no. 2, Wrocław District, Lower Silesian Voivodeship): **1, 4-7, 10-11** – the so-called late antique vessels.

Digital processing (with modification) by Joanna Sawicka according to Domański 2005, p. 261, Fig. 7

findings from the Sukow cultural province generally come only from the 7th century.

More recent studies by autochthonists also emphasise the convergence of archaeological observations with the results of the analysis of the hydronyms of the Polish lands mentioned above, as well as with more recent discoveries by biological sciences (see Makiewicz 2005; Makiewicz 2008; Kurnatowska, Kurnatowski 2012, p. 38 ff.). The latter concern the genetic affinities of the populations of the aforementioned territory and the morphological features of the skulls of the populations inhabiting the lands between the Oder and the middle Dnieper rivers in late antiquity and early Middle Ages.

In the first case, the researchers point to the lack of names of Germanic origin among the hydronyms of Polish lands (perhaps with the exception of the names of the rivers Warta and Noteć), referring to the findings of the linguists Jürgen Udolph and Zbigniew Babik. As the Slavic population of the Polish lands retained the old so-called Old European⁴¹ nomenclature in the Middle Ages, it is considered that they must have come into direct contact with the autochthonous population or must have originated from it (cf. Leciejewicz 2002, pp. 8-9; Leciejewicz 2005, pp. 244-245; see also Makiewicz 2008, pp. 9-37, 39-40). The findings of the linguists, including Zbigniew Babik quoted above and Witold Mańczak, seem to be particularly significant for the aforementioned views. Their research results, obtained from the analysis of linguistic sources, do not contradict the hypotheses of archaeologists-autochthonists.

Accordingly, Zbigniew Babik identified “as the starting point of Slavic languages in late antiquity [...] primarily the territories in the Vistula basin (partly perhaps also the Oder) and the adjacent eastern territories south of the Pripyat (Volhynia, Podolia, western parts of Kyiv region)”. He stated that “locating these sites in the upper Dnieper basin or east or north of it (as assumed by allochthonists – note by M.K.) is not a viable option for most of the linguistics community”. He stressed, however, that “the vision of the so-called ‘broad’ Urheimat between Oder and middle Dnieper rivers (typical for the views of some autochthonists and neo-autochthonists – M.K.) is definitely losing its popularity today [...] among linguists, who are increasingly aware that a uniform direction of linguistic evolution over many centuries in such a large area is unlikely, especially in view of the lack of analogous integration symptoms observed by archaeology in terms of the material culture of the territory, clearly divided into western and eastern parts” (Babik 2012, p. 845). We have written above about the division of the material culture of the early Slavs into the three main territorial-chronological horizons of archaeological

⁴¹ Contrary to the findings of Jürgen Udolph or Hanna Popowska-Taborska (works cited above), the presence of such Old European names in the hydronymy of the Polish lands was ruled out by the linguist Zbigniew Babik, although he did not deny the existence of names known to be “old and European” in the mentioned area (Babik 2001, p. 94). He considered these names, including such hydronyms as “Warta” and “Noteć”, to be Indo-European.

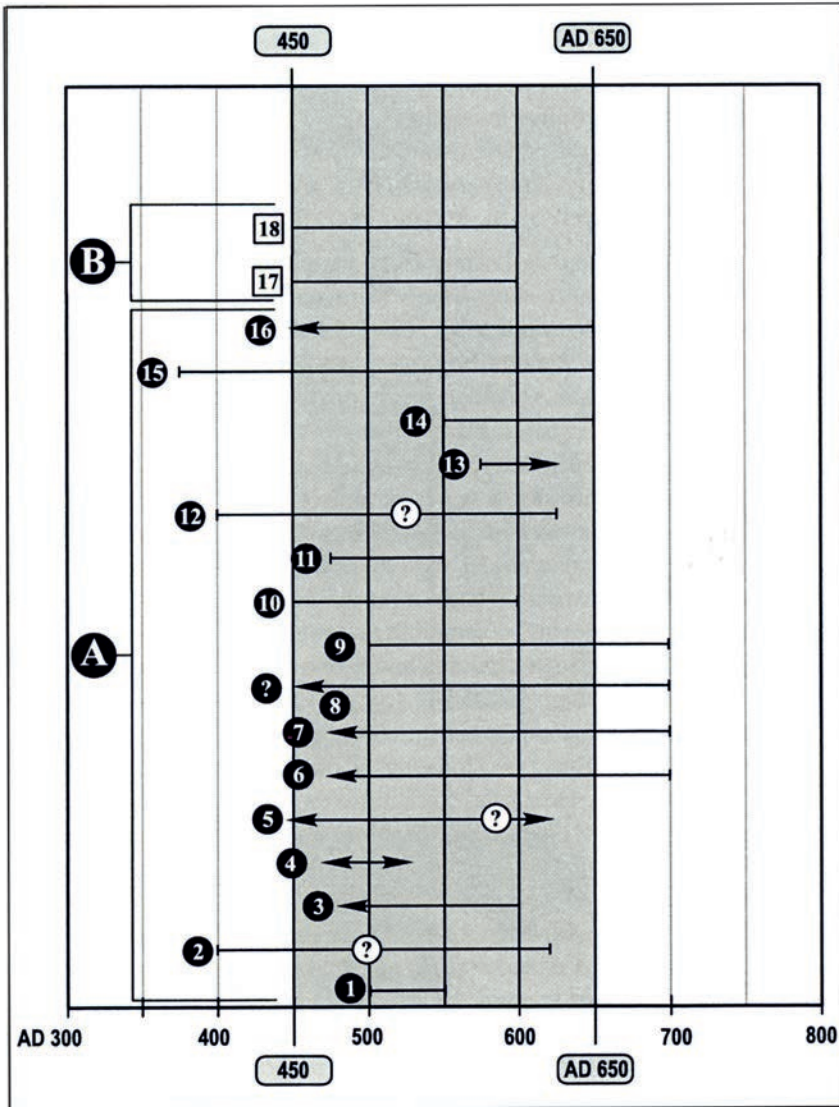


Fig. 17. The chronology of the selected so-called luxury items, originating, among others, from the areas of Danube and Rhine basin, discovered on archaeological sites from the turn of antiquity and the Middle Ages, or the early Middle Ages, in Greater Poland, Lubusz region, the northern borderland of Lower Silesia and Central Poland (A), and the chronology of Merovingian military artefacts (the so-called stray finds) from the middle Oder basin (B).

According to Kara 2009, p. 149, Fig. 47 (with modification)

A – finds with the stratigraphic context (cf. Fig. 8): 1 – long sax-type iron knife (Żukowice, Lower Silesian Voivodeship, site no. 5, feature 6); 2 – iron angoid spearhead (Tum pod Łęczycą, Łódź Voivodeship, site no. 1, the so-called “stronghold” clump, from the rampart of a stronghold, secondary context);

cultures – Penkovka, Prague and Sukow-Dziedzice – which some archaeologists cautiously associate (in the order adopted above) with the Antes, Sclaveni and Vistula Veneti peoples recorded by Jordanes in the 6th century AD (see Baran 1998, p. 41 and Fig. 2)⁴².

The possible area of the Slavic homeland, on the other hand, was limited – on the basis of statistical lexical correspondences taken from the oldest literary texts of the Slavs and their neighbours – by Witold Mańczak (1987, pp. 116-117, *ibid.* older literature; 1997, pp. 191-192; 2003, pp. 77-78). In his theory the Slavic motherland was confined to the lands of the Oder and Vistula basins. He emphasised the absence in the hydronymy of Polish lands of pre-Slavic river names with traces of the so-called High German consonant shift, which would manifest in the Slavic language as a Germanic linguistic borrowing, if the old river names were learned directly from the Germanic peoples (then the names of Polish rivers *Drama*, *Drawa*, *Drwęca* would begin with the letter “T”).

In the case of anthropological findings, the researchers’ attention is drawn by the similarity of the skulls of the population of the Przeworsk, Wielbark and Cherniakhiv archaeological cultures from the Roman period, usually associated by archaeologists with the Germanic population, to the skulls retrieved from the so-called early Polish cemeteries of the Piast era (see Piontek 2006; Piontek 2013, pp. 114-119; Piontek 2016; Dąbrowski 2007, p. 80 ff.; Piontek, Iwanek, Segeda 2008, p. 77 ff.). Let us add that the analysed finds were clearly different from the skulls from

3 – iron spearhead (Żukowice, site no. 9, feature 107); **4** – blacksmith’s iron tongs (Żukowice, site no. 1, near feature 18); **5** – bronze tube – belt element (?) (Osiecznica, Lubusz Voivodeship, site no. 1, pit 8); **6** – bronze belt ornaments (?) in the form of rectangular plates with rivets (Osiecznica, site no. 1, pit 8); **7** – head of a large, hat-shaped bronze rivet – belt element, or the so called sword/“sax” scabbard, or a shield fitting (Osiecznica, site no. 1, pit 8); **8** – bronze “ring” (link) – belt element or hand ornament (Osiecznica, site no. 1, pit 8); **9** – the so-called copper needle pin (Żukowice, site no. 9, feature 184); **10** – bronze fibula with the openwork, zoomorphic head (Biskupin, Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship, site no. 4, ar 107, layer IIc); **11** – bronze fibula with a rectangular head (Radziejów, Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship, site no. 5, existing pit ceiling 10); **12** – bronze necklace (Bonikowo, Greater Poland Voivodeship, site no. 2, base of pit 2); **13** – antler comb, single-row, three-layered, decorated with a diagonal grid ornament (Żukowice, site no. 1, feature 118); **14** – antler comb, single-row, three-layered, decorated with the so-called “dot” ornament (Żukowice, site no. 9, feature 1); **15** – glass goblet (Żukowice, site no. 9, feature 120); **16** – bronze ring with knobs, so-called *Knotenring* (Smolno Wielkie, Lubusz Voivodeship, site no. 1, layer V); **B** – the so-called stray finds, aquatic types: **17** – iron spearhead (Schwerin a.W., now Skwierzyna, Lubusz Voivodeship, from the Obra River); **18** – iron spearhead (Hermersdorf, Kr. Lebus, Germany, from a marshy swamp in the Oder urstromtal)

⁴² It is worth noting once again the consistency (albeit only to a certain extent) of Volodimir Baran’s and Zofia Kurnatowska’s findings with the hypothesis of Dušan Třeštík noted above (2008, p. 17 ff.), in which the historian proves the existence of a map, no longer extant, showing the location of peoples on the northern side of the Danube river (which was the border of the Byzantine Empire). The map was supposed to be used by Jordanes around 6th c. AD.

early-medieval cemeteries discovered in Scandinavia. Based on this, Janusz Piontek believes that “the structures of the compared populations [...] indicate a high biological similarity of the population of Roman period to early-medieval Western Slav populations, and a low similarity to early-medieval Germanic populations” (Piontek 2013, p. 116). This, according to the aforementioned researcher, rules out the thesis of archaeologists, who share the allochthonic notion of the ethnogenesis of the Slavs that “the territory of the Oder and Vistula basins was deserted after the emigration of Germanic tribes during the Migration Period and was only re-settled by Slavic populations in the 5th/6th century AD” (Piontek 2013, p. 116).

The findings of physical anthropology are rejected by archaeologists-allochthonists, as being based on too small source (empirical) sample, which is strongly disagreed with by the author of the cited research, Janusz Piontek (see Dulnicz 2008; Piontek 2009). We should add that certain statements by archaeologists have negated not only the scientific basis of the anthropological research carried out, but in principle also its point. This is an example of a failure to maintain, this time by the archaeologists, the autonomy of scientific disciplines. The situation discussed here concerns the physical anthropology which, after all, has its own empirically tested research technique at its disposal. This very phenomenon, which is unauthorised for methodological reasons – a fact that is forgotten by the researchers deeply involved in the discussion, whose abuse seems to be unintentional – is currently not that uncommon in the humanities. One can easily cite examples of similar treatment of the specialist findings of archaeologists by representatives of other disciplines of the historical sciences who are professionally, and therefore factually, unprepared to do so.

Meanwhile, the completed projects studying the fossil DNA of the population from Polish lands have revealed the great stability of human populations (in the sense of grouping) in the lands of the Oder and Vistula basins from modern times to the Roman influence period, and perhaps even to the Neolithic period (cf. Piontek 2013, pp. 116-117; for other important notes see also Pleszczyński [2020]). It should however be noted that these findings have not been so far commented on in the archaeological literature.

IV. ETHNOGENESIS OF THE SLAVS ACCORDING TO FLORIN CURTA

While in the concepts characterised above – allochthonic and autochthonic – one can see, regardless of fundamental differences, certain overlaps, especially in the attempt to link the “effect” of the crystallisation of early Slavic culture with a shorter or longer ethnic process, the views of Florin Curta (2001; 2006; 2008b), only ostensibly concerning the analysis of the historical ethnonym “*Sclavenes*”, contradict this phenomenon and thus constitute a completely new hypothesis.

According to the above-mentioned researcher, “the term *Sclavenes*, which was in use for most of the 6th century, must have been applied as a generic name, encompassing the various population groups living north of the empire’s frontier. Although undoubtedly derived from barbarians, most likely Slavs, the name was a creation of Byzantine authors intended to sort out the complex configuration of ethnic groups on the northern border. In its narrowest sense, the ethnicity of the Slavs is thus a Byzantine creation: the Byzantines created the Slavs” (Curta 2006, p. 33). Further on in the cited work, the researcher stated that “Byzantine authors used the terms ‘*Sclavenes*’ and ‘Antes’ to make sense of the process of group identification that was taking place before their eyes north of the Danube border. Therefore, the formation of Slavs has nothing to do with ethnogenesis, but with the classification and designation of population groups in Byzantine works, while the group identity defined as Slavic did not form in the swampy areas of Pripjat (i.e. Eastern Europe – note by M.K.), but in the shadow of Justinian’s strongholds” (Curta 2006, p. 55).

In Florin Curta’s views then, the language and the culture do not necessarily overlap with ethnicity. Let us recall, this kind of conviction is also shared by allochtonists and neo-autochthonists. Florin Curta’s views, however, are far more radical in this respect, as they see Slavism as a kind of cultural binder, the result of social and cultural identification. The Slavs were supposed to have been “created” by charismatic warriors or chieftains, speaking a Slavic language convergently developed over large areas in the relatively late stage of the Migration Period (the language which over time transformed into a kind of a lingua franca of the Central European Avar state)⁴³. By manipulating access to the spoils of war, they organised cultural and political groups under their control. According to Florin Curta, luxury products (e.g. the ornamental bow fibulae, elements of clothing) circulated among members of the elite of the communities of that time, including the “Slavs” scattered in various parts of eastern, central and southern areas of Europe. These objects were the indicators of prestige, necessary to determine the status and social identity of members of the leadership strata; they were also helpful in establishing the cultural consciousness of entire groupings, perhaps also in the sense of delimiting their ethnic boundaries.

It should be emphasised that in the proposed approach, the elements of the so-called material culture (e.g. vascular ceramics) lose their distinctive ethnic connotations ascribed to them by archaeologists (e.g. early Slavic connotations) in favour of cultural and social associations, e.g. in the sense of emblematic signs of a particular symbolic culture. The latter conditioned not only the mentality but also the awareness of the group as a distinct entity, also identifying itself ethnically. Thus, according to Florin Curta, archaeological findings do not confirm the existence of areas of crystallization of specific linguistic and ethno-cultural groupings

⁴³ These findings are noted after: Babik 2012, pp. 848-849.

(emerging in ethnogenesis) or migration of peoples. Instead, they can inform about the mobility of members of the elites of the time, various cultural and social interactions taking place over time and within the boundaries of specific territories, involving representatives of the so-called ethno-linguistic groups, especially the members of the leadership classes, and finally, about various processes of group identification (Curta 2006, pp. 45-55; Curta 2008a).

The ideas of Florin Curta, clearly inspiring some medievalists, although mainly in the scope of more specific research problems and certain cultural and social phenomena (e.g. Stanisław Rosik [2006] in the studies on the possible existence of a common religion for the early Slavs and the participation of the acculturation and Slavisation in the origins of this phenomenon), have met with more or less mild criticism of archaeologists, historians and linguists (Brather 2003; Fusek 2004; Grzesik 2008, pp. 231, 233; Ivanov 2008; Turlej 2010; Babik 2012, pp. 848-849, 851, *ibid.* further literature; Jasiński 2020b, p. 12, *ibid.* further literature; polemic with adversaries: Curta 2009; Curta 2013; Curta 2018), lack of reaction from the Polish allochthonists, probably meaning their disapproval, and finally, with negation by some neo-autochthonists. However, the latter, as for instance, Tadeusz Makiewicz (2008, pp. 30-32), share the opinion of Florin Curta on historical consequences of the emergence of the name “*Sclavenes*”. It is argued that Curta’s concepts do not, however, explain the fundamental issue of Byzantine intellectuals identifying foreign peoples at the northern border of the empire with an obviously Slavic proper name⁴⁴. In this context, researchers refer, among others, to the reservations of the Austrian medievalist, Walter Pohl (2006). In his works he emphasises the lack of information of early Byzantine written sources about the names of specific Slavic tribes, which in the situation assumed by Florin Curta should have existed in the sense of the relatively small, particular ethno-linguistic groupings postulated by him. In general, the researchers unanimously agree on the highly debatable nature of Florin Curta’s concept.

V. INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

It should be emphasised that all of the presented concepts of the origin of the Slavic ethnos and the beginnings of the Slavic culture meet the criteria of

⁴⁴ The name is read by researchers as “speaking intelligibly”, as opposed to “evolving in meaning in a way characteristic for the appellative **němьci*, i.e. *niemi* (mute) (Babik 2012, p. 842). Recently, the linguists have departed from the quoted interpretation, suggesting another translation of the ethnonym of our interest. It would have originally meant “‘one who is famous’ and was given to a group (perhaps initially warriors) by its members or by their neighbours, secondarily becoming a tribal name, further becoming the name of a tribal group, and finally being associated with a sense of distinctiveness expressed in a separate language” (quoted by Babik 2012, p. 842; see also Gołąb 1987, p. 76, footnote 5).

scientific hypotheses, although the theory of Florin Curta is eccentric and usually negated⁴⁵. Only the two theories – allochthonic and neo-autochthonic – attempt to illuminate the problem in a complete way, although the autochthonic approach does so much more explicitly, in line with the so-called holistic approach favoured in more recent ethnogenetic research (by Colin Renfrew, among others) (Renfrew 1987; see also Tabaczyński 1998, pp. 91-93, *ibid.* further literature). The theories are mutually exclusive, although they also contain some converging findings. For example, the view that early Slavic culture reflects the more general state of crisis in Europe at the time is shared. Also, the possibility that one language cannot be identified with one specific social and cultural community (including also archaeological cultures) is not considered controversial. Consequently, more recent archaeological studies prefer the term “cultural-communicative community”, which was introduced into archaeology by Michał Parczewski, following the linguist Ludwik Zabrocki (1963). Researchers are less likely to use the term “interpretative community”, proposed by Henryk Mamzer (2005), even though this term probably better captures the essence of the problem. It indicates the significance of the symbolic culture as a necessary phenomenon for the emergence of social identity which determines, among others, the sense of ethno-cultural distinctiveness⁴⁶. The researchers also unanimously agree about the existence of two provinces of early

⁴⁵ Although we consider any view assuming the negation of the ethnogenesis of the Slavs to be wrong, we must emphasise the importance of Florin Curta’s publications (2001; 2006; 2008a; 2008b) for archaeology, not only concerned with the study of early Slavic culture. This is because the presented studies unequivocally depart from the “traditional” model of archaeological studies of ethnogenesis, where ethnic variation is seen mainly in changes in the so-called material culture, which are determined, among other things, by correlating findings from the typological, chronological and chorological analysis of finds. Florin Curta’s work, on the other hand, draws attention to the role of symbolic culture (including emblematic signs) and social stratification in the construction of group identification, also in the dimension of ethnic unity. We consider the possibility of archaeology investigating such problems using the results of the analysis of selected material sources to be an interesting research direction (see Kara 2009, p. 63 ff., *ibid.* similar interpretation of archaeological finds).

⁴⁶ The so-called communicative communities have been critically commented on from a linguistic perspective by Zbigniew Babik (2012, p. 849). In relation to the concept of the so-called interpretative community, it is worth to mention the find of an animal bone with Germanic runes of the Elder *futhark* type engraved on its surface, which was discovered in the relics of an early Slavic settlement of the 6th - 7th century AD in Břeclav-Lány, Moravia (Czech Republic), where it was found in an assemblage with ceramics of the Prague type. Radiocarbon dating of the bones using the ¹⁴C AMS method revealed a conventional radiocarbon date of 1455 +/- 30 BP, which after calibration gave two probabilistic calendar age ranges: cal. AD 585-640 (68.2%) and 555-650 (95.4%). They confirmed the association of the find with the early Slavic period (Macháček et al. 2021). Based on this, even the knowledge of runic writing among the oldest Slavs is not excluded. It should be noted, however, that according to the opinions prevailing in science, among the so-called traditional peoples, whose culture was based mainly on oral transmission (thus also among the Germans and Slavs), writing was considered a gift from God (cf. Kara 2021, p. 73, footnote 168, *ibid.* further literature). For this reason, the runes were engraved in Germanic communities mainly for magical reasons. They could have also been considered as magical signs by the Slavs, which is supported by the fact that mental background of the symbolic culture of both peoples was similar in the early Middle Ages.

Slavic cultures, registered in archaeological materials – the so-called Prague and Sukow provinces – which were formed at a different time and thus differ in their genesis and certain aspects of their culture. The archaeological horizon of the Sukow-Dziedzice culture is considered younger than the horizon of the so-called Prague culture, but there is no consensus in the chronological evaluation of the finds and the ethnic identification of the population of the younger horizon. While the horizon of the Prague culture is rather commonly identified with the Sklaveni, the association of the horizon of the Sukow-Dziedzice culture with the Jordanes's Vistula Veneti people is supported only by some researchers.

It seems that unifying the views on the ethnogenesis of the Slavs is impossible at the moment, mainly due to methodic and methodological differences between the allochthonists and neo-autochthonists. Regardless of statements by some researchers suggesting the unrivalled validity of a particular concept, we consider an attempt to harmonize all such opinions unnecessary, also in view of the state of research. However, this does not rule out a possibility of a substantive, calm discussion of the problem in a wider circle of researchers coming from different fields, having certain experience with ethnogenesology and established views on that matter.

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