

Medieval Archaeology in Poland; Current Problems and Research Methods

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DURING the last thirty years many revolutionary changes have been brought about in the field of Polish medieval archaeology. The beginning of interest in the archaeology of the middle ages can be dated in Poland back to the second part of the 19th century. A significant revival in this interest took place between the world wars (for example, the first systematic excavations in Gniezno, Poznań and other places).¹ However, the idea of commemorating Poland's millennium, initiated by archaeologists and historians soon after the second world war, caused a hitherto unprecedented increase in the scope of excavation. Modern methods and principles of research were also defined and introduced.

In the Roman period the territories in the Oder and Vistula river basins, N. of the Sudeten and Carpathian Mountains, were beyond the imperial frontiers. But in the early middle ages, with the changes in primitive social, economic and political structures in this part of Europe, an early-feudal, socially-differentiated Polish nation was born.² About 963 a chronicle report first mentions the Piast state between the Oder and Vistula rivers; and the country first became officially Christian in 966. Soon after this event the Polish state became a full member of the community of civilized societies of medieval Europe. This had deep cultural consequences.

The first historic mention of the territories of the Oder and Vistula basins is Roman. Generally, however, written sources covering the period to the beginning of the second millenium A.D. are scarce, so that it is impossible on a documentary

¹ J. Kostrzewski, *Les origines de la civilisation polonaise, préhistoire-protohistoire* (Paris, 1949).

² See, for example, A. Gieysztor, J. Tazbir, E. Roztworowski, S. Kieniewicz, H. Wereszycki, *History of Poland* (Warsaw, 1968); K. Bosl, A. Gieysztor, F. Graus, M. M. Postan, F. Seibt, *Eastern and Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (London, 1970).



FIG. 1
HISTORICAL-GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS OF POLAND
Showing (a) modern state frontiers, and (b) main cities

basis to follow the history of these territories at that time. The basic sources exist, however, hidden under the soil; and archaeologists have been revealing them gradually, and interpreting them in the light of archaeological method.

Initially Polish medieval archaeology was an integral part of the prehistoric archaeological discipline; its first methods derived, therefore, from that source. In this respect it had an entirely different basis from that which developed in Italy, France and even in Germany, but it is quite similar to the method which developed in Scandinavia.

The new methods introduced into Polish medieval archaeology after the second world war resulted in the formulation of new questions to be put to the available sources. The birth of the Polish state has been considered as an element in a general process of the rise of feudal economic, social and political structures,

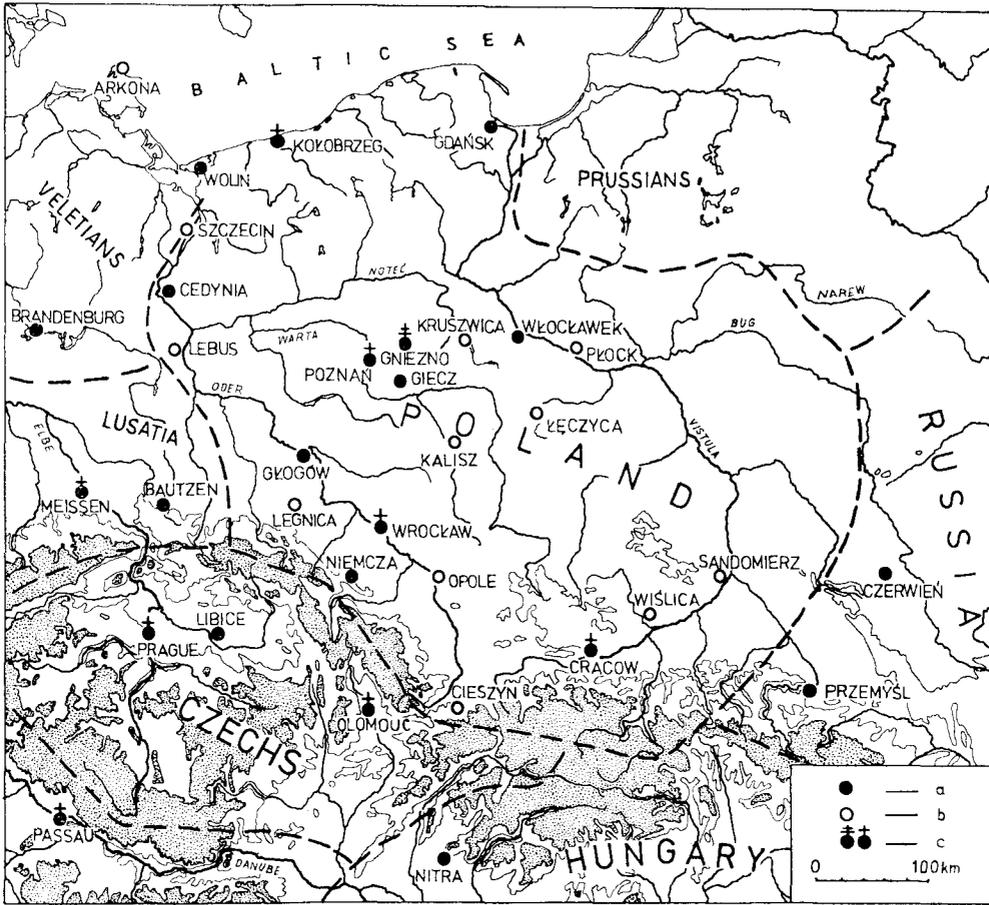


FIG. 2

THE POLISH STATE c. 1000

Showing (a) main centres mentioned in written sources; (b) main centres attested by archaeological discoveries; (c) archiepiscopal and episcopal sees

set against a wide European background.³ The archaeologist thus was forced to consider the cultural conditions and consequences caused by the rise of the state; its impact on the whole sphere of knowledge and outlook on life. Another fundamental problem was the way in which the natural environment was utilized in this process.

New questions required the elaboration of new methods of interpretation lying well beyond the scope of a traditional, typological method. A wide-ranging discussion among archaeologists, historians, art historians and cultural and social

³ See, for example, W. Hensel, *The Beginnings of the Polish State* (Warsaw, 1960); idem, *La naissance de la Pologne* (Wrocław, 1966); T. Manteuffel and A. Gieysztor (eds.), *L'Europe aux IX^e-XI^e siècles. Aux origines des états nationaux* (Warsaw, 1968).

anthropologists was, however, very fruitful. Socio-cultural models were created as a consequence, which made possible a deeper interpretation of archaeological sources concerning the Polish middle ages. Further, co-operation with the representatives of natural and technical sciences proved to be of great importance. Thus a research programme concerning the birth of the Polish state turned out to be the first interdisciplinary enterprise in the field of historical science.

Interdisciplinary co-operation is now the rule in Poland and is generally accepted in all countries; but thirty years ago it was to a high degree an innovation. It has met with wide interest in the scholarly community abroad, and this has been reflected in invitations given to us among others by historians from Italy and France to work on similar problems. This co-operation, of course, stimulated interest in the history of the middle ages in Europe and in turn widened our outlook on our own early history and culture.

The 'Millennium Research Programme' was concentrated on all the main political and economic centres of the Piast state (FIGS. 1, 2).⁴ First of all, excavations were carried out in Great Poland (the cradle of the Polish state): in the cities of Poznań, Gniezno (PL. II, A), Giecz (PL. I, A), Kruszwica, Łęczyca (PL. I, B) and Kalisz. Then work started in Little Poland: in Cracow (which became the capital of the country in the 11th century), Wiślica, Sandomierz and Przemyśl; then in Silesia: in Wrocław, Opole (PL. II, B), Niemcza, Legnica; then in Masovia: in Warsaw, Płock and Czersk. Work was also undertaken in larger towns on the Baltic Sea: in Szczecin (FIG. 4), Wolin, Kołobrzeg, Gdańsk and others.

These investigations enabled us to establish certain facts of extreme historical importance. They have demonstrated (despite many statements, mostly by German archaeologists, put forward before the second world war) that the economic and cultural foundations of the Polish state were entirely of native origin. The progress in agriculture created the necessary economic basis for the process of social differentiation and the emergence of political power. The standard of life rose because of the development of craft and trade. It is interesting to note that no major trace of Scandinavian cultural influence has so far been discovered. The most important factor was the acquisition of patterns of civilization of Latin origin (FIG. 3, PL. V); and in the course of archaeological excavations many new, sometimes sensational, relics of pre-Romanesque and Romanesque architecture and art have been found. PL. V, B, shows the oldest (11th-century) authentic Latin inscription from Poland, which reads: OSSA TRIVM TVMVLO FRA----/ [MV]NVS MILITIE P-VDV-T DV----/ QVI LEGIS --- MORTI IREP----/ AC ANIMAS HORVM REGI----/.

The most fundamental conclusion to be drawn from these investigations is the statement that all the main political and economic centres of early medieval Poland have early town patterns, so that the 'urban revolution' (following Gordon Childe's definition) took place in Poland in the time of 'state revolution'; not in the 13th and 14th centuries in connexion with the introduction of German

⁴ The reports have been published in English, French and German in *Archaeologia Polona*, 1-xvi (1958-75). See also: *I Międzynarodowy Kongres Archeologii Słowiańskiej (1st International Congress of Slav Archaeology)*, iii-v (Warsaw, 1968-70).



FIG. 3

COLLEGIATE CHURCH, WIŚLICA, LITTLE POLAND

12th-century incised plaster floor of crypt, presumably depicting members of Piast family as *orantes*. Sc. c. 1:35

law.⁵ In certain regions the establishment of this pattern took place at an even earlier date, for example, among the towns of the Baltic sea coast.

I have recently discussed elsewhere the problem of the early western Slavonic towns and the interesting questions of their socio-topography.⁶ Therefore I am not going to elaborate on such details here. I would merely like to draw attention to certain problems of method implicit in the excavation of these archaeological sites.

The greater number of the centres established by the first dukes of the Piast family were well situated, in places of strategic importance, where it was possible to control effectively communication by road and water. In the lowland landscape, which comprises a considerable part of Poland, these centres often lay in the drainage area of a river; and, as a consequence of changes in the ground water level, they were frequently endangered by floods and damp. In the sea zone eustatic movements of the Baltic bottom presented additional problems as the land sank on its southern coast. In such conditions, during the establishment of permanent urban settlements, it was convenient to raise the ground level at each rebuilding by leaving in place the foundations of old structures. In waterlogged layers, timber — the main building medium in this zone of Europe — remains in a good state of preservation (PL. II, A, B); and archaeologists often encounter layers, sometimes as much as 10 m. deep, consisting of structures and objects of organic material in a remarkably good state of preservation.⁷

In this situation cultural change can be traced over relatively long periods, beginning in the 9th and 10th centuries (FIG. 4); while the fact that the occupation layers are generally undisturbed makes it possible to determine the relative, and sometimes the absolute, chronology by applying dendrochronological and other methods. The considerable depth of occupation layers, however, reduces the possibility of examining large areas, and these excavations must be considered only as statistical sampling in relation to the areas of the whole sites.

In the remains of the buildings many objects are found, often of organic materials (PL. III, A-C). Thus workshops of specific craftsmen may sometimes be identified and hypotheses concerning the trading process and even the warlike activities of the inhabitants may be put forward. This, however, requires the application of different types of quantitative analysis, which drags out for a long time — sometimes for too long a time — detailed writing up and publication of the early town sites. In a more limited manner, investigations have been carried out on village sites, cemeteries and so on.⁸ Particularly important have been

⁵ Cf. *Les origines des villes polonaises* (Paris, 1960); 'L'Artisanat et la vie urbaine en Pologne médiévale', *Ergon*, III (1962); W. Hensel, *Die Anfänge der Städte bei den Ost- und Westslawen* (Bautzen, 1966); *I Międzynarodowy Kongres . . .*, IV (1968).

⁶ L. Leciejewicz, 'Early medieval sociotopographical transformations in west Slavonic urban settlements in the light of archaeology', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, XXXIV (1976), 29-56.

⁷ Some representative archaeological sites of this kind have been presented in the series *Archaeologia Urbium-Poloniae*: I, K. Jażdżewski, J. Kamińska, R. Gupiećowa, *Le Gdańsk des X^e-XIII^e siècles* (Warsaw, 1966); II, L. Leciejewicz, M. Rulewicz, S. Wesolowski, T. Wieczorowski, *La ville de Szczecin des IX^e-XIII^e siècles* (Wrocław, 1972).

⁸ Compare, for example, W. Hensel, L. Leciejewicz, S. Tabaczyński, 'En Pologne médiévale: l'archéologie au service de l'histoire', *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, XVII (1962), 209-38. For the numismatic research see e.g. *Wiadomości Numizmatyczne*, V (1961), supplement; *I Międzynarodowy Kongres . . .*, VI (Warsaw, 1968).

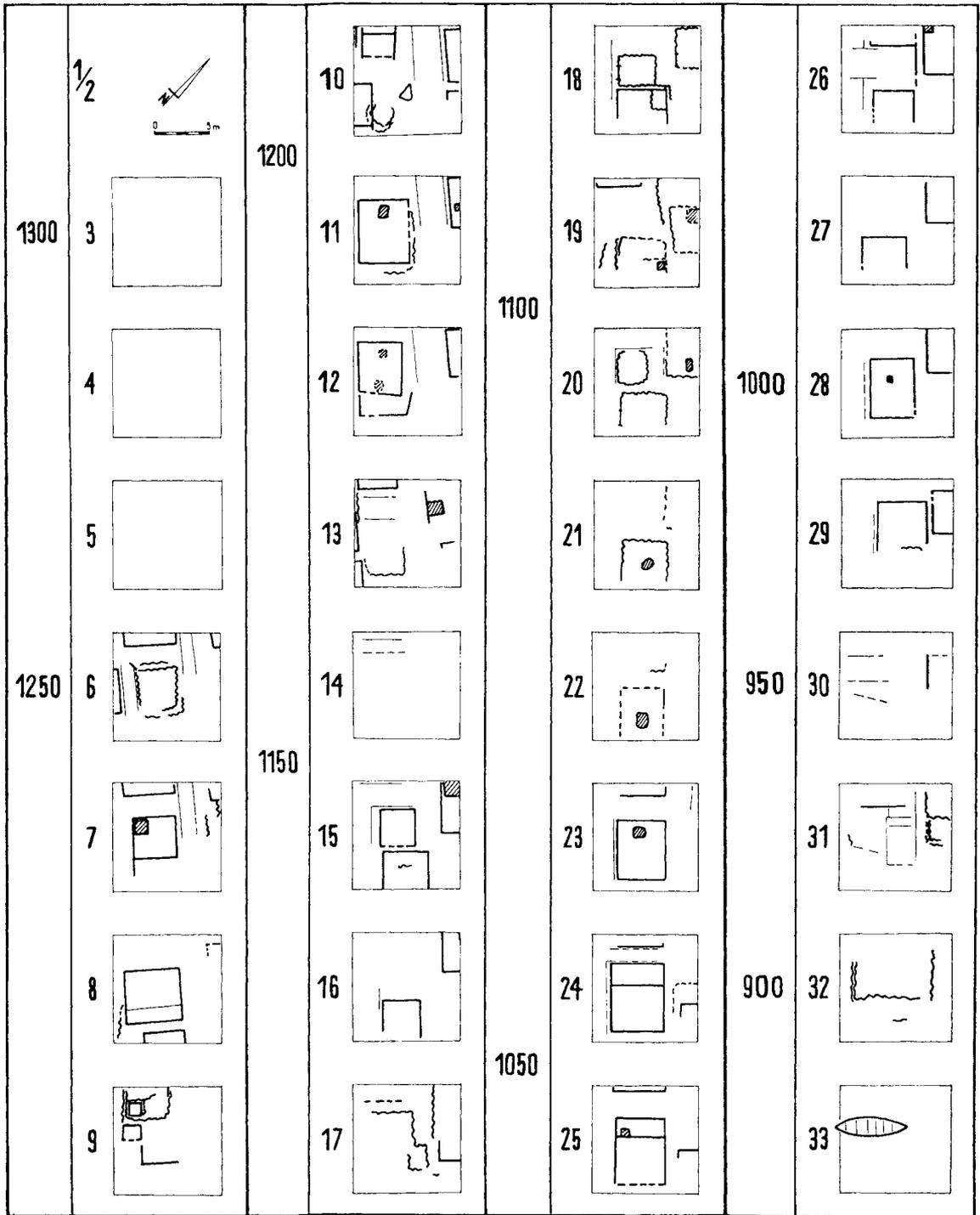


FIG. 4
 STRATIGRAPHIC SEQUENCE OF STRUCTURES FROM SZCZECIN OLD TOWN, POMERANIA
 9th to 13th-century

studies concerning the silver hoards found frequently in the Oder and Vistula basins, as in the whole Baltic zone (PL. IV, A). As a result of the work of our numismatists, an inventory of all the silver hoards and single coins from the 9th to the 12th century found in Poland has been published.

Concentration of all this research on the main centres of the Piast state has not meant the neglect of the fundamental problem of settlement and economic transformation in the period previous to the inception of the early feudal monarchy. Excavation of settlements dated between the 6th and the 10th centuries was initiated soon after the second world war (PL. IV, B), but work of this type has been intensified only in the last fifteen years. It has made possible the formulation of the thesis that the rise of the early feudal Polish state was the result of the socio-economic and political evolution of the local Slav tribes (FIG. 5).

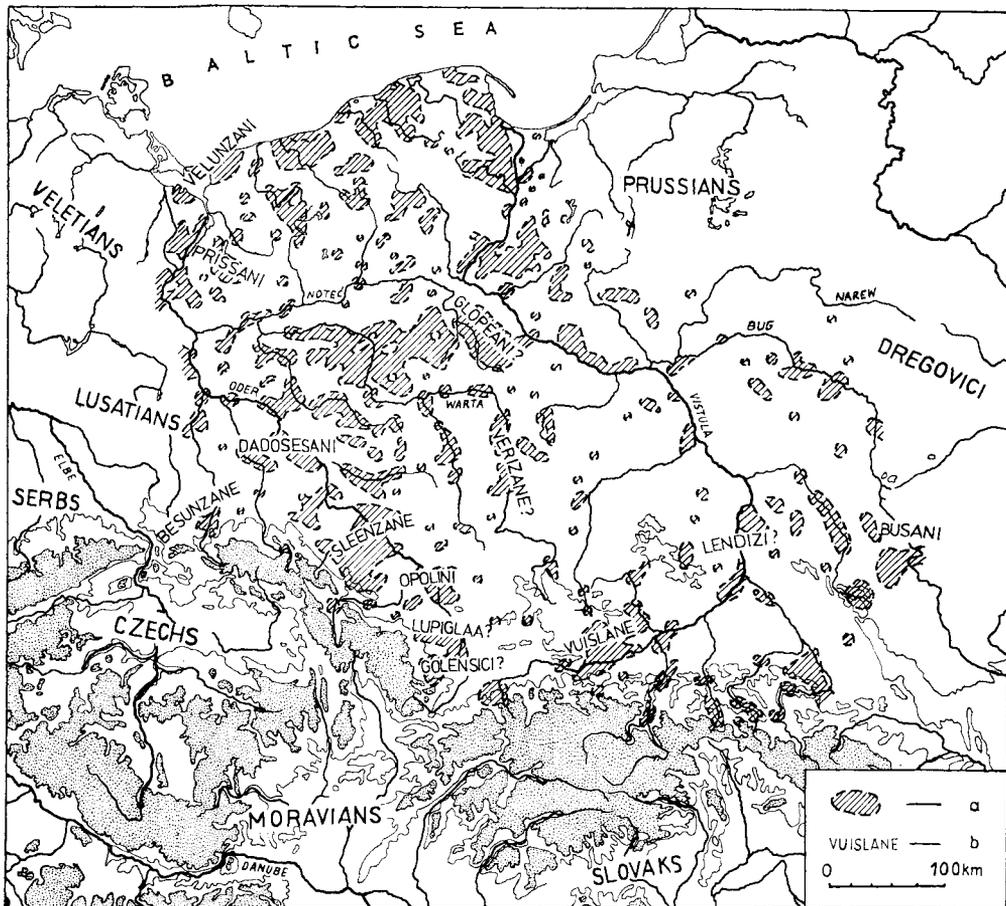


FIG. 5

7th TO 10th-CENTURY SETTLEMENT IN ODER AND VISTULA BASINS

Showing (a) areas of settlement; (b) territories of Polish tribes mentioned by Geographus Bavarensis (9th-century)

The method of field research work, however, has been rather different from that used in the examination of early towns;⁹ because village settlements were often transferred from one site to another and, consequently, no deep occupation layers have built up on the individual site. In this situation, the basic method used in the reconstruction of the settlement processes was microgeographical. Microregions which were selected for the research project distinguished themselves by their physiographical property — for example they were a river basin —, and also as settlement areas separated from others by zones of uninhabited forest and swamp, making them often difficult of access. Written sources permit the identification of units of this kind forming tribal territories of between 300 and 1500 sq. km. Within these territories it has been possible to distinguish further units of a lower order, forming the districts described in Latin sources as *civitates*, and in vernacular terminology at first as *Żupy*, later as *grody*. These were settlement units, concentrated mostly around a stronghold, exploiting an area of between 50 and 300 sq. km.; separated also by forests, but not so clearly delimited as in the case of the tribes. In the later 'state period' the *viciniae* kept alive many of their traits (in Polish terminology *opola* or *osady*):¹⁰ they were obligated to the common economic and military services of the state; they used the common cemetery. It is however, difficult to go much further in generalizing about the reconstruction of tribal relations. The burial grounds of the 6th to the 10th century have provided little evidence for the archaeologist. Cemeteries of that period are found extremely rarely, presumably because cremation was then the dominant rite. Cinerary urns, however, including the remains of cremated bone, have not for the most part survived.

Investigations of this kind were carried out in different regions: in Pomerania round Wolin and Kołobrzeg; in Great Poland in the Obra river basin; in Little Poland in the Nida and Chodla river basins; and so on. Lately, systematic investigations in the microregion of the Ślęza river in Silesia were begun. These researches show in different ways how the integration of the settlement groups of the *civitas* type developed into tribal organizations, and how, in different ways, feudal monarchy led to the union of many tribes into one state.

In the Parsęta basin near Kołobrzeg may be observed many similarities with the process seen farther westwards among the Polabian Slavs.¹¹ In the 7th and 8th centuries great fortified settlements dominated this region (FIG. 6). They were situated on the edge of river valleys, and dominated the inhabitants of the surrounding district. At the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries trade began to grow, Arabic coins and Scandinavian imports appeared (in some places we can suppose

⁹ See, for example, *I Międzynarodowy Kongres . . .*, iv (Warsaw, 1968) and recently L. Leciejewicz, 'Die frühmittelalterlichen Siedlungs- und Stammesräume im Oder- und Weichselgebiet', *Ethnographisch-Archäologische Zeitschrift*, xvi (1975), 505-17, bibliography.

¹⁰ Z. Podwińska, *Zmiany form osadnictwa wiejskiego na ziemiach polskich we wcześniejszym średniowieczu. Żreb, wieś, opole* (Summary: Les changements des formes de l'habitat rural en Pologne au haut Moyen Age) (Wrocław, 1971).

¹¹ W. Łosiński, *Początki wczesnośredniowiecznego osadnictwa grodowego w dorzeczu dolnej Parsęty (VII-X/XI w.)* (Summary: Die Anfänge der frühmittelalterlichen Burgbesiedlung im unteren Parsęta-Flussgebiet) (Wrocław, 1972); idem, 'Probleme der archäologischen Forschungen zum frühen Mittelalter in Westpommern (1945-72)', *Przegląd Archeologiczny*, xxi (1973), 165-99.

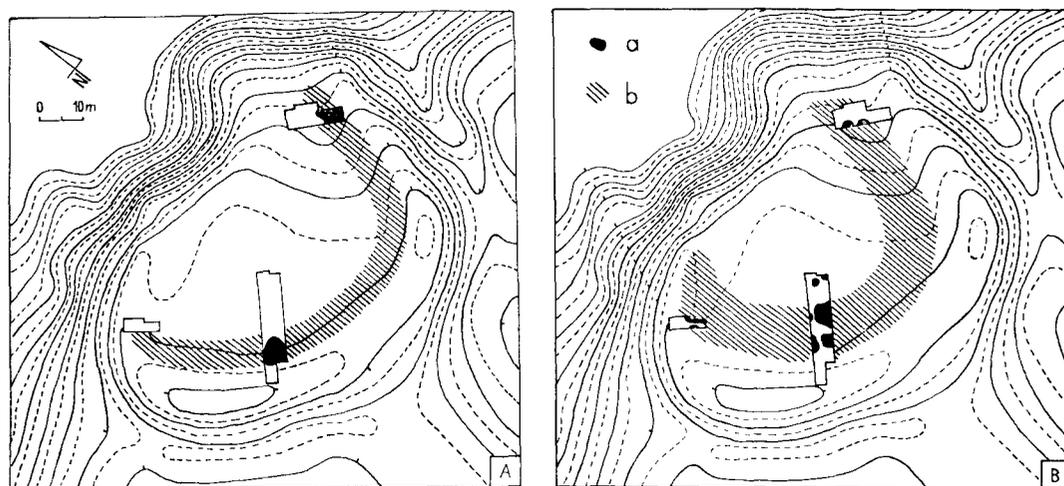


FIG. 6

HILL FORT AT GOŁAŃCZ POMORSKA, POMERANIA

A. 7th-century; B. 8th-century. Black shading (a) indicates pits, and cross-hatching (b) presumed area of occupation

the Scandinavians settled) and craft developed. In the middle of the 9th century the larger settlements collapsed and new strongholds were erected, which were a little smaller, but relatively rich in finds. They were situated sometimes in the valleys of the river (there are some indications that at this time there was a temporary lowering of the water level). These fortified centres can be interpreted, so it seems, as the seats of the nobles, *primores*, known from slightly later written sources. At the end of the 10th century when this region was conquered by the Piasts, these settlements were also abandoned. The early town, Kołobrzeg, which came into existence about the middle of the 9th century, retained its importance.

In the S. of Great Poland on the Obra river there was also a trend, about the middle of the 8th century, to replace the great fortified settlements erected in the 6th and 7th centuries by smaller ones; these are certainly the strongholds of the *primores*.¹² This region was however less well developed economically; there were no early town settlements similar to those on the Baltic sea. The 'state revolution' in the 10th century also brought about the disappearance of tribal strongholds in this region.

¹² Z. Hilczerówna, *Dorzecze górnej i środkowej Obry od VI do początków XI wieku* (Summary: The Basin of the Upper and Middle Obra from the 6th to the Beginnings of the 11th Century) (Wrocław, 1967); eadem, 'Grundzüge der Kultur der slawischen Stämme in Südgroßpolen und Niederschlesien vom 6. bis 10. Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für Archäologie*, 1 (1967), 278-97.

South-eastern Poland, however, had many features in common with the Great Moravian region.¹³ Fortified settlements erected in the 7th and 8th centuries covering areas of several dozen hectares, must have been capable of containing a great number of people; but, despite considerable research, their function defies explanation. In some of them nomadic patterns perhaps may be seen; as for example in the great stronghold with three oval, concentric embankments at Chodlik. This fortress, however, was replaced by a smaller one in the first half of the 9th century. Others may have been early towns, as, for instance, Stradów in the 9th and 10th centuries. All these centres were completely abandoned in the period of the encroachment of the Piast dynasty on the Upper Vistula, and the stronghold of Cracow was all that in the 11th century represented the older tradition of the region.

In considering the fundamental research problems of medieval archaeology in Poland it is necessary, however, to discuss two further questions of an importance equal to that of the beginning of the state, the development of medieval towns and tribal settlement. These questions concern the origin of early medieval culture, and the problem of structural transformation in the later middle ages.

The first traces of Slav culture, as distinct from other cultures known in central and eastern Europe in the Roman period, arose at the turn of the 5th and 6th centuries.¹⁴ There is no basis for the thesis that the Slavs arrived at that time from other regions: historical and linguistic data refute such a thesis. But, having said this, the details of the actual situation are controversial. What was the origin of the new culture pattern? this is the fundamental and, until now, the enigmatic question. Archaeological sources, however, do not help to clarify the history of central Europe in the migration period. There are many reasons for this, first among which is the undoubted impermanence of settlement at that time; second is the slightness of the evidence from cemeteries of the 5th to the 9th centuries in the Polish territories. Furthermore, exceedingly little is recorded historically about the tribes of the Oder and Vistula in the Roman period, or even about the relationships with Merovingian western Europe at the beginning of the early middle ages.

Discussion at the moment centres chiefly on the problems concerning the relationship of early Slav culture with the Roman world, and Polish scholars are examining these on two main fronts. First, they are looking at central European culture in the first centuries A.D., and at population continuity and discontinuity in the migration period. Secondly, they are examining the derivation of cultural traits from the former Roman provinces beyond the Danube; and here an important problem is that of Slav wheel-turned pottery (FIG. 7). Certain basic cultural provinces of central Europe at the beginning of the early middle ages have already

¹³ E. Dąbrowska, *Wielkie grody dorzecza górnej Wisły. Ze studiów nad rozwojem organizacji terytorialno-plemiennej w VII–IX wieku* (Summary: Grossburgen im Flussgebiet der oberen Weichsel. Aus Studien der territorialen und stammesmäßigen Organisationsentwicklung) (Wrocław, 1973). Cf. also A. Żaki, *Archeologia Małopolski wczesnośredniowiecznej* (Summary: Die Archäologie Kleinpolens im frühen Mittelalter) (Wrocław, 1974), 363–463.

¹⁴ See among others K. Jażdżewski, *Ancient Peoples and Places. Poland* (London, 1965); *I Międzynarodowy Kongres . . .*, 1–11 (Warsaw, 1968–9); W. Hensel, *Ur- und Frühgeschichte Polens* (Berlin, 1974).

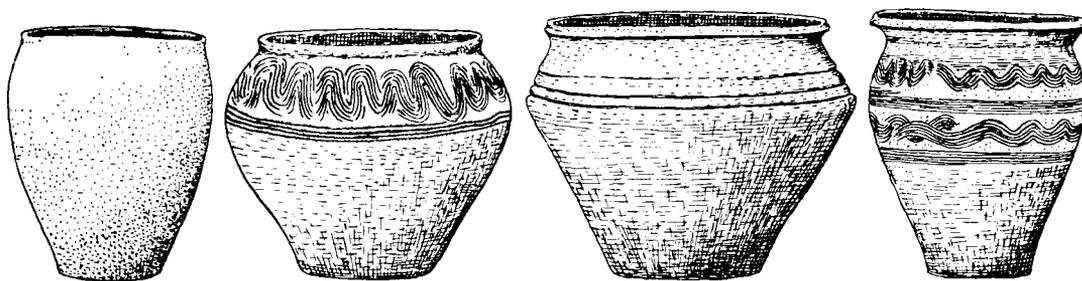


FIG. 7

EARLY SLAV POTTERY. Sc. c. 1:7

a. Prague type; b. Feldberg type; c. Tornow type; d. Chodlik type

been distinguished (FIG. 8);¹⁵ and comparative research is now being carried out which will ultimately construct a model to explain the cause of cultural modifications in this decisive period.

Research concerned with transformations in cultural structure in the later middle ages is rather more advanced. It is well known that this was a period of quick economic and cultural progress in Poland. The chartered towns became important and a rent economy was introduced in rural areas; at the same time the structure of the state took shape and a centralized monarchy was restored. The relatively rich written sources make such research easier. The archaeologist alone, however, must explain many basic problems concerning changes in material culture.¹⁶ Much interesting material has been produced in the excavations in the main centres of the early Piast period in Cracow, Wrocław, Gdańsk, Kalisz and others. It is worth mentioning that archaeological evidence concerning this period (the beginning of the 14th century) illuminates the origins of Warsaw, the modern Polish capital.

A consideration of national problems against a wider European background has been a characteristic feature of Polish medieval archaeology. Polish research workers have also been initiators in systematic international co-operation in the field of Slav archaeology. One of the most important scientific products of the Millennium celebrations was the first meeting of the International Congress of

¹⁵ See among others W. Szymański, *Szeligi pod Plockiem na początku wczesnego średniowiecza. Zespół osadniczy z VI-VII w.* (Summary: Szeligi near Plock in the Early Middle Ages. A Settlement Complex from the 6th-7th century) (Wrocław, 1967); A. Gardawski, *Chodlik, wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy* (Summary: Chodlik, ein frühmittelalterlicher Siedlungskomplex), 1 (Wrocław, 1970), notes 11-13.

¹⁶ Op. cit. in notes 4-5 above; also among others J. Kruppe, *Garncarstwo warszawskie w wiekach XIV i XV* (Summary: Warsaw Pottery in the 14th and 15th Century) (Wrocław, 1967); A. Nadolski, *Polish Arms. Side Arms* (Wrocław, 1974); some volumes of the series *Studia i Materiały z Historii Kultury Materialnej* (Studies and Materials Concerning the History of Material Culture) (Wrocław, 1957-75). Very important from the numismatic point of view, R. Kiersnowski, *Wielka reforma monetarna* (Summary: La grande réforme monétaire du XIII^e-XIV^e siècle), 1 (Warsaw, 1969).

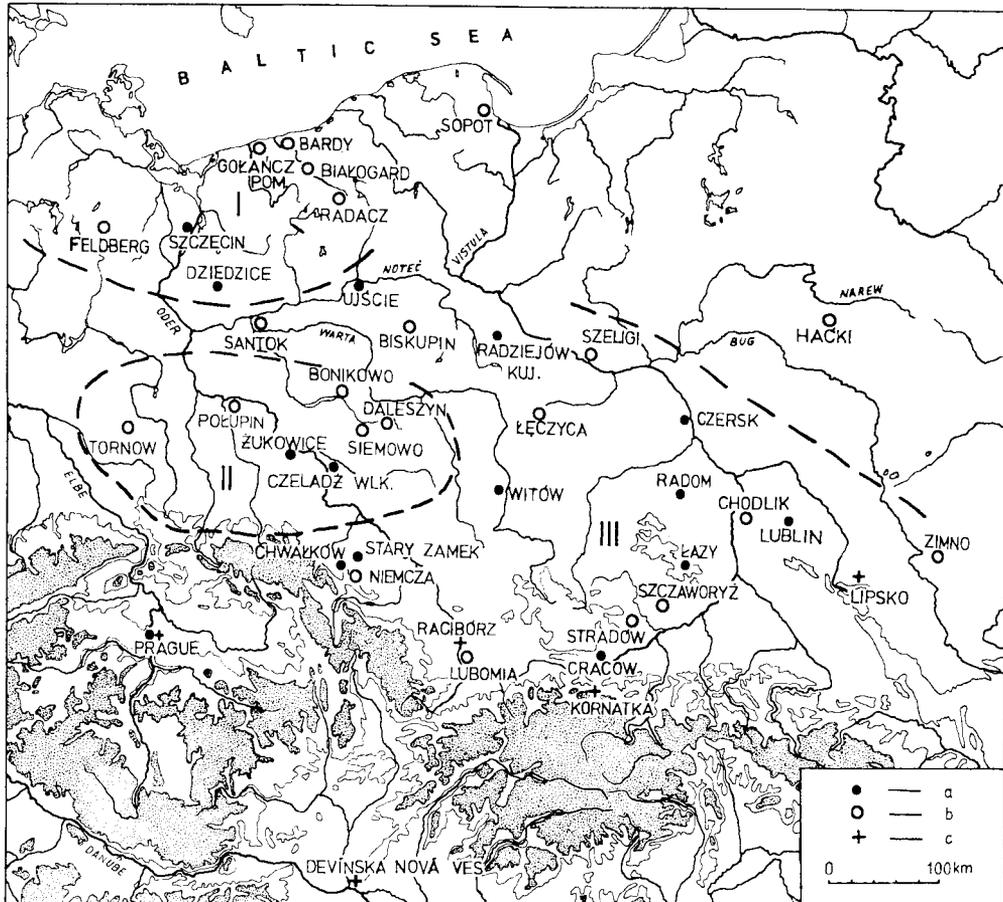


FIG. 8

MAIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES, 6th TO 8th-CENTURY, IN ODER AND VISTULA BASINS

Excavated within past twenty-five years. Showing (a) settlements, (b) forts, (c) cemeteries. Area I is the Feldberg pottery zone; area II the Tornow pottery zone; area III the Chodlik pottery zone

Slav Archaeology in Warsaw in 1965.¹⁷ In 1961, in co-operation with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Polish archaeologists took part in investigations into the beginnings of Slav settlement in northern Bulgaria by means of excavations at Styrmen and, later on at Odecy.¹⁸

In the same year, 1961, Polish archaeologists at the Institute of the History of Material Culture of the Polish Academy of Sciences were invited by Italian historians to co-operate in the study of the origins of Venice (by excavation on Torcello island), and this was followed a year later by excavations at the well-known Langobardic fortress at Castelseprio, near Milan.¹⁹ These researches, although unfortunately interrupted by the death of their initiator, Professor G. B. Bognetti, produced valuable data concerning problems of the formation of the early medieval Italian culture in two different environments: native Roman (Torcello) and barbarian Langobard (Castelseprio). In the last few years research on the Langobard period has again been initiated, this time in central Italy at Capaccio Vecchia, near Paestum. In like manner, Franco-Polish co-operation initiated in 1964 in the study of deserted medieval villages (at Saint-Jean-Le-Froid, near Rodez; at Montaigut, near Albi; Dracy, near Dijon; and Condorcet near Valence) enables us to come to grips with the culture of the medieval French village and to draw parallels with the history and development of the village in central Europe.²⁰ These are the main areas in which we have had international co-operation in the medieval field. Personal contact has, however, also broadened our horizons. Through them some of our colleagues have had the pleasure of taking part in excavations on certain early medieval sites in Great Britain.

Polish medieval archaeologists have been interested also in sites and subjects outside the European continent. And by this I do not refer to the discovery of splendid monuments of Byzantine art in Faras or the medieval finds at Palmyra, where investigations were carried out by classical archaeologists, using methods specific to their discipline. Rather I mean that specialists, who first received their archaeological experience in investigations concerning the origin of the Polish state, went to western Africa, where from 1964 onwards in the course of successive

¹⁷ *I Międzynarodowy Kongres . . .*, 1–VII (Wrocław, 1968–72). Cf. also *Berichte über den II. internationalen Kongress für slawische Archäologie*, 1–III (Berlin, 1970–3). Some comparative studies are worth mentioning here, as e.g. W. Hensel, *Die Slawen im frühen Mittelalter. Ihre materielle Kultur* (Berlin, 1965); idem, op. cit. in note 5; L. Leciejewicz, *Miasta Słowian północnopolańskich* (Summary: Towns of the North Polabian Slavs) (Wrocław, 1968); S. Suchodolski, *Początki mennictwa w Europie Środkowej, Wschodniej i Północnej* (Summary: Beginnings of Coinage in Central, Eastern and Northern Europe) (Wrocław, 1971).

¹⁸ W. Hensel, 'Recherches archéologiques polonaises à Styrmen (district Roussé) en Bulgarie', *Archaeologia Polona*, XII (1970), 151–86.

¹⁹ L. Leciejewicz, E. Tabaczyńska, S. Tabaczyński, *Torcello. Scavi 1961–1962* (Istituto Nazionale d'Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte, Monografie III, Rome, in press); reports about Castelseprio in *Rassegna Gallaratese di Storia e d'Arte*, xxiv–xxvii (1965–8). Cf. also T. Mannoni, H. Blake, 'L'archeologia medievale in Italia', in 'Archeologia e geografia del popolamento', *Quaderni Storici*, xxiv (Ancona, 1973), 858.

²⁰ *Villages désertés et histoire économique XI^e–XVIII^e siècle (Les hommes et la terre*, xi, Paris, 1965); 'Archéologie du village déserté', 1–II, *Cahiers des Annales*, xxvii (Paris, 1970). Cf. also J. M. Pesez, 'Ricerche e prospettive di lavoro intorno ai villaggi abbandonati', in 'Archeologia e geographia . . .', op. cit. in note 19, 766–806.

exploration, they have produced in Guinea new material for understanding the medieval kingdom of Mali and of its capital, Niani.²¹

In this short review, I have tried to point to problems which have been the centre of attention for medieval archaeologists in Poland during the last few years. I have not, of course, made anything like a definitive survey. I have referred to the most characteristic features of our investigations and outlined some research methods. British experiences in this field are held in high esteem in Poland, as proof of which are the translations of works by Childe, Clark, Foote and Wilson and others.²² Comparison with British experience has led to much new consideration of our problems, which is why the possibility of publication of this material in the pages of *Medieval Archaeology* is for us a most useful experience.

NOTE

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²¹ W. Filipowiak, 'L'Expédition archéologique polono-guinéenne à Niani (Guinée)', *Africana Bulletin*, iv (1966), 116-27; W. Filipowiak, S. Jasnosz, R. Wołagiewicz, 'Polsko-gwinejskie badania archeologiczne w Niani w 1968 r.' (Summary: Les recherches archéologiques polono-guinéennes à Niani en 1968), *Materiały Zachodniopomorskie*, xiv (1968), 575-648.

²² V. G. Childe, *Postęp a archeologia (Progress and Archaeology)* (Warsaw, 1954); idem, *O rozwoju w historii (What Happened in History)* (Warsaw, 1963); J. G. D. Clark, *Europa przedhistoryczna. Podstawy gospodarcze (Prehistoric Europe, the Economic Basis)* (Warsaw, 1957); P. G. Foote, D. M. Wilson, *Wikingowie (The Viking Achievement)* (Warsaw, 1975).