

Adam Ziółkowski

## Pollen, brooches, *solidi* and *Restgermanen*, or today's Poland in the Migration Period

**Abstract:** The work synthesises in 26 monographic chapters the results of a six-years long (2012–2018) interdisciplinary international project whose aim was to present the state of knowledge on today's Poland during the Migration Period, and to compare the evolution of its settlement with that of its neighbours. One of its main results – the accordance between the palynological evidence of the change of environment (extensive reforestation and drastic reduction of anthropogenic indicators) and the archaeological reconstruction of the change of settlement (disappearance of the Przeworsk, Wielbark and other cultures of the Roman Period by the mid-fifth century) – conclusively confirms the often questioned verdict of a sudden severe depopulation of the lands between the Vistula and the Oder, similar to that revealed in the rest of Central/Eastern Europe (disappearance of the Elbe and Chernyakhiv-Sântana de Mureş cultures). An entirely new perspective opened by the project is the survival of enclaves with contacts all round the compass (the Eastern Empire, the Merovingian West, the Danubian lands, Scandinavia, the Western Balts). None of them yielded Slavonic material, even the longest-lived one recently discovered at Gaški-Wierzbiaczany in Kujawy, evidently one of the main centres of the European Barbaricum and in the third and fourth century the Roman army's recruiting station, which continued till the early seventh century; this evidence (or lack of it) is the death-blow to the theory of a supposed continuity of settlement – and so of ethnicity, necessarily Slavonic – from the Bronze Age to the Middle Ages. Through these enclaves, southern cultural influences reached Scandinavia during the Younger Germanic Iron Age; the one at the mouth of the Vistula seems to have been the earliest and greatest recipient of the Imperial *solidi* in the Baltic zone, from which they were redistributed to the Nordic lands. A sample of other topics: tracing the extent (quite limited) of the Hunnic presence north of the Carpathians; evidence on fugitives from Hermanaric's realm, including what appears to be the earliest known assemblage of the Dančeny-Brangstrup horizon; the Migration Period among the Western Balts, neighbours and cultural cousins, who did not take part in the *Völkerwanderung*. In the end, two leitmotifs of the work, one pessimistic, the other optimistic: short-sightedness and harmfulness of the official persecutive policy, in Poland and the majority of other European countries, with regard to amateur metal detecting, which only makes priceless potential evidence disappear without a trace; material remains and relative written sources (in this case Iordanes and Procopius) reflect the same historical reality and can legitimately be used to support one another.

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Adam Ziółkowski, University of Warsaw, Faculty of History, Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28, 00–927 Warsaw, Poland  
a.ziolkowski@uw.edu.pl

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Already at a glance the work is an impressive undertaking. Two thick volumes (main text almost 900 pages, main bibliography 150, 1100 pages in all), innumerable high-quality maps, figures, diagrams and tables, all that on a subject that is at the same time familiar to every specialist on Late Antiquity (the *Völkerwanderung*) and exotic (Polish lands, away from the Empire and so from the sight of the ancients and, inevitably, the majority of the moderns), with some of the best-known names in the field among the contributors, guarantee a rewarding, if not easy reading.

This work, the achievement of the Migration Period between the Oder and the Vistula Project (henceforth: MPOV), is – says in *Introduction* (p. 1) the project's originator and coordinator, Aleksander Bursche – the result of an interdisciplinary enterprise which involved archaeologists, historians, numismatists, and palynologists from Poland and six other European countries: Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom. One name should be added to their list, that of Jerzy Kolendo, who passed during the duration of the project, but whose influence pervades the work, thanks both to his immense – in quality and quantity – scholarly output on the relations between the Romans and the continental barbarians in general, and on the ancient reports on Polish lands in particular,<sup>1</sup> and to his equally great educational work in the then Archaeology Institute of the University of Warsaw, the home institution of the project which was coordinated by his pupil and supported by the project team consisting of his other pupils (or pupils' pupils) and collaborators.

At the outset, the project's prehistory: The post-war territory of Poland corresponds almost perfectly with the areas of the archaeological cultures of Wielbark and Przeworsk, whose makers were, respectively, the Goths-Gepids and the Vandals, even though, at the beginning of the Migration Period, the Goths had for several generations been living mainly in today's Ukraine and Moldavia, and the Hasdings south of the Carpathians. A precise definition of the two cultures, including the south-east expansion of the Wielbark Culture to western Ukraine, where it became the core around which the Chernyakhiv-Sântana de Mureş Culture would be formed,<sup>2</sup> which made it possible to retrace the Goths' route from the Baltic to the Pontic steppe and so proved the essential veracity of the trek's account in Iordanes' *Getica* (which veracity, however, many a scholar, particularly Anglo-Saxon, have been

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1 See J. Kolendo, T. Płóciennik, *Vistula amne discreta. Greckie i łacińskie źródła do najdawniejszych dziejów polskich* [*Vistula amne discreta. Greek and Latin sources to the earliest history of the Polish lands*], Warszawa 2015, 303–10.

2 R. Wołagiewicz, "Die Goten im Bereich der Wielbark-Kultur", in J. Kmiecński (ed.), *Peregrinatio Gothica – Archaeologia Baltica* 7, 1986, 63–98; ID., *Ceramika kultury wielbarskiej między Bałtykiem a Morzem Czarnym* [*Pottery of the Wielbark Culture between the Baltic and the Black Sea*], Szczecin 1993; see M. Fudziński, H. Paner (eds), *Nowe materiały i interpretacje. Stan dyskusji na temat kultury wielbarskiej* [*New Materials and Interpretations. The State of the Discussion on the Wielbark Culture*], Gdańsk 2007; J. Andrzejowski, "The Gothic migration through Eastern Poland – the archaeological evidence", in A. Cieśliński, B. Kontny (eds), *Interacting Barbarians. Contacts, Exchange and Migration in the First Millennium AD*, Neue Studien zur Sachsenforschung B. 9, Warszawa/Braunschweig/Schleswig 2019, 225–38.

slow to realise, and even slower to admit),<sup>3</sup> was one of greatest achievements of the Polish post-war archaeology, to a large extent made possible by another: the establishment of the relative and absolute chronologies of Central European cultures of the Younger/Late Roman and Early Migration periods by Kazimierz Godłowski.<sup>4</sup>

With such a background, one might have expected the *Völkerwanderung* to be one of main themes of Polish archaeological studies; in reality, it had long been a taboo and half a century ago nothing suggested that the things would change. This situation was the result of the long undisputed reign in Polish archaeology of the 'neoautochthonous' theory, first put forward in 1914,<sup>5</sup> with its main tenet of a supposed continuity of settlement – and so of ethnicity as well – from the Bronze-Age Lusatian Culture to the Medieval Polish state. In the light of this theory – in which the Przeworsk Culture, in its maximum extent spreading over two thirds of the basins of the Oder and the Vistula, was the penultimate prehistoric link in the chain of proto-Slavonic/Slavonic cultures – there was no place for large migrations. Now, the aforementioned studies demonstrated that the Przeworsk and Wielbark cultures disappeared by the middle of the fifth century, and had no discernible links with the primitive, certainly Slavonic Prague Culture which succeeded them after a hiatus of several generations. An open challenge to the reigning dogma came in 1979 in the shape of Godłowski's study which for the first time in Polish archaeology squarely faced the question of the Slavs' historically attested expansion in the sixth to seventh century, starting with the location and chronology of the earliest archaeological culture(s) that can undoubtedly be ascribed to them.<sup>6</sup> His 'allochthonous' (from the Polish perspective) verdict – the Slavs are first perceptible in Ukraine sometime in the fifth century; in Poland their traces can be dated to the second half of the

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3 See e.g., the article of faith (presented as 'a fact') of the 'Toronto school' (and of the hypercritics in general) in M. Kulikowski, "Nation versus army: a necessary contrast?", in A. Gillet (ed.) *On Barbarian Identity. Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages 4, Turnhout 2002, 69–84 (n. 14): "It is an unfortunate fact, however, that historical and material sources are different categories of evidence that never intersect with the precision assumed by historians seeking the assistance of archaeological evidence", with Kazimierz Godłowski (see below and n. 4 and 6) singled out as a specimen of outdated archaeologists ascribing ethnic labels to the material evidence.

4 K. Godłowski, *The Chronology of the Late Roman and Early Migration Periods in Central Europe*, Cracow 1970; ID., "Problemy chronologii okresu rzymskiego [The problems of the chronology of the Roman Period]", in *Scripta Archaeologica (Materiały z sesji naukowej poświęconej pamięci prof. Rudolfa Jamki)*, Warszawa-Kraków 1988, 27–49.

5 J. Kostrzewski, *Wielkopolska w czasach przedhistorycznych [Greater Poland in prehistoric Times]*, Poznań 1914.

6 K. Godłowski, *Z badań nad zagadnieniem rozprzestrzeniania Słowian w V–VII w. n.e. [Researches into the question of the Slavs' expansion in the V–VII c.]*, Kraków 1979. The author's numerous essays on the subject are collected in K. Godłowski, *Pierwotne siedziby Słowian [Original dwellings of the Slavs]*, Kraków 2000; K. Godłowski, J. Bemmann, M. Parczewski (eds), *Frühe Slawen in Mitteleuropa. Schriften von Kazimierz Godłowski*, Neumünster 2005.

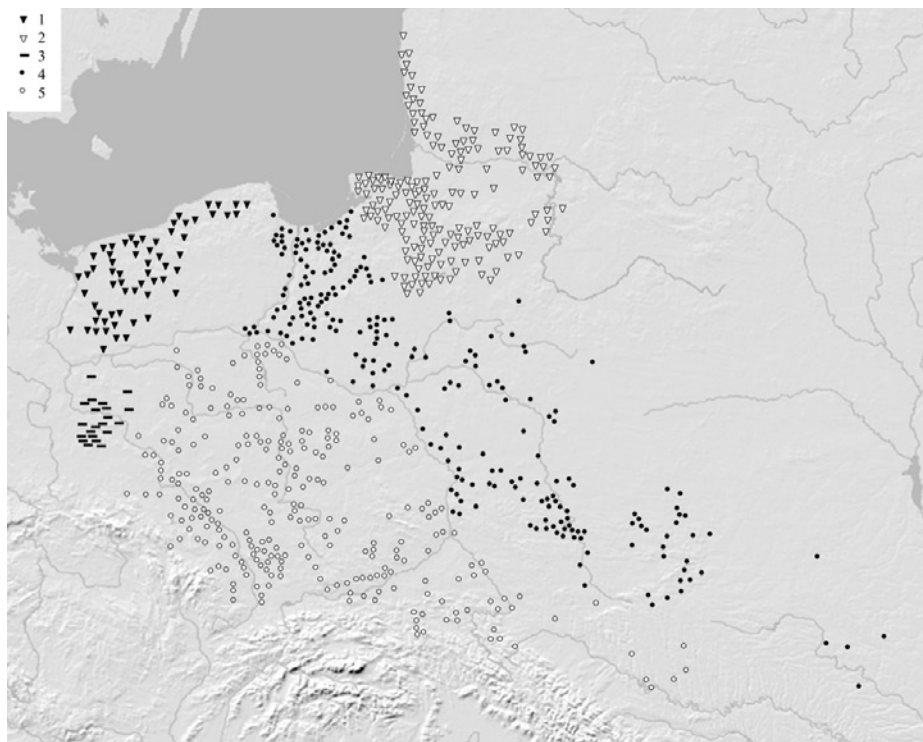


**Map. 1:** Historical provinces of Poland (source: Ireneusz Jakubczyk).

sixth century at the earliest<sup>7</sup> – for a time fiercely contested by many archaeologists and historians of note,<sup>8</sup> was in effect the death blow to the autochthonous theory, the purport of the evidence, repeatedly corroborated by subsequent research, being in the long run too univocal to leave room for doubt or evasions. Die-hard au-

<sup>7</sup> Actually, in his earlier works Godłowski admitted the possibility of the Slavs' reaching the eastern fringes of today's Poland already in the second half of the fifth century, but with the qualification that the datable chronological indicators are not earlier than the second half of the sixth to early seventh century.

<sup>8</sup> Readers unfamiliar with Polish can get a glimpse of the bitterness of the debate in Felix Biermann's review (*AAC* 41, 2006, 208–12) of probably the last great clash between the 'Cracow-Warsaw school' (allochthonists) and the 'Poznań-Wrocław school' (autochthonists), published in P. Kaczanowski, M. Parczewski (eds), *Archeologia o początkach Słowian. Materiały z konferencji, Kraków 19–21 listopada 2001* [*Archaeology on the origin of the Slavs. Conference materials, Cracow, 19–21 November 2001*], Kraków 2005.



**Map 2:** Archaeological cultures of the Younger/Late Roman Period in Poland. 1: Dębczyno Group, 2: West Balt cultures, 3: Luboszyce Culture, 4: Wielbark Culture, 5: Przeworsk Culture (source: Ireneusz Jakubczyk).

tochthonists are still around, but in their argumentation analyses of archaeological material and written sources are notably absent, supplanted by anthropological and sociological jargon, and lately by genetics which, as things stand today, can support any view.

MPOV started in 2012, thirty-three years after the publication of Godłowski's book: long enough time for a general reassessment of the evidence on two hundred years between the last quarter of the fourth and the late sixth century, incessantly growing but scattered in innumerable articles, conference papers and monographs, and for the appearance of a new generation of researchers grown in the intellectual environment of the 'Cracow-Warsaw school' who were to carry this task through. The project members had no wish to resuscitate the long-resolved debate about the reality of a huge migration movement which left most of the land empty; they also refrained from investigating the earliest Slavonic settlement (in this case, mainly for paucity of radiocarbon or dendrochronological dates, the only means of obtaining absolute chronology in the absence of reliable man-made indicators). Their aim was twofold: to present a *summa* of our knowledge on the inhabitants of today's Poland during the Migration Period, and to try to explain why things were happening

the way they did. Needless to say, to bring the project to completion it was necessary to put it in a wider geographical context, in order to compare the evolution of the settlement on the Oder and the Vistula with that of neighbouring lands, and to attempt to trace human groups moving out of and into Poland.

The work is divided into four parts (1: *History, Theory and Environment*, pp. 13–198; 2: *Between the Oder and the Vistula*, pp. 199–466; 3: *Case Studies*, pp. 467–624; 4: *Beyond the Oder and the Vistula*, pp. 625–876), each composed of several chapters (twenty-six in all), preceded by *Introduction* (pp. 1–12) in which the MPOV coordinator presents his collaborators, outlines the geography of the project, its aims and course, and the structure of the work, and concluded by a very brief *Afterword* (pp. 877–9), recapitulating the main gains in our knowledge obtained by the project, and indicating areas and methods of future investigation most urgently needed to get an all-comprehensive view of the transition of today's Poland from Late Antiquity to Early Middle Ages.

Part 1, an effective introduction to the archaeological/numismatic bulk of the work, consists of four chapters: one on 'theory of migration', two on written sources, one on palynology. Marzena Przybyła starts her *Migration Studies in Archaeology: Building a Circumstantial Case* (pp. 15–64) with an admission:

No single, uniform model has as yet been developed that would be applicable to migrations in both pre-industrial societies and the modern, globalized world. We lack a model which would not only identify basic variables in the process and their inter-relations but also demonstrate how changes in one variable affect other variables and the strength of the connections between them. (p. 17)

One shudders at the thought of what that model would look like; luckily, her goal is more modest: "to present mechanisms of migrations and basic variables which are of universal importance for the planning of any research programmes on migrations" (p. 18). There follow forty-odd pages of generally admitted statements (climatic changes affect human societies, human behaviour is conditioned by a number of factors, mass migrations result from push, pull or both, the first wave of migration consists of young males) or propositions for which one can adduce as many cons as pros (emigration most commonly stems from deterioration of living conditions), and finally an admonition about relevant Late Antique and Early Medieval written sources:

It must be made clear that these sources cannot properly be understood without theoretical knowledge about mechanisms responsible for shaping identities and ethnic boundaries, and those behind migrations. (p. 52).

A bold claim, also considering that right to the end the reader does not learn what that 'theoretical knowledge' really is. With regard to the favourite target of today's theoreticians with sociological/anthropological slant – the deplorable habit of backwoods archaeologists to think in terms of archaeological cultures and, worse still, attach to them ethnic labels taken from written sources – her stance is unclear; any-

how, other contributors cling to these obsolete notions and, e. g., consider the people of the Chernyakhiv-Sântana de Mureş Culture, whether on the Danube or on the Dnieper, as Goths.

The theme of the barbarians' ethnic identity is developed in Peter Heather's *Migration and Identity in Late Antiquity* (pp. 65–83). There is little to comment on his concise history of the debate from Gustaf Kossina (fairly assessed), through the crisis brought about by the Nazism and the Second World War, and the ways of escape from it, epitomised by the names of Frederik Barth and Reinhard Wenskus, to the academic battles of the last generation, in which he has played so prominent a part. I liked best his demonstration of the length to which the champions of the view depreciating mass migrations and the role of ethnic bonds during the *Völkerwanderung* strain the evidence to defend their position. I have only two remarks to make. First, as almost the whole of his argument concerns the barbarians moving within the Empire, archaeology is missing from the exposition save for one passage:

I am a believer in the reality of 3rd-century Gothic migration from the Black Sea to the Baltic [a Freudian slip?] ... but the contemporary material suggests that it took the form of many smaller migratory expeditions, which partly coalesced at the point of destination; not one coordinated move. (p. 82, with a reference to Chapter 2 of his *Goths*.<sup>9</sup>)

Now, irrespective of whether that material allowed for this (or, for that matter, the other) scenario, a reference to the book published in 1996 was twenty years later out of place in the face of the greatly grown archaeological evidence. Second, it is astonishing that in the whole chapter there is no mention of *Scythica Vindobonensia*. For all the laudable efforts of Herwig Wolfram, Walter Pohl, and others, including Heather, it was Jana Grusková's discovery which exploded the ideologically driven contention that the Goths living in the Empire had no ethnic self-consciousness, no memory of their past, and that what passes for their tradition as reported by Iordanes was invented by obliging Roman intellectuals.<sup>10</sup>

The trouble with the discussion of written sources by Marcin Wołoszyn (*The Migration Period in Poland in the Light of Literary Sources*, pp. 84–136) is that the subject matter which might perfectly well have been dealt with on fifteen pages, grew to more than fifty. We have five relevant texts: two mentions of the Vidivarii at the mouth of the Vistula in Iordanes' *Getica* 36 and 96, cited in later chapters as well because of their very probable identification with the people of the Elbląg Group; Procopius' account of the march of the Heruli across Central Europe after their defeat by the Langobardi (*Bell.* 5.15.1–2), some of the empty land between the abodes of the Sclaveni and the Varni, wherever both be situated, having by geographic necessity

<sup>9</sup> P. J. Heather, *The Goths*, Oxford 1996.

<sup>10</sup> See now J. Grusková *et alii*, *Empire in Crisis: Gothic Invasions and Roman Historiography. Beiträge einer internationalen Tagung zu den Wiener Dexipp-Fragmenten (Dexippus Vindobonensis)*. Wien, 3.–6. Mai 2017, Tyche Supplementband 12, Vienna 2020.

been Polish territory; finally, the alleged extent of Attila's empire in Priscus (fr. 11.2 Blockley: all of Scythia and the isles in the Ocean) and Iordanes (*Getica* 257: all the realms of Scythia and Germania), a worn topos (Iordanes, *Getica* 120, ascribes the same extent to Hermanaric's kingdom), but not entirely out of place in that, as shown later in the work, the south of Poland did fall under the Hunnic sway. Now, unsatisfied with this meagre dossier (to which Iordanes' passages on the abodes of the Venethi/Sclaveni/Antes [*Getica* 34–5, 119] might be added), the author doubled it with accounts, some muddled beyond comprehension, which, to be linked with today's Poland, require strained assumptions and interpretations (the Avars starving while fighting the Franks in Thuringia, an embassy of the Vandals who stayed home [on the Maeotid Lake!] to Genseric, Mauricius visited by three Sclaveni from the shore of the Western Ocean, etc). Alas, these few texts, relevant and irrelevant, scattered in a jumble of off-topic data, surmises, and debates, are hard to find, also because the reader has not been provided with their list.

Satisfaction returns with the last chapter of Part 1, *Pollen Evidence in Environment and Settlement during the 1st Millennium AD* (pp. 137–98) by a team led by Małgorzata Latałowa. Conditions for pollen analysis exist chiefly in the lakelands of northern and central Poland, corresponding to the extent of ice sheet in the last glaciation. The authors, on the basis of their own studies and earlier publications, used data from fifty-two sites, most of them radiocarbon-dated, to reconstruct changes of vegetation during the first millennium, very clearly presented on maps showing arboreal to non-arboreal pollen ratio, distribution of anthropogenic indicators (pollen of crop plants, weeds, ruderal plants, etc.), proportions of cereal pollen in general and of the best recognisable rye pollen in particular, in three periods: Roman (first to fourth century), Migration (fifth to sixth century) and Early Medieval (seventh to eighth century); data for twenty sites with high number of radiocarbon dates are presented in six two-hundred year time-windows (up to AD 1200). With all the limitations of the method, the study shows that in some areas of the Wielbark Culture, the population crisis begun already in the third century (a sure sign of the Goths' migration), severely affected all the territory except the north-eastern lakelands (Masuria) in the fifth to sixth century, with recovery starting in the late seventh century, and encompassing all the once depopulated areas by the ninth century (Masuria, in turn, enters then a period of regress). At the same time sites with good pollen record show that forest regeneration – the surest sign of depopulation – was not simultaneous and that in certain areas settlement survived on reduced scale well into the sixth century. As we shall see below, these results correspond perfectly with the evolution of settlement that has emerged from the archaeological investigation of the last half-a-century, a synthesis of which is presented in Part 2 and separate case studies in Part 3.

Archaeological investigation of Polish lands has its unique specificity, mainly due to the equally unique Polish history. First, the partitions, because of which one of the great historical states of Europe missed the nineteenth century, the age when modern educational and research institutions were born. Then, the Second



World War, i.e. indiscriminate destruction and plundering by the Germans and Soviets alike, and its aftermath: the westward shift of the country's territory, so that today almost a half of it are ex-German lands. As a result of all that, a good part of reports on archaeological finds from the Migration Period made in today's Poland before 1945, and the finds themselves, were destroyed, scattered, or sent as war-booty to Russia, where – as repeatedly experienced by Polish archaeologists – even when their location is known, they remain inaccessible for studying. Another great hindrance – for which, however, history cannot be blamed – has been the hostility of the state authorities to amateur metal-detecting, reinforced in 2018 under the banner of protecting the national heritage by particularly harmful legislation which, while unable to stop the detectorists' activity, successfully dissuades them from reporting their finds. The result is that the said finds in overwhelming majority end up in private collections or foreign auction houses without any notice on their provenance.

The opening chapter of Part 2, Magdalena Mączyńska's *The Chronology* (pp. 200–24), is mainly devoted to the still not definitively solved, due to the absence of local diagnostic objects and scarcity of Roman coins, problem of defining the Late Roman Period and the earliest phase of the Migration Period – in the Eggert-Godłowski scheme phases C3 and D1 – broadly the fourth century (often rendered as C3/D), after which in most of Poland's territory hitherto existing archaeological cultures disappear. This is now becoming possible with regard to the C3 phase of the Wielbark Culture, thanks to newly investigated grave assemblages from northern and eastern Poland, and to steadily growing material evidence from neighbouring lands, especially from the area of the closely related Cherniakhiv-Sântana de Mureş Culture. Unfortunately, for the Przeworsk Culture and two off-shots of the Elbian Culture, the Luboszyce Culture on the middle Oder and the Dębczyno Group in West Pomerania, such a possibility still does not exist. Although in the Polish lands the *Völkerwanderung* makes itself perceptible by some historically well-dated material, such as traces of fugitives from the collapsing Gothic realm, proofs of Hunnic domination, and, up to the early sixth century, the Imperial *solidi*, the time of the great migration which left most of the country depopulated cannot as yet be fixed more precisely than the first decades of the fifth century.

In *Styles* (pp. 225–89), specimens found in Poland, of the pan-regional styles of barbarian élites which appeared during the Migration Period, are discussed in the context of the current state of research on these styles' origins, diffusion, and characteristics: Sösdala-Untersiebenbrunn Style by Marzena Przybyła, Polychrome Style by Anna Bitner-Wróblewska, Nydam Style and Animal Style I and II by Alexandra Pesch. From their analyses there emerges with particular clarity, in spite of relative paucity of finds, the central position – in the literal sense – of today's Poland in that time of unprecedented multi-directional mobility of men, objects, and ideas. The region was at the same time the furthest area of appearance of artefacts firmly rooted in the South (objects of indubitably Hunnic provenance in southern Poland) and North (the Nordic bracteates in northern and central Poland), and a corridor through which ideas and objects flew from the Pontic and Danubian zones to Scan-

dinavia, and maybe in the opposite direction as well (e.g. an ornate buckle of a sword-belt from the Konarzew hoard in central Poland, with unique features providing a connection between the styles of the European South/South-East and North/West in the second half of the fifth century).

Most of all, the three authors demonstrate that after the great emigration there existed pockets of population in Polish lands able to support local élites with continent-wide contacts. The geography of these pockets is given in *Settlements* (pp. 299–332) and *Cemeteries and Burials* (pp. 333–69) by Henryk Machajewski and Jan Schuster, co-author of the latter chapter. In the territory of the Wielbark Culture, we find almost exclusively burials, with grave goods better datable than elsewhere: hence their more secure chronology combined with near impossibility of pinning down areas of settlement. In the territories of other cultures, group burials are poorly dated; as for settlements, with few exceptions limited to the area of the Przeworsk Culture, it is not easy to distinguish those in use in the early Migration Period, their dating being based mainly on local wheel-made pottery, mass-produced from the Younger Roman Period (phase C1b–C2, c. 220/30–300/10) onwards. With this caveat, both kinds of evidence show great thinning out of the population. During the phase C3/D–D1, almost all previously existing cemeteries go out of use, replaced by smaller and usually short-lived burial places, a footprint of people on the move. Settlement becomes nearly invisible save for the territory of the Przeworsk Culture, where it shrinks to several islands, mostly in Greater Poland, Lower Silesia, and on the upper Vistula; outside of it, only three such areas have been individuated, near the mouth of the Vistula and on the upper Bug (Wielbark Culture), and on the river Parsęta in West Pomerania (Dębczyno Group). A novel feature are burial places with grave goods unconnected with the local cultures of the Roman Period: single graves furnished with artefacts of the barbarian élite styles of the middle of the fifth century, with Alan, Gothic and Hunnic elements (see next paragraph), and cemeteries from the late fifth/early sixth century in Pomerania, with traits indicating a brief presence of Nordic settlers in the once Wielbark Culture territory.

The next two chapters delve deeper into the theme of foreign influences. More than a half of *Early Migration Period Nomadic Finds* (pp. 370–410) by Judyta Rodzińska-Nowak deals with the ‘princely’ grave found at Jakuszowice near Cracow in 1911, but only now submitted to an all-embracing study, including metallographic analyses. She confirms Godłowski’s dating of the burial to the thirties of the fifth century, just before Attila’s reign, but leaves open the question of identity of the frail youth buried with his horse six metres below the ground with an inventory of weapons, ornaments, and horse trappings which, though sorely incomplete due to the circumstances of the discovery, match the contemporary ‘royal’ burials and sacrificial deposits of the Carpathian Basin: a member of the uppermost Hunnic élite or a scion of the local ruling family subordinated to the Huns?<sup>11</sup> Be that as it may, this

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11 The only real inferiority of the Jakuszowice assemblage, compared to the archetypal, stylistically

find (plus most probably the nearby inhumation grave of a warrior with deformed skull equipped with a Hunnic seax at Przemęczany) shows that in the second quarter of the fifth century the south-eastern pocket of the Przeworsk Culture was a part of the Hunnic empire. The Huns also left traces in the south-western pocket of that culture in Lower Silesia: the assemblage at Jędrzychowice south of Wrocław, lost in the Second World War, with a typically Hunnic bronze cauldron and gold foil plaques decorated in the Polychrome Style, plus, less certainly, a similarly decorated gold neckring from Rędzin (today a part of Wrocław), now probably in Moscow, and a pottery workshop at Lisowice near Legnica, different from any other known in Central Europe but similar to those found in the Pontic region. Other signs of nomad connections amount in practice to two warriors' graves, neither Hunnic: at Ługi on the Silesian-Greater Polish border, with a mixture of Sarmatian and Przeworsk Culture traits, and at Juszkowo near Gdańsk (an 'Asian' *spatha* similar to that found in Jakuszowice, used by the Alans and the Goths as well as the Huns, and East Germanic accessories). In the light of this meagre evidence, attempts to trace Hunnic expeditions reaching the Baltic and even the North Sea, with the archaeological material based on ancient clichés about the extent of Attila's empire,<sup>12</sup> are simple fantasies. The author pertinently asks what would have been the purpose of the Huns' expansion to the almost empty lands beyond the Carpathians, with the infinitely richer Roman territories at a stone's throw. They evidently reconnoitred and for a time controlled the still inhabited areas just north of the passes through the mountains encircling their new home, the Hungarian steppe, but that would have been the limit of their forays in this direction.

*Shared Divine Imagery: Gold Bracteates* (pp. 411–33) by Alexandra Pesch is a study of the fifteen bracteates officially known to have been found in today's Poland, their dating, designs, links with specimens of the same families, plus circumstances of their finding and subsequent fate. The last aspect is a good illustration of problems the MPOV team had to face. Out of eleven pieces reported in the nineteenth century in the then Prussian Kingdom (Karlino, West Pomerania, and Wapno, Greater Poland), ten were lost or taken to Russia; two, bought in 1944 by the Landesmuseum in Stuttgart, have been traced to a huge hoard found c. 1926 in Zagorzyn near Kalisz, the contents of which were quickly melted down (among others a gold medallion of c. 750 grams) or sold (identification of the hoard's site and of a part of finds, now scattered in diverse museums and collections in Poland, Germany, and the USA,

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similar one from Szeged-Nagyszéksós, lies in the percentage of gold in objects of the same kind: respectively 76 % and 81 % in the former, 95 % and pure gold (99–100 %) in the latter (Rodzińska-Nowak, 384–5).

12 I. Bóna, *Das Hunnenreich*, Budapest 1991; B. Anke, "Zur hunnischen Geschichte nach 375", in B. Anke, H. Externbrink (eds), *Attila und die Hunnen*, Stuttgart 207, 39–47.

was quite a feat of detective work on the part of Aleksander Bursche)<sup>13</sup>; as for the last two, found in 2006 and 2010 in Suchań, West Pomerania, at least one other was found in the same plot in the 1990s and sold. Unique features of some of these bracteates strongly suggest local production;<sup>14</sup> the author concludes the chapter expanding a point made by Bursche with regard to the Zagorzyn hoard, an heirloom of a family which at the very end of the fifth century still maintained contacts across the Barbaricum, and which is the only assemblage known to have contained the Imperial medallions, their barbarian imitations, and the latter's derivatives with 'native' imagery, the bracteates:

The Polish regions seem to have been [...] a doorway between the related Germanic and Gothic peoples in the southern Romanized world on the one hand and the northern barbarian regions on the other. Local (and perambulating) people in this area apparently played a considerable role in transferring new ideas and techniques, and notably in providing the impetus behind the invention and crafting of the first bracteates. (p. 433)

The final section of Part 2, *The Southern Baltic Region* (pp. 434–50) and *Southern and Central Poland* (pp. 451–66) by Magdalena Mączyńska, presents an overview of the dating of the exodus and later developments in particular regions of today's Poland during the Migration Period. With regard to the greater part of Pomerania she reiterates what has been written above: the disappearance of the Dębczyno Group, the Nordic episode and definitive abandonment at the beginning of the sixth century. At the mouth of the Vistula all signs of the Wielbark Culture disappear well before 450, but the flow of *solidi* on a scale unparalleled in the Baltic zone (see below), began c. 425 and lasting for almost a hundred years, and numerous caches of other precious objects indicate the existence of a flourishing community in close contact with the Empire and the rest of Barbaricum till at least the first decades of the sixth century, even though it is not clear where exactly its members lived and were buried. East of the estuary, where no known hoards of *solidi* were deposited after the middle of the fifth century, some old inhabitants must have remained as well, as witnessed by the emergence of a new mixed, Balt-Germanic Elbląg Group, most probably Iordanes' Vidivarrii (see below), during the second half of that century. In the territory of the Przeworsk Culture, after the great contraction of the inhabited area in the late phase C3/D–D1 (c. 400), the islands of the old population declined or acquired new traits during the first half of the fifth century, in the south as the result of falling under the sway of the Huns (see above), in the centre by intense contacts with the rest of the Barbaricum and, possibly, immigration from the Elbe basin. At the begin-

**13** A. Bursche, "4th century solidi from Zagórzyn hoard", *WN* 47, 2003, 41–60; ID., "Germanic gold bracteates from the hoard in Zagórzyn near Kalisz", in M. Wołoszyn (ed.), *Byzantine Coins in Central Europe between the 5th and the 10th Century*, Rzeszów 2009, 133–53.

**14** See A. Pesch, "Die Formularfamilien der kontinentalen Brakteaten", in M. Lodewijckx (ed.), *Bruc Ealles Well. Archaeological Essays Concerning the Peoples of North-West Europe in the First Millennium AD*, Acta Archaeologica Lovanensia, Monographiae 15, Leuven 2004, 157–80.

ning of the sixth century, two such islands are still documented: one in Greater Poland, on the Prosna near Kalisz, and the other, whose importance has only recently started to emerge thanks to metal detector finds, in Kujawy.

Three out of six case studies which make up Part 3 treat of these two regions; the other three focus on individual assemblages: a founder's hoard from East Pomerania and, respectively, a cache of *solidi* and a gold deposit from West Pomerania. The subject of the first two chapters, *Kujawy (Central Poland) between Antiquity and Middle Ages* (pp. 469–99) by Marcin Rudnicki and Mirosław Rudnicki, and *Roman Origin and Migration Period Military Equipment from Kujawy* (pp. 500–38) by Bartosz Kontny and Marcin Rudnicki, is the most sensational archaeological (or nearly so) discovery made (actually: still being made) in Poland in this century. Kujawy, with their alluvial soils and salt, had ever been one of the parts of Poland most favourable for settlement. Since the La Tène Period at the latest as important an asset became the region's geographic position: The fact that all the main branches of the Amber Route met here before reaching the lower Vistula explains the emergence of a local Celtic enclave which continued as an important outpost of the Przeworsk Culture people during the Roman Period – it is worth adding, the one they never relinquished to their northern Wielbark Culture neighbours in the time of the latter's greatest pressure west of the Vistula in the second century, just before their great expansion to the south-east. During the last decade, a veritable explosion of amateur metal detector finds, most of them unpublished for the reasons given above (the best the archaeologists can usually get, especially in the case of coins and golden objects, are anonymous photos with approximate locations of the finds, like those of *solidi* reproduced on pp. 483 and 622, with annotations: 'photographer unknown' and 'not to scale') have revealed a community with the 'central place' between the villages Gąski and Wierzbiczyń near Inowrocław, apparently one of the main political centres of the European Barbaricum, which for centuries was a major station on the Amber Route, and probably served as the Roman army's recruiting station in the third and the fourth century. After the phase C3–D/D1 this community continued – on territorially much reduced scale, but with undiminished range of contacts (Eastern Empire, Frankish Kingdom, Danube and Elbe regions, Scandinavia, Western Balts) and prosperity – till the seventh century, i.e., probably up to the coming of the Slavs. The authors of the former chapter analyse these contacts essentially on the basis of just one category of objects, ornamental brooches, adding that there are also coins, buckles, and belt fittings, which tell the same story. The authors of the latter focus on items of military equipment found at Gąski-Wierzbiczyń (the only exception being a unique gilded badge of a Roman *beneficiarius* from nearby Karczyn), pointing out the site's close analogy with the Erfurt-Frienstedt settlement, recognised as a recruiting station of the Gallic Empire of 260–74 (coins of the usurpers, great quantity of small inexpensive pieces of the Roman military gear). Roman military belt fittings of the Late Roman/early Migration Period and two *solidi* of Theodosius II and Leo I (certainly a minute fraction of those actually found) suggest that the settlement continued in this role in the fourth and fifth century as well.

The region on the Prosna, the subject of *New Evidence for the Migration Period in the Central Prosna Basin* (pp. 592–624) by Sławomir Miłek, shares many features with Kujawy: very good soils, location on one of two main branches of the Amber Route, Celtic presence, great quantity of Roman imports, and a number of hoards, including the one from Zagorzyn (see above). What set it apart has been good archaeological recognition, largely due to the identification of Καλισία in Claudius Ptolemaios' second κλίμα of Germania Magna (2.11.28) with Kalisz, first put forward in the fifteenth century by the historian Jan Długosz, long prevalent in Poland and even today quite widely accepted (hence the city's popular appellation: 'the oldest town in Poland'),<sup>15</sup> though the investigation has tended to focus on the 'Ptolemaic' Roman Period. The re-evaluation of its position in the Migration Period is accordingly due less to amateur metal detecting than to regular excavations and surface surveying, and to reconsideration of assemblages found earlier in the region in the light of new finds made elsewhere. The old and new evidence shows that by the mid-fifth century, there appeared changes in burial custom and new elements – East European, Scandinavian, and 'Merovingian' – in burial goods, suggesting an influx of new population or new ideas, and that the region was quite densely inhabited till at least the beginning of the sixth century; a few finds date from the end of the sixth century, almost as late as those from Kujawy.

Turning to the studies focused on single assemblages, the very short text by Magdalena Mączyńska, *The Hoard from Łubiany in Pomerania* (pp. 539–41) is a follow-on of her earlier chapters (see above). The contents of a founder's hoard with c. 2000 small bronze objects dating from the end of the first century BC to the early fifth century AD, plundered from at least a dozen cemeteries, put into a bronze bowl and buried with twenty-seven iron lance-heads on top in 420/30 at the latest, signals the final breakdown of the Wielbark Culture in East Pomerania (depopulation, shortage of bronze, looting graves of one's own community), and thus provides the *terminus ante quem* of the main migration movement of its people. Anna Zapolska's *The Hoard of Solidi from Karsibór* (pp. 542–65) traces the modern history of a hoard of c. 40 *solidi* deposited in the first half of the sixth century (the latest struck under Anastasius I) and dug out in 1864–93 in a potato field in the then Caseburg Peninsula on the island of Uznam (Usedom), eighteen of which were quickly dispersed and/or melted down, and the eight (out of twenty-two recorded ones) that were not lost in the Second World War are in the National Museum in Szczecin since 2009. This fine example of excavations in archives, libraries, and museums, is followed by an equally valuable presentation of the chronology of the flow of *solidi* to the southern coast of the Baltic, and a discussion of its causes, significance, routes by which the coins reached the region, parallels to the Karsibór hoard and the inevitable Scandinavian connec-

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<sup>15</sup> For a crushing criticism of this identification, see Kolendo-Plóciennik 2015 (see n. 1), 264–71. Today the pendulum is apparently swinging back, precisely because of the accumulation of evidence on the importance of the Kalisz area in the Roman and Migration periods.

tion (the author tentatively links the finds of *solidi* and bracteates in the western and central Pomerania with the brief presence of Nordic settlers in the region, possibly fugitives from internal conflicts signalled by the contemporary destruction level on Öland and in many other places, in the late fifth and early sixth century). In *The Gold Hoard from Suchań in Western Pomerania and Its Context* (pp. 566–91), Aleksander Bursche and Bartłomiej Rogalski take up one of the MPOV's *Leitmotifs* – shortsightedness and harmfulness of the Polish officialdom's policy with regard to amateur metal detecting – emphasising that, given the number and nature of treasures found in West Pomerania before the Second World War, and the sheer number of active metal-detectorists, the number of hoards discovered there since the beginning of the twenty-first century can safely be estimated as at least as great as in Denmark, where treasure hunting is free of restrictions, quoting as an example seven fourth-century gold medallions reportedly found in the region, now in a private collection in the USA. In fact, the uniqueness of the Suchań hoard – six Migration-Period golden objects deposited in the early sixth century, including two bracteates (see above), the first recorded from Pomerania since 1945 – lies in that the finder of the first three, a local farmer and not a 'professional' treasure hunter, immediately reported his discovery to Aleksander Bursche, and permitted the archaeologists to investigate the plot, which led to further finds. The unmistakably Scandinavian character of the artefacts – the bracteates (made of the same dies as some specimens from Bornholm and Scania, the first known link of this kind between those found on the Continent and in Scandinavia), a ring, and three pendants – suggests, like a gold neckring (also in Scandinavian style, weighing 1.4 kilograms, and found in the nineteenth century in Stargard, twenty-five kilometres away from Suchań) and the Karsibór hoard, the presence of members of the Nordic ruling élite, probably from Bornholm, around AD 500 in the westernmost Polish Pomerania.

The 'geographic' chapters of Part 4 follow a clockwise order: Scandinavia, the East Baltic, Ukraine, the Middle Danube, the Elbe basin, the Roman West. One omission strikes the eye: Bohemia,<sup>16</sup> Poland's immediate neighbour and, during the Migration Period, a scene of some particularly interesting developments; as will be seen, this blank spot to the south-west is even more extensive, and encompasses the 'Bavarian' and 'Thuringian' lands as well. The first chapter, *Southern Scandinavia in the Migration Period – an Overview* (pp. 627–48) by Andreas Rau, is, as the title announces, a guide to the subject, with selective bibliography and discussion of debatable points limited to a couple of sentences each. It starts with the geographical definition of the region, the chronological system and nomenclature used by its archaeologists, followed by a general presentation of main research areas: literary sources ("rather sparse", says the author [p. 629], at which his Polish colleagues can only sigh with envy), various kinds of archaeological evidence and their peculiar-

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<sup>16</sup> Embleatically, the toponym Viničice is missing from the copious *Geographical Index*; all we have is a couple of references to the archaeological Viničice Group in the main text.

ities, finally contacts with the Continent; when it comes to contacts with today's Poland, he wisely prefers to refer the reader to other chapters of the work.

The next two chapters concern archaeological cultures which, while in today's Poland, stand apart as ethnically Balt, not Germanic. In *The Making of the Vidivarii: Germanic and Baltic Interculturation in the Late 5th Century* (pp. 649–88), Bartosz Kontny discusses the Elbląg Group, which sprang in the Elbląg Upland, in Late Antiquity surrounded on three sides by the waters of the Vistula Lagoon, a generation before still inhabited by the people of the Wielbark Culture, persuasively linked with two passages in Iordanes' *Getica*:

(36) *ad litus autem Oceani, ubi tribus faucibus fluenta Vistulae fluminis ebibuntur, Vidivarii resident, ex diversis nationibus adgregati; (96) [Gepids moving] in insulam Visclae amnis vadibus circumactam, quam patrio sermone dictam Gepedoios. Nunc eam, ut fertur, insulam gens Vidivaria incolit ipsi ad meliores terras meantibus. Qui Vidivarii ex diversis nationibus ac si in unum asylum collecti sunt [...] (96).*

Whereas the emigration of the bulk of the Wielbark Culture population of the east bank of the Lower Vistula took place well before the mid-fifth century (see above), new cemeteries of essentially Baltic character appeared in the Elbląg Upland at the close of the century (this, of course, does not mean that the Balts came there only then, considering that the migration's first wave would have consisted chiefly of young males). The newcomers mingled with the remnants of the old inhabitants, as shown, among others, by their gradual adoption of the typical Wielbark Culture burial without weapons. The new cultural unit, predominantly Balt but with a marked Germanic component and strong ties with Scandinavia, matches Iordanes' description of the Vidivarii; it cannot be entirely ruled out, however, that the people in question lived on the left bank of the Vistula where, as we have seen, settlement continued at least till the early decades of the sixth century. In the late sixth century, weapons reappeared in graves, which implies the arrival of a new wave of Balts, also suggested by other indicators. The change of the burial custom in the early seventh century (disappearance of grave goods) makes it impossible to date the end of the Elbląg Group; the author suggests that the great Early Medieval trading centre Truso, described in Wulfstan's account, recorded in King Alfred's translation of Orosius, identified with the settlement at Janów Pomorski, may have reached back to the Vidivarii, but the hiatus of two centuries makes this hypothesis unverifiable, at least for the time being.

*The Balt Neighbours – the Olsztyn Group* (pp. 689–730) by Anna Bitner-Wróblewska starts with a short outline of main features of the culture of the Western Balts: great stability of settlement and corresponding cultural continuity, reflected in burial practices and use of dress accessories and ornaments common to the Barbaricum centuries after they disappeared elsewhere. The Olsztyn Group appeared in the second half of the fifth century in the Balt region of the Masurian Lakes and west of it, in the area by then abandoned by the Wielbark Culture population, and lasted till the end of the seventh century. In spite of the profusion of artefacts in the 'international'



style combined with unmistakably Balt pottery and continuous use of cemeteries of the preceding period – hence its original appellation *masurgermanische Kultur* – it has conclusively been shown to be essentially Balt, the foreign component consisting less in imports than in imitations of models then in vogue in the Germanic world. This notwithstanding, the range and intensity of contacts which enabled the local population to keep abreast of the Scandinavian, Merovingian, and Danubian fashions, puts the Olsztyn Group – and the Elbląg Group as well – in the same category of enclaves of the old world as those in Kujawy or on the Prosna, the more so considering that the Western Balts had been full-fledged members of the barbarian *koine* of the Roman Period, on a par with the peoples of the Wielbark and Przeworsk cultures.<sup>17</sup> One can imagine the editors' dilemma in their case, but in my opinion Part 3 would have been a better place for these two chapters.

As the title indicates, *Migration Period Culture and Changes in the East-European Forest-Steppe Zone* (pp. 731–70) by Michail Lyubichev and Kyrylo Myzgin does not encompass all the territory of the Chernyakhiv-Sântana de Mureş Culture, but only its northern part, essentially the Ukrainian forest-steppe zone, the core of the kingdom of the Eastern Goths. The authors start with the thorny problem of correlating the chronologies of the last phase of the Chernyakhiv Culture devised by the Ukrainian and Russian archaeologists with the Eggert-Godłowski scheme expanded for the Danubian and East-European regions by Jaroslav Tejral.<sup>18</sup> For their exposition, they divide it into Periods 1 and 2, broadly corresponding to C3/D–D1, in absolute dates c. 350–75/80 and 375/80–420, with the year 375 as the symbolic dividing line, though in the forest-steppe zone the arrival of the Huns brought no change to the extent of the Chernyakhiv Culture settlement; neither have any traces of their presence been reported from its territory. One novelty of Period 2, limited to the east bank of the Dnieper, are inhumation burials under kurgan barrows, surely Sarmatian in spite of Chernyakhiv objects among grave goods (Alans who overthrew Hermanaric's kingdom?). The change came in the second, maybe third, decade of the fifth century when the Chernyakhiv Culture disappeared as a system: The authors observe that recent attempts to prolong the Goths' presence in Ukraine until the collapse of the Hunnic empire are as contrary to the evidence as the once generally shared view that they fled from it *en masse* in the face of the Hunnic onslaught. Some elements of the Chernyakhiv Culture survived in numerous short-lived cultural

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<sup>17</sup> The intensity of these contacts is shown, among others, by the presence of Balt weapons in Danish bog deposits from the second to the seventh century (B. Kontny, "Brothers-in-arms. Balt warriors and their interregional contacts in the Roman and Migration periods (the case of the Bogaczewo and Sudovian cultures)", *LA* 43, 2017, 11–62).

<sup>18</sup> J. Tejral, "Fremde Einflüsse und kulturelle Veränderungen nördlich der mittleren Donau zu Beginn der Völkerwanderungszeit", in *Peregrinatio Gothica* 1986 (see n. 2), 175–238; ID., "Neue Aspekte der frühvölkerwanderungszeitlichen Chronologie im Mitteldonaunraum", in J. Tejral, H. Friesinger, M. Kazanski (eds), *Neue Beiträge zur Erforschung der Spätantike im Mitteldonaunraum*, Brno 1997, 321–92.

units of mixed, Pontic, and East Germanic/Danubian character, which succeeded it (see next paragraph); a few Chernyakhiv forms can be found in the pottery of the subsequent Slavonic Penkivka Culture as well, but in the authors' opinion there is no evidence for the coexistence of the two cultures in the forest-steppe zone.

The Carpathian Basin, the centre of the Hunnic empire and till the coming of the Avars home of several successor states, is both particularly rich in archaeological material and relatively well covered in the literary sources. This richness, however, is not without problems, writes Zsófia Rácz in *Who were the Gepids and the Ostrogoths on the Middle Danube in the 5th Century? An Archaeological Perspective* (pp. 771–89). The Hunnic invasion completely changed the archaeologically perceptible situation in the region, replacing centuries-old cultural complexes, well identifiable ethnically, by a single homogenised culture, a blend of Sarmatian, Eastern European, and Hunnic features, the most prominent category of which are items of upper-class female dress and jewellery. In this situation attaching ethnic labels – in our case those of Eastern Goths and Gepids – “is not based on typological characteristics but rather on settlement history” (p. 774). The arrival of the Gepids to the region is archaeologically unobservable; their post-AD 454 descendants, by blood or self-identification, are easily recognisable as the rulers of the Great Hungarian Plain, but in their material culture no Wielbark legacy can be detected, only the new Danubian ‘international’ style. As for the future Ostrogoths, a few late fourth-century and early fifth-century sites with elements of the Chernyakhiv-Sântana de Mureş Culture witness the arrival of groups of fugitives from beyond the Carpathians to the region; but the bulk of the Greuthungi become invisible once out of Hermanaric’s old realm. Until the collapse of the Hunnic empire, they may hide in any of several cultural sub-units, generally similar though differing in small particulars, which shared the Lower and Middle Danubian region in the fifth century, whereas in the Roman Pannonia, where they lived in 455–73, the barbarians are imperceptible to the archaeologist. The author mentions only one find that can securely be attributed to them: the famous fifth-century folded lead tablet from Hács-Béndekpuszta with quotations from the Gothic Bible.

The title *Between the Rhine, the Danube and the Oder from the 5th to the End of the 7th Century: a Sketch* (pp. 790–829) renders the contents of the following chapter’s introductory part only, “The historical-archaeological framework” by Michael Schmauder; one has to start reading the text to find that it also includes the more to the point part “The neighbouring western areas between the Elbe and the Oder” by Jan Schuster. The former is a truly sketchy outline of the main historical processes taking place in the eastern Barbaricum after the arrival of the Huns: the complete disappearance of the Przeworsk, Wielbark, and Chernyakhiv-Sântana de Mureş cultures in Central and Eastern Europe combined with the survival of pockets of settlement which kept open communication between the South of the continent and Scandinavia; the paramount importance of the ‘Danube corridor’ in the movement of people, material objects, and ideas between the Pontic region and the West; the formation (and disappearance) of Germanic succession states to the Hunnic as well as the

Roman Empire; the arrival of the Avars, and the beginning of the Slavonic expansion; the Franks' conquests east of the Rhine and their impact on their neighbours' culture (or, in the Saxons' case, lack of it). All of that uncontroversial (except the stupefying statement at the very beginning: "in the classic way of looking at the events [...] the 5<sup>th</sup> c. is [...] the beginning of the formation of the Byzantine Empire" [p. 790]), but a bit erratic: e.g., one does not see why equal space is dedicated to the ecclesiastic landscape of Cologne as to the Thuringians, the 'Baiuvarian areas' (two casual remarks about each), and Bohemia put together. Schuster's part, divided into sections on the regions between the Lower Elbe and the Lower Oder, and between the Middle Oder-Neisse and the Middle Elbe-Saale, reveals a general picture very similar to that in the Polish lands: extensive depopulation at the end of the fourth and in the early fifth century, with several islands of settlement continuing at least till the end of the sixth century and probably longer; contacts all round the compass, including the Empire (finds of *solidi*, including c. 250 pieces in Biesenbrow), though with marked preponderance of the Frankish connection; extremely rare status markers of the Migration Period warrior élites (an 'Asian' *spatha* from Gröben near Berlin, similar to that from Juskowo [see above], fragments of two Baldenheim-type helmets from Demmin and Todendorf in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern). Of particular significance for MPOV are probable traces of westward migration of groups of the Przeworsk Culture (burnt layer cemeteries often found in its late phase appearing in Lusatia). Last but not least, thanks to the dendrochronological data the arrival of the Slavs to the lands between the Oder and the Elbe can be dated with a certain amount of assurance; and though these data put this date only in the last quarter of the seventh century, "against the background of old and new finds that increasingly fill the existing gap", says the author, "it can now be considered practically certain that there was a Germanic presence there when the new phase of settlement and history in the region began" (p. 829).

The last 'geographic' chapter, *East Germanic and Alano-Sarmatian Finds of the Early Migration Period in the Roman West* (pp. 830–52) by Michel Kazanski, takes the reader to the Western Empire's European regions from Raetia and Italy to Britain, though in the author's estimate only in Gaul and Spain the finds are numerous enough to warrant mapping. The only wish one might have concerning his exhaustive and sophisticated presentation is that on the maps the East Germanic finds (= East European steppe-forest zone = Chernyakhiv-Sântana de Mureş Culture) were distinguished from Alano-Sarmatian (= East/Central European steppe zone) ones. Another might perhaps be addressed to the editors: The work would have greatly profited from a similar exposition of finds left in the Roman West by the people of the Wielbark and Przeworsk cultures; a clear statement that there aren't any would have been equally welcome.

In the final chapter of Part 4, *The Migration Period between the Oder and the Vistula: an Outline* (pp. 853–76), Aleksander Bursche, Małgorzata Latałowa and Magdalena Mączyńska, after a summary of all the preceding chapters of the work, ask themselves in what way the project furthered our understanding of the period. We

have seen that the main results of MPOV – the palynological evidence of reforestation and drastic reduction of anthropogenic indicators in the basins of the Oder and the Vistula, the disappearance, essentially complete by the mid-fifth century, of the hitherto existing archaeological cultures, the survival of enclaves, some lasting at least till the beginning of the seventh century, none of which yielded indubitably Slavonic material – on the one hand irrefutably corroborate Godłowski's view of the general lack of settlement continuity between Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages (in other words, between the Germans and the Slavs), and on the other explain maintenance of contacts between areas where similar depopulation did not occur. In fact, the existence of Late Migration Period/Early Medieval oases in the Central European demographic semi-desert – of still elusive character in East Pomerania, basically Scandinavian in West/Central Pomerania, permeated by Western (Frankish, 'Thuringian') influence in Kujawy, around Kalisz and among the Western Balts – is perhaps the most important novelty the project has brought about. Equally revelatory is the discussion of the crucial question of primary causes of the sudden depopulation of the territory not only between the Oder and the Vistula, but also between the Oder and the Elbe, and of the forest-steppe zone of today's Ukraine. Not surprisingly, as the authors admit themselves, the project failed to give a positive answer to this question, but it effectively ruled out 'objective' (i. e. natural) causes: an unknown pandemic, unfavourable climatic changes, or overexploitation of the environment; in this case, particularly instructive is the fact that the neighbouring land of the Western Balts did not suffer a similar depopulation. This leaves us, though the authors do not say so explicitly, with 'subjective' (i. e. historical) ones: the immemorial *mirage méridional*, irresistible attraction exercised on the peoples of the Central/Northern Europe by the Mediterranean – in the Roman Period particularly strong once the continental expansion of the Empire had brought the coveted southern civilisation to the northern barbarians' doorsteps, and especially thanks to the barbarisation of the Roman army in the fourth century – and the Hunnic invasion.

With regard to the last factor, the summing-up contains information which to an extent compensates the greatest lack of the work: absence of a chapter, or chapters, on evidence indicating the presence of fugitives from the dramatic events which triggered off the *Völkerwanderung*. This evidence – caves, monadnocks, and other inaccessible places serving as places of refuge for the people of Chernyakhiv-Sântana de Mureş Culture in the late fourth to the early fifth century – have been found not only in the mountainous range of Central Europe as far as the Elbe, but also in the forest zone of today's Russia; clearly, fugitives from the first onslaught of the nomads were escaping in every 'safe' direction. Some pieces of relevant information are hidden in the chapters by Machajewski and Mączyńska, but only here they are discussed under this aspect. The evidence in question, together with one literally last-minute detecto-rist find, added to the chapter just before the work went to press so that its site does not figure in the index – a hoard of silver and silver-gilt objects, a classical assemblage of the Dančeny-Brangstrup horizon (p. 863, fig. 26.3) deposited during the last quarter of the fourth century at Stare Marzy on the Kujawy-East Pomeranian bor-

der – induces the authors to date the said horizon to the beginning of the *Völkerwanderung*,<sup>19</sup> with the conclusion that in the process of transmitting not only styles, but eschatological ideas as well, from the then south-eastern part of the Germanic world to Scandinavia, which was to influence the development of the Nordic culture so strongly, the catalytic role was played by the first wave of fugitives, small but elitist, from the ruins of Hermanaric's kingdom to their Wielbark Culture cousins and beyond.

So far the authors. In my opinion two points deserve special emphasis. One is the accordance between the palynologically and archaeologically based reconstruction of the settlement in the lands between the Vistula and the Oder, and in Central/Eastern Europe in general, in the fifth and the first half of the sixth century, and the relevant fragments in Iordanes, our main contemporary source for the region, and Procopius' report on the march of the Heruli. Iordanes' basic veracity – fiercely contested in modern historiography – has with regard to the much earlier second and third century been triumphally vindicated first by the discovery of *Scythica Vin-dobonensia*, and then by Aleksander Bursche's and Kyrlyo Myzgin's analyses of monetary finds linked with the Abrittus disaster and its aftermath;<sup>20</sup> but on the Migration Period we are still being served Florin Curta's reheated extravagancies,<sup>21</sup> in which misrepresentation of the archaeological material<sup>22</sup> goes hand in hand with depreciation of the historian's information.<sup>23</sup> The main lesson of MPOV is the old though constantly disputed truth that in the final account, material remains and relative written sources reflect the same historical reality, and that theoretical models of the moment are no more than provisional aids for interpreting the evidence.

The second point concerns the two main Germanic enclaves throughout the Migration Period, East Pomerania and Kujawy, but bears on the archaeological investigation in Central and Eastern Europe in general. In the light of available information, East Pomerania was the oldest and greatest recipient of *solidi* in the Baltic zone: Although the great majority of recorded finds were made before the wholesale destruction and plundering in 1945, their total number is higher than in Öland, the Scandi-

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19 In his paradigmatic paper, Joachim Werner dated the horizon slightly earlier, at the mid-fourth century (J. Werner, "Dančeny und Brangstrup. Untersuchungen zur Černjahov-Kultur zwischen Seret und Dneestr und zu den Reichtumzentren auf Fünen", *BJ* 188, 1988, 241–86).

20 A. Bursche, "The battle of Abrittus, the imperial treasury and aurei in Barbaricum", *The Numismatic Chronicle* 173, 2013, 151–71; A. Bursche, K. Myzgin, "The Gothic invasions of the mid-3rd c. A.D. and the battle of Abrittus: coins and archaeology in east-central Barbaricum", *JRA* 33, 2020, 195–229.

21 F. Curta, *The Long Sixth Century in Eastern Europe*, Leiden/Boston 2021; ID., *Slavs in the Making. History, Linguistics and Archaeology in Eastern Europe (ca. 500 – ca. 700)*, London/New York 2021.

22 See especially G. Fusek, "'Slawen' oder Slawen? Eine polemische Auseinandersetzung über eine wertvolle Monographie", *SlovA* 52, 2004, 161–86, a courteous yet devastating analysis of F. Curta's *The Making of the Slavs. History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region*, Cambridge 2001, never squarely answered by the latter.

23 See e.g., A. Ziółkowski, "When did the Slavs originate? The case of the Antes", *Pal* 9/10, 2014/2015, 211–36 (222–3, 228–31).

navian record-breaker. This and geography – in order to reach Scandinavia, the coins had first to come to the Baltic’s southern shore – not only point at the Vistula estuary as the area from which the *solidi*, especially those coming from the Eastern Empire,<sup>24</sup> were redistributed to the Nordic lands, but also suggests that it was there, or very near, that the main recruitment station of northern barbarians for the Eastern Imperial army was situated, irrespective of the said barbarians’ exact provenance. Be that as it may, the attitude of those who, like Svante Fischer, consistently ignore the East Pomeranian material under the pretext of it being dubious, uncatalogued (!), etc.,<sup>25</sup> grotesquely deforms the historical reality.<sup>26</sup> It is great to have all the finds made in modern times in a given area labelled, described, and displayed, but with regard to the Central and East European material we do not enjoy such luxury. Does it mean that this material, and these regions, should be excluded from studying? Solipsism which does not allow for collections being lost, dispersed, or stolen, and archives destroyed, has no legitimacy whatsoever.

In the adjacent Kujawy, as is becoming increasingly clear, the most important and longest-inhabited preserve of the Germanic population in today’s Poland, no Migration-Period burials and few settlement sites have been individuated, the region’s exceptional position being due mainly to amateur metal detectorists’ activity, or, to be precise, to scraps of second-hand information on their finds. The resulting situation is becoming more and more desperate; the archaeologists know that the report-

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**24** R. Ciolek, *Die Fundmünzen der römischen Zeit in Polen: Pommern*, Wetteren – Warszawa 2007.

**25** In S. Fischer, F. López Sánchez, “Subsidies for the Roman West? The flow of Constantinopolitan *solidi* to the Western Empire and Barbaricum”, *Opuscula* 9, 2016, 249–69, the East Pomeranian material is excluded “due to incomplete information” (n. 67). More specifically, the greatest hoards of the region, those of Mrzeziny (reportedly more than 150 coins, including 130 of Anastasius I) and Trąbki Małe (97 and 44 coins), are written off, the former because about the 81 pieces put up for sale in 1798, three years after the finding (including 53 of Anastasius and 21 of Zeno), “there is simply no way of knowing if these were pseudo-imperial issues from Italy (a very likely possibility given the hoard composition in Helgö and Gotland, Sweden) or genuine issues from Constantinople, as in the Abrittus hoard”; the latter because it “supposedly contained an *aureus* of Gordianus III together with relatively rare Western issues struck in Ravenna in 420s”. As for the first objection, he effectively answers it himself in S. Fischer, “Barbarous imitations in Scandinavian hoards”, *Nordisk Numismatisk Årsskrift* 2 s. 2, 2021, 9–41, table 1, where the ratio of genuine coins to imitations found in the said two Nordic regions is, respectively, 83 to 11 (Anastasius) and 53 to 0 (Zeno). Outright astonishing is the second objection: A third-century *aureus* in an assemblage of *solidi* actually strengthens the archival report’s credibility. One might add that, even though not fully published yet (but see K. Dahmen, “Der Schatzfund von Klein Tromp in Ostpreußen (heute Trąbki Małe, Polen). Fundsbeschreibung und -geschichte”, *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 56, 2017, 75–90), 75 out of 141 gold coins found there in 1822 and 1838 have always been within Fischer’s reach – if he only went to the trouble of visiting the Münzkabinett in Bode-Museum, where – incredible as it may sound – they are still deposited, or simply consulted their online catalogue.

**26** A good example is Fischer/López Sánchez 2016 (see preceding note), fig. 2: “Solidus hoards, regions 1–11”, where the East Pomeranian cluster of hoards is not given the rank of a region, dutifully bestowed on Bornholm, Öland and Gotland (together with Helgö). Worse still, it is not included in the analysis, which flaws the whole argument.

ed finds, especially those with high market-value, are badly unrepresentative, and, if anything, falsify the overall picture, with no remedy in sight. What do the two *solidi* reported from Gąski-Wierzbicznany stand for? One, two or five per cent of those actually found during the last twenty years? What makes the awareness of the priceless potential evidence disappearing at an ever-accelerating rate even more bitter is the fact that there exists a simple, proven solution to the problem, advantageous for both the treasure hunters and the archaeologists: All we need to do is to follow the Danish example. Alas, the Danes' eminently practical approach to the metal detector revolution, now being imitated elsewhere by more enlightened parties,<sup>27</sup> is still beyond the ken of the political classes of the majority of European countries, Poland included.

Astonishingly, the latter have found allies within the academia, in purists who consider the amateur metal-detectorists' activity 'immoral', 'unethical', and so refuse to take into account information obtained in this way. The harmfulness of this attitude is strikingly illustrated in Kyrilo Myzgin's recent paper on Late Roman Period barbarian gold foil pendants with zoomorphic and anthropomorphic motifs.<sup>28</sup> Until the beginning of this century, fifteen such pendants were recorded from three sites: Brangstrup on Funen, Denmark (five), Romanovka near Kiev (three) and Almalyk-Dere in Crimea (seven); in mid-2019, thanks to amateur metal detecting, their number stood at sixty-nine, all the new ones from Ukraine, including five signalled when the article was being proofread. What is more, the detectorists supplied the author with photos of what are almost certainly ten metal alloy matrices to make such pendants. Together with the fact that no such finds have been made by the Danish metal detectorists, they completely change the picture of the ornaments' distribution, rule out their place of origin being anywhere but in the territory of Chernyakhiv-Sântana de Mureş Culture and make local production of the specimens from Brangstrup highly unlikely: all that thanks to the Ukrainian treasure hunters' internet fora in which along with photos basic information on finds (weight, size) is provided and which make it possible for specialists to contact the finder to get an approximate location of the site. Sometimes it is simply Ukraine, sometimes the province, rarely the district; but for macroanalyses this kind of information is good enough, except for the difficulty in ascertaining whether a suspect object is genuine or a counterfeit. Unfortunately, in Poland similar fora have disappeared dur-

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<sup>27</sup> The new policy was first introduced in Schleswig-Holstein (largely thanks to the efforts of the then director of the local Archaeological Office, Claus von Carnap-Bornheim, *nota bene* a member of the MPOV Steering Committee), now being followed by other *Länder* and, outside Germany, the Netherlands and the Flemish Region in Belgium.

<sup>28</sup> K. Myzgin, "Late Roman Period gold foil pendants stamped with anthropomorphic and zoomorphic ornament found in the Barbaricum", in A. Pesch, M. Helmbrecht (eds), *Gold foil figures in focus. A Scandinavian find group and related objects and images from ancient and medieval Europe*, Munich 2019, 255–78.

ing the last few years because of the fear of criminal prosecution which threatens both the archaeologists and metal detectorists.

In *Afterword* (pp. 877–9), Aleksander Bursche and Magdalena Mączyńska single out obtaining a series of absolute dates for the earliest Slavonic settlement between the Oder and the Vistula, similar to those the Germans have obtained for the lands between the Oder and the Elbe, as one of the main goals of future research. In fact, the Slavonisation of today's Poland is the most logical follow-on of MPOV. Considering the poverty of the earliest Slavs' material culture, while working on this goal the archaeologists will certainly not run the risk of being forestalled by the metal detectorists. I think, however, that as urgent a task is to bring to completion what the metal detectorists initiated and start an all-out investigation of Gąski-Wierzbiczany and the surrounding area. It is there, in what must have been, figuratively as well as literally, the central place of this part of the Barbaricum, that the richest and most informative material is to be expected, even when all the *solidi* had been picked up by the treasure hunters. Who knows, maybe they will even find traces of the posited *Restgermanen* shaking hands with (or fists at) the Slavonic new arrivals.