

ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΑΚΑ

ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΟΝΙΚΟ ΟΡΓΑΝΟ
ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΣ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΗΣ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑΣ

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΗ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑ

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Georgios Kardaras

The Early Medieval Period in Poland 6th-9th century Part Two: The Tribal Period*

The beginning of the tribal (or pre-state) period in Poland, namely the phase after the Slavic settlement of the country (early 6th – mid-7th c.), is characterized by important transformations. According to some scholars, transformations to material culture during the 7th century, mostly the influences from the Middle and Lower Danube, can be partially attributed to the migration of Slavic populations from the south to the north from the late 6th up until the mid-7th century. A significant innovation is the wide use of the slow wheel in pottery, initially in the Upper Vistula area in the mid-7th century (very few samples are dated earlier). The wheel was used for the formation of the upper part of the vessels (top-turned) and later on for other parts too. That technique gradually spread to other Polish areas from the late 7th/early 8th century. The decoration both in handmade and wheel pottery in the 7th century is poor, usually with horizontally riled or wavy lines as well as imprints with a knife or combs¹. Regarding the types of dwellings, of which there

* I would like to thank the Museum of Polish History (Muzeum Historii Polski) for the fellowship granted me so I could conduct the relevant research in Poland, as well as my colleague Sylwia Cygan (Rzeszów) for her valuable comments on the paper. Part One was published in *Byzantika* 32 (2015) 51-77 (in Greek, with English summary).

¹ W. Szymański, *Szeligi pod Płockiem na początku wczesnego średniowiecza. Zespół osadniczy z VI-VII w. (Szeligi near Plock in the early Middle Ages. A settlement complex from the VI-VIIth century)*, Wrocław - Warszawa - Kraków 1967, p. 344-345 (hereafter: W. Szymański, *Szeligi*). — Helena Zoll-Adamikowa, *Wczesnośredniowieczne cmentarzyska ciałopalne Słowian na terenie Polski*, part I: *Źródła* [Frühmittelalterliche Brandgräberfelder der Slawen in Polen, Teil I, Quellen], Wrocław - Warszawa - Kraków - Gdańsk 1975, p. 306 (hereafter: H. Zoll-Adamikowa, *Wczesnośredniowieczne cmentarzyska*). — Renata Madyda-Legutko, Die ersten Spuren der frühslawischen Besiedlung in den West-Beskidien, *Archaeoslavica* 1 (1991) 83-93, p. 85. — M. Parczewski, Beginnings of the Slavs' Culture, in P. Urbańczyk (ed.), *Origins of Central Europe*, Warsaw 1997 (hereafter: *Origins*), p. 79-90, here 87-88. — K. Wachowski, *Śląsk w dobie przedpiastowskiej. Studium archeologiczne (Silesia before the Piast Dynasty*.

is quite a big diversity in this period in Poland, apart from the typical square sunken huts bigger constructions with internal storage pits appear in the 9th century in the stronghold of Czerchów (district of Łódź) or dwellings on the surface with a rectangular or oval shape (log cabins and wattle-and-daub constructions). In Little Poland, rectangular pits with round corners have been found, probably related to storage areas or heating devices of non-sunken huts².

Considering burial customs, a new element from the mid-7th century is the deposition of the urns on circular, oval or rectangular barrows (rarely with stones on the outer surface). The greatest variety of types occurs in eastern Mazovia, while the largest barrows came to light in Little Poland. Under some barrows square timber constructions existed. Another burial custom occurs in Little Poland between the 7th and the 10th century, namely cremations on flat ground, without urns, into square, rectangular or oval pits. Since the mid-8th century the Alt Käbelich type has been observed in Pomerania, namely large, shallow, oval pits containing fragments of cremated bones and pottery. According to H. Zoll-Adamikowa, even after the Christianization of Poland in 966, cremations survived alongside burials until the early 12th century in a large part of Poland and in Podlasia until the late 12th century. In the coastal

Archaeological Study), Wrocław 1997, p. 86-97 (hereafter: K. Wachowski, *Studium archeologiczne*). — P. M. Barford, *The Early Slavs. Culture and Society in Early Medieval Eastern Europe*, New York 2001, p. 67, 77, 80-81 (hereafter: P. M. Barford, *Early Slavs*). — M. Dulinicz, Najstarsza faza osadnictwa słowiańskiego w północnej części Europy środkowej (Die älteste Phase der slawischen Besiedlung im nördlichen Mitteleuropa), in P. Kaczanowski - M. Parczewski (ed.), *Archeologia o początkach Słowian. Materiały z konferencji* (Kraków, 19-21 Listopada 2001) (*Archäologie über die Anfänge der Slawen. Konferenzmaterial* [Kraków, 19.-21. November 2001]), Kraków 2005, p. 513-526, here 526 (hereafter: M. Dulinicz, Najstarsza faza). — J. Poleski, *Małopolska w VI-X wieku. Studium archeologiczne (Little Poland in VI-X centuries. Archaeological Study)*, Kraków 2013, p. 214 (hereafter: J. Poleski, *Małopolska*).

² Z. Kobyliński, Settlement Structures in Central Europe at the Beginning of the Middle Ages, in *Origins*, p. 97-114, here 105 (hereafter: Z. Kobyliński, Settlement Structures). — *Idem*, Early medieval hillforts in Polish lands in the 6th to the 8th centuries: problems of origins, function, and spatial organisation, in D. Austin - L. Alcock (ed.), *From the Baltic to the Black Sea. Studies in medieval archaeology*, London - New York 1997, p. 147-156, here 150 (hereafter: Z. Kobyliński, Early medieval hillforts). — P. M. Barford, *Early Slavs* 120. — J. Sikora, *Ziemia Centralnej Polski we wczesnym średniowieczu. Studium archeologiczno-osadnicze (The territory of Central Poland in early Middle Ages. Study of archaeological settlement)*, Łódź 2009, p. 179 (hereafter: J. Sikora, *Ziemia Centralnej Polski*). — J. Poleski, *Małopolska* 214-215.

area of Pomerania graves of Scandinavians have been found from the late 8th century, which testify to trade and cultural contacts with the North³.

A significant part of the finds is related to the Avar khaganate, mainly from the 7th and 8th centuries. Among others, bronze arm rings, belt fittings, golden earrings, lances, stirrups etc. came to light. These finds occur mostly in the south, in Silesia and Little Poland, areas closer to the Carpathian basin (Dobrzeń Mały, Izbicko and Chorula in the area of Opole, Syrynia and Lubomia in the area of Katowice, Nowa-Huta-Mogila/Kraków, Jakuszowice/Kielce, Naszacowice/Nowy Sącz) and less in the western (Połupin/Zielona Góra, Biskupin/Bydgoszcz) or eastern part of Poland (Gródek/Zamość, Lublin-Zembożyce). Avar finds also occur in two important early strongholds, namely Szeligi and Hački. Many finds of spurs that show contacts with the Moravian and Carolingian environment (Nowa-Huta-Mogila, Stradów, Tarnów, Chodlik etc.) date back to the 9th century. Imported objects from the Avar khaganate, as well as from the West in the 8th century, are similar to those of the western Slavs (Poland, Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia), an indication of the development of a ruling class which gathered luxurious objects from trade or war⁴.

³ H. Zoll-Adamikowa, *Wczesnośredniowieczne cmentarzyska* 306. — J. Sikora, *Ziemia Centralnej Polski* 181. — M. Dulnicz, *Kształowanie się Słowiańszczyzny Północno-Zachodniej. Studium archeologiczne (Die Herausbildung der Nordwestslawen. Archäologische Studien)*, Warszawa 2001, p. 305 (hereafter: M. Dulnicz, *Kształowanie*). — *Idem*, Najstarsza faza 526. — P. M. Barford, *Early Slavs* 77, 81, 202-204. — A. Buko, *The Archaeology of Early Medieval Poland. Discoveries - Hypotheses - Interpretations* [East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450-1450, vol. I], Leiden - Boston 2008, p. 89, 99-104 (hereafter: A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland*). — S. Brather, *Archäologie der westlichen Slawen. Siedlung, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im früh- und hochmittelalterlichen Ostmitteleuropa* [Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 61], Berlin - New York 2008, p. 258-260 (hereafter: S. Brather, *Archäologie*). — J. Poleski, *Małopolska* 214. For the contacts with Scandinavia, see also W. Duczko, *Scandinavians in the Southern Baltic between the 5th and the 10th Centuries A.D.*, in *Origins*, p. 191-211. — S. Brather, *Archäologie* 142-147.

⁴ Helena Zoll-Adamikowa, *Zur Chronologie der Awarzeitlichen Funde aus Polen*, in K. Godłowski - Renata Madyda-Legutko (ed.) *Probleme der relativen und absoluten Chronologie ab Latènezeit bis zum Frühmittelalter. Materialien des III. Internationalen Symposiums „Grundprobleme der frühgeschichtlichen Entwicklung im nördlichen Mittel- und Ostmitteleuropa“* (Kraków - Karniowice, 3.-7. Dezember 1990), Kraków 1992, p. 297-315 (hereafter: H. Zoll-Adamikowa, *Zur Chronologie*). — *Ibidem*, J. Poleski, *Datierungsgrundlagen der ältesten Phasen des Frühmittelalters (bis zum Ende des 10. Jahrhunderts) in Kleinpolen*, p. 317-338, here 317-322 (hereafter: J. Poleski, *Datierungsgrundlagen*). — *Idem*, *Małopolska* 214-215. — Z. Kobyliński, *Early medieval hillforts* 147. — K. Wachowski, *Studium archeologiczne* 33. — Zofia Kurnatowska, *Die Burgen und die Ausbildung der Stammesaristokratie bei den urpolnischen Slawen*, in A. Wiczorek - H.-M. Hinz (ed.), *Europas Mitte um 1000. Beiträge zur Geschichte, Kunst und Archäologie*,

The main feature of the tribal period, not only in Poland but in the entire western Slavic world was the development of strongholds and fortified settlements, a gradual process occurring up until the 9th century, when a great number of strongholds were tribal centres. The development of strongholds took place in areas with small communities — and required communal labor — from the late 6th/early 7th century. Possible reasons for their spread were, apart from the prestige, the formation of a tribal ruling class or local elites, religious or cultic centres, ceremonial (enthronement of the chieftains), space for tribal assembly, refuges for the population, centres of production or trade etc.⁵ Their beginnings in Poland are usually linked to influences from the East, modeled on the stronghold of Zimno on the Bug River in Volynia, dating back to the late 6th century. An older tradition is also possible in certain Belarusian strongholds, such as Tushemla and Demidovka in Upper Dnieper, dating from the 5th to the 7th century⁶. Peculiar defensive constructions from the tribal period are the long linear earthworks, usually earthen embankments, sometimes containing remains of wooden construction. The best known are the so-called Silesian Ramparts which run along the Bóbr River and some similar structures in Kujavia⁷.

Strongholds were usually built in naturally protected places (hills, swamps etc.). The older strongholds were constructed on hills possibly in the late 6th/early 7th century; they can be found in Mazovia and Podlasia (Szeligi, Nidzgora, Niewiadoma, Haćki) as well as in western Poland (Polubin, Bonikowo, Smolno). A second phase followed in southern and northern Poland after the first quarter of the 7th century. These early strongholds had no permanent settlements and extended over an area of

vol. I, Stuttgart 2000 (hereafter: *Europas Mitte I*), p. 257-263, here 262-263 (hereafter: Z. Kurnatowska, Burgen).

⁵ See Z. Kobyliński, Settlement Structures 108-110. — *Idem*, Early medieval hillforts 153-154. — J. Lodowski, *Dolny Śląsk na początku Średniowiecza (VI-X w.). Podstawy osadnicze i gospodarcze (Niederschlesien zu Beginn des Mittelalters [VI.-X. Jh.]. Besiedlung und Wirtschaftliche Grundlagen)*, Wrocław - Warszawa - Kraków - Gdańsk 1980, p. 277 (hereafter: J. Lodowski, *Dolny Śląsk*). — P. M. Barford, *Early Slavs* 86-87, 131-133, 144-146. — J. Sikora, *Ziemia Centralnej Polski* 180. A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 84-86. — S. Brather, *Archäologie* 126. — W. Chudziak, Z badań nad funkcją małych i średnich warowni na obszarze Pomorza (From studies on functions of small and medium strongholds in Pomerania territory), in K. Chrzan - K. Czapla - S. Moździejch (ed.), *Funkcje grodów w państwach wczesnośredniowiecznej Europy Środkowej. Społeczeństwo, gospodarka, ideologia (Function of strongholds in the states of early Medieval Central Europe. Society, economy, ideology)*, Wrocław - Głogów 2014 (hereafter: *Funkcje grodów*), p. 43-59, here 58 (hereafter: W. Chudziak, Z badań). — J. Poleski, *Małopolska* 215.

⁶ Z. Kobyliński, Early medieval hillforts 154-155. — Z. Kurnatowska, Burgen 258. — P. M. Barford, *Early Slavs* 87-88.

⁷ A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 98-99.

1,500 to 3,500 m², which increased after the mid-7th century (2,000-5,000 m²). Both small (500 to 700 m², e.g. Gostyń), as well as middle-sized strongholds (3,000 to 5,000 m²) can be found in western Poland. Almost all the strongholds from the 6th to the 8th century had inner buildings only along the walls and traces of settlement or activities are usually found at a distance of up to 10 meters from them⁸.

Considering the early small settlement structures, there are three patterns: a) simple and isolated or groups of settlements; b) isolated strongholds with a permanent population, without open settlements nearby; c) strongholds with a temporary population, linked to one or more neighbouring open settlements. The last one was the main pattern between the 6th and the 8th centuries (e.g. Szeligi, Wyszogród, Niewiadoma). In the early phase, the area of activity and exploitation around a stronghold was of 75-80 km² and is known as *pole*, a rudimentary local political organisation. Later on, when tribal strongholds with local rulers-chieftains appear, the new settlement pattern, known as *opole*, included groups of *pole* with an area of activity and exploitation of 150-300 km². The settlement of a small tribe covered an area of 300-800 km² and a large one 2,000-4,000 km², namely groups of *opole*⁹.

One of the older and most important strongholds in Poland is Szeligi close to Płock in western Mazovia with an adjacent open settlement. Regarding subterranean constructions, a local peculiarity — observed also in Wyszogród — are those oval in shape and without postholes. Their size is from 5-16 m² and their depth from 20-60 cm (at some points 70-80 cm). Such constructions are limited to the rest of Poland where the typical square huts with an oven at the corner prevail. Most of the dwellings in Szeligi were oval in shape and had stone ovens. In some cases small storage pits with remnants of vessels and animal bones were found. Another part of the dwellings had pits for the postholes, at a distance of about 3.5 meters from each other. The stronghold of Szeligi was built on a hill, surrounded by stone ramparts and a ditch one meter in depth. It was partially inhabited and covered the needs of defence and various rituals. The finds from Szeligi show that local economy was based on

⁸ Z. Kobyliński, Early medieval hillforts 147-150. — A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 66.

⁹ J. Lodowski, *Dolny Śląsk* 276. — W. Łoziński, *Osadnictwo plemienne Pomorza (VI-X wiek) (Zur Stammessiedlung von Pommern [VI-X Jh.])*, Wrocław - Warszawa - Kraków - Gdańsk - Łódź 1982, p. 306 (hereafter: W. Łoziński, *Osadnictwo*). — Z. Kobyliński, Settlement Structures 109-111. — *Idem*, Early medieval hillforts 153. — Zofia Kurnatowska, Territorial Structures in West Poland prior to the Founding of the State Organization of Mieszko I, in *Origins*, p. 125-135, here 127-128 (hereafter: Z. Kurnatowska, Territorial Structures). — P. M. Barford, *Early Slavs* 129. — A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 75.

agriculture — mostly cereals — and cattle. The majority of the bones belonged to squirrels and ferrets, the furs of which were used for trade. Production of metal objects, namely weapons (knives, axes, spears etc.) or jewellery was also significant. Some techniques in metallurgy in Szeli-gi are considered to be influences from the Balts, the Eastern Slavs or those of the Middle Danube. There is also both hand- and wheel-made pottery, mainly oval in shape made of clay mixed with sand. The majority of the vessels were not decorated while a smaller percentage, roughly 25 to 30%, bore grooves or parallel lines on the upper part¹⁰.

The initial phase of Haćki in Podlasia is preserved only in the wooden palisade, supported by a stone rampart. In the stronghold wooden oval constructions, similar to those at Szeli-gi, came to light with double postholes, as well as traces of jewellery and textiles. The finds included handmade pottery and imported objects from the Avar khaganate. Burned human bones lead to the assumption that the stronghold was a ritual centre linked with unknown burial customs¹¹.

The evolution and development of strongholds in Poland can be traced in some specific areas. The earliest tribal strongholds in Little Poland were constructed by local Slavic tribes in the 8th century (Trzcinica, Chodlik, Naszacowice, Szczaworyz, Kraków-Wawel, Zawada Lancko-ronska etc.). These early strongholds had a small permanent population and local production, as well as fences and dykes that covered a long distance. The majority of the strongholds replaced earlier settlements from the 6th and 7th centuries, probably to provide defence against the Avars. In Little Poland strongholds prevailed covering an area of more than 10,000 km², the largest in Poland from the 7th and 8th centuries, and indicate a different social structure. Some of them (Naszacowice, Zawada and the stronghold of Stradów in Świątokrzyskie district) are similarly arranged, namely three or four outer enclosures and an inner domain (multi-enclosure strongholds). The same arrangement is found in the strongholds of Wietrzno-Bóbrka, Trzcinica and Przeczyca in the valley of Wisłoka in Subcarpathian Poland, which appeared in the 9th century and were related to settlements of small tribes covering an area of 1,000-1,500 km². In the Upper Vistula valley, most of the tribal strongholds were founded (or developed further) during the 9th century. The strong-

¹⁰ W. Szymański, *Szeli-gi* 340-346, 362, 396-397. — H. Zoll-Adamikowa, *Zur Chronologie* 298. — Z. Kobyliński, *Settlement Structures* 104-106, 110. — *Idem*, *Early medieval hillforts* 152. — P. M. Barford, *Early Slavs* 87. On the presence of rectangular or oval dwellings in Central Poland, see J. Sikora, *Ziemia Centralnej Polski* 178, 179.

¹¹ H. Zoll-Adamikowa, *Zur Chronologie* 298-299. — Z. Kobyliński, *Early medieval hillforts* 151-152, 154. — P. M. Barford, *Early Slavs* 87.

hold of Zawada Lanckorońska on the Dunajec was founded in the second half of the 8th century and was expanded with new ramparts and an outer enclosure in the late 9th century. A later phase of two strongholds in the valley of the River Sącz (Chelmiec and Marcinkowice) as well as Naszacowice on the Dunajec, close to Nowy Sącz, dates back to the 9th century. The largest stronghold in Little Poland, Demblin, at the confluence of the Rivers Vistula and Dunajec, also dates back to the 9th century¹².

In central Poland, and especially in the district of Łódź, the development of strongholds begins in the 8th century with Tum, possibly a religious centre¹³. From the beginning of the 7th until the mid-10th century, the number of settlements increases by about 60%. Strongholds had timber or stone constructions and dykes, and were used for various purposes (military, ritual, religious etc.). Some middle-sized round strongholds are located in the Upper Warta River (Witów, Mnichów, and Ewinów in Great Poland), as well as in the valley of Bzura and its tributaries (Mroga, Moszczenica). Other strongholds were developed in the valley of Ner, Pilica and the tributaries of Luciąża and Wolbórka. Earlier strongholds in the district of Łódź (Barkowice Mokre, Witów, Tum) had small fortifications (ditches and wooden fences). On the other hand, later ones (Czerchów, Ewinów) bore wooden or stone ramparts and dykes, and they belong to a great group of compact circular strongholds, known as the Tornow type, in the areas of Lusatia, Polabia, Lower Silesia, the southern part of Little Poland and Mazovia. Pottery, namely thin-walled vessels decorated on the shoulder with horizontal incised lines or cordons, belong to the same type. The development of strongholds in central Poland reflects social transformations linked to the formation of a tribal ruling class. That evolution dates from the late 9th or the first half of the 10th century and evidence of this can be found in imported objects, mainly weapons from Great Moravia, spurs of the Carolingian type, iron bowls of the Silesian type etc. Such finds do not occur in the valley of Warta, where the power of the local rulers was likely more limited¹⁴.

In Pomerania, the first strongholds appeared in the 7th century and some of them already bore traces of permanent settlement. The earliest of them (7th-8th c.), located on hills, were of a semicircular or circular shape

¹² Z. Kobyliński, *Settlement Structures* 109-110. — *Idem*, *Early medieval hillforts* 150. — Z. Kurnatowska, *Burgen* 258-259. — A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 91-95. — J. Poleski, *Małopolska* 215-216. On the stronghold of Naszacowice, see mostly J. Poleski, *Datierungsgrundlagen* 324-338.

¹³ J. Sikora, *Ziemia Centralnej Polski* 181.

¹⁴ K. Wachowski, *Studium archeologiczne* 25-26. — P. M. Barford, *Early Slavs* 104-105. — A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 86-87. — J. Sikora, *Ziemia Centralnej Polski* 179, 181.

and had earthen or stone fortifications reinforced with wooden walls. The 43 strongholds of this period are divided into five groups: a) smaller than 2,500 m²; b) between 2,500 and 5,000 m²; c) from 5,000 to 10,000 m²; d) from 10,000 to 20,000 m²; e) over 20,000 m². The great majority of the strongholds belongs to the three first categories, while the greater strongholds had inner divisions in two parts. A peculiarity of Pomerania is that many strongholds were built on islands, having a mainly cultic function¹⁵. Two zones of a different development pattern can be distinguished in central Pomerania: the first in the area of the Rivers Rega and Parsęta, as well as by the upper waters of the Rivers Gwda and Drawa, while the second covers the plains of Słupsk and the area of Damnica and extends to the southeast up to the Kashubian lakes (eastern Pomerania) and Starogard. In the first zone great strongholds prevail while the second contains small ones, probably because of social differentiation. On the other hand, small strongholds prevail in Pomerania in the 9th and 10th centuries¹⁶. Settlements during the tribal period are divided into two categories: those of 100-200 km² were developed by small tribes in the coastal zone and the Kashubian lakes, while greater groups of settlements between 250 and 600 km² are located in Lower Parsęta (500 km²), Middle Wieprza (260 km²), Lower Łupawa (350 km²), the area of Pyrzyce (600 km²), etc.¹⁷.

The great fortified communities are linked during the 7th and 8th centuries to the development of *opole*, populated on a permanent basis and equivalent to the term *civitates* in Western sources (see below). Some of them, such as the stronghold Białogard, were the seats of local rulers-chieftains, who built watchtowers on the periphery of their settlements for defence purposes. The data from the 7th and 8th century settlements in Pomerania leads us to the conclusion that at least two great tribal unions existed. The first, composed of seven smaller tribes, lived in the area of the Rivers Parsęta and Rega and occupied a territory of ca 6,500 km². The second tribal union (6-8 tribes) occupied eastern Pomerania along with the coastal zone of Wieprza-Słupia-Łupawa and the area of the

¹⁵ W. Łoziński, *Osadnictwo* 303-304. — Z. Kobyliński, *Settlement Structures* 110. — *Idem*, *Early medieval hillforts* 150. — M. Dulnicz, *Kształowanie* 304. — W. Chudziak, *Z badań* 58.

¹⁶ W. Łoziński, *Osadnictwo* 303. — Z. Kurnatowska, *Territorial Structures* 131-132. — *Eadem*, *Burgen* 260-262. — P. M. Barford, *Early Slavs* 106. — A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 88-89.

¹⁷ W. Łoziński, *Osadnictwo* 305.

River Leba, namely ca 9,000 km². At the same time two small independent tribes developed on the plain of Pырzyce-Starogard¹⁸.

In Lower Silesia, strongholds from the 7th century — or even the late 6th — mostly exist in the northwestern part. The majority are circular or oval, with an inner space covering from 500 up to 1,000 m², in some cases up to 5,000 m², and a building on the inner side of the walls. According to A. Buko, Silesian strongholds bear peculiar features such as wooden and earthen ramparts with stone faces or even stone-wooden-earthen ones. The 40 strongholds, dating back to the 7th and 8th centuries, are divided into four categories: a) strongholds on hills from 400 up to 1,000 m² (the largest group); b) strongholds with an inner space from 2,000 up to 4,500 m² (usually 3,500); c) strongholds of 10,000 m²; d) a few great strongholds covering an area from 20,000 to 30,000 m². Most of the early strongholds, as well as those of the 9th century, replaced earlier open settlements. In Lower Silesia, the evolution of the early medieval settlements is similar to that in the rest of Poland, as well as in other neighbouring areas. Taking into account the density and the evolution of the settlements, the northwestern part of Lower Silesia — at least in the 7th and 8th centuries — shows faster social and economic development compared to that of the rest of Lower Silesia¹⁹.

The type of settlement in the northwestern Silesia was the small stronghold with open settlements nearby. Analogies are found in the southern Great Poland and Lower Lusatia, areas with similar material culture and phases of development. Different conditions existed in the mountainous southeastern Lower Silesia, where the number of strongholds is smaller and almost all of them, as well as the local settlements, date back to the 8th and 9th centuries. These strongholds were occupied by larger groups (*opole*) being simultaneously the political centres of the local tribes²⁰. One of the most important tribal strongholds in Lower Silesia was that of Chobienia (Rudna commune), with an adjacent settlement of 40 km². Founded in ca 850, rebuilt after 860 and abandoned in the late 9th or early 10th century, when it was destroyed by fire, it had inner ramparts as well as an outer ditch. The stronghold was permanently populated and in cases of emergency it was used as a refuge for neighbouring populations²¹.

¹⁸ W. Łoziński, *Osadnictwo* 306-308. — W. Chudziak, *Z badań* 58. — A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 77-78.

¹⁹ J. Łodowski, *Dolny Śląsk* 275-276. — Z. Kobyliński, *Early medieval hillforts* 148, 152-153. — Z. Kurnatowska, *Burgen* 258-259. — A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 96-98.

²⁰ J. Łodowski, *Dolny Śląsk* 277.

²¹ F. Biermann - A. Kieseler - D. Nowakowski, *Grodzisko plemienne w Chobieni gm. Rudna w świetle badań archeologicznych 2010 r.* (The tribal stronghold in Chobienia,

The development of strongholds and the fortified settlements poses the question of who were the tribes or the wider tribal unions related to the formation of the first centres of power in Poland. The earlier testimonies of sources date from the 9th century and possibly reflect the process of the second half of the 8th and the early 9th centuries, when settlements multiplied and the first important tribal structures (*opole*) were created. The 9th century proved to be a turning point for medieval Poland as transformations in the way of life, social organisation and material culture in the tribal structures, where local chieftains ruled, are observed²².

The first written testimonies that reflect these changes come from the so-called Bavarian Geographer (ca 845), who wrote a brief treatise under the title *Descriptio civitatum et regionum ad septentrionalem plagam Danubii*. The treatise records tribes and peoples north of the Danube and east of the Elbe, following the boundaries of the eastern Frankish Empire (Francia Orientalis) from the Baltic Sea to the south-east²³. In the Polish territory, the tribes of Glopeani, Lendizi, Prissani, Uelunzani/Velunzani, Bruzi, Uuislane, Sleenzane, Dadosesani, Uerizane/Verizane, Fraganeo, Lupiglaa, Opolini and Golensizi were located²⁴. The use of the word *civitas* indicates probably strongholds-local centres of power with multiple functions (defensive, economic etc.), or, according to Ch. Lübke, forms of settlement with a stronghold as a major topographical and strategic element²⁵. The Glopeani, with 400 *civitates*, were

Rudna commune, in the light of archaeological excavations in 2010), in *Funkcje grodów*, p. 269-333, here 332-333 (hereafter: F. Biermann - A. Kieseler - D. Nowakowski, Grodzisko).

²² M. Dulnicz, *Kształowanie* 304-305.

²³ M. Eggers, *Das Großmährische Reich. Realität oder Fiktion? Eine Neuinterpretation der Quellen zur Geschichte des mittleren Donauraumes im 9. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 1995, p. 112 (hereafter: M. Eggers, *Großmährische Reich*). — A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 76.

²⁴ Bavarian Geographer, ed. B. Horák - D. Trávníček, *Descriptio civitatum ad septentrionalem plagam Danubii* [Rozprawy Československé Akademie Věd. Řada společenských věd 66.2], Praha 1956: “*Isti sunt, qui iuxta istorum fines resident. ... Glopeani, in qua civitates CCC aut eo amplius. ... Lendizi habent civitates XCVIII. ... Prissani civitates LXX. Uelunzani civitates LXX. Bruzi plus est undique quam de Enisa ad Rhenum ... Uuislane. Sleenzane civitates XV. Lunsizi civitates XXX. Dadosesani civitates XX. ... Verizane, civitates X. Fraganeo civitates XL. Lupiglaa civitates XXX. Opolini civitates XX. Golensizi civitates V*”.

²⁵ Ch. Lübke, Forms of Political Organisation of the Polabian Slavs (until the 10th Century A.D.), in *Origins*, p. 115-124, here 118. — P. M. Barford, *Early Slavs* 107. — S. Rosik, O “rozpoznawaniu” *civitas* w świecie słowiańskich plemion (tzw. *Geograf Bawarski* a łacińskie przekazy z XI-XII w.). Uwagi do dyskusji nad kształtowaniem się pojęcia grodu (About the *civitas* “identification” in the world of Slavic tribes [the so-called Bavarian Geographer and Latin records from the 11th-12th centuries]). Notes to the

located in Great Poland or Kujawia with present-day Kruszwica a possible centre²⁶; the Lendizi in the eastern part of Little Poland (Sandomierz) and up to the River Bug or the Upper Pripet²⁷; the Prissani in the area of Lower Oder in Pomerania, centred in the district of Pyrzyce²⁸; the Uelunzani/Velunzani also in Pomerania, with the island of Wolin and the adjacent inland as its centre²⁹; the Bruzi, ancestors of the Prussians, between the Rivers Vistula and Niemen³⁰; the Uuislane/Vislane in the area of Vistula in Little Poland, with modern-day Cracow as its possible centre³¹; the Sleenzane in Lower Silesia, close to the mountain Ślęża and the River Oder or Ślęża³²; the Dadosesani close to the stronghold Chobienia in Lower Silesia³³; the Uerizane in the eastern part of Pomerania in the basin of the River Wierzyca, near the Baltic Sea and not far from the mouth of the Vistula³⁴; the Fraganeo in Kujavia³⁵; the Lupiglaa in the Kalisz Land or in Głupie Głowy/Głupczyce³⁶; the Opolini in western

discussion on the evolution of the concept of the stronghold), in *Funkcje grodów*, p. 37-42, here 42. — S. Brather, *Archäologie* 94-95.

²⁶ See Z. Kurnatowska, Territorial Structures 131. — K. T. Witczak, Z problematyki Słowiańszczyzny plemiennej, część 6: “Goplanie” i Bierdzanie czyli rzecz o prapolskim zasiedleniu Kujaw (Studies in early Slavic tribal geography, Part VI: “Goplanie” and Bierdzanie or the question of the pre-Polish inhabitants of Cuiavia), *Slavia Occidentalis* 57 (2000) 149-165. — A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 78-79.

²⁷ A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 79-83. — J. Poleski, *Małopolska* 215.

²⁸ J. M. Piskorski, *Pommern im Wandel der Zeiten*, Szczecin 1999, p. 30 (hereafter: J. M. Piskorski, *Pommern*). A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 76-77.

²⁹ J. M. Piskorski, *Pommern* 30. — W. Filipowiak, Wollin- ein frühmittelalterliches Zentrum an der Ostsee, in *Europas Mitte I*, p. 152-155, here 152. — A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 76-77.

³⁰ Marija Gimbutas, *The Balts*, London 1963, p. 24. — L. Z. Niekrasz, *Where are you, Prūsai?* transl. M. Kulczykowski, Warszawa 2012, p. 16.

³¹ A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 79-81. — B. Sz. Szmoniewski, Axe-like Iron Bars in the Early Middle Ages from Central and Northern Europe. Some Comments, in A. Măgureanu - E. Gáll (ed.), *Between the Steppe and the Empire. Archeological Studies in honour of Radu Harhoiu at 65th Anniversary*, București 2010, p. 289-295, here 290 (hereafter: B. Sz. Szmoniewski, Axe-like Iron Bars). — J. Poleski, *Małopolska* 215.

³² K. Wachowski, *Studium archeologiczne* 42. — A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 84.

³³ A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 83-84 (in the Głogów - Barycz area). — F. Biermann - A. Kieseler - D. Nowakowski, Grodzisko 333. — K. T. Witczak, Z problematyki Słowiańszczyzny plemiennej, cz. 5: Wierzycanie (Uerizane), Plemię Wschodniopomorskie znad rzeki Wierzyca (Studies in early Slavic tribal geography, Part V: Wierzycanie [Uerizane], an east Pomeranian Tribe situated at the Wierzyca River), *Pomorania Antiqua* 24 (2012) 1-18, p. 2 (in Upper Lusatia) (hereafter: K. T. Witczak, Z problematyki 5).

³⁴ K. T. Witczak, Z problematyki 5, p. 4-14.

³⁵ K. T. Witczak, Z problematyki 5, p. 3.

³⁶ K. Wachowski, *Studium archeologiczne* 42. — K. T. Witczak, Z problematyki 5, p. 3.

Upper Silesia, with the area of Opole as its centre³⁷ and the Golensizi in Southeastern Silesia, on the River Opava, close to the Moravian Gates³⁸. According to K. Witzcak, the location of five tribes from the mouth of the Vistula up to the Moravian Gates (Uerizane, Fraganeo, Lupiglaa, Opolini and Golensizi) coincides with the former Amber road³⁹.

Regarding the Byzantine authors, the Lendizi of the Bavarian Geographer can be identified with the *Lenzanenes*, who, according to Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, paid tribute to Kievan Rus⁴⁰. Mention is made also of the Slavs of the Vistula River in Little Poland, whom Porphyrogenitus names *Litziki* and correlates them with the homeland of the Zahlumi, a tribe of Serbian origin who settled later in Herzegovina⁴¹. On the other hand, the Uuislane is linked to the first contact of the Poles with Christianity, according to the *Life of Methodius: He [Methodius] also possessed prophetic abilities, as many of his predictions come true and one or two of which we shall recount. The pagan prince, of great strength, sitting by Vistula, railed heavily against the Christians and did them wrong. Hence, he ordered a messenger to pass on these words: "It shall be wiser for you, son, to accept christening from your own will at your lands rather than be forced to do so in captivity at foreign ground and you shall remind me". And so it happened*⁴².

³⁷ K. Wachowski, *Studium archeologiczne* 42. — A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 84. — K. T. Witzcak, *Z problematyki* 5, p. 2-3. — K. Jaworski, *Wczesne Średniowiecze* (Early Middle Ages), in E. Tomczak (ed.), *Archeologia Górny Śląsk* (*Archaeology of Upper Silesia*), Katowice 2013, p. 165-192, here. 167-169, 191 (hereafter: K. Jaworski, *Wczesne Średniowiecze*).

³⁸ K. Wachowski, *Studium archeologiczne* 42. — A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 84. — K. T. Witzcak, *Z problematyki* 5, p. 2-3. — K. Jaworski, *Wczesne Średniowiecze* 167-169, 191.

³⁹ K. T. Witzcak, *Z problematyki* 5, p. 13.

⁴⁰ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik - R. J. H. Jenkins [Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae], Washington, D.C. 1967 (hereafter: *DAI*), 9, p. 57: *All these come down the River Dnieper, and are collected together at the city of Kiev, also called Sambatas. Their Slav tributaries, the so-called Krivichians and the Lenzanenes and the rest of the Slavonic regions.... Ibidem*, 37, p. 169: *... and the province of Iabdiertim is neighbor to the tributary territories of the country of Russia, to the Oultines and Dervlenines and Lenzenines and the rest of the Slavs.* — K. Fokt, *Łędzianie - how far from the Empire? Byzantina et Slavica Cracoviensia* 5 (2007) 109-121. — A. Buko, *Early Medieval Poland* 81. — J. Poleski, *Małopolska* 215.

⁴¹ *DAI* 33, p. 161, 163: *The family of the proconsul and patrician Michael, son of Bouseboutzis, prince of the Zachlumi, came from the unbaptized who dwell on the River Visla and are called Litziki; and it settled on the River called Zachluma.*

⁴² A. Mironowicz, *The Methodian Mission on the Polish Lands until the Dawn of 11th Century*, *Elpis* 15 (2013) 17-32, p. 20-21.

Another source of the 9th century is the geographic treatise of the king of England Alfred the Great (871-899), known as *Old English Orosius*. The treatise of Alfred that deals, among other things, with the peoples of Central Europe, is based on the *Historiae adversum paganos* of Orosius, dating back to the early 5th century. Alfred translates the text of Orosius also making his own additions in order to coincide with data from the 9th century, especially about Northern and Eastern Europe. Furthermore, he uses material from unknown sources as well as the testimony of two mariners, Ohthere and Wulfstan. One of the problems with Alfred's description is the old Scandinavian system of orientation he follows and the subsequent variation in degrees, regarding the right location of the peoples he records. It is possible he also used an old map, full of errors⁴³.

According to Alfred's account, *west of the Old Saxons is the mouth of the River Elbe and Friesland, and thence north-west is the land called Angeln, and Sillende, and some part of the Danes; and north of them is the country of the Obodrites, and to the north-east, the Velts called Havolans; and east of them is the Wendish country called the country of the Siusles, and south-east, beyond some part, the Moravians; and these Moravians have west of them the Thuringians, and Bohemians, and part of the Bavarians; and south of them, on the other side of the Danube, is the country of Carinthia, south to the mountains called the Alps. Towards the same mountains lie the boundaries of the Bavarians and the Swabians; then east of the country of Carinthia, beyond the wilderness, is Bulgaria, and east of it is Greece; and east of Moravia is the Vistula country, and east of it are the Dacians, who were formerly Goths. North-east of the Moravians are the Dalamintzians, and east of the Dalamintzians are the Croats, and north of the Dalamintzians are the Sorbs, and west of them the Siusles*⁴⁴. According also to Wulfstan, *then comes the Elbing from the east into the Frisches Haff, from the lake on the shore of which stands Truso; and they run out together into the Haß: the Elbing from the east, from Estland, and the Vistula from the south, from Wendland. And then the Vistula deprives the Elbing of its name, and*

⁴³ On the views about the location of lands and peoples in Alfred's treatise, see R. Ekblom, Alfred the Great as Geographer, *Studia Neophilologica* 14 (1941) 115-144, p. 114, 117, 142 (hereafter: R. Ekblom, Geographer). — *Idem*, King Alfred and Bearings in the Borderland between the West Slavs and the Balts, *Scando-Slavica* 4 (1958) 117-126 (hereafter: R. Ekblom, King Alfred). — J. Lindersky, Alfred the Great and the Tradition of Ancient Geography, *Speculum* 39 (1964) 434-439, p. 434. — M. Eggers, *Großmährische Reich* 118-121.

⁴⁴ R. Ekblom, Geographer 116-117.

*runs out of the Haff north-west, into the sea; therefore it is called the mouth of the Vistula*⁴⁵.

Studying in depth the work of Alfred, R. Ekblom tried to identify his account with peoples and areas. Considering modern Poland, the *Vistula country* is identified with the area of Little Poland (Upper Vistula), located to the northeast and not the east of Moravia. Ekblom locates also in Poland two of the four groups of the Croats — namely White Croatia — one group in the area of Neisse in Upper Silesia and the other in the area of Cracow⁴⁶. According to other views, Siusles (Sysyle), possibly in Silesia, are identified with Wends and Dalamintzians (Dalamentsan) are located either in Great Poland or in Silesia⁴⁷. On the other hand, Ekblom believes that Wulfstan means not the flow of the Vistula but a branch of it, the River Nogat, which empties into the Baltic Sea from the east⁴⁸. The above sources concern a part of early Medieval Poland, while, after the 9th century, testimonies are more numerous and shed light on the conditions in other areas, such as Central Poland⁴⁹.

On the development of Polish strongholds in the 9th century very important were the influences from Great Moravia. Finds of Moravian weapons or harnesses in eight tribal strongholds of Little Poland (Uislane/Wiślane and Lendizi/Lędzianie), or their surroundings, lead to the conclusion that the tribal ruling class had contacts with Moravia. Contacts also link the pottery and other finds to the stronghold of Chobienia in Lower Silesia. In addition, investigation of the tribal period's finds shows a "cultural community" which included Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia, Little Poland, part of Silesia as well as the southeastern part of Polesia along the Elbe River. Common elements include the development of small or bigger strongholds, the common burial customs (cremations on barrows and later graves with weapons and harnesses), the hiding of silver objects, the iron bowls of the Silesia type (according to P. Rzeźnik, a cultural element characteristic of stratified tribal and early-state societies, residing in settlement complexes of the stronghold type), various tools for agriculture, textile and metal work as well as the so-called axe-like iron bars (known as *grzywny*). The latter, possibly originating from Scandinavia, entered Poland from Moravia in the first half of the 9th century and various assumptions have been made as to their use

⁴⁵ R. Ekblom, *Geographer* 120. — *Idem*, King Alfred 120-122. — P. M. Barford, *Early Slavs* 106.

⁴⁶ R. Ekblom, *Geographer* 129-133, 140-142.

⁴⁷ See R. Ekblom, *Geographer* 129. On the location of Dalamintzians in Eastern Germany, see S. Brather, *Archäologie* 81.

⁴⁸ R. Ekblom, *Geographer* 140. — *Idem*, King Alfred 121-122, 124-125.

⁴⁹ J. Sikora, *Ziemia Centralnej Polski* 178.

(agricultural tools, ritual/magic etc.). Also, some cultural influences from Western Europe and Scandinavia are related to trade as well as the expansion of the Franks in eastern Central Europe⁵⁰.

The end of the tribal period coincides with the end of the early medieval history of Poland. In the 10th century we observe the beginning of the state structures, after the establishment of the first Polish kingdom by the dynasty of Piast with its political and ecclesiastical seat in Gniezno. The centre of this evolution was the area of the River Warta in Great Poland, where the first medieval urban structures were developed beside the tribal strongholds. The family of Piast, who ruled the tribe of Polani, implemented the idea of the state formation changing the tribal system to a hereditary monarchy. The Piasts incorporated the area of Polani into the trade network between the Danube and the Baltic Sea and their economic growth gave them the chance to develop new urban centres, state services, army etc., while a new ruling class emerged from the new conditions. Under the rule of Mieszko I, the gradual conquest of the neighbouring areas established a strong kingdom in Central Europe. After the central part of the country, the annexation of Little Poland in 989 was decisive. Regarding the Piasts' era, the destruction of the older strongholds and the foundation of new after 950 can be seen. The strongholds-castles of the Piasts are more impressive with bigger ramparts and — apart from being symbols of power — they form the basis of the administrative system, which protected the trade network from Great Poland either to Mazovia or to Sandomierz and other areas. Simultaneously, the conversion of Mieszko I to Christianity paved the way for further influences from the West, among others the perception of the power of the monarch as an imitation of *Regni Dei*⁵¹.

⁵⁰ K. Wachowski, *Studium archeologiczne* 33-39, 44-60. — Z. Kurnatowska, *Burgen* 258, 262-263. — P. M. Barford, *Early Slavs* 108. — F. Biermann - A. Kieseler - D. Nowakowski, *Grodzisko* 332-333. — P. Rzeźnik, A Set of Early Medieval Sheet Iron Bowls from Gromnik. A Study of a Deposit Partly Reclaimed for Archaeology, in K. Jarski - A. Pankiewicz (ed.), *Mount Gromnik (Rummelsberg). From the History of Settlement and Management*, Wrocław 2008, p. 161-178. — J. Sikora, *Ziemie Centralnej Polski* 182. — B. Sz. Szmoniewski, *Axe-like Iron Bars* 289-295. — J. Poleski, *Małopolska* 216-217.

⁵¹ P. M. Barford, *Early Slavs* 220, 261-264. — S. Brather, *Archäologie* 75-77. — M. Kara, *Najstarsze państwo Piastów-rezultat przełomu czy kontynuacji? Studium archeologiczne (The Oldest State of the Piast - the Result of a Turning-point or a Continuation? Archaeological Study)*, Poznań 2009, p. 406-407. — J. Sikora, *Ziemie Centralnej Polski* 179-182. — P. Urbańczyk, *Origins of the Piast Dynasty, Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana* 2013.2 56-66. — J. Poleski, *Małopolska* 217.

Γεώργιος Καρδαράς

**Η πρόιμη μεσαιωνική περίοδος στην Πολωνία 6^{ος}-9^{ος} αιώνας
Μέρος Δεύτερο: Η φυλετική περίοδος***

Η παρούσα μελέτη πραγματεύεται τη φυλετική (ή προ-κρατική) περίοδο στην Πολωνία, από τον πρώιμο 7^ο έως τα τέλη του 9^{ου} αιώνα, η οποία ακολούθησε τη φάση της σλαβικής μετανάστευσης στη χώρα. Μετά από την αναφορά σε ορισμένες μεταβολές στον υλικό πολιτισμό, π.χ. στη χρήση του αργού τροχού στην κεραμεική και τα νέα ταφικά έθιμα (όπως τους τύμβους ή τις ταφές του τύπου Alt Käbelich), καθώς και στις πολιτισμικές σχέσεις με το αβαρικό χαγανάτο και, αργότερα, τη Μεγάλη Μοραβία, το ενδιαφέρον μας στρέφεται στην κατασκευή των οχυρών και των οχυρωμένων εγκαταστάσεων στον πολωνικό χώρο. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο, καταγράφονται τα γενικά χαρακτηριστικά των οχυρών, περιγράφονται τα παλαιότερα από αυτά (Szeligi και Haćki) και γίνεται ενδεικτικά λόγος για την ανάπτυξη των οχυρών σε ορισμένες περιφέρειες της χώρας (Μικρά και Κεντρική Πολωνία, Πομερανία και Σιλεσία). Όπως σημειώνουν αρκετοί μελετητές, ο ρόλος των οχυρών δεν ήταν μόνο αμυντικός αλλά αυτά εκπλήρωναν πολλές άλλες λειτουργίες (λατρευτικές, καταφύγιο πληθυσμών, κέντρα παραγωγής ή εμπορίου κ.ά.). Επίσης, λαμβάνοντας υπόψη τις μαρτυρίες του Βαυαρού Γεωγράφου και άλλων πηγών, επιχειρείται η ταύτιση των αναφερόμενων σε αυτές φύλων με συγκεκριμένες περιοχές της Πολωνίας.

* Θα ήθελα να ευχαριστήσω θερμά το Μουσείο Πολωνικής Ιστορίας (Muzeum Historii Polski) για την υποτροφία που μου παρέσχε προκειμένου να διεξαγάγω τη σχετική έρευνα στην Πολωνία, καθώς και τη συνάδελφο Sylwia Cygan (Rzeszów) για τις πολύτιμες παρατηρήσεις της επί του κειμένου.