

The Huns on Polish lands – an attempt to summarise

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The question of the range and character of Hunnic influences on the peoples inhabiting the northern part of Central Europe belongs to the least known issues in the history of the Huns after they took control over the Carpathian Basin in the late-4th century AD. Any conclusions concerning this topic are based on the scanty and vague accounts of ancient authors. One can only mention the information provided by Priscus (Fragmenta 8) that the reign of Attila reached ‘as far as the islands on the Ocean’ and a fragment of a song, recorded by Jordanes, praising the deeds of the deceased Attila who ‘acquired Scythian and Germanic kingdoms’ (Gética 257; cf. GODŁOWSKI 1985. 154–155, KACZANOWSKI–KOZŁOWSKI 1998. 286–287, cf. TEJRAL 2007. 109). In light of the above one can suppose that the range of the Hunnic state influences included the Oder and Vistula basins as well, and – according to Priscus – reached the southern coast of the Baltic Sea. Archaeological sources permitting scholars to attempt the reconstruction of the relations between the inhabitants of the Oder and Vistula basins and the Huns in the late-4th – early-5th century are equally sparse. In the literature addressing the history and culture of Hunnic tribes, the most often quoted finds from Poland are a ‘princely’ grave from Jakuszowice, Kazimierza Wielka district in western Lesser Poland and what is described as a ritual deposit from Jędrzychowice, Oława district in Lower Silesia (Fig. 1). These finds have spurred a long discussion on their character and importance as the indicators of connections linking the inhabitants of Southern Poland with the confederation of tribes led by the

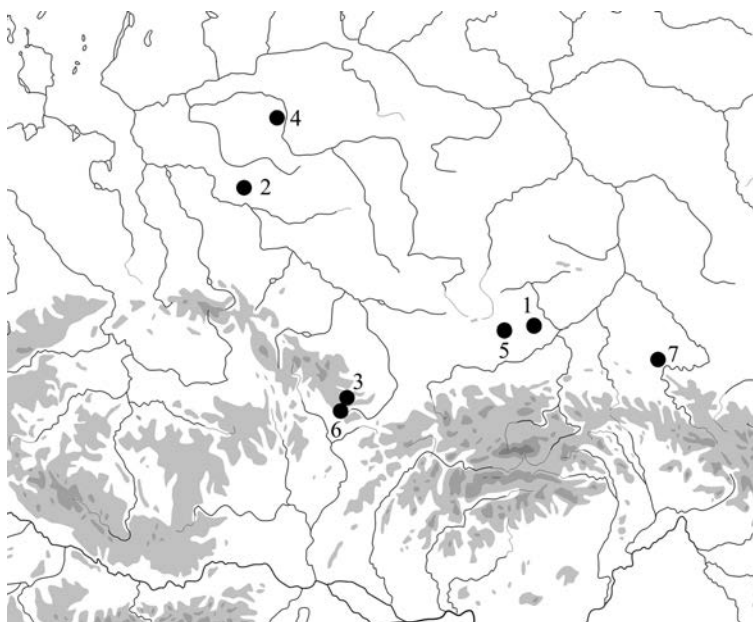


Fig 1

1: Jakuszowice, Kazimierza Wielka district, 2: Jędrzychowice, Oława district, 3: Lichnov, Bruntál district, 4: Podłoziny, Poznań district, 5: Przemęczany, Proszowice district, 6: Razová, Bruntál district, 7: Świlcza, Rzeszów district

1. kép

1: Jakuszowice, Kazimierza Wielka járás, 2: Jędrzychowice, Oława járás, 3: Lichnov, Bruntál járás, 4: Podłoziny, Poznań járás, 5: Przemęczany, Proszowice járás, 6: Razová, Bruntál járás, 7: Świlcza, Rzeszów járás

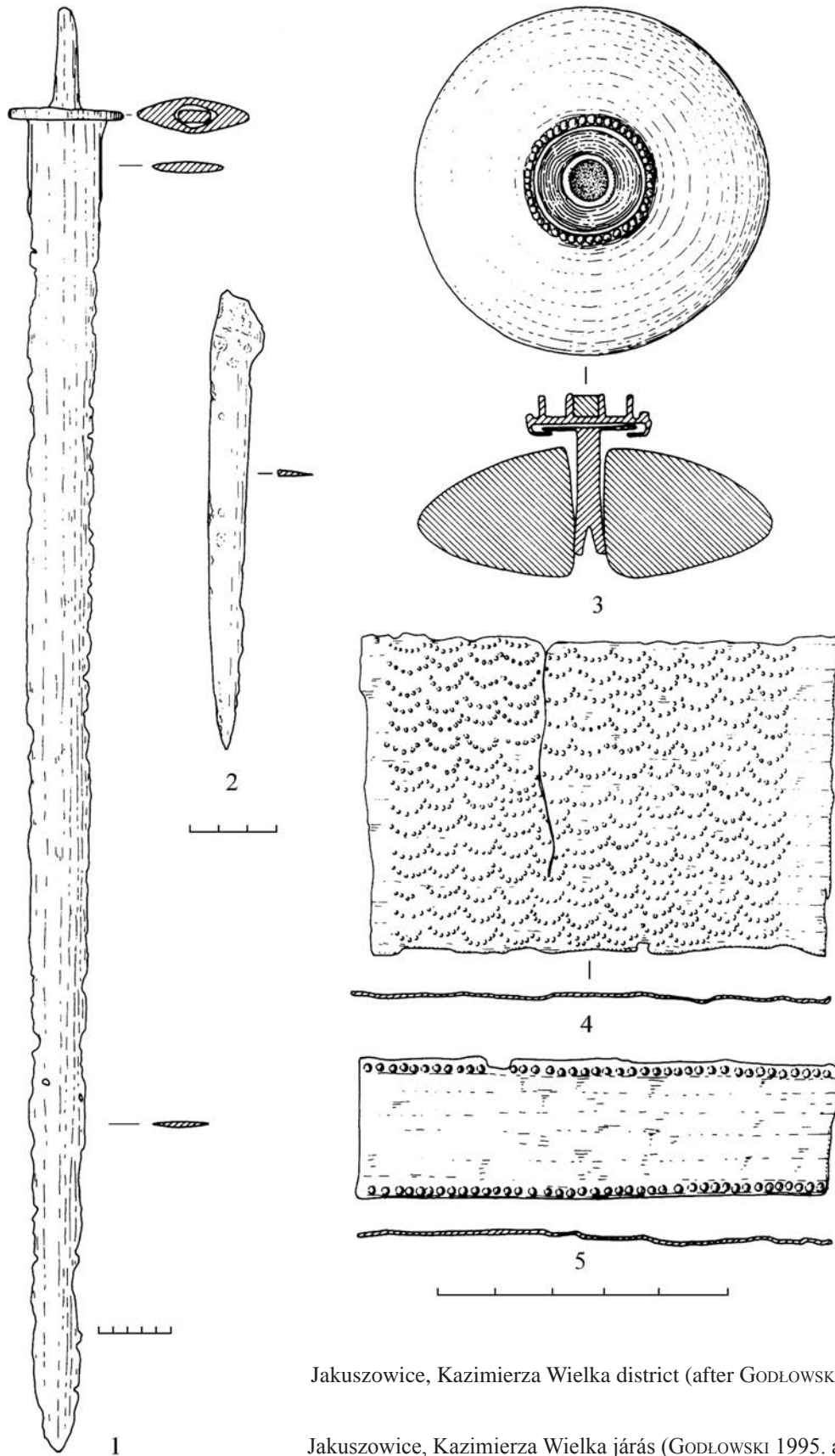


Fig. 2

Jakuszowice, Kazimierza Wielka district (after GODŁOWSKI 1995.)

2. kép

Jakuszowice, Kazimierza Wielka járás (GODŁOWSKI 1995. alapján)

Huns. Less attention has been paid to establishing a precise chronology for the two finds. Scholars have often limited themselves to general statements, not based on detailed analysis of the sources, that these finds should be connected with the time of Attila's reign (cf. KRAUSE 1904., ÅBERG 1936., LÁSZLÓ 1951., HARMATTA 1951., WERNER 1956., BÓNA 1991.).

The grave from Jakuszowice was discovered accidentally in the autumn of 1911 during the acquisition of sand on the left-bank terrace of the Nidzica river. At the depth of about 6 m, a skeleton burial was found which, along with the human bones, also contained the unburned bones of a horse and lavish grave-goods including numerous elements of dress, horse harness and weaponry. Most of the objects were made of silver or gold (ŻUROWSKI 1921., NOSEK 1959., GODŁOWSKI 1995.). The exact initial burial inventory is not known. In trying to keep the discovery a secret, its finder, a local farmer named Andrzej Radziszewski, gave 'a piece' of the discovery to each witness, which most likely means a gold or silver artefact. However, the authorities in Saint Petersburg learned about the discovery.¹ Radziszewski then decided to take the artefacts to Kraków, which belonged to Austro-Hungarian Monarchy at that time, where they were deposited in the Polish National Museum (ŻUROWSKI 1921. 8, GODŁOWSKI 1995. 155). At present, they are kept in the Archaeological Museum in Kraków.

Due to the circumstances of the discovery, no details are known as to the grave construction, the position of the skeleton against horse remains, or the arrangement of grave goods within the grave chamber. Moreover, only part of the grave inventory has survived, as can be deduced from the information mentioned above. Especially striking is the lack of fibulae, as 'princely' graves were usually furnished with more than one such artefact. Apart from a gold buckle decorated with almandines, the objects distributed among the witnesses of the discovery have never been recovered (ŻUROWSKI 1921. 9). It should be mentioned that, in spite of the considerable interest aroused by the discovery among Polish archaeologists (including prominent scholars such as W. Demetrykiewicz and L. Kozłowski), it was then impossible to start excavations at Jakuszowice due to unfavourable attitude of the Russian administration (ŻUROWSKI 1921. 9).

Human bones (missing at present) were transported to Kraków together with other artefacts and analysed by J. Talko-Hryncewicz. He briefly noticed that "the individual was not very developed, maybe a male, young" (ŻUROWSKI 1921. 10). Thus, there is no information about such features of the skeleton from which one could draw conclusions as to the origin of the deceased.

Among the preserved part of the grave inventory there are the following artefacts: a long sword with a cross-guard (Fig. 2: 1); an amber pommel, decorated with a gilded knob with almandine (Fig. 2: 3), earlier described as a 'magic' sword pendant (BIBORSKI–KACZANOWSKI 2009.); two fragments of decorated golden foil from the scabbard, a "Gundremmingen" type chape made of silver and bronze (Fig. 2: 4–5, Fig. 3: 5); two fragments of a golden band decorated with almandines (Fig. 4: 5–6); elements of horse harness: a bit with stamped decoration and two cross-shaped strap-dividers (Fig. 5: 1–2, Fig. 3: 2–3), a pelta shaped pendant, with stamped and niello ornamentation (Fig. 5: 3); three gold buckles decorated with almandines in polychrome style (Fig. 4: 1–2, 12); four silver buckles, including three gilded specimens with stamped decoration (Fig. 5: 5–7); a silver loop-shaped buckle, usually referred to as "Osenschnalle" (Fig. 4: 11); a gilded silver, stamped tongue-shaped strap-end; two golden strap-ends decorated with almandines in cloisonné technique (Fig. 5: 4, Fig. 4: 3–4); two lunulae of golden foil, decorated with almandines in polychrome style (Fig. 4: 7–8); a triangular appliqué made of golden foil (Fig. 4: 9); a fragment of an iron knife with the remains of wooden scabbard; and a fragment of a 'grey' colour ceramic vessel, most likely wheel-made, missing today but mentioned in J. Żurowski's publication (ŻUROWSKI 1921., NOSEK

¹ Jakuszowice belonged to the Russian partition at that time.

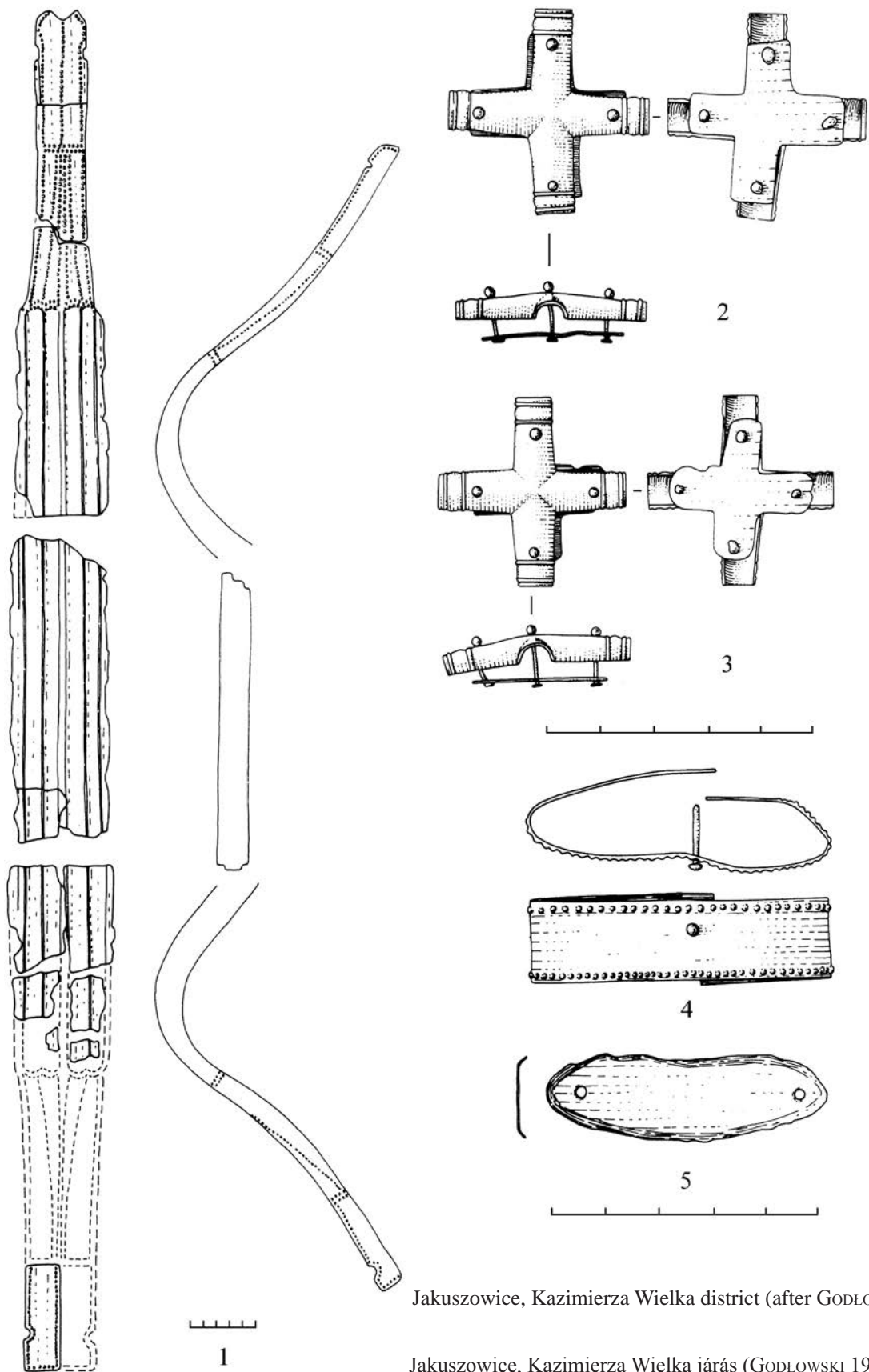


Fig. 3

Jakuszowice, Kazimierza Wielka district (after GODŁOWSKI 1995.)

3. kép

Jakuszowice, Kazimierza Wielka járás (GODŁOWSKI 1995. alapján)

1959., GODŁOWSKI 1995. 155, ATTLA UND DIE HUNNEN 2007. 268–269, KACZANOWSKI–RODZIŃSKA-NOWAK 2010A. Fig. 2–3). Of particular importance among these findings are fragments of thin golden foil – the fittings of a symbolic reflex bow (Fig. 3: 1) (BÓNA 1991. 135, Fig. 54, GODŁOWSKI 1995.). This artefact has clear connections with the Hunnic environment (ŻUROWSKI 1921. 176, 179, ŻUROWSKI 1924–1925. 332, ÅBERG 1936., LÁSZLÓ 1951., HARMATTA 1951. 107–151., WERNER 1956. 82–95., BÓNA 1991., GODŁOWSKI 1995. 155–156). With the nomads, most likely the Huns, should also be linked artefacts decorated in polychrome style mentioned above and a silver loop-shaped buckle (GODŁOWSKI 1986., 103, GODŁOWSKI 1995. 155, Fig. 1–4). In the inventory of the Jakuszowice grave there are artefacts that represent another cultural circle, too. These are objects with decoration typical for the Untersiebenbrunn-Sösdala horizon, such as some of the mentioned belt elements and parts of horse bridle (GODŁOWSKI 1995. 156, Fig. 4).

The grave from Jakuszowice also differs from typical Przeworsk Culture burials of that time by other features. In addition to its lavish grave-goods, the presence of the gold fittings of a symbolic reflex bow and the presence of numerous objects in polychrome and Untersiebenbrunn-Sösdala styles, it is also distinguished by its construction (6 m deep), the inhumation burial rite, and deposition of a horse to the grave pit. In the early phase of the Migration Period there is no other burial within the Przeworsk Culture range which is equal or even comparable to in terms of the lavishness and character of the inventory. What is more, such splendid and similarly dated graves are also almost unknown in other cultural areas of Central European Barbaricum outside the regions directly influenced by the Hunnic state, the only exception being the burial discovered at Poprad-Matejovce in Slovakia, attributed to the North Carpathian Group (PIETA–ROTH 2007.). In addition, finds of horse remains in the Przeworsk Culture burials are rare (cf. BARANOWSKI 1973. 399, KACZANOWSKI–RODZIŃSKA-NOWAK 2009.)². Apart from Jakuszowice, only the burial of a warrior with horse discovered at Ługi, Góra district comes from the early phase of the Migration Period (PETERSEN 1932. 154–159). Another characteristic trait of the Jakuszowice burial is the fact that the deceased was interred unburned, a rite seldom observed in the Przeworsk Culture sepulchral sites.

However, a large nearby settlement at Jakuszowice (Site 2) with which the deceased was most likely connected yielded no traces of connections with the Hunnic milieu. The youngest horizon of the settlement should be dated, like the grave, to the early phase of the Migration Period. Due to rich archaeological material, traces of various craftsmanship, and numerous Roman imports discovered in the settlement (GODŁOWSKI 1986. 120; GODŁOWSKI 1991, 664, 670., GODŁOWSKI 1995, 158, KACZANOWSKI–RODZIŃSKA-NOWAK 2000., KACZANOWSKI–MARGOS 2002. 72–76), especially coins (MORAWIECKI 1984., KUNISZ 1985., BURSCHE 1997A., BURSCHE 1997B., BURSCHE ET AL. 2000.), the Jakuszowice settlement is presumed in the literature to have played a particular role in the settlement structures of the Przeworsk Culture in Late Antiquity. The site has even been compared to ceremonial centres of power described as ‘ports of trade’ or ‘central places’, such as Gudme in Fionia, Sorte Muld in Bornholm or Uppåkra in Scania (cf. GODŁOWSKI 1985. 155, GODŁOWSKI 1995., BURSCHE 1998. 205, footnote 10, KACZANOWSKI–RODZIŃSKA-NOWAK 2008. 183, KACZANOWSKI–RODZIŃSKA-NOWAK 2010A., KACZANOWSKI–RODZIŃSKA-NOWAK 2010B., LUND HANSEN 2009. 83). Such an interpretation of the role played by the Jakuszowice settlement is supported by the presence of artefacts which testify to multidirectional contacts with other cultural areas, including those situated in the Middle Danube Basin (GODŁOWSKI 1995. 160, RODZIŃSKA-NOWAK 2001., RODZIŃSKA-NOWAK 2006. 240–241, KACZANOWSKI–RODZIŃSKA-NOWAK 2000., KACZANOWSKI–RODZIŃSKA-NOWAK 2008. 182, 184–185,

² One can mention here only grave 22 in the cremation cemetery at Grzybów, Staszów district, dated to phase B2 of the Early Roman Period, where unburned horse remains and fragments of a horse bridle were found (GARBACZ–GARBACZ 1990., GARBACZ 2000. 47, 135, Pl. XXXVII: 3).

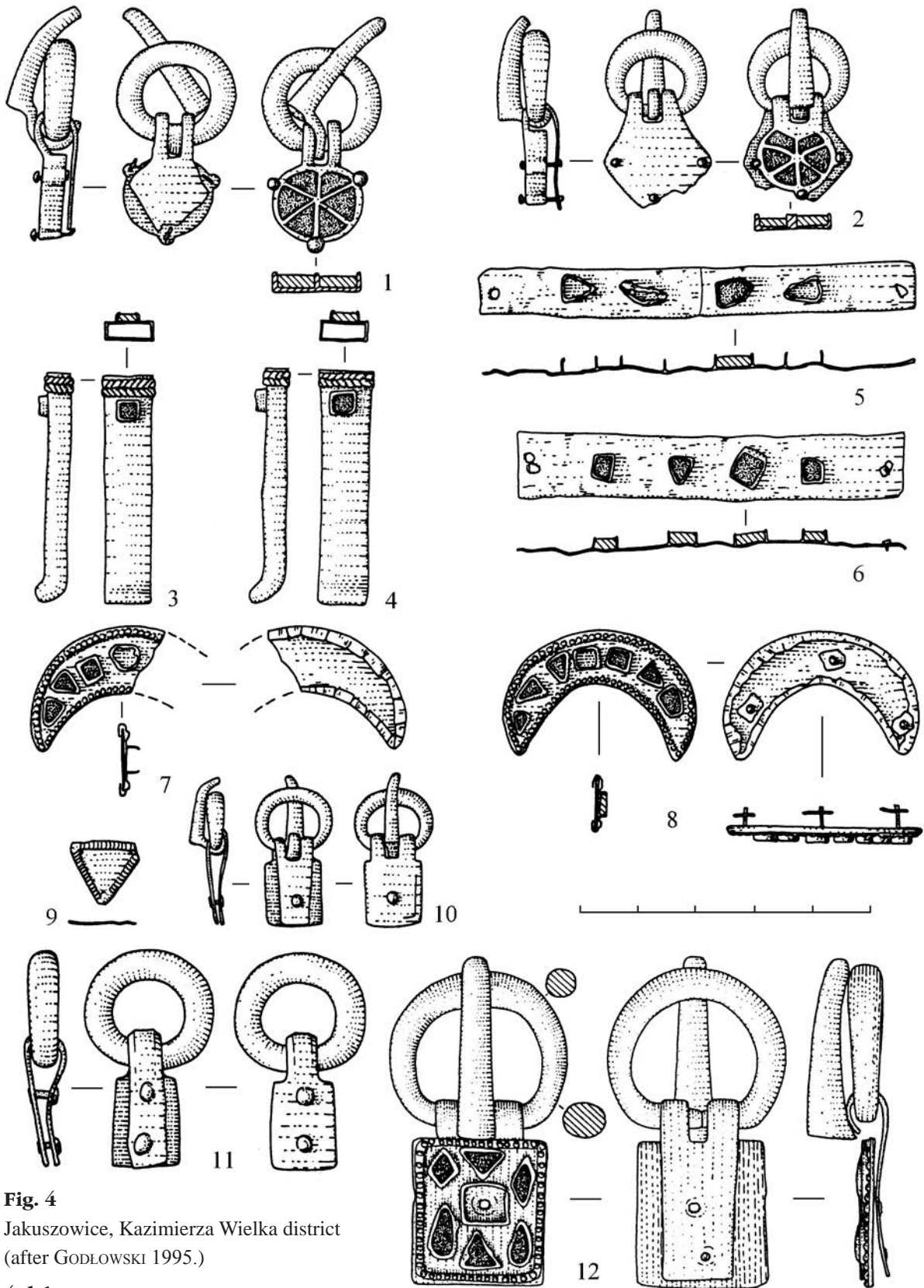


Fig. 4
 Jakuszowice, Kazimierza Wielka district
 (after GODŁOWSKI 1995.)

4. kęp
 Jakuszowice, Kazimierza Wielka járás (GODŁOWSKI 1995. alapján)

KACZANOWSKI–RODZIŃSKA–NOWAK 2010A). As already mentioned, there is no evidence for direct contacts with the Hunnic environment. One should take into consideration, however, that the occupational layers connected with the early phase of the Migration Period were significantly damaged and that the excavations covered little more than 2% of the estimated area of the site (RODZIŃSKA–NOWAK 2006. 13, 169–200., KACZANOWSKI–RODZIŃSKA–NOWAK 2008. 183).

The burial from Jakuszowice is not the only Przeworsk Culture grave to reveal connections with the nomadic environment in the early phase of the Migration Period. In 1912 the discovery of a skeleton burial of a warrior from Przemęczany (Fig. 6), again from western Lesser Poland (WAWRZENIECKI 1912. 50, Pl. XVIII: 1) was published. The deceased was characterised by his skull which was deformed in a way typical of nomadic milieu (cf. WERNER 1956., TESCHLER–NICOLA–MITTERÖCKER 2007. 273). In addition, a short single edged sword of the seax type discovered in this grave is also untypical of the Przeworsk Culture. The burial inventory also comprised a gold earring that may suggest connections with the Hunnic environment (GODŁOWSKI 1995. 161–162, Fig. 13).

An undoubtedly Hunnic attribution should be accepted for the assemblage (Fig. 7) discovered at Jędrzychowice (Höckricht), previously interpreted as a grave inventory but now considered to have had a votive character (Totenopfer) (KRAUSE 1904., WERNER 1956., 58, 123, Pl. 26, 64, GODŁOWSKI 1986. 104, GODŁOWSKI 1995. 155, BÓNA 1991. 140ff., TEJRAL 2000. 157, 161, Fig. 4). It includes a typical Hunnic cauldron (KRAUSE 1904. Fig. 12), described by J. Werner as the Höckricht type (WERNER 1956. 53). The cauldron refers by its simple attachments to similar vessels known, among other places, from Olbia and was included into the Osoka type (cf. TEJRAL 2000. 157, KOCH 2007. 289., RAJTÁR–ZÁBOJNIK 2010. 120). Nomadic connections are also indicated by polychrome style ornaments discovered together with the cauldron (KRAUSE 1904. 2, 4–9, GODŁOWSKI 1995. 162). A fragment of another Hunnic cauldron was found at Razová, near Horný Benešov, Bruntál district (Fig. 8) and at Lichnov, Bruntál district (Fig. 9), in the Opava region, close to the Polish border, in the Czech Republic. Most likely, these finds also have a votive character as indicated by traces of fire (BÓNA 1991. 144, TEJRAL 2000. with older literature, ATTILA UND DIE HUNNEN 2007, 114, BRÍZA–JANÁKOVÁ 2010.). **Other finds of this type from Europe are clustered in the Carpathian Basin and on the Lower Danube (KOCH 2007. 287, 290–291), where they occur in burials, votive sites ('Totenopfern') and in other contexts, including Roman army camps (BÓNA 1991. 144, KOCH 2007., RAJTÁR–ZÁBOJNIK 2010. Fig. 1). The above-mentioned specimens from Jędrzychowice and from the vicinity of Opava are the three northernmost finds of the discussed artefacts.**

Another proof of contact between the Przeworsk Culture population and the Hunnic environment are artefacts discovered in the settlement at Świlcza near Rzeszów (Fig. 10). These are two earrings of typically Hunnic form, of which one is made of gold and another of bronze (GRUSZCZYŃSKA 1999. 296). They were part of a hoard that comprised, among other ornaments, silver fibulae of the Wiesbaden and Niemberg types and ten denarii from the 2nd century (GRUSZCZYŃSKA 1999. 297, Fig. 19). The hoard has been dated dendrochronologically to 433 +10 AD, a date which agrees with the results of stylistic studies (GRUSZCZYŃSKA 1999. 299, GODŁOWSKI 1985. 118, GODŁOWSKI 1995. 162, 164, footnote 87, Fig. 14).

The northernmost find attributed to the Przeworsk Culture that can be regarded as a trace of connections with the Hunnic environment is an iron loop-shaped buckle from the settlement at Podłoziny Site 5, Poznań district, in Greater Poland (Fig. 11). It comes from a destroyed Roman Period pit which yielded no other artefacts contemporary with the aforementioned buckle (MAKIEWICZ 2003. Fig. 3: 13).

Regardless of the scanty historical data and sparse archaeological record, some studies dealing with the history of the Huns not only mention their military expansion to the Oder and Vistula

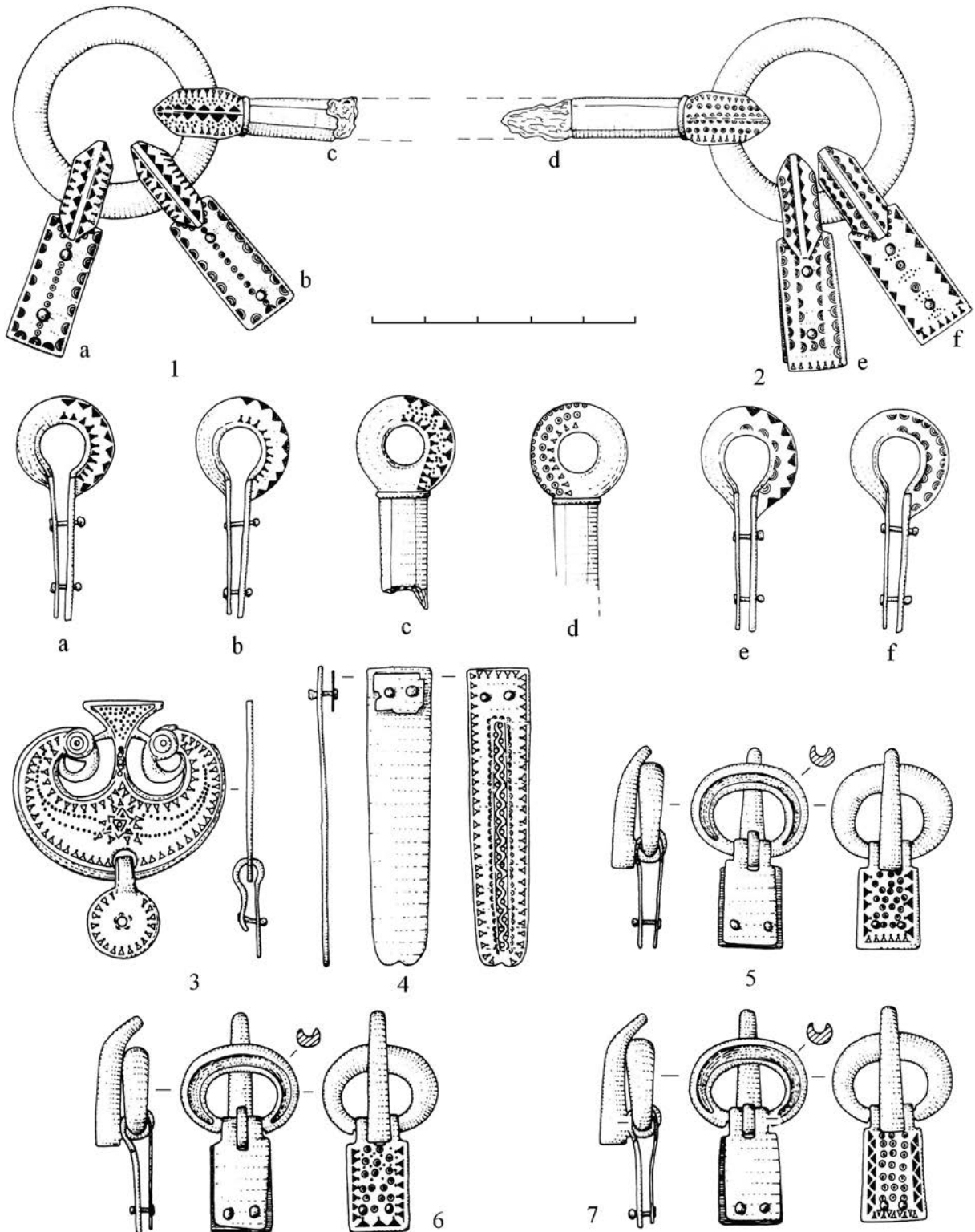


Fig. 5
 Jakuszowice, Kazimierza Wielka district (after GODŁOWSKI 1995.)

5. kép
 Jakuszowice, Kazimierza Wielka járás (GODŁOWSKI 1995. alapján)

basins but even present the routes supposedly followed by their armies. According to B. ANKE (2007. 40), the Hunnic invasion came to encompass the eastern part of Polish territory, reaching as far north as the Niemen river. The route taken by the Hunnic forces is presented differently by I. BÓNA (1991. map 1). In the years 400–405, Hunnic invasions penetrated the east and south of Poland, including the territory where the burials from Jakuszowice and Przemęczany, and the deposit from Jędrzychowice were found. The next raid to the Oder and Vistula basins Bóna dates to the years 435–438, i.e. to the times when the Huns were ruled by Attila and Bleda. This time, the Huns were to march through Silesia, the territories between the Oder and Elbe rivers, Pomerania and Podlasie region. Thus, the expedition to the Polish territories could have been connected with the Hunnic expansion to East Europe, with the subordination of peoples of *Scythia* mentioned by Jordanes and with the war against the little known Sorosgoi, dated to the times of common reign of Attila and Bleda (ŁOWMIAŃSKI 1963. 235). Both Anke and Bóna believe that the first Hunnic raids on Polish soil took place in the first decade of the 5th century, when the western Huns were led by Uldin. Such a dating for these hypothetical raids on the territories between the Oder and Vistula rivers seems to be justified to some extent. One can assume that these events should precede the period when the Huns, initially inspired by Aëtius, started wars in West Europe followed by subsequent invasions that ravaged the Balkans and reached as far west as Gaul and North Italy. However, the Huns started their raids on the Balkan provinces as early as in 395, and in the times of Uldin were engaged in further events which took place to the south of their territories, like a struggle with the leader of the Goths named Ganais or a support they gave to Stilicho when he defended Italy against the Radagais' invasion. There is no clue as to what would be the aim of this alleged Hunnic expansion

towards the areas north of the Carpathians and Sudetes at the time when they already had the possibility to invade much richer and more attractive Roman territories. It has been proposed that traces of contacts with the Huns discovered on the discussed territory reflect Hunnic attempts to control the trade in amber (TEJRAL 2000. 161–162). There is not enough data to estimate the importance of amber trade in the early phase of the Migration Period. Amber was surely not a particularly typical raw material in craftsmanship of the broadly understood Hunnic state environment, although some artefacts made of this material are known (TEJRAL 2000., KAZANSKI 2007. 79). One can also suppose that, in the analysed period, this trade might have been impaired by some destabilisation within the community representing the final stages of the Przeworsk Culture, manifested by a sparser settlement network and population movements from the northern parts of this culture area to the south (GODŁOWSKI 1985. 115, MAĆZYŃSKA 2005. 157, KACZANOWSKI 2005.). Moreover, the intensity of amber inflow to the Roman provinces must have been influenced by the altered political situation on the Middle Danube after the Huns had settled there. Their raids into the Vistula and Oder basins might

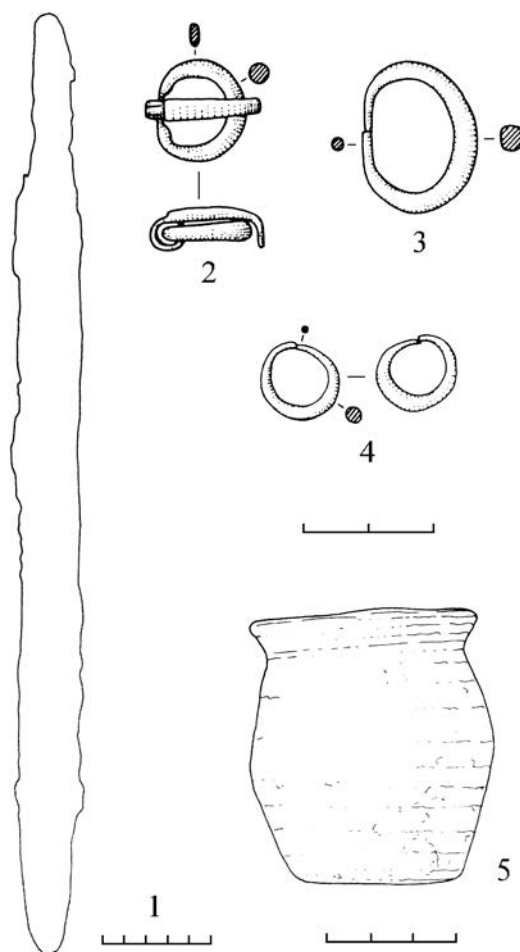


Fig. 6
Przemęczany, Proszowice district
(after GODŁOWSKI 1995.)

6. kép
Przemęczany, Proszowice járás
(GODŁOWSKI 1995. alapján)

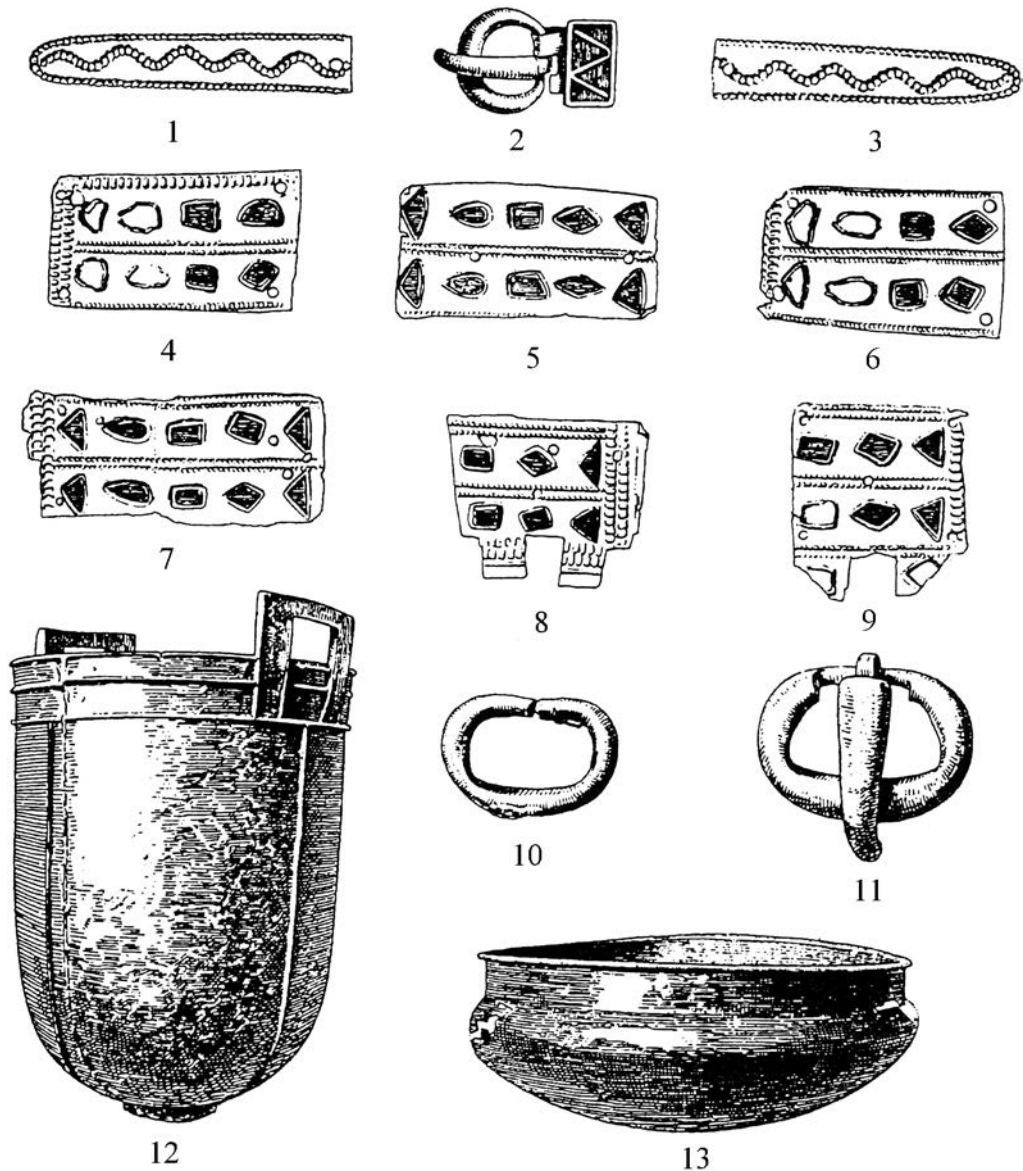


Fig. 7
 Jędrzychowice, Oława district (after KRAUSE 1904.)

7. kęp

Jędrzychowice, Oława járás (KRAUSE 1904. alapján)

rather have served as a reconnaissance of the areas that became their northern neighbourhood once they had taken control over the Carpathian Basin. The question remains as to whether these raids led to the subordination of the inhabitants of the territories north of the Carpathians and Sudetes and if, in a slightly later period, the reign of Attila truly extended ‘as far as the islands on the Ocean’. The archaeological sources mentioned above offer only a limited insight into these issues. As traces of the Huns, one can regard the already mentioned votive finds from Jędrzychowice, Razová and Lichnov. The burial from Przemęczany is undoubtedly the grave of a nomad warrior, as is indicated by the deformation of his skull, although one should remember that the same custom was adopted by the Germans (WERNER 1956., TESCHLER-NICOLA-MITTERÖCKER 2007. 273). The only Hunnic

element in the burial inventory is a golden earring. The above-mentioned finds offer no grounds for establishing their precise chronology. All we may say is that they come from the period spanning circa 70 years between the moment when the Huns settled in the Carpathian Basin and their defeat on the Nedao river. Thus, the finds date generally to the early phase of the Migration Period, as does the warrior burial from Przemęczany. Only two of the finds that revealed connections with the Hunnic state can be given more accurate chronology: the grave from Jakuszowice and the hoard from Świlcza. In the first case, it seems justified to date it no later than the early-430's. This is suggested by stylistic analysis of the artefacts, especially those typical of the Untersiebenbrunn-Sösdala horizon (GODŁOWSKI 1995. 156). The hoard from Świlcza should be dated only slightly later, as indicated by dendrochronological analyses (433 +10). Therefore, contrary to the occasionally expressed views, there is no reason to date the Hun-related finds from the Polish soil to the times of the Attila's reign, except perhaps for the Świlcza hoard.

Unlike the chronology, the interpretation of the discussed finds has been given much more attention. This applies first of all to the grave from Jakuszowice, which for most scholars studying the Huns is the primary or even the only source for reconstructing the relations between the Huns and the population north of the Carpathians. Among the proposed interpretations are such that regard this grave as a Hunnic burial, or a burial of a representative of a higher social class, connected with the Huns, of local or perhaps foreign origin (ŁOWMIAŃSKI 1963. 273, GODŁOWSKI 1985. 155). There is no doubt that the

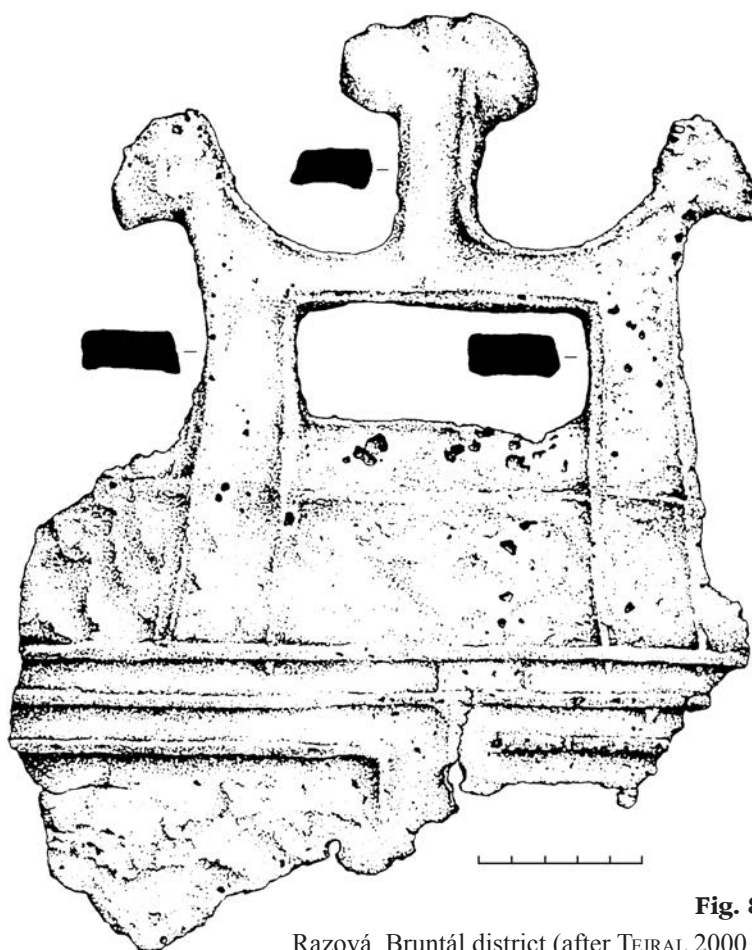


Fig. 8
Razová, Bruntál district (after TEJRAL 2000.)

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Razová, Bruntál járás (TEJRAL 2000. alapján)

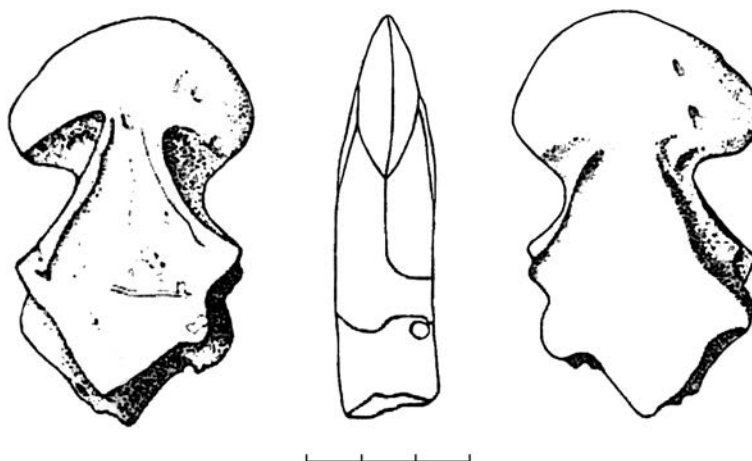


Fig. 9
Lichnov, Bruntál district (after BŘÍZA–JANÁKOVÁ 2010.)

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Lichnov, Bruntál járás (BŘÍZA–JANÁKOVÁ 2010. alapján)

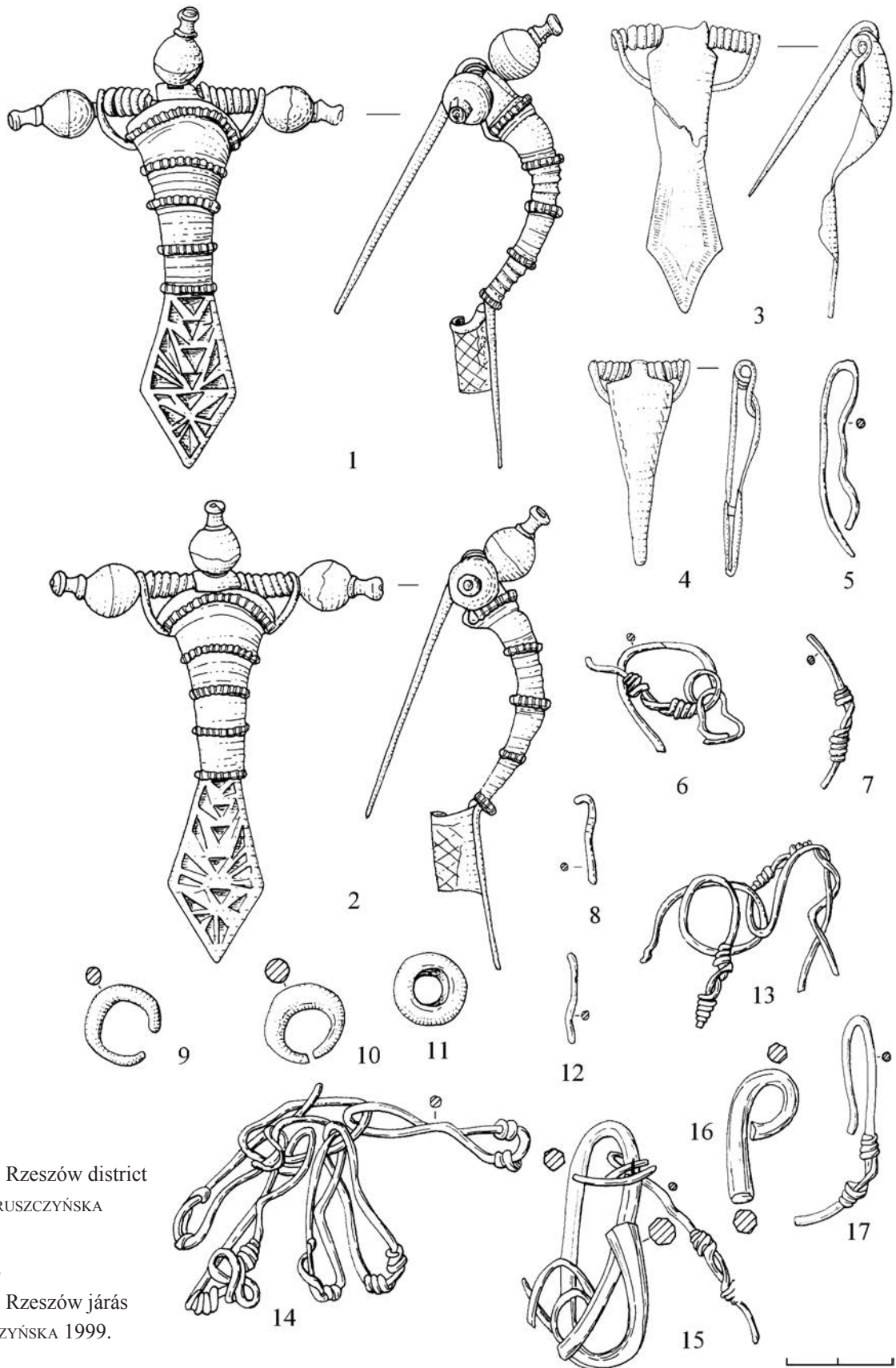


Fig. 10
 Świlcza, Rzeszów district
 (after GRUSZCZYŃSKA
 1999.)

10. kép
 Świlcza, Rzeszów járás
 (GRUSZCZYŃSKA 1999.
 alapján)

Jakuszowice burial belongs to a high-ranking member of the local elite, perhaps a chief of the local centre to which the settlement discovered at Jakuszowice belonged. Of particular importance for understanding the relations between this elite and the Hunnic power structure is a ceremonial, symbolic, gold-covered reflex bow discovered in the grave. According to some scholars (cf. GODŁOWSKI 1985. 155) its presence allows including the deceased among the people that Priscus called ‘*logades*’, who ranked very high in the hierarchy of the poliethnic Hunnic state. The ‘*logades*’ comprised representatives of the elites of various ethnic groups subordinated to the Huns, including the Germans (ALTHEIM 1975. 280–283, WENSKUS 1973. 468, POHL 2002. 112, TYSZKIEWICZ 2004. 124, cf. also ISTVÁNOVITS–KULCSÁR 2006.).

However, there is some doubt as to whether the term ‘*logades*’ appropriately describes the position of the man buried at Jakuszowice and if he can be linked with the group of nobles occupying the highest positions at the court of Hunnic rulers, such as Onegesius (who took care of Attila’s oldest son) or other court officials with no territorial power, often mentioned by Priscus (Fragmenta 8). Moreover, Priscus’ accounts describe the situation at the time of his stay at the court in 449, in the heyday of the centralised state under the authoritarian rule of Attila. The power structure could have been different in the previous period, before the centralised rule encompassed various groups of the Huns in the times of Ruas (HEATHER 2010. 377ff). However, one cannot exclude the possibility that the individual from Jakuszowice might have stayed in the sphere of Hunnic influences as a representative of the local elite from the borderlands of the Hunnic empire.

According to some opinions, the ceremonial, symbolic bow from Jakuszowice suggests that the settlement cluster existing in the early phase of the Migration Period in the western part of Lesser Poland was to some degree related with the Huns or even subordinated to them (GODŁOWSKI 1985. 155, MAĆZYŃSKA 2005. 157). The same has been proposed for Lower Silesia, for settlement in the Bystrzyce-Oława region (GODŁOWSKI 1985. 155, ŁOWMIĄŃSKI 1963. 273, footnote 833). It has been even proposed that a Hunnic ‘enclave’ existed on the Upper Vistula or that this area was ‘occupied’ by the Huns (TEJRAL 2000. 161). It is not possible to reconstruct the character of the relations, or the extent of control that the Huns may have exercised over the community led by the deceased from Jakuszowice or his family. Apart from the ‘Hunnic’ connections suggested by the precious symbolic bow, the relations between Western Lesser Poland and the Huns may be deduced from the inflow, in the first half of the 5th century, of gold coins to the territory north of the Carpatians, in particular on the Upper Vistula (GODŁOWSKI 1985. 155, TEJRAL 2000. 160, BODZEK 2009. 175). From this area comes the hoard of gold solidi discovered at Witów, consisting of probably 11 coins of Theodosius II and Valentinian III (KUNISZ 1985. 245–246, KACZANOWSKI–MARGOS 2002. 346). However, assuming that this inflow was directly connected, including Western Lesser Poland, within the orbit of a large, poliethnic state led by the Huns, it is nevertheless hard to imagine that the contacts with the Huns, or maybe even the subordination to them, were particularly painful for the Przeworsk Culture groups living on the Upper Vistula in the first half of the 5th century. Such an interpretation of the solidi inflow to Lesser Poland suggests that they reflect slightly later contacts than those manifested by the Jakuszowice burial. It is indicated by the structure of these finds (BODZEK 2009. 175). To some extent, this hypothesis is also supported by written accounts which notice a

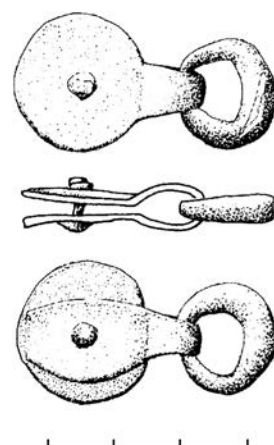


Fig. 11

Podłoziny, Poznań district (after MAKIEWICZ 2003.)

11. kép

Podłoziny, Poznań járás (MAKIEWICZ 2003. alapján)

significant increase of tributes paid to the Huns by the East Roman Empire only after Roman defeats in the 440's.

The question remains open if the Priscus' mention of Attila ruling the lands 'as far as the islands on the Ocean' truly reflects the range of his authority that would reach to the southern coasts of the Baltic Sea. It has been suggested that this fragment from Priscus does not correspond with the real borders of Hun-controlled territory, and the expression was used to emphasise that the reign of Attila reached the limits of the known world (ALTHEIM-HAUSSIG 1958. 35). On the other hand, some historians accept this information as a proof that the power of the Huns reached the Southern Baltic coast (ŁOWMIAŃSKI 1963. 270ff). Of course, we cannot rule out the possibility that the Hunnic raids could have encompassed the northern parts of Poland. However, the picture of the Early Migration Period settlement in the Oder and Vistula basins suggests that the Huns were interested in gaining control over new areas mainly in the most densely populated regions, which presented adequate economic potential. In the period discussed, Western Lesser Poland and the Oława-Bystrzyca region in Lower Silesia were such regions.³

Translated by Piotr M. Godlewski

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³ After finishing this paper the authors learned of the article by T. GRALAK (2010) It is difficult to regard this work as a new, important contribution to the issues discussed in our paper. Gralak's studies are based, among other things, on false data, such as the information about the occurrence of 'mass graves discovered in caves' on the Lesser Poland/Silesia border (GRALAK 2010. 81), or on an interpretation of the connections between Polish finds and other cultural areas which is discordant with the meaning of the archaeological sources to which he refers. These remarks concern, among other things, the Dobrodzień Group and the cemetery at Żerniki Wielkie. These are not the only examples when the hypotheses proposed by T. Gralak and concerning archaeological sources are made to fit the assumptions accepted a priori by the author.

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Hunok lengyel földön – kísérlet az összefoglalásra

Csak kevés olyan írott forrással (Priscos, Jordanes) és hasonlóan szórványos régészeti lelettel (Jakuszowice, Jędrzychowice, Przemęczany, Świlcza) rendelkezünk, amelyek fényt deríthetnének az Odera és Visztula völgye hun ellenőrzésének problémájára. E leletek között a helyi elit képviselőjének jakuszowicei sírja különösen fontos. Az említett források alapján feltételezhető, hogy Lengyelország területe még Attila uralkodása előtt került a hun állam hatókörébe. Ebben az időszakban a hun expanzió határai talán a mai Lengyelország északi részéig kiterjedtek.

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