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FROM PAGANISM TO CHRISTIANITY

BURIAL RITES DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD

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Early Medieval Inhumation Cemeteries in Gródek-Volyn'. Research Status and Future Prospects

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After a delay of more than 50 years the results of the excavation seasons 1952 to 1955 investigating the interior of the hillfort at Gródek (eastern Poland) were published comprehensively in 2018. The defence settlement at Gródek is identifiable with the stronghold of Volyn' known from early chronicles (the earliest written record is for the year 1018).

A significant series of radiocarbon dates obtained recently revised the dating of burials inside the hillfort as 11th to 13th century (from the until recently previously accepted Late Medieval dating). The presence of silk in several burials confirmed the elite status of at least some of the inhabitants of this borderland stronghold. Identified only recently in Gródek, site 29 produced several inhumations of infants datable to the Tribal Period (a chronology confirmed by radiocarbon dates from three different laboratories [Mannheim, Poznań, Zürich]). The findings of the research on Gródek site 29 will come out soon. Archaeological fieldwork carried out at Gródek (and nearby Czermno) for more than a decade has improved our understanding of the Polish-Rus' borderland, including the history of this region in the eighth and ninth centuries.

Keywords: Middle Ages, Polish-Rus' border zone, Gródek, Volyn', inhumation burials, silk, radiocarbon dating.

Introduction

Human occupation of the lower basin of the River Huczwa at its confluence with the River Bug goes back to the Late Palaeolithic Age. There is ample

evidence that this area also attracted settlement during later phases of prehistory and beyond. The origins, chronological phasing and function, but not

less importantly, the political affiliation of the Early Medieval hillfort at Gródek-Volyn' continue as key issues in East-Central European Medieval studies.¹

The study of this area (as often happens with borderlands) has never been free of the political dimension, which needs explaining at more length.²

Gródek-Volyn'. The site and its research history

According to the evidence to hand, the hillfort site at Gródek, extending over about 15 hectares, and comprising the remains of the stronghold, several

associated settlements and cemeteries, was in use in the Tribal (eighth to tenth centuries) and the Early State Period (11th to 13th centuries; Fig. 1). Fieldwalking surveys have confirmed the Medieval occupation of the loess plateau of about 150 hectares, bounded on its west side by a stream, and 'fortified' on its east side by a narrow natural loess formation, the marginal ridge.³ In the Early Medieval period the central, west and southern part of the complex were under settlement, whereas the eastern part was a space dedicated to funerary purposes (site 1C), with burials spanning the Neolithic age and the Early Medieval period.⁴

The site at Gródek has long attracted the attention of archaeologists, and possibly to an even

- 1 M. Wołoszyn, *Europa Środkowo-wschodnia a cywilizacja bizantyńsko-ruska w X–XIII w. Próba interpretacji źródeł archeologicznych*, *Prace Komisji Środkowo-europejskiej* 14, 2006, pp. 8–48; M. Wołoszyn, *Zwischen Gnesen, Krakau und Kiev. Archäologie über frühmittelalterliche polnisch-altrussische Beziehungen und die Gestaltung des polnisch-altrussischen Grenzgebietes = Między Gniezmem, Krakowem a Kijowem. Archeologia o wczesnośredniowiecznych relacjach polsko-ruskich i formowaniu polsko-ruskiego pogranicza*, *Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas: das polnisch-ukrainische Grenzgebiet aus archäologischer Perspektive = U źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej: pogranicze polsko-ukraińskie w perspektywie badań archeologicznych*, *Collectio Archaeologica Ressooviensis* 5, eds. M. Dębiec, M. Wołoszyn, 2007, pp. 177–206; *From Cherven' Towns to Curzon Line: the lands on the Middle Bug during the Middle Ages and the historiographic perspective on the formation of Poland's eastern border, 18th–21st cc. = Od Grodów Czerwieńskich do linii Curzona: dzieje środkowego Pobuża w wiekach średnich oraz postrzeganie formowania się wschodniej granicy Polski w historiografii XVIII–XXI w.*, U *Źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej = Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas* 3, ed. M. Wołoszyn, 2017, pp. 1–2; *The early medieval settlement complex at Gródek upon the Bug River in the light of results from past research (1952–1955). Material evidence = Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy w Gródku nad Bugiem w świetle wyników badań dawnych (1952–1955). Podstawy źródłowe*, U *Źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej = Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas* 4, ed. M. Wołoszyn, 2018. This article was written as part of the project: The Golden Apple of Polish archaeology. Stronghold complexes at Czeremno and Gródek (Cherven' Towns) – chronology and function in the light of past and current research, part 2 (Ministry of Education and Science, Warsaw, NPRH, Project No. 11H 18 0344 86). The official administrative name of the village where the settlement complex discussed in this paper is situated is Gródek. The name originates from a Slavic word for earthen fortifications or strongholds, and is quite a common place name in Poland (cf. Ch. Zschieschang, *Das früh- und hochmittelalterliche Siedlungsumfeld von Trepcza, Czeremno und Gródka im Lichte der Toponomastik. Eine methodische und areale Standortbestimmung = Osadnictwo wokół Trepczy, Czeremna i Gródka we wczesnym średniowieczu okiem językoznawcy. Uwagi metodyczne i analiza przestrzenna*, *From Cherven' Towns to Curzon Line. The lands on the Middle Bug during the Middle Ages and the historiographic perspective on the formation of Poland's eastern border, 18th–21st cc. = Od Grodów Czerwieńskich do linii Curzona. Dzieje środkowego Pobuża w wiekach średnich oraz postrzeganie formowania się wschodniej granicy Polski w historiografii XVIII–XXI w.*, U *Źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej = Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas* 3, 1, ed. M. Wołoszyn, 2017, p. 181). To distinguish the Gródek of interest to us here from other locations of the same name, traditionally the name of the nearby river has been added to that of the village. Consequently, in archaeological literature the locality is known as Gródek Nadbużny, or Gródek nad Bugiem (= Gródek upon the Bug River). In this paper we use the name Gródek.
- 2 As requested by one of the authors of the peer review.
- 3 Rodzik et al. *The early medieval settlement complex at Gródek upon the Bug River – the environmental conditions = Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy w Gródku – uwarunkowania środowiskowe*, *The early medieval settlement complex at Gródek upon the Bug River in the light of results from past research (1952–1955): material evidence = Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy w Gródku nad Bugiem w świetle wyników badań dawnych (1952–1955): podstawy źródłowe*, U *źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej = Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas* 4, ed. M. Wołoszyn, 2018, pp. 139–168.
- 4 T. Dzieńkowski, *Early Medieval settlement in the area of the mouth of the Huczwa river to the Bug river in the light of surface surveys and research excavations, as well as stray finds = Wczesnośredniowieczne osadnictwo w rejonie ujścia Huczwy do Bugu w świetle badań powierzchniowych i wykopaliskowych oraz znalezisk luźnych*, In *The early medieval settlement complex at Gródek upon the Bug River in the light of results from past research (1952–1955). Material evidence = Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy w Gródku nad Bugiem w świetle wyników badań dawnych (1952–1955). Podstawy źródłowe*, U *źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej = Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas* 4, ed. M. Wołoszyn, 2018, pp. 75–138.

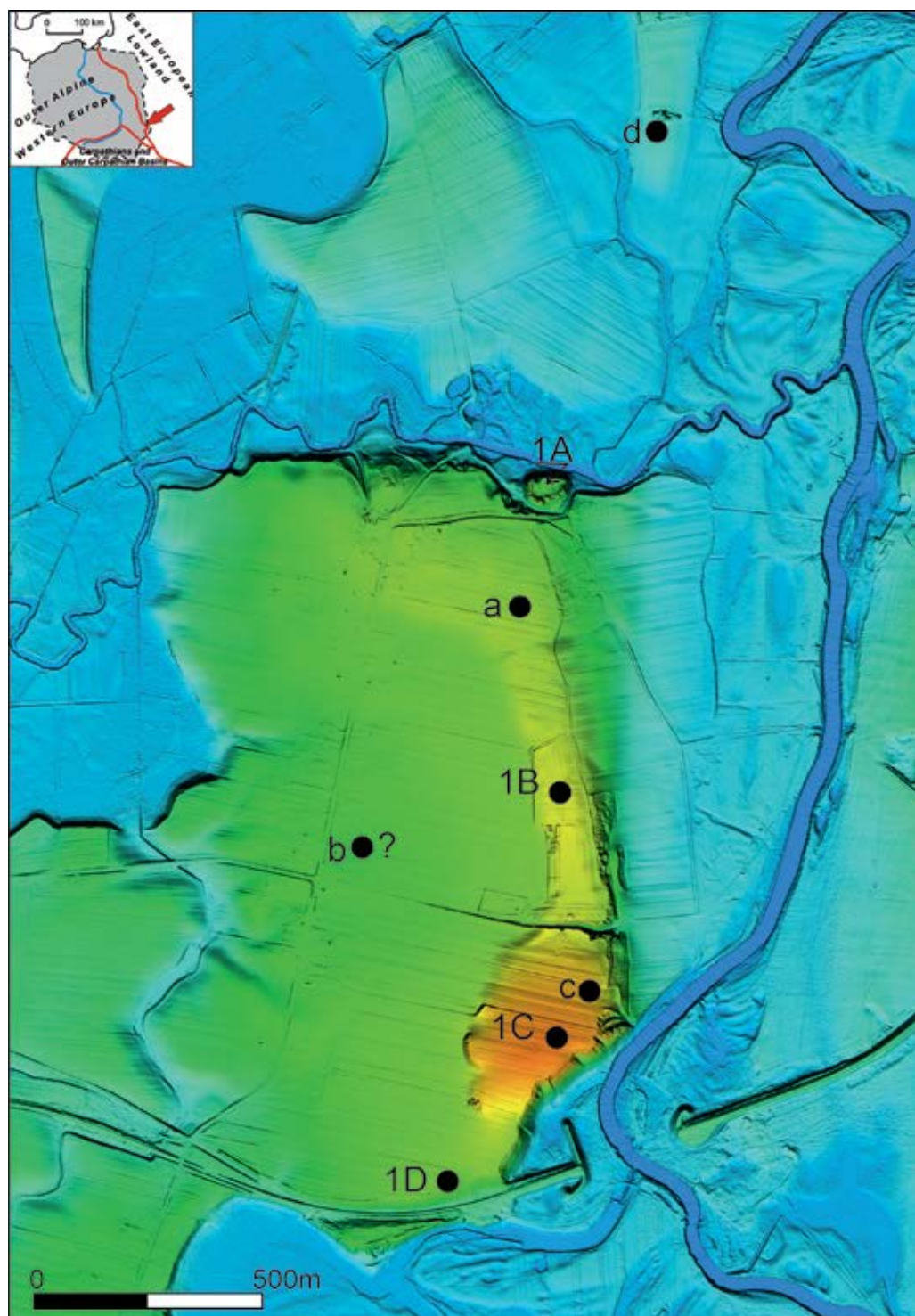


Fig. 1. Gródek. Lidar-derived image of the area at the confluence of the Huczwa and the River Bug, showing the location of archaeological sites at Gródek; compiled by T. Dzieńkowski using the background map of P. Zagórski. Key: 1A – the Early Medieval ‘Zamczysko’ hillfort; 1B–1D – prehistoric sites, a – inhumation cemetery with feature No 9, b – burial mound excavated in the 19th century (tentative location), c – the ‘warrior’ burial, d – the ‘Księżycowa mogiła’ (Moon Mound) burial mound.

greater extent, of historians, who have identified it as the remains of the stronghold of Volyn' recorded in the 'Primary Chronicle' as the site of a clash between Polish and Rus' armies during the campaign of Bolesław Chrobry of Poland against Kiyv in 1018: 'Boleslav attacked Yaroslav with Svyatopolk and his Lyakhs. After collecting Russes, Varangians and Slavs, Yaroslav marched forth against Boleslav and Svyatopolk, and upon arriving at Volyn', they camped on either side of the River Bug.'⁵ Elsewhere in the same chronicle there is a reference to Volhynians, a Slavic tribe said to dwell on the River Bug, where they replaced the Dulebians who used to live there in an earlier age, oppressed by the Avars.⁶ Thus, using the account in the 'Primary Chronicle', we can trace the history of the lands on the River Bug as far back as the seventh or eighth century, much earlier than in other regions of Poland. This was sufficient reason for historians to select the site at Gródek for wide-scale research in the 1950s (cf. the discussion below).

The first to identify Gródek as the stronghold of Volyn' was Jan Długosz, the 15th-century Polish historian, in a geographical introduction to his *Annales*, where we even find a reference to the River

Huczwa: 'with its mouth in the village of Gródek [...] where the ancient castle of Volyn' stood, after which the entire region was called the Volynia land, and now is called the Chelm and Lutsk land.'⁷

Interest in the archaeology of Gródek-Volyn' goes back almost 200 years, to the early 19th century. The first record and interpretations of the site were published by Zorian Dołęga-Chodakowski, a Polish antiquarian, who in 1819 noted the following: 'In 1817, I personally visited this place where the geography of Długosz locates a now defunct stronghold, Volyn'. There, near the place where the Huczwa meets the Bug, is a stronghold on the left-hand side, from which the place received its name of Gorodek, which means Gródek. There is a large rampart surrounding the stronghold, and numerous tombs stretching from behind the River Bug in the east and finishing among the ramparts, in which the history of the stronghold, its defenders, and the name of its unknown conqueror are hidden. It is a beautiful and very easily defendable place.'⁸

Chodakowski is also credited with reporting the discovery and excavation of a burial mound at Gródek rising over an inhumation burial furnished

5 *The Russian Primary chronicle*. Laurentian Text. Translated and edited by Samuel Hazzard Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor. Cambridge–Massachusetts, 1953, a. 6526 [1018], 132.

6 *The Russian Primary chronicle*. Laurentian Text. Translated and edited by Samuel Hazzard Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, Cambridge–Massachusetts, 1953, pp. 55–56.

7 Original version: 'Item Huczew cuius fons in silvis Grodek ville Podhorcze, hostia in villa Grodek, ubi olim antiquitas castrum Wolhin, a quo universa terra Wolinska appellabatur, que nunc Chelmensis et Luczensis nominatur'; cf. *Ioannis Dlugossi. Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*, Libri I–II, ed. Jan Dąbrowski, Varsaviae, 1964, liber I, p. 84; for an analysis of the written evidence relating to Gródek, see A. Poppe, G. Wołyń, Z zagadnień osadnictwa wczesnośredniowiecznego na pograniczu polsko-ruskim, *Studia Wczesnośredniowieczne* 4, 1958, pp. 227–300; for the earliest cartographic evidence, see A. Janeczek, The Landscape of the Region around Gródek (Former Stronghold Volhyn') on Early Maps = *Krajobraz okolic Gródka (dawnego grodu Wołyń) w świetle dawnych map, The Early Medieval Settlement Complex at Gródek upon the Bug River in the Light of Results from Past Research (1952–1955) = Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy w Gródku nad Bugiem w świetle wyników badań dawnych (1952–1955)*, U źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej = Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas 4, ed. M. Wołoszyn, 2018, pp. 169–213.

8 Dołęga Chodakowski Z., Razyskaniya kasatel'no Russkoj istorii, *Vestnik Evropy*, M. Kachenovskij (ed.), No. 20, Oktjabr', Sankt-Peterburg, 1819, pp. 277–302; on Dołęga-Chodakowski, see E. Musin, M. Wołoszyn, The birth of a myth: the first identification of Cherven' and description of the hillfort at Czeremno and its hinterland in 19th century accounts = *Narodziny mitu: pierwsza identyfikacja grodu Czerwień, opis grodziska w Czeremnie I jego zaplecza w relacjach z XIX wieku, From Cherven' Towns to Curzon Line. The lands on the Middle Bug during the Middle Ages and the historiographic perspective on the formation of Poland's eastern border, 18th–21st cc. = Od Grodów Czerwieńskich do linii Curzona. Dzieje środkowego Pobuża w wiekach średnich oraz postrzeganie formowania się wschodniej granicy Polski w historiografii XVIII–XXI w.*, U źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej = Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas 3, 1, ed. M. Wołoszyn, 2017, pp. 385–430.

with a finger-ring, mentioned at a later date by W. Antoniewicz and S. Nosek.⁹ More research followed only after nearly a century, carried out by qualified archaeologists. The area at Gródek and Husynne was studied comprehensively through a fieldwalking project conducted in 1921 by M. Drewko, the Monuments Conservator for the Lublin Region.¹⁰ Using the information in his report several archaeological sites from different chronological periods were identified, based on the conclusions of M. Drewko from his observations of the local relief forms, the presence of ramparts, and archaeological objects: 1) the stronghold of Volyn', a large hill: 'The hillfort lies to the south of the village and has the form of an oval, with its longer diameter aligned north-south. As for the stronghold itself [...] we failed to confirm the presence of ramparts [...] The site of the ancient stronghold of Volyn' produced a large scatter of potsherds [...] ornamented with parallel lines known from hillfort pottery.'¹¹ Other finds mentioned by Drewko: 'a bead made of stone, a fragment of worked bone with ornamentation of concentric rings'; 2) older occupation on the hill, documented by the discovery of a pottery kiln, its most likely attribution to *the Neolithic*; 3) ramparts and a ditch: 'today, the whole village of Gródek is surrounded on its west side by a long, double bank and ditch.'; 4) the stronghold known locally as *Zamczysko*, meaning 'castle ruins' in Polish 'The rampart leads to a small hillfort on the bank of the Huczwa

called "Zamczysko".' 5) a burial mound: 'Found in the meadows opposite the "Castle" is a solitary barrow some five metres in height and some 80 metres in circumference at the base'; 6) burial mounds on the hill and in the village of Gródek *near the Orthodox church* containing 'human skeletons with ornaments at their temples, S-shaped earrings'.

The findings of M. Drewko were confirmed by later research; the remains described under point 1 and 2 were listed as Gródek, site 1C; as for the others, point 4 must obviously be the hillfort (site 1A), and point 5 the burial mound in the village of Husynne (site 1). The follow-up excavation of the 'double ramparts' mentioned by M. Drewko made in 1952 (point 3) did not identify any traces of timber remains, and a small number of objects identified this feature as Early Modern.¹² The burial mounds located by Drewko in the village (point 6) were not recognised. According to a map drawn up by Z. Rajewski, they used to be near the graveyard of an Orthodox church, in the south area of site 1B.¹³ Similarly, the location of the burial mound dug up in the 19th century, recorded as site 10, can no longer be identified (the number assigned by the Cherven' Towns Research Unit.¹⁴

A large-scale study of archaeology in the Lublin region, including the antiquities of Gródek, was undertaken in connection with the millennial research endorsed by the State and the Party, and launched in the late 1950s, pending the millennial anniversary

- 9 W. Antoniewicz, *Archeologia Polski. Zarys czasów przedhistorycznych i wczesnodziejowych ziem Polski*. Warszawa, 1928, p. 244; S. Nosek, *Materiały do badań nad historią starożytną i wczesnośredniowieczną międzyrzecza Wisły i Bugu*, Annales UMCS F 6. Lublin, 1957, pp. 11, 44, 327, 368, Pl. XLVII, 2.
- 10 M. Drewko, Sprawozdanie z działalności Państw. Urzędu Konserwatorskiego na Okręg Lubelski. *Wiadomości Archeologiczne* 6, 1921, pp. 180–184.
- 11 M. Drewko, Sprawozdanie z działalności..., 1921, pp. 182–183.
- 12 A. Gieysztor, Prace badawcze na obszarze Grodów Czerwieńskich, *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 60, 1953, p. 307. Apparently, the excavations focused on the natural marginal ridge cf. Rodzik *et al.* *The early medieval settlement...*, 2018, pp. 139–168.
- 13 Z. Rajewski, Sprawozdanie z badań na Grodach Czerwieńskich w 1954 r., *Sprawozdania Archeologiczne* 2, 1955, Fig. 6.
- 14 H. Zoll-Adamikowa, *Wczesnośredniowieczne cmentarzyska szkieletowe Małopolski*, T. I, *Źródła*, Prace Komisji Archeologicznej 6, 1966, p. 51.

of Mieszko I's baptism in 1966.¹⁵ Excavations were concurrently carried out at Gródek at several locations like sites 1A, 1B, 1C, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, by the Cherven' Towns Research Unit appointed in 1952.¹⁶ The largest in scale were the excavation campaigns focused on the hillfort and its catchment, i.e. the stronghold and settlements in its immediate vicinity.¹⁷ The main

fieldwork on sites 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D=6, 2, 3, 4, 5 (catalogue nos. 1-3, 43, 32, 33, 47, 55, 9, 6, 7, 8) was carried out from 1952 to 1955, followed by more fieldwork in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.¹⁸ Nearly half of the area of the hillfort (site 1A) was excavated, identifying diverse features, some of them prehistoric and ancient, but mostly Early Medieval: a settlement from

- 15 A. Gieysztor, Prace badawcze na obszarze Grodów Czerwieńskich, *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 60, 1953; M. Dembińska, Grody Czerwieńskie w r. 1953, *Wiadomości Archeologiczne* 20, no. 1, 1954; J. Kuśnierz, The history of the research on the early medieval settlement complex at Gródek upon the Bug River, *The early medieval settlement complex at Gródek upon the Bug River in the light of results from past research (1952–1955): material evidence = Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy w Gródku nad Bugiem w świetle wyników badań dawnych (1952–1955): podstawy źródłowe*, U źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej = Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas 4, ed. M. Wołoszyn, 2018a., pp. 217–238; J. Kuśnierz, Organisation and the course of the research on the early medieval settlement complex at Gródek upon the Bug River in the years 1952–1955, *The early medieval settlement complex at Gródek upon the Bug River in the light of results from past research (1952–1955): material evidence = Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy w Gródku nad Bugiem w świetle wyników badań dawnych (1952–1955): podstawy źródłowe*, U źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej = Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas 4, ed. M. Wołoszyn, 2018b, pp. 239–254; J. Kuśnierz, Gródek upon the Bug River, site 1A. The results of the excavations in the years 1952–1955. Residential area. Immovable finds, *The early medieval settlement complex at Gródek upon the Bug River in the light of results from past research (1952–1955): material evidence = Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy w Gródku nad Bugiem w świetle wyników badań dawnych (1952–1955): podstawy źródłowe*, U źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej = Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas 4, ed. M. Wołoszyn, 2018c, pp. 297–552; J. Kuśnierz, Gródek upon the Bug River, site 1A. The results of the excavations in the years 1952–1955. Residential area. Artifacts (with the exception of coins). In *The early medieval settlement complex at Gródek upon the Bug River in the light of results from past research (1952–1955): material evidence = Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy w Gródku nad Bugiem w świetle wyników badań dawnych (1952–1955): podstawy źródłowe*, U źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej = Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas 4, ed. M. Wołoszyn, 2018d, pp. 553–660; J. Kuśnierz, Gródek upon the Bug River, site 1A. The results of the excavations in the years 1952–1955. Cemetery at the ward of the stronghold, *The early medieval settlement complex at Gródek upon the Bug River in the light of results from past research (1952–1955): material evidence = Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy w Gródku nad Bugiem w świetle wyników badań dawnych (1952–1955): podstawy źródłowe*, U źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej = Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas 4, ed. M. Wołoszyn, 2018e, pp. 699–734; M. Wołoszyn, Die frühmittelalterlichen orthodoxen Devotionalien in Polen und die Entstehung der ältesten Ostgrenze Polens. Forschungsgeschichte und Forschungsperspektiven, *Rome, Constantinople and Newly-Converted Europe. Archaeological and Historical Evidence*, U źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej = Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas 1:1, eds. M. Salamon, M. Wołoszyn, A. Musin, P. Špehar, 2012, pp. 225–290; M. Wołoszyn, Grody Czerwieńskie i problem wschodniej granicy monarchii pierwszych Piastów. Stan i perspektywy badań, *Studia nad dawną Polską*, 2013, pp. 85–116; on the subject of millennial research, see K. Reichenbach, Millionen für's Millennium: Finanzierung und Ausstattung der Forschungen zu den Anfängen des polnischen Staates 1949–1953, *Die Spur des Geldes in der Prähistorischen Archäologie. Mäzene–Förderer–Förderstrukturen*, eds. S. Grunwald, U. Halle, D. Maharski, K. Reichenbach, 2016, pp. 259–280; K. Reichenbach, The Research Program on the Beginnings of the Polish State between Polish Western Thought and Historical Materialism: Structural Developments and Political Reorientation, *Przełęcz Archeologiczna* 65: 2017, pp. 19–34; A. Szczerba, *Kierownictwo Badań nad Początkami Państwa Polskiego (1949–1953). Geneza-działalność-znaczenie*, 2021.
- 16 M. Dembińska, Grody Czerwieńskie..., 1954, p. 94; J. Kuśnierz The history of the research..., 2018a; J. Kuśnierz, Organisation and the course..., 2018b; T. Dzieńkowski, *Early Medieval Settlement in the Chełm Land = Wczesnośredniowieczne osadnictwo ziemi chełmskiej*, U źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej = Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas 7, 2021, pp. 39–42; excavations led by the archaeologists K. Jażdżewski and Z. Rajewski; A. Gieysztor, Prace badawcze na obszarze Grodów Czerwieńskich, *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 60, 1953, 302f.
- 17 A. Poppe Gród Wołyń..., 1958, pp. 227–300; J. Kuśnierz, Historia i stan badań latopisowych grodów Czerwień i Wołyń oraz ich okolic, *Zamojsko-Wołyńskie Zeszyty Muzealne* 1, 2003; J. Kuśnierz, Średniowieczne cmentarzysko szkieletowe na majdanie grodziska w Gródku (stan. 1A), pow. hrubieszowski, woj. lubelskie, w świetle zachowanej dokumentacji badań archeologicznych Komisji Grodów Czerwieńskich (1952–1955), *In campis, silvis... et urbe. Średniowieczny obrządek pogrzebowy na pograniczu polsko-ruskim*, Collectio Archaeologica Ressoviensis 14, eds. S. Cygan, M. Glinianowicz, P. N. Kotowicz, 2011; J. Kuśnierz, The history of the research..., 2018a; J. Kuśnierz, Organisation and the course..., 2018b; J. Kuśnierz, Gródek upon the Bug River..., 2018c; J. Kuśnierz, Gródek upon the Bug River..., 2018d; J. Kuśnierz, Gródek upon the Bug River... 2018e; M. Wołoszyn, Die frühmittelalterlichen orthodoxen..., 2012, pp. 225–290.
- 18 T. Dzieńkowski, Early Medieval settlement..., 2018, pp. 75–138.

the ninth or tenth century, a stronghold from the ninth (?) tenth/eleventh (?) to the 13th century, and a cemetery referred at that time to the 13th to the 18th century. Sites 2–6 yielded the remains of open settlements from the eighth to the 13th century.¹⁹

Several seasons of fieldwork at Gródek site 1C confirmed the presence of mostly Neolithic occupation (Funnel Beaker culture), and, at a later date, of burials attributed to several prehistoric archaeological cultures (Corded Ware, Lublin-Volyn, Strzyżów and Lusatian cultures), and a cemetery from the Roman Period.²⁰ Jan Kowalczyk suggested that some burials could be Medieval; this was confirmed in 1983 by the discovery of a warrior burial.²¹

The archaeological research done within the millennial programme at Gródek ran until 1955. Its results were published in several reports, discussing in detail mostly the results of the 1954 and 1955 excavation seasons.²² However, a comprehensive assessment, analysis and publication of the excavated materials was made only in 2018 within the project The Golden Apple of Polish Archaeology.²³ This is not to say that archaeological fieldwork and the research into the Medieval history of the region on the Huczwa and Bug rivers stopped altogether in 1955,²⁴ but the ambitious research project had run aground, with obvious consequences for our understanding of Gródek-Volyn'. This also needs some explanation.

19 J. Kuśnierz, The history of the research..., 2018a; J. Kuśnierz, Organisation and the course..., 2018b.

20 J. Kowalczyk, Osada kultury pucharów lejkowatych w miejsc. Gródek Nadbużny, pow. Hrubieszów, w świetle badań 1954 roku, *Wiadomości Archeologiczne* 23, no. 1, 1956, pp. 23–48; J. Kowalczyk, Badania osady kultury pucharów lejkowatych w Gródku Nadbużnym, pow. Hrubieszów, przeprowadzone w 1955 r., *Wiadomości Archeologiczne* 24, no. 1–2, 1957, pp. 37–52; W. Gumiński, Gródek Nadbużny. Osada kultury pucharów lejkowatych, *Polskie Badania Archeologiczne* 28, 1989; A. Kokowski, *Gródek nad Bugiem. Cmentarzysko grupy małopolskiej*, t. 1–3, 1993.

21 J. Kowalczyk, Prace badawcze w 1957 r. osady kultury pucharów lejkowatych w Gródku Nadbużnym, pow. Hrubieszów, *Wiadomości Archeologiczne* 25, no. 4, 1958, p. 317; B. Chudzińska et al., Burial at site 1C in Gródek upon the Bug River. The results of the excavations in the year 1983, *The early medieval settlement complex at Gródek upon the Bug River in the light of results from past research (1952–1955): material evidence = Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy w Gródku nad Bugiem w świetle wyników badań dawnych (1952–1955): podstawy źródłowe*, U źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej = Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas 4, ed. M. Wołoszyn, 2018, pp. 889–930.

22 J. Gąssowski, Konferencja w sprawie Grodów Czerwieńskich w Hrubieszowie (25–27 IX 1952 r.), *Sprawozdania P.M.A.* 5, 1953, pp. 99–103; M. Dembińska, Grody Czerwieńskie..., 1954, pp. 94–95; Z. Rajewski, O metodzie terenowych badań wczesnośredniowiecznych wiejskich zespołów osadniczych, *Wiadomości Archeologiczne* 22, no. 2, 1955, 1956, pp. 49–53; L. Rauhut, Sprawozdanie z badań w 1954 r. nad konstrukcją wału grodowego w Gródku Nadbużnym, *Sprawozdania Archeologiczne* 2, 1956a, pp. 65–68; L. Rauhut, Średniowieczne cmentarzysko szkieletowe na stanowisku 1A w Gródku Nadbużnym, *Sprawozdania Archeologiczne* 2, 1956b, pp. 78–81; M. Gądzikiewicz, Sprawozdanie tymczasowe z badań prowadzonych w 1954 r. na stanowisku 2 (Podgrodzie) w Gródku Nadbużnym, pow. Hrubieszów, *Sprawozdania Archeologiczne* 2, 1956, pp. 69–74; W. Bender et al., Badania w Gródku Nadbużnym w pow. hrubieszowskim w 1955 r., *Sprawozdania Archeologiczne* 3 (1957): 1957, pp. 169–189.

23 *The early medieval settlement complex at Gródek upon the Bug River in the light of results from past research (1952–1955). Material evidence = Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy w Gródku nad Bugiem w świetle wyników badań dawnych (1952–1955). Podstawy źródłowe*, U źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej=Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas 4, ed. M. Wołoszyn, 2018.

24 The first contribution to summarize the current understanding of settlement patterns in the region was published by S. Nosek in 1957 – a catalogue of sites in the region between the Vistula and the Bug, some of them of early medieval date. H. Zoll-Adamikowa followed with a discussion of burial mounds and inhumation cemeteries in and around Gródek in her studies addressing the funerary rite among the Slavs (*Wczesnośredniowieczne cmentarzyska...*, 1966; H. Zoll-Adamikowa, *Wczesnośredniowieczne cmentarzyska szkieletowe Małopolski*. T. II, *Analiza*, Prace Komisji Archeologicznej 11, 1971; H. Zoll-Adamikowa, *Wczesnośredniowieczne cmentarzyska ciałopalne Słowian na terenie Polski*, T. I, *Źródła*, 1975; H. Zoll-Adamikowa, *Wczesnośredniowieczne cmentarzyska ciałopalne Słowian na terenie Polski*. T. II, *Analiza*, wnioski. 1979). More research in the funerary practices was published by M. Florek (M. Florek, Obrządek pogrzebowy w międzyrzeczu Wieprza i Bugu we wczesnym średniowieczu, *Pogranicze polsko-ruskie we wczesnym średniowieczu na Lubelszczyźnie*, Skarby z Przeszłości 10, ed. E. Banasiewicz–Szykuła, 2009, pp. 53–72) and T. Dzieńkowski (T. Dzieńkowski, Wczesnośredniowieczne cmentarzysko szkieletowe i późnośredniowieczna osada wiejska, *Wielokulturowe stanowisko 3 w Czerniczynie w świetle badań archeologicznych w latach 1981–1985*, ed. A. Hyrchała, 2017, pp. 94–121). Archaeological fieldwork and monitoring carried out on site 29/205 at Gródek (E. Prusicka-Kołcon *Sprawozdanie z badań interwencyjnych na stan. 29/205 w miejscowości Gródek Nadbużny, gm. Hrubieszów podczas budowy sieci wodociągowej z przyłączami*, Zamość, typescript 2006) identified features dating to the 12th–13th century, and a large assemblage of archaeological objects associated with the occupation of this site, identified with some confidence as a fragment of the stronghold suburb. Some inhumation burials uncovered in 2017 suggest the presence of a cemetery from the early medieval period.

Research in the Polish-Rus' borderlands at the time of Polish-Soviet friendship, or why the research at Gródek came to grief

The project of millennial research intended to celebrate the 1,000th anniversary of Poland's statehood made a lasting imprint on our understanding of Piast Poland (966 to 1370). The medievalist Alexander Gieysztor, who headed the Millennial Research Committee, stressed the need to extend the research to every region of Poland, rather than focusing on Greater Poland alone, the home of the ruling Piast dynasty. He drew attention to the need to study the Polish-Rus' borderlands. And indeed, between 1952 and 1955 fieldwork projects were launched on sites near the eastern border of Poland, at Czeremo, Szaśiadka and Gródek.²⁵ The research at Gródek in particular received generous state funding, and the fieldwork had the support of the Polish army. And yet when we assess the number of publications devoted to the strongholds of Early Piast Poland, published analyses of sites in Greater Poland, Silesia and Pomerania obviously outnumber those reporting on their counterparts investigated to the east of the River Vistula.

Out of several factors to blame for this situation, one is the historical, political and cultural difference between western and eastern parts of Poland, with the region east of the Vistula, referred to as Poland 'B', less industrialised, with fewer larger urban

centres, universities and railway connections.²⁶ If we made a list of early Medieval archaeological sites dated with the C14 method, or with skeletal remains subjected to aDNA studies, also in terms of archaeological recognition the region centred on Poznań could be seen to represent Poland 'A', whereas the lands on the River San and the Bug are Poland 'B'.

Further reasons for this western bias of Polish Medieval studies came with the 'hard reality' which came in 1945. The Second Polish Republic used to have five major academic centres: 1) Warsaw; 2) Poznań; 3) Cracow; 4) Lwów; and 5) Wilno. Of these, only the two last were the east of the Vistula. When L'viv and Vilnius were incorporated into the Soviet Union on Stalin's decisions of 1939/45, for Poland this meant the loss of 40% of its academic/culture potential. Like all totalitarian regimes, People's Poland was a strongly centralised country, and nearly every government institution was in its capital city of Warsaw, with a lesser role played by Cracow, Poznań and Wrocław (formerly Breslau). Rzeszów, Lublin and Białystok, major urban centres in eastern Poland, in terms of potential, were a far cry from Lwów and Wilno.²⁷

The fundamental problem of the Polish communists was the total lack of acceptance of the public for their rule (they were perceived as Soviet agents). By financing research into the origins of Polish statehood, communist Warsaw hoped to come to a better

25 For a map of sites investigated in the 1950s, see A. Szczerba *Kierownictwo Badań nad Początkami Państwa Polskiego (1949–1953). Geneza-działalność-znaczenie*, 2021, Fig. 3.

26 P. Grata, Poland A and Poland B – Developmental Disproportions on Polish Lands in the 19th and 20th c. (Prior to 1939), *Analecta Archaeologica Ressoviensia* 13, 2018.

27 This periphery status was shared across the border in the Soviet Union by western regions of Belarus' and Ukraine. As newly annexed territories they were treated with suspicion. An additional role was played by the universal centralism of the USSR. Leo Klejn aptly described the impact of this situation had for archaeology: 'Foreign colleagues visiting Leningrad/St Petersburg might have gained the impression that they [...] had landed in the archaeological capital of the world: they were surrounded by archaeologists of great renown; in a stay of a month, they could attend a scholarly archaeological lecture every day, or even several in a day [...]. It was enough, however, to go to the provinces, and in any large town, if it was not the capital of a Soviet republic, you would find either a pitiful handful of archaeologists or none at all. [...] The 'capital' effect and the contrast with the provinces are a product of the excessive centralization of the USSR'; cf. L. Klein *Soviet Archaeology: Trends, Schools, and History*, 2012, pp. 4–5.

understanding with the citizens of People's Poland.²⁸ Not unexpectedly, the communists had no interest in examining the circumstances of the loss by Poland of parts of its pre-1939 territory to their Soviet 'ally', preferring instead to focus on the acquisition by the Polish state of Silesia and Pomerania (the so-called Recovered Territories). As a result, research after the Second World War tended to focus on the western part of Poland. This policy of the Polish authorities coincided with the sentiment of millions of Poles, who entered the Postwar reality with severe trauma and enmity (no to say loathing) for Germans and things German.²⁹ It was easy to present the study of Slavic culture in Silesia and Pomerania as a form of defence of Poland against the German *Drang nach Osten*, or outright, as retaliation for Nazi atrocities. The war trauma is evident in sentiments expressed by more than one Polish archaeologist; with a son murdered in Auschwitz, Józef Kostrzewski could refer to a Medieval Gestapo in his studies.³⁰ Similarly, Tadeusz Reyman, an archaeologist associated with Cracow, badly wounded during the German invasion of Poland in September 1939, and held captive in a German POW camp, found that the study of Medieval Slavic hillforts had a special appeal to Polish archaeology. 'The study of Arkona, the centre of Medieval Slavic worship, on the ancient Slavic island of Rügen, ought

to become the object of joint study by prehistorians from all the Slavic countries.'³¹

Another thorn in the side of Polish archaeology was ill feeling between Poles and Ukrainians. During the Second World War, units of OUN/UPA (the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists/Ukrainian Insurrectionary Army) carried out ethnic cleansing in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia. Communist Regime of Poland responded after the war by organising mass deportations of Ukrainians from southeast Poland (Operation Vistula) to Ukraine and to the 'Recovered Territories' in western Poland.³²

In this situation, Polish-Ukrainian research projects, especially those centred on the Polish-Rus' borderlands, could not be viable. The communist authorities in Poland deliberately stressed the image of Ukrainians as incorrigible nationalists, hostile towards their neighbours.

For obvious reasons, any study made of Poland's eastern border entailed contacts with Soviet comrades and the need to adjust one's views to their interpretation of the past. For many researchers, this was simply unbearable.³³ Consequently, with the first signs of the Thaw after Stalin's death, Polish researchers went back to archaeological sites in Gdańsk, in Silesia or Greater Poland.

28 M. Zaremba, *Communism – Legitimacy – Nationalism: Nationalist Legitimization of the Communist Regime in Poland*. *Studies in History, Memory and Politics* 20, 2019.

29 M. Zaremba, *Entangled in Fear Everyday Terror in Poland, 1944–1947*, 2022.

30 M. Wołoszyn, J. Kostrzewski, *Germanische Altertumskunde Online. Kulturgeschichte bis ins Frühmittelalter – Archäologie, Geschichte, Philologie*, 2017.

31 T. Reyman, Na nowych torach, *Z Otchłani Wieków* 14, 1939–1945, pp. 3–4; see also Z. Kobyliński, G. Rutkowska, Propagandist use of history and archaeology in justification of Polish rights to the 'Recovered Territories' after World War II', *Archeologia Polona*, 43, 2005; Z. Kurnatowska, S. Kurnatowski, Der Einfluss nationalistischer Ideen auf die mitteleuropäische Urgeschichtsforschung, *Deutsche Ostforschung und polnische Westforschung im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft und Politik: Disziplinen im Vergleich*, *Deutsche Ostforschung und Polnische Westforschung* 1, eds. J. M. Piskorski, J. Hackmann, R. Jaworski, 2002, 100.

32 G. Motyka, *From the Volhynian Massacre to Operation Vistula The Polish-Ukrainian Conflict 1943–1947*, 2023.

33 In 1951 Poland had 'agreed' to a Polish-Soviet border adjustment treaty and surrendered a part of its territories on the Bug river, receiving in exchange the region around Ustrzyki Dolne. There is evidence that in 1952 Moscow had proposed further – voluntary as always – transfer of its lands. It feels tempting to link anxiety over border adjustments with the discontinuation of archaeological research, the impact of such apprehension was presumably minor (although this issue could be made clear by the study of archival records in Moscow, at present unfeasible); cf. *From Cherven' Towns to Curzon Line: the lands on the Middle Bug during the Middle Ages and the historiographic perspective on the formation of Poland's eastern border, 18th–21st cc.* = *Od Grodów Czerwieńskich do linii Curzona: dzieje środkowego Pobuża w wiekach średnich oraz postrzeganie formowania się wschodniej granicy Polski w historiografii XVIII–XXI w.*, U Źródła Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej = Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas 3:1–2, ed. M. Wołoszyn, 2017.

The above review of reasons responsible for the foundering of the research in the Polish-Rus' borderland by the middle of the 1950s is nicely complemented by the recollections of Konrad Jażdżewski, one of the greatest Polish archaeologists of the 20th century. The passage below explains better than all scholarly analyses the lack of enthusiasm of Polish archaeology for these studies: 'Between mid-August and end of September 1952, somewhat against my will, I took part in an original archaeological venture as a participant in the Cherven' Towns research [...] the committee in charge of the Millennial research (Kierownictwo Badań nad Początkami Państwa Polskiego) had exerted pressure to have me join this campaign. Reportedly, the matter had been conceived as an element of cooperation between Polish and Soviet archaeologists in the study of mutual Polish-Rus' relations in the early Medieval period. I was given to understand that non-participation in this venture might be considered as boycotting the cooperation [...] From my stay at Gródek Nadbużny, I have a recollection of seeing from an elevated vantage point, the heights of the plateaus, installations and efforts made to secure the Molotov-Ribbentrop and Yalta frontier between the Polish People's Republic and the USSR running the length of the River Bug. What strange thoughts and feelings one had looking at this strip of empty ground on the Soviet side, each day harrowed anew to make it easier to detect any footprints of people escaping from the 'leading socialist' state to the Polish side, very poorly guarded [...] I was told that in a long while there had been just one case where someone from Poland escaped to the Soviet side. The fugitive was interrogated and found to be mentally ill. Returned to Poland, he reportedly resumed his attempts to make his way east with a

maniacal obstinacy. Who knows, perhaps what drove him was an overpowering nostalgia for his native parts from which he had been cut off as a result of the fourth partition of Poland made in September 1939?'³⁴

The huge backlog in the study of the archaeology at Gródek also applies to the grave finds. Human bones from the 1950s fieldwork at Gródek found passed to Wrocław, and most of them perished in the great flood of 1997. Silk textiles recovered in the 1950s would 're-surface' in Łódź only in 2016!

The aim of our [project] team is to make a comprehensive analysis of materials from this early research, and to confirm these past findings with current fieldwork. One of the most important categories are sepulchral finds.

Gródek as burial place

As was noted earlier, inhumation cemeteries were identified at several locations at Gródek: inside the hillfort (site 1A), in the multi-period site 1C; and finally, several graves discovered in 2017 were recorded as site 29.

The early Medieval cemetery inside the stronghold was investigated over four seasons from 1952 to 1955.³⁵ Of the 466 graves excavated at the time, two graves contained a double burial, bringing the total up to 469 burials (Fig. 2–4). Most of the skeletons rested within layer II (late occupation phase), some lay deeper down, within layer III (early occupation phase), where they intruded on features pre-dating the middle of the 13th century; the graves found at the greatest depth cut into the natural soil. Some burials had been disturbed by later graves, the ruins of a 17th or 18th-century manor house and infantry

³⁴ K. Jażdżewski, *Pamiętniki. Wspomnienia polskiego archeologa z XX wieku*, Łódź 1995, pp. 266–267.

³⁵ J. Kuśnierz, *Gródek upon the Bug River...*, 2018e, pp. 699–734.

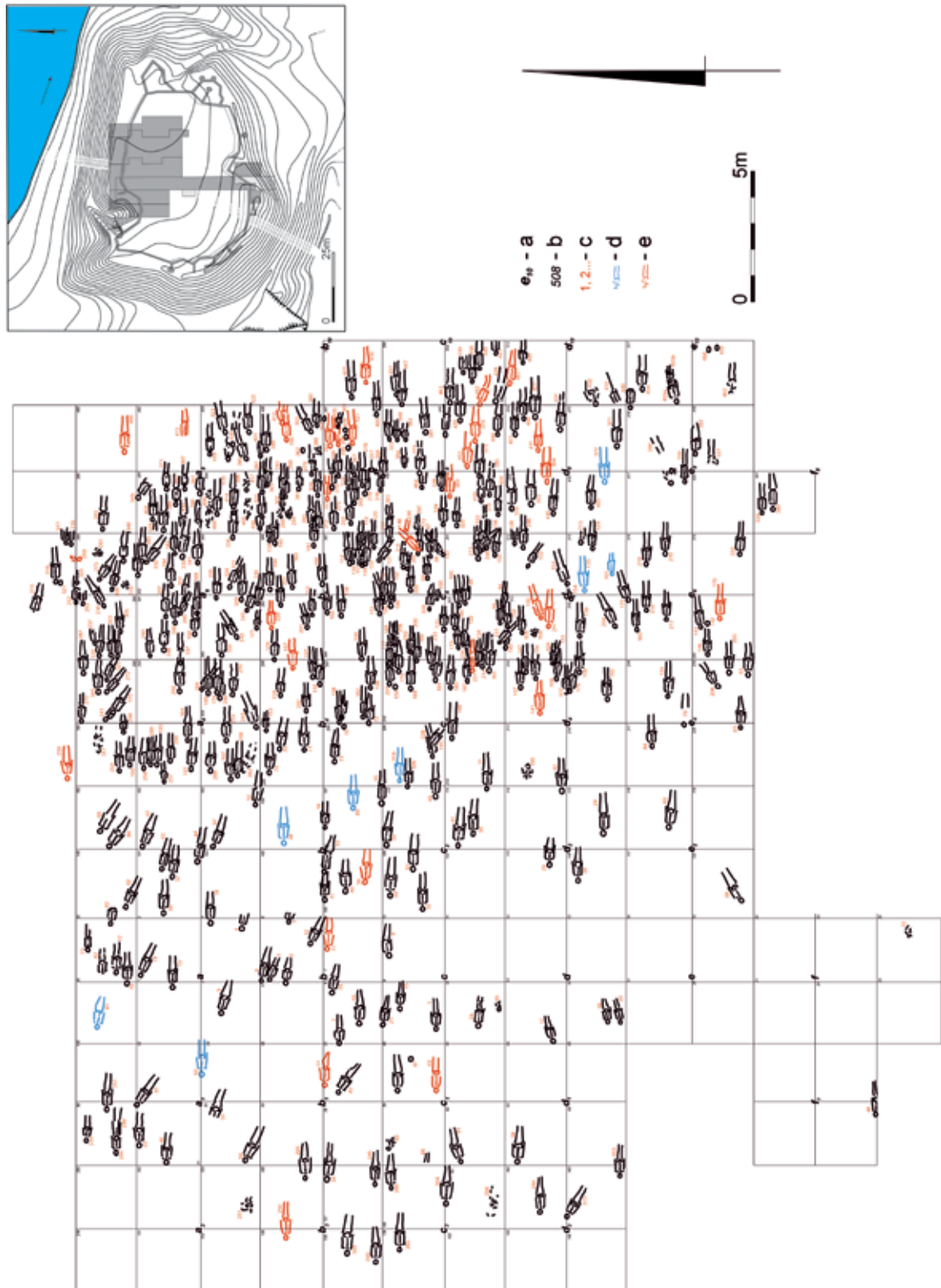


Fig. 2. Gródek, site 1A. The cemetery inside the hillfort; compiled by J. Kuśnierz, using the site drawing of Jerzy Fellmann from 1952 (Cherven' Towns Research Unit records, Muzeum Zamojskie in Zamość); redrawn by R. Ratajczak. Key: a – grid unit number, b – sector number, c – grave number, d – encoffined burials, e – burials recorded as Medieval.

trenches from the First and Second World War.³⁶ The graves were arranged in rows, forming a large cluster in the E area of the hillfort, which suggests the presence of a religious building in that area.

The burials were extended supine, arms flexed placed over the pelvis, or slightly higher; or alternatively, the arms were extended by the sides. In some burials, arms were found resting on the ribcage, right hand over left, or, more rarely, the other way round. Orientation was with the head pointing west (occasionally with a slight NW or SW deflection). In rare cases the head pointed south (eight graves, including No 226 containing grave goods). Traces of decayed wood identified inside a small number of grave cuts were interpreted as the remains of coffins (e.g. grave 350). This interpretation is supported by iron nails found in the grave pits.

An osteology analysis made of 303 skeletons identified 170 male and 133 female individuals. The age at death determined for the males was as follows: three juvenile individuals (age category *iuvenis* 14–18 years), 46 young adults (*adultus* 18–30 years), 104 middle adults (*matures* 30–50 years), and seven old adults (*senilis* 50+ years). For ten burials, the age was not determined, only their sex was established through an analysis of long bones. The age at death determined for the female burials was as follows: five *iuvenis*, 39 *adultus*, 54 *maturus*, and six *senilis* individuals. The age of 26 burials remains undetermined, only their sex was identified from long bones.³⁷ The absence of skeletons of young and older infants

(*infans* I and II) is puzzling, possibly explainable by the non-survival of skeletal remains (?).

Grave goods, mostly personal ornaments and dress objects, were recorded in 42 graves (9% of the total): 17 female, 14 male, and 11 undetermined. Most of these forms have likely analogies in archaeological material from sites in present-day Ukraine and Belarus (buttons of copper alloy, temple rings, type I, III and IV, finger-rings, earring, pendant cross and beads, appliqués, glass bracelets; Fig. 3).

A sensational discovery was that 13 grave assemblages under analysis contained the remains of silk textiles. Graves 80, 157, 230, 254, 259, 368, 379, 389, 413, 416, 421, 423 and 466 were mostly found in the eastern part of the cemetery (Fig. 4).

Eight burials which held fragments of silk textiles also contained grave goods, mostly personal ornaments: glass beads, temple rings, and a finger-ring. Furthermore, there was a larger number of copper alloy buttons identified as dress objects.

Between 2019 and 2021, the ETH Zurich secured several radiocarbon dates from the better-preserved skeletons, and three dates from silk textiles. These dates suggest a much earlier dating of the cemetery, 11th century, and an extensive use of the funeral space in the 12th century. At the same time, the latest dates obtained for seven graves were confined to the 13th-century horizon. The above results show that the cemetery came into use as early as in the 11th century, with continuity in the 12th and 13th centuries, which revises the dating proposed in the 1950s.

36 W. Bender et al. Badania w Gródku Nadbużnym w pow. hrubieszowskim w 1955 r., *Sprawozdania Archeologiczne* 3 (1957), 1957, p. 170.

37 A. Cieślík, Gródek upon the Bug River, site 1A. Medieval cemetery at the stronghold ward. The results of the excavations in the years 1952–1955. Current state and prospects of research, *The early medieval settlement complex at Gródek upon the Bug River in the light of results from past research (1952–1955): material evidence = Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy w Gródku nad Bugiem w świetle wyników badań dawnych (1952–1955): podstawy źródłowe*, U źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej = Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas 4, ed. M. Wołoszyn, 2018a, pp. 931–942; A. Cieślík, The number and state of preservation of the skeletons from Gródek upon the Bug River, site 1A (excavations in the years 1952–1955) kept in the osteological collection storage facility of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Wrocław, Unit of Anthropology, *The early medieval settlement complex at Gródek upon the Bug River in the light of results from past research (1952–1955): material evidence = Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy w Gródku nad Bugiem w świetle wyników badań dawnych (1952–1955): podstawy źródłowe*, U źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej = Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas 4, ed. M. Wołoszyn, 2018b, pp. 943–965.

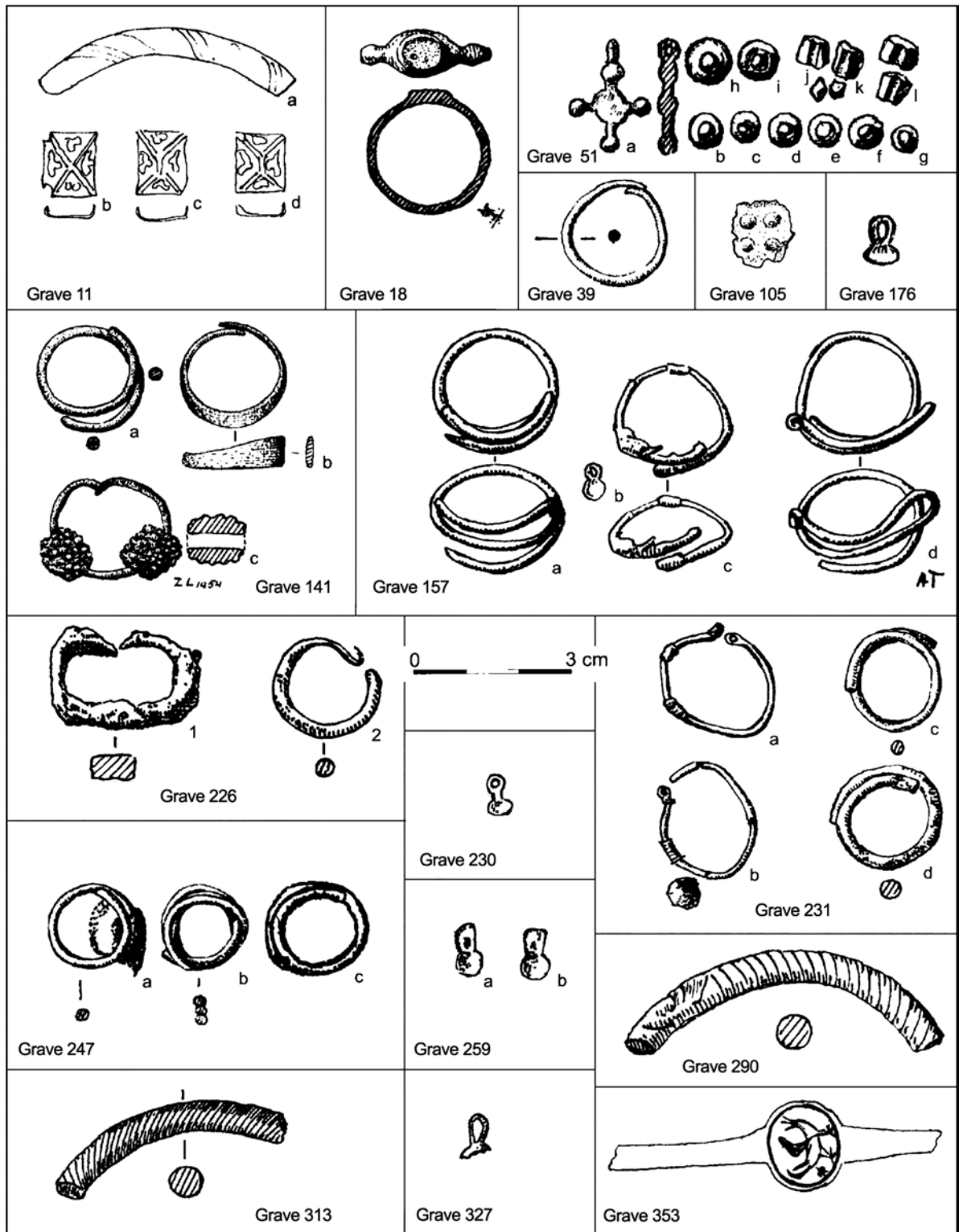


Fig. 3. Gródek, site 1A. Selected grave goods from selected graves; archival drawing (Cherven' Towns Research Unit records, Muzeum Zamojskie in Zamość); computer graphics by J. Kuśnierz, after J. Kuśnierz 2018, Fig. 8.



Fig. 4. Gródek, site 1A. Fragment of silk textile (samite) embroidered with gold thread and silk (catalogue Nos XVI and XVII, inventory Nos 152/55a and b). Bottom – details of the face (left) and of the underside (right). The holes detected on the underside of the textile are left over from embroidery with silver thread with a vegetable fibre core; photographed by M. Cybulska, M. Marciniak, after M. Cybulska et al., 2018, Fig. 12.

The presence of so many silk fragments and the discovery of gilding on some of the copper alloy buttons (studies made in December 2022 at the University of Warsaw) prove beyond any doubt that the cemetery inside the hillfort in Gródek was an elite burial space.³⁸

The remains of another cemetery were identified as Gródek, site 1C. Excavating the Funnel Beaker settlement in the 1950s, Jan Kowalczyk came across a large number of human bones and the remains of an earthen mound (barrow?) in the NE area of the site. Bones and vessels were collected from the remains of the mound (the latter are now missing). An excavation trench laid out at this location brought to light rectangular grave pits and traces of coffins. An adult burial was identified, resting supine, with arms flexed over the pelvis, furnished with a necklace (?) of green glass beads.³⁹ J. Kowalczyk suggested that these finds, while with only an ambiguous dating, could be related to a Medieval cemetery.

However, a still more spectacular discovery was made in 1983 in the eastern area of the site (about 100 metres to the south of the area discussed earlier). An

early Medieval burial was identified in trench II/83, feature 14/83, furnished with a sword, the antler mounts of a reflex bow, elements of a bow case and quiver, a small knife, and an iron loop. This burial is thought to date either from the 11th to 12th or the 12th to 13th century.⁴⁰ The authors of this research additionally made a tentative suggestion that the burial had been under a barrow.⁴¹ This suggestion may be found in most publications, but evidence is lacking at present to resolve this issue.⁴² A large-scale geophysical survey and a fieldwalking project confirmed the presence of a Medieval cemetery in the NE area of the site (studies made by B. Bartecki and his team in a project funded by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage). Two radiocarbon dates were obtained in the project 'Golden Apple of Polish archaeology ...' for the warrior burial (confirming the 12th-century dating). As we write, a complex physical anthropology analysis is in progress, with plans for a new publication of this burial sometime in 2023 or 2024.

As mentioned earlier, the cemetery recorded as site 29 to the south of the hillfort was studied from

38 These burials were the focus of special conferences organized in 2020: *Beauty, Power, Mystery. Silk in the Byzantine Commonwealth and beyond. The material evidence*. (18–20.11.2020) A comprehensive report on silk finds from Gródek is pending; cf. Cybulska et al. *Threads across borders. The medieval silks from Gródek upon the Bug River in a broader context*. (in preparation).

39 A Crown denar (penny) found in the topsoil overlying the burial has a tentative 15th-century dating; J. Kowalczyk, *Prace badawcze w 1957 r. osady kultury pucharów lejkowatych w Gródku Nadbużnym, pow. Hrubieszów*: *Wiadomości Archeologiczne* 25, no. 4, 1958, p. 317.

40 S. Jastrzębski, J. Maciejczuk, *Grób wczesnośredniowieczny z Gródka nad Bugiem, stan. 1 C, woj. Zamojskie*, *Studia nad etnogenezą Słowian i kulturą Europy wczesnośredniowiecznej*, t. 2, eds. G. Labuda, S. Tabaczyński, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź, 1988, pp. 56–61; M. Wołoszyn, *Między Wschodem a Zachodem: pochówek wojownika ze stanowiska 1C w Gródku, pow. hrubieszowski, woj. Lubelskie*, *Acta Militaria Mediaevalia* 1, 2005, pp. 87–105; B. Chudzińska et al., *Burial at site 1C in Gródek upon the Bug River. The results of the excavations in the year 1983*, *The early medieval settlement complex at Gródek upon the Bug River in the light of results from past research (1952–1955): material evidence = Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy w Gródku nad Bugiem w świetle wyników badań dawnych (1952–1955): podstawy źródłowe*, U źródeł Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej = Frühzeit Ostmitteleuropas 4, ed. M. Wołoszyn, 2018, pp. 889–930.

41 This detail is crucial in view of the persistence of mound burial among Eastern Slavs (longer than among Western Slavs), even after their official Christianization; on this subject cf. H. Zoll-Adamikowa, *Zum Beginn der Körperbestattung bei den Westslawen*. In *Rom und Byzanz im Norden. Mission und Glaubenswechsel im Ostseeraum während des 8.–14. Jahrhunderts: internationale Fachkonferenz der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Verbindung mit der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz Kiel, 18.–25. September 1994*, *Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse. Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz* / 1997 Nr. 3, 2, ed. M. Müller-Wille, Mainz–Stuttgart 1998, p. 237, Footnote 3; P. Sikora, *Kurhan – relikwium tradycji pogańskiej w świecie chrześcijańskim wczesnego średniowiecza na przykładzie obszaru Polesia*, *Popiół i Kość*, *Funeralia Legnickie – spotkanie* 4, ed. J. Wrzesiński, Sobótka–Wrocław, 2002.

42 E. Kokowska, A. Kokowski, *Wczesnośredniowieczny grot z Gródka nad Bugiem, woj. Zamojskie*, *Lubelskie Materiały Archeologiczne* 3 1990, Fig. 1.

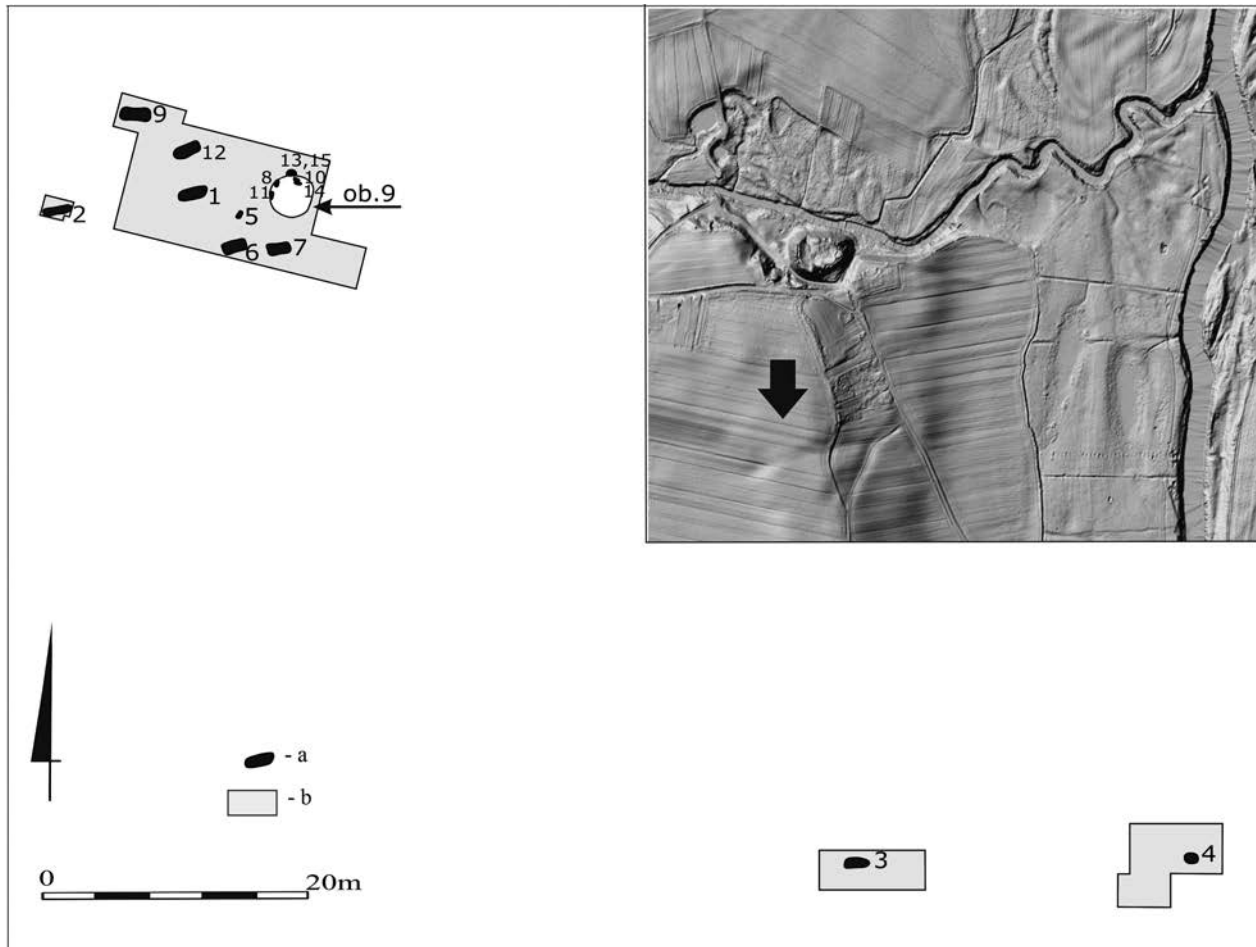


Fig. 5. Gródek. Plan of the inhumation cemetery (site 29) during the 2017–2019 fieldwork seasons, showing the location of graves 1–12 and feature 9. Compiled by M. Maziarczuk, T. Dzieńkowski. Key: a – grave, b – trench.

2017 to 2019. Of 15 inhumations then brought to light, 11 were arranged in rows, oriented E-W, with the head pointing west, and radiocarbon dating in the range of the 11th to 12th century (Fig. 5–6). One of these burials held the silk textile remains.

A large and deep feature (No 9), 3x3 metres, and 1.5 metres deep, was excavated in 2019. Its fill of several layers produced a modest quantity of pottery and

animal bones, but also fragments of cremated human bone (Fig. 6). Apparently, burials of infants (neonates, *infans I*) had been inserted at different depths into the sides of a large pit. They had been deposited inside small pits cut next to the sides of the large feature on its north and east side. The radiocarbon dates obtained for these skeletal elements correspond to the Tribal Period (!!!), and add an entirely new problem



Fig. 6. Gródek. The cemetery, site 29. Top – inhumation burial dating from the 11th or 12th century. Bottom – feature No 9 in plan, infant burials. Photographed by T. Dzieńkowski, A. Hyrczała.

to the study of Slavic funeral rites and practices. Radiocarbon dates obtained in three different laboratories, Poznan Radiocarbon Laboratory, ETH Zürich and CEZA Mannheim, turned out to be compatible. Until recently, radiocarbon dating was uncommon in Medieval studies. The last decade brought a radical change in this regard: the use of chronometric dating has been gaining in importance in Scandinavia, the region on the Danube, and in Poland as well.⁴³

We hope that the study of aDNA now in progress at the Max Planck Institute in Leipzig (Zuzana Hofmanová) will bring new useful evidence. This discovery is a valuable contribution to the study of childhood in Early Medieval East Central and Eastern Europe.⁴⁴

Closing remarks

Inhumation cemeteries identified at Gródek have contributed to our understanding of Medieval burial practices in the Lublin region. The study of funerary sites in our region has a long tradition. In her monumental publications of 1966 and 1971, H. Zoll-Adamikowa recorded just 11 cemeteries in the area between the Vistula and the Bug (bounded by the

lower reaches of the Wieprz, the San and Sołokija rivers), and three of them were putative.⁴⁵ Nearly 50 years later, the status of research has certainly improved, and it continues to improve. For instance, a map published by M. Florek in 2009 records 24 localities with cemeteries. By the year 2023, a group of 43 sites (in 32 localities) was recognised, listed as cemeteries, graves and mound burials. Nevertheless, the scale of these studies, the level of analysis and publication, could be more wide-ranging. Another drawback is the level of recognition of cemeteries in western Ukraine, an important point of reference, particularly for the period between the 11th and the 13th century, when that region formed the western outlying territory of Rus'.⁴⁶

As a meeting-ground of West and East European culture of the early Medieval period, the Lublin region is an area that is particularly attractive for research. By continuing to publish archaeological material from past studies, and excavating new cemetery sites, we expect to expand our database of sources, and improve our recognition of the processes of transition (from cremation to inhumation) and the spread of the inhumation rite. Another equally fascinating problem is the diversification of the funeral ritual in an area exposed in the tenth

43 *Początki obrządku szkieletowego na ziemiach polskich w okresie wczesnego średniowiecza*, eds. D. Błaszczyk, A. Buko, Warszawa, 2023.

44 M. Koval, *Childhood in Medieval Poland (1050–1300) Constructions and Realities in a European Context*, East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450, Leiden, 2021.

45 Sites: Szczekarków, Romanów, Gródek, site 10.

46 M. Kuczinko, *Cmentarzyska X–XIV w. na zachodnim Wołyniu, Chełmszczyźnie i Podlasiu, Zamojsko-Wołyńskie Zeszyty Muzealne* 1, 2003, pp. 67–72; O. Motsia, *Pohoval'ni pamijatki sered'ovichnih chasiv zahidnoru'kogo prikordonnja – osoblivosti obrjadu ta slidi mizhetnichnih kontaktiv = Early Medieval Sepulchral Sites in the West Rus' Borderland – Custom Diversity and Traces of Inter-Ethnic Contacts*, *In campis, silvis... et urbe. Średniowieczny obrządek pogrzebowy na pograniczu polsko-ruskim*, *Collectio Archaeologica Ressoviensis*, 14, eds. S. Cygan, M. Glinianowicz, P. N. Kotowicz, Rzeszów–Sanok, 2011, pp. 45–57; R. Mis'ka, *Rann'osered'vichni pohoval'ni pamijatki mezhirichchja Zolotoi Lipi ta Z»rucha = Early Medieval Cemeteries Between Rivers of Zolota Lipa and Zbrucz*, *In campis, silvis... et urbe. Średniowieczny obrządek pogrzebowy na pograniczu polsko-ruskim*, *Collectio Archaeologica Ressoviensis* 14, eds. S. Cygan, M. Glinianowicz, P. N. Kotowicz, Rzeszów–Sanok, 2011, pp. 101–112.

and 11th centuries both to Latin and Byzantine-Rus' Christianity.⁴⁷

Between 2017 and 2022, no less than 84 radiocarbon dates were secured from Gródek. They proved that the cemetery found inside the hillfort is older than we used to think. The graves containing silk shed a new light on the social status of the individuals buried there. Without doubt, not all of them were warriors-defenders of this border region.

Discoveries made at site 29 suggest that by the eighth or ninth century, the area was in the process

of being populated. This shows that we were right to trust the literary sources and historians that Gródek may date to a period before the baptism of Mieszko I and Vladimir the Great. We are confident that in future archaeology in Gródek will play an increasingly important role in the study of early Slav history. All the work to analyse the material from past research, and validate the findings of earlier generations of archaeologists using our modern research methods, has been worth it.

47 H. Zoll-Adamikowa. Zum Beginn der Körperbestattung bei den Westslawen, *Rom und Byzanz im Norden. Mission und Glaubenswechsel im Ostseeraum während des 8.–14. Jahrhunderts: internationale Fachkonferenz der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Verbindung mit der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz Kiel, 18.–25. September 1994*, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse. Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz / 1997 Nr. 3, 2, ed. Michael Müller-Wille. Mainz-Stuttgart: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur Mainz, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1998, pp. 227–238; M. Wołoszyn, *Europa Środkowo-wschodnia 2006*; M. Wołoszyn, *By Their Fruit You will recognize them* (Math. 7:15–20). The Byzantine and Latin Models of Christianisation of East– Central and Eastern Europe in the Light of Archaeological Evidence – Discussion Remarks, *Tak więc po owocach poznacie ich*, *Funeralia Lednickie* 12, eds. Wojciech Dzieduszycki and Jacek Wrzesiński. Poznań: Stowarzyszenie Naukowe Archeologów Polskich, pp. 163–183.

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Ankstyvųjų viduramžių inhumacijos kapinynai Grudeke–Voluinėje. Tyrimų būklė ir perspektyvos

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Straipsnyje aprašoma Ankstyvųjų viduramžių gyvenvietės komplekso Grudeke (taip pat žinomo kaip Grudekas prie Bugo) rytų Lenkijoje, esančio Lenkijos ir Ukrainos pasienyje, archeologinių tyrimų eiga ir perspektyvos. Ši archeologinė vietovė, siejama su Voluinės pilimi ir paminėta „Pradiniame sąvade“, aprašant 1018 m. mūšį tarp Boleslovo Narsiojo ir Jaroslavo Išmintingojo kariuomenių, yra neįkainojamas informacijos šaltinis Viduramžių Lenkijos ir Rusijos pasienio tyrimams.

Pirmą kartą platesniu mastu Grudeko archeologinė vietovė buvo ištirta 1952–1955 m., nors išsamūs šių tyrimų rezultatai paskelbti tik 2018 m. Kasinėjimų metu aptiktas didelis kapinynas su 466 nedegintais kapais (XI–XIII a.), iš kurių 13-oje rasta įkapių su daugybe šilko fragmentų – tai didžiausia Lenkijoje žinoma šilko fragmentų kolekcija.

Daugybė šilko fragmentų ir ant kai kurių vario lydinio sagų aptiktas auksavimas neabejotinai rodo, kad šis kapinynas buvo kilmingųjų laidojimo vieta.

Tolesni kasinėjimai, atlikti paskelbus 6 dešimtmečio ir vėlesnių tyrimų rezultatus, atskleidė dar daugiau nuostabių atradimų, įskaitant didelę ir gilią duobę (užfiksuotą kaip „duobė nr. 9“), kurioje rasti kūdikių palaikai, radiokarboniniu būdu datuoti „gentiniu laikotarpiu“ (radiokarboninės datos nustatytos trijų laboratorijų). Tikimasi, kad šiuo metu Leipzigo Maxo Plancko institute atliekami DNR tyrimai (Zuzana Hofmanová) pateiks naujų vertingų duomenų.

Naujausi darbai atvėrė nepelnytai primirštą Ankstyvųjų viduramžių Grudeko vietovę, šiandien virstančią neįkainojamu slavų laidosenos tyrimų šaltiniu.