

Hanna Olczak*, Dariusz Krasnodębski**

THE CEMETERY IN SZCZYTY-DZIĘCIOŁOWO, BIELSK PODLASKI DISTRICT, AS AN EXAMPLE OF GRAVE FORM DIVERSITY IN THE MIDDLE BUG RIVER BASIN IN THE 11TH-13TH CENTURIES

ABSTRACT

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The Early Medieval burial ground in Szczyty-Dzięciołowo is one of the few cemeteries with graves surrounded by kerbstones located on the Bielsk Plain, in the basin of the Narew River's tributaries – the Orlanka and Łoknica Rivers. In 2015, two graves were excavated at the cemetery: a pit grave with an inhumation burial and a setting of kerbstones and a barrow, where an inhumation burial was discovered as well. This has resulted in yet another confirmation of the differentiation of the funeral rite, which was characteristic for the whole Middle Bug River basin in the 11th-13th centuries. Flat graves with inhumation burials from this period are considered to be a feature of the West Slavic rite, while barrow burials are typical for the majority of East Slavic peoples. This text is an attempt to discuss the issue of grave form diversity in the Mazovian-Rus' borderland region in the younger phase of the Early Middle Ages on the example of the aforementioned cemetery.

Keywords: Early Middle Ages, flat graves with settings of kerbstones, barrows, funeral rite, Middle Bug River basin, Mazovian-Rus' borderland

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* hannaolczak@yahoo.co.uk

** Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Aleja Solidarności 105, 00-140 Warszawa, Poland; krasnodębskid@onet.poczta.pl

INTRODUCTION

The cemetery (site 1, and site 45-89/25 according to the Polish Archaeological Record) is located about 1.5 km northeast of the Szczyty-Dzięciołowo village (Fig. 1). It is situated at the top and on the southwest slope of a small hill covered with a deciduous forest (Fig. 2). At a distance of about 300-500 m to the south and east of the necropolis flows a nameless stream, which is a right tributary of the Orłanka River. This place is referred to as “Grabniak” (Grabnik/Hrabniak) or “Kurhan” (Kurgan). Sometimes the name “Mogilki pogańskie” (pagan graves) is also mentioned (Dzik 2015a, 139), but its relation to the site is not clear. A vast multicultural settlement extends to the south and southwest of the cemetery, the youngest artefacts of which can be dated between the 10th century and the 12th/13th centuries (Olczak 2015). At a distance of about 2.5 km to the east and northeast there is also an Early Medieval complex in Zbucz (see Fig. 1), which includes a gord (site 3) and two

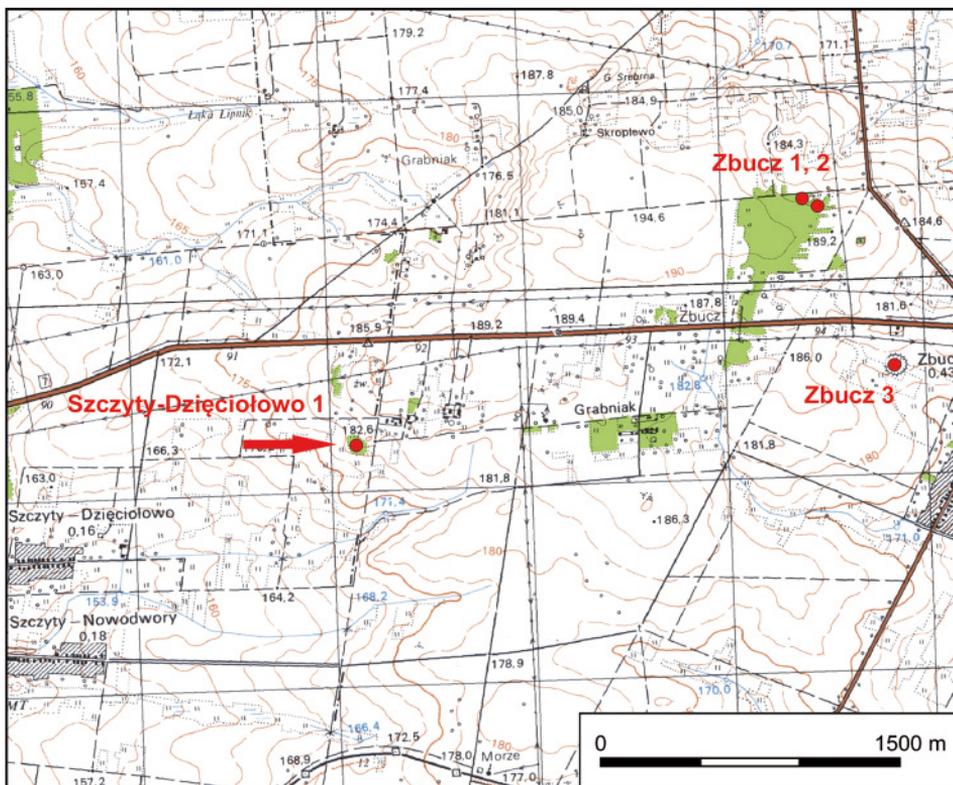


Fig. 1. Location of the cemetery at Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, site 1 and the cemeteries (sites 1, 2) and the strongord (site 3) in Zbucz on a 1:25,000 scale topographic map (Source of the map: Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography). Edited by H. Olczak



Fig. 2. Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, site 1, Bielsk Podlaski district. View of the site from the west (15.07.2006). Photo by D. Krasnodębski

burial grounds: one with flat graves surrounded by kerbstones (site 1), the other with burial mounds (site 2; Olczak *et al.* 2019, 61-65).

Geographically, this area belongs to the central part of the Bielsk Plain, which in turn is part of the North Podlasie Lowland (Kondracki 1998, fig. 33). The terrain was formed mainly during the Warthe glaciation, probably during the middle stadial. The site is located at the edge of a wide hill of push moraines, adjacent to an undulated moraine to the west. The surface sediments are made up mostly of glacial till, with numerous aggregations of erratic boulders (Brud and Boratyn 2006).

The described site has been known for over 150 years as a cemetery with graves accompanied by settings of kerbstones (Jaroszewicz 1853, 194-195, note I; Avenarius' 1890, 20-22; Pokrovskii 1895, 65-66; Musianowicz 1960, 188 and no. 245; Rauhut 1971, 642, no. 200; Dzik 2015a, 139-143). Its current surface area, determined by the range of the forest and the preserved stone constructions, is about 0.8 hectares (Fig. 3). Large stones are visible in several locations throughout the necropolis. They form lines or roughly rectangular kerbstone settings, especially in the western part of the cemetery (Fig. 4). In some places (usually near the kerbstones) there are shallow depressions on the modern ground surface, which are probably remains of excavations carried out in the 19th century or of robbery pits of unknown origin. Several earthen mounds with a diameter of about 5-9 m and a height of about 0.4-0.7 m, which can be interpreted as barrows, were also found at the site (see Fig. 3). Their number is difficult to estimate, because some of them (e.g., nos. 3A,

3B, and 7A, 7B) might be spoil heaps from past excavations. With the exception of barrow no. 1, which is located in the central part of the cemetery, the mounds are grouped in its eastern part. At the base of several of them lie individual boulders or smaller stones. The largest mound (no. 2), which is about 9 m in diameter and about 0.7 m in height, has a visible depression of about 1 m in diameter in its middle part, suggesting that it was excavated

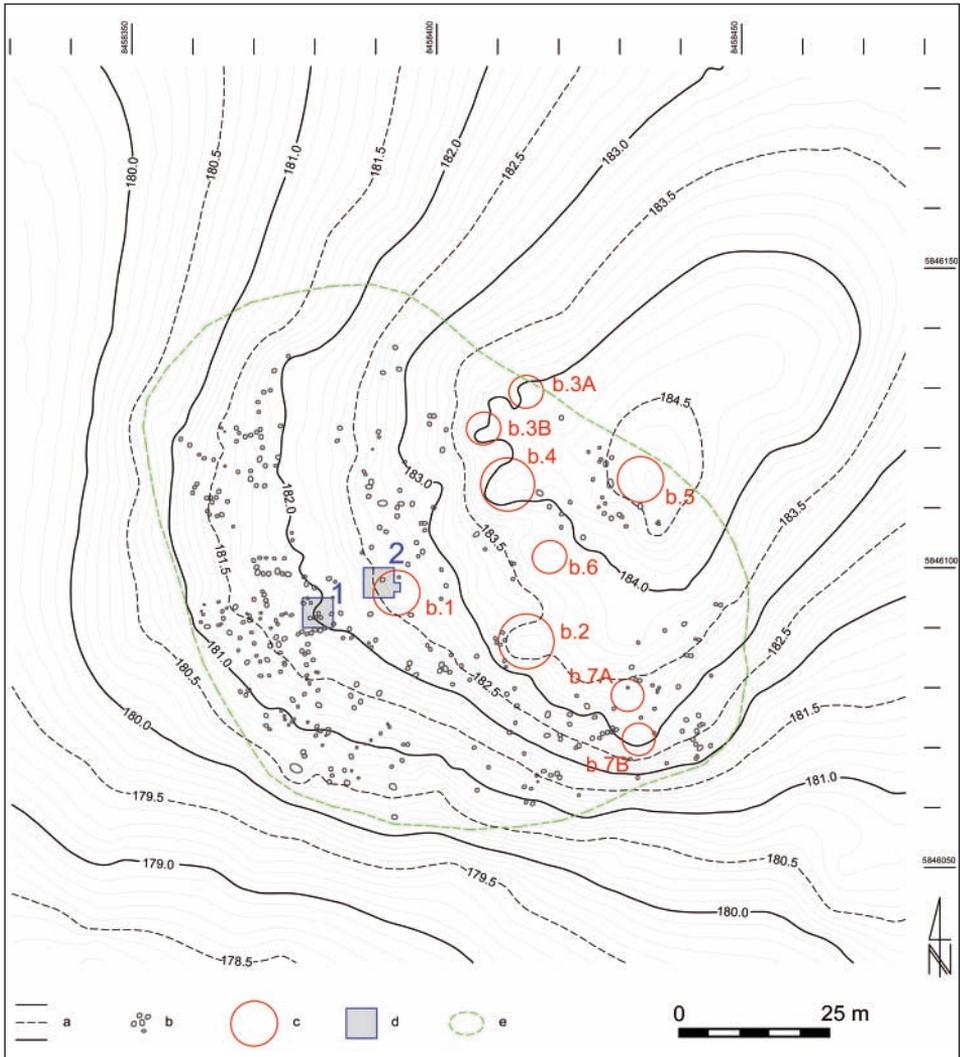


Fig. 3. Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, site 1, Bielsk Podlaski district.

Contour plan of the site: a – contour lines, b – stones, c – earthen mounds, d – archaeological trenches, e – area of the forest. Edited by A. Małkowska and W. Małkowski



Fig. 4. Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, site 1, Bielsk Podlaski district.
Kerbstones of graves in the western part of the cemetery. Photo by H. Olczak

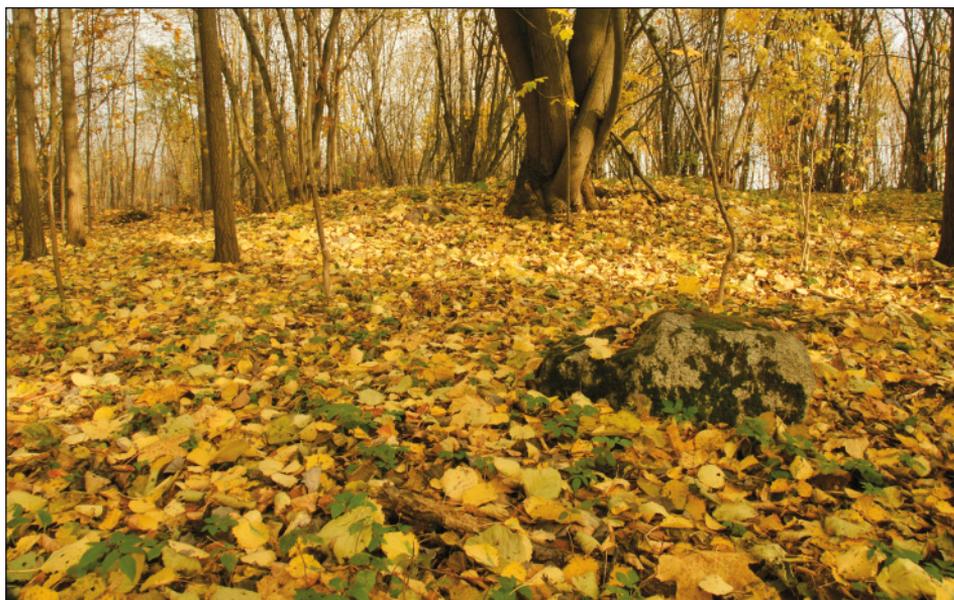


Fig. 5. Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, site 1, Bielsk Podlaski district. Barrow no. 2 (view from the west).
Photo by H. Olczak

in the past (Fig. 5). For many years, inhabitants of neighbouring villages were known to take stones from the cemetery, compromising its archaeological integrity.

The excavations were carried out in autumn of 2015 by the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, led by the article's authors. They were part of the project "The Beginnings of Christianity on the Polish-Ruthenian Frontier," led by Prof. Andrzej Buko and financed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (11H 12 0330 81). Two trenches with a total area of 51.5 m² were marked out at the site (see Fig. 3). In addition to the burial site described in this article, relics of a prehistoric settlement, probably from the Roman period, were also discovered (Olczak 2015).

RESEARCH HISTORY

The cemetery in Szczyty-Dzięciołowo is among those Podlachian burial grounds of which little is known, despite being subjected to excavations as early as the 19th century. The first information about the site was published in a monthly titled "Biblioteka Warszawska" (Warsaw Library) in 1853 by historian Józef Jaroszewicz (1853, 194-195, note I). Describing the Early Medieval Podlachian burial grounds, which he attributed to the Yotvingians, he listed the two largest (according to him) cemeteries of this region, located on the grounds of the Szczyty-Dzięciołowo estate, which belonged to the Wiewiórowski family: one in the village of Szczyty and the other in a forest called Grabniak. According to the Jaroszewicz, the graves visible there had been built of large kerbstones and were rectangular or oval in shape. Inside the stone settings there were finer stones, under which, shallowly below the surface ("half a cubit deep or even less," Jaroszewicz 1853, 194-195, note I), human remains were found. Some skeletons were well preserved enough to indicate that the dead had been buried with their heads facing west. The bones in other graves were very poorly preserved. In some of the graves iron nails were found, but no remains of wood from coffins or other structures that would protect the bodies were discovered. This description is based on the results of the excavations conducted around 1850 and led by Adolf Wiewiórowski, possibly with Jaroszewicz's participation (Avenarius' 1890, 20; Pokrovskii 1895, 63). The first of the cemeteries mentioned by the historian can be identified as the site discussed in this article. In the middle of the 19th century, it was located in the fields of Szczyty, on the western edge of the Grabniak forest, near a grange of the same name. The second one is the cemetery in Zbucz, situated at the northeastern edge of the aforementioned forest (see Fig. 1). The vague information published in "Biblioteka Warszawska" does not clearly indicate which one of them (or maybe both?) was excavated by Adolf Wiewiórowski. Based on the diverse variety of finds (e.g., glass beads, bracelets made of copper plate, silver and silver-plated copper earrings – perhaps with openwork beads, a chain of thin brass wire, a silver ring, "an oblong notched circle, like an earring," a probable iron ringed pin, fragments of pottery; Jaroszewicz 1853, 194-195, note I), it can be

assumed that the scale of excavations was large, and it resulted in major destruction of the investigated area.

Subsequent research, which, with all certainty, can be associated with the discussed necropolis, took place several years later. In 1862, a Russian tax official named Sergei Songin excavated several dozen graves with kerbstone settings in the Podlachia region (Avenarius' 1890, 20, 22; Pokrovskii 1895, 10). The scope of his work at the Szczyty-Dzięciołowo cemetery is not known. The only known finds from the site are two iron nails. They were included to the so-called Sznajder's collection in the museum in Vilnius and were catalogued under the name Dzeniołowo (*Katalog' predmetov'* 1885, 77, nos. 644 and 645).

In the years 1886-1888, at the request of the Imperial Archaeological Commission, the excavations of the Early Medieval cemeteries of the former Bielsk district were led by Nikolai P. Avenarius' (1890, 6, 18-24). Similar to Józef Jaroszewicz, the Russian archaeologist mentioned two cemeteries located at the Szczyty-Dzięciołowo estate in the research report "Drogichin' Nadbuzhskii i ego drevnosti." The first one was Dzięciołowo, about which he did not provide any further information, and the other was Grabniak, which he identified as the place excavated by Adolf Wiewiórowski (Avenarius' 1890, 20-21). In 1888, Nikolai P. Avenarius' probably excavated ten graves in Grabniak (Avenarius' 1890, 21; Bobrinskoi 1891, CCCXXI; Dzik 2017, 195). During the excavation he found a coiled bronze temple ring, an iron knife, and fragments of pottery (Avenarius' 1890, 9, 20-22, and table II: 2; Bobrinskoi 1891, CCCXXI; Jakimowicz 1924, 118, no. 80; Dzik 2017, 195).

A few details from the report of Nikolai P. Avenarius' suggests that despite him noting the name Grabniak, which Józef Jaroszewicz had used in relation to the Zbucz necropolis, the excavations in 1888 took place not in Zbucz, but in Szczyty-Dzięciołowo. In the map attached to the book, two sites were identified as burial grounds: Szczyty and the Grabniak grange. The first one was located in the village of Szczyty, and the second one a short distance to the southeast (Avenarius' 1890, table I), which in no way corresponds to the location of the necropolis in Zbucz. On the other hand, Dzięciołowo, which was marked on the bank of the Orlanka River at one of Wiewiórowski's manors, was not – contrary to the information from the text – identified as a cemetery on the map. The inconsistency of the map and the report suggests that Nikolai P. Avenarius' did not know the local topography well and therefore he was not able to properly interpret either the information taken from Józef Jaroszewicz's manuscript or from the artefact catalogue from the research of Sergei Songin, which he saw in the museum in Vilnius (Avenarius' 1890, 20, 22). He probably knew only one necropolis from his personal experience, and everything indicates that it was the discussed site, located only about 1.5 km from the Wiewiórowski manor, where he lived during the research. The fact that the cemetery examined in 1888 was located near the manor is confirmed by his wonderment that neither the manor owners nor the local parish priest could point him to the site that had been excavated by the former landlord (Avenarius' 1890, 20, note 2). This would not be so incomprehensible, if the cemetery had been located a few kilometres further, in the neighbouring parish of Zbucz. This supposition

is also confirmed by another statement of the archaeologist: “The word *kurhan* is not known here. People simply call them (barrows – authors’ note) mounds or Swedish graves. It is strange that the only time I have heard the word *kurhan* from the local people (in the village of Szczyty), it was used not in relation to the mounds, but the stone graves” (Avenarius’ 1890, 18, note 2). Today, the cemetery in Szczyty-Dzięciółowo is also known as “Kurhan” (Kurgan), while the name “Zakurhanki” (behind the barrows) appears in 18th-century historical documents in relation to the neighbouring fields (Sosna and Fionik 2005, 15, 60).

Other evidence that the site examined by Nikolai P. Avenarius was in fact the cemetery in Szczyty-Dzięciółowo can be found in the work of Fiodor V. Pokrovskii (1895, 65-66). As a result of a questionnaire, Pokrovskii acquired information about the Grabniak Range, located 1 verst (about 1 kilometre) east of the village of Szczyty. There was a round earthen mound (barrow), 2-3 arshins in height and 100 or 200 sazhen in circumference. According to a local legend, some warriors had been buried there. The local peasants told Pokrovskii that seven years earlier, the mound had been excavated by officials, who had discovered large human bones, a circle and earring made of bronze, and a broken clay pot with rather thick walls.

Unprofessional excavations carried out in the second half of the 19th century by amateur investigator Zdzisław Bitner were probably also associated with the discussed cemetery. In an article prepared 40 years later, he mentioned a hill called “barrow” by the local people, which was located in a forest belonging to the Karolin grange (Bitner 1900, 761-763). The grange was located south of Grabniak, and belonged to the Wiewiórowski family as well (Sosna and Fionik 2005, 103, 105). As Zdzisław Bitner states in a description of his excavations: “In the forest I have found remains of eight graves surrounded with large stones. (...) I unearthed one of these graves to its depths, removing with difficulty the pile of stones, under which a deep, non-laminar chernozem proved that the soil had once been moved here. At a depth of more than two cubits I found traces of several completely decomposed bodies, with barely a trace of bones left, and a few iron fragments of unknown origin” (Bitner 1900, 762-763). So far, no cemetery has been found in the former Karolin grange, nor was such a cemetery mentioned in the 19th-century sources. Therefore, it is very likely that the grave excavated by Zdzisław Bitner was located at the discussed necropolis. Admittedly, the size of the hill provided by him (43 steps in circumference) is too small, but his account, written years later, is known to have inaccuracies in other places, as well.

The imprecise information given by Józef Jaroszewicz and Nikolai P. Avenarius’ has, in subsequent years, resulted in other authors sometimes drawing unfounded conclusions about the cemeteries in Szczyty-Dzięciółowo and Zbucz. Fiodor V. Pokrovskii (1895, 66) mentioned four cemeteries instead of two, located in Szczyty, Grabniak, Dzięciółowo, and Zbucz (on this subject, i.a. Krasnodębski 2008, 253-255; Dzik 2012, 38-39; 2015a, 139-143). Some 20th-century researchers were also prone to misinterpretations (see, e.g., Musianowicz

1960, 188, 225, nos. 245 and 246). It is also not sufficiently confirmed that all items listed by Józef Jaroszewicz were found at the cemetery in Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, which is sometimes taken for granted (see, e.g., Rauhut 1971, 642, no. 200; Sedov 1982, 119; Dzik 2015a, tables 14, 17, 31).

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EXCAVATED GRAVES

Flat grave with a setting of kerbstones (trench 1)

Trench 1 was located in the western part of the cemetery where a cluster of large stones was visible on the surface (see Fig. 3). Three of them, with an east-west orientation, formed a line in the southern part of the trench (Figs. 6; 7: 1). The second row of kerbstones, with a similar arrangement, was located at a distance of about 1.2-1.3 m to the south, beyond the investigated area. The stones had probably formed a grave kerb with an external dimension of about 5.0 × 3.5 m. In addition, several loosely placed stones, some of which seemed secondarily dislocated, were present north and east of this construction. In the southern part of the excavated area, under the plant litter, a black-brown layer of modern



Fig. 6. Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, site 1, Bielsk Podlaski district.
Trench 1 – kerbstones of the grave and the upper layer of cobblestone pavement.
Photo by D. Krasnodębski

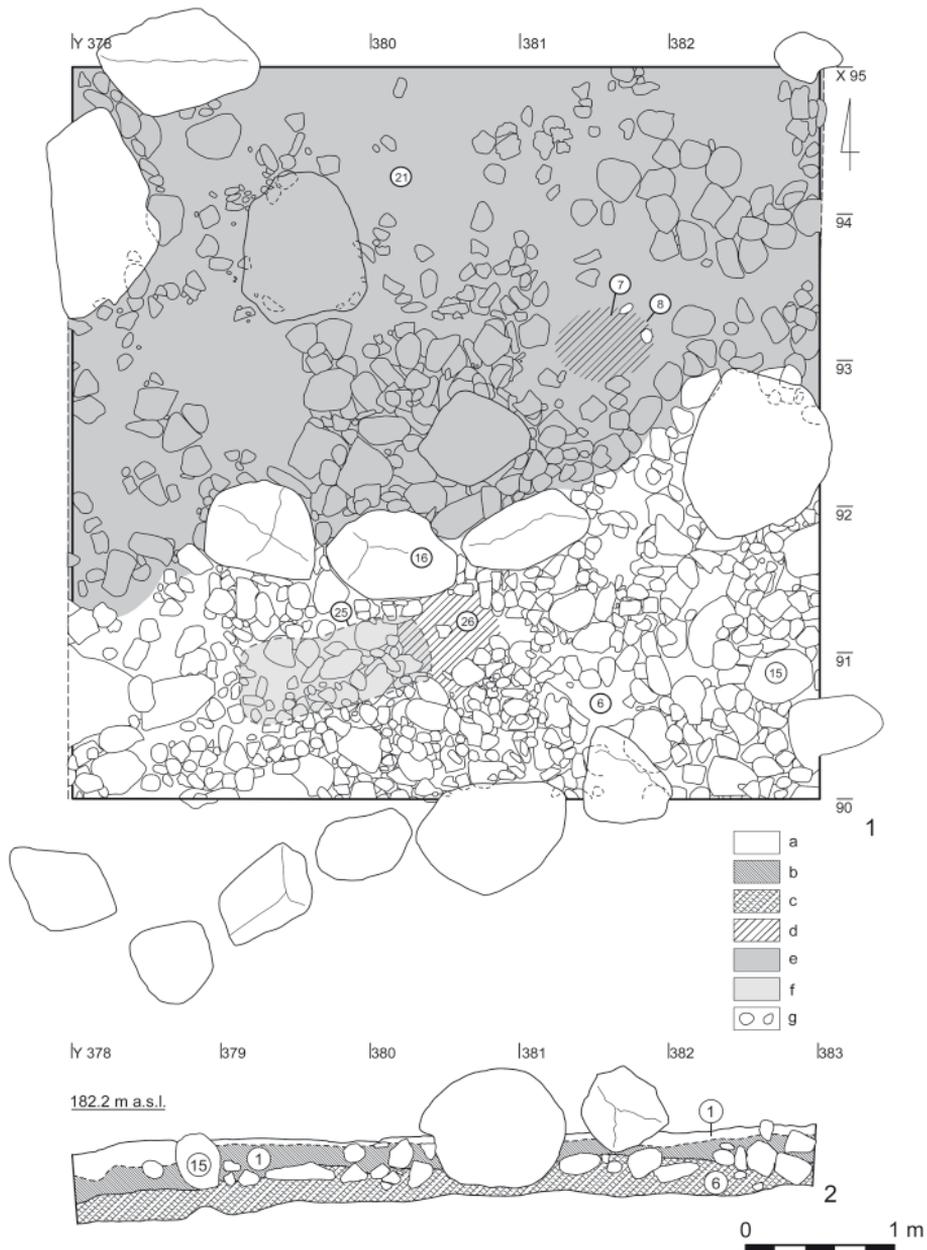


Fig. 7. Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, site 1, Bielsk Podlaski district. Plan of trench 1 at the level of the cobblestone pavement (1) and its southern profile (2): a – modern humus; b – brown-black sand; c – slightly clay-like dark grey-brown sand; d – modern destruction; e – boundary of the supposed archaeological excavation from the 19th century; f – outline of the flat grave (feature 25); g – stones. Drawn by B. Jakubowska, H. Olczak

humus (layer 1) with a thickness of about 0.2-0.3 m was unearthed (Fig. 7: 2). In it, four fragments of Early Medieval pottery and an animal bone belonging to an unidentified species were found. Below was a layer of slightly clay-like dark grey-brown sand (layer 6), with a thickness of about 0.1-0.3 m, which can be interpreted as the buried soil. This layer contained small, individual charcoals from common juniper, a tree of the Rosaceae family, and other plants (Skrzyński 2016), as well as animal bones: a few unburnt ones from a dog (including a skull) and perhaps from a horse, and a burnt one from an unidentified species (Piątkowska-Małecka 2016). A fragment of a completely corroded metal item (an ornament?) and seven pottery pieces, from which two bases have been reconstructed (Fig. 8: 1, 2), were also collected. In both layers there were small and medium-sized stones, with a diameter of up to 0.4 m. Most of them were located at different depths, and only in some places did they form a compact and levelled pavement with a thickness of around 0.3-0.4 m (see Figs. 6; 7: 1). The lower layer of the pavement was narrower and formed a row with a width of about 0.5-2.0 m, which extended along the southern limit of the excavated area. Traces of 19th-century or modern destruction were noticed in several parts of the pavement.

Inside the aforementioned setting of kerbstones, under two layers of cobblestones, a burial in a pit (feature 25) dug into the sterile soil was discovered (Figs. 9: 1; 10). It had a roughly rectangular shape with a size of 1.1 × 0.55 m and a preserved depth of about 0.20-0.25 m. The eastern part of the burial pit was adjacent to a modern pit (layer 26), but the grave had not been destroyed by it. In the burial pit there was a skeleton of a child aged 1.5-2 years (*infans I*) (Stanaszek 2019, 226). It was placed in a supine position, with the skull facing southwest and legs slightly bent in the knees. The left arm was stretched out along the body, with the palm perhaps placed on the pelvis. The bones of the right arm were not preserved *in situ*. The burial pit was filled with black sand mixed with gravel. The remains of pinewood found in several places of the pit may indicate the presence of some kind of container or protection for the deceased, for example a coffin. Thirty-eight glass beads and a dozen or so fragments, probably from about five more specimens, were found next to the skeleton. Most of them were below the mandible, while a few were between the ribs. Among them were 12 biconical beads made of blue and blue-green glass in various states of preservation (Figs. 9: 2-11; 11: 1-4), as well as a dozen or so fragments, probably from about five more specimens of this same type, 15 whole and three partly preserved ring-shaped beads made of light green glass (Figs. 9: 12-29; 11: 5, 6), a corroded bi-segmental bead from an unidentified type of glass (Fig. 9: 30), five corroded ring-shaped beads (Fig. 9: 31-33), including one made of dark brown or black glass, and two crushed beads of an unidentified type of glass.

The stratigraphy in the northern part of the trench was destroyed by a large and deep pit that reached the top of the sterile soil. It was probably the result of the 19th-century excavations at the site. Randomly scattered stones, including a dozen or so burnt ones, were found in the fill (layer 21) of the pit (Fig. 7: 1). In addition to several artefacts dated

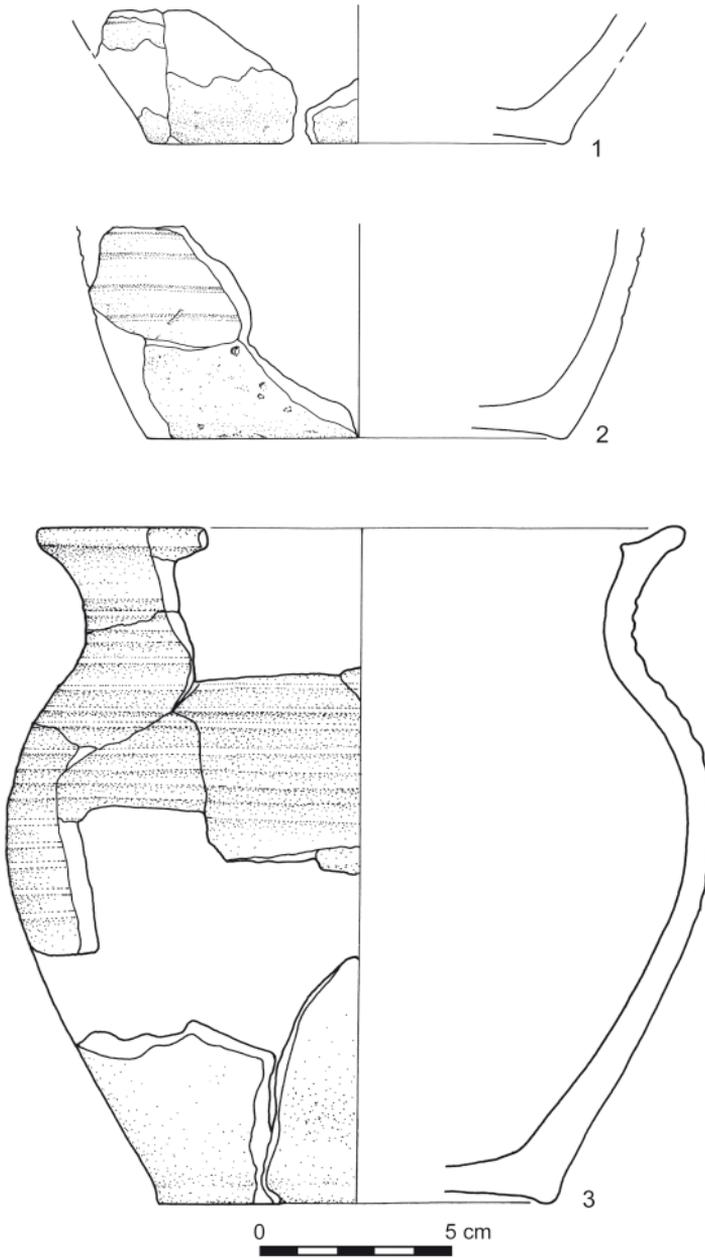


Fig. 8. Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, site 1, Bielsk Podlaski district. A selection of pottery from trench 1: 1, 2 – layer 6; 3 – layer 21. Drawn by G. Nowakowska, H. Olczak

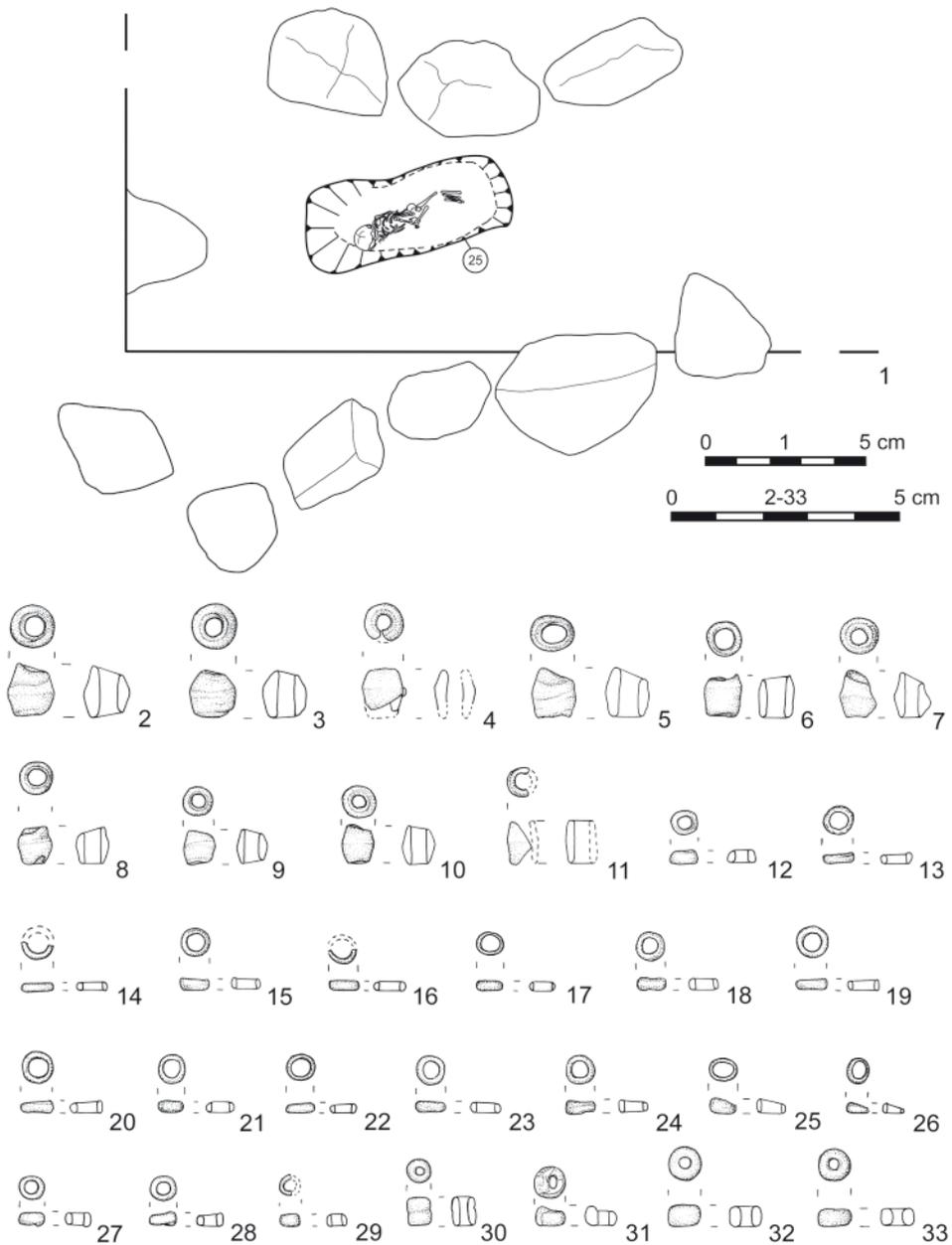


Fig. 9. Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, site 1, Bielsk Podlaski district. Trench 1. Flat grave (feature 25) with kerbstone setting, probably preserved *in situ* (1) and glass beads from its grave goods (2-33). Drawn by B. Jakubowska, G. Nowakowska



Fig. 10. Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, site 1, Bielsk Podlaski district. Trench 1. Flat grave (feature 25) during exploration. Photo by H. Olczak



Fig. 11. Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, site 1, Bielsk Podlaski district. A selection of grave goods from the flat grave (1-6) and the barrow (7-21): 1-17 – glass; 18, 19 – bronze; 20 – silver; 21 – copper. Photo by M. Osładcz

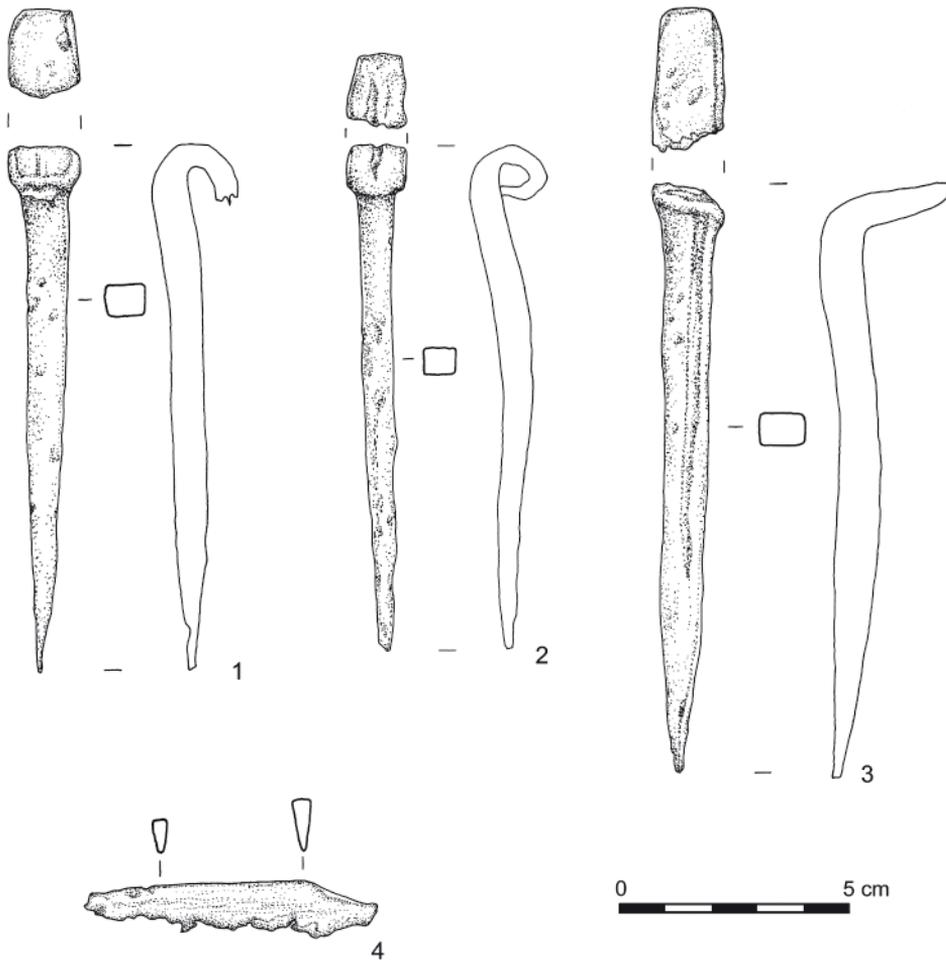


Fig. 12. Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, site 1, Bielsk Podlaski ditrict.
Iron artefacts from trench 1: 1-3 – layer 6; 4 – layer 1. Drawn by A. Poniewierska

between the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, an iron knife (Fig. 12: 4) and 31 fragments of Early Medieval pottery, found mainly in the northeast corner of the trench and originating from one pot (Fig. 8: 3), were discovered in this area. There were also a dozen or so animal bones belonging to a dog, a bird, and a pig (the ones belonging to the pig are probably modern), and a cluster of several small, burnt bones, one of which came from a medium-sized animal (Piątkowska-Malecka 2016). Apart from that, three iron nails lying next to each other were found in the locally preserved buried soil (Fig. 12: 1-3).

Barrow no. 1 (trench 2)

Another trench was marked out in the northwest part of a small, poorly visible mound with a diameter of about 7 m and a relative height of about 0.5 m (Fig. 3). On its northern slope there was a stone with a length of 1.5 m and a width of about 0.5 m, which was oriented east-west (Figs. 13: 1; 14). In the plant litter and modern humus – with a thickness of about 0.05-0.2 m – several human bones and 11 small fragments of Early Medieval pottery were discovered (Fig. 15: 2, 3). The upper part of the mound was built of dark, grey-brown sand (layer 4), with a thickness of about 0.20-0.25 m (see Figs. 13: 2, 3; 14). In it, there were 12 small pottery fragments (Fig. 15: 1, 4), a blue glass bead (Figs. 11: 13; 16: 29), a copper roundel (Figs. 11: 21; 16: 34), and several human bones. Below was a layer of brown sand (layer 20), slightly clay-like, with a thickness up to about 0.3 m, containing a small number of stones and individual pine and alder charcoals (Skrzyński 2016). A silver S-shaped temple ring (Figs. 11: 20; 16: 33) and 13 pottery fragments (Fig. 15: 8, 9) were collected from this layer. The mound was built on the sterile, sand/clay soil with many medium- and small-sized stones.

In the northern and northwestern base of barrow 1, one to two layers of cobblestone were unearthed (Fig. 14). The cobbles were embedded in a clay-like brown sand (layer 2), with a thickness of 0.15-0.30 m, which can be interpreted as a slope-wash brought down from the upper part of the mound (Fig. 13: 3). In this layer, small charcoals from hazel, alder, poplar or willow, and a tree of the Rosaceae family were found (Skrzyński 2016), as well as eight cattle bones (Piątkowska-Malecka 2016) and 19 pottery fragments (Fig. 15: 5-7). Below, a thin (about 0.1 m in thickness) layer of dark brown sand, slightly clay-like, with lighter patches was recorded (layer 11). Nine fragments of pottery were found in it. At the western base of the mound, under slope-wash deposits brought down from its upper part, a longitudinal pit that was basin-shaped in cross-section (feature 23) was excavated at a length of about 3 m (Figs. 13: 1, 3). It had a width reaching 1.8 m and a maximum depth of about 0.75 m. Three layers of large and medium-sized stones were found in the top and the central part of the pit's fill (Figs. 13: 1; 17; 18). They did not form a regular pavement; instead, they seem to have slipped or been thrown into the pit. Among the stones there was also a probably re-used quern, measuring about 0.65 × 0.4 m. Aside from this, the fill of the feature was made of brown and dark brown sand that was mixed with clay in its lower part (see Fig. 13: 2) and contained small charcoals from maple and a tree of the Rosaceae family (Skrzyński 2016). Three fragments of Early Medieval pottery, 15 cattle bones, as well as a bone and tooth from a deer were also found in it (Piątkowska-Malecka 2016).

An inhumation burial, heavily damaged by animal dens and tree roots, was found in the middle part of the barrow (Figs. 13: 1; 17; 18). The bones were on a lower mound layer, which had a thickness of about 0.15 m (Fig. 13: 3). Neither a burial pit nor traces of a coffin were observed. The skeleton belonged to an *adultus/maturus* woman (about 35 years old)

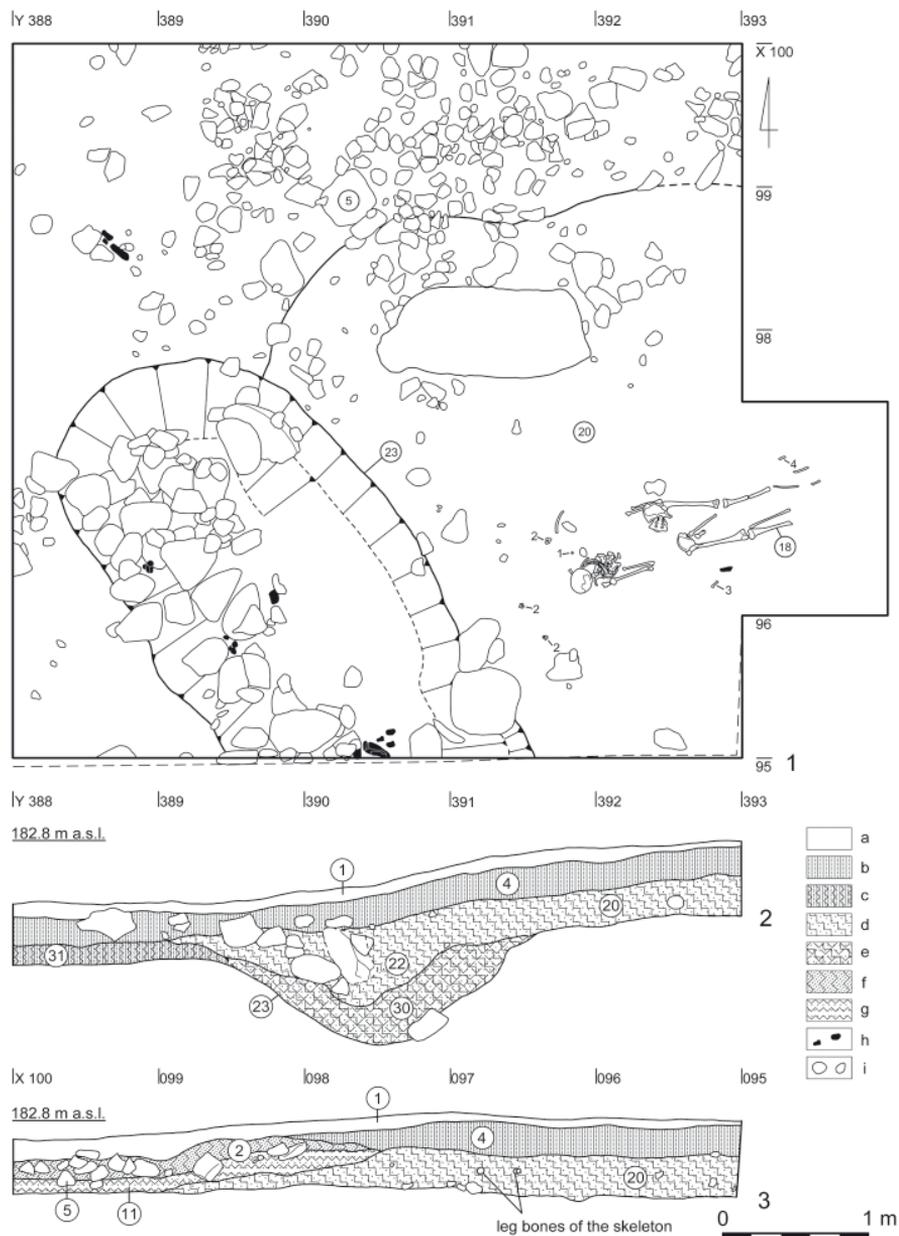


Fig. 13. Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, site 1, Bielsk Podlaski district. The plan (1) and the southern (2) and eastern (3) profiles of trench 2 (barrow no. 1): a – modern humus; b – dark grey-brown sand; c – dark grey-brown clay-like sand with patches of brown clay; d – slightly clay-like brown sand; e – dark brown sand with patches of brown clay, yellow-brown gravel and traces of burning; f – clay-like brown sand; g – slightly clay-like dark brown sand with lighter patches; h – animal bones; i – stones. Drawn by B. Jakubowska, H. Olczak



Fig. 14. Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, site 1, Bielsk Podlaski district. Barrow no. 1 (trench 2) during exploration – stones at the northern and eastern base of the mound. Photo by D. Krasnodębski

(Stanaszek 2019, 225-226). The deceased was placed on her back, with her head lying on its right side and facing southwest. Due to the disturbed anatomical order of the bones, the arrangement of the arms was not determined. Near the skeleton, at the height of the right femur, fragments of the diaphysis of a cattle tibia and a metapodial section were found (Piątkowska-Malecka 2016). The deceased woman was equipped with ornaments that were dispersed in the vicinity of the skeleton and inside the skull. The grave goods included: two heavily corroded bronze earrings – one with a curly braid (Figs. 11: 18; 16: 30) and the other with three so-called knot-shaped beads (Figs. 11: 19; 16: 31); a tin plate (Fig. 16: 32); glass beads: three bi-segmental beads made of creamy-white and brown glass (Figs. 11: 15-17; 16: 1-3), 21 made of black glass, including 14 with an ornament of yellow eyes (Figs. 11: 8-12; 16: 4-24), one corroded, now of a yellow-brown-green colour (Figs. 11: 14; 16: 25), two made of light green glass (Fig. 16: 26, 27), one made of dark blue glass (Figs. 11: 7; 16: 28), and probably one (in two fragments) made of blue-green glass. Traces of green patina were visible on one of the phalanges, which suggests that the grave goods of the deceased woman could also include a ring.

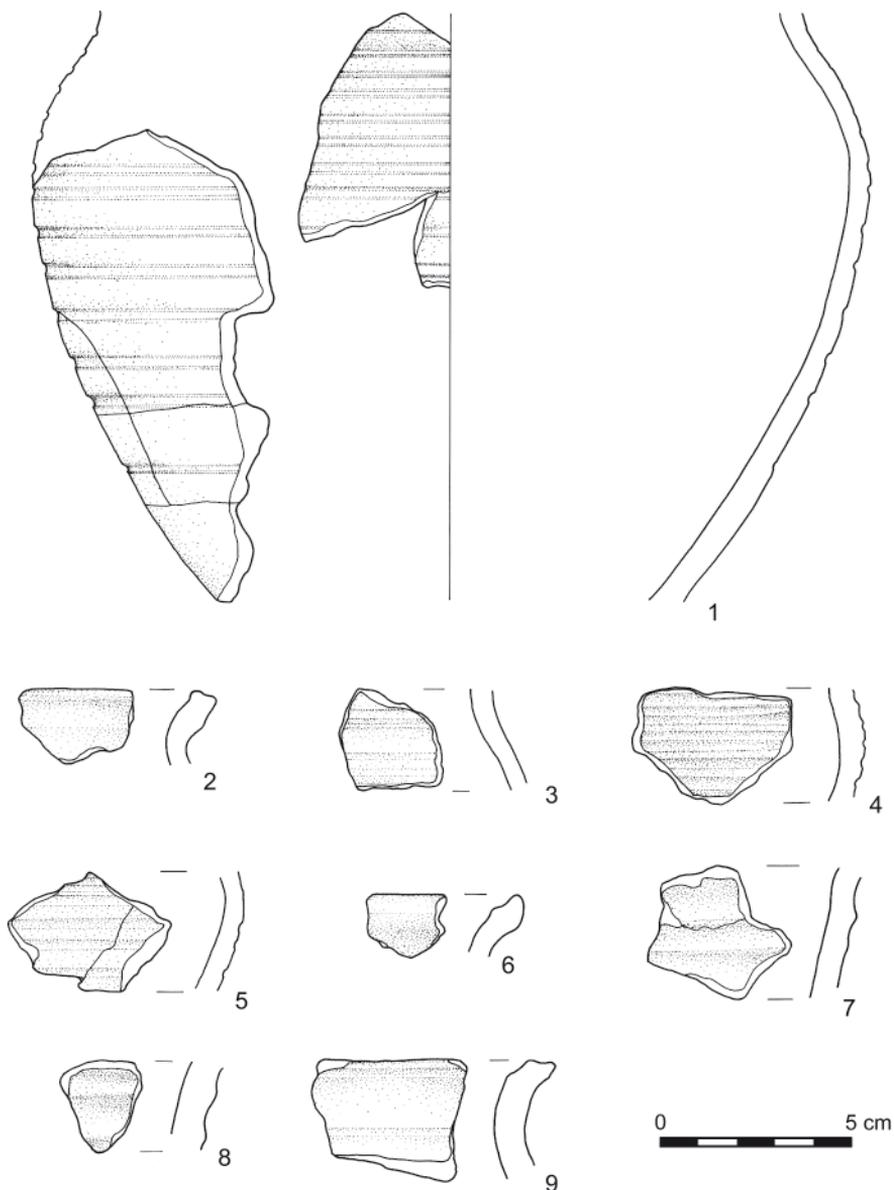


Fig. 15. Szczty-Dzięciołowo, site 1, Bielsk Podlaski district. A selection of pottery from barrow no. 1 (trench 2): 1 – layers 1, 2, 4, 11, 20, and feature 23 (layer 22); 2, 3 – layer 1; 4 – layer 4; 5-7 – layer 2; 8, 9 – layer 20. Drawn by G. Nowakowska, H. Olczak, A. Poniewierska

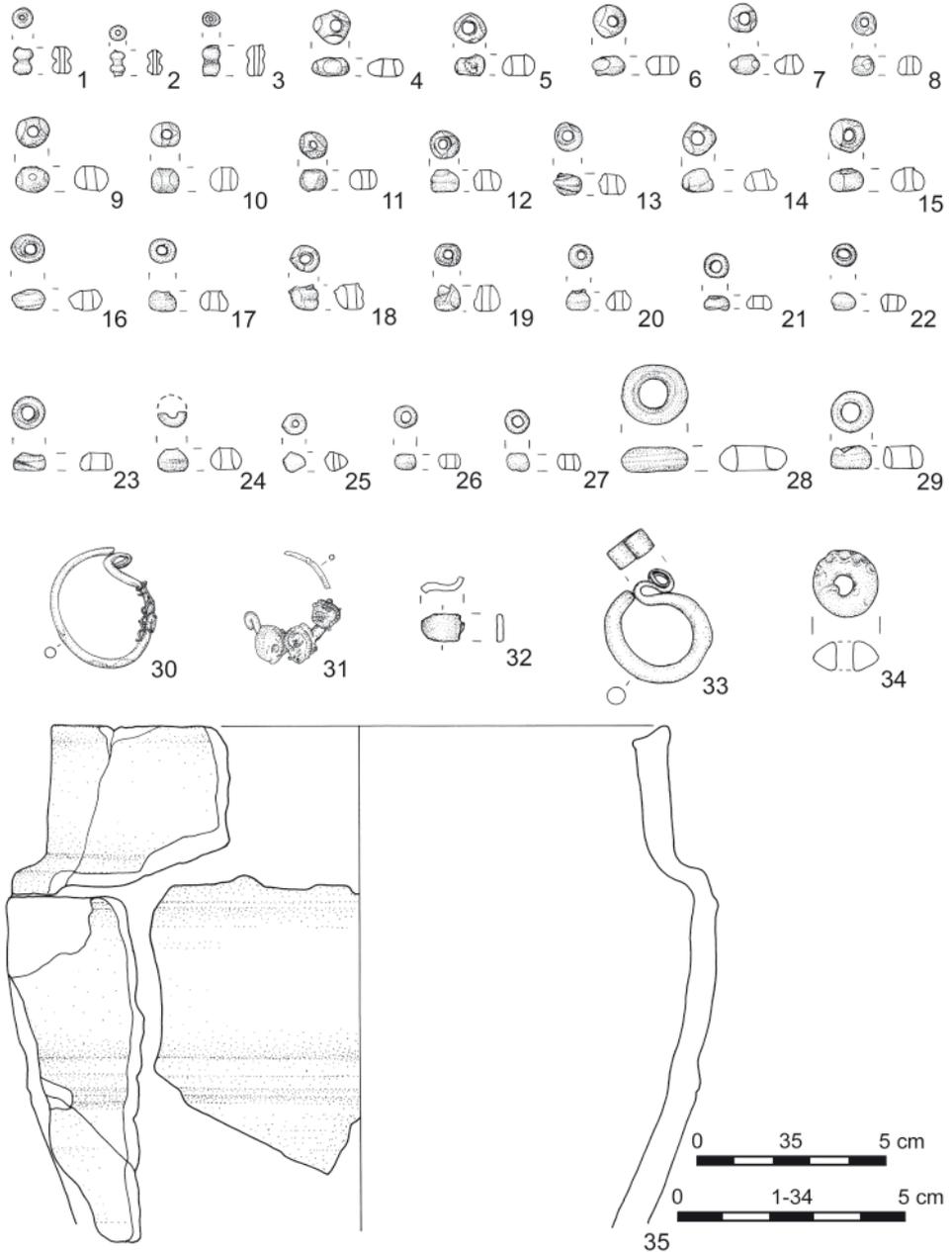


Fig. 16. Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, site 1, Bielski Podlaski district. A selection of artefacts from barrow no. 1 (trench 2): 1-28, 30-32 – grave goods; 29, 33, 34 – artefacts found in the mound (layers 4 and 20), probably coming from the grave goods; 35 – the mound and slope-wash deposits (layers 1, 2, 4, 11, 20): 1-29 – glass; 30, 31 – bronze; 32 – tin; 33 – silver; 34 – copper; 35 – clay. Drawn by G. Nowakowska, H. Olczak



Fig. 17. Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, site 1, Bielsk Podlaski district. View of barrow no. 1 after unearthing the burial and pavement covering the side pit (view from the north). Photo by D. Krasnodębski



Fig. 18. Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, site, Bielsk Podlaski district. Barrow no. 1, southern part of trench 2 – the burial in the foreground, the pavement at the top of the side pit in the background (view from the east). Photo by D. Krasnodębski

GRAVE GOODS AND OTHER FINDS

Glass beads

As a result of the research, several dozen glass beads from both graves have been collected. About 43 specimens in various states of preservation were discovered in the flat grave. Most of them were covered with a layer of white corrosion, which often prevented a determination of the type of glass used. About 31 beads in a slightly better state of preservation were found in the barrow.

The grave goods of the barrow burial included three beads made by the drawing technique of two-layered transparent creamy-white and brown glass. These are bi-segmental specimens, consisting of segments with a spherical shape that had been cut off from a larger tube (Figs. 11: 15-17; 16: 1-3). The diameter of the beads reaches 0.32-0.43 cm and their height, about 0.52-0.63 cm. The inner glass core is decorated with a metal layer, probably a silver one.

The other beads were most probably made by the winding technique. The black opaque glass beads found in the barrow (21 specimens, including one partly preserved) have a ring-like or spherical shape (Figs. 11: 8-12; 16: 4-24). Their cores are often uneven and asymmetrical, with clear traces of non-embedded narrow strips of glass. These beads have a diameter ranging from 0.5 to 0.75 cm and a height ranging from 0.29 to 0.53 cm. Most beads of this type were probably decorated, but an ornament or its remains have only been preserved on 14 of them (see Figs. 11: 8-11). The ornament includes three yellow opaque glass eyes with an oval or circular shape. They are usually slightly convex, and only one bead has high lumps that give it a triangular shape in cross-section (see Figs. 11: 8; 16: 4). Among the decorated beads there is also a corroded yellow-brown-green specimen with a diameter of 0.48 cm and a height of 0.25-0.42 cm (Fig. 11: 14; 16: 25).

Among the beads made using the winding technique, there are also unornamented bi-conical specimens made of transparent blue or blue-green glass. They are often made slapdash and asymmetrical, with a roughly cylindrical shape. Nine completely preserved beads of this type were found in the flat grave as well as one partly preserved bead, two crushed beads, and 11 fragments, probably coming from approximately five more specimens (Figs. 9: 2-11; 11: 1-4). Two fragments that are probably part of a similar bead were also noticed in the barrow. These beads are characterized by a height greater than their diameter, and varying sizes. Their diameters range from 0.65 to 0.99 cm and their heights, from 0.73 to 1.1 cm.

Another group includes transparent, ring-shaped, light-green glass beads. Two of them come from the barrow (Fig. 16: 26, 27), but the majority (15 completely and three partly preserved specimens) were found in the flat grave (Figs. 9: 12-29; 11: 5, 6). Some of the beads were found joined together, so it cannot be excluded that they were originally part of bi-segmental specimens (see Fig. 11: 5). These beads are characterized by very diverse

sizes, with diameters ranging between 0.4-0.7 cm and heights, between 0.18-0.41 cm. A completely corroded bi-segmental bead, 0.5 cm in diameter and 0.6-0.7 cm in height (Fig. 9: 30), may belong to the same type. The other transparent glass beads are represented by two ring-shaped specimens found in the barrow: the first one is dark blue, with a diameter of 1.32×1.45 cm and a height of 0.47-0.52 cm (Figs. 11: 7; 16: 28), while the other one is blue, with a diameter of 0.9 cm and a height of 0.35-0.50 cm (Figs. 11: 13; 16: 29). In addition, five ring-shaped specimens with a diameter of 0.7 cm and a height of 0.31-0.45 cm can be distinguished among the corroded beads from the flat grave, including one that was probably made from dark brown or black glass (Fig. 9: 31-33).

Non-ferrous metal artefacts

During the research led by Nikolai P. Avenarius', a coiled temple ring (also called a "finger-ring type" temple ring, type IV according to Musianowicz 1949, 154-160) was found at the cemetery. It had diameter of 2.2×2.3 cm and was probably made of bronze wire with a diameter of 0.2 cm (Avenarius' 1890, 9 and table II: 2; Dzik 2017, 195 and figs. 2: 93; 7: 1). On the other hand, a silver S-shaped temple ring found in 2015 in the barrow (Figs. 11: 20; 16: 33), due to its size – having an external dimension of 2.3×2.05 cm and an internal one of 1.7×1.4 cm – can be classified as type III, variant A (Kóčka-Krenz 1971, 102; 1993, 47-48).

The bronze earrings found in the barrow, with hoops rolled up into a loop at one end, are heavily damaged. One of them, with a hoop measuring 2.7×2.1 cm, is an earring with a so-called curly braid (Figs. 11: 18; 16: 30). These earrings are rarely found among either East or West Slavs, and their provenance has not yet been convincingly explained (Žak 1971; Kóčka-Krenz 1993, 61 and map 13; Sedova 1997, 65; Jaskanis 2008, 203; Dzik 2014a, 173-174). Another earring is a specimen with three so-called knot-shaped beads (Figs. 11: 19; 16: 31). The beads are about 0.7-0.8 cm in diameter and were made of a thin, coiled wire, around which a filigree wire was spirally wound. This earring belongs to the so-called Kiev type of ornaments (Lysenko 1991, 62-63).

One of the more unusual finds is the copper roundel discovered in the upper layer of the burial mound. It is biconical in cross-section, 1.5 cm in diameter and 0.55 cm in height, and has a hole 0.45 cm in diameter (Figs. 11: 21; 16: 34). Similar items from Novgorod are believed to be spindle whorls (Sedova 1981, 156-158 and figs. 62: 18-32). A rectangular tin plate with bent ends, with a length of 0.9 cm, a width of 0.6 cm and a thickness of 0.15 cm (Fig. 16: 32), which is probably a fragment of some ornament or clasp, was also discovered at the barrow burial.

Iron artefacts

A knife with a length of 6.5 cm and a partial tang was found in trench 1 (Fig. 12: 4). Its blade is triangular in cross-section and is up to 1.8 cm wide, while the tang is rectangular

in cross-section and is 0.5 cm wide and 0.1 cm thick. Another partly preserved knife was discovered during the excavation that took place in 1888 (Dzik 2017, 195 and figs. 7: 15, 16). Knives were typical grave goods at cemeteries with graves that included settings of kerbstones in the basins of the Middle Bug and Upper Narew Rivers (Dzik 2015a, fig. 82).

Three nails discovered in trench 1 are massive specimens, with a length of 11.0 to 13.3 cm and rectangular tangs with a width of 0.7 to 1.1 cm (Fig. 12: 1-3). Their heads were formed by hammering and bending the upper parts of the tangs. Similar nails from the cemetery in Czarna Wielka were classified as group II (Dzik 2014b, 52-56; further literature there). Two nails were also found by Sergei Songin during his excavation at the discussed cemetery (*Katalog' predmetov' 1885*, 77, nos. 644 and 645).

Pottery vessels

110 fragments of Early Medieval pottery were found during the excavation, including 42 from the flat part of the cemetery and 68 from the barrow. Most of them are small fragments with a length of less than 5 cm (88%) and with signs of erosion on the surface (about 81%). After reassembling the material from trench 1, a partly reconstructed pot (Fig. 8: 3), two base fragments (Figs. 8: 1, 2), and individual fragments from at least another three vessels were acquired. All sherds of the reconstructed vessel were found in the destroyed area in the northeastern corner of the trench, while the fragments of the bases were found among the cobblestones in the southwestern and eastern parts of the trench. In trench 2, pottery was mostly found in both of the mound's layers, in the slope-wash deposits at its base, and in the modern humus. Only three small fragments were found in the fill of the side pit. Two pots were partly reconstructed (Figs. 15: 1; 16: 35), and fragments of at least ten more vessels were distinguished among the remaining sherds (Fig. 15: 2-9). Most of the fragments belonging to one of the reconstructed vessels (see Fig. 16: 35) were found in the northeastern part of the trench, mainly in the slope-wash deposits, and less often in the mound. Sherds from another pot (see Fig. 15: 1) were dispersed over a large area of the trench, with the greatest concentration in the northern part of the mound. Traces of usage in the form of soot stains and light burning were noticed on the surfaces of all the reconstructed pots and one of the bases from trench 1.

Vessels from both parts of the cemetery are similar in terms of technique and style. They were formed on a potter's wheel using the coiling technique and then turned on their whole surface. The vessels were made from ferriferous clay of glacial origin, tempered with crushed stone, probably granite, except for one of the pots (see Fig. 16: 35), the clay of which was tempered with both crushed stone and sand. The temper grains were usually not larger than 0.2 cm, with the majority of sherds having grains with a diameter of 0.10-0.15 cm (67%). The vessels were well turned, which resulted in the modest thickness of their walls (most often 0.5-0.6 cm) and the precise development of their rims. All bases were concave, usually slightly, with traces of mineral ballast in the form of medium-grained

(0.1-0.2 cm) crushed stone or sand. The vessels were fired in an oxidizing atmosphere. They generally had brown or orange outer surfaces, as well as multi-coloured cores.

Two morphological types of vessels were distinguished in the collection: S-shaped pots and pots with cylindrical necks. The first of these types is represented by the partly reconstructed vessel from trench 1, characterized by an everted rim and a concave base (Fig. 8: 3). Its total height probably reached about 17.5 cm, while the diameter of the rim was about 17 cm, and the diameter of the base was 10.0-10.5 cm. The partly preserved vessel found in the barrow was S-shaped as well (Fig. 15: 1). This shape was also likely shared by several other vessels, of which only small rim fragments were preserved (Figs. 15: 2, 6, 9). The vessels with cylindrical necks are represented by a pot from the barrow with a diameter of about 16 cm at its rim (Fig. 16: 35). The bases discovered in trench 1 were slightly concave, with a diameter of about 11 cm (Fig. 8: 1, 2). Most of the pots were decorated with incised horizontal grooves (Figs. 8: 2, 3; 15: 1, 3-5, 7-9). Only the pot with the cylindrical neck was covered with a rare ornament, in the form of uncommonly widely spaced grooves (see Fig. 16: 35).

BURIAL RITE

The latest excavations have confirmed that the discussed site is an inhumation cemetery with flat graves accompanied by settings of kerbstones. The discovery of the barrow at its grounds was, however, an unexpected one. The small scope of the excavations from 2015 and the lack of description of the burials excavated in the 19th century make an in-depth characterization of both the cemetery and its funeral rite impossible. In the western part of the site only a few potential stone settings around graves are visible. They each have a length of about 3-6 m and a width of about 2.0-3.5 m. Based on their arrangement, it can be assumed that the graves had an east-west or northeast-southwest orientation. This is confirmed by the orientation of the excavated burial of a child, the head of which was facing southwest. In his report of Adolf Wiewiórowski's research, Józef Jaroszewicz (1853, 194-195, note I) also mentioned a similar orientation of skeletons, which were arranged with their heads facing west. Due to the poor state of preservation of kerbs, it is difficult to say whether the kerbs of adjacent graves had joint walls, which is considered a typical feature of Podlachian cemeteries (Rauhut 1971, 457). The form of the examined grave shows that the deceased were placed in shallow pits covered with multiple layers of cobblestones – type IIb or IIP according to Lechosław Rauhut's classification (1971, 456-457), or type II.1 according to Michał Dzik (2015c, 43-44). So far, in the Upper Narew River basin, inhumation pit graves with kerbstones have been discovered in cemeteries at Kuraszewo, site 4 (Rajewski 1932; Dzik 2015a, 106-107), while in the Middle Bug River basin they were found, for example, at Czarna Wielka, site 1 (Dzik 2014c, 19-22), Rogawka, site 1 (Dzik 2016, 222-225), and Czekanów, site 1 (Zawadzka-Antosik 1982, 27). Despite the existence

of such a tradition at these burial grounds, it was not the most widespread burial rite in these areas. It cannot be ruled out that some of the deceased were placed on the ground's surface, as was the case at other similar Podlachian cemeteries (see, i.a., Dzik 2015c, 41-43). This may be indicated in the account of Józef Jaroszewicz (1853, 194-195, note I) about the shallow burials of the dead. Iron nails discovered in trench 1 and pieces of wood found in the excavated grave prove that some of the dead were buried in coffins or that there was some other type of wooden constructions used for protection of the corpses. The large sizes of the nails indicate that they were used to fasten heavy planks.

The burial ground in Szczyty-Dzięciołowo is unusual among cemeteries with graves accompanied by settings of kerbstones due to the presence of the barrow, located only a dozen or so meters from the examined flat grave. The mound was made of sand and stones, but due to the significant degree of its destruction, details regarding its construction are difficult to recreate. The cobblestones discovered at the base of the mound and in the side pit probably originate from the mantle that originally covered it. An oblong stone lying on the northern slope of the mound can be interpreted as a fragment of the damaged kerb. Stones from other sides of the barrow that are visible on the surface, already outside the research area, could also be parts of this kerb. This hypothesis is supported by finds of individual boulders at the bases of other mounds (see Fig. 5), as well as by the presence of similar constructions at a number of cemeteries in the Middle Bug River basin (see below). However, it is also likely that the aforementioned stone and a small pavement of cobblestones located to the north of it are not related to the barrow, but to a completely destroyed flat grave. The pit located at the western base of the barrow was probably a result of the removal of soil used to build the mound. Only residual artefacts (including pottery from the Roman period) were found in the lower part of the pit, so there is no indication that it fulfilled any ritual function. The inhumation burial was placed within the mound, on a layer with a thickness of about 0.15 m. A similar burial rite was recorded in the cemetery at Leśnictwo Postołowo, site 11 in the Białowieża Forest (Olczak and Krasnodębski 2017), as well as at Baciki Dalsze, Korzeniówka Mała, site 2, and Klukowo, site 1 in the Drohiczyń Upland (Dzik 2015c, 63). It was also noted at several cemeteries located in the Leśna River basin in the Belarussian Pobuże region (Korobushkina 1993, table 5).

The grave goods deposited with the dead at the discussed cemetery include mainly ornaments, but tools like knives and a copper roundel, which was perhaps a spindle whorl, have also been found. Just like in the case of other burial grounds with graves accompanied by kerbstone settings, pottery fragments were also discovered in Szczyty-Dzięciołowo. However, the vessels were not deposited near the deceased in the flat grave nor in the barrow. The presence of base fragments among the cobblestones of the pavement in trench 1 is proof of the placing of pots on the ground near the burials, or of their use during funeral rites (cf. Rauhut 1971, 470; Olczak and Wójcik 2019, 165). Sherds found by Nikolai P. Avenarius' (1895, 20) in various parts of one of the graves indicate, however, that pottery vessels or parts thereof could have also been placed directly near the dead. The dispersion of

pottery fragments in the mound and around its base seems to confirm the thesis that vessels, which might have been ritually broken first, were then thrown into the mound during funeral rites (cf. Korobushkina 1993, 47-50; Olczak and Wójcik 2019, 165-166). It is also possible that one of the pots was originally placed at the top of the barrow. This theory is supported by the concentration of most of its fragments in the slope-wash deposits at the northern slope of the mound. Soot stains and traces of secondary burning visible on the surface of the vessels from both parts of the cemetery indicate either that fire-related rituals were performed (Rauhut 1971, 470; Dzik 2015c, 127-133), or that the pots had served household purposes before the funeral.

Animal bones discovered at Early Medieval burial grounds are also usually considered to prove the performance of cult-related activities, such as funeral feasts (i.a. Musianowicz 1955, 267; Rauhut 1971, 470; Dzik 2015c, 156-158). The vast majority of animal bones found in the barrow came from cattle, mainly from a young individual or individuals (Piątkowska-Malecka 2016). The bones, which had varying degrees of consumption value, were found at the edge of the mound and in the upper and middle parts of the fill of the side pit, but not in the mound itself. The only exceptions were fragments of a tibial diaphysis and a metapodial section situated near the burial, at a distance of about 0.2 m from the skeleton's right femur (Fig. 13: 1). Such a location may indicate an intentional action, for example placing near the deceased an offering of meat that was consumed by the participants of the funeral ceremony. Remains of several animal species were discovered in the flat part of the cemetery, but their connection to the funeral rites is unclear due to the cemetery's high degree of destruction. The only thing worth noting is a long bone found among the cobblestones in the southeastern part of the trench, which probably belonged to a horse (Piątkowska-Malecka 2016). Among other places, horse bones have also been found at a cemetery with graves accompanied by kerbstone settings in Niewiarowo-Sochy (Niemczak 2019).

CHRONOLOGY OF THE CEMETERY

Due to the lack of radiocarbon dating, the chronology of the cemetery is based on the analysis of burial forms and grave goods. Burials placed within mounds, similar to the one found in the discussed barrow, appear as early as at the turn of the 10th and 11th centuries in the area inhabited by the Dregoviches (Lysenko 1991, 40, 46). In the Middle Bug River basin, they are usually dated to the 11th century or the beginning of the 12th century (Korobushkina 1993, 82-92; Zoll-Adamikowa 1975, 56; Dzik 2015a, 48, 83, 89). Only one burial in the cemetery at Leśnictwo Postołowo, site 11 in the Białowieża Forest can be dated to a later period, namely to the 12th century (Olczak and Krasnodębski 2017). Among the oldest of the barrow's grave goods are glass beads made by the stretching technique (Figs. 11: 15-17; 16: 1-3). Similar beads were mostly produced in the 8th to 10th centuries,

but they also sporadically appeared in the younger phase of the Early Medieval period – in the 11th and even 12th centuries (Dekówna 1999, 60-61; Pankiewicz *et al.* 2017, 63-64 and table 2). In the areas of northern Kievan Rus', such beads were most widespread in the second half of the 10th century, but they occurred until the beginning of the 12th century (Fekhnner 1959, annexes III: 1, IV: 1; Kuzina 2016, 219). Similar beads are rarely discovered in the cemeteries of the Middle Bug River basin. At Skiwy Małe, site 1 and Czarna Wielka, site 1, they were found in flat graves with inhumation, along with ornaments dated to the 10th-12th centuries (Bieńkowska 2010, figs. 3: 10-16; Wajda 2014, figs. 24: 3-4, 31, grave 29, and table 7, no. 11). Beads decorated with three eyes (Figs. 11: 8-11; 16: 4-17) in the lands of the northern Kievan Rus' are usually dated from the 11th to the early 12th centuries (Fekhnner 1959, annex VI: 18; Kuzina 2016, 235; Valiulina 2016, 130), while in the Western Slavic areas they are associated with a wider time range, namely the 11th-13th centuries (Markiewicz 2006, 135 and table 13). In the Middle Bug River basin, they were found in Drohiczyn (Pawlata 1991, table II: 5; *Schätze* 2011, 138, no. 372), and in north-eastern Mazovia, they were discovered in one of the graves from the older phase of the cemetery at Daniłowo Małe, site 1, which was dated from the 11th to the first quarter of the 12th centuries (Olczak *et al.* 2019, 77-83, 86-87). Similar beads from Świećk-Strumiany (Jaskanis 2008, 186, 346-347 and fig. 49: XII/N) may be slightly younger, because they were discovered together with bronze temple rings of the Pomeranian type, widespread in Mazovia mainly in the 12th century (Rauhut 1971, 473, chart A; Jaskanis 2008, 199). Beads decorated with three eyes were also part of the hoard from Olbrachtówek, from which the youngest coins are dated to the second half of the 11th century (Bogucki and Kulesza 2013; Czonstke and Koperkiewicz 2013, 234 and table V: 15, 17). The blue glass bead is among the youngest finds from the burial mound (Figs. 11: 13; 16: 29). In the vicinity of the discussed site, ornaments of this type were discovered in flat cemeteries at Zbucz, site 1 (Olczak *et al.* 2019, figs. 5.9: 5, 6) and Kuraszewo, site 1 (Jaskanis 1966, 246, and table XIII: 11), as well as in a barrow at the cemetery in Leśnictwo Postołowo, site 11 in the Białowieża Forest (Olczak and Krasnodębski 2017). These aforementioned burial grounds were used mainly in the 12th century. Metal ornaments from the barrow are also helpful in the dating of the burial. The silver S-shaped temple ring found in the mound (Figs. 11: 20; 16: 33) belongs to type A, which was most widespread in the 11th century (Rauhut 1971, 473, chart A; Kóčka-Krenz 1971, 102-105; 1993, 47-48). On the Bielsk Plain, silver ornaments of similar size were noticed at Kuraszewo, sites 1 or 2 (Musianowicz 1960, table VIII: 14; Pachobut 2006, fig. 5: 2) and in the inhumation barrows at Leśnictwo Przechody, sites 9 and 10 in the Białowieża Forest (Jelonka Range, Olczak *et al.* 2019, fig. 5.13: 3) and Leśnictwo Postołowo, site 3 (Szczekotowo Range, Götze 1929, table 13: 2). Earrings with a curly braid (Figs. 11: 18; 16: 30) occurred in the West Slavic territories in the period from the end of the 10th to the 13th centuries, most often in the 11th-12th centuries (Kóčka-Krenz 1993, 61, 205-206). In Kievan Rus' their chronology is equally wide; specimens from Novgorod were discovered in deposits dated from the late 10th to the second half of the

13th centuries (Sedova 1981, 16 and fig. 3: 3; 1997, 65). In the Mazovian-Rus' borderland, similar bronze earrings were found in a barrow dating back to the 11th century at Hotinovo in the Leśna River basin (Korobushkina 1993, 81, 127, and fig. 39: 17) and in flat graves at Czarna Wielka, site 1 (Bieńkowska *et al.* 2013, table XIV, grave 12: 2; Perlikowska-Puszkarska 2018, fig. 8, grave 255: 1), as well as at Święck-Strumiany, site 3 (Jaskanis 2008, table LXII, grave 23: 1; CXV, grave 289: 1, 2; CXXVIII, grave 383: 2). Earrings with knot-shaped beads (Figs. 11: 19; 16: 31) were discovered in former Rus' territories, often in barrow graves (i.a. Tyszkiewicz 1868, 212-213 and table I: 7; Sedov 1982, tables XXIX: 14, LVIII: 12; Lysenko 1991, 62-63). In cemeteries of the Polans, they were dated to the 10th-11th centuries (Rusanova 1966, table XI), and in the northern regions of Kievan Rus', to the 11th-12th centuries (Levasheva 1967, 21; Sedova 1981, 14; 1997, 65). No earring of this type is known from the Middle Bug River basin, while beads of similar shape were found in Skorbichi, Brest region, Belarus (Andrzejowski *et al.* 2005, 179) and at Twarogi Lackie, site 1 (Dzik 2015a, 190). Both types of earrings were found in a flat inhumation cemetery at Zvenygorod (Dźwinogród in Polish), Lviv region, Ukraine (Hupało 2011, figs. 11: 2-4).

It is much harder to precisely date the graves with kerbstone settings located in the discussed cemetery. The finds from the excavations carried out in the middle of the 19th century have been lost, and it is also not clear whether all the items mentioned by Józef Jaroszewicz (1853, 194-195, note I) were discovered at the said site. The form of the pit grave researched in 2015 indicates its late chronology; in the cemeteries of the Drohiczyn Upland, graves of this type started to spread at the end of the 12th century (Dzik 2016, 225). Biconical blue glass beads (Figs. 9: 2-11; 11: 1-4) discovered at the aforementioned burial were dated to the 11th-12th centuries in the northern part of Kievan Rus' (Fekhnner 1959, annex 6: 1; Kuzina 2016, figs. 1: b, c; 4). In the lands of contemporary Poland, these beads were most popular in the 12th-13th centuries (Wajda 2014, 68-69; Markiewicz 2006, table 13; Pankiewicz *et al.* 2017, 261-263 and table 2). They were found, for example, at nearby cemeteries with graves accompanied by settings of kerbstones at Zbucz, site 1 (Olczak *et al.* 2019, fig. 5.9: 2, 3) and Kuraszewo, site 1 (Jaskanis 1966, tables XIV: 5; XV: 1), as well as in the barrows of the Białowieża Forest at Leśnictwo Postołowo, site 3 and Leśnictwo Przechody, site 10 (Götze 1929, tables 12: 2; 13: 1-3). They were also noted at several flat cemeteries on the Drohiczyn Upland, for example at Baciki Dalsze (Dzik 2015a, table VII: 5-8), Czarna Wielka, site 1 (Wajda 2014, 68-69 and fig. 24: 20), and Krupice, site 1 (Dzik 2015a, table XVIII: 26). In Daniłowo Małe, site 1, they were found in graves of the younger phase, which were probably used in the 12th century (Olczak *et al.* 2019, 86-87). The beads made of light green glass (Figs. 9: 12-29; 11: 5, 6), known for example from Czarna Wielka, site 1 (Wajda 2014, fig. 31, graves 24 and 29), Krupice, site 1 (Dzik 2015a, table XVIII: 30, 31), and Rogawka, site 1 (Dzik 2016, fig. 18: 7) were also dated to the 12th-13th centuries. Among the items discovered in the flat cemetery in the 19th century, the coiled temple ring is worth mentioning. These ornaments have a wide chronology, covering the 11th-13th centuries, with the period of their greatest proliferation in the 11th-

12th centuries (Musianowicz 1949, 206-207; Kóčka-Krenz 1993, 59, 205; Korobushkina 1993, 73; Kalaga 2006, 149). On the Bielsk Plain, similar temple rings were noted at Kuraszewo, site 1 (Jaskanis 1966, table XIII: 8). In the Białowieża Forest, these temple rings were found in the cemeteries at Leśnictwo Przechody, sites 9 and 10 (Olczak *et al.* 2019, fig. 5.13: 2), Leśnictwo Postołowo, site 3 (Götze 1929, table 13: 1), and Leśnictwo Teremiski, site 1 (Zamczysko Range, Krasnodębski *et al.* 2005, figs. 9; 11: d-j).

Pottery vessels found at the cemetery belong to forms that were used for a long period of time. In terms of technique and decoration, they primarily resemble pots discovered at nearby cemeteries with graves accompanied by kerbstone settings at Zbucz, site 1 (Olczak *et al.* 2019, figs. 5.9: 9, 10) and Kuraszewo, site 1 (Jaskanis 1966, tables XIII: 1, 12; XIV: 1, 4; XV: 9; XVI: 8). They are very similar to the vessels from cemeteries in the Białowieża Forest (Götze 1929, table 14: 1-6, 8; Krasnodębski *et al.* 2005, fig. 11: a) as well as the ones from the barrows in the Leśna River basin (Korobushkina 1993, figs. 17: 4, 11, 12, 17, 18; 35: 12; 45). Pots with cylindrical necks are a very common find at the cemeteries on the Drohiczyń Upland (i.a. Rauhut and Długopolska 1975, 360, table VI: f, r, s; Długopolska 1993, tables I: h, i; II: b; Piasecka and Piasecki 2014, tables V: 1; X: 3), while S-shaped vessels are discovered there much less frequently (i.a. Długopolska 1993, table II: i; Piasecka and Piasecki 2014, tables V: 1; X: 1, 3; XI: 4). Vessels from many settlements on the Bielsk Plain are also similar in terms of shape and technique. A good example can be seen in the pots from the gord in Paszkowszczyzna, which is located about 10 km to the southwest of the discussed cemetery (Krasnodębski 2000, figs. 4: 4, 6). In Brest, analogical forms are dated mainly to the 11th-12th centuries (Lysenko 1985, 326), while in the urban centres of north-western Belarus they are known from the 11th-13th centuries (Zverugo 1975, 69; Malevskaia-Malevich 2005, 144-145). In the Upper Narew and Middle Bug River basins, similar vessels probably spread between the middle and the end of the 11th century and remained in use until the end of the Early Medieval period.

Taking the above data into account, it seems that the most probable time of the barrow construction is the period from the end of the 11th century to the middle of the 12th century. The examined flat grave is probably slightly younger and dates to the 12th century or the first half of the 13th century. However, these assumptions do not allow the establishment of the dating for the entire site. They also do not allow the determination of the chronological relationship between the graves with kerbstone settings and the barrows. Neither are there any precise chronological markers for other cemeteries on the Bielsk Plain. For example, the use of the cemetery at Kuraszewo, site 1 was dated to the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries (Jaskanis 1966, 263), while the one at Zbucz, site 1 dates to the period from the end of the 11th century to the end of the 12th century (Olczak *et al.* 2019, 64). At the current stage of research, the dating of the discussed site should therefore stay within the general timeframe adopted for cemeteries of this type. For the Middle Bug River basin, it is believed that cemeteries with graves accompanied by settings of kerbstones began to appear in the period between the middle of the 11th century and the turn of the

11th and 12th centuries, and were used at least until the beginning of the Late Medieval period (Rauhut 1971, 472-474; Miśkiewicz 1981, 101-102; Dzik 2015c, 179-203).

THE CEMETERY AT SZCZYTY-DZIĘCIOŁOWO AS AN EXAMPLE OF GRAVE FORM DIVERSITY IN THE MIDDLE BUG RIVER BASIN IN THE 11TH-13TH CENTURIES

The results of the 2015 excavations at the Szczyty-Dzięciołowo cemetery are yet another confirmation of the exceptional diversity of funeral rites that was characteristic of the Middle Bug River basin in the 11th-13th centuries (Zoll-Adamikowa 1979, 214-218, 232-234; Kalaga 2006, 184-191; Dzik 2015c, 170-199). According to the division proposed by Helena Zoll-Adamikowa, this period in the discussed area coincides with phase III of the Early Medieval funeral rite. During this phase, the passage from cremation to inhumation rites took place under the influence of Christianity (Zoll-Adamikowa 1979, 214-218). Simultaneously with the spread of inhumation in most of the areas inhabited by West Slavs, barrows were supplanted in favour of flat graves, while the East Slavs retained the former grave form. In the Mazovian-Rus' border region this process was slower than in other areas, and cremation burials, according to various researchers, continued there until the second half of the 12th century or even to the end of the 13th century (Rauhut 1973; Zoll-Adamikowa 1979, 214-215; Kalaga 2006, 186). The habit of burying the dead in barrows survived even longer in the Middle Bug basin – up to the Early Modern period, although, starting from the Late Medieval period, the deceased were usually buried in older mounds (Dzik 2015c, 64-66; Olczak *et al.* 2019, 90-94). The issue of funeral rite diversity has been thoroughly studied in recent years (see, i.a., Kalaga 2006; Dzik 2015c; Skrzyńska 2019); in this case, therefore, the authors are going to concentrate only on one aspect of this phenomenon, namely the diversity of grave forms.

Many different theories have been formulated about the genesis of “Podlachian” cemeteries with graves accompanied by settings of kerbstones (their juxtaposition in: Dzik 2014d, 87-93). They are most often considered to be a feature of Mazovian ritual and are connected with the population influx from Old Mazovia into the Middle Bug River basin (see, i.a., Jakimowicz 1935; Musianowicz 1960, 191-193; Rauhut 1971, 482-485; Miśkiewicz 1981, 106-116). Others, however, argue that graves with settings of kerbstones were spread throughout the discussed region by the Rus'-Varangian settlers brought in by Yaroslav the Wise (Kiersnowska 1992, 69-72; Kordala 2006, 233-249). Michał Dzik (2015b, 132-135; 2015c, 186-187) has recently presented an interesting theory of the local genesis of this type of grave. According to this theory, graves with kerbstone settings originate from the transformation of older barrows with stone constructions (cf. Sedov 1982, 122; Kvyatkovskaya 1998, 37-39, 170). In contrast to flat graves, inhumation barrows are considered to be an element of the East Slavic burial rite (see, i.a., Lysenko 1991, 33-49; Korobushkina

1993, 93-107). The presence of both grave types in the Middle Bug River basin was noted by, among others, Roman Jakimowicz (1935, 248-249) and Krystyna Musianowicz (1960, 191-199), who recognized it as evidence of an ethnically mixed Mazovian-Rus' or, more precisely, Mazovian-Dregovich settlement. In the opinion of Helena Zoll-Adamikowa (1979, 232-234; 1996, 88-90), the dominance of inhumation barrows in some regions was a reflection of the missionary influences of the Eastern Church, which was probably a result of political affiliation to the Kievan Rus'. This concept was also adopted by Michał Dzik (2015c, 190-192). According to Dzik, the survival of the custom of barrow construction at some cemeteries on the Drohiczyn Upland can be seen as a manifestation of the slowed progress of Christianisation and the tolerance of the ancient grave form. These two events resulted from the subjugation of this area by the Rurikids.

The vast majority of well-known cases where graves with kerbstone settings and barrows existed side-by-side were concentrated in the Drohiczyn Upland. These are, for example, sites at Baciki Dalsze (Musianowicz 1960, nos. 183, 184; Rauhut 1971, 630, nos. 161, 162; Zoll-Adamikowa 1975, 53-56; Dzik 2015a, 48-52), Baciki Średnie, sites 1-3 (Musianowicz 1960, nos. 185, 186; Dzik 2015a, 52-53), Kamianki (Musianowicz 1955, 247 and fig. 1; 1960, nos. 122, 123), Korzeniówka Mała, sites 1 and 2 (Dzik 2011; 2015a, 87-89), Nie-wiarowo-Sochy (Musianowicz 1955, 247 and fig. 1; 1960, nos. 119, 120), Rogawka, sites 1 and 3 (Dzik 2016, 209), and Skiwy Małe, site 1 (Bieńkowska 2010; Dzik 2015a, 135-137). It should be remembered, however, that the barrows located near flat grave cemeteries were not always excavated; hence, it is difficult to determine their dating and the type of burial rite. It is probable that some of the listed mounds are older graves with cremation, which had prevailed in these areas at least until the middle of the 10th century (phase II according to Helena Zoll-Adamikowa 1979, figs. 57, 58). So far, Early Medieval inhumation burials in barrows have been confirmed at just a few cemeteries, for example at Baciki Dalsze (barrow no. 9 – Zoll-Adamikowa 1975, 56; Dzik 2015a, 48-49), Czarna Cerkiewna, site 1 (barrow no. II – Chilmon 1974, 310-313; Zoll-Adamikowa 1975, 69), and Korzeniówka Mała, site 2 (barrow no. 2 – Dzik 2011; 2015a, 87-89). Graves from Klukowo, site 1 (barrow no. 19 – Zoll-Adamikowa 1975, 60-66, Dzik 2015a, 82-84) and Kamianki (Musianowicz 1960, no. 123) could also come from the same period, but a Late Medieval or Early Modern origin cannot be excluded. The cemeteries at Baciki Dalsze and Korzeniówka Mała, where barrows were located just a few meters from flat graves (Dzik 2015c, figs. 35 and 40), are particularly interesting. In the Siedlce Upland, the close proximity of barrows with inhumation and graves with kerbstone settings was observed at Łuzki (Łuniewski 1883, 478; Musianowicz 1950/51, 229-236, 240-248; 1960, nos. 70, 71; Kalaga 2006, 58-59, and the documentation at the State Archaeological Museum in Warsaw) and Czekanów, site 1 (Zawadzka-Antosik 1982, 27). The spatial relationships between the two types of graves is not known at Łuzki, whereas at Czekanów very few barrows were situated in the southern and western parts of the cemetery, where they copied the row arrangement of flat graves (*ibidem*).

Unlike in the Drohiczyń and Siedlce Uplands, inhumations in flat graves and barrow graves on the Bielsk Plain occur in two separate zones, and the cemetery in Szczyty-Dzięciołowo is an exception in this respect. It is part of a cluster of several burial sites with graves accompanied by settings of kerbstones, which is located in the interfluvium of the Orlanka and Łoknica Rivers, left tributaries of the Narew River. About 2.5 km northeast of Szczyty-Dzięciołowo lies the aforementioned cemetery at Zbucz, site 1, and about 10 km further are three cemeteries at Kuraszewo – sites 1, 2, and 4 (Rajewski 1932, 95-97; Musianowicz 1960, nos. 251-253; Jaskanis 1966; Pachobut 2006; Dzik 2015a, 98-107). There is another site that is reportedly located near the village of Krzywa, but has not been found to this day, which is likely a burial ground of the same type (Avenarius' 1890, 21; Pokrovskii 1895, 66; Musianowicz 1960, no. 244; Rauhut 1971, no. 198). This group forms the northernmost enclave of Podlachian cemeteries with graves accompanied by settings of kerbstones, which is clearly distinguishable from the Drohiczyń cluster. Apart from the unlocated necropolis in Kruhłe, the character of which is not fully defined (Dzik 2015a, 93-94), the cemetery in Sasiny, about 25 km from Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, is the closest known site of this type (Dzik 2015a, 133-134). Despite insufficient knowledge of these cemeteries, which was a result of their high degree of destruction, as well as the unprofessional research conducted there in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, the difference of the funeral rite practised there is noticeable. In this small area there are cemeteries with cremation burials in pit graves (Kuraszewo, sites 1 and possibly 2), inhumation burials in pit graves (Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, site 1 and Kuraszewo, site 4), and probably also with burials placed directly on the ground (Zbucz, site 1), possibly both inhumation and cremation ones. At the current stage of research, there is insufficient data for the chronological stratification of these cemeteries, which would perhaps partly explain the phenomenon of such a large diversity of burial rites. In this part of the Bielsk Plain, however, Early Medieval barrow cemeteries with inhumation burials have not been found so far. In recent years, it has been excluded that the neighbouring mounds from Zbucz, site 2 are inhumation barrows, since cremation burials dated to the 9th-10th centuries were discovered there (Olczak *et al.* 2019, 61-62). Other features excavated in this region are either barrows with the cremation rite (Lachy – Zoll-Adamikowa 1975, 153-156; Dzik 2015a, 109-110), barrows in which Early Modern inhumation burials were unearthed (Kozłiki, Kuraszewo – Jaskanis 1963; Dzik 2015a, 107-109; Olczak *et al.* 2019, 90-94), or uninvestigated mounds known from field surveys or 19th-century discoveries (Jaroszewicz 1844, 204-205; 1853, 194-195, note I; Musianowicz 1960, nos. 248, 255, and table IX, as well as the Polish Archaeological Record documentation in the Podlachian Museum in Białystok).

In contrast to the western part of the Bielsk Plain, in the eastern part of this region the barrow was the most common type of grave during this period. Several of the biggest cemeteries with inhumation barrows in northeastern Poland, dated from the second half of the 11th century to the end of the 13th century, are located in the Narewka River basin in the Białowieża Forest. The two westernmost of these cemeteries, Leśnictwo Postołowo,

sites 3 and 11, are located about 20 km from Szczyty-Dzięciolowo, while a bit further north-east there are cemeteries in Leśnictwo Przechody, sites 9 and 10, as well as the barrows in the Ladzka Forest, which have not yet been located (Götze 1929, 528-540; Walicka 1958; Krasnodębski *et al.* 2011, 155-163; Olczak and Krasnodębski 2017; Olczak *et al.* 2019, 58-61, 67-72). It is very likely that other earthen mounds located in the Białowieża Forest are also barrows from the same period. Two examples are unexcavated mounds at Leśnictwo Jelonka, site 1 (Götze 1929, 518) and barrows at Leśnictwo Krynica, site 2, where pottery from the second half of the 11th century or the 12th century was discovered (Wawrzeniuk 2017, 207-213, figs. 13-16). Though present in both the older and the most recent literature (i.a. Górska 1976; Wawrzeniuk 2017), the thesis of an Early Medieval origin and sepulchral function of most of the earthen mounds in the Białowieża and Ladzka Forests (including mounds where no burials were discovered) is nevertheless unfounded at the current stage of research (Samojlik 2007, 88-95; Krasnodębski *et al.* 2011, 148-149, 163; Krasnodębski and Olczak 2018, 28-29). Burial mounds from the eastern part of the Bielsk Plain belong to zone K, which, according to Helena Zoll-Adamikowa (1979, 232-234, fig. 59), covers the majority of Eastern Slavic territories. The cemeteries from the Narewka River basin are probably a continuation of a large cemetery complex located in the Leśna River basin in the Belarussian Pobuże region (Korobushkina 1993). Both groups share not only a similar form of graves, but also more frequent exceptions to the western orientation of the burials, and a more widespread custom of equipping the dead with clay vessels, which sets them apart from other cemeteries of the Middle Bug River basin (Korobushkina 1993, tables 1, 2, 5; Olczak *et al.* 2019, 60, 71; Olczak and Wójcik 2019, 155-156). No cemeteries with flat graves accompanied by kerbstone settings have been found in the Białowieża Forest so far, although it is possible that any such graves were heavily damaged by the repurposing of stones over the years by locals. One such place is the cemetery at Leśnictwo Teremiski, site 1 (Krasnodębski *et al.* 2005). The boulders visible on its surface and the remains of cobblestone pavements, which covered both pit graves as well as burials placed on the original ground surface, are evidence of the use of stone constructions. Due to the high degree of destruction, however, interpreting these constructions as kerbs of flat graves is not obvious. According to one of the witnesses of the excavations at this necropolis in 1825, there had been a “stack of stones formed in a cone,” under which a skeleton was discovered (Bajko 2001, 16). This information may indicate the presence of small barrows with stone constructions at the cemetery.

In view of the insufficient state of research, it is difficult to say whether the duality of grave types on the Bielsk Plain reflects an actual diversity of forms, or is rather just an accidental phenomenon, which resulted from the significant destruction of burial grounds in this region. The fact that there were many fewer cemeteries on the Bielsk Plain than in the Drohiczyn Upland is already apparent in the middle and late 19th-century reports (Jaroszewicz 1844, 104-105; 1853, 194-195, note I; Avenarius' 1890, 18-24 and table I; Pokrovskii 1895). Particularly interesting is the lack of known cemeteries in areas with intense settlement

near 11th-13th century gords such as Bielsk or Bobrówka (Krasnodębski *et al.* 2019, 38-39). This leads to the conclusion that in addition to the aforementioned enclaves of cemeteries with graves accompanied by kerbstones, one can also expect the presence of flat cemeteries without stone constructions on the Bielsk Plain, such as the so-called rural cemeteries like Daniłowo Małe, site 1, located in northeastern Mazovia (Krasnodębski 1998; Olczak *et al.* 2019, 77-83), or church graveyards, like the ones at Suraż, site 2 (Bieńkowska 2005) and Drohiczyn (Pawlata 1991; Andrzejewski and Sikora 2009, 162, 164-165).

It should be considered that the diversity of grave types in the Middle Bug River basin may, in some cases, be the result of a long period of use of the cemeteries. Michał Dzik (2015c, 186-187) pointed out that in the Drohiczyn Upland, the settlement zone from the older phase of the Early Middle Ages – indicated by the presence of barrows with cremation burials – is the same as the range of occurrence of flat cemeteries in later times. This could indicate the continuity of settlement in this region. It is very probable that some inhumation burials in barrows may prove that the local population changed their burial rites from cremation to inhumation under the influence of the Christianity, while maintaining the older grave form. This applies to the previously mentioned inhumation barrows at Baciki Dalsze and Korzeniówka Mała, and perhaps at Klukowo as well, all of which were located in the immediate vicinity of barrows with cremations. Two inhumation burials had been deposited in one of the two mounds excavated at the beginning of the 20th century in Baciki Dalsze, including a burial with grave goods dated to the 11th century or the beginning of the 12th century. On the other hand, a Drohiczyn-type vessel fragment was found in a cremation barrow, which indicates that it was built in the 11th century at the earliest (Zoll-Adamikowa 1975, 56; Dzik 2015a, 48-49). A similar situation was observed in Korzeniówka Mała, where one of the three excavated barrows contained an inhumation burial, while the other two had cremation burials. The barrow with the inhumation was dated to the 11th century or the first quarter of the 12th century. The chronology of the two cremation barrows was determined by radiocarbon dating to the second half of the 10th century, but since a Drohiczyn-type vessel was found at the bottom of one of the mounds, their formation in the 11th century seems more likely (Dzik 2015a, 87-89; 2015c, 49-50). The early dating of inhumation burials probably indicates the continuous use of cemeteries in Baciki Dalsze and Korzeniówka Mała during the period of transition from cremation to inhumation. The presence of flat graves with settings of kerbstones in the aforementioned burial grounds is more difficult to explain. The small number of examined burials makes it impossible to precisely determine when the areas of both cemeteries with flat graves began to be used, but it is likely that this occurred at the end of the 11th century (Dzik 2015a, 48-49, 89; 2017, 193). On the one hand, the close proximity of barrows and graves with settings of kerbstones seems to indicate long-time settlement in this region. On the other hand, the change in grave form could be proof of the abandonment of ancient funeral practices, whether because of the influence of religious ideas (the spread of Western Christianity) or for ethnic and cultural reasons (the arrival of new settlers). The inhumation cemetery from

Łuzki, located in the Siedlce Upland, may be interpreted in a slightly different way. According to Krystyna Musianowicz (1950/51, 247), it was used in the 11th-12th centuries, which was the period when flat graves prevailed in these areas. The grave goods found in barrows and flat graves with kerbstone settings in Łuzki were similar, which indicates that both types of graves in this cemetery were probably built at the same time (Dzik 2015c, 190). A similar phenomenon has been confirmed at the necropolis in Podroś in the Neman River basin (Belarus), which was probably being used during the same period. There were barrows in its northern part and flat graves with settings of kerbstones in its southern part (Jaskanis 1962). Both types of graves were similar in terms of grave goods. In the case of the cemetery in Szczyty-Dzięciołowo, it is hard to speculate on the relative chronology of barrows and graves with settings of kerbstones due to the insufficient level of research. Although it was established that the examined barrow was older than the flat grave, these conclusions cannot be applied to the entire necropolis. The discussed barrow should not be considered evidence of the survival of the local traditional grave form during the time of transition from cremation to inhumation funeral rites. This is because settlement continuity in the Bielsk Plain in the 11th century has not been confirmed. This hiatus in settlement manifests itself in the abandonment of old cemeteries and the establishment of new ones, albeit sometimes only at a short distance from the previous ones (Olczak *et al.* 2019, 65-67).

As was already mentioned, the burial mound in Szczyty-Dzięciołowo could have been covered with a stone mantle, with a setting made of large kerbstones probably laid at its base. Various forms of stone constructions found on barrows (generally those with cremations) that date between the 8th-9th centuries and the 12th-13th centuries are characteristic of the Middle Bug River basin (Zoll-Adamikowa 1979, 103-115, 224; Kalaga 2006, 103-108; Dzik 2014d, 94-98; 2015b). One such form includes a quadrangular or circular setting of kerbstones, which often co-exists with other features, such as multiple layers of cobblestone pavements, kernels, or mantles covering the mounds (Dzik 2015b, table 1). While the kerbstone settings of older cremation barrows were usually made of small or medium-sized stones (see, e.g., Dzik 2014d, fig. 6), larger stones were also used for this purpose in the case of mounds with inhumation burials in the 11th-13th centuries. In the Bielsk Plain, burial mounds with settings of kerbstones visible on their surfaces are concentrated in the Białowieża Forest. Several such features were noticed at the burial ground in Leśnictwo Postołowo, site 11 (Olczak and Krasnodębski 2017), and single ones were found in the cemeteries at Leśnictwo Przechody, sites 9 and 10, with at least 20% of the mounds in the last two cemeteries having stone mantles or kernels (Götze 1929, 515-518, 528-531; Olczak *et al.* 2019, 67-69, 71). Earthen mounds with stone constructions were also found at other places in the Białowieża Forest, such as Leśnictwo Krynica, site 2 (Wawrzenuk 2017, 207-213), Leśnictwo Jelonka, site 1 (Götze 1929, 518), Leśnictwo Przechody, site 1 (Götze 1929, 526-528), or Białowieża National Park, sites 22 and 30 (Górska 1976, 132, fig. 17; Krasnodębski and Olczak 2018, 22-23, fig. 13), but their dating and funeral rites have not been

determined yet. In the Drohiczyn Upland, inhumation barrows with settings of kerbstones and sometimes also layers of cobblestones were found in the cemeteries at Czarna Cerkwiewna, site 1 (Chilmon 1974, 310, 313-314), Baciki Dalsze (Zoll-Adamikowa 1975, fig. 15; Dzik 2015c, table 6), and probably Kamianki (Musianowicz 1960, no. 123). No setting of kerbstones was observed on the edge of an inhumation barrow at Korzeniówka Mała, site 2, but such constructions, as well as cobblestone pavements, were discovered at two neighbouring cremation mounds (Dzik 2015a, 87; 2015c, table 6). The barrows at two sites on the Siedlce Upland, Łuzki (documentation at the State Archaeological Museum in Warsaw) and Czekanów (Zawadzka-Antosik 1982, 27), were also surrounded by kerbstones. Additionally, the barrows in Czekanów were also covered with mantles (*ibidem*).

Burial mounds with settings of kerbstones at their bases, sometimes covered with stone mantles or with other stone constructions, were the dominant grave form in the region of the Leśna River basin, which neighbours the discussed area, in the 11th-13th centuries (Salewicz 1937, 166-169; Korobushkina 1993, 11-17). These so-called stone barrows with inhumation burials were being built at the same time in the Upper Neman River basin as well (Jaskanis 1962, figs. 2, 5; Zvyaruga 2000, 104-106; Yurkavets 2006, 128, fig. 2: 1, 2). Valentin Sedov (1982, 120) saw the form of graves from the aforementioned regions as a reference to the older West Baltic barrows and interpreted them as burials of slavified Balts, who inhabited these territories along with the Slavs. This view was challenged by Tatiana Korobushkina (1993, 100-101), according to whom the construction of the discussed mounds was based on practical considerations – namely the use of stone material, which is common in these areas. Korobushkina also drew attention to the wider zone of occurrence of barrows with stone constructions in the lands of Eastern Slavs (*ibidem*).

It is difficult to say to what extent burial mounds with settings of kerbstones were widespread in the Middle Bug River basin in the 11th-13th centuries, because these constructions were heavily impacted by the removal and reuse of their stones by locals. It is undisputed, however, that they were built both in areas dominated by flat graves with settings of kerbstones (the Drohiczyn and Siedlce Uplands, the western part of the Bielsk Plain) as well as in regions where earthen burial mounds were the most common form of burial (the Białowieża Forest). In the first case, barrows with settings of kerbstones were located near or at the same cemeteries as flat graves, but usually – apart from Szczyty-Dzięciołowo – in separate zones. It should also be noted that inhumation barrows without stone constructions are found in those regions only sporadically. On the other hand, in the Białowieża Forest, barrows surrounded by settings of kerbstones appeared at the same burial grounds as barrows without stone constructions (Leśnictwo Przechody, sites 9 and 10) or formed separate cemeteries (Leśnictwo Postołowo, site 11). The last example is significant, because in the cemetery at Leśnictwo Postołowo, site 3, which is located only 400 m from the aforementioned cemetery at Leśnictwo Postołowo, site 11 and was used during the same period, only barrows without stone constructions were found (Götze 1929, 518-521, 535-540; Krasnodębski *et al.* 2011, 155-160; Olczak *et al.* 2019, 58-61). At the current stage of research,

it is difficult to say whether stone constructions in inhumation barrows in the Middle Bug River basin are a result of the evolution of older cremation mounds, or are rather an indication of a form borrowed from the neighbouring Leśna or Upper Neman River basins, which is possibly an effect of migration from those regions. It cannot be excluded that both factors overlapped here; the first one seems to be more likely in the case of the Drohiczyn Upland, while the second one is more probable in the Białowieża Forest, where barrow cremation graves without stone constructions had predominated in the earlier period (Götze 1929, 531-535, 541; Krasnodębski *et al.* 2011, 150-155).

It was repeatedly pointed out that some barrows with stone constructions have a shape resembling that of flat graves with settings of kerbstones (see, e.g., Jaskanis 1962, 358; Yurkavets 2006, 130; Dzik 2015b). This is particularly evident in the case of the aforementioned burial ground at Leśnictwo Postołowo, site 11 (Olczak and Krasnodębski 2017). There are five mounds of varying sizes in this cemetery, all of them with settings of large kerbstones arranged at their bases or on their slopes. The two best-preserved graves are very small mounds with a diameter of about 3 m and a height of about 0.3-0.4 m, accompanied by a quadrangular setting of closely placed kerbstones. Due to the shape of these constructions and the small size of the mounds, these features are confusingly similar to flat graves with settings of kerbstones. Another grave with an unusual form was found at the flat cemetery with graves surrounded by kerbstones at Zbucz, site 1. A quadrangular kerb made of large stones and measuring approximately 5.0 × 4.5 m was excavated there. In the middle part of this kerb there were a few similar-sized stones and three layers of cobblestones, which formed a small mound with a height of about 0.4 m (Olczak *et al.* 2019, fig 5.9.1). No human bones were found inside the setting of kerbstones, only some grave goods and iron nails. It cannot be excluded that the current shape of this grave is the result of a later transformation of the cemetery, but it must also be remembered that in the case of some Mazovian graves with kerbstones, the internal pavements were arranged in small cones, which made them look similar to barrows (see Rauhut 1971, 455). According to Michał Dzik (2014d, 94-101), in the case of both flat graves and barrows, settings of kerbstones could be an expression of the same idea, namely the house of the dead. However, it should be emphasized that – with the exception of the above-mentioned examples – both types of graves differ significantly in their shapes and usually also in size. Regardless of the idea (which could be similar), communities burying their dead in barrows undoubtedly took great care to emphasize their own distinctiveness by constructing an earthen or stone mound.

The diversity of grave forms in the Middle Bug River basin has little reflection in the grave goods of the dead. Ornaments with connections to both West and East Slavs are characteristic of the cemeteries throughout the discussed area in the 11th-13th centuries (Musianowicz 1955, 267-273; Miśkiewicz 1981, 94-100; Dzik 2015c, 192-194, 197). Grave goods with West Slavic connections include mainly S-shaped temple rings and vessels with cylindrical necks. Ornaments of East Slavic origin include coiled temple rings, band

bracelets and openwork beads – the so-called Dregovich ones, which were used as parts of necklaces and earrings. The grave goods in flat graves with settings of kerbstones and in barrows are very similar in this respect; the aforementioned types of ornaments were found at the same cemeteries, and sometimes even in the same graves (see, e.g., Musianowicz 1955, table IV: 1-5, 15-17; Bieńkowska *et al.* 2013, table LXVIII: 1-6; Olczak *et al.* 2019, fig. 5.13: 2, 3). This phenomenon extends further to the east, reaching the basins of the Leśna River (Korobushkina 1993, 67-92) and the Upper Neman River (Jaskanis 1962, table X: 1-6; Kizyukevich 2006, fig. 2), although the dominance of ornaments of East Slavic character is visible there. The culturally heterogeneous, West and East Slavic character of grave goods is most likely a reflection of the region's location near the Bug River trade route, the centre of which was Drohiczyn (Musianowicz 1969, 219-223). In terms of grave goods, the cemeteries there clearly differ from the nearby burial sites of northeastern Mazovia, where most ornaments have West Slavic connotations, with a noticeable share of items pointing to contacts with Baltic territories (Jaskanis 2008, 174-247; Bieńkowska 2005, 139-143; Olczak *et al.* 2019, 77-90). On the other hand, greater regional diversification is observed among the pottery vessels found in the Middle Bug River basin, which, unlike the ornaments, were fully local products. In the 11th-13th centuries, the so-called Drohiczyn-type vessels or their imitations – the main production centre of which was probably in Drohiczyn (Musianowicz 1969, 145) – are widespread in the Drohiczyn and Siedlce Uplands (Olczak and Wójcik 2019, fig. 9.12). In the Bielsk Plain, the presence of these vessels has not been sufficiently confirmed yet. Furthermore, at burial sites of all types (both barrow cemeteries from the Białowieża Forest and flat cemeteries from the basins of the Orłanka and Łoknica Rivers), aside from pots with cylindrical necks, S-shaped vessels were discovered, which were similar to the pottery from Brest and the cemeteries of the Leśna River basin, but also to pottery from the urban centres of northwestern Kievan Rus' (see above).

In this context, the finds from the discussed necropolis are very interesting. While the grave goods of the flat grave with settings of kerbstones are common in the Middle Bug River basin, items with few analogies in this area were found in the barrow (see above). One could venture to hypothesize that the form of the discussed barrow burial did not have to be a result of the westward permeation of funerary rites from the nearest cemeteries in the Narewka and Leśna or even Upper Neman River basins. Instead, it could be a reflection of the traditions of the deceased – a woman perhaps coming from farther areas of Kievan Rus'. One of the potential regions of her origin is the area around the basins of the Middle Dnieper and Berezina Rivers, where numerous examples of earrings with knot-shaped beads and burials placed within the mounds – which were more frequent than in other areas inhabited by the Dregoviches – were found (Lysenko 1991, 33, 62-63).

Unfortunately, this issue has not been resolved by genetic research, although such research has brought many interesting results. The woman buried in the barrow had mtDNA of haplogroup H1c3b, while the child buried in the flat grave belonged to haplogroup U5a

(Molak *et al.* 2019, table 14.4, annex 14.1). Haplogroup HV is one of the most frequent in modern European populations, including among Slavs (Juras 2012, 101-102). In the Bielsk Plain it was extracted from the majority of six studied individuals who were buried in barrows, with the exception of one skeleton from the cemetery at Leśnictwo Przechody, site 10. Large shares of haplogroup HV were also noted among the human remains from flat cemeteries of northeastern Mazovia (Daniłowo Małe, site 1 and Suraż, site 2) and the Siedlce Upland (Czekanów, site 1 and Niewiadoma, site 3), while in the Drohiczyn Upland it was found only in one individual from the necropolis in Twarogi Lackie (Molak *et al.* 2019, fig. 14.1). Interestingly, haplogroup H1c3b – the same as that of the deceased in the barrow at Szczyty-Dzięciołowo – was also discovered in a woman and a man buried in one of the barrows in the cemetery at Leśnictwo Postołowo, site 3. According to the authors of the analysis, this may indicate their relation along the maternal line (Molak *et al.* 2019, 239). On the other hand, haplogroup U5a was recorded in two individuals from a cemetery with graves accompanied by kerbstone settings at Klepacze, site 1, and in one individual from Suraż, site 2 (Molak *et al.* 2019, table 14.4, annex 14.1). The cited genetic studies have revealed another aspect of the issue under consideration: they showed a great diversity of the Early Medieval population of the Middle Bug River basin, with a distinct separateness of the Drohiczyn Upland, where individuals with haplogroup HV were almost completely absent.

The diversity in grave forms from the Middle Bug River basin in the 11th-13th centuries was a consequence of these areas being part of the broadly defined Mazovian-Rus' borderland region. It was characterized by political instability due to an unstable and fluid affiliation to the states of Poland and Kievan Rus' (Bieniak 2010, 165-178), which in turn probably resulted in the late establishment of permanent church structures. The nature of the borderland and its proximity to the Bug River trade route led to the development of a diversified material culture and the differentiation of funeral rites. Grave form diversity probably had a slightly different background depending on the region. It is worth considering whether the division of the Bielsk Plain into an eastern part (with barrows) and a western part (with a predominance of flat graves) could, according to the suggestion of Helena Zoll-Adamikowa (1979, 232-234; 1996, 88-90), reflect the zones of influence of the Eastern and Western Churches. This thesis finds only partial confirmation, since it seems that both parts of the Bielsk Plain were subjugated by one administrative centre located in Brest as early as in the second half of the 11th century. At the same time, it is difficult to imagine that the influence of both burial rites would be so clear at such a great distance from administrative and church centres. The presence of a cemetery enclave with graves accompanied by kerbstone settings in the Orlanka and Łoknica River basins can be explained in two ways. According to the first explanation, this was a reflection of the situation prior to the middle of the 11th century. According to the second one, it was the result of a local migration of people from the Drohiczyn Upland. This group maintained its own funeral customs, while, in the field of material culture – manifested for example in pottery

production – they did not differ from the inhabitants of the eastern part of the Bielsk Plain. The discovery of the burial mound in Szczyty-Dzięciołowo revealed yet another possible aspect, namely the settling of Ruthenians from the more distant parts of Kievan Rus' into the area of the Middle Bug River basin. In the case of the cemetery at Łuzki in the Siedlce Upland, ethnic and cultural differences also seem to be the most likely explanation for a different grave form. However, this phenomenon could have had slightly different causes in the Drohiczyn Upland, where it was noted that some cemeteries were continuously used from the early phase of the Early Middle Ages. One may agree with the view of Michał Dzik, according to whom burying the dead in barrows in the 11th-12th centuries on the Drohiczyn Upland was a consequence of the tolerance for the ancient grave form. This tolerance was a result of this area being subjugated by Kievan Rus' (Dzik 2015c, 190-192). In this case, however, ethnic factors and the intention of the local population to emphasize their cultural identity should not be underestimated as well. On the one hand, any conclusions regarding this problem need to be supported by evidence in the form of radiocarbon datings of graves, which at the moment is almost completely non-existent. On the other hand, they need to be supported by wider settlement studies.

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