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REVIEWS

Neglected Barbarians, edited by Florin Curta, Studies in the Early Middle Ages 32, Brepols Publishers n. v., Turnhout 2010, pp. 629, 24 colour images. ISBN 978-2-503-53125-0.

The era of Late Antiquity, notably the period of great migrations, presents a broad spectrum of issues and changes that are hardly seen during other periods of history¹. The decline of the Roman Empire, the fall of centuries-old borders, the coming of “unknown” barbarian peoples and the progressive transformation of the ethnic and cultural character of the European area are a very attractive field of research for historians and not only. A significant contribution to the group of complex issues related to “neglected” peoples during the great migrations is the volume *Neglected Barbarians*, collective work with 16 studies on the history and culture of *gentes* with a short-lived or a more marked presence in the population shifts of the 5th and 6th century. In this context, the volume covers gaps in research and highlights new approaches to the study of various peoples who, though they played a role in the process of change of the Roman world, were not given adequate attention both by their contemporaries and later authors. The attribution of the adjective *neglected* is justified in principle by the fact that the sources provide evidence of a barbarian people almost only when it appears at the borders of the Empire. Also, according to Florin Curta and Roland Steinacher, there is another dimension, whether the internal division of barbarian peoples is neglected or not. In a better position are barbarians who either had a “national” historian, such as Jordanes and Gregory of Tours, or were sought in modern times as ancestors of modern nations (in some cases this provided a pretext for expansion). However, in both cases their number is small. The Goths, the Franks and Slavs are those who undoubtedly are not included among the “neglected barbarians”, while for the majority of barbarian peoples, apart from the very fragmentary testimonies of the sources, modern scholars have not shown an equivalent research interest.

With its focus point the Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, and its geographic coverage, moving from east to west, the contributions of the volume focus on a great number of barbarian peoples and cultures from the Baltic Sea and Caucasus to the Iberian Peninsula and the northwestern Africa. The introduction to issues addressed is given by Florin Curta, while the volume closes with an Afterword of Peter Heather.

First in the series of the remarkable or exemplary studies in the volume is the contribution from Audronė Bliujienė (*The Backcountry Balts [Aesti] and the ‘Northern Gold’ in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 13–29) which tackles the production and distribution of amber, the ‘Northern Gold’, in the area between the rivers Vistula and Narva. The trade relations of Rome with Aesti as well as the amber finds

¹ The greek version of this review was published in *Byzantina Symmeikta* 22 (2012), p. 443–456.

are recorded and emphasis is placed on the 5th and 6th century when cultural changes in the region of Lithuania took place. Important trade centres had developed along the Baltic coast at an earlier date but after 550 the production of amber continues only in the Lamata area, in western Lithuania. The fact that the amber beads in female ornaments (particularly, necklaces), are recorded, inter alia, on the Middle Danube and in Crimea and, on the other hand, finds of belt sets, fittings and brooches from the aforesaid areas are known from Lithuania, is regarded by the author as proof that amber was the base for the development of commercial and cultural contacts of the Lithuanian area with its wider surroundings until the 8th century.

Wojciech Nowakowski (*The Mysterious Barbarians of Mazuria: The Riddle of the Olsztyn Group*, pp. 31–52), discusses the finds and the settlements of the so-called Olsztyn culture in Mazuria (northeastern Poland) which flourished 6th to 7th century and developed a large network of contacts. Under consideration is the historical background of the area since the Roman Period (the people of *Galindae*), the causes of the great gap in the archaeological record between 350/75–450/75, the gradual development of Olsztyn culture and its main features (cremation, bow fibulae, absence of weapons in the graves, inhumation of horses, etc.), the external influences (especially from the Slavs), the cultural contacts with the Merovingians, the Middle and the Upper Danube, and the decline of the culture, which coincides with the coming to an end of its external contacts. The question of the development of the Olsztyn group, whether through internal factors, as e.g. social transformation, or triggered by the coming to the area of some other groups, namely the Goths in mid-5th century, or the Herules, is also posed. The author's view is that the gap in the archaeological record corresponds to the temporary departure and return of the Balt population (*Galindae/Galindians*) and attributes to them the Olsztyn culture.

The contribution from Bartłomiej Szymon Szmoniewski on the Antes (*The Antes: Eastern 'Brothers' of the Slavens?*, pp. 53–82), addresses a very important chapter in the early history of Eastern Europe. The views about the Slavic, Iranian or German origin of the Antes and the assumptions on their relation to the medieval Rus or the modern Ukrainians are cited. Special focus is given also to the Penkovka culture, often identified with the Antic, the geographical boundaries of this culture, and to other hoards in the Antean territory. On the origin of the Antes, the controversial testimony of Jordanes on the Venethi and Antic anthroponyms mentioned in the sources are given some consideration. The scholar disputes traditional views as the identification of the Antes with the Penkovka culture (he considers it as a mixture of Slavic and nomadic elements), or the Slavic identity of the Antes, as relatives of the *Sklaveni*. Responding to Florin Curta in his monograph on the Lower Danube Slavs, Szmoniewski considers the name Antes as an umbrella-term for various political and cultural formations in their own geographical area (mainly the Ukrainian forest-steppe zone, between the Dnieper and the Dniester).

The contribution from Igor O. Gavritukhin and Michel Kazanski (*Bosporus, the Tetraxite Goths, and the Northern Caucasus Region during the Second Half of the Fifth and the Sixth Centuries*, pp. 83–136) emphasizes the cultural influences observed in the area of Crimea and the northern Caucasus between c. 453–570. The numerous archaeological finds examined (with the note made on their only as yet partial publication and analysis) show initially the dissemination of certain ornament types from the Middle Danube to these areas, as the bow fibulae with or without chip-carved decoration, buckles with a diamond-shaped plate and chip-carved decoration etc. The main interest of the study is interaction between the city of Bosporus and the Tetraxite Goths with the barbarian populations in the northern Caucasus. In the area of

Krasnodar and Lower Kuban various finds have come to light, considered imitations of Bosporan models, such as sheet bow fibulae with three knobs, or cicada brooches, while other finds are of Bosporan origin. In contrast, the areas of Kislovodsk, Kabardino-Balkaria and the northern Ossetia apparently maintained stronger contacts with Byzantium, through Abkhazia and the mountain passes of Elbrus. Bosporan influences are interpreted in terms of migration from Crimea to the northern Caucasus.

Another neglected research topic, that of the Huns of the Middle Danube after the Battle of Nedao of 454 and the collapse of their hegemony, is addressed in the contribution from Margit Nagy (*A Hun-Age Burial with Male Skeleton and Horse Bones Found in Budapest*, pp. 137–175), who discusses the finds of a young horseman's grave from the mid-5th century in Budapest (Budapest-Zugló). Also found in the grave was an equine skull and three vertebrae, along with two small bells. Beside the horseman were found seven garnet-inlaid gold plaques, two iron buckles, an iron knife, a horn iron bit, etc. Also mentioned is the use of this form of burial custom among the Sarmatians and the Huns, certain details that "indicate" the latter, as well as some late Roman influences to the horseman's decoration. The author notes that the Battle of Nedao did not bring the immediate disappearance of earlier traditions in decoration, which was related to the social status of the people, and she argues for the continuity for some decades of the material culture of the "Hunnic Empire".

The study by Ágnes B. Tóth (*A Fifth-Century Burial from Old Buda [Budapest]*, pp. 177–208) examines a female burial found in Old Buda. The integration of finds (two spirals of gold wire, a comb fragment, a brooch with five knobs, a belt buckle, an iron knife, etc.) in a cultural context and the correlation of objects with various other barbaris forms is attempted. Taking as her point of departure the post-Hunnic date of the elite grave the author approaches the question of population data in the area of Budapest for the late 5th and early 6th century, associated with barbarian principalities on the Middle Danube. According to Tóth, the brooch and the buckle belong to a richly decorated female garment, similar to those of other members of the aristocracy in communities of eastern Hungary or in southern Germany that had adopted Hunnic and Ostrogothic traditions. She claims also that a woman's knife attached to a strap has parallels with finds from southern Germany, a remark interpreted as a westward migration of populations, with a short-term presence in the Middle Danube area, the people identified tentatively as Suevi.

Putting under scrutiny the Gepidic cemetery of Bratei III in the region of Sibiu in Transylvania, dated to the late 6th or early 7th century (abandoned around 650), Radu Harhoiu (*Where Did All the Gepids Go? A Sixth- to Seventh- Century Cemetery in Bratei [Romania]*, pp. 209–244) raises the question of the route taken by the Gepids after 567 and attempts to trace the continuity of their material culture. Information on the burial customs, as inhumation, W-E orientation, food offerings deposited in pots, and, on the other hand, on diverse finds (brooches, buckles, necklaces, combs, knives, arrow and spear heads, swords, daggers and stirrups) is provided. Reference is made also to some differences between the western (older) and eastern half of the cemetery (latter, dominated e.g., by handmade pottery and horse graves). According to Harhoiu, a large number of 6th century burials provides evidence of strong Avar influences from the Middle Danube, which is considered a sign of assimilation of the local Gepids into the early Avar society. This process was completed by early 7th century, as it is observed mainly in the eastern half of the cemetery.

The archaeological remnants of the Gepids in the Balkans is the topic addressed by Anna Kharalambieva (*Gepids in the Balkans: A Survey of the Archaeological Evidence*, pp. 245–262). A brief overview of the Gepidic migration from the Baltic Sea to

the northern Carpathians, their incorporation into the Hunnic Empire and their subsequent hegemony, with Sirmium as their center, is provided. A discussion is made of the limited number of archaeological finds from Bulgaria related to ornamentation, especially bow-shaped brooches with five knobs, and eagle-shaped buckles. Kharalambieva argues that due to the possible migration of some Gepids, the female fashion of the Gepidic aristocracy in the Tisza area was a model imitated in the northern provinces of the Byzantine Empire during the early 6th century.

The chapter contributed by Jaroslav Jiřík (*Bohemian Barbarians: Bohemia in Late Antiquity*, pp. 263–317) discusses Bohemia in Late Antiquity. After a reference to the local German cultural elements of the 4th century and the German or nomadic influences in border regions, settled by the *foederati*, Jiřík lays as ground for the understanding of the cultural transformations in Bohemia after 410, the changes that took place earlier on the Middle Danube. With the finds attributed to the Vinařice group as his main focus, the author discusses the presence of Ostrogothic (bow fibulae, antler combs, wheel-made pottery etc.) and Late Roman elements (buckles with chip-carved or animal heads' decoration, glass vessels, clay jugs etc.) and notes the prevalence of inhumation in the burial customs. The development of Vinařice culture is dated to between 440/50 and 480/90, and a plausible contribution for its formation, next to the influences from the Middle Danube and the area of Rhine/Main, is involvement of the Bavarians (Baiuvari) who migrated from northern Bohemia to the south at the beginning of the 6th century.

The study by Roland Steinacher (*The Herules: Fragments of a History*, pp. 319–360) deals with the Herules from the perspective of relevant testimonies for the period between 268 and 550. The conflicts and alliances with Rome in the 3rd century, their integration into the late Roman and early Byzantine army, their service under other barbarian rulers, their life within the Hunnic Empire, the ephemeral hegemony in Lower Austria and southern Moravia, overthrown by the Lombards, their settlement by Emperor Anastasius in Pannonia Secunda and the policy of Justinian towards them are recorded. The march of the Herules from Scandinavia to the Azov Sea, to Central Europe etc. and the return to their homeland, recorded by Jordanes and Procopius, is considered by Steinacher as a historiographic myth, inspired by oral traditions and the need of ancient historiography to “create” a distant homeland for the barbarian peoples. The author believes that the Herules were no different from other barbarians (*gentes*), as they were not only a group of warriors in the service of the Empire, as follows from the narrative of Procopius.

Alexander Sarantis (*The Justinianic Herules: From Allied Barbarians to Roman Provincials*, pp. 361–402) examines the circumstances of the peculiar political, geographical and cultural status of the Herules on the northern border of the Empire between 527 and 550. He records briefly their history from mid-5th century to the reign of Justinian and, emphasizing the latter period he focuses on their area of settlement as well as on the effort at their Christianization in order to be integrated in the Empire. Also noted is their participation in the Byzantine army and the revolt of some of the Herules against the Byzantines in 545–549. Sarantis remarks the deviation made by Procopius from the *common places* for the barbarians when he makes reference to the Herule *foederati* and claims that the Herules are “neglected” because they did not create a significant hegemony or culture while their fate was determined by the policy of the Empire to a greater extent as compared to other peoples. Their disappearance from the written sources is attributed to the fact that the Herules who migrated to the south of the Danube were soon assimilated and from being allies became a rural population within the Empire.

The quite thorny and controversial *Slavic problem* in Greece is a topic addressed by Florin Curta (*Still Waiting for the Barbarians? The Making of the Slavs in 'Dark-Age' Greece*, pp. 403–478). The author, recognizing that his contribution does not relate to “neglected barbarians”, offers a detailed presentation of the research data and historiographic parameters illuminating the question in Greece and abroad, taking as his point of departure the conclusions of Fallmerayer. Following an interdisciplinary approach, Curta combines the data of the written sources and the archaeological finds in order to establish his own view in relation to Greece during the so-called Dark Ages. Without ignoring finds often considered as “barbarian” (Slavic or nomadic) which have come to light in the rest of the country, the author focuses on Peloponnesus, where he compares the finds with their counterparts in *barbaricum* and proposes some re-evaluation of their origin or dating. Among his arguments, more notable is the discussion on of the Slavic character of the urns in Olympia. Curta argues that in Peloponnesus no Slavic settlement took place until c. 700 A.D., the *Sklaviniai* to the north were a defence zone for the *thema Hellados*, and regards the horseman’s grave in Corinth, the cemetery of Tigani and urns in Olympia as interrelated and belonging to local garrisons.

Three “unknown” peoples of the Iberian Peninsula, left in the shadow of developments of the Late Roman and post-Roman periods, are highlighted in the study contributed by Santiago Castellanos on the Astures, Cantabri, and Vascones (*Astures, Cantabri, and Vascones: The Peoples of the Spanish North during the Late and Post-Roman Period*, pp. 479–502). Regarding the historical context, he examines the evidence of Hydatius on the 5th century and records the relations of these peoples with neighboring barbarians, as the Suevi, the Visigoths and the Franks. Attempting a reassessment of traditional views Castellanos compares the local cities and the rural system of *villae* (which was based on the great landed property) with the rest of Roman Spain and ascertains that central northern Spain too was integrated into the Roman administrative and fiscal system. The author rejects the historiographic model on “barbarians” in central northern Spain who lived far from the influence of the Roman civilization, he considers that their ruling class had adopted the Roman administrative system, and concludes that “[...] the northern regions of the peninsula certainly had local peculiarities, but the idea of tribal societies permanently arrayed in battle against a predominantly urban society in the south is nothing more than a historiographic myth” (p. 502).

Staying in the Iberian Peninsula, in his original study Fernando López Sánchez (*Suevic Coins and Suevic Kings [418–456]: The Visigothic Connection*, pp. 503–536) focuses on the early Suevian kingdom (418–456) in the central and eastern part of the peninsula and Suevi dependence on the Visigoths as suggested by the numismatic material (c. 200 Suevian coins from 5th and 6th century). Reference is made to the relations of Braga with Ravenna and Toulouse and, on the other hand, Suevian coins are examined, where, as to the Visigothic coins, is remarked the depiction of the western emperor on the obverse. Moreover, some other coins intimate the alliance of the Suevi with the Visigoths in 449. Sánchez proposes to reject the traditional view that the numismatic finds indicate the alliance of the Suevi with Ravenna and concludes that they have to do with the relations between the Suevi and the Visigoths. Through the coins the Suevi declared their intention to be under the service of the Visigoth kings, who considered the rulers in Braga as their representatives in Spain. The strengthening of the Suevi and the direct communication with Ravenna, established by King Rechiar (448–456), marked the first claims of the Suevi for independence, suppressed by King Theodorik II. Sánchez argues that the military conflicts between the Visigoths and the Suevi cannot be considered as wars between barbarians but “[...] as quarrels of power between two partners in a common enterprise” (p. 536).

The last two contributions focus on Roman Africa. The study by Guido M. Berndt (*Hidden Tracks: On the Vandal's Paths to an African Kingdom*, pp. 537–569), one of the most complete in the volume, deals with the history of the Vandals on the former Roman territory. The author makes a brief reference to their history until 406 (when they crossed the Rhine) and a more detailed one, up to their subjugation by Justinian in 534. Major milestones on their march, which is described as a desire of the Vandals to participate in the events of the Roman Empire, are their three-year stay in Gaul, the twenty-years in Spain (409–429) and their migration to North Africa in 429 along with the Suevi, Alans, Goths, etc. After mentioning the lacuna in the sources (“[...] the literary sources do not allow a continuous narrative linking the early Vandals of the second century to those who established themselves in Northern Africa”, p. 551), Berndt approaches the issue of the Vandalic ethnogenesis from the perspective of historical circumstances. Crucial for the assimilation of Roman economic, social and political structures, which formed the context of the state organization and ethnogenesis in North Africa, is considered the interval between 406 and 429. The author rejects the migration of Geiseric as outcome of an arrangement with the Roman governor of Africa Boniface and believes that the main reason for it was the precarious situation in Spain because of the pressure both from the Visigoths and Ravenna as well as the growing power of the Suevi. According to Berndt, the events of 429 mark the beginning of the Vandalic ethnogenesis which continued until 534, as various population groups unified politically in North Africa under the name of Vandals and formed a distinct *gens Vandalarum*.

The contribution from Philipp von Rummel (*The Frexes: Late Roman Barbarians in the Shadow of the Vandal Kingdom*, pp. 571–603) may be justified more than any other in a collective volume on “neglected barbarians”, as it deals with the Moor tribe of Frexes. Their name appears only in Corippus (*Iohannis*) while their leader Antalas is known also to Procopius. The area of their settlement in modern Tunisia and Algeria, the relations of the Frexes with both the Vandals and the Byzantines, the distinction of Antalas’ Frexes from other Moors, their language, religion, daily life, external features, art of war and the conditions of their coming to the fore, which are linked to the crisis of the late 5th century in the southern regions of the Vandal kingdom, are under consideration. Rummel assumes that the Frexes were a settled community with a way of life that did not differ substantially from that of the Roman provincial populations and formed a distinct identity when they were led by powerful chieftains like Guenfan and Antalas.

The authors of the volume attempted either an overview or they investigate some specific aspects of the barbarian peoples, following their own methodology in treating their material. The collective work promotes various, many-sided issues that help to generate a more intelligible picture of the period of the great migrations. In this context some general and specific comments are in order. According to the Editor of the volume, “[...] the book does not aim at reconciling the different interpretations indicated by different categories of evidence. Instead, bringing together a number of specialists in a single volume is a first step towards a new evaluation of some of the more significant ways in which the study of the ‘neglected barbarians’ could change our understanding of Late Antiquity” (p. 10). Further, are mentioned the three key issues of the volume: “[...] first, why is a particular barbarian group neglected? Is it a problem of the source base, or are there any deeper, perhaps historiographic reasons? Second, just how much can one learn about a particular group of neglected barbarians, and how does one go about finding out? Third, what sorts of future research are necessary to extend or fill out our understanding about a particular group of neglected barbarians?” (p. 6).

As a general remark, all the contributions have an excellent literature while some authors attempt a comprehensive presentation of the research data related to their subject. In the studies we observe an interdisciplinary approach and a critical attitude, both towards the stereotypes of ancient historiography and the traditional treatment of archaeological finds, namely, the concrete ethnic attribution to a material culture. As regards the first objective, to the two reasons indicated in more detail in the introduction of the volume (no 'national' historian and ephemeral polities) we may add the dimension of the finds which are often ignored by historians. As to the second issue, one observation we can make, taking into account the possibility for a larger scale work, is that there is a lack of contributions addressed at "neglected barbarians". It is reasonable to expect to find in the volume a discussion of peoples such as the Alans, Alamans, Sciri, Rugii, Saxons and the Sarmatians, and a number of others too.

Regardless of this, and in keeping with the second objective of the volume, the criticism focuses mainly on the lack of uniformity in the contributions in their presentation of peoples of interest. One would expect the studies in a volume titled "neglected barbarians" to offer both an overview of their history and material culture and, furthermore, more complete and modern research data. This is observed in some studies while others, despite their high level, give a fragmentary picture and deal only with some finds or with a limited time. Furthermore, it would have been better to avoid the publication of two contributions on the same people, as the Herules, which for the era of Justinian overlapped to a large extent, or for the Gepids. On the other hand, one should recognize that for some more or less known peoples (Vandals, Fraxes/Moors, Astures, Cantabri, and Vascones etc.) the respective contributions are a good base for anyone interested. As to the quite subjective question of the third objective, the interdisciplinary research and the emphasis on intercultural relations between the barbarians could perhaps offer new evidence for the existence of neglected people and the formation of their identity. However, although this matter is addressed separately in a few contributions it would have been better to have it as a topic of a collaborative project, focusing on the cultural features of the barbarian peoples, rather than an attempt at "general interest" as indicated by its title. Furthermore, the remark of Sarantis on the Herules (which applies to many *gentes*) that have not been investigated their demographic composition and the socio-economic nature of their society, raises questions that may offer impetus to the development of the research data and the global restoration of the barbarian world.

As for more detailed observations, the study by Kharalambieva, although in the title the Balkans are mentioned neglects to examine the Gepidic remnants in Serbia. The conclusion of Sarantis for the Herules that 'integrated' barbarians tend to be 'neglected' barbarians, characterized by Curta as a paradox and with the question: if truly integrated, were they still barbarians? — In any case, cannot be applied as a rule that the neglect of the barbarians in historiography is due to their integration in the service of the Empire or their gradual assimilation. On total and realistic basis Berndt raises the issue of the immigration, as he distinguishes its factors into ones that impel the peoples to move out of a region and to those that attract the people to another. Also, the use of such parameters with regard to the ethnogenesis and the formation of ethnic identity of a people that he seeks simultaneously exposes a weaknesses in the other contributions, as they do not deal with such parameters.

The study contributed by Curta is, as all the contributions, the "last word" on the research data of his subject. The author handles equally well the data from the written sources and archaeological finds, and adds new cases to the many already existing. However, he does not examine the toponymic material. A key question that emerges

from his assumptions is the difference in burial customs of the three burial assemblages that he correlates with each other. In our opinion, and regardless of the conclusions made or the dimension that can give in the future some new finds, the so-called *Slavic problem* has already a long tradition of research and is less attractive than in the past, while the former one-sided, extreme approach is almost unseen nowadays. Finally, quite controversial are the conclusions of Rummel. From the testimonies of Procopius at least, all that arises is that Antalas was a chieftain loyal to the Byzantines and there is no special distinction among the Moors (as the name *Frexes*). Rummel himself points out the inadequacy of archaeological data and for various issues under consideration, as religion and physical features, recognizes that there is no clear picture. Also, it is rather pointless to argue that there were common elements to the art of war of the *Frexes* and Rome because the weapons we know are no different from those known to many other peoples and, on the other hand, the *Frexes*, as all the Moors, used camels in battle. It is possible that because of their contacts with Rome, Byzantium and the Vandals, the *Frexes* were closer than other Moors to “western civilization”, however, the view that they were a Romanized population is rather risky.

In conclusion, the volume about the neglected barbarians, despite the above — always subjective — remarks, is an indispensable tool for the scholar of the period of great migrations and culture-forming processes in *barbaricum*. In any case, we should acknowledge to the Editor and coordinator the effort needed to succeed in bringing together a larger number of specialists and have them focus on specific issues, and for this reason the final result can be considered as a work of the highest level.

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Die Archäologie der frühen Ungarn. Chronologie, Technologie und Methodik. Internationaler Workshop des Archäologischen Instituts der Ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften und des Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseums in Mainz in Budapest am 4. Und 5. Dezember 2009, edited by Bendeguz Tobias, RGZM-Tagungen 17, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Mainz 2012, 309 pages with illustrations. ISBN 978-3-88467-205-1; ISSN 1862-4812.

Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Mainz continues a good, easily recognizable tradition in organizing small scale theme conferences with eminent scholars presenting the results of their latest researches. The primary value of these conferences is that the presentations are later published within a separate edition of *Tagungen* and as such, presented to a wider scholarly public. Volume 17 publishes papers presented at a conference held in cooperation with the Archaeological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on 4th–5th December 2009 in Budapest. The subject of the conference was archaeology of early Hungarians from the point of view of chronology, technology of the production of small finds, and the methodology of scientific researches. Its significance, next to the importance of the subject itself, was interdisciplinary nature of the approach, with input from different fields of natural sciences.

Within this publication are fifteen papers, written by sixteen authors, divided into four sections by theme, namely: border areas of the early Hungarian environment, the chronology of small finds recorded in the Carpathian Basin, the East-West relationship and finally, a section dedicated to papers discussing the result of researches in the technology of small finds production made with the new non-destructive and micro-destructive techniques.

The first section opens with a contribution by Attila Türk presenting the most recent data on east European and Byzantine relations in the Carpathian Basin, in the period 10th–11th cc. In keeping with the latest trends in archaeological investigations the author addresses the question of feasibility of ethnic attribution based on small finds only. His excavations of sites dating to the earliest period of the Hungarian expansion point to ties with Byzantine Balkans and the Mediterranean, and also, to some connection with Saltovo culture, 8th–10th cc. The recently identified Subotsi horizon of that culture on the river Dnieper suggests significantly stronger ties with early Hungarian culture. According to current data the origins of this horizon, like the origins of early Hungarians, are to be found in the area between the Volga and Southern Ural River.

In the second paper Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson deals with the Hungarian small finds from the Viking Age discovered in the trading centre at Birka in Sweden. These finds suggest the existence of short-lived contacts between Vikings and Hungarians, and longer periods of coexistence which made possible the transfer of knowledge between them. Based on grave finds and material from settlements the author draws attention

to the fact that a major influence Hungarians had on the Vikings may be traced in warfare given that the latter adopted cavalry and the use of bow and arrow as a novelty, originally the main tactic used by the nomads. In conclusion, a short summary of finds attributable to the Hungarian environment recorded elsewhere in Sweden is presented, followed by their closer analysis.

The next section in the same volume includes papers dedicated to the chronology of the early Hungarian period. Péter Langó deals with Byzantine coin finds from the Carpathian Basin dated to the 10th century, with special attention paid to graves recorded at Jánoshalma. Statistical analysis of the coin finds confirms the interpretation offered in the past by some of the Hungarian researchers that the circulation of coins reflects change in contacts between Byzantium and Hungarians, sporadic during the 9th century because of military conflicts. The number of discovered coins may be seen to increase starting from Constantine VII onwards, suggesting more lively exchange, attested also in the written sources. Moreover, the higher number of bronze coins would confirm strong economic relations between these two states. Péter Prohászka studies the circulation of Byzantine coins from the period of the Hungarian conquest, and coin finds from the time of formation of the Hungarian state in the Carpathian Basin. On this occasion an overview of coins discovered after the 1989 monograph of L. Kovács¹ is presented and some of the coin finds published by that author are re-examined. The analysis of the circulation of Byzantine coinage during the 10th century mostly confirms past views on Byzantine-Hungarian relations but with revision of some of the earlier assertions. The next contribution, by Gabriel Fusek, is dedicated to the chronology of the necropolises in the area of Nitra, 10th and 11th cc., based on the case study of the necropolis Nitra-Šindolka. The analyzed material shows, as G. Fusek suggests, that there may be two global dating phases, similarly as in the case of Bijelo Brdo culture. However, from a regional perspective, one can distinguish three horizons of burials which can further be separated into six subhorizons. The larger necropolis was used during all of these periods while the smaller is tied to the subhorizon b-e. Gabriel Nevizánsky and Jiří Košta focus on 1926-1937 excavations of the early Hungarian horseman necropolis at Streda nad Bodrogom (Slovakia), at first an amateur and later an archaeological test excavation. Analysis shows that there were significantly more graves than was believed earlier, some with a stone marker, a highly unusual funerary practice. Unfortunately most of those graves had been robbed and disturbed and only grave 1/1937 survived intact while the richest finds came from grave 2/1937: gilded cast silver fittings and other precious metal objects, totalling 220 g in weight. All were dated to 10–11th cc. and attribute the burial to the member of a military elite; by most researchers they are provenanced to a workshop on the Upper Tisa. Miklós Takács deals with the dating of the 8th–11th cc. settlements in the Carpathian Basin, with special attention paid to pottery finds from these sites, using a number of methods, intuition included, next to e.g., the analysis of horizontal and vertical stratigraphy, usually difficult because of inadequately published results, and the method for dating with chronologically diagnostic finds. Another method used by the author is seriation which has potential to become in future the most common method, as well as methods taken from the natural sciences, e.g., radiocarbon dating and dendrochronology, to date used only sporadically in the archaeology of the Carpathian Basin.

¹ L. Kovács, *Münzen aus der ungarischen Landnahmezeit: archäologische Untersuchungen der arabischen, byzantinischen, westeuropäischen und römischen Münzen aus dem Karpatenbecken des 10. Jahrhunderts*, Fontes archaeologici Hungariae 19, Budapest 1989.

The next section is dedicated to the relations between East and West, with a report on finds of imported swords recorded in a local context. First, there is a paper by Nad'a Profantová who focuses on the most significant results of a technological analysis of swords discovered on the territory of the Czech Republic which are present in the eastern part of central Bohemia during the earliest horizon, i.e. the second half of 9th and the beginning of the 10th century. During this period the most common sword form is type X, followed by the less frequent type M and only a small number of types H and K. Special attention is paid to a sword of high quality with a pattern welded blade found in grave No. 54 at Kanin and to a number of swords with an inscription. A relatively new find of a St. Wenceslas sword from Prague Castle, also described in this paper, is dated to the 10th or the beginning of the 11th century. It has a damascene mark on the blade. Another more outstanding find is that of a blacksmith's workshop where swords were produced and repaired which was discovered at Mikulčice and dated to the second half of the 9th century.

Ádám Biró deals with the dating of weapon graves and with the exchange of weapons. His paper is a preliminary report of a new investigation of Viking sword finds from the Carpathian Basin. In the chronological system developed for the Carpathian Basin, during the 10th century, some authors link the occurrence of double-bladed Viking swords with the final quarter of that century. The presence of these finds is explained mainly in terms of the military reform conducted by *dux* Géza and Saint Stephen who realised that nomad tactics did not provide valuable results in combat with the armoured heavy cavalry of Western Europe. This paper is an attempt at a historical and archaeological critique of this hypothesis, first of all, by questioning the existence of such a reform at all and next, by negating the connection of certain weapon types with specific tactics, etc. In his contribution Valery Yotov discusses a sword guard found in a grave at Kunágota together with two bronze matrices for hilt manufacturing. This well-known sword, Byzantine in origin, is dated to the second quarter of the 10th century. The two matrices, dated previously by D. Nicolle to the 12th–13th cc², are given a different dating here, using input from stylistic analysis and similar sword guard finds — 10th, possibly the first half of the 11th century.

A segment dedicated to technological researches and application of assorted methods taken from the natural sciences opens with a paper by Adam Bollók on the chronology of the Hungarian conquest, based on a technological analysis. In this short paper the author deals with the main manufacturing technologies used in the Carpathian Basin during the 10th century, with special attention paid to the analysis of techniques used by gold-, silver- and blacksmiths. His object is to identify possible differences between the treatment of precious and non-precious metals, above all, casting, *Pressblech* technique, also, hammering and punching, with attention given to other methods. The analysis demonstrates the existence of a unified manufacturing technology and also that differences between different production centres were insignificant. This would explain why it is unfeasible at present to develop a more detailed chronology basing only on the technology of execution. In the next paper Susanne Greif deals with early Hungarian silver alloys made in the archaeometric laboratory of Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum in Mainz. Several selected decorated silver objects and coins were analysed by using minimal-invasive Micro-XRF method which revealed an unusually high level of zinc. The results of these tests show that different groups of alloys can be separated and attributed to different production centres. Nataša V. Eniosova searched for the

² See D. Nicolle, *Arms and Armour of the Crusading Era, 1050–1350*, London 1999, vol. II, *Islam, Eastern Europe and Asia*, Cat. No. 543a; Cat. No. 676.

silverpaths in the early urban center at Gnezdovo, 10th–early 11th cc. During the recent excavations numerous finds of Islamic coins were recovered in the European part of Russia, Ukraine, Baltic islands and Scandinavia datable to the Viking Age. This paper presents the results of an analysis of minted and unminted silver made using portable ED-XRF equipment in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Its results confirm that silver coins dated to between 914 and 953 are of good quality, with a silver content of 80%. Moreover, a high level of bismuth and gold was found in coins from Transoxiana, one compatible with the results of geological surveys of modern Central Asian resources. At the same time, jewelry and other objects were found to have a silver content of 90% but a smaller amount of gold and bismuth. This suggests that Arabian coins were the main source of silver for Slavic and Scandinavian craftsmen. For her part, Mariela Inkova deals with the production of early Bulgarian belt sets, more precisely, the appearance in settlements, starting from the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 10th century, of a new form — heart- and leaf-shaped — mounts, strap ends and small buckles. Analysis suggests that their alloy is based on copper, with some zinc and lead content, and with a very small amount of silver, meaning that it was easy to cast and made possible cheap production of good quality items. The consistency of alloy, which at the same time dictated the colour of the objects, suggests that there existed different sources of raw materials, as well as different workshops and manufacturers. Finally, there is also a study by Nadá Profantová dealing with the find of a damascene stirrup from the region of Dobruška, a stray find from a multi-phase site where the early medieval horizon was dated to the 8th and first half of 9th century. N. Profantová links this specimen with the north Viking environment, while similar spurs of early Hungarian style known from a number of sites are dated to 10th–11th cc.

The results of the conference held under the patronage of two eminent scientific institutions, published in book form under review here, represent a significant breakthrough in the study of archaeological finds from the early Hungarian period. The co-operation of researchers from several countries has made possible a more detailed insight into the process of Hungarian expansion and also, into the culture exchange between the newly arrived tribes and peoples already established in this part of Europe. Next to the traditional archaeological approach to this issue in some of the papers interdisciplinary approach was applied, manifested most notably by the application of various methods borrowed from natural sciences and applied first of all to the study of the technology of production of precious metal objects. The use of these methods opens new possibilities for archaeologists, whose final achievements will have to be published in future. One apparent drawback is the application of a variety of methods in analyses which makes it hard to compare their results, if at all. One solution could be to use the same method of analysis, or to have all the small finds analysed at a same institution.

Despite these difficulties the concept of the volume under review and the international and interdisciplinary approach to the problem may be said to have provided a model worth using in the study of other important questions of medieval archaeology if we wish to see a real scientific breakthrough.

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Erwin Gáll, *Az Erdélyi-Medence, a Partium ée a Bánság 10–11. századi temetői, szórvány és kincsleletei*, Magyarország Honoglalás kori es kora Árpád-kori sírleletei 6, Szeged 2013, vol. I-II, 973 pages, 322 figures, 335 plates; ISBN 978-963-9046-79-5 Ö; ISBN 978-963-306-197-8; ISSN 1219 79 71.

The research of the settling of the Hungarians on European continent, i.e. the process of founding of their state, is one of the most important segments of medieval history and archaeology in Europe. Erwin Gáll made his contribution to the study of this issue in his vast monograph *z Erdélyi-Medence, a Partium ée a Bánság 10–11. századi temetői, szórvány és kincsleletei // 10th and 11th century Burial sites, Stray finds and Treasures in the Transylvanian Basin, the Partium and the Banat*. This publication includes all archaeological evidence known today, dated to 10th–11th century, that can be tied to the Hungarian cultural circle in the areas which are considered in this study. The book in front of us has ten chapters, the one but last an extensive summary in English, while the very last contains data about bibliography and a list of illustrations, followed by Plates.

The first chapter, divided into two smaller subchapters, has 5 pages and is dedicated to geographical characteristics of the areas which are the subject of this monograph. Those are mostly plains lower than 200 m above sea level, followed by hills lower than 1000 m above sea level, while the smallest part of the mentioned territory are high mountains. Plains offer good conditions for agriculture, while the hill and mountain regions covered by forest are more suitable for livestock breeding. Moreover, the author draws attention to the fact that the plains could often be flooded by rivers running through the Carpathian Basin, while the higher lying zones were flooded only rarely.

The second and at the same time the largest chapter of this study has 531 pages. It gives insight into all 163 sites known today attributed to the Hungarian cultural circle of 10th–11th century in the areas mentioned in title. The sites are mentioned in alphabetical order, and for each of them information about the location and the type of site is given, together with a brief overview of historiography and an inventory of small finds. For some sites a situation plan is also included and a table presenting the numismatic material.

The third chapter is dedicated to the history of current studies on Hungarian settling. It has 30 pages divided into two subchapters. The uneven level of research was noticed as early as 1895, during the celebration of 1000 years' anniversary of the founding of the Hungarian state when F. Pulszky provided insight into the sites dated to the period of the Hungarian conquest. F. Pulszky observed at that time that no

necropolis was found on the territory of Transylvania, not even a single grave from the period of interest. The reason for this situation was, above all, the fact that researches were mostly conducted in the eastern, more accessible part of the basin while the excavation of the mountain region was conducted much later. This chapter also deals with the quality of the excavations and with the quality of publications of the excavation results. The researches on Hungarian settlement in the basin were traced through three main phases: the first starts from the second half of the 19th century and lasts until 1946, the second is from 1947 to 1989, while the more recent researches taken into consideration in this study were conducted from 1990 to 2007. In analyzing the level of research of this problem a classification of each study is conducted using three main criteria — high, acceptable and low standard. Afterward they are analyzed by study region — the Transylvanian Basin, Partium and Banat, followed by a comparison of the uneven level of research in the three regions.

The next chapter has 48 pages and deals with the analysis of funerary practices. This part of the monograph is divided into 10 subchapters, most of them subdivided further. Analysis of funerary practices is one of the most important elements for defining the cultural horizons of 10th century. After an insight into the general characteristics of burials, analysis is made of necropolis size and microtopography, depth and size of the graves, the orientation of the skeletons inside each grave. Up to date results suggest that the prevailing orientation is W-E, with some exceptions, when the skeleton is oriented E-W, N-S, or S-N. The most common orientation (W-E) is interpreted by the author as a consequence of the spread of Christianity. All the exceptions are connected to the pagan tradition, suggested by the fact that they are more common during the earlier period of Hungarian expansion, 8th to 9th century, before embracing Christianity. This is followed by a typology of graves, either in the form of a simple pit inside which held the body of the deceased deposited in a wooden coffin. Graves constructed of stone and brick were also observed. In the next segment of the same chapter analysis is made of the placement of the buried individual's arms, possibly a clue to the Christian or pagan belief of the deceased, although this statement should be taken with some reserve. Attention is paid also to unusual forms of burial, as contracted burial, double burial and burial of the head only. Moreover, the presence of oboloi in burials is analyzed, in their various placements: near the head or inside the mouth, on the chest, below the pelvis, or in the region of the hand or fist. Discussion is made also of a special type of grave — horse burial, which are classified into several subtypes. These were mostly ritual burials, since parts of horse equipment (saddle, bridle, spurs...) or horse bones were deposited by the legs of the deceased. It would appear from past research that horse burial was used for men and women alike, although at first sight they suggest the military status of the deceased. At the same time, we have to note that in Transylvania no female funerals were observed that had horse bones in the graves. Finally, attention is given to funeral rituals, like offerings inside the graves, suggested by finds of animal bones and egg shells. In the final subchapter, which is a sort of a small conclusion, the author discusses the question of continuity of the funerary practice during the 10th and the 11th centuries. On the turn of these two centuries pagan graves disappear, possibly the result of the policy followed by Stephen I (1000/1001-1038) to embrace Christianity and to suppress pagan practices. Yet, on the territory examined in the study of interest there are regional differences so that in the necropolises in Transylvania situated near to larger urban centers the influence of Christianity may have been

stronger whereas in the more remote graveyards traces of paganism are to be found more often. That is explains in the 11th century the burning of the edge of the graves is still to be found, as well as the burial of heads, symbolic horse burial.

The next chapter is dedicated to the typological and chronological analysis of the remains of material culture. In 139 pages, it is divided into 11 subchapters, nine of them dedicated to individual finds categories, the last two a synthesis of the obtained results. Without going into a detailed analysis of the small finds we can say that they are classified according to their purpose: jewelry, dress accessories, belt set elements, weaponry, horse trappings, objects for personal usage, pottery, coins, etc. Each of these groups is further divided into subgroups, once again according to their purpose, while individual objects are described, attributed typologically and dated according to their context of discovery, but also, according to adequate analogies. On this occasion we will pay special attention to two types of finds. The first is weaponry, as a status symbol. The author proposes to identify separate zones in which a specific type would be more characteristic, by making an analysis of the distribution range of specific types of weapon. This did not yield the expected results because all types are recorded in each area covered by the study. The second class of find are coins, especially foreign issues, Byzantine and Western European, and some Hungarian coins too. It is clear that foreign coinage was not a currency, it testifies to commerce, and only in the larger urban centers. In the final two subchapters the author formulates a number of more general conclusions, based on the analysis of the available material, his focus mostly on the chronological system and also on the analysis of grave inventories according to the sex of the deceased.

The conclusion is 25 pages long, divided into several subchapters. One of them deals with the problem of the occupation of the land and also with the attempt to identify in archaeological evidence, forms and relics that may be characterized as Hungarian. These would be warrior graves which, as the author is correct to say, cannot be attributed ethnically with certainty, nevertheless their macro-regional variation taken together with available historical data can still point to particular population, in this case Hungarian. This is followed by an attempt to reconstruct the 10th century Hungarian social model, but with some strong reservations, and to identify the location of the Hungarian political centers, on the evidence of several necropolises with elite graves. Attention is turned next to the study of border areas and to another review of the types of necropolises from 10th–11th century. As a special segment of the conclusion, analysis of precious metal finds in graves is given, mostly datable to the first third of the 10th century, while the amount of bronze items increases afterwards. However, one needs to bear in mind that a comparison of different necropolises from different ages has its risks since, according to author, the fashion also changes. The spread of Christianity may be traced in the grave goods. During the first two thirds of the 10th century pagan elements are observed in the graves but starting from the middle of the 10th century Christianity was embraced by the elite members of the Hungarian society. Only from the first half of 11th century we can speak about institutionalization of Christianity since the formation of the church organization was followed by the elimination of pagan elements from the funerary practice.

The chapter with conclusions is followed by another, on osteological analysis, written by Gál S. Sándor, 10 pages long, and by a short text dedicated to the possibility of radio-carbon dating. This is followed by an extensive 67 pages summary in English, and a list of illustrations and bibliography.

This publication is a valuable contribution to the study of Hungarian settlement since it presents not only the archaeological material but also numerous typological and chronological analyses of sites and small finds, as well a wide range of cultural and historical phenomena. All of which helps to improve our understanding of the process of formation of the medieval Hungarian state.

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THE LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| AAC | — Acta Archaeologica Carpathica, Kraków |
| AAHung. | — Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Budapest |
| AÉ | — Archaeologiai Értesítő, Budapest |
| AMNap. | — Acta Musei Napocensis, Cluj |
| Annales UMCS | — Annales Universitatis M. Curie-Skłodowska, Lublin |
| APolski | — Archeologia Polski, Warszawa |
| AR | — Archeologické Rozhledy, Praha |
| Arch. A | — Archaeologia Austriaca. Beiträge zur Paläanthropologie, Ur- und Frühgeschichte Österreichs, Wien |
| Arh. Mold. | — Arheologia Moldovei, Iași |
| AVANS | — Archeologické Výskumy a Nálezy na Slovensku, Nitra |
| BRGK | — Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission, Berlin |
| ČMM | — Časopis Moravského Musea, Brno |
| FA | — Folia Archaeologica, Budapest |
| FQ | — Folia Quaternalia, Kraków |
| JbRGZ Mainz | — Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseum, Mainz |
| JbSGU | — Jahrbuch der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Urgeschichte; Annuaire de la Société Suisse de Préhistoire; Annuario della Società di Preistoria, Basel |
| KSIA | — Kratkiye Soobshcheniya Instituta Istorii Material'noj Kul'tury (=Краткие Сообщения Института Истории Материальной Культуры), Moskva (to number 80); Kratkiye Soobshcheniya Instituta Arkheologii (=Краткие Сообщения Института Археологии), Moskva (from number 81) |
| Kwart. HKM | — Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej, Warszawa |
| Mat. Arch. | — Materiały Archeologiczne, Kraków |
| Mat. Arch. NH | — Materiały Archeologiczne Nowej Huty, Kraków |
| MIA | — Materialy i Issledovaniya po Arkheologii SSSR (=Материалы и Исследования по Археологии СССР), Moskva–Leningrad |
| MSiW | — Materiały Starożytne i Wczesnośredniowieczne, Warszawa |
| MSROA | — Materiały i Sprawozdania Rzeszowskiego Ośrodka Archeologicznego, Rzeszów–Krosno–Tarnów |
| Pam. Arch. | — Památky Archeologické, Praha |
| PMMAE | — Prace i Materiały Muzeum Archeologicznego i Etnograficznego w Łodzi, Łódź |
| Prz. Arch. | — Przegląd Archeologiczny, Poznań–Wrocław |
| Ros. Arch. | — Rossijskaya Arkheologiya (=Российская Археология), Moskva |
| SCIV (SCIVA) | — Studi și Cercetari de Istorie Veche (to number 24); Studi și Cercetari de Istorie Veche și Arheologie (from number 25), București |
| Sl. Ant. | — Slavia Antiqua, Poznań |
| Slov. Arch. | — Slovenská Archeológia, Nitra |
| SNM Praha | — Sborník Národního Musea v Praze, Praha |
| Sov. Arch. | — Sovetskaya Arkheologiya (=Советская Археология), Moskva |
| Spraw. Arch. | — Sprawozdania Archeologiczne, Kraków |
| Spraw. PAN Kraków | — Sprawozdania z Posiedzeń Komisji Naukowych, Polska Akademia Nauk — Oddział w Krakowie, Kraków |
| Spraw. PAU | — Sprawozdania z czynności i posiedzeń PAU, Kraków |
| ŚSA | — Śląskie Sprawozdania Archeologiczne, Wrocław |
| WA | — Wiadomości Archeologiczne, Warszawa |
| WN | — Wiadomości Numizmatyczne, Warszawa |
| WPZ | — Wiener Prähistorische Zeitschrift, Wien |
| ZOW | — Z Otchłani Wieków, Poznań–Warszawa |

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