

ATTITUDE OF GERMAN SCIENCE TOWARDS ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES IN THE FORMER WESTERN-SLAVONIC TERRITORIES

German archaeologists, in the first place former employees of museums in the western and northern territories now returned to Poland, as well as professors and assistants of the Wrocław and Królewiec universities, usually interpreted the excavations carried out in these territories along a biased line, contradicting the original, Slavonic character of Lusatian culture; and evaluated the level of Slavonic and Polish early-medieval cultures extremely low. Apart from this, some of these archaeologists tried to persuade into believing in the presence of Germans as far as Pomerania since the IIIrd period of the Bronze Age (1200 to 1000 years B. C.), while others since the IVth period of the Bronze Age (1000 to 800 years B. C.). German tribes were suggested to have inhabited this country permanently until the end of the people's migration period, i. e. until the end of the VIth century of the new era. The German archaeologists reckoned Slavs to have appeared at the earliest since the VIIth century of the new era, and to have acquired nearly all features of their material culture from the German population. Slavs, for example, were denied a knowledge of iron (Frenzel) which has been recognized in central Europe since the middle of the VIIth century B. C.; Slavs were suggested to have gained this knowledge from the Germans. Slavs were supposed to have lived mainly of hunting, honey-collecting and fishing, while in reality their economies were primarily based on farming and animal husbandry; to have adopted the corrugated ornamentations typical of this race from Sweden (B. v. Richthofen); to have assumed the characteristic decorations of women and girls, namely temporal small bows, from southern Germany. Refined goldsmith's articles with filigreed ornamentation were insinuated to be of a Byzantine origin. Furthermore, it was claimed that silver treasures found in Slavonic countries are relics of the vikings; that early-medieval Slavs did not know town or trades; that even the Piast dynasty came from Skandinauia (e. g. E. Petersen). In view of the archaeological findings and more recent research, all these claims proved groundless. It has been for example discovered, that original Slavonic tribes have inhabited the territories between Łaba and Bug as early as since the end of the IInd millennium B. C.; that exclusively continental Teutons in Poland (hence the ancestors of Germans) lived in the western part of Pomerania for some 150 years (in the 2nd century and at the beginning of the 1st century B. C.). Pomerania and northern terrains of Great Poland were occupied for two and a half centuries by Goths and Gepids from Skandinauia, who constituted solely an admixture to the Slavonic population of Veneds, and who left voluntarily the Polish country in order to conquer the Roman Empire.

Unlike the chauvinistic, pre-war German archaeologists, scientists from the German Democratic Republic assume a matter-of-fact attitude towards archaeological discoveries; they study intensely the material culture of early-medieval Slavs which they have in high esteem. In the German Federal Republic, too, studies on Slavonic culture have revived since the war, and some of the West German archaeologists manage to form an unbiased opinion on the distant past of Polish western and northern territories, and to deny a German character of east-Pomeranian culture (Eggers).