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SOME PROBLEMS OF LUSATIAN CULTURE IN NORTH-EAST POLAND

One of the main problems of the Polish archaeology is that of Lusatian culture because of its scope and long duration in our land and because of its importance for the ethnogenesis of the Slavs. On the whole the archaeological documents of that culture have been already investigated, but as regards the east of Poland this matter demands still a lot of study. In this article an attempt will be made to present only certain problems concentrate upon Warmia, Mazury, Podlasie and a part of Mazowsze.

The general descriptions available up to now of the relations in that territory during the Bronze and early Iron Age¹ are full of controversies, the opinions expressed being mainly hypothetical. This is the result of the incompleteness of research work in this region, and consequently poor yield in excavation. What is more some of the archaeological documents were damaged during the last World War. Recently several books and articles on the results of the last years' excavation work have been published as well as the non published pre-war archaeological documents². That is why many problems became now much clearer than it was several years ago.

First the Mazury and Warmia group of the Lusatian culture should be mentioned here, documents of which we know only by fragments, mainly from old German works. Recently J. Kostrzewski³ published an article giving a general description of this culture. That group had been developing since the IV period of the Bronze Age and its appearance is confirmed by the existence of big burial places under stone pavement and by characteristic pottery. The preceding period is agreed to have been that of a remarkable exchange with the Lusatian culture areas, hence a number of metal objects imported. The pottery of the Mazury and Warmia group is rather closely connected in form with that of Ku-

jawy and of the north Mazowsze. Beside the common form in the whole area of the Lusatian culture (amphoras, pots platters, double conical and bellied vessels as well as channelled ornament), very soon specific local features appear. Different forms can be also observed in sepulchral architecture. It is expressed by the existence of barrows, pit-tombs and even of skeleton-tombs by the end of the period beside the characteristic "flat" tombs under stone pavement. The majority of materials from the Bronze Age come from burial places. The situation is different for the Hallstatt D period and the early La Tène period when numerous boroughs can be observed in that area⁴. However it can be stated that at that time there were only some relics of the Lusatian culture which can be seen within the Baltic culture. It cannot be confirmed at present whether migration was the case here in the early Iron Age or was it the assimilation of Lusatian groups with the local population. The existence of that population much earlier is confirmed by some forms of pottery and afterwards by some changes and ornaments of metal objects. It is impossible at the present moment to give a detailed chronology of that phenomenon because of the fact that the exact indications for establishing dates are not available. In any case the disappearance of the Lusatian culture in Warmia and Mazury has to be considered very important for the ethnogenesis because of a certain continuity of culture since the middle La Tène period. It seems probable that in the said area the Iron Age began with the Hallstatt D period only, whereas a little shortened the VI period of the Bronze Age is synchronized with Hallstatt C.

A little more towards the South, up to the Wisła, Bug, Narew, Omulew and Orzyc rivers, a north-Mazovian group of Lusatian culture can be found, that began in the middle of the III period of the Bronze Age and is separated from the previous one by moraines. The group has been recently distinguished and it is very close to the Mazury and Warmia group as well as to the central Polish group. It has been known so far, mainly from burial places of which the biggest investigated are these of Szydłowo (Mława district) and Zeńbok (Ciechanów district). The pottery of that group of Bronze Age has been shown on the table 1. The existence of barrows of mass burial, containing many cist and pit-graves under regular stone pavement is characteristic here. It can be assumed it was a ritual mass burial during some particular feasts. At the same time some single flat tombs can be found. Attention should be given to the fact that by the end of the III period of the Bronze Age pit-graves already existed, sometimes even with stone fortification. It proves once again that graves of this type in the Lusatian culture⁵ were autochthonal. A print of a grain of wheat (*Triticum* sp.), originating from the III/IV period of the Bronze Age was found on a fragment of a pot from

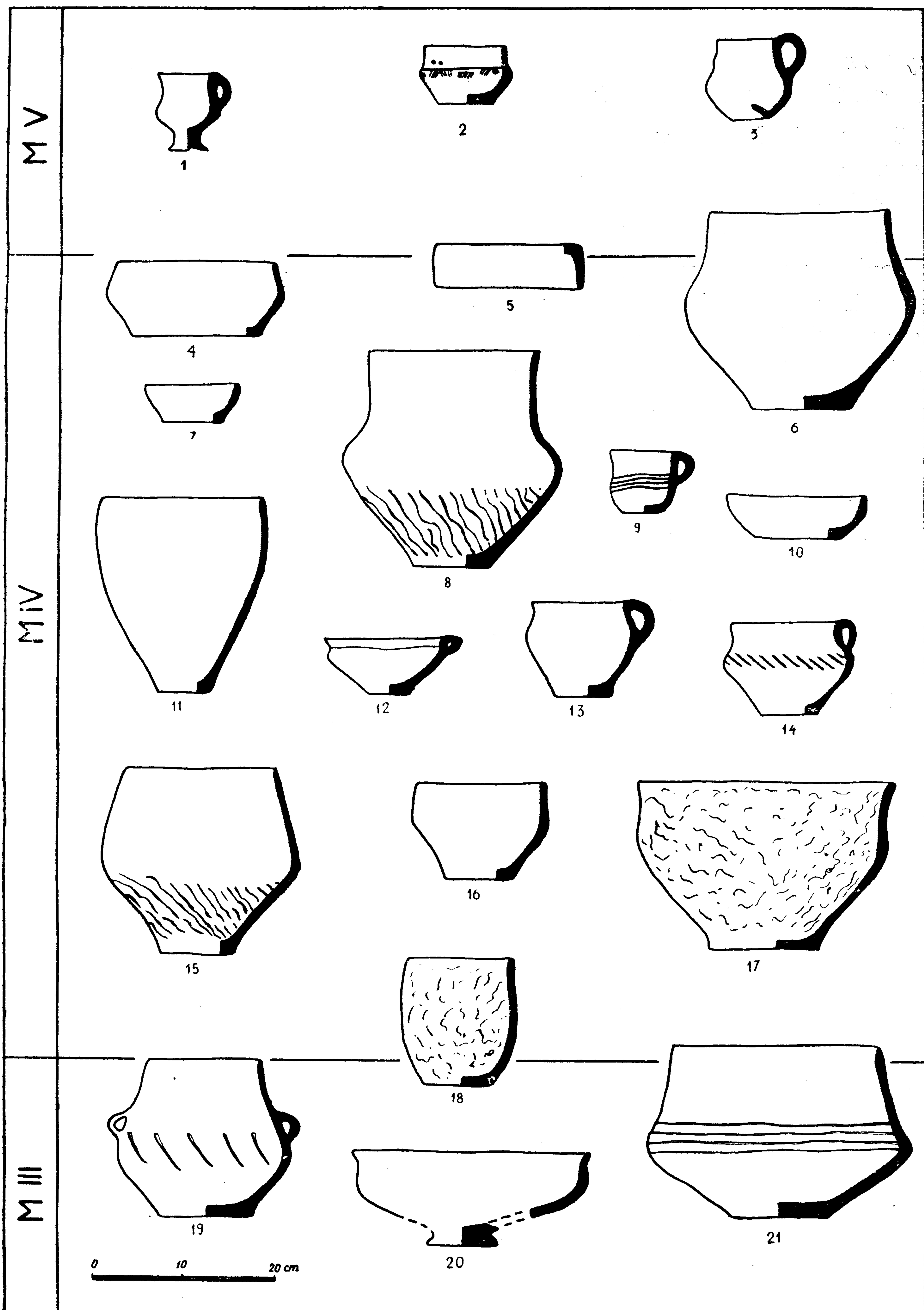


Table 1. Pottery of North-Masovian Lusatian culture group in Bronze Age. 1. Kra-
jowo Wielkie, distr. Przasnysz; 2. Wempity, distr. Płock; 3. Garlino-Zalesie, distr.
Ciechanów; 4, 5, 7, 8, 10—17. Zeńbok, distr. Ciechanów; 6. Cieśle, distr. Płock;
9. Chamsk, distr. Żuromin; 18, 20. Szydłowo, distr. Mława; 19. Setropie, distr. Płock;
21. Miszewo Murowane, distr. Płock

Szydłowo (Mława district). Further data that could enable more information on the economy of this region are not available for the moment.

The north-Mazovian territories are characteristic with their numerous bronze objects. J. Kostrzewski and L. Kozłowski were concerned with the earliest Lusatian metal objects from these areas⁶. The initial stage of that group can be rather easily distinguished because of the presence of early forms, common in the Lusatian culture and because of some connection with the Trzciniec culture through transitory materials of the so called Konstantynów group, but the problem of its decline has not been sufficiently explained so far. The few existing Lusatian centers from the Hallstatt period and many centers of the Pomeranian culture (chest and bell graves) allow to suppose that it declined at the beginning of the Hallstatt D only. The differences between the two said above cultures and the Lusatian culture have to be worked over in details. There are many premises allowing to assume that only some changes in ritual forms of burial took place which consisted in introducing new types of pottery (cist faced urns) and new forms of burial which became universal (bell graves and mass graves in a stone chest). These forms of burial were much less popular before⁷.

Podlasie and the eastern part of Warsaw Mazowsze is the area of the Mazowsze and Podlasie group, which not long ago had been known since the early Iron Age only. The borders of that area are: the middle course of the Wisła, Bug—Narew, and the middle course of the Bug river. In the south it is probably the Wieprz river. The group developed by the end of the III or even at the beginning of the IV period of the Bronze Age on the basis of the Trzciniec culture. Its influence can be seen very distinctly, on the pottery above all. Some forms of that pottery are presented on table 2. It is characteristic that some vessels with aperture ornaments under the edge were already known in the IV period of Bronze Age. Some Polish scholars considered this ornament as a result of influence of eastern cultures upon the areas of the Lusatian culture in the early Iron Age. A. Terenojkin has recently come to a similar conclusion⁸. However, the non published materials concerning the Lusatian culture of eastern Poland make possible the assumption that the elements indicated by A. Terenojkin as result of eastern influence upon Lusatian pottery are an earlier local product. The convergence does not result so much from influence but from great similarity of material cultures — Komarów and Trzciniec. Metal objects were found within the Mazowsze—Podlasie group, mainly from the Hallstatt period. During the whole Bronze Age the use of some flint tools can be observed as well as in other areas of the Lusatian culture. Among burial places already investigated attention should be given especially

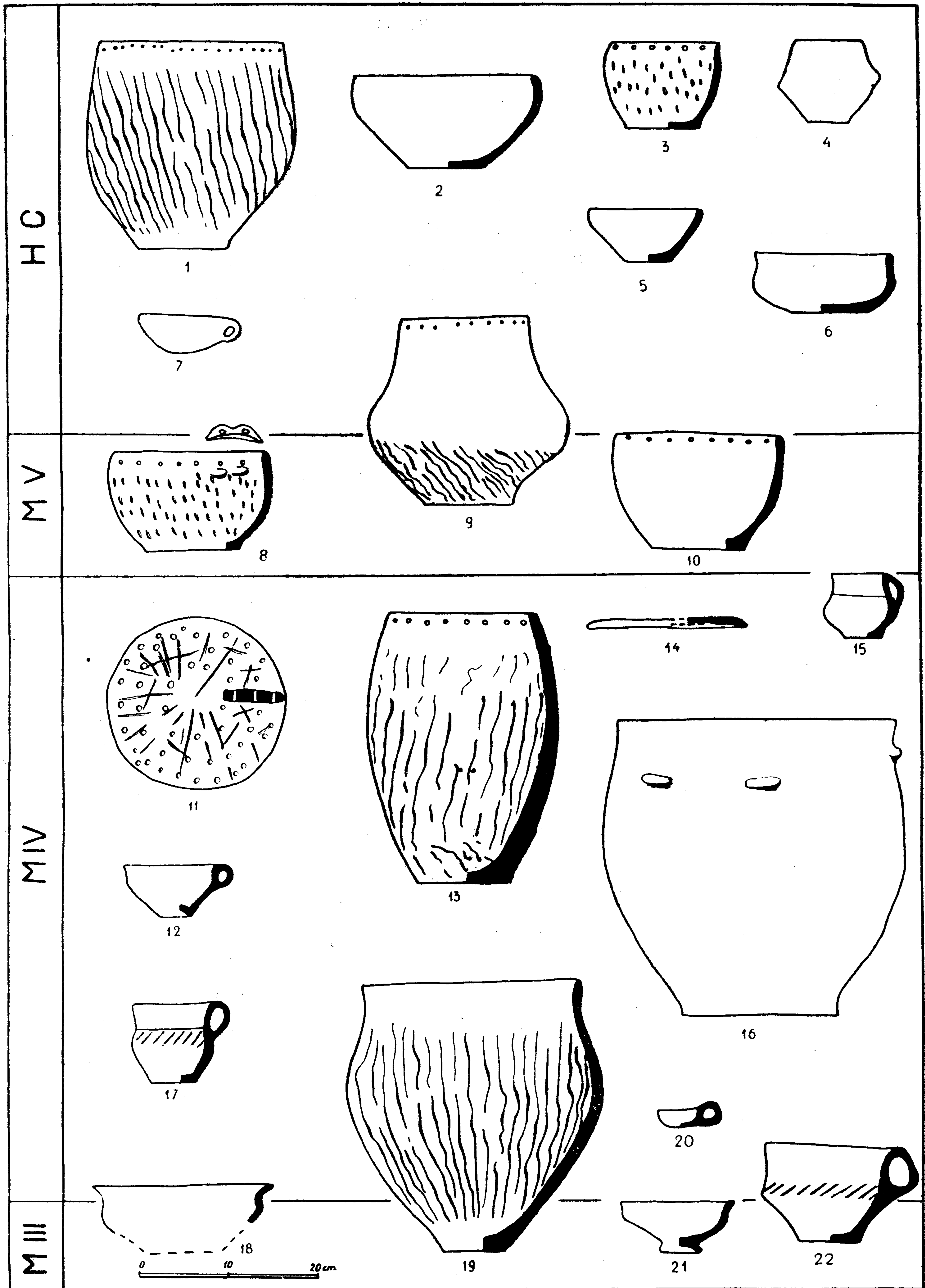


Table 2. Pottery of Masovian—Podlasie Lusatian culture group: 1, 4, 7, 9. Warszawa—Grochów; 2, 3, 5. Płock, distr. Łowicz; 6. Świdry Wielkie, distr. Otwock; 8, 10, 18, 22. Drohiczyn, distr. Siemiatycze; 11, 14, 15. Mogielnica, distr. Sokołów Podlaski; 13, 19, 20. Kamionka Nadbużna, distr. Ostrów Mazowiecka; 12, 16. Słochy Annapolskie, distr. Siemiatycze; 17. Krzemień, distr. Sokołów Podlaski; 21. Kuligów, distr. Wołomin. (Numbers 1, 4, 7, 9 according to Z. Podkowińska; 8, 10, 16 according to Z. Szmit; 13, 19, 20 according to T. Węgrzynowicz; 17 according to J. Janowski; — Drawings executed by W. Gawrysiak)

to those of Płosków (Łosice district) and Grochów in Warsaw⁹. Cist urns and pit-graves can be found there. Sometimes they are a little longer than usual with remains of funeral piles inside them. Metal gifts were rather rare like in both described above groups. A print of rye (*Secale cereale* L.) was kept on a fragment of a vessel of which unfortunately the date is unknown. Settlements often founded on dunes do not seem to have been long lasting, nor can certain Lusatian boroughs be met here. Undoubtedly it was connected with the fact that it was impossible for a group of people to live for a long time in an area with such a poor soil which quickly grew sterilized.

Speaking about the problems of the Mazowsze—Podlasie group it would be good to say some words about the beginnings of the Lusatian culture. Nowadays it is assumed¹⁰ that this culture crystallized in a considerable part of Poland about the III period of the Bronze Age from the Trzciniec culture with some foreign influence. Transitory forms are represented by the so called Konstantynów-group — as regards the described here area the scheme seems to be right for the north-Mazovian group. Speaking about Podlasie the matter is more complicated because it is impossible to fix precise dates concerning these transitory forms. It can be assumed that it took place a little later than in the areas to the west from the Wisła, by the very end of the III or even at the beginning of the IV period of the Bronze Age. Here are the arguments that advocate it: transitory as well as early Lusatian materials can be met together with relics considered up to now to have been later. Moreover the Lusatian culture materials can be found in pits containing also fragments of the Trzciniec pottery. The treasure of the Trzciniec culture from Dratów (Puławy district)¹¹ worked over in details does not exclude the possibility of this culture to have lasted still in the III period of the Bronze Age. It is characteristic that the authors of that elaboration consider pottery as one of the most important chronological indexes. It is possible that not numerous cist graves of the Trzciniec culture are just from this period. Besides, if the Komarów culture lasted even up to the V period of the Bronze Age — it is theoretically possible that the Trzciniec culture in the neighbouring area could last until the III period of the Bronze Age all the more, considering the similarity of later cultures. On the basis of analysis of metal objects M. Kaniwec has proved recently that the beginnings of the Wysocko culture are connected with the end of the IV period of the Bronze Age, which is to a certain extent confirmed by the analysis of pottery¹². In addition to that some fragments of broken pottery of Biełohrudow culture were found among materials from a Lusatian settlement at Strzyżów (Hrubieszów district) which gives grounds to assumption that its beginnings

were earlier than it has been supposed so far¹³. The problem of absolute chronology of the Pre-scythian Iron Age has not been solved up to the present and it ought to be taken into consideration that great changes are possible in dating of respective cultures.

The above remarks are of hypothetical character because of the data being very poor. However it can be already assumed that the development of the Lusatian culture as well as of other eastern cultures, belonging to the group of buried fields cultures, was gradual from the west to the east. The element of migration can be almost entirely excluded. The chronological differences concerning the beginnings of these cultures in the respective areas were supposedly between the beginning of the III and the V period of the Bronze Age.

As far as other essential problems of the Lusatian culture are concerned in the area described here — attention should be paid to the adaptation of the general chronological scheme to the local specific conditions. It was already mentioned that in Warmia and Mazury the VI period of the Bronze Age had probably existed (with some corrections). At the present moment data are lacking to distinguish materials from the end of the III period and the first half of the IV period of the Bronze Age in the Mazowsze—Podlasie group; thus it can happen that it will be necessary to cancel the ceasura of time. Besides the problem of confirming regional chronology is actual not only for the Polish territory and demands very detailed working out.

These fragments of numerous problems of the Lusatian culture show that investigation of that culture in eastern Poland will explain many questions, not only in the field of facts, but it may also contribute to better synchronization of the eastern European cultures with these of western Europe and it will be enable to explain social and cultural changes.

NOTES

¹ J. Kostrzewski, *Od mezolitu do okresu wędrówek ludów* [From Mesolith to the People's Migrations Period], „Prehistoria ziem polskich” [PAU — Encyklopedia Polski vol. IV, Kraków 1939—48, pp. 223 fol., maps 8—11, tabl. 67—76; The same, *Pradzieje Polski* [Prehistory of Poland], Poznań 1949, pp. 94—144; S. Nосек, *Materiały do badań nad historią starożytną i wczesnośredniowieczną międzyrzecza Wisły i Bugu* [Materials for Research on Antique and Early Middle Age History of Wisła and Bug inter-river Areal], „Annales Univesitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska” Sectio F., vol. VI, 1951, pp. 98—112, map. VIII.

² J. Antoniewicz, J. Okulicz, *Sprawozdanie z prac wykopaliskowych, przeprowadzonych w l. 1951—1954 w Jeziorku pow. Giżycko* [Report on Excavation from 1951 to 1954 at Jeziorko, Giżycko distr.], „Materiały Starożytne” vol. III, 1958, pp. 7—69, tabl. I—XXVII; J. Dąbrowski, *Dwa cmentarzyska kultury łużyckiej*

w Zeńboku, pow. Ciechanów [Two Cemeteries of the Lusatian Culture at Zeńbok, Ciechanów distr.], „Materiały Starożytne” vol. III, 1958, pp. 85—114, tabl. XXVIII—XXXIV; T. Hildt-Węgrzynowicz, *Sprawozdanie z badań osady kultury lużyckiej we wsi Kamionka Nadbużna, pow. Ostrów Mazowiecka, w l. 1955—1956*, [Report on Investigation of a Settlement of the Lusatian Culture at a Village Kamionka Nadbużna, Ostrów Mazowiecka distr., from 1955 to 1956], „Wiadomości Archeologiczne”, vol. XXIV, 1957, pp. 307—325, tabl. XLVII—XLIII.

³ J. Kostrzewski, *Stosunki między kulturą lużycką i bałtycką a zagadnienie wspólnoty językowej balto-słowiańskiej* [Relations between the Baltic and Lusatian Culture and the Problems of Balto-Slavonic Language Community], „Slavia Antiqua”, vol. V, 1954—1956, pp. 1—75.

⁴ J. Antoniewicz, *Zagadnienie wczesnożelaznych osiedli obronnych na wschód od dolnej Wisły i w dorzeczu rzeki Pregoly*, [The Early Iron Fortified Settlements to the East of lower Wisła and in the Basin of Fregola river], „Wiadomości Archeologiczne”, vol. XX, 1954, pp. 327—368, tabl. XXVII—XXVIII.

⁵ Z. Durczewski, *Zagadnienie grobów jamowych w kulturze lużyckiej i późniejszych ich nawiązań* [The Problem of Pit-Graves in the Lusatian Culture and their later Connections], „Wiadomości Archeologiczne”, vol. XVI, 1939—1948, pp. 35—52.

⁶ J. Kostrzewski, *I, II i III okres epoki brązowej w Polsce* [The I-st, II-nd and III-rd Period of the Bronze Age in Poland], „Przegląd Archeologiczny”, vol. IV, 1928, pp. 1—35; L. Kozłowski, *Wczesna, starsza i środkowa epoka brązu w Polsce w świetle subborealnego optimum klimatycznego i jego wpływu na ruchy etniczne i zaludnienie Polski* [The Early, Late and Middle Bronze Age in Poland in the Light of Subboreal Climatic Optimum and its Influence upon Ethnic Movements and Population of Poland], Lwów 1928, pp. 135—136, map. III.

⁷ Recently that problem was talked over by W. Hensel, *Poznań w zaraniu dziejów* [Poznań at the beginning of History], Wrocław 1958, pp. 84—86.

⁸ А. И. Тереножкин, (A. J. Terenojkin), «Лужицкая культура и культуры среднего Поднепровья», „Краткие Сообщения ИИМК АН СССР” т. 67, 1957, p. 3—16.

⁹ W. Ogonowski, *Cmentarzysko przedhistoryczne w Płoskowie na Podlasiu* [Prehistorical Burial Place at Płoskow — Podlasie] „Z otchłani wieków”, vol. XIII, 1938, pp. 153—154; Z. Podkowińska, *Cmentarzysko ciałopalne z wczesnego okresu żelaza Warszawa-Grochów, pole „Bryłowszczyzna”* [Cist Burial Place from the Early Iron Period Warszawa-Grochów, „Bryłowszczyzna” Field], „Sprawozdania Państw. Muz. Archeol.”, vol. I, 1945—1947, pp. 175—181, tabl. V—IX.

¹⁰ K. Jażdżewski, *O zagadnieniu początków kultury lużyckiej* [About the Beginnings of the Lusatian Culture], „Slavia Antiqua”, vol. I, pp. 94—151; A. Żaki, *Początki rozwoju kultury lużyckiej w dorzeczu górnej Wisły* [The Beginnings of the Development of the Lusatian Culture in the Basin of upper Wisła], „Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska” Sectio F, vol. N, 1949, pp. 1—214.

¹¹ A. Gardawski, K. Wesółowski, *Zagadnienia metalurgii kultury trzcinińskiej w świetle skarbów brązowych z Dratowa, pow. Puławy, i Rawy Mazowieckiej* [The Problem of the Metallurgy of Trzcinięc Culture in the Light of Bronze Hoards from Dratow, Puławy distr., and Rawa Mazowiecka], „Materiały Starożytne”, vol. I, 1956, pp. 59—103, tabl. XXXVIII—LX.

¹² В. И. Канивец, «Вопросы хронологии высокой культуры», „Краткие Сообщ. Института Археологии”, т. 4, 1955, p. 94—96.

¹³ «Написи стародавньої історії Української РСР», Київ 1957, p. 93—94.