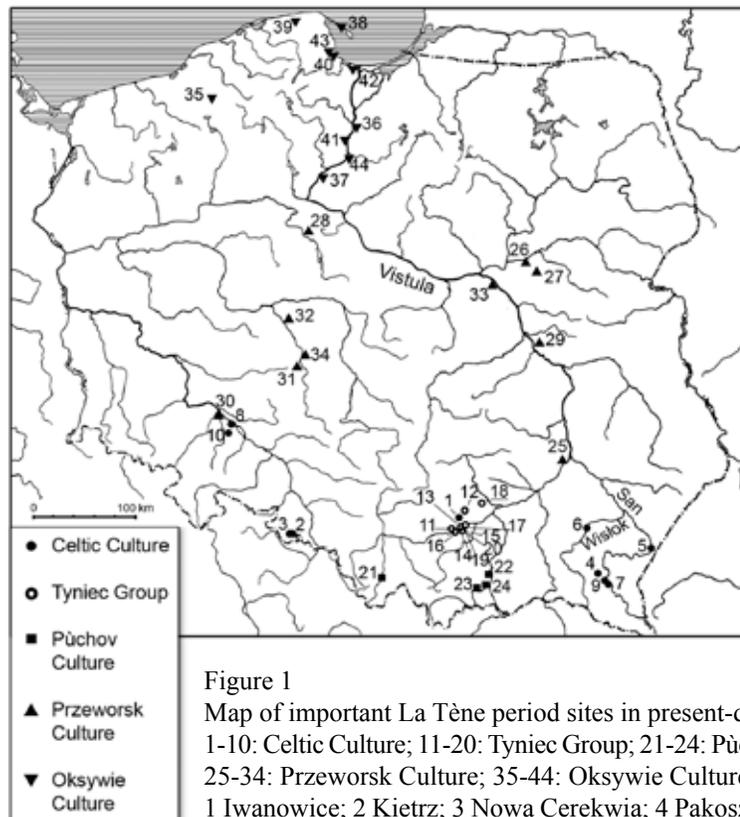


The Eastern Celts in the North

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Ancient historiography frequently mentions Celts in the context of developments in Southern Europe, on the lower Danube, in the Balkans, or in Greece. For these areas, the presence of La Tène culture artefacts is often interpreted using written sources. For more remote regions, especially north of the Carpathian Mountains, practically no accounts by ancient authors are extant and archaeological finds are virtually the only source available for a reconstruction of cultural change in the last centuries B.C.

As archaeological sources suggest, what is now southern Poland constituted the northernmost reaches of Celtic settlement in Central Europe. Celtic culture appeared in this area in phase Lt B, flourishing in Lt C (beginning in the late 3rd century). Dense Celtic settlement in the Rivers Vistula and Oder basins, combined with influences from the Jastorf culture, helped shape new local cultures: the Przeworsk culture and the Oksywie culture. The ‘Laténisation’ was marked by the adoption of the typically Celtic funerary rite: cremation, accompanied by the ritual destruction of grave equipment, the spread of iron metallurgy and the adoption of numerous metal artefacts. Most brooches, two-edged swords with scabbards, spearheads, spurs, and tools found in Poland are identical to their Celtic equivalents, so much so that it is impossible to tell imports from local imitations (Godłowski 1977; Fitzpatrick 1993, 239-242; Cumberpatch 1993a, b, with more literature). The La Tène culture settlement in today’s Poland is limited to areas with the most fertile soils, endowed with special



1 Iwanowice; 2 Kietrz; 3 Nowa Cerekwia; 4 Pakosówka; 5 Radymno; 6 Rzeszów; 7 Sanok-Biała Góra; 8 Sobocisko; 9 Trepcza; 10 Żerniki Wielkie; 11 Aleksandrowice; 12 Dalewice; 13-Kraków-Krzesławice; 14 Kraków-Mogiła; 15 Kraków-Pleszów; 16 Kraków-Tyniec; 17 Kraków-Wyciąże; 18 Pełczyska; 19 Podłęże; 20 Zakrzowiec; 21 Grojec (Żywiec-Grojec); 22 Marcinkowice; 23 Maszkowice; 24 Podegrodzie; 25 Błonie; 26 Kamieńczyk; 27 Karczewiec; 28 Krusza Zamkowa; 29 Oblin; 30 Partynice; 31 Piwonice; 32 Wesółki; 33 Wilanów (Warszawa-Wilanów); 34 Zadowice; 35 Buczek; 36 Bystrzec; 37 Chełmno; 38 Jastarnia; 39 Kopaniewo; 40 Oksywie (Gdynia-Okisywie); 41 Opalenie; 42 Pruszcz Gdański; 43 Rumia; 44 Rządź (Grudziądz-Rządź).

qualities like saline springs or commanding transportation routes (fig. 1; Woźniak 1970). The Rivers Vistula and Oder basins saw overlapping influences from the Eastern and Western Celtic branches. In many cases, it is impossible to draw a clear line between the Eastern and Western provinces of the Celtic culture. Centres of the La Tène culture in Lower Silesia, around the Rivers Oder, Bystrzyca and Oława and near Mt. Ślęża, show discernible references to a Celtic culture in Bohemia, an indirect link to Western Europe. Notably, this area was traversed by a leg of the Amber Route leading from the Baltic coast to the Adriatic Sea. Stronger ties to the Eastern Celtic area are visible in settlements in Upper Silesia, around the Głubczyce Upland, which show some similarity to the La Tène culture in Moravia. In south-eastern Poland, the upper part of the River San saw a growth of Celtic culture in phase Lt C, probably linked to a centre on the upper part of the River Tisa (Ołędzki 2004; Bochnak 2006; Karwowski 2007, further bibliography). In the Krakow region, following a 'pure' Celtic period in phases Lt B2 and Lt C1, a mixed group appeared containing elements of the La Tène and Przeworsk cultures, called the Tyniec group (Woźniak 1996; Poleska 2006, further bibliography). For a full picture of the influences of the circle of Celtic cultures in southern Poland one must also add elements of the Púchov culture, observed in mountain valleys and in the Krakow area (Madyda-Legutko 1996).

Celtic culture

As has been said, the concentrations of Celtic culture in Lower Silesia show references to Bohemia, while settlement in the Głubczyce Upland displays a close affinity to Moravia. The similarity is observed in items of material culture as well as in burial rite characteristics. Moreover, the cadence of cultural and stylistic changes in both Silesian concentrations reflects

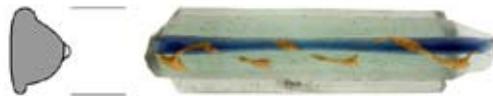


Figure 2
Glass bracelet from the Trepcza settlement. (Photo: Fotolabor IUFG, Vienna).

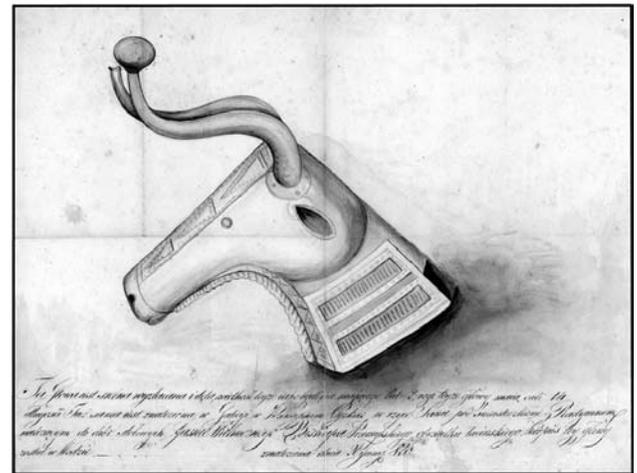


Figure 3
Silver bull's head recovered from the River San at Radymno. Note under the drawing: *Ta głowa jest srebrna wyzlacana i dęta, wielkości teyże jako bydłęcia mającego lat 2, rogi teyże głowy mają cali 14 długości. Taż sama jest znaleziona w Galicyi w Przemyskim Cyrkule w rzyce Sanie pod miasteczkiem Radymnem należącym do dóbr stołowych Jaśnie Wielmożnego biskupa Przemyskiego obrządku łacinskiego. Korpus tej głowy został w Wodzie znaleziony dnia 26 Juny 826.* (This head is made of silver, gilt, and hollow, sized like that of a beast two years old with two horns, each 14 inches long. This same one was found in Galicia, Przemyśl County, in the River San, near the town of Radymno under the dominion of the Illustrious Bishop of Przemyśl of the Roman Denomination. The Head was uncovered in water on the day 26th of June, 826.). (Drawing from the Archive of the Muzeum Archeologiczne w Krakowie).

the evolution of the Celtic culture in Bohemia and Moravia. Both populations, therefore, maintained trade relations with the Eastern Celtic regions. Many different goods must have been exchanged, the commodity now easiest to capture in archaeological sources being amber. Another area north of the Carpathians where Celtic culture flourished was the upper part of the River San basin. Settlement in this area should most likely be dated to phase Lt C. Most probably, it was under strong influence from Subcarpathian Ukraine with its then flourishing centre at Gališ-Lovačka. The upper part of the River Tisa basin is often identified as the location of the Anarti, a Celtic tribe mentioned by Caesar (*BG*, VI, 25) and Ptolemy (*Geography*, III, 8, 3). Ptolemy also mentions an Anartophracti tribe (*Geography*, III, 5, 8), which he places north of the Carpathians. The La



Figure 4
Sword and scabbard recovered from the River Wisłok in Rzeszów (photo T. Bochnak). 1-3 – iron.

Tène culture on the upper San is represented chiefly by sedimentary remains and random finds (**fig. 2**). Not a single Celtic burial is known from the area. Interesting finds in South-eastern Poland include a silver bull's head found in the San near Radymno in 1827 (Głosik 1973). Now lost, the item was substantial in size: a description preserved in the archives of the Archaeological Museum in Krakow says it was nearly life-size (**fig. 3**). The presence of pellets on the horn tips links the San discovery to a number of representations found in the Celtic circle. The motif of a bull's head with pellet-tipped horns often appears on decorative fire-dogs; it can also be found on other items used in food preparation (bucket mountings, roasting spits, knife handles), as also elsewhere, for instance on small artworks. Finds of ornamental fire-dogs and other items featuring the above mentioned motif are concentrated in the western reaches of the Celtic circle (Feugère 2002, 451). In eastern Celtic territories, we only know of one example of this type, a fire-dog from Ocnîța (Berciu 1982). Yet, there are strong suggestions to link the San find with Eastern Celtic lands. The bull's head in question (torn off a larger whole, as witnesses testified) was made of silver, and the western Celtic circle could not claim a tradition of silver toreutics. Large silverware products, like the Gundestrup cauldron and Trichtingen neck ring, are mostly identified with the lower Danubian area, which was almost entirely settled by the Celtic tribes of *Volcae-Tectosages*, *Scordisci*, and Thracian *Triballi*. That the San silver bull's head originated in the eastern fringes of the Celtic world is also suggested by a geometrical ornament unusual for 'pure' Celtic style. Another interesting Celtic relic is a sword in an iron scabbard retrieved from the River Wisłok in Rzeszów (**fig. 4**). According to older publications, the scabbard was embellished with a barely visible 'dragon-pair' ornament, now faded away. Another series of finds to confirm Celtic penetration north of the Carpathians comes from the upper part of the River Dniester. These are singular finds typical of the La Tène culture, for the most part discovered with material from other cultural units (Woźniak 1970, 180, 181; 1974, 149; Bidzilja, Shchukin 1993, 68, 69). A larger series of phase Lt C Celtic ceramics surfaced at Bovšev (Ivano-Frankovsk oblast') (Woźniak 1974, 149).

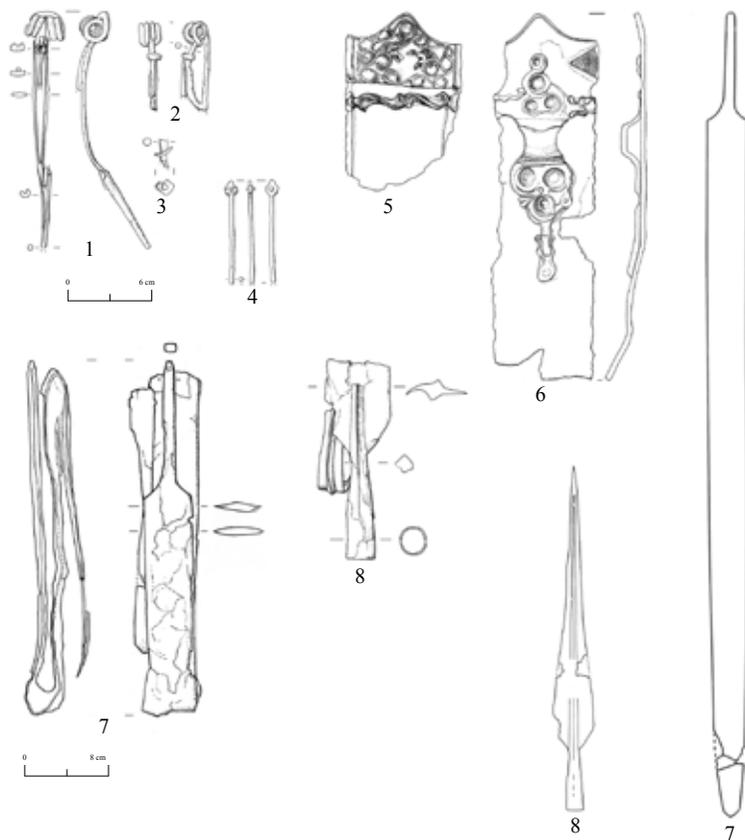


Figure 5
Tyniec group. Inventory of the cremation grave at Aleksandrowice (drawing R. Naglik). 1-8 iron.

Tyniec group

The Krakow area saw the development of a syncretic group, described as the Tyniec group (from phase Lt C until the early period of Roman influence), combining elements of the Celtic and Przeworsk cultures, with influence from the Jastorf and Púchov cultures, as well as the Dacian circle. The population of the group produced wheel-made ceramics (also painted) and used advanced metallurgy of iron and non-ferrous metals. The relatively high social and economic development of the population inhabiting the Krakow area is confirmed by its production of local coinage. Inventories of the Tyniec group indicate that its population maintained contacts with both the western and eastern provinces of the Celtic circle. In its late developmental stage, especially after the fall of the Czech and Moravian *op-pida*, the Tyniec group shows increased contacts with

Southern Europe, indicated by finds of Gorica- and Jezerine-type brooches. The Tyniec group's population practiced a funerary rite that left no traces discernible with present-day archaeological methods, exceptions from this rule being extremely rare. Such exceptional finds include quadrangular enclosures at Zakrzowiec (Jarosz, Rodak 2006, 628, 630, Pl. 7). In this context, a highly interesting discovery was the cremation grave at Aleksandrowice, the contents of which included a sword in an iron scabbard with the metal segments of a belt, a spearhead, a brooch of the middle La-Tène type, and some ceramics (fig. 5, 6; Bochnak 2006, 167-169). Ornamented with imagery of fantastic beasts, the scabbard is reinforced with an S-shaped ornated brace attached to a suspension loop. Composed of rectangular segments and dividing rings, the belt is the only existing analogy to the Grave 6 find from Brežice (Guštin 1984b, 114-120; Szabó, Petres 1992, 109, 221, Pl. 103). The Aleksandrowice item is one element suggesting a link between the Tyniec group and the Eastern Celts as early as phase Lt C.

Púchov culture

Polish territories were influenced by the northern, mountainous parts of Slovakia, which, from phase Lt C until the later Roman period, developed the Púchov culture, considered part of the La Tène cultural province (Pieta 1982, 150-158). Remains of the Púchov culture were recorded chiefly in the Sądecka and Żywiecka mountain valleys and in the Krakow area, but the population obviously also penetrated into the Tatra near Zakopane (Madyda-Legutko 1996, 26, 27). In the Sącza area, highland settlements of the Púchov culture have been found at Maszkowice, Marcinkowice and also at Podegrodzie and Zabrzeż. The chief Púchov culture site in Żywiecka valley is Mt. Grojec (Madyda-Legutko, Gołąb 2004). The earliest Púchov culture finds in Poland are dated to the Lt C2 phase (e.g. the Mötschwil-type and Slovenské Pravno-type brooches of Maszkowice and Podegrodzie), with the most intense settlement in the Lt D1 phase. The Púchov highland settlements have not yet supplied clear evidence that they were inhabited in the Lt D2 phase. Another phase in which this culture influenced Polish lands dates to the turn

of the Common Era, when Púchov materials appear in the Tyniec group near Krakow.

The present outline of Eastern Celtic settlement and influences in the River Vistula basin is nothing more than contributory. At present, Poland is in a state of research preceding major investment projects. Its findings will help to considerably expand our knowledge of the nature of Celtic settlement north of the Carpathians.

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Translated by Tomasz Stanek

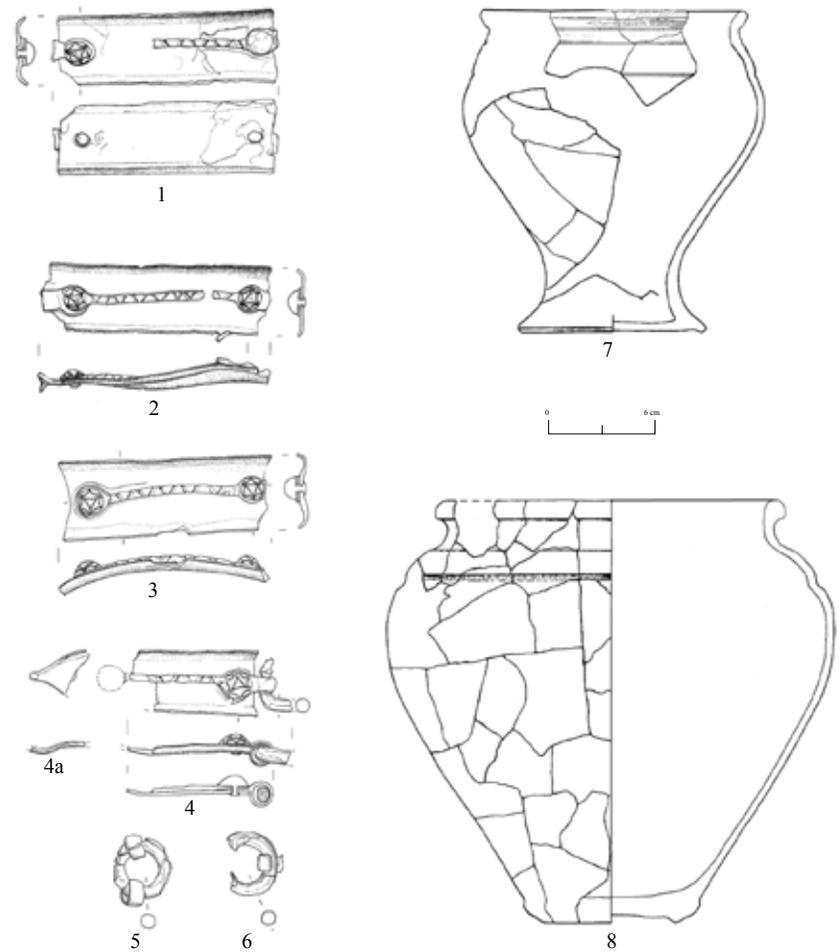


Figure 6
Tyniec group. Inventory of the cremation grave at Aleksandrowice (drawing R. Naglik). 1-6 iron, 7, 8 ceramics.