

Shared Divine Imagery: Gold Bracteates

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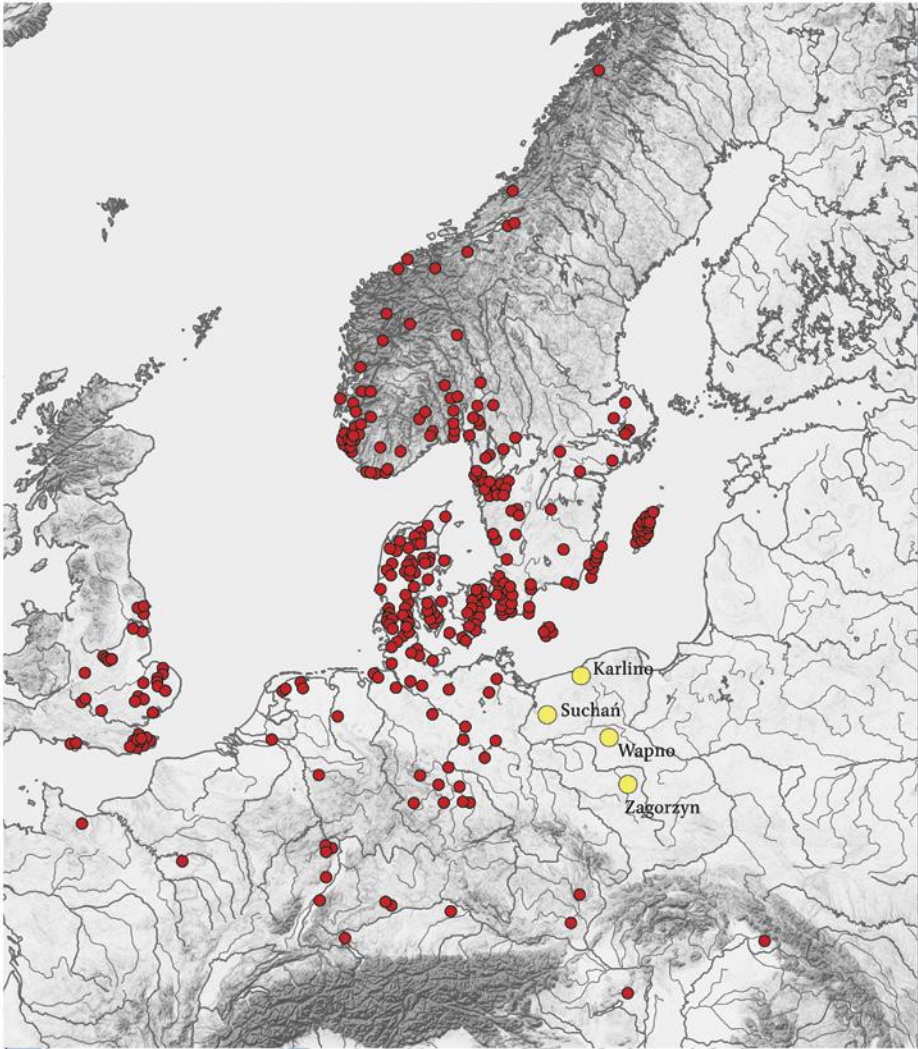
1 Introduction

At least 15 Migration Period gold bracteates have been found in the region of present-day Poland from the early 19th c. up to the year 2010 (see Map 10.1; Fig. 10.1; Fig. 10.3; Fig. 10.6; Fig. 10.9). Some of them are now gone, lost through time, but most of them are known at least from photographs and descriptions and thus can be utilized for further investigation. They all have clear connections to other bracteates, especially those from southern Scandinavia, casting light on the close relationships between the neighbouring peoples in the regions around the Baltic Sea, and their shared cultural traits.

Gold bracteates are small, round pendants from the 5th and 6th c. AD. They are made of sheet metal.¹ The embossed pictorial field in the centre can be surrounded by a border zone with punched ornaments. Bracteates have an enclosing wire around the rim and a suspension loop, both of gold. They were worn as pendants from necklaces. Their imagery follows the typical principles of Germanic Animal Style I. The bracteate motifs can on the whole be divided amongst four types, designated by the letters A, B, C and D: the A-type shows a humanoid head in profile, the B-type has one or more whole humanoid figures, and the C-type shows a huge humanoid head over a quadruped. On the D-type stylized animals are to be seen, often interlaced with their own legs and bodies.² Thus, the range of bracteate designs is on the whole rather limited. Closely related bracteates can be found in Denmark, Sweden and Norway, and also in England and the southern coastal regions of the North Sea and the Baltic, and sometimes even further South, for example in the Danube region. The main production and distribution area, however, is southern Scandinavia. There they occur as hoard finds or as stray finds from settlements, while on the

1 Munksgaard et al. 1978; Axboe 2001b; for more information and descriptions, photographs and drawings of all bracteates see the catalogue IK 1985–89, and its supplement Heizmann, Axboe (eds.) 2011.

2 Munksgaard et al. 1978, 335f; IK 1985–89, Vol. 3.



MAP 10.1 Distribution map of the principal series of gold bracteates, with the find spots in Poland in the south-eastern corner (A. Pesch, K. Göbel, ZBSA Schleswig)

Continent and in England, as well as in other border zones like Gotland and Norway, they are usually found in women's graves.³

There are continuing problems concerning the precise dating of single gold bracteates. All their designs are examples of the so-called Animal Style I, i.e. the Migration Period style of the North in the 5th and 6th c.⁴ However, the absolute chronology of that period depends on Roman coins, taken from closed finds such as graves or hoards. It is somewhat difficult to build an overall chronology on such finds, as they give only a *terminus post quem*, but no accurate date or time for the deposit of the find, although the time elapsed between the striking of the youngest coin and the deposit may have been short – or surprisingly long. Consequently, opinions about the beginning and development of Style I differ, and so do ideas on the dating of the gold bracteates. Fortunately, it is possible to get some better hints for a dating of single bracteates, thanks to Morten Axboe who produced a seriation on the humanoid heads on A, B- and C-types, comparing specific stylistic elements with dates from coin-dated finds in order to gain a relative chronology of the images.⁵ It was possible to divide the bulk of bracteates into a series and to establish four groups with shared pictorial details and stylistic features, H₁–H₄ (and one mixed crossover-group H₃/H₄). The specimens within these groups seem to have been more or less contemporary. The total seriation number of a bracteate and its head group are quoted here, but due to the fact that bracteate motifs were spread by copying them one from another,⁶ there may be some blurring of the chronology.⁷ As yet, however, it provides the best possibility of narrowing the date down.

The Polish bracteate designs were stamped using seven different dies (matrices). Six of these are of the C-Type, which shows a humanoid head over a quadruped (Fig. 10.1; Fig. 10.3; Fig. 10.6; Fig. 10.9). The most common interpretation of the C-type motif is that it depicts the head of a Germanic god, presumably Woden (Odin), performing one of his great deeds in healing an injured horse or foal.⁸ The seventh motif is of the B-type (Fig. 10.6), which is defined by its depiction of one or more complete humanoid figures. Furthermore, the piece belongs to the famous group of “three-god bracteates” (see below), which were interpreted as depictions of Baldr's death, a very serious even in Old Norse mythology.⁹

3 André 1991, 248; see Pesch 2004.

4 Salin 1904; Haseloff 1981; Roth 1998; Ament, Wilson 2005; Pesch 2012b; see also Chapter 6.

5 Axboe 1998; 2004.

6 Pesch 2007, 373–379.

7 See Axboe 2004, 203–207, 223–228.

8 Hauck 1970a; 1977; 1980, 37–43; 2011a; Heizmann 2001; 2007.

9 Hauck 2011b, 80–127.

1.1 *Karlino*

The first find of bracteates from the territory of present-day Poland was made as early as 1839/40 in a peat bog near Karlino, Białogard district, (then Pommern). It was a hoard find, containing six die-identical bracteates and one bracteate from another die (Fig. 10.1), today bearing the numbers IK 100 and IK 367 in the Iconographic Catalogue (IK 1985–89). It was argued that the seven bracteates from the hoard may have belonged to a necklace, with IK 367 as a central piece.¹⁰ But there was more: a solidus coin of Theodosius II (AD 408–450) and one of Leo I (AD 457–474 [which provides a clue to the dating of the deposition after AD 457]), two gold finger rings, a parabola-shaped bead of twisted gold¹¹ and a piece of ring gold.¹² All these items are now missing. However, some objects came into private ownership early on, which might have been parts of the same hoard: a double gold finger ring, a profiled gold pendant and two coins with punch-decorated loops and double wire around the borders, from Valentinian I (364–375) and Valentinian III (425–454; currently items in a Swiss collection). Besides the six die-identical gold bracteates, the most impressive find from the Karlino hoard is one of the missing pieces: a gold finger ring with an inner diameter of 15 mm and ten triangular facets.¹³ Each facet was ornamented with symbols or animal figures and one of them bore a runic inscription. The runes show the close connection of the ring to Germanic customs, as they can be clearly read (from right to left) as *alu*, which is a word well known from bracteates as well as many other objects. This is a so called “formula word”, i.e. a much repeated expression, presumably meaning “defence” and thus giving protection to the owner of the ring.¹⁴ It even may be written here twice, since there are bind-runes above the inscription that can also represent *alu*, possibly being the first bind-runes known.¹⁵ In general, the ring can be seen as late evidence of the antique monogram ring tradition, now inscribed with runes, and thus a unique specimen.¹⁶ As an aristocratic element it underlines, together with the seven bracteates (which is a relatively high number both of a die-identical series and of specimens in one closed find), the

10 Tybulewicz 2011, 149.

11 von Ledebur 1839/40, 97; La Baume 1963.

12 See IK 1, Text, 178f; Tybulewicz 2011; Tybulewicz 2012.

13 von Ledebur 1839/40; Krause 1937, 447; Krause, Jankuhn 1966, 105, tab. 21; Tybulewicz 2011, 147.

14 Krause, Jankuhn 1966, 447; see generally Heizmann 2011, 533–544; for the runes in general see also Makaev 1996; Düwel 1988; 2008.

15 Düwel 2008, 184.

16 Schwab 1998.



FIGURE 10.1 Two of the seven bracteates from Karlino, Białogard district, representing the two C-bracteate dies in the find. Scale: 2:1; (after: IK)

value and importance of the hoard. It has been interpreted as evidence for the close relations between southern and northern Germanic peoples up to the beginning of the 6th c., and its deposition has been dated to the end of the 5th or the early 6th c.¹⁷

The six bracteates IK 100 from the Karlino hoard seem to have been more or less identical in size, border wire, loop, and motif. One of them has been missing since 1929 and the other five since 1945, until then belonging to the Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte Berlin-Charlottenburg (Inv. Nr. II 2506, II 2507, II 5865–67). But even when it turned out that they are under custody of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow¹⁸ they are not open for further research. However, old photographs could be used for analyzing and drawing the bracteates. The pieces were small, with a diameter of 2 cm each. While the loops were relatively simple, made of a profiled and bent gold strap that has two broader and six smaller ridges, the rim around the border, made from two twisted wires (opposed, S- and Z-forms), is unusual. While twisted rims of smooth wire occur in some cases, especially on the Continent (for example IK 129,1 and IK 308 from the Nebenstedt hoard in Northern Germany, IK 347 Straubing and IK 389 Welschingen from southern Germany),¹⁹ there is just one direct parallel within the bracteate horizon with the double rim wire from Karlino: it belongs to a pendant from a richly equipped grave in Frankfurt,

17 Tybulewicz 2011, 155.

18 Tybulewicz 2011, Tybulewicz 2012.

19 See generally for the rims Axboe 1981, 38–40.

Germany, which has in shape and motif some similarities to D-bracteates, but seems to be a little younger.²⁰

The Karlino C-bracteates (IK 100) belong to a design family (“Formularfamilie”), designated C₁₂. The members of such a motif-related group or family are so alike that they could not have been designed and crafted independently.²¹ Additionally, some specimens can often be listed that show some affinities to a specific family, but also clear differences or variations, and these specimens are called bastards. The design families are each defined by a set of criteria. In the case of C₁₂ (Fig. 10.2) the horse’s legs are especially important, since three of them are shaped similarly while the fourth is not.²² All the bracteates of this motif-related family come from Denmark and southern Sweden (Map 10.2). Normally, contrary to IK 100, no bird occurs on them, with one exception: IK 587 Uppåkra, but here the bird lies under the horse – thus not the normal position on bracteates. However, as a bird turning towards the big head is quite a common feature within the imagery of other design families, it does not come as a very surprising element here: such variations in detail, including the addition of symbols or elements from other motif groups, are typical of bracteate imagery. The birds express reliance and trust between themselves and the depicted head, presumably the god Woden (Odin).²³

Within the seriation of the humanoid heads on A, B- and C-types²⁴ the Karlino bracteate IK 100 image belongs in the head-group H₃, with the total seriation number of 232. That means that those bracteates may have been produced around the year 500, in the middle of the bracteate period, which started along with the Early Animal Style I somewhere around 450, and ended around 550 or in the second half of the 6th c.

A seventh bracteate presumably derives from the Karlino hoard, IK 367 (Fig. 10.1). Since 1945 the specimen was classified as missing. It is the merit of Rozalia Tybulewicz, who went thoroughly through all the available sources in different archives to discover its original association with correlation to the Karlino hoard. Also IK 367 is in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow today.²⁵ The bracteate is a C-type seen from the left, like the six IK 100 specimens, and

20 Pesch 2015b.

21 Pesch 2007, 44.

22 C₁₂ members: IK 4 Åkarp, IK 30 Bolbro (7 copies), IK 53 Fjärestad/Gantofta (2 copies), IK 100 Karlino/Körlin (6 copies), IK 235 Dybäck, IK 272 Hermannstorp, IK 325 Schleswig(?), IK 366 unknown find spot, IK 379 Ven, IK 587 Uppåkra, IK 606 Smørenggård; bastards: IK 8 Års, IK 138 Olovstorp, IK 179 Stenholts Vang (7 copies), IK 321 Roma region/Gotland, IK 529 Sorte Muld 11/Fuglesang, IK 625 Uppåkra (Pesch 2007, 210–215).

23 Hauck 1977, 109; IK 1, Einleitung, 125–126; Heizmann 2001, 327–334, 338; Oehrl 2010, 438; Pesch 2018.

24 Axboe 1998; 2004.

25 Tybulewicz 2011; Tybulewicz 2012.



IK 4



IK 30



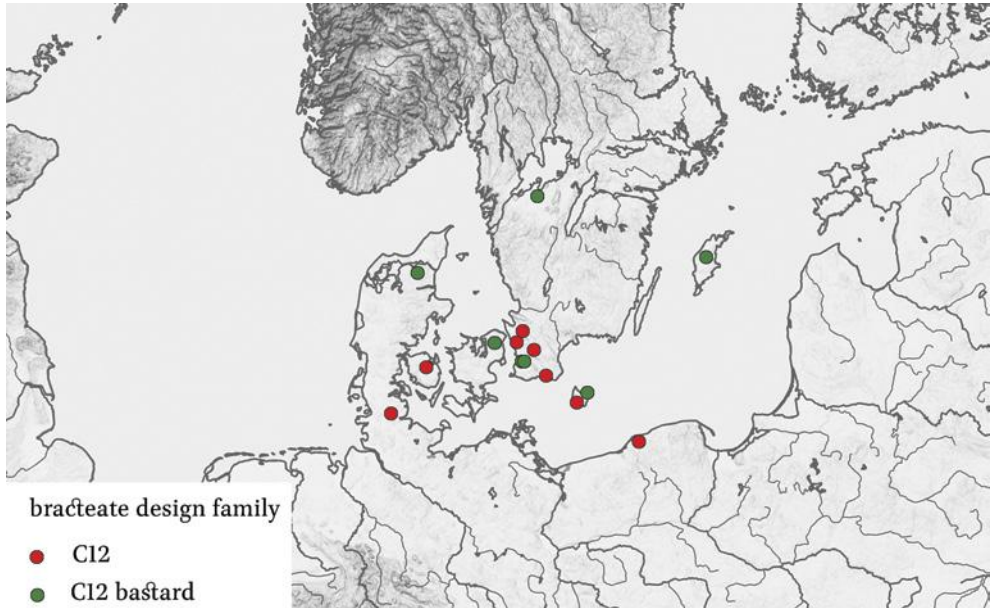
IK 53



IK 587

FIGURE 10.2 Four members of design family (*Formularfamilie*) C12. IK 4 Åkarp; IK 30 Bolbro; IK 53 Fjärestad/Gantofta; IK 587 Uppåkra. Scale: 2:1; (after: IK and Heizmann, Axboe [eds.] 2011)

especially the head and hair style on IK 367 share many details with IK 100. But the bracteate was made from another, slightly bigger and more detailed die. It appears to have had a diameter of 2.45 cm. The horse carries ornamental horns and a stylised harness on the body. It has relatives in design family C6 (Fig. 10.4 and Map 10.3), and so does the whole composition of the bracteate design, making it a bastard of that cluster. This links the find to bracteate IK 211 (Fig. 10.3) from the Wapno hoard (see below), another bastard of C6. Most intriguing is the unique runic inscription of IK 367, written between two lines



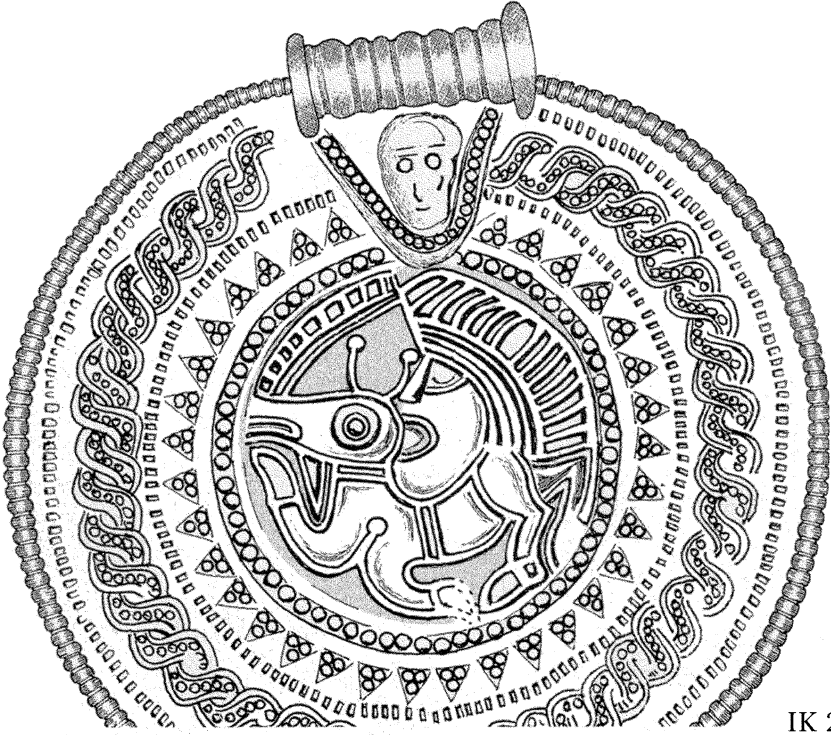
MAP 10.2 Find spots of members (red) and bastards (green) of design family C12, related to IK 100 from Karlino, Białogard district (A. Pesch, K. Göbel, ZBSA Schleswig)

in the upper left field of the bracteate. It can be easily read as **waiga**, which was interpreted as a name by runologists, having to do with strength and/or an intoxication drink, and possibly the name of the rune master.²⁶ Graphically a similarly composed inscription between lines occurs on many bracteates from design family C1 (see Fig. 10.7), the members of which are mostly from southern Scandinavia (Map 10.5). The members of this family usually show extra symbols additional to the main design, which are swastikas, crosses or rosettes. That is also the case with IK 367. It has two extra symbols, a round punch (“bulls eye”) behind the head and a x-shaped sign with a round middle part in front of the head, a so-called circle cross.²⁷ A circle cross is a rare symbol, yet it occurs on two of the bastards of design family a C1, IK 291 and IK 93, both from Zealand in Denmark.

All in all, the bracteates from the Karlino hoard show several clear links to some main bracteate clusters from southern Scandinavia. They relate as bastards to different design families (C12, C6) and share traits with others (C1), whose members are mainly known from Scania, Zealand and Bornholm, and

26 IK 2, Text, 227; see Tybulewicz 2011, 149.

27 Behr 1991, 125–126.



IK 211



IK 386

FIGURE 10.3 IK 211 and IK 386 from Wapno, Wągrowiec district. Scale: 2:1; (after: IK)



IK 115



IK 186

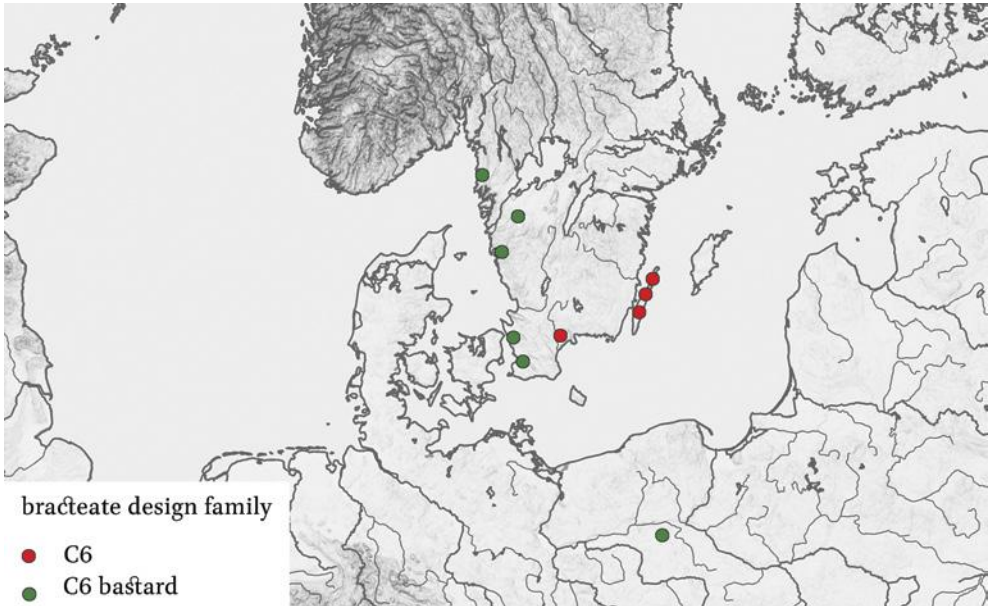


IK 202



IK 221

FIGURE 10.4 Four members of design family (*Formularfamilie*) C6. IK 115 Lundeby; IK 186 Tjusby and IK 202 Vå (both without their broad punched border zones); IK 221 Bostorp. Not to scale (after: IK)



MAP 10.3 Find spots of members (red) and bastards (green) of design family C6, related to IK 211 from Wapno, Wągrowiec district (A. Pesch, K. Göbel, ZBSA Schleswig)

less frequently from other regions of southern Scandinavia (see Map 10.2, Map 10.3 and Map 10.5). It has been argued that they were imported from those regions.²⁸ But IK 100 and IK 367 from Karlino both differ slightly from the main traits of the Scandinavian motif groups. Thus while none of their ciphers are completely unknown from Scandinavian bracteates, they show newly arranged symbols and design-elements. It might therefore be possible that they were not imported from Scandinavia, but manufactured in a workshop within Poland (see also below). That workshop, however, used templates from southern Scandinavian bracteates and clearly tried to link itself to the customs of typical bracteate production.

1.2 *Wapno*

The next bracteate hoard found in present-day Poland was made in 1850 (then Provinz Posen). Inside a burial mound near Wapno, Wągrowiec district, (Great Poland), a clay urn contained four bracteates, a gold finger ring, three spiral rings of gold and six other gold rings.²⁹ The urn, two of the gold rings

²⁸ Tybulewicz 2011, 155.

²⁹ IK 1, Text, 359; figures in: Petersen 1939, 73; Żak 1962, 57; Kara 1994.

and two bracteates were soon lost, and the other finds from the Museum in Berlin (Charlottenburg) have been officially missing since the Second World War but also came into custody of the Pushkin Museum in Moscow; only one of the bracteates (IK 386, see below) could be bought back by the Museum in Berlin later.

The four bracteates were stamped from two dies, IK 211 and IK 386 (Fig. 10.3). Both their motifs belong to the C-type and show the large humanoid head over the horse, seen from the left. All the bracteates seem to have had beaded wires around the rims, which is the most common type of rim wire.

From die IK 211 a single bracteate was examined; the other one was quickly lost. The specimen had a diameter of 4.7 cm and a weight of 6.5 g. It belongs to Axboe's later head group H_{3/4}, having a total number in the seriation of 298, thus belonging approximately in the first half of the 6th c. It is equipped with a broad border zone, filled with punched ornament: circular rows of dots, triangles and s-shaped punches are arranged close to each other as interlaced motifs or two twisted ribbons. The inner motif does not belong directly to a design family, but it is related to family C6.³⁰ This family (Fig. 10.4 and Map 10.3) is defined by a huge, scratched hair style, while the front legs of the quadruped are splayed. IK 211 from Wapno features this horse, but not the special hair style, which makes the specimen a so-called bastard of family C6. Nevertheless, some dependency on the other members of that group is obvious: members like IK 211 from Bostorp on Öland help us to read the ciphers more accurately. One of the other bastards of C6, IK 367 from Karlino (see above; Fig. 10.1), even helps to understand the small line of squares between the horse's nostrils and the front of the human hair: this could be an echo of a runic inscription, as occurs frequently in this position on other bracteates and design families. The members and bastards of C6 are mostly from Öland and Scania in southern Sweden, and it is typical for them to have an especially broad border zone, often with circular punched rows in the form of twisted ribbons.³¹ A less common feature of the Wapno find IK 211 is the small humanoid face under the loop. Similar faces, often described as "face masks",³² seem to be a typical element of south-eastern Swedish bracteates, although some exceptions are known from other regions.³³ IK 221 from Bostorp also shows this

30 C6 members: IK 115 Lundeby, IK 186 Tjusby, IK 202 Vä, IK 203 Vä, IK 221 Bostorp; bastards: IK 12 Raum Alingsås, IK 54 Fjärestad/Gantofta, IK 121 Maen, IK 211 Wapno, IK 287 Keberg, IK 367 and IK 368 unknown find spots, IK 591,1 and 2 Uppåkra (Pesch 2007, 170–178).

31 For these in general see Axboe 1981, 51–53, 82.

32 Against this term: Pesch 2015a, 457, 477–480.

33 Pesch 2015a, 308f.

feature. Thus many traces of both the design and the border decoration link the Wapno find to Scandinavian bracteates.

One of the two original specimens of IK 386 Wapno-C (see Fig. 10.3) has been lost since 1874, but the other is now back in the Berlin Museum (Charlottenburg) today. It has a diameter of 2.3 cm and a weight of 3.425 g. IK 386 from Wapno belongs to Axboe's seriation group H₃ (no. 191 of the whole seriation), thus fitting into the first half of the 6th c., and it has a swastika behind the humanoid head as an additional symbol. There is a runic inscription in front of the head. This can be read, right to left, as *sabar*, although the meaning is somewhat unclear: It has been interpreted as "Saba [i.e. wise one] (wrote the) r(un)es";³⁴ but this is not generally agreed upon, as neither *Saba* as personal name nor the sense of "wise" can be asserted beyond doubt.³⁵ Nevertheless, "the wise one" could be connected with Woden/Odin and, as normally the bracteate inscriptions, if not formula-words, seem to represent denotations or by-names of gods,³⁶ this could be an explanation. The majority of the inscriptions of Migration Period bracteates remain cryptic, and this is no exception.

The motif of IK 386 Wapno-C is related to another design family, "Formularfamilie" C₁₄ (Fig. 10.5).³⁷ This family is known from southernmost Sweden, including Öland, from Bornholm and from the eastern part of Zealand (Map 10.4). Its members are defined by a longish humanoid head drifting higher atop the quadruped's neck than usual, and connected to it by a round motif in the very middle of the pictorial field. The head's nose is marked by an inner line, the almond-shaped eye lies in the spandrel between the nose and the forehead underneath a dotted line that separates the face from the hairstyle. They all carry a swastika symbol and an inscription of three runes, to be read from right to left, and transcribed as *ota*. That again is interpreted as a formula-word, meaning "fear", "terror".³⁸ On a bracteate, this might have had a similar function to *alu*, helping the bearer of the amulet defend himself against evil forces; but *ota* could also be related to one of the names of Woden/Odin, "Yggr", which is etymologically connected with another word for terror. Thus *ota* may be used here in order to underline the power of the depicted god,

34 Antonsen 1975, 64.

35 IK 2, Text, 253; Nowak 2003, 299–300, 650.

36 Beck 2011; Heizmann 2012, 703–704.

37 C₁₄ members: IK 55 Fjärestad/Gantofta, IK 152 Scania, IK 185 Tjurkö (11)/Målen, IK 578 Gadegård; bastards: IK 134 Öland, IK 386 Wapno, IK 619 Suchań and IK 619,2 Søtoftegård (Pesch 2007, 220–224).

38 IK 1, Text, 104 (Düwel); Heizmann 2011, 574–577; see also Düwel 1998.

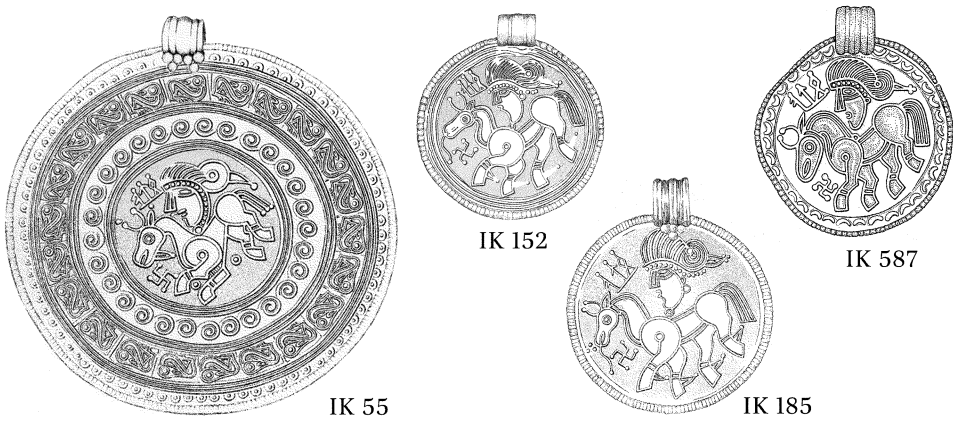
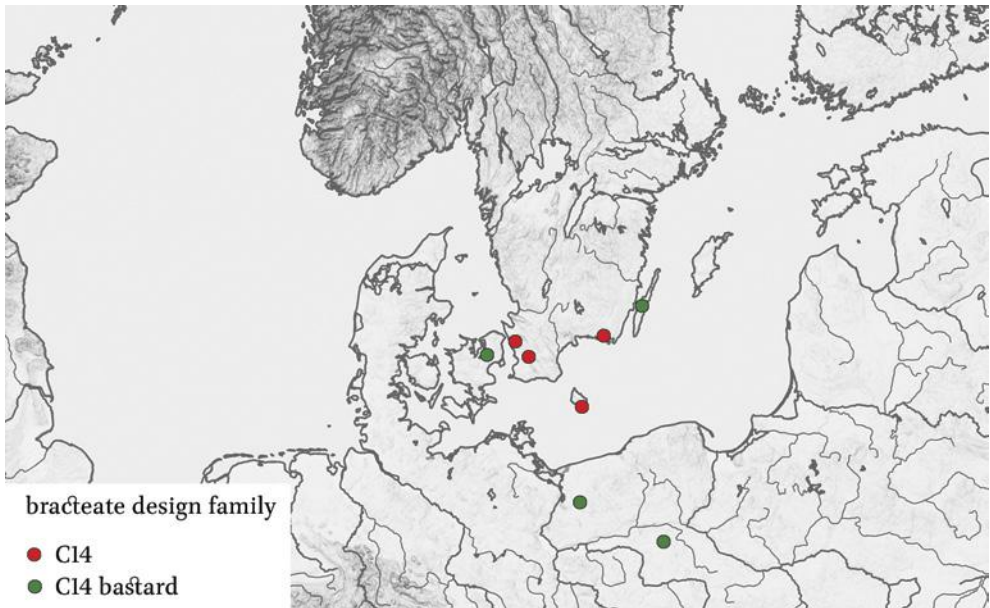
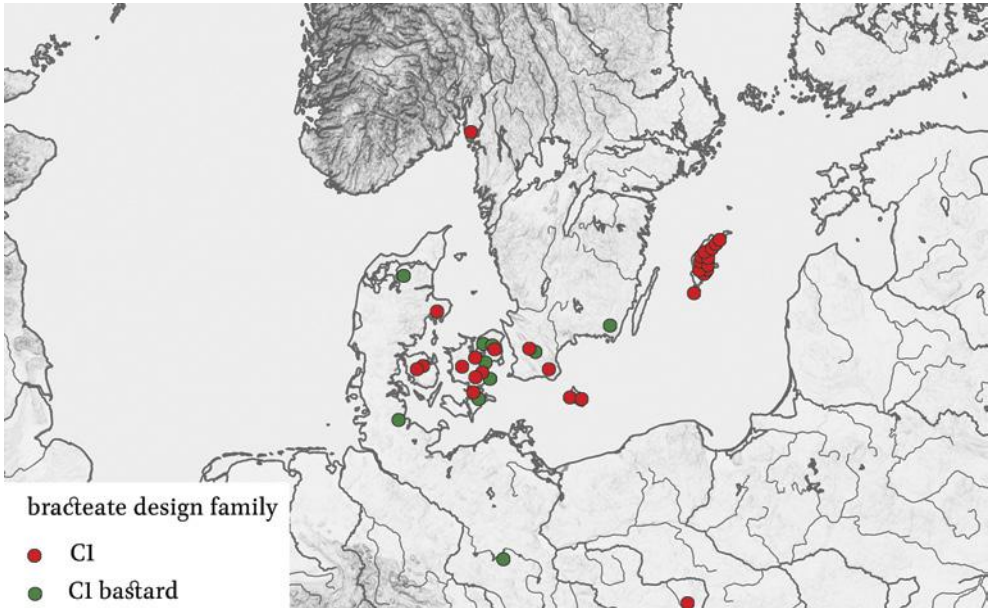


FIGURE 10.5 Four members of design family (*Formularfamilie*) C14. IK 55 Fjärestad/Gantofta; IK 152 Schonen (III); IK 185 Tjurkö (II)/Målen; IK 587 Gadegård. Scale: 1:1; (after: IK and Heizmann, Axboe [eds] 2011)



MAP 10.4 Find spots of members (red) and bastards (green) of design family (*Formularfamilie*) C14, related to IK 386 from Wapno, Wagrowiec district and to IK 619 from Suchań, Stargard district (A. Pesch, K. Göbel, ZBSA Schleswig)



MAP 10.5 Find spots of members (red) and bastards (green) of design family (*Formularfamilie*) C1, related to IK 217 from Zagorzyn, Kalisz district and IK 367 from Karlino, Białogard district (A. Pesch, K. Göbel, Schleswig)

bringing fear and terror to his enemies,³⁹ and consequently to the bracteate owner's enemies as well.

In contrast to the true members of design family C14, IK 386 Wapno is lacking the *ota*-inscription, which is replaced by the *sabar*-runes. Also, on the horse, clear differences can be seen. Nevertheless, there are many associative features, and as another Polish find, IK 619 from Suchań (see below), also belongs amongst the bastards of family C14, connections between the Polish regions and southern Sweden are once again visible with these family resemblances.

1.3 *Zagorzyn*

In 1927, two gold bracteates were offered to the National Museum in Copenhagen by M. Gumowski of Poznań, which had reportedly been found “during the war” in Russia, somewhere in the “region of river Beresina” (IK 1, Text, 48). However, the price demanded by the Polish dealer was too high. In 1944, the two specimens were offered again to the Württembergisches Landesmuseum Stuttgart

39 Heizmann 2011, 577.

and then bought notwithstanding, and with them came three solidi (Licinia Eudoxia, Severus III [461–465], Glycerius [473/74]) to Stuttgart. Thanks to Aleksander Bursche, other precious-metal finds in different museums and collections, which emerged from the same mysterious Russian “Beresina region”, among them at least six Roman gold medallions and medallion imitations, could be understood as parts of one and the same treasure hoard.⁴⁰ This could be connected to a huge hoard from Zagorzyn, Kalisz district, which came to light in 1926. Thus it seems very likely that the two bracteates IK 20 and IK 217 (Fig. 10.6) originally belonged to that hoard.

One of the two bracteates from Zagorzyn is a C-type. IK 217 has a diameter of 2.56 cm and a weight of 3.07 g. According to Morten Axboe it belongs to his head-group H3, which was produced in the late 5th or early 6th c. With its overall number of 170 in the whole seriation it seems to be slightly older than the bracteates from Karlino, Wapno and Suchań (see below). IK 217 is a member of the design family C1 (Fig. 10.7).⁴¹ This quite extensive family occurs in southern Scandinavia, especially on the Danish islands of Zealand and Bornholm as well as in Scania and Öland (Map 10.5).⁴² It is defined through a bust motif between the relatively small head and the horse, which has one of its hind legs stretched back- and upwards, as if it had just slipped. In many cases a swastika is placed in front of the head. Thus, although IK 217 lacks the strange hind leg of the other members, the majority of its other features link it directly to that family. However, another symbol, which looks like a single *R*-rune (ʀ), is a unique feature.

An exception within the Polish material is IK 20 Zagorzyn (see Fig. 10.6). It belongs to a design family of B-type bracteates, family B1 (Fig. 10.8 and Map 10.6),⁴³ also well known as “three-god bracteates” (Fig. 10.8).⁴⁴ Today,

40 Bursche 2009; see also Bursche 1990; 1996b.

41 Pesch 2007, 142–151.

42 C1 members: IK 57,1 Fride, IK 57,2 Öster Ryftes, IK 57,3 Riksarve, IK 91 Illerup, IK 95 Kjøllegård (3 copies), IK 175 Snesere Overdrev, IK 199 unknown find spot, IK 199 unknown find spot (Denmark), IK 215 Aversi, IK 217 Zagorzyn, IK 233 Djupbrunns, IK 238 Ejby, IK 244 Fredrikstad, IK 249 Fyn (II), IK 258 Gotland, IK 264 Gurfiles(?), IK 267 Hammenhög, IK 298 Lynge Gyde, IK 301 Maglemose (II)/Gummersmark, IK 330 Zealand, IK 357 Tved/Mols area, IK 364 unknown find spot, IK 365 (8 copies from Gotland), IK 385 Visby Kungsladugård, IK 593 Sorte Muld II/Fuglsang (4 copies); bastards: IK 9 Års (I), IK 11 Hjørnlunde Mark/Slangerup, IK 83 Højstrup Strand, IK 93 Kitnæs II, IK 98 Køge region/Zealand II, IK 150 (3 copies from Southern Sweden), IK 229 Denmark, IK 236 Eckernförde area, IK 257 Golm, IK 291 Lekkende Have, and maybe IK 642 (at least 7 copies from unknown find spots).

43 Pesch 2007, 99–103.

44 Hauck 1970b, 225, 423; 2011a, 18–28; 2011b, 80–109; Axboe 2004, 211.

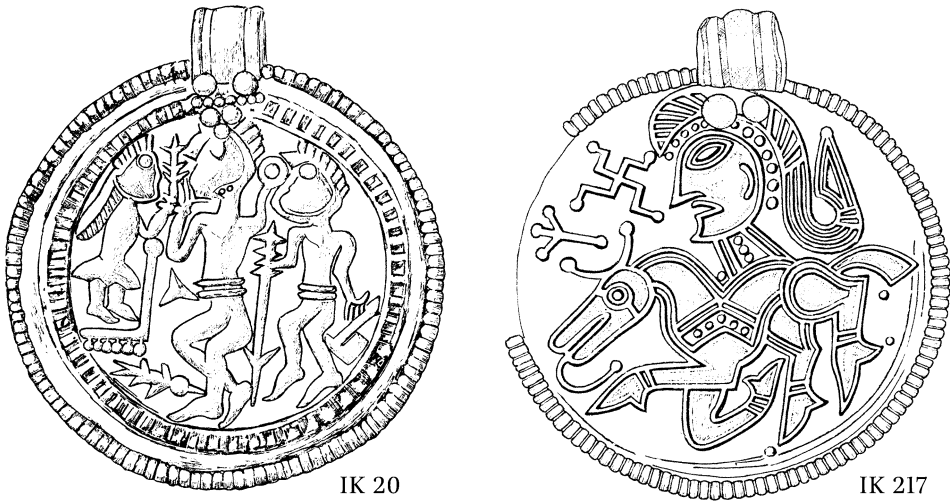


FIGURE 10.6 Bracteates IK 20 and IK 217 from Zagorzyn, Kalisz district. Scale: 2:1; (after: IK)

15 specimens from nine different dies are known.⁴⁵ On these amulets three standing figures are depicted, the middle one a little larger than the others and with crossed legs. A bird above, some minor creatures, attributes, signs and symbols frequently occur, sometimes also runes or imitation roman capitals. The specimen from Zagorzyn, the only one found outside of Denmark (although one is from Bornholm, much closer to Poland) weighs 3.67 g and has a diameter of 2.8 cm. Though it, like most of the members of family B₁, does not stand out by having a great ornamental border zone and thus a relatively great diameter, it has been seen as an indicator of important cult places of the Migration Period.⁴⁶ Even if this were not the case, these bracteates were vital for decoding bracteate imagery as a whole.⁴⁷ The story of Odin's son Baldr, who was killed with the mistletoe twig through the wickedness of Loki, is a prime example of equating stories from medieval text sources concerning the pagan religion of the North with other sources of information in order to get access to the meaning of bracteate images, whence the method of context iconography was born.⁴⁸ Specimen IK 20 from Zagorzyn fits excellently into this family.

45 B₁ members: IK 20 Zagorzyn, IK 39 unknown find spot (Denmark x), IK 40 unknown find spot (Denmark), IK 51,1 Fakse, IK 51,2 Ilerup, IK 51,3 Gudme, IK 66 Gummerup, IK 165 Skovsborg (2 copies), IK 595 Sorte Muld/Bornholm (3 copies) and IK 646 Gammel Lejre.

46 See Hauck 1994.

47 see Hauck 1970b, 184f., 225, 423; 2011a, 18–28; 2011b, 80–109.

48 Hauck 1975; Pesch 2012b, 678–682; 2015a, 345–349; see Behr 2011, 220–229.



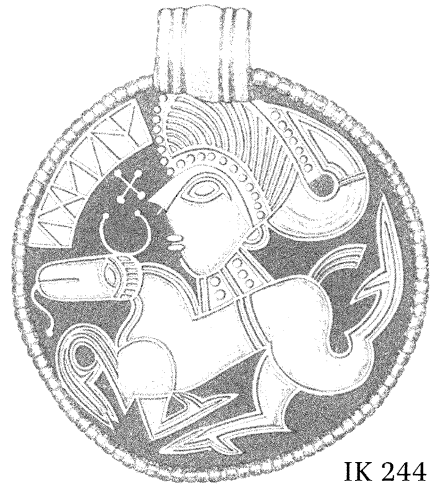
IK 91



IK 95



IK 215



IK 244

FIGURE 10.7 Four members of design family (*Formularfamilie*) C1: IK 91 Killerup, IK 95 Kjølbergård, IK 215 Aversi, IK 244 Fredrikstad. Scale: 2:1; (after: IK)

1.4 *Suchań*

The most recent find was made in 2006 at Suchań, Stargard district (Western Pomerania).⁴⁹ Though it was found over an area of 10 × 10 metres, it must originally have been a closed hoard, containing at least two bracteates, three gold pendants and a gold ring.⁵⁰ There are reports of a bracteate find made in the

49 See also Chapter 17; Bursche, Kowalski, Rogalski 2017 (eds.), 111–112.

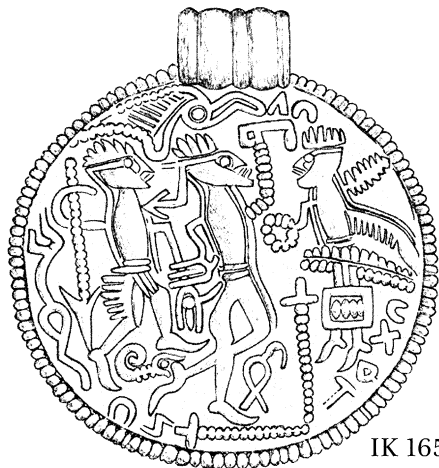
50 Bursche 2009, 142; Heizmann, Axboe (eds.) 2011, 980–982.



IK 39



IK 51,1



IK 165



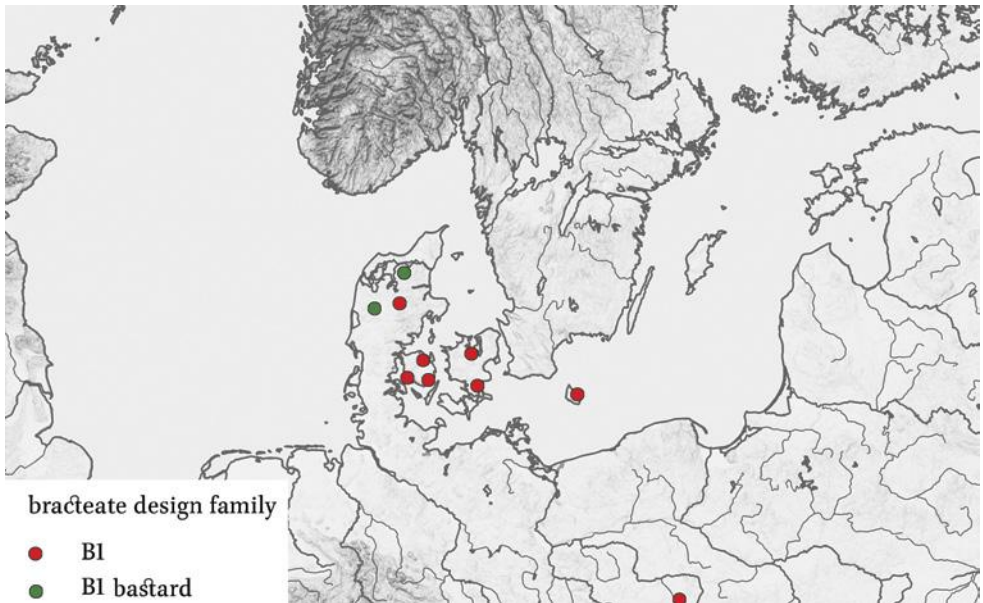
IK 595

FIGURE 10.8 Four members of design family (*Formularfamilie*) B1: IK 39 Dänemark (x); IK 51,1 Fakse; IK 165 Skovsborg; IK 595 Sorte Muld II/Fuglsang. Scale: 2:1; (after: IK and Heizmann, Axboe [eds] 2011)

1990s by a woman at nearly the same spot, but that remains elusive.⁵¹ Today the artefacts are to be seen in the Department of Archaeology, the National Museum in Szczecin (Dział Archeologii, Muzeum Narodowe w Szczecinie).

C-bracteate IK 619,1 from Suchań (Fig. 10.9) has a diameter of 2.4 cm and a weight of 2.91 g. It is an interesting piece, belonging to the design family C14

51 See Bursche 2014b, 59.



MAP 10.6 Find spots of members (red) and bastards (green) of design family (*Formularfamilie*) B1, related to IK 20 from Zagorzyn, Kalisz district (map: A. Pesch, K. Göbel, ZBSA Schleswig)

(Map 10.4),⁵² of which IK 386 from Wapno (see above, Fig. 10.3) is a bastard member. While the horse, the humanoid head and even the swastika underneath the horse's mouth resemble the members of C14 very closely, the original *ota*-inscription is modified here: in the same position, likewise to be read from right to left, the runes *ohl* or *oha* are visible. Whether this is a mishap (brought about by a bracteate master who was not capable of writing runes or even of copying a runic template correctly), or an operation intended to insert another, new, meaning, has to remain uncertain, as neither *ohl* nor *oha* seem to be understandable words. In 2010, a bracteate was found in Sotoftegård, Ganløse parish, on the north-eastern part of the Danish island of Zealand, which had been pressed from the same die (*matrice*) as the Suchań bracteate: number IK 619,2 in the Iconographic Katalogue (IK). Especially with such die-identical bracteates, presumably made by the same workshop, close connections between the find regions and the peoples living there are demonstrated.

This is also the case with the second C-bracteate from the Suchań hoard, IK 153,2 (Fig. 10.9), which is die-identical to IK 153,1 from Scania in Sweden. The specimen was found in 2009, it has a diameter of 2.8 cm and a weight of 3.86 g. It is slightly damaged, dented and scratched, and the motif is partly

52 Pesch 2007, 220–224.



IK 619



IK 153,1



IK 153,2

FIGURE 10.9 Bracteates IK 619 from Suchań, Stargard district and IK 153,1 from Scania, which is die-identical with the Suchań bracteate IK 153,2. Not to scale (after: IK).

blurred because the sheet metal became misplaced while pressing it into the die. The runes are read today as **fupiz**,⁵³ which seems to be a bawdy term for which we may offer a relatively polite translation as “private parts”, used as a formula-word with an apotropaic function.⁵⁴ IK 153 does not belong to any design family. It shows the big humanoid head with its mouth directly on the horse’s mane. Here the confiding, close connection between the head and the quadruped is particularly evident. In addition, one humanoid arm lies on the horse’s neck and throat, the hand at its lower jaw. Such gestures and actions

53 Beck 2009.

54 Beck 2009, 22; for the formulas see Heizmann 2011.

are known as ancient healing methods,⁵⁵ again pointing to the fact that on C-bracteates Woden/Odin is depicted as a great healer and divine magician. The bird in front of his forehead, also to be seen on many bracteates, underlines this, as it is supporting the actions of the central god, being his confidant and helping spirit.

2 Imports or Local Production?

All 15 bracteate finds from Poland fit well into the Nordic bracteate corpus according to shape, motifs and techniques. Six of the seven of the dies used can directly be linked to a design family (i.e. a motif-related group),⁵⁶ of which the majority of the other members were found in southern Scandinavia. Therefore, at first sight it seems likely that the bracteates were imported in one way or another (gift, trade, booty?) or that they came as private possessions of people coming from the North. In each case the Polish find is the southernmost specimen of its design family.

On the other hand, some of the specimens do show individual features that are not known from Scandinavia. Unique runic inscriptions, like **sabar**, on the two pressings of IK 386 Wapno and the strange **ohl/oha** of IK 619 Suchań (surely derived from the **ota**-inscriptions of the design family C14), the unique double rim wire of the six bracteates, and even minor details like anomalies or motif variations (respective to the relatives in the design families C6, C12 and C14), for example in the drawing of the horses on IK 100 from Karlino, IK 386 and IK 211 from Wapno as well as the additional symbols on IK 217 from Zagorzyn and IK 367 from Karlino, could be understood as evidence of local production. However, as variation is one of the overall principles in bracteate production and in the animal styles in general, this does not mean that the finds could not derive from the North. However, as we really do not know a single bracteate workshop to this day,⁵⁷ no definite answers can be given. It is not totally out of the question that a regional workshop copied northern bracteates, thus using the same techniques and the shared “vocabulary” of images as all the other “scholars”, the bracteate masters, in the workshops in Scandinavia and in England.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, it has to be stated that A- and D-type bracteates are absent, that all the Polish bracteates belong to the second half of the overall production period (Axboe’s group H3 or even H3/4), that the region is on the border zone of the whole bracteate area (see Map 10.1), and that

55 Heizmann 2007, 35; generally Hauck 1977.

56 Pesch 2007.

57 See Pesch, Blankenfeldt (eds.) 2012.

58 Pesch 2007, 373–379.

relatively few finds were made here. All in all, it seems relatively unlikely that the region between the Oder and the Vistula was consistently involved in the network of northern bracteate masters and their customs of bracteate production during the Migration Period.

3 Conclusions

The bracteate finds made between the two rivers show, like those from other continental areas,⁵⁹ the vivid relationships between peoples and cultures in the southern Scandinavian regions, the coastal zones of the North Sea and the Baltic, and present-day Poland.

Aleksander Bursche rightly stated: “The hoard from Zagorzyn is extremely important as the only assemblage containing original medallions next to their barbarian imitations and gold bracteates – apparently, a family heirloom, accumulated over several generations by [a] Germanic power elite who maintained ties across Europe ranging from Scandinavia to the Lower Danube.”⁶⁰ It is common scholarly opinion that the gold bracteates have early templates in the images, material and shape of Roman medallions and Late Antique coins,⁶¹ and that they derive originally from those roots. The barbarian medallion imitations are to be seen as connecting links in respect of the prevailing ideas, time and imagery. Thus, the role of the Polish regions seem to have been of great importance as a doorway between the related Germanic and Gothic peoples in the southern Romanized world on the one hand and the northern barbarian regions on the other. Local (and perambulating) people in this area apparently played a considerable role in transferring new ideas and techniques, and notably also in providing the impetus behind the invention and crafting of the first bracteates. The Zagorzyn hoard in particular, with its mixed content collected over a considerable period of time⁶² is evidence of this, as well as the Karlino hoard; both showing the long-lasting traditions and continuities standing behind the Germanic world view of the late 5th and early 6th c. All the valuable hoard finds demonstrate, especially with the bracteates, constant communication between North and South during the Migration Period. What is more, the impact of the region on the development of Germanic imagery and identity may have been crucial.⁶³

59 Pesch 2004.

60 Bursche 2009, 133.

61 IK 1, Einleitung, 11f; Axboe 2004, 207–209.

62 See generally, for these *thesauri*-hoards, Pesch, forthcoming.

63 Author: Aleksandra Pesch, Centre for Baltic and Scandinavian Archaeology (ZBSA), Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig, Germany.