

Landscapes and Societies in Medieval Europe East of the Elbe

Landscapes and Societies in Medieval Europe East of the Elbe presents the results of the fourth international conference of the interdisciplinary project “*Gentes trans Albiam* – Europe East of the Elbe in the Middle Ages,” held in 2010 at York University, Toronto, in cooperation with the University of Kiel and the German Historical Institute in Warsaw. The fifteen essays included in this collection examine how historical landscapes were perceived, experienced and transformed in the Middle Ages, in a region that stretched from the lands of the western Slavs in the Elbe area to Livonia and Staraja Ladoga in the northeast and Hungary in the south. The book is organized into four parts, each covering a different region and era: Central Europe in the early Middle Ages; Wagria in the central Middle Ages; Silesia, Poland and Hungary in the high Middle Ages; and, lastly, the Baltic Sea area in the high and late Middle Ages.

Drawing on evidence from the fields of archaeology, history, palaeobotany and palaeozoology, the case studies in this book offer a close look at the many environments of Europe east of the Elbe, and at the continuing interaction between natural landscapes and their conceptual and cultural counterparts. Using an interdisciplinary approach, the collection highlights the impact of changes of patterns of settlement during both the transition from late antiquity to the early Middle Ages and the period of colonization and social transformations in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Over these historical periods, human beings transformed the physical landscapes – hydrological, zoological, botanical and epidemiological – at the same time as they reshaped the human geography of the region. *Landscapes and Societies in Medieval Europe East of the Elbe* shows the growing importance of environmental history to understanding medieval Europe.

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Landscapes and Societies in Medieval Europe East of the Elbe

*Interactions Between Environmental Settings
and Cultural Transformations*

EDITED BY

Sunhild Kleingärtner, Timothy P. Newfield,
Sébastien Rossignol and Donat Wehner



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Foreword

This book presents the results of the fourth international conference of the interdisciplinary project “*Gentes trans Albiam* – Europe East of the Elbe in the Middle Ages,” founded in 2006 by Anne Klammt (University of Göttingen) and Sébastien Rossignol. The meeting was held on the 26th and 27th of March 2010 on the Keele Campus of York University in Toronto and was jointly organized by the Department of History of York University, the Graduate School “Human Development in Landscapes” of Christian-Albrechts University in Kiel, and the German Historical Institute in Warsaw. The conference brought together a group of scholars and doctoral students from North America (Canada, U.S.A.) and Europe (Germany, Poland, Estonia, Latvia) working in the fields of archaeology, history, palaeobotany and palaeozoology and specializing in East-Central and Northeastern Europe in the Middle Ages.

We would like to thank all persons and institutions who contributed to the realization of the conference and the book. Our profound gratitude goes to the keynote speakers, Professor Piotr Górecki (University of California, Riverside) and Professor Jüri Kivimäe (University of Toronto); to Professor Richard C. Hoffmann (York University) for his inspiration and support, and for summarizing the contributions of the conference with his concluding remarks; to all presenters who contributed their papers to the conference and the book; as well as to Professor Ulrich Müller (University of Kiel) and Professor Fredric Cheyette (Amherst College) for joining us at the conference. For diverse reasons, it has not been possible to include in the volume the contributions of Professor Kivimäe, Dr. Andris Šnē (University of Latvia), Ben Krause-Kyora (University of Kiel) and Dr. Corneliu Varlan (Université Laval). On the other hand, the joint contribution of Dr. Ulrich Schmölcke and Professor Hauke Jöns, who were not able to take part in the conference, is found in the following pages. Many thanks to Boris Vasiliev (Staraia Ladoga Historical-Architectural-Archaeological Museum) and Professor Heidi Sherman (University of Wisconsin-Green Bay) for making it possible for us to use the wonderful picture on the book cover.

We also want to thank Cristina Arrigoni Martelli (York University), Jennifer Bernadette Konieczny (University of Toronto), Eileen Küçükcaraca (University of Kiel), Dr. Karoline Mazurié de Keroualin-Müller (Le Pellerin, France)

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We should not forget to thank our host institution, York University, for providing us with the opportunity to hold the meeting in Toronto. Many York colleagues were extremely helpful at the different stages in the organization of this project, particularly with the applications for funding. Most of all, we are grateful to Professor Richard C. Hoffmann; to Professor Jonathan Edmonson, Chair of the Department of History; to Jean R. Levy, administrative assistant; and to Professor Colin C. Coates, Professor Carolyn Podruchny and Professor James P. Carley. The conference would not have been possible without their enormously helpful advice and experience.

We extend our sincere thanks to the sponsors of the conference, the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada/Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada, the Graduate School “Human Development in Landscapes,” and the German Historical Institute in Warsaw and its director, Professor Eduard Mühle. Further thanks go to the co-sponsors: the Network in Canadian History & Environment/Nouvelle initiative canadienne en histoire de l’environnement (NiCHE), the Canadian Centre for German and European Studies (York University), the Department of History (York University), the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies (York University), the Ad Hoc Research Fund (York University) and the Centre d’études médiévales (Université de Montréal).

We are very thankful for the extraordinary support we received from the Department of Publications at the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies (PIMS) in Toronto, especially to Fred Unwalla, who was available at every step of the process and showed interest in the project from the beginning, and are very pleased that the conference proceedings have been included in the Institute’s publishing program. We owe a special debt of gratitude to Nate Dorward, whose remarkable skills in editing, typesetting, and design have served to enhance the volume in every way. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada/Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada has graciously helped cover the costs of printing and production through a publication subsidy, and the German Historical Institute in Warsaw and the Graduate School “Human Development in Landscapes” have covered the costs of proofreading.

Sunhild Kleingärtner, Wilhelmshaven

Timothy P. Newfield, Ann Arbor

Sébastien Rossignol, Halifax

Donat Wehner, Kiel

January 2013

Contributors

ARTUR BEAŻEJEWSKI is Head of the Department of Archaeology at the University of Wrocław, Poland, and Professor of Archaeology specializing in barbarian Europe. Among his recent publications are a monograph on the influence of the culture of the Rhine-Weser area on the Przeworsk Culture (2007), and a book on the ancient Slavs (2007).

KRZYSZTOF FOKT is a historian and archaeologist, currently employed at the Faculty of Law and Administration of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland, where he is working on, *inter alia*, an edition of medieval and early modern court books (Zgorzelec/Görlitz, Kraków) and of the legislative production of Polish-Lithuanian parliaments in the seventeenth century. His research interests also include the Slavs in the ninth and tenth centuries; the history and archaeology of Upper Lusatia and Lower Silesia in the tenth to fourteenth centuries; and the medieval history of state and administration in Central Europe. He is the author of a monograph on the late medieval rural settlement of Lower Silesia based on archaeological evidence (2012).

SARAH NELLY FRIEDLAND works in the Section “World Cultures and Their Environment” at the Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen in Mannheim, Germany. Her research interests include the archaeology of medieval Europe as well as theoretical and practical museum science. She finished her dissertation on the formation, development and importance of the Olsborg stronghold and its environment in the Slavic region of Wagria in 2012 at Christian-Albrechts University in Kiel.

TOMASZ GIDASZEWSKI is a Research Assistant at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences. He works in the Research Group for the Historical-Geographical Dictionary of Greater Poland in the Middle Ages in Poznań and is currently preparing an edition of the earliest registers of nobles’ courts (*księgi ziemskie*) of the districts of Konin and Nakło from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. He is also preparing a biography of the Silesian duke Henry IV Probus († 1290).

PIOTR GÓRECKI is Professor of History at the University of California, Riverside. He specializes in the history of medieval Poland between the twelfth and the early fourteenth centuries, and in the intersection between legal and social history. His most recent publications are *A Local Society in Transition: The Henryków Book and Related Documents* (Toronto, 2007), and, as co-editor, *Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages: A Cultural History* (London, 2009).

MARTIN GRAVEL is Maître de Conférences at the Université Paris 8 Vincennes–Saint-Denis, France. He researches the political history of the Carolingian empire, focusing on long distance networks and communications. The revised version of his doctoral thesis on Carolingian communications has just been published with Brepols (2012).

HAUKE JÖNS is Co-Director of the Lower Saxony Institute for Historical Coastal Research in Wilhelmshaven and Professor of Prehistoric Archaeology at the University of Rostock, Germany. His research focuses on the history of prehistoric settlement in northern Germany and southern Scandinavia. He is interested in the functions of iron in the economic system and in the development of trade and exchange networks, as well as in changes in social organization from the beginning of the Iron Age to the early Middle Ages.

SUNHILD KLEINGÄRTNER obtained her *Habilitation* in 2012 from the Institute of Archaeology at Christian-Albrechts University in Kiel, Germany, with a study on coastal trading places east of the Elbe (forthcoming 2013). Her research interests focus on maritime archaeology and cultural history. She is currently employed at the Lower Saxony Institute for Historical Coastal Research in Wilhelmshaven and studies the settlement and cultural history of the Wadden Sea area in Lower Saxony.

TIMOTHY P. NEWFIELD is a Postdoctoral Fellow and Visiting Scholar in the Department of History at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and soon a Research Fellow at the Centre for Environmental History and Policy at the University of Stirling, Scotland. He studies the environmental history of the early Middle Ages with a focus on agriculture, climate, disease and food shortage. Publications include “A Great Carolingian Panzootic: The Probable Extent, Diagnosis and Impact of an Early Ninth-Century Cattle Pestilence,” *Argos: Bulletin van het Veterinair Historisch Genootschap* 46 (2012), pp. 200–210. He is currently preparing a monograph on dearth, disease and death in the Carolingian world for Brepols Publishers.

INGO PETRI studied Pre- and Protohistory, Anthropology and Geology at Christian-Albrechts University in Kiel, Germany, and at Adam-Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. His research interests include the early medieval period in East Central Europe and medieval metal handicrafts. He is currently working on his doctoral dissertation on the extracting and working of metals in the west Slavic area, particularly at the stronghold Starigard/Oldenburg (Schleswig-Holstein), at Christian-Albrechts University.

MARTA PIBER-ZBIERANOWSKA is employed by the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw and works for the Historical-Geographical Dictionary of Medieval Mazovia. She is especially interested in female regents' government in the Polish lands in the late Middle Ages and in the political role of women in this period. She is currently preparing her doctoral dissertation on the regency of

the last duchess of Mazovia, Anna Radziwiłłówna (1476–1522). She also specializes in the historical geography of Poland and previously worked in the Historical Atlas Section of the Academy of Sciences.

SÉBASTIEN ROSSIGNOL is a Banting Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of History at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Visiting Fellow at the German Historical Institute in Warsaw, and former Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of History at York University. He is interested in the cultural and interdisciplinary history of medieval East Central Europe and is the author of a monograph on early medieval urbanization in Central and Northern Europe (2013). His current project focuses on the usage of written documents in Silesia and Pomerania in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

ULRICH SCHMÖLCKE is an archaeozoologist and Senior Researcher at the Centre of Baltic and Scandinavian Archaeology in Schleswig, Germany. His interests focus on the history of the fauna in Central and Northern Europe, the palaeoecology of landscapes and species, and the history of hunting from the Late Palaeolithic until 1500 AD.

HEIDI M. SHERMAN is an Associate Professor of Humanistic Studies (History) at the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay and a specialist in the archaeology and history of medieval Russia. Her articles range widely in topic from Viking-age trading sites, Staraia Ladoga, flax and linen, to glass production. In 2008, she defended her dissertation entitled *Barbarians Come to Market: The Emporia of Western Eurasia 500 BC to AD 1000* at the University of Minnesota.

ÜLLE SILLASOO is a palaeoecologist and medieval archaeobotanist at Tallinn University, Estonia, with research interests in plant iconography in late medieval religious art, medieval nutritional habits in Northern Europe, environmental history and plant ecology. She has published articles in *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany*, *Environmental Archaeology*, *Boreas*, *Quaternary Geochronology*, *Quaternary International*, *Journal of Vegetation Science* and *Landscape Research*, and contributed to the collection of essays *Medieval Food Traditions in Northern Europe*, ed. Sabine Karg, *Studies in Archaeology and History* 12 (Copenhagen, 2007).

JAROSŁAW SUPRONIUK is Researcher at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, where he contributes to the projects of the Historical Atlas Section. He is interested in the history of cartography and medieval urban history. He has published several journal articles on municipal police and urban government in late medieval Polish towns and on late medieval and early modern settlement processes in East Central Europe.

CAMERON M. SUTT is Assistant Professor of Medieval European History at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee. He researches the social history of Árpáadian Hungary, and his first monograph, *Slavery in Árpád-era Hungary in a Com-*

parative Perspective, is under contract with Brill. Current research projects include estate organization and inheritance patterns of thirteenth-century Hungary.

DONAT WEHNER is Assistant Professor of Historical Archaeology at Christian-Albrechts University in Kiel, Germany. He is interested in the archaeology of the Western Slavs. His publications include a monograph on structure and change in the Slavic settlement areas in the Havelland and the northern Zauche (2012).

MAGDALENA WIECKOWSKA-LÜTH is palaeoecologist and Postdoctoral Fellow at Christian-Albrechts University in Kiel, Germany. Her research focuses on climatic and environmental changes, vegetation history and human-environment interactions. Her publications include “Holocene History of Environment and Human Impact on Two Islands in the Ostholstein Lakeland Area, Northern Germany,” *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* (2011) and “Vegetation and Settlement History of the Past 9000 Years as Recorded by Lake Deposits from Großer Eutiner See (Northern Germany),” *Review of Palaeobotany and Palynology* 174 (2012).

PRZEMYSŁAW WISZEWSKI is Professor of Auxiliary Historical Sciences and Medieval History in the Faculty of Historical and Pedagogical Sciences, University of Wrocław, Poland. He specializes in the history of values, the social history of medieval East Central Europe, and regional history. Among his publications is *Domus Boleszlai: Values and Social Identity in Dynastic Traditions of Medieval Poland (c. 966–1138)*, trans. Paul Barford, East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450, 9 (Leiden and Boston, 2010).

MICHAŁ ZBIERANOWSKI works at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. He currently contributes to the Digital Repository of Scientific Institutes and previously worked in the Historical Atlas Section. His research interests include the historical geography of Poland, as well as Scottish settlement in Greater Poland and Mazovia in the early modern period. He is currently preparing his doctoral thesis on the Scots in northern Greater Poland, from the sixteenth to the first half of the seventeenth century.

DANIEL ZWICK graduated in Maritime Archaeology at the University of Southampton and is currently completing his doctoral thesis on maritime logistics in the age of the northern crusades at Christian-Albrechts University in Kiel, Germany. He has previously worked for the Museum of London Archaeology Service, as well as excavated and studied a medieval shipwreck for the Bremen Archaeology Unit (Bremer Landesarchäologie).