

# A Hoplological and Interdisciplinary Perspective on the Lechitic Roots of Today's Poles and Poland

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**Abstract:** *Problem:* There are ongoing disputes over the origins of Western Slavs and Poles. The author attempts to describe the state of knowledge in light of recent research and analyzes the content of the new scientific monograph "About military and physical culture in the lands of Lechia." He does so with an emphasis on the heritage of military culture.

*Method:* The results of archaeogenetic and hoplological research, as well as an analysis of the relevant literature, are considered together. Logical arguments are used.

*Results:* An approach synthesizing the current state of knowledge, presented in the monograph, is described. This particularly falsifies the hypothesis of the late arrival of the Slavs in Central Europe. The analysis of the author's monograph is supplemented with new observations regarding weapons and other attributes of legendary heroes and demigods.

*Conclusions:* The monograph provides a series of logical proofs of the presence of Slavs, known for example as the Veneti, in Polish lands since at least 2000 BCE, which refutes the hypotheses of a late arrival of Slavs in the Lechitic lands. Genetic studies have demonstrated the continuity of settlement of these lands by the direct ancestors of today's Poles. Similarities have been observed in weaponry and military culture.

**Keywords:** Hopology, Slavic history, Veneti, genetic research.

## INTRODUCTION

The topic of the early Slavic presence in Europe fascinates researchers and provokes discussion. Several books on this topic have appeared in recent years (cf. Bocek, Jansens 2020; Bieszk, Wrózek 2023; Bieszk 2024; Jirincov 2024; Kosiński 2024; Torres Prieto 2025). How does Wojciech J. Cynarski's new book [2025] appear against this background? What new content does it bring to the table, or what are its strengths?

It is intended to be a synthesizing approach to the current state of knowledge in light of genetic, archaeogenetic, linguistic, anthropological, and other research. It is therefore an attempt to organize knowledge while rejecting erroneous and falsified concepts. The hoplological perspective and interdisciplinary approach are the book's main strengths. It emphasizes history and tradition, the common ground between the physical and military cultures of the Lechites and Poles. The analyses cover semi-legendary times, from the Bronze Age and the archaeological Lusatian culture, the art of war in medieval Poland, to the glorious victories of the hussars and horse fencing in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

This article is a continuation of the book – a discussion and expansion of the author's concept, the result of further reflection, taking into account subsequent publications. The state of knowledge evolves with subsequent discoveries and research results. The author strives to present the most current picture – a synthesizing approach.

## ON THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF THE SLAVS

Pliny, Tacitus, and Ptolemy indicated the presence of the Veneti (Venedi) from the 2nd century AD between the Baltic and the Black Sea. Unfortunately, the Polish chronicler Master Wincenty Kadłubek (1150–1223, an outstanding scholar of his time, bishop and blessed of the Catholic Church), who described the ancient times of pre-Christian Lechia, is most often considered a fabulist (cf. Borawska, 1977). However, the 5th or 6th century is most often considered the beginning of the Slavic presence in Europe, when ancient historians explicitly mention the Slavs in their descriptions (cf. Barford, 2001; Torres Prieto, 2025).

Contrary to the findings of other studies (cf. Stolarek et al., 2023; Speidel et al., 2025) concludes that:

"the majority of individuals from medieval Poland can be modelled only as a mixture of ancestries related to Roman Iron Age Lithuania, which is similar to ancestries of

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individuals from middle to late Bronze Age Poland (44%, 95% confidence interval 36–51%), an ancestry component related to Hungarian Scythians or Slovakian *La Tène* individuals (49%, 95% confidence interval 41–57%) and potentially a minority component of ancestry related to Sarmatians from the Caucasus ( $P = 0.13$ )”.

There is no "Germanic" or "Scandinavian" component in the essential components of the genetic pool of the direct ancestors of today's Poles. It was probably the other way around – the Araini (possessors of the R1a1 haplogroup, ancestors of the Aryans, Scythians, and Slavs) transmitted their biological genes and warrior ethos to Denmark and southern Scandinavia. Later, the Goths, in small numbers (three ships of "King" Berig), appeared on the Lechitic coast of the Baltic Sea, in Vistula Pomerania. However, on their way along the Vistula and towards the Black Sea, they significantly intermingled with the Lechites, as we can conventionally define the original West Slavs or their biological ancestors.

The Proto-Slavs can be traced back to the Veneti. Linguistically, as Gościwił Malinowski [2024] recommends, one can distinguish Lechitic-Slavic dialects (Wends / Lęchs / Lechites) and southern and eastern dialects, generally speaking non-Lechitic. Among the Lechitic dialects, the Gołęszyce dialects ranged from the Gołęszyce dialects in the south to the Pomeranians and Kashubians in the north, from the Lendians in the east (Grody Czerwieńskie and present-day western Ukraine) to the Veleti/Lucici dialects in the west. Furthermore, in "Golden Meadows," Al-Masudi mentions, in addition to the Lendians, also the Volhynians, who are said to have inhabited the lands east of present-day Poland, and describes the very rich Lechitic temples.

Jordanes, who was half Goth and half Alan, mentions the Veneti (Veneti, Venedi, German *Winden und Wenden, Wendland*) and the Slavs (*Sclaveni*) and Antes, who descended from them. Slavs also included the Lugii and probably the *Mugilonos* (*Mogilanie?*), mentioned in Strabo's "Geography" [Book VII, 1.3].

(Cynarski, 2025) also wonders about the Vandals (*Vandalia, Vadalorum*), whether they might not be Veneti/Lechites (from the legendary King Lech I the Great and Lechia as a land), as described by Wincenty Kadłubek. However, if the Vandals were originally a Germanic tribe, they likely also intermingled with the inhabitants of the Lechite lands.

## THE PERSPECTIVE OF HOPOLOGY

The military culture of the Lechites and other Slavs was likely influenced by centuries of proximity to the Scythians, trade with Rome, the arrival of the Goths, invasions by the Huns, Avars, and Mongols, wars with the Germans, etc. From a hopological perspective, it is particularly interesting to determine the specificity of the Lechites', and later the Poles', military art. What distinguishes them, what characterizes them, or what is unique about them? These include, in particular:

- the construction of strongholds (fortification art) and the capture of strongholds;
- military skills on land and at sea;
- guerrilla warfare;
- tactics – the use of cavalry and archers;
- an elite troop of the prince or king (Figure 1);
- infantry formations initially equipped primarily with spears and axes.
- This is similarly described by (Grabski, 2015; Grabski, 2019; Grotowski, 2015), among others.

A separate issue is folk physical combat culture. Here, Cynarski mentions the highlander tradition (the bandit dance), the peasant formation of scythemen, and the Cossacks, who co-founded the First Polish Republic, with their *hopak* dance and combat *hopak* (Ławrynow, 2018).

## DISCUSSION

However, there are researchers who still adhere to the German version of the history of "Greater Germania." (Morys-Twardowski, 2023) relies on historical sources – chronicles by foreign authors and the chronicle of Wincenty Kadłubek, but with his own interpretation of the same source. In his opinion, Krak did exist, but in the 8th century CE, while according to Kadłubek, it was the 5th century BC. Therefore, this researcher perceives both the Suebi (*Suebi, Suevi*), the Harii, and the Wends as Germanic, and above all, non-Slavic, peoples. Similarly, according to (Torres, 2025), the Slavs arrived in Central Europe only in the 6th century CE (around 530). Could it be that new knowledge still hasn't broken through the existing paradigm?



**Figure1:** On the cover of Wojciech J. Cynarski's book [2025] there is a painting from a postcard – Michał Bylina, *Bolesław's team*, 1951. These are the troops of the Polish king Bolesław I the Brave, heavy cavalry, on a Baltic beach.

## Arguments

The latest results of archaeogenetic research confirm a certain coincidence. We have had continuous settlement in Polish lands for approximately 4,000 years (Mattila et al., 2023), and from around 2000 BCE we can speak of a distinct haplogroup R-M417 (Lazaris et al., 2025). And there is no significant amount of Scandinavian or Germanic genes in the gene pool of these proto-Poles. Also, before 2000 BCE, satem languages emerged, perhaps first a Proto-Indo-European language – that of the Arioslavic people. Hence, in Central Europe we find the Proto-Slavs – both Lechitic and non-Lechitic – while the Indo-Aryans spread east and south, establishing the kingdoms of Iran (Parthia, later Persia) and India, as well as Greater Scythia, from Germania (as a geographical region) to the Ural Mountains and even further east, and south to East Asia. The emergence of Slavic states was influenced by both cultural and biological influences – reaching Polish lands from the east and south (from the Danubian lowlands). The Sclaveni and Antes co-founded the multi-ethnic Scythian Empire until its collapse.

Today's linguistics indicates the emergence of the Proto-Slavic language around 600 BCE, or perhaps already in the 20th century BCE (Długosz-Kurczabowa,

Dubisz, 2024). However, (Alinei, 2000; Alinei, 2020) may be right, as he recommended moving the arrival of Slavs in Europe back to the time of the Vinča culture – 5500-4000 BCE. Cynarski is relatively cautious in giving the period from around 2000 BCE, in which he agrees with the German linguist and archaeologist, (Haarmann, 2016). This researcher writes about Slavs in Germany from 2000 BCE. This is confirmed by the latest genetic studies cited above (Lazaris et al., 2025; Speidel et al., 2025). They indicate the continuity of the Polish lands' inhabitation by the ancestors of today's Poles, as well as the fact that these very lands were the cradle of Slavic identity. This led to expansion in various directions, especially eastward and southward.

There is no doubt that the archaeological Lusatian culture, the Aryans, and the Slavic-Lechites used the same sun symbol, called the swastika in Sanskrit. This ancient symbol is still found on the denarii of the first Piast dynasty (Mrowiński, 1986)<sup>1</sup>. The swastika is found on coins likely minted by local rulers in the Lechite lands. In ancient times and the early Middle Ages, coins were used here (mainly imitations of Macedonian coins, among others) that also frequently

<sup>1</sup>It is not important here whether it is not a denarius of King Mieszko II, as some researchers claim.

featured horses or horsemen. This is particularly true for the period from the 5th to the 1st centuries BC (Bieszk Wrózek, 2023). If coins found in Poland are described as Celtic, this is – according to Maciej Bogdanowicz – an error. Staters made of gold or electrum (an alloy of gold and silver) were coins of the Veneti. Anthropological and archaeogenetic research indicates that the inhabitants of these lands were the direct ancestors of today's Poles (RudaWeb, 2016; Kosiński 2023b, 2023c; Mattila et al., 2023).

The ancient presence of proto-Slavic people between the Elbe and Dniester rivers is evidenced by the fact that warriors of the Lusatian culture – genetic pre-Poles – fought in the Battle of Tollense (*Dołęża*) around 1250 BC (Kosiński, 2023a). Recent research in Papowo Biskupie (human bones from the period 1000-400 BC) confirms this genetic continuity (Gackowski et al., 2024). The Goths, who lived there much later, often possessed the R1a1a7 haplogroup, typical of Poles (Zawadzińska, 2016). The same applies to the supposedly Germanic Vandals (cf. Jakubowski Poraj, 2023).

Centuries later, expansion from the Lechitic territories took place eastward and southward. For example, Radzim and Vyatko founded the Radymicz and Vyatichi tribes/communities in present-day Russia, Kij founded Kiev, and Vysh found its way to the Adriatic Sea (cf. Morys-Twardowski, 2023). In the 8th century, the Slavs occupied much of Greece.

#### About the book itself

In their editorial reviews, two professors – Maciej Łuczak and Zbigniew Borysiuk – highly praised Cynarski's monograph [2025]. Both noted the originality of the interdisciplinary approach and the logical proofs used to debunk the myth of "Greater Germania" and to falsify the concept of the late arrival of the Slavs in Central Europe. They also noted the novelty of a combined approach to military history and the history of physical culture from the perspectives of hopology, cultural anthropology, and the anthropology of martial arts.

As M. Łuczak wrote:

"The innovative nature of Wojciech J. Cynarski's research lies in the introduction of new content in the field of the history of physical culture, previously unconsidered not only by historians of physical culture but also by some general historians, historians of antiquity, and archaeologists. The author questions

past research lacking modern techniques and research methods and introduces new, original knowledge in the field of physical culture and military culture. The author posed research questions that had not been previously analyzed in physical culture sciences, concerning the origins of the Slavs and their development of military and physical culture. As a result, the work contributes new content and findings to knowledge."

In turn, Z. Borysiuk pointed out (among other things) that:

"The book under review (...) can be considered a single-topic scholarly monograph. In my opinion, it is an original publication of an eclectic nature, possessing scholarly merits, and a wealth of historical information, covering an area that has not yet been explored by researchers or has been presented, primarily in the West, with a biased approach. This concerns the polemics about Slavic origins in Polish lands."

What else can be added or supplemented here? These are the new thoughts and observations of the author of the book, which provided the impetus for reflection on the indicated topic.

#### Heroes, Gods, and Their Weapons

Weapons, attributes of heroes, heroes, and gods, as well as symbols and entire archetypal complexes (complex symbols) (Cynarski, 2022), also indicate the cultural closeness of the Slavs and their genetically related Aryan peoples. And this is not just about the swastika, mentioned earlier, which has little in common with the ancestors of the later Germans. Instead, it was a solar symbol shared by the Lusatian culture, Slavs, and Aryans.

The thesis of an Aryan-Slavic origin of the warrior ethos, which only recently reached the Scandinavian countries, India, and the Far East, can be confirmed to some extent by logical proof. A possible premise is the name of a Scandinavian god who may have been a warrior – the leader of the Araine expansion. Odin could mean "one," as in "one-eyed warrior." The valor of the northern peoples may have its origins in the heritage of the R1a1 people. In turn, the Aryans' migration to India, and the subsequent journey of Prince Bodhidharma from the *kshatriya* caste to the Chinese Shaolin Monastery, may have transferred not only this characteristic solar symbol but also the ethos known today in the *kung fu* tradition. The author conducted fieldwork in this regard at the Shaolin religious, sports, and tourism center (Cynarski, Swider, 2017).

We do not know where the Slavs derived their gods – Svantowit / Svetowit / Svetovid / Światowid (from Arkona), Łada, Jarowit, and Perun. Each of them was, among other things, a god of war. They were likely personifications of the forces of nature. The later ones, it seems, were deified posthumously for their military achievements. The conqueror of fortresses – the Aryan leader Indra – was originally depicted on horseback, and his weapon was a vajra (a diamond, a type of club/mace, or thunderbolt). He thus acquired the attributes of a ruler and gods – Perun and Thor, Zeus and Jupiter. The Hindu god Rama, in turn, is depicted riding a chariot and holding a bow. This is similar to the Indo-Iranian warrior, hero, and god Mithra. Arjuna, son of Indra, was also an excellent archer. Another representative of the Hindu pantheon – Shiva – wields a trident (*trishula*). This is also a Scythian *tamga* and the emblem of present-day Ukraine. Meanwhile, what do Lekhian heroes and deities look like? Svetovid's attributes included a sword and cornucopia, a horse, a saddle and bit, and an eagle. The name of the founder of Kiev, Kij, may have come from his exceptional skill in stick fighting. The Norse god Odin's weapon, in turn, was a spear.

## SUMMARY

How does Wojciech J. Cynarski's new book [2025] appear against this backdrop? What new content does it bring to the table, or what are its strengths?

"Generally, civilizations of various peoples developed on the basis of warrior cultures – first nomadic, then settled, which is studied on the basis of history, hopology and cultural anthropology. In this book, the area of research mainly concerned Polish and neighboring lands. In turn, physical fitness, necessary for mastering combat skills and other combat skills (especially equestrianism / horse riding), is an area of interest for physical culture sciences." (Cynarski, 2025).

Satem languages and biological kinship united the Aryo-Slavic people before the Aryans migrated east and south. They carried over a similar ethos and martial customs. Later, the Scythians ruled the Eurasian steppes, a fact echoed by later rulers of these regions in their weapons and military tactics. The Polish-Lithuanian nobility of the First Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth directly drew on these Scythian-Sarmatian patterns.

In particular, however, we find a series of logical proofs for the presence of Slavs, known for example as

the Veneti, in Polish lands from at least 2000 BC, which falsifies the hypotheses about the late arrival of Slavs in the Lechitic lands. Genetic studies have demonstrated the continuity of settlement of these lands by the direct ancestors of today's Poles.

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