

The gord in Grzybowo and its settlement facilities in the context of in-depth interdisciplinary research.

Project goal

The primary goal of the project is an academic (interdisciplinary) compilation of issues related to the early medieval gord in Grzybowo and its settlement facilities. The works will result in a book (aggregate compilation) discussing the research into the discussed settlement complex. This way we would fill in the gap in the existing historiography because the most significant, central gords in Wielkopolska established during the Piast dynasty reign: Giecz, Gniezno, Poznań and Ostrów Lednicki have been discussed academically, to various degrees. It so happens that the mysterious Grzybowo, located more or less halfway between Giecz and Gniezno, is still waiting for a concise, academic compilation in the form of a book. Only concise popular science texts have been written to date on the hillfort in Grzybowo or academic articles which are excerpts from the local research.

Another project goal is to conduct a number of specialist tests including palynology, archaeological zoology, dendrology and dendrochronology which will allow for enriching the knowledge on the hillfort and the open settlements in the vicinity of Grzybowo. The tests will also make it possible to process the historic material which so far has not been submitted to far-fetched specialist analyses.

Another project goal consists in taking inventory, mainly non-invasive, of all the early medieval archaeological sites from the vicinity of Grzybowo in order to provide better preservation maintenance. Perhaps as a result of the works, we will also manage to identify a grave field. This would be of great importance to the future research into the local community from the early Middle Ages.

Conducted research

As part of the project, research will be carried out in the realm of archaeology, history, natural sciences and geophysics. An important role in the project will also be played by a survey of the economic, political and administrative role of the Grzybowo gord, the extent of the local trade, the premises' status in the early medieval traffic network, demography or development of open settlement. We will resort primarily to archaeological sources from former works and new efforts made as part of the project. On top of the above mentioned tests, works will be carried out with the aim of a better understanding of the Grzybowo settlement complex. To this end, the hillfort's main square will be examined in a non-invasive way (geomagnetic tests); this will be followed by open archaeological excavations on some of its parts. At the same time, we will identify the structure's settlement facilities. In the course of the works, we will resort to, among other things, the cognitive opportunities offered by aerial photography or surface prospection, finally also excavation works. The research will be extended with use of modern dating technologies like C14 dating in the AMS technology and dendrochronology as well as palynology analyses supplementing the knowledge of the early medieval settlement plus zoological archaeology.

Reasons for tackling the subject

The major reason for undertaking the research into the issues in question is the need for in-depth and interdisciplinary works on the Grzybowo hillfort and its settlement facilities. To date, barely 3% of the premises' area has been examined, while the explored material which is testimony of the gord's exceptional role, has been developed and published to a small extent. This Wielkopolska gord, exceptional on the early medieval scale, requires on the one hand new archaeological field studies (invasive and non-invasive). On the other hand, the explored source material needs to wait for new specialist compilations; it would be available to the general public and academic circles in the form of an interdisciplinary published book. The new research into the hillfort may lead not only to developing or extending the already known source basis but, first and foremost, to at least a partial explanation of the mystery of this huge gord's location between Gniezno and Giecz in the first half of the 10th century. To date, Grzybowo's economic, administrative and political role in the 10th -11th centuries has not been explained. The poorly identified open settlement (chiefly in the course of surface methods) does not allow for evaluating unambiguously the size of the settlement facilities and demographics in the early medieval gord. Of special importance seems also a presentation of the hillfort in Grzybowo while there is no knowledge of the local early medieval grave field. It seems that the possible discovery thereof could explain many issues related to the gord's population and that of the adjacent open settlements and could provide abundant material for the research into the then society.