Different finds from archaeological investigations in eastern Sweden show evidence of close contacts with the Baltic coastal area on the continent, and further towards the south-east. This is visible in the find material from the Bronze Age onwards. Swedish rescue excavations in the past few years have contributed with material for the study of such contacts. From the Bronze Age onwards, there are signs of contacts between eastern Sweden and areas in modern Poland and eastern Germany and also with areas in the Baltic states. This is evident in material from several sites in eastern Sweden. Pottery as well as special house types and graves show contacts with the Lusatian culture, but also with more distant areas. These cultural elements fit well into a pattern of long-distance cultural contacts during the Bronze Age, probably maintained by an élite in society. These contact routes across the Baltic sea seem to have continued in a similar way during the Early Iron Age. During this period, some grave structures and objects demonstrate cultural contacts between Scandinavia and the Wielbark culture in Poland. Such finds have traditionally been connected with Jordanes’ Getica, and its account of a migration of Gothic people from Scandinavia. In modern research, the theory of a massive migration has generally been abandoned. The Wielbark culture is generally believed to have developed from...
earlier cultures in the same area. Research of recent years have more often focused on questions regarding a Gothic identification with a Nordic origin, as possibly invented during the 4th century or as a genuine tradition in the form of a myth. However, this does not explain archaeological evidence for contacts during earlier periods. A reasonable explanation for similarities in the material cultures can be that they are products of long-term contacts, perhaps originating in connections between the Lusatian culture and other urnfield groups on the continent and eastern Scandinavia already during the Late Bronze Age à “ Early Iron Age. Regular contacts between high ranking groups in different geographic areas could eventually have developed into a close relationship between certain groups of the Wielbark culture and groups of people in Scandinavia, visible in similarities in material culture, language and burial customs. The archaeological record could indicate that Jordanes’s history concerning the origin of the Goths was based on an oral tradition with some sort of real background.

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