

FINDINGS OF HARNESS ITEMS AND THE CULT OF THE HORSE IN LATGALLIAN AND SELONIAN TERRITORIES

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Abstract

This article summarises the evidence of the military and agricultural significance of the horse, as well as of the Pagan beliefs and ritual practices related to horses found in the archaeological excavations in the Latgallian and Selonian territories relating to the Iron Age. During the Iron Age, the role of horse is growing; the fact is reflected in diversity and quantity of harness items and cavalryman's equipment found in the excavations. Although the existence of horse cult in all the peoples that lived in territory of present Latvia and surrounding territories is indisputable, there are significant differences in the common beliefs and ritual practices defined by the social development of the society, by mutual trade relations, interaction of cultures and, probably, even by the migration of people.

Key words: harness, burials with horses, horse cult, Latgallians, Selonians, Iron Age.

Introduction

In the territory of Latvia evidence of horse can be traced to as far as middle Mesolithic; teeth of wild horse are found in burials of Zvejnieki burial ground, in the Osa settlement (Zagorska 2001, pp.54, 60 and 68 with table 1). In early Bronze Age settlements (Brikuļi, Mūkukalns, Asote, Kļauģukalns etc.) the number of horse bone findings is significantly grown, which attests the assumption on horse meat as an important food source. For example, in the Brikuļi settlement horse bones constitute for 18.6% of all local bone findings. Bridle-bit fragments made of bone and horn (found in Brikuļi and Mūkukalns settlements) shows the usage of horse as tractive force in the daily life of the inhabitants (Vasks 1994, pp.30 and 59 with table 8). Along with the growth in significance of horse's agricultural role it gets more prominent place also in mythological and ritualistic conceptions. In early Bronze Age settlements were found sacrifices of horse teeth and skulls, as well as items with stylised depictions of horse (Kivutkalns), which attests the existence of a horse cult (Graudonis 2001, pp.124 and 151 table 2).

The economical and symbolic significance of the horse is described several times both in general-purpose scientific works and in more detailed reports (Karnups 1936; Urtāns 1974; Zemītis 2004). The newest archaeological explorations confirm these assumptions on role of the horse in daily life of ancient inhabitants of the territory of Latvia; also that in their religious conceptions and ritualistic practices.

Reflection of the economical significance of horse in the Latgallian and Selonian archaeological material

In the Iron Age, during the development of field crop-growing, the tractive role of horse is indisputably growing; archaeological findings of spurs, bridle-bits, stirrup, horse-collars and other harness items shows the usage of horse also for riding and driving.

The archaeological material from Latgallian and Selonian settlements shows and attests that horse is no more purely livestock, but also a tractive force in the field crop-growing practice, a mean of conveyance and is acquiring ever more prominent place in military affairs. The growth in the role of horse in lives of the inhabitants is signified by percentile changes of the horse bone quantity in the occupation layer within the boundaries of given age. In the first half of first millennium CE osteological material acquired in the excavated settlements shows evidence of horse as a food source. In locations dated with early Iron Age (Mūkukalns, Kivti) horse bones contributed 21 to 22 per cent of total livestock bone findings, thus having second place by quantity (Vasks 2001, p.200). In the widely explored Ķente hillfort which was inhabited in the fifth-ninth century, horse is at fourth (11.1%) place, though in the settlement near the mound - second (30.2%) place by quantity among livestock bone findings. In addition, the horse bones, similarly to other livestock bones, were heavily fragmented and concentrated in the vicinity of dwellings and fireplaces. Most of the bones are of young specimen less than three years old, which is the age at which horse is not com-

monly being used at work (Stubavs 1976, p.84). In the beginning of second millennium, horse loses its value as a food source, which is attested by percentile decrease of horse bone quantity among livestock bone findings. In the Latgallian and Selonian locations dated with Late Iron Age, horse bones in the osteological material fill fourth position by quantity, being fewer in numbers than findings of pig, small cattle and bovine bone (Tsalkin 1961, p.219 tables 17 and 18). For an example, in Asote, horse bone proportion among livestock bone findings contributes to 5.38%, in Jersika – 3.6%, in Sēlpils – 5.2%, in Dignāja – 8.1%, in Oliņkalns – 7.6%, in Lokstene – 9.8% (fifth-eleventh century strata) and 10.45% (in 14th-15th century strata) (Fig. 1). It is assumed that horse meat was used in emergency situations, such as cases of a famine or siege.

It has to be noted that the horse bones found in the basin of river Daugava (Western Dvina), as state the researchers, shows similarities to these found in ancient Russian locations; the growth of the specimens found there was approx. 120-130 cm (rarely – 144 cm) and could be counted to the thin-legged horse type, thus differing from the dwarf-horse detected in western Latvia (112-118 cm) which is similar to wild tarpan horse (Tsalkin 1961, p.210).

Iron spurs found in some of the early Iron Age burials in Selonian territory (Sauka's Razbuki) attests that horse was used also for riding; bridle with iron bridle-bits was used for directing the horse (Šnore 1993, p.69; Apals *et al.* 1974, p.110 with table 31.3). In the middle Iron Age horseman's equipment and harness items were found both in settlements and in burials. Monolithic iron spur with bent ends was found in Madalāni hillfort in the Latgallian territory (Urtāns 1978; 1979). In the Ķente hillfort (fifth- ninth centuries) along with four iron spurs three fragments of iron bridle-bit were also found (Stubavs 1976, table XI.4-6, 8-11); the spurs are mutually different. Two of them are monolithic, with sloped or curved bow, bent ends and sharp conical prick. Two more have sloped bow with a conical prick riveted to an extension of it. The bridle-bits found in the castle mound are bipartite, with toreutic side-irons with profiled upper parts.

In the Late Iron Age number of harness and horseman's equipment items found in Latgallian and Selonian locations is growing. Not counting the usual findings of spurs, bridle bindings and bridle-bits, there are also samples of stirrup and whip handles. Spurs are among the most frequently found harness items; they are found in almost every explored Latgallian and Selonian settlement of the Late Iron Age. Three iron spur fragments were found in the Piziči' Kaupra mound hillfort

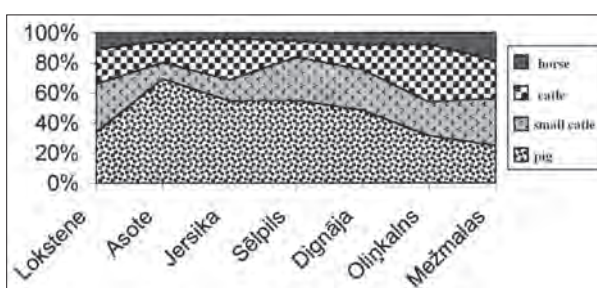


Fig. 1. Horse bone quantity among livestock bone findings in the Late Iron Age Latvian habitation sites.

(Urtāns 1981), fragment of an iron spur was detected in Goveiķi and Madalāni hillfort (Ruša 1998, fig.13.5), a bronze spur and bits were found in Stupeļi settlement (Stubavs 1977, fig.12.25). In the more large and significant hillfort of this period the number of spur findings is quite large. In the Koknese castle and castle-front in 11th-13th century strata 33 samples were found, 14 more in the Asote hillfort (Shnore 1962, p.577). Most of these findings could be dated with 12th century. In the beginning of the period spurs with bow that is rectangular or segmented in cross-section were used; with bent end-loops and short pyramidal prick (Koknese). In 11th century Latgallian settlements (Asote) spurs with bow segmented in cross-section, ending with bipartite plate for fastening straps and straight, round in cross-section, middle-length pricks were found. In the occupation layer of Late Iron Age in Asote and Koknese spurs with V-shaped bow bent in profile, with bent loop-shaped or bipartite placoid ends were found. These spurs have long, straight prick with thickened middle part, sometimes profiled. It has to be noted, that in Asote, Koknese and Jersika, there were also found spurs with ornate, inlaid bow, sometimes inlay was applied also to the prick. Approximately one third from the spurs found in Koknese were incusted with silver or bronze granules. These ornate spurs are usually mentioned in connection with horsemen from the castle guard. Ornate spurs are found also in Livic, but especially prominently in Couronian territories (Svarāne 2008, p.79).

The horse was urged both with spurs and whip. In the Latgallian archaeological material whip handles could be found, also as a part of grave goods in several burials (In the Jersika hillfort bone cap of a whip handle was found; only one handle of a similar form was found in the Tērvete hillfort. Similar whip handles are found in Russia, yet their origin is to be traced to the nomads of southern steppes, from whom they gain their distribution in Russia. In the Latgallian territories more frequent are so called "sounding" whip handles (hoard of the Sauleskalns, Āraiši lake castle). Whip usage is originally connected to eastern mode of riding without



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spurs, when the horseman rests his legs on stirrup and directs horse using the whip. It has to be noted, that in described territory, given the wide distribution of spurs and stirrup, this mode of riding was apparently less common (Vilcāne 2007, pp.273, 276 and 277).

Stirrup is not common among settlement and burial findings both in Latgallian and in Selonian territories. They have rounded or oval upper bow and concave or flat base. In Madalāni castle mound, a stirrup with flat upper bow, pointed top and convex base was found (Urtāns 1978); fragmented stirrup was found in the Jersika castle mound (Vilcāne 2004, table 15.7). By form it is closer to 12th century stirrup with oval or triangular upper bow and oblong slit for fastening straps (Vilcāne 2004, fig.15.7). Horsemen, by using saddle and stirrup, ensured more stable sitting on the horseback; in addition, firm base for feet guaranteed more stable stature in military skirmishes. The small number of iron stirrup lets to assume that in the eastern Latvian territories iron stirrup was not gaining popularity yet.

From all the harness items most frequent among findings are bridle bindings or bridle-bits. Fragments of bindings were found in Jersika, Asote and Madalāni hillfort, but in the Stupeļi settlement and also in the Madalāni hillfort parts of bridle-bits were detected (Vilcāne 2004, table 15.10,11; Shnore 1961, table XIII.43-45; Urtāns 1978; Stubavs 1977, p.58). This harness item is the one most common in Latgallian and Selonian burial inventories. In the end of the age items such as ice spurs, horseshoes and horse-combs which are found in settlements only and gain massive popularity only since 13th century (Apals *et al.* 1974, p.246).

Horses in chronicle descriptions

The growth of significance in the role of horse is attested also by 13th century written sources. In the Chronicle of Henry evidence can be found that horses, along with other livestock, were main war trophies; sometimes, the chronicler describes even several thousands of such horses (IH XII.6; XIV.10; XV. 3 and etc.). As horse gains more popularity in warfare practices, number of horses deprived both from enemy and from civilians becomes crucial for successful victory. Horse is being used in military skirmishes and becomes a companion of a warrior; evidence of this could be found in the Chronicle of Rhymes: “the Pagans are not so mighty, before they rush at us on horses, we have to break their lines” (AH 542-544). It has to be noted, that the Baltic peoples had large regiments of cavalrymen (IH XV.3; AH 11719), yet, as could be assumed

from the depictions of battles in the chronicles, the core of the army in 13th century consisted of infantry which goes on forays both on feet and on horseback or with sled (ambushes were usually conducted in winter, when the frozen earth allows more easy traversal of rivers and swamps). Before the battle they dismounted and participated in the skirmish as infantry, although in the case of victory they frequently pursued the enemy on horseback (IH XXII.2).

The overall significance of the horse is further underlined by the fact that horses are sometimes presented as a precious and valuable gift, to gain someone’s trust and favour. The Chronicle of Henry describes that the bishop of Riga presented horses to the ruler of Koknese as a sign of honour and to recoup him for the loss caused by his (bishop’s) men. In turn, the ruler of Koknese sent horses and weapons to kniaz of Polock, to gain his support in the campaign against German crusaders (IH XI.8,9).

Speaking of horse as mean of conveyance, it cannot be disputed that originally it was used for riding; the fact is further attested by spur and stirrup findings. It is interesting, though, that the Chronicle of Rhymes mentions that not only men but also Latgallian women was able to ride the horse:

“Their women blossom in the beauty
With splendid dress and fair posture
They ride their horses, as their fathers did...”
(AH 345-347) or

“[...] where women are apt at riding horseback
And standing by their men at every work [...]”
(AH 9226-9230).

Growth in effectiveness of using the horse’s power is attested by finding of half of an ornate horse-collar in Āraiši lake castle’s occupation layer (10th-12th century), but well-preserved sled runner shows the usage of horse as a tractive power for means of conveyance that ensured transportation of larger groups of persons (Apals, Mugarēvičs 2001, p.323 fig.225).

Evidence on means of conveyance in the Latvian archaeological material is comparatively late and sparse. The Chronicle of Henry mentions usage of sled (IH XI.7) and contains indirect references that wheel was known. It is assumed that the cart also was a common mean of conveyance. Scientists have pointed to the width of entry gates of the Koknese castle mound that is suitable for using a cart (Apals, Mugarēvičs 2001, p.323). In the neighbour countries the cart was commonly used, for example, in the Scandinavian territories. The growing role of horse in agricultural and

military practices is reflected also in Selonian and Latgallian burial traditions. In the Late Iron Age burial grounds burials with a definite harness item set were detected, as well as double burials of cavalryman and his horse.

Burials with harness and cavalryman's equipment, and cavalryman burials with horse

In the Selonian territory, harness and cavalryman's equipment can be found chronologically since the beginnings of the Selonian culture, i.e., as soon as in the Roman Iron Age. Iron spurs and bridle-bits are known from the findings in Sauka and are dated with third century. Singularly found iron spurs consist of three sections and end with circular heads; one of the bronze spurs has a short neck, the heel band is quadrangular in cross-section, with bent ends. Another bronze spur was found in a burial of an adult male, dated with fourth century. It was found together with weaponry, namely, one bronze narrow-blade axe and two iron socketed spearheads, as well as with ornamentation - namely, bracelets and a pin with wheel-shaped head. The spur has button-shaped ends, the heel band is triangular in cross-section, neck and prick is broken and missing. The named findings are from the Saukas Razbuki mound with a stone circle in Sauka (Šnore 1993, p.69 table VIII. 1 with fig.66.5).

Among the examined middle Iron Age burials, spurs were found in one grave inventory in a burial of an adult male in the Saukas Ratulāni borrow (grave 27) in the Selonian territory; among the findings were two bronze spurs (Šnore 1993, p.69 table VIII.2,3). The spurs have short, conical neck placed in the centre of the heel band on a quadrangular base; the heel band has deep cross-ribbing and flattened ends. The spur was fastened to the leather boot or spur straps with small rivets. Similar spurs are known from Lithuanian archaeological material of fifth-sixth century (Tautavičius 1996, p.153). The earliest designs of these spurs show strong Roman influence and are typical for territories inhabited by Baltic tribes (Perhavko 1978, p.114). In the grave goods, weapons also were found (2 spearheads, an axe, and a single-edged sword), as well as ornamentation, whose ornate design, together with the other findings, creates an image of a rich warrior who owned a horse.

In the Late Iron Age, the number of harness items and horseman's equipment items found in the Latgallian and Selonian burials is growing, especially in the last half of the period. In some of the male burial inventories, similarly to the previous periods, only horseman's equipment (spurs, stirrup) or harness items (bridle-bits,

irons parts of bridle binding) are found. In the examined territory, in only one case there were found silver-plated shield-shaped saddle chest strap dividers (in Sāviena) and saw-shaped strap bindings (LVM RDM I 1926), similar to those found in 12th-13th century Couronian burials (in Sāraji, Vilkumuiža and Pasilciems) (Šturms 1936, fig. 8; Asaris *et al.* 2008, p.82).

Of horseman's equipment, most frequent findings are spurs; only one spur is frequently found in the grave, such as the left spur in the grave 7 in the borrow of Sēlpils' Lejasdopeles (Lövis of Menar 1900, p.143ff, Šnore 1997, p.65). Among the named grave's goods were found following items: a double-edged sword with a bronze binding of the hilt end, a socketed spearhead and a broad-blade axe, as well as a horseshoe fibula with club-shaped ends, two bronze spiral rings and leather belt with bronze bindings. A right iron spur was found in the grave 8 of the Beteļi cemetery (12th century) (Šnore 1987, p.87) Among the grave goods of that grave was leather belt with bronze bindings, two rings, fragment of a shoe (decorated with a tinkler), socketed spearhead and a broken bronze broad-blade axe, placed at the right leg. In the Ērgļu Jaunāķēni cemetery damaged burials (grave 10), in the leg level was found bronze-inlaid iron spur with a long awl-shaped prick, as well as a small iron buckle, probably from a leather strap used for fastening the spur to a shoe. In the named grave was also found a bronze buckle from a leather belt, a broad-blade axe and an iron knife (Graudonis 1971). Singularly found iron spur was detected also in the Aizkalne's Ludvigova cemetery (LVM A 12007:96). These iron spurs belong to the rowelled spur type that is common in the territory of Latvia since 13th century. In the mound 10 of the Kaunata's Rikopole barrow cemetery (11th century), there was found a bronze spur with a short, rounded neck, straight U-shaped heel band with a ornamented band for holding the spur strap riveted to it (LVM A 7761:6). Findings of an iron stirrup are rare - one of them comes from Rēzna's Jusi cemetery singular findings (LVM A 8717:24). The stirrup has oval upper bow and flat bottom.

Iron bridle bindings and bridle-bits are found in several chronologically Later burials of Iron Age men in the cemeteries of middle part and upper reaches of river Dubna. These cemeteries differ with a peculiar set of harness items (bridle bindings and/or bridle-bits, bells, whip handles) which is not detected in the Latgallian and Selonian territories outside this area. It has to be noted, that in none of these burials neither spurs nor stirrups was found.

The harness items named above was detected in five examined burial grounds in the surroundings of riv-



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er Dubna - namely, Aglona's Kristapiņi, Aizkalne's Maskeviciški, Viški' Maskava, Šķeltova's Brūveri and Aizkalne's Ludvigova cemeteries (Vilcāne 2007, p.276). They were found in 16 graves in total, almost half of which are damaged, yet some more of these items were found singularly. In archaeological excavations in 1930 in the Aizkalne's Maskeviciški cemetery, in grave 5 (damaged) there was found an iron whip handle (Riekstiņš 1931). In the excavations in 20th century 70s-80s in Aglona's Kristapiņi cemetery, the named items were found in nine burials of adult males. In this ground, only one grave contained full set of harness items (grave 211), three graves contained iron bells and bridle bindings (graves 141, 174 and 284), three more graves (graves 91, 130 and 280) - only bridle bindings, but in two graves only an iron bell was found (graves 76 and 273) (Kuniga 2000, p.72ff).

In the excavations in 2004–2007 in Šķeltova's Brūveri cemetery, harness items were found in six male burials, four from which were damaged (Vilcāne A. 2006, p.80). A full set of harness items (bridle bindings, an iron bell, and a whip handle) was detected only in the damaged grave 38. In the graves 11 and 40 there were found bridle bindings and iron bells, but in graves 36 and 44 - iron bridle bindings only. Several iron whip handles and iron bridle bindings were singularly found in the cemetery of Aglona's Kristapiņi, Viški' Maskava and Aizkalne's Ludvigova (Vilcāne 2007, p.276).

The harness items were usually placed in the foot level, with an exception of Šķeltova's Brūveri cemetery grave 38, where whip handle, bell and bridle bindings were placed in the left side of the defunct in the head level. In these burials where a full set of harness items or a couple of them was detected, the items were placed together.

The male burials from cemeteries with harness items of surroundings of river Dubna are not different from other male burials of the tenth-eleventh century in context of grave goods and their placement in the grave. In the grave inventory usually an iron axe, iron tanged or socketed spearheads, and a broad iron battle-knife (*scramasaxes*) or a dagger can be found. In some cases, an iron double-edged sword was found together with the harness items (grave 280 at Kristapiņi, grave 40 at Brūveri). Integral item of these findings is the warrior's bracelet on the left hand of the defunct, together with bronze-decorated arm-clothes or arm-windings made from bronze spirals on leather lacing. In the grave inventory was also rich exposure of other goods: fibulae, bracelets, rings, belts with bronze bindings, sometimes also attire decorated with bronze rings and spirals.

From harness items in this group of burials the most common are two- or three-sectioned bridle bindings

(14 samples), which consist of two or three rod-shaped links (quadrangular or twisted in cross-section) that end with ring-shaped heads. In the Aglona's Kristapiņi cemetery, in one of the graves were found bridle-bits with flat triangular side-bindings (grave 141). In the territory of Latvia, bridle-bits and bridle bindings in the Late Iron Age burials are usually found in the Couronian lands (Asaris *et al.* 2008, p.81).

The whip handles found in the grave inventories (5 samples in total) belongs to the "sounding" whips (type I by the typology of A. Kirpichnikov (Kirpichnikov 1973, p.72 fig.41.1). These handles has a metal tip with a ring, in which a binding of the tip of the whiplash is placed, as well as several tinklers, which made sound when the whip was flailed and thus urged the horse. In the territory of Latvia, iron whip handles in late 10th century - early 12th century burials are detected also in the territories of Semigallians and in lower reaches of river Daugava in territory populated by Livs, although their shape is different (Atgāzis, Bebre 1986, p.23 fig.4.1; Zariņa 2006, p.197). Whip handles similar to those found in basin of river Dubna are known from findings of excavations in Lithuania and Russia.

On the other hand, the bells found in the grave inventories (10 samples) bear no similarity to Latvian archaeological material. They are cylinder-shaped with narrowed top parts which has spherically pulvinate or flats lids with a loop for attaching the clapper is drawn through. Some of the bells were bronze-plated (graves 211 and 273 at Kristapiņi). Similarities to these bells are found in territory of Lithuania - notably, bells are found among grave goods in horse burials in central and eastern Lithuanian borrows. In some of the Lithuanian cemeteries, bells among horse burial grave goods are found also in 12th–14th century graves (Varnas 1995, p.251 fig.9.). Bells are very popular items in the ancient Prussian cemeteries, where iron, bronze and, more rarely, silver bells were detected. Bells were found in almost every 10th-12th century horse burial of the Irzekapinis cemetery; they were attached to the bridle under horse's neck (Kulakov 1990, p.37).

As is widely known, findings of harness items in the male burials were common burial peculiarity in the territory of Lithuania, where they are found since first centuries CE, but since the middle of first millennium, the horse was buried together with the horseman (Kulikauskienė 1953, p.212ff; Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė 1999, p.310). Thus it is possible that the peculiar burial traditions were spread across the basin of river Dubna due to contacts with the Lithuanian territories; this theory is favoured by several scientists, who include also the possibility of migration of some extent to the examined territory (Kuniga 2000, p.107). It has to be

said, though, that, assuming the case of migration, we have to count in several different items of ornamentation or weaponry that are unlike to those of Latgalian descent and are not detected in the excavations unlike the findings in Later, Mediaeval burials in the Augustiniški and Slutiški graveyards in surroundings of Krāslava, where in some graves (both male and female burials) harness items also were detected (Berga 2007, pp.66 and 122) Archaeologist T. Berga draws a connection between these findings and influence from Lithuanian burial traditions; this statement is strongly confirmed by significant number of artefacts with Lithuanian descent in both burial grounds (and in both male and female burials), as well as the craniological measurements of the defuncts. The craniological analysis shows that in 14th-18th century, among the inhabitants of Latgale prominent is gracile, narrow-faced morphological form, which shows similarities to Lithuanian immigrants. The narrow-faced morphological form is not detected among chronologically more early inhabitants of Latgale (Zariņa 2007, p.195). Lithuanian linguist K. Garšva states that people with Lithuanian origins live in the surroundings of Krāslava since 13th century (Garshva 1984, p.83ff)

If we notice that similar harness item sets and individual items draw similarities to the Lithuanian burials with horses, we have to assume that also in the surroundings of river Dubna they have a certain symbolic significance which doubtlessly points also to the social status of the defunct.

If the harness items found in the surroundings of Dubna could be viewed as belonging to merely symbolical horse burials, along the coasts of river Daugava both in Latgalian and Selonian lands there are known several examples of burials of both horse and the horse-man (Vilcāne 2006a, pp.130 and 131). In the left bank of Daugava a horse burial with bridle-bits among the grave goods was found in the Sēlpils Lejasdopeles barrow burial field in the excavations of 1886 (Buchholtz 1896, p.116). In the A. Buchholtz's excavation report it is mentioned that in one of the examined barrow a preserved horse skull was found with bits between its jaws; nearby it was found an iron spur and stirrup, which could point out at the burial of a horseman.

Double-burial of a male adult and a horse was exposed in the grave 14 of the Beteļi cemetery (11th century) in excavations of year 1978 (Šnore 1987, p.71 figs. 8 and 9) (Fig. 2.1). The horseman and the horse were both buried in the same grave pit. Horse was put on its abdomen, with declined head and bent legs. In both sides of the horse's head were bronze tinklers, iron bridle-bits in the mouth, in the left side of its trunk was found an iron stirrup. Next to the horse was damaged burial of

a male adult, in which were detected only remains of an ornate belt, bracelet with beast-head ends, a spiral ring and a fragment of sword's cross-guard (?). It is possible that there were more horse burials in the burial ground. During the excavations, both fragmented horse skull and a whole horse skeleton was discovered in the burial ground. The last was well-preserved, although there was no human burial nearby it. As the locals stated that in the territory of the burial ground was buried also the dead livestock, including a horse, and that in the excavations was unearthed also bones of small cattle, these findings cannot be equivocally connected to ancient damaged horse burials (Šnore 1978). There is evidence of horse and human skeleton finding (together with a spearhead) during construction of a stable in Rite's Dīvuļi house, in Augšzeme (Šnore 1987, p.78). The nature of these findings points at possible burial ground, yet there were done no testing excavations.

In the right bank of river Daugava, in the Latgalian territory was found a horse burial without harness items next to a cremation grave in the Jersika burial ground. One more horse burial was unearthed in the Lejasžagari cemetery (Urtāns 1972) (Fig. 2.2), where in the grave 29 remains of a horse were found; it was buried with its head pointing west, and a bronze buckle was found next its neck. Under its legs, 7 cm deeper, was unearthed a defunct lying on its back in east-west direction in outstretched pose with its hands crossed over its chest. Among the grave goods were detected two bracelets with beast-shaped ends on defunct's left hand, in the belt's level - a horseshoe fibula with poppy-head ends and 4 spiral rings; at the left shin was found a socketed spearhead with its point towards the bed-foot and a broad-blade axe with its handle pointing towards the head end. Part of the horse's skeleton (a mandibula) was found also in the Koknese cemetery (Žeiere 2002, p.208). The mandibula was placed on a stone in the middle of a stone semicircle. It seems to be possible that this finding is connected with somewhat different funeral rituals that are observed in findings in the lower reaches of river Daugava in the Liv territory - e.g., in the Salaspils' Laukskola cemetery, where also were found fragments of horse skulls and circular stone layings (Zariņa 2006, pp.23 and 27). It has to be noted, that full horse skeletons buried in circular pits were found in excavations in the Daugmale and Ogresgals' Čabas cemetery in the territory of Livs. In excavations of year 2007, in the Liv burial ground of Ogresgals' Čabas was also found a well-preserved horse skeleton buried in a circular pit covered with dolomite slabs, yet it is not to be seen as a horse and horseman double burial, rather as a ritual sacrifice, probably to ward off the evil forces (Spirģis 2008, pp.54 and 57). It is been thought that the horse skeleton under a certain Latgalian building



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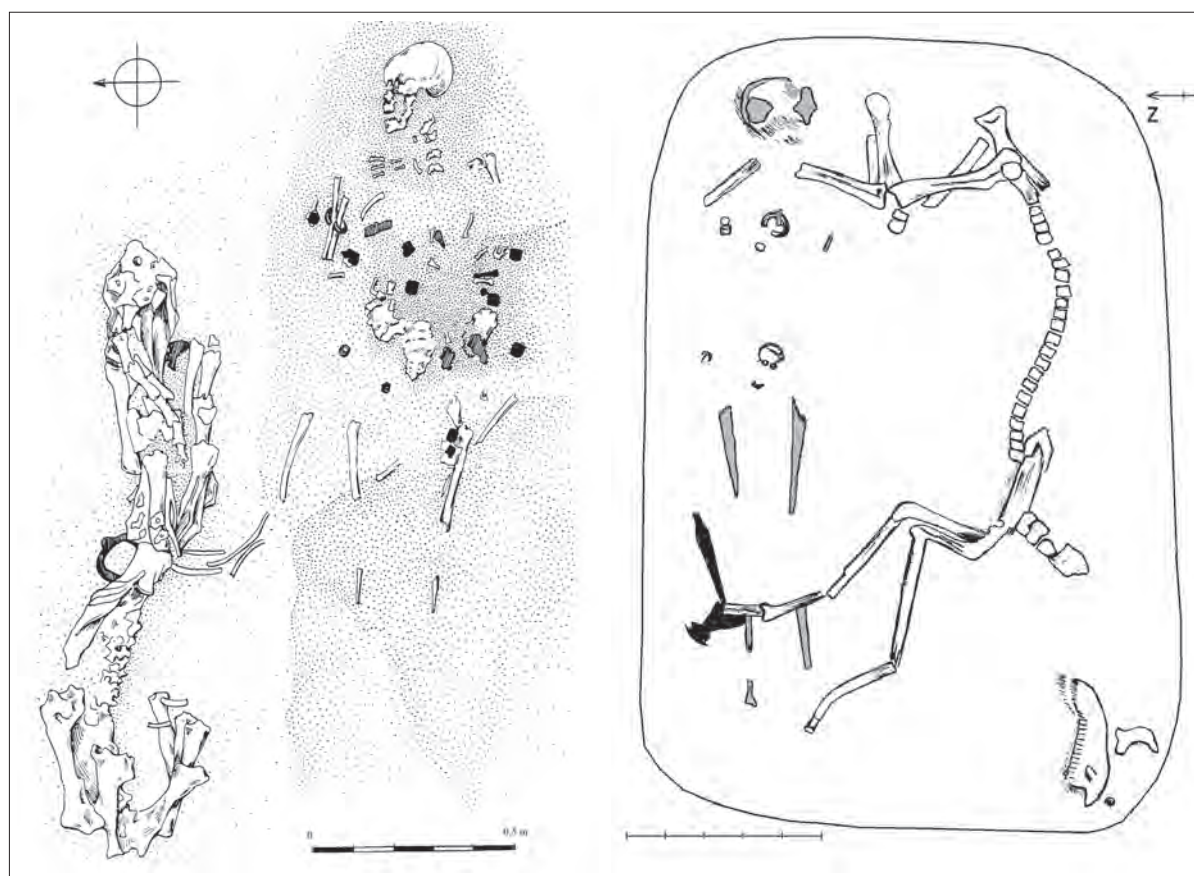


Fig. 2. Horse and riders graves *in situ*: 1 Beteli cemetery, grave 14; 2 Lejaszagari cemetery, grave 29.

remains in the Dinaburga castle-settlement was placed there for these ritualistic reasons (Mugurēvičs, Vilcāne 1986, p.93). Similar “building-sacrifices” were detected in the Talsi castle mound (Kamups 1936, p.70ff) and in Riga (Tsaune 1984, p.39).

E. nore states that the “horse burials” in Selonian territory had a certain role in the overall funeral ritual in the second half of the Late Iron Age. However, the small number of such burials and the limited area of the findings (Selonian wall and the valley of Daugava) purports that this particular funeral tradition has its roots in the burial tradition practiced in the Lithuanian territory. Lithuanian warriors and traders, as it seems, sometimes used the Daugava waterway. It has to be noted, that the Lithuanian burial rituals were quite diverse and the burial inventory is frequently very generous and rich. Also the ornate form of the bridle-bits found in the Beteli burial ground, the silver-plated stirrup and the nature of other grave goods displays the prominent social status of the defunct (Fig. 3). Heavily ornate harness items were sometimes detected also in the Lithuanian and Prussian archaeological material (Kulikauskienė, Rimantienė 1966, figs.147 and 183).

It should be stressed that both the burials with harness items in the basin of river Dubna and the horse and horseman double burials in the banks of Daugava are

dated with second half of the tenth-eleventh century when, judging from the grave inventories, the society undergoes notable changes. The rise in numbers of the grave inventory items, the growth of variety within these goods (e.g. scales and weights as grave goods), as well as appearance of singular rare, ornate and expensive items in the burial inventories all display emergence of notable social and professional differentiation among the members of the society. The ornate swords found in the burials were not simply battle weaponry, they also symbolised might, wealth and honour (Kazakevičius 1996, p.93). Scientists see these cases of plentiful grave goods as burials of the economical and political leaders of the society (Radiņš 1999, p.134).

Ornaments with horse motif in Latgalian and Selonian archaeological material

In the Late Iron Age image of a horse becomes one of the most popular ornamentation themes. In the archaeological material of eastern Latvia could be found a significant number of zoomorphic pendants depicting horse, although, as the pendants are highly stylised by design, there are different opinions about the precise

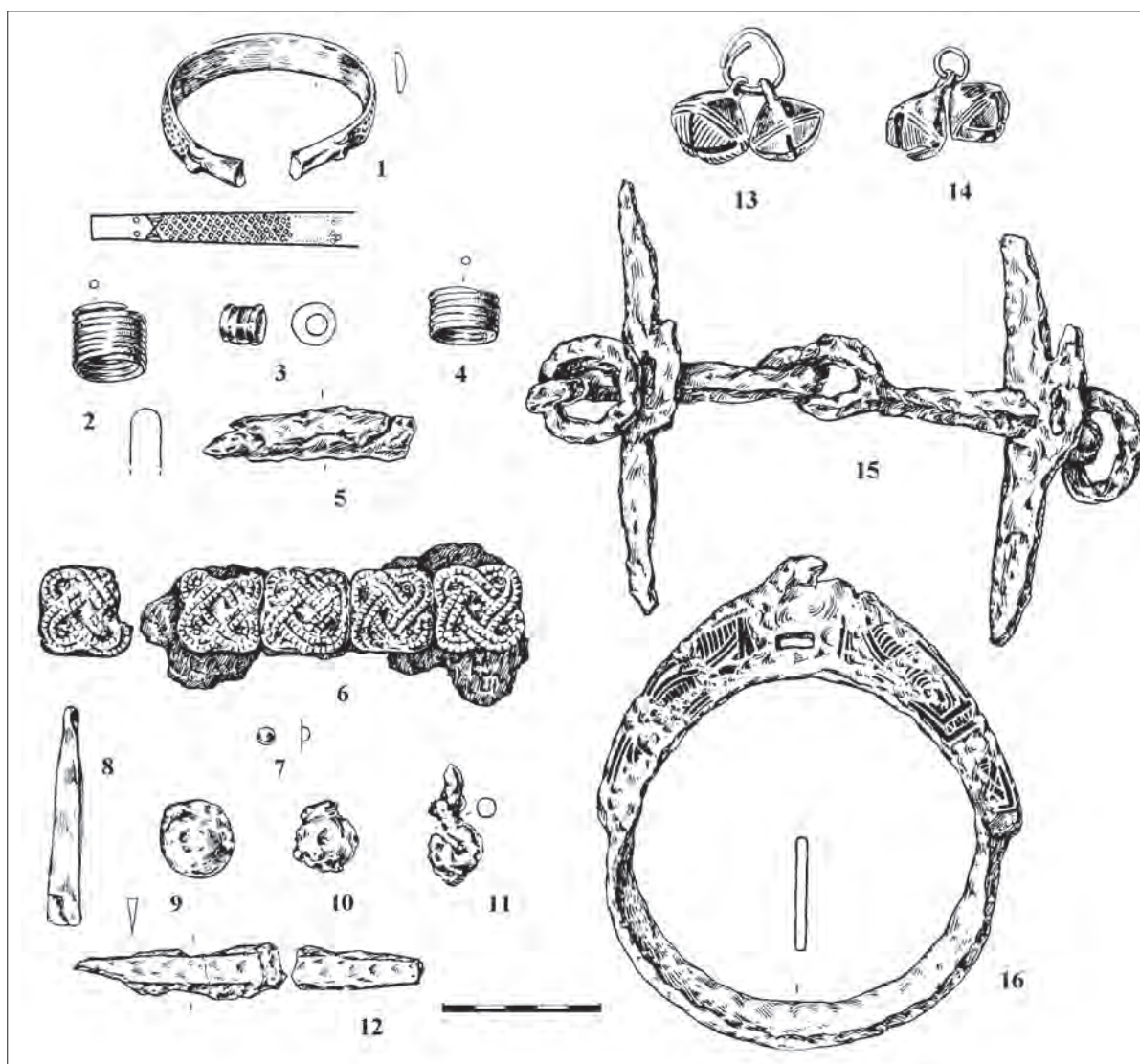


Fig. 3. Burial inventory of grave 14 at Betēļi cemetery. Raider: 1 bronze bracelet; 2,4 bronze spiral finger-rings; 3 bronze bead; 5 fragment of iron sword's cross-guard (?); 6 bronze belt bindings; 7 fragment of bronze item; 8 bronze belt bindings 9,10 weights; 11 fragment of iron chain; 12 iron knife. Horse burial inventory: 13, 14 bronze tinklers; 15 iron bridle-bits, 16 iron stirrup with silver inlays.

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nature of depicted animal. There exist several variations of these pendants, both of flat and of sculptural design.

Flat pendants are more typical to Latgalian and Selonian territories (Fig. 4.7,9); the depicted animal has stylised ears, bent-up tail together with the bridle-rein forms a loop with hole for hanging the pendant; the legs are slightly bent. Body of the horse is frequently decorated with tiny sun-shapes; tinklers sometimes are placed in the leg-holes so that the pendants had sounding, not only visually decorative qualities. Pendants of this type are sometimes also called “dogs”, “lynxes”, “calves” etc. In the territory of Latvia they were found about 50 samples in total. The described pendants are common also in the territories of Livs, although in the Couronian and Semigallian lands only a few samples were found. In burial grounds these pendants are usual-

ly found placed at the chest level with chain adornments as a part of a rich grave inventory of a female burial. In the Pļaviņu Radzes cemetery the horse pendant was attached to a bow in the left side of chains and chain-holder; it was found together with a round pendant (Mugurēvičs 1977, table XLVI.13). Among the grave goods there also was a chain-holder with tinklers and comb-pendant, four neck-rings, three head ornaments of different sizes, necklace made from cowries, glass beads and crosses, six bracelets, several rings and other jewellery items dated with 12th century. Horse pendant attached to a bow-shaped chain-holder was found also in Pilda's Bradaiži cemetery (LVM RDM I 91) (Fig. 4:8). In its turn, in Ludza's Odukalns cemetery a horse pendant with tinklers in its legs was detected attached to a necklace made from cowries and tinklers (grave 279 (III, 117), female burial, the 11th century) (Ciglis, Radiņš 2002, p.114). It has to be noted that these pen-

dants in their whole area of distribution are only occasionally used in necklaces (Riabinin 1981, p.30). An unconventional attachment of a pendant was detected also in one more burial of the Odukalns' burial ground (grave 44 (II, 4)), dated with 12th century. In this burial of a child the horse pendant with ring running through its ears and two tinklers in its back was attached with a woollen thread to spiral head ornament of a twist (Ciglis, Radiņš 2002, p.31).

Horse pendants of this particular type are common also outside the territory of Latvia. For one example, they are found in 84 locations in the territory of ancient Russia (104 samples in total) (Riabinin 1981, p.29). Their area of distribution extends to territories of Smolensk, Polock, Rostov-Suzdal, Novgorod, and the upper reaches of river Daugava. Significant number of findings with these pendants comes from the territory of Kriviches, in the lands of Smolensk-Polock. Due to their especially prominent number in these areas, this pendant in the works of Russian archaeologists has got the name of "horse pendant of the Smolensk type." In several locations in the territory of Russia the horse pendant is detected in the archaeological material of 10th century, yet most common it is in findings dated with 11th-12th century.

Several Russian archaeologists had extended their research of these pendants. Arguments against the zoological comparison of these pendants with horse come from B.A. Rybakov (Rybakov 1987, p.548); by showing some, in his opinion, disparities from the overall image of a horse (the sharp, pointed ears, thick, upturned tail, prognathic forehead, convexity of feet), the scientist identifies the depicted animal as a lynx, white spots of whose hide the makers of these pendants etched in as the sun-shaped markings. Lynx, as one of the most strong and agile feline animals of temperate zone, living high up in the trees and hunting from them, could bear some mythological connection with the heavenly realm. On the other hand, lynx is absent in the spoken folklore of ancient Russia, yet the horse has a prominent place both in folklore and in the ethnographic reports; thus the opinion of Rybakov is not widely accepted in works of other scientists. Archaeologist V.V. Sedov identifies these pendants with the image of a horse and draws a connection between them and the eastern Baltic horse cult which was preserved in the Slavonic lands, where it is possible to identify the substratum of ancient Baltic peoples (Sedov 1968, p.156). Other archaeologists that conducted research of these pendants have similar opinions (Golubeva 1979, p.39; Riabinin 1981, p.29ff). The area of distribution of these pendants extends to eastern Slavonic territories with Baltic substrata and territories closely adjacent to

these lands (namely, the northeast and northern territories of ancient Russia).

The centre of this area of distribution is thought to be the surroundings of the Smolensk territory, with inclusion of the possibility that in the lower part of river Daugava there was one more centre of their production, given that there are semi-finished samples among the findings and the fact that pendants found in the territory of Latvia have slightly different construction. In the Slavonic lands, these pendants were frequently worn together with several other types of pendants - miniature spoons, keys, tinklers, decorated animal teeth etc.; so multiform a selection of pendants is not common in the Latgalian and Selonian territories, where they (the pendants) were usually worn as amulets, hanging from chains, usually in the left side of chest. In the process of formation of Latgalian culture, there are signs of strong eastern Baltic influence, which contributed also to distribution of the horse pendants also in the territory of Livs.

Some samples of the horse pendant found in Latgalian and Selonian lands shows a second type of the flat pendant - so called "openwork horse pendants" (Fig.4:1,3). Two such pendants were found in the Asote castle mound, one more among the grave goods of rich female burial in the Sēlpils Lejasdopeles barrow (grave 9, barrow 2), dated with 12th century (Šnore 1997, fig.2.9) and in the Smaudži burial ground (Loze 1974, p.44 fig.7.3). The horse is depicted in motion, with craned neck and four legs with holes for hanging tinklers, bells or other adornments. The side and neck of the horse is marked with joggle decoration, bridle-rein is hanging bow-like below the neck, the upturned tail and part of the bridle forms the open-worked parts. Pendants of this type are commonly found in women chain adornments from end of 12th century till 14th century, usually in locations in basin of river Daugava, especially in the lower reaches of the river (more than 30 samples in total). The Finnish origin of these pendants is signified both by the attached tinklers and by their distribution in 12th century CE findings in the northeast Russia (Zariņa 1974, p.243). Given the fact that the head of these pendants is slightly different in shape, it is assumed that they were made locally, with the imported samples as a reference.

Similar to the situation with the openwork horses is that with the hollow pendants (Fig. 2); the number of their findings is limited to a few samples (Vecgulbene (LVM A 564), Balvu Aizezeri (LVM A 7210:8), Krustpils Trepe (LVM RDM I 3286), Balvu Daņilovka (Šnore 1952). The horse typically has craned neck with massive snout that is round in cross-section, and mane being marked with a wavy rib. The figurine is

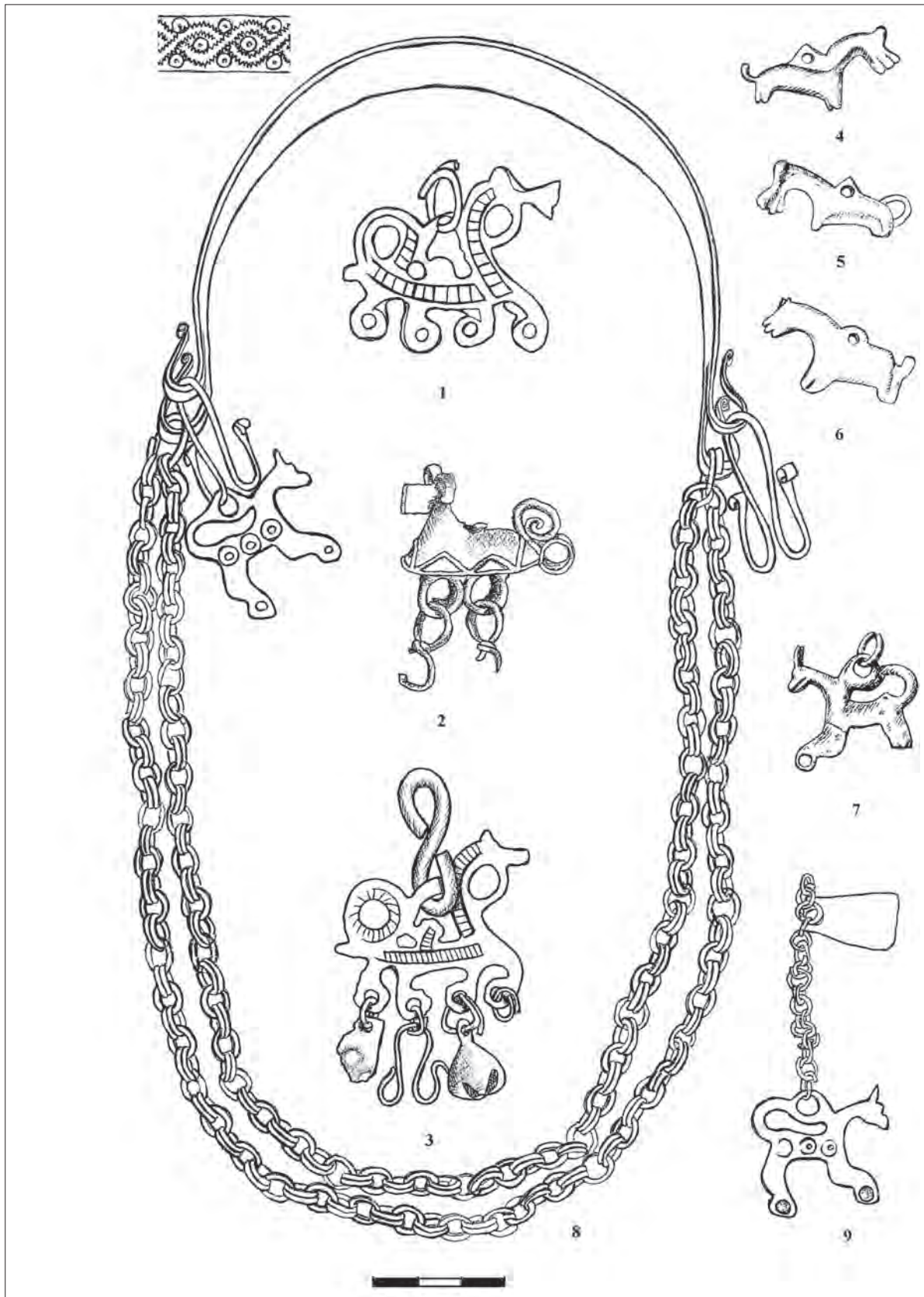


Fig. 4. Bronze pendants with horse figures: 1, 3 open-work horse pendants (Asote hillfort, Smaudži cemetery); 2 hollow horse pendant (Krustpils Trepe); 4-6 horse pendants of sculpturesque design (Liepiņas cemetery, grave 24, Asote hillfort); 7, 9 flat horse pendants (Jersika hillfort, Trikātas Lubumuiža cemetery); 8 bow-shaped chain holder with flat horse pendant (Pildas Bradaži cemetery).

decorated with a zig-zag line; tail consists of two rings and legs of four rings with bronze tinklers or tiny bells hanging from them. Two of the pendants found in the territory of Latvia have two heads (Lielvārde (LVM A 9284), Grundzāles' Jaunbemberi (Cimermane 1972, p.66)). The hollow pendants were used during 13th-14th/15th century. Outside already named locations in the northeast part of the Latgallian territories, they were also found in larger numbers in the lower reaches of river Daugava, in the territories of Livs (Zariņa 1974, p.247ff). These pendants, also, are widely distributed in the northeast and northwest regions of Russia (in the territories inhabited by Finnish peoples), as well as in the Estonian territories inhabited by the Wots (Golubeva 1979, p.38).

In some of the Latgallian territories bronze horse pendants of sculptural design were also detected; they are small horse figurines used, similarly to the previous examples, for hanging from chain adornments. The horse image in these figurines is quite primitive and stylised; some of them bear more likeness to a dog than to a horse. The sculptural pendants are quite popular and common in the lands of Livs (Urtāns 1974, p.212 fig.1.1). In the Latgallian territories only few samples of this type are found, and these in locations near to trade roads (Asote, Drabešu Liepiņas) (Shnore 1961, table V.13,18; LVM VI 155: 143). One such finding comes from the Drabešu Liepiņas cemetery where in a female burial (grave 24) was found a chain adornment with two mutually slightly different sculptural horse pendants attached to it, together with two bird-shaped pendants and two animal teeth decorations.

Together with the described pendants horse motif is used also in the decoration of metal bindings found in small numbers in the Latgallian-Selonian, as well as in the Livic territories (Fig. 5). Binding pendants with depiction of a horse were found in Rite's Stupeļi settlement (LVM VI 227 :778), in Jersika burial ground (damaged burial of an adult male, grave 24) and in the Jersika castle mound (12th century stratum) (Vilcāne 2004, p.68) In Ludza's Odukalns cemetery (male burial, 12th century, grave 140 (II, 99), among findings of broad-blade axe and an iron spearhead, one of the two found belts had bindings with depictions of horse (Ciglis, Rādiņš 2002, p.60 fig. 69.12). Similar bindings with depictions of horse are known from male graves at Galgauskas Tīceni (LVM RDM I 1314), Cesvainas Kalnapaukši (grave 1) and Lielstraupes Pūricas (grave 11) cemeteries (Urtāns 1974, fig.7,8). The bindings were made of a quadrangular plate of bronze tin-foil (size 28–29×22–23 mm) on which in middle of chiselled frame was pressed out stylised image of a standing horse with craned neck. Images of horse on

bindings are different, what shows that they making by various masters. The author has no knowledge of other similar findings from other territories.

Among these findings is a sample of a trapezoid chain-holder with engraving of a trotting horse, found in the Ludza's Odukalns cemetery (male burial, grave 196 (III, 34)) (Ciglis, Rādiņš 2002, p.85 fig.61.3). The chain-holder with four twisted chains and trapezoid reeds in the ends was found on chest of the defunct, fastened with a leather strap to the clothing; it was apparently used as a chest-decoration. Guessing from the warrior's bracelet and narrow-blade axe found in the grave, it is dated with the tenth century.

In turn, in the castle-settlement of Dinaburga, in Latgallian inhabitation stratum was found a side-iron of bronze bridle-bits, decorated with a stylised horse head. The motif of a stylised horse is common also in the harness items found in territory of Lithuania, such as in side-irons and stirrup decoration (Kulikauskienė, Rimantienė 1966, figs.182 and 183). An analogue to the sample found in Dinaburga is known from 11th-12th century horse burial in the Veršvai burial ground in surroundings of Kaunas in Lithuania (Kulikauskienė, Rimantienė 1966, fig.112).

The distribution of the horse pendants and other decorations with the horse motif is connected to certain mythological conceptions of the ancient people and their shared nature (the horse cult is common among Slavonic, Baltic and Finno-Ugric peoples) that contributes to a kind of "internationality" in that distribution. By creating zoomorphic items, ancient people assigned certain ideas to them, as well as belief in magical and protecting qualities of the given animal. Horse symbolised fertility, which is reason for its popularity among women jewellery items. Connection between the symbol of horse and the solar mythology is showing in the sun-shaped ornamentation on the pendants. Among the Finnish peoples the popularity of these pendants was augmented by connection between the symbolic meanings of horse and Finnish semantically similar symbol of bird. This could be the reason why horse pendants are significantly more common in the Livic territories than these of Semigallians, Selonians and other Baltic peoples.

Conclusions

The archaeological material from Latgallian and Selonian territories shows us that since the beginning of development of these cultures horse riding and directing using spurs was common practice parallel to its usage for food; iron bridle-bits and bridle was used to tame and restrain the horse. In the first half of the first mil-

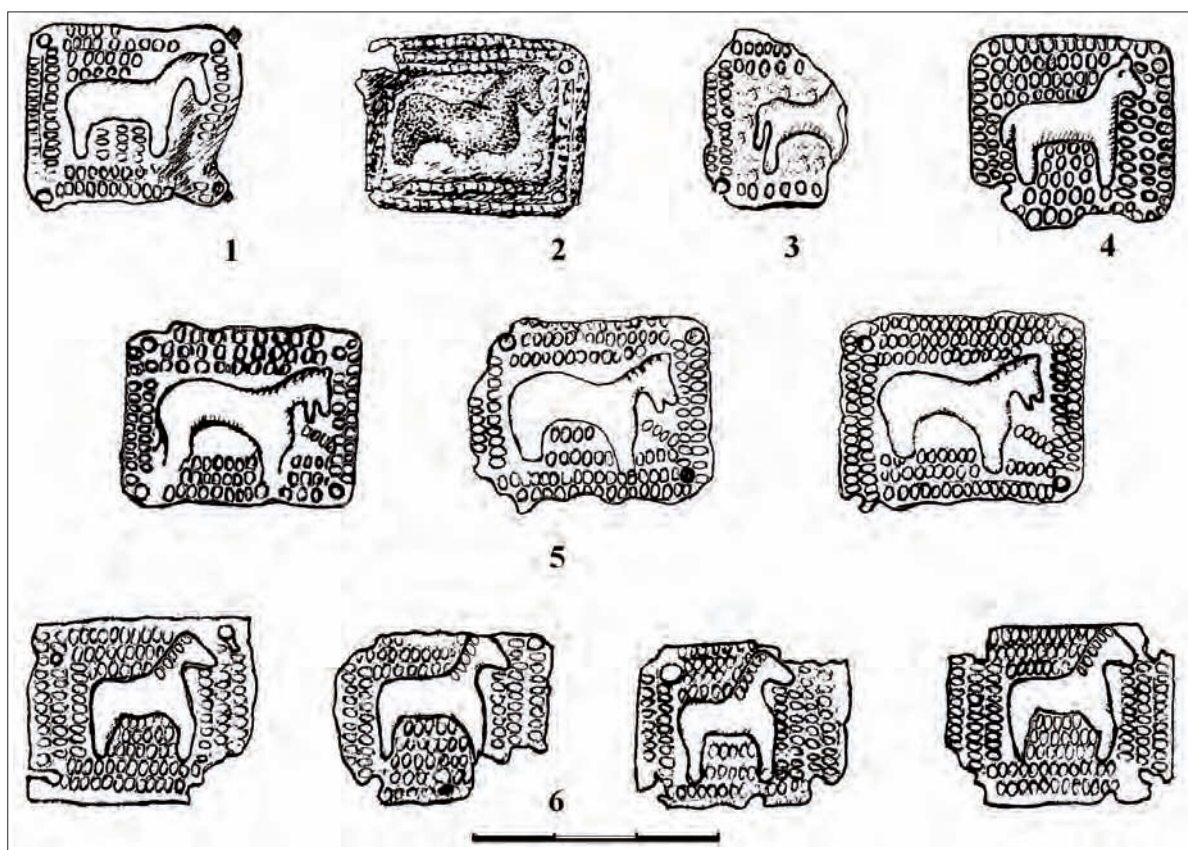


Fig. 5. Bronze belt bindings with horse motif: 1 Stupeļi settlement; 2 Jersika hillfort; 3 Jersika cemetery, grave 24; 4 Cesvaine's Kalnapaukši cemetery, grave 1; 5 Lielstraupe's Pūricas cemetery, grave 11; 6 Galgauska's Tīcēni cemetery.

lennium harness items are rarely found both in the territory of Latvia and in the whole Eastern Europe. More extensive distribution of harness items in the eastern Latvian territories begins in the last centuries of the first millennium, which is attested by growth of number of such findings both in settlements and burials, although even in this period this number is significantly lower in the Latgallian-Selonian and Semigallian-Livic territories than in these inhabited by the Couronians. For example, in the Sārāji ancient burial site harness items were found in 62 percents of all the adult male burials and in 89 percents of all the intact adult male burials (Asaris 1994, p.17). Apparently in the Latgallian and Selonian territories there were no strong traditions of giving harness or cavalryman's items as a grave goods for the defunct. This assumption is further attested by the fact that in the ancient burial ground of Koknese, there were no findings of spurs in any single burial, regardless of the significant number of spurs found in the Koknese castle and castle-front (Žeiere 2002, p.222).

Although in the Latgallian and Selonian archaeological material entire horseman's and horse riding equipment can be found, singular items are not equally distributed in all historical periods and all territories. Of the horseman's equipment, spurs are among the most fre-

quently found items both in Latgallian and Selonian territories.

Broader distribution of spurs in the Latgallian-Selonian territories begins with the first centuries of the second millennium. They can be found both in settlements and burials, although the distribution cannot yet be considered global. The form and design of these spurs are borrowed from Central and Western Europe; with delay of one to two centuries it permeates into Eastern Europe. Characteristic to this period is that spurs are usually found in rich grave inventories, along with weaponry that shows certain social status of the defunct. It has to be noted that in the Western Europe parallel to purely military utilisation spurs served also as a sign of certain social ranking; by symbolical significance spurs are likened to sword. In the eastern Latvian territories, ornate spurs are found in the largest population centres of 11th-12th century - namely, in Koknese, Asote, and Jersika; it could signify that these belonged to the local ruler and his closest confreres. The wide spur distribution in ancient Russia is thought to be connected with formation of cavalry as the main military force.

How important was the horse in eastern Latvian military affairs? Although the Latgallian and Selonian archaeological material contains almost every horse-

man's and harness item, the very number of these findings puts some necessary carefulness in hypothesizing on strong cavalry and the use of its characteristic tactic patterns in battles during the first centuries of the second millennium. These questions are only sparsely mentioned in the archaeological literature; more so, the material has not undergone sufficient research, looking from the point of military practice analysis. Andris Šnē has stated that harness items found in Late prehistoric burials of eastern Latvian territories signify "the development of a new socially-professional stratum - the warrior-guard that possesses already different military equipment" (Šnē 2002, p.293).

The evidence from 13th century written sources allows assuming that horse in the military practice was used mainly as a mean of conveyance - both for riding and driving with sled and cart (?). The warriors entered the battle "by the custom of their forefathers, dismounting [...] and rushing towards the lines of brothers [...]" (AH 11728-11735). The depiction of the battle shows us that horseman departed his mount before the battle. This peculiarity could explain the small number of iron stirrup findings in the described territory. If the horse was used solely for transport, simple leather or wooden stirrup could be sufficient, whereas for mounted close combat, firm foot support was required. As shows the research, the stirrup was adjusted for shoes with both hard and soft soles; also the form of the stirrup was a characterising factor of horseman's possible manoeuvres and posture while mounted (Kirpichnikov 1973, p.46). At the same time, spurs found in the eastern Latvian territories has both rounded and flat base, which allowed horseman to participate even in close combat while mounted.

Naturally, along with the growth in the role of horse in military affairs, it (the horse) gradually becomes a symbol of a wealthy warrior. Beginning with the second half of 10th century, in parts of the described territory there appear burials whose grave inventories contain a definite set of harness items. Judging from these inventories, this signifies and correlates with certain changes in the society. The grave inventories containing harness items usually excel with greater number of total grave goods; sometimes among them are rare, precious and masterfully ornate items (e.g., swords) or the harness items themselves are decorated (the stirrup from the Beteļi burial ground). Integral parts of these grave inventories are items symbolising the military prowess - weaponry, warrior's bracelets. It seems obvious that these are burials of the high-born that possessed also the military power; thus these burials point out the formation of military elite. Probably the harness items among other grave goods reflect only one aspect of this power, namely, growth in the role of

cavalry in the military and political spheres. The different collections of these items in the grave inventories seemingly points at certain status and military ranking of the given defunct.

At the same time it is impossible to deny the consistency of collections of harness items in different grave inventories, which, by analogy of Lithuanian burial traditions, are usually linked with horse burials. The practical life in the ancient past was governed not only by experience and rational knowledge, but also by mythological and religious conceptions. Thus these burials could be looked upon as sites with symbolical significance and connections to the horse cult. As the horse gained more importance in both agricultural and military practices, it also acquired a permanent place in the ideological and mythological structures; this burial tradition shows that horse had already gained the role of warrior's companion.

The status of a horse as a symbol of a wealthy warrior is reflected also by findings of double burials of horse and horseman found along river Daugava. According to the ancient beliefs and conceptions about the afterlife that continues in the netherworld, the defunct was equipped with everything necessary for comfortable living in "that world". Although the appearance of these traditions is linked with influence from Lithuanian culture, these burials allow more prominence in the debate on horse cult in the Latgalian and Selonian territories. The image of horse as a spiritual protector appears also on belt bindings, which is considered by some researchers to be a warrior's attribute.

Alongside with the already mentioned, there is also evidence of ancient conceptions about horse as a general benefactor and stimulant of fertility, which is attested by findings of pendants and other jewellery with horse depictions.

Overall it has to be agreed upon that horse had a prominent place in Latgalian-Selonian culture's both practical and spiritual aspects, although some disclosures of the role of horse in agricultural and military practices, as well as the full extension of the horse cult in the given archaeological material remain only fragmentary and hard to trace.

Translated by Agrita Lujāne

Abbreviations

LVM AA –	Latvian National History Museum, Archive, Riga
LVM A, LVI –	Latvian National History Museum, Collections, Riga
LU LVI AA –	LU Latvian Institute of History, Archive, Riga

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ŽIRGO ATRIBUTIKA IR KULTAS LATGALIŅU IR SĒLIŅU GENTYSE

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Santrauka

Latgaliņu ir sēliņu geležies amžiusa paminkļu medžiaga aišķiai rodo, kaip arklys pamažu virto traukiamuoju gyvuliū, kurio jēga vis dažniau buvo pritaikoma lauko darbams, be to atskleidžia vis didėjančią žirgo svarbą kariniuose žygiuose. Kintantis arklių kaulų kiekis šio laikotarpio kultūriniuose sluoksniuose pabrėžia ekonominės arklio funkcijos aktualėjimą. Remiantis osteologine medžiaga matyti, kad arklių kaulai sudaro tik ketvirtąją visų tirtų gyvulių kaulų dalį (4,5–9,1%) (1 pav.).

Pradėjus formuotis latgaliņu ir sēliņu kultūroms, arklys ir toliau naudojamas maistui. Šalia šios paskirties atsiranda ir kita – juo pradedama jodinėti, arklys tampa žirgu. Tai patvirtina rasti pentinai ir žąslai. Ankstyviausių pentinų formoms (Saukas Razbuki) stiprią įtaką darė romėniškojo laikotarpio pentinai. Panašių formų pentinai buvo paplitę baltų gentyse.

Viduriniame geležies amžiuje pentinų ir žąslų kiekis didēja (Kente piliakalnis, Ratulani kapinynas, kapas 27). Pentinai imituoja Vidurio ir Vakarų Europai būdingas formas.

Āraiši ežero pilies (IX–X a.) kultūriniame sluoksnyje buvo rasta dekoruotų arklio pakinktų dalių ir rogių detaļu, liudijančių, kad arklys buvo naudojamas kaip traukiamoji jēga.

Pirmaisiais II tūkstantmečio šimtmečiais aptariamajame regione daugēja radinių, susijusių su kinkymu ir jodinėjimu (žąslai, balnai, pentinai, botagų rankenos).

Pentinų formoms ir toliau įtaką daro Vidurio ir Vakarų Europa.

Žirgo vaidmens stiprėjimas atskleidžiamas XIII a. rašytiniuose šaltiniuose, tokiuose kaip „Eiluiotoji Livonijos kronika“. Faktas, kad žirgai kartais būdavo dovanojami, siekiant gavėjo pasitikėjimo ir palankumo, liudija galbūt aukščiausią žirgo įvertinimą.

Latgalių ir sėlių žemėse vėlyvajame geležies amžiuje rasta tiek vyrų kapų su raitelio atributais ir kamanų dalimis, tiek žirgų kapų, bet nė vieni, nė kiti Rytų Latvijoje nėra plačiai paplitę. Pentinai ir žąslai yra dažniausiai kapuose randami raitelio atributikos elementai (Sēlpils Lejasdopeles, Betelī, Jaunpiebalga, Ērgļu Jaunāķeni, Rikopole, Višķu Maskava). Tuo tarpu geležinės balnakilpės yra retos (Rēznas Jusi, Ciblas Eversmuiža). Pentinai ir balnakilpės Rytų Latvijoje dažniausiai randamos gyvenvietėse (Asote, Jersika, Koknese).

16 kapų su žirgo kamanų dalimis žinoma iš keturių kapinynų, esančių ties Dubnos baseino vidurpiumi ir žemupiu (Aglonas Kristapini, Višķu Maskeviciški, Višķu Maskava, Škeltovas Brūveri ir Aizkalnes Ludvigova). Šiuose kapinynuose rasta žąslų, geležinių žvangučių ir geležinių botagų rankenų. Visi jie priklauso specifinei įkapių grupei, kurioje šalia žirgo atributikos randama prestižinių daiktų, pavyzdžiui, kalavijų.

Sėlių ir latgalių žemėse rasti šeši kapai, kuriuose kartu su raiteliais palaidoti ir jų žirgai. Žirgo kapas yra žinomas iš 1886 m. kasinėto Lejasdopeles kapinyno. Paminėtinas XI amžiumi datuojamas dvigubas vyro ir žirgo kapas 14 iš Betelī kapinyno (2: 1; 3 pav.). Žirgas buvo paguldintas ant pilvo žemyn galva, o kojos surištos. Šalia gulėjo jo šeimininkas. Įkapės rodo, kad mirusysis priklausė aukštą socialinį statusą turinčiai visuomenės grupei. Dar vienas žmogaus ir žirgo kapas kartu su geležiniu ietigaliu yra žinomas iš Rites Divuļi gyvenvietės. Latgalių žemėse, esančiose dešiniajame Dauguvos upės krante, Jersika kapinyne rastas šalia degintinio kapo gulintis, jokių pakinktų neturintis žirgo skeletas. Aizkraukles Lejasžagari kapinyno kape 29 gulėjo žirgas, kurio galva buvo pasukta į vakarus, o kaklas papuoštas žalvariniu antkakliu. Po žirgo kojomis, giliau apie 7 cm, gulėjo mirusysis su į rytus pasukta galva. Jo rankas puošė dvi apyrankės ir keturi žiedai, segė, o drabužius – segė. Taip pat kape rastas įmovinis ietigalis ir plačiašmenis kirvis.

Geležies amžiaus antrojoje pusėje žirgų laidojimas sėlių ir latgalių žemėse buvo svarbi laidojimo ritualo dalis. Šiam fenomenui įtakos turėjo Lietuvoje gyvavusios laidojimo tradicijos.

Žirgo skeleto (*mandibula*) dalis buvo rasta Koknese kapinyne, kuriame buvo laidojami skirtingų genčių žmonės. Šis reiškinys panašus į mažai tesiskiriančius

žemutiniame Dauguvos upės baseine gyvenusių lyvių laidojimo papročius. Panašių žirgo kulto apraiškų pastebėta ir latgalių archeologinėje medžiagoje – Dinaburgo pilyje, pastato kampe, buvo rasta žirgo kaukolė, datuojama XI a. pradžia.

X–XIII a. Rytų Latvijoje buvo paplitę zoomorfiniai arklius vaizduojantys kabučiai (4 pav.). Kai kuriuose latgalių paminkluose rasta arklių figūrėlių, bet standartizuoti kabučiai vis dėlto buvo dažniau naudojami: iš viso rasta apie 50 kabučių. Panašius kabučius nešiojo baltų įtaką patiriantys rytų slavai.

Žirgo motyvais puoštų diržų buvo rasta keliuose latgalių kapinynuose (Ludzas Odukalns, Jersika, Cesvaines Kalnapaukši, Galguskas Tīcēni) ir gyvenvietėse (Stupeļi, Jersika). Ludzas Odukalns kapinyno kape 196 rasta ristele bėgančių žirgų atvaizdų (5 pav.). Latgalių Dinaburgo pilyje buvo rasta žalvarinių žąslų pusė, dekoruota stilizuota žirgo galvute. Stilizuotas žirgo motyvas taip pat būdingas Lietuvoje randamų žąslų laužtukams.

Arklio (žirgo) įvaizdis ir pasireiškimo formos yra neatsiejama senovės žmonių mitologijos dalis. Vaizduodami gyvūnus, žmonės įkūnydavo juose tikėjimą jų maginėmis ir globėjiškomis galiomis. Arklys (žirgas) simbolizavo vaisingumą, todėl papuošalai su jo atvaizdu buvo ypač mėgstami moterų. Suomijoje žirgo pavidalo kabučių populiarumui įtakos turėjo jo ir semantiniu požiūriu panašaus paukščio simbolinių reikšmių sąsajos. Tikriausiai dėl šios priežasties žirgą vaizduojantys kabučiai labiau buvo paplitę lyvių nei žiemgalių, sėlių ir kitų baltų žemėse.

Latgalių ir sėlių archeologinė medžiaga iliustruoja žirgą kaip patyrusio kario palydovą ir simbolį, suteikiantį pasitikėjimo ir reiškiantį gerovę. Žirgo praktinių funkcijų svarbos didėjimas atsispindi ir kultuose.

Vertė Agnė Čivilytė



THE WORLD
OF HORSE
SYMBOLISM