IS A WARRIOR WITHOUT A WEAPON NOT A WARRIOR? SOME IDEAS ABOUT BRONZE AGE WARFARE IN THE EASTERN BALTIC REGION

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Abstract

Bronze weapons hint not only at the intensity and effectiveness of warfare in particular societies, but, even more, they may reveal the identity of warriors as a separate group within society. Over most of Europe weaponry is one of the important categories of material culture, although in some regions, like the Eastern Baltic, bronze weapons are a real rarity. There is no doubt that people fought wars here, but instead of bronze weapons they effectively used stone, bone or wooden weapons. Because of the scarcity of bronze weapons, defensive settlements, such as those known from Central and Southeast Europe, and warrior graves, warfare cannot be seen as an organizational principle of social ties *per se*. There is no reason to assume the existence of retinues or warrior aristocracies as fundamental social units in the Eastern Baltic. However, warfare or war ideology without the existence of the warrior as a social layer is simply inconceivable.

Key words: warrior identity, bronze weapons, warfare, war ideology, bronze deposition, ritual.

Introduction

During the last few decades prehistoric warfare has become one of the most important subjects of archaeological research. It would not be a mistake to say that the Bronze Age is becoming more and more dominant in this field of study[1]. It is a very mysterious and evocative era, attracting scholars with plenty of gripping and elusive details[2]. This pull lies first of all in archaeological evidence. A stunning abundance of weapons, various remains of defensive fortifications, as well as elusive places where prehistoric battles and massacres may have taken place help us to realize the refinements of one particularly human trait, aggression. Societies which had not developed writing left traces for us that allow us to debate why people carried weapons with them and who they were, and how the weapons were used. New anthropological, ethnological, sociological and psychological investigations[3] add to these questions. However, in the centre of all these considerations, nonetheless, are weapons. In fact, bronze weapons hint not only at the intensity and effectiveness of warfare in separate societies, but, even more, at the identity of warriors as a separate layer of society. In other words, in reconstructing the cultural biography of weaponry[4], biographies of their owners also unfold. Maybe it concerns a strong and brave warrior, a priestess or a child awarded weapons, or maybe a tribal leader, warrior and priest all in one?

However, these archaeological expectations cannot always be vindicated. Over most of Europe, weaponry is one of the important categories of material culture, although in some regions bronze weapons are a real rarity. The East Baltic[5] is one of those regions, which for various reasons, primarily because of the scarsity of bronze artefacts and the monotony of forms, could be described as "the periphery of the periphery" (Čivilytė 2005, p.329). Does it mean that in this region bronze weapons were unpopular and unacceptable? And maybe ignorance of weapons reflects the social and warlike amorphousness of societies living here? There is no doubt that people here were at war: this has been discussed in detail in the reports of colleagues. However, does it really reflect warfare and violence itself? Is it possible to talk about war ideology and connected processes in the East Baltic? After all, is it possible to recognize warriors as individuals? If yes, why were they not given the right to keep bronze weapons? Does

[1] It is easy to see that not only new studies about warrior culture have separate chapters for the Bronze Age (Harding 2000, p.271), but also there are more definitive monographs devoted to this topic (Randsborg 1995; Osgood 1998; Carman, Harding 1999).

[2] Recently, interest in Bronze Age weaponry, especially swords, has increased considerably. A few of the more recent studies should be mentioned: Kilian-Dirlmeier 1993; Quillfeldt 1995; Bridgford 1997; Tarot 2000; Bridgford 2000; Čivilytė 2003; Wüstemann 2004; Stockhammer 2004; Mödlinger 2007.

[3] In greater detail, see Carman, Harding 1999; Haas 1999.

[4] The cultural biography of bronze objects, including weapons, is subjected to broad discussion in David Fontijn's study, which reveals innovative interpretative views of the significance of things in human life (Fontijn 2003).

[5] The Eastern Baltic is the name we give here to the region between the Vistula in the south and the Gulf of Finland in the north. This region covers northeastern Poland, the Kaliningrad Oblast and the three Baltic States (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia).

it mean that a warrior without a weapon is not really a warrior at all?

In trying to answer these questions, first of all, I would like to itemize the definition of weaponry. Practically any sharp and heavy thing can inflict death or injury in a battle. Anthropological findings show that even wooden clubs served that purpose (Fontijn 2003, p.221). Therefore, I think it is necessary to distinguish multi-functional objects, for which the function of a weapon is just one example, from objects that are specialized weaponry (Čivilytė 2003)[6]. Consequently, talking about weapons, I mean daggers, swords and spearheads. The problem of bronze axes and battle-axes will be discussed here in the context of the analysis of weapons[7].

Bronze weaponry in the Eastern Baltic region

Only nine bronze daggers were found from the Early and Middle Bronze Age (Periods I to III) in the whole of the East Baltic region. One of them, a bronze metal-shaped halberd, belonging to the so-called Great Poland type from Veliuona (Jurbarkas district) (LAB 1961, Fig. 50), is dated to the second half of Period I (Gedl 1980, pp.33-34). However, the circumstances of its discovery are not clear, and if this object was not brought to Lithuania by a hobbyist, then it can be called a unique example on the East Baltic coast. Such metal-shaped halberds were especially rare all over Europe; therefore the dagger from Veliuona, moreover, an example of this type found its way as far as northeast Europe, is an especially valuable and exotic example of an import.

Furthermore, two daggers should be mentioned, which are also dated to the second half of Period I. A piece of the first was found in the Złotoria (Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodship, Poland) hoard, together with two low-flanged axes. This is the Únětice-type dagger (Gedl 1980, p.14, Nr. 10, tab.: 31, B). The second dagger was found together with the axe from the Ubiedrze-type Sterławki Wielki (Suwałki voivodship) hoard (Gedl 1980, p.47, Nr. 107, tab. 14; Blajer 1990, p. 138, Nr. 122, tab. CII, 5). It should be observed that in both hoards only fragments of daggers are found; and that the axes found are deformed.

The rest of the daggers dated to Period II–III are daggers with a rhomboid cross-section and middle-rib, one of them is a lancet-like spike-tang dagger with rivet. Further there are two flang-hilted daggers (Gedl 1980, p.58, Nr. 152, tab. 18, p.62, Nr. 167, tab. 19, p.65, Nr. 181, tab. 20; LAB, 1961, Fig. 55: 2). As was mentioned, two daggers were found in hoards; all the others were discovered as single objects. One of them was found in a river.

In the Middle Bronze Age the first swords appeared. Seven are known from this period. Six of them belong to flang-hilted swords (*Griffzungenschwerter*), Sprockhoff type I and II and dated to Period III (LAB 1961, Fig. 55: 1, 3; Bezzenberger 1904, Fig. 15; Šturms 1936, tab.: 16, a-g). They are widely prevalent in Europe, although one of the centres of their production could have been Denmark and northern Germany, and maybe even part of west Pomerania (Dąbrowski 1968, p.49). The seventh sword, the earliest in the East Baltic, is the solid-hilted sword (*Vollgriffschwert*), found in Konojady (Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodship, Poland). It belongs to the *Dreiwulstschwerter* group, type Illertissen (Dąbrowski 1997, Fig. 43: c). This sword seems to have been an import from the south of Germany (Dąbrowski 1997, p.57). Five swords were found separately, and two in graves, in the Marjinskoe, Primorsk district, Kaliningrad region of Russia (formerly Marscheiten, Kr. Fischhausen) and Zaostrove, Primorsk district, Kaliningrad region of Russia (former Rantau, Kr. Fischhausen) barrows. The latter was laid in the grave after being broken. It seems to have been in a wooden sheath (Šturms 1936, p.109). Two swords were found in a bog. One of them, the sword from Chelmża (Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodship, Poland), was also found in a wooden sheath, which crumbled after it was unsheathed (Šturms 1936, p.117).

Twenty spearheads are known from this Bronze Age period. Most of them belong to types Valsømagle (six examples), Ullerslev (four examples) and Hulterstedt (three examples), showing relations with north Middle Europe (Dąbrowski 1968, pp.56-57, 196; 1997, pp.58-59). Two so-called Sejma-type spearheads (Okulicz 1976, Fig. 23) argue for contacts with the Volga–Kama region, where those spearheads mostly prevailed (Dąbrowski 1968, p.59). Fourteen spearheads were found as single objects, three were found in hoards. Six spearheads were found in bogs, two in rivers.

[6] The same distribution of material is followed by Fontijn (Fontijn 2003, p.221).

[7] All bronze weapons are analysed in chronological order (from the Early, Middle and Late Bronze Age). For a long time scholars were wont to divide the period into two parts, namely Early and Late Bronze Ages, but archaeological material allows us to distinguish a Middle Bronze Age too. The most recent studies use this tripartite chronology (Brazaitis 2005, p.257). However, according to Brazaitis' model, the third Bronze Age period belongs to the Late Bronze Age. Parallels can be found with German and Polish chronologies (Sommerfeld 1994, p.15; Dąbrowski 1997, pp.81-89). I allocate this period to the Middle stage rather than the Late stage.

In the Late Bronze Age (Periods IV–VI) the number of weapons slightly increases. To be more specific, spears are much more significant: all in all 71 have been found. At this stage we can start to talk about local production of spearheads**.** This is proven by the clay moulds found in the fortified settlement of Brikuļi in Latvia (Vasks 1994, p.46, tab. 16: 1, 2), as well as many distinctive forms of spearheads attributable to local types. The most predominant form of spearheads comprises Lusatian-type spearheads (28 examples) (Dąbrowski 1968, pp.196-197; 1997, p.59). Three spearheads were found in graves (Fig. 1), 13 in hoards. Also, 11 were found in the hoard of Zorino, Primorsk district, Kaliningrad region of Russia (formerly Littausdorf, Kr. Fischhausen) (Engel 1935, tab. 87: b). Three spearheads were found in bogs, three in rivers.

Only ten swords were found from the Late Bronze Age. The earliest of them is dated to Period IV Sprockhoff type III a, found in Kępa Tolnicka (Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship, Poland, former Altkamp, Kr. Rößel) (Engel 1935, tab. 31: c). Such swords are found in the region stretching from Pomerania up to Jutland, from whence they were imported (Dąbrowski 1968, p.49). Four swords belong to the "antennae-type" (*Antennenschwerter*) (Bezzenberger 1904, Fig. 20, 21; Kossinna 1917, Fig. 54; Dąbrowski 1997, Fig. 43: b), and two to the Mörigen-type (Dąbrowski 1997, Fig. 43, c; 52). The first were brought to the region as an import from Central Europe, though possibly local copies of them could have been produced in Pomerania. The same could be said about the Mörigen-type swords (Dąbrowski 1968, p.50). In the Braniewo (Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship in Poland, formerly Braunsberg) hoard, together with an "antennae-type" sword, was found a hallstat or Gündlingen-sword (Dąbrowski 1997, Fig. 43, d), imported from southern Germany (Dąbrowski 1968, p.49), and in the Tehurmarne hoard the only *Griffangelschwert*-type sword (Tallgren 1922, p.75, Fig. 12). No single sword was found in a grave, but there was a tendency to put them into hoards, this has been noted (six swords in four hoards). Two hoards were found in bogs, two swords as single objects in bog and water. "Antennae" swords that were found in the hoard from Nikolajevka, Ozersk district, Kaliningrad region of Russia (formerly Waldburg, Kr. Königsberg) seem to have had crossed handles (Kossinna 1917, p.194, Fig. 54).

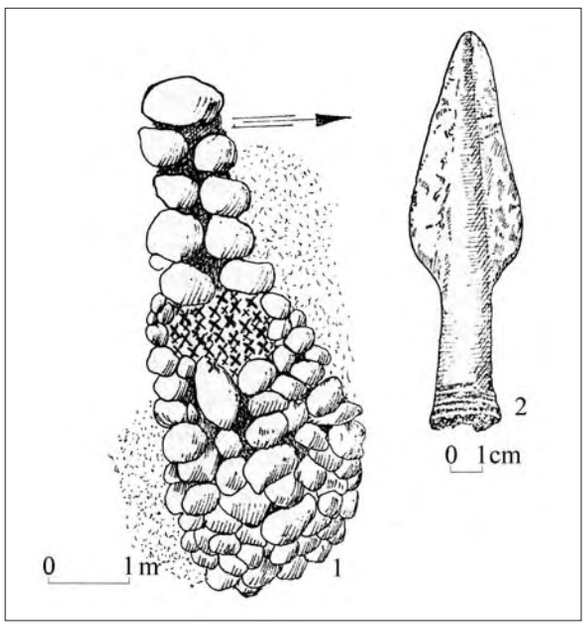

Fig. 1. The grave of Jaunā Muiža (Latvia) with a spearhead of the Lusatian type (after Okulicz 1976, Fig. 58).

In the Late Bronze Age we are aware only of four daggers: three "antennae" (Gedl 1980, p.26, Nr. 43, pp.25-26, Nr. 41, tab. 6, 7; Grigalavičienė 1995, p.162, Fig. 90: 2) and one *Griffangeldolch.* One of them was found in a hoard, others were found as single objects. A dagger from the Vaškai (Pasvalys district) hoard (Grigalavičienė 1995, Fig. 90) is undoubtedly an import from Scandinavia, representing a so-called miniature-sword (Grigalavičienė 1995, p.162).

The issue of warrior identity in the Eastern Baltic region

This diachronic review of weapons brings us to make some distinctions. A bronze weapons, even if this means a simple spearhead, is an inseparable element of elite society. There is no doubt that swords formed the cultural high point of these societies, judging from their elaborate character, their presence in the largest graves and in specialized deposits[8].

Some reflections of the adoration of swords can be seen in the East Baltic region: in the Zaostrowie/Rantau barrow a sword accompanies its owner in the journey to the afterlife. According to a frequent custom in Europe, it experiences a ritual of damage before being placed in the grave (Čivilytė 2004). An outstanding phenomenon in the East Baltic is the Trehumarne hoard**,** which also includes the practice of the broken sword. The hoard from Nikolayevka, Ozersk district, Kaliningrad region of Russia (formerly Waldburg, Kr. Königsberg), in which both swords had crossed handles, is interesting as well[9].

[8] The special significance of swords in the social system is revealed by many other clear factors in addition to the ones already mentioned, such as the fact that they are found together with especially rich grave goods (see Čivilytė 2003, chapter 6). Archaeological data is complemented by many written sources concerning famous swords (Maraszek 1998, p.19; Kristiansen 2002, pp.329-331).

[9] For more on the cross-wise placement of bronze artefacts in hoards as a ritual which was widespread throughout Europe in the Bronze Ages, see Soroceanu 1995, pp.44-45.

Fig. 2. The so-called "Beaker Package" from Předmosti (Moravia) (after Neolithikum, Fig. 96).

The same should be said about Early Bronze Age daggers. Although only their components were put into hoards, they were important components of these hoards. This is not a coincidence; on the contrary, it is an action connected with rituals. A symbolic meaning is attributed to the daggers mentioned. In archaeology it is called *pars pro toto*.

Let us remember that many weapons and especially spearheads were found in water deposits or in a damp environment, and this is connected with ritual activities as well[10]. Thus, some ideological principles, and even rules as to how to behave with them in the last stage of their life, were encoded in weapons. These ideas came from other regions together with weapons. But is it right to connect this with warfare? We can also read some remarks about warfare ideology and the identity of warriors in the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age in Jacob Westermann's article in this volume. But I would like to emphasize some more aspects. Generally, a growing emphasis on the social and ideological significance of warfare is envisaged in swords, and the ideological martial tradition in their owners (Fontijn 2003, p.223). We can speak about the self-confidence of a warrior only in a case when we are able to recognise the social intermingling of the individual with martial values, in other words, if the individual is closely linked with the manifestation of some sacred customs. A clear example of this is found in Funnel Beaker Culture, where the so called "Beaker Package" as an image of a warrior has developed (Fig. 2) or the mass appearance of daggers of Sögel-Wohlde type found in graves (Fig. 3) has led to some arguments for the widely shared conceptualization of persons as a specific type of warrior. This ideal is highlighted not only by weaponry itself, but also with apparel and outfit emphasizing personality, such as razors or tweezers (Kristiansen 1999a, pp.176-177, 180-181; Fontijn 2003, pp.81-82, 227-229). All this shows the establishment of new customs connected with new ideas of social behaviour and lifestyles, and the appearance of a "warrior aristocracy". Having said this, it is unlikely that this could have affected the East Baltic: the rarity of the Bronze Age funeral in the region does not fit this theory. As with other regions of Europe (for example, the Netherlands and Belgium) (Fontijn 2003, p.224), there is no reason to assume the existence of retinues or warrior aristocracies as fundamental social units in the Eastern Baltic. A question arises: how should bronze weapons found here be interpreted and how can their meaning be realized?

Interpretation of bronze weapons in the Eastern Baltic region

At the beginning of this paper I mentioned the biography of weapons. Swords are distinguished by their special flamboyance. The discussion about the use of swords for only prestigious and ritual spheres of life is

[10] The depositing of Bronze Age artefacts in wet zones and water sites has been interpreted by scholars since the 19th century as a cultural act most often associated with sacrifices. For more on this topic see Čivilytė 2004, pp.229-230 and references; Fontijn 2003, pp.267-268.

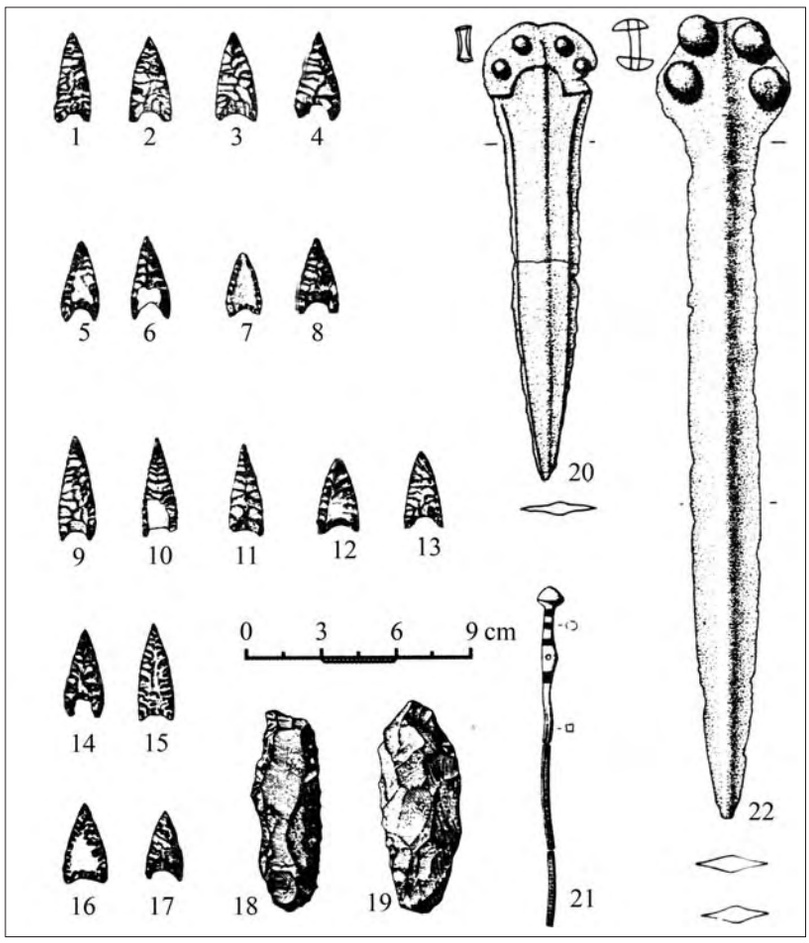

Fig. 3. The grave from Baven (Lower Saxony) with a Wohlde type dagger (after Schauer 1990, Fig. 10b)

becoming more and more entrenched in archaeological scholarship (Born, Hansen 1991; Wüstemann 1992; Čivilytė 1997)[11]. Other studies deal with this aspect too in the context of other possibilities that swords were used practically in battle (Bridgford 1997; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1993, pp.130-162; Quillfeldt 1995, pp.19-25; Harding 2000, pp.88-91). Speaking about the practical use of swords, they were unsheathed in hand-to-hand combat, bringing honour for their owners. In my study about the deposition of Bronze Age weapons in north-east Europe and after studying the specific aspect of the breaking of weapons, I have noticed that the tops of the blades of most swords are broken (Čivilytė 2003, chapter 3.4), and stabbing movements were into a target, which could be the enemy or another object, for example, an animal being sacrificed (Quillfeldt 1995, pp.19-20). This is well documented in the Mycenaean iconography (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1993, p.137). Thus, swords may have been used in some rituals. Their particularity is emphasized by the fact that swords were so elaborately decorated[12], even further emphasizing the status of their owner. It was enough for him to unsheathe the sword and demonstrate its power, and at the same time to strengthen the honour and fear of the people around him (Osgood 1998, p.3; Harding 1999a, p.91). Many swords had no practical use at all, they merely bore a ceremonial function[13]. Spearheads, though performing more practical functions, had an important social meaning as well: some spears are so abundantly decorated that they may have only been display items in the first place: the spear was a sign of extreme honour. During the Early Roman Empire it was a symbol of authority and of the sovereign. Supernatural powers were thus accredited to spears (Tarot 2000, pp.46-48). Daggers reflect the tradition of the formation of a warrior as a personality. Besides, abundantly decorated and easily broken blades were display items as well (Wüstemann 1995, p.36; Harding 1999, p.161)

All these aspects reflecting the close relationship between weapons and their owners could be applied to East Baltic weapons as well. Having said this, their disposal was very different from that in other regions. Most of them were carried to these countries from far away to become the symbolic property of their new owner, and later to be sacrificed to the gods. This ideology of sacrifice reflects not the practical, but rather the symbolic meaning of bronze weapons in the East Baltic. Their rarity in these lands shows that the idea of a warrior as a personality and also as a social status was not yet formed here. Weapons got here by way of exchange, as exotic, special objects, but not as symbols of the warrior**.** If the ideology of warfare had

[11] Against this theory: Kristiansen 1999b; 2002.

[12] Not only were the hilts of swords decorated but also, on occasion, their blades (Harding 1999b, p.166). Hilts, especially those of "antennae" swords, were clearly visible when the sword was hung (Harding 2000, p.278). Such a demonstration of swords stresses even more their representative function and idealisation (Steffgen 1997, p.190).

[13] This is to be said first and foremost of solid-hilted swords. Often the hilts are attached unstably to the blades and are too short (Harding 1999 a, p.88; Quillfeldt 1995, pp.19-24; Wüstemann 2004; for a differing opinion, Kristiansen 2002, p.320). That these swords were produced only for representational-cultural purposes is confirmed by the fact that certain technical production errors visible to the naked eye were corrected, despite the fact that the swords themselves could not have been used in battle because of other defects (Born, Hansen 1991).

been established here, today we would have much bigger deposits of weapons, because societies living here were able to obtain bronze articles and the bronze itself for their production. In this region, in particular, the tradition of axes and battle-axes was established, even in the Early Bronze Age. In another paper I have raised the question that these objects may have been imported from Atlantic Western Europe, and might have reached the Eastern Baltic by the way of Nordic Bronze Age Culture (Čivilytė 2005, p.337). Such objects may have made up the largest part of bronze artefacts, reflecting the strong conservatism of forms with regard to other bronze objects. This limitation of forms can be noted in the stone and flint inventory, where axes and battle-axes prevail, whereas daggers and spears are a rarity. Although bronze exemplars differed strongly in their form from stone and flint ones, they reflect the conservatism of values and the continuation of old traditions. The transmission from stone to bronze in the East Baltic happened in a very distinct way. The value of the old tradition and of bronze as a new material were united in particular in bronze axes. Their deposit as single objects in water, bogs or moist places and large hoards reflect the desire of their owners to express their social status in a ritual act. This tendency can be noted as late as the end of the Bronze Age.

Therefore, in this context bronze weapons are to be understood as chance finds here, especially in the regions to the East of the Sambian peninsula, where the evidence of these weapons considerably declines[14]. Like axes and battle-axes, they might have been seen as symbols of status and prestige. Those who had the honour to obtain any bronze object, or participate in grand ritual ceremonies and be buried in graves with bronze artefacts, no doubt realized the significance of bronze weapons. However, these weapons could also be interpreted as illustrating the unwillingness of societies that inhabited the region to break with tradition, and, I would even be so bold as to say, a social, and especially warlike, amorphousness. The ideology which pertains to bronze weapons in other regions was not apparently established in these areas, and is evidenced only as a peripheral episode.

The subtext of this paper is the question "Is a warrior without a weapon not a warrior?" and this could be answered in the affirmative. I am not denying that in the East Baltic there were no any wars. I mentioned this at the beginning of the report. But instead of bronze weapons, stone, bone or wooden weapons could be effectively used (Dąbrowski 1996, pp.177-179; Osgood 1998, p.37; Chapman 1999, pp.109-142; Fontijn 2003, p.221)[15]. However, warfare or war ideology without the existence of the warrior as a social layer is simply inconceivable. We can see that defensive settlements, such as those known from Central and Southeast Europe (Jockenhövel 1990), are rare[16] and the evidence of warrior graves is lacking, so warfare cannot be seen as an organizational principle of social ties in themselves. I agree with the theory that in the Bronze Age there were not organized and hierarchically structural war affairs, and that Bronze Age conflicts should generally be seen as small-scale, endemic warfare that took place between groups that were socially and spatially distant. They may even have been simply armed conflicts during cattle rustling raids, because of the important role of cattle, not only economically but socially as well (Fontijn 2003, pp.224-226)[17]. I would like to end my assertions here with the view from David Fontijn that "warriorhood was a stage in life for some, and that weaponry was only part of a more encompassing cultural idealization involving the construction of martial personal identities" (Fontijn 2003, p.227). However, for societies that lived in the East Baltic, this identity was alien, and maybe even a totally unfamiliar social phenomenon.

Summarising the current archaeological material and theories based on anthropological, ethnological and sociological research, the following remarks could be made:

1. Primarily ideological principles, rather than the practicalities of use, were encoded in Bronze Age weapons.

[14] Here we should draw attention to the very small number of swords in the Eastern Baltic, in contrast to other regions, such as Scandinavia, where they were important prestige objects, showing cultural connections with Central Europe. Meanwhile, the Eastern Baltic region played no part in such connections (Luchtanas, Sidrys 1999, p.24).

[15] After examining archaeological material from the Bronze and early Iron Age in Eastern Lithuania, it is apparent that much of it comprises bone and flint arrowheads, spearheads and daggers, which tell us something about the conflicts which took place at that time (Luchtanas 1992, pp.64-67).

[16] It would be wrong to deny that there were fortified settlements in the Eastern Baltic. From Eastern Lithuania alone we know of more than 370 hill-forts from the first millennium BC, for the post-Ice Age relief of this area was very convenient for building such forts (Luchtanas 1992, pp.61-62). However, Bronze Age hill-forts were usually protected by ditches or ramparts, and more complex defensive constructions from wood or stone were used only seldom (Luchtanas 1992, p.62).

[17] Certain scholars are of a different opinion. They claim that military matters occupied one of the most important parts of human life, distinguishing the social role of both different groups of people and individuals and that by the Bronze Age we can speak of organised battles led by commanding chiefs (Harding 2000, pp.273-275; Kristiansen 2002, p.329).

2. It is unlikely that the establishment of a warrior identity as a social unit could have affected the East Baltic.

3. Apparently, the ideology which is held to have pertained to bronze weapons in other regions was not established in this area and is evidenced only as a peripheral episode.

Translated by Raminta Matulytė and Stephen Rowell

Abbrevation

LAB 1961 – P. Kulikauskas, R. Kulikauskienė, A. Tautavičius. Lietuvos archeologijos bruožai. Vilnius, 1961.

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AR KARYS BE GINKLŲ YRA NE KARYS? KELETAS MINČIŲ APIE RYTŲ PABALTIJO BRONZOS AMŽIAUS KARYBĄ

Agnė Čivilytė

Santrauka

Priešistorinė karyba paskutiniais dešimtmečiais tapo vienu svarbiausių archeologijos mokslo objektų. Rašto dar neturėjusios visuomenės mums paliko pėdsakus, leidžiančius svarstyti apie tai, kodėl ir kokie žmonės nešiojosi ginklus ir kam jie buvo skirti. Bronziniai ginklai byloja ne tik apie karybos intensyvumą ir efektyvumą atskirose visuomenėse, bet visų pirma apie karių, kaip atskiro visuomenės sluoksnio, identitetą. Beveik visoje Europoje ginklai sudaro svarbiausią materialinės kultūros dalį, tačiau Rytų Pabaltijyje jie yra tikra retenybė. Kyla klausimas, ar tai reiškia, kad šiame areale bronziniai ginklai buvo atmestinas ir nepriimtinas dalykas ir ar toks ginklų ignoravimas rodo čia gyvenusių visuomenių socialinį, o kartu ir karinį, amorfiškumą, t. y. ar galima kalbėti apie karo ideologiją ir su tuo susijusius procesus Rytų Pabaltijyje ir ar įmanoma atpažinti karius kaip asmenybes. Bronziniuose ginkluose buvo užkoduotos tam tikros ideologijos principai ir taisyklės, kaip su jais elgtis paskutiniame jų gyvavimo etape. Ši ideologija iš kitų kraštų buvo atsinešta kartu su ginklais. Europoje jau varpinių taurių kultūroje susiformavo kario idealas, išryškintas ne tik pačia ginkluote, bet ir papuošalais bei asmenybę pabrėžiančiais reikmenimis. Visa tai rodo naujų papročių, susijusių su naujomis socialinėmis normomis ir gyvenimo būdu, įsigalėjimą bei „karinės aristokratijos" atsiradimą. Rytų Pabaltijo archeologinė medžiaga rodo, kad ginklai čia patekdavo mainais, kaip egzotiški, ypatingi objektai, o ne kaip kario atributai. Šiame regione gyvenusioms bendruomenėms kario identitetas buvo svetimas, o gal net ir visai nepažįstamas.