

# A ROMAN IRON AGE WARRIOR FROM WESTERN LITHUANIAN CEMETERY BAITAI GRAVE 23

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## Abstract

A warrior from Baitai grave 23 was equipped with a spear, socketed axe, scythe, fragment of knife and a belt. Such a set of grave goods was typical but not entirely standard in west Lithuanian graves. The author discusses how, through many possible variations of male grave goods, we could recognize the personal position of the dead in a group of other armed men.

Key words: West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture area, Late Roman Iron Age, warriors, martial values.

## Introduction

The Baitai cemetery, which is known in Prussian archaeology as *Baiten*, belongs to the West Lithuanian Stone Circle Graves Culture area of the first six centuries AD (Fig. 1). Most of the Baitai graves explored hitherto belong to a quite definite Late Roman Period stratum and some of them to the Early Migration Period (Bezenberger 1900; Banytė-Rowell 2005).

Here we will deal with one grave from the central part of the cemetery, where the graves that have been studied so far belong to the period between the end of C<sub>1b</sub> to the turn of the C<sub>2</sub> and C<sub>3</sub> phases, which is more or less between the second half of the third century and the early fourth century. This is the period when we find ornamentation and common decorative features in grave goods from the Lithuanian coastland which show that at that time the people of the region at some level selected a unified central and northern *barbaricum* style of ornamentation. It was adopted in accordance with local capability and local taste. Similar features of male attire are not only evidence of kinship links with the western Balts but also reflect the same forms that were common throughout the Central European *barbaricum* and the northern Germanic areas (on the “common barbarian” features of ornamentation found in the Lithuanian coastland, see Tempelmann-Maczyńska 1985, pp.68-80; 1989, pp. 84-93, Nowakowski 1999; Banytė-Rowell 2000a; 2004; von Carnap-Bornheim 2000; Michelbertas 2000; Bliujienė 2005).

## Baitai grave 23: contents and context

The man whose grave was excavated in 1993 should be called a warrior simply because a spear was placed in his grave and this is an indisputable warrior attribute. Other material in the pit of the grave included an iron socketed axe, an iron scythe, belt buckle and fragments

from iron and bronze belt decorations (Fig. 2). The grave goods we know of do not cause us to doubt very much that the owner of the grave was male. The pit furnishings at Baitai 23 are not in any way exceptional. The grave, which lies next to other graves that are covered with many stones, was marked with only a few stones above the pit and next to it. The finds we have listed are quite standard for the grave goods placed in male graves in the Late Roman Period in Western Lithuania. So we must ask why we should pay all our attention to one “ordinary grave”, which is neither princely nor in any way exceptional?

There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the set of grave goods that is common to Western Lithuania in this period is rare in Baitai. Only one other such male grave has been found at that site so far, which contains a spear along with an axe. Of course, it is still too early to analyse the grave in the Baitai cemetery context, because the cemetery has not been excavated in full, but it is possible to offer preliminary comparisons. Secondly, if the “standard” of grave goods in Baitai 23 was not applied to all dead males, can we determine the social position and significance of the dead who are equipped

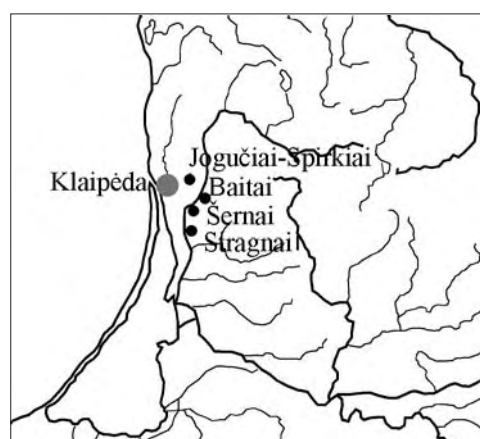


Fig. 1. A map with the grave sites on the Lithuanian coastland discussed in the text.

## IV

WARRIORS  
AND  
ARMAMENTS  
FROM THE  
VISTULA  
TO THE  
DAUGUVA

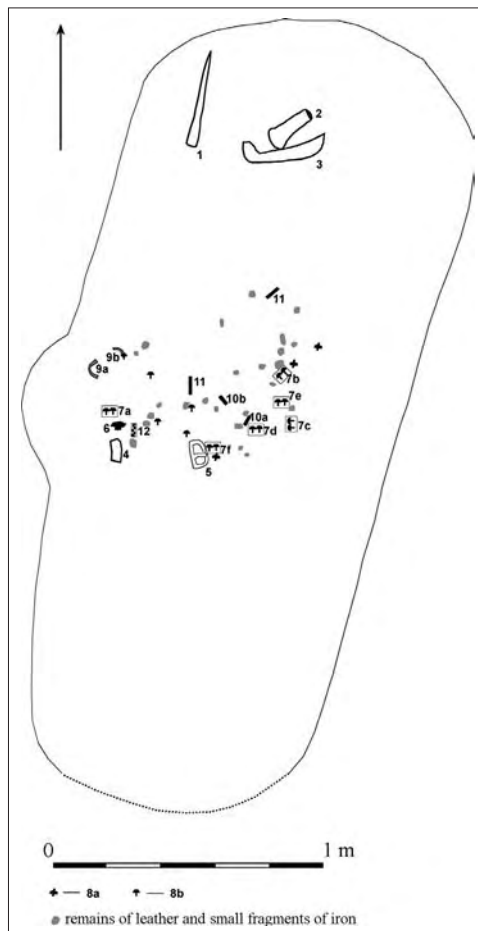


Fig. 2. A plan of finds in the grave pit of Baitai grave 23. The numbering system of items coincides with the numbering of the find-types illustrated in Fig. 3.

with such grave goods as that of warriors in similar communities? To what extent were a warrior's prestige, experience, "military rank" and indeed individuality reflected in the standards of burial ritual? Can we provide any answer to such a question?

First some brief information about the types of finds at Baitai grave 23 and their date (Fig. 3). The spearhead (or lance head, to use a more exact term) (Fig. 3:1), which was 28 centimetres long with a maximum blade width of six centimetres belongs to subtype IB (in the original Russian-language publication subtype IB) of spearhead with a rhomboid blade as categorised by Vytautas Kazakevičius, which typically has a raised blade edge. Spearheads of this type are known from sites in the western part of what is now Lithuania (the coastal areas and Samogitia) and from central Lithuania and dated by V. Kazakevičius to the third and fourth centuries AD. The Baitai spearhead is close to quite a small group of spearheads of this subtype, which are marked by the lengthened upper part of the blade. Because finds of this version of IB subtype were less numerous in the time when Kazakevičius wrote his study on the weaponry of the Balts, it was difficult for him to determine the chronology of version IB more strictly (Kaza-

kiavichius 1988, pp.24-27). Recently, Linas Tamulynas published material from grave 1 of the Jogučiai-Spirkiai cemetery (Fig. 1), where the grave set contained among other finds a spearhead of Kazakevičius subtype IB (IB) along with an omega-shaped buckle, which is similar to the omega-buckles found in Thorsberg and Illerup bog sites, and along with the Roman coins of Emperors Maximinus I and Gordianus III. Tamulynas reviewed other grave sets of spearheads of that form known from Lithuanian territory, and specified the dating of the type to the Late Roman Period, from the middle of the third century to the middle of the fourth century AD, making a comparison with similar types found in Scandinavia (Tamulynas 2005, pp.87-88, Figs. 2:13 and 5). The form of the Baitai spearhead appears closer to J. Ilkjær type 26 (Sventum type) and 29 (Dorby), except that it has a squarish rather than rounded edge to the blade. The Scandinavian types are dated to C<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>3</sub>, namely the mid-third to the mid-fourth century (Ilkjær 1990, pp.328-329).

The socketed axe from Baitai 23 is not a particularly informative find (Fig. 3:2). Socketed axes with this form (Malonaitis Type 3d) are found in the Early Roman Period and were still being used during the Great Migrations (Malonaitis 2003, pp.10, 11 and 13). Researchers are more inclined to regard iron socketed axes as working tools, while the function of butted narrow-bladed axes is associated directly with war (Michelbertas 1986, pp.159-160; Kazakiavichius 1988, pp.74-81), even though there are those who think that socketed axes were also multi-functional. Analysing the finds of the Late Roman Period from Dauglaukis cemetery, Eugenijus Jovaiša included socketed axes in his statistics of weaponry (Jovaiša 1997). The earliest forms of butted narrow-bladed axes known from Lithuanian sites are dated to Phase B2, though their percentage in Roman Iron Age graves is considerably lower at that period than of socketed axes (Malonaitis 1997 and 2002; Malonaitis 2003; Michelbertas 2004, p.50).

The scythe found in Baitai 23 (which is 29cm long) is also one of the "standard" grave goods found in Western Lithuania (Fig. 3:3). This tradition of burying people with scythes is evidence of the influence of the Samland peninsula, where scythes were placed in graves from the beginning of the Roman Period. It is typical that many of the scythes found in graves have been found in the Lithuanian coastal area and the lower reaches of the Nemunas, where material reflects most sharply connections with Dollkeim-Kovrovo Culture. This grave good is found in Lithuanian coastal areas in graves of the B<sub>2</sub>/C<sub>1</sub> phase, and the custom is most widespread in the third century and remains also during the Great Migrations (Michelbertas 1986, pp.163-164). In Latvia, Late Roman Period scythes have been found

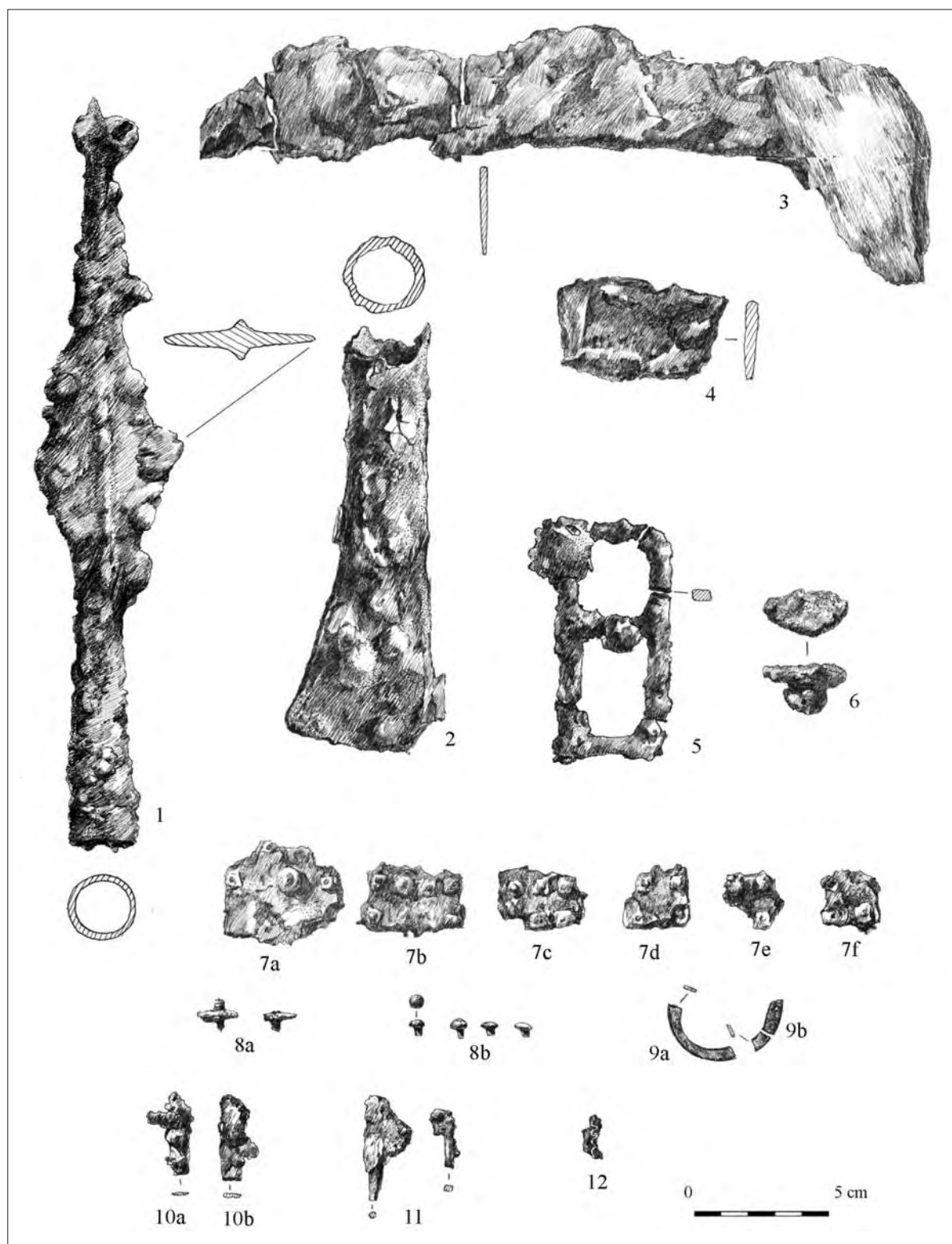


Fig. 3. Finds from Baitai grave 23: 1 spearhead (lance head); 2 socketed axe; 3 scythe; 4 fragment of iron item covered with remains of leather; 5 buckle; 6 rivet ? – probably a part of belt fittings; 7a-f remains of belt – fragments of leather fastened with rivets-studs; 8a-b rivets and studs of the decoration for the belt; 9a-9b fragments of semi-circle fitting – probably remains of the belt loops; 10a-b, 11, 12 fragments of iron items of uncertain type. 1-6, 8a, 10a-b, 11, 12 iron; 7a-7f leather, bronze, iron; 8b, 9a-b bronze. Drawings by J. Mažeikaitė (in the custody of the History Museum of Lithuania Minor in Klaipėda, inv. No. 39380-39386).

IV

WARRIORS  
AND  
ARMAMENTS  
FROM THE  
VISTULA  
TO THE  
DAUGUVA



in the southwest region, which at that time was related culturally with the West Lithuanian cemetery area, and in the lower reaches of the River Lielupe. Scythes are typical of male graves (Moora 1938, pp.532 and 536).

A large oblong binomial buckle (9cm long, 6cm wide) (Fig. 3:5) is similar in its proportions and rounded edges to Type 31 of R. Madyda-Legutko's D Group, which is not numerous, but is known from various Germanic grave sites in Central Europe and is dated to phases C<sub>1b</sub>-C<sub>2</sub> of the Late Roman Period (Madyda-Legutko 1986, p.34). At first sight the Baitai buckle is more similar to the types of Madyda-Legutko's G Group, but it is difficult to find a particular form from the latter group for comparison (Madyda-Legutko 1986, pp.46-60, plate 13-17). The buckle from Baitai grave 23 can also be described as a local form of the belt fittings in the Late Roman Period which was produced as an imitation of various large oblong binomial buckles distributed in several areas of the European *barbaricum*.

The leather fragments decorated with iron and bronze rivets-studs, and other decoration elements found in the Baitai grave should be associated with the buckle (Fig. 3:6, 7a-f, 8a-b, 9a-b). *In situ* they were found near the buckle, but they were scattered quite broadly and are fragmentary. Perhaps the internal part of the grave was disturbed back in Antiquity. We can tell this from the small "niche" in the western side of the grave pit. The belt was made of double leather and was folded and joined with rivets-studs (Fig. 3:7a-f, 8a-b). It is difficult to reconstruct exactly the way in which the belt was decorated. A few other fragments should also be associated with the belt, namely two iron bands (Fig. 3:10a-b). A hole was made in one of them for a stud, showing that there was a mounting for the belt. There is also a hole in the bronze semi-circular fitting on one of the fragments (Fig. 3:9a-b). We might think that the latter details are the remains of the belt loops (so-called *Aufhängbeschläge*, or *bogenförmige Halterung*, in German archaeological literature). Two strips (Fig. 3:11) and a broken piece of a wavy plate (Fig. 3:12), whose purpose is difficult to guess, stand out among other small fragments of shapeless iron. One rusted iron fragment (Fig. 3:6) is similar to

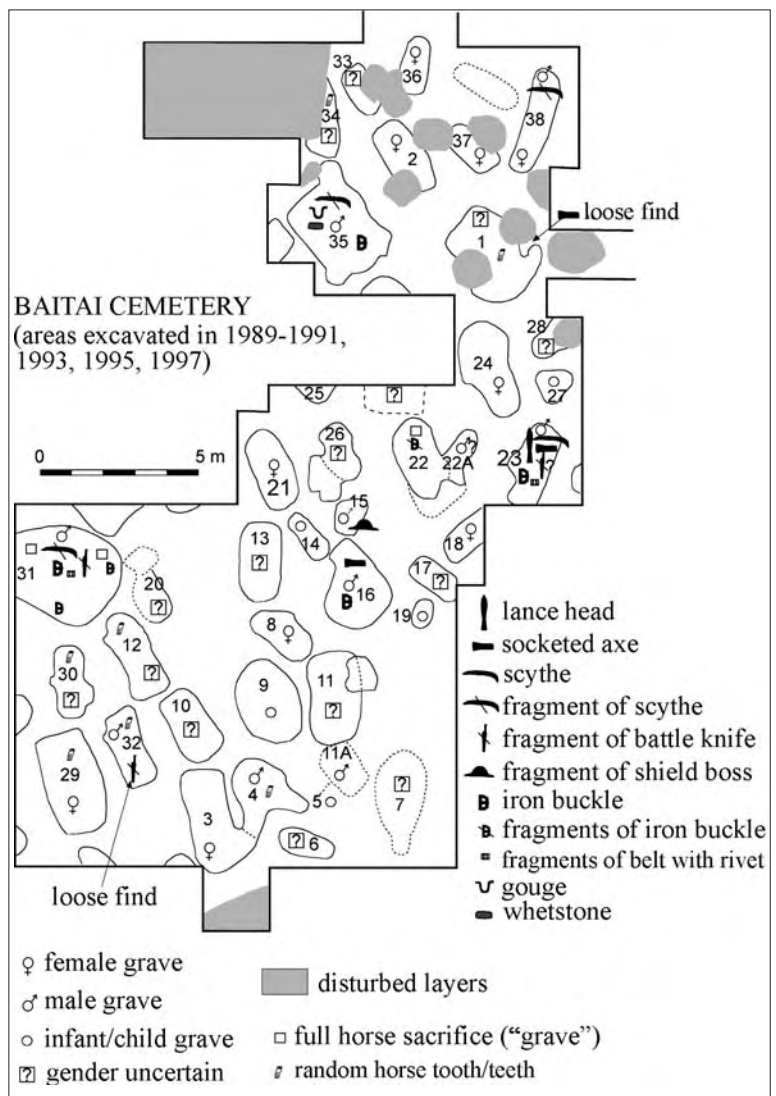


Fig. 4. The layout of the graves in the areas near grave 23 of Baitai cemetery. Distribution of weapons and "male" work tools (prepared and drawn by the author).

a large stud (this could be a moving connection for parts of the belt, like *Niete zur Befestigung des Schulterriemens* according to the description of J. Ilkjær; see 1993, pp.209-233, Figs. 87 and 88), while another looks like a broken knife or similar artefact, which is covered by the remains of a layer of leather on both sides (Fig. 3:4).

What context do other Baitai graves provide for Baitai 23? Grave 23 in the best-excavated central part of the cemetery stands out for its "most masculine" grave goods and this is the only "safely-armed" male (Fig. 4). No further spearheads have been found. A few metres to the west at the level of the stone constructions a part of a shield boss was found, and in grave 16 an iron socketed axe was found. Approximately ten metres to the west of grave 23 only a broken battle-knife was found in an exceptional male grave 31 containing two horse sacrifices (Banytė-Rowell 2000a, Fig. 7; 2007c,

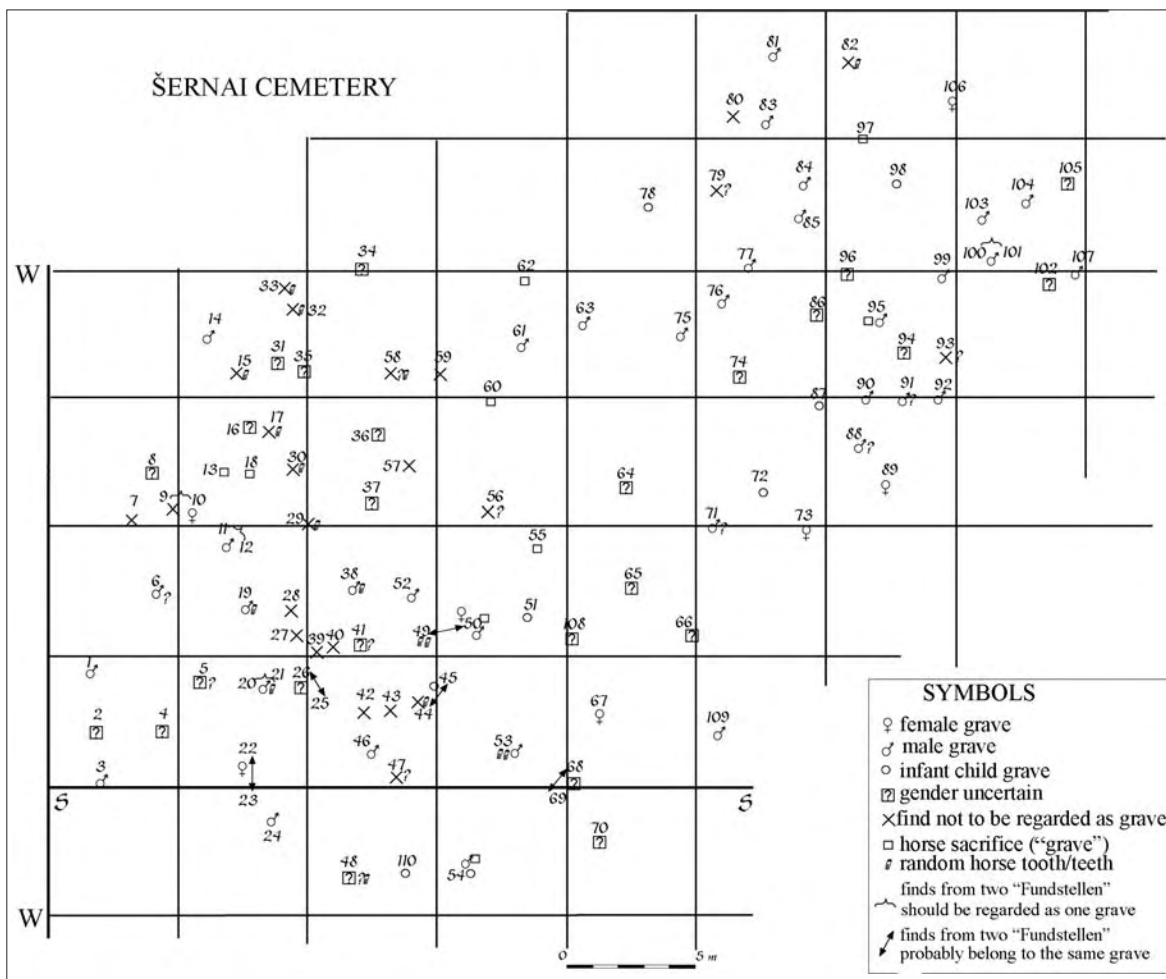


Fig. 5. A plan of *Fundstellen* in Šernai (formerly Schernen) cemetery, made on the basis of the sketch of A. Bezenberger's excavations in 1891 (after Bezenberger 1892, plate). The interpretation of the diverse origin of *Fundstellen* was made by the author on the basis of data given in Bezenberger's publication.

forthcoming). Another fragment of a battle-knife or sword was found in the upper stratum of the old cemetery as a loose find. A further two graves with male grave goods were discovered 45 metres to the south of our grave, but these belonged to a later phase (C<sub>3</sub>-D) in the exploitation of the cemetery. Other items typical of male graves at Baitai are parts of scythes, whetstones and a gouge. All the buckles at Baitai were found in graves with male grave goods. The corpse in grave 23 was the best armed, if we associate the axe along with spearhead to a weapon category, but the range of grave goods he had is not the richest. So we ask ourselves, can we say how the social status of a person was differentiated, and what functions he had during his lifetime, if a scythe is placed alongside an axe and spearhead in one grave, while another grave contains two whetstones?

### Warrior grave-sets: West Lithuanian comparisons

Let us look at the plan of finds made at Šernai (formerly *Schernen*) which is approximately five kilometres down the River Minija from the Baitai cemetery (Fig. 5). The plan (see Fig. 5) was drafted according to a report published by Bezenberger in 1892 (Bezenberger 1892, plate VI). The Šernai cemetery is very close in chronological terms to that at Baitai. The earliest Šernai graves situated on the west-south-west side of the area excavated by A. Bezenberger, such as *Fundstellen* 3, 4, 8, 10-13, 22, 46, 50, 53, 54, 61, 64, 67, 110 can be dated to the C<sub>1b</sub>-C<sub>2</sub> phase, while the latest graves, such as *Fundstellen* 98, 101, 102 should be associated with the C<sub>3</sub>-D phases (chronological analyses of Šernai finds was done by the current author as a part of her dissertation work, see Banytė Rovell 2001). It is noticeable that in the area's C<sub>1b</sub>-C<sub>2</sub> phase graves the full horse sacrifices, or so-called "horse's graves",

in between the human burials or in the same grave pit occurred more frequently than did random horse teeth. The scale of the horses' offerings here suggests that the meaning of these rituals bears a significance which is more communal than personal. Random horse teeth found in the different stratigraphical levels of Šernai cemetery do not allow us to link the horse sacrifices forthright with a strictly "personal", "martial" or even entirely "male" symbolic context of burial customs. Jan Jaskanis, summarising his analyses of the burial rites of the Western Balts in the first to the fifth centuries, concluded that the fact of offering a horse for the dead does not necessarily indicate the social position of the latter or his warlike needs. In the case of the Western Balts, the cult of horses known in the system of beliefs of various pastoral societies is revealed to us through their burial rites and was left for us as archaeological evidence, as probably the adoration of horses for similar needs was expressed in Scandinavian offering sites such as Skedemosse (Jaskanis 1966, pp.61-65; 1974, pp.248-252; Hagberg 1967, pp.60-62). Horse graves/sacrifices from the seventh to the 11th centuries in central Lithuania, as was represented in the study of Mindaugas Bertasius (2002, pp.169-205), in some degree were a continuation of the way of fulfilling the requirements of the "community of the dead" as a whole, not only those of a "warrior class" as we could expect when dealing with phenomena of the Late Migrations or Viking Period. When analysing the data from West Lithuanian cemeteries of the Late Roman Period, it is worth remembering J. Jaskanis' conclusion, which was made from his analysis of finds from neighbouring West Baltic areas, that a horse offering for a particular dead person could be one of the ways to emphasize his upper social position, but this ritual was not an exceptional privilege for the "prince" class. The diversity of the burials with horses of the Late Roman Period in West Lithuania is shown by Audronė Bliujienė and Donatas Butkus in this volume. The next plan of Šernai presented here, which shows weapons and implements along with buckles and belt parts, reveals that the contents were quite diverse, but they all come from the same categories (Fig. 6). The blend of items reminiscent of Baitai grave goods, namely spearhead, axe and scythe, are present in Šernai in only one grave (76). Apart from these goods, only a small potshard has been found. In two graves only a spearhead was found (75 and 85). Three spearheads, one of which is bent, were found in grave/*Fundstelle* 104 in the supposed D phase part of the cemetery. A ring and two amber beads were found along with these. The most common set of kit in Šernai male graves comprises an axe and a scythe, which were both the only goods found in grave 84 and were placed along with an iron shield boss in grave

61. The latter grave contained a spur, the remains of a leather strap with studs, and an iron buckle. It is hard to say whether the ornaments with the remaining fragments of the deceased's bones that were found 80 to 100 centimetres to the south of these finds belonged to the same weapon owner (Bezenberger 1892pp.158-159). The neck-ring found here along with a crossbow brooch with a bent foot decorated with ringlets and blue glass eyes, two bracelets, two spiral rings and amber and glass beads are quite prestigious decorations for an armed horseman. Grave 3, belonging to an adult male, is quite rich; it contains a scythe and an axe. Here the remains of a particularly decorative belt with rivet-stud ornamentation and an end-mounting tongue with a glass eye were found along with two crossbow brooches with a bent foot, and two spiral rings (one of which was twisted) (Bezenberger 1892, plate VIII right side:1; Gaerte 1929, Fig. 176b). The belt from Šernai grave 3 is a possible example of what effect was sought by the person who made the belt found at Baitai grave 23. In one male grave from Šernai, which Bezenberger called *Fundstelle* 50, a similarly rich set of grave goods was found along with a full collection of supplementary male grave goods, which contained a spearhead, battle knife, axe, shield boss, scythe, gouge, whetstone and two bronze belt buckles which evidently belonged to two belts decorated with studs and end-mounts (Bezenberger 1892, pp.155-157). To the northwest of the male was a female grave, and to his northeast was a horse sacrifice with iron bridle bits. Coins found next to the brooches of the male dead were from the reigns of Hadrian and Alexander Severus, which allows us to date the grave to the C<sub>1b</sub> period (Fig. 7). The silver neck-ring and silver ring belonging to the deceased and other bronze ornaments (two bronze crossbow brooches with ringlets, two smaller crossbow brooches with a bent foot, and two spiral rings) leave us in no doubt that there was a strong desire to stress the deceased's status. The weapons and implements placed in the grave appear to tell of this man's all-round skills or his diverse needs, but they give few hints as to his priorities in life. When he was alive did he really spend as much time in the workshop as fighting? Most probably this variety of grave goods reflects the maximum provision of goods to meet the dead man's needs according to the standards of burial ritual then practised.

Let us go back to Baitai 23. What is the milieu of this grave? Next to this grave were two richly equipped female graves 18 and 24 (for finds of grave 18, see Banytė 1999, Fig. 2), horse sacrifice/grave 22 which was connected with a human grave, and what we guess to have been a child's grave without grave goods (grave 27) (Fig. 4). A silver ornament or parts of silver garment decoration were found in the female and equine



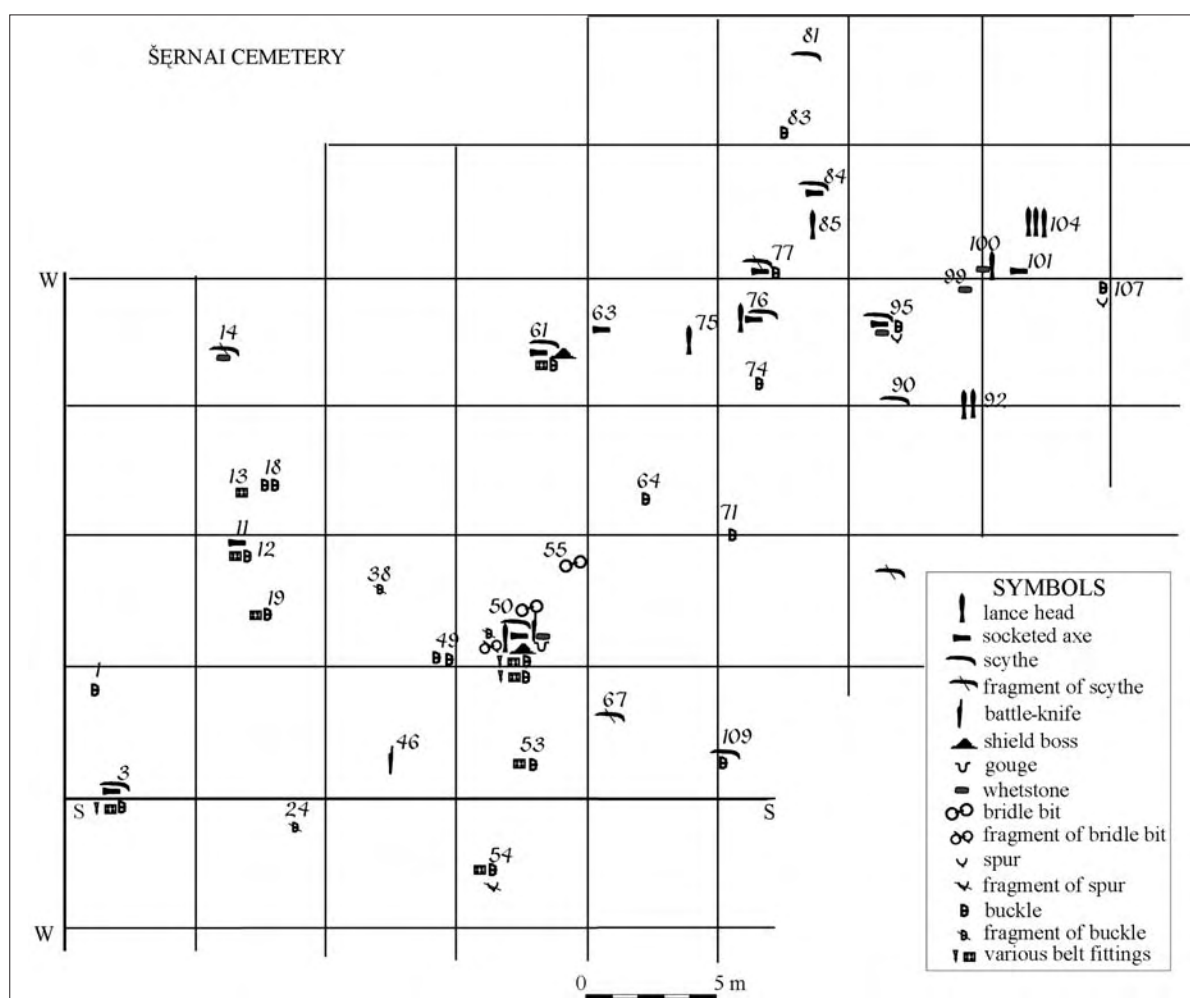


Fig. 6. The distribution of weapons, “male” work tools, metal details of belt or bridle fittings, the remains of equine and equestrian equipment (prepared on the basis of data from Bezenberger’s publication).

graves. It is interesting that grave 22 with its human and equine remains does not stand out for military attributes (for drawing of finds from Baitai grave 22, see Banytė-Rowell 2000a, p.35, Fig. 6). Here, what look like fragments of an iron bridle bit were found along with ornaments and rings and a broken buckle. A silver spiral ring of Baitai burial with horse grave 22 similar in form to Beckmann Type 38 (*aus spiralg gekerbtem und teils glattem Draht*) and its ornamentation is reminiscent of the gold ring from Zakrzów (formerly Sackrau) in Silesia, which dates to C<sub>2</sub> (Beckmann 1969, pp.45-46, Fig. 17, cat. No. 551).

Thus this grave is similar to Baitai 31 (containing a man with two horses), where only fragments of a sickle and battle-knife were found, while the exceptional character of the deceased is reflected by the sacrifice of two horses, the special-quality cloth decorated with silver, clothing, the bridles decorated with bronze and silver and a belt, silver ring (the Baltic version of Beckmann types 39–40 *Schlangenkopfringe*), a silver rosette decoration, similar to the ornamentation details of Almgren 216–217 rosette brooches and of Almgren 234–235 brooches (*Hakenkreuzfibeln*) known in

Denmark and southern Scandinavia as chronological indicators of the C<sub>1b</sub>–C<sub>2</sub> periods (Lund Hansen 1995, pp.212-216; Banytė-Rowell 2000a, pp.37-39, Fig. 7; Banytė-Rowell 2007c, forthcoming). In both Baitai graves (22 and 31) where we found horses sacrificed to the dead, silver rings would denote the exceptional status of the deceased.

The bronze and silver decorations found in female grave 24 near male grave 23 at Baitai belong to the same style and chronological phase as those found at Baitai 31. The same filigree-style, glass-eye decorations were used on the belts and brooch found in the grave of a rich armed man in Šernai 50. The belt belonging to the warrior from Baitai 23 fits the same context, namely ascetic but functional dress.

Let us take a look at what sets of grave goods mark the grave of a wealthy man which contains weapons and a horse sacrifice (probably only the horse’s head was sacrificed) which was found in another cemetery not far from Baitai and Šernai at Stragnai (formerly *Stragna, Skören*) (Fig. 1). Stragnai grave 13 (excavations in 1985, see Varnas 1986) is dated according to

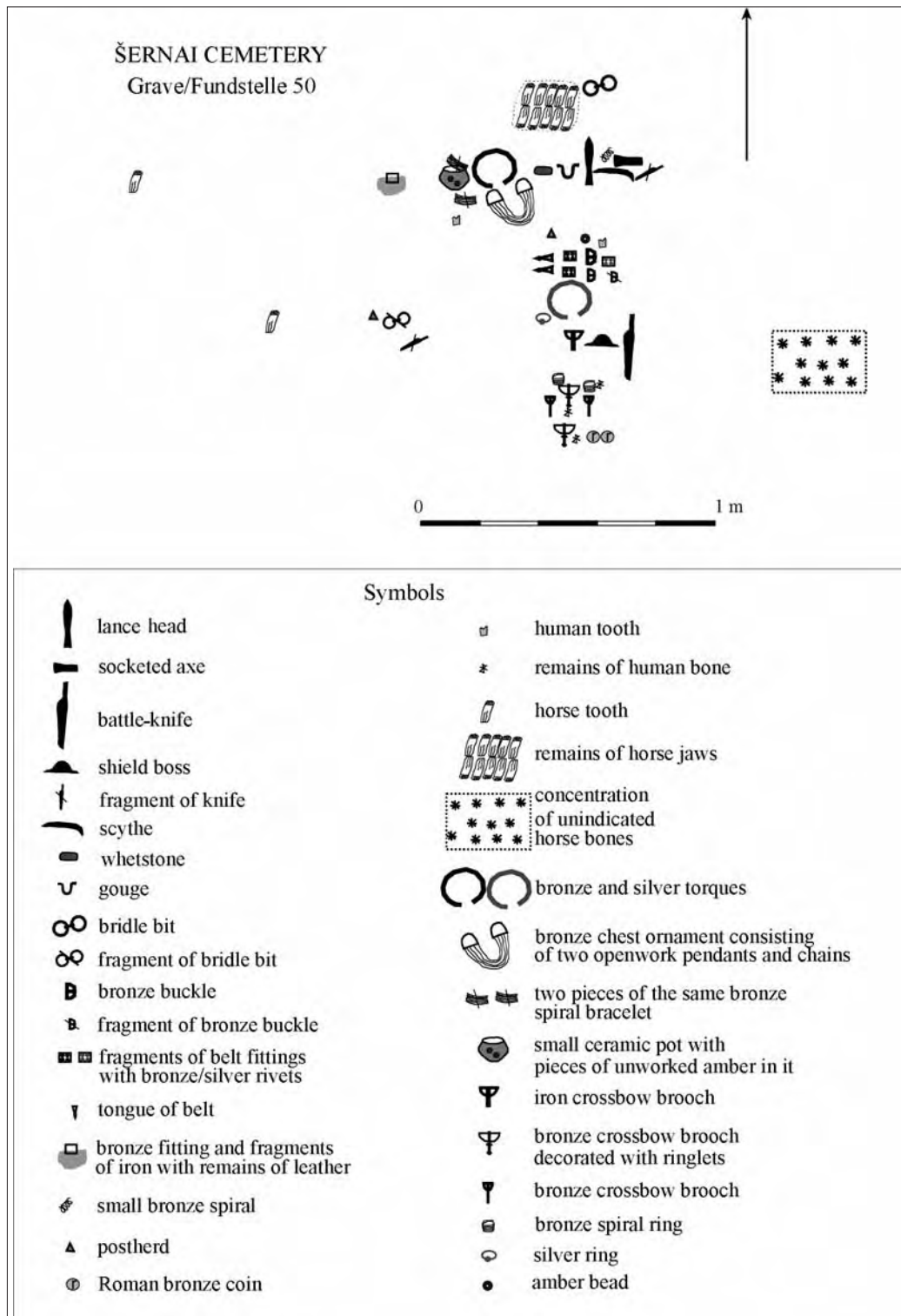


Fig. 7. A reconstruction of the layout of items and of remains of human and horse bones in *Fundstelle 50*. The sketch was drawn by the author of this article on the basis of data about the distances between finds recorded in Bezenberger's publication (1892).

a coin of Alexander Severus to no earlier than the second half of C<sub>1b</sub>, that is, like the wealthy man's grave at Šernai (50). The weaponry of the man from Stragnai is almost the same as that of the Šernai corpse, except that it lacks the shield boss, but he has one more spearhead and two spurs. The man from Stragnai grave 13 also had a one-edged sword, which was found badly dam-

aged and was not preserved as an item in the museum (Varnas 1986, p.82). The set of ornaments belonging to the Stragnai warrior is quite wealthy but it is within the limits of reason (for drawings of all grave goods from Stragnai grave 13, with the exception of a Roman coin, one bronze bracelet, the same type as that shown in the drawings, and a one-edged sword, see Banytė-Rowell



2007a, p.82, Fig. 26; 2007b, p.328-329, Figs 3 and 4). The brooch decorated with silver wires and the apparent horse pendant with a blue glass eye were created by a skilful local craftsman, but they do not equal the diversity of ornamentation owned by the wealthy man of Šernai. The belt and bridle belonging to this man were not decorated as richly as those found in Baitai 31 even though the collection of finds from Stragnai cemetery discovered at the end of the 19th century has the most diverse ornaments for belts and bridles from the Late Roman Period (Banytė-Rowell 2004). There is a possibility that some signs of disturbance in the grave pit of Stragnai 13 could be the consequence of robbery in ancient times. On the other hand, a remarkable percentage of graves in the West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture area are distinguished by the arrangement of some grave goods in an “unusual” way.

Stragnai grave 13 contains not only a set of spear, axe and scythe that is typical of Baitai 23, but also a similar large iron buckle (Banytė-Rowell 2007b, Fig. 4:10). Such a set of buckle, gouge, whetstone and scythe, similar to that in Stragnai grave 13, was also found in the weaponless grave 30 at Baitai (Banytė 2000b, Fig. 3). The Stragnai and Baitai gouges are remarkably similar, as though they were made by the same craftsman. It is very probable that the communities at Baitai, Šernai and Stragnai were connected to the same central place during the C<sub>2</sub> period. Thus the significance of this “centre” as everyone could suppose was much more local compared with the “proper central places” in southern Scandinavia at that time (Lund Hansen 2001). Nevertheless, the inhabitants of the Lithuanian coastland had a knowledge about the richness of centres with an outstanding role in the Baltic area and had contacts with them in some way or degree.

#### Concluding remarks: the social attribution of warriors' graves

Who was at the top of these communities which buried their former members in the cemeteries we have discussed here? Were they like the men buried at Baitai 31 and Šernai 50? Did they belong to the *princeps* class? If we consider the sacrifice of a horse to the deceased to mark horseman status, then the man from Stragnai 13 should be regarded as a noble. But why is the horse owner in Baitai 22 so anonymous? Are his insignia, the silver ring, much more clear a sign of status than all the standard scythe plus spear plus axe and whetstone collections? What place and role did the Baitai 23 man hold in this structure? On the basis of studies of Scandinavian weapon sacrificial sites (von Carnap-Bornheim and Ilkjær 1996, pp.483-484; Jørgensen 2001, pp.9-12; Pauli Jensen *et al.* 2003, pp.310-314),

we should ask to what class of armed man the deceased from Baitai 23 could belong. This is not so easy, since so far no such Baltic *princeps* grave has been found in Western Lithuania to equal the grave found at Szwarzaria Barrow 2 grave 1 in the Suwałki region of Poland (Antoniewicz *et al.* 1958, pp.25-31, plates I-IX). It is not clear whether we should class the wealthiest Šernai and Baitai graves in the highest social stratum. The man from Baitai 23 was armed with a particular type of spear, he had a more decorative belt and was buried next to a wealthy man. It is probable that he was at least of the middling class of warrior. In this scheme of things, the man from Jogučiai-Spirkiai cemetery (Tamulynas 2005), in whose grave an omega buckle was discovered, would appear to be a member of the warrior elite, but perhaps he must not necessarily have been a member of the *princeps* class. This warrior was buried with a particularly expensive buckle, and a spear that was modern for the time according to local tradition, and the contacts he and those who buried him had (most likely military contacts) went beyond the borders of their homeland. Perhaps the belt belonging to the man in Baitai 23 reflects the aim of its owner to demonstrate, in so far as his means allowed, his belonging to the group of warriors, which was represented by the man from Jogučiai-Spirkiai with the “foreign” belt or by men buried in Šernai or Aukštkiemiai (formerly *Oberhof*), who wore local versions of ornamental riveted belts with fittings (Bezenberger 1892, plate VIII right:1; plate XIV below right; Gaerte 1929, Fig. 176: a, b, d). Could this group be counted in the context of finds from the West Lithuanian cemeteries as level 2 warrior representatives – *comites (optimates)*? Could we suggest that a personal belt, more than a particular type of weapon, was the instrument to demonstrate the common martial values of soldiers of different rank? This would be most credible – in a way. The belt itself and its ornamentation could be a soldier's epaulette of that time as it is known thanks to the Illerup find (Pauli Jensen *et al.* 2003, p.319). Jogučiai-Spirkiai grave 1, Šernai grave 50, Stragnai grave 13, despite the presence of some peasant-type tools there, look too rich for the conscript class in the context of other male graves. Most probably, tribal warriors of a higher class were buried in these graves and their grave goods reflected the mix of martial and rural values of the community which buried its former members. If Scandinavian war booty offerings provide an impressive view of well-organized armies, West Lithuanian cemeteries give us not too much evidence to deny that the inhabitants of the Lithuanian coastland at the same time had “a spontaneously mobilized, haphazardly equipped peasant army”, as it can be outlined using the words of B. Storgaard (2001, p.100). Tribal class social communi-

ties interlinked warlike occupations with rural ones in a natural way, as every young man had to go through his initiation into the warrior group as well as learning the fundamental values of rural or pastoral life (Roymans 1996, pp.13-20 and 87-97). We can treat the weapons in the graves from a statistical point of view, but we can also recognize the symbolic meaning of the rite. Martial meanings of horse sacrifices are interlaced with the needs of a pastoral society, the image of the warrior's values is exposed against the background of his everyday responsibility for the rural community or for his family. Most probably, the weaponry of a man at burial depended not only on his position in social and military structures but also on his age and the circumstances surrounding his death. Unfortunately, most commonly, the complete destruction of physical remains in the soil of West Lithuanian cemeteries does not allow us to gather supplementary anthropological information. Therefore, it is impossible to say whether the Baitai grave 23 warrior was a young adult or veteran soldier, as it is difficult to contemplate the ways how the man from Jogučiai-Spirkiai became the owner of a belt with such an expensive omega buckle (was it a gift for an important leader in the community from the outside? Was it a lucky spoil gain in the raids on the south Baltic area?).

The overview of a few graves of warriors from neighbouring cemeteries in the Lithuanian coastland from the same period made here is a study on a small scale, but it allows the author to believe that further comparable analyses of grave sets of the same chronological phase in the various cemeteries (also in the broader area of the West Balts) could give us a more precise picture of the meanings of "standard" and of "exceptional" in the context of the warlike, economic, cultural and religious life of similar communities, activities reflected by burial customs. A good inspiration for work in this direction is provided by the analyses of Roman Iron Age data from the Aukštakiemiai (Oberhof), Lazdininkai (Kalnalaukis) and Netta cemeteries in the articles by Christine Reich, A. Bliujienė and D. Butkus in this volume, and in the recently published study by Anna Bitner-Wróblewska (2007, pp.101-110).

Translated by Stephen Rowell

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## ROMĖNIŠKOJO LAIKOTARPIO KARYS IŠ BAITŲ KAPINYNŲ KAPO 23

### Rasa Banytė-Rowell

#### Santrauka

Straipsnyje pateikiama dar nepublikuota Baitų kapinyno kapo 23 medžiaga, kuri aptariama kitų iki šiol ištirtų Baitų kapinyno kapų kontekste, taip pat lyginama su duomenimis iš Šernų ir kitų dviejų netolimų Vakarų Lietuvos kapinynų (1 pav.). Baitų kapas 23 priklauso kapinyno grupei, kuri skirtina C1b fazės pabaigai – C2 ir C3 fazių sandūrai, t. y. maždaug III a. antrajai pusei – IV a. pradžiai.

Vyras, palaidotas Baitų kape 23, vadintinas kariu jau vien dėl to, kad jam į kapą buvo įdėta ietis – neginčijamas karybos atributas. Kiti radiniai, aptikti kape duobėje: geležinis įmovinis kirvis, geležinis dalgelis, peilio dalis, diržo sagtis bei diržo puošybos detalės (2, 3 pav.). Baitų ietigalis priklauso V. Kazakevičiaus išskirtio ietigalių su rombine plunksna potipio IB [originalio IB] variantui. Pastaruoju metu L. Tamulynas patikslino šių ietigalių datavimą, skirdamas juos III a. viduriui – IV a. viduriui. Įmovinis kirvis, dalgelis – ne tokie informatyvūs dirbiniai. Jie yra vieni dažniausių „vyriškų“ įkapų Vakarų Lietuvos kapinynuose su akmenų vainikais. Geležinė sagtis artima R. Madyda-Legutko D grupės 31 tipui, tačiau tiesioginių atitikmenų šioje tipologijoje atrasti sunku. Tai vietinė forma, kuri, matyt, sukurta imituojuojant įvairias prabangesnes didelių keturkampių sagčių formas. Tarp žalvarinėmis-geležinėmis kniedutėmis puošto diržo liekanų yra papildomų tvirtinimo detalių – paslanki kniedė (?) (3: 6 pav.), žalvarinė kilpelė (3: 9a, b pav.).

## IV

WARRIORS  
AND  
ARMAMENTS  
FROM THE  
VISTULA  
TO THE  
DAUGUVA



Baitų kapinyno centrinėje dalyje išsiskiria kape 23 palaidotas „gausiai ginkluotas“ mirusysis. Šioje kapinyno dalyje ietigalių daugiau nerasta. Keletą metrų į vakarus buvo rasta antskydžio dalių, o kape 16 – geležinis įmovinis kirvis. Apie 10 m į vakarus nuo kapo 23, išskirtiniame vyro kape 31 su dviejų žirgų aukomis, rasta tik kovos peilio nuolaužų (4 pav.).

Lygindami apžvelkime greta esančio Šernų kapinyno radinių išsidėstymo planus (5, 6 pav.), kurie autorės sudaryti, remiantis A. Bezenbergerio tyrinėjimų publikacija (1892 m.). Vakarų-pietvakarių Šernų kapinyno dalis datuotina C1b–C2 fazėmis, o šiaurės rytų kapų grupė – C3–D fazėmis. Derinys ietigalis+kirvis+dalgis Šernuose būdingas tik vienam, 76-ajam, kapui. Būdingiausia dirbinių, rastų Šernų vyrų kapuose, kombinacija yra kirvis ir dalgis. Šernų vyrų kapuose 3 ir 50 rasti diržai galbūt rodo, kokia maniera buvo sekta, gaminant Baitų kapo 23 diržą. Šernų vyro kape 50 rasta tiek turtingas papuošalų komplektas, tiek pilnas visų papildomų vyriškų įkapių rinkinys (7 pav.). Į kapą sudėti ginklai ir įrankiai tarsi kalba apie šio vyro veiklos universalumą arba apie įvairius jo poreikius, tačiau mažai – apie jo buvusios svarbios veiklos gyvenime prioritetus.

Straipsnyje atkreipiamas dėmesys, kad Baitų kapas 23 buvo netoli turtingų moterų (kapai 18 ir 24) ir „negincluotų“ vyrų kapų su žirgų aukomis (kapai 22 ir 31). Svarstant apie šių mirusiųjų buvusią užimamą padėtį bendruomenėje, susiduriama su klausimais, kuris iš vyrų galėjo užimti aukštesnę padėtį genties kario statuso prasme – ar mirusysis, palaidotas su ypatingu sidabrinu žiedu, ar su ginklais, bet aprengtas paprastesne apranga. Šernų kapo 50, Stragnų kapo 13 (1985 m.), Jogučių-Spirkių kapo 1 kariai buvo aprūpinti ne tik ginklais, įrankiais, bet ir išskirtiniais aprangos elementais. Pirminėmis prielaidomis – genties kario diržas galėjo būti ta aprangos dalis, kuri simboliškai vienijo įvairių socialinių pakopų vyrus, dalyvaujančius kariniuose žygiuose. Kita vertus, aplinkybė, kad Vakarų Lietuvos dirvožemyje beveik visiškai sunyko visa romėniškojo laikotarpio kapinynų osteologinė medžiaga, užkerta galimybę palyginti įvairaus amžiaus vyriškosios lyties mirusiųjų įkapes kiekybiniu ir kokybiniu požiūriu.