

GRAVES OF THE UNBURIED: SYMBOLIC IRON AGE WARRIOR BURIALS IN EAST LITHUANIA

LAURYNAS KURILA

Abstract

The paper analyses symbolic warrior burials found in East Lithuanian barrows dated to the Iron Age. The discussed graves contain mainly weapons, without any human remains. Judging from the grave assemblages and the shapes of the weapons, it is supposed that higher-status individuals used to be buried symbolically more frequently. Stressing the male gender and the warrior status was the primary task when performing a symbolic burial.

Key words: East Lithuanian barrows, symbolic burial, warrior, weapon, status.

Introduction

The primary purpose of burial is disposal of the body. But it also has a somewhat deeper meaning. Funerary rites reflect the conception of the next world and the relationships between the living and the dead. The rites are determined by the emotional and social ties between the dead and surviving members of the community, as well as those between the participants in the rites. The manner of an individual's burial is connected in every society with a certain system of values and the social order (Binford 1971; Brown 1995; Parker Pearson 1993; Tainter 1978). In order to ensure the peace of the deceased's soul and a successful journey to the next world or a successful afterlife, complex rites are practised, which frequently require large expenditures of labour and material resources. Some funerary ritual elements would be difficult to comprehend judging just on the basis of practicality.

One such phenomenon that cannot be explained by only practical needs is symbolic burial, ie graves without human remains, also called cenotaphs (from Greek *kenos* "empty", and *taphos* "grave"). When no body is buried, the fundamental meaning of the grave, burial items, and burial rites disappears in a way. In this case the very existence of a burial purifies the metaphysical function of funerals, and reveals a symbolic conception of the connection between the dead person and the burial. From this perspective, a symbolic burial is a significant source for learning about visualisations of the passage from this world to the next. Burying an individual is a way of transferring his/her status and position in society to descendents or heirs. Therefore, even when there is no possibility of burying the body, certain funerary rites are a form that is necessary to regulate the social order (Kroll 2000, p. 216).

Symbolic funerary rites were practised in many ancient civilisations and cultures, in the Ancient Greek and Roman world, and in huge areas of Eurasia. Their meaning and purpose were not the same in every place and at every time. The pharaohs and wealthy people of ancient Egypt used to create cenotaphs at Abydos so that they would be symbolically buried beside the mythic grave of Osiris. Symbolic headstones have sometimes been erected at the place where rulers or soldiers have died or, conversely, in the homeland in those cases where the individual was buried elsewhere. But the majority of the graves, it is thought, were for people, whose bodies could not be buried. Symbolic burials are known in various Celtic, Germanic, and Baltic societies. Cenotaphs for missing individuals and for people who have been buried in another or an unknown location are frequently erected even in modern times (for example, a symbolic headstone was erected in Florence in 1829 for Dante Alighieri). In some cases they acquire the function of a monument (the Cenotaph in London to commemorate the victims of the First World War).

This paper discusses the small category of symbolic burials which have been found in East Lithuanian barrows and contain only burial items without human remains. It is necessary to stress that other variants of symbolic funerary rites were also characteristic of this region: grave-like pits that contain no burial items or any remains are sometimes found in barrows (Abaravičius 1994, p.101; Bliujus 1983, p.35f.; Semėnas 1994, p.111) as well as equestrian burial items buried separately in barrows (Bliujienė 1992, pp.113-119; Juškaitis 2005, p.147f.) and barrows without any signs of a grave (Bliujienė 1992, p.120f.).

Material

Symbolic warrior burials are not a mass phenomenon in East Lithuanian Barrow Culture. Only 18 such graves have been found in the approximately 170 cemeteries with over 1,400 barrows that have been excavated. In fact, their actual number could be larger since many previous excavations are poorly documented or totally undocumented and due to imperfect excavation methods some of these graves could have remained undiscovered or interpreted as chance finds. Although East Lithuanian barrows were intensively excavated in the second half of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century, data about only three symbolic burials, found at Smarhon, Sudota and Zasvir barrow cemeteries, are available from this period. The scale of the practice of symbolic funeral rites is more reliably reflected in the statistics for barrows excavated during the Soviet and post-Soviet eras. Out of the 770 barrows excavated during this period, symbolic burials were found in at least 14 (1.82%). This percentage could be somewhat larger, considering that frequently there are no objective criteria for distinguishing a symbolic burial from chance finds arising from disturbed graves. Due to the latter reason, the distinct category of symbolic burials is restricted in this paper to warrior graves. Several finds, which should, with certain reservations, be considered symbolic female graves, were found at Jakšiškis (Michelbertas 2002, p.72), Kapitoniškės (Tautavičius 1957, p.100), Vaišniūnai-Medžiukalnis

(Kliaugaitė 2002), and Riklikai (Tautavičius 1970, p.55) barrow fields. Due to their doubtful interpretations, they have not been examined in this study.

Symbolic warrior graves are known in ten barrow-cemeteries in East Lithuania (Table 1, Fig. 1). The barrow 1 at Eitulionys contained a cairn of stones on top of the primary surface with a rectangular stone construction under the cairn (Fig. 2). Uncharred burial items: a spearhead with a narrow leaf-shaped blade, a spur and a buckle, had been placed inside the consumption in an area that had been strewn with charred wood particles (Bliujus 1983, p.35f.).

A similar grave was investigated at Nemaitonys barrow 3. On the bottom of a large pit covered with stones and strewn with charred wood particles, uncharred burial items were found without any human remains: a large fighting knife or single-bladed sword with a bronze-decorated hilt, the remains of a shield boss, a knife, a crossbow brooch, a buckle, and a fragment of an uncertain iron artefact (Butėnienė 1972).

The most symbolic burials in one place (eight) were investigated at Grigiškės–Neravai barrow field (Figs. 3; 4). In these graves, the burial items were placed on the primary surface of the ground, which had been burnt or strewn with charred wood particles, or in shallow pits dug into it. In barrows 8, 10, 20, 25 and 28 weapons had been stuck into the ground before the barrow was erected. Some of the burial items had been charred (Kuncienė 1980, p.50f.). The majority of the barrows

Table. Assemblages of symbolic burials: 1 single-edged sword (battle-knife); 2 spearhead; 3 axe; 4 shield boss; 5 knife; 6 spur; 7 awl; 8 firesteel; 9 buckle; 10 crossbow brooch; 11 penannular brooch; 12 finger-ring; 13 bronze bell; 14 uncertain iron artefact

Barrow-cemetery	Barrow No.	Grave No.	Grave assemblages														
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Eitulionys	1	1		1				1			1						
Grigiškės–Neravai	8	unnumbered			1												
	10	unnumbered			1												
	13	2		1	1	1											
	18	3		1	1		1										
	20	2		1	1												
	25	1		1	1												
		4			1												
28	4		1	1	1												
Gudeliai–Lenkiškės	11	1		1	1												
Kretuonys	13	unnumbered		1	1												
	51	unnumbered		2	1												
Nemaitonys	3	1	1			1	1				1	1				1	
Palūšė	3	1		2			2		1								
Smarhon	8	unnumbered		1	1		1										
Sudota	2	1		1	2		1										
Vanagiškės	1	unnumbered	1														
Zasvir	1	unnumbered		1	1		1				1			1	1	1	

VI

WEAPONS:
THEIR
SIGNIFI-
CANCE AND
SYMBOLISM

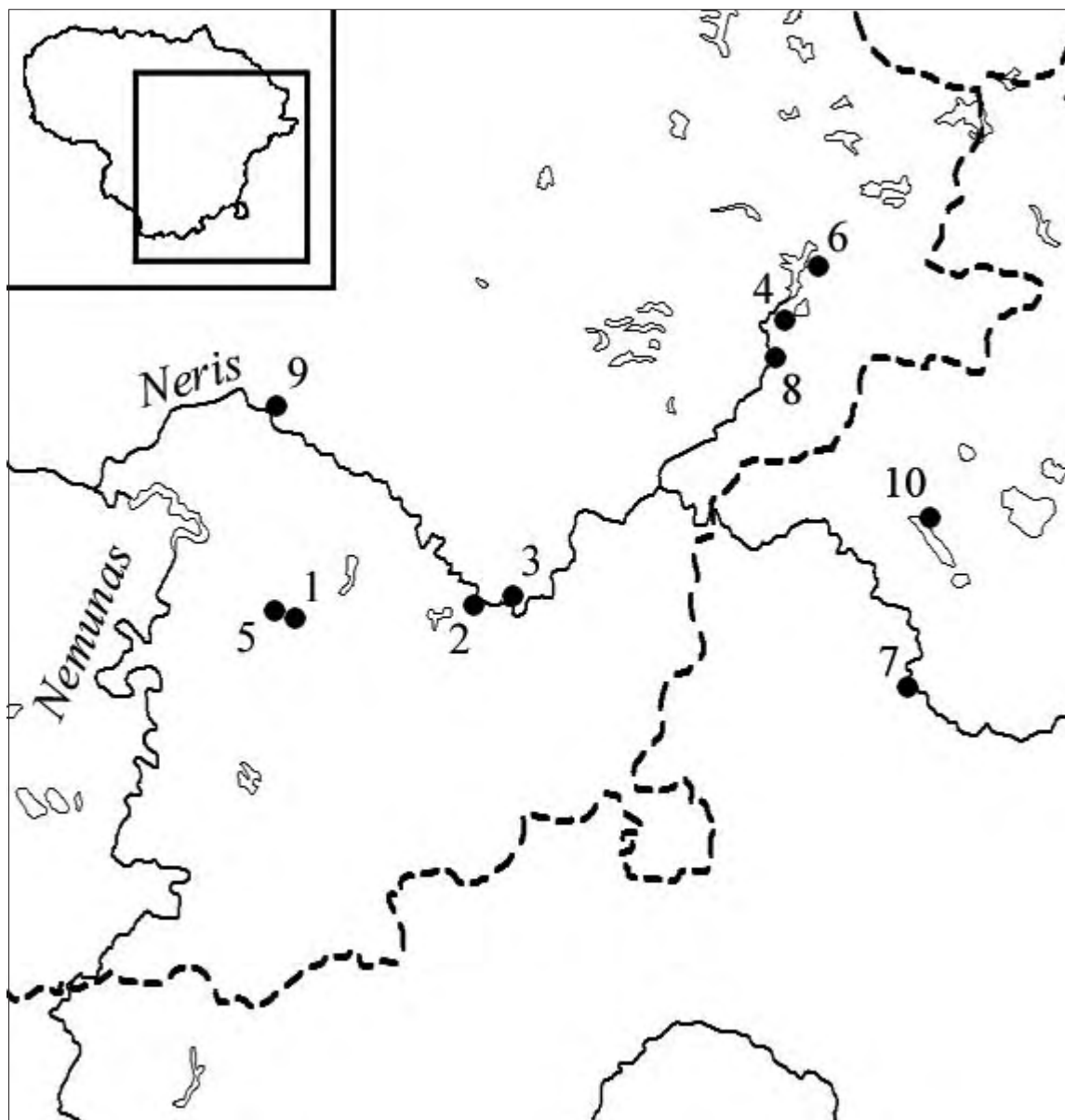


Fig. 1. Symbolic warrior burials in the territory of East Lithuanian Barrow Culture: 1 Eitulionys (Trakai district); 2 Grigiškės–Neravai (Vilnius city); 3 Gudeliai–Lenkiškės (Vilnius district); 4 Kretonys (Švenčionys district); 5 Nemaitonys (Kaišiadorys district); 6 Palūšė (Ignalina district); 7 Smarhon (Belarus); 8 Sudota (Švenčionys district); 9 Vanagiškės (Jonava district); 10 Zasvir (Miadel district, Belarus) (drawn by the author).

with symbolic burials were surrounded by circles of stones. These barrows also contained from one to eight cremation burials, the majority of which had probably been placed in the barrow at a later time.

A slightly charred, narrow-bladed axe and spearhead socket were found, without any other traces of a grave, below the primary surface of the ground at the centre of Gudeliai–Lenkiškės barrow 11. It had no circle of stones and at least two small pits had been dug at its edge (Kurila 2006, p.94f.).

On the edge of Vanagiškiai barrow 1, a bent, uncharred, single-edged sword was found in one of the pits surrounding the barrow (Butėnas 1998, p.139f.). The ar-

tefact had been buried in a previously erected barrow, which contained another two cremation burials.

Below the primary surface at the centre of Kretonys barrow 13, an uncharred narrow-bladed axe and a spearhead with a broad leaf-shaped blade were found (Butėnienė 1978, p.134). The mound contained another eight cremation burials. One of them (a female burial?) was probably created when the barrow was erected, while the rest were made in the mound at a later time. The barrow was surrounded by a circle of stones and five pits. Barrow 51 contained a narrow-bladed axe and two Petersen type E spearheads, one of which had been broken in half and the other bent (E. Butėnienė's 1980 excavations, unpublished material). The mound, which



Fig. 2. Eitulionys barrow 1 symbolic burial *in situ* (photograph by Bliujus, 1980).



Fig. 3. Grigiškės–Neravai barrow 18 symbolic burial 3 *in situ* (photograph by O. Kuncienė, 1975).

was surrounded by ditches, also contained another cremation burial.

On the edge of Palūšė barrow 3, two spearheads, two knives and an awl were found. Both spearheads and one knife were charred (Butėnienė 1982, p.69). The mound also contained at least one disturbed cremation burial. The barrow lacked a circle of stones, but it had four ditches around the mound.

In Smarhon barrow 8, a cremation burial was found with an abundance of weapons and, judging from the description, a short distance away a spearhead with a broad leaf-shaped blade, a lugged, narrow-bladed axe, and a knife (Rykov 1913, pp.11 and 16).

There had probably been a symbolic burial in Sudota barrow 2. The excavation report mentions no bones (Kaczyński 1963, p.148). Unfortunately, due to poor documentation, we only know about the finds: two narrow-bladed axes, a tanged spearhead with a barbed blade, and a knife.

At Zasvir barrow 1, a wide-bladed axe, spearhead, knife, firesteel, and bronze ornaments: a penannular brooch, a ring, and a bell were found at its base (Pokrovskii 1899, p.12f.). The author likewise failed to mention any bones. It is likely that a symbolic burial was investigated in this barrow.

Burial construction, furnishings and status

Graves without human remains are referred to as symbolic in literature (Kuncienė 1980, p.50f.). This interpretation is confirmed by the similarity of their construction to the cremation and inhumation graves found in the same barrow fields. In construct-

VI

WEAPONS:
THEIR
SIGNIFI-
CANCE AND
SYMBOLISM

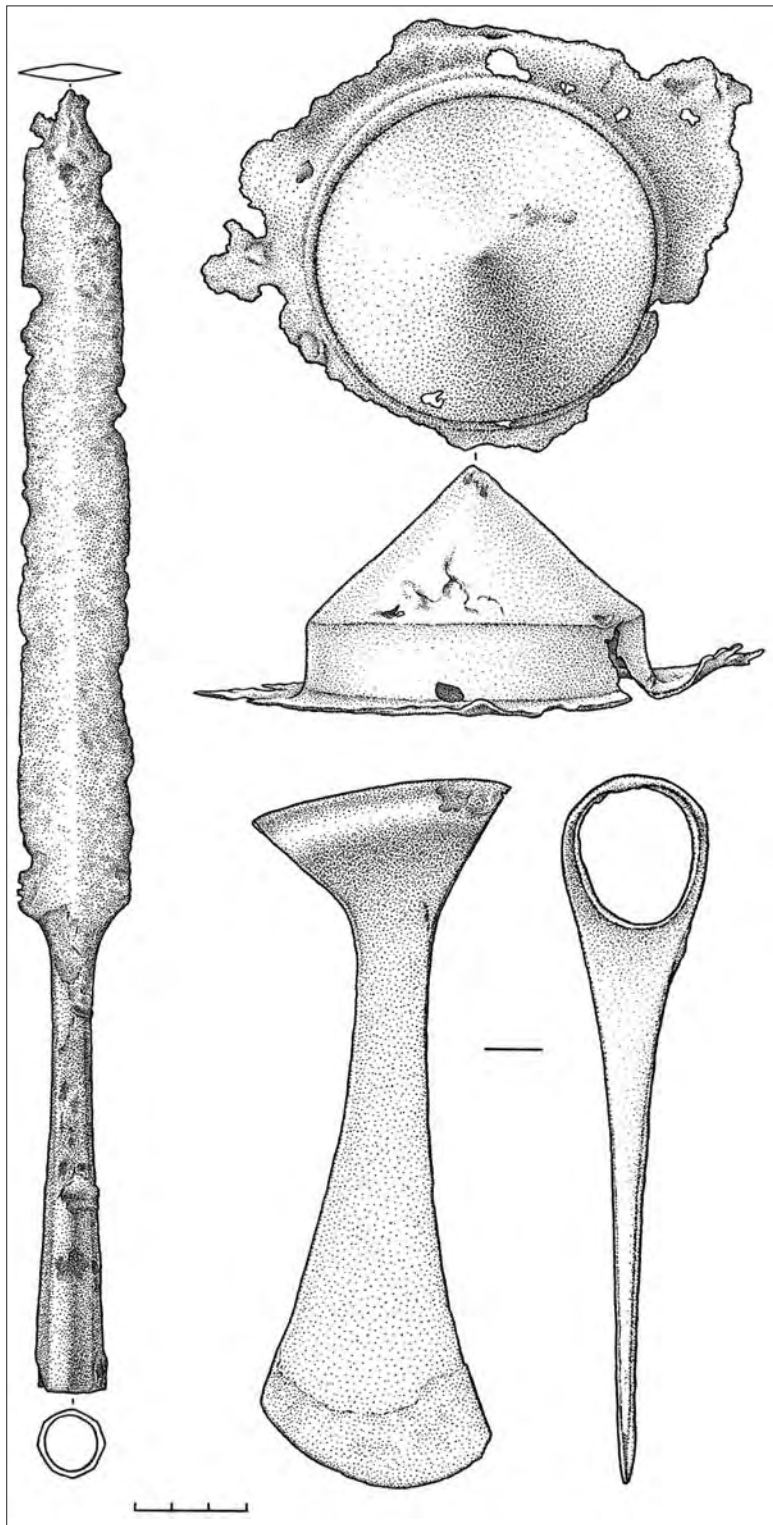


Fig. 4. Finds from the Grigiškės–Neravai barrow 28 symbolic burial 4 (drawing by I. Maciukaitė).

ing them, barrows of the same form and construction were erected and characteristic rites involving fire were performed. The fact that the burial items were usually charred allows us to think that burial items used to be burned in a symbolic funeral pyre in imitation of a cremation. The position of the burial items in the Eitulionys grave imitated the burial of an uncre-

mated body oriented in the NW–SE direction characteristic of this barrow field. The burial items were also positioned in the Nemaitonys grave in the same manner as they would have been placed around an uncremated body.

We should be somewhat more cautious in assigning the Eitulionys and Nemaitonys graves to the category of symbolic burials. Uncremated bones are less resistant to environmental effects and can disappear completely, although practice has shown that at least small bone fragments are usually found in inhumation burials, usually being preserved near metal artefacts. We should also not reject the possibility that some of the artefacts in other discussed graves were placed as additional burial items and are directly connected with the cremation burials located in the barrows. Thus, in talking about the scale of the incidence of symbolic funerary rites, many reservations are encountered, but the fact of the phenomenon's very existence cannot in any way be denied.

The assumption is possible that symbolic burials are for people who are buried elsewhere: a person who died on a trip or raid and was buried where he died, while a symbolic burial was held in his homeland. However, in spite of the large number of excavations, so far no burials characteristic of East Lithuanian Barrow Culture have been found in the territories of neighbouring tribes. It can only be concluded that an effort was made to carry back home the bodies or ashes of those who died in battles or elsewhere. Symbolic burials are probably evidence of those separate instances when that was impossible to do.

In the absence of the bodies of the dead, there is no possibility of answering reasonably the question for whom a symbolic burial was intended. Attempts to discuss the status and social position of symbolically buried people are of an interpretative nature. Judging by the burial items, all, or at least the majority of the symbolic burials, were for men (as has been mentioned, several instances are also known where female burial items without any hu-

man remains have been found in barrows). The grave in Palūšė barrow 3, which contained burial items characteristic of both a male and a female, should be considered separately. The distinctive dualism of this burial is also confirmed by the fact that only some of the burial items are charred. Different rites were probably performed in symbolically burying a man and a woman.

It is likely that the larger number of symbolic male burials reflects higher male mortality by violent death or other circumstances when the community cannot bury the body. Men, by engaging in warfare, hunting or fishing, die far from home or drown more frequently than women. Osteological examinations of the traces of trauma show that men more frequently became the victims of violence (Anderson 1996; Jankauskas 2001, p.43; Larsen 1997, p.122; Walker 2001, p.587). On the other hand, another explanation is also possible. In communities which were located in sparsely inhabited areas and which probably did not avoid clashes between themselves, women and children could also have become the victims of violence, and died far from home or disappeared without a trace. On the basis of the available archaeological data, it is impossible to answer the question how a community behaved in those instances: whether any rituals imitating a funeral were performed. Perhaps some isolated artefacts, or pieces of them, which are discovered in barrows and not connected with graves are traces of similar rites. It would seem, however, that when a person died elsewhere or disappeared without a trace, the community's reaction differed, depending on the social group to which he or she belonged.

The majority of the graves in question were made on top of the primary surface of the ground or under it. Their stratigraphy shows that they are the first burials and not placed in already existing mounds. Only the Vanagiškiai burial should be considered a later burial. Funerary rites, which are more complex and require more labour and resources, reflect the individual's higher social status. A person for whose burial a new mound is erected should be in a higher social position than those whose graves are placed in already existing barrows (Tainter 1978, p.127f.; Mizoguchi 1993, p.227). In this case, the erection of new barrows and the performance of more complex and longer funerary rites used to occur exclusively (or almost exclusively) when symbolically burying males.

The majority of the burial items in the aforementioned graves consist of weapons: 35 of the 52 items (67.3%) belong to this category (in cremation and inhumation male burials, weapons comprise only 39.8% of all the assemblage). Furthermore, many other artefacts are

also connected with a set of male-warrior burial items (eg a spur and knives). The graves contained from one to three weapons (an average of 1.94). This number is insignificantly larger than the one of weapons in male inhumation and cremation burials, ie an average of 1.83 weapons in those graves which contained at least one weapon (but an average of only 0.53 weapons in all the graves which had been osteologically identified as male). Of course, separate communities could have had distinctive burial rite traditions. In addition, they probably had different amounts of wealth. The material from the Grigiškės–Neravai barrow field also allows us to envisage certain tendencies: 1.875 weapons were found on average in each symbolic burial in this barrow field. Meanwhile, the average was smaller (1.75) in male cremation burials.

The total number of burial items is not the only measure for defining an individual's status. No less important are such criteria as the diversity of the set of burial items or their rarity (Aleksin 1983, p.141f.). Of the 35 weapons placed in symbolic burials, it is possible to consider that at least 15 (42.9%) have a rare form or are prestigious. These are single-edged swords or fighting knives, spearheads with a Petersen type E blade, a sword-shaped blade, a blade with pronounced shoulders, a barbed blade, wide-bladed, ornate or lugged axes, and shield bosses. Such weapons on the whole only comprise about 20% to 25% of all the weapons in male cremation or inhumation burials in East Lithuanian barrows. The spur from the Eitulionys grave should also be considered a rare find. By drawing the conclusion that weapons of rarer and more complex forms, as well as more specialised weapons (swords, lugged axes and shield bosses), reflect their owner's higher status, it is possible to state that, compared to those who were buried in actual graves, a higher percentage of the individuals who were buried symbolically belonged to the community's social elite. This could be a consequence of the specific way of life of the higher stratum of society. These people, more than the community's other males, participated in battles (this was also a prerequisite of the higher status) and failed to return more frequently. On the other hand, whether a community organised symbolic funerary rites for a man who had died elsewhere may have depended greatly on his status and prestige. The tendency for various symbolic and imitative forms of funerary rites to be more characteristic of the social elite and warrior stratum is also observable in other societies (Hope 2003, p.88ff.; Ionesov 1999; Richards *et al.* 1995).

No differences, however, are visible in the construction or size of the barrows erected for actual and symbolic burials. The Grigiškės–Neravai barrows, in which the primary burials are cremation burials, are even

VI

WEAPONS:
THEIR
SIGNIFI-
CANCE AND
SYMBOLISM

insignificantly larger than the barrows with symbolic burials. The Gudeliai–Lenkiškės barrow with a symbolic burial was even of a simpler construction than the majority of the other mounds, as it lacked a circle of stones.

The fact that the majority of the burial items in symbolic burials consist of weapons does not necessarily mean that all the individuals for whom they are intended belonged to the warrior estate in the true sense of this term. A warrior class or a true social elite, which inherited its exclusive position, could hardly have developed in East Lithuania in the middle of the first millennium AD. It is more likely that social status was connected with an individual's age (Kurila 2002, p.129ff.). Weapons are found in the majority of the male graves from that time and are in no way an attribute of estate. Neither the burial nor the burial items are a direct reflection of the individual's trade, way of life or status, but are rather a symbol (Hodder 1982; Parker Pearson 2000). Studies of various societies have revealed that frequently specific groups of burial items were used to express an individual's position (Lynn *et al.* 2001, p.206; O'Shea 1995, pp.130-139; Williams 2003, p.117f.). In East Lithuania weapons were an important male attribute, a symbol, expressing their owner's gender, identification with a certain social category, position in society, or perhaps just claims to it. In stating this, it is important to stress, however, that the social and biological sides of the concept of "male" (gender and sex) did not necessarily coincide in past societies (Lucy 1997; Nelson, 1997, p.15f.). Investigations of graves with burial items for the opposite sex (Pawletta 2003; Weglian 2001) have revealed that social gender could also be connected with the individual's age, position in society, disability, or other factors.

Weapons could have various social meanings. They could, for example, be an attribute of a mature or free individual. In many societies they acquire a distinctive sacredness and are hallowed. Publius Cornelius Tacitus mentions a huge respect for weapons in Germanic lands (Tacitus 1980, p.158f.). It is difficult to say how much weapons had to be used in everyday life, but their significance was especially large in funerary rituals. The placement of a weapon in a grave could be a particular way of somewhat raising an individual's status upon entering the afterlife. In burying an individual, no effort was made to stress, for example, his trade, ie no farming, smithy, or other tools are found in male graves. The energy of the symbolism of burial items was concentrated on stressing gender and status.

In symbolic burials this focus is especially striking. As has been mentioned, the absolute majority of the burial items found in them are warrior gear. Aside from the

Palūšė grave, which symbolises the burial of a male and a female, for which latter the awl is intended, the only non-weapon or warrior-related burial items are the buckles and crossbow brooch from the Eitulionys and Nemaitonys barrows and some of the Zasvir grave items. In the rest of the symbolic burials, none of the other frequent male burial items, buckles, crossbow brooches and spiral rings, were found. In performing a symbolic burial, accenting the male gender and warrior status was the primary task. In such cases, the symbolic content of other burial items faded. It is likely that the mourners behaved in this manner in order to stress the circumstances of the individual's death. In most societies, warriors who fall in battle are honoured, and the image of the missing or unknown warrior is especially strong. Perhaps the placement of weapons in the grave of a warrior who has failed to return from battle expresses the society's respect and recognition of the status he has earned.

It is worthwhile noting another quality characteristic of symbolic burials. In some of the Grigiškės–Neravai graves and in the Gudeliai–Lenkiškės grave, the weapons were stuck into the ground. In the latter, an axe and a spearhead were also broken (Vanagiškiai barrow 1, Kretuonys barrow 51, and Sudota barrow 2 also contained broken or bent weapons). This atypical position of the burial items is likewise observable in the cremation burials of some East Lithuanian barrow cemeteries, at the funeral sites of the other Baltic tribes, and frequently in symbolic burials (Kazakevičius, Malonaitis 2006). But nowhere is it a mass phenomenon. It is difficult to judge, on the basis of material from two adjacent sites, how much the custom of sticking weapons into the ground in East Lithuania was connected with symbolic funerary rites. But its connection with warriors is obvious. Symbolic and cremation burials with weapons stuck into the ground are also connected in the sense that both these types of graves contained almost no other burial items except weapons. The sticking of weapons into the ground definitely had a magic meaning and reflected the spiritual bond between a weapon and its owner (Argente Oliver *et al.* 2000, p.242f.). In this case the burial items acquire a seemingly double symbolic meaning and create a symbolic structure, in which the artefact itself and its position are equally important.

By sticking a weapon into the ground, the mourners perhaps sought to protect the deceased's soul and scare away evil spirits. It is likely that this was done in order to accent the circumstances under which the person being buried or symbolically buried had died, distinguishing a warrior who fell on the battlefield from other members of the community. In Scandinavia this custom is treated as a ritual "killing" of the deceased,

thereby sending his soul to Oðinn (Nordberg 2002). Probably the semantics of sticking a weapon into a grave have and can have no single explanation. This is part of the ideological structure that helps to fortify status in society.

Chronology, historical background

The dating of symbolic burials on the basis of weapon typology alone cannot be precise. It seems that this custom was practised on a larger or smaller scale throughout the entire period of the existence of East Lithuanian Barrow Culture (third/fourth to 11/12th centuries AD). The Eitulionys grave should belong to the early stage. It is difficult to date the burial items of a symbolic burial, but according to the adjacent barrows with inhumation burials, it should belong to the fourth or early fifth century (Bliujus 1983, p.39). Several graves should have been created in the Late Iron Age. The latest one, dated to the 11th or 12th centuries, most probably is the Zasvir symbolic burial. The Petersen type E spearheads in Kretuonys barrow 51 date to the ninth/tenth centuries (Kazakevičius 1999, p.188). It is possible to assign the graves of Grigiškės–Neravai barrows 8 and 10 as well as the grave of Vanagiškiai barrow 1 to a similar or earlier period (eighth/ninth centuries) on the basis of the construction of the mounds and the finds from later graves.

The majority of the finds from the other symbolic burials have been reliably dated to the second half of the fifth century or the sixth century. Judging by analogous finds, the ornate axes (Malonaitis 1998, p.5), shield-bosses (Kontny 2004, p.254) and battle knife or short sword (Kazakevičius 1981, p. 45) belong to this period. The spearhead chronology is somewhat longer, but it does not extend beyond the limits of the seventh century (Kazakiavichius 1988, pp.29ff., 37-42 and 55-57). The increase in the number of symbolic burials in the middle of the first millennium is observable. This period is one of great transformations in East Lithuanian Barrow Culture. The contemporary events in Europe, which led to the fall of the Western Roman Empire and the creation of new states, also touched the Baltic region. The spread of some new forms of weapons, crossbow brooches, buckles and spurs in East Lithuania shows the existence of inter-tribal contacts. Their nature is still fairly vague. The region was probably shaken up by the movement of neighbouring tribes. The three-bladed arrowheads found in hill-forts are witnesses to one or several direct attacks by wandering tribes. East Lithuania could have been reached by individual bands from the Hun Empire that had expanded in the time of Attila (434–453) (Lukhtan 1997). Beside Huns, these bands might also have included Os-

trogoths and Gepids, who were subjects of the Huns at that time.

The consequences of these events are reflected in the social order and funerary customs. Beginning in the middle of the first millennium, the custom of cremating the dead became established and a typical set of warrior burial items began to be placed in male graves (Vaitkevičius 2005, p.78). A distinctly socially stratified society, in which an effort was made to accent a warrior's status, probably developed at that time in East Lithuania. An increase in the number of weapons in graves during a period of fighting seems to be logical. The same should also be said about the number of symbolic burials. In this context, the increase in their number causes no surprise. The more warriors go off to fight, the more they die or disappear. It is only possible to guess how many of the symbolic burials are directly connected with these struggles. It is very likely that most of the Grigiškės–Neravai symbolic burials, and perhaps some of the cremation burials, are from the same time and reflect some event that shook up the community. It would otherwise be difficult to explain the large number of these unusual graves at one site. But it would not be appropriate to connect all the symbolic burials from the middle of the first millennium with one big attack by an external enemy. External shocks were probably just a factor in increasing the importance of this custom. After the significance of the male-warrior grew in society, the symbolic expression of his status also correspondingly changed. A distinctive ideological basis appeared at that time for highly respectful behaviour by the community when a warrior died.

Conclusions

A brief study on symbolic burials in East Lithuanian barrows reveals a connection between symbolic funerary rites and higher status, which is expressed through both the grave construction and artefact types. Different circumstances could have occurred in past societies depriving the community of the possibility to bury a body. However, a symbolic funeral was most likely to be organized in the instances of the death of a male. The evident dominance of weapons in the grave assemblages reflects the mourners' aspiration to stress the male gender and the recognition of the status and prestige the deceased had earned for the afterlife. The subconscious necessity to emphasize warrior status through mortuary symbolism shows the importance of this social attribute in East Lithuanian societies. The increase in the number of symbolic warrior burials in the middle of the first millennium should be considered a consequence of the growing warfare at that time. It

VI

WEAPONS:
THEIR
SIGNIFI-
CANCE AND
SYMBOLISM

resulted in larger numbers of warrior deaths, as well as in the changing ideology and mortuary treatment of the warrior.

Translated by Jeffrey Arthur Bakanauskas

References

- ABARAVIČIUS, G., 1994. Mošos (Naujasodų) pilkapyno tyrinėjimai 1993 metais. In: *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 1992 ir 1993 metais*, 99-102.
- ALEKSHIN, V.A., 1983. Burial Customs as an Archaeological Source. *Current Anthropology*, 24 (2), 137-149.
- ANDERSON, T., 1996. Cranial Weapon Injuries from Anglo-Saxon Dover. *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, 6 (1), 10-14.
- ARGENTE OLIVER, J.L., DÍAZ DÍAZ, A., BESCÓS CORRAL, A., 2000. Tiermes V, Carratiermes necrópolis celtibérica: campañas 1977 y 1986-1991. In: *Arqueología en Castilla y León*. Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 9.
- BINFORD, L.R., 1971. Mortuary Practices: Their Study and Their Potential. In: J.A. BROWN, ed. *Approaches to the Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices. Memoirs of the Society for American Archaeology*, 25, 6-29.
- BLIUJENĖ, A., 1992. Alinkos (Raistinės) pilkapiai. *Lietuvos archeologija*, 8, 105-127.
- BLIUJUS, A., 1983. Eitulionių pilkapynas. *Muziejai ir paminklai*, 5, 31-40.
- BROWN, J., 1995. On Mortuary Analysis – with Special Reference to the Saxe-Binford Research Program. In: L.A. BECK, ed. *Regional Approaches to Mortuary Analysis*. New York: Plenum Press, 3-26.
- BUTĖNAS, E., 1998. Vanagiškių pilkapyno tyrinėjimai 1997 metais. In: *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 1996 ir 1997 metais*, 138-142.
- BUTĖNIENĖ, E., 1972. Nemaitonių (Kaišiadorių raj.) pilkapių tyrinėjimai 1970 m. In: *Archeologiniai ir etnografiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 1970 ir 1971 metais*, 39-40.
- BUTĖNIENĖ, E., 1978. Kretuonių (Švenčionių raj.) pilkapių tyrinėjimai 1976 ir 1977 metais. In: *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 1976 ir 1977 metais*, 132-136.
- BUTĖNIENĖ, E., 1982. Palūšės pilkapiai. In: *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 1980 ir 1981 metais*, 67-70.
- HODDER, I., 1982. The Identification and Interpretation of Ranking in Prehistory: A Contextual Perspective. In: C. RENFREW, S. SHENNAN, eds. *Ranking, Resource, and Exchange: Aspects of the Archaeology of Early European Society*. Cambridge University Press, 150-154.
- HOPE, V.M., 2003. Trophies and Tombstones: Commemorating the Roman Soldier. *World Archaeology*, 35 (1), 79-97.
- IONESOV, V., 1999. Imitative Ritual in Proto-Bactrian Mortuary Practice. *Current Anthropology*, 40 (1), 87-89.
- JANKAUSKAS, R., 2001. Lietuvos gyventojų antropologija: nuo seniausių laikų iki XIII a. *Istorija*, 49/50, 38-45.
- JUŠKAITIS, V., 2005. Žirgų kapai Rytų Lietuvos pilkapyuose vėlyvajame geležies amžiuje (IX-XII a.). *Archaeologia Lituana*, 6, 139-163.
- KACZYŃSKI, M., 1963. Materiały z badań 1934 r. na cmentarzysku kurhanowym w miejscowości Sudata, pow. Świąciany, na Wileńszczyźnie (LSRR). *Wiadomości archeologiczne*, 29 (2), 138-156.
- KAZAKEVIČIUS, V., 1981. Vienašmenių kalavijų atsiradimas ir raida Lietuvoje. *Lietuvos archeologija*, 2, 43-58.
- KAZAKEVIČIUS, V., 1999. Dėl E tipo ietigalių ornamentuotomis įmovomis chronologijos ir kilmės. *Archaeologia Lituana*, 1, 179-196.
- KAZAKEVIČIUS, V. AND MALONAITIS, A., 2006. Sacrifices of Weapons in Baltic Burials. *Transformatio mundi: The Transition from the Late Migration Period to the Early Viking Age in the East Baltic*. Kaunas University of Technology, 73-79.
- KAZAKIAVIČIUS, V., 1988. *Oruzhie baltskikh plemen II-VIII vekov na territorii Litvy*. Vilnius: Mokslas.
- KLIAUGAITĖ, V., 2002. Vaišniūnų (Medžiukalnio) pilkapynas. In: *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2000 metais*, 69.
- KONTNY, B., 2004. Broń z cmentarzyska kultury kurhanów wschodnioliteńskich w Słobódce (?) na Białorusi w świetle podobnych odkryć. *Światowit Supplement Series B: Barbaricum*, 7, 249-263.
- KROLL, A.M., 2000. Looted Graves or Burials without Bodies? In: J. DAVIS-KIMBALL, E.M. MURPHY, L. KORYAKOVA, L.T. YABLONKSY, eds. *Kurgans, Ritual Sites, and Settlements: Eurasian Bronze and Iron Age. BAR International Series*, Oxford: Archaeopress, 890, 215-222.
- KUNCIENĖ, O. 1980. Grigiškių (Neravų) pilkapyno laidojimo papročiai (I. M. e. V-VII a. pilkapiai). *Lietuvos TSR Mokslų akademijos darbai, serija A*, 3 (72), 41-54.
- KURILA, L., 2002. Socialinių santykių atspindžiai Rytų Lietuvos pilkapių degintinių kapų medžiagoje. In: *Archaeologia Lituana*, 3, 122-136.
- KURILA, L., 2006. Gudelių (Lenkiškių) pilkapynas. In: *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2005 metais*, 92-96.
- LARSEN, C.S., 1997. *Bioarchaeology: Interpreting Behavior from the Human Skeleton*. Cambridge University Press.
- LYNN, H.G., WALKER, P.L., RUSSELL, G.S., 2001. An Integrative Approach to Mortuary Analysis: Social and Symbolic Dimensions of Chumash Burial Practices. *American Antiquity*, 66 (2), 185-212.
- LUCY, S.J., 1997. Housewives, Warriors and Slaves? Sex and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Burials. In: J. MOORE, E. SCOTT, eds. *Invisible People and Processes: Writing Gender and Childhood into European Archaeology*, Leicester University Press, 150-168.
- LUKHTAN, A.B., 1997. Voina V veka v Litve. *Gistarychna-arkhealagichny zbornik*, 11, 15-20.
- MALONAITIS, A., 1998. Ornamentuoti sjauraašmeniai pentiniai kirviai Lietuvoje. *Istorija*, 38, 3-11.
- MICHELBERTAS, M., 2002. Jakšiškio pilkapynas. In: *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2000 metais*, 71-72.
- MIZOGUCHI, K., 1993. Time in the Reproduction of Mortuary Practices. *World Archaeology*, 25 (2), 223-235.
- NELSON, S.M., 1997. *Gender in Archaeology: Analyzing Power and Prestige*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- NORDBERG, A., 2002. Vertikalt placerade vapen i vikingatida gravar. *Fornvännen*, 1, 15-24.
- O'SHEA, J.M., 1995. Mortuary Custom in the Bronze Age of Southeastern Hungary: Diachronic and Synchronic Perspectives. In: L.A. BECK, ed. *Regional Approaches to Mortuary Analysis*. New York: Plenum Press, 125-145.
- PARKER PEARSON, M., 1993. The Powerful Dead: Archaeological Relationships between the Living and the Dead. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 3 (2), 203-229.

- PARKER PEARSON, M., 2000. Mortuary Practices, Society and Ideology: An Ethnoarchaeological Study. In: J. THOMAS, ed. *Interpretive Archaeology: A Reader*. Leicester University Press, 246-265.
- PAWLETTA, M., 2003. Blurring genders: A case study from Pruszcz Gdanski cemetery in Northern Poland. *Stanford Journal of Archaeology*, 2 [online]. Available from: http://archaeology.stanford.edu/journal/newdraft/2003_Journal/pawleta/ [Accessed 24 October 2006].
- POKROVSKII, F.V., 1899. *K izsledovaniu basseina Vilii v arkeologicheskoi otshosenii (Iz Trudov X. Arkheol. s"ezda. T. I.)*. Moskva.
- RICHARDS, J.D., JECOCK, M., RICHMOND, L., TUCK, C., 1995. The Viking Barrow Cemetery at Heath Wood, Ingleby, Derbyshire. *Medieval Archaeology*, 39, 51-70.
- RYKOV, P.S., 1913. Mogil'nik bliz stantsii Smorgon'. *Zapiski Severo-zapadnago otdela Imperatorskago russkago geograficheskago obshchestva*, 4, 7-17.
- SEMĖNAS, V., 1994. Rėkučių-Paversmio I grupės pilkapyno 1993 tyrinėjimai. In: *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 1992 ir 1993 metais*, 110-112.
- TACITUS, 1980. *Tacitus in Five Volumes*. Harvard University Press, 1.
- TAINTER, J.A., 1978. Mortuary Practices and the Study of Prehistoric Social Systems. In: M.B. SCHIFFER, ed. *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory*. New York: Academic Press, 1, 105-141.
- TAUTAVIČIUS, A., 1957. Kapitoniškių pilkapiai. *Lietuvos TSR Mokslų akademijos darbai, serija A*, 1, 95-109.
- TAUTAVIČIUS, A., 1970. Riklikų pilkapių kasinėjimai 1969 metais. In: *Archeologiniai ir etnografiniai tyrinėjimai 1968 ir 1969 metais*, 53-60.
- VAITKEVIČIUS, V., 2005. Interpreting the East Lithuanian Barrow Culture. In: V. LANG, ed. *Interarchaeologia: Culture and Material Culture*. Tallinn: Pakett Press, 1, 71-86.
- WALKER, P.L., 2001. A Bioarchaeological Perspective on the History of Violence. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 30, 573-596.
- WEGLIAN, E., 2001. Grave Goods Do Not a Gender Make: A Case Study from Singen am Hohentwiel, Germany. In: B. ARNOLD, N.L. WICKER, eds. *Gender and the Archaeology of Death*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 137-155.
- WILLIAMS, H., 2003. Material Culture as Memory: Combs and Cremation in Early Medieval Britain. *Early Medieval Europe*, 12 (2), 89-128.

Received: 17 January 2007; Revised: 18 May 2007

NEPALAIDOTŲJŲ KAPAI: SIMBOLINIAI GELEŽIES AMŽIAUS KARIŲ KAPAI RYTŲ LIETUVOJE

Laurynas Kurila

Santrauka

Straipsnyje analizuojama viena Rytų Lietuvos pilkapių kapų kategorija – simboliniai karių kapai, kuriuose rasta įkapių be jokių žmogaus palaikų pėdsakų. Konstrukcija jį iš esmės nesiskiria nuo vienalaikių griautinių ir

degintinių kapų. Iki šiol iširta 18 tokių kapų dešimtyje pilkapių. Tikrasis jų skaičius gali būti ir dar kiek didesnis. Rytų Lietuvoje žinoma ir pavienių simbolinių moterų kapų, tačiau jų skaičius yra gerokai mažesnis.

Tikėtina, kad vyrai dažniau žūdavo svetur ar dingdavo be žinios. Kita vertus, galbūt simbolinės laidojimo apeigos buvo atliekamos tikrai aukštesnio socialinio statuso asmenų, tarp kurių buvo daugiau vyrų, žūtis atveju. Įrengiant simbolinį kapą dažniausiai būdavo pilamas naujas pilkapis. Šią aplinkybę taip pat reikėtų laikyti aukštesnio statuso išraiška.

Absoliučią daugumą simbolinių kapų įkapių sudaro ginklai. Iš jų nemažai – daugiau nei degintiniuose ar griautiniuose kapuose – yra retų ar specifinių formų. Reikia manyti, laidojant simboliškai ypač stengtasi pabrėžti vyriškąją lytį ir tam tikrą socialinio statuso aspektą – priklausymą karių kategorijai. Šiuo atveju itin svarbus buvo įkapių simbolinis turinys. Jomis bendruomenė stengėsi išreikšti simboliškai laidojamo asmens statusą ar netgi jį savotiškai kilstelėti.

Dalis ginklų šiuose kapuose rasti sulaužyti ar sulankstyti, kai kuriais atvejais – įsmeigti į žemę. Tai – savitų laidojimo apeigų pėdsakai. Simboliniai kapai būdingi iš esmės visam Rytų Lietuvos pilkapių kultūros gyvavimo laikotarpiui. Tačiau daugiausia jų priklauso I tūkstantmečio viduriui. Tikėtina, kad tai susiję su to meto Europą krėtusiais įvykiais, kurie galėjo būti tiek tiesioginė didesnio karių mirčių skaičiaus priežastis, tiek simbolinę laidoseną aktualizavęs veiksnys.

VI

WEAPONS:
THEIR
SIGNIFI-
CANCE AND
SYMBOLISM