

EAST BALTIC MIDDLE IRON AGE WEALTH DEPOSITS IN BURIAL AREAS: AN EXAMPLE OF REGIONAL CULTURAL PRACTICE

ESTER ORAS

Abstract

This article provides an example of how variable the uses of and practices in prehistoric burial monuments can be. The concept of 'wealth deposits' is introduced, which arguably helps to define the variety of intentionally concealed artefact deposits as a whole. An emphasis is put on deposits in burial areas. It is shown that the depositional practices in burial areas vary considerably in the three Baltic countries, and we can definitely talk about small-scale regional practices, not universal and unitarily interpreted cultural phenomena. Special attention is paid to Estonian Middle Iron Age material. An overview of possible interpretations based on purely archaeological reasoning, as well as parallels from written sources, is provided.

Key words: Middle Iron Age (fifth to ninth century AD), Baltic countries, wealth deposits, hoards, ritual, religion, written sources, burial monuments.

I

SOCIETIES
OF THE PAST:
APPROACHES
TO LANDSCAPE

Introduction

Throughout the history of archaeology, burial monuments have been one of the main and most studied types of archaeological site. In this respect, east Baltic Iron Age (circa 500 BC to 1200 AD) scholarship of archaeology is no different. We only have to take a look at the volumes dedicated to the analysis of Iron Age burial sites in classic works on Prehistoric archaeology in Estonia (Tallgren 1925; Moora *et al.* 1936; Jaanits *et al.* 1982), Latvia (Moora 1929; 1938; Apals *et al.* 1974; 2001) and Lithuania (LAA, 1977; Michelbertas 1986; Tautavičius 1996). The same tendency can be followed in more recent publications, as well (Ritums 2004; Griciuvienė 2005; 2007; 2009; Melne 2006; Muižnieks 2008; Lang 2007a-b; Tvauri 2012). In these, as well as numerous other specific case studies, the focus is put on the burial goods, the remains of the deceased, the distribution of burial areas in the (cultural) landscape, and further social analysis based on this data.

The aim of this paper is to contribute another addition to the list of examples which show that burial monuments are not only the last resting place of the deceased or manifestations of past social structures. It aims at broadening our ideas about the whole variety of use and/or reuse of burial monuments in east Baltic Iron Age societies. An example provided here is the phe-

nomenon of making separate artefact concealments in Iron Age burial grounds. Second, and more importantly, the goal is to stress the importance of analysing archaeological material by combining wider comparative scales and smaller regional characteristics of the archaeological record. I wish to contribute to the discussion of culture-specific and regional social practices, as opposed to universally applied and cross-cultural explanations for similar material culture remains.

I start the article by briefly introducing the concept of 'wealth deposit', why such a concept is useful, and what its relationship is with burial monuments, especially burial goods. After that, Middle Iron Age wealth deposits from burial monuments in the three Baltic countries are introduced. This is an example of how archaeology can start recognising a regional depositional activity, which, in order to be distinguished at all, must be seen in a broader comparison with overall archaeological material in the east Baltic. Finally, Estonian material is analysed in detail, as an example of outstanding culture-specific and widely followed depositional practice. Possible interpretations of this particular practice are provided on the basis of archaeological material, and some interesting parallels from Medieval written sources.

Wealth deposits as archaeological source material

The term ‘wealth deposit’ is certainly not the most often used term in archaeological literature. By wealth deposit, I mean one or more objects of value that is/are hidden deliberately as an intended deposition of artefacts in a specifically chosen place in a distinguishable manner (see also Oras 2012). The main reason for choosing this word combination, instead of more traditional ones such as ‘hoard’, ‘treasure’ or ‘votive deposit’, is that these terms often have traditional meanings and explanations attached to them, which to some extent limit the selection of primary data. I argue that the concept of wealth deposit allows an analysis of artefact deposits regardless of their production material, the number of objects, the environment of their concealment, and their location in the (cultural) landscape. Additionally, and in the current context perhaps more importantly, the term does not imply any interpretation-based and often arbitrarily determined categorisation of artefact deposits, such as sacrifices or offerings, safe-keepings, economic hoards, and so on. The problems of distinguishing differently aimed and artefact- or environment-based divisions of deposits are familiar to many scholars who have been studying deliberate artefact deposits in Prehistoric (e.g. Bradley 1987; 1988; Verlaeck 2000; Hamon, Quilliec 2008; Mills, Walker 2008; Joyce, Pollard 2010; Berggren, Stutz 2010) and later periods (e.g. Millett 1994; Johns 1994; 1996a-b; Randsborg 2002; Hingley 2006) (for further discussion of this issue, see Oras 2012).

I do not wish to deny that there were different reasons for concealing valuables in the past. Rather, I prefer to admit that very often these interpretations, especially in the case of opposing groups such as economic and ritual hoards, are very problematic, and largely based on the concepts or even check-list criteria that are created in the minds and cultural contexts of contemporary archaeologists (see also Brück 1999; Bradley 2003; 2005). In order to achieve a better understanding of past societies as dynamic entities with various entwined material characteristics, different archaeological monuments, artefacts and practices relating all those aspects should be seen as an organic whole and a complementary system. No artefact group or site exists in a vacuum; it is related to its closer, and sometimes even further, surroundings. To interpret a single case, it is necessary to set it in its wider material and cultural contexts, in order to see the correlations and divergences between different source materials, and to try and make sense of them.

This certainly applies to intentionally concealed artefact deposits. Regardless of the production material, the physical and cultural environment, and the characteristics and handling of artefacts, the common notion of acknowledged concealment of valuables is the essence of this particular find group that links all these deposits into an organic whole. For this reason, I see an approach to the phenomenon of artefact deposits via the concept of past cultural practices as more fruitful, and more useful in helping us to get a closer look at past societies than any study aiming at opposed categorisation. This approach is inclusive rather than exclusive. Therefore, instead of setting the goal as dividing artefact deposits into opposing interpretational groups or on the basis of material characteristics, I would rather pose the question as follows: what determines which artefacts, where and how are deposited? What might be the social processes and conditions that influence or might be the reasons for wealth depositing and choosing materialities for this practice? Of course, when data allows, it is preferable to take a step further and provide probable interpretations as to why the items were concealed in the first place. It is just that these interpretations cannot be the starting point for an analysis of artefact deposits. Thus, I would argue that ‘wealth deposit’ serves as a useful and less interpretationally loaded umbrella term for all the variety of intentional artefact concealments.

Now, moving on from terminology to methodology: how to get to the past practices of wealth depositing? The scholarship on past cultural practices and decoding them from the material culture is abundant (e.g. Barrett 1988; 2000; 2001; Harding 2005; Robb 2010, and the literature cited). What most of these studies suggest is that it is a question of overlapping materialities in close spatial and temporal terms that allow archaeologists to start seeing more widely followed and culturally accepted practices.

Bringing these theoretical concepts into studying the practices of wealth depositing means comparing the materialities of single events, single wealth deposits, on a larger scale, with other contemporaneous deposits. We can regard the variety of material characteristics of a single deposit, artefacts, their handling, placement, the environment of concealment, and location in the cultural landscape, as a micro-scale of the analysis. Putting these material characteristics into the larger picture and comparing them with other contemporary deposits makes it possible to see similarities and differences in the wealth deposits. If these material characteristics are overlapping, it is a hint at more widely

followed and socially accepted cultural practices, i.e. rule-bound activities, in the past. The latter argument is further strengthened if these deposits are close in spatial and temporal terms. This allows the further step of putting the practice of wealth depositing into a wider archaeological context: comparing the artefacts and environments of concealment with other archaeological features and finds in the particular area. In order to recognise local and culture-specific or more widely followed depositional practices, it is also necessary to compare such regional practices in broader spatial and temporal scales (in my case, the first to the ninth century AD in the three Baltic countries).

East Baltic first to ninth-century wealth deposits in burial areas

The current analysis includes all the first to ninth-century AD wealth deposits (except coin hoards) in the three Baltic countries: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (Fig. 1 map). However, not all the discovered artefacts or find spots could be included. As the methodological basis for micro-scale analysis is in the detailed contextualisation of every single find, deposits lacking some relevant information had to be excluded. Thus, discoveries without sufficient data about the exact find spot or the environment of concealment could not be included. The same applies to the deposits of which part or all have been lost over time and have remained undocumented, so that the artefacts and their chronology cannot be established. Therefore, although the total number of first to ninth-century AD wealth deposits is somewhere around one hundred (Urtāns 1964; 1977; Jaanits *et al.* 1982; LAA, 1977; Michelbertas 2001; Lang 2007b; Ducmane, Ozolina 2009; Oras 2009; 2010; Bliujienė 2010; Tvauri 2012), the current study is based on 69 deposits altogether. It is also worth pointing out that the majority of the deposits discussed below are chronologically from the Middle Iron Age (fifth to ninth century AD).

Estonia

The total number of first to ninth-century AD wealth deposits in Estonia is 28. Six of these were discovered in, or in the close vicinity of, archaeological sites; whereas in five cases the monument is a burial ground (Figs. 2, 3). All of these finds are from the Middle Iron Age. In fact, there are two earlier deposits of bronze ornaments, mainly neck-rings: Liimala (Schmiede-

helm 1955, Fig. 46; Jaanits *et al.* 1982, pp.220-221, 231, Fig. 147; Lang 2007b, pp.211, 246-247, Fig. 149; Jonuks 2009, pp.230-233, 242) and Kiiu (Vassar 1966, p.211; Lang 1996, pp.314, 328; Lang 2007b, pp.211, 217, 247; Jonuks 2009, pp.231-232). These are both from the north coast of Estonia, and are dated to the Roman Iron Age. The Liimala deposit was discovered in a field where stones were noticed, the Kiiu deposit under a stone. However, in the case of the latter, the interpretation as a possible burial has been under discussion (Vassar 1966, p.211; Lang 1996, pp.314, 328), although there are no burials known in the vicinity. A landscape survey of the Liimala find did not reveal any direct evidence of possible burial area either.

Therefore, it leaves us with the situation where there are four deposits from burial areas consisting mainly of silver ornaments: Villevere, Kardla, Paali I & II (Table 1: 1-4), and a find of a Byzantine silver vessel from Kriimani (Table 1: 5). To this list, an interesting discovery of another Byzantine silver vessel from Varnja (Table 1: 6) can be added. Although known to have been discovered in the 19th century under a stone, its possible connection with some kind of burial area has remained unclear (Oras 2009, pp.38, 44, no. 18; Oras 2010, no. 10; Quast *et al.* 2010, p.102). All of these items, or more precisely, the probable deposition of these assemblages, can be dated to the fifth or sixth century AD. The burial grounds themselves are mostly dated to the first half of the first millennium AD, mainly around the third to the fifth century. This indicates that the time of making the wealth deposits overlaps with the last use period of the burial grounds as a resting place for the deceased. However, the exception here is Kriimani, because this vessel had been placed into a somewhat earlier *tarand* grave that probably had not been used for burials for some centuries already (Sb GEG 1877, p.103; Oras 2009, pp.38, 44, no. 6; Oras 2010, no. 11; Quast *et al.* 2010, p.100). When generalising about the content, it is noticeable that all the objects, or the greater part of them, are silver, and they can all be characterised as imported items: ornaments as Baltic types, vessels as Byzantine origine. Such items are very rare in the contemporary burial goods or any other archaeological sites in the central and southern part of Estonia (see e.g. Aun 1992; Lang 2007a; Tvauri 2012). Looking at the geographical distribution, it becomes clear that all these finds are located in central-south Estonia, mostly in the area surrounding the River Emajõgi, which is the largest water-route in the country.

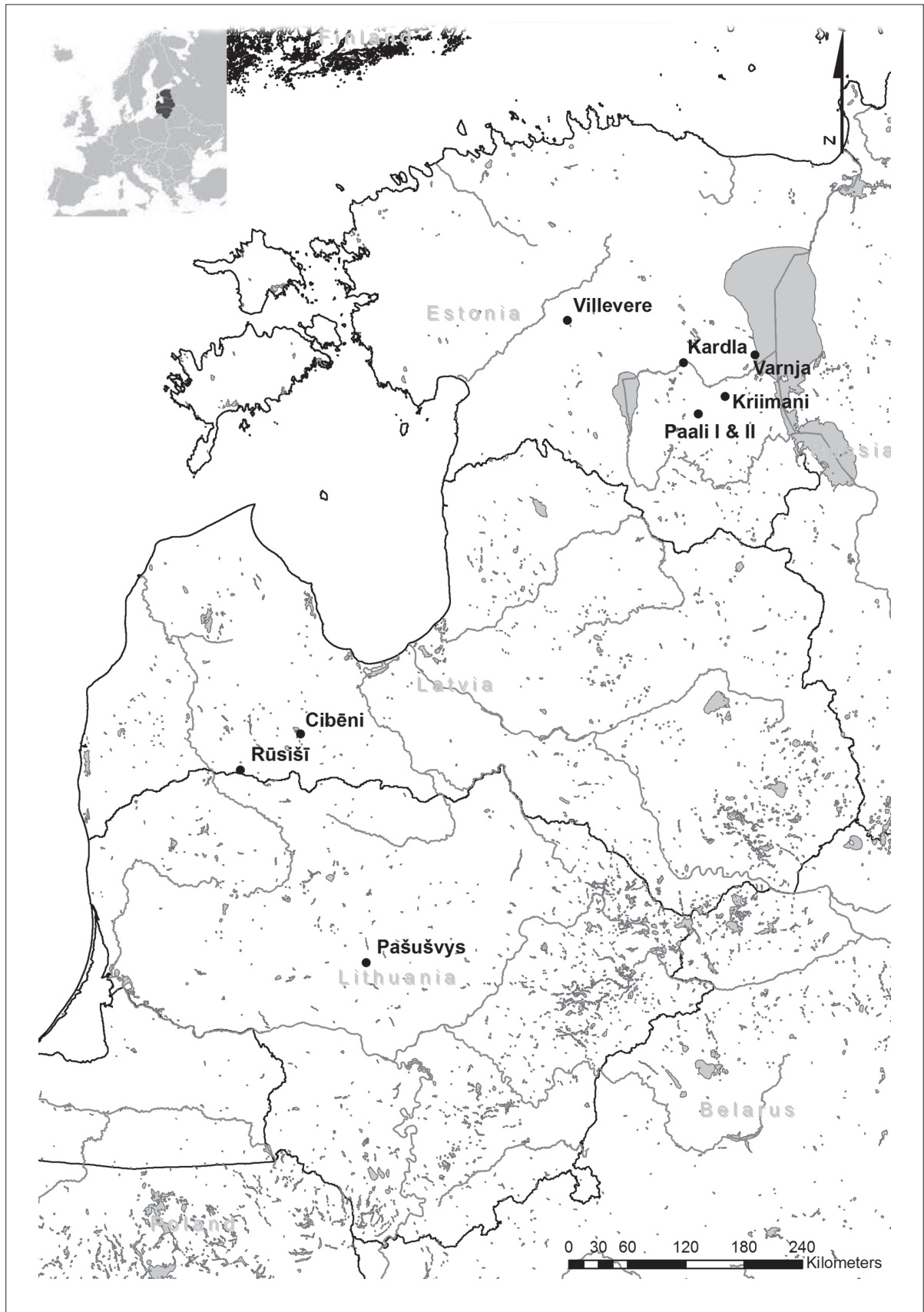


Fig. 1. East Baltic fifth–seventh century AD wealth deposits from burial areas (map by E. Oras).

Table. 1. East Baltic Middle Iron Age wealth deposits from burial areas

No.	Deposit	Collection	Country	Dating	Artefacts	Manuscripts	References
1.	Villevere	AI 2489	Estonia	450-500	8 neck-rings (S) 1 bracelet (B) 1 brooch (S) 1 ring (S) 1 hoop (S)	Allik, Markus 1923, pp.7-8	Jaanits <i>et al.</i> 1982, p.287; Moora 1925; Oras 2010; Selirand, Tõnisson 1963, p.127; Tamla, Kiudsoo 2005, pp.24-25; Tvauri 2006, pp.107, 110; Tvauri 2012, pp.291, 295
2.	Kardla	AI 2415	Estonia	500-550	11 neck-rings (S) 1 neck-ring (G) 5 bracelets (S) 1 bracelet (B) 4 brooches (S) 2 hoops (S) 1 hoop (I)	Riisberg 1921, p.21; Jüriado 1928/1929, p.7; Valk 1993 p.5. juuni	Aun 1992, p.138ff; Hausman 1914; Jaanits <i>et al.</i> 1982, p.286; Kiudsoo 2005, p.20; Oras 2010; Sb. GEG 1912, p.7; Selirand, Tõnisson 1963, p.127; Tamla, Kiudsoo 2005, p.20; Tvauri 2006, pp.106, 110; Tvauri 2012, pp.291, 294-295
3.	Paali I	AI 3235: 90-92	Estonia	500-550	2 neck-rings (S) 1 brooch (S)	Schmiedehelm 1933	Aun 1992, p.138; Jaanits <i>et al.</i> 1982, p.286; Oras 2010; Schmiedehelm 1934; Selirand, Tõnisson 1963, pp.125-126; Tvauri 2006, 110; Tvauri 2012, pp.291, 295
4.	Paali II	AI 3235: 235-244	Estonia	500-550	2 neck-rings (S) 1 bracelet (S) 1 bracelet (B) 3 brooches (S) 1 ring (B) 3 belt parts (B) 4 small spirals (B)	Schmiedehelm 1933	Aun 1992, p.138; Jaanits <i>et al.</i> 1982, p.286; Oras 2010; Schmiedehelm 1934; Selirand, Tõnisson 1963, pp.125-126; Tvauri 2006, p.110; Tvauri 2012, pp.291, 295
5.	Kriimani	AI 1270	Estonia	475-525/600	1 vessel (S)		Aun 1992, pp.142-143; Ebert 1913, p.545; Jaanits <i>et al.</i> 1982, p.287; Oras 2010; Quast <i>et al.</i> 2010; Sb. GEG 1877, p.103; Tallgren 1925, p.14; Tvauri 2012, pp.87, 291
6.	Varnja	LVNM DM I 1365	Estonia	491-518/600	1 vessel (S)	Tiitsmaa 1921, pp.14-15	Aun 1992, p.142; Ebert 1913, p.545; Engel 1914, p.29 Fig. 45; Hausman 1909, p.41; Jaanits <i>et al.</i> 1982, p.287; Oras 2010; Quast <i>et al.</i> 2010; Sb. GEG 1885, pp.213-214; Tallgren 1925, p.14; Tvauri 2012, pp.87, 291
7.	Cibēni	LVNMA 10404: 1-9	Latvia	400-450	1 axe (I) 2 arrowheads (I) 1 strike-a-light stone 1 whetstone 1 drinking horn (B-parts) 1 hoop (B) 1 knife (I) 1 bridle? (I) 1 scythe? (I)	Stepiņš P. 1940. Izraukumi Īles Cibēnos - 1940.14.-15.VII. - LVNM AA no. 279.	

No.	Deposit	Collection	Country	Dating	Artefacts	Manuscripts	References
8.	Rūšiši	LVNM A 9510: 1-33 (CVVM 62644)	Latvia	475-525	1 brooch (B) 1 dress pin (I) 5 bracelets (B) 2 drinking horns (B-parts) 6 small spirals (B) 1 battle-knife (I) 1 hoe (I) 1 spearhead (I) 2 scythes (I) 4 knives (I) 2 awls (I) 4 spurs (I) 1 bit (I) 1 hook (I) 2 hoops (I) 1 piece of iron slag	LVNM archives	Stepiņš 1939, pp.45-46; Šnore E. 1962, pp.577- 578; Urtāns 1977, pp.147- 148, Fig. 52
9.	Pašušvys	VDKM, 715:70, 1129:1; LNM AR EM 5:221	Lithuania	400-600	3 neck-rings (S)		LAA 1978, p.21; Audronė Bliujienė (pers. com.)

S– silver; B – bronze; I – iron; G – gold.

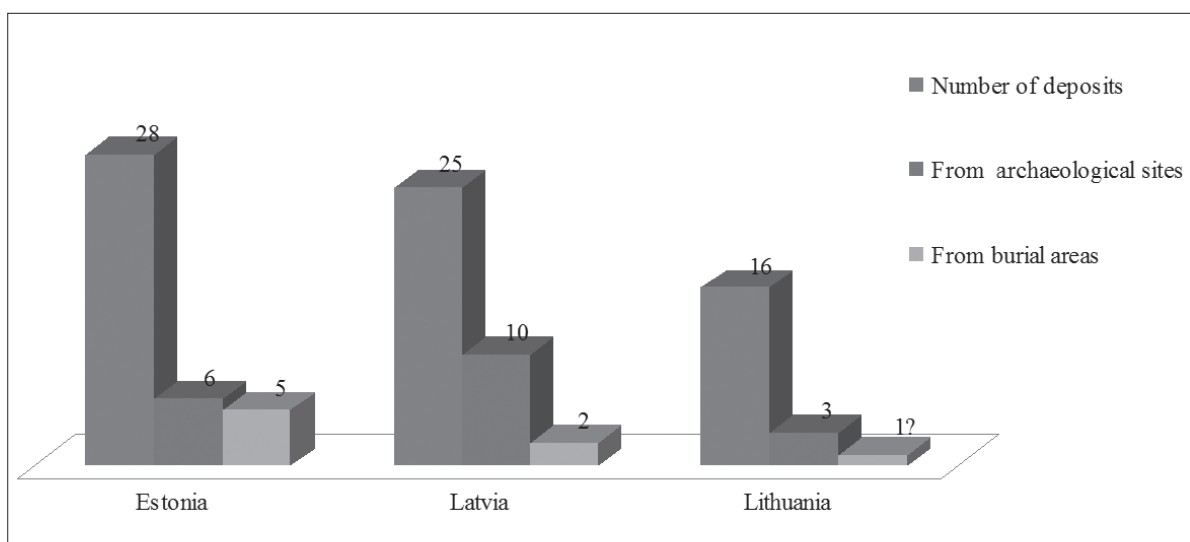


Fig. 2. The distribution of east Baltic wealth deposits according to the environment of concealment (graph by E. Oras).



1



2

Fig. 3. Examples of Estonian Middle Iron Age wealth deposits from burial areas. 1 Kardla (AI 2415) (photograph by E. Oras); 2 Kriimani (AI 1270) (photograph by V. Iserhardt, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum) (after Quast *et al.* 2010, p.102, Fig. 3).



Fig. 4. Examples of Latvian Middle Iron Age wealth deposits from burial areas.
1 Cibēni (LVNM A 10404); 2 Rūsiši (LVNM A 9510) (photograph by E. Oras).

Latvia

Out of 25 Latvian wealth deposits, ten are from archaeological sites. Most of the examples are, however, from hill-forts, but there are also two deposits, Rūsiši and Cibēni (Figs. 2; 4; Table 1: 7-8), in the burial areas. They both consist mainly of iron objects. They seem to relate to elite (?) male personal items: some weapons and tools, bronze ornaments, horse gear and drinking horn fragments. These deposits have been dated to the fifth to the early sixth century AD, and the surrounding burial area was in use in approximately the same or a slightly earlier time period. Both of the finds are located in the southwest-central part of Latvia (Semigallia). These finds belong to an area known for its weapon-rich male underground inhumation burials (e.g. Vasks 1999, p.63ff; Apals *et al.* 2001, p.453; Griciuvienė 2005; Vaškevičiūtė 2007). In the case of Cibēni as seen in the report of the excavations, the objects were even surrounded by stone slabs like inhumations in a cemetery (Stepiņš 1940). The Rūsiši finds were discovered in a pile of burnt stones and sooty soil, indicating a probable hearth (Stepiņš 1939; Urtāns 1977, p.148). As the items in the deposit, and even their placement in the case of the Cibēni find, are remarkably similar to contemporary male burial goods, these two wealth deposits have been interpreted rather as cenotaphs of lost high-status deceased individuals (Stepiņš 1939, p.46;

Stepiņš 1940; Kazakevičius, Malonaitis 2004, p.75). This fits well with the similar east Lithuanian tradition of male cenotaphs in Iron Age barrow cemeteries (Kurila 2007). In fact, there is a possibility that two more similar weapon deposits in burial areas consisting of weapons and/or personal items might be added to this list: Bālas-Šķērstaīņi and Īles Gailīšu (Stepiņš 1939, p.46; Kazakevičius, Malonaitis 2004, p.75, and the literature cited). However, in the case of the latter two, it seems that the exact interpretation as to whether these are separate wealth deposits or directly related to burials is not entirely clear.

Lithuania

Compared with the two previously discussed countries, the total number of wealth deposits (again, it needs to be stressed that coin deposits are excluded) is only 16. Three of them were found in or close to archaeological sites, namely hill-forts, whereas two were discovered in the marshy area at the foot of a fort (Fig. 2). There is no solid information about separately concealed wealth deposits from burial areas. According to Adolfas Tautavičius (LAA, 1978, p.21) and Audronė Bliujienė (personal communication), there is a possibility that three silver neck-rings from the Pašušvys burial ground in central Lithuania might have formed



Fig. 5. A neck-ring from the Pašušvys burial ground (LNM AR EM 5:221) (photograph from the archives of LNM).

a separate deposit (Table 1: 9, Fig. 5). This is based on the assumption that similar neck-rings have been discovered in separate deposits both in Latvia and Lithuania (Tautavičius 1978, p.21; Bliujienė 2010, p.154, Fig. 11). However, the cemetery was badly damaged during gravel digging in the late 19th and early 20th century (LAA 1977, p.85). Thus, it is impossible to argue whether these three silver neck-rings were separate wealth deposits in a burial ground or deposited as burial goods. The burial ground itself was used in the middle of the first millennium AD, and only a few finds are from later periods (Tautavičius 1996, p.85), overlapping rather well with the general chronology of such faceted neck-rings, that is, fifth to seventh century AD (see e.g. Bliujienė 2010, p.154, Fig. 11). There are some other possible examples of interesting depositional practices in Lithuanian burial areas that in principle might count as separate wealth deposits. The interesting tradition of putting weapons in Lithuanian cemeteries throughout the Iron Age should be considered in this context (Kazakevičius, Malonaitis 2004). However, most of these possible cenotaph candidates are single weapons with a direct connection with a grave, and thus are not considered as wealth deposits, but rather as parts of specific burial rituals. There are also some examples of what we might call additional burial goods in some Lithuanian Roman Iron Age female graves, e.g. Pašekščiai and Pavajuonis-Rėkučiai barrow cemetery. In these, besides the items and ornaments attached to the deceased, some extra and separately placed objects were deposited in the grave (see e.g. Semėnas 1998, p.151ff; Grižas, Steponaitis 2005; Bliujienė, Curta 2011, p.34). However, all of these, especially the latter two, are examples of somewhat unusual burial good depositions that, due to the context of their discovery, cannot be regarded as separate wealth deposits. Thus, we are in a situation where there are no certain separate wealth deposits from burial areas in Middle Iron Age Lithuanian material.

Interpretations of wealth depositing in burial areas

The phenomenon of hiding valuables in contemporary or previous burial areas as separate and distinguished deposits has been noticed by various archaeologists. It has even been successfully shown that deposits and burial goods are like two sides of the same coin: the consumption of wealth, decommo-ditisation and removing valuables from circulation, however, expressed in selective and distinguished depositional practices (cf. Needham 1988; Fontijn 2002; Crawford 2004; Bradley 2009).

There are examples of depositing single items or even whole assemblages in spectacular burial monuments that are no longer in active use. For instance, numerous Roman coins and other later artefacts have been discovered in Irish and British megalithic tombs (Grinsell 1967; Aitchison 1988, and the literature cited). Based on mythology and folklore traditions, these have been mostly interpreted as votive deposits or offerings that are still remembered in stories about hidden treasures concealed in ancient burial mounds (Grinsell 1967, pp.2, 10; Aitchison 1988, p.275ff). Quite often, a connection has been made with the *Beowulf* story of a dragon guarding a huge treasure in a barrow, or a hoard concealed in the mound of a deceased leader (e.g. Grinsell 1967, pp.4, 7; Harte 2009; Bradley 2009).

In fact, using written sources for interpreting archaeological material from transitional periods, such as the Late Iron Age, the Viking Age and early Medieval times, seems to be a more widespread phenomenon, often utilised in studies of north European deposits as well. The drawbacks and problems of comparing and using archaeological and written sources concurrently are well known to all scholars dealing with eras when, besides the sole archaeological data, the first written sources become available. Much ink has been spilt over the question of how reliable these written sources are. It is certainly necessary to acknowledge the distances of not only time and space, but also the cultures of the describers and the described. A critical approach and continuous evaluation of the reliability of early written sources in the context of the specific study must be kept in mind and recalled constantly (see below for further discussion). But every now and then, these fragments of early written data have caught the eye of archaeologists, and also those who study intentional artefact deposits.

Moving geographically closer, there are several examples of Viking Age hoard finds in earlier burial areas in the Baltic Sea (Heijne 2007; Bliujienė 2008). Quite often, these finds resemble other deposits from this period, consisting of coins, artefacts and hack-silver (Heijne 2007). They have been interpreted in different ways. One possibility is to see them as buried for safekeeping under the protection of ancestors (Heijne 2007; Bliujienė 2008, p.173). A similar interpretation has been proposed by Estonian scholars as well (Jonuks 2009, p.255). However, in particular in Estonian literature, finds from burial areas have been seen as deposits of valuables for the afterlife, made either by the owner himself/herself or the relatives of the deceased (e.g. Ligi 1995, p.229; Myrberg 2009, p.141; Tamla, Kiudsoo 2009, pp.20, 24). Sometimes, hoards

with special personal items, such as sets of jewellery, have been interpreted as symbolic burials or cenotaphs (Myrberg 2009). Both of these interpretations have been linked to the famous chapter from the Ynglinga Saga, where Odin's Law is described in chapter 8:

‘Óðinn established in his land the laws that had previously been observed among the Æsir. He ordained that all dead people must be burned and that their possessions should be laid on a pyre with them. He said that everyone should come to Valhalla with such wealth as he had on his pyre, and that each would also have the benefit of whatever he himself had buried in the earth ...’ (Snorri Sturluson, Heimskringla, Ynglinga Saga, chapter 8).

There is also another line of thought in interpretations of separate artefact deposits in burial areas. Some scholars have related these finds to some kind of ancestor-related rituals (Schmiedehelm 1934). Again, an interesting parallel can be found in the Ynglinga Saga, namely chapter 10:

‘Freyr caught an illness, and as the illness progressed people thought what to do, and they let few people come to him, and built a great tomb, and put a doorway and three windows in it. And when Freyr was dead, they carried him secretly into the tomb and told the Svíar that he was still alive, and kept him there for three years. And they poured all the tribute into the mound, the gold through one window, the silver through the second, and copper coins through the third. Then prosperity and peace continued. Freya kept up the sacrifices ...’ (Snorri Sturluson, Heimskringla, Ynglinga Saga, chapter 10).

This small fragment might be interpreted as homage to the deceased leader. Sacrifices to him of gold, silver and copper were expected to assure the well-being and fertility of society.

But yet another, rather interesting and less well-known series of written descriptions can be related to deposits of valuables in burial areas, which might hint at wider communal ritual practices. Namely, as is pointed out by Myrberg (2009, p.140) in relation to her studies of Scandinavian Late Iron Age hoards, there is a story in Heimskringla about Bjármaland and its people with their interesting ritual traditions. There are in fact several early Medieval written sources, including a description of the voyage of Wulfstan and Ohthere (see chapter 3 and 4 in Bosworth 1855; Bately, Englert [eds] 2007; Englert, Trakadas [eds] 2008) and different saga parts (Ross 1981) that mention Bjármaland,

a country northeast of Scandinavia, in the River Dvina area, most likely in what is now Karelia (Ross 1981, pp.51-58; Bately 2007, pp.45-46, 52, but see also Makarov 2007). In these passages, interesting ritual sites and related practices are described. For instance, in Heimskringla, we can find the story of Þórir's and Karli's trading adventure to Bjármaland:

‘When they are out to sea, a meeting is held and Þórir arranges an expedition, which promises danger but much booty: he said that in Bjármaland “when rich men died their chattels had to be divided between the dead man and his heirs; the dead man had to have a half or a third (but sometimes less); the property had to be carried out into the forest, sometimes to mounds, and buried; sometimes a building was put over it.” They go ashore. “First of all, there were level plains and then a great forest ... They came out into a large clearing and, in the clearing, there was a high palisade [*skiogaror*] with a door which was locked in front. Six of the natives were supposed to guard the palisade each night, two for each third of the night.” But they find it unguarded and effect an entry. “Þórir said ‘In this enclosure there is a mound in which gold and silver and earth are all mixed together; that is your objective. But in the enclosure there stands the god of the Bjarmar who is called Jomali; let no one be so bold as to plunder him.’ Then they went to the mound and took as many things as possible; they carried them in their clothes; much earth was mixed therewith as was to be expected.” Þórir now tells the party to leave but he “returned to Jomali and took a silver bowl which was standing on his knees; it was full of silver coins; he poured the silver into his kirtle and put the chain of the bowl over his arm; then he went out to the doorway. By this time all the others were out of the palisade; now they noticed that Þórir had stayed behind. Karli went back to look for him and they met inside the doorway; Karli saw that Þórir had the silver bowl with him. Then Karli ran to the Jomali; he saw that there was a thick necklet on his neck. Karli swung his axe at it and severed the strap at the back of the neck by which the necklet was held. The blow was so great that Jomali's head flew off; the crash was such that everybody was amazed. Karli took the necklet and then they went away. And as soon as the crash came the watchmen came out into the clearing and immediately blew their horns; then they heard the sound of trumpets on all sides of them.” The Bjarmar pursue them but they reach the ships in safety and depart’ (in Ross 1981, pp.30-31, emphasis by the author of the article).

In *Bósasaga*, another interesting description can be found in which the daughter of *Bjármaland*'s king tells a story to *Bósi*:

‘Here in this forest there stands a great temple; it belongs to King *Hárekr* ... there is a mighty god there, who is called *Jomali* [...] there is much gold and treasure there [...] In the temple there is, apart from the vulture and its egg, a slave who looks after the priestess' food; she needs a two-year-old heifer at every meal ... [...] *Bósi* and *Herrauðr* go to the temple and, slaying the slave, the priestess and the vulture, they find much gold and also the egg. They went to the altar where *Jomali* [...] was sitting; they took from him a gold crown set with 12 gems and a collar that would have cost 300 gold marks; and from his knees they took a silver bowl so large that four men could not have emptied it; it was full of red gold; and the cloth that was spread over *Jomali* [...] was worth more than three cargoes from the richest dromond that sails the Grecian sea; all this they took for themselves [...] In a carefully hidden recess they find *Hleiðr*; they take her with them, burn the temple and depart [...]’ (in Ross 1981, pp.34-35, emphasis by the author of the article).

Additions can be found in *Sturlaugssaga Starfsama*, in which *Sturlaugr* describes the temple in the *Bjármaland*:

‘*Sturlaugr* looks into the temple and sees *Þórr*, very tall, sitting in the high-seat; in front of him was a fine table coated with silver; he sees that the *urochshorn* is standing in front of *Þórr* on the table; it was as beautiful as gold to look on, and it was full of poison. He saw a backgammon board and men [*taflborð ok tafi*] standing there, both made of shining gold; resplendent garments and golden rings were fastened up on poles [...]’ (in Ross 1981, pp.36, emphasis by the author of the article).

Or another example from *Qrvar-Oddssaga*, where *Oddr* describes the following:

‘There is a mound standing higher up the River *Dvina*, composed of earth and bright coins; they have to carry there a double handful of silver and a double handful of earth for each man who dies and also for those who are born [...]’ (in Ross 1981, p.38, emphasis by the author of the article).

All these stories give a common description of the sacred mound in which communal ritual activities take place. This is an area which is also characterised by a statue of the local god called *Jomali*. As scholars

(Ross 1981, p.48ff) have successfully argued, this is a common name for god in various Finno-Ugric languages, including Estonian, where even today a god is referred to as ‘*Jumal*’. In addition, quite often this particular area is described as a place for various riches and offering practices: silver vessels into which coins are brought, neck-rings and collars around the statue of the god and/or poles, mixed wealth and earth to commemorate the dead and the living, and so on. It is particularly important that they all describe a specific area and people in northeast Europe. Looking at the archaeological evidence, and in combination with the content of these descriptions, I would hereby argue that they shed some new and rather remarkable light especially on the tradition of hiding precious metal ornaments and vessels as seen in Estonian Middle Iron Age material.

Discussion: Estonian wealth deposits in burial areas

As is evident from the presented data, Estonian wealth deposits from burial areas stand out clearly from their southern neighbours. We are looking at the intentionally concealed precious metal objects, mainly ornaments (dominated by various rings) and silver vessels that are absent in contemporaneous burial goods. It is also noticeable that if precious metal objects are concealed in archaeological sites, they tend to be related to various stone grave constructions or their vicinity. All the finds are located in the south-central part of the country, in the area of Lake *Peipsi* (*Peipus*) and the River *Emajõgi*. The dating range of the deposits is narrowed to the late fifth to the sixth century AD. Additionally, looking at the overall material of Estonian Middle Iron Age wealth deposits (see Oras 2010), it is striking that the act of depositing these items was highly acknowledged and selective. Firstly, none of the deposits in burial areas include weapons, although weapon deposits are known from this period. Secondly, such assemblages of precious ornaments and single silver vessels are found mainly in burial areas, whereas deposits of bronze ornaments during these centuries are discovered in various watery conditions. This altogether seems to reflect particular conscious choices about which artefacts are suitable for depositing in specific environments. Additionally, this kind of tradition of hiding precious metal ornaments and vessels in contemporary or earlier stone grave areas seems to be a specifically ‘Estonian’ phenomenon, concentrated in the small south-central part of the country.

This is the point at which, some might argue, it is best to end this article, leaving further interpretations open for the creative ideas and explanations of every single reader. However, the interesting parallel describing ritual activities taking place in Bjármaland as presented in several paragraphs above cannot leave the author of this article indifferent and unintrigued.

This all leads us to the much broader question of how much we should rely on written sources, and search for concepts described in them in archaeological material in the first place. Perhaps we should content ourselves with using written sources as an interesting parallel that help to widen our ideas about the archaeological source material and make our interpretations more varied and thought provoking (e.g. Jennbert *et al.* 2002; Andrén *et al.* 2006; Andrén 2011; Price 2002; 2004; 2006; Hultgård 2008). Therefore, more recent scholars tend to be more cautious when discussing the direct relation between Prehistoric religion and Medieval written sources. The latter approach is indeed taken by the author of the current article as well. And precisely due to this, I argue for the need to study archaeological and written sources separately. In this respect, it has to be emphasised that the pattern of concealing precious metal vessels and ornaments in burial areas became evident even before I became acquainted with the interesting stories about Bjármaland (see e.g. Oras 2010, p.131). It is only after gaining separate results from an independent analysis of written sources and archaeological material that some interesting similarities in their content can be emphasised.

Issues in interpreting early Medieval written sources describing areas of contemporary Estonia have been discussed previously (see e.g. Palmaru 1980; Jonuks 2005b). This is particularly topical when relating the written sources to religious activities. As is pointed out by Jonuks (2009, p.48ff), we have to bear in mind that, in the case of describing Estonia(ns), not only were the records written down at a long distance both mentally and physically, and in terms of time, but also their motives and goals were most likely something other than an objective description of foreigners. The most important point to bear in mind is the oppositional mentalities of Christian and non-Christian polarities in Medieval Europe, and in this context it is more than likely that the 'pagans' were perceived as ill-fated and wild, with their peculiar and unacceptable religious and ritual activities. Therefore, in the case of Old Norse sources about the people in the east, we are looking through two lenses at least: one of writers describing pagan outsiders, and the other of storytellers

who were telling about the weird people in the north and east (Jonuks 2005a-b).

So, bearing in mind the problem of using written sources in the interpretation of Prehistoric ritual activities, there are still some striking similarities in the descriptions provided above and the archaeological material of Estonian Middle Iron Age wealth deposits in burial areas. The minimum we can conclude is that 1) the materialities of those Estonian Middle Iron Age wealth deposits, precious metal rings and vessels, share common characteristics with the ones described in the given written sources; 2) both of them include the concept of mixing valuables and earth in relation to some kind of sacred site, a mound which in principle (although not necessarily) can be related to an earlier burial ground as seen in archaeological material; 3) the notion of god or Jomali is related to the Finno-Ugric religious world-view. The latter, indeed, might be another argument to explain the lack of such deposits in the south, among the Baltic tribes.

In relation to these minimum conclusions, it is interesting to note that, for instance, numerous Sámi later period sacrificial sites and silver hoards in previous sacred sites also include a considerable amount of various rings (Zachrisson 1984; Spangen 2005, pp.48-83; 2009). In the material of the Viking Age northern Norway Sámi population, several silver hoards in previous sacred sites, including burial areas (*sic!*), have been recorded, whereas the most frequent objects are silver neck-rings (Fossum 2006, pp.115-120, and the literature cited). In the White Sea area, there are also some Viking Age and early Medieval silver hoards which often include several neck-rings (Makarov 2007, p.143ff), but no direct relation to burial areas has been recorded so far. However, to add another interesting parallel from a closer area, there is also a discovery of a Pamio-Spurila Roman Iron Age find from Finland which included a pair of neck-rings, possibly in relation to a bracelet, ring and brooches, and was discovered next to the larger stone of a cremation cemetery (Luoto, Asplund 1986; Luoto 2010, p.25). The items were scattered over a larger area, but the neck-rings were clearly placed together on top of each other. The neck-rings seem not to have been worn, their type is unparalleled in Finland, and thus we are possibly looking at something other than an ordinary set of woman's ornaments.

Of course, it has to be admitted that a neck-ring, and rings in general, has a universal significance which can be followed in Scandinavian archaeological mate-

rial from the Bronze Age onwards (e.g. Capelle 1967; Thrane 1982) and is evident in the iconography, as well as archaeological finds, from Iron Age Scandinavia (e.g. Stenberger 1977, pp.290ff, 314-322; Helg 1990; Hedeager 1992, p.60ff; Jørgensen 1995, p.92ff; Lund Hansen 2001; Lamm 2004; Jensen 2006, pp.60ff, 105ff). However, the latter finds are, according to the knowledge of the author, not related to previous burial areas. By contrast, as described above, at least the Scandinavian Viking Age hoards in the vicinity of burial areas are less selective and consist of a whole variety of silver objects, including coins and hack silver (Zachrisson 1998; Heijne 2007). Additionally, although there are silver neck-ring finds from the fifth to the seventh century in Latvian and Lithuanian archaeological material, they too are found either as burial goods or separate deposits without any close connection to contemporary or earlier burial areas (Bliujienė 2010, Fig. 11; Bliujienė, Curta 2011, Fig. 17). Therefore, it is likely that based on purely archaeological material, there is considerable cultural differentiation in the depositional practices both to the south and west of the Finno-Ugric population.

There are several questions which remain open. One of them is why this particular practice of hiding valuables in burial areas is such a short-term and very regional practice, even within modern Estonia. This is particularly interesting in the context of the above-mentioned Sámi sacred sites, which indicate that the tradition of depositing silver objects in them was carried out mainly during the Viking Age or later periods. Besides, although Finnish archaeological material does provide some interesting parallels, it is still quantitatively modest.

It is also a matter of interpretation to what extent burial areas are connected with the sites of later communal ritual activities. As we see in the written source descriptions, burial grounds as such are not mentioned in that connection. However, again the Sámi examples of northern Norway allow us to draw a connection between (previous) burial areas and later communal sacred sites (Fossum 2006). There are also some examples of deposits in the vicinity of burial areas from the Early Viking Age and later periods in Finland (e.g. Siljander, Poutiainen 2010). In this context, we can emphasise the Kuhmoinen-Papinsaari bronze ornament deposits from around 800 AD, discovered some 300 metres from a burial ground to which the folklore of a sacred site has been attached (Siljander, Poutiainen 2010, pp.83ff, 96ff). Additionally, scholars from both Finland and Estonia have established at least some relation between burial grounds and *hiisi*-sites or holy

groves (see e.g. Lang 1999; Jonuks 2007; Wessman 2009, and the literature cited).

And finally, the question remains about the fact that the ornaments and vessels in the Estonian material are actually separate finds, as is evident in the material of the wealth deposits. However, in the written sources they seem to belong to one and the same site, and to be used in the same activities concurrently. To the knowledge of the author of the current article, there have been no combinations of precious metal ornaments and vessels as a separate wealth deposit in Estonian and Finnish Iron Age archaeological material.

In the current state of research, I cannot answer these questions, as I cannot provide solid proof that in the case of Estonian Middle Iron Age material we really are dealing with particular sacred places and practices as described in Old Norse sources. Perhaps we are looking at early (if not the earliest) traces of this particular communal ritual practice, which spread for a brief time in Estonia, but was later carried out in a more elaborate way by other northern Finno-Ugrians. The differences might relate to the economics and different values, as well as to the use of silver in different Nordic areas: Estonia as directly on the eastern route of the Vikings, as opposed to more peripheral areas further north. The latter might be reflected in the general numbers of Viking and Late Iron Age coin finds, where Estonia clearly exceeds Finland in the amount of coin finds (see e.g. Tõnisson 1962; Talvio 2002, Table 1). At this point in the research, it all remains purely speculative. And, without doubt, the descriptions provided in the written sources are certainly closer both in time and space to the archaeological data from northern Scandinavia and Finland, and not so much to Estonia a couple of centuries earlier.

However, what I can conclude is that all the Estonian Middle Iron Age silver objects I have described were discovered in burial areas which might be related to other ritual activities, not only the burying of deceased individuals. The objects themselves were rather unique and rarely discovered in contemporary burial goods or other deposits from this period. This indicates a special selection of objects for this particular depositional practice. Additionally, in the east Baltic context, it is only in Estonia, one of the southernmost Finno-Ugric population areas, that these silver wealth deposits have been discovered in this particular period. And the descriptions indicate these practices as belonging to Finno-Ugrians. Finds from the same period in Latvia

and Lithuania show quite different choices and depositional practices.

Finally, I do not wish to state that there is a direct correlation between Estonian Middle Iron Age wealth deposits in burial areas and these fragments of Old Norse written sources. Rather, these written sources open up a whole new interpretative mind-game, at least for the author of this article. Without these rich and multifaceted Old Norse and English sources, we would see Estonian Middle Iron Age wealth deposits in burial areas as just imported silver objects hidden in an unusual environment in a short time period. In that case, I would say that, if nothing else, we would be missing a very good story. Therefore, I would argue that being at least aware of this story helps to see the archaeological material in a new, and perhaps more colourful, light.

Conclusion

Burial monuments are remarkable landscape signposts with long-term use and a variety of related cultural activities, of which the burial of the deceased is the main but certainly not the only one. Hiding separate assemblages of valuables in these areas is one example of the different uses and reuses of these sites. Although cross-cultural phenomena in general, the detailed analysis of such practices indicate regional and culture-specific characteristics that warn archaeologists against applying universal explanations to what at first sight might look like similar archaeological data. To argue for the latter, I have pointed out differences in the overall material from east Baltic Middle Iron Age wealth deposits in burial areas. These conclusions could not have been made without the concept of a 'wealth deposit' that allows us to look at intentionally concealed separate artefacts regardless of their amount, production material, the environment of concealment, and the location in the cultural landscape. As a result of such large-scale comparisons, it has also been possible to emphasise the special character of Estonian Middle Iron Age material, which clearly stands out in the east Baltic data from this period, and thus has provoked more elaborate discussion of possible interpretations of this particular regional phenomenon.

Acknowledgements

This article is based on a paper given at the 18th Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists in Helsinki in 2012. I would like to thank the Estonian Cultural Foundation (Eesti Kultuurkapital) and MERC (Medieval Europe Research Congress)

bursary scheme for supporting my conference attendance. My sincere gratitude goes to Catherine Hills and Tõnno Jonuks for reading and commenting on the first draft of this article. The research was supported by the Estonian Science Foundation Grant (ETF8956) 'The Materiality of Religion – Religious Artefacts in Estonian Archaeological Collections', and by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence CECT).

Abbreviations

AI – Institute of History, Tallinn University
LNM AR – Lithuanian National Museum, Archaeology collections, Vilnius
LVNM – Latvian National Historical Museum, Riga
Sb. GEG – Sitzungsberichte der Gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft, 1861–1923; Õpetatud Eesti Seltsi Aastaraamat, 1924–1938; 1988–. Dorpat (Tartu), 1861–1940; 1995–.
TÜAK – Arheoloogia kabinet (archaeological infrastructure unit of the University of Tartu), University of Tartu
VDKM – Vytautas the Great War Museum, Kaunas

References

Manuscripts

- ALLIK, H., MARKUS, E., 1923. Pilištvere kihelkonna muinasjäänused. Manuscript in TÜAK.
JÜRIADO, A., 1928/1929. Nõo khk-st ajalooline traditsioon. Manuscript in TÜAK.
ORAS, E., 2009. Eesti keskmise rauaaja peitvarad (Magistritöö/ MA thesis). Tartu Ülikool. Tartu.
RIISIBERG, A., 1921. Nõo kihelkonna arheoloogiline kirjeldus. Manuscript in TÜAK.
SCHMIEDEHELM, M., 1933. Aruanne kaevamistest Kambja kh. Kambja vl. Paali talu kivikalmel 14.VIII-21.VIII 1933 a. Manuscript in TÜAK.
STEPINŠ, P., 1940. Izraukumi Īles Cibēnos - 1940.14.-15. VII. - LVNM AA no. 279. Manuscript in LVNM.
TIITSMAA, A., 1921. Kodavere [kihelkonnakirjeldus]. Manuscript in TÜAK.
VALK, H., 1993. Inspektsiooniaruanne Äksi kihelkonna edelaosast 05. juunil 1993. Manuscript in TÜAK.

Literature

- AITCHISON, N.B., 1988. Roman Wealth, Native Ritual: Coin Hoards within and beyond Roman Britain. *World Archaeology*, 20(2), 270-284.
ANDRÉN, A., 2011. Old Norse and Germanic Religion. In: T. INSOLL, ed. *Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion*. Oxford: University Press, 846-862.
ANDRÉN, A., JENNBERT, K., RAUDVERE, C., (eds.) 2006. *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, Changes, and Interactions: An International Conference in Lund, Sweden, June 3-7, 2004*. Vågar till Midgård, 8. Lund: Nordic Academic.
APALS, J., ATGAZIS, M., DAIGA, J., DENISOVA, R., GRAUDONIS, J., LOZE, I., MUGUREVICS, Ē., STU-

- BAVS, A., ŠNORE, E., ZAGORSKIS, F., ZARINA, A. 1974. *Latvijas PSR Arheoloģija*. Rīga: Zinātne.
- APALS, J., MUGURĒVIČS, Ē., VASKS, A., 2001. *Latvijas senaka vesture 9.g.t. pr. Kr.-1200.g.* Rīga: Latvijas vestures instituta apgads.
- AUN, M., 1992. *Arheologischeskie pamiatniki vtoroi poloviny I-ogo tysiacheletia n.e. v lugo-vostochnoi Estonii*. Tallinn: Olion.
- BARRETT, J.C., 1988. Fields of Discourse: Reconstituting a Social Archaeology. *Critique of Anthropology*, 7(3), 5-16.
- BARRETT, J., 2000. A Thesis in Agency. In: M.-A. DOBRES, J.E. ROBB, eds. *Agency in Archaeology*. London: Routledge, 61-68.
- BARRETT, J., 2001. Agency, the Duality of Structure, and the Problem of the archaeological record. In: I. HODDER, ed. *Archaeological Theory Today*. Cambridge: Polity, 141-164.
- BATELY, J., 2007. Text and translation. In: J. BATELY, A. ENGLERT, eds. *Ohther's Voyages: A Late 9th-Century Account Of Voyages Along The Coasts Of Norway And Denmark And Its Cultural Context. Maritime Culture Of The North*, 1. Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum, 40-58.
- BATELY, J., ENGLERT, A., eds. 2007. *Ohthere's Voyages: A Late 9th-Century Account Of Voyages Along The Coasts Of Norway And Denmark And Its Cultural Context. aritime Culture Of The North*, 1. Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum.
- BERGGREN, A., STUTZ, L.N., 2010. From Spectator to Critic and Participant: A new Role for Archaeology in Ritual Studies. *Journal of Social Archaeology*, 10, 171-197.
- BLIUJENĒ, A., 2008. Trade, Warfare, Looting and Hoarding: Attributes of Viking Age Contacts across the Baltic Sea. In: *Pētījumi Kuršu Senatnē, Latvijas Nacionālā Vēstures Muzeja Raksti, 14. Arheoloģija*. Latvijas Nacionālais Vēstures muzejs, Rīga, 167-179.
- BLIUJENĒ, A., 2010. The Bog Offerings of the Balts: "I Give in Order to Get Back". *Archaeologia Baltica*, 14, 136-165.
- BLIUJENĒ, A., CURTA, F., 2011. Exotic Lands, Quixotic Friends: Eastern Lithuania and the Carpathian Basin in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages (AD c 380 to c 620). *Medieval Archaeology*, 55, 28-64.
- BOSWORTH, J., 1855. *A Description of Europe and the Voyages of Ohthere and Wulfstan: Written in Anglo-Saxon by King Alfred the Great*. London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans.
- BRADLEY, R., 1987. Stages in the Chronological Development of Hoards and Votive Deposits. *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 53, 351-362.
- BRADLEY, R., 1988. Hoarding, Recycling and the Consumption of Prehistoric Metalwork: Technological Change in Western Europe. *World Archaeology*, 20(2), 249-260.
- BRADLEY, R., 2003. A Life Less Ordinary: The Ritualization of The Domestic Sphere in Later Prehistoric Europe. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 13, 5-23.
- BRADLEY, R., 2005. *Ritual and Domestic Life in Prehistoric Europe*. London: Routledge.
- BRADLEY, R., 2009. Beowulf and British prehistory. In: D. SAYER, H. WILLIAMS, eds. *Mortuary Practices and Social Identities in the Middle Ages. Essays in Burial Archaeology in Honour of Heinrich Härke*. University of Exeter Press, Exeter, 38-45.
- BRÜCK, J., 1999. Ritual and rationality: Some problems of interpretation in European archaeology. *European Journal of Archaeology*, 2, 313-344.
- CAPELLE, T., 1967. Zu den Halsringopfern der jüngeren Bronzezeit im westlichen Ostseegebiet. *Acta Archaeologica*, 38, 209-214.
- CRAWFORD, S., 2004. Votive deposition, religion and the Anglo-Saxon furnished burial ritual. *World Archaeology*, 36(1), 87-102.
- DUCMANE, K., OZOLIŅA, A., 2009. *Latvija Eiropā: Monētu depoziiti 1.-20. gadsimtā, Latvijas vēstures Nacionālais muzejs numismātika*. Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālais Vēstures muzejs.
- EBERT, M., 1913. Die baltischen Provinzen Kurland, Livland, Estland. *Praehistorische Zeitschrift*, V, 498-559.
- ENGEL, C., 1914. I. Führer durch die vorgeschichtliche Sammlung des Dommuseums. Dommuseum der Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Alterdumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands. Riga.
- ENGLERT, A., TRAKADAS, A., eds. 2008. *Wulfstan's Voyage. The Baltic Sea Region In The Early Viking Age As Seen From Shipboard. aritime Culture Of The North*, 2. Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum.
- FONTIJN, D.R., 2002. *Sacrificial Landscapes. Cultural Biographies of Persons, Objects and Natural Places in the Bronze Age of the Southern Netherlands, c.2300-600 BC, Analecta Praehistorica Leidensia 33/34*. Leiden: Faculty of Archaeology, University of Leiden.
- FOSSUM, B., 2006. *Förfädernas land: en arkeologisk studie av rituella lämningar i Sápmi, 300 f. Kr-1600 e. Kr. Institutionen för arkeologi och samiska studier*. Umeå universitet.
- GRICIUVIENĒ, E., 2005. *Žiemgaliai Baltų Archeologijos Paroda. Katalogas / The Semigallians/ Baltic Archaeological Exhibition. Catalogue*. Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus, Latvijas Nacionālais Vēstures muzejs.
- GRICIUVIENĒ, E., 2007. *Sēļiai: Baltų Archeologijos Paroda. Katalogas / The Selonians. Baltic Archaeological Exhibition. Catalogue*. Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus, Latvijas Nacionālais Vēstures muzejs.
- GRICIUVIENĒ, E., 2009. *Kuršiai: genties kultūra laidosenos duomenimis: Baltų archeologijos paroda. Katalogas / The Curonians. Tribe Culture According to the Burial Data. Catalogue*. Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus, Latvijas Nacionālais vēstures muzejs.
- GRINSELL, L.V., 1967. Barrow treasure, in fact, tradition, and legislation. *Folklore*, 78, 1-38.
- GRIŽAS, G., STEPONAITIS, V., 2005. Pašėkšėių pilkapy-nas. In: *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2002 metais*. Vilnius: Diemedžio leidykla, 61.
- HAMON, C., QUILLIEC, B., 2008. Hoards from the Neolithic to the Metal Ages: Technical and codified practices - Introduction. In: C. HAMON, B. QUILLIEC, eds. *Hoards from the Neolithic to the Metal Ages Technical and Codified Practices: Session of the XIth Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists*. BAR International Series, 1758. Oxford: Archaeopress, 1-4.
- HARDING, J., 2005. Rethinking the Great Divide: Long-Term Structural History and the Temporality of Event. *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 38, 88-101.
- HARTE, J., 2009. Dragons, elves and giants: some pre-archaeological occupants of British barrows. In: M. AL-

- DRICH, R.J. WALLIS, eds. *Antiquaries And Archaists The Past In The Past In The Past In The Present*. Reading: Spire Books, 14-28.
- HAUSMANN, R., 1909. *Übersicht über die archäologische Forschung in den Ostseeprovinzen im letzten Jahrzehnt Vortrag, gehalten auf dem Historikertag zu Riga 1908*. Riga.
- HAUSMANN, R., 1914. Der Depotfund von Dorpat. In: *Baltische Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte*. Arbeiten Des Baltischen Vorbereitenden Komitees Für Den XVI. Archäologischen Kongress in Pleskau 1914. Herausgegeben Von Der Gesellschaft Für Geschichte Und Altertumskunde Der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands. Riga: G. Reimer, 97-116.
- HEDEAGER, L., 1992. *Iron-Age Societies From Tribe To State In Northern Europe, 500 BC to AD 700*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- HEIJNE, C. VON, 2007. Keepers of the Past - Hoarding in Old Grave Monuments in Viking-age Southern Scandinavia. In: U. FRANSSON, M. SVEDIN, S. BERGERBRANT, F. ANDROSHCHUK, eds. *Cultural Interaction between East and West Archaeology, Artefacts and Human Contacts in Northern Europe*. *Stockholm Studies in Archaeology*, 44. Stockholm: Stockholms Universitet, 148-152.
- HELG, B., 1990. The gold necklet from Kyhl. *Meddelanden från Lunds Universitets Historiska Museum*, 1989-1990, 120-128.
- HINGLEY, R., 2006. The Deposition of Iron Objects in Britain During the Later Prehistoric and Roman Periods: Contextual Analysis and the Significance Of Iron. *Britannia*, 37, 213-257.
- HULTGÅRD, A., 2008. The religion of the Vikings. In: S. BRINK, N.S. PRICE, eds. *The Viking Way Religion and War in Late Iron Age Scandinavia*. Oxon: Routledge, 212-218.
- JAANITS, L., LAUL, S., LÕUGAS, V., TÕNISSON, E., 1982. *Eesti esiajalugu*. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat.
- JENNBERT, K., ANDRÉN, A., RAUDVERE, C., eds. 2002. *Plats och praxis studier av nordisk förkristen ritual. Vägar till Midgård*, 2. Lund: Nordic Academic Press.
- JENSEN, J., 2006. *Danmarks oldtid. Yngre Jernalder og Vikingetid, 400-1050 e. Kr., 2. udg., 1. opl.* ed. København: Gyldendal.
- JOHNS, C., 1994. Romano-British precious-metal hoards: some comments on Martin Millett's paper. In: S. COTTAM, ed. *TRAC 94. Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference, Held at the Department of Archaeology, University of Durham, 19th & 20th March*, 1994. Oxford: Oxbow, 107-117.
- JOHNS, C., 1996a. Hacked, broken or chopped? A matter of terminology. *Antiquaries Journal*, 76, 228-230.
- JOHNS, C., 1996b. The Classification and interpretation of Romano-British treasures. *Britannia*, 27, 1-16.
- JONUKS, T., 2005a. Archaeology of Religion - Possibilities and prospects. *Estonian Journal of Archaeology* 9(1), 32-59.
- JONUKS, T., 2005b. Eesti ja kujutus Eestist Skandinaavia saagades. *Mäetagused*, 23, 130-140.
- JONUKS, T., 2007. Holy Groves in Estonian Religion. *Estonian Journal of Archaeology*, 11(1), 3-35.
- JONUKS, T., 2009. *Eesti muinasusund. Dissertationes archaeologiae Universitatis Tartuensis*, 2. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus.
- JØRGENSEN, L., 1995. Stormandssaeder og skattefund i 3.-12. århundrede. *Forntid og Nutid*, 1995(2), 83-110.
- JOYCE, R.A., POLLARD, J., 2010. Archaeological assemblages and practices of deposition. In: D. HICKS, M. C. BEAUDRY, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*. *Oxford Handbooks*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 291-309.
- KAZAKEVIČIUS, C., MALONAITIS, A., 2006. Sacrifices of weapons in Baltic burials. In: M. BERTASIUS, ed. *Transformatio mundi. The transition from the Late Migration Period to the Early Viking Age in the East Baltic*. Kaunas: University of Technology Department of Philosophy and Cultural Science, 73-79.
- KIUDSOO, M., 2005. Eesti kagunurga aardeleid (Vastseliina-Alüksne keskaegne ühendustee). In: M. AUN, Ü. TAMLA, eds. *Uurimusi Setumaa loodusest, ajaloo ja folkloristikast. Setumaa kogumik*, 3. Tallinn: Ajaloo Instituut, 138-169.
- KURILA, L., 2007. Graves of the unburied: Symbolic Iron Age warrior burials in East Lithuania. *Archaeologia Baltica*, 8 (*Weapons, Weaponry and Man. In memoriam Vytautas Kazakevičius*), 292-301.
- LAA, 1978. *Lietuvos TSR archeologijos atlasas. T IV. I - XIII a. radiniai*. Vilnius: LTSR Mokslų akademijos Istorijos institutas.
- LAA, 1977. *Lietuvos TSR archeologijos atlasas. T III. I-XIII a. pilkapynai ir senkapiai*. Vilnius: LTSR Mokslų akademijos Istorijos institutas.
- LAMM, J.P., 2004. Figural gold foils found in Sweden. A study based on the discoveries from Helgö. In: H. CLARKE, K. LAMM, eds. *Excavations at Helgö XVI. Exotic and Sacral Finds from Helgö*, 16. Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets historie och antikvitets akademien, 41-142.
- LANG, V., 1996. *Muistne Rävåla. Muistised, kronoloogia ja maaviljelusliku asustuse kujunemine Loode-Eestis, eriti Pirita jõe alamjooksu piirkonnas. I-II, Muinasaja teadus*, 4. Tallinn: Ajaloo Instituut.
- LANG, V., 1999. Kultuurmaastikku luues: Essee maastiku religioosest ja sümboliseeritud korraldusest. *Eesti Arheoloogia Ajakiri*, 3(1), 63-85.
- LANG, V., 2007a. *Baltimaade pronksi- ja rauaaeg*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus.
- LANG, V., 2007b. *The Bronze and Early Iron Ages in Estonia. Estonian Archaeology*, 3. Tartu: University Press.
- LIGI, P., 1995. Ühiskondlikest oludest Eesti alal hilispronksi ja rauaajal. In: V. LANG, ed. *Eesti arheoloogia historiograafilisi, teoreetilisi ja kultuuriajaloolisi aspekte. Muinasaja teadus; Tõid Arheoloogia Alalt*, 3. Tallinn: Teaduste Akadeemia Kirjastus, 182-270.
- LUND HANSEN, U., 2001. Gold rings - symbols of sex and rank. Necklaces and bracelets in Scandinavia and continental Europe from the Late Roman and Migration periods. In: B. MAGNUS, ed. *Roman Gold And The Development Of The Early Germanic Kingdoms : Aspects Of Technical, Socio-Political, Socio-Economic, Artistic And Intellectual Development, A.D. 1-550: Symposium in Stockholm, 14-16 November 1997. Konferenser* (Kungl. Vitterhets, historie och antikvitets akademien), 51. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 157-188.

- LUOTO, S., 2010 Suomen esihistoriallisista uhrilöydöistä. In: H. POUTIAINEN, ed. *Hirviveenestä Hullukaaliin – Muinaisuskomukset Arkeologisen Aineiston Tulkinnassa. Päijät-Hämeen Tutkimusseuran Vuosikirja*. Hämeenlinna: Päijät-Hämeen tutkimusseura, 12-33.
- LUOTO, S., ASPLUND, H., 1986. Två halsringar med halvklotformiga ändknoppar från Spurila i Pemar (Paimio). In: T. EDGREN, ed. *Studia prähistorica Fennica C.F. Meinander septuagenario dedicate*. ISKOS, 6. Helsinki: Suomen muinaismuistoyhdistys, 67-76.
- MAKAROV, J., 2007. The land of the Beormas. In: J. BATELY, A. ENGLERT, eds. *Ohthere's Voyages. A Late 9th-Century Account Of Voyages Along The Coasts Of Norway And Denmark And Its Cultural Context. Maritime Culture Of The North*, 1. Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum, 140-149.
- MELNE, I. ed., 2006. *Pētījumi Sēļu Senatnē: Rakstu Krājums, Latvijas nacionālā vēstures muzeja raksti*, 11. Rīga: Latvijas nacionālais vēstures muzejs.
- MICHELBERTAS, M., 1986. *Senasis geležies amžius Lietuvoje, I-IV amžius*. Vilnius: Mokslas.
- MICHELBERTAS, M., 2001. *Corpus Der Römischen Funde Im Europäischen Barbaricum: Litauen*. Vilnius: Universität Vilnius Lehrstuhl für Archäologie.
- MILLETT, M., 1994. Treasure: interpreting Roman hoards. In: S. COTTAM, ed. *TRAC 94 Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference, Held at the Department of Archaeology, University of Durham, 19th & 20th March, 1994*. Oxford: Oxbow, 99-106.
- MILLS, B.J., WALKER, W.H., 2008. Introduction: memory, materiality, and depositional practice. In: B.J. MILLS, W.H. WALKER, eds. *Memory Work Archaeologies of Material Practices. School for Advanced Research Advanced Seminar Series*. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 3-23.
- MOORA, H., 1925. *Hõbeaare Pilistverest. Eesti Rahva Muuseumi Aastaraamat*, 1, 110-117.
- MOORA, H., 1929. *Die Eisenzeit in Lettland bis etwa 500 N. Chr. Verhandlung der Gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft*, 25. Tartu-Dorpat.
- MOORA, H., 1938. *Die Eisenzeit in Lettland bis etwa 500 N. Chr. II. Teil. Analyse*. Verhandlungen der Gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft, 29. Tartu.
- MOORA, H., LAID, E., MÄGISTE, J., KRUS, H., 1936. *Eesti ajalugu I: Esiajalugu ja muistne vabadusvõitlus*. Tartu: Eesti Kirjanduse Selts.
- MUIŽNIEKS, V., ed. 2008. *Pētījumi Kuršu Senatne Rakstu Krājums, Latvijas nacionālā vēstures muzeja raksti*, 14. Rīga: Latvijas nacionālais vēstures muzejs.
- MYRBERG, N., 2009. The hoarded dead. Late Iron Age silver hoards as graves. In: I.-M. BACK DANIELSSON, I. GUSTIN, A. LARSSON, N. MYRBERG, S. THEDÉEN, eds. *Döda Personers Sällskap Gravmaterialens Identiteter Och Kulturella Uttryck / On the Threshold Burial Archaeology in the Twenty-first Century. Stockholm Studies in Archaeology*, 47. Stockholm: Institutionen för arkeologi och antikens kultur, Stockholms universitet, 131-145.
- NEEDHAM, S.P., 1988. Selective deposition in the British Early Bronze Age. *World Archaeology* 20(2), 229-248.
- ORAS, E., 2010. Ritual wealth deposits in Estonian Middle Iron Age material. *Estonian Journal of Archaeology*, 14(2), 123-142.
- ORAS, E., 2012. Importance of terms – What is a wealth deposit? *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology*, 22.
- PALMARU, R., 1980. Eesti vanimais kirjalikes allikates. *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 5, 261-269.
- PRICE, N.S., 2002. *The Viking Way Religion And War In Late Iron Age Scandinavia*. Oxford: Oxbow.
- PRICE, N., 2004. The archaeology of Seiðr: circumpolar traditions in Viking pre-Christian religion. *Brathair*, 4, 109-126.
- PRICE, N., 2006. What's in a name? An archaeological identity crisis for the Norse gods (and some of their friends). In: A. ANDRÉN, K. JENNBERT, C. RAUDVERE, eds. *Old Norse Religion in Long-term Perspectives Origins, Changes, and Interactions an International Conference in Lund, Sweden, June 3-7, 2004. Vägar till Midgård*, 8. Lund: Nordic Academic, 177-183.
- QUAST, D., TAMLA, U., FELTEN, S., 2010. Two fifth century ad Byzantine silver bowls from Estonia. *Estonian Journal of Archaeology*, 14(2), 99-122.
- RANDSBORG, K., 2002. Wetland hoards. *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 21(4), 415-418.
- RITUMS, R., ed. 2004. *Pētījumi Zemgaļu Senatnē: Rakstu Krājums, Latvijas Vēstures Muzeja raksti*. Rīga: Latvijas Vēstures Muzejs.
- ROBB, J., 2010. Beyond agency. *World Archaeology*, 42 (4), 493-520.
- ROSS, A.S.C., 1981. *The Terfinnas and Beormas of Ohthere*. London: Viking Society for Northern Research.
- SCHMIEDEHELM, M., 1934. Keskmise rauaaja aardeleide Kambjast. *Eesti Rahva Muuseumi Aastaraamat*, 9-10, 210-224.
- SCHMIEDEHELM, M., 1955. *Archeologischeskie pamiatniki perioda razlozhenia rodovogo stroia na severo-vostoke Estonii (V vek do n. e. – V vek h.e.)*. Tallinn: Estonskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo.
- SELIRAND, J., TÕNISSON, E., 1963. *Läbi aastatuhandete, Teaduse teedelt*. Tallinn.
- SEMĖNAS, G., 1998. Pavajuonio-Rėkučių pilkapyno tyrinėjimai 1996 metais. In: *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 1996 ir 1997 metais*. Vilnius: Diemedžio leidykla, 150-152.
- SILJANDER, E., POUTIAINEN, H., 2010. Päijät-Hämeen rautakautiset aarre- ja korukätkölöidöt. In: H. POUTIAINEN, ed. *Hirviveenestä Hullukaaliin – Muinaisuskomukset Arkeologisen Aineiston Tulkinnassa. Päijät-Hämeen Tutkimusseuran Vuosikirja*. Hämeenlinna: Päijät-Hämeen tutkimusseura, 82-101.
- SNORRI STURLUSON, 2011. *Heimskringla, vol. 1. The Beginnings to Óláfr Tryggvason*. London: Viking Society for Northern Research, University College London.
- SPANGEN, M., 2005. *Edelmetalldepotene i Nord-Norge. Komplekse identiteter i vikingtid og tidlig middelalder. Hovedfagoppgave*. Tromsø: Institutt for arkeologi, Universitetet i Tromsø.
- SPANGEN, M., 2009. Silver hoards in Sámi areas. In: P. HALINEN, M. LAVENTO, M. SUHONEN, eds. *Recent Perspectives on Sámi Archaeology in Fennoscandia and North-West Russia. Proceedings of the First International Conference on Sámi Archaeology, Rovaniemi, 19–22 October 2006*. ISKOS, 17. Helsinki: Finnish Antiquarian Society, 94-106.
- STENBERGER, M.K.H., 1977. *Vorgeschichte Schwedens*. Neumünster: K. Wachholtz.
- STEPINŠ, P., 1939. Senkapi "Liepu kalnā" Rubas. pag. Rūsīšos. In: *Senatne un Māksla*, 1, 45-63.
- ŠNORE, E., 1962. Spory gorogidicha Asote i ich mesto klasifikacii spor. *Swiatowit*, 24, 557-585.

- ZACHRISSON, I., 1984. *De samiska metalldepåerna år 1000-1350: i ljuset av fyndet från Mörträsket, Lappland / The saami metal deposits A.D. 1000-1350: in the light of the find from Mörträsket, Lapland, Archaeology and environment*. Umeå: University of Umeå.
- ZACHRISSON, T., 1998. *Gård, gräns, gravfält sammanhang kring ädelmetalldepåer och runstenar från vikingatid och tidig medeltid i Uppland och Gästrikland. Stockholm studies in archaeology*, 15. Stockholm: Arkeologiska institutionen, Stockholms universitet.
- TALLGREN, A.M., 1925. *Zur Archäologie Eestis 2, Von 500 bis etwa 1250 n. Chr.* Acta et commentationes Universitatis Dorpatensis C, VIII.1. Dorpat.
- TALVIO, T., 2002. *Coins And Coin Finds In Finland, AD 800-1200. ISKOS*, 12. Helsinki: Suomen muinaismuistoyhdistys.
- TAMLA, Ü., KIUDSOO, M., 2005. *Eesti muistsed aarded: [näituse kataloog: 19.05.2005 - 05.06.2006 Tallinnas.]* Tallinn: Arheoloogiakeskus.
- TAUTAVIČIUS, A., 1996. *Vidurinis geležies amžius Lietuvoje (V–IX a.)*. Vilnius: Pilių tyrimų centras “Lietuvos pilys”.
- THRANE, H., 1982. Broncehalsringe fra jernalderens begyndelse. *Fynske Minder*, 1981, 12-27.
- TÖNISSON, E., 1962. Eesti aardeleidud 9.–13. sajandist. In: H. MOORA ed. *Muistsed kalmed ja aarded. Arheoloogiline kogumik*, 2. Tallinn: Ajaloo Instituut, Eesti NSV Teaduste Akadeemia, 182-274.
- TVAURI, A., 2006. Investigation of the Middle Iron Age. In: V. LANG, M. LANEMAN, eds. *Archaeological Research in Estonia, 1865-2005. Estonian Archaeology*, 1. Tartu: University Press, 105-126.
- TVAURI, A., 2012. *The Migration Period, Pre-Viking Age, and Viking Age in Estonia, Estonian Archaeology*, 4. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus.
- URTĀNS, V., 1964. Latvijas 5.–9. gs. depozīti. *Arheoloģija un etnogrāfija*, VI, 39-74.
- URTĀNS, V., 1977. *Senākie depozīti Latvija līdz 1200. g.* Rīga: Zinatne.
- VASKS, A., 1999. Latvian archaeology: research and conclusions. In: O.W. JENSEN, H. KARLSSON, A. VIJUPS, eds. *Inside Latvian archaeology. Gotarc. Series A*, v. 2. Göteborg: University, Department of Archaeology, 3-87.
- VASSAR, A., 1966. Sammaskalmetest Eestis. In: H. MOORA, J. SELIRAND, eds. *Pronksiajast Varase feodalismini. uurimusi baltimaade ja naaberlade arheoloogiast*. Eesti NSV Teaduste Akadeemia Ajaloo Instituut, Tallinn, 207-215.
- VAŠKEVIČIŪTĒ, I., 2007. Semigallian warrior weaponry and its reflection in burial rites in the fifth to the 12th century AD. *Archaeologia Baltica*, 8 (*Weapons, Weaponry and Man. In memoriam Vytautas Kazakevičius*), 214-222.
- VERLAECKT, K., 2000. Hoarding and the circulation of metalwork in Late Bronze Age Denmark: quantification and beyond. In: C.F.E. PARE, ed. *Metals Make the World Go Round. The Supply and Circulation of Metals in Bronze Age Europe. Proceedings of a Conference Held at the University of Birmingham in June 1997*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 194-208.
- WESSMAN, A., 2009. Iron Age cemeteries and Hiisi sites: is there a connection. *Folklore*, 42, 7-22.

Received: 30 November 2012; Revised: 3 May 2013;
Accepted: 26 August 2013

Ester Oras
Division of Archaeology,
Department of Archaeology and Anthropology
University of Cambridge
Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3DZ
United Kingdom (eo271@cam.ac.uk)

RYTŲ BALTIJOS REGIONO VIDURINIO GELEŽIES AMŽIAUS TURTINIAI DEPOZITAI LAIDOJIMO PAMINKLŲ APLINKOJE: REGIONINĖS KULTŪRINĖS PRAKTIKOS PAVYZDYS

ESTER ORAS

Santrauka

Archeologijos istorijos tėkmėje laidojimo paminklai yra vienas svarbiausių ir labiausiai ištirtų archeologinių objektų. Šiuo požiūriu Rytų Baltijos regiono geležies amžius (apie 500 m. pr. Kr. – 1200 m. po Kr.) nėra išimtis. Šio straipsnio tikslas – papildyti dar vienu įnašu pavyzdžius, liudijančius, kad laidojimo paminklai yra ne tik paskutinė mirusiųjų poilsio vieta ar praėities socialinių struktūrų manifestacija. Tuo siekiama praplėsti mūsų supratimą apie visapusišką laidojimo paminklų naudojimą ar antrinį naudojimą Rytų Baltijos regiono geležies amžiaus visuomenėse. Čia pateikiamas pavyzdys – atskirų artefaktų slėpimo geležies amžiaus kapinynuose fenomenas.

Straipsnį pradėdama trumpai pristatydama turtinio depozito sąvoką. Su turtiniu depozitu aš sieju vieną ar daugiau vertingų objektų, sąmoningai paslėptą kaip artefaktų lobį atskirai tam parinktoje vietoje ir ypatingu būdu. Toliau pateikiami vidurinio geležies amžiaus turtiniai depozitai iš laidojimo paminklų trijose Pabaltijo šalyse. Tuo pavyzdžiu siekiama parodyti, kaip archeologijoje galima atpažinti regioninius deponavimo veiksmus, kurie, siekiant juos iš viso išskirti, turi būti matomi plačiau, lyginant bendroje Rytų Baltijos regiono archeologinėje medžiagoje. Galiausiai išsamiau bus analizuojama Estijos medžiaga kaip išskirtinis kultūriškai ypatingas ir plačiai išlaikytas deponavimo praktikos pavyzdys.

Iš viso yra penki sidabro depozitai iš laidojimo vietų Estijos vidurinio geležies amžiaus medžiagoje. Tai daugiausia sidabro papuošalų depozitai: Villevere, Kardla, Paali I ir II (1: 1–4 lent.) ir bizantiško sidabrinio indo radinys iš Kriimani (1–3 pav.; 1: 5 lent.). Prie šio sąrašo galima pridurti įdomų dar vieno bizantiško sidabrinio indo radinį iš Varnja (1: 6 lent.). Visi jie yra importuoti tauriojo metalo objektai, skirtini V a. pabai-gai – VI a. pradžiai po Kr., besitelkiantys pietinėje ir centrinėje Estijos dalyse.

Latvijoje esama dviejų depozitų laidojimo vietose: Rūsiši ir Cibēni (2, 4 pav.; 1: 7–8 lent.). Jie abu daugiausia susideda iš geležinių daiktų: tam tikrų ginklų ir įrankių, žalvarinių papuošalų, žirgo aprangos elementų ir geriamojo rago fragmentų. Šie depozitai buvo datuoti V a. – VI a. pradžia, o juos supanti laidojimo erdvė buvo naudojama apytikriai tuo pačiu ar truputį ankstyvesniu laikotarpiu. Abu radiniai išsidėstę pietvakarinėje ir centrinėje Latvijos dalyje (vadinamojoje Žiemgaloje), labiausiai tikėtina, kad tai yra žuvusių karių kenotafai.

Lietuvos medžiagoje nėra patikimų duomenų apie turtinius depozitus laidojimo vietose nuo I iki IX a. po Kr. (2 pav.). Galbūt trys sidabrinės antkaklės iš Pašušvio kapinyno Vidurio Lietuvoje galėjo sudaryti atskirą depozitą (1: 9 lent.; 5 pav.). Tai paremta prielaida, kad panašių antkaklių buvo rasta atskiruose depozituose tiek Latvijoje, tiek Lietuvoje. Beje, šis kapinynas buvo smarkiai apgadintas kasant žvyrą XIX a. pab. – XX a. pr., todėl neįmanoma pagrįsti, ar minėtos trys antkaklės buvo atskiras turtinis depozitas kapinyne, ar į jį pateko kaip kapo įkapės.

Taigi, Estijos vidurinio geležies amžiaus depozitai aiškiai išsiskiria iš kitos viso Pabaltijo medžiagos. Šios ypatingos regioninės praktikos interpretacijai yra daug įvairių būdų, pradedant nuo saugaus paslėpimo ir laidojimo anapusiniam gyvenimui iki bendruomenės ritualinių veikslių reikšmės. Siejant su pastarąja interpretacija, kai kurie senieji skandinavų ar senieji anglų rašytiniai šaltiniai pateikia tam tikras įdomias paraleles, kurios gali padėti paaiškinti šią Estijos medžiagą. Būtent jie susiję su pasakojimais apie Bjármalanda, galbūt šiandieninę Karelijos sritį, ir jo žmones, turinčius įdomias ritualines tradicijas. Pastarosios apima šventas pilkapių vietas ir aptvertas vietas, kuriose žemė ir dirvožemis yra sumaišyti su sidabru ir auksu mirusiesiems ir naujai gimusiesiems paminėti ir vietiniam dievui, vadinamam Jomali (panašus Dievo vardas yra vartojamas daugelyje šiandieninių finougrų kalbų), garbinti. Aprašoma šiose vietose taip pat buvus daug tauriųjų metalų žiedų ir indų. Straipsnyje įrodinėjama, kad kai kurie tokie bruožai yra ypač panašūs į Estijos vidurinio geležies amžiaus turtinių depozitų archeo-

loginę medžiagą laidojimo vietose, o tai gali suteikti naujų įdomių šių radinių interpretacijos galimybių. Ši galima interpretacija ir paralelės kritiškai aptariamoms, taip pat susiejant rašytinius šaltinius su Estijos pavyzdžiais argumentai sustiprinami sąsajomis su žinomais vienalaikiais ar vėlesniais paminklais ir panašiais radiniais Estijoje, Suomijoje ir Samių žemėse.

Vertė Rasa Banytė-Rowell