

DID THEY EXIST? THE QUESTION OF ELITES IN WESTERN LITHUANIA IN THE ROMAN AND EARLY MIGRATION PERIODS, AND THEIR INTERREGIONAL CONTACTS

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Abstract

The emergence of Iron Age elites in the Baltic lands is discussed here in the context of western Lithuania, a region with local amber deposits and distant interregional connections, with reference to what is called the West Lithuanian Group, with cemeteries with stone circles. No interregional status symbols have been recorded in the area, but it is possible to identify local prestige goods, such as equestrian equipment, horse offerings, drinking horns and decorative belt sets (male indicators), and elaborate headdresses and necklaces, and splendid pectoral ornaments (female indicators). Precious imports and silver or silver-plated* ornaments are to be found in both male and female graves.

The inhabitants of western Lithuania in the Roman and Early Migration periods differed according to their social status. It is possible to distinguish quite a large number of well-equipped graves, but no exceptionally rich ones. Local elites existed in certain small territorial communities, but there were no regional elites. The destroyed grave 31 at Baitai may be an exception to this rule: it presents a sign of the appearance of people of very high rank, a process which developed further in later periods.

Key words: western Lithuania, Roman Period, Early Migration Period, elites, prestige goods.

Introduction

The emergence of elites in Iron Age society has been discussed widely in literature (Lund Hansen 1995; Quast 2009, and earlier literature cited therein). One of the ways in which an elite can establish itself outside local society and traditional kinship relations is through the use of prestige goods. There is a number of grave goods which are usually treated as symbols of high status, such as gold artefacts (neck-rings, bracelets, finger-rings and brooches), sets of Roman metal vessels for drinking wine, and generally precious Roman imports.

The lack of such prestige goods in graves in the Baltic lands may explain the lack of interest in the question of elites in the southeast Baltic. Until now, no one has

studied this question deeply, specifically whether elites actually existed in the Balt environment.¹ Did the Balts remain outside the system of prestige goods, or did they perhaps manifest their position in a different way from the practice in other areas within the *barbaricum*. Reading Tacitus' *Germania*, one comes across the simple statement '*Hic Suebiae finis!*' (Germ. XLVI, 1), marking separate peoples with different lifestyles and models of civilisation. The Aestii, who are identified with the inhabitants of the southeast Baltic zone, remained on the same side of this border as other inhabitants of Germania. This means they shared the same cultural situation, and it may suggest the same social structure.

To check this assumption, the area of the southeast Baltic Sea region is analysed, namely west Lithuania, the area of the West Lithuanian Group, with cemeteries with stone circles (Michelbertas 1986, pp.28-41; Banytė-Rowell 2007c, p.43). The choice is not accidental: this area, with amber resources and distant interregional contacts, may be regarded as the perfect area in which to study the process of the emergence

* Only in a few cases have west Lithuanian artefacts been subjected to a chemical analysis and it is possible to say for sure if there is silver, tin or any other white metal coating. However, this does not matter for the purposes of our article. It is important that the bronze item was surface-decorated. According to a study by Regina Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė and Kęstutis Jankauskas (1992), the surfaces of bronze ornaments were frequently covered in a very thin layer of tin alloy instead of silver alloy, as in the case of tutuli pins from Bandužiai grave 74 (see also Stankus 1985, p.89, and footnote 1). So if a chemical test of a particular ornament has not yet been made, we describe the white coating as 'white metal'.

¹ The question of elites among the Balts and their prestige symbols has been discussed briefly in literature in the case of particular cemeteries, or with respect to interregional connections (e.g. Jovaiša 1997; Bitner-Wróblewska 2001, p.121ff; 2003, p.33ff; Banytė-Rowell 2007a, p.26ff; Bliujienė, Bračiulienė 2007, p.60ff).



Fig. 1. The area of distribution of the West Lithuanian Group (a); a peripheral area in southwest Latvia and the middle reaches of the Jūra River (b). The location of cemeteries discussed in the text (map by J. Žabko-Potopowicz).

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of an elite. Control over exchange and resources is a fundamental element in the development of ranked societies.

Two cemeteries have been chosen to analyse in detail: Žviliai and Aukštkiemiai (formerly Oberhof), which are relatively large and have been entirely or mostly excavated. The analysis includes the richest graves, as well as the proportions of well-equipped burials to others in particular grave fields. It may allow us to distinguish exceptionally rich graves, if they occur, and to point out local or interregional symbols of prestige. To this end, we have used a simple quantitative method to evaluate grave equipment, a comparison of the frequency of a particular category of artefacts, and the analysis of the quality of inventory elements. Attention has also been paid to the form of the graves, which

could be one factor demonstrating a high social status. Apart from materials from the two above-mentioned cemeteries, rich single graves in different cemeteries in western Lithuania (Fig. 1, see also Fig. 10) have been included, in order to offer a wider perspective for studying prestige grave goods in the region.

Žviliai (Šilalė district)

Žviliai cemetery lies on the right bank of the River Akmena, a tributary of the River Jūra (Fig. 1). This area is regarded as having been a peripheral area of the West Lithuanian Group with cemeteries with stone circles. During the Early Roman Period, the inhabitants of the area buried their dead in barrows (Vaitkunskienė 1999, p.209ff). This burial tradition disappeared ap-

proximately 200 years earlier in the main area of West Lithuanian Group cemeteries on the coast. From the beginning of the Late Roman Period, burial rites in this part of the River Jūra region remained the same as those in the coastland (Michelbertas 1989, p.16; Vaitkunskienė 1989). Late Roman Period and Early Migration Period cemeteries in the upper basin of the River Jūra contain grave goods similar to the finds in the Lithuanian coastland area, but some features of their grave sets were also subject to influences from the south, the lower basins of the rivers Jūra and Nemunas, and from the north and east, from Žemaitija (Samogitia). Žviliai cemetery was explored by Laima Vaitkunskienė, who published the results of her excavations in a separate volume of *Lietuvos Archeologija* (Vaitkunskienė 1999). Graves dated to the Late Roman Period and the Early Migration Period make up 60% of all burials explored so far in Žviliai (182 graves, containing 185 buried individuals). A total of 101 graves in Žviliai can be dated more precisely, and attributed to one of three chronological phases of the cemetery: Phase 1, end of C_{1a}-C₂; Phase 2, turn of C₂ and C₃; Phase 2a, turn of C₃/D and D (Banytė-Rowell 2011).² This total number is our basis for the further statistical analysis of Žviliai cemetery.

Burial customs at a particular period of time are a set of rules which also govern the tradition of what selection of grave goods is worth placing in graves for the deceased. It is possible to recreate a particular collection of finds as an 'ideal' and 'richest' grave set for male or female deceased. Of course, these rules were usually applied with exceptions for particular people. In many cases, some types of grave goods are missing from the grave, and on rare occasions, exceptionally valuable ornamentation or rare types of weaponry or working tools are found in grave pits. So first, let us look at what selection of finds in male and female graves might represent the 'ideal richest' grave set in Žviliai. The seriation of grave finds and grave units of Žviliai graves dated to the third century to the beginning of the fifth century helps to detect this statistically. Every type in the database was included as a general type of particular grave good, distinguishable by its function, but not as an archaeological type determined among other items of the same function (Fig. 2).

It is possible to distinguish 31 well-equipped graves with a significantly higher quantity of different categories of finds. There are 19 male graves, which contained seven to 11 categories of grave goods: of course

² According to the recently made seriation of Žviliai graves, 24 (23.8% of all those datable) belong to Phase 1 (late C₁-C₂), 47 (46.5% of all those datable) should be attributed to Phase 2 (turn of C₂ and C₃), and 30 (29.7% of all those datable) belong to Phase 2a (C₃/D-D).

some of these artefacts could appear in pairs or even larger quantities, so there could be from seven to 19 items in a given grave. Among the female graves, it has been possible to select 12 well-equipped burials. They produced fewer categories of artefacts than the male graves, namely six to nine types, but some were found in larger quantities. Thus, the richest female graves contained from eight to 14 items. Girls and women from Žviliai were not allowed to have crossbow brooches; nevertheless, they had a right to wear much more expensive and impressive pins than the males. Given the broader spectrum of grave goods because of variable types of weapons, tools and equestrian items, the male group of graves contrasts with the more variable set of female ornaments and their special quality. For example, bracelets such as ornaments were distributed among both genders, but not equally: the largest number of bracelets per male grave was three items, while the largest number in the female graves was eight bracelets. It appears that deceased males (both adults and children) were equipped as a rule with only one iron crook-like pin. Meanwhile, iron crook-like pins in pairs were found only in the female group of graves, as well as pairs of bronze pins with a ring head or cruciform pins.³

As we can see in the diagram of the seriation of the richest Žviliai graves, there is no grave which could be called 'ideally' rich. It is almost a strict rule that every male of higher rank should own a spear, axe, knife, brooch and belt. The most frequent male ornamentations are bronze crossbow brooches, iron pins and amber beads-amulets. More solid ornamentation, like neck-rings and bracelets, was found in far from every male grave. On the contrary, neck-rings and bracelets are common among the richest female graves. Equestrian types (parts of bridles and spurs) are found quite seldom. Their appearance in a grave should probably be interpreted as a sign of 'higher upper' rank, stressing a relationship between the deceased and the equestrian warrior circle. Another rare type is represented by drinking horns, which were found in only two Žviliai graves (one from the first phase, grave 35, another from the third phase, grave 143B) (Vaitkunskienė 1999, p.190ff, Fig. 221). Drinking horns appear only in rich male graves, and probably have a special ritual meaning. The richest graves in Žviliai were equipped according to 'common rules', and did not represent completely different means of expression of status. Such singly occurring male types

³ An analysis of male and female sets of grave goods in Žviliai was made by R. Banytė-Rowell, and was presented for the first time at the conference 'Rank, Gender and Society around the Baltic 400-1400 AD' in Kuressaare (Saaremaa, Estonia) on 23-27 May 2007. The proceedings of the conference have not yet been published.

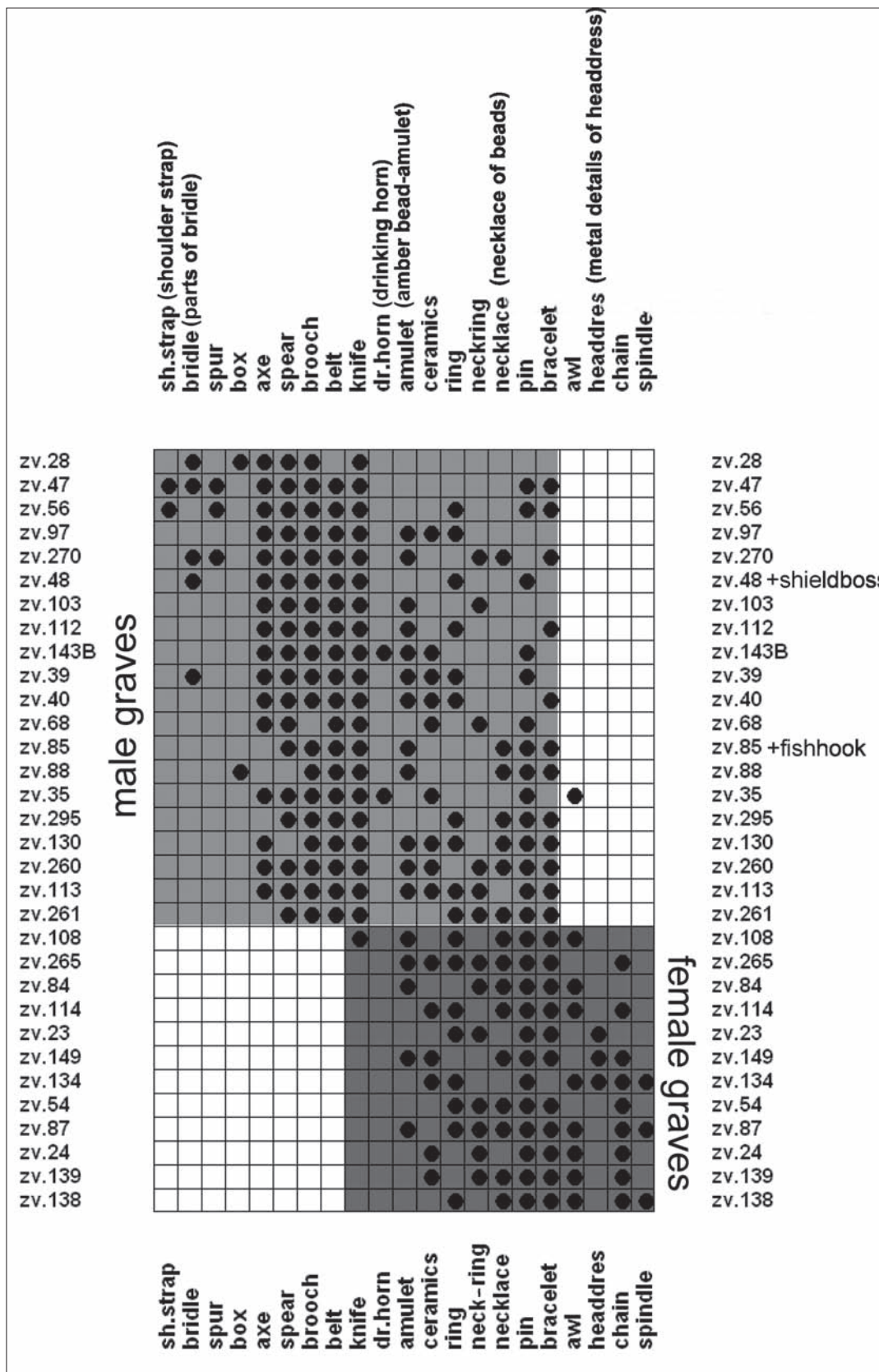


Fig. 2. The seriation of common types of grave goods, and of the richest Žviliai graves (by R. Banytė-Rowell).

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as tweezers (grave 152), a fishhook (grave 85) and strike-a-light stone (grave 58) add more individual character to the grave, rather than signifying a possible change in rank (Vaitkunskienė 1999, p.140ff, Figs. 142.3; 143.3). On the other hand, the shield-boss found in grave 48 indicates a type of weapon which we can describe as important to the higher-class warrior group (Vaitkunskienė 1999, p.147, Fig. 150).

Sometimes one type or another could be not put in the grave, not because of the lack of means, but because of a taboo relating to a particular deceased person. It is maybe no coincidence that a spear or axe is absent mostly in male child/adolescent graves (graves 88, 130, 261, 295) (Vaitkunskienė 1999, Table 17). Only one rich male grave did not contain both a spear and an axe, grave 85, but this burial could be treated a little differently because it contained a fishhook. So the simple arithmetic of grave goods simplifies the mystery of dead personhood: statistical methods are helpful for recreating the common rules of offering grave goods. After that, we should look more closely into individual features of so-called elite graves.

Arithmetically, graves 260, 113 and 270 are of the highest status. Grave 113, which can be dated to the turn of phases C₃ and D, represents local types of jewellery and weaponry. Only massive bracelets with thickened terminals can be seen as a sort of imitation of *Kolbenarmringe* (bracelets with thickened terminals) (Vaitkunskienė 1999, p.44ff, Fig. 56). Similar to grave 113, graves 28, 35, 39, 68 and 112 also contained finds of local shapes and production. Only grave 270 could be regarded as a burial of a high-ranking person: some of its finds, such as elements of horse equipment, are undoubtedly marks of social status. The social status of the man from grave 270 was also stressed by a rich set of jewellery: a necklace, a neck-ring (similar to type R 301 according to Kent Andersson, see Andersson 1995, p.96ff, Figs. 67; 68), three crossbow brooches with ringlets, and two bracelets (Vaitkunskienė 1999, p.84ff, Figs. 100; 168.1; 210.5-8; Banytė-Rowell 2011, p.52ff, Fig. 7).

The second group of rich male graves from Žviliai was notable for single types of ornamentation or weaponry, which can be related to the common fashion in the *barbaricum* during the Late Roman Period, and also Phase D, although these items are probably of local production (Banytė-Rowell 2011, p.76ff). Among them should be mentioned a shield-boss (similar to type Zielsing K1, see Zielsing 1989, p.121ff, Plate 14) (grave 48), a shoulder strap (graves 47, 56), bracelets with more or less thickened terminals (*Kolbenarmringe*) (graves 40, 47, 85, 261, 295), spiral rings with a broadened central part (graves 40, 130), a spiral finger-ring with a twisted shank, type Beckmann 36 (Beckmann

1969, p.45) (grave 97), and silver⁴ elongated bucket-shaped pendants of Pâtrovičy-Žviliai type (Belâvec, Bitner-Wróblewska 2010) (grave 85) (Vaitkunskienė 1999, pp.147, 179-182, 184-185, Figs. 22; 31; 42; 59; 96; 150; 207). The deceased male of grave 143B from Phase D was provided with a brooch of Dollkeim/Kovrovo type, plated with silver foil (Banytė-Rowell 2011, p.68ff, Fig. 17).⁵

Neck-rings are a characteristic feature of the third group of rich male graves; their shapes are similar to the examples of prestigious Germanic ornamentation. Graves 47, 103, 260 and 261 contained neck-rings with a key-shaped hole in a clasp plate, and grave 270 was equipped with a neck-ring with overlapping terminals similar to type R 301, according to K. Andersson (Vaitkunskienė 1999, pp.158, 160, Figs. 166; 168). The neck-rings were often combined with *Kolbenarmringe* (graves 47, 260). The most impressive graves of the richest males in Žviliai are graves 47 and 261. Grave 47, apart from typical grave goods, comprised elements of rider and horse apparel and a shoulder strap (Vaitkunskienė 1999, p.25, Figs. 31; 145.4; 207.4; 211; 212; 214; 216). Horse bits as well as spurs occurred in several male graves at Žviliai (28, 47, 48, 39, 56, 270) (Vaitkunskienė 1999, p.186ff), but grave 47 also produced other horse harness fittings, such as a nose-piece, mounts and rivets (Fig. 3). Grave 47 contained a shoulder strap ornamented with bronze mountings plated with silver, notched wires, and silver rivets as well.⁶ The shoulder straps with metal fittings undoubtedly symbolised the upper warrior rank from the turn of the Late Roman Period and Early Migration Period (Astrauskas, Gleiznienė, Šimėnas 1999). Shoulder straps ornamented in a more simple way were also found in Žviliai, graves 56 and 284 (Vaitkunskienė 1999, Fig. 207.2). Grave 284 was not included in our quantitative analysis of the richest graves, but its full set of weaponry and ornamented shoulder strap probably belonged to a warrior of greater importance.

An adolescent male was buried in grave 261 (Vaitkunskienė 1999, p.80, Figs. 96; 176; Bliujienė 2001, Fig. 7). There were two foreign *Raupenfibeln* brooches among local forms and imitations of common *barbaricum* jewellery types in this grave (Bliujienė 2002, p.148, Fig. 1.3, 5). They were typical of Wielbark culture during phases C₃-D, but were also known in West Balt areas: Samland, the Masurian Lakeland

⁴ Not all the artefacts indicated as silver have been analysed using chemical methods. See footnote 1.

⁵ Plated with silver. A chemical analysis of this item was made in the laboratory of the National Museum.

⁶ Chemical analyses of the fittings of the shoulder strap from Žviliai grave 47 were published in an article by A. Astrauskas, G. Gleiznienė, V. Šimėnas (1999, p.133, Table 2).

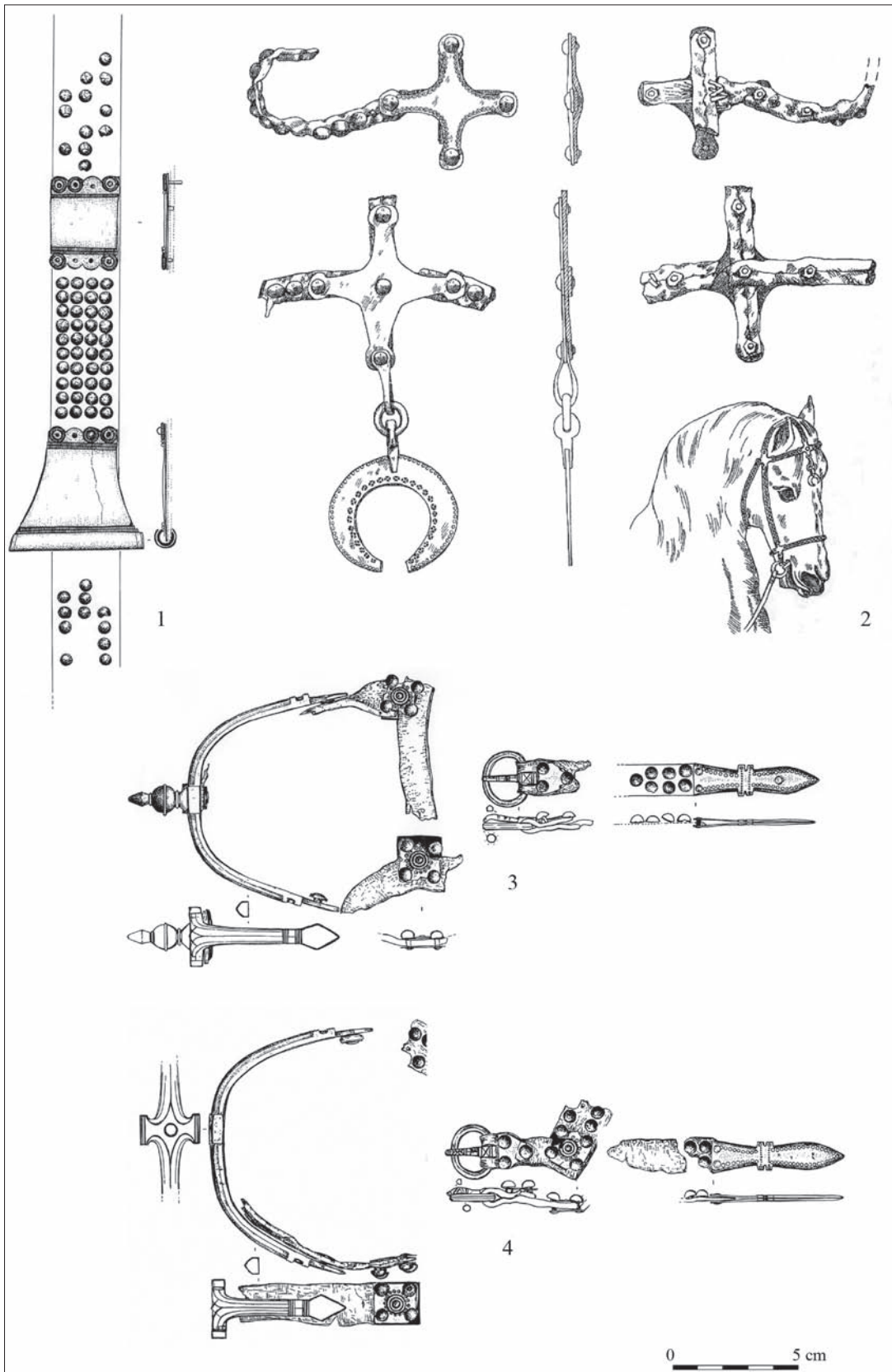


Fig. 3. A shoulder strap (1), harness fittings (2), spurs and parts of their fittings (3, 4) from Žviliai, grave 47: 1 bronze, silver; 2-4 bronze (LNM AR 487:243, 248-250; 1, 3-4 drawings by A. Ruzienė, 2 after L. Vaitkunskienė 1999, Fig. 214).

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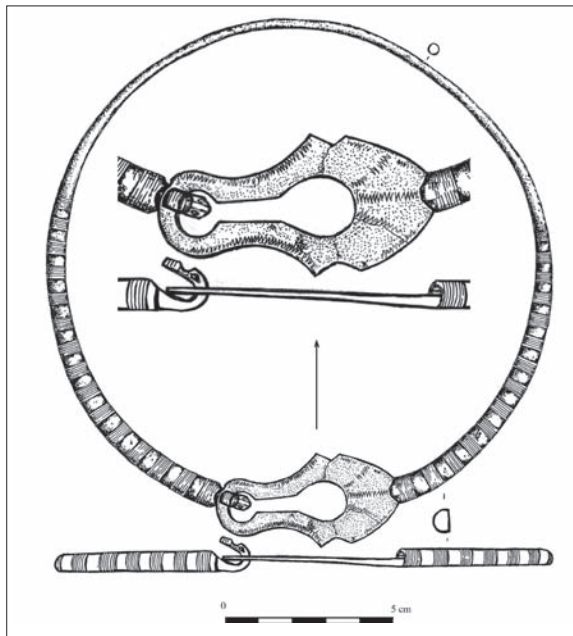


Fig. 4. A neck-ring with a key-shaped hole from Žviliai, grave 44 (LNM AR 487:217; drawing by A. Ruzienė).

and the Suwalki region (Tuszyńska 1988, p.183, Fig. 4.1; Cieśliński 2010, p.65). Silver elongated bucket-shaped pendants of Pâtrovičy-Žviliai type and figure-of-eight-shaped amber pendants from a boy's grave also reflect interregional trends in fashion, typical of the Baltic Sea region and areas where Wielbark culture spread (Belâvec, Bitner-Wróblewska 2010, p.170ff, Fig. 1.7; Bliujienė 2007, pp.295-302). Probably the boy from Žviliai grave 261 belonged to an important higher-status family in the local community, in which opportunities for communicating with areas somewhat distant from Žviliai were valued and encouraged.⁷

What special forms represent rich female graves in Žviliai? Neck-rings were absent from only four graves (108, 114, 134, 138) among the 12 selected richest female graves (Vaitkunskienė 1999, Table 17). Pairs of pins joined with a bronze chain were the most typical ornament. Some of them comprised simple-shaped iron crook-like pins, others were represented by more elaborate bronze pins. Graves 23 and 24 of phases C_{1b}–C₂ contained neck-rings with a box-shaped clasp and coiled wire terminals and pairs of bronze pins with a ring head (Vaitkunskienė 1999, p.14ff, Figs. 8; 164:2, 3; 189). At the turn of phases C₂ and C₃ local crafts-

⁷ 'A classic integrated example linking control over exchange and resources in a reconstruction of a social system is the model proposed by Frankenstein and Rowlands (1978). At its heart lay the notions of chiefdom as a stage in social evolution, and redistribution as a fundamentally important process in hierarchical societies (Renfrew 1982, p.5). The emergence of the elite in Iron Age society is explained by its role in external exchange, the control over production of the goods to be exchanged, and the exclusive possession of the ones received' (Babić 2005, p.72).

men invented a new form of pin with a cruciform head, which was made by attaching circles of differently notched and twisted wires on the surface of a cruciform head. Sometimes these pins were joined with pendant-joiners and a chain (as in grave 149) (Vaitkunskienė 1999, p.175ff, Fig. 193). Usually rich female graves in Žviliai contained more than two bracelets: for example, the deceased from grave 54 was buried with eight bracelets (Vaitkunskienė 1999, p.28). Small necklaces made of amber and glass beads were also frequent, and not only in rich graves. The whole complex of ornamentation is most astonishing in graves 149 and 265, where typically Balt jewellery (a bronze headband [149], a neck-ring with a spoon-shaped clasp [265], cruciform pins joined with pendants and chain [149], and openwork half-moon-shaped pendants with chains [265]) was accompanied by 'interregional' necklaces of silver⁸ elongated bucket-shaped pendants of Pâtrovičy-Žviliai type (Vaitkunskienė 1999, pp.53, 81-82, Figs. 98; 179; 193; Belâvec, Bitner-Wróblewska 2010, p.169ff, Fig. 5). It is necessary to stress that 'interregional' neck-rings with a key-shaped hole in the clasp plate were also worn by women (graves 54, 139) (Vaitkunskienė 1999, pp.28, 51, 158, Fig. 61; Banytė-Rowell 2011, p.46ff, Fig. 5). They appear not only in the 'arithmetically' richest, but also in the more modestly equipped graves (female grave 42). This type of ornament attracts our attention because they are bronze imitations of silver or gold *Halsring mit birnenförmige Öse* (neck-rings with a key-shaped hole terminal), regarded in southern Scandinavia, the Elbe region and Pomerania as an interregional status symbol (Ethelberg *et al.* 2000, p.64ff, Figs. 57-59; Przybyła 2007, p.587ff; 2011, p.244ff, Fig. 12; Belâvec, Bitner-Wróblewska 2010, p.174). Neck-rings with a key-shaped hole were found together with cruciform pins in grave 44 (Fig. 4). Despite the small selection of other types of grave goods, grave 44 should be treated as rich: there were also four bracelets and four spiral finger-rings. The female from grave 55 was buried with a pair of cruciform pins joined with a string of beads, two bracelets and one spiral finger-ring with a broadened central part, and one awl (Vaitkunskienė 1999, pp.23-24, 28, Figs. 34; 166.2) (Fig. 5). This grave was not one of the 'arithmetically' richest, but the cruciform pins were a very generous offering to the deceased.

In summary, we can say that the picture we get of social stratification among the local group which used the Žviliai cemetery is far from clear. As an experiment, we applied a quantitative analysis, the so-called NAT (Number of Artefact Types) (Hedeager 1992, pp.104-138), which has provided good results with Scandina-

⁸ Information about the metal being silver was provided by the Lithuanian National Museum.

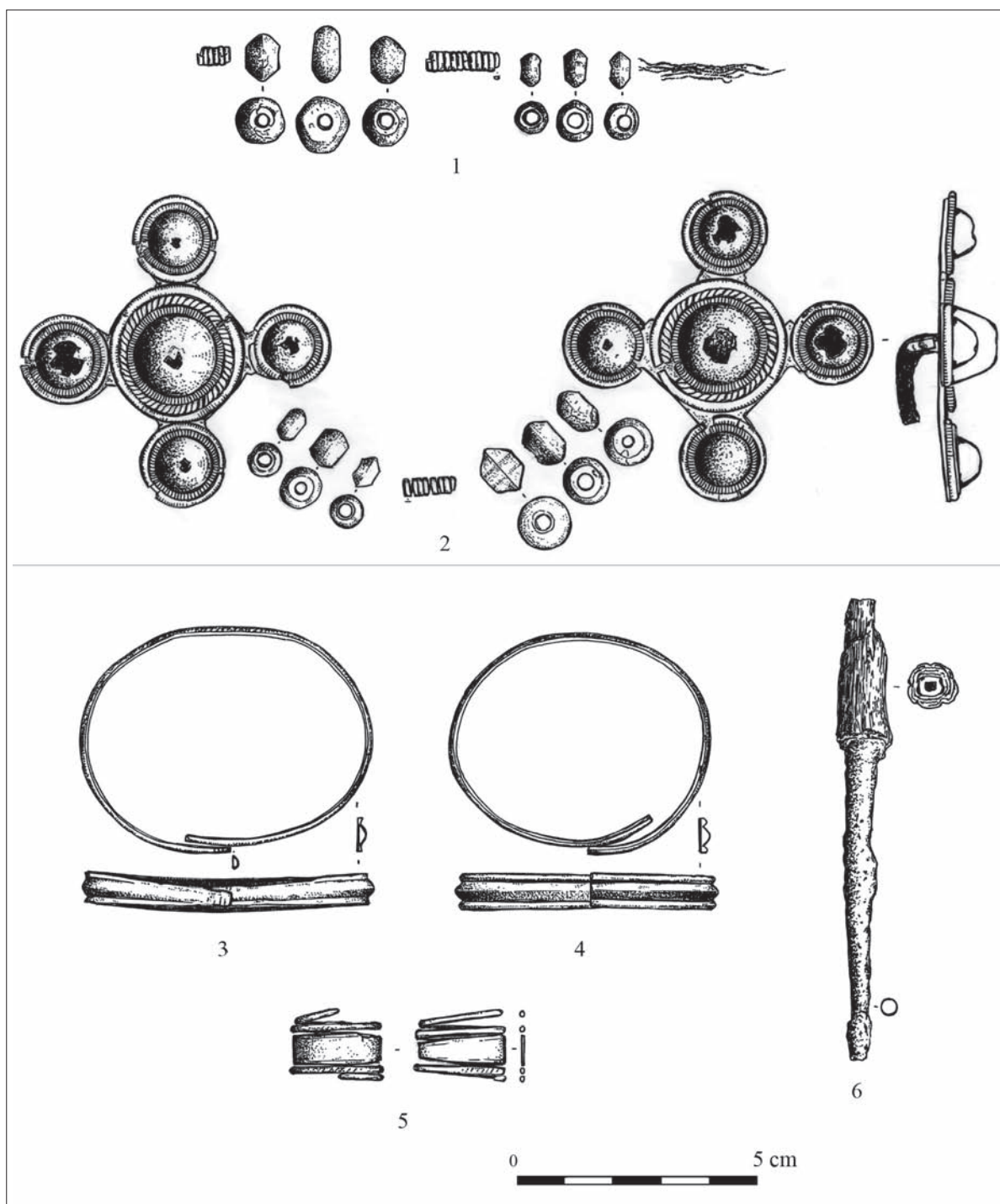


Fig. 5. Grave goods from Žviliai, grave 55: 1 necklace of amber beads and bronze spirals (headdress ornamentation?); 2 two bronze cruciform pins joined with a necklace of five amber beads and one glass bead and bronze spiral; 3-4 two bronze bracelets; 5 a spiral bronze finger-ring; 6 an iron awl with traces of a wooden handle (LNM AR 487:296-303; drawings by A. Ruzienė).

vian material as a general instrument for measuring wealth and social differentiation. In the case of the Žviliai cemetery, this method could be treated more as a supporting tool than as a way to confirm social stratification. Graves with many categories of artefact types often do not produce any items over standard burial furnishings; but on the other hand, graves with rare finds, which are usually treated as a symbol of a higher

status, may belong to a group with a relatively smaller number of artefact types, but not in poorly equipped burials.

There is no doubt that the group which used Žviliai cemetery differentiated social status. It is possible to distinguish a number of well-equipped graves with finds which could be regarded as prestige symbols. But in general, their grave sets did not differ much from

those of others. The local elite at Žviliai represents a 'middle class' rather than a rank aristocracy. There are no exceptionally rich graves, the number of well-equipped burials is relatively large in particular phases, especially Phase 2, which was clearly a period of prosperity for the local community. Analysing the location of these well-equipped graves within the cemetery area, it is not possible to point out any significant locations or concentrations. It looks as if there were several family groups competing for power and trying to mark their wealth and position, but none of them managed to prevail over their opponents. The proportions of well-equipped graves during a particular phase of the cemetery are similar to the percentage of graves of every phase.⁹ A tendency for a larger amount of female graves to contain more grave goods in Phase 2 (the turn of C₂ and C₃) can be observed, as well as a rule that during Phase 2a (the turn of C₃/D and D) wealth was revealed more clearly in male graves. Nevertheless, we should remember that the area of Žviliai cemetery has not been entirely explored, and all our statistics are only relatively correct.

Aukštkiemiai (formerly Oberhof, Klaipėda district)

The cemetery at Oberhof is situated on the coast, northeast of the city of Klaipėda. It was excavated from 1886 to 1888 by Otto Tischler, and in 1894 by Alfred Jentzsch, Heinrich Kemke and Carl Kretschmann (Reich 2007; 2009). They investigated 452 graves. The burial ground was in use from the Roman Age until the Middle Ages, that is, from the third to the 12th century. Apart from short reports by Tischler (1888; 1889; 1890), some illustrations, mentions and references in literature, the material remained unpublished. Until the Second World War, the material and documentation were housed in the Prussia Museum in Königsberg. During and after the war, the archaeological collection of the Prussia Museum, and with it the material from Oberhof, was dispersed and badly damaged (Reich 2004/05; Reich, Menghin 2008). Therefore, the grave units have to be reconstructed.¹⁰ This is possible

⁹ The percentage of the richest graves is the following: Phase 1, three male graves (35, 39 and 68, or 15.8% of all the richest male graves), and two female graves (23 and 24, or 16.6% of all the richest female graves); Phase 2, nine male graves (40, 56, 85, 88, 103, 260, 261, 270 and 295, or 47.4% of all the richest male graves), and eight female graves (54, 55, 84, 87, 108, 114, 149 and 265, or 66.6% of all the richest female graves); Phase 2a, seven male graves (47, 48, 97, 112, 113, 130 and 143B, or 36.8% of all the richest male graves), and two female graves (138 and 139, or 16.6% of all the richest female graves).

¹⁰ The procedure used in the reconstruction of the contents of a burial is explained in Reich 2007, p.196, Plate II.2.

by means of the preserved objects and the archive material in Berlin, combined with references in literature, old photographs, drawings and notes in other archives.¹¹

As the grave units are reconstructed based on more or less incomplete sources, we encounter several problems:

- Some grave assemblages are incomplete. In some cases it was not possible to reconstruct them completely; in other cases they were disturbed by more recent graves.
- If no objects of a burial or images of them have survived, it is often hard or impossible to date them.
- Metal objects, especially iron items, were in bad condition already when excavated, and some could not be saved.
- As no bones have survived, sex can only be determined by archaeological means, that is, mainly by the presence or absence of tools and weapons. Also, double graves are impossible to identify, as indeed are those of children, where only the diameter of rings may give a hint.

Therefore, a quantitative analysis was less useful, because this method requires well-documented data. That is why in this case another method was used to get an idea of the social structure of the community in Oberhof. Groups of grave furnishings can be distinguished and compared by the use of combinatory tables (Figs. 6; 7).

Forty-seven male burials can be dated to the Late Roman Period, in 105 burials may have been women. The much higher number is due to the fact that men's graves can only be identified if they contain weapons or work tools. Another eight male burials and ten women's burials can be dated to the Early Migration Period (Phase D).

Within the male burials, five groups of furnishings can be distinguished (Fig. 6). It is clear that the weapon equipment does not correlate with the number and categories of ornaments. In the first group (containing seven graves) are men with an extended set of weapons, that is, two spears and an axe, and in two cases also a shield-boss. This can be accompanied by a brooch, a neck-ring or an arm-ring, a knife and a sickle. In grave 15, there was also a snaffle bit. Three graves contained coins.

The second group (with six graves) is characterised by a complete set of weapons, consisting of one spear and

¹¹ A short outline of the sources can be found in Reich 2007, p.195ff. Complete publication is being prepared by Christine Reich.

one socketed axe, accompanied by equestrian equipment or horse remains and Roman coins. Only two of the deceased had a brooch, in grave 7 accompanied by a silver neck-ring and a bracelet (Reich 2009, Fig. 1). In grave 360, 36 silver or tin-plated bronze rivets were found that might have belonged to a belt or a horse bridle (Fig. 8).

The members of the third group (consisting of 18 graves) were given only one spear that could be accompanied by a sickle and a knife, ornaments like a brooch, pin, neck-ring, arm-ring or finger-ring, and sometimes Roman coins. A silver brooch was found in grave 355, one with silver coating in grave 355. The famous enamelled brooch (Tischler 1887; Banytè-Rowell 2002) belongs to grave 242, and was accompanied by a bead, a knife, a spear, a sickle, a whetstone, two rings and a small bronze plate. Another brooch and a Roman coin were found nearby. So in this group with 'ordinary' furnishings, there are three graves with prestigious goods (if the ones with Roman coins are not counted).

The fourth group consists of only two graves with an axe as a weapon. Both contain Roman coins, one of them even has six.

In the fifth and last group (with 14 graves), weapons are absent. In some of them iron fragments were found that might belong to weapons or tools. But apart from that, these graves are not poorly furnished. Grave 369 contained a silver neck-ring and 21 (!) Roman coins, which is the largest amount of coins found in a single grave in Oberhof. Maybe a rich merchant was buried there? In grave 2, a horse bridle with enamelled fittings was found (Reich 2009, p.207ff, Fig. 2). Another rider with two spurs was buried in grave 375. Another special grave furnishing was found in grave 366, with an oval strike-a-light stone (Paulsen 2007, p.302ff; Illkjær 1993, p.240, Fig. 92¹²) and an 'awl' that has to be considered as fire steel, combined with two fishing hooks, a knife, a neck-ring and seven Roman coins. Oval strike-a-light stones are common in Scandinavia and northern Germany. They also occur in the lands of the Balts (Illkjær 1993, p.255), but this is the only one in Oberhof. Maybe it was someone foreign, or someone who travelled far?

From the Early Migration Period, three graves in Oberhof can be attached to group one (two of them with silver or silver-plated¹³ items), and two each to groups four and five.

¹² The strike-a-light stone from Oberhof is not as slim as these parallels, so it might be a little older. According to Jørgen Illkjær (1993, p.255), it could be from Phase C₂.

¹³ The artefacts from Oberhof have not been analysed, only examined carefully by MVF conservators, at their suggestion. So if a chemical test of a particular ornament

To sum up so far, even if it is possible to make out two groups of men with extended weapon equipment and riding gear, who might be identified as 'higher class', there are also prestige goods in other not-so-well-equipped graves.

The distribution of these two groups on the reconstructed map of the cemetery shows no separate location of these burials, but they take a somewhat central position within graves with different furnishings that might be interpreted as families.

The picture offered by the female graves looks more consistent. Nine groups can be distinguished (Fig. 7). The first group shows outstanding ornament equipment: one to three brooches, and one, two or three pins (at least three fastening devices in total), one or two neck-rings, a minimum of two bracelets or spiral arm-rings, finger-rings, pectoral ornaments (chains, chain supporters, interlinks and pendants) and necklaces. Two graves contained silver items (a pin and a neck-ring), one of them was grave 202 (Fig. 9). Pins or brooches in four graves are coated with silver or tin. The pins from grave 388 have blue glass inlays. In grave 40, the largest amount of Roman coins, that is nine, in a woman's grave in Oberhof was found.

A small group of five graves is characterised by one fibula in combination with one pin; pectoral ornaments or bead necklaces are missing.

In the third group (consisting of 17 graves), one brooch is typical; pins are missing. There are only two graves with neck-rings, only one with an elaborated necklace, and one that might have contained a headdress. All in all, it gives a below-average impression, but we should bear in mind that this may not necessarily be due to status or wealth, but could also be due to the age of the deceased.

For the third group of female burials (with 16 burials), two pins are typical. They can be accompanied by a neck-ring, arm-rings or spirals, chains, supporters and pendants. Only a few beads occur. However, in half the cases, the pins are coated with silver or tin, or have blue glass inlays.

In the fifth group (with 14 graves), there is only one pin (in two cases also with a silvery outfit, and in one of them with a blue glass inlay). In two graves there are also chain supporters, so maybe some of these burials are disturbed ones.

Graves of the sixth group (consisting of ten burials) are characterised by the presence of neck-rings, while pins

has not been made, the item is described as having a white metal coating. For objects that are missing today, the information from Tischler's documentation or other sources is quoted.

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grave	brooch	pin	neckring	armring	spiral armring	finger-ring	chain supporter	chain	pendant	bead	spiral whorl	pinners	buckle	strap end	fitting	rivet	strap distributor	bridle fitting	snaffle bit	spur	knife	sword	spear-head	socketed axe	shield boss	sickle	wheel stone	coin	pot	other items	complete?	period	archaeological sex	remarks	
15	1		1						1			1 Fe							1?	1?	1?	2	1	1	1+H	1	1	5	1 Fe, little stone		KZ	m	coins at waist or deposit		
344	1		2																					1		5	weapons	?	KZ	m	coin next to the stacked up arm-rings; pot aside + neck-ring?				
195	1		1F	2						2	1	1Fe									1	2	1	1	1	1	1			KZ	m				
393	1		1	1																	1	2	1	1	1					KZ-C3	m				
178	1																				1	2	1	1	1					KZ	m				
19	1F								much													2	1	1	1					KZ	m				
176		1+1	1																			2	1	1	1					KZ	m				
10																				1		1	1	1	1	3			n	KZ	m				
7	1		1Ag	1					4+9								2			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Ag-tube, Fe?, horse teeth				coin near neck-ring/ornaments, maybe box, position of body			
365	1																					1	1	1	1	3	textil, horse skull			KZ	m				
360										1		1Bz+2Fe				36	2	2	1	1	1F	1	1	1	1	1	1	Fe, horse bones			KZ	m			
379										1												1	1	1	1	2					KZ	m			
231										1												1	1	1	1	3	2birch bark					KZ	m		
242	1+1									1											1	1	1	1	1	1	1	ring, Bz-ring, Bz-platelet					ENAMEL BROOCH; coins and crossbow brooch further away		
380	1	1	1	1	1					1												1	1	1	1	1									
398	1+1Fe																				1	1	1	1	1						KZ-C3	m			
184	1(Ag)												1Fe								1	1	1	1	1						KZ-C3	m			
156	1																				1	1	1	1	1		1								
355	1Ag		1																		1	1	1	1	1										
196	1																					1	1	1	1										
217		1	1	2	1					1												1	1	1	1	3	1							coins, 2 arm-rings and 2 spirals	
158			1	1	1				1												1	1	1	1	1	2								min birch bark	
351			1																			1	1	1	1									mneck-ring at skull	
362			2						1													1	1	1	1	1									
356			2							1											1	1	1	1	3		weapons								
244																						1	1	1	1										
157																						1	1	1	1										mstone circle
230																						1	1	1	1										
48																						1?	1?	1?	1?	2	1?	1?	Fe, birch bark						coins in birch bark

grave	brooch	pin	neckring	armring	spiral armring	finger-ring	chain supporter	chain	pendant	head	spiral	spindle whorl	pincers	buckle	strap end	fitting	rivet	strap distributor	bridle fitting	snaffle bit	spur	knife	sword	spear-head	socketed axe	shield boss	sickle	whet stone	coin	pot	other items	complete?	period	archaeological sex	remarks		
338																							1?	1?							n	KZ	m?	spear-head might not belong			
14																							1?	1?							?	KZ	m				
163	1	1	1F	2																		2		1	1	1	1	6	1F			KZ	m	1 coin with the knife; the others possibly with the deposited arm-rings			
161				1																				1									KZ	m			
369	2	1	1Ag		1						1		1Bz+1Fe								1	1				1	1	21		2	Bz-trimmings, plane		KZ	m			
24 1F(Ag)				1F																													KZ	m			
253	1		1	1																													KZ	m			
2	1F			2	2									1					4	1													KZ-C3	m?	Fe		
187	1F																																KZ	m	arm-rings not in description		
305																										1F							KZ	m			
38				1F																						1F?							KZ	m			
106				1F																								2					KZ	m?	Fe		
204				1																								1						KZ?	m	probably disturbed	
175				1	1									1Fe+1Bz	1											1							KZ	m			
375				1					1Be					1Fe	1						2							5						KZ	m		
366				1																	1							7		2	2	2			KZ	m	
162																												1	1	3					KZ	m	mcoins with sickle and whet stone
377																						1						1	5						KZ	m	

Fig. 6. A combinatory table of grave goods in Roman Period male burials in Oberhof (Aukštėmėiai). Abbreviations: Ag - silver or white metal; Fe - iron; Bz - bronze; Be - amber; F - fragment; KZ - Roman Period; VWZ - Migration Period (table prepared by Ch. Reich).

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Grave	brooch	pin	neckring	armring	spiral armring	finger-ring	chain supporter	chain	pendant	bead	spiral	spindle whorl	pincers	buckle	strap end	fitting	rivet	strap distributor	bridle fitting	snaffle bit	spur	knife	sword	spear-head	socketed axe	shield boss	sickle	whet stone	coin	pot	other items	complete?	period	archaeological sex	remarks
330	3	1	2	2	1	5				1	1																	3	1	needle		KZ	f		
153	1+1	1+1F	2	2	4+1F				6		1?		2?	Bz													3	1	birch bark		KZ	f	coins in pouch? with 2 arm-rings, spindle (in box) and pot above the head		
40	1+1	2	2	2	2+1	2+1			2+1																		9	1	textile		KZ	f	1 coin damaged		
352	1+1	2	2							1											1						1				KZ	f			
46	1+1	2	1																		1						4	2			KZ	f	1 pot with 2 coins wrapped; 2 coins with pins beneath 2nd pot		
11	2	1	2	2				1																		1				n		KZ	f		
229	2+1																										3	1	textile		KZ	f			
309	1	2	2	2		2+6																									KZ-B2	f			
202	1	2	1Ag	1?	2	10+6 Stgl.					1										1		1?				3	1	bracelet(?)		KZ	f?	coins with pot, spindle and birchbark box with bracelet(?) above the head		
306	1	2	1	2							1																				KZ-B2	f			
199	1	2	1	4	1																										KZ	f			
388	1	2	1	1	1			4Be	105	4																1					KZ	f	finger-ring=spiral ring		
81	1	2		2																							1				KZ	f/K	coins in birchbark box, maybe with brooch and necklace; position unclear		
35	1F	2	1	2					3																						KZ	f	Position unclear, neckring or pectoral ornaments separate		
214	1	2+1Fe		2	1	2	1		1+6+1																		1?		Ag-pin; textile		KZ	f	belonging of coin unsure, north of skull, probably like in grave 202		
86	1	1		2				1																							KZ	f?	position unclear neck-ring or pectoral ornaments separate		
350	1	1	1	2	1						1																3	1		(?)	KZ	f			
310	1	1	1	1																								1				KZ	f		
18	F	F	F						2																							KZ-C3	f		
227	1	1			1																											KZ-C2	f		
212	1	1F		2					1	1																	1					KZ	f	coin on the side of the head, possibly in the mouth; chaddad?	
16	1	1F	2																								2	F				KZ	f		
85	1	1	1	1			1																					1				KZ	f?		
395	1		1+1?						6	1?																						KZ-C3			
164	1	1F						26	42	2																						KZ/			
13	1F		2?F																									4	1			KZ	f	Ag-arm-ring	

Grave	brooch	pin	neckring	armring	spiral armring	finger-ring	chain supporter	chain	pendant	bead	spiral	spindle whorl	pincers	buckle	strap end	fitting	rivet	strap distributor	bridle fitting	snaffle bit	spur	knife	sword	spear-head	socketed axe	shield boss	sickle	whet stone	coin	pot	other items	complete?	period	archaeological sex	remarks
219			2		1						1																	4	birch bark		KZ	f?	coins with arm-rings und finger-ring in birchbark box; spindle aside?		
251			1+1		1																									KZ/ VWZ	f	finger-ring within arm-rings			
304			IF?	IF?																							1	1		KZ	?				
147			2					1																			2	1		KZ	f	coins and arm-rings in the pot?; all in birch bark			
303			2																								3	1F		KZ	?				
311			2																								2			KZ	?				
343			2																								2			KZ	?				
91			2																											C3	?				
125			2																											C3	K				
12			F																									1	Fe	KZ?	?				
359			1									1																		KZ	f				
41			1F				1+1?					1																		KZ	f				
322				1	1				4	3																									
318				1F				1Be	2	4																			1		KZ	f			
6				1F			x	2+11	9		1											1								KZ	K	disturbed			
382								1berl																							KZ	f?			
243																															KZ	?			
200																												1	Fe		KZ	?	coin under teeth, spiral ring at the ear; stone circle		
50																												2	1		KZ	?			
325																												1			KZ	?			
357																												2		n	KZ	?			
389																												3			KZ	?			
216																												1			KZ	?			
316																												2		n	KZ	?			
342																													1	n	KZ	?			

Fig. 7. A combinatory table of grave goods in Roman Period female burials in Oberhof (Aukštėmiiai). Abbreviations: Ag - silver or white metal; Fe - iron; Bz - bronze; Be - amber; F - fragment; KZ Roman Period; VWZ Migration Period (table prepared by Ch. Reich).

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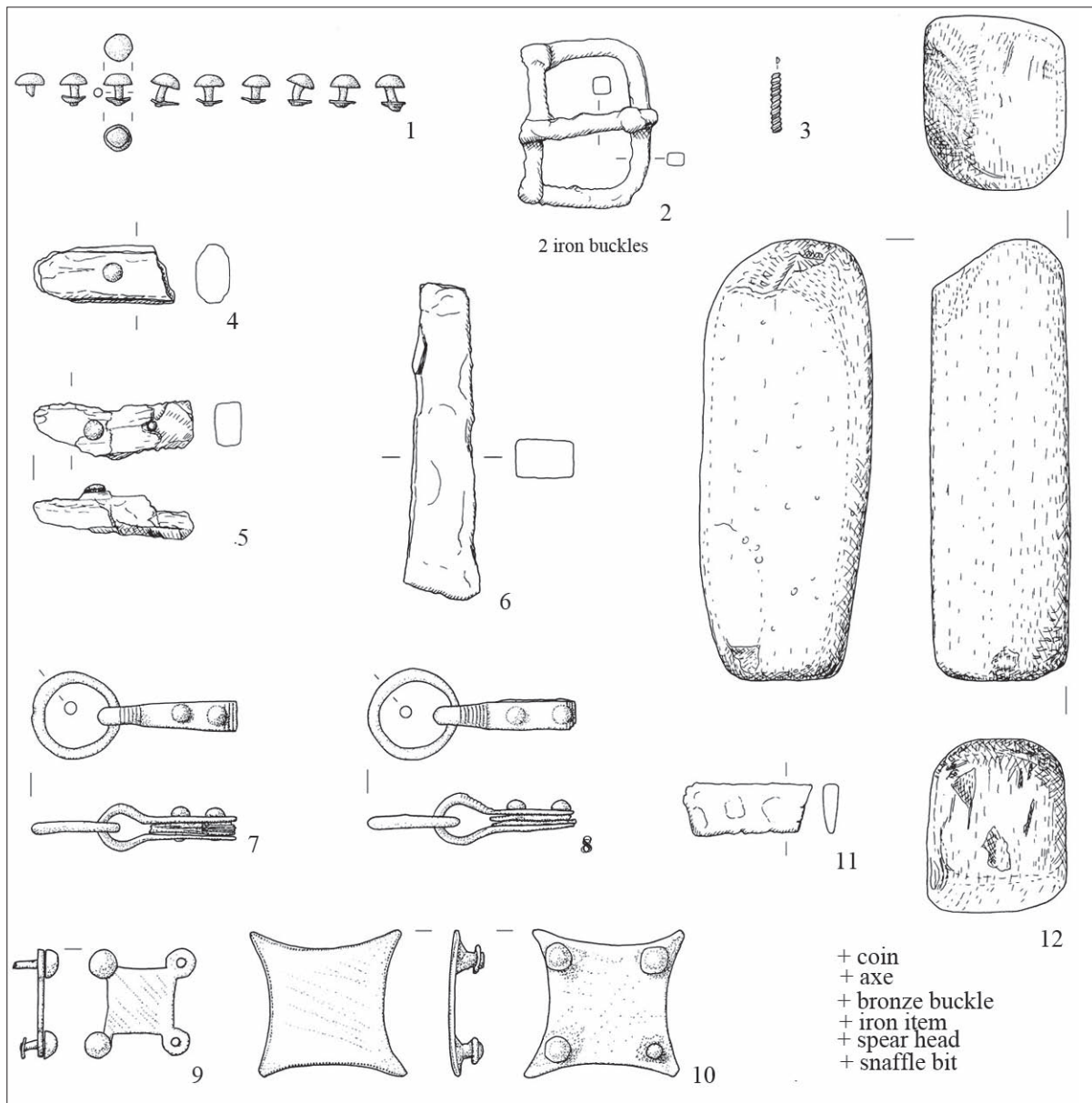


Fig. 8. Oberhof (Aukštkiemiai), grave 360: 1 rivets; 2 buckles; 3 spiral; 4-5 sickle and a fragment; 6 chisel; 7-8 strap-ends; 9-10 fittings; 11 knife; 12 whetstone. Not preserved are a coin, a socketed axe, a bronze buckle, a spearhead, a bridle bit, and an iron item (1, 9, 10 bronze, tin-plated, tin covering was established by conservators at MVF; 3, 7, 8 bronze; 2, 4-6, 11 iron; 12 stone) (drawings by Silvia Nettekoven).

and brooches are missing. When no arm-rings are present (as in graves 234, 339, 391 and 53), it is possible that these are not female but male burials.

The same is valid for the seventh group (18 graves), with bracelets that may have been deposited separately in the burial, often together with Roman coins.

The deceased of group eight, three graves with finger-rings or a pendant, and group 9, seven graves with Roman coins, cannot be dated or determined according to sex.

For female burials from the Early Migration Period, the same groups can be recognised: three graves of above-average equipped group 1, two graves with one

brooch (group 3), and one grave each for groups 2, 4, 5 and 6.

Prestigious ornaments such as silver neck-rings, brooches or pins with a 'silvery outfit' or blue glass inlay are clearly connected with the first, fourth and fifth group. At the same time, only the first group has above-average ornament equipment. It is hard to tell whether the difference from group 4 is due to status in terms of wealth, or membership of an elite, or whether it is due to age, or, for example, marital status, or time and a change of fashion.¹⁴

¹⁴ A map of the different types and variations of pins with tutuli or disc-shaped heads shows a distribution that can be interpreted chronologically. This is confirmed by the seriation of the material. Therefore, the most elaborated tutulus pins with a white metal coating decorated with

The distribution of these equipment groups on the reconstructed plan of the cemetery shows no obvious concentrations. It seems that women's burials with above-average equipment take a more central position within grave groups, similar to their male counterparts.

The picture of the social stratification of the community that buried their dead in Oberhof is not clear, as in the case of Žviliai. It is possible to point out a number of male burials that can be labelled as 'higher class'. As for the riders, the dating of the graves (if possible) suggests that there was not much more than one in every chronological period (according to the seriation), but for the burials with two spearheads the chronological distribution unfortunately is not so clear. It also turned out that prestige goods or status symbols also occur in graves with only one spear, and even without weapons. Therefore, it is hard to point out local leaders.

As for female burials, the first group can be referred to as upper class, but there are one to five such burials in every chronological phase, so it looks like a group of women belonging to leading families more than a reflection of a hierarchy among the local elite.

Well-equipped graves in other cemeteries

Looking through west Lithuanian cemeteries, a number of well-equipped graves could be distinguished in the following grave-fields: Šernai (formerly Schernen), Baitai (formerly Baiten), Bandužiai, Lazdininkai (Kalnalaukis), Stragnai (formerly Stragna) and Jogučiai-Spirkiai (formerly Jagutten-Spirken)¹⁵ (Fig. 1). Apart from the latter, which is known only from one, but a very important, burial, the others represent standard cemeteries in the region in question. Among the grave complexes from these sites, there are ten burials with particularly rich inventories. They are presented in Fig. 10, described by grave number, sex, number of categories of artefact, list of artefacts, symbols of prestige, and chronology. All of them are dated to the Late Roman Period, phases C_{1b}–C₂.

The number of artefact categories in the burials is different, from five to as many as 13 or even 16 (a double grave?). It is possible to observe the same tendency as in the case of Žviliai, that a significant grave inventory should not always be combined with simple calculation. For example, the outstanding grave 74 at Bandužiai (Stankus 1995) produced only five cat-

spherules belong to the end of the Roman Iron Age, to C₂/C₃. For this, see Banytė-Rowell 2009, p.17ff.

¹⁵ Šernai, Baitai, Stragnai and Jogučiai-Spirkiai are in the Klaipėda district. Lazdininkai (Kalnalaukis) is in the Kretinga district. Bandužiai is in the southern part of Klaipėda.

egories of artefacts (some in larger quantities), but the quality of the finds is impressive. In each of the well-equipped graves described in Fig. 10, there is a group of artefacts which could be treated as symbols of prestige. In the above-mentioned female burial at Bandužiai, status-indicating finds are represented by a splendid pectoral ornament with a pair of tutulus pins with white metal inlay and blue glass (Plate VI). Pectoral decorations are typical Balt costume elements in the Late Roman Period (Moora 1938, pp.222-243), but the form, size and composition of the decoration of the Bandužiai pectoral is definitely unique. Tutulus pins with white metal and blue glass also belong to extraordinary finds (Banytė-Rowell 2009). Among the seven finger-rings found in this burial, one was a silver imitation of Scandinavian gold snake-head finger-rings (Lund Hansen 1995, pp.206-207, 209-212; Ethelberg 2009; Ethelberg *et al.* 2000, p.70ff), a symbol of a very high social status. The phenomenon of local, Baltic imitations of Scandinavian high social status finger-rings has been discussed in the literature by Dieter Quast (2004, pp.254-257, 268, Fig. 9.2-6) and Rasa Banytė-Rowell (2007a). The Balts' spiral finger-rings with broadening terminals, imitations of Scandinavian Beckmann 40 snake-head rings, were made of bronze, and more rarely silver. The latter occurred only in rich burials, such as the above-mentioned Bandužiai grave 74. The same silver imitation snake-head item was also found in well-equipped female grave 10 at Šernai (Bezenberger 1892, p.147ff, Plate VII.1-29, VIII left: 1, 2, 12, 13, IX:1, 5-7, X:1, XIII), accompanied by an elaborated headdress and a pair of tutulus pins. Necklaces from this burial also attract our attention, because they consist of many elements of a different colour being a picturesque set of decoration, namely colourful glass beads, orange amber beads, bronze spirals and iron *Schellenberlocke* (bell-shaped pendants).

In Fig. 10, there are three other female graves from Šernai and Baitai cemeteries. Grave 22 at Šernai (Bezenberger 1892, p.151ff, Fig. 11; 12, Plate VIII left: 3, 4, IX:2, 8, 9, 14, X:1) produced seven categories of artefact, including a bronze tutulus brooch with a silver inlay and an elaborated headdress. Textile caps decorated with bronze appliques and pendants were also status-indicating costume elements in west Lithuanian female graves. Metal elements of such a headdress were also found in burial 18 at Baitai (Banytė 1999, p.64, Fig. 2), together with silver neck-ring and a pair of tutulus pins with white metal inlay (Fig. 11). In the grave inventory of female grave 8 (Banytė 1999, p.64, Fig. 1) in the same cemetery, there was a pair of tutulus pins with blue glass, joined with a colourful necklace consisting of different types of glass beads, iron *Schellenberlocke* (bell-shaped pendants), and amber beads.

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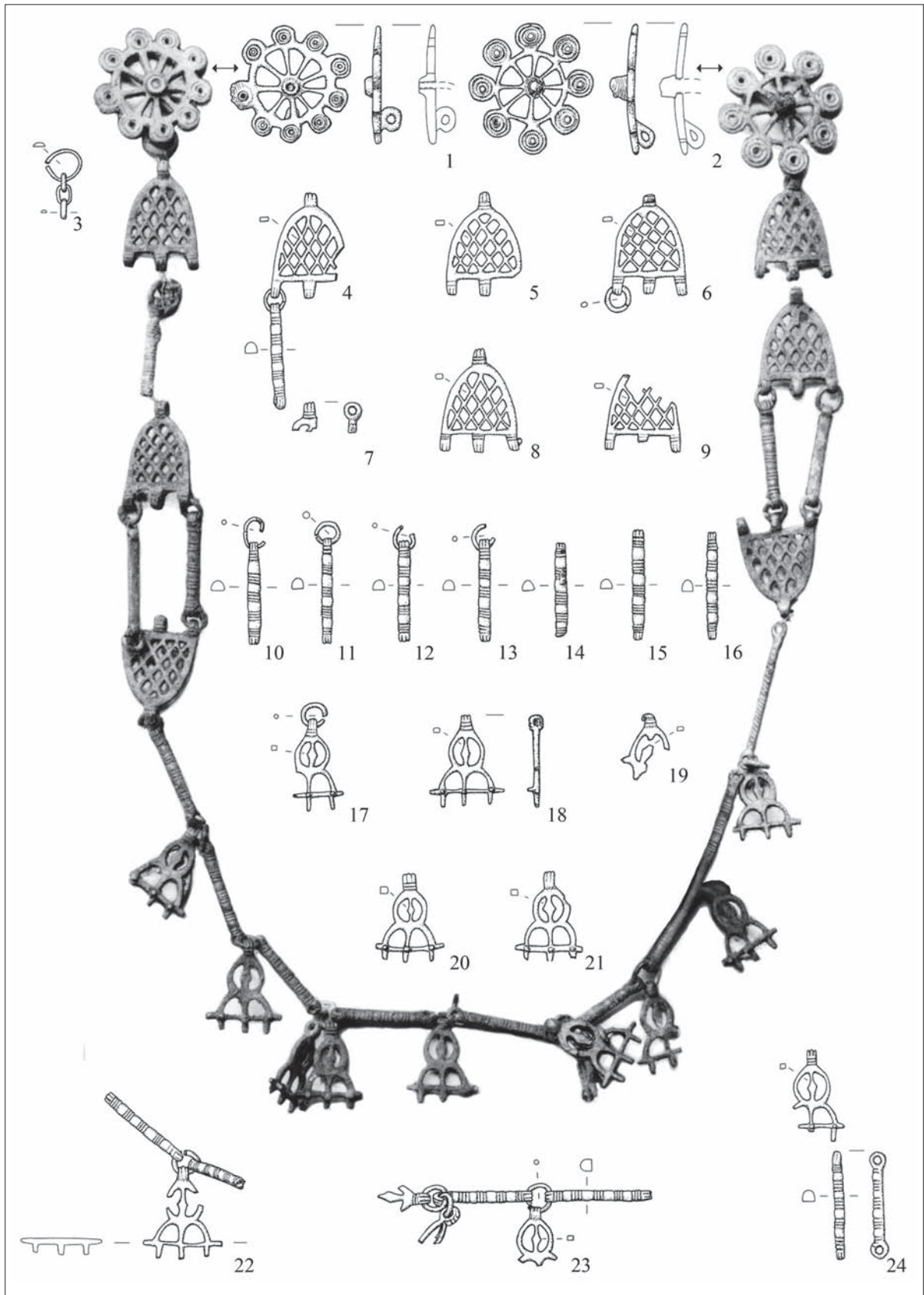


Fig. 9a. Oberhof (Aukštkiemiai), grave 202: 1-2 pins; 3-24 pectoral ornaments (1, 2 bronze, tin-coated or white metal, iron; 4-9 bronze, tin-plated; 3, 10-24 bronze) (drawings by Silvia Nettekoven).

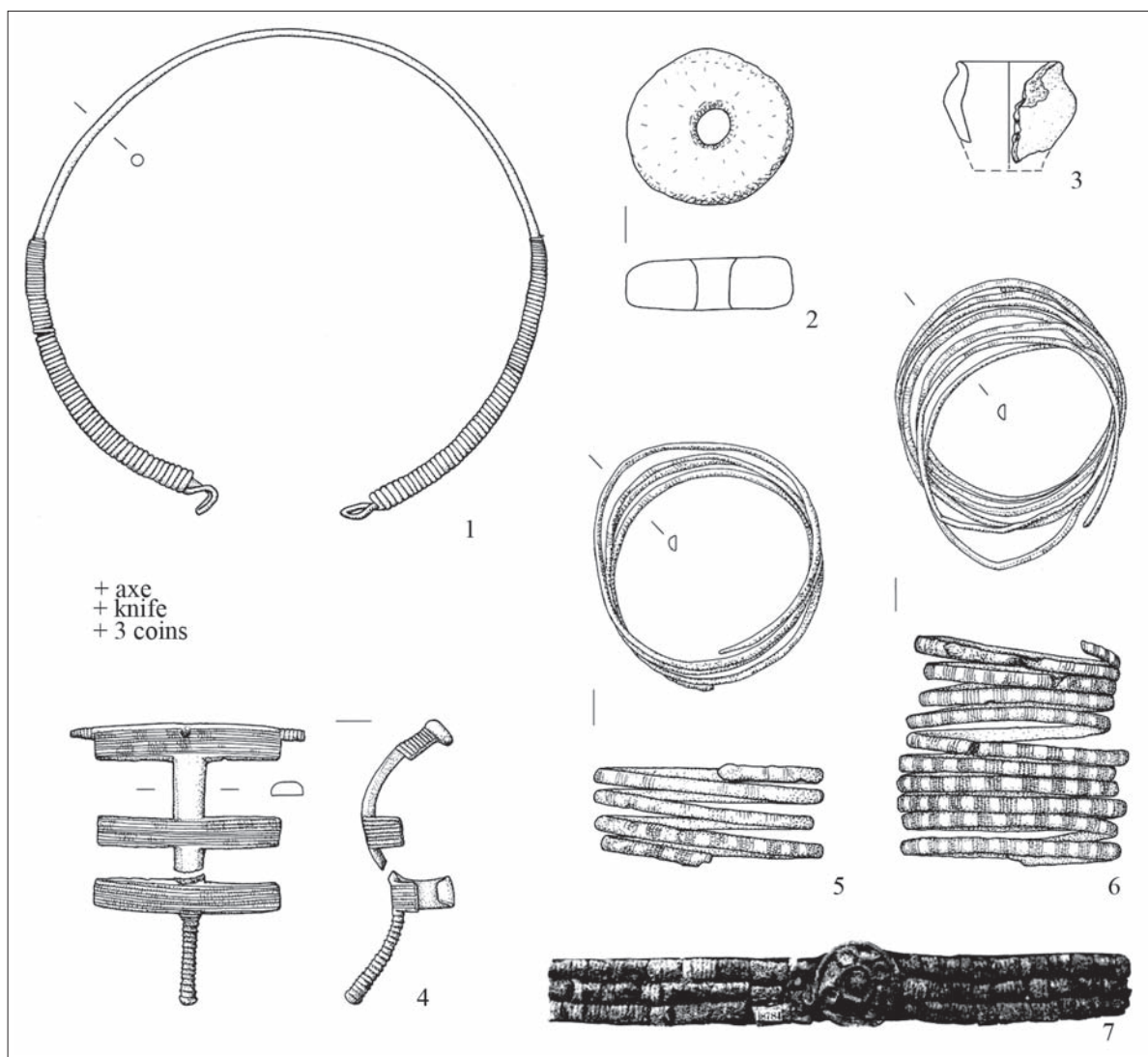


Fig. 9b. Oberhof (Aukštkiemiai), grave 202: 1 neck-ring; 2 spindle whorl; 3 miniature pot; 4 brooch; 5-6 spiral arm-rings; 7 bracelet (?); not preserved artefacts are a socketed axe, a knife, and three coins (7 silver; 2 stone; 3 clay, 4-7 bronze) (drawings by Silvia Nettekoven).

Šernai grave 50 (Bezenberger 1892, p.155ff, Plate XIV, XV.1-5, 7-9), excavated in the 19th century, did not allow us to make any anthropological investigations. We can base our analysis only on its rich archaeological inventory, which reveals artefacts characteristic of both male and female burials. It could be a double grave of a man and a woman, but it is also possible that the male burial was supplemented by a birch bark box with female ornaments. According to Audronė Bliujienė and Donatas Butkus, such small boxes with additional ornaments characteristic of women are found in high-status warrior graves (such as Lazdininkai, grave 65/2000; Bliujienė, Butkus 2007, p.103, Fig. 7). There is also another possibility, the so-called bridal offering, namely women's ornaments put into the grave of an unmarried warrior, according to Christine Reich's studies of the Oberhof material.¹⁶

¹⁶ This question was presented by Christine Reich at the conference in Brandenburg, Germany in September 2010 at a meeting of the Kommission zur Erforschung von

Horse offerings and elements of horse harnesses, as well as an elaborate belt with silver decorations, a silver neck-ring and a silver finger-ring, may confirm the high social status of the deceased man buried in grave 50 at Šernai. A warrior-horseman had also been buried in Stragnai, grave 13 (Varnas 1986, p.80ff; Banytė-Rowell 2007b, p.332ff, Figs. 3-4). A human burial was accompanied by a horse offering, and a rich grave inventory consisted of 13 categories of artefacts (Fig. 10), including a complete weapon set (two spearheads, one axe), elements of a horse harness, spurs, tools (a knife, a scythe, a cooper's knife), costume elements and a Roman coin. Equestrian equipment, with an elaborated rare type of nose-piece decorated with blue glass, and horse remains, indicated the high social

Sammlungen Archäologischer Funde und Unterlagen aus dem Nordöstlichen Mitteleuropa. An article about it was published in *Acta Praehistorica and Archaeologica* (Reich, 2012, p.144ff).

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cemetery	grave no	sex	no of categories of artefacts	list of artefacts	prestige symbols	chronology
Baitai	8	female	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 tutulus pins with blue glass (joined by necklace) - elaborate necklace (different types of glass beads, <i>Schellenberlocke</i>, amber beads) - 2 bracelets (early types of <i>Kolbenarm-ring</i>) - 3 finger-rings (1 with blue glass) - spindle-whorl 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tutulus pins with necklace - finger-ring with blue glass 	C ₂
Baitai	18	female	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - headdress - neck-ring (silver) - necklace - 2 tutulus pins with white metal coating - bracelet - 4 finger-rings - awl - spindle-whorl - small vessel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - headdress - tutulus pins - silver neck-ring 	C ₂
Baitai	31	male	? (destroyed grave)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - horse harness parts with silver decoration - scythe - <i>Dolchmesser</i> - belt set with silver decoration - ca. 100 silver rivets and knobs, some of them with coiled wire (two with blue glass) - silver coiled wires to decorate textiles - fragments of high-quality textiles - silver fragments of <i>Rosettenfibel</i> - finger-ring (imitation of snake-head ring) - amber and glass beads (parts of horse harness and necklace) - small piece of glass (glass vessel?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 horses offerings with elaborate parts of horse harness - splendid coat with silver decoration - imported <i>Rosettenfibel</i> - silver finger-ring (imitation of snake-head ring) - outstanding form of grave 	C ₂
Bandužiai	74	female	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - splendid pectoral ornament - 2 tutulus pins with blue glass (pins with tin coating) - 2 crossbow brooches - 2 bracelets - 7 finger-rings (1 silver, imitation of snake-head ring) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pectoral ornament - tutulus pins with blue glass and tin inlay - silver finger-ring (imitation of snake-head ring) 	C _{1b} -C ₂
Jogučiai-Spirkiai	1	male	? (destroyed grave)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - spearhead - knife - scythe - whetstone - elaborate imported buckle (bronze, silver, gold foil) - pieces of ornaments (a brooch?) - amber bead - small vessel - 3 Roman coins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - imported buckle - Roman coins 	C _{1b} -C ₂
Lazdininkai	9/1992	male	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - spearhead - axe - knife (<i>Dolchmesser?</i> with bronze mountings) - elaborate belt set (different types of mountings, openwork decoration and layer of tin) - scythe - parts of horse harness (bridle bit, 2 buckles) - neck-ring - bracelet - crossbow brooch - 4 Roman coins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - parts of horse harness - elaborate belt set - Roman coins 	C _{1b}

cemetery	grave no	sex	no of categories of artefacts	list of artefacts	prestige symbols	chronology
Stragnai	13	male	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 spearheads - axe - knife - scythe - belt buckle - cooper's knife - 2 spurs - parts of horse harness with elaborate nose-piece (with blue glass) - 2 brooches (1 iron with silver) - bracelet - 1 amber bead and 2 <i>Schellenberlocke</i> - Roman coin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - horse offering - parts of horse harness with elaborate nose-piece - spurs - brooch with silver 	C _{1b} -C ₂
Šernai	10	female	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - headdress - 2 neck-rings - 2 necklaces - 2 tutulus pins - 2 crossbow brooches - 2 bracelets - 6 finger-rings (1 silver imitation of snake-head ring) - Roman coin as a pendant - knife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - headdress - tutulus pins - silver finger-ring (imitation of snake-head ring) 	C _{1b}
Šernai	22	female	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - headdress - 3 neck-rings - necklace - 4 brooches (crossbow, 1 tutulus brooch with silver inlay) - 2 bracelets - 2 rings - potsherds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - headdress - tutulus brooch 	C _{1b}
Šernai	50	male and female?	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - spearhead - axe - shield-boss - 2 knives (1 <i>Dolchmesser</i>) - belt set with bronze and silver¹ decoration - scythe - whetstone - cooper's knife - horse bit - 1 neck-ring (silver)² - 6 glass beads (as pendants) - 5 crossbow brooches - 3 finger-rings (1 silver)³ - 2 Roman coins - small vessel - birch bark box (with female ornaments) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - horse offerings with horse equipment - silver neck-ring - silver finger-ring - elaborate belt set - Roman coins? 	C _{1b} -C ₂

¹ Bezenberger noted that among the bronze *Knöpfchen* a silver one was also found (1892). We ought to believe him, as we know analogies from Baitai grave 31.

² It is worth believing A. Bezenberger. There is no possibility to make a chemical analysis.

³ After A. Bezenberger (1892, p.155ff).

Fig. 10. Selected well-equipped graves from west Lithuanian cemeteries (prepared by A. Bitner-Wróblewska).

position of the buried man. The silver¹⁷ decoration of one of the brooches may be treated as another status-indicative find.

Lazdininkai (Kalnalaukis) grave 9/1992 (Bliujienė, Butkus 2007, Fig. 10) also belongs to a group of warrior-horsemen. In its inventory, we can find elements of horse equipment (a bridle, two buckles), a complete set of weaponry (a spearhead, an axe, a *Dolchmesser* battle knife), and costume elements (Fig. 10). Among the latter, we should point out an elaborate belt set with a buckle and rectangular mountings with openwork decoration, as well as cross-shaped mountings and a belt end fitting. Four Roman coins could also be treated as a symbol of prestige in this burial.

There are two destroyed graves, probably robbed in antiquity, but even so they reveal an outstanding position among west Lithuanian male burials, namely Jogučiai-Spirkiai grave 1 (Tamulynas 2005; Kuršiai 2009, p.39ff), and Baitai grave 31 (Banytė-Rowell 2007a, pp.10-17). The former produced an imported bronze omega-buckle decorated with silver and gold foil, which is unique in western Lithuania. The large number of Roman coins (three survived) may also be regarded as a sign of a more senior deceased person buried here. Grave 31 at Baitai was distinguished by its outstanding form, with several layers of stone settings, as well as its inventory; however, only a part of it has survived (Fig. 10). There were two horse offerings, elaborate elements of horse harnesses with silver decoration, a silver imitation of a snake-head finger-ring, silver fragments of imported *Rosettenfibel*, a belt set with silver decoration, and unique finds which could be interpreted as a splendid coat with small silver details attached for decoration (Fig. 12). Fragments of high-quality woollen cloth were discovered, some of them decorated with coiled silver wire, and about 100 white metal and silver¹⁸ rivets and/or knobs, some of them with coiled wire, a few with blue glass, a sort of appliqué decoration of textile.

Conclusions

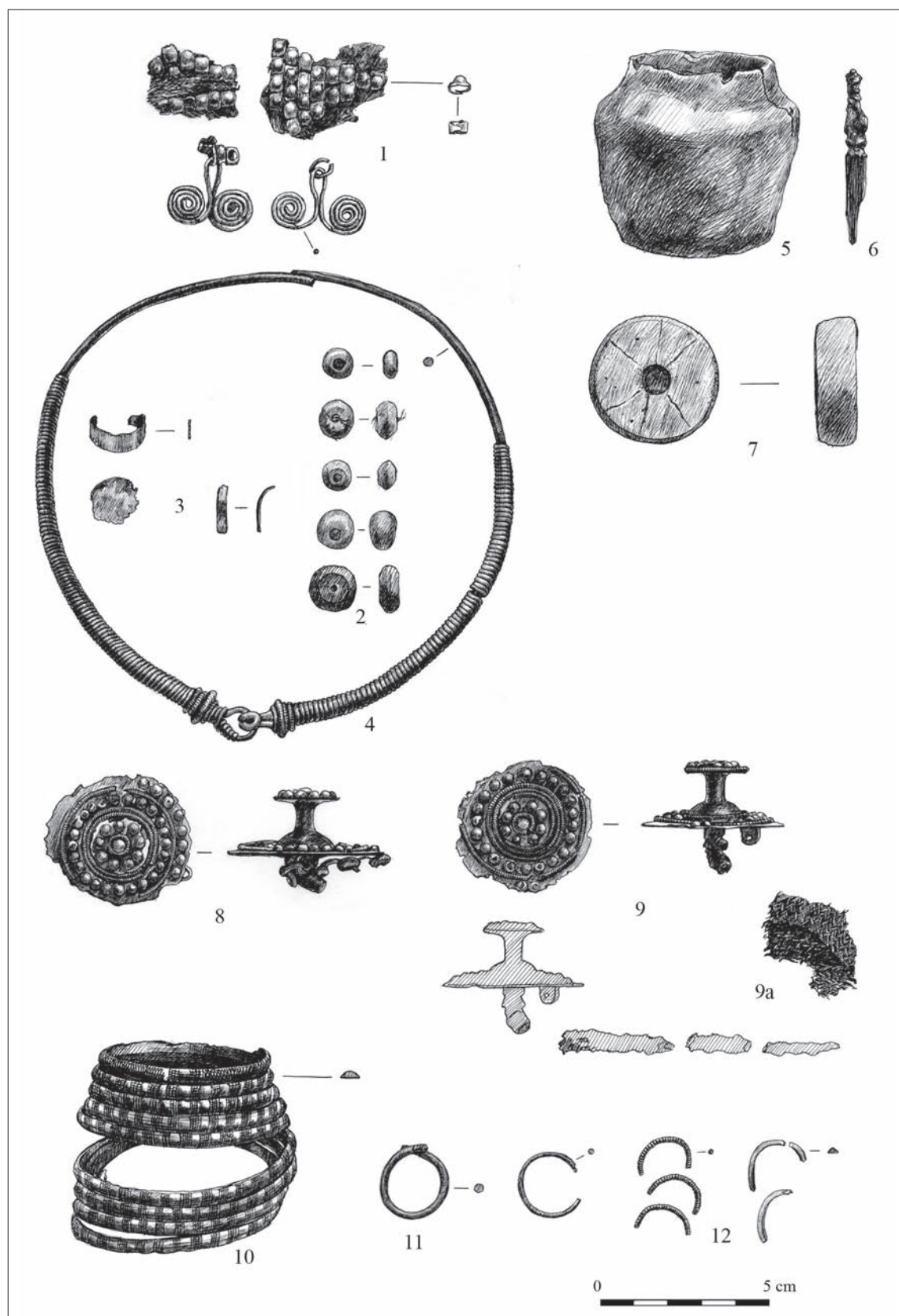
Analysing grave materials from west Lithuanian cemeteries dated to the Roman and Early Migration periods, we can observe a relatively large amount of well-equipped burials. This is probably nothing strange in a region which may have accumulated its wealth from local amber deposits (see Bliujienė 2007, and earlier

literature cited) and intensive contacts with the Germanic tribes living in the Baltic Sea and Elbe regions, as well as with the Roman Empire (Michelbertas 2001; Banytė-Rowell 2007c, pp.105-129). The development of contacts across the Baltic Sea at the beginning of the Late Roman Period may have had an impact on the inhabitants of the west Lithuanian coast. The importance of the sea route arose after the Marcomannic Wars interrupted the earlier trade routes and brought about a change in the main centres in both the Roman Empire and the *barbaricum*. An important role in this long-distance sea route was played by Zealand, where a rich and powerful settlement centre emerged (Boye, Lund Hansen 2009), with lively contacts with the southern Baltic Sea region, especially the Lower Vistula region, and indirectly through the latter area, or directly with west Lithuania. The significant number of local imitations of ornaments from the west Baltic Sea basin remains perfect confirmation of such an assumption. As examples of this, we might cite the above-mentioned imitations of snake-head finger-rings or neck-rings with *birnenförmige Öse* (neck-rings with key-shaped hole terminals), as well as the phenomenon of blue glass decoration inspired by west European influences (von Carnap-Bornheim 2000). Looking at the gold and gilded jewellery, for example, from the grave of the Hassleben 'princess' (Quast 2009, p.4, Fig. 8.2-4), we can easily recognise 'prototypes' for the ornaments crafted by the Balts in western Lithuania. Nevertheless, gold is almost absent, and silver is rare enough in the cemeteries of the Lithuanian coastland. Furthermore, imitations of Germanic luxury jewellery in western Lithuania were accessible to members of the 'middle class'.

Despite the distant interregional connections of western Lithuania, its cultural rhythm was definitely different to that in other areas of the *barbaricum*, and this may be observed clearly with regard to the question of elites. No interregional status symbols could be recorded in western Lithuania, although some of them occurred as bronze imitations that were widespread in the coastland and the nearby hinterland (Banytė-Rowell 2007a, Fig. 4). Rather, it is possible to establish a list of local prestige goods. These could be divided into male and female indicators, and some which occurred in both categories of grave can be distinguished. Among the male burials, equestrian equipment is often accompanied by horse offerings, drinking horns, and elaborate belt sets. For female graves, we can point out elaborate headdresses, outstanding necklaces, and splendid pectoral ornaments. It is worth stressing that the same types of artefacts may be found in simpler versions in rather modestly equipped graves.

¹⁷ It is a notched silver wire (the analysis was made in the museum) which goes around the stem of an iron crossbow brooch (a fragment of one). Usually tin was used for the covering, but not for the notched wires.

¹⁸ Some pieces have already been analysed, and they are definitely silver. About the others, we are not sure yet.



III
BALT
SOCIETIES:
AN ATTEMPT
TO PENETRATE
THE MIST

Fig. 11. Grave goods from Baitai, grave 18: 1 remains of headdress decorations; 2 one blue glass bead and four amber beads; 3 fragments of bronze ornamentation found in the vicinity of the headdress; 4 silver neck-ring; 5 ceramic vessel; 6 awl; 7 spindle whorl; 8-9 a pair of tutulus pins with white metal inlay *in situ* found joined with bronze chain; 9a fragment of woollen cloth; 10 bracelet; 11 ring; 12 fragments of rings (1 bronze, fragment of cloth; 2 glass, amber; 3, 10-12 bronze; 4 silver; 5 ceramic; 6 iron, remains of wood; 7 sandstone; 8-9 bronze, white metal inlay, iron, wool) (drawings by Jolanta Mažeikaite).

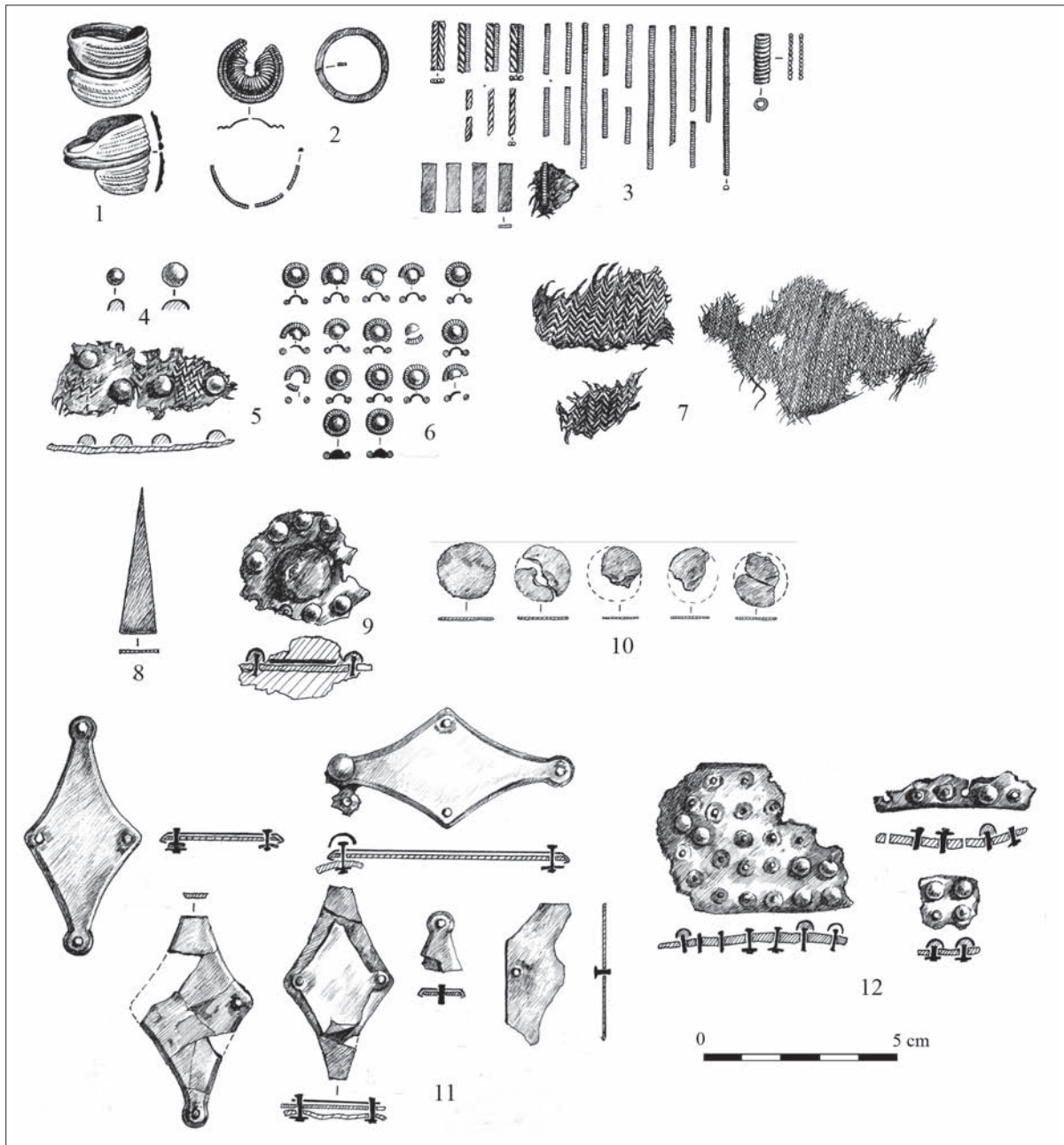


Fig. 12. Ornamentation made of silver or silver-plated from Baitai, grave 31: 1 snake-head finger-ring; 2 small fragments of *Pressblech* or *Rosettenfibel*; 3 silver wires and spiral for the dress decoration; 4 stud heads to decorate leather and silver studs to decorate cloth (around 100 more found *in situ*); 5 fragment of cloth with silver studs; 6 rosette-shaped details for cloth decoration (two with a blue glass inlay); 7 fragments of cloth; 8 ornamentation plate for a belt (?); 9 fragment of leather decoration for shoes (?); 10 plate decorations from footgear (?); 11 fittings for harness (?); 12 fragments of leather belt decorated with silver/bronze studs (1-4, 8, 10 silver; 5 silver and cloth; 7 cloth; 9, 12 silver, bronze and leather, 11 bronze and silver) (drawings by Jolanta Mažeikaitė).

There are a number of higher-status symbols that are common to both male and female burials, such as silver ornaments or items with silver or white metal inlay, as well as precious imports like the omega-buckle from Jogučiai-Spirkiai or the enamelled plaquette from Aukštkiemiai. The question arises whether Roman coins could be regarded as prestige goods. They occurred in numerous male and female graves, often ones that were quite modestly equipped. It seems that only a larger number of Roman coins in one burial, sup-

plemented by a rich inventory, may indicate a higher social position.

It would be hard to dismiss the assumption of social differentiation in west Lithuanian society, but the scale of social stratification remains unclear. Of course, it is possible that local elites chose ways of expressing their position other than through grave equipment. The picture received from studying burial customs allows us to speak of a number of well-equipped graves, but

no exceptionally rich ones. It is possible to point out the presence of local elites in particular small territorial communities, but not to distinguish region-wide elites. However, there is one exception, the man with the splendid coat buried in Baitai grave 31. The grave inventory is incomplete, but even so, this burial could be regarded as a sign of the existence of very high-ranking people in the region in question. The process which probably developed further within the Late Migration Period may be suggested by warrior grave 73 at Lazdininkai (Kalnalaukis) (Bliujienė, Butkus 2002).

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Abbreviations

Arch. Baltica – *Archaeologia Baltica*
Arch. Lituana – *Archaeologia Lituana*
Lietuvos arch. – *Lietuvos Archeologija*
LNM – *Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus*
MVF – Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz

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AR JIS GYVAVO? ELITO IR TARPREGIONINIŲ KONTAKTŲ KLAUSIMAS VAKARŲ LIETUVOJE ROMĖNIŠKŲ IR ANKSTYVŲ TAUTŲ KRAUSTYMO LAIKOTARPIU

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Santrauka

Geležies amžiaus elito atsiradimo klausimas *barbaricum* erdvėje yra plačiai aptartas literatūroje. Aukšto statuso simboliais kapuose laikomos auksinės įkapės, romėniškų metalinių indų rinkiniai, kitas išskirtinis prabangus romėniškasis importas. Tokio lygio prestižinių daiktų baltų kapuose beveik nežinoma. Galima tik spėlioti, ar baltai neturėjo poreikio tokiu būdu reprezentuoti savąjį elitą. O gal jis iš viso neegzistavo tarpregioniniu lygmeniu? Straipsnyje ši problema nagrinėjama remiantis Vakarų Lietuvos kapinynų su akmenų vainikais grupės medžiaga. Visų pirma aptariamos turtingiausios įkapės Aukštikių (*Oberhof*) ir Žvilių kapinynuose (1 pav.). Šiuo tikslu taikomi tiek kiekybiniai medžiagos analizės, tiek kokybinės įkapių

sudėties tyrimo metodai. Žviliuose dirbinių seriacijos metodas padeda išskirti įkapes, kurios turėtų priklausyti „idealiai“ turtingiems kapams (2 pav.). Išskiriami turtingiausių vyrų kapų papuošalų ir ginkluotės tipai. Iš vietinės juvelyrikos pavyzdžių išsiskiria egzemplioriai, puošti sidabru ar balto metalo danga, ir formos, kurios imituoja platesnių *barbaricum* regionų madas (antkaklės su rakto skylutės formos kilpele, apyrankės storėjančiais galais, žiedai su paplatinta vidurine apvija, Pätrovičy-Žviliai tipo sidabriniai kabučiai, įvežtinės *Raupenfibeln*, aštuoneto formos gintaro kabučiai). Vyrų statuso ženklais neabejotinai buvo laikomi žirgo ir raitelio aprangos elementai (3 pav.), žalvariu puošti geriamieji ragai. Moterų kapuose turtas buvo pabrėžiamas ne tik papuošalų kokybe, bet ir kiekybe. Moterų kapuose taip pat randama tokių germaniškų prestižinių formų imitacijų kaip antkaklės su rakto skylutės formos kilpele (4 pav.). Ypatingi yra krūtinės papuošalai – sudaryti iš smeigtukų porų ir juos jungiančių kabučių su grandinėmis. Šie papuošalai primena juostas, dengusias moters krūtinę. Kitas ypatingas moterų krūtinės papuošalas buvo puošnūs karolių vėriniai (VI iliustr.). Vis dėlto pažymėtina, kad turtingiausiems kapams būdingų papuošalų formų pasitaikė ir „vidutinio luomo“ kapuose. Tiek Žviliuose, tiek Aukštikiuose turtingi įkapių kapai buvo pasiskirstę po kapinyną gana tolygiai, tarsi atskirų šeimų kapų plotuose.

Aukštikių kapinyne įkapių deriniai turiniu gali būti skirstomi į grupes (vyriškos lyties mirusiųjų kapai susiklostė į penkias grupes, o moteriškos lyties – į devynias grupes) (6; 7 pav.). Pažymėtina, kad turtingus ginklų kapus nebūtinai lydi gausus ar išskirtinis papuošalų komplektas. Kita vertus, kapuose su „įprastu“ įkapių rinkiniu pasitaikė prestižinių dirbinių (pvz., sidabrinė (?) segė kape 355 ar emaliuota importinė segė kape 242). Kapų ypatingumą pabrėžė ir turtingi diržų ar kampanų apkalai (8 pav.). Penktoji vyriškų kapų grupė pasižymi tuo, kad čia nerasta ginklų, tačiau kai kuriuose kapuose būta išskirtinių įkapių (kape 369 – sidabrinė (?) antkaklė ir 21 romėniškoji moneta; kapuose 2a ir 375 – rasta žirgo ir raitelio aprangos elementų; kape 366 – skiltuvo rinkinys). Taigi Aukštikių vyrų kapai liudija, kad „aukštesnį luomą“ simbolizavo pilnas ginkluotės rinkinys ir raitelio / žirgo apranga, tačiau prestižinių dirbinių pasitaikė ir ne taip gausiai įkapių aprūpintuose kapuose, todėl sunku būtų tiksliai nurodyti vadovaujantį vietinei bendruomenei asmenį. Aukštikių moterų kapuose pagal įkapių derinius išsiskiria pirma, ketvirta ir penkta grupės, kurių kapuose buvo rasta tokių prestižinių papuošalų kaip sidabrinės (?) antkaklės, segės ar smeigtukai su balto metalo danga ar mėlyno stiklo akutėmis (9a, b pav.). Atkreiptinas dėmesys, kad papuošalų komplektų ypatumus kapuose galėjo lemti ne tik statuso, bet ir amžiaus ar vedybinės

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padėties skirtumai, taip pat mados pokyčiai laikui bėgant.

Siekiant palyginti platesniame Vakarų Lietuvos kontekste aptariamą turtingiausią C1b–C2 periodų kapai iš kitų kapinynų, išskiriant tas įkapių kategorijas, kurias būtų galima laikyti prestižinėmis (7 pav.). Moteriškosios lyties mirusiųjų kapuose, tokiuose kaip Bandužių kapas 74 (VI ilustr.), Šernų kapai 10 ir 22, Baitų kapai 8 ir 18 (12 pav.), buvo rasta metalinių galvos apdangalo puošybos detalių, *tutuli* segė ar *tutuli* smeigtukų poros, sujungtos prabangiu plokštelių ir grandinėlių junginiu arba karolių ir kabučių aparomis, taip pat juose pasitaikė įvairesnių formų žiedų, tarp kurių išsiskiria sidabriniai žiedai – skandinaviškųjų gyvatgalvių žiedų imitacijos. Turtingam C1b–C2 laikotarpio vyro kapui įvairiapusis atstovauja Šernų kapas 50, pasižymintis ginkluotės, darbo įrankių ir raitelio reikmenų įvairove. Panašus yra Stragnų kapas 13. Lazdininkų (Kalnalaukio) vyro kapas 9/1992 iš kitų turtingų kapų išsiskiria metalu puoštu diržu. Išsiskiria dar du vyrų kapai, kurie senovėje buvo apiplėšti – Jogučių–Spirkių kapas 1, kuriame rasta importinė omega formos sagtis, dengta sidabru bei aukso folija, ir Baitų kapas 31, kuriame rasta importinė *Rosettenfibel* detalė. Pastarasis kapas pasižymėjo sidabrinėmis išskirtinės kokybės vilnonio audinio puošybos detalėmis, sidabrinium „gyvatgalviu“ žiedu, sidabro plokštelėmis puoštu diržu ir apavu (?) bei prabangiomis kamanomis (12 pav.).

Apžvelgiant Vakarų Lietuvos kapinynų medžiagą, nesunku pastebėti, kad joje pasitaikė gana daug kapų su turtingomis įkapėmis. Šis regionas, išsiskyręs gintaro žaliavų šaltiniais, vystė ryšius su pietiniais Baltijos regionais. Pavyzdžiai gali būti vietinės plačiau paplitusių *barbaricum* formų imitacijos – „gyvatgalviai“ žiedai, antkaklės su rakto skylutės formos kilpele, puošyba stiklo akutėmis. Prestižinių germanų papuošalų formų imitacijos buvo prieinamos ir baltų „viduriniam luomui“. Tačiau tikrųjų *barbaricum* prabangos prekių čia beveik nerasta (išskyrus Jogučių–Spirkių sagtį ir Aukštikiemių emaliuotą segę). Tuo tarpu galima išskirti statusą simbolizuojančias vietines įkapes. Vyrų – žirgo ir raitelio aprangos elementai, žirgų aukos, geriamieji ragai, prabangiai puošti diržai. Moterų – metalu puošti galvos dangalai, prabangios antkaklės ir krūtinės papuošalai.

Vakarų Lietuvoje pasitaikė daug turtingų kapų, tačiau tarp jų nėra išskirtinai turtingų. Socialinės diferenciacijos skalė šiame regione lieka neaiški. Galima atpažinti vietinio elito asmenis, susijusius su mažomis bendruomenėmis, tačiau nesama tarpregioninės reikšmės elito kapų. Gausiai sidabru puošta apranga, du paaukoti žirgai, išskirtinė kapo įranga Baitų kapo 31 mirusįjį leidžia sieti su ypač aukšto rango asmeniu. Šis elito išsikristalizavimo procesas vyko toliau, ką liudija vėlyvojo tautų kraustymosi laikotarpio kario kapas 73 iš Lazdininkų (Kalnalaukio) kapinyno.

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