ARMED MEN AND THEIR RIDING HORSES AS A REFLECTION OF THE WARRIOR HIERARCHY IN WESTERN LITHUANIA DURING THE ROMAN IRON AGE

AUDRONĖ BLIUJIENĖ AND DONATAS BUTKUS

Abstract

Three vast areas in northern Europe during the Roman Period are known for their people's development of a distinctive viewpoint regarding the riding horse that was reflected in sacrificial rites (north Germany; the Jutland Peninsula; Zealand, Funen, other Baltic Sea islands, as well as southern Scandinavia) and burial rites (Dollkeim-Kovrovo, Sudovian, West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave cultures, and, in part, the Lower Nemunas and Bogaczewo cultures). The custom at the end of the second century and in the third century to bury a riding horse (usually only the horse's head, head and legs, or individual teeth) with armed men was especially distinct in the West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture area. This burial rite feature distinguishes the mentioned cultural unit (Aistians) area from the communities of other Balts who lived in current Lithuanian territory. The burial rite features that had developed in the West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture area illustrate the warriors' hierarchy and the military's dependency on the society's nobility that already existed in the Roman Period. These social structure features link the West Balt communities with the northern Germanic peoples. West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture was the northernmost *barbaricum* territory in which riding horses were so often buried with people.

Key words: men's graves with horses, horsemen, warriors' hierarchy, riding gear.

The diffusion of horse graves and horse sacrifices in the Roman Period

At the end of the Early Roman Period (Phase B_2), its transition from the early to the late period (Phase B_2/C_1), and in the late stage of this period (Phase $C_1–C_3$), people's graves with horses constitute an expressive feature of Aistian (West Balt) communities' burial rites. Graves with horses were widespread in Dollkeim-Kovrovo Culture in this period (Jaskanis 1966, Fig. 1) (Fig. 1. I). Individual graves with horses in the Roman Period are known in Bogaczewo and Sudovian Culture territory (Jaskanis 1966, Fig. 1; Piątkowska-Małecka 2000, Fig. 1) (Fig. 1: I). The West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture area is the third largest territory that has men's burials with horses among the west Balt cultures (Fig. 1. I).

Early Roman Period solitary graves of men and occasionally of women with riding horses, their parts, or even their separate bones are found along the lower River Veser and in the Elbe basin (Müller-Wille 1972, p.226ff, Abb. 38). Graves with horses from that time are concentrated in the basin of the Central Danube and Tisa rivers, in the areas that were inhabited by the Sarmatians (Fig. 1. IA) (Müller-Wille 1972, p.169 and p.228ff., Abb. 38).

Roman Period horses (usually only their heads and legs) and their riding gear were sacrificed in bogs, moist meadows, river valleys, and other low places as-sociated with water in the Jutland Peninsula, Zealand, Funen, Öland, Bornholm, the Gotland islands, as well as in southern Scandinavia (Fig. 1. IB) (Brøndsted 1960, p.228; Hagberg 1970, p.165ff.; Müller-Wille 1972, p.188, Abb. 41-44 and 47; Fabech 1996, p.137; Ilkjær 1997, p.56ff.; Monikander 2006, p.143ff.). Sacrificial finds discovered in bogs in lands of the West Balts in the Roman Period – elements of the horseman's accoutrements (spurs) and horse's riding gear (bridle bit), as well as weapons – so far are only known from the Wolka-See locality in former Rastenburg (in the Masurian Lakeland; the precise find site is unclear) (Raddatz 1993, p.145ff.). Sacrifices were made in the Finno-Ugric part of the East Baltic (in current northern Estonia), but these offerings include only weapons (Tamla 1995, p.103).

The variety of funeral customs involving human burials with horses, as well as offerings of horses and their riding gear, reflect the somewhat different view of the horse held by the communities living in the vast territory between the Jutland Peninsula in the south and the Mazkatuži vicinity (in Latvia) in the north. Through the diversity of human and horse burial rituals, the *Aistians* accented both the significance of the riding horse in the military and its role as a mediator. Meanwhile, the Germanic peoples would make sacrifices after military conflicts by making war booty sacrifices, or by offerings they would thank the gods through various rituals, and the horse's significance and its sacredness were

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reflected not only in the bog offerings themselves, but also in that time's myths and iconography (bracteates, fibulae, various fittings or mountings, etc) (Baranowski 1973, p.399; Fabech 1996, p.135ff.; Monikander 2006, p.147ff., Fig. 2, 3). On the other hand, however, the views of the people living around the Baltic Sea toward the horse's worth in the military, and undoubtedly its significance in the world-view in general, had more features in common rather than differences.

The horsemen of West Lithuania, southwest Latvia, and the lower Nemunas

Armed men's graves with horses are known from 18 cemeteries of the West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture area and three lower Nemunas River cemeteries (Fig. 1; Appendix). Unfortunately, a large portion of these cemeteries was excavated at the end of the 19th century and the research results remain unpublished or only partly published. Moreover, a part of the material was scattered during the last war. Many cemeteries have been destroyed by farming activity. A large proportion of these cemeteries' investigations was small, so not enough data exists to determine the connections between the people and their riding horses.

Be that as it may, 86 human burials that are in one way or another associated with horses are known from 21 cemeteries. Among these, 44 graves undoubtedly belonged to armed men, usually horsemen (see Appendix). The horse's ownership by the horseman is indicated either by the bridle parts or spurs found in the man's grave, or by the horseman's spurs and riding bits found in the horse's grave. Cases are also known in which several men share one horse. According to other features, seven additional graves might belong to men, but their grave inventories lack the more characteristic weapon or set of weapons. Nevertheless, they contain buckles of belts and of various other items, typically found in men's burials. The sex of the interred is unclear in seven graves since they contain no grave goods that would more clearly suggest the interred's gender, but usually these graves have been destroyed or were plundered in antiquity (see Appendix). Four of the graves could belong to children or adolescents (Gintarai, grave 12, girl?; Baitai, grave 4, adolescent of indeterminate sex; Lazdininkai [Kalnalaukis], grave 39/1940, child)[1] (see Appendix). Only separate horse

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[1] This particular grave found in the Gintarai cemetery, like the burial found in Lazdininkai, was ascribed to a child based only on archaeological data. A bioanthropological analysis of preserved bones and teeth was not performed (Baleniūnas 1940; Michelbertas 2002). Human and animal bones found in West Lithuania are rarely preserved due to the coastal soil's properties.

teeth or fragments have been found in the human burials of children, adolescents, and unsexed individuals. There are cases when children's graves were a part of a group of warriors encircling a horse's grave (see Appendix). Unfortunately, in 25 instances, horse graves cannot be associated with specific human burials for different reasons (see Appendix).

It would appear that if their complex of graves is known and not destroyed or disturbed, West Lithuanian stone circle graves and the lower Nemunas' human burials with horses belonged to armed horsemen. At the end of the second century and in the first half of the third century, horsemen's graves in the West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture area might have comprised approximately up to 9.1% of the entire community's members (Fig. 2). Thus, even though Aistian men were armed, and well-armed, such a prestigious grave good as a riding horse was accessible only to a small circle of people (Fig. 2). The social profile of coastal communities at the end of the second century and in the third century shows a different status among its members. Noblemen, most usually horsemen and well-armed infantrymen, were especially well distinguished, as were the noblewomen (Bliujienė, Bračiulienė 2007, forthcoming).

The horsemen's horses: from burial rites to funeral repasts

In both the West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture area and in other regions of Lithuania, only the parts of the horse used in ritual, which constitute the riding horse grave, are found in or beside excavated human burials. Usually the horse's head was buried (41 graves), less frequently the horse's head and legs, or the horse's head, legs, and parts of its spine and ribs (nine graves). Horses' teeth and legs would be put into the graves infrequently (three graves). Fourteen burials with only individual horse teeth or a single horse tooth were found. Only one instance is known in the entire discussed area in which a man was buried together with an entire horse in one grave (Reketė, grave 35).

The age of the researched horses from the West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture area is around two to 3.5 to 4.5 years (Bliujienė 1998, p.283; 2005, p.96; the horses' teeth were analysed by Prof. Linas Daugnora, of the Lithuanian Veterinary Academy). So, the horses that were buried were young. The Aistian communities could have continued to use these horses in their practical lives. We have no data that suggests that traumatised or sick horses were buried.

The horse parts found in the graves would suggest that the burial rites were quite bloody and heart-wrench-
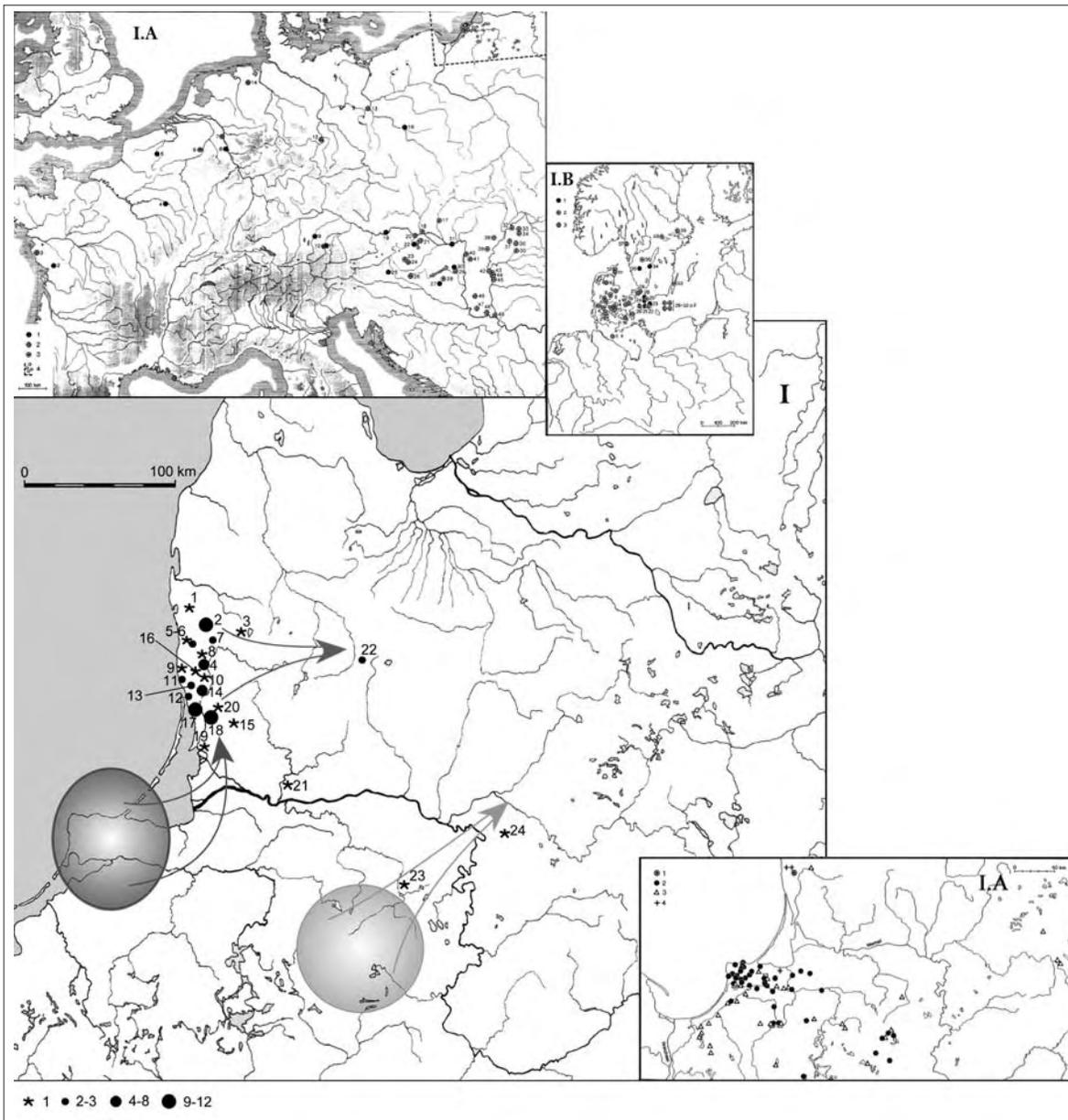
Fig. 1. Distribution of armed warriors' graves with horses in the West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture and surrounding regions, Dollkeim-Kovrovo and Sudovian cultures (* one grave in cemetery; ● 2–3 graves in cemetery; ● 4–8 graves in cemetery; ● 9–12 graves in cemetery; list of cemeteries in Appendix) I.A: Roman Period diffusion of horse graves in Europe: 1 complete horse skeleton; 2 parts of horse skeleton; 3 only separate horse bones; 4 Dollkeim-Kovrovo Culture horse graves; I.B: Details of riding gear from Roman Period and Migration Period southern Scandinavian find sites: 1 bridle and saddle details; 2 weapons and equipment hoards; 3 individual artefacts (after the authors; I.A and I.B after Müller-Wille 1972).

ing spectacles. As far as can be determined from the current data, the head of the horse would be chopped off, and its skin would be flayed, leaving the head, legs and sometimes even the hoofs attached to the skin. It is most difficult to imagine a ritual in which the horse's head would be cut up into smaller pieces, removing and placing only separate teeth into the grave. The individual teeth found on the former and current ground surface of the cemetery could be either the remains of the burial ritual and quartering of the horse or the consequence of later farming activity. Instances of the destruction of horse graves are known from the Užpelkiai

cemetery. Individual horse teeth have been found in the ploughed layer and previous ground surface of the Baitai and Užpelkiai cemeteries that were excavated in recent years.

The custom of burying a horse's head in a burial pit together with a person dominated in the West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture area (Fig. 3). However, the custom itself of burying a person with a horse was not standardised. Conversely, a large variability is noticeable within this tradition, which allows for the supposition that burial rites were not only diverse, but also strictly unregulated (Fig. 3). If only the horse's head or

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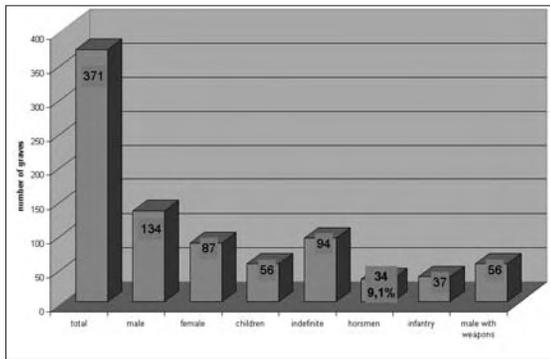
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Fig. 2. Social profile of West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture society at the end the second century and in the third century, based on the number of excavated graves.

even individual teeth were buried separately, then large burial pits (210×90cm; 210–200×110cm and the like) predominated. In other words, the size of the burial pits was as if the entire horse was being buried (Figs. 4, 5). This important element of horse burial rites would appear to emphasize that, regardless of the obvious fact that only parts, albeit important parts of the animal were buried, the horseman, just like his horse, would journey to the afterworld both healthy and whole. It would appear that the important pagan world-view's provision of *pars pro toto* was reflected in the horse's "quartering rituals". Thus, the burial of a part of the horse is equivalent to the burial of the entire horse and once again, only in a different way, emphasizes the horse's significance as a fully-fledged mediator, and allows the perception of the horse's purpose in rituals and its importance in world-view as diverse.

Contemporary authors discern a special supernatural significance of the horse's head in other searches regarding the horse's significance, but return to the mediator role of the horse, emphasizing that it was the main intermediary in different spheres of world-view (Loumand 2006, p.131ff., Fig. 1). Thus, it must be ad-

mitted that, regardless of the distinctions of new aspects, contemporary interpretations of the significance of the horse in burial rites and mythology do not differ much from the insights of Tacitus at the end of the first century (Tacitas 1972, §45).

There are several graves in the West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture area in which the horse's head and legs, and possibly its skin, were buried. The Scythians and many various nomadic tribes, even in historical times, buried the horse in a similar fashion (Jaskanis 1966, p.52ff.; Monikander 2006, p.147). Evidently, we will never find out what was done with the tongue, tail, and other, in many respects, ritually important body parts of the horse. However, apparently the remaining parts of the horse that were not placed in the grave would become food for the funeral repasts that connected the living with the dead. Both written sources and the burial material speak of the funeral repast and the placement of food inside the grave together with the deceased (Gimbutienė 1943, p.59ff.; Bliujienė 2005, p.81ff.). At the end of the ninth century, the Anglo-Saxon traveller and merchant Wulfstan wrote about the significance of the riding horse in Esti or Osti funeral customs. He mentioned the funeral repast's drinks, and the horse races that used to take place on the day of the funeral for the distribution of the deceased person's property (Wulfstan's Reisebericht 1996, p.166ff.).

People and horses: aspects of their interrelatedness

Armed men with one or even two riding horses buried with them in diverse ways dominate West Lithuanian stone circle graves. The Lithuanian coast differs in its clear prevalence of the bond between riding horses and armed men in Sudovian and Dollkeim-Kovrovo Culture sites, in which burials of unarmed people with
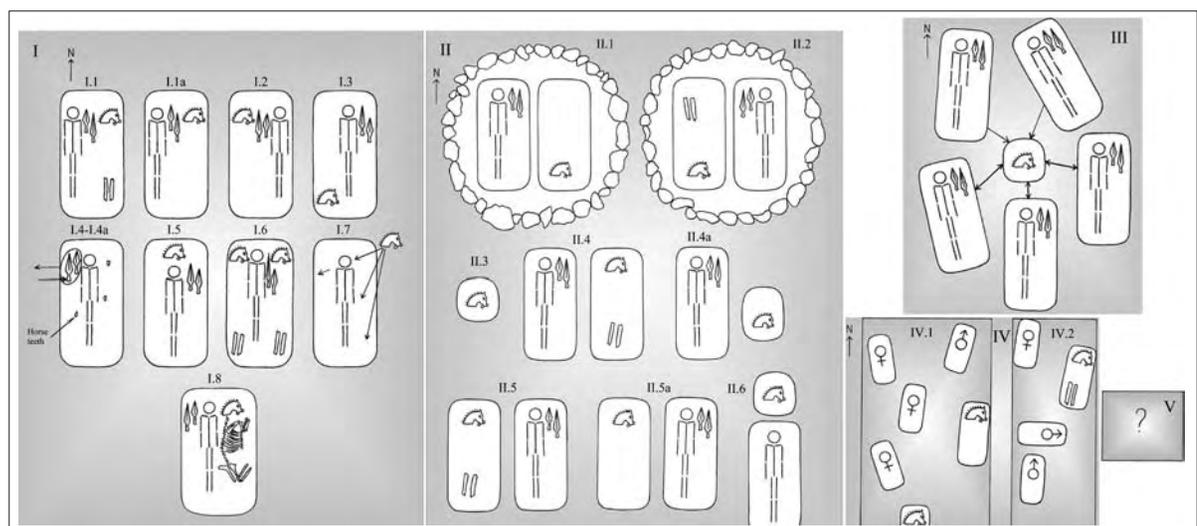

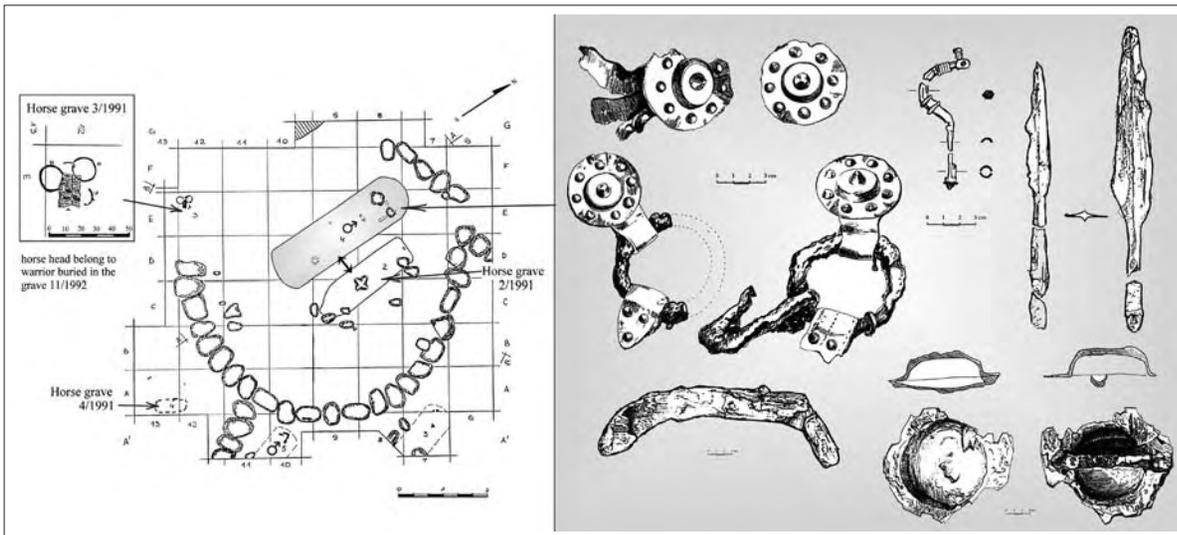Fig. 3. Typology of warrior graves with horses.

Fig. 4. Lazdininkai (Kalnalaukis, Kretinga district) cemetery, warrior grave 4/1991, with a part of his grave assemblage and his horse, buried in grave 2/1991. Grave goods: bridle fittings with bit fragments (bronze, iron, mineralized leather), silver crossbow fibula with wire coils, two iron spearheads, and shield boss (plan by J. Kanarskas, illustrations by P. Gasiūnas).
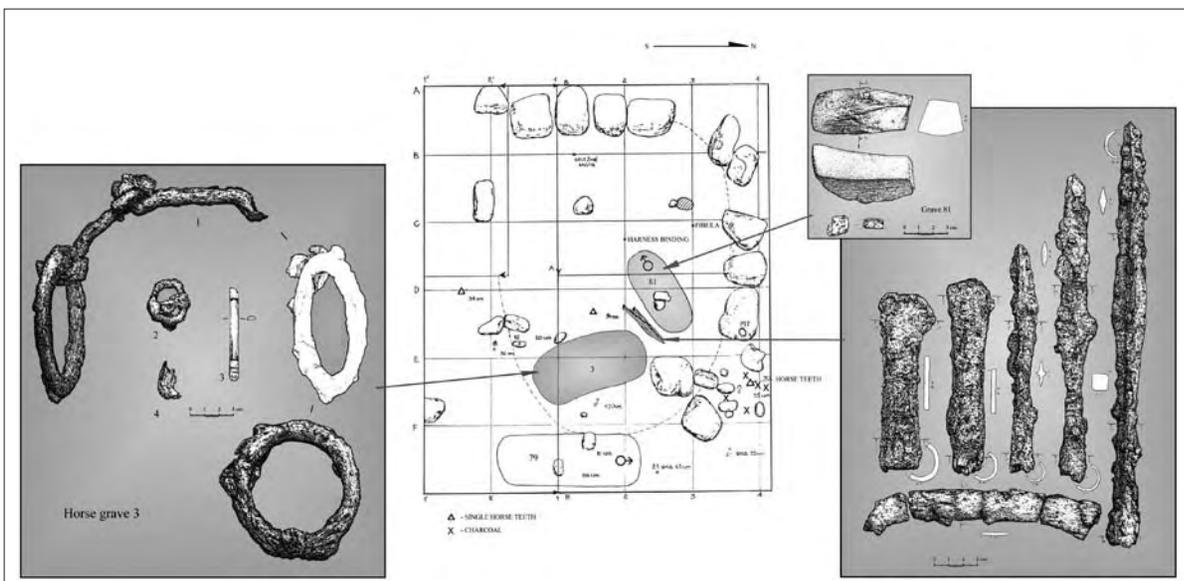
Fig. 5. Užpelkiai (Kretinga district) male grave 81 and his horse's grave 3. The horse's and warrior's grave goods (after Bliujienė, drawings by V. Truklickas).

horses dominate; moreover, graves with grave goods characteristic of women are found among the graves with horses, while noblemen's graves usually do not have ornate bridles with metal fittings (Jaskanis 1966, p.58ff, 1968, p.100ff., 1974, p.198f., 203; Baranowski 1973, p.397; Piątkowska-Małecka 2000, p.187; Engel *et al.* 2006, Plate IX: 7). In recent years, Dollkeim-Ko-vrovo Culture sites with horses have tended to be associated with warrior horsemen who belonged to the nobility (Kulakov 2005, p.41ff., Figs. 71-72; Tiurin 2006, p.147). Unarmed people's graves might possibly have belonged to individuals who looked after the riding horse herds (Jaskanis 1966, p.64), but more likely they belonged to those individuals who controlled the horse herds, ie to high-ranking animal rearers. However, in both cultural areas that have burials of men with

horses, individuals stand out who undoubtedly have the highest status, whether they were tribal or community leaders (Jaskanis 1974, p.198; Tiurin 2006, p.147).

The society's social structure was already changing in the Baltic Sea region in the Early Roman Period; the first military organizations that consisted of infantry-men and their leader horsemen appeared (Godłowski 1960, p.82). West Lithuanian and Nemunas delta communities repeat this process at the end of the second century and in the third century (Fig. 2). Despite the Gothic historian Jordanes's allusion to the Aistians as a very peaceful people, their grave inventories show that the communities' men, in a vast region between the Nemunas in the south and the Daugava in the north, were armed. Graves in which men were armed comprise up to 70% of known graves in West Lithuania

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(Michelbertas, Vitkūnas 2003, p.27). In the opinion of this article's authors, graves of armed men along the coast exceed 80%. Moreover, it must be emphasized that graves in which the horse is buried to the left of the person, ie to the east of the person, dominate in the West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture area (only in four cases were horses buried to the right of the people). Such a connection between a man and his horse once more would indicate a purpose that was very clearly understood and stressed in the burial rite: the horse's use for riding. A horseman mounts his horse from the left side (horsemen are taught to mount their horses in this way nowadays as well). Thus, this aspect of the burial rite, which may appear insignificant at first glance, would indicate that the horseman's and his horse's bond was grounded in practical regulations both in life and in the afterlife.

Despite the direct Dollkeim-Kovrovo cultural influence on the appearance of people with horses in West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture, the tradition's adaptation and evolution along the Lithuanian coast occurred for practical purposes: the horse was buried for the horseman. This does not necessarily mean that the barbarians who lived to the north understood their neighbours' funeral custom incorrectly or in their own way. Many cultural influences, or even elements of imported things that were worn, simply changed in essential ways once they crossed the River Nemunas. On the other hand, one could survive in the Dollkeim-Ko-vrovo cultural influence only by standing up to it and demonstrating a well-organised military force.

However, we cannot explain the entire variety of the horse's burial rite only by social and military reasons, because there is no doubt that the Aistians' viewpoint concerning the riding horse was also related to pagan religion and therefore was multifaceted. Certain observations of Tacitus (55–120) described in his work *Germania* are especially valuable regarding this viewpoint. At the beginning of his narrative about the Aistians and wanting to stress how vast the barbarians' lands are, and the kind of outskirts of the world the *Aestiorum gentes* inhabit, Tacitus makes a reference that his readers understand about the sun, driven across the dome of heaven by a horse. He writes that beyond the *Suiones* is another calm and torpid sea, beyond which the world appears to end, in which the murmuring of the emerging sun is heard and the horses and radiating head of the sun are seen. Only after this observation Tacitus starts describing the *Aestiorum gentes* live (Tacitas 1972, §45). Before focusing attention on the Aistians, this introduction is not only a rather accurate description of the northern country's geographical environment, but also this text simultaneously shows that Tacitus tried to connect known myths and beliefs with the phenom-

ena of the vast barbarian world to his readers, thereby making the described barbarians more understandable to the Romans. Thus, Tacitus' connection of the horse with the sun shows the common Indo-European viewpoint of the horse as an intermediary in different world realms.

In the area of West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture, people and horses, even in the same cemetery, were buried in several different ways. Evidently, the variety of the burial rites of such graves was determined by many reasons (Fig. 3. I–III). The diversity in the custom of burying the horse and the person could first be related with the social structure differences of the region's communities; these differences affected the funeral customs and formed different burial rites. In the system of world-view images, as Tacitus also mentions, the horse has an indisputable significance as an intermediary between different worlds, while the ritualistic body parts of the horse, like the burial of individual teeth, undoubtedly are related with the view that the buried body parts correspond to the ability of the horse to carry a person over to the afterworld. On the other hand, the custom of burying the horse, while sufficiently widespread, was not universal, so there had to be other mediators who also eased the person's way to the afterworld. The fact that horse teeth are found less often as grave goods in graves of the wealthy, unsexed individuals, children and adolescents, or in the graves of unarmed persons, is a reflection both of hierarchy and world-view notions. However, current East Baltic material and known written sources do not allow us to assert that there had been a horse cult (Zemītis 2004, p.86ff.), nor is there data that allows us to reevaluate the horse's importance in community rituals and sacrifices or to emphatically evaluate it as an offering, although it absolutely might have been that the Aistians, like the Germanic tribes, raised sacred horses from which they could learn the will of the gods, and that they, like the Germanic tribes, would throw the deceased person's weapons and sometimes his horse into a fire (Tacitas 1972, §10, 27).

Men and unsexed individuals who were buried with a horse in the same burial pit and facing the same direction belong to the first and largest group of burials (Fig. 3. I. 1-8; Appendix). The weapons and the horse's head (or head and legs) were placed at the head end and to the left; only in two cases were they placed to the right. Both the weapons and the horse were buried to the right of the man in grave 12 in the Dauglaukis cemetery (Jovaiša, Asadauskas 1991, p.64f.). This position of the weapons and the horse, as well as the fact that horses buried on the right side are a minority, would allow the supposition that left-handers might have been buried in such graves.

The second group is graves of men and horses in which the men and horses were buried in separate burial pits. Usually such graves are enclosed by a stone circle. Sometimes this group's stone circle does not encircle the graves. Only in one instance of the 16 graves in this burial group was the horse buried to the person's right. A gap ranging from 0.30 to 0.50 centimetres wide separates the person's and horse's burial pits, while the burial place of the horse and the burial pit's size vary (Figs. 3. II. 1-6; 4-5; Appendix). Riding bits are found in the horses' mouths. One or two iron spurs are more often found not in the men's graves, but in the graves of their horses, as if this was emphasizing the horse's dependence on the horseman (Fig. 4). Meanwhile, ornate bridles with bronze fittings and other important details are found in the graves of their warrior masters, thereby indicating the bond between the horseman and his horse (Fig. 3). On the other hand, the spurs or spur placed together namely with the horse would indicate that the warrior would be accompanied to the afterworld by a horse distinguished for riding.

Human burials with horses within Groups I and II in which only teeth are found are problematical. The inventories of such human graves are usually not expressive, appearing as if the buried individual's gender and social status have "disappeared" or deliberately not shown for some reason (see Appendix). Weapons are not found in the inventories of such graves. So far the largest amount of such graves has been found in Baitai (see Appendix). Adolescents' and unsexed individuals' graves buried with individual horse teeth apparently belong to community members with a lower social status. Horse teeth might have been placed in the graves of adolescents, evidently boys, because of their age.

Instances in which the horse's grave (usually the horse's head) is encircled by a group of armed warriors comprise the third group of men's graves with horses (Figs. 3. III; 6; Appendix). The horse is usually surrounded by a small group of people who are unequally armed, buried with different military equipment, ornaments, and additional grave goods. The position of every member of the group in respect to the horse shows the individual warrior's bond with the centrally buried horse, as well as each one's distinct subordination to the military leader who is also buried among his subordinate warriors and horse. These graves of a horse and a group of warriors, which at first glance appear problematical, are the most revealing regarding hierarchical associations (Fig. 6). Burials like this were found in 1940 while excavating the Lazdininkai cemetery (horse grave 1 and armed men's graves 34, 36–38, 40, as well as child's grave 39) (Fig. 6). Groups of graves in which a horse's grave is encircled with more or less armed buried men are known from the cemeteries of

Pryšmančiai II and Užpelkiai (see Appendix). Such groups of warriors that are clustered around a horse that belonged to them can be discerned in the Šernai cemetery, although at first glance it appears that this burial site has many single graves of horses that are not associated with any people. However, the vast majority of individual horse graves in the Šernai cemetery can be associated with interrelated groups of warriors and their horses, that are identical or similar to the ones discussed in the third group of burials with horses (Figs. 3. III; 6; Appendix). Nevertheless, it is difficult to correctly interpret the Šernai cemetery material because there are no plans of its graves with precise grave good locations.

The Lazdininkai cemetery's horse grave 1/1940, in which only a horse's head together with an iron bit with a three-jointed mouthpiece and bronze rein ring and distributor were found, was surrounded by five warriors' graves and one child's grave (34/1940, 36–40/1940). Judging from their artefacts and Roman coins, the members of this warriors' and horse's group are contemporaneous and date from the beginning of the third century (Fig. 6; Appendix). It is possible that the military leader and a part of his retinue, along with the child, died at the same time. The members of this group of warriors buried around a horse are not only interrelated, but their specific interrelations, just like their relationship with the buried horse that they surrounded, were different (Fig. 6). It would appear that all the group's members not only shared the horse, but had an obviously different right to it. It could be that this group's leader, buried in grave 38/1940, is sharing the horse with his retinue.

All the warriors in this group were buried with neckrings around their necks, ornate belts, or even shoulder-belts, to which were hung knives that, judging by their length and other attributes, could have been weapons. Moreover, a large amount of Roman *sestertii* was found in their graves and additional grave goods were placed into small birch bark boxes for them. Only for the warrior buried in grave 34/1940 was a bridle bit placed inside the grave with him; this horseman was buried with a belt and shoulder-belt, so his connection with the horse was emphasized rather clearly. Grave goods characteristic of horsemen were not found in the graves of the other members of this group, so this fact, together with the warriors' arrangement around the horse, would indicate that the group consisted of horsemen and infantrymen. On the other hand, the warriors in graves 37/1940 and 36/1940 were buried in such a way that the horse is to their left, i.e., in the dominant horse's position in this cultural region. Thus, to some degree, the horse also belongs to them. A somewhat different relationship with the buried horse is demonstrat-

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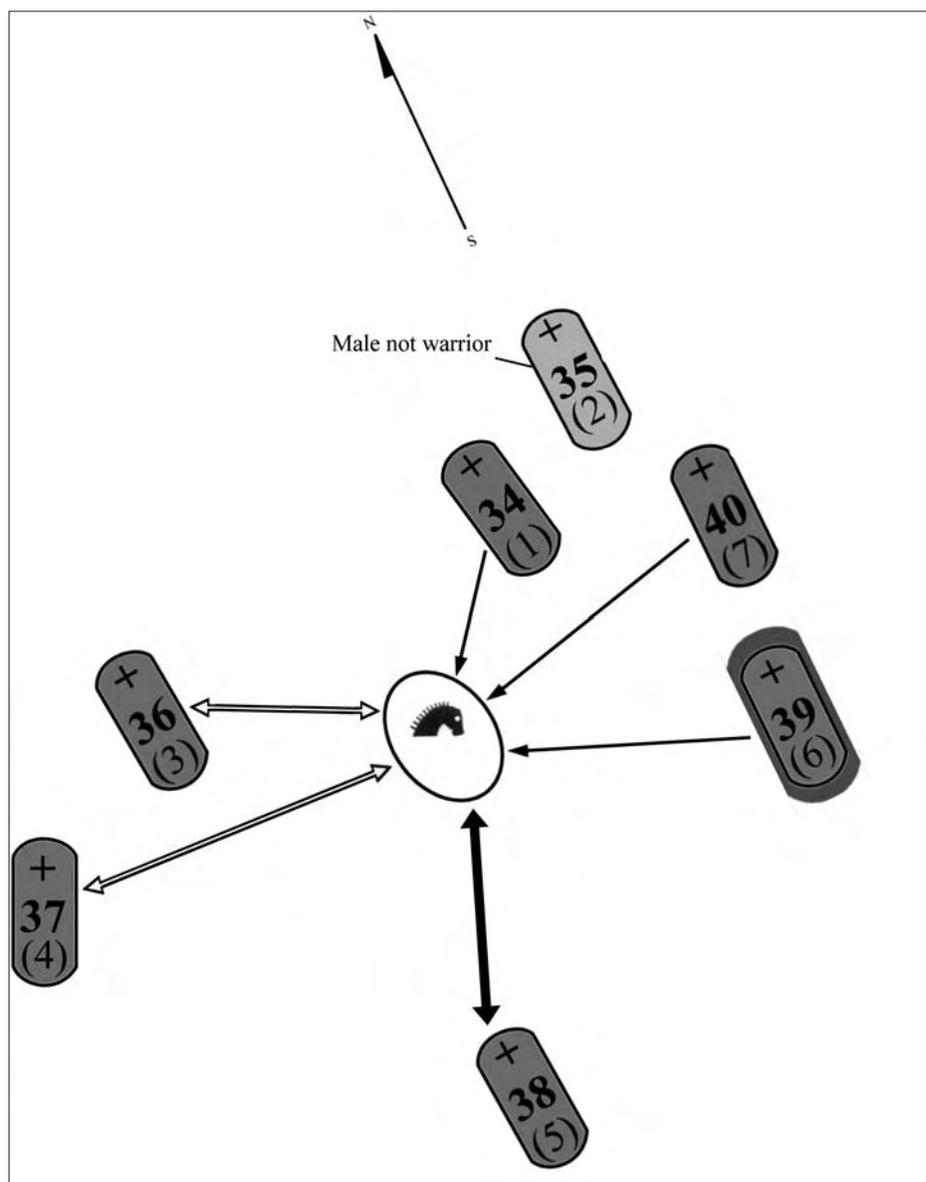Iron Age

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Fig. 6. Lazdininkai (Kalnalaukis, Kretinga district) cemetery, horse grave 1/1940 surrounded by five warriors' (34/1940, 36–38/1940, 40/1940) and a child's grave (39/1940); + indicates the direction of the deceased's head (after Baleniūnas 1940; supplemented by the authors).

one inevitably had to end up on the horse's right.

To all appearances, the horse buried in the encirclement of warriors belonged to this group's leader or military commander, who had the highest social status and undoubtedly belonged to the Aistian nobility. Such a person, according to his superior set of notable grave goods comprised of 22 items, must have been buried in grave 38/1940. Two different-function spears, a shield with an iron shield boss and handle, a socketed axe, a small scythe, a knife, and a whetstone were found in this grave. The neck of the deceased was probably adorned with a silver or bronze neck-ring covered with a white metal, and an iron crossbow fibula, while four Roman coins and an amber bead were apparently placed inside the pouch fastened to his

ed by the warrior with two different-function spears, a socketed axe, and ornate belt with a bronze belt-end fitting, buried in grave 40/1940, and by the child buried in grave 39/1940. The horse is to their right, so it could be that the people's position in this group shows their different social status – one that is somewhat higher than that of the warriors buried to the horse's left. Since the warriors buried in graves 37/1940 and 36/1940 are the poorest in terms of grave goods in this group, it could be that in wanting to somewhat heighten their social position and to show more clearly their connection with the horse, they were buried to the horse's left. It could be that this group's leader and child, buried to the leader's left, were closely related kin. On the other hand, in burying the warriors around the horse, some-

belt. Neck-rings, especially made of silver, were an attribute connected with the social status of the deceased person (Vaitkunskienė 1996, p.8ff.). In addition, five more Roman coins and ornaments that belonged to a woman were placed inside a small birch bark box (Baleniūnas 1940). Thus, evidently the horse was the property of this notable person with the most meaningful set of grave goods; in demonstrating his excellence, he shared his property with the members of his small, armed retinue. Judging by the set of grave goods with which they were buried, this group of warriors and horse consisted of well-armed men who belonged to a warrior elite. On the other hand, however, the set of grave goods of the members of this group shows that there was a certain hierarchy among the group's mem-
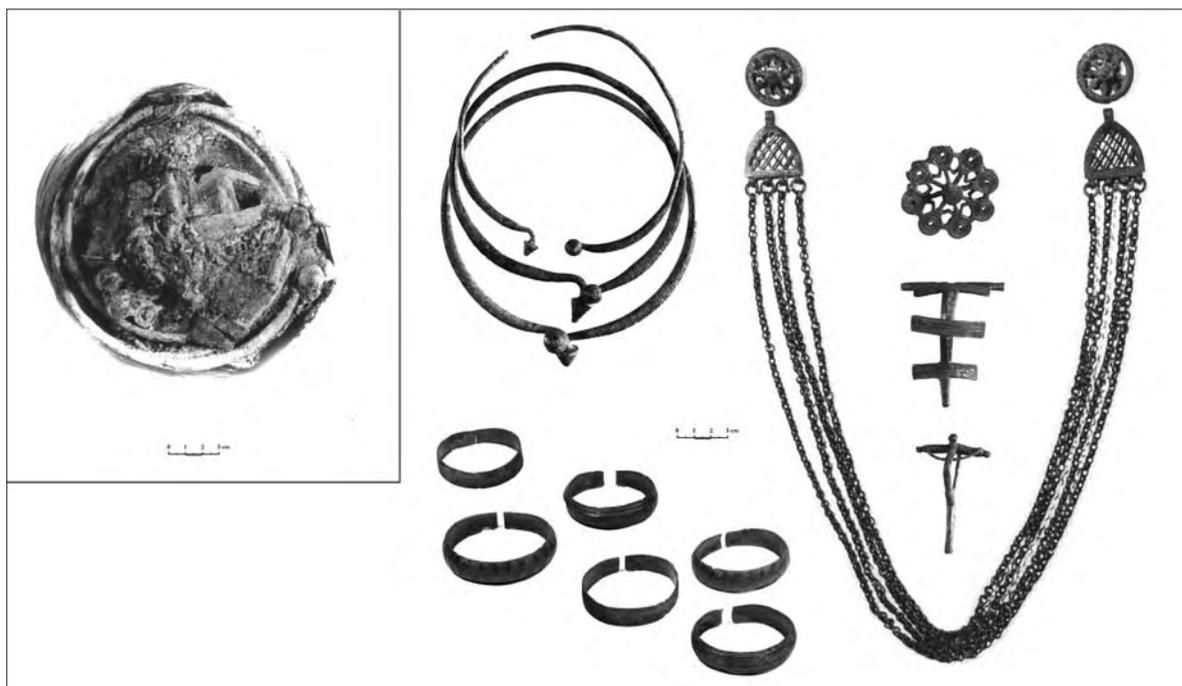
Fig. 7. Contents of the birch bark box with bronze ornaments characteristic of women of West Lithuanian Stone circle graves from Lazdininkai (Kalnalaukis, Kretinga district) warrior's grave 65/2000 (photograph by D. Rudinskas).

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bers, and some of them were true horsemen, while the others fought on foot.

Thus, the Lazdininkai example shows that the organisation of Aistian society could have exemplified the Germanic peoples, whose military leaders found it important to have as much retinue as possible, since, according to Tacitus, in times of peace, the retinue was their pride, while in times of war, it was their support (Tacitas 1972, §13). Moreover, citing Tacitus, we can suppose that the war tactics of the Aistian and Germanic peoples were similar: the infantrymen fought intermixed with the horsemen, he also mentions that Germanic people (*Suiones*), do not have personal weapons, their weapons are corporate (Tacitas 1972, §6, 44). Thus, the specific Lazdininkai cemetery example shows the existence of infantrymen and horsemen, a certain hierarchy of warriors, and the formation of a military leader and his retinue already at the end of the second century and the first half of the third century.

Few ornaments related to military equipment are found in the high social status graves of horsemen and infantrymen in West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture cemeteries at the end of the second century and beginning of the third century. Neck-rings and fibulae in warriors' graves, like other personal ornaments, are rarely found. Bracelets were placed on warriors' arms especially rarely. Thus, the discussed Lazdininkai cemetery's group of warriors stands out for its neck-ring wear. Sets of ornaments characteristic of women, placed inside small birch bark boxes, wrapped in birch bark or linden bast bundles, that would be placed at

the head of the deceased are found in the majority of graves of the highest-ranking warriors (Fig. 7). Roman coins are found near the deceased in the graves of the highest social status warriors; moreover, they are additionally placed inside little boxes. Small birch bark boxes with additional ornaments are found in contemporaneous noblewomen's graves as well. However, the ornaments characteristic of women that are found in high status warriors' – mostly horsemen's – graves constitute a phenomenon that can be explained in various ways. The ornaments found in the little boxes are typical West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture women's ornaments (Michelbertas 1986). Meanwhile, the discussed period's men's complex of accoutrements, and especially their riding gear, are of an inter-regional nature (Figs. 4, 8).

The fourth group of West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture human graves with horses is comprised of "single" horse graves[2] that for various reasons

[2] Single evidence when horses belonging to the Late Roman Period were buried separately, away from human graves, is known from the several Sudovian burial grounds in the Gołdap and Suwałki area (Netta, grave 47; Korkliny, site I, barrow 1; Boćwinka, barrow XII and on Samland (former Koddien, grave 14, Kaliningrad region), and evidence that the horses were buried as votive offerings (Bitner-Wróblewska 2007, p.105). This evidence, when horses were really found away from humans, or horse graves which were marking the edges of the cemeteries, give various ideas. First of all, those burial rites which involve animals, in the circum of the West Baltic cultures, were much more complicated and diverse than we are expecting.
Human graves with riding horses, horse's grave goods in human graves, various horse graves, and the burial of

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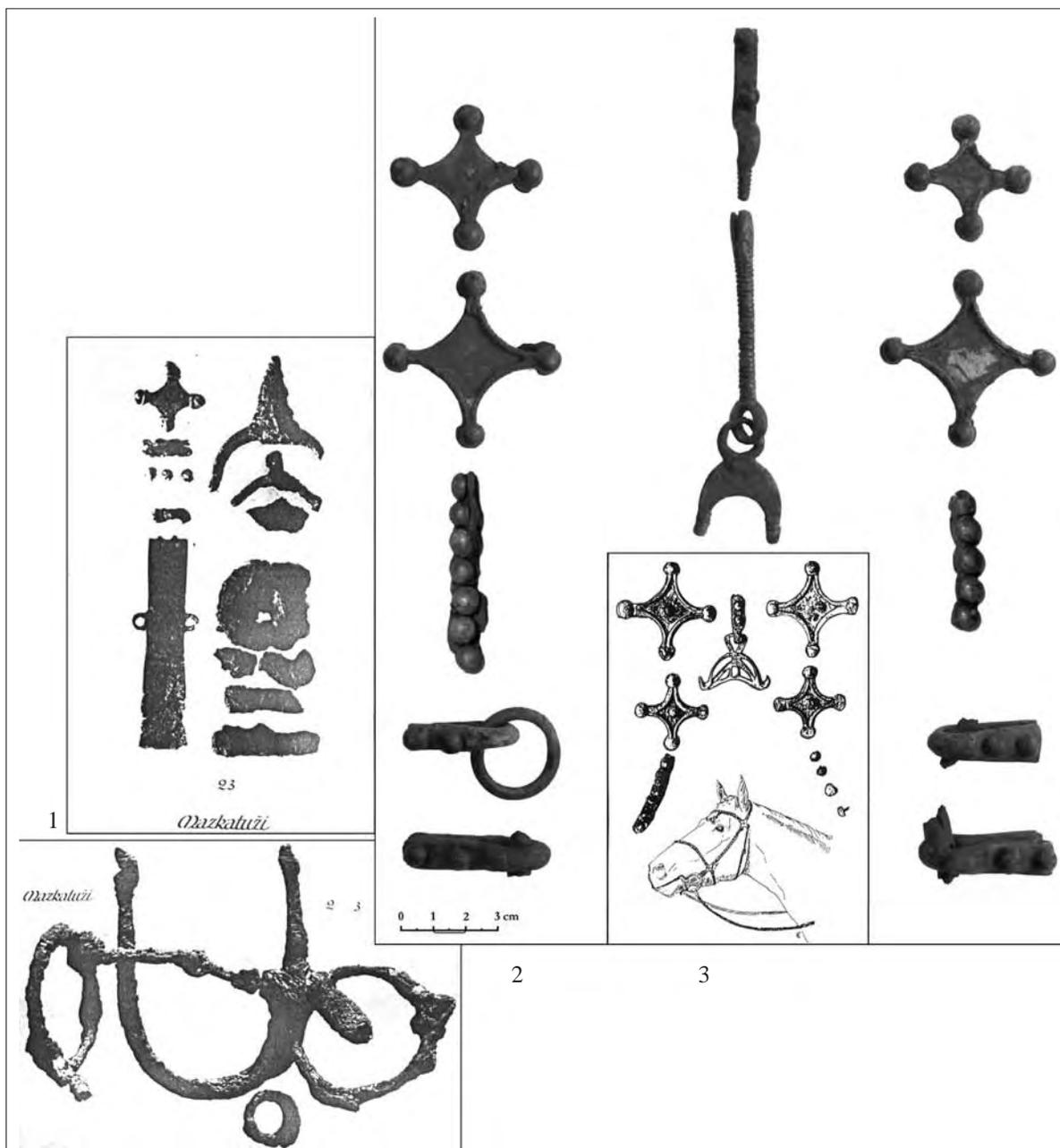
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Fig. 8. Bridle parts found in West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave and Dollkeim-Kovrovo culture burials: 1 horses' grave goods from a common grave of a warrior and a horse, grave 23/1942 at Mazkatuži (Liepāja district) cemetery; 2 Lazdininkai (Kalnalaukis, Kretinga district) cemetery horse grave 6/1992; 3 Cherniachovsk (formerly Althof-Insterburg, Kaliningrad region, Cherniachovsk district) grave 135 (after Šturms 1942, archive of the Latvian History Museum; Nowakovski 1998, Plate 104; photograph by Bliujienė).

– usually due to a small excavated plot or due to the published material's peculiarities – cannot be assigned to a specific person's grave (Fig. 3. IV. 1-2; Appendix). It is the conviction of this article's authors that horse burials unassociated with a person or horse sacrifices

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horse parts (characterized as horse sacrifices) spread in the lands of the Balts and in Europe in the fifth to eighth centuries (Müller-Wille 1972; Vaitkunskienė 1981, p.58ff.; Oexle 1984, p.138ff., Figs. 1-8). In Baltic lands and during the Migration Period, the horse and parts of the horse were mostly buried for people of the highest social stratum, and these typically were the warrior horsemen (Vaitkunskienė 1981, p.72 ff.).

for the entire community on various occasions in the discussed cultural area are so far unknown, while "single" horse graves appeared due to various destructive reasons that can be generalized: the horseman lost his horse, or the horse his horseman (Senkai, Rūdaičiai II, Pryšmančiai II, Užpelkiai, and others). At least a portion of the graves in the Šernai cemetery also fall into this group because the illustrated and textual material published by Adalbert Bezzenberger for this cemetery allows a fairly diverse understanding and interpretation of the text (Bezzenberger 1892, pp.141-186).

The last and fifth group of human burials with horses is ascribed to the graves known usually only from very brief accounts in literature or reports and which known data does not allow us to detail (Fig. 3. V).

Horsemen without horses

Already at the turn of the second and third century (Phases B_2/C_1–C_{1a}) men's graves with spurs and some horse riding gear, usually bridles and bridle bits (metal bridle fittings, pendants, and even metal rein rings, are found in the Western Lithuanian stone circle grave area and in the lower Nemunas, as well as in the burial sites of Samogitia and the southwestern part of Lithuania. It must be emphasized that graves with the accoutrements of horsemen and horses were diffused across a much broader territory than men's burials with horses (Fig. 9) (Michelbertas 2000, Abb. 2). Horsemen's graves and men's graves with elements of riding gear and spurs are found in the same cemeteries in the West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture area; they are contemporaneous.

A larger diffusion of graves with elements of riding horse and horseman accoutrements than the diffusion area of men buried with horses is most likely a distinctive form of expression of the common custom of the Balts to bury the horse; it not only marked the buried individual's social status, but also the diversity of burial rituals. On the other hand, the absence of horses in regions beyond the coast, ie in the funeral customs of other communities living in the surrounding area of the Balts, could have formed due to the different economic structure, in which horse rearing did not constitute an important part of the economy, so that the burial of horses that were healthy and necessary in vital activities would have been economically unsubstantiated or even an altogether detrimental act. Thus, instead of the horse, only symbols that denoted the horseman and his horse (bridle parts and spurs) were used for burial rituals and for the demonstration of social status or the warriors' hierarchy. In all of Lithuania, cemeteries and loose finds of this kind are known from 24 burial sites, whose largest portion is along the coast and in the lower Nemunas, and smaller portion in the Samogitian barrow area (Fig. 9). Single graves with riding gear have been found in southwest and east Lithuania (Fig. 9). The appearance of ornate bridles in burials of people without horses is also known in other communities of the West Balts (Jaskanis 1966, p.64).

The placement of riding gear in a warrior's or an armed man's grave, usually only of bridle bits instead of ornate bridles, could be a token of the existence of a warriors' hierarchy or of the unequal wealth of separate commu-

nities. However, ornate bridles and spurs are also found in well-armed or exceptionally wealthy men's graves that could be ascribed to horsemen with the highest social status or to community leaders (Lazdininkai, grave 9/1992; Žviliai, grave 47) (Butkus *et al.* 1994, p.143, Fig. 13; Vaitkunskienė 1989, p.58ff.) (Fig. 10).

The Aistian Baltic cultures' horizon's graves with horses in the Baltic Sea area

The appearance of numerous horsemen's graves in the area of West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture is related to the direct influence of Dollkeim-Kovrovo Culture, since the social-economic processes that occurred in both cultural areas at the end of the B_2 Phase and in the B_2/C_1-C_2 Phases were rather well synchronized. The first human burials with horses that had riding gear appeared in the Dollkeim-Kovrovo cultural area in the middle of the first millennium or in its third quarter, which is just slightly earlier than along the Lithuanian coast (La Baume 1944, p.2ff.; Jaskanis 1966, p.64; 1974, p.197; Baranowski 1974, p.397; Michelbertas 1986, p.40ff., 178; Ibsen, Skvorzov 2004, p.404ff.; Kulakov 2005, p.21). Due to the Dollkeim-Kovrovo cultural influence, burials with horses appeared in the Sudovian cultural environment (Jaskanis 1966, p.46).

The coast of western Lithuania and southwestern Latvia was the northern *barbaricum* boundary where men's burials with horses were especially abundantly widespread from the end of the second century to the beginning of the third century. The first men's graves with horses or with elements of riding gear along the Lithuanian coast appeared with the A58-60 types of brooches or the eye brooches of the Old Prussian series, metal rein rings, and iron Sarmatian-type riding bits with curbs (Jablonskis 1979). At a similar time, or a bit later (in the C_{1b} Phase) the "Sarmatian" riding bits appeared among the Thorsberg bog finds (von Carnap-Bornheim 2003, p.377ff., Abb. 4-5). Armed men's graves with horses, as well as men's graves with riding gear, in the western Lithuanian stone circle grave area and in lower Nemunas cemeteries were most abundantly widespread in the third century (Fig. 2). However, already by the end of the third century, their numbers were notably reduced in these cultural surroundings. Apparently, the number of burials with horses consistently declined throughout the entire fourth century, while the very latest of men's burials with horses along the coast reached the middle of the fifth century. At the beginning of the Migration Period, men's graves with horses spread to sites peripheral to the West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture area,

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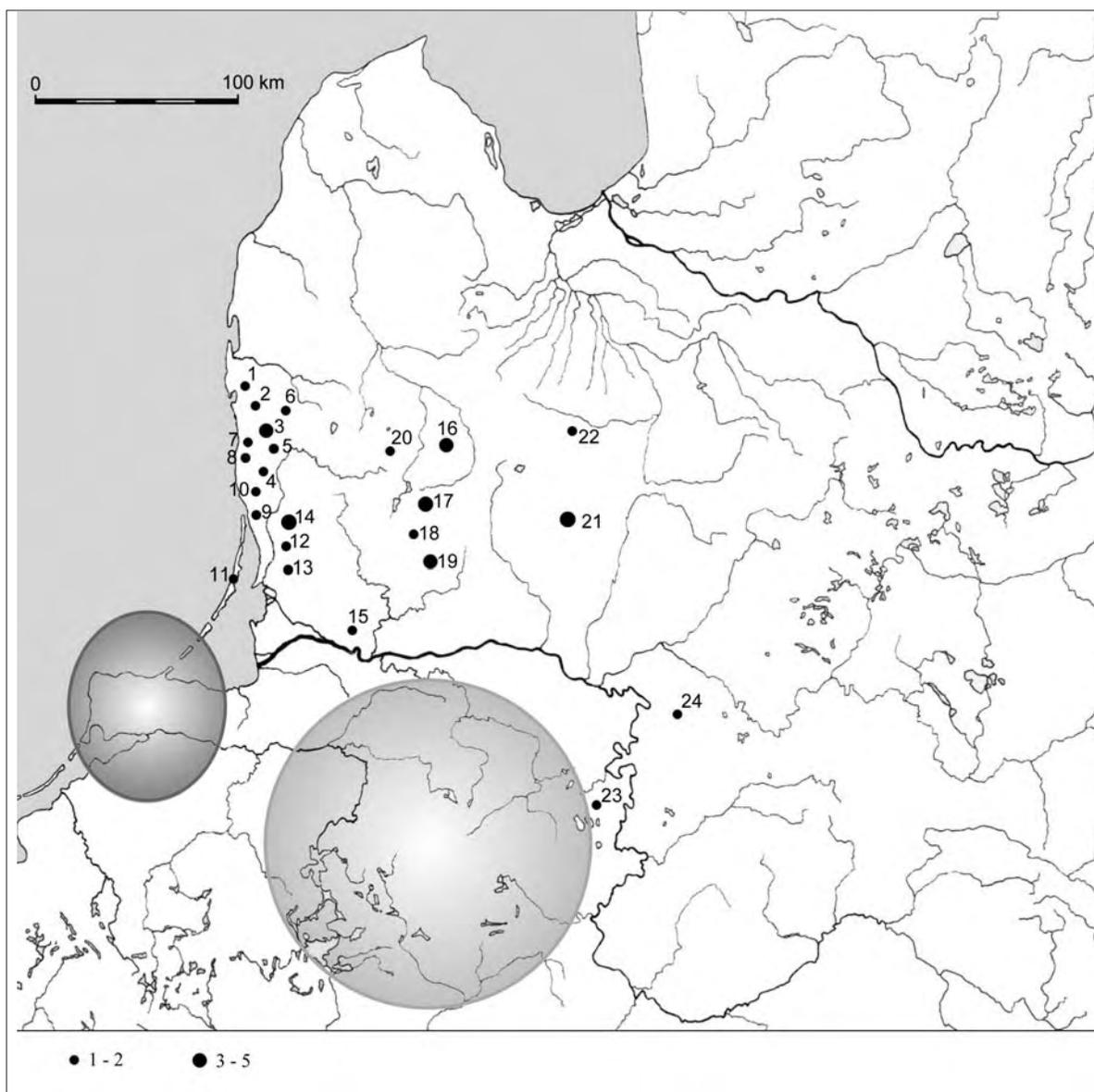Iron Age

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Fig. 9. Distribution of warriors' graves with riding gear and horsemen's accoutrements (details of bridles and spurs) ●
1–2 graves in the cemetery, or stray finds; ● 3–5 graves in the cemetery: 1 Kapsēde (Liepāja, district, LV); 2 Mazkatuži
(Liepāja, district, LV); 3 Lazdininkai (Kalnalaukis); 4 Padvariai; 5 Kurmaičiai; 6 Reketė; 7 Užpelkiai; 8 Pryšmančiai II
(nos. 3–8 in Kretinga distict); 9 Bandužiai (Klaipėda district); 10 Aukštkiemiai (formerly Oberhof, Klaipėda district);
11 Juodkrantė (Neringa city, Curonian Lagoon); 12 Strazdai-Jaciškė (Šilutė district); 13 Nikėlai (Šilutė district);
14 Mikužiai, Klaipėda district); 15 Vėluikiai (Tauragė district); 16 Žviliai (Šilalė district); 17 Krištanai (Joniškis district);
18 Paalksniai (Kelmė district); 19 Požerė (Šilalė district); 20 Maudžiorai (Kelmė district); 21 Vaitiekūnai (Radviliškis dis-
trict); 22 Gibaičiai (Šiauliai district); 23 Dzirmiškės (Alytus district); 24 Eitulionys (Trakai district) (after the authors
and Michelbertas 2000).

to sites like Reketė (grave 35), Rūdaičiai I (grave 19),
and Užpelkiai (grave 66) (Michelbertas 1968, p.101f;
Navickaitė-Kuncienė 1968, p.165, Figs. 7, 8; Bliujienė
1998, p.283f., Figs. 5, 10.2). Graves from the Migra-
tion Period are found in the Aukštkiemiai cemetery
(formerly Oberhof) which is distinguished for its
abundance of graves and was undoubtedly one of that
period's main sites along the coast (see Reich's article
in this volume). Bridle bits and iron bridle buckles are
found in only a small number of armed men's graves
along the coast in the Migration Period. Men's graves

with horses are found in new lower Nemunas cemeter-
ies in the Migration Period (in Rubokai and Vidgiriai,
both in the Šilutė district) (Bezzenberger 1909, pp.151-
171; Šimėnas 2006, Fig. 30). For example, men's
graves with horses in the Rubokai cemetery in the fifth
and sixth centuries comprise as much as 32% of men's
graves (Tautavičius 1996, p.77).

Despite the influence of Dollkeim-Kovrovo Culture
on the origin of graves with horses in West Lithuanian
Stone Circle Grave Culture, graves of this type found
in both areas also have their differences. More men's
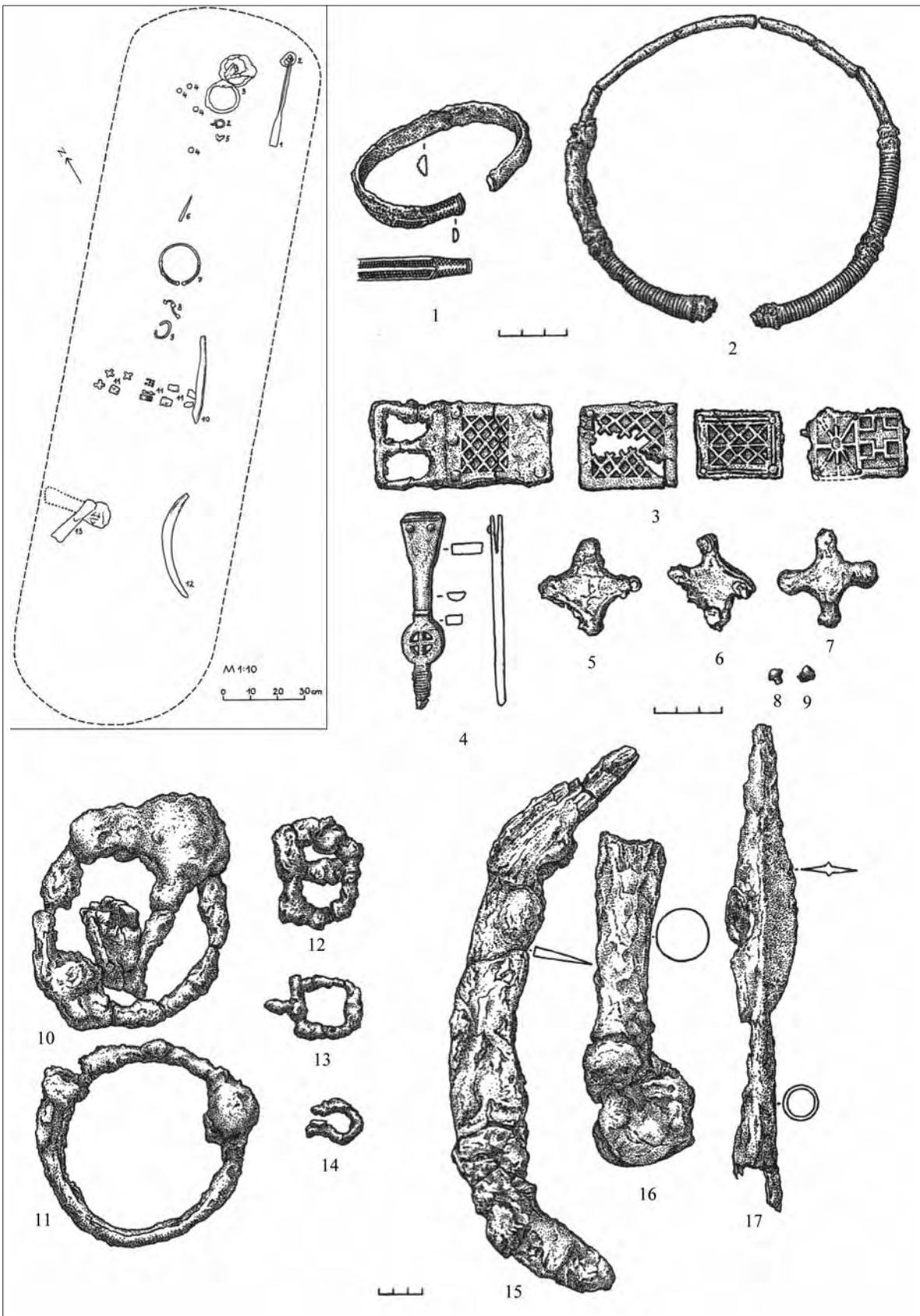
Fig. 10. Lazdininkai (Kalnalaukis, Kretinga district) cemetery, grave 9/1992 *in site*, and: 1 bronze sash-like bracelet; 2 bronze neck-ring; 3–9 belt set (before conservation; for a picture of the set after conservation, look at the inside front cover): tin/bronze belt buckle with mount, rectangular bronze openwork belt mounts, bronze belt-end fitting and bronze rivets; 10–11 iron bridle bits; 12–13 iron buckles; 14 bronze ring; 15 iron scythe; 16 iron socketed axe; 17 iron spearhead (illustrations by P. Gasiūnas; plan of the grave by J. Kanarskas).

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burials with elements of riding gear are found in Dol-lkeim-Kovrovo Culture's Phase B_1–B_2, while, starting with Phases B_2/C_1–C_2, an equal amount of men's burials with a whole horse or with a horse's head as men's graves with only riding gear is found; moreover, there are also differences in the rituals of the placement of weapons in these graves (Jaskanis 1974, p.197; Ibsen, Skvorzov 2004, p.402ff., Figs. 13, 14; Kulakov 2005, p.41ff.). In Dollkeim-Kovrovo Culture burials, just as in burial sites of Sudovian Culture, the entire horse is usually buried west of the person, ie to his right (Jaskanis 1966, pp.34-47; 1968, Figs. 1-2; Piątkowska-Małecka 2000, p.186; Ibsen, Skvorzov 2004, Fig. 14; Kulakov 2006, p.41; Tiurin 2006, p.148). Despite the fact that throughout the entire Roman Period, the number of men's graves with horses continually increased in Dollkeim-Kovrovo Culture sites, these graves were characteristic of the nobility and comprised only about 2% to 3% of the total number of graves (Tiurin 2006, p.147). At the beginning of the fifth century, men's graves with horses in Dollkeim-Kovrovo Culture comprised up to 20%. Human burials with horses also increased in the Suwałki region and Masurian Lakeland in the Migration Period (Jaskanis 1966, Fig. 1; Piątkowska-Małecka 2000, Fig. 1, Tab. 1-3). Meanwhile, only single graves of well-armed men with horses or with riding gear are known in the first half of the fifth century along the Lithuanian coast.

Several graves with elements of riding gear, including bronze rein rings, are known from Bogaczewo Culture (Figs. 1, 9) (Jaskanis 1966, p.33 and 64, Fig. 1; 1968, p.84; Baranowski 1973, Figs. 11, 15, 25; Bitner-Wróblewska *et al.* 2001, p.75ff., Figs. 6, 12).

Dollkeim-Kovrovo, West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave, Sudovian, and Bogaczewo cultures are related not only by their custom of burying horses, but also in the uniformity of their riding gear, visible in the bridles' construction and in the forms and ornamentation of their metal decorative details (Fig. 8) (La Baume 1944, Figs. 5-10; Baranowski 1973, pp. 401-452; Raddatz 1993, p. 143ff., Fig. 9, 15b; Wilbers-Rost 1994, Tafel 4-9, Beilage 1-3; Nowakowski 1996, Tafel 51, 81, 99, 104; Kulakov 2005, p.41ff., Figs. 70-72).

In their construction, form of fittings and metal reins, the Baltic region's horse bridles are similar to the bog finds of Zealand on the Jutland peninsula and of Funen Island in the third century. Obvious analogies to round bridle fittings and nosebands are known not only from Sambland Peninsula sites, but also from bog offerings in the Jutland peninsula (the Illerup bog find site A) and in the Schleswig-Holstein region in the north (the Thorsberg bog) (Fig. 4) (Baranowski 1973, p.447, Fig. 27d; Wilbers-Rost 1994, Beilage 3.2b, 4e; Ilkjær 1997,

p.55ff., Abb. 1). Analogues to the bridles with *Kehlbergen*-shaped details found in the Mazkatuži cemetery are known from the Sambland Peninsula (Fig. 8.1) (La Baume 1944, Abb. 5-7a, 8-9; Baranowski 1973, p.450, Fig. 29a; Nowakowski 1996, Abb. 81, 91, 96; Wilbers-Rost 1994, Beilage 2.1). The rein ring from the Padvariai cemetery has analogues both in Dollkeim-Kovrovo Culture material and in Denmark (Baranowski 1973; Wilbers-Rost 1994). The ornate, rhombic bridle details of the West Lithuanian stone circle grave area have analogies both in Dollkeim-Kovrovo and Sudovian sites (La Baume 1944, Fig. 13; Nowakowski 1996, Fig. 104; Bitner-Wróblewska 2003, Fig. 7). Besides elements of riding gear in the same Scandinavian as well as southeast and east Baltic Sea region sites, similarities are also found in the metal quadrangular openwork and rhombic belt mountings as well as in the forms of belt-end fittings (Fig. 8; 10.3-7) (Raddatz 1957, Figs. 1.3, 2.3; Fabech 1996, p.140; Bitner-Wróblewska *et al.* 2001, Fig. 10).

Horsemen's graves with horses that appeared in West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture and lower Nemunas sites spread to the Samogitian barrow cemetery area (see Appendix). The appearance of individual horse teeth in Samogitian barrow cemeteries is related to the general cultural development of the entire east Baltic Sea region, the penetration of adjacent cultures into this territory, and traditional intercultural influences. In its traditional intercultural and commercial influences, the area of Samogitian as well as northern Lithuanian and southern Latvian barrows was bound by the area of West Lithuanian stone circle graves (Banytė-Rowell 2004, Figs. 3, 4; Bliujienė 2005, p.123, Fig. 1).

Single burial sites with horse graves are known in southwest Lithuania and in the developing East Lithuanian Barrow Culture (Fig. 1; Appendix). The initial stage of East Lithuanian Barrow Culture in the Roman Period was related to the Sudovian Culture's expansion to the northeast (Astrauskas 1998; Vaitkevičius 2005, p. 71ff.; Bliujienė 2006, p.123ff.).

Graves with horses in the West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture area markedly diminished at the very end of the third century. Today it is difficult to say with what kinds of phenomena this decrease of graves with horses was associated. The number of armed men with horses, just as graves in general, and even people themselves, possibly decreased because a portion of Aistians were drawn into the migration of Wielbark Culture people (Goths-Gepids) (Žulkus 1995, p.96ff., Figs. IX, XII). Thus, it is altogether possible that some Aistian noble leader horsemen and their mounted warrior retinues, as a mobile, well-armed group of people,

streamed into the military being formed by the Gothic elite, and together engaged near the northern shores of the Black Sea into the developing Chernyakhov Culture's territory. The significant consolidation process of the Gothic military force and its movement southeastward is suggested by the third century's Wielbark cultural material (Urbańczyk 1998, p.404f.). The third century is time of barbarians and military activity in the vast Germania expanses, when pillage and military raids by mobile groups in the Roman provinces became an inseparable and the main aspect of the social life of various barbarian collectives (Brather 2005, p.159). Thus, in one way or another, Aistian horsemen could have streamed into this process.

Conclusions

Armed men's graves with horses constitute an expressive feature of the West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave and lower Nemunas cultures in the Roman Period (Phases B_2 and B_2/C_1). Currently, 21 cemeteries and 86 human graves with horses are known. A large portion of West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave and Lower Nemunas culture graves with horses, if their grave complexes are known and not destroyed, belonged to well-armed horsemen. At the end of the second century until the second half of the third century, horsemen's graves in the West Lithuanian stone circle grave area might have comprised up to about 9.1% of all the community's members.

In the West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture area, as in other Lithuanian regions, only ritually used parts of horses, which constitute the horse's graves, are found in or alongside people's graves. Usually the horse's head was buried, more infrequently – the horse's head and legs, or the head, legs, and parts of the spine and ribs. The horse's teeth and legs were placed in the graves only rarely. Separate horse teeth or a single tooth are found in a large portion of the graves. Only one case is known in the entire discussed area in which a man and an entire horse were buried in one grave. The horses that were buried were young.

Human graves with horses can be divided into five groups. To the first belong the graves in which the person and the horse were buried in the same burial pit; the second group is ascribed to graves in which the person and horse were buried in separate burial pits. The third group of human and horse graves is comprised of graves in which a horse grave is encircled by people's graves. These burial groups provide the most information about a warriors' hierarchy, horsemen and infantrymen, the military leaders who belonged to the

nobility, and the military commander's retinue, which had already formed by the end of the second century.

The fourth group is comprised of "single" horse graves that, because of various circumstances, usually due to a small excavated plot or to the peculiarities of the material's publication, cannot be attributed to a specific human burial. The fifth group of human and horse burials is ascribed to the graves known usually only from brief accounts in literature or reports and which known data does not allow us to detail.

Already at the end of the second century and beginning of the third century men's graves with spurs and some horse riding gear, usually bridles and bridle bits, are found in the West Lithuanian stone circle grave area and in the lower Nemunas, as well as in the burial sites of Samogitia and southwest Lithuania.

The appearance of abundant horsemen's graves in the West Lithuanian stone circle grave area is associated with the direct influence of Dollkeim-Kovrovo Culture, since the social-economic processes that occurred in both cultural areas at the end of Phase B_2 and in Phases B_2/C_1-C_2 were synchronous. West Lithuanian stone circle graves constituted the northernmost *barbaricum* territory in which horses were so often buried with people.

Graves with horses markedly diminished in the West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture area at the very end of the third century. Thus, it is entirely possible that a portion of Aistian noble leader horsemen and their mounted warrior retinue members, as a mobile, well-armed group of people, streamed into the military being formed by the Gothic elite and engaged together on the northern shores of the Black Sea and into the developing Chernyakhov Culture's territory. Warriors' graves with horses disappeared along the coast in the first half or middle of the fifth century.

Translated by Indrė Antanaitis-Jacobs

APPENDIX

Catalogue of males' and unsexed individuals' graves with horses (Types I–IV of human burials with horses, see Fig. 3)

West Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture

(1) Mazkatuži (Liepāja district, Latvia)

1.1. Mazkatuži, male grave 23/1942 (Type I.3) (Fig. 8.1).

Chronology: B_2/C_1-C_{1a}

(Reference: Šturms 1942)

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(**2**) **Lazdininkai (Kalnalaukis, Kretinga district)**

2. 1/1-7. Lazdininkai, horse grave (horse head) surrounded by warriors' graves 34, 36–38, 40, and child grave 39, excavated in 1940 (Type III) (Fig. 6):

2. 1/1. Horse grave 1/1940

2. 1/2. Grave 34, male

2. 1/3. Grave 36, male

2. 1/4. Grave 37, male

2. 1/5. Grave 38, male

2. 1/6. Grave 39, child

2. 1/7. Grave 40, male

Chronology: C_{1a}–$C_{1b.}$

(Reference: Baleniūnas 1940)

2. 2/1-2. Lazdininkai, male grave 1/1991 and horse head grave 1/1991 in separate grave pits; horse head buried left of deceased person (Type II.4a).

2. 3/1-2. Lazdininkai, male grave 4/1991 with horse head grave 2/1991 in separate grave pits inside stone circle; horse's head left of deceased person (Type II.1) (Fig. 4).

2. 4/1-2. Lazdininkai, male grave 11/1992 and horse head grave 3/1991 in same grave pit, horse grave left of deceased person (Type I.1a) (Fig. 4).

2.5. Lazdininkai, single horse head 4/1991 (consisting only of 18 teeth); only part of stone circle excavated (Type II.3).

2.6. Lazdininkai, single horse head 5/1992 (remains of only six teeth; grave is disturbed); human graves in vicinity are destroyed (Type II.3).

2.7. Lazdininkai, single horse head 6/1992 with fashionable bridle parts scattered throughout pit: four cross-shaped bindings of different sizes, lunular forehead plate, rivets, fragments of bronze rein rings, and iron spur (Type II.3) (Fig. 8: 2).

2.8/1-2. Lazdininkai, male 57/1998 with horse head in same grave pit, horse head left of deceased person (Type I.1a).

Chronology: C_3/D_1

2.9/1-2. Lazdininkai, male grave 66/2000 with horse head grave 7/2000, buried in separate grave pits; horse head left of deceased person (Type II.4a).

2. 10/1-2. Lazdininkai, male grave 67/2000 with horse head grave 8/2000, buried in separate grave pits; horse head is north of deceased person's head (Type II.6).

2. 11/1-2. Lazdininkai, male grave 70/2000 with horse head grave 9/2000, buried in separate grave pits; horse head is left of the person (Type II.4a).

2. 12/1-2. Lazdininkai, male grave 82/2003 with horse teeth in the same grave pit (Type II.4).

Chronology: Graves of catalogue's position numbers 2.2–2.7 and 2.9–2.12 are dated to Phases B_2/C_1–C_{1b}–C_2

(Reference: Excavations of Butkus)

(3) Reketė (Kretinga district)

3.1. Reketė, male grave 35 with horse (complete skeleton), buried in same grave pit; horse is left of deceased person; grave pit is 270×170cm (Type I.8).

Chronology: D_2.

(Reference: Navickaitė-Kuncienė 1968)

(4) Kurmaičiai (Kretinga district)

4.1. Kurmaičiai, grave 23, human of indeterminate sex, and horse teeth, buried in same pit, surrounded by stone circle; fragment of bronze rein ring inside circle. Only one human tooth found indicative of human burial; human without grave goods (Type I.4).

Chronology: B_2/C_1–C_{1a}

4.2. Kurmaičiai, grave 42, male with horse head in same stone circle (Type I.7).

(Reference: Kulikauskas 1968)

(5) Rūdaičiai I (Kretinga district, 1940 excavations)

5.1. Rūdaičiai I, grave of human, possible male, and horse, found in Trench VI; find circumstances unclear; grave might have been destroyed by Late Viking Age burials. No data about horse (Type I.7).

Chronology: C_{1b}–C_2

Note: Horse grave A: surrounded by inhumation graves of eighth to tenth centuries and cremation burial II, dated to 11th–12th centuries. It should be noted that horse grave A was found in very close proximity to the Roman Period graves.

(Reference: Michelbertas 1968)

(6) Rūdaičiai II (Kretinga district)

6.1. Rūdaičiai II, single horse grave 1; fibulae (A57 and A63) and spearhead (Type IV.1) found near horse grave.

6.2. Rūdaičiai II, single horse grave 2 (Type IV.1).

6.3. Rūdaičiai II, single horse grave 3: remains of head, legs, and ribs (Type IV.1).

6.4. Rūdaičiai II, male grave 6 and horse head, buried in same grave pit (Type I.2).

6.5. Rūdaičiai II, male grave 7 and horse head with remains of legs, buried in same pit (Type I.1).

Chronology: B_2/C_1–$C_{1b.}$

(Reference: Michelbertas 1968a)

(7) Užpelkiai (Kretinga district)

7.1. Užpelkiai, destroyed grave of male?, grave 1, with single horse tooth in same grave pit (Type I.4).

7.2. Užpelkiai, single horse grave 1 (horse head and hoofs); association to human grave unclear (Type IV.1).

7.3. Užpelkiai, horse grave 2 (horse tooth in northern part of grave, legs in southern) and male grave 66, both within stone circle, in separate grave pits (Type II.1).

7.4. Užpelkiai, horse grave 3 was possibly surrounded by male graves (81 and 79, as well as some destroyed graves) within stone circle (Type III) (Fig. 5).

7.5. Užpelkiai, horse grave 4 (horse head); association to human grave unclear (Type IV).

7.6/1-2. Užpelkiai, male grave 83 and horse grave 5, in separate grave pits (Type II.5a).

7.7. Užpelkiai, horse grave 6 (head; Type IV.1); association to human grave unclear; found in vicinity of grave 83.

7.8. Užpelkiai, destroyed grave of male?, grave 61 (depth of grave pit is 46cm), three horse teeth found surrounding and above grave pit.

7.9. Užpelkiai, male grave 65, contains one horse tooth (Type IV.1)

Chronology: Transition of Phase D_1/D_2, and Phase D_2–D_3

(Reference: Bliujienė 1998)

(8) Senkai (Kretinga district)

8.1. Senkai, horse head, surrounded by inhumation graves and cremation burials dated to the 11th–12th centuries. Late Viking Period human graves are dug into the stone circles of the Roman Period. The horse head might belong to the Roman Period. Jablonskis notes that the association of the late human graves with the horse head is unclear (chronologically, and based on the cemetery's stratigraphy) (Type V).

Chronology: Roman Iron Age

(Reference: Jablonskis 1986)

(9) Pryšmančiai II (Kretinga district)

9.1. Pryšmančiai II, single horse grave; might belong to males buried in graves 2, 3 and 4 (Type III).

Chronology: B_2/C_1–C_{1a}

(Reference: Navickaitė-Kuncienė 1968a)

(10) Ėgliškiai-Anduliai (formerly Andulen, Kretinga district)

10.1/1-2. Ėgliškiai-Anduliai, male grave 43/2002 with horse head, both within same stone circle, in separate grave pits; horse left of deceased person (Type II.1).

Chronology: B_2/C_1–$C_{1b.}$

(Reference: Bliujienė 2005)

(11) Palanga (Palanga city, Baltic square)

11.1. Palanga, male with horse inside stone circle; found accidentally in 1938 (Type II.1 or II.2).

11.2/1-2. Palanga, male grave 2 with horse head and remains of legs in one grave pit (disturbed) (Type I.1).

Chronology: B_2/C_1–C_2

(Reference: Tautavičius 1968)

(12) Bandužiai (Klaipėda district)

12.1. Bandužiai, grave 14, male with two horse teeth in southern part of grave (Type I.4).

12.2. Bandužiai, grave 81, male and horse head with hoofs, in same grave (Type I.1).

12.3. Bandužiai, male grave with horse, known about from excavations in 1935 (Type V).

12.4. Bandužiai, male grave 21 with one horse tooth on bottom of grave pit (Type I.4a).

Chronology: 12.1-3: B_2/C_1–C_2

(Reference: Stankus 1995)

(13) Aukštkiemiai (formerly Oberhof, Klaipėda district)

13.1. Aukštkiemiai, grave 2, with horse head, teeth (Type V).

13.2. Aukštkiemiai, male grave 7, with horse teeth right of male (Type I.1a).

13.3. Aukštkiemiai, male grave 360, with horse bones (?) (Type V).

13.4. Aukštkiemiai, male grave 365, with horse head fragments (Type V).

Chronology: B_2/C_1–C_{1b}

(Reference: personal communication with Dr Christine Reich, Berlin).

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(14) Gintarai (Kretinga district)

14.1. Gintarai, child grave 12, female judging by grave goods, with small fragment of horse bone and fragment of one horse tooth found under stone near grave; grave goods were small bronze bracelet, with the horse tooth by the bracelet (Type V).

14.2. Gintarai, destroyed grave of male?, grave 23, with jaw fragment of horse found beside grave (Type I.1?).

Chronology: C_{1a}–C_{1b}

(Reference: Michelbertas 2002)

(15) Stragnai (Klaipėda district)

15.1. Stragnai, male grave 13, with horse head and hoofs in same grave pit (Type I.1).

Chronology: C_{1a}–C_{1b}

(Reference: Varnas 1985)

(16) Toleikiai (Thalen-Jacob), Klaipėda district

16.1. Toleikiai (Thalen-Jacob), known graves of humans buried with horses, dated to the third/fourth centuries (Type V)

(Reference: Tautavičius 1977)

(17) Baitai (Klaipėda district)

17.1. Baitai, destroyed human grave 1, sex unknown, with separate horse teeth, in the same grave pit (Type I.4).

17.2. Baitai, adolescent male?, grave 4, with horse tooth in same grave pit (Type I.4a).

17.3. Baitai, human grave 12, sex unknown, with fragment of horse tooth in same grave pit (Type I.4a).

17.4. Baitai, grave 22, male? and horse in same grave pit (horse head might have been placed over the head of the deceased person, horse's legs were by the left side of the person) (Type I.4a).

17.5. Baitai, human grave 29, sex unknown, with three individual horse teeth in the same grave pit (Type I.4a).

17.6. Baitai, human grave 30, sex unknown, with three single horse teeth in the same grave pit (Type I.4a).

17.7. Baitai, male grave 31 (robbed in prehistory), with two horse skulls in the same grave pit (Type I.6).

17.8. Baitai, male?, grave 32, with horse teeth (Type I.4a).

Note: Graves 31, 30, 12, 29 and 32 were somehow associated with each other.

17.9. Baitai, human grave 34, sex unknown, with single horse tooth fragment (Type I.4a).

17.10. Baitai, human grave 40, sex unknown, with two horse teeth (Type I.4a).

Chronology: C_{1a}–C_3

(Reference: Banytė Rovell 2001)

(18) Šernai (Klaipėda district)

18.1. Šernai, single horse head, grave 13; association with human graves in the area is not clear (Type IV.1).

18.2. Šernai, single horse head, grave 18, association with human graves in the area is not clear (Type IV.1).

18.3. Šernai, single horse head, grave 49, associated with male grave 50 (Type III).

18.4. Šernai, male grave 50, with horse head (Type III).

Note: Males buried in graves 49 and 50 have a certain connection with the horse's grave and can be ascribed to Type III. Male graves 38 (in which only one horse's tooth was found) and 53 might also belong to this group.

18.5. Šernai, male grave 53, with horse head (Type I.7).

18.6. Šernai, male grave 54, with horse head (Type I.7).

18.7. Šernai, grave 60, single horse head, association with human grave unclear.

Note: Horse head grave 60 might be connected with warriors' graves 55, 58, 61, 63, 75, 76 and 74, and thereby be ascribed to Type III.

18.9. Šernai, single horse head grave 62, association with human graves (possibly male graves 61 or 63?) not clear (Type IV.1).

18.10. Šernai, male grave 95, with horse head (Type I.7).

Note: The male buried in grave 95 might be associated with the warrior horsemen in graves 90, 92, 100, 101 and 107. This group of warriors might also belong to Type III.

18.11. Šernai, single horse head grave 97 (Type IV.1). The connection of this horse's grave with the nearest human graves (male? grave 83 and male grave 84) is unclear.

Note: Individual horse teeth were found in *Fundstellen* 29, 30 and 82. In the Šernai cemetery, graves of males and individuals of indeterminate sex buried with horse heads and teeth are concentrated in the southern part of the cemetery.

Chronology: C_{1a}–C_3

(Reference: Bezzenberger 1892)

Cemeteries of the Lower Nemunas group

(19) Cemetery at Šilutė estate, former Adlig–Heydekrug

19.1. Cemetery at Šilutė estate, horse grave found in 19th century. Riding gear: cross-shaped bridle mounts, crescent-shaped forehead pendant, *Kehlberge*, and others. Find circumstances not clear (Type V).

Chronology: B_2–C_2

(Reference: Nowakowski and Banytė-Rowell 2001)

(20) Jogučiai (Klaipėda district)

20.1. Jogučiai, single horse grave (head) in Plot II; association with male grave 1 in Plot I not established (Type IV.1).

Chronology: C_{1b}–C_2

(Reference: Tamulynas 2005)

(21) Dauglaukis (Tauragė district)

21.1. Dauglaukis, male grave 12, with horse head and part of spine in the same grave pit (Type I.2).

Chronology: B_2/C_1–C_{1a}

21.2. Dauglaukis, single horse head (Type IV.1).

Chronology not clear; trench without clearly dated material.

(Reference: Balčiūnas 1984; Jovaiša, Asadauskas 1993)

Samogitian, Northern Lithuanian and Southern Latvian Barrows Culture

(22) Pavėkiai (Šiauliai district)

22.1. Pavėkiai, barrow 14, male?, grave 8 (Type II.1).

22.2. Pavėkiai, barrow 15 male? (questionable grave); one horse tooth and fragment of spearhead or axe found at a depth of 25cm.

Chronology: C_{1a}–C_3

(Reference: Michelbertas 1986)

Sudovian Culture or influence zone of Sudovian Culture

(23) Liepynai (Marijampolė district)

23.1. Liepynai, four human skeletons and one horse skeleton, all surrounded with stones; horse skeleton known to have been found in stone cist. Dated to the third/fourth or seventh/eighth centuries (Type V).

(Reference: Tautavičius 1977)

East Lithuanian Barrow Culture

(24) Moša/Nausodai (Trakai district)

24.1. Moša/Nausodai, barrow 2, horse skeleton?, buried to the left of the human (Type I.1a).

Chronology: C_2–C_3

(Reference: Abaravičius 1994).

Abbreviations

LAP – Lietuvos archeologiniai paminklai. Lietuvos pajūrio I–VII a. kapinynai. Vilnius: Mintis, 1968.
LII R – Lithuanian Institute of History, Archive, Vilnius.
LNB RS – Lithunian National Library, Department of Manuscripts, Vilnius.

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ROMĖNIŠKOJO LAIKOTARPIO VAKARŲ LIETUVOS GINKLUOTI VYRAI IR JŲ ŽIRGAI KAIP KARIŲ HIERARCHIJOS ATSPINDŽIAI

Audronė Bliujienė, Donatas Butkus

Santrauka

Romėniškuoju laikotarpiu (nuo periodų B2; B2/C1) ginkluotų vyrų kapai su žirgais yra išraiškingas Vakarų Lietuvos kapų su akmenų vainikais ir Nemuno žemupio kultūrų laidosenos bruožas (1 pav.). Čia iš 21 kapinyno yra žinomi 86 žmonių kapai su žirgais (žr. priedą). Didžiojoje dalyje nesuardytų Vakarų Lietuvos kapų su akmenų vainikais ir daugelyje Nemuno žemupio žmonių kapų su žirgais kompleksų rasti palaidoti gerai ginkluoti vyrai raiteliai. II a. pab. – III a. antrojoje pusėje raitelių kapai Vakarų Lietuvos kapų su akmenų vainikais kultūrinėje srityje galėjo sudaryti net apie 9,1% visų bendruomenės narių palaidojimų (2 pav.).

Vakarų Lietuvos kapų su akmenų vainikais kultūrinėje srityje, beje, kaip ir kituose Lietuvos regionuose, žmonių kapuose ar šalia jų randamos tik ritualams buvusios panaudotos žirgų dalys, kurios ir sudaro žirgo kapą. Dažniausiai buvo laidojama žirgo galva (41 kapas), rečiau – žirgo galva ir kojos arba žirgo galva, kojos, stuburo ir šonkaulių dalys (9 kapai). Retokai į kapus buvo dedami žirgų dantys ir kojos (3 kapai). Net 14-oje kapų rasti tik pavieniai žirgo dantys ar tik vienas dantis. Visoje aptariamoje srityje žinomas tik vienas vyro ir viso žirgo palaidojimo viename kape atvejis (Reketė, k. 35). Laidojami buvo jauni žirgai.

Žmonių kapus su žirgais galima suskirstyti į penkias grupes (3: I–V pav.). I grupei priklauso kapai, kuriuose žmogus ir žirgas palaidoti toje pačioje kapo duobėje (3: I pav.); II grupei skirtini kapai, kuriuose žmogus ir žirgas palaidoti skirtingose duobėse (3: II; 4–5 pav.). Problemiški I ir II grupių žmonių su žirgais kapai, kuriuose randami tik žirgų dantys. Tokių kapų inventoriai dažnai yra neišraiškingi, atrodo, kad palaidoto žmogaus lytis, socialinis statusas lyg „pradingę" ar dėl kažkokių priežasčių sąmoningai nerodomi (žr. priedą). Tokių kapų inventoriuose nerandama ginklų. Kol kas daugiausia tokių kapų rasta Baitų kapinyne. Neaiškios lyties individų ir paauglių kapus su pavieniais dantimis pirmiausia norėtųsi skirti prie žemesnį socialinį statusą užimančių bendruomenės narių palaidojimų. Paaugliams žirgų dantys į kapus galėjo būti dedami dėl jų amžiaus.

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III žmogaus ir žirgo palaidojimų grupę sudaro kompleksai, kuriuose žirgą supa žmonių kapai (3: III; 6 pav.). Tokios palaidojimų grupės suteikia daugiausia žinių apie tam tikrą karių hierarchiją, karius raitelius ir pėstininkus, karo vadus, priklausančius diduomenei, ir vado palydą, kuri formavosi II a. pab. – III a. pirmojoje pusėje.

IV grupę sudarytų „pavieniai" žirgų kapai, kurių dėl įvairių aplinkybių, dažniausiai dėl mažo tirto ploto ar dėl medžiagos paskelbimo ypatybių, negalima priskirti konkrečiam žmogaus kapui (3: IV; 1–2 pav.; priedas). Straipsnio autorių įsitikinimu, su žmogumi nesusijusių žirgų palaidojimų ar visai bendruomenei įvairiomis progomis skirtų žirgų aukų aptariamoje kultūrinėje srityje kol kas nežinoma, o „pavieniai" žirgų kapai atsirado dėl įvairių destruktyvių priežasčių, kai raitelis „prarasdavo" žirgą arba žirgas raitelį. Paskutinei – V – žmonių ir žirgų kapų grupei skirtini dažniausiai tik iš trumpų žinučių literatūroje ar ataskaitų žinomi kapai, kurių turimi duomenys neleidžia detalizuoti (3: V pav.).

Raitelių kapai išsiskiria turtingumu, be to, jų kapuose dažnai randama tošinių dėžučių su moterims būdingais papuošalais (7 pav.). Žirgų kapuose randamos kamanų dalys turi analogų Dollkeimo-Kovrovo, Bogačevo ir sūduvių kultūros paminkluose ir tarp Jutlandijos pelkių radinių (8 pav.).

Jau II a. pab. – III a. Vakarų Lietuvos kapų su akmenų vainikais srityje ir Nemuno žemupyje, taip pat Žemaitijos, Užnemunės laidojimo paminkluose randama vyrų kapų su pentinais ir žirgo aprangos dalimis, dažniausiai žąslais ar kamanomis (metaliniais kamanų apkalais, kabučiais ir net metalinėmis pavadžių grandimis). Taigi raitelio ir žirgo ekipuotės paplitimo teritorija gerokai didesnė (9 pav.).

Gausus ir raitelių kapų atsiradimas Vakarų Lietuvos kapų su akmenų vainikais srityje yra susijęs su Dollkeimo-Kovrovo kultūros tiesiogine įtaka, kadangi akivaizdu, jog abiejose kultūrinėse srityse vykę socialiniai-ekonominiai procesai B2 periodo pabaigoje ir B2/C1–C2 periodais buvo gana gerai sinchronizavęsi. Vakarų Lietuvos kapai su akmenų vainikais buvo šiauriausia *barbaricum* teritorija, kurioje taip gausiai su žmonėmis buvo laidojami žirgai.

Vakarų Lietuvos kapų su akmenų vainikais kultūrinėje srityje kapų su žirgais gerokai sumažėja pačioje III a. pabaigoje. Taigi galima manyti, kad dalis aisčių diduomenės vadų raitelių ir jų raitos karių palydos narių, kaip mobilios gerai ginkluotos žmonių grupės, įsiliejo į gotų elito formuojamą kariauną ir kartu patraukė į šiaurines Juodosios jūros pakrantes bei turėjo įtakos Černiachovo kultūros susiformavimui. Pajūryje karių, palaidotų su žirgais, kapai išnyko V a. pirmojoje pusėje ar viduryje.