

VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

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**THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION IN
EAST LITHUANIA IN THE 3RD-12TH
CENTURIES
(ON THE BASIS OF THE MORTUARY RECORD)**

Summary of doctoral dissertation

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I. INTRODUCTION

East Lithuania played an important role in the process of the genesis of the Lithuanian state and the Lithuanian nation. In the 13th century it became the consolidation centre of the Baltic tribes and the nucleus of the Lithuanian state. But the conditions for statehood did not arise overnight. The society, which was later capable of creating this state, formed here gradually. Its sources lie in the Iron Age, when the so-called East Lithuanian barrow culture existed in the region.

Although a good deal of attention in Lithuanian historiography has been devoted to the germ of statehood, the heritage of the pre-state period has not yet been properly evaluated, and the knowledge about the society that left the East Lithuanian barrow culture is still comparatively poor. The huge potential of the archaeological sources (especially the burial sites) has still been little used in this topic, which has caused many knowledge gaps.

The **aim** of this dissertation is an analysis of the social relationships in Iron Age East Lithuania using the mortuary record. This analysis is the basis for presenting a study of the social organisation and development of this society that encompasses all of the social groups, their status and roles, and the relationships between them.

The paper sets the following **objectives**: to distinguish the funeral rite aspects, which are significant for an analysis of the social organisation, and the criteria for evaluating these aspects; to analyse the burials of individuals of all ages and both sexes; to create social organisation models that encompass the social norms that functioned at the level of both the separate communities and the whole society; to create a model of the organisation of a typical community, to produce a model of the organisation based on inter-community ties; to reconstruct the society's class structure; to evaluate the society in respect to the theory of social organisation development; and to reveal the chronological change in the social organisation and its connection with the historical processes.

The main **assertions defended** in the paper are: the construction and grave goods of a burial site reflect the deceased's social status; the position of each individual was influenced by age, sex, achieved status, and ascribed status, and the significance of these factors was not uniform in the culture's different stages; the community's base

consisted of nuclear and extended families; the society was divided into social classes; the social organisation should be considered a chiefdom; and the changes in the social organisation were influenced by external factors.

The research **method** is the correlation of the archaeological and osteological data from excavated burials. Through separate individuals, an attempt is made to reconstruct the social organisation of the entire society. Therefore it is mostly based on those burials, from which osteological analysis results are available. The main research starting point is the biological criteria, i.e. age and sex, which are compared to the construction of the barrows and graves and to the burial assemblages. The use of dual data and the adaptation of the theoretical approaches and methods introduced in the works of many foreign investigators have resulted in the paper's **originality**. The paper attempts to look for the original analytical methods that are the best suited for the available material.

The presented conclusions create a certain theoretical model of the society, although each community could have had individual features. The paper uses data from many partially excavated sites, but the volume should considerably compensate for the fragmentary nature of the material.

No attempt is made through the research to cover the complete diversity of the issues connected with the social organisation. An analysis of a single kind of archaeological site does not allow this. Furthermore the burial sites have a deep ideological and symbolic content. Therefore the answers to many of the questions, which are raised, are of an interpretative nature.

The period and space analysed in the paper are defined on the basis of archaeological criteria. Only data from burial sites characteristic of the East Lithuanian barrow culture are used. The material is divided into three conditional chronological groups: 3rd–5th-century inhumations, 5th–7th-century cremations, and 8th–11/12th-century cremations. This classification was selected as the best suited for East Lithuanian barrows.

II. EAST LITHUANIAN BARROWS: CHRONOLOGY, TERRITORY, AND DEVELOPMENT

The formation of the East Lithuanian barrow culture dates to the 3rd or 4th century. This process was connected with the disappearance of the Brushed Pottery culture in the 2nd–3rd century. But the funeral rites were not completely uniform in the cultural range that was forming. Several 3rd–5th-century flat cemeteries are known. From at least the 4th-century uncremated individuals were also buried in barrows with stone kerbs or paved with stones. Up until the 5th century the East Lithuanian barrow culture was a kind of totality of subcultures that were gradually unifying in respect to funeral rites. The entire cultural range is connected by burials in barrows, body orientation, and certain types of artefacts. Some of the burials from this period, especially of females, are distinguished by their rich grave goods.

Some barrow construction features reveal ties with the neighbouring regions: in the northern part of the range, with the Old Iron Age North Lithuanian barrow culture, and in the southern and southwestern part, with South Lithuania and the Suwałki region. There is an inclination to link the creation of the East Lithuanian barrow culture with the influence of the Western Balts and the migrations, but it is hardly possible that they were universal influences.

From the 5th–6th century the funeral rites throughout the culture became uniform and acquired particular features. In the entire range, individuals were buried in barrows with stone kerbs, pits, or ditches on the edges. East Lithuanian barrows are characteristic to a territory between approximately the Nemunas and Šventoji in the west, lake Svir (Belarus) in the east, Dūkštas in the north, and Dieveniškės in the south, although the distribution of the sites is not uniform in this territory.

In about the mid-1st millennium the custom of cremating the dead, which spread north in the 4th–5th centuries, became established in the region. The construction of the graves became simpler. With the establishment of the custom of cremation there was a simultaneous change in the burial assemblages. The 5th-century burials are distinguished by their richness. From the mid-1st millennium a certain standardisation of the grave goods is also visible. Weapons became the main accent in male burial assemblages. Meanwhile more modest grave goods were used for females from the

second half of the 5th–6th century. The appearance of new types of artefacts, expensive imported artefacts, the change in the burial traditions and grave good assemblages, and the elevation of warrior burials are connected with the events of the Migration Period.

During the entire third quarter of the 1st millennium the funeral rites in East Lithuania developed gradually. The barrows were ringed by pits and disorderly stone kerbs while the grave construction continued to become simpler. The burial assemblages were not diverse and comparatively sparse during this period. Their composition did not essentially change during several centuries.

In the last quarter of the 1st millennium the East Lithuanian barrows gradually acquired new features. The barrows stopped being ringed by stone kerbs, and ditches became a distinct construction element. Several individuals were more frequently buried in one barrow and graves were more frequently dug in earlier barrows. Several new customs appeared in the Late Iron Age. No burials were made in many barrows. It is thought that they were a symbolic form of burial. Another feature of this period is the tradition of horse burials: inhumations, cremations, and symbolic burials.

In the last centuries of the 1st millennium and the early 2nd millennium the traditions for the placement of grave goods in burials did not change significantly, although changes are observed in the forms of the items themselves. Only from the 10th–11th centuries were isolated male burials distinguished by an abundance of grave goods. The grave goods in female burials were somewhat more diverse than in male burials, but they were also usually sparse.

The disappearance of the East Lithuanian barrow culture is usually dated to the late 12th or early 13th century. But the custom of barrow burials probably already disappeared in the late 11th or early 12th century.

III. HISTORIOGRAPHY

III.1. The history of barrow investigations in East Lithuania

The archaeological investigation of East Lithuanian barrow cemeteries has been conducted for over a century and a half. During that time approximately 180 burial

sites have been investigated. At least 1450 barrows and their remains and at least 30 flat (?) graves have been excavated.

Barrows fairly early attracted the attention of investigators. East Lithuanian barrow cemeteries were first excavated in the first half of 19th century. The number of excavations especially increased in the mid-19th century with the work of E. and K. Tyszkiewicz, L. Kondratowicz-Syrokomla, A. H. Kirkor, etc. Most of the attention was devoted to finds rather than funeral rites. Many excavations remained undocumented.

The excavations, which stopped after 1865, started up once again in the late 19th and early 20th century. At least 40 barrow cemeteries were excavated. The excavations and their documentation were now of much better quality. F. Pokrovskii was especially distinguished in this respect. E. Volter, W. Szukiewicz, V. Kashirskii, and other archaeologists also excavated barrows.

After the First World War the intensive excavation of barrows occurred in the Polish-occupied Vilnius region. Professional archaeologists (R. Jakimowicz, H. and W. Hołubowicz, etc.) excavated around 15 barrow cemeteries. Some excavations were large and fairly well documented. Several barrow cemeteries were investigated in the Republic of Lithuania at that time. But the documentation and interpretation of the material was of a poorer quality.

During the Soviet occupation almost 70 barrow cemeteries were excavated in East Lithuania. Several large and many smaller expeditions were organised. Mounds that were in comparatively good condition were frequently selected for excavation. A. Tautavičius, R. Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė, O. Navickaitė-Kuncienė, and E. Butėnienė were the archaeologists who conducted most of the barrow investigations at that time. The quality of the excavation methods constantly rose and the results of many investigations were published.

After Lithuania regained its independence, the scale of barrow investigation did not drop with excavations being conducted at over 70 barrow cemeteries. But the expeditions became smaller. Mostly disturbed or already destroyed sites are being excavated. This somewhat diminishes the research value of the collected data. Z. Baubonis, E. Butėnas, G. Grižas, V. Kliaugaitė, R. Kraujalis, A. Luchtanas, A. Simniškytė-Strimaitienė, V. Steponaitis, V. Šimėnas, V. Vaitkevičius, and G. Vėlius have performed most of the work in this field.

Several East Lithuanian barrow cemeteries were also investigated in Belarusian territory during the Soviet and post-Soviet period.

III.2. Social relationship investigations in the Western archaeological tradition and the development of theoretical thought

The significance of burial sites in reconstructing a past social organisation is universally recognised in archaeology. Still, reasoned studies based on theoretical works were begun only several decades ago. Attempts to reconstruct the social structure on the basis of grave goods were already being made by the first half and middle of the 20th century. But a pessimistic view of the possibility of reconstructing past social relationships has predominated in Western archaeology.

The idea that grave construction and grave goods are directly dependent on the deceased's social status was developed by US representatives of processual or New Archaeology in the late 1960s and the 1970s. The essence of the new view was that funeral rites are a reflection of social status, and the mortuary variability shows the social complexity of the society. The more complex the grave construction and the richer the grave goods are, the higher the deceased's status. These provisions were introduced in the theoretical work of A. A. Saxe, L. R. Binford, J. A. Tainter, etc. and have been used in many case studies.

The division of burials into groups and correlation became the main research tools. Most of the attention was devoted to grave good analysis, but while also taking into consideration grave construction (the time and labour consumed by the community in burying an individual).

The biggest merit of the New Archaeology is the defined methodological conception of social organisation investigations and the revealed possibilities of statistical methods. The research became much more scientific. This allows one to discuss in detail a society's social structure rather than just the level of its development.

The social interpretation of burial sites became one of the component parts of the middle range theory. Viewing a society as a system, the components of which are connected by causal bonds, is characteristic of processualists. A person's behaviour is

perceived as strictly following social laws. This approach opened up the capabilities of comparative analysis.

Contemporary European archaeologists were affected by the American ideas. In Europe the investigations in this field were based on a similar conception of the connection between burial and status, only it was not defined at the theoretical level.

The provisions formulated by the representatives of the New Archaeology are also influential today. But its materialism, positivism, and uncritical trust in statistics have been criticised. The revision of these ideas is connected with the spread of the ideas of postprocessual archaeology in Europe in the 1980s. It was perceived that a person is not just part of a social system that obeys social laws. Mutual ties exist between the individual and the society. Postprocessual archaeologists (I. Hodder, M. Parker Pearson, etc.) stressed the importance of the subjective factor in the investigation of social relationships. Symbolic values and ideology exist between a person and the archaeological record. The material culture is not a reflection of behaviour, but its transformation, which is capable of being unique in each society. It is necessary to perceive funeral rites in a cultural – historical context, and to treat material culture as an original text.

The social content of funeral rites is determined not just by the occupant's status, but also by the mourners, their emotions, and the society's attitude towards the dead. Funerals can be an aspiration by the living to express their status and to compete over it.

The symbolic content of grave goods can be more important than their actual value, which can differ in different societies. Therefore it is necessary to use caution in applying the social organisation and burial association model created for one society to another society.

Postprocessual archaeology did not supply substantially new models for reconstructing a social organisation. Its principal merit is more the critical evaluation of the results, the noted multitude of reservations, and the evaluated factor of human mentality. On the other hand, deciphering funeral symbolism is usually very complicated. Pure processual and postprocessual concepts exist in general on a more theoretical level, while case studies are rarely limited to the framework of one school.

Interest in gender roles in society has grown recently in Western archaeology. This branch has acquired the name of gender archaeology. Gender, as a main factor determining a society's structure, became a sort of prism, through which an attempt is made to look at past societies. Gender archaeology gives investigations new criticism and expands the circle of investigated topics. Interest in the social roles of women, children, and other groups that are traditionally considered marginal has grown in connection with it. The mortuary record is also used in gender studies. Interest has grown in unusual burials, for example, in burials with grave goods for the opposite gender.

III.3. Social relationship investigations in Lithuanian archaeology

Bold, romanticised interpretations are characteristic of the first work by Lithuanian archaeologists (E. and K. Tyszkiesicz, A. H. Kirkor), although logical assumptions about the social relationships reflected in the burial sites were also expressed. But in no work were these questions thoroughly analysed. F. Pokrovskii discussed certain social aspects of the funeral rites. Past social relationships did not become an object of investigation during the interwar period. Only hints about social inequality reflected in burials were sometimes made in archaeologists' work.

During the Soviet occupation the investigation topics of Lithuanian archaeologists were limited by the difficulties in becoming acquainted with the work of their Western colleagues and the forced doctrine of historical materialism. The latter was, in fact, fairly advantageous in a certain sense for investigations of social relationships. The main focus of attention was the general model of society and its development, accenting the relationship between the ruling and the ruled classes and the formation of the social elite. The mortuary record was also used for investigating the social organisation. The direct dependency between social status and funeral rites was perceived as self-evident. In this respect, the work of Lithuanian (and all Soviet) archaeologists was close to the US conception of New Archaeology; they only lacked theoretical discussions and statistical analysis of the material. The work of L. Vaitkunskienė, in which she attempted to recreate the social structure of separate communities on the basis of grave goods, was distinguished from the others.

After Lithuania regained its independence, the general approach to burial sites as a reflection of the social organisation did not essentially change. The ideas of the Western archaeologists were assimilated slowly. However, in a methodological and a theoretical sense the investigations pushed ahead. The innovative studies of E. Jovaiša should be mentioned. More attention was devoted to methodological principles of research. Papers appeared that were devoted to the social organisation of the various ethnocultural regions and the separate social classes (L. Vaitkunskienė, A. Simniškytė-Strimaitienė, R. Švelniūtė, V. Žulkus, etc.). The social organisation of the East Lithuanian barrow culture was also discussed (L. Kurila). After statistical methods began to be applied more, the conclusions became more reasoned. In respect to its theoretical attitudes the work of Lithuanian archaeologists remained close to the New Archaeology, but they somewhat lacked a critical view and a broader circle of investigated topics.

IV. DATA AND RESEARCH METHODS

IV.1. Osteological aspects of the research

IV.1.1. Osteological analysis methods and capabilities

The essence of an osteological analysis of remains is the determination of the number of individuals, their sex, and their age at death, and, when dealing with cremations, the differentiation of human and animal bones. An analysis is mostly based on a morphological evaluation of the bones and osteometrics.

Various circumstances impede the work with archaeological osteological material: the degree of the site's destruction, the archaeologist's carefulness in collecting the bones, and the effect of the environment on the bones. The analysis of cremated remains is impeded by the fragmentary nature and deformation of the material. In addition, the possibilities of an analysis of cremated remains are also limited due to certain specific features of the funeral ritual. (Some of the bones may have not been collected from the funeral pyre and some of the remains may have been buried in more than one grave.) There were on average 300–350 g of bones in the analysed cremations

in the East Lithuanian barrows, i.e. only a comparatively small fraction of an individual's cremated remains.

Determining the number of individuals in inhumations is not difficult. It is much more difficult in this sense to evaluate cremated remains. The most reliable criteria for this are the single and paired bones of the human skeleton: fragments of the petrous pyramids of the temporals, the frontal, the occipital, the maxilla and the mandible, the odontoid process of the axis, some of the matching long bones, etc. Another reliable criterion is unmatched bones that belong to individuals of different sex or age. In these ways it is possible to determine the minimum number of interred individuals, but a certain probability of error always remains.

The estimation of an individual's age is based on an evaluation of the bones that change in the ontogenesis process. Methodological problems are also encountered here in connection with differences in the period of time required for the development of individual bones and with possible differences between past and present populations. The main analysis criteria are the cranial suture closure, dental development and loss, the epiphyseal fusion, vertebral growth and osteophyte development, and the pubic symphyseal surface. These methods are difficult to employ in analysing unearthed bones, especially cremated remains. It is possible to estimate subadult ages with an accuracy of 1–5 years and adult ages usually with an accuracy of 10–20 years.

Sex determination is based on an evaluation of the bones that reflect sexual dimorphism and the measurement of certain bones. It is osteologically impossible to determine the sex of a subadult. In addition, the sexual dimorphism in different individuals is very uneven. In studying cremated remains it is also necessary to evaluate bone shrinkage. The most reliable sex indicators are cranial and pelvic bones. The informative bones that are usually identified among cremated remains are the supraorbital ridge of the frontal, fragments of the temporal, the zygomatic, the occipital, the maxilla, and the mandible. Meanwhile the pelvis does not usually survive the cremation process. Certain bone measurements are also used in determining sex. The reliability of an analysis is very diverse and depends on the available material.

IV.1.2. Osteological data and demographic calculations

Out of all the osteologically analysed burials, at least minimal information (determination of the sex or age at death) is available for 425 graves (i.e. about 35% of all the excavated and reliably documented human burials in East Lithuanian barrows) from 67 burial sites excavated up until 2006. Of these, 72 are inhumations and 353 cremations. In all, the remains of 514 individuals were identified in the burials (78 in inhumations and 436 in cremations).

The nature of the material does not allow one to analyse the demography of the communities that left the separate burial sites. Therefore the presented conclusions reflect a more theoretical model of the demographic structure of an Iron Age East Lithuanian community.

The age of 510 individuals was determined. The individual remains were divided into six age groups: 0–1, 1–5, 5–12, 12–20, 20–40, and over 40 years of age. Because the majority of the determined age intervals are fairly broad, the minimum, maximum, and most probable number of individuals is given for each age group. This last size is calculated using the probability of assigning each individual to one of the age groups and is used in the demographic calculations.

The sex of 247 adults was more or less reliably determined (39 in inhumations and 208 in cremations). The remains of at least 128 males and at least 119 females were identified. The ratio of identified male and female remains is perhaps somewhat skewed by the specific features of the osteological analysis methods.

On the basis of the available data, an Iron Age East Lithuanian life table was created and other demographic rates calculated.

IV.2. Archaeological aspects of the research

IV.2.1. Theoretical research assumptions

The reconstruction of a past social organisation is based on certain theoretical assumptions. The nature of the archaeological sources does not allow one to follow undisputed conceptions of the connection between the data and past processes. Each

conclusion of an archaeologist is more or less based on a theoretical model. The basis of further research is four essential assumptions: the universal aspiration of higher status; the reflection of status in burials; the connection of burial complexity with the deceased's status; and the connection between the diversity of the funeral rites and the complexity of the social organisation. It is possible to consider them social laws.

The main assumption of this paper is the aspiration characteristic of all societies and individuals to achieve a higher status, to strengthen it, and to exhibit it. This aspiration is common to all of humanity and caused by human nature itself. Differences in status can be achieved in infinitely different features and forms, but they exist everywhere without exception.

The use of the manner of burial for the expression of status is also more or less universal. Competition over higher status in life is also transferred to the afterlife. The funeral rites do not reflect the status possessed or sought by deceased, but rather the status afforded him/her by the society. Thus the entire social structure and the established norms are encoded in the archaeological source.

Another important assumption is the connection between the deceased's status and the complexity of the burial. The latter concept encompasses three main aspects of the community's contribution to the funeral ritual: the time, labour, and material resources that are consumed. In each society the expression of status during a burial can acquire various forms. Some of them are impossible to detect using archaeological methods. The differences in grave construction can be connected with not only the deceased's status but also various other circumstances. Despite these reservations, it is possible to consider the archaeologically recorded burial features to be an indicator of the complexity of the entire ritual.

In the case of the East Lithuanian barrow culture, the main criteria for evaluating the resources consumed for a burial have been defined, i.e. the barrow and grave construction elements, which required different time and labour expenditures: mound dimensions and construction, burial in an individual or collective grave, burial in a new or earlier barrow, and the grave construction. Each ritual element could have a symbolic implication, but it is possible to adequately evaluate them only on the basis of the energy expenditure. Grave goods, as an expression of status, are evaluated in respect to both quantity and quality, while taking into consideration their diversity, form, rarity,

material, and purpose. In defining the construction of a burial site or the grave goods as an indicator of social status, it is necessary to keep in mind the possible regional and chronological differences.

A more complex social structure reveals itself in a greater diversity of funeral rites. But mortuary variability reflects not only the social inequality of the separate members of the society but also the actual need to exhibit it. In stable societies the funeral rites become simpler, and their differences become smaller. Meanwhile the connection between a social organisation and the society's funeral rites is the most distinct during a period of change in the social organisation. Increasing diversity in grave goods or funeral rites is an indicator of changes in the society's structure. In newly forming social structures, when the social strata are regrouping, the exhibition of status becomes important. During periods of change in a social organisation, achieved status, which is usually more actively exhibited in various ways as well as through funeral rites, can acquire greater significance than ascribed status.

IV.2.2. Methods for evaluating the richness of a burial

One of the main criteria used in research in order to define social status is grave goods. But it is difficult to evaluate the richness of a burial assemblage. It is necessary to consider the chronological differences, artefact forms, complexity of the production technology, the value and quantity of the materials used, the distance it was transported, the directions of the trade routes, and many other factors. Its symbolic content could also affect the value of an artefact as a grave good. The relative value of grave goods is an object of subjective interpretation. In addition, only some of the grave goods survive in the archaeological environment. In the pursuit of objectivity and accuracy, the dissertation strives to use several methods in order to determine the value of a burial assemblage. The research is based on an analysis of the number of artefacts, the number of artefact types, and the imputed value of the assemblage.

The simplest criteria for determining the value of a burial assemblage is the number of artefacts. In many cases it is fairly reliable. But in using it, it is necessary to follow the assumption that the value of all of the artefacts is approximately the same. In individual instances, it can become a reason for error.

An analysis of the number of artefact types is sometimes used in the investigation of past societies. It reflects the assemblage diversity rather than the general richness of the burial. A complex, multi-layered identity or status can be manifested not just through an abundance of grave goods but also through their variety. In the majority of the cases the number of artefacts and the number of artefact types are closely connected. Nevertheless in individual instances this method can also have obvious deficiencies.

Sometimes the investigators use various methods to estimate or calculate the value of the grave goods: on the basis of defined criteria, by subjectively defining the value of the grave goods, by harmonising the number of artefacts with the number of artefact types, by evaluating the rarity of the grave goods used to produce the artefact, and by using historical sources. The suitability of the methods depends on the specific nature of the archaeological sources as well as the quantity of non-archaeological data available. No one method can be completely objective.

In this dissertation, the method of correlating artefact type and assemblage diversity was selected as the most suitable in the case of the East Lithuanian barrow culture. The calculation of the grave good values was based on data from 804 human inhumations and cremations, which contained at least one artefact. The essence of the method is that the greater the grave good diversity in the assemblages, in which an artefact was discovered, the higher the value given the artefact. On the basis of an analysis of the number of artefact types, the average diversity of the assemblages, in which this type was found, was determined for each artefact type. It was indexed according to the average assemblage diversity. This size, which is called the imputed value of the artefact type, ranges from 0.65 (a bridle bit) to 1.65 (a sword). The imputed assemblage value is considered to be the total of all of the imputed artefact values in the assemblage. Of course, the results obtained cannot completely reflect the true value of the artefacts. The differences in the artefact values estimated using this method are smaller than they must have been in reality. In addition, some of the estimated artefact values are probably too low or too high. The calculation of the imputed assemblage value only corrects the analysis of the number of artefacts, but does not guarantee complete research objectivity.

None of the three methods for estimating assemblage value is completely reliable. But the use of uniform methods for the analysis of all of the assemblages and the comparison of the data obtained from all three methods increases the reliability of the research. Many aspects of the value of grave goods (form, ornament, material, weight, production location, chronological differences, the circumstances of their discovery, etc.) definitely remain the interpretation of the researcher. Unfortunately, it is practically impossible to define the value of a horse or other animals sometimes buried with humans as grave goods.

IV.2.3. Method for determining sex on the basis of grave goods

It is frequently necessary in research to use grave goods to determine an individual's gender. This criterion is definitely not completely reliable. It is impossible to use it in analysing collective cremations and impossible to distinguish between subadult and adult burials. In addition, an individual can be buried with grave goods for the opposite gender. Although the connection of grave goods in general with one gender or the other is universally recognisable, there are many methodological problems. In studying a specific past society, it is necessary to define the connection between gender and grave goods that functioned in it.

In order to establish a link between artefact type and gender in the East Lithuanian barrow culture, three analyses were conducted on the material. On the basis of the assemblages from 553 human inhumations and cremations, the number of instances where specific artefact types were discovered in one grave was determined. After statistically analysing (cluster analysis; calculation of the distances using the Pearson coefficient) 321 assemblages (with three or more artefact types), a dendrogram of the connections between the artefact types was created. In it the grave good groups that should be connected with male or female gender emerged. In order to check the connection of grave goods with biological sex, the number of artefact types found in osteologically identified adult male and female burials was calculated.

It is impossible to objectively evaluate all of the artefact types using these methods. Some artefacts are too rare. The calculation results can deviate due to several exceptionally rich assemblages, errors caused by a small data volume and specific cases,

or an erroneous osteological sex determination. Therefore the significance of grave goods, as a gender indicator, is further corrected by taking into consideration their rarity, the circumstances of their discovery, chronological and typological differences, possible symbolic meanings, etc.

The defined grave good links to gender characteristic of the East Lithuanian barrow culture in many cases correspond to the classic conception. But the connection of certain artefacts with gender is fairly subtle and depends on chronology and typology and for others it is significant only statistically. In addition, even artefacts that raise few doubts are found with surprising frequency in the burials of the opposite sex. All of the artefact types were divided into five groups: male (weapons, riding gear, the later type of sickles, whetstones, fire strikers, tweezers, drinking horns, and some types of crossbow brooches), slightly male (knives, buckles, several types of pins, and later types of penannular brooches), neutral (loops, coil rings), slightly female (early types of neck-rings, enamel penannular brooches, and pottery), and female (awls, needles, the early type of sickles, spindle whorls, combs, chaplets, temple ornaments, beads, pendants, later types of neck-rings, some types of rings, several types of crossbow brooches, and other small ornaments). Thus in determining an individual's gender using grave goods it is necessary in each case to use the totality rather than individual grave goods. It is possible to more reliably identify the gender in only larger assemblages.

V. RESULTS

V.1. Status and its manifestation in funeral rites

V.1.1. A survey of subadult burials

Sunbadults comprise a distinctive social category, in which the public norms and the hierarchy of status between peers functions at a certain level. But the status recognised for them by the adults who organise the funerals and the view of childhood are reflected in funeral rites more than the actual position held prior to death. In this sense, the picture created by an archaeologist is only an image imparted by the adult part of the society.

It is difficult to archaeologically identify subadult burials. It is possible to approximately determine the age of subadults buried in inhumations on the basis of the size of the skeleton or the grave construction. In investigating cremations, assumptions that the remains are subadult are only possible on the basis of the small quantity of small bones and the small dimensions of the grave goods. But at least in the East Lithuanian barrow culture, no one funeral rite element or grave good is characteristic for only subadults. Basically, the only means to distinguish subadult cremations is an osteological analysis.

The remains of at least 137 infants, children, and adolescents have been identified in osteologically analysed burials (most probable number: 134.2 or 26.1%).

V.1.1.1. *Newborn and infant burials*

The number of buried newborns and infants is unexpectedly small. The remains of at least six individuals under the age of one year have been identified in the burials (most probable number: 8.5 or 1.7%). In the majority of the pre-industrial societies, infant mortality was much higher. The data may be somewhat distorted (the infant bones may have disintegrated and not been recorded during the excavation or they may have failed to have been identified among other remains). But this alone cannot explain the deficit of infant burials.

Thus East Lithuanian barrow burials do not supply reliable information about the newborn and infant mortality rate. Compared to other societies, it is possible to state that it should be at least 20–25%. The probability of death in infancy was the highest.

A small number of infant burials at burial sites is a universal phenomenon. In many societies, children were not considered full members of the society and were buried in a different manner than adults, at a different location, or not buried at all. Infants (until the performance of some ritual?) might not have been considered an independent new life.

In East Lithuanian barrow cemeteries no probable burial sites, where specifically infants were buried, have so far been found. Various explanations are possible: the infants were buried at a completely different location, their graves were constructed so that they quickly vanished, or they were not buried at all. In any case, this

reflects the low status of infants in the community. Due to the high infant mortality rate, emotional ties with them were probably not as strong as they are now. In addition, they did not provide any economic benefit to the family, but were more of a burden. Due to these reasons the death of an infant was not a great loss for the community. On the basis of analogies from other societies, it is possible to hypothesise about the practice of infanticide, even though it essentially cannot be proven archaeologically.

The question arises as to why some newborns and infants were nevertheless buried. It is possible to notice some tendencies when the burials are divided into chronological groups. The inhumations at Diktarai bur. 2 and Liūlinė III bur. 2/1, the cremation at Neravai-Grigiškės bur. 28/1, and perhaps several more burials that have not been osteologically analysed should be ascribed to the early period (4th–6th centuries). All of these burials have a common feature, that the infants were buried together with adults, mostly females. The most compelling explanation is that they are the burials of females who died in childbirth and of infants who did not survive. Perhaps infants were buried only in the case of simultaneous death with the mother. Some of the aforementioned burials were fairly rich. This should reflect the higher status of these infants (or rather that of the adults buried with them). It seems that when an infant died the community's behaviour was also somewhat determined by its ascribed status.

The rest of the infant cremations (Kapitoniškės bur. 8/6, Neravai-Grigiškės bur. 7/4, and Varlišškės bur. 2/2) date to the 8th–11/12th centuries and were dug into earlier barrows. The graves contained only sparse grave goods and were much poorer than the majority of the other burials in these barrow cemeteries. It is difficult to say why infants were buried in barrows in these specific instances, but it does not seem that this is a sign of higher status. The isolated instances of infant burials could have been determined by the circumstances of the death, emotional ties, or simply an unreasoned decision. But this does not refute that it was a universal phenomenon that infants of both sexes were not buried together with the other members of the community.

V.1.1.2. *Child burials*

A far greater number of older children were buried in barrows. The remains of 97 children 1–12 years of age have been identified (most probable number: 97.9 or

19.0%). Of them it is possible to ascribe 26 to the 1–5 age group (most probable number: 41.2 or 8.0%) and 33 to the 5–12 age group (most probable number: 56.7 or 11.0%). These numbers appear to be completely real. Similar child mortality rates have existed in many other past populations.

Certain specific diseases and infanticide do not threaten children. Stronger, more resistant individuals reach this age. Older children could already perform certain jobs and be useful to the community. The family had already invested more time and energy into their upbringing. It is likely that they were better cared for. Therefore the probability of death in childhood was not as great as in infancy.

Sharp changes are seen in the funeral rites of children who survived infancy. From their second or third year (?) all the children were apparently buried and thus in a way recognised as members of the family and the community. The burial of small children together with the other members of the community is characteristic for all of the culture's stages.

Over half (54 of 97 or 55.7%) of the children were buried in collective graves: in the 1–5 age group 13 of the 26 burials (50.0%) and in the 5–12 age group 22 of the 33 burials (66.7%). This was more characteristic of cremations although several collective inhumations have also been found. Children were buried together with other individuals throughout the period under discussion, but it was mostly practiced during the 5th–7th centuries (the burial of 71.1% of the children in collective graves).

Some of the individuals buried together could have died at the same time (from violence or an infectious disease). But it is difficult to believe that so many children would have died under precisely these circumstances. The hypothesis of child sacrifice is possible, even though highly unlikely. The collective graves most likely reflect some specific children's funeral rites (burial at some time after death, reburial?). Children's funeral rites differed from those for adults and were probably shorter and simpler.

Children were buried in collective graves with other subadults as well as adult males and females. It can be noticed that older males (on average 35–40 years of age) were more often buried together with children than females (on average 28–33 years of age).

The barrows with child graves and the collective graves of children and older individuals were of average dimensions (the latter being somewhat smaller). They do not differ from the others in construction.

Somewhat over half of the child graves were dug into earlier barrows: 45.7% of the child graves and 60.0% of the collective graves. Thus a correlation is noticed between two aspects of the manifestation of higher status, i.e. burial in an individual grave and the creation of a new barrow during the funeral. It seems that smaller children were more frequently buried in earlier barrows.

Sharper differences emerge chronologically. In the culture's early stage (3rd–5th centuries) a new barrow was more frequently created in burying children, meanwhile during the 8th–11/12th centuries the majority of the child graves were dug into earlier barrows. It seems that children's funeral rites changed during the middle to third quarter of the 1st millennium.

Child graves did not differ in their construction from the general context of the East Lithuanian barrows.

It is possible to determine the sex of children only on the basis of the grave goods. Out of the 46 children buried separately, their sex was determined in this way in 29 instances. 7 male and 22 female burial assemblages were identified (2 and 7 respectively among children 1–5 years old, and 2 and 5 among children 5–12 years of age). The number of male and female assemblages differed the most in the 8th–11/12th-century barrows (1 and 10). It is possible to speculate that this shows a higher female child mortality rate (due to poorer care?). Another, more likely interpretation is the specific nature of the burial traditions. Grave goods characteristic for females could have been placed in graves for boys. It seems that in burying a boy, little effort was usually made to stress his male gender. In respect to status in the society, boys were probably closer to females and up until a certain age were not recognised as equal to adult males.

Fairly abundant and diverse burial assemblages have been discovered in child graves. Only 21.7% of child graves and collective graves contained no grave goods. Graves, in which only children were buried, are somewhat richer. The number of artefacts and the number of artefact types in child graves is very diverse. On the basis of these parameters it is possible to distinguish three conditional groups of child graves: no grave goods, 1–4 grave goods, and 5–11 grave goods. But there are no clear boundaries

between them. Somewhat clearer groups emerge in the collective graves of children and older individuals: no grave goods or 1–3 grave goods, 4–8 grave goods, and the lone richer grave at Baliuliai bur. 5/3.

The range in the richness of child graves is somewhat smaller than that of adult graves. (The diversity in assemblage values is somewhat greater in child graves than in collective graves). No clearer correlation of assemblage richness and age is noticeable, only it seems older children were buried in the richest graves.

After dividing the burials into chronological groups, no clear differences in the number of artefacts and the number of artefact types are noticeable. The grave goods from graves, in which only children were buried, are only slightly more abundant and more valuable than those from collective graves. In the Late Iron Age a decrease in the value of children's grave goods is noticeable.

It is necessary to note that some child graves contained exceptionally rare and expensive grave goods. In several graves (Sudota IV bur. 1/2, Rėkučiai-Pavajuonis bur. 11/1, etc.) exceptionally valuable precious metal or imported grave goods were discovered. All of the richest child burials date to the second quarter – middle of the 1st millennium.

The most expensive grave goods in child burials are mostly female ornaments. Meanwhile weapons are sparse and not diverse in child graves. A typical warrior burial assemblage was discovered in only Papiškės bur. 7/2. Even when rich grave goods were placed in a grave, they did not function as a symbol of warrior status. The burial assemblages for girls, unlike those for boys, are similar to those for adult females.

The diversity of the grave goods in collective graves differs from those in child graves. They included no expensive ornaments, but there were far more weapons. Warrior burial assemblages have been found in 8 graves (Palūšė bur. 1/1, Popai-Vingeliai bur. 2/1, Baliuliai bur. 5/3, etc.). The weapons were probably intended for the adults buried together with the children. But in some of the graves it is possible to treat them as children's grave goods (when adult females were buried together with children).

V.1.1.3. *Adolescent burials*

At least 21 or 22 (most probable number: 27.8 or 5.4%) graves with the remains of adolescents up to the age of 20 have been identified, far fewer than those of children. In this age group, especially in the first half of the age interval, the mortality rate in many populations is small. The threat of certain diseases and infections declines for adolescents. The probability of death in this age group was the least. But in later adolescence other dangers arise: for females – death in childbirth, for males – death in the hunt or in battle.

Of the 22 individuals 12–20 years of age only 6 (27.3%) or 7 (31.8%) were buried in collective graves. The more frequent burial in an individual grave is a distinct feature that separates adolescent graves from child graves.

Adolescent burials have been found in barrows that are on average far smaller in size than those with child burials. But at specific sites the mound sizes do not differ significantly.

A new barrow was usually created in burying an adolescent. Only 30.8% of the graves were dug into earlier mounds. In this respect the difference in adolescent and children's funeral rites is obvious. Adolescent funeral rites were essentially the same as adult rites. It can be argued that a person who had reached a certain age (probably 12–15) was already recognised as a full member of the community. The status manifested through the funeral rites was higher than a child's. No clear chronological funeral rite differences are noticeable in the available data. Of the adolescents buried with other individuals, more graves were dug into earlier mounds.

There are insufficient data to determine the number of graves with male and female adolescents on the basis of the grave goods. It is possible to think that male and female mortality in this age group was similar.

Of the 15 adolescents buried in individual graves, only 3 (20.0%) had no grave goods. Adolescent burial assemblages are statistically only slightly less rich than those of children. But they contained mostly small metal artefacts and only several larger ornaments (of which not one had a rare shape or was made of precious metal) have been found. A weapon (an axe) was discovered in only Žvirbliai bur. 4/I, and a fairly abundant female burial assemblage was found in only Pašekščiai bur. 4/1. The

range in the imputed value of the assemblages is small in the graves of individuals 12–20 years of age. At some burial sites adolescent burials are markedly less rich compared to other burials. It seems that this is characteristic for the entire period under discussion. The collective graves of adolescents and other individuals are even less rich.

That adolescent burials are less rich than child burials is fairly unexpected. It would seem that the burial assemblages from this age group should reflect their higher status. In this case, as a means of expressing status, the symbolic content of the grave goods is more important. Children's grave goods could be only (posthumous) gifts from older individuals rather than objects they had acquired independently in life. Meanwhile an older individual, in becoming a full member of the community, began accumulating personal wealth, which was probably still small in adolescence. After the death of such an individual, the community used to not place abundant gifts in the grave, perhaps in recognition of his independence.

But at this age a certain difference from the adults still remained. Weapons were still rarely placed in the graves. Until maturity (at 18–22) adolescents were still at a lower social level than adult males and did not belong to the community's group of warriors. It is likely that female status acquired the features characteristic of adults at a younger age, i.e. 15–18. (The differences between adolescent and adult female burials are not that large.)

V.1.1.4. *Subadult social status*

A review of subadult funeral rites reveals four interrelated dimensions of status: age, sex, ascribed status, and chronological change.

The most significant differences are noticeable in the funeral rites of different aged individuals. As subadults grow, not only do their social positions change but also the afterlife, in which it is believed they will find themselves. At least three thresholds of a change in a subadult's status are distinct. During the second or third year of life, a child who has survived infancy becomes a part of the family and the community and in case of death is buried together with its other members. But there remain certain specific features of a child's funeral rites, which reflect his lower status: burial in collective graves and the digging of graves into earlier barrows. The death of a child of this age is

already a big loss for the parents both economically and emotionally. This is reflected in the comparatively abundant and rich burial assemblages.

The second important turning point occurs in the first half of the second decade of life (at the beginning of sexual maturity). An adolescent of this age approaches the adults in respect to status and is already recognised as an independent person (the same mortuary treatment as for an adult) but has still not yet earned a higher individual position (comparatively poor grave goods).

The third turning point, when full biological and social maturity is reached, occurs at about 20 years of age.

Stages in the social roles of subadults exist in many societies. Clear links between a subadult funeral rites and age are also a frequent phenomenon. Not only analogous stages in status but also a very similar expression of them in funeral rites are noticeable in the burial sites of the Vandals, Franks, Anglo-Saxons, Continental Saxons, Alemans, and Scandinavian Vikings. Similar social maturity stages are reflected in the law codes of the Germanic tribes.

The change in status as a subadult grows is not uniformly articulate in the burials of both sexes. That more ornaments but far fewer weapons were placed in the graves of male subadults shows the considerable distance in status between them and adult males. The burial assemblages for boys are fairly similar to those for subadult and adult females. In a society sharply divided into two poles: male and female, both sexes of subadults were closer to the latter pole in respect to status. A boy or adolescent was still not recognised as equal to the older warriors. The social and economic roles of adult males are of a different nature than those of adult females. They are easier to divide into stages (the first hunt or the first military exploit), which are also more distinct in funeral rites. The acquisition of warrior status signals a young man's full rights in the community.

No reflection of female maturity is that noticeable in funeral rites. Grave goods similar to an adult female's were placed in their graves from early childhood. Female social and economic roles probably did not change as clearly with age as male roles did. A girl gradually became immersed in the economic activities. This process was long and without any essential turning points. It is not noticeable in funeral rites,

which apparently convey more the individual's position in the society rather than in the family.

Many differences are also noticeable among the burials of subadults of similar age. They are clear in both the funeral rites and the burial assemblages. The vertical gradation of society and ascribed status are reflected to a certain extent in subadult funeral rites. A wide range exists in the richness of the grave goods in subadult burials: from no grave goods to especially rich assemblages. The diversity of subadult funeral rites is considered the best evidence of ascribed status. Thus subadult funeral rites should testify to the existence of inherited social inequality in the East Lithuanian barrow culture.

It is possible to envisage the chronological change in a subadult's status. The development towards plainer and less differentiated subadult funeral rites is noticeable during the entire period. The subadult inhumations from the early stage do not significantly differ in their construction from the adult inhumations. After cremation began in the mid-1st millennium, a large percentage of the children were buried in collective burials but usually still in a newly created barrow. In the 8/9th–11/12th centuries, children's graves were usually dug into earlier barrows. A similar dynamic is also noticeable when reviewing the grave goods. The burial assemblages in infant and child inhumations and early (5th–6th-century) cremations are qualitatively and quantitatively the most diverse. 7/8th–11/12th-century grave goods are considerably plainer and in a way more standardised. It can be argued that the funeral rites reflect a gradual decline in the social status of subadults and an increase in the gap between them and the adults. During the early stage of the East Lithuanian barrow culture subadults were closer to the status of an integral part of the society. The move towards more uniform and plainer burials that is noticeable during later centuries shows a changing view of subadults and their diminishing importance in society. During this period, status became more dependent on age.

V.1.2. A review of adult burials

The remains of a total of at least 352 adults (over 18–20 years of age) have been identified in burials (most probable number: 379.8 or 73.9%). At least 159 of them

belong to the 20–40 age group (most probable number: 272.0 or 52.9%) and at least 70 to the over 40 age group (most probable number: 107.8 or 21.0%). Thus young adults comprised over half of all the individuals. The mortality rate in this age group is greater than in all the earlier ones. It is likely that most of the adults died at the age of 30–40.

The sex of the adults was osteologically determined in 247 cases (70.2%). The remains of 128 males (51.8%) and 119 females (48.2%) were identified. The number of males and females differs more sharply in the age groups. The most probable number of male remains in the 20–40 age group is 81.9 (48.0%), female 88.6 (52.0%), while in the over 40 age group it is 46.1 (60.2%) and 30.4 (39.8%) respectively. After reaching maturity males lived longer than females and more frequently reached old age, which is a phenomenon characteristic of the majority of pre-industrial societies. The main reason for early female death had to have been childbirth and perhaps a poorer quality of life.

The male – female ratio determined using grave goods is clearly distorted. Of all the East Lithuanian barrow culture burials, which contained engendered grave goods (621 assemblages), 59.4% should be considered female and 40.6% male. The relatively large number of female burial assemblages could have been caused by subadult burials. Another reason is also likely, i.e. that female grave goods were sometimes placed in male burials. Of the 190 burials, which contained one adult male or female, 106 had engendered grave goods. Sex determined in both ways coincided in 74 (69.8%) instances. But the number of mismatches in male and female burials differs sharply. The majority (25 of 32) mismatches were osteologically identified male burials with female grave goods. This once again confirms the deficiencies in determining sex on the basis of grave goods. Due to this reason osteologically determined sex was selected as the main starting point.

Of the 352 adults, only 82 (23.3%) were buried in collective graves. Adult funeral rites differ considerably in this way from children's rites and slightly from adolescent rites. Adults were mostly buried in collective graves with subadults. These funeral rites were practiced during the entire period under discussion, but they were especially characteristic of the middle – third quarter of the 1st millennium. The comparatively rare instances of collective funeral rites show that higher status was recognised for adults. In addition, adult burial together with a subadult should perhaps

not be unambiguously considered a sign of lower status (as it instead shows the lower status of subadults).

V.1.2.1. *Adult male burials*

Of the 128 adult males, 31 (24.2%) were buried in collective graves. The males were mostly buried together with subadults and more rarely with adult females. Males of various ages were buried in approximately the same frequency in collective and individual graves. The largest scale of collective funeral rites occurred in the middle – third quarter of the 1st millennium, although it was also practiced during other periods.

The barrows, in which adult male burials have been found, were on average somewhat larger than the mounds with subadult or female burials, and the diversity of their dimensions is large. The mounds, in which the individual graves of males 20–40 years of age have been found, were on average larger than the barrows with males over the age of 40 and collective graves. Several barrows were distinguished by a more complex construction (large stone kerbs and pits under the mound).

Only 42.2% of the adult male burials were dug into earlier barrows (more than only adolescent burials). A larger number (52.2%) of later burials exists among the collective graves of males and other individuals. Thus it is also possible in male burials to see a correlation between two funeral rite elements that reflect higher social status: burial in an individual grave and the creation of a new mound in conducting the burial. Certain differences are also noticeable in the funeral rites of adult males of different ages. In the young adult age group, 48.8% of the graves were dug into earlier barrows, meanwhile in the over 40 age group, 39.1%. In this respect, the funeral rites for older males were somewhat more complex. An increase in the percentage of graves dug into earlier barrows is chronologically noticeable.

Male graves do not differ from the others in the other construction elements. In some cases the larger dimensions of the grave pits might reflect the individual's higher status.

No grave goods were found in only 26.8% of the male graves and 29.0% of the collective graves. Relatively more males over 40 were buried without grave goods.

The number of artefacts, the number of artefact types, and the imputed value of the assemblages does not essentially differ between individual and collective graves.

Female grave goods: awls, sickles, spindle whorls, and some ornaments have been found in a large percentage (45.5%) of the graves with osteologically identified males. Several of them contained larger female assemblages (Kapitoniškės destroyed barrow site bur. 3, Kurklių Šilas bur. 5/7, Pašekščiai bur. 5/1). The sex of some of the individuals could have been determined erroneously, but the large number of such graves proves that male burials with female artefacts were frequent. Female grave goods were more frequently placed in burials for older adult males. These assemblages are less rich than the assemblages with male grave goods. Such burials should probably be connected with individuals who did not have a full male – warrior status. This could be some sort of a restriction of their social rights or perhaps a manifestation of their personal qualities, disabilities, etc.

The diversity in the number of artefacts and the number of artefact types is the greatest in adult male burials. It is possible to divide the burials into five groups: no grave goods, 1–3/4 grave goods, 4/5–8 grave goods, 10–13 grave goods, and the richest assemblages (the unique Taurapolis I bur. 5/1). The clear boundaries between them are more distinct than in subadult and female graves. It is likely that this reflects a greater standardisation of male burial assemblages and perhaps some sort of rules for the placement of grave goods. Among the collective graves with males and other individuals, no clearer groups are noticeable on the basis of the number of grave goods.

The range in the richness of adult male burials is the widest. On average, the burials of the older adult males surpass those of the young adult males in the number of artefacts and the imputed value of the assemblages. But in general younger males were more often buried with richer grave goods (except several of the richest older male burials, which affected the statistics). This tendency is also noticeable in some separate barrow cemeteries (Grabijolai-Žemaitiškiei II, Peršaukštis-Kasčiukai II, Baliuliai).

The composition, richness, and diversity of the male burial assemblages during the entire period under discussion did not remain the same. The 3rd–5th-century inhumations are the richest on the basis of all of the parameters. From the establishment of cremation rites, the richness of the grave goods decreased considerably and from the

mid-1st millennium did not change significantly. Only a very slight decrease in the richness of the grave goods is noticeable in collective graves during the entire period.

The male burials, which at first glance reflect just a general decrease in the richness of the grave goods, become more informative after they are divided into age groups. The change in assemblages was not uniformly pronounced in both age groups. The average richness of the grave goods in the burials of males 20–40 years of age gradually declined during the entire period of the culture's existence. This change was probably connected more with general changes in the funeral rite traditions. During different stages of the culture, the expression of the status of young males through grave goods remained fairly stable. Meanwhile the composition of the assemblages of males over 40 changed sharply. During the culture's early stage the burials of older males were richer than those of the young adults. Around the mid-1st millennium an especially distinct and probably fairly sudden drop is noticeable in the richness of the grave goods of older males. It seems to have been synchronous with the establishment of cremation rites. It was precisely during the brief period when the funeral rites changed that the greatest differences occur in the grave goods of males 20–40 years of age and over 40. During the last quarter of the 1st millennium and the early 2nd millennium the grave goods of individuals of both age groups were essentially uniform in respect to quantitative parameters.

The dominant element in male burials is weapons. Strong ties exist between the general richness of the burial and the number of weapons in it. In essentially all of the periods except the culture's early stage, more weapons were placed on average in the graves of younger males. The weapons in them are more varied and more specialised. Being a warrior was the main category defining male social status. Military experience, participation in battles, or preparation for them was a prerequisite for higher status. More distinct warrior attributes in burials were ascribed to younger adult males. It is likely that male status significantly depended on personal qualities, physical condition, the ability to participate in battles, and the ability to constantly maintain one's position in the society. Weapon sets fairly clearly correlate with other valuable grave goods: characteristic male ornaments made of precious metals and imported artefacts.

All or at least the majority of the male burials with the richest and largest weapon sets date to a brief period encompassing the last stage of the inhumation funeral

rite tradition and the period that saw the establishment of cremation funeral rites (mid-5th – early 6th century). During this period the greatest qualitative and quantitative diversity in male burial assemblages is noticeable. It was precisely at this time that an especially distinct standardisation of male burial assemblages occurred. Grave goods could have probably even been some sort of attributes of the warrior rank system.

V.1.2.2. *Adult female burials*

Of the 119 adult females, 26 (21.8%) were buried in collective graves. The majority of them were buried with subadults, a minority with adult males, and in only one instance, with another adult female. A somewhat greater number of younger adult females were buried in collective graves. This funeral rite is most characteristic of the middle – third quarter of the 1st millennium, although it was also practiced in other periods.

Barrows, in which the graves of adult females have been found, were on average somewhat smaller than those with child or adult male graves. The diversity of their sizes is smaller than that of barrows with male burials. The mounds with the graves of young adult females were on average slightly larger than mounds, which contained the graves of older females or collective graves. Several mounds are distinguished by their more complex construction.

Many (55.7%) of the adult female graves were dug into earlier barrows. Among the collective graves, 63.6% are later burials. The connection between individual burial and burial in a new barrow is the least distinct in adult female burials. A relatively greater number of later burials were in the 20–40 age group than in the over 40 age group (57.8% and 41.2% respectively). The percentage of graves dug into earlier barrows increased beginning in the mid-1st millennium.

The construction of adult female graves did not differ from the others; only several inhumations were made in pits with comparatively large overall dimensions.

Adult female burial assemblages were quantitatively slightly poorer than male assemblages. There were no grave goods in 26.9% of the female graves and 28.0% of the collective graves with adult females and other individuals. Older females were buried relatively a little more frequently without grave goods, and this tendency in the

course of time became ever more distinct. Individual graves are slightly richer than collective graves.

A fairly small percentage (14.0%) of the osteologically identified adult female burials contained male grave goods (weapons). Typical male weapon sets, which were not exceptionally rich, were found in several graves (Gudeliai-Lenkiškės bur. 3/1, Žvirbliai bur. 1/I, Aleksandriškės-Pukštėnai bur. 4/4, Padūkštai bur. 1/1). The majority of the adult females buried with weapons belonged to the young adult age group. The significance of female burials with weapons is not clear. Possible explanations are: female participation in military activities, having met a violent death, or a female role in the hereditary system when there was no male heir. But in any case, the presence of weapons in the burial of younger females is not surprising. But a female burial with weapons does not correlate with signs of higher status. A woman's exceptional position in the society was not emphasised through male symbols.

The diversity in the number of artefacts and the number of artefact types in adult female burials is smaller than in male burials. It is possible to divide burials into four conditional groups: no grave goods, 1 or 2 grave goods, 3–8 grave goods, and rare richer assemblages. But there are no clear boundaries between them. It is possible to divide collective graves only into burials without grave goods and those with 1–5 grave goods.

The range of richness in female burials is fairly broad. The grave goods of young adult females were on average richer and more diverse than those of older females. But at separate burial sites the connection between the female's age and the richness of the burial assemblage is varied. It seems that the artefact assemblages placed in the graves for young and older females were not firmly established in the different communities. Perhaps they were determined more by the woman's marital status and the family's general wealth than by the woman's own age.

The decline in grave good richness characteristic of the majority of the burials of the other social groups is also chronologically noticeable in female burials. (It is especially distinct in the mid-1st millennium after cremation funeral rites became established.) Analogous tendencies are seen in the burial assemblages from the collective graves.

The ratio of the average richness of the graves of adult females of different ages remained similar during all the stages of the East Lithuanian barrow culture. The abundance and diversity of the grave goods placed in the graves of females 20–40 years old and those over 40 remained identical. During the entire period the burial assemblages of young adult females stably remained on average visibly richer.

It is possible to divide female grave goods into two conditional groups, which, it can be argued, are connected with different images of the afterlife: tools and various paraphernalia versus ornaments and clothing accessories. The social symbolism of these grave good groups should also differ. Tools in the burial assemblage should symbolise the work performed by the woman as well as her duties in the family and the community. Meanwhile ornaments reveal more the attention shown to the woman herself. The total number of ornaments and their diversity was greater in the graves of younger adult females in every period. It seems that it was the young adult females who were buried with the richer ornament sets and valuable imported grave goods (Rėkučiai-Pavajūnis bur. 11/2, Ziboliškė III bur. 1/1). Only the older female in Baliuliai bur. 1/1 was buried with an abundant ornament set. Separate grave goods (e.g. neck-rings, beads, and spindle whorls?) could also have had certain age related symbolic meanings.

V.1.2.3. *Collective adult male and female burials*

In the majority of the instances of collective funeral rites, the remains of subadults were buried together with other individuals. This part of the dissertation focuses on graves with an adult male and female buried together. At least seven such graves have been identified. The actual scale of collective male and female funeral rites could have been even bigger. Graves exist that have not been osteologically analysed and contain grave goods characteristic of both genders. The separate male and female burials that have been found in some barrows should be considered contemporaneous on the basis of their position in the mound.

Collective funeral rites in many societies are connected with kinship. Collective male and female burials may be associated with a nuclear family. The remains of individuals of roughly similar ages (the males probably being somewhat older on average) have been identified in them. Burial together or cremation in one pyre

could be a manifestation of a subtle connection between the individuals. In an instance of the contemporaneous death of several adults, it seems that usually separate funeral rites were organised. The only exception is those instances when a male and female of similar age were buried at the same time.

The small scale of collective burials can be explained by contemporaneous death (from disease, famine, or violence). Sometimes the hypothesis of human sacrifice (or self-sacrifice) is proposed. It is supported by some contemporary or chronologically close written sources describing the neighbouring regions and Lithuania (Ahmad ibn Fadlan, Henry of Livonia, etc.). They and the many parallels in other societies suppose the classic model of human sacrifice in funerals: the sacrifice of a lower status individual (a woman – a wife or slave) after the death of a high status individual (a man – a leader or warrior). A characteristic feature of instances of human sacrifice should be an elaborate burial.

Neither the construction of the barrows, in which the aforementioned burials were found, nor the construction or position of the graves themselves in the mound is exceptional in the general context of the barrow cemeteries. The grave goods from collective male and female graves are fairly sparse, not diverse, and of comparatively small value. Weapons were found only in Kretuonys bur. 46/1. The grave goods in these graves do nothing to accent any special social or warrior status the individual might have had. In fact, several osteologically unanalysed inhumations and cremations, which are probably collective male and female burials and should be connected with the social elite, are known (Sudota I barrow 1, Pavajuonis-Cegelnė barrow II, Rokantiškės barrow 1, Žvirbliai barrows 47 and 49). They contained exceptionally rich grave goods (large weapon sets and in many cases fairly rich female ornament sets). These burial assemblages should not conflict with the version of female sacrifice. But it is impossible to support such an interpretation with evidence. No sharp social differentiation between males and females was stressed through grave goods. In addition, a symbolic female sacrifice could have been performed by only burying the grave goods (but the ornaments themselves do not necessarily signify a female sacrifice).

Thus an analysis of collective graves reveals almost no dominant position of individuals of one sex in respect to the other sex. The most likely interpretation of these burials is the contemporaneous death of family members. Collective funeral rites do not

correlate with higher status. At any rate, no data exists about any mass human sacrifice. This practice should not be considered characteristic of Iron Age East Lithuania. Isolated instances of sacrifices, if they even existed, could have been a local phenomenon connected with exceptional social position or influence from another ethnic group.

Theoretically, collective burials could reflect the greater significance of inheritance in the society (status gradation at the family rather than the individual level). Due to the small scale of the collective male and female burials in the East Lithuanian barrow culture, it is difficult to notice the chronological tendencies. It seems that such funeral rites were always practiced on a similar scale and do not reflect a more distinct chronological change in the significance of the family in the social organisation.

V.1.2.4. *Adult social status*

Five interconnected status dimensions are revealed in adult funeral rites: sex, age, achieved status, ascribed status, and chronological change.

Sex was the main category determining social status. Only slight differences are observed in the funeral rites: male burials are of somewhat more complex construction than female burials. But male and female burial assemblages differ sharply. The symbolism of the grave goods was concentrated on accenting sex. This shows the distribution of the social and economic functions between males and females. On the other hand, no marked domination of one sex is observed.

The image provided by grave goods reflects a sort of idealised image of the afterlife, purifying the most important features of male and female social life that were established in the worldview. The main aspect of male status was military activity. Weapons were the most significant male attribute. The number of weapons in male burials is fairly clearly standardised. It can be argued that the position of each male in the society was clearly defined and perceived at the level of the entire community.

Female burial assemblages reflect more the sphere of familial life: housework and the role in the family. The diversity of the grave goods and the absence of standardisation show that at the community level female status was not that clearly defined and differentiated and that there was no clear competition between individuals over it. In this respect female status is closer to subadult status.

The differences in male and female status are not necessarily directly connected with just biological sex. Gender was partially a cultural category. Male and female social attributes were not ascribed uniformly when burying individuals; they probably depended on age, achieved or ascribed status, and individual qualities.

Social status changed with individual age. The funeral rites for adults of different ages did not essentially differ. Funeral rites, unlike in adolescence, were not perceived as a means of expressing age. The independence and full rights of adults were unquestionable, and their accentuation in a burial was not important.

Grave goods much more clearly mark the differences in the status of individuals of various ages. Signs of higher status were given to younger adult males and females through grave goods. But the content of the assemblages probably depended not so much on the number of years that had been lived as the individual qualities connected with age. The social development of adults was consistent without any distinct turning points. The frequent exceptions (rich burials of older adults and poor burials of young adults) show that age determined status only indirectly. The death of older individuals (who had raised heirs and were less active in warfare) was already no great loss to the community. On the other hand, richer grave goods reveal not just higher status, but also the greater efforts to demonstrate it. The demonstration of status at the beginning of mature life was more important as a means of competition for position, but later it lost such significance. The actual distance in status between younger and older adults may have been less distinct than is seen in the burial assemblages.

A similar connection between status and age is also noticeable in other contemporary societies: the Franks, Visigoths, Anglo-Saxons, continental Saxons, and Scandinavian Vikings. However, in some societies (including that in Central Lithuania) a contrary connection between age and status is seen.

Achieved status is a status element that is difficult to identify archaeologically. The male social identity that changed the most clearly with age was membership in the warrior stratum. The prerequisite for higher status was the personal qualities characteristic of a young adult (in his 20s and 30s): physical power and the ability to compete for position. Older males, who had lost their warrior status, were somewhat closer to females in their position in society (being more frequently buried in

collective graves with children as well as with a smaller number of weapons and a larger number of female grave goods).

The main individual quality determining a woman's position was fertility. The female age most suitable for reproduction was the 20s, while 40–45 should be considered its end. Beginning at approximately this latter age more modest grave goods and fewer ornaments were placed in female graves. On the other hand, such a systematic dependency of the richness of grave goods on age, which was characteristic for males, is not noticeable in female burials. Achieved status had less significance for females, and their possibilities for improving it were very limited.

It is difficult to identify the inheritance of status in adult burials. The rich burials of older males and the poorest burials of younger adults can be considered indirect indicators of ascribed status. It is likely that those individuals who had the highest status were able to keep it as they aged. Rich female burials should also be considered a sign of ascribed status (the ability of adult males with high status to extend it to family members). Meanwhile the rich burials of young adults should be treated as indicators of the small significance of ascribed status. Age and individual qualities determined status in general only within certain inherited boundaries.

The significance of all of the aforementioned factors on an individual's social status was not uniform during different periods. The adult funeral rites did not change significantly during the entire period (only the simplification of female funeral rites being somewhat more distinct). The differences in male and female funeral rites that began to emerge in the second half of the 1st millennium show the increasing dependency of status on sex. The position of adult females in society became lower and closer to the position of children.

The chronological change in the burial assemblages is closely connected with the sex and age of the buried individuals. The connection between male status and age was not distinct in the second quarter of the 1st millennium. Greater significance was perhaps given at that time to ascribed status. In the 5th century, a distinct and sudden differentiation in male burials is noticeable. In the Middle Iron Age, the burials of younger adult males were much richer than those of older males. This change is contemporaneous with the growth in the significance of warrior attributes. After the ideology changed and the connection between male status and being a warrior

strengthened, the advantages of young age and actual military activity became more important. The significance of ascribed status declined. In the last quarter of the 1st millennium and the early 2nd millennium no sudden changes in male burials are noticeable. No differences essentially remained in the richness of the grave goods of young and older males, although the association of warrior status with young age remained. Isolated 10th–11/12th-century rich warrior burials seem to indicate the beginning of new changes in the social organisation, which seem to allude to the later social processes.

The change in female burial assemblages occurred gradually over the entire period the East Lithuanian barrow culture existed. The richest grave goods were placed in burials from the second quarter of the 1st millennium, which perhaps indicates the greater significance of ascribed status. From the mid-1st millennium poorer burial assemblages were characteristic of female burials and did not change until the early 2nd millennium. The differences in status between young and older adult females that were determined by family ties, and fertility always remained stable and fairly marked.

V.2. Features of the social organisation in Iron Age East Lithuania

V.2.1. Community structure and family ties

In discussing the typical structure of an Iron Age East Lithuanian community, the main question is its size. The mortuary record is favourable for the discussion of this question, but its nature (i.e. data from many sites) causes certain difficulties. The resolution of this question is also impeded by the small volume of the excavations, the imprecise dating, and the destruction of the sites. The Ubelaker method was used to calculate the size of a community on the basis of data from several more widely excavated barrow cemeteries (Baliuliai, Žvirbliai, Neravai-Grigiškės, Kapitoniškės, Kretuonys): from 5–6 to 18–24 people. It can be argued that communities of 5–15 people buried their dead in the barrow cemeteries.

The internal structure of the majority of the barrow cemeteries (adult and subadult, male and female burials) supposes the interpretation of them as family burial sites. The number of individuals buried in the typical small barrow cemetery essentially

corresponds to a group of people of the size of the average nuclear family over several generations (on average 5 people). The existence of a model of such a family in the society under discussion does not raise any serious doubts. The members of one nuclear family that existed during the defined period could have been buried in one mound (although this was not the universal norm). After summarising the instances of contemporaneous funeral rites, it is noticeable that individuals, who could have theoretically been family members (several children, adults and children, or an adult male and female), were buried together the most frequently. Perhaps the arrangement of the barrows into separate groups in many barrow cemeteries also reflects the distribution of the communities into nuclear families.

The medium-sized and larger barrow cemeteries could have been the burial sites of several (2–5) families. Several nuclear families could have created a social unit characteristic for many societies, i.e. the extended family (a group of people connected by over two generations of family ties, the families of several siblings, or a similar community). The extended family could have also included more distant relatives, adopted family members, perhaps slaves, etc. One or another form of the extended family had to have been the main element of the Iron Age East Lithuanian society, i.e. a separate community.

It is impossible to say from the available material whether a community's structure changed during the entire period the East Lithuanian barrow culture existed. On the basis of the data from the several widely excavated barrow cemeteries, no change in the average size of a community is noticeable. Perhaps the increasing percentage of graves dug into earlier mounds and the average number of individuals buried in one mound that occurs from the second half of the Middle Iron Age show the increasing distribution of the communities into nuclear families.

V.2.2. Social classes and their identification

More or less defined social classes (ascribed status) exist in the majority of societies. It is difficult to identify them on the basis of archaeological data. In this case it is only possible to deduce them, i.e. to verify this hypothesis using archaeological material. The only starting point for this is written information. Having practically no

data about Iron Age East Lithuania and the other lands of the Balts, it is necessary to base it on sources from other geographically, chronologically, and culturally close societies.

The written sources in the barbarian societies refer to the existence of several main social classes: the aristocracy, the free, the half free (freedmen), and the unfree (slaves). Their existence is confirmed by the Germanic law codes, which stress a clear divide between the unfree and the free (with further finer gradations within the latter class), but contain little data about the social elite. A similar societal division occurs in Prussian and Ruthenian law. The same social classes existed in Lithuania by at least the 13th century.

Thus a minimum of three classes probably existed in Iron Age East Lithuania: the elite, the free, and the unfree (and perhaps the half free?). Intermediate links could have actually existed between them and a finer gradation within these classes. But it is archaeologically possible to attempt to identify only the main classes. The existence of an aristocracy in prehistoric East Lithuania was recorded in early 11th-century sources that describe the mission of St Bruno. But its existence in earlier periods is confirmed only by the analogies of the neighbouring regions. Even less data exists about the unfree stratum. But it is possible to consider it a universal realia of early medieval Europe. Of course, the concept of 'slave' is not unambiguous.

In attempting to identify the social classes on the basis of funeral rites, it is necessary to keep in mind many reservations. The manifestation, through funeral rites, of membership in a social class is only a hypothesis. Other aspects of social life are also reflected in funeral rites. To divide burials into groups is usually not easy. In addition, it is not clear whether the excavated sites represent all the classes.

The approach of using burial assemblages: the general richness of the burial and the number of weapons, to identify social classes predominates. The concept of human value ('wergeld') used in all barbarian societies confirms the definition of the classes through a certain quantity of property. Graves with expensive grave goods can be connected with the elite, graves with weapons with the free, and graves without weapons or completely without grave goods with the unfree.

Because burial assemblages depend on the age of the deceased, only data from adult burials were used for the identification of the social classes. (Even after restricting

the database, the results can reflect not only class differences but also differences in the status of young and older adults.)

The following probable social class proportions are observed in adult male burials: the unfree and half free (no grave goods) – 26.8%, the free (1–3/4 grave goods) – 50.5–58.8%, and the elite (4/5–8 or 10–13 grave goods and richer) – 14.4–22.7%. It is probable that finer divisions existed within the elite class. The classes identified among the adult females are less distinct: the unfree and half free (no grave goods) – 26.9%, the free (1–2 or 3–8 grave goods) – 71%, and the elite (12 or 13 grave goods) – 2.2%. The social differences in the funeral rites of commoners and the nobility are not clear.

It is possible to divide adult male burials into three groups on the basis of the number of weapons: with grave goods but without weapons (43.3% of all the burials), with 1 or 2 weapons (22.7%), and with 3 or more weapons (7.2%). These perhaps indicate ordinary freemen, a higher class, and the elite.

Thus on the basis of the adult male burials (that are socially more informative than those of the adult females), it is possible to attempt to define the society's class structure: the unfree and the half free (about a fourth), the free (about half or somewhat more), and the social elite (a fourth or a fifth).

The division into social classes was probably not very distinct and the distance between the classes comparatively small. Class was likely to have been a combination of ascribed and achieved status. The social division of the adult females seems to have been less distinct than that of the adult males. A clear boundary probably existed only between free and unfree adult females. Meanwhile a free female's status in the class system probably depended on her husband's status.

It is possible to see in both male and female burials a consistent increase in the number of individuals that were probably unfree and half free during the entire period and a decrease in the number of representatives from the elite in the mid-1st millennium. This perhaps shows changes in the society. On the other hand, it is also possible to explain these differences as calculation errors, a general change in the burial traditions, or the aforementioned differences in the grave goods of individuals of different ages.

V.2.3. Social organisation models

After defining the various separate features of the Iron Age East Lithuanian social organisation, it is possible to attempt to define a model of this society. This, however, is limited to those society features, which can be identified in the mortuary record.

The social classification into band, tribe, chiefdom, and state that was suggested by Service predominates in the contemporary theory of social organisations. Usually the fairly broad term of ‘chiefdom’ is used in archaeology and cultural anthropology to describe many prehistoric societies. The most common features of a chiefdom are social inequality, permanent hereditary power, frequent military activity, etc. The diversity of chiefdoms in reality is huge and they are fairly distant from the theoretical model. Chiefdoms are divided into simple (one level of subordination) and complex (several levels of subordination). There is also the somewhat more primitive big man society model, which is close to a chiefdom (non-hereditary power based on personal authority). But these are only generalised models. Real societies have very diverse features and are closer or further from the theoretical model. Archaeologically identifiable signs of a chiefdom are greater population density, settlement size and a hierarchy among them, monumental sites, craft specialisation, social inequality and its demonstration through burials and other means, inheritance of status, domination of military elements, prestigious artefacts, etc.

The use of the term ‘chiefdom’ for the social organisation of the East Lithuanian barrow culture does not raise any serious doubts. The social stratification and predominant military element characteristic of it are signs of this society model. On the other hand, the significance of ascribed and achieved status can also indicate a big man system. In this respect, the social organisation changed throughout the entire period of the culture.

From the formation of the East Lithuanian barrow culture until the 5th century, stability and social stratification were characteristic of the social organisation. The grave goods in the burials from that period are fairly rich. The diversity of their richness is big, but does not clearly depend on sex or age. This shows the large significance of ascribed

status. It is possible to consider such a society close to the classic model of a simple chiefdom with one level of subordination.

From the mid-5th century distinct and sudden changes are noticeable. The concentration of the most valuable grave goods in the burials of young adult males shows that the established social ties and ascribed status system began to break down. Competition strengthened over the dominant position and the main prerequisite for higher status became the ability to fight. Thus the social organisation became closer to a big man system. On the other hand, it was during precisely this period that it is possible to see in some barrow cemeteries (for ex. Taurapilis) the several levels of subordination characteristic of a complex chiefdom. It seems that during the period of rapid transformations the social organisation became more distant from the simple chiefdom model and acquired features characteristic of different systems. It is possible to use the term 'military democracy' for such a system.

The later development of social relations is difficult to deduce. The social organisation evolved gradually and the changes are noticeable only from a perspective of several centuries. In the late 1st millennium the East Lithuanian society was still socially stratified, but the competition over domination had declined. Ascribed status became more important than before (with male status depending less on age), but did not acquire a very big significance (poor child burials). The chiefdom functioned in the late 1st millennium and early 2nd millennium. Some rich warrior burials (Žvirbliai, Rokantiškės) allow one to think a complex chiefdom with several levels of subordination already existed.

The power of one leader in a chiefdom unites at least several communities. It is possible to only hypothetically define the size and number of the chiefdoms in the East Lithuanian barrow culture. Communities defending themselves in one hill fort can be considered a simple chiefdom. It is possible to create a model where no more than 10 communities (extended families) could defend themselves in one average sized hill fort. This number probably had very wide and frequent variations. Around 100–150 entities, which could be considered simple chiefdoms, existed (but not necessarily at the same time) in the entire territory of the East Lithuanian barrow culture. It is impossible to say whether any subordination relationships existed among them. The data from the investigation of the settlements is still insufficient to define their density, their internal

structure, and the relations between themselves and with the hill forts and barrow cemeteries. Few larger contemporaneous hill fort, settlement, and barrow cemetery complexes exist in East Lithuania, and the sites are arranged without any clear structure. A chiefdom's territory could have been fairly large and constantly changing and could have eventually merged with other analogous formations.

The only socially informative written sources, the descriptions of the mission of St Bruno, allow one to define the size and structure of the East Lithuanian chiefdoms. They mention a 'royal' warrior retinue (of 300 men) and describe a hierarchy of several levels of government and hereditary power. This social formation should have united at least tens and perhaps even one or two hundred of the communities that left the barrow cemeteries. Thus the written information confirms that at least in the early 2nd millennium a fairly sophisticated complex chiefdom(s?) already functioned in East Lithuania.

V.2.4. The changes in the East Lithuanian social organisation against the background of historical events

The social organisation of each society is the result of not only its internal development but also external factors. It is possible to understand the specific nature of the social relationships of Iron Age East Lithuania only in the context of the historical events of the entire European *Barbaricum*.

The early stage of the East Lithuanian barrow culture (3rd–4/5th centuries) was a comparatively peaceful period, although various upheavals were occurring at that time in Europe. The largest migration that occurred near the lands of the Balts was the movement of the Goths that started in the mid-2nd century from the lower reaches of the Vistula (Wielbark culture) towards the Black Sea, where they formed the Chernyakhov culture. This was a long, slow migration, which was accompanied by social and cultural transformations. The trade route directions changed in the 3rd century and the importance of the Eastern route grew. Perhaps the migration of the Goths had a certain significance on the formation of the East Lithuanian barrow culture. Immigrants from other Baltic tribes dislodged by the movement of the Goths could have reached the region. But there were probably no long, intense military clashes. These events probably had a more

peaceful effect on East Lithuania, which formed at least indirect contacts with civilisation. This was a period when the region's material culture prospered.

Conditions for the steady development of the social relationships were created in East Lithuanian communities, which were in contact with their neighbours but not mauled by military conflicts. Through the increase in the society's accumulated wealth, the social inequality grew and the social system of a simple chiefdom type formed. The main prerequisite for high status was wealth, and military activeness did not have any especially large significance (the comparatively rich burials of the older males). The inequality that developed was reinforced through the established hereditary system (rich child and female burials).

From the late 4th century the events of the Migration Period, which were initiated by the nomadic Huns, began to shake Europe. Their expansion into Gothic territory caused the decline of the Chernyakhov culture in the first half of the 5th century. The Hunnic Empire also collapsed in the mid-5th century. It seems that these events strongly shook East Lithuania. The region was probably devastated by nomad attacks in the 5th century and the repercussions of the waves of other migrating nations also reached it. The disappearance of the Chernyakhov culture also had a big impact. East Lithuania could have been reached by Goths retreating from the Huns or bands of nomadic robbers. Thus several generations could have suffered from the constant shocks. This caused the distinct militarization of the East Lithuanian barrow culture.

The social organisation of the local communities changed suddenly in the face of the danger of attacks by migrating people and enemies. A strictly defined hierarchy and several levels of subordination formed, but no clear inheritance of status remained. The social organisation model acquired features characteristic of both a complex chiefdom and a big man system. Warriors able to compete for status occupied a position dominating the communities. The burials of young adult males are distinguished by their richness, and it was weapons that predominated among their grave goods. The change in the ideology caused an increased distance in the social status between adult males and females.

The history of Europe in the second half of the 1st millennium saw the creation of many new states, the rise of the Ostrogoths and the Franks, onslaughts by various conquerors (Arabs, Avars, Scandinavian Vikings, etc.), and the start of the Slavic

migrations. Many Baltic lands remained out of the way of these events. They were affected by a decline in trade. For several centuries beginning in the 6th century, the Balts experienced practically no pressure from external attacks. Only the Dnieper Balts were gradually assimilated by the Eastern Slavs. But this had no marked effect on the East Lithuanian barrow culture. The stable development of the culture became established in around the 6th–7th century.

No clear changes in the social organisation are noticeable in East Lithuania during almost the entire second half of the 1st millennium. The sudden 5th-century social innovations gradually disappeared. In the absence of larger military clashes, the domination of the young adult males – warriors declined in the society. Comparatively little wealth reached East Lithuania. The social differentiation was small and the competition over position and its inheritance did not have the same meaning as previously.

The late 1st millennium and early 2nd millennium were a time of economic, cultural, and military upsurges in Europe and of the creation of new states. The Scandinavian Vikings and their trade with the East had the biggest impact on the Balts during this period. At the end of the 1st millennium, the Balts found themselves surrounded by Christian states (Denmark, Sweden, Poland, and Kievan Rus) and felt their pressure. At the turn of the millennium East Lithuania was far from the areas where the Vikings were active. The expansion of Poland also did not have a big impact on it. A real military threat was posed only by Kievan Rus. From at least the 11th century, the Ruthenians organised plunder raids into Lithuania. The Eastern Slav principalities, which began to fragment in the second half of the 12th century, themselves became the target of Lithuanian attacks as the Lithuanians became stronger.

Keeping in mind the changed political environment, the shifts in the social organisation of East Lithuania are very plausible. The pressure by the neighbours encouraged social stratification and evolution towards a more complex societal structure. The need to defend the community strengthened the representatives of the elite. The changes in East Lithuania at this time do not raise any serious doubts and are sustained by the later Lithuanian leadership among the Baltic tribes and the creation of the state. A complex chiefdom already existed during this period. But the archaeological data do almost nothing to confirm this. Perhaps the burials from the highest social stratum have

not been discovered so far. The tradition for the placement of grave goods in the graves could have changed. In addition, it is difficult to distinguish the latest barrows, which should reflect the 11th–12th-century social organisation, from the others. The sharpest social changes have remained almost unrecorded in the barrows, which stopped being used for burials at that time.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The burial sites cannot reveal the entire spectrum of the social ties that functioned in a bygone society. The relationships between people and social status are much more complex and subtle than the information encoded in a burial. The assertions made in this dissertation are firm in so far as the reconstruction of reality from small fragments can in general be accurate. Some of them may be rethought in the future. Nevertheless, a fairly large body of data, that shows clear tendencies and has abundant parallels with other lands, allows one to trust the reliability of the conclusions. The study presents a sort of generalised theoretical model of the social organisation.

A burial site is sign of social status, although it does not directly reflect it. The funeral rites are socially informative when evaluated from the perspective of the consumption of time, labour, and material resources. In the case of the East Lithuanian barrow culture, the status indicators are the barrow construction, the grave construction, burial in an individual or collective grave, the location of the grave in the barrow, and the number of artefacts and their value.

In Iron Age East Lithuania, status and social roles were closely connected with age. Children did not equal adults in status. Only from the second or third year of life was a child considered a part of the community, but retained a lower status. In the first half of the second decade of life he or she was recognised as independent, but still did not have higher personal status. Full maturity was achieved at around twenty. Young adults had the highest status, but in the late 30s or the 40s they gradually began to lose their position in the society.

Sex was also an important factor determining a person's status. In childhood the division into male and female was not distinct. Children comprised a sort of asexual (in a social sense) group in the society, and were in many respects closer to adult

females. The adult part of the society was clearly divided on the basis of sex. Male status was mostly determined by military activeness. A sharp competition over position in the society existed among the adult males. Female social roles were more closely connected to marital status, while fertility mostly determined status. Competition over status and differences in status were smaller among the females.

Achieved and ascribed status is reflected in the funeral rites. A person's status depended mostly on those personal qualities that are connected with age and sex as well as on achieved status. But the social position of each individual varied only within certain hereditary limits.

The significance of all of the aforementioned factors that determined an individual's status was not uniform in different periods. The position of children during the culture's early stage was closer to an integral part of the society. In the second half of the 1st millennium and the early 2nd millennium the status of children gradually fell and the gap between children and adults grew. The changes in the ideology and social structure are reflected in male burials. The dependency of status on age, which had until then been insignificant, became especially distinct in the mid-1st millennium, but then gradually declined again. The social roles of adult females were less affected by the changes in the social organisation. The higher status of young adult females always remained stable. The significance of ascribed and achieved status differed in the culture's different stages.

Small (about 5–15 people) communities buried their dead in barrow cemeteries. Nuclear families could have left the smaller barrow cemeteries and extended families the medium-sized and larger barrow cemeteries.

On the basis of analogies of contemporary neighbouring societies, it is possible to assert that at least three social classes existed in Iron Age East Lithuania. It is difficult to identify them in the mortuary record. It is possible to create a model where the unfree and half free comprised about a fourth, the free around half or a little more, and the elite about a fourth or a fifth of the society. The class division could have been uneven both between males and females and in different periods.

The social organisation of the East Lithuanian barrow culture should be considered a chiefdom. During the early stage the society functioned as a simple chiefdom. From the 5th century distinct and sudden changes are noticeable: the social

organisation acquired the features of both a big man system and a complex chiefdom. The later development of the social organisation is fairly obscure. The complex chiefdom model probably became established by at least the turn of the 2nd millennium. One simple chiefdom could have united no more than ten communities and a complex chiefdom several simple chiefdoms.

The social organisation model, social stratification, and the factors that determined the status of the separate individuals changed over the entire period the East Lithuanian barrow culture existed. The historical situation and external influences caused this. During the early period the region experienced the effect of the Gothic migration, which manifested itself mostly through peaceful contacts. The trade ties encouraged property inequalities and social differentiation and the formation of a hereditary system. Sudden social transformations occurred in around the mid-5th century due to the events of the Migration Period (direct attacks). This resulted in the disintegration of the established ascribed status system, the formation of a strict hierarchical military organisation, and an increased significance of young adult males in the society. Later, during almost the entire second half of the 1st millennium, stable development continued in East Lithuania. Social differentiation and competition over position declined. The struggle that began from at least the mid-11th century with Kievan Rus encouraged the development of a complex and sophisticated social system. But the data from the barrows does not essentially confirm this.

The presented conclusions encompass only some of the topics connected with social relationships. In the future they can be supplemented and corrected by an analysis of the hill fort, settlement, and other archaeological sites. The possibilities of archaeology in the field of social organisation investigation have still not been exhausted.

Translated by Jeffrey Arthur Bakanauskas

SANTRAUKA

Rytų Lietuva XIII a. tapo besikuriančios Lietuvos valstybės branduoliu. Tokia regiono lyderystė buvo ilgos socialinės raidos rezultatas. Tačiau priešistorinio laikotarpio Rytų Lietuvos pilkapių kultūros socialinė organizacija iki šiol yra dar mažai tyrinėta.

Šio darbo tikslas – laidojimo paminklų duomenimis paremta socialinių santykių Rytų Lietuvoje geležies amžiuje analizė, apimanti visas socialines grupes. Darbe keliami uždaviniai: išskirti socialinės organizacijos analizei reikšmingus laidosenos aspektus; išanalizuoti skirtingo amžiaus abiejų lyčių asmenų kapus; sudaryti socialinės organizacijos modelius; sudaryti tipinės bendruomenės ir bendruomenių organizacijos modelius; rekonstruoti visuomenės klasinę struktūrą; įvertinti visuomenę socialinių organizacijų raidos teorijos požiūriu; atskleisti chronologinę socialinės organizacijos kaitą ir jos ryšį su istoriniais procesais.

Pagrindiniai darbe ginami teiginiai: laidosena atspindi mirusiojo socialinį statusą; kiekvieno individo padėtį sąlygojo amžius, lytis, įgyta ir įgimta padėtis, o šių faktorių reikšmė buvo nevienoda atskirais kultūros etapais; bendruomenės pagrindą sudarė mažoji ir išplėstinė šeima; visuomenė buvo susiskaidžiusi į socialines klases; aptariamoji socialinė organizacija laikytina vadyste; socialinės organizacijos kaitai įtakos turėjo išorės veiksniai.

Tyrimo metodika yra kapų archeologinių ir osteologinių duomenų koreliacija. Amžius ir lytis sugretinami su pilkapio ir kapo įranga bei įkapių kompleksais. Darbe sukuriamas tam tikras teorinis visuomenės modelis, kuris nebūtinai yra tinkamas kiekvienai konkrečiai bendruomenei. Naudojama medžiaga suskirstyta į tris sąlygines chronologines grupes: III–V a. griautiniai kapai, V–VII a. degintiniai kapai ir VIII–XI/XII a. degintiniai kapai.

Rytų Lietuvos pilkapių kultūra formavosi III–IV a., išnykus brūkšniuotosios keramikos kultūrai. Tuomet ji dar buvo nevienalytė. Mirusieji laidoti nedeginti. Nuo V–VI a. laidosena regione suvienodėjo. Apie I tūkstantmečio vidurį įsivyravo mirusiųjų deginimo paprotys, staigiai kito įkapių kompleksai (į kapus dėta daugiau ginklų ir brangių importinių dirbinių). Vėliau, visą I tūkstantmečio trečiąjį ketvirtį, laidojimo papročiai vystėsi tolygiai – pilkapių konstrukcija ir kapų įranga paprastėjo, įkapių kompleksai tapo skurdesni. Paskutiniajame I tūkstantmečio ketvirtyje Rytų Lietuvos pilkapiai palaipsniui įgavo kai kurių naujų bruožų, tačiau staigių pokyčių nebuvo. Tik kai kurie X–XI a. kapai yra

turtingesni. Laidojimo pilkapiuose paprotys greičiausiai išnyko XI a. pabaigoje ar XII a. pradžioje.

Rytų Lietuvos pilkapiai kasinėjami nuo XIX a. pirmosios pusės – vidurio. Tyrinėjimai aktyviai vykdyti XIX a. pabaigoje ir XX a. pradžioje, Lenkijos okupuotame Vilniaus krašte – ir tarpukariu. Sovietinės okupacijos metais išsamiai kasinėta daug pilkapynų, patobulėjo tyrinėjimų metodika. Lietuvai atgavus nepriklausomybę, imta tyrinėti daugiausia ardomus pilkapius.

Bandymų remtis laidojimo paminklais rekonstruojant praeities socialines struktūras būta jau XX a. pirmojoje pusėje ir viduryje. Šios srities tyrinėjimai išplėtoti JAV procesų arba „Naujosios archeologijos“ atstovų 7-ojo dešimtmečio pabaigoje bei 8-ajame dešimtmetyje. Naujo požiūrio esmė – laidosena yra socialinio statuso atspindys, o jos skirtumai rodo visuomenės socialinį nevienalytiškumą. Įvertinant laidojimui išseiktus resursus, statusas suvoktas kaip išmatuojamas dydis. Imti taikyti statistiniai metodai. Dėmesys sutelktas į socialinius dėsningumus, įvairių visuomenių palyginimus.

Šias idėjas revizavo 9-ajame dešimtmetyje Europoje susiformavusi postprocesų archeologijos mokykla, atkreipusi dėmesį į laidosenoje užkoduotas simbolines reikšmes ir ideologiją. Suvokta, kad žmogus nėra vien socialinės sistemos dalis, paklūstanti socialiniams dėsniams. Laidojimu gali būti išreiškiamas ne vien mirusiojo statusas, bet ir gyvųjų siekiai.

Pastaruoju metu archeologijoje išaugo susidomėjimas lyčių vaidmenimis. „Lyčių archeologija“ tyrinėjimams suteikė naujo kritiškumo ir išplėtė temų ratą – imta domėtis moterų, vaikų socialiniais vaidmenimis.

Socialiniai santykiai Lietuvos archeologų iki XX a. vidurio praktiškai nebuvo nagrinėjami. Sovietinės okupacijos laikotarpiu tyrinėjimus ribojo geležinė uždanga ir primetama istorinio materializmo doktrina. Tačiau priklausomybė tarp socialinio statuso ir laidosenos buvo suvokiama panašiai kaip JAV procesualistų, tiksliai trūko teorinių diskusijų ir statistinio medžiagos tyrimo. Nepriklausomoje Lietuvoje šiuo požiūriu teorinės nuostatos iš esmės nepakito, tačiau tyrinėjimai pasistūmėjo į priekį. Aptarta kai kurių etnokultūrinių regionų socialinė organizacija, atskiros socialinės klasės.

Osteologinės palaikų analizė yra paremta daugiausiai morfologiniu kaulų įvertinimu bei osteometrija. Ją apsunkina įvairios aplinkybės. Asmenų skaičius nustatomas daugiausiai pagal vienetinius arba porinius skeleto kaulus. Amžiaus indikatoriai yra

ontogenezės procese kintantys kaulai. Lytis nustatoma pagal lytinį dimorfizmą atspindinčius kaulus ir kai kurių kaulų matavimus.

Osteologiškai analizuoti 425 kapai iš 67-ių laidojimo paminklų, tyrinėtų iki 2006 m. (72 griautiniai ir 353 degintiniai). Juose identifikuoti mažiausiai 514-os asmenų palaikai. Nustatytas 510-ies individų amžius. Palaikai suskirstyti į šešias amžiaus grupes: 0–1, 1–5, 5–12, 12–20, 20–40 ir per 40 m. Joms nurodytas minimalus, maksimalus ir tikėtinas (apskaičiuotas) individų skaičius. Nustatyta 247-ių suaugusių asmenų lytis. Identifikuoti 128-ių vyrų ir 119-os moterų palaikai. Šių duomenų pagrindu apskaičiuoti demografiniai rodikliai.

Tyrimo pagrindas yra keturios esminės teorinės prielaidos. Pirma jų – visuotinis aukštesnio statuso siekis. Antra prielaida – statuso atspindys laidojimo paminkle. Trečia prielaida – ryšys tarp palaidoto asmens statuso ir laidojimo sudėtingumo. Pastaroji sąvoka apima laidojimui bendruomenės sugaištą laiką, darbo sąnaudas ir materialinius resursus. Jiems įvertinti apibrėžti laidosenos kriterijai: sampilo matmenys ir konstrukcija, laidojimas individualiame arba grupiniame kape, laidojimas naujai supiltame arba ankstesniame pilkapyje, kapo konstrukcija, įkapių kompleksai (kiekybiniu ir kokybiniu požiūriu). Ketvirta prielaida – laidojimo papročių įvairovės ryšys su socialinės organizacijos kompleksiskumu (įvairiausia laidosena būna socialinės organizacijos kaitos laikotarpiu).

Įkapių kompleksų vertei nustatyti darbe remiamasi įkapių skaičiumi, įkapių tipų skaičiumi ir sąlygine komplekso verte. Pastarasis dydis apskaičiuojamas sudėjus sąlygines įkapių vertes, nustatytas įkapių tipų koreliacijos su kompleksų įvairove metodu (remiantis 804-ių kapų duomenimis).

Įkapių ryšiai su lytimi apibrėžti trimis metodais: nustatytas įkapių tipų radimo viename kape atvejų skaičius (553-jų kapų duomenimis); sudaryta dirbinių tarpusavio ryšių dendrograma (321-o kapo duomenimis); apskaičiuotas įkapių tipų radimo osteologiškai identifikuotuose vyrų ir moterų kapuose atvejų skaičius. Įkapių, kaip lyties indikatorius, reikšmės pakoreguotos atsižvelgiant į jų retumą, radimo aplinkybes, chronologinius ir tipologinius skirtumus, simbolines reikšmes. Visi įkapių tipai suskirstyti į penkias grupes: vyriškas, neryškiai vyriškas, neutralias, neryškiai moteriškas ir moteriškas.

Kapuose identifikuoti mažiausiai 6-ių asmenų iki 1 m. amžiaus palaikai (tikėtinas skaičius – 8,5; 1,7%). Naujagimių ir kūdikių mirtingumas turėjo būti daug didesnis. Galbūt jie nelaikyti visateisiais socialiniais asmenimis ir laidoti kitaip ar kitose vietose nei kiti

mirusieji arba apskritai nelaidoti. Kūdikių statusas buvo žemas, jų netektis bendruomenei nebuvo didelis nuostolis.

Ankstyvuosiuose (IV–VI a.) kapuose kūdikiai laidoti kartu su suaugusiais asmenimis (gimdant mirusiomis moterimis?), tikėtina – tikrai vienalaikės mirties su suaugusiais atvejais. Dalis šių kapų buvo gana turtingi. Taigi laidoti daugiau aukštesnės socialinės padėties (paveldėto statuso) kūdikiai. Kiti kūdikių kapai, datuoti VIII–XI/XII a., buvo gerokai skurdesni. Motyvai, kodėl šiuo laikotarpiu kūdikiai kartais laidoti pilkapiuose, nėra aiškūs.

Vaikų buvo palaidota nepalyginamai daugiau – 97 (tikėtinas skaičius – 97,9; 19,0%). Iš jų 26 priklauso 1–5 m. amžiaus grupei (tikėtinas skaičius – 41,2; 8,0%), 33 – 5–12 m. amžiaus grupei (tikėtinas skaičius – 56,7; 11,0%). Toks vaikų mirtingumas yra visiškai realus. Nuo antrųjų ar trečiųjų metų (?) vaikai, atrodo, jau buvo visi laidojami, taigi pripažįstami šeimos ir bendruomenės nariais.

Daug (55,7%) vaikų buvo palaidoti grupiniuose kapuose (ypač – V–VII a.). Greičiausiai tai atspindi kažkokias specifines vaikų laidojimo apeigas, trumpesnes ir paprastesnes nei suaugusiųjų. Vaikų kapai buvo dažnai (45,7% individualių kapų ir 60,0% grupinių kapų) įkasami į ankstesnius pilkapius. Ši tendencija darėsi vis ryškesnė laikui bėgant.

Vaikų kapuose buvo 7 vyriški ir 22 moteriški įkapių kompleksai. Greičiausiai berniukams į kapus buvo dedama moteriškų įkapių. Statusu vaikas, ko gero, buvo artimesnis moteriai ir nepripažįstamas lygiaverčiu suaugusiems vyrams.

Į kapus vaikams dėtos gana gausios ir įvairios įkapės. Kapų turtingumas yra labai įvairus, bet aiškesnių grupių pagal jų neišryškėja. Su vaiko amžiumi kapo turtingumas reikšmingai nesusijęs. Statistiškai chronologinės kapų turtingumo kaitos nepastebima. Tačiau keliuose I tūkstantmečio antrojo ketvirčio – vidurio kapuose buvo išskirtinai brangių įkapių.

Brangiausios įkapės vaikų kapuose yra daugiausiai moteriški papuošalai, tuo tarpu ginklų juose rasta nedaug. Berniukų įkapių kompleksai skiriasi nuo suaugusių vyrų, o mergaičių yra panašūs į suaugusių moterų. Daugiau ginklų dėta į grupinius vaikų ir suaugusiųjų kapus.

Paauglių iki 20 m. amžiaus palaikų identifikuota 21 ar 22 (tikėtinas skaičius – 27,8; 5,4%). Šioje amžiaus grupėje mirtingumas buvo nedidelis.

Mažiau (27,3 ar 31,8%) paauglių buvo palaidoti grupiniuose kapuose. Kapai buvo rečiau (30,8% atvejų) įkasami į ankstesnius pilkapius. Paauglių laidojimo apeigos iš esmės buvo tokios pačios kaip suaugusiųjų. Maždaug nuo 12–15 m. amžiaus asmuo jau laikytas visateisiu bendruomenės nariu. Laidojimo apeigomis išreiškiamas statusas buvo aukštesnis nei vaikų. Ryškesnių chronologinių paauglių laidosenos skirtumų nepastebima.

Įkapių kompleksai visų laikotarpių paauglių kapuose yra mažiau turtingi ir įvairūs nei vaikų. Tačiau galbūt tai rodo būtent simboliškai išreikštą aukštesnę padėtį (nededant į kapą dovanų pripažįstamas mirusiojo savarankiškumas).

Šiame amžiuje dar išlikdavo atskirtis nuo suaugusiųjų. Iki brandos (18–22 m. amžiaus) paaugliai buvo žemesnėje socialinėje pakopoje nei suaugę vyrai (mažai ginklų kapuose). Merginos statusu prie suaugusių moterų greičiausiai priartėdavo 15–18 m.

Nesuaugusiųjų laidosenoje išryškėja keturios tarpusavyje susijusios statuso dimensijos: individualus amžius, lytis, paveldėtas statusas ir chronologinė kaita.

Ryškiausiai statusas kito su amžiumi. Antraisiais ar trečiaisiais gyvenimo metais vaikas tapdavo bendruomenės dalimi. Antrojo gyvenimo dešimtmečio pirmojoje pusėje paauglys statusu priartėdavo prie suaugusiųjų, bet dar neturėdavo aukštesnės individualios padėties. Apie dvidešimtuosius gyvenimo metus būdavo pasiekama visiška socialinė branda. Panašūs brandos etapai egzistavo daugelyje barbarų visuomenių.

Statuso kaita augant skyrėsi tarp abiejų lyčių individų. Nesuaugusieji statusu buvo artimesni moterims. Vyrų branda buvo aiškiau išreikšta, buvo didesni skirtumai tarp nesuaugusių asmenų ir suaugusiųjų. Moterų brandos išraiška laidosenoje – ne tokia ryški, tarp mergaičių ir suaugusių moterų nebuvo tokios ryškios distancijos.

Vaikų statusą lėmė ir paveldėta padėtis. Vaikų laidosenos įvairovė liudija paveldimos socialinės nelygybės egzistavimą Rytų Lietuvoje geležies amžiuje.

Per visą aptariamąjį laikotarpį pastebimas nesuaugusių asmenų laidosenos paprastėjimas. Tai rodo palaipsniui žemėjantį vaikų statusą ir didėjančią atskirtį tarp jų ir suaugusiųjų. Ankstyvuojant kultūros etapu vaikai buvo artimesni integralios visuomenės dalies statusui. Vėliau statusas tapo labiau priklausomas nuo amžiaus.

Iš viso kapuose identifikuoti mažiausiai 352-jų suaugusių asmenų palaikai (tikėtinas skaičius – 379,8; 73,9%). Mažiausiai 159 iš jų buvo 20–40 m. amžiaus (tikėtinas skaičius – 272,0; 52,9%), mažiausiai 70 – per 40 m. amžiaus (tikėtinas skaičius – 107,8;

21,0%). Greičiausiai daugiausiai suaugusiųjų mirdavo būdami 30–40 m. amžiaus. Vyrų gyvenimo trukmė buvo ilgesnė nei moterų.

Tik 23,3% suaugusiųjų buvo palaidoti grupiniuose kapuose (paprastai – su vaikais). Tai rodo jiems pripažįstamą aukštesnį statusą. Grupinė laidosena buvo būdingiausia I tūkstantmečio viduriui – trečiajam ketvirčiui.

Iš visų suaugusių vyrų grupiniuose kapuose buvo palaidoti 24,2%. Kai kurie pilkapiai su vyrų kapais buvo gana didelių matmenų ar sudėtingesnės konstrukcijos. Į ankstesnius pilkapius buvo įkasti 42,2% vyrų kapų ir 52,2% grupinių vyrų ir kitų asmenų kapų. Chronologiškai pastebimas kapų, įkastų į ankstesnius pilkapius, nuošimčio didėjimas.

Nemažoje dalyje (45,5%) vyrų kapų buvo moteriškų įkapių. Galbūt tai – specifinio ar žemesnio jų statuso ženklas.

Įkapių skaičiaus įvairovė vyrų kapuose yra didžiausia. Pagal ją išsiskiria penkios ryškios grupės, rodančios savotišką įkapių kompleksų standartizaciją. Kapų turtingumo diapazonas yra plačiausias. Jaunesni vyrai laidoti su turtingesnėmis įkapėmis. Tačiau šiuo požiūriu pastebimi ryškūs chronologiniai skirtumai. Ankstyvuojų kultūros etapu pagyvenusių vyrų įkapės buvo turtingesnės nei jaunų. Apie I tūkstantmečio vidurį jaunų vyrų kapai staigiai tapo gerokai turtingesni už pagyvenusių. I tūkstantmečio paskutiniajame ketvirtyje ir II tūkstantmečio pradžioje abiejų amžiaus grupių asmenų įkapės kiekybiniais parametrais iš esmės suvienodėjo. Visais laikotarpiais, išskyrus ankstyvąjį kultūros etapą, į jaunesnių vyrų kapus dėta daugiau ginklų. Statusas priklausė nuo karybai būtinų, jaunam amžiui būdingų savybių. Turtingiausi vyrų kapai datuojami V a. viduriu – VI a. pradžia.

Iš visų suaugusių moterų grupiniuose kapuose buvo palaidotos 21,8%. Keli sampilai su moterų kapais išsiskyrė sudėtingesne konstrukcija. Į ankstesnius pilkapius buvo įkasti 55,7% moterų kapų ir 63,6% grupinių moterų ir kitų asmenų kapų. Kapų, įkastų į ankstesnius pilkapius, nuošimtis didėjo nuo I tūkstantmečio vidurio.

Nedaugelyje (14,0%) moterų kapų buvo ginklų. Galbūt tai buvo susiję su moterų karine veikla, smurtinėmis mirties aplinkybėmis, vaidmeniu paveldėjimo sistemoje. Tačiau laidojimas su ginklais nebuvo moters aukštesnio statuso požymis.

Įkapių skaičiaus įvairovė moterų kapuose yra mažesnė nei vyrų. Kapus galima suskirstyti į keturias grupes, tačiau jos nėra tokios ryškios. Moterų kapų turtingumas yra įvairus. Jaunų moterų kapai vidutiniškai yra turtingesni nei pagyvenusių. Ši tendencija ryški visais kultūros etapais. Be to, jaunoms moterims į kapus dėta daugiau papuošalų.

Identifikuoti mažiausiai 7 grupiniai suaugusio vyro ir moters kapai (neskaitant kitų vienalaikės laidosenos atvejų). Juos galima laikyti porinės šeimos narių palaidojimais. Rašytinai šaltiniai suponuotų moterų aukojimo hipotezę. Tačiau archeologiniai duomenys (išskyrus kelis tikėtinus atvejus) jos nepatvirtina – grupinė laidosena nekoreliuoja su aukštesniu statusu. Teoriškai grupinė laidosena galėtų atspindėti didesnę paveldėjimo reikšmę visuomenėje.

Suaugusiųjų laidosenoje atsiskleidžia penkios tarpusavyje susijusios statuso dimensijos: lytis, amžius, įgyta padėtis, įgimtas statusas ir chronologinė kaita.

Lytis buvo pagrindinė socialinį statusą lemianti kategorija. Įkapių simbolizmas buvo sutelktas į jos akcentavimą. Pagrindinis vyro statuso aspektas buvo karinė veikla. Kiekvieno vyro padėtis visuomenėje buvo aiškiai apibrėžta. Moters statusas buvo susijęs daugiau su ūkio darbais ir vaidmeniu šeimoje. Jis nebuvo taip aiškiai išreikštas ir diferencijuotas. Tačiau lytis dalinai buvo kultūrinė kategorija, priklausanti nuo amžiaus, įgyto ar įgimto statuso, individualių savybių.

Suaugusiojo statusas pamažu kito su amžiumi, priklausomai nuo individualių savybių. Jaunesniems asmenims įkapėmis buvo suteikiami aukštesnio statuso ženklai, nors tai ir nebuvo griežta norma. Panašios statuso sąsajos su amžiumi pastebimos ir kai kuriose kitose barbarų visuomenėse.

Ryškiausiai su amžiumi kintantis socialinis vyro identitetas buvo priklausymas karių luomui. Vyresni vyrai šio identiteto pamažu netekdavo. Pagrindinė moters padėtį lemianti individuali savybė buvo vaisingumas. Moters statusui įgyta padėtis turėjo mažesnę reikšmę.

Padėtis visuomenėje priklausė ir nuo paveldėto statuso. Amžius ir individualios savybės lėmė statusą tikrai tam tikrose paveldėtose ribose.

Chronologinė įkapių kompleksų kaita buvo glaudžiai susijusi su laidojamo asmens lytimi ir amžiumi. Aukštesnio vyrų statuso sąsajos su jaunesniu amžiumi ir karine veikla staigiai išryškėjo V a., o vėliau vėl sumažėjo. Tuo tarpu moterų statuso priklausomybė nuo amžiaus visada išliko panaši.

Pilkapnyuose mirusiuosius laidojo apie 5–15 žmonių bendruomenės. Nedideli pilkapynai gali būti porinių šeimų kapavietės. Kelios porinės šeimos sudarydavo išplėstinę šeimą. Tai buvo geležies amžiaus Rytų Lietuvos bendruomenės pagrindas. Ar šeimyninė organizacija kito chronologiškai, atsakyti neįmanoma.

Apie aptariamą visuomenės klasinę struktūrą duomenų neturima. Remiantis kitų barbarų visuomenių analogijomis, tikėtinai egzistavo mažiausiai trys socialinės klasės: elitas, eiliniai laisvieji ir nelaisvieji (bei pusiau laisvieji?). Klases mėginama identifikuoti pagal suaugusių asmenų įkapių kompleksus. Nelaisvieji ir pusiau laisvieji galėjo sudaryti apie ketvirtadalį, eiliniai laisvieji – apie pusę ar kiek daugiau, elitas – ketvirtadalį ar penktadalį visuomenės. Susiskirstymas į klases, ko gero, buvo nelabai ryškus (atrodo, ryškesnis tarp vyrų nei tarp moterų), o distancija tarp jų – palyginti nedidelė. Chronologiškai pastebimas tikėtinai nelaisvųjų skaičiaus didėjimas per visą laikotarpį ir elito atstovų sumažėjimas I tūkstantmečio viduryje.

Archeologiškai identifikuojami Rytų Lietuvos pilkapių kultūros visuomenės bruožai (socialinė stratifikacija, vyraujantis karinis elementas) leidžia ją laikyti vadyste. Tačiau šiuo požiūriu socialinė organizacija per visą laikotarpį kito. Nuo kultūros susiformavimo iki V a. visuomenė buvo artima paprastosios vadystės modeliui (socialinis susiskaidymas, nemaža padėties pavaldimumo reikšmė, vienos pakopos pavaldumas). Nuo V a. vidurio socialinė organizacija įgavo skirtingoms sistemoms – didžiojo žmogaus sistemai (konkurencija dėl dominuojančios padėties) ir kompleksinei vadystei (kelių pakopų pavaldumas) – būdingų bruožų. Vėlesnė visuomenės raida yra sunkiai pasekama. I tūkstantmečio pabaigoje ir II tūkstantmečio pradžioje funkcionavo vadystės. Galima manyti jau buvus kompleksines vadystes. Visoje Rytų Lietuvos pilkapių kultūros teritorijoje galėjo egzistuoti (nebūtinai vienu metu) apie 100–150 paprastųjų vadysčių. Kompleksinė vadystė, egzistavusi bent II tūkstantmečio pradžioje, galėjo jungti mažiausiai keliasdešimt, o galbūt netgi vieną ar du šimtus pilkapyių palikusias bendruomenes.

Ankstyvasis Rytų Lietuvos pilkapių kultūros etapas (III–IV/V a.) buvo palyginti taikus laikotarpis. Jai tam tikro taikaus poveikio turėjo gotų migracija link Juodosios jūros ir ryšiai su Černiachovo kultūra. Socialinė organizacija vystėsi nuosekliai, didėjo turtinė diferenciacija, kuri buvo įtvirtinta pavaldimumo sistema. Karyba neturėjo itin didelės reikšmės.

Regioną V a. sukrėtė Didžiojo tautų kraustymosi įvykiai – Černiacovo kultūros žlugimas, klajoklių antpuoliai. Rytų Lietuvos pilkapių kultūra tapo militarizuota. Socialinė organizacija staigiai kito – susiformavo griežta hierarchija, kelių pakopų pavaldumas, tačiau neliko aiškaus padėties pavaldėjimo. Dominuojančią padėtį visuomenėje užėmė jauni kariai, gebantys konkuruoti dėl statuso.

Vėliau, I tūkstantmečio antrojoje pusėje Rytų Lietuva nepatyrė didesnių išorės įtakų. Prekybos apimtys sumažėjo. Apie VI/VII a. nusistovėjo stabili kultūros raida. Ryškių socialinės organizacijos pokyčių I tūkstantmečio antrojoje pusėje nepastebima. Karių dominavimas visuomenėje mažėjo. Socialinė diferenciacija nebuvo didelė.

Tūkstantmečių sandūroje Rytų Lietuvai kilo karinė grėsmė iš Kijevo Rusios, rengusios grobiamuosius anpuolius. Nuo XII a. lietuviai patys ėmė puldinėti Rytų slavus. Permainos to meto Rytų Lietuvos socialinėje organizacijoje (socialinė stratifikacija ir evoliucija sudėtingesnės struktūros link) yra labai tikėtinos. Tačiau archeologiniai duomenys to beveik nepatvirtina. Tuo metu laidojimo pilkapiuose paprotys jau nyko. Ryškiausi socialiniai pokyčiai liko beveik neužfiksuoti šiuose archeologiniuose paminkluose.

Laidojimo paminklai negali atskleisti viso praeities visuomenėje funkcionavusių socialinių ryšių spektro. Santykiai tarp žmonių, socialinis statusas yra daug sudėtingesni ir subtilesni nei kape užkoduota informacija. Šiame darbe išsakyti teiginiai yra tvirti tiek, kiek apskritai gali būti tikslus realybės rekonstravimas iš fragmentų. Išvadų patikimumu leidžia tikėti didelė duomenų imtis, išryškėjančios aiškios tendencijos, gausios paralelės su kitais kraštais. Tyrimas pateikia savotišką apibendrintą teorinį socialinės organizacijos modelį.

Šio darbo išvados yra: laidosena yra socialinio statuso ženklas, ją įvertinus sugaišto laiko, darbo sąnaudų ir išieškotų materialinių resursų požiūriu; Rytų Lietuvoje statusas buvo susijęs su amžiumi, lytimi, įgyta ir įgimta padėtimi, o visų šių faktorių reikšmė buvo nevienoda skirtingais laikotarpiais; bendruomenės sudarė mažosios ir išplėstinės šeimos; visuomenę greičiausiai sudarė elito, eilinių laisvųjų ir nelaisvųjų bei pusiau laisvųjų klasės; aptariamoji socialinė organizacija laikytina vadyste; socialinius procesus Rytų Lietuvoje lėmė istorinė situacija bei išorės įtakos.

Pateiktos išvados apima tikrai dalį su socialiniais santykiais susijusių temų. Ateityje jas gali papildyti ar pakoreguoti kitų archeologinių paminklų analizė. Archeologijos mokslo galimybės socialinės organizacijos tyrinėjimų srityje dar nėra išsemtos.

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