Donkalnis is a cemetery and ritual complex of the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods, found and excavated in Tiščiai district, Varniai area, Kaltinėnai village, on a former island in the Biržulių Lake, which turned into a low hillock in the course of land reclamation. An area of 1024 sqm. was excavated here in 1981-1983. 14 inhumation burials were found, six of which had been disturbed. Some of the buried individuals were sprinkled with red ochre. Burial goods included pendants made of animal teeth, flint artefacts and fragments of jaws of wild animals. In the eastern part of the island a site of Stone Age rituals was found, and a double 'seven' burial was smeared with red ochre, to the west of it. Oval contours of the burial, filled with brownish ochre and measuring 220x160 cm, were fully exposed in the depth of 25-30 cm from the earth surface. The burial revealed an extended male skeleton, thickly sprinkled with red ochre, particularly in the area of the head, and a female, buried in a crouched position beside him. On the northern verge of the outline of the double burial, just 12-30 cm below the earth surface, a small heap of chipped stones sprinkled with red ochre was uncovered, which must have been a symbolic heart. The buried individual, a 20-25 year-old male, was decorated with 57 pendants of perforated teeth of elk, bear and aurochs, arranged in a very symmetrical pattern, especially in the sections of the head and legs. The burial of a 25-30 year-old female, laid beside him, did not yield any grave goods, and had considerably less ochre. The burial should be most probably dated to the Mesolithic period. On the basis of burial items and radiocarbon dates, the remaining burials are attributed to the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods.

The Narkūnai hill-forts, the Major, called Utėnai Castle, and the Minor, called Utėnai Grave, are 3 km southeast of the town of Utėna. They are separated by a ditch, 3-4 m wide and 13 m deep. The hill-forts were excavated by Regina Kulkaszkienė in 1975-1978. Especially valuable data were obtained during excavations of the Major hill-fort. Two cultural layers were found there. The lower layer belongs to the first millennium B.C. and the first centuries A.D. Investigations have revealed that during this period the hill-fort was inhabited by people of the Brushed Pottery Culture. Scattered quadrangular buildings of post construction with round-shaped stone foundations inside had been built at the settle ment. The whole settlement had been surrounded by a defensive barrier built of two rows of vertical poles woven over with branches. At the bottom, the barrier was reinforced with stone pavements of several layers. Stock-breeding was the main occupation of the population. The excavated remains of a metal melting furnace point to the existence of a bronze production centre at the site. The upper cultural layer (12th-14th centuries) was badly disturbed. There are no other remains of the wooden cas tele left except for former fortifications - a 2 meter high rampart, which sur rounded the hilltop in the northern part. Furthermore, the Minor hill-fort had been finally arranged and turned into a forework by that time. The time of adjustment of the Minor hill-fort coincides with the period of the castle on the Major hill-fort. In the western part of the hill-fort, the cultural layer of an old settlement has survived.

During the Old Iron Age (1st-6th cent. A.D.) and the folk migration period, the economic and social organization of the Baltic tribes underwent considerable change. Early in this period they learned how to extract iron from local seams one, which allowed iron tools and weapons to be used in everyday work activities. Iron technology facilitated agricultural work, and farming became the primary mode of subsistence. Trade with neighboring countries intensified, as did, most importantly, contacts with the Roman Empire. Large quantities of non-ferrous metal bronze, silver were imported into the Baltic lands. In turn, the Balts exported raw goods and commodities such as furs, leather, wax and amber — known as "northern gold" to the Romans — as well as some craft goods made by artisans. Archaeological artifacts and the number of ancient sites indicate that at this time the population was increasing, new settlements were being established, and Baltic tribal units were developing in size and complexity.

On the basis of burial type, archaeologists recognize a number of smaller cultural areas in the Old Iron Age, which are identified with tribes known from written sources. The sea coast, previously regarded as the Roman tradi tion of the west Balts, is now characterized by inhumation burials in flat graves. At this time, Prussia becomes the wealthiest sector of the western Balts, with Sam bia standing out as a particularly distinct region. Later written sources indicate it was the homeland of Sambian, Natangian and Vazimian tribes. Another distinct tribal unit in the western Balts of the Lithuanian coast, extending from the mouth of the Miša to the south to the Šventoji in the north, and Lake Plateliai and the Juva river, in the east. The custom of burial mounds disappeared in the coastal zone by the 3rd century. In the new practice, the local inhabitants inhumed individuals in flat burials, which, like the earlier barrows, were encircled by rings of stone, sometimes in concentric arrangements. Up to four concentric rings were sometimes constructed around the grave pit and then filled in with stones. The stone circles of neighboring graves were often interconnected. The custom of burying inhumed individuals in stone encircled barrows soon diffused to the west, to the territory of present-day Samogitia and southern Lithuania. This is associated with the arrival of new settlers from the coastal area. By the 4th century, the large culture-zone of Lithuanian and Latvian barrows, which had formed in the Old Iron Age, now split into three smaller units: Samogitia, Semgallia and Selonia. Their burial patterns remained largely unchanged until the 11th-13th centuries, a time when their tribal names begin to appear in written sources.

Barnes dated to the 1st century found in Samogitia usually include one inhumation, sometimes later joined by several other inhumations. During the 3rd to 4th centuries, cremation burials in carins were practised in southern Lithuania (from the middle reaches of the Nemunas to the Mozurian lakes). These are the lands of the tribal union of the future Lithuanians, who also include the Sudovians mentioned by Ptolemy.

In central Lithuania and the Lower Nemunas are distinctive flat cemeteries, which some analysts attribute to proto-Upland Lithuanians, while others believe they represent proto-Samogitians. This area includes the famous cemeteries of Egliai, Sargselis and Verhol (all in the present town of Kaunas), and which were excavated between World Wars I. Recent excavations in this region, at the Marvės cemetery on the left bank of the Nemunas in Kaunas, have uncovered a unique cemetery with a continuous burial tradition of about one thousand years.

It is more difficult to identify distinct tribal small areas in eastern Lithuania and the eastern part of present Belarus, where the Stokhid Ware Culture continues. Initially, this huge region appears to be undifferentiated. By the middle of the 1st millennium A.D., however, a new East Lithuanian Barrow Culture starts to form here. It seems to represent a natural evolution out of the earlier Stokhid Ware Culture. The first such burial sites appear in the 6th or 7th centuries, represented by barrows of two types: 1) earth piles with a stone circle at the foot, 2) with piles of earth and stones. Burial goods in the graves are rather poor.

The cultural situation of Baltic lands in the Middle Iron Age (5th-6th centuries) took a new turn. This is the result of both domestic and external factors. By the 5th century, the Roman Empire was collapsing, nomadic tribes were raging across Europe, and traditional economic and political centers were facing strong new competitors. It is possible that scattered groups of Goths and Huns reached the western Baltic lands. Evidence of this is a very rich 5th century male grave recently found in the cemetery of Vidigalai (District Skelbiūnai). It features a symbolic offering of two horses, a grave with an atypical cross-section, and exotic grave wealth: a silver-decorated drinking horn, five brooches (one is gilded) and a silver neck-ring. This suggests the burial of a wealthy warrior, perhaps the participant of a remote expedition. Further to the east, nomadic style arrowheads have been found in two graves at the Parkšiškių cemetery (District Kėdainiai) and at the hill-forts of Aukštakalnis, Kreivinė, and Pravazniki. Extensive socio-political changes also took place to the east and south of Baltic lands. In the east, the Slavic tribal units of Drogovičiai and Kriuchišiai formed and began to expand into the lands of the Eastern Balts, while Western Slavs were penetrating into the Lithuanian territory and Old Prussian lands in the west. In the 6th-7th centuries, the Slavs reached the present