

● DAUGLAUKIS

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The Dauglaukis burial ground where 127 graves of men, women and children were excavated is a remnant of the people of the Lower Nemunas Culture. Three successive chronological groups have been distinguished, covering the period from 70 to 260 A. D. The first, or the earliest group, comprises 6 graves (70-150 A. D.), the second, the principal group, consists of 39 graves (150-220 A. D.). The third group is the largest and consists of 59 graves (220-260 A. D.). There are relatively few (25) graves which have not been dated. Bronze coins of the period of Roman emperors found in ten graves in Dauglaukis help to securely date the graves. What was the structure of the Dauglaukis burial grounds? On the left side of the massif of graves it is not difficult to distinguish the central, i.e. the earliest ring of the burial grounds. Graves of later epochs comprise independent groups, i.e. elliptical circles or their parts. This structure of the burial ground gives an idea about the structure of the Dauglaukis community. It is quite probable that individual groups represent graves of individual families or relatives. The fact that men, women and children are buried next to each other proves that these rings are graveyards of individual families.

Based on the evidence of the graves, we have divided males and females into three groups, referring to them as the "ordinary" members of the community (men found with 1-4 burial items, women buried with 1-6 grave goods), the "well-off" members of the community (men with 5-8, women with 7-13 burial items) and the "rich" members of the community (men with 9-12, women with 14-20 burial items). The grouping of the graves showed that the "ordinary" members comprised the most numerous section of the Dauglaukis community, since 41 graves (or 49 percent) are attributable to this group. Thirty two graves (38 percent) belong to the "well-off", and only 11 graves (13 percent) are those of the "rich". The topography of the graveyards is convincing proof that, despite the fact that abundance of burial items varies greatly between individual groups, there was no tradition to bury the rich in special places in the necropolis.

The comparison of the male groups attests to their social differentiation. This is convincingly demonstrated by the quantitative ratios of those groups to the burial items. Within the male population, the ratios are as follows: 0.45:0.39:0.16 (the quantitative ratio) and 0.27:0.44:0.29 (the ratio of the burial items of the "ordinary" : "well-off" : "rich"). Therefore, more than a quarter of all the burial items have been classified as belonging to the "ordinary"



men who comprised almost half of all the males. The "well-off" group "own" the bulk of the grave goods, with 6 rich members of the community having more burial items than all the "ordinary" males put together. There is another ratio which makes the obvious wealth differentiation even more distinct. This is the ratio of the burial items which belong to every individual male from every individual group and is as follows: 2.8:5.1:8.5 (2.8, 5.1 and 8.5 burial items per "ordinary" "well-off" "rich" man, respectively).

The study of the burial items of the female groups indicates the same trend in wealth differentiation. We will compare the quantitative ratios of the groups of the female community to the burial goods attributable to them. The ratio among the entire female population is as follows: 0.52:0.37:0.11 (the "ordinary", "well-off" and "rich" women, respectively) and the ratio of their burial items is 0.25:0.48:0.27. In other words, only a quarter of all the burial items belong to the "ordinary" who comprised more than half of the female population. The bulk of the grave goods is attributable to the "well-off", with 5 "rich" women having more burial goods than the majority of the women. The ratio of the burial goods per woman from each individual group is as follows: 2.7:7.5:14.4.

During 70-260 A. D. the Dauglaukis community was not homogeneous, i.e. the communal product was not evenly divided and individuals differed in terms of the goods they possessed. It was a patriarchal society with apparent wealth differentiation manifested by the contrasting amounts of burial items of the burial goods and, indirectly, by the phenomenon of the spatial orientation of

the buried individuals, i.e. the males were buried with their heads directed to the north, while the heads of the females were turned to the south. In terms of wealth, there are three distinct groups within the community. The best equipped "worker" in the community is from the stratum of the "well-off". He possesses different tools intended for specific functions. The stratum of the "rich" represents the nobility of the community. The distinctive features of their graves are as follows: males' graves typically contain numerous weapons, as well as ornaments and belts of original forms, whereas female graves contain special head-dresses, bracelets and rings of original shapes.

Most researchers no longer question the close resemblance between social relationships and the general cultural level of the Germans and Balts during the period prior to 450 A. D. This resemblance becomes obvious when we compare their weapons, ornaments, and analyse trade (as well as trade routes). The role of Roman coins among the Aistian tribes has been thoroughly studied and

researched by M. Michelbertas. He has convincingly demonstrated the narrowness of the old concept ("Coins of the Roman Empire were used as raw material for bronze") and substantiated a new interpretation: coins of the Roman Empire were used as a monetary equivalent. Twelve coins were found in ten graves in Dauglaukis. Their continuity is amazing: they all are sesterces (bronze coins) dating back to the emperors of the Antoninian dynasty (from Antoninus Pius to Comodus). This attests to regular contacts that existed at the time between the Dauglaukis community and the Roman merchants through intermediary Prussians and Germans via "the Amber Road". The Aistians were aware of monetary transactions and made use of them. P. K. Tacitus noted that: "... we taught them to accept money as well."

"Germania" tells us about the custom of cremation, and indicates that the Germans did not throw clothes into the funeral pyre, as they did weapons. The Dauglaukis community did not cremate their dead before burying them and, like the Germans, did not bother to build "solid tombstones". Weapons constituted an important part of the things meant for the afterlife. The dead were seen off to the next world with their clothes on and with numerous ornaments. Caps made of cloth, with their surface covered with thin ornamented brass plates and the forehead, temple and skull areas decorated with pendants or intricate compositions, have been found in very few sites in northern Europe dating back to the first centuries A. D. Z. Blumbergs indicates 5 areas where such caps were found:

Blekmar (Germany), Kompolje (former Yugoslavia), Juve (Sweden), the Volga-Kama district (Russia) and Šernai (Lithuania). The cap from female grave 66 in Dauglaukis has many similar features, too. Such caps, undoubtedly, were ornaments of the tribal nobility and both German and Baltic wealthy women wore them to stand out from other members of their communities. The abundance of ornaments made of brass is another interesting feature. Since copper, tin, zinc, silver and gold are not found in the lands of the Balts, it is obvious that the Dauglaukis community was not short of the raw materials needed for craftsmen and jewellers. This indicates that trade relations were regular and steady. On the other hand, Lithuanian archaeologists investigated the origins of this raw material and concluded that at least part of it had been brought from the Alps area. This suggests steady contacts between the Balts and Germans. Social differences were not great. The Dauglaukis community lived under the conditions of military democracy which manifested itself in community meetings, pagan beliefs, customs law, patrimonial line of inheritance, election of dukes as the tribes' war chiefs, and the family as the major unit of the community. Therefore, M. Gimbutas's idea of the structure of the Baltic society at the beginning of historical times appears to be somewhat too categorical (say, it is quite improbable that the institution of ducal dynasties was estab-

lished at that time).

