The well-known Taurupis hill-fort is located in eastern Lithuania, Utena District, on the southern shore of the Tauragnai lake. There were badly disturbed burrows 400 m south-east of it. The barrow cemetery consisted of two groups - the western and the eastern, separated by 200-300 m. In 1970 and 1971, remains of the barrows were excavated by the Institute of Lithuanian History and the National Museum. A total of 13 barrow sites was excavated and another 12 trenches of different size were dug in an attempt to localize the disturbed barrows. Barrows of the western and eastern group are contemporary in terms of chronology. Remains of 8 barrows were found in the western part, only two of which yielded intact burials. The barrows are from 6-7 to 12-13 m in diameter, they were enclosed with rings of boulders. Found in the pit under the earth pile of barrows, were single male inhumation burials of warriors with a riding horse, supplied with a lot of weapons. These are the earliest rich burials of warriors with riding horses in Lithuanian (tribal seres) barrows. An exceptional example in terms of dimensions and particularly rich burial equipment, was the so-called burial 5, situated in the central position of the barrow cemetery. The barrow stood out from the remaining barrows in size (13.5 m in diameter, 1.5 m high) and the exceptional richness of the burial, with some artefacts unique in the Lithuanian archaeological material. The burial of the barrow Taurupis "Duke" has yielded perhaps the largest set of iron artefacts that have yet been found in cemeteries excavated in the territory of Lithuania.

The skeleton of a 40-50 year-old male was found under gilled gravel in the centre of the barrow, in a grave pit measuring 4 m in length and 2.8 m in width, 1.6 m deep from the horizon of the barrows. The individual was buried with his head oriented to the west, his arms folded on the chest. Weapons prevail in the grave equipment, which characterizes the buried individual as a distinguished warrior and chief. There was a big whetstone at the head of the burial. The garment of the individual was covered by a bronze crossbow brooch, he had a silver spiral ring on his left hand's finger. At his right side, partly on the chest, was an iron double-blade sword, 91 cm long, probably stuck in a wooden hilts. Especially impressive was the golden pendant sherd, decorated with silver, gilded mountings, and embossed with an ornamental relief. The sword was attached to a belt by two decorative massive silver gilded buckles. Such swords are rare specimens in the Lithuanian archaeological material of the 5th-6th centuries: one more is known from a 4th century burial at the Klektyniai burial cemetery (Lazdijai district). More sword scabbards of such an exquisite make have not been found either in the Baltic lands or the neighbouring Slavic countries. Under the blade of the sword, was a cylinder-shaped bead made of lime stone and set in a silver, gilded binding, the shape of which was semicircular. Following the traditions of the time, it had been most probably fastened to the hilts with a strap, as was very popular with the Hunnish and Germanic tribes. The other two buckles that have been recovered - a massive silver gift buckle, the shape and ornament of which are characteristic of the Scythians and the Balkans, and an oval-shaped iron buckle decorated with ugamits, set into gold-plated nails - are also unique finds in the Lithuanian archaeological material. Analogues to the latter buckle are known from the 5th century archaeological material of Yugoslavia and Hungary.

Close to the sword, bronze tweezers, le iron knives; an imported drinking horn in silver mountings were found. The deceased individual was buried with massive, bronze spurs decorated with silver, typical of western tribes. Two spears had been placed on the right side of the buried individual, as witnessed by the find of socketed spearheads at his feet. On the left side, at the legs, an axe was found. The legs of the buried individual were covered with a thick linen cloth, and a shield was put over him, preserved as an iron umbo. The burial also included a horse without riding bit, buried on his side on the left of the deceased, its head directed to the west.

The above grave presumably represents a burial of a warrior - chief of a few tribes, and, in terms of inventory, it is close to the 6th century "Duke" burials from Suvačiai (Poland) of the Przeworskian tribes. On the basis of the burial rites and the prevailing local character of burial goods (ornaments, spears or spearheads, umbo, whetstone), an assumption has been made that the grave belongs to a local inhabitant. The existence of such luxurious imported artefacts, which, judging from the shape and ornamental pattern, could have originated in the provinces of the Danube basin, shows that the buried individual had an exceptional social status.

How had the warrior from Taurupis get hold of imported artefacts? They might have been a booty of war. or presented as gifts. According to written sources, the Auduvis visited Theodoric in the beginning of the 6th century and received presents from him. There might be more delegations going to southern countries even earlier, and the warrior from Taurupis might have taken part in one of such ventures. The above mentioned sword, found in a scabbard so lavishly decorated, could only have been accessible to representatives of tribal aristocracy at that time, and it could have even been a royal present. A sculptural reconstruction of the face of the Taurupis "Duke" has been made on the basis of skeletal data.