Merovingian and Viking Periods in Norway from archaeological and historical sources. – Norwegian Archaeological Review, 18, 61–76.


Vasks, A. 1994. Apdzejonība, saimniecība un sabiedrība Daugavas baseinā bronzas un senākajā dzelzā laikmetā. Summary: The habitation areas, economy and society in the Bronze / Pre-Roman Iron Age in the Daugava basin. – LVŽ, 4, 54–76.


INTERPRETING THE EAST LITHUANIAN BARROW CULTURE

Vyktintas Vaitkevičius

In this article the origins and development of the East Lithuanian Barrow Culture (from the early 3rd to the late 13th centuries AD) are discussed, and the necessity of paying greater attention to the archaeological evidence is stressed. Correspondingly, various social and religious manifestations within this culture, relating to its formation, existence, and transitional periods are examined, and some new approaches are proposed.

Key words: Iron Age, East Lithuania, burial rites.

Vyktintas Vaitkevičius, Lithuanian Institute of History, 5 St. Kražių, LT-01108 Vilnius, Lithuania; vikiv@takas.lt

Introduction

In the basins of the Nemunas and Neris rivers there are many archaeological sites from the Roman, Middle and Late Iron Ages that are treated as monuments of the East Lithuanian Barrow Culture. This conception is highly important in order to obtain an objective understanding of the history of both Lithuania and Belarus.

At this point I would like to discuss a statement prevalent in the historiography and related to the interpretation of the East Lithuanian Barrow Culture. It has been stated that the roots of the Lithuanian nation are already evident in the early period of the East Lithuanian Barrow Culture (cf. Vilkaitė-Kulikauskienė 2001, 113). The development of this culture during the 1st and early 2nd millennium AD did not undergo any significant interruptions. This cultural formation became a form of the feudalistic organization in the 13th century as a direct result of the gradual development of the institutions and relationships between the members of the community. Almost all archaeological studies in the former Soviet Union were conducted according to such a pattern. The investigations of these cultures are actually much more sophisticated and should be verified in greater detail.

I would like to add some significant material to the investigation of East Lithuanian Barrow Culture, and interpret it as a much bigger complex of interdependent features including material culture, religious features, burial rites and peculiarities of lifestyle. This article is devoted to two aspects of the East Lithuanian Barrow Culture, namely its origins in the late second and early third centuries and the changes that followed in the middle of the fifth century (fig. 1).

Origins of the culture

Researchers only observe closer contacts between western Baltic tribes and Striated Ware Culture during the final period of its existence. Quite a number of rough-

Fig. 1. Presumed stages of the East Lithuanian Barrow Culture (drawn by the author).
surface pottery characteristic of the western Balts began to appear in the area of the Striated Ware Culture at the turn of the first millennium BC (Jaunius 1966; Būbrińskiš 1978, 250; Lukanij 1987, 20; Medvedev 1998, 82-84).

The same direction of interaction (from southwest to northeast) is demonstrated by the migration of small groups along the moraine heights of Sudovia, Drąžia, East Lithuania and Selonia to Suvalkai (Suwałki) region, eastern Lithuania, and Selonia (Illinek 1985, 44-46; Nowakowski 1995, 78; cf. Česnavičius 1985, 146). Single flat graves and barrows indicate both inhumations and cremations illustrate this process (Oswa, Przebřęd, Raczki, Sowajcaria in Suwałki region and Bukšiai, Kairėnai, Medžionys, Pakraukli, Selšiūnai – in Lithuania) (fig. 2).

Lesser known recently excavated graves dating from the 3rd century AD are located in Almenai-Kurganai, Antasari, Balniki, Migoys, Moša, Pakalniai, Pilviškės, Slabadle, Virginai (barrow groups) and Gražiniškiai, Zapšė (flat graves). A reviser of the hillfort materials shows that the end of the Striated Ware Culture and major changes in hillforts should be dated to the late 2nd and early 3rd, but not to 4th or 5th centuries (Lukanij 2001, 24). The complex of the archaeological sites in Kernavė provides good examples. During the late 2nd and early 3rd century the buildings on the Aukstkalnas hillfort were burnt down (Luchtanai 1994, 52). On the site where the Striated Ware Culture were buried in the Pajauta valley, a new large settlement was founced (Luchtanai 2002, 22).

The goods found in the graves and in some settlements, primarily enamelled penannular fibulae and cuff-shaped bracelets, show direct contacts between eastern Lithuania and the Suvalkai region on the one hand, and Bogaczewo on the other (Nowakowski 1995, 77-78; 1996, 91; Bitner-Wroblewska 1998, 308). So far, however, we have no answers about the origin of the barrows in Suvalkai and eastern Lithuania. At that time, barrows were unknown to the Dollkem-Korovo Culture in Samland and the Bogaczewo Culture in the Mazurian Lakeland (Nowakowski 1995, 79; Bitner-Wroblewska 1998, 308). Bi-ritualism was also unknown to the Bogaczewo Culture (Nowakowski 1998, 15). Big flat burial grounds with cremation graves were prevalent there.

I presume that the appearance of stone-covered barrows in Suvalkai and eastern Lithuanian regions in the 3rd century AD is a phenomenon similar to that in Poles'e and right-bank Mazovia (see Włodziewicz 1977, 70; 1986, 70) (fig. 3). In this region barrows did not predominate at that time (cf. Česnavičius, 1996). In 1975, however, 68 barrows were recorded in 21 localities (54 of them recently excavated) (Włodziewicz 1977, 69-70).

The presumption about the synchrony of the processes in both regions may be illustrated by the following facts:

(1) The construction of the stone-covered barrows in the first centuries AD and especially in the 3rd and 4th centuries in the
Wielbark Culture (types 4a-b; Wołogajewicz 1977, 71–75; 1986, 67–68) is the same as in Suwałkai and eastern Lithuania.

(2) The same should be said about the fact that barrows were mostly established for individual graves; inhumations were more numerous than cremations; burials were usually in pits beneath the foundation of a barrow; the prevalent directio

n of the graves was towards the north, with some inclination to both east and west (Morawiecki 1974, 163–164; Jas

(3) The tall stones (internationally called stelae) so characteristic of burial sites in the Wielbark Culture area (Chyżewska-Solowska 1971, 139; also see Kunticinski 1962, 101–103) are widespread in south-eastern Lithuania and partly also in western Belarus (see Tautavičius 2003, 80–84). The size and height of the stones were the same in both regions. In the Dieveniš
cės barrow group a tall stone was erected on the northern side of stone-covered barrow no. 3 (fig. 4). The remains of the de

stroyed cremation grave were found there (Tautavičius 1958, 71). Not far from the Migliniškės barrow group, there is also a tall stone, and two tall stones (1.15 and 1.5 m high) at two Noreikškės hillforts and an open settlement of the first centu
ries AD. It seems that a similar pair of tall stones also stood by the destroyed Riciliai-Degėsiai barrow group (Sniešeris 1935, 201).

In general, this presumptions conflicts with the fact that assemblages of Balts’ grave goods from the 3rd and 4th centuries often included weaponry (Dirmiškės, Eit
tulionys, Moša, Vingainai), in contrast to those in the Wielbark Culture.

In interpreting the appearance of stone-covered barrows in the Suwałkai and eastern Lithuanian regions, it is important to note two more phenomena. Firstly, many inhumation graves in the barrows dated to the 3rd and 4th centuries have been robbed (Dirmiškės, Eitu
tuliony, Mašiotai, Pliviškės) (Agrupcija 1989, 73). The example of the Eitu
tulionys cremation grave, which was found over a robbed inhumation grave, clearly shows that the robber
tes took place in ancient times. Secondly, stone-covered barrows are often situated on the former open-settlement areas of the Striated Ware Culture (Akenenai-Kurg
ganai, Eitu
tulionys, Moša, Pliviškės, Sausiai-Mašiotai, Vilkaiti
tinis, Vingainai; for Latvian examples, see Ilžojope, 1985, 40).

The first phenomenon may be explained in various ways, among them also as a re

sult of conflict between different/ unfriendly communities. In the second case, the behaviour of the people erecting stone
covered barrows in the areas of the former settlements resembles claims to establish their own power in a foreign territory.

In about the middle of the 3rd century the Sudovian Culture appeared in the Su
wałkai region (Kultūra Sudovskoja) (Nowa
kowski 1995, 77, 1998, 15). The number of barrows covered by stones and earth increased in eastern and especially in south-eastern Lithuania. Moreover, set
lements in open areas (Bakšiai, Nemai
tony, Pošionys, Sellūnai) and at the foot of small hillforts (Bežionys, Dirmiškės, Grauzdžiai-Bendžiukai, Lavariškės, Mašie
jai, Mėlioniškės-Bogotaiškė, Migonių, Moša Navxdai, Zapės-Paveiksimai, Žuklija) became the most prevalent form of dwellings in this region. Although in the northern and eastern localities the hill
forts of the Striated Ware Culture were common up to the early 5th century AD (Meščeris 1996, 63–64), the beginnings of the East Lithuanian Barrow Culture should be considered to lie in the first half and the middle of the 3rd century (Huyxa
nas 2001, 27). This was a time of changes in lifestyle (from big hillforts to open set
lements) and of the spread of new burial practices mainly attested by the barrows.

The first stage of the culture
(up to the mid-5th century)

The East Lithuanian Barrow Culture ab
sorbed various elements that were of vari
ous origins and for a long time were not com
pletely united. This area extended from the Daugava in the north and reached the middle of the Nemunas. The watershed between the Žeimenai and Sventoji rivers divided this cultural space into northern and southern areas. The latter, covering the middle Nemunas and Neris regions as well as the whole Žeimenai basin, was the main area of the above-mentioned proc
esses. Taking into consideration the typi
cal grave-good assemblage (see Simniški
tyte 1998, 20–22) and common collective bur
ials in the barrows, the northern part (in the upper Sventoji region) should be asso
 ciated with the traditions of the northern Lithuanian and Latvian Barrow Culture (cf. Ilžojope 1985; Simniški
tyte 1999).

Sometimes the southern part of the East Lithuanian Barrow Culture is divided into the northern area of the ‘Lithuanian bar
rows’ and the southern one of the ‘stone covered’ barrows (Huyxanas & Ūsi
kūnas 1988, 92–95; Tautavičius 1996, 46, 97; the approximate border would be the Neris river). However, the differences between these areas in about the 4th and 5th centuries were significant. In the north, too, there are quite a number of barrows covered by stones (Alinka, Mėzionių, Paraisiai, Pliviškės, Šilinė-Borava) and in the south

Earth (Migonių, Punios Silas). In all of the barrows, inhumation graves are found predominately beneath the barrow foun
dation. The grave-good assemblages are the same in the both areas; and the gen

eral northern (western or north-western) grave orientation is also similar.
shaped fire steels found in Mėžionys and Pilviškės (Godowski 1974, 65; Kukoliškis 1985 (type IAA2a); Ginalska 1991, 57–59, 66–67 (types C1, F3); Michelbertas 1999). Buckles of the types D17, D20, D29, D30, G1, H1, H13 (according to Madyda-Legatko 1986) and spearheads of the types 1A, 1B, 4A, 4B (according to Kazakevičius 1988) also often belong to male grave-goods assemblages.

Among standard open settlements of the first stage of the East Lithuanian Barrow Culture worth mentioning are those in Bakišiai (materials are still unpublished) and Kernavė (Lukhanis 1987).

While exploring hillforts and settlements at their foot, different cultural layers were not always properly chronologically distinguished. In this respect a notable exception would be the recently excavated Aukuro Kalnas hillfort in Kernavė.

The settlements had consisted of rectangular post buildings. Pottery with a rough surface was evidenced by the potsherds found there (about 70 per cent). The rest was represented by striated, smooth and polished pottery. Many clay spindle whorls, awls, knives, and finds connected with iron manufacture were also unearthed there (cf. Lukhanis 1987; Lukhanis 2001).

The time of abandonment of the open settlements is not completely clear. Cylinder-shape ribbed spindle whorls and pinched potsherds found in Kernavė indicate that this may have taken place in around the 5th century (Luchtanis 1998, 84).

Buried fortifications and triangular arrowheads peculiar to the Huns would clearly indicate the end of one settlement stage in the hillforts in the mid-5th century (Zabielska 1995, 49; Lukhanis 1997, 15–16). However, the changes in burial practices at the same time have not yet been discussed in greater detail. This process seems to have been one of the short and dynamic processes in the history of the discussed culture.

The barrows of the same type and the location of the early cremation graves in pits beneath barrow foundation illustrate the link between old and new burial customs. Contrary to prevalent opinion, (cf. Lukhanis & Šimpanskas 1988, 95; Tautavičius 1996, 52) many old burial sites were abandoned (Eitulionys, Mašiøjūnai, Mėžionys, Slabadle) with the spread of the cremation rite or soon after. During this short transition period it was customary to arrange cremation graves in the mounds of the former erected barrows (Paraisčiai, Rudašiai, Taupališkis). In the same period many new burial sites were established, and cremation graves are generally found in such sites (see selected data in the appendix).

Certain geographical features also distinguish old and new burial sites. The newly established burial sites usually did not have any direct relations with hillforts or open settlements. With regard to their environment, the barrows belonging to the first stage of the culture under consideration are located in more arid regions (cf. I. Ilgutė 1985, 45–46; that is also characteristic of the burial sites of the Wielbark culture – Maksimovičienė 1974, 162). East Lithuanian barrow groups established in the 5th century are quite often situated in sandy areas (Pabarė, Pausuys, Sudota, Vyžiai).

The spread of the cremation rite led to the disappearance of spiral temple ornaments – indicators of the first stage of the culture. Single spiral temple ornaments, found only in the Chernaya Luzha barrow no. 2, in the double cremation grave and in barrow no. 7 of the third site at Padiobė-Saltalainė, imply that these goods were sporadically used until the turn of the 5th century (see Kaupuzkonienė 1899, 36–47; Steponaitis 2000, 205).

Following the wide distribution of the cremation rite, standard female grave-goods became spindle whorls and awls...
untypical of burials of the former period (Tautavičius 1953, 144). In the course of the new stage of the East Lithuanian Barrow Culture, however, the custom of placing sickeles in female graves was still preserved. However, dealing with processes of the 5th century, I will pay special attention to male grave-goods.

A common male grave-goods assemblage of the East Lithuanian Barrow Culture appeared in the mid-5th century. It consisted primarily of conical shield bosses and iron fibulae of the so-called Vilkonys and Pilviniai types. B-shaped buckles (types H23, H24 according to Madyla-Legutki 1986), narrow-blade axes (also with elongated backs) and some types of spearheads (2, 3, 4B according to Kazakevičius 1988) and knives (cf. Mešneienė 1995, 57–58) (fig. 6).

Assemblages of this kind appearing in large areas between the middle Nemunas in the south, the Sventoji in both the west and the north, and the middle Neris in the east, have evidently enlarged the area of the East Lithuanian Barrow Culture. Many burial sites were established in newly settled areas, for instance along the upper Gauja, the upper Zemiai and at Lake Swiri (see fig. 2).

The above-mentioned male grave-goods assemblage appearing in both inhumation and cremation graves, couched in my opinion point to the false conclusion that the spread of the cremation rite was a long and slow process that took place between the late 4th and early 6th centuries (Tautavičius 1996, 52; cf. Bertašius 2002, 75, 79, 165). Actually, related weaponry in a particular burial site was found only in inhumations or in cremations. For example, conical shield bosses are found only in inhumations (Bauboniškienė-Musteniai, Degešės-Labotiskės) or in cremations (Popai÷ Vinčiūnai, Višakiai, Vyžiai). The same phenomenon is evident with respect to other kinds of goods. I therefore doubt whether the male grave-good assemblage of the mid-5th century was characterized by such a long lifespan.

The 'farewell to weaponry' does not seem to have been long and gradual. Most likely only the members of two or three generations (maybe father-son, older son-younger son) were buried with their equipment. The types of goods representing the male assemblage of the 5th century were not local – they were often distributed widely in central and south-eastern Europe (cf. Bajaniak & Karpiński 1989; Januropys 1989; Bliujevičius 2002, 148–149). From this perspective, it is worth noting that the spread of popular goods such as B-shaped buckles or iron fibulae with lofty bow did not in principle cross the western border of the East Lithuanian Barrow Culture. In addition, it is not quite clear why the male assemblage did not include the bracelet with thickened terminals. This ornament was especially popular among the inhabitants of the adjacent central Lithuanian region (see Kazakevičius 1993, 119; Tautavičius 1996, 250–252; also Bertašius 2002, fig. 25).

Some bracelets with thickened terminals, found in cremation graves of eastern Lithuanian barrows belong to female or unidentified assemblages (Bauboniškienė-Musteniai, Poikony, Sudota 1st site). The only known exception would be a destroyed inhumation grave in the Taurupis barrow no. 4, where a silver bracelet of a related type with a conical shield boss was found (Tautavičius 1981, 34, fig. 38).

The main question is why the appearance of the above-mentioned male grave-goods assemblage coincides with the spread of the cremation rite among the inhabitants of eastern Lithuania. I have mentioned cultural changes in eastern Lithuania in the mid-5th century, but at this moment I will emphasize that these changes were parallel to those in other Baltic regions. One can compare the situation in central Lithuania and along the lower Nemunas (Simne 1994), Selonia (Simniškaitė 1999, 31, 33), Suvalkiai and Mazuria (Antoniwicz 1960, 321; Jaskanis 1974, 37; Nowakowski 1998, 16; Bitner-Wróblewska 1998, 305). The cremation rite appeared in a large area of eastern Lithuanian barrows together with the standard weaponry assemblage (this may not be a special Baltic feature, cf. Steuer 1982, 189). This warrior stratum was united by both weaponry of the same type and similar approaches to the afterlife (predominately to cremation). In addition to the general fact of cremation, the customs of breaking and destroying weapons as well as placing them in particular positions in the burials must be mentioned (Kuncienė 1980, 49; Tautavičius 1996, 55–56; Vėlius 2000, 237).

**Discussion**

The history of the East Lithuanian Barrow Culture is much more complicated than the researchers sometimes suggest. The cultural, social and religious aspects influenced by external and internal factors changed more than once. Various points of view enable us to treat this culture (from the 3rd to the 5th centuries) as dynamic and having interactions with other cultures. The distribution of stone-covered barrows and tall stones, their location in the former settlements, grave robberies, and spiral temple ornaments as cultural indicators as well as standard weaponry assemblages and the introduction of the cremation rite should evidently be discussed and verified once again.

It can be presumed that the Wielbark Culture (obviously, as well as the substratum of the Striáte Ware Culture) played a significant role in the process of the formation of the East Lithuanian Barrow Culture. The interaction between Balts and the Wielbark Culture is an interesting and promising topic of research (cf. Nowakowski 1989). Some examples discussed above indicate that this interaction can be characterized not only by the exchange of goods. In the early 3rd century, direct influences from the south reached the Balts. People from the Wielbark Culture area participated in the formation of a new cultural unit in the former area of the Striáte Ware Culture.

Some facts indicate that the first stage of the East Lithuanian Barrow Culture, which began in the 3rd century, ended in about the mid-5th century: namely, the changes in male and female grave-goods assemblages; a transition from prevalent individual burials in the barrows to collective ones; the abandonment of the old burial sites and the establishment of new ones, as well as the neglect of the open settlements. One of the stages of hillfort use ended after the Hunnic forays in the same period. In the middle of the 5th century significant cultural changes (in social life, burial customs, and so on) are also observed in the neighbouring regions.

The fact that the innovations in burial practice, supposedly introduced by warriors in the mid-5th century did not completely suppress the old rites should signify a link between the first and second stages of the culture. In this event the warriors buried in the barrows could have been representatives of the same or a closely related culture. In what way they became
bearers of the new burial rite is not clear. Perhaps they were related to the events in central Europe in the 5th century and even its participants. According to some suggestions, the cremation rite could have reached eastern Lithuania from the Dnieper area or some other eastern Baltic region (Nowakowski 1995, 80; Volkaite-Kulkauskiené 2001, 174, 321).

In my opinion, when speaking about the introduction of the cremation rite it is important to emphasize that this process was not geographically uniform (cf. Vonkář, Kümpen 1979, 38; Jytkarasi & Yauhnick, 1988, 93). In some localities warrior graves marked the end of the inhumation period, and in others only the beginning of a long period of cremations. Rich male grave goods assemblages of the mid-5th and early 6th century were unearthed in both inhumation (Tauraplis barrow no. 5) and cremation graves (grave no. 4 in Sudota site no. 1, barrow no. 30) (cf. Bitter-Wróblewska 2001, fig. 33).³

Conclusions

The history of the East Lithuanian Barrow Culture offers numerous examples of social and religious processes as well as many difficulties in the interpretation of the rise and development of the culture. The appearance of stone-covered barrows in the regions of Suvalkai and eastern Lithuania in the 3rd century AD is in all probability related to the same process in Polësye and right-bank Mazovia (in the Wielbark Culture’s area).

The first stage of the East Lithuanian Barrow Culture is characterized by prevalent inhumation graves. The spiral temple ornaments with overlapping terminals may be regarded as reliable indicators of this stage of the said culture.

The new social and religious processes in eastern Lithuania in the mid-5th century are linked to the significant cultural changes that took place in western and central Europe.

References

Godlewski, K. 1974. Chronologia okresu późnołacińskiego i wczesnego okresu wędrówek ludów w Polsce północno-

³ Besides some impressive female inhumation graves of the same period were unearthed in Cigelné (barrow no. 4, together with an infant) (Zabjela 1986, 45–46), in Paravinieni-Tekšukai (barrow no. 11, together with an infant) (Seménas 1998), in Balulai (barrow no. 12) (Klaugaite 2002).

Klaugaite, V. 2000. Tyrinėjimai Baltilerių pilkapyno 1999 m. Summary: Explora
Luchantas, A. 1998. Gynvenvieji ir kap-


штрихованной керамики (по материалам керамики). Zusammenfassung:  
Białystok, 81–85.
Пукковский, Ф. В. 1899. К исследованию бассейна Вилии в археологическом отношении. Москва. (Off print from: "Ру̀ды десятого археологического съезда в Петре, 1. Москва, 71–173).  
Taštavičius, A. 1953. Восточная Литва в первом тысячелетии нашей эры. Диссертация на соискание звания кандидата исторических наук. Вильнюс (PhD Thesis manuscript stored in Lithuanian Institute of History.)

**Appendix**

East Lithuanian Barrow Culture

Selected list of excavated barrow groups dated to the Roman and Middle Iron Ages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Total number of barrows and excavated items</th>
<th>Number of inhumations</th>
<th>Number of cremations</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st stage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinkūnės</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūgiūnai</td>
<td>3/1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puntažai I</td>
<td>4/2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Padvartikės (Blagodatnė)</td>
<td>7/1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilviškes</td>
<td>9/1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prienai Šilas</td>
<td>10/1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viesužiai</td>
<td>5/3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miegynys</td>
<td>36/6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moša (Naujasodas)</td>
<td>13/8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>A horse grave found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varapinkės</td>
<td>ca.20/10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meziūnys</td>
<td>16/16</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slabadele</td>
<td>ca.30/26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taurapilis I</td>
<td>14/8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>At least 4 horse graves found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maisiūtynai</td>
<td>43/22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>There was also a cremation grave dated to the Late Iron Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taurapilis II</td>
<td>7/7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antanarė (Laukai)</td>
<td>41/12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 horse graves found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eistulynys</td>
<td>ca.20/14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd stage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borova</td>
<td>31/5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akmėnai-Kurgainai</td>
<td>7/3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Želmeniškė</td>
<td>7/7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraisčiai I</td>
<td>14/11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puplikės (Varėnos r.)</td>
<td>7/25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balutai</td>
<td>ca.15/13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augėkünai</td>
<td>ca.20/16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vilkuškainis</td>
<td>ca.150/34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žvirbliai</td>
<td>70/65</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ca.50</td>
<td>A number of graves dated to the Roman and Middle Iron Ages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mickionys</td>
<td>ca.5/3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ziboleikė III</td>
<td>4/1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Versekėle</td>
<td>18/11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### PRINCIPLES OF ESTONIAN PREHISTORIC RELIGION: WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS TO SOUL BELIEFS

**Tõnno Jonuks**

The article offers an overview of the development of religion in the areas of present-day Estonia. Two long periods, the Bronze and Iron Ages, are under investigation, and these have been divided into five sub-periods in accordance with grave forms. It will be shown how different phenomena were important in different periods and how these developed. The distinctive element is the cult of ancestors, which was orientated mostly towards the elite. Different concepts of the soul can also be observed. It seems that during the earlier periods, this concept of a collective soul was more important, whereas during later periods, the idea of an individual soul became more and more important. The cult of the skull can also be followed through the analysis of archaeological data. Over a 2000-year period we can follow a constant development of the religion, where different phenomena undergo changes but are nevertheless connected with earlier and later forms.

**Key words:** prehistory, prehistoric religion, graves, elite, ancestor cult, cult of skull, concepts of a collective and individual soul, development of religious beliefs.

Tõnno Jonuks, Estonian Literary Museum, 42 St. Vanemuise, Tartu 51003; tonno@folklore.ee

In this article I will present some principles of prehistoric religion in Estonia during the Metal Ages, between the 11th century BC and the 13th century AD. The article is based on my MA thesis (Jonuks 2003), and only the main results are presented here. Most of the discussion has been removed because of the limitations of the article. A much longer article, together with argumentation will be published in 2005 in the collection of articles *Mythologica Uralica* (Jonuks, in print).

Religion has usually been studied using the phenomenological method, in which a single religious phenomenon is studied; it usually concentrates on the description and development of the phenomenon. The method has been used extensively, not only by historians of religion (Masing 1995; Paulson 1997; Viires 2001), but also by archaeologists (Jaanits 1961; Selrand 1974; Kulmar 1994) in studying Estonian prehistoric religion. Unfortunately, the method allows us to see only one side of religion (see the critique of the method in Hedin 1997; Jensen 2003).

In the following I will attempt to examine religion in one particular period and compare different phenomena, trying to date them, and to analyse which phenomena might have been present and coincided. In doing so, the main purpose is to look at religion as a complete picture, as a narrative of one period (Jensen 2003, 451). The problem that remains is that we can mostly only cover such themes as burying, concepts of the soul and the Afterworld.

But this is the problem with our sources and the level of our knowledge, and the broader purpose of the study should still be to examine religion as a system of different phenomena, including deities, rituals and beliefs concerning the society of the living, etc. To achieve this purpose, many other disciplines should also be involved in the study, but if the task is to follow the development of prehistoric religion, the basic discipline should remain archaeology.

As for the sources, the article is based more on archaeological data than on folk-