

SOME NOTES ON CURONIAN WOMEN'S BEAD SETS WITH BRONZE SPACER PLATES IN THEIR HEADBANDS, HEADDRESSES MADE OF CLOTH AND UNACCOUNTABLE WARE DURING THE VIKING AGE AND EARLY MEDIEVAL TIMES

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Abstract

Curonian women's bead sets with bronze spacer plates or pectoral ornaments, headbands, headdresses made of cloth, caps adorned with metal spirals and unaccountable ware from the Viking Age and early medieval times in a lot of cases are not correctly interpreted. Some of the Curonian ornaments investigated in this article have good parallels in Livonian, Gotlandic and Scandinavian material and material from Finland. At the same time, bead sets with spacer plates both in Gotland and in Curonia were an outcome of the rivalry between Western Europe and the Byzantine Empire in designing symbols of power and prestige.

Key words: bead set, spacer plate, pectoral ornament, headband, headdress, unaccountable ware.

Some notes on Curonian women's headdress

It seems that Curonian culture is one of the best known of its kind researched by scholars. However, some aspects of Curonian culture based on inaccurate assumptions are interpreted wrongly. This has happened with Curonian headdresses, to which have been attributed even bead sets composed of bronze spacer plates and monochromic and multicoloured glass and bronze beads. The same has happened with unknown designed cloth headdresses and ware with clasps. The problem occurred because different research classifies identical objects as different artefacts. Another part of this problem developed out of objective conditions, such as unpublished material of Curonian cemeteries, the poor survival of artefacts even during excavations, or the fragmentation of artefacts in the storage of museums. Furthermore, littoral soil creates bad conditions for the preservation of all sorts of organic material (bone, cloth, leather). These aspects do not promote the positive analysis of material. The appearance and development of the custom of cremation also aggravates research into these ornaments. Similarly, without quoting simultaneous analogies from the Eastern Baltic region, Scandinavia, Gotland, Finland and other countries, the wrong conclusions about some culture features of Curonian culture are reached.

Metal clasps of the Curonians' predecessors in Western Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture

For centuries, both married women and young girls of Baltic tribes covered their hair. Women wore hemispherical caps in the Western Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture, the Nemunas delta region and central Lithuania from the end of the second century till the middle of the fourth century (phase B2/C1–C3) (Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė 1959: 32–33, Figs. 2–3; Jovaiša 1992: 97; Kačkutė 1995: 14). These caps were fastened with cloth with tiny bronze bobbles with legs, of a specific design.

At the same time, headbands designed with tiny bronze bobbles fastened by leather or cloth were common to women's garments of Western Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture (Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė 1959: 45–46, Fig. 19; Kačkutė 1995: 15–18). Some such headbands were adorned with double flat spirals.

To the headbands were attributed artefacts made from four to seven leather strips, with bronze staples and joined to two bronze clasps (Fig. 1: 1) (Bezenberger 1892: 153, 160–161, Tafel: VIII: 15; Šturms 1942; Stankus 1995: 39–40, Fig. 33; Banytė-Rowell 2001: Fig. 25). Most of the headbands with clasps are too fragmented, and it is impossible to reconstruct the ornament or even to describe them as headbands (Stankus 1995: Fig. 33). It should be mentioned that headbands with clasps are concentrated between the left bank of the middle reaches of the River Minija and the vicinity

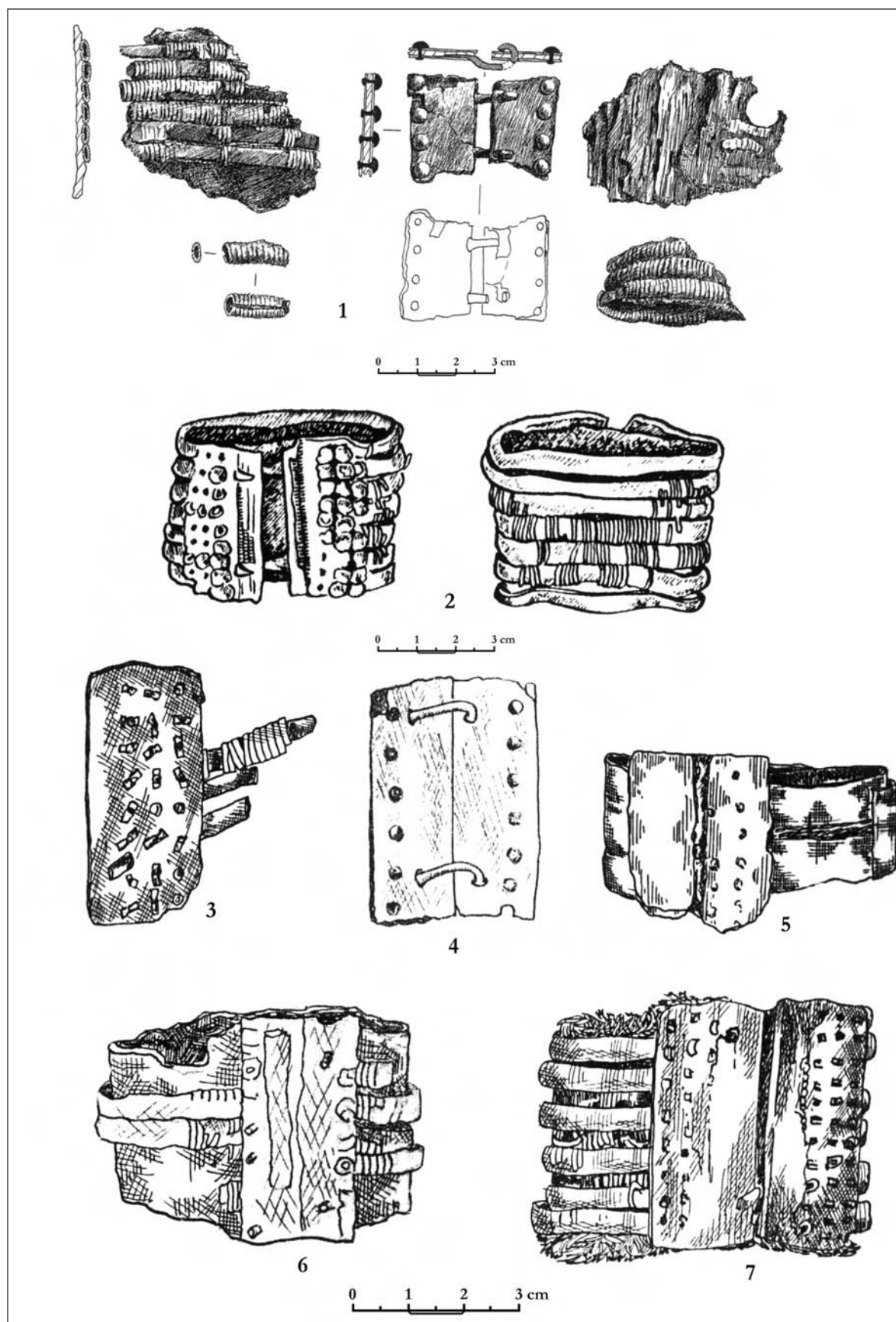
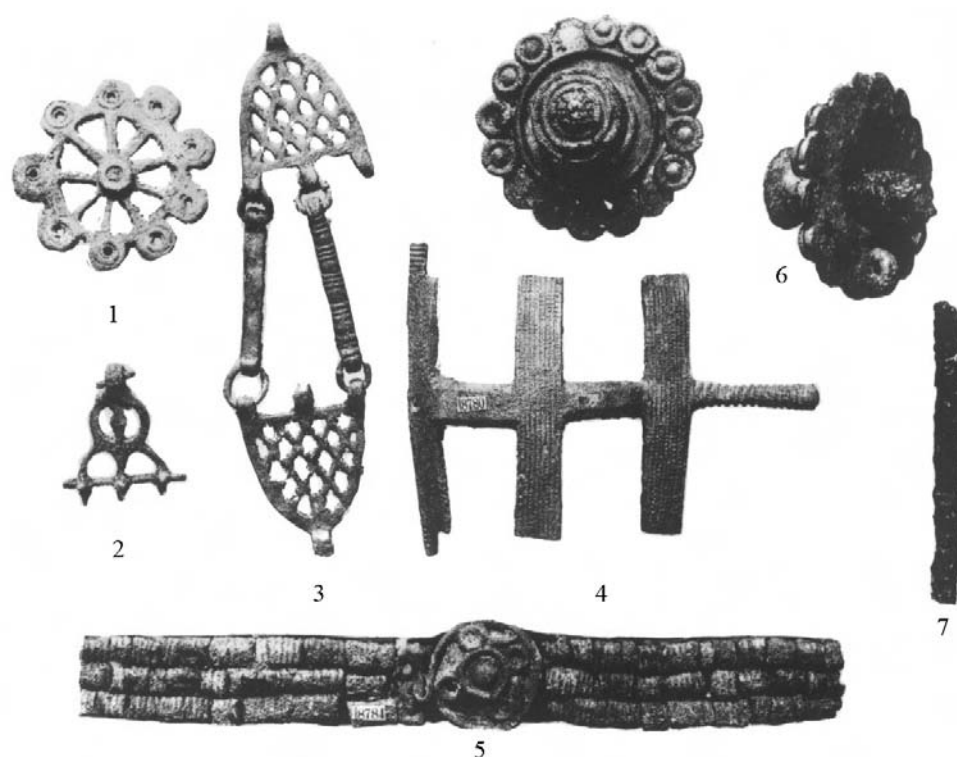


Fig. 1. Unaccountable ware: 1 Baitai cemetery, grave 37; 2 Palanga, grave 20; 3 Palanga, grave 108; 4 Laiviai, stray find (LNM AR 2: 31–32); 5 Palanga, grave 90; 6 Laiviai, grave 15; 7 Palanga, grave 100 (1–5 bronze, leather, birch bark; 6 bronze, leather, birch bark, silver plate; 7 bronze, leather, birch bark, cloth; 1 - after Banytė-Rowell, 2001, Fig. 25; 2–7 LNM AR. Drawings by Audronė Ruzienė).

Fig. 2.
Aukštkiemiai
(formerly Ober-
hof, Klaipėda
district), grave
202:1–4, 5
armlet, and
grave 388:6–7
(photograph from
VDKM archive,
no scale)



of Klaipėda. An exception to this distribution is only the headband found at Mazkatuži (Liepāja district, Latvia)¹. However, bronze clasps produced from two rectangular bronze plates similar to clasps are attributed as headbands, belts, armrings and garment clasps at the same time (Bezenberger 1892: 153, 160–161, Tafel: VIII: 15; Stankus 1995: 63, Fig. 55: 13–14).

To the specific armlet might be ascribed ornaments made from two or four leather strips and embraced with bronze staples, and in the front part joined with a round clasp similar to the decoration of box-shaped neck-rings (Fig. 2:5). Such ornaments have been found only at Lazdininkai (Kalnalaukis, grave 81/2003) and Aukštkiemiai (formerly Oberhof, Klaipėda district, grave 202) (Butkus, Kanarskas 2005: 118–119; MVF archive; photograph of Aukštkiemiai cemetery, graves 202 and 388, from VDKM archive). The armlet from Aukštkiemiai has not survived, and the headband (?) from Lazdininkai (Kalnalaukis) was found to have disintegrated. Therefore, it is difficult to judge their real purpose.

It might be that all the artefacts mentioned above were pieces of headbands which women of the Western

Lithuanian Stone Circle Grave Culture wore from the end of the second century till the middle of the fourth century (phases B1/C2–C3). However, for the moment there is not enough data to argue that headbands with rectangular clasps in a certain way came into the Curonian culture of the seventh to ninth centuries (Figs. 1: 2–7; 3: 2).

Bead sets with bronze spacer plates or headbands of Curonian women?

Several Curonian women's bead sets with bronze spacer plates are attributed as headbands, while other ornaments strung with the same accessories (spacer plates and different sorts of beads), after more than 50 years of intensive investigations into Curonian culture, are considered to be pectoral ornaments (Figs. 4–6) (Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė 1959: 48–49; 1986: 146–147; 1997: 39–40, Fig. 31; Kuncienė 1981: 78; Bliujienė 2001: 235–242, Figs. 2–4). Therefore, the problem of confusing the same ornament originates from several different reasons. Firstly, ornaments with spacer plates and different beads appeared in Curonia during the Late Viking Age, when the Curonians developed cremation burial customs. Only a few ornaments strung with bronze spacer plates and beads have been found in late inhumation graves. In these cases, ornaments strung with bronze spacer plates and different beads were found on the breast or on the nape of the deceased women (Valatka 1956; 2004: 56–59; LAB 1961: Fig.

¹ Baitai (Klaipėda district, grave 37), Bandužiai (Klaipėda district, in graves 63 and 85 only rectangular bronze clasps were found), Mazkatuži (Liepāja district, grave 5), Šernai (Klaipėda district, graves 24 and 72). Artefacts found in the Šernai cemetery by Adalbert Bezenberger are ascribed as parts of belt clasps (grave 24) or details of a headband (grave 72) (Bezenberger 1892: 153, 160–161, Tafel: VIII: 15).

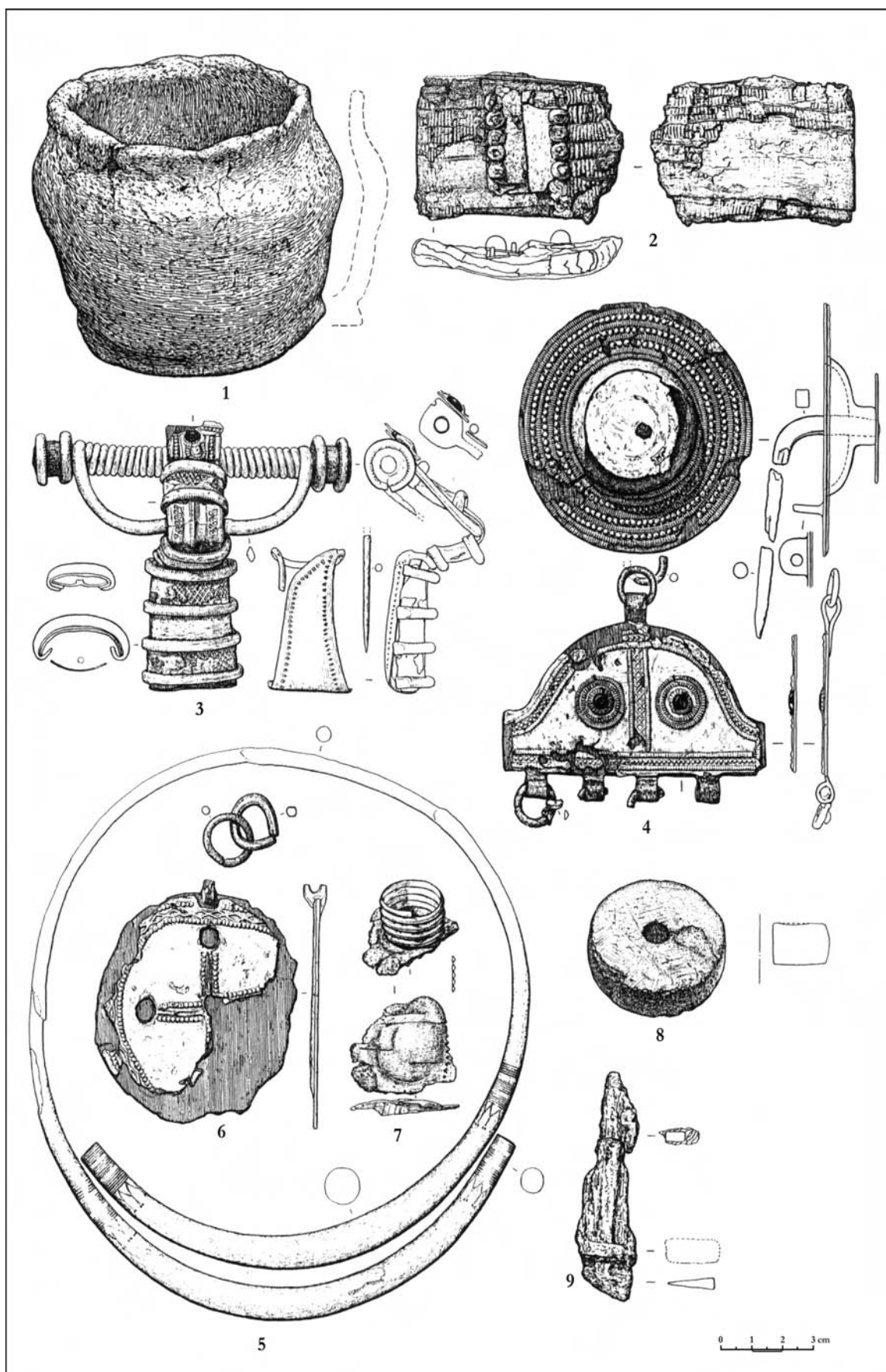
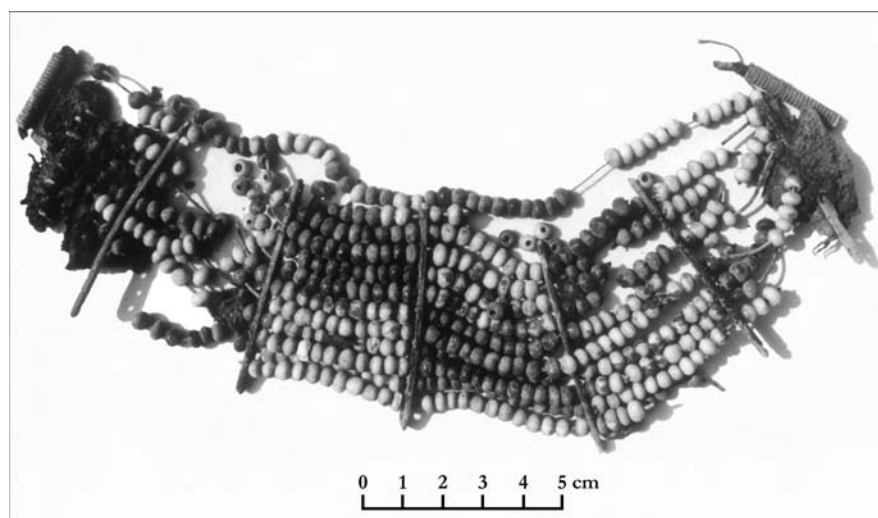


Fig. 3. Lazdininkai cemetery (Kalnalauskis, Kretinga district) inhumation woman's grave 72/2000 (1 clay; 2 bronze, leather, birch bark; 3 silver, bronze, silver plate, blue glass; 4 bronze, iron, silver plate, blue glass; 5 silver; 6 bronze, silver plate, blue glass; 7 bronze, birch bark; 8 amber; 9 iron; drawing by Virgilijus Truklickas)

Fig. 4. Pectoral ornament or bead set from Bandužiai cemetery, cremation burial 43a (MLIM, bronze, glass; photograph by Mindaugas Brazauskas)



270; LLM 1958: Fig. 415). However, it is difficult to establish exactly how such ornaments were located on the bodies of deceased women even in inhumation graves, because in the coastal cemeteries skeletons and other organic materials have disappeared. Most of the bead sets are found in a disintegrated state. Therefore, the position of the artefact in the grave provides few clues in discussing the original placement of the ornaments. Consequently, at Siraičiai grave 7(18) and Gintališkė grave 5 fashionable bead sets or pectoral ornaments strung with bronze spacer plates and different beads were found.

A hemispherical cap adorned with bronze spirals and fixed to the deceased woman's hair with two different headdress pins and a fashionable bead set with seven bronze spacer plates were found at the Siraičiai cemetery in the inhumation grave 7(18). This is obvious from the report of the researcher Vitas Valatka (Valatka 1956; 2004: 56–59). A similar pectoral ornament was found at the Bandužiai cemetery in a woman's cremation burial 43A (Fig. 4). The bead set was found on the nape of the deceased woman at Siraičiai. This ornament was 23 centimetres in length and has seven bronze spacer plates 5.8 centimetres wide. Each of the bronze spacer plates has 12 small holes; a bronze wire was threaded through these holes, and about five hundred small black and white glass beads (with a diameter of 0.4 centimetres) were strung on the bronze wire (Valatka 1956; 2004: 56–59).

One more fashionable bead set or pectoral ornament and hemispherical cap adorned with bronze spirals were found in the richly equipped female (girl's) grave 5 at the Gintališkė cemetery (Plungė district). The bead set was found on the breast of the deceased person in an extended position (Baleniūnas 1940: 14–17; LAB 1961: Fig. 270; LLM 1958: Fig. 415). This fashionable pectoral ornament was strung from two rectangular-shaped bronze spacer plates, 42 blue, whitish and yellow glass

beads and bronze spirals. All the parts of this bead set were strung in five rows (Baleniūnas 1940: 14–17). A bronze neck ring and necklace strung with 35 glass and bronze beads were found on the deceased girl's neck (Baleniūnas 1940: 14; LLM 1958: Figs. 362, 415). There was a reason to put fashionable pectoral jewellery on the girl's breast. The importance of the bead set was emphasised in this act at the same time.

Vladas Nagevičius has written about the “garland of bronze spirals” from the first Pryšmančiai cemetery (Nagevičius 1935: 62)². However, he did not indicate the circumstances of the finding of this artefact, and just mentioned that a “garland of bronze spirals” was found during his previous excavations in 1909, and that this item is similar to the artefact from the male grave 65 (Nagevičius 1935: 51, 84, Tables I: 4, VII: 1). It might be that the cap adorned with ten rows of spirals was found in the male inhumation grave 65. On the other hand, it might be that an elaborate but typical Curonian men's belt set with pendants was enclosed in this grave beside the deceased man's head (Nagevičius 1935: 26–27, 61, tab. VII: 1). The artefact written about by Nagevičius in 1958 was somehow reconstructed as a female “headband” (LLM 1958: 332, Figs. 359–360). This reconstruction of a “headband” or “garland of bronze spirals” has no clasp or other possibility to be fastened to the hair, cap or cloth headdress, because all the parts of it are not joined into one piece.

A few bead sets or ornaments with bronze spacer plates were found in “specific graves” and perhaps collective cremations, or are known as a stray finds (Lekemė vilage³, Plungė district) (Butėnienė 1959: 164; Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė 1959: 48–49, Fig. 21; Valatka 2004: 73).

² This artefact is in the LNM (LNM AR 3: 59).

³ The pectoral ornament came to the Alka Museum in Telšiai from the private collection of Lapinskas (from Lekemė vilage).

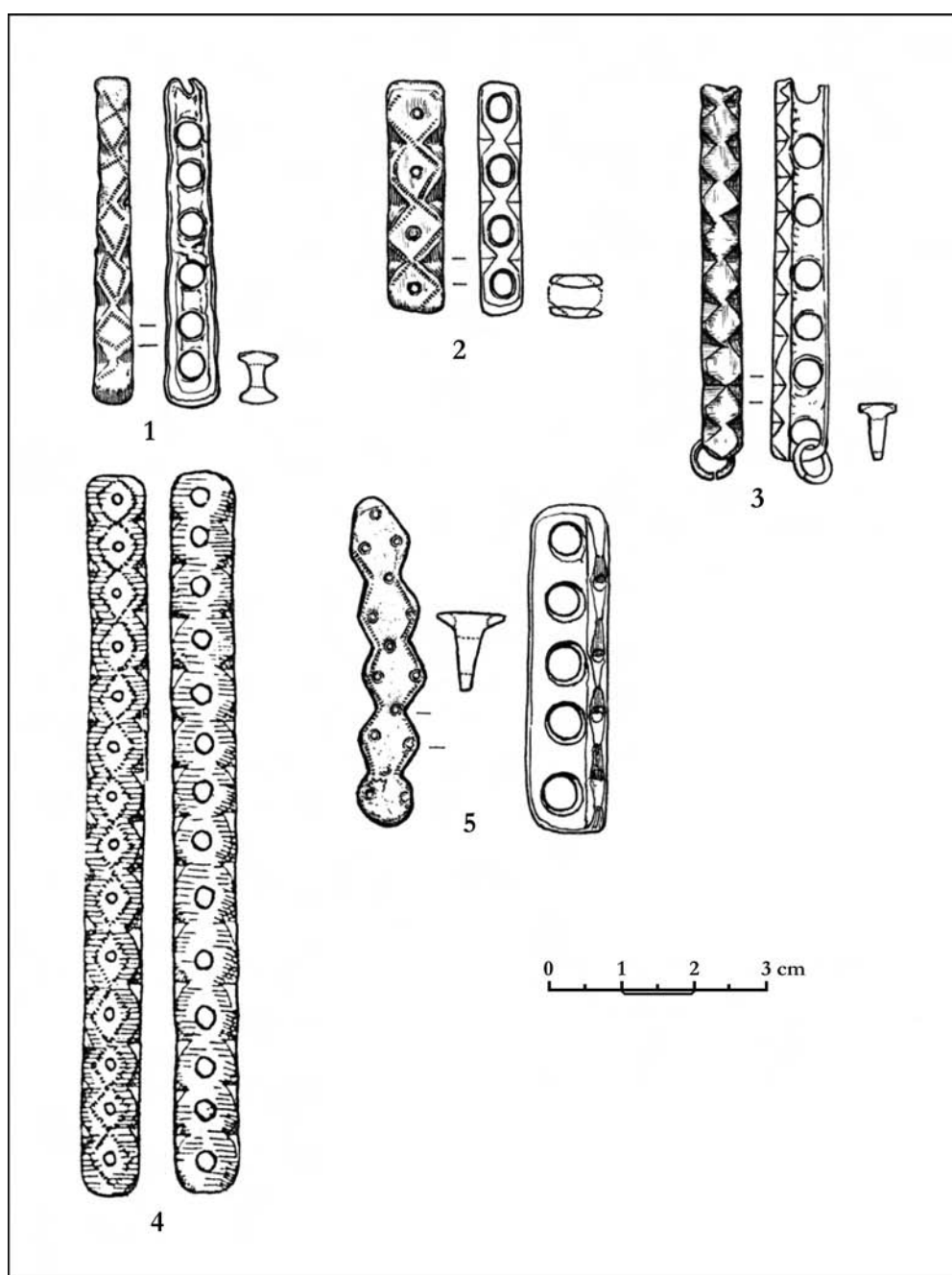


Fig. 5. Bronze spacer plates of Curonian bead sets: 1–3 Pryšmančiai I: KM without inventory numbers; 4 Klaišiai (Truikiai), stray find; 5 Lazdininkai (Kalnalaukis), cremation burial 179/1976 (1–2, 4–5 bronze; 3 bronze covered by tin; 1–3, 5 drawings by Virgilijus Truklickas, 4 after Dakanis, 1983)

As mentioned above, only a few intact well-preserved examples of bead sets with bronze spacer plates are known in the area inhabited by the Curonians. However, even these bead sets with bronze spacer plates with clear enough finding circumstances provoked the rise of a myth about Curonian “headbands” (Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė 1959: 48–49, Fig. 21; 1970: 123–128; 1987: 189, Fig. 30, 2001: 128–130).

The residual part of the Curonian bead sets with bronze spacer plates or just the constituent parts of spacer plates were found in cremation graves of the tenth to the 12th

centuries, or are known as stray finds (Figs. 4–6). Bead sets or pectoral ornaments are found in small piles together with other grave goods (Bandužiai, Klaipėda district, grave 43a). Sometimes broken, burned, but mostly unburned grave goods are in disorder, scattered all over the grave pit in Curonian cremation burials (Girkaliai, grave 24; Kretinga, graves 6 and 34; Palanga, grave 198; Slengiai, graves 23 and 25). Sometimes bronze spacer plates as additional grave goods are found in birch bark boxes (Kiauleikiai, grave 10/1985) (Šimėnas 1984). Therefore, it is possible to make a reconstruction of the set as a fashionable pec-

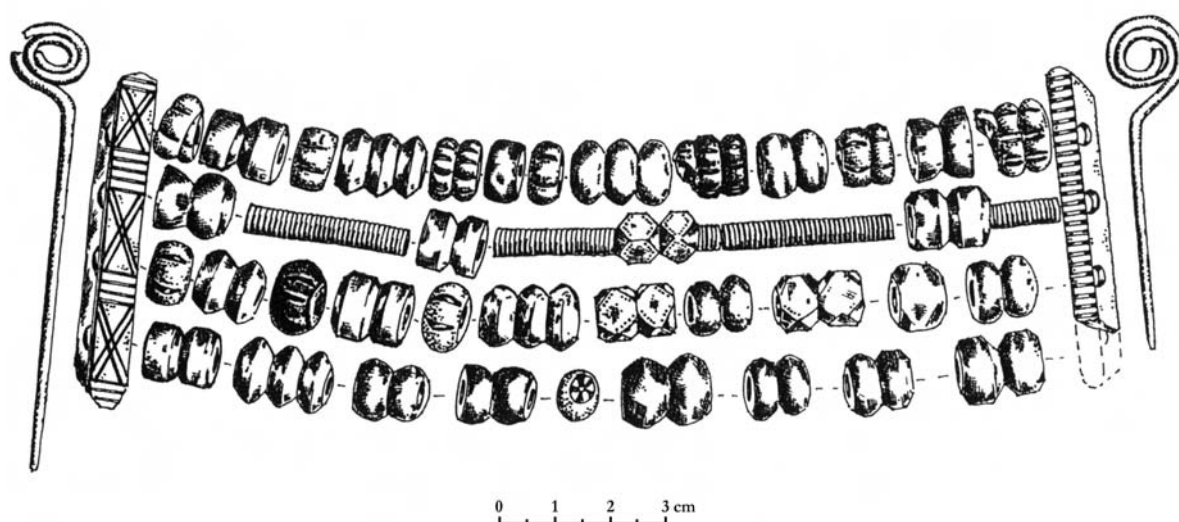


Fig. 6. Bead set and dress pins from the Palanga cemetery, cremation burial 198 (reconstruction) (bronze, glass, opaque past; drawing by Audronė Ruzienė; reconstruction Audronė Bliujienė)

toral ornament, actually applying to the cremation and inhumation burial context, and analogous with Scandinavia, Gotland, Finland and other regions of the eastern Baltic zone (Fig. 7). There is insufficient data to support the assumption that Curonian women wore headbands. Judging from the distribution of complete artefacts and single spacer plates, fashionable pectoral jewellery with bronze spacer plates, multicoloured glass and bronze beads, as well as bronze spirals, were popular enough ornaments in southern Curonian lands.

Curonian bead sets with bronze spacer plate distribution and chronology

Bead sets with bronze spacer plates or fashionable pectoral ornaments have been found in burials with elaborated grave goods. These pectoral ornaments are known only from the Curonian territory around Klaipėda in the south to Talsi in the north⁴. Women of the other

Baltic tribes did not have such fashionable pectoral ornaments designed from glass or bronze beads, bronze spirals and bronze spacer plates.

Curonian women probably wore bead sets from the end of the ninth century, but most finds probably belong to between the tenth and 11th centuries (LAB 1961: 454–455; Bliujienė 2001: 240). It might be that bead sets with bronze spacer plates were used into the 12th century and the first half of the 13th century, as they are combined with penannular brooches with star-shaped terminals and bracelets with animal terminals in grave complexes (Vaitkunskienė 1978: 54–55, 97–101, maps 34: 4; 58).

The design of Curonian bead sets with bronze spacer plates

An exceptional element of Curonian bead sets and pectoral ornaments are bronze spacers (Figs. 4–6). Bead sets contain from two to ten ornamented spacer plates (Figs. 4; 6). Bronze spacer plates are of two types: “T” shaped (Fig. 5: 3, 5; 5) and rectangular shaped (Fig. 5: 1–2, 4; 4). The length of both spacer types of plates is usually five to seven centimetres, and the width only 0.5 to 0.8 centimetres. Just a few spacer plates are ten centimetres or 3.2 to 3.5 centimetres in length (Fig. 5: 2, 4). It should be pointed out that most Curonian spacer plates are straight. Curonian spacer plates are exclusively decorated in geometrical patterns (Figs. 4–5). A layer of white metal covers some of the spacer plates. The layer of white metal in most cases is tin (Bliujienė 2001: 240).

⁴ Bandužiai cremation burial 43a; Ēglišķiai-Anduliai (former Anduln, Kretinga district; stray finds; MVF I a 829k, 2377, 2378, 2949, 3506), Genčiai the 1st cemetery (Kretinga district; stray find LNM AR 694: 1899), Gintališkė (Plungė district; inhumation grave 5), Girkaliai (Klaipėda district; cremation burials 17, 23 and stray find LMIM inv. no. 4412), Kiauleikiai (stray find LNM AR 4: 391), Klaišiai-Truikiniai (Skuodas district; stray find), Kretinga (cremation burials 6 and 34), Laiviai (Kretinga district; graves 43 and 198), Lazdininkai (Klaipėda district; graves 61, 73, 126 and 179), Lekemė (Plungė district; stray find TAM inv. 4491), Palanga (cremation burials 67, 198, 271 and stray finds LNM AR 396: 2762, 2764, 2839), Pryšmančiai the 1st cemetery (Kretinga district; KM stray finds without inv. no.), Ramučiai (Klaipėda district; grave 213), Siraičiai (Telšiai district; inhumation grave 7 (18)) and Slengiai (Klaipėda district; cremation burials 23 and 25) cemeteries, Vilkumūža Lake (Talsi region Latvia; LVM PV 12380, 12 386).



Fig. 7. Round openwork silver pendant from Aska, Hagebyhöga in Östergötland (Sweden), c 800. Diameter 3 cm, enlarged (after B. Arrhenius, 2001, Fig. 5)

Fashionable Curonian bead sets with spacer plates had to cover a woman's breast as a pectoral ornament (Figs. 4, 6). In most cases, it is impossible to say how pectoral ornaments were terminated and how they were fastened to the woman's garment. Where leather strips and spirals terminated some of the bead sets, probably the leather strips were tied on to the nape of the woman's neck. It might be that most of the pectoral ornaments in which fine bronze wire was used as the thread terminated in eyeholes directly fastened into the garment cloth (Bandužiai, burial 43a). Two small bronze pins with spiral heads were found at Palanga cremation burial 198. It might be that pins untypical of the Curonians fastened the pectoral ornament to the garment (Fig. 6).

The typology of Curonian bead sets with bronze spacer plates

Curonian bead sets with bronze spacer plates are strung in a different ways. It is possible to divide them into three groups. To the first group belong bead sets which have six to ten bronze spacer plates and small whitish, black, blue glass beads or beads of glass paste. Most beads are ball or barrel shaped, only 0.4 to 0.6 centimetres in diameter. These small beads were strung on fine bronze wire using bronze spacer plates. Pectoral ornaments of this group have 330 to 350, or even 500, small glass beads. Only three bead sets belongs to the first group (Bandužiai, grave 43a, Siraičiai, grave 7(18) and a stray find from the village of Lekemė (Fig. 4).

Bead sets with two bronze spacer plates with different amounts of monochrome and multicoloured glass and bronze beads, as well as spirals, might be ascribed to the second group. Amber beads are not included in Curonian bead sets with bronze spacer plates or pectoral ornaments, except grave 34 at the Kretinga cemetery. Sets of the second group are strung in such a way that the beads are in the centre of the ornament. These sets ended with bronze spirals. Such necklaces have been found at Gintališkė (grave 5), Girkaliai (grave 24) and Palanga (grave 198) cemeteries (Fig. 6).

In the third group of Curonian bead sets with spacer plates are necklaces of which the construction is not clear, and which in most cases are known only as separate bronze spacer plates (Fig. 5).

Curonian bead sets with bronze spacer plates and parallels with the eastern Baltic region and Scandinavia

Similar bronze spacer plates are known from the territories inhabited by the Livonians (Daugmale, Martinsala, Rauši, Krimulda; Lauskola–Salaspils, Rīga district) from cemeteries from the middle of the tenth to the middle of the 11th centuries, or even the middle of the 12th century (Thunmark-Nylén 1992: 109–11; *Les Vikings* 1993: 294). The bronze spacer plates found in Latvia are a bit bent and decorated with simple geometrical designs imitating impressed foil. Spacer plates similar to the Curonian ones have been found in Gruobina, Latvia (Nerman 1958: Tafel 2: 14, 19: 105). Necklaces with bronze “T” shaped spacer plates are found in Finland at the Luistari cemetery in Eura (grave 1260) and at the Anivehmaanmäki cemetery (Ranta 1999: 72, Fig. 1). The spacer plates found in Finland are very similar to the Curonian ones as well. At the Luistari cemetery grave 1260, bead sets were found which are very similar to Curonian pectoral ornaments with spacer plates of the second group. The bead sets found in Finland belong to the Middle and the Late Viking Age (Ranta 1999: 72).

Bead sets with “T” shaped bronze spacer plates are characteristic of Gotland in the Vendel Period (750–800) (Nerman 1969: Tafel 285: 2263–2269). Such spacer plates are known from the mainland of Scandinavia. Several bead sets with spacer plates have been found in Zealand and Bornholm (Kyndby, Nørre Sandegård). These pectoral ornaments are terminated with openwork spacer plates (Gaimster 1998: Fig. 165: 2–3). Viking Age mainlanders ceased using bead spacers, but Gotland women went on using them and developed them into large and richly decorated pectoral ornaments

(Thunmark-Nylén 2000: 176). Gotlandic and Curonian bead sets are composed of the same elements: straight spacer plates, and monochrome and multicoloured glass beads (Thunmark-Nylén 1995: Abb. 47, 173b: 1, 179b: 8, 192b: 15, 241: 6; 1998: Tafel 161: 14). The bead sets of Gotland women were completed with two spacer plates. However, Gotlandic bead sets are more elaborate, they were strung with opaque paste, tinted glass, limestone and rock crystal beads, and often enough these pectoral ornaments were adorned with bracteates, fish head and other pendants. Several spacer plates are decorated in Scandinavian styles of the Viking Period (Thunmark-Nylén 1995: Abb. 49a: 5, 166b: 13, 207b: 16; 1998: Tafel 161: 1–14). The decoration of Curonian spacer plates is less sophisticated, because Baltic parts of pectoral ornaments were decorated only with geometrical patterns (Figs. 4–6). The latest bead sets on Gotland came from graves from the second half of the tenth century (Thunmark-Nylén 1992: 111–112).

Bead sets with spacer plates spread across the south Curonian territory in the tenth and 11th centuries. During this period, the Curonians held the most comprehensive relationship with Gotland. These circumstances allow us to suggest that Gotlandic pectoral ornaments of the Late Viking Age inspired Curonian bead sets. Also, it should be mentioned that local jewellers produced Curonian bead sets with bronze spacer plates. Monochrome and multicoloured glass beads were imported by Curonia from the east (Syria and Byzantine), from Kievan Russia and the western Slavic lands. Glass producing centres were in Wolin (Poland) (Kuncienė 1981: 86–87). Glass beads were imported from the continent by Scandinavia or produced on the basis of imported raw material at the Viking centres such as Hedeby, and perhaps Ribe and Birka (Calmer 1977: 165). Some of the glass beads might have come from Western Europe through Scandinavia (Мугуревич 1965: 76). It is possible that notched blue glass beads were produced in the Baltic lands (Moora 1938: 365; Kuncienė 1981: 86).

However, bead sets with spacer plates, both in Gotland and in Curonia, were an outcome of the rivalry between Western Europe and the Byzantine Empire in designing symbols of power and prestige. Elaborate bead sets or pectoral ornaments appeared under Byzantine influence, and were adapted to adorn the costumes of wealthy German ladies on the continent (Gaimster 1998: 242–243). Elaborate pectoral jewellery was worn by Frankish queens, as depicted on the shroud of Queen Balthilde (d. circa 680). It is a great pity that in Baltic prehistoric applied art, no figurative styles formed. Therefore, parallels with Scandinavia are useful. Women wearing a huge garnet brooch and a fashionable pectoral ornament with spacer plates are

depicted on a round openwork silver pendant from Aska, Hagebyhöga in Östergötland (Sweden). This pendant was found in the very rich grave of the so-called “Lady of Aska” (Fig. 7). The round openwork cast pendant gives a remarkably detailed picture of a woman with clasped hands, a dress with horizontal stripes on its lower part, and a mantle hanging down on each side. The hemispherical cap of the “Lady of Aska” might be similar to Curonian women’s caps. The type of fibula and bead set depicted on the pendant went out of fashion at the beginning of the Viking Age, or even earlier, in all of Scandinavia except Gotland. The funeral of the “Lady of Aska” took place in the middle of the tenth century. In the grave a lot of perhaps inherited jewellery (berlok-shaped, lozenge-shaped and round silver pendants) was found. It might be that on the round openwork pendant from Aska a pregnant goddess Freyja is depicted (Arrhenius 2001: 306–307, Fig. 5).

Curonian women’s caps and other headdresses made of cloth

The iconography of the pendant of the “Lady of Aska” is a useful parallel for making a comparison with Curonian archaeological material. The “Lady of Aska” pendant is a good indication that Curonian women wore similar hemispherical caps. Curonian women also used to wear some sort of kerchiefs and other cloth headdresses of an indistinct shape (Genčai, the first cemetery, inhumation grave 21) (Tautavičius 1970: 112; 1996: 173). The inference of such a conclusion is possible because sometimes some patches of cloth are found beside the deceased’s heads.

Shreds of caps adorned with spirals were found in several southern Curonian cemeteries in women’s inhumation graves⁵. Similar caps adorned with bronze spirals have been found in Curonian men’s graves as well (Pryšmančiai, the first cemetery, inhumation grave 65) (Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė 1997: Fig. 52). The caps were adorned with rows of bronze spirals attached in a special order to a cap at the front of the headdress. Sometimes bronze spirals terminated with bronze chains, and one or two amber beads terminated these bronze chains (Palanga, graves 11, 104, 119 and 142) (Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė 1964: 49, Fig. 10). Specially designed bronze pins or crossbow brooches decorated

⁵ Genčai, the 1st cemetery, Kretinga district, inhumation graves 11, 36, 46, 60, 67, 76, 93, 95, 171 and 230; Gintališkė, Plungė district, inhumation graves 5, 7, 14 and 20; Kiauleikiai, Kretinga district, inhumation grave 1/1984; Palanga, inhumation graves 11, 104, 114c, 119, 142 and 144; Siraičiai, Telšiai district, inhumation grave 7(18).

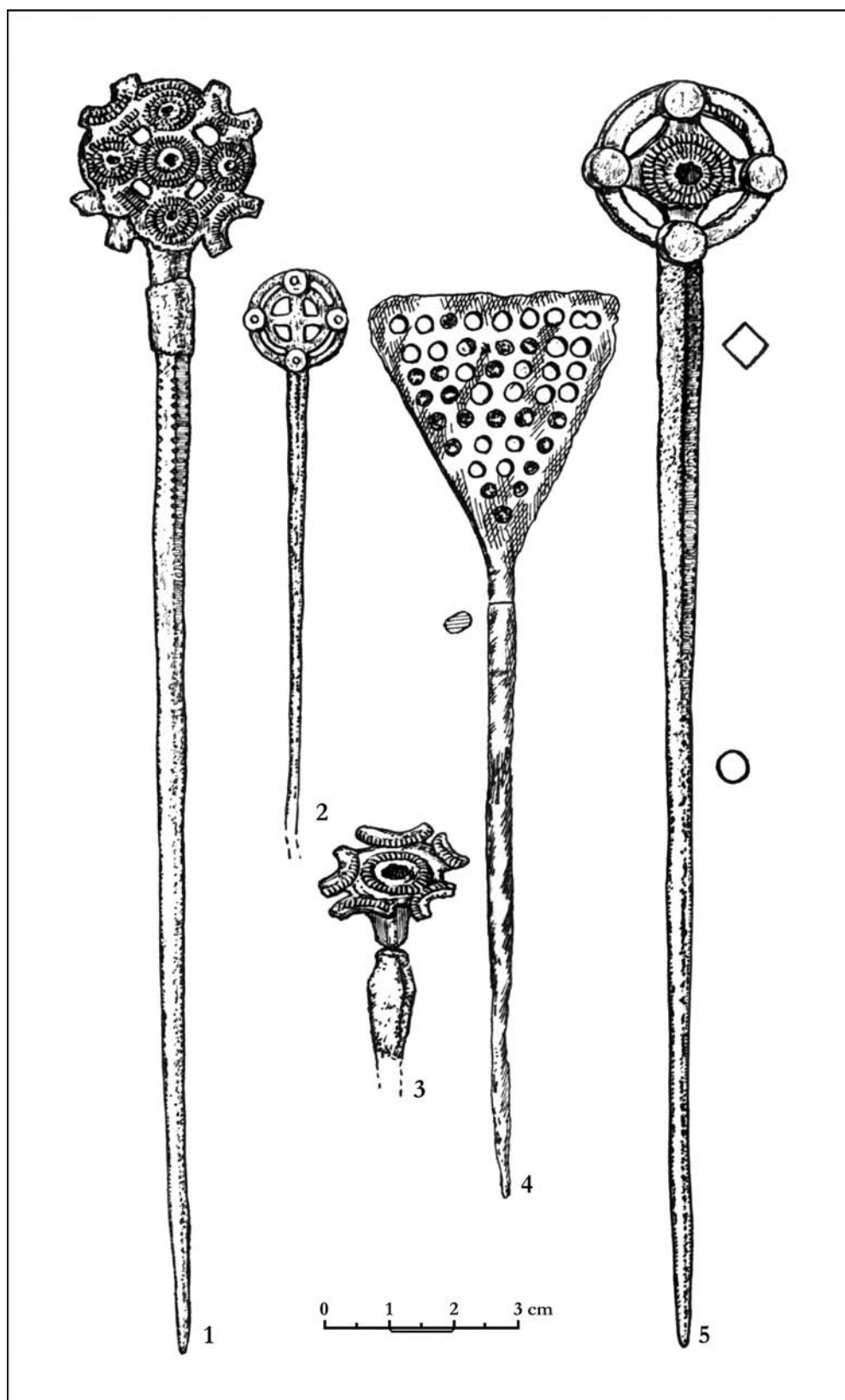


Fig. 8. Curonian women's headdress fasteners: 1, 3 Genčiai 1st cemetery, grave 93; 2 Gintališkė, stray find; 4 Palanga, grave 100; 5 Genčiai 1st cemetery, grave 130 (1, 3, 5 bronze, covered with white metal plates, blue glass; 2 bronze, blue glass, 4 bronze covered with white metal, rivets; drawings by Virgilijus Truklickas)

with ringlets fastened the caps to the hair (Figs. 3: 3; 8)⁶. Frequently, one or even two headdress pins have been found close to the deceased women's heads in graves from the eighth to the 12th centuries (Kuncienė 1978: 9–10, map. 4; Tautavičius 1996: 172–173). Such pins have been found on the right side of women's heads as mentioned by a couple of researchers (Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė 1997: 40).

Curonian women's wimple (*nuometas*): myth or reality?

In Lithuanian historiography the opinion dominates that Curonian headdresses were very similar to the Lithuanian “wimple” (*nuometas*) during the Viking Age and early medieval times (Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė 1964: 41–52; 1970: 123–126, Fig. 14–15; 1997: 40–43, Fig. 33; Vaitkunskienė 1981: 22–23, Fig. 6; Bliujienė 1995: 42, Fig. 2; 1997: Fig. 1: 2; 1999: Table 9; Žulkus 2005: Fig. 54). Moreover, Curonian women's “headbands” are linked with a young girl's headdresses; wimples are attributed to Curonian women's headdress (Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė, 1964: 46–50, Fig. 6, 8, 10; 1970: 126; 1986: 156–168; 2001: 128–130). However, there is no indication that Curonian women wore metal headbands or wimples made from cloth during the Viking period and early Viking times. Wimples have been reconstructed based on the finds in Palanga cemetery graves 30, 70, 147 and Siraičiai cemetery grave 7(18) (Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė 1964: 41–52; 1970: 123–126; 1997: 40–42). However, the grave plans and the location of the grave goods in the mentioned burials do not support such conclusions. There is no information for the reconstruction of a headdress based on the material mentioned. The report, plans and archaeological material of excavations at Palanga cemetery do not give any grounds for the reconstruction of wimples (Tautavičius 1962; 1970: 113–114). In grave 147 at Palanga cemetery, near the deceased woman's head, two bronze pins were found, and in the space beside the head 221 small blue glass beads were located. There is no information to see these beads as “white linen wimple” (detailing Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė 1970: 123, Fig. 15; 1997: 40). Glass beads are typical additional Curonian grave goods, mostly found over the head or close to the head of the deceased, sometimes in boxes of birch bark. There is no information about white linen cloth woven with two heddles in the graves mentioned above of the Palanga cemetery (Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė 1997: 40–41)⁷. There is no data for a wimple's reconstruction

in the other graves of the Palanga cemetery, or in the other Curonian burial grounds of the Viking period and early medieval times.

It might be that the headdress of Curonian women was similar to that worn by other European women of the period. European women's headdresses made of a piece of cloth are well enough known from manuscripts, illuminations, effigies in stone or wood and other sources (Baltrušaitis 1948: 77–78; Hook, Macgregor 1997: 50–52, Fig. 67). However, European women's headdress is not the same as wimples, as we know from Lithuanian archaeological literature (Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė 1964: 41–52; 1970: 123–126, Fig. 14–15; 1997: 40–43, Fig. 33; Vaitkunskienė 1981: 22–23, Fig. 6; Bliujienė 1995: 42, Fig. 2; 1997: Fig. 1: 2; 1999: Table 9; Žulkus 2005: Fig. 54).

Hans Adelhauser and Cesare Vecello were the first to publish a depiction of garments and Gardin residents at the end of the 16th century (Reklaitis 1999a: 171–180). Women from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania are depicted with caps, or their heads are wound with a round piece of cloth in the shape of a turban in the publications of the authors mentioned (Reklaitis 1999 a: Fig. 3, 5, 9, 11). The turban was introduced to the garments of Europeans through the adventures in Palestine in the 11th century (Guzevičiūtė 1995: 40). In the European fashion, a turban-like headdress was called a bar-bette, and was in use from the 12th to the 15th century (Guzevičiūtė 1995: 40–44).

Wimples (*nuometas*) are mentioned in written sources only from the 16th and the 17th centuries (LEB 1964: 363–365; Bernotienė 1974: VI). Instead of a wimple, married women wore a sort of headdress of white linen several metres long, which was of eastern origin, but also adopted in Europe in the 19th century (Baltrušaitis 1948: 77–78). There is no information about wimples in peasants' garments from ancient Prussia in the 17th to 19th centuries (Reklaitis 1999b: 323–340). Ethnographic information about women's headdresses made of cloth (*linik*, *linkainis*, *nāmatas*, *namiotka*, *namitka*, *ubrus*) from Belarus, Estonia, Latvia and Ukraine is very late and comes only from the 17th century and even the second half of the 18th century (Калашникова 1986: 112–132; Лаул 1986: 190–207; Зарина 1986: 172–189).

It should be emphasised that in Lithuania wimples were worn only in the eastern part. These facts are quite well documented by ethnographic sources⁸. There is only

⁶ Genčiai, the 1st cemetery, inhumation graves 11, 46, 60, 76, 93 and 171; Kiauleikiai, inhumation grave 1/1998; Palanga, inhumation graves 114c, 119 and 142.

⁷ Information from Elvyra Pečeliūnaitė-Bazienė, a research-

er of archaeological textiles, to whom I owe my sincere gratitude.

⁸ Information from Dalia Bernotaitė, curator of the textiles collection at the LDM, to whom I owe my thanks for sharing useful information.

one very late ethnographic wimple known in the western areas. A similar wimple comes from around Rucava (Latvia) (Girnīs 1926: Fig. 3). It should be mentioned that knots in wimples are tied on the left side or the back⁹. In Curonian women's graves, bronze head pins and brooches are mostly found on the right-hand side or over the head of the deceased person.

Unaccountable ware from women's graves in coastal cemeteries of the seventh to ninth centuries

Artefacts of an unknown purpose or unaccountable ware are found around deceased women's heads¹⁰ in the southern Curonian lands (Fig. 9). The unaccountable ware consists of several leather strips, double rectangular bronze plates with clasps and birch bark (Figs. 1: 2; 3: 2). The leather strips, of 0.5 centimetres in width, fully covered with bronze staples, are the main part of this item. Both ends of each leather strip are joined to bronze rectangular double plates (Figs. 1: 2; 3: 2). The bronze plates are covered with a layer of white metal or plate. These plates are adorned with two or three rows of bronze rivets (Fig. 1). The heads of the rivets are mostly in the shape of a semicircle. The unaccountable ware has distinctive clasps. On one bronze plate are two holes, on another plate are two hooks. The hooks are always on the back of the bronze plates. Unaccountable ware is only one type of Curonian artefact which has such clasps. Unaccountable ware is covered with birch bark inside. Only a little unaccountable ware without birch bark inside is known. The artefacts of an unknown purpose or unaccountable ware have a diameter of 4.5 to six centimetres, and are only four to 4.5 centimetres in height.

Unaccountable ware was widespread in the southern Curonian lands from the seventh to the ninth century (Fig. 1: 2–7)¹¹. However, artefacts such as parts of head-

bands, armlets or belt clasps are known in graves from the end of the second till the middle of the fourth century, as mentioned above (Fig. 1: 1; 2: 5) (Bezzenberger, 1892: Tafel: VIII: 15; Šturms 1942; Stankus 1995: 38–39, Fig. 22, 28, 33; Banytė-Rowell 2001: Fig. 25). The construction of the clasps and material from which unaccountable ware was made in the Roman Iron Age and in the Late Migration Period/the Viking Age is the same, and this fact is amazing (Figs. 1: 1–7; 2: 5; 3: 2). The construction of unaccountable ware is similar to Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian clasps of class B, form B7 (Hines 1993: 39–41). Clasps were adopted in England as part of a female costume in which they were used only as wrist-clasps. In Scandinavia, clasps of class B were found in men's graves, and were used to fasten the trouser-legs between the knee and the ankle (Hines 1993: 76–82). There are only two examples of clasps being used for headdresses, one clasp was found under the chin. In general, clasps of class B were widespread in Scandinavia, on Gotland, Anglo-Saxon England and even in Finland and Estonia during the second to the sixth centuries (Hines 1993: 39–41, Fig. 78: a).

Unaccountable ware has been found only near deceased women's heads, over the head or near the head, mostly on the right-hand side of the buried woman (Fig. 9)¹². It should be mentioned that unaccountable ware has never been found under the head or in such a position that allowed it to be interpreted as head ornaments. Very often, unaccountable ware is located five to 15 centimetres above the head of the deceased woman, but frequently these strange items are found together with small iron or bronze rods (needles or pins?) (Figs. 3: 2; 9: 2)¹³. In most cases these artefacts are empty inside. However, sometimes inside unaccountable ware pieces of folded cloth are found (Genčai I, graves 159, 232, 254; Palanga, graves 48, 92, 100, 108); pieces of raw amber (Palanga, graves 73 and 100); amber spindle whorls, amber plaques, bronze needles (Genčai 1st cemetery, grave 233, Kiauleikiai, grave 10/1985) and miniature clay cups (Užpelkiai, grave 73). Sometimes unaccountable ware is put into birch bark boxes together with another's additional grave goods (Kiauleikiai, grave 10; Laiviai, grave 57). At times, unaccountable ware has been found under miniature clay cups near the deceased person's head (Baleniūnas 1941: 23). It

⁹ D. Bernotaitė.

¹⁰ Except man's grave 17/1948 from the Laiviai cemetery.

¹¹ Ēgliškiai-Anduliai (Kretinga district, graves 262, 271, 388, 410 and 477, the exact number of artefacts is not clear. The archive is at the MVF; part of the material was at the Prussia Museum and in the museum at Insteburg; ZAI, 1905, Tafel: XI: 1), Genčai 1st cemetery (graves 159, 195, 206, 207, 232, 233, 236, 254, 259 and loose finds), Kašučiai (Kretinga district, graves 4, 8, 12, 13? and 20), Kiauleikiai (Kretinga district, graves 17, 19 and 10/1985), Laistai (Klaipėda region, grave 55, exact number of artefacts is not clear), Laiviai (graves 18, 33, 43, 57, 67 and 15/1949, 17/1949) Lazdininkai (Kalnalaukis), grave 64/1980, grave 72/2000), Palanga, graves 20, 48, 34a, 92, 100, 108, 112?, 113?, 123?, 142, 143, 162? 327 and 334), Pryšmančiai, 1st cemetery (grave 67/1987) and Užpelkiai, grave 73. A catalogue of unaccountable artefacts cannot be precise for the moment, because material from Curonian cemeteries at

Aukštkiemiai, Ēgliškiai-Anduliai, Ramučiai, Laistai is not published and most of the unaccountable ware is found as poorly preserved finds.

¹² Unaccountable ware is found on the breast of the deceased person at Genčai, 1st cemetery, in graves 207 and 254; in the middle of the grave pit at Laiviai, grave 15/1949; and around the waist at Genčai, 1st cemetery, in grave 259.

¹³ Genčai, 1st cemetery, graves 195, 206 and 233; Kašučiai, graves 8 and 12; Laiviai, graves 57 and 15/1949; Palanga, grave 20; Pryšmančiai, 1st cemetery, grave 67.

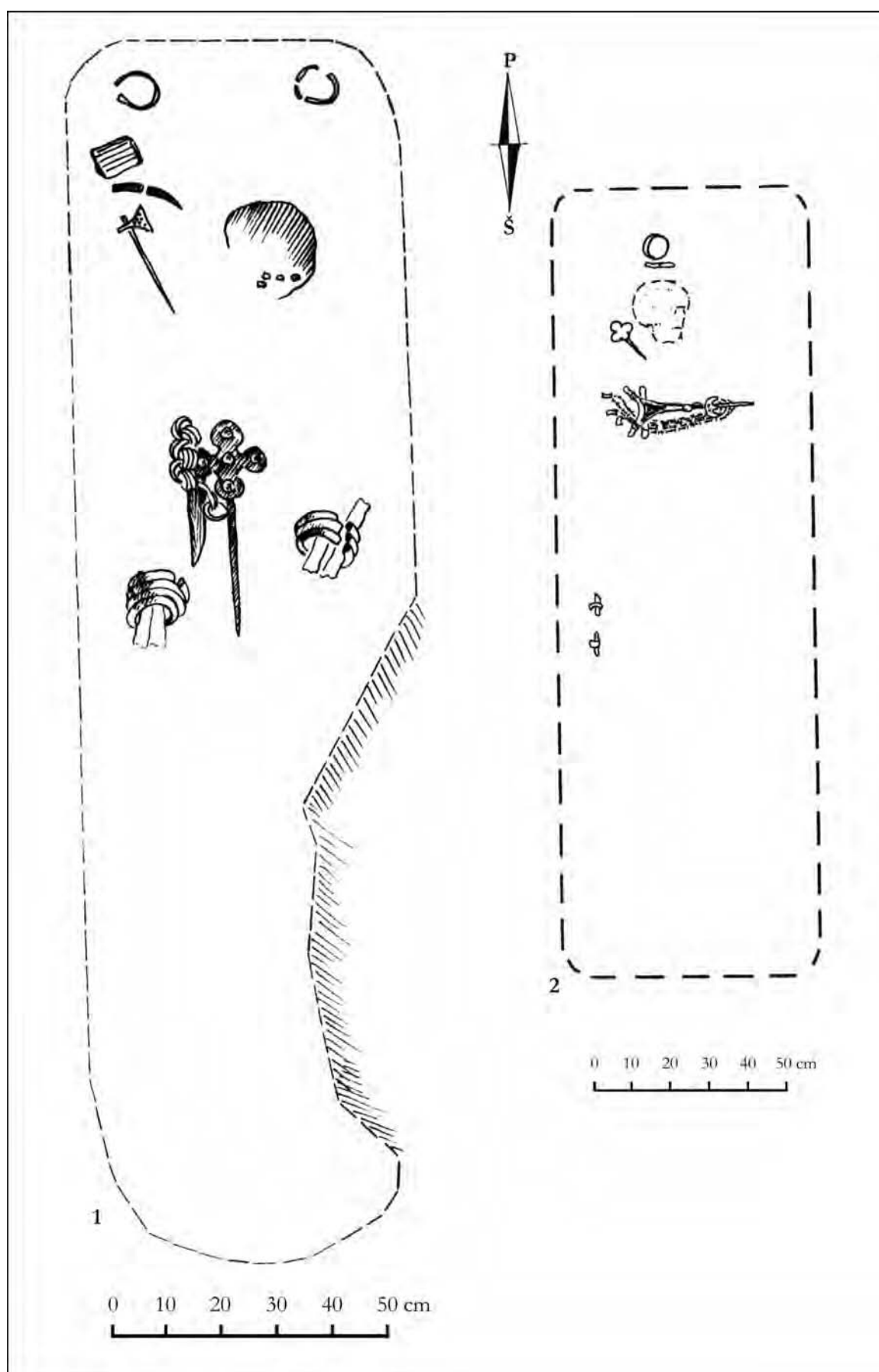


Fig. 9. Palanga, grave 20; and Pryšmančiai 1st cemetery, grave 67/1986 (1 after A. Tautavičius, 1963; 2 after R. Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė, 1986)

should be mentioned that graves with unaccountable ware are very wealthy. In graves with unaccountable ware cruciform or pins with round heads and different pendants, crossbow fibulae, neck rings and fingerings are found (Fig. 3). In these graves ornaments made of silver or artefacts with a silver coating are found. From ten to 15 grave goods are found in one burial together with unaccountable ware (Bliujienė 1995: 47).

However, an interpretation of the wearing of unaccountable ware is not possible, because it is usually found as poorly preserved finds or comes from destroyed graves. In the German archaeological tradition, unaccountable ware was known as *armstulpen* or “armbands” (Hoffmann 1941: 100–101; MVF I a). Obviously, the term *armstulpen* given to unaccountable ware by Hoffmann has a strict sense, because they have a similar fastener to Anglo-Scandinavian clasps (Hines 1993). Unaccountable ware is depicted by German archaeologists in an extended position (Gaerte 1929: Abb. 316, 256). However, Hoffmann makes a difference between Curonian sash-like bracelets and unaccountable ware (Hoffmann 1941: 100–101). Gimbutienė and Baleniūnas ascribed unaccountable ware as bracelets, but with a question mark. Perhaps they were basing themselves on the opinion of German scholars (Baleniūnas 1940b: 17–18, 33–34, 47–48; Alseikaitė-Gimbutienė 1946: 250, Tafel 9, Abb. 29).

There is no evidence that unaccountable ware was bracelets or the clasps of shirt sleeves in the area inhabited by the Curonians. Only at the Laiviai cemetery, in grave 15, was unaccountable ware found over the head together with a spiral bracelet (Baleniūnas 1940b). Unaccountable ware was found on the breast, together with a spiral bracelet, a little above other grave goods at the Genčiai 1st cemetery, in grave 207. Unaccountable ware has been found once on the breast of the deceased person according to the plan in the same cemetery, in grave 254 (Merkevičius 1987: 46–47, Figs. 99–100; Stankus 1996: 12–13, Figs. 61–62).

In Butėnienė, Merkevičius, Stankus, Tautavičius and Stepinš¹⁴ unaccountable ware is ascribed as boxes (Butėnienė 1964: 88; Merkevičius 1985; 1987; Stankus 1985; 1996; Tautavičius 1963). Perhaps the reason for such a decision was that unaccountable ware was covered inside by birch bark. However, these artefacts have no bottom, which is necessary for a box. The last year's unaccountable ware is ascribed to head ornaments (Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė, 1997: 42–44, Fig. 35; 2001: 216–218, Fig. 81; Stankus 1995: 38–39; Banytė-Rowell, 2001, Fig. 25). However, there is no information that this unaccountable ware from the Viking

Age was found on the head or under the head of the deceased person (Fig. 9). As mentioned above, inside the unaccountable artefacts folded pieces of cloth, raw amber or small amber artefacts and even clay pots were found. This is why these artefacts have no connection with Curonian women's headdress. Until today, the purpose of Curonian unaccountable artefacts is open. Obviously the construction of unaccountable ware is similar to clasps. However, there is no evidence of the purpose Curonian women used these clasps for.

Translated by Audronė Bliujienė and Joseph Everatt

Abbreviations

ATL – *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje*, Vilnius.
 BA – *Archaeologia Baltica*, Vilnius
 ILKI – *Iš lietuvių kultūros istorijos*, Vilnius
 LEB – *Lietuvių etnografijos bruožai*, Vilnius, 1964
 LA – *Lietuvos archeologija*, Vilnius
 LPA – *Latvijas PSR Archeologija*, Rīga, 1974
 LEB – *Lietuvių etnografijos bruožai*, Vilnius, 1964
 LLM – Kulikauskienė R., Rimantienė R., *Lietuvių liaudies menas. Senovės lietuvių papuošalai*. I knyga, Vilnius, 1958
 MAD'A – *Lietuvos TSR mokslų akademijos darbai*, serija A, Vilnius
 Sb. Prussia – *Sitzungsberichte der Altertumsgesellschaft Prussia*, Königsberg
 ZAI – *Zeitschrift der Altertumsgesellschaft Insterburg (1800–1905)*, Insterburg, 1905

Museums and institutions

KM – Kretinga Museum, Kretinga
 LII – Lithuanian Institute of History Archive, Vilnius
 MLIM – Lithuanian Minor History Museum, Klaipėda
 LNM AR – National Museum of Lithuania, Department of Archaeology, Vilnius
 LVM – Latvian Historical Museum, Riga
 MVF – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Berlin and Vorgeschichtliche Abteilung des Königlichen Museums für Völkerkunde, Berlin
 TAM – Alka Museum, Telšiai
 VDKM – Vytautas the Great War Museum, Kaunas

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¹⁴ Personal information from the Latvian archaeologist Dr. Ingrida Virse, for which I am grateful.

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KELETAS PASTABŲ APIE KURŠIŲ MOTERŲ VIKINGŲ LAIKŲ IR ANKSTYVŲJŲ VIDURAMŽIŲ KAROLIŲ VĖRINIUS SU ŽALVARINIAIS SKIRSTIKLIAIS, APGALVIUS, GALVOS APDANGALUS IŠ AUDINIO IR NEAIŠKIOS PASKIRTIES DIRBINIUS

AUDRONĖ BLIUJIENĖ

Santrauka

Atrodytų, jog kuršių kultūra yra viena iš labiausiai pažinių dėl savo pakankamai plataus tyrinėjimo masto. Tačiau vis dėlto kai kurie kuršių kultūros aspektai nuo seno, remiantis klaidingomis prielaidomis, neteisingai interpretuojami. Taip atsitiko su kuršių moterų galvos danga, kuriai priskirti net vėriniai su žalvariniais skirstikliais, vienspalviais ir įvairiaspalviais stiklo ir žalvario karoliais bei žalvarinėmis įvijomis (4, 6 pav.).

Dalis kuršių vėrinių su žalvariniais skirstikliais skiriama apgalviams, o kiti lygiai tokie pat dirbiniai vadinami karolių vėriniais ar jų dalimis (4, 6 pav.). Iš nedegintuose kuršių moterų kapuose, aiškiomis radimo aplinkybėmis, rastų žalvarinių skirstiklių ir įvairiarūšių karolių išsidėstymo yra akivaizdu, kad jie yra puošnių vėrinių dalys (4–6 pav.). Išskirtinė kuršių karolių vėrinių detalė yra žalvariniai skirstikliai (4 pav.). Nagrinėjami kuršių vėriniai susideda iš 2–10 žalvarinių ornamentuotų skirstiklių, įvairiaspalvių stiklo ir žalvario karolių, žalvarinių įvijų (4, 6 pav.). Skirstikliai yra dviejų tipų. Vieni jų „T“ raidės pavidalo (5: 3–5 pav.), kiti – stačiakampiai (5: 1–2, 4 pav.). Dažnai tame pačiame vėrinyje esantys skirstikliai yra ne tik skirtingo dekoro, bet ir skirtingų tipų (6 pav.). Kuršių vėriniai su žalvariniais skirstikliais yra nevienodai suverti, todėl juos galima būtų skirstyti į tris grupes. Pirmajai gru-

pei priklausytų vėriniai, sudaryti iš 6–10 žalvarinių skirstiklių ir smulkių juodų, balzganų, melsvų stiklinių karoliukų (4 pav.). Antrajai kuršių vėrinių su žalvariniais skirstikliais grupei priklausytų vėriniai, kuriuose yra tik 2 žalvariniai vėrinio skirstikliai ir žalvariniai bei įvairiaspalviai stikliniai karoliai, o žalvarinės įvijos suvertos centrinėje vėrinio dalyje. Trečiajai kuršių vėrinių su žalvariniais skirstikliais grupei priklausytų visi neaiškos konstrukcijos vėriniai ir jų dalys – žalvariniai skirstikliai (5 pav.).

X a. vid. – XI a. vid. ar net XII a. vid. panašių žalvarinių vėrinių skirstiklių ir pačių vėrinių rasta lyvių moterų kapuose. Panašių į kuršių karolių vėrinių skirstiklių rasta Gruobinioje (Latvija). Vėrinių su žalvariniais „T“ raidės formos skirstikliais, visiškai panašiais į kuršių, rasta Suomijoje, kur jie skiriami viduriniam ar vėlyvajam vikingų laikų periodams. Vendelio periodu vėriniai su tiesiais metaliniais abiejų tipų skirstikliais buvo paplitę Gotlande. Tokie skirstikliai buvo žinomi ir Skandinavijoje. Puošnių krūtinę dengiančių vėrinių aptikta ir kai kuriuose Skandinavijos taikomojo meno pavyzdžiuose (7 pav.). Vėlyviausių gotlandiškų vėrinių su skirstikliais randama X a. antrosios pusės kapuose. Pietinių kuršių gyventojų teritorijoje karolių vėriniai išplito X–XI a. Būtent X–XI a. visapusiški santykiai tarp kuršių ir Gotlando buvo intensyviausi. Tai leidžia teigti, kad kuršių vėrinių su skirstikliais plitimui įtakos turėjo panašūs Gotlando karolių vėriniai. Tačiau tiek Gotlando, tiek Skandinavijos, o kartu ir kuršių karolių vėriniai su skirstikliais yra Vakarų Europos ir Bizantijos imperijos įtakų kuriant valdžios ir prestižo simbolius atspindžiai. Kuršių karolių vėriniai suverti ir žalvariniai skirstikliai gaminti vietos juvelyrų. Įvairiaspalvius vikingų laikotarpio stiklo karolius kuršiai importavo iš Artimųjų Rytų, Senosios Rusijos žemių ar vakarų slavų teritorijos.

Konkretesnių duomenų, kad kuršių moterys vikingų laikais nešiojo apgalvius, nėra. Tačiau tai nereiškia, kad kuršių moterys galvos nedengė. Vikingų laikais kuršės nešiojo kepuraites, skareles ir neaiškos formos galvos apdangalą iš audinio ar audinio ir žalvarinių grandelių. Kepuraitės ar kita danga iš audinio kartais būdavo prisegamos smeigtukais, skirtais galvos apdangalui pritvirtinti, ar lankinėmis žieduotomis segėmis (3: 3; 8 pav.).

Lietuvos archeologinėje literatūroje vyrauja nuomonė, kad kuršių moterų galvos apdangalas iš audinio yra artimas etnografinėje medžiagoje žinomam lietuvių moterų galvos apdangalui nuometui. Tačiau turima medžiaga, kapų aprašai ir planai tokių išvadų daryti neleidžia. Išvados, kad kuršės nešiojo nuometus, nepalaiko nei žinoma etnografinė ar ikonografinė medžiaga. Matyt, kuršių moterų galvos apdangalas iš audinio

turėtų būti artimas kitų šio laikotarpio Europos moterų galvos dangai, kurios atvaizdų randame rankraštinėse knygose ar tiek taikomajame, tiek vaizduojamajame romanikos mene.

Pietinių kuršių nedegintuose kuršių moterų kapuose randama neaiškos paskirties dirbinių iš odinių, kausytų žalvarinėmis sankabėlėmis, juostelių ir žalvarinių apkalų (1, 2: 2 pav.). Išsiskiria savitas šių dirbinių užsegimas: vienoje plokštelėje yra dvi nedidelės skylutės, kitoje – du kabliukai. Tai vieninteliai ne tik kuršių, bet ir apskritai baltų papuošalai, turintys tokių užsegimą. Beveik visų šių dirbinių vidus išklotas tošimi. Aptariamų neaiškos paskirties dirbinių randama tik moterų kapuose, galvos srityje, virš galvos ar netoli galvos, dažnai dešinėje pusėje, bet jų nerasta po mirusiosios galva ar tokioje pozicijoje, kad galima būtų teigti juos esant galvos papuošalais (9 pav.).

Nors tokie dirbiniai pietinių kuršių žemėse išplito VII–IX a., bet ankstyviausių šio tipo dirbinių, siejamų su apgalviais ar diržų sagtimis, rasta Vakarų Lietuvos kapų su akmenų vainikais srityje II a. pab. – IV a. vid. kapuose (B2/C1–C3 periodai) (1: 1 pav.). Tačiau nėra pakankamai duomenų, kad šios sąsagos siekia ankstyvuosius vikingų laikus. Pajūrio Lietuvos ir Latvijos medžiaga teikia duomenų, kad romėniškuoju laikotarpiu vakarų baltų moterys, be žalvariniais spurgeliais puoštų kepuraičių, galėjo nešioti kelių tipų apgalvius, susidedančius iš odinių juostelių, padengtų žalvarinėmis sankabėlėmis, ir apskritų sąsagų, kurios panašios į dėželių antkaklių užsegimą (2 pav.).

Vikingų ir ankstyvųjų viduramžių laikų dirbinius su sąsagomis vokiečių archeologai sieja su odos juostelėmis ir vadina „armstulpen“ ar „armband“ (1: 2–7 pav.). Pagal užsegimo konstrukciją šie dirbiniai artimi anglosaksų ir Skandinavijoje randamoms sąsagoms. Marija Gimbutienė ir Pranas Baleniūnas šiuos dirbinius vadino apyrankėmis. Eugenija Butėnienė, Algimantas Merkevičius, Jonas Stankus, Adolfas Tautavičius šiuos neaiškos paskirties dirbinius laikė dėžutėmis, matyt, todėl, kad jie iškloti tošimi. Tačiau šie savitos konstrukcijos dirbiniai neturi dugnelio, kuris būtinas dėžutei (1: 2–7 pav.). Reginos Volkaitės-Kulikauskienės nuomone, o ja remdamiesi ir kai kurie kiti lietuvių archeologai mano, kad tai cilindro formos galvos papuošalas. Tačiau nėra duomenų, rodančių šiuos dirbinius buvus nešiotus kaip galvos papuošalus. Be to, šiuose dirbiniuose rasta sulankstytų audinių, gintaro žaliavos ir dirbinių bei puodelių. Todėl nagrinėjamus dirbinius sieti su galvos papuošalais nėra jokio pagrindo. Turimais duomenimis, šių dirbinių iš odinių juostelių paskirtis tebelieka neaiški, nors jų konstrukcinis panašumas su sąsagomis yra neabejotinas. Tačiau ką šios sąsagos susegdavo – neaišku.

