

Identifying gender in the archaeological record from Roman Period barrows with stone circles

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Sex attribution has been a feature always taken into account in burial studies. Burials have regularly been defined as male or female, and this polarisation has been determined by human biology. Alongside with biological sex as an inborn biological category, age of individuals, models of cultural behaviour and changing life circumstances influenced the formation of gender, which could have correspond to the individual's biological sex, but which could also be different (for further discussion see e.g., Claassen, 1992; Lesick, 1997, p. 34; Lucy, 1997, p. 159; Gilchrist, 1999; Sørensen, 2004; Díaz-Andreu, 2005).

The important task of the archaeologist should be to identify patterned correlations between morphologically identifiable sex and the material culture expression of gender within a specific prehistoric context. However, the analysis is often limited by factors such as the degree of preservation, ambiguities in physical markers, research bias (Mays, 1998). Therefore, in order to make advances in the study of gender, one needs to employ not only osteological, but also genetic methods (Effros, 2000; Arnold, 2002). Sometimes, however, the skeletal material is totally missing. In such cases other criteria are invoked and usually the principle of labour division between sexes is taken for granted. For example, burials with weapons, almost without exception, are defined as masculine and burials with spindles – as feminine. This speaks for the dependence on the normative two sexes / two genders model, which stems from the nineteenth century stereotypes of the binary division between men and women and which usually imply some level of asymmetry (see e.g., Gilchrist, 1999, p. 31–53; Bettina, 2002). In practice this is not a method of sex identification, but rather a bipolarisation prejudice which considerably restricts understanding of men and women and their social roles in the past. A number of attributes might be inconstant, sometimes, male, sometimes fe-

male or non-gendered, which indicate that associations between biological sex and cultural behaviour are not necessarily normative. Gender is not static and it needs to be continually renegotiated, confirmed and maintained. All its forms and meanings can be transformed by such factors as age and status of the deceased, and gender-linked attributes might result from the ideological function of mortuary custom.

This article is devoted to establish the level of gender polarization and how this involves materialities in the burial rites, which due to the natural and disturbance factors leave no skeletal traces or they were too fragmentary to be collected.

In order to avoid bias sex / gender identification by stereotypes a sort of test was made by splitting the graves of adult individuals into three groups: with weapons (spears) and/or without axes, without weapons/axes and with axes only. The role of axes cannot be established unequivocally: they could have been used both as working tools and weapons (Malonaitis, 2008). Therefore, burials with axes (but without weapons) have been distinguished as a separate group in order to determine with which of the other two groups it shares more similarities and to check whether the practice of identifying burials with axes as male burials has been correct. Each of the groups have been analysed taking into consideration the following burial features: spatial position of the burial, orientation of the deceased to the compass, stone constructions in the burials, metal ornaments, working implements and weapons and their placement in the graves.

In every specific society and at distinct temporal perspective connection between sex / gender and burial rites might have been different, and therefore, one needs to identify specific characteristics for every particular case. Current survey concentrates on the Roman Period Culture of Barrows with Stone Circles (exten-

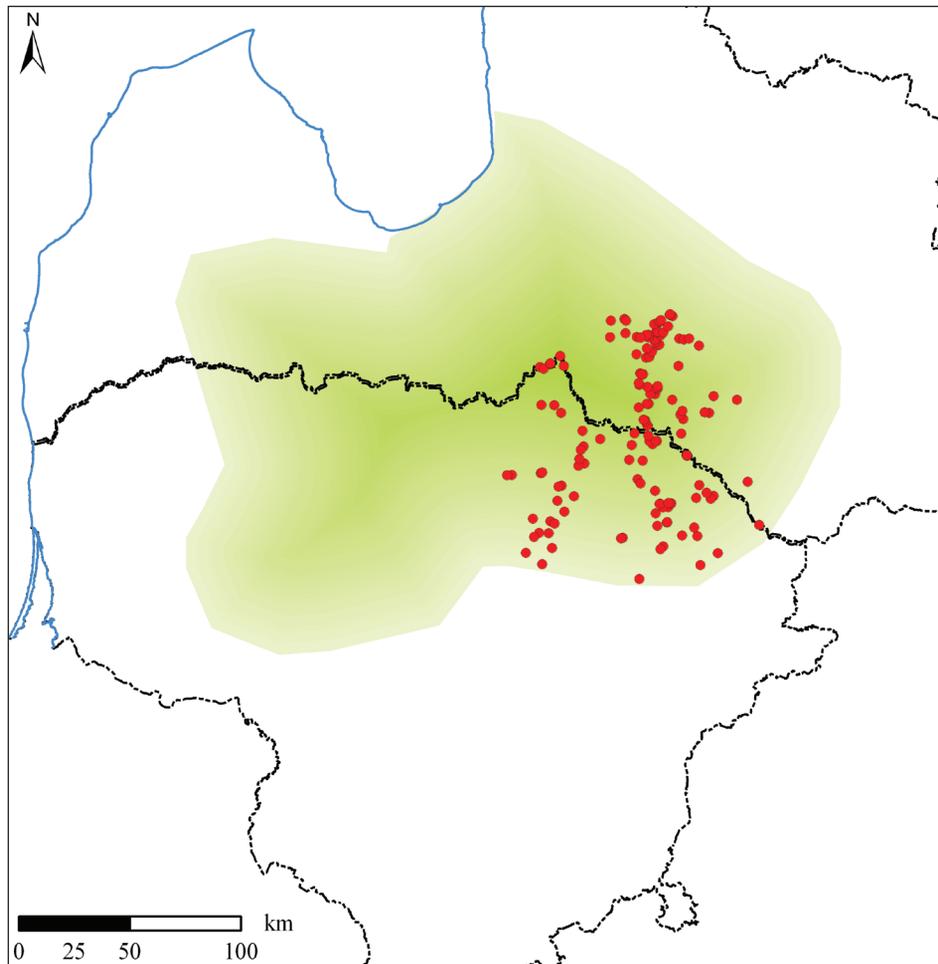


Fig. 1. Territory of the Barrow with stone circles culture and the distribution of the eastern group barrows, discussed in the text.

1 pav. Pilkapių su akmenų vainikais kultūros teritorija ir rytinės jos grupės pilkapių, kurių medžiaga analizuojama tekste, paplitimas

sively excavated by prof. M. Michelbertas – Akmeniai, Kuršiai, Paalksniai, Pajuostis, Paragaudis, Perkūniškė, Daujėnai, Berklainiai, just to mention a few) (Michelbertas, 1986) in particular its eastern area, which covers part of the territory of Lithuania and Latvia (Fig. 1). The culture obtained its name from the characteristic form of burial sites in this area. The barrow cemeteries are small, having between one and six or seven barrows and only small part of them are bigger. The barrows were generally between 8 and 12 m in diameter, 0.5–1 m high (Fig. 2). The number of inhumation burials per barrow varies between several and twenty (6–7 graves at an average). There was usually the earliest burial at the centre of mound, the deceased lying on the ground surface. Then the body was covered in earth, creating a barrow. The other burials were arranged around the pri-

mary one, generally next to the peristalith. The secondary burials were covered in more earth, thus, progressively increasing the height of the barrow. Starting from the 3rd quarter of the I millennium grave pits were dug for the deceased, and the custom continued into historical times, which damaged the earliest burials and made the result of current research less reliable.

At present, we have more than 60 uncovered barrows from 29 barrow cemeteries with 625 graves, out of which 162 date back to the Roman period. 146 of them have been identified as adult individuals. Three groups of burials have been distinguished: 58 burials with spears and/or without axes, 64 burials without spears and axes and 24 burials with axes only. Only scanty of them were examined osteologically, while most burials are lacking the skeletal evidence, conse-

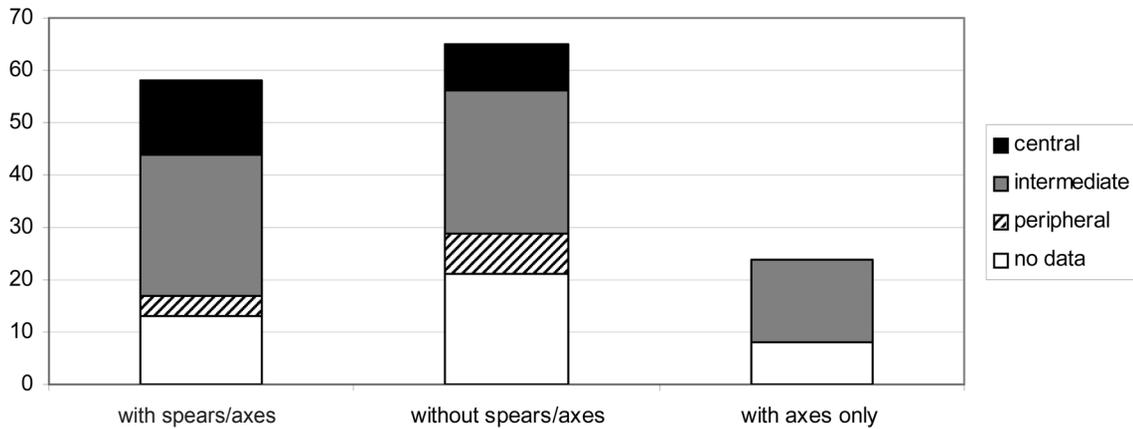


Fig. 3. The spatial distribution of graves in barrows.

3 pav. Erdvinis kapų paplitimas pilkapiuose

quently sex determinations must then rest on the archaeological determinations alone.

Burial spatial distribution within a barrow. The issue of burial spatial position within a barrow is very important, because it is used to prove the traditional thesis that it was the family elders – usually male individuals – who were buried in the centre, and that barrows were mounded for them (Riekstiņš, 1935, p. 12–13; Moora, 1952, p. 78; Latvijas, 2001, p. 207; Sēļi, 2005, p. 39–40).

Out of 146¹ burials 22 (15%) were central burials, and it was discovered that not all of the central burials contained spears/axes (Fig. 3). True, burials with weapons prevailed accounting for 60%, nevertheless other 40% were burials without spears/axes and also without axes. Within the group of burials with weapons/axes, central burials made 24% (14 burials), and in the group of burials without weapons/axes such burials made 14% (9 burials), which in fact means, that the difference was not that big. Attention should be paid to the fact that no axe-only containing burials were found in barrow central position

Most of the burials (73 graves, 50%) were found in the mid between the barrow centre and the stone circle. Burial of intermediate spatial position made respectively for 47%, 42% and 67% within the above-mentioned groups.

7% of graves had a peripheral position near the edge of the mound and even on the outside the stone

¹ Out of these 42 burials provides no data about spatial position (29%).

circle (10 burials). Most of them contained no weapons (66%), and burials with weapons made 33%.

Orientation of the deceased to the compass. In regard to compass orientation, in all three groups W and especially NW direction prevailed (Fig. 4).

Most of the deceased buried with weapons were orientated to NW (15), W (12) and N (8) (data from 45 burials is available). In several cases, burials were also orientated SW (4) and NE (2), and by one – to SE and S.

Burials without weapons looked similar in general and most of the graves were buried NW (13), W (6) and N (5), although 11 burials were orientated to SW and by 4 deceased – to E and NE. Several burials were also found orientated SE.

Out of 21 only axe containing burials on which we have data, most were found orientated to NW (7) and SW (6); others were directed respectively to W (4), N (3) and SE (1).

Prevailing orientation was featured almost by all central burials – by 18 out of 22. Several were directed with heads to SW (2) and one in E direction. Although orientation of the rest burials (124) was much more determined by layout of a mound, attempts to maintain the same orientation are obvious.

Stone constructions in the burials was a characteristic feature for the entire habitat of the Barrow Culture, and burials sometimes contain by one, two and sometimes even three small stones placed by the head, foot or sides of the body (Fig. 5). Stone constructions were discovered in a half of the researched burials

(68). Their appearance among the abovementioned groups was almost equal (55%, 49%, 46%), only burials with weapons featured a slight overweight. Stone configurations within the burials were also similar to all the groups: most of the uncovered graves had one or two stones placed by the head (respectively 7 and 21 graves); stone pairs placed by the head and foot were also found quite often (10 graves).

Metal ornaments. Three most common kinds of ornaments – neckrings, pins and bracelets – were equally common both for burials with weapons and/or axes and without them. Not only kinds of the ornaments, but also their types and subtypes were almost evenly distributed. A seriation of all artefacts types, which occurred in at least two graves, support the ambiguity of the grave-goods, especially ornaments (Fig. 6). Very few ornaments could be defined as presumably sex-related. Here we have necklaces, rings and pins with a spool-shaped head, which were characteristic of group without spears or axes, while pins with a needle-shaped head, spiral bracelets, bracelets with semicircular cross-section were characteristic of group with weapons. However, as the number of these artefacts is very small the given evidence is not reliable. The only difference was that burials with weapons featured slightly greater variety of ornaments, than those without them.

Tools and their placement in the graves. Speaking of additional burial inventories, usually these were knives and knives-sickles attributable to working tools, found in 43 burials. No implements of spinning, which are usually treated as female-related activities were found. Only 8 graves contained awls or their fragments and all these graves were without spears or axes.

Knives were found in 9 burials and all of them (with one exception) occurred in graves with spearheads and/or axes. These implements were usually placed by the side of interred individuals (4 cases), presumably, in the way they had been worn. In the only weapon-free grave knife was found by the foot (Fig. 7).

Since they occurred almost exclusively in graves with spearheads and/or axes, it is possible to assume they could have been used as a kind of weapons, not only working implements.

The situation is different with 34 knives-sickles which were found in all three groups: 12 in burials with spearheads/axes (19% of all graves containing

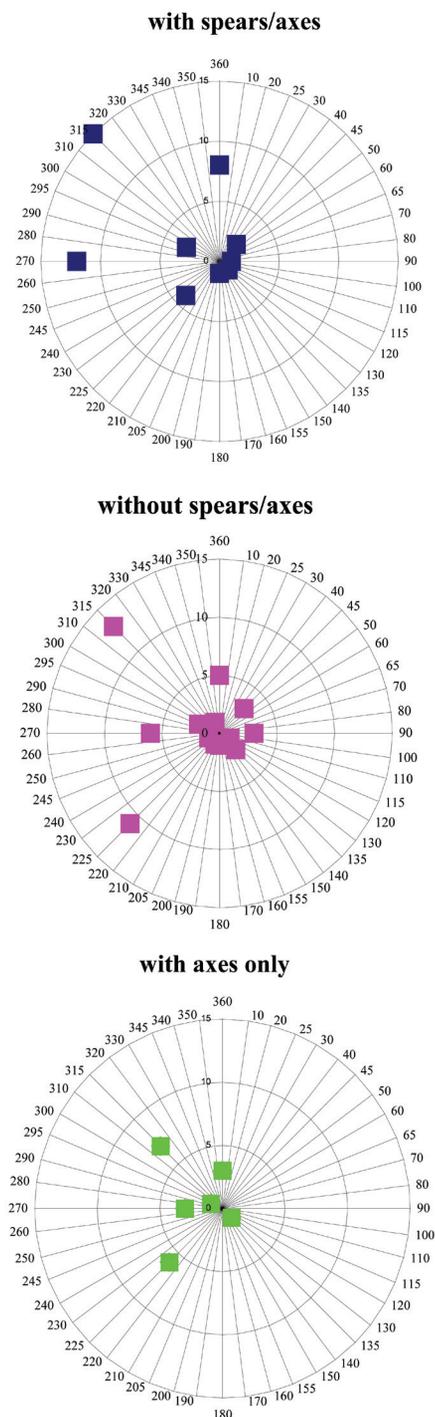


Fig. 4. The orientation of the deceased.

4 pav. Kapų orientavimas pagal pasaulio šalis

spearheads), 16 in burials without spearheads/axes (25%) and 6 in burials with axes only (25%). Location of knives-sickles in the burials was not similar. Sickles in burials with weapons were more often found by

Burials with stones (%)	Stone configurations within the burials																				
with spears (55%)	4	1	2	1	-	7	1	1	1	5	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	1
without spears/axes (49%)	2	3	1	2	1	9	2	2	-	3	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	1	1	1	-
with axes only (46%)	1	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
In all (68 burials)	7	4	3	3	1	21	3	3	1	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1

Fig. 5. Stone configurations within the burials.

5 pav. Akmenų konstrukcijos kapuose

the head or by the sides of the deceased, while in burials without weapons they were mostly placed by the foot.

The different placement of knife-sickles within the graves with or without weapons can also be sex-relevant when biological material is poorly preserved. E.g., one slightly disturbed burial from Melderiški, gr. II/7 contained only two items: a knife-sickle and a fibula. The burial was located in the barrow centre, and the fibula is kind of ornament rarely encountered in this region in general. There were no weapons in the grave, so it could have been assumed as a female burial. Nevertheless, the knife-sickle was placed by the head and its position implies that the possibility of a male individual should not be rejected.

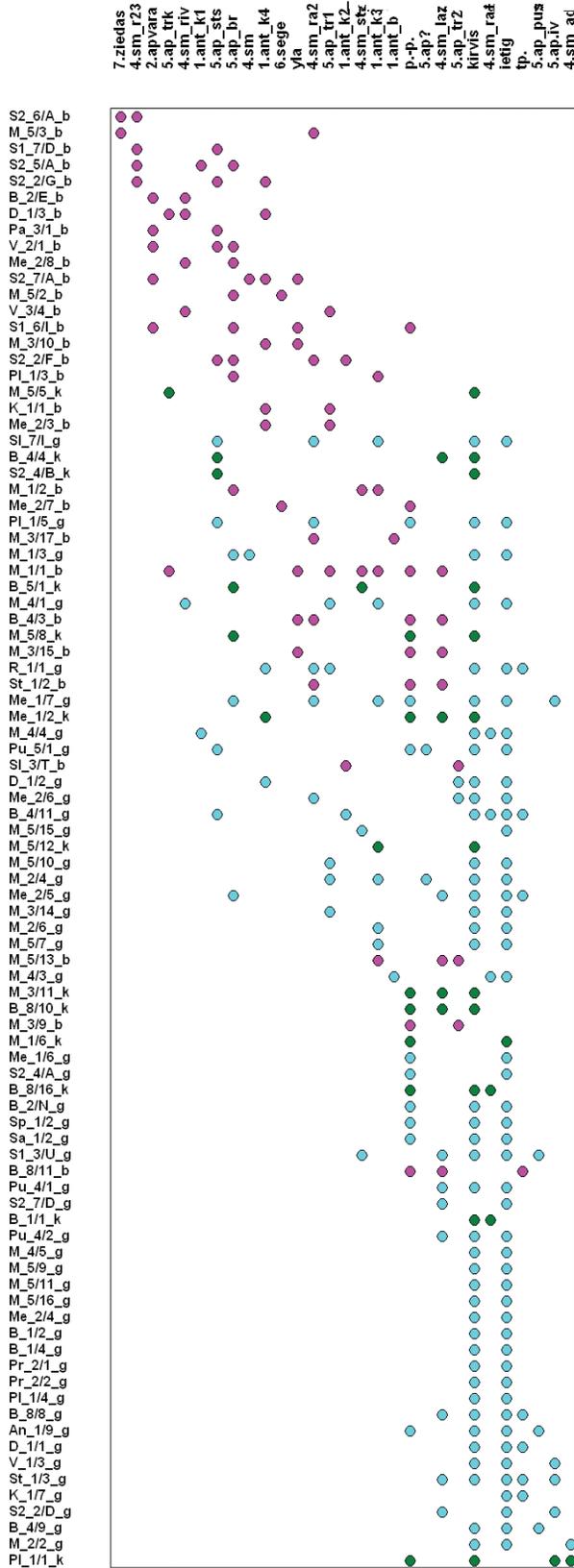
Though curious, it has to be admitted that in only axe-containing burials position of knives-sickles was more similar to their position in weapon-free burials: most often, sickles were found by the foot, and none of them was placed by the head.

Spearheads and axes and their placement in the graves. Spearheads and axes themselves were the criterion for the graves division into groups. 58 burials contained spearheads, and there are data about the placement of spear in 43 cases. In half of the graves (21) spearheads were located by the foot, less often – by the head (17 burials), and in 5 burials spearheads were found by the side (in the chest or pelvic area) of the interred individuals (Fig. 8). Spearheads placed by the head were found on both sides, whereas those placed by the foot or by the side were almost always found on the right side.

44 of these burials also contained axes, and there are data about the placement of an axe in 31 cases. Most of axes were located by the foot (23), 5 by the head and 3 by the sides of the buried bodies. Axes placed by the foot were usually found on the right side (11); in other cases their position varied.

In a separate group of 24 burials containing only axes, but no weapons, axes were also placed mostly by the foot (16); only the right side overweight was less distinguished.

Spearheads and axes (theoretically axes can also be attributed to weapons) are treated as the prime masculine attribute – the sign of male warrior. Nevertheless, some scholars suggested that is no necessary connection between the weapon-burial rite and the actual experience of warfare (Härke, 1990). Obviously, weapons could be associated with military practice or serve as sex indicators, but they might bring a slightly different connotation and symbolize other things as well: law status, social status, ethnic identity or specific burial rites. They might also occurred in female graves. “Masculine” items in female graves are explained as evidence of gifts, secondary utilization of objects, which lost their primary function, double graves with female and male burials mixed together, or even transvestite. Sometimes these “unusual” items are explained as “husband’s symbol”, which declares status of family position (i.e., status of male) rather than indicates evidence of powerful women with autonomy and property. However, the special status or specific activity of a deceased is also assumed. It is acquired under certain circumstances, e.g. during the absence of a virtual agent (in this case – male



Abbreviations:

Archaeological sites: An – Antuži; B – Boķi; D – Drūlēnai; K – Ķebēni; M – Muorišķiai; Me – Melderišķi; P – Pāķi; Pl – Plāteri; Pr – Priekšāni; Pu – Pungas; R – Razbuki; Sa – Salenieki; S1 – Slate I; S2 – Slate II; Sp – Spietiņi; St – Stūreļi; V – Vaineikiai.

Grave goods:

- 1.ant_b – neckring with knob-shapes terminals
- 1.ant_k – neckring with cone-shapes terminals (1–4 gr.)
- 2.apvara – necklace
- 4.sm – pin
- 4.sm_ad – pin with needle-shaped head
- 4.sm_laz – crook like pin
- 4.sm_r23 – pin with spool-shaped head (2, 3 gr.)
- 4.sm_ra – pin with wheel-shaped head (1, 2 gr.)
- 4.sm_riv – pin with spool-shaped head (the latest variant)
- 4.sm_st – pin with barrel-shaped head (the latest variant)
- 5.ap – bracelet
- 5.ap_br – bracelet with poligon cross-section and rounded terminals
- 5.ap_iv – spiral bracelet
- 5.ap_pus – bracelet with semicircular cross-section
- 5.ap_sts – bracelet with rectangular cross-section and rounded terminals
- 5.ap_tr – bracelet with triangular cross-section
- 6.sege – brooch
- 7.žiedas – finger-ring
- iet. – spearhead
- yla – awl
- kirvis – axe
- p.-p. – knife-sickle
- tp – knife

Trumpinimai:

Archeologinēs vietas: An – Antuži; B – Boķi; D – Drūlēnai; K – Ķebēni; M – Muorišķiai; Me – Melderišķi; P – Pāķi; Pl – Plāteri; Pr – Priekšāni; Pu – Pungas; R – Razbuki; Sa – Salenieki; S1 – Slate I; S2 – Slate II; Sp – Spietiņi; St – Stūreļi; V – Vaineikiai.

Ķkapēs: 1.ant_b – antkablē buoželiniais galais; 1.ant_k – antkablē kūģiniais galais (1–4 gr.); 2.apvara – apvara; 4.sm – smeigtukas; 4.sm_ad – smeigtukas adatine galvute; 4.sm_laz – lazdelinis smeigtukas; 4.sm_r23 – ritinis smeigtukas (2, 3 gr.); 4.sm_ra – ratelinis smeigtukas (1, 2 gr.); 4.sm_riv – ritinis smeigtukas (vēlyvas variants); 4.sm_st – statinēlinis smeigtukas; 5.ap – apyrankē; 5.ap_br – briaunoto pjūvio apyrankē suapvalintais galais; 5.ap_iv – iļvijinē apyrankē; 5.ap_pus – pusapvalio pjūvio apyrankē; 5.ap_sts – stačiakampio pjūvio apyrankē suapvalintais galais; 5.ap_r – trikampio pjūvio apyrankē; 6.sege – segē; 7.žiedas – žiedas; iet. – ietigalis; yla – yla; kirvis – kirvis; p.-p. – peilis-pjautuvēlis; tp – peilis tiesia nugarēle.

Fig. 6. The seriation table of the grave-goods (● – burials with spears, ● – burials without spears/axes, ● burials with axes only).

6 pav. Ķkapiu seriācijas lentelē (● – kapai, kuriuose rasta ietigaliu ir / arba kirviu, ● – kapai, kuriuose nerasta nei ietigaliu, nei kirviu, ● – kapai, kuriuose trasta tik kirviu)

individual) (Simniškytė, 2007). Whatever the reasons, these incidences are impossible to trace without comparing with skeletal data. In such circumstances in order to detect sex/gender related traces one needs to look for the overall pattern of mortuary rituals expecting that possible “abnormal” cases are accompanied not by one attribute alone, but rather by whole complex of unusual burial rites. Certain features, e.g., untypical location of burial items, unusual orientation of the interred individual, may be among the first indications of such exclusiveness or otherness. Cases of untraditional location of spearheads and axes were rather rare and they should be examined under the closer scrutiny (e.g., Muoriškiai, V/15; Pungas, 5/1; Slate I, k.1/8). In Vaineikiai there was a burial II/3 with untraditional spearhead and axe location (the first was placed by the right side, the other – by the left shoulder); the body was orientated atypically – head SE. The rare occasion of available osteological data implied that this was a female burial. Another burial of the same barrow cemetery contained two axes – a unique case in the entire region – and one of these axes was also placed by the side of interred individual. Examination of osteological remains revealed that the individual was about 30–50 years old and presumably female.

GENDER IN THE ROMAN PERIOD SOCIETY

Summing up, it can be said that burial rites of Roman Period society left no explicit traces of strict bipolar sex/gender system and even less of inequality. While analysing three burial groups by six features, it has been established that at least four of these features show no relevance to the possible biological sex of the individuals. Spatial position in the barrow, orientation of the deceased, stone constructions in the graves, the presence / absence of most of the metal ornaments and part of tools were surprisingly similar for all burials, which imply about the social organization with the system of non-contrasting gender identity. Even axes or weapons in the burials cannot be assumed as a save proof of sex-related identity. In such circumstances the overall pattern should be assessed and the deviations are very important to record, because they may be symptoms pointing to specific social status or gender of the buried individual, rather than just an example of “accidentally” different burial practice.

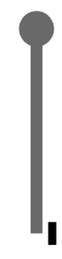
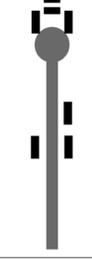
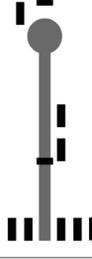
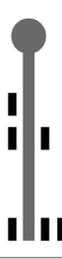
knives		with spears/axes	without spears/axes	with axes only
				
9 graves in all	N of graves (% within group)	6 graves (10%)	1 grave (2%)	2 graves (8%)
knives-sickles		with spears/axes	without spears/axes	with axes only
				
34 graves in all	N of graves (% within group)	12 graves (21%)	16 grave (25%)	6 graves (25%)

Fig. 7. Placement of implements.

7 pav. Darbo įrankių vieta kapuose

Placement of spears within burials	Placement of axes within burials with spears	Placement of axes within burials without spears
		

Fig. 8. Placement of spears and axes.

8 pav. Įetigalių ir kirvių vieta kapuose

Individuals of both sexes had practically the same chance to be honoured with a barrow or to be buried in the older one. This fact at least partly refuted the prejudice that the male sphere had been assumed to be associated with responsibility, whereas the female one was perceived as passive and of secondary importance. In this regard, the group of burials with axes only looks

more marginal – none of them was found in the barrow centre. Sex-related identity of these individuals remains an open issue. On the one hand, location of axes in the burials is similar to the tradition featured in the burials with weapons, on the other, burials with axes only have revealed implements – in particular, knives-sickles – placed similarly as in burials without weapons. This is probably due not so much biological sex as social status of the deceased was the most influential factor, which impacted the pattern of burial rites.

The interpretations about moderate gender ideology to some extent conflict with data from other simultaneous or a little later burial sites from Lithuania, where pattern of sex related grave-goods assemblages revealed rather strict bipolar gender organization (Vaitkunskienė, 1995, p. 158–159; Jovaiša, 1997, p. 18, 38; Jankauskas, Čepiauskaitė, 2010; but see Švelniūtė, 2005; Kurila, 2009, p. 111). The reason might be methodical – enhanced focus on the types of grave-goods leaving out another aspects of burial rites.

Ambivalence in the graves equipment of the Roman Period Culture of Barrows with stone circles demonstrates that the associations between burial rites and gender blurred to some extent. To acknowledge that it was not necessarily to emphasised sex identity during the burial rituals is not the same as saying that the dichotomy of two sexes did not exist. Some kind

of activity and the attributes might be qualified as predominantly male (warfare, defence: knives, spears) or female (housework, sewing: awls). Knives-sickles, possibly axes might relate to agriculture, which involved all members of community regardless of their sex. It might be assumed that under such circumstances the placement of additional grave-goods in the graves developed as sex-related feature, which has so far not offered much attention.

CONCLUSION

It has been established that four of six discussed burial features show no relevance to biological sex. Spatial position in the barrow, orientation of the deceased, stone constructions in the graves, the presence / absence of most of the metal ornaments and part of tools were similar for all burials. Roman Period society left no explicit traces of gender polarisation and even less of inequality. The group of burials with axes only looks more marginal. This is probably due not so much biological sex as social status of the deceased. The principle of labour division in the society of the Roman Period Barrow culture has been affirmed only partly and not so much by the grave-goods themselves as far as by their placement within grave, which has so far not offered much attention.

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LYTIES IDENTIFIKAVIMAS ROMĖNIŠKOJO LAIKOTARPIO PILKAPIŲ SU AKMENŲ VAINIKAIS KULTŪROS MEDŽIAGOJE

Andra Simniškytė

Santrauka

Visuomenės susiskirstymas į du – vyrišką ir moterišką – polius yra nulemtas žmogaus biologijos, o jų paieška yra neatsiejama tyrimų dalis analizuojant laidojimo paminklų medžiagą. Šalia biologinės lyties, kaip pastovios kategorijos, individų amžius, bendruomenės elgsenos modeliai, tradicijos formavo socialinę lytį, kuri galėjo sutapti, tačiau galėjo ir nesutapti su biologine, ir turėjo savybę kisti.

Siekiant patikrinti laidosenos ryšius su biologine lytimi, būtina archeologinių ir osteologinių duomenų koreliacija. Tačiau sąlygos tam ne visada tinkamos dėl nepakankamo antropologinės medžiagos išlikimo. Tuomet tenka pasikliauti kitais kriterijais. Dažniausiai vadovaujamosi lyčių darbo pasidalijimo principu. Faktiškai tai reiškia ne lyties atpažinimo metodiką, bet išankstinę lyčių poliarizaciją, kuri labai apriboja lyties ir jos funkcijų praeityje sampratą.

Tai paskatino dar kartą įvertinti lyčių identifikavimo pagal veiklos pasidalijimo principą efektyvumą. Natūralu tikėtis, jog esant lyčių poliarizacijai binarija turėtų vienaip ar kitaip atsispindėti ir laidosenoje. Šio straipsnio tikslas ir būtų įvertinti, kokio lygio buvo lyčių opozicija laidosenoje ir ar ji turėjo tam tikro nelygiavertiškumo požymius.

Kiekvienu atveju konkrečioje visuomenėje lyties ir laidosenos ryšiai galėjo skirtis, todėl visuomet būtina apsibrėžti būtent jai būdingą specifiką. Tyrimams pasirinkta romėniškojo laikotarpio Pilkapių su akmenų vainikais kultūra, duomenys iš pilkapių jos rytiniame areale. Tai 162 kapai, iš kurių 146 identifikuoti kaip suaugusių individų. Nesant osteologinių duomenų, kapai suskirstyti į tris grupes: kapai, kuriuose rasta ginklų – 58 kapai, kuriuose nerasta ginklų – 64 kapai ir kuriuose rasta tik kirvių – 24 kapai. Kirvio pa-

skirtį tvirtai apibrėžti sunku, jie galėjo būti įvairiai naudojami tiek ūkyje, tiek karyboje. Todėl kapai, kuriuose rasta kirvių (bet nerasta ginklų) išskirti į atskirą grupę taip siekiant patikrinti, kuriai iš minėtų dviejų ji yra artimesnė ir ar tikrai kapai, kuriuose rasta kirvių, skirtini vyrams.

Kiekviena šių grupių buvo analizuota įvertinant tokius laidosenos požymius: 1) kapų vietą pilkapyje, 2) mirusiųjų orientaciją pagal pasaulio šalis, 3) akmenų konstrukcijas kapuose, 4) papuošalų rūšių ir tipų buvimą / nebuvimą, 5) darbo įrankių buvimą / nebuvimą ir jų vietą kape; 6) ietigalių ir kirvių buvimą / nebuvimą ir jų vietą kape.

Nustatyta, kad romėniškojo laikotarpio visuomenės laidosenoje ryškių lyties poliarizuojančių ar nelygiavertiškumo ženklų nebuvo. Išanalizavus tris kapų grupes pagal šešis požymius keturi iš jų nerodo jokio ryšio su biologine lytimi. Mirusiųjų orientacija, akmenų konstrukcijos kapuose, dauguma papuošalų rūšių ir net jų tipai buvo tokie patys visuose kapuose. Net ir ginklai negali būti laikomi neginčijamu lyties tapatumo rodikliu. Toks laidosenos ambivalentiškumas gali reikšti, kad romėniškajame laikotarpyje dar nebuvo išsikristalizavęs poreikis pabrėžti vyriškojo ir moteriškojo prado atskirumą.

Abiejų lyčių atstovai turėjo faktiškai vienodas galimybes tiek būti pagerbti jiems supilamu pilkapiu, tiek palaidoti anksčiau supiltame pilkapyje. Šia prasme kiek marginalesnė buvo kapų, kuriuose rasta tik kirvių, grupė – tokių kapų pilkapiu centre nerasta. Iš vienos pusės, kirvių padėtis šiuose kapuose atitinka laidosenos tradicijas kapuose, kuriuose rasta ginklų, dažniau aptinkama lazdelinių ir ratelinių smeigtukų, nėra kaklo apvarų. Tačiau dalis darbo įrankių,

konkrečiai, peilių-pjautuvėlių, į kapus dėti palaidojimams be ginklų būdinga tvarka. Greičiausiai tai reikėtų sieti ne su biologinės lyties, bet su specifiniu socialiniu vaidmeniu.

Nesant galimybių patikrinti biologinės lyties fakto, būtina atsižvelgti į kitus veiksnius, visų pirma, radinių padėtį

kape, kuri gali turėti šokių ryšį su biologine lytimi. Ne mažiau svarbu užfiksuoti iš bendro konteksto išsiskiriančią laidoseną „anomalius“ jos elementus, kurie nėra tiesiog šiaip, atsitiktinai kitokia laidosena, bet gali būti užuomina apie specifinį mirusiojo socialinį statusą ar lytį.

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