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SOME DEBATABLE QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE ARMAMENT OF THE VIKING PERIOD IN LITHUANIA

During the research work on the Baltic weapons of the Late Iron Age (9th-12th c. A.D.) one inevitably encounters West European arms, the Scandinavian ones included. The analysis of the imported arms in Lithuania is not an exhaustive one yet. Many questions regarding the time and place of their production, chronology, the ways of transportation to the Baltic region remain unsolved. Therefore it may be important to discuss some debatable questions concerning the imported arms in Lithuania. The more so as the last relevant work appeared ten years ago. This article makes no pretence of being a detailed analysis of all sorts of imported arms.

There are only three special works devoted to the imported arms in Lithuanian archaeological literature: the article about the sword with signs and inscription on the blade accidentally found in Sargenai, the Kaunas cemetery¹ and two short articles in an ethnographical publication about the swords with inscriptions found in Gudes Laukas, the Anykščiai district, Gudai, the Akmenė district and the Ukmerge region². Little has been written about the imported arms in general editions, for example in the book devoted to the Lithuanians of the 9th-12th c.³ Short paragraphs are found in the work dealing with the trade relations of the 1st-13th c.⁴ and in the book about the material culture of the Lithuanians of the 9th-13th c.⁵ More attention has been paid to the steel arms of Damascus: spears and swords. They are discussed in the works of the Latvian metalographer Andris Anteins⁶.

At present there are some 70 different kinds of arms and their fragments that are not characteristic of Baltic people: spearheads, swords, sword chapes and battle-axes. They appeared in Lithuania through trade or were brought as prizes or tributes to the winners during wars.

Spearheads with ornamental grooves are one of the sorts of arms (type E according to J. Petersen). The type E spearheads were very widespread in Europe. Many such spearheads were found in Scandinavia: Sweden⁷, Finland⁸, Norway⁹. According to the researcher of the Slavonic arms Anatolij Kirpichnikov, these spearheads are found in bigger numbers in the North¹⁰. This fact is clearly seen in the work of the Polish archaeologist Jan Żak, in which the type E spearheads found in Europe are described¹¹. However, this work was criticised by the Finnish archaeologist Pirkko-Liisa Lehtosalo-Hilander¹² as some mistakes in the presentation of facts regarding the material of North European countries had been revealed. It should be mentioned that, unfortunately, the author did not know the material of Eastern Europe, either. Jan Żak points to, for example, 4 type E spearheads found in Lithuania, 7 — in Estonia, 5 — in the Kaliningrad region (former East Prussia), 4 — on the Sambia peninsula, and 1 in the Baltic region of Poland¹³. The spearheads found in Latvia are not mentioned at all.

Let me discuss in detail the type E spearheads found in Lithuania. On the territory of this country 27 spearheads were found in 17 places (fig. 1). They are 25-45 cm

¹ I. Sadauskaitė, *Del Sargenuose rasto kalavijo ornamentuota geležte kilmes ir datavimo*. "Lietuvos TSR Mokslu Akademijos darbai", series A, vol. 1(14), 1963, pp. 91-98.

² A. Lisankā, *Dar du kalavijai su irāšais*, "Kraštotyra", Vilnius 1975, pp. 183-188; A. Lisankā, *Gudes Lauko kalavijas*, "Kraštotyra", II, Vilnius 1980, pp. 54-56.

³ R. Volkaite-Kulikauskienė, *Lietuviai IX-XII amūiais*, Vilnius 1970, pp. 102-104.

⁴ O. Kuncienė, *Prekybiniai ryšiai IX-XIII amūiais*, [in:] *Lietuvos ventoju prekybiniai ryšiai I-XIII a.*, Vilnius 1972, pp. 205-212.

⁵ O. Kuncienė, *Prekyba. - Lietuviu materialine kultura IX-XIII amūiuje II*, Vilnius 1981, pp. 61-72.

⁶ A. K. Anteins, *Drevneje oruūje iz damasskoj stalī*, [in:] *Materiali VI konferencii po istorii nauki v Pribaltike*, Vilnius 1965, pp. 78-80; A. K. Anteins, *Damasskaia stal v stranach basseina Baltijskogo Morja*, Riga 1973, pp. 32, 33, 60, 61, 109, 121, 124, fig. 75a, 109, 110b, 121, 124b.

⁷ H. Arbman, *Birka, I. Die Grāber*, Stockholm 1940, Table 8:1, 3, 7; 9:1; L. Thālin-Bergman, *Die Waffengrāber von Birka*, [in:] *Birka, II:2. Systematische Analysen der Grāberfunde*, Stockholm 1986, pp. 16, 17; Table 3:2.

⁸ E. Kivikoski, *Die Eisenzeit Finnlands*, Helsinki 1973, p. 115, Table 98:853; P. L. Lehtosalo-Hilander, *Luistari II. The Artefacts*, Helsinki 1982, p. 26; fig. 7:1 - 11.

⁹ J. Żak, *Eine skandinavische frūhmittelalterliche Eisenlanzen-spitze aus Grosspolen*, "Meddelanden fran Lunds Universitets Historiska Museum" (1959) 1960, pp. 141, 142; J. Żak, "Importy" skandynawskie na ziemiach zachodniostowiańskich od IX do XI wieku, Poznań 1967, p. 293.

¹⁰ A. N. Kirpichnikov, *Drevnerusskoe oruūje, I, Meči i sabli*, Moscow 1966, p. 9.

¹¹ J. Żak, *Eine skandinavische ...*, pp. 136-148.

¹² P. L. Lehtosalo-Hilander, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

¹³ J. Żak, "Importy" skandynawskie ..., p. 293.

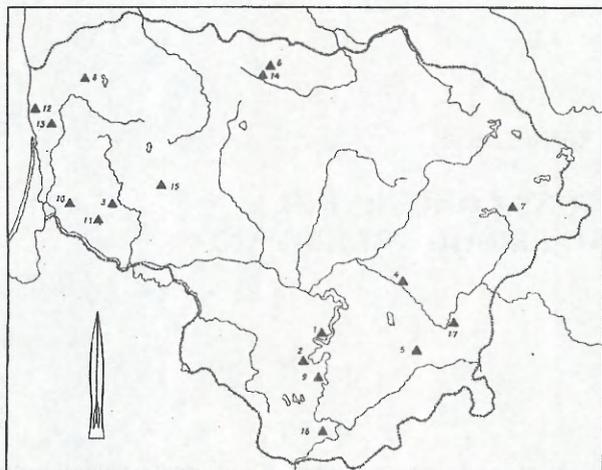


Fig. 1. Spread of type E groove ornamented spearheads in Lithuania: 1 - Bagrenai, Prienai district; 2 - Balbieriskis, Prienai district; 3 - Bikavenai, Šilute district; 4 - Ciobiskis, Širvintos district; 5 - Danosai, Trakai district; 6 - Jauneikiai, Joniskis district; 7 - Kretuonys, Švenčionys district; 8 - Ladviai, Kretinga district; 9 - Likiskiai, Alytus district; 10 - Nikeilai, Šilute district; 11 - Pajuriskiai, Šilute district; 12 - Palanga; 13 - Paupeliai-Laukžemiai, Kretinga district; 14 - Slepsniani, Joniskis district; 15 - Upyna, Šilale district; 16 - Vilkiautinis, Varena district; 17 - Žvirbliai, Vilnius.

long, with blades 2-2,8 cm wide and bushes 2-2,7 cm in diameter. The bushes are decorated with a "gothic" design — deep clear-cut furrows. Among the 27 spearheads found in Lithuania 16 were found in graves together with other grave finds. Therefore it is quite possible to date them exactly.

Most of the type E spearheads were found during the investigations in the Upyna cemetery, the Šilale district in 1966. Five spearheads were found in graves No. 7, 17, 35 and 62. In grave No. 7 two type E spearheads were found: they were 32,6 and 28 cm long with 2,1



Fig. 2. Burial mound No. 32, grave No. 3 in Kretuonys, Švenčionys district. Type E spearheads in situ.

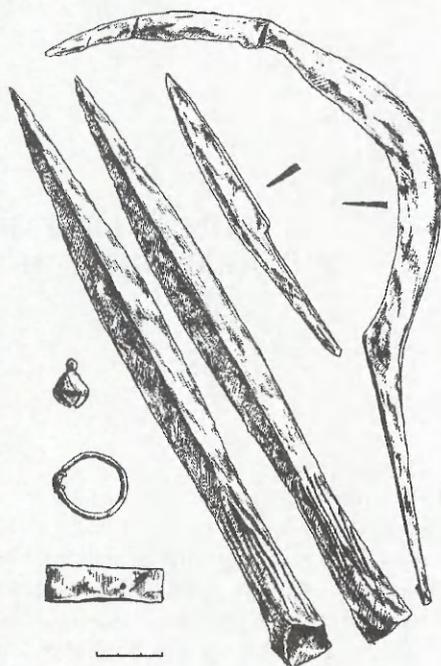


Fig. 3. Inventory of grave No. 2, burial mound No. 35 in Kretuonys, Švenčionys district.

and 2,8 cm wide blades and bushes 2,4-2,6 cm in diameter. There were also two bronze penannular brooches with polygonal terminals, a massive bracelet with a pentagonal cross-section, a spiral ring, iron and bronze fasteners, an iron spur with a twisted bow, a knife, binomial bits, the bindings of a drinking horn and the remains of a leather belt decorated with bronze bindings in this grave. The grave is dated to the 10th century. Four well preserved type E spearheads were found in 1976-1980 during the excavation works in the burial mound of Kretuonys, the Švenčionys district, in North-East Lithuania. They were found in mound No. 32, in graves No. 2, 3 and in mound No. 35, grave No. 2. Two spearheads were found in grave No. 3 of mound No. 32 (fig. 2). A sicle, a knife, a bronze bell, a binding and a bronze chain characteristic of the end of the first millennium were found together (fig. 3). The grave is dated to the 9th-the beginning of the 10th c. One of the earliest type E spearheads was found in grave No. 2 of mound No. 35 in Kretuonys. There were also a narrow-bladed axe and a knife (fig. 4) in this grave. The spearhead is about 35 cm long with a 2,2 cm wide blade and the bush is 2,5 cm in diameter. It was bent for ritual purposes. This grave can be dated by the form of the axe. On the basis of the analysis of Latgalian axes and their chronology done by the Latvian archaeologist Maris Atgāzis¹⁴ the axe, and consequently the grave, were dated to the year 800 A.D. In other graves with the type E spearheads twisted neckrings with hooks and loops, stepped and penannular brooches with rolled terminals, massive bracelets with a multangular cross-section, type

¹⁴ M. Atgāzis, *Latgali 9.-12. gs. cirvji*, "Arheoloģija un Etnografija", vol. VI, Rīga 1964, pp. 107, 108.

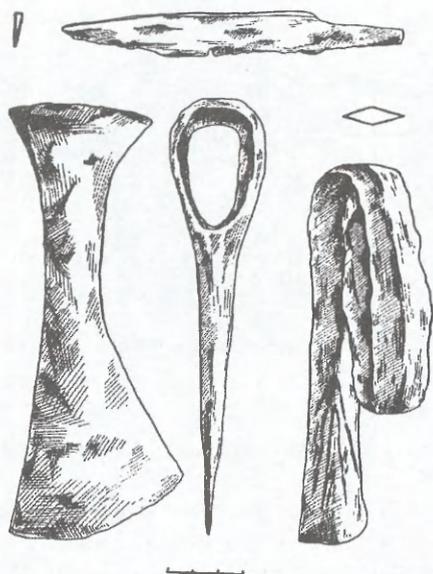


Fig. 4. Inventory of grave No. 2, burial mound No. 35 in Kretuonys, Švenčionys district.

B and type M swords and other objects dating to the 9th and 10th c. were discovered. Therefore we can date the type E spearheads found in Lithuania to this period. It should be acknowledged that they can be regarded as imported only when compared with other spearheads of the same type found in North European countries. The spearheads found in Lithuania have not been examined metallographically yet. No X-ray analysis has been done. The above mentioned spearheads may have been done of Damascus steel. It may be assumed that they were produced abroad. The Finnish scientist Helmer Salmo thinks that the technology of Damascus steel production was unknown to Finnish tribes in the pre-historic times¹⁵. Therefore it is assumed that 36 out of 66 type E Damascus steel groove ornamented spearheads were imported¹⁶. At the same time A. Anteins claims that the Balts were acquainted with this technology in the Viking period and that one of the centres of Damascus steel weapons production could have been situated in the north-western part of Lithuania¹⁷.

In North European countries the type E spearheads are dated with slight differences. In Sweden the type E Damascus steel spearheads are dated to the years 800-900 A.D.¹⁸ In the famous necropolis in Birka 14 spearheads of this kind with groove ornamentation were found, 11 — made of Damascus steel. They were found in the graves together with type H (graves No. 542, 643) and type E (grave No. 1151) swords¹⁹, other weapons²⁰ and other finds dated to the 9th-10th c. Five such spear-

¹⁵ H. Salmo, *Die Waffen der Merowingerzeit in Finnland*, Helsinki 1938, p. 252.

¹⁶ P. L. Lehtosalo-Hilander, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

¹⁷ A. K. Anteins, *Damasskaia stal ...*, p. 33.

¹⁸ *Vikingatidens ABC*, Stockholm 1981, p. 250.

¹⁹ L. Thālin-Bergman, *Die Waffengräber ...*, p. 10, fig. 1:1,

²⁰ L. Thālin-Bergman, *Die Waffengräber ...*, fig. 1:1, 1:2.

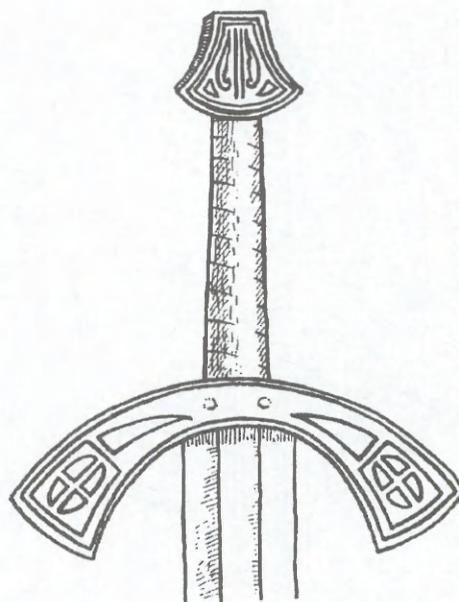


Fig. 5. Desiuiškes sword hilt, Ukmerge district.

heads were found in the Luistari cemetery in Finland. Two of them were made of Damascus steel. A pin with a round head decorated with the Borre style design (grave No. 135), a penannular brooch with multangular terminals (grave No. 400), a round brooch with animal headed terminals (grave No. 384) were dated to the years 880-950 A.D. as asserted by the researcher²¹. Ella Kivikoski dates such spearheads found in other cemeteries to the 9th century²². Some type E spearheads made of iron and not of Damascus steel appeared in Norway between the 8th and 9th c. They were mostly used in the 9th century²³. On the Slavonic territory of Eastern Europe they are dated to the years 900-1050 A.D.²⁴ Twenty nine type E spearheads were found in the eastern part of the Baltic region, in Estonia. Some of them were made of Damascus steel and are dated to the 10th-11th c.²⁵ In Latvia such spearheads are found in the graves coming from the 9th-11th c., however, the most characteristic ones belong to the 10th century²⁶. For example, in the Čunkāni-Drengeri cemetery, in the Bauske district, excavated by M. Atgāzis and V. Bebre in grave No. 198 dating back to the 10th century the following articles were found: an type E groove ornamented spearhead, a penannular brooch with rolled terminals and a battle-knife²⁷. Such spearheads are quite often found on the territory of West Baltic tribes in the graves dating back

²¹ P. L. Lehtosalo-Hilander, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-186.

²² E. Kivikoski, *op. cit.*, p. 115, fig. 853.

²³ J. Žak, "Importy" skandinavskie..., p. 294.

²⁴ A. N. Kirpichnikov, *Drevnerusskoe oružje*, 1, p. 9.

²⁵ J. Selirand, *Eestlaste matmiskombed varafeodaalsete suhete tärkamise perioodil*, Tallin 1974, p. 110, note 7, table XI:2.

²⁶ *Latvijas Arheologija*, Riga 1974, p. 243.

²⁷ M. Atgāzis, V. Bebre, *Petijumi unkanu-Drengeru kapulauka*, [in:] *Zinatniskas atskaites sesijas materiali par arheologu un etnografu 1984. un 1985. petijumu rezultatiem*, Riga 1986, p. 25, fig. 4:4, 11.

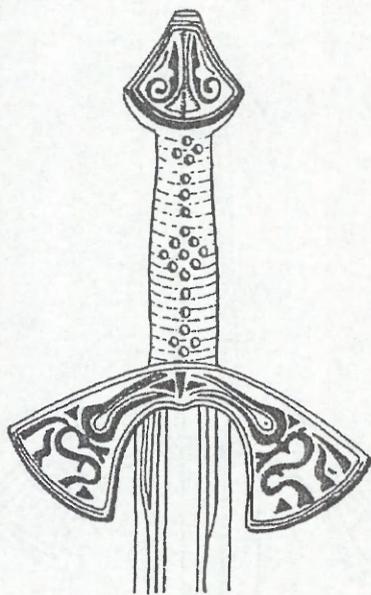


Fig. 6. Bargello sword hilt, Italy (according to P. Paulsen).

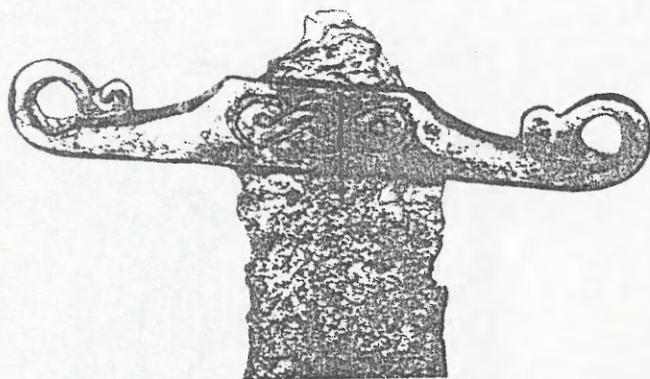


Fig. 8. Hilt of the sword found in the Plunge district.

to the beginning of the 10th century²⁸. However, it may be assumed that they appeared before on the territory of the Western Balts e.g. in mound No. 151a in Viskiautai (Wiskiauten) such spearheads were found together with a type M sword, a bow-shaped brooch, a penannular brooch with rolled terminals and a knife²⁹. Generally speaking the cemetery of Viskiautai (Wiskiauten) is rich in type E groove ornamented spearheads³⁰.



Fig. 7. Sword from an unknown place in the Plunge district.

Therefore I cannot give the explicit answer to the question of whether all the type E groove ornamented spearheads found in Lithuania are imported. However, I do not doubt that the stimulus of the appearance of such spearheads came from Northern Europe, the territories inhabited by Germanic tribes. The type E spearheads with non-decorative bushes are very numerous in Lithuania. They are especially widespread in the West Lithuanian cemeteries dating from the 9th-11th c.

In Lithuania ninety swords of different types have been found so far on the archaeological sites dating from the 9th-13th c.³¹ Some of them are regarded as imported. These are type B, H and U swords (according to J. Petersen's classification) and swords with inscriptions on the blades³².

There is no need to go into details of all imported swords for this could be the subject of a separate study. Therefore I shall call your attention to two swords worthy of a deeper analysis. The first one is the sword accidentally found in Desiukiškes, the Ukmergė district, and preserved in the Vytauto Didžiojo Karo Museum in Kaunas (No. 1450, (fig. 5). The other comes from an unknown place in the Plunge district and it may be seen in the Samogitian museum "Alka" in Telšiai (No. 1214, fig. 7).

The Desiukiškes sword is double-edged, 84 cm long and 4,8 cm wide with a much wider down-bent hilt and a profiled pommel. The guard is 16,4 cm long in a straight line, the pommel's outline is 5,6 x 4 and 8 x 3,2 cm big. The pommel and the guard are encrusted with silver and decorated with a geometrical design (fig. 5).

It does not fit into the framework of J. Petersen's classification. It is closest to the type classification made by the Polish archaeologist Andrzej Nadolski³³. The Lithuanian archaeologist Regina Volkaite-Kulikauskienė, who wrote about the swords of the 9th-12th c. in Lithu-

³¹ R. Volkaite-Kulikauskienė, *Ginklai*, [in:] *Lietuvių materialinė kultūra IX-XIII amžiuje*, part 2, Vilnius 1981, p. 250.

³² O. Kuncienė, *Prekybiniai ryšiai* ..., pp. 206-208, addition No. 6; O. Kuncienė, *Prekyba* ..., p. 70, fig. 10.

³³ A. Nadolski, *Studia nad uzbrojeniem polskim w X, XI i XII wieku*, Łódź 1954, pp. 26-27.

²⁸ J. Žak, "Importy" skandynawskie ..., p. 294; W. I. Kułakow, *Drevnosti prussov VI-XIII vv.*, "Archeologija SSSR", Moscow 1990, p. 31.

²⁹ B. Mühlén, *Die Kultur der Wikinger in Ostpreussen*, "Bonner Hefte zur Vorgeschichte", Nr. 9, 1975, Table 36.

³⁰ B. Mühlén, *op. cit.*, Table 18, 27, 28, 31, 42, 55.

ania, divided the type into two subtypes: a1 — the swords with short straight guards and different forms of pommels, and a2 — the ones with down-bent guards³⁴. According to this supplemented classification, the Desiukikes sword belongs to type a2. In this case, however, the specification of the subtype appears to be much less important than the indication of its place of production and chronology.

We cannot say with certainty where and when this sword was made. Our statements can only be based on analogies. At present 4 more swords found in various places in Europe are known to us. First of all the sword from the Bargello Museum in Florence, Italy, should be mentioned³⁵. Two swords with similar hilts are known in Poland. However, the exact place of their finding remains unknown. One sword is preserved in the Toruń Museum, the place of the preservation of the other is not specified³⁶. According to A. Kirpichnikov's data, one more sword of this type was found during the research work in Novogrod, the Russian Federation, USSR. It has not been published yet.

Therefore 5 swords which can be singled out into a separate type are known in Europe. A detailed analysis of these swords appears to be difficult as they were found accidentally and in some cases the places of their finding remain unknown. Peter Paulsen dates the Bargello sword to the 12th century. He claims that it could be made in Northern Europe³⁷. On the other hand, however, Francis Laking, who was the first to publish the sword, thinks that it dates back to the 13th century and comes from Spain or Southern Italy³⁸. According to Eduard Wagner the sword dates from the 13th century, too. Wagner does not analyse its origins. The Toruń sword and the one from Poland are dated to the 12th-the first half of the 13th century by Marian Głosek. He compares them with the Bargello sword, but does not discuss the origins, either³⁹.

Coming back to the analysis of the Desiukiškes sword it should be noticed that some metalographic work has been done in this case. Jonas Stankus, a metalographer, having analysed the Desiukiškes sword stated that the blade was hardened. The structure is martensitic, the hardness — 494 kG/mm². The middle part of the blade is made of ferrite and perlite (0,3-0,1% C).

This fact distinguishes it from the other blades of the analysed swords, which are not tempered⁴⁰. Not only the form of the hilt, but also the technology of the blade

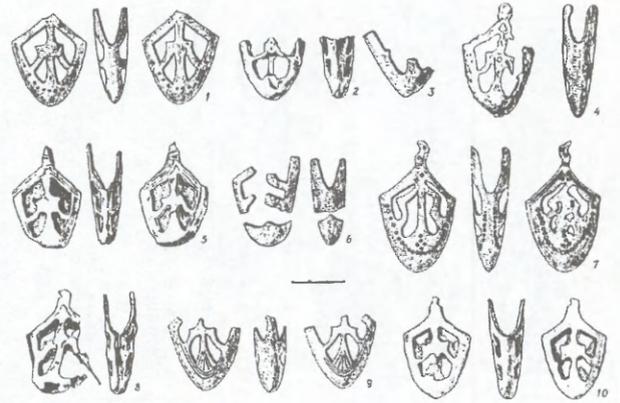


Fig. 9. Sword chapes of subgroup Ia: 1, 7, 9 - Paragaudis, Šilalė district (two stray finds and grave No. 27); 2 - Dovainynys, Kaišiadorys district (cremation grave); 3, 4, 5 - Žasinas, Šilalė district (two stray finds and grave No. 59); 6 - Upyna, Šilalė district (grave No. 96); 8 - Rimaisiai, Panevezys district (grave No. 4); 10 - Pavirvyte-Gudai, Akmenė district (stray find).

confirm the hypothesis that the Desiukiškes sword is an imported one.

The design of the Desiukiškes sword's hilt is geometrical and simpler than that of the Bargello sword. There are no close analogies to this sword in Lithuania. Some motifs resemble the sword found in Käkisalmi, Suotniemi, Finland, and the details of its hilt ornament⁴¹. This observation, however, is not sufficient to draw any conclusions.

The dating appears to be quite difficult, too. R. Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė was apt to date this sword to the 12th century⁴². Later R. Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė changed her opinion and dated the sword to the 13th century⁴³.

The examination of the analogies and their dating leads to the conclusion that the Desiukiškes sword may be dated to the second half of the 12th c. or the first half of the 13th c. The place of its production is still debatable.

The second sword coming from an unknown place in the Plunge region is 81cm long with a double 4 cm wide blade of a prolonged rhomboidal form extremely pointed at the spike (fig. 7). Only a part of the hilt — the guard with flaps and a woven ornament on the sides — has been preserved (fig. 8). Such a form of sword is rarely found in Europe. The guard of the sword of Lümanda, Estonia, could be regarded as a very distant analogy⁴⁴. This sword is dated to the first half of the

³⁴ R. Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė, *Kovos kirviai ankstyvojo feodalizmo laikotarpiu*, "Lietuvos TSR Mokslu Akademijos darbai", series A, vol. 1 (16), 1964, pp. 218-221.

³⁵ P. Paulsen, *Prunkwaffen der Niederlausitz*, "Altschlesien", vol. VII, Wrocław (Breslau) 1937, pp. 112-117, fig. 1; P. Paulsen, *Axt und Kreuz bei Nordgermanen*, Bonn 1939, pp. 151-152, fig. 91, 92.

³⁶ M. Głosek, *Miecze śródkowoeuropejskie z X-XV w.*, Warsaw 1984, p. 169, Table XXIII:4, XXVII:4, 5.

³⁷ P. Paulsen, *Prunkwaffen...*, p. 114.

³⁸ Ibidem.

³⁹ M. Głosek, *op. cit.*, pp. 94, 169.

⁴⁰ J. Stankus, *Kalaviju ir lietigaliu gamybos technologija Lietuvoje IX-XIII amiais*, "Lietuvos TSR Mokslu Akademijos darbai", series A, vol. 2 (33), 1970, p. 116, fig. 2:30.

⁴¹ J. Leppäaho, *Späteisenzeitliche Waffen aus Finnland*, Helsinki 1964, p. 18, Table 38:2a.

⁴² R. Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė, *Kovos kirviai...*, p. 221.

⁴³ R. Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė, *Ginklai...*, 1981, p. 31.

⁴⁴ A. M. Tallgren, *Zur Archaeologie Eestis*, Tallinn 1925, fig. 150.

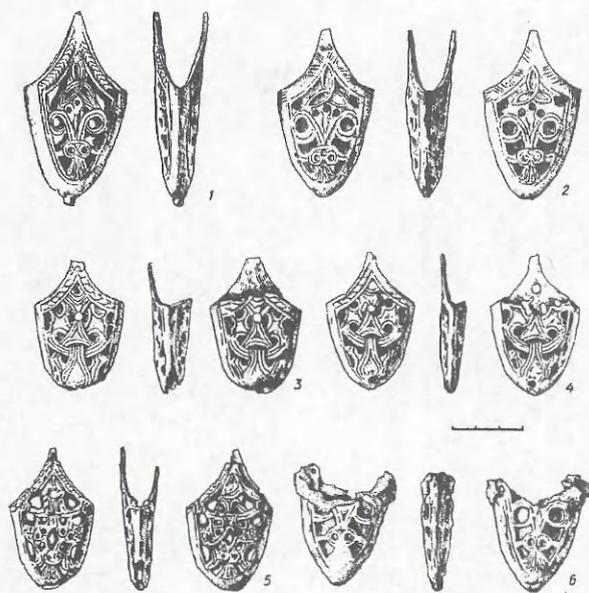


Fig. 10. Sword chapes of subgroup Ib: 1 - Šulaičiai, Kedainiai district (stray find); 2 - Bikavenai, Šilute district (grave No. 137); 3-6 - Žašinas, Šilale district (graves No. 62, 94, 160 and a stray find).

11th century. It is supposed to be of Scandinavian origin⁴⁵. One more sword with a similar hilt was found in the Baltic territory, Curonia, in the Užavas Silmalu cemetery, Latvia⁴⁶. Although the ornament is different, the form, when compared with the sword found in the Plunge district, is very similar. The Latvian archaeologist Eduard Šturms thinks that this sword was made by a local armorer in Curonia⁴⁷. Fragments of such hilts were found in Curonia at the cemeteries of Kazdanga, Ranku Kapeniekos and Lielivande⁴⁸. The sword hilt from Kihelkonna Paju, Estonia, also resembles the one found in the Plunge district⁴⁹.

The artefacts with woven ornaments are not rare. Motifs of similar design are widespread on Germanic and Slavonic territories. It should also be added that these motifs are found on different finds, sword hilts included, e.g the hilt from Czernik Polski, Poland⁵⁰, on Baltic territories, especially in Curonia⁵¹.

R. Volkaite-Kulikauskienė dated the sword of the Plunge district to the 11th c. and traced its origins to Scandinavia⁵². I agree with the dating, but have some

⁴⁵ B. Nerman, *Die Verbindungen zwischen Skandinavien und dem Ostbalticum in den jüngeren Eisenzeit*, Stockholm 1929, pp. 87-89, fig. 83.

⁴⁶ E. Šturms, *Kuršu zobeni*, "Senatne un maksla", vol. IV, Riga 1936, Fig. 6:a.

⁴⁷ E. Šturms, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

⁴⁸ E. Šturms, *op. cit.*, fig. 7:c, f, g.

⁴⁹ A. M. Tallgren, *op. cit.*, fig. 158.

⁵⁰ W. Sarnowska, *Miecze wczesnośredniowieczne w Polsce*, "Światowit", vol. 21, Warsaw 1955, fig. 5:2.

⁵¹ E. Šturms, *op. cit.*, fig. 4:2, c.

⁵² R. Volkaite-Kulikauskienė, *Kovos kirviai ...*, p. 214.

doubts concerning the origins of the sword. According to me, it was made by a local armorer in Curonia.

At present the Lithuanian archeologists are familiar with 106 sword chapes dated to the 10th-12th c. Some of them such as the sword chapes with the figure of a bird (Ortbänder mit germanischem Vogelmotiv, Ein Scandinavische Gruppe und Schwedisch-Warägische Gruppe /according to P. Paulsen/) or with the figure of some fantastic animal (Ortbänder mit germanischem Vierfüßlermotiv)⁵³ are considered to have been imported from Scandinavia. There are no doubts as far as the latter chapes are concerned. They are different from the Baltic sword chapes. They were found in Bikavenai, the Šilute district, grave No. 117 and in Žašinas, the Šilale district, grave No. 163. They are dated to the 10th century. However, the chapes with the figure of a bird are debatable.

There are 20 such chapes known in Lithuania. They can be divided into two groups: a and b. They are 5,5-8 cm long and 3,9-4,5 cm wide. In group a the representation of a realistic bird figure with spread wings on its both sides is visible (fig. 9). There are 10 such chapes, 6 of them found in graves and 4 — accidentally. The ones found in graves lied on type H (Upyna, the Šilale district, grave No. 96) and type X (Žašinas, grave No. 59) sword spikes together with other goods dating from the 10th century.

Some analogues sword chapes were found over vast territories spreading from Norway and the North of Sweden to the South of France and the Oka River basin in the East of the USSR. There is no need to enumerate all the sword chapes of the subgroup described by Peter Paulsen in his book⁵⁴.

Group b chapes are decorated with a stylized bird figure. Each silhouette of the bird is composed of three intertwined loops, two large circles represent the wings, while the tail is made of oblong furrows girded with a double circle (fig. 10).

Ten chapes belonging to this group come from the territory of Lithuania. Six of them were found in graves, four — were stray finds. Four of the chapes found in graves were revealed on the swords classified as belonging to type X (Bikavenai, grave No. 139), type H (Žašinas, grave No. 12) or on the fragments of sword blades (Bikavenai, grave No. 111; Žašinas, grave No. 62). On the basis of their equipment the graves can be dated to the 10th-11th c.

Group Ib chapes are widespread as well. As it has already been noticed by P. Paulsen, they are found from the territory of Iceland in the North to Schleswig-Holstein in the South⁵⁵.

The origin of the sword chapes belonging to group I is to be discussed. Such swords have been found in Scandinavia, along the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea, as well as far in the East, in Russia. While describing the contacts between Scandinavia and the East Balts,

⁵³ O. Kuncienė, *Prekyba ...*, p. 69; P. Paulsen, *Schwertortbänder der Wikingerzeit*, Stuttgart 1953, pp. 35-37.

⁵⁴ P. Paulsen, *Schwertortbänder ...*, pp. 22-34.

⁵⁵ P. Paulsen, *Schwertortbänder ...*, pp. 17-20.

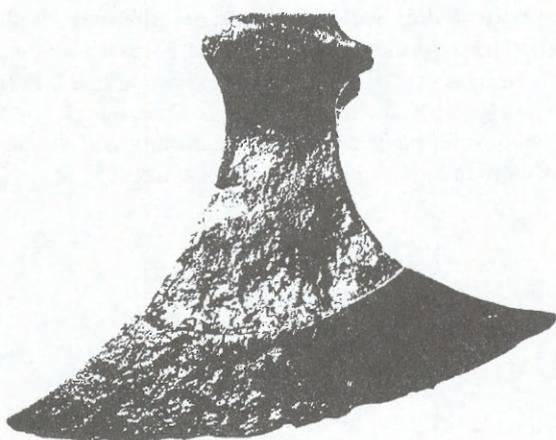


Fig. 11. Type M battle axe from Grieže, Mažeikiai district.

Birger Nerman notes that the sword chapes of subgroup Ia found in Eastern Europe may have been imported from Scandinavia⁵⁶. Märta Strömberg also keeps to the opinion that the ornaments of these chapes may have originated in the North of Europe⁵⁷. P. Paulsen, while speaking about the so called "Schwedisch-Warägische" chape group, points to three possible places of their production: two in Sweden, i.e. in Birka and Gotland, the third one in Ukraine, in the region of Kiev⁵⁸.

The Scandinavian origin of the sword chapes attributed to subgroup Ia found in Lithuania cannot be categorically asserted, but there are no arguments confirming their local origin, either. Neither the moulds nor semi-manufactured articles have been found in Lithuania. Only one chape from the Paragaudis burial place with a different bird figure, which seems to be more stylized, might be taken into consideration. On one side of the chape a bird's silhouette can also be seen, but the wings abnormally meet at the top part of the chape leaving no space for the bird's neck. The body and the tail are long and narrow. There is a stylized bird's head in the top part of the chape. On the other side of the chape the bird figure is completely invisible. Both sides of the chape are ornamented with rows of eyes (fig. 9: 7). It is possible that the chape is defected because the mould was carelessly made by local craftsmen or because of the repeated use of the imported one. As it was found separately, the dating of this chape is also difficult.

P. Paulsen does not point to any concrete place of production of the chapes attributed to subgroup Ib. He only notes that such swords are widespread in Scandinavia, especially in Sweden. This scientist also marks out a small group of swords used about A.D 1000 in the territory of former East Prussia⁵⁹. M. Strömberg main-

ins that these chapes are of Normandic style, though some motifs of the oriental ornament can also be traced. She argues that the swords of this kind are more common in the North⁶⁰.

These Lithuanian chapes which, according to me, are really of Scandinavian origin should be identified. They come from Vežaičiai, the Šilute district, and Žašinas, grave No. 160 (variant Ib₁) (fig. 10: 5). The other variant of subgroup Ib (Ib₂), the East Prussian one, comprises the chapes from Bikavenai, graves No. 111 and 139, a stray find from Šulaičiai, the Kedainiai district, and some chapes from Žašinas (fig. 10: 1, 2, 6). These chapes may have been made in the adjacent Prussian territory as well. The chapes of the third variant (Ib₃) are supposed to be of local origin. They come from Žašinas, graves No. 12, 62, 94 (fig. 10: 3, 4). Laima Vaitkunskiene, who published the swords, considers them to have been made by local craftsmen⁶¹.

Among the broad-bladed battle-axes of the 10th-13th c. found in Lithuania the axes with blades widening on both sides (fan-shaped) and with side flaps can be distinguished (fig. 11). According to J. Peterssen's classification, the above mentioned axes belong to type M. In Curonia, a strictly defined region of Lithuania, 22 axes were found in 10 places (fig. 12). Twelve of them were found in graves and one cannot be located as the place

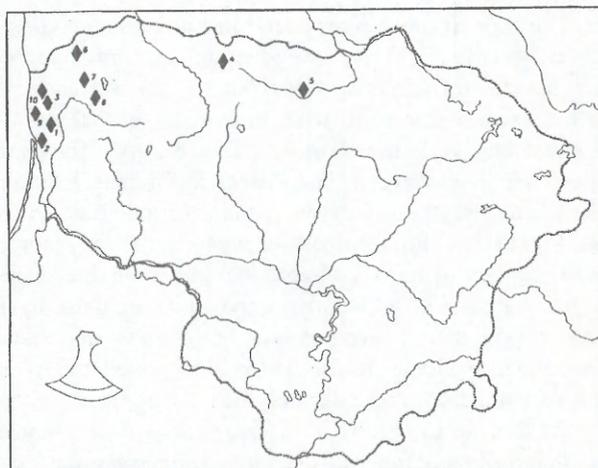


Fig. 12. Spread of type M battle axes in Lithuania: 1 - Anduliai, Klaipeda district; 2 - Bandužiai, Klaipeda; 3 - Genčiai I, Kretinga district; 4 - Grieže, Mažeikiai district; 5 - Gudai, Akmenė district; 6 - Klaišiai, Skuodas district; 7 - Laiviai, Kretinga district; 8 - Nausodis, Plunge district; 9 - Palanga; 10 - Rudaičiai, Kretinga district.

⁵⁶ B. Nerman, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

⁵⁷ M. Strömberg, *Schwertortbänder mit Vogelmotiven aus der Wikingerzeit*, "Meddelanden från Lunds Universitets Historiska Museum", Lund 1951 (1950-1951), p. 238.

⁵⁸ P. Paulsen, *Schwertortbänder ...*, p. 33.

⁵⁹ P. Paulsen, *Schwertortbänder ...*, p. 20.

⁶⁰ M. Strömberg, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

⁶¹ L. Vaitkunskiene, *Skandinaviki elementai žemaičiu kulturoje X-XI a.*, "Lietuvos istorijos metraštis", 1982 metai, Vilnius 1983, p. 10.

of its finding is unknown. Their blades are 15,5-23,5 cm long and 15,5-22,5 cm wide equipped with 3x2-4x2,2cm oval, sometimes triangular or multangular shaft-holes.

Most of the type M axes (7) were found during the research works conducted in the Griež*ė cemetery, the Mažeikiai district, in the years 1981-1983. Three of them were discovered in collective cremation graves, 4 were found accidentally⁶². In the Banduziai cemetery, Klaipėda, which was explored in 1974, 1985-1989, five such axes were found — four in graves and one accidentally⁶³. Three axes were found in graves No. 175, 201, 329 of the Palanga cemetery explored in 1961-1962. In other cemeteries single type M battle-axes were discovered.

The axe from Laiviai, the Kretinga district, was discovered in a very rich grave (No. 222). This grave was furnished with a type T sword with the Damascus steel blade, the pommel and the guard coated with silver, three spearheads, stirrups, iron clasps, 9 bronze penannular brooches, remnants of a leather belt ornamented with bronze and amber beads, bridle-bits, a device for striking fire, a key, the above mentioned battle-axe, a working axe, a sickle, fragments of scales, several implements such as an axe, a hoe, etc. The grave is dated to the 11th century. The inventory of other graves indicates the spread of type M axes in Curonia in the 11th c. In Palanga, grave No. 201, for example, a bronze woven necklace, three penannular brooches with star- or animal-shaped terminals and a twisted bow with polygonal terminals, as well as other articles dating from the 11th c. were found.

The type M battle-axes found in Lithuania are considered imported⁶⁴. They are identical in form and resemble the Scandinavian ones. This is natural enough, as the axes of this form were present in the Viking armament and widespread in Northern Europe. They are also being discovered in Great Britain, Finland, Estonia, Normandy, Northern Russia, Poland, former East Prussia, Latvia. It is highly doubtful whether the axes found over such a vast territory might have been produced only in Scandinavia. Certainly, some of them must have been imported from Scandinavia, but the rest may have been made by local people, since new achievements in war techniques spread extremely fast at that time⁶⁵.

To sum up the above remarks, it should be pointed out that quite a number of questions concerning the Baltic armament of the Viking period and the arms which are regarded as imported still remain on the hypothetical level. The Vikings, who devastated large territories of Europe, were well armed and their arms might have influenced "the foreigners'" armament. However, it is also

true that the influence was mutual. That is why some kinds of weapons, e.g. swords or battle-axes, can be ascribed to neither local nor foreign armourers without comprehensive metalographical and X-ray examinations and the analysis of technologies. Such studies, besides the analysis of forms and search for analogies, could constitute the basis for further reasoning and would allow us to draw more precise conclusions.

⁶² A. V a r n a s, *Griežės kapinynas*, [in:] *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 1980 ir 1981 metais*, Vilna 1982, pp. 75-78; A. V a r n a s, *Griežės plokštinis kapinynas*, [in:] *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 1982 ir 1983 metais*, Vilnius 1984, pp. 108-111.

⁶³ J. S t a n k u s, *Bandužių kapinyno tyrinėjimai*, [in:] *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 1982 ir 1983 metais*, Vilnius 1988, p. 90.

⁶⁴ R. V o l k a i t e - K u l i k a u s k i e n e, *Ginklai ...*, p. 35.

⁶⁵ A. N. K i r p i t c h n i k o v, *Drevnerusskoe oružje 2*, p. 8.