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RUBIĶI CEMETERY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EAST LATVIAN AND EAST LITHUANIAN BARROWS

ELĪNA GUŠČIKA

Institute of Latvian History, University of Latvia, Kalpaka Blvd. 4, LV-1050 Riga, Latvia, e-mail: elinaguscika@gmail.com

Rubiķi Cemetery (Jēkabpils District, Rubene Parish), which had 31 barrows, is providing important information about Iron Age burial practices in eastern Latvia and eastern Lithuania, especially those relating to barrows with stone kerbs and the territory later inhabited by the Selonians. The cemetery was investigated by Pēteris Stepiņš in 1937 and by Elīna Guščika and Mārtiņš Lūsēns in 2012. In all, seven barrows were excavated. Despite the extensive disturbance of the barrows and the fact that only fragmentary remains of burials were discovered in 1937, the data collected in the 2012 excavation have enabled a detailed analysis of the 2nd–7th and 11th–12th-century burial practices at Rubiķi. The article presents for the first time a complete description and analysis of the Rubiķi archaeological material (including AMS ^{14}C dating), finishing with a discussion of some theoretical questions (burial site preconditions, burial practice continuity, etc.).

Keywords: Iron Age, burial practices, barrows, area of barrows with stone kerbs, territory of Sēlija.

Rubikių (Rubiķi) pilkapynas (Jėkabpilio r., Rubenės valsčius), kuriame buvo 31 pilkapis, suteikia svarbios informacijos apie Rytų Latvijos ir Rytų Lietuvos geležies amžiaus laidojimo papročius, ypač apie pilkapių su akmenų vainikais bei teritorijos, kurioje vėliau gyveno sėliai, laidoseną. Pilkapyną 1937 m. kasinėjo Pēteris Stepiņš, 2012 m. – Elīna Guščika ir Mārtiņš Lūsēns. Iš viso ištirti septyni pilkapiai. Nepaisant smarkaus suardymo ir to, kad 1937 m. buvo aptikta tik išlikusių kapų fragmentų, paskutinių tyrinėjimų duomenys suteikė galimybę atlikti detalią II–VII a. ir X–XI a. Rubikių pilkapyne praktikuotų laidojimo papročių analizę. Straipsnyje pirmą kartą pristatomas Rubikių pilkapyno archeologinės medžiagos apibūdinimas ir analizė (įskaitant AMS ^{14}C datas), taip pat teorinės diskusijos tokiais klausimais kaip pilkapyno įrengimo prielaidos, laidosenos tęstinumas ir pan.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: geležies amžius, laidojimo papročiai, pilkapiai, pilkapių su akmenų vainikais sritis, Sėla.

INTRODUCTION

In the Early Roman period (1st–2nd centuries), clearly separated areas with specific burial practices formed in the Baltic territory. The southern Latvia (Zemgale, south-western Vidzeme, Sēlija, and western Latgale) and northern Lithuania (Žemaitija and the northern Aukštaitija) area is characterised by cemeteries containing barrows with stone kerbs (also known in Baltic literature as barrows with stone circles or barrows with stone rings; hereinafter referred to as the area of barrows with stone kerbs) (Michelbertas 1986, pp.54–68; Vasks 2001a, pp.217–223). However, this area's development was not homogeneous: considerable chronological differences exist between barrow cemeteries in its western and eastern parts. The earliest barrows with stone kerbs have been discovered in the western part and date from second half of the 1st–first half of the 2nd centuries, while the earliest such barrows in the eastern part (generally corresponding to the present-day region of Sēlija) have mostly been dated to the second half of the 2nd–3rd centuries (Михельбертас 2004; Guščika 2014b). Moreover, in the western part, the use of barrows

stopped in 5th–6th centuries, while in the eastern part, their use continued up until the 7th–8th centuries (Atgāzis 2001a, pp.279, 285; Vaškevičiūtė 2007, pp.258–259; Simniškytė 2013, pp.109–115).

After the 5th–6th centuries, the barrow burial practice in the western part was replaced by flat cemeteries, which became the only form of burial during the Migration period and Viking Age (5th–12th centuries). Meanwhile, in the east various burial practices are observed in both the Migration period and Viking Age. In the 6th–7th centuries, the use of flat cemeteries also spread in the territory of Latgale and partially in Sēlija, but in Sēlija during the 9th–13th centuries, new barrows were likewise created, in addition to instances of burials in Roman period barrows (Latvijas 1974, p.149, 222–229; Simniškytė 2013, pp.109–115, 147–153). However, the continuity of the barrow burial practice from the Roman period to the Viking Age is still a topic of discussion (Latvijas 1974, pp.149, 222–229; Simniškytė 2013, p.114).

These features have significantly affected the identification, analysis, and interpretation of archaeological sites in eastern Latvia and eastern Lithuania, especially in Sēlija. This complex situation is fully represented by Rubiķi Cemetery in Rubene Parish, Jēkabpils District (for the location of the sites mentioned in this text, see Fig. 1).

The aim of the article is to present and analyse the Rubiķi archaeological material from the 1937 excavation by Pēteris Stepiņš and especially from the 2012 excavation by the present author and Mārtiņš Lūsēns. The results of the latest research provide important data for re-evaluating the perceptions of Rubiķi Cemetery itself. In some cases they also suggest a re-evaluation of the concepts prevailing in the historiography of Iron Age burial practices in eastern Latvia and eastern Lithuania as a whole, especially the Roman and Migration-period burial practices in the area of barrows with stone kerbs and the area inhabited by the Selonians in the Viking Age (referred to as the territory of Sēlija), which is the main context of the Rubiķi Cemetery analysis.

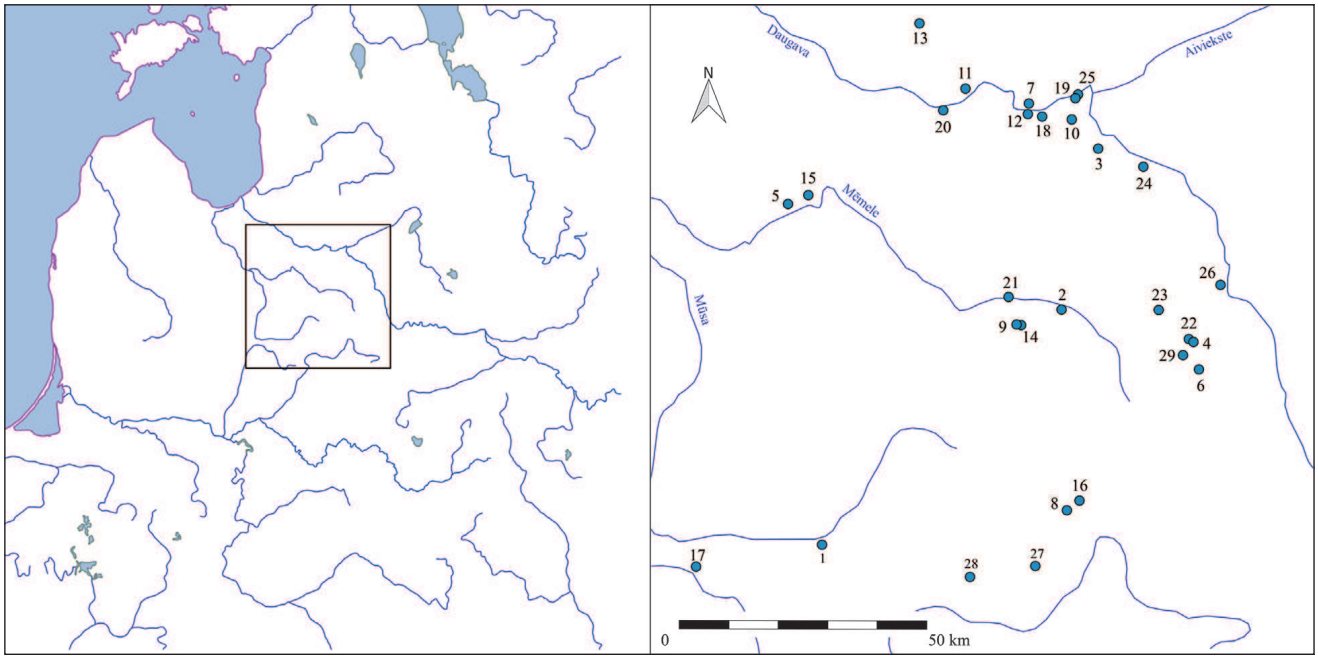

Fig. 1. Archaeological sites mentioned in the article: 1 – Bajoriškiai, 2 – Beteļi, 3 –Boķi-Priednieki, 4 – Dronkas, 5 – Juljanava, 6 – Kaldabruņas, 7 – Kalnieši II, 8 – Kubiliškis, 9 – Ķebēni, 10 – Ķunci, 11 – Lejasbitēni, 12 – Lejasdopeļi, 13 – Lejasoķēni, 14 – Melderišķi, 15 – Muoriškiai, 16 – Norkūnai, 17 – Pajuostis, 18 – Pāķi, 19 – Plāteri, 20 – Pungas, 21 – Ratulāni, 22 – Rubiķi, 23 – Slate, 24 – Smiltiņi-Krēsliņi, 25 – Spietiņi, 26 – Strautmaļi, 27 – Vaineikiai, 28 – Visėtiškės, 29 – Zesercelmi. *Map by E. Guščika.*

SITUATION, RESEARCH HISTORY, AND METHODOLOGY

Rubiķi Cemetery, which contained 31 barrows, is situated on two small hillocks (50 x 70 m and 30 x 60 m, both roughly 12 m high) in a forested area on the E side of a valley (Fig. 2). The barrows are in two groups in accordance with the relief: a N group and a S group. The barrows of the N group cover roughly 65 x 30 m, those of the S group roughly 63 x 44 m. The groups are separated by about 50 m. In all, the Rubiķi barrows lie within a 170 x 60 m area. The round or slightly oval barrows have diameters of 4–10 m and heights of 0.3–1 m. They are arranged irregularly, the distance between barrows being 0.5–12 m, but mostly not exceeding 1–2 m. There is some indication that the biggest barrows are located mostly near the valley on the cemetery's E side.

The first information about Rubiķi Cemetery dates to the 1930s. In 1936, Eduards Šturms (1936), an archaeologist at the State Historical Museum of Latvia, wrote a report about A. Koskens's 'war hills' in Rubiķi Forest and in 1937, the Board of Monuments received a report from Pēteris Baltmanis about barrows with cremations at Rubiķi ([Stepiņš] 1937; Stepiņš 1943, appendix). It is known that even before this, in the belief that soldiers had been buried there with jewellery a long time ago, local people, a local forester, and members of the youth organisation *Mazpulki* had all dug into the barrows ([Stepiņš] 1937; Stepiņš 1943, p.2). In addition, with the permission of the forestry service, stones had been taken from the barrows for economic needs ([Stepiņš] 1937; Stepiņš 1943, p.3). In 1937, in accordance with an instruction from the Board of Monuments, Rubiķi Cemetery was surveyed by Stepiņš, who identified

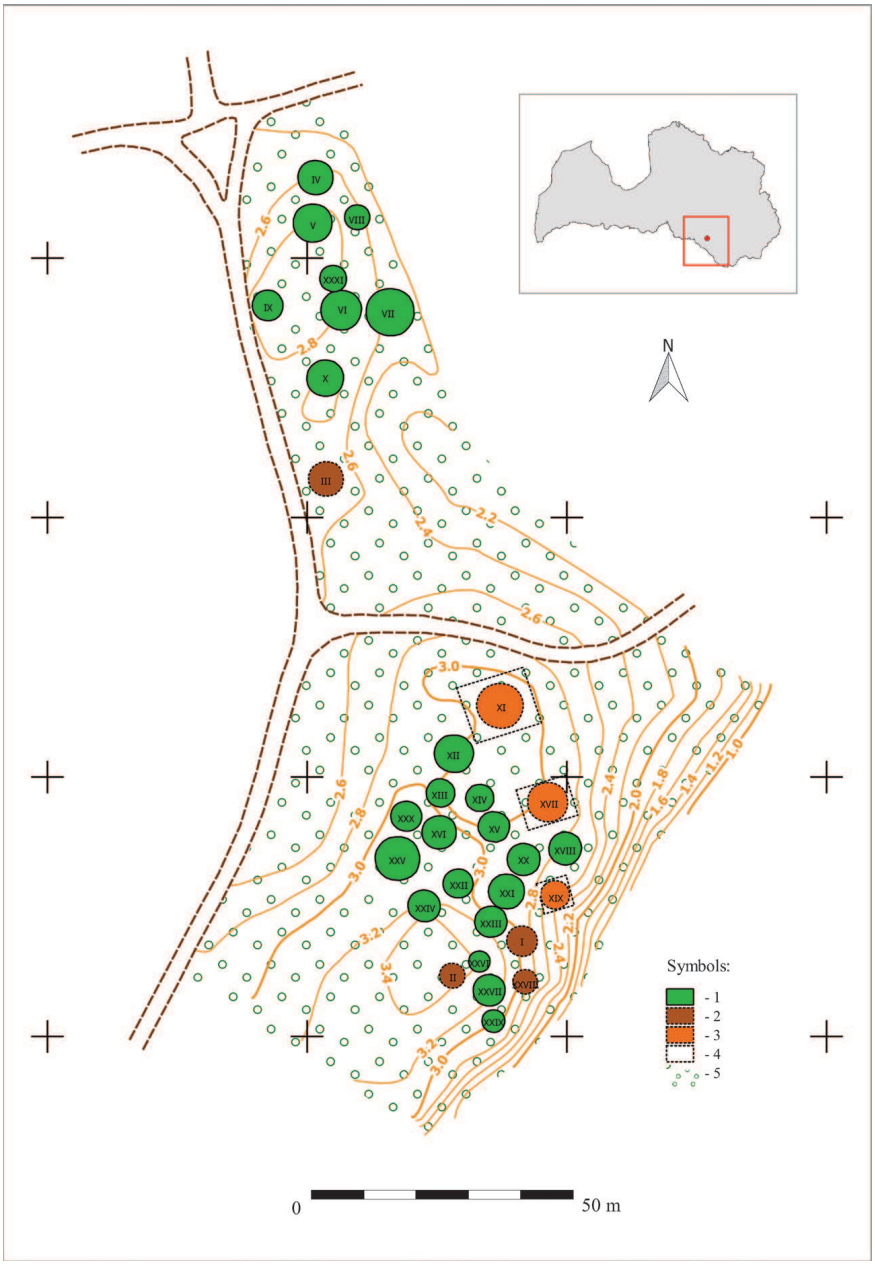

Fig. 2. Situation plan of Rubiķi Barrow Cemetery (local height (m) system measured in April 2012 and May 2013): 1 – unexcavated barrows, 2 – barrows excavated in 1937, 3 – barrows excavated in 2012, 4 – areas excavated in 2012, 5 – vegetation (forest). *Drawing by E. Guščika.*

29 barrows (8 in a N group and 21 in a S group) and soon after made a detailed situation plan of the cemetery ([Stepiņš] 1937; Stepiņš 1943, pp.1–6, situation plan).

In 1937, Stepiņš (1943) also conducted the first excavation of Rubiķi Cemetery. He excavated four barrows, uncovering only the area of the mounds without making any cross-sections of the mounds. One (no. III) was in the N group, the other three (nos. I, II, and XXVIII) in the S group. Despite their being the visually best-preserved barrows in the cemetery, extensive damage was discovered. Stepiņš (1943, pp.8–10) mentioned that even after excavation it was impossible to define the chronology and clearly characterise the burial practices at the cemetery owing to the extensive disturbances. He, however, concluded that the barrows had probably been created in the Roman period (1st–4th centuries) when they were used for one or several burials. In some cases, barrows had also been used in the Viking Age (10th–12th centuries) but these latter graves must be considered evidence of the reuse of Roman-period barrows. Accordingly, Stepiņš (1943, p.10) assumed that Rubiķi Cemetery was one of the largest Roman-period barrow cemeteries (presumably, in respect to the present-day territory of Latvia) and contained various-sized barrows both with one burial and with several burials.

The chronology of the barrows was determined by the types of burial practices and artefacts. No information is available about anthropological or any other analyses performed on the Rubiķi archaeological material. No osteological material collected during the excavations has survived. The artefacts are stored at the National History Museum of Latvia (LNVM AD, A 10272:1–29), but some of the ornaments are missing. (A note with the artefacts states that they were deposited in Daugavpils Museum. While Daugavpils Museum has some artefacts that could be related to this collection, no detailed identification information has been preserved.)

No further archaeological excavation was conducted at the cemetery until 2012 but the site was repeatedly surveyed. In 1980 it was visited by Elvīra Šnore (n.d., pp.86–87), a researcher at the Institute of History of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, and in 1986 and 2003 by Juris Urtāns (1987b; 2007), an archaeologist at the Research Council for Museums and Cultural Heritage and later at the State Inspection for Heritage Protection. During these survey expeditions, no new damage was discovered, but in 2003, Urtāns (2007) mentioned that only 20 barrows could be identified (6 in the N group and 14 in the S group).

Owing to the extensive damage and fragmentary nature of the material, Rubiķi Cemetery has not been analysed in detail in the archaeological literature. Generally, it is simply mentioned as a Roman-period barrow cemetery and as a Viking-Age Selonian burial site (Rubenes 1938, p.36810; Latvijas 1974, pp.226, 338; Urtāns 1988). Andra Simniškytė-Strimaitienė (2004, p.92), an archaeologist at the Lithuanian Institute of History, was the only one to pay closer attention to Rubiki cemetery in the context of the cultural dynamics in the Sēlija region during the Iron Age (500 BC – 12th century AD).

An excavation was conducted at Rubiķi Cemetery in 2012 because of new damage caused by logging. Three of the most extensively damaged barrows in the S group were excavated (nos. XI, XVII, and XIX), two cross-sections being made of each, and the area immediately adjacent to barrow XI was also excavated (Guščika 2013; 2014a). The three excavated areas were 11 x 13 m, 8 x 10 m, and 6 x 6 m in size. As in 1937, a variety of archaeological evidence was recovered. Despite the damage, evidence from the Roman and Migration periods was unearthed in two barrows while it was possible to identify Viking-Age burial practices in the third. In 2013, AMS radiocarbon dating was also obtained for uncremated human bones from three burials in the Roman and Migration-period barrows (the radiocarbon laboratory at Uppsala University, Sweden). These were the only burials in earlier barrows with undisturbed areas. These AMS dates permitted individual barrow layers to be dated.

Other analyses have also been performed. Anthropological material (bones both from the burials and isolated finds) was analysed by Guntis Gerhards (2013), a bioarchaeologist at the Institute of Latvian History, University of Latvia. A macrobotanical analysis of charcoal from 10 different locations in barrows XI and XVII as well as seven sediment samples from barrow XI was performed by Valdis Bērziņš (2013), a senior researcher at the aforementioned institute (on the charcoal), and Aija Ceriņa (2013), a researcher at the Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences, University of Latvia (on the sediment samples). The artefacts are stored at the National History Museum of Latvia (LNVM AD, A 13940:1–29, AP 158:1–7) and the bone material at the Repository of Bioarchaeological Material, Institute of Latvian History, University of Latvia.

A tacheometric survey of Rubiķi Cemetery was conducted in 2012 and 2013. All 25 barrows distinguished in the course of excavation by Stepiņš were identified as well as two previously unknown possible barrows (one in the N group, the other in the S group, nos. XXX and XXXI) (Guščika 2013, p.5, pl. 1). Thus, according to the latest data, there were a total of 31 barrows (9 in the N group and 22 in the S group).

Simniškytė (2013, pp.113, 147–148, 284) has already analysed some of the features of the recently excavated Rubiķi barrows together with the material collected in the excavations conducted by Stepiņš. In the context of Selonian barrow cemeteries, Simniškytė has attributed them to Migration-period and Viking-Age burial practices. However, it should be emphasised that at the time of this research, a complete analysis of the material collected during the latest fieldwork at Rubiķi Cemetery, including radiocarbon dating, had not yet been done.

In total, seven barrows in the N and S groups at Rubiķi Cemetery, i.e. nearly a quarter of the 31 identified barrows, as well as a small part of the immediate area around barrow XI have been excavated. However, considering how the number of barrows varies at excavated cemeteries, it is difficult to evaluate the extent of the excavation of Rubiķi.

With 31 barrows, Rubiķi Cemetery can be considered one of the largest barrow cemeteries in the territory of present-day Sēlija. Most of the cemeteries known in this region have a single barrow or no more than ten. The largest numbers, which are similar to the number at Rubiķi, have been identified at Bajoriškiai (30 barrows), Kubiliškis (20), Lejasdopeļi (63), Norkūnai (40–50), Pungas (20), Slate (43 barrows, which form several distinct groups that could be considered separate cemeteries), Vaineikiai (roughly 50), and Visėtiškės (15) (Simniškytė 2013, pp.226–307; Urtāns 2013, pp.26–31). However, it must be noted that every cemetery mentioned above has suffered extensive damage and the original number of the barrows may have been different. Among the above-mentioned cemeteries, four can be singled out as the most extensively excavated (Simniškytė 2013, pp.265–266, 282, 290–291, 305). At Lejasdopeļi, Friedrich Kruse, Anton Buchholtz, and Karl Löwis of Menar in the 19th century and Elvīra Šnore in 1960–1961 excavated 17 of the 63 identified barrows, which date to the 10th–13th/14th centuries. At Pungas, 11 of 20 identified barrows, which date to the Roman period, were excavated under the direction of Sergey Bogojavlenky (*Богоявленский*) in 1896 and Milda Bresava in 1960. Extensive field research was also conducted at Slate, where Bogojavlenky in 1896, Harri Moora in 1925, and Francis Balodis together with Elvīra Šnore in 1927 excavated 19 of 43 barrows from the Roman and Migration periods. At Visėtiškės, all 15 Migration period and Viking Age barrows were excavated under the supervision of Vytautas Kazakevičius during 1985–1989. In addition, 15 cemeteries in Sēlija that have small numbers of Roman and Migration-period barrows can be considered completely excavated (Simniškytė 2013, pp.229–230, 242, 247, 261–262, 264, 269–270, 276, 280–281, 282–283, 293, 306–307).

Despite the fact that Rubiķi cannot be numbered among the most extensively excavated burial sites in eastern Latvia and eastern Lithuania like the aforementioned cemeteries, the excavation results (espe-

cially from the latest one) have significantly supplemented the assumptions about the burial practices in this region. In addition, they cover almost all of the chronological phases of the Iron Age.

ROMAN AND MIGRATION-PERIOD BURIAL PRACTICES

Two barrows at Rubiķi Cemetery, nos. XI and XVII, both excavated in 2012, can be clearly attributed to the Roman and Migration periods.

Barrow XI

With a diameter of roughly 10 m and a height of 1 m, it was one of the biggest barrows in the cemetery (Guščika 2013, pp.10–14, pl. 5–11) (Fig. 3). The mound consisted of yellow sand with small pieces of charcoal. At the mound's base was a light grey layer roughly 10 cm thick that also contained small pieces of charcoal. A circular stone kerb characteristic of Roman-period barrows was discovered on this layer and at least three inhumations were identified in different layers of the barrow (Fig. 4, 5).

The kerb's stones were arranged densely in a wall two or even three rows high (Fig. 6), except on the N side, where it was only one row high. This, however, could be explained by later damage, a curving trench, possibly the result of stone quarrying, having been observed in this area prior to the excavation. The stones were of various sizes from 0.6 x 1 m to 0.1 x 0.7 m and 0.1 x 0.1 m. The kerb had an overall diameter of 6–7 m and a height in places of 0.7 m. Only one gap, roughly 0.4 m wide, was discovered in the SSW part of the kerb. (However, a tree near this spot must be also mentioned.) In the NW part of the kerb, an arcing row of smaller stones joined it, forming an enclosure with inside dimensions of roughly 2.4 x 0.8 m (again, with a tree near this spot). If this enclosure may be attributed to the burial practices, then it was created later than the stone kerb, the row of smaller stones having been laid not on the grey layer at the mound's base but in the upper layers (about 0.25 m from the mound's surface).

Fig. 3. Barrow XI before excavation (from the SSW). *Photo by E. Guščika.*

As has been mentioned, the remains of at least three inhumations were identified in the barrow. They occurred in different layers within the stone kerb. All of them had been completely or partially disturbed and only in the case of **burial 1** was it possible to determine the burial's initial location. It was discovered at a depth of 0.4–0.45 m from the mound's surface and roughly 0.2 m above the grey layer at the mound's base. The burial's area did not differ from the surrounding area in terms of the colour or texture of the sand. However, three small areas of grey sand with small pieces of charcoal were unearthed near the burial (to the S, WNW, and N). Only the femurs remained undisturbed. A fragmentary skull was discovered near them. Based on the position of the legs, it can be concluded that the individual had been laid in an extended supine position oriented ENE (head)–WSW. No artefacts or evidence of a coffin were discovered. The individual had been older than 40 but the sex could not be determined (Gerhards 2013).

Other burials identified in this barrow, **burials 2 and 3**, had been completely destroyed: only skulls mixed with some other fragmentary bones from adult males were discovered. As a consequence, the

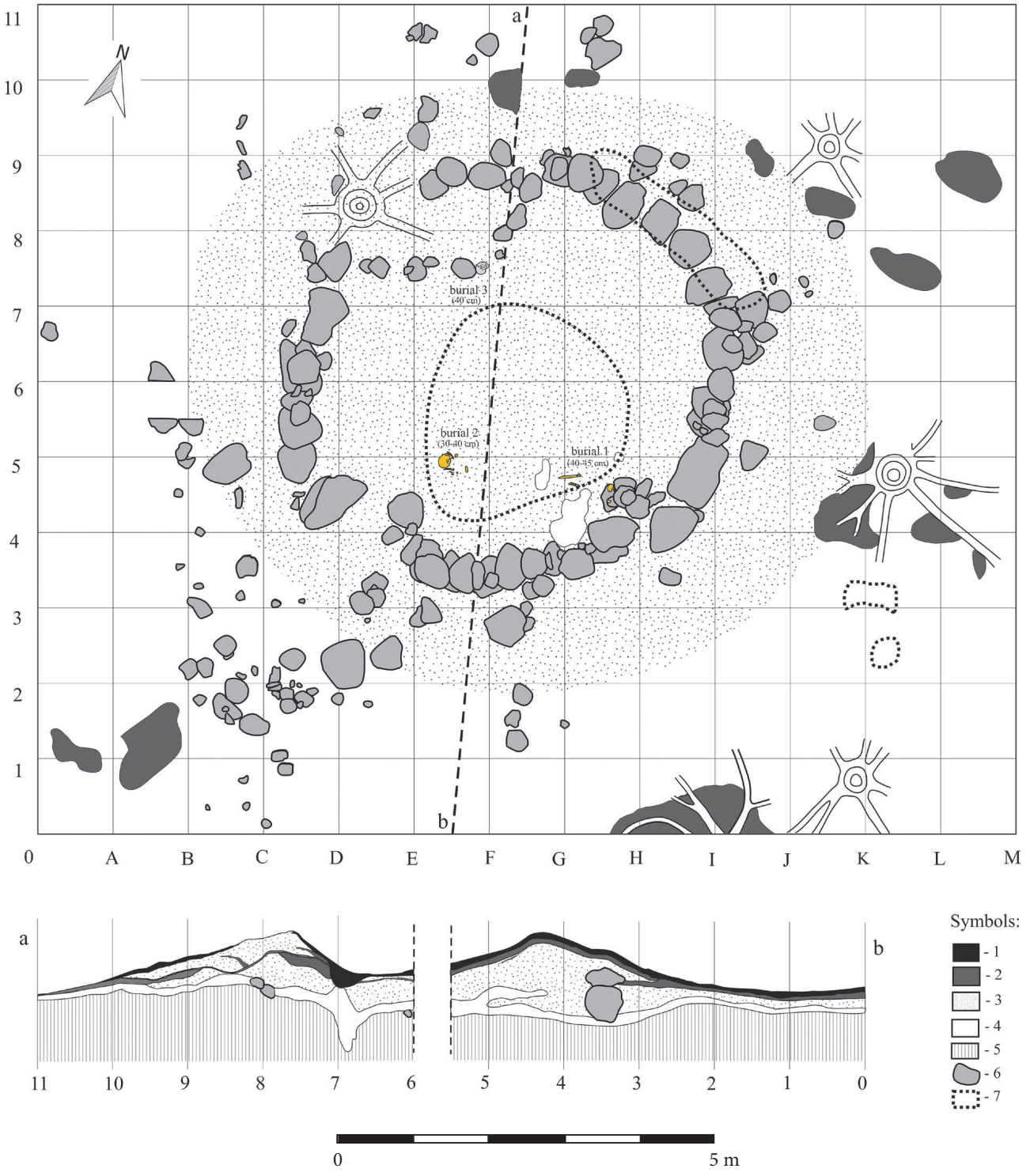

Fig. 4. Barrow XI at a depth of 0.1–0.9 m: 1 – turf, 2 – dark grey layer saturated with pieces of charcoal, 3 – yellow sand with some pieces of charcoal, 4 – light grey layer with pieces of charcoal, 5 – subsoil, 6 – stone, 7 – disturbed area (a pit) observed before the excavation. *Drawing by E. Guščika.*

Fig. 5. A general view of barrow XI (from the SE). *Photo by E. Guščika.*

Fig. 6. Part of the stone kerb at barrow XI (from the W). *Photo by E. Guščika.*

original location of the burials could not be determined nor is their attribution to barrow XI absolutely clear.

Probably because of the extensive damage to barrow XI, only one artefact was discovered in this barrow: an iron shaft, wound with bronze wire, from a decorative pin (LNVM AD, AP 158:1). It was found in the S part of the barrow, outside the stone kerb. An iron wedge (LNVM AD, A 13940:1) should also be mentioned, but it was unearthed immediately below the mound's surface and should be attributed to modern activities.

Barrow XVII

In terms of construction, many similarities with barrow XI can be observed in barrow XVII (Guščika 2013, pp.14–18, pl. 13–19) (Fig. 7, 8). It was an 8 x 9 m oval and 0.9 m high. The mound consisted of yellow sand with some small pieces of charcoal and a roughly 10 cm thick grey layer at the base that likewise contained small pieces of charcoal. Although a number of stones were unearthed in different layers as well as at the base, no kerb was identified. However, Stepiņš (1943, p.5) already noted in 1937 that a trench, caused by quarrying, was observable all around this barrow. This trench could also be partially identified in the measurements made in 2012 (Guščika 2013, pl. 12). Four inhumations were identified in the mound's various layers. All four had been disturbed, only two (nos. 2 and 3) having been partially preserved in their initial positions. Here, too, the total number of burials is not clear. In the course of the excavation, isolated finds of individual human bones were recovered and in at least one case the bone was from an individual of a different age than those in the aforementioned burials (Gerhards 2013). Isolated artefacts were also found.

Burial 2 was discovered at a depth of 0.40–0.50 m from the mound's surface and roughly 0.3 m above the grey layer at the base (Fig. 9). The area of the burial did not differ from the surrounding area in either the colour or texture of the sand; only in the region of the lower legs and feet was an irregular 2.5 x 0.8 m area of darker sand saturated with pieces of charcoal discovered. This, however, had been observed in the mound's upper layers as well and so can probably be attributed to later activities at the cemetery. The burial was preserved almost undisturbed with only the bones of the lower legs, feet, and left arm missing. The deceased had been laid in extended supine position, oriented ENE (head)–WSW. The head was turned to the left; the position of the arms could not be determined owing to the disturbance and poor preservation of the bones. The individual had been interred with a few

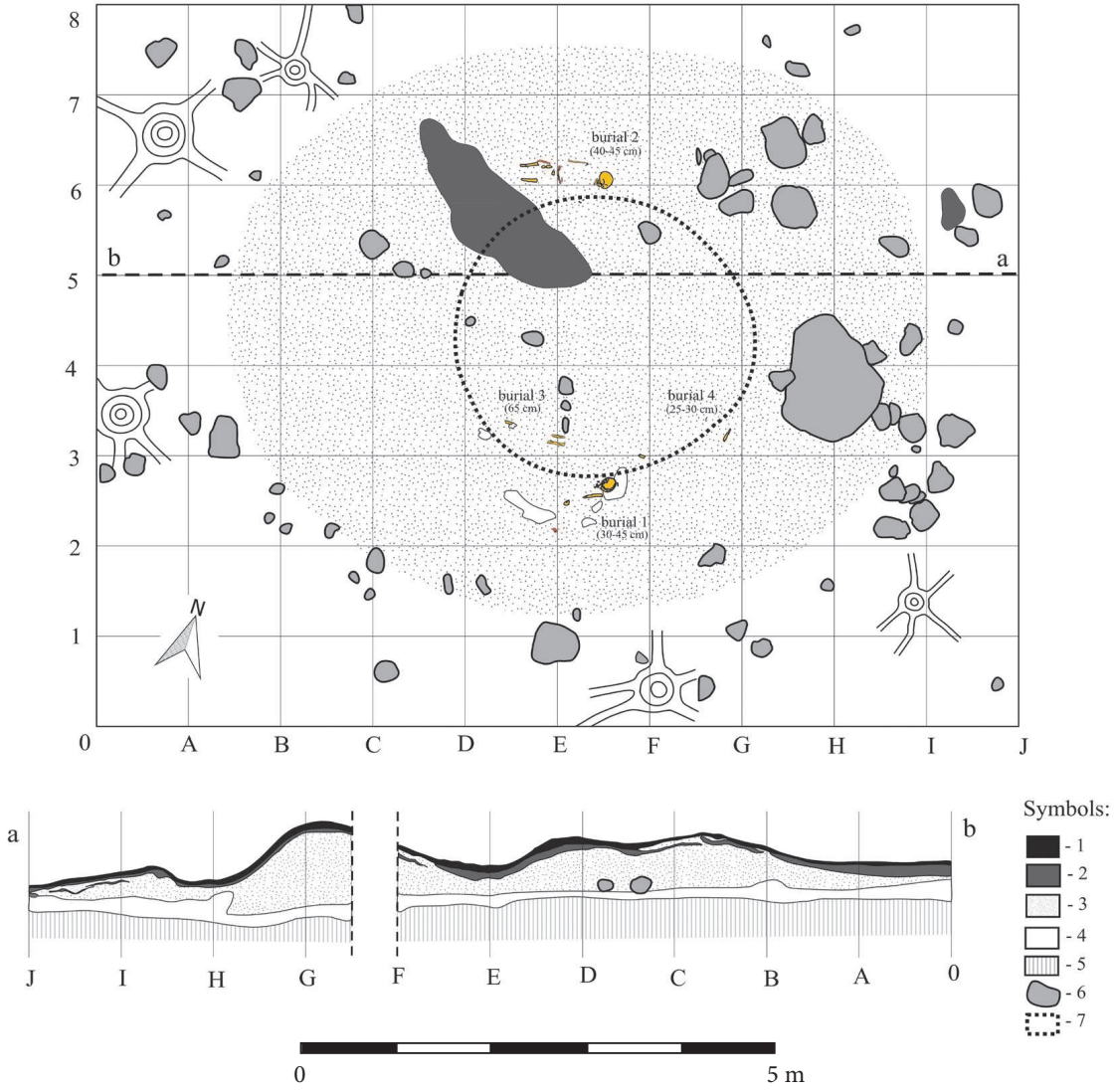

Fig. 7. Barrow XVII at a depth of 0.1–0.9 m: 1 – turf, 2 – dark grey layer saturated with pieces of charcoal, 3 – yellow sand with some pieces of charcoal, 4 – light grey layer with pieces of charcoal, 5 – subsoil, 6 – stone, 7 – disturbed area (a pit) observed before the excavation. *Drawing by E. Guščika.*

items (Fig. 10): near the head (on the left side) lay three bronze coil beads and one tubular bead (The bead's material is not clear and a natural origin is also possible.) (LNVM AD, A 13940:5, 6); above the right femur, an iron knife with a curved back (LNVM AD, AP 158:4); and in the waist area, a belt segment made of iron chain (LNVM AD, A 158:2). It is likely that the rest of the belt was made of leather or cloth, the iron chain made of wire rings constituting the front part with the clasp. An iron pin shaft (LNVM AD, A 158:3) was also found next to the chain, but both were heavily corroded. No evidence of a coffin was found. The burial was that of a roughly 40–50 year-old female (sex determination not certain) (Gerhards 2013).

Of **burial 3**, which lay on the grey layer at the mound's base, only fragmentary leg bones attributed to an adult (determination uncertain) were

Fig. 8. A general view of barrow XVII (from the NNE). *Photo by E. Guščika.*

Fig. 9. Barrow XVII, burial 2 (from the SW). *Photo by E. Guščika.*

preserved undisturbed. Based on the position of the legs, it can be assumed that, like in burial 2, the individual had lain in an extended supine position, oriented ENE (head)–WSW. No artefacts or coffin remains were discovered, only three small stones placed in a row next to the individual.

Of the other identified burials, only a number of mixed bones were found; as a result, their original location and position are not clear. However, in **burial 1**, 16 coil beads made of bronze wire with a triangular or semi-circular cross-section and arranged in two parallel rows were discovered in their original position around the upper part of the skull (LNVM AD, A 13940:3) (Fig. 11). These prob-

Fig. 10. Artefacts from barrow XVII, burial 2 (LNVM AD, A 13940:5, 6, AP 158:2, 4): 1 – a belt segment made of iron chain, 2 – an iron knife with a curved back, 3–5 – bronze coil beads, 6 – a tubular bead made of paste (?). *Photo by E. Guščika.*

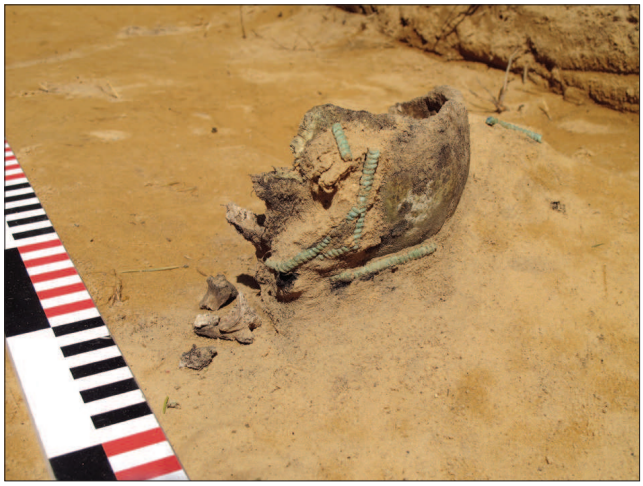

Fig. 11. Barrow XVII, burial 1 (from the SSW). *Photo by E. Guščika.*

ably formed part of a headdress ornament. A single bronze coil bead and some small bronze wire rings were also found alongside the skull (LNVM AD, A 13940:4, samples). The burial was discovered at the same depth as burial 2 and is that of a 25–40 year-old male (Gerhards 2013). In **burial 4**, fragments of a chain made from flat bronze strips (LNVM samples) were discovered close to the bones of a child no older than one year (Gerhards 2013), however, the chain's association with the burial is not clear.

Twenty-two artefacts were collected as isolated finds in barrow XVII (Fig. 12:2–16): fragments of two coil bracelets made of triangular cross-section bronze wire (LNVM AD, A 13940:8, 10), a bronze bracelet with widened terminals (The terminal's cross-section is slightly triangular.) decorated with chevrons (LNVM AD, A 13940:9), three bronze sheet flat bracelets with a rectangular cross-section (all found together with a fragment of a human hand bone) (LNVM AD, A 13940:19–21), fragments of a coil ring made of semi-circular cross-section bronze wire (LNVM AD, A 13940:12), a fragment of chain made of triangular cross-section bronze wire rings together with an indeterminate iron object (LNVM AD, A 13940:25), two chain fragments made of triangular cross-section bronze wire rings together with three small bronze bell-shaped pendants

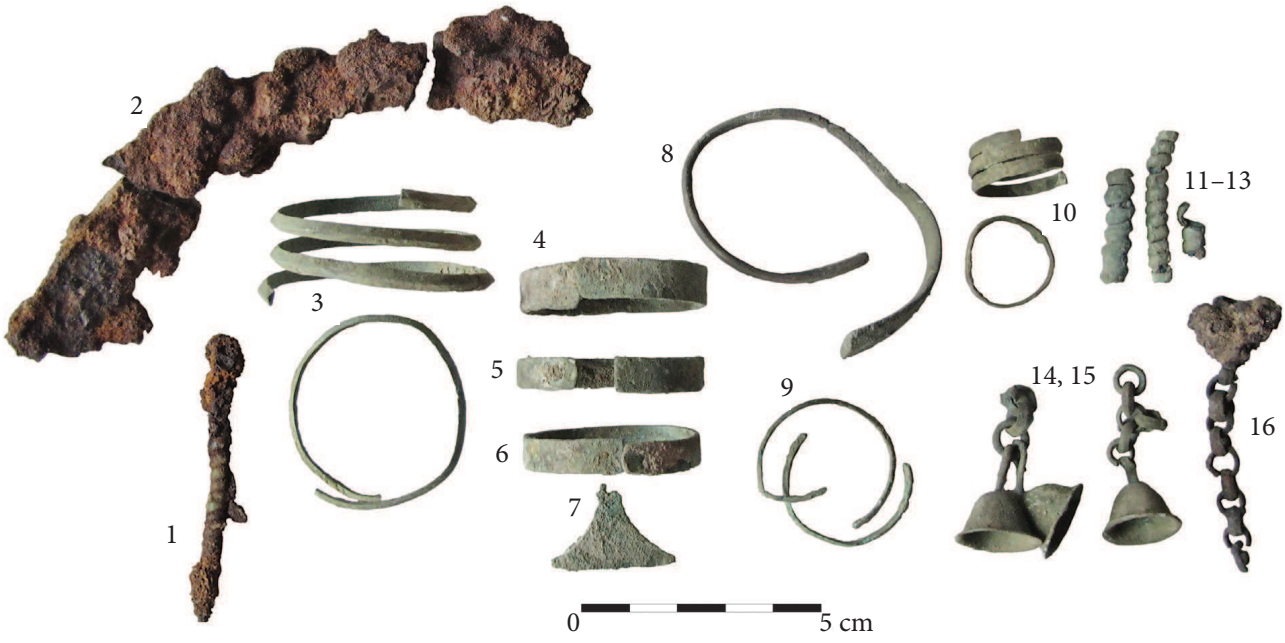

Fig. 12. Isolated finds from barrow XI (1) and XVII (2–16) (LNVM AD, A 13940:8–10, 12, 14–22, 25, AP 158:1, 5): 1 – a decorative pin's iron shaft wound with bronze wire, 2 – an iron knife with a curved back, 3, 9 – bronze coil bracelets (four fragments), 4–6 – bronze sheet flat bracelets, 7 – a triangular bronze double pendant, 8 – a bronze bracelet with widened terminals, 10 – a coil ring (two fragments), 11–13 – bronze coil beads, 14, 15 – chain fragments consisting of bronze wire rings with bell-shaped bronze pendants, 16 – a chain fragment consisting of bronze wire rings with an indeterminate iron object. *Photo by E. Guščika.*

(LNVM AD, A 13940:14, 15), a triangular bronze double pendant (LNVM AD, A 13940:22), six coil beads and bead fragments made of bronze wire with both triangular and semi-circular cross-sections (LNVM AD, A 13940:11, 13, 16–18, 24), four fragments of separate bronze wire rings with triangular and unidentifiable cross-sections (from chains or textile ornaments) (LNVM AD, A 13940:23), a fragmentary iron knife with a curved back (LNVM AD, AP 158:5), and a fragment of some indeterminate iron object (LNVM AD, samples).

Analysis

Judging from the archaeological material from barrows XI and XVII, which were excavated in 2012, individuals of both sexes and various ages were buried in the barrows of Rubiķi Cemetery during the Roman and Migration periods (Gerhards 2013), and in both cases several burials were discovered in a single barrow. Because of the poor condition of the bones, it was possible to determine the sex in only four cases, the determination being uncertain in two. One of the four was a female (uncertain) and three were males (one uncertain). Their ages could also not be clearly determined: four individuals were over 40, two 20–40 years old, and the child in barrow XVII was under a year in age. Additionally, the isolated finds of human bones indicate that this barrow contained at least one more child or adolescent.

Even though none of the artefacts can be definitely attributed to the Roman period, all of the aforementioned burial elements in barrows XI and XVII completely correspond to the burial practices seen in 1st–4th-century barrows with stone kerbs in present-day northern Lithuania and southern Latvia (e.g. Šnore 1993). The fact that at least some barrows at Rubiķi Cemetery already existed in the Roman period was confirmed by radiocarbon dating the human bones (Table 1:1, 3; Fig. 13). A ^{14}C date was obtained for barrow XI, burial 1, and barrow XVII, burials 2 and 3. Barrow XI, burial 1 was dated to the 180s–380s (1755±30 BP; cal 242–331 AD (68.2%), cal 180–385 AD (95.4%)), most likely to the 210s–380s. However, it lay 0.35 m above the mound's base. Thus, it cannot be considered the earliest burial. Barrow XVII, burial 3, at the mound's base, dates to the 90s–330s (1819±30 BP; cal 140–235 AD (68.2%), cal 91–321 AD (95.4%)), most likely to the 120s–250s.

Burials continued to be made in both these barrows until the 6th–7/8th centuries. In barrow XVII, this is shown by the ^{14}C date for burial 2, which lay roughly 0.3 m above the grey layer at the mound's base (Table 1: 2; Fig. 13). The burial was dated to the 420s–560s (1565±31 BP; cal 429–539 AD (68.2%), cal 418–562 AD (95.4%)). In addition, the isolated artefact finds are mainly characteristic of the 6th–7th centuries. These include the sole artefact from barrow XI, an iron shaft (Fig. 12:1) that was probably part of a crutch-shaped pin, which were very frequently wound with bronze wire in the 7th–8th centuries (Šnore 1993, p.60; Tautavičius 1996, pp.225–226; Sėliai 2007, p.37; Latvijas 1974, p.160; Bliujienė 2013, pav. 365). Bracelets with widened terminals similar to the one from barrow XVII are dated to the 6th–8th or even the 9th–10th centuries (Latvijas 1974, p.161; Sėliai 2007, pp.154–155). Three small, plain bronze bell-shaped pendants also represent an ornament type characteristic of Sēlija in the 6th–8th centuries (Urtāns 1970, pp.67–73; Sėliai 2007, pp.24–25). The triangular bronze pendants, which were sometimes worn together with bell-shaped pendants, are attributed to the 6th–7th centuries (Urtāns 1970, p.3, att. 5; Bliujienė 2013, pav. 365). The other artefacts (the coil rings, coil bracelets, and chains of bronze, the iron knife, etc.) cannot be dated so precisely.

The dating of these burials also completely corresponds to the characteristic barrow-building technique or method of the Roman and Migration periods, where the dead were laid on the subsoil and then covered with sand. Judging by the grey layer with pieces of charcoal, the territory under Rubiķi barrows XI and XVII was intentionally burnt or was

Table 1. Results of the ^{14}C dating of uncremated human bones from Rubiķi Cemetery; calibrated using atmospheric data according to Paula Reimer *et al.* 2013 and OxCal v4.3 software from Christopher Bronk Ramsey (2017)

No.	Barrow, burial	material	Lab. no.	^{14}C years, BP	cal AD, 1σ (68.2%)	cal AD, 2σ (95.4%)
1	barrow XI, burial 1	human bone	Ua-47370	1755±30	242–264 (18.3%) 273–331 (49.9%)	180–185 (0.4%) 214–385 (95.0%)
2	barrow XVII, burial 2	human bone	Ua-47371	1565±31	429–495 (50.0%) 508–521 (9.1%) 527–539 (9.1%)	418–562 (95.4%)
3	barrow XVII, burial 3	human bone	Ua-47372	1819±30	140–197 (45.1%) 208–235 (23.1%)	91–99 (0.8%) 124–258 (90.5%) 296–321 (4.1%)

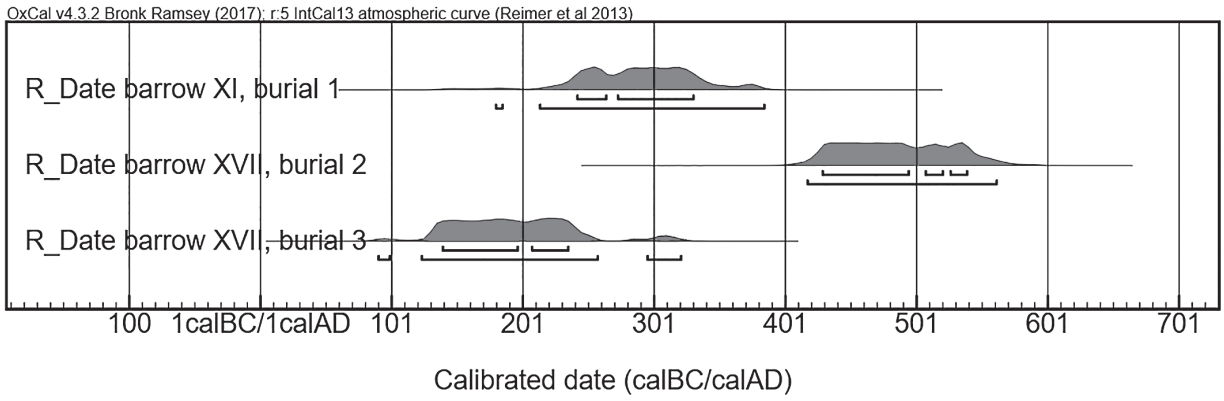

Fig. 13. Correlation of the ^{14}C dates from Rubiķi Cemetery.

exposed to fire. Later burials were laid on the previously created mound and likewise covered with sand. Whether pits were dug for burials is impossible to say because of the disturbance. However, no such feature was observable in the partially undisturbed burials.

VIKING-AGE BURIAL PRACTICE

Two Viking-Age barrows were also excavated at Rubiķi Cemetery. Material from this period was discovered in barrows II, excavated in 1937, and XIX, excavated in 2012.

Barrow II

One of the smallest barrows in the cemetery, it had a diameter of 6 m and a height of only 0.34 m (Stepiņš 1943, pp.3, 7–8, a plan of barrow II) (Fig. 14:A). Barrow II consisted of sand, which could not be differentiated from the former surface. The isolated stones discovered at various depths within the mound did not form any kind of structure. One burial was discovered under the mound but none were found in the mound. The burial was identifiable as a darker area with no discernible, sharp grave contours at base in the SE part of the barrow. A partially destroyed inhumation (burial 1) was dis-

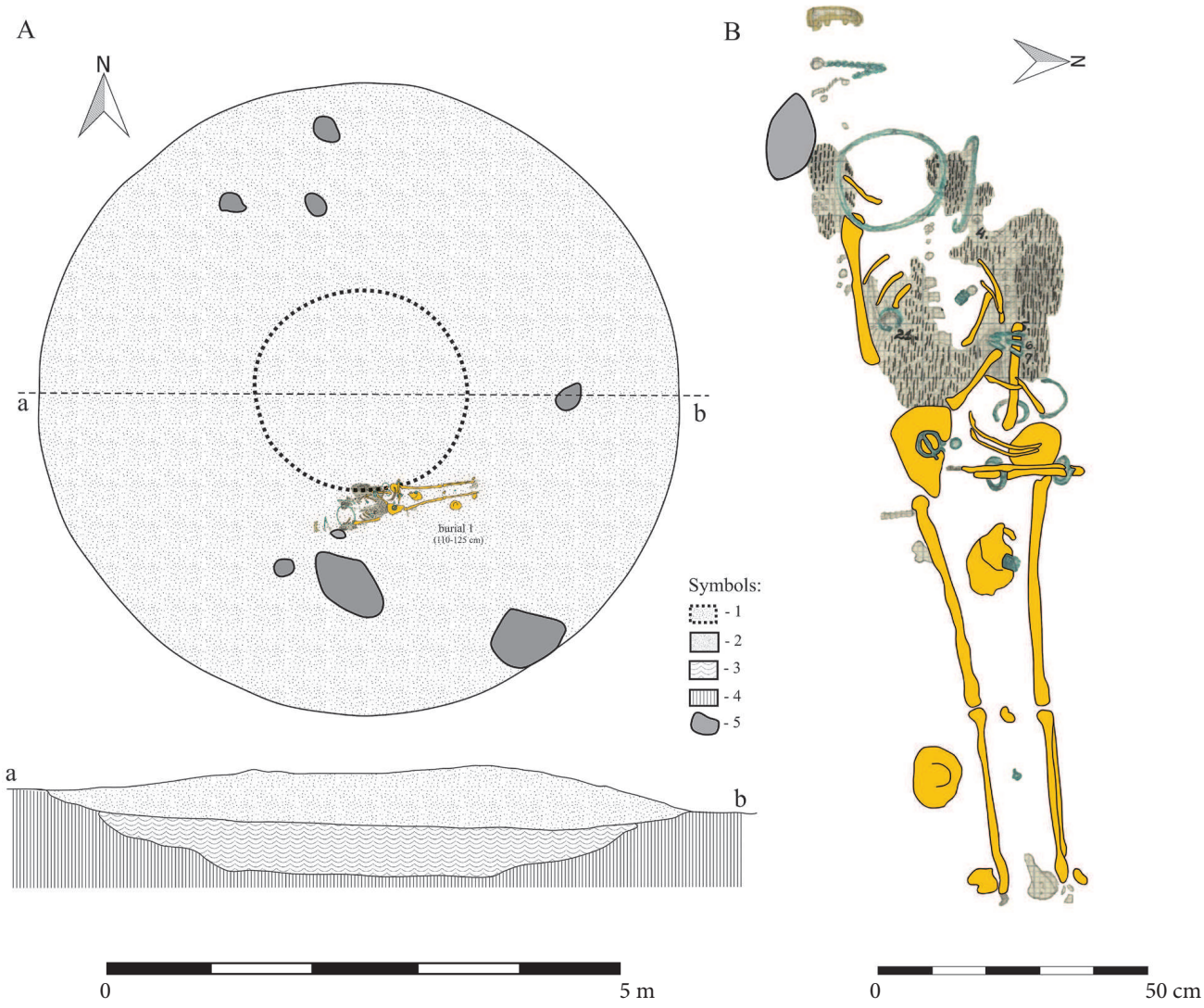

Fig. 14. Barrow II: A – at a depth of 0.1–1.25 m: 1 – disturbed area (a pit) observed before the excavation, 2 – yellow sand, 3 – darker sand (excavated area), 4 – subsoil, 5 – stone; B – burial 1. After Stepiņš 1943, *reproduced by E. Guščika*.

covered at a depth of 0.60–0.95 m (approximately 0.92–1.25 m below the mound's surface).

The individual in **burial 1** had been laid in an extended supine position, oriented WSW (head)–ENE (Fig. 14:B). Most of the bones had been disturbed, but many of the artefacts were still present. These consisted of (Fig. 15): three items where indeterminate iron artefacts had corroded together with a chains made of circular cross-section bronze rings or with flattened or circular cross-section bronze rings with animal tooth pendants, bone pendants, and bronze double-spiral pendants (LNVM AD, A 10272:16–18); a single, circular cross-section, bronze wire ring; a circular cross-section bronze wire ring with a small, fragmentary, bell-shaped, bronze pendant (LNVM AD, A 10272:15); a fragmentary trapezium sheet pendant (LNVM AD, A 10272:16); glass beads, cowry shell pendants, five bronze crotal bells with a flattened spherical shape with a cruciform slot and with a spherical shape with an I-shaped slot, some individual bronze coil beads made of flattened, circular, and semi-circular cross-section wire (Considering their main location in the neck area, they could have all come from a

Fig. 15. Artefacts from barrow II, burial 1 (LNVM AD, A 10272:6, 8, 11, 15–18, 22, 24, 26): 1–3 – bronze bracelets with zoomorphic terminals, 4 – a bronze wire ring with a bell-shaped pendant, 5 – a trapezium sheet pendant, 6 – an animal tooth pendant and a bronze double spiral pendant suspended from a bronze ring on indeterminate fused iron artefacts, 7–9 – bronze coil rings, 10, 11 – bronze crotal bells, 12–15 – bronze coil beads. *Photo by E. Guščika*.

single necklace.) (LNVM AD, A 10272:26); eight bronze bracelets with zoomorphic terminals and a flat semi-circular cross-section shank (LNVM AD, A 10272:5–9, 11–13); four bronze coil rings (two with six and 9.5 coils of circular cross-section bronze wire, one with 6.5 coils of twisted bronze wire, and one with seven coils of bronze wire wound with thinner, circular cross-section bronze wire) (LNVM AD, A 10272:14, 17, 22, 24); and one fragment of an unidentified iron artefact (LNVM AD, A 10272:20).

Some other artefacts were also discovered in the burial: two bronze neck-rings with a twisted shank and quadrangular or polygonal terminals, two bronze penannular brooches with a twisted shank and cylindrical terminals, one bronze coil ring with the middle coil widened at the head, and presumably a fragmentary iron awl. Unfortunately, their current location is unknown and so they can be characterized only from the descriptions given by Stepiņš (1943, pp.8, 11).

The remains of wood were unearthed under the individual (in the chest area) (LNVM AD, not numbered, together with artefacts from Rubiķi barrow II, burial 1), which suggest that the individual had been interred in a coffin or laid on wooden planks. Based on the artefacts, this is considered to be a female burial (Stepiņš 1943, p.7).

Barrow XIX

Similar burial elements were discovered in barrow XIX, excavated in 2012 (Guščika 2013, pp.18–20, pl. 21–23). The mound had a diameter of 6 m and a height of 0.6 m (Fig. 16–18). It consisted of yellow sand with no evidence of a stone kerb or burials in the mound. Only two coil rings with six and eleven coils of circular cross-section bronze wire (LNVM AD, A 13940:28, 29) (Fig. 21:5, 6) were recovered as isolated finds from the disturbed area. At the base of barrow XIX, a roughly 5–10 cm thick light grey layer with some small pieces of charcoal was visible; this was similar to the layers observed at the base of Roman and Migration periods barrows. A burial was discovered slightly off centre under the mound's base (no. 1).

Fig. 16. Barrow XIX before excavation (from the SE). *Photo by E. Guščika.*

Burial 1 consisted of a slightly darker 2.5 x 1 m area with indistinct contours and a partially undisturbed grave (Fig. 19, 20). The grave's fill contained disarticulated human bones and some artefacts: a bronze penannular brooch with cylindrical terminals and a twisted shank (LNVM AD, A 13940:26), a coil ring with nine coils of circular cross-section bronze wire (LNVM AD, A 13940:27), and fragments of an iron knife (LNVM AD, AP 158:6) (Fig. 21:2–4). Only the bones of the lower legs and feet as well as a socketed iron spearhead were in their primary position (LNVM AD, AP 158:7) (Fig. 21:1). The spearhead, with the point towards the feet, had been placed along the right side of the body. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the individual, like in barrow II, had been laid in an extended supine position, oriented NE (head)–SW. No evidence of a coffin was observed. On the whole, the grave's depth was 0.6 m below the former surface (roughly 1.25 m below the mound's surface). Two coil rings that were isolated finds appear to have also come from this burial. According to the osteological analysis, the burial contained a roughly 40–50 year-old male (sex determination uncertain) (Gerhards 2013).

Barrow XIII

The barrow is most likely also from the Viking Age. The isolated finds of bronze coil beads and decorated, folded sheet plates (LNVM AD, A 10272:29) that were recovered from the disturbed area, were probably parts of a Viking Age chaplet (Stepiņš 1943, p.5; Sėliai 2007, p.45; Latvijas 1974, p.230). The barrow has a diameter of 6.5 m and a height of 0.6 m.

Analysis

The archaeological material from Rubiķi barrows II and XIX shows that in the Viking Age, a barrow was used for only one burial. These barrows could contain individuals of either sex (although an osteological analysis was performed only for barrow XIX). Based on these two barrows, it can be assumed that opposed burial orientation depending on sex was practised at Rubiķi in the Viking Age. A similar practice is observable at other Viking Age barrow cemeteries in eastern Latvia and Lithuania, both in Selonian and Latgalian territory. For example, a pattern of opposed orientation, where males were mainly laid in an E (head)–W orientation and females in a W (head)–E orientation (Some deviations can be found, but these directions predominate.) has been observed

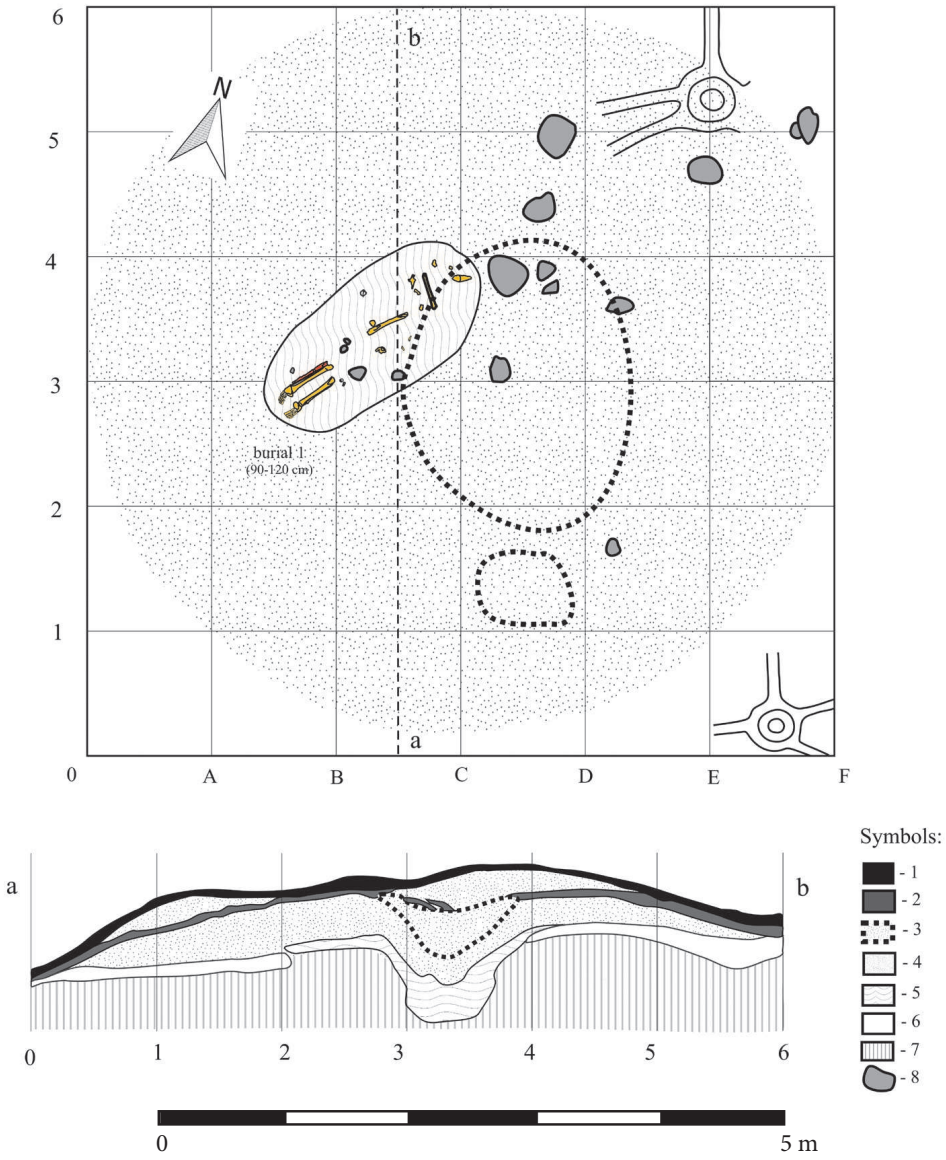

Fig. 17. Barrow XIX at a depth of 0.1–1.2 m: 1 – turf, 2 – grey layer saturated with pieces of charcoal, 3 – disturbed area (a pit), 4 – yellow sand, 5 – light grey layer with pieces of charcoal, 6 – darker yellow (brown) sand, 7 – subsoil, 8 – stone. *Drawing by E. Guščika*.

at Lejasdopeļi Barrow Cemetery in Selonian territory (Šnore 1997, p.75). The same can be seen in Latgalian barrow cemeteries (Radiņš 1999, pp.41–42). At Rubiķi, a male was also oriented NE (head)–SW and a female in almost the opposite direction.

These burials have not been radiocarbon dated, but their chronology can be determined from the artefact forms and types. All the artefacts discovered in barrows II and XIX are typical of the Viking Age. A more precise date can be given for barrow II based on the two bronze neck-rings with twisted shanks and quadrangular or polygonal terminals, which have been dated to the 10th–12th centuries in Latgalian and Selonian cemeteries (Sėliai 2007, pp.119–120; Radiņš 1999, pp.71–73). As has been mentioned, these are known only from the descrip-

Fig. 18. The section of barrow XIX (from the SE). *Photo by E. Guščika.*

Fig. 20. Barrow XIX, burial 1 at a depth of 1.20 m (from the NW). *Photo by E. Guščika.*

Fig. 19. Barrow XIX, burial 1 at a depth of 0.95–1.0 m (from the NE). *Photo by E. Guščika.*

tion given by Stepiņš, who stresses that they have different terminals: one with quadrangular terminals, the other as similar but with polygonal terminals. According to Ēvalds Mugurēvičs (1977, p.112) and Arnis Radiņš (1999, pp.71–73), neck-rings with smooth quadrangular terminals can be dated to the 10th–11th centuries, quadrangular terminals with deep grooves (so they can be regarded as polygonal terminals) to the 12th. It seems that both neck-ring types were discovered in Rubiķi barrow II and so the burial can be dated to the 12th century. Likewise, bronze bracelets with zoomorphic terminals and a flat, semi-circular cross-section shank can be dated to the 11th–12th centuries on the basis of groups 1 and 2 of the Baiba Vaska (1997, pp.36–37) terminal and decoration types. Barrow XIX is similar in date. Its socketed spearhead can be attributed to Māris Atgāzis (1998, p.61, att. 16:3, 4) spearhead type B and dated to the mid-11th–mid-12th century. Other artefacts, for example, forms analogous to a penannular brooch with a twisted shank and sharply upturned, rolled terminals, also date to the 12th century (Kuniga 2000, p.50, att. XI:16–18).

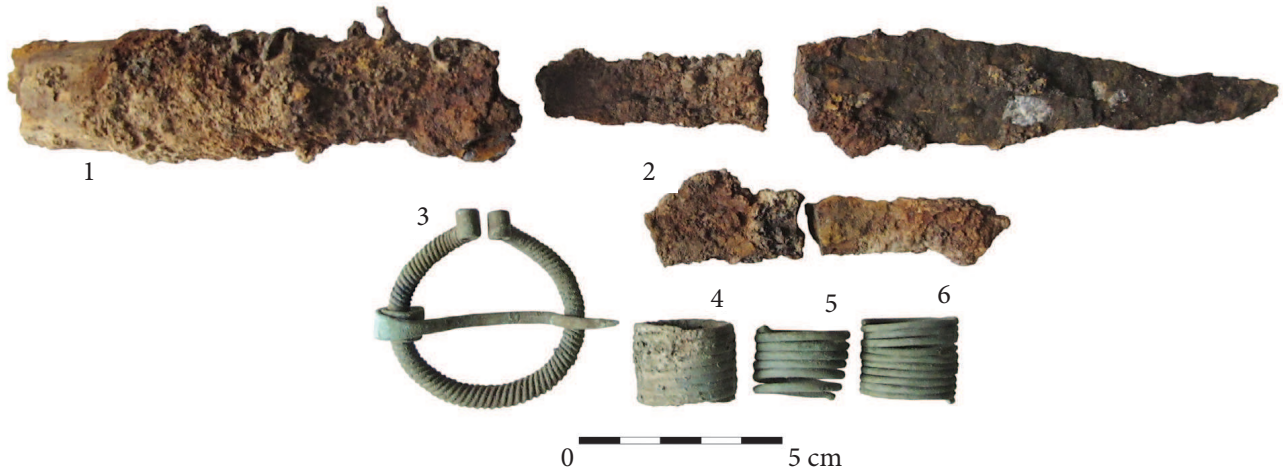

Fig. 21. Artefacts from barrow XIX, burial 1 (LNVM AD, A 13940:26–29, AP 158:6, 7): 1 – a socketed iron spearhead, 2 – fragments of an iron knife, 3 – a bronze penannular brooch, 4–6 – bronze coil rings. *Photo by E. Guščika*.

Although only two Viking Age barrows have been excavated and one more can be dated by isolated finds, most of the barrows at Rubiķi may be regarded as dating from this period. The size of the barrows provides the most important indication: according to Stepiņš's (1943, pp.3–6) 1937 measurements, only in 10 cases did the barrows exceed the characteristic diameter for Viking Age barrows, 6.5 m. By comparison, the excavated barrows with more than one burial from the Roman and Migration periods have a diameter of 9–10 m (according to Stepiņš's measurements, even 11 m).

BURIAL PRACTICES OF UNCERTAIN CHRONOLOGY

Three more barrows have been excavated at Rubiķi Cemetery; however, because of the extensive disturbance, it is not possible to analyse their archaeological material properly. Barrows I, III, and XXVIII, excavated by Stepiņš in 1937, can be considered burial sites of uncertain chronology.

Barrows I and XXVIII

In these two barrows, no evidence of burials was discovered. Barrow I, which was roughly 6 m in diameter and 0.48 m high, contained only an area of ashes, small pieces of charcoal, and some isolated stones (Stepiņš 1943, pp.3, 6–7, a plan of barrow I). The roughly 1.2 x 1.8 m ashy area was discovered in the S part of the mound's base and interpreted by Stepiņš (1943, p.7) as a fire site. Barrow XXVIII, which was roughly 6 m in diameter and 0.6 m high, contained only some isolated stones in the bottom layer (Stepiņš 1943, pp.6, 9, a plan of barrow XXVIII). In both cases, the lack of burials can probably be explained by the aforementioned major damage, i.e. deep pits from the modern period both in the central part and at the mound's sides.

Barrow III

This barrow was a roughly 7 x 6 m oblong, 0.58 m high, and consisted of sand, which was indistinguishable from the former surface and the sub-surface (Stepiņš 1943, pp.4, 9, a plan of barrow III) (Fig. 22).

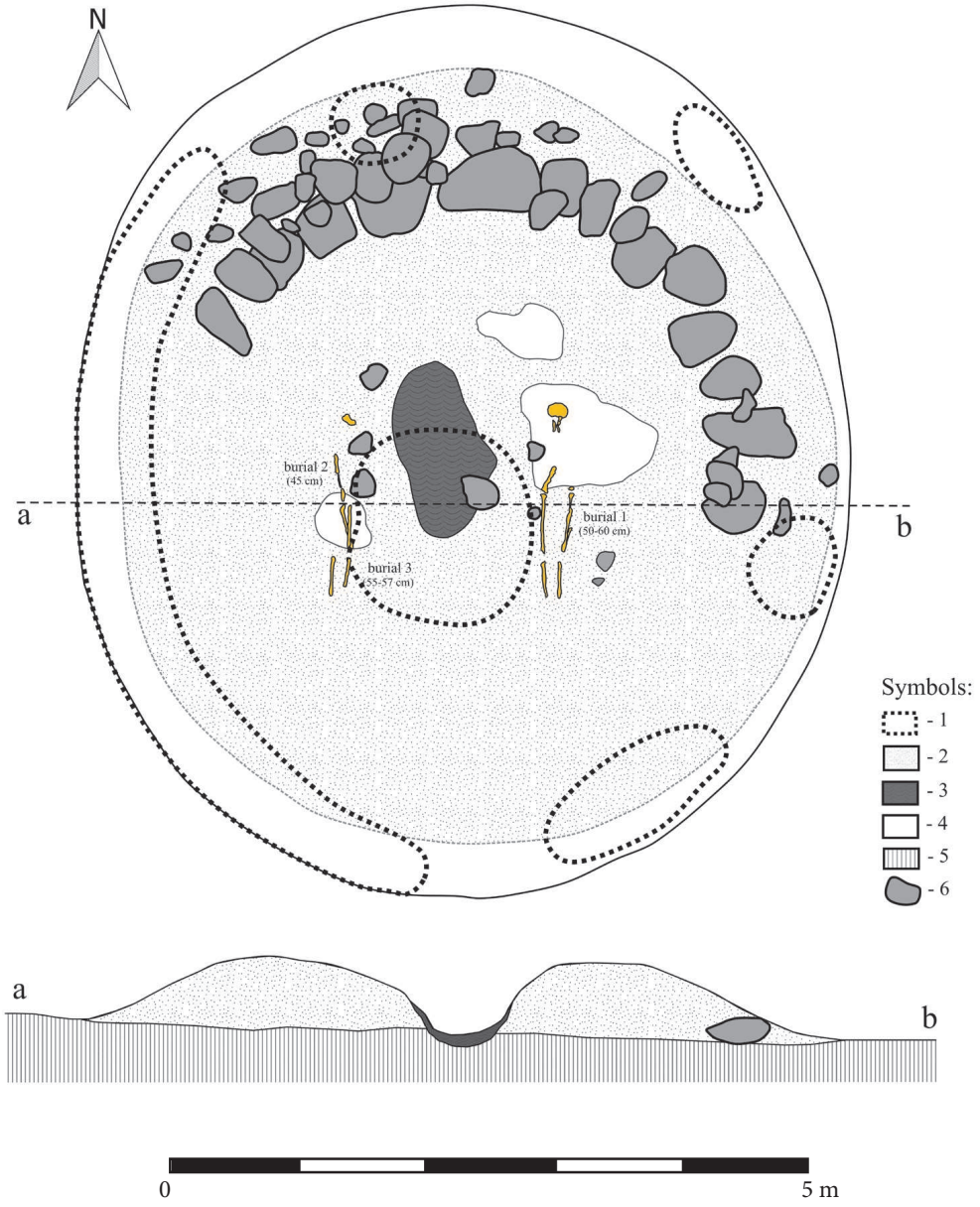

Fig. 22. Barrow III at a depth of 0.1–1.0 m: 1 – disturbed area (a pit) observed before the excavation, 2 – excavated area – yellow sand, 3 – dark sand (from the disturbance), 4 – places with pieces of charcoal, 5 – subsoil, 6 – stone. After Stepiņš 1943, *reproduced by E. Guščika*.

Stepiņš pointed out that the mound's oblong shape could be the result of later damage. Pits exceeding the mound's height had been dug both in the middle and on its sides. However, despite the extensive damage, part of a stone kerb was unearthed in the mound's bottom layer. As suggested by a curved trench in the W part (presumably from quarrying stones), a stone kerb probably encircled the entire barrow originally, but only half of it has survived. The stones in the surviving part were densely arranged, mostly in a single row, but two rows high in places; the stones varied in size, the biggest being 0.7 x 0.5 m. The kerb was 4.5–5 m in diameter. Three distinct areas saturated with ash and charcoal

Fig. 23. Artefacts from barrow III (LNVM AD, A 10272:27, 28): 1 – an iron knife fragment, 2 – an iron knife with a curved back (or a part of a sickle). *Photo by E. Guščika.*

were unearthed in the bottom layer in the central part of the mound and identified as fire sites. Isolated stones and the remains of three partially disturbed inhumations were discovered in the various layers of the mound, two in the W and one in the E. None of the burials lay on the base. Judging by the undisturbed parts of these burials, the individuals had lain in an extended supine position, oriented N (head)–S (with minor deviations). Some grave goods were also found: an iron knife with a curved back in **burial 1** (LNVM AD, A 10272:27) and a knife fragment in **burial 2** (LNVM AD, A 10272:28) (Fig. 23).

Analysis

Owing to the lack of Roman period artefacts and to the small size of the barrows, Simniškytė (2013, p.147) dated Rubiķi barrows III and XXVIII to the Late Migration period and Viking Age. However, no artefacts clearly relating to the Migration period and Viking Age were discovered in these barrows. In addition, no graves dug under the base, a characteristic burial element in both of the clearly datable Viking Age barrows at Rubiķi, were identified. The 2.5 x 1.6 m pit disturbing the central part of the mound of barrow I down to a depth of 0.25 m below the former surface was the only pit that may have exceeded the size of the grave. Due to the pit's large size, it could have completely destroyed the burial.

On the other hand, the aforementioned three barrows at Rubiķi show a number of features characteristic of the Roman–Early Migration period: a stone kerb completely (or partially) encircling the mound, the remains of fire sites, and burials in different layers of the mound. In addition, the types of artefacts found with barrow III, burials 1 and 2 do not exclude the possibility of a Roman or Migration period date. Similarly, the roughly 15 cm long knives with a curved back can also be considered a characteristic Roman-period artefact (Michelbertas 1986, p.163). In addition, neither burial 1 nor 2 in barrow III lay at the mound's base and so neither can probably be the earliest burial. It should be mentioned that Viking-Age barrows with more than one burial are also known in Sēlija (Simniškytė 2013, p.148) but at Rubiķi Cemetery, none of the excavated barrows from this period contained more than one burial. Nevertheless, owing to the incompleteness of the evidence, the possibility cannot be excluded that the aforementioned three barrows could date to the Viking Age.

Thus, the question of the chronology of barrows I, III, and XXVIII remains unanswered, making it more difficult to identify any correlation between the dimensions of the barrows and their chronology at Rubiķi Cemetery.

THE CEMETERY'S TYPE, ATTRIBUTION, AND DEVELOPMENT

The results of the 1937 and 2012 excavations at Rubiķi provide important information about barrow cemeteries in eastern Latvia and eastern Lithuania. In particular, the material recovered in 2012 offers grounds for revising certain previously held ideas concerning Rubiķi Cemetery and barrow cemeteries in the region as a whole while supporting and complementing other accepted ideas.

Type and attribution

The archaeological material shows that at least some of the Rubiķi Cemetery barrows had already been created by the second half of the 2nd century. These barrows have been attributed to the Roman and Migration-period barrows with stone kerbs of southern Latvia–northern Lithuania. At the same time, the cemetery lies at the south-eastern border of this barrow area, where it meets the area of East Lithuanian barrows. Despite the fact that Rubiķi Cemetery has yielded no artefacts dateable to the Roman period, the radiocarbon testing of the disturbed burials with no grave goods suggests that the barrows already existed in the 2nd–first half of the 3rd century (which corresponds to the stratigraphy of the burials in the barrows). Thus, barrows appeared earlier at Rubiķi than is characteristic for the East Lithuanian barrow area, where barrows began to be created in the 3rd–4th centuries (Michelbertas 1986, p.72; Banytė-Rowell 2007, p.51). In addition, the Rubiķi excavations yielded no evidence of the cremations characteristic of late 4th–5th-century East Lithuanian barrows (Banytė-Rowell 2007, p.51).

Considering this attribution, Rubiķi is one of the few barrow cemeteries in Sēlija where, based on the ^{14}C date for barrow XVII, burial 2, it is indicated that burial in barrows was still practised in the second half of the 5th–6th centuries. As mentioned by Simniškytė (2001, pp.76–77, Fig. 6; 2009, p.103), because of the small number of finds from the 5th–6th centuries, the years 450–600 can be considered a time of important changes in Sēlija, highlighted by depopulation. It is also considered that, from the late 6th–8th centuries, Sēlija saw the appearance of a different culture, which is equated with the Selonians and identified by Simniškytė (2001, pp.76–77; 2009, p.103) with the appearance of burials from the second half of the Migration period in Roman period barrows after a roughly 150-year hiatus. According to an analysis of artefacts, this situation has been observed at 25 of the 60 Roman-period barrows excavated in Sēlija (Simniškytė 2013, pried. 8). By contrast, the chronology of the burials and artefacts at Rubiķi shows instead the probability of a continuity of burials during the 2nd–7th/8th centuries but no archaeological material datable to the 9th–10th centuries has yet to be discovered at this site.

In the context of the burial practice in Sēlija, one prevailing theory involves a transformation and a transition from barrow burials to flat cemeteries during the 7th–8th centuries (Latvijas 1974, p.149; Šnore 1993, pp.42, 44; Atgāzis 2001, pp.285–286). It notes that the latest burials in the barrows are often situated outside the stone kerb (as well as in semicircular extensions joined to the kerbs) and subsequently as flat graves next to the barrows (but still in close vicinity to them). This course of development has been identified at Boķi-Priednieki, Lejasbitēni, Lejasoķēni, Zesercelmi, and Kalnieši II Cemeteries.

In light of the aforementioned concept, in 2012 a 1–4.5 m wide area was excavated around barrow XI (Guščika 2013, p.12, pl. 5). No evidence of burials was found beside the barrow, only some darker, charcoal-rich areas 0.25 x 0.2 m to 2 x 0.7 m in size, one of which contained a single fragment of hand-built smooth pottery (LNVM AD, A 13940:2). The chronology of these features and pottery is not clear, but the pottery type allows it to be attributed to the period when the barrows were in use. The question of whether burials once existed outside the stone kerbs of the Rubiķi barrows is difficult to answer owing to the extensive disturbances, which included the complete destruction of some burials.

It is possible that the area excavated around the Rubiķi barrows was too small to permit burials to be identified next to the barrows; however, Simniškytė has already pointed out that the idea of a transformation from a barrow burial practice to flat graves does not correspond in Sēlija to the actual archaeological material. According to Simniškytė (Simniškytė-Strimaitienė 2001, p.79; Simniškytė 2009, p.104; 2013, p.110), the large number of 7th–8th-century burials and isolated finds discovered in Roman period barrows, which sometimes exceed the number of 1st–6th-century finds (for example, at Boķi, Ķunci,

and Ratulāni), attests to the continuation of the barrow burial practice. Also, at Boķi cemetery, the arrangement of the 7th–8th-century burials in a curved line around the earliest burials but outside to the kerb suggests that they were initially buried in the barrow; only the mound has been flattened over a long period of use (Simniškytė 2009, p.105; 2013, p.111, pav. 45). In Sēlija, excavations have been conducted between the barrows at Boķi, Juljanava, Pajuostis, Spietiņi, and Visėtiškės Cemeteries, but only one burial has been found (Simniškytė 2001, p.79; 2013, pp.111–113). During the 1961 Boķi excavation under the direction of Lūcija Vankina, a 7th-century burial (no. 32) in a 0.96 m deep grave was discovered between barrows VIII and IX (Vankina 1961, p.35, att. LVIIa); however, because of its close proximity to barrow VIII, the possibility has been suggested that it may have originally belonged to that barrow (Simniškytė 2009, p.105). Accordingly, it has been suggested that barrow burial may have been practiced in Sēlija up until the 10th century, flat cemeteries appearing only in the 11th (for example, at Beteļi and Strautmaļi) (Simniškytė 2001, p.79; 2013, pp.114–115, 150–151).

In the 11th–12th centuries, burial recommenced at Rubiķi Cemetery. Moreover, the 2012 excavation of barrow XIX proved that Viking-Age burials cannot be regarded as consecutive burials in Roman-period barrows at Rubiķi, as suggested by Stepiņš. This was already the second case where a barrow without any evidence of the Roman or Migration periods was discovered. Also, the structure of barrows II and XIX differed significantly. Both were small with diameters of only 6 m and intended for only one burial where the individual lay in the grave under the mound. Similar barrows with a one burial dating to the Viking Age have been discovered, for example, at Boķi-Priednieki and Lejasdopeļi (Štokmanis 1942; Šnore 1997, pp.70, 72).

Judging by the many significant differences between the 2nd–7th/8th and 11th–12th-century burial practices, it can be considered that the Viking Age barrows at Rubiķi were created by a completely different society.

Sequence of the cemetery's development

Considering the meaningful characteristics of burial practices (e.g. Parker Pearson 1999; Nilsson Stutz 2003, pp.18–159, and references therein), it may be presumed that the location and position of a cemetery were chosen deliberately. Based on the currently available data, the Roman-period barrow cemeteries were situated close to settlement sites, as is clearly apparent in the study of the Sēlpils microregion, especially the Spietiņi-Plāteri archaeological complex (Vasks 2001b, pp.36–38). The Spietiņi settlement site is known to be close to two associated barrow cemeteries: the single Plāteri barrow with a stone kerb lies roughly 100 m to the S of the settlement and the two Spietiņi barrows with stone kerbs lie roughly 100 m to the NE. Apart from this, a previously inhabited area was quite often chosen as a cemetery site in the Roman period. For example, the Plāteri barrow was erected within a Late Bronze Age–Pre-Roman Age (1100–1 BC) settlement site (Vasks 2001b, p.38). The cultural layer of a previously inhabited settlement (usually identified by pottery) has also been discovered at other Roman period barrows: Ķebēni, Melderišķi, Muoriškiai, Pajuostis, Pāķi, Pungas, etc. (Simniškytė 2001, p.74).

No settlement site dating to the Roman–Early Migration period has been discovered near Rubiķi Cemetery. Nor is there much evidence of previously inhabited areas. Considering the finds of striated pottery, Kaldabruņas Hillfort and settlement site could have been inhabited from 500 BC to the second half of the 1st millennium AD (Graudonis 1969, p.36), but it is roughly 6 km to the S of Rubiķi Cemetery. The other closest Roman-period archaeological sites are extensively excavated Slate Cemetery 9–10 km to the NW (with 43 barrows arranged in six groups, which could also be interpreted as separate cemeteries), and the completely excavated barrow at Zesercelmi, roughly 3.5 km to the SW of Rubiķi (Богоявленский 1900, pp.112–114; Moora 1928, pp.6–15; Šnore 1933; 1993, pp.23–25; Stepiņš 1937). However, the chronology of the Zesercelmi

barrow is considered rather uncertain owing to extensive disturbances (Simniškytė 2013, p.306). It must be mentioned that in the 19th century isolated Migration-period finds were also collected in Rubene Parish: four narrow iron axes, three iron spearheads, fragments of two iron knives (one with a curved back), and probably part of an iron buckle (LNVM AD, RLB 549–555, 557–559), but the possibility that they came from Rubiķi Cemetery cannot be excluded.

It seems that Rubiķi Cemetery was probably established in a previously uninhabited area, which can be inferred from the composition of the mounds, which consisted of yellow sand with some small pieces of charcoal, and from the fact that the barrows yielded no artefacts from the Bronze Age or Pre-Roman period (1800–1 BC).

The environmental conditions at the time when the earliest of the Rubiķi barrows was created can be also ascertained from other evidence. The 2012 excavation of the two Roman and Migration-period barrows revealed a light grey layer with some small pieces of charcoal at the base of each, which is very characteristic of Roman-period barrows, especially in the eastern part of the distribution area, and is traditionally interpreted as a specific element of the burial practice, namely, as the purification of the site (Michelbertas 1986, p.57; Šnore 1993, p.35). Such a burnt layer was also uncovered next to the Rubiķi barrows: around barrow XI (across the whole of excavation area I) and also under Viking-Age barrow XIX. Although fire rites played an important role in the barrow burial practice at Rubiķi, as is seen from the areas with a high concentration of ash near the graves, such a burnt layer under a mound can also indicate the clearing of a previously uninhabited location. The prevailing barrow-excavation methodology makes it difficult to discuss this question because generally only the barrows themselves are excavated, not the areas around or between them. Such a burnt layer was probably found by Mykolas Michelbertas (2004, pp.123, 126) next to the barrows at Pajuostis in the 1970s, but because of the presence of burials, it was interpreted as the remains of barrows. By contrast, at Spietiņi, where Atgāzis and Jolanta Daiga also excavated the area around the barrows during 1961–63, no charcoal-rich areas were observed next to them (Atgāzis 2006, pp.22, 24). However, in this case the Roman and Migration-period barrows had been created in the immediate vicinity of a previously inhabited area.

This was presumably a forested area prior to the creation of Rubiķi Cemetery. Charcoal samples from basal layers of barrows XI and XVII came from pine (*Pinus sylvestris* L.) (Bērziņš 2013); likewise, the macrobotanical analysis of sediment samples collected from the basal layer of barrow XI contained only pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) cone fragments and bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva ursi*) seeds (Ceriņa 2013). There was no evidence of crops or other cultivated plants. The samples from other mound layers (excluding the surface) also contained no such evidence.

By contrast, in the 11th–12th centuries, barrows were deliberately created at the site of a previously used cemetery. The Roman and Migration-period barrows were clearly visible and the form of burial was outwardly similar in the Viking Age. This raises the question of the motive for the continued use of Rubiķi after a hiatus of roughly two centuries as no evidence datable to the 9th–10th centuries has yet to be found there. In connection with the Migration-period burials discovered in Roman-period barrows as well as Migration-period barrows discovered alongside Roman-period barrows, Simniškytė (2009, pp.99–100, 103) and Audronė Bliujienė (2013, p.207) mention that in Sēlija, barrows were created much more for symbolic purposes than just as a burial place for the dead; thus the reuse of barrow cemeteries was more likely related to a power strategy than an ancestor cult. In addition, such a conspicuous way of showing continuity was especially important for societies without a real connection to the past and could be a way to legitimise power in a particular location and to take control of a wider region.

In this regard, attention should be drawn to barrow XVII, burial 1, which, considering the barrow's other artefacts and radiocarbon dating, is probably also datable to the Late Roman–Early Migration period. Although the burial had been almost completely destroyed, the headdress ornament (made of bronze coil beads) was in its original position around the skull, which suggests that the damage was done soon after the individual had been interred. It should also be noted that both the human bones and the metal artefacts were in poor condition at Rubiķi, nor have textile remains been observed inside the headdress's bronze coil beads.

Usually barrow disturbances are explained in terms of later activities by grave-robbers; however, the evidence from Rubiķi barrow XVII suggests that the disturbance of earlier barrows may also be discussed in the context of 11th–12th century burials. The reopening of burials for ritual purposes (to remove symbolic and valuable items as well as to manipulate the human remains) is likewise not exceptional in historical burial practices (e.g. Wessman 2009, pp.81–82, and references therein). In the case of Rubiķi, for example, it could reflect a conscious division between the previous social group and newcomers who adopted the accepted status symbols through the continued use of the barrow cemetery.

That the 11th–12th-century burial alongside previously created barrows had a symbolic meaning is probably also indicated by the quite distant location of the related settlement site identified at Dronkas (Urtāns 1987a). The Dronkas settlement site is situated beside Lake Dronkas, roughly 1.2 km to the SE of the cemetery, and is so far the only Viking-Age settlement site discovered near Rubiķi. It should also be mentioned that Lake Dronkas is the closest body of water. However, the chronology of Dronkas settlement is known only from isolated finds, no archaeological excavation having been conducted yet. About 200 fragments of hand thrown pottery and only a small number of fragments of hand-built pottery indicate that the site was inhabited the most intensively in the second half of the Viking Age, starting in the late 10th–11th century, when hand thrown pottery appears in present-day Latvia (and also corresponding to the time when the Viking-Age barrows were created in Rubiķi Cemetery), and during the Middle Ages (13th–15th centuries) (Latvijas 1974, p.256; Urtāns 1987a; 2008, pp.142, 144).

Rubiķi is not the only cemetery in eastern Latvia and eastern Lithuania where Viking-Age barrows were created alongside Roman-period ones. As indicated by the burial features and isolated finds, a similar situation can also be seen in Sēlija at Priedniekiu-Boķi and probably Smiltiņi-Krēsliņi Cemeteries (Štokmanis 1942; Vankina 1961; Simniškytė 2013, pp.292–293). However, it is possible that further field research will show that the same situation and pattern of development as that at Rubiķi Barrow Cemetery can also be found in other cemeteries, especially, in ones mentioned above where a similar number of barrows have been discovered (Pungas, Lejasdopeļi, Slate, and others).

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the excavation at Rubiķi Cemetery have provided considerable data about burial practices in eastern Latvia and eastern Lithuania, covering almost all the chronological phases of the Iron Age.

The archaeological material from the seven excavated barrows shows that burials began at Rubiķi Cemetery in the 2nd century and continued up until the 7th/8th, including the as-yet poorly understood period of the 5th–6th centuries. During this period, Roman and Migration-period collective barrows with stone kerbs and more than one inhumation in various layers characteristic of southern Latvia and northern Lithuania can be attributed to the cemetery. In the 9th century, burials stopped in Rubiķi Cemetery but new, smaller barrows with one burial began to be created alongside the earlier ones in the 11th–12th centuries. Inhumation was likewise prac-

ticed in the later period, but the dead were buried in a grave under the mound but not in the mound. In the Viking Age, Rubiķi Cemetery can be attributed to a completely different society.

The material uncovered in 2012 provides grounds for revising or supplementing some ideas relating to barrow cemeteries in Sēlija: the development of the cemeteries and, consequently, the interpretation of some characteristic burial evidence.

A more detailed evaluation of the significance of the Rubiķi archaeological site also requires further research. The use of non-destructive geophysical field research methods to reveal differences in the barrow burial practices and thus their chronology, etc. could provide a great deal more information. Moreover, the data from Rubiķi Cemetery will probably help in analysing the material from other barrow cemeteries in eastern Latvia and eastern Lithuania as well as contribute to reconstructing prehistory.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AE – Arheoloģija un Etnogrāfija

LNVM AD – Latvijas Nacionālais vēstures muzejs, Arheoloģijas Departaments (National History Museum of Latvia, Department of Archaeology)

LU LVI AMK – Latvijas Universitātes Latvijas vēstures institūts, Arheoloģisko materiālu krātuve (Institute of Latvian History at the University of Latvia, Repository of Archaeological Material)

LVMR – Latvijas Vēstures muzeja raksti

PVMK AR – Pieminekļu valdes materiālu krājumi. Archaioloģijas raksti

VKPAI PDC – Valsts Kultūras pieminekļu aizsardzības inspekcija, Pieminekļu dokumentācijas centrs (State Inspection for Heritage Protection, Centre of Documentation of Monuments)

RUBIKIŲ PILKAPYNAS RYTŲ LATVIJOS IR RYTŲ LIETUVOS PILKAPIŲ KONTEKSTE

Elīna Guščika

Santrauka

Rubikių (Rubiķi) pilkapyno pilkapiai – apskriti arba nežymiai ovalūs, 4–10 m skersmens ir 0,3–1 m aukščio. Kasinėti pilkapiai buvo arba visiškai, arba iš dalies suardyti ir tik penkiuose jų buvo kapų liekanų. 1937 m. kasinėjimų metu Pēteris Stepiņš nustatė, kad pilkapiai yra Romėniškojo laikotarpio (I–IV a.), o dalis jų buvo pakartotinai naudojami Vikingų laikotarpiu (XI–XII a.). 2012 m. kasinėjimai ir tolesnė archeologinės medžiagos analizė patvirtino, kad seniausi kolektyviniai pilkapiai buvo supilti dar Romėniškuoju laikotarpiu, o pilkapynas naudotas iki Tautų kraustymosi laikotarpio vidurio. Vikingų laikotarpiu pilkapyne vėl buvo laidojama ir supilti nauji mažesni individualūs pilkapiai. Trijų pilkapių chronologija yra neaiški.

Sprendžiant pagal trijų kapų radinių tipus ir AMS ^{14}C datavimą, du pilkapiai (XI ir XVII) neabejotinai yra datuotini Romėniškuoju ir Tautų kraustymosi laikotarpiais: jie supilti II a. 2-ojoje pusėje ir naudoti iki VI–VII/VIII a. Pilkapius sudarė geltonas smėlis su pavieniais anglies intarpais, jų pagrinde buvo šviesiai pilkas su angliukais sluoksnis. Abu šie pilkapiai buvo kolektyviniai, įvairiame gylyje rasta griautinių kapų (pilk. XI – trys, pilk. XVII – keturi, iš kurių tik vienas buvo nesuardytas). Mirusiųjų lytis ir amžius buvo įvairus. Greičiausiai visuose kapuose būta įkapių. Pilk. XI juosė akmenų vainikas.

Du mažiausieji kasinėti pilkapiai (II ir XIX) pagal radinių tipus datuotini Vikingų laikotarpiu. Juos taip pat sudarė geltonas su smulkiais angliukais smėlis. Pilk. XIX pagrinde buvo šviesiai pilkas su angliukais sluoksnis. Abiejuose pilkapiuose buvo po vieną suardytą XI–XII a. griautinį kapą. Mirusiųjų (vyro ir moters) palaikai su įkapėmis aptikti 0,6–0,95 m gylyje nuo pilkapio paviršiaus.

Archeologinė medžiaga leidžia bent dalį Rubikių pilkapių priskirti Romėniškojo ir Tautų kraustymosi laikotarpių Pietų Latvijos ir Šiaurės Lietuvos pilkapiams su akmenų vainikais. Laidojama pilkapyne buvo nuo II iki VII/VIII a., įskaitant ir menkai pažįstamą V–VI a. laikotarpį. Kol kas neturima duomenų apie laidojimą pilkapyne IX–X a. 2012 m. tirta pilk. XI aplinkoje, tačiau už jo ribų palaidojimų nerasta. Kaip minėta, XI–XII a. pilkapyne vėl pradėta laidoti, bei šie kapai priskirtini visiškai kitai bendruomenei.

Atrodo, kad Romėniškuoju laikotarpiu Rubikių pilkapynas buvo įkurtas anksčiau neapgyvendintoje teritorijoje. Tai rodo pilkapių išsidėstymas bei degėsių sluoksnis, esantis ne tik po Romėniškojo laikotarpio pilkapiais, bet aprėpiantis ir didesnį, nei užima pilkapiai, plotą. XI–XII a. pilkapiai buvo sąmoningai pilami ankstesnėje laidojimo vietoje maždaug po dviejų šimtmečių pertraukos. Šie pilkapiai

labiau sietini su galios išraiškos strategija nei su protėvių kultu. Ankstyviausių pilkapių suardymas turėtų būti siejamas su laidojimu XI–XII a.

LENTELĖ

1 lentelė. Rubikių pilkapyne aptiktų kaulų radiokarboninio datavimo rezultatai. Kalibruota OxCal v4.3 programa (Bronk Ramsey 2017) naudojant IntCal13 kreivę (Reimer *ir kt.* 2013).

ILIUSTRACIJŲ SĄRAŠAS

1 pav. Straipsnyje minimos archeologinės vietos: 1 – Bajoriškiai, 2 – Beteļi, 3 – Boķi-Priednieki, 4 – Dronkas, 5 – Juljanava, 6 – Kaldabruņas, 7 – Kalnieši II, 8 – Kubiliškis, 9 – Ķebēni, 10 – Ķunci, 11 – Lejasbitēni, 12 – Lejasdopeļi, 13 – Lejasoķēni, 14 – Melderišķi, 15 – Muoriškiai, 16 – Norkūnai, 17 – Pajuostis, 18 – Pāķi, 19 – Plāteri, 20 – Pungas, 21 – Ratulāni, 22 – Rubiķi, 23 – Slate, 24 – Smiltiņi-Krēsliņi, 25 – Spietiņi, 26 – Strautmaļi, 27 – Vaineikiai, 28 – Visėtiškės, 29 – Zesercelmi. *E. Guščika žemėl.*

2 pav. Rubikių pilkapyno situacinis planas: 1 – nekasinėti pilkapiai, 2 – 1937 m. kasinėti pilkapiai, 3 – 2012 m. kasinėti pilkapiai, 4 – 2012 m. kasinėtas plotas, 5 – augmenija (miškas). *E. Guščika brėž.*

3 pav. Pilk. XI prieš kasinėjimus (vaizdas iš PPV). *E. Guščika nuotr.*

4 pav. Pilk. XI 0,1–0,9 m gylyje: 1 – velėna, 2 – tamsus pilkas sluoksnis su anglies intarpais, 3 – geltonas smėlis su pavieniais anglies intarpais, 4 – šviesiai pilkas sluoksnis su anglies intarpais, 5 – įžemis, 6 – akmuo, 7 – suardymo vieta (duobė), užfiksuota iki kasinėjimų. *E. Guščika brėž.*

5 pav. Bendras pilk. XI vaizdas (iš PR). *E. Guščika nuotr.*

6 pav. Dalis pilk. XI akmenų vainiko (vaizdas iš V). *E. Guščika nuotr.*

7 pav. Pilk. XVII 0,1–0,9 m gylyje: 1 – velėna, 2 – tamsus pilkas sluoksnis su anglies intarpais, 3 – geltonas smėlis su pavieniais anglies intarpais, 4 – šviesiai pilkas sluoksnis su anglies intarpais, 5 – įžemis, 6 – akmuo, 7 – suardymo vieta (duobė), užfiksuota iki kasinėjimų. *E. Guščika brėž.*

8 pav. Bendras pilk. XVII vaizdas (iš ŠŠR). *E. Guščika nuotr.*

9 pav. Pilk. XVII k. 2 (vaizdas iš PV). *E. Guščika nuotr.*

10 pav. Pilk. XVII k. 2 radiniai (LNVM AD, A 13940:5, 6, AP 158:2, 4): 1 – diržo, pagaminto iš geležinės grandinėlės, dalis, 2 – geležinis peilis lenkta nugarėle, 3–5 – žalvarinės įvijos, 6 – vamzdinis karolis. *E. Guščika nuotr.*

11 pav. Pilk. XVII k. 1 (vaizdas iš PPV). *E. Guščika nuotr.*

12 pav. Pilk. XI (1) ir XVII (2–16) pavieniai radiniai (LNVM AD, A 13940:8–10, 12, 14–22, 25, AP 158:1, 5): 1 – geležinė smeigtuko adata, apsukta žalvarine viela, 2 – geležinis peilis lenkta nugarėle, 3, 9 – žalvarinės įvijinės apyrankės (keturi fragmentai), 4–6 – žalvarinės juostinės apyrankės, 7 – žalvarinis dvigubas trikampio formos kabutis, 8 – žalvarinė apyrankė išplatintais galais, 10 – įvijinis žiedas (du fragmentai), 11–13 – žalvarinės įvijos, 14, 15 – grandinėlės, pagamintos iš žalvarinės vielos žiedelių su varpelio formos kabučiais, fragmentai, 16 – grandinėlės, pagamintos iš žalvarinės vielos žiedelių su nenustatytu geležiniu dirbiniu, fragmentas. *E. Guščika nuotr.*

13 pav. Rubikių kapinyno radiokarboninių datų išklotinė.

14 pav. Pilk. II: A – pilkapis 0,1–1,25 m gylyje: 1 – suardymo vieta (duobė), užfiksuota iki kasinėjimų, 2 – geltonas smėlis, 3 – tamsus smėlis (kasinėtas plotas), 4 – įžemis, 5 – akmuo; B – k. 1. *E. Guščika brėž.* pagal Stepiņš 1943.

15 pav. Pilk. II k. 1 radiniai (LNVM AD, A 10272:6, 8, 11, 15–18, 22, 24, 26): 1–3 – žalvarinės apyrankės zoomorfiniais galais, 4 – žalvarinis žiedelis su varpelio formos kabučiu, 5 – kabutis, pagamintas iš trapecijos formos plokštelės, 6 – dirbinys, sudarytas iš gyvūno danties kabučio ir žalvarinio dvigubos spiralės formos kabučio, žalvariniu žiede-

liu pakabintų ant neaiškaus korodavusio geležinio dirbinio, 7–9 – žalvariniai įvijiniai žiedai, 10, 11 – žalvariniai žvangučiai, 12–15 – žalvarinės įvijos. *E. Guščika nuotr*.

16 pav. Pilk. XIX prieš kasinėjimus (vaizdas iš PR). *E. Guščika nuotr*.

17 pav. Pilk. XIX 0,1–1,2 m gylyje: 1 – velėna, 2 – pilkas sluoksnis su anglies intarpais, 3 – suardymo vieta (duobė), 4 – geltonas smėlis, 5 – šviesiai pilkas sluoksnis su anglies intarpais, 6 – tamsiai geltonas (rudas) smėlis, 7 – įžemis, 8 – akmuo. *E. Guščika brėž*.

18 pav. Pilk. XIX pjūvis (vaizdas iš PR). *E. Guščika nuotr*.

19 pav. Pilk. XIX k. 1 0,95–1 m gylyje (vaizdas iš ŠR). *E. Guščika nuotr*.

20 pav. Pilk. XIX k. 1 1,2 m gylyje (vaizdas iš ŠV). *E. Guščika nuotr*.

21 pav. Pilk. XIX k. 1 radiniai (LNVM AD, A 13940:26–29, AP 158:6, 7): 1 – įmovinis geležinis ietigalis, 2 – geležinio peilio fragmentai, 3 – žalvarinė pasaginė segė, 4–6 – žalvariniai įvijiniai žiedai. *E. Guščika nuotr*.

22 pav. Pilk. III 0,1–1 m gylyje: 1 – suardymo vieta (duobė), užfiksuota iki kasinėjimų, 2 – kasinėtas plotas – geltonas smėlis, 3 – tamsus smėlis (suardymo vieta), 4 – vietos su anglies intarpais, 5 – įžemis, 6 – akmuo. *E. Guščika brėž.* pagal Stepiņš 1943.

23 pav. Pilk. III radiniai (LNVM AD, A 10272:27, 28): 1 – geležinio peilio fragmentas, 2 – geležinis peilis lenkta nugarėle (arba pjautuvo dalis). *E. Guščika nuotr*.

Vertė J. Žukauskaitė

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