**BURIAL AND SACRIFICE IN LITHUANIA
DURING THE LATE FOURTEENTH - FIFTEENTH
CENTURY: RELIGIOUS CONFRONTATION
OR A UNIQUE CONVERSION PHENOMENON –
BAPTISM BY FIRE?***

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ABSTRACT *This article seeks traces of the 1387 Lithuanian baptism formula, i.e. a religious confrontation or the conversion from paganism to Christianity, in the archaeological material. One type of find, low-relief ring brooches were selected for this purpose since they are found in fourteenth-century Livonian Christian burials, late-fourteenth – fifteenth-century Lithuanian inhumation burials in Lithuania, sacrificial pits, pyre sites, and Lake Obeliai. It would be difficult to find more suitable finds in Lithuanian archaeological material for researching late-fourteenth-century religious confrontation or conversion than low relief ring brooches since it is precisely these that help to place the various burial customs and rites in chronological order.*

Low-relief ring brooches were Christian devotional objects intended for neophytes. Most of them consist of brooches with a grapevine or seven doves. In some of the sacrificial locations they are found brand new, while in others they have been in a very hot fire. The chronology of their sacrificial locations coincides with the beginning of Lithuania's Christianisation in the late - fourteenth – early - fifteenth century but in no way with the end of the old faith we are seeking. Thus this archaeological material does not provide data for a religious confrontation in the late fourteenth century but does point to a unique phenomenon from the beginning of the religious conversion: evangelical baptism by fire.

After the Grand Duchy of Lithuania accepted Catholic baptism officially in 1387, a new ideological - cultural process began: the Catholic Christianisation of a small territory of a large state, which

* The article was written for the scientific research project 'Politinės, etninės ir konfesinės konfrontacijos XIII–XV a. Lietuvoje' supported by the Lithuanian State Foundation for Research and Studies.

was accompanied by a religious confrontation with the old faith of ethnic Lithuania and the influential Russian Orthodox Church which had spread over a tenfold wider territory. Unfortunately, few written sources reflecting the beginning and course of this process survive. The confrontation with the old faith of ethnic Lithuania is summarised laconically in the baptism formulation ‘they shed the slavery of idols, renounced the darkness of false belief, and came to a true and correct knowledge of the Catholic faith,’ which was written by Pope Urban VI in a 12 March 1388 bull to Bishop Dobrogost of Poznań, authorising him to appoint a bishop for Vilnius. The same bull mentions that Jogaila had demolished the temple, where the false gods and idols had been worshipped, had ‘smashed the idols themselves to pieces and in their place ordered a church be erected in honour of the Holy and indivisible Trinity, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and the blessed martyr Stanislaus’.¹ Another ostensible attestation of a confrontation between ordinary people drowning in the superstitions of paganism and those assembled by the Catholic dukes for baptism is presented in Jan Długosz’s *Annals* which describe the 1387 episode of the baptism of Lithuania. This account lists the most important deities of the barbarians: fire, forests, and snakes and serpents, which it was necessary to overthrow in order to introduce the Christian faith. This was very simple since it was only necessary to extinguish the fires, cut down and ravage the pine-groves and other forests, and kill and exterminate the snakes and serpents. No defenders of paganism appeared in this religious confrontation and the action occurred smoothly and peacefully since, according to Długosz, ‘the barbarians only wept and lamented as they watched how the false gods and deities were toppled, slain and destroyed since they did not dare mumble against the authority of the king. And when the idols had been smashed and destroyed, the people were convinced of the falseness of their gods and saw with their own eyes that they had been deceived up until then. The entire Lithuanian people and nation agreed in devout obedience to accept the Christian faith and to renounce their proclivities towards the ancient error’.²

¹ *Kodeks dyplomatyczny katedry i diecezji wileńskiej (1387-1468)*, ed. J. Fijałek, W. Semkowicz, Cracow, 1948, no. 10, pp. 20–22; *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, comp. N. Vėlius, (Vilnius, 1996), vol. I, pp. 446–448.

² Joannis Dlugossii, *Annales seu cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae, liber decimus, 1370-1405*, ed. D. Turkowska (Warsaw, 1985), p. 160.

These attestations of ideological confrontation and conversion, although very imprecise and twisted or metaphorical, are nevertheless the actual record of the beginning of the new era in outlook that began with the creation of the Catholic diocese based in Vilnius. It is obvious that it is impossible to recreate the old faith, rites, and burial customs of the pre-Christian inhabitants of fourteenth-century ethnic Lithuania on the basis of these descriptions.

In this article we attempt to find traces of the 1387 Lithuanian baptism formula – the religious confrontation or conversion from paganism to Christianity – in archaeological material. In order to realise this end, we selected one type of artefact: low-relief ring brooches (badges) since they are found in fourteenth-century Livonian Christian burials as well as sacrificial pits at pyre sites and Lake Obeliai and in late fourteenth – fifteenth century Lithuanian inhumation burials. For research on late-fourteenth century religious confrontation or conversion, it would be difficult to find more suitable artefacts in Lithuanian archaeological material than low-relief ring brooches since it is precisely these that help to put the various burial customs and rites in chronological order.

Classification and the symbolic meaning of low-relief ring brooches Although this type of brooch has been known to archaeologists for several decades now, no broader interest in them has developed. Until now low-relief ring brooches have not been classified, their chronology has not been defined, the symbols portrayed on them have not been established, and their significance has not been ascertained.

Data about 187 ring brooches from 40 localities were collected for classification (Fig. 1). The majority of these brooches were found in the territory of the GDL: 176 from 35 localities. Only 11 of them were found in 5 localities in Livonia. We classified brooches of this type according to the symbols portrayed on their rims into 6 sub-types and several individual examples. Meanwhile we did not classify over 40 brooches and fragments which came from 17 localities and which had been melted and deformed in a fire and the rim eroded.³

³ Unclassified brooches have been found: one each at Kulautuva, Marvelė, Masteikiai, Obeliai bur. 149, barrow bur. 73 and 78–82, Payžnys, Pakalniškiai (Kaunas District), Pavilkijys, Pernarava bur. IX, Rumšiškės bur. 152 and 1 chance find, Ruseiniai crem. bur. 57, Sargėnai crem. bur. 378, and Lake Vilkumuiža; two each at Pakritižis and Ruseiniai crem. bur. 1; three at Raguva; four at Pakalniškiai (Šakiai District); five at Lake Obeliai; and ten at Paalksniai.

Sub-type 1: brooches with a grapevine symbol (Fig. 2). A stylised grapevine, which consists of four joined branches, three short and one long, are portrayed on the rim of brooches of this sub-type. The short branches are joined to one another while the long one is inserted in the upper left part of the brooch between two short branches. The short branches have a triangle-shaped cluster of grapes in the middle with a tendril on each side (Fig. 2:a). The two tendrils and cluster of grapes are all on the same side of the branch and alternate to the outside, inside, and outside of the brooch (starting on the brooch's upper right hand corner). The long branch is portrayed with one tendril to the outside of the brooch and two tendrils to the inside (Fig. 2:b). In addition, the inside and outside edges of these brooches have a line of dots. The rims of this type of brooch are convex. Sub-type 1 brooches are from 3.3 cm to 4.2 cm in diameter. The various sizes of these brooches show that it was cast in different forms. In all 39 sub-type 1 brooches from 16 localities managed to be identified.⁴ Two such brooches cast from a silver alloy were found in Obeliai barrow burials 48–56⁵ while the rest were copper, bronze or brass.

Sub-type 2: brooches with a symbol of seven doves (Fig. 3). Seven doves joined in a tight circle are portrayed on the rim on the brooches of this sub-type. It is possible to divide the images of the doves into two groups. Doves with large eyes, spread tails, raised wings, and round objects in their beaks are very clearly portrayed on some brooches (Fig. 3:1). Meanwhile abstract bird bodies and round objects are portrayed on other brooches (Fig. 3:2). It is worthwhile pointing out that even in those brooches, on which the doves are portrayed with all details (head, eyes, beak, wings, and tail), not all of the seven doves are identical. Usually only a pair of birds in the lower part of the brooches has all the details. The inside and outside

⁴ Sub-type 1 brooches have been found at Balčiai, Barinė crem. bur. 21, 25, Kurklintiškiai, Lejasdopeļi bur. 9 in barrow II (2 of 5), Marvelė crem. bur. 671, 707 and 1 chance find, Masteikiai (2), Obeliai bur. 48–56 (2), 78–82, 90, 141 (2) in barrows, at the pyre site (2), and in the lake (6), Paalksniai bur. 27 and 2 chance finds, Pakalniškiai (Šakiai District) (2), Pavirvytė bur. 111, Piliakalnai village on the castle mound, Radikiai bur. 46, Raguva, Ruseiniai bur. 36, crem. bur. 2, 53, and Sargėnai crem. bur. 378.

⁵ B. Tautavičienė, *III–XVI a. sidabriniai ir sidabru puošti dirbiniai. Katalogas* (Vilnius, 1981), Nr. 279–280, ill. 142; V. Urbanavičius, S. Urbanavičienė, 'Archeologiniai tyrimai', *Lietuvos archeologija* (hereinafter *LA*), 6 (1988), ill. 39.

edges of sub-type 2 brooches have rows of dotted lines and in this way differ from the sub-type 1 brooches. The brooches of this sub-type, like those of sub-type 1, have convex rims and are of various sizes. In all 73 brooches with a symbol of seven doves have been identified from 24 localities.⁶

Sub-type 3: brooches with a symbol of a crown of thorns (Fig. 4). A crown of thorns composed of two branches that are not intertwined are portrayed on the rim of brooches of this sub-type. The branches form two irregular squares. On the outside of each outer square there is a loop and a round protuberance in the middle of each side. The interior square has loops in the corners. Three loops are clearly visible, the fourth coinciding with the hole for the brooch's tongue. All the sub-type 3 brooches are flat and in this way differ from brooches of sub-types 1 and 2, which have convex rims. 9 brooches with a crown of thorns have been identified from 9 localities.⁷

Sub-type 4: brooches with a crown of thorns (?) (Fig. 5). The symbol portrayed on the rim of the brooches of this sub-type is not clear. A pentagon with rounded corners, which might symbolise a crown of thorns, is portrayed on one such brooch (Fig. 5:1). It is harder to state the number of rounded corners of the figures portrayed on the other sub-type 4 brooches. It is possible to distinguish only two distinct rounded corners in them, an upper and a lower. Another two rounded corners could exist on each of the other two edges but they are not distinct. The rims of sub-type 4 brooches are somewhat convex. 7 such brooches have been identified from 6 localities.⁸

Some compositional elements used in portraying the grapevine and crown of thorns in sub-type 1 (Fig. 6:1) and sub-type 4 (Fig. 6:2)

⁶ Sub-type 2 brooches have been found at Alytus bur. 104, Asote castle mound, Barinė crem. bur. 22, 23, and 24, Braslau castle mound, Grauziai (2), Kriemala, Kulautuva, Kurklintiškiai, Lejasdopėli bur. 9 (3 of 5) and burial 10 barrow II, Marvelė (4), Masteikiai (4), Nača-Lankišiai, Obeliai bur. 125, bur. 48–56 (2), 60, 73, and 78–82 (2) in barrows, at the pyre site (2), and in the lake (13), Paalksniai (6), Pakalniškiai (Šakiai District) (5), Pakritižis (3), Raguva (2), Ruseiniai crem. bur. 39, Salaspils, Seredžius, Šeimyniškėliai castle mound, Šulaičiai bur. 30 (2), Uplanti bur. 43 (2), Vilnius, the Grand-Ducal Palace (2002 research, area 5, no. M 1154). The discovery location of one brooch is unknown (LNM AR 384:1142).

⁷ Sub-type 3 brooches have been found in the vicinity of Kernavė, in Marvelė crem. bur. 416, Masteikiai, the Obeliai pyre site, Paalksniai, Pakalniškiai (Šakiai District), Pavilkijys, Pavirvytė bur. 111, and Višpilis.

⁸ Sub-type 4 brooches have been found at Kulautuva, Paalksniai (2), Pakalniškiai (Šakiai District) 2, Raguva 2, Ruseiniai crem. bur. 69, and Višpilis.

brooches are visible on the rim of *sub-type 5 brooches* (Fig. 6). Unfortunately, the compositional details of these brooches are not very well executed, therefore it is impossible to establish what they wish to portray. This is probably a cheap imitation of several symbols. The rims of such brooches are somewhat convex. Of all the low-relief ring brooches, these are the smallest, ranging from 2.6 cm to 2.8 cm in diameter. 10 brooches from 7 localities are ascribed to this sub-type 5.⁹

Sub-type 6 brooches (Fig. 7) differ from the other low-relief ring brooches in that their rim is decorated with only transverse diamonds and no clearly portrayed symbol is visible on them. The rims of these brooches are convex like those of sub-type 1 and sub-type 2 brooches. We know of only 4 such brooches from 4 localities.¹⁰

Individual brooches (Fig. 8). Among the low-relief ring brooches, we know of four¹¹ dissimilar ones with fairly clear elements, which differ from the six classified sub-types. A chaotically composed band of transverse dashes and amorphous bumps is visible in one brooch (Fig. 8:1), eleven eyes are visible in a second (Fig. 8:2), and a composition of four round protuberances, four transverse double ridges, and eight indistinct raised symbols arranged in the spaces between the studs and ridges are visible in the third and fourth (Fig. 8:3–4).

The meaning of the symbols. In Christian symbolism the grapevine is a sacred plant and has many meanings. The most common meaning can be considered the equation of Christ to a grapevine, which is based on the words of St John's Gospel: 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. ... I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing' (Jn 15:1–5). Thus Christ says that He is like a true grapevine, the vital stem of which supports the faithful just like a grapevine its branches, which means: only one who draws upon His power can bear real fruit.¹²

⁹ Sub-type 5 brooches have been found at Bečiai bur. 75, Bubiai, Girdiškis, Kernavė, Lake Obeliai, Paalksniai (2), and Pakalniškiai (Šakiai District) (2).

¹⁰ Sub-type 6 brooches have been found at Marvelė, Masteikiai, Sargėnai crem. bur. 378, and Šilelis bur. 30.

¹¹ Individual low-relief ring brooches have been found in the vicinity of Mažeikiai, Obeliai crem. bur. 2, barrow burial 90, and at Paalksniai.

¹² D. Forstner, *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej* (Warsaw, 1990), pp. 180–183; G. Ferguson, *Signs and symbols in Christian art* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 39–40; U. Becker, *Simbolių žodynas* (Vilnius, 1995), p. 307; [transl. from English - *The Continuum of Encyclopedia of Symbols* (London, 1994)]; *Krikščioniškosios ikonografijos žodynas*, comp. Dalia Ramonienė (Vilnius, 1997), p. 320.

The most common bird in Christian symbolism and the most important of all the birds mentioned in the Bible is the dove. This bird is also suitable for sacrifices. The dove symbolises the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Ghost. The dove can also symbolise a baptised Christian. The seven doves around the images of Christ or Mary and the Christ child, which are frequently encountered in the stained-glass windows of Gothic cathedrals, symbolise the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost according to the prophesy of Isaiah (Is 11: 1–2): *Sapientia* (wisdom), *Intellectus* (understanding), *Concilium* (counsel), *Fortitudo* (might), *Sciencia* (knowledge), *Pietas* (piety), and *Timor* (fear of the Lord).¹³

A crown of thorns was one of the means of Christ's torture and symbolises His suffering and mockery. The symbol of a crown of thorns was especially common beginning in the fourteenth century when the cult of the crown of thorns, as a holy relic, was given great prominence.¹⁴

Chronological analysis Attempts have been made by scholars to guess the chronology of these brooches. In the captions for the first published photographs it was noted that these brooches date to the eleventh – twelfth centuries or the eleventh – thirteenth centuries.¹⁵ A year later the chronology of the same brooches was defined as twelfth – thirteenth centuries¹⁶. Even later their chronology was extended and moved to the thirteenth – fifteenth centuries.¹⁷ The chronology of the most abundant collection of these brooches from Obeliai is also defined as thirteenth – fifteenth century¹⁸ while those from Barinė cemetery are dated back to the fourteenth century.¹⁹

The chronology of these brooches has not been investigated separately in Latvian archaeological material. The material from the

¹³ Forstner, *Świat symboliki*, pp. 228–232; Ferguson, *Signs and symbols*, pp. 15–16; Becker, *Simbolių žodynas*, pp. 33–34; *Krikščioniškosios ikonografijos žodynas*, p. 44.

¹⁴ Forstner, *Świat symboliki*, p. 213; Ferguson, *Signs and symbols*, p. 38; *Krikščioniškosios ikonografijos žodynas*, pp. 74, 106.

¹⁵ R. Kulikauskienė, R. Rimantienė, *Lietuvių liaudies menas. Senovės lietuvių papuošalai* (Vilnius, 1958), kn. 1, ill. 589–592.

¹⁶ I. Sadauskaitė, 'XII–XIII amžių pirklio kapas Sargėnuose', *Lietuvos TSR Mokslų Akademijos darbai, Serija A*, 2(7) (1959), p. 66.

¹⁷ R. Kulikauskienė, R. Rimantienė, *Lietuvių liaudies menas. Senovės lietuvių papuošalai* (Vilnius, 1966), kn. 2, ill. 264.

¹⁸ V. Urbanavičius, S. Urbanavičienė, 'Archeologiniai tyrimai', pp. 19–61.

¹⁹ A. Petruilienė, 'Barinės senkapis', *LA*, 11 (1995), p. 51.

published cemeteries, where low-relief ring brooches have been found, is broadly dated: those from the Lejasdopėlių barrow second – thirteenth century²⁰ and from Uplanti cemetery thirteenth – fourteenth century.²¹

Low-relief ring brooches have been found in 10 late fourteenth – fifteenth-century inhumation burials,²² 18 fourteenth-century sacrificial pits and cremation burials,²³ and 3 fourteenth-century Livonian inhumation burials.²⁴

Three sub-type 1, four sub-type 2 (two were in one burial), one each of sub-type 5 and 6, and 2 unclassified low-relief ring brooches have been found in inhumation burials from the late fourteenth – fifteenth century.²⁵ The correlation cluster of this group (Fig. 9) consists of over 70 finds.²⁶ These correlation data are fairly diverse.

²⁰ E. Šnore, 'Lejasdopėlių kapulauks senajā Sēlijā', *Archeologija un etnogrāfija*, 19 (1997), p. 81.

²¹ Z. Apala, 'Drabešu Uplandu kapsēta' *Archeologija un etnogrāfija*, 15 (1987), p. 107.

²² Low-relief ring brooches have been found in inhumation burials from the late fourteenth - fifteenth century: in Alytus bur. 104, Bečiai bur. 75, Obeliai bur. 125 and 149, Paalksniai bur. 27, Radikiai bur. 46, Rumšiškės bur. 152, Ruseiniai bur. 36, Šilelis bur. 93, and Šulaičiai bur. 30.

²³ Low-relief ring brooches have been found in fourteenth-century sacrificial pits and cremation burials: Barinė bur. 21–25, Marvelė bur. 416, 671, 707, Obeliai bur. 2, Pavirvytė bur. 111, Pernarava bur. IX, Ruseiniai bur. 1, 2, 39, 53, 57, 69, and Sargėnai bur. 378.

²⁴ Low-relief ring brooches have been found in fourteenth-century Livonian inhumation burials: in Lejasdopėlių bur. 9, 10 in barrow II and Uplanti bur. 43.

²⁵ Low-relief ring brooches have been found in late fourteenth – fifteenth century inhumation burials: sub-type 1 in Paalksniai bur. 27, Radikiai bur. 46, and Ruseiniai bur. 36; sub-type 2 in Alytus bur. 104 (the brooch's surface is eroded but elements characteristic of sub-type 2 brooches are visible on it), Obeliai bur. 125, and Šulaičiai bur. 30 (2); sub-type 5 in Bečiai bur. 75; sub-type 6 in Šilelis bur. 93; unclassified in Obeliai bur. 149 and Rumšiškės bur. 152.

²⁶ The correlation cluster for low-relief ring brooches in late fourteenth-fifteenth-century inhumation burials comprises: an indeterminate coin (Radikiai bur. 46); ring earrings (Alytus bur. 104 (2), Radikiai bur. 46); a necklace (2 pendants, one tin, the other round sheet metal, 5 bells, and 10 glass beads in Obeliai bur. 149); a lily-shaped type IV pendant (Bečiai bur. 75); a glass bead (Bečiai bur. 75); individual bells (Obeliai bur. 125, 149, Paalksniai bur. 27 (3), Radikiai bur. 46, Šilelis bur. 93); sheet metal type II brooches (Bečiai bur. 75 (2), Obeliai bur. 149 (4), Paalksniai bur. 27, Šulaičiai bur. 30 (2)); an omega brooch with unicorn terminals (Paalksniai bur. 27); an omega brooch with pomegranate terminals (Šulaičiai bur. 30); an omega brooch with square terminals (Rumšiškės bur. 152); an omega brooch without terminals (Radikiai bur. 46); a bracelet (Šulaičiai bur. 30); rings (Alytus bur. 104 (7), Obeliai bur. 125, Paalksniai bur. 27 (5), Rumšiškės bur. 152, Ruseiniai bur. 36,

A chronological analysis of the separate finds comprising the largest part of this cluster showed that low-relief ring brooches were only used after the 1387 baptism of the GDL until the fourth quarter of the fifteenth century.²⁷ The cluster consists of finds, which are abundantly found in late-fourteenth-fifteenth-century burials, i.e. earrings, type II sheet metal brooches, and certain types of rings. Many rare and solitary late-fourteenth-fifteenth-century finds also correlate with brooches of this type. In addition, this group's cluster contains solitary omega brooches and other finds, which correlate with the low-relief ring brooches in the earlier cluster of fourteenth-century sacrificial pits and cremation burials.

Seven sub-type 1, four sub-type 2, two sub-type 3, one each of sub-types 4, 6, and an individual brooch, as well as five unclassified low-relief ring brooches have been found in fourteenth-century sacrificial pits and cremation burials.²⁸ We created a correlation cluster for this group from 12 sacrificial pits and cremation burials (Fig. 10–11).²⁹ After carefully examining where they were discovered exactly, it is

and Šulaičiai bur. 30); an amulet (Paalksniai bur. 27); symbolic keys (Obeliai bur. 149 and Paalksniai bur. 27); a spindle (Alytus bur. 104); a leather belt with 7 sheet-metal decorations (Alytus bur. 104); the remains of a small leather pouch with a horizontal loop fitting (Rumšiškės bur. 152); sheet metal decorations (Bečiai bur. 75 (2), Šilelis bur. 93); button-shaped beads (Alytus bur. 104, Obeliai bur. 125, and Radikiai bur. 46); a pin (Alytus bur. 104); tanged knives (Obeliai bur. 125, 149, Paalksniai bur. 27, and Šulaičiai bur. 30); knives with wooden handles (Alytus bur. 104, Radikiai bur. 46, and Ruseiniai bur. 36); knife fragments (Šilelis bur. 93); an awl? (Bečiai bur. 75); an axe (Rumšiškės bur. 152); and pots (Bečiai bur. 75 and Šilelis bur. 93).

²⁷ A chronological analysis of late fourteenth-fifteenth-century finds with Christian symbols is given in: E. Svetikas, *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės christianizacija XIV a. pabaigoje – XV a.: archeologiniai radiniai su krikščioniškais simboliais* (in press).

²⁸ Sub-types of low-relief ring brooches in fourteenth-century sacrificial pits and cremation burials: sub-type 1 in Barinė bur. 21, 25, Marvelė bur. 671, 707, Pavirvytė bur. 111, Ruseiniai bur. 2, 53, Sargėnai bur. 378; sub-type 2 in Barinė bur. 22, 23, 24, Ruseiniai bur. 39; sub-type 3 in Marvelė crem. bur. 416, Pavirvytė bur. 111; sub-type 4 in Ruseiniai bur. 69; sub-type 6 in Sargėnai bur. 378; individual in Obeliai bur. 2; and unclassified in Pernarava bur. IX, Ruseiniai bur. 1 (2), 57, and Sargėnai bur. 378.

One brooch each of sub-types 1 and 3 were found in Pavirvytė bur. 111 and one brooch each of sub-type 1 and 6 as well as an unclassified brooch in Sargėnai bur. 378. The unclassified Pernarava burial IX brooch could be sub-type 3.

²⁹ The correlation cluster for low-relief ring brooches in fourteenth-century sacrificial pits and cremation burials consists of: various types of neck rings and fragments of them (Marvelė bur. 671, 707, Sargėnai bur. 378 (?); beads (Barinė bur. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25; 1 amber and glass bead in Marvelė bur. 707); large and small

possible to think that the finds from these sacrificial pits and cremation burials comprise a contemporaneous set. The 6 so-called cremation burials with low-relief ring brooches recorded in Ruseiniai cemetery raise doubts concerning their reliability, therefore we did not include these finds in this cluster. It is difficult to state the total number of finds comprising this cluster since not only whole finds but also an abundance of various fragments of finds that were broken or melted in a fire were found in these sacrificial pits and cremation burials. It is roughly possible to examine the approximately 500 finds comprising this cluster. The largest set consists of approximately 220 finds from the so-called Sargėnai 'craftsman's' hoard,³⁰ which was later listed

coil beads (Barinė bur. 25, Marvelė bur. 416, 671, 707, Pernarava bur. IX, Sargėnai bur. 378 (2)); bells (Barinė bur. 21, 24, Marvelė bur. 416, Sargėnai bur. 378 (7)); brooches with hoof-shaped terminals (Barinė bur. 24, 25, Marvelė bur. 707, Pavirvytė bur. 111 (2), Sargėnai bur. 378 (6)); omega brooches with loop terminals (Marvelė bur. 707 (8), Pavirvytė bur. 111 (2), Sargėnai bur. 378 (4)); omega brooches with unicorn terminals (Pavirvytė bur. 111, Sargėnai bur. 378 (3)); omega brooches with pomegranate terminals (Barinė bur. 24 (8), Marvelė bur. 671, 707 (3), Obeliai bur. 2, Pernarava bur. IX (2), Sargėnai bur. 378 (19)); omega brooches with square terminals (Barinė bur. 24, Marvelė bur. 671 (2), Pavirvytė bur. 111 (2), Sargėnai bur. 378 (4)); omega brooch fragments (Barinė bur. 24, Marvelė bur. 671, 707); crossbow ladder brooches (Sargėnai bur. 378 (4)); a so-called flat brooch with zoomorphic terminals (Sargėnai bur. 378); various types of ring brooches (Sargėnai bur. 378 (4)); pins (Pavirvytė bur. 111 (2), Sargėnai bur. 378 (3)); various types of bracelets and fragments of them (Barinė bur. 25, Marvelė bur. 671, 707, Sargėnai bur. 378 (33)); rings (Barinė bur. 24 (4), 25, Marvelė bur. 671 (4), 707 (?), Obeliai bur. 2, Pavirvytė bur. 111 (2), Sargėnai bur. 378 (11?)); a small cross (Barinė bur. 24); a bird-shaped pendant (Pavirvytė bur. 111); omega pendants (Barinė bur. 24, Marvelė bur. 671, 707, Pernarava bur. IX); a so-called maple leaf-shaped pendant (Pavirvytė bur. 111); spindles (Barinė bur. 24 (2), Marvelė bur. 671, 707 (3)); a sword with a scabbard fitting (Pavirvytė bur. 111); a sword pommel (Sargėnai bur. 378) and cross-guards (Marvelė bur. 707 (2), Pernarava bur. IX); spearheads (Marvelė bur. 671 (2), 707, Obeliai bur. 2, Pavirvytė bur. 111); tanged knives (Barinė bur. 24, Marvelė bur. 671 (4), 707 (3), Obeliai bur. 2, Pavirvytė bur. 111, Pernarava bur. IX); a hook knife (Pavirvytė bur. 111); a flint striker (Obeliai bur. 2); buckles and loops (Pavirvytė bur. 111, Sargėnai bur. 378 (5)); sheet metal mane decorations with coiled terminals (Marvelė bur. 671, 707, Sargėnai bur. 378 (20)); bells (Marvelė bur. 671, 707, Sargėnai bur. 378 (4)); chains (Marvelė bur. 416, 671, 707, Pavirvytė bur. 111); harness rings (Marvelė bur. 671, 707); awls (Marvelė bur. 707, Obeliai bur. 2, Pavirvytė bur. 111); sheet metal decorations and fittings (Marvelė bur. 416, 671, 707, Pavirvytė bur. 111); a weight (Barinė bur. 23); a razor (Barinė bur. 23); fragments of various artefacts (Barinė bur. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, Marvelė bur. 671, 707, Pernarava bur. IX, Sargėnai bur. 378); and pots and shards (Barinė bur. 21, 25, Marvelė bur. 671, Sargėnai bur. 378).

³⁰ J. Puzinas, 'Sargėnai Kaune, Vytauto Didžiojo Kultūros muziejaus 1939 ir 1940 m. archeologinių kasinėjimų ataskaita (kapai Nr. 59–245)', Ms: LII, f. 1, b. 927, l. 25.

as cremation burial 378.³¹ After approximately 60 finds were found in Marvelė burials 671 and 707,³² which are described as group cremation burials.³³ Around 50 finds were found in Barinė burial 24.³⁴ From 7 to 22 finds or fragments of them were found in another 8 sacrificial pits and cremation burials.³⁵ The composition of this cluster is marked by a conflicting diversity since it includes not only a great many different ornaments but also weapons and pieces of riding gear. Of all the finds comprising this cluster, all the types of omega brooches, some of the types of rings, and several other things correlate with finds from the late-fourteenth – fifteenth century. The chronology of the majority of the finds comprising this cluster is defined very broadly from the tenth – thirteenth centuries. The finds of Sargėnai burial 378 or the ‘craftsman’s’ hoard have been studied in most detail. The chronology of the neckrings, coil beads, various types of brooches, pins, bracelets, coil rings, and other finds in this set are defined as dating from the tenth – eleventh, eleventh – twelfth, and twelfth – thirteenth centuries.³⁶ The chronology of the sword and scabbard tip found in Pavirvytė burial 111 are also touched upon. These finds are dated to the late tenth – eleventh centuries.³⁷

³¹ Sadauskaitė, ‘XII–XIII amžių pirklio kapas Sargėnuose’, p. 57.

³² A. Astrauskas, M. Bertašius, ‘Marvelės kapinyno 1994 m. tyrinėjimo ataskaita. I ir III dalis’, Ms.: LII, f. 1, b. 2413, 2415.

³³ M. Bertašius, *Vidurio Lietuva VIII–XII a.* (Kaunas, 2002), ill. 28.

³⁴ Petrulienė, ‘Barinės senkapis’, p. 63.

³⁵ From 7 to 22 artefacts have been found in fourteenth-century sacrificial pits and cremation burials: 10 in Barinė bur. 21; 13 in Barinė bur. 22; 7 in Barinė bur. 23; 19 in Barinė bur. 25, ?? in Marvelė bur. 416, 8 in Obeliai bur. 2, 22 in Pavirvytė bur. 111, and 12 in Pernarava bur. IX.

³⁶ Sadauskaitė, ‘XII–XIII amžių pirklio kapas Sargėnuose’, pp. 57–75.

³⁷ V. Kazakevičius, *IX–XIII a. baltų kalavijai* (Vilnius, 1996), p. 71, ill. 81, 84; idem, ‘Iš vėlyvojo geležies amžiaus baltų ginklų istorijos (kalavijų makštų galų apkalai)’, *LA* (1998), t. 15, pp. 290–292, ill. 4:4. The sword in Pavirvytė burial 111 was found with a scabbard tip. This is clearly seen in the burial drawing. But no scabbard tip was described in the burial description and list of finds from the 1981 excavation report (A. Chodolinskienė, ‘Pavirvytės–Gudų, Akmenės raj., Viekšnių apyl., tyrinėjimai 1981 m.’, Ms.: LII, f. 1, b. 1722). No chance find of a scabbard tip is described in any list of finds from the 1977–1979 excavation of Pavirvytė cemetery. V. Kazakevičius investigated swords and their scabbard tips in separate works. When he investigated the sword from Pavirvytė burial 111, he also published the burial drawing, in which it is clearly seen that the sword was together with a scabbard tip (Kazakevičius, *IX–XIII a. baltų kalavijai*, ill. 84). Unfortunately, this fact remained unnoticed and therefore the Pavirvytė scabbard tip was investigated in another work as a chance find (Kazakevičius, ‘Iš vėlyvojo geležies amžiaus baltų

This chronology of the separate sets and the finds comprising them is clearly not reliable and reveals the most fundamental problem of tenth-fourteenth-, century Lithuanian archaeology, i.e. the lack of a chronological analysis of the finds from this period. We very seldom find works devoted to a chronological analysis of finds from the tenth – fourteenth centuries in the historiography of the archaeology of Lithuania and its neighbours. Obsolescent works of a generalising descriptive nature, which contain no such analysis and instead only include speculated dates, are usually used in defining the chronology of one find or another. Thus, if we acknowledge such a chronology for finds correlating with the low-relief ring brooches in sacrificial pits and cremation burials, it would emerge that they were produced and worn over 500 years ago. But the correlation of brooches of this type with finds from inhumation burials from the late fourteenth-fifteenth century conflicts with such a broad chronology. On the basis of these data we can look for the beginning of the production of low-relief ring brooches only in the immediate period, i.e. the fourteenth century. The results of a radiocarbon analysis of Obeliai burial 2, which also included, together with other finds, a low-relief ring brooch, also direct us to this period. Wood samples, an analysis of which showed a calibrated calendar period of AD 1383–1489, were taken from this sacrificial pit.³⁸

Two sub-type 1 and six sub-type 2 low-relief ring brooches were found in fourteenth-century Livonian inhumation burials.³⁹ The cluster for this group consists of over 60 finds (Fig. 12).⁴⁰ Many of

ginklų istorijos', pp. 290–291, ill. 4:4). It is evident that the artist precisely recorded the sword with a scabbard tip in the burial drawing during the excavations. It is not clear whether the burial was described in situ or from the burial drawing that was made. The burial was probably described from the drawing since the description is missing details, which are only recorded in situ. It was precisely because of this that the scabbard tip on the sword, which could have been separated from it in collecting the finds, remained unnoticed and was later lost among other finds.

³⁸ Urbanavičius, Urbanavičienė, 'Archeologiniai tyrimai', p. 19; J. Mažeika, R. Petrošius, 'Archeologinių radinių radioanglies amžius', *LA*, 15 (1998), p. 479, Vs 545.

³⁹ Sub-types of low-relief ring brooches in fourteenth-century Livonian inhumation burials: sub-type 1 in Lejasdopėlių bur. 9 in barrow II (2); sub-type 2 in Lejasdopėlių bur. 9 (3) and 10 in barrow II, and Uplanti bur. 43 (2). Two sub-type 1 and three sub-type 2 low-relief ring brooches were found in Lejasdopėlių bur. 9 in barrow II.

⁴⁰ The correlation cluster for the low-relief ring brooches in fourteenth-century Livonian inhumation burials consists of: circlets (Lejasdopėlių bur. 9, 10 in barrow II, Uplanti bur. 43); neck rings (Lejasdopėlių bur. 9, 10 (2) in barrow II); necklaces

the various finds even more broadly extend the correlation data found for such brooches. It is possible to define the chronology of type I sheet metal and omega brooches, star brooches with sixteen rays, so-called zoomorphic and sheet metal pendants and some types of rings as fourteenth century. Meanwhile, the correlation of circlets and neck rings with low-relief ring brooches is just as unexpected as a large part of the finds, which correlate with brooches of this type in fourteenth-century GDL sacrificial pits and cremation burials. Unfortunately, the chronology of tenth-fourteenth-century Livonian archaeological material is also based on speculation rather than an analysis although their finds in thirteenth-fourteenth-century burials are found together with contemporaneous coins.

In summarising the chronological analysis of low-relief ring brooches we can make the following comments: 1) their correlation with finds from late-fourteenth-fifteenth-century inhumation burials shows that such brooches were produced and used intensively in the second half of the fourteenth century – first half of the fifteenth century; and 2) the abundant correlation data for this type of brooch from GDL sacrificial pits and cremation burials and Livonian inhumation burials shows a different chronology for the finds, which correlate with them, than has been believed up until now.

The owners of low-relief ring brooches and the circumstances of their discovery We do not have a great deal of information about who were the owners of low-relief ring brooches since they

(Lejasdopeli bur. 9, 10 in barrow II, Uplanti bur. 43); various pendants (Lejasdopeli bur. 9 in barrow II, Uplanti bur. 43); bells (Lejasdopeli bur. 9 in barrow II); type I sheet metal brooches (Lejasdopeli bur. 9 (2) in barrow II); an omega brooch with loop terminals (Lejasdopeli bur. 10 in barrow II); omega brooches with square and knob-shaped terminals (Lejasdopeli bur. 9 in barrow II, Uplanti bur. 43); star brooches with sixteen rays (Lejasdopeli bur. 9 in barrow II); various bracelets (4 each in Lejasdopeli bur. 9, 10 in barrow II, Uplanti bur. 43); various rings (Lejasdopeli bur. 9 (11), 10 (6) in barrow II, Uplanti bur. 43 (4)); a decorated leather knife sheath (Lejasdopeli bur. 9 in barrow II); a spindle (Lejasdopeli bur. 10 in barrow II); an awl (Lejasdopeli bur. 9, 10 in barrow II); a hook knife or sickle (Lejasdopeli bur. 10 in barrow II); and a knife fragment (Lejasdopeli bur. 10 in barrow II).

Data taken from: Lejasdopeli bur. 9 in barrow II – E. Šnore, 'Lejasdopeli kapulauks senajā Sēlijā', Fig. 2:1–14, pp. 67–68 (burial description); Lejasdopeli burial 10 in barrow II – A. Ia. Stubavs, 'Arkheologija v Sovetskoj Latvii', *Sovetskaja arkeologija*, 4 (1967), pp. 103–122, Fig. 10:1–13; E. Šnore, 'Lejasdopeli kapulauks senajā Sēlijā', Fig. 3:1–13, p. 68 (burial description); Uplanti bur. 43 – Z. Apala, 'Drabešu Uplandu kapsēta', p. 98, Fig. 9 (burial photograph), Fig. 10 (burial inventory).

have only been found in 10 late fourteenth-fifteenth-century GDL inhumation burials and 3 fourteenth-century Livonian inhumation burials. It is seen from this information that 1 man,⁴¹ 10 women,⁴² and 2 children⁴³ were buried with such brooches. Brooches of this type have been found in various locations in the grave: near the skull, in the neck area, near the right collarbone, under the left shoulder, in the chest area, near the left elbow, and even to the left of the waist.⁴⁴ This shows that they were not used as utilitarian parts of clothing.

The main location for the discovery of this type of brooch is sacrificial pits and so-called cremation burials. These can be divided into several groups.

To the first group we assigned two burials, which are similar to the pits of inhumation burials due to the long form of the pits. In both burials the grave goods were placed in two separate groups. In Pavirvytė burial 111, one group of finds was heaped into a pile but some of the other group of finds were arranged in imitation of the placement of grave goods in a real inhumation burial: a spearhead was placed at the head, a sword at the side, and two big omega brooches with square terminals in the upper part of the chest. It is interesting that no burnt bones from a buried individual were noted in this burial. In addition, all the finds from this burial are intact and untouched by fire although it is noted in the excavation report that

⁴¹ A low-relief ring brooch was found in Rumšiškės male burial 152.

⁴² Low-relief ring brooches have been found in female burials. In the GDL: a 20–25 year old in Alytus bur. 104; a 55+ year old in Ruseiniai bur. 36; and indefinite aged females in Bečiai bur. 75, Obeliai bur. 149, Paalksniai bur. 27, Radikiai bur. 46, Šilelis bur. 93, and Šulaičiai bur. 30. In Livonia: a 20 year old in Lejasdopeļi bur. 9 in barrow II; and a 21–35 year old in Uplanti bur. 43.

⁴³ Low-relief ring brooches have been found in children's burials. In the GDL: a 2.5–3 year old in Obeliai bur. 125. In Livonia: an approximately 10 year old in Lejasdopeļi bur. 10 in barrow II.

⁴⁴ The circumstances of the discovery of low-relief ring brooches in inhumation burials: near the skull – Šilelis bur. 93; in the area of the neck – Obeliai bur. 149 (see: Fig. 124:4); near the right collarbone – Ruseiniai bur. 36, Uplanti bur. 43; under the left shoulder in removing the skeleton – Obeliai bur. 125; in the area of the chest – Paalksniai bur. 27, Rumšiškės bur. 152, Šulaičiai bur. 30 (one brooch on the right, the other on the left); near the left elbow – Radikiai bur. 46; to the left of the waist near a pile of other grave goods – Alytus bur. 104. Location not established: Bečiai bur. 75, Lejasdopeļi bur. 10 in barrow II. In Lejasdopeļi bur. 9 in barrow II, five low-relief ring brooches together with two type I sheet metal and a star brooch with sixteen rays were attached on one side of a wool kerchief and on the other side, an omega brooch with polygonal terminals.

‘a pile of burnt artefacts’ was found, which consisted of 2 low-relief ring brooches, 2 brooches with hoof-shaped terminals (Fig. 10:16), an omega brooch with unicorn terminals (Fig. 10:22), a ring with a flattened top (Fig. 10:33), a chain with a pendant (Fig. 10:4), a maple-seed-shaped pendant, and a metal pendant.⁴⁵ Thus no reliable data exists that would make it possible to call this pit the grave of a cremated individual. This might be a cenotaph or a sacrificial pit. In the other burial of this group, Pernarava burial IX, at one end of the pit was discovered a 0.35x0.3 m patch of dark ground and a heap of charred wood particles with fragments of a large bronze coil bead and a chain as well as an omega brooch with pomegranate terminals while at the other end of the pit were noted small pieces of coal, several small bones and among them were found a second omega brooch with pomegranate terminals, a low-relief ring brooch, a sword cross-guard, an omega pendant, and a tanged knife⁴⁶. The data from this burial are more reliable than those from Pavirvytė burial 111 but are still too unreliable for this burial to be said to belong a cremated individual according to the several bones, bits of coal, and charred pieces of wood that were noted. We do not have an osteological diagnosis of these bones confirming that they are human remains. They could just as well be the bones of a sacrificed animal.

To the second group we assigned 7 so-called cremation burials in small pits⁴⁷. The contours of these pits were discovered at different depths; therefore their size, form, and volume differ. The size of the smallest pit of this group was 0.3 x 0.5 m, the largest 0.7 x 0.8 m. Their depth ranged from 0.45 m to 0.75 m. Burnt charcoal or small pieces of coal, ashes, and burnt bones were noted in five Barinė burial mounds⁴⁸. In Sargėnai burial 378 small pieces of coal, charred pieces of wood, and several burnt human bones were also observed⁴⁹.

⁴⁵ A. Cholodinskienė, ‘Pavirvytės–Gudų, Akmenės raj., Vieکشnių apyl., tyrinėjimai 1981 m.’.

⁴⁶ K. Rickevičiūtė, ‘Pernaravos kapinyno (Kėdainių raj.) tyrinėjimų ataskaita’, Ms: LII, f. 1, b. 1635.

⁴⁷ So-called cremation burials in small pits: Barinė bur. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, Marvelė bur. 416, and Sargėnai bur. 378.

⁴⁸ Petruilienė, ‘Barinės senkapis’, pp. 62–63.

⁴⁹ 377 graves were opened in Sargėnai during 1938–1941. A small pit with an abundance of finds was discovered in 1939. This pit was described in the excavation report as a craftsman’s hoard. In the first book in a series of the Lithuanian folk art albums which was devoted to ancient Lithuanian ornaments, the publication’s compilers in 1958 gave a description of the ‘craftsman’s cremation burial – hoard’

Two burials of this group are distinguished by an abundance of finds. Around 50 were found in Barinė burial 24 and around 220 in Sargėnai burial 378. It would seem that there is no reason to doubt that we can describe these burials as those of cremated individuals since the pits are small, and coal, pieces of charred wood, and even to some extent human bones have been noted. But it is not clear whether these bones were collected and are still preserved in a museum or the VU anthropology laboratory. It is clear that we do not have the results from an osteological diagnostic analysis for any such burial confirming that this was an actual human cremation. So long as we do not have such data, it is possible to call the so-called cremation burials of the second group both burials and sacrificial pits. One should not forget that the bones noted in the records could be those of sacrificed birds, domestic animals, or wild animals. There is yet another so-called cremation burial recorded in Marvelė cemetery. The ostensible burial of two horses, 56B, was discovered here and, among the bones, so-called cremation burial 416. It is evident that this ostensible horse burial was the place where they were sacrificed since broken skulls, pelvic, and leg bone fragments were found but no skeletons. Small burnt bones were observed among the remains of these bones, in an area appropriately 0.55 m in diameter.⁵⁰ It is not clear to what these bones belonged: a person, bird, or animal. Most likely these are the remains of a sacrificial pit rather than the burial of 2 horses and a cremated individual.

The third group consists of 3 large pits. The diameter of the largest pits, those of Obeliai burial 2 and Marvelė burial 671 were about 7 m (about 14 m²)⁵¹ and 5.5 x 2.2 m (12 m²) respectively while the size of the smallest pit, that of Marvelė burial 707, was 3.4 x 1.9 m (about 6.5 m²).⁵² They reached a depth of from 0.6 m to 1 m. Burnt bone fragments and large pieces of charred wood were also noted in these pits. The two Marvelė pits contained over 60 finds

in the captions to the photographs of this hoard (Kulikauskienė, Rimantienė, *Lietuvių liaudies menas*, 1958, ill. 432, 450–451, 488, 493, 509, 588–589, 591). In 1959 I. Sadauskaitė-Mulevičienė supplied the number, which this hoard – burial had lacked in reports thitherto (Sadauskaitė, ‘XII–XIII amžių pirklio kapas Sargėnuose’, p. 57).

⁵⁰ A. Astrauskas, M. Bertašius, ‘Marvelės kapinyno 1993 m. tyrinėjimo ataskaita. I ir III (radinių piešiniai) dalis’, Ms: LII, f. 1, b. 2213, 2214.

⁵¹ Urbanavičius, Urbanavičienė, ‘Archeologiniai tyrimai’, p. 19, ill. 20:1–8.

⁵² Astrauskas, Bertašius, ‘Marvelės kapinyno 1994 m. tyrinėjimo ataskaita’.

each but the Obeliai pit only 8. Many of the finds in the Marvelė pits were burnt or fused together or only very small pieces of them were found. These Marvelė pits have been described as group cremation burials⁵³ and the Obeliai burial as a cremation burial. The Obeliai sacrificial pit has been dated to a calibrated calendar age of AD 1383–1489.⁵⁴ As in the case of the so-called cremation burials of the second group, we do not have any results of an osteological diagnosis of the bones from these pits. The characterisation of such pits as group or individual cremation burials is in general very questionable. Most likely these pits were used not as graves but for sacrificial rites, which were performed by creating bonfires. During these rites some metal items were thrown into the fire and another part of them were thrown in when the bonfire was dying out.

Six so-called cremation burials with low-relief ring brooches were also recorded in Ruseiniai cemetery but the data from their record raise doubts concerning such a characterisation of them. Two so-called cremation burials were discovered in 1939. One was described as ‘human cremation burial no. I, human inhumation burial no. 1, and disturbed horse burial no. 1’ while the other was described as ‘human cremation burial no. II and disturbed human inhumation burial no. 2’. The pit of the first grave is 3x1.6 m while that of the second 2x1.8 m with a depth of 0.8 and 0.65 m respectively. On the bottom of each of the graves was discovered a disturbed human inhumation burial. In excavating the mounds, charred wood particles, larger pieces of coal, and burnt human and animal bones were noted and individual unburnt human bones, several canine bones, and small bird bones were found. Horse bones were found only on the surface of the mound from the first pit.⁵⁵ During the 1968–1969 excavations at Ruseiniai cemetery 4 so-called cremation burials and low-relief ring brooches were recorded. Two of them are described in exactly the same manner as in 1939: ‘human cremation burial no. 57 and inhumation burial no. 13 (disturbed)’, ‘human inhumation burial no. 23 (disturbed), human cremation burial no. 69 (disturbed), and horse burial no. 31 (disturbed)’.⁵⁶ The composition of the mounds of these

⁵³ Bertašius, *Vidurio Lietuva VIII–XII a.*, ill. 28.

⁵⁴ Urbanavičius, Urbanavičienė, ‘Archeologiniai tyrimai’, p. 19; Mažeika, Petrošius, ‘Archeologinių radinių radioanglies amžius’, p. 479, Vs 545.

⁵⁵ P. Baleniūnas, ‘Ruseiniai, Josvainių vlsč., Kėdainių apskr.’, Ms: LII, f. 1, b. 305.

⁵⁶ Urbanavičius, ‘Ruseinių senkapis, Kėdainių raj., 1968–1969 m. tyrinėjimų ataskaita’, Ms: LII, f. 1, b. 345.

so-called burial pits is similar to that discovered in 1939. There is no doubt that the pits for all four inhumation burials were dug after the 1417 founding of the Medininkai Diocese (*Žemaitija*) when a new Christian cemetery was opened in Ruseiniai in place of the old cemetery. Up until then the remains of cremated individuals and their horses were buried in the old cemetery and sacrificial rites were performed at the pyre sites. All four Christian inhumation burials were discovered disturbed. It is not clear when and why they were redug but they were redug and part of their skeletons and grave goods ended up in the pits' mounds. It is clearly impossible to distinguish in all this mix the remains of any separate horse or cremated human burials. The data from the record of another two so-called cremation burials from Ruseiniai show that low-relief ring brooches could also be found in the small pits of the second group. Thus, the contours of the small 0.3x0.4 m pit of so-called burial 39 were discovered at a depth of 0.3 m and the mound, in which the charred wood particles and fragments of burnt bones were noticed, reached a height of only 0.4 m. The mound of another so-called burial, that of 53, also reached a height of 0.4 m while the contours of the irregular oval shaped pit (0.95 x 0.6 m) discovered at a depth of 0.2 m were over twice as large⁵⁷.

Lakes and pyre sites should be considered the most important places for the discovery of low-relief ring brooches since almost a hundred such brooches and many fragments of them have been found in them. The greatest number of brooches of this type has been found in Lake Obeliai. Here, in the summer of 1983, a spot of black soil mixed with charred wood particles that was about 5 m in diameter and up to 20–25 cm thick was discovered among bulrush roots about 10 m from the shore. In this layer was found an indiscrete mass of burnt bone fragments and various finds. The finds consisted of entire and burnt finds as well as fused fragments. About 2,400 of them were recorded although it is thought that the total number of finds could be over 3,000.⁵⁸ Twenty-five low-relief ring brooches and many small fragments of them were found in Lake Obeliai. These brooches differ in their appearance and condition. Some brooches look brand new with all the details clearly visible in their relief surface. Other brooches have been in the very hot fire of a bonfire, which

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Urbanavičius, Urbanavičienė, 'Archeologiniai tyrimai', pp. 35–36.

deformed them, honeycombed the surface, and made the details of the relief surface barely visible or completely obliterated them. This fact shows that there were two ways of making a sacrifice. One was direct where intact objects were thrown into the water and the other connected with the sacrifice of objects in a fire. According to the authors of the excavation of Obeliai cemetery and lake, 'the objects discovered in the lake could be treated as a sacrifice. Among them were also the bones of cremated people: and not individual fragments but several dozen of kilogrammes. By saying that the finds in the lake are the remains of sacrifices, it is necessary to admit that people were sacrificed at this site.' It was decided to characterise the Lake Obeliai finds, together with the bones found with them, not as a sacrificial site but as a new manner of burial where 'the majority of the cremated individuals nevertheless must have not been buried as sacrifices. A large part of them were dropped into the water'.⁵⁹ This position was gently challenged: 'very quickly, on the basis of a sole, unproven argument about the abundance of cremated human bones in the lake, the hypothesis about the lake's finds as a sacrifice is essentially rejected'.⁶⁰ In later developing the theoretical 'water burial' postulates, the latter comment was examined and new reasoning was presented on the basis of the results of an unpublished osteological diagnosis. It emerged that among the several tens of kilograms of bones from a very small and comparatively thin layer were found completely unburnt, very slightly burnt, or burnt elk, horse, boar, pig, and beaver bones. This was stated by the palaeozoologist V. Danilchenko of the Archaeology Department of the Russian Academy of Sciences on the basis of his research.⁶¹ Unfortunately, the results of his research not only remained unpublished but it is also not clear where the certificate certifying his research has been placed. Usually researchers attach such certificates to their excavation reports. There is no such certificate attached to the Obeliai cemetery and lake excavation report. Evidently, the results of the osteological material were very unfavourable and refuted the sensational 'water burial' theory, making it necessary to conceal the certificate from their

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 45–46.

⁶⁰ G. Zabiela's review of *Lietuvos archeologija*, 6 (1988): *Obelių kapinynas, Lietuvos istorijos metraštis 1989* (Vilnius, 1990), p. 100.

⁶¹ V. Urbanavičius, *Lietuvių pagonybė ir jos reliktai XIII–XVI a.* Unpublished higher doctorate dissertation summary (Vilnius, 1993), p. 12.

critically-inclined colleagues. It has remained unclear to this day whether human bones were found among the bones raised from the lake and whether or not they had been cremated since the certificate for the results of such research is missing and only the data from the inhumation burials in Obeliai cemetery are examined in the works by Lithuanian anthropologists. It is possible to state that the results of palaeozoological research manifestly showed that a sacrificial site rather than a 'water-burial' site existed in Lake Obeliai. We think that in this case even osteological diagnosis results showing cremated human bones, which would only confirm the reports, mentioned in thirteenth- fourteenth-century historical sources, of how Lithuanians used to cremate their enemies during sacrificial rites, would not change anything essentially.

After ten years of excavating Marvelė cemetery, a site similar to that found in Lake Obeliai was discovered. Here, in a small 5 x 3 m area, were collected around 1,500 artefacts or fragments of them and a multitude of burnt bones. Everything had been thrown into a 0.7 m pit. According to the drifts that had formed, it was decided that at some time this location had been under water⁶² but it is thought that 'it has not been proven that this site was submerged when the objects found their way to the site'.⁶³ This site is considered to be a group cremation burial and not connected with any sacrifices.⁶⁴ Eight low-relief ring brooches that had not been touched by fire were found at this Marvelė location. Obviously, the remains of this type of brooch could be found among the fragments of fused finds.

We know of another low-relief ring brooch from Livonian Lake Vilkumuiža.⁶⁵ In this lake, unlike at Lake Obeliai, around 1,300 finds were collected from a fairly large (100 x 15 m) and deep (from 3 to 5 m) area. Perhaps more brooches of this type were also found among the abundance of finds from Lake Vilkumuiža but only one was published and we find no references to any others in literature.

The largest pyre site, which had 15 low-relief ring brooches, was found during 1971–1973 in excavating Pakalniškiai (Šakiai District)

⁶² M. Bertašius, 'Vėlyvojo geležies amžiaus kapai Marvelės kapinyne', *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 1992 ir 1993 metais* (henceforth *ATL*) (Vilnius, 1994), p. 132.

⁶³ Bertašius, *Vidurio Lietuva VIII–XII a.*, p. 88.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁶⁵ E. Šturms, 'Vilkumuižas ezera atradumi', *Senatne un māksla*, 2 (1936), ill. 12:10, pp. 72–85.

cemetery. In it were buried uncremated horses and the remains of cremated people. A pyre site with an actual area of 750 m² in all was discovered and it was established that it had been far bigger but that it had been dug up when sand was being quarried. The pyre site layer was from 0.3 m to 0.75 m thick. This was a layer of black earth mixed with burnt bones, small pieces of coal, ashes, soot, and various finds. In addition, a 0.15–0.2 m thick site of hard-packed clay with an almost square shape was found at the pyre site and an abundant layer of soot and ashes was noted on its surface. This large pyre site is connected with the cremation site. It is thought that the remains of cremated individuals were collected and inhumed in the cemetery beside the pyre site.⁶⁶

The remains of a so-called pyre site for the cremation of individuals were also discovered during 1993–1994 in excavated Masteikiai cemetery. Eight low-relief ring brooches were found at this pyre site. The pyre site layer consisted of soil, which was almost black from small charred wood particles, small burnt bones, various finds, and a fairly large number of stones of various sizes. It was noted that in places the stones created a solid floor or cairn. The pyre site layer was from 0.3 m to 1 m thick.⁶⁷

Similar pyre sites were apparently discovered at Obeliai and Paalksniai cemeteries. However, the Obeliai investigators surmised that they had discovered not a pyre site but an area of disturbed cremation burials⁶⁸. The data from Paalksniai cemetery was similarly characterised⁶⁹. 21 brooches of this type were found in the so-called area of disturbed cremation burials at Obeliai and 25 at Paalksniai.

The low-relief ring brooches were found in various states at the pyre sites. They include intact brooches untouched by fire with all the details very visible on the relief surface but the greater part consist of parts of broken brooches and many have been in a fire.

⁶⁶ J. Antanavičius, 'Pakalniškių kapinyno (Šakių raj.) tyrinėjimai 1971 m.', *Archeologiniai ir etnografiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 1970 ir 1971 metais* (further *AETL*) (Vilnius, 1972), p. 58; idem., 'Pakalniškių (Šakių raj.) senkapio kasinėjimai 1972 ir 1973 m.', *AETL 1972 ir 1973 metais* (Vilnius, 1974), p. 90.

⁶⁷ A. Varnas, 'Masteikių kapinyno 1993 metų tyrimai', *ATL 1992 ir 1993 metais* (Vilnius, 1994), p. 184; idem., 'Masteikių kapinyno (Kauno r.) tyrimai 1994 metais', *ATL 1994 ir 1995 metais* (Vilnius, 1996), p. 140.

⁶⁸ Urbanavičius, Urbanavičienė, 'Archeologiniai tyrimai', p. 20.

⁶⁹ M. Michelbertas, 'Tyrinėjimai Paalksniuose', *ATL 1996 ir 1997 metais* (Vilnius, 1998), pp. 147–149; idem., 'Paalksnių kapinyno kasinėjimai', *ATL 1998 ir 1999 metais* (Vilnius, 2000), pp. 265–267.

Over 40 low-relief ring brooches from almost 25 localities have been found accidentally. In the majority of the localities they were found individually, in others two, three and even twelve at a time⁷⁰. The brooches have been found not only in disturbed cemeteries and castle mounds but also in castles.

Conclusions 1. Data about 187 low-relief ring brooches from 40 localities (map 1) have been collected for classification. The majority of these brooches were found in the territory of the GDL: 176 from 35 localities. Only 11 of them were found in 5 localities in Livonia. According to the symbols portrayed on the rim, the brooches of this type were classified into 6 sub-types and several individual brooches (Fig. 2–8). Over 40 brooches, which had been melted and deformed in a fire, had eroded rim surfaces, or were fragments and which had come from 17 localities, were not classified.

2. A grapevine, seven doves, a crown of thorns, and several other undetermined Christian symbols are portrayed on the rims of the low-relief ring brooches. The majority of the low-relief ring brooches consist of brooches with a symbol of a grapevine or seven doves.

3. In order to define the chronology of low-relief ring brooches, correlation clusters were created for the Lithuanian inhumation burials (Fig. 9, late fourteenth–fifteenth century), Lithuanian sacrificial pits and cremation burials (Fig. 10–11, fourteenth century), and Livonian inhumation burials (Fig. 12, fourteenth century).

The correlation of these brooches with late fourteenth–fifteenth-century inhumation burials showed that they were manufactured and intensively used in the second half of the fourteenth century – first half of the fifteenth century.

4. The abundant correlation data on low-relief ring brooches from GDL sacrificial pits and cremation burials as well as Livonian

⁷⁰ Low-relief ring brooches have been found by chance: 1 each at Asote castle mound, Balčiai, the Braslau castle mound, Bubiai, Girdiškis, the vicinity of Mažeikiai, Nača-Lankišiai, Payžnys, Pakalniškiai (Kaunas District), Piliakalniai village on the castle mound, Rumšiškės, Salaspils, Seredžius, the Šeimyniškeliai castle mound, the Grand-Ducal Palace in Vilnius; 2 each in Grauziai, Kernavė, Kriemala, Kurklintiškiai, Pavilkijys, and the Višpilis castle mound; and 3 in Kulautuva. Five brooches were found in Pakritižis and 7 in Raguva. It has been determined that all of these finds were found in one cemetery, which was assigned for a long time to two localities (V. Steponaitis, 'Archeologijos paminklai', *Raguva*, ed. R. Sarnavičius (Vilnius, 2001), p. 65). In other words, 12 brooches were found in the Pakritižis-Raguva cemetery.

inhumation burials shows that the chronology of the finds correlating with them is different from that which had been believed to exist up until now. The composition of these clusters is distinguished by conflicting diversity since they contain not only a great diversity of ornaments but also of weapons and pieces of riding gear. The chronology of the majority of the finds from the tenth to thirteenth centuries comprising this cluster has been defined very broadly in studies. The low-relief ring brooch clusters show that such a chronology is unreliable and reveals the most fundamental problem of tenth – fifteenth century Lithuanian archaeology: the lack of a chronological analysis of the finds from this period.

5. According to the data from late fourteenth-fifteenth-century GDL inhumation burials and fourteenth-century Livonian inhumation burials, it was established that men, women, and children all owned low-relief ring brooches. Such brooches have been found in various places in the grave: near the skull, in the neck area, near the right collarbone, under the left shoulder, in the chest area, near the left elbow, and even to the left of the waist. This shows that they were not a utilitarian part of dress or apparel.

6. The main discovery location of such brooches is sacrificial pits and so-called cremation burials. Investigators unambiguously assign the burnt bones found in so-called cremation burials to the remains of cremated people but we do not have the results of an osteological diagnostic analysis confirming the actual cremation of a person from even one such ‘burial’. So long as we do not have such data, it is possible to characterise these so-called cremation burials as both burials and sacrificial pits. It is necessary to remember that the bones noted in records could be sacrificed birds, domestic animals, or wild animals.

7. The most important discovery locations for low-relief ring brooches are the Lake Obeliai sacrificial area and pyre sites since almost a hundred such brooches and many fragments of them have been found at them.

At the pyre sites, low-relief ring brooches have been found in various states. These include intact brooches untouched by fire with all the details very clearly visible on the relief surface but the greater part of them consist of parts of broken brooches and many, which have been in a fire.

The Lake Obeliai brooches are also distinguished by their appearance and condition. Some brooches look brand new with all

the details being very clearly visible on their relief surface. Other brooches have been in a very hot fire, which has deformed them, severely pitted their surface, and made the details of the relief surface barely visible or totally obliterated them. This fact shows that there were two sacrificial methods. One is direct where intact objects were thrown into the water and the other connected with the sacrificing of objects in a fire.

8. We do not have any data by which it is possible to establish the place where low-relief ring brooches were manufactured. We know that such brooches were cast in forms, which, judging from the differences in the sizes of the first two sub-types, had to have been fairly numerous. In other words, their manufacture must have been a massive and long-term process. About seventeen times as many such brooches are found in the GDL as in Livonia (disregarding small and burnt fragments). However, their greater numbers are still not evidence that they were manufactured in Lithuania and reached Christian Livonia from here since it would thus be necessary to acknowledge the fact that Christian devotional objects were manufactured in a pagan state. They were probably manufactured in Livonia and intended for Christians in the GDL. These brooches could have been commissioned by the Franciscan friaries in Vilnius or at Livonian Franciscan friaries, where they were distributed among the faithful prior to Lithuania's baptism.

9. Judging from the data from the three correlation clusters (Fig. 9–12), it is possible to state that the cluster of finds from Livonian inhumation burials (Fig. 12) is earlier and the cluster of finds from Lithuanian inhumation burials (Fig. 9) follows later. The finds from both clusters are from a Christian context. The symbols on the low-relief ring brooches are definitely Christian. The cluster of finds from Lithuanian sacrificial pits and so-called cremation burials (Fig. 10–11) is earlier than the cluster of finds from Lithuanian inhumation burials (Fig. 9). A radiocarbon analysis of some sacrificial pits showed an AD 1383–1489 calibrated calendar age. In other words, the chronology of the sacrificial locations of such low-relief ring brooches coincides with the beginning of the Christianisation of Lithuania in the late fourteenth – early fifteenth century but in no way with the end of the old faith we are seeking. Thus this archaeological material does not provide data for a religious confrontation in the late fourteenth century and points to a unique phenomenon from the beginning of the religious conversion: evangelical baptism by fire.

10. Low-relief ring brooches are Christian devotional objects with symbols of a grapevine, seven doves, or a crown of thorns, which were intended for neophytes. Some of them were found at the sacrificial sites in a brand new state while others had been in the great fire of a fire.

Baptism by fire is mentioned in St Luke's Gospel, when describing the activities of John the Baptist: 'I indeed am come to baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.' (Lk 3:16) In the third century, Origen, one of the greatest fathers of Christian Church, commented on this passage as follows:

As John baptised in the Jordan some of those, who had come and who had confessed their vices and sins, but drove others away, saying to them: 'You brood of vipers...', so also will the Lord Jesus Christ use a river of fire (*in igneo flumine*) like a flamethrower (*flammea rompea*) so that all who are to go to Paradise after death but who have not been sufficiently cleansed (*purgatione indiget*), shall go to their promised places after being baptised in this river but those who do not have the mark of first baptism, He shall not baptise in the sea of fire. It is in fact necessary to be baptised first with water and the Spirit so that, after arriving at the river of fire, you can show the vestigial marks that were made by the water and the Spirit so that you are worthy now to receive baptism by fire in Jesus Christ.⁷¹

Illustration Captions

Fig. 1 Locations where low-relief ring brooches have been found: 1 – Alytus, 2 – Asote, 3 – Balčiai, 4 – Barinè, 5 – Bečiai, 6 – Braslau, 7 – Bubiai, 8 – Girdiškis, 9 – Graužiai, 10 – Kernavė, 11 – Kriemala, 12 – Kulautuva, 13 – Kurklintiškiai, 14 – Lejasdopeļi, 15 – Marvelė, 16 – Masteikiai, 17 – Nača-Lankišķiai, 18 – Obeliai, 19 – Paalksniai, 20 – Payžnys, 21 – Pakalniškiai (Kaunas District), 22 – Pakalniškiai (Šakiai District), 23 – Pakritižis (Raguva), 24 – Pavilkijys, 25 – Pavirvytė, 26 – Pernarava, 27 – Piliakalniai, 28 – Radikiai, 29 – Rumšiškės, 30 – Ruseiniai, 31 – Salaspils, 32 – Sargėnai, 33 – Seredžius, 34 – Šeimyniškėliai, 35 – Šilelis, 36 – Šulaičiai, 37 – Uplanti, 38 – Lake Vilkumuiža, 39 – Vilnius, 40 – Vispilis.

⁷¹ J. Le Goff, *Skaistyklos gimimas*, (Vilnius, 2005), p. 75.

Fig. 2 The grapevine symbol on a sub-type 1 low-relief ring brooch from Lake Obeliai (Lithuanian National Museum, Archaeological Repository (LNM AR) 621:1939).

Fig. 3 The seven dove symbol on a sub-type 2 low-relief ring brooch from Lake Obeliai (LNM AR 621:1933–1934).

Fig. 4 The crown of thorns symbol on a sub-type 3 low-relief ring brooch from the Obeliai pyre site (LNM AR 621:1011).

Fig. 5 The crown of thorns (?) symbol on sub-type 4 low-relief ring brooches: 1 – Paalksniai (LNM), 2 – Ruseiniai cremation burial 69 (LNM AR 508:316).

Fig. 6 Sub-type 5 low-relief ring brooches: 1 – Kernavė (Kriveikiškis cemetery), 2 – Lake Obeliai (LNM AR 621:1940).

Fig. 7 A sub-type 6 low-relief ring brooch from Sargėnai cremation burial 378 (VDKM 1590:796).

Fig. 8 Individual low-relief ring brooches: 1 – Obeliai cremation burial 2 (LNM AR 621:153), 2 – Paalksniai (LNM), 3 – Obeliai barrow burial 90 (LNM AR 621:874), 4 – in the vicinity of Mažeikiai (LNM AR 1119).

Fig. 9 The correlation cluster for the low-relief ring brooches in late fourteenth – fifteenth century burials: 1–2 – ring earrings, 3 – a lily-shaped pendant, 4 – a necklace, 5–7 – different sub-types of type II sheet metal brooches, 8–10 – different types of omega brooches, 11 – a bracelet, 12–17 – different types of rings, 18 – button-shaped beads, 19 – a leather pouch fitting, 20 – a leather belt buckle and sheet metal decorations with different symbols, 21 – a spindle, 22 – a tanged knife, 23 – a knife with a wooden handle, 24 – an axe, 25 – a pot, 26 – an amulet, 27 – a symbolic key.

1, 15, 17, 18, 20–21, 23 – Alytus burial 104; 3, 5, 25 – Bečiai burial 75; 4, 6, 27 – Obeliai burial 149; 7–8, 12, 14, 16, 22, 26 – Paalksniai burial 27; 2 – Radikiai burial 46; 10, 19, 24 – Rumšiškės burial 152; 9, 11, 13 – Šulaičiai burial 30.

Fig. 10 The correlation cluster for the low-relief ring brooches in fourteenth century sacrificial pits and cremation burials: 1 – a coil bead, 2 – an omega pendant with chains, 3 – a small cross, 4 – a pendant with chains, 5 – a bird-shaped pendant, 6 – a neckring, 7–8 – pins, 9–10, 12–13 – various types of ring brooches, 11 – a triskeleon-shaped brooch, 14 – a ladder brooch, 15–18 – brooches with hoof-shaped terminals, 19–29 – various types of omega brooches (11–21 – with pomegranate terminals, 22–23 – with unicorn terminals, 24–27 – with square terminals, 28–29 – with rolled terminals), 30–37 – various types of rings, 38–41 – various types of bracelets.

3, 21, 25, 34–35 – Barinė burial 24; 37 – Barinė burial 25; 2, 36 – Marvelė burial 671; 32 – Obeliai burial 2; 4–5, 7, 16, 22, 27, 29, 33 – Pavirvytė burial 111; 1, 6, 8–15, 17–20, 23–24, 26, 28, 30–31, 38–41 – Sargėnai burial 378 (the craftsman's hoard).

Fig. 11 Continuation of the correlation cluster for the low-relief ring brooches in fourteenth century sacrificial pits and cremation burials: 1 – a sword, 2 – a scabbard tip, 3 – a sword pommel, 4 – a sword cross-guard, 5–7 – spearheads, 8–9 – a flint striker, 10 – a weight, 11 – an awl?, 12–13 – spindles, 14 – a hook knife, 15 – a tanged knife, 16 – a razor, 17–20 – buckles, loops, and sheet metal belt decorations, 21–25 – horse mane sheet metal ornaments with coiled terminals, 26 – a bell.

10, 16 – Barinė burial 23; 12 – Barinė burial 24; 5–6, 21–22 – Marvelė burial 671; 4, 13 – Marvelė burial 707; 7–9 – Obeliai burial 2; 1–2, 11, 14–15, 17–18 – Pavirvytė burial 111; 3, 19–20, 23–26 – Sargėnai burial 378 (the craftsman's hoard).

Fig. 12 The correlation cluster for the low-relief ring brooches in fourteenth century Livonian burials: 1–2 – circlets, 3–4 – neckrings, 5–6 – necklaces, 7–10 – pendants, 11 – a star brooch with sixteen rays, 12 – a type I sheet metal brooch, 13–15 – omega brooches, 15 – 21 – bracelets, 22–30 – rings, 31 – spindles, 32 – an awl, 33 – a hook knife or sickle, 34 – a decorated leather knife sheath.

1, 7–8, 11–12, 15, 19, 23, 26–27, 29, 34 – Lejasdopėli burial 9 in barrow II; 3–5, 13, 20–21, 24, 30–33 – Lejasdopėli burial 10 in barrow II; 2, 6, 9–10, 14, 16–18, 22, 25, 28 – Uplanti burial 43.

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LAIDOSENA IR AUKOJIMAS LIETUVOJE XIV A. PAB. – XV A.:
RELIGINĖ KONFRONTACIJA AR SAVITAS ATVERTIMAS –
KRIKŠTIJIMAS UGNIMI?

Santrauka

EUGENIJUS SVETIKAS

Šiame straipsnyje ieškoma 1387 m. Lietuvos krikšto formulės – konfesinės konfrontacijos ar konversijos nuo vadinamosios pagonybės į krikščionybę pėdsakų – archeologinėje medžiagoje. Šiam tikslui įgyvendinti pasirinktas vienas radinių tipas – žiedinės segės reljefinių paviršiumi, nes jų rasta krikščioniškuose XIV a. Livonijos kapuose, griautiniuose XIV a. pabaigos–XV a. kapuose Lietuvoje, aukojimo duobėse, laužavietėse ir Obelių ežere. Lietuvos archeologinėje medžiagoje sunku būtų surasti tinkamesnių radinių XIV a. pabaigos konfesinės konfrontacijos ar konversijos tyrinėjimams negu žiedinės segės reljefinių paviršiumi, nes būtent jos padeda chronologine seka susieti įvairius laidojimo papročius ir apeigas.

Klasifikavimui surinkti duomenys apie 187 žiedines seges reljefinių paviršiumi iš 40 vietovių (žem. 1). Daugiausia šių segių rasta LDK teritorijoje – 176 iš 35 vietovių. Livonijoje jų rasta tik 11 iš 5 vietovių. Pagal lankelyje pavaizduotus simbolius šio tipo segės klasifikuotos į 6 variantus ir kelias pavienes seges (pav. 2–8). Neklasifikuota daugiau negu 40 ugnyje apsilydžiusių ir deformuotų bei nusitrynusių lankelio paviršiumi segių ir jų fragmentų iš 17 vietovių. Šių segių lankeliuose pavaizduoti vynmedžio, septynių balandžių, erškėčių vainiko ir dar keli nenustatyti krikščioniški simboliai. Didžiąją žiedinių segių reljefinių paviršiumi dalį sudaro segės su vynmedžio ir septynių balandžių simboliu. Jų chronologijai apibrėžti sudaryti griautinių XIV a. pabaigos–XV a. kapų (pav. 9), XIV a. aukojimo duobių ir degintinių kapų (pav. 10–11) bei griautinių XIV a. Livonijos kapų (pav. 12) koreliaciniai klasteriai. Šių segių koreliacija su XIV a. pabaigos–XV a. griautinių kapų radiniais parodė, kad jos gamintos ir intensyviai naudotos XIV a. antroje–XV a. pirmoje pusėje.

Gausūs žiedinių segių reljefinių paviršiumi koreliaciniai duomenys iš LDK aukojimo duobių ir degintinių kapų bei Livonijos griautinių kapų parodė kitokią su jomis koreliuojančių radinių chronologiją, nei iki šiol manyta. Šių klasterių sudėtis pasižymi prieštaringa įvairove, nes juose yra ne tik labai daug įvairių papuošalų, bet ir ginklų bei žirgo aprangos detalių. Daugumos radinių sudarančių šį klasterį chronologija literatūroje buvo apibrėžiama labai plačiai – nuo X a. iki XIII a. Žiedinių segių reljefinių paviršiumi klasteriai parodo, kad tokia chronologija nepatikima ir atskleidžia fundamentaliausią X–XIV a. Lietuvos archeologijos problemą – šio laikotarpio radinių chronologinės analizės stoką.

Žiedinės segės reljefinių paviršiumi – tai krikščioniškos devocionalijos, skirtos neofitams. Vienos iš jų aukojimo vietose rastos kaip tik ką pagamintos, o kitos – pabuvusios kaitrioje laužo ugnyje. Jų aukojimo vietų chronologija sutampa su Lietuvos christianizacijos pradžia XIV a. pabaigoje–XV a. pradžioje, bet jokia būdu ne su mūsų ieškomų senųjų tikėjimų pabaiga. Taigi ši archeologinė medžiaga nesuteikia duomenų apie XIV a. pabaigos konfesinę konfrontaciją ir nukreipia į unikalų konfesinės konversijos pradžios reiškinių – evangelinį krikštijimą ugnimi.