

Ancient temple ornaments in Latvia

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It is a little bit curious, that at the end of the Late Bronze Age and the Early or Pre-Roman Iron Age these temple ornaments were the most common metal ornament type in the territory of Latvia, but later periods these ornaments almost disappeared.

The Pre-Roman Iron Age temple ornaments can be divided into three groups. The most wide-spread temple ornaments were plain spiral temple ornaments (first group) and ornaments with a spiral middle part and spoon-shaped ends (second group). The third group consists of ornaments made of thin bronze wire rings with beads and pendants.

The most ancient spiral-plate temple ornaments in the territory of Latvia are known already from the Late Bronze Age. Two spiral-plates have been found at Ļaudonas Midzenīcas in Latvia, and there is a single find from the bank of the River Aiviekste (Fig. 1). One of these has been found together with a sherd of striated pottery. The diameter of the spiral-plate is approximately 30–35 mm; they are made of approximately 1.8 mm thick wire of circular cross-section. The closest analogies are known from stone barrow burials with stone coffins in Estonia: there are 10 finds from 6 places. Valter Lang has published a very characteristic example from Lehmja- Loo cemetery (Lang, 2007,

156, Fig. 89), and this is also the closest place and example for dating archaeological finds from Latvia. Based on the dating of Estonian plain spiral temple ornaments, the finds from Latvia could belong to the Late Bronze Age or the beginning of the Early Pre-Roman Iron Age. These plate-spirals were women's or girls' ornaments. The spread to the East Baltic from the southeast, where they occur earlier found in the culture of the Sosnitski area.

Another kind of spiral-plate has been found at the cemetery of Salaspils Reznēs, in the upper layer of Barrow 2, where there are burials in stone coffins. This spiral-plate is made of thicker wire, approximately 2.5 mm in diameter, of circular cross-section, and has almost two wreaths (Graudonis, 1961, p. 24, 26, I tab:18). The diameter of the whole ornament is approximately 4 cm. Latvian archaeologist Eduards Šturms has dated this ornament to Period VI of the Bronze Age (Šturms, 1936, p. 78, Fig. 6:6). This spiral-plate is probably a temple ornament, because later similar spiral-plate ornaments with several wreaths are widespread in the western part of Latvia and western Lithuania.

Two spiral-plates with fixed tablets of bronze from the hillfort of Ķekavas Kļauģukalns, excavated in 1935 (Šnore, 1936, p. 62, Fig. 7:19), can most likely also

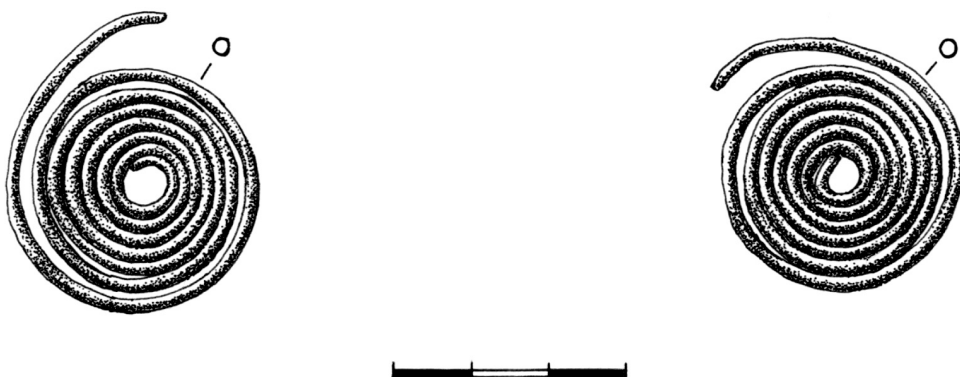


Fig. 1. Plain spiral temple ornaments from Midzenīcas at Ļaudona.

1 pav. Ļvijiniai antsmilkiniai iš Ļaudonos Midzenīcos

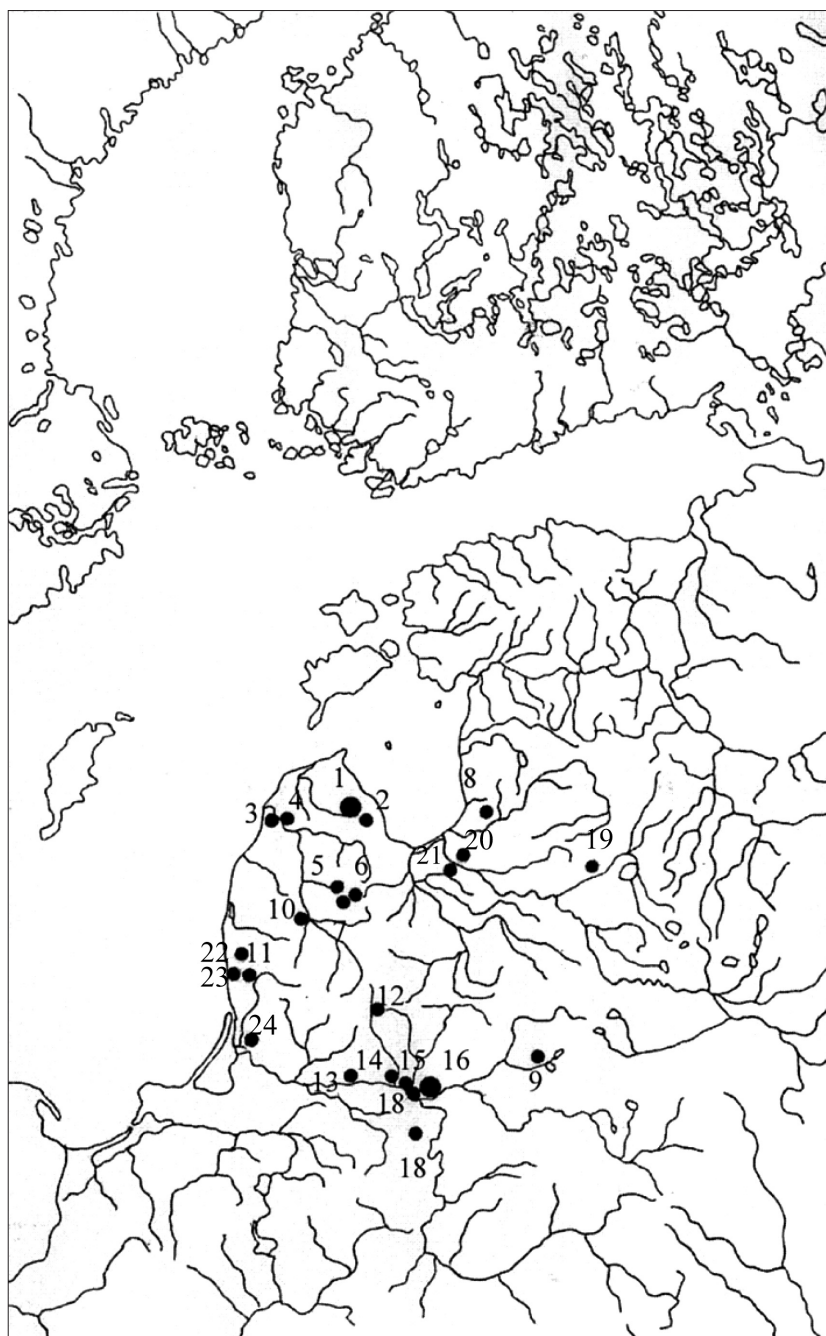


Fig. 2. **Distribution of later spiral plate temple ornaments in the East Baltic:** 1 – Laidzes Lazdiņi, 2 – Strazde, 3 – Vārves Strīķi, 4 – Piltenes Drukēni, 5 – Zvārdes Grīnerti, 6 – Īles mežs, 7 – Rubas Renģe, 8 – Sējas Vīlētāji, 9 – Nemenčinē, 10 – Zastaučiai, 11 – Paragaudis, 12 – Jagminiškė, 13 – Raudonėnai, 14 – Kriemala, 15 – Paštuva, 16 – Veršvai, 17 – Sargėnai, 18 – Pažarstis, 19 – Ļaudonas Midzenīcas, 20 – Salaspils Reznēs, 21 – Doles Klanģukalns, 22 – Kurmaičiai, 23 – Ēģliškiai, 24 – Šilutė
 2 pav. Vēlyviju ģvijiniu ansmilkinu paplitimas Rytu Baltijos kraštuose

be interpreted as temple ornaments. Both ornaments have been found together, approximately at a depth of 60 cm. As temple ornaments were worn in pairs, it is plausible that this find was buried on purpose, i.e. it is a hoard.

Spiral-plates with large, tightly lashed wreaths become a widespread form of temple ornament at the end of the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age and beginning of the Early or Roman Iron Age. There are about 24 finds of spiral-temple ornaments from 5 places known in Latvia

(Fig. 2). Most finds are from the early tarand graves at Laidzes Lazdiņi, where 14 spiral temple ornaments have been found (Шноре, 1970, c.192, Fig. 5:14), and one has been found in an early tarand grave at Strazde (Vasks, 2003, p. 143–145, Fig. 2:3). Two finds are from the cemetery of Zvārdes Grīnerti (Fig. 3) (Skraby, 2007, s. 293, kat. nr 403–404), three ornaments come from cemetery of Rubas Renģes Saulītes kalns (KPM 789a – KPM 789c), three are from a barrow at Piltenes Drukēni (in Ventspils Museum), and one more spiral

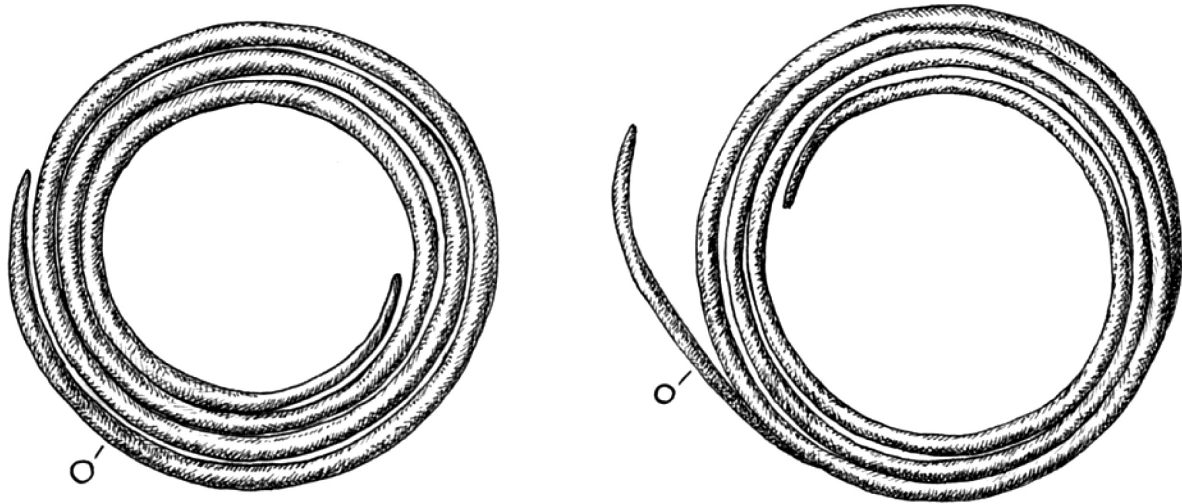


Fig. 3. Plain spiral temple ornaments from Zvārdes Grīnerti.

3 pav. Ļvijiniai antsmilkiniai iš Zvārdes Grīnertu

temple ornament comes from the cemetery of Īles meža kapi, but this last ornament is a degenerated type (Stepiņš, 1974, p. 114, Fig. 4:11, 12). The latest spiral temple ornaments, from the beginning of the Early or Roman Iron Age, are not made so carefully any more, for example finds from the cemeteries of Īles mežs in Latvia and Paragaudis in Lithuania (Michelbertas, 1997, p. 81, Fig. 16:2). These finds also have somewhat thinner wire. There are also possible spiral plates from the cemeteries of Vārves Strīķi (Fig. 4) and Piltenes Druķēni. These finds are badly broken, but I have to admit that the archaeological monuments from which these spiral temple ornaments come are also considerably damaged.

Spiral temple ornaments in Lithuania are known already from the Early Pre-Roman Iron Age. They have been found at the cemeteries of Kurmaičiai (Kulikauskas, 1968, p. 16, Fig. 4) and Ēgliškiai (Grigalavičienė, 1979, p. 20, Fig. 25:4–5, Fig. 28) and at the neighbouring site of Šilutė. Later spiral temple ornaments, dated to the beginning of the Early Iron Age, are known in Lithuania, mostly from flat burials of Central and Western Lithuania. There are approximately 150 ornaments of this type from 11 places in total (Michelbertas, 1986, p. 85–87; Lietuvos, 1978, p. 5–6, map 1).

Some spiral-plate ornaments from Ēgliškiai (Grigalavičienė, 1979, p. 20, Fig. 25:6–9, Fig. 28) and Kurmaičiai have pendants. Only one similar pendant

has been found in Latvia, at the settlement of Seces Pāķi (Bresava, 1966, p. 51, II tab:4). This pendant is a single find from the earlier settlement on the site of the barrow. The director of the excavation has dated it to the 1st millennium BC. Unlike the finds from Lithuania, this find lacks a conical middle part.

Another group consists of temple ornaments which are made of wire with glass beads and pendants. In Latvia this kind of ornament is represented by single finds at the destroyed cemetery of Dreiliņu Gilberti, which contained six burials. Temple ornaments were found near the skull, together with a fragment of a cup-shaped ornament. And this was the only burial with grave goods (Fig. 4).

The temple ornaments at Gilberti were fully preserved. The two temple ornaments are similar. They consist of bronze wire of circular cross-section, threaded onto which is a blue glass bead. The glass beads are 1 cm in diameter. Another, smaller circle of bronze has been placed in this glass bead. This smaller circle has openwork, trapezoidal pendants with a loop at the end. Trapezoidal part of the pendant is shaped as rays with a loop at the end: the first pendant has four, and second has three rays. The blue glass bead from the temple ornament with a pendant of three rays has white “eyes”. Analogies for the pendants from Gilberti are known in Estonian archaeological material. Valter Lang has published pendants from the early tarand gra-

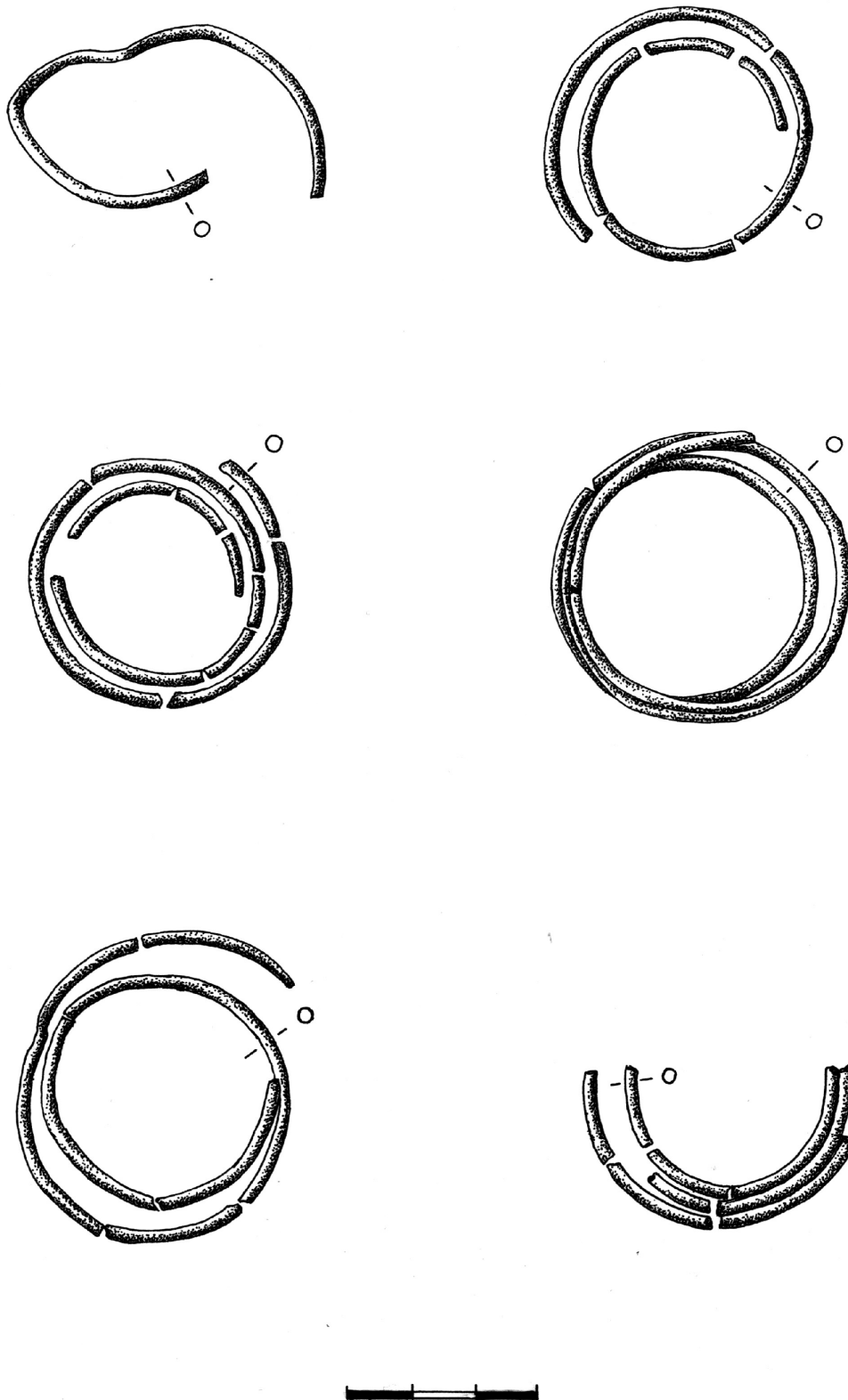


Fig. 4. Fragments of plain spiral ornaments from the barrow at Vārves Strīki.

4 pav. Irvijinių antsmilkinių fragmentai iš Vārves Strīkių pilkapių



Fig. 5. Artifacts from the cemetery at Dreiliņu Gilberti: 1 – fragment of a temple ornament with a spiral middle part and spoon-shaped ends, 2–3 – plain spiral temple ornaments with pendants

5 pav. Dreiliņu Gilbertu kapinyno radiniai: 1 – antsmilkinio šaukšto formas galais, viduryje sujungto įvijine dalimi, fragmentas, 2–3 – įvijiniai antsmilkiniai su kabučiais

ves of Kurevere and Liiva-Putla (Lang, 2007, p. 185, Fig 113:3–4). At the cemetery of Kurevere a pendant with three rays has been found, preserved almost fully, while a pendant with four rays from the cemetery of Liiva-Putla is fragmentary, missing its suspension loop. Lang has dated these pendants to the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age (2nd–1st cent. before Christ). Based on the circumstances of the find, namely that it was found together with a fragment of a cup-ended ornament, the finds from Gilberti can be dated similarly or a little bit earlier. Direct analogies for these pendants outside of the East Baltic region are not known. That is one reason why I would like to conclude that these pendants have local origins. Analysis of the chemical composition has been made of one glass bead, bronze wire and pendant (S8 TIGER – Technological inno-

vation for wavelength dispersive A-ray fluorescence (WDXRF) spectrometry). They showed following composition:

	Glass bead	Larger ring	Pendant
SiO ₂	73.63%	0.03%	
CaO	9.47%	4.91%	7.98%
Na ₂ O	6.56%		
Fe ₂ O ₃	1.57%	0.84%	1.39%
P ₂ O ₅	1.51%	12.42%	16.31%
Al ₂ O ₃	1.46%		
SO ₃	1.14%	1.32%	1.15%
K ₂ O	0.86%	0.44%	0.51%
MgO	0.73%	0.96%	
CuO	0.42%	53.42%	53.03%
Sb ₂ O ₃	0.33%		0.44%
PbO	0.15%	7.30%	3.33%
SrO	0.03%		
SnO ₂		14.01%	12.59%
ZnO		1.98%	
CeO ₂		0.35%	
Cr ₂ O ₃		0.32%	
As ₂ O ₃			1.01%
V ₂ O ₅			0.07%
NiO			0.06%

The fragment of a cup-ended ornament has been found together with glass beads. Eleven temple ornaments with a spiral middle part and spoon-shaped ends have been found at 8 sites (Fig. 6) in Latvia (Ciglis, 2010, p. 55–65). Their distribution area covers the seacoast of the Gulf of Riga and central Latvia near the banks of the River Daugava (Fig. 7). In Estonia approximately 35 items are known, mainly from the western and north-western part. Only one such ornament has been found in Lithuania, at Steponava. A review of the prevalence of these ornaments in the East Baltic has been given by Vello Lõugas (Lõugas, 1991). He dated such ornaments extremely late – the 1st–2nd centuries AD. The new dating by Valter Lang to the first half of the Pre-Roman Iron Age is more believable.

In the academic works written about the earliest history of Latvia there is practically no characterisation of the Earliest or Pre-Roman Iron Age (Latvijas, 2001, p. 145–161). The Earliest Iron Age has been considered along with the Bronze Age, viewing them together as the Early Metal Period, and sites of the Pre-Roman Iron Age have only been touched on from time to time. This kind of overall view is possible with regard to the first half of the Pre-Roman Iron Age, i.e.

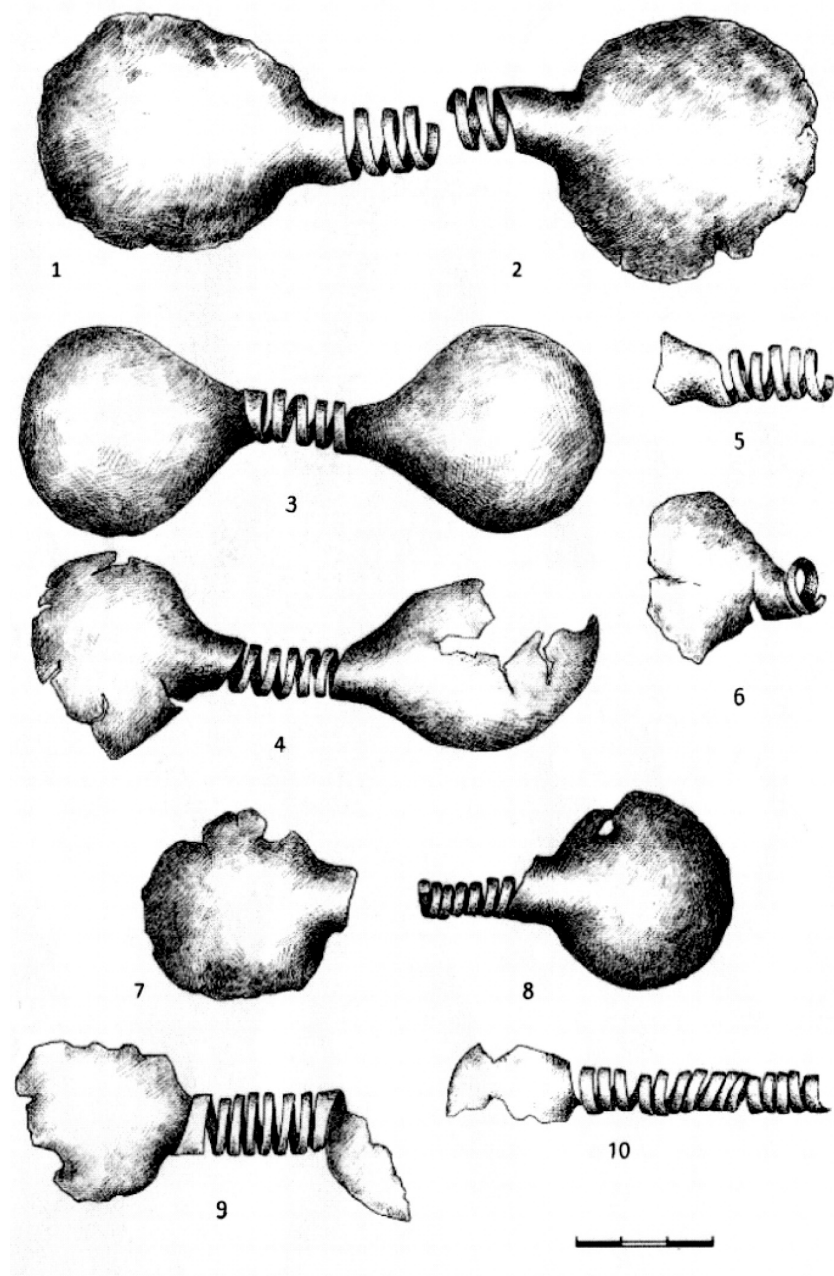


Figure 6. Temple ornaments with a spiral middle part and spoon-shaped ends from Latvia: 1 – Aizkraukle, 2 – Aizkraukle, 3 – Rites Strēļi, 4 – Rites Strēļi, 5 – Varakļānu Škēles, 6 – Turaida, 7 – Jumpravas Priedaine, 8 – Jumpravas Priedaine, 9 – Tukuma apkārtnē, 10 – Strazde.

6 pav. Antsmilkiniai šaukšto formos galais, viduryje sujungti įvijine dalimi, iš Latvijos

the 3rd quarter of the 1st millennium BC, but in the last centuries BC the situation changed cardinally.

In terms of burial practices, several ethnocultural regions can be distinguished in Latvia (Fig. 8). South-western Latvia was the periphery of the Western Baltic Barrow Grave Culture, where barrows with cremations in urns have been excavated. The burial practices are most clearly characterised by Barrow 1 at Rucavas Baški, where four cremations in urns have been excavated. The finds permit the barrow to be dated to the 2nd century BC.

In north-western Kurzeme, early tarand cemeteries are characteristic of the Finnic groups that have been excavated at Strazde and Laidzes Lazdiņi. Strazde is one of the earliest tarand cemeteries on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea. Based on a find of a neck-ring with recurved terminals and a massive iron bracelet of circular cross-section, the establishment of this cemetery can be dated to the 5th–4th century BC.

Barrows with stone structures have been excavated on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Riga. The clearest picture of the burial practices is provided by the

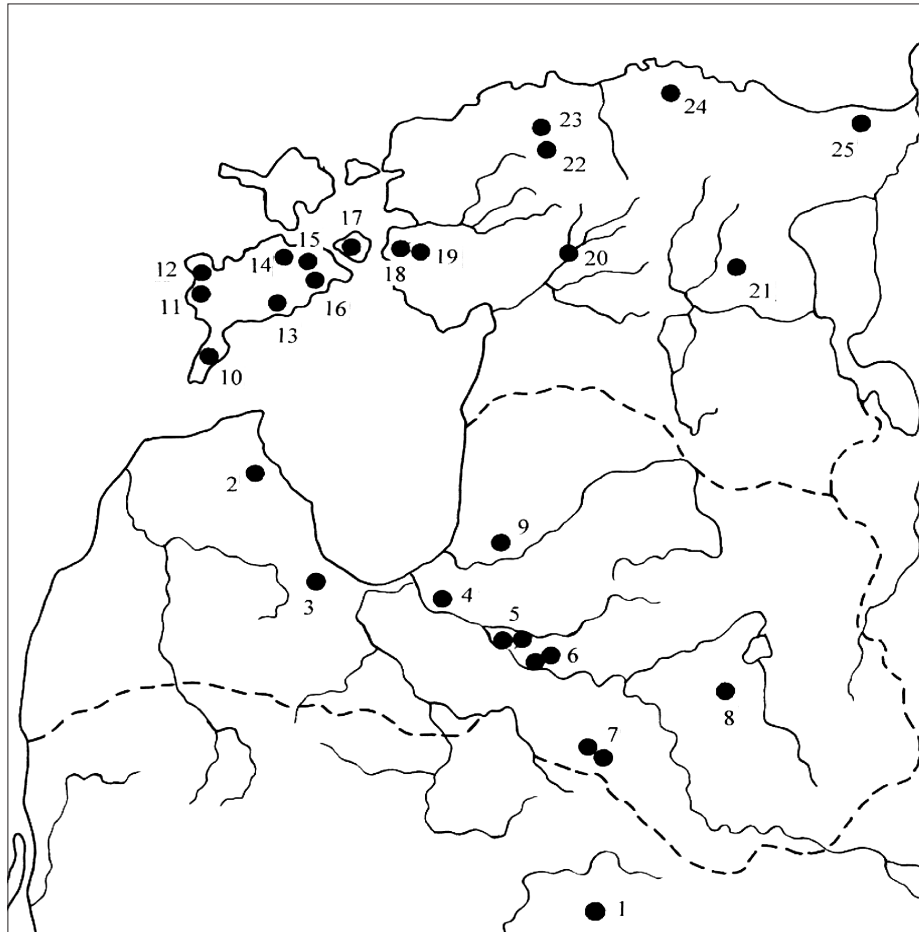


Figure 7. **Distribution of temple ornaments with a spiral middle part and spoon-shaped ends in the East Baltic:** 1 – Steponava, 2 – Strazde, 3 – Tukuma apkārtnē, 4 – Dreiliņu Gilberti, 5 – Jumpravas Priedaine, 6 – Aizkraukle, 7 – Strēļi, 8 – Varakļānu Sķēles, 9 – Turaidas Pūteļi, 10 – Kaunispea, 11 – Loona, 12 – Kurevere, 13 – Ilpla, 14 – Laugu, 15 – Tagavere, 16 – Tõnija, 17 – Māla, 18 – Kõmsi, 19 – Poanse, 20 – Kadjaste, 21 – Nava, 22 – Adila Mikkuri, 23 – Kurna, 24 – Võhma, 25 – Toila.

7 pav. Antsmilkinių šaukšto formos galais, viduryje sujungtu įvijine dalimi, paplitimas Rytų Baltijos kraštuose

barrow at Sējas Vīlētāji. It was surrounded by a ring of stones and was covered with fist-sized stones. The barrow contained cremation burials. Based on the few artefact finds, it can be dated to the same period as Laidzes Lazdiņi. It seems that there were similar burial fields at Turaidas Pūteļi and Vitrupes Ivaši.

In the remaining part of present-day Latvia there are sand barrows without stone structures, containing multiple inhumations, or else flat burial fields with a small number of burials. Such cemeteries have been excavated most thoroughly in north-eastern Latvia, where they remained in use up to the 2nd century AD. It is thought that the burials were provided with grave goods of organic materials, which have not survived. Thus, Barrow 10 at Makašānu Salenieki contained the

remains of a charred wooden bowl and a miniature wooden boat. A miniature boat of similar dimensions has been found in Bendiķi Bog near Valmiera. However, most commonly these monuments can be dated from a small number of artefacts of Pre-Roman Iron Age date, as in the case of Barrow 9 at Salenieki, the cemetery of Gilberti near Riga, and the barrows, possibly also belonging to this type, at Vārves Strīķi and Gārsenes Bērzkalni. All of these burials show similar burial practices: inhumations with pottery vessels as grave goods. A string of stray finds, such as a flat spiral at Zvārdes Grīnerti and a spiral middle part and spoon-shaped ends at Rītes Strēļi, possibly derive from destroyed barrows or flat burial fields.

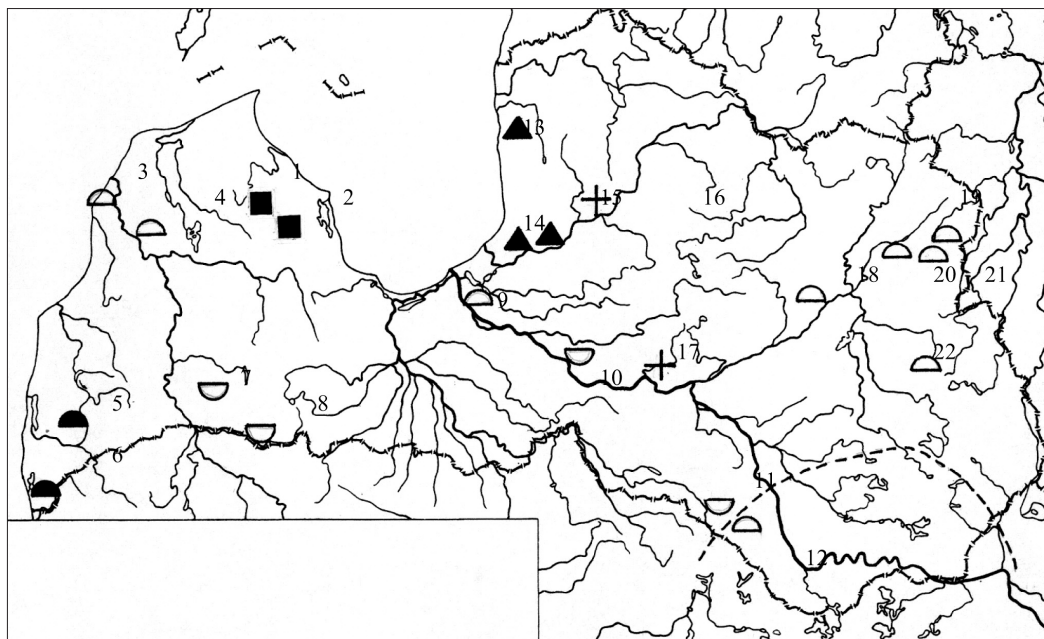


Fig. 8. **Distribution of grave types in the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age in Latvia:** ▲ cairn graves, ◐ sand barrows, ▼ Western Baltic barrow graves, ■ Early tarand graves, ▽ flat cemeteries, La Tene finds, Late Striated Pottery Culture. 1 – Laidzes Lazdiņi, 2 – Strazde, 3 – Vārves Strīķi, 4 – Priekules Drukēni, 5 – Cīravas Dārznieki, 6 – Rucavas Baški, 7 – Zvārdes Grīnerti, 8 – Rubas Renģe, 9 – Dreiliņu Gilberti, 10 – Jumpravas Priedaine, 11 – Rites Strēļi, 12 – Gārsenes Bērzkalni, 13 – Vitrupes Ivaši, 14 – Sējas Vīlētāji, 15 – Turaidas Sikšņi, 16 – Lenču Strīķi, 17 – Koknese, 18 – Jaungulbenes Struņķu sils, 19 – Šķilbēnu Dzīlnaskalns, 20 – Balvu Nauduševa, 21 – Šķilbēnu Daņilovka I, 22 – Makašānu Salenieki.

8 pav. Vēlyvojo ikiromēnišķo laikotarpio kapu tipu paplitimas Latvijoje: ▲ krūsniniai kapai, ◐ smėlio pilkapiai, ▼ Vakarų Baltijos pilkapiai, ■ ankstyvieji tarand tipo kapai, ▽ plokštiniai kapinynai, La Teno radiniai, vėlyva brūkšniuotosios keramikos kultūra

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SENOVINIAI ANTSMILKINIAI LATVIJOJE

Jānis Ciglis

Santrauka

Ankstyvojo geležies amžiaus antsmilkiniai skirstomi į tris grupes. Labiausiai buvo paplitę įvijiniai antsmilkiniai (pirmoji grupė) ir antsmilkiniai šaukšto formos galais, viduryje sujungti įvijine dalimi (antroji grupė). Trečiąją grupę sudarė antsmilkiniai, pagaminti iš plonos žalvario vielos žiedų, papuošti karoliais ir kabučiais.

Ankstyviausi įvijiniai antsmilkiniai Latvijos teritorijoje yra žinomi nuo vėlyvojo žalvario amžiaus. Tai du įvijiniai antsmilkiniai, surasti *Ļaudonas Midzenīcas* vietovėje, Latvijoje. *Salaspils Reznas* kapinyne buvo rastas kitokios formos įvijinis antsmilkinis. Jis aptiktas pilkapio nr. 2 viršutiniame sluoksnyje, kuriame buvo dėželiniai akmeniniai kapai. Dvi įvijios su pritvirtintomis žalvarinėmis plokštelėmis, rastos *Ķekavas Kļančukalns* piliakalnyje, taip pat gali būti interpretuojamos kaip antsmilkiniai. Įvijiniai antsmilkiniai tampriai susukta viela plačiai paplito nuo ankstyvojo gele-

žies amžiaus pabaigos ir senojo geležies amžiaus pradžios. Iš viso rasti 24 tokio tipo antsmilkiniai, penkiose Latvijos vietovėse.

Kitą grupę sudaro antsmilkiniai, pagaminti iš vielos, papuoštos stiklo karoliais ir kabučiais. Latvijoje šios rūšies antsmilkiniai yra negausūs. Jie aptikti tik apardytame *Dreiliņu Gilberti* kapinyne, kuriame rasti šeši kapai. Antsmilkiniai buvo aptikti šalia kaukolės, kartu su puodelio formos papuošalo fragmentu. Beje, tai buvo vienintelis kapas su įkapėmis. V. Langas panašius Estijoje rastus kabučius datuoja ankstyvojo geležies amžiaus pabaiga (II–I amžius pr. Kr.).

Vienuolika antsmilkinių šaukšto formos galais, viduryje sujungtų įvijine dalimi, buvo rasti aštuoniuose Latvijos paminkluose. Jų paplitimo teritorija driekiasi nuo Rygos įlankos iki Latvijos vidurio, šalia Dauguvos upės krantų.

Iš anglų kalbos vertė *Auksė Pūraitė-Kuokštienė*

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