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FROM PAGANISM TO CHRISTIANITY

BURIAL RITES DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD

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Contents

- 7 Preface
- 10 Pratarinė

I. BETWEEN PAGANISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Rytis Jonaitis

- 17 Christians in a Pagan Environment. Medieval Urban Cemeteries in Lithuania in the 13th and Early 15th Centuries
- 39 Krikščionys pagoniškoje aplinkoje. XIII–XV a. pr. miestietiški Viduramžių kapinynai Lietuvoje

Irma Kaplūnaitė

- 41 The Earliest Catholic Burial Sites in Medieval Vilnius
- 65 Ankstyviausios katalikų laidojimo vietos Viduramžių Vilniuje

Dmytro Bibikov

- 67 Between Paganism and Christianity: The Rite of Partial Cremation in the South of Old Rus'
- 87 Tarp pagonybės ir krikščionybės: dalinė mirusiųjų kremacija pietų Rusijoje

Marius Ščavinskas

- 89 Pagan Customs in Christian Burial Grounds? Written Sources from the 12th to the 16th Century and their Possible Interpretation
- 101 Pagoniški papročiai krikščioniškuose senkapiuose? XII–XVI a. rašytiniai šaltiniai ir jų galima interpretacija

II. BURIAL RITES

Mikalai Plavinski

- 105 The Main Phases in the Development of the Burial Rites of the Late First Millennium to Early Second Millennium Slavic Population of the Upper Viliya (Neris) Region
- 129 Pagrindiniai Neries aukštupio slavų populiacijos laidojimo papročių vystymosi etapai vėlyvajame I m. e. tūkstantmetyje – pirmuosiuose II tūkstantmečio amžiuose

Sławomir Wadył, Elżbieta Jaskulska

- 131 Living with the Dead: Unique Burial Rituals of Early Medieval Society in Pasyń (Northeast Poland)
- 143 Gyventi su mirusiais: išskirtiniai laidojimo papročiai Ankstyvųjų viduramžių Pasyńo (šiaurės rytų Lenkija) bendruomenėje

**Bartłomiej Bartecki, Beata Borowska, Tomasz Dzieńkowski,
Irka Hajdas, Anna Hyrchała, Marcin Wołoszyn**

- 145 Early medieval inhumation cemeteries in Gródek-Volyn'. Research status and future perspectives
- 171 Ankstyvųjų viduramžių inhumacijos kapinynai Grudeke–Voluinėje. Tyrimų būklė ir perspektyvos

III. GRAVE GOODS

Roberts Spirģis

- 175 Materials from Children's Burials from the Ogresgala Čabas Cemetery in the Context of the Spread of Christianity to the Lower Daugava Area in the 11th to 13th Centuries
- 201 Ogresgalos Čabo kapinyno vaikų kapų medžiaga krikščionybės plėtros Dauguvos žemupio XI–XIII a. kontekste

Viktoryia Makouskaya

- 203 Some Features of Children's Grave Goods from the Polack Land from the End of the Tenth to the 12th Century
- 223 Kai kurie X a. pabaigos – XII a. vaikų įkapių Polocko žemėje bruožai

IV. CEMETERY INVESTIGATIONS

Ludwika Jończyk

- 227 The Last Yotvingian Pagans. The Case of the Mosiężysko Cemetery in Northeast Poland
- 251 Paskutiniai jotvingių pagonys. Šiaurės rytų Lenkijos Mosiężysko kapinyno atvejis

Justinas Račas

- 253 The Excavations of the 15th to 17th-Century Punžionys Burial Site in 2017 and 2018
- 273 XV–XVII a. Punžionių kapinyno tyrinėjimai 2017–2018 metais

Roman Shiroukhov, Vyacheslav Baranov, Vsevolod Ivakin,

Ben Krause-Kyora, John Meadows, Khurram Saleem, Ulrich Schuermann

- 275 Baltic Migrants in Ukraine? A Comparative Laboratory Study of the Late Viking Age Ostriv Cemetery
- 299 Baltų migrantai Ukrainoje? Lyginamasis laboratorinis vėlyvojo vikingų laikotarpio Ostrivo kapinyno tyrimas

Oleksandra Kozak

- 301 The Anthropology of the 11th-Century Ostriv Cemetery on the River Ros' in Ukraine: The Effects of Migration
- 323 Antropologiniai XI a. Ostrivo kapinyno prie Rosės (Ukraina) duomenys: migracijos poveikis

Materials from Children's Burials from the Ogresgala Čabas Cemetery in the Context of the Spread of Christianity to the Lower Daugava Area in the 11th to 13th Centuries

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The article presents children's burials studied in the Ogresgala Čabas cemetery. The remains of 1.5 to three-year-old children were found in nine graves in the 38 burials investigated at the site. The deceased were buried on their backs, and mostly oriented with the head to the north or the northwest. The excavations revealed evidence of non-surviving barrow mounds. Three burial mounds with the remains of two children or one adult woman and a child can be distinguished. The deceased children were buried in festive clothes and age-appropriate miniature items.

The observations made in the Ogresgala Čabas cemetery allow us to discuss changes in children's burials in the tenth to the 13th centuries in the context of the spread of Christianity among the Livs of the Lower Daugava area. In the opinion of the author of the article, the mass spread of children's burials in the 11th century, while they were completely absent among pagan cremations of the tenth century, serves as evidence of a change in the attitude to the child in Liv society. It is proposed to consider the wide distribution of items of personal piety in children's burials starting from the 12th century in the context of Medieval concepts of the ages of life and Christian practices of age-appropriate initiations.

Keywords: Livs, cemeteries, children's burials, burial inventory, Christianisation.

Introduction

The attention of researchers in Latvia, especially anthropologists, has recently been focused on so-called children's archaeology. At the same time, in my opinion, insufficient attention has been paid to Christian canons and concepts of the ages of life. By rethinking antique traditions, Christian beliefs formed the essence of the general European understanding of the stages of human maturation. Therefore, the study of

Medieval Christian practices specifically can become an original source for evaluating archaeological data not only from Christian sites but also from objects presumably bearing traces of early Christianisation.

This article is based on finds discovered in the Ogresgala Čabas cemetery, and offers a discussion of the transition process from cremation to inhumation, which resulted in the considerable growth

of children's burials in Liv cemeteries. For example, the number of children's burials at Salaspils Laukskolas reaches 40% of inhumations.¹ At the same time, this indicator makes Liv cemeteries resemble a Medieval Christian cemetery. Thus, according to the apt remark of the famous French Medievalist Philippe Ariès, 'The cemetery was for the young.' Therefore, the problem of the rare availability, or even the non-availability, of children's cremations, and the spike in their number with the transition to the rite of inhumations, evidently requires detailed analysis. It is primarily important to raise the issue of how exposure to Christianity could have caused a change in the attitude of Liv society towards children.

The other issue to be addressed is the identification of full-age groups on the basis of the analysis of the burial inventory from Liv cemeteries, and the role of items of personal piety among children.

In this article, the topics outlined are addressed on the basis of finds from the Ogresgala Čabas cemetery, one of the few burial sites of the Daugava Livs, where extensive excavations have recently been carried out.

From a methodological point of view, in my opinion, the attempts to explain changes observed in the burial rite and the appearance of Christian symbols among the ancient Livs by the influence of some kind of abstract 'trend' are an evident anachronism. Therefore, in this article, the author has tried to adhere to the principle of historicism, and use for

comparison data on concurrent Medieval Church rituals and theological considerations.

The Ogresgala Čabas cemetery

The complex of archaeological sites near the farm of Čabas (Ciemupe settlement, Ogresgals parish, Ogre district) is located in the central part of Latvia on the right bank of the River Daugava, 37.5 km from Riga, and consists of a settlement and two cemeteries. The site was discovered in 1979. Trial excavations were held in 1984, led by Anna Zariņa, when three burials and a small part of the settlement were investigated.²

In 2007, the Institute of History of Latvia resumed research work there in view of planned construction work. As a result of research undertaken in 2007 and 2008, the eastern edge of the cemetery was uncovered, and another 35 burials dated to the 11th and 13th centuries were found. The excavations showed that there used to be burial mounds in this area which were subsequently scooped up in the course of human economic activity. The mounds are marked clearly by stone circles and barrow ditches.

A monograph summing up the results of this work is still in preparation, but some articles have been published, and they make it possible now to learn about the main results of the research.³

This article, however, is about ten children's burials discovered in the Ogresgala Čabas cemetery.

1 A. Zariņa, *Salaspils Laukskolas kapulauks. 10.–13. gadsimts*, Rīga, 2006, p. 447.

2 A. Zariņa, *Aizsardzības izrakumi pie Ciemupes, Zinātniskās atskaites sesijas materiāli par arheologu un etnogrāfu 1984. un 1985. gada pētījumu rezultātiem*, Rīga, 1986, pp. 148–150.

3 R. Spirģis, *Arheoloģiskie pētījumi Ogresgala Čabās 2007 gadā, Arheologu pētījumi Latvijā 2006. un 2007. gadā*, Rīga, 2008, pp. 50–58; R. Spirģis, R. Brūzis, *Arheoloģiskie pētījumi Ogresgala Čabās 2008. gadā, Arheologu pētījumi Latvijā 2008. un 2009. gadā*, Rīga, 2010, pp. 52–56; R. Spirģis, *Jaunas liecības par akmens riņķiem Daugavas lībiešu kapulaukos: Ogresgala Čabu kapulauka izpēte 2007.–2008. g.*, *Ogres vēstures un mākslas muzeja raksti*, Ogre, 2015, pp. 20–35; R. Spirģis, R. Brūzis, *The Ogresgala Čabas cemetery and horse sacrifice, Archaeologia Baltica: The horse and man in European antiquity (worldview, burial rites, and military and everyday life*, Vol. 11, 2009, pp. 283–294; R. Spirģis, *Novye dannye o pogrebal'nom obryade daugavskikh livov v XII-XIII vv. po materialam raskopok mogil'nika Ogresgala Chabas 2007-2008 gg.*, *Arkheologiya i istoriya Pskova i Pskovskoy zemli*, seminar imeni akademika V.V. Sedova: Materialy 60-go zasedaniya, Vyp. 30, Moskva, 2015, pp. 286–293, 354–357; R. Spirģis, R. Brūzis, *Cremation and Christianity in the Lower Daugava Area in the Tenth to the 13th Century: A Case Study Based on Liv Burials in the Ogresgala Čabas Cemetery, Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis 44. 2023*, pp. 27–79, doi: 10.15181/ahuk.v44i0.2571.

Children's burials in the Ogresgala Čabas cemetery

In total, ten⁴ inhumations of children aged from one to 13 years⁵ were discovered during research in the cemetery. Three of them (see the description of the burials below) were aged from 1.5 to 3.5 years (burials 21, 29, 36), five were aged from four to seven years old (burials 5, 15, 22, 30, 33), and two children were aged from 11 to 13 (burials 12, 34).

Location. The children's burials were distributed quite evenly among the graves of adults (Fig. 1). Two of them were recorded at the junction of large barrow mounds: the burial of a five or six-year-old child (burial 15) was found to the north of a mound with two female burials (13, 17); the skeleton of a 2.5 to 3.5-year-old child (burial 21) was found between the mounds over male burial 32 and female burial 28. Three burials of boys⁶ (5, 12, 33), who died at the ages of four to five, 12 to 13, and four years, were buried in a mound paired with an adult woman in burials 4, 16 and 35 respectively. A pair of burials of boys (29, 30), whose ages were identified as 1.5 to 2.5 and four years, were discovered next to each other. It is assumed that a single mound was built over both burials. Presumably in separate mounds, two girls aged six to seven and 11 to 13 (burials 22, 34), and a boy aged 1.5 to 2.5 (burial 36), were buried.

Depth of burial. Since the relief of the once mound-type cemetery has undergone significant transformations as a result of levelling, the original depth of the placement of skeletons in the burials is unknown. Children's burials were mostly opened at 55 to 85 centimetres relative to the modern surface.

Only burial 21 was reported at much less depth, under 28 centimetres of soil.

Integrity. Osteological material survived badly in the sandy soil of the Ogresgala Čabas cemetery, especially the skeletons of young children. Some of the bones are completely decomposed. Mostly parts of the skull and the long bones of the hands and legs have survived, sometimes the collarbones (burials 5, 15, 21, 22, 33, 34), and less often vertebrae (15, 33), scapula (15), ribs (15, 21, 22, 34), and phalanges of fingers (34).

Due to the fact that the long-preserved mounds were clear marks of burial sites, about 70% of the burials in the cemetery have apparently been disturbed, mainly by robbery; at the same time, the situation with children's burials is much better. Only two burials were significantly disturbed: burial 22 was completely dug up, and in burial 34 the upper part was dug up and some inventory and surviving skeleton bones were mixed up, while the leg bones remained *in situ*. The robber's pit was filled with a heap of rocks stacked in several tiers. A First World War trench reached the head end of the grave pits of burials 29 and 30; the skeletons, however, remained intact.

The children's graves supposedly stayed untouched by robbers due to their unsightliness and the small size of the mounds, or their location outside the barrow mound, at least on the edge of it. Particularly revealing are the cases of three mounds where boys (5, 12, 33) were buried with women. The looters apparently did not expect to find the second burial, and limited themselves to looting the graves of the adult deceased, leaving the children's skeletons intact.

4 During the 1984 excavations, an inventory-free and disturbed burial of another adolescent was found, burial 1 (the skeleton was buried on the left side); since the author has no more accurate anthropological definition of the bone remains at his disposal, the case will not be covered in this article.

5 The author is grateful to the anthropologist Gunita Zarina, who has defined the osteological materials. Without her involvement, this article could not have been written.

6 The sex of the children was defined based on the inventory.

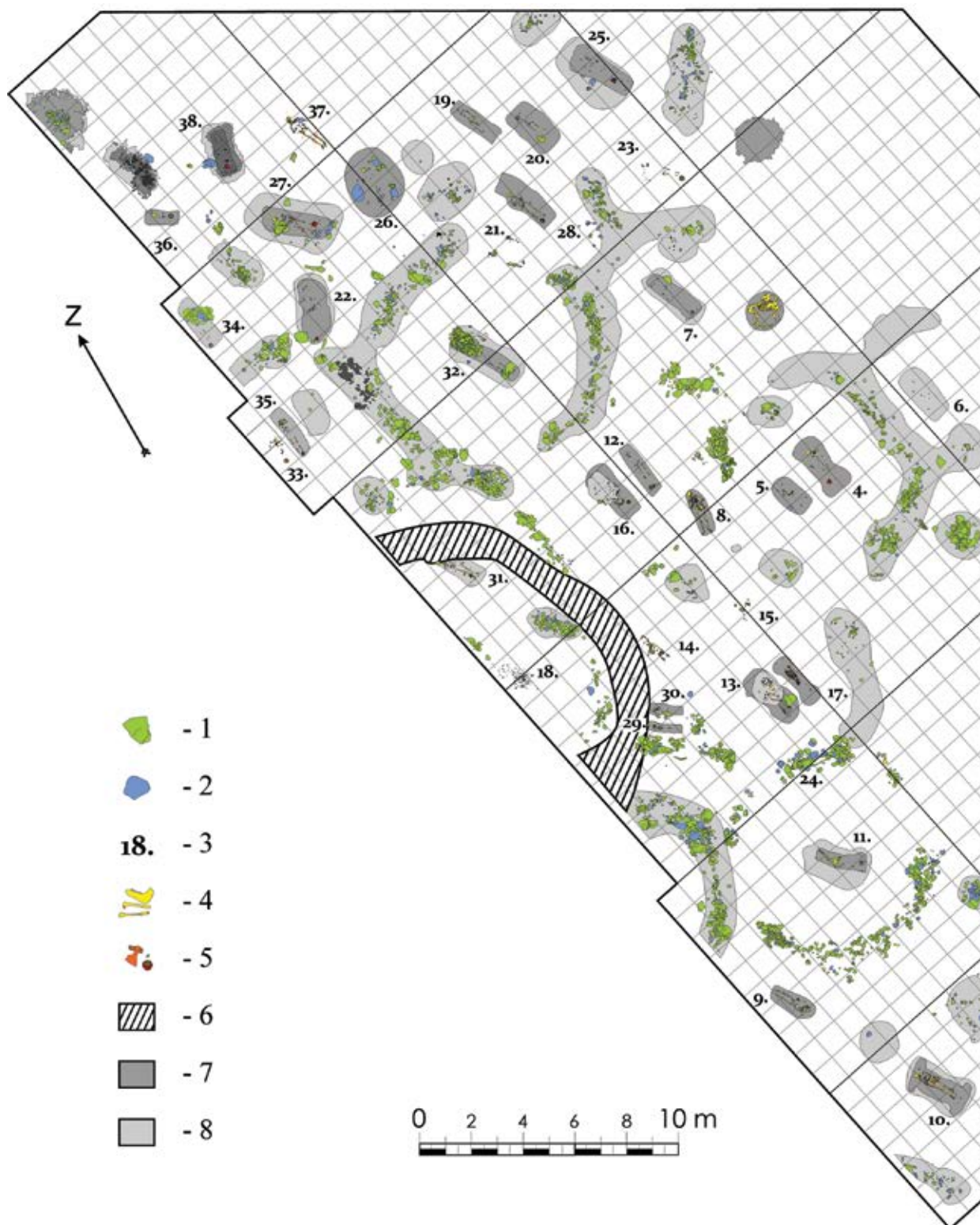


Fig. 1. Ground plan of burials and objects found in 2007-2008:

- 1 – dolomite; 2 – granite; 3 – burial number; 4 – bones; 5 – artifacts; 6 – WWI trench;
- 7 – dark soil from grave fill; 8 – dark layer from ditch and pit fill. Drawing by R. Spirģis.

Orientation. Like most Liv burials, children in the Ogresgala Čabas cemetery were laid in an extended position on the back with the head usually placed to the north (burials 5, 12, 21, 33, 34) or northwest (29, 30, 36). In the case of burial 22, which was completely dug up, the orientation of the skeleton was impossible to identify, but the orientation of the grave pit, with a wheel-made pot at the feet, indicates a northeast direction.

Position of hands. Since the hand bones in the children's burials have almost not survived, almost no data are available to clarify this aspect. Thanks to spiral rings, the phalanges of the finger bones have survived in burial 34, and based on this fact it is possible to assume that the arms were stretched straight out, and the hands were joined over the pelvis. In turn, the location of the iron bracelet near the abdomen in burial 21 may indicate that at least one child's hand was bent at the elbow and placed across the body. The bronze bracelet in burial 36, judging by the location of the item, was placed a little lower than the waistline, and therefore the arms were stretched out along the sides.

Coffins. Iron nails were found in four children's burials, which indicates the placement of the deceased in a wooden coffin. Thus, burial 5 of a boy aged four or five years had 16 iron nails recorded, which mark the 1.10 by 0.40-metre coffin. In other burials, the number of nails found is smaller: in burial 12 nine nails were found, in burial 22 three nails, and in burial 34 one nail. The nails in burials 5 and 12 had wood remnants preserved.

Inventory. In terms of weapons, in one of the burials (12) a short-socketed spearhead with a diamond-shaped (or square) nib cross-section, and in

other two burials (5, 33) broad-blade axes (Fig. 2: 10) were found. The arms are of a child-age-appropriate small size. In six burials (12, 29, 30, 33, 34, 36), iron knives (Fig. 2: 7), and in two burials a couple of stone chips in each (5, 12), were found.

A pink slate spindle whorl was found in burial 22. Possibly amber 'beads' of a similar size and bitrapezoid (33) and barrel-shaped (34) beads were used as the spindle whorl; as well as a spiral ring with the remnants of wood inside.⁷ In burial 12, an iron key to a padlock, three flints, and a West European coin were found.⁸ Two-sided hairbrushes were recorded in burials 12 and 33.

Burials 22, 29, 33, 34 and 36 had wheel-made pots (Fig. 2:10). The pottery was usually placed at the feet, and only in burial 29 was a small pot found behind the head of the deceased. No food remnants or any other items were found inside the tableware.

Burial 5 had a well-preserved leather waist-belt with round bindings. The belt had no buckle or spreader. Two spirals on the left-hand side were possibly used as suspensions. Similarly, a small spiral was also found in the waist area in burial 33 (Fig. 2: 6), although no traces of any belt survived there. In burial 12, the trapezoid binding of the end of a strap was preserved.

Horseshoe-fibula with rolled-up ends used to fasten the clothes of the deceased were found in three burials: in burial 12 the bow of the fibula was tereutic, and in burials 5 and 36 it was smooth and round in section. The fibula from the looted burial 34 is lost, but the pin for its fastening is preserved.

Bracelets were reported in burials 21 and 36: an iron bracelet with rolled-up ends,⁹ and a bronze strip-shape bracelet with animal heads at the ends,

7 The likelihood of the use of spiral rings by the Livs as spindles was discussed in an article by Anna Zariņa (A. Zariņa, Vērpšanas rīki Salaspils Laukskolas 10.–13. gadsimta apbedījumos, *Latvijas vēstures institūta žurnāls*, Vol. 4, 2002, pp. 5–15).

8 Not yet identified.

9 The closest analogies to the iron bracelet with up-twisted ends like the one from burial 21 are known from four children's burials from period II in the Salaspils Laukskolas cemetery. Products of this kind are considered to be characteristic of the Viatichis (A. Zariņa, Salaspils Laukskolas kapulauks, p. 294).



Fig. 2. Inventory from burial No.33:

1 – cross (10*); 2 – glass beads (13, 16); 3 – rings from textile decoration (15), 4 – axe (7); 5 – bear tusk pendant (12); 6 – spiral (14); 7 – knife (8); 8- amber bead (?) (11); 9- double-sided comb (9); 10 – clay wheelmade pot (17).
1, 3, 6 – copper alloy; 2 – glass; 4, 7 – iron; 5, 9 – bone; 8 – amber; 10 – clay. Photographs by R. Spirģis.

* Hereinafter the numbers are indicated according to the list of finds from the primary documentation of the expedition in 2007 (burials 4–32) and 2008 (burials 33–38).

respectively. All the finger-rings found were spiral rings, and came from burials 12, 22 and 34.

Glass bead necklaces are the most common type of jewellery (Fig. 2: 2). In most cases, these are necklaces of beads of various shapes and with metal foil (burials 15, 21, 22, 29, 30, 33). Burial 21, where only one glass bead was found, is possibly a case where bronze cylinders which were usually used to decorate the fabric of a garment were also used on a string. The necklace from burial 5 was made of small yellow beads. More than 50 small black beads were also found in burial 22. Black zonal beads were also found there, some of them with three yellow 'eyes', and several were cylinder-shaped with silver foil. Since the burial was completely looted, it is impossible to state whether the small beads were used for a necklace or embroidery. The greatest variety of beads came from disturbed burial 34, where blue and green bitrapezoid, green grooved, black and red zonal beads, with and without 'eyes', were found. In its turn, a large light spherical grooved bead from burial 12 found at the waist level was possibly used to secure the lace that tightened the lapel of a purse.

The three necklaces included West European coin-pendants (Fig. 3: 5–7):¹⁰ an imitation of a Frisian dinar from the 11th century, burial 15; a Hardeknut denarius (1035–1042) minted in Vyborg (Denmark), burial 22; and a Konrad II/Henrich II denarius minted in 1014–1039 in the city of Strasbourg (Kingdom of Germany), burial 29. In addition, five crosses (Fig. 3: 1–4; 8) were found in four children's burials (22, 30, 33 34). In burial 34, the string of a necklace along with a cross included four round pendants with the image of a bull's head (Fig. 3: 9) and a tinkler. Another tinkler was used in the string in burial 21.

It has been established that in two cases (burials 21, 34), the tinkler was included in the string. In burial 36, two tinklers were attached in the belt area to a bronze double-ring chain. In burial 5, one tinkler was found separately on the right-hand side of the deceased. The tinklers are mostly pear-shaped with a cross-shaped slit, and only in burial 5 was a ball-shaped tinkler with a straight slit found.

An amber pendant of irregular shape (burial 5) and a bear tusk (burial 33), found at the waist level, should be mentioned as an amulet characteristic of male Liv burials (Fig. 2: 5).

Certain types of chain were used to suspend amulets and knives: in burial 12, four iron S-shaped links survived; in burial 21 there was one surface-mounted bronze link made of threefold intertwined wire with rings at the ends;¹¹ two similar bronze links of a rod chain were found in burial 36, where a bronze double-ring chain was used.

Dating the burials

The Estonian archaeologist Evald Tõnisson¹² has divided the materials of the Livs into three chronological periods: period I, third quarter of the tenth century to the second half of the 11th century; period II, second quarter of the 11th century to the second half of the 12th century; period III, end of the 12th to the beginning of the 13th century. Further elaboration on the chronology based on female burials was carried out by the author of this article.¹³

Items characteristic of period I are missing in the burials of our interest. More widely occurring are finds typical of period II. So coins are represented by

10 The coins from the Ogresgala Čabas cemetery were identified by T. Berga.

11 It fell apart during conservation.

12 E. Tõnisson, *Die Gauja-Liven und ihre materielle Kultur (11. Jh.–Anfang 13. Jhs). Ein Beitrag zur der ostbaltischen Frühgeschichte*, Tallinn, 1974.

13 R. Spirģis, *Bruņrupuču saktas ar krūšu važiņotām un lībiešu kultūras attīstība Daugavas lejtecē 10.–13. gadsimtā*, Rīga, 2008.



Fig. 3. Items of personal piety from children's burials in the Ogresgala Čabas cemetery:
 1–2 – crosses from burial No. 22 (624); 3 – cross from burial No. 30 (623); 4 – cross from burial No. 33 (10); 5 – coin-pendant from burial No. 15 (519); 6 – coin-pendant from burial No. 22 (626); 7 – coin-pendant from burial No. 29 (692); 8 – cross from burial No. 34 (20); 9 – round pendants with the image of a bull's head from burial No. 34 (18, 19, 21, 32).
 1–4, 5, 8, 9 – copper alloy; 6 – silver; 7 – silver, copper alloy. Photographs by R. Spirģis.

minting in the 11th century. At the same time, the absence of dinars from the beginning of the 11th century and a considerable number of copycat coins is conspicuous (burials 15, 12), indicating mostly a 'snapshot' of monetary circulation in the middle and the second half of the 11th century. Considering the monetary 'hunger' which began in the 12th century, as well as the use of coins as pendants, a quite long 'gap' can be assumed between the time of their minting and getting into the burial inventory. Therefore, to narrow the chronological scope of dating, some other chronological markers are important, such as nailed coffins (burials 12, 22, 34), which appeared among the Livs at the end of the 11th century.¹⁴

Period II actually begins with the appearance of wheel-made pottery,¹⁵ while a complete shift away from handmade pottery, except for certain cases, took place only in the next period.¹⁶ Thus, the burials of our interest (burials 22, 29, 33, 34, 36) had a wide collection of wheel-made pottery (Fig. 2: 10), which may indicate the time starting at the end of period II. It is also noteworthy that combs (Fig. 2: 9) from burials in the Ogresgala Čabas cemetery are represented only by double-sided specimens (burials 12, 33), although in period II earlier one-sided composite combs still prevailed in the period, which indirectly indicates a late dating of the burials, such as the 12th century.¹⁷

Finds of Old Rus' crosses, which belong to the so-called third generation of antiquities, according to Aleksandr Musin, lead us to similar conclusions.¹⁸

Such finds only became widespread among eastern neighbours in the second half to the end of the 11th century. Regarding the Livs, we can assume some delay, and accept that in the 11th century only individual specimens got to the lower Daugava area, while the mass use of Christian items of personal piety occurred most probably in the 12th century.

In general, the dating of the weapons found also leads to the same conclusion. Thus, an iron spearhead found in burial 12 has features of a pike, which according to observations by Anatolii Nikolayevich Kirpichnikov, the researcher of Old Rus' weapons (type V), were maximally spread in the area he studied in the 12th and 13th centuries.¹⁹ This type of weapon was rare in Latvia before the 13th century, and is not mentioned in works by Māris Atgāzis, a Latvian specialist in ancient weapons, although it was known to the Livs.

The shape of the axe with an elongated butt from burial 33 (Fig. 2: 4) is the closest to being typical of axes in Latvia in the 11th century.²⁰ In its turn, the proportionally bigger blade of the axe from burial 5 is a specific feature of this type of item starting from the 12th century.²¹

In general, judging by the material finds, burial 5, where a ball-shaped tinkler with a straight slit was found, should be recognised as the latest, and due to this, the burial may be dated to period III. In other burials (21, 22, 34, 36), tinklers have pear-shaped and cross-shaped slits, a type typical of period II.

14 A. Zariņa, *Libieši Daugavas lejtecē: Ieskats arheoloģiskajā materiālā*, *Latvijas Zinātņu Akadēmijas vēstis A*, 50, 4/5, 1996, p. 124.

15 R. Spirģis, *Bruņrupuču saktas*, p. 302.

16 A. Zariņa, *Salaspils Laukskolas*, p. 312.

17 A. Zariņa, *Salaspils Laukskolas*, pp. 209–210.

18 A. Musin, *Khristianizatsiya Novgorodskoy zemli v IX–XIV vekakh. Pogrebal'nyy obryad i khristianskie drevnosti*, Sankt-Peterburg, 2002, p. 178.

19 A.N. Kirpichnikov, *Drevnerusskoe oruzhie, Tom 2: kop'ya, sulitsy, boevye topory, bulavy, kisteni (seriya Arkheologiya SSSR: Svod arheologicheskikh istochnikov E1-36)*, Moskva, Leningrad, pp. 15–16.

20 Type IVA according to A.N. Kirpichnikov; the author offers a somewhat later dating, the 12th or 13th century (A.N. Kirpichnikov, *Drevnerusskoe oruzhie*, p. 37).

21 M. Atgāzis, *Tuvciņas ieroči Latvijā*, pp. 129, 66. att.

Burial 5 is also confirmed to belong to period III by an oval fibula and chain holder with palmettes (type 5b₁ and 4b respectively) characteristic of the end of the 12th century and the beginning of the 13th century,²² from the second burial in the mound (female burial 4), while the availability of the 4b type chain holder indicates more likely the second half of the period, that is, the beginning of the 13th century.²³

Thus, based on the above considerations, children's burials from the Ogresgala Čabas cemetery are mostly dated to the second half of period II to period III, and can be attributed to the 12th or the beginning of the 13th century.

Children's burials in the Ogresgala Čabas cemetery in the context of ancient Liv culture

The sex and age groups of the children were defined based on changes in the burial inventory content of the Liv inhumations (historiography of the issue). In the 1980s, in her monograph on clothes of the Livs, the Latvian archaeologist Anna Zariņa specifically addressed material on children's burials.²⁴ This work was taken as the basis for further elaboration on the subject. The work of Latvian researchers who were studying finds of children's burials was either focused on just a biological-anthropological assessment of osteological material,²⁵ or tried to offer an analysis of Liv society based on the differences in inventory of various sex and age groups. In particular, in 2002,

the short article published by Vita Bandere²⁶ based on Anna Zariņa's work presented an attempt to reveal the 'social life' of Liv society on the basis of an assessment of children's burials in cemeteries on the island of Dole (Doles Vampenieši I, Doles Vampenieši II, Doles Rauši) and at Salaspils Laukskolas.

Based on changes in inventory sets and the nature and decoration of the clothes, the author of the article identified three age groups: children aged under five; children aged from five to 12 years and adolescence, which is determined as the period from 12 or 13 to 16 or 17 for boys, and from 12 to 15 for girls. At the same time, the inventory of the first group does not give grounds to identify the sex, since the style of clothes and accessories, neck-rings, necklaces, bracelets, rings and pendants are no different. Clear distinctions become evident only in the next group: bracelets are the only items remaining in boys' burials, while household items, like a needle case with needles, a spindle with a spinner, and a knife, appear in the girls' burials. In the adolescent boys' graves, variable arms can be found, and in the graves of young girls a sundress fastened at the shoulders with an oval fibulae or pins.²⁷

The research by V. Bandere is partially 'duplicated' by the article by the archaeologist A. Zariņa and the anthropologist Gunita Zariņa on children's burials at Salaspils Laukskolas.²⁸

The authors of the article probably did not know and did not refer to the work by Vita Bandere ten years earlier. Due to the growing importance of interdisciplinary research, and efforts to increase the status of historical anthropology as a scientific

22 R. Spirģis, *Bruņrupuču saktas*, p. 47, tab. 1: 196.

23 R. Spirģis, *Bruņrupuču saktas*, pp. 148–149, 50. att.

24 A. Zariņa, *Lībiešu apģērbs 10.–13. gs.*, Rīga, 1988, pp. 55–63.

25 G. Gerhards, Rīgas 13.–17. gadsimta bērnu un pusaudžu fiziskā attīstība, *Senā Rīga 4: Pētījumi pilsētas arheoloģijā un vēsturē*, Rīga, 2005.

26 V. Bandere, Jaunas atziņas lībiešu kultūras izpētē, *Latvijas vēsture* 3(47), 2002, pp. 25–30.

27 V. Bandere, Jaunas atziņas lībiešu kultūras izpētē, *Latvijas vēsture* 3(47), 2002, pp. 27–28.

28 A. Zariņa, G. Zariņa, Bērni Daugavas lībiešu 10.–13. gadsimta sabiedrībā, *Ikšķiles almanahs*, 4. laid., Ikšķile, 2012, pp. 79–88.

discipline, the authors attribute this direction to 'social bioarchaeology'.

Unfortunately, the age groups mentioned in the above works are not supported by statistical evidence, there is lack of division into chronological periods, and all the material from the tenth to 13th centuries is assessed in its totality, without taking into account the changes taking place throughout these centuries, which makes it impossible to track the availability or the absence of any evolution.

From the point of view of revealing historical processes, the work by the Latvian 'children's bioarchaeologist' Aija Erkšņa (Vilka) was also not very productive; these works not only ignored cultural differences between the Livs, Semigallians and Selonians, but also did not track the evolution of the funeral rite, although the study claims to offer a summary of information on the cemeteries of Salaspils Laukskolas, Selpils Leiasdopeles and Bauskas Čunkāni-Dreņģeri, which chronologically cover a timespan of a thousand years.²⁹ Along with this, the issue of children's burials in the context of the transition of the Livs from cremation to inhumation was also bypassed.

Transition from cremation to inhumation. One of the specific cultural features of the Livs in the Late Iron Age is the considerable variety in the burial rite, which underwent certain changes from the second

half of the tenth century to the 13th century. The transition from cremation to inhumation, which is observed closer to the mid-11th century, can be regarded as one of the key points in this process. No children's burials are known among early cremations. Thus, in the Salaspils Laukskolas cemetery, the best-studied cemetery of the Livs, only two out of 111 cremations are children's cremations, and even they are dated to period II.³⁰ Children's cremations are uncommon in other regions of northern Europe as well.³¹ How can this situation be explained?

The culture of the Livs appeared on the Daugava riverbank in the second half of the tenth century. Pagan cremations from that time look like relatively shallow pits (on average 0.3 to 0.5 metres deep), oval-shaped or round and lenticular-shaped, with an average diameter of 0.5 metres, filled with ashes from the cremation. The pits contain calcinated bones mixed with ashes and melted, charred objects, often previously broken.³²

Similar pagan cremations were widespread in neighbouring areas inhabited by the Scandinavians, Slavs and Baltic Finno-Ugric people. The closest examples to the Livs are the Scandinavian burials in Kurzeme: Grobiņa³³ and recently discovered cemeteries near Kuldīga.³⁴ It is no coincidence that the literature suggests the relocation of part of the population of Scandinavian origin from Kurzeme and

- 29 A. Vilka, Bērnu arheoloģija' un Latvijas arheoloģiskā materiāla izmantošana: vidējā un vēlā dzelzs laikmeta kapulauku piemēri, *Latvijas vēstures institūta žurnāls* 2 (83), 2012, pp. 5–35; A. Vilka, Not just unimportant little things: children in Latvia's middle and late Iron Age mortuary landscape, *Lietuvos archaeologija* 40, 2014, pp. 139–162; A. Vilka, Some aspects of child burials in the Middle and Late Iron Age (5th–12th c.) in the territory of Latvia, *Child and Childhood in the Light of Archaeology*, Wrocław, 2013, pp. 113–135; A. Erkšņa, The children are missing! Some thoughts on the underrepresentation of nonadult burials in Latvian Iron Age cemeteries, *Estonian Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 2, issue 24 (2020), pp. 161–189.
- 30 G. Zariņa, Salaspils Laukskolas 10.-13. gs. iedzīvotāju paleodemogrāfija, Anna Zariņa, *Salaspils Laukskolas kapulauks*, 447. For more information about the transition from cremation to inhumation among the Livs, see: R. Spirģis, R. Brūzis. Cremation and Christianity in the Lower Daugava Area in the Tenth to the 13th Century: A Case Study Based on Liv Burials in the Ogresgala Čabas Cemetery. *Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis* 44. 2023, pp. 27–79, doi: 10.15181/ahuk.v44i0.2571.
- 31 A. Vasks et al., New data on funeral customs and burials of the Bronze Age Reznas cemetery in Latvia, *Estonian Journal of Archaeology* 25, 1, 2021, p. 16, doi: 10.3176/arch.2021.1.01.
- 32 A. Zariņa, Lībieši Daugavas lejtece, p. 195.
- 33 B. Nerman, *Grobin – Seeburg: Ausgrabungen und Funde*, Stockholm, 1958.
- 34 J. Urtāns, S. Zirne, Arheoloģiskie pārbaudes izrakumi Kurzemē, *Arheologu pētījumi Latvijā 2016.–2017. gadā*, Rīga, 2018, pp. 97–103; M. Lūsēns, Jauns skandināvu kapulauks Kurzemē, *Arheologu pētījumi Latvijā 2014.–2015. gadā*, Rīga, 2016, pp. 68–72; M. Lūsēns, Arheoloģiskie pētījumi Kundu senkapos 2017. gadā, *Arheologu pētījumi Latvijā 2016.–2017. gadā*, Rīga, 2018, pp. 68–72.

their active involvement in the ethnogenesis of the Vidzeme Livs.³⁵

In general, since children's cremations from the second half of the tenth century and the beginning of the 11th century have not been found, it seems that the rite of burning the deceased in the eschatological context segregated individuals who had not passed certain age-related initiations. Their bodies did not undergo purification through the flame of fire like other full members of the community. In other words, children were barred from entrance to the conditional 'other world' of the pagan Livs.

It should be noted that a child's body has fewer fat cells, which complicates the combustion process. Therefore, their cremation takes three times longer (in cases of paired cremation with the body of an adult, a child's corpse combusts at the normal rate).³⁶ At the same time, it could hardly be a good enough reason to refuse the cremation of children. Thus, for example, Latvian materials from the Bronze Age have examples of individual children's cremations.³⁷

Children might have been buried separately unburnt. So in one of the earlier cemeteries, Doles Vampeniešu I, a section with children's inhumations was recorded.³⁸ To establish whether these were

children of cremated parents or of parents buried unburnt is a task for further studies.

Inhumations appeared in the Lower Daugava at the same time as cremations, notably of quite a Christian type: in coffins,³⁹ oriented to the northwest, with hands bent and positioned on the breast. Pendant-crosses were not commonly used at that time, so the eggs⁴⁰ found in some burials as a symbol of Easter and resurrection can be mentioned as items with a Christian symbolic meaning.

In turn, at a certain point in the mid-11th century, the number of burials carried out by the cremation rite greatly reduced. This process is most vividly illustrated by an analysis of Liv female burials with oval fibulae (Fig. 4), where the division is explicit.⁴¹ At that time, the number of children's burials also grew rapidly; among inhumations, children's inhumations make up 40%.⁴²

The Latvian archaeologist Ēvalds Mugurevičs, who studied processes of the Christianisation of the population of modern Latvia in the period before the Crusades, mentioned this trend, relating it to the spread of the new religion.⁴³ This matter undoubtedly requires more in-depth assessment, which has already been mentioned in some publications on the

35 R. Spirģis, *Bruņrupuču saktas*, pp. 377–379.

36 G. Zariņa, Salaspils Laukskolā 10.–13. gs. iedzīvotāju, p. 447.

37 A. Vasks et al., New data on funeral customs, p. 18.

38 E. Šnore, Doles Vampeniešu 1971. gada arheoloģiskās ekspedīcijas guvumi, *Zinātniskās atskaites sesijas Materiāli par arheologu, antropologu un etnogrāfu 1971. gada pētījumu rezultātiem*, Rīga, 1972, p. 97.

39 Deal coffins were believed to spread with the Livs later (ca. 1050 according to E. Šnore, or in the late 11th century according to A. Zariņa), while in earlier burials log coffins were used, and as a distinguishing feature she refers to the presence or absence of iron nails (E. Šnore, Daugavas lībieši Doles salā, *Arheoloģija un etnogrāfija*. 18. laid., Rīga, 1996, p. 114) or the narrowness of the coffin (A. Zariņa, Lībieši Daugavas lejtecē, p. 124). In his turn, the Latvian archaeologist Andris Celmiņš analysed the design of coffins from Riga's Medieval cemeteries and noticed frequent cases of the use of pin connections, and thanks to that he came to the conclusion that the absence of nails with wood traces in burials is not an indicator of the incidence of log coffins, but is rather evidence of the use of wooden connection elements in the structure of the deal coffins (A. Celmiņš, Daži Rīgas un Ziemeļkurzemes 11.–14. gadsimta etniskās vēstures aspekti, *Ventspils muzeja raksti*. 2. sēj., Rīga, 2002, p. 163). The Riga material is replete with examples of quite narrow coffins (R. Spirģis, Rīgas Sv. Pēterā baznīcas kapsētas apbedījumu stratigrāfija, *Senā Rīga: Pētījumi pilsētas arheoloģijā un vēsturē*. 7. sēj., Rīga, 2012, pp. 222, 224, 39, 40. att.). Therefore, since Liv burials have no outstanding cases with especially thick walls and remains of bark, in the author's opinion, there are no grounds to state that initially just log coffins were used.

40 E. Šnore, Daugavas lībieši, pp. 118, 122, 127.

41 R. Spirģis, *Bruņrupuču saktas*, pp. 328, 134. att.

42 G. Zariņa, Salaspils Laukskolā 10.–13. gs. iedzīvotāju, p. 447.

43 Ē. Mugurevičs, Krustiņveida piekariņi Latvijā laikā no 11. līdz 15. gs., *Arheoloģija un etnogrāfija*. 9. laid., Rīga, 1974, p. 231.

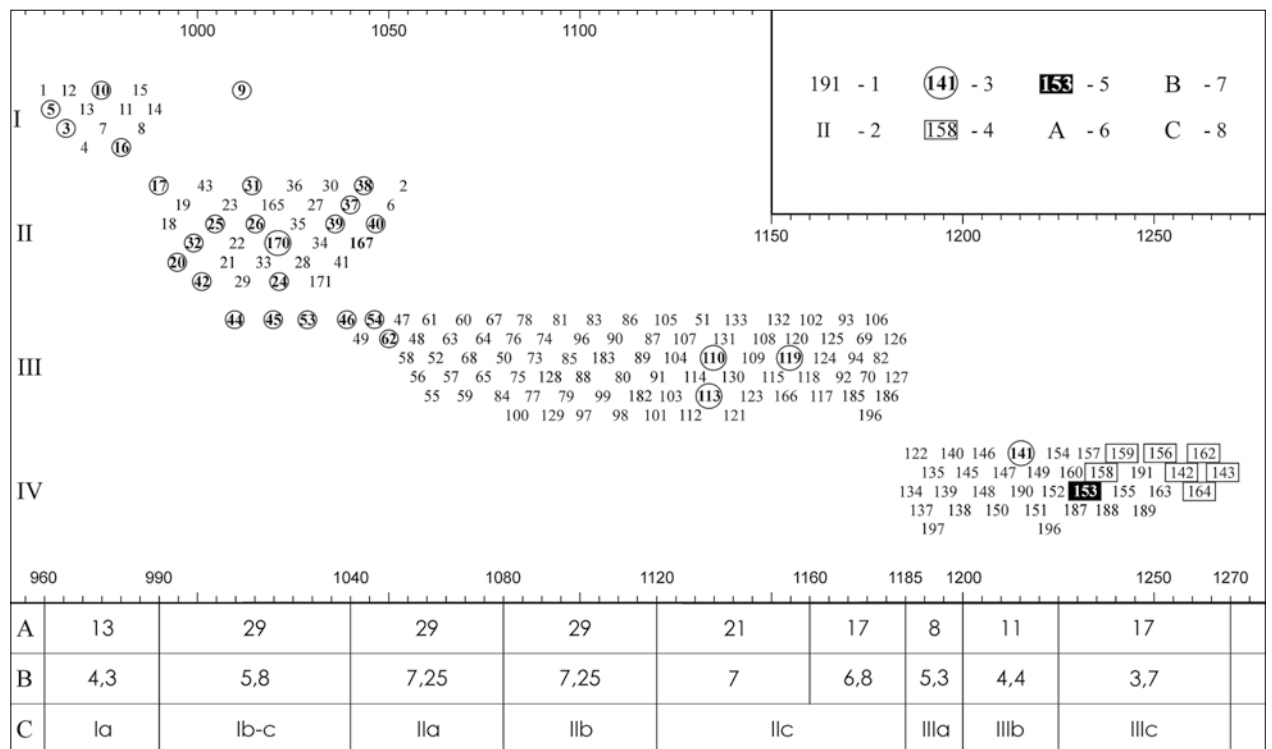


Fig. 4. Chronology of Livs female burials with oval fibulae and chain-like jewellery. After R. Spirģis,

Bruņrupuču saktas, 328, 134. att. (with additions):

- 1 – number of the chain-shaped jewellery according to Table 1 of: Spirģis, Bruņrupuču saktas, 42–47;
- 2 – group of chain-like jewellery; 3 – chain-like jewellery from the cremation; 4 – chain-like jewellery from the church graveyard; 5 – chain-like jewellery from the cremation in the church graveyard;
- 6 – number of chain-like jewellery; 7 – number of chain-like jewellery for 10 years; 8 – period.

Christianisation of the ancient Livs.⁴⁴ Therefore, it would be worth addressing the subject of children's burials through the prism of the incoming Christian doctrine.

The attitude to childhood in Christianity

The first thing that catches our attention when children's burials in the Ogresgala Čabas cemetery are scrutinised is the large number of finds that fall into

⁴⁴ R. Spirģis, Archaeological evidence on the spread of Christianity to the Lower Daugava area (tenth–13th century), *Rome, Constantinople and Newly-Converted Europe Archaeological and Historical Evidence*, Vol. 1, Kraków, Leipzig, Rzeszów, Warszawa, 2012, p. 707; R. Spirģis, Kristieši pirms krusta kariem Latvijas teritorijā? Kristietības izplatība Daugavas lībiešu zemēs 11.–12. gs., *Arheoloģija un etnogrāfija*. 26. Isid., Rīga, 2013, pp. 134–135; R. Spirģis, Arkheologicheskie svidetel'stva rasprostraneniya khristianstva na zemlyakh daugavskikh livov v XI–XII vv., *Arheologiya i istoriya Pskova i Pskovskoy zemli*, Seminar imeni akademika V.V. Sedova: Materialy 58-ogo zasedaniya. Vyp. 28, Moskva, Pskov, 2013, p. 377.

the category of personal piety (Fig. 3): in four burials (22, 30, 33, 24), cross pendants were found (Fig. 3: 1–4, 8), which, compared with undisturbed burials (30, 33), had a central place in the necklace. Coin pendants with an image of a cross or a saint on them (15, 29) can also be attributed to items of personal piety (Fig. 3: 5–7). Other amulets found in children's burials are also in line with the conclusion about the affiliation of deceased children with the Christian community. They could function within the new religion already as Christian amulets. Thus, amber like 'honey of a Baby Christ' in the people's Christianity served as an amulet protecting from the forces of hell (Fig. 2: 8).⁴⁵ The image of a bull on pendants (Fig. 3: 9) could be associated with the symbols of some saints (St Antipas of Pergamum, St Eustace, St Pelagia of Tarsus, and others) who allegedly suffered martyrdom by an execution widely known in antiquity, the bronze bull of Phalaris.⁴⁶ The use of the fangs and claws of a predator as a Christian amulet (Fig. 2: 5), including with a Christian inscription, is also well known in literature.⁴⁷ The presence of inventory and barrow mounds does not contradict this either.⁴⁸

In my opinion, along with the shift away from cremations, the integration of children in the 'otherworldly' space of a burial site is an important element allowing us to see profound changes in the religious concepts of the Livs. Indeed, in the Christian world,

the attitude to children was different from the traditions of the pagan era. Examples can be found in Christian art. Thus, images of God as a child were widespread, they were of the Emmanuel iconographic type, meaning a baby (Fig. 5:2). This attitude is based on attention paid to the earthly life of the Saviour. At the same time, the period of His childhood was not overlooked, and in some apocryphal Gospels, events from the Saviour's childhood are described in detail.⁴⁹ In mosaics, frescoes and icons in churches, one of the central and most touching scenes depicts relations between the young Christ and the Mother of God (Fig. 5: 1), and they are intended to reveal the essence of Christian love.

The motif of the Massacre of the Innocents cannot be left unremarked (Fig. 5: 3). In fact, it is the children from Bethlehem who were the first martyrs in the name of Jesus Christ.⁵⁰ Everyone knew this story as part of the Christmas cycle. The plot could also have been interpreted as the juxtaposition of an obsolete 'pagan city' with the coming Christian world built upon love of the neighbour.

It can be noted that since the 13th century, the concept of the soul of the deceased leaving the body through the mouth and being taken away by two angels like a baby, swaddled, and brought to the gates of paradise, was disseminated. On the other hand, the soul of a sinner was pulled out by the devil like a tooth.⁵¹

45 L. Charbonneau-Lassay, *Bestiario del Cristo. La misteriosa emblematica di Gesù Cristo*. Vol. 2, Roma, 1994, p. 392.

46 R. Spīrģis, *Kristieši pirms krusta kariem*, pp. 125–128; R. Spīrģis, *Arkheologiskie svidetel'stva*, pp. 374–375, 456–457.

47 One of the latest works on this group of artefacts is: A. Musin, *Czy król Zygmunt III Waza był w dzieciństwie poganinem? Między pogaństwem a chrześcijaństwem, o fenomenie amuletów z zębów i kości zwierząt, Ot Bachórza do Światowida ze Zbrucza. Tworzenie się słowiańskiej Europy w ujęciu źródłoznawczym*, Księga jubileuszowa Profesora Michała Parczewskiego, Kraków, Rzeszów, 2016, pp. 421–440.

48 A.E. Musin, *Khristianizatsiya Novgorodskoy zemli v IX–XIV vekakh. Pogrebal'nyy obryad i khristianskie drevnosti*, Sankt-Peterburg, 2002.

49 A.A. Tkachenko, *Evangelija detstva, Pravoslavnyaya entsiklopediya*, Tom 17, Moskva, 2008, pp. 39–40.

50 As Augustine of Hippo wrote: '*Habet enim et illa parva aetas magnum testimonii pondus, quae prima pro Christo meruit sanguinem fundere*' (Aurelius Augustinus. *De Genesi ad Litteram*, accessed 11 September 2024, online: https://la.wikisource.org/wiki/De_Genesi_ad_Litteram/X).

51 F. Ariès, *Chelovek pered litsom smerti*, Moskva, 1992, p. 219; D. Antonov, M. Maizul, *Anatomiya ada: Putevoditel' po drevnerusskoy vizual'noy demonologii*, Moskva, 2014, pp. 78–86.



Fig. 5. The theme of childhood in Christian iconography:
1 – Virgin of Tenderness, icon, mid-12th century, adapted according to: Natalia Mayorova, Gennady Skokov, *Masterpieces of Russian Iconography* (Moscow: Bely Gorod, 2008): 42; 2 – Christ Emmanuel, mosaic of the Cathedral of Monreale, Sicily (photograph by the author); 3 – The Massacre of the Innocents, detail from the altar of the church at Ølst, Denmark, early 13th century. National Museum of Denmark, D5144. Photograph by R. Spirģis.

I believe that the best illustration of the change in attitude to children's eschatology in Christianity is the story in the Gospel where children were brought to Christ for a blessing. The Apostles tried to prevent it, which shows the 'traditional attitude', and Christ responded as follows: 'Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven'.⁵²

Perceptions of the ages of life in the Middle Ages

The concept of the Church is that children are 'a gift from God', and the growth in their number is directly related to the covenant of God to 'be fruitful and multiply' that makes them live the embodiment of the glory of the Almighty.⁵³ Medieval treatises, including

⁵² Mat. 19:14.

⁵³ R. Fossier, *Lyudi srednevekov'ya*, Sankt-Peterburg, 2010, p. 44.

pseudoscientific encyclopedias, whose leitmotif was to demonstrate the unity of nature and God, often referred to the topic of the ages of man. The traditionally identified ages were childhood and adolescence, youth and young adulthood, old age and decrepitude. The number of ages could correlate with the number of planets, and each age could correlate with a segment of life of seven years.⁵⁴ It was Isidore of Seville who characterised infancy (*infantia*) as a period when a child under seven years old learns to speak in connected speech, and when the teeth are being formed. Then comes childhood (*pueritia*, a term derived from the word *purus*, meaning 'pure', according to Isidore's etymology), which lasts from seven to 14 years old. Thereafter comes adolescence (*adolescencia*), when the reproductive age is reached.⁵⁵ Each of these ages had specific sacraments, which regulated relations between a child and God, the Church, and society.

Infancy. The life of Jesus Christ and the Holy Family as a whole is the undoubted example of the ages of life for a new Christian concept. During His years of human life, Jesus lived through infancy, adolescence and youth, which indicates the possibility of sanctity in these ages.⁵⁶ Therefore, Christianity developed a system of prayers and rituals that take care of the spiritual life of the person from the first days of his or her life. Like Jesus, children were washed after their birth; the prayers of the eighth day drew a parallel with the circumcision of Christ on the eighth

day of his life.⁵⁷ As Mary brought Christ to the temple for the Days of Purification (the Meeting of the Lord),⁵⁸ it was common to bring babies to the church on the 40th day, when the priest laid them against the holy throne, and thus the child was communed to the holiness of God.⁵⁹

According to the observations of the famous French medievalist Robert Fossier,⁶⁰ a child was a connecting link between the world of adults, which the child was destined to join, and an unknown other-world from where the child had come. Therefore, the child was sacralised in a certain way. It was believed that the child's mouth told the will of a deceased, or of God Himself, and the child's gestures should be interpreted as religious signs. No wonder that the beginning of a human life carried with it a whole tangle of theological problems resolved in different ways at various stages in the history of Christianity. It is, first and foremost, the matter of baptism in infancy, the innocence of infants, the limbo of infants, and so forth.

Infant baptism. A person joined the body of the Church through baptism. The dominating concept of baptism in early Christianity was baptism at a conscious age, and even more, at the 'age of Christ', in other words, at 30.⁶¹ It was also practised to carry out baptism before death to wash away the sins of the pagan life once and for all, following the example of the Emperor Constantine the Great.⁶² Later, there was a system of ritual teaching developed for those who

54 F. Ariès, *Rebenok i semeynaya zhizn' pri Starom poryadke*, Yekaterinburg, 1999, pp. 30–31.

55 Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, ed. and trans. Stephen A. Bartley, W.J. Lewis, J.A. Besch, O. Berghof, Cambridge, 2006, Book XI, §ii: 1–4.

56 A. Tkachev, *Vozrast zrelosti*, Portal 'Pravoslaviye.ru', accessed 30 December 2022, online: <https://pravoslavie.ru/45039.html>.

57 Luk. 2:21.

58 Luk. 2:22.

59 M. Zholtov, *Chinoposledovaniye kreshcheniya i miropomazaniya v pravoslavnoy traditsii*, *Pravoslavnaya entsiklopediya*, Tom 38, Moskva, 2015, pp. 651–652.

60 Fossier, *Lyudi srednevekov'ya*, p. 53.

61 E.V. Tkachev, *Kreshcheniye v koptskoy traditsii*, *Pravoslavnaya entsiklopediya*, Tom 38, Moskva, 2015, p. 662.

62 H. Janson, Pagani and Christiani. Cultural Identity and Exclusion Around the Baltic in the Early Middle Ages, *The Reception of Medieval Europe in the Baltic Sea Region: papers of the 12th Visby Symposium, held at Gotland University (2002)*, Visby, 2009, p. 186.

expressed their desire to be baptised, the so-called 'catechumenate'. The catechumens could be baptised only after a certain established period had expired, having grown strong in their beliefs.

In the Roman Empire, after the complete victory of Christianity, they started baptising people in infancy. Missionaries, in their turn, encountered pagan peoples again and again, and had to return to the proven practice of catechumenate, when pagans were taught the basics of Christianity in depth and went through a whole string of religious activities. The first step was attributed to the category of 'listener', who was entitled to attend readings of the Gospel. After three years, a candidate would become a 'proclaimer', and having gone through some instructions and rituals would become a 'chosen'.⁶⁵ During Church services, the catechumens stood in the porch of the church, where wall paintings usually depicted the Last Judgement and the horrors of hell for educational purposes,⁶⁴ as a visual reminder of the future destiny of those who failed to be converted in this world, which in its essence was a kind of blackmail for pagans and sinners. And only then, having gone through a series of exorcisms, followed baptism.

In a while, a generation or two later, after the missionary phase was over, when Christianity had already taken firm root in society, and there were no more pagans left in the community, the institution

of the catechumenate lost its significance, and people were baptised in childhood, entrusting the care of their spiritual upbringing to the godparents.

Limbo of infants. With this in the background, the fate of unbaptised children who died in infancy remained the subject of urgent discussions for centuries in the Middle Ages. According to the Saviour's words: 'Amen, Amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,'⁶⁵ so unbaptised infants were doomed. Therefore, infants, as well as pregnant women and women in childbirth, who were considered unclean, were not allowed to be buried in the holy ground of the cemetery.⁶⁶ On the other hand, infants were not burdened with any personal sins, but original sin only,⁶⁷ and were compared directly to the first man, Adam.⁶⁸ For this reason, a separate 'location' was 'allocated' in the otherworld for them, the limbo of infants.

The limbo of infants was seen as a gloomy but not tortuous place, without bodily torments, since those who died as infants bore only the curse of Adam.⁶⁹ Infants were considered to be subject to the lightest punishment only, and some theologians believed that it was not about punishment, but merely about the postponement of bliss.⁷⁰ In practice, this 'postponement' could be bypassed by burying infants under the gutter of a church so that rainwater running off the roof of the church could bring them baptism.⁷¹

63 D. Artyomkin, Kreshcheniye v kanonicheskom prave Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi, *Pravoslavnaya entsiklopediya*, Tom 38, Moskva, 2015, p. 955.

64 V.Ya. Petrukhin, Khristianstvo na Rusi vo vtoroy polovine X – nachale XI veka, *Khristianstvo v stranakh Vostochnoi, Yugo-vostochnoy i Tsentral'noy Evropy na poroge vtorogo tysyachletiya (Studia historica)*, Moskva, 2002, p. 87.

65 Iohn 3: 5.

66 V. Muižnieks, Neparasti gulditi mirušie Latvijas vēsturisko laiku kapsētās, *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls* 1, 2007, p. 43.

67 Zh. L. Goff, *Rozhdeniye chistilishha*, Ekaterinburg, 2011, p. 326.

68 '... unumquemque parvulum non esse nisi Adam et corpore et anima, et ideo illi Christi gratiam necessariam' (Aurelius Augustinus. *De Genesi ad Litteram*, accessed 11 September 2024, online: https://la.wikisource.org/wiki/De_Genesi_ad_Litteram/X).

69 L. Goff, *Rozhdeniye chistilishha*, p. 390.

70 L. Goff, *Rozhdeniye chistilishha*, p. 398.

71 V. Muižnieks, Neparasti gulditi, p. 44. The sacrament of baptism is aimed at the soul, and not body, and the church does not baptise the dead (Aurelius Augustinus, *De Genesi ad Litteram*, accessed 11 September 2024, online: https://la.wikisource.org/wiki/De_Genesi_ad_Litteram/XI). Therefore, this manifestation of 'folk' Christianity engages the 'highest spheres', since it was believed that rainwater originates directly from God (E.P.B., Kreshcheniye: Pravoslavnoye dogmaticheskoye ucheniye o tainstve kreshcheniya. Vidimaya storona tainstva. *Pravoslavnaya entsiklopediya*, Tom 38, Moskva, 2015, p. 616).

Communion of children. Thereafter, children were gradually introduced into the Church. In Orthodoxy, children were allowed to receive communion from a young age. Pieces of prosphora in the chalice were dipped in wine and given to children with a small spoon.⁷² Spoon-shaped pendants found in children's and female burials can be evidence of the practice of this communion rite among the Livs.⁷³ By contrast, in Catholicism, children are not allowed to receive communion, on the assumption that young children are still unintelligent beings.

Adolescence. In traditional societies, before educational institutions were introduced, adolescents were used by adults to provide services: they herded, learned crafts, and received military training. In the army, they could perform various auxiliary duties, being engaged as messengers, guards, etc. It is not surprising that with the emergence of social stratification, people at the bottom of the hierarchical ladder and servants in Rus' were often called 'отроки' (adolescents), a term used to denote a low age group.

The modern Church sees the end of infancy at the age of seven. As St Thomas Aquinas wrote: 'Thus we speak of a man being an infant until he has the use of reason'.⁷⁴ Therefore, the Church believes that from this age a person can fight against evil in himself or herself. As a consequence, he or she assumes responsibility for his or her actions before God, and has the right to receive gracious forgiveness in the sacrament of Penance. At the same time, the Church

Fathers already understood that the development of a child could go in different ways. According to the 18th rule of St Timothy of Alexandria, adopted at the Sixth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople, 680), 'Sins are judged by God [the essence of the sacrament of Confession] individually according to the knowledge and reasoning of each person. Some are judged from the age of ten, and others from a later age'.⁷⁵ Thus, the beginning of the practice of confession marks the end of infancy, and the child is given the status of an adolescent.

Other variable age-specific initiations were probably also practised. For example, in ancient times in Byzantium, a few years after being baptised, children underwent a rite of cutting, when four small strands of hair were cut crosswise on the head. The ritual marked the transition from childhood to adolescence, and had the symbolic meaning of bringing the first gift to Christ, and thus recognising the authority of Christ. When adolescents reached ultimate maturity, the beard was cut in the same way.⁷⁶

In Catholicism in the Late Middle Ages, confirmation became a rite of passage to a new age group. Until then, the gap between baptism and confirmation did not usually exceed a year,⁷⁷ and from the 13th and 14th centuries, confirmation was carried out when a conscious age was reached, i.e. at the age of about seven years. Nowadays, the sacrament of confirmation is preceded by a period of additional education for children, and is performed at the end

72 Infants were given for communion only the 'blood of Christ' (M. Zholtov, 'Lzhitsa', *Pravoslavnaya entsiklopediya*, Tom 40, Moskva, 2015, p. 294).

73 R. Spīrgis, V. Kuznetsova, V. Sobolev, Spoon-shaped pendants in the culture of the Livonians and inhabitants of ancient Russia in the 11th–13th centuries: preliminary study results, *Eesti ja soome-ugri keeleteaduse ajakiri* 13, 1, 2022, doi:10.12697/jeful.2022.13.1.10.

74 Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa Theologiae*, Second Part of Second Part, Question 24, Article 9 (answer), accessed 11 September 2024, online: <https://www.newadvent.org/summa/3024.htm#article9>

75 Canon rule of Timothy, Bishop of Alexandria № 18, *Kanonicheskie pravila Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi s tolkovaniyami*, accessed 30 December 2022, online: <https://orthodoxbible.ru/canons.php?id=27&canon=18>.

76 Zholtov, *Chinoposledovaniye kreshcheniya*, p. 654; v pozdnevzantiyskuyu epokhu postrizheniye volos detyam sovershalos' vo vremya kreshcheniya.

77 Until the 13th century, confirmation was an official part of the rite of baptism (A.A. Tkachenko, 'Konfirmatsiya', *Pravoslavnaya entsiklopediya*, Tom 37, Moskva, 2015, p. 478).

of adolescence (the age may vary from country to country in the Catholic world).⁷⁸

It should be added that in one way or another, adolescence has been widely reflected in hagiography and in the Holy Scriptures, where 'adolescent', 'adolescents' and 'adolescent women' are used 126 times. Perhaps the most popular holy adolescents are the three young men in the fiery furnace⁷⁹ and the seven Sleepers of Ephesus.⁸⁰

Majority. According to the Jewish tradition, a 13-year-old boy reads the Book of the Law in the presence of adults and becomes a 'son of the covenant'. From this moment on, he is considered an adult, and henceforth he is obliged to fulfil all the commandments. The ignorance of childhood is over.⁸¹ As the Gospel tells us, Jesus Christ entered the temple in Jerusalem at the age of 12, that is, less than a year before His majority: He sat 'in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at his wisdom and His answers'.⁸²

Not accidentally, the Livs' knightly legislation also registers the child's right to take ownership of the inherited line and take an oath of loyalty to the suzerain from the age of 12.⁸³

The age of majority was closely linked to the possibility of marriage, i.e. with the age qualification to pass through the sacrament of marriage, which was 12 years for the bride and 14 years for the groom. In this regard, it should also be noted that in the old days the engagement, blessed by the Church, was of

great importance, and the parents of the bride and the groom could conclude the engagement when the children reached the age of seven.⁸⁴

Discussion

Being an archaeologist myself, a representative of a discipline claiming to be an 'exact' science, I would like to see direct correlations between the age of buried individuals and changes in their accompanying inventory, which would clearly identify the sex and age groups that existed in the society under study. Ideally, such groups could be associated with data in written sources. Unfortunately, it is not that simple. As anthropology points out, due to the individual peculiarities of the organism, or external factors, the person's calendar age might not match his or her biological age. And social age is still more complicated to establish, as it means revealing the norms and ideas about an individual in the society under study, based on the individual's age.⁸⁵

There is no doubt that the study of Christian or Christianised society should be based on concurrent ecclesiastical practices. At the same time, a researcher may expect to face a number of challenges. Despite the dogmatic and conservative nature of Church institutions, ritual changed, although slowly, over the centuries. Medieval rites are significantly different from contemporary ones. At the same time, the timeline and the progress of change are not always

78 O.C. Napjurkovskij, A. S. Gorelov, Miropomazanie, *Katolicheskaja jenciklopedija*, Tom 3, Moskva, 2007, p. 432.

79 Dan 1:7, 3:24–95.

80 I. Voraginskiy, *Zolotaya legenda*, Tom 2, Moskva, 2018, pp. 102–106.

81 Tkachev, *Voзраст zrelosti*.

82 Luk 2:46–47. In the contemporary Catholic Church, to celebrate this event, children aged 12 or 13 undergo education and confirmation. Until the 13th century, confirmation was an official part of the rite of baptism (A.A. Tkachenko, *Konfirmatsiya, Pravoslavnaya entsiklopediya*, Tom 37, Moskva, 2015, p. 478.).

83 'Livonijas senākās bruņinieku tiesības', 12. nodaļa, §3, *Seno paražu un Livonijas tiesību avoti. 10. gs. – 16. gs.* (Latvijas tiesību avoti. Teksti un komentāri, 1. sējums), Rīga, 1998, p. 49.

84 V. Cypin, *Brak: Zaključenje braka v hristianskoj cerkvi: Zaključenje braka v Vizantii*, *Pravoslavnaja jenciklopedija*, Tom 6, Moskva, 2003, p. 151.

85 Vilka, 'Bērnū arheoloģija', p. 12; Zariņa, *Bērnū Daugavas lībiešu*, p. 79.

sufficiently reflected in the sources. For example, in the 13th century, baptism became the norm for the Latins, the rite of confirmation was separated from baptism, and communion was forbidden until the age of 'distinction',⁸⁶ but it is not clear when these changes were specifically introduced in Livonia. As a result, researchers have different interpretations for the elements of the baptismal ritual of the local population described in the Chronicle of Henry of Latvia.⁸⁷ It is assumed that in the course of forced baptism (or might it mean re-baptism?), missionaries could have used various simplified versions of the ritual. As a comparison, the 'normal' Latin baptismal rite in the Middle Ages consisted (not counting pre-baptismal rites) of laying hands on the baptised, reciting (returning) the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, drawing the sign of the cross on the forehead, exorcism, the opening of the ears and nostrils (rite of Ephpheta), the renunciation of Satan, the recitation of the formula for anointing with oil, processions around the font, kneeling in prayer, the blessing of candles and water, the repeated renunciation of Satan, the profession of faith, proclaiming the desire to be baptised, immersion in water crosswise, the anointing of the head with chrism, and confirmation.

When assessing available materials which may testify to Christian rituals considering the historical and geographical peculiarities of the location in the lower River Daugava, where at a certain time not only Latin, but also Orthodox Christianisation

might have taken place, it is important to bear in mind that some points of view on the age of initiation, as well as the elements of rituals, might have been different in these two confessions. Initially, the Church could adapt to local customs in terms of the age of initiation.

For example, the Latin Church was built on the premise that children should be baptised as early as possible. Thus, according to the decrees of Charlemagne (Carolus Magnus) concerning the newly conquered lands of the Saxons, a child had to be baptised within a year after birth.⁸⁸ Moreover, in the Latin church, baptism was carried out not only at Easter but also on Trinities. By contrast, the Byzantine custom required the baptism of children to be carried out only after some glimpse of consciousness was formed, at the age of about three years.⁸⁹

These days, it is customary in the Orthodox Church to lay a pectoral cross together with the white 'baptismal vesture' on a newly baptised person at the end of baptism.⁹⁰ Mandatory Church requirements to wear the cross go back to the 17th century. Before that, starting from the 11th century, written sources simply stated the fact of cross wearing. The 'Questions of Kirik' in the 12th century tell of the prohibition to place icons in a grave,⁹¹ so we can assume the existence of a requirement to remove Christian symbols from the deceased before burial. This explains the absence of crosses in the burials of adults both in the cemetery in our study and their rare presence

86 A.A. Tkachenko, *Chin kreshhenija v katolicheskoj Cerkvi*, *Pravoslavnaja jenciklopedija*, Tom 38, Moskva, 2015, p. 669.

87 For example, some historians believe that in certain cases when the story goes about sprinkling the population of conquered settlements, it means some special rite of exorcism, not baptism (M. Ščavinskas, *The Christianisation of the Past [the Example of the Baltic Society in High Middle Ages]*, *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae*, 2017, Vol. 22, pp. 366). Similarly, anointing might not have been an element of baptism, but a separately carried-out confirmation (A. James Brundage, *Introduction: Henry of Livonia, the writer and his Chronicle*, *Crusading and chronicle writing on the medieval Baltic frontier: a companion to the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, Farnham [England], Burlington [USA], 2011, p. 17).

88 D.V. Smirnov, *Razvitie uchenija o kreshhenii v katolicheskoj Cerkvi do Trinedatskogo Sobora (kon. 8–16 v.)*, *Pravoslavnaja jenciklopedija*, Tom 38, Moskva, 2015, p. 671.

89 Zhjoltov, *Chinoposledovanie kreshhenija*, p. 651.

90 Also, p. 653.

91 A.E. Musin, *Khristianizatsiya Novgorodskoy zemli v IX–XIV vekakh. Pogrebal'nyy obryad i khristianskie drevnosti*, Sankt-Peterburg, 2002, pp. 73–75.

in burial sites in the Orthodox lands in Eastern Europe as a whole. As the archaeological material of the Livs shows, since the first sacrament was of special importance for the salvation of a child's soul, an exception for this symbol of baptism was often made in case of a child's death.

Guided by canonical formulations, Church leaders knew from their personal experience that the 'age of mind' in children could start at different times. Therefore, going through certain Christian initiations was prescribed only when a child was ready for it. Naturally, a priest could only fully realise the degree of a particular child's development if he lived directly among the population he served.

Moreover, before the arrival of German missionaries, the eastern part of the modern territory of Latvia was most likely served through a system of 'pogosti' (*nozocm* in Russian), administrative and territorial districts to collect tribute and taxes.⁹² Under these circumstances, the congregation itself was likely to take care of Christian education, and Church services might have been periodically difficult to access due to the underdeveloped network of churches and the absence of a priest on a permanent basis. At the same time, there might have been delays in age-associated Church initiations.

A dense network of parishes in the Liv-populated territories began to emerge only with the formation of Latin Livonia at the beginning of the 13th century.⁹³ On the other hand, with the spread of mendicant orders, the Church's pressure on parishioners increased, and negligent parents or priests were punished for any delay in the baptism of children.⁹⁴ Thus,

in the Middle Ages, the time of Church age-associated 'initiations' could be different, which should be taken into account when extending the chronological scope of the research.

At the same time, it should be noted that at Ogresgala Čabas, a cross appears only in burials of children aged four or five years and older. This situation may indicate the Orthodox custom of child baptism from the age of three. On the other hand, necklaces with coins are recorded on 1.5 to 2.5-year-olds and older children. These coins might possibly have been consecrated by a priest like crosses and served as a symbol of going through the rituals on the 40th day from birth, as this rite was associated with the symbolic redemption of the baby in the Temple.⁹⁵

It should be noted that in the event of mortal danger a child could be baptised at any age, and no priest was necessary. The laity, including women, were allowed to perform the rite. If the child survived, such 'incomplete baptism' had to be confirmed in a church by anointing, for which the use of myrrh consecrated by a bishop was required.⁹⁶ That is why the burial sites of Orthodox Christians may well have burials of children younger than three years, the age prescribed for baptism.

Conclusions

The materials from the Ogresgala Čabas cemetery collected at the modern methodological level are an important source of information that allows us to take a fresh look at existing problems related to

92 About the development and growth of the 'pogost-churchsystem' structure in northwest Russia, see S.A. Salmin, 'Prestol'nye posvjashhenija pogostskih cerkvej', *Vestnik universiteta Dmitrija Pozharskogo* 2 (14), 2019.

93 About the network of Church parishes in Latin Livonia, see: A. Selart, Die Rolle des Deutschen Ordens bei der Entstehung der Pfahrrorganisatin in Livland, *Ordines Militeres. Colloquia Tourensia Historica. Yearbook for the Study of the Military Orders* 23, 2018.

94 Ariès, *Rebenok i semejnaja zhizn'*, p. 18.

95 It has been suggested in literature that Catholics could regard a coin as a symbol of having gone through confirmation (B. Yorke, 'The Weight of necklaces': some insights into the wearing of women's jewellery from Middle Saxon written sources, *Studies in early Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology: papers in honour of Martin G. Welch*, BAR British series 527, Oxford, 2011, p. 109.

96 M. Zhjoltov, *Kreshhenie v kanonicheskom prave Pravoslavnoj Cerkvi, Pravoslavnaja jenciklopedija*, Tom 38, Moskva, 2015, p. 655.

the culture of the ancient Livs, in particular those concerning children's burials. The children's inhumations studied date back to the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century, and do not form a separate section, but are distributed evenly within the whole area of the cemetery studied among burials of adults.

Because of the statistical unrepresentativeness of the total number of children's burials studied in the cemetery, it does not seem appropriate to isolate any age group on the basis of an assessment of the inventory. Such research would require special studies covering all Liv burial sites and the breakdown of the material into chronological periods. The excavations have not answered the question about the method of burying infants: only two burials of children aged 1.5 to 2.5 were found. At the same time, the conceptualisation of the archaeological data collected from Medieval perceptions of the ages of life and Christian views on human childhood allows us to draw a number of important conclusions.

From the viewpoint of Christianity, the age of a person was determined by his or her relationship with God, which is directly related to the development of consciousness in a child. Considering the changes observed in Liv funeral rites, such as the drastic reduction in the number of cremations, the spread of laying skeletons in board coffins, and the spread of items of personal piety, which obviously occurred as a result of Christianisation, the consideration of data

collected through the prism of the Medieval Christian perception of childhood can become a source enabling fresh interpretations. Thus, the spread of items of personal piety in children's inhumations in the 12th century may indicate that at that time the baptism of children aged about three years was already practised, which matches the perceptions of the Greek Catholic Orthodox Church of baptism 'in infancy'. This situation indicates that at that time the Daugava Livs were already bearers of Christian culture and had already gone through the 'missionary' phase of Christianisation.

In my opinion, this is exactly the situation shown by the phenomena observed in Liv cemeteries. The early sections of the cemeteries from the second half of the tenth to the first half of the 11th century, with an approximately equal number of cremations and inhumations, can be associated with the initial, missionary phase of 'peaceful' Christianisation, when baptism was accepted by part of the population (early inhumations), and the institution of listeners and proclaimers existed. At that time, there was an 'intensive' training of neophytes. By about 1050, the Livs had mostly ended cremations, which might indicate the completion of the missionary phase and the people's baptism. On the other hand, inhumations at the Ogresgala Čabas cemetery, with items of personal piety in children's burials, represent the next level in the life of a Christian community.

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Ogresgalos Čabo kapinyne vaikų kapų medžiaga krikščionybės plėtros Dauguvos žemupio XI–XIII a. kontekste

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Straipsnyje nagrinėjami 2007–2008 m. tirti Ogresgalos Čabo kapinyne vaikų kapai. 1,5–13 m. amžiaus vaikų palaikai rasti devyniuose kapuose (pav. 1), iš viso kapavietėje – 38. Mirusieji paguldyti ant nugarų, galvos – į šiaurę arba šiaurės vakarus. Kasinėjimai suteikė duomenų apie neišlikusius pilkapius. Galima išskirti 3 pilkapius su dviejų vaikų arba moters ir vaiko palaikais. Vaikai palaidoti šventiniais drabužiais su jų amžių atitinkančiais miniatiūriniais daiktais (pav. 2).

Reikia pabrėžti, kad vaikų kapuose daug asmeninių su tikėjimu siejamų daiktų (pav. 3): 4-iuose – karoliai su kryželiu centre. Prie tokių daiktų priskirtini ir monetos-pakabukai su kryžiaus arba šventojo atvaizdu.

Be asmeninių pamaldumo daiktų, krikščionybės plitimą lyvių žemėse liudija inhumacijos plitimas, taip pat laidojimas mediniuose karstuose. Tyrėjai jau yra pastebėję, kad ankstyvuosiuose X a. lyvių pagoniškuose degintiniuose kapinyuose nėra vaikų kapų.

Inhumacijos papročių plėtra XI a. viduryje nulėmė ir vaikų kapų skaičiaus didėjimą: tai liudija, kad pakito bendruomenės požiūris į vaikus. Iš esmės vyko jų integracija į „anapusinę“ kapavietės erdvę.

Straipsnyje siūloma analizuoti lyvių kapinyne tendencijas Viduramžių gyvenimo amžių suvokimo ir su amžiumi susijusių krikščioniškosios iniciacijos praktikų kontekste. Krikščionių pasaulyje požiūris į vaikus skyrėsi nuo pagonių epochos tradicijų – daug pavyzdžių galima rasti krikščioniškame mene (pav. 5): plačiai paplito Išganytojo kaip vaiko (vadinamo Emanueliu) vaizdavimas, jautrūs Kūdikių Jėzaus ir Dievo Motinos atvaizdai, kūdikių žudynių motyvas ir t. t.

Savo ruožtu asmeninių su krikščionyste siejamų daiktų paplitimas XII a. vaikų griautiniuose kapuose gali liudyti, kad tuo metu krikštas vaikystėje jau buvo įprastas. Reikia pabrėžti: Ogresgalos Čabo kapinyne kryželių randa vyresnių nei 4 m. amžiaus vaikų kapuose – tai irgi atitinka tos epochos praktiką krikštyti trimečius. Ši situacija gali byloti Dauguvos lyvius XII a. pradžioje jau buvus krikščionių kultūros nešėjais, perėjusiais „misionierių“ fazę.

Kitų lyvių kapinyne duomenų tyrimai leis patikrinti ir patikslinti Ogresgalos Čabo vaikų kapų su asmeniniais pamaldumo daiktais tyrimų išvadas.