Kernavė in the context of towns of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania

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Data assembled during archaeological excavations at Kernavė during the last 23 years lead to a conclusion that a town existed here as early as the second half of the 13th century – the 14th century. A whole complex of sites of the period has been excavated for a number of years, including the town itself on the upper and lower terraces of the Neris, the defence system comprising five hill-forts and a burial ground (Kernavė – litewska Troja, 2002). The question, however, is what general urbanization processes the emergence of the town represents, what formation model it followed and under what influences this urban culture was formed.

Contrary to the archaeological evidence, historical sources of the period which have references to Kernavė are very scarce. The town was first mentioned in 1279 when the Livonian Order launched a large-scale military march to the Lithuanian lands reaching as far as Kernavė (Livonijos..., 1991, p. 173). Later references of the town are related to its finale. In 1365 the united troops of the German Order burnt down the castles and the town of Kernavė. In 1390 history repeated itself and the town was never rebuilt. In the second half of the 14th century when the German Order arranged military marches to Lithuania, the castle of Kernavė was mentioned a few times in road descriptions compiled by reconnaissance (Kraštas..., 1988, p. 30–32). Inscriptions in Riga's book of debts witness that representatives of merchants lived in Kernavė at the end of the 13th century. In 1290 reference was made to merchant Rameize, while in 1303 another merchant, Studilė, was mentioned (Das Rigische..., 1872, p. 84). It is also noteworthy that the said Riga's book of debts contains no references to merchants of other contemporary towns of ethnic Lithuania. The name of the first merchant sounds Lithuanian, while the other one is probably of Slavic origin.

Though written sources are scarce, Z. Ivinskis identifies Kernavė as "one of Mindaugas' key castles where one of his major residences could have been located for a rather extended period of time" (Ivinskis, 1991, p. 177). H. Paszkiewicz regarded the town as Mindaugas' capital.

At the time of Traidenis, Kernavė remained an important, or maybe the most important residence of the duke. Both Z. Ivinskis (Ivinskis, 1991, p. 200) and V. Pašuta (Pašuta, 1971, p. 37) identify Traidenis as the duke of Kernavė. When the dynasty of Gediminaičiai came to power, Kernavė and Vilnius, according to E. Gudavičius, were the main centres of the domain, same as during the time of Traidenis (Gudavičius, 1999, p. 74). In the course of the 14th century, however, the situation changed to the disadvantage of the wooden Kernavė. From 1323, Vilnius was mentioned as the capital of the country and brick castles built according to a totally different fortification principle sprang up at the Old Trakai, Vilnius, Medininkai, Krėva, Kaunas and Lyda.

Nevertheless, what place does Kernavė occupy in the history of European towns? During the Middle Ages, the process of European urbanization was based on the foundations of towns of the Roman Empire. West European towns basically grew within the boundaries of the empire provinces. In Eastern Europe, these processes were inspired by the Byzantine culture. In the Baltic Sea basin urban cultures emerged as a consequence of the military and trade activities of the Vikings. In Russia, cities – trade centres developed due to the trade route connecting Scandinavian and Byzantine towns. Most of the later centres of Russian lands can also be regarded as cultural legacy of the disintegrated Kiev Russia. Furthermore, the development of European towns was inspired by the growing influence of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. In this context, the Baltic lands are still a grey area in the development of the Christian European town, while the emergence of such centres as Kernavė and Vilnius remains an object of scientific discussions.

The first three centuries of the 2nd millennium A. D. are characterized as a period of regrouping of political forces and cultural influences all over the Baltic area. At that time, same as at all times, Lithuania was situated at the crossroads of the Western and the Eastern worlds. Any cultural activity in the coastal or eastern Lithuania can be associated with changes of the geopolitical situa-

tion in the widespread European region. Assessment of their significance sheds light on the issues related to the emergence of the first towns, including Kernavė, in Lithuania.

The beginnings of the earliest Lithuanian towns, brainpower towns, spring up at the seaside. These include Palanga and Žardė (Klaipėda). It can be associated with the dynamic military and trade activities of the Scandinavian Vikings. These trade centres, however, existed just as long as Scandinavians needed them. In Lithuania, more substantial urban communities appeared only at the residences of eminent rulers, where craftsmen served the household of the ruler primarily on a compulsory basis. "Towns" of the coastal area, in the meantime, never developed into significant land centres.

The balance of cultural activities in the 13th century were conspicuously in favour of eastern Lithuania. In the course of 100 years, a number of powerful, well-fortified hill-forts appeared, including those of Kernavė, Maišiagala, Aukštadvaris, etc. Cultural layers of the period excavated at fortified foot settlements witness a certain demographic bang, resulting in a significant increase of the population. The causes of the increasing activity in the area, which led to the emergence of the state, can be associated to the geopolitical changes of the country. Eastern Lithuania of the 11th–12th century was just a target in the expansionary policies of Kiev Russia. Russian towns, Grodno, Volkovysk, Slonim and Novogrudok appeared in the ethnic land of Jatvingians as Russian border outposts. From the end of the 12th century, however, Lithuanians started attacking Russian lands themselves. The situation changed even more dramatically after the great Mongolian – Tatar incursion. The above towns were isolated from their political and cultural roots. Mindaugas made a perfect use of the moment and annexed them to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

The complex of archaeological sites of mediaeval Kernavė reflects the historical situation of the time. We can definitely claim that a mediaeval town with all the typical structures of defensive facilities and streets existed here as early as the second half of the 13th century. On the evidence of archaeological investigations, mediaeval Kernavė was at its peak in the end of the 13th century and the first half of the 14th century. The Russian towns of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, located at the upper reaches of the Nemunas, in the meantime, were experiencing a noticeable decline of material culture (Зверуго, 1983, p. 62). The quality and variety of articles manufactured by craftsmen was declining. According to Byelorussian archaeologists, this can again be ex-

plained by the Mongolian – Tatar forays into the lands and towns of southern Russia, closely connected to the upper Nemunas area – the Slavic towns of Black Russia. At the same time, this rather poor period is being identified as the "Lithuanian phase". Thus, the decline of Russian towns coincides with the upsurge of Lithuania's political power and, at the same time, with the economic boom of Kernavė. This was doubtless related to changes in the balance of political forces. Control over crafts and trade was in the jurisdiction of those who were dictating terms in the political and military field.

The stationary archaeological excavations and fieldwalking surveys in the complex of Kernavė's mediaeval sites enable to define the boundaries of the town. The lower town in the "Pajauta" valley covered an area of not less than 11 ha, another 1.5 ha were occupied by buildings of craftsmen constructed on the "Pilies kalnas" hill-fort. To date, the size of homesteads on the upper terrace is not precisely known, though it should not exceed 1 ha. Thus, the overall size of the inhabited area must have been 13.5 ha. One of the comprehensively excavated homesteads at "Pajauta" valley measured almost 1000 m^2. Thus, the number of homesteads in the area could have totalled 135. The above figures, however, do not take into consideration the size of the streets and a probable market place. The actual number of farmsteads should be smaller, close to 80. On the evidence of demographic data, an average family both in Europe and Russia as well as Eastern countries, comprised 6 members. In such a case, at the time when Kernavė flourished, its population could have totalled approximately 500 townsmen. According to data received during excavations of a contemporaneous cemetery and the indices of birth-and death rates as well as the average life expectancy, we can again assume that up to 500 townsmen dwelt in Kernavė during the last stage of its existence (second half of the 14th century) excluding the elite and the soldiery.

The same principle was applied to define the population at centres of Russian lands. The size of the town of Kernavė in the context of the 13th century can be illustrated by a few references: Kiev (~ 300ha) – 37–45 thousand people (before the Mongolian – Tatar invasion), Novgorod – 30–35 thousand, other Russian lands and capitals of dukedoms – from 20 to 30 thousand residents (Древняя..., 1985, p. 65). The latter towns were fortified – they were surrounded by a defensive wall. The homestead plot was limited in space and amounted to just around 400 m^2. This resulted in a higher density of the population amounting to 100–150 individuals per hectare, which is two to three times less than the figures from contempo-

raneous towns in Western Europe or Eastern countries (Древняя..., 1985, p. 65). The density of the population in the town of Kernavė was just 60 residents per hectare. As a matter of fact, it could have been much higher in the fortified, i.e. spaciously limited "Pilies kalnas" hill-fort.

In the context of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Slavic towns of Black Russia were closer to Kernavė in terms of size and population density. The overall volume of the population in a town is believed to be reflected by the size of its fortified part, which served as a shelter for all the residence in the instance of attacks. Novogrudok and Slonim had a fortified territory of 3 ha, Volkovisk barely 1.5 ha. In the meantime, the size of the flat hilltop of the "Castle Hill" in Kernavė totals 2 ha, while the total size of the defensive system of hill-forts is much larger. In any case, it should be taken into account that the size of the fortified part of a town, i. e. the hill-fort is conditioned by the natural landscape and does not reflect the factual size of the population.

Thus, what are the factors that stimulated the emergence and growth of Kernavė? First of all, this is the founding of the state of Mindaugas. Residences of the Duke obtained a qualitatively new status. The increased economic and cultural needs of the feudal elite stimulated concentration of crafts at the manor of the Duke. The increased political and military power of the state provided conditions for the use of the potential of craftsmen from neighbouring lands in the development of towns. This can be particularly associated with the incorporation of Russian towns at the upper Nemunas, namely Grodno, Novogrudok, Volkovysk and Slonim into the Grand Duchy of Lithuanian under the rule of Mindaugas. These towns maintained close ties with Kiev and other centres of southern Russia, especially before the great Mongolian – Tatar incursion. The craftsmen of the Black Russia adopted the high standard of craftsmanship achieved in the Kiev Russia, especially in the field of jewellery. This is reflected in manifestations of both applied and monumental arts. There were brick orthodox churches in Grodno, Novogrudok and Volkovysk in as early as the 12th century. According to the data of archaeological investigations from Novogrudok, jewellers from Kiev worked there along with the local ones (Гуревич, 1980, p. 96). As a matter of fact, the most skilled craftsmen of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania primarily had to work for the feudal elite. Thus, the produce of craftsmen of the Slavic towns mentioned above had to satisfy the needs of the Grand Duke of Lithuania and his entourage first of all. It is very likely that Slavic craftsmen who had long lasting jewellery making traditions worked at the residences of dukes in Lithuania. This is witnessed by 14th century hoards retrieved in the territory of Lithuania, namely Stakliškės, Geliogaliai and Kretinga. Along with the Lithuanian monetary units ingots and imported jewellery, these hoards contained ornaments exceptionally typical to the Baltic context, such as flat and horseshoe brooches (Daugudis, 1968, p. 24). These, however, were produced with the help of intricate technologies of blackening and filigree, which were more familiar to Slavic craftsmen.

Thus, the town of Kernavė emerged in the middle of the 13th century, in the neighbourhood of the castle and the residence of the Duke which by that time had become extremely powerful from the political and military point of view. The town rapidly developed at the end of the 13th and beginning of the 14th century with the help of the industrial potential of the centres of Black Russia which had longer lasting urban traditions.

On the evidence of the geopolitical situation as well as the historical and archaeological data of Kernavė town, we can interpret the specific material of the 13th–14th century Kernavė cemetery, which is untypical of provincial burial sites, and characterise the model of the town community.

To date, 292 burials have been excavated at the 13th–14th century cemetery of Kernavė. The date when exploitation of the cemetery came to an end corresponds to the date when the existence of the town came to an end, i. e. 1390. This is testified by finds of the first Lithuanian coins struck in 1387–1390, uncovered in the burials. The female burials are exceptionally rich and their grave goods represent a wide typological variety. Most of the finds are of local manufacture and some of these are typologically unique, though some are imports from the towns of Russia.

Though artefacts retrieved form the cemetery differ from the material of contemporaneous old cemeteries of Lithuania, they cannot be interpreted as artefacts of imported origin, as legacy of the Slavic community. The closest Slavic neighbours, the Krivichi, buried their dead individuals in barrows and, following the pagan tradition, deposited grave goods only until the 12th century inclusively, while the Kernavė cemetery is dated to the second half of the 13th century, the year 1390. Furthermore, in terms of typology, finds from the Kernavė cemetery have little in common with the artefacts of Krivichi. In the 13th and 14th centuries Slavic townsmen were buried in the vicinity of churches and were virtually not furnished with grave goods. The Kernavė cemetery, in contrast, was set up some distance away from the town and

displayed a purely pagan tradition of depositing supplementary grave goods in the burial. In many cases these include various everyday articles, such as knifes, steels, spinning whorls, needle cases, keys and other. Neither does the cemetery have a strict orientation towards the west, which is typical of Christian burials. Though the western direction dominates, there are many graves oriented towards southwest and northwest. In general, it would not be logical to associate the Kernavė cemetery with the part of the community of a different ethnos, which was living there. The very size of the cemetery (approximately 5350 sq m) and the credible number of graves (about 1570) indicate that it was used to bury inhabitants of the Kernavė town in a wider sense.

Paradoxically, and somewhat painfully, the Lithuanian nature of Kernavė, in the context of towns of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, is testified by the absence of writing. I am not referring to writing on the level of the duke's chancery (one stylus was found at the "Aukuro kalnas" hill-fort), I am referring to everyday life. In the towns of Black Russia, for instance Novogrudok, Grodno, Volkovisk and Slonim, numerous examples of writing are found on various household articles such as pottery, bone artefacts and spinning whorls. Besides, a lot of metal styluses were found in these towns, which is indisputable evidence that Slavians residing there already had their own script. Kernavė is just 150 km away from the towns mentioned above, but we do not have anything similar. Another attribute of every Slavic town since the 12th century, an orthodox church, does not exist, or maybe has not been found yet either. Thus, no traces of noticeable Slavic substratum have been found in the cultural layers of hill-forts and the town.

Some scholars claim that Lithuanians practised cremation until the official christening of Lithuania in 1387, which means that the inhumation cemetery of Kernavė should be regarded as legacy of Christian Slavs. Besides, not a single 13th or 14th century cremation burial has been found on the territory of Lithuania (in the narrow sense). The latest cremation burials in barrows found in this region are dated to the 12th century. Consequently, in the case of Kernavė the inhumation custom of burial cannot serve as an indication of the nationality or confessional affiliation of the dead.

The urban community of Kernavė reached some prosperity at the end of the 13th century and existed for just about 100 years, but it represents a peculiar cultural phenomenon, influenced and shaped to a certain extent by external factors as illustrated by the analysis of groups of concrete artefacts.

Especially magnificent were the diadems found in as many as 30 graves. The number of graves that yielded diadems is greater than anywhere else. The plates of diadems display a surprising variety of the depicted symbols and ornaments. This must have been predetermined by a number of reasons. This type of head ornament is not of local origin (Kiev Russia), hence the likely intermingling of symbols from both local and neighbouring cultures. Diadems found at the Kernavė cemetery were worn by residents of a mediaeval town, while distribution of symbols of neighbouring cultures in towns must have been much faster than the periphery. Symbols struck on the plates of diadems are obviously not of local origin. These include heraldic lilies (fig.1), stylised animals, possibly lions (fig. 2), palmettes (fig. 3) and others. Some of the uncovered diadems, however, were decorated with local, pagan symbols, such as swastikas (fig. 4), a leaf of a trefoil clover or just a simple geometrical pattern. The assumption that the plates of diadems with motifs untypical to the Balts could have been manufactured locally is backed by finds of birch bark decorated with comparable heraldic lilies and palmettes from a homestead of a bone craftsman.

A total of 45 diadems have been found in 6 cemeteries of Lithuania. All of these have been found in the eastern part of Lithuania, in the territory of the former Barrow Culture.

Similar diadems were also worn in contemporaneous centres of Russian lands. The distribution of these head ornaments reached its height in the 13th and 14th century cemeteries along the upper Nemunas. According to the data of A. Kviatkovskaja, a total of 55 examples of this ornament have been found at 11 cemeteries in this area (Kviatkovskaja, 1998, p. 242–243). Sites, which have yielded the majority of diadems, i. e. 40 specimens (72%) are located in a compact territory on the right bank of the Nemunas, in the basin of the Katra river, which many scholars consider to be Baltic. V. Sedov claims that this group of graves with stone cairns is the legacy of the Dainaviai tribe of the Jatvingians and believes that it signifies the outcome of the evolution of the earlier Jatvingian stone barrows (Седов, 1968, p. 26–28).

Diadems are not the only one manifestation of similarity between the Kernavė cemetery and Jatvingian graves with stone cairns. Even grave goods from Kernavė and Jatvingian burial sites, such as diadems, temple ornaments, necklaces, ring types and other are closely related. Russia was organising military raids to the Jatvingian lands from the 10th century. Later on, the Dukes of Galič, Poland and Mosuria intruded into these lands quite a few times.

Fig. 1. Kernavė, grave 177. Diadem plates, gilded silver (2,85×1,9 cm; 1,2×1 cm).

1 pav. Kernavė, kapas 177. Sidabrinės paauksuotos apgalvio plokštelės (2,85×1,9 cm; 1,2 × 1 cm). Fotografavo Arūnas Baltėnas.

Fig. 2. Kernavė, grave 89. Diadem plates, silver (2,1×1,9 cm).

2 pav. Kernavė, kapas 89. Sidabrinės apgalvio plokštelės (2,1×1,9 cm). Fotografavo Arūnas Baltėnas.

Fig. 3. Kernavė, grave 192. Diadem plates, gilded silver (2,27×1,7 cm; 0,9×0,9 cm).

3 pav. Kernavė, kapas 192. Sidabrinės paauksuotos apgalvio plokštelės (2,27×1,7 cm; 0,9×0,9 cm). Fotografavo Arūnas Baltėnas.

**Fig. 4. Kernavė, grave 157. Diadem plates, gilded silver
(1,4×1,4 cm; 1,3×1,3 cm; 1,43×1,43 cm; 1,55×1,55 cm).**

*4 pav. Kernavė, kapas 157. Sidabrinės paauksuotos apgalvio plokštelės
(1,4×1,4 cm; 1,3×1,3 cm; 1,43×1,43 cm; 1,55×1,55 cm). Fotografavo Arūnas Baltėnas.*

**Fig. 5. Kernavė, grave 21. Silver temple ornaments with three beads
(Ø 4,4 cm), decorated with filigree.**

*5 pav. Kernavė, kapas 21. Sidabriniai trikaroliai antsmilkiniai (Ø 4,4 cm), puošti filigranu.
Fotografavo Dalia Vaičiūnienė.*

**Fig. 6. Kernavė, loose find. Gilded silver temple ornament with three beads
(Ø 2 cm), the central bead is of filigree.**

*6 pav. Kernavė, atsitiktinis radinys. Sidabrinis paauksuotas trikarolis antsmilkinis (Ø 2 cm),
vidurinysis karolis puoštas filigranu. Fotografavo Dalia Vaičiūnienė.*

Fig. 7. Kernavė, grave 133. Gilded silver earings (Ø 2,4 cm).
7 pav. Kernavė, kapas 133. Sidabriniai paauksuoti auskarai (Ø 2,4 cm).
Fotografavo Arūnas Baltėnas.

Fig. 8. Kernavė, grave 175. Fragment of a silver necklace – a pendant in the shaped of a stylised lily, an oblong bead with floral ornament and circular bead (6,3 cm; 3,5 cm; 1,1 cm).
8 pav. Kernavė, kapas 175. Sidabrinio kaklo vėrinio fragmentas – stilizuotos lelijos formos kabutis, pailgas karolis, dekoruotas augaliniu ornamentu, bei apvalus karolis (6,3 cm; 3,5 cm; 1,1 cm). Fotografavo Dalia Vaičiūnienė.
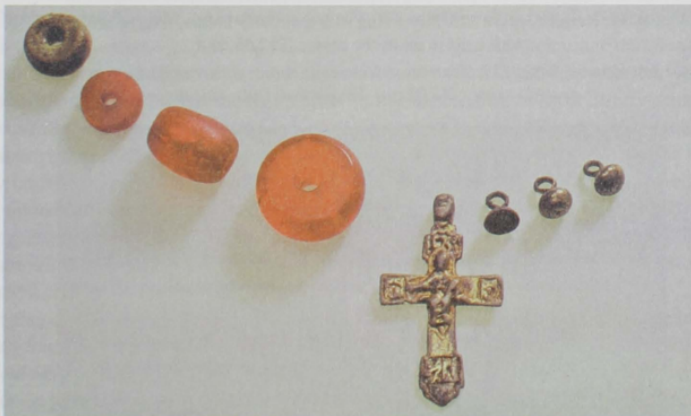

Fig. 9. Kernavė, grave 180. Necklace of three amber and one glass bead, three hollow buttons and cross (3,55×4,30 cm), gilded silver.
9 pav. Kernavė, kapas 180. Kaklo vėrinys iš gintarinių bei stiklinio karolių, sidabrinių paauksuotų sagučių bei kryželio (3,55×4,30 cm). Fotografavo Arūnas Baltėnas.

Fig. 10. Kernavė, grave 191. Silver ring with a circular glass setting, decorated with filigree (Ø 2,1 cm).
10 pav. Kernavė, kapas 191. Sidabrinis žiedas su stiklo akimi, dekoruotas filigranu (Ø 2,1 cm).
Fotografavo Dalia Vaičiūnienė.

**Fig. 11. Kernavė, grave 125. Silver ring with a circular hollow, filigree setting,
with a glass set in the center (Ø 2,05 cm).**

*11 pav. Kernavė, kapas 125. Sidabrinis tuščiaviduris žiedas, padarytas filigrano technika,
su stiklo akimi (Ø 2,05 cm). Fotografavo Dalia Vaičiūnienė.*
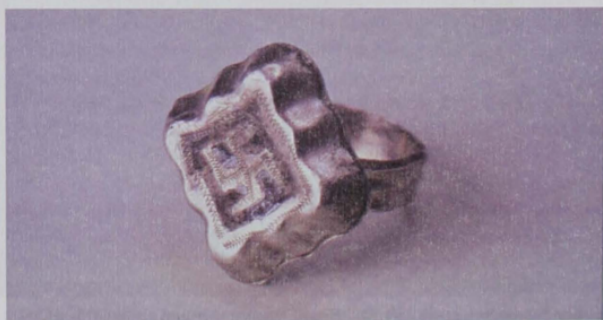

Fig. 12. Kernavė, grave 216. Silver ring with hollow setting made by stamping (Ø 2,3 cm).
*12 pav. Kernavė, kapas 216. Sidabrinis tuščiaviduris žiedas, padarytas metaloplastiniu spaudimo būdu (Ø 2,3 cm). Fotografavo
Arūnas Baltėnas.*

In the second half of the 13th century the Jatvingian lands were ravaged by the Crusaders. In search for rescue, some Jatvingians fled to Lithuania. Thus, the tradition of wearing diadems could have been adopted directly from the expelled Jatvingians.

A survey of the find places of diadems enables to define an interesting distribution tendency. In Lithuania, the majority of diadems have been found at the township cemetery of Kernavė. The number of diadems retrieved from peripheral burial sites is insignificant and these are not as flamboyant. The situation in the territory of the Black Russia was quite the different, though. All the diadems with metal plates come from sites located at a distance from large centres, while township cemeteries have yielded only one ornament of this type found at Novogrudok. This situation can be explained by the fact that Grodno, Novogrudok and other larger centres of the region were Christian towns from their very establishment. In these places the traditions of furnishing burials with grave goods had been forgotten long ago. Kernavė, in the meantime, was one the centres of a formally pagan country Lithuania. This is most likely the reason why inhumation was already in practice though the custom of furnishing the dead with numerous grave goods continued all the same.

In Novogrudok, excavations of a workshop of a jeweller who worked with non-ferrous metals yielded two templates used to stamp quadrangular plates for diadems (Зверуго, 1989, p. 129–130). F. Gurevič claims, that this workshop belonged to a craftsmen from Kiev, as a lot of parallels with artefacts manufactured in this town were established (Гуревич, 1980, p. 96). As craftsman from Novogrudok had already mastered gold-plating technologies, this site could have served as one of the centres for manufacture of diadems. Nevertheless, the highest percentage of graves with diadems at the Kernavė cemetery leads to the opinion that they were manufactured locally. Most probably, craftsmen working at Kernavė knew the metalloplastic method employed to produce plates and the gold-plating techniques as well. This is also testified by isolated examples of diadem plates found in the cultural layers of the Kernavė town and hill-forts. A diadem decorated with plates in the shape of a four-leaf blossom has been recently found at the cemetery. Absolutely identical plates have been found during excavations of a craftsman's, namely jeweller's workshop in the "Pajauta" valley.

Thus, the collection of diadems from Kernavė gives a possibility to describe the character of the Kernavė town community. The distribution of this type of artefacts tes-

tifies to the existence of a Jatvingian substrate, while the elaborate production technologies imply a Slavic substrate, and symbols struck on the plates indicate a religious and cultural syncretism of the community.

The variety of types of temple ornaments and earrings discloses the multifaceted character of Kernavė community as well. The origin of the temple ornament of three silver beads found in grave 21 is doubtlessly Slavic (fig. 5). This is a typical ornament of Russian townspeople of the 12th and 13th centuries, exclusively characteristic of town communities. The temple ornaments have openwork beads decorated in filigree. According to F. Gurevič, the Novogrudok jewellers were not familiar with the techniques of wire soldering (filigree) (Гуревич, 1981, p. 130). As a matter of fact, artefacts of this type have not been found in the cultural layers of Black Russian towns. Ornaments which bear closest resemblance to the three-beaded temple ornaments from Kernavė have been retrieved from the cultural layers in Kiev, Riazan and other large centres of Russian lands dated to the period prior to the Great Mongolian – Tatar incursion. The cemetery has also yielded simpler three-beaded temple ornaments found in two burials and an especially ornate isolated example from a disturbed burial (fig. 6).

The manner of wearing earrings and temple ornaments should be associated with Slavic adornment traditions. Nevertheless, most of the earring types uncovered at Kernavė are also frequently found at the upper reaches of the Nemunas, in the Jatvingian graves with cairns, as well as the earlier barrows built from stones. They are also known from the cultural layers of the Black Russian towns. We can thus maintain that earrings were ornaments of Slavic origin, but their usage traditions came to Kernavė in two ways, i. e. either as an article of trade from Slavic townsmen themselves or directly from Jatvingians who were much more affected by Slavic traditions. The mixed character of Kernavė community is also illustrated by ring earrings found in grave 133, the ends of which terminate in stylised heads of horses (fig. 7). Consequently, the ornament seems to be more typical of Slavs, but the décor, the zoomorphic head characteristic to Baltic horseshoe brooches, is of local origin.

No neck-rings typical of the Late Iron Age Balts have been found at Kernavė. These were replaced by necklaces noteworthy for the variety of constituent elements. Fragments of necklaces of "lily" shaped pendants (fig. 8) doubtlessly represent Slavic ornaments. Silver necklaces composed of this type pendants have been recovered in the most famous Lithuanian hoards of the 14th century (Staklišķės, Geliogaliai). One intact necklace of this type

has been found in a burial dating to as late as the end of the 14th century in the territory of the churches of Kernavė. "Lily" shaped pendants are abundantly found in the hillforts and barrows of eastern Slavs, especially in the Smolensk area (Финоугры, 1987, p. 315–346). Their production centre closest to Kernavė was Novogrudok. A template used for the production of pendants has been found there (Звяруго, 1987, p. 129, fig. 67:14).

The Kernavė cemetery has yielded necklaces with doubtlessly imported crosses threaded with local amber beads (fig. 9). However, necklaces manufactured from locally produced tinklers or rhomboid pendants exceptionally characteristic of the Balts have been found as well. As a matter of fact, in one case the rhomboid pendant was gilded which is not typical to articles of this type. Thus, the composition of necklaces and the origin of the components testify once more to the syncretic nature of the Kernavė community in both ethnic and confessional terms.

The most numerous group of ornaments recovered at Kernavė is that of rings. More than one hundred rings of different types have been found in both male and female burials. The majority of these are sash-like or with a plaited or broadened front part widespread in the large region of both the Slavs and the Balts. Notice should be made of three ring groups which are less common from the typological point of view, i. e. rings with glass settings manufactured from soldered wires (scan techniques) as well as hollow rings manufactured by the techniques of metalloplastic stamping. The cemetery yielded 9 rings with glass settings as well as 2 fragments (fig. 10). Fragments of 4 further rings with glass settings were found in the cultural layers of the town. Thus, in terms of the number of rings with glass settings the Kernavė complex of medieval archaeological sites is comparable to such trade and crafts centres as Kiev or Novgorod. One setting of this type rings was made of rock crystal instead of glass. However, it is rather difficult to define whether these rings are imported or manufactured locally due to the simplicity and universality of composition. It is only the abundance of rings that leads to the opinion that they were manufactured by local jewellers.

From the technological point of view the most intricate are rings manufactured by scan techniques, furnished with glass settings and decorated with soldered wires and tiny cones. Three of these were found in the 13th–14th century cemetery of Kernavė, and 4 in graves of the end of the 14th century in the vicinity of churches (fig. 11). No analogues to these aretefacts have been found in the archaeological material from the towns of Russia. The only

one ring representing the same type from the technological and stylistic point of view was found in a burial with stone cairns at the Venzovščina cemetery in the upper reaches of the Nemunas (Kviatkovskaja, 1998, p. 91, photo 27). The fact that even 7 such rings were found at Kernavė as well as absence of these in the cultural layers and cemeteries of other towns lead to the opinion that they were manufactured by local jewellers. It is merely the complexity of techniques involved which indicates that the master who created them was well acquainted with the Slavic subtleties of manufacture and decoration of ornaments.

A further type of silver rings characteristic exceptionally to Kernavė mediaeval monuments includes original hollow rings manufactured by metalloplastic stamping (fig. 12). Four of these have been found at the 13th–14th century cemetery. The fact that this is really a product of local jewellers is witnessed by a setting of an analogous ring found in the cultural layers of the town, in the workshop of a jeweller. There are no analogues to this ring type in the archaeological material of towns. A single ring of comparable manufacture was recovered in the hoard found at Stakliškės. An interesting motif was struck on the front part of these rings, representing a swastika in two cases and an oblique cross also in two cases. Thus, this is another demonstration of complex jewellery techniques assimilated from the Christian lands as well as pagan symbols swastikas displayed on one and the same artefact.

As regards other artefact groups and the overall archaeological legacy of the mediaeval town of Kernavė, it is obvious that local artefacts typical of the Baltic lands, such as horseshoe and flat brooches, various ring and pendant types as well as other articles dominate very conspicuously. Nonetheless, a certain cultural and confessional multiplicity is characteristic to Kernavė as well as to any other mediaeval town. The articles worn by townsfolk were not restricted to the narrow Baltic area but typical of the culture of mediaeval towns of the wide region in general. In this context unique groups of artefacts that are typical exceptionally to the mediaeval town of Kernavė stand out very clearly. Thus, we can recognize an exceptional urban culture which was born here and which regrettably existed for just a hundred years.

The Kernavė town community and its material culture are clearly distinguished in the general context of contemporaneous Lithuanian archaeological sites. Finds from peripheral burial sites are articles manufactured by local jewellers and the influence of neighbouring cultures is very minute. In Kernavė, on the other hand, the exist-

ence of an urban community is clearly reflected by its receptivity to the material culture novelties of neighbouring towns. The community was more open, not shut up in its own shell. This was predetermined by its internal structures. The specificity of the activities of craftsmen and merchants, contrary to that of farmers, required continuous contacts as the market was expanding.

As the old local pagan world was challenged by the Christian culture, the urban community took up the role of a mediator. The townspeople lived in the neighbourhood of the manor of the duke of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which had been more or less Christian since the times of Mindaugas. As Lithuania was leaning towards Christianity, the renunciation of paganism by members of the urban community served as a further step succeeding the christening of members of the elite. Pagan customs and Christian culture intertwined here as early as in the 13th century.

The cultural orientation of the Kernavė community was very clearly targeted at the neighbouring Slavic towns. Imports form western Europe have been recovered merely in the duke's residence on the "Aukuro kalnas" hillfort. Certain technologies used in the production of jewellery as well as their decorative elements were assimilated from Slavic craftsmen.

The rather large numbers of Slavic ornaments in graves testify to burials of members of an ethically mixed community. These could have been craftsmen who came from foreign lands and worked for the household of the duke, merchants and their families. The fact that towns of the

Grand Duchy of Lithuania were ethnically mixed is testified by historical sources as well. However we do not have any, even theoretical, possibilities to determine the percentage of foreigners in the community of mediaeval Kernavė. Members of the Kernavė community of an ethnically different Slavic origin did not constitute a separate unit in terms of organisation, as was the case with the Russian part of the town in Vilnius. The main element, which would have united the Slavic community of the time, i. e. an orthodox church, did not exist.

Some of the grave goods found at the cemetery are very close to artefacts of the Jatvingian burial sites. Grave goods from Jatvingian burials excavated at the upper Nemunas are practically identical to the material from Kernavė cemetery. We can thus claim that quite many members of the Kernavė community are of Jatvingian descent. Historical sources also mention the flight of Jatvingians to Lithuania to escape Russians and later on Germans.

Thus, the Kernavė complex of mediaeval archaeological sites represents the urban culture and community of Lithuania in the 13th and 14th centuries. Structurally, it was a formation of the European context. Nonetheless, it was unique in terms of its internal still pagan world intertwined with the Christian culture and tradition. The cultural and religious syncretism defined the model of the Kernavė community from the organizational point of view. This situation stipulated the emergence of an exclusive material culture and even the appearance of specific artefacts, which are typical only to Kernavė.

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KERNAVĖ LIETUVOS DIDŽIOSIOS KUNIGAIKŠTYSTĖS MIESTŲ KONTEKSTE

Gintautas Vėlius

Santrauka

23 metus Kernavėje darytų archeologinių tyrinėjimų duomenys jau leidžia apžvelgti ir įvertinti XIII a. antrojoje pusėje–XIV a. čia egzistavusią miesto kultūrą platesnio regiono kontekste. Kasinėtas ištisas to laikmečio paminklų kompleksas: pats miestas viršutinėje ir apatinėje Neries terasose, penkių piliakalnių gynybinė sistema, kapinynas (Kernavė – litewska Troja, 2002). Gausi tyrimų medžiaga jau diktuoja gana tikslų rekonstrukcinį viduramžių Kernavės modelį. Tačiau kartu kyla įvairių klausimų: kokią vietą Kernavė užima Europos miestų raidos istorijoje, koks buvo jos formavimosi modelis, kokių įtakų veikiama susidarė šio miesto bendruomenė. Lieka nepasverta, kiek Kernavės viduramžių kultūra yra fenomenalus bei savitas ir kiek nulemtas to meto miestams būdingos kultūrinės simbiozės reiškinys.

Viduramžiais Europos urbanizacijos procesas vyko ant Romos imperijos miestų pamatų. Vakarų Europos miestai augo daugiausia imperijos provincijų teritorijose, Rytų Europoje šiuos procesus inspiravo bizantiškoji kultūra. Baltijos jūros baseine miestų kultūros atsirado inspiruotos vikingų karinės-prekybinės veiklos. Didieji Rusijos miestai – prekybos centrai išaugo prie prekybos kelio, jungusio skandinavus ir Bizantijos miestus. Daugelį vėlesnių rusų žemių centrų vėlgi galime vertinti kaip subyrėjusios Kijevo Rusios kultūrinį palikimą. Be to, europinio miesto raidą inspiravo katalikų ir pravoslavų bažnyčių įtakos plėtra. Šiame kontekste baltų žemė lieka balta dėmė europinio krikščioniško miesto raidos istorijoje, o tokių centrų kaip Kernavė ir Vilnius atsiradimas – mokslinių diskusijų objektu.

Ankstyviausių miestų užuomazgos Lietuvoje – protomiestai atsiranda pajūryje: Palanga, Žardė (Klaipėda). Tai sietina su aktyvia Skandinavijos vikingų karine ir prekybine veikla. Tačiau XIII a. kultūrinio aktyvumo svarstyklės ženkliai svyra Rytų Lietuvos pusėn. Per 100 metų iškyla nemažai galingų, gerai įtvirtintų piliakalnių – Kernavė, Maišiagala, Aukštadvaris ir kiti. Buvus tam tikrą demografinį sprogimą, lėmusį ženklų gyventojų skaičiaus padidėjimą, liudija turtingi radinių to meto kultūriniai sluoksniai papilių gyvenvietėse. Regiono suaktyvėjimo priežastis, vedusias prie valstybės gimimo, paaiškina geopolitinės krašto padėties permainos. XI–XII a. Rytų Lietuva buvo tik Kijevo Rusios ekspansinės politikos taikinys. Kaip rusų pasienio forpostai etninėje jotvingių žemėje išdygsta slaviški miestai: Gardinas, Volkovyskas, Slonimas, Naugardukas. Tačiau nuo XII a. pabaigos lietuviai patys pradeda pulti Rusios žemes. Po 1240 m. mongolų-totorių invazijos situacija dar labiau pasikeičia. Minėti miestai atskiriami nuo savo politinių ir kultūrinių šaknų. Šį momentą puikiai išnaudojo Mindaugas – prijungė juos prie Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės.

Viduramžių Kernavės archeologijos paminklų kompleksas atspindi to meto istorinę situaciją. XIII a. pabaiga–XIV a. pirmoji pusė – tai viduramžių Kernavės klestėjimo laikotarpis. O Nemuno aukštupio slaviškuose LDK miestuose tuo metu pastebimas ženklus materialinės kultūros nuosmukis. Baltarusių archeologai jį sieja su mongolų-totorių antplūdžiu į pietinės Rusios žemes ir miestus, su kuriais Panemunės kraštas buvo glaudžiai susijęs. Kartu šis palyginti skurdus etapas įvardijamas kaip „lietuviškasis". Taigi slaviškų miestų nuosmukis sutampa su Lietuvos politinės galios ir kartu Kernavės ekonominiu pakilimu.

XIII a. kunigaikščio rezidencijos įgavo kokybiškai aukštesnį lygmenį. Išaugę feodalinio elito ūkiniai ir kultūriniai poreikiai skatino amatų koncentraciją prie kunigaikščio dvaro. Sustiprėjusi politinė ir karinė valstybės jėga sudarė sąlygas miestų plėtrai naudoti gretimų kraštų amatininkų potencialą. Ypač tai sietina su Nemuno aukštupio miestų Gardino, Naugarduko, Volkovysko ir Slonimo prijungimu prie LDK. Šie miestai, ypač iki didžiojo mongolų-totorių antplūdžio, buvo glaudžiai susiję su Kijevu ir kitais pietinės Rusios centrais. Kijevo Rusioje pasiektas aukštas amatininkystės, ypač juvelyrikos, lygis buvo perimtas Juodosios Rusios amatininkų. Be abejo, LDK aukščiausio lygio juvelyrai visų pirma turėjo dirbti feodaliniam elitui. Taigi ir minėtų slaviškų miestų amatininkų gaminiai visų pirma turėjo tenkinti didžiojo Lietuvos kunigaikščio ir jo aplinkos poreikius. Tikėtina, kad prie kunigaikščių rezidencijų Lietuvoje dirbo senesnes juvelyrikos amato tradicijas turintys slavų amatininkai. Tai rodo Lietuvos teritorijoje – Stakliškėse, Geliogaliuose, Kretingoje – aptikti XIV a. lobiai. Juose kartu su lietuviškais ilgaisiais – piniginiais lydiniais, įvežtiniais juvelyriniais dirbiniais aptikta tik baltiškam kontekstui būdingų papuošalų – plokštelinių ir pasaginių segių. Tačiau jie pagaminti naudojant sudėtingas, labiau slavų amatininkams žinomas technologijas – juodinimą, filigraną.

Įvertinę Kernavės miesto geopolitinę situaciją, istorinius ir archeologinius duomenis, galime interpretuoti savitą, provincijos laidojimo paminklams nebūdingą Kernavės XIII–XIV a. kapinyno medžiagą.

Kiek XIII a. pabaigoje suklestėjusi ir tik apie 100 metų egzistavusi Kernavės miesto bendruomenė buvo savitas kultūrinis reiškinys, o kiek paveiktas bei formuojamas išorės veiksnių, iliustruoja konkrečių dirbinių grupių analizė.

Itin puošnūs kapuose aptikti apgalviai. Kernavės kapinyne jų rasta kaip niekur daug, net 30-yje kapų. Apgalvių plokštelės stebina jose pavaizduotų simbolių ir ornamentų įvairove. Aiškiai ne vietinės kilmės simboliai išmušti apgalvių plokštelėse yra heraldinės lelijos (1 pav.), stilizuoti žvėrys – liūtai? (2 pav.), palmetės (3 pav.) ir kiti. Tačiau aptikta ir apgalvių, dekoruotų vietiniais, dar pagoniškais simboliais – svastikomis (4 pav.), trilapiu žiedu arba paprasčiausiu geometriniu raštu. Tai, kad plokštelės su baltams nebūdingais motyvais gali būti pagamintos vietoje, rodo mieste,

kauladirbio sodyboje, aptiktos beržo tošys, ornamentuotos tokiomis pačiomis heraldinėmis lelijomis ir palmetėmis.

Iš viso Lietuvoje surasta 40 apgalvių, 6 kapinynuose. Visi aptikti rytinėje Lietuvos dalyje, buvusios Rytų Lietuvos pilkapių kultūros teritorijoje. Tačiau labiausiai aptariami galvos papuošalai paplito XIII–XIV a. Nemuno aukštupio kapinynuose. A. Kviatkovskajos duomenimis, iš viso čia surasti 55 šio papuošalo pavyzdžiai 11-oje kapinynų. Paminklai, kuriuose surasta daguma apgalvių – 40 (72 proc.), išsidėstę kompaktiškoje teritorijoje, dešiniajame Nemuno krante, Katros upės baseine, kuris daugelio autorių laikomas baltišku – jotvingių arealu.

Kernavės kapinyno radiniai panašūs į aptinkamus jotvingių kapuose su akmeninėmis krūsnimis ne tik apgalviais. Ištisi kapų inventoriai – apgalviai, antsmilkiniai, kaklo vėriniai, žiedų tipai ir kita – Kernavėje ir jotvingių laidojimo paminkluose labai mažai kuo skiriasi.

Didžiausias kapų, kuriuose rasta apgalvių, procentas Kernavės kapinyne leidžia manyti, kad jie gaminti vietoje. Tai patvirtina ir pavieniai apgalvių plokštelių pavyzdžiai, surasti Kernavės miesto bei piliakalnių kultūriniuose sluoksniuose. Pastaraisiais metais kapinyne aptiktas apgalvis, puoštas keturlapio žiedo formos plokštelėmis. Visiškai identiškos plokštelės surastos tyrinėtoje amatininko – juvelyro dirbtuvėje Pajautos slėnyje.

Taigi Kernavės apgalvių kolekcija leidžia apibūdinti Kernavės miesto bendruomenės pobūdį. Šio tipo dirbinių paplitimas regione rodo jotvingiško substrato buvimą, plokštelėse išmušti simboliai – religinį ir kultūrinį bendruomenės sinkretizmą, sudėtingos gamybos technologijos – aukštą juvelyrų techninį lygį. Apskritai toks didelis apgalvių populiarumas tarp moterų būdingas tik viduramžių Kernavės bendruomenei.

Aptiktų antsmilkinių ir auskarų tipologinė įvairovė taip pat atskleidžia daugialypį Kernavės bendruomenės charakterį. Abejonių nekelia kapo Nr. 21 sidabrinių trikarolių antsmilkinių slaviška kilmė (5 pav.). Tai yra tipiškas XII–XIII a. slavių miestiečių papuošalas, būdingas tik miesto bendruomenėms. Antsmilkinių karoliai ažūriniai, puošti filigranu. Paprastesnių trikarolių antsmilkinių kapinyne aptikta dar dviejuose kapuose, o vienas itin puošnus yra iš suardyto kapo (6 pav.).

Auskarų nešioseną reikėtų sieti su slaviškomis puošybos tradicijomis. Tačiau daugelis Kernavėje aptiktų auskarų tipų yra dažnas radinys ir Nemuno aukštupio jotvingiškuose kapuose su akmenų krūsnimi bei kiek ankstyvesniuose iš akmenų krautuose pilkapiuose. Auskarai žinomi ir iš Juodosios Rusios miestų kultūrinių sluoksnių. Taigi, nors auskarų kilmė ir nešiosenos tradicijos dažniausiai tapatinamos su slavais, į Kernavę šie dirbiniai atkeliavo dviem keliais: iš pačių slavų miestiečių kaip prekė ir tiesiogiai iš labiau slaviškų tradicijų paveiktų jotvingių. Savitą Kernavės miesto materialinę kultūrą iliustruoja kape Nr. 133 aptikti žiedeliniai sidabriniai paauksuoti auskarai, kurių galai užsibaigia stilizuotomis žirgo galvutėmis (7 pav.).

Neabejotinai slaviškos kilmės papuošalai – „lelijos" formos kabučių vėrinių fragmentai (8 pav.). Sidabrinių vėrinių iš šio tipo kabučių aptiktą žymiausiuose Lietuvos XIV a. lobiuose (Stakliškės, Geliogaliai). Vienas visas šio tipo vėrinys surastas jau XIV a. pabaigos kape Kernavės bažnyčių teritorijoje. „Lelijos" formos kabučių plačiai aptinkama rytinių slavų piliakalniuose ir pilkapiuose, ypač Smolensko srityje (Финоугры..., 1987, p. 315–346). Artimiausias Kernavei jų gamybos centras buvo Naugardukas. Ten aptikta kabučiams gaminti skirta matrica (Зверуго, 1989, p. 129, pav. 67:14).

Kernavės kapinyne surasta kaklo vėrinių su įvežtiniais kryželiais, tačiau su vietiniais gintaro karoliais (9 pav.). Įvežtiniais laikytini ir 2 vėrinuose aptikti briaunoti karoliai iš sardonikso (oniksų grupė) akmens. Tačiau surasta kaklo apvarų ir iš vietoje pagamintų žvangučių arba tik baltams būdingų rombinių kabučių. Tiesa, vienas rombinis kabutis buvo paauksuotas, o tai nėra būdinga šio tipo dirbiniams. Taigi kaklo apvarų sudėtis, jas sudarančių komponentų kilmė vėlgi rodo sinkretinį Kernavės bendruomenės pobūdį tiek etnine, tiek konfesine prasme.

Gausiausia Kernavės kapinyne aptiktų papuošalų grupė – žiedai. Surasta daugiau kaip 100 įvairių tipų žiedų tiek vyrų, tiek moterų kapuose. Daugelis jų – pinta arba praplatinta priekine dalimi, taip pat juostiniai, paplitę plačiame tiek slavų, tiek baltų regione. Tačiau reikėtų atkreipti dėmesį į tris tipologiniu požiūriu unikalias žiedų grupes: žiedai su stiklinėmis akimis, žiedai, pagaminti iš sulituotų vielučių (skan technika), ir tuščiaviduriai žiedai, pagaminti metaloplastiniu spaudimo būdu. Žiedų su stiklo akimis kapinyne aptikta 9 bei dar 6 fragmentai (10 pav.). Dar 4 žiedų su stiklo akimis fragmentai surasti miesto kultūriniuose sluoksniuose. Taigi Kernavės viduramžių archeologijos paminklų kompleksas žiedų su stiklo akimis skaičiumi prilygsta tokiems prekybos ir amatų centrams kaip Kijevas arba Novgorodas. Vieno šio tipo žiedų akutė buvo ne stiklinė, o iš kalnų krištolo. Tačiau dėl konstrukcijos paprastumo ir universalumo sunku pasakyti, ar šie žiedai yra įvežtiniai, ar vietos gamybos. Tik jų gausa leidžia manyti, kad tai yra vietos juvelyrų darbo produktas.

Technologiniu požiūriu sudėtingiausi žiedai – pagaminti skan technika, su stiklo akimis, papuošti prilituotomis vielutėmis bei spurgeliais. 3 jų aptikti Kernavės XIII–XIV a. kapinyne, dar 4 – XIV a. pabaigos kapuose bažnyčių aplinkoje (11 pav.). Šių dirbinių analogų aptikti nepavyko. Vienintelis technologiškai ir stilistiškai to paties tipo žiedas aptiktas jotvingiškame kape su akmeninėmis krūsnimis Venzovščinos kapinyne, Nemuno aukštupyje (Kviatkovskaja, 1998, p. 91, nuotr. 27). Kernavėje surasti net 7 tokie žiedai, taip pat jų nebuvimas kitų miestų kultūriniuose sluoksniuose ir kapinynuose leidžia teigti, kad tai yra vietos juvelyrų darbas. Naudotų technologijų sudėtingumas rodo, kad šiuos dirbinius gamino aukščiausio lygio juvelyrikos meistras. Ši unikalių dirbinių grupė vėlgi traktuotina kaip savitos miestietiškos kultūros juvelyrikos meno pavyzdys.

Kitas tik Kernavės viduramžių paminklams būdingas sidabrinių žiedų tipas – originalūs tuščiaviduriai žiedai, pagaminti metaloplastiniu spaudimo būdu (12 pav.). XIII–XIV a.

kapinyne jų aptikta 4. Kad tai vietos juvelyrų produktas, rodo analogiško žiedo galvutė, surasta miesto kultūriniame sluoksnyje, juvelyro dirbtuvėse. Šio žiedų tipo analogų miestų archeologinėje medžiagoje nėra. Tik Stakliškėse surastame lobyje aptiktas vienas tokia pačia technika pagamintas žiedas. Įdomus motyvas išmuštas ant šių žiedų priekinės dalies: dviem atvejais – svastika, dviem – įstrižas kryžius. Taigi vėl matome sudėtingas juvelyrinių dirbinių technologijas, perimtas iš krikščioniškų kraštų, ir pagoniškus simbolius – svastikas tame pačiame dirbinyje.

Kalbant apie kitas dirbinių grupes ir apskritai visą Kernavės viduramžių miesto archeologinį palikimą pažymėtina, kad vietiniai baltų kraštams būdingi gaminiai – pasaginės bei plokštelinės segės, įvairiausių tipų žiedai, kabučiai, kiti dirbiniai aiškiai vyrauja. Tačiau Kernavei, kaip ir kiekvienam viduramžių miestui, būdingas tam tikras kultūrinis bei konfesinis daugialypiškumas. Miestiečiai puošėsi dirbiniais, būdingais ne tik siauram baltiškam regionui, bet ir europinio miesto kultūrai apskritai. Šiame kontekste visų aptinkamų radinių grupėse aiškiai išsiskiria unikalūs, tik viduramžių Kernavės miestui būdingi dirbiniai. Taigi galime kalbėti apie čia gimusią, ir, deja, tik apie 100 metų egzistavusią savitą miesto kultūrą.

Kernavės miesto bendruomenė, jos materialinė kultūra aiškiai išsiskiria bendrame to meto Lietuvos archeologijos paminklų kontekste. Periferinių laidojimo paminklų radiniai yra vietos juvelyrų darbo, čia mažai juntama gretimų kultūrų įtaka.

Taigi Kernavės viduramžių archeologinių paminklų kompleksas reprezentuoja Lietuvos miesto kultūrą ir bendruomenę XIII–XIV a. Tai buvo struktūriškai europinio konteksto darinys, tačiau savitas vidiniu dar pagonišku pasauliu, sumišusiu su krikščioniškaja kultūra ir tradicija. Kultūrinis ir religinis sinkretizmas nulėmė Kernavės bendruomenės modelį. Tai sąlygojo savitos viduramžių miesto kultūros, net kai kurių tik Kernavei būdingų dirbinių tipų atsiradimą.