REVIEWS


In 1990, some Russian colleagues provided the expedition of the archaeologist A. Girininkas with a few copies of Sorokin’s study “Mesolithic Culture of Butovo” in Russian (Moscow, 1990). A few students, followers of Girininkas, won the books in a draw (I was lucky to get one of them). The principles of criticism of sandy Stone Age settlements, as archaeological sources, presented in the study by Sorokin, and the principles of the analysis of the collections of flint findings, were among the most important stimuli for the “young expedition generation” to start immediately and to improve radically the research methodologies for Stone Age settlements. Firstly, to correct the fixing of finds, which is the basis for the preservation of information about monuments. That was the first rather significant introduction of young archaeologists (Dž. Brazaitis, E. Šatavičius, and others), organised by Girininkas, to the research of Sorokin.

Sorokin’s 2002 study is about the Mesolithic Period of the Zhizdra river basin, and examines the problems of East European Mesolithic source analysis. It consists of 256 pages, with 57 statistical tables, 49 pictures of finds, and two maps.

In the introductory part of the book, the author introduces the Mesolithic Period as a form of human adaptation to the early Holocene (post-glacial period) and underlines the particularity of Mesolithic communities in the East European forest region. According to the author, a concrete historical principle is very important in analysing theoretical and global processes, as it is based on actual facts and grants real content to abstract theoretical contemplation. Therefore, a polezie, a sandy lowland micro-region of the River Zhizdra was selected as grounds for the model, reflecting the entirety of processes in the sandy flatlands of Europe. The history of archaeological research in the Zhizdra polezie is briefly, but thoroughly, reviewed in the second chapter. It started at the end of the 19th century, though the largest contribution was made in the period 1951 to 1984, when the Upper Oka Expedition from the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR was working there. Besides, starting from 1973, a digest of archaeological monuments in the Kaluga region was under way. Mesolithic settlements in the Zhizdra basin were also explored by I. Frolov and A. Smirnov.

In the chapter entitled “Stratigraphy of monuments and methodology of field tests in settlements of zandric type”, Sorokin notes that an excess of water and powdery sediments are dominant in the polezie. These circumstances determined the topography of Mesolithic
settlements, priorities in choosing living sites and peculiarities of the formation and survival of the cultural layer. All Mesolithic settlements in the Zhizdra polese started on the edge of river banks in the vicinity of lakes or similar valleys. Usually the genuine colours of cultural layers in Mesolithic settlements do not differ from the natural colours of the soil and its lower layers. It is generally traced as a “horizon with finds”. Later cultural layers in sandric zones were affected by numerous destructive factors: natural, climatic, biochemical, etc. They all influenced unfavourably the survival of the cultural layers. According to the author of the study, it is very important to choose a proper methodology for an archaeological field test to collect the most information possible for research. While working in sandy flatlands, researchers employ both a traditional finding horizon methodology and specially designed ones, like vertical horizon scrape. The first destroys the micro-stratigraphy of the cultural layers; the second, recording the stratigraphy more carefully, reduces the opportunities for horizontal research. Sorokin developed a methodology of three-dimensional finding fixation and introduced it in 1982. This methodology enables us to preserve a considerably larger amount of information about cultural layers destroyed in settlements during explorations, and at the same time offers an opportunity for the versatile analysis of a cultural layer, from stratigraphic, horizontal and other aspects. It should be mentioned that similar methodologies have been developed, improved and employed in the research of settlements from the Stone and Bronze ages during the expeditions by Girininkas and his “school” in Lithuania since 1990.

The fourth chapter of Sorokin’s book is designed for a criticism of Mesolithic sources on the Zhizdra polese. The author identifies five types of archaeological material. Selected (sorted), mixed collections or rare sets might be employed only as a subsidiary. Only the so-called “clean” and abundant enough (over 100 morphologically evident items) collections are valuable sources and can be employed in the solution of culturological problems. Thirteen basic settlements of the micro-region are characterised in the chapter. All of them are sandy, and the level of their exploration is different. The author thinks that five abundant enough, “relatively clean”, without typological “sorting” collections of settlements might be singled out. These are the Krasnoye 1 “Vasia”, Krasnoye 3, Krasnoye 8 “Penioshki”, and Reseta 2 and 3 settlements. The material collected in these settlements or acquired in different sites of these settlements during extensive research was divided by Sorokin into 15 complexes. They were employed in further research.

In the largest (70 pages) chapter in the study, “Inventory of Mesolithic settlements in the Zhizdra polese”, the author describes in detail 15 flint finding collections from five of the above settlements and compares them both with each other and with collections of Mesolithic monuments from neighbouring regions. The collections are described in a detailed and precise way. Readers can form a rather clear and preliminary view of the collections on the basis of descriptions and pictures of the findings. It is preliminary, because any self-respecting researcher can only shape his own attitude to a concrete collection after a review of the settlement material.

A few remarks of a general character about what kind of information I missed in the description of sets on Mesolithic settlements from the Zhizdra region. In most collections, flint material of several kinds was traced. It would also be interesting to trace the interrelations between findings of different material in each settlement from the point of view of technology, typology and planigraphic analysis. It would be good to describe in detail the evidence of primary processing technique: striking points, remnants of platforms on blades and flakes, shapes and sizes of bulbs, blade profiles, and so on. This would enable us to form a clear view about the primary flint knapping technique and provide additional material for contemplation about the identity of collections. Despite the abundant pictures of findings, I missed some significant findings described in the text, firstly, pictures of microliths and arrowheads.

I would like to point out a few particular details to draw the author’s attention. The typological distribution of microliths and hunting inventory ought to be elaborated. To my mind, typologically identical (judging from descriptions and pictures) artefacts, namely, microlithic blades with chipped (retouched) ends, are classed as different types: diagonal points, trapezoid points, micro-blades with chipped ends, microliths with retouched sides, blades, even broad trapeziums (for example, from Krasnoye 1 “Vasia” settlement [p. 206 Fig. 11]). Short trapeziums from the same Krasnoye 1 “Vasia” settlement [p. 33-34, 39] cannot be called trapeziums (from the aspect of trapezoid arrowheads and microliths). From the pictures (p. 206, Fig. 11: 21, 23) it becomes evident that these flint artefacts should be called microlithic blades with retouched terminals, but not trapeziums. On page 204, a Mesolithic-type lancet is depicted (Fig. 9: 16), which is treated by the author as a broken Ahrensburg-type arrowhead. According to Sorokin, the facet at the lancet point is casual and in the process of a retouch (p. 38). Guessing from the blade on the left side, the retouch of this shape is made specially for micro-burin percussion; therefore, the artefact should be treated as a lancet. The
division of arrowheads into “Swiderian” and “Ahrensburgian” only on the basis of plate retouch (sometimes very superficial, with a few tiny negatives) at the stems does not seem to be reasonable, the more so because there is no difference in the billets of arrowheads and their shapes (p. 204-205 Fig. 9-10). I presume it to be a rather formal attitude towards the material. Usually every Swiderian culture settlement has a few arrowheads without a flattened retouch, that is, they are not completed, or simply the barb is not removed due to other reasons.

The sixth chapter in the study, “Mesolithic of the Zhizdra polesie. Data analysis”, gives a detailed statistical comparison of the complexes of discovered finds. All Sorokin’s attempts are reflected and illustrated by 57 statistical tables, a real hoard for the researcher’s colleagues. The final conclusion of the data analysis is that the Krasnoye 8 “Penioshki” settlement is to be linked to Studienok-type settlements (Desna orlate stage of Pieschonetz Rov culture). The origin of the Krasnoye 1 “Vasia” settlement is not clear. Reseta 3 and Reseta 2 are linked to Reseta culture, the Krasnoye 3 settlement to Butovo culture.

The author of the study does not discount the possibility that the above complexes of settlements do not reflect cultural ties and transformations. They are just a mechanically mixed inheritance of different cultures from different times. Sorokin, however, chooses the hypothesis of cultural interface and continuity to explain the peculiarities of Mesolithic Zhizdra collections. According to him, the chain of Reseta 3, Reseta 2 and Krasnoye 3 complexes reflects the transformation of Reseta culture into Butovo culture. On the basis of experience, working with material about sandy Stone Age settlements in Lithuania, I should say that Sorokin’s conclusions are too audacious. Five out of 13 (38.5%) Zhizdra polesie settlements were identified by him as “clean” or not intermixed. For comparison: after several revisions of material on Mesolithic finds from about 200 Lithuanian sandy settlements, I would have at least to view independently all the collections of finds from the Zhizdra region.

I also think that the dating of Reseta culture settlements on the basis of dates connected with Pulli-type settlements of Kunda culture, has no substance (p. 112). Sorokin does this with reference to his own hypothesis about the evolution of Reseta-Kunda-Butovo cultures (see my article “On the Genesis of Kunda Culture” in this volume). The Chernobyl catastrophe had no impact on radiocarbon dating (the opinion of N. Kovalch, head of the C-14 laboratory in Kiev); therefore, it could be performed in the Zhizdra region as well. The shifting of dates from remote monuments is beside the purpose.

In the chapter entitled “Place of Zhizdra polesie Mesolithic settlements in the Mesolithic of the Oka-Desna watershed”, Sorokin introduces us briefly to the taxonomic classification of Mesolithic, characterises significant monuments of the period in the Desna and Oka basins, and names the basic problems in the research of the above cultures. Four cultural groups are identified within the Desna river basin: the Smyatchka XIV group, Desna culture and its Studienok period, and Kudlaevka culture. Within the Oka river basin, Butovo, Reseta, Yen, Purgasov cultures and Krasnov 1 types of settlements are identified. As I have already mentioned, Sorokin’s opinion about Pulli-type settlements (Kunda culture) is very interesting for researchers into Eastern Baltic Mesolithic. According to the author, Pulli and Lepakoze settlements reflect the seasonal migration of Reseta cultural groups into the Eastern Baltic region. At the same time, Pulli-type settlements are treated as a transitional stage between Reseta and Butovo cultures.
This hypothesis is unusual, though Mesolithic research of the Nemunas basin in the last decade allows us to refute it decisively.

From the point of view of archaeology, the most significant is the eighth chapter, “Problem of source analysis on the Mesolithic of Eastern Europe”. I would not agree, though, with Sorokin, who defines archaeological sources as a type of historical source and studies of archaeological sources only as research into the particularity of archaeological monuments, perceived as historical sources. This theoretical attitude of Sorokin is based on the tradition and ideology of Soviet historiography, treating archaeology only as an auxiliary discipline of prehistoric science. In short, this paradigm does not reflect the basic difference of an archaeological source from a historical source: key historical sources are written sources. Their origin is subjective and they are the offspring of an ideologically engaged human. Besides, very often it is done purposefully. Archaeological sources, on the contrary, are objective in their essence. They reflect objectively the processes of time. Information might become subjective only when researching historical monuments, researching in a harsh way on the basis of primitive methodologies. A long time ago, archaeology became a miscellaneous, multi-disciplinary science, closely linked to many other sciences exploring the development of the human race and its natural environment. The historical process is no longer the only basic aim of archaeological research.

In this chapter, the author analyses processes that take place during and after the formation of a cultural layer as an archaeological source, processes that modify the cultural layer (post-depositive processes). I totally agree with Sorokin that the fixation of finds by means of three measurements enable us to preserve much more information than traditional and ordinary research methods. This information is very often vital to the value of an archaeological monument as a source. This methodology is important in particular for the exploration of sandy settlements with multicultural features. It is also important working in contact zones of natural-geographic and cultural regions. The Zhizdra poslesie is in a similar contact zone. Sorokin suggests employing technologies of “finds-markers” (finds with features from several cultural traditions) and hybrids (mestizos) to separate “mixed”, naturally shaped complexes from those formed on the basis of cultural mestization. If the above features are isolated, or if they are not traced at all, the collection of finds is a mechanically intermixed multicultural collection. As East European polycultural sets of finds, “shaped” by natural forces, are the rule rather than the exception, Sorokin offers a “naturation” term instead of the “non-cultural forming of syncretic sets”. Naturation is a mechanism of natural factors which influences the formation of artefacts and mixed polycultural sets. The naturation phenomenon is opposed to acculturation, when human groups interact in the cultural process of mestization. Naturation takes place under appropriate conditions: the horizontal conjunction of settlements from different cultures, finds in the soil, powdery deposits in the soil, pedoturbation, aeolian deposits, erosion, etc. In this chapter the author also analyses Mesolithic polycultural sets of finds which were formed in the process of naturation in the upper Oka region. For his final conclusions about the eventual influence of naturation processes upon archaeologists’ deductions, Sorokin chose Lithuania, as it is relatively well explored, materials are available due to the publications of R. Rimantienė in 1971, etc. On the basis of descriptions of material and pictures of finds only, the author proves that a significant amount of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic sets are not culturally hybrid (mestizic), but are simply mixed (p. 156-159). It is obvious that Sorokin could not perform a precise and detailed research of separate settlements without archaeological collections. Nevertheless, in most cases his conclusions are incredibly correct: for example, when he speaks about the artificially mixed character of Mesolithic Nemunas culture. Readers should know that in 1971 the study by Rimantienė was actually the first serious generalisation of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic material in Lithuania and was ahead of its time, with conclusions influencing exploration in neighbouring and even remote regions. It is understandable that Rimantienė, possessing mostly surface collections, found it difficult to rate everything properly, the more so because knowledge of the above periods in neighbouring countries was even worse. The merit of the study is unquestioned until now, and Sorokin’s attention is a manifestation of that. Thanks to this publication, only the verification of the researcher’s hypothesis about naturation appears to be thinkable. I would like to add to his conclusions information that will allow readers to evaluate more precisely the material presented by Sorokin. The so-called Baltic Madlen complexes from the late Palaeolithic Period are traced in Lithuania. They are divided into those similar to Ljunby and to the Vilnius group (sometimes linked to Ahrensburg culture). In Swiderian culture, settlements of two stages (?) are distinguished: settlements with stemmed arrowheads, and with willow-leaf shape arrowheads. One genuine hybrid or Chvalibogovici-type settlement was explored (Varenie 5), in the hunting inventory of which features of Swiderian and Ahrensburg cultures (the West European type) are reflected. At the very beginning of the Mesolithic (the start of pre-Boreal) Period, late Swiderian culture still survives.
In the pre-Boreal Period, settlements of Kunda (Pulli type) and Kudlaevka cultures are common. Probably at the end of the pre-Boreal Period Maglemoze groups emerge (Proto-Janislavici). Late Mesolithic is associated with Janislavici culture. In this chapter Sorokin also analyses critically the influence of naturation processes upon Mirnoye settlements from the coastal area of the northern Black Sea.

At the end of the chapter Sorokin draws attention to the necessity of criticism towards settlement sets (as sources) before employing them in further work. I would also like to draw the author’s attention to the fact that the complexes analysed above do not hold water from the point of view of naturation processes. Sorokin presents no patterns of hybrid “finds-markers” or mestizic technologies in the Krasnoye 1 “Vasia”, Reseta 2 and 3 settlements; therefore, according to the same naturation features, they should be treated as naturally mixed poly-cultural sets. In the set of the Krasnoye 1 “Vasia” settlement, the inheritance of at least three components from late Palaeolithic Swiderian culture (presumably Smyatchka XIV type), Butovo culture and some later Mesolithic (presumably Janislavici) culture could be traced. Components of Butovo and Reseta cultures emerge in the Reseta 2 set, while in the set of Reseta 3 settlement at least three different parts can be distinguished: the heritage of Palaeolithic Swiderian culture (Smyatchka XIV) and material from Mesolithic Butovo and Reseta cultures. On the basis of the above, I would like to point out that researchers of the Mesolithic in the Volga-Oka basins should search for a really unblended complex of Reseta culture. Reseta 2 and 3 sets do not assist us in understanding technologies and material that are to be linked to the Reseta cultural tradition.

Finally, I would like to draw the attention of all East European late Palaeolithic and Mesolithic researchers to a rather substantial misunderstanding which is anchored in the historiography of the region. Ahrensburg culture in the northern part of Western Europe is a totally different cultural phenomenon, compared to similarly named settlement groups in the upper basins of the Dnieper, Volga and Oka (including the Nemunas, of course). With its primary flint processing technology, West European Ahrensburg culture is totally identical to Swiderian culture (the same two-end cores for blades). Therefore, the identification of East European cultural groups with their flake technologies (alongside other differences) with then existing West European cultural phenomena is misleading and indefensible. The appearance of the terms “Ahrensburg” or “Eastern Ahrensburg” in the context of East European material was conditioned by the poor exploration of local regions and the search for similar stemmed arrowheads in well-explored northwest Europe. Attempts to oppose these finds to the abundant inheritance of Swiderian culture were also influential. I find it advisable to withdraw from using the term “Ahrensburg” with respect to East European material, as the terminology is abundant and complicated enough (Perstunska, Volkshanskia, Krasnoselie, Desna, Grensko, Yenevo, Pieschny Rov cultures, let alone different monumental types and groups).

Sorokin’s study is valuable not only as an exceptionally exhaustive and diverse publication about archaeological sources and Mesolithic settlements from the Zhizdra river region. Processes in cultural layers of sandy settlements are summarised and analysed in detail with respect to theories of cultural mestization. The theory of naturation processes was designed, clear criteria and methods were established to recognise factors of such a character, and finally to solve the problem. Abundant patterns of application demonstrate the vitality of the method and introduce readers to critically evaluated material on standard Mesolithic monuments of the upper Volga-Oka region.

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In commemoration of Klaipėda’s 750th anniversary, an abundantly illustrated book (112 photographs, pictures and maps) about the past of the town and the castle has appeared. It was written in Lithuanian and English by the archaeology professor Vladas Žulkus. A work of perfect polygraphic quality, it is one of few studies published in Lithuania in which research findings about centenary research on urban development are presented to a wider circle of readers in plain language. The propositions are laconic and clearly formulated, with abundant references to sources and other authors. An impressive number of them was employed: 38 written sources, historical plans and research reports, including also 227 publications, about ten per cent of which were written by the author himself.

The chronological framework (the Middle Ages) of the subject and the analysed material (it notes that the “publication of archaeological material about Klaipėda is not the aim of the book. No priority was given to archaeological material in the process of writing”) are given in the title and the preface of the book. In fact, a wider period is analysed, as historic, iconographic and archaeological material, covering the 17th and 18th centuries, is presented in most chapters. Besides, the use of archaeological material is comprehensive, including archaeological finds of the last decade that are still unknown to Lithuanian readers, such as a significant part of a Renaissance tile collection, and a stamp from the end of the 13th century, discovered just a few years ago.

Simple cartographic and iconographic sources are mentioned after the preface, followed by a short history of the research into Klaipėda. It is stated that after the researchers at the turn of the 20th century (A. Boetticher, E. Zurkalowski, J. Sembrityzi, A. Semrau, K. Forstreuter), the history of Klaipėda was not considered interesting for a long period of time, mainly due to political reasons. The resumption of studies was stimulated by archaeological research into the castle and the town, which started and was provided with new information in the Seventies. Žulkus, the organiser and leader of the group that was involved in them, summarises the job in the book: “Between 1977 and 2002 almost 40 studies were published, though the typologisation and dating of archaeological material on Klaipėda is insufficient” (p. 11). It is implied modestly that, thanks to the studies of J. Genys, E. Paleckis, R. Spraimantaitis and Žulkus, the amount of published archaeological material about Klaipėda was the highest in Lithuania for a long time. Recently Vilnius has exceeded it.

The historical context is surveyed, and is followed by an analysis of the development of the town of Memel and the castle, founded by the Germans. The historic lands around modern Klaipėda, including Lamata, Mėguva and Pilsotas (more attention is given to the latter), are characterised. Thirty archaeological objects, existing now or known from historical sources, are introduced, together with a plan of Pilsotas (Plate 1). Some of them are localised only approximately (for example, Ouse Varpe temple, Galmene and Octe castles), and some are uncertain (Nos 2, 10, 11). Probably the explanation holds no information about arbitrary signs and symbols due to a fault of the printing house. The area covered by the plan is rather small (around 12 by 17 km). Maybe the author could make another plan or scheme, with areas neighbouring on Pilsotas and/or larger objects, like Palanga, which is mentioned in the book several times?

While characterising the development of the town and the castle, more attention is obviously paid to the latter. It is explained by the different level of exploration and the amount of information available. A deeper characterisation of the development of urban fortifications is missing; their evolution from the first half of the 16th century to the end of the Seven Years War in the middle of the 18th century is described in one sentence. This cannot be explained by a lack of material, as there is sufficient in Vytautas Šliogeris’ article, published in 1982. The interesting material mentioned about confessional and ethnic relations, such as, for example, the fact that in the 16th century local Lithuanians had to attend services in a shed (eine Scheuer) and in the 17th century in a tavern (p. 69), ought to be followed by wider comments. While analysing archaeological finds, discussed and supplied with numerous photographs and pictures in the second part of the book, an uncertainty appears regarding the interpretation of some subjects on laminar tiles. The gingerbread clothes
of a man, portrayed in a dynamic situation (Plate 51) recall the 16th-century noble fashion. If that is true, a woman drawing him towards a bed (?) could hardly be treated as “a lady”. I have never seen all the portraits of 16th-century West and East European rulers; therefore, I cannot say that an elderly bearded man with a cap in the Renaissance style in Plate 100 is not “an old king”. Again, it is known that in the area from Germany to Latvia firstly historic personalities, connected with the Reformation, were portrayed on tiles manufactured in 16th century. They were both followers and leaders of the movement (such as Saxon kurfürst Johann Friedrich, Hessen landgrave Philip) and savage opponents of it, like the emperor Charles V. That is why the old man for me is much more like the Saxon kurfürst Friedrich the Prudent, the father of the above Johann Friedrich and a protector of Martin Luther, whose portrait was painted by Dürrer in 1523.

The book is likely to see more editions; therefore, attention should be paid to inaccuracies. There is no clear decision on how to name modern Polish towns (the German or Polish spelling), inhabited in the period by German colonists. Both versions are presented only when speaking about Küstrin, even the use of the “ü” is not forgotten (p. 42); whereas the names of Torun and Wroclaw (p. 32, 57, 102) are transcribed from the German name alone, Kolberg and “Elbingians” (p. 38, 39, 106) from the German, Gdansk (Danzig) and its inhabitants are called alternately one way or the other. It is not fair to identify kapers (corsairs) with pirates, that is sea marauders: they used to attack the merchant vessels of enemy countries or those trading with them. They even had official permission for such actions. It is worth making a correction to the statement on p. 23: “An attempt was made to join the castle and the town into one solid defensive system-location.” In fact, the term “location” (locatio) is perceived as “a one-time action, uniting two elements: urban reform from economic, dimensional aspects and the introduction of civil liberties of foreign origin, connected with the settlement of colonists in the town”(4). It should be noted that most location towns, founded in new territories, had no castles whatsoever, but they were fortified(5). The remark on p. 32 of a “Classical convent-type castle” characterisation, which contradicts the valid proposition of the eighth footnote about the incorrectness of such a classification should be treated as an oversight. The same should be said about a sentence on p. 40: “V. Šliogeris thinks these are the remains of ancient bastion external stone pleckwerk with firing openings, as he maintains in his studies something different. In his article about Klaipėda bastions he characterises pleckwerk as stonework, where greensward rectangles are used instead of bricks and a mixture of mould, manure and twitch grass instead of grout. This mixture was used for the reinforcement of the sides of bulwarks, erected by fortifiers”(6); whereas in the above article about research on the Prince Friedrich bastion the elements discovered are not called pleckwerk, but “a stonework shell”(7). The “French traveller Ghillebert de Lannoy” could be among other famous visitors to Klaipėda, and he could have been travelling in 1413-1414 for his own pleasure. Even if he is not to be suspected of spying for those who had knighted him shortly before(8), namely, the brothers of the order or Crusaders from the German sanctuary in Jerusalem named after the Holy Virgin, he is still to be treated as “Ghillebert de Lannoy, a Burgundian knight and diplomat”.

More should be said about the evolution of Klaipėda tile schemes, presented on p. 97. A. Swiechowska noted eight basic types of Warsaw tiles with a defined date(9). In Lithuania and Byelorussia, attempts were made in the Seventies and Eighties in the last century to make schemes of their evolution(10). In these attempts the fact was ignored that tile ovens, the techniques of their construction and manufacture, and ornamentation were taken from culturally more advanced countries (Czechia, Germany, Poland); later, the knowledge was constantly updated. The shortening of tile sections, offered as a basic feature of their evolution, was predetermined not by the evolution of the tile itself, but by developing the oven construction technique. Besides, the length changed, subject to its planned position on the oven. If it was doubted that the lower parts of ovens might not sustain the weight of the upper parts, their

(2) Katalynas, K., Vilniaus koklių ornamentų prototipai. In: Mokslos ir Lietuva, 1991 Nr. 4, p. 102, 103 pav. 9–24.
(9) Trusov, O., Pamiątniki monumentalnego zodchestwa Bielorussii XI–XVII vv. Minsk, 1988, Q:130–150, rys. 74, 84.
walls would be thickened, changing correspondingly the shape of the tiles. For example, a lower part of ten metres in height of the oven from the Artus palace in Gdansk (the first half of the 16th century) was bricked with tiles of an incredible neck length (about 80cm). Therefore, it is hardly possible to talk about the evolution of local tiles or the heating installations in the construction of which they were used. In the above example, the conversion of utensil-shape tiles into plated ones, with deeply concave plates (judging by the Renaissance rosette-shape ornamentation final stage of the process, according to the author of the scheme, which took place in the first half or the middle of the 16th century) is based entirely on the external similarity of different tile types. It should be noted that former Gothic tiles had almost smooth plates; therefore, the scheme discussed is no good in principle and has to be rejected.

These minor remarks do not reduce the significance of this interesting and well-presented book. One of the basic positive factors is that it is a collection of separate facts and ideas from different studies, including a bibliography of almost all the writing about the history of Klaipėda. Undoubtedly, the book is also very useful to both ordinary readers and to specialists. Unfortunately, such books are not numerous, and the initiative of Vladas Žulkus and Klaipėda municipality is welcome.

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This book deals with prehistoric central Lithuania. It is one of the few studies whose subject is the prehistory of a single tribe or region. It consists of 12 chapters, in which the climate, peculiarities of the soil, and the development of the region in Roman times and the great migration are reviewed. The largest part of it covers the Viking era, outlines the region within the entire world of the Baltic tribes, and shows its importance on the eve of the formation of the state.

In the preface to the book, the author explains, why “central Lithuania” is more appropriate than “Aukštaitija” (Upland Lithuania). He does not go into the disputes about the size of Upland Lithuania, though several times he points out that the cemeteries of central Lithuania belong to the Upland Lithuanians. His attitude towards the boundaries of the territory is similar, based on exceptional culture. For the above, he employs not only material from explored cemeteries with graves belonging to the same culture, but hill-forts as well. Though prior to this, he writes that the hill-forts of the region are not explored. Even if they were, they would hardly differ from those of other regions in the period discussed.

The chronological framework of the book is the eighth to the 12th centuries. The beginning of the period is identified with the start of the Viking invasions, and the cultural, social and economic changes in Scandinavia and the Baltic region, while the end is linked to the beginning of Lithuania’s transition into a state. Thus, the main subject of the book is the region of central Lithuania in the Viking period. The author also pays much attention to the Roman period, represented by abundant cemeteries from the time. One more factor is favourable: most of them are already explored. The rich material culture of the region shows that local communities were involved in regional activity, due to which the inhabitants of the Kaunas area are attached to the cultural circle of the eastern Balts. The author presumes that the inhabitants of the Kaunas area and the eastern Balts are akin to each other. Abundant imported articles (bronze and silver) prove that trading relations were active. The author tries to imagine the possible items of trade. Probably he liked the idea of Wojciech Nowakowski that the population of central Lithuania could be importing items which the inhabitants of the Lower Vistula, directly connected with the “amber trade-route”, were short of. The assumption is made that these could be slaves. Shortly after, he notes logically that we lack arguments for the above assumption. At the same time, he thinks that a well-armed community could maraud and capture people from neighbouring tribes. It is hard to agree with this assumption, in particular when we know that brass articles are also abundant among the other Baltic communities. According to this assumption by the author, the latter also “captured people from other tribes” to turn them into slaves and to sell. Thus, it would mean that slaves from the Baltic world came in large numbers. This kind of “abundance” would be described in written sources from the period. We have the opposite.

A significant part of the book is devoted to the cultural particularity of the region, including the development of cremation traditions and ritual horse offering, as one of the attributes characterising central Lithuania. The author employs a wide range of material from cemeteries in central Lithuania, but the most attention is paid to Marvelė cemetery, where he explored over 400 cremations. He tries to answer the question, where the cremation tradition in central Lithuania came from. Was it from the east, as R. Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė presumes (Lietuvių tautybės ištakos. Archeologijos duomenys. In: Lietuvių etnogenezė. Vilnius, 1987, p. 155), or southwest Europe, as proposed by A. Tautavičius (A. Tautavičius. Archeologinės kultūrinės sritys. In: Lietuvių etnogenezė. Vilnius, 1987, p. 136,139)? The author is inclined to believe it came from the west Baltic tribes, firstly from the Sudovians and the Przeworsk cultural region (p. 71).

The book emphasises the particularity of central Lithuania. The author thinks that around modern-day Kaunas, in Viking times, an administrative centre and a marketplace, where different cultures intersected, could have existed, though at the same time he admits that such a centre has not yet been identified archaeologically. The author’s contemplations about the region of central Lithuania on the eve of the formation of the state are interesting. He envisages all kinds of preconditions for the appearance of the state in the 11th and 12th centuries (the hierarchical structure of settlements, specialised handicrafts, the professional military structure);
that is to say, this is already the first step, according to the author, on the way to the formation of the state. He also insists upon the Vikings’ role in the appearance of such a structure. In previous literature the attitude dominated that the example of ancient Russia was very significant for the appearance of Lithuania as a state (R. Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė. Lietuviai IX-XIIa. Vilnius, 1970, p. 44). Isn’t the trend of an “example” in the formation of a state becoming a matter of fashion? It is evident that such a finding could be disputed. Central Lithuania, that is, the Upland Lithuanians, was not the only tribe to be very close to founding a state in the 11th and 12th centuries. Almost all the Baltic tribes in this period were close to it, but only one of them made the fateful step.

Bertašius’ book is the first, and, I would say, a successful study about the prehistory of this region. I think it will be acknowledged by the academic community, young people studying, and everyone who is interested in their own history.

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The first volume of *Archaeologia Lituana*, launched by the Department of Archaeology at Vilnius University in 1999, did not surprise the archaeological community in Lithuania. It had to happen. The department is the only base in Lithuania for training archaeologists, and one of the strongest with respect to its scientific potential. It has seven highly qualified employees, doctors of science, including two professors and three associate professors. Therefore, such an edition for this department is both necessary and obligatory.

Three volumes of *Archaeologia Lituana* have already reached its readers. It is totally shaped and formed by now, and takes its place among other publications advocating Lithuanian archaeology. I would like to introduce it briefly to the readers of *Archaeologia Baltica* too.

The editorial staff of *Archaeologia Lituana* consists of Mykolas Michelbertas (senior editor, Vilnius University), Aleksiejus Luchtanas (deputy senior editor, Vilnius University), Violeta Vasiliauskienė (managing editor, Vilnius University), and the members Wojciech Nowakowski (Warsaw University), Adolfas Tautavičius (Castle Research Centre, Vilnius), Albinas Kuncevičius (Vilnius University), Jonas Stankus (Lithuanian Institute of History), and Indrė Antanaitis-Jacobs (Vilnius University).


This volume was intended for the publication of material from the international conference “Reading Jonas Puzinas”, held in 1996. It begins with an introduction by Mykolas Michelbertas, where he presents the concept, aims and objectives of the publication. Aleksiejus Luchtanas introduces archaeological science and its development at Vilnius University from 1919 to 1989, when the independent Lithuanian state was restored. The second article by Luchtanas and V. Sidrys analyses the spread of bronze in the Eastern Baltic region in the years before Christ. The authors conclude that the import of bronze to the Eastern Baltic started from the 16th century BC. Local amber merchandise greatly stimulated its import. Michelbertas, in a short article, analyses Roman-period barbed spearheads discovered in Lithuania. R. Banytė looks at the analysis and dating of finds from two rich burials in the old Iron Age cemetery discovered in Baitai in the Klaipėda region. M. Karczewski analyses the chronology of burials with weaponry discovered in the Paprotki Kolonii cemetery belonging to the Bogaczew culture and dated to the end of the Roman Period and the beginning of the Great Migration. Wojciech Nowakowski discusses chronology issues of the late Roman and great migration periods in the Klaipėda region, on the basis of material from the Aukštikiemai (Oberhof) cemetery. He manages to identify three chronological periods in the cemetery: the first period around 150–250, on the basis of discovered Roman coins, pins with rosettes and profiled heads, neck-rings with cone-shaped and coiled wire terminals, and shielded brooches; the second period around 250–300, on the basis of late versions of crossbow brooches with a bent foot from the fourth Almgren group, and bracelets with thickened terminals; the third period on the basis of late crossbow brooches with a bent foot, neck-rings and bracelets from moulded wire, and buckles with methopic tongues. A. Astrauskas, G. Gleiznienė and V. Šimėnas write about shoulder-belts, which are very rare in the Baltic lands. They analyse their construction and manufacturing technique, chronology, use and social issues. In her research, Audronė Bliaujienė analyses Curonian male and female ornaments from the eighth to the 11th centuries, treating them as part of global patterns. She also reviews the world outlook of men and women in the different types of ornaments they wore. Vytautas Kazakevičius analyses imported E-type spearheads with decorated sockets which are discovered in the Baltic area. He also discusses their chronology and origins. He finally concludes that these spearheads are imported, originate from Scandinavia, and date from the Viking period. V. Kulakow reviews the Baltic focus of Viking movements via traditions of ethnic diffusion and art. He defines the ethno-cultural situation which emerged in the Eastern Baltic region, and determines the rather peaceful character of Viking movements in the Baltic, Slavonic and Finno-Ugric lands.

The first volume finishes with book reviews and a chronicle of the research world.

This volume starts with an article by M. Hoffman about the genesis and typology of the barrows of the western Balts in the early Iron Age. According to the author, at least 470 barrow cemeteries, with 1,450 barrows, are known. In all, 423 of them (28%) from 184 cemeteries are already explored. Eight types are identified. Aleksiejus Luchtanas analyses the extinction of brushed pottery culture in the Neris basin (on the basis of material from Kernavė hill-forts and settlements). His key finding is that the second quarter of the first millennium AD is to be treated as the beginning of a new barrow culture in east Lithuania, that people of the brushed pottery culture were not the direct predecessors of the new east Lithuanian culture, when the new culture started developing. R. Banytė-Rowell analyses the peculiarities of burial rites in western Lithuania in the late Roman Period. According to her, west Lithuanian cemeteries with stone circles continue the tradition of the previous period of equipping graves with plenty of stones. The Latvian archaeologist J. Ciglis, in his article, revises the chronology of some Lettigallian and Selonian articles from the mid-Iron Age. A. Radiņš analyses Lettigallian burial rites and items from the tenth to the 13th centuries. The numismatist V. Smilgevičius describes Prague mites in the Labanoras hoard from the collections of Lithuanian museums. In the section entitled “Discussions, debates”, Mykolas Michelbertas criticises Raymond Sidrys’ article on the state of Lithuanian archaeology. In the section for reviews, a survey is made of new books. In the section “Chronicle of research”, a review of research activity for 1998–1999 in the Department of Archaeology of Vilnius University is presented.


This volume starts with a publication by a young archaeologist G. Grinevičiūtė, about the fourth Stone Age settlement in Gribaša in the Varėna region. The material discovered in it is dated to the Late Palaeolithic/Late Neolithic periods. Mykolas Michelbertas, in his article, summarises the results of his explorations in Gintarai, in the Kretinga region, in the period 1977 to 1981. It is an old Iron Age cemetery, with 25 graves from the second to the fifth centuries. E. Pečeliūnaitė-Bazienė analyses the remains of fabric from the same Gintarai cemetery. The author found that wool dominates among the materials. The soil conditions for vegetal threads are unfavourable, so linen was not discovered. The anthropologist A. Barkus presents an ontological and craniological analysis of material from the cemetery. Due to the poor condition of the remains of bone, material from five graves only was investigated. Audronė Bliujienė and D. Butkus present material from a warrior’s grave of the seventh century, discovered in Lazdininkai (Kanalaukis) in the Kretinga region. According to the authors, it is a grave equipped with rich burial items, belonging to a man of a high social position. R. Beganskaitė and S. Satkūnaitė discuss practical conservation aspects regarding grave goods from the grave of the first half of the seventh century in Lazdininkai (Kanalaukis) cemetery. Vytautas Kazakevičius analyses a rare 11th-century spearhead with a silvery socket, discovered in Vilkija in the Kau nas region. He introduces the circumstances of the discovery, analogies and origins. L. Kurila writes about reflections of social relations in material from cremations discovered in barrows of eastern Lithuania. The main conclusion of his article is that a thorough analysis of osteological material could assist in answering some questions connected with the world outlook, and sexual and inter-generation relations. A. Simniškytė analyses the chronological and structural changes of the Juodoniai (Rokiškis region) hill-fort settlement. She also tries to clarify the course of the formation of the cultural layer, and identifies three chronological stages of it. In the section for discussions and debates Aleksiejus Luchtanas and G. Vėlius discuss with G. Zabiela cremation traditions in east Lithuania in the 13th and 14th centuries. At the end of the volume, a survey is made of new books.
Books by Lithuanian authors in a foreign language are rare in the archaeological world. Feeling more as inhabitants of a European province rather than patriots of our own country, we still hesitate to present the results of our research in other languages which are popular and widely used in the international academic community. A welcome exception is this new study, which has recently reached its readers. The author is a famous Lithuanian archaeologist, head of the Department of Archaeology at Vilnius University, Professor Mykolas Michelbertas, who has dedicated all his scientific talent to old Iron Age exploration, collecting in driblets, and accumulating information about the seemingly distant Roman Empire, its provinces and the relations of the Baltic tribes with it. He has produced over 350 scientific and popular articles, and several large studies on the exploration of archaeological monuments.

All known artefacts of Roman material culture (over 100 items), and around 1,000 coins from the Roman Empire, discovered in Lithuanian archaeological sites (barrow cemeteries and burial grounds, hill-forts, settlements and hoards) are collected and presented in his book. These abundant and very valuable archaeological sources are registered, analysed and interpreted, and are presented to all researchers involved in studies on “barbarian” European countries. Consequently, the author presents the material in German, providing it with exhaustive explanations, as some material could be problematic for a wider circle of German readers to perceive, though it is routine for our archaeologists.

This book is a part of a big international scientific project, which also involves other European countries that were not a part of the Roman Empire but experienced its direct cultural and economic influence. This is European Barbaricum or Germania libera. Modern Lithuania, a remote backwater of the European barbarian world in those days, is one such area.

The structure of the book is well balanced and arranged logically. It consists of a preface, an introduction, a catalogue, a list of localities, pictures and a map.

The idea of the book and the story of its birth are discussed in the preface, naming the people directly concerned and the financial sources.

The first written sources by ancient historians about the Aistians are presented in the introduction. Readers are introduced to Germania by Tacitus, familiar to all archaeologists and researchers of ancient times, in which he provides information about the territories and lifestyle of the Aistians (Balts), and about facts from Pliny on direct trading relations with the Roman Empire and the amber route, which existed for a few centuries. Due to this route, the names of Aistian tribes became familiar and are mentioned separately in subsequent written sources. These are the Galindians, Sudovians and Selonians. Readers are introduced to the term “Balts”, which was proposed by the German linguist Georg Nesselmann in the middle of the 19th century. It is followed by a short introduction to former ethnic-cultural areas in modern Lithuania.

Explanations to the book are put in a separate chapter. They provide us with information about the administrative division of Lithuania, including the names of district centres and regions, about the introduction of the exploration and collection of archaeological artefacts, the beginning of professional museology, and the fate of collections (in particular from western Lithuania) during the Second World War and after it. The author analyses the population of modern Lithuania, and its expansion since the beginning of the Iron Age. Numbers of imported articles increased together with the increase in the population. Artefacts are more abundant in sites where the population density is higher. This chapter provides a list of references, abbreviations and tables of illustrations.

The catalogue makes up the largest part of the book. It is designed on the basis of the latest administrative division of the Republic of Lithuania – the districts and regions. It will be useful for researchers, as some foreign archaeologists have a poor understanding of the division and the smaller territorial units of the country. A lot of room is given to the coins of the Roman Empire. Alongside glass and enamel beads, they make up the largest part of finds. At the moment, over 100 find sites, with over 1,000 Roman coins, have been discov-
ered in Lithuania. It was not difficult for the author to arrange a catalogue of coins, as an article by him on the subject has recently appeared. He draws the attention of readers to the fact that Roman coins in graves are typical of the cemeteries of the western Balts. It separates them from other analogous monuments of barbarian Europe.

The catalogue introduces other spare artefacts of Roman origin, including the circumstances of their finding, dates, thorough descriptions of artefacts and other items discovered together, references and conservation sites.

The book is provided with one specific chapter which is not usually typical of similar publications. It is dedicated to Lithuanian transcription. No doubt, this is a positive feature of the book, as foreign scholars distort the place-names beyond recognition, having no idea how to read them properly.

The book is illustrated with pictures professionally drawn by I. Maciukaitė. Unfortunately, they are not too numerous. It would have been worth introducing more pictures of items, despite their poor condition.

This book is valuable for several aspects: 1) material about the Iron Age in Lithuania has never before been presented so broadly to readers in a foreign language; 2) it penetrates a pan-European readership, and assists in the better understanding of the economic-cultural influence of the Roman Empire on the Baltic tribes. Henceforth, the Baltic area will no longer remain a blank spot on the archaeological map of European cultures.

It is hard to evaluate critically the work of a person who has spent all his life, consistently and purposefully, exploring the material culture of the Iron Age in Lithuania. This is a professional and mature work; therefore, we can only express our admiration regarding the accuracy of Professor Michelbertas, and wish him further success in researching his favourite area.

Vytautos Kazakevičius

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