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ARCHEOlogija 47

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Redakcijos adresas / Editorial Board address:
Lietuvos istorijos institutas, Archeologijos skyrius
Tilto g. 17, LT-01101 Vilnius
Tel. (+370) 5 2614436, fax (+370) 5 2611433
e-mail: lietuvsarheologija@gmail.com;
civilytea@gmail.com

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FOREWORD

Dear readers of 'Lithuanian Archaeology',

The year of Marija Gimbutas' centenary commemoration simply flew past like a bird's wing bridge. We live in the 21st century and I have to admit that it is not easy to talk about her work today.

First, this is because she has written so much. She wrote articles like her pen was on fire. Of course, that was part of her job and duties. Some works took years to write, oppressive, torturous years, but the books (which she called 'the fat ones') did appear and reached many readers. The articles examine various problems and, judging by their names, her broad range and huge ambitions are amazing. I don't know if anyone has read all of her articles; I think everyone chooses what is important to him or her and the choice is absolutely huge.

Second, it is difficult to evaluate Gimbutas' works due to her hypotheses, which were received not only positively but also negatively, especially her hypothesis about Old Europe and the Mother goddess, which caused a real storm of debate.

Third, this scientist's writing style and thought processes balance between science and literature, which is not standard practice for archaeologists, who often ignore her. Indeed, it is acknowledged that Gimbutas' books intertwine archaeological fact and fantasy: the desire to see a specific world and a beautiful, romantic history, but even the most critical feel a little confused as her words have the power to convince. Her works, which incorporate Lithuania's oral and written heritage as well as ideas related to humankind and nature, have a lasting value that has been passed down from generation to generation.

In the world of science, Gimbutas is distinguished by the intensity of her interpretive thinking and her strong poetic feel. Subsequent publications, especially a book in Lithuanian on the Balts, fortified

the somewhat earlier wave of creativity by the Lithuanian poets Vaidotas Daunys picturesquely called 'cultural archaeologists'. Thus romanticism, the strength of her national self-awareness, the German School of Archaeology, the huge US libraries, and Europe's endless layers of archaeology allowed her to improvise and create her own archaeological poetry.

This 47th volume of 'Lithuanian Archaeology' unites a very wide variety of texts, revealing the colours of Gimbutas' personality, her hobbies, working methods, approach to archaeology, and ideas, and their continuity in today's science and life. Most of the texts are articles based on papers presented at the 29–30 April, 2021 international virtual conference 'Marija Gimbutas in Lithuania and the World: a Centenary Commemoration', but some are also by scientists who did not participate in the conference. The aim in compiling this volume was to show different opinions about her hypotheses and to present new possibilities for their interpretation. The insights of researchers from Europe and besides into Gimbutas' work reveal a wide range of views that should interest more than just archaeologists. The articles are like 'young wine in old bottles', reviving and continuing Gimbutas' thoughts and encouraging readers to seek answers to many questions.

The uniqueness of this volume is that, in keeping with the nature of its subject, syntheses predominate. While the individual articles focus locally on topics dear to Gimbutas, especially Old Europe and anthropomorphic figurines, on a broader level the publication seeks to show the universality of her hypotheses in Europe and the world by comparing archaeological, historical, and ethnographic material from different regions.

The first part of the publication consists of the memories and experiences of people who personally

worked with her. Ernestine Elster, who started studying archaeology thanks to Gimbutas, talks about Gimbutas' scientific interests before she arrived in Los Angeles, introducing the reader to how Gimbutas herself explained the concept of Old Europe. The author's experience and impressions from Gimbutas' expeditions show what new archaeological data were important to Gimbutas and how she created hypotheses about the civilization of Old Europe and a prehistoric pantheon of goddesses and gods. Interestingly, she never called herself a real excavator, although she always knew what to expect from those excavations. Elster clearly shows that Gimbutas' idea of Old Europe has remained relevant in archaeology to this day.

James Mallory, who listened to Gimbutas' lectures at the University of California, Los Angeles, takes readers into the auditorium, introducing the topics, structure, and featured issues of her lectures. He also describes the way she used many of her own photos and slides, now stored in the Opus Archives in Santa Barbara, California, and her examination principle, which is in line with the conservative rules still used in Germany today: students not only had to write a final thesis, but also identify, date, and describe archaeological objects. He likewise presents her advice on what to read, what TV shows to watch, and how to rate them. This text is a unique opportunity to learn more about the inner workings of archaeology as a discipline in the US and Gimbutas' position thereon, especially in the wake of the new wave of archaeology started by Lewis Binford.

Kornelija Jankauskaitė's article colourfully reveals Gimbutas' love of travel, prompting the thought that she was constantly in motion: hiking in the homeland, out collecting folklore, or travelling by plane, train, or car around Europe. Perhaps that is why the idea of migration was so close to her? The author presents all the spicy details of the trips and, most importantly, lets us feel the subtle meaning of her personal relation with Gimbutas

and her travel history, showing new qualities of her character and giving us to understand that her work would not have existed without her travels.

The academic part consists of eight articles, starting with one by Šarūnas Milišauskas and Kathryn Hudson that reviews the main stages in Gimbutas' personal and scientific life, something that has not been done before. The authors examine seven aspects of her scientific career while both supporting and criticising her hypotheses. But, most importantly, this article introduces readers to folklore elements that were essential for Gimbutas and discusses symbols that she saw as a writing system, things which are not discussed in the other articles of this volume. The authors clearly show that this researcher, who frightened male archaeologists with her strong manner and beliefs, flew like a comet in the history of archaeological science and left an indelible mark.

Julia Mattes writes about the universal application of Gimbutas' works in various scientific fields and social movements, focussing on anthropomorphic figurines and the gynocentric interpretation she proposed. The author explains the differences between the various social structures, in which a woman's role was important, inherited, or dominant while critically discussing the religious pantheon Gimbutas created. She points out problems associated with the interpretation of anthropomorphic plastic art and various researchers' positions: from fertility cults, individual portraits, family members, ancestors, and symbolic objects to female images as erotic stimuli, thereby revealing the risks in forming a scientific conclusion without avoiding even such extremes as a medical-anatomical interpretation of the female body and the female fertility cycle.

This article provides insights into the unique archaeological complexes at Poduri and Isaiia (Romania), which have yielded female figurines sitting on chairs that Gimbutas described in her works. The author boldly asks whether these figurines

can even be assigned a gender or whether they are abstract humanoid beings; she also discusses the significance of the figurines decorations, and tattoos as artistic expressions. This article uniquely underscores the links between the feminism movement and the 'witchcraft' in Gimbutas' works, encouraging us to reflect on the role of women in prehistory and to continue researching this topic.

Nurcan Yalman innovatively examines anthropomorphic figurines in her article on the archaeological excavations at Catalhöyük (Turkey) by comparing Gimbutas' thoughts on the Mother Goddess with James Mellaart's similar conception of a temple adorned with female goddesses. The author, herself a participant in the Catalhöyük research project, presents critical arguments that allow the archaeological material found at this location to be evaluated a little differently than Gimbutas did. Yalman points out how much depends on an objective and rational analysis of the figures and their general contextualisation. She admits that the vision and worldview of the people of Catalhöyük are connected with the difficult to understand symbols. The female image was obviously important in this artwork, but it only complemented the totality of Catalhöyük's signs and symbols and was by no means the dominant element.

Sharada Srinivasan continues the theme of female depiction in prehistory, taking us to India with its very rich figurative heritage and modern goddess worship. She uniquely links the movements and postures typical of prehistoric female sculptures and stone carvings with modern plastic art and dance. The author, by imitating archaeological figures in dance, ties them to contemporary dance rituals in an effort to discover the meaning of these movements in archaeological times. In describing ethnographic examples, Srinivasan validates the importance of women to society and agrees with Gimbutas' idea about the matrilineal structure of society in archaeological times.

Rasa Banytė-Rowell writes about the doctoral dissertation Gimbutas defended at the University of Tübingen and its importance for archaeology. She rightly states that this work has been forgotten and so it is very important to examine it in more detail. While she raises the question of how relevant the dissertation's burial monument distribution is to modern archaeology, the dissertation was a significant breakthrough in Lithuanian burial monument research since 1920. According to her, Gimbutas, although still a very young scientist, managed to reconstruct the system of old beliefs and see prospects for further research in this direction. Gimbutas herself mentioned that her interest in archaeological burial rites was connected with her personal experiences after the early loss of her father. This led to the maturity of one of her earliest works and its undoubted significance for future generations of researchers.

Florin Gogăltan examines the Indo-European migration hypothesis, presenting his Romanian colleagues' views of Gimbutas' migration models and seeking to clarify the prehistoric links between Transylvania and the North Pontic Steppe. According to him, Romania still lacks serious debate on this controversial issue. New archaeological finds after World War II led more researchers, including Gimbutas, to adopt the views of V. G. Child, who developed a theory of three major migration waves of kurgan people. Researchers agree on the first (4400–4300 BC) and third (3000–2900 BC), but not on the second, which allegedly led to major cultural changes in the Central and Lower Danube region circa the mid-4th millennium BC. The author believes that the data has yet to prove this wave and the claim that steppe populations caused major changes in Transylvania in the early Bronze Age.

Lithuanian archaeologists are also interested in the question of human migration. Gytis Piličiauskas, Edvardas Simčenka, Justina Kozakaitė, Žydrūnė

Miliauskienė, Giedrė Piličiauskienė, and Harry Kenneth Robson return us to Lithuania and provide a special opportunity to learn the first strontium isotope results for the Donkalis and Spiginas cemeteries in West Lithuania. The latest genetic research has proven that long, large-scale human migrations occurred in many parts of Europe, including Lithuania, in the Neolithic and Bronze Age. Interestingly, strontium isotopes show not only individual mobility but also seasonal movement. All of the continent's hunter-gatherers, including fishermen, were mobile but some sedentariness also existed. Immigrants from other regions are likewise found in mobile local communities. This article not only places Lithuanian material in a European context, but also opens new perspectives for research on intercultural relations in prehistoric communities.

The academic part ends with an article by Janusz Czebreszuk and Agnė Čivilytė about prehistoric amber in Gimbutas' works. She was one of the first to recognize the importance of amber in interregional exchanges with southern European regions. The article discusses several stages in the spread of amber in the Baltic and neighbouring regions, other amber trade routes in the Stone and Bronze Ages, and how the items changed shape. It explains why, in her opinion, succinite was associated with the sun and why people rarely put amber in the Bronze Age burials on the Eastern Baltic coast. Amber also had a special significance in Gimbutas' life – one can see from her own and other people's letters and memories how important it is to wear amber necklaces and other amber jewellery that *'brings to sway the hearts of the greatest women'*.

The chapter 'Alternative Perceptions of Archaeology' features Paulius Gritėnas' witty, ironic text: what do you say to a proud philosopher sitting in an ivory tower when an archaeologist tries to dig under it with a shovel? Although the author tries

to avoid comparing his field with archaeology, he fails to do so; on the contrary, based on the mutual admiration of philosophers and historians, he is consistently moving towards the establishment of philosophy as archaeology and the mutual love of these disciplines, or perhaps even, as the author himself would say, their marriage. Gritėnas reveals the meaning of the word 'digging' from a completely different angle and provocatively asks whether philosophy fell from its ivory tower, or did archaeology finally undermine its foundation and cast down the philosopher?

The volume ends with a review by Artūras Dubonis, who examines Rytis Jonaitis' and Irma Kaplūnaitė's 2020 monograph *Senkapis Vilniuje, Bokšto gatvėje. XIII–XV a. laidosenos Lietuvoje bruožai* (The Old Cemetery on Bokšto Street in Vilnius. 13th–15th-century Burial Rite Features in Lithuania), a book that would have definitely interested Gimbutas.

As I write this foreword, I remember the days I recently spent at Gimbutas' home in Topanga, near Los Angeles. In this jubilee year commemorating her centenary, many people have been talking about this exceptional woman, her home, and her hospitality. In fact, after waking up in Topanga in an early autumn morning and walking around her garden with its lofty cypresses, fruit trees, flowers, and falling leaves, it is pleasant to sit on the terrace and watch the sunlit mountains. A visit to Gimbutas' house this year made sense; I realized that I was inspired and willing to finish the work I had started and begin something new. I would like to thank all the authors, without whom the ideas and this book would not exist, Dovilė Urbanavičiūtė and Mindaugas Maskoliūnas. I hope that everyone who opens this volume will feel equally inspired.

*Agnė ČIVILYTĖ,
Editor-in-Chief*