

VOLUME II OF AESTIORUM HEREDITAS

GINTAUTAS ZABIELA



Archeologiczne dziedzictwo Prus Wschodnich w archiwum Feliksa Jakobsona. Das archäologische Vermächtnis Ostpreußens im Archiv des Felix Jakobson. Austrumprūsijas arheoloģiskais mantojums Fēliksa Jākobsona arhīvā. Aestiorum Hereditas, vol. II. Warsaw, 2011. 639 pp. + DVD. ISBN 978-62622-14-6

An important publication is now available to archaeologists and the general public who are interested in (but not only) the ancient past of the Balts, namely volume two in the 'Aestiorum Hereditas' (The Heritage of the Aestii) series, which was published in Poland. This volume focuses on the East Prussian archaeological heritage known from the archives of the Latvian archaeologist Feliks Jākobsons (1896–1930). Volume one, which was published in 2008 and covered the inventory books of the Prussia Museum, was favourably received (*Fornvännen*, 2008, t. 103, p.291, J.P. Lamm; *Lietuvos archeologija*, Vilnius, 2009, t. 35, pp.274-275, R. Banytė-Rowell; *Archeologija Litwana*, Vilnius, 2009, t. 10, pp.193-198, L. Tamulynas). Volume two, edited by T. Nowakiewicz, follows essentially the same structure as the first one. It contains articles by individual authors, published materials, and a trilingual text (in this case, the place of the Russian-language text in volume one is taken by a Latvian text, which indicates the third language, along with Polish and German, intended for local researchers). All this shows that the project is well thought out, and is gaining momentum. Also, volume two contains a small but important supplement, a compact disc.

The book consists of four chapters. Chapter one focuses on F. Jākobsons and the material he collected. A rather brief characterisation (pp.14-25 of trilingual text, with five illustrations) of Jākobsons is given by J. Ciglis, an archaeologist from the National History Museum of Latvia. During his short life (he drowned in his 34th year on 25 May 1930 in the River Daugava, next to Lucavsala) Jākobsons, a promising researcher from the younger generation of Latvian archaeologists, worked for only eight years in archaeology. He was unable to complete any very important work in such a short time. This is probably the reason why later he was almost forgotten. Jākobsons' contribution to Latvian archaeology was again brought to light a decade or so ago (Jākobsons, F., 'Austrumbaltijas dzels laikmeta pētījumi', *Latvijas vēstures muzeja raksti Nr. 6. Arheologija*, Rīga, 1999), but a more thorough assessment of his legacy is still awaiting research. The book discussed here is one of the first attempts to do this (the version of his dissertation, defended in Königsberg in 1927, that survived in Latvia was published in Germany in 2009, under the title *Jakobson F. Die Brandgräberfelder von Daumen und Kellaren im Kreise Allenstein, Ostpr. Daumen und Kellaren – Tumiany i Kielary*,

Band 1. Neumünster, 2009 [Schriften des Archäologischen Landesmuseums, Band 9]). Jākobsons' archives are discussed in a broader article (pp.26-57, with 37 illustrations) by A. Bitner-Wróblewska and T. Nowakiewicz. It is interesting that both researchers are from Poland, whereas the archives themselves are kept in the National History Museum of Latvia. Is it possible that no one in Latvia has yet shown an interest in them?

Jākobsons' archives consist of approximately 2,000 cards (p.29), containing a variety of archaeological information (mostly rough drawings of finds) gathered during his visits to Berlin (Königliche Museum für Völkerkunde), Szczecin (Stettin Museum), Vilnius (Muzeum Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk, and the collections of Stefan Batory University), Warsaw (Państwowy Muzeum Archeologiczne), Kaunas (Kaunas City Museum) and Liepāja (Liepājas Muzejs). There are also approximately 10,000 sketches of finds found in Latvia (p.53) and held in museums in Jekabpilis (Latvia), Tartu (Estonia) and Mainz (Germany). Finally, there are 12 accounts of his excavations in Latvia, and about 100 other accounts (p.55). Jākobsons' archives also contain material from the present-day territory of Lithuania: from Anduliai, Pašušvys, Švėkšna, Karmazinai, Senieji Maceliai, Vilkiautinis (Wysoki), Žvirbliai and Apuolė. This material is published in the book. The material on archaeological valuables of the Klaipėda region (mostly burial sites) contained in these archives has already been published earlier in a brief version (Tamulynas, L., 'Das archäologische Untersuchungsmaterial des Memellandes in der Kartei von Felikss Jakobsons', *Archaeologia Litwana*, Vilnius, 2008, t. 9, pp.150-160).

Chapter two, a catalogue, is the main part of the book (pp.64-511). It contains descriptions of 208 localities mentioned in the archives. The place-names are arranged in alphabetical order. A map showing these localities is included on page 64 for easy guidance. The principles of the compilation of the catalogue are set out on pages 60 to 63. Next to every object described there is an indication of its name and present-day location, a short description of the object, the chronology of the object (in periods according to K. Engel; a chronology is given on page 62), literature on the object, and the numbers of electronic files (for every object, the numbers start with 001). The descriptions are illustrated with the location of the object on a separate map, and occasionally with drawings or photographs of individual finds. The illustrations have been taken mostly from Jākobsons' papers. Thus, information in a single publication is presented twice in two different formats, traditional paper format and an electronic one. Illustrations from other sources are used only rarely (for example, on pages 70-71, 93, 111, 132, 137).

The latter constitute a valuable part of the catalogue, because they are published here for the first time. In some instances, illustrations from external sources are not related to the published information, they are not original (pp.100, 107, 109, 229, 232), and they have most likely been included in the book solely to give a general view. In this context, we find an artistically splendid and unusual view of Borecka forest on page 407. Now and then, there are separate cuttings from older maps with the locations of the places mentioned, for example on pages 129, 145, 147 and 150. These are important in cases where the names of the old settlements have changed, or the very settlements are of little importance. However, in some instances they seem to have been included solely for the attractiveness of the layout (on page 106, for instance, in the case of the well-known Balga Castle, or on page 134, where a cutting from E. Hollack's archaeological map of 1908 has been used for a description of Corjeiten). On page 364, the map contains a technical error related to the location of Paskalwen: the arrow points to an empty area in Lithuania, near Šereiklaukis, whereas Paskalviai is marked on the left bank of the River Nemunas closer to Tilsit. In general, the catalogue is generously illustrated (the illustrations are not numbered, but their total number, excluding the general map, is 700 or more, or more than one and a half to every page), and this gives the catalogue a significant value. In individual cases, when a single piece of information on an object has survived (such as Alkehnen on page 68, Baiten on page 105, or Bendiglauken on page 118), it would obviously have been worthwhile publishing it, but this has not been done. In general, the structure of the catalogue is well thought out and duly implemented, which is something that publications of this type do not always succeed at. It is a great achievement by the entire team of the authors and the project *per se*.

Chapter three of the book (Miscellanea) focuses on the publication of various individual studies undertaken in relation to work on Jākobsons' archives. Its title should be 'Studies' rather than 'Miscellanea'. The chapter consists of four articles. In their article on Strenwald burial site (pp.514-533), T. Nowakiewicz and A. Rzeszotarska-Nowakiewicz discuss the earlier knowledge about this burial site and its location in 2010 (in the locality of Lasowiec) by using a metal detector and excavating separate trenches. Although the only finds found in the excavated areas were a relatively well-preserved horse skeleton and the bottoms of former pits, the burial site was reliably located on the basis of the rather numerous (about 100 pieces) accidental finds collected there. Based on the research data, the burial site was dated to the second to the sixth centuries (p.532). Another article by A. Rzeszotarska-Nowakiewicz

wicz discusses the excavations of tumuli in present-day Belarus, which are called Marszałkowszczyzna in Jākobsons' archives. During a thorough analysis, it was found that these tumuli of East Lithuanian Tumuli culture (no less than seven mounds) had been excavated by Hermann Strathmann (1882–1966), the chaplain to the 21st Brigade of the 14th Division of the German Army (Landwert) between January and April 1916. Later the same year, he handed over the finds to the Prussia Museum. All the material on these excavations published in the article is extremely important both to studies of the history of archaeology and the prehistory of the Balts, since it has never been published before. An article by A. Bitner-Wróblewska discusses 13 early horseshoe fibulae from six burial sites of the Masurian region (pp.548-561). Most of them have a quadrangular bow and reflexed terminals, and they are dated to the second half of the seventh century to the early eighth century (p.555). This study shows that important scientific results can be achieved even if one has access to indirect archaeological sources, which Jākobsons' notes are in this case. The last article, written by T. Nowakiewicz, focuses on 27 single-edged swords from the former East Prussia (pp.562-593). Eight of these swords originate from present-day Lithuania (Anduliai, 2, Ramučiai, Rambynas and Vėžaičiai, 4). The swords are dated to the tenth century (p.589). The data about them supplements the well-known work by V. Kazakevičius on ninth to 13th-century swords of the Balts (Vilnius, 1996). In the article itself, quite a lot of attention is paid to the analysis of the material from the Vėžaičiai burial site. Therefore, it is important for a comprehensive interpretation of the material from this burial site.

The last chapter of the book (Varia) contains a list of the literature referred to in the book (pp.596-613), and a detailed list of place-names, which is first and foremost based on the old German place-names, with modern place-names given next to the old ones. In addition, individual lists of modern place-names are compiled for every state that has inherited East Prussian territory (Poland, Lithuania and Russia), and these modern place-names are linked to the old ones (pp.616-631). This is a historically correct approach, for the use of the place-names of this region is often quite confusing. In this case, the place-names that did not survive the Second World War have been treated in an interesting way. An index of them has been compiled as a separate group (pp.630-631). At the end of the book, we can find an index of personal names used in the book (pp.634-634), and brief words about themselves by the four authors (pp.638-639).

The publication of the non-Latvian part of Jākobsons' card index in electronic form on a DVD disc that ac-

companies the book is extremely valuable. Copies of 1,798 card index items are presented in the disc, in the same order as in the book. The number for a single locality varies from one to 161 (Alt Kossewen). However, in general, the number per object does not exceed ten. The electronic appendix is easy to use. However, in general, a problem connected with the publication of archivalia (not necessarily Jākobsons') does exist. Or even two problems. The first is the absence of clear archival signatures in documents published. As we can clearly see from the published material, Jākobsons' archives are not put in proper order, that is, the material is not numbered, or divided into files, inventories, and so on (if it is required in this case). On the basis of the book, we cannot even determine the stock number. It is just Jākobsons' archives in the National History Museum of Latvia where his dissertation has been allocated an inventory number AA-883 (p.26, reference 1). As this dissertation has now been published (see pages 27 to 328 of the aforementioned work by Jākobsons published in Neumünster in 2009), this single signature is not very important because most researchers are going to use this well-prepared publication anyway. The absence of original numbering of individual pages (cards, photographs) of the remaining (main) archives by Jākobsons makes the material already published (or future works done using the archives) difficult to compare with the material published in this book. In it, as has already been mentioned, the entire published material attributable to an object is numbered 001 and upwards. Therefore, using the book is simple and convenient, and it does not matter at all in what order the pages have been numbered, because quite often a page contains data on several graves and even objects. In the absence of archival numbering, it remains absolutely unclear according to what principle all this material is stored on site, because even under ideal storage conditions there always exists the possibility that unnumbered pages can be mixed up, as supposedly nothing changes because of this. However, another researcher working on the archives might be unable to find an item, or might only find it with difficulty. A brief comparison given below of archivalia of the Klaipėda region published in this book with the above-mentioned earlier publication by L. Tamulynas serves as a good illustration of the problem. Although in the article, L. Tamulynas does not indicate when he worked on these archives, it is absolutely obvious that the archives were used. In the article, the cards are marked in the same way that Jākobsons marked them.

According to the 96-card index (pp.154, 160) described in Appendix 1 to the article (pp.157-158), the number is indicated erroneously as 125 (excluding Anduliai and Aukštkiemiai). The book does not contain

cards of accidental finds from Adl Heydekrug (p.157) and Pleschkutten (p.158) (the latter, according to L. Tamulynas' description, is not identical to the card for Pangesai). Tamulynas indicates 15 cards from Barvai, 14 are published in this book, from Greižėnai 6 and 1, from Rubokai 8 and 4, from Šernai 3 and 2, from Vėžaičiai 23 and 17, from Vilkyčiai 7 and 5, and from Vilkyškiai 5 and 2. It is not the aim of this review to go into a detailed investigation as to where, how much, and what has been omitted, or who made a mistake or misplaced this or that. However, a thorough researcher cannot do without the archive original in the future, and in the absence of archival numbering, the above-mentioned problem will always persist.

The second problem that has not been solved in the book is the fact that the size of the published pages is not indicated, whereas the published images of pages are of different sizes. It would still be understandable if written information was published: the size of a 20th-century written document is of no relevance yet to science. However, most of the published pages contain images, drawings of archaeological finds of varying quality, which today are often the only source for verifying finds. In archaeology, the size of an object is a rather important aspect, even if its surviving image is not to scale. If the sizes of the original archivalia are known, we can at least try to search for certain patterns applied in redrawing, and then try to determine the actual sizes of objects on these patterns. In this case, it is impossible to do this.

To conclude, we should say that researchers into the prehistory of the Baltic region now have a very valuable work, which will be extremely useful. The work is not ideal, due to some unsolved methodological problems in the publication of archivalia of an archaeological nature. Archaeologists should just follow the experience of archivists, and in some instances do the archivists' work, by simultaneously publishing and putting in order 'Aestiorum Hereditas'.



REVIEWS