

# Publications of hillfort research during the Soviet period: A case study of the Narkūnai hillfort on the 50th anniversary of its investigation

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## Abstract

Publications on hillforts, like those in other areas of archaeological research, serve as important sources of knowledge. Their significance has grown in recent years as the number of new hillfort excavations has decreased considerably, and accordingly earlier publications are now referenced more frequently. By 2024, a total of 48 works on hillforts had been published. The question is, however, whether these studies meet the definition of a ‘comprehensive publication’ and whether the data they present is reliable and provides a suitable basis for future research.

A comprehensive publication is a presentation of research material, usually in printed form, containing sufficient data in case the original material is lost. It is in the context of this definition that we here evaluate the Soviet-era publication of excavation results, using the excavations at the hillfort of Narkūnai (eastern Lithuania), conducted between 1976 and 1978 (*Lietuvos Archeologija* [Lithuanian Archaeology], vol. 5, 1985, pp. 5–49), as a case study. The material from these excavations is well preserved. Due to various restrictions during the Soviet period, the publication of excavation results was very limited. This can be seen from the fact that there are no photographs of the excavations and very little attention is paid to the pottery. Since the scope of research publications is determined by a variety of factors, in order to determine how comprehensive it is, the Narkūnai publication was compared with other works on hillforts published in the recent past. The coefficient obtained shows that the publications from the Soviet period are not comprehensive and do not cover all the research material. Therefore, it is necessary to republish studies on the major hillforts, applying the current advances in archaeological science in the fields of research and dissemination.

## Introduction

The publication of archaeological research material is a routine part of an archaeologist’s scientific work, the specifics of which are often overlooked. The purpose of such studies is the dissemination of archaeological data, enabling scientists to continue the exploration of the past in future research. In addition to its scientific value, including its introduction into academic discourse, the publication of source material also carries an important heritage conservation aspect. Publication is the dissemination of the material in the form of physical or digital copies distributed to various libraries and other collections, thus preventing the loss of the material record in the event of any of the various calamities that can lead to the destruc-

tion of the artefact collection, accompanying manuscripts and other recorded material. The evidence for this is so abundant that examples need not be given. Published data from excavations or material studies often falls short of the required level of detail due to various subjective and objective factors that arise during investigations, artefact storage and the preparation of the final publication. The same applies to all works of this kind. Expanded editions are produced as unpublished material accumulates and interest in a particular subject grows. The length of such publications usually exceeds that of an article. Therefore, when it comes to disseminating the results of more extensive excavations, it is preferable to publish all the material in a separate publication.

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These general points also apply to publications on Lithuanian hillforts. As with other types of archaeological heritage, works on this subject are not numerous, although they are more common than studies of old towns. Of the 1,014 hillforts currently known (as of 2025), 222<sup>1</sup> have been investigated. Of these, research has been published on 48 hillforts — just over a fifth (21.6%).<sup>2</sup> Although no comparative study with regard to the publication of other types of archaeological sites has been carried out, this figure is more or less representative of the general situation in Lithuania.<sup>3</sup> This study does not aim to identify trends or peculiarities in the publication of archaeological material. Instead, it focuses on a topic that has not yet been explored in research on Lithuania or its neighbouring regions: a source-based evaluation of publications on past hillfort research.

### 1. Narkūnai hillfort investigations and publications

Archaeological research at each hillfort is unique, and what is published depends on various factors. With this in mind, this article focuses on a single case study: the Narkūnai hillfort (Utena District, Leliūnai Eldership). Excavations at the site were conducted between 1976 and 1978, with a partial publication of the research material appearing in 1985 (Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė 1986b). Several factors influenced the selection of this case study. The Narkūnai hillfort holds particular significance in the development of the Brushed Pottery culture and is regarded as one of its earliest hillforts. Additionally, it has been extensively excavated, with half of its interior investigated by two experienced archaeologists (Fig. 1). The research material is well preserved, and the findings were published relatively soon after excavation — just seven years later (Fig. 2). Consequently, Narkūnai remains a valuable reference for modern research. The hillfort forms part of a complex that includes the outworks (see Fig. 3), the settlement at its foot and a burial site. The hillfort sits at the heart of this complex, making it particularly significant. The present study focuses only on the hillfort, as the material record of the other components within the complex has not been published (except for a partial study of the burial site by Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė and Luchtanas 1979).

<sup>1</sup> For a list of publications up to 2019, see Zabiela 2019, pp. 28–29, Table 2.

<sup>2</sup> Calculated according to *Lietuvos piliakalniai* atlases (2017, pp. 196–224) with additional data for 2017–2025. For an overview of the statistics related to past investigations of hillforts, see Zabiela 2019, pp. 24–27.

<sup>3</sup> In 1995, 30 (20%) of the 150 burials from the 13th–18th centuries were investigated, and the results were published (Zabiela 1995, p. 4).

Initial scientific information on excavation results was published immediately after the investigations were conducted, in accordance with the procedure of the time (Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė and Kulikauskas 1978; Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė and Luchtanas 1980; Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė et al. 1977; 1978; 1979). Furthermore, the excavation reports were quickly written (Kulikauskienė 1976; Kulikauskienė and Luchtanas 1978), the original

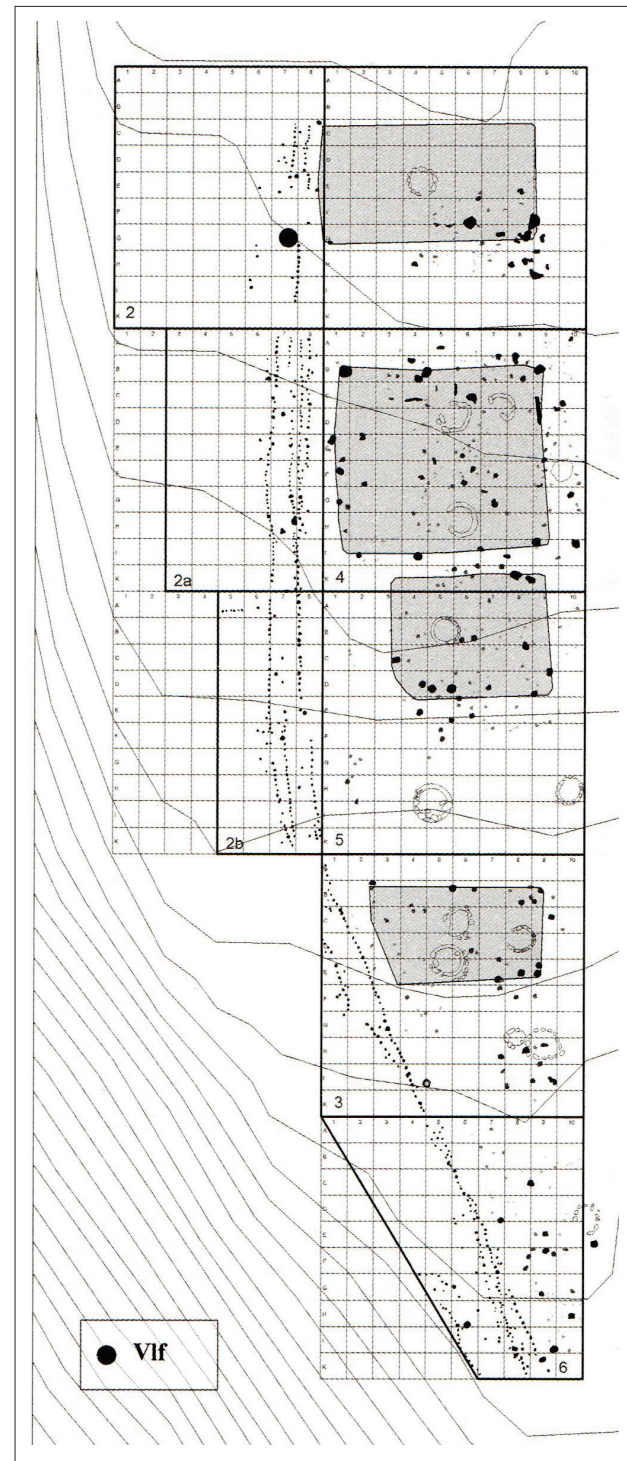


Figure 1. Archaeological plan of the Narkūnai hillfort for the 1976–1978 investigations (Čivilytė 2014, Fig. 99, p. 122).

Table 1. Research material on the Narkūnai hillfort

Type of research material	Page count in the publication	No. of illustrations in the publication	Percentage of publications out of 42 pages	No. of pages in the archaeological excavation report/ No. of plans in the report	Additional research material in the archives
Text	16		38	416	The collection of the Kulikauskas family
Plans	13	16	31	134/55	
Photographs	0	0	0	0	Collection of the Kulikauskas family and the personal archive of A. Luchtanas
Drawings of finds	8	103	19	0	
Photographs of finds	4	43	10	0	The collection of the Kulikauskas family
Reconstruction drawings	1	3	2	0	

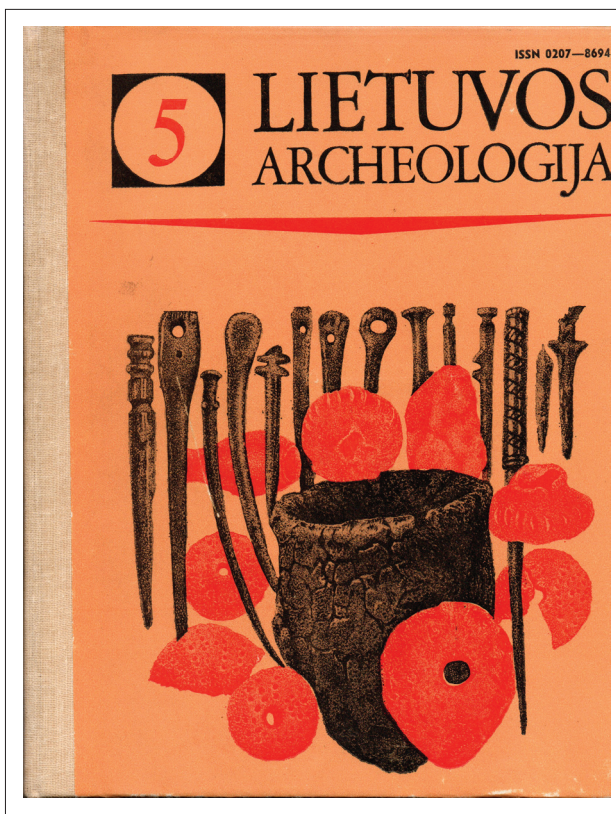


Figure 2. Cover of volume 5 of *Lietuvos archeologija*, in which the findings from the lower cultural layer of the Narkūnai hillfort were published in 1986.

plans of the site<sup>4</sup> and photo negatives<sup>5</sup> were submitted to the archive, and the finds were handed over to the museum.<sup>6</sup> This makes the record of the excavations reliable and relatively complete.<sup>7</sup> The material record is complemented by the collection that was created by researchers Regina Kulikauskienė (R. Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė, 1916–2007) and Pranas Kulikauskas (1913–2004).<sup>8</sup> Some of the finds, such as bones, casting moulds and pottery, were briefly examined in separate studies (Lukhtan 1986; Čivilytė 2014; Podėnas et al. 2016a; 2016b; Luik and Maldre 2007). Additionally, two more detailed works focusing on some of the artefact groups were published (Volkaitė-Kulikauskiene and Lukhtan 1981; Merkevičius 1986). Together, they form the basis for evaluating the publication of the research material within the volume in which it appeared (excluding the study of the medieval cultural layers).

The Soviet period was a distinct era in the history of Lithuania and other socialist countries, marked by widespread shortages that affected nearly all aspects of life. In archaeology, these shortages were particularly evident in the limitations placed on publishing research findings. The planned economy allocated minimal resources —

<sup>4</sup> Archive of Lithuanian Institute of History, corpus 1, files 6094–6150, 6158–6170, 6173, 6174, 6176–6178, 6181–6198, 6200–6218, 6220–6242.

<sup>5</sup> Archive of Lithuanian Institute of History, corpus 1, files: 45338–45641.

<sup>6</sup> National Museum of Lithuania, Inventory No. AR 594:1-758. Pottery finds have not been inventoried.

<sup>7</sup> Only the descriptions of pottery found in 1978 are missing. However, as the pottery is kept in the National Museum of Lithuania, this is more of a formal shortcoming.

<sup>8</sup> Collection of Pranas Kulikauskas, LMAVR RS, file 376; Collection of Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė, LMAVR RS, file 377.



Figure 3. Narkūnai hillfort with its outworks (on the right) seen from the air (from the southeast) on 3 November 2018 (photograph by G. Zabiela).

both financial and material (such as paper) — to scientific publications. As a result, the release of each archaeological work was a significant event in the field. Although no overview of the history of archaeology in Soviet Lithuania has been published, the peculiarities of the time are reflected in the memories that have been shared by archaeologists working at the time (Kulikauskas 2003, pp. 121–147, 183–231; Rimantienė 2010, pp. 185–440; Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė, 2016, pp. 62–111; Tautavičius 2016, pp. 43–175). The history of the scientific journal *Lietuvos archeologija* [Lithuanian archaeology] also illustrates this point well (Zabiela 2009). The research material from the lower cultural layer of the Narkūnai hillfort was published in volume 5. Since *Lietuvos archeologija* was published during the Soviet period as a topical collection of articles or monographs (volumes 1–7), its limited scope<sup>9</sup> meant that a single volume could include multiple case studies. In the case of volume 5, the hillforts of Nevieriškė and Sokiškiai were also featured alongside Narkūnai (Grigalavičienė, 1986a; 1986b). The material from all three hillforts determined the theme of the volume: ‘Early Hillforts of North-Eastern Lithuania’. For this reason, the medieval material from Narkūnai was left unpublished.<sup>10</sup> The 145-page publication (only

slightly longer than other Soviet-period *Lietuvos archeologija* volumes, which averaged 139 pages) was divided almost equally between the three case studies, Narkūnai, Nevieriškė, and Sokiškiai, which received 31%, 26% and 34% of the total pages, respectively.<sup>11</sup> However, the allocation of pages did not take into account factors such as the total excavated area of these hillforts (3,261 m<sup>2</sup> in total) or the number of finds (approximately 28,750 in total, including 1,870 small finds and about 26,880 pottery sherds<sup>12</sup>). The respective shares of the total area excavated were 20%, 46% and 34%, while the distribution of finds was 45%, 18% and 37%. The only correlation observed between the number of pages and excavation data was with small finds. This aligns with a common trend in earlier publications that primarily focus on small finds. These account for 32%, 33% and 35% of the text for each case study, respectively. In this case, the publication on the Narkūnai hillfort can be considered fairly typical of Soviet-period hillfort studies, with similar tendencies observed in other publications. The limitations faced by the publishers of *Lietuvos archeologija* are also evident in

<sup>9</sup> The number of pages ranged from 109 to 195, and the frequency of volume publication ranged from one to three years (Kurila 2014, pp. 29–30).

<sup>10</sup> The chemical composition of six medieval artefacts was published in a separate article in the same volume (Merkevičius 1986, pp. 49–50, nos. 10–15).

<sup>11</sup> In addition to the above-mentioned case studies, the volume also contains a preface (Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė 1986a), data from the analysis of the non-ferrous metal artefacts found at the Narkūnai hillfort (Merkevičius 1986), and a word about the volume’s editor, Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė (Rimantienė 1986), as well as her bibliography for the years 1976–1985 (Šimėnas 1986).

<sup>12</sup> Calculated from published data, the number of sherds of Narkūnai handmade pottery (12047) is based on Podėnas et al. 2016b, (p. 204, Table 2).

the fact that in volumes 2 (1981) and 6 (1988), as well as volume 5, which is discussed here, the table of contents and publication data appear on the third page — a space that would typically be left blank.

## 2. Analysis of Narkūnai hillfort publication

The structure of the research article on the lower cultural layer of the Narkūnai hillfort follows the same pattern as the rest of the publication. The content distribution is as follows: data on the hillfort accounts for 4% of the article, structures 36%, finds 42%, and the conclusion 9%.<sup>13</sup> For the Nevieriškė and Sokiškiai hillfort case studies, the respective figures are 5%, 24%, 57% and 5% and 4%, 22%, 52% and 16%. These differences can be attributed to the specific research interests of the authors and the nature of the available material. Additionally, the layout of the articles also influenced their scope. For example, in the case of Sokiškiai, the concluding section was significantly expanded by the inclusion of eight illustrations of pottery (Grigalavičienė 1986b, pp. 128–135). Considering illustrations, the ratio of the number of illustrations to the total volume of text is also noteworthy:<sup>14</sup> 1.5 for Narkūnai compared to 0.8 for Nevieriškė and Sokiškiai. This nearly twofold difference reflects variations in how much of the research material the authors could publish.

Another aspect of the publication in question is its completeness in comparison with the available primary reference material, i.e. archaeological excavation reports. In the case of Narkūnai, two reports were produced: one covering 1976–1977 (Kulikauskienė 1976) and another for 1978 (Kulikauskienė and Luchtanas 1978). Together, they total 414 pages, including unnumbered pages with photocopies of plans from the reports. Seventy-two per cent of the typewritten text is dedicated to the description of finds, mainly pottery, which accounts for 244 pages. This represents 77% of the total number of finds and 17% of the entire text. The remaining 101 pages focus on the description of structures and other discoveries. In a publication, artefact descriptions can be presented in different ways, either as detailed descriptions or in tables. The description of the finds is not the most valuable part of the reports, as such information can be obtained from the museum that holds them. For this reason, texts describing artefacts from the Narkūnai hillfort are not evaluated here as, as such data is not essential for the present study. Furthermore, not all of the information in the field reports is valuable and worth

printing. Some of it is technical, such as the numbering of the grid squares, some of it can be integrated, and so on. The volume of this part is difficult to estimate, but we can assume that the amount of text that did not make it from the field report to the published article does not exceed 50%.

The complete absence of photographs of the investigations is a significant shortcoming of the publication. Photographs are a relatively objective method of recording, unlike plans, which always involve some level of interpretation. They have been used in archaeological publications since 1913, as evidenced by the work of Ludwik Krzywicki (1859–1941). The absence of photographs in the Narkūnai hillfort publication can be partly explained by two factors: the poor printing quality of the time (as evident in the published photographs of finds) and the inability to print in colour. Colour photographs were published only in exceptional cases and typically as inserts. Before the Narkūnai hillfort publication, colour photographs had been used only twice — once to illustrate finds and once to show a view of the Narkūnai hillfort (Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė ed. 1978, the insert between pages 32 and 33 (Fig. 1)). Colour drawings, on the other hand, were more widely used. The excavations at Narkūnai were recorded on colour slides<sup>15</sup> (Fig. 4), but the situation at the time made it impossible to publish them in the press. The first colour photographs appeared in *Lietuvos archeologija* only in 2010 (Kurila et al. 2010). The decision not to publish the black-and-white photographs taken by the author of the Narkūnai study is difficult to understand, especially since similar images appear in other articles from volume 5 of *Lietuvos archeologija*. This omission may have been a deliberate choice by the author, Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė, possibly due to the article's limited scope. However, given that 303 photo negatives from the excavation are preserved at the Lithuanian Institute of History, selecting a few images could have enhanced the understanding of the site (Fig. 5). While photographs provide valuable visual context, they are often less informative than plans — 16 of which were included in the publication.

Illustrating archaeological finds is essential in publications, as textual descriptions alone cannot fully convey their details (Fig. 6). In the case of Narkūnai, a total of 143 images of finds — both drawings and photographs — were published. Notably, one artefact, a coin, was presented in a separate article.<sup>16</sup> Setting aside factors such as

<sup>13</sup> Technical parts of articles, such as the reference list and abstract, are not evaluated.

<sup>14</sup> This is the most objective criterion for assessing the illustrations used in an article, since the other criteria (size of the illustrations, number of objects depicted, etc.) depend largely on the author and the layout of the publication.

<sup>15</sup> They are preserved in the Kulikauskas archive (two colour photographs were published by Kulikauskienė (1998) and the personal archive of A. Luchtanas (six colour photographs were published in Podėnas et al. 2016b, Figs. 17 and 18 on p. 217, Fig. 24 on p. 223, Fig. 26 on p. 224, Fig. 30 on p. 229; and in Podėnas and Babėnė 2017, Fig. 2 on p. 99).

<sup>16</sup> Later works by other authors provide images of individual artefacts (for example, see Fig. 79 on p. 100, Fig. 80 on p. 101 and Fig. 84 on p. 103 in Čivilytė 2014); however, these are not



Figure 4. Excavation areas 1 and 2 at Narkūnai hillfort in 1977, as viewed from the east (photograph LMAVR RSF376-1100 by P. Kulikauskas).

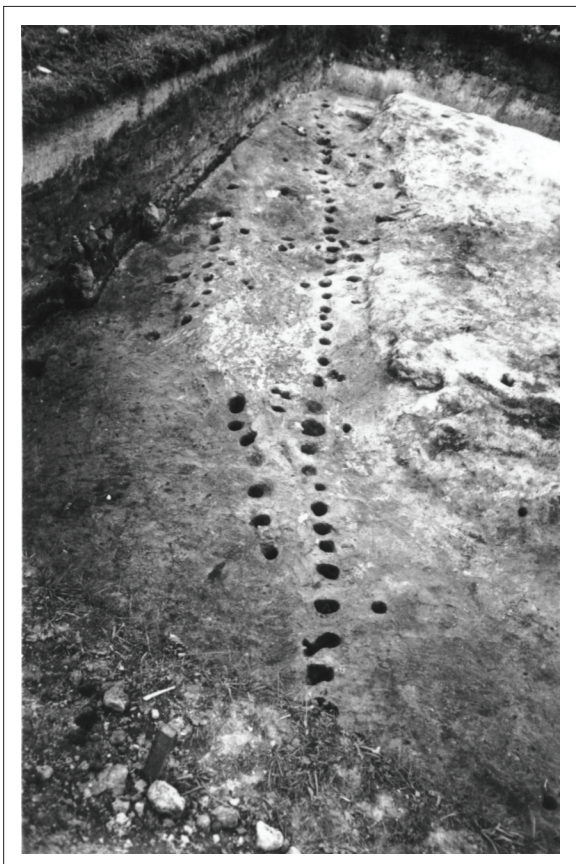


Figure 5. A row of postholes from a defensive barrier in excavation area 3 in the southwestern part of the interior of the Narkūnai hillfort, as viewed from the south, 1978 LII 43980 (published in Baubonis et al. 2005, p. 245).

image quality, the visible sides of an artefact and section views, illustrations can be divided into two main categories: small and bulk finds. In the case of the publication on the Narkūnai hillfort, bulk finds consist solely of pottery sherds, as other materials — such as earthen plaster, animal bones and slag — were not recorded.<sup>17</sup> Small finds were presented based on representative examples from the analysed artefact groups. In total, 37 artefact groups were illustrated, with images showcasing finds from each. For instance, of more than 70 chisels discovered, six were depicted (Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė 1986b, Figs. 26–27). A strong emphasis was placed on unique artefacts: of the eight mentioned in the text, all are illustrated. This approach is characteristic of similar publications and follows the same internal logic. Focusing on small finds, the 144 published images (including a coin) represent 17% of

considered publications in themselves. This is a common practice when using unpublished material in research.

<sup>17</sup> The excavations yielded 5,984 animal bones from at least 313 individuals (Lukhtan 1986, pp. 5–7, 19).



Figure 6. Antler axes from Narkūnai hillfort (LNM AR 594-3, 6) (photograph by G. Zabiela).

the total recorded finds (844).<sup>18</sup> However, since medieval finds (126)<sup>19</sup> discovered at Narkūnai were not intended for publication, the actual percentage of illustrated small finds is slightly higher, reaching 20%.

<sup>18</sup> Counted on the basis of information in archaeological field reports: 338 finds recorded between 1976 and 1977 (Kulikauskienė 1976, p. 50, 229 (a discovery of a fragment of a stone axe (find no. 179) was mentioned on p. 230, but as it was not found on the hillfort it is not added to the total number of finds), and 506 in 1978 (Kulikauskienė R. and Luchtanas A. 1978, p. 104).

<sup>19</sup> According to the lists of finds provided in the excavation reports, finds dated to the medieval period include numbers 1, 2, 4, 5, 13, 18, 22, 25, 31, 38, 52–58, 61, 64, 65, 67, 71, 72, 82, 94, 99–102, 119–124, 130, 138–140, 142 and 159 (a total of 41 small finds were recorded in the excavation report of 1976). Also, numbers 1, 2, 6, 7, 11, 14, 16, 20–24, 26, 33, 35, 39, 41, 44, 45, 52, 55, 69, 75, 76, 85, 87, 96, 150, 158, 162, 166–168 (33 in total) recorded in 1977 1976–1977 excavation reports. And numbers 2, 3, 7–10, 47, 49–62, 83, 85, 86, 169–171, 180, 184, 195, 209, 211–215, 226, 231, 286, 292, 321, 367, 383, 387, 388, 406, 408, 414, 440, 444, 454, 457 (52 in total) recorded in excavation report of 1978 (only the artefacts characteristic of the period were included on the lists).

The situation with pottery, however, is entirely different. Ceramics have always constituted the majority of finds from settlements and hillforts. This abundance presents a challenge, as including all pottery finds in publications would require a significant amount of space. Nevertheless, ceramic finds cannot be excluded when publishing material from settlements. For instance, in the case of Narkūnai, the pottery is described in just under three pages (Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė 1986b, pp. 37–39). More than half of this section consists of five drawings (Figs. 56–60), illustrating 15 hand-built vessels (4) and sherds (11). This accounts for 7% of the total publication. Whether this proportion is high or low depends on the total number of sherds found. However, the publication does not provide this figure, the research reports are incomplete (lacking a list of pottery found in 1978), and the counting of sherds is inconsistent: some have been listed under the same number, and it has been noted that there are sherds that were not added to the inventory.

Follow-up studies can help specify the total number of pottery finds. Vytenis Podėnas, who analysed hand-built pottery from Narkūnai, lists 12,047 sherds (Podėnas et

al. 2016b, p. 204, Table 2) and 88 fragments of technical pottery (the latter described in great detail) (Podėnas et al. 2016a, pp. 174–182). In her dissertation on wheel-turned pottery, Dovilė Baltramiejūnaitė reports the total number of sherds recorded from the hillfort and the settlement at its foot (without specifying them separately) as 14,846 sherds, of which 1,257 were from wheel-turned pots (Baltramiejūnaitė 2023, p. 278, Table 6). Since Podėnas has provided separate statistics for pottery recovered from the foot settlement and the Mažasis [Small] hillfort at Narkūnai (Podėnas 2016b, p. 204, Table 3; p. 205, Table 4), the same number of 12,047 sherds was deducted. However, this leaves the count of 33 sherds from the Mažasis hillfort unclear. This minor discrepancy (0.3% of the total number of sherds found at the hillfort) reflects the challenges of accounting for bulk material but holds little significance for the present study. Given that the known total of pottery finds is 12,047 sherds, and only 15 of these have been included in the publication on the Narkūnai hillfort, it is clear that the publication does not fully represent the pottery record from this site.

Research-based reconstructions (there are three in the publication on Narkūnai) are usually included in summaries of in-depth publications. They are not common in the published material on Lithuanian hillforts and are found only in more comprehensive summaries or in the popular press.

### 3. The value of hillfort publications

As can be seen from the above discussion, a scientific study (in this case, of a hillfort) is an individual piece of work that is difficult to place within any framework. At the same time, it must have certain characteristics that distinguish it from other types of research papers. The extent to which research material is published can be perceived in different ways. We have already touched upon some of the reasons why certain material is published while other material is not. In principle, it is impossible to produce an ideal publication containing all archaeological research material, so it is necessary to define criteria by which a publication can be considered complete. The material record of the Narkūnai hillfort was never fully released. A closer examination of the study in question has revealed additional aspects that contribute to its incompleteness.

What makes a publication of research on an archaeological object (in this case, a hillfort) enduring? The length/scope of a publication is generally related to the extent of excavations, but this is not always the case. In archaeology, it is not uncommon to find cases where excavated areas are relatively extensive but the amount of material recovered is not. In the case of hillforts, this is particularly evident when dealing with disturbed areas or when exca-

vating the central internal area, where the cultural layer is always thinnest (such as the site of the castle courtyard). As seen in the earlier discussion, another equally important aspect of the investigations is the material uncovered, comprising both structures and artefacts. Structures include a wide variety of features recorded in the cultural layer and the ground, such as pavements, hearths, post-holes, middens and other distinct elements. It is often difficult to distinguish them in studies, as they are frequently analysed as part of larger structures such as buildings and fortifications. The interpretation of these structures varies, making it challenging to include them in the broader evaluation of publications. Finds include both artefacts and ecofacts. A clear distinction is made between ecofacts (such as bones, raw materials and wood) and artefacts. Ecofacts are considered recurring elements and are generally described in broad terms. Artefacts, on the other hand, are analysed as individual cases because they are rare or exceptional finds. There is a well-established tradition of classifying artefacts into small finds (which, as individual pieces, are important for enhancing the understanding of an archaeological site) and bulk finds (which are generally more significant in terms of their dominant characteristics). Bulk finds, such as pottery sherds and production waste, are often similar in type, and can therefore be described in a standardised format, such as in tables. Any remaining elements that do not fit into these categories and are not included in a publication are regarded as a more detailed study of a particular aspect.

Taking into account the points discussed above, a publication can be described as a means of presenting research material that ensures sufficient data remains available even if the original records, reports and finds have perished, been irretrievably mixed or been lost in some way. These considerations relate to the broader issue of preserving information that may no longer have a tangible or material presence. For archaeological publications, a larger format is most appropriate, allowing drawings to be printed in a legible form with as few non-standard appendices as possible. The most common format is A4, which is the most suitable size for evaluating existing and proposed publications. The following is an assessment of recent publications on hillforts, taking into account three main types of research data: the area surveyed, and small and bulk finds. The results of other studies are compared with the Narkūnai publication to assess the extent to which the discovered material has been covered in the published studies.

The coefficient is calculated by adding together the total area surveyed, the number of small finds, and the number of bulk finds, and then dividing this sum by the number of pages in the publication. A lower coefficient indicates a

Table 2. Comparison of recent publications on hillforts.

Hillfort	Publication	Excavated area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Small finds	Bulk finds	Total	Coefficient
Bilioniai (Lithuania)	Zabiela, 2019, p. 24–127 (104 pages)	69	102	998	1169	11.24
Djakovo (Russia)	Krenke 2011, monograph comprises 548 pages	290	2564	65265	68119	124.76
Glienke (Germany)	Messal 2015, monograph comprises 486 pages	8400	1048	16621	26069	53.64
Jegliniec (Poland)	Iwanowska et al., 2022, monograph comprises 586 pages	219.15	810	129	1158	1.98
Rušenica (Latvia)	Kuniga 2022, monograph comprises 120 pages	500	139	3800	4439	36.99
Narkūnai (Lithuania)	Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė 1986, article comprises 45 pages	660	718	12135	13513	300.29

more detailed publication. The results vary greatly, ranging from 2 to 125. Even though the lowest value (Jegliniec) can be explained by the unusually small amount of pottery found during excavations — an uncommon situation for hillforts — the overall difference between the highest and lowest values is tenfold. This suggests that publications on hillforts have significant potential for detailed analysis.

#### 4. Possible directions for the development of publications dedicated to hillforts

With the dramatic decline in new archaeological excavations on hillforts (only one hillfort — Ēgliškiai-Anduliai hillfort with outworks — was excavated in 2024, covering just 10 m<sup>2</sup> (Ubis et al. et. p. 78–83)), the material collected during earlier excavations is becoming increasingly important. At the same time, publishing such studies is more crucial than ever, as archaeological material from hillforts is often inaccessible in museum repositories or archives, making it difficult to use for research on the past. However, it must be acknowledged that earlier publications may lack sufficient information. This is especially true for studies published during the Soviet period, which were constrained by the specific conditions of the time. There is a clear need for new, more comprehensive publications, at least for the major hillforts. Such studies could be enhanced by small-scale investigations, such as stratigraphic analysis and chronological studies, to provide a more complete understanding of the existing material record. As demonstrated by the case of Narkūnai, there is plenty of material available for such publications.

Modern 21st-century technologies, particularly the electronic dissemination of information, have made it possible to revise such publications. While maintaining the traditional print format (which has been relied upon for

nearly 600 years since the advent of book printing), publications can now be supplemented with electronic copies of secondary sources. Ideally, these should include scanned research reports, other primary research records (such as drawings, photographs and films) and images of finds viewed from multiple angles, especially 3D files, which cannot be fully represented in print. All of this can now be incorporated into the electronic appendices of a publication. An example of such an addition is the digitised footage from the interwar excavations at the Apuolė and Įpiltis hillforts (Fig. 7). However, these films are not directly related to the publication of material from these hillforts: a partial publication of the excavations at Apuolė, conducted between 1928 and 1932, was released in 2009 (Lamm 2009).

Another change in publications linked to the advent of information technology is the omission of the abstract in a foreign language. Such an abstract cannot cover the entire publication (unless an accompanying text is produced), so any translation into other languages is partial. With the development and improvement of online translators (e.g. Google Lens), it is sufficient to provide publications with



Figure 7. Digitised footage of Apuolė and Įpiltis hillforts (2018).

a bilingual (in this case Lithuanian–English) glossary of specific archaeological terms, as it will be some time before AI translators will be able to find the exact equivalent of the scientific terms in other languages.

Such a format would be a good compromise between the desire to publish everything and the ability to do so. Although the present paper focuses on the publication of material records from hillforts, the tendencies observed in this paper can be applied, with some modifications, to the publication of other types of archaeological research material.

## Conclusions

The publications of research on hillforts, as well as other archaeological sites, are an important and valuable scientific resource, becoming the primary or even the only basis for their further study. Comprehensive publications help avoid irreversible losses of research material, related to both the degradation of the research material itself and the destructive nature of archaeological investigations.

The publications of hillfort research from the Soviet period were not comprehensive for a number of reasons. Their distinctiveness is clearly visible in the partial publication of the Narkūnai hillfort (eastern Lithuania) from 1976–1978, which was published seven years after the research. In the case of Narkūnai, all research materials (finds, documentation) have been well preserved, allowing them to be compared with the publication and, based on that, to identify the main shortcomings of Soviet-era hillfort publications. These shortcomings include the reduced presentation of essential data on the structures and finds of the hillforts, the scarcity or complete absence of research photographs, the emphasis on unique finds, and the extremely limited attention paid to ceramics.

Earlier publications of hillfort research enable the discussion of the republication of these studies, which has become especially relevant due to the drastic reduction in the number of newly studied hillforts and the scope of their research. While modern publications on hillfort materials are at least twice as detailed as those from the Soviet period, the potential for further improvement lies in modern research methods (application of various scientific techniques, archival archaeology and small-scale re-excavations) and the use of electronic publications, or incorporating elements of this.

## Abbreviations

AO – Arkheologicheskie otkrytiia / Archaeological Discoveries. Moskva: Institut arkeologii Rossiskoi akademii nauk /Institute of Russian Academy of Science, Moscow

Arch. Lituana – Archaeologia Lituana

ATL – Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje.../ Archaeological Investigations in Lithuania Vilnius

Lietuvos arch. – Lietuvos archeologija / *Lithuanian Archaeology*, Vilnius

## Institutions

LII – Lietuvos istorijos institutas / Institute of Lithuanian History

LMAVR RS – Lietuvos mokslų akademijos Vrublevskių bibliotekos Rankraščių skyrius (Vrublevskis' Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, Manuscripts Department)

LNM – Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus / National Museum of Lithuania

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## Piliakalnių tyrimų publikacijos tarybiniu laikotarpiu: Narkūnų piliakalnio atvejis

### Gintautas Zabiela

#### Santrauka

Archeologinių tyrimų medžiagos skelbimas yra įprasta archeologų mokslinio darbo dalis, leidžianti tiek naudoti tyrimų medžiagą, tiek ir ją apsaugoti nuo galimų negrįžtamų praradimų. Archeologinių publikacijų struktūra ir apimtys yra labai skirtingos, o šią įvairovę lemia ne tik asmeninis tyrėjo ir skelbėjo požiūris į kasinėjimų medžiagą, bet ir įvairūs kitokie aspektai. Juos bandoma atskleisti šiame tyrime, analizės pagrindu imant beveik prieš pusę šimto metų vykdyto Narkūnų piliakalnio (Rytų Lietuva, Utenos r.) kasinėjimų medžiagos publikaciją, paskelbtą 1986 m. „Lietuvos archeologijos“ 5 tome. Šis piliakalnis lieka svarbus siekiant pažinti brūkšniuotosios keramikos kultūrą, kurios medžiaga ir sudaro analizuojamą publikaciją. Tai ganėtinai tipiška Lietuvos piliakalnių tyrimų publikacija. Iš 222 iki dabar tyrinėtų piliakalnių žinoma 48. Išsamūs archeologinės medžiagos tyrimai šiandien yra aktualūs, nes labai sumažėjo naujų kasinėjimų piliakalniuose, todėl tiriant praeities reiškinius ir procesus tenka remtis ankstesniu įdirbiu.

1976–1978 m. vykdytų Narkūnų piliakalnio tyrimų medžiaga gana gerai išliko Lietuvos istorijos instituto Rankraštyne (tyrimų ataskaitos, brėžiniai ir fotonegatyvai), Lietuvos nacionaliniame muziejuje (radiniai) bei piliakal-

nį tyrinėjusių Reginos ir Prano Kulikauskų archyve (Lietuvos mokslų akademijos Vrublevskių biblioteka, F376, F377). Jos fizinė išraiška parodyta 1 lentelėje.

Įvairūs tarybinio laikotarpio ribojimai lėmė, kad Narkūnų piliakalnio tyrimai turėjo apsiriboti apatinio kultūrinio sluoksniu medžiagos skelbimu. 660 m<sup>2</sup> tyrinėtame plote aptiktų 718 ypačiųjų radinių ir 12 135 keramikos šukių apibūdinimą knygoje teko bemaž po lygiai dalintis su kitų dviejų čia skelbiamų ankstyvųjų piliakalnių medžiaga, viską bandant sutalpinti į 45 A4 formato publikacijos lapus. Todėl publikacijoje teko atsisakyti tyrimo nuotraukų, beveik visiškai – keramikos analizės, o bendras paskelbtas tekstas, lyginant su archyviniais duomenimis, sumažėjo maždaug per pusę. Didesnis dėmesys publikacijoje kreiptas į planų (iš viso 16) ir radinių (143 vaizdai, reprezentuojantys 37 radinių grupes) skelbimą, tuo stengiantis bent iš dalies atsverti medžiagos apimties stoką. Tačiau ir jie sudaro apie 20 proc. turimos medžiagos. Matant tokius trūkumus, kyla pagrįstas klausimas: ką galima laikyti tyrimų publikacija?

Siekiant išryškinti publikacijoms būdingus bruožus, Narkūnų publikacija palyginta su paskutinio laikotarpio piliakalnių publikacijomis (2 lentelė). Tyrimų medžiagos apimtis labiausiai lemia keturi kriterijai: ištirtas plotas, ypatieji ir masiniai radiniai bei struktūros. Pastarųjų pagal tyrimų publikacijas objektyviau įvertinti neįmanoma, nes jos dažnai neišskiriamos ar įkomponuojamos į didesnes struktūras (pastatus, įtvirtinimus). Pirmųjų trijų kriterijų pagrindu gautas koeficientas rodo, kad tarybinio laikotarpio publikacijos (Narkūnų piliakalnio publikacijos kaip tipiškos atveju) nėra išsamios ir neatskleidžia visos tyrimų medžiagos. Lietuvos priešistorei pažinti svarbiausių tyrinėtų piliakalnių tyrimų medžiagą reikia skelbti iš naujo, taikant dabartinius archeologijos mokslo pasiekimus tyrimų ir sklaidos srityse. Tam reikėtų atlikti papildomus nedidelių apimčių lauko tyrimus, leidžiančius patikslinti stratigrafiją ir chronologiją, o į pačias publikacijas įkelti elektronines šalutinių šaltinių kopijas (nuskenuotas atskaitas), į popierinę publikaciją netilpusius brėžinius, nuotraukas, filmuotą medžiagą, radinių vaizdus, taip pat ir trijų matmenų). Plintant skaitmeninėms technologijoms, tikslinga atsisakyti ir santraukos užsienio kalba, ją pakeičiant dvikalbiu (šiuo atveju lietuvių ir anglų) specifinių archeologinių terminų žodyneliu.