

## PREFACE

A quarter of a century has passed since the first volume of *Archaeologia Baltica* was published in 1995. *Archaeologia Baltica* was born thanks to the efforts of Vytautas Kazakevičius (1951–2005). After completing a research internship in Sweden and participating in international conferences, and with an expanding circle of scientific contacts, it became apparent to Kazakevičius that Lithuanian prehistory had to be brought out from behind the Iron Curtain to enter the European archaeological context. A proper communication platform was needed to achieve this goal, a publication that would present the prehistory of both Lithuania and the entire Eastern Baltic region through the results of the latest research in the *lingua franca*. Estonian archaeologists have pursued a similar goal by creating the *Estonian Journal of Archaeology* (its current name), which came into being and was first published in 1997. As such, *Archaeologia Baltica* remains the oldest archaeological journal in the East Baltic region published in a foreign language. However, publishing a journal in foreign languages (the first four volumes were in English and German) was a huge challenge at that time due to the limited knowledge of the English language. Luckily, where there is a problem, there is a solution. In 1991, our compatriot Raymond V. Sidrys, who was born in the USA, began work at the restored Vytautas the Great University. Kazakevičius and Sidrys had met in 1979, when Sidrys visited Lithuania as a Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences (USA), with a recommendation from Marija Gimbutas (Marija Gimbutienė, 1921–1994). It is no surprise that Kazakevičius and Sidrys became the editors of the first volume of *Archaeologia Baltica* (Fig. 1). In the preface, the editors presented it as a journal intended for archaeologists and historians who are interested in the East Baltic region, which had been behind the Iron Curtain from the end of the Second World War until the restoration of independence. For this reason, the region was only familiar to the European scientific community from interwar studies conducted and published by German, Estonian, Latvian and a few Lithuanian researchers who wrote in German. Even though Polish scholars published a number of articles on the culture of the Balts during the 1970s and 1980s, these were only acknowledged by a small circle of professionals. In 1963, the informational Iron Curtain that covered Lithuanian prehistory was removed to some degree by the study entitled *The Balts. Ancient Peoples and Places, Volume 33*, written by Gimbutas and published in London by Thames and Hudson. It was a summary of the prehistory of Lithuania, and to an ex-

tent of the East Baltic region, which aimed to integrate our archaeological material into the European context. Today, we can only conclude that even though two monographs and a considerable number of articles written by Lithuanian archaeologists are published every year in various foreign research journals, none of them can compare to the synthesis of the Balts written by Gimbutas. In the first (albeit not numbered) volume of *Archaeologia Baltica*, the editors selected articles that reveal the importance of excavated archaeological sites and the discovered material. Sidrys was the language editor of this volume, whereas Kazakevičius was responsible for content of the research articles in the journal. The Lithuanian Institute of History was the first publisher of *Archaeologia Baltica*, and released five volumes. We can see Kazakevičius' name on the cover of each issue as the editor-in-chief. He remained in this position until his death. This year sadly marks the 15th anniversary of Kazakevičius' death. Although a permanent editorial board was not established for the first five volumes, the contributors to the publication published by the Lithuanian Institute of History included Professor Vladas Žulkus (Klaipėda University), MA Asle Bruen Olsen (Bergen Museum, University of Bergen), MA David Neil Simpson (Bergen Museum, University of Bergen), Professor Claus Carnap-Borheim (Archaeological Landesmuseum Schloß Gottorf, Schleswig, currently the Centre for Baltic and Scandinavian Archaeology), and Professor John Hines (School of History and Archaeology, Cardiff University). As such, it is clear that from the very beginning, the aim of *Archaeologia Baltica* was to take a place among international publications.

In 2005, after Kazakevičius' unexpected death, the publishing of *Archaeologia Baltica* was taken over by the Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology of Klaipėda University (although in the first 15 volumes published in Klaipėda, the Lithuanian Institute of History was still noted as one of the publishers of the journal). During this transformation, a permanent international editorial board was formed, on which Professor Vladas Žulkus was the editor-in-chief. Furthermore, a clear strategy for the journal was established. The editorial policy of *Archaeologia Baltica* was to publish a wide range of contributions in all fields of archaeology relating to the Baltic Sea region, from methodology to synthesis and theory. As a result of this reorganisation, a clear structure of contents was created (with the aim of linking articles thematically), and the overall appearance of the journal changed completely.



Figure 1. Raymond V. Sidrys (left) and V. Kazakevičius on 5 March 1979 in front of the former building of the Lithuanian Institute of History on T. Kosciuškos Street in Vilnius. Photograph from the personal archive of R. V. Sidrys.

It was also agreed that the journal would come out periodically, and that it would be published in English. What made the journal stand out was the fact that most volumes contained articles devoted to specific topics. Up to 2020, volumes 6 to 26 were published. The 20th-anniversary volume was among these, which included a bibliographical catalogue of all the articles published (a total of 375 articles, bibliographies and reviews presented by individual scholars). The authors in *Archaeologia Baltica* are researchers from the Baltic Sea region, and Central and Western Europe; articles written by Lithuanian scholars make up a small percentage.

In 2020, the strategy for *Archaeologia Baltica* was revised and updated for a more contemporary conceptual approach. The aim is to focus on all fields of European archaeology, more specifically the archaeology of the Baltic region, or the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea, and to include archaeological material, methodology, synthesis and theory. The editorial board was substantially reorganised, and a group of advisers was selected. Furthermore, the overall design was improved, and it was agreed that the journal would be published annually.

The new editorial board and advisers hope that the recent changes will allow the journal to become more visible in the scientific space of the Baltic region. Thus, Volume 27

of *Archaeologia Baltica* begins a new phase in the life of the journal.

There is no specific theme that unifies Volume 27. The articles cover chronological periods from the Middle Neolithic to the Middle Ages. It begins with an article written by Mantas Daubaras concerning human bones found in settlement Kretuonas 1B that date from the Middle-Late Neolithic (5500/5300–3100/2900 cal BC). The study conducted by the author using low magnification revealed repeated perimortem incisions/cuts on human bones found in burial 2 at the settlement. The cuts identified on human bones show that the people who resided on present-day Lithuanian territory practised similar funerary rites as other European hunter-gatherer communities. This is the first case of the perimortem cutting of human bones in Lithuania to be confirmed by conducted research.

In the next article, an analysis of fragments of a cultural layer at Kvietiniai (in the Klaipėda district) is presented by Rokas Vengalis, Gytis Piličiauskas, Mindaugas Pilkauskas, Justina Kozakaitė and Vytautas Juškaitis. The authors date this archaeological site to the period between the Mesolithic and the Late Bronze Age. The most significant outcome of the investigation of this particular site was the new data on the little-known Bronze Age in western Lithuania. Furthermore, undeniable evidence has been obtained, which trace the beginnings of agriculture back

to the Bronze Age, and is associated with a specific type of Kvietiniai-Tojāti pottery. Investigations of burials dated to the 1st millennium BC indicate particular elements of the funerary tradition, with pottery deposited as grave goods. The authors conclude that these burials should be attributed to Western Baltic Barrow culture.

Jaroslav A. Prassolow and Konstantin Skvortsov have conducted a thorough analysis of Early Migration period crossbow fibulae of the Schönwarling/Skowarcz and Dollkeim/Kovrovo types, by using material evidence from Sambian-Natangian culture. It is unfortunate, however, that the authors covered only the local Baltic culture area in their investigation.

Laurynas Kurila distinguishes the great barrows with a substantial diameter (up to 37 and 41 metres), covered with mounds of an unusually low trapezoid shape, within the context of East Lithuanian Barrow culture. He also discusses their chronological dependency. However, no direct chronological data is known for the great barrows, since not a single one has been excavated. Therefore, the author relies on indirect data, and attributes the great barrows to the Early Migration period. This insight into chronology was based on a consideration of burials, for during this period, funerary traditions became a meaningful way to express social status. However, as the author himself notes, interdisciplinary research is required in order to lift the cover of uncertainty from these impressive east Lithuanian barrows.

Inga Doniņa, Normunds Stivrins and Valdis Bērziņš take the reader to western Latvia of the 12th and 14th to 15th centuries, more specifically to the Curonian Lapiņi cemetery. At that time, the tradition of cremating the deceased was still predominant in this cemetery. The authors not only analyse the equipment of cremation burials, funerary traditions and archaeological finds, but also reconstruct the palaeoenvironment. The research into the palaeoenvironment is based on pollen analysis, which has significantly enriched our knowledge not only of Curonian burial customs but also the 'live' Curonian culture, that is, daily life during the Early Middle Ages.

The article by Vykintas Vaitkevičius is devoted to a study of artefacts marked with a swastika symbol, and objects that are swastika in shape, dating from the times of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (the 13th and 14th centuries). The highlight of this article is perhaps the attempt to answer the question whether the swastika, a universal and widespread symbol, may have had its mythical meanings and connections with the sovereign gods of the Lithuanian pantheon, Perkūnas and Kalvelis, in the context of the ancient Lithuanian culture and religion.

Jaroslav A. Prassolow introduces to the scientific community Hermann Sommer (1899–1962), a largely unknown

cultural figure, and his work for the protection of the cultural heritage on the Sambian Peninsula during the years from 1929 to 1945. The author refers to the Fischhausen Archive and a card-file index of archaeological monuments that are kept in the archives of the Museum of Archaeology, Gottorf Castle, Schleswig-Holstein.

Volume 27 of *Archaeologia Baltica* concludes with two reviews by Tomas Rimkus on publications concerning the Late Palaeolithic and Mesolithic around the Baltic area that are significant to this region. The first book *Working at the Sharp End: From Bone and Antler to Early Mesolithic Life in Northern Europe*, edited by Daniel Groß, Harald Lübke, John Meadows and Detlef Jantzen, is the outcome of an international workshop held in 2016 and concerns the Mesolithic osseous technology in northern Europe. The second is monograph *Ahrensburgien und Swiderien im mittleren Oderraum. Technologische und typologische Untersuchungen an Silexartefakten der Jüngeren Dryaszeit* by Katja Winkler, which studies technological relations between Late Palaeolithic Ahrensburgian and Swiderian technocomplexes in the middle reaches of the River Oder. Both books were published in 2019 in the series entitled 'Untersuchungen und Materialien zur Steinzeit in Schleswig-Holstein und im Ostseeraum', volumes 10 and 11.

Audronė Bliujienė