

THE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HERITAGE OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND THE WARS OF INDEPENDENCE IN LITHUANIA: THE STATE OF RESEARCH AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT

The archaeological investigations of First World War sites that began in the United Kingdom at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries expanded the concept of Great War research, laid the foundations for the development of modern conflict archaeology, and shaped its theoretical and methodological approaches. In Lithuania, the sites of the First World War (1914–1918) and the Wars of Independence (1919–1920) have not attracted much interest among researchers, and there are almost no published studies to date. This article focuses on the legacy of the First World War and the Wars of Independence in Lithuania, for the first time providing an overview of the archaeological research carried out up to 2023 in trenches, battlefields, and sites of death and burial, analysing the context of the research and presenting its results. Drawing on the experience of the archaeology of the First World War in other countries, the author discusses the state of the research and its future prospects, and offers a definition of the archaeology of the First World War and the Wars of Independence in Lithuania.

KEYWORDS: First World War, Lithuanian Wars of Independence, protection of cultural heritage, archaeological research, modern conflict archaeology.

ANOTACIJA

XX–XXI a. sandūroje Jungtinėje Karalystėje pradėti Pirmojo pasaulinio karo vietų archeologiniai tyrimai išplėtė Didžiojo karo tyrinėjimų sampratą, padėjo pagrindus plėtojant Naujaisių laikų konfliktų archeologiją, leido suformuoti šios archeologijos krypties teorines ir metodines prieigas. Lietuvoje Pirmojo pasaulinio karo (1914–1918) ir nepriklausomybės kovų (1919–1920), kaip tiesioginio šio karo padarinio, vietos didesnio tyrėjų susidomėjimo iki šiol nesulaukia, mokslinių publikacijų beveik nerengiama. Šiame straipsnyje dėmesys kreipiamas į Pirmojo pasaulinio karo ir nepriklausomybės kovų paveldą Lietuvoje, pirmą kartą apžvelgiami iki 2023 m. atlikti apkasų, kautynių, žūties, palaikų užkasimo vietų ir kapaviečių archeologiniai tyrimai, analizuojamas jų kontekstas ir pateikiami rezultatai. Remiantis Pirmojo pasaulinio karo archeologijos patirtimi, diskutuojama dėl tyrimų būklės ir ateities perspektyvų, siūloma Pirmojo pasaulinio karo ir nepriklausomybės kovų archeologijos Lietuvoje apibrėžtis.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: Pirmasis pasaulinis karas, nepriklausomybės kovos, kultūros paveldo apsauga, archeologiniai tyrimai, Naujaisių laikų konfliktų archeologija.

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Introduction

The First World War was a global conflict unprecedented in its scale and industrial nature. Spanning much of Europe, the Middle East, Africa, parts of Asia, and the Pacific, the war also had a significant impact on the future territory of Lithuania. From 1795 onwards, this territory had been under the rule of the Russian Empire, and the First World War reached Lithuania in its early days. By 1915, the German Empire had taken control of the region, and although Lithuania declared independence on 16 February 1918, it remained under German occupation. As the war in the West came to an end, the Lithuanian government had to defend its claimed territory during the subsequent Wars of Independence. These included conflicts with Soviet Russia (January 1919 to January 1920), the Bermontians (pro-German West Russian Volunteer Army) (July to December 1919), and Poland (April 1919 to December 1920).

For many years, the First World War received little scholarly attention in Lithuania. However, over the past decade, substantial publications¹ and analyses focusing on the various phases of the war² have emerged. Researchers have examined the memory of the Great War,³ the experiences of its participants and the impact on society,⁴

¹ *Empires and Nationalisms in the Great War: Interactions in East-Central Europe* (Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis, Vol. 31). Ed. by Vasilijus SAFRONOVAS, Česlovas LAURINAVIČIUS. Klaipėda, 2015; *The Great War in Lithuania and Lithuanians in the Great War: Experiences and Memories* (Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis, Vol. 34). Ed. by Vasilijus SAFRONOVAS. Klaipėda, 2017.

² PEČIULIS, Marius. Pirmojo pasaulinio karo veiksmai Lietuvos teritorijoje 1915 m. rugpjūčio pabaigoje – rugsėjo mėnesį. *Karo archyvas*, 2010, t. 25, p. 29–97; PEČIULIS, Marius. Pirmojo pasaulinio karo veiksmai Vakarų Lietuvoje – Vokietijos ir Rusijos pasienyje – 1915 m. pradžioje. *Karo archyvas*, 2011, t. 26, p. 44–80.

³ ANTANAVIČIŪTĖ, Rasa. The memory and representation of World War I in Lithuania. In *The Art of Identity and Memory: Toward a Cultural History of the Two World Wars in Lithuania*. Ed. by Giedrė JANKEVIČIŪTĖ, Rasutė ŽUKIENĖ. Boston, 2016, pp. 175–202; JOKUBAUSKAS, Vytautas. Didysis karas: diskursai ir atminimo praktika tarpukario Lietuvoje. *Lituanistica*, 2016, t. 62, Nr. 4 (106), p. 235–264; SAFRONOVAS, Vasilijus. Didžiojo karo reikšmių perteikimas Rytų Prūsijoje ir Klaipėdos krašte. Simboliai, praktikos, ritualai. *Istorija*, 2016, t. 104, Nr. 4, p. 4–55; SAFRONOVAS, Vasilijus. The Non-Overshadowed Experiences of the Great War and Their Manifestations in Lithuania, 1914–1926. In *Central and Eastern Europe after the First World War* (Schriften des Bundesinstituts für Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen im östlichen Europa, Bd. 74). Ed. by Burkhard OLSCHOWSKY, Piotr JUSZKIEWICZ, Jan RYDEL. Berlin, Boston, 2022, pp. 367–376.

⁴ SAFRONOVAS, Vasilijus; JOKUBAUSKAS, Vytautas; VAREIKIS, Vyngantas, et al. *Didysis karas visuomenėje ir kultūroje: Lietuva ir Rytų Prūsija*. Klaipėda, 2018; GRIFFANTE, Andrea. *Children, Poverty and Nationalism in Lithuania, 1900–1940*. Cham, 2019, pp. 41–63; SAFRONOVAS, Vasilijus. A War Experience in a Bilingual Border Region: The Case of the Memel Territory. In *Identities In-Between in East-Central Europe* (Routledge Histories of Central and Eastern Europe, Vol. 5). Ed. by Jan FELLERER, Robert PYRAH, Marius TURDA. London, New York, 2019, pp. 229–249; SAFRONOVAS, Vasilijus. The Great War experiences of Lithuanians: an overview. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 2022, Vol. 53, No. 2, pp. 291–309; PETRONIS, Vytautas. The Evolution of Wartime Criminality in Lithuania, 1914–1920. In *The Shaken Lands: Violence and the Crisis of Governance in East Central Europe, 1914–1923*. Ed. by Tomas BALKELIS, Andrea GRIFFANTE. Boston, 2023, pp. 15–41; SAFRONOVAS, Vasilijus; VAREIKIS, Vyngantas; VITKUS, Hektoras. War Violence and Its Representation: A Comparison of Civilian Experiences of the Great War on Both Sides of the Former Russian-German Border. In *The Shaken Lands. Violence and the Crisis of Governance in East Central Europe, 1914–1923*. Ed. by Tomas BALKELIS, Andrea GRIFFANTE. Boston, 2023, pp. 42–82.

the plight of refugees and those subjected to forced migrations,⁵ as well as the provision of compensation for losses.⁶ The history of the Wars of Independence has also been the subject of a number of publications.⁷ Some of them delved into the conduct of the fighting across various regions,⁸ explored specific episodes of combat,⁹ intricately detailed details of battles,¹⁰ and shined a light on hitherto little-known groups of participants¹¹ along with numerous other facets. In addition, the catalogues and atlases presenting the material culture¹² and burial sites¹³ of the conflict were published. Although the Wars of Independence are directly linked to the aftermath of the First World War, these conflicts are rarely seen as interrelated phenomena.¹⁴

- ⁵ BALKELIS, Tomas. Forging a "Moral Community": The Great War and Lithuanian Refugees in Russia. In *Population Displacement in Lithuania in the Twentieth Century: Experiences, Identities and Legacies* (On the Boundary of Two Worlds, Vol. 43). Ed. by Tomas BALKELIS, Violeta DAVOLIŪTĖ. Leiden, Boston, 2016, pp. 42–61.
- ⁶ JOKUBAUSKAS, Vytautas. 'The Tsar Would not Have Taken away Our Pensions': Compensation for Russian Army First World War Invalids in Interwar Lithuania. *Lithuanian Historical Studies*, 2017, Vol. 21, pp. 79–106; SAFRONOVAS, Vasilijus. Didžiojo karo sureikšminimo Rytų Prūsijoje ir Klaipėdos krašte prielaidos: nuostolių kompensavimo klausimas. *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis, 2017/1*. Vilnius, 2017, p. 127–167.
- ⁷ LESČIUS, Vytautas. *Lietuvos kariuomenė Nepriklausomybės kovose, 1918–1920*. Vilnius, 2004; SURGAILIS, Gintautas. The 1919–1920 Lithuanian War of Liberation. In *Wars of Lithuania: A Systemic Quantitative Analysis of Lithuania's National Wars in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Ed. by Gediminas VITKUS. Vilnius, 2014, pp. 149–221.
- ⁸ ANIČAS, Jonas. *Nepriklausomybės kovos Pasvalio krašte 1918–1919 metais*. Vilnius, 1997; ANIČAS, Jonas. Lietuviškos valdžios kūrimasis ir nepriklausomybės kovos Joniškėlio krašte 1918–1919 metais. In *Joniškėlis*. Sud. Eugenijus PETROVAS, Algimantas GARLIAUSKAS. Vilnius, 2007, p. 186–213; ANIČAS, Jonas. Pirmieji nepriklausomybės metai Daujėnų krašte (1918–1919). In *Daujėnai* (Lietuvos valsčiai, kn. 29). Sud. Antanas ŠIMKŪNAS. Vilnius, 2015, p. 251–276; JOKUBAUSKAS, Vytautas. Lietuvos Nepriklausomybės kovų epizodai Ramygalos apylinkėse. In *Ramygala* (Lietuvos valsčiai, kn. 33). Sud. Gražina NAVALINSKIENĖ. Vilnius, 2016, p. 229–245; STALILIONIS, Algimantas; VAITKEVIČIUS, Vyktintas. *Laisvės ir tėvynės ginti: 1918–1920 m. Pumpėnų valsčiaus savanoriai*. Vilnius, 2017; *Iš Panevėžio praeities: Lietuvos nepriklausomybės gynėjai ir puoselėtojai*. Sud. Donatas PILKAUSKAS, Zita PIKELYTĖ. Panevėžys, 2018.
- ⁹ LESČIUS, Vytautas. Kovų su bolševikais ir bermontininkais etapai. *Karo archyvas*, 2000, t. 16, p. 57–91; LESČIUS, Vytautas. Lietuvos ir Lenkijos karinis konfliktas dėl Seinų krašto 1919 metais. *Karo archyvas*, 2003, t. 18, p. 169–192; LESČIUS, Vytautas. Lenkų provokacijos neutralioje zonoje 1921–1923 metais. *Karo archyvas*, 2007, t. 22, p. 153–218; LAURINAVIČIUS, Česlovas. On Political Terror during the Soviet Expansion into Lithuania, 1918–1919. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 2015, Vol. 46, No. 1, pp. 65–76; SEREICKAS, Mindaugas. Geographical localization and intensity of the Lithuanian Wars of Independence with the Red Army. *Vėsture: avoti un cilvēki = History: Sources and People*, 2019, Vol. 22, pp. 215–224.
- ¹⁰ GERMANAVIČIŪTĖ, Reda. Kovos dėl nepriklausomybės Širvintų ir Giedraičių apylinkėse. *Karo archyvas*, 1992, t. 13, p. 162–186; MATUSEVIČIUS, Juozas. Kėdainių, Jiezno ir Alytaus kautynių reikšmė užkertant kelią bolševikų įsiveržimui į Kauną. *Karo archyvas*, 2000, t. 16, p. 92–119; LESČIUS, Vytautas. Mėginimas 1919 m. pavasarį atsiimti iš bolševikų Vilnių. *Karo archyvas*, 2002, t. 17, p. 80–99; TAMOŠIŪNAS, Alvydas. Legendinės Radviliškio kautynės. *Karo archyvas*, 2019, t. 34, p. 75–118.
- ¹¹ VITKUS, Hektoras. Žydų kariai Lietuvos (lietuvių) Nepriklausomybės (1919–1923 m.) kovose: ką žinome apie jų motyvus? In *Šiuolaikinių tautinių valstybių kūrimas rytiniame Baltijos jūros regione* (Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis, vol. 38). Sud. Vygantas VAREIKIS, Silva POCYTĖ. Klaipėda, 2019, pp. 163–185; JOKUBAUSKAS, Vytautas; VITKUS, Hektoras. Jews as Lithuanian Army Soldiers in 1918–1940 (a quantitative analysis). *Lithuanian Historical Studies*, 2021, Vol. 25, pp. 103–112; POCYTĖ, Silva. Prūsijos lietuviai ir Lietuvos Nepriklausomybės kovos 1919 m. pirmoje pusėje. *Karo archyvas*, 2023, t. 38, p. 73–107.
- ¹² *Lietuvos kariuomenės kūrimo ir Nepriklausomybės kovų (1918–1920) eksponatai Vytauto Didžiojo karo muziejaus rinkiniuose: katalogas*. Sud. Vidmantas AIRINI, Solveiga LUKMINAITĖ, Lina URBONIENĖ, et al. Kaunas, 2019.
- ¹³ *Lietuvos karių, partizanų ir šaulių kapai: atlasas, 1919–1940*. Sud. Eugenijus IVAŠKEVIČIUS. Vilnius, 2003.
- ¹⁴ BALKELIS, Tomas. Memories of the Great War and the Polish-Lithuanian conflict in Lithuania. In *The Empire and Nationalism at War* (Russia's Great War and Revolution, Vol. 2). Ed. by Eric LOHR, Vera TOLZ, Alexander

Archaeological investigations of First World War training and prisoner-of-war camps, trenches and mass graves, which began at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, expanded the concept of the Great War as one of the bloodiest modern conflicts.¹⁵ Research on sites from the First World War laid the foundations for the development of modern conflict archaeology, and publications have shaped its theoretical and methodological approaches. In Lithuania, modern conflict archaeology has also become a separate discipline of archaeology, but unlike the sites from the Second World War (1940–1945) and the Lithuanian Partisan War (1944–1953),¹⁶ the sites from the First World War and the Wars of Independence have not attracted much interest among researchers, and there are almost no published studies to date.

This article focuses on the heritage of the First World War and the Wars of Independence in Lithuania, for the first time providing an overview of the archaeological research carried out up to 2023 in trenches, battlefields, and sites of deaths and burials, analysing the context of the research and presenting its results (see the list of investigated sites and the summary of research data in the Appendix). Drawing on the experience of the archaeology of the First World War in other countries, the state of research in Lithuania and its future prospects are discussed, and definitions of the archaeology of the First World War and the Wars of Independence in Lithuania are formulated.

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Archaeology of the First World War

The heritage and material legacy of the First World War and the Second World War have long attracted public attention. The 1960s and 1970s saw an increase in amateur excavations and souvenir hunting at war sites, with the most significant excavations taking place on battlefields and aircraft crash sites of the Western Front of the First

SEMYONOV, et al. Bloomington, 2014, pp. 241–256; BALKELIS, Tomas. *War, Revolution, and Nation-Making in Lithuania, 1914–1923*. Oxford, 2018; SAFRONOVAS, Vasilijus. The War Is Not Over? On the Continuity and Discontinuity between the Great War and the War of Independence as Experienced by Lithuanian Soldiers. In *Independence Wars in North-Eastern Europe and Beyond* (Estonian Yearbook of Military History = Eesti Sõjajaloo Aastaraamat, 2021, 11 (17)). Ed. by Kaarel PIIRIMÄE, Toomas HIIO. Viimsi, Tallinn, 2023, pp. 11–36.

¹⁵ SAUNDERS, Nicholas J. *Trench Art: Materialities and Memories of War*. London, New York, 2003; ROBERTSHAW, Andrew; KENYON, David. *Digging the Trenches: The Archaeology of the Western Front*. Barnsley, 2008; SAUNDERS, Nicholas J. *Killing Time: Archaeology and the First World War*. Stroud, 2010.

¹⁶ Cf. PETRAUSKAS, Gediminas; PETRAUSKIENĖ, Aistė. Archaeology of the Lithuanian Partisan War: Case of the Partisan Bunker in Daugėliškiiai Forest. In *Archaeologies of Totalitarianism, Authoritarianism, and Repression: Dark Modernities*. Ed. by James SYMONDS, Pavel VAŘEKA. Cham, 2020, pp. 149–170; ČIČIURKAITĖ, Ingrida; KRANIAUSKAS, Rokas. Investigating two mass grave sites of WWII POW camps in Lithuania. *Scandinavian Journal of Forensic Science*, 2022, Vol. 28, Special Issue, pp. 20–31; VĒLIUS, Gintautas. Archaeology in the study of the Anti-Soviet Lithuanian partisan war. In *The Unknown War: Anti-Soviet armed resistance in Lithuania and its legacies*. Ed. by Arūnas STREIKUS. London, New York, 2022, pp. 149–167.

World War.¹⁷ Unlike in Lithuania and other countries occupied by the Soviet Union, these amateur excavations made extensive use of metal detectors. In Belgium, northern France and neighbouring countries, the rapid growth of tourism on the battlefields of the Western Front, accompanied by uncontrolled excavations and souvenir collecting, has caused considerable damage to the heritage of the First World War.¹⁸ The chaotic excavations, the discovery of human remains and unexploded ordnance have caused concern for scholars and heritage conservationists, but there has been a lack of action to protect the war sites and to regulate these excavations.¹⁹

Although rescue archaeological excavations of Great War sites in France and Belgium began at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries,²⁰ the work of the British archaeologist Nicholas J. Saunders is considered to be the beginning of the archaeology of the First World War. In 1996, after visiting the site of the 1916 Battle of the Somme in northern France, where his grandfather fought among hundreds of thousands of British soldiers, Saunders took his first anthropological look at the landscape of the battlefield, the trench lines that carved it out, and the spirit of the place. Realising that the battlefield was being excavated by amateurs and that the sites of modern conflicts were not attracting the attention of archaeologists, Saunders set out on a focused exploration of the First World War sites.²¹

Saunders' research into the material culture,²² landscape²³ and memory²⁴ of the First World War in Europe and the Middle East not only expanded the scope of research on the Western Front, but also pioneered the archaeology of the Great Arab Revolt of 1916–1918 in Southern Jordan.²⁵ The research projects and publications of the

¹⁷ MOSHENSKA, Gabriel. Conflict. In *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Contemporary World*. Ed. by Paul GRAVES-BROWN, Rodney HARRISON, Angela PICCINI. Oxford, 2013, pp. 352–353.

¹⁸ SAUNDERS, Nicholas J. Excavating memories: archaeology and the Great War, 1914–2001. *Antiquity*, 2002, Vol. 76 (291), pp. 103–104; SAUNDERS, N. J. *Killing Time...*, pp. 10–15, 138–147.

¹⁹ Cf. HOLYOAK, Vince. Out of the blue: assessing military aircraft crash sites in England, 1912–45. *Antiquity*, 2002, Vol. 76 (293), p. 657.

²⁰ SAUNDERS, N.J. Excavating memories..., pp. 103–106; SAUNDERS, N. J. *Killing Time...*, pp. 15–19, 100–137, 149–161; THOMAS, Suzie; DECKERS, Pieterjan. 'And now they have taken over': hobbyist and professional archaeologist encounters with the material heritage of the First World War in western Belgium. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 2022, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 4–5.

²¹ SAUNDERS, Nick. Launching the new discipline of modern conflict archaeology. *Current Archaeology*, 2009, No. 235, pp. 35–40.

²² SAUNDERS, Nicholas J. Material culture and conflict: the Great War, 1914–2003. In *Matters of Conflict: Material Culture, Memory and the First World War*. Ed. by Nicholas J. SAUNDERS. London, New York, 2004, pp. 5–25; SAUNDERS, N. J. *Killing Time...*, pp. 31–40.

²³ SAUNDERS, N. J. *Killing Time...*, pp. 64–97; SAUNDERS, Nicholas J. Bodies in trees: A matter of being in Great War landscapes. In *Bodies in Conflict: Corporeality, materiality and transformation*. Ed. by Paul CORNISH, Nicholas J. SAUNDERS. London, New York, 2014, pp. 22–38.

²⁴ SAUNDERS, Nicholas J. Crucifix, Calvary, and Cross: Materiality and Spirituality in Great War Landscapes. *World Archaeology*, 2003, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 7–21; SAUNDERS, Nicholas J. *The Poppy: A History of Conflict, Loss, Remembrance, and Redemption*. London, 2014.

²⁵ SAUNDERS, Nicholas J.; FAULKNER, Neil. Fire on the desert: conflict archaeology and the Great Arab Revolt in Jordan, 1916–18. *Antiquity*, 2010, Vol. 84 (324), pp. 514–527; SAUNDERS, Nicholas J. *Desert Insur-*

last 20 years, the emergence of the discipline of modern conflict archaeology at the University of Bristol, and the annual Great War archaeology conferences have laid the foundations for modern conflict archaeology (unfortunately, First World War research at the University of Bristol and the conferences it hosted for more than a decade are no longer held there).

Another important contribution by Saunders to the archaeology of the First World War, and to modern conflict archaeology in general, is the development of the concept of trench art. This refers to objects created by soldiers, prisoners of war and refugees during the war, as well as war souvenirs and war trophies made after the war from spent artillery shells, cartridges, coins and everyday materials (wood, bone, textiles, stone, etc).²⁶ Although many objects of trench art do not have exceptional artistic value, their significance is revealed by the experiences and feelings of the participants and witnesses of the war, hidden in the material, the form, the decoration and other details.

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Finds and material culture, in the broadest sense, are an integral object and research tool of archaeology. The First World War was an unprecedented global military conflict of an industrial nature, which left many material traces and artefacts in the landscape as evidence of the war. These artefacts range in size and weight (from a cartridge case and a bullet to an aeroplane, a tank, or even a battleship),²⁷ and are used to reconstruct different narratives. However, the material culture of war is characterised by mass production and large volumes.²⁸ On the Western Front, large quantities of unexploded ordnance are still being found in the ground, posing a danger to local populations and archaeologists, thus complicating research.²⁹

The study of landscape, its perception and social meanings is one of the cornerstones of modern conflict archaeology. The landscape of the First World War consists of trench lines with dug-outs and underground tunnels, prisoner-of-war and internment camps, buildings adapted for military use, military airfields, artillery shell holes, sites of death and burial, war memorials and various artefacts scattered in the landscape (weapons, ammunition, ordnance, and personal belongings), etc. Research on the First World War has focused on the landscape of the Western Front³⁰

gency: *Archaeology, T. E. Lawrence, and the Arab Revolt*. Oxford, 2020; SAUNDERS, Nicholas J. East of the Jordan: Curating and forgetting the First World War and Arab Revolt along the Hejaz Railway. In *Curating the Great War*. Ed. by Paul CORNISH, Nicholas J. SAUNDERS. Abingdon, New York, 2023, pp. 107–127.

²⁶ SAUNDERS, Nicholas J. Bodies of metal, shells of memory: 'Trench Art' and the Great War re-cycled. In *The Material Culture Reader*. Ed. by Victor BUCHLI. Oxford, New York, 2002, pp. 181–206; SAUNDERS, N. J. *Trench Art...*; SAUNDERS, N. J. *Killing Time...*, pp. 40–54.

²⁷ SAUNDERS, N. J. *Material culture and conflict...*, p. 6.

²⁸ SAUNDERS, Nicholas J. The ironic 'culture of shells' in the Great War and beyond. In *Matériel Culture The archaeology of twentieth-century conflict* (One World Archaeology, Vol. 44). Ed. by John SCHOFIELD, William Gray JOHNSON, Colleen M. BECK. London, New York, 2002, pp. 22–40.

²⁹ WEBSTER, Donovan. *Aftermath: The Remnants of War*. New York, 1998, pp. 11–80; SAUNDERS, N. J. The ironic 'culture of shells'..., p. 37.

³⁰ ROBERTSHAW, A.; KENYON, D. Op. cit.; SAUNDERS, N. J. *Killing Time...*

and the Soča Front (or Isonzo Front) (May 1915 to October 1917) on the Slovenian-Italian border.³¹ The landscape of the First World War is considered to be an integral object of landscape archaeology research.

The trench lines of the Allied and German armies (each about 500 kilometres long), stretching from the Belgian coast to the Swiss border, are the most prominent feature of the Western Front, and the most extensively investigated sites. The excavation of the trench lines has uncovered wooden wall and floorboards, the remains of tables and chairs, brick-paved trench sections, and various other finds, which provide information on the use of trenches for defence and daily life, as well as on the living conditions of the soldiers.³² The Austro-Hungarian and Italian troops fighting on the Soča Front in the Alps had to adapt to the natural and climatic conditions of the mountains, which not only determined the nature of the trenches and other fortifications, but also posed a variety of challenges.³³

Another group of widely investigated First World War sites are prisoner-of-war camps and internment camps. The first archaeological excavations in the camps were mainly of a rescue nature, to fill gaps in the historical record and to gather evidence of the horrors of war.³⁴ Archaeological research provides material evidence of the structure of the camps, the prisoners held there, and their living conditions, but research on the camps is also inseparable from the analysis of archival documents, diaries and the memoirs of survivors.³⁵ Today, the widespread use of non-invasive research methods and data sources (ground-penetrating radar, magnetometer, 3D photogrammetry, aerial photographs, plans, drawings, etc) makes it possible to record the surviving structures and to reconstruct the spatial layout of the camps.³⁶

³¹ SAUNDERS, Nicholas J.; FAULKNER, Neil; KOŠIR, Uroš, et al. Conflict landscapes of the Soča/Isonzo Front, 1915–2013: Archaeological-anthropological evaluation of the Soča Valley, Slovenia. *Arheo*, 2013, Vol. 30, pp. 47–66; KOŠIR, Uroš; ČREŠNAR, Matija; MLEKUŽ, Dimitrij, et al. Integrated archaeological research as a part of Modern conflict archaeology. What we have learned from the conflict landscapes of the Upper Soča Valley (Western Slovenia). *Schild von Steier. Archäologische und numismatische Beiträge aus dem Landesmuseum Joanneum*, 2015/2016, Bd. 27. Graz, 2016, pp. 108–118; MLEKUŽ, Dimitrij; KOŠIR, Uroš; ČREŠNAR, Matija. Landscapes of Death and Suffering: Archaeology of Conflict Landscapes of the Upper Soča Valley, Slovenia. In *Conflict Landscapes and Archaeology from Above*. Ed. by Birger STICHELBAUT, David COWLEY. Farnham, 2016, pp. 127–145; KOŠIR, Uroš. Rombon: biography of a great war landscape. *Journal of Conflict Archaeology*, 2020, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 146–167.

³² ROBERTSHAW, A.; KENYON, D. Op. cit.

³³ MLEKUŽ, D.; KOŠIR, U.; ČREŠNAR, M. Op. cit., pp. 136–139; KOŠIR, U. Rombon..., pp. 154–157.

³⁴ DEMUTH, Volker. 'Those who Survived the Battlefields': Archaeological Investigations in a Prisoner of War Camp near Quedlinburg (Harz/Germany) from the First World War. *Journal of Conflict Archaeology*, 2009, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 163–181.

³⁵ MYTUM, Harold. A Tale of Two Treatments: The Materiality of Internment on the Isle of Man in World Wars I and II. In *Archaeologies of Internment*. Ed. by Adrian MYERS, Gabriel MOSHENSKA. New York, Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London, 2011, pp. 33–52.

³⁶ MYTUM, Harold; PHILPOTT, Rob; CARR, Gilly, et al. "Almost a model of its kind": Les Blanchés Banques Camp for German World War I military prisoners. *Société Jersiaise. Annual Bulletin for 2020*, Vol. 32, Part 4. Jersey, 2021, pp. 841–863.

The analysis of finds, animal bones and soil samples from the camps makes it possible to determine the health of the prisoners, as well as their daily life and diet.³⁷

Wars cause huge material losses and casualties, both military and civilian. The remains of soldiers killed in the First World War were buried in trenches, battlefields and prisoner-of-war cemeteries, while others were later reburied with their comrades in the newly established military cemeteries. However, some of them were buried in unmarked places and forgotten. Different countries had their own policies regarding the burial and commemoration of the remains of the fallen. British and German soldiers killed on the Western Front, for example, were not repatriated, and cemeteries were established abroad.³⁸

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The investigation of burial sites of soldiers and civilian casualties and the exhumation of their remains are a very important, sensitive and ethical area of the archaeology of the First World War. Research is motivated by the aim of honouring the war dead, finding the fallen, identifying them, and a giving a dignified burial.³⁹ The identification system (identity discs), adopted in Germany in 1866, then in France, and finally in 1906 with the ratification of the Geneva Convention in the United Kingdom and the United States, plays an important role in the identification of the remains of soldiers of the First World War found during archaeological investigations.⁴⁰

Since the end of the First World War, thousands of memorials have been erected in the countries that took part in and were affected by the war to commemorate the fallen. The horror, destruction and millions of war casualties have been commemorated through remembrance, and the memorials, ruins and trenches have become a dark heritage and an attraction for visitors and war tourists.⁴¹ On the other hand, however, the landscape has been transformed not only by various forms of commemoration, but also by the desire of local communities to reclaim and reuse lands devastated by war. This meant that the landscape created by the war underwent yet

³⁷ BEAULIEU, Sarah. The prisoner of war diet: a material and faunal analysis of the Morrisey WWI Internment Camp. *Journal of Conflict Archaeology*, 2020, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 118–145.

³⁸ DENDOOVEN, Dominiek. 'Bringing the dead home': repatriation, illegal repatriation and expatriation of British bodies during and after the First World War. In *Bodies in Conflict: Corporeality, Materiality and Transformation*. Ed. by Paul CORNISH, Nicholas J. SAUNDERS. London, New York, 2014, pp. 66–79; cf. SAFRONOVAS, V.; JOKUBAUSKAS, V.; VAREIKIS, V., et al. Op. cit., p. 319–320, 325–336.

³⁹ SAUNDERS, N. J. *Killing Time...*, pp. 98–175; ASHBRIDGE, Sarah I.; VERDEGEM, Simon. Identity discs: The recovery and identification of First World War soldiers located during archaeological works on the former Western front. *Forensic Science International*, 2020, Vol. 317, art. No. 110568.

⁴⁰ ASHBRIDGE, Sarah I.; O'MARA, David. The *Erkennungsmarke*: the humanitarian duty to identify fallen German soldiers 1866–1918. *Journal of Conflict Archaeology*, 2020, Vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 192–223; ASHBRIDGE, S. I.; VERDEGEM, S. Op. cit.

⁴¹ EAVENSON, Charles D., II. Remembering the 'Doughboys': American memorials of the Great War. In *Beyond the Dead Horizon: Studies in Modern Conflict Archaeology*. Ed. by Nicholas J. SAUNDERS. Oxford, 2012, pp. 85–100; SCHRIEK, Max van der. *Archaeological Approaches to and Heritage Perspectives on Modern Conflict: Beyond the Battlefields* (Heritage and Memory Studies, Vol. 16). Amsterdam, 2022, pp. 92–102.

another transformation in a short space of time, and some people tried to forget the war itself as soon as possible. For example, in Ypres in West Flanders, and many other key battlefields on the Western Front, trenches and artillery pits were filled in, buildings and entire settlements were rebuilt, and land devastated by the battles was converted back to farmland.⁴²

In many countries, the legacy of the First World War remains marginalised, and change is slow.⁴³ The trenches and fortifications of the Great War, like those of many other military conflicts, are generally not considered part of the heritage, and much of it has been destroyed by urbanisation, industrialisation, agriculture, and other forms of development. For this reason, projects on cultural resource management, the mapping of war heritage sites, the analysis of aerial photographs, orthophotos, 3D models, First World War maps and digital terrain models based on LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) data, as well as on the application of GIS (Geographical Information System) and various non-invasive research techniques, are of particular importance.⁴⁴

The archaeology of the First World War, which investigates the material legacy of the Great War and its relationship to people and the environment, is characterised by an interdisciplinary approach to research, encompassing a wide range of academic disciplines, such as military history, geography, anthropology, heritage conservation, museum studies and many others. Until recently, oral history played an important role in the study of the First World War, but as the war years have receded, eyewitnesses and primary accounts have disappeared.

The discipline of the archaeology of the First World War originated in the United Kingdom, whose archaeologists continue to set the trends in Great War research. The archaeology of the First World War is developing rapidly in northern and Central Europe (Belgium, France, Germany, Slovenia, etc) and in North America (the United States and Canada). In recent years, the number of First World War sites investigated

⁴² SCHRIEK, M. v. d. Op. cit., pp. 93–94.

⁴³ Cf. KOŠIR, Uroš. Legacies of the Soča Front – from rubbish to heritage (1915–2017). In *Rediscovering the Great War: Archaeology and Enduring Legacies on the Soča and Eastern Fronts*. Ed. by Uroš KOŠIR, Matija ČREŠNAR, Dimitrij MLEKUŽ. London, New York, 2019, pp. 181–198.

⁴⁴ SAEY, Timothy; STICHELBAUT, Birger; BOURGEOIS, Jean, et al. An Interdisciplinary Non-invasive Approach to Landscape Archaeology of the Great War. *Archaeological Prospection*, 2013, Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 39–44; GHEYLE, Wouter; DOSSCHE, Rebekka; BOURGEOIS, Jean, et al. Integrating Archaeology and Landscape Analysis for the Cultural Heritage Management of a World War I Militarised Landscape: The German Field Defences in Antwerp. *Landscape Research*, 2014, Vol. 39, No. 5, pp. 502–522; GHEYLE, Wouter; SAEY, Timothy; HOLLEBEEKE, Yannick van, et al. Historical Aerial Photography and Multi-receiver EMI Soil Sensing, Complementing Techniques for the Study of a Great War Conflict Landscape. *Archaeological Prospection*, 2016, Vol. 23, No. 3, pp. 149–164; ŠTUHEC, Seta; KOŠIR, Uroš. Digitising the Great War in 3D: the remains of the Soča Front, Slovenia. In *Rediscovering the Great War: Archaeology and Enduring Legacies on the Soča and Eastern Fronts*. Ed. by Uroš KOŠIR, Matija ČREŠNAR, Dimitrij MLEKUŽ. London, New York, 2019, pp. 43–62.

and the interest in them has increased in Poland,⁴⁵ while in other neighbouring countries of Lithuania, archaeological research on First World War sites has not yet become common practice.⁴⁶

The legacy of the First World War and the Wars of Independence in Lithuania

This article examines the legacy of the First World War and the Wars of Independence in Lithuania, based on summarised data from the publicly available Register of Cultural Property as a legally binding list of cultural property.⁴⁷ Although these data cover only legally protected immovable cultural property, they are sufficiently representative to reveal the richness, diversity and patterns in the protection of the legacy of the First World War and the Wars of Independence.

As of March 2024, 497 objects from the First World War and the Wars of Independence were registered in the Register of Cultural Property. Of these objects, 50.9% relate to the Wars of Independence ($n=253$) and 48.7% relate to the First World War ($n=242$), while the other two objects (Pabradė military cemetery and Vingis Park military cemetery in Vilnius, unique codes in the Register of Cultural Property 21064 and 12870 respectively) relate to both the Wars of Independence and the First World War. In terms of the status of cultural property, 24 objects have the status of monuments, 84 are under state protection, and 389 are registered. The Register of Cultural Property contains individual and complex objects of the cultural heritage, but complexes consisting of several individual objects, often from different periods (e.g. the Second World War, the Lithuanian Partisan War) are not included in the number of cultural heritage objects.

Objects from the First World War and the Wars of Independence account for 2% of the total number of cultural heritage objects with legal protection (24,266 objects registered in total). This is slightly less than a third of the total number of ob-

⁴⁵ KOBIAŁKA, Dawid; KOSTYRKO, Mikołaj; KAJDA, Kornelia. Inconspicuous and Forgotten Material Memories of the First World War: The Case of a POW Camp in Czersk, Poland. In *The Materiality of Troubled Past: Archaeologies of Conflicts and Wars*. Ed. by Anna ZALEWSKA, John M. SCOTT, Grzegorz KIARSZYS. Warsaw, Szczecin, 2017, pp. 23–39; KARSKI, Kamil; TOKARCZYK, Tomasz. Archaeologies of memory – archaeologies of oblivion: the Great War in south-eastern Poland. In *Rediscovering the Great War: Archaeology and Enduring Legacies on the Soča and Eastern Fronts*. Ed. by Uroš KOŠIR, Matija ČREŠNAR, Dimitrij MLEKUŽ. London, New York, 2019, pp. 140–151; ZALEWSKA, Anna; CZARNECKI, Jacek. An archaeology of 'No Man's Land': the Great War in central Poland. In *Rediscovering the Great War...*, pp. 122–139.

⁴⁶ Cf. RUSSOW, Erki; ORAS, Ester. Archaeological fieldwork in 2010. In *Archaeological Fieldwork in Estonia 2010*. Ed. by Ester ORAS, Erki RUSSOW. Tallinn, 2011, p. 14; ZŁATOHORSKI, Ołeksij. Prace ekshumacyjno-archeologiczne na Ukrainie. In *Materialne pozostałości konfliktów i zbrodni XX wieku w świetle najnowszych badań archeologicznych*. Ed. by Maciej BADOWICZ. Gdańsk, 2019, s. 67–69.

⁴⁷ *Register of Cultural Property*. URL: <<https://kvr.kpd.lt/#/static-heritage-search>> [accessed 05.03.2024].

jects related to 20th-century conflicts registered in the Register of Cultural Property ($n=1,764$, as of July 2023).⁴⁸ In comparison, the Register of Cultural Property includes 414 burial sites of 1944–1953 Lithuanian partisans, 361 burial sites of Lithuanian soldiers (including those killed during the Wars of Independence), resistance fighters and defenders of freedom, and 275 sites of battle and deaths of Lithuanian partisans, etc.⁴⁹

The legacy of the First World War and the Wars of Independence consists of the homesteads of participants in the conflict, defensive fortifications, sites of battle and deaths, cemeteries, individual graves, and war memorials. The list of First World War objects presented in the article includes only the structures and fortifications of the Kaunas Fortress, its First Fort and Palemonas (Railway) Fort, which were built, rebuilt and used during the war. Therefore, the remaining forts and their dependencies, the construction of which began in the 1880s, are not included in the list.⁵⁰ The legally protected Lithuanian military cemeteries contain not only the graves of soldiers who were killed during the Wars of Independence, but also of those who died after the end of the fighting due to illness, murder, suicide and various accidents.⁵¹ Thus, the list includes only the cemeteries and burial sites of soldiers killed in 1919–1920 (as well as in clashes with the Poles in 1921–1923). In this case, the main selection criteria were the date of death, the context, and the historical data provided in the Cultural Property Act.

The largest group of First World War objects are military cemeteries and individual graves ($n=185$) (Figs. 1, 2). This group accounts for 75.8% of all First World War objects with legal protection. As many as 166 burial sites contain the graves of soldiers of the Imperial German army and 75 of the Imperial Russian army, while a further 59 sites are related to the graves of soldiers of both sides. The nationality of the soldiers buried in the other three cemeteries (all in the Kelmė district) is unknown. Although some of the remains of soldiers buried in smaller cemeteries were reburied in larger cemeteries at the end of the First World War, data from the 1920s on 564 German and 649 Russian burial sites⁵² indicate that the actual number of military cemeteries

⁴⁸ PETRAUSKAS, Gediminas; MURADIAN, Lijana; KURILIENĖ, Augustina. Archaeology of Modern Conflict and Heritage Legislation in Lithuania during Thirty Years of Restored Independence. *Internet Archaeology*, 2024, Vol. 66. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.11141/ia.66.13>>.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Fig. 5.

⁵⁰ ORLOV, Vladimir. *The Atlas of Kaunas Fortress*. Kaunas, 2009.

⁵¹ Cf. JOKUBAUSKAS, Vytautas. Causes of Death in the Lithuanian Armed Forces, 1919–1940. In *Defeating Disease in the Changing Society of the Southeast Baltic from the 18th to the 20th Century* (Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis, vol. 43). Ed. by Milda KONTRIMĖ. Klaipėda, 2022, pp. 99–130; JOKUBAUSKAS, Vytautas. Casualties of the Lithuanian Wars of Independence: an aspect of Lithuanian historiography. *Vėsture: avoti un cilvēki = History: Sources and People*, 2022, Vol. 25, pp. 125–137.

⁵² JOKUBAUSKAS, V. Didysis karas..., p. 249–250; SAFRONOVAS, V.; JOKUBAUSKAS, V.; VAREIKIS, V., et al. *Op. cit.*, p. 319–320.

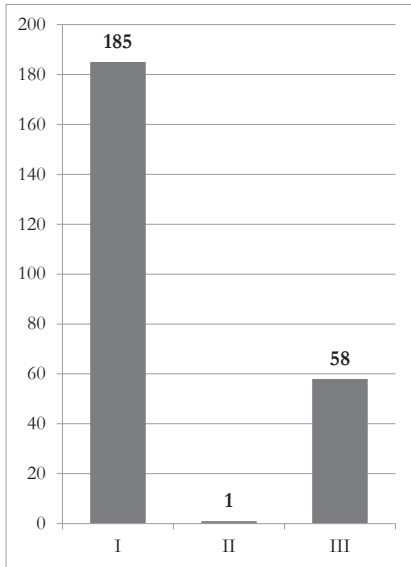


Figure 1. First World War objects registered in the Register of Cultural Property: I) military cemeteries and burial sites, II) monuments, III) defensive fortifications. Diagram by G. Petrauskas

and individual graves of Great War soldiers was higher than the data from the Register of Cultural Property indicate.

Some First World War cemeteries are remarkable for their size and the number of soldiers buried there. For example, the Vingis Park military cemetery in Vilnius (unique code 33766), which was later used during the Wars of Independence and the Second World War, contains the graves of 1,305 German, 719 Russian, 141 Austrian and Hungarian, as well as eight Turkish soldiers killed in battles of the First World War.⁵³ The Carmelite cemetery in Kaunas (unique code 37314) was the burial place for 550 Catholic, 206 Muslim and 114 Evangelical Lutheran soldiers of the Imperial German army,⁵⁴ while another 375 soldiers of the Imperial German and Russian armies were buried in the Zarasai military cemetery (unique code 38686).⁵⁵

The largest number of Imperial German army cemeteries and individual graves are included in the Register of Cultural Property in the districts of Švenčionys ($n=15$), Šiauliai ($n=14$), Ignalina, Kupiškis and Vilkaviškis ($n=11$ each), while the cemeteries of the Imperial Russian army are located in the districts of Šiauliai ($n=11$), Varėna ($n=6$) and Kaišiadorys ($n=5$). However, it should be noted that in some cases several objects of the cultural heritage are registered in one cemetery. For example, in the cemetery at Adučiškis (Švenčionys district), legal protection was granted not only to the grave of soldiers of the Imperial German army (unique code 39175), but also to four separate graves of officers and soldiers of the same army (unique codes 39176–39178 and 40483). The cemetery of the village of Šarkiškės (Varėna district) contains three graves of soldiers from the Imperial Russian army (unique codes 40432, 40433 and 40437). The distribution of legally

⁵³ GIRININKIENĖ, Vida. *Vilniaus kapinės*. Vilnius, 2004, p. 173–175.

⁵⁴ BENDORAITIS, Kostas. Pirmojo pasaulinio karo aukos. In *Žuvome dėl Tėvynės*. Sud. Jonas VORONAVIČIUS. Kaunas, 1995, p. 11–12.

⁵⁵ Pirmojo pasaulinio karo Vokietijos ir Rusijos imperijų karių kapai (unique code 38686). *Register of Cultural Property*. URL: <<https://kvr.kpd.lt/#/static-heritage-search>> [accessed 15.04.2024].



Figure 2. The First World War Imperial German and Imperial Russian army cemetery in the village of Kurkliškės (Elektrėnai municipality). Photograph by G. Petrauskas, April 2024

protected cemeteries and individual graves partly corresponds to the historical data on the burial sites of soldiers from the First World War.⁵⁶

Various memorials have been erected in Lithuania to commemorate the soldiers killed in the First World War, but almost all of them are in cemeteries and other burial sites.⁵⁷ Only one memorial commemorating the fallen soldiers of the Imperial German army is registered in the Register of Cultural Property in the Švenčionys town cemetery (unique code 39179). However, in this case too, the motivation for the memorial was not to commemorate the First World War, but to mark the presumed burial place of German soldiers.⁵⁸ Many Great War memorials have become valuable property of a legally protected burial site (e.g. the Imperial German army cemeteries in Balingradas and Antakalnis in Vilnius, the Imperial Russian army cemetery in Panevėžys, unique codes 20953, 36445 and 15562 respectively), or are not objects of the cultural heritage at all.

The second group of First World War objects in Lithuania are defensive fortifications. There are 58 objects of this type registered in the Register of Cultural Property (23.8% of all First World War objects). In northeast and eastern Lithuania, 32 reinforced concrete, concrete and stone masonry fortifications built by the Imperial German army have legal protection. These are defensive walls and bunkers for artillery

⁵⁶ JOKUBAUSKAS, V. *Didysis karas...*, p. 250; SAFRONOVAS, V.; JOKUBAUSKAS, V.; VAREIKIS, V., et al. *Op. cit.*, p. 319–320.

⁵⁷ SAFRONOVAS, V.; JOKUBAUSKAS, V.; VAREIKIS, V., et al. *Op. cit.*, p. 304.

⁵⁸ Paminklas Pirmojo pasaulinio karo Vokietijos imperijos kariams (unique code 39179). *Register of Cultural Property*. URL: <<https://kvr.kpd.lt/#/static-heritage-search>> [accessed 07.03.2024].



Figure 3. First World War German defensive fortifications in the village of Raščiūnai (Igalina district). Photograph by G. Petrauskas, December 2015

guns, ammunition, position tracking, shelter, defensive lines, etc.⁵⁹ (Fig. 3). A separate group of fortifications consists of the Palemonas (Railway) Fort, ammunition depots, and various shelters of the First Fort built by the Imperial Russian army during the First World War. This group also includes the reconnaissance bunker, shelters and firing slots, and the fortifications of the Palemonas-Narėpai defensive line related to the defence of the city of Kaunas, which were constructed by the Imperial German army.⁶⁰ A variety of First World War fortifications are listed in the Register of Cultural Property, but wartime trenches, shelters and decayed wooden fortifications are not registered.⁶¹

Like First World War objects, the predominant type of Wars of Independence objects are cemeteries and individual graves (Figs. 4, 5). According to 2003 data, there are 176 burial sites of soldiers killed in battles of the Wars of Independence in Lithuania (including burial sites of soldiers and riflemen who died during the interwar period).⁶² Nevertheless, as many as 235 cemeteries and individual graves of victims of the Wars of Independence are included in the Register of Cultural Property (92.2% of the total number of objects from that period). The largest number of these objects was registered in Kaunas ($n=24$), and the Pasvalys ($n=15$) and Panevėžys districts, as well as in Vilnius ($n=11$ each). However, this number does not always reflect the actual distribution and number of burial sites. For example, as many as 13 objects have

⁵⁹ ANDRAŠIŪNIENĖ, Elena; VASILIAUSKAS, Zenonas. Pirmojo pasaulinio karo gynybiniai įtvirtinimai. In *Kultūros paminklų enciklopedija: Rytų Lietuva*. [T.] I. Sud. Jonas VARNAUSKAS. Vilnius, 1996, p. 115; ORLOV, Vladimir. Fortifikacija Pirmojo pasaulinio karo metais (1914–1918). In *XX amžiaus fortifikacija Lietuvoje*. Sud. Ingrida VELIUTĖ. Kaunas, 2008, p. 32–44.

⁶⁰ ORLOV, Vladimir. *Kauno tvirtovės istorija, 1882–1915*. Kaunas, 2007, p. 63–68; ORLOV, V. Fortifikacija..., p. 12–26; ORLOV, V. *The Atlas...*, pp. 52–59; STEPONAITYTĖ, Nijolė; ZALECKIS, Kęstutis. *Karo architektūra Lietuvos miestuose ir miesteliuose*. Kaunas, 2014, p. 60–64.

⁶¹ Cf. ORLOV, V. Fortifikacija..., p. 7–46.

⁶² *Lietuvos karių, partizanų ir šaulių kapai...*

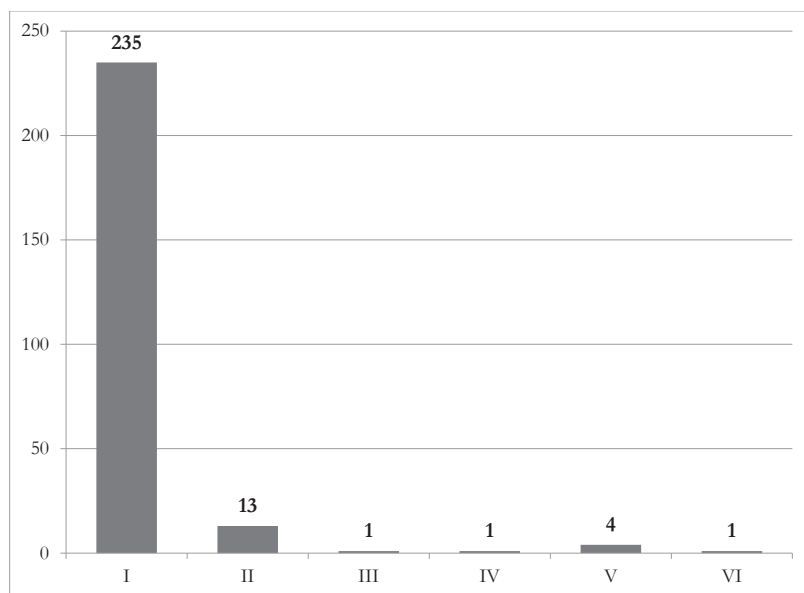


Figure 4. Objects from the Lithuanian Wars of Independence registered in the Register of Cultural Property: I) cemeteries and burial sites, II) monuments, III) homestead sites, IV) battle memorial sites, V) battlefields and sites of death, VI) execution sites. Diagram by G. Petrauskas

been granted legal protection in the Panemunė cemetery in Kaunas alone, such as the burial site of 14 soldiers killed during the Wars of Independence (unique code 16956) and 12 individual graves.⁶³

Among the Lithuanian military cemeteries, the burial sites of Polish soldiers killed during the Wars of Independence are particularly noteworthy. The largest Polish burial site is in Vilnius Antakalnis cemetery (unique code 36321), where the remains of about 1,600 soldiers are buried (many of them were reburied from other graves).⁶⁴ Two graves in the Rasos cemetery in Vilnius (unique codes 36412 and 36415) contain 164 and 40 remains respectively,⁶⁵ and the Pabradė military cemetery (Švenčionys district), where both German and Polish soldiers were buried, is the burial site of 20 Polish soldiers.⁶⁶ Until May 2023, the presumed burial site of Lithuanian and Polish soldiers

⁶³ Cf. *Lietuvos karių, partizanų ir šaulių kapai...* p. 62–65.

⁶⁴ GIRININKIENĖ, V. Op. cit., p. 191–192.

⁶⁵ Vilniaus senųjų kapinių, vad. Rasų kapinėtis, komplekso Lenkijos karių kapai I (unique code 36412); Vilniaus senųjų kapinių, vad. Rasų kapinėtis, komplekso Lenkijos karių kapai II (unique code 36415). *Register of Cultural Property*. URL <<https://kvr.kpd.lt/#/static-heritage-search>> [accessed 15.03.2024].

⁶⁶ Pirmojo pasaulinio karo Vokietijos imperijos ir Lenkijos karių kapai (unique code 21064). *Register of Cultural Property*. URL: <<https://kvr.kpd.lt/#/static-heritage-search>> [accessed 08.03.2024].



Figure 5. Graves of Lithuanian soldiers in the old cemetery at Telšiai.
Photograph by G. Petrauskas, April 2024

from the Wars of Independence in the village of Lazdėnai (Elektrėnai municipality) was considered a cultural heritage site. However, in 2021, following archaeological excavations at the site and the discovery of no remains,⁶⁷ the protection of the burial site was lifted (the remains of the soldiers were discovered elsewhere in the village, see below).

Although memorials of the Wars of Independence make up a larger proportion of the Register of Cultural Property than First World War memorials ($n=13$, or 5.1% of all objects), only a small proportion of them have been granted legal protection.⁶⁸ These include memorials erected in central squares and other places in towns and cities ($n=9$), and, to a lesser extent, in cemeteries commemorating the victims of the Wars of Independence ($n=2$). Many of these memorials, which have become a reflection of the cult of Lithuanian soldiers,⁶⁹ were erected during the interwar period (often

⁶⁷ ŽĖKAITĖ, Monika. Lietuvos ir Lenkijos karių kapo (u. k. 41833) vietos, Elektrėnų sav., Vievio sen., Lazdėnų k., detaliųjų archeologinių tyrimų 2021 m. ataskaita. Vilnius, 2022. *Lietuvos istorijos instituto rankraštynas* (Manuscript Department at the Lithuanian Institute of History, hereinafter *LIIR*), f. 1, b. 10401.

⁶⁸ Cf. *Nukentėję paminklai*. Sud. Marija SKIRMANTIENĖ, Jonas VARNAUSKAS. Vilnius, 1994.

⁶⁹ STALIŪNAS, Darius. Žuvusių karių kultas tarpukario Lietuvoje. In *Nacionalizmas ir emocijos (Lietuva ir Lenkija XIX–XX a.)* (Lietuvių atgimimo istorijos studijos, t. 17). Sud. Vladas SIRUTAVIČIUS, Darius STALIŪNAS. Vilnius, 2001, p. 120–132.

on the occasion of the anniversary of Lithuanian independence in 1928 or 1938), later demolished by the Soviets, and rebuilt in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In 1991, another monument (unique code 41591) was erected in the present-day village of Vyčiai (Panevėžys district) to commemorate the volunteers from the former Staniūnai estate who were awarded the Cross of Vytis (the village was named after the participants in the Wars of Independence).⁷⁰ This monument, as well as the birthplace of the war participant Jonas Variakojis in the village of Rinkušiai (Biržai district) (unique code 29612), are the only non-martyrological objects of the heritage of the Wars of Independence in Lithuania.

In addition to the abovementioned, the memorial site of the 1919 Kėdainiai-Šėta battle (unique code 12569), four sites of battle and deaths in the Wars of Independence (unique codes 16597, 17248, 20380 and 43817), and the site of the massacre of Lithuanian riflemen in Troškūnai (Anykščiai district) (unique code 17255), are considered to be separate cultural heritage property. However, even in these cases, one of the most important valuable properties of these objects are the memorials (or the memorial oak tree at the site of the massacre)⁷¹ commemorating the victims of the Wars of Independence.

Archaeological research on the First World War and the Wars of Independence in Lithuania

After the end of the First World War, many countries began exhuming the remains of soldiers buried on battlefields, in trenches and mass graves, transferring them to cemeteries and commemorating the war dead.⁷² The extent of exhumation of the remains of victims of the First World War and the Wars of Independence in Lithuania is unknown. The mass reburial of the remains of the Red Army and later of Soviet partisans in cemeteries began at the end of the Second World War,⁷³ and the first

⁷⁰ VYŠNIAUSKAS, Vytautas. Vienintelis Lietuvoje. In *Kaimų istorijos*. T. I. Sud Romas MASTEIKA. Vilnius, 1995, p. 67.

⁷¹ Lietuvos šaulių sušaudymo vieta (unique code 17255). *Register of Cultural Property*. URL: <<https://kvr.kpd.lt/#/static-heritage-search>> [accessed 15.03.2024].

⁷² FERRÁNDIZ, Francisco; ROBBEN, Antonius C. G. M. Introduction: The Ethnography of Exhumations. In *Necropolitics: Mass Graves and Exhumations in the Age of Human Rights*. Ed. by Francisco FERRÁNDIZ, Antonius C.G.M. ROBBEN. Philadelphia, PA, 2015, pp. 4–5.

⁷³ ZIZAS, Rimantas. *Sovietiniai partizanai Lietuvoje 1941–1944 m.* Vilnius, 2014, p. 533–534; ARLAUSKAITĖ-ZAKŠAUSKIENĖ, Inga; ČERNIAUSKAS, Norbertas; JAKUBČIONIS, Algirdas, et al. *Kariai. Betonas. Mitas: Antrojo pasaulinio karo Sovietų Sąjungos karių palaidojimo vietos Lietuvoje*. Vilnius, 2016, p. 43–46; KULEVIČIUS, Salvijus. In the Traps of the Soviets: Soviet World War II Military Burial Sites in Lithuania. The Genesis. *Trimarium. The History and Literature of Central and Eastern European Countries*, 2024, No. 4, pp. 13–16.

serious exhumations of Holocaust victims of a political nature, commissioned by the Soviet authorities, were carried out in Lithuania in 1944 and 1951–1963.⁷⁴

During the Soviet occupation, archaeologists repeatedly found the remains of soldiers killed in First World War battles, but these discoveries were mostly kept silent. For example, in 1974, during the excavation of the presumed prehistoric Grybiškės barrow (Šalčininkai district), remains of four German soldiers killed in 1915 were recovered,⁷⁵ and in 1980, an unknown number of remains related to the events of 1915 were unearthed in Bubliai old cemetery (Kėdainiai district).⁷⁶ The latter archaeological report by Mykolas Černiauskas does not mention graves from the First World War at all, but notes that some of the graves were very modern, had an unpleasant smell, and that the surviving ribs were not flat, but were protruding perpendicular from the ground.⁷⁷

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In 1996, the governments of the Republic of Lithuania and the Federal Republic of Germany signed an agreement on the maintenance of graves of German soldiers in Lithuania. The agreement established a procedure for the transfer of the remains of German soldiers killed in the First World War and the Second World War to cemeteries, ensuring the protection of graves.⁷⁸ It also provided that the exhumation of remains would be carried out by the German War Graves Commission (Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge e. V.). However, at the same time, a bilateral agreement between the Republic of Lithuania and the Russian Federation regarding the graves of Russian soldiers had not yet been signed.

The bilateral agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany accelerated the search for burial sites of German soldiers and their exhumation. In the 1990s and 2000s, the focus was on the exhumation of remains of German soldiers from the Second World War, while archaeologists, anthropologists and forensic medical experts were not involved in these exhumations⁷⁹ (the same applies to the exhumation of

⁷⁴ JANKAUSKAS, Rimantas. Forensic anthropology and mortuary archaeology in Lithuania. *Anthropologischer Anzeiger*, 2009, Vol. 67, No. 4, pp. 393–395; SARCEVIČIUS, Saulius. Exhumation of human remains by the Extraordinary State Commission in August 1944. In *The traces of crimes do not disappear: Mass killings in the Paneriai forest, 1941–1944*. Compiled by Saulius SARCEVIČIUS, Stanislovas STASIULIS. Vilnius, 2021, pp. 107–123; JANKAUSKAS, Rimantas; KISIELIUS, Giedrius. Development of forensic archaeology in Lithuania and identification of historical persons. *Scandinavian Journal of Forensic Science*, 2022, Vol. 28, Special Issue, p. 40.

⁷⁵ BALČIŪNAS, Jonas. 1988 m. žvalgomosios archeologinės ekspedicijos Šalčininkų rajone ataskaita. Vilnius, 1989, p. 15–16. *LIIR*, f. 1, b. 2250.

⁷⁶ TAUTAVIČIUS, Adolfas. Archeologinių paminklų tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 1980 metais. *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis. 1980 metai*. Vilnius, 1981, p. 166.

⁷⁷ ČERNIAUSKAS, Mykolas. Kėdainių rajono 1980 m. archeologijos paminklų žvalgomųjų tyrinėjimų ataskaita. Vilnius, 1980, p. 62–63. *LIIR*, f. 1, b. 793.

⁷⁸ Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės ir Vokietijos Federacinės Respublikos sutartis „Dėl vokiečių karių kapų priežiūros Lietuvos Respublikoje“, 1996-07-04. *Valstybės žinios*, 1997-03-12, Nr. 21-495. URL: <<https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/TAR.12673E3B6CFC>> [accessed 15.04.2024].

⁷⁹ SPRINDYS, Simonas. *Antrąjo pasaulinio karo karių palaidojimai Lietuvos teritorijoje*. Bakalauro baigiamasis darbas. Vilniaus universitetas, 2015.

remains of Russian soldiers⁸⁰). In 1997 and 1998, the first archaeological excavations were carried out at the German First World War and Second World War military cemeteries at the Šiauliai Hill of Insurgents⁸¹ and in Vilnius' Vingis Park.⁸² The investigations were prompted by the plans of the German War Graves Commission to renovate the German military cemetery in Šiauliai, as well as the need to dismantle the amusement park on the territory of the First World War graves and to determine the exact location of the Second World War graves in Vingis Park in Vilnius. Archaeological investigations revealed grave pits and the remains of headstones, but the graves themselves were not excavated.

In 2005, after the Panevėžys City Municipality Administration decided to abolish the cemetery of the First World War German military hospital on the Juozas Balčikonis Gymnasium playing field and exhume the remains of the buried soldiers (some of the remains may have been Russian soldiers), detailed archaeological research was carried out. An area of 4,070 square metres was excavated, and 191 grave pits with the remains of 830 individuals, including five women (probably hospital staff), were unearthed. In 2010, the excavations continued, and the remains of seven more soldiers were discovered.⁸³ A total of 26 individuals were identified by identity discs and wedding rings with engraved inscriptions. The dead were buried in individual and mass graves (up to 17 individuals per pit), the remains of coffins were found in some graves (probably officers' graves), and details of uniforms and footwear, as well as equipment and ammunition, were found next to the remains of soldiers. These finds suggest that some of the soldiers were transported directly from the battlefield to the field hospital, or died before reaching it. The anthropological analysis has provided exceptional data on the state of health and the causes of death of the soldiers, and on First World War medicine in general.

The renewal of the cooperation agreement between the Public Institution Cultural Property Protection Service and the German War Graves Commission in 2015 has led to a significant increase in the number of investigations of First World War and Second World War sites. As the official representative of the German War Graves Commission in Lithuania, the Public Institution Cultural Property Protection Service maintains relations with the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Lithuania and carries out investigations and exhumations of the remains of German soldiers. It is also responsible for the reburial of recovered remains. In this context,

⁸⁰ ARLAUSKAITĖ-ZAKŠAUSKIENĖ, I.; ČERNIAUSKAS, N.; JAKUBČIONIS, A., et al. Op. cit., p. 172–175.

⁸¹ SALATKIENĖ, Birutė. Žvalgomųjų tyrinėjimų Sukilėlių kalnelyje Šiauliuose, Vilniaus g., nustatant I ir II pasaulinių karų vokiečių karių kapinių ribas 1997 metais, ataskaita. Šiauliai, 1998. *LIIR*, f. 1, b. 2909.

⁸² KLIAUGAITĖ, Vida. Vilniaus, Vingio parko (Zakreto) neveikiančių karių kapinių 1998 m. žvalgomųjų archeologijos tyrimų ataskaita. Vilnius, 1999. *LIIR*, f. 1, b. 3103.

⁸³ JANKAUSKAS, Rimantas; MILIAUSKIENĖ, Žydrūnė; STANKEVIČIŪTĖ, Daina, et al. Im Osten etwas Neues: Anthropological analysis of remains of German soldiers from 1915–1918. *Anthropologischer Anzeiger*, 2011, Vol. 68, No. 4, pp. 393–414.



Figure 6. The First World War Imperial German army cemetery in Verseka Forest (Šalčininkai district), a bird's eye view. The photograph shows rows of graves and the outlines of grave pits uncovered during archaeological research. Photograph by I. Čičiurkaitė, July 2022.

the archaeological excavations carried out in 2022 at the German military cemetery from the First World War in Verseka Forest (Šalčininkai district), which was looted by illegal metal detectorists (Fig. 6), and at the Second World War trenches in the village of Baliniai (Zarasai district), are worthy of special attention. In the first case, 75 grave pits with the remains of 93 soldiers were uncovered,⁸⁴ while in the second case the remains of at least two First World War soldiers were found which had been disturbed during the trench digging.⁸⁵

Since 2017, in cooperation with Lithuanian archaeologists, the Polish state institution Institute of National Remembrance (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej) has been exhuming the remains of Polish soldiers in Lithuania. Although in recent years the research carried out by the Institute of National Remembrance has focused on the search and exhumation of remains of Polish Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*) soldiers from the Second World War,⁸⁶ graves from the First World War have also been found. In 2019,

⁸⁴ ČIČIURKAITĖ, Ingrida. Abiejų pasaulinių karų vokiečių karių palaikų paieškos. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2022 metais*. Vilnius, 2023, p. 528–530.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 530.

⁸⁶ KADIKINAITĖ, Jovita. Lenkijos karių palaikų paieškos Lietuvoje: tyrimų istorija ir metodika. *Archaeologia Litwana*, 2023, t. 24, p. 88–93; KADIKINAITĖ, Jovita. Armijos Krajovos karių, žuvusių Družilių ir Raubiškių mūšiuose, bioarcheologiniai tyrimai. In *Vilniaus universiteto Istorijos fakulteto studentų mokslo darbai 2022*. Vilnius, 2024, p. 21–34.

excavations at the presumed burial site of Polish Home Army soldiers in the village of Pajusinė (Vilnius district) revealed a mass grave of First World War soldiers in the Imperial Russian army, where seven grave pits were recorded and 16 skulls of the deceased were collected.⁸⁷ In 2022, the remains of two Polish soldiers or legionnaires killed in 1918 or 1919, as well as the remains of a local priest who was killed during the Second World War and exhumed after the war, were unearthed in the former cemetery of the village of Žvėrynas (Trakai district).⁸⁸

A separate research group from the Institute of National Remembrance deals with the exhumation of Polish soldiers from the Wars of Independence. In 2023, one grave of a Polish soldier was unearthed in the village of Noruliai (Varėna district),⁸⁹ but the most important was the discovery of the grave of Lithuanian and Polish soldiers killed in a battle on 13 July 1920 near the railway station of Lazdėnai (now the Elektrėnai municipality). Archaeological investigations carried out in 2021, commissioned by the Elektrėnai Municipality Administration, revealed that the location of the previously legally protected grave had been incorrectly identified.⁹⁰ In 2022, at the initiative of the Institute of National Remembrance, the search for the presumed burial site was extended. The grave was found in the railway protection zone, 1.2 kilometres from the previously excavated site. Although historical data indicate that seven Lithuanian and four Polish soldiers were buried in the grave, a total of 14 individuals were recovered during the archaeological excavations.⁹¹ The remains were ceremoniously reburied in a common grave in the Kurkliškės village cemetery in the presence of representatives of the Lithuanian and Polish authorities (Fig. 7).

The German War Graves Commission and the Institute of National Remembrance are still the main sponsors of research on First World War burial sites in Lithuania. Nevertheless, some of these sites have also been commissioned for archaeological research by municipal administrations. Archaeological excavations in 2016 at a presumed First World War cemetery in the village of Paaliosė (Elektrėnai municipality) revealed a pit with non-anatomically buried male remains and two pits with the remains of three coffins and exhumed bodies.⁹² In 2018, in the village of Bubiai (Šiauliai district), during the reconstruction of a road where human remains were accidentally

⁸⁷ VAŠKEVIČIŪTĖ, Ilona; SIEMIŃSKI, Michał. Armijos Krajovos kovotojų kapų paieška Vilnijos krašte. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2019 metais*. Vilnius, 2020, p. 475–477.

⁸⁸ OLEINIK, Diana; SIEMIŃSKA, Dominika; SIEMIŃSKI, Michał. Armijos Krajovos ir Pirmojo pasaulinio karo metu žuvusių karių palaikų paieška Vilniaus krašte. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2022 metais*. Vilnius, 2023, p. 561–562.

⁸⁹ Information from Diana Oleinik, 21 February 2024.

⁹⁰ ŽĖKAITĖ, M. Op. cit.

⁹¹ OLEINIK, Diana; SIEMIŃSKA, Dominika; SIEMIŃSKI, Michał. 1920 m. žuvusių lietuvių ir lenkų karių kapavietė Lazdėnuose. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2022 metais*. Vilnius, 2023, p. 553–558.

⁹² VINGIS, Vytautas. Spėjama Paaliosės I pasaulinio karo karių kapinių vieta. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2016 metais*. Vilnius, 2017, p. 514–517.



Figure 7. The grave of Lithuanian and Polish soldiers killed at Lazdėnai railway station on 13 July 1920 and reburied in the cemetery of the village of Kurkliškės (Elektrėnai municipality). Photograph by G. Petrauskas, April 2024

discovered, a part of a trench was unearthed, and the remains of four Russian soldiers killed between April and July 1915 were uncovered.⁹³

Trench research is a separate field of First World War archaeology. However, almost all trench excavations carried out in Lithuania have been accidental so far. Buried First World War trenches were discovered in 1999 during excavations of the presumed Stabulankiai cemetery (Utena district).⁹⁴ In 2011 and 2012, First World War trenches were unearthed in Alytus Forest (Alytus district) as a presumed burial site of the remains of the Lithuanian partisan commander of the Dainava district Domininkas Jėčys-Ažuolis, and the remains of the partisans Vaclovas Kavaliauskas-Juodvarnis, Mykolas Petrauskas-Aras, and Jonas Pilinskas-Krūmas, who were killed on 11 August 1947 (the investigation was extended in 2024) (Fig. 8).⁹⁵ Finally, in 2019 archaeological investigations were carried out in First World War trenches cut by the main gas pipeline in the village of Ramučiai (Kaunas district).⁹⁶ During the excavations, various wartime finds were collected in the trenches, and in the last two cases, cross-sections of the trenches were made.

⁹³ GRIGAS, Tomas. I pasaulinio karo karių palaidojimai Bubiuose. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2018 metais*. Vilnius, 2019, p. 581–585.

⁹⁴ BALČIŪNAS, Jonas. Stabulankių spėjamo kapinyno (Utenos r.) 1999 m. žvalgomųjų archeologinių tyrimų ataskaita. Vilnius, 1999. *LIIR*, f. 1, b. 3339.

⁹⁵ IVANOVAITĖ, Livija. Spėjamos partizanų palaikų užkasimo vietos (Alytaus r., Alovės sen., Alytaus šilo 24 kvartalas) archeologinių žvalgomųjų tyrimų 2011 m. ataskaita. Vilnius, 2011. *LIIR*, f. 1, b. 5725; PETRAUSKAS, Gediminas. Spėjamos partizanų palaikų užkasimo vietos (Alytaus r., Alovės sen., Alytaus šilo 24 kvartalas) žvalgomųjų archeologinių tyrimų 2012 m. ataskaita. Vilnius–Pašušvys–Dvarviečiai–Alytus, 2012. *LIIR*, f. 1, b. 5930.

⁹⁶ MEMGAUDIS, Vilius; ZABIELA, Gintautas. Pirmojo pasaulinio karo apkasų liekanos Ramučių ir Romaškių kaimų apylinkėse. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2021 metais*. Vilnius, 2022, p. 569.

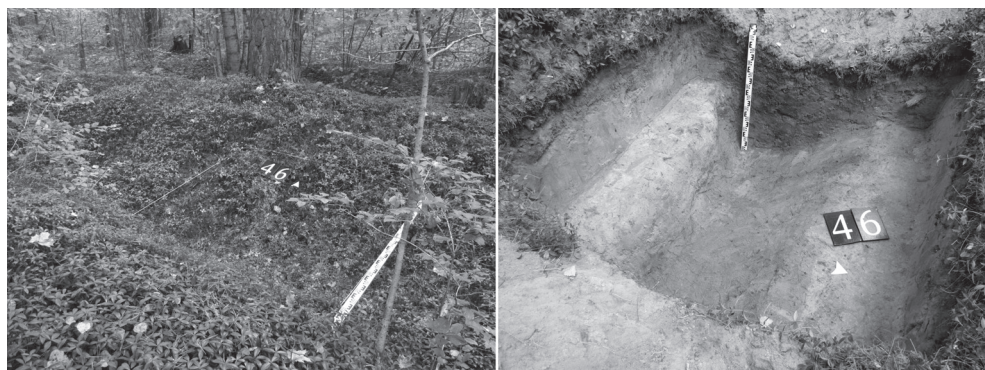


Figure 8. Detail of a First World War trench in Alytus Forest (Alytus district) before (left) and after archaeological research (right). The right-hand photograph shows the outline and a section of the trench. Photograph by G. Petrauskas, September 2012

Archaeological research often reveals chance finds from the First World War.⁹⁷ These are mainly unused cartridges, cartridge cases, and fragments of artillery shells related to the war. Of particular note is an impressive set of First World War-era German identity discs discovered in 2017 during excavations at the northern foot of Gediminas Hill in Vilnius. It consisted of 29 identity discs of the 44th Infantry Regiment (7th East Prussian) (Infanterie-Regiment Graf Dönhoff [7. Ostpreußisches] Nr. 44) of the Imperial German army, produced between 1915 and 1916.⁹⁸

Sites from the Wars of Independence are less well studied than those from the First World War. Research on burial sites was described earlier, while the search for non-localised battlefields has received the most attention so far. In 2016, during the investigation of the presumed site of the 1236 Battle of Saulė, isolated finds from a battle between the Lithuanian army and the Bermontians of 21–22 November 1919 were found in the village of Ilguočiai (Radviliškis district).⁹⁹ Three years later, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Wars of Independence, and in order to determine the exact location of the battle, archaeological surveys were carried out with metal detectors in various places in Radviliškis town and district. No traces of

⁹⁷ Cf. PETRAUSKAS, Gediminas; VAITKEVIČIUS, Vyktintas; PETRAUSKIENĖ, Aistė, et al. II pasaulinio ir Lietuvos partizaninio karo vietų žvalgymai. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2015 metais*. Vilnius, 2016, p. 506, 508, Fig. 12.

⁹⁸ REMECAS, Eduardas. Pirmojo pasaulinio karo vokiečių kareivių žetonų kompleksas iš Vilniaus žemutinės pilies teritorijos. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2017 metais*. Vilnius, 2018, p. 694–696; BALTRAMIEJŪNAITĖ, Dovilė. Vilniaus Aukštutinės pilies šlaitų tyrimai 2017–2018 metais. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2018 metais*. Vilnius, 2019, p. 180.

⁹⁹ ZABIELA, Gintautas. Žvalgymai Ilguočiuose. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2016 metais*. Vilnius, 2017, p. 470–472.

the battle were found in the vicinity of the Radviliškis Old Believers cemetery, and pieces of ammunition and explosives from the First World War and Second World War were collected in an area of about ten hectares near the Radviliškis windmill in the village of Vaiduliai.¹⁰⁰ However, in the opinion of Gintautas Zabiela, the director of the research, the actual battlefield has not been located.

In 2022, a metal detector was used to investigate the presumed site of the Battle of Varviškė on 22–23 March 1923 (Lazdijai district). The survey covered an area of approximately 18 hectares, and uncovered ammunition, items of clothing and personal belongings of the Lithuanian and Polish armies.¹⁰¹ The research allowed us to confirm the hypothesis formulated in the historiography about the direction of the Lithuanian attack and the Polish retreat, and to identify the weapons used during the battle. Traces of another battle between the Lithuanian and Polish armies in July 1919 were discovered by chance while surveying the surroundings of the village of Šuoliai (Vindziuliai) and different parts of Jagėlonys Forest (both in Elektrėnai municipality).¹⁰²

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Summary and discussion

The First World War and the Wars of Independence, as a direct consequence of the war, are interrelated phenomena in Lithuanian history. However, the memory of the Great War is alien to Lithuanian society, and has been overshadowed not only by the Wars of Independence that followed, but also by the Second World War and the Lithuanian Partisan War. The oblivion of the First World War is due to the prevailing image that Lithuania did not take part in the Great War independently, and that it was not a Lithuanian war at all. Moreover, the undeveloped tradition of commemorating the First World War, the confrontation with Poland in the interwar period, and the issue of the recapture of Vilnius, the historic capital of Lithuania, have also had a significant impact.¹⁰³

Lithuanian scholars have focused on the memory of the First World War and the experience of its participants, and the historiography of the Wars of Independence has concentrated on the regional specificities of the conflict and the details of the

¹⁰⁰ ZABIELA, Gintautas. Radviliškio apylinkių žvalgymai. *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2019 metais*. Vilnius, 2020, p. 427–429.

¹⁰¹ ZABIELA, Gintautas; KUCKAILIS, Ernestas; VITKŪNAS, Manvydas. Varviškės apylinkių (Lazdijų r., Kapčiamiesčio sen.) archeologinių žvalgymų 2022 m. ataskaita. Vilnius, 2023. *LIIR*, f. 1, b. 10973.

¹⁰² VAITKEVIČIUS, Vyktintas; PETRAUSKAS, Gediminas; PETRAUSKIENĖ, Aistė. Archeologinių ir istorinių vietų žvalgymai 2016 m. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2018 metais*. Vilnius, 2019, p. 544–546.

¹⁰³ BALKELIS, T. Memories...; SAFRONOVAS, Vasilijus. Pirmojo pasaulinio karo atminimas Lietuvoje ir Rytų Prūsijoje: naujų tyrimų pradžia. *Lituanistica*, 2015, t. 61, Nr. 3 (101), p. 149–165; VAREIKIS, Vygantas. Personalinis bandymas suvokti, kaip ir kodėl lietuviai užmiršo Didįjį karą. *Kultūros barai*, 2016, Nr. 12, p. 82–90.

battles. Only one anthropological publication has been devoted to the archaeology of the First World War in Lithuania,¹⁰⁴ while no archaeological studies on the Wars of Independence have yet been published. In contrast to Western Europe, where modern conflict archaeology has developed on the basis of research into the First World War, in Lithuania the discipline is mainly associated with the Lithuanian Partisan War.¹⁰⁵ The study on sites from the First World War, and especially the Wars of Independence, is a new and still undervalued field of archaeology.

Although graves of First World War soldiers had been discovered several times during archaeological excavations, it was not until the late 1990s that the Great War burial sites began to be investigated. The predominance of excavated sites of death and burial (11 sites, or 73.3% of the total number of First World War sites investigated) confirms that the archaeology of the First World War in Lithuania has so far been limited to the search and exhumation of remains. The excavation of burial sites was mainly commissioned by the German War Graves Commission and the Institute of National Remembrance, for the exhumation of German and Polish soldiers respectively. Thus, the development of the archaeology of the First World War in Lithuania was influenced mainly by the 1996 bilateral agreement between the Republic of Lithuania and the Federal Republic of Germany, the cooperation between Lithuanian and foreign organisations, and the Archaeological Heritage Management Regulation. The 2022 revision of this regulation stipulated the necessity for archaeological research in Lithuania for excavation work at all sites of resistance and armed conflict from the 19th and 20th centuries.¹⁰⁶

As the analysis of the Register of Cultural Property revealed, the predominant type of First World War heritage objects in Lithuania are military cemeteries and individual graves of the fallen (75.8% of the total number of First World War objects with legal protection). At the same time, the share of burial sites from the Wars of Independence in the Register of Cultural Property is even higher (92.2% of all sites). The exceptional attention paid to sites of death and burial by heritage conservationists, public activists, civil servants and archaeologists is a testimony to the martyrological nature of the concept of Lithuanian culture and heritage. All this characterises the field of heritage protection, commemoration and research into the First World War and the Wars of Independence, as well as the Lithuanian Partisan War.¹⁰⁷

The fortification heritage of the First World War in Lithuania consists of fortifications built by the Imperial German army in northeast and east Lithuania, as well as

¹⁰⁴ JANKAUSKAS, R.; MILIAUSKIENĖ, Ž.; STANKEVIČIŪTĖ, D., et al. Op. cit.

¹⁰⁵ PETRAUSKAS, G.; PETRAUSKIENĖ, A. Op. cit.

¹⁰⁶ PETRAUSKAS, G.; MURADIAN, L.; KURILIENĖ, A. Op. cit.

¹⁰⁷ PETRAUSKIENĖ, Aistė. The partisan war in Lithuanian memory culture after 1990. In *The Unknown War: Anti-Soviet armed resistance in Lithuania and its legacies*. Ed. by Arūnas STREIKUS. London, New York, 2022, pp. 135, 138–140.

fortifications of the Imperial Russian and Imperial German armies in the Kaunas Fortress. Their importance was emphasised by experts in fortifications of the Great War,¹⁰⁸ and some of these fortifications were adapted for public use. At the same time, the cultural and scientific value of First World War trenches with fortifications and shelters is not fully appreciated in Lithuania. To date, none of the trench sections have been granted legal protection, nor have they even been listed among valuable properties of objects of the cultural heritage. Small parts of the trenches have been excavated in Alytus Forest and in the village of Stabulankiai, but the First World War trenches were not the main or most important object of this research.¹⁰⁹ The excavations in the village of Ramučiai were prompted by the need to investigate part of the outer field fortifications of the Kaunas Fortress, which was crossed by a planned main gas pipeline.¹¹⁰

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Unlike the trenches of the Western Front, which became a symbol of the positional trench warfare of the First World War, and whose research has provided exceptional data on the construction of the fortifications, the conditions of the the war and the daily life of the soldiers,¹¹¹ the trenches of the Eastern Front in Lithuania and other countries have not reached the same scale, significance or level of construction. Although their role was smaller than on the Western Front, the trenches of the Eastern Front, with their fortifications and shelters, are nevertheless a very important, yet unrecognised and marginalised, piece of the military and engineering heritage.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the battlefields of modern conflicts in Lithuania. Metal detector surveys to locate the battlefields from the Wars of Independence, such as the presumed site of the battle between the Lithuanian army and the Bermontians near Radviliškis on 21–22 November 1919, have sometimes failed to yield significant results.¹¹² On the other hand, the location and clarification of details of the Battle of Varviškė on 22–23 March 1923 between the Lithuanian and Polish armies,¹¹³ as well as successful cases of battlefield research of the Lithuanian Partisan War,¹¹⁴ show the importance of the discipline of battlefield archaeology and its good prospects.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁸ Cf. ORLOV, V. Fortifikacija...; ORLOV, V. *The Atlas...*, pp. 52–59.

¹⁰⁹ BALČIŪNAS, J. Op. cit.; IVANOVAITĖ, L. Op. cit.; PETRAUSKAS, G. Op. cit.

¹¹⁰ MEMGAUDIS, V.; ZABIELA, G. Op. cit.

¹¹¹ ROBERTSHAW, A.; KENYON, D. Op. cit.; MOSHENSKA, G. *Conflict...*, p. 355.

¹¹² ZABIELA, G. *Žvalgymai Ilguočiuose...*; ZABIELA, G. *Radviliškio apylinkių žvalgymai...*

¹¹³ ZABIELA, G.; KUCKAILIS, E.; VITKŪNAS, M. Op. cit.

¹¹⁴ PETRAUSKAS, Gediminas; PETRAUSKIENĖ, Aistė; VAITKEVIČIUS, Vyktintas. Iš Lietuvos Laisvės Kovos Sąjūdžio istorijos: 1949 m. rugpjūčio 13 d. Užpelkių miško kautynės. In *The Unending War? The Baltic States after 1918 = Nesibaigiantis karas? Baltijos šalys po 1918 metų* (Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis, Vol. 36). Sud. Vytautas JOKUBAUSKAS, Vasilijus SAFRONOVAS. Klaipėda, 2018, p. 151–174; PETRAUSKAS, Gediminas. Battlefields of the Lithuanian partisan war: a complex approach. *Archaeologia Historica* (European Contemporary and Historical Archaeology Special Issue, Vol. 1) (forthcoming).

¹¹⁵ HOMANN, Arne. Battlefield Archaeology of Central Europe—With a Focus on Early Modern Battlefields. In *Historical Archaeology in Central Europe* (Society for Historical Archaeology Special Publication No. 10).

The course of the First World War and the Wars of Independence is documented in historical publications, archival documents, recollections of participants and eyewitnesses, and authentic photographs. Archaeological data offers a unique opportunity to link specific events, and in some cases individuals, to precise locations, to define their territory, and to complement or even contradict existing information. For example, archaeological research has allowed us to define the territory of the military cemetery on the Šiauliai Hill of Insurgents,¹¹⁶ and to disprove previous data and determine the exact burial place of the Lithuanian and Polish soldiers killed in the battle of 13 July 1920 at Lazdėnai railway station.¹¹⁷ All possible sources of data, including archaeological field survey methods, and cartographic and LiDAR data analysis, should be used to identify and investigate the unlocated battlefields of the Wars of Independence.

The study of burial sites and the exhumation of remains of the fallen are one of the most important areas of research on the First World War and the Wars of Independence. Successful excavations involve the anthropological analysis of unearthed remains, their identification, and reburial in cemeteries. For this reason, the archaeological excavation of graves is a particularly sensitive area of research that must be balanced with public respect.¹¹⁸ The objectives and scope of the research must be properly considered and justified, and archaeological excavations should be limited to disrespectful burials and to the exhumation and reburial of remains at the request of interested parties or where there is a risk of disturbance and destruction of the burial site.

Like many other modern conflict sites, sites from the First World War and the Wars of Independence are threatened by a variety of factors. To date, only a small number of military cemeteries and individual graves in Lithuania have been granted legal protection, while the trenches of the First World War and the battlefields of the Wars of Independence are practically unprotected. Although the 2022 revision of the Archaeological Heritage Management Regulation prohibited any non-archaeological excavations in war trenches,¹¹⁹ the trenches of the First World War and the Second World War are probably the sites most disturbed by illegal metal detectorists.¹²⁰

Ed. by Natascha MEHLER. Rockville, MD, 2013, pp. 203–230; CARMAN, John. Battlefield archaeology. In *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology*. Ed. by Claire SMITH. New York, 2014, pp. 812–819.

¹¹⁶ SALATKIENĖ, B. Op. cit.

¹¹⁷ OLEINIK, D.; SIEMIŃSKA, D.; SIEMIŃSKI, M. 1920 m. žuvusių lietuvių...

¹¹⁸ MOSHENSKA, Gabriel. Ethics and Ethical Critique in the Archaeology of Modern Conflict. *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 2008, Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 167–171; ROBERTSHAW, A.; KENYON, D. Op. cit., pp. 162–164.

¹¹⁹ Paveldo tvarkybos reglamentas PTR 2.13.01:2022 „Archeologinio kultūros paveldo tvarkyba“. *Valstybės žinios*, 2011-09-03, Nr. 109-5162. URL: <<https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/TAR.8B2A750536FF/asr>> [accessed 15.04.2024].

¹²⁰ Cf. HERVA, Vesa-Pekka; KOSKINEN-KOIVISTO, Eerika; SEITSONEN, Oula, et al. 'I have better stuff at home': treasure hunting and private collecting of World War II artefacts in Finnish Lapland. *World Archaeology*, 2016, Vol. 48, No. 2, pp. 267–281; THOMAS, Suzie; SEITSONEN, Oula; HERVA, Vesa-Pekka. Nazi memorabilia, dark heritage and treasure hunting as “alternative” tourism: understanding the fascination with the material remains of World War II in Northern Finland. *Journal of Field Archaeology*, 2016, Vol. 41, No. 3, pp. 331–343.

Moreover, trenches from the First World War and the battlefields of the Wars of Independence are often on agricultural land, or in areas developed with residential, commercial and farm buildings.

The research carried out in Lithuania on sites from the First World War and the Wars of Independence, including sites of deaths and burial, military cemeteries, individual graves, trenches and battlefields, testifies to the beginning of a distinct field of modern conflict archaeology (distinguishing between the First World War and the Wars of Independence). In order for this field to develop and be recognised, future research should be based on an interdisciplinary approach, and its results presented at scientific conferences and in publications.

Conclusions

The emergence of the archaeology of the First World War in the United Kingdom at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, and the research and publications that followed, laid the theoretical and methodological foundations for modern conflict archaeology. Although British researchers still dictate the trends in this field of archaeological research, in northern and Central Europe, and in North America as well, the study of the First World War is an integral part of archaeology. The First World War landscape consists of trenches with dug-outs and underground tunnels, prisoner-of-war and internment camps, buildings adapted for military use, artillery shell holes, sites of death and burial, and other war-related sites. The interdisciplinary approach, which includes research on trench art and the material culture, landscape and memory, broadens the knowledge and interpretation of the First World War, and provides an archaeological perspective on participants in the war, their place in the everyday life of the war, and their relationship to the surrounding environment.

As interrelated phenomena of early 20th-century history, objects from the First World War and the Wars of Independence form a small part of the Lithuanian cultural heritage. As of March 2024, a total of 497 heritage objects from the First World War and the Wars of Independence were registered in the Register of Cultural Property. These include military cemeteries and individual graves, war memorials, First World War defensive fortifications, and homesteads and battlefields of participants in the Wars of Independence. The unique martyrological nature of the Lithuanian cultural heritage concept is reflected in the predominance of Imperial German and Imperial Russian military cemeteries and burial sites of soldiers killed during the Wars of Independence (75.8% and 92.2% of the total number of registered objects respectively).

By 2023, 15 First World War sites and eight Wars of Independence sites had been excavated, surveyed and recorded in Lithuania. Most of the investigated sites consist of 13 burial sites. Archaeological investigations of the cemeteries of Imperial German army soldiers have been carried out since the late 1990s, while exhumations of German and Polish soldiers have intensified since 2015 and 2017, when the German War Graves Commission and the Institute of National Remembrance respectively started to collaborate with Lithuanian researchers. Research on First World War trenches ($n=3$) and battlefields of the Wars of Independence ($n=6$) is still episodic, and has not yet received much attention from researchers.

Archaeological research at sites from the First World War and the Wars of Independence in Lithuania has so far focused on the search and exhumation of the remains of the fallen. However, the study of First World War trenches and defensive fortifications, as well as battlefields of the Wars of Independence, is also a very promising area of research. Future research will undoubtedly broaden the possibilities for understanding and interpreting these wars, but it is necessary to take an integrated approach to the sites, combining and analysing all possible sources of research, such as archaeological data, historic documents, recollections of contemporaries, historical maps, etc. The sites from the First World War and the Wars of Independence in Lithuania are an integral part of the archaeology of modern conflicts.

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Appendix

Sites from the First World War and the Wars of Independence investigated in Lithuania

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The appendix gives data on sites from the First World War and the Wars of Independence in Lithuania that have been investigated up to 2023 (Fig. 9). The data collected includes investigated sites, but excludes amateur excavations and exhumations carried out without permission from the authorities. Different groups of sites are distinguished, such as First World War trenches, sites of death and burial (including individual and accidental graves), military cemeteries and other war-related sites, as well as battlefields and sites of burials of the remains of soldiers from the Wars of Independence (Fig. 10). The sites are described in alphabetical order within the groups. The location, year of research, name of the researcher, brief results and literature are given. The site number in the Appendix corresponds to the number in the figure.

First World War trenches

1. ALYTUS FOREST (Alytus district)

In 2011 and 2012, commissioned by the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, Livija Ivanovaitė and Gediminas Petrauskas investigated First World War trenches as the presumed burial site of the remains of the Lithuanian partisan commander of the Dainava district Domininkas Jėčys-Ažuolis, and the remains of the partisans Vaclovas Kavaliauskas-Juodvarnis, Mykolas Petrauskas-Aras and Jonas Pilinskas-Krūmas, who were killed on 11 August 1947. An area of 200 square metres was excavated, of which 132 square metres was in the trenches. Cross-sections of the trenches were made, and several finds from the First World War, such as German 7.92×57mm Mauser cartridge cases and a belt buckle, were found. The investigation was continued in 2024.

Lit: IVANOVAITĖ, Livija. Spėjamos partizanų palaikų užkasimo vietos (Alytaus r., Alovės sen., Alytaus šilo 24 kvartalas) archeologinių žvalgomųjų tyrimų 2011 m. ataskaita. Vilnius, 2011. *Lietuvos istorijos instituto rankraštynas* (Manuscript Department at the Lithuanian Institute of History, hereinafter *LIIR*), f. 1, b. 5725; PETRAUSKAS, Gediminas. Spėjamos partizanų palaikų užkasimo vietos (Alytaus r., Alovės sen., Alytaus šilo 24 kvartalas) žvalgomųjų archeologinių tyrimų 2012 m. ataskaita. Vilnius–Pašušvys–Dvarviečiai–Alytus, 2012. *LIIR*, f. 1, b. 5930.

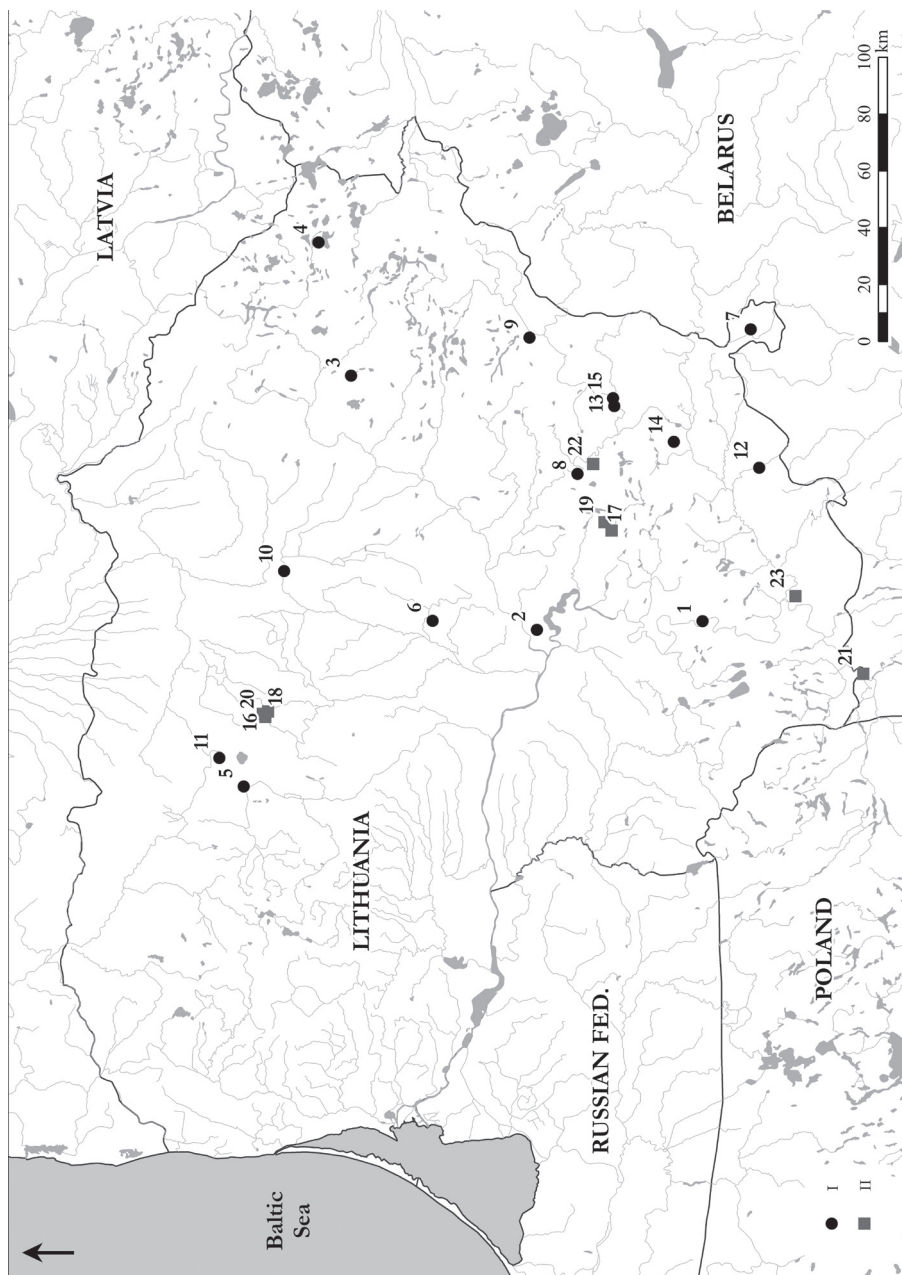


Figure 9. Archaeological research sites from the First World War (I) and the Lithuanian Wars of Independence (II). For the site numbers on the map, see Appendix. Drawing by G. Petrauskas

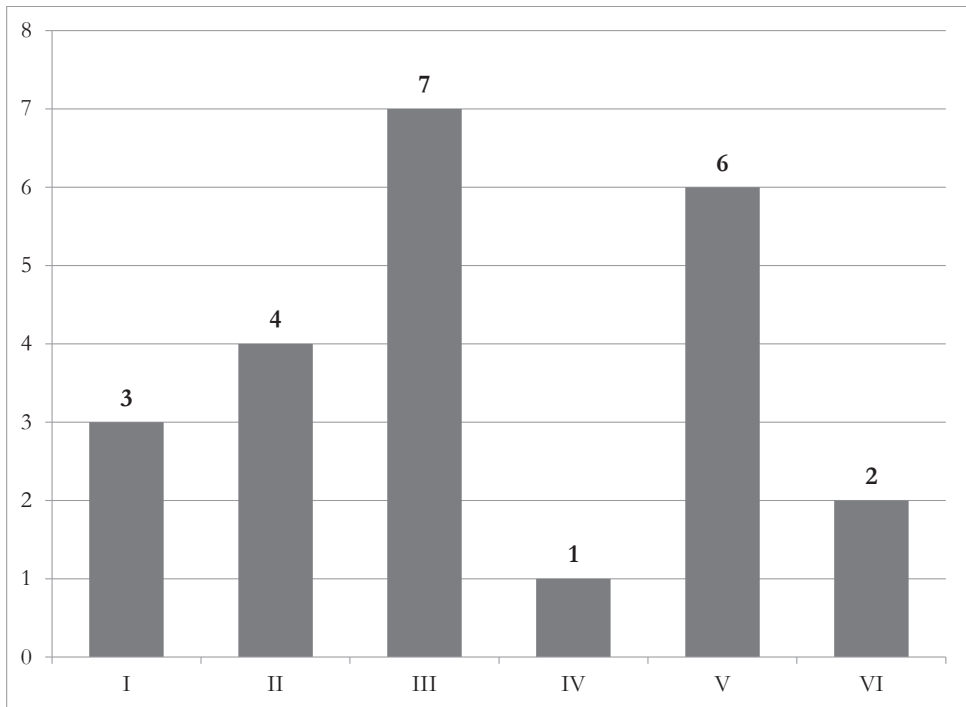


Figure 10. The distribution of archaeological research sites: I) First World War trenches, II) sites of deaths and burials of First World War soldiers, III) First World War cemeteries, IV) other First World War sites, V) battlefields from the Lithuanian Wars of Independence, VI) burial sites from the Lithuanian Wars of Independence. Diagram by G. Petrauskas

2. RAMUČIAI (Kaunas district)

In 2021, Vilius Memgaudis and Gintautas Zabiela investigated the First World War trenches crossed by a planned main gas pipeline in the village of Ramučiai. An area of 50 square metres was excavated, a two-metre wide (1.5 metres at the bottom) part of the trench was unearthed, and a cross-section was made. Pieces of wire and concrete mortar were found in the trench fill.

Lit: MEMGAUDIS, Vilius; ZABIELA, Gintautas. Pirmojo pasaulinio karo apkasų liekanos Ramučių ir Romaškių kaimų apylinkėse. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2021 metais*. Vilnius, 2022, p. 569.

3. STABULANKIAI (Utena district)

In 1999, Jonas Balčiūnas (Cultural Heritage Centre) investigated the presumed Stabulankiai cemetery, also known as Skerdimai. An area of 60 square metres was excavated, and First World War finds, such as German 7.92×57mm Mauser cartridge cases, parts of magazines and a belt buckle, were found in the buried trenches in the cemetery.

Lit: BALČIŪNAS, Jonas. Stabulankių spėjamo kapinyno (Utenos r.) 1999 m. žvalgomųjų archeologinių tyrimų ataskaita. Vilnius, 1999. *LIIR*, f. 1, b. 3339.

Sites of death and burial of First World War soldiers

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4. BALINIAI (Zarasai district)

In 2022, commissioned by the German War Graves Commission, Ingrida Čičiurkaitė (Public Institution Cultural Property Protection Service) investigated trenches from the Second World War. An area of ten square metres was excavated, and the remains of at least two German soldiers from the First World War (?) were discovered which had been disturbed during the trench digging. Several First World War finds were found in the excavated soil, such as buttons from German uniforms, fabric details, an award plaque, rings and tent rings.

Lit: ČIČIURKAITĖ, Ingrida. Abiejų pasaulinių karų vokiečių karių palaikų paieškos. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2022 metais*. Vilnius, 2023, p. 530.

5. BUBIAI (Šiauliai district)

In 2018, commissioned by the Šiauliai District Municipality Administration, Tomas Grigas investigated a burial site of accidentally discovered remains of soldiers from the First World War. An area of 12 square metres was excavated, part of a 5.6-metre-long and 0.6 to 1.2-metre-wide trench was unearthed, and the remains of four Russian soldiers killed between April and July 1915 were found. The remains were accompanied by ammunition, parts of uniforms and clothing, and personal belongings of the soldiers, such as a magazine, cartridge clips, unused cartridges, cartridge cases and bullets, buttons, crosses, part of a belt with a buckle, military boots, a shovel, a cauldron, flasks, a mirror, the remains of a purse, etc.

Lit: GRIGAS, Tomas. I pasaulinio karo karių palaidojimai Bubiuose. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2018 metais*. Vilnius, 2019, p. 581–585.

6. BUBLIAI (Kėdainiai district)

In 1980, Mykolas Černiauskas (Scientific Methodological Council for the Protection of Cultural Monuments) investigated Bubliai old cemetery. An area of six square metres was excavated, four graves and more isolated human bones were found. One of the graves dates from the 18th century, while the others are related to the events of 1915.

Lit: ČERNIAUSKAS, Mykolas. Kėdainių rajono 1980 m. archeologijos paminklų žvalgomųjų tyrinėjimų ataskaita. Vilnius, 1980, p. 60–70. *LIR*, f. 1, b. 793; TAUTAVIČIUS, Adolfas. Archeologinių paminklų tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 1980 metais. In *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis. 1980 metai*. Vilnius, 1981, p. 166.

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7. GRYBIŠKĖS (Šalčininkai district)

In 1974, Eugenija Butėnienė (Lithuanian Museum of History and Ethnography) investigated a presumed prehistoric barrow. During the investigations, four remains of German soldiers killed in 1915 were found buried in the barrow.

Lit: BALČIŪNAS, Jonas. 1988 m. žvalgomosios archeologinės ekspedicijos Šalčininkų rajone ataskaita. Vilnius, 1989, pp. 15–16. *LIR*, f. 1, b. 2250.

First World War military cemeteries

8. PAALIOSĖ (Elektrėnai municipality)

In 2016, Vytautas Vingis investigated a presumed First World War cemetery in the village of Paaliosė. An area of 20 square metres was excavated, and a pit with non-anatomically buried male remains, and two pits with the remains of three coffins and exhumed bodies, were found. One of the pits contained a Russian 7.62×54mmR cartridge case from the First World War.

Lit: VINGIS, Vytautas. Spėjama Paaliosės I pasaulinio karo karių kapinių vieta. *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2016 metais*. Vilnius, 2017, p. 514–517.

9. PAJUSINĖ (Vilnius district)

In 2019, Ilona Vaškevičiūtė and the Institute of National Remembrance (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Poland) investigated a Russian military cemetery from the First World War. An area of 21 square metres was surveyed, and seven grave pits were recorded. One of the pits was excavated, two rows of graves were recorded, and 16 skulls were collected. Ammunition, parts of uniforms and clothing, and personal

belongings of soldiers were found, such as Russian 7.62×54mmR unused cartridges and cartridge cases, regimental insignia of the Imperial Russian army, cockades, buttons, crosses, religious medallions, fragments of cloth and belt, buckles, military boots, a cup, knives, a spoon, coins from the Russian and German empires, travel icons, a mirror, a cigarette mouthpiece, etc.

Lit: VAŠKEVIČIŪTĖ, Ilona; SIEMIŃSKI, Michał. Armijos Krajevov kovotojų kapų paieška Vilnijos krašte. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2019 metais*. Vilnius, 2020, p. 475–477.

10. PANEVĖŽYS, Juozas Balčikonis Gymnasium playing field

In 2005, Daina Stankevičiūtė (Public Institution Academy of the Cultural Heritage) investigated the cemetery of the First World War German military hospital in Panevėžys. An area of 4070 square metres was excavated, and 191 grave pits with the remains of 830 individuals, including five women (probably hospital staff), were recovered. In 2010, Asta Gerbutavičiūtė and Ramūnas Šmigelskas (Public Institution Academy of the Cultural Heritage) continued the research, and discovered the remains of seven more soldiers. A total of 26 individuals were identified. During the investigations, individual graves and mass grave pits were uncovered (up to 17 remains per pit). Some of the deceased (presumably officers) were buried in coffins. Weapons, ammunition, parts of uniforms and clothing, and personal belongings, such as a bayonet, magazines, unused cartridges and cartridge cases, helmets, identity discs, buttons, chains, rosaries, crosses, religious medallions, wedding rings, belts, military boots, knives, combs and coins, were found next to the bodies. Of particular note are surgical drains, thermometers, rubber bladders, splints, medicine bottles, urinals, medical scissors, etc.

Lit: STANKEVIČIŪTĖ, Daina. Pirmojo pasaulinio karo vokiečių karių kapinių Panevėžyje archeologiniai tyrimai. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2005 metais*. Vilnius, 2006, p. 134–135; GERBUTAVIČIŪTĖ, Asta; ŠMIGELSKAS, Ramūnas. I pasaulinio karo vokiečių karių kapinės Panevėžyje. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2010 metais*. Vilnius, 2011, p. 129; JANKAUSKAS, Rimantas; MILIAUSKIENĖ, Žydrūnė; STANKEVIČIŪTĖ, Daina, et al. Im Osten etwas Neues: Anthropological analysis of remains of German soldiers from 1915–1918. *Anthropologischer Anzeiger*, 2011, Vol. 68, No. 4, pp. 393–414.

11. ŠIAULIAI, Hill of Insurgents

In 1997, commissioned by the German War Graves Commission, Birutė Salatkienė (Šiauliai Aušra Museum) investigated the German military cemetery from the First World War and the Second World War on the Šiauliai Hill of Insurgents. An area of 67 square metres was excavated, and 19 First World War grave pits were recorded. The graves were dug in rows, many of them containing the remains of coffins.

Lit: SALATKIENĖ, Birutė. Žvalgomųjų tyrinėjimų Sukilėlių kalnelyje Šiauliuose, Vilniaus g., nustatant I ir II pasaulinių karų vokiečių karių kapinių ribas 1997 metais, ataskaita. Šiauliai, 1998. *LII*R, f. 1, b. 2909.

12. VERSEKA FOREST (Šalčininkai district)

In 2022, commissioned by the German War Graves Commission, Ingrida Čičiurkaitė (Public Institution Cultural Property Protection Service) investigated a German military cemetery from the First World War which had been looted by illegal metal detectorists. An area of 378 square metres was excavated, and 75 grave pits with the remains of 93 soldiers were recovered. The cemetery consisted of seven rows of graves, each containing between three and 12 grave pits. A total of 73 individual graves were discovered. Of particular note is a trench 11.2 metres long and 2.5 metres wide containing the remains of 19 individuals. Identity discs, uniform parts, military boots, tent parts and various personal belongings were found next to the remains.

Lit: ČIČIURKAITĖ, I. Op. cit., p. 528–530.

13. VINGIS PARK (Vilnius)

In 1998, commissioned by the Public Institution Cultural Property Protection Service, Vida Kliaugaitė investigated the German military cemetery from the First World War and the Second World War in Vilnius' Vingis Park. An area of 304.75 square metres was excavated, of which 154.75 square metres was the burial site of soldiers from the First World War. A total of 47 grave pits were recorded, the remains of about 20 headstones were found, and individual human bones were collected.

Lit: KLIAUGAITĖ, Vida. Vilniaus, Vingio parko (Zakreto) neveikiančių karių kapinių 1998 m. žvalgomųjų archeologijos tyrimų ataskaita. Vilnius, 1999. *LII*R, f. 1, b. 3103.

14. ŽVĖRYNAS (Trakai district)

In 2022, Diana Oleinik and the Institute of National Remembrance investigated the former cemetery in the village of Žvėrynas. An area of approximately eight square metres was excavated, and the remains of two Polish soldiers or legionnaires killed in 1918 or 1919 and buried in coffins (the army affiliation is unclear), as well as the remains of a local priest who was killed during the Second World War and exhumed after the war, were uncovered. The remains of uniforms, rosary beads and coffin nails were found in the graves of the soldiers.

Lit: OLEINIK, Diana; SIEMIŃSKA, Dominika; SIEMIŃSKI, Michał. Armijos Krajovos ir Pirmojo pasaulinio karo metu žuvusių karių palaikų paieška Vilniaus krašte. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2022 metais*. Vilnius, 2023, p. 561–562.

Other First World War sites

15. GEDIMINAS HILL (Vilnius)

In 2017, while investigating the northern foot of Gediminas Hill, Dovilė Baltramiejūnaitė (Public Institution Centre for Archaeology) discovered a set of First World War-era German identity discs. It consisted of 29 identity discs of the 44th Infantry Regiment (7th East Prussian) (Infanterie-Regiment Graf Dönhoff [7. Ostpreußisches] Nr. 44) of the Imperial German army, produced between 1915 and 1916.

Lit: REMECAS, Eduardas. Pirmojo pasaulinio karo vokiečių kareivių žetonų kompleksas iš Vilniaus Žemutinės pilies teritorijos. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2017 metais*. Vilnius, 2018, pp. 694–696; BALTRAMIEJŪNAITĖ, Dovilė. Vilniaus Aukštutinės pilies šlaitų tyrimai 2017–2018 metais. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2018 metais*. Vilnius, 2019, p. 180.

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Wars of Independence sites

16. ILGUOČIAI (Radviliškis district)

In 2016, Gintautas Zabiela investigated the presumed site of the 1236 Battle of Saulė and the battle between the Lithuanian army and the Bermontians on 21–22 November 1919. An area of about 20 hectares was surveyed with a metal detector, and many finds relating to the battles of the Wars of Independence were found. These include a piece of an artillery shell, French 11×59mmR Gras bullets, a German 9×57mm Mauser bullet, a 9×19mm Parabellum cartridge case, 7.92×57mm Mauser cartridge cases and bullets, 7×57mm Mauser bullets, Russian 7.62×54mmR cartridge cases and bullets, an American 7.65×17mmSR (.32 ACP) unused cartridge and cartridge case, a Japanese 6.5×50mmSR Arisaka (?) cartridge case, etc.

Lit: ZABIELA, Gintautas. Žvalgymai Ilguočiuose. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2016 metais*. Vilnius, 2017, p. 470–472.

17. JAGĖLONYS FOREST (Elektrėnai municipality)

In 2016, while investigating the surroundings of dug-outs from an uncertain period on a hill called Akopai Island, Vykintas Vaitkevičius (Institute of Baltic Region History

and Archaeology at Klaipėda University) discovered finds from battles between the Lithuanian and Polish armies in July 1919. These include a German 7.92×57mm Mauser unused cartridge and cartridge cases, and Russian 7.92×54mmR unused cartridges from the First World War. In addition, in the same year, several cartridge cases from the same period were found during a metal detector survey near the dug-out pit of the Lithuanian partisan commander Antanas Galinis-Juoda Kaukė. These finds are related to battles fought in the summer of 1919.

Lit: VAITKEVIČIUS, Vyktintas; PETRAUSKAS, Gediminas; PETRAUSKIENĖ, Aistė. Archeologinių ir istorinių vietų žvalgymai 2016 m. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2018 metais*. Vilnius, 2019, p. 544–545.

18. RADVILIŠKIS, Old Believers Cemetery

In 2019, while searching for the presumed site of a battle between the Lithuanian army and the Bermontians on 21–22 November 1919, Gintautas Zabiela investigated the vicinity of the Radviliškis Old Believers Cemetery. An area of about 1,400 square metres was surveyed with a metal detector, but no finds relating to the battle were found.

Lit: ZABIELA, Gintautas. Radviliškio apylinkių žvalgymai. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2019 metais*. Vilnius, 2020, p. 429.

19. ŠUOLIAI (VINDZIULIAI) (Elektrėnai municipality)

In 2016, Vyktintas Vaitkevičius (Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology at Klaipėda University) discovered finds from the July 1919 battles between the Lithuanian and Polish armies at a site known as Prancūzkapiai. These include a German 7.92×57mm Mauser cartridge case, a US army button, and another metal button with two holes.

Lit: VAITKEVIČIUS, V.; PETRAUSKAS, G.; PETRAUSKIENĖ, A. Op. cit., p. 545–546.

20. VAIDULIAI (Radviliškis district)

In 2019, while searching for the presumed site of a battle between the Lithuanian army and the Bermontians on 21–22 November 1919, Gintautas Zabiela investigated the surroundings of the Radviliškis windmill. An area of about ten hectares was surveyed with a metal detector, and various pieces of ammunition and explosives from the First World War and the Second World War were found. The First World War finds include fragments of artillery shells, German 7.92×57mm Mauser cartridge cases and bullets, a 9×19mm Parabellum bullet, Russian 7.62×54mmR cartridge

cases and bullets, a British 7.7×56mmR (.303 British) cartridge case, and American 7.65×17mmSR (.32 ACP) bullets.

Lit: ZABIELA, G. Radviliškio apylinkių žvalgymai..., p. 427–429.

21. VARVIŠKĖ (Lazdijai district)

In 2022, Gintautas Zabiela, Ernestas Kuckailis and Manvydas Vitkūnas (Institute of Warfare of the Lithuanian Armed Forces Training and Doctrine Command) investigated the site of the Battle of Varviškė on 22–23 March 1923. An area of about 18 hectares was surveyed with a metal detector, and finds from the battle between the Lithuanian and the Polish armies were detected. These include ammunition, parts of clothing and personal belongings of the soldiers, such as German 7.92×57mm Mauser, Russian 7.62×54mmR and French 8×50R mm Lebel cartridge cases, an unidentified bullet, a piece of a rifle grenade, spurs, a shoe plate, a spoon, etc.

Lit: ZABIELA, Gintautas; KUCKAILIS, Ernestas; VITKŪNAS, Manvydas. Varviškės apylinkių (Lazdijų r., Kapčiamiesčio sen.) archeologinių žvalgymų 2022 m. ataskaita. Vilnius, 2023. *LII*R, f. 1, b. 10973.

Burial sites of soldiers of the Wars of Independence

22. LAZDĖNAI (Elektrėnai municipality)

In 2021, commissioned by the Elektrėnai Municipality Administration, Monika Žėkaitė investigated the presumed burial site of Lithuanian and Polish soldiers killed in the battle of 13 July 1920 near Lazdėnai railway station. An area of 65 square metres was investigated, but no remains or related finds were found. In 2022, Diana Oleinik and the Institute of National Remembrance investigated a further 22.1 square metres, and recovered 14 individuals (according to historical data, seven Lithuanian and four Polish soldiers were buried in the grave). Ammunition, uniforms and items of clothing, and personal belongings were uncovered next to the remains. These include buttons from the Polish, US and UK armies, pieces of a cap band, garment hooks, belts, buckles, the remains of military boots, a gas mask case, rosary beads, coins, a pocket knife, a pocket watch with a chain, a mirror, cigar mouthpieces, a pencil, etc.

Lit: ŽĖKAITĖ, Monika. Lietuvos ir Lenkijos karių kapo (u. k. 41833) vietos, Elektrėnų sav., Vievio sen., Lazdėnų k., detaliųjų archeologinių tyrimų 2021 m. ataskaita. Vilnius, 2022. *LII*R, f. 1, b. 10401; OLEINIK, Diana; SIEMIŃSKA, Dominika; SIEMIŃSKI, Michał. 1920 m. žuvusių lietuvių ir lenkų karių kapavietė Lazdėnuose. In *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2022 metais*. Vilnius, 2023, p. 553–558.

23. NORULIAI (Varėna district)

In 2023, Diana Oleinik and the Institute of National Remembrance investigated the presumed grave of a Polish soldier from the Wars of Independence in the village of Noruliai. An area of 25 square metres was excavated, and the remains of one individual were recovered. Leather boots, buttons from the Polish and US armies, remnants of cloth and a belt, garment hooks and underwear buttons were found next to the body.

Lit: information from Diana Oleinik, 21 February 2024.

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PIRMOJO PASAULINIO KARO IR NEPRIKLAUSOMYBĖS KOVŲ ARCHEOLOGIJA IR PAVELDAS LIETUVOJE: TYRIMŲ BŪKLĖ IR ATEITIES PERSPEKTYVOS

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Santrauka

XX–XXI a. sandūroje Jungtinėje Karalystėje užgimusi Pirmojo pasaulinio karo archeologijos kryptis, atlikti tyrimai ir pasirodžiusios publikacijos padėjo teorinius ir metodinius Naujausiųjų laikų konfliktų archeologijos pagrindus. Nors britų tyrėjai iki šiol diktuoja Pirmojo pasaulinio karo tyrimų madas, ši tyrimų kryptis sparčiai plėtojama Šiaurės ir Vidurio Europoje (Belgijoje, Prancūzijoje, Vokietijoje, Slovėnijoje ir kt.), taip pat Šiaurės Amerikoje (Jungtinėse Amerikos Valstijose ir Kanadoje). Pastaraisiais metais Pirmojo pasaulinio karo vietų tyrimų skaičius ir susidomėjimas karo vietomis itin išaugo kaimyninėje Lenkijoje, tačiau Lietuvoje kryptingų Pirmojo pasaulinio karo ir Nepriklausomybės kovų, kaip tiesioginio šio karo padarinio, vietos platesnio tyrėjų susidomėjimo iki šiol nesulaukia, mokslinių publikacijų beveik nerengiama.

Vakaruose daugiausia tyrinėjamos Pirmojo pasaulinio karo belaisvių stovyklos ir civilių asmenų įkalinimo vietos, apkasai su žeminėmis ir požeminiais tuneliais, mūšių vietos, kapavietės ir daugelis kitų karo vietų. Tyrimų temos apima materialinės kultūros, apkasų meno, atminties, kraštovaizdžio, jo sampratos ir socialinių reikšmių tematiką. Tarpdalykinė tyrimų prieiga, aprėpianti karo istoriją, geografiją, antropologiją, kultūros paveldo, muziejų studijas ir daugelį kitų disciplinų, išplečia Pirmojo pasaulinio karo pažinimo ir interpretacijos galimybes, suteikia galimybę iš archeologijos perspektyvos žvelgti į karo dalyvius, atskleisti jų vietą karo kasdienybėje ir santykį su supančia aplinka.

Pirmojo pasaulinio karo ir Nepriklausomybės kovų vietos sudaro nedidelę Lietuvos nekilnojamojo kultūros paveldo dalį. 2024 m. kovo mėn. Kultūros vertybių registre buvo registruoti 497 Pirmojo pasaulinio karo ir Nepriklausomybės kovų paveldo objektai (2 % visų Kultūros vertybių registro objektų). Iš jų 253 skiriami Nepriklausomybės kovų laikotarpiui (50,9 %), 242 – Pirmajam pasauliniam karui (48,7 %), dar du siejami ir su Pirmuoju pasauliniu karu, ir su Nepriklausomybės kovomis (0,4 %). Pagal kultūros vertybės statusą, 24-iems objektams suteiktas paminklo statusas, 84 yra valstybės saugomi, 389 – registriniai. Tai kiek mažiau nei trečdalis visų Kultūros vertybių registre registruotų XX a. konfliktų objektų.

Pirmojo pasaulinio karo ir Nepriklausomybės kovų paveldu Lietuvoje laikomos karių kapinės ir pavieniai kapai, paminklai žuvusiems kariams atminti, Pirmojo pasaulinio karo fortifikaciniai įrenginiai ir gynybiniai įtvirtinimai, Nepriklausomybės kovų dalyvių gimtųjų sodybų ir kautynių vietos (2, 3, 5 pav.). Šiame sąrašė vyraujančios Vokietijos ir Rusijos imperijų karių, taip pat Nepriklausomybės kovų dalyvių kapavietės (atitinkamai 75,8 % ir 92,2 % visų Pirmojo pasaulinio karo ir Nepriklausomybės kovų paveldo objektų) byloja apie išskirtinai martirologinį Lietuvos kultūros ir paveldo apsaugos sampratos pobūdį (1, 4 pav.). Gynybiniai

įtvirtinimai sudaro 23,8 % Pirmojo pasaulinio karo, paminklai žuvusiems kariams atminti – 5,1 % Kultūros vertybių registre registruotų Nepriklausomybės kovų laikotarpio objektų.

Iki 2023 m. Lietuvoje tyrinėta, žvalgyta ir užfiksuota 15 Pirmojo pasaulinio karo ir aštuonios Nepriklausomybės kovų vietos (6, 8–10 pav.). Didžiausia jų dalis – tai karių žūties ir palaikų užkasimo vietos, kapinės ir pavieniai kapai (13 vietų). Nors Pirmojo pasaulinio karo karių kapų Lietuvoje atliekant archeologinius tyrimus atsitiktinai surasta dar sovietmečiu, Pirmojo pasaulinio karo Vokietijos imperijos karių palaikų užkasimo vietų tyrimai rengiami nuo XX a. 10-ojo dešimtmečio pabaigos. Vokiečių ir lenkų karių kapaviečių tyrimų skaičius išaugo 2015 m. su lietuvių tyrėjais pradėjus aktyviai bendradarbiauti Vokiečių karių kapų globos tautinei sąjungai (*Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge e. V.*) ir 2017 m. Tautos atminties institutui (*Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*). Lietuvoje atlikti Pirmojo pasaulinio karo apkasų vietų (3 vietos) ir Nepriklausomybės kovų kautynių vietų (6 vietos) tyrimai kol kas yra epizodiniai.

Pirmojo pasaulinio karo ir Nepriklausomybės kovų vietų tyrimai Lietuvoje iki šiol daugiausia nukreipti į karių palaikų paiešką ir ekshumaciją. Vis dėlto Pirmojo pasaulinio karo fortifikacijos įrenginių, apkasų ir kitų gynybinių įtvirtinimų, taip pat Nepriklausomybės kovų kautynių vietų tyrimai yra ne mažiau perspektyvi kryptis. Ateityje atlikti tyrimai neabejotinai išplės šių karų pažinimo ir interpretacijos galimybes, tačiau į tiriamas vietas būtina žvelgti kompleksiskai, sujungti ir analizuoti visus įmanomus šaltinius (archeologinius duomenis, rašytinius dokumentus, amžininkų prisiminimus, nuotraukas, istorinius žemėlapius ir kt.). Pirmojo pasaulinio karo ir Nepriklausomybės kovų vietos yra neatsiejama Naujajusių laikų konfliktų archeologijos dalis.