

# Review of the Scientific Activity of the Department of Archaeology (2021)

## DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY

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**Head** – Prof. Albinas Kuncevičius

### *STAFF*

**Professors:** Dr. A. Kuncevičius, Habil. Dr. M. Michelbertas (professor emeritus).

**Associate professors:** Dr. A. Luchtanas, Dr. A. Merkevičius, Dr. G. Motuzaitė Matuzevičiūtė Keen, Dr. G. Piličiauskienė, Dr. J. Poškienė, Dr. E. Štavičius, Dr. G. Vėlius.

**Assistant professors:** Dr. J. Kozakaitė (part-time), Dr. K. Minkevičius.

**Lecturers:** A. Žilinskaitė.

**Teaching assistants:** R. Augustinavčius (part-time).

**Doctoral students:** E. S. Ardavičiūtė-Ramanauskienė, D. Baltramiejūnaitė, E. Marcinkevičiūtė-Štavičė, L. Muradian, A. Rusteikytė, R. Valatkevičienė, A. Zagurskytė.

### *RESEARCH INTERESTS*

Prehistoric and historical archaeology of Lithuania and neighbouring countries (research of material and spiritual culture, landscape studies)

Archaeology of the Balts

Methodology of archaeological research

Bioarchaeology

Zooarchaeology

Archaeological heritage management

### *RESEARCH PROJECTS CARRIED OUT IN 2021*

#### **National Research Projects**

- Research Council of Lithuania. **Dogs in Lithuania during the 13<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> c.: Origin of the Breeds, Function and Breeding Culture** (No S-MIP-20-5). Dr. P. Blaževičius. 2020–2022.

In 2021, the project participants have collected all the data they had planned to collect on historical, iconographic and archaeological sources. Working with primary sources, the project participants prepared and presented 5 papers at international scientific conferences and 2 papers at conferences in Lithuania. In 2021, an article on dog tracks was prepared and published in the journal “Lituanistica”. An article based on historical sources was also prepared for the press on the conditions of keeping dogs in the manors and towns of the

leaders and nobility in the GDL. In the course of laboratory research in 2021, zooarchaeological and palaeopathological analyses were performed for 168 individuals that were selected for more detailed analysis. aDNA analysis of 30 individuals, both teeth and bone samples were carried at Oxford University lab and the results of the analysis are currently being analyzed.  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  stable isotopes analysis of 91 individuals were performed, 8 individuals were AMS  $^{14}\text{C}$  dated.

- Research Council of Lithuania. Research group projects. **Humans and horses in Lithuania during the Migration period (4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> c. AD) on the basis of Sr and O stable isotope data: origin and social context** (No. S-MIP-19-67). Assoc. Prof. G. Piličiauskienė. 2019–2021.

The  $^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr}$  analyses on 41 animal, 40 humans and 13 horses were performed. 32 humans and all horses were also directly AMS  $^{14}\text{C}$  dated. The analysis of  $^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr}$  of Late Roman – Post-Migration humans ( $n = 40$ ) demonstrates that about 30% individuals were of nonlocal origin. There was no significant difference in number of nonlocals comparing groups of males and females as well as people of different social stratus.  $^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr}$  analysis of Lithuanian horses partially supports the hypothesis that the largest horses of the Late Roman – Post-Migration period are of nonlocal origin. We identified 3/13 nonlocal horses, of which 2/3 were the largest individuals from above mentioned periods in Lithuania. Unfortunately, the overlapping ranges of bio-available  $^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr}$  in most regions of Europe limit our ability to establish whether nonlocal individuals have come from other areas in Lithuania or from more distant regions. The area of origin of the nonlocal horses as well as some humans could be Southern Sweden. Several humans could originate also from Sambia or Poland. The results provide a basis for a new discussion on trends in migration during this transitional period. It also compels us to rethink the current models which situate Southern and Central Europe as the dominant vectors of migration. Results of  $^{14}\text{C}$  dating demonstrate that large-scale application of  $^{14}\text{C}$  dating can make a significant contribution to shaping the Roman Period – Migration Period research agenda.

- Research Council of Lithuania. Dissemination project. **International scientific conference dedicated to Prof. Marija Gimbutienė 100 anniversary** (No. S-LIP-21-21). Assoc. Prof. G. Vėlius. 2021.

In September 23–24, 2021, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Prof. Marija Gimbutienė (Gimbutas), the 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference “**THE NEW OLD EUROPE**” of “*Readings of Prof. Jonas Puzinas*” was organized by The Faculty of History of Vilnius University in cooperation with The Society of Lithuanian Archaeology, The National Museum of Lithuania and The Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. 27 scientific papers were read in the 2-days program. It has provided an opportunity to evaluate the perspectives of research methods applied in various fields of science in European and Lithuanian cultural history research, to evaluate them in various cultural and geographical contexts. The newest investigations in the fields of archaeology, anthropology, linguistics, theology and genetics were presented during the conference, analyzing and updating the issues of Lithuanian and European prehistory, Baltic ethnogenesis and mythology.

- Research Council of Lithuania. **Functional development of mounds: from the fortified settlement to the residence of the duke** (No. S-MIP-21-22). Assoc. Prof. G. Vėlius. 2021–2024.

Complex research was carried out in the UNESCO protected Kernavė Archaeological Site in 2021. The four geophysical surveys using georadar were carried out in the territory of the mounds. 300 wells have been drilled in the central mound of Aukuras Hill, the stratigraphy of this heritage object has been determined. Archaeological excavations at the mound site investigated 36 sq m overpass. The study uncovered many artefacts dating back to the Iron Age and Middle Ages, a large paleozoological bone collection was collected and 50 soil samples were taken for paleobotanical studies. Also over 200 samples were collected from various cultures from different periods for  $^{14}\text{C}$  dating.

- Research Council of Lithuania. Activity “Scientific research conducted by high-level researchers”, supported by EU structural funds. **Margins or Nodes? Dietary Adaptation Strategies and the Role of Inner Asian Mountain Communities in Prehistoric Food Globalization** (No. 09.3.3-LMT-K-712-01-0002). Assoc. Prof. G. Motuzaitė Matuzevičiūtė Keen. 2018–2021.

Concluding online conference “Beyond being a pastoralist in Central Asia. Margins or Nodes” was held (March 26, 2021 – Zoom).

### **Contractual Research**

- Contract with UAB Alvora **Gas Interconnection Poland–Lithuania (GIPL)** (archaeological research). Project manager: Prof. Dr. A. Kuncevičius. 2020–2021.

Vilnius University under the joint activity (partnership) agreement with UAB Alvora on archaeological research “Gas pipeline connection between Poland and the part of Lithuania in the territory of the Republic of Lithuania” together with Klaipėda University, Lithuanian Institute of History, Public Institution “Cultural Heritage Preservation Force”, UAB “Cultural Values Search” carried out archaeological exploration and detailed archaeological research works on the section of 170 km long gas pipeline construction route, from Kernavė to the Lithuanian–Polish border. Archaeological excavations were carried out on an area about 155 ha, and 42 objects were investigated by detailed archaeological research.

### **MAIN R&D&I (RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INOVATION) PARTNERS**

Institute of Archaeology University of Wrocław (Poland)

University of Copenhagen (Denmark)

University of Latvia (Latvia)

University of Stockholm (Sweden)

University of Tartu (Estonia)

Administration of the State Cultural Reserve of Kernavė (Lithuania)

### **OTHER SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES**

#### **Prof. A. Kuncevičius –**

- board member of The Society of Lithuanian Archaeology, <http://lad.lt/lietuvos-archeologijos-draugija/vadovybe>.
- editor-in-chief of the journal *Archaeologia Lituana*, [www.journals.vu.lt/archaeologia-lituana/about/editorialTeam](http://www.journals.vu.lt/archaeologia-lituana/about/editorialTeam);
- editorial board member of the journal *Archaeologia Baltica*, <http://journals.ku.lt/index.php/AB/about/editorialTeam>;
- editorial board member of the journal *Lituanistica*, [www.lmaleidykla.lt/ojs/index.php/lituanistica](http://www.lmaleidykla.lt/ojs/index.php/lituanistica).

#### **Prof. emeritus M. Michelbertas –**

- foreign corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut);
- editorial board member of the journal *Archaeologia Lituana*, [www.journals.vu.lt/archaeologia-lituana/about/editorialTeam](http://www.journals.vu.lt/archaeologia-lituana/about/editorialTeam);
- editorial board member of the journal *Kultūros paminklai (Cultural Monuments)*, [www.paveldas.lt/leidiniai](http://www.paveldas.lt/leidiniai).

#### **Assoc. Prof. A. Merkevičius –**

- member of the organizing committee of the international scientific seminar *Baltic archaeological seminar (BASE)*;
- editorial board member of the journal *Estonian Journal of Archaeology*, <https://kirj.ee/estonian-journal-of-archaeology-editorial-board>;

- editorial board member of the journal *Acta Archaeologica*, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/16000390/homepage/editorialboard.html>;
- editorial board member of the journal *Archaeologia Lituana*, [www.journals.vu.lt/archaeologia-lituana/about/editorialTeam](http://www.journals.vu.lt/archaeologia-lituana/about/editorialTeam);
- editorial board member of the journal *Interarchaeologia*, <https://researchportal.helsinki.fi/en/activities/interarchaeologia-journal>;
- editorial board member of the journal *Lietuvos archeologija (Lithuanian Archaeology)*, [www.istorija.lt/leidiniai/mokslo-zurnalai-ir-testiniai-leidiniai/lietuvos-arheologija/674#tab-editorial\\_board](http://www.istorija.lt/leidiniai/mokslo-zurnalai-ir-testiniai-leidiniai/lietuvos-arheologija/674#tab-editorial_board);
- editorial board member of the journal *Kultūros paminklai (Cultural Monuments)*, [www.paveldas.lt/leidiniai](http://www.paveldas.lt/leidiniai).

**Assoc. Prof. E. Šatavičius –**

- editorial board member of the journal *Archaeologia Lituana*, [www.journals.vu.lt/archaeologia-lituana/about/editorialTeam](http://www.journals.vu.lt/archaeologia-lituana/about/editorialTeam).

**Assoc. Prof. G. Vėlius –**

- editorial board member of the journal *Archaeologia Lituana*, [www.journals.vu.lt/archaeologia-lituana/about/editorialTeam](http://www.journals.vu.lt/archaeologia-lituana/about/editorialTeam).

**A. Žilinskaitė –**

- executive board member of European Association of Archaeologists.
- chairwomen of The Society of Lithuanian Archaeology, <http://lad.lt/lietuvos-arheologijos-draugija/vadovybe>.

**BEST REPORTS DELIVERED AT CONFERENCES ABROAD**

- International online conference *XXVII European Congress of Archaeologists*, Kiel (Germany). Report by Assoc. Prof. G. Piličiauskienė with co-authors *Hunting dogs and hunting with dogs in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania during the 13<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries*; Report by Assoc. Prof. G. Piličiauskienė with co-authors *Horseman and horse in Lithuania during the 2<sup>nd</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> c. AD: size, age and origin of the horses*.
- International online conference *Contemporary Issues and Challenges in the Management of Heritage Sites in the Baltic States*, Riga (Latvia). Report by A. Žilinskaitė, J. Poškienė, A. Kurilienė *Current challenges in management of endangered archaeological heritage in Lithuania*.
- International scientific conference of the Council of Archaeozoologists (Working group on Archaeology, Genetics, Proteomics and Morphometry) in Oulu university (Finland). Report by Assoc. Prof. G. Piličiauskienė with co-authors *Dogs in Lithuania in the 13<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> c.: morphology, diet and health status*.

**MOST IMPORTANT PARTICIPATION CASES OF RESEARCHERS IN WORKING GROUPS OR COMMISSIONS SET UP BY STATE AUTHORITIES, STATE AND MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS, ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESS ENTITIES**

**Prof. A. Kuncevičius –**

- chairman of the Board of the Research Council of Lithuania, [www.lmt.lt/lt/apie-taryba/kontaktai/86/valdyba/d1](http://www.lmt.lt/lt/apie-taryba/kontaktai/86/valdyba/d1);
- chairman of the working group of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education for preparation of Description of Archaeology Studies.

**Assoc. Prof. A. Luchtanas –**

- chairman of 4<sup>nd</sup> Assessment Council for Immovable Cultural Heritage, Department of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture, <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/3c41c1517bff11e98a8298567570d639?jfwid=zjgvs4rs8>.

**Assoc. Prof. A. Merkevičius –**

- member of 4<sup>nd</sup> Assessment Council for Immovable Cultural Heritage, Department of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture, <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/3c41c1517bff11e98a8298567570d639?jfwid=zjgvs4rs8>;
- member of the working group of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education for preparation of Description of Archaeology Studies.

**Assoc. Prof. J. Poškienė –**

- vice chairwoman of the Committee of Humanities and Social Sciences, Research Council of Lithuania, [www.lmt.lt/en/about-the-research-council/vice-chair/2684](http://www.lmt.lt/en/about-the-research-council/vice-chair/2684);
- chairwoman of the Board of the State Cultural Reserve of Kernavė <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/4bf93a30174c11ebb0038a8cd8ff585f>

***MOST IMPORTANT RESEARCH DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES***

Participation (lectures) in the European Archaeology Days in the National Museum of Lithuania.

***MAIN CONFERENCES ORGANIZED IN 2021***

- In 2021 to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Prof. Marija Gimbutienė (Gimbutas), The Faculty of History of Vilnius University in cooperation with The Society of Lithuanian Archaeology, The National Museum of Lithuania and The Lithuanian Academy of Sciences have initiated and implemented an international scientific conference. In September 23–24, 2021, the 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference “**THE NEW OLD EUROPE**” of “*Readings of Prof. Jonas Puzinas*” was held in Vilnius, The National Museum of Lithuania. The International Scientific Conference aimed to give the meaning to Prof. M. Gimbutienė’s contribution to the research of the history of civilizations, to reveal the significance of the researcher’s work for scientific development as well as to present the latest research on European cultural history from different perspectives, including the widest possible range of research topics (archaeology, anthropology, linguistics, genetics, etc.).

***MAIN SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2021***

- In 2021, PhD theses have been defended: Mindaugas Griškėdis “Origin and cultural plants in Lithuania in the Context of Eastern Baltic (Based on Archaeobotanical Material Dated up to 14<sup>th</sup> Century AD)” (supervisor Assoc. Prof. G. Motuzaitė Matuzevičiūtė Keen).
- “Archaeologia Litwana” Vol. 22 in process of being published.