

Review of the Scientific Activity of the Department of Archaeology (2020)

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY

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Head – Prof. Dr. *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. Šatavičius, Dr. G. Vėlius.

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

Lecturers: A. Žilinskaitė (part-time).

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

Doctoral students: E. Ananyevskaya, S. Ardavičiūtė-Ramanauskienė, D. Baltramiejūnaitė, M. Griķpēdis, E. Marcinkevičiūtė-Šatavičė, K. Minkevičius, A. Rusteikytė, L. Muradian, R. Valatkevičienė, A. Zagurskytė.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Prehistoric and historical archaeology of Lithuania (material and spiritual culture, landscape studies);

Archaeology of the Balts;

Archaeology of the Baltic Sea region;

Conflict archaeology and heritage;

Archaeological heritage management;

Methodology of archaeological research;

Bioarchaeology (archaeobotany, zooarchaeology, anthropology).

RESEARCH PROJECTS CARRIED OUT IN 2020

National Research Projects

- 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. The goal of the research is to evaluate the role of highland zones to the food globalization processes in Eurasian prehistory. The territory of Kyrgyzstan situated in the central Tian Shan mountains constitutes a key study area for understanding the strategies people used to adapt their agricultural systems to one of the most challenging environments on earth. During the project, Bronze Age human subsistence mechanisms in these

high altitude zones are studied, pinpointing the timings of crop and animal arrival, and human choice and selection between species. Additionally, this project constitutes the first thorough, high-level archaeological investigation of settlement sites left by the first farming communities in Kyrgyzstan, where modern field methodologies and research techniques are applied from the landscape scale to molecular level.

- Research Council of Lithuania. Research group projects. **Humans and horses in Lithuania during the Migration period (4th–6th 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.

During the 2020, ⁸⁷Sr/⁸⁶Sr analysis on 35 humans, 12 horses and 41 other animals' teeth was realized. The obtained results demonstrate that this method successfully can be applied to Lithuanian material. Analysis of ¹⁸O/¹⁶O were performed on 35 humans, 12 horses and 13 other animals' teeth. The initial results disclose the origin and the mobility of humans and horses during the Migration Period. 34 new AMS ¹⁴C dates on humans and horses were obtained. The results reveal that chronology of particular burials, cemeteries and even some Iron Age cultural phenomena is to be revised.

- Research Council of Lithuania. Lithuanian Studies and Dissemination Programme (2016–2024). **Dogs in Lithuania during the 13th–18th c.: origin of the breeds, function and breeding culture** (S-MIP-20-5). Dr. P. Blaževičius. 2020–2022.

In 2020, dogs' remains from medieval Lithuanian archaeological sites were selected and a comprehensive zooarchaeological database was created. Zooarchaeological and paleopathological analyses are in progress. Oxford University lab performed aDNA analysis of 30 teeth and bone samples. On 80 samples for d13C and d15N, stable isotope analysis was performed. One individual was ¹⁴C AMS dated. Of ~25K ceramic objects examined, dog traces were found on over 220. Literary and historical sources in Lithuania, as well as other countries, were examined.

- 2014–2020 European Neighbourhood Instrument Cross-border Cooperation Latvia–Lithuania–Belarus Programme. **The Dukes Radziwills' heritage preservation and adaptation for tourism in Kėdainiai and Nesvizh (ENI-LLB-1-109)**.

The aim of the project, concentrating on the Mausoleum of the Dukes Radziwili in the Evangelical Reformed Church (Kėdainiai), is twofold: restoration of the crypt and sarcophagi of the Dukes Radziwili, and anthropological analysis of remains that belong to Radziwili family members and other notable people of Kėdainiai community.

Partners of the project: Kėdainiai Regional Museum and Vilnius University, Faculty of History. Project executors: Prof. Dr. A. Kuncevičius, Prof. Dr. Aivas Ragauskas, Dr. Raimonda Ragauskienė, Dr. Justina Kozakaitė.

Contractual Research

- **Gas Interconnection Poland-Lithuania (GIPL)**. Project manager: Prof. Dr. A. Kuncevičius. 2020–2021.

The archaeological surveys and detailed excavations are carried out according to the contract with JSC “Alvora”. Archaeological research is conducted on the 170 km long pipeline construction route from Kernavė to the Lithuanian–Polish border. Archaeological explorations and detailed research are executed in parallel with the construction of GIPL gas connection. Archaeological works in the framework of the joint activity (partnership) agreement are performed by Vilnius University (subcontractor) together with Klaipėda University, Lithuanian Institute of History, PI “Cultural Heritage Preservation Forces”, JSC “Search of Cultural Values”.

MAIN R&D&I (RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION) PARTNERS

Institute of Archaeology University of Wrocław (Poland);
 University of Stockholm (Sweden);
 University of Copenhagen (Denmark);
 University of Latvia (Latvia);
 University of Tartu (Estonia);
 Administration of the State Cultural Reserve of Kernavė (Lithuania).

OTHER SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES

Prof. A. Kuncevičius

- editor-in-chief of the journal *Archaeologia Lituana* (www.journals.vu.lt/archaeologia-lituana/about/editorialTeam)
- editorial board member of the journal *Archaeologia Baltica* (www.ku.lt/leidykla/leidiniai/moksliniai-zurnalai/archaeologia-baltica)
- editorial board member of the journal *Lituanistica* (www.lmaleidykla.lt/ojs/index.php/lituanistica)

Prof. emeritus M. Michelbertas

- foreign corresponding member of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institute
- editorial board member of the journal *Archaeologia Lituana* (www.journals.vu.lt/archaeologia-lituana/about/editorialTeam)
- editorial board member of the journal *Kultūros paminklai (Cultural Monuments)*; 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 *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)
- editorial board member of the journal *Estonian Journal of Archaeology* (www.kirj.ee/11373)
- editorial board member of the journal *Interarchaeologia*
- editorial board member of the publication *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje (Archaeological Research in Lithuania)*; www.atl.lt)
- editorial board member of the journal *Lietuvos archeologija (Lithuanian Archaeology)*; www.istorija.lt/leidiniai/testiniai-leidiniai/lietuvos-archeologija)
- editorial board member of the journal *Kultūros paminklai (Cultural Monuments)*; www.paveldas.lt/leidiniai)

Assoc. Prof. E. Štavičius

- editorial board member of the journal *Archaeologia Lituana* (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)

PhD candidate A. Žilinskaitė

- executive Board member of European Association of Archaeologists (https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA/About/EAA_Boards_and_Committees/EAA/Navigation_About/EAA_Boards_and_Committees.aspx?hkey=adb43fb0-bbf0-4150-b96b-bdab0fbca40a);
- chairwomen of The Society of Lithuanian Archaeology (<http://lad.lt/lietuvos-archeologijos-draugija/vadovybe/>)

BEST REPORTS DELIVERED AT CONFERENCES ABROAD

- XXVI European Congress of Archaeologists. Assoc. Prof. Giedrė Piličiauskienė: “New Elites and their Horses in the Migration Period Lithuania – Strangers or Locals? (co-authors L. Kurila, E. Simčenka, Ž. Miliauskienė, K. Lidén). August 24–30, 2020.
- International conference “Historical Practice in Horsemanship and Equestrian Sports” organized by the Latvian Sports Academy (LASE), session “Archaeological Perspectives on the Early Equestrianism”. Assoc. Prof. G. Piličiauskienė: “Looking for a warhorse in Vilnius Lower Castle, Lithuania: size, age and equipment of the 13th–15th c. horses” (co-authors Dr. Povilas Blaževičius and Aurelija Zagurskytė). August 25, 2020.
- 78th International Scientific Conference of the University of Latvia in Riga (Latvia). PhD student Karolis Minkevičius: „Agrarian intensification during the Bronze and Early Iron Ages in Lithuania: new isotopic evidence on shifting dietary practices“ (co-authors V. Podėnas, A. Garbaras, J. Šapolaitė, Ž. Ežerinskas). February 21, 2020.
- XXVI European Congress of Archaeologists. PhD student A. Rusteikytė, Assoc. Prof. G. Motuzaitė Matuzevičiūtė: “Organic Residue Analysis of Medieval Cooking Wares from The Vilnius Lower Castle: A Glimpse into The Castle’s Inhabitants’ Diet” (co-authors S. Brown (University of Bristol), R. Evershed, (University of Bristol), S. Venckūnienė (National Museum – Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania)). August 24–30, 2020.
- XXVI European Congress of Archaeologists. Prof. A. Kuncevičius: “Monitoring of Urban Heritage Implementing 3D and Convolutional Neural Networks-Based Technologies” (co-authors – T. Žižiūnas, R. Laužikas, R. Šmigelskas (Vilnius University), D. Amilevičius (Vytautas Magnus University)). August 24–30, 2020.

MOST IMPORTANT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AWARDS RECEIVED FOR R&D ACTIVITIES

Dr. Justina Kozakaitė (together with Prof. Dr. Rimantas Jankauskas, Prof. Dr. Tamara Bairašauskaitė, archaeologists Gytis Grižas and Valdas Steponaitis, forensic experts Dr. Giedrius Kisielis and Jūratė Jankauskienė) was awarded St. Christopher Award “For Revealing the Secrets of the Uprising of 1863–1864” (January 24, 2020).

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

Prof. A. Kuncevičius

- member of the Board of the Research Council of Lithuania (<https://www.lmt.lt/en/about-the-research-council/contacts/2279/board-of-the-research-council-of-lithuania>)

Assoc. Prof. J. Poškienė

- chairperson of the Committee of Humanities and Social Sciences, Research Council of Lithuania (www.lmt.lt/en/about-the-research-council/vice-chair/2684)

Assoc. Prof. G. Motuzaitė Matuzevičiūtė Keen

- member of Scientific Commission of Archaeology of the Department of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture (<https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/9de3400296e311eaa51db668f0092944?jfwid=2r1mnh0a>)

Assoc. Prof. A. Merkevičius, Assoc. Prof. A. Luchtanas

- member of 4th 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>)

PhD candidate A. Žilinskaitė

- member of Commission of Experts on the Protection of Immovable Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture (<https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/4ca716d2eeb911e99ab7ff5a9ea34fcc?jfwid=ouu0hruq2>)

CONSULTATIONS PROVIDED BY THE UNIT TO THE PUBLIC OR ECONOMIC ENTITIES

- Methodological seminar for the members of immovable cultural assessment councils, Department of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture. Assoc. Prof. Justina Poškienė: report and consultations on the topic “Buildings’ remains, discovered during archaeological excavations: preservation *in situ*. Objectives, practice, legal regulation”. December 17, 2020.

MOST IMPORTANT RESEARCH DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

- Dissemination of the preliminary results of the archaeological excavations of the Stone Age Šventininkai settlement (Kaišiadorys dist.) in the seminar “The latest archaeological investigations and discoveries: UNESCO World Heritage Site – Kernavė Archaeological Site and Lithuanian-Polish Gas Interconnection (GIPL)”. Paper “Archaeological Investigations in the Environment of Šventininkai Settlement” (PhD candidate A. Žilinskaitė, Dr. D. Brazaitis). At the same programme: “Recent Investigations of Kernavė Archaeological Site” (Assoc. Prof. G. Vėlius). September 19, 2020, Kernavė.
- European Archaeology Days in the National Museum of Lithuania: lecture “Hide and seek with a Prehistory” (Assoc. Prof. A. Luchtanas), lecture “From Seal to Pork” (Assoc. Prof. G. Piličiauskienė), lecture “What you sow...” (PhD student M. Grikpėdis). June 20, 2020.
- Prof. A. Kuncevičius has participated in Lithuanian National Radio (LRT) broadcast “Jazzing History”. Discussion’s topic: „Jazzing History. Due to what kind of “offences” archaeology attracts an attention of mass media?” October 28, 2020.
- Seminar “Protection of Cultural Heritage” organized by the Academy of Cultural Heritage. Assoc. Prof. Justina Poškienė: “Preservation of Archaeological Heritage *in situ*”. November 11–13, 2020.
- PhD candidate A. Žilinskaitė has participated in the podcast “Soup of Science”. Topic “What do archaeologists discover in Lithuania?” December 3, 2020.

MAIN SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2020

- Scientific archaeological excavations of the Stone Age Šventininkai settlement (Kaišiadorys dist.) in the framework of the Gas Interconnection Poland–Lithuania (GIPL) project.
- In 2020, 2 PhD theses have been defended: Karolis Minkevičius „Agricultural development and settlement dynamics in 11th c. BC – 12th c. AD Lithuania (based on archaeobotanical evidence)” (supervisor Assoc. Prof. G. Vėlius) and Elina Ananyevskaya “Economy of the Kazakh Steppe Populations During the Construction of Geoglyphs in Turgai Region, Kazakhstan“ (supervisor Assoc. Prof. G. Motuzaitė Matuzevičiūtė Keen).
- “Archaeologia Litwana” Vol. 21 is in process of being published. The volume contains 10 articles by foreign and Lithuanian scientists based on the materials from the international scientific conference “Investigating bones: diet, health, environment in the Baltic region” (Vilnius University, October 2019).
- A descriptor for the study field “Archaeology” has been prepared. Working group: Prof. A. Kuncevičius (head of the group), Assoc. Prof. A. Merkevičius, Dr. A. Čivilytė, Dr. P. Blaževičius, Assoc. Prof. G. Zabiela.