

# Rimutė Rimantienė: Founder of the School of Stone Age Explorations in Lithuania and the Eastern Baltic Region

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## INTRODUCTION. LITHUANIAN STONE AGE ARCHAEOLOGY

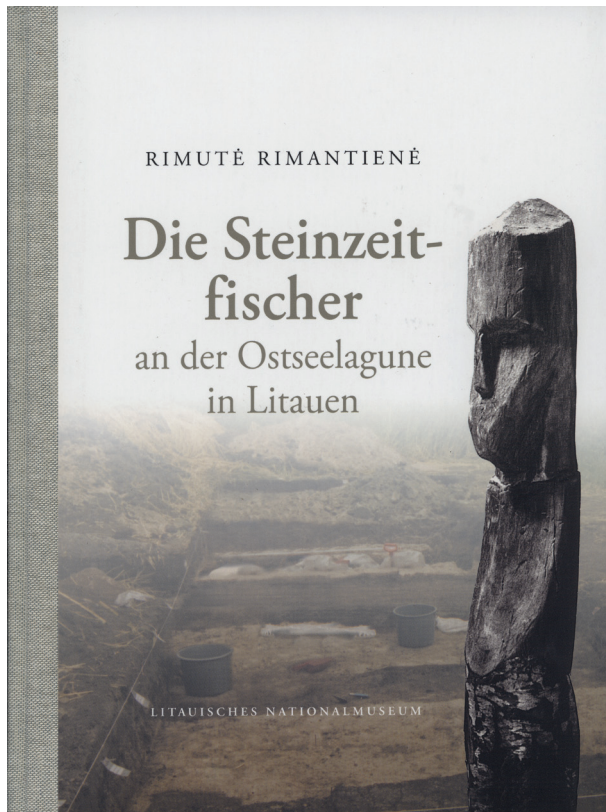
In 1941, the first scientific publication by Rimutė Jablonskytė-Rimantienė on the Stone Age settlements of Skaruliai and Puvočiai was published; in 2016, the monography *Nida – a Bay Coast Culture Settlement on the Curonian Lagoon* – the last monography by the same author – was published in English. This article is devoted to explore the foundations of academic Stone Age archaeology in Lithuania and to the main figure of this process – Rimutė Jablonskytė-Rimantienė. Her professor dr. Jonas Puzinas was a graduate of the Lithuanian University in Kaunas and Heidelberg University in Germany and was the first Lithuanian professional archaeologist. His adaptation of the German historical school of archaeology, applied to the study of Lithuanian past, has marked the theory and practice of archaeology in the country up to the present day, also in no small part having influenced Rimutė Jablonskytė herself. The conference (In honor of prof. Jonas Puzinas), which marked the 95<sup>th</sup> birthday of Rimutė Rimantienė, is an excellent occasion to provide a wider view on the research and works of the most famous explorer of the Stone Age in Lithuania and the eastern Baltic region.

## IN THE AREAS OF ACTIVITY OF PALAEOLITHIC AND MESOLITHIC INHABITANTS

Rimutė Jablonskytė-Rimantienė started her long and very fruitful scientific archaeological career from the explorations of the oldest period of our history, namely the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods. The Palaeolithic period took place in Lithuania from 11,300 B.C. to 9,000 B.C., when the last glacier retreated. At that time, reindeers settled in the region of north-eastern

Europe and the Baltics, and soon afterwards the hunters followed (Zagorska 2012, p. 44; Ostrauskas 2002, pp. 76–77). The issues regarding the time when these territories began to be settled, the classification of periods and the attribution of culture are of particular importance to the science of archaeology, for these questions must be answered in order to understand the ancient history of the region as a whole. Rimutė Jablonskytė-Rimantienė laid the foundation for these answers more than 50 years ago, when in 1966 she created the first cultural-chronological system for Lithuanian Stone Age settlements (Štavičius, 2016, p. 12).

Having analyzed publications by Władzimirz Antoniewicz (1930) and Hugo Gross (1940), as well as the materials and findings provided in them, the sets of Stone Age articles of Zygmunt Gloger and Vandalinas Šukevičius stored in museums, the particularly rich (collected from almost 500 Stone Age sites and locations of the Neman River basin) and perfectly organized collection of her father Konstantinas Jablonskis, in 1962 she successfully defended her dissertation as a candidate of historical sciences, the dissertation being titled *Periodization and Topography of the Lithuanian Settlements of the Stone and Bronze Ages* in the Institute of the Lithuanian SSR. In 1964, her article *Some Questions About the Lithuanian Palaeolithic Period* was published and became the introduction to her fundamental monograph *The Palaeolithic and Mesolithic Periods in Lithuania* (1971, published in Russian). In this study, she categorized all of the material available at that time on the Stone Age to cultural and archaeological groups referring to the typological-statistical analysis and topography of monuments where sites of different periods were found on the bench terraces of the Neman and Neris rivers at different heights. In her work, she referred to the geographical marking of dates of the Stone Age



Rimantienė R. The cover of R. Rimantienė monograph “Die Steinzeit-fischer an der Ostseelagune in Litauen. Forschungen in Šventoji und Būtingė”. Vilnius, 2005.

monuments in Finland. This idea seemed to have potential. While developing it, she consulted local geologists, geographers, palaeobotanists, namely Alfonsas Basalykas, Vytautas Gudelis, Meilutė Kabailienė and other researchers in Lithuania. Based on this theory, the camps in the periods of Alleröd and Younger Dryas were usually located on the second terrace above the floodplain, and in the period of Pre Boreal – on the first bench terrace. She also identified two major cultural groups of the late Palaeolithic period, namely the Swiderian and Baltic-Madlen. The last group was distinguished by referring to three different typological groups of tanged points: Ahrensburgian, Bromme-Lyngby and Hamburg.

Studies of the Swiderian culture monuments that were carried out by Rimantienė soon allowed the inclusion of the Lithuanian, Belorussian and Masurian Law District into the initial, early area of this culture, and several decades later it was complemented by the material of the Latvian late Palaeolithic period; thus, the area expanded up to the Dauguva River in

the north. The findings of the surveys by Rimantienė were confirmed by the monograph of Ilga Zagorska published in 2012 and titled *The Old Hunters of Reindeer in Latvia* (Zagorska, 2012), which demonstrated the longevity of the conclusions drawn in the research by Rimantienė.

According to Rimantienė’s research data, the settlement of the territory of Lithuania took place in two directions: from both the south-west and west. Settlement from the south-west (Swiderian culture) did not raise much debate; however, the arrival of the inhabitants of the Baltic-Madlen culture to Lithuania from the west through northern Germany and Poland, across the Baltic coasts, the statements about the spread of the culture of Bromme-Lyngby in the Nemman River basin in particular, were a real challenge to the archaeologists of the area of Poland, Germany and Königsberg (Kaliningrad): monuments found in Lithuania and attributed to this culture had their closest analogies in the territory of Denmark only, i.e., 1,000 kilometers away from Lithuania (Jablonskytė-Rimantienė, 1964, pp. 35–51; 1966, pp. 43–54; Rimantienė, 1971, pp. 174–176). At the time, this material was not known in the aforementioned neighbouring territories and no attention was paid to it (Zaliznyak, 2000, p. 34). The geographical relationship between these monuments was only confirmed by Polish archaeologists in 1975, when they started publishing material from Poland on the culture of Bromme-Lyngby (Kozłowski, 1975, pp. 134–142; Schild, 1975, pp. 262–267; Zaliznyak, 2000, p. 34). The monuments and articles typical to the cultures of Ahrensburgian and Bromme-Lyngby, distinguished by Rimantienė, also later caught the attention of Latvian researchers (Zagorska, 2012, pp. 12–22). These monuments have also recently begun to be explored in the upper reaches of the Volga-Oka basin and Dnepr (Sinitsina, 2002, pp. 83–93; 2009, pp. 14–23). The cultural areas and the periodization identified by Rimantienė served as the basis for further periodizations carried out in northern Ukraine, Belarus and the aforementioned monuments on the upper reaches of the Volga and Oka in Russia as well as in Latvia for several decades. Several cultures which developed on the basis of the eastern Lyngby have been identified throughout the region (Zaliznyak, 2000, p. 34). Surveys of the monuments



Academic Konstantinas Jablonskis with his daughters Jūratė and Rimutė in Biržai. 1944.

of this culture are being further continued in Lithuania by our new generation of archaeologists (Šatavičius, 1997, pp. 3–15; 2002, pp. 163–186; 2004, pp. 17–44; Girininkas, 2009, pp. 15–70). Referring to the material found in the territories of Lake Biržulis and western Lithuania, researchers managed to attribute post-Swiderian Pulli type monuments (records) to the upper Palaeolithic period not only in Latvia and Estonia, but also in Lithuania (Butrimas, Ostrauskas, 1996, pp. 7–14; Butrimas, Ostrauskas, 1999, pp. 267–271; Ostrauskas, 1996, pp. 192–212). Vygandas Juodagalvis applied the scheme of periodization and cultural evolution developed by Rimantienė to interpret the material on the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic findings and monuments in the area of Užnemunė (the Trans-Neman region) (Juodagalvis, 2010, pp. 183–211). Thus in the upper Palaeolithic period and at the beginning of the period of Holocene, reindeer hunters of the Swiderian and Baltic-Madlen (Ahrensburgian and Bromme-Lyngby) settled in the basins of the rivers Neman, Dauguva, Pripetė and the upper Dnepr. With her scientific ideas, Rimantienė laid the foundations for the reconstruction of such a grand cultural and historical process as early as in the publications dated from 1964 to 1971. Later surveys of this wide region were carried out by her students who complemented her studies with new material, and corrected or specified them only fractionally. The theoretical founda-

tions laid by this great researcher, the chronological limits and settlement directions identified by her have changed only very slightly even after half a century.

#### SURVEYS ON THE NEMAN AND NARVA CULTURES

The new phase of identification of cultural and chronological groups, which coincided with the exploration of monuments of the Mesolithic and Neolith of south Lithuania, and which was carried out by Rimantienė from 1963 up to 1998 with some long breaks, allowed her to be the first to identify the Mesolithic Neman culture which was found in southern Lithuania, Belarus and northern Poland with the entire complex of camps and their flint articles typical to the culture. In Lithuania, the Mesolithic is usually recognized from the inventory of flint, especially in the southern part of its territory, in the zone of Neman culture. This name soon became established in Belorussian and Polish archaeological literature (Kozłowski, 1975, pp. 134–142). It also denoted the region in which the culture was prevalent (the Neman River basin) and its place in the evolution of cultures. Successful surveys and analyses of the old collections of Paštuva, Žemieji Kaniūkai, Brūžė, Derežnyčia 15, Druskininkai 8, Merkinė 3 and other camps enabled the researcher to group the material into early and late groups, as well as to identify the items made of flint and



Diploma of laureate of the Baltic Assembly Science Premium and medal. 1997.

attribute them to every stage of the Mesolithic evolution of the Neman culture. The cultural attribution of the Mesolithic articles remains the same even in the present-day works of her students (Juodagalvis, 2010, pp. 72–74).

Later, when exploring the Neolithic culture in southern Lithuania, the researcher noticed that local people apparently continued the traditions of Mesolithic flint articles and that their pottery resembled the articles found in Belarus and Ukraine. Rimantienė was the first to combine all the monuments of this type into one Neolithic culture of Neman with different stages of its development (e.g., Dubičiai, etc.). This culture, which had lived in the territories of present-day Lithuania, Belarus, northern Ukraine and north-east Poland was soon named by the archaeologists of different countries as the Neman culture (Telegin, 1968, p. 223; Černjanskij, 1987; Kempisty and Sulgostowska, 1976, etc.). In this way, the archaeologist gave the name to the first culture of the early and middle Neolithic peri-

od which is universally recognized in Eastern Europe. In fact, Rimantienė noted that the features of the Neman culture continued right up until the Bronze Age (Rimantienė, 1994, pp. 23–146).

In investigating the Neolithic Neman culture settlements, examples of different stages of development pottery and flint artifacts were discovered, but these investigations only confirm the already established theories about the Neolithic in Lithuania (Marcinkevičiūtė, 2016, p. 53).

In a similar period, the Narva culture was found in western and northern Lithuania. The cultural layers of the Neman culture are mostly found in sand up to present day; meanwhile, the cultural monuments of the Narva culture are found on the coasts of turfy lagoons and lakes. The first monuments of this culture were discovered and explored in Estonia not far from Narva city (the origins of the name of the culture traces back to here). Rimantienė was the first to name part of the monuments of the Šventoji complex explored in Lithuania as monuments of the Narva culture and this name gradually became entrenched in Estonia first (Jaanits, 1959, pp. 122–124; Gurina, 1967, p. 144), later in Lithuania (Rimantienė, 1979), and eventually in Latvia (Loze, 1979). To analyze these monuments from the cultural and chronological perspective, Rimantienė developed a universal (not only in Lithuania) and applied up to this date categorization of the shapes of the necks of pots of the Narvian ceramics, which is based on their resemblance to capital letters *I*, *C*, *S*, and several derived intermediate shapes (Rimantienė, 1979).

## TOWARDS THE SYNTHESIS AND INTRODUCTION OF LITHUANIAN STONE AGE MATERIAL TO THE WORLD

Analyses carried out by Rimantienė were always accompanied by syntheses. Perhaps it is best seen in her milestone (both in terms of Lithuania and the entire Baltic region) work published in 1984, namely *The Stone Age in Lithuania*, the second, revised, complemented and adjusted for archaeology students edition of which appeared in 1996.

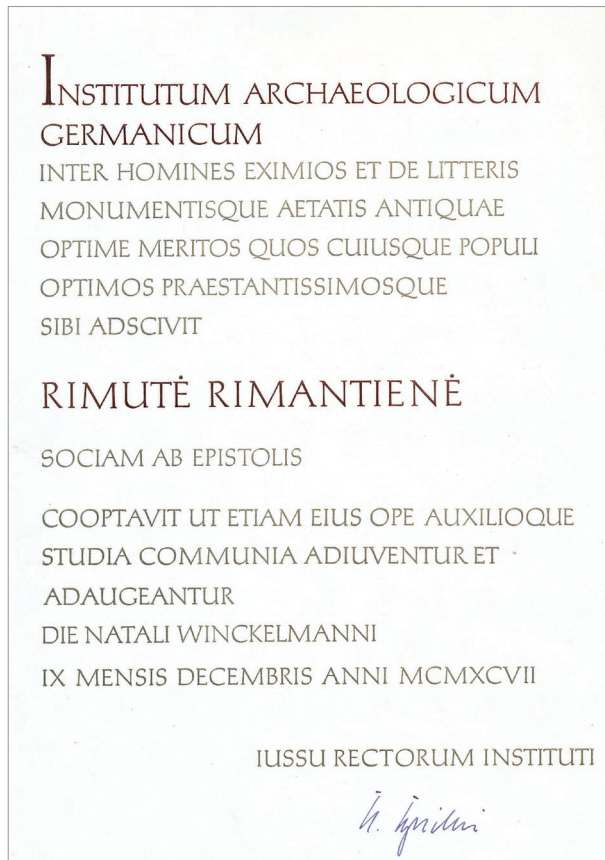
Before this synthetic work, there were only monographs devoted to individual Stone Age monuments in the countries of the east Baltic Region. Most of the material on the best archeologically explored region –

Prussia – was lost during World War II; thus, this monograph became the real storehouse for the surveys on the Stone Age to all who were and are interested in the Stone Age in this region. The work summarizes the material of almost 200 monuments of the Stone Age. The sequence of archaeological facts would be bare and its interpretation would have remained limited if the author had not employed the scientific knowledge opportunities of the time. For the first time in Lithuania, this monograph had used carbon dating for the findings and monuments to the maximum benefits it could have provided. One more characteristic of this monograph is that nothing is analyzed without palaeogeographic data. It was tried to link all monuments to climate change, evolution of coastal lagoons, lakes and river basins, and this allowed the chronology of monuments (even the oldest ones) to be specified, as well as giving a better understanding and reconstruction of the living environment of the people of those times. Rimantienė compared and drew parallels between her concepts and linguistic data; she perfectly used hydronic, mythological and ethnological facts. She devoted attention to the physical composition of the oldest inhabitants of the region and to their burial customs; therefore, for the first time, the monograph interpreted the anthropological findings of the necropolises of Kirsna, Turlojiškė, Plinkaigalis, Veršvos, Donkalinis, as well as some other key necropolises of Latvia and Prussia in a more liberate manner.

After the publication of Rimantienė's monograph, which was devoted to the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods, in 1971, no new material which would essentially change the chronological or cultural interpretation of these periods has since been found. The monograph was only complemented with new findings on the monuments of southern Lithuania. Nevertheless, the greater experience of the author and data of new surveys in the neighboring countries provided in that work provided even more linkage of the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic cultures with the context of all the European cultures of the time.

For the first time in Lithuanian historiography, the author provided a synthesis of explorations on the Lithuanian Neolithic monuments referring to the monographs of the major researchers of Neolithic settlements and to unpublished material from recently surveyed set-

tlements of the period. In accordance with unique monuments surveyed by herself in the complex of Šventoji and Nida, southern Lithuania, and using some of the material of the surveys of her students on the surrounding territories of the river Kretuonas and Lake Biržulis, she discussed all the main Lithuanian Neolithic cultures, namely the Neman, Narva and Corded Ware (Bay Coast Culture), as well as their chronology, interaction, destinies of the old local Narva and Neman cultures, together with the development of cultural communities. The author's persuasive argument shows how Indo-European cultures (Neolithic in the southern part of Lithuania, and the Narva culture in the western and northern parts of the country) took over the influence of the cord ware, new material and spiritual cultural values brought by new inhabitants, new traditions of painting (first scenic), the elements of the worldview and symbolic way of thinking in different periods and on different intensity levels. Specific archaeological questions, namely the chronology of monuments, the stratigraphy, the problems of cultural affiliation, were first of all interesting to the explorers of the Stone Age, and the chapters devoted to the portable and scenic painting, amber, bone and horn jewellery, understanding of the world and religions of people of those times, written in the science of Lithuania for the first time, were appealing to everyone who shared an interest in the origins of Lithuanian art, religion and culture. Many of these subjects were discussed in individual publications by the author and in her reports given at scientific conferences, also in an exhaustive monography on the Šventoji Neolithic Settlements complex published in German: *Die Steinzeitfischer an der Ostseelagune in Litauen*. The third very important monograph on the Neolithic settlement of Nida published five years later (Rimantienė 1989) focused on the analysis of material on the culture of Rzucevo and its most important monument – the Nida settlement site. During the period of Soviet occupation, the publishing opportunities were limited in Lithuania. In 1989, a small and thin book of poor quality, titled *Nida: Senujų Baltų Gyvenvietė (Nida: An Old Baltic Settlement)*, was published. Before the Second World War, monuments of this culture were much studied by German and Polish (Rzucevo settlement) and German (Tolk Micko, Suchacz and other settlements) researchers. Unfortunately, most of the material on these monu-



Diploma of member and correspondent of the German Archaeological Institute. 1997.

ments was lost, part of it was published based on the old scratch paintings (Żurek, 1954; Kilian, 1955). Surveys on these monuments carried out in the recent decades in the Vistula delta and the Bay of Puck have lived to see only preliminary publications by Danuta Król and Ryszard F. Mazurowsky. There have been some more publications on these monuments in the recent decades focusing on the findings in the Kaliningrad area (Zalcman, 2004). Thus, even more than three decades after the publication by Rimantienė, Nida still remains the largest and most important underlying monument explored in the south-eastern Baltic region (in the period from 1973 to 1978, the area of over 4600 m<sup>2</sup> was explored, more than 100,000 fragments of pottery alone were found). By this reason, the Nida material, preserved in the holdings of the National Museum of Lithuania, in a permanent archaeological exhibition, receive the greatest interest from foreign researches. That was the reason for Rimutė Rimantienė to return to material gathered from Nida and prepare a new edition of this

book in English: well documented and supplemented with both decent quality illustrations and new texts. “The material is the most important thing as it does not change, while the attitude towards it and the conclusions drawn from it change with every generation” (Rimantienė, 2016). This monograph generalized a huge amount of material and provided an understanding of the material and spiritual culture of the late Neolithic societies. Public and household life, a set of tools used in early agriculture, remnants of fruits of plants, work tools made of flint and stone, amber jewellery, and the earliest art scenes on the sides of pots in Lithuania were all covered in great detail. The most important value of this monograph is the statistical processing of the underlying monument of the Bay Coast culture, namely of the shapes of pots of the cord ware pottery and of their ornamentation system, which will serve as the basis for the future analysis of other monuments of this culture not only in Lithuania, but in the north of Poland as well. With great respect to the author and her industriousness and diligence, I am delighted that she and the National Museum of Lithuania are organizing a considerably supplemented and updated version of this monograph which will not be limited, as it was in Soviet times, by the number of quires, the size and number of illustrations nor will it be printed on the worst quality of paper, which was used for publishing scientific monographs at that time. The material on Nida will sparkle with full beauty and richness of this cultural monument and will reveal the value of scientific analysis. It will take an especially important place in the context of the acquisitions of the entire Baltic Region in the Neolithic period. Rzucewo culture generally was determined by many features of choices of settlement places; main settlements were established by the Curonian Lagoon, Vistula Lagoon and the Bay of Gdansk. The geographical situation, seas and bays fauna, amber resulted in many common features of this culture settlements (Butrimas *et al.*, 2016, pp. 102–115). Later archaeological excavations in the coastlands of Lithuania and Poland, from the Kashubian-inhabited territories in the west to the nowadays Samogitian-inhabited territories in the north-western Lithuania – Minija river and Biržulis Lake, showed that during the Late Neolithic period these lands were inhabited by Rzucewo (Bay Coast Culture) or at least belong to the zone of this culture’s influence



Near the baroque Chateau Štiřin with Christian Strahm. 1990.

(Butrimas, Ostrauskienė 2004, pp. 121–144; Vengalis *et al.*, 2015, p. 85).

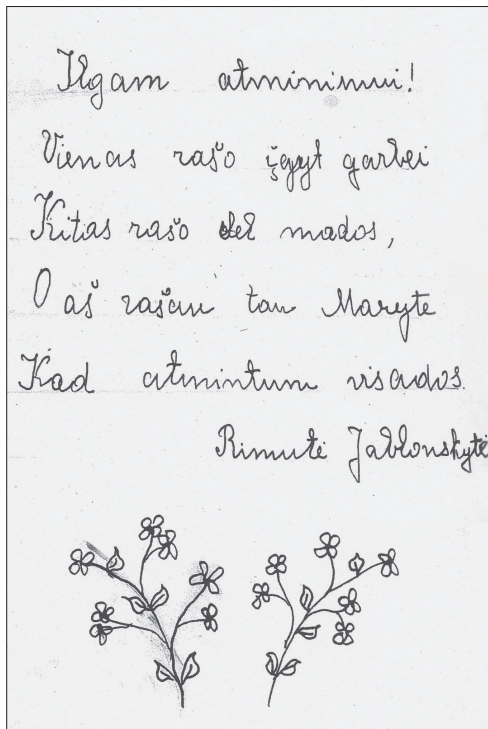
Rimantienė devoted both of the aforementioned monographs to the issues of Baltic origin. The author feels the capacity and limits of every science and this is explicitly seen in her reasoning on the origin of the Baltic people: “The question of where the Balts lived is answered by linguists [...], the question of when in this case the archaeologists and anthropologists respond together [...], and the question of how can be answered by the archaeologists only” (Rimantienė, 1984, p. 284). Based on the latest genetic research (Haak *et al.*, 2015, pp. 137–139), the theory of Gimbutienė on the origins of the Indo-Europeans and the spread of the Kurgan culture, as well as the theory of Rimantienė on the south-eastern Baltic region becoming Indo-European, and the differences of the haplogroups between the inhabitants of the Mesolithic-early Neolithic and late Neolithic period in the region once more proved the probability of these theories even several decades after their announcement (Gimbutas 1956; Rimantienė 1980a; 1980b; 1989).

#### THE INTRODUCTION OF MATERIAL ON LITHUANIA AND THE NEIGHBOURING REGION TO EUROPE AND THE WORLD

The priority of introducing the material on the Stone Age of the region to the world and Europe is also at-

tributed to the founder of the Lithuanian School of the Stone Age. In 1952, the first works of Rimantienė were published in Russian and introduced the Lithuanian Stone Age to the scientists and researchers of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Bloc first. Her monograph *Palaeolithic and Mesolithic Period in Lithuania* (1971) was also published in Russian, and between 1952 and 2004, over 30 scientific articles were published; a large number of them, as their reviews and quotations show, were available to and noticed by Polish and other former Soviet Bloc archaeologists. In some rare cases, these publications would reach the most important European and world libraries. This most frequently happened through personal contacts, which Rimantienė, as her correspondence shows, maintained with the most prominent archaeologists worldwide.

She managed to establish contacts with the science world on the other side of the iron curtain fairly early. Although they were severely aggravated by the fact that Rimantienė belonged to the category of famous Soviet Union archaeologists who would not be allowed to travel to foreign archaeology congresses and conferences and that Vilnius (unlike Moscow and former Leningrad, present-day Saint Petersburg) was among the cities which were not recommended for the visits of foreign archaeologists. The especially rich and abundant correspondence of the researcher (thousands of letters which are presently stored at



Entry by Rimutė Jablonskytė in the memory album of Marija Alseikaitė. 1930s.

her home) speak of her close contacts with the most prominent foreign archaeologists. The first representative of the free world to find Rimantienė was, at that time, the young archaeologist Wolfgang Taute. They would exchange not only books and reprints – he also used the material sent by her, namely articles and pictures, in the summarized work designated for the Palaeolithic period in Europe (Taute, 1968). Later, she developed relations with an investigator of cord ware and early metallurgy from southern Germany, Christian Strahm, and Klaus Wolf, a researcher of massive multi-layered archaeological Stone Age monuments in Switzerland. They both visited Rimantienė in Vilnius when Lithuania became independent. Thanks to Rimantienė, her students Adomas Butrimas, Marius Iršėnas and Vygantas Juodagalvis had a chance to take part in their expeditions and give lectures at the University of Freiburg (1993, 1998). Back in Soviet times, in 1979, Rimantienė happened to pay a visit to Bernhard Gramsch, a renowned explorer of Mesolithic bog sites, in East Germany.

A box of letters from Scandinavia and Finland received from the most prominent 20<sup>th</sup> century explor-

ers of the Stone Age, namely, Aarne Elias Äyräpää, Torsten Edgren, Carl Fredrik Meinander (the early ones), and later, from 1990, sent by Mats P. Malmer, an active supporter of independence (who participated in meetings in Stockholm square supporting the Baltic countries on a weekly basis), have been stored to date. They exchanged literature, and later Rimantienė was invited to pay a visit in Stockholm (Rimantienė, 2010, p. 19).

Letters received from Alseikaitė-Gimbutienė in the US are interesting in at least several aspects. First, the letters were, for well-known reasons, written under the pseudonym of Sullivan. The letters were about archaeology and conferences. Much concern was expressed about invitations to the conferences in Dubrovnik (Moscow would not issue a visa) and Dublin. The latter, which was held after the establishment of the Reform Movement of Lithuania, was finally visited after a number of adventures in Moscow. The researcher was also corresponding with Antanas Mažiulis, her studies colleague, who found himself in the US. The letters contain no surnames, only nicknames or code names of persons known to the two correspondents only; of such coded references, examples would be *Papuninis* for Professor Jonas Puzinas, *Marytė* for Marija Gimbutienė, etc.

The richest and longest correspondence was kept up with the Latvian archaeologists of common fate: her good friend Ilze Loze wrote about her expeditions, findings and conferences; they had also visited each other's expeditions. Rimantienė carried on correspondence with Janis Graudonis, Liucija Vankina, Ilga Zagorska and Eduard Sturm, a Latvian researcher of the Stone Age, who ended up emigrating to Bonn and was very diligent in sending reprints and books to her.

Rimantienė and Nina Gurina, director of the Institute of Archaeology and an archaeologist from Leningrad, were bound by a long-lasting correspondence and friendship. Nina Gurina patronized archaeologists from the Baltic countries, Belarus and Ukraine. Her conferences and symposia, organised several times a year, could be visited not only by Rimantienė: she would always take her doctoral students with her. Leningrad became one of the contact venues not only for relations with archaeologists from the west of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, but was also the “window





Rimutė Rimantienė (in the middle) with her colleagues at the conference “A Decade of Complex Explorations in the Basin of Lake Biržulis” in Varniai. 1987.

to Europe”, the opportunity to meet Danish, Finnish and Polish archaeologists, to get news on the explorations of the Stone Age in these countries, to establish contacts and exchange literature. It was here that Rimantienė developed a close relationship and started a long-lasting correspondence with Dmitro Telegin. He and his student, Leonid Zalizniak, introduced Ukrainian archaeology to Rimantienė and her students. As seen from correspondence, Rimantienė also had professional relationships with archaeologists from Moscow (namely Svetlana Oshibkina, Dmitrij Krainov, Vanda Moshinskaja, Otto Bader, etc.). Her contact person for liaison with Belorussian archaeologists was Michal Černiauski and his students. Contacts with the Polish archaeologists are revealed by interesting letters from Zofija Sulgostowska, Elizabeth Kempisty, Hanna Więckowska, etc.

This long-lasting correspondence and scientific contacts of Rimantienė determined that material on the Stone Age in Lithuania, i.e., the illustrations, descriptions, reprints, monographs – most of which were sent by the researcher in person – would appear in the European atlases of archaeology, as well as in digests,

encyclopaedias, summarizing monographs and libraries. Rimantienė’s correspondence is an inexhaustible source for Lithuanian and European historians of archaeology science. It can also help them understand the extent of her personal effort to create an opening which would lead into the Stone Age of Europe and the Baltic region.

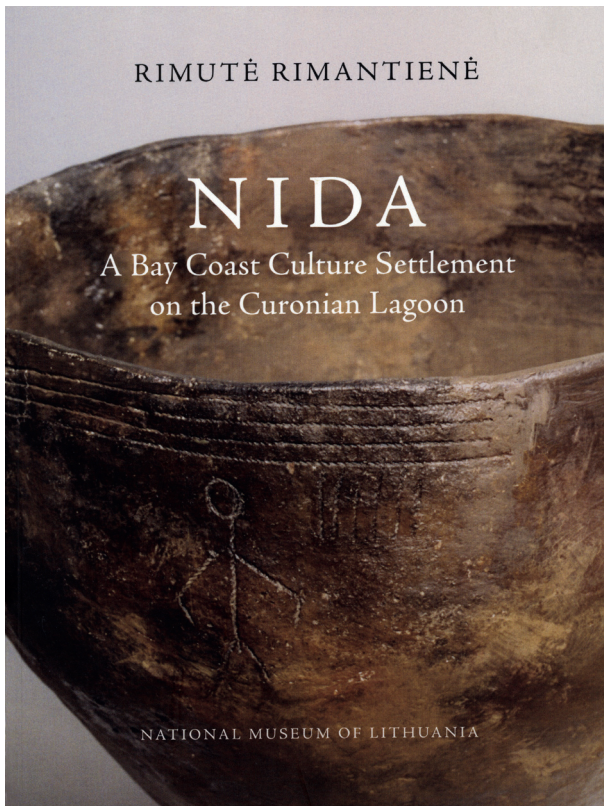
Due to the aforementioned contacts, in 1970, the first publication by Rimantienė appeared in Prague (in German), and in the period from 1970 to 2010, in other foreign countries or in foreign languages in Lithuania; almost 30 monographs, broad-scale studies and scientific articles were published all over the world. Data on the research of the Stone Age in Lithuania appeared in publications that are well known in the world of archaeology. The *Journal of Antiquity* (1992) published her article about the findings of Šventoji; a broad-scale study on Neolithic Lithuania and the entire eastern Baltic region was published by the *Journal of World Prehistory* (1992), several articles were published by the *Journal of Indo-European Studies* (1980, 1990, 1996) and publications intended for the Mesolithic period in Europe (1973).

Her monograph study in the German *The Stone Age in Lithuania* was published in 1994 (Rimantienė, 1994, pp. 23–146) by the Roman-German Commission, and the monograph on the archaeology of the Curonian Spit, *The Curonian Spit Through the Eyes of an Archaeologist*, was published in Lithuanian and German in 1999 by the publishing house of Vilnius Academy of Arts. An important monograph by Rimantienė, devoted to the results of long-lasting research on the complex of Šventoji, titled *Stone Age Fishermen at the Coastal Lagoon. Surveys of Šventoji and Būtingė*, was also published in German in 2005. This monograph, which was published by the National Museum of Lithuania, will continue to be a fundamental reference book for many decades to come, not only in Lithuania and Europe, but for anyone who wants to know about the Neolithic period in the eastern Baltic region.

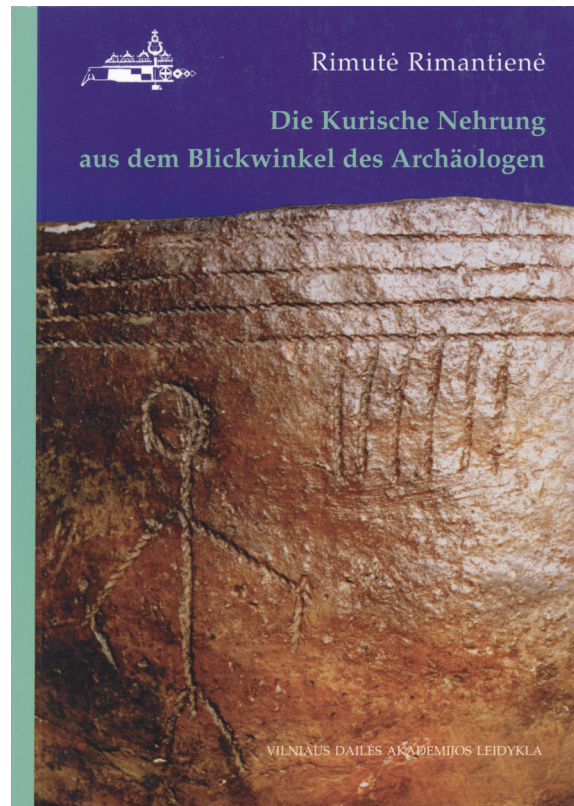
I would like to focus more on the latter monograph as it is the most important present-day publication for those who want to learn about the Lithuanian Neolithic period. Explorations of the complex of peat bog Neolithic monuments of Šventoji laid the grounds for many explorations of monuments of this group in Lithuania. It was the main school for Rimantienė's students and gained the attention of international science (co-project of the Lithuanian Institute of History and the University of Bergen, 1998–2000). Material collected during these explorations and later, and which has been particularly and expertly preserved and restored, has become the basis of the archaeological exposition of the Stone Age in the National Museum of Lithuania. Rimantienė researched the complex of Šventoji and Būtingė for as long as 24 years (1966–1972, 1982–1998). She explored an area of 10,300 m<sup>2</sup> in 42 archaeological locations and bog sites. All archaeological findings were made in a complex manner along with palaeogeographic, paleozoological, ichtiological, anthropological, petrographic, and radiocarbon surveys. Experts of wood and fibre materials had helped, too. In this way, through the combined efforts of the author and the abovementioned experts, the daily life of hunters, fishermen, gatherers, amber workers and ancient land cultivators in the region of the coastal lagoon in western Lithuanian in IV–III millennium B.C. was re-created. Over 10,000 samples of hunting, fishing, communication, gathering, amber, stone

articles and tens of thousands of pottery samples have been collected. The monograph has a logical structure and explicit style. To bring the Neolithic culture back to life, almost a thousand publications in different languages were used. This, undoubtedly, was determined by the fact that Rimantienė is perhaps the only archaeologist in Lithuania, and maybe beyond, to speak such a high number of European languages.

I would very much like to draw your attention to one more clearly expressed aspect in this monograph and the exposition of the National as well as other museums: the material on the area of Šventoji has so far been the best (in a most professional manner) preserved and restored material of the Stone Age peat bog monuments. There can be no doubt that this is a very important aspect of the activities carried out by the founder of the Archaeological School of the Stone Age in Lithuania. On the one hand, she managed to find substances which were not known to Lithuanian restoration specialists, among them, the wet (“liquid”) wood of the Stone Age, fibre, amber, also managing to find restoration specialists and get them interested in new restoration technologies, the chance to acquire the highest qualification in this area and to establish special laboratories. On the other hand, it is hard for the modern-day archaeological generation to understand how Rimantienė managed to preserve wooden articles using polyethylene glycol received from her colleagues from Denmark and Leningrad, as well as Lithuanian colleagues in foreign countries, which was not available in Lithuania at that time. Furthermore, the restoration specialist Bronė Pinkevičiūtė demonstrated creativity and ingenuity when giving the preserved findings an appearance suitable for expositions (Rimantienė, 2005, p. 16). Later, after Lithuania had regained its independence and she could go abroad, to Germany and other countries, Rimantienė amazed the local restoration specialists by her professional knowledge in the field as she had experience of restoration activities in her explorations. She continued writing down restoration methods applied abroad as well as other news (Rimantienė, 2010, pp. 392–393); she would bring all these news and knowledge back to the Lithuanian restoration specialists. The archaeologist herself would perform the initial necessary preservation for articles found during the expeditions with the



The cover of R. Rimantienė monography “Nida. A Bay Coast Culture Settlement on the Curonian Lagoon”, where the material of the most important Settlement of Bay Coast Culture (Rzucewo Culture) in Lithuania was published. Vilnius, 2016.



The cover of R. Rimantienė monography “Die Kurische Nehrung aus dem Blickwinkel des Archäologen”. Vilnius, 2016.

help of professional restoration specialists. The fact that today we can see perfectly restored findings from Šventoji and other localities in the exposition of the National Museum of Lithuania is due to Rimantienė’s professionalism and organizational skills (findings from neighboring countries were not so successful; for instance, there are almost no wooden articles from the complex of Sarnate peat bog monuments or similar findings in other countries remaining). These archaeological artifacts – often pictures, drawings and photographs made by the author herself during the expeditions, or pictures of other painters – were published already in the early monographs devoted to the monuments of Šventoji (Rimantienė 1979; 1980a; 1980b; 1992). The author has a talent for painting: she learned professional painting in Kaunas art school and in the painting studio of Adomas Galdikas.

One further important advantage of this book is the reconstruction of the spiritual life of the ancient coast

settlers. By referring to the ornamentation of the pottery, amber jewellery and symbols in them, and the objects of the pre-historic painting of Šventoji, which is well-known throughout Europe today (the sculpture of a wooden god, sculptural images of moose heads), the religions of inhabitants of the Narva, Globular Amphora, and Pomeranian corded ware cultures, their art and rituals of sacrifice were reconstructed. Rimantienė was the first researcher in most of the explorations, discoveries and publications on the Stone Age of Lithuania. Explorations on Lithuanian Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods, explorations of Šventoji, publications as well as the book discussed here prove that we can reasonably consider her as the first researcher and explorer of Lithuanian pre-historic art, the beginnings of agriculture and the set of agricultural tools, such as wooden ploughs and oxbow models. She was the first to find and introduce to the world of science the Stone Age plants of Lithuania, she explored the

oldest weaving techniques, amber workshops and articles found in the Stone Age settlements as well as the amber trade. The very explorations of Šventoji stimulated research of the Lithuanian peat bog monuments and laid the foundations for their methodology which were very important for the exploration paths of her students. This publication is the result of her long hours of work. It was timely and promoted further archaeological explorations of the Baltic region. A detailed announcement of the material in two languages (Lithuanian and German) made this material available to all local and foreign researchers, to the lovers of our oldest history and to the young people who explore archaeology and art history.

What personal traits of the researcher determined such a fruitful road of explorations, their publication, development of the school of the Lithuanian Stone Age, all of which have had a huge effect on the entire Baltic region?

Rimantienė's personal characteristics as a scientist, colleague and loyal companion as well as the importance of her works have been accurately defined by her long-year colleagues Lembit Jaanits from Estonia, Ilze Loze from Latvia and Gintautas Česnys. "She had always not only untiringly collected material, but also thoroughly processed and analyzed it. In addition, the analysis was always accompanied by the synthesis of her works [...]. There have always been friendly relationships among the Lithuanian and Estonian archaeologists. Rimantienė's personality has played an important role in the development of these relationships" (from the letter of Jaanits to the author of this publication dated to the 1995). As a person and a scientist, she was described by her long-time colleague and companion Ilze Loze as follows: "Rimutė Rimantienė is a colleague who deserves to be not only respected but also loved [...] for her loyal friendship, because she could always put her own work aside if her colleagues needed any help. Her responsiveness, humanity, benevolence, the warmth of her heart characterize Rimutė as a person, and her firmness, perseverance, drive, iron discipline define her as a scientist. Her extraordinary industriousness, combined with her knowledge of multiple languages, puts her on the same level as the most prominent archaeologists of the Bal-

tic basin. Her excellent diggings in the Curonian Spit and Šventoji complemented not only the archaeology of Lithuania: we have all become considerably richer [...]" (from the letter of Ilze Loze to the author of this publication dated 1995). Prof. Gintautas Česnys wrote in 1995, in an article intended for her birthday, as follows: "Rimutė Rimantienė, in the eyes of our generation, is the most professional archaeologist, the authority of the spiritual and material Stone Age culture, the founder of the School of the Lithuanian Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic archaeology and a good spirit [...] we admire her extraordinary professionalism and firmness of opinion; however, there is no unnecessary assertiveness and harmful fantasy [...]; apart from her analytical mind and methodological consistency, Rimutė Rimantienė has an artistic streak: she has painted many of her findings herself when preparing her archaeological works – articles and books – for publication [...]" (Česnys, 1995). Rimantienė has an excellent feeling for language. She "knows how to correctly and in a picturesque manner, but also in a very simple way, put even the most complex archaeological and historical matters. All the times I collaborated with her on articles, her text made me take great efforts in attempting to write in a beautiful manner – the way she did. The latest example of her elegant language is her last book intended for young people and titled *Lietuva iki Kristaus (Lithuania Before Christ)*. The book is written in such an expressive manner, you would think you were reading a piece of fiction" (*the same source*). It most probably comes from her family (her grandfather Jonas Jablonskis is considered the father of the standard Lithuanian language); she also had excellent teachers of Lithuanian language and literature in the gymnasium of Aušra. All these facts determined that Rimantienė was the first to write about the Stone Age in a professional manner and that she was the first to coin some archaeological terms. Her terminology contains a lot of diminutives, as she believes in naming items in accordance with whether they are big or small. Therefore, when describing them, instead of saying that an object is big or small, she makes a diminutive form of a noun. Perhaps it comes from her home – Suvalkija (Sudovia) – where people tend to speak in diminutives.

## AN EDUCATOR OF SCIENTISTS

The scientific authority of Rimantienė, which is universally recognized in the Baltic region and Eastern Europe, is proven by the fact that she was the supervisor of 26 scientific dissertations defended in Vilnius, Minsk, Riga, Kiev and Moscow; she was an official opponent, the chairwoman of the doctoral committee or the member of the habilitation committee (*bibliography of Rimutė Rimantienė ... 2000*, p. 26).

It was my fortune to have had the opportunity to listen to her lectures in my third year of studies and to write a modest course paper on the subject of the Stone Age. Now, when I look back at the corrections, and remarks made by her in that paper, I can see that she took even the first steps of her students to the Stone Age seriously. In all those works, be it the first steps of a university thesis or dissertation supervised by her, you can feel her firm, wise and generous remarks as a supervisor. She was also very generous with books and reprints from the excellent home library collected for several decades by her and her father. Without them, our work would have been almost impossible in Soviet times, as the Lithuanian libraries were very poor and lacked materials for researchers of the Stone Age, who were cut off from the world by the iron curtain. The same could be said by other postgraduate and doctoral students of hers, namely Algirdas Girininkas, Tomas Ostrauskas, Vygantas Juodagalvis, as well as her dissertation students from Latvia, Russia and Belarus. As a teacher, she had one more feature: she would always take her students, later postgraduates, too, to every symposium and conference; the older ones – to Leningrad and Riga, the younger ones – in the times when independent Lithuania was freed from the Soviet occupation – to Germany, Poland, Denmark, Swe-

den and Switzerland. In this way, she broadened their horizons and helped them establish their first contacts with the archaeologists of the neighboring countries as well as with those from all over the world.

During my many conversations with Rimantienė, I tried to find out which archaeological school she considers herself to belong to and which countries' works on the Stone Age influence her most. First, she favored the positivist German archaeological school, which was mostly determined by literature in German that was collected by her father, also her teacher Jonas Puzinas, a student of Heidelberg University. Later, however, some drawbacks came to light: Germans are excessive typologists; they avoid getting involved in reconstructive archaeology. They also have some other fears which Rimantienė finds unacceptable, e.g., they are afraid of religious matters, after WWII they tend to avoid ethnical questions, they are indifferent to explorations of reconstruction of spiritual culture. The deviation of this school and the focus on typological and chronological archaeology no longer impress her.

Following the explorations of peat bog monuments in Šventoji and Šarnelė, she found the works of the Scandinavians (especially Danish) as well as some other archaeologists from Germany, and the Swiss archaeological school very attractive – maybe for their analysis of wooden articles.

Having reviewed the road of scientific work by Rimantienė, we understand that many statements about the millennium-years-old Stone Age history cannot be verified in a few years. Most of the conclusions drawn by this scientist have resisted the tests and challenges of several decades or even half a century. She saw everything from a wide perspective, she worked in the deepest layers of our history, she firmly and distinctly drew the main lines which obliged her students to go forward and delve even deeper.

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