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Fields of research: Indo-European studies, Baltic, especially Old Prussian, Slavic languages.

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AISČIAI. KILMĖ

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This extraordinarily impressive volume consists of the following parts: Introduction (pp. 7–17); Chapter I – The Balts in Lithuanian history (pp. 19–28); Chapter II – Polyethnicity in the Baltic world (pp. 31–40); Chapter III – Balts and Slavs (pp. 43–55); Chapter IV – Balts and Aestians (pp. 57–78); Chapter V – The beginnings of the Balts and Aistians (pp. 81–88); Chapter VI – Goths in the heart of Aistian culture (pp. 91–121); Chapter VII – The origin of Aistians and the territory inhabited by them (pp. 123–142); Chapter VIII – The Gothic-Gepid, or Wielbark, culture and its characteristics (pp. 145–157); Chapter IX – The great spread of the Aistians (pp. 159–169); Chapter X – The great spread of the Aistians on the maps (pp. 171–203); Chapter XI – The great spread of the Aistians in Lithuanian archaeological material (pp. 205–244); Chapter XII – On the track of the great spread of the Aistians (pp. 247–276); Chapter XIII – Aistians in the Old Iron Age (10–450 years A.D.) (pp. 279–293); Lithuanian summary (pp. 295–306); English summary (pp. 307–320); German summary (pp. 321–334); Russian summary (pp. 335–348); Sources (pp. 349–361); Text references to personal names (pp. 363–369); Text references to place names (pp. 370–379). There is also a vast number of maps, drawings, diagrams and pictures of archaeological findings.

In the introduction Jovaiša (p. 7) writes that Kazimieras Būga said that the Prussians and Lithuanians, Latvians, Semigalians, Selonians, and Curonians are to be called Astians. Other scholars have said that Aistians is a group name because Tacitus wrote „Aestiorum gentes“; i.e., the Aistian peoples. It is difficult to know who the Aistian peoples might have been at the time when Tacitus was writing. One might believe that Tacitus had in mind the mouth of the Vistula, Sambian and Lithuanian coastal Aistians because it is just those coasts that are richest in amber, the collection of which Tacitus considered an important distinguishing feature of the Aistians.

In an effort to establish the area inhabited by the Aistians or West Balts one

meets with a number of complicated elements. Historical tradition is limited, one is led astray by the explanations and lack thereof of Baltic-Germanic and Baltic-Slavic relationships in the earliest times. Difficulties of Baltic, Germanic and Slavic ethnochronology play a role as well as the contemporary cultural tradition. Contemporary archeological thought shows what historical tradition means in the light of the history of the Aistian peoples (p. 9).

The western boundary of the territory ascribed to the Aistians is defined by the Sambian peninsula and the Masurian lake district, i.e., the cultures ascribed to the border of western Baltic Sambia-Notanga and Galindia which has been renamed the Bogačev culture. Thus the mouth and lower reaches of the Vistula are not included in the Aistian territory. At the same time German scholars of the fourth decade of the twentieth century, defining the boundary of the West Baltic burial mounds do not doubt the Baltic nature of the upper reaches of the Vistula. The mouth and the upper reaches of Vistula river have become the Gordian knot. (p. 9) Contemporary archaeological thinking has assigned them to Gothic history. Through the efforts of Polish, and Russian archaeologists and archaeologists of other nationalities the early times of the history of the Goths, who are not mentioned in any other written source than Jordanes' legend of the northern origin of the Goths, have been identified with the history of the people of the Wielbark culture. (p. 9) The birth of the Wielbark Gothic culture is constructed in the mouth of the Vistula, the path of the Gothic migration from the mouth of the Vistula to the west towards Pamaris, but later returning to the mouth of the Vistula and passing to the right bank of the Vistula towards the Black Sea merging into the development of the Černiachov cultural development which was formed in the second decade of the third century. The Wielbark culture and the history of its people is authentic, but the Gothic burden heaped on them is too heavy for critical analysis when one compares the written sources, archaeology and linguistic history (p. 9).

There has been then disagreement among the historians, linguists and archaeologists and two chronologies, the chronology of the formation of the language and the chronology of the material culture of the people using the language. Among the language historians there have been many opinions about the time and birth place of the Baltic, Slavic and Germanic languages. And at various times archaeologists have deepened this bottomless pit of opinions by offering countless and frequently contradictory theories about the place of origin of these peoples and the chronology of the stages of their development. (p. 9) This is particularly true in the archaeological sources about the Slavic peoples. Between the two disciplines – language history and archaeology – there has been a hardly surmountable divide, especially when in order to support various theories at various periods there ap-

peared ideological requirements. This was particularly noticeable during Nazi and Soviet times. (p. 9) Although linguistics and archaeology attained great successes, the ideological researches of the German and Slavic distant past gave a lack of objectivity in researching, e.g., Western Baltic history. (p. 9)

The contemporary cultural tradition which suggests that one decides ethnic questions with care when archeological culture is investigated is in its way correct. In the inhabited places and on the burial monuments there are no inscriptions which would permit the ascertainment of their ethnic origin. (p. 9)

Marija Gimbutienės' ascription of the Przeworsk culture to the Slavs is not remarkable here. (p. 10–11) The archeologists of Soviet times did that. Now this culture is unanimously identified with the Germans. It is so easy. (p. 11) Perhaps it would be just as easy to return the Wielbark culture to the Balts? Jovaiša's frequent reference to the political aspects of the opinions of other scholars begs the question as to whether he has a political aim in finding Baltic ethnicity where it was not found before. I have no opinion about many of these questions. I do believe, however, that scientific theories are social movements similar to religions and that they change from generation to generation. Whether a theory is correct or not is decided merely by a majority vote of the experts. And it is well known that in the course of time paradigms change (Kuhn 1970: 66–91).

The introduction (p. 15) also explains that the volume reviewed here *Kilmė* 'Origin' is only the first volume of a trilogy, the second volume to be entitled *Kapai ir žmonės* 'Graves and people' and the third *Archeologo užrašai* 'An archeologist's notes' (p. 15).

The author writes that it is generally accepted that Balts were created about 2200–2000 B.C. (p. 20) He attributes to Algirdas Girininkas the notion that the sources of the Baltic culture were formed already in the VI–V centuries B.C. (p. 20). He writes further that the world's linguists agree that the Prussian and Lithuanian languages belong to the oldest layer of the Indo-European languages. (p. 21) The notion of age with regard to language is rather tricky. It is better to use the term 'conservative' to denote the retention of ancient features. If we say that English and Lithuanian are both Indo-European languages one assumes that they both eventually derive from the same proto-language. Presumably there is a succession of generations speaking each language and that English and Lithuanian have the same age, i.e., the same number of years separate the common Proto-Indo-European language from contemporary English and Lithuanian. English, however, has apparently changed more than Lithuanian. E.g., an original Indo-European \**d-* in the word *dešimt* is more original than the *t-* in its English cognate *ten*. We assume that the *d-* is original since the majority of the other Indo-European languages have an initial *d-* in the cognate word (cf. Latin *decem*, Greek δέκα (déka), Sanskrit

*daša* etc. Of course, if one develops a sufficiently complex theory one could suppose that the English *t-* is original (cf. the Armenian cognate *tasn*) and that the *d-* in the other languages derives from a later voicing.

Many linguists avoid this question and adhere to the Balto-Slavic theory and say that „The Baltic and the Slavic languages were originally one language and so form one group“ (Beekes 1995: 22). See also Martinet 1986: 73–79, Watkins 29, 1998). I don't think that one could claim that a Dutch man, a French man and an American would have any political interest in that. I personally think the Balto-Slavic problem is insoluble, since whatever common changes the Baltic and Slavic may have could just as well be ascribed to parallel development.

In conclusion I would say that Jovaiša's thorough examination of the evidence and the ascription of the archaeological sites in the Vistula area to the Baltic peoples (Aistians) seems correct even to a non-Lithuanian. The detailed study and the erudition displayed are most admirable.

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