Materials of the East Lithuanian Barrows Culture from the area of Smorgon basing on the files from the territory of Silesia

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One may say that before the Second World War Silesia was the province of Third Reich (germ. Das Dritte Reich)1 that was most abundant in archaeological finds. It resulted not only from the fact that the region was very attractive for the settlers in particular periods but also from the good state of research here. It was in Breslau (Wrocław) where one of the first museums directed to archaeology was established in 1815 A.D. (Bandurska, 1998; Demidziuk, 1999, p. 176; 2000a, p. 9; 2001, p. 9) and archaeology was taught in university starting from 1822 A.D. (Gediga, 1998, s. 33-34). Also here a service for preserving the monuments acted from the middle of 19th c. A.D. (Kramarek, 1970, p. 212-213) basing on the unique act aimed to protect archaeological antiquities2. Additionally there were numerous regional scientific societies which collaborated with archaeologists3. Astoundingly, despite militant history of the region during 19th and 20th c. A.D. (Demidziuk, Żmudziński, forthcoming), changes in administration system (Davis, Moorhose, 2002, s. 243) and reorganization or relocation of particular institutions (Demidziuk, 2000a; 2001) roughly 80 % of files and 60 % of artifacts survived4. Unfortunately, almost all of local collections was destroyed5.

Until 1931 A.D., when the specialized institution was established to preserve archaeological relics from Province of Silesia (germ. Landesamt für vorgeschichtliche Denkmalpflege), the main Breslau museum was to collect them (Demidziuk, 1999, p. 8). Firstly (1815-1857) it was King's Museum of Art And Antiquities (germ. Königliches Museum für Kunst und Altertümer), then (1858-1899) Museum of Silesian Antiquities (germ. Museum Schlesischer Altertümer), and finally (1899-1930) Silesian Museum of Artistic Craftsmanship and Antiquities (germ. Schlesisches Museum für Kunstgewerbe und Altertümer). After the First World War it was supported by smaller regional, provincial and town museums (germ. Bezirk-, Kreis- Stadt- und Heimatmuseen)6. Their first aim was to gather, research and present artifacts from Silesia, but items from abroad were also included in collections. They appeared generally as a result of exchange between museums, namely Danish and German ones, but also as gifts of private donors. They were treated as teaching aids also after creation of the Institute of Prehistory and Middle Ages (germ. Institut für Vorund Frühgeschichte) on the local university (germ. Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Breslau) in 1936 A.D. Basing on the files that survived mainly in the

stroyed e.g. Museum of Lower Silesia in Legnica (germ. Niederschlesisches Museum Liegnitz), District Museum in Lubin (germ. Kreismuseum Lüben), City Museum in Głogów (germ. Stadtmuseum Glogau). Others, e.g. City Museum in Bolesławiec (germ. Stadtmuseum Bunzlau), Regional Museum in Złotoryja (germ. Heimatmuseum Goldberg), became devastated and robbed. Only not numerous ones survived, e.g. Sudety Museum in Jelenia Góra (germ. Sudetemuseum Hirschberg), Museum of Antiquities in Wałbrzych (germ. Altertumsmuseum Waldenburg), Regional Museum in Jawor (germ. Heimatmuseum Jauer).

¹ In present paper we deal with the area of Silesia as a province – Province of Silesia (germ. *Provinz Schlesien*), in its widest territorial boundaries from years: 1815–1919 and 1938–1940.

² Ist full name was: Ausgrabungsgesetz, Nr. 11342 vom 26. März 1914, together with detailed regulations: Ausführungsbestimmungen vom 30. Juli 1920 (Gummel, 1935; Kaufmann, 1987).

³ The most important ones were: Schlesische Gesellschaft für Vaterländische Kultur (Gerber, 1988); Verein für Geschichte und Alterthum Schlesiens (Wendt, 1904); Schlesischer Altertumsverein (Oehlert, 2007).

⁴ Naturally, the calculation is imprecise.

⁵ During the war and soon after there were utterly de-

⁶ For full list of them see F. Geschwendt (1929).

Scientific Archive of the Archaeological Museum in Wrocław⁷, as well as published data⁸ we may reconstruct the collections possessed by Breslau museum but also regional ones before 1945 A.D.⁹

Apart from the finds from the North America, South America, Egypt, China, Middle East etc. ¹⁰ the collection embraced also finds from Balt lands ¹¹. One part of the gathering, consisting of 2 items survived in the Archaeological Museum in Wrocław (see Kontny, 2006). Before 1945 A.D. it was an element of gathering of Department of Prehistory (germ. *Prähistorische Abteilung*) in Silesian Museum of Art Craftsmanship and Antiquities. They were signed "Slobotka bei Smorgon in Litauen" and an information was added that it came from the barrow. As refers to chronology, the unknown individual wrote that they should be dated to 6th–9th c. A.D. what is surely wrong. We know also that the items were delivered by a certain Mr. Teichmann, merchant in wood from Breslau, living at

Auguststrasse 209. "Smorgon" means surely "Smorgonie" in former Oszmiana district (today: Smarhon', ray. loco in northern Belarus). It was famous from taming of wild bears (so called Smorgonie Academy) as well as baking regional delicacy: Smorgonie bagels (Słownik geograficzny, 1889, s. 915). Actually the attribution to the Lithuanian territory was wrong: in those times town Smorgonie was a part of Poland. More problematic is to place "Slobotka". It could have been Słobódka situated in Oszmiana district (today: ray. Ashmyany, obl. Hrodna, Belarus). Accordingly to "Geographical dictionary of Polish Kingdom and the other Slavonic nations", published in 1889 A.D. it was localized quite close to Smorgonie in Graużyszki com. The railway station laid on the railway Wilno-Minsk was placed here (Słownik geograficzny, 1889, s. 803) what seems to be important because of a wood trade and need to transport it. This is quite plausible as in Słobódka a group of barrows was found nearby the station, what is confirmed by the mention in supplementary edition of "Geographical dictionary of Polish Kingdom and the other Slavonic nations" (Słownik geograficzny, 1902, s. 595). From the other side the distance between Słobódka and Smorgonie was not very short: it was 33 wiorstas (Słownik geograficzny, 1889, s. 803), the equivalent of about 35 kilometers. Therefore we cannot exclude the possibility that we have to do with a very small settlement adjoining to Smorgonie, with a local name: Słobódka, which was very popular in those times 12. Let us to remind that we know a cemetery of the East Lithuanian Barrows culture also from Smorgonie (Rykov, 1914; Гуревич, 1962, c. 176, cat. no 118)13.

As refers to the items, there are a shield boss and a lance-head (Kontny, 2006)¹⁴. The first belongs to a quite popular type of conical umbos with wide brim

⁷ There are the following archival files: Ergenzungsband zu Büschings Catalog C (sign. MA/A/145); Kartei: A-G, H-L, M-R, S-Z (sign. MA/A/394a-d); Inventarbücher: 1925-1926, 1927-1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1932 (sign. MA/A/293-299); Zugangs-Verzeichnis: 1931-1942 (sign. MA/A/279-280; 283; 285-287; 289-291); Eingänge: 1931-1944 (sign. MA/A/281; 283-284; 288; 292).

⁸ There were special sections in silesian acrhaeological periodicals that served to publish among the others the information concerning new artifacts from abroad the Province of Silesia in collections of Museum of Silesian Antiquities and Silesian Museum of Artistic Craftsmanship and Antiquities: "Schlesiens Vorzeit" (also "Schlesiens Vorzeit" Neue Folge) Fundchronik (1866–1933); "Altschlesien" – Vermehrung der vorgeschichtlichen Sammlung des Schlesischen Museums für Kunstgewerbe und Altertümer (1922–1941); "Altschlesische Blätter" – Neue Bodenfunde (1926–1944).

⁹ It was possible mainly basing on the inventory books of particular museums, e.g. Karkonosze Museum in Jelenia Góra, Upper Silesia Museum in Bytom, Regional Museum in Jawor.

¹⁰ Artifacts from Silesian collections originating from outside the territory of Silesia are systematically published in "Silesia Antiqua", starting from its volume 42 – 2001 (Bartoszcze, 2001; Demidziuk, Szykulski, 2001; Kontny, 2006; 2008; Kotowicz, 2008; see also Chojecki, 2008; Lewicka, 2008).

¹¹ Files concerning this group are still present in Archaeological Museum in Wrocław (sign. MA/A/294 and sign. MA/A/394d). The existence of the artifacts is mentioned in pre-war periodicals (Neue Bodenfunde, 1929; Vermehrung, 1931).

¹² E.g. in the collection of the Wilno University Museum before the Second World War there were finds from Słobódka in Troki district (today: *r. Trakai*) stored (cat. no 21), what is proved by files from the archive of Włodzimierz Antoniewicz (in the Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw). We'd like to thank Wojciech Wróblewski, Ph.D. for the access to the archive.

¹³ Materials from excavations led by P. S. Rykov are described and drawn also in the files from the archive of Włodzimierz Antoniewicz.

¹⁴ We decided not to present them in details as they had been already published (Kontny, 2006).

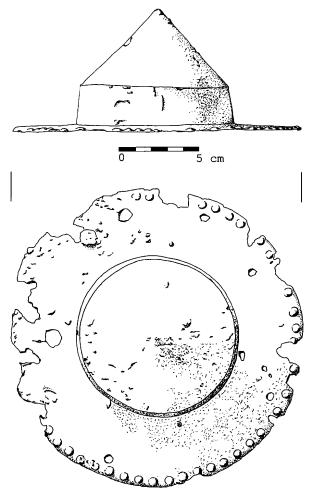


Fig. 1. **Shield boss from Slobotka**; drawn by B. Kontny. I pav. Antskydis iš Slabadėlės; piešė B. Kontny

furnished with pearl-like ornament made of small protuberances along the edges (Fig. 1). Probably is was fastened to the shield boards by five rivets but only two rivet-holes are clearly visible. Its surface was partly covered by fire patina. Such forms were typical of Balts milieu, namely East Lithuanian Barrows culture, although they appeared also in Semigalia (Kontny, 2006, p. 162–165). The prototypes of shield bosses ornamented in that way come most plausibly from

Scandinavian type 6a after J. Ilkjær (1990), that was typical of Group 7 of Scandinavian weapon-graves. The earliest, known examples with such an ornament are known from Hjartbro, Haderslev amt in Denmark (Stjernquist, 1955, p. 123, Pl. XLII: 3; Ethelberg, 1992, Fig. 4) dated to the beginning of Phase C1b (Ethelberg, 1992, p. 114, 122) or phases C1b–C2 (Ilkjær, 1990, p. 291, 360, table 197, Fig. 189). The second prototype could have been short conical forms from

bog site at Ejsbøl, Site North (Ørsnes, 1988, p. 83-84; Pl. 145: 1-2, 7-15), dated to the late stage of phase C2. Contrary to presumptions by M. Kazanski (1999, c. 409), it seems less plausible that it originated from very ornamental Scandinavian forms, fitted with silver and gilded mountings, e.g. Thorsberg (Raddatz, 1987, Pl. 79). It looks like pearl-like pattern umbos appeared soon after in the Balt milieu. It is proved by a find from grave 2 in barrow 13 from Neravai-Grigiškės, r. Trakai in Lithuania (Kuncienė, 1982, p. 50, Fig. 6:7). It is quite similar in shape to specimens from the Przeworsk culture Group 7b after K. Godłowski (1994, Fig. 1:59), what situates its chronology even at the turn of phases C1b/C2 although also slightly later. Therefore its appearance was almost synchronous or at least not far from the oldest Scandinavian examples¹⁵. The ornament of that kind flourished later on, during the late stage of phase D (D2/D3) and early stage of phase E (the equivalent of late 5th-early 6th c. A.D.), on conical shield bosses from the East Lithuanian Barrows culture (Vaitkevičius, 2005a, p. 78; Bliujienė, 2006, p. 131). They are known from east Lithuania: e.g. Popai-Vingeliai, r. Trakai, barrow 2; Pakrauglė, r. Vilnius, barrow 1; Pamusiai, r. Varėna, as well Belarus: e.g. Karobki, ray. Smarhon'; Zasvir, obl. Minsk, barrow 1; Tschornaya Luzha, obl. Minsk (Kontny, 2006, p. 162-165, with further literature). The umbo in question should be probably dated to times of greatest popularity of above forms i.e. late stage of phase D and early stage of phase E.

Umbos with pearl-like ornament were frequently accompanied in grave furnishing by lance-heads and axes with a narrow blade of different types, which are not precisely dating elements (see Malonaitis, 2002), kidney-shaped belt buckles type III.1a after E. Butėnas (Butėnas, 1999, p. 54) or H 23–24 after R. Madyda-Legutko (Madyda-Legutko, 1986), simple ornaments and knives. On the margin one should mention also exceptionally spotted iron pin-shaped objects with trapeze-like upper part. They were described as battle daggers (Bliujienė, 2006, p. 137, Fig. 7:12), pins (Vaitkevičius, 2005b, p. 85, Fig. 30)

or chisels (Iwanowska, 2006, s. 76, 86, 89). Actually we may find good parallels in the areas situated to south-west from Lithuania. Such items were relatively frequent in the Przeworsk culture (especially in Silesia), Luboszyce culture, on the territory of Bohemia and Moravia as well in the south-eastern Poland in phase D. The latter has been attributed to Heruls (Niezabitowska-Wiśniewska, forthcoming) what seems to be very controversial because of chronological discrepancies between their chronology and dating of the Heruls' migration. Their function isn't quite sure; some scholar thought that it was multifunctional whereas the others claimed that they served as punches or even Roman stili (Szydłowski, 1977, s. 19-20). In my opinion the most convincing idea was proposed by B. Niezabitowska-Wiśniewska who treated it as strikea-light (Niezabitowska, 2004, s. 284; Niezabitowska-Wiśniewska, forthcoming). Let me remind that such iron-steels (but smaller and narrower) were popular on the territory of Poland (Jonakowski, 1996, s. 93-94) starting from the Late Pre-Roman Period through the Roman Period. So far the earliest one comes from the beginning of phase A2. It was found in the Oksywie culture cemetery at Pruszcz Gdański, grave 170A (Pietrzak, 1997, s. 31, Pl. LXI:4) together with a fibula type D after J. Kostrzewski (1919) but the there are items dated similarly in the Przeworsk culture as well (Jonakowski, 1996, s. 93). There are also finds from the Wielbark culture dated to the Early Roman Period (Pietrzak, 1999) and the Younger Roman Period (Pietrzak, Rożnowski, 1996, s. 193, Fig. 2: 2). It the Balt territory they appeared probably in phase A3, what is confirmed by a find from the Bogaczewo culture necropolis at Stregiel Wielki, site II, grave 148 (Kontny, 2007a, p. 92-93, Fig. 11; Iwanicki, Juga, 2007, s. 54). This way of striking a light was used in the Bogaczewo culture also in the Late Roman Period (Iwanicki, Juga, 2007, s. 58). Therefore it seems probable that it prolonged in the Early Migration Period too.

The second specimen from that part of the collection was almost 30 cm long lance-head, also covered with fire patina (Fig. 2). Its attribution isn't utterly clear as parts of its blade didn't survive. Probably it is an example of type Ig after V. Kazakevičius (Kazakevičius, 1988) but type IVa and Ib are also possible. Therefore its chronology has very wide scope starting from 2nd c. A.D. up to phase E (6th c. A.D.), accordingly to

¹⁵ One cannot forget that there are slight discrepancies between Scandinavian and Central European chronologies, visible namely in the Younger and Late Roman Periods (compare e.g. Ilkjær, 1990; Godłowski, 1994).

V. Kazakevičius (Казакевичюс, 1988, с. 25–27, 43–44). It was fastened to the socket by a nail, not a rivet what seems to be the local Balt trait, characteristic not only for Lithuanian but also for Polish finds (Kontny, 2007b, p. 127).

Naturally, it is not clear whether both specimens come from the single object although it is not excluded.

Apart from the above finds also the second part of the collection existed in Silesia. It was located close to Wrocław, in Legnica (germ. Liegnitz) but the Lower Silesian Museum (germ. Niederschlesisches Museum) situated here wasn't subordinated to Wrocław (Fig. 3). Founded in 1879 A.D. firstly it was intended to collect artifacts from the region of Liegnitz but soon it started to muster finds from the whole area (germ. Bezirk). As refers to archaeological finds it competed even with Breslau museum, namely in 20's of 20th c. A.D. During the war, in February 1945, Soviets burnt down the seat of museum together with its whole collection so it completely disappeared (Firszt, 1994, p. 157-162; Demidziuk, 2000b, s. 43-45). Fortunately there remained traces of its existence, spread in particular written and photographical documentation. As refers to the finds in question only two notes survived: one in inventory book of Silesian Museum of Art Craftsmanship and Antiquities for years 1927-2816 (Fig. 4), the second in the scientific catalogue of the above museum (Fig. 5)17, both now stored in Scientific Archive of the Archaeological Museum in Wrocław. In first, apart from the typical notes with inventory numbers 786-788, it was written that steelworks "Paulinenhütte" from Nowa Sól (germ. Neusalz) made in 1928 copies of 3 early medieval artifacts dated to 8th c. A.D., basing on originals kept in Lower Silesian Museum in Liegnitz. The work was ordered by Silesian Museum of Art Craftsmanship and Antiquities and it costed 24 German marks (Reichsmarken). Similar information was published a few years later (Vermehrung, 1931) but in a shortened version. After 8 years, in 1936, the information in inventory book was supplemented by pictures of originals (traces of rust are clearly visible on them so surely we do not deal with copies), pro-

¹⁷ The chart named: *Smorgon i. Litauen*, is included in a part of the scientific catalogue (S-Z) and has signature No MA/A/394d.

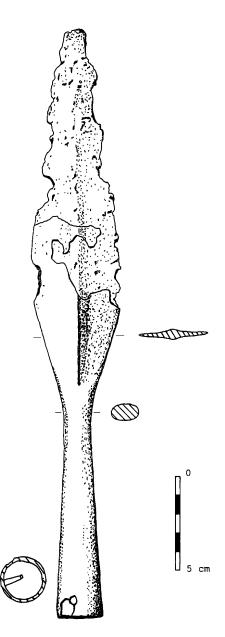


Fig. 2. Lance-head from Slobotka; drawn by B. Kontny. 2 pav. Ietigalis iš Slabadėlės; piešė B. Kontny

¹⁶ Actually there are two files – two books bound as one, with single signature: MA/A/294.

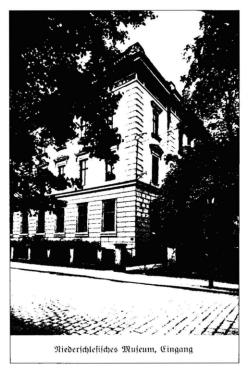


Fig. 3. Seat of the Lower Silesian Museum in Liegnitz; after "Mitteilungen: des Geschichts – und Altertums – Vereins für die Stadt und das Fürstentum Liegnitz", vol. 11, 1928 (1926–27).

3 pav. Žemutinės Silezijos muziejus Liegnitze; fotografija iš leidinio Mitteilungen: des Geschichts – und Altertums – Vereins für die Stadt und das Fürstentum Liegnitz, vol. 11, 1928 (1926–27).

bably taken by Fritz Geschwendt (Fig. 6). The second file enumerates the artifacts, describing them as Viking ones, repeats their chronology and adds that they came from a grave. One may be sure that the artifacts were recorded in Liegnitz museum before April 1, 1928 and their copies in Breslau museum before December 31, 1928¹⁸. Finding circumstances and a donor remain unknown. We should add that unfortunately also copies

kept in Breslau disappeared during war or post-war turmoils.

The Liegnitz collection comprised an umbo, and axe and a knife.

The shield boss (No 786) belonged to the same type as the find ascribed to Slobotka, depicted above. It also had the pearl-like ornament and was fastened with 5 rivets or nails, identically as in a case of the shield boss attributed to Slobotka (Kontny, 2006, p. 159). The latter fact in untypical for the majority of finds of that type that were fixed with only 4 rivets, so it seems to be a local trait. The following dimensions of the item are given on the chart: diameter 21,5 cm, inner diameter of the convexity 9,5 cm, height 9,5 cm, width of the brim 6,5 cm. It was slightly bigger than the find from Slobotka and as refers to proportions its brim was wider but generally they are very close to each other so its cultural affiliation is most probably the same. As refers to chronology, taking into consideration a similarity between the item from Smorgon its Lithuanian (e.g. Žvirbliai, r. Vilnius - Iwanowska, 2006, s. 121, Pl. CVIII; Krikštonys, r. Lazdijai, grave 2 - Казакевичюс, 1988, Fig. 48:5) as well Przeworsk culture parallels (find from Nowa Wieś Legnicka, Legnickie Pole com., grave 2 - Tackenberg, 1925, S. 65, Pl. 30:4 - attributed to 8 Group of weapon graves after K. Godłowski, i.e. dated to phases C3-D1) it will occur that most probably it should be dated to phase D.

The second artifact (No 787) was the iron axe with slightly convex and asymmetrical blade. In the vicinity of fixing area the projections were situated aimed to stabilize the handle. Its length was 18,5 cm, width of the blade 6,8 cm, width together with projections 9,3 cm and inner diameter of the hole 2,7 cm. The item should be attributed to type 9 after A. Malonaitis (Malonaitis, 2002)¹⁹. They are treated as battle-axes (Казакевичюс, 1988, c. 78–79). Although the group is not very differentiated (it embraces artifacts 15–20,4 cm long of weight 250–790 g), their chronology and proliferation was very wide: they appeared in east, south-east and north-east Lithuania from 5th till 10th c. A.D. (Malonaitis, 2002, p. 170)²⁰.

¹⁸ It is deduced from two notes concerning copies of artifacts: the former in the inventory book (year 1928) and the latter published in "Altschlesien": April 1, 1928 – March 31, 1929 (Vermehrung, 1931).

¹⁹ Results of researches concerning axes done by A. Tautavičius (1996, p. 105-108) seem to be not up-todate.

²⁰ As refers to paper by A. Malonaitis see Iwanowska, 2006, s. 61.

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Fig. 4. Information concerning Smorgon in the inventory book of Silesian Museum of Art Craftsmanship an Antiquities for years 1927–28 (MA O.MMW: DzDN-AN, sign. MA/A/394d); photo by T. Gąsior.

4 pav. Informacija apie radinius iš Smurgainių Silezijos meno, amatų ir senienų muziejaus inventorinėje knygoje (M. O.MMW: DzDN-AN, sign. MA/A/394d). T. Gąsioro nuotrauka

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Fig. 5. Information concerning Smorgon in the scientific catalogue of Silesian Museum of Art Craftsmanship and Antiquities (MA O.MMW: DzDN-AN, sign. MA/A/279). Photo by T. Gasior.

5 pav. Informacija apie radinius iš Smurgainių Silezijos meno, amatų ir senienų muziejaus moksliniame kataloge (MA O.MMW: DzDN-AN, sign. MA/A/279). T. Gąsioro nuotrauka

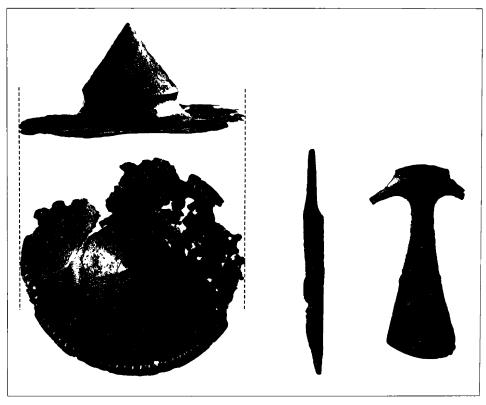


Fig. 6. Photograph of the finds from Smorgon taken by Fritz Geschwendt (?).

6 pav. Radinių iš Smurgainių nuotrauka. Autorius – Fritzas Geschwendtas (?)

The last item from Liegnitz collection was the long, narrow knife (No 788). It was ornamented with two parallel lines carved along its back. The following dimensions are put down: length 12,5 cm, length of the thong 5,7 cm, width of the blade 1,7 cm. Knives from the Balt tribes territory are not investigated thoroughly (see Bertašius, 2007) so its exact chronology cannot be stated firmly but it is not unwise to assume that the item in question should be dated closely to the other artifacts from the site the more so as similar knives are proved for the East Lithuanian Barrows culture (Bliujienė, 2006, p. 132–133, 136–137).

All three artifacts were originally covered with fire patina, although it is not noted in the files. Nevertheless careful examination of the photographs proves it without any doubt: it is visible on the upper part, the neck and partly on the brim of the umbo as well as on the vast surface of the axe and the knife's thong and part of the blade. It proves that we deal with items from cremation graves what is significant for the chronology. In the East Lithuanian Barrows culture firstly inhumation had been practiced (Bliujienė, 2006, p. 125), and cremation graves started to appear in the first decades of the 5th c. A. D. (Tautavičius, 1996, p. 48–52; Bliujienė, 2006, p. 127). Long-lasting cemeteries with cremation graves (a few in one barrow) existed in the mid of the 5th c. A. D.-beginning of the 6th c. A.D. (Bliujienė, 2006, p. 132). The latter horizon is characterized by features richly equipped with weapons and probably we should attribute the finds from

Smorgon to it. Surely it is not dated to 8th c. A. D. as it was stated in files.

As refers to the location of the site it seems most probable that both groups of material discussed above come from the same place. Let us remind that eastern findings are extremely rare in Silesian collections, moreover the items came here in the same year 1928 and went to collections situated nearby. Eventually they were attributed to very close locations (Slobotka bei Smorgon versus Smorgon). Taking into account the above, probably we deal with the materials from the same cemetery of the East Lithuanian Barrows culture. Apart from the chronology of the particular items, we

have to do most probably with the late 5th and early 6th c. A.D. objects, what seems to confirm the hypothesis. Naturally the whole collection didn't come from the single grave as there are no cases of finding two shield bosses in one feature. From the other side it is possible that it was originally placed in a single barrow, in two or more graves. Nevertheless it cannot be stated for sure.

Summing up one may say once again that archival archaeology is very important for our knowledge and interesting finds could be found even in files so unexpectable and distant from the sites of finding as Silesia.

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RYTŲ LIETUVOS PILKAPIŲ KULTŪROS RADINIAI IŠ SMURGAINIŲ APYLINKIŲ PAGAL SILEZIJOS ARCHYVŲ MEDŽIAGĄ

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje autoriai pristato radinius iš Smurgainių ir Slabadėlės prie Smurgainių, priskiriamus Rytų Lietuvos pilkapių kultūrai. Prieš Antrąjį pasaulinį karą šie daiktai pateko į žemutinės Silezijos muziejus Breslau (dab.

Wrocław) ir Liegnitz (dab. Legnica). Kai kurie radiniai po Antrojo pasaulinio karo dingo, tačiau išliko archyvinė medžiaga, kuri šiame straipsnyje ir pristatoma.

Iš anglų kalbos vertė Linas Tamulynas

Įteikta 2009 m. kovo mėn.