

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL THOUGHT IN LATVIA DURING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE RIVER DAUGAVA HYDROPOWER PLANTS

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### **Abstract**

The construction of the Daugava River Hydropower Plants (HPPs) and corresponding impact on archaeological monuments directly showed the importance of landscape. It is a manifest example how identity of whole nation relies on symbols. It needs to be asked what is left when the landscape – formed, shaped and developed through hundreds and thousands of years – has been brutally destroyed.

During the 1960s archaeologists worked mostly in two regions – Pļaviņas and Riga HPP submerging zones [Loze, Cimermanis 1969: 2–3]. That was really huge and planned research. For archaeologists it was clear that the collected material would keep the story of the life in ancient villages, hillforts and castles as well as peoples living, who had lived there, alive, when all of it would be under the water.

Besides the negative aspects, research that went on for many years has shaped and formed archaeological science as well as the development of archaeological thought. The goal of this paper is to examine what pros and cons these works have left and how to evaluate them in today's context.

**Keywords:** *archaeological thought, history of archaeology, Daugava, hydropower plants, HPP.*

Already in the first millennium AD the density of population on the right bank of the biggest river in territory of Latvia – the Daugava – was notably large because of good geographical location and the plenitude of fish in the waters. The steep banks of the Daugava were especially beneficial for fortifications. Oliņkalns, Lokstene, Sēlpils and other hillforts were situated on naturally developed isle-like platforms [Mugurēvičs 1977: 9].

The Daugava was the main traffic and trade route. The location of finds let us conclude that the best places for living were the banks of lakes and the embouchures of small rivers. A lot of dwelling-places and burial grounds are located exactly on banks or in old river valley of the Daugava. From archaeological material we can observe that people have lived near the Daugava continuously from Stone Age till nowadays. The only changes are in administrative centres [Mugurēvičs 1977].

The River Daugava historically has played an invaluable role in the national identity of Latvians and is still one of greatest milestones in what could be called the discourse of what it means to be a Latvian. Proofs of that we find in folklore, art and many historical events where the Daugava has indeed been the “River of Destiny” (*Likteņupe*).

The River Daugava obviously has also played an important role in the history of archaeology in Latvia. When in the great flood of 1837 the Daugava revealed ancient burial remains, it turned out to be a catalyst for further public interest in antiquity which resulted in the first more or less scientific archaeological research. Traditionally in historiography of Latvian archaeology Friedrich Karl Hermann Kruse's (1790–1866) *Necrolivonica, oder Altertümer von Liv-, Esth- und Kurland* (Dorpat 1842) has been recognized as being the very first scientific monograph and inspired by it that many aristocrats, priests, teachers started their own “excavations”. As the work of Kruse represents the beginning of scientific archaeology [Graudonis 2001: 7–19], we can agree with archaeologist Jānis Graudonis (1913–2005), who said that the beginning of archaeological science is also the beginning of actual knowledge about the history of Latvia [Graudonis 2001: 10].

However, much later a big turn in archaeological science was made in 1959 when an unprecedented amount of research was started in the territory planned for submerging due to the construction of Pļaviņas Hydroelectric Power Station. Archaeologists had to explore territory from Aizkraukle to Pļaviņas (1959–1965). As soon as those works ended, already next year, in 1966 researchers had to move to the next construction site – Riga HPP. Territory from Dole to Ogre was explored in total by 8 expeditions. In 1979 preparation was started for one more HPP on the Daugava – Daugavpils HPP. Expeditions resulted in discovering 4 earlier unknown hillforts, 50 settlements and 17 burial fields [Mugurēvičs 1977].

It is hard to imagine Latvian archaeology without those large-scale construction works of the Soviet era and the legislation which provided archaeological research before works started. And what is most important – the customer had to finance archaeological research. So financially those were one of the best times Latvian archaeologists have had; the more electrification and industrialisation Soviet government enacted, the more archaeologists were needed; furthermore, the more work and praxis they had, the more professional the archaeological science became.

Archaeology became prominent in Soviet Latvia. We cannot imagine the archaeology of Latvia in the modern sense without all the information (for example, density and chronologies of population) collected near the banks of the Daugava in a relatively short time. Thereby the gains are incontestable and very important. On the other hand, there is no gain without a loss – incalculable amount of archaeologically significant information is forever gone because of haste, insufficient quantity of the samples, incomplete documentation etc. It obviously is the fault of the destructive nature of archaeology. Which is why whenever the possibility is not to dig, we should refrain from intervening in the integrity of objects. In case of Daugava HPPs the amount of excavations is not adequately comparable to the relatively small number of resulting publications. Acknowledging the high standards of archaeological research in relation to the average level of scientific development back then – everything was recorded using the established practices of the time – it still cannot be denied and overestimated that Latvia has irretrievably lost one of the most splendid cultural landscapes. Even if some modern technology could reconstruct the entire valley digitally, the meaning and substance of the place is lost. Such iconic monuments of nature and history as Staburags (submerged cliff on the bank of the Daugava shaped by lime and rich springs) or Koknese Castle ruins, which till the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century delighted artists and literati, as well as tourists with their historical significance and monumentality, today live only in memories and reflections.

Besides the nostalgia and sense of loss, which arises after losing heritage, the importance of the identity of the place, the big role it occupied in the individual and national consciousness can be sensed more and more. Archaeologists thus had a crucially important task – while the real witnesses of the past were going to be destroyed, they had to ensure that the narrative of the past becomes as complete as possible.

### **Ķegums HPP**

The first HPP on Daugava – Ķegums HPP started to operate in October 1939. Although in the introduction of the monumental work *Latvijas PSR arheoloģija* (“Archaeology of Latvian SSR”. Rīga: Zinātne, 1974) we can read that “in times of bourgeois Latvia, while Ķegums HPP was built, there was no archaeological research in the zone of submersion” [Latvijas PSR arheoloģija 1974: 12], the reality is different. Press shows that in 1939 there was excavation in burial ground of Aizkraukle led by archaeologist Pēteris Stepiņš (1914–1999). Latvian Monuments Board (*Pieminekļu Valde*) decided to do a wider protective excavation. Despite the scanty grave goods, the research still was scientifically important for the corresponding period [Stepiņš 1939: 331–334].

On an isle named after Lāčplēsis, the national epic of Latvia, excavation works were also conducted before it was submerged. The famous stone of Lāčplēsis was carved to make a monument for author of the epic – Andrejs Pumpurs (1841–1902). It must be mentioned that during the construction of Ķegums HPP a big hoard was also found – a pot containing 879 Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden (1594–1632) silver coins (the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century) [Ķeguma HES 1939: 7].

Nevertheless, the impact of Ķegums HPP on the preserving of archaeological heritage still remains unclear and should be examined in future. Since public consensus on construction was highly positive [Lapiņš 1940: 6], there were practically no discussions about heritage.

### **Pļaviņas HPP** (Fig. 1 and 2)

As the director of National History Museum of Latvia, also an archaeologist, Arnis Radiņš (b. 1951) has mentioned, during the first period after the occupation of Latvia archaeology was poorly financed, there was a serious deficiency of professionals in the field due to the lack of excavation works [Radiņš 2012: 385]. Till the building of HPPs, of course!

The construction of Pļaviņas HPP was widely advocated as crucially important for the Soviet Latvian economics [Stubavs 1960: 1]. When archaeologists came to know about planned proceedings, it was immediately evident that in the territory spanning both sides of the Daugava from Aizkraukle to Pļaviņas, at least 6 hillforts and 14 burial grounds were situated, in need of archaeological research. Since everyone obviously knew there had to be and also would be new objects, in order to start the construction, the Institute of History of Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences had to immediately change all the plans for 1960. For example, the expedition that the archaeologist of the Institute of Latvian History Elvira Šnore (1905–1996) had to lead in Latgale was shifted to Selonian burial fields on the left bank of the Daugava which were seen as important to improve the study of ethnogenesis. One of the greatest Latvian Stone Age researchers – Francis Zagorskis (1929–1986), who for several years worked in Tērvete, also had to move his expedition to the Daugava region.

Today many think that the research of archaeological monuments surrounding Pļaviņas started a qualitatively new phase of archaeological science in Latvia. 1960/1961 saw the start of continuous archaeological exploration in the submersion zone of Pļaviņas HPP [Stubavs 1960: 11].

Ironically, exactly in communist era we see capitalistic tendencies in research of history – everything was judged by amount of excavated earth, gained antiquities and other kinds of quantitative statistics. Archaeologist Ēvalds Mugurēvičs (b. 1931) writes, if archaeology in post-soviet period mostly performed monument

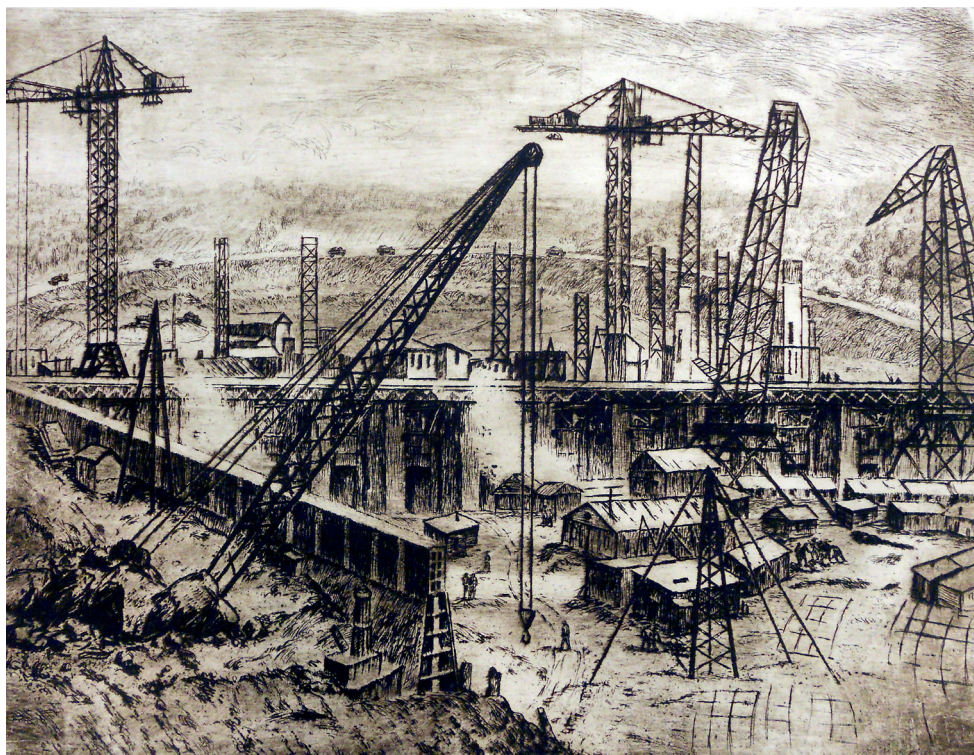


Figure 1. Zelma Tālberga (1900–1972). Construction site of Pļaviņas HPP. From cycle “For peace and future” 1965. Etching. JVMM (Ģederts Eliass Jelgava History and Art Museum) 3892.

inspection or small protective excavations where one monument gave some dozens or at max 100 antiques, then at the beginning of 1965 already a whole micro-region was explored and researched. These excavations uncovered territory of 6800 m<sup>2</sup>, 69 burial sites, 2548 artifacts, 29 339 fragments of pottery, 9529 osteological material units; 390 plans were drawn, more than 3000 photos taken. Archived document amount exceeded 1100 pages. Without stationary excavations in known monuments, several new sites were found and also researched [Stubavs 1960: 12]. At the same time, it is now clear that there were also monuments that archaeologists did not have time and capacity to research and no one will ever know what secrets they hide.

From 1959 to 1964 Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) Academy of Sciences Institute of History did archaeological research on the left bank of the Daugava near Pļaviņas. Oliņkalns and Lokstene hillfort regions were examined as an outstanding archaeological complex. While doing excavation works in dwelling places, parallel works were also done in corresponding burial fields in order to gain



Figure 2. Archaeologists in work. Photo from Jasenovs, J. (1966).  
Te viļņosies Rīgas jūra. *Ciņa*. Nr. 174, 4. lpp.

a possibly unified and coherent view about the history of one micro-region (about 75–100 km<sup>2</sup>) corresponding to period from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century AD.

Plenty of new conclusions were made. For example, the material from Lokstene Castle excavations led to the conclusion (such proof was the first of its kind in the territory of Latvia) that locals had participated in and also influenced the construction of German stone castles [Mugurēvičs 1977: 7–8]. The professional level of archaeologists also grew with the amount and covered territory. The Archaeological sector of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences started seven-hour working days. Improvements were made in the organisational part of excavations. In order to enhance the productivity of work, regulations were made that all the excavated earth should be transported with modern techniques. Institute also bought mobile power station. Already in 1960, the chief director of Archaeological sector Ādolfs Stubavs (1913–1986) reported that expeditions were well equipped with the necessary inventory, small tools, measuring instruments, photo cameras. The only thing lacking was the appropriate space for excavation material and inventory storage. Everything was kept in the work space, which led to dust and unsanitary conditions, as Stubavs has noted [Stubavs 1960: 4].

The praxis that archaeological and culture-historical monuments were not protected, but destroyed due to huge construction works was not uncommon in the USSR, and in other countries at the time. For example, from 1960 to 1980

in Egypt the construction of Aswan Dam saw the transfer of 22 monuments [The Rescue of Nubian Monuments and Sites]. That was one of the reasons why the international heritage society started to raise the alarm about how changing social and economic conditions influenced damage or destruction of the cultural or natural heritage. Notably the main document of world heritage protection, made by UNESCO, was created about the same time [Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage 1972].

Besides Latvia, similar huge excavations were also carried out in Volga, Kaunas etc. HPPs construction zones in the USSR. Most probably because of censorship archaeologists had to depict the huge excavations as outrageously successful, thanks to the politics of the Soviet government. Mostly they claimed that monuments had been completely researched, and the main works were subordinated only to the scientific tasks [Graudonis, Urtāns 1961: 162–163] (concealing the fact that works were often rushed to meet the deadlines of construction workers).

The industrialisation and economic goals in the Soviet Union were seen as much more important than aesthetic or sentimental views on landscape. Furthermore, it seems that for the building of communism it was essential to erase the previous history with its monuments by creating a new living space. Exploiting and changing the nature was as important as in absolutist monarchies – to show the human supremacy and legitimate their project of the new world order.

Scientists of course did their best to collect as much information as it was possible at that time using all the available scientific and technical support. The research in Pļaviņas HPP submerging zone lasted 7 years in total (1959–1965). Nine archaeological expeditions researched 7 hillforts and castles, 22 settlements, 12 burial fields, 1 cult hill – in total a territory of 3 ha with more than 31 000 m<sup>3</sup> earth. It was the first time in history of archaeology in Latvia when an entire micro-region, dating from I millennium BC to the 17<sup>th</sup> century AD, was thoroughly researched [Strods 1966: 5].

During the excavations seed samples for paleobotanical analysis were taken to study the history of agriculture. Excavations provided about 100 000 human and animal bones. Animal bones were studied by paleozoologists to compare livestock and hunting proportions. Most of the collected human bones were skulls and the so-called long bones. The skulls and teeth were used by anthropologist Raisa Deņisova (b. 1930) to identify ethnicity (the main research factor at the time), while paleopathologist Vilis Derums (1899–1988) used bones to study ancient diseases. Ceramics (approximately 85 000 fragments found) were also examined to analyse the technical level and ethnicity of the population.

The age of buildings was identified with the help of dendrochronology and analysis based on the radioactive decay of carbon. Pottery and Iron Age melting

furnaces were identified with the archaeomagnetic method, in collaboration with the Moscow and Leningrad scientists. The age of fish-bones was identified by biologists; plants – by paleobotanists. Archaeology was seen as a branch of humanities that could use the widest available spectrum of modern natural science and technical methods [Strods 1966: 5].

In the vicinity of Pļaviņas, around 25 000 artifacts were obtained, which, according to historian Heinrihs Strods (1925–2012), constituted around 20% of all the items found in excavations till that time (probably – during the Soviet era). The objects from excavations primarily were to be preserved in a special workshop to ensure the preservation for the future generations [Strods 1966]. Many of the objects found were unique [Zakss 1965: 4].

It can be said that systematic mapping of the cultural layer on excavation site was started exactly at that time. Every 10–20 cm were drawn in plans. As a result, more than 2150 big-size coloured plans were made. Each excavation layer and cross-sections, as well as the most significant finds were photographed. In total around 20 000 shots were taken. In addition, excavations were filmed, creating several documentaries [Strods 1966].

According to the ruling paradigm of Marxist historiography, archaeological materials had to solve problems of productive forces and production relations and the development of ideology in the period of disintegration of primitive community and development of class societies, the Latvian nation ethnogenesis, as well as the problems related to the genesis of feudalism. Therefore, after scientific processing the obtained material was expected to be published already in the next half a year in several volumes for the knowledge transfer to scientists and working-class people. Studies in Pļaviņas area were supposed to aid the debunking of some still preserved “wrong” views on Latvian history, build proper materialistic view, and also to contribute significantly to the construction of modern culture [Strods 1966].

Excavations took place from early spring to late autumn [Mugurēvičs 2013: 136]. Consequently, the participating workers were able to manage the development of their professional skills at a high level. A big plus for the archaeology in Soviet era was the systematic planning in all industries, including historical research. Regarding finances, for example, in 1960 each expedition got ca. 17 to 18 thousand roubles [Mugurēvičs 2013: 133]. But there were problems, notwithstanding. Specialists were not prepared on the spot, in Latvian SSR. They had to study abroad. The methodological level of archaeology was pretty high for that time, but archaeological ethics was not on the agenda. For example, when excavation in Mārtiņšala ended, before submerging, in collaboration with workers of HPP, the castle and church walls were showered with grit, so that the basis of



the monuments were not undermined and thus be saved for future generations. Obviously, the effectiveness of such methods is questionable [Mugurēvičs 2013: 192–193].

It is significant that a special role in the contemporary discourse was given to Koknese (Fig. 3–5) hill (note – not a castle) because it was considered that evidence of close relations with the Slavs could be found there [Loze, Cimermanis 1969: 2–3].

The most recent major damage to the castle was caused by Pļaviņas (Aizkraukle) HPP construction and water level increase above the foundations of the castle in 1965. The annual flood, ice and water swings thoroughly washed out the castle walls, an important south side wall fragment of the castle has perished thus permanently transforming the historically established landscape with fortress on the steep bank of the river.

Before the submerging in 1961–1966 archaeologist Stubavs led excavations in Koknese. Material applies to both periods of the Castle existence. Evidence was found pertaining to the economic life of the Castle. The layers of the 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century showed the impact of local culture. Various traces of rebuilding and marks left by all ruling powers, mentioned in written sources, were found.

By the end of 1965 the Ministry of Culture had developed Koknese Castle restoration project (designed by A. Bite from Scientific restoration engineering



Figure 3. Photo from the meeting of Semigallian Society “Labour youth” in Koknese Castle ruins, Midsummer, 1932. JVMM 4729/2.



Figure 4. Gēderts Eliass (1887–1975). Koknese Hillfort. 1960s.  
Oil on canvas. JVMM 34746/El 666.

design office). It must be mentioned that one of the options discussed was the detonation of the ruins [VKPAI PDC].

On 16 April 1966, Aleksandrs Drīzulis (1920–2006), Director of the Institute of History of the Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences, and Archaeological team leader A. Stubavs wrote to USSR Minister of Culture Vladimirs Kaupužs (b. 1925) in the name of the Institute of History, asking for the assistance in reinforcing the castle ruins.

According to excavation results (1961–1965), Koknese was considered an object with outstanding scientific importance on the All-Union scale. In the 1960s Koknese was attended by tens of thousands of local and international tourists. No other Soviet Latvian historic monument had given so much particular and unique material about the economic, cultural and political relations between Ancient Rus and Latvian territory relations as the 13<sup>th</sup> century Koknese, which was considered the residence of Russian prince Vjačko (Vyachko). Already in 1970, after submerging, the USSR Heritage protector (Heritage scientific-methodological council President P. Volodin) reported that Koknese Castle was in a threatened condition. Art Professor K. Afanasyev noted that the local authorities before the



Figure 5. Koknese Castle 08.03.2015.  
Personal archives of Zenta Broka-Lāce.

construction of HPPs themselves had abandoned the reinforcing of castle, despite the apparent need. Then in 1970 there was an urgent need to develop projects for the conservation of ruins and the improvement of landscape.

After regaining the independence of Latvia, Koknese again came to the public notice – only to find that the ruins were in a very poor condition. In 1991–1992 archaeologist Mārtiņš Ruša led excavations. Between 1993–1999 various conservation works were carried out. Of 8000 LVL budget, 3000 LVL were used for concrete works alone [Ruša 1994; 1998; 2002].

In 1999 underwater archaeologist Voldemārs Rains (b. 1948) led exploration and concluded that in order to reinforce the rock, the river bed should be tipped with at least a million tons of gravel, so it did not seem realistic. All the conservation

work in the 1990s seems to have been a vain effort to stop the further erosion of a unique architectural, archaeological and historical monument [VKPAI PDC].

### Riga HPP (Fig. 6)

In 1966 the archaeological research was started in Riga HPP zone. Eight archaeological expeditions took place from Dole Island to Ogre. Till the 1975 in Riga HPP zone archaeologists excavated monuments of the total area of approximately 13.5 hectares – that could be considered the most comprehensive research in history of Latvian archaeology within a single district. It had obtained around 45 000 artefacts, 150 000 ceramic units, approximately 1000 human skulls and many other archaeological materials for further analyses. Every year thousands of tourists from all over Latvia took part in the scientific sessions of the archaeological excavation sites to see the results of research [Ģiga 1966: 1; Radiņš 2012: 385].

In the Soviet era archaeologists were not protected from censorship. The Archaeological sector was supervised by the Communist Party. For example, in



Figure 6. Photo from Riga HPP building in 1974. Inscription on stone in Russian “Well, the Daugava, wait!”. Available: [http://www.latvenergo.lv/hesture/hes\\_rigas.html](http://www.latvenergo.lv/hesture/hes_rigas.html) (viewed 07.11.2016.)

1959 archaeologists were criticised for their level of qualification, unrealistic plans, little amount of publications<sup>1</sup> and, of course, lack of Party members in sector [Radiņš 2012: 132].

Archaeological research in Pļaviņas and Riga HPP submerging zones also attracted attention of the Central Committee of Latvian Communist Party and Presidium of the Academy of Sciences. The leader of Revision Commission of the Central Committee R. Ķīsis was also dispatched to the director of the Institute of History with official letter to clarify the origin of names of the Daugava isles near Salaspils, which in his opinion was “considerable” [Mugurēvičs 2013: 155].

In 1972, talking about number of monuments and budget for research in submerging zone of Daugavpils HPP, the officials of project group criticised the Institute of History for low ideological and methodological level in the previous research of scientific co-workers. Historians were also kindly asked to intensify the fight against bourgeois ideological manifestations [Mugurēvičs 2013: 177].

When Ēvalds Mugurēvičs in 1974 prepared to participate in international conference dedicated to Prehistory and early history in Nice, France, with his paper and a small documentary on results of archaeological research in Riga HPP submerging zone, the Archaeological Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences blocked him and sent delegation from Moscow, Leningrad and Novosibirsk to conference instead [Mugurēvičs 2013: 205].

Only in the 1980s, more and more sadness and sense of loss could be detected also in the popular press. Only then research on geology, history etc. of submerged monuments could be seen [Pastors 1988: 13–14]. More interest in the Daugava and its cultural landscape was felt in wider public with planned Daugavpils HPP and protests against it. On 19 December 1987 the Commission of the Daugava was established under Latvian Culture Foundation, which was led by professor of geology – Guntis Eberhards (b. 1936) [*Dabas un vēstures kalendārs* 1990: 75]. The fight against the destruction of what was left of the Daugava cultural landscape, led by national intelligentsia, was successful this time. If in the case of Pļaviņas the political censorship silenced every opponent, now the message was successfully spread. The protection of the Daugava became an essential part of Latvian movement of National Awakening. In a wider context it can be seen also as a part of worldwide Green movement, its echoes being captured by illegal listening to foreign radio stations etc.

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<sup>1</sup> The main publications about the Daugava HPP research are listed in Caune, A., Caune, C., 1976: 43–45, No. 193–236.

Some of the most notable monographs: Mugurēvičs, 1977; Stubavs, 1976; Šnore, 1987; Šnore, Zariņa, 1970; Zariņa, 1988; Денисова, Граудонис, Гравере, 1985; Мугуревич, 1965.

### Daugavpils HPP

Although Daugavpils HPP was never built, the preparation process had already begun. In the zone planned for submergence, 4 previously unknown hill-forts, 50 settlements and 17 burial fields were found [Graudonis 2001: 15].

The search for new objects was organised in several expeditions by walking on foot (around 20 km per day) near the shores of the Daugava [Mugurēvičs 2013: 176]. Notable excavation was led by Mugurēvičs in the settlement of Dinaburga Castle [Mugurēvičs 2013: 251].

### Jēkabpils HPP

In 1984 Ēvalds Mugurēvičs was assigned to search for monuments in Jēkabpils HPP planned submersion zone. In reality the work was done by archaeologist Andrejs Vasks (b. 1947). Several groups of archaeologists searched both banks of the Daugava in territory between Jēkabpils and Daugavpils.

However, construction of both Daugavpils and Jēkabpils HPP was pending due to political changes. With no doubt, Soviet legal system had one good thing for archaeologists: before starting any destructive or potentially – for monument preservation – dangerous activities, government normally financed archaeological research [Mugurēvičs 2013: 330]. Unfortunately for archaeologists, the old system collapsed after the restoration of independence. The new law for preservation of cultural heritage [*Latvijas Republikas likums: Par kultūras pieminekļu aizsardzību*; paragraph 22] also restricts any destructive activity before research. In reality, however, it is not always the case.

In total, archaeological excavations were carried out in more than 300 sites in Latvian SSR. It inevitably led to essential shift in knowledge about history. Chronology and typology of our Prehistory changed, as well as notions about ethnical structure and funerary traditions. However, when compared to the amount, the small number of actual publications is not satisfying [Radiņš 2012: 388].

Along with the independence of Latvia, we also regained the scientific independence in the archaeological science, which almost for half a century (at least in theory) had been under the control of Marxist ideology and pro-Slavic interpretations. When all these ideological restrictions were gone, the science gained a seemingly ideological freedom. Cost of that was a notable reduction of budget, that archaeologists were used to reckon with. Latvian archaeology was not ready for free market economy. If previously the main factor in defining the archaeologist was whether or not he/she did excavations, then now scientific research institutions had to accept the new situation and reorganise work in order to shift to the archival material analysis and the publication of articles.

If the use of quantitative methods has grown notably, then completely different situation is in the field of qualitative methodology. Almost no one talks about ethics of archaeology, interpretation problems and theory of archaeological science. Research in the Daugava Valley still is one of the most influential stages in the history of Latvian archaeology, owing to the great amount of excavated objects and collected archaeological material it is not comparable to any other period in the history of Latvian archaeology. Undeniably, for scientists it was an unprecedented and alluring opportunity, however, almost nothing was said against the very process, no one seemed to care about lost monuments of the past and those which were never explored [Padedzis, Mintauris 2013: 86]. No one will ever know about hoards and individual finds, which obviously must have been there.

The newest research about construction of Pļaviņas HPP shows that we still do not know all the reasons and considerations behind it. Although many see the decision to build HPP as a normal praxis of modernisation, it must not be looked at as such, because in that specific time and place we cannot see these decisions as any other but political. Destroying the Daugava Valley with all its cultural historical heritage, destroying landscape with its emotional weight was not just an economic decision. Researchers and public activists, including the leader of Popular Front of Latvia and the symbolic spokesman of the movement for Latvian independence from the USSR, Dainis Īvāns (b. 1955), are sure that construction of HPP was a crime against Latvian nation. It was carefully calculated part of Russification politics in the USSR towards Latvians, at that time it was obviously an attempt to deal with or even punish the so-called national communists. As historian Mārtiņš Mintauris has noted, the status of archaeologists was not so stable – of course, government did give money for research, but at the same time researchers risked to look as Latvian bourgeois nationalists in the eyes of Soviet authorities [Padedzis, Mintauris 2013].

In the winter of 1961/1962 a settlement near Lokstene Hillfort was destroyed due to intense quarrying of dolomite. Archaeologists had just managed to discover some dozen centimetres of thick cultural layer, some pottery, but nothing more is known [Mugurēvičs 1977: 54]. This case was not widely discussed. Also in 1964, the Pļaviņas dolomite-mining factory made haste to blow up and transport away yet acquirable resources, thus making it difficult for archaeologists to work [Mugurēvičs 1977: 143].

In conclusion, to answer the question why it is still up to date and important to speak about the Daugava HPP, I must say that archaeology has not yet examined and assessed the amount of the actual loss. Under the pretext of economic benefits, unique natural and cultural monuments of Latvia were destroyed, giving up all international and national ethics, charters and laws which should have protected

cultural heritage, especially taking into account that not only the object itself is essential – it provides much more information in its cultural and historical landscape, therefore the landscape itself should be protected.

The large-scale economic activities of HPP construction started a very dangerous trend in the development of our archaeological thought – not taking landscape in consideration at all. It is thought that the full exploration of the monument which interferes with the construction work solves the problem. However, the problem persists today. In the name of economic development Latvia will carry out the huge *Rail Baltica* project. And if Estonia has declared that it is the largest archaeological project in the history of Estonia [Laats 2015], Latvia is pretty much falling behind. Complete research by using methods of modern archaeological science seems no longer possible, bearing in mind that meeting deadlines for this project will be more important than serious scientific research. It seems, we are not yet ready to learn from mistakes of the past, as long as we do not see them as mistakes. No one has spoken about the influence of *Rail Baltica* on landscape. The primary concern is about economics. These questions should have been discussed already in the planning stages of such the project. If HPPs of the Daugava River could be written-off as consequences of foreign and hostile politics, censorship and fear, even objective praxis of that time, then today the inactivity of monument guards has no excuses.

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