

Marija Gimbutas, "The Kurgan Culture and the Indo-Europeanization of Europe. Selected articles from 1952 to 1993." Edited by Miriam Robbins Dexter and Karlene Jones-Bley. *Journal of Indo-European Studies Monograph No. 18*, Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of Man. 1997. XIX + 404 pages.

"*Varia* on the Indo-European Past: Papers in Memory of Marija Gimbutas." Editors Miriam Robbins Dexter and Edgar C. Polomé. *Journal of Indo-European Studies Monograph No. 19*, Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of Man. 1997. 265 pages.

Marija Gimbutienė, known to the world of scholarship as Marija Gimbutas, was born in Vilnius on January 23, 1921. After leaving Lithuania she continued her studies in archaeology at Tübingen University in Germany, where she earned a Ph.D. In 1949, she moved to the United States and settled in Boston. In 1963 she was offered a teaching position at the University of California at Los Angeles. She was attached to UCLA to the end of her career. She died of cancer in 1994. Besides being a famous archaeologist, she was also a prolific writer. *The Baits* (New York 1963) and *The Language of the Goddess* (San Francisco 1989) are important texts, but the work that best enshrines her thinking and research is certainly *The Civilization of the Goddess. The World of Old Europe* (San Francisco, 1991).

Since Marija Gimbutas was one of the founding editors of the *Journal of Indo-European Studies*, it was fitting that the latest two numbers in the monograph series of that prestigious journal should carry her name in the respective title pages. Both volumes were published in 1997. No. 18 is a collection of articles by Marija Gimbutas written in the period 1952-1993: The Kurgan Culture and the Indo-Europeanization of Europe (=Kurgan). No. 19, entitled *Varia on the Indo-European Past: Papers in memory of Marija Gimbutas* is a collection of essays written by distinguished Indo-Europeanists and archaeologists (=Varia).

If we take a look at *Varia* First, it may be said right away that this volume differs profoundly from the usual type of 'Studies in Memory of XV' in that the contributors were evidently asked to write on themes directly connected with the work of Marija Gimbutas. The result is that we find here a number of papers that immediately continue Gimbutas' approach and build on her work. Most notable is perhaps Miriam Robbins Dexter's paper entitled 'The Frightful Goddess, the sirens and Witches', which clearly sets out from the feminist approach advocated by Gimbutas, adds new material and achieves far-reaching conclusions. The last sentence of the paper is worth quoting: "If we can only recognize the unity of the goddess, and of all life, and realize that we are all connected with one another, and with our planet, then, through this holistic, harmonious view of our society and our universe we may be *empowered*, in the etymological sense of building our power from *within*, and having the power to effect the changes which will enable us to restore our lives and our environment to harmony and wholeness" (*Varia*, p. 150f.). If scholarly research leads up to positive results of the kind, then it is definitely worth the trouble involved.

Of the two books to be announced here the second may in some respects be considered still more relevant, because it contains a selection of Gimbutas' most characteristic papers. Towards the end of her life Marija Gimbutas was active collecting the more important of her separate papers in an anthology, which was meant to contain her major ideas and conclusions. These can be summed up as follows (in Gimbutas' own words):

Kurgan culture came into existence in the first half of the 5th millennium BC when, by means of domesticated horse, horse riding, and wheeled transport, pastoral people overwhelmed the Russian steppe north of the Caucasus and reached the borders of Old Europe in the Dnieper basin;

Kurgan theory does not depict a thousand-year-old homeland, but recounts a specific situation created by social and economic conditions, especially a hierarchical/patriarchal social structure and horse domestication;

From the mid-5th millennium onward, the pastoral people of South Russia came into close contact with Old Europe, and from around 4300 BC these pastoralists started a westward push that eventually caused the great civilization of Old Europe to disintegrate (Kurgan, p. XIX).

As with every great scholar it goes without saying that Gimbutas' views did not remain unchallenged, but this is certainly not the occasion to repeat the criticism or raise new objections: Marija Gimbutas was an original thinker, and the two volumes aptly introduce the reader to her approach, although Gimbutas' work is quoted on many occasions in the two volumes, a full bibliography of her publications would have been useful.

*Alfred Bammesberger*  
The Catholic University of Eichstaett