

is the most common of all the purse types and is the one pictured in the early portrait photographs. It is estimated that some 12,000 were made in less than a 100-year period. *Haudenosaunee* and non-Indians alike recognize these purses as being Iroquois; it is the most recognizable form of Iroquois beadwork, but no one is sure of where the purses were made. As some are lined with French-language newspapers, they most likely were made in Quebec but no one has identified the community. They are most likely Mohawk because they share the five-color motif with the Mohawk pincushions framed with leaves in five colors. These purses are, however, sometimes identified in the literature as “probably Tuscarora.” Because of their similarity and if some are definitely Mohawk, the likelihood of these purses all being made by the Mohawk is high. Biron may tend to agree but he speculates that they evolved in western New York, which is unlikely.

Biron is a professional artist, not a professional researcher, historian, or anthropologist, so he may be excused the few factual errors included in his essay, such as the name of Fulton’s steamboat, the shape of the National Badge of the Iroquois, and the identification of a piece in the Iroquois Indian Museum. The most serious error is his assertion that the Iroquois Confederacy no longer exists. Most contemporary *Haudenosaunee* would refute this statement. The Grand Council of the Confederacy still meets, treaty cloth from the U.S. Federal government still upholds the ancient relations between sovereigns, and people travel on *Haudenosaunee* passports. They may not agree on whether they should call themselves Iroquois, *Haudenosaunee*, or Six Nations, but they all agree that the Iroquois Confederacy is still in existence.

The *Haudenosaunee* are proud of their beadworkers. They appreciate the historic pieces illustrated in this catalogue and they admire the beadwork created by contemporary beadworkers. They should be grateful that Biron has brought this extensive collection of fantastic pieces together and has published this catalogue so that others may admire and appreciate the wonderful purses made by their ancestors.

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*Lubāna ezera mitrāja Neolīta dzintars un tā apstrādes darbnīcas (Neolithic Amber of Lake Lubāns Wetlands and Amber-Working Workshops).*

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**Ilze Loze.** Institute of the History of Latvia, Academy Square 1-1202, Riga LV-1050, Latvia. 2008. 188 pp., 80 color figs., 81 B&W figs. ISBN 978-9984-9924-8-8; UDK 902/904(474.3). \$25.00 (hard cover).

The complicated and permanently incomplete biography of an artifact can never be fully comprehended in all its stages. When amber beads and pendants are in question, archaeologists often find them used and finished, more or less processed, as artifacts that have temporarily broken their “life cycle” and are now static finds in a grave, hoard, or settlement debris. Yet this static archaeological record is but one of the many phases of the biography of an amber ornament: before that moment, it was a piece of resin, lingering for millions of years in clay layers, then rolled by sea waves and washed onto the shore where it was found, carved, exchanged, worn, to return—only temporarily—into the ground, and then dug out as an “archaeological find.” Archaeologists rarely have an opportunity to perceive more than this last “passive” phase of an amber bead but in her most recent book, *Lubāna Ezera Mitrāja Neolīta Dzintars (Neolithic Amber of Lake Lubāns Wetlands and Amber-Working Workshops)*, Dr. Ilze Loze, doyenne of Latvian archaeology and amber studies at the Institute of the History of Latvia in Riga, succeeds in convincingly demonstrating several stages in the life of Latvian Neolithic amber beads and pendants. Moreover, through a detailed analysis of Neolithic amber workshops, she raises some important issues regarding the functioning of prehistoric communities, social organization, craftsmanship, and exchange.

Dr. Loze concentrates on a number of archaeological sites dating to the middle and late Neolithic (from the middle of 4th to the end of the 3rd millennium B.C.E.) in the region of the Lake Lubāns Depression in eastern Latvia. The Depression is a wetland that receives water from many tributaries of the Daugava, the largest river in the eastern Baltic region. This wet and naturally diverse region was not only suitable for life in the Neolithic, but the specific peat-bog conditions enabled the perfect preservation of the archaeological material, amber above all. Archaeological investigations in the region began in 1938 and have continued until the present. Twenty-seven Neolithic sites were registered in the process. Ilze Loze has studied the amber from this region for decades, publishing a number of studies on the subject, and this book crowns her research into prehistoric amber of the Eastern Baltic region.

Contrary to expectations, natural deposits of amber do not exist in the Lake Lubāns region but are found further to the west and southwest, by the shores of the Baltic. The first

chapter of the book is dedicated to these natural deposits that, during the Neolithic, stood by the shores of the brackish-water Litorina Sea, the predecessor of the present Baltic Sea. The communities of the Pit-Comb Ware Culture that occupied the peat-bog region around Lake Lubāns as early as about 3300 B.C.E. established a dynamic exchange with their littoral neighbors, not only acquiring raw amber from them but also probably learning how to process it as well. Soon, however, this lake district, and not the regions close to the source of the material, became the center of amber manufacture and retained this distinction for more than a thousand years. Infrared analyses of the amber, undertaken under the supervision of the late Professor Curt W. Beck at the prestigious Amber Research Laboratory at Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York, confirmed the author's assumptions on the origin of the raw material worked in the Neolithic workshops of the Lake Lubāns Depression.

Of course, not all the Neolithic sites of the Lake Lubāns region held evidence of amber workshops; some sites produced no amber jewelry at all. Dr. Loze nevertheless offers a detailed account of the Neolithic occupation for the entire region, thus positioning the amber workshops within the wider archaeological context. The complex network of interregional exchange in amber slowly emerges before the reader, with the focal points on the centers of manufacture. The author pays special attention to two such workshops attributed to the Middle Neolithic Pit-Comb Ware Culture. The Nainiekste and Zvizde settlements not only produced a large quantity of amber beads and pendants of various types (such as trapezoidal pendants, rings, zoomorphic figurines, and button-shaped, cigar-shaped, and tubular beads), but also direct evidence for the process of amber carving. Lumps of unprocessed amber and unfinished beads and pendants of various types were recovered, as well as a significant amount of scrap and even broken beads, that testify—in the opinion of Ilze Loze—that this material represents the work of “apprentices” training in the craft. Analysis of the spatial distribution of the types of amber jewelry produced in the workshops of the Lake Lubāns Depression proves that as early as the Middle Neolithic, the trade in amber extended well beyond the local region and that the network included far-off communities to the east, in the upper Volga valley and that of its tributary, the Oka. The amber evidence is corroborated by the presence of flint and flint implements at sites in the Lake Lubāns Depression and by the shores of the Litorina Sea; petrological analyses confirm that the flint originated precisely from the upper Volga and Oka valleys.

The carving of amber in the Lake Lubāns Depression, as well as the active trade in amber with remote communities, continued into the ensuing Late Neolithic period when it

seems that the central role was played by the settlement at Abora—an important and meticulously investigated site. At this settlement, along with the amber workshops, evidence of other crafts—such as stone carving and pottery production—was uncovered. Over the years, the site produced 1,410 amber artifacts and almost 2 kg of amber scrap. The Abora craftsmen introduced new pendant types and methods for perforating pendants and beads (two-sided perforations and multiple perforations). The most popular new types were the stemmed disc and tooth-shaped pendants. Loze provides minute typological analysis of the amber pendants, beads, and figurines, thus providing us with a reference framework for the study of amber in the whole region. The analysis is enhanced by both color and black-and-white illustrations of the archaeological material, thus creating an encyclopedia of the Neolithic amber of Latvia.

Besides Abora, Dr. Loze meticulously describes other smaller workshops, such as the Asne I, Iča, and Lagaža settlements. Lagaža represents the last phase of the Neolithic amber workshops in the region. During the first half of the second millennium B.C.E., the Neolithic communities of the region suffered a crisis and moved away, probably due to a change in the lake's water level, and the centuries-long tradition of amber carving in the Lake Lubāns Wetlands was interrupted.

In her superb study, Loze uses the recovered amber artifacts to delineate the complex social and cultural traits of Neolithic society in the Eastern Baltic region, as well as the extensive trade network with both neighboring peoples and distant communities as far away as the Volga valley and the Dnieper basin. The reader is not faced with the image of isolated agricultural Neolithic villages, but an open system of well-developed and specialized craft production (in almost proto-industrial quantities), innovation, inter-regional communication, and material and social exchange. And so, to the long-standing cultural biography of amber beads, Ilze Loze has skillfully and eruditely added several convincing, turbulent, and interesting lines.

It should be pointed out that while the bulk of the book is in Latvian, there is an excellent 15-page English summary. The illustrations are pretty much self-explanatory.

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