

ARHEOLOOGILISED
VÄLITÖÖD
EESTIS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
FIELD WORKS
IN ESTONIA

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS IN THE OLD PART OF VILJANDI

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In 1997, archaeological investigations were carried out in Viljandi between Tallinna road, Tartu, Lossi and Väike-Turu streets, behind the cinema "Rubiin" (Fig.). The investigations were ordered by the municipal government of Viljandi to obtain additional information for detailed planning of this quarter. Since the town wall of Viljandi was also located in this quarter, the possibilities to display or mark the town wall, defence towers and the moat were studied. Heiki Valk conducted the boring and georadar works; archaeological excavations were conducted by the author of the present paper.

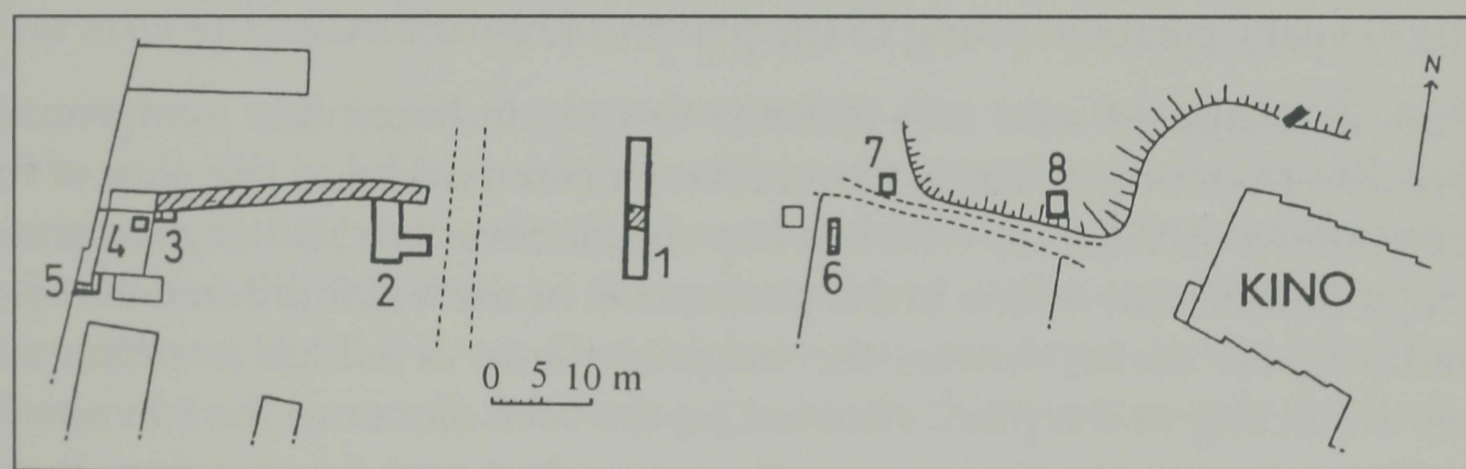


Fig. Archaeological excavations in Viljandi.

Town wall and moat

During the Middle Ages, a section of the western part of the town wall of Viljandi, from the Riia Gate to the NW corner of the fortifications, was situated in the area between Tallinna road, Tartu, Lossi and Väike-Turu streets. From there, the northern wall ran to the Tartu Gate, which was located at the present-day Lossi Street. Presently, a 28.5 m long section of the northern wall, beginning at the NW corner, has been reconstructed. Archaeological investigations have proved that a section of the same wall, at least 40m long, 2.2–2.3m wide and 1.5m high, has survived

underground, to the east of the reconstructed section. This is the bottom part of the wall, 3–4 stones high, consisting of large granite stones with brick rubble and yellowish mortar between them.

The stratigraphy of the cultural layer indicated that a layer of yellowish sandy loam, up to 0.8m thick, was piled to the inner slope of the moat before building the wall or contemporaneously with laying the foundation of the wall. A similar layer of sandy loam was observed leaning against the lowermost stones of the town wall on both sides and extending partly below them. The lowermost stones of the wall are connected with sandy clay of the same yellow colour to a height of about 40–50 cm, while lime mortar connected the higher stones. The main foundation of the formerly investigated sections of the town wall – at the beginning of Lossi Street (Valk 1994), at Jaani church (Valk 1993) and at the rear of the Franciscan monastery (Selirand 1982) – was of analogous construction. The extensive layer of sandy loam probably emerged with the digging of the moat. In excavation no 1, five meters from the inner side of the town wall, the thickness of the yellow layer reached 40 cm, and the layer extended southwards. On the moat side of the wall this layer extended from the wall to the bank of the moat. In excavation no 2, a charred brand was found. The result of its ^{14}C dating (Ta-2615) was 740 ± 30 years, corresponding to the period 1175–1255 AD.

In the investigated area two defence towers, indiscernible overground, were also discovered. These towers have been marked in the plan of the fortifications of Viljandi, which is kept in the Swedish Military Archives. A copy of this plan is also in the possession of the Viljandi Museum. The quadrangular corner tower, the original name of which is unknown, was, according to the plan, situated on the NW corner of the town wall. To determine its location, excavations nos 3, 4 and 5 were dug. It appeared that the quadrangular foundation of the tower, preserved in the ground, measured 8x8 m. The thickness of the eastern wall of the tower was 1.3 m. It remains uncertain whether the tower was built contemporaneously with the wall or affixed later. The eastern wall of the tower was built separately from the town wall while the southern wall seems to be built together with the town wall.

To determine the location of the second tower, excavation no 8 was dug. According to the plan it was situated between the NW corner of the town wall and the Tartu Gate. In the course of the excavations it became evident that the location and the shape of the rotund tower corresponded exactly to the plan. The tower was built on the outside of the town wall. Its outside diameter was 8–10 m, the thickness of the walls

reached 1.6–1.7 m. At the excavated towers and the section of the town wall, no ruin layer worth mentioning was discovered. Probably the stones of the ruins lying on the ground have been used for later construction works.

The results of boring allowed determination of the width and depth of the moat in front of the northern part of the town wall. At excavation no 1, the moat was located about 5 m to the north of the town wall. Most likely the upper part of the bank of the moat was gently sloping. The steep-walled trench was located about 8 m from the wall. The natural valley carved out by a glacier had served as a starting point for digging the moat. It was situated 5–6 m from the wall, about 25 m to the west from the cinema. The drop in the surface in the two following metres was about 80 cm before the digging of the moat. In the area of excavation no 2, the moat was about 20 m wide, its bottom being 5.5–6 m deeper than the surface of that time and about 8 m deeper than the present-day one. The bottom of the ditch was dug through moraine up to the red Devon sand. The sediments and alluvial layers discovered inside the moat testify that the moat was filled with water.

The area surrounded by the town wall

Excavations nos 1 and 2 were located in the area surrounded by the town wall (Fig.). Additionally, numerous borings were carried out in the same area, to determine the thickness and nature of the cultural layer. It appears that the thickness of the cultural layer in the area surrounded by the wall reaches 1.2–3 m. The thickest was the layer at the Northwest corner of the town wall, becoming gradually thinner towards the East.

No construction remains were discovered in excavation no 2. Nevertheless, iron slags and numerous iron objects, including tools, found here suggest that blacksmiths worked here in the Middle Ages.

In excavation no 2, adjacent to the town wall, only a 10-cm cultural layer, accumulated over the layer of mortar from the building of the wall, is related to the Middle Ages, dating from the 13th century. Presumably in the 16th century the area of the excavation was cobbled. Later, a building was erected on the pavement, containing a stove of granite stones and bricks. Only the lowermost part of the stove was preserved. Its walls were laid of granite stones and clay. The inside and the floor of the stove was lined with bricks measuring 27–28x12–13x8 cm. The surface of the stove was left uneven. The thickness of the inside lining of the stove varied – the northern side was lined with three layers of

bricks while the southern and backside had only one. In front of the mouth on the western side of the stove, on the same level with the stove floor, a 15 cm thick patch of ashes could be observed. Further, on the same level, a clay layer with a thickness of 9–12 cm was discovered. It was not clear whether the clay layer originated from the floor of the building, or was it the base of a hearth in front of the mouth of the stove.

Relying upon the three coins of the last third of the 16th century, found from the ruins of the building, the house could have been erected on the site after 1560, when the Russians conquered the town. The traces of bronze working discovered on the same site suggest that a craftsman of this trade lived in this house. Very likely the building was demolished in the wars at the beginning of the 17th century. After the ruin of the building, no remarkable cultural layer accumulated on the site. The strata of the 16th–17th centuries were discovered immediately under the sod layer.

The finds

Compared with the earlier excavations in the old part of Viljandi, the amount of the finds obtained in the excavations of 1997 (VM 10589) was small. Relatively numerous were stove tiles. Among them were unglazed pot-formed stove tiles as well as green-glazed tiles, the latter being more numerous. The majority of the pottery fragments come from vessels covered with dark green or yellow glaze. Legs and handles of grappens were also represented. The sherds of unglazed pottery and stoneware were mostly found from the lowermost parts of the cultural layer. On the bottom of the medieval ditch, discovered in excavation no 1, fragments of a spherical vessel were found.

A small case of red clay, with a height of 3.3 cm and an orifice of the same measure, was found in excavation no 2. It dates from the end of the 16th or the beginning of the 17th century and was probably used as a cupping horn. Of the three coins found from the ruins of the building with a stove in the same excavation, one was a one-mark silver piece of the Swedish king Johan III (1569–1592). The other two were shillings: of the town of Riga, 1575, and of the Bishop of Riga.

Among iron objects, nails were most numerous. Those from the top layers had round heads, the nails from deeper layers were with flat or T-shaped heads. A large knife 17 cm long, was also found. The refuse of bronze working, fragments of bronze sheets, bronze objects and their fragments were abundant in excavation no 2. Among these, fragments of

beads made of bronze foil, a small flower-shaped plaque and a hemispherical plaque should be mentioned.

All glass fragments, mostly of greenish windowpane with a thickness 1–2 mm, were found from the ruins of the building in the excavation no 2. Glass had been cut into a diamond shape with the sides of 8 cm, and the edges had been retouched. A fragment of a leaden frame also came to light. In the rubble layer, a grindstone of sandstone and a fragment of the upper half of a quern were found. The pipe bone with two drilled holes is probably a fragment of a whistle.

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ARHEOLOOGILISED UURINGUD VILJANDI VANALINNAS

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1997. aastal tehti uuringuid Viljandi vanalinnas Tallinna mnt., Tartu, Lossi ja Väike-Turu tänavate alal (joon.). Uuriti võimalust eksponeerida või markeerida Viljandi keskaegset linnamüüri, kaitsetorne ja vallikraavi. Ühtlasi selgitati kultuurikihi iseloomu ja säilivust linnamüüri vahetult piirneval alal. Arheoloogiliste radardus- ja puurimistööde juhendas Heiki Valk, väljakaevamisi tegi artikli autor. Uuritud kvartalis paiknes Viljandi linnamüüri läänepoolne osa Riia väravast kuni müüri loodenurgani. Sealt edasi on müüri põhjapoolne osa säilinud 28, 5 m pikkuse rekonstrueeritud lõiguna kuni Lossi tänava kohal paiknenud Tartu väravani. Selgus, et põhjapoolne müür jätkub rekonstrueeritud lõigust edasi ida poole 2,2 –2,3 m laia ja vähemalt 40 m pikkuse kehandina maa sees. Suurtest maakividest laotud ja kollaka mördi ning tellisetükkidega seotud müürist on säilinud u. 1,5 m kõrgune osa, mis moodustub 3 – 4 kivikihist. Kultuurikihi stratigraafia järgi võib öelda, et linnamüüri ehitamise ajal on kuhjatud vallikraavi siseküljele kollakas 0,8 m paksune loodusliku saviliiva kiht. Arvatavalt on see kiht tekkinud vallikraavi kaevamisest. Samast kihist saadud ¹⁴C proov andis analüüsimisel puidu vanuseks 740± 30 aastat, mis dendroparandusega vastab aastatele 1175 –1255 AD.

Uuritud alale jäi kaks linnmüüri kaitsetorni, millest pole säilinud maapeal nähtavaid jälgi. Esimene oli 8x8 m suurune nelinurkne nurgatorn, mille algset nime pole teada. Teine – ümartorn – jäi müüri loodenurga ja Tartu värava vahelisele alale ning oli ehitatud linnamüüri välisküljele. Selle müüri välimine läbimõõt on olnud u. 10 m, kusjuures müüri alaosa paksus ulatus 1,6 – 1,7 m. Ümartorni põhiplaan ja asend on fikseeritud ka 17. sajandi Viljandi linnakindlustuse plaanil.

Puurimistega selgitati linnamüüri põhjapoolse osa ees paiknenud vallikraavi laiust ning sügavust. Selgus, et antud kohas oli kraav kaevatud linnamüürist u. 5 m põhja poole nii, et selle kaldad olid sujuva langusega. Järsem sissekaeve on alanud müürist u. 8 m kaugemal. U. 20 m laiuse vallikraavi rajamisel on arvestatud looduslikku vagumust. Tõenäoliselt oli kraav vähemalt 5,5 – 6 m sügav. Kraavi põhjast avastatud sette- ja uhtekihid annavad tunnistust sellest, et kraav pidi olema täidetud veega.

Linnamüüri piiratud alale rajati kaevandid nr. 1 ja 2 (vt. joon.) ning tehti hulgliselt puurauke. Kultuurikihi paksuseks oli uuritud alal 1,2 – 3 m, kusjuures kõige paksem oli kiht müüri loodenurga juures, muutudes ida suunas üha õhemaks.

I kaevandi alal ehituskonstruksioone ei leitud. Linnamüüri eksisteerimise ajal oli müürist kuni 4 m laiune ala olnud hoonestuseta. Leitud šlakk osutab, et siin tegeleti sepatööga. Hoonestuseta oli ka II kaevandi ala. Alles 16. sajandil on see koht sillutatud munakividega. Hiljem on sillutisele ehitatud hoone, mida köeti maa- ja tellisekividest laotud ahjuga. Otsustades kolme 16. sajandi viimase veerandi mündi põhjal, võidi hoone rajada kõige tõenäolisemalt pärast linna vallutamist 1560. aastal. Ehitus, milles pronksitöötlemisjääkide põhjal võis elada käsitöoline, hävis ilmselt 17. sajandi alguses.