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FIELD WORKS
IN ESTONIA

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS ON THE SETTLEMENT SITE OF JÕELÄHTME

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The settlement site of Jõelähtme was discovered at the beginning of 1980`s. The investigations demonstrated that the core of the settlement was located in the eastern bend of the Jõelähtme river, near the present-day community centre. To the south, the settlement extends to the Narva Road, and to the east to the new dwellings west of the Jõelähtme dairy. The cultural layer is thickest (75 cm) and most intensive in the area between the community centre and the river. Finds are few here – only some potsherds and artefacts, including a medieval spur with a dented rowel (AI 4938).

Late in the autumn of 1997, the construction of a petrol station, shop and a café started between the old and the new Narva roads, to the north of the Jõelähtme stone graves. As a pipeline was to be built along the northern side of the old Narva Road, into the Jõelähtme River, the track had to be investigated archaeologically (see Lõugas & Toos 1997). The length of the excavation dug in the area of the track was 65 m and the width was 1–1.2 m. It began at the bridge, on the verge of the broad and ran along the northern side of the road. In this section the ground declined towards the river by 2.5 m. The cultural layer was preserved only sporadically. At the higher end of the excavation, a stone construction was discovered, skirted by vertical limestone slabs. Several metres towards the river of this construction, a thick layer of burnt clay fragments and a pavement, 10–15 cm thick, of small granite stones, came to light. The potsherds with cord impressions found here (Fig. 1: 15) were vital for dating the construction. The closest parallels for the potsherds come from the nearby Rebala Presti stone grave. This type of pottery was widely spread in Estonia around the birth of Christ.

At the lowest end of the excavation, near the river, the thickness of the dark cultural layer was 15–20 cm, and was buried here under a layer of soil, probably from the road, about half a metre thick. In this section the cultural layer contained no stones. Animal bones and pottery, including

sherds with polished surface and from bowls with horizontal line decoration (Fig. 1: 1, 3, 8, 10, 13) were found here even immediately on the bedrock.



Fig. 1. Finds from Jõelähtme settlement. (AI 6302: 82, 77, 84, 70, 80, 19, 87, 44, 86, 79, 76, 68, 48, 32, 1.)

Only a few artefacts were found from the Jõelähtme settlement site. Two of the best-dated finds were silver coins. According to Ivar Leimus, one of them is a penny of Plettenberg, the Master of the Order, coined in Riga in 1527. The other, only fragmentarily preserved, is a coin of the King of Sweden, Johan III, dating from the year 1590 or 1592. A bronze spiral, about 3 cm long and 0.9 cm in diameter, should also be mentioned. It consists of 19 tight whorls and is made of bronze wire with a diameter of 0.15 cm (Fig. 1: 6). Such spirals are usually dated to the Late

Iron Age in Estonia. A couple of polished stones and a fragment of a slate whetstone, nondescript fragments of iron objects and iron sheet were also found, which are undatable.

The majority of the finds from the Jõelähtme settlement site consist of fragments of hand-moulded pottery. The fragments of simple vessels with smoothed surfaces prevail. Three sherds display simple cord impressions and impressions of cord wrapped around a peg (Fig. 1: 15). Such pottery was widely distributed in Estonia in the Pre-Roman Iron Age, with cord impressions especially at the end of the period.

Nearly a quarter of the pottery derives from well-finished low vessels with polished surfaces. Parts of them are black. In several cases the pottery with polished surfaces has been ornamented with lines (Fig. 1: 1) or cord impressions. Another group consists of convex-bottomed vessels with polished surfaces, which have narrowing orifice and the upright rims of which are decorated with wide horizontal grooves. Some vessels have rims with wavy profile of the outer surface. One brown sherd decorated in this way is rather thick — 0.95 cm (Fig. 1: 4), others are 0.5–0.6 cm thick. Some fragments have grooves so wide as if they were drawn with a finger (Fig. 1: 2, 9). Some fragments derive from vessels, which have a low bulge in the middle of the rim, or at the transition to shoulder (Fig. 1: 3, 7). In Estonia, such type of vessels is quite rare and probably imported. Nevertheless it is not impossible that such pottery has also been manufactured locally, taking imported vessels as pattern. Hitherto, such pottery has been found in a rather limited area, from the stone graves of Proosa, Lagedi and Viimsi, the Iru hill-fort and the settlement site of Rebala. Analogies to this pottery, in shape, finishing and ornamentation, can be found in Denmark in the 5th–6th centuries.

One potsherd comes from a round shoulder part which has been ornamented with horizontal lines in pairs (Fig. 1: 8). One black polished fragment is decorated with peculiar curved lines (Fig. 1: 12), this fragment might belong to the same period with the pottery with grooved rims. Formerly, pottery with such decoration has been found from the Asva hill-fort, where potsherds of this type were also few and exceptional.

Only ten fragments come from wheel pottery, among which is also a leg of a *grapen*.

Relying upon the finds from the Jõelähtme settlement site, the older deposit can be dated to the end of the Early Iron Age. No pottery, contemporaneous to the Jõelähtme stone cist graves, was found. Neither can the pottery of the Roman Iron Age be distinguished among the finds.

Probably it is not represented here, but it is also possible that it simply cannot be distinguished yet. A part of the carinated pottery may belong either to the Late Roman Iron Age, or to the Migration Period, or even to the Viking Age. Medieval pottery is represented by widespread types of vessels, known also in the find material from Tallinn.

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ARHEOLOOGILISED KAEVAMISED JÕELÄHTME ASULAKOHAL

Vello LÕUGAS

Jõelähtme asulakoht avastati 1980. aastate algul. Tookordsed uurimised näitasid, et asula tuumikala paikneb Jõelähtme jõe idapoolses käärus, praeguse rahvamaja ümbruses. Asula lõunapiiriks on Vana–Narva maantee, idapiiriks Jõelähtme meiereist lääne poole jäävad uued elamud. Kõige tüsedam kultuurkiht (kuni 75 cm) on rahvamaja ja jõe vahelisel alal. Leide oli siit teada vähe – vaid mõned savinõukillud ja esemed, s.h. keskaegne hambulise rattaga kannus.

1997. aastal hakati Jõelähtme kivikangruteist põhja poole, Tallinn – Narva uue ja vana tee vahelisele alale, ehitama bensiinjaama ja torujuhet, mis kulges piki vana maantee põhjapoolset serva kuni Jõelähtme jõeni. Arheoloogilised avariikaevamised toimusidki rajatava trassi alal 65 m pikkuse ja 1 – 1, 2 m laiusel lõigul. Kaevand algas silla juurest madala, üleujutatava maa servast, ja kulges kuni bensiinjaamani. Kultuurkihti oli säilinud vaid laiguti. Kaevandi kõrgemas osas leiti kividest laotud ehituskonstruksioon, mida ääristasid vertikaalsed paeplaadid. Sellest mõne meetri kaugusel oli paksus lades põlenud savitükke (võimalik, et need pärinesid koldekummist) ja väiksematest kividest laotud sillutis. Ehituskonstruksiooni dateerimiseks on olulised siitsamast leitud nõorivajutusega savinõukillud (joon. 1: 15), millele on lähemad vasted teada Jõelähtme ümbrusest Rebala Presti kivikalmest. Selline keraamika oli Eestis laialt levinud meie ajaarvamise vahetusel ja algul.

Kaevandi kõige madalamas osas oli kultuurkiht vaid 15 –20 cm paksune ning seal ei esinenud enam kive. Loomaluid ja keraamikat, s.h. kiilapinnalist ja horisontaaljoontega kaunistatud liuakeste kilde, leiti siit ka otse paelava pealt. Esemeleide saadi vähe.

Jõelähtme asula leidudest moodustas suurema osa keraamika, kusjuures ülekaalus oli käsitsi vormitud savinõud. Kolmel killul oli võrikuosas nõöri ja ümber pulga mässitud nõöri vajutustega ornament (joon. 1: 13). Selline keraamika on laialt levinud eelrooma rauaajal, nõorornamendiga eriti selle perioodi lõpul. Ligi veerand keraamikast pärines kiila pinnaga madalatest nõudest, millest osa oli musta värvi. See, kõige tõenäolisemalt importkeraamika, peaks pärinema ajavahemikust 5.–6. sajandini. Omaette rühma moodustasid kumerapõhjalised nõud, mille suuosa on ahenev ja püstjat servaosa kauni-

stavad horisontaalsed madalad laiad sooned (joon. 1: 10). Mõne nõu serva välispind on profiilis ülalt alla laineline (joon. 1: 7). Paaril killul on sooned nii laiad, et jääb mulje, nagu oleks need näpuga nõule veetud (joon. 1: 4). Osa kilde pärinevad üsna haruldase vormiga nõudest, mille õlal ehk serva all on madal plastiline mõigas (joon. 1: 3, 9). Omapäraste kaarjate joontega on kaunistatud üks must killapinnalise nõu katke (joon. 1: 12).

Täpsemalt dateeritavatest leidudest on olulised kaks hõbemünti: 1527. aastal Riias vermitud ordumeister Plettenbergi penn ja 1590. või 1592. aasta Rootsi kuninga Johan III verming. Leidudest nimetatagu veel tiheda keermega jämedast traadist pronksspiraali (joon. 1: 6), mis pärineb nooremast rauaajast. Keraamika põhjal näib, et Jõelähtme asula kultuurikihi ladestused pärinevad ajaarvamise vahetusest kuni tänapäevani. Siinsamas läheduses paiknevate Jõelähtme pronksiaegsete kivikirstkalmetega samaaegset leiumaterjal asula avariikaevmistelt ei leitud.