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RESCUE EXCAVATIONS ON THE SETTLEMENT SITE OF ALA-PIKA

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The Iron Age settlement site of Ala-Pika is situated in the Valga County (previous Kanepi parish), about 7 km to the north-east of Otepää. It was first excavated in 1995 (see Valk 1996). In 1996, the uninvestigated cultural layer to the east of the excavated area was damaged by the inhabitants of a neighbouring house. In the autumn of 1996, the damaged area was measured and trimmed on a smaller scale (Valk 1997). In 1997, rescue excavations were carried out there, conducted by the author of the present paper.

The damaged area lies in the eastern part of the Ala-Pika settlement site, on the bank of the Elva river, on the north-eastern slope. An area of 38 m² was investigated. In its middle part the cultural layer was destroyed or heavily mixed. The cultural layer was best preserved in the north-eastern part of the excavation, where it was also the thickest.

The upper 1.3 m of the cultural layer consisted of greyish-brown soil which had slid down the slope of the hill, and contained much of pottery. At a depth of 50-70 cm, a sparse layer of granite stones with an approximate diameter of 20-30 cm was discovered. In the depth of 70-80 cm, the stone layer became compact. At a depth of 70-100 cm, black and damp cultural layer occurred sporadically between the stones. Its colour was considerably darker than in the upper parts of the cultural layer. This dark layer contained potsherds, animal bones, small fragments of charcoal and much heavily burned stone rubble. This layer was presumably in its original position. The charcoal sample gathered from this layer was dated 1210±30 years (Ta-2616), corresponding to the years 710-790 AD.

No constructions were observed in the stone layer. The stones, which occurred in the whole area were mostly heavily burned, and some had even crumbled. These stones were probably rejected from a *keris*-stove.

In the south-western part of the excavation, a 20 cm thick light brown layer of natural soil was observed between the cultural layer and the original yellow sand. This layer contained no finds, except a few pieces of charcoal.

In the eastern part of the excavation, a ditch directed towards the brook was discovered in the original sand. It was 25 cm deep and 50-75 cm wide. The south-western part of the ditch was filled with brown natural soil and the north-eastern part with a black cultural layer. There, some potsherds were also found. The bottom of the ditch was covered with a couple of centimetres of yellow alluvial sand, indicating that the ditch once contained water. The origin of the ditch is uncertain: it may be man-made as well as of alluvial origin.

A total of 701 finds were numbered. The actual amount of finds is greater since small potsherds found from the same square and same layer were filed under the same number. Potsherds prevailed among the finds. As the cultural layer was screened, many tiny scraps of pottery were also collected. The fragments are from vessels of fine as well as coarse pottery. Carinated pottery was also represented, mostly with fragments of fine pottery, decorated with fingernail marks, pits, lines, pinched and net ornament. One fragment bears presumably striated marks.

Besides pottery, a spinning-whorl of grey sandstone, with a scraped ornament on both sides (Fig. 1) was also found. Noteworthy are about various beads – polychrome, yellow, of translucent and opaque glass. Concerning ornaments, a bronze spiral was found together with a bit of yarn. Iron objects were heavily oxidised, only knife fragments were determinable.

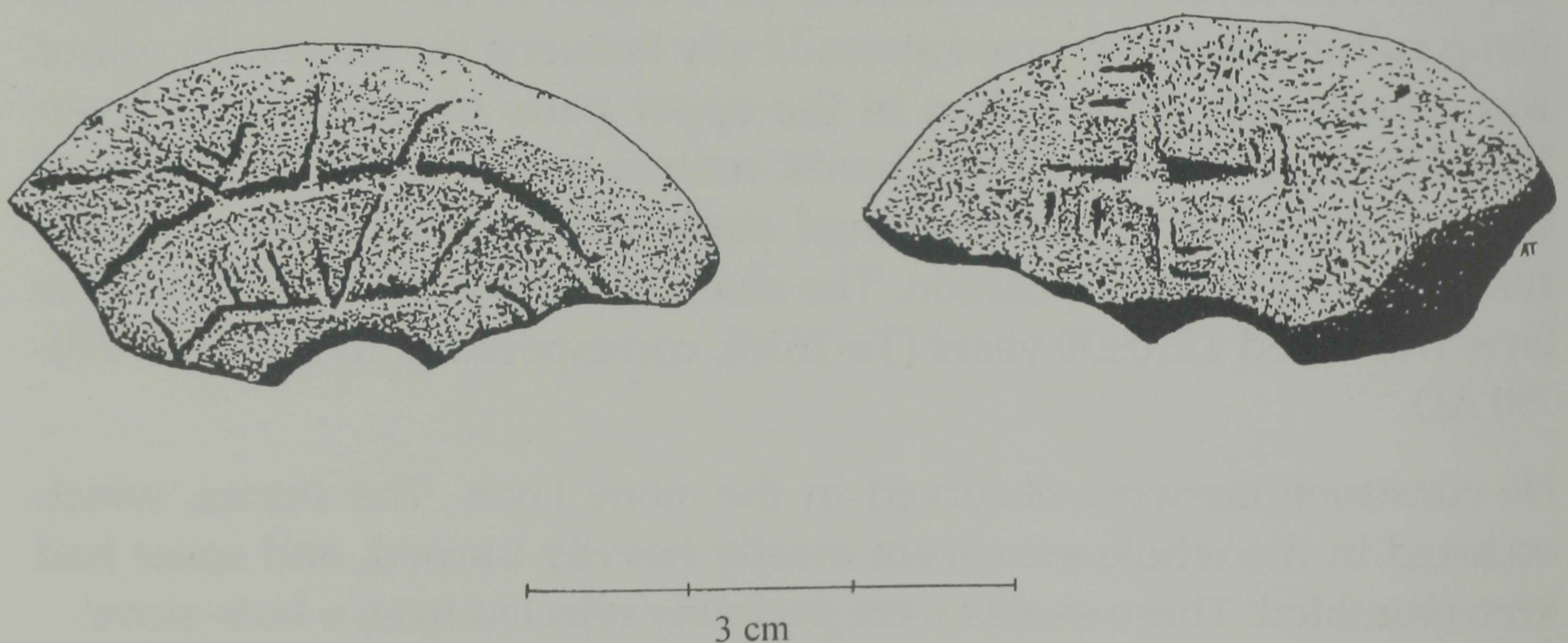


Fig. 1. Spinning-whorl of sandstone from Ala-Pika
Joon. 1. Liivakivist värtakeder Ala-Pikalt

The investigated cultural layer had been mixed by erosion, ploughing, and digging with a dredge. No definite constructional details were discovered during the excavations. The find material is scanty and nondescript compared with the material of previous excavations. Relying upon the finds from the excavations of 1997, and also the radiocarbon analysis, the settlement site of Ala-Pika can be dated to the period 450-850 AD. This dating is to some extent later than those of the previous excavations.

References

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PÄÄSTEKAEVAMISED ALA-PIKA ASULAKOHAL

Andres TVAURI

Ala-Pika asulakoht asub Valga maakonnas (end. Kanepi khk.), Otepää linnast 7 km kirdes. 1996. aastal lõhuti seal ekskavaatoriga kaevates kaitsealust muinasasulat. Sama aasta sügisel mõõdistati lõhutud ala ja tehti väiksemaid korrastustöid säilinud kultuurikihi päästmiseks. Päästekaevamised toimusid 1997. aastal asula idaosas, kirde poole alaneval Elva jõe kaldal.

Asula tüse, kohati kuni 130 cm paksune kultuurikiht koosnes erinevatest ladestustest. 50-70 cm sügavusel algas hõre kivistik, mis muutus sügavamal järjest tihedamaks. Sügavusel 70 -100 cm leidis kive vahel musta ja nätsket pinnast, mis sisaldas rohkesti savinõukilde, loomaluid, väikesi söetükikesi ja eriti palju põlenud kivipurdu. Sellest kihist korjatud söe analüüs andis ladestuse vanuseks 740 ± 30 aastat, mis kalibreeritult vastab aastatele 710-790 AD. Mingeid ehituskonstruktioone ei leitud. Arvatavalt pärinesid tugevasti tuld saanud või lausa murenenud kivid väljavahetamisele kuulunud keristest.

Loodusliku alusliiva sees avastati oja suunas kaevatud kraavilohk. Kraav oli kuni 25 cm sügav ja 50-75 cm lai. Kraavi põhjas olev mõne sentimeetri paksune läbiuhutud liiv näitab, et selles on voolanud vesi. Pole kindel, kas kraavi on kaevanud kunagi inimesed või on see looduslik uhtemoodustis.

Leidudest domineeris keraamika, mille hulgas olid ülekaalus väikesed killud. Need pärinesid nii peenkeraamilistest kui ka robustse teostusega tarbenõudest. Ornamendina esines küünevajutusi, näpimustrit, lohukesi, jooni ja joontest moodustuvat võremustrit. Ühe killu pinnal oli aimatavad riipejäljed. Leidudest oli tähelepanuväärne hallist liiva-

kivist värtnakeder, millele oli sisse kraabitud haakristimuster (joon.1). Rohkesti leiti klaashelmeid. Ühes pronksspiraalis oli säilinud villast lõnga. Raudesemetest olid äratuntavad noakatked.

Enamus läbiuuritud kultuurkihist oli segatud kas erosiooni, künni või hiliste sissekaevetega. Asulakoha võib leiumaterjali ja söeproovi analüüsi alusel dateerida aastatesse 450-850 p. Kr., mis on mõnevõrra varasem eelmiste kaevamiste vanusemäärangutest.