

ARHEOLOOGILISED
VÄLITÖÖD
EESTIS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
FIELD WORKS
IN ESTONIA

1997

Koostanud ja toimetanud
Ülle Tamla

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVENTORIES ON THE ISLANDS IN THE LIVONIAN BAY

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The small islands of Estonia, including Kihnu and Ruhnu in the Livonian Bay, are archaeologically almost uninvestigated. The scarce material has been obtained incidentally, mostly from local inhabitants. Therefore, the earliest history of these islands is either not mentioned in special literature, or the discussion is confined to the settlement of these areas by the Swedes in the Middle Ages. The archaeological inventories of Kihnu (A. Kriiska) and Ruhnu (Ü. Tamla) in 1997 were the first scientific field-works to investigate the earliest settlement history of these islands.

Kihnu

The only prehistoric find from the Kihnu island was, up to the past year, a stone axe with a shaft-hole (Sb Pernau V, 18).¹ Information about later periods concerns some burial places (Vindi 1996) and a hoard of silver coins, dated to the 17th century, found from Lemsi village.²

In 1997, an archaeological inventory trip was organized to the island, financed by Eesti Kultuurkapital. The trip was aimed at mapping the known burial places, determining the medieval cultural layer in the vil-

¹ The stone axe from Kihnu could not be found in the Glück collections of the Pärnu Museum. In the catalogue compiled in 1965, the numbers Gl. 390–403 are missing. A photo of the axe is preserved (PäMu 968/F2793/12).

² The hoard (PäMu 90) was discovered in 1940, between the foundation stones of the granary of the Pulli farm in the Lemsi village. It weighed about 1 kg and consisted of coins of Livonian and Riga stamping, of Sigismund III, Gustav II Adolf, Kristina, Karl X Gustav and Karl XI.

lages known from the earlier written sources³ and investigating the central part of the island, which was the first area to emerge from the sea, to find the earliest traces of settlement (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Kihnu. 1 – medieval cemeteries; 2 – medieval settlement sites; 3 – Iron Age settlement sites; 4 – inventories in 1997.

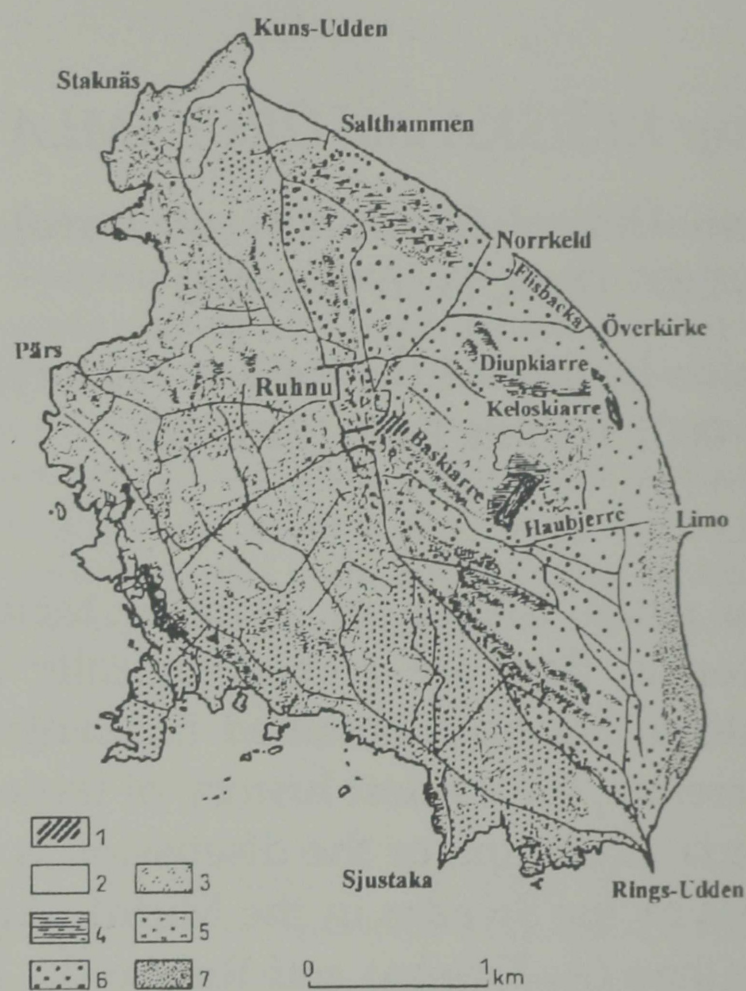


Fig. 2. Ruhnu. 1 – Stone Age settlement site; 2 – fields; 3 – pasture-land; 4 – swamp; 5 – meadows; 6 – forests; 7 – drifting sand.

Under the guidance of local people, presumable flat cemeteries were checked on Künkra farm of the Rootsiküla village, Kallase farm of the Lemsi village, and in Vanakiriku. These were the places where human bones have been found (Saar 1947; Mättik 1974, 11). The area at Vanakiriku, in the northeastern part of the island, is considered to be an ancient cemetery by the present islanders who tell a legend about a church that had stood there and was once burned together with people (Kriiska 1997, 5). In 1996, while digging a ditch, bones were found again, including a double burial of an adult and a child (Vindi 1996). A coin pendant from the 16th century was found associated with the child's skeleton.⁴ During the inspection of 1997, a bead of a cowrie shell⁵ was

³ The hoard (PäMu 90) was discovered in 1940, between the foundation stones of the granary of the Pulli farm in the Lemsi village. It weighed about 1 kg and consisted of coins of Livonian and Riga stamping, of Sigismund III, Gustav II Adolf, Kristina, Karl X Gustav and Karl XI.

⁴ According to the numismatist Vladimir Sokolovski, it is a Tallinn shilling stamped during the period 1535–1549, by the rule of the Master of the Order, Hermann von Brüggenei.

found at the same site. The legend about the church may indicate that a catholic chapel once stood on the cemetery (Mättik 1977, 12).

During inventories, information from the written sources of the 16th century and a map of Kihnu from the 17th century were used. On the Saarde farm of Rootsiküla and the Pärna farm of Linaküla, cultural layers of settlement sites were discovered, from which the oldest fragments of unglazed wheel pottery belong to the Middle Ages. An analogous fragment was found in Sääre village, but compact cultural layer could not be determined there.

When prospecting the highest area, some fragments of pottery were found and the presence of a cultural layer was established. There, on the territory of the former Mõisaküla village, about 100 m to the Northeast of the church of Kihnu, a trial excavation of 4 m² was dug. In the excavation, a 1 m diameter sooty spot, probably a fire-place, came to light. In the trial excavation and trial pits 17, potsherds were found. The fragments are very small and badly preserved. Judging by the outer surface that is preserved on five fragments, the pottery was hand-moulded. The clay used for pottery contains stone rubble with a diameter up to 4 mm. The small number of finds may indicate short duration of settlement. The site was likely a seasonal camp for seal hunters or fishermen. The hand-moulded pottery dates the site to the prehistoric period, but the small size of the fragments does not allow more precise dating. If the settlement belonged to fishermen or seal-hunters, we could presume that it was situated on the seashore. The site was palaeo-geographically very suitable for coastal settlement: it was in the central part of the ancient island, on the shore of a bay, and was separated from high seas by a small island. Relying on neo-tectonics (see: Miidel 1995, Fig. 1), the settlement may be dated to the Early Metal Age.

Ruhnu

Unlike Kihnu, which first rose above sea level some 4000 years ago, according to geologists, Ruhnu might have emerged from the sea by the regression of the Yoldia Sea, i. e. 10300.... 10200 years ago. Coastal formations of that period have not been discovered yet. The oldest beach ridges date from the Ancylus Lake period, i. e. about 9000 years B. P. This is confirmed by fresh water molluscs found from the gravel ridge in the western part of the island at an absolute altitude of 11.... 12 m above

⁵ All finds from the inventories, as well as the coin found in 1996 near the hotel *Rock city*, are kept in the Kihnu Museum.

sea level. Observing the present shape of the island (Fig. 2) and the relief of its middle part, it can be presumed that first, two islets emerged here: one at Houbjerre and the other, Baskierre, about 1 km to the Northwest. When the islets finally joined, a shallow bay remained in the middle of the sickle-shaped island. The beach ridges of the Ancylus Lake are presently covered by sand dunes and their limits are difficult to determine. Thus we do not know the exact shape and height of the beach ridges, which would give valuable information about the sea level of that period and the earlier phase of the development of Ruhnu (Kala & Einasto 1979; Kask, Lepland, Perens 1994, 23–24).

The early human settlement of Ruhnu is confirmed by the information in the archaeological archives about two stone axes found in the foundation ditch at the construction of a new church on the island in 1910–1912. One of these was given to the Estonian Museum in Tallinn, while the other was redeposited in the ground (Leinbock 1924). The stone axe brought to Tallinn and stored in the archaeological collections of the Institute of History (Fig. 3) is broken at the shaft-hole and its butt is heavily worn. The quite roughly polished oval axe might, most likely be dated to the Late Neolithic or even the beginning of the Bronze Age. One more reference of a stone axe found from the island was published in an article in "Päevaleht" in 1931, where it is written that a stone axe was brought to light by ploughing a field in the northern part of the island (see: Saar 1973, 33). The fate of this axe is unknown.

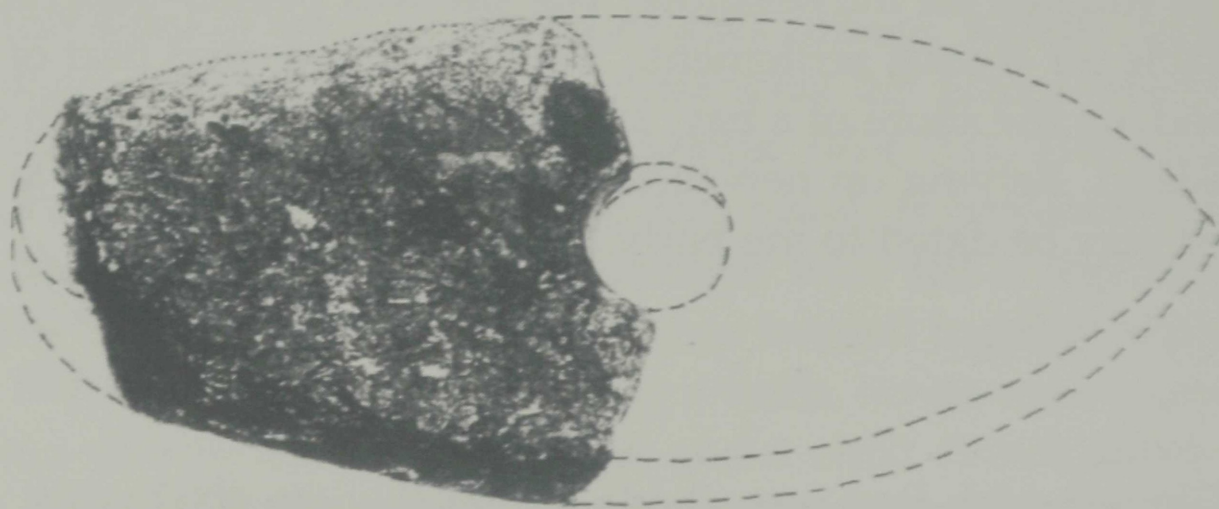


Fig. 3. Stone axe, found in 1910. (AI 2643: 35.)

An oval strike-a-light found from Ruhnu (Fig. 4), kept in the Latvian History Museum in Riga, is considerably later, dating probably from the Middle Iron Age. To the Southwest of the beacon of the island, in the Houbjerre fen, the remains of an ancient ship are reported to have been found. The oak planks had been 6.4 m long and contained peg holes. Though the search for the remains of the ship has hitherto been unsuc-

cessful, it was a fact widely known about 60 years ago (see: Mäss 1996, 102–103).

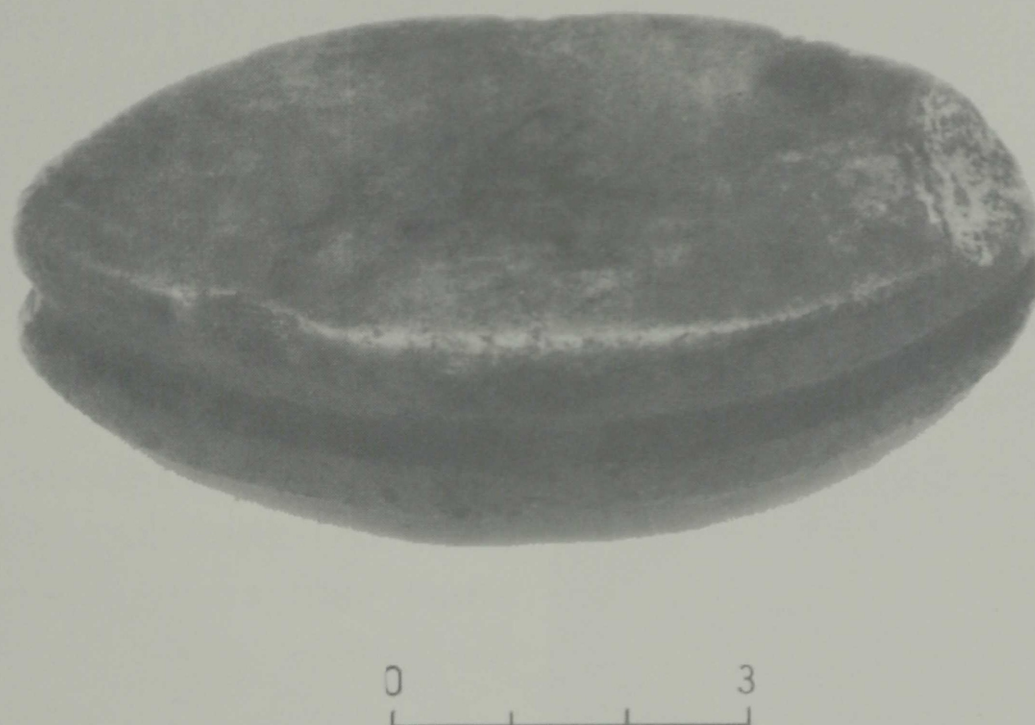


Fig. 4. Strike-a-light, kept in Riga.

Several medieval coin hoards have been found from Ruhnu.⁶ The largest deposit, containing coins from the 15th– first quarter of the 16th centuries, was discovered at the beginning of the present century. According to the information in the archaeological archives, one part of this hoard was taken to Russia, the Hermitage, and the other to Poland, to the Archaeological Museum of the Warsaw University. The numismatist Ivar Leimus supposes that most likely the coins from Ruhnu in the collections of the Institute of History in Tallinn⁷ and those filed as two different hoards in the Nordic Museum in Sweden⁸ also belong to the same large hoard, deposited evidently in 1520–ies.

The coin hoard, discovered in Ruhnu in 1965 was deposited in a larger clay pot. This find,⁹ probably deposited in 1601, consisted of 183 coins, struck in Tallinn, Riga, Curonia, Spain, Netherlands, etc.

Special mention should be made of a gold duckat of Carl V, also maintained in the collections of the Nordic Museum in Sweden.¹⁰

⁶ I would like to express my gratitude to the numismatist of the History Museum, Ivar Leimus, for the information concerning the silver hoards found from Ruhnu.

⁷ AI 5000/751: 1,2.

⁸ The hoards are recorded in the Nordic Museum under the inventory numbers 17350 and 17353.

⁹ PāMu 1340/1–183.

¹⁰ Nordic Museum inv. no. 17349.



Fig. 5. Place of Stone Age Settlement in Ruhnu, found in 1997. The northern shore of an old cove. Photo from SSW.

During the archaeological inventory in 1997 (Tamla 1997) more attention was paid to the vicinity of the church of Ruhnu, since the precise data about the stone axes found from the island mention the site (Fig. 2: 1). Both the wooden church dating from the 17th century and the new one erected at the beginning of this century are situated on a sandy elevation in the northern part of the village bearing the name of the island. At this site, the old cemetery is preserved, and unique wooden crosses mark some of the oldest graves. Hoping that some archaeological material would come to light by digging the graves, the soil was investigated there. An abundance of small reddish, well burnt fragments of wheel pottery was found. Their concentration seemed to be greatest near the foundation of the new church. The only prehistoric find, a blade of rather beige flint (AI 6217: 1), was discovered about 5 m north of the church, at a fresh grave.

About 100 m south of the churchyard, a forest path runs eastward at the foot of a sandy hillock, towards Korsvein. To the south of this path the soil becomes low and soggy and is the place of former sea cove. It has become overgrown and is called the fen of Baskiarre. Here, on the northern edge of the fen, reliable traces of earlier settlement of Ruhnu was discovered (Fig. 2: 1; 5). Finds include an oval tool of quartz, probably a scraper (Fig. 6: 1), bearing clear marks of processing, and

two smaller quartz flakes (Fig. 6: 2, 3). All implements were found from the sandy roadside without digging.

About a week after the first inventory, officials of the Board of Antiquities visited Ruhnu, among them the archaeologists Ants Kraut, Anti Pärn and Urve Truup. As a result, seven more quartz flakes and a stone bearing the traces of polishing (AI 6225) were found from the same stretch of the path leading to Korsvein.

Relying upon the information in the archives, concerning the finds of the stone axes, and especially on the finds obtained in the two inventories of 1997, we can assert quite confidently that the Stone Age settlement site, reflecting the earliest phase of settlement on the island of Ruhnu, was situated in the neighbourhood of the Ruhnu church, on the northern shore of a cove (or a lagoon) stretching far inland. The area has been taken under legal protection.

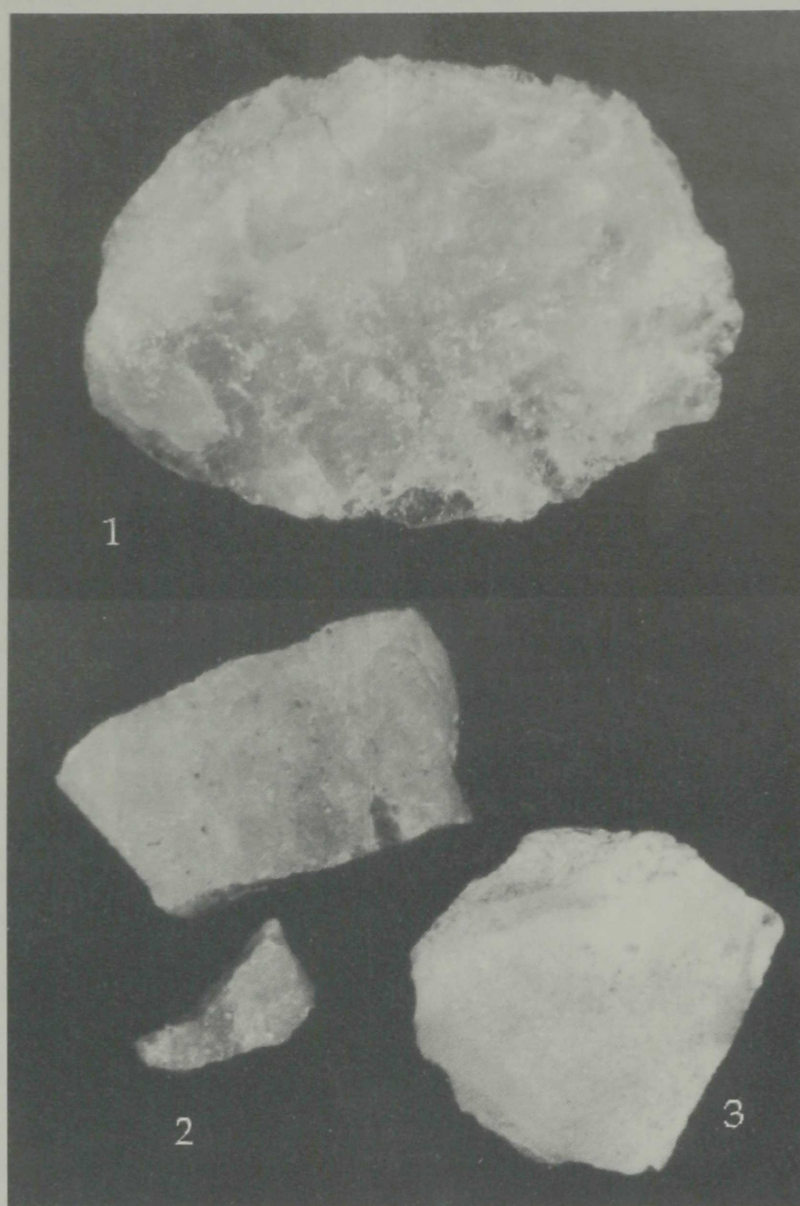


Fig. 6. Finds from Stone Age settlement of Ruhnu, found in 1997. Scraper and flakes from quartz and flint. (AI 6217.)

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SB Pernau V = Sitzungsberichte der Altertumforschenden Gesellschaft zu Pernau. 1905–1908. Fünfter Band. Pernau 1908.

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ARHEOLOOGILISED INSPEKTSIOONID LIIVI LAHE SAARTEL

Aivar KRIISKA ja Ülle TAMLA

Eesti väikesaared, sh. Liivi lahes paiknevad Kihnu ja Ruhnu on arheoloogiliselt praktiliselt uurimata. Vähene olemasolev materjal on saadud juhuslikult, enamasti kohalike elanike vahendusel. Seetõttu on ka erialases kirjanduses väikesaarte vanemast ajaloost mainimata mööda mindud või käsitletud seda üksnes seoses rannarootslaste asustusega keskajal. 1997. aasta arheoloogilised inspeksioonid Kihnu (A. Kriiska) ja Ruhnu (Ü. Tamla) olid esimesed teaduslikud välitööd nende saarte varasema asustusloo selgitamiseks.

Kihnu (joon.1)

Ainsaks teadaolevaks muinasleiuks Kihnu saarelt oli kuni 1997. aastani silmaga kivikirves. Hilisemast ajast oli saadud saarelt teavet mõnest matmispaigast ja Lemsi külast leitud 17. sajandi hõberahadega aardest.

1997. aastal korraldati Kihnu saarele esimene arheoloogiline uurimisretk. Ekspeditsioonil oli kolm eesmärki: kaardistada teadaolevad ajaloolise aja matmispaigad; lokaliseerida keskaegne kultuurkiht varasematest kirjalikest allikatest tuntud külates ning inspekteerida saare keskosas merest kõige varem vabanenud ala vanima asustuse leidmiseks.

Kohalike elanike juhatusel kontrolliti arvatavaid maa-aluseid kalmistukohti Rootsiküla Künkra ja Lemsi küla Kallase talu maal ning Vanakiriku nimelises paigas. Vanakiriku ala, mis paikneb saare kirdeosas, peavad vanaks kalmistuks ka praegused kihnlased, kes teavad legendi seal asunud kirikust, mis kunagi koos inimestega maha põletati 1996. aastal tuli samas kohas kaablikraavi kaevamisel päevavalgele taas luid, sealhulgas lapse ja täiskasvanu kaksikmatus. Lapse luustiku juurest saadi 16. sajandil vermitud ripatsmünt. 1997. aasta inspeksioonil leiti samast kohast maapinnalt veel kaurikarbist helmes.

Rahvapärinus kirikust võib osutada sellele, et kunagi paiknes kalmistul katoliiklik kabel.

Keskaegsete asulakohtade väljaselgitamisel kasutati 16. sajandi kirjalikke allikaid ja 17. sajandi lõpust pärinevat Kihnu kaarti. Rootsikülalt Saarde ja Linakülalt Pärna talu maal leiti asula kultuurkiht, millest kogutud vanimad glasuurita kedrakeraamika killud pärinevad keskajast. Üks analoogne savinõukild leiti ka Sääre külast, kuid kompaktset kultuurkihi ala ei õnnestunud seal fikseerida.

Merepinnast kõige kõrgema ala šurfimisel leiti muistselt rannamoodustiselt mõned savinõukillud ja täheldati kultuurkihi olemasolu. Samasse, end. Mõisaküla maale, Kihnu kirikust u. 100 m kirde suunas, rajati 4 m² suurune proovikaevand. Kaevandis puhastati välja 1 m läbimõõduga süsisem ala, arvatav tulease. Proovikaevandist ja šurfidest saadi 17 savinõukildu. Killud on väga väikesed ja suhteliselt halvasti säilinud. Otsustades viiel killul säilinud välispinna järgi, on tegemist käsitsi vormitud keraamikaga. Leiuainese vähesus ja katkendlikkus võivad osutada asuastusaja lühidusele ja passiivsusele. Võimalik, et tegemist on hooajalise hülgeküttide või kalurite laagripaigaga. Käsitsi vormitud keraamika dateerib muistise muinasaega. Fragmendid ei võimalda veel täpsemat esemetüpoloogilist dateerimist. Juhul, kui tegemist on püügiasula jäänustega, siis võiks oletada, et see paiknes omaaegsel rannal. See on rannikuasulaks soodne paik ka paleogeograafiliselt: muinasajal paiknes nimetatud koht saare keskosas, lahe ääres, olles avamerest eraldatud väikese saarega. Arvestades neotektoonikat, võib muistis pärineda varasest metalliajast.

Ruhnu

Erinevalt Kihnust, mille vanuseks arvavad geoloogid 4000 aastat, võis Ruhnu esmakordselt saarena üle veepinna tõusta juba Joldiamere regressioonil, s.o. umbes 10300 10200 aastat tagasi. Nimetatud perioodist pärinevaid rannavorme seni aga leitud pole. Vanimad saare rannavallid on moodustunud Antsülusjärve staadiumil, s.o. umbes 9000 aastat tagasi. Seda oletust kinnitab saare lääneosas absoluutkõrgusel 11...12 m ü.m.p. paiknevast kruusavallist leitud magedaveeline molluskifauna. Saare tänast kuju (joon.2) ja tema tuumiku reljeefi arvestades võib oletada, et esialgu tekkis siin kaks laidu – üks Houbjerre ja teine sellest u. 1 km loode pool Baskierre kohal, mis lõpuks ühinesid nii, et saare keskele jäi madal laht.

Ruhnu varast inimasustust tõestab arheoloogiaarhiivi laekunud teade, mille kohaselt on 1910–1912 saare uue kiriku ehitamise ajal leitud kaks kivikirvest. Neist üks oli antud Eesti Muuseumile, teine maetud mulda tagasi. Tallinna toodud kivikirves (joon.3) on silma kohalt murdunud ja kannaosast tugevasti kulunud. Võrdlemisi viletsalt lihvitud ovaalja kujuga kirves võiks pärineda kõige tõenäolisemalt hilisneoliitikumist või koguni pronksiaja algusest. Kolmanda, 1931. aastal saare põhjaosast kündmisega päevavalgele tulnud kirve kuju ja saatuse on teadmata. Märgatavalt hilisemast ajast, kõige tõenäolisemalt keskmisest rauajast, pärineb Ruhnust leitud ovaalne tuluskivi (joon.4). Saare majakast edelas, endise merelahe kinnikasvamisest tekkinud Houbjerre rabas, arvatakse olnud muinaslaeva jäänused. Ehkki laevajäänuse otsingud pole siiani andnud tulemust, on vraki olemasolu u. 60 aastat tagasi laialt tuntud tõsiasi.

Ruhnu saarelt on leitud mitmeid keskaegseid mündiaardeid ja üks kuldtukat. Suurim, 15.–16. sajandi esimese veerandi verminguid sisaldav peitleid tuli päevavalgele selle sajandi algul. Arheoloogiaarhiivi andmetel sattus üks osa sellest aardest Venemaale Ermitaaži ja teine Varssavi Ülikooli Arheoloogiamuuseumisse. Numismaatik Ivar

Leimus arvab, et suure tõenäosusega võiks samast, kõige tõenäolisemalt 16. sajandi 20. aastatel peidetud suurest rahaleiust, pärineda ka need mündid, mis on arvele võetud Tallinnas Ajaloo Instituudis ja kahe eraldi aardena Rootsis Põhjamaade Muuseumis.

Suurema savipotiga oli peidetud mündiaare, mis leiti Ruhnust 1965. aastal. See, arvatavalt 1601. aastal maetud leid, mida säilitatakse Pärnu muuseumis, koosnes saja kaheksakümne kolmest Tallinna, Riia, Kuramaa, Hispaania, Madalmaade jt. vermingust.

1997. aasta arheoloogilisel inspeksioonil pöörati rohkem tähelepanu Ruhnu kiriku ja kirikuaia ümbruse inspekteerimisele, kuna just sealt pärinevad kõige täpsemad andmed saarelt leitud kivikirveste kohta. Kirikust sadakond meetrit lõunas, Baskierre raba – tänaseks kinnikasvanud lahesopi – põhjapoolselt kaldalt (joon.2: 1; 5), avastatigi kindlamad jäljed Ruhnu varasemast (mesoliitilisest?) asustusest. Nendeks leidudeks olid: kvartsist selgete töötlemisjälgedega ümar-ovaalne tööriist, arvatav kõõvits (joon. 6: 1), kaks väiksemat kildu (joon.6: 2, 3) ja ihumisjälgedega kivi.