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VÄLITÖÖD  
EESTIS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
FIELD WORKS  
IN ESTONIA

1998

Koostanud ja toimetanud  
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## ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESCUE EXCAVATIONS ON THE SETTLEMENT SITE OF VAIDA

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The village of Vaida in the parish of Jüri, Harjumaa is known in archaeological literature for its silver hoard from the 12<sup>th</sup> century found in 1896 (Tallgren 1925, 146; Tõnisson 1962, 190). The existence of the ancient settlement could already be suggested by analogy with various treasure finds dated back to the same time (Jaanits *et al.* 1982, 366). The name of the village was already registered in "*Liber Census Daniae*" (Johansen 1933, 73, 652-653).

The issue of the cultural layer of the ancient Vaida settlement arose due to reconstruction of the motorway between Tallinn and Tartu. Consequently, to the south-west of the probable road extension area, as suggested by Ain Lavi and Ardo Niinre in 1989-1990, there were made over 160 pits of which more than a third indicated the existence of a cultural layer also with some pottery finds (Lavi, pers. comm.). The trial excavations financed by the Board of Antiquities and carried out in 1997 by Tael Ltd. confirmed the presence of the cultural layer on the site and also gave a certain picture of its scope (Sokolovski & Jaanits 1998, 127).

The rescue excavations in 1998 were carried out by Tael Ltd. on the basis of the data of the trial excavations in 1997. A pit measuring 112 x 22 m was ploughed more or less parallel to the motorway (Fig. 1). The surface of the earth here descended from east to west with a height difference in the pit reaching up to 70 cm. The cultural layer was 35-60 cm thick, and its upper part was mixed with tillage, sporadically reaching 35-40 cm in depth.



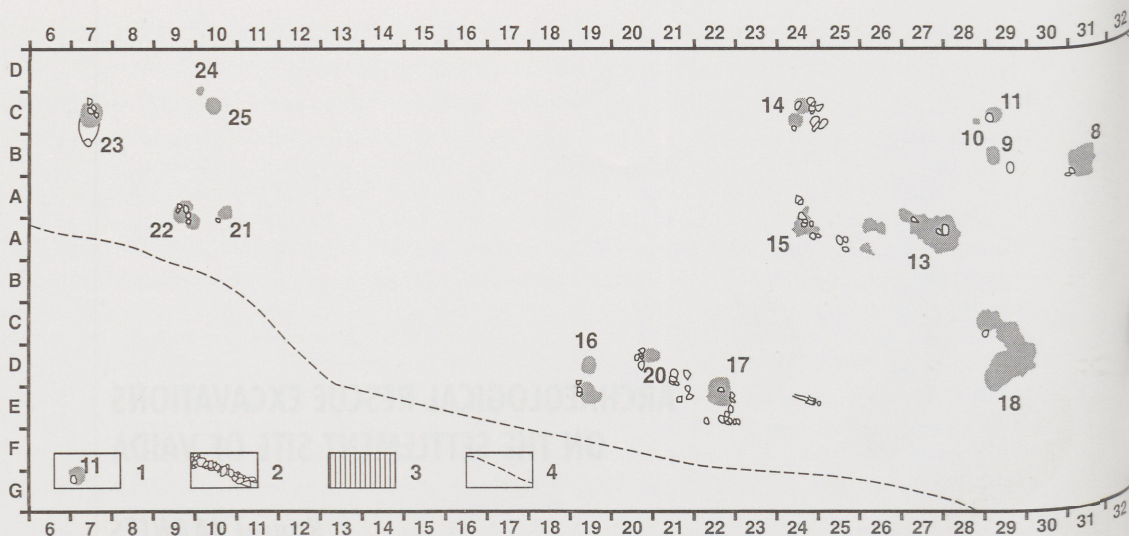


Fig. 1. General plan of the excavation in Vaida.

1 - pits, 2 - stone constructions, 3 - paved area, 4 - contour line.

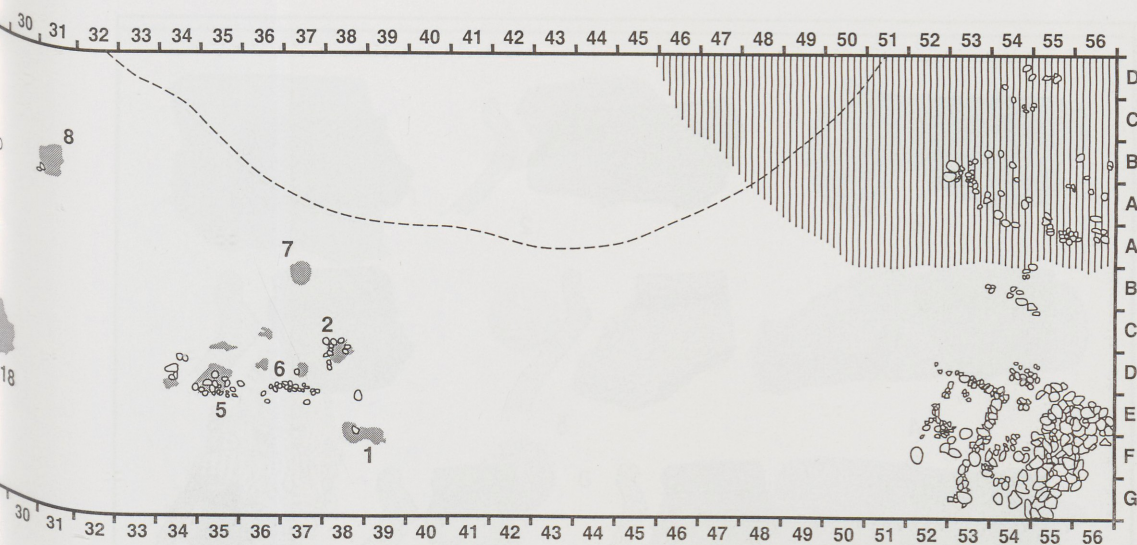
The majority of the finds were discovered 30–50 cm deep in the ground. The material found was mainly divided into two chronologically different groups. The later one seemed to be related to the construction remnants discovered in the south-eastern part of the pit.

At the corner of the same area, next to the motorway, were remnants of foundation walls consisting of big granite stones, the surroundings of the building and its floor were gravelled with limestone. The  $C^{14}$  analysis of the charcoal sample gathered immediately on the limestone gravel gave a result of  $263 \pm 41$  years (Tln -2342), most likely 1622–1680 AD or 1750–1806 AD. This age determination is similar to that from coins found from the same part of the pit: a Russian *denga* from 1741 found on the limestone gravel and a Swedish 1/6 *ore* from 1676 found slightly further (Vladimir Sokolovski's estimations).

The south-eastern part of the pit produced mainly finds related to the above-mentioned construction remnants - mostly painted glazed pottery of red clay with a few dark brown glazed fragments of tripod vessels (altogether about 160 broken potsherds or over 50 per cent of the Vaida pottery finds of 1998), and a multitude of various iron artefacts and their fragments.

Painted glazed pottery spread from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onward (Aus 1992, 28–32, Fig. 12, Photo 10: 2,3), and the duration of use of tripods is known to extend until





Joon. 1. Vaida asula. Kaevandi üldplaan.  
1 - süvendid, 2 - kivikonstruktsioonid, 3 - sillutatud ala, 4 - samakõrgusjooned.

the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Russow 1997, 27). Concerning iron artefacts, most noteworthy were horseshoes and many blacksmith's nails including mostly horseshoe's nails as judged by their size. Among other horse utensils were bridles; the remaining iron artefacts included knives (mainly straight-stemmed), heel irons, calks, scissors, a fishhook, a fire iron and other black - smithy articles. However, the majority of iron artefacts consisted of various iron blanks and their remains. The amount of iron slag found in this part of the pit suggests that this was the location of a forge from the 17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The thimbles found mainly in the south - east of the pit during the Vaida excavations in 1998 are similar to the one discovered in a plague grave from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the cemetery of Santa Barbara (Sheveljov 1996, 89, Fig. 66).

Another large group of finds in the Vaida material consisted mainly of so called village type wheel pottery (Fig. 2, about 110 potsherds or nearly 39 per cent of pottery). The crocks of profiled lattice and round sided pots dominated, although fragments of flat plates appear as well. A part of the wheel pottery crocks are ornamented, usually consisting of a few punched-in lines clustered in pairs or trios (Fig. 2: 10-12). Wheel pottery was discovered clustered mainly in the central and south-western part of the pit. Stratigraphically, wheel pottery was located deeper than painted pottery of red clay as a rule.



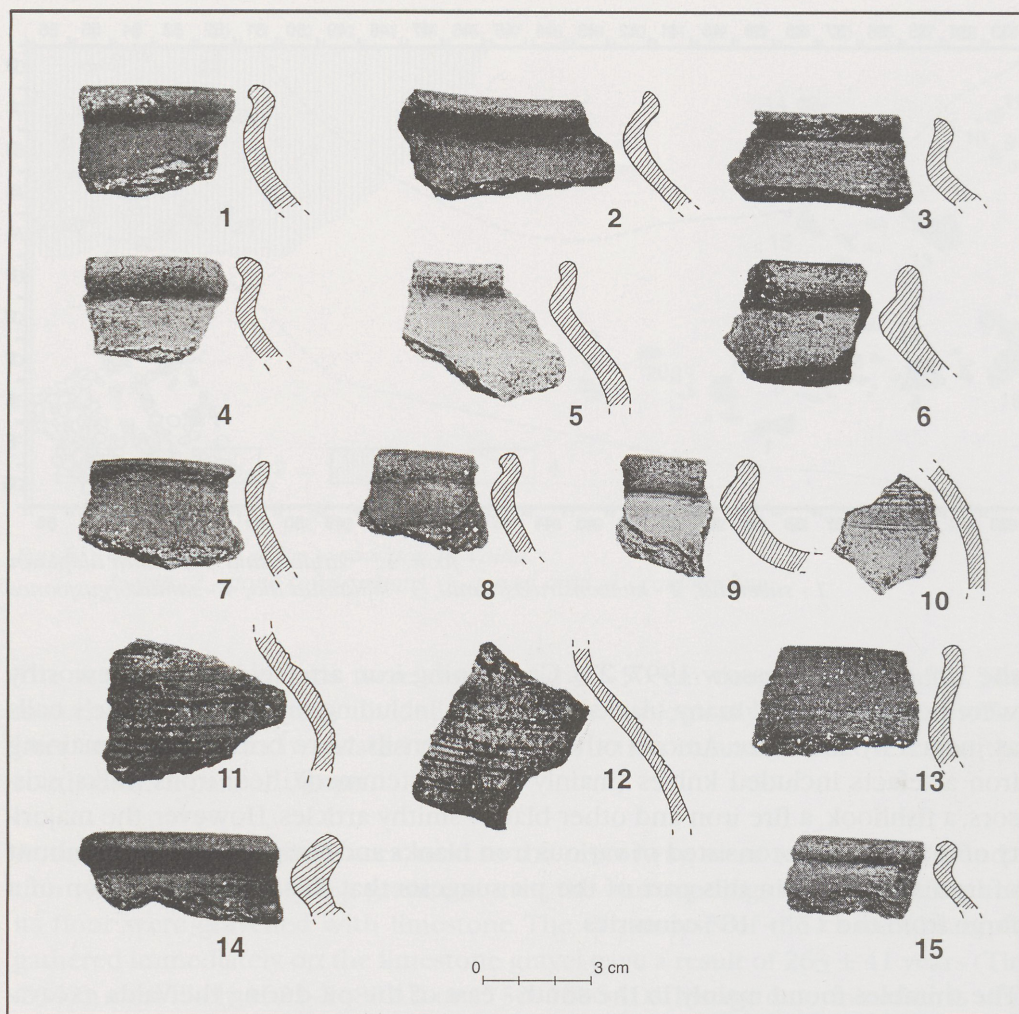


Fig. 2. Wheel pottery from Vaida.

(AI 6248: 129, 67, 146, 274, 258, 42, 232, 129, 100, 300, 71, 58, 85, 48, 67.)

Joon. 2. Vaida asula. Kedrakeraamika.

A small amount of stone pottery and fragmentary remains of unglazed grapens of red clay were also discovered in the Vaida excavations in 1998. As for stone pottery, one should mention a single fragment covered with a brownish and light-grey glaze depicting a man's face in relief (Fig. 3: 4) which seems to represent the 18<sup>th</sup> century late Rhein pottery (cf. Sheveljov 1997, 8). Unglazed grapens of red clay are mostly represented as single fragments of supporting knobs (Fig. 3: 3, 7-9). They seem to represent the late forms of tubular handles dating back to the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and later (Russow 1997, Photo 6). This type of pot-



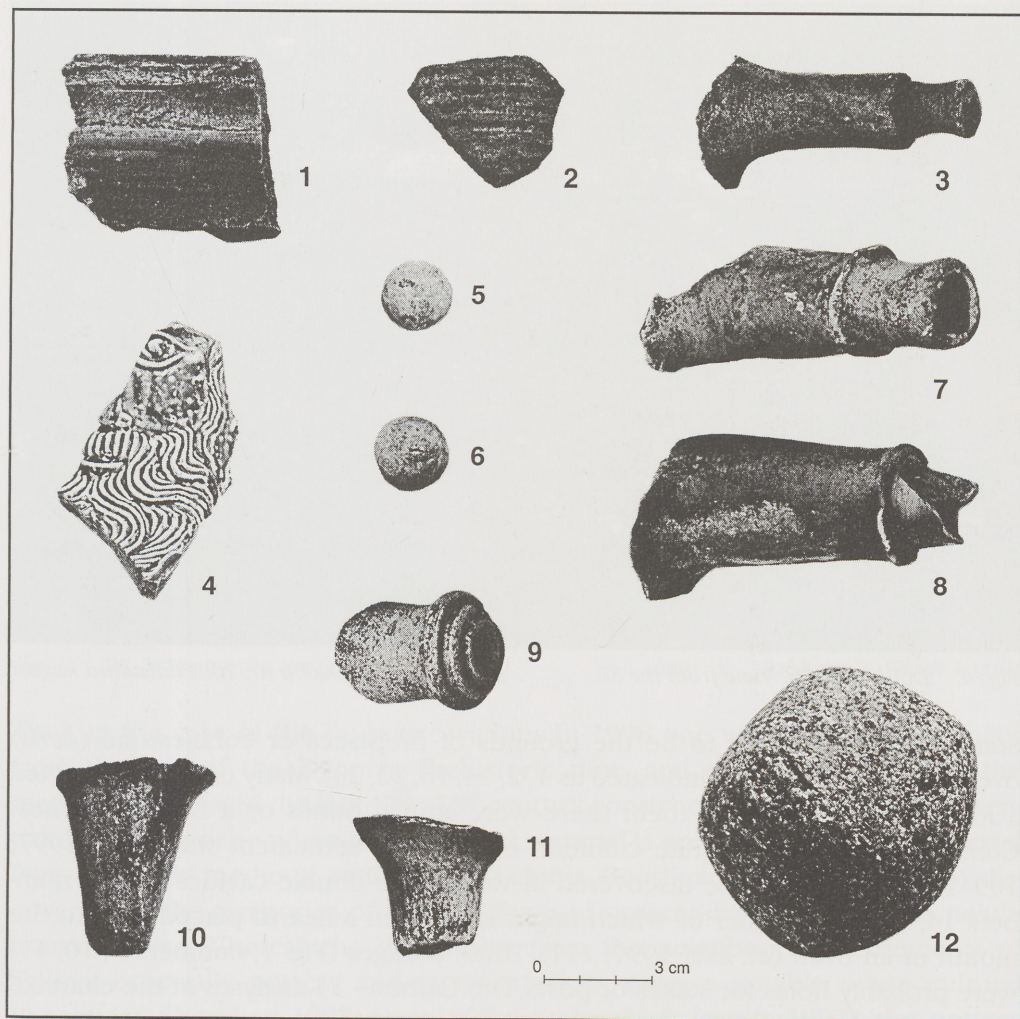


Fig. 3. Pottery (1-4, 7-11), clay marbles (5-6) and grinding stone (12) from Vaida.  
 (AI 6248: 201, 136, 139, 265, 291, 216, 116, 262, 130, 140, 102, 283.)  
 Joon. 3. Keraamika (1-4, 7-11), savist mængukuulid (5-6) ja jabvekivi (12) Vaidast.

tery was spread throughout the pit.

Whereas the painted pottery of red clay and the larger amount of iron artefacts were mainly related to the assumed forge from the 16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and other building constructions in the south-eastern part of the pit, the village type wheel pottery is apparently linked with the earlier settlement of the site. The construction remnants discovered in the pit of the 1998 excavation (Fig. 1, 4 and 5) were related to nearly 30 cavities of different sizes and shapes dredged into the subsoil.





Fig. 4. Double pit 16. View from the SE.

Joon. 4. Kaksiklohk nr. 16. Pildistatud kagust.

Some of them seemed to be the grounds of fireplaces or cobblestone (*keris*) ovens (Fig. 1; the cavities indicated as 1, 2, 14, 16, 22, 23). Many cavities contained a lot of coal, in some of them there were animal bones or a heap of stones. Cobblestone heaps are quite common in medieval settlement sites (Lavi 1997, 109–113). Some of those discovered in Vaida were double cavities (Fig. 1; numbers 14, 16, 22), another of which might have been a hearth placed next to the mouth of an oven (cf. Lavi 1997, 111). Three dredges (Fig. 1; numbers 9, 10, 11) were probably holes for stakes or posts. The Carbon - 14 analyses of the charcoal samples from the above mentioned cavities in the Vaida excavations in 1998 gave a result of 956 to 1636 AD, basically, however, focusing on the 13<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries (see Table).

The osteological material (analysed by Liina Maldre) contained only bones of domestic animals (63 identified mammal bones and fragments and a fish bone, probably that of a pike). Horse bones dominated (26 fragments), followed by 14 bovine and 13 swine bone fragments. Goat and sheep (the bones available did not enable identification of species) and a dog were both represented by four bone fragments, one bone fragment belonged to a cat and one to a human. Additionally a human skeleton, poorly preserved and without any associated artefacts, about 130 cm tall, and with its head oriented south-south-east was discovered.





Fig. 5. Pit 2. View from the SE.

Joon. 5. Lohk nr. 2. Vaade kagust.

Thus, in the case of the Vaida excavations in 1998 one was dealing with traces from the end of the Estonian Prehistoric time, and the remote areas of the medieval village and the late 17<sup>th</sup> –18<sup>th</sup> century construction sites. However, essential differences arise when the Vaida find material is compared to similar material from the early medieval settlements (Lehmja, Roosikrantsi and Vene Str. 4) discovered on the territories of the Old Town of present-day Tallinn and its neighbouring areas. Whereas the discoveries from the neighbouring settlements of Tallinn, especially pottery and metal artefacts, carry a notable urban cultural impact (cf. Sheveljov 1997; Lavi 1997; Sokolovski & Jaanits 1997), the pottery (stone pottery and tripods of red clay) typical of urban culture is represented in Vaida by only a single fragment. This is not only because of the distance between the town and the settlement, but also because Roosikrantsi street was at this time non-Estonian and probably a German settlement of artisans, while Vaida represented a village of Estonians.

The Vaida discoveries in 1998 contain three artefacts seemingly older than those described above. These are a crop grating stone (Fig. 3: 12) and two bronze bracelets, one of them preserved as only a half (Fig. 6: 2), the other in two fragmentary and matching halves (Fig. 6: 1). As we know there are many millstones in the find material of fortified settlements (Jaanits *et al.* 1982, 144, 148 and 156, Fig.



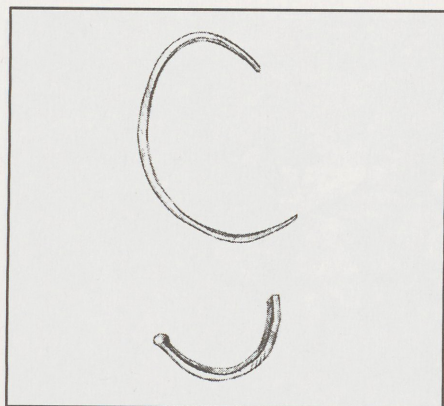


Fig. 6. Two bronze bracelets from Vaida (AI 6248: 284, 272.)

Joon. 6. Kaks pronksist käevõru Vaidast.

98). For example, they also occur in the later find material from the Roman Iron Age (*op. cit.*, 232). Both bracelets resemble similar finds from the first half of the Iron Age, and rather similar samples can be found, for example, in the find material of stone graves at Pada and Jäbara (see e.g. Jaanits *et al.*, Fig. 115: 3 and 149: 5). Their connection with the Vaida settlement is still vague.

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**Table 1. Radiocarbon dates from Vaida.**

**Tabel 1. Vaida asula C<sup>14</sup> analüüside tulemused.**

Laboratory No	Sample origin	C <sup>14</sup> years BP	68,3% (1 sigma) cal AD	95,4% (2 sigma) cal AD
Tln-2334	Cavity 1	679 ± 52	1286 – 1314 1348 – 1390	1268 – 1404
Tln-2335	Cavity 2	1020 ± 49	974 – 1042 1096 – 1114 1142 – 1154	894 – 916 956 – 1162
Tln-2336	Cavity 8	495 ± 52	1400 – 1456	1310 – 1350 1388 – 1492 1500 – 1506 1600 – 1618
Tln-2337	Cavity 23	580 ± 33	1314 – 1346 1392 – 1410	1304 – 1362 1380 – 1426
Tln-2338	Cavity 16	716 ± 44	1272 – 1306 1358 – 1382	1232 – 1314 1346 – 1392
Tln-2339	Cavity 18	369 ± 45	1469 – 1524 1558 – 1630	1450 – 1636
Tln-2340	Cultural layer Square 15/B	554 ± 33	1324 – 1334 1396 – 1428	1312 – 1350 1388 – 1436
Tln-2342	Cultural layer Square 56/A	263 ± 41	1526 – 1554 1632 – 1672 1778 – 1798 1951 – 1953	1512 – 1594 1622 – 1680 1750 – 1806 1926 – 1940 1950 – 1954
Tln-2343	Cultural layer Square 40/A	562 ± 69	1308 – 1354 1386 – 1432	1290 – 1458

## ARHEOLOOGILISED KAEVAMISED VAIDA ASULAKOHAS

Kaarel JAANITS

Vaida asulakoha päästekaevamised toimusid 1997. aasta proovikaevamiste andmeile tuginedes. Leiumaterjal jagunes põhiliselt kahte kronoloogiliselt erinevasse rühma. Hilisem nendest (punasest savist maalitud glasuurkeraamika, mõned tumepruuni glasuuriga kolmjalgnõude fragmendid ning arvukalt mitmesuguseid raudesemeid ja nende katkendeid) oli arvatavalt seotud kaevandi kaguotsas avastatud 17.–18. saj. sepikoja jäänustega ( $C^{14}$  dateering  $263 \pm 41$  a., kalibreeritult 1622–1680 või 1750–1806 AD).

Teise suure leiurühma moodustas nn. külatüüpi kedrakeraamika (joon. 2). Kedrakeraamika leiud koondusid peamiselt kaevandi kesk- ja loodepoolsesse ossa. Vähesel arvul leiti ka kivitkeraamikat. Eraldi väärib mainimist üks pruunika ja helehalli glasuuriga kaetud reljeefse mehenäo kujutisega fragment (joon.3: 4), mis võiks esindada 16.–18. saj. hilist kivitkeraamikat.

Kedrakeraamikaga võis ühendusse viia kaevandi kesk- ja loodeosas avastatud ligikaudu 30 erineva suuruse ja kujuga aluspõhja süvendatud lohku (joon. 1: 1). Mõnede puhul näis tegemist olevat kolde-asete või kerisahju põhjadega (joon. 4 ja 5), osa olid nähtavasti postiaugud. Süvenditest kogutud sõeproovide  $C^{14}$  analüüside tulemused langesid ajavahemikku 956–1636 AD, koondudes põhiosas siiski 13.–15. saj. (vt. tabel).

Vaida 1998. a. kaevandi alal oli tegemist muinasaja lõpu ja keskaegse küla äärealaga ning hilisema, 17.–19. saj. hoonestuse jälgedega. Erinevalt Tallinna-lähedastest varakeskaegsetest asulatest (näit. Lehmja) on Vaida leiumaterjalis linnakultuuri mõju tähtsusetu. Näiteks on Vaidas kivitkeraamika ja kolmjalgnõud esindatud ainult üksikute kildudega. Viljahõõrumiskivi (joon. 3: 12) ja kaks katkenditena säilinud pronksist käevõru (joon. 6: 1, 2) näivad aga pärinevat tunduvalt varasemast ajast kui ülejäänud leiud, võib-olla rauaaja esimesest poolest. Nende seos Vaida asulakohaga ei ole selge.