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THE INVESTIGATIONS ON THE HILL-FORTS OF NORTHERN TARTUMAA

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In connection with the research topic “Centre and Periphery”, the role of the hill-forts, their dating, nature of their cultural layer and their position in the ancient settlement pattern presents immense interest.

More than 10 hill-forts are known from Northern Tartumaa. The varying relief of Vooremaa enabled the builders of ancient hill-forts to make use of natural pre-conditions. The area of the hill-forts here is usually smallish, and the walls and other defence constructions rather weak. Topographically, the hill-forts of Kassinurme, Vilina and Reastvere form a separate group. They are not located on a hillock, but on a relatively flat ground between deep basins, where only the open ends of the promontory required stronger fortifications.

In 1998, rescue excavations were carried out on the hill-forts of Kassinurme and Reastvere, which had not been dated yet. The areas with damaged cultural layers were investigated and later reinforced against further harm.

The hillfort of Kassinurme (Palamuse parish) lies 5 km south-east of Jõgeva. From North and South, deep basins separate a 15–25 m wide promontory. The open SE and NW ends of it carry slightly curving walls, 2–3 m high, which border a 1200 sq. m yard (Fig. 1: A). Preliminary investigations (Moora 1953; Lavi 1996) determined several intermediate layers with coal in the cultural layer. In 1998, trial pits were dug in the SE part of the yard (I) and in the NW wall (II) (Fig. 1; 2: B, C).

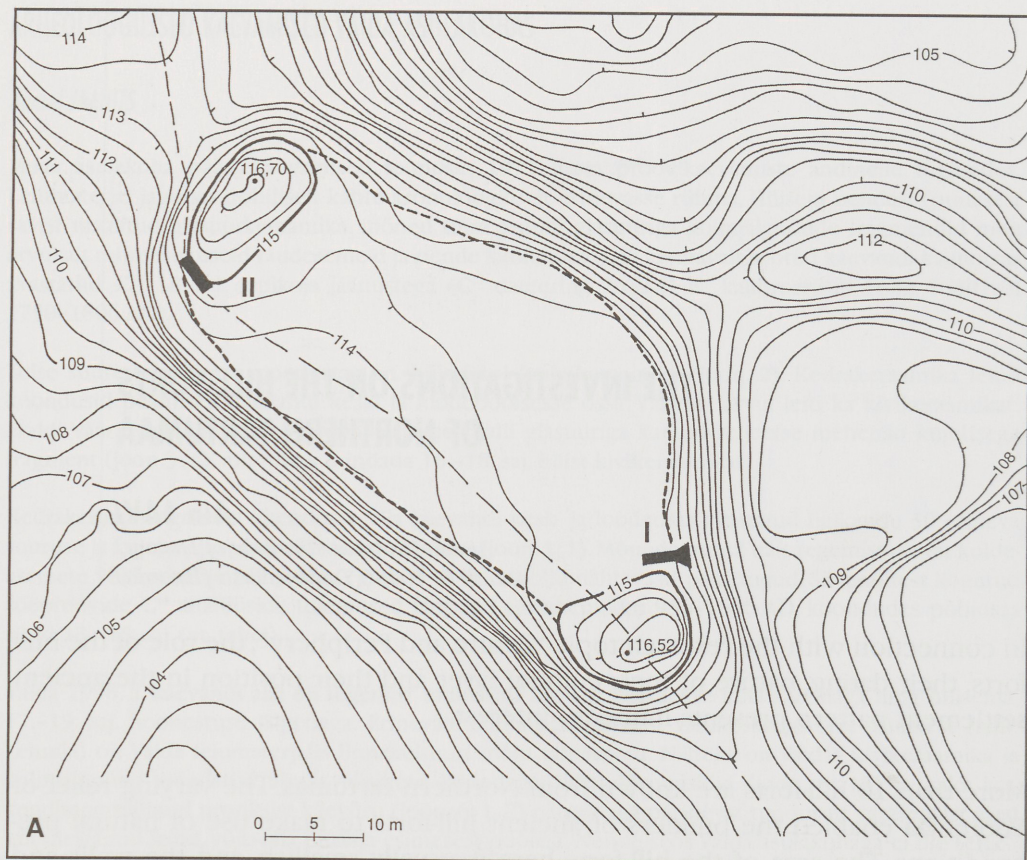


Fig. 1. Hillfort of Kassnurme. A plan of the hillfort with the excavations (I-II) of 1998.
 Joon. 1. Kassnurme linnamägi. A linnamäe plaan koos 1998. a. kaevanditega (I-II).

Excavation I was dug in the SE side of the eroded part of the yard (10 sq. m). At a depth of 50–60 cm was a construction of granite stones, rubbed in fire, evidently remains of a hearth, probably a *keris*-stove (Fig. 2: B). The C¹⁴ analysis of charcoal from the hearth (Tln. 2329) dated it to 760±41 BP (1217–1298 AD cal.). One and a half meters the present slope, towards the yard of the hillfort, brand remains were discovered, which may come from the outer wall of the defence constructions. The C¹⁴ analysis (Tln. 2332) gave a result of 821±42 BP (1214–1277 AD cal.).

On the very edge of the hillfort, immediately on the natural layer, a line of brand remains running along the edge of the promontory were discovered. Their age, according to C¹⁴ analysis (Tln. 2331) was 1042±48 BP (965–1032 AD cal.). Supposedly the brands belonged to the outer wall of an earlier phase of fortifications.

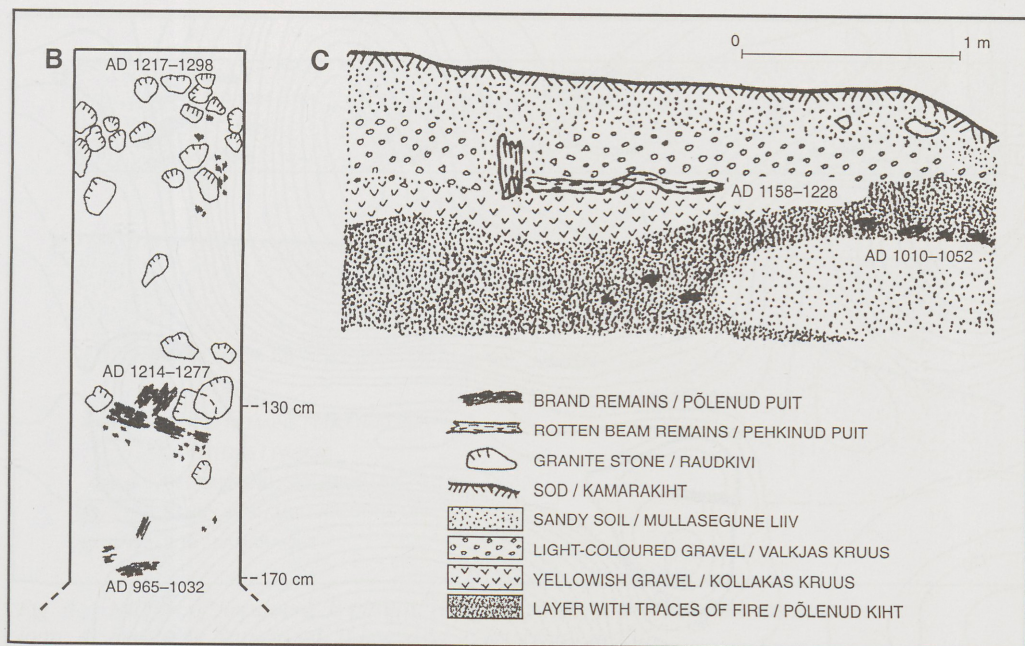


Fig. 2. Hillfort of Kassinurme. B plan of the excavation I; C profile of the excavation II.
Joon. 2. Kassinurme linnamägi. B I kaevand; C II kaevandi profil.

Excavation II was dug in the SW end of the NW wall, which had been damaged by a path. Only the topmost, partly damaged layers of the wall were investigated (Fig. 2: C). In the upper part of the wall, traces of two or three building phases were distinguished. Until a depth of 70 cm, the wall consisted of gravel in which two horizons could be distinguished. In the upper (I), very light-coloured gravel horizon, was a rotted beam lying crosswise through the wall and post remains on the outer side of the wall. The C^{14} analysis of the timber (Tln. 2328) gave a result of 875 ± 46 BP (1158–1228 AD cal.). Evidently this horizon is connected with the later building phase, gravel-filled fortifications of the hillfort. The different, yellowish layer of gravel under it is probably related to the previous defence construction (II).

At the depth of 75–100 cm, a dark burnt layer extending through the whole wall came to light. At the inner side of the wall, brand remains could be extracted for the C^{14} analysis (Tln. 2327). The result was 985 ± 44 BP (1010–1052 AD cal.). This layer seems to belong to an earlier, III phase of fortifications, a beam construction without sand and gravel filling. Below layer III, under an intermediate sandy layer, traces of a still earlier layer IV could be seen, but these remained below the studied area.

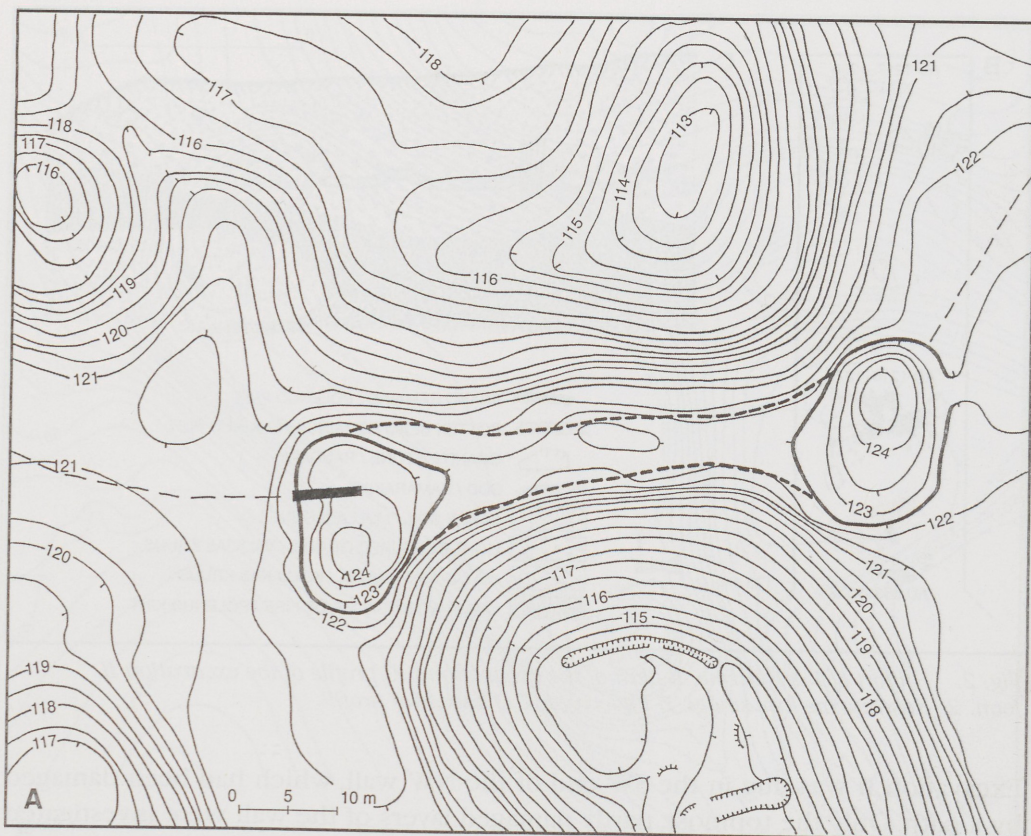


Fig. 3. Hillfort of Reastvere. A plan of the hillfort with the excavation of 1998.
 Joon. 3. Reastvere linnamägi. A linnamäe plaan koos 1998. a. kaevandiga.

On the basis of the investigation results, several construction phases can be distinguished on the hillfort of Kassinurme. The remains of the earliest fortifications evidently lie under the uninvestigated end walls of the hillfort. Keeping in mind the stray finds (including grinding stones) collected from the nearby settlement layer and the cup-marked stones standing there, we may assume that the earliest phase of the hillfort dates from the earlier Iron Age.

Traces of fortifications from the 10th-11th centuries can be found on the yard side of the end walls. While the fortifications of the 10th-11th centuries seem to lack filling, the beam constructions of the 2nd half of the 11th and the 12th centuries were filled with sand and gravel. A bronze ring with double spiral ends (AI 6387) found from the SE edge of the hillfort also dates from the 11th century. Relying upon the results of the investigations we may assert that the hillfort was used until the 13th century. There is no evidence, that any battles for the ancient struggle for inde-

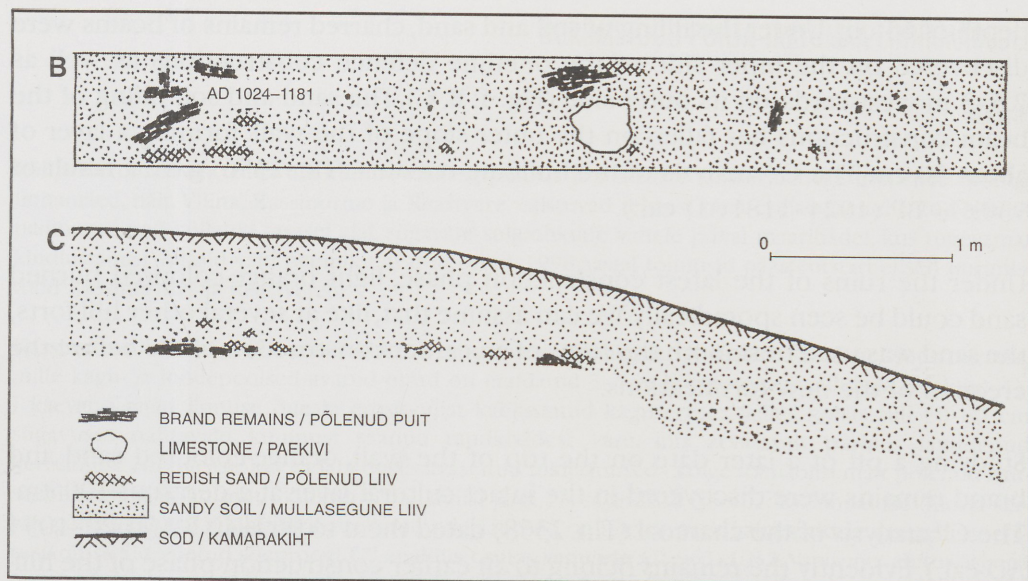


Fig. 4. Hillfort of Reastvere. B plan of the excavation; C profile of the excavation.
Joon. 4. Reastvere linnamägi. B kaevand; C kaevandi profiil.

pendence were fought here. Evidently the defence potentialities of the old hillfort were no longer sufficient.

The hillfort of Reastvere (Laiuse parish) lies 18 km NE of Jõgeva, on the northern border of the ancient county of Vaia-maa. The numerous settlement sites at the foot of the Sadala-Räabise drumlin indicate the formation of the agricultural settlement centre in the Iron Age.

The hillfort lies on the relatively flat top of the drumlin, on a strip of land, more than 50 m long but only 5–12 m wide, between two deep basins. The eastern and western ends have been fortified with slightly curving walls, 2–3 m high (Fig. 3: A). The present area of the yard is only 270 sq. m, but originally it must have been larger; evidently some soil has slid into the basin.

The preliminary investigations (Moora 1953; Lavi 1996a) did not reveal a remarkable cultural layer in the yard of the hillfort, but several intermediate layers with coal were discovered in the end walls. In 1998, rescue excavations were carried out on the northern wall, damaged by the path. The excavation area covered 9.5 sq. m and extended to the unharmed cultural layer.

The remains of the later construction phase of the hillfort were discovered at a

depth of 65 cm. Under the filling of soil and sand, charred remains of beams were discovered on the inner side of the onetime defence constructions as well as 2.5–3 m westwards, on its outer side (Fig. 4: B, C). The sand and soil filling of the beam constructions has fallen on the outer slope of the wall, forming a layer of about 50 cm. The C^{14} analysis of the building remains (Tln. 2356) gave a result of 930 ± 43 BP (1024–1181 AD cal.).

Under the ruins of the latest construction phase, light orange-coloured burned sand could be seen sporadically. We can assume that, like at several other hill-forts, the sand was used to smooth the ruins of an earlier construction phase before the erection of the new fortifications.

Studying a pit of a later date on the top of the wall, orange-coloured sand and brand remains were discovered in the intact cultural layer at a depth of 100 cm. The C^{14} analysis of the charcoal (Tln. 2358) dated them to 969 ± 40 BP (1020–1054 AD cal.). Evidently the remains belong to an earlier construction phase of the hill-fort which requires further study.

From the investigation results of 1998 and earlier, it seems that Kassinurme and Reastvere hill-forts were both used only in times of peril. Their cultural layers lack find material that would indicate permanent settlement e.g. pottery, osteological material, etc. The intermediate layers in the walls, containing charred beam remains, belong to the defence constructions of various periods of the Late Iron Age, which have been burnt down but reconstructed soon after.

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UURIMISTÖÖD PÕHJA-TARTUMAA LINNAMÄGEDEL

Ain LAVI

Põhja-Tartumaal on teada üle kümne väikese pindala ja madalate kaitsevallidega linnamäe. Mõned linnamäed, näit. Vilina, Kassinurme ja Reastvere, eristuvad teistest oma erilise asendi tõttu. Nimelt paiknevad nad küllaltki tasasel alal, sügavate sulglohkude vahele jääval maaribadel, kus tugevamat kindlustamist vajasisid vaid neemiku avatud otsad. 1998.aastal toimusid päästeotstarbelised uurimistööd Kassinurmes ja Reastveres.

Kassinurme linnamägi (Palamuse khk.) on sügavate sulglohkude vahel asuv 15–25 m laiune neemik, mille kagu- ja loodepoolsed avatud otsad on eraldatud 3–4 m kõrguste otsavallidega (vt. joon. 1). I kaevand rajati linnuse õueala erosioonist kahjustatud kaguservale. Selles kohas tuli 50–60 cm sügavuses nähtavale kuumust saanud raudkividest vare, mis arvatavalt pärines lagunenenud kerisahjust. Nii tulease, kui ka läheduses avastatud tukijäänused - kõige tõenäolisemalt põlenud kaitseehitistest säilinud puit - kuulub C¹⁴ analüüsi järgi 13. sajandisse (joon. 2: B). Linnamäe õueala servas, päris loodusliku kihi piiril avastatud tukijäänused on ilmselt pärit kaitseehituse varasemast ehitusjärgust. Siit võetud söeproovi C¹⁴ analüüs osutas vanusele AD 965–1032. Varasema ehitusjärguga on tõenäoliselt seotud ka pronksist prillspiraalotstega sõrmus. II kaevand tehti osalt lõhutud loodepoolsele otsavallile (joon. 2: C). Uuriti vaid valli ülemisi, osaliselt kahjustatud ladestusi. Kaevandis sai eristada kolme ehitusjärku. Kuni 70. cm sügavuses võis vallis märgata kahte eritoonilist kruusakihti, mida teineteisest eraldas pehkinud palgijäänus. Sellest võetud proovi C¹⁴ analüüs andis puidu vanuseks aastad AD 1158–1228. Tõenäoliselt seostuvad kruusakihid linnamäe kahe hilisema ehitusjärguga, kus palkidest kaitsetarandil oli kruusast sisetäidist. 75–100 cm sügavuses tuli nähtavale varasem, läbi kogu valliala ulatuv tulekahjujälgedega tume kiht. Siin andis tukijäänuste C¹⁴ analüüs vanuseks aastad AD 1010–1052. See kiht näib pärinevat varasema ehitusjärgu, ilma liiva ja kruusa sisetäiteta palkkindlustustest. Esialgsete uurimistulemuste põhjal võib Kassinurme linnamäel eristada mitmeid ehitusjärke. Tõenäoliselt peituvad muinaskantsi varasemad jäljed veel seni uurimata otsavallide all. 10.–11. sajandil on hakatud kindlustama otsavallidest õue poole jäävat ääreala. Kuigi uurimiste põhjal oli linnamägi kasutusel ka 13. sajandil, puuduvad andmed, et siin oleks võideldud muistse iseseisvusvõitluse päevil.

Reastvere linnamägi (Laiuse khk.) paikneb Sadala-Räabise suurvoore põhjapoolsel, tasase reljeefiga lael. Muinaskants on asunud kahe sügava sulglohu vahele jääval, enam kui 50 m pikkusel ning üksnes 5–12 m laiusel maaribal, mis ida- ja läänepoolsest otsast olid eraldatud 2–3 m kõrguste, osalt poolkaarjate otsavallidega. 1998.a. uuriti läänepoolse otsavalli ülemisi ladestusi alal, mida oli lõhutud linnamäe ületava tee rajamisel (joon. 3: A).

Linnamäe hilisema ehitusjärgu söestunud palgijäänused tulid nähtavale u. 60 cm sügavuses (joon. 4: B, C). Ilmselt oli palktarandil liivatäidis, mis peale linnuse hävimist valgus kuni 50 cm paksuse kihina valli välisnõlvale. Sõejäänuste C¹⁴ analüüsiga dateeriti linnamäe hilisem ehitusjärg 11.–12. sajandisse. Valliharjale tehtud hilisema sissekaeve uurimisel avastati 100 cm sügavusel tukijäänuseid ühest varasemast, sõeanalüüsi põhjal 11. sajandi esimesest poolest pärit ehitusjärgust.

Uurimistulemuste põhjal näib, et Kassinurme ja Reastvere muinaslinnad olid vaid ohu korral kasutatud pelgupaiklinnused, kuna nende kultuurkihis puudub püriasustusele osutav leiuväine (näit. keemika ja loomaluud). Seni avastatud söestunud palgijäänuseid sisaldavad vahekihid pärinevad noorema rauaaja eriaegsete linnuste tules hävinud, kuid peatselt jällegi taastatud kaitseehitistest.