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RESCUE EXCAVATIONS ON THE SETTLEMENT SITE OF PEDÄJASAARE IN SETUMAA

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The island of Pedäjasaare, better known locally as Sosna or Soosna, lies in Setumaa, in Värskä county near the village of Väike-Rõsna, on the eastern shore of the Värskä Bay. Amateur archaeologist Ali Kikkas discovered a settlement site there in 1995. In the same year Arvis Kiristaja inspected it. According to him, the cultural layer of the settlement site was situated in the eastern part of the island (Kiristaja 1995, 4, Fig.). Among the pottery gathered from the molehills (AI 6062) there were also sherds that might belong to the end of the prehistoric period. In 1996, during a period of low water level, A. Kikkas found some potsherds, including wheel pottery of the Late Iron Age (Aun & Kiristaja 1998, Pl. I, 12, 13) from the foot of the western and north-western slope of the island. During an inventory trip early in 1998, A. Kiristaja found some wheel pottery of the prehistoric period (AI 6112: 2-5) from the south-eastern part of the island.

According to folk tradition, a sacred grove had been on the island. There had also been some stone crosses which were later taken to St. Anne's *tsässon* (small chapel) in the village of Väike-Rõsna (Luik & Kiristaja 1996, 1). An interesting story about the island was recorded by Veera Pino in 1939. It tells that the island came to its present location from Russia on the opposite coast of Lake Peipsi. Large forests then grew on the island and there was also a small chapel, *tsässon*. Later, the forest was cut and the chapel was ruined, and only the stones remained. The island is supposed to leave again before doomsday (ERA II 248, 50/51 (5), Setumaa, Mäe county, Usenitsa village < Veera Pino < from parent, 1939).

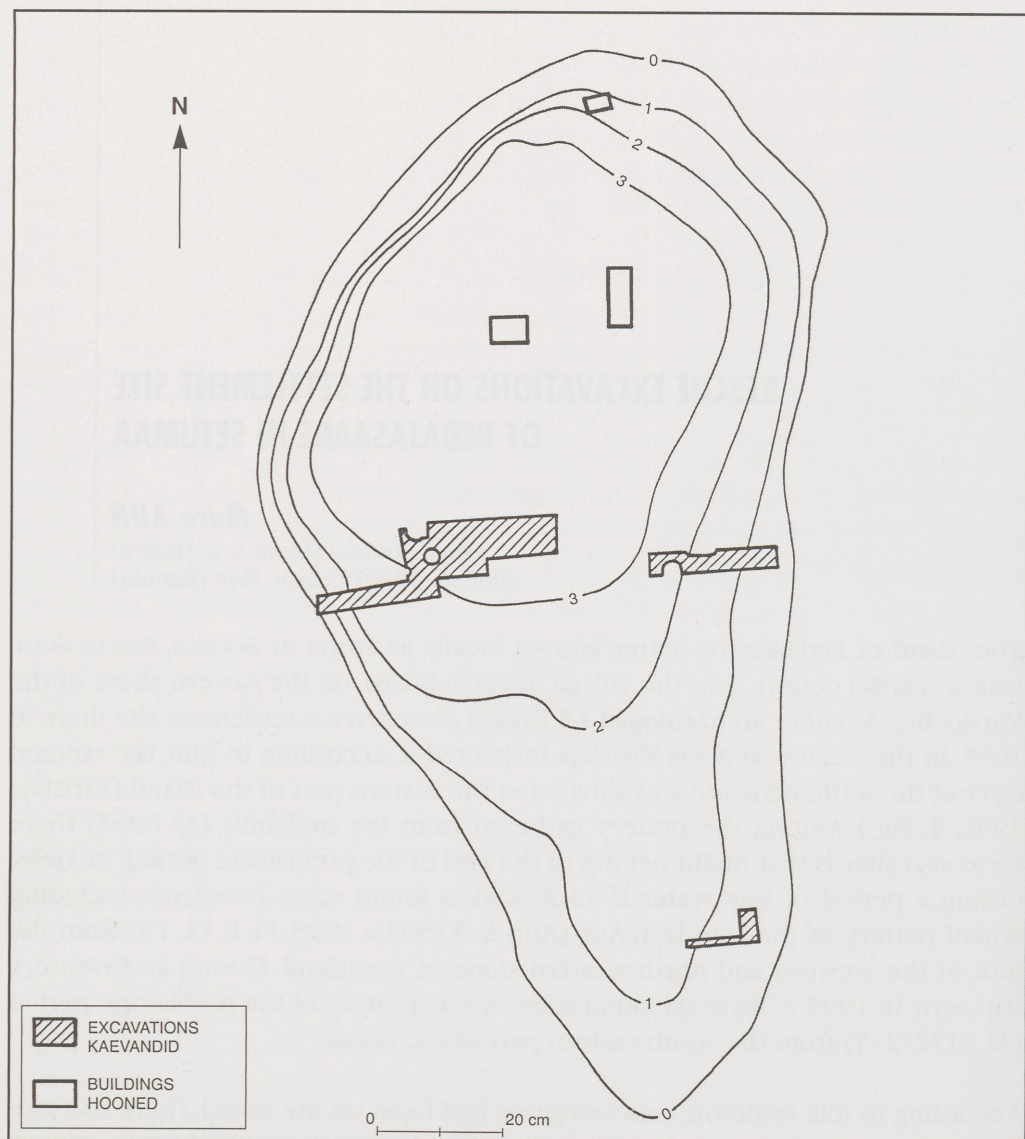


Fig. 1. General plan of Pedäjasaare.

Joon. 1. Pedäjasaare üldplaan.

The island measures nearly 190 m north to south and about 90 m from east to west. The western slope is higher and steeper, the eastern one is lower and shelving (Fig. 1). Nowadays, a 150 m long dam leads to the island. During the inventory trips, the settlement layer was found mostly in the southern part of the island (Luik 1997, Fig. 1), none has been discovered in the northern part and around the buildings.

Archaeological rescue excavations on the settlement site of Pedäjasaare were undertaken by the Institute of History in connection with the construction of the Värskä frontier guard station on the island. The works were financed by the Board of the Frontier Guard. The excavations measuring 360 sq.m in total were located almost in the middle of the island (Fig. 1: 1). A small excavation was dug in the SE part of the island (Fig. 1: 1), outside the area mixed by ploughing, to investigate the possible prehistoric cultural layer. These works were financed by the Institute of History and the Setu Culture Foundation.

The cultural layer in the central part of the island was brownish grey and ploughed almost to the bottom. Its thickness, on average, was 0.2 m, sporadically 0.3 m. In the eastern and western parts of the excavated area the soil was dark grey and the thickness of the cultural layer was 0.4–0.5 m. On the eastern slope and at the dug-in pits in the western part of the island it even exceeded 1 m. The profile of the cultural layer was most interesting in the eastern part of the excavation (Fig. 2), where a layer of brownish-grey sand, up to 0.5 m thick, could be traced under the thin sod layer in the northern profile. This contained many pot-



Fig. 2. The settlement site of Pedäjasaare. Profile of the cultural layer in the northern wall of the eastern part of the excavation. View from S.

Joon. 2. Pedäjasaare asulakoh. Kultuurikihi läbilõike kaevandi idaosa põhjaseinast. Pildistatud lõunast.

sherds, lumps of burnt clay, and somewhat less charcoal fragments and burnt stone rubble. Underneath this lay dark grey soil with brownish rotten pieces, with an average thickness of 0.4 m. This layer contained charcoal fragments, burnt stone rubble and smallish granite stones, some of them burnt, and many medieval potsherds. Under this lay 0.2 m of blackish-grey sand with charcoal fragments and Late Iron Age wheel pottery, followed by a 0.15-m layer of mixed yellowish-grey sand with a few potsherds, and, under this, the original yellow sand.

In the excavation in the south-eastern part of the island the thickness of the dark grey coal consisting layer containing late medieval wheel pottery was 0.25–0.3 m. Beneath this, on the original soil lay, was yellowish grey mixed sand, 0.1–0.15 m thick, which contained pottery of the Late Iron Age.

Only a few remains of dwellings came to light in the investigated area, among them two fire-places destroyed by ploughing in the central part of the excavation. It was not possible to determine the size and shape of the fire-places from the preserved smaller granite stones, standing separately or clustered, and the patches of darker soil with coal. Lots of late wheel pottery was found there (AI 6340: 1000 and others). The lower part of a clay vessel was preserved in its original position among the stones of the fire-place (Fig. 3). Animal bones were quite numerous too, and some were burnt. Other finds were few. In the western part of the excavation, remains of a presumed stove floor came to light, but too little was preserved to determine the size and construction of the stove. Under the limestone's were mixed soil and potsherds (AI 6340: 549, 567). Deeper down, a hollow was discovered with limestone slabs on the bottom (Fig. 4). The southern part of the depression remained outside of the excavation and its purpose is not clear.

In the western part of the excavation at least six depressions were discovered. They all continued above the limits of the excavations. Some of them were household pits or cesspits, the purpose of the others is not quite clear. The pits contained many potsherds as well as animal bones, some of them burned. In the upper parts of the pits, some fragments of human maxilla were found (AI 6340: 396, 1146). The C¹⁴ analysis of the charcoal sample gathered from the bottom of the largest pit gave a result of 750 ± 30 (calibrated 740 ± 40) years B.P. (Ta-2692, analysed by Arvi Liiva & Toivo Rinne). This pit, especially in the lower part, contained less finds than the other five: mostly medieval potsherds, a few animal bones and slag fragments. Two so-called household pits had been dug in this depression in a later period. These were filled with dark sand containing coal and lots of burnt clay fragments. From the smaller circular household pit potsherds

and an iron spokeshave (AI 6340: 737) were found. In the bigger pit, shaped like an irregular quadrangle, a fragment of a limestone artefact with a hole in it (AI 6340: 715), two bronze cruziform pendants (AI 6340: 929, 1095), a fragment of a bronze temple ring (Fig. 6: 1), and a fragment of a whetstone (AI 6340: 1139) were found along with numerous potsherds.

Concerning the hollows in the central part of the excavated area, the pit elongated in the NE-SW direction contained dark coal containing sand under the sod layer, fragments of burnt bones, and two fragments of a clay net weight (AI 6340: 1125). Digging deeper, human bones and some granite stones came to light. Near the bones a fragment of late wheel pottery was found (AI 6340: 1159), which had probably incidentally reached there from the settlement layer. According to Raili Allmäe the bones belonged to a female younger than 18 years of age (Allmäe, 1999).

Some larger depressions also came to light in the south-eastern part of the island. The southernmost of these had a diameter of 2 m and was 0.7 m deep. The depression was filled with clay-like sand mixed with charcoal. The finds were few,

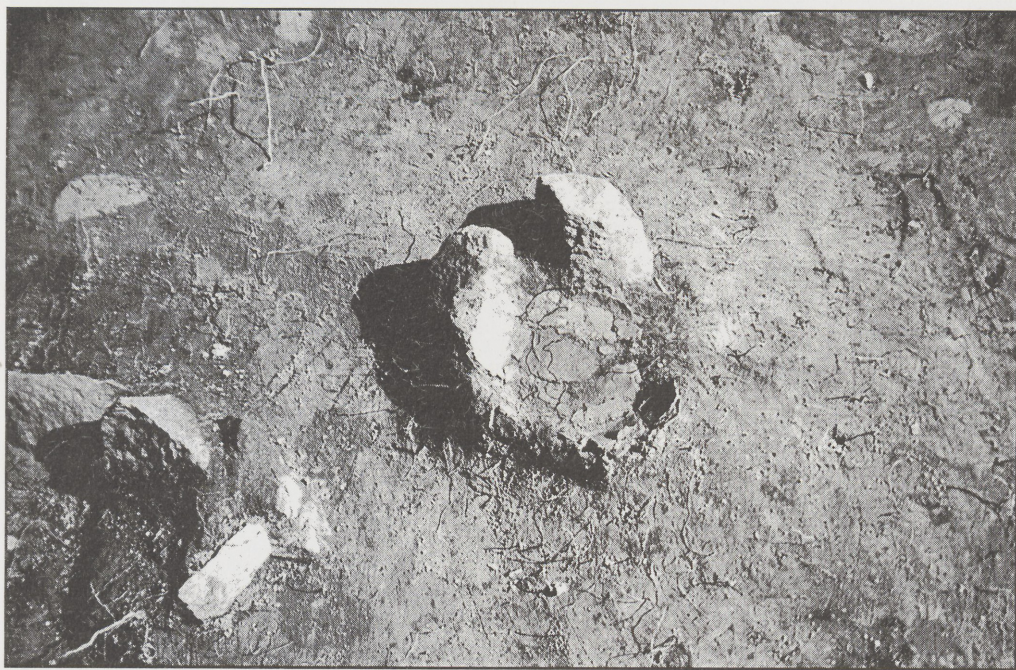


Fig. 3. The settlement site of Pedäjasaare. The lower part of the earthenware between the stones of the hearth. View from SW.

Joon. 3. Pedäjasaare asulakobt. Purunenud savinõu leaseme kivide vabel. Pildistatud edelast.

mostly potsherds. Several metres to the Northeast was another depression with coal mixed soil. The C^{14} sample gathered gave a result of 650 ± 30 and the calibrated age was 655 ± 40 years B. P. (Ta-2693, determined by A. Liiva & T. Rinne).

Among the finds, fragments of late- and post-medieval greyish or greyish-brown, well-baked and quite carefully smoothed wheel pottery prevailed. The clay of the vessels contained fine rubble or sand. The vessels had a low, flat-edged brim, sharply turned outwards, a strongly profiled shoulder and a flat bottom (Fig. 5: 4–9). The vessels were mostly unornamented. Similar pottery has been found in numbers from the excavations of the settlement sites of Setumaa of the same period (Valk & Peets 1994, Fig. 2: 3, 5; Harlašov 1987, Fig. 2: 29, 31, 32), as well as during the inventory trips on the settlement sites. This type of pottery is especially numerous in the archaeological excavations of Pskov town (Labutina 1994, Figs. 32–36, *etc.*). The archaeologist from Pskov, Inga Labutina, has dated such pottery to the second half of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century (Labutina, *op. cit.* 244, 246, Figs. 32, 34: 6, 8–10, 16, 17). Some pottery of red clay was also found. One fragment (AI 6339: 216) came from a field flask made of light grey fine-grained clay, covered with green glaze on the outer side and decorated with line



Fig. 4. The settlement site of Pedäjasaare. Limestone slabs on the bottom of the depression. View from N.

Joon. 4. Pedäjasaare asulakoh. Peaplaadid lohu põhjas. Pildistatud põhjast.

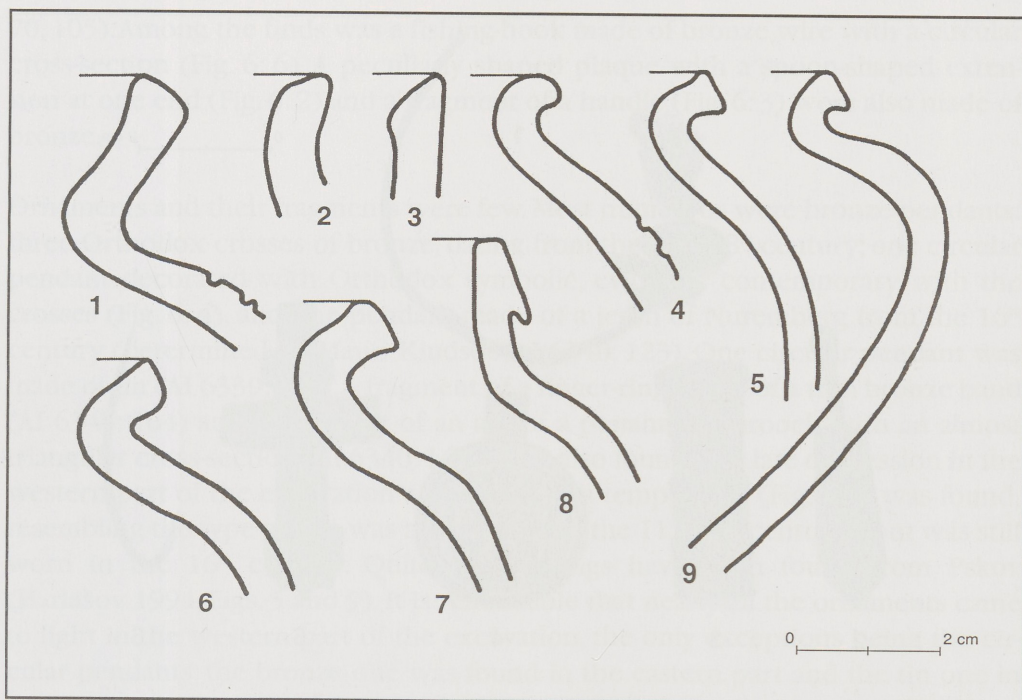


Fig. 5. The settlement site of Pedäjasaare. Profiles of the upper parts of earthenware.
(AI 6339:521; 6340:1205, 1214; 6339:242; 6340:958; 6339:223; 6340:1490, 589, 769.)
Joon. 5. Pedäjasaare asulakobt. Savianumate ülaosa profiilid.

ornament. Such flasks date from the period of the Livonian War. Their fragments are usually found in the archaeological excavations of towns, e.g. in Tartu.

A smaller share of the potsherds come from Late Iron Age vessels with upright or outwards-turned brims and curved edges (Fig. 5: 1-3). The vessels have a curved shoulder part and a flat bottom. The clay contains fine or medium-grained rubble. The vessels have a decoration of belts of horizontal lines, or wavy lines. Some vessels have their surface covered with a decoration of close fine horizontal lines (Fig. 5: 1).

In the trial pit dug in the SE part of the island, a fragment of hand-moulded pottery (AI 6339: 486), dating probably from the early Iron Age, was found. Its surface was decorated with a depression with an uneven bottom.

Among the tools there were several fragments of knives (AI 6340: 263, 282, 463 etc.) with a straight back and rather thin blade (the thickness of the back 0.3-0.4 cm, the width of the blade 1.7-1.8 cm). In the SE part of the island a longer knife

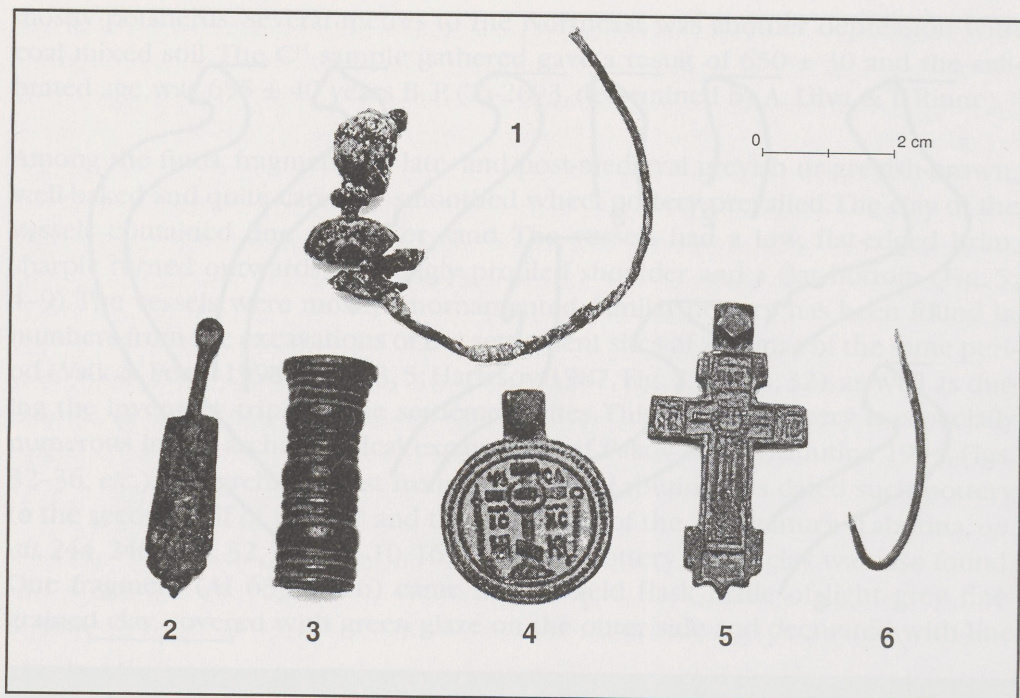


Fig. 6. Bronze artefacts from the settlement site of Pedājasaare.
1 – fragment of a temple ring, 2 – plaque, 3 – fragment of a handle, 4 – round pendant,
5 – cruciform pendant, 6 – fishing-hook.
(AI 6340: 1053, 469, 675, 1224, 147a, 447.)

Joon. 6. Pronksesemeid Pedājasaare asulakohalt.

1 - oimurõnga katke, 2 - naast, 3 - käepideme katke, 4 - ümarripats, 5 - ristripats,
6 - õngekonks.

was also found (AI 6339: 233), the point of which was broken. The preserved part together with the tang measured 26.5 cm, the width of the blade was 1.9–2 cm and the thickness of the back was 0.45 cm. This long knife had a peculiar tang; unlike the others it was as wide as the blade, even slightly widening towards the end, with four rivet holes in it. In one of these, a small bronze rivet was preserved. Jüri Peets has dated these knives to the 16th century (Peets, pers. comm.). Nails and their fragments were quite numerous, as well as boat clamps and their fragments. Two of the calk fragments were better preserved (AI 6340: 465, 570). Besides these, a fragment of a broad-blade axe (AI 6340: 1288) was found. The spokeshave (AI 6340: 737) discovered in a hollow was evidently of modern origin. Net weights and their fragments, made of clay, were also numerous. Most of them were disc-shaped (AI 6339: 69; 6340: 591, 751, 1509), but some were oval (AI 6339: 521) or spherical (AI 6339: 216). The spinning-whorls made of clay were mostly biconical (AI 6340: 876), while the stone ones were disc-shaped (AI 6340:

70, 105). Among the finds was a fishing-hook made of bronze wire with a circular cross-section (Fig. 6: 6). A peculiarly shaped plaque with a spoon-shaped extension at one end (Fig. 6: 2) and a fragment of a handle (Fig. 6: 3) were also made of bronze.

Ornaments and their fragments were few. Most numerous were bronze pendants: three Orthodox crosses of bronze, dating from the 16th–18th century; one circular pendant decorated with Orthodox symbolic, evidently contemporary with the crosses (Fig. 6: 4), and one pendant made of a jeton of Nuremberg from the 16th century (determined by Mauri Kiudsoo; AI 6340: 123). One circular pendant was made of tin (AI 6339: 147). A fragment of a finger-ring, made of a thin bronze band (AI 6340: 164) and a fragment of an arc of a penannular brooch with an almost triangular cross-section (AI 6340: 145) were also found. In a late depression in the western part of the excavation a fragment of a temple ring (Fig. 6: 1) was found, resembling the type which was mainly used in the 11th–13th centuries but was still worn in the 16th century. Quite similar rings have been found from Pskov (Harlašov 1994, Figs. 5 and 9). It is remarkable that nearly all the ornaments came to light in the western part of the excavation, the only exceptions being the circular pendants: the bronze one was found in the eastern part and the tin one in the south-eastern part of the island.

On the western edge of the excavation, quite near the waterfront, a Neolithic stone wedge (Fig. 7) was found between the cultural layer and the natural sand. According to Kaarel Jaanits's estimation it might even date from the period of the Corded Ware Culture (K. Jaanits, pers. comm.), but Lembit Jaanits disagrees (L. Jaanits, pers. comm.). Various lumps of flint and quartz also came to light. Stone Age specialists Aivar Kriiska and Kaarel Jaanits do not connect them with the Stone Age (A. Kriiska and K. Jaanits, pers. comm.). Most of the flint lumps were found in the western and central part of the excavation. In the south-eastern, and especially in the eastern part of the island they were few.

As a result of the archaeological investigation of Pedäjasaare we obtained additional information about the monument(s) on the island as well as

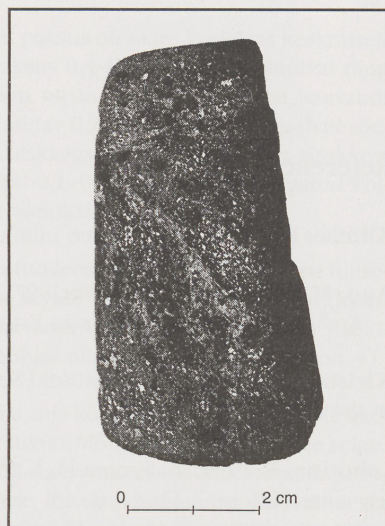


Fig. 7. Stone wedge from the settlement site of Pedäjasaare. (AI 6340:811.)

Joon. 7. Kivitalb Pedäjasaare asulakohalt.

the settlement history of the whole neighbourhood. Unlike the potsherds gathered from the molehills, which enabled us to date the settlement to the Late Iron Age and the first half of the Middle Ages (Aun & Kiristaja 1998, Fig. 1), the pottery found in the excavations was mainly late- and postmedieval (16th–17th centuries) wheel pottery. Of other finds, the long-bladed knife, the pendant made of the jeton of Nuremberg, and probably the fragment of the temple ring, also can be dated to the 16th century. Late Iron Age pottery was found mostly on the eastern, south-eastern and western sides of the island. The single fragment of Early Iron age hand-moulded pottery came to light on the south-eastern side of the island. The Neolithic stone wedge is supplementary to the Stone Age finds from the Väike-Rõsna II settlement site (Aun & Kiristaja 1998, Fig. 2). The fragments of human bones found in the excavations, and a peculiar burial discovered in a shallow depression immediately below the ploughing layer in the central part of the island are very interesting. Most of the human bone fragments were found in the western part of the excavation and in the pits, and so were most of the ornaments, including the Orthodox cross pendants. These finds indicate a demolished cemetery, and so does the folklore information about stone crosses and *tsässon*. In Setumaa, such chapels are often located on the cemeteries or in the neighbourhood (e.g. Laossina, Mikitamäe, Suure-Rõsna, Väike-Rõsna *etc.*). The finds from the archaeological excavations do not exclude a possible cult site, which is indicated by the folklore information about a sacred grove on the island.

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PÄÄSTEKAEVAMISED PEDÄJASAARE ASULAKOHAL SETUMAAL

Mare AUN

Ajaloo Instituut tegi arheoloogilisi päästekaevamisi Pedäjäsaare asulakohal seoses saarele rajatava Värskä piirivalvekordoni ehitustöödega. Kaevand, mille suuruseks oli u. 360 m², paiknes saare keskel, saart ida-lääne suunas läbiva tee ida- ja lääneosas ning sellest põhja poole jääval alal. Väike kaevand (28 m²) rajati veel saare kaguossa, künniga segatud alast väljapoole (joon. 1: 1).

Pruunikashalli ja enamasti kuni põhjani läbiküntud kultuurkihi paksus oli saare keskosas keskmiselt 0,2–0,3 m. Uuritud ala ida- ja lääneosas ulatus kultuurkihi paksus 0,4–0,5 m, saare idanõlval ning maasse kaevatud lohku kohal ka üle 1 m. Kõige huvitavam oli kultuurkihi läbilõike kaevandi idaservas, kus tuli nähtavale muinasaegset kedrakeraamikat sisaldav 0,2 m paksune mustjashall sõeseguse liiva kiht (joon. 2). Saare kaguosas oli peamiselt hiliskeskaegset kedrakeraamikat sisaldava tumehalli sõeseguse liivakihi paksus 0,25–0,3 m. Selle all olnud 0,1–0,15 m paksusest segatud kollakashallist liivakihist saadi varasemat, hilisrauaaegset kedrakeraamikat.

Ehitusjäänuseid oli uuritud alal vähe. Leiti kaks kündmisel lõhutud leeaset, kust saadi rohkesti hilisemat kedrakeraamikat. Ühe savinõu alaosa oli säilinud leeaseme kivide vahel oma algsel kohal (joon. 3). Samas esines palju loomaluid, millest osa oli põlenud. Kaevandi lääneosas tuli arvatava paekividest ahju(?)jäänuse all nähtavale väiksem sissekaeve, mille põhjas olid lapikud paekivid (joon. 4).

Kaevandi lääneosas oli vähemalt kuus maasse süvendatud lohku, mis kõik jätkusid ka väljapoole kaevandi piire ja millest osa olid nn. majapidamislohud või jäätmeaugud. Mõne lohu otstarve pole selge. Lohkudes oli palju savinõukilde, sealt pärineb ka suurem osa kaevamistel saadud loomaluudest, millest mõni oli põlenud. Lohkude ülaosast leiti veel inimese lõualuu fragmente. Kaevatud ala keskosas tuli otse künnikihi all nähtavale kirde-edelasuunaline piklik sissekaeve, milles olid inimluud.

Leidude hulgas olid ülekaalus keskaegsed kedrakeraamika killud (joon. 5), väiksem osa savinõukilde pärineb hilisrauaaega kuuluvatest kedranõudest. Leiti ka üks ilmselt varase rauaaja käsitsikeraamika

kild. Töö- ja tarberiistade hulgas oli mitmeid nugade katkeid, samuti nii terveid kui katketena säilinud paadiklambreid, naelu ja jäänaelu, liimeister, savist võguraskusi ja nende katkeid. Leiti ka üks õngekonks (joon. 6: 6), naast (joon. 6: 2), arvatava käepideme katke (joon. 6: 3). Ehete hulgas oli kõige enam 16.–18. sajandisse kuuluvaid õigeusu ristripatseid (joon. 6: 5), üks ümarripats (joon. 6: 4), ühe 11.–13. sajandil laialt levinud ja veel 16. sajandilgi kantud pronksist oimurõnga katke (joon. 6: 1), 16. sajandi Nürnbergi arvestuspennist tehtud ripats jm. Kaevandi lääneservas tuli nähtavale neoliitiku-mi kuuluv kivitalb (joon. 7).