

A-65707

ARHEOLOOGILISED
VÄLITÖÖD
EESTIS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
FIELD WORKS
IN ESTONIA

1998

Koostanud ja toimetanud
Ülle Tamla

Muinsuskaitseinspeksioon
Tallinn 1999

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TARTU ÜLIKOOLI
RAAMATUKOGU
SUNDEKSEMPLAR

ISSN 1406-3972

Trükitud AS Pakett trükikojas
Laki 17, Tallinn

A HOARD FROM THE PREHISTORIC SETTLEMENT OF TÕRMA

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In the autumn of 1998, Raivo Laasimäe, the owner of an antiquarian shop in Rakvere informed the author that a prehistoric hoard, found from Tõrma (Rakvere parish), had been brought to him for sale. Following this information, Valter Lang, Toomas Tamla and Ülle Tamla went to Tõrma in the first week of September to negotiate for the hoard to be handed over to the Rakvere Museum (Tamla 1998).

THE SITE OF DISCOVERY AND FINDING CONDITIONS

The village of Tõrma lies in the heart of Virumaa, about 5 km SSW of Rakvere, between the roads from Rakvere to Väike-Maarja and Simuna. The village was first mentioned in *Liber Census Daniae*, where Tõrma (*Tormas*) is described as an extraordinarily large village of 70 hides. Tõrma is also mentioned in Heinrich's Livonian Chronicle in connection with the christening and conquering of Virumaa. In this village with several lanes and presumably 35 farms, Germans chose their camp sites (Johansen 1933, 624; Henriku Liivimaa kroonika 1982, XXIII:7; Tarvel 1996, 245–246).

Since the beginning of this century several archaeological monuments (a settlement site, one *tarand*-grave and at least two undated stone graves, eight cup-marked stones, a sacrificial fountain, a hill of a sacred grove) have been recorded and numerous stray finds collected from the territory of the Tõrma village. Among the latter belong the bronze neck-ring and six twisted bracelets (AI 2661) found as a deposit from the sacrificial fountain near the Kõrtsi farm, and two hoards con-



Fig. 1. Findplace of the Tõrma IV hoard. View from W.
Joon. 1. Tõrma IV aarde leiukoh. Vaade läänest.

sisting of ornaments and their fragments only. The Tõrma I hoard (AI 2504) was discovered in 1912 from the Pajosi (Paju) farm during stone-breaking, under a corner of a large boulder; and the Tõrma II hoard (AI 2660) in 1926 at the border of the Inno farm, while digging a roadside ditch. Both hoards contain objects most typical of the final phase of the Estonian prehistoric period – mainly of modest quality and low silver content – like big penannular brooches with flat arcs and plate terminals, hammered bracelets and pendants of thin silver sheet, and plaited neck-rings with plate terminals (Jaanits *et al.* 1982, Fig. 248). Evald Tõnisson has dated the Tõrma I hoard to the 13th century and the II hoard to the 14th century, observing that the II hoard also contained ornaments typical of the 13th century (Tõnisson 1962, 193, nos 36 and 37).

The Tõrma IV deposit was discovered in 1998 from the Kooli farm, from the site of an old granary between two outbuildings, about 20 m east of the dwelling-house (see Fig. 1). The discoverer was Mati Kaljuver, the owner of the Kooli farm, who asserted that the deposit came to light from a ditch for a water-pipe connecting the dwelling-house and the outbuildings, from a depth of about 25–30 cm. According to him, the ornaments had been clustered together between sooty and burnt stones, so that at first the number of the artefacts was not quite clear. He had not observed any vessel, potsherds or textile fragments with the hoard. To

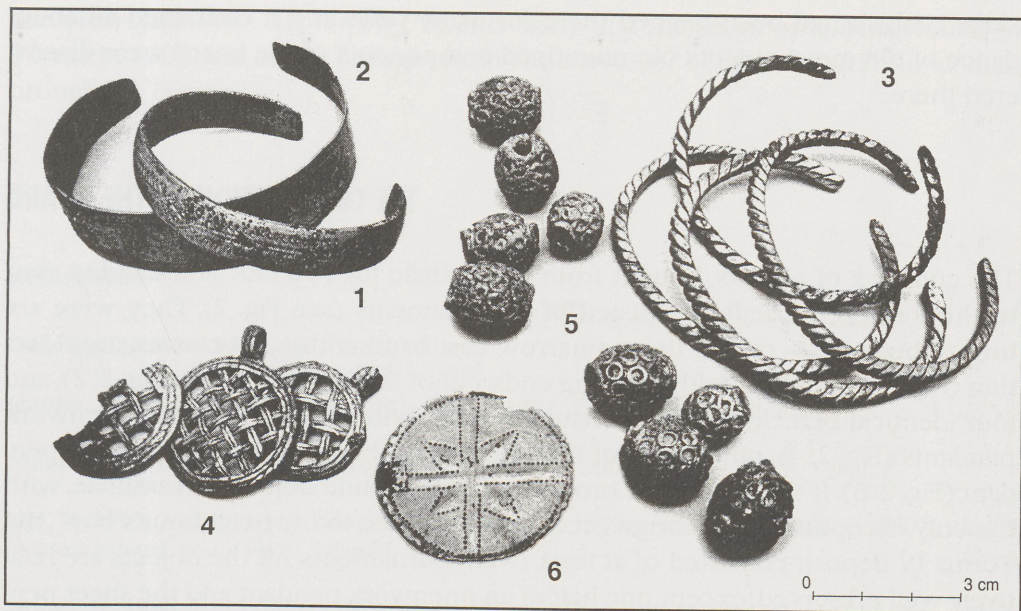


Fig. 2. Hoard from the prehistoric settlement of Tõrma, found in 1998.
Joon. 2. Peitleid Tõrma muinasasulast, leitud 1998.

study the number and material of the objects, he had boiled his find in a solution of washing-powder. The discoverer had given one of the five twisted bracelets of bronze wires to the neighbour's boy.

Inspecting the site of discovery, it appeared that the soil from the ditch in the yard of the Kooli farm displayed features of an intensive cultural layer: deep-black soil, about 70 cm thick, lay on light-coloured moraine and contained numerous potsherds, clay packings, burnt clay, stone and slag fragments. Among the potsherds gathered from the dug-out soil were fragments of hand-moulded pottery (both fine- and coarse-grained) as well as wheel pottery. One potsherd, different and considerably earlier than the others, was clearly striated (AI 6371: 3).

On the site of discovery of the deposit, pointed out by M. Kaljuvere, the ditch profile revealed more burnt stones and stone rubble than in the rest of the length. This probably means that the hoard was hidden in the dwelling-house of the day, presumably near the stove. To investigate the soil from the ditch we tried to use a metal detector. This gave better results on the area between the dwelling-house and the outbuildings, where we found a disfigured bronze fragment and a fragment of a medieval buckle (AI 6371: 1-2). At the site of discovery of the hoard, between the two outbuildings, the use of the metal detector was complicated

since rubbish had been heaped there for many years and it contained an abundance of old metal objects. No unnoticed components of the hoard were discovered there.

THE COMPOSITION OF THE HOARD

The complex of objects, bought from R. Laasimäe for 750 EEK and handed over to the Rakvere Museum consisted of 19 ornaments (see Fig. 2). They were six bronze bracelets – one of them a narrow cast band with a flat-convex cross-section (Fig. 2: 1); another with tapering ends, cut of thin bronze sheet (Fig. 2: 2), and four identical bracelets, tightly twisted of three wires (Fig. 2: 3), three openwork pendants (Fig. 2: 4), nine beads of tin-bronze (Fig. 2: 5), and one silver sheet pendant (Fig. 2: 6). If the discoverer brought all of the found objects to Laasimäe, with the only exception being the twisted bracelet “given to the neighbour’s boy”, the Tõrma IV deposit consisted of at least twenty ornaments. All the objects are relatively well preserved, except one half of an openwork pendant and the sheet pendant without a loop. Deciding by the fresh breaking point, the openwork pendant was probably broken at the time of finding. The loop of the silver sheet pendant, a heavily oxidised fragment of the fastening rivet of which is preserved, was probably destroyed earlier. With boiling the objects in the solution of washing-powder, the discoverer has removed most of the layer of oxidation, so the ornaments have become bright.

Deciding by the shape and typology of the objects, the Tõrma IV deposit consists of ornaments well known and widely spread, above all in northernmost districts of Estonia, mostly in the 12th and the 13th centuries. It should be mentioned that of nearly 400 bracelets of three tightly twisted bronze wires, known from Estonia, which are mostly dated to the end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th centuries, more than half have been found from ancient Virumaa (Selirand 1974, 170). Among these belong the twisted and hammered bracelets found earlier from the Tõrma village: six from the sacrificial fountain (AI 2661: 2–7) and fragments from the *tarand*-grave of the Reinapi farm (AI 2488: 30, 31, 163). The fragments were laid in the *tarand*-grave most likely with the later burials, or during sacrificial ceremonies (Moora 1926, 199).

Regarding the Tõrma IV deposit as a set of ornaments, we may observe its similarity to the typical ornaments found with the women’s burials in the Votic barrows in Estonia – neck ornaments of openwork pendants together with bronze beads, and several bracelets, either twisted of three bronze wires or cast band

bracelets (Ligi 1993, 58, 60, 69–70). It is likely that the set of ornaments found in Tõrma in 1998 was either brought from Votic areas, or belonged to a Votic woman brought to Tõrma.

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PEITLEID TÕRMA MUINASASULAST

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1998. aasta sügisel saadi Rakvere lähedalt Tõrmast muinasaegne peitleid. Arheoloogiaarhiivi andmetel on see juba neljas 12.–13. sajandist pärinev ohvri- või peitleid arheoloogiamälestiste ja juhuheidude poolest rikkast Muinas-Eesti ühest suuremast külast.

1998. aastal avastatud ehtekogum tuli päevavalgele kraavi kaevamisel Kooli taluüuest, elumajast u. 20 m kaugusel paikneva kahe kõrvalhoone vaheliselt alalt, vana aida asemelt (vt. joon. 1). Aarde lei-dja, Kooli talu peremehe Mati Kaljuveri tähelepanekute järgi olid esemed maapõues 25–30 cm

sügavusel tahmaste ja põlenud kivide vahel. Üheskoos pundis olnud esemete arvu ja materjali täpsemaks uurimiseks keetnud ta kokkukleepunud ehteid pesupulbrivees. Leidja andmeil oli leiu koosseis järgmine: seitse pronksist lahtiste otstega käevõru (neist üks kitsas paeljas, lamekumera ristlõikega (joon. 2: 1) ja teine laiem, otste suunas aheneva kuju ja riskülikulise läbilõikega (joon. 2: 2) ning viis kolmest traadist tugevasti kokkukeerutatud, külgedelt kergelt lapikuks taotud ehet (joon. 2: 3), kolm võreripatsit (joon. 2: 4), üheksa tinapronksist helmest (joon. 2: 5) ning üks õhukesest hõbeplekist rinnaleht (joon. 2: 6). Ühe leius sisaldunud pronkstraatidest keeratud käevõru kinkinud Kaljuver naabripoisile.

Leiuropa ülevaatamisel selgus, et Kooli taluõue pinnas on intensiivse kultuurkihi tunnustega. Tüsedas, u. 70 cm paksuses mustjaspruunis kihis esineb rohkesti erinevatest ajastutest pärinevaid nii käsitsi kui ka kedral vormitud savianumate kilde, silumisjälgedega savitihendeid, põlenud savi-, kivi- ja šlaki- ning sulanud pronksitükke. Üleskorjatud kildudest on ajaliselt varasem üks selgete riipimisjälgedega paksuseinalise nõu katke.

Peitleiu avastamiskohas oli kraaviprofiilis näha rohkem kui mujal rusikasuurusi tahmunud, põlenud või murenemiseni porsunud kive ja kivi räbu, mis võivad osutada sellele, et ehtevakk oli asetsenud omaaegses elamus, kerisahu lähedal. Koha täiendavaks läbivaatamiseks kasutatud metalldetektor ei andnud peitleiule lisa, kuna kahe kõrvalhoone vahelisele alale oli aastakümnetega kuhjatud prügi-hunnik, mis sisaldas rohkesti vanametalli, s.h. detektorile tugevasti reageerivaid alumiiniumplekitükke, pudelikorke jms.

Kõik peitleius sisalduvad ehted, mis anti üle Rakvere Muuseumile, on säilinud rahuldavalt, v.a. üks poolik võreripats ja kannata rinnaleht (vt. joon. 2). Otsustades värske murdekoha järgi, pole võimatu, et võreripats läks katki aarde leidmise ajal. Hõbedast rinnalehe pronksplekist kand, mille kinnituskoha märgib tugevasti oksüdeerunud needifragment, on arvatavalt läbiroostetanud varem. Esemete keetmisega on kõigilt pronksesemetelt eemaldunud paksem oksüdeerumiskihit, mistõttu need on muutunud haljaks.

Otsustades esemete vormi ja tüpologia järgi, on 1998. aastal avastatud Tõrma IV peitleiu näol tegemist eelkõige 12.–13. sajandil põhjapoolsetes Eesti maakondades laialt levinud ehtevormidega. Näiteks on kõikidest Eestist teadaolevatest, ligi neljasajast kolmest traadist tugevasti kokkukeeratud pronksvõrust, mis enamasti dateeritakse 12. sajandi lõppu ja 13. sajandi algusesse, üle poole leitud Virumaalt.

Kui vaadata Tõrma IV peitleidu kui üht ehtekomplekti, siis torkab silma selle suur sarnasus Eesti vadjapäraste kääbaskalmete naiste matuste juurest leitud soositumate ehteasjadega: kaelakees võreripatsid koos hõbedaläikeliste tinapronkshelmestega ning mõlemal käerandmel mitmed kolmest pronkstraadist keerutatud või vormi järgi valatud võrud. Vaid õhuke rinnaleht (foto 2: 6) võiks olla nii teostuselt kui ka ornamendilt kohalike külaseppade toodang. Seega võib arvata, et 1998. aastal Tõrmast leitud ehetest enamik saadi 12. sajandi teisel poolel või 13. sajandi esimesel veerandil vahetuskaubana idpoolsetelt aladelt. Pole võimatu seegi, et hoone rusudesse mattunud ehtevakk kuulus Tõrmasse toodud vadjä päritoluga naisele.