

ARHEOLOOGILISED
VÄLITÖÖD
EESTIS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
FIELD WORKS
IN ESTONIA

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Koostanud ja toimetanud
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Esikaas: rihmajagaja Harjumaalt Harmi kalmest
Cover: strap-divider from Harmi grave in Harjumaa

Tagakaas: kaelavõru fragment Harjumaalt Harmi kalmest
Back cover: fragment of neck-ring from Harmi grave in Harjumaa

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TARTU ÜLIKOOLI
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RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT THE SE FOOT OF TOOMEMÄGI, TARTU

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The aim of the present review is to provide some essential results of the 1994–1998 archaeological excavations of the ancient settlement and the later singular part of the medieval suburb of Tartu.

The area of investigations on the sites Vallikraavi Street 2 and 6a, Küüni Street 5b and Kitsas Street 1 lies about 200 m SE of the ancient hill-fort of Tartu and about 50 m south of the line of the medieval town wall (Fig.). The natural relief is heavily sloping towards the Emajõgi River: in the upper part of the slope, on the W side of Ülikooli Street, the came to light at a height of 41.95 m, and in the lower part of the slope, on the W side of Küüni Street, at 35.55 m. Thus the drop is nearly 6.4 m per 80 m. Remarkably, the earliest deposit of the cultural layer in this area – as it was also observed in the earlier excavations on the site of Kaubahall (Supermarket) and the E side of Ülikooli Street – rests upon a quarternary sand layer. In the neighbourhood of the Town Hall Square (e.g. the VII quarter), to the E of the line of Ülikooli Street, a layer of sedimentary lime was found underneath the cultural layer. From the point of view of the location of the earliest permanent settlement, such a difference may be significant, since the high moisture of the soil was one of the main factors restraining the expansion of the settlement for a long time, in the prehistoric period as well as in the Early Middle Ages.

In the 200 sq. m of cultural layer, investigated in 1994 on the site of Vallikraavi Street 2, the essential part was the greyish bottom layer, 10–15 cm thick, which was preserved mainly in the NW part of the excavation. Here, typical finds were fragments of striated pottery (e.g. TM A 70: 510, 671, 970, 979, 1033, 1062, 1063, 1068). As we know, the foundation of the hillfort of Tartu has been dated to the 5th–6th centuries, on the basis of the finds of striated pottery. In the area of about 30 sq. m, where the striated pottery could be associated with the earliest deposit of the cultural layer, there is no reason to believe that the finds have been carried there by rainfall. The stratigraphic position of the striated pottery fragments, dating from the early construction period of the prehistoric hillfort, in the excavation of Vallikraavi Street 2 indicates that the settlement formed there contemporaneously with the earliest phase of the hillfort.

In the subsequent prehistoric layers it was possible to discriminate between the

deposits of different centuries on the basis of their composition and/or the peculiarities of find material. Besides the striated pottery, some potsherds with textile impression and pinched surface, as well as pottery of the Rõuge type and fine-grained carinated vessels were found. Wheel pottery with linear and wavy ornament, typical of the 10th–13th centuries, was found throughout the excavation. Special mention should be made of a restored earthenware with nearly all of its outer surface decorated and a master's mark under the bottom (TM A 70: 1977, 1979, 1988, 2000, etc.). The prehistoric pottery from Vallikraavi Street 2 can be partly divided into earlier and later types of vessels on the basis of their different stratigraphic position in the pits and fire-places. In the prehistoric layer in the eastern part of the same excavation, a fragment of a glazed ceramic Easter egg was found (TM A 70: 2115). Such ceramic eggs were manufactured in the Old Russian territory, most likely near Kiev, and date from the 11th century. They are connected with Christianity and, first of all, with ancient burial customs. Besides Russia, they have been found also in Latvia, Sweden and Poland. In Estonian archaeological material the egg from Vallikraavi Street was the first such find; another egg fragment, similar to the first one, was discovered somewhat later also from Tartu, from the excavation at Küüni Street 5b. Two ceramic egg fragments and cruciform pendants from the excavations at the Kaubahall (supermarket) and the Postimaja (post office) suggest that the settlement or exploitation of this area was not typical during a certain period. Some of the mentioned cruciform pendants, e.g. the bronze cross (TM A 40: 820), the cross of pink slate, with equal hands, and the lead cross (see: Aun & Tiirmaa 1987, Fig. 3: 3) may be dated even to the 11th–12th centuries. One of the suggestions based upon the stray finds of human bones from this area, is the possibility that the area was used as a Christian cemetery and destroyed already in the last or the penultimate century of the prehistoric period. Some of the objects from these graves may have fallen into the later deposits in the Middle Ages, in the course of digging.

Of medieval constructions, the remains of a stove or a hearth made of bricks and granite stones, and a timber-curbed well came to light in the excavation of Vallikraavi Street 2. The finds determining the age of the constructions were dated to the 13th–14th centuries. The outer measurements of the rectangular hearth were 155 x 75 cm, and its wall was sporadically preserved up to a height of 70 cm. The well construction was unusual compared to those discovered previously in Tartu. The upper part of the well, nearly square, with the sides measuring 95–105 cm, was built of horizontal beams. The lower part was round, of vertical planks. The C¹⁴ calibrated dating of the sample taken from a well preserved unbarked birch branch from the fill was 713±40 years. Thus, relying upon this dating, the well was filled at the beginning of the 14th century, at the latest.

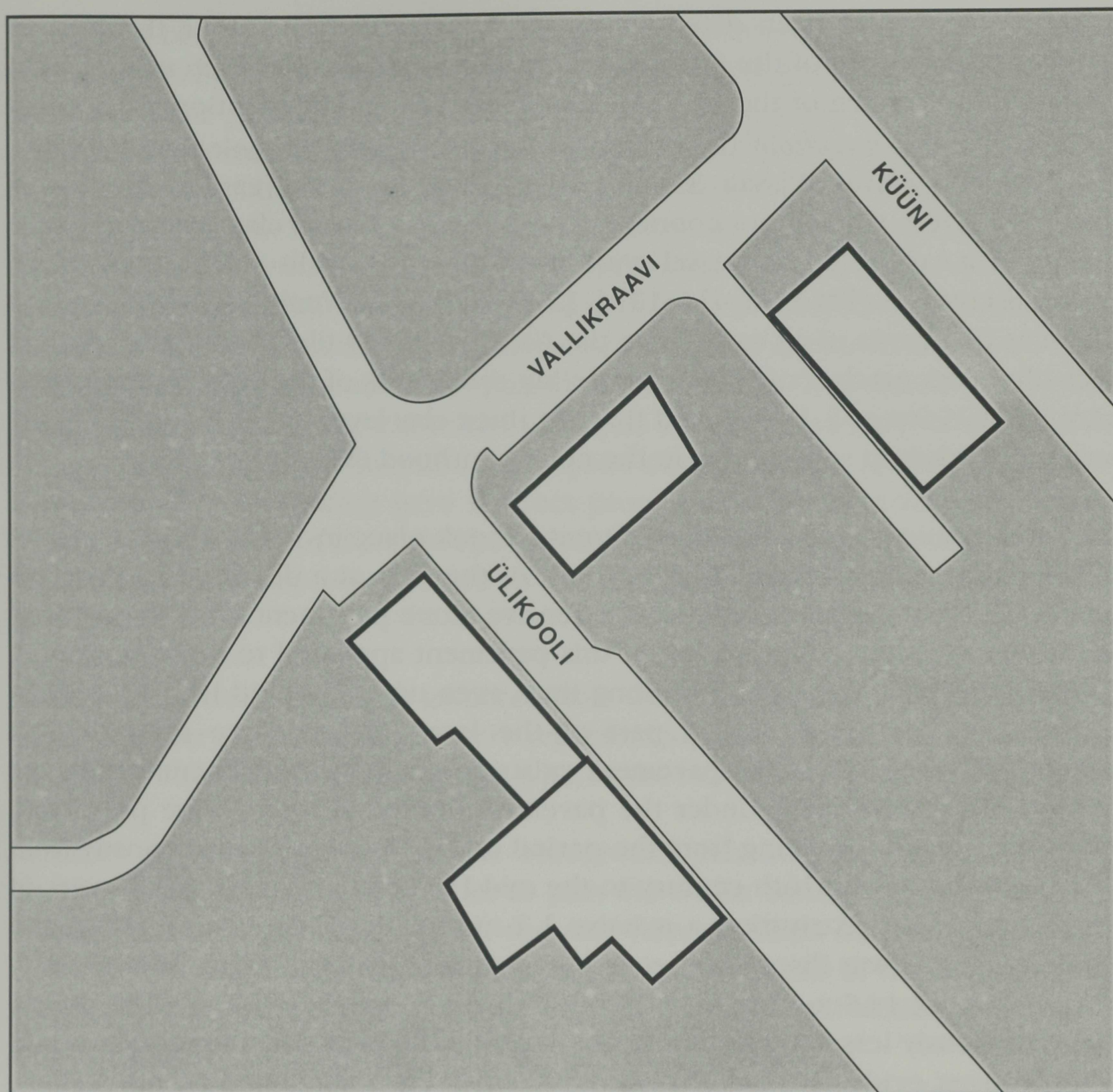


Fig. Location of the rescue excavations at the SE foot of Toomemägi in 1994–1998.

Joon. 994–1998 Tartu Toomemäe kagujaamil toimunud päästekaevamiste asendiplaan.

Unlike the medieval layers, formerly excavated in the centre of the town and in the southern suburb, the medieval deposits of the cultural layer in the excavation of Vallikraavi Street 2 contained very little organic matter (wooden fragments, dung, etc.). Remarkable was the clear red clay layer, up to 90 cm thick, covering an area of 45 sq. m in the western part of the excavation, below the later medieval deposits. In this clay there was an intermediate layer of soil and charcoal fragments, which contained the only finds associated with the clay layer. The majority of the pottery fragments came from a proto-stoneware *kugeltopf* with a rounded bottom (TM A 70: 324, 333, 352, etc.), which was reconstructed. Although this

type of vessels has been dated, in special literature, to be earlier, the circumstances of discovery of the fragments from Tartu indicate that such vessels were still used at the turn of the 13th-14th centuries. It should be mentioned here that a fragment of a *kugeltopf* discovered in the course of archaeological investigations of Old Pärnu (Vissak & Vunk 1996, 354). From the earlier deposits of medieval layers, though not connected with the mentioned clay layer, some fragments of a cylindric clay vessel with unusually thick walls and coarse surface were discovered (TM A 70: 433, 1274, 1275, etc.). Aldur Vunk (1998) determined them as fragments of an early stove tile, the pot-shaped tile. The outer surface of this tile bears patches of soot. Interpreting the results of the rescue excavations at Vallikraavi Street 2, I presumed that the thick clay layer might indicate a brick-making workshop somewhere in the neighbourhood (Vissak 1994, 13).

The rescue excavations at Ülikooli Street 6a took place in 1996, when an area of 450 sq. m was investigated. In the N part of the area, at a depth of 42.35-41.65 under severely disturbed layers, an extensive stone pavement with an eastward slant was discovered. The dating of this pavement appeared to be complicated, since a part of it was used for a long time, even up to the mid-18th century. As preparation for the paving, a part of the layers below were removed and smoothed. Quite surely the pavement existed already in the 17th century, in the period of early bastions. Under the pavement, medieval layers were preserved, with the latest finds dating from the period of the Livonian War, but mostly from the beginning of the 16th century to the mid-15th century. Under these layers, in the S part of the excavation, a massive 1.2 m thick layer containing bricks and their fragments was discovered, covering an area of 80 sq. m. Some of the bricks, measuring 9 x 14.5 x 32 to 10 x 15 x 33 cm, were strongly burnt, while others were obviously less severely burnt. On one side the bricks had longitudinal parallel grooves, evidently made by hand. The brick layer contained no other finds, but some charred wood came to light there. The samples for C¹⁴ dating were taken from a round piece of wood with a diameter of 10 cm, and some single charcoal lumps. The timber analysed at the Institute of Geology of the Tartu University (TA-2563 and Ta-2564) gave the results 800±40 and 810±40 years for the calibrated age. Such a result seems, even considering the possible latest date (i.e. the mid-13th century), a little too early. The earliest presumable date of the layer of waste bricks and the brick-manufacturing refuse might be the turn of the 13th and the 14th centuries. Such dating is supported by the finds from the layers above the brick layer. There were few fragments of early stoneware, and the finds typical of the 14th century were missing.

Below the brick layer, greyish-brown humus deposit was sporadically preserved.

Below and beside it, where the humus layer was destroyed, a mixed yellow sand layer came to light, containing veins and patches of dark grey cultural layer. In the sand and dark patches only prehistoric pottery fragments were found. After removing the mixed sand layer, clay pits came to light, filled with sand mixed with the prehistoric cultural layer. Some of the pits were easily reconstructed, since there were narrow belts of intact clay between them. Unlike the brick layer which covered only the S part of the excavation, the clay pits extended from the S end of the E side of the excavation up to its N limit. It should be mentioned that during the archaeological investigations preceding the construction of the new building of Hansapank, similar clay pits were observed on the N side of Vallikraavi Street. In the report of the excavations the pits are not connected with clay mining but their genesis and function are beyond doubt. The clay pits and especially the refuse of brick-making gave indirect proof to the above presented theory about the peculiarity of the area. The location of the brick layer allows one to presume that a brick kiln was situated to the south of the investigated area (Vissak 1996, 18).

Among the pottery fragments gathered from the excavation of Ülikooli Street, all types of pottery typical of Tartu were represented, from the hand-moulded striated pottery and pottery of the Rõuge type, to the richly decorated wheel pottery.

In the excavated area, investigations with ground penetrating radar were carried out before the excavations, in order to plan the works better. The plans and profile drawings of the fieldworks on the site Ülikooli Street 6a were digitalised. Next, three-dimensional virtual models of the main deposits of the cultural layer and the levels of ground planning in Ülikooli Street 6a and Vallikraavi Street 2 were made.

The site of Küüni Street 5b is the easternmost of the discussed sites, and the nearest to the Emajõgi River. The upper and later deposits of the cultural layer had been removed from the 300 sq. m area, investigated here in 1997, in the course of erecting the buildings and deepening their cellars on this site at the beginning of the 20th century.

In the south, the investigated area borders on the site of the supermarket, investigated by the archaeologist Mare Aun. So the site forms the connecting link between the stratigraphy of the supermarket and the post office sites. Two medieval N-S-oriented ditches and a trough of boards, observed already on the supermarket site, traversed the excavation at Küüni Street.

Among the more recent finds, several small fragments of crucibles should be mentioned. They were made of whitish clay containing stone rubble (e.g. TM A 51: 1172, 1174, 4934, 4935). The function of these crucibles, dating from the beginning of the modern times, is not clear, but the amount of fragments, both from used and unused vessels, leads to the conclusion that the crucibles were used in some kind of production or processing in this area.

The find material from the medieval layers of the excavation was not rich: several fragments of pottery from the 14th and 15th centuries, some small sherds of glass beakers of the same period, and, among the rest, one bracteate of the bishop of Tartu, came to light.

The prehistoric layer was 20–30 cm thick. Besides the above mentioned ceramic egg fragment (TM A 102: 897), fragments of decorated wheel pottery were found. A few fragments of the pottery of Rõuge type, made of clay with stone temper, represented the hand-moulded pottery. A spinning-whorl of pink slate (TM A 102: 1439) was also found. It should be mentioned here that in this area, including the excavations of M. Aun, such spinning-whorls have been found more often than elsewhere in the prehistoric cultural layers of Tartu.

On the site of Kitsas Street 1, an area of 600 sq. m was excavated in 1998. Several underground tracks traversed the area and the deposits lay strongly slanting on the slope. Considering that, the disturbed layers were removed and investigated first, after that the mixed filling layers of all the tracks were investigated. As a result, we had most of the stratigraphy of the cultural layer and the profiles before we started to excavate the preserved cultural layer.

The cultural layer was better preserved in the central part of the excavation. In the E part the top layers were damaged by an earlier building. In the W part the cultural layer was destroyed by the flattening of the slope. In the N part of the excavation a layer of brick fragments came to light, resembling the excavation of Ülikooli Street 6a. In this excavation the cultural layer was up to 80 cm thick. In the E part, clay pits came to light, extending through the excavation from N to S, but the clay belts or “walls” of intact clay were missing and so the pits dug at different times and filled with sand and prehistoric deposits could only be distinguished by different stratification of the fill.

Under the layer of brick-making refuse, the remains of a brick kiln came to light in the SW part of the excavation, at a height of 43.70–42.65 m. The stove, partly sunk into the original sand layer, stood on the slope. The brick base was laid upon

the smoothed but undisturbed natural clay layer. The longitudinal axis of the stove was, like the slope, roughly E-W-oriented. In the eastern wall there were two burning chambers, and beside them an opening, which was probably used for filling and cleaning the stove. During the period of use, the walls of the burning chambers and the vault covering them had been repaired at least once. The earlier wall bricks of the kiln were crumbled, so we may presume that the earlier vaults disintegrated while the kiln was still used. While the front of the kiln, with the burning chambers and the opening, was laid of burnt bricks, the other two excavated walls were mostly laid of unburned bricks. The fourth, N wall of the kiln was under the building bordering the excavation. The measurements of the kiln, taken at the outer sides of the walls, were the following: the length of the burning chamber 2.5 m; the width, narrowing towards the kiln, 1–0.5 m; the range of the brick burning chamber 6.2 m; the width observed in the excavation up to 4 m. The walls were sporadically preserved up to the height of 1.5 m. A similar construction of a brick kiln came to light also in the excavation at the site of the post office, nearly 100 m SE of the kiln of Kitsas Street. To the S of the post office, some timber constructions have been excavated, with the clay deposits near them indicating that the constructions belonged to a complex of brick yards. It is remarkable that the mixed sand and the dark grey filling contained only prehistoric potsherds, among which the share of hand-moulded pottery was extremely small.

SUMMARY

The archaeological investigations of the discussed area have revealed that between the medieval suburb and the town wall, near the bishop's castle, the area of brick yards was located in the 14th century. Although the prehistoric layer has been greatly damaged here by the later clay mining, the filling layers of the clay pits contain quite a lot of decorated wheel pottery of the 10th–13th centuries. The bottom deposit of the prehistoric layer, better preserved only on the site Vallikraavi 2, shows that the earliest finds from the hillfort correspond to the find material of the settlement of the discussed area. Hitherto, the location of the settlement of the period of the formation of the hillfort has been presumed on the NE side of the hillfort, not the SE one.

Investigating the discussed area, one of the main objects was discovering the direction of the prehistoric road traversing Tartu. To find the answer to the question whether the road from N to S, an important precondition to the formation of the ancient settlement and the hillfort, traversed the area somewhere in the

neighbourhood of the present-day Ülikooli Street, should be a special task in the investigation of all archaeological monuments of the area.

In the medieval southern suburb of Tartu we have a multi-purpose area, a part of which consisted of living quarters, another part was used as kitchen-gardens by townspeople, and the third part was a "manufacturing district".

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TARTU TOOMEMÄE KAGUJALAMI ARHEOLOOGILISTE UURINGUTE TULEMUSED

Rünno VISSAK

1994–1998 toimusid arheoloogilised päästekaevamised Tartu Toomemäe kagujaalamil neljal ehitusobjektile, kus uuriti kultuurikihti u. 1500 m² suurusel alal (joon 1). Selles piirkonnas toimunud tööd olid eriti olulised seoses siinse muinasasula varaseima, 6. saj. dateeritud kihi ja Vallikraavi t. 2 kinnistult u. 30 m² suuruselt alalt saadud Tartu linnuse varaseimale etapile iseloomuliku riibitud pinnaga keraamikaleidude tõttu. Keskaegse Tartu lõunapoolse eeslinna alalt saadud mitmed leiud, sh. kreeka-katoliku kiriku matusekombestikuga seotud ülestõusmismunade fragmendid Vallikraavi t. 2 ja Küüni t. 5b kinnistutelt, viitavad võimalusele, et tõenäoliselt asus selles piirkonnas 11. või 12. saj. kristlik kalmistu, mis osaliselt hävis muinasaja viimasel või eelviimasel sajandil. Keskaja alguseks oli Vallikraavi t. 2, Ülikooli t. 6a ja Kitsas t. 1 kinnistute läbiuuritud alale ladestunud savikaid ja tellisetükkide kihte, mis osutasid siin toimunud telliste valmistamisele. Kitsas t. 1 kinnistult leiti telliste põletamiseks rajatud ahju jäänused, mis kõige tõenäolisemalt pärinesid 14. sajandist. Seoses savi kaevandamisega oli muinasaegne kiht suures osas lõhutud, kuid ettekujutuse selle mahust ja leiuvainesest andis saviaukude täiteks tagasiloobitud kihi läbiuurimine. Muuhulgas sisaldas see rohkesti keraamika fragmente. Esmakordselt Tartu arheoloogias fikseeriti Toomemäe kagujaalamil läbiuuritud arheoloogiline situatsioon digitaalselt; digitaalsete jooniste ning plaanide põhjal konstrueeriti arvutiga kolmemõõtmelised mudelid.