

ARHEOLOOGILISED  
VÄLITÖÖD  
EESTIS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
FIELD WORKS  
IN ESTONIA

1999

Koostanud ja toimetanud  
*Ülle Tamla*

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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

*Toimetuskolleegium:*

Ants Kraut  
Valter Lang  
Anneli Randla  
Jaan Tamm  
Toomas Tamla  
Ülle Tamla  
Heiki Valk

Uus 18, Tallinn 10111, Eesti  
e-mail: info@muinas.ee

*Kujundus ja makett:*

Jaana Kool

TARTU ÜLIKOOLI  
RAAMATUKOGU  
SUNDEKSEMPLAR

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# LATE PRE-ROMAN AND VIKING AGE STONE GRAVE OF UUSKÜLA

**Valter LANG and Jonathan KALMAN**

*Ajaloo Instituut (Institute of History), Rüütli 6, 10130 Tallinn, Eesti (Estonia)*

*valter.lang@mail.ee; jon18@mail.ee*

In 1999, the excavations of stone grave II of Uusküla (North Estonia) were completed. The investigation of this grave was already started in 1998 when two *tarands*, i.e. rectangular enclosures built of stones, were discovered (Lang 1999). The narrower and later *tarand* B was then excavated completely, whereas the bigger and earlier *tarand* A was only partly unearthed (Fig. 1). In 1999, the excavations of the latter were finished.

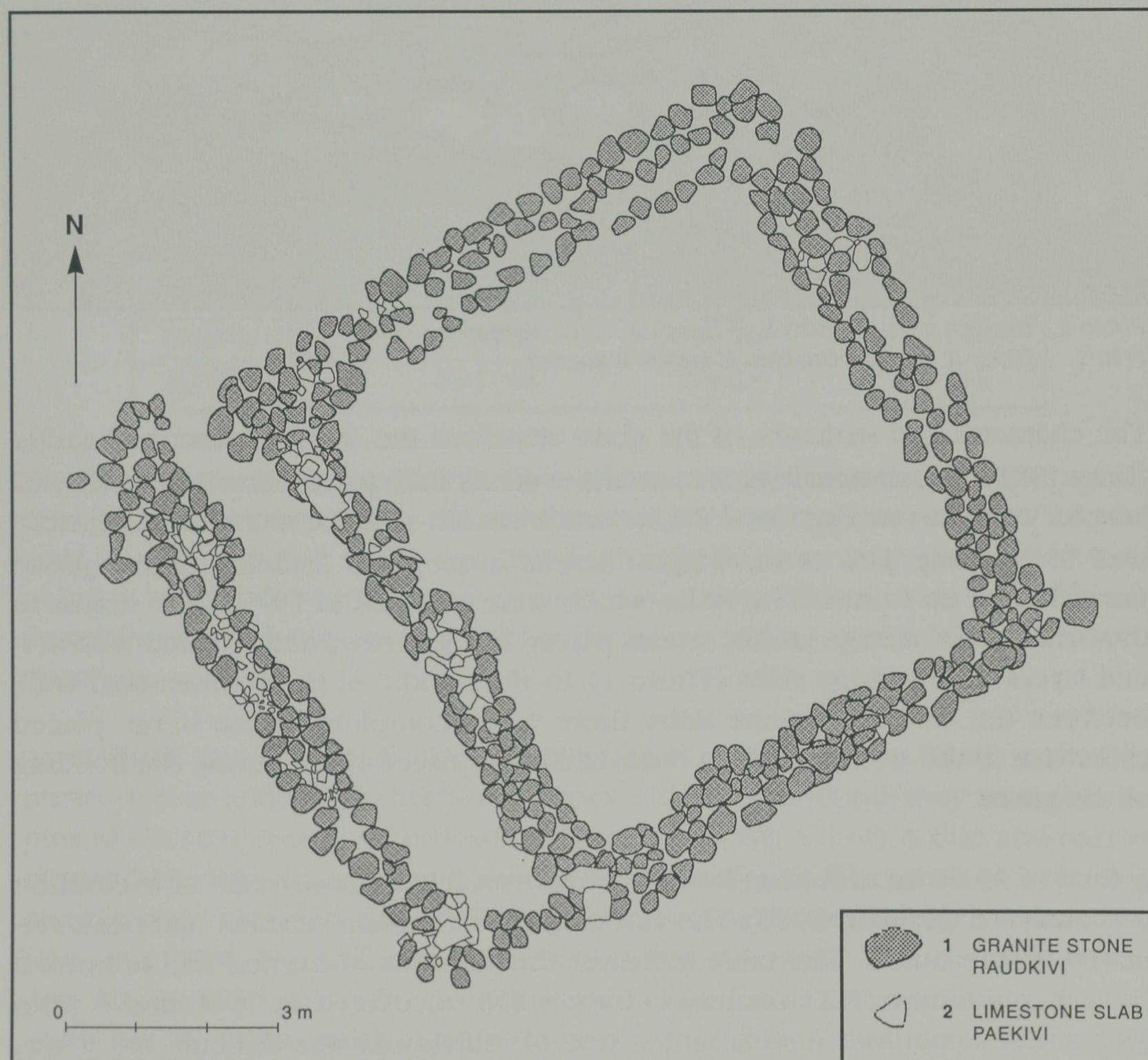


Fig. 1. Structures of grave II of Uusküla.

Joon. 1. Uusküla II kalme konstruktsioonid.





Photo 1. Western part of grave II of Uusküla, unearthened in 1999.

Foto 1. 1999. a. avatud Uusküla II kalme lääneosa.

The character and structure of the grave remained the same as described earlier (Lang 1999). The dimensions of *tarand* A were as follows: the north-western wall was 8.7 m, south-western wall 9.1 m, south-eastern wall 8.4 m and north-eastern wall 9.4 m long. This is the biggest *tarand* among the Estonian *tarand*-graves unearthened up to now. The walls, which were exposed in 1999, were similar to the other walls of large granite stones placed in three rows and covered with several layers of limestone slabs (Photo 1). In the middle of the southeastern wall, between the wall's limestone slabs, there was a complete hoarse bone placed crosswise to the wall's line. This bone had been placed there during the building of the grave.

A total of 33.65 kg of human bone was recovered in the two years of excavation and analysed (Kalman 2000). The vast majority of human remains had been cremated before burial. The table indicates the amounts of burned and unburned bone. A minimum of 23 cremation burials (15 uncovered in 1998 and 8 from 1999) was recognised. Ageing and sexing of individuals was difficult, but it was observed that the very young to the very old were present, as were both males and females. Both clusters and scattered fragments of bone were found, but most



fragments were found in clusters. Within the clusters, several individuals were often discernible, perhaps indicating that multiple bodies were cremated or at least deposited together.

The burned bones seem to indicate two different styles of cremation. Excavations from 1998 uncovered the western part of the grave (*tarand* B and the western edge of *tarand* A) and the majority of bones had been exposed to intense heat. Only some of the bones were lightly burned and they were found towards the eastern side of that year's excavation. In contrast to the general condition of the bones from the first year, the vast majority of bones uncovered in 1999, from the eastern half of the grave (the main portion of *tarand* A), were only lightly burned.

**Table. Amount of burned and unburned bone recovered from stone grave II of Uusküla**

**Tabel. Põletatud ja põletamata luude kogus Uusküla II kivikalmes**

	1998	1999	TOTAL
BURNED	23.77 kg	9.27 kg	33.04 kg
UNBURNED	0.54 kg	0.07 kg	0.61 kg
TOTAL	24.31 kg	9.34 kg	33.65 kg

In addition to cremation burials there were several inhumations. First, a fairly eroded skeleton of a six year old child; second, the incomplete remains of an adult aged 21–24 years; and finally two new-born infants. These were the only four discernible burials. However, small fragments of unburned bone were occasionally found throughout the eastern half of the grave, but no complete burials were apparent.

As in 1998, the general picture of grave goods remained poor. There were fragments of four additional shepherd's crook pins of iron found; they resemble the pins of the first year of investigations (Lang 1999, Fig. 3: 1–4). A thin and narrow bronze bracelet with open and sharpening ends (Fig. 2: 3) represents a developmental stage between the Pre-Roman bracelets with rectangular cross-section (see Lang 1996, Fig. 2: 2) and the bracelets twice as wide from the Roman Iron Age (Moora 1938, 418–426). A unique artefact for Estonia is presented in Fig. 2: 1 – this is a miniature smith's spade for coal with a broken stem. Such spades originate from the Celtic cultural sphere and date from the Late Pre-Roman – Roman Iron Age (Moosleitner & Urbanek 1991, 72–73, Fig. 5: 5; Salo 1968, 168, Pl. 39: 1).



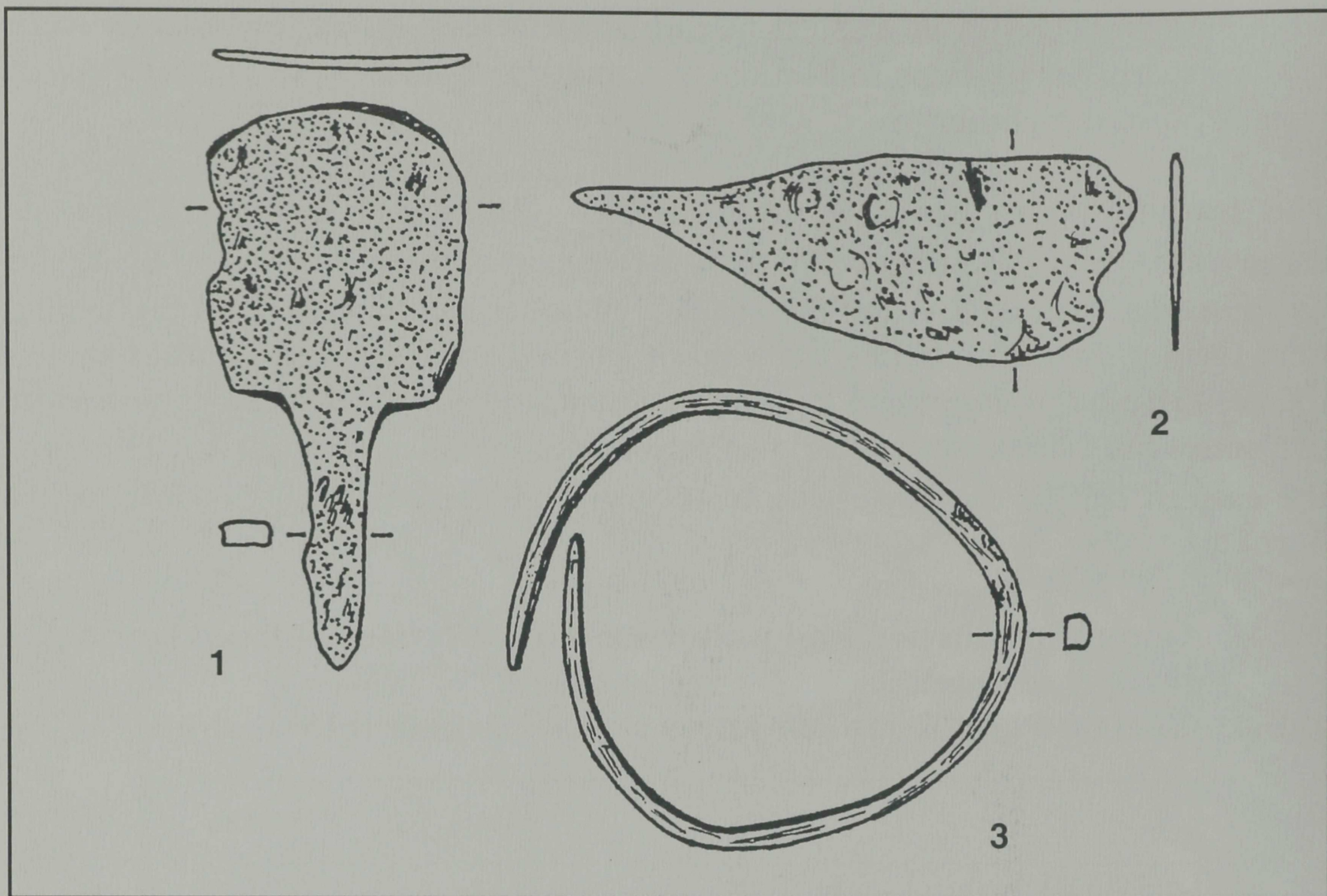


Fig. 2. Some grave goods from Uusküla. 1 miniature spade for coal, 2 knife, 3 bracelet. (AI 6342: 91, 80, 81).

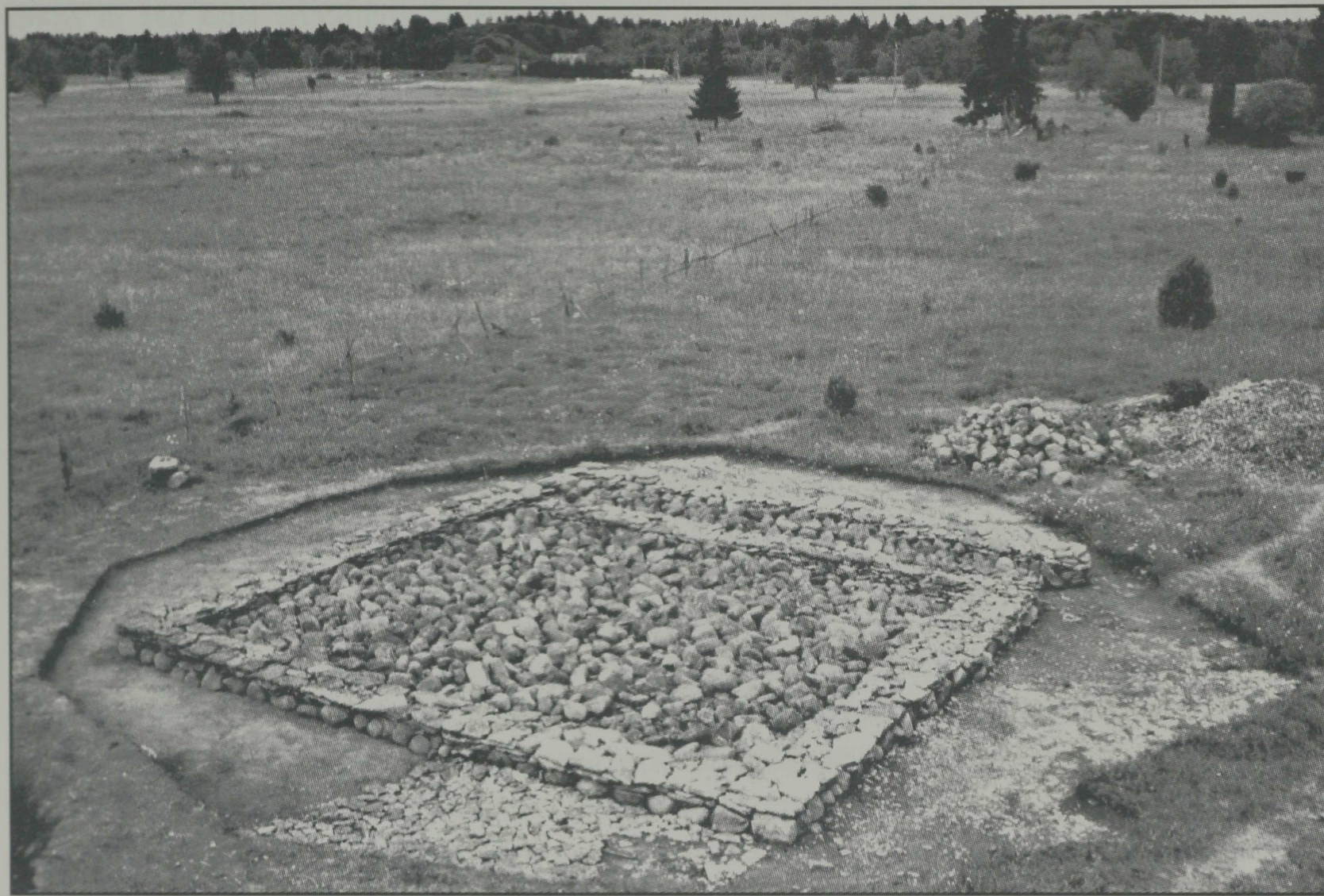
Joon. 2. Leide Uusküla kalmest. 1 söelabidas, 2 nuga, 3 käevõru.

A knife with a broken blade (Fig. 2: 2) has no exact parallels so far. In addition to these finds there were some small fragments of knives, a bronze spiral and only three potsherds discovered.

Pieces of quartz were also found in the eastern part of the grave. There are now 286 pieces of quartz and three fragments of flint altogether, and many of them bear traces of breaking up or manufacturing. The majority of the quartz was found between the gravestones and only a few of them underneath the stones. Therefore they can hardly be interpreted as remains of a settlement at this location, as suggested last year (Lang 1999, 35). Rather, these finds originate either from a displaced cultural layer of a settlement site elsewhere or they were made at the location during the grave construction. Single pieces of quartz have been found from a number of stone graves.

The investigations in 1999 have supported the earlier suggestion that there were at least two stages in the use of grave II at Uusküla. First, the grave was built in the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age and this is the period that all the grave goods and





*Photo 2. Stone grave II of Uusküla reconstructed.*

*Foto 2. Rekonstrueeritud Uusküla II kalme.*

lightly burned human bones belong to. Second, during the Viking Age (8<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup>, or 7<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup>, centuries; the radiocarbon dates of this disturbance are published in Lang 1999, Table 2) there was a significant disturbance of the grave and probably new burials, intensely burned and without grave goods, were placed in the grave.

After the excavations, the stone grave of Uusküla was reconstructed (Photo 2). According to the observations made during the fieldwork, this grave was reconstructed not as a large box filled in with stones as had been done earlier (see Lõugas 1975, Fig. 1), but rather as a graveyard surrounded by stone walls which were higher than the filling. The stone filling of the grave grew higher in proportion to the addition of new burials. The Uusküla grave seems to have been abandoned before its filling reached the level of the surrounding walls.

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## EELROOMA RAUAAJA JA VIKINGIAJA KIVIKALME UUSKÜLAS

*Valter LANG ja Jonathan KALMAN*

Lõpetati Uusküla II kivist kalme kaevamine. 1998. a. oli avastatud kaks tarandit, esimesena ehitatud suur ruudukujuline tarand A ja sellele hiljem liidetud kitsas tarand B. A-tarandi lõplikud mõõtmed selgusid 1999. aastal: loodemüür oli 8,7 m, edelamüür 9,1 m, kagumüür 8,4 m ja kirdemüür 9,4 m pikk. Tegu on kõige suurema tarandiga, mis seni Eestis kaevatud (joon. 1; foto 2).

Enamik surnuid oli kalmesse maetud põletatult. Täheledatai, et A-tarandis olnud luud olid valdavalt põletatud üsna nõrgalt, samas kui B-tarandis ning A-tarandi läänenurgas (eriti A- ja B-tarandi vahelise müüri peal) avastati tugevalt põletatud luid. Kalme alalt koguti 33,65 kg luid (vt. tabel), mille hulgas õnnestus eristada 23 põletusmatust ning 4 laibamatust. Viimaste seas oli 6-aastane laps, 21–24-aastane täiskasvanu (vaid osaline matus) ning kaks vastsündinut. Leiumaterjal jäi ka 1999. aastal suhteliselt vaeseks – lisaks neljale karjasekeppnõelale avastati haruldane miniatuurne söelabidas, nuga, käevõru (joon. 2: 1–3), pronksspiraal, paar väikest noakatket ja kolm savinõukildu. Nagu eelmisel aastal, nii leiti nüüdki arvukalt purustamis- või töötlemisjälgedega kvartsitükke ning kolm tulekivikildu. Leiutingimuste täpsem jälgimine osutas asjaolule, et kvartsitükid esinesid peamiselt kalmekihis, mitte selle all, nagu kohati jäi mulje esimesel aastal. Võib arvata, et kvartsi- ja tulekivitükid pärinevad kas teisaldatud asulakihist või kalmeaegsest tegevusest.

Kokkuvõttes kinnitasid 1999. a. kaevamised varasemat tulemust, mille põhjal Uusküla II kalme rajati nooremal eelrooma rauaajal. Tollesse aega kuuluvad nõrgalt põletatud inimluud ning hauapanused. Viikingiaja paiku on kalmesse asetatud tugevasti põletatud luid, kuid ühtki hauapanust sellest perioodist ei leitud. Pärast kaevamiste lõppu kalme rekonstrueeriti (foto 2).