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2000. aasta välitööde tulemused

**ARHEOLOOGILISED
VÄLITÖÖD
EESTIS**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
FIELD WORKS
IN ESTONIA**

2000

Koostanud ja toimetanud
Ülle Tamla

Muinsuskaitseinspeksioon
Tallinn 2001

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Uus 18, Tallinn 10111, Eesti
National Heritage Board
Uus 18, Tallinn 10111, Estonia

Esikaas: hõbetatud naast Viljandi Pähklimäelt
Cover: plaque decorated with silver from Pähklimägi in Viljandi

Tagakaas: kuljus Viljandi Pähklimäelt
Back cover: bell from Pähklimägi in Viljandi

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TARTU ÜLIKOOLI
RAAMATUKOGU
SUNDEKSEMPLAR

ISSN 1406-3972

Trükitud AS Pakett trükikojas
Laki 17, Tallinn

FOSSIL FIELDS AND STONE-CIST GRAVES OF REBALA REVISITED

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In connection with the extension of the mines of Maardu Chemistry Factory, archaeological investigations were started in 1982 by Vello Lõugas 1,5 km north of Rebal village (Jõelähtme parish, North Estonia). The remains of fossil fields were discovered in the vicinity of six stone-cist graves (*"Lastekangrud"*) that were dated to the early Pre-Roman Iron Age (Lang 1996, 295). Graves IV-V and only partly preserved grave VI were excavated entirely while for the rest only the uppermost layer was removed and the central cist opened. The analysis of human osteological material carried out afterwards revealed that this was predominately a burial ground for the young whereas middle aged and older individuals were for the most part excluded from the cists (Kalman 1999).

In 2000, the mapping of the whole complex was carried out and graves I, II and III were excavated entirely, except for the areas around the graves I and II. The aim of the excavations was to get a comprehensive overview of the whole group and thereby provide some additional information about the population structure of the community that buried its members in the graves. In order to gather charcoal for making the dating of fossil fields more exact, an excavation was made into a baulk. Charcoal was collected from the lowermost layers of and beneath the graves as well and the results of radiocarbon dating are presented in Table 2. The faunal osteological material is not analysed yet. Nevertheless, preliminary results of human osteological material are presented among the other results of the investigations.

THE FOSSIL FIELDS

The mapped area covers ca 6.5 ha (Fig. 1). The highest portion of the area around the graves I-III is badly destroyed by mining of limestone; it is quite possible that some of the graves and baulks were totally destructed in the course of this mining. Grave VI is an example of graves destroyed partly during such works.

Remains of fossil fields are more densely located in the southernmost part of the area, being rather sparse north- and northeastward. Field plots, surrounded with

low, 3–4 m wide stony baulks, are rather small and irregular in both their shape and location. There is only one probable clearance cairn, the rest of field remains being baulks and terrace edges. Bigger granite stones were cleared from the cultivated areas and placed by the sides of graves (Lõugas 1983, Pl. IV).

In the early 1980's, several baulks were uncovered of turf while narrow trenches were dug into some others. When excavating trench A, a fireplace with charcoal was found between the uppermost stones of the baulk. This charcoal was radiocarbon dated to 2020 ± 60 BP (Lõugas & Selirand 1989, 152). As the fireplace was located on the top of the baulk, the latter had to be older than the former. In 2000, another, 1.5 m wide trench (E) was excavated into the baulk located close to grave III (Fig. 1). The original width of this baulk had been 3.5–4 m and the height ca 30 cm. The baulk consisted mostly of limestone slabs gathered from the surrounding fields, and there was only one granite stone in the excavation area. Some small pieces of animal bone and very fragmentary potsherds were found during the excavations which, unfortunately, do not help in the dating of this field fence. A few pieces of charcoal were also gathered from beneath the lowermost stones of the baulk; however, their amount was not enough for the radiocarbon dating. It seemed that the removal of the humus layer prior to the establishment of the baulk was responsible for the very small amount of charcoal under the stones.

GRAVE I

During the excavations of 1982, skeletons of four children and two young adults of different sex lying in the central cist were unearthed (Table 1). A fragment of a spade-headed bone pin and potsherds with textile-impressed surface were present in the cist as well. In addition, some pottery was found from the eastern part of the grave (Kalman 1999; Lõugas 1983).

Destruction of the western part of the grave was reported already by Vello Lõugas (1983). Excavations in 2000 revealed that the southern portion was also somewhat damaged since the ring-wall that was extant in grave's northern and eastern part was not observable southwards. The ring-wall, laid of limestone slabs and rising 15–30 cm above the natural bedrock, was preserved for a length of 15 m. This allows to suggest that the grave had been approximately 11 m in diameter and, therefore, a sector covering roughly 6–7 m² of its western part was almost completely destroyed.

The opened cist in the centre of the grave was, quite untraditionally for stone-cist

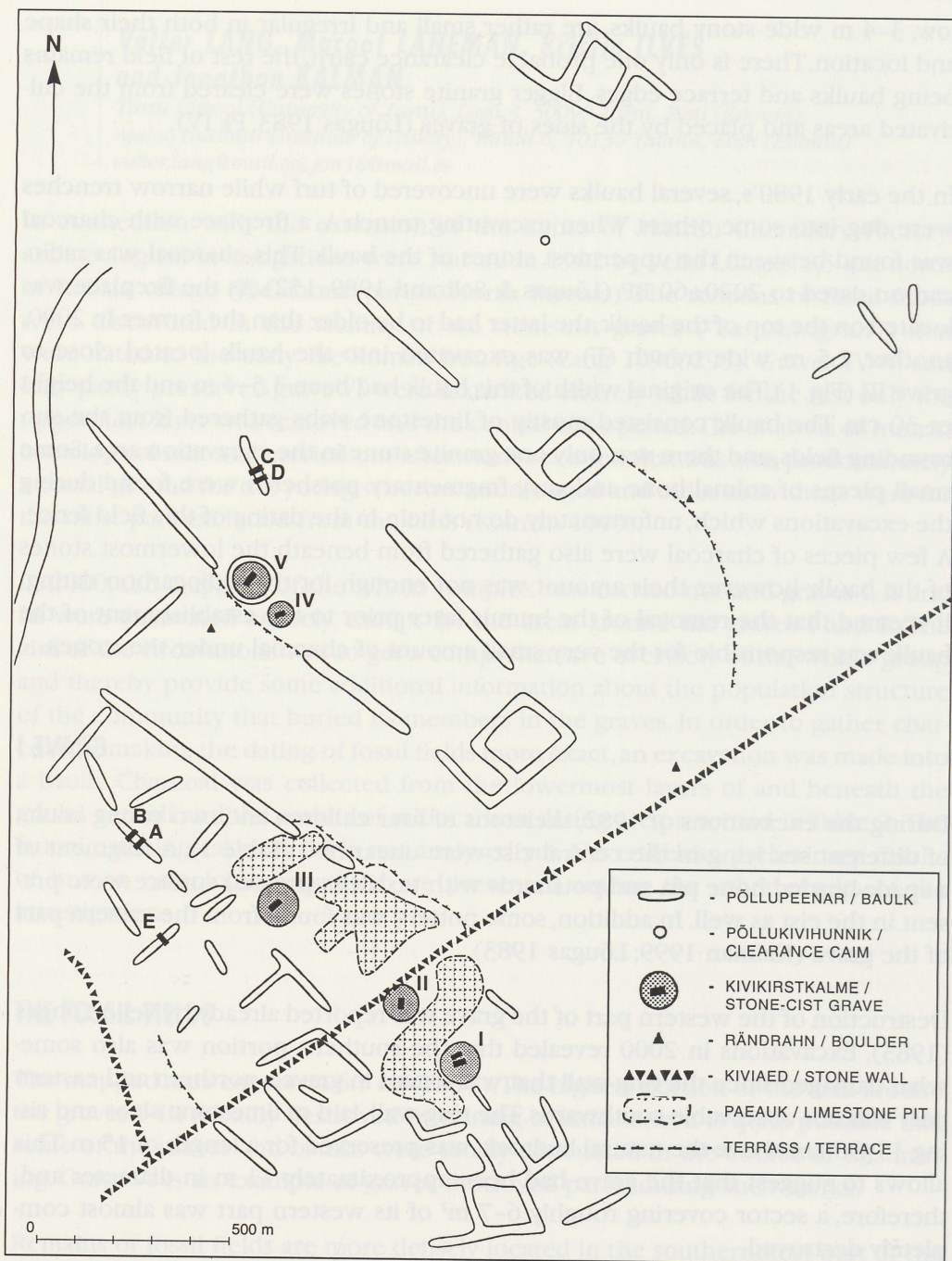


Fig. 1. Graves and fossil fields of Rebala.
Joon. 1. Rebala kalmed ja muinaspõllud.

graves, oriented in ENE-WSW direction (approximately 70°). The walls of the cist (measuring 210 × 90–100 cm and 60–65 cm in height) were preserved well and it was possible to distinguish 8–9 layers of larger limestone slabs laid flat on top of one another. Besides, at the time of building the eastern end of the cist, a big granite stone, roughly 50 cm in diameter and seated deep in the ground beneath the grave bottom, was made full use of.

1.5–1.8 m northwards, another cist laid of limestone slabs (measuring 200 × 50–55 cm and 20–35 cm in depth) came to light (Photo 1). This one, designated as cist B, was 55° in orientation and, thus, not completely parallel to the central one (marked with A). In comparison with the latter, cist B with its shattered bottom and northern wall fallen aslant outwards was considerably worse preserved. It was filled with soil and limestone slabs positioned in some cases aslant, apparently in consequence of collapse of the plate covering the cist. Since in general there were no granite stones in the vicinity of the cist, it is noteworthy that one with a diameter of ca 25 cm was situated at the eastern end of the cist.

Four quite well preserved skeletons with their heads towards ENE were found lying on the bottom of the newly found cist (Table 1). These inhumations comprised the majority of human osteological material collected from the grave in 2000 while only a few small pieces of uncremated bones were found scattered throughout the grave. Two of the skeletons belonged to females, around 35–45 and 25–35 years of age. Interestingly, the latter had the majority of her skull missing. Along the two women, the remains of two children (2–3 and 8–9 years old) were also interred in the cist. Near the skulls there had been a clay vessel with smoothed surface but, unfortunately, it was broken into several hundred extremely small fragments.

The peripheral location of cist B and its bottom lying 30 cm higher than that of the central one (Photo 2) leaves no doubt that cist B was added somewhat later to the grave construction. Strongly slantwise-situated limestone slabs at its bottom were preserved more or less in their original position, providing evidence of the whole grave's construction. The overall impression was that the walls of the central cist laid upon either limestone bedrock or a somewhat higher platform that had been surrounded by a zone of horizontally positioned limestone slabs and, thus, the central part of the grave became presumably flat. Against these horizontally laid slabs, larger stones in a slantwise position had been placed. Strongly aslant slabs were apparent already 1.5–2 m distant from the central cist even in deep layers, extending as far as the ring-wall. Moreover, before excavations the central part of the grave with a diameter of 3.5–4 m appeared to be remarkably



Photo 1. Grave I of Rebala, the fourth layer.

Foto 1. Rebala I kalme neljas korris.



Photo 2. The bottom of the cist of grave I of Rebala. View from NE.

Foto 2. Rebala I kalme kirstupõhi. Pildistatud kirdest.

grave, quite close to the ring-wall. Two sherds of Corded Ware vessel(s) seemed to indicate that the grave had been erected upon an earlier cultural layer. The supposition is supported by a remarkable amount of animal bones and the ground being mixed with charcoal beneath the grave (especially in its eastern half).

Table 1. Biological profile of human remains (findings of year 2000 are in *italic*)

Burial Place	Age (years)	Sex
Grave I - Cist 1	0	?
	1	?
	4-5	?
	5-7	?
	17-19	Female
	23-27	Male
<i>Grave I - Cist 2</i>	<i>35-45</i>	<i>Female</i>
	<i>25-35</i>	<i>Female</i>
	<i>2-3</i>	?
	<i>8-9</i>	?
Grave II - Central Cist	18-22	Male
	35-45	Male
	1-2	?
<i>Grave II - Outside of Cist</i>	<i>0-1</i>	?
	<i>0-1</i>	?
	<i>0-1</i>	?
	<i>0-1</i>	?
	<i>0-1</i>	?
	<i>0-1</i>	?
	<i>0-1</i>	?
	<i>0-1</i>	?
	<i>0-1</i>	?
	<i>9-10</i>	?
Grave III - Central Cist	50+	Female
	1	?
	1	?
<i>Grave III - Outside of Cist</i>	<i>Adult</i>	?
	<i>4-5</i>	?
Grave IV - Central Cist	16-18	Male
	16-18	Male
	16-20	Female
	18-20	Female
Grave V - Central Cist	0	?
	1	?
	2	?
	17-22	?
	25-30	Female
	25-35	Male
Grave V - Outside of Cist	Adult	?
	Adult	?

GRAVE II

The central cist of grave II, opened in 1982, appeared to contain remains of two adults and a 1-2 year old child (Table 1). On a photograph, taken during the excavations, several peculiarities about rearrangement of the bones were visible (Kalman 1999). In addition to the inhumations, cremated bones were reported under the skeletons at the bottom of the cist. A fragment of an iron object was present in the cist as well. A bone pin, three bronze spirals, some potsherds and several other objects dating to the late Iron Age were found outside the cist. The ring-wall of the grave was completely uncovered, including removal of the remarkably big granite stones placed near the ring-wall in the northern part of the grave (Lõugas 1983).

Excavations carried out in 2000 showed that grave II of Rebala was a magnificent example of classically constructed stone-cist graves (Photos 3 and 4). It was built predominately of limestone whereas a few granite stones in the eastern part of the grave were very small in size and situated only in upper layers. The ring-wall of larger limestone slabs, 8.8-9.2 m in diameter and 0.2-0.5 m in height, was preserved over time unbroken, being merely to some extent fallen outwards in the western and southern portions of the grave. The upper part of the grave was almost flat. In the centre of the grave there was a cist orientated more or less in the direction of N-S (10°). The cist was 190-200 cm in length, 50-60 cm in width and 55-65 cm in depth. Its bottom consisted of two very large but crumbled limestone slabs, 2.80 m in total length.

Most of the bones were found from the NW-portion of the grave and belonged to young children (Table 1). In total 9 infants dying around birth and one child, 9-10 years old, were interred outside the cist. The remains of the children laid mixed in small hollows between larger stones and were covered with friable limestone-shingle. The direction of only one burial out of these ten was observable: the skeleton was lying with its head towards NW.

The rest of the bones (which predominately belonged to animals) was found distributed throughout the grave, except for its southernmost part, where the osteological material was almost completely missing. In addition, a small concentration of both cremated and uncremated bones was discovered between the plates of the northern wall of the cist. Some bones were found beneath the bottom plates of the cist as well.

The finds comprised only two bronze spirals, neither of them found in the imme-

diate vicinity of the burials. An iron nail and some fragments of an iron object were also present but they were most likely unconnected with the burials.

GRAVE III

In 1982, three comparatively well preserved clay vessels and inhumations of two one-year old children and an elderly woman were discovered from the central cist of the grave (Table 1). About 600 grams of cremated bone were gathered from the area around the cist as well. During the removal of the uppermost layer, some potsherds, an iron shepherd's crook pin and a curve-backed iron knife were found (Kalman 1999; Lõugas 1983).

The central cist, measuring 210 x 70-85 cm and 60-65 cm in depth, was orientated in the direction of NNE-SSW (35°). As it became clear in the course of excavations of the year 2000, its walls were laid of 8-9 layers upon a limestone platform placed directly on the natural bedrock. In general, the whole grave was built of limestone whereas a few rather small granite stones occurred mostly in the uppermost layer. Concerning the upper layers, the limestone slabs in the western portion of the grave were remarkably better preserved (measurements up to 130 x 80 x 10-15 cm) than those of the eastern portion. However, such a difference was not observable in deeper layers.

Immediately around the cist there was an area, roughly 4.5-5.5 in diameter, where the stones were found more or less in horizontal positions over and next to each other. This area in the centre of the grave was in turn surrounded by a zone of limestone slabs strongly slanting towards the peripheral areas of the grave, resembling the construction of grave I in this respect (Photo 5). But contrary to expectations, no ring-wall was found beneath these stones, leading to the conclusion that the grave was formed merely by placing large slabs of limestone slantwise against the core of horizontally laid slabs around the cist.

The absence of the ring-wall is exceptional for Estonian stone-cist graves and makes it difficult to determine the original diameter of the grave. Including the 1.5-2 m wide zone of thin limestone shingle in the outer areas of the excavation, the diameter of the stone-covered area appeared to be about 11 m. Originally the diameter of the grave could not have been larger than that of the area surrounded and covered with stones that were put slantwise, probably by no more than 6.5-7.5 m. As to the height, the grave extended up to 85 cm above the limestone bedrock but was obviously higher originally.

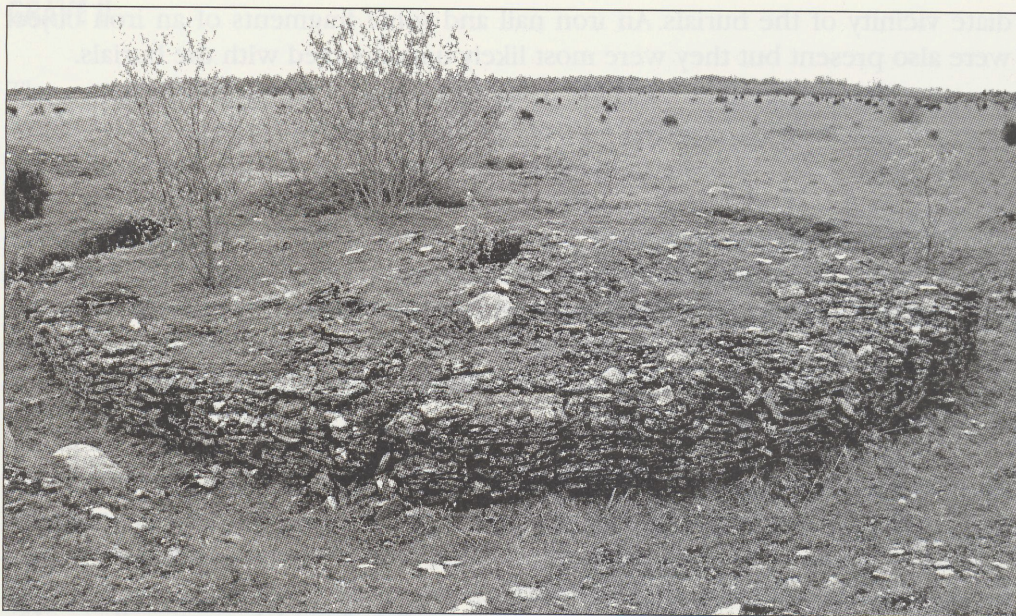


Photo 3. Grave II of Rebala prior to the new excavations in 2000.

Foto 3. Vaade Rebala II kalmele enne 2000. a. revisjonkaevamisi.

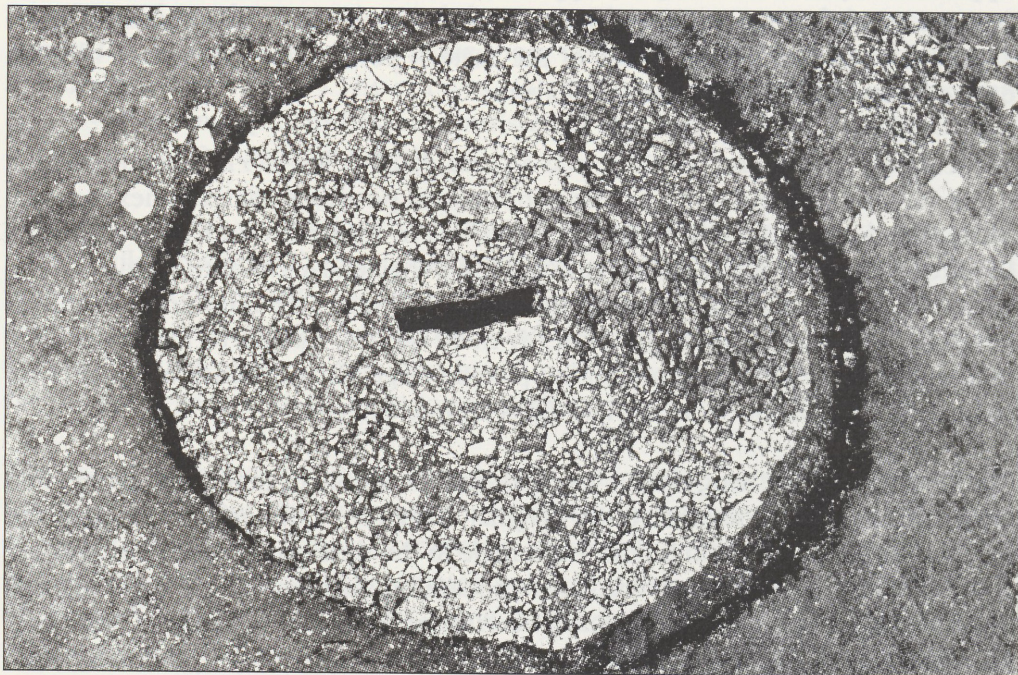


Photo 4. Grave II of Rebala, the third layer.

Foto 4. Rebala II kalme kolmas korris.

From the uppermost layer of the western part of the grave an inhumation outside the cist was found (Table 1). The contours of the burial place were not clearly distinguishable from the surrounding stone layer. The burial was apparently orientated in the direction of SSE-NNW (135°), with the head near the SW-corner of the cist and body extended towards the external area of the grave. Highly fragmented bones were scattered over an approximately 175 cm long and 40–55 cm wide area. The bones belonged to an adult, but determination of sex and approximate age was impossible.

About 1.5 m northwards and somewhat deeper than the latter, another concentration area of uncremated bones was observed near the western wall of the cist. The bones belonging apparently to a child aged 4–5 were not in anatomical position.

As in 1982, pieces of bluish-white cremated bone mixed with uncremated fragments were gathered from the upper layers around the cist, mainly near its eastern side. Regrettably they were too small in size to determine age, sex or the number of individuals.

The rest of the human osteological material found scattered throughout the grave and even between the plates of the cist-walls suggests that probably there have been more burials in the stone heap. In any case, the above described burials were evidently later than those in the cist but the dating remains an unresolved issue, since no grave goods were found in the vicinity of the bones. Possible connection between burials and finds made in 1982 remains merely hypothetical as well.

Altogether 98 potsherds of at least 6–7 clay vessels were found from the NE-portion of the grave. It is noticeable that they were situated only in the peripheral zone of the unearthed stone heap, quite close to the limestone bedrock indicating that once the pots were probably placed along the periphery of the grave. Regrettably it was not possible to reconstruct the shape of any vessel and only general dating to the Pre-Roman and Roman Iron Age was possible on the basis of smoothed or slightly striated surface of a few sherds. In addition, two pieces of Viking Age clay vessels were also present.

RADIOCARBON DATES

Small pieces of charcoal were observed between and beneath the lowermost

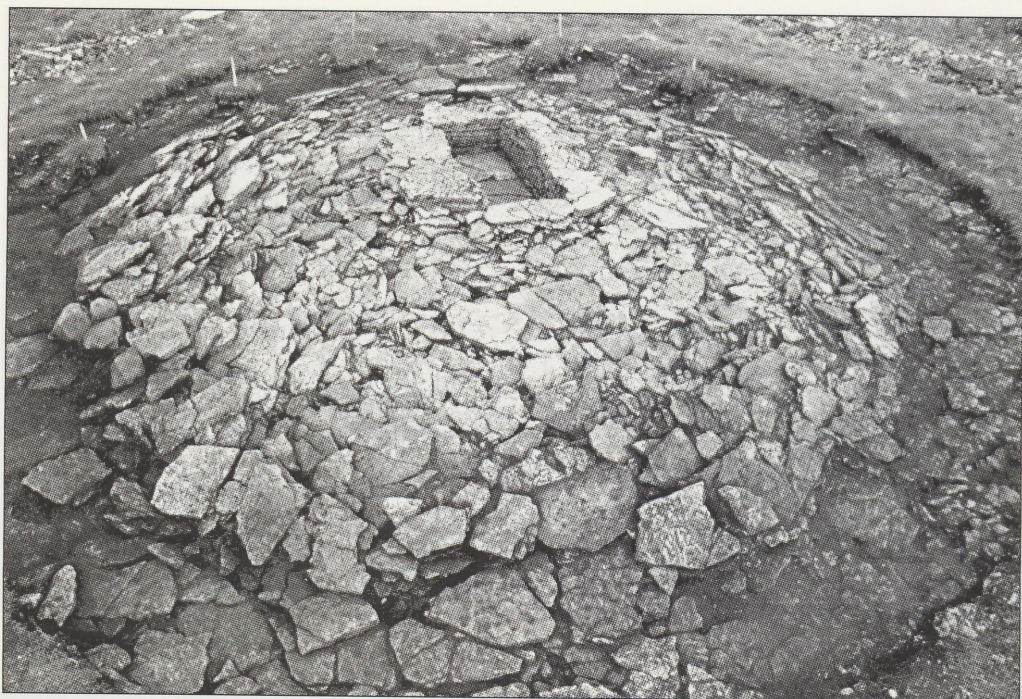


Photo 5. Grave III of Rebala from SW, the fifth layer.

Foto 5. Rebala III kalme viies korris. Pildistatud edelast.

stones of the graves. No doubt, the land was cleaned with help of fire before the graves were erected. The question is, however, was this clearance connected with the grave building or with some other activity, e.g. field cultivation. According to the calibrated dates (Table 2), the land under the graves was burnt during the 12th-10th centuries BC, which seems to be a too early date for the building of stone-cist graves. Until the local field remains are not dated by the radiocarbon method, one cannot finally solve the relationship between the grave building and the clearance of land by fire under those graves.

Table 2. Radiocarbon dates from the graves of Rebala.

Sample No	Grave	C ¹⁴ date BP	Calibrated age BC (68.2% confidence)
Tln-2565	Rebala I	2868±75	1190-1180; 1150-920
Tln-2557	Rebala II	2930±57	1260-1240; 1220-1020
Tln-2563	Rebala III	2865±75	1190-1180; 1150-920

CONCLUSIONS

The new excavations of the graves at Rebala provided Estonian archaeological data with a new group of completely investigated stone-cist graves. Concerning the building technique of the graves, the main thing to note is the considerable variation in details of the construction elements within one and the same grave group: different number and orientation of cists, single (graves I, II, IV) or double (grave V) ring-walls, or total lack of them (grave III), etc. Excavations provided additional evidence of ritual removal of skeleton parts as it was ruled out that the missing of the skull parts from the newly discovered cist of grave I was due to poor excavations and recovery.

The 16 skeletons assessed from the excavations in 2000 bring the total body count to 40 for Rebala. The preponderant number of infants and the lack of older individuals give an average life expectancy mere 13.3 years (normally 20–25 years in Northern Europe at this time). However, the dating of the burials outside the cists (particularly the burials of children) to the building time of the grave group is not certain. In any case, the additional data has reinforced the position that the Rebala graves are an unbiased representation of the community.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to Mrs. Margit Pärtel and Mr. Ants Kraut for their kindly help in the organisation of the fieldwork at Rebala. We also thank Mr. Armin Rudi for completing the map of the graves and fossil fields.

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UUED KAEVAMISED REBALA KIVIKIRSTKALMETEL JA MUINASPÖLDUDEL

Valter Lang, Margot Laneman, Kristin Ilves ja Jonathan Kalman

2000. aastal lõpetati Vello Lõugase poolt 1982. aastal alustatud, kuid pooleli jäänud arheoloogilised uurimistööd Rebala külast 1,5 km põhjasihis asuval muististekompleksil, mis koosnes fossiilsetest põllujäänustest ning kuuest eelrooma rauaaja algupoolde dateeritud kivikirstkalmest ("Lastekangrud"). Lõugas kaevas lõpuni läbi IV ja V ning osaliselt säilinud VI kangru; I, II ja III kalmel eemaldas ta üksnes ülemise kihi ning avas keskse kirstu. 2000. a. välitööde eesmärk oli saada teravlik ülevaade "Lastekangrute"st, plaanistada põllujäänused ning täpsustada nende dateeringut.

Plaanistatud põllujäänused, peamiselt madalad kamardunud peenrad ja järsemaks küntud terrassiservad, katavad u. 6,5 ha suuruse ala (joon. 1). Tihedalt paikneb peenraid ala lõunaosas (u. 2,5 ha), märksa hõredamalt põhja- ja kirdeosas. Ühte peenraste kaevati 4 x 1,5 m tranšee (joon. 1: E), kust leiti mõned loomaluutükid ja haprad potikillud. Sütt leiti sedavõrd väheses koguses, et sellest ei piisanud radioaktiivse süsiniku meetodil tehtavaks dateeringuks. Tundus, et huumusekiht koos võimaliku sõega oli enne peenra rajamist eemaldatud.

Rebala I kalme lääne- ja lõunaosa oli lõhutud; paekividest laotud 15–30 cm kõrgune ringmüür oli säilinud üksnes põhja- ja idaosas 15 m ulatuses (foto 1). Arvatavalt võis terve kalme läbimõõt olla u. 11 m. Kesksest kirstust 1,5–1,8 m põhja pool avastati veel teinegi kirst (mõõdud 200 x 55–60 cm, sügavus 35–40 cm ja orientatsioon 55°), mille põhjal paiknesid peaga ida-kerde suunas kahe naise (vanus 25–35 ja 35–45 aastat) ning kahe lapse (2–3 ja 8–9 aastat) luustikud. Kirstu peatsiosas oli purunenud savinõu. Kuna noorema naise koljust oli enamik puudu, võib oletada luude matusejärgset eemaldamist.

Leitud kirst oli ehitatud suurte, ringmüüri poole kaldu asetsevate paeplaatide peale, nii et selle põhi paiknes keskse kirstu põhjast 30 cm kõrgemal (foto 2). Kuna tugevalt viltuasestsevad paeplaate leidis nii keskse kirstu kui ka ringmüüri vahel, võib see osutada võimalusele, et kalmet ehitades asetati suuri paeplaate kaldu vastu keskset kirstu ümbritsevat kiviladet. Kalme keskel oli 3,5–4 m läbimõõduga ala ümbritsevast märgatavalt kõrgem (enne kaevamisi ringmüürist 65–75 cm kõrgemal) ja seetõttu on Rebala I kalme puhul välistatud võimalus, et see oleks algselt sarnanenud ühekõrguse lameda laega kivikirstkalme rekonstruktsioonile Jõelähtme muististerühmas. Raudkivid, mida esines 1,5–2 m laiuse vööndina kalme ida- ja lõunaosa äärealal (eriti kagusektoris), paiknesid võrdlemisi sügaval paelademe sees.

Lisaks kirstust leitud purunenud savinõule saadi kalme idapoolsest osast 47 savinõukildu, s.h. 2 katket nõorkeraamika nõu(de)st, mis osutab sellele, et kalme võis olla rajatud varasemale kultuurkihile. Varasemast asulakihist võisid pärineda ka rohked loomaluud ning sõesegused laigud kalmealuses pinnases.

1982. aastal välja puhastatud hästi säilinud paekividest ringmüüri Rebala II kalme läbimõõt oli 8,8–9,2 m. Ringmüüri ning keskse kirstu vahele jääv ala oli ühtlaselt paekividega täidetud. Erinevalt teistest läbiuuritud kalmetest oli II kalme pealispind enne kaevamisi enam-vähem ühetasane, vaid kalme loodesektor oli mõnevõrra kõrgem (foto 3). Just sellest sektorist leiti 9 imiku ja ühe 9–10-aastase lapse matused, mis asusid paeklibuga kaetult väiksemates süvendites. Luud paiknesid korrapäralt; jälgitav oli ainult ühe matuse suund (peaga loode poole). Väike kogum põletatud ja põletamata luuframente avastati kirstu põhjapoolse otsa plaatide vahelt, ülejäänud kalmest kogutud osteoloogiline materjal paiknes hajusalt kalmekivide vahel. Kaks pronksspiraali olid ainsad muinasegsed leiud.

Rebala III kalme (foto 5) ehitusviis sarnanes I kalmega. Ümber keskse kirstu paiknes 4–4,5 m alal enam-vähem horisontaalses asendis paeplaate. Sellest alast väljapoole jäi tugevalt kaldu asetsevate paeplaatidega võõnd, mida omakorda ümbritses 1,5–2 m laiuselt peenema paeklibuga ala. Kaldu asetsevate plaatide all ringmüüri ei olnud ning arvatavalt oli kalme ehitatud nii, et suured paeplaadid asetati kaldu ümber kirstu kivituumiku. Otsustades viltuste paeplaatide asendi põhjal ei saanud kalme algne läbimõõt ületada 6,5–7,5 m.

Põletamata luutükke esines üle kogu kalme; rohkesti leidus põletatud luid ülemistes kihtides kirstu ümbritseval alal. Kirstu läänepoolse külje juures sai eristada paelademesse süvendatud kahte laibamatust. Üks neist oli orienteeritud lõuna-kagu-põhja-loode suunas, peaga kirstu loodenurga lähedal. Luud kuulusid täiskasvanule, kuid nende fragmentaarsuse tõttu ei olnud maetu soo ja vanuse täpsem määramine võimalik. Mõnevõrra sügavamal, esimesest 1,5 m põhja pool, paiknesid korrapäratult 4–5-aastase lapse luud. Kuna panuseid matuste juures ei täheldatud, jääb nende dateerimine lahtiseks. Üksnes kalme kirdesektorist saadi vähesel määral savinõukilde 6 või 7 nõust, mida oli võimalik dateerida eelrooma või rooma rauaaega (v.a. kaks kildu viikingiaegsest savinõust).

2000. aasta revisjonkaevamiste tulemusena lisandus Eesti arheoloogilisse materjali järjekordne täies ulatuses läbiuuritud kivistkalmete rühm. Rebala Lastekangrute puhul väärrib eraldi märkimist sama rühma piires esinev kalmete ehituslike iseärasuste mitmekesisus ning laste ja noorte täiskasvanute suur ülekaal maetute hulgas. Esialgu jääb lahtiseks kalmete alt kogutud sõeproovide dateeringute (tabel 2) seotus nende kalmete rajamisega, kuivõrd nad tunduvad olevat selleks liiga vanad (12.–10. sajand eKr.).