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Results of archaeological fieldwork of 2002

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ARHEOLOOGILISED VÄLITÖÖD EESTIS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK IN ESTONIA

2002

Koostanud ja toimetanud
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THE SITES OF TSIISTRE AND KIRIKUMÄE IN SOUTHEASTERN ESTONIA

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The burial place of Tsiistre was discovered in 1978 by Silvia Laul and, judging by its appearance, was identified as a stone grave of the Roman Iron Age (Laul 1978). Prior to the disturbance of the grave in 2000 by road repairs, no investigations had been made on the site. Trial excavations, financed by the National Board of Heritage, began on the grave in 2001 and were finished the following year. The results of the investigation refer to rather long-term usage of the place for different purposes. Phases of use of this site were radiocarbon dated to the Late Mesolithic, Bronze Age/Pre-Roman Iron Age, Migration Period and Viking Age. In addition to the excavation of this particular place, an investigation in the vicinity of the Kirikumäe farm, 4 km northeast of Tsiistre, was carried out at the same time.

THE STONE GRAVE OF TSIISTRE

The stone grave of Tsiistre is situated in the southeastern part of Estonia, 9 km southwest of the local centre Vastseliina and 600 m northeast of the modern village Tsiistre, directly at the side of Vastseliina-Misso/Ruusmäe Road (Fig. 1). The grave, barely visible on the ground and covered with a coniferous forest, is located on the northern part of a ridge, separated from both sides by low areas: a swampy area in the east and the bog of Järvesoo together with the little lake of Mära in the west. The nearest sites are four round barrows of the Middle or Late Iron Ages, located 250 m south of the grave. Because of several disturbances, the precise size of the grave remains unclear. According to the fieldwork, the size of the area is higher from the surrounding ground and containing stones and cremated bones are approximately 60 x 35 m. This area is situated on both sides of the present road. The eastern part of the grave, where the excavations were carried out, measures 30 (N-S) by 15 m. As only a small area (35 sq m) in the southern part of the grave was excavated, the present research does not give enough evidence for interpretation of the complete character of the grave constructions. The excavation area included both the demolished part of the grave where the stones had been pushed away, and an undisturbed area where the structure of the grave was preserved and can be analysed (Fig. 2). The stone structure consisted of two layers of granite stones with a diameter of 30–50 cm. Smaller granite stones with a diameter of 10–15 cm were used as fill. The stone fill was rather

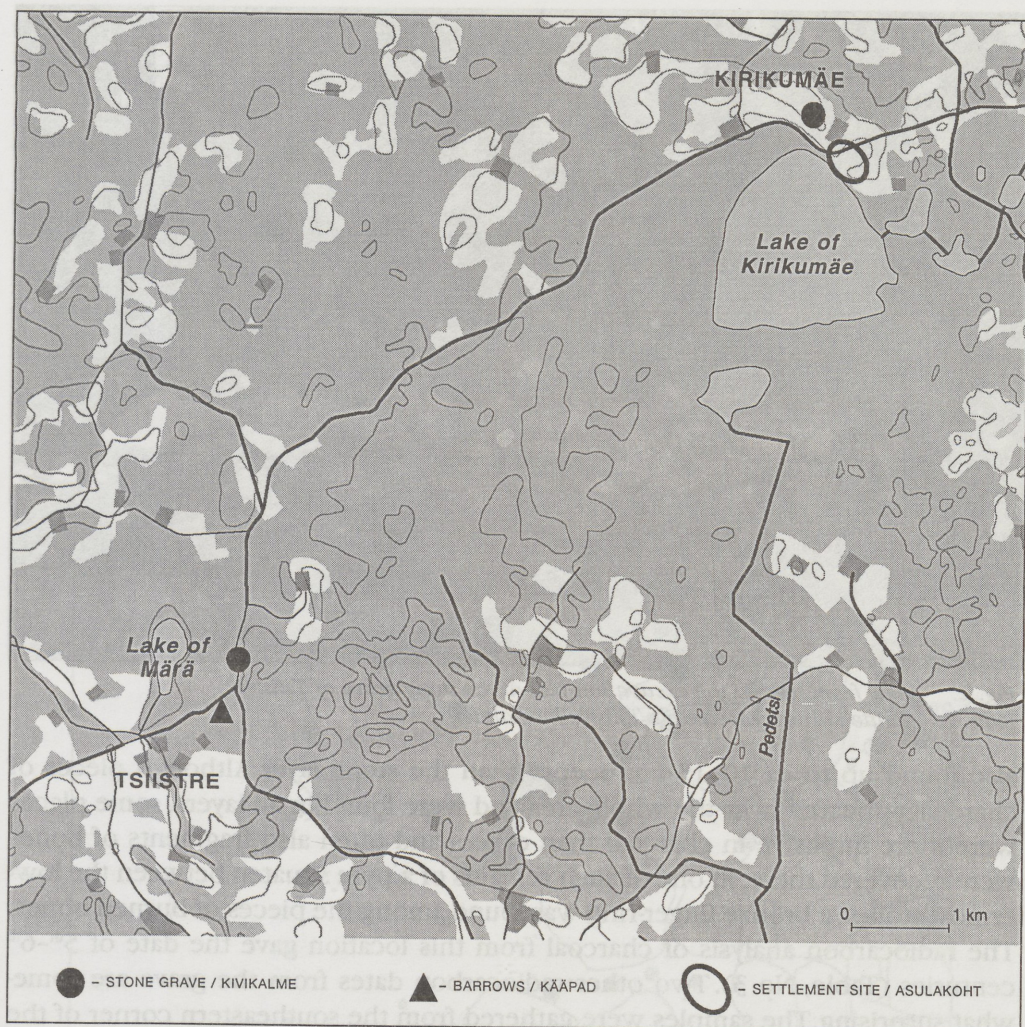


Fig. 1. Location plan of the sites of Tsiistre and Kirikumäe.

Joon. 1. Muistised Tsiistres ja Kirikumäel.

compact. Three stones in the southern and two in the northern section of the excavation were bigger in size (80–90 cm) than the others. The black soil layer on and between the uppermost stones was thin, while yellow sand started to appear already at a depth of 10 cm from the turf layer.

Cremated bones were discovered from the black soil and sand, they were laying on, between and beneath the stones. Bones occurred almost in all parts of the excavation area, but larger nests were found in the central part where the stone structure was not preserved (Fig. 3). Fragments of bones (altogether 15 g) were



Fig. 2. View from west to the excavation plot at the stone grave of Tsiistre.

Joon. 2. Vaade läänest kaevandile Tsiistre kivikalmel.

also found up to ca 10–15 cm deeper than the stone layer. Although pieces of charcoal appeared over the whole area and were found in all layers, some places were more intensive in charcoal than others and often also fragments of bones were recovered there. In one of such remains of a pyre situated between the lowermost stones, a bronze finger-ring was found among the pieces of burned bones. The radiocarbon analysis of charcoal from this location gave the date of 5th–6th centuries (Table, No 3). Two other radiocarbon dates from the grave are somewhat surprising. The samples were gathered from the southeastern corner of the excavation area. One of them (Table, No 4), which was taken from a coal patch at a depth of 20 cm, was dated to 1018±45 BP, suggesting the use of this site at the end of the Viking Age. The other sample indicates activities in the Bronze Age/Pre-Roman Age (Table, No 2); it was gathered much deeper than the former ones, from a sandy patch having brownish colour. Pieces of charcoal were observed there up to a depth of 75 cm from the surface, but no bones or artefacts were found.

The number of finds is small. All 20 potsherds originate probably from a hand-made coarse-grained pot with a diameter of 12 cm in the upper part (Fig. 4). The outer sides of the vessel are covered with a textile-impression. The fragments of this broken vessel were situated in one particular area around large stones in the

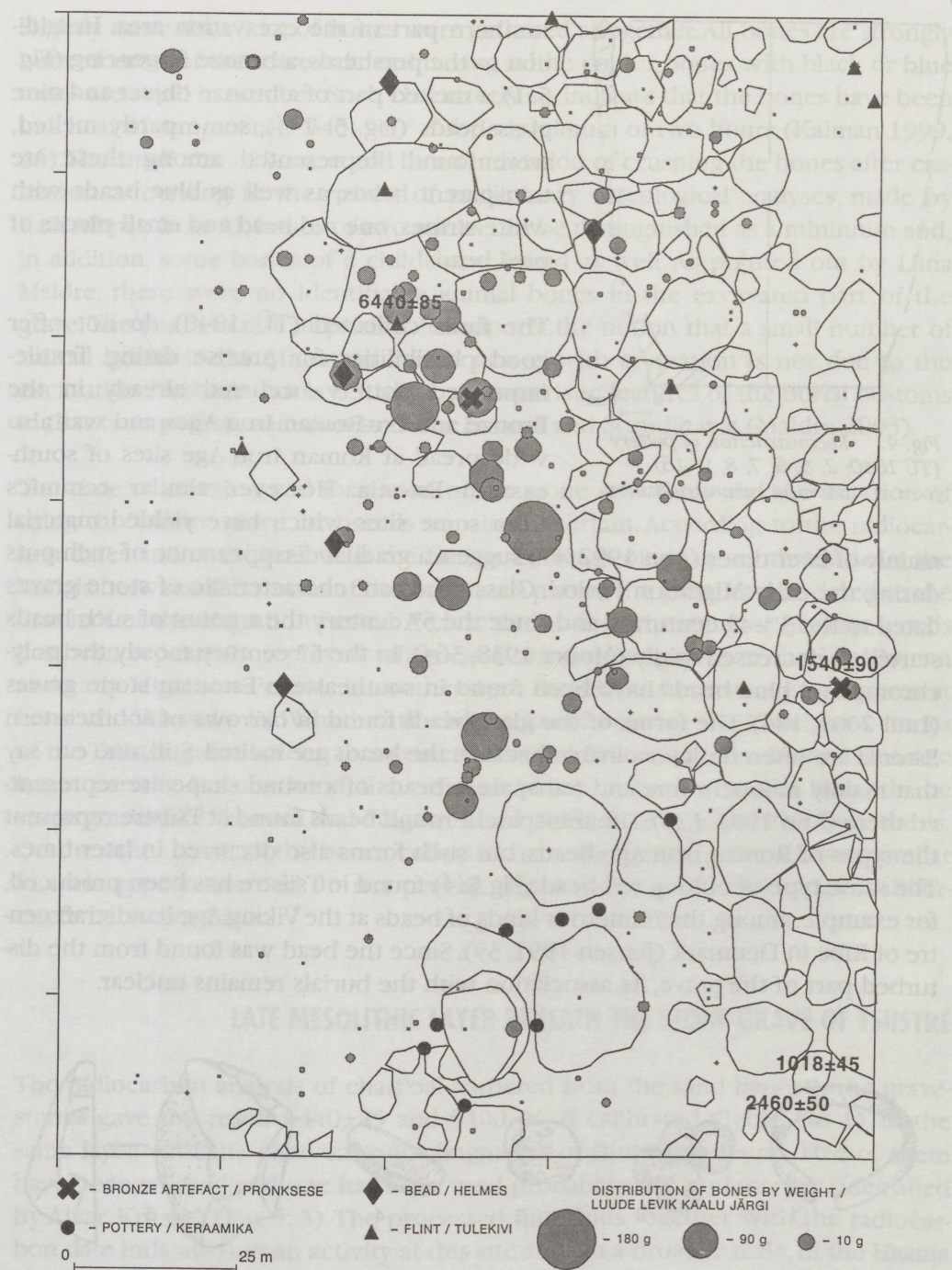


Fig. 3. Lowermost stone layer and distribution of finds in the grave of Tsiistre.
Joon. 3. Tsiistre kalme alumine kivikiht ja leidude levik.

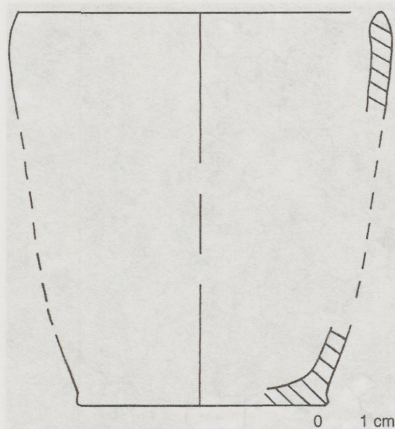


Fig. 4. Reconstruction of pottery (TÜ 1040: 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16).

Joon. 4. Savinõu rekonstruktsioon.

southern part of the excavation area. In addition to the potsherds, a bronze finger-ring (Fig. 5: 1), a melted part of a bronze object and nine glass beads (Fig. 5: 2-4), some partly melted, were found. Represented among these are transparent beads, as well as blue beads with white stripes, one red bead and small pieces of pined beads.

The finds collected (TÜ 1040) do not offer good possibilities for precise dating. Textile-impressed pottery occurred already in the Bronze and Pre-Roman Iron Ages and was also widespread at Roman Iron Age sites of south-eastern Estonia. However, similar ceramics from some sites which have yielded material

mainly of later times (Aun 1992, 47) suggest a gradual disappearance of such pots during the early Migration Period. Glass beads are characteristic of stone graves dated to the 3rd-4th centuries, and since the 5th century the amount of such beads started to decrease rapidly (Moora 1938, 364). In the 5th century, mostly the polychrome and blue beads have been found in southeastern Estonian stone graves (Laul 2001, 184). The forms of the glass beads found in barrows of southeastern Estonia are often undeterminable because the beads are melted. Still, one can say that mainly monochrome and transparent beads of a round shape are represented there (Aun 1992, 126). The transparent round beads found at Tsiistre represent the types of Roman Iron Age beads, but such forms also occurred in later times. The same type of oblong red bead (Fig 5: 4) found in Tsiistre has been produced, for example, among the numerous kinds of beads at the Viking Age handicraft centre of Ribe in Denmark (Jensen 1991, 39). Since the bead was found from the disturbed part of the grave, its association with the burials remains unclear.

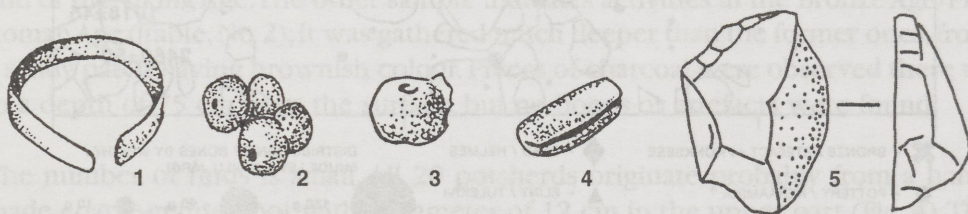


Fig. 5. Bronze finger-ring (1), beads (2-4) and flint end-scarper (5) from the grave of Tsiistre (TÜ 1040: 13, 4, 15, 14, 18).

Joon. 5. Pronksist sõrmus (1), helmed (2-4) ja tulekivist otskõõvits (5) Tsiistre kalmest.

Slightly more than 3 kg of bones were gathered altogether. All bones are strongly burned: most of them are calcined having white colour, bones with black or blue tones are small in number. Such characteristics indicate that the bones have been in a heat of temperature 645–940° C for a minimum of two hours (Kalman 1999, 26). The small size of bone could be an indication of crushing the bones after cremation. According to the results of preliminary osteological analyses, made by Raili Allmäe from AI, bones of two adults can be distinguished as a minimum and, in addition, some bones of a child were found as well. As pointed out by Liina Maldre, there were no identifiable animal bones in the excavated part of the grave. The result is not surprising. It supports the notion that a small number of animal bones in the Migration Period graves with cremation is not due to the excavation methods, but is actually a characteristic features of the burial customs in that time period, common both for Estonia and Scandinavia (Maldre 2003).

The time of erection and formation of the stone structures and the duration of using the Tsiistre grave for burials remains uncertain. According to the radiocarbon dates and consistent with the find assemblage, one can say that at least the burials between the stones of the excavated part of the grave can be dated to the first half of the Migration Period. A clear decrease in the number of grave goods has been repeatedly reported when excavating stone graves of the late Roman and early Migration Periods in southeastern Estonia, as for instance the graves at Loosi and Virunuka IV. Whether the bones found beneath the lowermost stones of the Tsiistre grave belong to a cemetery of the Bronze Age/Pre-Roman Iron Age is not certain. On one hand, the cases of earlier cremation burials beneath the stone graves like Vehendi and Põlgaste (Laul 2001) do not negate this hypothesis. On the other hand, all the bones collected from the Tsiistre grave are very similar in their appearance and do not provide any indication of chronological differences between them.

LATE MESOLITHIC LAYER BENEATH THE STONE GRAVE OF TSIISTRE

The radiocarbon analysis of charcoal gathered from the sand beneath the grave-stones gave the result 6440±85 and 5400 BC if calibrated (Table, No 1). In the same layer with the charcoal eight fragments of flint were found. Five of them have been worked and one has been used probably as an end-scarper (identified by Aivar Kriiska) (Fig. 5: 5). The processed flint finds together with the radiocarbon date indicate human activity at this site and, on a broader scale, in the Haanja Heights region already in the Late Mesolithic. The radiocarbon date of Tsiistre correlates well with the data of the pollen analyses from Lake Hino, 7 km south of

Tsiistre. The first markers of human impact appear there also in the Late Mesolithic (Laul & Kihno 1999, 8). Although among the Mesolithic sites known until now the one of Tsiistre has the highest location relative to the sea level, it cannot be interpreted as an exceptional case. The ever-growing amount of new data shows a wider settlement pattern on the Estonian hilly areas in the Mesolithic, and confirms that the presence of a water body was a main condition for the early habitation sites (Kriiska & Tvaauri 2002, 28). One can assume that at Tsiistre the marshy areas adjacent to the ridge were filled with water at that time.

THE SITES IN THE VICINITY OF KIRIKUMÄE

Archaeological trial excavations on the settlement site at the eastern side of Lake Kirikumäe were carried out in connection with plans of the Vastseliina district government to build a holiday resort there (Fig. 1). During survey trips in the parish of Vastseliina in 2000 some potsherds of wheel-made pottery were found on the southern side of the road Kirikumäe–Vana-Vastseliina, but a cultural layer was not discovered there (Konsa & Ots 2001, 132). In the present investigations, a series of trial pits was excavated and the area of the site was measured: the settlement site south of the farm Kirikumäe involves altogether an area of 300 x 50 m. The intensity of the cultural layer is not uniform over the area, and three patches with a thicker layer were observed. Near the farm buildings the thickness of the layer was 30–50 cm, and mainly pieces of wheel-made ceramics of medieval and modern times were found there (TÜ 902). Another settlement patch, 60 x 30 m, was situated 30 m south of the road of Kirikumäe–Vana-Vastseliina; the thickness of the cultural layer reached ca 30 cm, and both wheel-made and hand-moulded pottery was found there. Similar pottery, dated to the early second millennium, was also discovered at the third patch located 140 m away from the road and extending onto the high lakeshore. Some of these potsherds were decorated with horizontal and wavy lines; one was covered with textile impressions. Other finds of the Roman Iron Age are known in the vicinity of Kirikumäe as well: 100 m northwest of the farm there is a stone grave located on top of a hill. During field cultivation, an eye fibula of the early Roman Iron Age was found by the side of this grave. In 2002, a sherd of a double-conical vessel characteristic of the late Roman Iron Age was discovered close to this place (TÜ 1152: 1). This site has been important even in medieval times, as it was situated by the road leading to the castle of Vastseliina; there are many folk-tales about a church which sunk to the bottom of the lake and voices of a bell in the Kirikumäe Lake.

Table. Radiocarbon dates from the stone grave of Tsiistre.

Tabel. Tsiistre kivikalme ^{14}C - analüüside tulemused.

Sample No	Lab. No	^{14}C years BP	68.2% (1 sigma) cal	95.4 % (2 sigma) cal	Location
1	Le-6355	6440±85	5475-5323 BC	5608-5215 BC	beneath the stones
2	Le-6353	2460±50	759-411 BC	763-407 BC	Southeast corner
3	Le-6354	1540±90	441-671 AD	419-773 AD	lower stone layer
4	Tln-2609	1018±45	970-1040 AD	940-1070 AD	Southeast corner

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TSIISTRE JA KIRIKUMÄE MUISTISED KAGU-EESTIS

Marge KONSA

Tsiistre kivikalme. 2001.–2002. aastal toimusid arheoloogilised päästekaevamised teeparandusega lõhutud Tsiistre kivikalmel ning eeluuringud Kirikumäe asulakohal. Vastseliinast 9 km edela poole, Vastseliina–Misso/Ruusmäe tee äärde jääva kalme mõõtmed on ligikaudu 60 x 35 m (joon. 1). 35 m² suurune kaevand rajati kalme lõunaserva (joon. 2). Kalmetäide koosnes kahest kivikihist. Kolm kivi kaevandi lõuna- ning kaks põhjaosas olid teistest suuremad, mõõtetega 80–90 cm. Esimese kivikihi peal ja vahel olnud tume mullakiht oli üsna õhuke ning kohati algas kollane liiv maapinnast juba 10 cm sügavusel. Põlenud luid leiti nii tumedast mullast kui ka liivast kivide pealt ja vahelt, aga ka alt. Suuremad luukogumid paiknesid kaevandi keskosas (joon. 3). Kivide all esines luid 10–15 cm sügavusel. Ühest alumise kivikihi vahel paiknenud luudekogumist leiti pronksist sõrmus ning samast kogutud sõeproovi analüüs andis tulemuseks 5.–6. saj. p.Kr. (vt. tabel, nr. 3). Kahe teise sõeproovi analüüsi tulemused olid mõneti üllatavad ning osutavad antud paiga kasutamisele pronksiaja lõpus või eelrooma rauaaja alguses ning viikingiajal (tabel, nr. 4 ja nr. 2). Luid ja leide pole nende proovidega võimalik seostada. Väheene leiumaterjal koosneb tekstiilijäljenditega nõu kildudest (joon. 4), pronkssõrmusest (joon. 5: 1), ühest pronkseseme katkendist ning üheksast, osaliselt sulanud klaashelmest (joon. 5: 2–4). Kalmest leitud luud (kokku veidi üle 3 kg) on tugevalt põlenud ning fragmentaarsed. Esialgsete analüüside kohaselt oli uuritud kalmeosasse maetud vähemalt kaks täiskasvanut ning laps. Loomaluid luude hulgas ei eristatud. Kuigi kaevamiste väikese pindala tõttu jääb kalme kui terviku rajamis- ning kasutusaeg lahtiseks, võib läbiuuritud osa matuseid pidada rahvasterännu aja algusesse kuuluvaiks. Panuste vähesus näib olevat Kagu-Eesti noorema rooma rauaaja ja rahvasterännu aja alguse kivikalmetele iseloomulik. Kas kivide alt leitud luud võiksid pärineda noorema pronksiaja–eelrooma rauaaja matusepaigast, pole selge. Üksikuid näited varasematest matusepaikadest Lõuna-Eesti rooma rauaaja kivikalmete all võiksid toetada sellist hüpoteesi. Teisest küljest on aga kõik Tsiistre kalmest leitud luud nii väliselt kui ka säilivusastmelt sarnased ning ei võimalda konstateerida ajalisi või stratigraafilisi erinevusi nende vahel.

Hilisesoliitiline kiht Tsiistre kivikalme all. Kalmekivide alusest liivast kogutud sõeproovi analüüs andis tulemuseks 6440±85 radiosüsiniku aastat (tabel, nr. 1). Samast kihist leiti ka kaheksa tulekivikildu, millest viis oli töödeldud ning ühte kasutatud otskõõvitsana (joon. 5: 5). Saadud tulemused osutavad inimtegevusele Tsiistres ning laiemas mõttes Haanja kõrgustikul juba hilisesoliitikumis. Tsiistre radiosüsiniku dateering ühtib Hino sulglohu õietolmu diagrammiga, kus esimesed märgid inimõjust ilmnevad samal perioodil.

Muistised Kirikumäe ümbruses. Arheoloogilised eeluuringud Kirikumäe järve idakalda läheduses paikneval asulakohal (joon. 1) toimusid seoses Vastseliina vallavalitsuse kavaga rajada sinna suvitust- ja puhkekompleksi. Uuringuteks tehti mitmeid prooviauke ning selgitati välja, et Kirikumäe talust vahetult lõuna poole jääv asulakoht hõlmab kokku ca 300 x 50 m suurust ala. Siiski pole kultuurikihi intensiivsus kogu alal ühtlane ning kohati esines seda vaid laiguti. Keskmiselt 30 cm paksusest kultuurikihist leiti hilisrauaaegset käsi- ja kedrakeraamikat ning kilde kesk- ja uusaegsetest nõudest (TÜ 902). Asulakihist leitud üks tekstiilkeraamikakild võib olla samaaegne Kirikumäe talust 100 m loodes kõrgel künkalael paiknenud kivikalmega. Praeguseks osaliselt lõhutud kalme lähedalt on põluharimisega leitud vanema rooma rauaaja silmiksõlg. 2002. aastal leiti samast üks savinõukild (TÜ 1152), mis on iseloomulik Kagu-Eesti noorema rooma rauaaja kaksikkoonilistele nõudele.