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VÄLITÖÖD
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
FIELDWORK
IN ESTONIA**

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Back cover: Glass in lead frame (fragment of a stained glass window?) from Pirita.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT SIKSÄLÄ AND PODMOTSA: CHAPEL SITE, CEMETERY AND STONE CROSS

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In 1980–1993 extensive archaeological excavations were carried out on the cemetery of Siksälä in the extreme south-eastern corner of Estonia (Võrumaa county, Misso community). During these years from the hill called *Kalmõtõmägi* (Cemetery Hill) in all 278 graves from the 11th–15th centuries were opened. From those investigations which gave a most rich archaeological material, only the results of the first years (Laul 1981, 1983), an unique sword find (Laul 1997) and a male grave (Kaarma, Laul & Peets 2000) have been published.

While preparing a monograph on the Siksälä cemetery, there arose also the question about the meaning of *Kirikumägi* (Church hill) located on the same ridge immediately south of Kalmõtõmägi. In oral tradition the hill is strongly connected with legends about a former church which perished once in a war. Its bells are told to have fallen into Lake Mustjärv where their chime can still be heard on the nights before certain holidays (midsummer, New Year). A trial pit made on that hill in 1986 in the top layer disturbed by ploughing also had revealed some fragments of human bones.

In 2003 archaeological excavation took place on *Kirikumägi*. The aim of the work was to find out, whether the hill became to be used as a burial ground after the abrupt desertion of the cemetery on the adjacent Kalmõtõmägi hill in the 2nd half of the 15th century. The purpose of the investigation was also to check the oral tradition referring to a rural chapel.

Kirikumägi is a natural moraine ridge between Lake Hino and Lake Mustjärv and has a dominant place in the landscape. It is about 120 m long and its more-or-less flat top has the width of some 6–10 m. The northern end of the ridge lies in the immediate vicinity of Kalmõtõmägi, the foot of which is separated from it only by a narrow way. The northern part of Kirikumägi is low but the land is sloping higher towards the south. The central and southern part of the hill stand ca. 7.5 m above the water level of the lakes and ca. 6 m above the modern Misso–Aluksne road which is situated west of the hill – between it and Lake Hino. The road was constructed in the late 19th century and in course of these works the southwestern end of Kirikumägi was destroyed. According to oral tradition, at that time many human bones were found. However, the map from 1681–1684 also shows

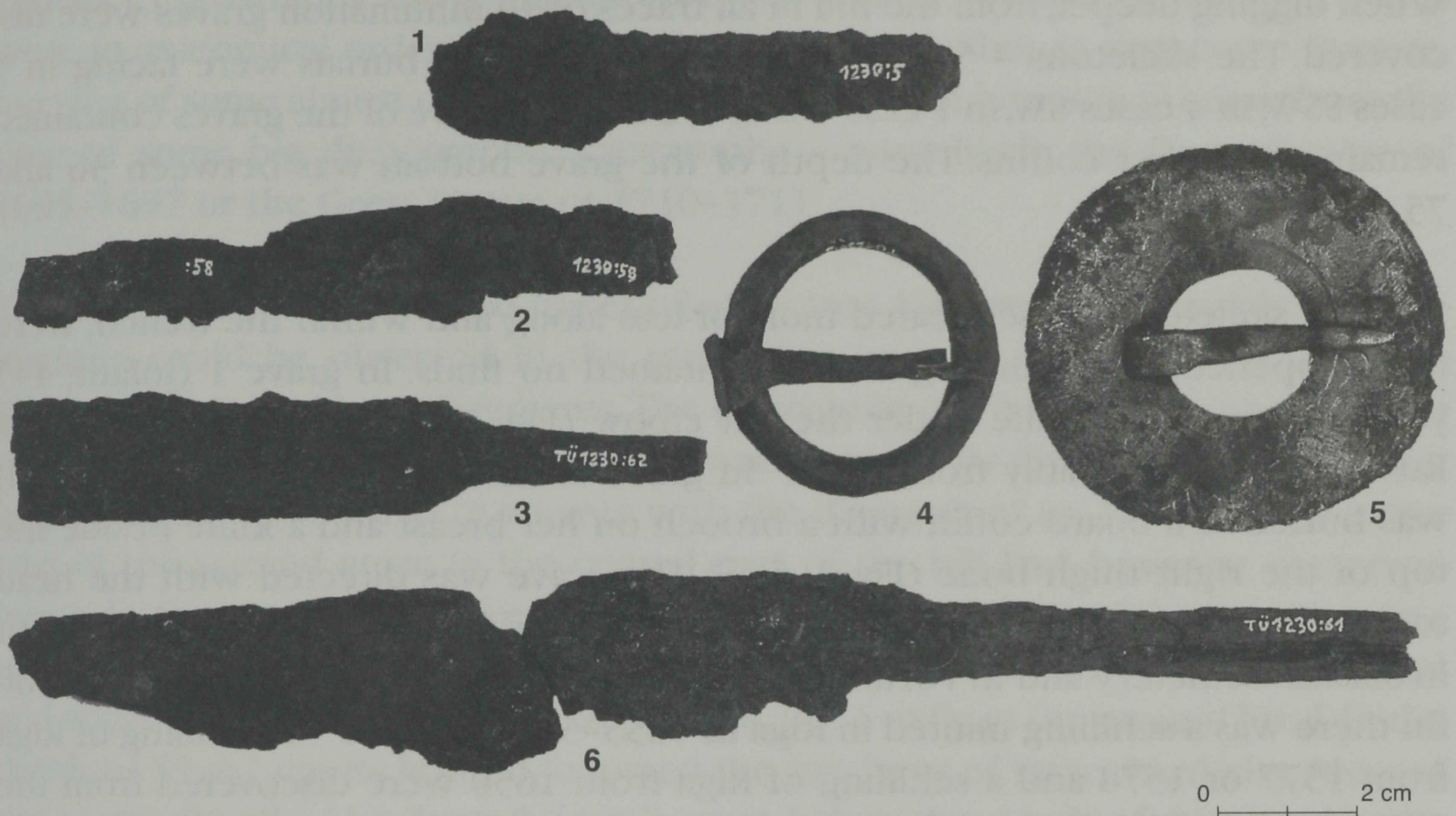


Fig. 1. Grave goods from inhumation graves of Siksälä Kirikumägi. 1, 2, 3, 6 - knives, 4 - belt buckle, 5 - brooch (TÜ 1230: 5, 58, 62, 3, 59, 61.)

Joon. 1. Kirikumäe laibamatuste hauapanuseid. 1, 2, 3, 6 - noad, 4 - pannal, 5 - rõngassõlg.

a north-south directional small road between Lake Hino and Lake Mustjärv.¹

In order to establish the presence of burials or cultural layer, a trench with the width of 40 cm was dug on the whole western edge of the hill plateau. To get a better survey of the hill, the trench forked in its southern part into two branches. In the central part of the hill a crossing trench with the length of 10 m was made. The eastern part of this trench was extended to an excavation plot of ca. 11 m². The ground was sieved with 4 mm sieves.

In the northern, lower part of the hill the main trench yielded no finds and no marks of a cemetery. In the central and southern part, however, some fragments of both cremated and uncremated human bones gave evidence of a burial ground already in the top layer. From that depth also some stray finds, probably coming from disturbed graves – a knife, a cowry shell and an iron buckle (Fig. 1: 4) – were unearthed.² Sieving of the sand gave evidence also of earlier, Mesolithic settlement traces. Excavations yielded a fragment of imported flint and 4 pieces of quartz.

¹ Estonian History Archives: F. 308, I. 2, D. 177.

² TÜ 1230: 1–62.

When digging deeper, from the hill in all traces of 14 inhumation graves were discovered. The skeletons – 5 male, 3 female and 6 infant burials were facing in 5 cases SSW, in 4 cases SW, in 1 case WSW, W, E and ENE. Five of the graves contained remains of timber coffins. The depth of the grave bottom was between 36 and 75 cm.

9 of the skeletons, those located more-or-less along and within the trench, were totally opened. From these graves 5 contained no finds. In grave 1 (infant, 4–5 years³) there was a knife under the left elbow (Fig. 1: 2) and in male grave 7, a Russian denga, probably from 1734.⁴ In grave 12 an old woman (aged over 70) was buried in a board coffin with a brooch on her breast and a knife beside the top of the right thigh bone (Fig 1: 5, 6). The grave was directed with the head towards the east (80°) – a custom characteristic for female medieval graves both in Siksälä Cemetery and in Võrumaa in general (Valk 2001). On the top of the coffin there was a schilling minted in Riga in 1655–54. Two coins – a schilling of Riga from 1577 or 1578 and a schilling of Riga from 1650 were discovered from the fillings of two adult graves which were not opened. The last-mentioned grave (No. 13), the feet of it were cut by the trench, was oriented towards ENE (70°) and was, judging by such orientation, probably, a female one. Immediately beside this skeleton there was an infant grave, facing the opposite direction. The double grave was filled with granite stones with the diameter of 10–20 (the biggest 20 x 28) cm. The layer of stones which started in the depth of ca. 40 cm from the ground level, was some 30 cm thick and ended 5–10 cm above the bones. The stones, most exceptional in medieval graves of South Estonia, had, evidently, a ritual background. Probably, they were meant to avoid the dead person from returning home as a revenant.

The earliest of the graves (No. 11) may date from the 14th century. In the top layer disturbed by ploughing above it two coins – a penny of Tartu bishopric (2nd half of the 13th century – 1330s) and a bracteate of Hamburg (14th century) were found. The skeleton was also furnished with a knife (Fig. 1: 3) which lay under its back. As the top of the rather well-preserved knife was missing, the tool was, evidently, deliberately broken before putting into the grave. One, most poorly preserved skeleton of an aged man (grave No. 8; over 70), had in the skull a rhomb-shaped wound, probably, from a stroke with a spear. The same skull had on its other side traces of healed trepanation.

In addition to ordinary graves, from the excavation plot in the central part of the hill a heap of rather well-preserved, mostly disturbed bones at least from 4 indi-

³ The age and gender of the skeletons was determined in situ by Leiu Heapost (AI).

⁴ All coins determined by Mauri Kiudsoo (AI).

viduals (3 grown-ups and 1 infant) were discovered. As some of the limb bones were in anatomical order, it can be suggested that the bones may come from re-burying of some almost decayed corpses. Probably, the bones may come from the time of some big demographic catastrophe – most likely the Great Famine of 1695–1697 or the Great Plague of 1710–1711.

The excavations revealed also traces of some Iron Age cremation burials. The cremations could be observed in the ploughing layer as concentration of small, strongly calcinated bone fragments. The excavation cut 2 more intensive areas in the central part of the hill. One of the graves was totally disturbed by ploughing; bone fragments occurred in an area with the diameter of ca. 1.5–2 m. The lower part of the second grave in the central part of the hill had, however, preserved intact. In the profile of the trench it appeared that the grave-pit had more-or-less upright edges and that its diameter was 1.6–1.7 meters. The grave was dug in sand and could be observed since the depth of 0.3–0.4 m from the ground level. In the depth of 55–62 cm its bottom followed the top layer of intact hard clay. Most of the bones (in all 641 g from 0.44 m²) were below the depth of 40 cm whereby their concentration was the highest in the bottom of the pit and until 4–5 m higher from it. There were 23.6 g bones in the depth of 30–40 cm. 17.2 g bones, probably belonging to the same grave, were found also from higher layers disturbed by ploughing. The bones which lay in an irregular order, covered, in the depth of their highest concentration, ca. 50% of the excavated part of the grave-pit. There were also tiny fragments of charcoal and ash between the bones, as well as in the higher soil, disturbed by ploughing. Single dispersed cremated bone fragments were found also from the southern part of the trench within a span of 8 meters but single bone fragments occurred also in other parts of the trench.

As the cremation graves yielded neither artifact finds nor pottery, their dating remains unclear. Considering the fact that cremation graves from the 11th–14/15th centuries on the adjacent Kalmõtõmägi have artifacts, burials of Kirikumägi must be, evidently, of earlier origin. Most likely, they date from the first millennium AD or even from the first millennium BC. As the area with earlier cremation graves on Kalmõtõmägi included textile-impressed pottery, probably of the Roman Iron Age, that dating might also be excluded. Palynological analysis gives evidence of active human presence in the surroundings of Siksälä since ca. 1400 BC and especially since 1000 BC; pollen of cultivated cereals appears ca. 500 BC and permanent presence of rye can be observed since ca. 800 AD (Laul & Kihno 1999, 11–12).

During the excavations also the location of the former chapel was established. Its

site could be determined by the highest concentration of coin finds which occurred in the trench within ca. 20 m in the depth of 10–30 cm from the ground level. Evidently, the coins come from popular offerings, most frequent at Estonian rural chapels in the 17th century (Westrén-Doll 1926, 8–17; Köpp 1959, 217–240). The earliest of the 43 coins which can be connected with the chapel, is a schilling of the Free Town of Riga from 1575. The rest of the coins are schillings of Riga from the 17th century, both from the Rigan and Livonian mintage. Finds from the period of Gustav Adolf (1621–1632) are represented with 1, those of Queen Christina (1632–54) with 16, those of Carl X Gustav (1656–1661) with 4 and those of Carl XIth (1661–1697) with 20 items. One coin, also a shilling of Riga, cannot be dated.

Judging by the dating, offering the coins started in the 2nd quarter of the 17th century. The higher deadline for offerings cannot be exactly determined. Minting the schillings in Riga ended in the late 1660s but the small change was in circulation, due to its large quantities, up to the end of the 17th century and even in the first decades of the 18th century. As there were no finds of Russian copper coins, which became frequent in Estonia since the 1730s, by that time offering seems to have ended.

The concentration of coin finds was the biggest in the area with the width of 6–8 m. In that area in the depth of 25–30 m a thin layer of ash and charcoal fragments with the thickness up to 1–2 cm, probably originating from the chapel, could be observed. Preliminary data enable to suggest that the chapel mentioned in folkloric data was a timber building. It seems that there were no graves within the chapel area, although there existed graves in its immediate surroundings. As the coins occurred above the ash and charcoal layer, the offerings are likely to come from the period when the chapel did not exist any more. Thus, the chapel seems to have been destroyed in the Swedish–Polish War the events of which took place in South Estonia in 1600–1625 and which ended with the Altmark peace treaty in 1629.

The time of constructing the chapel remains, however, unclear. The reason of missing of earlier coins can probably be that when the chapel still functioned, the gifts were laid to some definite place (e.g. some vessel) from which they were periodically removed. Coin finds from the layer above grave 11, which lay outside the distribution area of coins enable to suggest that the chapel may have existed already in the mid-14th century. As the village cemetery on adjacent Kalmõtõmägi was in most intensive use at that time, it seems unlikely that the earliest graves on Kirikumägi are just occasional burials. Probably, their location there was condi-

tioned by the presence of a chapel. Concerning grave 11, however, a big difference in burial customs, compared with male burials from Kalmõtõmägi, must be noted. While grave 11 was furnished, in addition to the coins, only with a knife, most of men were buried on Kalmõtõmägi throughout the 14th century with a spear and/or axe, and often also with a spur. If the coins really belong to grave 11, the big difference may be conditioned by a different ideological background, i.e. the burial customs at the chapel greatly followed Christian practises.

The surroundings of the chapel were used as a village cemetery throughout the period of Swedish rule and also during the first half of the 18th century. The area was also used for re-burying of half-decayed corpses from the time of big social cataclysms and demographic catastrophes of the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

A test-pit was made also on the north-eastern part of Kõugumägi Hill, located ca. 2 km north of the cemetery, where remains of unfinished hill-fort were identified in 1986 (Пелтс & Балк 1988). According to C¹⁴ analysis from former excavations, the timber constructions had perished in fire in the late 13th or first half of the 14th century. The new trial pit (5 m²) was made in the north-eastern end of the hill plateau, near its highest point – in the area which was suggested to be a site for crossing the northern moat. The top of the plateau turned out to be of natural origin: intact moraine began some 40 cm below the surface. The top layer above the intact soil seemed to be, however, either disturbed or added. In one end of the trench a pit with the diameter of ca. 1 m and with the depth of 80 cm, filled with disturbed soil and stones was discovered.

In Setomaa, archaeological observations were carried out in **Podmotsa** village (Värskä community) on the local village cemetery with medieval origin. The cemetery with the diameter of ca. 80 m has been continuously in use since the Middle Ages until nowadays. On the cemetery there are 3 small medieval grave-crosses with Orthodox inscriptions, a foot of a similar cross and a big stone cross which stretched for 1.3 m above the ground level. The cross had traditional Orthodox inscriptions – ligature abbreviations ИС ХС and ИРЬ СЛА (from the words: Jesus Christ, the Czar of Glory) and the word НИКА. In oral tradition, known among the locals also nowadays (Valk 2003, 229–230), the cross is believed to have supernatural, also healing qualities. According to popular legends, it was once removed to Kuulja Church (in the distance of 2 km, across the bay of Lake Pskov) but returned in a miraculous way. The cross is believed to designate the grave of soldiers, buried once in a wartime. The big cross had dropped slant due to the activities of gold-hunters, who had looked for hidden treasure at its foot some decades ago.



Fig. 2. The stone cross at the village cemetery of Podmotsa: during and after erection.
 Joon. 2. Kivirist püstiajamine Podmotsa külakalmistul.

To prevent the cross from falling down, the area in front of it and around its foot (ca. 1 m²) was opened and the cross was erected in an upright position (Fig. 2). It became apparent that the cross was 210 cm high. The cross had been erected not in a hole but above the former ground level – its foot did only partly stretch into the layer of dark soil which designated the initial ground below the present-day ground level. A horizontal granite slab with the thickness of 12 cm supported the foot of the cross into which for that purpose a 15 cm deep and 30 cm wide niches had been made. Above that slab, around the foot of the cross, there were 2 granite boulders with the diameter of ca. 40 cm. As the cross was standing not on a hill but on flat ground, it seems that simultaneously with its erecting the ground level of the whole cemetery had been raised for ca. 50 cm. The reason of these earth-works has evidently been the raising water level in Lake Peipsi. In front of the cross, below the filling layer of sand, above or within the greyish soil of initial ground level, there was a coin – a schilling of Riga, minted by Wolter von

Plettenberg in 1535.⁵ The foot of the cross and the supporting stones around it were surrounded by disturbed sand, which included some fragments of medieval wheel pottery and pieces of disturbed human bones. The soil included also a tiny fragment of calcinated bone which may indicate to the Iron Age origin of the cemetery.

As the initial natural soil in front of the cross and the sand below it were intact, the cross is not a grave mark but has, probably, designated the whole burial ground. Such origin is reflected also in the oral tradition – it is told to have been erected by a rich man: let there be a cross for the cemetery! (Valk 2003, 231).

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⁵ The finds from Podmotsa: TÜ 1240: 1–3.

ARHEOLOOGILISED KAEVAMISED SIKSÄLÄS JA PODMOTSAS: KABELIASE, KÜLAKALMISTU JA KIVIRIST

Heiki VALK

2003. aastal toimusid arheoloogilised proovikaevamised Siksälä Kirikumäel. Muistis asub aastatel 1980–1993 uuritud, Kalmõtömäe-nimelise 11.–15. sajandi külakalmistu naabruses Misso–Aluksne maantee ääres, Mustjärve ja Hino järve vahelisel künkal. Pärimuse kohaselt asunud seal kirik, mille kellad olevat sõja ajal uppunud või peidetud Mustjärve. Kaevamised olid ajendatud soovist saada selgust küsimusse, kas Kalmõtömäel olnud külakalmistu, kuhu matmine 15. sajandi kolmanda veerandil järsult lõppes, kandus üle Kirikumäele ja kas pärimus hävinud puukirikust vastab tõele.

Kalmistu ja kabeli olemasolu tuvastamiseks kaevati Kirikumäe mäeplatoo läänepoolsesse serva kraav, mis jagunes künka laiemal, lõunapoolisel otsal kaheks haruks. Mäe keskosas ristus põhikraaviga teine, 10 m pikkune tranšee, millega liitus 11 m² suurune kaevand. Kaevatav pinnas sõeluti läbi 4 mm silmavahega sõelte abil.

Mäe madalamast, põhjapoolsest osast leide ei saadud. Künka kesk- ja lõunaosas avastati juba künnikihist üksikuid põlenud ja põlemata luutükke ning mõned juhuleiud – kaurikarp, noa katke ja raudpannal (joon. 1: 1, 4). Sõelale jäid ka mesoliitilist asustust tõendavad leiud – killuke importulekivi ja 4 kvartsitüüki.

Künnikihist sügavamal leiti tranšeeist 14 luustikku, mille hauapõhjad asusid maapinnast 36 ja 75 cm sügavusel. Viis matust oli peaga lõuna-edela, neli edela, üks lääne-loode, lääne, ida ja ida-kirde poole. Viiest hauast leiti kirstujäänuseid.

Lahti kaevati 10 täiesti või suuremas osas tranšeesse jäävat matust. Kõige enam leide – nuga, rõngassõlg ja 1644.–1654. aasta münt (joon. 1: 5, 6) – oli peaga itta suunatud, enam kui 70 aastase naise luustiku juures (matus nr. 12). Ühel lapsematusel (nr. 1) oli panuseks nuga (joon. 1: 2), ühel meheluustikul (nr. 7) tõenäoliselt 1734. aasta denga. Selja all paiknenud noaga (joon. 1: 3) meheluustiku (nr. 11) kohalt tranšeeist leiti künnikihist kaks münti – 13. saj teise poole – 14. saj alguse Tartu brakteaat ja Hamburgi brakteaat 14. sajandist. Ainulaadse paarismatuse moodustasid peaga vastassuunas maetud luustikud nr. 13 ja 14 – peatsiga ida-kirdesse suunatud täiskasvanu (eeldatavasti naine) ja väikelaps. Haualaik oli u. 40 cm sügavusest alates täidetud ligemale 30 cm paksuse, 10–20 cm läbimõõduga kividest lasuga, mis lõppes matustest 5–10 m kõrgemal. Matuse nr. 13 luudest veidi kõrgemalt leiti 1650. aasta münt. Lõuna-Eesti külakalmistutes väga haruldane haua kivitäide osutab sellele, et tegemist on olnud mingis mõttes anomaalse surnuga.

Mäe keskosas tehtud kaevandist leiti ka korratult paiknevate luude lasu, mis sisaldas vähemalt kolme täiskasvanu ja ühe lapse luid. Et osa jäsemeluudest paiknes anatoomilises asendis, võiks tegemist olla ümbermaetud, juba väga tugevalt lagunenenud laipade jäänustega. Võimalik, et matused seostuvad 1695.–1697. aasta näljahäda või 1710.–1711. aasta katku ohvritega.

Kirikumäelt leiti jälgi ka rauaaegsetest põletusmatustest. Künnikihis leidis üksikuid kaltsineerunud luukilde mäe eri piirkondades; tranšee lõikas ka üht võrdlemisi hästi säilinud matust. Püstjate servadega haualohu läbimõõt oli 1,6–1,7 m. Haud oli kaevatud liiva ning selle põhja sügavuse määras liiva all paiknev, maapinnast 55–62 cm sügavusel olev kõva savikiht. Luukogum – leitud matusega seostub ligi 680 g põlenud luid – oli tihedaim haualaigu põhjas, millest avatud tranšeelõigu piires luud katsid ligi poole. Luude hulgas oli ka tuleriidalt pärinevaid söekübemeid ja tuhajäänuseid. Et põletusmatuste juurest ei saadud leide, jääb nende vanus ebaselgeks. Arvestades seda, et

Kalmõtõmäelt leitud 11.–14./15. sajandi põletusmatustel esines hauapanuseid, on Kirikumäe omad ilmselt neist vanemad ning pärinevad I aastatuhandest p.Kr. või veelgi varasemast ajast. Kuna Kirikumäelt ei leitud Kalmõtõmäel tavalist tekstiilkeraamikat, on põletusmatuste kuuluvus rooma rauaaega vähe tõenäoline.

Kaevamistel õnnestus lokaliseerida ka pärimuses tuntud kabeli asukoht. Sellest andsid tunnistust u. 20 m läbimõõduga alalt maapinnast 10–30 cm sügavuselt leitud 43 ohvrimünti. Varaseim neist pärineb 1575. aastast, kõigil ülejäänud juhtudel on tegemist 17. sajandil Riias vermitud Rootsi killingitega. Rahade esinemispiirkonna keskmes leidus maapinnast u. 25 cm sügavusel u. 6–7 m läbimõõduga alal 1–2 cm paksune sütt ja tuhka sisaldav põlemiskiht, mis võiks seostuda tules hävinud puukirikuga. Et münte leidus söekihist kõrgemal, võib oletada, et ohverdamine on aset leidnud pärast kabeli hävimist. Müntide vanuse põhjal on väike puukirik tõenäoliselt hävinud Rootsi-Poola sõjas. Tõenäoliselt ohverdati Kirikumäele 17. sajandi vältel, kuid Vene dengade puudumise põhjal võib arvata, et 1730. aastateks on komme juba hääbunud. Tõkestamaks detektorirüüstet, külvati mäele rohkesti värvilisest metallist petteleide.

Kabeli rajamisaeg jääb ebaselgeks. Luustik nr. 11 kohalt leitud mündid ei lase välistada võimalust, et Kalmõtõmäe naaberkünkal võis kabel olla juba 14. sajandi keskpaiku. Keskaegsete ja 16. sajandi müntide puudumist saab oletamisi seletada asjaoluga, et kabeli normaalse funktsioneerimise ajal pandi ohvriannid mingisse kindlasse kohta (näit. anumasse), kust nad regulaarselt ära korjati. Kirikumägi on olnud külakalmistuks ka pärast kabeli hävimist ja tõenäoliselt on sinna maetud veel 18. sajandi keskpaiku.

5 m² suurune proovikaevand tehti Kalmõtõmäest 2 km põhja pool paiknevale Kõugumäele. 1985. ja 1986. aasta kaevamiste põhjal on sellele mäele 13. sajandi lõpul või 14. sajandi algupoolel asunud rajama väikelinnust, kuid see on enne valmimist maha põlenud. Kaevand rajati mäeplatoo kirdeosas asetseva kõrgeima künka piirkonda. Ilmnes, et kõrgendik on loodusliku päritoluga: puhas looduslik moreenpinnas algas maapinnast 40 cm sügavusel. Samas näis ülemine kruusane pinnasekiht olevat kas segatud või kohale toodud. Tranšeest avastati ka ümar, u. 1 m läbimõõduga ja väikeste kividega täidetud sissekaeve, mis ulatus maapinnast kuni 80 cm sügavuseni.

Setomaal Värskas vallas **Podmotsa** külas tehti arheoloogilist järelevalvet külakalmistul paikneva suure ja viltuvajunud keskaegse kiviristi püstiajamisel (joon. 2). Ristiesine ala kaevati lahti u. ruutmeetri ulatuses. Ilmnes, et rist, millest maa peale ulatus ligemale 130 cm, on 210 cm kõrgune. Rist oli püsti aetud omaaegsele maapinnale – selle jalaots ei ulatunud sügavamale 50–70 cm sügavusel olevast, puutumatul liival lasuvast tumedama mulla kihist. Risti püstitamisel oli selle jalg toetatud vastu 12 cm paksust graniitplaati, millesse oli tahatud ristijala kujule vastav, u. 15 cm sügavune ja 30 cm laiune õnarus. Kiviplaadi peal toetasid risti kaks u. 40 cm läbimõõduga raudkivi, mida ümbritses liiv. Kuna rist ei paiknenud künkal, vaid tasasel kalmistupinnal, võib arvata, et selle püstitamise ajal on kalmistupinda tervikuna poole meetri võrra tõstetud. Põhjuseks on tõenäoliselt Peipsi järve lähedus, maapinna vajumine ja veetaseme tõus. Ristijala eest leiti pinnase sõelumisel liivatäite alt, ligikaudu algse maapinna sügavuselt 1535. a. vermitud ordumeister Plettenbergi Riia killing, mis aitab määratleda risti püstitamise aega. Ristijala ümber kuhjatud liivas leidunud kedranõude tükid ja üksikud luukillud lubavad arvata, et kalmistu on samas piirkonnas olnud juba varem. Samast leitud põlenud luukild võib osutada rauaaegsetele põletusmatustele. Kuna ristijala otsa juures oli säilinud looduslik algne alusmuld ning sellele järgnes puutumata puhas liiv, pole tegemist huaristiga, vaid kogu kalmistu tähisega. Sellekohast pärimust on säilinud ka suulises traditsioonis.