

ARHEOLOOGILISED
VÄLITÖÖD
EESTIS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
FIELDWORK
IN ESTONIA

2004

Koostanud ja toimetanud
Ülle Tamla

Muinsuskaitseamet
Tallinn 2005

© 2005 Muinsuskaitseamet
Uus 18, Tallinn 10111, Eesti
National Heritage Board
Uus 18, Tallinn 10111, Estonia

Esikaas: ebtenaast Viskla II asulast.

Tagakaas: ribmajagaja Kämbla II asulast.

Cover: decorative mount from Viskla II settlement site.

Back cover: strap-divider from Kämbla II settlement site.

Toimetuskolleegium:

Ants Kraut
Erki Russow
Toomas Tamla
Ülle Tamla
Agne Trummal
Heiki Valk

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

Kujundus ja küljendus:

Jaana Kool

ISSN 1406-3972

TARTU ÜLIKOOLI
RAAMATUKOGU
SUNDKSEMPLAR

FROM THE EARLY PRE-ROMAN IRON AGE TO THE EARLY MODERN TIMES: NEW INVESTIGATIONS AT KEAVA

**Valter LANG, Margot LANEMAN, Helena KALDRE, Marge KONSA
and Andres TVAURI**

*Tartu Ülikool (University of Tartu), Lossi 3, Tartu 51003, Eesti (Estonia)
valter.lang@ut.ee*

In 2004, the archaeological fieldwork at the settlement centre of Keava was continued according to the research programme started in 2001 and followed in 2002 and 2003 (Lang *et al.* 2002; 2003; 2004a; Konsa *et al.* 2002; 2003). The excavations financed by the Estonian Science Foundation (grant no. 4563) were carried out on the hill-fort of Keava (the continuation of the second excavation area), the hilltop site of Võnnumägi (the finishing of the first excavation area and phosphate mapping), the pavement of birch bark and branches (the continuation of excavations started in 2003), settlement site II of Linnaaluste (surface survey) and settlement site III of Linnaaluste (opening of a new excavation area). The latter excavation – led by Jüri Peets (Institute of History) – was aimed at locating the smithy the signs of which were observed during earlier excavations at this site (Konsa *et al.* 2003). As these investigations were only started and the results are only of a very preliminary nature, they are not treated in this paper. Neither is the unfinished work at the birch bark pavement.

VÕNNUMÄGI IN FOCUS: EXCAVATED AND SAMPLED, BUT STILL PERPLEXING

At the site called Võnnumägi, the primary task in 2004 was to continue the excavation of the rampart on the northern side of the presumed hill-fort (Fig. 1). Digging a cross-section (3 x 10 m; excavation I) through the western end of the rampart was started in 2003 but not completed. The body of the rampart covered by a compact stone layer remained in fact totally unexplored, and the areas on both sides of it were by no means finished or explained (for details, see Lang *et al.* 2004a-b; see also Lang *et al.* 2003). In 2004, the construction history of the rampart was expected to be cleared up and the previously obtained dates (indicating the early Pre-Roman Iron Age) to be confirmed. Simultaneously, systematic sampling was carried out on the hill plateau, south of the rampart. The objective of this was to obtain detailed knowledge on the character of the cultural layer in the presumed habitation area, since the previous occasional test pits as well as the excavation (II) in the south-western part of the enclosed area had not yield-

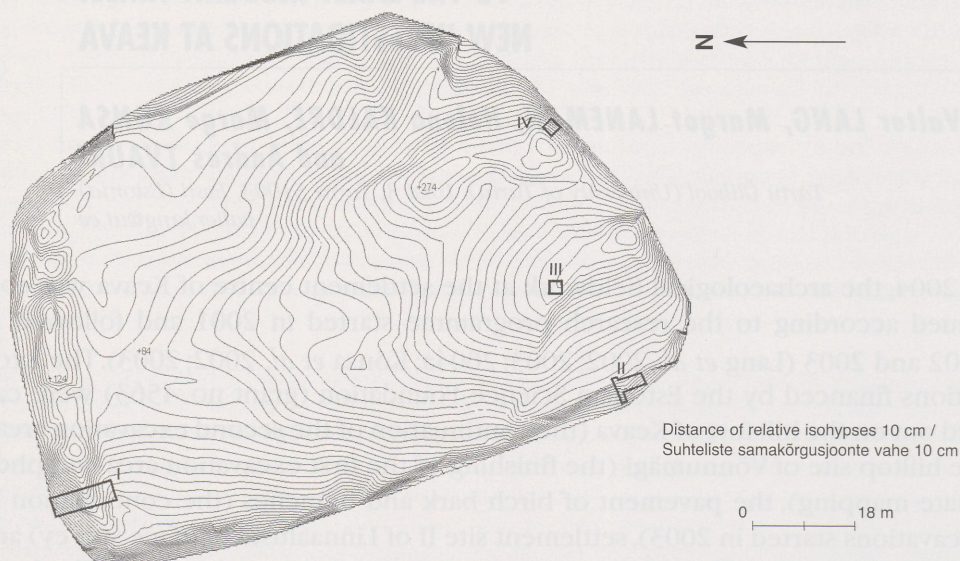


Fig. 1. Map of the plateau of Võnnumägi hill.

Joon. 1. Võnnumäe platoo plaan.

ed firm evidence of permanent settlement, thus bringing the general function and nature of the site into question. Two of the test pits were enlarged and thereby turned into small excavation areas (III and IV according to the numeration).

On the rampart, beneath the compact layer of big stones there was a 70–80 cm thick sandy fill that contained occasional stones of various sizes and kinds (Fig. 2). The northern (external) foot of the rampart was clearly discernible as it was bordered by a straight row of granite stones, 25–35 cm in diameter and placed directly on the original ground. The location and construction of the internal side of the rampart was more difficult to interpret since here the sandy soil was mixed with sparse stones situated at different levels. However, here the side of the rampart was most likely indicated by a strip of burnt sand and soil with coal, bordered by a row of stones on its southern side (Fig. 3). This row, located ca. 3.5 m from the northern one and stratigraphically on the same level, was not quite straight, curving slightly southwards in its eastern part. The stones were smaller and in the section extending southwards they were clearly laid on top of each other (as 2–3 layers). The strip of rather bright brick-red sand, 15–20 cm wide, was unmistakably parallel to the stone row but did not follow the curve of the latter, however. The space between the red sand and the stones, 15–20 cm wide as well, had a fill of soil with some coal containing fragments of charred

wood in places. This zone between the stones and the fill of the rampart, evidently indicating some kind of burning, became apparent at approximately the same level where the tops of the adjacent stones were situated, and it disappeared close to the intact natural sand. However, in the same zone some fragments of the charred logs and spots of the burnt sand had also been found at the upper levels. Therefore, it seems plausible that some wooden construction had once been present here.

Between these two rows of stones, *i.e.* under the rampart, there was a thin layer of charred wood comprised of rather poorly preserved logs and poorly defined areas with coal (Fig. 4). These were found lying immediately on the intact sand beneath the rampart fill. As there could not have been any fire inside the earthen body, it must be assumed that the charred wood was already present at the time of constructing the rampart, probably resulting from clearing the site by fire.

South of the stone row bordering the fire-marked zone, the lower part of the cultural layer was clearly different from that in the rampart area. There were no remains of charred wood directly above the intact sand. Under the layer of stones and sandy soil, most probably originating from the collapse of the rampart, there were a number of small burnt stones in the strongly coal-mixed soil at the



Fig. 2. The rampart of Võnnumägi after removal of its stone layer. View from NW.

Joon. 2. Võnnumäe vall pärast kivikatte eemaldamist. Vaade lääne-loodest.



Fig. 3. The lowermost parts of the cultural layer in excavation I on Võnnumägi. View from W.

Joon. 3. Kultuurkibi alumine osa kaevandis I Võnnumäel. Vaade läänest.

eastern side of the excavation plot. The area adjacent to the western profile was clearly distinct from its surroundings as the soil here was very compact and hard to excavate. It was also rich in charcoal, gravel size pebbles, and spots of burnt sand. Another peculiar feature of the area south of the row of stones was that all of the finds were concentrated here. However, the finds consisted of merely five small potsherds (TÜ 1256: 10–12).

North of the rampart, about a metre from its external foot, were massive stones



Fig. 4. Remains of charred wood beneath the rampart, and stones at its internal side on Võnnumägi. View from W.

Joon. 4. Söestunud puidu jäänused vallitäite all ja kivi-rida valli siseküljel Võnnumäel. Vaade läänest.

that were already unearthed in 2003. It turned out that these stones, much bigger than those covering the rampart, were located on a kind of declivity, as the ground surface started to slope downward rather suddenly here. At present, it is not possible to conclude whether this slope was natural or created by human hand, as in this part of the excavated area the relevant layers had already been removed. Therefore, the role of the massive stones is by no means evident yet.

On the basis of these observations one may conclude that the rampart had been constructed above flat ground, perhaps cleared previously by fire. Its base was ca. 3.5 m wide. The rampart was piled up of sand and stones, and subsequently the northern sloping side and the top of the earthen body were covered with a compact layer of stones. It seems that the internal side had been vertical, with wood used in its construction. However, in the excavated section there was no clear evidence of supporting posts, beams or something similar for this kind of a wall. The place where the southern stone row was slightly curved, though, appeared to be a hole for an upright post since the stones constituted a kind of circular arrangement here; however, no pit had been dug into the intact sand. The rampart rose only 1–1.1 m higher above the ancient ground surface south of it, whereas in relation to the lower ground northward, where the existence of a shallow ditch cannot be precluded, its height was perhaps 1.5–1.7 m. However, originally the rampart must have been somewhat higher (though not much), probably with more

stone layers on top of it. The presence of some wooden construction on top of the rampart cannot be precluded either, although in the excavated area no traces of it were found. A little north of the rampart, where the ground level was becoming lower, for some reason not yet entirely clear, massive stones were placed on the slope. The nature of the area adjacent to the internal side of the rampart remained unclear as well; however, the potsherds indicate at least some activities having taken place here. At some time, most likely as a result of burning, the wooden structure of the internal side of the rampart was destroyed and a part of the rampart fill as well as the stones fell southwards. There were no signs of subsequent reconstruction of the rampart.

Radiocarbon dating of the charcoal collected from different contexts within the excavated area consistently yielded Early Pre-Roman Iron Age dates (see Fig. 5). The results seem to suggest that the site had been in use for quite a short time. The coarse-grained and striated ceramics could be regarded as being consistent with the radiocarbon dates. However, there was a sherd covered with ornamentation of parallel double lines that is generally presumed to be characteristic of Viking Age pottery decoration. But since it was tempered with coarse rock debris, and because this kind of ornamentation could not be entirely precluded for Early Iron Age pottery, this potsherd could be regarded as being consistent with the rest of the data as well.

The test pits were dug systematically at intervals of 5 m. The grid of pits covered about 2/3 of the hill plateau south of the rampart, whereas the north-eastern part of it remained unexplored due to the dense brush in that area, as well as a lack of time. In total, 155 test pits were made (including the two enlarged into trial excavation plots). None of them contained finds or any sign of a cultural layer characteristic of habitation. In general, the upper layer below the turf, 20–60 cm thick, consisted of a brownish soil resembling that in the fields, and was followed by yellow sand or moraine; in a few cases, the presence of stones was noted in the test pit. However, a soil sample was taken from each pit for later phosphate analyses. At the time of writing the current overview, the results were not yet available.

Excavation plot III, measuring 2 x 2 m, was located on a low moraine ridge in the southern part of the plateau. In the test pit made here, upright limestone slabs and a side of a big granite stone, 45 cm in diameter, was observed (Fig. 6). However, a more thorough excavation revealed that these stones were situated in the intact yellow moraine beneath a layer of greyish soil, 15–20 cm thick, and their position was not of human origin. Excavation IV, of the same size, was made right at the side of the south-eastern slope of the hill plateau where the test pit

had indicated the presence of big limestone slabs. At first, some defensive or similar structure was expected to be discovered here, but the stones were lying rather loosely and therefore made an impression of having been piled up casually. The investigations here were not completed, and thus the nature and origin of these stones are to be explored during the next excavation season. No finds were gathered in these excavation areas.

The investigations in 2004 confirmed the previous understanding that the rampart of the Võnnumägi was Early Pre-Roman Iron Age in date. The data suggests that the rampart was damaged by fire, perhaps quite soon after its construction. The rampart had been rather low unless there was some wooden construction on top of it. In any case, its defensive purpose was doubtful. Moreover, no settlement traces were found in the explored area south of it. This leaves the question about the nature and function of the whole site still open. New hints could be provided by the results of phosphate analysis unavailable at this time. In the future, the north-eastern part of the plateau should be sampled and the nature of the stone pile on the southern end of the hill cleared up. An additional trench north of the rampart would provide an answer to whether or not there was once some ditch-like formation here.

THE HIDDEN GATEWAY ON THE HILL-FORT OF KEAVA

On the hill-fort of Keava, the research of the second excavation area that was started in 2003 was continued. It was already at the end of the previous excavation's



Fig. 6. Excavation III on Võnnumägi. View from S.
Joon. 6. Kaevand III Võnnumäel. Vaade lõunast.

season that the uppermost stones of the walls of a gateway started to come to light. After the removal of the stone cover from the entire area of investigation, and excavating deeper, it became evident that we were dealing with a very narrow and deep-reaching gateway going cross-wise through the rampart to the slope of the hill (Figs. 7–8). The walls of the gateway were piled up of limestone slabs; up to 15 layers of stones were

preserved at some places. The width of the gateway, as measured from the uppermost stones of the walls, varied between 40 and 60 cm; however, it became apparent later that the upper parts of the walls had dropped slightly inwards and the original width of the gate had reached ca. 70 cm. The bottom of the gateway, which was not completely exposed this year, lay at least 1.2–1.5 m deeper from the original ground surface. Thus it became evident that this gateway had been built not *through* the rampart but *beneath* it.

Atmospheric data from Stuiver et al. (1998); OxCal v3.9 Bronk Ramsey (2003); cub r:4 sd:12 prob usp[chron]

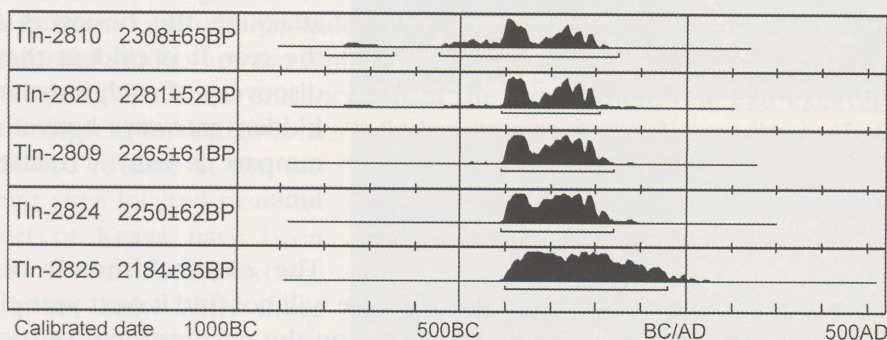


Fig. 5. Radiocarbon dates of Võnnumägi from the excavations of 2003 and 2004.
Joon. 5. Võnnumäe radiosüsiniku dateeringud 2003. ja 2004. aastast.

The entire gateway was filled in with burnt stones and pieces of burnt timbers. At the internal side of the gate (towards the yard), where the bottom of the gateway was cleaned out, yellowish sand and gravel was observable under the ruins. At the central section of the gate there was a layer of burnt clay with pieces of charcoal under the ruins, and beneath it – another layer of smaller burnt stones and pieces of burnt timbers. The latter feature was not investigated completely at this time. Some fragments of burnt timbers were also discovered on the yellowish sand mentioned above; the charcoal sample taken from one of these timbers was dated to 1001 ± 51 BP (TIn-2823). One can suppose that this narrow gateway was once covered with a roof of timbers, whereas the entire structure was built under the rampart consisting of stones and earth and wooden defence buildings on the top. In Estonia, a gateway of this kind is unique. However, there are some narrow (and probably hidden) gateways to the slopes of hills discovered at some other hill-forts, although they were all running through rather than beneath the ramparts. For instance, there have been even two such gateways found at the late Viking Age hill-fort of Iru (Vassar 1939, 69, Fig. 32 and Plate VI; Lang 1996, Fig. 19)



Fig. 7. The fourth layer of stones in excavation plot II at the hill-fort of Keava: the gateway has become visible. View from NE.

Joon. 7. Neljas kivikiht Keava linnamäe II kaevandis: väravakäik on tulnud nähtavale. Vaade kirdest.

and one at Lõhavere, which was fortified contemporaneously with the Keava fort (Jaanits *et al.* 1982, 192, Plate XIX). The latter was evidently built for getting water from the well located at the foot of the hill; the other narrow gateways have been interpreted as the means for escaping or attacking the besiegers from the rear. It is evident that the discovery of such narrow and hidden gateways beneath the rampart is only a matter of luck.

The external mouth of the gateway was not found this year and probably we will not find it next year either. This is because the large man-made depression on the northern foot of the hill-fort begins exactly from this place (Lang *et al.* 2004a, 62, Fig. 2). It is very plausible that the external part of the gateway was simply destroyed by the digging of this depression by the besiegers for the purpose of hollowing the hill-slope and dropping the rampart.

On both sides of the gateway we succeeded in excavating the remains of the rampart and reaching the natural yellowish ground under them. At several places some clusters of stones and remains of burnt timbers were observed; two post-holes lined with limestone slabs were also found. One of these was located on the inner, and the other on the outer side of the rampart and they both went rather deep into the ground. Some remains of burnt posts were also observed both inside and outside these post-holes. Both the earth and the stones in the area of the rampart indicated everywhere traces of burning.

Pieces of animal bone were the common finds from the area of the excavation. In addition, a few fragments of Late Iron Age pottery and iron slag as well as some broken ornaments and one javelin head similar to that found in 2002 (Lang *et al.* 2003, Fig. 8: 1) were found.

In order to obtain more information about the interior mouth of the gateway, an extension of the excavation area, measuring 3 x 1 m, was also made. However, we

were not able to finish the study of this extension this year. In the coming season of fieldwork, we are planning to finish the excavations of this area and to restore the hidden gateway.

SURFACE SURVEY AT SETTLEMENT SITE II OF LINNAALUSTE

Detailed investigation of settlement sites can offer extremely interesting data on the households, the structure of the sites and the changes over time. This requires, however, the opening and excavation of large areas, which today is usually possible only in the case of large-scale salvage excavations. The financial means of project-targeted studies are too limited for such work; also, the land-owners are usually dictating the limits and location of the areas where one can excavate. The archaeological investigations conducted to date at the settlement sites located near the hill-fort of Keava have been limited to small-scale excavation plots only. With these investigations we have been successful in exploring the character of the cultural layer and building remains; however, how representative the results are in relation to the entire dwelling sites has remained questionable. Keeping that in mind, we decided to test the possibilities of a systematic surface survey for intrasite analysis.



Fig. 8. The gateway beneath the rampart of the Keava hill-fort at the end of excavations in 2004. View from SE. Joon. 8. Keava vallialune väravakäik 2004. a kaevamiste lõpul. Vaade kagust.

The first explicitly systematic attempt to deal with surface artefacts was made already in the 1960s by Lewis Binford and by now there are several different surface collection techniques available in field archaeology (see Lavento 2000). Surface and subsurface investigations at numerous sites over the world have demonstrated that surface artefact patterns may significantly relate to patterns of occupation in the subsurface deposits and, in a more general sense, have demonstrated the validity of employing a systematic approach to the collection and analysis of surface material (Matthews & Hodder 1993). In order to test this valid-

ity of correlations in local conditions, we chose settlement site II of Linnaaluste for a systematic field survey in 2004. At this site, we collected and mapped all archaeological finds from an area of 2,750 m² (25 x 110 m) between the Tooma farm and the village road that had been ploughed up (TÜ 1327). It should be mentioned that in 2003, a plot of 13 m² had been excavated at this site by us (Lang *et al.* 2004b), and now the task was to compare the materials gathered both from the latter plot and the surface of the field.

The number of different types of finds remained small for both the excavated plot and the field surface. In addition to potsherds, fragments of animal bone, clay daub and some tools and ornaments were recorded in both cases. However, while several bronze artifacts and their pieces were discovered in the excavation plot, there was only one small bronze spiral among the surface finds. On the other hand, many more pieces of iron slag were found from the field surface. For a quantitative exploration of the pottery, we proceeded from its weight, as the weight can give less biased estimates of the proportions of the assemblage than the sherd counts (Orton 2000, 52). Since the excavated soil was sieved, it is expected that the number of potsherds collected (609) would be greater than that from the field survey (580); however, the total weight of the excavated sherds remained smaller (2067.8 and 2274.7 g respectively). In both cases the majority of the pottery belonged to the Late Iron Age and medieval times; even the share of hand-moulded pottery was more or less the same (5% or 103.2 g from the excavated plot and 6% or 136.9 g from the field). Fragments of vessels decorated with net decoration, characteristic for the Late Iron Age, were observed in both areas; but among the surface finds there are also sherds decorated with bracelet stamps. Some bigger differences were observed in the materials of early modern times: potsherds of this period formed 4.7% of the pottery from the field surface but were around one per cent in the excavated plot. As clear evidence of the early modern times was absent in the excavation of 2003, it was supposed that there had been some break in the continuity or location of settlement after the Livonian War. The surface finds do not support this opinion, the more so as we also found a 1/4 öre of Swedish origin minted in 1635. When comparing archaeological evidence of the excavated plot and the entire field surface one could notice that by a systematic field survey it is possible to obtain a better overview of the sequence of finds than by a small-scale excavation.

We were also interested in the question of whether the analysis of the distribution of surface finds can offer any valuable information in the case of areas that have been ploughed over a long time and the cultural layers of which are completely mixed. By ploughing, in general, the small-scale patterning of artifacts is

lost very quickly and clusters increase in size and decrease in density; the shape of clusters tends to become more circular and less distinct. Experiments have demonstrated that the most significant dispersion of finds that were located together occurs from the first ploughing (ca. 1 m horizontally), and the dislocation of artifacts decelerates in the course of following ploughings (the distance can be only 2 m after 12 ploughings), (Orton 2000, 62–64). In the study area of 2004, for instance, four fragments of one hand-moulded vessel were located in an area with a diameter of 14 m. Although these potsherds may not have been located together originally, it still shows that the distribution analysis of finds proceeding from their exact location is not necessary in the case of cultural layers beneath the cultivated fields; it seems more promising to concentrate on bigger

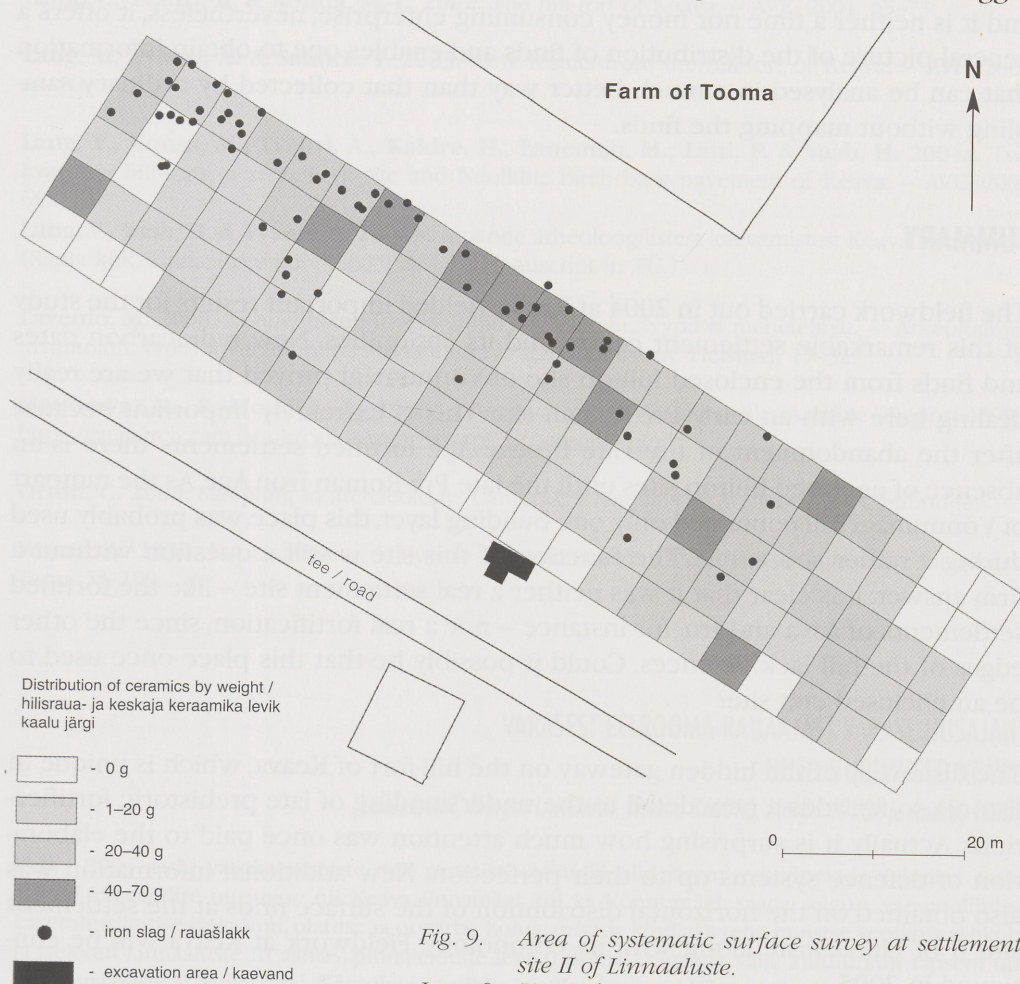


Fig. 9. Area of systematic surface survey at settlement site II of Linnaaluste.

Joon. 9. Linnaaluste II asulakohal süstemaatilise pinna-seirega uuritud ala.

clusters. Therefore, the distribution of Late Iron Age and Medieval pottery of Linnaaluste II was analysed by 5 x 5 m quadrates (Fig. 9). It turned out that the distribution of pottery was not uniform, as relatively small numbers of potsherds were found in the south-eastern part of the study area, which also had a weaker cultural layer. At the same time, a clear concentration (with a diameter of ca. 20 m) of ceramics became visible on the northern edge of the field; possibly, a farm had been there. As to the distribution of iron slag, the main portion of it (626.6 g) was mostly concentrated in the northern and north-western corner of the field, indicating the existence of a place for some iron working there.

The investigation of settlement sites by surface surveys is rather easy to carry out and it is neither a time nor money consuming enterprise; nevertheless, it offers a general picture of the distribution of finds and enables one to obtain information that can be analysed in a much better way than that collected by ordinary sampling without mapping the finds.

SUMMARY

The fieldwork carried out in 2004 at Keava yielded important results for the study of this remarkable settlement centre and its antiquities. New radiocarbon dates and finds from the enclosed hilltop site of Võnnumägi proved that we are really dealing here with an early Pre-Roman site. This is extremely important because after the abandonment of the Late Bronze Age fortified settlements there is an absence of enclosed hilltop sites until the late Pre-Roman Iron Age. As the rampart of Võnnumägi hill contained only one building layer, this place was probably used during a rather short time. The function of this site is still a question without a firm answer: it is clear that it was neither a real settlement site – like the fortified settlements of Asva and Iru, for instance – nor a real fortification, since the other edges of the hill lack defences. Could it possibly be that this place once used to be an enclosed cult site?

The discovery of the hidden gateway on the hill-fort of Keava, which is unique in Estonia so far, adds a new detail to the understanding of late prehistoric fortifications. Actually it is surprising how much attention was once paid to the elaboration of defence systems up to their perfection. New additional information was also obtained on the horizontal distribution of the surface finds at the settlement site II of Linnaaluste along with its chronology. Fieldwork at Keava will be continued in 2005.

References

- Jaanits, L., Laul, S., Lõugas, V. & Tõnisson, E. 1982.** Eesti esiajalugu. Tallinn.
- Konsa, M., Lang, V., Lainemurd, I. & Vaab, H. 2002.** Archaeological excavations at settlement site I of Linnaaluste. – AVE, 2001, 74–81.
- Konsa, M., Lang, V. & Loolaid, L. 2003.** Settlement site III of Linnaaluste from archaeological complex of Keava. – AVE, 2002, 51–55.
- Lang, V. 1996.** Muistne Rävala. Muistised, kronoloogia ja maaviljelusliku asustuse kujunemine Loode-Eestis, eriti Pirita jõe alamjooksu piirkonnas. (MT, 4). Tallinn.
- Lang, V., Tvauri, A. & Rohtla, M.-L. 2002.** The hill-fort of Keava. – AVE, 2001, 65–73.
- Lang, V., Tvauri, A. & Saimre, T. 2003.** New results from the hill-fort of Keava. – AVE, 2002, 42–50.
- Lang, V., Konsa, M., Tvauri, A., Kaldre, H., Laneman, M., Lätti, P. & Vaab, H. 2004a.** Two Iron Age hill-forts, a settlement site and Neolithic birch bark pavement of Keava. – AVE, 2003, 61–71.
- Lang, V., Vaab, H. & Tvauri, A. 2004b.** Aruane arheoloogilistest kaevamistest Keava Võnnumäel (Rapla khk, Linnaaluste küla) 2003. aastal. (Manuscript in TÜ.)
- Lavento, M. 2000.** Kohdennetun inventoinnin suunnittelu, tyypit ja menetelmät. – Arkeologinen inventointi. Opas inventoinnin suunnitteluun ja toteuttamiseen. Helsinki, 17–32.
- Matthews, R. & Hodder, I. 1993.** Introduction. – Çatalhöyük Archive Report 1993. http://catal.arch.cam.ac.uk/catal/Archive_rep93/content93.html
- Orton, C. 2000.** Sampling in archaeology. Cambridge Manuals in Archaeology. Cambridge.
- Vassar, A. 1939.** Iru Linnapära. – Muistse Eesti linnused. 1936.–1938. a uurimiste tulemused. Tartu, 53–100.
- VARASEST EELROOMA RAUAAJAST VARASE UUSAJANI:
UUED UURIMUSED KEAVAS**
Valter LANG, Margot LANEMAN, Helena KALDRE, Marge KONSA ja Andres TVAURI

Keava 2004 aasta väljakaevamiste neli peamist eesmärki olid järgmised: lõpetada eelmisel aastal avatud kaevandite uurimine nii Keava linnamäel kui ka Võnnumäel; saada selgust varaneoliitilise kasetohusillutise iseloomu, ulatuse ja otstarbe kohta; üritada kindlaks teha muistse sepikoja asukoht ja iseloom Linnaaluste III asulas; pinnaleidude leviku põhjal selgitada välja kultuurikihi täpsem ulatus Linnaaluste II asulakohal. Käesolevas artiklis käsitletakse vaid Võnnumäe, Keava linnamäe ning Linnaaluste II asulakoha uurimise tulemusi.

Võnnumäel (joon. 1) jätkati 2003. aastal alustatud valli läbilõike kaevamist. Eelmisel aastal võetud radiosüsiniku analüüsid dateerisid muistise 4.–3. sajandisse eKr, millega sobisid hästi kokku ka sealt leitud vähesed savinõukillud. Nüüd eemaldati valliharjal olevad suured kivid ning kaevati sügavamale (joon. 2–4). Kivide all oli liivast, kruusast ja juhuslikest kividest kokku visatud vall, mille all avastati sõe- ja tuhasegune algne maapind. Niisiis selgus, et enne muldvalli rajamist oli maapind puhastatud tulega ning et vall koos kivimüüriga on rajatud ühes etapis. Leiutmaterjali peale mõne savinõukillu juurde ei saadud. Valli erinevatest kohtadest ja tasanditelt võetud uued sõeproovid kinnitasid varasemat dateeringut (joon. 5). Ühtlasi tehti kogu linnamäe platoole hulganisti šurfe kontrollimaks kultuurikihi iseloomu ja võtmaks proove mulla fosfaadisalduse mõõtmiseks. Kahes kohas, kus šurfides leiti kive ja pisut tumedamat mulda, tehti väiksemad proovikaevandid (III ja IV). Ühes neist (platoe lõunapoolsemas osas, joon. 6) mingeid ehitusjäänuseid siiski ei avastatud, teises (platoe lõunaäärel) paljandus aga ebaühtlane kivivare. Viimane võis pärineda kas mõnest kaitseehitisest või oli sinna sattunud hilisema põlluharimisega (kivide viskamisest põllu, s.t. linnamäe servale).

Keava linnamäel jätkati eelmisel aastal alustatud II kaevandi uurimist, kus juba siis oli hakanud paljanduma tõenäoline väravakäigu ase. Avastatigi risti läbi valli kulgev väravakäik, mille mõlemad seinad olid laotud paeplaatidest kuivmüürina (joon. 7–8). Üllatuslikult selgus kaks tõsiasja: et väravakäik oli hästi kitsas (ülemiste kivide järgi mõõdetuna 40–60 cm, kuid hiljem selgus, et müürid olid ülalt pisut sissepoole vajunud, nii et värava algne laius oli natuke suurem, u. 70 cm) ning et värav paiknes omal ajal hästi sügaval. Värava põhi, mida me sel aastal ei jõudnudki täielikult välja puhastada, asus esialgse maapinna suhtes 1,2–1,5 m sügavamal. Näib päris kindel, et siin on tegu valli alt läbi läinud kitsa ja ilmselt varjatud käiguga, mitte tõelise väravaga. Kuna tegu oli unikaalse konstruktsiooniga meie muistsetel linnustel, siis ei saanud seda tavalises tempos läbi kaevata, vaid otsustati seda teha rahulikumalt ja põhjalikumalt järgmisel aastal. Ühtlasi otsustati väravakäik järgmisel aastal rekonstrueerida.

2004. aastal jätkati uuringuid ka Linnaaluste II asulakohal. 2003. a kaevamised sellel asulakohal andsid küll arvuka leiutmaterjali, kuid asula ulatusest ning selle täpsemast kujunemisest üldpildi saamiseks jääb ühe väikese kaevandi andmetest väheseks. Kuna käesoleva aasta suvel oli asula tuumikala üles küntud, siis otsustasime katsetada Eesti asulauurimise kontekstis uudset metoodikat, kus avatud pinnas üksikasjalikult kaardistatakse ning kõikide maapinnal olnud leidude asend fikseeritakse. Selline metoodika võimaldas meil suhteliselt kiiresti ja ilma kultuurikihti hävitamata läbi uurida kogu Linnaaluste II asulakoha tuumikala ning välja selgitada mõned leidude kontsentratsioonid kohad, mis osutavad tõenäoliselt varasematele talu- resp. majakohtadele (joon. 9). Leiutmaterjali täpsem analüüs võimaldas ühtlasi täiendada asulakoha kronoloogiat: kui kaevandi leidude põhjal oletati teatud asustuskatket või asustuse ümberpaiknemist varasel uusajal, siis pinnaleidude põhjal otsustades on ka see periood küla ajaloos esindatud.

Kokkuvõtteks võib märkida, et 2004. a kaevamised andsid oluliselt uut teavet Keava asustusüksuse kohta. Väljakaevamised kavatakse lõpetada 2005. aastal.