

ARHEOLOOGILISED
VÄLITÖÖD
EESTIS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
FIELDWORK
IN ESTONIA

2006

Koostanud ja toimetanud
Ülle Tamla

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Esikaas: 2006. a Palutaja külast avastatud aardes sisalduv
hõbedatud hoburaudsõlg.

Cover: Silver-plated penannular brooch from Palutaja hoard,
discovered in 2006.

Tagakaas: Krõllid Palutaja aardest.

Back cover: Silver beads from Palutaja hoard.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESCUE EXCAVATIONS ON THE FOSSIL FIELD REMAINS IN VATSLA

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In summer 2006 archaeological investigations were carried out on the fossil field remains in the Vatsla village, Saue municipality, Harjumaa (Vedru 2006). This site (archaeological object no. 27435 under state protection) was discovered by Mati Mandel and Armin Rudi in 2005 (Konsa & Ots 2006, 256). The plot with fossil fields was intended for housing development by a real estate company *Lekree Majad* and that led to the need for archaeological rescue excavations. Hence the main aim of the excavations was to investigate the field remains under the future dwelling houses and to release the land for building activities. These excavations were financed by the real estate company.

EXCAVATIONS

The fossil field remains of Vatsla are located northwest and north from a smaller road that leads from the Harku – Vatsla road to the Kodasema village. Kainu and Kaasiku farms are located south of that area and Altsauna farm lies in the east. The historical centre of the Kodasema village is about 1 km to the northwest and the River Vääna 0.8 km to the southwest. Three stone-graves (nos. 18981, 27434, 27433) are located about 40–50 m to the NNE and NE on a slightly higher ground. The area with the field remains and stone graves measures 330 m in the north-east-southwest and 300 m in the southeast-northwest direction (Fig. 1).

The field remains are in an alvar area with thin soil and in earlier times it was used as grassland. Some land improvement activities were carried out here in the 1970s, leaving the surface bumpy. The developers dug a trench measuring *ca.* 30 x 6 m and oriented to northwest-southeast along an edge of the area of future buildings before archaeological excavations were started. It showed that the soil layer there was only 10–20 cm thick, with smooth limestone bedrock underneath. In November 2005, two possible clearance cairns and six baulks were discovered and they were excavated in summer 2006. Only rather small parts of the baulks were preserved.

The first cairn (Fig. 1: 1) was located a few metres northwest from the ditch and

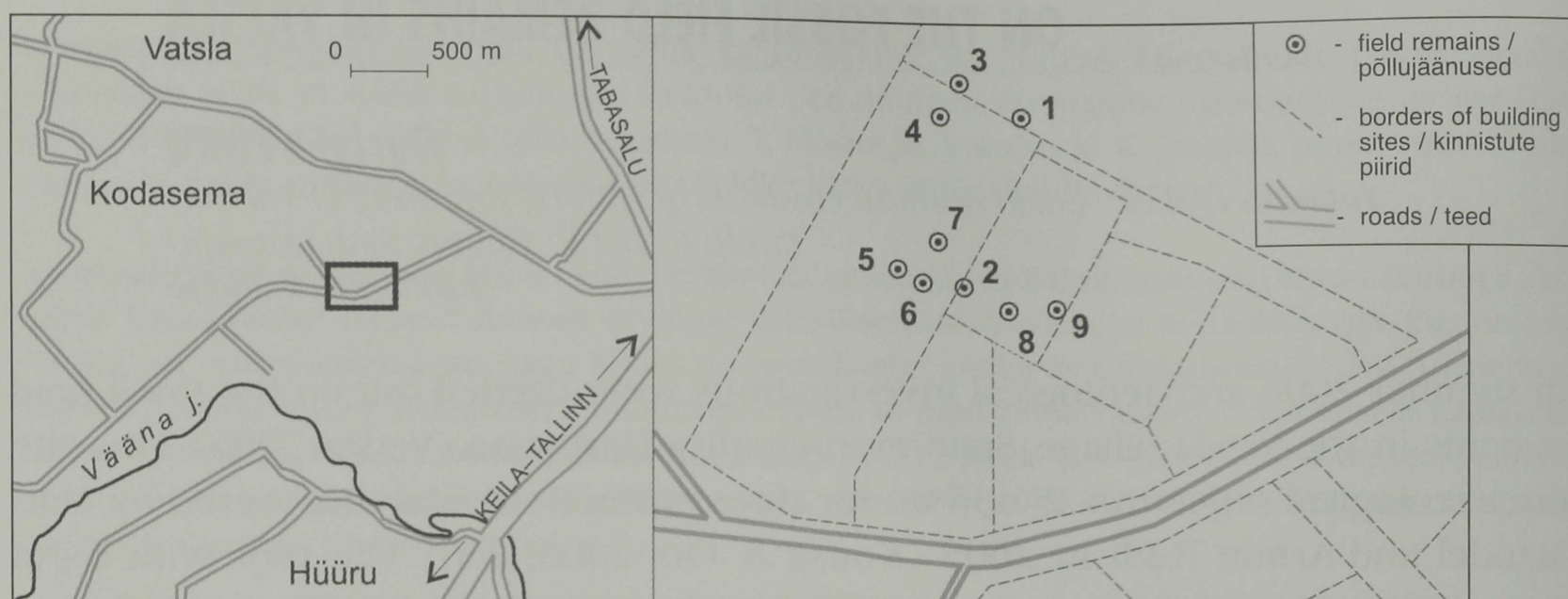


Fig. 1. Vatsla. Location of the study area. 1–9 - field remains with cairns and baulks.

Jn 1. Vatsla. Uuritud ala asendiplaan. 1–9 - põllukivihunnikutega ja peenardega põllujäänused.

remained just outside of the direct construction area. It was the biggest cairn in this group, with a diameter of 5 m and a height of 30 cm. The first layer of stones under a turf cover consisted of limestone slabs of different sizes; the biggest of them having a diameter of 30–40 cm, the soil between the stones was light brown. A large number of animal bones and two mediaeval potsherds¹ (: 5, 8) were found near the edge of the excavation plot. The second layer of stones was not compact and consisted of a few limestones only. The soil layer between the lowermost stones and the limestone bedrock was about 10 cm thick and contained small pieces of charcoal, which were gathered for radiocarbon analysis. That cairn was rich in finds: there were approximately 170 finds divided into 114 sub-numbers. These included small pieces of burned bone (: 12), a fragment of bracelet made of three wires (: 85), a melted bronze object (: 28), fragments of iron objects (: 82, 98, 112) and pieces of ceramics (e.g.: 25, 33, 76, 77). Potsherds originated from both hand moulded vessels and wheel pottery. Hand moulded potsherds originated from both fine-tempered and thick-walled clay vessels. The ceramics can be dated to the Viking Age and to the Late Iron Age. These finds indicate that this area was used as a burial ground during the Viking Age and Late Iron Age. Additionally, potsherds from the Modern Age and also pieces of modern glass were found from that cairn.

The second cairn (Fig. 1: 2) was situated *ca.* 40 m SSW of the above mentioned cairn. It had a diameter of 3.5 m and the height of 40 cm. The first layer of stones consisted of quite small, mostly 10–20 cm wide limestone slabs. Beneath these stones there was a 20–30 cm thick brown soil layer containing charcoal. That soil contained pieces of mediaeval ceramics (: 116) as well as a modern bottle (: 130).

¹ The finds are stored in the archaeological collection of the Institute of History (AI 6857).

The first baulk (Fig. 1: 3) was located in the northern part of the area, *ca.* 15 m WNW from the first cairn. The baulk was in the northwest-southeast direction, it was *ca.* 1.7 m wide and *ca.* 5.0 high; a trench was dug across it. The baulk consisted of shingle and earth. Charcoal was found only in small quantity. The only find was a sherd of modern glass. The second baulk (Fig. 1: 4) was almost parallel to the first one and it situated *ca.* 6 m SSW of the former. It was *ca.* 3.0 m wide and 17 cm high, the trench was dug across it. The first layer of stones consisted of medium sized limestone slabs, beneath these was a brown soil layer up to 15 cm thick that covered the natural limestone bedrock. Some animal bones, one potsherd (: 137) and several nails (: 139, 145) were found. The third baulk was situated *ca.* 40 m SSW from the second baulk and it was *ca.* 2.0 m in width and up to 15 cm in height; it was oriented towards WNW-ESE. Two trenches with the distance of 7.5 m were made across it in its ends (Fig 1: excavation plots no.-s 5 and 6). In the first trench the layer of stones consisted of granite stones, measuring 28-35 cm in diameter. Beneath these stones was a 15 cm thick soil layer. No finds were observed during the excavation and no charcoal was found. In the second trench the first layer consisted both of limestone slabs and granite stones. A dozen of sherds of cups, originating from the Soviet period, were found. The fourth baulk was located *ca.* 7.5 m NNE of the former (Fig. 1: 7) and it was preserved as a small section of *ca.* 4.0 m only. Its width was *ca.* 3.0 m and height *ca.* 10 cm and it was oriented in the E-W direction. Under the turf layer was a 20 cm thick layer of brown soil. The only finds were pieces of animal bones. The fifth baulk was situated 20 m SE of the fourth baulk (Fig. 1: 8). It was oriented also in the E-W direction and was 2.5 m wide and 12 cm high. It was found out, that there were only a few stones in that baulk, most of it was formed from brown soil. Some animal bones were found from that baulk also.

The sixth baulk was oriented in NW-SE direction and it was located *ca.* 11.5 m west of the former (Fig. 1: 9). This baulk was *ca.* 2.5 m wide and 5 cm high. Under a turf layer was a compact layer of stones which measured 0.6 m in width only. A nail and pieces of modern glass bottle were found.

In addition, some small test pits were excavated in that area to locate possible cultural layer of the cemetery. Some pieces of mediaeval ceramics and animal bones were found but the untouched cultural layer of the cemetery was not found. A number of finds was also collected from the edges of the trench made for the future communication trace. Among these finds were pieces of flint, burned bones, unburned animal bones, potsherds with fine-tempered surfaces from the Viking Age and pieces of flint (: 163-166). A large number of charcoal was also observed.

CONCLUSIONS

It can be supposed that somewhere in the vicinity of the investigated area was a cremation cemetery of the Viking Age and/or Late Iron Age. It is indicated by the small pieces of burned bones, but also by some of the finds gathered from the clearance cairn no 1 (fragment of a bracelet, broken iron objects, melted bronze object). As finds from both Mediaeval and Modern Age were also gathered from that cairn, it can be supposed that the cairn was formed in the course of later farming and some material from earlier cemetery, located in the vicinity was included in it. The agricultural activities of later centuries have probably destroyed the original cultural layer of the cemetery or part of it. It is also possible that the cemetery was located in the area NNE and NE from the field remains and near the stone graves. The fossil fields of Vatsla originate from the Mediaeval period or even from Modern Age as indicated by several finds.

References

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ARHEOLOOGILISED PÄÄSTEKAEVAMISED VATSLA PÖLLUJÄÄNUSTEL

Gurly VEDRU

Vatsla põllujäänustega ala paikneb Harku-Vatsla teelt Kodasema külla suunduvast väiksemast teest põhja ja loode pool; Kainu ja Kaasiku talud jäävad põldudest lõuna ning Altsauna talu ida poole; ajalooline Kodasema küla asub u 1 km loodesihis ning Vääna jõgi u 0,8 km edelas (jn 1). Põllujäänustega alast 30–40 m põhja-kirde ja kirde pool on kolm kaitsealust kivist kalmet (nr 18981, 27434, 27433).

Vatsla põllujäänustega ala suurus on kirde-edela sihis 330 m ning loodest kagusse 300 m. Omaegsed põllud on rajatud kergesti haritava õhukese mullakihi loopealsele, mida hiljem kasutati heinamaana. 2005 ostis selle ala endale kinnisvarafirma Lekree Majad sooviga see hoonestada. 2006. a päästekaevamiste eesmärk oli tulevaste majade alla jäävad põllujäänused (jn 1: 1–9) läbi kaevata ning seega vabastada ala ehituspiirangust.

Kaevamistele eelnenud maastikuinspeksiooniga tehti kindlaks kahe põllukivihunniku ning kuni kümne meetriste lõikudena säilinud kuue põllupeenra olemasolu. Esimene põllukivihunnik (jn 1: 1), mille läbimõõt oli 5 m ning kõrgus ümbritsevast maapinnast 30 cm, jäi hoonestamisele minevast alast välja, kuid paiknes siiski vahetult selle piiril. Hunniku ülemine kiht koosnes erineva suurusega paekividest, mille vahel oli helepruun muld. Sealt leiti suuremas koguses loomaluud ning kaks koha-pealse päritoluga keskaegset savinõukildu. Teine kiht koosnes vaid mõnest kivist, mille alla jäi u 10 cm paksune söetükikesi ning leide sisaldav mullakiht. Leidudeks olid paar väikest põlenud luukildu, kolmest pronkstraadist keeratud käevõru fragment, sulanud pronksese, raudesemete katked ja ke-raamikakillud. Kaks savinõukildu pärinevad viikingiaegsetest kiilapinnalistest nõudest. Samast kihist leiti ka kaasaegse klaasnõu tükke. Kuhjatise vanimad leiud osutavad võimalusele, et kusagil läheduses oli viikingi- ja/või hilis-rauaaegne matmispaik.

Teise põllukivihunniku (jn 1: 2) läbimõõt oli 3,5 m ning kõrgus 40 cm. Kuhjatis koosnes ühest kivi-kihist, mille alla jäi 20–30 cm paksune sütt sisaldav mullakiht. Sellest leiti keskajal kohapeal valmistatud savinõu kild ning kaasaegse klaaspudeli tükk.

Esimene põllupeenar (jn 1: 3) oli NW-SO- suunaline, selle laius oli 1,7 m ning kõrgus praegusest maapinnast u 5 cm. Peenar koosnes mullast ja kivist; ainus leid oli kaasaegne klaasikild. Teine põllupeenar (jn 1: 4) oli 3,0 m lai ja u 20 cm kõrge ning selles oli üks kiht paekive. Leidudeks olid mõned loomaluud, savinõukild ja paar naela. Kolmas peenar oli WNW-OSO-suunaline (jn 1: 5, 6), 2 m lai ning 15 cm kõrge. Kaevandid tehti peenra mõlemasse otsa. Selgus, et seegi peenar koosnes vaid ühest kivi-kihist ja leidudeks olid nõukogudeaegsed kruusikillud. Neljas põllupeenar (jn 1: 7) oli säilinud u 4 m pikkuse O-W-suunalise lõiguna, mille laius oli 3,0 m ning kõrgus u 10 cm. See peenar koosnes vaid mullast; leidudeks olid mõned loomaluud. Viies põllupeenar (jn 1: 8) oli samuti O-W-suunaline, selle laius oli 2,5 m ning kõrgus ümbritsevast maapinnast u 10 cm. Selles olid vaid üksikud kivid. Leidudeks oli mõni loomaluu. Kuues peenar (jn 1: 9) oli NW-SO-suunaline ning u 6 m pikk. Selle laius oli 2,5 m ning kõrgus 5 cm, kusjuures mättakihi all oli vaid üks kiht paekive. Peenrast leiti nael ja kaasaegse klaaspudeli kild.

Lisaks kaevanditele tehti uurimisalale mitmeid prooviauke eesmärgiga lokaliseerida kalmistu kultuurikihti. Leiti küll mõned keskaegsed savinõukillud ning loomaluud, kuid muinasaegne kalmistukiht jäi leidmata.

Kokkuvõtvalt võib öelda, et uuritud ala läheduses pidi asuma viikingiaegne ja/või hilisrauaaegne põletusmatustega kalmistu. Seda tõendavad mitmed esimesest põllukivihunnikust ja pinnase koorimisest lõhutud alalt saadud leiud. Kuna koos muinasaegse materjaliga saadi samast ka kesk- ja uusajaseid leide, siis võib oletada, et põllukivihunnik nr 1 (jn 1: 1) tekkis hilisema põlluharimise käigus, kuhu sattus ümbritsevalt alalt ka kalmeleide. Võimalik, et matmiskoht asus põllujäänustest vahetult põhja-kirde ja kirde pool pisut kõrgemal alal, kus on tänaseni säilinud kolm kivi kalmet. Vatsla vanad põllud pärinevad aga kesk- ja uusajast.