

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
FIELDWORK
IN ESTONIA**

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**ARHEOLOOGILISED
VÄLITÖÖD EESTIS**

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ESTER ORAS, ERKI RUSSOW

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS ON THE IRON-SMELTING SITE IN TÖDVA VILLAGE

MAURI KIUDSOO
mauri.kiudsoo@mail.ee

Tallinna Ülikool, Ajaloo Instituut
(Institute of History,
Tallinn University)
Rüütli 6, 10130 Tallinn, Estonia

JAAK MÄLL
jaak@eam.ee

Eesti Ajaloomuuseum
(Estonian History Museum)
Pikk 17, 10123 Tallinn
Estonia

IRITA KALLIS
meinardus@inbox.lv

Archaeological excavations on the iron-smelting site on the lands of Ildase farm in Tõdva village, the County of Harjumaa (under state protection as a settlement site from 1st – 2nd millennium AD, reg. no. 18927), were performed in May 2008.¹ Some preliminary work was done already in 2007 (Kiudsoo & Kallis 2008).

According to the archaeological investigations and visual survey, the lands of the Ildase farm can be divided into two different areas: low, dried-up wetland in the west and a low moraine hill in the east. The investigated site is situated on the moraine hill, which runs about 100 m westwards from the Tallinn–Viljandi motorway. Even if the boundaries of the now much-abraded moraine hill could not be ascertained exactly, there are some visual hints that it continues on the neighbouring plot.² The moraine hill is comprised of rough clay-mixed gravel, containing big amounts of limestone rubble and some granite boulders. The hill is hardly noticeable nowadays, elevating approximately 1–1.5 m from the surrounding area.

Fig. 1. Tõdva iron-smelting site.

General plan.

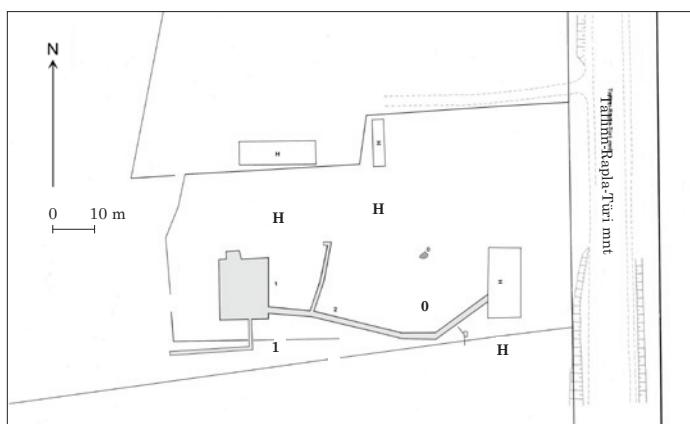
1 – excavation plot
2 – ditches for water
mains and canalization
H – buildings.

Jn 1. Tõdva rauasulatuskoht.

Asendiplaan.

1 – kaevand
2 – vee- ja kanalisatsiooni-
trassid
H – hooned.

Drawing / Joonis: Irita Kallis,
Ekke Lepp



¹ The excavations were directed by Mauri Kiudsoo and Jaak Mäll, assisted by Irita Kallis, under the aegis of MTÜ Arheoloogakeskus.

² According to the archive of the National Heritage Board, the protected settlement site also extends to the neighbouring plot Vana-Ildase farm.

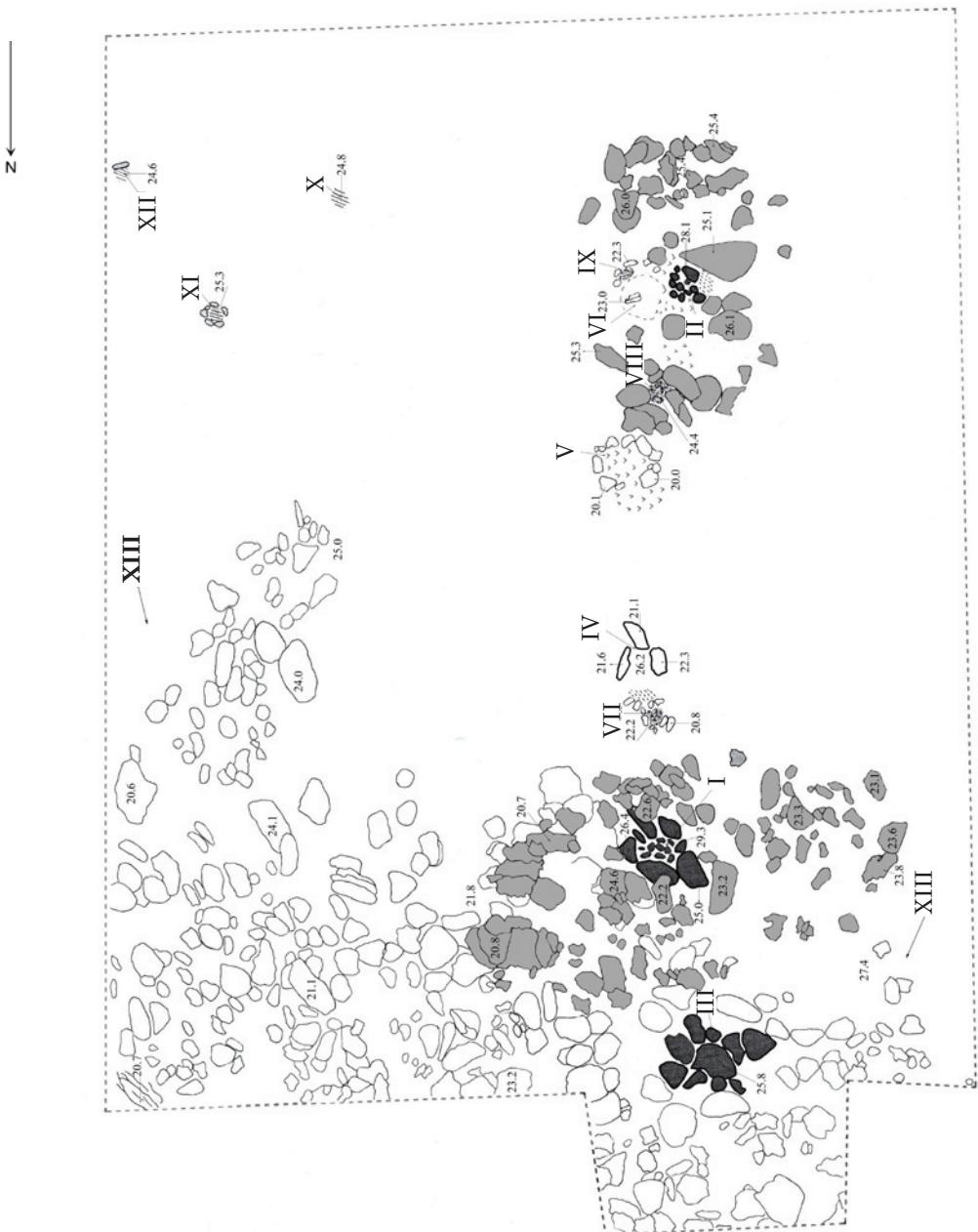


Fig. 2. Excavated area.
I-III – furnaces
IV-VI – pit-forges
VII-IX – post holes from
the anvilpost
X-XII – post holes
XIII – ditch-like depression.

Jn 2. Kaevand.
I-III – rauasulatusahjud
IV-VI – väliääsid
VII-IX – alasipaku posti-
augud
X-XII – postiaugud
XIII – vagumus.

Drawing / Joonis: Irita Kallis

On the southern end of the hill the soil character changes abruptly to fine sand of low clay content.

In 2008 the whole area of the planned new dwelling house of the Il-dase farm was excavated, covering 181 m². In addition, the excavation of the ditches for water mains and canalization was supervised (Fig. 1). Already during the preliminary work in 2007, remains of two iron-smelting furnaces and three pit-forges were discovered (Fig. 2: I, II, IV–VI). The work in 2008 added another furnace-site, in a poor state (Fig. 2: III).

The iron-smelting furnaces of Tõdva belong to the type known as slag-pit furnaces. The remains of the iron-smelting furnaces comprised of approximately 35 cm deep pits with a diameter of ca. 40 cm, which were lined with granite boulders (Fig. 3). Those were interpreted as slag-collecting pits of the furnaces. Around the pits semi-circular and circular layers of limestone rubble were found, which were interpreted as the remains of the destroyed furnace shafts. If the granite boulders in the slag-pits showed only slight signs of high temperatures, the limestone rubble around the pits was severely damaged by heat, sometimes to extreme brittleness. The slag-pits were filled with humus-rich earth containing occasional pieces of charcoal.

The pit-forges were situated in the vicinity of the furnaces. The pits interpreted as forges were approximately 40–50 cm deep, more or less square, measuring approximately 40 × 50 cm. The bottoms and three sides of the pits were lined with flat pieces of limestone and small boulders. Areas around the pit-forges were scattered with drops of slag. Adjacent to all pit-forges stood post-holes with the approximate diameter of 25 cm. Those were interpreted as remains of the anvil-posts (Fig. 4).

Fig. 3. Slag-pit of the iron-smelting furnace.

Jn 3. Rauasulatusahju
slakikogumisauk.

Photo / Foto: Irita Kallis





Fig. 4. Pit-forge (1) with the adjacent post-hole from the anvil-post (2).

Jn 4. Väliääs (1) koos selle kõrval paikneva alasipaku asukohaga (2).

Photo / Foto: Irita Kallis



Fig. 5. Ditch-like depression filled with burned limestone rubble.

Jn 5. Pölenud paekivipurruga täidetud vagumus.

Photo / Foto: Irita Kallis

Approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of the investigated area was formed by a shallow but wide ditch, probably a dried-up creek bed, which was filled with severely burned limestone rubble and granite boulders, pieces of bog ore, slightly burned clay and few slag pieces (Figs. 2: XIII, 5). The ditch-like depression in the natural soil with its rubble fill continued at least 15 m eastwards from the excavated area, where it was observed during the supervision of the digging of the ditch for water mains. The width of the ditch-like depression was at least 12 m, the depth in the middle more than 1.5 m from the original surface. Interpreted as a dried-up creek-bed, the ditch-like depression runs in the east–west-direction longitudinally along the moraine hill. It may have served as a source for building material



Fig. 6. Fragment of the wave-ornamented A III type pottery.
Jn 6. Laineornamendiga A III tüüpi savinõu fragment.
Photo / Foto: Mirja Ots

for the iron-smelting furnaces (stones having been laid bare by water) and afterwards also as a site for disposal of the burnt-out stone from furnace shafts.

In addition to the described features, a grouping of three post holes was discovered in the SE-corner of the excavated area (Fig. 2: X–XII). Although the post holes did not seem to have any direct connection to the iron-smelting furnaces and pit-forges, nevertheless the radiocarbon dating (see below) seemed to indicate that they are contemporaneous. The post holes were interpreted as the remains of some light structure or shelter on the iron-smelting site.

The most significant finds³ collected during the excavations are the pottery finds. The fragments of the A III type (Selling 1955, 140–155; Lang 1985, 201–205) vessels decorated with the linear ornament are determinative to the dating of the site (Fig. 6). In Estonia such pottery is typical for the northern coastal areas (Tamla 1983, 304), until now being dated broadly to the Viking Age (Schmie-

dehelm 1939, 134). Only Valter Lang has offered a more precise time span – the 9th century and the beginning of the 10th century (Lang 1996, 78). Swedish pottery of the same type is dated to the period from the mid-9th century to the second half of the 10th century, and is believed to originate from the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea (Selling 1955, 148, 153–154, Abb. 63).

Radio-carbon dates from the samples collected from the Tödva iron-smelting site seem broadly to confirm the dating of pottery – the dating ranged between 1085 ± 30 BP (cal. 95.4% 890–1020 AD)⁴ in pit-forge V and 1111 ± 80 BP (cal. 95.4% 680–1120 AD)⁵ in post holes X and XII.

Three samples of slag and three samples of bog-ore (limonite) collected from the Tödva iron-smelting site were analysed in the Institute of Geology of the Tallinn University of Technology (Table 1).⁶

Slag sample 3 (big, foamy lump of lightweight slag) consisted mainly of molten clay, but samples 1 and 2, collected near the pit-forges VI and V showed composition typical to the primitive iron-smelting activities. Surprisingly, the results of the analysis of the slag differed significantly from the results of the analysis of the pieces of the bog ore collected. The main difference lay in the high phosphorus and low manganese content of the ores, which is nevertheless typical for the Estonian bog ores analysed previously (Peets 2003, 34). According to Tarmo Kiipli and Toivo

³ AI 6870.

⁴ Hela-1911.

⁵ Tln-3118.

⁶ Analysis performed by Toivo Kallaste (Institute of Geology of the Tallinn University of Technology).

| No. / Nr | Sample / Proov | P ₂ O ₅ | SiO ₂ | Al ₂ O ₃ | Fe ₂ O ₃ | MnO | MgO | CaO | Na ₂ O |
|-------------|----------------|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|-------------------|
| 1. | Tödva, slag | 0.62 | 19.3 | 2.98 | 58.1 | 1.89 | 0.34 | 2.62 | 0.34 |
| 2. | Tödva, slag | 0.43 | 28.68 | 4.51 | 49.04 | 1.51 | 0.34 | 2.5 | 0.68 |
| 3. | Tödva, slag | 0.33 | 69.47 | 11.04 | 2.3 | 0.09 | 0.82 | 2.83 | 1.58 |
| 4. | Tödva, ore | 1.96 | 19.73 | 2.38 | 43.79 | 0.02 | 0.26 | 1.29 | 0.11 |
| 5. | Tödva, ore | 1.71 | 34.92 | 0.5 | 39.86 | 0.01 | 0.08 | 1.05 | 0.03 |
| 6. | Tödva, ore | 1.48 | 33.51 | 4.32 | 35.17 | 0.03 | 0.46 | 2.3 | 0.25 |

Kallaste, researchers of the Institute of Geology of the Tallinn University of Technology, the source for manganese could be maritime manganese-iron concretions, which also occur in the soil of Estonian coastal regions.

The iron-smelting site of Tödva village is the first Viking Age iron-smelting site archaeologically investigated in Estonia. Due to the limited scope of the rescue-excavations, the location of the slag deposits in Tödva remained unearthened, which makes it difficult to estimate the level of the intensity of the iron production.⁷ Nevertheless, it was discovered, that contrary to the traditional opinion, the limonite bog ore was not the only raw material known to the ancient Estonian iron-smelters (Peets 2003, 34), but also iron-manganese concretions of maritime origin could have been used.

Table 1. XRF-analysis of slag and ore samples from the Tödva iron-smelting site
 Tabel 1. Tödva rauasulatuskoha šlaki- ja maagiproovide XRF-analüüsid.

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⁷ Some slag samples discovered during fieldwalking in Tödva have been analyzed by Michail Gurin, Belarusian researcher in the 1980ies (Gurin 1988).

ARHEOLOOGILISED KAEVAMISED TÖDVA RAUASULATUSKOHAL

2008. a mais toimusid arheoloogilised kaevamised Harjumaal Tõdva külas Ildase talu maale jääval rauasulatuskohal, mis olid jätkus seal 2007. a läbi viitud eeluuringutele ning järelevalvetöödele. Tuginedes arheoloogilise välitöö tulemustele, samuti varasemale kaardimaterjalile, võib Ildase talu krundi jagada kaheks eriilmeliseks osaks: läänes kuivendatud soo ning idas moreenpõndak.

Muistis paikneb loode-kagu-suunalisel moreenpõndakul, mis saab alguse Tallinn–Viljandi maantee kohalt ja jätkub u 100 m lääne suunas. Kuigi põndaku täit ulatust polnud võimalik välja selgitada, on see visuaalselt jälgitav ka Ildase taluhoovist põhja pool. Moreenpõndak on moodustunud savisest kruusast, milles sisaldub hulgaliiselt erinevas mõõdus paekivistükke ja vähem graniitveeriseid. Ümbrustest maapinnast u. 1–1,5 m vörra kõrgemal paikneva põndaku lounapiiril lõppeb kirjeldatud segapinnas järsult, muutudes sõmeraks, madala savisisaldusega liivaks.

2008. a kaevati läbi kogu Ildase talu planeeritava eluhoone alune – 181 m². Lisaks tehti ka järelevalvetöid kommunikatsionitrasside kaevamisel (jn 1). Juba 2007. a välitööde käigus tulid päevalgele kahe rauasulatusahju ja kolme väliäsi jäänused, millele 2008. a lisandus veel ühe oletatava rauasulatusahju põhi (jn 2: III).

Tõdva rauasulatuskoha ahjude puhul olid maasse süvendatud šahtahjud. Nende konstruktsioonidest olid säilinud u 35 cm sügavused ja u 40 cm läbimõõduga, maakividega vooderdatud šlakikogumisaugud (jn 3) ning ümber nende paiknevad paekivist vared, mida interpreteerisime ahjude maapealse osade lammutusjäänustena. Kui šlakikogumisaukude maakividest vooderdustel oli näha vaid mõningasi põlemise märke, siis lammutusvaredes paiknenud paekivid olid tugevas kuumuses muutunud hapraks. Augud olid täitunud söetükkidega segatud mullaga.

Väliäsidena tõlgendasime ahjude vahetus läheduses paiknevaid madalaid neljakandilisi, u 40 × 50 cm suurusi auke, mis olid kolmest küljest ja põhjas vooderdatud paeplaatide või maakividega. Ääside ümbruses leidus rohkesti šlakitilku. Iga ääsi juures paiknes u 25 cm läbimõõduga postiauk, kus toona võis paikneda alasipaku (jn 4).

Umbes kolmandiku kaevandist hõlmas selle põhjaküljel paiknev massiivne, põhiliselt tugevalt põlenud paekivistükke sisalda vare, mis täitis enam kui 1,5 m sügavust vagumust (jn 2: XII, 5). Vares oli vähemal määral ka põlenud maakive, soomaagi-

tükke, savikamakaid ja üksikuid šlakitükkide. Kommunikatsionitrassides paljandus sama vagumus ka mujal Ildase talu krundil, olles vähemalt 12 m laiune. Tegemist on oletatavasti loodusliku süvenediga, mille põhjast on võetud ahjude ehituseks valaminevat materjali ning mis hiljem on täidetud rauasulatusahjudes läbipõlenud pae- ja maakivide, üksikud põlenud liivarikka savi tükkide, kiviprügi ja soomaagi tükkidega.

Lisaks nimetatutele paljandusid kaevandi kagu-nurgas kolm postiauku (jn 2: X–XII), mis ei näinud olevalt otsest seotud ahjude ja ääsidega. Võimalik, et tegemist on jäänustega mingist varjugaluse-tüüpि ehitistest.

2008. aastal Tõdvast kogutud leiumaterjali seas on esikohal savinõude fragmendid. Rauasulatuskompleksi dateerimise seisukohalt on olulised A III peenkeraamiliste tüüp'i nõude katked, mille kaelaja õlaosa vahel on nõu mõikaimitsioon; viimase all kohtab ainsa kaunistuselementina harvadel puhkadel laineornamenti (jn 6). Eestis on taoline keraamika iseloomulik põhjaranniku muististele kusjuures siinsed uurijad on dateerinud selle üksmeelselt umbmääraselt viikingiaega. Üksnes Valter Lang ajaldb laineornamendiga nõuvariandi kitsamalt 9.–10. saj algusesse. Rootsis ollakse seisukohal, et keraamikatüüp A III kuulub tervikuna ajavahemikku 9. sajandi keskpaik – 10. sajandi teine pool ning on pärít Läänemere idakaldalt. Lisaks keraamikaleidudele osutavad Tõdva rauasulatuskompleksi viikingiaega kuulumisele ka radiosüsiniku proovid, mis dateerivad objekti ajavahemikku 890–1020 ja 680–1120 pKr.

Kaevamiste käigus leitud šlaki- ja rauamaagitükke analüüsiti Tallinna Tehnikaülikooli Geoloogia Instituudis (tabel 1). Analüüsiti kolme šlaki- ja kolme maagiproovi. Huvitavaid tulemusi andsid proovid 1 ja 2, mis osutusid tüüpilisteks primitiivse rauatootmisega seostatavateks fajaliitseteks šlakkideks. Üllatuslikult andis sootuks teistsuguseid tulemusi maagitükkide analüüs: erinevalt šlakkidest oli maakide puhul täheldatav kõrge fosforisisaldus ja madal mangaanisisaldus, mis on iseloomulik Eesti nn soomaagile (limoniit). Tõdva šlakkides sisalduva mangaani allikana võiks kõne alla tulla merepõhjas tekivad mangaani-rauakonkretcioonid, mida esineb ka rannikualadel meresettelises liivapinnases.

Tõdva küla Ildase talu maadel avastatud rauasulatuskompleksi puhul on tegemist esimese arheoloogiliselt uuritud viikingiaegse rauasulatuskohaga Eestis. Tingituna päätsekaevamiste piiratud mahust, jäi leidmata šlaki ladustusplats, mistöttu on ka raske

hinnata sealsete rauatootmiste mahtu. Täiesti uudseks võib pidada aga Tôdva šlakianalüüsidel baseeruvat avastust, et vastupidiselt üldlevinud seisukohale polnud soomaak siiski mitte ainus siinsete rauasula-

tajate poolt kasutatud toormaterjal, vaid tõenäoliselt tunti ka meretekkelisi raua-mangaanikonkret-sioone.