



**COMMENTS ON
MARTTI VELDI AND TÕNNO JONUKS**
*The problem of forgotten sites: what to do with new
monuments? A case-study of long-known but left
behind sites from Ida-Virumaa*

WHERE DOES THE SHOE OF OUR HERITAGE PROTECTION PINCH?
VALTER LANG

Martti Veldi and Tõnno Jonuks have raised a most important topic: why newly discovered archaeological sites are not included in the state register as protected monuments and what to do with such new heritage. The article proposes to create a database on discovered, but non-registered and thus unprotected heritage, which is certainly necessary and would be of assistance in the protection of such sites and in planning and coordinating future research. Yet this cannot be the only solution, because this register would never replace state protection of heritage. Another question is who would create such a database and run it in future, when we know that the resources of the National Heritage Board are insufficient even to carry out their current obligations. This database could even become an excuse for some officials not to actively organise heritage protection as a database already exists. But this may be only a bad dream that will never become true.

Before targeting all existing powers to create such database, we need to analyse all possibilities of protecting newly discovered heritage sites. The authors should have looked deeper into the reasons of the present problem, as the reader does not really comprehend why new discoveries require such a long time to be taken under state protection. Regardless of the tight bureaucracy and shortage of work force this extremely slow pace as described in the article cannot be comprehended. When the minister does not sign the proposed list of state protected archaeological monuments for over a year, the question arises if this is up to the minister or something else. If it is up to the minister, could it not be possible to explain things to him? If the reason lies somewhere else, why have we not been informed of the obstacle? Yet it is only a single list. The Expert Council of Heritage Conservation has in the last few years discussed a number of various types of monuments to be included in the state register, mainly architectural heritage and historic sites – very seldom have we discussed archaeological monuments proposed to the state register. This suggests that the core of the problem lies mainly in the administrative shortcoming of implementing the archaeological policy of the National Heritage Board, in other words lack of qualified work force.

Who could assist the National Heritage Board in overcoming this obstacle? To solve a problem we first need to identify and recognise it. Here the authors of the article have

made a significant step. It is not by far the first step, since the topic has been discussed also earlier, but a written word always carries more weight than oral discussions. It is vital to bring the problem to the attention of the management of the National Heritage Board and the minister, so that they in turn could explain the situation to decision makers at the parliament charged with allocations from the state budget. I realise that this scheme may seem naive and idealistic, yet it is the only scheme that could result in solving this serious problem. Another possibility, but equally idealistic, would be to make amendments to the Heritage Conservation Act in order to diminish current bureaucracy in organising state protection over archaeological monuments. As an example – discovered sites could be declared state monuments without official consent from the minister, or we could re-introduce the concept of a ‘local monument’ (see below). A third possibility that would not be idealistic at all, would be to review the present working methods of the National Heritage Board in the sector relevant to this problem with the aim of finding possible internal resources to organise the work better.

The article pays attention also to finding out new archaeological sites in the landscape. Recently we have heard of calls to initiate a new registration of immovable heritage, fourth of the kind. Still, even the third registration remained unfinished. This was initiated by archaeologist Vello Lõugas who expected professional archaeologists to walk through the whole territory of Estonia. There is no denial of the problem, especially in areas with intense building and industrial activities or where treasure hunters are especially keen. Unfortunately there is no institution in Estonia who is charged with controlling and initiating registration activities. Archaeological research stands separate from protection of archaeological sites – research is coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Research and protection is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture. University archaeologists are engaged with studies and teaching and they basically do not have possibilities to actively take part in protection activities – first due to lack of time, and second, heritage protection is not considered academic enough. The work of academic archaeologists in the field of heritage protection is mainly connected with their areas of study and therefore rather sporadic in view of the whole territory. On the other hand, the National Heritage Board does not employ a sufficient number of professional archaeologists charged with finding out new archaeological sites and proposing them for the state register (following all the necessary administrative procedures). Yet, there is no shortage of professional archaeologists – each year at least half a dozen (and often more) young archaeologists graduate from the University of Tartu. Under the current circumstances there is no other way than for the National Heritage Board to take care of coordinating the findings and registration of new archaeological sites. The web-based database of known archaeological sites, as suggested in the article, would be the first step in starting this work. The Expert Council of Archaeologists will be happy to assist with knowhow. The question of who exactly would run this database, remains to be discussed, but a general background would be secured for interested parties to start their work.

Nevertheless, the authors of the article are rightly hesitant about work being done so far if the discovered sites in the end of the day will not be included in the state register of protected monuments. Another important issue is brought forward: is it necessary for every single monument to be under state protection? The question is relevant

first and foremost about monuments that are located on a large territory like settlement sites and ancient field systems that sometimes may cover hundreds of hectares. This is serious question for land owners. It is also relevant to ask how ‘recent’ a monument has to be so that it would not qualify as archaeological heritage. Similarly, are all monuments that are included in the state register or waiting to be included really proper monuments? The number of unanswered questions is large and probably archaeologists will never manage to find answers that suit all. Still, these questions need to be discussed prior to rushing head over heels to the landscape, as the authors quite rightly point out. In the Soviet times we made use of the concept ‘local monument’ – this was much easier to establish than a ‘national monument’. The current legislation does not differentiate anymore and only national monuments exist. Still, considering the present difficulties it may be a mistake. The database proposed by the authors can partly accomplish the aims of local protection, yet everything still depends on the agreements between involved individuals and institutions and their good will to fulfil the agreements. The authors are certainly right in claiming that the database will only function if it will be accessible for all interested parties. We will need other means to fight illicit use of metal detectors – hiding information will not do much good.

The essential point as I see it is that although we have a new and improved Heritage Conservation Act, we lack the resources to implement it in real life. This is where the shoe pinches the most.

***SOMETHING IS ROTTEN: SOME COMMENTS ON RAISED TOPICS
CONCERNING ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE PROTECTION
HEIKI VALK***

The problem raised by Martti Veldi and Tõnno Jonuks is of significant importance to be discussed among archaeologists. Something is rotten. Not in the state of Denmark, but in the state of Estonia, more precisely – in its state system of archaeological heritage protection. The presented numbers about sites discovered and those designated as state-protected monuments during the last decade are amazing and would even seem unbelievable, if not coming from reliable sources. As the recently discovered sites are anyhow not less valuable than those included in the state register, I fully agree with the authors that urgent changes are needed here.

The last decade’s practice of the National Heritage Board (NHB) not to add new sites to the lists, but to concentrate upon different aspects of already protected sites is not friendly towards the preservation of archaeological heritage as a whole. In fact, the recently discovered sites are anyhow not less valuable than the state-protected ones. The difference is only that some of the sites were lucky enough to be discovered in the time when getting state-protected was not so much hindered by bureaucracy than in the present time. Bureaucracy seems to overweigh actual work and this presents a threat to heritage. A cautionary example can be brought from Muhu Island, where a well-preserved grove site in Pärase village with an old sacred oak and an offering stone with a large man-made depression on its top was discovered in the course of the

inventory of the natural sacred places in 2005. As threatened by development activities, it was presented to be taken under state protection and was even covered by temporary half-year protection, but the NHB finally decided not to include the monument in the register of state-protected sites. By now the sacrificial stone is stolen. As the site is not protected, no crime has been committed and there is no judicial reason to launch an investigation. When does the time come for the oak tree?

In fact, the lists of discovered sites might be even longer than those published in AVE. Considering the misuse of the information against the non-protected monuments not all discovered objects by far have been presented there for publication.

The danger of looting archaeological monuments, both state-protected and unprotected, is really large. Although since June 1 2011 the use of metal detectors to look for objects of cultural value has been forbidden in Estonia and it is allowed only on the basis of licences issued by the NHB, the number of hobby detectorists who have passed the training to get the certificate is, when compared to the dispersed masses doing field-walking with metal detectors, insignificant. The working range of treasure hunters from Tallinn and the towns of eastern Virumaa has reached even the southern periphery of Estonia. Considering the present situation when metal-hunting on archaeological sites has become a popular entertainment for probably thousands of hobby-detectorists, the published data of discovered but not protected sites work as a guidebook to get an answer to the eternal question: where to go treasure hunting this weekend? And is it only a hobby? There is enough reason to suggest the presence of systematic and active network(s) for buying antiquities from 'hobby-detectorists', to sell them on coin auctions and in the black market. The hobby-detectorists get, of course, only a small part of the black market value of the artefacts and coins found. But unemployment is a big social problem in the countryside and something is better than nothing. Moreover, there is always a possibility and hope to get the jackpot – a hoard of old silver coins. When discussing the question of public availability about the data of unprotected sites, we must not forget the fact that public awareness in Estonia concerning archaeological heritage protection is far from the level in Britain or Denmark. Reaching that level takes several generations of hard work of the archaeologists' community.

The authors set up the idea of a database of unregistered archaeological monuments that would be available to all archaeologists, inspectors of the NHB, local municipalities and specialists holding a permit to document archaeological monuments. Such database really forms a useful tool – both for archaeologists and treasure hunters. But considering the danger of looting, access to the data must be strictly controlled and the risks of leaking data should be minimized as much as possible.

A question is how much of the data should be available to local municipalities. Both development activities and plundering sites by using metal detectors are serious threats to the archaeological heritage. We must consider that hobby-detectorism is widespread in rural areas and there may be people seeking for information about possible sites of treasure hunting also among local authorities (or among their close friends and relatives). Before making the data public, a lot of factors should be taken into consideration. Here, first and foremost, 'the principle of bigger threat' should be considered. Undoubtedly, total destruction of a site by using heavy machinery is

a much harder damage than picking up coins and archaeological artefacts by using metal detectors. However, detectors get more powerful every year, the number of users grows and the number of inhabitants in the countryside constantly decreases. People move to towns and/or larger rural settlements and control over what happens in the countryside is getting weaker and weaker. Moreover, the landowners generally give a positive answer to hobby-detectorists' request to walk on their land, not asking for their licence. Thus, different approaches towards presenting data on archaeological sites to local communities should be used in fast developing areas rural peripheries. While in quickly developing suburban communities information about most non-protected archaeological information should be immediately delivered to the local authorities, the threat of total destruction of sites is not so big in the peripheries. In some and not few cases, the best protected sites are these the location of which is not known to outsiders and the general public. The same principles that nature protection authorities have followed to protect eagle nests, should be introduced also in the practice of archaeological heritage protection. Even the location of some state-protected archaeological monuments should not be available to the public on the internet.

We also must consider that in terms of treasure looting, archaeological monuments are of different sensibility. Public knowledge about the location of cup-marked stones, judging by the existing archaeological information, probably does not cause any threat to them, but in the case of settlement sites and cemeteries, both inhumation and cremation, also the upper 20–30 cm under the surface may contain important archaeological information that will easily get lost as a result of detector looting. Most vulnerable to looting are sacred places – possible sites of coin offering where nearly all detailed information may be destroyed by looters using metal detectors. It is a well-known fact that just coins are one of the main targets of treasure hunters and/or hobby-detectorists. Thus, no general rules can be outlined, but every site must be considered individually.

Before deciding, whether to publicize data of a newly discovered or re-discovered site, it would be advisable to check the monument with metal detectors: does it contain artefacts that could serve as targets for looting? In this field also the cooperation of archaeologists with reliable and law-obedient hobby-detectorists could be developed. But who should do these works? Is it a task for the academic institutions? Rather a new challenge to the National Heritage Board who even without that has presently no human and financial resources to fulfil its tasks.

Although the idea of a general archaeological database is being presented by the authors as a fresh suggestion, such database was initiated by the University of Tartu already a long time ago. The commented article makes references to the database in its bibliography, and one of the authors has used this database in his work for a long time, therefore the suggestion to create a new database seems odd. The database of place-related archaeological information that has gradually been developed for more than a decade, includes at present in concentrated form most of the information from the archaeological archives and/or collections of Estonian archaeological institutions. The IT-environment of the database has been developed in cooperation with the Register Department of the NHB and in 2010–2011 the database became accessible on the internet, connected to the register of state protected sites. This step has created

preconditions for a broader use. Although data have been available for the NHB archaeological heritage protection officials for years, access to the database has been provided to all NHB people engaged in archaeological heritage protection work since this spring.

The database of place-related archaeological information can surely be used as source material for preparing archaeological field inventories and for finding the sites in the landscape. However, for threats mentioned above, the database cannot become so widely accessible as suggested by the authors. Granting easy access to large amounts of data (that anyhow are available in the archives) does not outweigh the risk of data leaks and consequent misuse of the data for looting the sites. A precondition for getting data for field inventories should be reports of field works carried out by using data from the database.

On the grounds of the database within the international project 'Archaeology, authority and community', financed by the European Union European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument Estonia-Latvia-Russia cross-border programme, the University of Tartu has launched the inventory of sites, mentioned in archaeological archives but not state-protected, in at least 15 parishes of eastern and south-eastern Estonia. The work takes place in 2012–2014. We encourage all active archaeologists, especially colleagues from the University of Tallinn, to initiate systematic field inventories by checking old data also in the northern and western regions of Estonia.

**PROTECTION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONUMENTS –
VIEW OF A HERITAGE INSPECTOR**
ANTS KRAUT

In response to the issues raised in the article by Martti Veldi and Tõnno Jonuks, I would like to begin with good news and expand a bit the comment by Valter Lang. Estonia has a good Heritage Conservation Act and numerous well preserved monuments, despite of shortage of resources available for their protection. Not trying to paraphrase well-known quotes "Who has the power when people are in power?" and "What is state?" it is quite certain that in the field of protection of archaeological monuments archaeologists are in power. Archaeologists who are active today are those who have provided us with the current Heritage Conservation Act, both the original 1994 Act and the amended Act from 2002. The new amendments to the Heritage Conservation Act were largely initiated in 2011 by archaeologists and they provided most of the major changes to the Act. True, it was not possible to ban the use of metal detectors on monuments to avoid looting, but several hopes and proposals from Estonian archaeologists concerning protection of underwater heritage and finds of cultural value were included in the legislation. With these changes in the background, the issue raised by Veldi and Jonuks is not the acutest and reminds slightly of shooting a sparrow with a canon. Far more serious are the issues of unknown monuments and looting by treasure hunters commented by Valter Lang and Heiki Valk, being probably the most serious problem in Estonian archaeology at present. However, I thank the authors for raising this topic. This makes us discuss things that need our joint effort in order to find the best possible solutions. As chief inspector of

archaeology it has been my responsibility to make decisions concerning management of archaeological heritage both in Soviet Estonia and also for twenty years in independent Estonia. These comments from a heritage inspector may shed light to some aspects that may not be so obvious from a scientist's point of view.

Concepts and statistics

The Heritage Conservation Act determines that an immovable object can be declared monument by the directive of the Minister of Culture, earlier also by his decree. Only after that it is called a protected monument or a protected site. Therefore the official number of protected sites and monuments is the one presented in the national register of monuments. For all other places or sites we may use whatever popular name we choose, protected monuments are those that include finds of cultural value and a cultural layer. Those archaeological finds that the authors list in their article are protected by the state from the moment of discovery, yet they will have to go through a long process before becoming protected monuments.

It is difficult to say without substantial analysis how many of the finds and objects listed in the tables of the current publication may be immovable heritage. Certainly hill forts with visible characteristics, stones, find places of human bones and the like are considered immovable heritage. Sites with above ground chance finds and even find places of hoards require supplementary research and determining their borders before they may be presented to the Minister of Culture to declare protected monuments. From the sites discovered in a certain year that are listed in the table the proportion of such sites is well over 50%. The majority of the 42 sites mentioned in the table as monuments or cultural heritage, discovered in 2009, are places where chance finds have been collected, from which 16 are said to have no cultural layer i.e. they do not have the characteristics required to be a protected immovable monument. 12 find places are located outside Estonia, on the present territory of Russia. Yet there is no doubt that all these sites are sites of archaeological finds. Until these sites are legally not declared protected monuments, they (those situated in Estonia) are included in the national register of monuments as registered sites and as such they are subject to protection and research as stated in the Heritage Conservation Act. An attempt has been made to mark such sites on the maps of the Estonian Land Board with a special symbol to indicate 'sites being analysed'. Such symbols were of assistance in cases of planning or construction, but at the same time they were endangered by possible looting as pointed out also by Heiki Valk.

In terms of numbers, we should add to the registered number of 6624 archaeological monuments also 11 heritage protection areas in historic city centres, numerous medieval and early modern manors and historic churchyards (only 43 of the churchyards are protected as archaeological monuments, too). The total area of those, their connection with contemporary settlements and the amount of protection methods would totally change the presented statistics. It is not intended to diminish the importance of the protection of 'forgotten' sites, but it explains the background of the main issue: the relation between aims, requirements and resources.

But first, some more statistics. From the 6544 sites and objects that were declared protected in the years 1997–1998 altogether 38% (2510 monuments) had been under state protection for 50 years, 48% (3159 monuments) were under local protection and

13% (875 monuments) were added in 1997–1998 by the Minister of Culture. Hence the majority of sites and objects discovered over 20 years were on the ‘waiting list’ for the government decision for state protection. This was the situation in Soviet Estonia when we made use of the peculiar Soviet legal system. Upon re-establishing independence, it was a bold step to include all these previously protected sites and monuments into the new legal frame. The result of the decision made then affects the present day, now put forward for discussion by Veldi and Jonuks.

Creation of an administrative act – the present day in heritage protection

The authors have mapped the process of how a site becomes a protected monument, and distinguished seven stages in the process. They agree that scientists in academic circles may not be familiar with the administrative requirements and work methods. In addition to the Heritage Conservation Act a number of implementation acts need to be considered. The implementation acts list several actions and documentation procedures that are very time consuming – in fact the most time consuming procedures have not been mentioned by the authors. For example, requirements regarding restrictions imposed to owners – communication with landowners (future owners of monuments and protection zones) and local authorities prior, during and after a site has been declared a protected monument. Precisely here is an answer to the question why newly discovered sites take a long time to be included in the register of monuments and therefore remain without protection. Someone has to do it. An example from recent past can perhaps explain the problem. 25 years ago, when archaeology was taught by one or two professors and two or three archaeologists graduated every year, we had four inspectors working with archaeological heritage in Estonia. Sites were declared protected on the basis of a list, no maps were needed. Today the process of declaring archaeological sites protected monuments has become extremely complicated, but only one or two specialists are charged with this work, in addition to their other everyday duties. At the same time archaeology is taught by a dozen lecturers in two universities, around a dozen students graduate each year, 30–40 archaeologists are engaged with fieldwork.

Another important aspect that the article does not address concerns requirements that the proposal to take an object under protection should follow. Legal acts list these requirements, but a majority of these requirements are not fulfilled by archaeologists also for the ‘forgotten’ monuments. For example, the authors mention re-discovered and newly discovered monuments in Ida-Virumaa, yet they have not presented a duly completed proposal for initiating the process of including these monuments in the state register as protected monuments. Analysing newly discovered archaeological sites and compiling expert opinions concerning their characteristics is certainly one of the tasks of the National Heritage Board, but not among the priority duties as stated in the statute and development plans. This is also reflected in the structure of the National Heritage Board and in the allocated resources for the work. All administrative acts in the given time scale to declare archaeological sites protected monuments have been prepared by the archaeologists employed by the National Heritage Board. This work is additional to their everyday duties and has depended on the critical need for protection of specific sites. Not a single administrative act has been rejected by the Minister of

Culture and the government has supported also issues related to the rewards for discovering finds of cultural value. Hence solutions to this particular problem lie rather in better cooperation between archaeologists and heritage specialists.

Find notices, prehistoric sites and protected monuments

At closer look the distribution and character of discovered, but unregistered sites and find places seem to be quite random. This indicates another serious problem, referred to also by Valter Lang – the third nation-wide registration of monuments and sites has remained unfinished, present-day archaeologists have not taken up systematic field surveys as a research topic or a contracted job. Fortunately there are still some exceptions. Mati Mandel has systematically studied historic Läänemaa and Gurly Vedru has researched Harjumaa, Heiki Valk has conducted systematic field work in South Estonia and Andres Vindi has discovered numerous new sites. Also sites discovered by them have waited too long to be included in the state register of cultural monuments, but at least those sites are correctly documented and been approved by experts. A positive example is also Aivar Kriiska and his studies of various Stone Age sites in Estonia. At the same time there are plenty of regions that have not seen an archaeologist for dozens of years; the sites discovered by amateurs are waiting for the assessment by professionals. This shortcoming is to some extent amended by the database of registered sites and articles published in the annual archaeological publications. Research covers more areas and it is possible to consider the results in the planning process. This leads to another issue: do all found archaeological sites need to get state protection? It is clear that the present system, although administratively time consuming, is simple, but it ignores the concerns of land owners. Comparing our system to countries that proceed from the rights of the owners, we come across totally different systems. Although we do not have a recent overview of different practices in other European countries, we can refer to an example from the Master's thesis of Ingrid Ulst, defended in 2012: "There are some 18 000 protected sites in England but possibly 90% of known sites are not scheduled" (Ulst 2012, 23 and the literature cited). As we see, only 10% of archaeological monuments are state protected. But still – our history is in our monuments and we attempt to protect them the best we can regardless of practices in other countries.

What next?

In order to find answers to all the raised questions it is necessary to analyse a few other aspects. One of them is the actual content of the protected monuments, another aspect their chronological boundary. Regarding the actual content, both the heritage specialists and the owners are becoming rather cautious due the growing number of 'zero' reports – both preliminary studies and surveillance of protected monuments tend to result in discovering no traces of archaeological finds or a cultural layer. It appears as if the restrictions imposed by the state are not justified. Has a mistake been made? Perhaps in research, assessment, principles of protection, administrative proceedings? Who is responsible and should pay the costs? Where does an archaeological site or monument end? More and more new discoveries originate from periods, where archaeology has the role of an assisting science, a research method. Which restrictions to ownership

are relevant in such cases? More and more of the precious time of heritage inspectors is spent on administrating the protection of cultural layers and archaeological sites from very recent times. This, however, means that caring for prehistoric monuments suffers and the 'waiting list' to be included in the register of monuments is becoming longer.

We may conclude that solutions to all the raised issues are fortunately a reversible process, i.e. almost nothing is entirely lost and mistakes can be mended. In a democratic country with private ownership archaeologists will be faced with new huge challenges in addition to managing the preservation of 'forgotten' monuments. Hundreds of protected archaeological sites and monuments need to be 'filled' with scientific information and expert opinions to justify their protection to owners, local authorities, scientists, the general public. For this cooperation and a helping hand from every archaeologist is welcome!

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COMMENTING THE COMMENTS: A REPLY TO VALTER LANG, HEIKI VALK AND ANTS KRAUT

MARTTI VELDI and TÕNNO JONUKS

We thank everybody for their comments. The extent and detail of the discussion proves that the questions addressed are important and in need of general attention from the Estonian archaeological community. Each of the commentators tackles the problems from their own professional and ethical points of view. It also seems that further discussion among a much wider audience is necessary as there seem to be some extensive issues, like the concept of a protected site in general, that must be debated.

Still, we see that the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing: there is a considerable watershed between heritage management (the National Heritage Board) and academic archaeologists. The aim of the article was not to point fingers at culprits, but to analyse the current situation resulting in a discussion how to go on more effectively.

The past 20 years of regained independence have showed that both archaeologists and heritage management need to adapt to new conditions of land ownership, and also adjust the understanding of information exchange. This means that we need to be more open to discussion, and take a turn from heritage protection towards heritage management, which demands more collaboration and transparent decisions between archaeologists, the National Heritage Board, and also different stakeholders. In the long-run this means changes in mentality, which cannot happen overnight, but demands more time.

We do understand the complicated bureaucratic mechanisms behind monument designation, and acknowledge Ants Kraut's comment with all the necessary details, with the special focus on communication with landowners. The latter is especially vital, for we cannot forget the actual owner of the site. But still, it is not possible to hide behind the bureaucracy. We just need to find more effective ways how to handle it. For example, a myriad of bureaucratic obligations of coordination with different government instances and private owners apply for landscape planners and contractors as well, but somehow they manage to put their interests forth. True, the motivation of private sector has always been higher than that of the state.

It is most useful how Ants Kraut explained the history of the protection of sites and most certainly – the majority of problems we are struggling now derives from the mass-listing of sites in the 1980s and 1990s. It was then when many sites were listed as protected, but many of them can be rather considered as find-places or stray finds. In this respect the careful practice now with expert assessments and collecting different data is the only possible way. But simultaneously it must be understood that this practice is far too slow and alternative, more dynamic and less bureaucratic solutions can be used in addition. Even though the database we suggested will never have this legal power as the official list, it might be more effective to share data. The issue is even more important as there are different initiatives for extensive landscape surveys all over Estonia. But what to do with all those newly discovered sites?

Arheoloogia kabinet (archaeological infrastructure unit of the University of Tartu) has done a great job over the past decades compiling the database of all known archaeological sites in Estonia. As an application for the National Registry of Monuments, the database can be a very effective tool both for heritage management and research purposes. This database could be a perfect platform for the solution suggested in the article, but it also demands more transparent information exchange. The main problem at this point is that a very limited circle of people is actually aware of the possibilities that the database can offer, which can result in pointless overlapping work, and insufficient use of resources. Another issue is that even though the database has been compiled for over ten years, the inserted material is more detailed concerning South-Estonia (pers. comm. Heiki Valk (TÜ), 14.09.2012). Other regions of Estonia have been paid less attention to. Thus the database has different purposes and even though one database can manage different types of data, it would be good to have one for each goal. And this is especially important if considering the limited access to the database of the *Arheoloogia kabinet* and strict rules of use.

This leads us to the next issue in the debate. As Valter Lang mentions the database can be only good if used by everybody who needs it and it is hard not to agree with it.

This is in sharp contradiction with the view of Heiki Valk who suggests limited and controlled access. Without any doubt, the plundering of archaeological sites destroys our knowledge of the past and most certainly it is an increasing problem combined by new and more efficient technical equipment and growing black market. The situation is clearly not so black-and-white with archaeologists on one side and greedy users of metal detectors on the other. Among both of them there are different people with different interests and purposes. Still, an intersection can be found among both groups, which could lead to more useful collaboration. That kind of positive encompassment of hobby users of metal detectors has already proved its effectiveness for archaeologists. But this was not the scope of the article. One of the issues is, that it is very difficult to prevent hobby users of metal detectors doing field-walking and most certainly they do their homework in advance. Ironically, the most useful source for searching finds – the database of historic maps at the Estonian National Archives – is freely accessible over the internet without any regulations at all. This makes us ask the same question as Valter Lang did: are there any other ways of fighting against the plundering than locking up data? At the same time, it is obvious that there are finds which are better not spoken about loudly and deliberately advertised. This goes most of all for hoard finds. Despite of these examples, it must be admitted that an archaeological site and an eagle's nest are not one and the same and should also be protected differently.

Even though we have a new good Heritage Conservation Act, it is quite obvious that the state does not have the power, the money, nor the efficacy to actually protect these sites the way the law obliges. In these circumstances the National Heritage Board is only capable of monitoring the current situation, and it should be the local communities, who should take care of the sites. For sustaining the sites not designated as national monuments the local communities should be aware of these sites. Valuing archaeology by local communities can only become through knowledge, which means that archaeologists should not 'hide' their information from the public. And in this respect a database covering also not protected sites can be a useful tool if available to local authorities. At the same time, the database we suggested was never meant to be either the ultimate goal for next years in Estonian archaeology, neither a magic wand to solve all the problems. It is just one option that could fill one gap and work mostly for sharing data.

The situation at hand most certainly demands further discussion, which sites must be designated as national monuments protected by the law, and which sites can just be listed as archaeologically interesting. This leads us to the concept of 'archaeological monument' and its characteristics, discussed both by Ants Kraut and Valter Lang. In order to improve the protection of archaeological heritage we need a round table of archaeologists to define in detail what are the characteristics and differences of an archaeological site and an archaeological monument. Another round table about different archaeological databases and their possibilities should also be in order. This could lead to a more effective protection scheme with different levels and categories of sites and monuments. All interested parties could actually gain from a more flexible system.