



THE SILVER HOARD FROM KÕUE

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DISCOVERY OF THE HOARD AND SURVEY OF THE FIND SPOT

In spring 2013 amateur archaeologist Rene Vinkler, using a metal detector, found silver ornaments and coins in a freshly ploughed *Koolimäe* field located about a kilometre south of the Kõue manor (Triigi village, Harjumaa). Archaeologists from the National Heritage Board and the Institute of History of Tallinn University (Ulla Kadakas, Villu Kadakas and Mauri Kiudsoo) who examined the finds and find spot agreed that R. Vinkler had come across a hoard from the end of the prehistoric period. Trial pits and further survey with a metal detector provided more finds and confirmed the supposition that the hoard was not in a compact cluster, but was scattered over the field in different horizons of the soil. However, mapping the finds revealed that they remained within a clearly limited area with a diameter of 20 m (Fig. 1). No finds suggesting a settlement layer – potsherds, animal bones, burnt stones, etc. – were discovered there. Occupation layer suggesting a settlement site was absent also in the trial pits dug further in the field: beneath the evenly light brown 35–40 cm thick top soil of clay-rich moraine there lay intact yellowish loam (Tamla & Kiudsoo 2013). To recover the scattered parts of the hoard and establish their original location, archaeological excavations had to be organized.

EXCAVATION METHODS

The excavations could take place only after the grain was harvested. Since the owner of the field wished to start autumn ploughing and sowing of winter corn as soon as possible, we had to choose a method different from the usual time-consuming archaeological excavations. In the area, which had been determined by preliminary investigations, an excavation measuring 25×25 m was dug, where the soil was removed by *ca.* 10 cm thick layers with the aid of an excavator, down to the intact soil. After the removal of each layer the plot was checked visually and then with metal detectors, by grid method (see Östergren 1989; Tamla



Fig. 1. Mapping of finds revealed that they remained within a clearly limited area.

Jn 1. Leidude kaardistamisega selgitati välja aarde leiuala.

Photo / Foto: Mauri Kiudsoo



Fig. 2. After the removal of each layer the plot was checked visually and with metal detectors.
Jn 2. Iga kiihi eemaldamise järel kontrolliti kaevand üle visuaalselt ja metallidetektoritega.
Photo / Foto: Mauri Kiudsoo

a part of the hoard. Among the coins of the hoard (see Table 1) specimens struck in various mints of Germany prevail. On 12 coins a riveted loop or its remains have been preserved, suggesting the use of them as ornaments, and one sheet pendant has been repaired with two coins (Table 1: 8, 13).

The bulkiest silver ornaments in the hoard are six penannular brooches (Fig. 3). On the basis of the cross-section of the arc and the specific features of terminal knobs they can be divided into two typological groups: four specimens with rhomboid arc

et al. 2006; Tamla et al. 2011). The removed soil, heavily hardened during the droughty summer, was spread beside the excavation, broken up and checked carefully once more with a metal detector (Fig. 2). The location of the discovered finds was surveyed and their depth was recorded by layers. We expected to establish the most likely original location of the hoard by the concentration of finds.

COMPOSITION OF THE HOARD

All in all about 200 g of silver was recovered, including 24 coins, 19 ornaments and one fragment of silver-working refuse. Besides these, some bronze objects were found that, most likely, also were

Table 1. Coins of the Kõue hoard.
Tabel 1. Kõue aarde vermingud.
Compiled by / Koostanud Mauri Kiudsoo¹

No/ Nr	Power / Country Võim / Riik	Town / Region Linn / Regioon	Ruler / Valitseja	Time / Aeg
1	Abbasides	Madinat as-Salam	al-Muqtadir	309AH
2	Samanides	Ash-Shash	Mansur ibn Nuh	359AH
3	Germany	Metz	anonymous	1080–1120
4–5	Germany	Andernach	anonymous	1027/30–50/60
6	Germany	Dinant	Count Albert	1018–64
7	Germany	Friesland	Count Wichmann III	994–1016
8	Germany	Emningheim?	Count Egbert II	1068–90
9	Germany	Emden	Count Hermann von Kalvelage	1020–51 (1050–70)
10	Germany	Dortmund	King Heinrich IV	1056–84
11	Germany	Corvey	Abbot Arnold I	1051–55
12	Germany	Hildesheim	Bishop Bernold	993–1002
13	Germany	Goslar	King Heinrich IV	1056–84
14–18	Germany	Goslar	Otto & Adelheid	991–1050
19–20	Germany	Magdeburg	anonymous	1023–51
21	Germany	Erfurt	Archbishop Bardo	1031–51
22–23	Germany	Erfurt	Archbishop Aribo / Bardo	1021–51
24	Germany	Worms	Heinrich II	1024–46
25	Germany	Regensburg	Emperor Konrad II & King Heinrich III	1027–39
26	Anglo-Saxon	Thetford	Aethelred II	1003–09

¹ Arabic coins were identified by Ivar Leimus (AM).

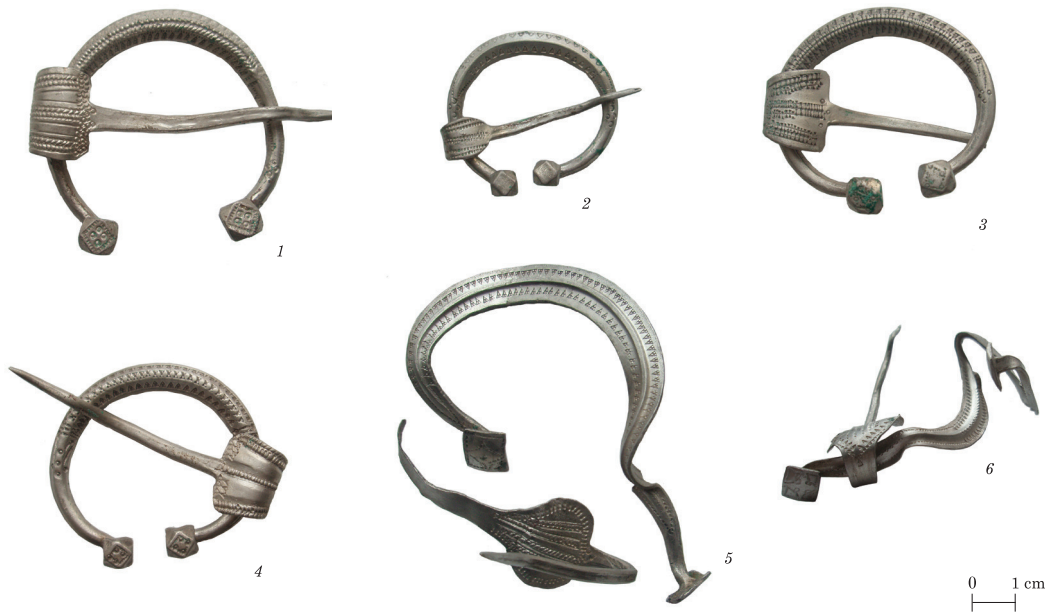


Fig. 3. Penannular brooches.

Jn 3. Hoburaudsõled.

(AI 7136: 1–6.)

Photo / Foto: Ülle Tamla



Fig. 4. Disc-shaped pendants from the Kõue hoard.

Jn 4. Kõue aarde sõõrjad ripatsid.

(AI 7136: 7–13.)

Photo / Foto: Ülle Tamla

and faceted knobs (Fig. 3: 1–4), and two with thin arc with a longitudinal ridge and flat quadrangular knobs (Fig. 3: 5–6). The arcs, knobs (except those of the smallest specimens with faceted knobs) and feet of the pins are decorated with geometrical patterns where rows of triangles and notches filled with dots and circles stamped with different punches, and the so-called fishtail pattern prevail. The penannular brooches with a longitudinal ridge are heavily twisted, but it has not been deliberate: the thin and plastic arc could have been deformed by the weight of soil or by agricultural tools. Fragile brooches with a more or less deformed ridged arc occur also in several other hoards found in Estonia, e.g. Tõrma II and Angerja I (see Tõnisson 1962, pl. XXIV: 6; Tamla & Kallavus 1998, 234, fig. 3).

The hoard contained also six disc-shaped pendants cut from thin silver sheet, and they all have a riveted flat loop of bronze sheet for hanging (on one pendant only a small fragment of a loop has been preserved on the rear side). The basic decorative motif on two pendants is quadriloop (Fig. 4: 1–2) and other two bear the cross image (Fig. 4: 3–4). These have been stamped and raised with different punches. The larger pendant

with a quadriloop has been torn into several pieces, but an attempt has been made to repair it with two coins riveted on the front side and a patch of bronze sheet attached to the rear side. Since several examples of coarse repair of silver ornaments can be found among Estonian archaeological finds, including tinkering of a fracture with a coin or a strip of metal sheet (Tamla 2008, figs 7, 7a), the pendant from the Kõue hoard tinkered with two coins is by no means exceptional. The two thinner pendants of an approximately equal size (one of them broken in two) differ from the previously known ones both by their decoration and its application. Their pattern resembles the inscriptions on Arabic coins (Fig. 4: 5–6). Since their relief decoration coincides to the smallest detail, it is evident that they were both decorated with the same die.

The four cast silver rings have a relatively narrow oblong front part and tapering overlapping ends. The ends of one ring are so long as to curl around the front part (Fig. 5: 1). This ring and one of the others have the front part decorated with a pattern stamped with different punches: the first bears rows of notches and triangles along the edges, the other



Fig. 5. Rings from the Kõue hoard.

Jn 5. Kõue aarde sõrmused.

(AI 7136: 14–17.)

Photo / Foto: Ülle Tamla

has a diagonal hatch between parallel lines (Fig. 5: 2). The two absolutely similar rings are quite modest, their front part is not decorated (Fig. 5: 3–4). One of them has just a little smaller diameter and its overlapping ends are worn quite thin. The smallest silver ornament is a circular knob mount (Fig. 6: 1), which has a fastening hole at the top. It is possible that the blank of the mount was cut from an oval piece of a silver sheet, which had a hole in the middle with a diameter coinciding with that of the mount (Fig. 6: 2).

Two S-shaped hooks have been made from a slightly profiled ribbon-shaped strip of bronze sheet, the surface of which is decorated with a dense transverse groove (Fig. 7: 1). Such hooks could have been used e.g. to attach a knife sheath to a belt (e.g. Mägi 2002, pl. 20: 2–4), but also to hang tinklers, amulets and some smaller commodities (e.g. needle-cases, keys and fire steels) onto breast chains or decorative pins (see Zariņa 2006, figs. 121: 4; 122: 3; 132: 22; 152; 157). The strip of bronze sheet bent to the shape of a loop, which has a rivet hole in the lower end has evidently belonged to a bronze or silver sheet pendant and detached from it when the rivet broke. The tun-shaped weight with iron core and bronze casing has two circles stamped on each flat top (Fig. 7: 2), indicating two-öre weight. This is also confirmed by its 16.9 g weight.

DATE OF THE HOARD AND ORIGIN OF THE ORNAMENTS

The latest of the coins of the Kõue hoard is an anonymous coin minted in the diocese of Metz, Germany, during the period 1080–1120 (Fig. 8). Since it has only a few test marks – pecks – scratched on it by some sharp object, which indicate the circulation frequency and speed of coins, the interval between the minting and deposition of this coin cannot be long. Since numismatists base the dating of hoards on the earliest possible time of minting, not the circulation, of the latest coin in its composition, the *tpq* (Latin *terminus post quem*)



Fig. 6. A knob mount and a silver sheet from the Kõue hoard.

Jn 6. Kõue aarde kühmnaast ja hõbepleki tükk.
(AI 7136: 18, 19.)

Photo / Foto: Ülle Tamla



Fig. 7. Two hooks and a weight from the Kõue hoard.

Jn 7. Kõue aarde kaks haaki ja kaaluviht.
(AI 7136: 20–22.)

Photo / Foto: Ülle Tamla



Fig. 8. The latest of the coins of the Kõue hoard: anonymous coin minted in Metz, Germany (1080–1120).

Jn 8. Kõue aardes sisalduv noorim münt: Metz, Saksamaa, anonüümne verming aastatest 1080–1120.

(AI 7136: 24.)

Photo / Foto: Tarvi Toome

in these parts in the 12th – early 13th centuries and were manufactured by local craftsmen. The same period has also been regarded as the beginning of local silver smithery and the time of the appearance of the so-called typical Estonian silver jewellery sets (Tõnisson 1962; 1970; Tamla 1991; Leimus 2009a). Since the ornaments in the Kõue hoard, discovered in 2013, can be dated more accurately on the basis of coins containing in the assemblage, we suggest that the appearance of the mentioned artefact types and the emergence of local craftsmen specializing in their manufacture must be dated somewhat earlier, i.e. to the second half of the 11th century. The date of the hoard, based on coins, is also confirmed by the above-mentioned pendant, coarsely repaired with two coins and a strip of bronze sheet: one of the used coins is a Frisian denier. Although in the Late Iron Age *Gewichtsgeldwirtschaft* was spread in Estonia as well as in other Baltic regions, sometimes it is still possible to establish the time of appearance and disappearance of some coins in the local *Gewichtsgeldwirtschaft* on the basis of the analysis of hoards. For example Frisian deniers do not occur in Estonian hoards before the 1060s (Leimus & Molvõgin 2000, 54–55; Leimus 2003, 45). The appearance of such coins in our hoards has been connected with a brief upturn of Frisian trade in the third quarter of the 11th century – a process that lasted for about 20–30 years (Leimus & Molvõgin 2000, 55). But since the Frisian coins, owing to their poorer silver content, quite soon disappear from the *Gewichtsgeldwirtschaft* of Rõvala-Harju (Kiudsoo in print), the time of the manufacture, and very likely also the repair, of the pendant in question must be in the 11th century.

Defining the provenance and date of artefacts by external features, i.e. similar or same types, similar workmanship and similar decorations, the two pendants with decorations resembling Arabic inscriptions cannot be regarded as typical Estonian ornaments. Although each of them has a loop of a bronze strip, attached with one rivet, which has been considered a distinctive feature of sheet pendants of local production (Tõnisson 1962, 220), their decoration resembling Arabic coins as well as its application by a die are puzzling. Among hundreds of prehistoric sheet pendants found in Estonia, which have been stamped and raised with different punches, only some pen-

of the Kõue hoard is 1080. Silver ornaments of the Kõue hoard resemble most of all ornaments from other hoards from the final stage of the prehistoric period discovered in other counties of North Estonia, Harju, Rõvala and Viru – both by their types and their manufacture. Such objects are, particularly, the penannular brooches with rhomboid arc and faceted terminal knobs, and those with flat arc with a longitudinal ridge and flat terminals, finger-rings with an oblong front part and overlapping ends, and sheet pendants decorated with geometrical patterns. It has been assumed that artefacts of these types became fashionable

dants from hoards discovered in Kose (Leimus 1986, nos 1684–1685), in Ubina (Tamla *et al.* 2006, 238) and in Vao (?) villages in Harjumaa (Talvio 1995, 181), in Kaarma-Piila village in Saaremaa (Talvio 2001, 206–212) and somewhere in southern Estonia (near Rāpina?) have been decorated with dies. The comparison of the non-traditionally decorated sheet pendants from the Rāpina and Kõue hoards is particularly fascinating because of the fact that the Rāpina find contains pendants decorated at least with three different dies, and all their patterns seem to be imitating coins. Whereas the design of the pendants decorated with two different cross motives resembles Anglo-Saxon coins, the specimens made with the third die also imitate Arabic coins (Leimus 2009b, 101, fig. 2). Although the pendants imitating Arabic coins in both hoards have been made with different dies, their appearance is strikingly similar. Close parallels to one-sided pendants imitating Arabic coin inscriptions can be found primarily in Finland, where by the year 1978 as many as 12 such specimens had come to light (Talvio 1978, Appendix 1). One of these, found from the cemetery of Kõyliö, and another from Akaa, Mainiemi (Talvio 1978, fig. 6: 9), are most similar to the specimens from the Kõue hoard. For a long time already, Finnish researchers have regarded such pendants as local production (Appelgren 1898, 24–29; Talvio 1978, 26 and references). According to Tuukka Talvio (1978, 32) bracteate imitations found in Finland are crude work, and their pseudo-legends are produced without proper die-cutter's tools. They may have been fabricated at various times during the 11th century by ordinary silversmiths.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE ORIGINAL LOCATION OF THE HOARD

Most likely the coins, silver and bronze artefacts found in the *Koolimäe* field all belonged to the same find assemblage. Although the investigations did not establish indisputably the original location of the hoard, we suggest that it could have been an area with a diameter of about 1.5 m in the ESE part of the excavation, where the concentration of finds was the highest. As neither there nor in any other part of the excavation no traces could be found of holes dug in the original intact soil, we think it likely that the hoard must have been deposited at ploughing depth. The absence of finds characteristic to a settlement site of the prehistoric period (burnt stones, clay packings, bone fragments, pottery) in the excavation as well as in the surrounding field suggests that a place further from dwellings had been selected for the deposition of the hoard. The nearest settlement sites with prehistoric habitation layer, one of which might be a village of Koy, with 19 ploughlands, also mentioned in *Liber Census Daniae* (Johansen 1933, 454), are at a distance of about a kilometre from the find spot.

For the interpretation of the presumable deposition site and reasons for deposition of the hoard we used the maps of the Kõue region. It appeared that in the *kolkhoze*-time map drawn in the end of 1960 the site was marked as field, and about 600 m NW of it lay a 2 ha orchard. Today the orchard has been disposed of, the trees rooted up, and there is a field instead. Traces of the liquidation of the orchard (e.g. transportation of soil) could not be observed in the profiles of the test pits dug during the preliminary investigations and archaeological investigation. On the post-WWII topographic maps of the USSR the presumable site of deposition of the hoard was either beside or beneath a village road running from NE to SW. Neither the run of the road nor the traces of pos-



Fig. 9. Map of Harjumaa from 1926.
Jn 9. Harjumaa kaart aastast 1926.
(Map in the archives of AI.)

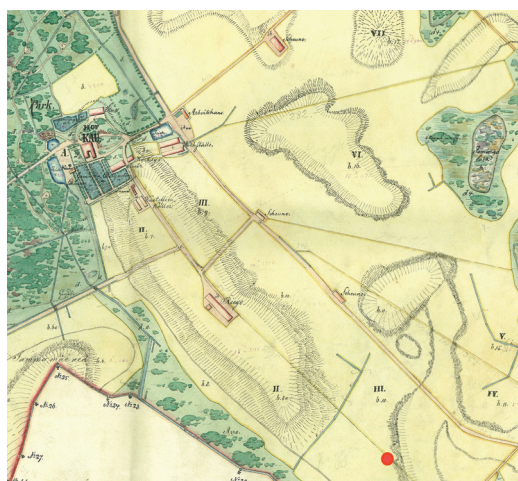


Fig. 10. Map of the Kõue estate from 1875.
Jn 10. Kõue mõisa plaan aastast 1875.
(Digital copy of the map in the archives of AI.)

sible earthworks related to its construction are now observable any more. On the so-called *verst* map from the beginning of the 20th century, the map of Harjumaa from 1926 (Fig. 9), and the oldest map we had, the map of the Kõue estate from 1875, the NE – SW road is missing. On the latter, however, a straight field track from NW to SE, grazing or crossing the find spot of the hoard, is marked (Fig. 10). If we presume that it could have been a road of a considerably older date, we may assert that the hoard had been deposited at the side of a road. In that case the scattering of the hoard may be related either with the ploughing-over of the field track, or more extensive earthworks connected with the construction of the road marked on the later maps.

SUMMARY

From the aspect of archaeology the silver hoard of Kõue is of a remarkable value from several aspects. First, the information that we were able to obtain in the course of the investigations on the find spot is very valuable. The hoard as historical source material is still more valuable for the date given on the basis of including coins, since it is considerably more accurate than the date established on the basis of the kinds of ornaments and their typology. The accurate date, in its turn induced us to revise the datings of several kinds of artefacts that are quite widespread in other hoards of the

final stage of the prehistoric period (including sheet pendants, penannular brooches with a rhomboid arc and faceted terminal knobs, those with a thin arc with a longitudinal ridge and flat terminals, open finger-rings with overlapping ends), and raise the question about the beginning of the activities of local ornament-makers specialized in making silver ornaments. Deciding by the Kõue hoard it could have taken place in the second half of the 11th century, i.e. somewhat earlier than has been hitherto suggested.

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KÕUE HÕBEAARE

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2013. a kevadel leiti Harjumaalt Kõue mõisast u 1 km kaugusele jäävalt äsja küntud põllult hõbeehteid ja -münste. Leiukoha täiendav seire kinnitas oletust, et avastatud on hõbeaare. Ühtlasi tõdeti, et peitvara pole kompaktset koos, vaid on u 20 m läbimõõduga alal laiali (jn 1). Aardest pärit leidude kokkukorjamiseks ja koha täpsemaks uurimiseks korraldati arheoloogilised kaevamised. Need toimusid tavapärasest erineval moel: leiualale rajati 25 × 25 m suurune kaevand, kust eemaldati mulda u 10 cm kihtide kaupa ekskavaatoriga. Iga kihi eemaldamise järel kontrolliti kaevand üle võrgustikmeetodil (jn 2). Ühtekokku saadi 24 vermingut (vt tabel 1), 19 ehteasja (jn 3–6: 1) ja üks hõbedatöötlamisjääk (jn 6: 2). Koos hõbedaga on peitvara hulka kuulunud ka mõned pronksesemed (jn 7). Aardes sisalduvate vermingute hulgas domineerivad Saksamaa müntlate rahad. Kõige hilisema vermingisajaga on Saksamaal Metzi piiskopkonnas 1080–1120 löödud anonüümne raha (jn 8), mille põhjal määrati aarde *tpq*-ks 1080.

Arheoloogilised kaevamised ei toonud täit selgust aarde algse peidukoha asjus. Leidude kontsentratsiooni põhjal võis selleks olla u 1,5 m läbimõõduga ala kaevandi ida-kagu poolses osas. Kuna seal ega kusagil mujal ei täheldatud sissekaevaid inimtegevusest puutumatusse pinnasesse, siis arvame, et vara oli peidetud künnikihi sügavusse. Muinasaegsele asulale iseloomuliku leiumaterjali puudumine kaevandis ja laiemalt kogu põllualal viitab asjaolule, et peidukohaks oli valitud eluasemetest kaugemale jääv koht.

Aarde peitmiskoha tõlgendamiseks kasutasime Kõue piirkonna eriaegseid kaarte. Pärastsõjaaegsetel kaartidel on aarde oletatav peitmiskoht paiknenud kirde-edelasuunalise külavahetee kõrval või selle all. 20. saj alguse nn verstakaardil, 1926. a Harjumaa kaardil (jn 9) ja 1875. a Kõue mõisa kaardil (jn 10) see tee puudub. Seevastu on mõisa kaardile kantud leiukohta riivav või üle selle kulgenud loode-kagusuunaline sirge põlluvahetee. Kui oletada, et selle tee näol oli tegemist oluliselt vanema, juba muinasajal kasutusel olnud teekohaga, siis võib ka arvata, et aare oli peidetud tee vahetusse lähedusse. Sellisel juhul võiks aarde laialikandumise siduda põlluvahetee üleskündmisega või hili-sematel kaartidel jälgitava kirde-edelasuunalise ja ilmselt mahuka mullatööga seotud tee-ehitusega.

Kõue hõbeaaret tuleb arheoloogiateaduse seisukohast hinnata kõrgelt mitmest aspektist. Kõigepealt on oluline informatsioon, mis talletati aarde avastamiskohas toimunud uuringute käigus. Aardele kui ajalooallikale lisab teaduslikku väärtust ka selles sisalduvate müntide põhjal saadud dateering, mis on oluliselt täpsem kui ehteasjade liigilisele koostisele ja tüpoloogiale põhinev vanusemäärang. See omakorda ärgitas üle vaatama Eesti muinasaja lõpuperioodi teistes aaretēs üsna laialt levinud mitmete ehtetüüpide, sh rinnalehtede ja harikaarega hoburaudsõlgede senised dateeringud ja tõstatama küsimuse hõbeehete valmistamisele spetsialiseeruma hakanud kohalike ehtemeistrite tegevuse algusest. Kõue aarde dateeringu põhjal otsustades võis see aset leida juba 11. sajandi teisel poolel.