Rakvere Teatrimägi – an overview of the site and new results from the archaeological excavations in 2015

Jekaterina Lissitsina, Liivi Varul, Martin Malve

Tartu Ülikool, ajaloo ja arheoloogia instituut, ajaloo osakond, laboratoorse arheoloogia õppetool (University of Tartu, Institute of History and Archaeology, Department of Archaeology, Chair of Laboratory Archaeology), Jakobi 2, 51014 Tartu, Estonia

OÜ Arheograator, Raekoja plats 11–16, 51004 Tartu, Estonia

Villu Kadakas

Tallinna Ülikool, humanitaarteaduste instituut, ajaloo, arheoloogia ja kunstiajaloo keskus (Tallinn University, School of Humanities, Institute of History, Archaeology and Art History), Uus-Sadama 5, 10120 Tallinn, Estonia

Aivar Kriiska

Tartu Ülikool, ajaloo ja arheoloogia instituut, ajaloo osakond, laboratoorse arheoloogia õppetool (University of Tartu, Institute of History and Archaeology, Department of Archaeology, Chair of Laboratory Archaeology), Jakobi 2, 51014 Tartu, Estonia

OÜ Arheograator, Raekoja plats 11–16, 51004 Tartu, Estonia; aivar.kriiska@ut.ee

INTRODUCTION

Archaeological rescue excavations were held in Rakvere during the spring and summer of 2015 when a trench was opened at Teatrimägi (Eng. 'Theatre Hill'). The trench was located east of the present-day theatre buildings, in an area where an annex to the Rakvere Theatre, the Cinema is planned to be constructed (Fig. 1). The fieldwork unearthed remains of several buildings from the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period, including walls from a carriage house from the 18th century (Fig. 2). Additionally, a small part of a medieval cemetery was discovered (see also Lissitsina *et al*. 2015).

It is known from previous excavations that the area has been inhabited since the first centuries AD or even earlier (by radiocarbon analysis from a fire pit; Aus 1993, 9). More extensive habitation belongs to the

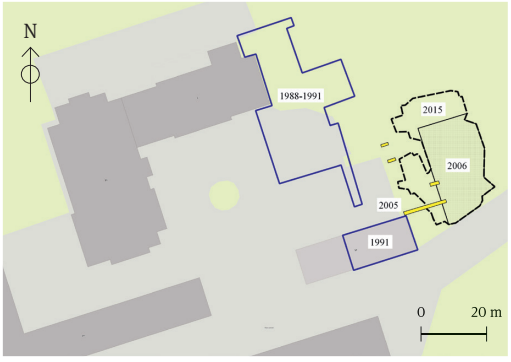

Fig. 1. *Location plan of the archaeological investigation areas at Rakvere Teatrimägi.*

Jn 1. *Rakvere Teatrimäel teostatud arheoloogiliste kaevamiste asukohaskeem.*

Base map / Alusplaan: Eesti Maa-amet

Excavation areas / kaevandid: 1988–1991 according to Aus 1990a; 1993

Mapping and drawing / Objektide kaardistus ja joonis: Andres Kimber

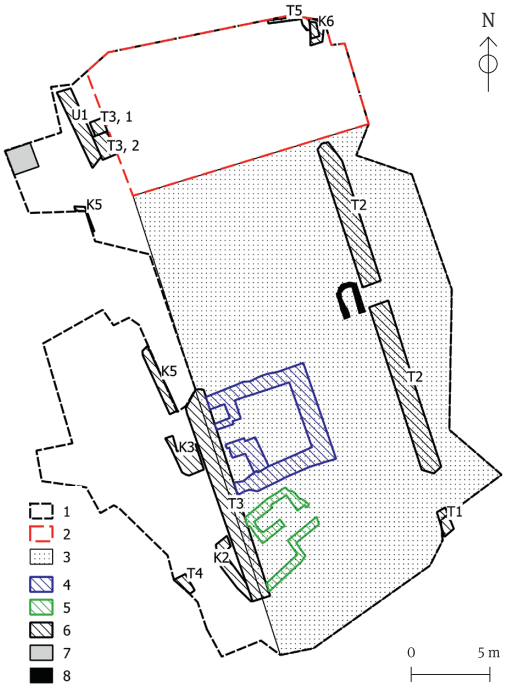

Fig. 2. *Plan of the investigated area in 2015 and a few constructions investigated in 2006 at Rakvere Teatrimägi: 1 – archaeologically investigated area for the new cinema, 2 – the northern side of the trench which was expanded without the presence of an archaeologist, 3 – area investigated in 2006, 4 – medieval house N investigated in 2006, 5 – medieval house S investigated in 2006, 6 – building structures investigated and opened in 2015, 7 – corner of the cemetery, 8 – heat storage hypocaust furnace. T – carriage house, K – the Middle Ages, U – the Modern Period.*

Jn 2. *Rakvere Teatrimäe 2015. aasta ja osaline 2006. aasta uuringuala skeem: 1 – projekteeritud kinomaja süvendi uuringuala, 2 – 2015. aastal ehituse käigus lõhutud ala, 3 – 2006. aasta uuringuala, 4 – 2006. aasta uuritud keskaegne maja N, 5 – 2006. aastal uuritud keskaegne maja S, 6 – 2015. aastal uuritud ja lahtiolevad ehituskonstruktsioonid, 7 – kalmistu nurk, 8 – kerishüpokaustahi. T – tõllakuur, K – keskaeg, U – uusaeg.*

Mapping / Kaardistus: Andres Kimber, Villu Kadakas
Drawing / Teostus: Andres Kimber, Villu Kadakas

latest parts of the Iron Age (second half of the first millennium AD) and to the beginning of the Middle Ages (the second quarter of the 13th century) (Aus 1990a; 1993). St. Michael's Friary was erected there by the Franciscans in the beginning of the 16th century (Kirss 1989, 3–4). It was destroyed during the Livonian War (1558–1583) and demolished probably in 1635 (Tamm 2002, 61). A manor complex was built on Teatrimägi in the 17th century, which was rebuilt and expanded various times during the 17th – 19th centuries (Kirss 1989). The main building of the manor was converted into a cultural centre 'Rakvere Rahvamaja' in 1920, in 1929–1940 a theatre house was designed and constructed next to it (Kirss 1989, 15; Odette Kirss, pers. comm. 16.08.2016). The carriage house of the manor was demolished in 1939 (Ervin 2013, 12 and citations therein).

Large-scale excavations and conservation work was done at Teatrimägi in 1988–1991 (Aus 1990a; 1993; Tamm 2002, 34); later the revealed structures were reburied due to financial issues (Kadakas 2007, 199). After the decision to build a cinema, additional archaeological excavations were required. A preliminary study was conducted in 2005 (Jonuks 2005) slightly east of the previous excavations and in 2006 new excavations were held (Kadakas 2007, 199–201; Kadakas *et al.* 2007; Fig. 1). This fieldwork revealed constructions of the carriage house of the manor from the 18th century (Fig. 2, T1–5), underneath which there were remains of two medieval buildings with stone cellars (one of them had a heat storage hypocaust), additionally the presence of a third house was marked with another hypocaust (Fig. 2: 8).

The opened and excavated area proved to be too small for the construction of the cinema. Therefore, the plot had to be expanded westward and northward and new archaeological excavations were held in 2015. Unfortunately, the majority of the northern side of the plot was expanded by the construction workers without the presence of an archaeologist and it was possible to study only the north-eastern corner of it. The rest of the expansions of the plot were archaeologically excavated (Lissitsina *et al.* 2016; see also Fig. 2).

Combining information from the excavated building remains, graves, stratigraphical data, collected artefacts, and geological observations as well as the results of the previous excavations, enables us to give an overview of how Teatrimägi has been used throughout time. In 2015, most comprehensive information regarding the usage of Teatrimägi was collected from the profiles of the western side of the trench (Fig. 3), but additional data were gathered also from other parts of the excavation areas.

Fig. 3. *Western profile of the investigation area: 1 – turf, 2 – gravel, probably added in the 20th century to fill the area after the carriage house was demolished in 1939, 3 – turf, possibly from the beginning of the 18th until the second half of the 20th century, 4 – gravel, infilling, probably from the carriage house building period in the 18th century (estimated construction time* ca. *1760), 5 – the in-house planning and filling layer and mortar floor horizon, probably from the 17th century, 6 – black ashy soil 1 containing ceramics, glass, and 16th and 17th century coins,* in situ *layer from medieval/Early Modern Period, 7 – mixture of red clay and sand, probably fill layer from the medieval/Early Modern Period, 8 – layer with mixed stones and sand, probably moraine thrown on the ground during grave digging, 9 – black ashy soil 2 with pebbles,* in situ *layer from the medieval/Early Modern Period, 10 – burials.*

Jn 3. *Uuringuala lääneprofiil: 1 – kasvupinnas, 2 – kruus, oletatavalt 20. sajandi täitepinnas, mis on alale planeeritud pärast vankrikuuri lammutust 1939. aastal, 3 – huumus, tõenäoline alates 18. sajandi teisest poolest kuni 20. sajandini, 4 – kruus, täitepinnas, oletatavalt 18. sajandist ning planeeritud laiali vankrikuuri ehituse järel (oletatav ehitusaeg 1760. aastad), 5 – hoonesisene täide ja planeerimiskiht ning mördipõranda horisont, oletatavalt 17. sajandist, 6 – must söene muld 1, mis sisaldas keraamikat, klaasi ning 16. ja 17. sajandi münte, keskaegne/varauusaegne paigal tekkinud kultuurkiht, 7 – punase savi ja liivasegune kiht, oletatavalt keskaegne/varauusaegne täide, 8 – liiva ja kivisegune kiht, oletatavalt haudade kaevamisel omaaegsele maapinnale heidetud moreen, 9 – must söene muld 2 kiviklibuga, keskaegne/varauusaegne paigal tekkinud kultuurkiht, 10 – matused.*

Photo and processing / Foto ja töötlus: Jekaterina Lissitsina

Fig. 4. *Finds collected in 2015 at the Teatrimägi excavation. 1 – sherd of Iron Age pottery, 2 – sherd of stoneware from a pile of stones K3, 3–11 – finds from the dark layer on top of the skeletons: 3 – crampon (13th century), 4–5– shoe fittings (16th – 17th century), 6 – sherd of striated pottery from the Early Iron Age, 7–10 – sherds of medieval pottery, 11 – fragment of a medieval glass beaker.*

Jn 4. *2015. aastal Teatrimäel teostatud kaevamiste leiud. 1 – rauaaegne savinõukild, 2 – kivikeraamika kild kivikuhjatisest K3, 3–11 – leide luustikke katvast mustast kihist: 3 – jäänael (13. sajand), 4–5 – kontsarauad (16.–17. sajand), 6 – varase rauaaja riibitud pinnaga keraamika kild, 7–10 – keskaegsed savinõukillud, 11 – keskaegse klaaspeekri kild.*

(RM A 174:61, 239, 94, 115/1, 115/2, 71, 38, 40, 28, 40, 124.)
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Processing / Töötlus: Kristel Roog

IRON AGE

The oldest signs of human activity on Teatrimägi are dated to the first centuries AD or even earlier (Aus 1993, 9). In the southern part of Teatrimägi the inside of at least one house was unearthed which appeared to be contemporary with the finds from the nearby esker where later the Rakvere castle was erected (Aus 1990a; 1993). In 1988–1991 it was also discovered that wooden houses had been built in the area probably during the second half of the first millennium AD (the dating is based on carinated coarse ware; Aus 1993, 9, plate I). Some of the unearthed constructions showed signs of intense burning (*ibid.*). Additionally, at least one of the wooden houses was in use during the end of the 12th or the beginning of the 13th century (Aus 1993, 9–11), indicating the continuation of permanent settlement in the area from the Iron Age to the medieval period. The finds from 2015 included three sherds of ceramics from the Iron Age, one of them was a sherd of striated pottery probably from the Early Iron Age (Fig. 4: 6) and two fragments were of Viking Age hand-made pottery (Fig. 4: 1), corroborating the previously known information. The commingled Iron Age pottery sherds and medieval artefacts (see below) were found in a mixed layer which covered skeletons and the surrounding territory.

During the first millennium AD, a body of water, a stream, probably seasonal, flowed through the area which at one point in time had been filled and levelled (see below). In 2015 only a small part of the infilled body of water was visible in the south-western area of the excavation plot and in the northern profile. The majority of the feature was excavated in 2006.

MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Throughout the archaeological excavations, several signs of medieval settlement on Teatrimägi have been discovered. Around the last quarter of the 13th century, at the time of the early development of the Rakvere town, a barn was built above the previous wooden

houses (Aus 1993, 11) on Teatrimägi. It burned down in the second quarter of the 14th century (Aus 1993, 11). Soon after the fire, the remains of the barn were covered with gravel and a stone building was erected there, followed by two other stone buildings which were in use during the 15th century (*ibid.*).

At that time the stream was still running on Teatrimägi. It appears that the presence of the running water was hindering various construction works and it was infilled with a thick cultural layer which included several finds from the Medieval period *e.g.* stoneware from South Lower Saxony (end of the 13th century and first half of the 14th century) and wheel-thrown ceramics (14th – 15th century). The levelling happened before the medieval houses with cellars in the southern part of the excavation plot were built (Kadakas *et al.* 2007, 9), however the precise time of the earthwork remains unclear.

The excavations in 2005, 2006 and 2015 revealed new information about medieval Rakvere (see also Jonuks 2005; Kadakas 2007). Remains of at least four medieval houses were unearthed during these excavations (e.g. Fig. 2: 4, 5). Possibly the number of houses in the area was bigger, but in this case, construction work during the modern period had completely destroyed these.

In 2006, stone cellars of two houses and a heat storage hypocaust preserved from a third house were found in the southern part of the excavation plot. In 2015 one cellar with a heat storage hypocaust was located in the northern part (Fig. 2: K6). The southern cellars were built of boulders and rounded limestone, which has not been quarried but gathered from fields, clay was used as binder (Kadakas 2007, 200). The southernmost cellar had a well preserved furnace inside (*ibid.*). The buildings had been next to each other and it is likely that the houses had a dwelling function (Kadakas 2007, fig. 2). All of the houses had been demolished and the cellars were filled during the late 16th century (Kadakas 2007, 200).

During the fieldwork in 2006 the inside of the buildings was researched, but in 2015 the focus was on the area west of the previously discovered cellars. In the process the western corner of the southernmost cellar (Fig. 2: K2; 5), studied also in 2006, was partially re-opened, revealing its 0.6 m thick south-western wall. However, no artefacts were recovered.

In 2015 additionally a pile of boulders and limestones (1.38 m in length, 1.2 m in width), mixed with soil, was found west of the northern cellar discovered in 2006 (Fig. 2: K3). It remained unclear why the stones were piled in the area. Possibly they derived from a wall that had been demolished, however no sign of mortar was discovered. For example, the pile can be explained with the construction of the carriage house in the 18th century, *i.e.* a wall from the medieval cellar might have been hindering the construction, therefore it was demolished and the stones were set aside. Two sherds of stoneware (14th – 16th century) were found underneath the boulders (Fig. 4: 2).

Fig. 5. *Partly re-opened western side of the medieval house with a heat storage hypocaust furnace (K2).*
Jn 5. *Kerishüpokaustahjuga keskaegse maja taasavatud läänepoolne osa (K2).*
Photo / Foto: Jekaterina Lissitsina

Another wall was unearthed about 2.5 m north of the pile of stones (Fig. 2: K5). The preserved part of the wall was 0.6 m thick, at least 5.64 m long and 0,4 m high. It was

built of limestone and boulders and bound with lime mortar. The purpose of the wall remains unclear – it could derive from another building, or possibly be connected with the northern cellar found in 2006. No artefacts were recovered. It is possible that the same wall (K5) was also partially preserved on the north-western side of the excavation plot. A small portion of a wall was visible in the profile, approximately on the same level and with the same direction as the wall K5. It also appears that both walls (Fig. 2: K5) were built in a similar manner.

Additionally, in 2015 remains of a fourth house were discovered in the northern corner of the excavation plot (Fig. 2: K6). Very few aspects of the building were observable – only a partially preserved heat storage hypocaust. The eastern wall of the furnace was 1.7 m long, 0.45 m wide and 1.5 m high. The furnace was erected on top of a salient underground footing of boulders. A piece of slag was found underneath it. The furnace itself was built from boulders with a limestone arch.

It could not be determined when the house was erected. The existence of a heat storage hypocaust suggests that the house was used sometime between the 13th and the 16th centuries (Tvauri 2009, 49). The furnace was partially destroyed when the carriage house was built in the 18th century, but it appeared that the house had already been demolished before. Therefore, it is most likely that the house was destroyed in the 16th century. No artefacts were recovered near the hypocaust, but fragments from various ceramics, including pipe stems and faience from the 18th – 19th centuries were found in the cultural layer on top of the structure.

THE FRANCISCANS' FRIARY

The Franciscans built St. Michael's friary on Teatrimägi in the first decade of the 16th century (Kirss 1989, 3). The exact year when the work began is up to debate – either in 1503 when the first donation was received, or in 1506 after it was clear that instead of Tallinn the monastery will be built in Rakvere (Tamm 2002, 60–61). The archaeological fieldwork in 1989–1991 showed that there had been at least two bigger construction phases and several smaller ones (Aus 1993, 11). It is also known that in 1526 there was a fire in the monastery and new donations were collected for the repair work (Kirss 1989, 4 and citations therein).

The Franciscans could use the building only for about half a century since it was destroyed by the Russians during the Livonian War in 1559 (Kirss 1989, 4–5 and citations therein; Tamm 2002, 60–61). The ruins and the garden of the friary were mentioned in 1591 and also in 1616; it is likely that they were completely demolished in 1635 by Reinout van Brederode, the new owner of the land of the former monastery and the castle of Rakvere (Tamm 2002, 61; Ervin 2013, 47 and citations therein).

The cemetery

During the excavations in the late 1980s altogether 15 or 16[1] skeletons were unearthed east of the friary ruin (Aus 1990a, 462; 1990b). According to anthropologist Leiu Heapost various age groups (from children to adults) were represented and she was able to determine the sex of eight men, but the sex of two adults remained unclear (Table 1; Aus 1990b, 22). Since no grave goods were recovered and the majority of the skeletons lay with their heads towards the west, it can be assumed that the inhumations were part of a cemetery of the friary (Aus 1990a; 1990b).

[1] The report refers to 15 individuals (Aus 1990b, 22) while in the article Aus writes of 16 (Aus 1990a, 462).

Unfortunately, information regarding the exact location of the skeletons in the cemetery is missing.

In 2015, skeletons from five individuals were found in the north-western corner of the excavation plot. Only a part of the skeletons could be excavated (Fig. 6). During the fieldwork, four individuals could be discerned as the remains of the fifth individual were co-mingled (Table 1). It appears that the trench was situated at the south-eastern corner of the cemetery, *i.e.* the cemetery continued to the north and west from the trench, but not to the south or east. Similarly to previously-found burials, the heads of the skeletons lay towards the west and no grave goods were recovered.

Fig. 6. *Partially unearthed skeletons 1 and 2.*
Jn 6. *Osaliselt välja puhastatud luustikud 1 ja 2.*
Photo / Foto: Liivi Varul

The artefacts from the graves fill indicate that the individuals were buried during the 16th century, probably after 1558, when the army of the tsar of Moscow conquered Rakvere. Additionally, grave fill of the skeleton no. 4 included two sherds of ceramics from the Iron Age. The dark layer on top of the skeletons included a crampon (13th century), a shoe fitting (16th – 17th century by typology; Veksler *et al.* 1997), various pieces of ceramics from the Iron and Middle Ages and a medieval fragment of a glass beaker (Fig. 4: 3–11). Evidently the earlier Iron Age and medieval cultural layers have been thoroughly disturbed by the burials.

The osteological analysis

The recovered human remains are intriguing since skeletons found nearby friaries have rarely been studied although various monastic cemeteries have been excavated in Estonia (Aus 1990b; Tamm *et al.* 1997). The unearthed individuals could have been residents of the friary, e.g. monks or donors and thus the osteological material can reveal information about the everyday life of the monastery.

The osteological analysis identified the remains of five individuals (Malve 2016).[2] Four of them were men (skeletons nos. 1–4; Table 1). Two individuals were very young adults (skeletons nos. 1, 2) and two were older than 40 years at the time of their death (skeletons nos. 3, 4). Tarsal bones of a fifth probable adult were found commingled with the remains of skeleton no. 3. The sex of the individual could not be determined. Based on the maximal lengths of the right femora, the average height of the men was about 172±3.27 cm (Table 1).

Despite the fact that all the skeletons were only partially recovered, various pathologies were identified on the bones (see Table 1). Periostitis, *i.e.* new bone formation on the cortical bone due to the inflammation of the periosteum (membrane) (Stirland 2009, 23), was

[2] The sex of the burials was determined according to the morphological traits on the pelvis (Buikstra & Ubelaker 1994, 16–20) and maximum length of the long bones (Garmus & Jankauskas 1993, 6–8). The age at death was determined according to the changes in pubic symphyseal face (Todd 1920; Brooks & Suchey 1990), age-caused changes on the limb joints (Ubelaker 1989, 84–87) and the epiphyseal fusion (Schaefer *et al.* 2009). Pathological conditions were identified with the aid of Ortner & Putschar (1985) and Roberts & Manchester (2012). Stature was calculated according to the formulae of Trotter and Gleser (Trotter 1970) using the measurements of the right femora. After the osteological analysis of the skeletons and stray bones the human remains were reburied.

discovered on the lower leg (tibiae and fibulae) and metatarsal bones of three individuals (nos. 1–2, 4; Fig. 7). Periostitis could be caused by various factors (e.g. infections, trauma, etc.) and therefore in most cases the etiology remains unknown. The presence of periostitis and healed traumas could imply to heavy physical stress on the lower limbs of the found men (*e.g.* long journeys). Evidence of healed traumas was found on one skeleton: a healed fracture on the right tibia of individual 2.

Table 1. *The results of the osteological analysis of the skeletons found in the area of the Rakvere Franciscan friary in 1989 and in 2015.*
Tabel 1. *Rakvere frantsisklaste kloostri alalt 1989. ja 2015. a leitud luustike määrangud.*
Compiled by / Koostanud: Martin Malve

Skeleton no. / luustiku nr	Sex / Sugu	Age / Vanus	Pathologies / Patoloogiad	Stature / Kehakasv
1989[3]				
1	♂	25–30 y / a	-	-
2	?	3–4 y / a	-	-
3	?	6–10 y / a	-	-
4	?	10 y / a ±30 m / k	-	-
5	?	Subadult / alaealine	-	-
6	♂	Young adult / noor täiskasvanu	-	-
7	♂	18–20 y / a	-	-
8	♂	Adult / täiskasvanu	-	-
9	♂	20–25 y / a	-	-
10	♂	25–30 y / a	-	-
11	♂	25–30 y / a	-	-
12	?	Approx. 5 y / a	-	-
13	?	12–18 y / a	-	-
14	♂	20–25 y / a	-	-
15	?	Adult? / täiskasvanu?	-	-
2015				
1	♂	18–20 y / a	Osteoarthrosis on the left hip joint. Periostitis on the left II–V metatarsals (Fig. 7)	176.8±3.27 cm
2	♂	18–19 y / a	Healed fracture on the distal third of the right tibia. Light periostitis on the lateral sides of the tibiae	165.7±3.27 cm
3	♂	40+ y / a	Osteoarthritis on the hip, knee and talocrural joints.	173.8±3.27 cm
4	♂	40+ y / a	Periostitis on the tibiae and fibulae. Signs of wear on the hip and knee joints.	172.6±3.27 cm
5	?	Adult / täiskasvanu	-	-
			Mean stature / Keskmine kasv:	172.2±3.27 cm

RAKVERE MANOR

The precise date when the manor complex was built is unknown. However, since there is a document from 1643 with a list of the manor buildings (Kirss 1989, 7–8), it can be said that the first manor houses were erected on the location of the friary during the first half of the 17th century. From 1618–1669 the manor complex belonged to von Brederodes, between 1669 and 1828

[3] Analysed by Leiu Heapost (AI).

to von Tiesenhausens and from 1828 until 1919 it was rented out to von Rennenkampffs (Kirss 1989, 7–11). Throughout the centuries the manor complex has undergone various reconstructions. Most of the known information about the complex derives from the 19th century, however some plans and overviews from the 17th and 18th century have survived (Kirss 1989, 7–12 and citations therein).

Fig. 7. *New bone formation on the shafts of the left metatarsal bones: superior view (left); inferior view (right).*
Jn 7. *Vasakute pöialuude keskosas moodustunud värske luu: jalaselja poolne vaade (vasakul); taldmine vaade (paremal).*
Photo / Foto: Liivi Varul

The excavations in 2015 unearthed only a small part of the manor complex – the carriage house (see below) and a small part of a stone wall which was erected out of flat limestones and boulders (0.3 × 0.2 m), using lime mortar (Fig. 2: U1). It had preserved in a 5.6 m long, 0.85 m thick and 0.6 m high section. The wall was situated in the northern-western part of the plot and it is likely that it derives from the storehouse which has been depicted by Waxelberg in 1683 (Raid 2013, 190). The coach house had been demolished during the 18th century, before the construction of the carriage house, which had been built next to it.

The carriage house

The carriage house was probably built during the second half of the 18th century (Kadakas 2007, 199). The precise date of the construction works is unknown, although it was present on the plan made in 1786 (Kirss 1989, 10 and citations therein). In 1887 a description of the manor complex was made by the owner Wilhelmina von Tiesenhausen and the carriage house was described as following: a massive one-storied building from limestone and mortar with a stone roof and a vaulted ceiling; it had seven windows, three big gates and a fanlight; the house was 41.5 m long and 13.0 m wide; the building was used to store carriages, horses and spirits (Kirss 1989, 12). The carriage house was demolished in 1939 (Ervin 2013, 12 and citations therein). The artefacts which were recovered in 2015 nearby the stone walls are dated to the 18th – 20th century.

Fig. 8. *South-western wall of the manor carriage house (T3). View from the south-west.*
Jn 8. *Mõisa tõllakuuri edelamüür (T3). Vaade edelast.*
Photo / Foto: Jekaterina Lissitsina

The inside of this building had already been excavated in 2006 when also most of the remains of the carriage house were unearthed (Kadakas 2007, 199–200). In 2015 new parts of the house were discovered both in the southern and northern end of the building (Fig. 2: T3, T4, T5; 8). Additionally, the outer side of the western wall of the house was opened – this had already been excavated in 2006 and therefore only the top and western sides of the wall

were cleaned in 2015.[4] The western wall of the carriage house is preserved in a 13.5 m long, 1.28 m thick and 1.0–1.1 m high section. A previously unknown 1.25 m thick and 0.8 m high wall fragment in the south-west profile was discovered. The length of the wall is unclear, as it continued to the unexcavated area. The exact manner in which the discovered wall fragment is connected with the rest of the carriage house remains unclear.

In the north area of the excavation plot, two parts of the carriage house were discovered in 2015. The support was built of limestone, bound with sand; it was preserved as a 2.5 m long and 1.2 m high section. Since the structure continued to the unexcavated area, the thickness of the support remains unknown.

In the north-western area of the plot two smaller wall fragments were unearthed in 2015 (Fig. 2: T3, 1–2). Based on their appearance and construction, *i.e.* built of limestone and boulders, bound with lime mortar, it is likely they derive from the northern part of the carriage house. No datable finds could be connected with these walls.

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the current and previous studies the history of Teatrimägi can be divided into several phases. The first signs of known habitation derive from the Early Iron Age. The next phase of settlement can be dated to the Viking Age and Late Iron Age, i.e. to the end of the first millennium AD. It appeared that during the Iron Age, a stream ran through the area and its basin was filled probably during the medieval period. Around the 14th century, the first known stone buildings were erected on the site. A Franciscan friary was built on top of the Teatrimägi hill in the very beginning of the 16th century and at least some of the stone houses at the site were demolished prior to the construction of the friary. A cemetery was situated east of the friary, it was still in use in the second half of the 16th century. The friary was destroyed during the Livonian War and the ruins were demolished in the first half of the 17th century. The Rakvere manor was erected and re-built on Teatrimägi hill during the 17th – 20th centuries. The excavations in 2006 and 2015 also revealed the walls of the carriage house that had been in use from the second half of the 18th century until 1939.

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[4] The area of the medieval houses with cellars and the inside of the carriage house was refilled after the excavations in 2006 and it was not re-opened during the fieldwork in 2015.

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RAKVERE TEATRIMÄGI – ÜLEVAADE JA 2015. AASTA ARHEOLOOGILISTE UURINGUTE TULEMUSED

Jekaterina Lissitsina, Liivi Varul, Martin Malve, Villu Kadakas ja Aivar Kriiska

Rakvere teatri kinomaja ehituse tõttu toimusid 2015. aasta kevadel ja suvel arheoloogilised välitööd Teatrimäel (jn 1). Välja kaevati mitmeid kesk- ja uusaegseid kivimüüre ning tõenäoliselt keskaegse mungakloostri kalmistu nurk (jn 2). Kuivõrd Teatrimäel on arheoloogilisi uuringuid teostatud korduvalt – aastatel 1988–1991 (Toivo Aus), 2005 (Tõnno Jonuks) ja 2006 (Villu Kadakas) –, on koos uute andmetega võimalik saada võrdlemisi hea ülevaate selle piirkonna kasutusest läbi aegade.

Vanimad asutusjäljed Teatrimäelt pärinevad hiljemalt esimese aastatuhande algusest – sellesse perioodi on dateeritud vähemalt ühe maja jäänused. Ka esimese aastatuhande teisel poolel ja 12.–13. sajandil on Teatrimäel paiknenud puithoonestus, mis hävis (vähemalt osaliselt) põlengus. 2015. aasta kaevamiste leidudest seonduvad muinasaegse asustusetapiga mõned savinõukillud, millest üks pärineb varasest rauaajast (jn 4: 6) ja kaks viikingiajast (jn 4: 1). Toonast asustuspilti määras muuhulgas vooluveekogu, väike oja, mille ääres küla paiknes.

Ala jäi hoonestatuks ka keskajal. 13.–14. sajandil oli seal veel puithoonestus ja seejärel vähemalt osaliselt kivist majad. Erinevatel välitöödel on leitud vähemalt nelja keskaegse hoone osi. Neist kahel olid keldrid ning kolmel kerishüpokaustahi. Selle asustusetapiga seondub tõenäoliselt ka ojasängi täitmine ja tasandamine. 2015. aasta välitöödel uuriti omaaegse vooluveekogu sängi täitematerjali ning avati mõned keskaegsete ehitiste müüriosad (jn 2: K2, K3, K5; 5), mis ulatusid tõllakuuri massiivsete müüride alla, ning ühe kerishüpokaustahju jäänused, mis asusid uuringuala loodenurgas (jn 2: K6). Üks neist (K2) seondub 2006. aastal uuritud hoonejäänusega, kahe teise (K3 ja K5) müürifragmendi puhul ei ole selge, millisest ehitistest need pärinevad. Kerishüpokaustahi (K6) sattus täpselt tõllakuuri nurga kohta ning oli viimase ehitamisel osaliselt lõhutud.

16. sajandi alguses rajati Rakvere Teatrimäele Püha Mihkli klooster, seetõttu enamik seniseid ehitisi tõenäoliselt lammutati. Kloostri kasutusaeg jäi aga lühikeseks – see hävis Vene-Liivi sõja ajal ning tõenäoliselt lammutati täielikult 1635. aasta paiku, mil uueks Teatrimäe omanikuks sai Reinout van Brederode. 1980. aastatel leiti kloostri kalmistu ning uuriti vähemalt 15 indiviidi säilmed. 2015. aastal kaevati osaliselt välja veel viie indiviidi luid. Nelja inimese skeletid olid välitööde ajal jälgitavad, ühest olid säilinud vaid üksikud jalalabaluud, mis asusid läbisegi teise luustikuga. Kaevandisse jäi vaid luustike alumine pool (jn 6). Inimesed olid maetud peaga lääne suunas, panuseid ei leitud. Seevastu oli esemeid hauatäites, mis võimaldavad matmise aja dateerida 16. sajandisse. Võimalik, et inimesed surid pärast 1558. aastat, mil Moskva armee hõivas Rakvere. Hauatäites leidus erinevaid esemeid rauaajast keskaja lõpuni, sh 13. sajandist pärit jäänael, 16.–17. sajandi kontsarauad, raua- ja keskaegsed savinõukillud ja keskaegse klaaspeekri katke (jn 4: 3–11).

Osteoloogilise analüüsi tulemusel selgus, et viiest indiviidist neli olid mehed ja ühe sugu ei ole võimalik määrata. Kaks meest oli surnud 18–20 aasta vanuselt ja kaks olid surmahetkel rohkem kui 40 aastat vanad. Viies indiviid oli täiskasvanu. Meeste sääre-, pind- ja põialuudel esines periostiiti (jn 7). Ühel juhul oli võimalik tuvastada ka paranenud sääreluumurdu. Nimetatud muutused luudel viitavad alajäsemete koormusele, näiteks pikkadele rännakutele.

17. sajandi esimesel poolel ehitati Teatrimäele mõisakompleks, mis kuulus järgnevatel sajanditel mitmetele suguvõsadele. 17.–20. sajandi jooksul ehitati mõisahooneid korduvalt ümber, kuid selle kohta ei ole säilinud kuigi palju andmeid. Üldjoontes on teada, et algselt ehitati mõisahooned ennekõike puidust, hiljem kivist. 2015. aasta välitöödel leiti väike müürijupp kaevandi loodeosas, mis tõenäoliselt pärineb aidast, mis lammutati 18. sajandi jooksul, enne tõllakuuri ehitamist. 2015. aasta kaevamistel avati mõnevõrra ka 18. sajandil ehitatud tõllakuuri müüre (jn 8). Rajatise kohta on teada, et see oli massiivne ühekorruseline hoone, mis lammutati 1939. aastal.