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EXCAVATIONS IN ANCIENT FIELDS OF SAHA-LOO AND PROOSA NEAR TALLINN

Valter LANG

Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia Ajaloo Instituut (Institute of History, Estonian Academy of Sciences). Rüütli 6, EE-0001 Tallinn, Eesti (Estonia)

Archaeological excavations in remains of fossil fields at **Saha-Loo** started in 1992.[1] As only one field plot together with its fences was investigated in the south-eastern part of the complex, dated to the Late Bronze Age and the beginning of the Pre-Roman Iron Age by the radiocarbon method, some more information and new dating were needed from other portions of this locality, too. So, the following year, 1993, one trench was dug in baulk no. 12 located in the north-western corner of the complex, and another in baulk no. 179, in the south-western part. In addition to that, the 'cattle path' (baulks nos. 117 and 118) and one clearance cairn (p-48) were also investigated in the eastern portion of the Saha-Loo field-system.[2] The radiocarbon samples were analyzed in the Laboratory for Isotope Geology of the Swedish Museum of Natural History (Magnus Hedberg), and the osteological material by Lembi Lõugas from the Institute of History, Estonian Academy of Sciences.

Baulk no. 12 is 4—5 m wide, 28 m long and 20—30 cm high, orientated in E—W direction. The trench of measures 8×1 m was dug in the eastern part of the baulk consisting merely of limestone slabs and covered by turf (Plates I and II). Only some small fragments of bones (*Mustela lutreola* and *Aves*) were found in the baulk. The soil layer between the lowermost stones of the baulk and limestone bedrock beneath it was 3—5 cm thick and contained small pieces of charcoal. The latter is regarded as remains of local vegetation burned down just before the beginning of the clearing and cultivation. The radiocarbon sample of this charcoal was dated to 2780±50 BP (ST-13584, uncal.), and it is the earliest date obtained from Saha-Loo so far.[3]

Baulk no. 179 was wider (6—7 m) and longer (up to 130 m), and consisted of much bigger stones than other baulks at Saha-Loo. The trench (7.3×1 m) was dug in the central part of this baulk the stone layer of which was 20—25 cm high. Some stones of the baulk were charred, as were also some fragments of cattle bones (*Bos taurus* and *Mammalia indet.*) found during the excavations. The radiocarbon sample taken from between the baulk and bedrock was dated to 2440±65 BP (ST-13585, uncal.).[4]

One trench measuring 11×1.5 m was dug in the two parallel stone baulks interpreted as a cattle path. The easternmost baulk (no. 118, Plate III beneath) consisted of quite big limestone slabs and was wider

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[1] **Lang, V.** Fossil fields at Saha-Loo. — Proc. Estonian Acad. Sci. Humanities and Social Sciences, 1994, **43**, 1, p. 22—26; **Lang, V.** Muinaspõllud Saha-Lool. — Stilus 3. Reports of the Estonian Archaeological Society 1992 (3). Tallinn, 1992, p. 50—60.

[2] The map of Saha-Loo fields see: **Lang, V.** Fossil fields, fig. 2.

[3] The calibrated age given by the laboratory is 919 BC with a standard deviation of 66 years. The 68.26% probability interval is 991—855 BC and that of 95.44% is 1072—825 BC.

[4] The calibrated age of this date is 577±115 BC, the 68.26% probability interval 720—451 BC, and that of 95.44% 770—402 BC.

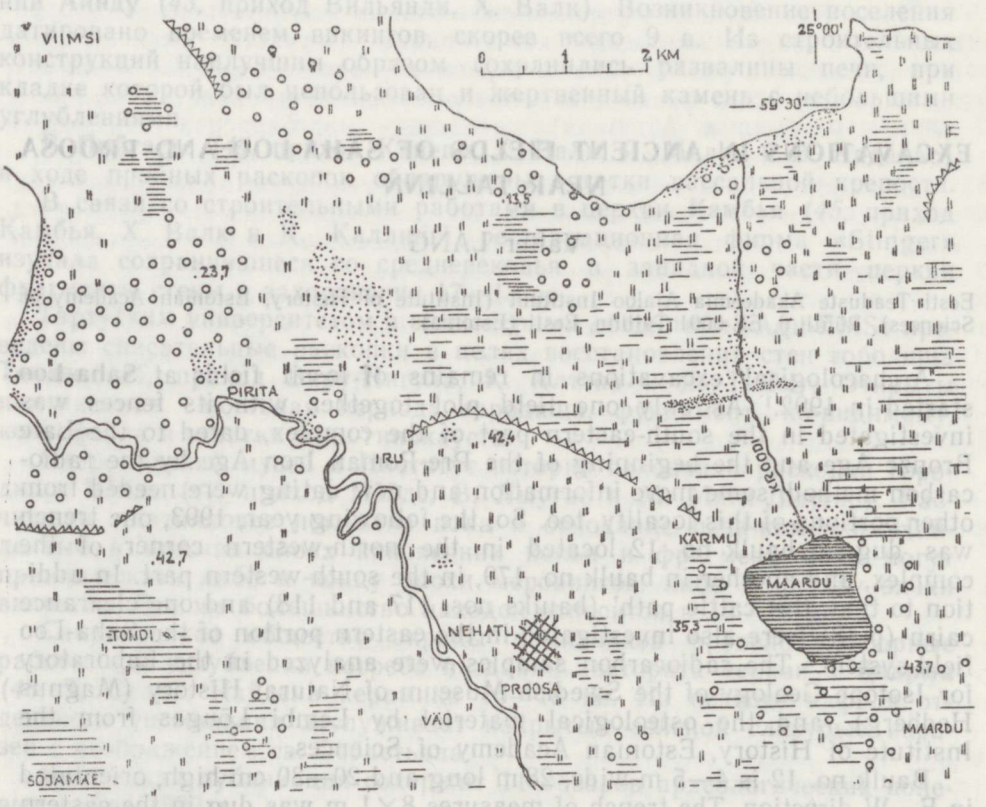

Fig. 1. Location of ancient fields of Proosa.

and higher than the westernmost baulk (no. 117, Plate III above, between the second and third sticks). The distance from one baulk to another was 3.2 m, and the limestone bedrock was covered with a layer (up to 5—7 cm thick) of stone shingle here, not discovered elsewhere at Saha-Loo. This layer of shingle indicates, maybe, that we have really to do with a beaten (by animal hooves) track here. A nest of charcoal was found beneath the lowermost stones of baulk no. 118, and was dated to 2020±55 BP (ST-13583, uncal.)[5] This result may prove that the net of cattle paths at Saha-Loo does not belong to the original lay-out of the Late Bronze Age — early Pre-Roman Iron Age field complex, and represents a new land-use system established here around the birth of Christ.

The diameter of clearance cairn p-48 reached 5—5.5 m and the height 20—25 cm; only one half of it was excavated. Plate IV, *1—3* illustrates the course of these excavations: the first layer of stones under the turf cover (Plate IV, *1*), the second layer of stones after uppermost stones had been removed (Plate IV, *2*), and the limestone bedrock under the heap and the profile of the heap (Plate IV, *3*). Numerous bones were found in this heap and they were identified as belonging to some fishes (*Esox lucius*, *Tinca tinca*, *Cyprinidae*, *Perca fluviatilis*, *Abramis brama*), birds (*Gallus domesticus*, *Turdus* sp., *Parus major*), sheep/goat (*Capra/Ovis*), and rodents (*Apodemus sylvaticus*, *Arvicola terrestris*, *Mus musculus*). Charcoal was found under the lowermost stones of this cairn too, but in insufficient quantities for the radiocarbon dating.

[5] The calibrated age is 21±75 BC, the 68.26% probability interval 102 BC—44 AD, that of 95.44% 171 BC—113 AD.

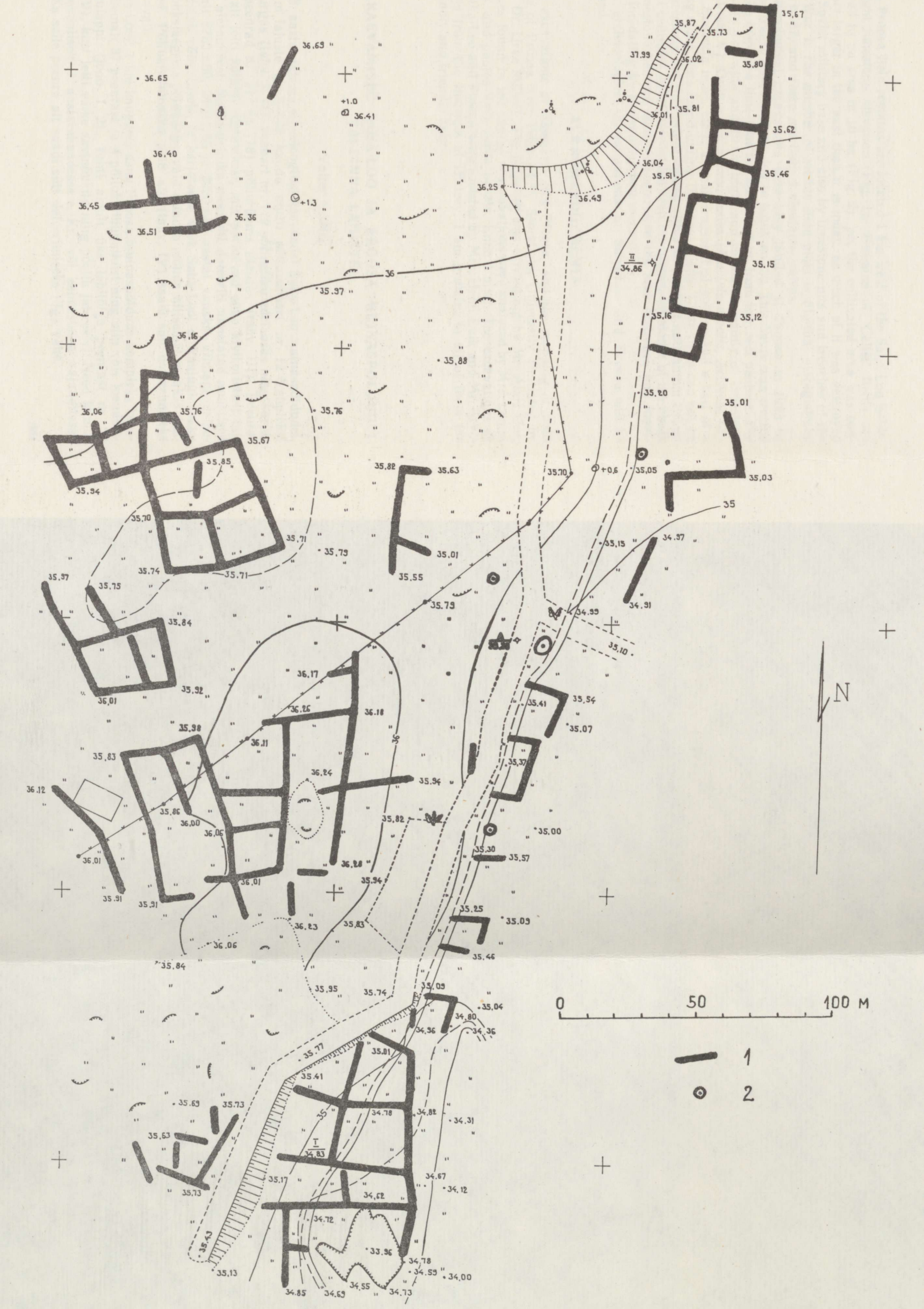

Fig. 2. Field remains at Proosa. *1* baulk, *2* clearance cairn.

The **Proosa** field remains are located 1 km west of the Saha-Loo fields, on a light limestone elevation (Fig. 1). Remains of 'Celtic' fields are preserved in an area of 10 ha (Fig. 2), yet the cultivated area was considerably larger in the past than it is today, as much of it was destroyed by the Soviet military base and also by limestone pits and trenches of the World War I. The number of visible field plots is 81, that of registered baulks is 87, and there are only 4 clearance cairns.

Archaeological excavations were very limited at Proosa in 1993 — only one trench (8×1 m) was dug in baulk no. 30. This baulk was erected along the edge of a limestone terrace rising up from low, wet pasture. The baulk was 4 m wide and 20 cm high, and consisted mainly of limestone slabs (Plate V). Only a few animal bones (*Mustela nivalis, Arvicola terrestris, Rodentia* indet. etc.), a small fragment of pottery and a half of a grinding stone were found during the excavations. These finds can not be dated precisely but they might belong either to the first millennium BC or the first centuries AD. Charcoal between the lowermost stones of the baulk and limestone bedrock was very sparse in the area of trench and insufficient for dating by the radiocarbon method.

The archaeological investigations at Saha-Loo and Proosa will be continued.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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VÄLJAKAEVAMISED SAHA-LOO JA PROOSA MUINASPÕLDUDEL TALLINNA LÄHISTEL

Valter LANG

1993. aastal jätkati arheoloogilisi kaevamisi Saha-Loo muinaspõldudel. 1—1,5 m laiuste tranšeede kaudu uuriti põllupeenart nr. 12 kompleksi loodenurgas (tahv. I, II), peenart nr. 179 põllustiku edelaosas ning karjateed (peenrad nr. 117 ja 118) põllurühma idaosas (tahv. III). Peenrakivide alt leiti kõikjal söetükikesi, mis pärinevad enne kivikoristust toimunud aletamisest. Radiosüsiniku meetodil dateeriti nimetatud muistised vastavalt 2780±50, 2440±65 ja 2020±55 aastat vanaks. Viimane dateering osutab võimalusele, et karjateede võrk Saha-Lool ei kuulugi kokku hilispronksiaegsete põldudega, vaid esindab mõnda hilisemat maakasutussüsteemi. Põllukivihunniku p-48 alt (tahv. IV) saadi sütt dateerimiseks ebapiisavalt.

Saha-Loolt 1 km kaugusel asuv Proosa muinaspõldude kompleks koosneb vähemalt 87 peenrast ja 4 põllukivihunnikust ning siin võis loendada 81 põllulappi (joon. 1, 2). Tehti ainult üks läbilõige peenrast nr. 30 (tahv. V), kust leiti väike savinõukild ning poolik jahvekivi. Need kuuluvad tõenäoliselt I aastatuhandesse e. Kr. või esimestesse sajanditesse p. Kr. Ka selle peenra alt saadi sütt dateerimiseks liiga vähe.

РАСКОПКИ НА ДРЕВНИХ ПОЛЯХ В САХА-ЛОО И ПРООЗА БЛИЗ ТАЛЛИННА

Вальтер ЛАНГ

В 1993 г. были продолжены археологические раскопки на древних полях в Саха-Лоо. Траншеями шириной 1—1,5 м исследованы межа № 12 в северо-западном углу комплекса (табл. I, II), межа № 179 в юго-западной его части и прогон (межи №№ 117 и 118) на востоке (табл. III). Повсюду под камнями находились кусочки угля — свидетельство спаленной подсеки, предшествовавшей сбору камней. Радиоуглеродным методом названные памятники старины датированы соответственно 2780±50, 2440±65 и 2020±55 лет назад. Последняя датировка позволяет предположить, что сеть здешних прогонов относится к системе землепользования не конца бронзового века, а более позднего периода. Под каменной кучей р-48 (табл. IV) угля оказалось слишком мало для определения датировок.

Комплекс древних полей в Прооза, в 1 км от Саха-Лоо, состоит не менее чем из 87 межей и 4 каменных куч. Здесь насчитывается 81 полевой участок (рис. 1, 2). Произведен лишь один разрез межи № 30 (табл. V), где найдены небольшой черепок керамики и половинка зернотерки. Их можно отнести либо к I тысячелетию до н. э., либо к первым столетиям н. э. И здесь собрать достаточного для датирования проб угля не удалось.