

THE END OF EXCAVATIONS AT THE LATE IRON-AGE SETTLEMENT OF AINDU

Heiki VALK

Tartu Ülikool (University of Tartu). Lutsu 16—4, EE-2400 Tartu, Eesti (Estonia)

In summer 1993, archaeological excavations at the Late Iron Age settlement of Aindu started in 1992¹ were brought to an end. During the works an area of 35 m², mostly opened already in the previous year, was investigated.²

The upper part of the excavated cultural layer (40/50 up to 60/70 cm from the ground) consisted of intensively black sooty soil containing numerous pieces of burnt granite stones (Plate IX, 1). The bottom of the cultural layer, lying on the natural brown soil, was mostly formed by greyish sandy ground of the thickness of some 6—10 cm. The sand seemed to have served initially as a filling material. In some places the brown subsoil was covered by a mixed dark cultural layer. In one part of the excavation plot, the lowest layer, lying immediately above the brown natural soil, consisted of mixed yellow subsoil — yellow loamy sand. This layer contained no stones or pottery, but yet abundantly charcoal pieces. A radiocarbon analysis of the latter gave the result 980±40 AD (calibrated age 900±50 AD).³ Another sample taken from below the loamy sand, yielded the dating 920±30 AD (calibrated age 920±40 AD).⁴

In most of the excavation area immediately above the natural brown soil there were lying reddish brown rotten timber remains. In some areas where the structure of the timber was better preserved, the remains seemed to have come from cut timber chips. In some cases, however, the decayed timber seemed to originate from board fragments or some other major remains. A ¹⁴C analysis of the rotten timber coming from the initial phase of the settlement yielded the result 760±40 AD (calibrated age 780±50 AD).⁵

The majority of finds⁶ consisted of pottery fragments. While in the upper part of the cultural layer both wheel and hand-made pottery occurred, in the lowest 10—15 cm, only fragments of hand-made pottery were found lying on natural brownish subsoil. The wheel pottery was sometimes decorated with line ornament (Plate XI, 1, 3; Plate XII, 1), in one case also with wave ornament (Plate XII, 4).

The hand-made pottery was represented by mostly brownish or greyish fragments, sometimes with a coarse or rather coarse, sometimes with a smoothed or black glittering surface. One sherd was decorated with fingertip impressions and another with small dots. Among the finds sherds

¹ Valk, H. Rescue Excavations on the Late Iron Age settlement of Aindu. — Proc. Estonian Acad. Sci. Humanities and Social Sciences, 1994, 43, 1, p. 34—41; Valk, H. Aruane arheoloogilistest kaevamistest Aindu asulakohal 1992. aastal. Manuscript at the Department of Archaeology, University of Tartu.

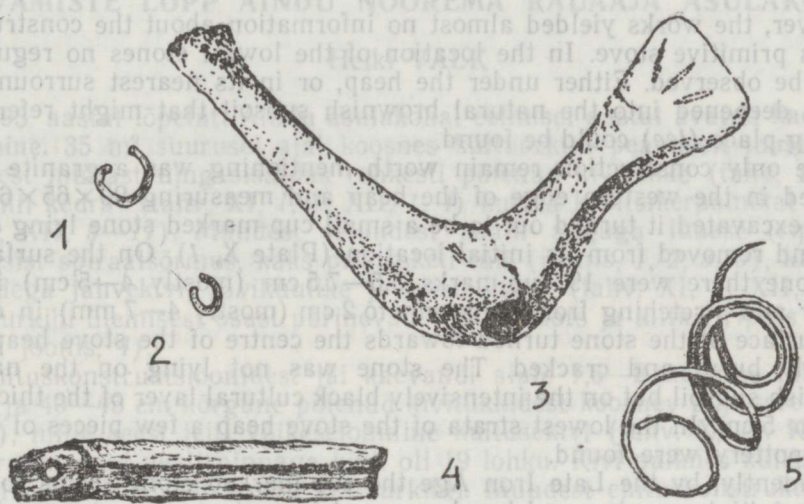
² Valk, H. Aruane jätkukaevamistest Aindu muinasasulakohal 22. juunil—09. juulil 1993. a. Manuscript at the Department of Archaeology, University of Tartu.

³ Analyzed at the Radiocarbon Laboratory of the Institute of Zoology and Botany, Estonian Academy of Sciences, Sample TA 2465.

⁴ TA 2464.

⁵ TA 2463.

⁶ TU 113:1—158.



Finds from Aindu. 1, 2 fragments of bronze chain, 3 bone item (pendant?), 4 slate pendant, 5 bronze ring. All 1:1.

of vessels, very similar to those of the Rōuge-type (Plate XI, 5) and also sherds of rimmed vessels (Plate XII, 6, 8, 9, 11) occurred. Some sherds came from vessels with very thin walls (Plate XII, 5, 7). When compared with ceramics from the upper part of the investigated black layer, among the hand-made pottery found in the lowest 10 cm (Plate XII, 8—11) there were relatively more fragments with a coarse surface.

The vessel forms occurring in Aindu are numerous represented in south-eastern Estonia in the 2nd half of the first millennium AD.⁷ However, when compared with the pottery of south-eastern Estonia, in case of Aindu pottery should be noted a scarcity of dot ornament and a lack of vessels with small holes at the upper edge.

Beside pottery also some other artifacts were discovered. Among the finds from the upper parts of the black layer a small spearhead, found immediately below the ploughing layer (Plate XI, 2) and a slate pendant, fallen from the profile of the excavation site (Fig. 4), must be mentioned. From the area where a big key⁸ was found in the previous year, a worn grindstone (Plate XI, 4) was discovered almost at the same depth. The lower part of the black layer contained two fragments of a bronze chain (Fig., 1, 2), one of them immediately in the brown subsoil and a fragment of a whetstone (Plate XII, 3). Just above the brown subsoil also a burnt spiral ring of bronze (Fig., 5) and a small clay ball (Plate XII, 2) were found. From the sandy layer under the black soil a bone item (pendant?) with a drilled hole (Fig., 3) was found. Bird-shaped artifacts of similar kind have repeatedly been found at archaeological sites of south-eastern Estonia.⁹

In the excavation area a compact heap of strongly-burnt granite stone pieces was investigated (Plate IX, 2). The heap had a diameter of 1.5—2 m; in the centre its thickness was 40—45 cm. The lowest stones were especially strongly disintegrated in the heat. The soil between the stones contained abundantly small charcoal pieces and burnt granite rubble.

⁷ Аун М. Археологические памятники второй половины 1-го тысячелетия н. э. в Юго-Восточной Эстонии. Таллинн, 1992, Plates VI—XII.

⁸ Valk, H. Rescue Excavations, Plate XIV, 1.

⁹ Аун М. Археологические памятники, Plate XXXI.

However, the works yielded almost no information about the construction of this primitive stove. In the location of the lowest stones no regularity could be observed. Either under the heap, or in its nearest surroundings no pit deepened into the natural brownish subsoil that might refer to a cooking-place (*lee*) could be found.

The only construction remain worth mentioning was a granite stone situated in the western edge of the heap and measuring 90×65×60 cm. When excavated it turned out to be a small cup-marked stone lying on its side and removed from its initial location (Plate X, 1). On the surface of the stone there were 19 cup-marks 3.5—7.5 cm (mostly 4—5 cm) in diameter and stretching from some mm to 2 cm (mostly 4—7 mm) in depth. The surface of the stone turned towards the centre of the stove heap was strongly burnt and cracked. The stone was not lying on the natural brownish subsoil but on the intensively black cultural layer of the thickness of some 5 cm. In the lowest strata of the stove heap a few pieces of hand-made pottery were found.

Evidently, by the Late Iron Age the cup-marked stone seems to have lost its initial meaning and has been used in a stove as a means of heat accumulation. It must be noted that in 1980 during the excavations of the Kuusalu Late Iron-Age settlement (North Estonia, east of Tallinn) also a fragment of a cup-marked stone was found in the remains of a stove.¹⁰ Although the cup-marked stones are very numerous in Estonia (altogether about 1600 under protection), their number in the southern parts of the country is insignificant. Thus, in the district of Viljandi only 16 cup-marked stones are known. The nearest of them is situated near Viljandi Central Hospital, at a distance of 1.8 km from Aindu. After the end of the excavations the Aindu cup-marked stone was transported into the Viljandi Museum.

From among construction remains must be also mentioned a row of stones lying immediately on the natural brown subsoil. The stones of the diameters of 20—30 cm lay at distances up to 20—30 cm from each other and had more or less flat upper surfaces. Together with the stones found last year, there were three stone rows found in Aindu, all lying almost parallel to each other along the slope. Evidently the stone rows (Plate X, 2) come from the wall foundations of log houses.

In the soil samples organic remains were poorly preserved.¹¹ However, a sample taken from the upper part of the black layer contained a charred barley seed (*Hordeum vulgare*). Some raspberry seeds were found in the lowest layers. Other vegetative remains consisted of weed seeds typical for human-settled areas.

Osteological remains from Aindu, together with the finds of 1992 — 354 items altogether — came mostly from domesticated animals (cattle — 43.5%, sheep/goat 21.8%, horse 15.3%, pig 15%, dog 2.6%, and cat 0.3%).¹² Wild animals were represented only by some jaw fragments of an elk and a fang of a wild boar. According to cutting spurs, horse meat was used for kitchen purposes.

¹⁰ Краут А. Археологические раскопки в Куусалу. — Изв. АН ЭССР. Обществ. н., 1981, 30, 4, p. 409.

¹¹ Analyses made by Olle Sillasoo (University of Tartu).

¹² Determined by Paul Saks and Eha Järv (Estonian Agricultural University).

Heiki VALK

1993. aastal lõpetati Aindu asulakohal eelmisel aastal avatud kaevandi uurimine. 35 m² suurusel alal koosnes kultuurkiht peamiselt mustast ja nõrgisest mullast ning sisaldas rohkesti põlenud kivitükke (tahv. IX, 1). Leiti nii kedra- (tahv. XI, 1, 3; XII, 1, 4) kui ka käsitsikeraamikat (tahv. XI, 5; XII, 5—11). Muudest leidudest saadi auguga luuese (ripats?), pronksist spiraalsõrmus, kaks pronksketi lüli (joonis, 1, 2, 3, 5), kulunud kantidega jahvekivi, savikuulike ja luisu katke (tahv. XI, 4; XII, 2, 3). Kultuurkihi ülemisest osast pärinevad väike odaots ja kiltkiviripats (tahv. XI, 2; joonis, 4).

Ehituskonstruksioonidest jäi kaevandi alale 1,5—2-meetrise läbimõduga ja 40—45 cm kõrgune põlenud kivitükkidest koosnev ahjuvare (tahv. IX, 2), mille seest leiti väikeselohuline kultusekivi (tahv. X, 1). Kuumuses pragunenud pealispinnaga kivil oli 19 lohku. Kivi paiknes külili; selle all oli 5 cm paksuselt musta kultuurkihti. Muudest ehituskonstruksioonidest leiti veel palkhoone vundamentaluseks olnud kivirida ja mõned väiksemad koldeasemed. Koos eelmise aastaga on Aindust leitud kokku kolm enam-vähem paralleelset vundamentikivide rida (tahv. X, 2). Looduslikku alusmulda katnud alumistest kihtidest võetud ¹⁴C-analüüsid viitavad asula tekkimisele tõenäoliselt 9. sajandil. Kultuurkihist leitud loomaluud pärinevad valdavalt koduloomadelt (veis, lammas/kits, hobune, siga). Raiumisjälgede põhjal on ka hobuseliha toiduks tarvitatud. Mullaproovidest leiti sõestunud odratëra ning vaarika- ja umbrohtude seemneid.

ЗАВЕРШЕНИЕ РАСКОПОК В ПОСЕЛЕНИИ ПОЗДНЕГО ЖЕЛЕЗНОГО ВЕКА В АЙНДУ

Хейки ВАЛК

В 1993 г. в Айнду было завершено исследование заложенного в предыдущий год раскопа (35 кв. м). Интенсивный темный и углистый культурный слой, насыщенный пережженными булыжниками (табл. IX, 1), содержал гончарную и лепную (в нижней части только лепную) керамику, а также некоторые другие предметы (табл. XI, XII, рисунок). Обнаружены остатки печи-каменки (табл. IX, 2), при сооружении которой использован культовый камень (вероятно, конец I тысячелетия до н. э.—начало н. э.). В материнской почве исследованы ряды камней, служившие, очевидно, фундаментами деревянных зданий (табл. X, 2). По данным радиоуглеродного анализа, поселение основано, видимо, в 9 в.