

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS AND INVENTORIES IN THE VILLAGES OF TÕUGU AND VÕHMA, NORTH ESTONIA

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## 1. CONTINUATION OF EXCAVATIONS ON STONE GRAVE II OF TÕUGU

Archaeological investigations of the complex of stone graves and clearance cairns at Tõugu were started in 1993, when both a stone grave (II) and a clearance cairn (I) were partially opened.<sup>1</sup> In 1994, the excavation of the uncovered portion of the grave was accomplished and the whole area of the Tõugu antiquities mapped (Fig. 1). There are at least nine stone graves preserved in this area, three of them (I or "Seamägi", II, and VII) being *tarand*-graves and six stone-cist graves. The clearance cairns are only preserved in the eastern corner of the complex, while a relatively high stone baulk is visible between graves III and VI. Interesting is the location of a cup-marked stone side by side with stone grave I.

The first step in the continuation of excavations on the *tarand*-grave was the removal of stone cover outside the grave walls. The measures of two *tarand*-walls were fixed as follows: the northeastern wall 6.8 m, the southeastern wall 7 m; the crossing point of two other walls remained in an unexcavated part of the grave. Between the lowermost stones of the grave and the original soil a number of small charcoal pieces were found by the side of the northwestern grave wall. This charcoal was radiocarbon dated to  $961 \pm 136$  BP (Tln-1883). One more radiocarbon sample was taken from the southeastern part of the excavation area, also outside the grave wall and below the stone cover, but at a distance of 2 m from the wall. The result of this dating was  $719 \pm 35$  BP (Tln-1877). These dates indicate that the grave walls had remained standing at least up to the Viking Age. Only some pieces of pottery with striated surfaces (AI 6003) and uncremated human and animal bones were discovered by the removal of the stone layer outside the grave walls. Some small fragments of cremated bones were found only beneath the stone cover, in the original earth.

In the area of the grave (*tarand*), the third layer of stone cover (two uppermost layers were examined in 1993) was cleaned up after the removal of the second layer (Plate IV). This second layer contained mostly limestone slabs and shingle, granite stones were relatively rare. Only a few uncremated bones were discovered by the excavation of the third layer but artefacts — which usually are very numerous in the *tarand*-graves — were not observed at all, although the removed material was totally sieved (the holes of the sieve being at 5 mm). No burials *in situ* were observed.

<sup>1</sup> Lang, V. An early *tarand*-grave and clearance cairn at Tõugu, North Estonia. — Proc. Estonian Acad. Sci. Humanities and Social Sciences, 1994, 43, 4, pp. 383—385.

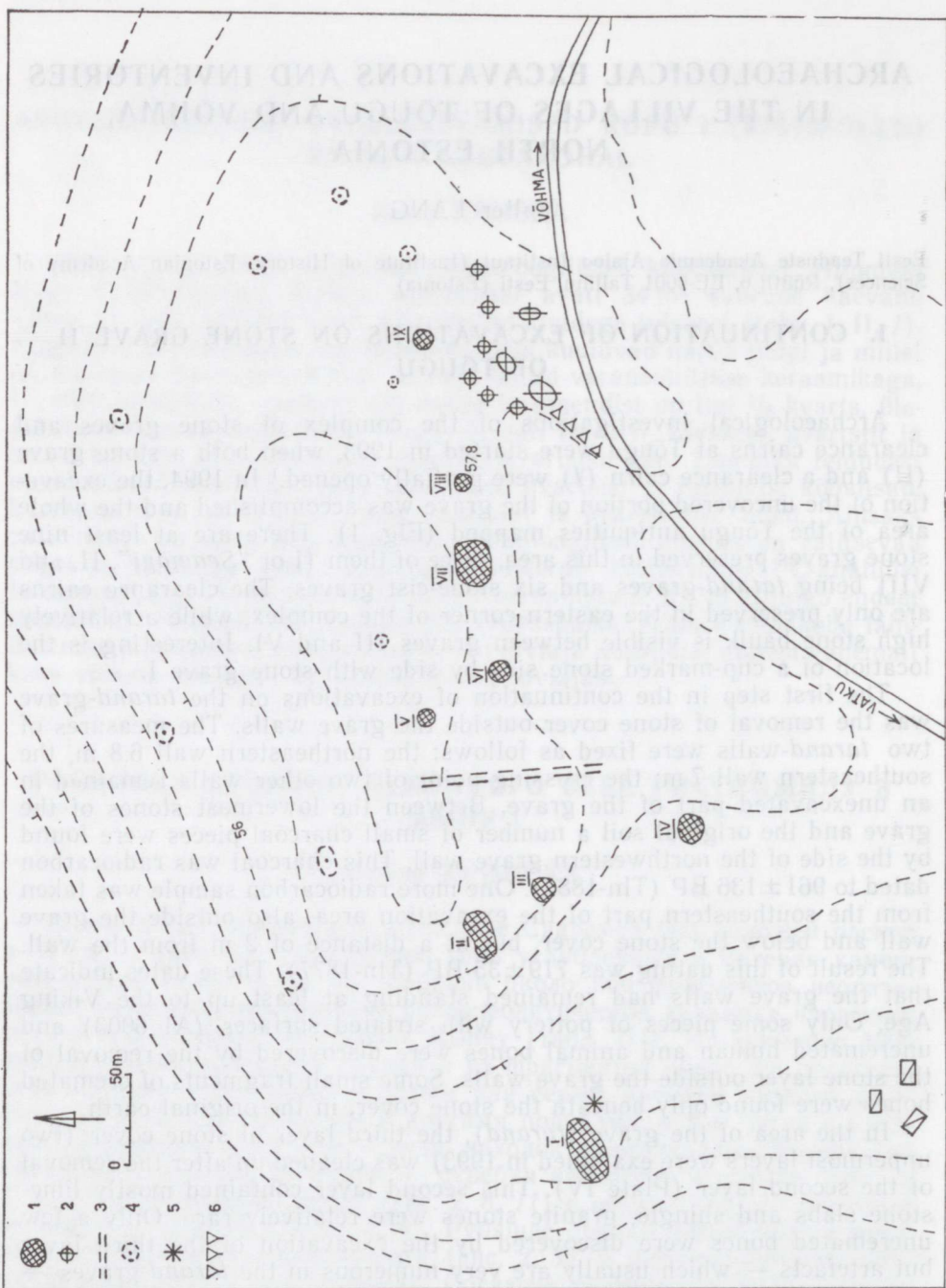


Fig. 1. Antiquities of Tõugu. 1 stone grave, 2 clearance cairn, 3 stone baulk, 4 modern clearance cairn from the kolkhoz time, probably containing an ancient grave or clearance cairn, 5 cup-marked stone, 6 edge of a terrace.

By the removal of the third (lowermost) stone layer pieces of charcoal were gathered inside the grave, too. This sample was radiocarbon dated to  $2004 \pm 99$  BP (TIn-1885), showing that the *tarand*, whose walls had stood in the upright position up to the Viking Age, had been built more than two thousand years ago. However, it was not the earliest building in this grave.

Excavating the lowermost stone layer a new stone cist was discovered (the first cist had been excavated in 1993). A stone circle (diameter 6.1—6.8 m) around the cist (Plate V, 2), situated partially below the *tarand*-walls (Plate V, 1), was the next discovery. It became evident that there had been an earlier stone-cist grave in the place of the erection of the *tarand*-grave. The cist (185×80×27 cm) was built of limestone slabs in the direction of NNE—SSW (25°) and contained cremated human bones. It was noticed that the fragments of a skull had been put into the north-northeastern corner of the cist and they did not occur elsewhere. The only artefact discovered in the cist was a quartz point (Fig. 2). Artefacts made of quartz have been observed in some Estonian stone-cist graves which belong to the (Late) Bronze Age, as e. g. Jõelähtme, Muuksi, and Napa.<sup>2</sup>

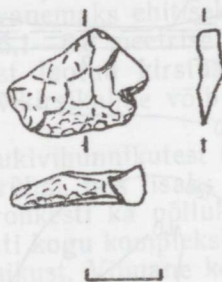


Fig. 2. An artefact of quartz found in the cist. (AI 6003: 48.)

The building process of grave II at Tõugu consisted of the following stages. First, as indicated by small pieces of charcoal under cist No. 2, the land was cleaned by fire. Secondly, a round-shaped stone-cist grave was erected on the place of burning. It happened, probably, in the Late Bronze Age. Thirdly, the land around the stone-cist grave was burned once more at the end of the Pre-Roman Iron Age and a new, *tarand*-grave was built on and around the previous stone-cist grave. Fourthly, cist No. 1 was built into the existing *tarand*-grave some time later. Fifthly, the local community took care of the grave up to the Viking Age, when the walls of the grave fell finally down. Possible enough, the last event was connected with slash-and-burn cultivation, which started in the surroundings of the graves c. 1200 years ago.<sup>3</sup> The study of the history and constructions of this grave will be continued in 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Kraut, A. Die Steinkistengräber von Jõelähtme. — Proc. ESSR Acad. Sci. Social Sci., 1985, 34, p. 4, Plate VI: 9; Friedenthal, A. Ein Gräberfeld der Bronzezeit in Estland. — Beiträge zur Kunde Estlands, XIII:1-2. Reval, 1928, pp. 47—50; Шмидехельм М. Х. Археологические памятники периода разложения родового строя на северо-востоке Эстонии (V в. до н. э. — V в. н. э.). Таллинн, 1955, pp. 19—22, Fig. 2:7.

<sup>3</sup> The radiocarbon sample from clearance cairn No. 1 at Tõugu was dated to  $1181 \pm 97$  BP (TIn-1851), i. e. to approximately the same time as the samples outside the *tarand*-grave, see: Lang, V. An early *tarand*-grave, p. 384.

## 2. INVESTIGATIONS AT VÖHMA

Quite a large area covered with fossil field remains is registered 0.5—1.3 km east of the Tõugu graves and clearance cairns, on the ridge of Tõugu Tandemäe. These remains consist of clearance cairns, which look very similar to the Tõugu cairns (Plate VI), and long narrow strips separated from each other by low baulks and negative lynchets. Some hundred metres northeast of the cairns, the Late Bronze and Pre-Roman Iron Age stone graves, which were excavated by Tanel Moora in 1969—72<sup>4</sup>, are located.

In 1994, a detailed mapping of fossil field systems was started by the author, but this work is not yet completed. One clearance cairn (p-15) was partially excavated. The cairn consisted of one big rock standing in its original place in the centre, and smaller granite stones, which were thrown on and around it (Fig. 3). Small pieces of charcoal were gathered beneath the lowermost stones of the cairn, originating from the layer of slash-and-burn prior cultivation. This sample was radiocarbon dated to  $1200 \pm 100$  BP (BGS-1733).<sup>5</sup> This means that the clearance cairns at Võhma and Tõugu were formed at the same time. Investigations of fossil field remains of Võhma will be continued in 1995.

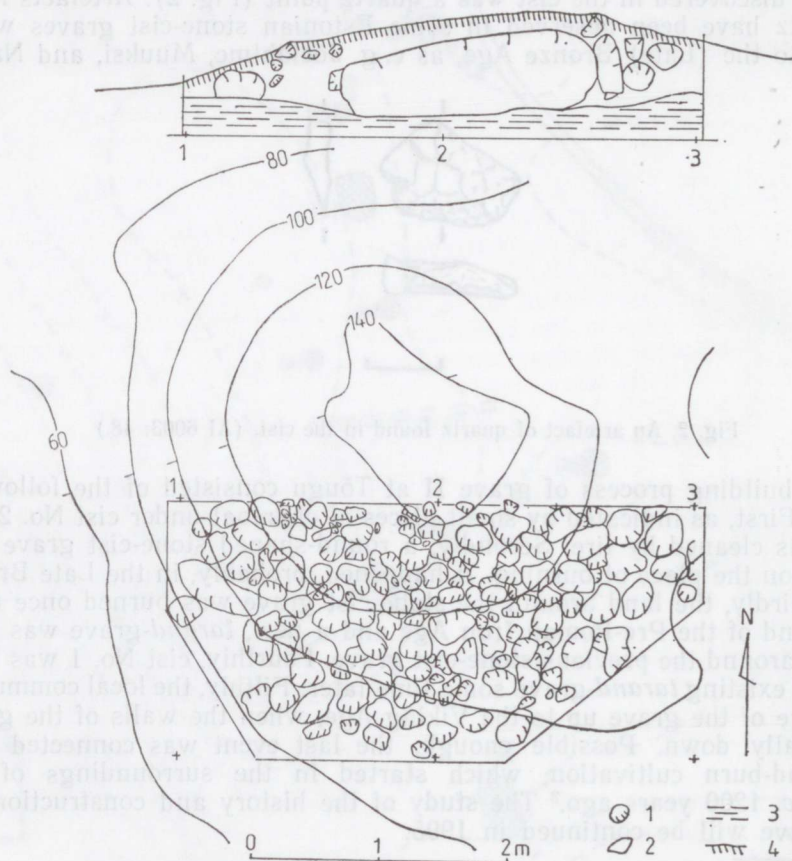


Fig. 3. Clearance cairn No. p-15 of Võhma. 1 granite stone, 2 limestone slab, 3 sand and gravel, 4 turf.

<sup>4</sup> Моора Т. Раскопки каменного могильника у с. Выхма в Северной Эстонии. — Proc. ESSR Acad. Sci. Social Sci., 1974, 23, 1, pp. 84—87.

<sup>5</sup> This sample was analysed in the Radiocarbon Laboratory of the Brock University, Canada.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ARHEOLOOGILISED VÄLITÖÖD TÕUGUL JA VÕHMAS

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Jätkati Tõugu II kivilalme (joon. 1) 1993. aastal avatud osa arheoloogilist uurimist (tahv. IV, V). Kalme dateeringu seisukohalt on olulised kolm radioaktiivse süsiniku proovi, mis kõik saadi kivilademe alt algselt maapinnalt. Neist üks võeti tarandi seest ja see näitas vanust  $2004 \pm 99$  aastat tagasi. Teine proov võeti vahetult tarandi loodepoolse müüri väliskülje vastast ( $961 \pm 136$  aastat tagasi) ja kolmas tarandi kagumüürist 2 m kauguselt ( $719 \pm 35$  aastat tagasi). Seega on eelrooma rauaaja lõpul rajatud tarandi müürid seisnud püsti vähemalt kuni viikingiajani ja alles siis maha varisenud. Kõige vanemaks ehitiseks selles paigas osutus aga hoopis tarandi all avastatud 6,1–6,8 meetrise läbimõõduga kivikirstkalme (tahv. V), mille paeplaatidest laotud kirstus oli põletusmatus ja väike kvartse (joon. 2). Selle kivikirstkalme võib esialgselt dateerida nooremassi pronksiaega.

Tõugu kalmetest ja põllukivihunnikutest 0,5–1,3 km kaugusel asub Võhma Tandemäe muististe rühm, mis lisaks hilispronksiaja ja eelrooma rauaaja kalmetele sisaldab rohkesti ka põllukivihunnikuid (tahv. IV) ja ribapõlde. 1994. aastal alustati kogu kompleksi plaanistamist ning kaevati läbi pool ühest põllukivihunnikust. Viimane koosnes suurest rändrahnust, mille ümber ja peale oli visatud väiksemaid põllukive (joon. 3). Kivide ja algse maapinna vahelt kogutud sõeproov andis kuhila vanuseks  $1200 \pm 100$  aastat.

## АРХЕОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ПОЛЕВЫЕ РАБОТЫ В ТЫГУ И ВЫХМА, СЕВЕРНАЯ ЭСТОНИЯ

Вальтер ЛАНГ

В раскопе 1993 г. было продолжено исследование 2-го могильника в Тыгу (рис. 1; табл. IV, V). Для определения датировки могильника важны три радиоуглеродные пробы, собранные под его каменной кладкой. Одна из них взята в самой оградке и определяет возраст основания этой части в  $2004 \pm 99$  лет. Остальные две пробы собраны за пределами оградки, под развалинами каменных стен, их возраст —  $961 \pm 136$  и  $719 \pm 35$  лет. Следовательно, стенки каменной оградки, выложенной уже в конце доримского периода железа, стояли вплоть до эпохи викингов. Более ранним сооружением оказался, однако, каменный могильник с ящиком, обнаруженный под каменной кладкой и стенками оградки (табл. V). Этот могильник (диаметром 6,1–6,8 м), ящик которого содержал трупосожжение и кварцевый предмет (рис. 2), можно предварительнo датировать эпохой поздней бронзы.

