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A PRE-ROMAN TARAND-GRAVE AND LATE MEDIEVAL FOSSIL FIELDS OF ILMANDU, NW ESTONIA

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In the framework of the international interdisciplinary PACT project "Environmental History of the Baltic Region", large-scale inventories were started in the area of the villages of Rannamõisa, Ilmandu, and Muraste, 14—17 km west of the centre of Tallinn (Fig. 1). These inventories revealed some new stone graves and a number of complexes of fossil field remains, covering tens of hectares in some places and less in others. In addition to that, one of the stone graves registered at Ilmandu already more than 20 years ago was found to have been seriously damaged during the building of a house in 1992. Rescue excavations, financed by the owner of the house, were carried out on this grave under the direction of Priit Ligi and the author in June 1994. The mapping and a trial excavation of a fossil field complex located close to the grave was done in October 1994.

1. THE GRAVE

Stone grave III of Ilmandu, located 12 m north of grave II (see the situation map Fig. 1) and 700 m westnorthwest of the well-known graves at Rannamõisa[1], was originally 21 m long, 11—13 m wide and 0.5 m high, as the inventory report of 1971 shows. After the destruction of one portion of the grave, its preserved part (covered with a heap of gravel) had dimensions of 10×6 m, i.e. only a fourth of the total burial mound. One can assume that the preserved part belonged to the southwesternmost portion of the original grave, while its northern and eastern parts were totally damaged (Plate X, *1*). Before the excavation, gravel was removed by a bulldozer.

The stone grave excavated contained at least three layers of burials separated both stratigraphically and chronologically. Investigating the first, uppermost layer of the stone cover (Plate X, *2*), both cremated and uncremated human bones were found scattered in between the stones of the northernmost part of the excavation area. Some artefacts were also found together with bones, as for instance bronze finger-rings and spirals, fragments of crossbow fibulae, a belt buckle, iron knives, a firestone, etc. (Plate XII, *1—9*), which can date from the Late Roman Iron Age. Such grave goods were totally missing in the southernmost part of the excavation area. A (*tarand*-?) wall of big stones in area F-G/5-6 (Fig. 2) is the only preserved construction that probably was built in connection of burying in the Late Roman Iron Age. One can suppose that the main part of the Late Roman Iron Age *tarand*-grave, being the third and last stage in the use of this grave-field, was completely destroyed by the building of the house.

[1] **Spreckelsen, A.** Das Gräberfeld Strandhof (Rannamõis), Ksp. Kegel, Harrien, Estland. — Beiträge zur Kunde Estlands. Vol. XI. 1925/1926, pp. 22—38.

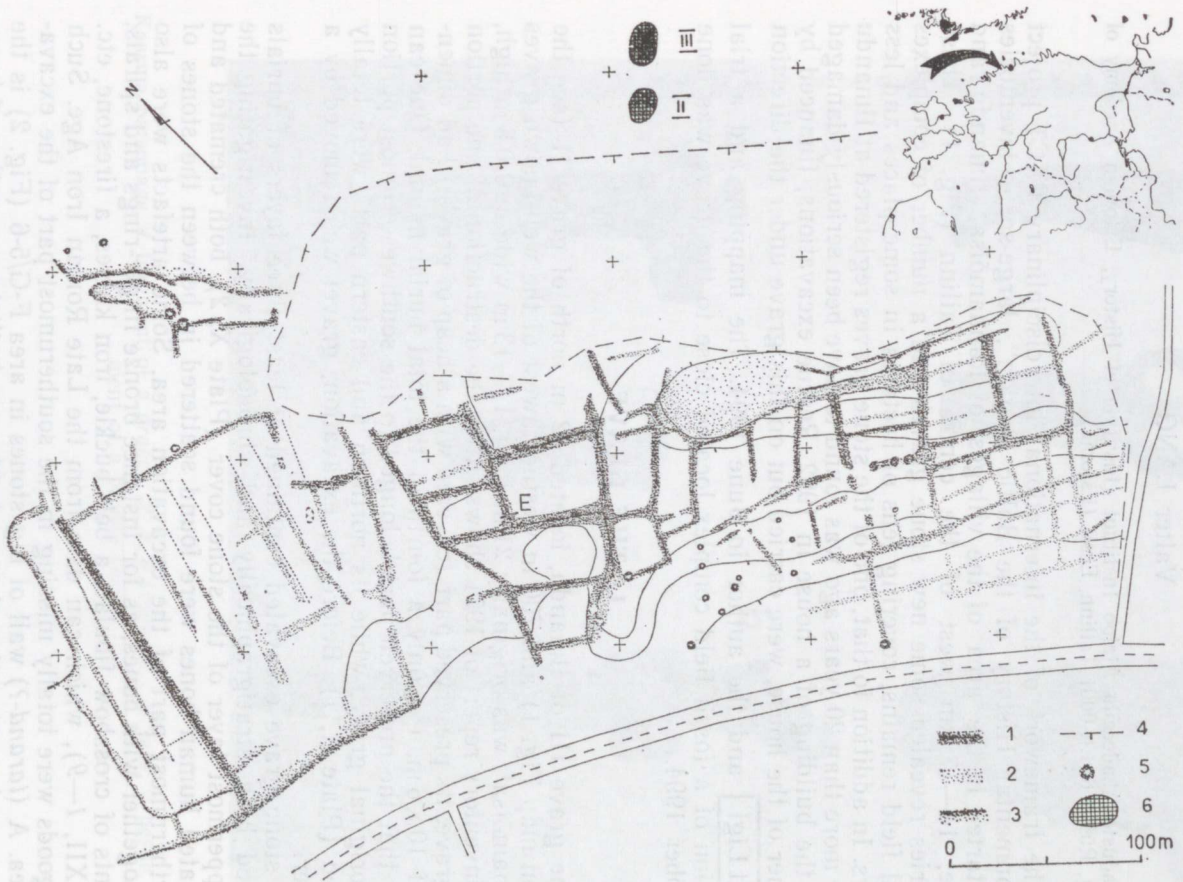

Fig. 1. Stone graves and fossil fields at Ilmandu. *1* well-preserved baulk, *2* bottom of destroyed baulk, *3* terrace, *4* negative lynchet, *5* clearance cairn, *6* prehistoric stone grave, *E* excavated trench.

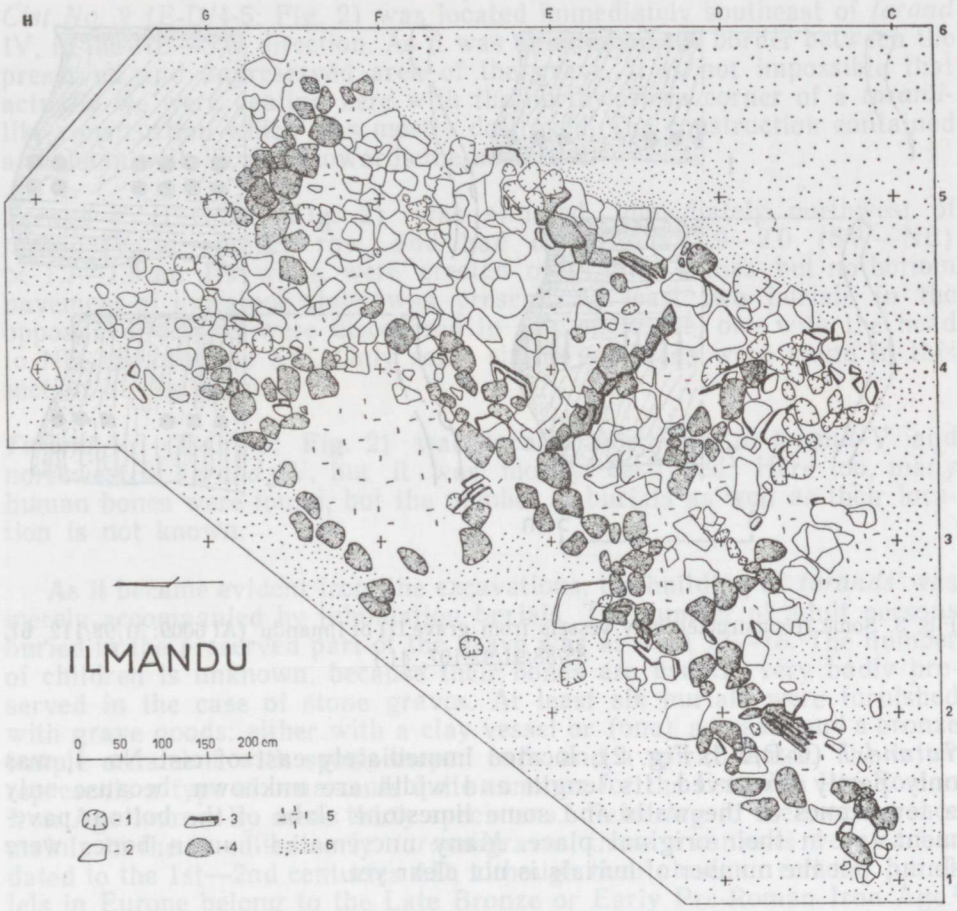

Fig. 2. The preserved constructions of stone grave III at Ilmandu. *1* granite stone, *2* limestone slab, *3* limestone slab standing upright, *4* wall stone, *5* limestone shingle, *6* destroyed area of grave.

In the second and main stage of burying, the so-called stone cists and *tarands* (bigger enclosures) were built. All together two cist-like and six *tarand*-like constructions in two to three rows were preserved in the excavation area (Fig. 2; Plate XI, 2). It has to be mentioned that all the grave constructions were erected with great carelessness and neglect, or inexperience, which may prove that the tradition of building *tarand*-graves was not finally elaborated for the time of the foundation of the grave at Ilmandu.

In the following, a short description of constructions, burials (as the bones are still not analysed by the anthropologists, only preliminary data obtained during the excavations are available), and grave goods is presented.

Cist No. 1 (area C-D/1-2; Fig. 2; Plate XI, 1) was situated in the southwestern corner of the preserved part of the grave. It was built of limestone slabs and granite stones in the direction of NE—SW (30°), with internal measures 140×35—45 cm. Bones of one skeleton were found from cist No. 1, whereby the fragments of a skull were located in its northeastern end. Grave goods of metal were missing, but 55 potsherds from one clay vessel with striated surfaces and stamp decoration (Fig. 3, *1*) were discovered in the cist.

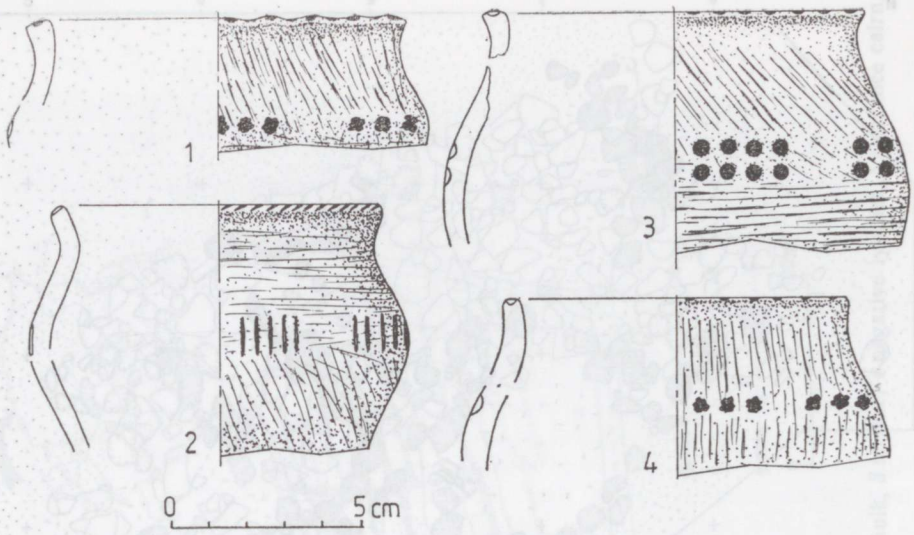

Fig. 3. Some reconstructed clay vessels from grave III of Ilmandu (AI 6009: 31/98/112, 67, 85/88/91/92/107, 41.)

Tarand I (C-D/2-3; Fig. 2), located immediately east of cist No. 1, was only partly preserved. Its length and width are unknown, because only a few stones of the walls and some limestone slabs of the bottom pavement lay in their original place. Many uncremated human bones were found but the number of burials is not clear yet.

Tarand II (C-E/2-4; Fig. 2) was built northeast of *tarand* I, and only its southern corner was destroyed. The construction had a NW—SE orientation and was 1.1 m wide and at least 2.8 m long. Its walls were built of granite stones and the bottom pavement consisted of limestone slabs. The skeleton(s) was not preserved *in situ* any more, but quite numerous uncremated bones were gathered over the area of the enclosure. No grave goods were found.

Tarand III (E-D/3-4; Fig. 2), 2.8 m long and 0.9—1.2 m wide, was located side by side with *tarand* II. The northeastern wall of this enclosure was built of limestone slabs standing in an upright position, the other walls were erected of granite stones. The bottom pavement, consisting of big limestone slabs, was quite well preserved. On this pavement, bones of at least one adult person without grave goods were lying, the head put towards the southeast.

Tarand IV (D-G/3-6; Fig. 2) was the biggest in this grave, being at least 5 m long (its northeastern corner was destroyed) and 1.9—2.3 m wide. The bottom pavement of limestone slabs was well preserved here, too, and all together nine skeletons *in situ* were discovered on it. Skeletons Nos. 1 and 4—9 were lying with their skulls to the southeast, skeletons Nos. 2 and 3 in the opposite direction. Five burials had grave goods, Nos. 1, 3, 7 and 8 a clay vessel, No. 9 a vessel and a bronze temple ornament with spoon-shaped ends (Fig. 3, *2—4*; Plate XII, *10*). Skeleton No. 9 was lying below the wall of big granite stones, which proves that the latter was of later origin (see above).

Cist No. 2 (E-D/4-5; Fig. 2) was located immediately southeast of *tarand* IV, in the NE—SW direction. As it was situated on the border between the preserved and unpreserved area of the grave, it is not impossible that actually we were dealing here with the northwestern corner of a *tarand*-like construction which was mostly destroyed. The construction contained a skeleton with its skull towards the northeast.

Tarand V (E-G/3-4; Fig. 2) was situated immediately northwest of *tarand* IV, in another row, and had dimensions 1.9—2.0 (SW—NE) × 1.7—1.8 m. Its walls were erected of granite stones but no bottom pavement of limestone slabs was present. At least two burials in the opposite directions were discovered in this enclosure, one with the head to NE, the other to SW. Only some single potsherds were found in this section of the grave.

Tarand VI (F-G/4-5; Fig. 2) was located northeast of *tarand* V and northwest of *tarand* IV, but it was mostly destroyed. Here too, many human bones were found, but the number of burials as well as their location is not known.

As it became evident from the excavations, the building of *tarands* was merely accompanied by inhumation burials. The number of adult persons buried in the preserved part of the grave was at least 17—18. The number of children is unknown, because their bones are usually very badly preserved in the case of stone graves. At least six burials were furnished with grave goods: either with a clay vessel or (one) a vessel and a bronze temple ornament with spoon-shaped ends and a spiral centre. The latter represents a type of ornaments quite common for the Estonian Pre-Roman Iron Age known by some thirty specimens.[2] Referring to their occurrence mainly in the so-called early *tarand*-graves, these ornaments were earlier dated to the 1st—2nd centuries AD, although their closer or remoter parallels in Europe belong to the Late Bronze or Early Pre-Roman Iron Age.[3] The previous dating of early *tarand*-graves to the Early Roman Iron Age was recently put under suspicion for many reasons, and much earlier dating has been argued for.[4]

Pottery (all together a dozen pots) is quite uniform consisting of one main type of vessels represented in Fig. 3. The vessel surfaces are either slightly striated or smoothed, and the pots themselves are decorated with stamp impressions of various size and shape. These impressions are usually situated both on the rim and (in one or two rows and, as a rule, in separate groups) on the shoulder of vessels. Such pottery is characteristic of some antiquities in North and West Estonia dating from the Late Bronze and Early Pre-Roman Iron Age.[5] An important circumstance for the dating of the grave is the total absence of cord- and comb-decorated pottery as well as iron and bronze shepherd's crook pins and bracelets, which are typical finds in North- and West-Estonian cemeteries of the Late Pre-Roman and Early Roman Iron Age.

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[2] **Lõugas, V.** Eesti vanimatest oimuehetest. — In: **Jaanits, L. & Lang, V.** (Eds.). Muinasaja teadus 1. Arheoloogiline kogumik. Tallinn, 1991, pp. 66—74.

[3] **Lõugas, V.** Eesti vanimatest oimuehetest, pp. 69—71.

[4] **Lang, V.** Über die Formierung der frühen Tarandgräber im östlichen Ostseegebiet. — Congressus Septimus Internationalis Fenno-Ugristarum, Debrecen, 27. VIII—2. IX 1990. Sessiones sectionum dissertationes historica, archaeologica et anthropologica. Debrecen, 1990, pp. 308—313.

[5] The closest parallels to this type of pottery have been found from the stone-cist grave of Loona (AI 4210: 67, 366, 1396, 1351/1359, 947), but similar ceramics is also known from the grave of Uuri Klaukse (AI 3805: 7, 15, 48) and the settlement site of Rannamõisa (AI 4535: 49).

In this way, the foundation of the *tarand*-grave at Ilmandu can be probably dated to the Early Pre-Roman Iron Age. In its structure containing both cist- and *tarand*-like constructions, burial custom (inhumations), and scantiness of grave goods, grave III of Ilmandu resembles very much one stone grave (III) at Rannamõisa, located 700 m eastsoutheast of it and excavated by an amateur archaeologist A. Spreckelsen in 1913—14.[6] The grave of Rannamõisa consisted of 21 cists and 3 *tarands*, and the majority of the burials were without grave goods. However, as the excavations of this grave yielded some artefacts (iron and bronze bracelets, tweezers, and a few pieces of cord-decorated pottery) which can date from the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age, it seems that the grave of Ilmandu is even older than the Rannamõisa grave, earlier regarded as one of the oldest *tarand*-graves in Estonia.[7]

But the place of grave III at Ilmandu had been used for burying also before the erection of stone constructions. Scattered over the whole area of the grave, fragments of slightly cremated human bones and small pieces of charcoal occurred below the bottom pavement of *tarands*, at a depth of 5—10 cm. It is not likely that these bones originated from the cremations of the Late Roman Iron Age (see above), because they were found even below the big limestone slabs of the bottom pavement, on which the Pre-Roman burials were lying *it situ*. The dating of these cremation burials (without grave goods) is still uncertain, but data from other districts of Estonia prove that such a burial custom existed here both in the Late Bronze Age and the Pre-Roman Iron Age.[8]

2. FOSSIL FIELDS

In the surroundings of the neighbouring villages of Rannamõisa, Ilmandu, and Muraste there are large alvar areas covered with field remains of different types, mostly clearance cairns and the so-called Baltic fields.[9] During the extensive land reclamation in the 1960s, many old field boundaries, clearance cairns, and single stones were moved away. This happened in the field group of Ilmandu I, too, situated 120 m southwest of the grave discussed above, but the bottoms of stony and earthern baulks have preserved there to quite a large extent.

The mapped area (Fig. 1) forms 11 hectares but weakly preserved remains of cultivation can also be observed outside it, so that the total area covered with fields could form some 20 hectares. This field group consists of three parts, one of which is located in the southeastern portion with a typical Celtic field pattern of some 60 plots (the surface of plots being 629 m^2 on the average). The second part is situated in the northwestern corner of the complex and is covered with the so-called strip fields. The strips have been marked off by low and narrow baulks, terrace edges, and the so-called negative lynchets. They are usually 11—16 m wide (strips some metres narrower or wider also occur). The third portion is located in the centre, between the Celtic-like and strip fields, and it is made up of quite large block-shaped fields with an average surface area of 1434 m^2.

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[6] **Spreckelsen, A.** Das Gräberfeld Strandhof; **Lang, V.** Tallinna ümbruse tarandkalmed. — Proc. ESSR Acad. Sci. Social Sci., 1987, 36, 2, p. 192, Fig. 3.

[7] **Lang, V.** Tallinna ümbruse tarandkalmed, pp. 192—195.

[8] **Laul, S.** Die Entwicklungsetappen und Chronologie der Steingräber in Estland. — Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis — Studia Baltica Stockholmiensia, 1. Stockholm, 1985, p. 68.

[9] About the Baltic fields see: **Lang, V.** Celtic and Baltic fields in North Estonia. Fossil field systems of the Late Bronze Age and Pre-Roman Iron Age at Saha-Loo and Proosa. — Acta Archaeologica (in press).

A 1-m-wide trench was excavated in one of the earthern baulks in the central part of the complex where the large block-shaped fields are located. Some late Medieval potsherds were found at a depth of up to 30 cm from the turf cover. Pieces of charcoal were also found at a depth of 35—40 cm, the baulk lying 44 cm over the limestone bedrock, and was radiocarbon dated to 245±127 BP (Tln-1880). This means that the block-shaped fields of Ilmandu, i. e. the central part of the whole complex, were ploughed not earlier than in the late Medieval period. The local strip fields seem to be contemporary with or younger than the local block-shaped fields but nothing is known about the date of the southeastern part of the complex. The elaboration of exact chronology of these different field types at Ilmandu is a concern of further studies.

According to Johansen, the block-shaped fields were an old Estonian land-use system, the exploitation of which did not last very long after the 16th century.[10] It is uncertain how old it really was, but it seems as though the origin of at least some of the Medieval block-shaped fields is to be found already in the Late Bronze or Early Iron Age. Maybe after the first exhaustion of the soil some two thousand years ago the area of old fields was used as pasture land for a long period of time, and turned fertile (together with the forming of new parcels) once more in the Middle Ages. There are several block-shaped fields known so far in Estonia (Võhma and Pidula on the island of Saaremaa, for instance) that are located in the same groups together with the Early Iron Age stone graves. This cannot be regarded as incidental. On the other hand, there could certainly have been some block-shaped fields that had not been established before the Middle Ages. The relations between the 'old' and 'young' block-shaped fields need certainly further investigation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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[10] **Johansen, P.** Siedlung und Agrarwesen der Esten im Mittelalter. Ein Beitrag zur estnischen Kulturgeschichte. — Verhandlungen der Gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft, 23. Dorpat, 1925, p. 76.

EELROOMA RAUAAJA TARANDKALME JA HILISKESKAEGSED FOSSIILSED PÕLLUD ILMANDUS

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Majaehituse tõttu oli juba mitu aastat tagasi lõhutud kivikalme (III) Ilmandus. Selle säilinud osa uuriti läbi Priit Ligi ja autori juhatusel. Avastati matuseid kolmest järgust, millest kõige hilisemad olid nooremasse rooma rauaaega kuuluvad laiba- ja põletusmatused kalme pealmistes kihtides (nende panused vt. tahv. XII, *1—9*). Kõige olulisema ja tüsedama kihi moodustasid laibamatused (kokku vähemalt 17—18) väga algelisel kombel ehitatud tarandites (6) ja kirstudes (2) (joon. 2). Surnud

olid maetud enamasti panusteta, mõnel oli siiski juures savinõu (joon. 3) ja ühel savinõu koos spiraalse keskosa ja lusikakujuliste otstega oimuehetega (tahv. XII, *10*). Nende panuste põhjal, samuti arvestades nöör- ja kammornamendiga keraamika, karjasekeppnõelte ja raudkäevõrude puudumist, võib Ilmandu III kalme dateerida eelrooma rauaaja esimesse poolde. Kõige varasemat ja seni veel dateerimata matustejärku esindasid aga põletatud luud kalmealuses kruusakünkas.

Uuritud kalmest 120 m edela pool avastati rühm fossiilseid põlde, millest u. 11 ha suurune osa plaanistati (joon. 1). Kui kompleksi kaguosa meenutab väga eelrooma rauaaegseid kelti põlde, siis selle keskosa põllulapid on hoopis suuremad ning esindavad keskajast tuntud nn. lapiväljasüsteemi. Seda kinnitas ühte mullapeenrasse tehtud läbilõikest saadud söeproov (245±127 aastat tagasi). Kompleksi loodeosa on kaetud ribapõlludega, kus siilud on üksteisest eraldatud madalate ja kitsaste peenarde, terrassiservade või kraavikestega. Ilmandu fossiilsete põldude uurimine jätkub.

МОГИЛЬНИК С ОГРАДКАМИ ДОРИМСКОГО ПЕРИОДА ЖЕЛЕЗА И ПОЗДНЕСРЕДНЕВЕКОВЫЕ ФОССИЛЬНЫЕ ПОЛЯ В ИЛМАНДУ, СЕВЕРО-ЗАПАДНАЯ ЭСТОНИЯ

Вальтер ЛАНГ

В связи с домостроительством был частично разрушен один каменный могильник (III) в Илманду, остатки которого исследованы Прийтом Лиги и автором. Обнаружены погребения трех этапов, самые последние из них — трупоположения и трупосожжения 3—4 вв. до н. э. (погребальный инвентарь см. табл. XII, *1—9*). Самая многочисленная группа погребений состояла из трупоположений (не менее 17—18) в каменных оградках (6) и ящиках (2), построенных весьма примитивным способом (рис. 2; табл. X—XI). Погребения в большинстве своем безынвентарны, лишь в некоторых из них имелись глиняные сосуды (рис. 3) и в одном — сосуд с височным кольцом (табл. XII, *10*). Судя по этим предметам, а также учитывая отсутствие шнуровой и гребенчатой керамики, посоховидных булавок и железных браслетов, могильник с оградками в Илманду можно датировать ранним доримским периодом железа. Эта местность, однако, использовалась под погребения и раньше, поскольку под камнями оградок обнаружено определенное количество пережженных костей. Их датировка пока не установлена.

В 120 м на юго-запад от могильника обнаружена группа фоссильных полей, большая часть которых (11 га) картографирована (рис. 1). Юго-восточная часть комплекса напоминает т. н. кельтские поля доримского периода, северо-западная часть покрыта чересполосицей, полосы отделены друг от друга низкими межами, узкими канавами или террасами. Центральная часть комплекса состоит из больших участков, характерных для средневековья. Одна межа в центральной части исследована траншейным методом, при этом получена радиоуглеродная датировка угля, относящая ее к периоду 245±127 лет тому назад. Исследование полей в Илманду продолжается.