

TRIAL EXCAVATIONS AT THE SETTLEMENT AND THE STONE SETTING OF ALA-PIKA

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In the summer of 1995 the Chair of Archaeology of the University of Tartu carried out trial excavations at the archaeological complex of Ala-Pika (Kanepi parish) within the framework of the PACT project. The complex, which consists of a settlement and two stone settings, lies c. 6 km NE of Otepää, 1 km SE of the manor site of Neeruti (Fig. 1). An intensively black cultural layer can be observed on an area of some 0.6–0.7 ha, 130–260 m NW of Ala-Pika farmstead. The site is located on arable land sloping down towards the Elva River (which at present is at Ala-Pika only a small streamlet and which dried almost totally by the end of the hot summer of 1995). The river was, evidently, the main source of water for the inhabitants of the settlement. The location of the site has also greatly been determined by Lake Ala-Pika, lying some 130 m from the area where a cultural layer was observed.

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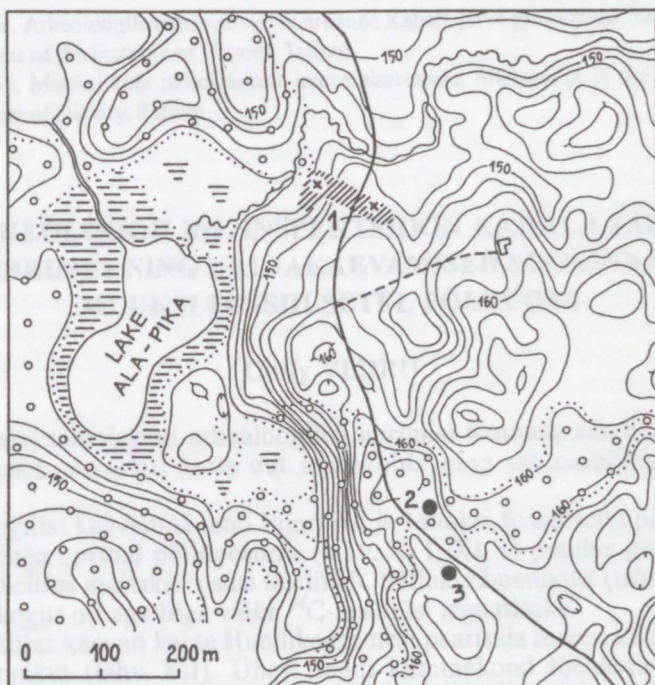


Fig. 1. The archaeological complex of Ala-Pika. 1 settlement with excavation plots, 2 excavated stone setting, 3 stone setting.

The settlement site was discovered in 1987. On the grounds of hand-made pottery, picked as stray finds (AI 5465; TÛ 225; 271), it could be dated preliminarily to the Roman or Middle Iron Age, i.e. to the pre-Viking Age period. Besides pottery, also a grind-stone, a whetstone, and a fragment of a blue glass bead (Fig. 2, 3), characteristic of the Roman Iron Age *tarand*-graves, were found from the field.

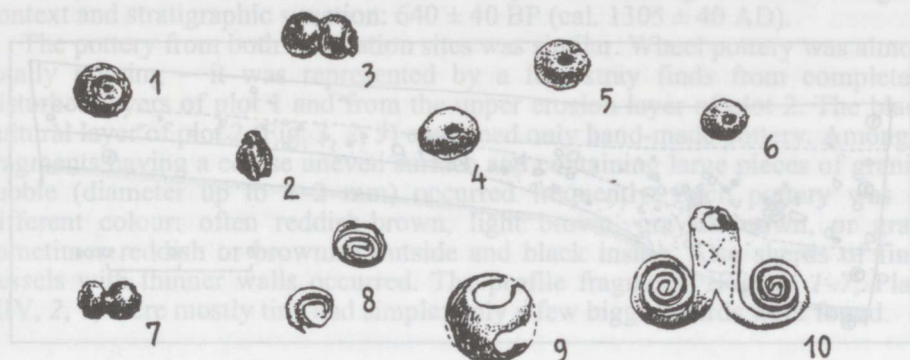


Fig. 2. Artefacts from the settlement of Ala-Pika. 1–7, 9 beads, 8 spirals, 10 pendant. TÛ 319: 197; 318: 204; 225: 3; 318: 105, 12; 319: 90, 427, 535/1–2; 320: 25; 318: 13. 1–3, 7 glass, 4–6 clay, 8–10 bronze. All 1 : 1.

The two stone settings lay 300 and 380 m to the SSE of the settlement, on the lands of the farmsteads of Ala-Pika and Keebi. The stone settings were first mentioned in the descriptions of Kanepi parish from the 1920s (Raid, 1921, pp. 39–41; Laja, 1925, pp. 5–6). The landscape situation suggests that they should belong to the settlement site.

As only a few data about Iron Age settlement sites older than the Viking Age existed for southern Estonia, the Ala-Pika complex was chosen for trial excavations. It seemed to offer also good possibilities to observe the interrelations of man and landscape on the accumulative insular heights of southern Estonia, a research topic of the PACT project. As a methodological innovation, intensive screening of the cultural layer was practised for gaining a comprehensive survey of the finds. First, dry screens were used; later the material was reviewed in a water screen in a stream. Most of the small items – fine fragments of pottery and beads – were found only at water-screening.

In the settlement area two excavation plots, both 4 × 6 m, were made. One plot (finds: TÛ 318) was situated in the western part of the site. The cultural layer with a thickness of 30–35 cm was, however, almost totally disturbed by ploughing. The dark brownish soil contained no fragments of burnt stones. From the bottom of the excavation area two post holes were discovered. The larger one had a 55 cm diameter; it had been dug into the yellow subsoil of sandy clay to a depth of 27 cm. The relative depth of the other, oval post hole (diameter 28 × 37 cm) was only 9 cm.

The other excavation (Plate XIII, 1; finds: TÛ 319) was made in the eastern part of the settlement, on the lower part of the slope, near the steep shore of the wide stream valley. The thickness of the cultural layer ranged from c. 50 cm in the southern part of the plot to c. 1.3 m in the end of its northern, more deeply

sloping part (Fig. 3). The upper 27–30 cm of the cultural layer consisted of dark grayish-brown erosion soil (Fig. 3, 1), which contained almost no fragments of burnt stones. Also pottery occurred only seldom there. The erosion layer was followed by the cultural layer of the settlement (Fig. 3, 2, 3), which was black in colour and contained abundant burnt stone rubble. In the southern part of the plot there was brown pre-settlement natural soil devoid of finds (Fig. 3, 4) under the cultural layer. The natural soil lay on the subsoil of sandy clay (Fig. 3, 5).

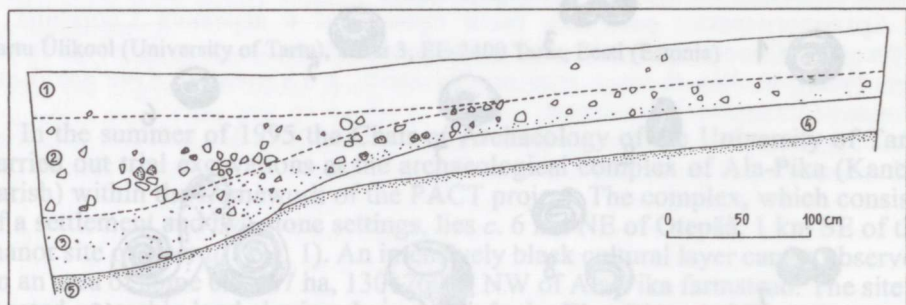


Fig. 3. Eastern profile of excavation plot 2 at Ala-Pika. 1 ploughed erosion layer, 2 black cultural layer (probably partly formed by settlement period erosion), 3 intensively black cultural layer, 4 pre-settlement natural brown soil, 5 sand/clay.

As ploughing had disturbed only the erosion soil, the black cultural layer of the settlement had remained intact. In the southern part of the plot the thickness of that layer was some 18–23 cm; in its northern part it extended to about 1 m. Here the upper and middle parts of this layer (Fig. 3, 2) had a relatively light, grayish colour. Quite probably, the formation of this part of the black layer had been influenced by the erosion processes taking place during the existence of the settlement. Just above the natural ground the black layer was, however, very intensively dark in the whole excavation area (Fig. 3, 3). The thickness of this intensively dark stratum ranged from some 18–23 cm in the southern part of the plot to some 40 cm in the north. The border between the lighter and the intensively dark lower part of the black layer was, in fact, rather vague.

In the black cultural layer organic matter was very poorly preserved. Only from the lowest layers a toe bone of a horse and of an elk, two pig teeth, and a fragment of a cattle tooth were found (determined by Lembi Lõugas, AI). The analyses of macro-remains from the black layer yielded some seeds of field weeds (*Fumaria officinalis*, *Galium aparine*, *Chenopodium album*, *Thlaspi arvense*, *Viola* sp., *Trifolium* sp.), a raspberry seed, and a charred wild strawberry seed (samples analysed by Sirje Hiie, AI). The post hole in plot 1 was richer in plant remains containing numerous seeds of fat hen (*Chenopodium album*) and other plants characteristic of settlement sites (*Lamium* sp., *Arenaria serpyllifolia*, *Stellaria media*, *Fumaria officinalis*, *Polygonum aviculare*).

From the black cultural layer an irregular heap of burnt stones – remains of a primitive stove or a fire pit – was found. The heap was 20–30 cm thick and had a diameter of up to 1.75 m (Plate XIII, 2). It consisted of 2–4 layers of stones with an average diameter of 8–12 cm. In the bottom of the heap four strongly burnt pieces of stone (diameter 15–20 cm), evidently meant for heat accumulation purposes, were found. The fire pit was deepened into the ground – the brown

natural soil had been removed from there. The sandy clayish subsoil under the lowest stones was burnt. From the black layer covering the stone heap enough charcoal for ^{14}C analysis (TA-2532)¹ was obtained. The sample yielded the result 240 ± 40 AD (calibrated age 245 ± 50 AD with 68.3% probability).

About 1 m to the east of the fire pit an area with an extraordinarily black cultural layer was found. This 25–30 cm thick layer contained numerous charcoal fragments. The natural brown subsoil had been dug off also there. A ^{14}C sample from this dark patch, containing typical pottery for the excavation site (TA-2517), yielded, however, a result evidently contradicting the archaeological context and stratigraphic situation: 640 ± 40 BP (cal. 1305 ± 40 AD).

The pottery from both excavation sites was similar. Wheel pottery was almost totally missing – it was represented by a few stray finds from completely disturbed layers of plot 1 and from the upper erosion layer of plot 2. The black cultural layer of plot 2 (Fig. 3, 2, 3) contained only hand-made pottery. Among its fragments having a coarse uneven surface and containing large pieces of granite rubble (diameter up to 1–2 mm) occurred frequently. Such pottery was of different colour: often reddish-brown, light brown, grayish-brown, or gray; sometimes reddish or brownish outside and black inside. Also sherds of finer vessels with thinner walls occurred. The profile fragments (Fig. 4, 1–7; Plate XIV, 2, 4) were mostly tiny and simple; only a few bigger sherds were found.

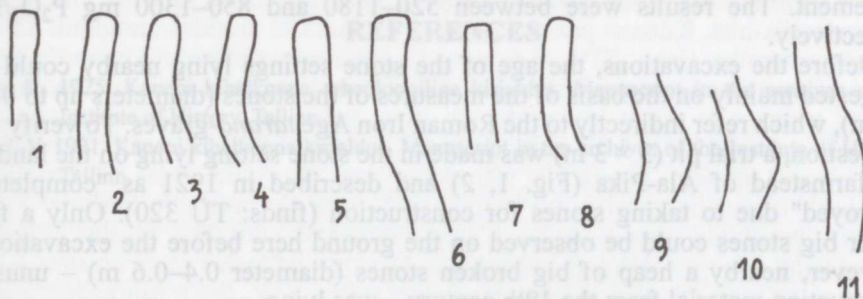


Fig. 4. Pottery from the settlement of Ala-Pika. TŪ 318: 36, 37, 112, 144; 319: 359, 387, 492, 493; 318: 170; 271: 4, 5. All 1 : 1.

A separate group of pottery, relatively small in number, includes fragments with a smoothed dark brown, dark gray, or black surface. Such pottery does not contain big pieces of stone rubble but sand and tiny pieces of mica. Among such pottery also sherds of rimmed vessels occurred (Plate XIV, 1, 3; Fig. 4, 8–11). Most of the black layer contained pottery of various kinds. However, in the bottom of the northern part of the excavation area (more than 1 m from the ground level) only coarse pottery containing rough stone rubble was found. It cannot be excluded that in the earliest stage of settlement only coarse pottery, characteristic especially of the Early Iron Age, was used. From different places in the intensively black layer (Fig. 3, 3) six fragments of a vessel decorated with fingerprints were found. Some sherds of this type were unearthed also from plot 1. Textile-impressed and striped pottery were both represented only by a few finds.

¹ Analysed by the Radiocarbon Laboratory of the Institute of Geology, University of Tartu.

Among other finds, first a fragment of an iron bridle bit from the transition zone between the lighter and darker parts of the black layer (Plate XIV, 6) deserves mentioning. This find seems to be the oldest iron bridle bit found in Estonia. From the probable settlement-time erosion layer (Fig. 3, 2) also three fragments of iron knives and an awl (Plate XIV, 7–9) were found. From the water screens a total of nine beads were gained. Five of them were evidently locally made – irregular and of light brown or black clay (Fig. 2, 4–6; Plate XIV, 14). The other small beads (Fig. 2, 1, 2, 7), one of them double, were made of blue glass. Also a fragment of a bigger green bead decorated with "eyes" (Plate XIV, 15) occurred. From plot 1 a lunula pendant and a bronze ring (Fig. 2, 10; Plate XIV, 13) were found. The intensively black lower part of the black layer of plot 2 yielded two small flat bronze spirals (Fig. 2, 8).

In spite of the similar types of pottery, the cultural layers of the two excavation plots, lying at a distance of some 80 m, had certain differences. From plot 1, where the soil was brownish, neither charcoal nor fragments of burnt stones were found. In plot 2, however, the intensively black cultural layer contained numerous pieces of burnt stone and small charcoal fragments. It remains unclear whether the dissimilarities in the cultural layers were conditioned by chronological or functional factors. Phosphate analyses (made by Toomas Mägi, AI) evince intensive life activities in both areas (in plot 1 roughly 480–690 mg P_2O_5 /kg, average from four samples 619 mg P_2O_5 /kg; in plot 2 380–1000 mg P_2O_5 /kg, average from nineteen samples 519 mg P_2O_5 /kg). A row of phosphate analyses was taken both from the eastern and western parts of the settlement. The results were between 520–1180 and 850–1300 mg P_2O_5 /kg, respectively.

Before the excavations, the age of the stone settings lying nearby could be suggested mainly on the basis of the measures of the stones (diameters up to 0.5–0.7 m), which refer indirectly to the Roman Iron Age *tarand*-graves. To verify the suggestion, a trial pit (3 × 3 m) was made in the stone setting lying on the land of the farmstead of Ala-Pika (Fig. 1, 2) and described in 1921 as "completely destroyed" due to taking stones for construction (finds: TÜ 320). Only a few rather big stones could be observed on the ground here before the excavations. However, nearby a heap of big broken stones (diameter 0.4–0.6 m) – unused construction material from the 19th century – was lying.

The existence and extent of the stone layer under the turf was determined with a sharp iron bar. A layer of stones could be observed in an area with a diameter of 14–18 m. The trial plot was made in the eastern part of the setting where the ground was sloping towards the east. A stone layer with a thickness of 0.4–0.5 m was found to have been preserved (Plate XV). The granite stones were of different size, their diameters ranged from 10–15 to 40–50 cm. Between the stones there was light brown sandy soil, which contained tiny fragments of coarse dark brown, very weakly burnt hand-made pottery. From the soil five single, one double, and one triple bronze beads on iron wire (Plate XIV, 10–12), typical of the Estonian *tarand*-graves, a fragment of a hollow bronze bead (Fig. 2, 9), and fragments of two bronze spiral fingerings (Plate XIV, 5) were found, mostly in the course of water-screening.

Although all the artefacts were damaged by fire, the cultural layer contained no charcoal pieces. From the stone setting also some tiny fragments of weakly cremated bones, including a human tooth, were found. The weak cremation of bones and weakly burnt pottery suggest that the plotted part of the stone setting was in use in the beginning of the Roman Iron Age.

The absolute dating of the settlement of Ala-Pika remains still greatly open. Although one of the radiocarbon analyses yielded a calibrated result 245 ± 50 AD, the pottery from Ala-Pika differs from that of the *tarand*-graves of south-eastern Estonia of that period (2nd–5th centuries). Thus, in Ala-Pika, both textile-impressed and striped pottery, typical of the *tarand*-graves, are almost totally

missing. While in the *tarand*-graves mostly fragments of reddish pottery occur, such sherds do not predominate in the settlement of Ala-Pika. As a rule, pottery with fingerprint impressions, stratigraphically connected with the intensively black layer, does not occur in *tarand*-graves. It cannot be excluded that the pottery from Ala-Pika belongs to two chronologically different groups, the earlier dating to the Early Iron Age and the later to the Roman or Post-Roman Iron Age. However, in Ala-Pika both these kinds of pottery occur in the same black layer. It must also be noted that the pottery from the Ala-Pika stone setting, probably of the Early Roman Iron Age, differs from that of the settlement and of the typical *tarand*-graves.

Summing up we can say that the occupation of the settlement most likely dates back to the end of the Early Iron Age. The settlement was deserted at the latest by the beginning of the Viking Age: no fragments of rimmed bowls with a well-smoothed and glittering surface, characteristic of the Viking Age, have been found there. Which time-span(s) within these wide chronological limits the settlement actually covered, remains, however, unclear as yet. The pottery of the Late Iron Age, represented by single stray finds, enables us to suggest that some settlement unit existed somewhere in the surroundings also in that period. Whatever the dating, Ala-Pika is the first site in southern Estonia where a compact and intensive cultural layer of a settlement dating from times older than the Viking Age has been excavated.

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PROOVIKAEVAMISED ALA-PIKA ASULAKOHAL JA KIVIKALMEL

Heiki VALK

1995. aastal tegi Tartu Ülikooli arheoloogia kabinet proovikaevamisi Ala-Pika asulakohal ja kivikalmeal (Kanepi khk.). Muististekompleks paikneb Otepääst 6 km kirdes ja Neeruti mõisast ligi 1 km kagus. 1987. aastal avastatud asulakoht asub Ala-Pika talust loodes, Elva jõe (ülemjooksul vaid väike ojake) äärsel põllul, Ala-Pika järve lähedal (joon. 1). Tumedat kultuurkihti leidub umbes 0,6–0,7 ha suurusel alal. Asulakohast 300 ja 380 m lõuna-kagus on kaks kivikalmet – üks Ala-Pika, teine Keebi talu maal.

Asulakoha inspekteerimisel saadud keraamika põhjal võis oletada, et muistis pärineb I aastatuhandest, tõenäoliselt selle esimesest poolest või keskpaigast. Et Lõuna-Eestis viikingiajast varasemaid kompaktse kultuurkihiga asulakohti ei olnud varem uuritud, tehti kultuurkihis kaks 4 × 6 m suurust proovikaevandit. Kogu pinnas sõeluti läbi – esmalt kuiv-, seejärel märgsõelal. Esimeses, läänepoolses kaevandis oli 30–35 cm paksune kultuurkiht enamasti läbi küntud. Pinnas oli pruunikas; sütt ega põlenud kive ei leidunud. Kaevandi põhjas paljandus kaks looduslikku liivsavisse kaevatud postiauku – esimene 55 cm läbimõõduga ja 27 cm sügavuselt jälgitav, teine (ovaalne) 28 × 37 cm läbimõõduga ja 9 cm sügavuselt jälgitav. Teine, idapoolne kaevand (tahv. XIII, 1) rajati ojaoru poole langeva nõlvaku alumisse serva. Kultuurkihi paksus oli kaevandi lõuna-

otsas ca 50 cm, ojaoru poolses põhjaotsas aga üle 1,3 m (joon. 3). Ülemine, ligi 30-sentimeetrine pinnasekiht koosnes pruunikast ja lieuvaesest läbiküntud erosioonimullast (joon. 3, 1). Sellele järgnes must, rohkesti põlenud kivitükke sisaldav kultuurikiht (joon. 3, 2, 3), mille paksum kaevandi lõunaosas oli 18–23 cm, põhjaosas, kus looduslik aluspõhi langes, aga ligi 1 m. Mustas kihis võis eristada silmapaistvalt musta ja nõrgist ladestust (joon. 3, 3), mis kattis looduslikku pruuni alusmulda (joon. 3, 4) või saviliivast koosnevat mineraalpinnast (joon. 3, 5). Nõlvakul, kus must kiht oli paksem, oli selle ülaosa mõneti heledam (joon. 3, 2). Võimalik, et selle ladestuse kujunemisel on oma osa etendanud asulaeagne erosioon. Piir musta kihi tumedama ala- ja heledama ülaosa vahel jäi siiski ebamääraseks. Pruuni asulaeelset alusmulda oli säilinud vaid kaevandi lõunaosas; kaevandi põhjaosas oli see juba asula eksisteerimisajal ära kaevatud. Orgaanika oli kultuurkihis halvasti säilinud. Leiti vaid üks põdra ja üks hobuse varbaluu, kaks seahammast ja veisehamba tükk. Musta kihi alaosa sisaldas vähesel määral põlluumbrohtude seemneid; leiti ka üks vaarika- ja metsmaasikaseeme. Esimese kaevandi suurest postiaugust võetud mullaproovis oli rohkesti valge hanemaltsa ja muude inimlembeste umbrohutaimede seemneid. Kultuurkihi põhjast tuli nähtavale ca $1,25 \times 1,75$ m mõõtmatega u. 30 cm kõrgune tugevasti põlenud kividest vare – nähtavasti kolde ja algelise ahju vahevorm (tahv. XIII, 2). Keskmiselt 10 cm läbimõõduga kivitükkidest vare paiknes maasse süvendatud alal, kust pruun alusmuld oli eemaldatud. Varet katvas kultuurkihist kogutud ^{14}C -proov andis tulemuseks 240 ± 40 A.D. (kalibreeritud vanus 245 ± 50 A.D.).

Nii mõlemast kaevandist saadud kui ka inspekteerimisel kogutud keraamika oli põhijoontes ühetaoline. Kedrakeramikast saadi vaid mõni juhuslik kild künni- ja erosioonikihist. Künnist puutumata must kultuurikiht sisaldas eranditult käsitsi tehtud keraamikast (tahv. XIV, 1–4; joon. 4). Palju esines jämedat kivipurdu sisaldavate, konarliku pinnaga nõude katkeid. Teise, vähem arvuka rühma moodustab silutud pinnaga ja peent kivipurdu või liiva, vahel ka vilgukivitükke sisaldav keraamika (tahv. XIV, 1, 3; joon. 4, 8–11). Erinevad keraamatüübid esinesid mustas kihis läbisegi. Musta kihi alaosa kaevandi sügavamas osas sisaldas siiski eranditult jämedapurrulisi ja koredapinnalisi, varasele rauaajale omaseid kilde. Tekstiil- ja riibitud keraamikast saadi vaid mõni üksik nõukatke. Mustas kihis leidis ka veidi näpiornamendiga keraamikast. Muudest leidudest saadi mustast kihist rauast suitsekang, naaskel ja kolm noakatket (tahv. XIV, 6–9). Märksõeltest leiti kahe kaevandi kohta neli savi- (tahv. XIV, 14; joon. 2, 4–6) ja viis klaashelme, sh. üks sinine kaksikhelme (joon. 2, 7) ja üks roheka silmakestega helme katke (tahv. XIV, 15). Üks sinise mitmikhelme katke (joon. 2, 3) oli varem saadud ka inspeksioonileiuna. Esimesest kaevandist leiti veel luunulakujuline ripats ja pronksõrmus (joon. 2, 10; tahv. XIV, 13), teisest kaevandist musta kihi tumedast alaosast aga kaks pronksspiraalikest (joon. 2, 8).

Enne kaevamisi võis muististekompleksi kuuluvad kivikalmed kivide suuruse põhjal (läbimõõt 0,5–0,7 m) oletamisi arvata rooma rauaaja tarandkalmeteks. Oletuse kontrollimiseks tehti Ala-Pika kivikalmesse, mis 1921. aasta kihelkonnakirjelduse andmetel ehituskivide võtmisega "täiesti lõhutud", 3×3 m proovikaevand. Selgus, et kivivare on säilinud 40–50 cm paksuselt (tahv. XV). Kalmekivide läbimõõt ulatus 10–50 cm-ni. Kivide vahel oli pruun liivmuld, millest leiti väga nõrga põletusega jämedapurrulist ja koredapinnalist keraamikast. Leiti ka seitse rooma rauaaja tarandkalmetele omast raudtraadil pronkskelmest (sh. üks kaksik- ja üks kolmikhelme; tahv. XIV, 10–12), kaks pronksist spiraalõrmuse katket (tahv. XIV, 5) ja mõned nõrgalt põlenud luukillud (sh. üks inimese hammas). Kõik metall-leiud olid tuld saanud, kuid kalmel söepuru ei esinenud. Nii keraamika kui ka luude nõrga põletusastme põhjal võiks uuritud kalmeosa pärineda rooma rauaaja algusest. Metalloraga tehti kindlaks säilinud kalmevare ligikaudsed mõõtmad: ebaühtlase tihedusega varet leidub ca 14×18 m mõõtmega alal.

Kaevamistest hoolimata jääb Ala-Pika asulakoha dateering paljuski problemaatiliseks. Kuigi ^{14}C -analüüs andis tulemuseks 245 ± 50 A.D., erineb asula keraamika mõneti Kagu-Eesti rooma rauaaja (2.–5. saj.) tarandkalmete omast. Nii puuduvad asulas peaaegu täielikult tarandkalmetes sagedane riibitud ja tekstiilkeraamika; suhteliselt vähe on ka tarandkalmetele omast punaka värvusega keraamikat. Märgitagu veel asjaolu, et Ala-Pika eeldatavasti rooma rauaaja varasemasse poolde kuuluvast kalmest leitud keraamika on asula omast erinev.

Kokku võttes näib Ala-Pika asulakoha algus langevat varasesse rauaagea. Keskmise rauaaja teiseks pooleks või hiljemalt viikingiaja alguseks on asula ilmselt maha jäetud – viikingiajale omaste kiilapinnaliste nivendiga kausside tükke Ala-Pikalt leitud ei ole. Millis(t)esse kitsamalt piiritletud ajalõiku(desse) asula kõnesolevas laias ajalisel raamistuses kuulub, jääb praeguse uurimisseisu puhul ebaselgeks. Noorema rauaaja keraamika on nii kaevandites kui ka küntud põllult korjatud inspeksioonileidude seas esindatud vaid üksikute juhukildudega. Võib arvata, et mingi selleaegne asustusüksus on paiknenud kuskil lähikonnas. Kuigi Ala-Pika asulakoha dateering jääb suuresti lahtiseks, on muistis esimene viikingiajast varasem intensiivse ja kompaktselt kultuurkihiga arheoloogiliselt uuritud asulakoht Lõuna-Eestis.

ПРОБНЫЕ РАСКОПКИ НА ПОСЕЛЕНИИ И КАМЕННОМ МОГИЛЬНИКЕ АЛА-ПИКА

Хейки ВАЛК

В 1995 г. проведены пробные раскопки на поселении и каменном могильнике Ала-Пика (рис. 1). На поселении заложено два раскопа площадью по 24 кв. м. В первом раскопе культурный слой был полностью перемешан вспашкой. Здесь обнаружены две ямки от столбов. Во втором раскопе (табл. XIII), расположенном на склоне, толщина культурного слоя достигала от 0,5 до 1,3 м (в нижней части склона). Интенсивно темный слой содержал пережженные булыжники (табл. XIII, 2), лепную керамику (табл. XIV, 1–4; рис. 4), а также несколько бусин, железных и бронзовых предметов (табл. XIV, 6–9, 13, 15; рис. 2, 4–7). По характеру керамики поселение можно датировать с раннего железного века по середину или третью четверть н.э. Одна из проб угля дала радиоуглеродную датировку 245 ± 50 лет (с дендрокалибровкой).

На каменном могильнике, расположенном на расстоянии 300 м от поселения, изучено 9 кв. м. По находкам бронзовых бусин (табл. XIV, 10–12), слабой степени обжига костей и керамике изученный участок могильника может быть отнесен к началу римского железного века, вероятнее всего, к 2 в.

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