

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
FIELDWORK
IN ESTONIA**

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**ARHEOLOOGILISED
VÄLITÖÖD EESTIS**

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ESTER ORAS, ERKI RUSSOW*

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS IN THE COUNTIES OF HARJUMAA AND RAPLAMAA

GURLY VEDRU
gurli11@mail.ee

RAILI ALLMÄE
raili.allmae@ai.ee

KADRI NIGULAS
kadri.nigulas@linnamuuseum.ee

Tallinna Ülikool, Ajaloo Instituut
(Institute of History,
Tallinn University)
Rüütli 6, 10130 Tallinn, Estonia

In summer 2008 archaeological excavations were carried out in Saha village (Jõelähtme parish) in Harjumaa and Kalbu village (Rapla parish) in Raplammaa. Excavations in Saha took place within the framework of the project 'Saha chapel – a hidden treasure of Estonian cultural heritage – planning stage'. This work was financed by the Jõelähtme local government. In Kalbu fieldwork was supported by the Estonian National Heritage Board.

SAHA

Archaeological excavations in Saha were carried out in the churchyard of Saha chapel and its vicinity. The aim of these excavations were to localize and to establish the measures of the medieval stone fence that surrounded the chapel and also to carry out preliminary investigations on the area of the future building of a shed and a parking ground (Vedru 2008).

Saha chapel is situated in the SW-part of the Saha village. The chapel was built on the western part of a moraine ridge, oriented in the ONO–WSW-direction. Several cup-marked stones are located in the vicinity of the churchyard. In the 1920s a number of finds, indicating the existence of a pit-grave cemetery, were gathered from the churchyard (Lang 1996, 247).

Excavations in the Saha graveyard

Saha graveyard can be divided into two parts:

1. older part, situated on higher grounds around the chapel;
2. newer part, situated lower than the chapel and the old part of the cemetery and is still in use.

The graveyard is surrounded by a stone fence. An old stone fence, covered by turf, separates the above mentioned older and newer part. Before the beginning of the excavations we assumed that it might be medieval (as it was once a part of the fence, which surrounded the older part of the graveyard). The length of the old stone fence is about 50 m and it crosses the present graveyard in the NO–SW-direction.

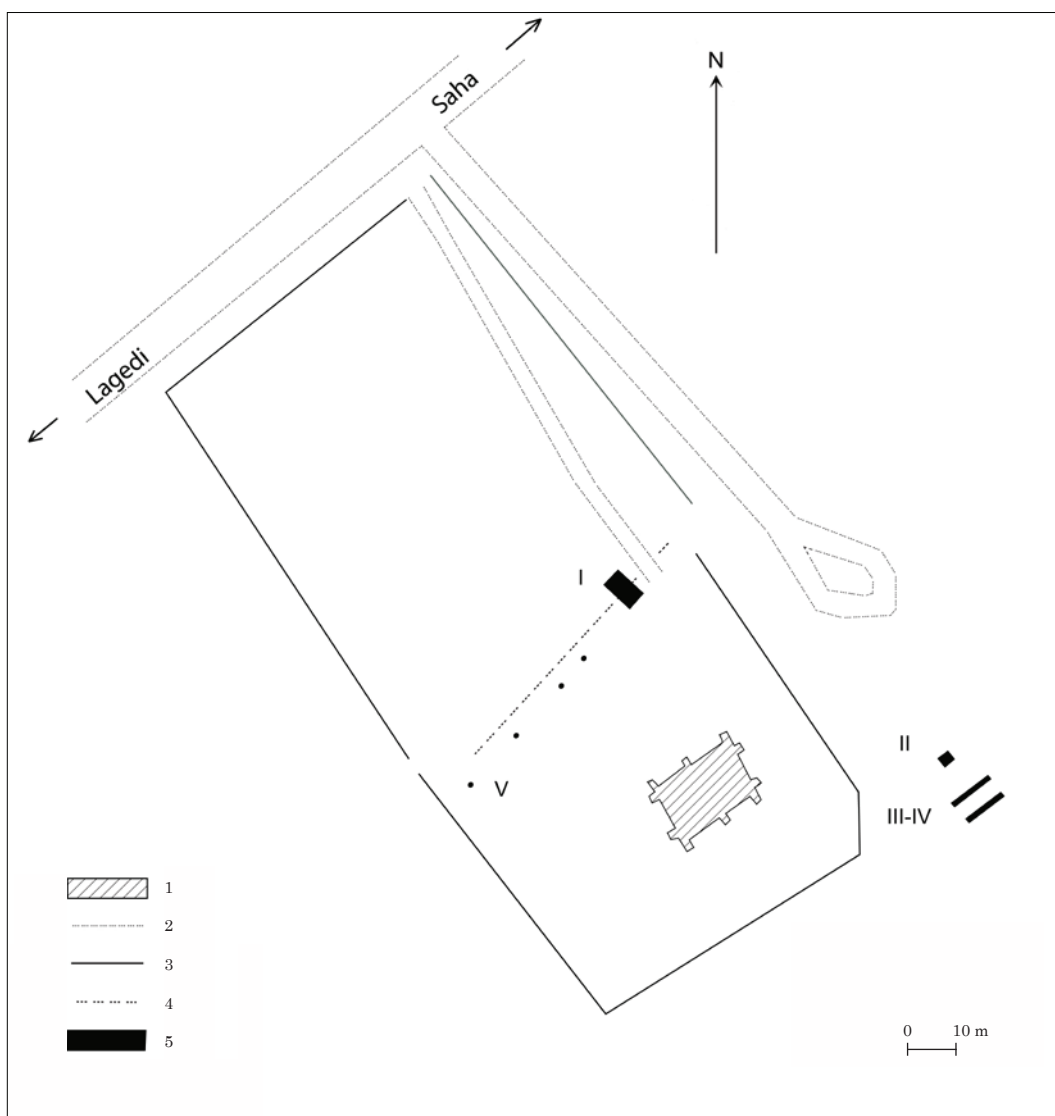


Fig. 1. Map of the Saha investigations.
1 – chapel
2 – roads / paths
3 – stone fence
4 – remains of a probable mediaeval stone fence
5 – excavation plots (I–II), trenches (III–IV) and pits (V).

Jn 1. Saha kaevamiste plaan.
1 – kabel
2 – teed / rajad
3 – kiviaed
4 – arvatava keskaegse kiviaia jäänused
5 – kaevandid (I–II), tranšeed (III–IV) ja šurfid (V).

Drawing / Joonis: Gurly Vedru

Fig. 2. Excavation plot in Saha graveyard. Remains of the probable medieval stone fence under the big stones visible in the SE part of the plot. View from the north.

Jn 2. Saha kabeliaia kaevand. Kaevandi kagupoolses osas paiknevate suuremate kivide all on arvatava keskaegse kiviaia jäänused. Vaade põhjast.

Photo / Foto: Kadri Nigulas



During the research work in 2008 the stone fence was visually evaluated, measured and small test pits were dug in it at a distance of 5 m. To get a cross section and obtain more information, an excavation plot in the size of 15 m² was made (Fig. 1: D). Excavations showed that at least some remains of the old fence have preserved everywhere in its presumed position. One or two, in some places up to four layers of stones have preserved, though some of them have been moved from their original position. In some parts, for example in the excavation plot, there are more layers, but most probably these have been added to the old fence later – the reasons for making this conclusion are mixed soil and pieces of plastic bags, which were found between the upper layer of stones in the excavation plot. It is probable that bigger stones, found in the upper layers of the fence (Fig. 2) are leftovers from the restoration of the chapel, which took place in the 1960s (Raam 1997, 51).

The density of the stones in the old fence suggests that the preliminary width of the fence was somewhere between 1.2–2 m. The fence was made of both limestones and granite stones. It seems that the limestones, especially smaller ones, have been used mainly for binding bigger granite stones and thickening the fence. As for the original height of the fence, it is quite impossible to make any assumptions about it, at least if based only on the existing archaeological data.

Dating the fence is also difficult. The finds gathered from the excavation plot originated from the 20th century (the only exceptions were fragments of cremated bones which came from the mixed layer). Hence, based on the archaeological data, the fence could be medieval as first presumed, but it could also be built later. But even if the fence was built (or rebuilt) in modern times, it is still possible (and logical considering the natural situation) that the medieval fence was on the same spot.

Two skeletons were revealed in the excavation plot (Fig. 3). One of them (skeleton No. 1) was fully in the excavation area, the other (No. 2) only partially (lower body up to the pelvis). Both of them were positioned parallel to the old stone fence, to the north of it (out of the older part of the cemetery). The burials lay on their backs, stretched out and orientated towards SW (parallel to the chapel). Skeleton No. 1 had his arms crossed on his chest.

The burials were placed in a shallow grave without a coffin. The maximum depth of the grave from the ground was 65 cm. At the time of the burial the grave must have been even shallower. There were no finds around the burials. At least the grave of the skeleton No. 1 had to be quite narrow, not much larger than the body (the width of the skeleton was about 40 cm and the length about 160 cm), the borders of the grave were marked by smaller stones (mostly with a diameter of 10–15 cm). A clear stratum consisting of at least four layers of stones was placed on the hips of that skeleton. The profile of the excavation plot suggested that a similar stratum of stones might have been placed also on the hips of the skeleton No. 2. Some smaller stones were also placed on and around the skeletons.

The condition of the skeletons was good, the bones were well preserved. It is quite likely that the burials

Fig. 3. Skeletons in the excavation plot in Saha graveyard. View from the south-east.

Jn 3. Luustikud Saha kabeliaia kaevandis. Vaade kagust.

Photo / Foto: Gurly Vedru



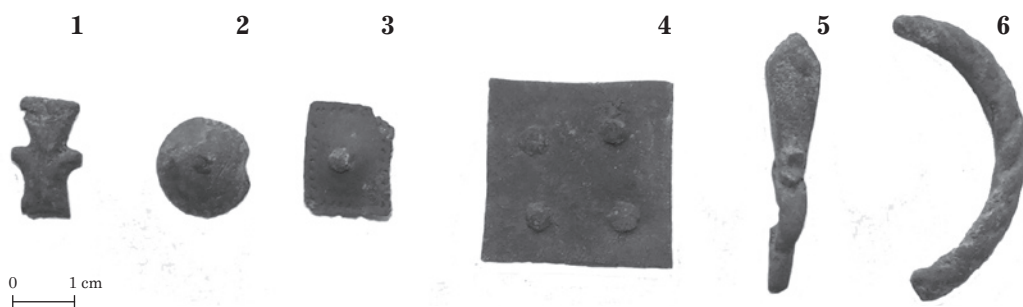


Fig. 4. Selection of belt parts and a fragment of a bracelet found from Saha.

1–4 – belt mounts

5 – belt end

6 – fragment of a bracelet.

Jn 4. Valik Sahalt leitud vööosi ja käevõru katke.

1–4 naastud

5 – rihmaots

6 – käevõru katke.

(AI 6913: 31, 28, 19, 48, 46, 47.)

Photo / Foto: Gurly Vedru

were made in the modern time. Skeleton No. 1 belongs to a man aged 35–45, skeleton No. 2 to an adult woman (Allmäe 2008).

Dating these burials is quite complicated. Considering the known material, it can only be said, that the burials are most probably post-medieval, but not made later than the World War II. The absence of a coffin and any finds support the opinion that probably the burials were made before the 20th century. Both the dating and the way of the burials (quite shallow graves with a number of stones covering the bodies) remained unclear.

In connection with the excavation plot, six pieces of burnt bones¹ are also worth mentioning. Such finds here are not surprising, taking into account that a prehistoric cemetery with cremation burials was discovered outside the graveyard in summer 2008.

Excavations outside the graveyard

Altogether three excavation plots were opened outside the graveyard. Their aim was to detect whether there is a cultural layer on the area of the future shed, parking ground and access road. The planned building will be situated on a lower area south from the ridge where the chapel is located. In the past the area has been used for tillage, now it is used as a hayfield.

Two parallel trenches, oriented in the NE–SW-direction were dug (Fig. 1: III–IV). Each trench measured 5 m² and they marked the long walls of the future shed. These trenches were erected on a soil lowering towards the south. Both trenches contained similar layers of soil. Under a turf layer there was a 40–50 cm thick layer of dark brown field soil. The uppermost 30 cm were disturbed by ploughing. That ploughed soil contained a number of small limestones and granite stones, mostly with the diameter of 2–7 cm. These stones did not form a compact layer. Fragments of heavily burnt human bones, bronze ornaments, molten bronze drops and pot sherds were found from the ploughed soil layer (Fig. 4). All finds, except the pieces of ceramics, had been in a fire. Also some finds of

¹ AI 6913: 56–58.



Fig. 5. Finds from the II excavation plot in Saha.

1 – fragment of a burnt bone
2 – bronze ring
3 – fragment of a glass bead.

Jn 5. Leide Saha II kaevandist.

1 – põlenud luukild
2 – pronks-rõngake
3 – klaashelme katke.

(AI 6913: 61, 62, 63.)

Photo / Foto: Gurly Vedru

the modern era were found from that layer. The virgin soil began on the depth of 50–65 cm, it consisted of orange-coloured sand. All finds were discovered on the ploughed soil layer.

As an addition, an excavation plot was made on the higher part of the ridge (Fig. 1: II). Its aim was to detect whether the cultural layer of the cemetery existed also in that area; and if so, then it might indicate that the cemetery was originally created on the top of the ridge and was ploughed downwards later. The excavation plot measured 4 m² and was oriented in the NE–SW-direction. Most of the finds, gathered from the plot, belonged to the modern time. The only finds, indicating the existence of a cemetery were a fragment of a burnt bone, a glass bead and a small bronze ring (Fig. 5).

Based on the finds, the excavations outside the Saha graveyard gave evidence about the existence of a cemetery of the last centuries of Estonian prehistory. The cemetery was located probably on the higher part of the ridge at first, but was ploughed downwards later. The cultural layer is damaged by ploughing and it can only be assumed that cremation burials were made probably in shallow pits.

KALBU

Archaeological excavations were also carried out at the cemetery of Kalbu (Vedru & Allmäe 2008). The cemetery is situated in the lands of Räägu-Uuetoa farm in the NW part of the Kalbu village. The village of Kalbu is located SSE from a small road that leads from the Rapla–Lelle road (road no. 15) to the Rapla–Järvakandi road (no. 27). A small road runs through the village in the NE–SW-direction.

The cemetery was first mentioned by Jaan Jung. According to Jung, human bones and artefacts had been found from that site, but that place did not bear the name of a cemetery amongst local people (Jung 1910, 105).

The owners of Räägu-Uuetoa farm wanted to set a cistern for an earth closet. The first place for it was chosen to the north of the farm house and SW from the small village road. According to the measures of the cistern, a hole (2 × 4 m) was dug. A number of human bones were unearthed from the sandy soil. Next, a hole with the same measures was dug 2 m to the SW from the house's NW end. Human bones were found also from that place, the hole was re-filled with sand and the find was reported to the National Heritage Board.



Fig. 6. Burials in Kalbu cemetery.
View from the north-east.

Jn 6. Matused Kalbu kalmistul.
Vaade kirdest.

Photo / Foto: Gurly Vedru

Rescue excavations followed, the hole was emptied again and the skeletons were determined *in situ* (Vedru & Allmäe 2008).

The excavation plot measured also 2×4 m and was oriented in the NE–SW-direction. Under the turf layer there was a layer of *ca.* 10–15 cm thick dark gray sand. Beneath that layer darker yellow sand followed. Three skeletons were unearthed at the depth of 80 cm in the SW end of the excavation plot. They were oriented towards WSW and were buried side by side. Two skeletons were located quite close to each other, the third remained a little further to the SW. All skeletons were preserved poorly and were partly destroyed by later earthwork. The diggings of later periods were not traceable because the farm owners had opened the excavation plot earlier. Remains of coffins were found on all three skeletons, all of them had been buried with grave goods (Fig. 6).

Skeleton No. 1 belonged to a *ca.* 15 year-old girl. A pendant coin was found by her right side², a heart shaped brooch rested on her chest. The coin had been worn as a pendant and it was an *öre*, minted by Karl XI

² The finds from Kalbu: AI 6914.

in Stockholm in 1685.³ Skeleton No. 2 was in a better condition, but partly disturbed by later digging. His right arm was on his chest, his left arm was preserved only in part. He had a heart-shaped brooch on the left side of his chest and half of a horseshoe on the stomach area. These bones belonged to a man aged over 65 years.

Skeleton No. 3 was close to the latter, their distance was *ca.* 25 cm. That skeleton was very poorly preserved. An earlier dig was indicated by the disturbed bones. These bones belonged to a woman who was over 60 years old. Glassbeads were found near the skull of the skeleton with a silver pendant coin between the beads, a copper coin lie beside the skull. The silver coin was a shilling of the Livonian Order minted by Wolter von Plettenberg in Tallinn in 1528; the other coin was a *öre*, minted by Karl XI in Avesta, Sweden in 1708. About 20 cm to NW there was another skeleton that belonged to an adult man.

Ca. 50 cm NW from the lower extremities of the skeleton No. 1 the bones of two children (skeletons Nos. 5 and 6) were unearthed. By these bones a copper coin was found. That coin was a $\frac{1}{4}$ *öre*, minted by Kristina in Nyköping/Säter/Avesta, in Sweden in 1633–38, 1640–42 or 1644. In the NE part of the excavation plot skeleton No. 7 that belonged to a woman of 30–35 years was discovered. That burial was 30 cm higher than the previous ones.

One coin was also found from the sand of the first plot that was opened by the owners of the Räägu-Uuetoa farm. That was a $\frac{1}{4}$ *öre*, minted by Karl X Gustav in Avesta, Sweden in 1660.

Additionally, a number of test pits were also dug in the surroundings of the Räägu-Uuetoa farm to determine the extent of the cemetery. It was found out that an area, measuring *ca.* 6 × 25 m was used for burials, which ran in the NE–SW-direction under the Räägu-Uuetoa farm. Test pits made in the surroundings of that farm gave no evidence of any other graves in the area. On the basis of the coins found it can be suggested that the cemetery was probably used in the 17th century and in the beginning of the 18th century.

³ All the coins were determined by Mauri Kiudsoo (AI).

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ARHEOLOOGILISED KAEVAMISED HARJU- JA RAPLAMAAL

2008. aastal toimusid arheoloogilised kaevamised Harjumaal Saha külas ning Raplamaal Kalbu külas. Saha kabeliaia kaevamiste eesmärk oli lokaliseerida kabelit keskajal ümbritsenud kiviaed ning teha kindlaks selle mõõtmed. Samuti taheti uurida kabeli naabruses olevat ala, kuhu plaanitakse rajada abihooned ning parkla.

Saha kabel asub küla edelaosas idakirde-lääne-edela-suunalisel seljandikul. Saha kabeliaias teostatud uurimistööde algne eesmärk oli koguda infot oletatava keskaegse kivist kabeliaia kohta lõigus, mis läbib risti praegust surnuaeda, jäädes kabeli ja selle ümber paikneva vanema surnuaia ning uuemal ajal kasutusele võetud surnuaia vahele. Tööde käigus mõõdeti visuaalselt jälgitav aed ning piki seda kaevati 5 m vahedega prooviaugud. Avati 15 m² suurune kaevand (jn 1: D). Kokkuvõttes võib öelda, et kive on aias säilinud 1–4 kihina u 50 m ulatuses (jn 2). Aia vanust määrata ei õnnestunud.

Risti üle kiviaia tehtud kaevandis paljandusid sellest põhja pool kaks luustikku (jn 3). Üks neist jäi kaevandisse tervenisti, teine vaid alumise poolega kuni vaagnani. Mõlemad olid maetud selili-siruli, peaga edela poole. Haua sügavus oli kuni 65 cm praegusest maapinnast. Kitsaste haualohkude piirjooni markeerisid mingil määral väiksemad kivid. Mõlema luustiku puusaluudel ja osalt ka alajäsematel oli suuremaid paekive. Antropoloogi määramatu kohaselt kuulub luustik nr 1 35–45 aastasele meesterahvale ning teine täiskasvanud naisele. Matuste dateeringut ei olnud võimalik kindlaks teha.

Väljaspool kabeliaeda avati kolm kaevandit (jn 1: II–IV). Eesmärgiks oli välja selgitada arheoloogilise kultuurikihi olemasolu tulevase abihooned, parkla ning juurdepääsutee alla jääval alal.

Esmalt avati kaks paralleelset 5 m² suurust tranšeed, mis tehti tulevase abihoonepikiseintekohale. Mõlemas tranšees oli mättakihi all tumepruun 40–50 cm paksune mullakiht, mille pealmised 30 cm olid küniga segatud. Looduslik oranžikas põhjaliiv algas 50–65 cm sügavusel. Kogu künnikihi ulatuses esines mitmesuguseid leide: põlenud luukilde, pronksspiiraale ja rõngakesi ning savinõude kilde jm (jn 4). Lisaks tranšeedele avati 4 m² suurune proovikaevand seljandiku kõrgemal osal. Sellega taheti välja selgitada, kas kalmistu kultuurikiht on ka seal lokaliseeritav

ning kas algselt rajati kalmistu kõrgemale kohale ning on hilisemate põllutööde käigus sealt alla künatud. Enamik proovikaevandist saadud leide pärines uusajast. Muinasaja lõpu põletusmatustega kalmele viitas vaid üks põlenud luukild, pronksrõngake ja poolik klaashelmes (jn 5). Viimaste põhjal võib väita, et Sahal on olnud muinasaja lõpusajandite maa-alune põletuskalmistu.

Arheoloogilised kaevamised toimusid ka Kalbu külas Räägu-Uuetoa talu maal kaitsealusel maa-alusel kalmistul. Räägu-Uuetoa talu omanikud tahtsid paigaldada kuivkäimla kogumispaaki. Selle käigus leiti inimeste luustikke. Leitud teatati muinsuskaitseinspektorile.

Päästekaevamiste käigus varem kaevatud augud tühjendati uuesti, luud määrati kohapeal. Umbes 80 cm sügavusel tulid nähtavale kolm kõrvuti asetsevat luustikku (jn 6). Luustikud olid maetud üsna lähestikku, peaga lääne-edela suunas. Kõik luustikud olid halvasti säilinud ning osaliselt lõhutud hilisemate mullatöödega. Maetute juurest leiti kirstujäänuseid ning hauapanuseid. Luud määrati ning maeti kaevamiste lõppedes tagasi.

Luustik nr 1 kuulus 15-aastasele tüdrukule, tema rinnapiirkonnas oli südamekujuline sõlg ning parema külje juures hõbedast ripatsmünt. Luustik nr 2 kuulus üle 65-aastasele mehele. Ka tema rindkere piirkonnas oli südamekujuline sõlg, lisaks oli tal kõhupiirkonnas poolik hobuseraud. Luustik nr 3 jäi eelmisest vaid 25 cm kaugusele. See luustik kuulus üle 60-aastasele naisele. Tema kolju ümbruses olid klaashelmed ning nende vahel hõbedast ripatsmünt; kolju kõrval oli vaskmünt. Luustik nr 4 kuulus täiskasvanud mehele ning jäi eelmisest u 20 cm kaugusele. Luustik nr 1 alajäsemete luudest umbes 50 cm loode poole jäid kahe lapse luud (luustik nr 5 ja 6). Nende juures oli vaskmünt. Kaevandi loodepoolsesse ossa jäi luustik nr 7, mis kuulus 30–35 aastasele naisele. See matus oli eelkirjeldatutest 30 cm kõrgemal. Lisaks tehti Räägu-Uuetoa talu ümbrusesse proovisurfe, mille eesmärgiks oli välja selgitada kalmistu ulatus ning paiknemine. Selgus, et matmiseks kasutatud ala suurus on u 6 × 25 m ning see kulgeb kirde-edela-suunaliselt Räägu-Uuetoa talu alt läbi. Leitud müntide põhjal saab oletada, et Kalbu kalmesse maeti 17. saj ning 18. saj algul.