



Preliminary results of archaeological investigations of the bunker of the forest brothers in Harju county

MAURI KIUDSOO

Tallinna Ülikool, Ajaloo Instituut (Institute of History, Tallinn University),
Rüütli 6, 10130 Tallinn, Estonia; mauri.kiudsoo@tlu.ee

MARTIN ANDRELLER

Okupatsioonide Muuseum (Museum of Occupations), Toompea 8, 10142 Tallinn, Estonia

PEARU KUUSK

historian

During May 2013 – September 2014, archaeological investigations were carried out in the Forest Brothers' bunker in Harju County, former Kose parish, near Saarnakõrve village, in Pususoo bog. In the context of Estonia this was the first instance of research where modern archaeological methods were implemented during the investigation of such monument.

The Forest Brothers' bunker complex of Saarnakõrve was discovered by Arne Kivistik during survey works of wetlands already in 2011. A collapsed and completely rotten ground house made of 'peat blocks', lookout tree with iron rods, firewood stock, a well, remnants of the table, etc. were preserved there, as could be noticed already at first glance. During the first field survey on 15 May 2013, we noticed the large amount of finds in the spot: milk containers and barrels, cream separator, car battery, meat mincer, etc.

In June 2013 while mapping the Saarnakõrve bunker and its surrounding, we also recorded several fresh digging and demolition traces. Luckily, the bunker was left untouched by the people who used metal detectors, but the well, wood sawing bench and some storerooms were destroyed. Considering the real danger to the so far uninvestigated bunker we applied some precautionary measures. Artefacts found from the outside of the bunker were removed to hiding places at a safe distance.

Although the bunker was built on the ground, archaeological trial excavations indicated that the lower part of that (approx. 30–50 cm) was still preserved together with the furniture. Since it was the first such find in Estonia, immediate preparations were started for the thorough investigation of the bunker place. After having received permission from the Estonian authorities, full-scale rescue excavations were carried out at the site of the Saarnakõrve bunker (Fig. 1). As a result, we were able to reconstruct the appearance and the constructional nuances of the tent-shaped bunker that was abandoned in 1955, according to coin finds from the floor, as well as oral data. In addition to the rich find material collected during the archaeological excavations, we were lucky to obtain over a hundred original pictures and photographic negatives, previously in private possession, which shed light on the everyday life of the Forest

Brothers' group linked to that bunker (Figs 2–3). In the near future, there is a plan to write a capacious research on this topic.

In order to discover other bunkers in the vicinity we also inspected neighbouring islets of the bog mentioned in the local folklore as the old refuge places. Definitely the best known of them is the so-called Kaskevõhma hill fort, which is marked by a special sign in the map of the Harju County printed in 1926. Though the term 'Forest Brothers' was taken into use in Estonian language only in the 19th century (Laar 1993, 12), such a

phenomenon is known for centuries. From the various chronicles as early as from the beginning of the 13th century (HCL, XXIII: 10), we can learn about the Estonians, who fled to the bogs, forests or caves during big military conflicts and lived there in hiding even for years.

REFERENCES

- HCL.** Henriku Liivimaa kroonika. Heinrici Chronicon Livoniae. Tõlkinud R. Kleis. Toimetanud ja kommenteerinud E. Tarvel. Tallinn, 1982.
- Laar, M. 1993.** Metsavennad. Tallinn.



Fig. 1. Archaeological investigations of the bunker complex.
Jn 1. Punkrikompleksi arheoloogilised uuringud.
 Photo / Foto: Mauri Kiudsoo



Fig. 2. Saarnakõrve bunker in the 1950s.
Jn 2. Saarnakõrve punker 1950. aastatel.
Photo: private collection / Foto: erakogu



Fig. 3. Daily life of the Saarnakõrve Forest Brothers.
Jn 3. Saarnakõrve metsavendade argipäev.
Photo: private collection / Foto: erakogu

METSAVENDADE PUNKRI ARHEOLOOGILISED UURINGUD HARJUMAAL: ESIMESED TULEMUSED

Mauri Kiudsoo, Martin Andreller ja Pearu Kuusk

Ajavahemikus maist 2013 septembrini 2014 toimusid Harjumaal Kose vallas Saarnakõrve küla lähedases Pususoos metsavendade punkri arheoloogilised uuringud, mis olid esimesed taolise objekti väliuuringud Eestis. Punkrikompleksist, mille avastas Arne Kivistik märgalade inventeerimistöödel, oli säilinud lisaks elamu jäänustele veel raudpulkadega vaatluspuu, küttepude riit, kaev, laua jäänused jms.

2013. aasta juunis, mil plaanistasime Saarnakõrve punkrit ja selle ümbruskonda, fikseerisime muuhulgas ka mitmeid värseid kaeve- ja lõhkumisjälgi. Metallidetektorit kasutanud rüüstajad polnud punkrit ennast õnneks puudutanud, kuid hävitatud oli kaev, puusaagimispukk ja mõni panipaik. Veel läbi uurimata punkrikompleksi kaitseks võtsime tarvitusele täiendavad turvameetmed.

Kuigi punker oli ehitatud maapealsena, osutasid arheoloogilised eeluuringud sellele, et eluaseme alumine osa (u 30–50 cm) on siiani koos sisustusega säilinud. Eesti ametivõimude poolt väljastatud lubade alusel toimusidki järgnevalt Saarnakõrve punkri täiemahulised arheoloogilised päästekaevamised (jn 1), mille käigus suutsime taastada 1955. aastal hüljatud telgikujulise punkri välisilme koos kõigi ehituskonstruksiooniliste nüanssidega. Lisaks arheoloogiliste tööde käigus kogutud rikkalikule leiumaterjalile: piimanõud ja vaadid, koorelahutaja, autoaku, hakklihamasin jne, õnnestus meil seejärel enda valdusesse saada ka üle saja originaalfoto ja negatiivi, mis heitsid valgust konkreetse metsavendade grupi igapäevaelule (jn 2–3). Lähitulevikus on kavas sellest kõigest kirjutada mahukas uurimistöo.

Eesmärgiga avastada teisigi läheduses paiknevaid punkreid, inspekteerisime ümbruskonna soosaari, millest mõnesid on rahvapärimeses mainitud muistsete pelgupaikadena. Tuntuim neist on kindlasti nn Kaskevõhma linnus, mis on kantud eraldi leppemärgiga ka 1926. aastal trükitud Harjumaa kaardile. Kuigi termin „metsavendad“ võeti eesti keeles kasutusele alles 19. sajandil, võib see nähtus ulatuda sajanditetagusesse aega. Juba 13. sajandi alguse kroonikatest alates võime lugeda, kuidas eestlased põgenesid suurte sõdade ajal rabadesse ja soosaartele pakku, varjates end seal vahel isegi aastaid.