



Archaeological monitoring at the central part of New Pärnu

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INTRODUCTION

Archaeological monitoring in Pärnu was carried out from May to June and from August to October 2015 by archaeologists Gurly Vedru and Heidi Luik from MTÜ Arheoloogiakeskus. The work took place in the heritage protection zone of the old town and the resort area of New Pärnu (No. 27007 in the National Registry of Cultural Monuments), including the settlement site (No. 11793), located in the same area (Vedru & Luik 2016). Archaeological fieldwork was



Fig. 1. Map of Pärnu from the year 1678 with the approximate location of trenches dug in 2015. The trenches are marked with red lines.

Jn 1. Pärnu kaart aastast 1678 koos 2015. aasta kraavide ligilähedase asukohaga. Kraavid on tähistatud punaste joontega.

(EAA 1000-1-8415, sheet 4.)

Drawing / Joonis: Heidi Luik

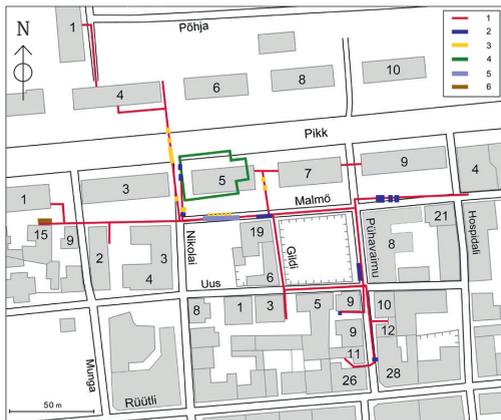


Fig. 2. The location of trenches dug in 2015 in the central part of Pärnu. 1 – trench, 2 – wall sections, 3 – area with human bones, 4 – location of St Nicholas Church, 5 – fragment of pavement, 6 – log.

Jn 2. 2015. aastal Pärnu kesklinnas kaevatud kraavide paiknemine. 1 – kraav, 2 – müürikatke, 3 – inimluudega ala, 4 – Nikolai kiriku asukoht, 5 – sillutisekatke, 6 – palk.

Drawing / Joonis: Heidi Luik

commissioned due to large-scale earthworks in the central part of Pärnu, where remote heating pipelines were renovated. This work took place in Pühavaimu, Uus, Malmö, Gildi, Nikolai and Aida streets, also Pikk street was crossed on the line of the imaginary extension of Nikolai street (Figs 1, 2).

An area measuring approximately 700 m² was opened, digging mainly to the depth of 1.3 m. Only a limited section, located just west to the crossroads of Pühavaimu and Uus streets was opened at a depth of 2.5 m. Most of the investigated area had already been archaeologically studied (see e.g. Heinloo & Vissak 2012), only an approximately 25 m long section in Malmö street, east of the crossroads of Pühavaimu and Malmö streets had not been excavated before. Nevertheless, several wall and/or basement remains were unearthed, and a number of fragmented human bones were found in the surroundings of the former St Nicholas Church. Despite of

the limited extent of works, new data were obtained about the St Nicholas Church and the cemetery surrounding it, as well as previous buildings and the extent of the street line.

ST NICHOLAS CHURCH AND THE CEMETERY SURROUNDING IT

St Nicholas Church was located at the corner of the Nikolai and historical Pikk streets close to the old market square (Figs 1, 2). The church was built in the 13th – 14th centuries, left into ruins after World War II and demolished in the middle of the 1950s as a result of the planning of the new main street of the town – Lenin's boulevard – and its surrounding buildings. At present, the major part of the foundation of the church is located beneath the apartment building at Pikk Street 5, some of its northern aisle is located beneath the roadway of Pikk street.

In 2015, parts of the massive western wall of St Nicholas Church were unearthed in a trench dug on the eastern side of the Nikolai street on the section between Malmö street and Pikk street. The outer side of that wall was located on the eastern side of the roadway of the present Nikolai street indicating that the street line used to run a few metres west of the current street line.

Two sections of that wall were cleaned out, the part between them was destroyed by earlier pipeworks. The church was built of large granite stones, limestone and red bricks, between and on the stones there was a large amount of lime mortar (Fig. 3). The northern section of the wall was demolished to a lower level; on the southern section it was possible to clean out the facade. The original thickness of the southern wall section was ca. 2 m, it was cleaned out in a length of 1.1 m and height of 1.3 m. In this place, only a 20 cm thick layer of brown soil separated the upper stone layer of the wall remains from the contemporary ground level. The northern section of the wall was ca. 2 m long and ca. 1.75 m wide.

Traces of the **cemetery** that once surrounded St Nicholas Church were documented at Pikk street and at the western, eastern and southern sides of the church. One of the trenches crossed Pikk street on the area located to the west and north-northwest of the former church, and a small amount of disordered human bones were found. Existing cables run in that trench and thus the bones were disturbed by previous earthworks.

As the whole area was dug empty before erecting the apartment building, the number of bones, found from the area east to the church was very low. Single bones that were found on the northern side of the present Pikk street suggest that the area with burials may once have reached up to this point.

This is also proved by earlier archaeological research conducted in that area (Heinloo & Vissak 2012). In all occasions the soil was disturbed and not a single well-preserved or intact burial was found. One *in situ* burial was unearthed in the vicinity of the southern end of the western wall of the St Nicholas Church. That skeleton remained only partially in the opened area, the distal parts of its femurs and tibias were located outside the trench. Also that burial was disturbed by later diggings: its bones were broken and some of them were missing; some of its bones were pressed deeper into the ground than others. The skeleton belonged to an individual with the height of *ca.* 1.5 m who was buried with its head towards west. Its left arm was on the chest area and the fingers of right hand were on the left pelvis. Three coffin nails were found on the right side of the burial. Of the other burial that most likely was in its original position, only a skull was in the trench. It was located in front of the St Nicholas Church in the central part of the present Nikolai street. Near the skull a thin layer of rotten wood was detected with two thin nails inside that originated from a coffin.

A section of an east-west directional **wall** was unearthed *ca.* 2 metres to the north of the northeastern corner of the Nikolai and Malmö streets. It was built of limestone and granite stones with a large amount of lime mortar between them, the latter also contained some pieces of roof tiles. Despite the heavy mortar, the wall was in a poor condition and collapsed at every touch. The top layer of the wall was located *ca.* 30 cm below the asphalt layer, its remaining height was 60 cm and width *ca.* 30 cm. Considering the location of the wall and the disturbed human bones to the north of it, and the fact that on the southern side of the wall no bones were found, it may possibly be a remnant of the cemetery wall. However, it is also possible that the wall was part of a building of a later date than the cemetery.

FRAGMENT OF THE TOWN WALL

In Pühavaimu street, excavations took place in the section between the crossings of Rüütli street and Pikk street. Three building remains were unearthed in that area, the most interesting of them was the southernmost. That wall fragment was located *ca.* 17.5 metres to the north from the present Rüütli street. It was situated on the eastern side of the Pühavaimu



Fig. 3. St Nicholas Church. Southern section of the western wall. View from the west.

Jn 3. Nikolai kirik. Lääneseina lõunapoolne katke. Vaade lääne poolt.

Photo / Foto: Gurly Vedru



Fig. 4. Probable town wall in the Pühavaimu street.
View from the north.

Jn 4. Arvatav linnamüür Pühavaimu tänaval. Vaade põhja poolt.

Photo / Foto: Gurly Vedru

street, and its upper stone layer was 60 cm below the current street level. That wall was oriented approximately in the east–west direction. Its western side was destroyed by earlier water- and sewer pipelines, its eastern end proceeded beneath the building of Rütli Street 28. The width of the section of the wall, situated in the trench was 1.1 m in the north–south direction, but it continued towards the south into unexcavated area. Only two layers of stones were dug out of that wall, the height of them was *ca.* 55 cm. Only one large granite stone was visible in the lower layer and two large granite stones in the upper layer of that wall fragment. Stones were bound by a thick layer of mortar that contained fragments of red tiles. Taking into consideration the location and direction of the wall, it is probably a fragment from the town wall of New Pärnu (Fig. 4).

OTHER BUILDING REMAINS

In the course of excavation work several other building remains, fragments of cobblestone pavement and a log were unearthed (Fig. 2). These most probably originate from the Modern Period, some of them even from the 20th century. The building remains located in the Pühavaimu, Malmö and Nikolai streets give evidence that these streets of central Pärnu used to be much narrower and the old houses were partially located under the present street.

Most of them were covered with clean backfill soil that was either empty of finds or contained only a few. The only exception in this was the area of limited extent, located to the east of the crossroads of Pühavaimu and Malmö streets. The building remains of that area were covered with dark backfill soil that contained finds of different periods, the latest from the 20th century. That soil probably originated from somewhere near, maybe from the area where the present apartment building at Pikk Street 9 stands. The majority of the finds, gathered in the course of the monitoring work in 2015, were found there.

FINDS

Altogether 55 find numbers were gathered during the archaeological monitoring. The majority of the finds were fragments of ceramic vessels from different periods. All finds came from mixed or backfilling layers and mostly it was not possible to follow the stratigraphy of the artefacts. The reason of the small number of finds is that most places have been investigated previously and the artefacts have been picked up already during earlier archaeological surveys. Some more typical and interesting examples from different periods are presented here. The earliest finds are fragments of 14th – 15th-century stoneware of Siegburg and Lower Saxony (Fig. 5: 3–5; Heege 2002, 254ff., figs 538ff.; Russow 2006, 47ff., fig. 12). The latest stoneware sherds come from the 18th – 19th centuries (Fig. 5: 7; Heege 2002, 326, fig. 706).

Fragments of 15th – 18th century glazed redware and whiteware of North Germany and Low Countries were also found, including some sherds of tripod pipkins and slipware (Fig. 5: 6; Heege 2002, 269–270, figs 567, 569; Russow 2006, 97–98). Similar ceramics have been found from Pärnu also during earlier archaeological fieldwork (Russow 2006, 164ff.;



Fig. 5. Ceramics from Pärnu. 1 – gaming piece made from a faience vessel sherd, 2 – 19th-century faience sherd, 3, 5 – Siegburg and 4 – Lower Saxony stoneware fragments from the 14th – 15th centuries, 6 – red slipware sherd, 7 – stoneware mineral water bottle fragment and 8 – pieces of Delftware platter, all from the 18th century.

Jn 5. Keraamikat Pärnust. 1 – fajanssnõu killust mängunupp, 2 – 19. sajandi fajanssnõu kild, 3, 5 – Siegburgi ja 4 – Alam-Saksi 14.-15. sajandi kivikeraamika katked, 6 – maalingutega punase glasuurkeraamika kild, 7 – kivi-keraamilise mineraalveepudeli katke ja 8 – Delfti fajansist vaagna killud, 18. sajandist.

(PäMu 27485 A 2680: 1, 7, 18, 15, 19, 38, 31, 30.)

Photos / Fotod: Gurly Vedru, Heidi Luik



Fig. 6. A piece of tin with scratched motif, found from the Malmö street.

Jn 6. Sissekraabitud kujutisega tinatükk Malmö tänavalt. (PäMu 27485 A 2680: 27.)
Photo / Foto: Gurly Vedru

Heinloo & Vissak 2012, 157–159, fig. 8). Some decorated fragments occur among sherds of 17th – 19th century faience and porcelain vessels, e.g. a small sherd with a Japanese girl figure (Fig. 5: 2), and pieces of a large Delftware platter with a chrysanthemum and landscape motifs, the platter originates from the middle or the second half of the 18th century (Fig. 5: 8; e.g. Matusz 1977; Pauts in print). A small faience sherd with dark blue glaze is cut round and was presumably used as a gaming piece (Fig. 5: 1; e.g. Heege 2002, 320, fig. 694; Gläser 2002, 123–124, fig. 17; Russow 2012, fig. 7: 2). In addition to the pottery fragments some other artefacts were also found: a couple of glass vessel sherds, some fragments of clay pipes, a small flint piece and a flat deformed piece of tin with a scratched motif (Fig. 6).

CONCLUSIONS

Although the trenches dug in Pärnu were narrow and rather low, new data was acquired on the history of Pärnu. In 2015, parts of the western wall of the St Nicholas Church were unearthed. The uppermost stone layer of the southern part of the massive wall was covered only with a 20 cm thick soil layer. Traces of the cemetery, once surrounding the church, were found during the earthwork carried out in Pikk street, including the northern side of it. Based on these bone finds, the burials and mixed bones found at Nikolai street, the few bones unearthed on the eastern side of the apartment building at Pikk Street 5, despite the fact that the area was once dug empty of original soil, and the few fragments gathered from the northern side of the Malmö street, the extent of the cemetery can be estimated. According to present data, its western border was either the central part or western side of the present Nikolai street, its northern border ran along the northern side of the present Pikk street, its eastern border in the area between the modern buildings at Pikk Street 5 and 7, and the southern border on the northern side of Malmö street. The cemetery was probably surrounded by a wall that separated the consecrated earth of the churchyard from the secular town land, thus creating also a border between the living and the dead. The wall fragment that ran more or less on the northern side of the present Malmö street might originate from the cemetery wall, although the possibility that it is a fragment of a later building cannot be excluded.

A small section of the medieval town wall of Pärnu was unearthed in Pühavaimu street. Although it was opened in a very limited area, its location and direction correspond to the location and direction of the town wall, as known from the 17th century town maps (cf. Fig. 1). The other remains of buildings constructed on the Malmö, Nikolai and Pühavaimu streets gave evidence that these streets were once much narrower than at present.

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ARHEOLOOGILINE JÄRELEVALVE PÄRNU KESKLINNAS

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2015. aastal tegi MTÜ Arheoloogiakeskus arheoloogilist järelevalvet Pärnu vanalinna ja kuurordi muinsuskaitsealal (reg. nr 27007) ja samal ajal oleval asulakohal (nr 11793). Järelevalvetööd kaasnesid ulatuslike kaevetöödega Pärnu kesklinnas, kus uuendati kaugküttetorustikku. Kaev- ja järelevalvetööd toimusid Pühavaimu, Uuel, Malmö, Gildi, Nikolai ja Aida tänaval, lisaks ületati Pikk tänav Nikolai tänava mõttelisel pikendusel (jn 1, 2).

Kokku avati u 700 m² suurune ala, kus kaevamissügavus oli valdavalt kuni 1,3 m. Vaid Pühavaimu ja Uue tänava ristmikust vahetult lääne pool avati lühike lõik 2,5 m sügavuselt. Valdav enamik kohti on olnud varem avatud ja arheoloogiliselt uuritud, erandiks oli vaid piiratud ulatusega ala Malmö tänaval, Malmö ja Pühavaimu tänavate ristmikust vahetult ida pool. Hoolimata tööde piiratud mahust saadi uut informatsiooni Nikolai kirikust ja seda ümbritsenud kalmistust ning varasemast hoonestusest ja selle paiknemisest.

13.–14. sajandil ehitatud ja 1950. aastate keskel õhitud Nikolai kirikust jäi kraavidesse kaks lõiku selle läänepoolsest seinast (jn 3). Kahest seinakatkest põhjapoolne oli lammutatud madalamale tasapinnale, lõunapoolsel katkel õnnestus välja puhastada ka fassaad. Kiriku massiivse läänepoolse otsasena välimine külg asus Nikolai tänava praeguse sõidutee idapoolses servas. Jälgi Nikolai kiriku juures asunud kalmistust saadi nii Pikalt tänavalt kui ka kiriku lääne-, lõuna- ja idaküljelt. Peamiselt oli tegu kas üksikult esinevate või segatud luudega. Kirikust ida pool asuvalt alalt leitud luude hulk oli väga väike, kuna enne kortermaja ehitamist oli kogu ala tühjaks kaevatud. Üks algses asukohas kuid lõhutud matus leiti Nikolai kiriku lääneseina lõunapoolse osa lähedalt. See luustik paiknes avatud alas vaid osaliselt, reieluude distaalsed osad ning sääreluud jäid kraavist välja. Teisest võimalikust algses kohas olevast matusest asus kraavis vaid kolju, mis jäi Nikolai kiriku oletatava edelanurga kohale praeguse Nikolai tänava keskosas.

Nikolai tänava ja Malmö tänava ristmiku kirdenurgast u 2 m põhja pool tuli päevavalgele ida–lääne-suunaline väga halvast seisust habras müürikatke. Arvestades selle asukohta ning seda, et müürist põhja pool oli pinnases palju segatud luid ja nende fragmente, samas kui sellest lõuna pool need puudusid, võis see olla kalmistut kunagi ümbritsenud müüri jäänus. Samas ei saa välistada selle kuulumist mõnele surnuaiast hilisemale ehitisele.

Pühavaimu tänaval toimusid kaevetööd Rüütli ja Pika tänava vahelises lõigus, kus avastati kolm müürikatket. Neist lõunapoolseim tuli päevavalgele Rüütli tänavast u 17,5 m põhja pool. Selle ligilähedaselt ida-lääne-suunaliselt kulgeva müürikatke pealispind jäi praegusest tänavatasandist 60 cm sügavamale. Arvestades müüri asukohta ja suunda, võis see olla katke Pärnu linnamüürist (jn 1, 4). Kõik teised leitud müürikatked pärinevad arvatavasti uusaegsetest ehitistest. Nende paiknemine tänapäevase tänavajoone suhtes osutab varasematele oluliselt kitsamatele tänavatele.

Järelevalve käigus võeti üles 55 leidu, millest enamiku moodustavad eriaegsete savinõude killud. Kõik leiud saadi segatud või tagasitõrjetest, kus stratigraafiat ei olnud võimalik välja selgitada. Leiti Siegburgi jt Saksamaa pottsepakeskuste kivikeraamiliste nõude, glasuurkeraamika ning fajanssnõude katkeid (jn 5). Varasemad keraamikakillud pärinevad 14.–15. sajandist ja hilisemad 18.–19. sajandist. Saadi ka paar hiliste klaasanumate kildu, mõned savipiipude katked, tulekivitükk ja sissekraabitud kujutisega tinatükk (jn 6).