



Before the hill fort of Valjala was built Landing places and graves along the Lõve River in Saaremaa

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INTRODUCTION

Valjala parish is situated in the middle of the eastern part of the island of Saaremaa. However, when to consider the distribution of arable lands in Saaremaa, Muhu and other, smaller islands that about 1000 years ago surrounded the present Saaremaa, the central position of the Valjala district cannot be overlooked. The later parish of Valjala is full of archaeological monuments, and its central status was emphasized in some 13th-century written sources – notably, the mighty hill fort of Valjala was called ‘the strongest city among all those of the Oeselians’ [the inhabitants of Saaremaa] (HCL XXX, 5).

The last decades’ archaeological study in coastal Saaremaa has confirmed the interpretation of the local Viking Age culture as strongly maritime, with a number of landing places along the indented coast and cultural landscape clearly defined by outlets to sea (Mägi 2004). However, only a few sites dated to the Viking Age were known from the Valjala parish so far. Several years’ surface surveys carried out in order to find prehistoric harbour sites had not produced results, and even the number of burial places dated to the Viking Age was minimal. Everything seemed to indicate that the district emerged as central only in the 12th century.

The situation has started to change abruptly during the last years and mainly due to the increasing number of detector finds (e.g. Mägi 2019b). Surface survey in 2018 and 2019, partly into places first revealed by detectorists, has by now resulted in several sites that can be interpreted as Viking Age harbour sites, as well as in new burial places from this period, all along the lower reaches of the Lõve River (Fig. 1). This article focuses on new sites around the former manors Vanalõve (Eng. Old-Lõve) and Uuelõve (Eng. New-Lõve), as well as Jursi. Finds from these surface surveys are stored in the Saaremaa Museum, SM 10864 (Jursi), SM 10865 (Vanalõve) and SM 10878 (Uuelõve).

LATE IRON AGE STONE GRAVE AT JURSI

The small manor of Jursi (Germ. *Jührs*) 4 km southeast from Valjala has first been mentioned in written sources in 1398. It then consisted of only one ploughland and belonged to the von Jurs family (Saaremaa 1934, 783). The nearest burial ground in the surroundings of Jursi known so far was a stone grave at the distance of 2 km, where it probably indicated another prehistoric manor or dominant household at Kalli. A stone grave registered about 500 m from

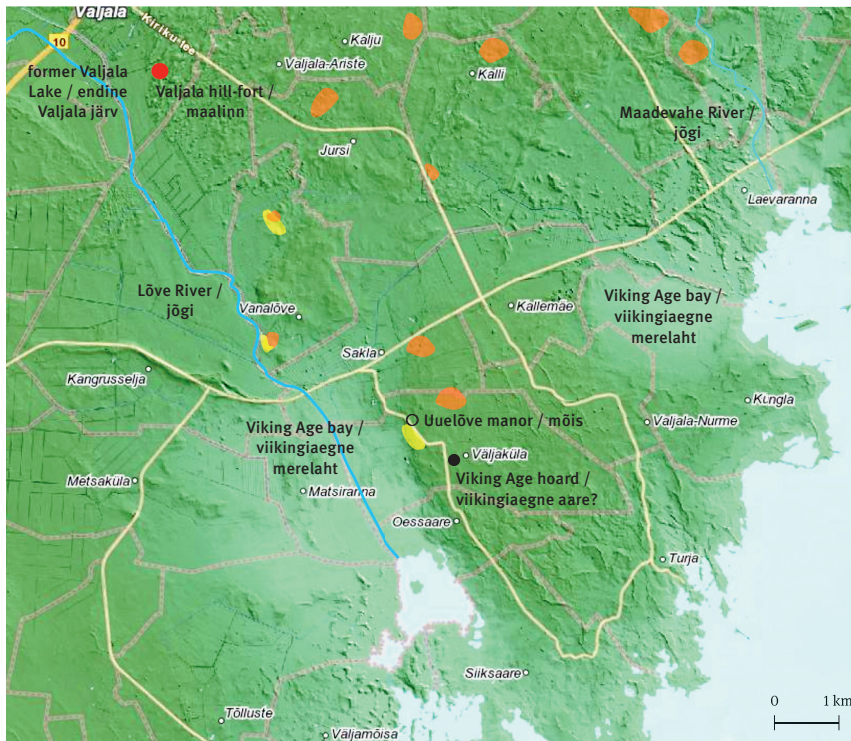


Fig. 1. 6th–12th century sites around the lower reaches of the Lõve River. Burial grounds are marked in orange, landing places in yellow.

Jn 1. 6.–12. sajandi muistised Lõve jõe alamjooksu ümbruses. Matusekohad on märgitud oranžiga, randumiskohad kollasega.

Drawing / Joonis: Marika Mägi

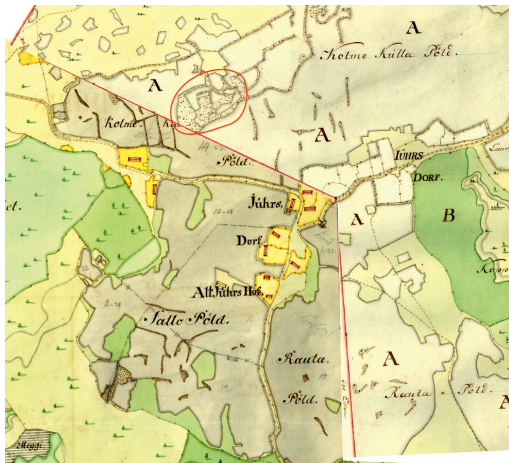


Fig. 2. The area of the stone grave at Jursi on a map from 1790.

Jn 2. Jursi kivikalme ala 1790. aasta kaardil.

(RA, EAA.2072.3.426f, p. 74; RA, EAA.2072.3.426f, p. 51.)

the historical Jursi manor in 2019 indicated, however, that the lands of the medieval and later Jursi manor had probably belonged to some elite family as early as in the Viking Age (Fig. 2).

The stone grave was situated on top of an elevated ground at the edge of arable lands around the manor, and covered an area of approximately 0.5 ha. Stones from this area had been collected into a stone heap in the south-western edge of it, and the area had been taken into use for cultivation in the 20th century. Another artificial stone heap is in the north-eastern end of the elevation and fills up a former wet depression. The latter, perhaps a one-time spring, may have formed a part of the ritual landscape of Jursi (Mägi 2019a).

The former stone grave at Jursi had been known for metal detectorists for some time before the archaeologists received the information of it. The number of finds from this site is, therefore, unknown. During detector survey by professional archaeologists in 2019, 22 numbers of finds were reported, dating from the period from the 9th to the 12th century. Most of the artefacts were jewellery, belt fittings and pieces from horse equipment characteristic to other 11th–12th-century stone graves of Saaremaa (Fig. 3).

The most conspicuous artefact was a big flat crossbow brooch, covered with an elaborated ornament in Nordic Animal Style, and decorated with small blue stones (Fig. 3: 1). Such big crossbow brooches were typical ornaments for Baltic and Baltic-Finnic men in the 9th–10th century, and were unknown in the western coasts of the Baltic Sea. The use of Nordic Animal Style for decorating the brooch can be considered as a sign of developing a shared culture of warriors along the northern coasts of the Baltic Sea, that started in the 8th–9th century (Mägi 2018, 132–135). Similar crossbow brooches, but with common, local decoration have recently been uncovered, for example, at Linnakse near Tallinn (Kiudsoo 2016, 54–57). Another example of the same brooch type decorated with the Nordic Animal Style was found in Haljala, North Estonia in 2016 (presently at Käsmu Museum; Mägi 2017, fig. 4. 7). The mixture of local and Scandinavian cultures is also obvious in some other local artefacts decorated in Nordic Styles, first of all certain 8th–9th-century triangular-headed pins (Jets & Mägi 2015). The brooch of Jursi is, accordingly, very valuable indicating the cultural processes that took place in coastal Estonia in the beginning of the Viking Age.

STONE GRAVES INDICATING POSSIBLE LANDING PLACES AT VANALÕVE

The manor of Vanalõve (Germ. *Alt-Löwel*) has been mentioned several times in late medieval documents (Saaremaa 1934, 786). It was one of the tax-collecting centres in Saaremaa, connected with sea transport, and, accordingly, probably situated near a suitable landing place (Saaremaa 1934, 775–776). The location at the one-time lower reaches of the Lõve River, where the terrain created suitable conditions for smaller seagoing vessels to land, supports this hypothesis. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, archaeological investigations were carried out around the manor site in order to determine the possible harbour, but with no results (Mägi 2002a).

Earlier investigations at Vanalõve referred to the surrounding of Kummi farm (now abandoned) as the most probable area for the one-time landing place. The word ‘kumm’ means a bow or a bridge in the local dialect, and the crossing over the Lõve River had really situated in the vicinity of the Kummi farm in historical times. The owner of the farm had in the 1950s found remains of an old bigger boat or small ship, when ploughing the low area along



Fig. 3. Finds from the Jursi stone grave.

Jn 3. Leide Jursi kivikalme.

(SM 10864: 12, 1, 14, 13.)

Photo / Foto: Marika Mägi



Fig. 4. The stony elevation at Vanalõve.
Jn 4. Kivine kõrgendik Vanalõves.
 Photo / Foto: Marika Mägi

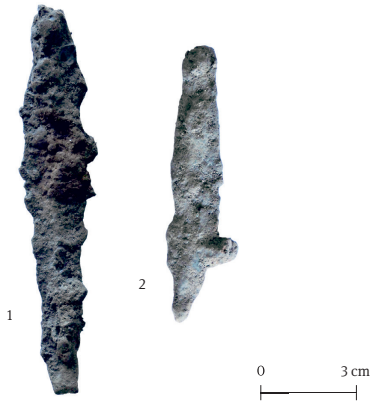


Fig. 5. A spearhead and an arrow-head from Vanalõve.
Jn 5. Odaots ja nooleots Vanalõvest.
 (SM 10865: 1, 5.)
 Photo / Foto: Marika Mägi

Metal items, some of them probably deposited as small offerings, have been uncovered in many harbour sites along the northern coasts of the Baltic Sea (e.g. Hiitis, Viltina; Edgren 1995; Mägi 2009). However, stone graves right next to prehistoric harbour sites seems to have been a commonplace, too (Mägi 2004 and literature referred there). Our knowledge of burial places in 6th–8th century Saaremaa is very limited, consisting mainly of Paju and Lepna funeral houses and the collective burials in ships at Salme.

The harbour site or grave remained at the distance of approximately 700 m from the historical Vanalõve manor. Trial pits to the central area in the present Vanalõve village indicated an intensive cultural layer, but did unfortunately not inform about the beginning of the settlement (Mägi 2002a). Arable lands around the manor, as well as the position close to suitable landing places suggest a prehistoric settlement in the same site.

Another possible landing and/or burial place was found along the Lõve River bank 1200 m north from the Vanalõve manor in 2019 (Fig. 1). It was first revealed by a local detectorist and then visited by officials from the National Heritage Board. The report of the site is very

the river bank; since nobody was interested in the find, the remains were destroyed by the following cultivation (information from Bruno Pao; Mägi 2002a).

In 2018 local people informed archaeologists about rumours of finds in a stony elevation about 200 m southwards of the Kummi farm. According to this information, horse bits and a crossbow brooch had been found by illegal detectorists somewhere in this area. Archaeological detector survey was arranged to the place in April 2019 that resulted in five additional finds, dating the site to the 6th–8th century.

The elevated area, now forested, on the eastern bank of the Lõve River, 1000 years ago close to the estuary, was covered with bigger boulders (Fig. 4). No clear structure could be seen in the stony elevation, which was probably a natural collection of stones – characteristic to several places along Estonian coasts. The finds – a spearhead and an arrow-head, a fragment of a probable pin and some other items, were found between the big boulders (Fig. 5). No bones, charcoal or intensively black soil was detected.

The finds did not bear clear marks of being in fire, and it remained unclear whether the site was a grave or something else. Right next to the elevation, the terrain sloped down towards the one-time bigger Lõve River, creating suitable conditions for a landing place.

laconic, and the finds were preliminary dated to the Late Iron Age (Kurisoo 2019). The finds, two spearheads and two seaxes, belong, however, to the 6th–9th century, that is, to the same period as the other recent finds from Vanalõve (Mägi 2020). They seem to have come to light, according to the description of the detectorist, in similar conditions as the other finds, next to a slope suitable for a prehistoric landing place.

UUELÕVE SITE COMPLEX

The position of the Vanalõve manor as the district tax-collecting centre was taken over by Uuelõve manor (Germ. *Neu-Löfwel*) around 1600 at the latest, although the Vanalõve manor as an agrarian household continued its existence (Saaremaa 1934, 786). The location of the Uuelõve manor, in the 17th century probably still on the coast of a small bay at the estuary of the Lõve River, enabled smaller sea vessels to land somewhere in the nearest vicinity of the tax-collection centre. The land mass upheaval escalated in the 17th century (Mägi 2002b), which was probably the main reason why the harbour and the administrative centre moved closer to the open sea.

Archaeological detector survey near the site of the former Uuelõve Manor in 2018 revealed that the site had been in use much earlier than in the 17th century. The later manor was built to a place where the slope towards the one-time little bay was most suitable for vessels to land (Fig. 6). Surface survey in a small field south of the manor site along the slope resulted in several metal finds, some of them items characteristic to the 10th century (Fig. 7). The soil around the finds, in an area of approximately 1 ha, was black, but could not be characterized as an intensive cultural layer. Finds were concentrated in the northern part of the area, suggesting that the one-time harbour site had continued northwards, where it remains under the historical manor buildings and present-day households.



Fig. 6. Sites around the Uuelõve manor, combination of a map from 1790 and the modern relief map.

Jn 6. Muistised Uuelõve mõisa ümbruses, kombinatsioon 1790. aasta kaardist ja tänapäevasest reljefkaardist.

Maps / Kaardid: RA, EAA.2072.3.426f, 27; relief map from Estonian Land Board / Maa-ameti kaardiserveri reljefkaart



Fig. 7. Finds from Uuelõve.
Jn 7. Leide Uuelõvest.
 (SM 10878: 12, 9, 14, 18, 2, 5.)
 Photo / Foto: Marika Mägi

The most remarkable finds from the Uuelõve site were a Viking Age equal-armed brooch with Nordic Animal Style ornament, a knob of a triangular-headed pin and a faceted weight (Fig. 7: 3, 6, 2). Faceted weights are much less common in Estonia than cubic weights, and are dated to the second half of the 9th and to the 10th century (Gustin 2004, 100–107). Several of them have been recorded recently by metal detectorists, often from places that can be interpreted as Viking Age harbour sites. Other metal finds, altogether 22, could not be dated more precisely.

Interviews with local inhabitants revealed, unfortunately, that the area near the Uuelõve manor had been illegally detected several times before, so the real amount and character of finds is unknown. What is more, some people could inform us of a hoard consisting of West-European and Kufic coins with *tpq* around the year 1000 AD, that had been found 800–900 m south-east from the probable harbour site some years ago. All locals, when asked about the hoard, denied it, so the information cannot unfortunately be proved.

Other rumours pointed to a former stone grave approximately 900 m north-east from the Uuelõve manor, an elevation called Kalmumägi (Eng. Burial Hill). Numerous finds were apparently unearthed there and around the hill by several illegal detectorists. Most likely, the Kalmumägi was a 10th–12th century stone grave characteristic to Saaremaa.

Study of historical maps merged with modern relief maps of the area suggests an old settlement unit 1.2–2 km east of the Viking Age harbour site, around the present-day Kraavi and Kuuse farms (Fig. 6). On both of these maps, remains of stone fences indicating small field plots suggest the oldest arable cluster in the surroundings. On the earliest maps of the district of the Uuelõve Manor in 1788 and 1790, the area around the Kraavi and Kuuse farms was already abandoned as arable lands (RA, EAA.2072.3.243.2a; EAA.2072.3.426f.27).

The area in the middle of the old field remains is, according to the locals, characterised by very dark soil, where several rusted iron items had been found in the course of cleaning the area from junipers. A special find – a bronze pendant – was uncovered by the locals in 2017 and handed over to archaeologists (Fig. 7: 1). The pendant represented a type that is sometimes called axe-shaped, sometimes woman-shaped (Jets 2013, 223–225). Some recent finds of similar pendants, notably from Viskla in North Estonia (AI 6621: 6), where the central part of the artefact is clearly shaped as a human face, support the second interpretation. Most of such items in Estonia and the Livic area in Latvia are stray finds, dated to the 11th–13th century (Mägi 2017, 86).

Recent information enables us to reconstruct the oldest settlement near Uuelõve around the present Kraavi and Kuuse farms, where it existed in the end of prehistory, but most likely also in the Viking Age. The stone grave Kalmumägi 600–700 m north-west of the farms was probably the burial ground of the local elite family or families living in this settlement centre and controlling the harbour site at the place of the later Uuelõve manor.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SETTLEMENT AROUND THE LOWER REACHES OF THE LÕVE RIVER

All sites described above are situated along the lower reaches of the Lõve River, which is now quite small and surrounded by drained wetlands. Old local inhabitants still remember the river considerably larger, before big drainage works started in the 1950s (Mägi 2002a). In the Viking Age, the river was probably even bigger than in the first half of the 20th century, and its lower reaches formed a small bay that has by now almost disappeared due to massive land upheaval (Fig. 1). The river flows out of the Valjala Lake that is completely drained by now, but was situated 500–700 m towards south and south-west from the Valjala Church.

The Lõve River was an essential landscape element that defined the development of one of Saaremaa's most important centres at Valjala, where a hill fort and a church were built in the 12th–13th centuries. Archaeological investigations in 2018–2019 demonstrated that the 12th–13th-century landscape started to take shape much earlier. However, when trying to reconstruct the Viking Age situation, the absence of a hill fort cannot be overlooked. The nearest archaeologically known fortification was in Asva 13 km east of Valjala, and it was abandoned as early as in the 9th century. All Viking Age sites around Valjala seem to indicate open settlements.

In the Viking Age context, the most influential factor in the development of the coastal landscape may have been the international trade route *Austrvegr*. Most ships from southern Scandinavia and bound for the Neva River crossed the Baltic Sea near Gotland and continued their journey along Saaremaa's southern coast towards West Estonian coast and thereafter towards the Gulf of Finland (Mägi 2018, 87–100). The southern coast of Saaremaa was densely populated, which, together with suitable topographic conditions, favoured the emergence of several harbour sites. Some of them have been detected during the last decades (Mägi 2004; 2010). The probable harbour sites in the lower reaches of the Lõve River, outlets to the sea for the local settlements, could also function as landing places for ships sailing along *Austrvegr*.

The finds from Uuelõve, although few in numbers, namely a Scandinavian equal-armed brooch, a weight belonging to a type that was more common on the western shores of the sea and the probable hoard could indicate international contacts. In the Viking Age, the harbour site was situated in the best naturally protected part of a little bay, 1–2 km from a cluster of arable lands. Such location is characteristic for Viking Age landing places, especially for these of mainly district importance (Mägi 2004). However, the arable lands in Uuelõve were quite limited and the site situated at some distance of the main settlement of the district, suggesting that the harbour was meant not only for the locals but also for vessels sailing along the big route and temporarily needing a landing place for overnighing.

The sites near Vanalõve were presumably more closely connected with the local settlement, especially with the elite families living somewhere at the place of the later Vanalõve and Jursi manors. The elite family at Jursi buried their dead to the stone grave recorded in 2019. The finds from stony elevations at Vanalõve seem to suggest graves as well, built near slopes suitable for landing places. The recent finds date both sites around Vanalõve to the period 6th–9th century, thus some centuries earlier than the Jursi grave or the harbour site at Uuelõve. The northernmost of the Vanalõve sites is actually at more or less the same distance from the Jursi and Vanalõve manors. It is possible that the pre-Viking Period landing places were replaced by the one at Uuelõve in the 10th century, when the international route *Austrvegr* gained momentum.

Many harbour sites along the Baltic Sea coasts were abandoned in the beginning of the 11th century due to the land upheaval and crises in the international trade. Whether it also

was the destiny of the Uuelõve harbour, is not known. The hill fort of Valjala that was built in the 12th century was certainly connected with a suitable harbour place as well, although it has not been located so far. In any case, the old settlement east from the Uuelõve harbour continued its existence, as is indicated by the 11th–13th century pendant and the stone grave.

The medieval taxation centre was established in Vanalõve that, accordingly, may have then still been accessible with boats and smaller ships along the lower reaches of the Lõve River. However, the escalated land upheaval in the 16th–17th centuries caused that the taxation centre was moved to Uuelõve, the old Viking Age harbour place. The map of Saaremaa, drawn in 1650 and re-drawn in 1704, demonstrates that the small bay then still existed near the Uuelõve manor (RA, EAA.308.2.28). Sometime between the 17th and the late 18th century the old settlement 1–2 km from Uuelõve was abandoned.

New finds can bring along changes in these preliminary interpretations, based on quite a small number of artefacts found by professional archaeologists, and on several oral references about finds by illegal detectorists. Despite the limited artefactual evidence, data provided by historical and modern maps, as well as theoretical constructions and logistic calculations enable to present preliminary results, defining a coastal micro-district in Saaremaa that was going to play an essential role in the wars of the 13th century.

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- RA, EAA.308.2.28.** Geographisk Charta öfwer Provinzien Ösell, med dhe där intill Gränzande Orter. (*Map in RA.*)
- RA, EAA.2072.3.243, p. 2a.** Charte nach verkleinerten Maasstab von dem im Rigaschen Statthaltersch., und dem Arensburgschen Kreise belegenden Woldeschen Kirchspiel so wie allen Güthern und Dörfern ihre Grentzen nach der neuen Regulierung von 1788 einzuweisen sind. (*Map in RA.*)
- RA, EAA.2072.3.426f, p. 27.** Geometrische Charte von dem in der Rigischen Statthalterschaft dem Arensburgschen Kreise und dessen Wolde Kirchspiel belegenden publiquen Hoff Neuloewel /.../. (*Map in RA.*)
- RA, EAA.2072.3.426f, p. 51.** Geome. Charte von dem in der Rigischen Statthalterschaft dem Arensburgschen Kreise und dessen Wolde Kirchspiel belegenden zu dem Publ. Guth Altlöwel gehörigen Publiquen Dorf Lührs. (*Map in RA.*)
- RA, EAA.2072.3.426f, p. 74.** Specieller Geometrische Plan von denen in der Rigischen Statthalterschaft dem Arensburgschen Kreise und dessen Woldeschen Kirchspiel belegenden zur Zeit der Regulierung von dem Major Christopher von Nölken zugehörigen Guthe Cabbil mit Inbregif des ganzen Werths für das von Cabbil zugekaufte und in Krons Grenzen verbliebenen Guth Kalli samt Turrja /.../. (*Map in RA.*)
- Saaremaa 1934** = Eesti. Maateaduslik, majanduslik ja ajalooline kirjeldus, IV. Saaremaa. Tartu.

ENNE VALJALA MAALINNA. SADAMAD JA KALMED LÕVE JÕE ALAMJOOKSUL SAAREMAAL

Marika Mägi

Valjalat on Läti Henriku kroonikas nimetatud tugevaimaks saarlaste linnuste seas. Ka järgnevalt kirjeldatud sündmused ei jäta kahtlust, et tegu oli mitmeski mõttes Saaremaa keskusega. Valjala ümbrusest teada olev arheoloogiline aines on seni kuulunud pea eranditult muinasaja lõpusajandisse, tekitades mulje, et piirkond kerkiski keskusena esile alles 12. sajandil. Viimaste aastate arheoloogiline maastikuseire on aga osutanud Valjala ümbruse olulisusele juba viikingiajal. Käesolevas artiklis käsitletakse Lõve jõe alamjooksu ümbrusest hiljuti leitud muistiseid.

Üks Valjala kihelkonna varaseimaid kirjalikes allikates mainitud mõisaid on Valjala kirikust 4 km kagu pool asuv Jursi. Allikateest hoolimata polnud mõisa ümbrusest seni teada kalmeid, mis võinuks markeerida esiajaloolist eliiditalu või mõisa hilisema mõisa kohal. 2019. aastal registreeritud, põlluks küntud kivikalme 500 m kaugusel ajaloolisest mõisaasemest osutas, et asustusüksus oli Jursis siiski juba muinasajal. Kalme paiknes ümbruskonnas kõrgemal alal. Seda katnud kivikiht oli lükatud maaparandusega kokku ala edelääärde ning kalmeala võetud kasutusele põlluna.

Jursi kivikalme ala oli enne meie uurimisrühma külasthanud mitmed detektoristid ning sealt saadud leidude arv on teadmata. 2019. aasta inspeksioonil koguti 22 numbrit leide, enamik neist Saaremaa 10.–12. sajandi kivikalmetele iseloomulikud põlenud ehtekatkendid, vööosad ja ratsutamiseiga seotud esemed. Kõige haruldasem leid Jursi kalmest oli aga

9. sajandisse dateeritav suur lame ambsõlg. Taolised sõled olid viikingiaja esimesel poolel balti ja läänemeresoome sõdalastel laialt levinud, kuid pea alati kohaliku ornamendiga. Jursi sõlg oli kaunistatud hästi viimistletud skandinaaviapärase loomornamendiga, andes seega tunnistust 8.–9. sajandist alguse saanud ühtse sõdalastega seotud kultuurisfääri kujunemisest Läänemere põhjaosa ümbritsevatel rannaaladel.

Arvatavad kalmed tuvastati ka Vanalõve mõisa läheduses, kunagise Lõve jõe kaldapealsel – jõgi oli praegusest märksa suurem. Vanalõve oli keskajal lauamõis, mis Saaremaa oludes eeldas sadamakohta ja väljapääsu merele. Vanalõve ümbruses olime käinud sadamakohta tulutul otsimas juba 2000. aastate alguses. 2018. aastal sattusime kohalikele detektoristidelt kuulnud teadete põhjal kivisele alale esiajalooliseks sadamakohaks sobiva kallaku kõrval, kust kivide vahelt tulid välja odaots, nooleots ja mõned muude esemete tükid. Need kuulusid 7.–8. sajandisse, mis ajast Saaremaal kalmeid peaaegu teada ei ole. Ka Vanalõve leiukoha puhul pole kindel, kas tegu on kalmega või sadamakohta markeeritud leidudega, nagu neid on teada mitmetest muudest Läänemereäärsetest randumiskohtadest.

Teine sarnane leiukoht 7.–9. sajandisse dateeritavate relvadega leiti Lõve jõe kallastelt Vanalõve mõisast 700 m põhja poolt, Vanalõve ja Jursi mõisate vahelt. Ka selle puhul oli tegu randumiseks sobiva kallakuga ning selle kõrval olnud kivise alaga. Kohta pole seni lähemalt uuritud.

Terve kompleks muistiseid, osa neist küll tuvastatavad vaid kuulduste põhjal, registreeriti Uuelõve mõisa ümbruses eelnevatest lõuna pool. Vanalõve lakas lauamõisana eksisteerimast hiljemalt 17. sajandi alguseks, mil uus maksukogumiskeskus rajati Uuelõvesse, mis tollal paiknes veel väikese merelahe kaldal. 2018. aastal Uuelõve mõisaasemest vahetult lõuna pool läbi viidud detektoriuuringud osutasid, et hilisema mõisa ümbruskond oli kasutusel ka viikingiajal. Siingi oli tegemist randumiseks sobiva kallakuga, mille kõrvalt, umbes 1 ha alalt, saadi mitmeid metall-leide. Esemleid leidis rohkem ala põhjapiiril, mis võiks osutada sellele, et kunagine sadamakoht oli suurem ja ulatus ka hilisema mõisa ja praeguse Mõisa talu aladele.

Kohalike teateil on Uuelõve mõisa ümbruskonnas korduvalt nähtud detektoriste, nende leidude hulk on aga teadmata. Arheoloogilise detektoriuuringuga leiti kolm 10. sajandisse dateeritavat eset või esemekatket, millest kaks – skandinaaviapärase võrdhaarne sõlg ja tahuline kaaluviht – viitavad ülemeresidemetele. Mõnede teadete kohaselt olevat sadamakohast 800–900 m kagu poolt leitud mõni aasta tagasi viikingiaega dateeritav mündiaare. Kohalike küsitlemisega ei õnnestunud paraku neid kuuldusi kinnitada.

Mitmed kuuldused osutasid Uuemõisa mõisaasemest umbes 900 m kirde poole jäävale künkale, nn Kalmumäele kui kohale, kust aegade jooksul on rohkesti leide saadud. Tegemist on ilmselt 10.–12. sajandi Saaremaale tüüpilise kivikalmega. Ajalooliste kaartide ja tänapäevase reljefkaardi võrdlus osutas, et kalmet kasutanud asustusüksus paiknes tõenäoliselt mitte Uuelõve mõisaasemel, vaid kalmest 600–700 m kagu pool, kus on selgelt näha kunagiste põllupeenarde jäänused. Tänapäeval asuvad seal Kraavi ja Kuuse talud, 18. sajandi lõpu ja hilisematel kaartidel pole ala aga põlluna kasutatud.

Kuuse ja Kraavi talude läheduses on maapind kohalike andmetel väga must ning ala kadakatest

puhastamise käigus olevat sealt välja tulnud mitmeid raudesemete tükke. Arheoloogideni jõudis üks samast leitud kirve- või naisekujuline ripats, mille võib dateerida 11.–13. sajandisse. Tõenäoliselt paiknes seal mingi asustusüksus juba viikingiajal, mil see kontrollis läheduses olevat sadamakohta.

Kõik nimetatud muistised on Lõve jõe alamjooksu ümbruses. Lõve jõgi, tänapäeval väike, kraavitatud ja kuivendatud, on ilmselt olnud muinasajal märgatavalt suurem, lisaks on jõe praeguse alamjooksu kohal olnud väike merelaht.

Kohalik asustus oli selgelt orienteeritud Lõve jõe, mille äärde mõned kilomeetrid põhja poole rajati 12. ja 13. sajandil Valjala maalinn ja kirik. Jõgi voolas välja praeguseks täiesti kuivendatud Valjala järvest. Viikingiajast pole Valjala ümbruskonnast siiski kindlustusi teada, kõik seni tuvastatud kohad viitavad avaasulatele.

Oluliseks faktoriks Lõve jõe alamjooksu ümbruse viikingiaegse asustuse kujunemisel oli ilmselt rahvusvaheliselt oluline marsruut *Austrvegr* (Idatee), mille üks haru kulges piki Saaremaa lõunarannikut. Uuelõve sadamakohta, mis praegustel andmetel näib kuuluvat peamiselt 9.–10. sajandisse, võikski pidada kohaks, mida lisaks kohalikele külastasid ka möödunud laevad, mis vajasisid ööbimiseks randumispaika. Võimalikud sadamakohad Vanalõve ja Jursi ümbruses võiksid olla pigem kohalike väljapääsud merele 7.–9. sajandil, seega enne viikingiaegse Idatee kasutuse intensiivistumist.

Kas Uuelõve sadamakoht jäeti 11.–12. sajandi algul maha koos paljude muude Läänemere-äärsete sadamakohtadega, pole uuringute praeguses seisus võimalik täie kindlusega öelda. Kahtlemata pidi kusagil olema ka sadam, mille kaudu pääses merele Valjala 12.–13. sajandi maalinnast. Asustusüksus Uuelõve sadamakohast idas eksisteeris igal juhul ka peale viikingiaega ja jäeti maha hiljemalt 18. sajandi teiseks pooleks.