

**ARHEOLOOGILISED
VÄLITÖÖD
EESTIS**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
FIELDWORK
IN ESTONIA**

2007

Koostanud ja toimetanud
Ülle Tamla

Muinsuskaitseamet
Tallinn 2008

© 2008 Muinsuskaitseamet
Uus 18, Tallinn 10111, Eesti
National Heritage Board
Uus 18, Tallinn 10111, Estonia
www.muinas.ee

Esikaas: 13.–14. sajandist pärit ribiline väike klaaspudel Tartu vanalinnast.

Cover: Fragment of a 13.-14 cc small glass bottle (Ribbenflasche) from Old Tartu.

Tagakaas: Tervena säilinud keskaegne nahkjälats Tartu vanalinnast.

Back cover: Well preserved leather shoe from Old Tartu.

Toimetuskolleegium / Editorial Board:

Ants Kraut
Friedrich Lüth
Erki Russow
Leena Söyrinki-Harmo
Toomas Tamla
Ülle Tamla
Jaan Tamm
Juris Urtāns
Kalev Uustalu
Heiki Valk

Kujundus ja küljendus:
Jaana Kool

ISSN 1406-3972

**TARTU ÜLIKOOLI
RAAMATUKOGU
SUNDEKSEMPLAR**

EXCAVATIONS AT THE HILLFORT OF KORNETI (DRUSKI)

Heiki VALK and Antonija VILCĀNE

*Tartu Ülikool (University of Tartu)
Lossi 3, 51003 Tartu, Eesti (Estonia)
Heiki.Valk@ut.ee*

*University of Latvia
Akadēmijas laukums 1, 1060 Rīga, Latvia
Antonijavilcane@inbox.lv*

In August 2007 the joint expedition of the University of Tartu and the Institute of Latvian History at the University of Latvia carried out excavations on the hillfort of Korneti in north-eastern Latvia. The aim of the work was to get information about the chronology of the monument. The hillfort of Korneti had not been archaeologically investigated before but preliminary data enabled to suggest the Late Iron Age date (Urtāns 1991, 57-59). The work hypothesis was that the hillfort might be one of the main centres of Late Iron Age Adsele District of north-eastern Latvia.

The hillfort is located about 4 km south of the Estonian-Latvian border, in Veclaicenes community (or *pagasts*; historically also *Vana-Laitsna vald*). The present-day state border was formed only in the early 1920s when Estonia and Latvia had become independent states. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries Veclaicenes / Vana-Laitsna (Germ. *Alt-Laizen*) community was an area of a mixed settlement of Latvian and Estonian population, the latter speaking the Võru dialect.

The hillfort, called in South-Estonian Võru dialect *Korneti liinamägi*, in Latvian *Drusku (Korneti) pilskalns* is located on a high oblong ridge with the length of about 1 km on the north shore of the lake *Liinamäe järv / Pilskalna ezers* (Fig. 1). The relative height of the hilltop (absolute height 246.6 m) from the level of the lake is 82 m. The northern side of the hill has the relative height of some 40-50 m when measured from the road on its foot.



Fig. 1. A view of Korneti hillfort from the SE in 1913. A post card from the collection of Juris Urtāns.
Jn 1. Vaade Korneti linnamäele kagust 1913. a. Postkaart Juris Urtānsi kogust.

Although the whole ridge is called *liinamägi / pilskalns*, the eventual hillfort area with the length of *ca.* 230 m is located on the south-western end of the oblong hill plateau. In the north-east it is separated from the rest of the hill by a *ca.* 2 m high rampart with the width of *ca.* 3.5 m on its foot. The rampart exists, however, only on the western side of a small road on the hilltop; on its eastern side visible fortifications are missing. The other end of the fort is located on the south-western tip of the hill plateau where rather flat hilltop surface begins to fall towards the lake. The width of the hillfort plateau is *ca.* 30–40 m in the northern part, and 50–60 m in the central and southern part (except for the narrowing tip), but the width is rather conventional, since the edges of the plateau are not horizontal, but slope down towards the steep and high hillsides. On the highest part of the hill, which is located close to its south-western end, cultural layers have been, as a matter of fact, destroyed by a bulldozer while erecting a geodetical tower in the Soviet time.

A graphic image of the hillfort by Jegor von Sievers, depicting a view to its eastern slope from the other side of the lake was published already in 1866 (Album 1866).

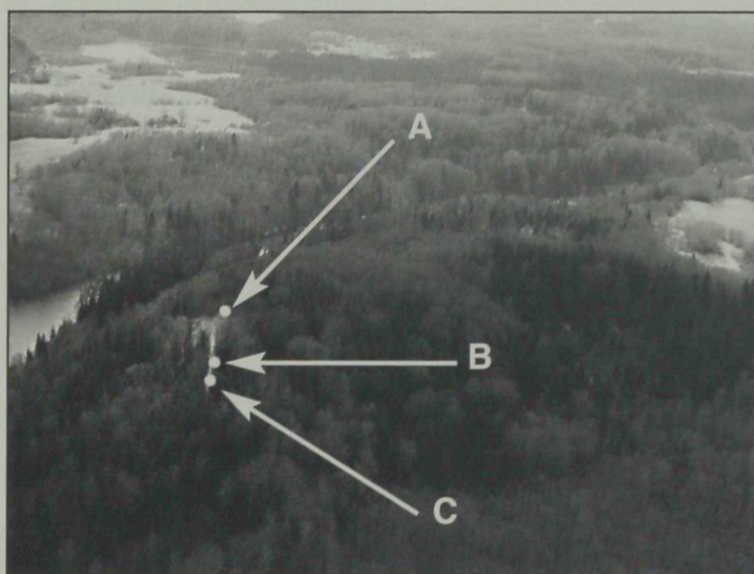


Fig. 2. Korneti hillfort with the locations of excavation plots. Aerial photo by Juris Urtāns 28.04. 2008. View from the SW.

Jn 2. *Ōbuvaade Korneti linnamäe kaevandite asukohtadega edelast. Juris Urtānsi ōhufoto 28.04. 2008.*

The hillfort was measured and described by Ernst Brastiņš in 1926 (Brastiņš 1930, 178–179).¹ He noted that the cultural layer was disturbed by ploughing and only on the edge of the slope its thickness extended to 0.5 m. On the western slope he noted an up to 0.5 m deep moat with one or two terraces on the gentle slope of the hill (see also Fig. 1). The hill was covered by trees, except only for the plateau.

In 2007 it appeared that the cultural layer was spread unevenly on the hill. The colour of the ground could be well observed on the road running along the hilltop, since the road area was partly smoothed by a bulldozer. The soil was mostly light brown, but occasionally also grey; in one area intensively black earth was observed.

Three excavation plots were made on the hill (Fig. 2: A, B, C) in the summer of 2007.² Plot A, a 18 × 1 m trench (Figs. 3, 4), was made on the south-western end of

¹ Field inventory records are stored at the Latvian National History Museum, in the archives of the department of archaeology (LNVM AA 295, 296).

² The finds are stored in Riga, in the National History Museum of Latvia (LVVM).

the hill where the ground began to slope towards the lake. The ground level in the upper end of the trench greatly corresponds to the flat edge of the plateau; in its lower end the ground level was *ca.* 3 m lower. Judging by the relief, 3 units - the higher and lower sloping end (both, respectively, *ca.* 1/3 of the length) and the flat, terrace-like middle part between them could be distinguished in the trench.

In the upper, northern third of the trench the ground consisted of disturbed sand and fine gravel; below it, at the depth of 0.6-0.7 m intact hard natural sand began. The disturbed sand contained some small fragments of hand-moulded pottery (Fig. 5).

After the end of the slope a shallow pit appeared on the hillside end of the terrace in the depth of *ca.* 0.6 m from the ground (Fig. 6). It stretched from that depth for *ca.* 0.6 m into intact natural mineral soil. The width of the pit, which probably corresponds to the remains of the ditch mentioned by Brastiņš, was *ca.* 1 m on its top and *ca.* 0.5 m in the bot-



Fig. 3. Korneiti hillfort.
Excavation plot A: view from the S.
Jn 3. Korneiti linnamäe A-kaevand.
Vaade lõunast.

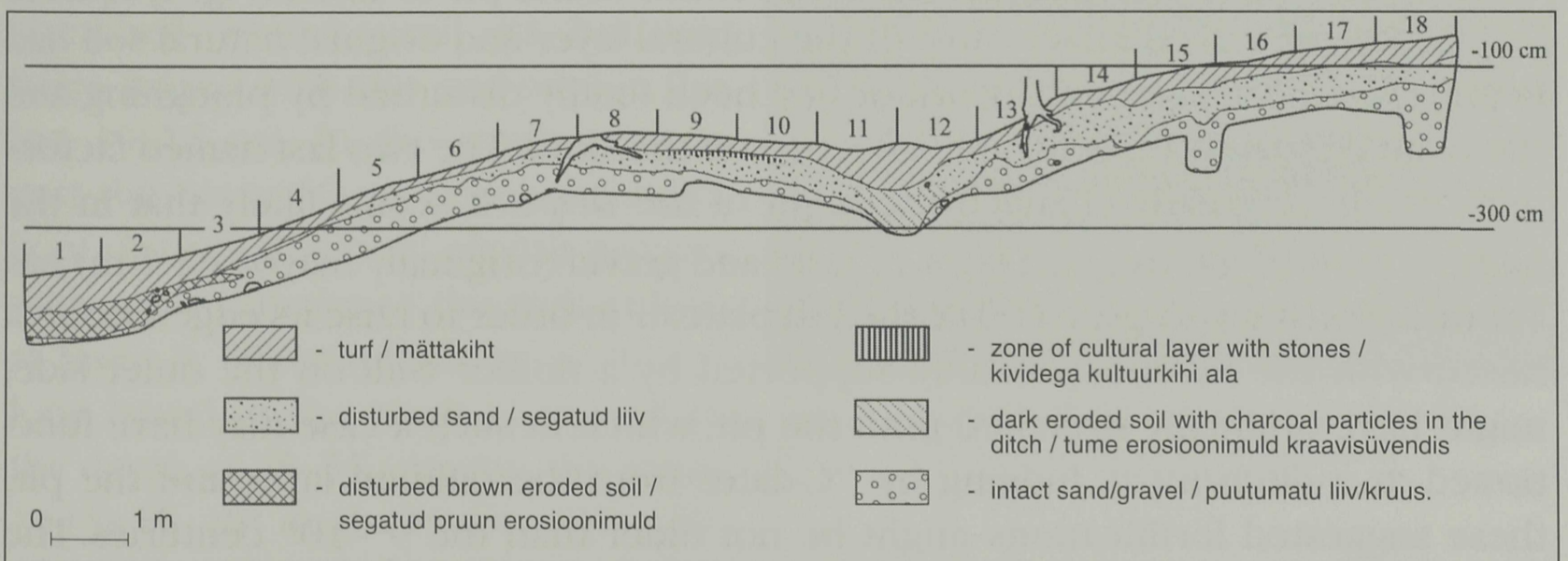


Fig. 4. Korneiti hillfort. Profile of excavation plot A.
Jn 4. Korneiti linnamäe A-kaevandi profiil.



Fig. 5. Finds from Korneti hillfort, excavation plot A.

Jn 5. Leide Korneti linnamäe A-kaevandist.

tom. The pit was filled with grey erosion soil, which contained tiny pieces of charcoal. For until *ca.* 2.5 m from the edge of the pit a grey layer with fragments of burnt stones, including pieces of stones with smoothed surfaces (presumed grinding stones) was found in the depth of 15–30 cm. A ^{14}C -sample from this layer gave the date 1140 ± 0 BP (cal. 95.4% 777–979 AD).³ A sample from the tiny charcoal particles in the pit gave the result 1239 ± 55 BP (cal. 95.4% 667–895; 925–935 AD).⁴ In the bottom of the pit only two small pieces of hand-made pottery were found.

In the lower sloping part of the trench there was mostly only *ca.* 30 cm disturbed sand without finds; in its very end a thick layer of brownish, proba-

ably eroded soil, maybe a pit (with a knife from the 16th or 17th century in it) was found. In no part of the trench, presumably with the exception of 2–3 m downwards from the presumed ditch, traces of original natural soil were detected. From the top layer also a horse bell, presumably an ethnographic item, was found.

Thus, from the original cultural layers only a small part, represented by the area with small stones stretching for *ca.* 2.5 m south of the pit or ditch (Fig. 4, squares 9–11), was preserved intact. Most of the cultural layer and original natural soil had been removed by later earthwork or had been totally disturbed by ploughing and the related erosion, considerably effective on the slope. The two last-named factors may also have greatly changed the relief of the slope. It seems likely that in the highest third of the trench a layer of sand and gravel (originally maybe *ca.* 1 m) has been added to the sloping end of the hill plateau, in order to raise its edge. The area raised with the fill and, probably, supported by a timber wall on the outer side, might have originally stretched until the pit, which in such a case may have functioned as a ditch/moat. Judging by ^{14}C -dates from the cultural layer and the pit, these suggested fortifications might be not older than the 9th–10th centuries. The

³ Tln-2997.

⁴ Tln-2298.

lack of wheel-thrown pottery seems, however, also to exclude the 11th century or later times.

Excavation plot B (3 × 2 m) (Fig. 7) was made on the south-western side of the road on the hilltop, in the distance of 74-76 m from the point where the axis of the road crosses (at the angle of 90°) with the line, which cuts the geodetic point on the highest top of the hill. The plot was made in the area where a patch of intensively black cultural layer with the diameter of *ca.* 10-15 m was visible on the ground. The cultural layer turned out to be 0.4 m thick in the western, and 1.1-1.2 m at the eastern end of the plot, i.e. next to the road. Soil in its upper 30-40 cm was somewhat lighter, probably eroded from higher areas and contained no stones. Soil in the lower layers of the plot was intensively black, sooty and contained fragments of stones (diameter up to 10-15 cm) cracked in fire. In the north-eastern, deeper part of the pit an intensively black sooty layer stretched almost until its bottom, being mixed with clay and sand in the last 10-15 cm. In the south-western part the lower 50 cm consisted mainly of disturbed natural clayish ground with some remains of the dark cultural layer. A ¹⁴C-sample from a 70 cm long brand in the black sooty soil in the depth of 45-55 cm gave the result 1443±55 BP (cal. 95.4% 439-449, 467-483, 493-499, 511-515, 531-685



Fig. 6. Korneiti hillfort. The ditch in excavation plot A.

Jn 6. Korneiti linnamägi. Kraav A-kaevandis.



Fig. 7. Korneiti hillfort. Excavation plot B.

Jn 7. Korneiti linnamäe B-kaevand.

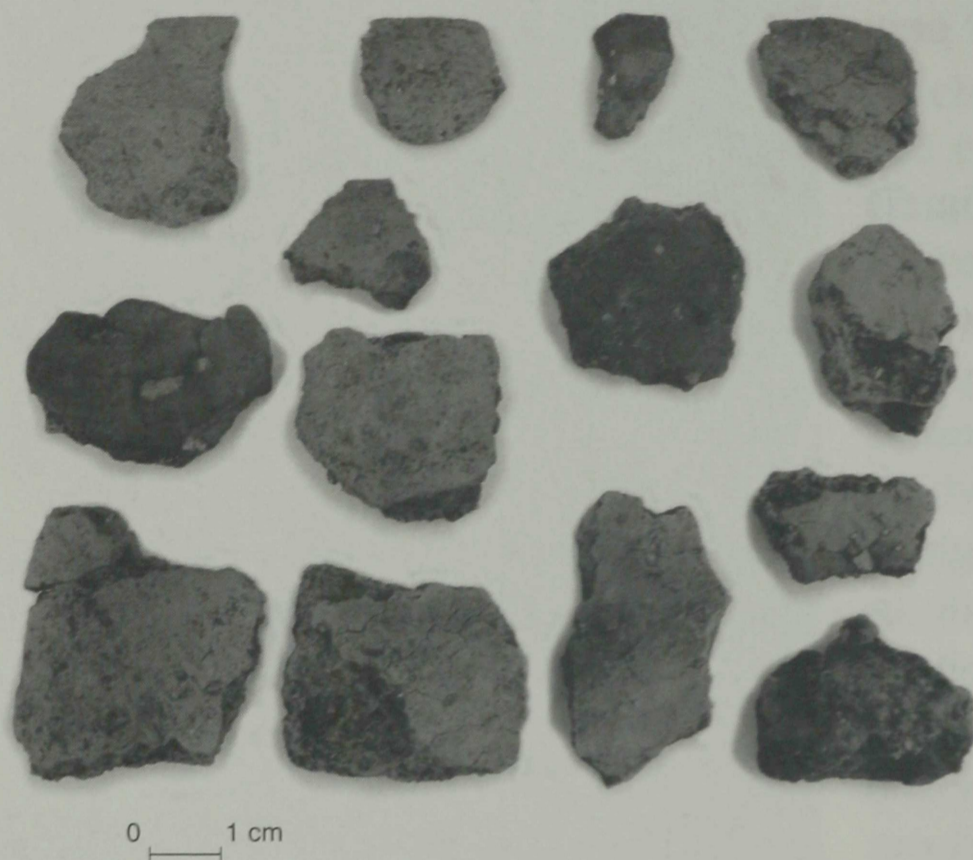


Fig. 8. Finds from Korneti hillfort, excavation plot B.
 Jn 8. Leide Korneti linnamäe B-kaevandist.

AD); another sample from the bottom of the pit (ca. 75 cm from the ground) was dated 2048 ± 55 BP (cal. 95.4% 199-187 BC; 177 BC - 69 AD).⁵ As the black layer seemed quite homogeneous, the big difference of the dates is hard to explain. The bottom of the excavation plot was uneven, stretching into intact mineral ground; original natural soil was preserved nowhere. The intensively black cultural layer contained several sherds of hand-moulded pottery (Fig. 8), including those “greased” with wet clay before burning. The character of pottery was greatly similar in different depths.

From the erosion layer a tiny bronze clip from a shawl (Lat. *villaine*) was found.

Excavation plot C (6.5 m²) (Fig. 9) was made on the south-western side of the road, in the distance of 95-98 m from the line of the geodetic point (measured in the same way as plot B). The location of the trial plot was determined by brands found in the test pit there. The area south-west of the road had no traces of cultural layer, but in the edge of the road soil some irregular brands and remains of a 2 burnt poles were found on intact natural hard sand at the depth of 20-30 cm. The ¹⁴C-analysis from a pole remains gave the result 1975 ± 55 BP (cal. 95.4% 145-135 BC; 115 BC-133 AD).⁶

In conclusion, the earliest settlement traces on Korneti hillfort date from the Pre-Roman or Early Roman Iron Age, the following - from the Migration period or from the Pre-Viking Age and the Viking Age. As the cultural layer was thin and of low intensity in general, the hillfort seems not to have been permanently settled. No traces of the Latest Iron Age were found.

⁵ TIn 2999 and TIn-3000.

⁶ TIn-3001.

During the excavations data were collected also about the hill *Dieva kalns / Māras kalns* ("Hill of God"; "Hill of Māra"),⁷ a place of sacral meaning having a stone with footprints on it. The site and related folklore have been repeatedly discussed in publications (e.g. Saltupe & Eberhards 1981, 60; Gailīte 1982; Ziedonis & Ziedonis 2006, 212; Grāvītis 1984, 264-266; Urtāns 1993, 87-88). The hill, almost as high as Korneiti hillfort (absolute height 240.1 m) is located *ca.* 1.4 km SSW of it. Olga Šķepaste, born in 1919 in Staldes (Skāpaski) farmstead on the foot of the hill, told that the highest part of the hill was called *Mariamägi* or *Marimägi* and the lower plateau on the way - *Jumalamägi* by the native Estonian population. The area around the 3 big stones on the hilltop (the radius of *ca.* .5 m around them) was not touched by ploughing in the past. One of the stones (Fig. 10) had two "footprints" on it - one of a bare foot and the other of a shoe (Fig. 11).

They were believed to belong to St. Mary (*Maarja*) who was told to have stepped from the stone to the back of a donkey at the time of the Big Flood. Local inhabitant Jānis Prangels (Prangli Jaan) said that the stone was called *Māras pēdes akmens* ("Stone of Mara's footprint") in the Latvian tradition and showed also the place where the devil (*velns*) was told to have sat on the stone.



Fig. 9. Korneiti hillfort. Brands in excavation plot C. Jn 9. Korneiti linnamägi. Tukid C-kaevandis.



Fig. 10. Stone with the footprints of St Mary (*Māras pēdes akmens*) on *Dieva kalns* close to Korneiti.

Jn 10. *Maarja jalajälgedega kivi Maria-mäel Korneiti lähedal.*

⁷ I.e. stone with the footprint of Māra. In Latvian mythology Māra is a female deity who has contaminated in the Christian period with St Mary. The old local Estonian informant related the footprints in the stone unambiguously to St Mary (Maarja).

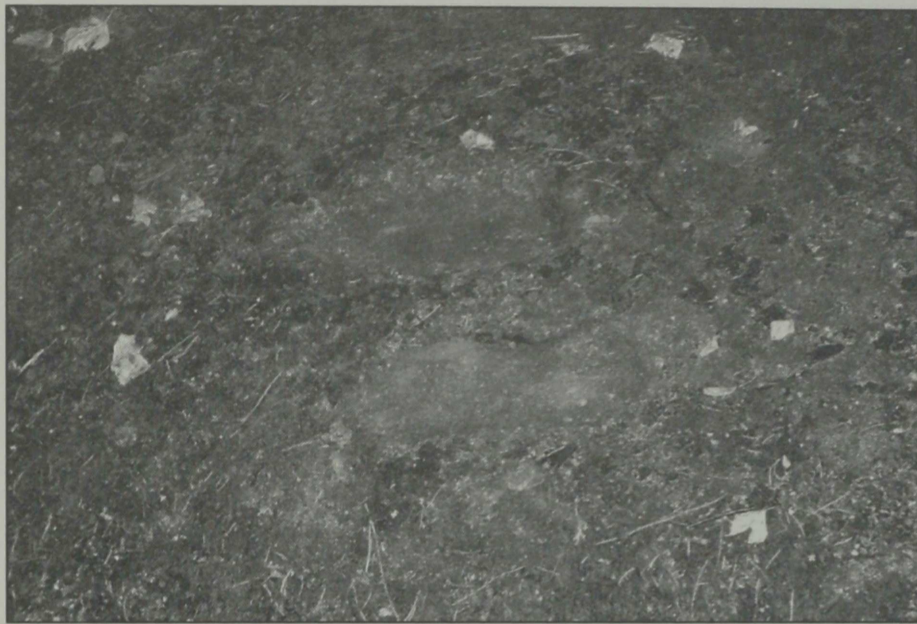


Fig. 11. Footprints of St Mary on the stone on Dieva kalns Hill.

Jn 11. Maarja jalajäljed Mariamäel oleval kivil.

The archives of Latvian National History Museum also contain data recorded by A. Gusārs from the Board of Heritage Protection in 1931. He has drawn the stone "with the footprint of Mary" and written down a legend about „Maria from Rugada" who stepped on the stone, in order to sit on a horse and left her footprints on the stone.⁸ The data is recorded in Vosvas farmstead beside the hill *Dieva Kalns*. Gusārs has recorded also a legend about oaks on *Dzerves Hill*, located between the hillfort and the centre of Korneti. On the hill there were once four big "God's oaks" (*Dieva ozoli*), which were visited by locals offering gifts. In the middle of the 1920s the last oak was burnt by making a fire in its hollow.⁹ There is folklore information, that once a salubrious spring ran on the Drusku hillfort. The spring was situated on the highest point of the hillfort. The pit of the spring has survived, but since bad women used to wash the dirty clothing of their children in the spring, the spring moved to Cēsis hillfort¹⁰ (Vidzeme 2007, 52-53). The expedition visited also a village cemetery called *Zenģu kapi* or *Zviedru kapi* ca. 500 m north-west of the hillfort, ca. 100 m west of *Zenģi* (Zengi) farmstead on the southern side of Korneti-Krabi road.¹¹ In the local Estonian tradition (data from Olga Šķepaste) the hill was called *Hernesmägi* ("Pea hill"). The hill with the diameter of ca. 130 x 100 m is 2-3 m high. In the profile of a kolkhoz-time gravel pit there were the remains of an infant burial, the head oriented towards the south-west in the depth of ca. 30-40 cm. According to local legends, a place in Lake Korneti just under the hillfort, with a big stone in the water, was feared of in the past - because of evil beings living there: it was used neither for swimming nor for fishing.¹² There are also talks about seeing a girl with a fish tail on the stone, combing her long fair hair there. The being was seen by a girl herding cattle on the other side of the lake as late as in the 1940s and even twice, in different years.¹³

⁸ Rugada means evidently Rōuge. The church of Rōuge, located 15 km north of Dieva Kalns is dedicated to St Mary. In the late 19th century the hill was located on the southern border of Rōuge parish.

⁹ LNVM AA 296.

¹⁰ Information about the spring was provided by Juris Urtāns, professor at the Academy of Culture, Latvia.

¹¹ See also the inventory report by E. Mugurēvičs from 1962 (LNVM 295).

¹² Data from Jānis Prangels.

¹³ Data from Silvija Graudiņa, daughter of Olga Šķepaste in 2007 and 2008. She saw it at the age of 7-8 years, before the collectivization of 1949.

Acknowledgements

The authors express gratitude to the Estonian Science Foundation (grant no. 6119), and to local inhabitants Jānis Pranglis (Prangli Jaan) and Konstantins Volkovs (Zeņģi farmstead) who helped the expedition with practical arrangements and professor Juris Urtāns for his kind help with illustrations and for good advices concerning folkloric data.

References

Album 1866 = Jegor v. Sievers. Der Druske-See und der Schoßberg (pilskaln) unter Schreibershof bei Oppekahn. – Album Livländischer Ansichten gezeichnet und herausgegeben von Wilhelm Siegfried Stavenhagen in Mitau in Stahl gestochen und gedruckt von G.G. Lange in Darmstadt. Mit erläuterndem Text von verschiedenen Verfassern. Mitau, 1866.

Brastiņš, E. 1930. Latvijas pilskalni. Vidzeme. Pieminekļu valdes izdevums. Rīga.

Gailīte, A. 1982. Senatnes liecinieks. Oktobra Karogs [Alūksne]. – 1982. g. 2.martā.

Grāvītis, V. 1984. “Saules iezīmes” akmenī. Dabas un vēstures kalendārs 1985. Rīga.

Saltupe, B. & Eberhards, G. 1981. Akmeņi un dižakmeņi. Rīga.

Ziedonis, I. & Ziedonis, R. 2006. Mežu zeme Latvijā. 2006. – Lauku Avīzes izdevniecība.

Urtāns, J. 1991. Ziemeļvidzemes pilskalni. Rīga.

Urtāns, J. 1993. Latvijas senās svētnīcas. Rīga.

Vidzeme 1923 = Vidzeme. Novadu teikas. Sak. L. Rezakova. – Jāņa Rozes apgāds, Rīga 2007.

KAEVAMISED KORNETI LINNAMÄEL

Heiki VALK ja Antonija VILCĀNE

2007. suvel tegi Tartu Ülikooli ja Läti Ülikooli ühisekspeditsioon kaevamisi Korneti linnamäel, Rõuge kihelkonnaga lõunas külgnevas Vana-Laitsna/ Veclaicene vallas Eesti piirist u 4 km lõuna pool. Töö eesmärk oli välja selgitada linnamäe kasutusaeg ja kontrollida hüpoteesi linnuse kuulumisest hilisrauaaega. Linnamäeks kutsutakse ligi 1 km pikkust mäeseljandikku Korneti järve põhjakaldal (jn 1). Mäelae kõrgus järvepinnast on u 90 m; põhja pool oleva maantee suhtes ligi 40–50 m. Linnusekoht asub seljaku edelapoolses otsas ja on mäelael kulgeva tee lääneküljel ülejäänud mäest eraldatud u 2 m kõrguse valliga; teest ida pool vall puudub. Linnuseala mõõtmed on ligikaudu 230 × 30–50/60 m. Mäele tehti 3 proovikaevandit (jn 2). Kaevand A (jn 3, 4) rajati linnuseplatoo tippu ja otsanõlvale, et leida eeldatavaid servakindlustusi. Tranšee ülemises, nõlvakul olevas kolmandikus koosnes pinnas 0,7–0,8 m sügavuseni segatud liivast ja kruusast; tranšee tasase, terrassil oleva keskosa mäepoolses otsas paljandus maapinnast 60 cm sügavusel loodusliku mineraalpinnase pealt u 1 m ja põhjast u 50 cm laiune süvend (jn 5), mis oli täidetud ilmselt erosiooni toimel sinna valgunud peeni söekübeid sisaldava tumehalli mullaga. Võimalik, et tegemist on kunagise vallikraaviga. Sissekaevest kuni 2 m lõuna pool leidis 15–30 cm sügavusel õhukese vööndina tumehalli, põlenud kive sisaldavat kultuurikihti, kust leiti ka lõhkipõlenud ihumiskivi tükke. Kultuurikihist võetud ¹⁴C-proov andis tulemuseks 1140±50 BP (cal. 95.4% 777–979 pKr, sissekaeves leidunud söekübemetest võetud proov aga 1239±55 BP (cal. 95.4% 667–895; 925–935 pKr). Tranšee alumises, nõlvakul olevas kolmandikus koosnes pinnas kamara- ja mullakihi all u 30 cm sügavuseni segatud liivast ja kruusast, millele järgnes puutumata mineraalpinnas. Kaevandi otsas ulatus segatud pruun pinnas sügavamale; siit leiti 16.–17. sajandi nuga. Pinnase sõelumisel saadi veidi käsikeraamikat (jn 6), maapinna lähedusest aga etnograafiline hobusekuljus. Ilmnes, et enamuse kultuurikihti on hilisemate mullatööde või künniga võimendatud erosiooni toimel hävinud. Samal põhjusel on tõenäoliselt muutnud ka nõlva kuju. Näis, et tranšee ülemise kolmandiku osas on pärast algse loodusliku alusmulla eemaldamist linnuseõue serva liiva ja kruusaga täidetud. Sellisel juhul võis täidetud ja väljast puitseinaga toetatud ala ulatuda kuni oletatava vallikraavini. Kultuurikihist ja kraavist võetud süsinikuproovide põhjal otsustades ei tohiks eeldatavad kindlustused olla varasemad 9.–10. sajandist; kedrakeramika puudumine viitab samas nende 11. sajandist varasemale algupäralt. B-kaevand (jn 7) tehti tee lääneküljele. Maapinnal võis siin eristada u 10–15 m läbimõõduga intensiivselt musta ja nõgise kultuurikihiga ala. Tume kiht oli kaevandi lääneotsas 0,4 m, teepoolses otsas 1,1–1,2 m paksune. Ülemises, nähtavasti erosiooni toimel tekkinud 30 cm paksuses ladestuses oli kiht mõnevõrra heledam ja kivideta, alaosas aga must ja nõgine ning sisaldas korratult paiknevaid, sageli tugevalt põlenud raudkive. Maapinnast 45–55 cm sügavuselt võetud ¹⁴C-proov andis tulemuseks 1443±55 BP (cal. 95.4% 439–449, 467–483, 493–499, 511–515, 531–685 pKr), kaevandi sügavama osa põhjas olnud tukist võetud proov aga 2048±55 BP (cal. 95.4% 199–187 BC; 177 eKr – 69 pKr). Kuna must kiht tundus kaevamisel olevat homogeenne, on erinevust raske seletada. Süsine muld sisaldas eri sügavustel üldilmelt sarnaseid käsikeraamikakilde (jn 8). Kolmas, C-kaevand (jn 9) tehti tee lääneküljele, eelmisest kaevandist 19–21 m põhja poole, kus šurfirmisel satuti 20 cm sügavusel tukkidele. Tee kõrval kultuurikiht puudus. Tee alale tehtud laiendis leiti 20–30 cm sügavuselt korratult paiknevaid tukke ja postijäänus, kust võetud ¹⁴C-proov andis tulemuseks 1975±55 BP (cal. 95.4% 145–135 eKr; 115 eKr – 133 pKr). Vanimad asustusjäljed linnamäel pärinevad eelrooma rauaajast. Süsinikuproovid osutavad ka rahvasterändamis-ajale ja eelviikingi- ning viikingiajale, kuid hilisrauaaegseid leide ei saadud. Inspekteriti ka linnamäest u 1,4 km lõunaedelas asuvat Mariamäge/Jumalamäge (*Dieva kalns*; *Māras kalns*). Seal paikneval kivil olevaid lohke (jn 10, 11) peab kohalik võrukeelne pärimus veeuputuse ajal eesli selga astunud Maarja jala jälgedeks. Kivil näidati ka kuradi (*velns*) istumisjälge. Korneti linnamäe all järves olevat suure kiviga kohta on vanasti kardetud. Seal on karjalaps veel 1940. aastatel näinud kalasabaga tüdrukut.