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Back cover: Glass in lead frame (fragment of a stained glass window?) from Pirita.

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THE MORTUARY HOUSE AT LEPNA ON SOUTHERN SAAREMAA

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In 2002 and 2003, archaeological excavations were carried out on a burial ground known in the local tradition as *Lepna Katkuauk* ("Lepna Pestilence Hole"). The site is situated in the deserted Lepna village on southern Saaremaa, next to the lower reaches of the River Maadevahe. The distance from the Lepna grave to the Tõnija Tuulingumäe burial and cult complex, excavated 1995–2001, is 1.2 km, and the two sites can be considered as belonging to the same settlement unit, probably centered near the later Rõõsa manor.

The Lepna burial ground was detected in 2000 when it was first identified as a medieval village cemetery. However, some weapons and a belt buckle found during the re-study of the site in 2001 dated it to the 5th–7th centuries. The archaeological excavations supported this date. The site was completely unearthed and proved to have been a building of stone and timber, used for storing uncremated human bones together with artifacts.

The excavations at Lepna were financed by the Institute of History in Tallinn, the Museum of Saaremaa, the Estonian Science Foundation Grant No 5432 and, in 2002, by a group of Swedish amateur archaeologists organized by Raine Nykänen. In addition to the amateur archaeologists, it was mainly students from the University of Tartu as well as pupils and teachers of the Valjala School who helped to carry out the excavations. The finds were stored in the Museum of Saaremaa (SM 10372).

THE SYMBIOSIS OF AGRICULTURAL AND MARITIME LANDSCAPES

The area around the present villages of Tõnija, Põllu and Rõõsa forms a well-defined settlement unit, surrounded by wetlands in the east, north and west, and by the seacoast in the south (Fig. 1). A dominant feature is the River Maadevahe flowing through the eastern part of the area. The primary settlement centers holding the best location among the arable lands seem to have been the later Rõõsa Manor (presently, again, a village) and the group of farms south of the village of Tõnija (sometimes also called Rõõsa Village). The location of the Tõnija village at the boundary between the arable lands and (the nowadays partly drained) wetlands points to a somewhat later origin.

Remains of fossil fields and Bronze Age – Pre Roman Iron Age stone graves have survived in the stony pasture in the middle of the settlement unit. The Viking Age part of the cemetery, where some stone circle graves have been excavated by Aarne Michaël Tallgren in 1921 (Mägi 2002, 12), formed the northwestern part of the area which was unfortunately destroyed by the Soviet-time agricultural buildings. Several prehistoric graves, including the excavated Tõnija Tuulingumäe grave (Mägi-Lõugas 1996; 1997), had been erected at the northern border of the arable lands and a former bog.

Two sanctuaries situated along the northern border of the arable lands were both connected to the (later) Rõõsa Manor by old roads. The Bronze Age – first half of Iron Age cult site was unearthed next to the Tuulingumäe grave in 2000–2002 (Mägi 2001; Mägi & Mägi 2002). Close to the present Tõnija village, the Holy Shrine, about half of which was destroyed by later buildings, is likely to date from the second half of the Iron Age. At least the so-called “King’s Grave”, which forms a part of the construction, can be dated to the late Viking Age (Mägi & Mägi 2002).

Fifteen hundred years ago, the seacoast was flat and hardly suitable for landing sites – the situation was thus similar to the present. The present coastline is situated only more than 2 km further south. Under these circumstances, the lower reaches of the Maadevahe River probably offered the best opportunities for boats and ships to land. A fortified 5th–6th century site Paemõis (“Limestone Manor”) 1 km upstream from what was the river estuary 1500 years ago can be considered as a probable site of a river-harbor. Paemõis was situated on and aside a slope, originally very likely the river bank, and separated from the surrounding flat area by a low wall. Small trial excavations there in 2003 revealed a culture layer of low intensivity, probably witnessing only a temporarily used site. Several metal artifacts found already during the earlier surface surveys date the use of Paemõis to the Migration Period (Mägi & Mägi 2002).

On Saaremaa, as in several other areas closely associated with maritime activities, stone graves were often erected right on the seacoast where they normally marked harbor sites (e. g. Carlsson 1992; 1998). In the Tõnija-Rõõsa settlement unit, the only coastal grave known so far is Lepna next to the 1500-years-ago estuary of River Maadevahe. Its location at the highest point in the vicinity, at a distance of approximately 1 km from both of the old settlement unit centers refers to a nearby harbor site controlled by these settlements. In this way, the grave functioned both as a landmark and a manifestation of power. These aspects were only underlined by the fact that, as indicated by the remains uncovered during the excavations, the grave had actually been a mortuary house, a stone building probably dominating the coastal landscape of its time.

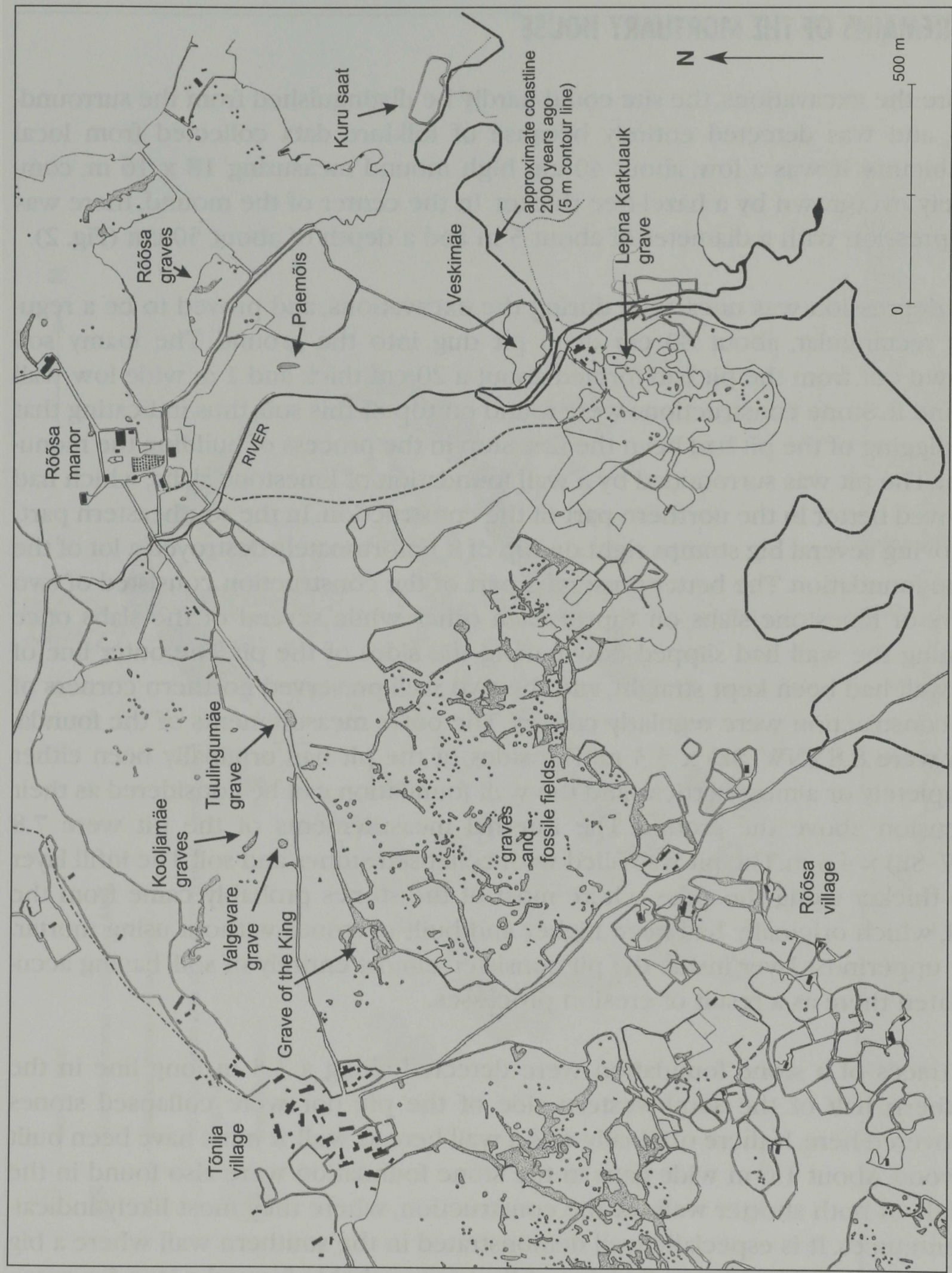


Fig. 1. Tõnija-Rõõsa area. Re-drawn from the map of 1873. (The Estonian Historical Archives F. 3724, I. 5, D. 2492.)
Joon. 1. Tõnija-Rõõsa ümbruskond. Ümber joonistatud 1873. aasta kaardilt (Eesti Ajalooarhiiv F. 3724, N. 5, S. 2492.)

THE REMAINS OF THE MORTUARY HOUSE

Before the excavations, the site could hardly be distinguished from the surroundings, and was detected entirely because of folklore data collected from local inhabitants. It was a low, about 40 cm high mound measuring 18 x 16 m, completely overgrown by a hazel-tree thicket. In the center of the mound, there was a depression with a diameter of about 5 m and a depth of about 50 cm (Fig. 2).

The depression was unearthed during the excavations, and proved to be a regularly rectangular, about 80 cm deep pit dug into the ground. The loamy soil thrown out from the pit had formed about a 20 cm thick and 1 m wide low wall around it. Stone constructions were found on top of this soil, thus indicating that the digging of the pit had been the first step in the process of building the monument. The pit was surrounded by a wall foundation of limestone slabs, which had survived better in the northern part of the construction. In the southeastern part, removing several big stumps right on top of it unfortunately destroyed a lot of the stone foundation. The better-preserved part of the construction consisted of two layers of limestone slabs on top of each other while several of the slabs once forming the wall had slipped down along the sides of the pit. The outer line of the wall had been kept straight, and the two well-preserved northern corners of the construction were regularly convex. The outer measurements of the foundation were 8.8 (NW-SE) x 5.3 m. The sides of the pit had originally been either completely or almost vertical, and the wall foundation can be considered as their extension above the ground. The internal measurements of the pit were 7.8 (NW-SE) x 4.3 m. The pit was filled with collapsed stones and soil. The infill layer was thicker along the sides where most of the stones probably came from the wall, which originally had been higher and built of stones without using mortar. The uppermost layer inside the pit consisted almost entirely of soil, having accumulated there as a result of erosion processes.

No traces of a stone foundation were detected along a 3.5 m long line in the southern half of the southwestern side of the pit; nor were collapsed stones uncovered here. If there originally was a wall here as well, it must have been built of wood. About 1.6 m wide gaps in the stone foundation were also found in the middle of both shorter walls of the construction, where they most likely indicated entrances. It is especially well demonstrated in the southern wall where a big horizontal limestone (at midheight) of the wall probably formed a step for entering a room partly dug into ground. The bottom of the pit was covered with a floor of limestone slabs (Fig. 3). Most of the floor was well preserved, especially under the fallen wall stones along the sides; in the middle of the pit, the slabs once form-



Fig. 2. Lepna mortuary house.

Joon. 2. Lepna surumaja.



Fig. 3. Fireplace at the SE-corner of the pit.
Joon. 3. Tulease lohu kagunurgas.



Fig. 4. The floor of limestone slabs. View from NW.
Joon. 4. Paeplaatidest põrand. Vaade loode poolt.

ing the floor were more often broken into several pieces. About 0.5 m from the southeastern corner of the pit, close to the southern entrance, the remains of a fireplace – 10–15 cm thick layer of charcoal at a location with a diameter of 60–70 cm – were found (Fig. 4). The corner of the pit around the fireplace was lined with clay. Quite a few burnt stones were uncovered especially around the charcoal while artifacts were completely absent there. The fireplace was not used



Fig. 5. The Lepna site after excavation. View from SW.

Joon. 5. Vaade kaevendile peale kaevamiste lõppu. Vaade edela poolt.

very often which, considering the function of the building, is quite understandable.

A building like the one unearthed at the Lepna site (Fig. 5) must have been covered by a shelter. The ethnographic parallels suggest that the roof was supported by a timber framework resting upon the ground, without any need of postholes. That kind of timber construction unfortunately does not leave any traces in the ground except under special conditions. In the northwestern corner of the Lepna building, however, some inclined limestone slabs had probably provided support for a wooden post which had collapsed towards the center of the pit.

THE AREA AROUND THE PIT

Some obscure stone constructions were detected around the pit and the rectangular stone foundation. This is true mostly for the northern part of the excavations while the southern side of the pit was lined with about a 3-m-wide NE-SW-oriented zone of limestone slabs. A similar zone surrounded the pit at its NW and SW sides, starting here about 1.5 m away from the stone foundation. The zone was formed of mainly limestone slabs probably chosen for some building or construction. Their position suggested that they were thrown there during some destruction work or collapsed there from somewhere above. In most of the zone, neither artifacts nor bones were found. The area between the zone of limestone

slabs and the foundation contained mostly smaller stones, with some medium-size limestones that sometimes formed lines or parts of rectangular constructions. The layer of the smaller stones was 10–15 cm thick and started right below the turf, which can be the main reason why pieces of human bones and metal artifacts found in this layer were generally very poorly preserved.

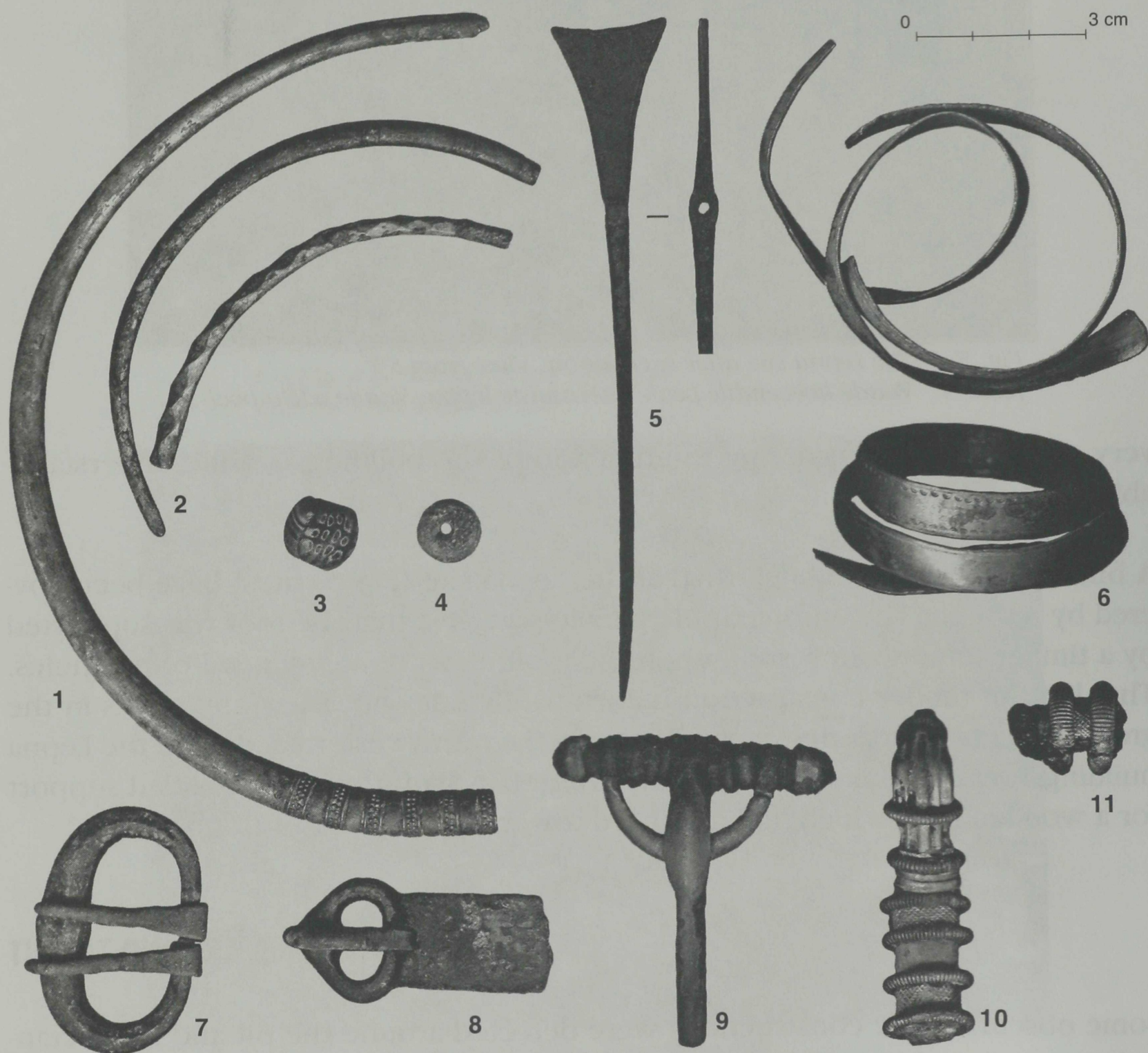


Fig. 6. Finds from the Lepna mortuary house. 1–2 - fragments of silver neckrings, 3–4 - glass and amber beads, 5 - decorative bronze pin, 6 - silver spiral bracelet, 7–8 - bronze belt buckles, 9 - bronze crossbow-brooch, 10–11 - fragments of silver crossbow-brooches with silver and gold plating (SM 10372: 409, 519, 232, 394, 95, 100, 113, 203, 288, 175, 339.)

Joon. 6. Leide Lepna surnumajast. 1–2 - hõbekaelavõrude tükke, 3–4 - klaasist ja merevaigust helmed, 5 - pronksist ehtenõel, 6 - hõbedast spiraalkäevõru, 7–8 - pronkspandlad, 9 - pronksist ambsõlg, 10–11 - katked hõbe- ja kuldplateeringuga kaunistatud hõbedast ambsõlgedest.

Here, the clearest construction was unearthed near the western corner of the foundation. Limestone slabs laid on top of each other in several layers formed a U-shaped rectangular "box". In the middle of the construction, a deposit of four spearheads, a sax, a shield boss, a bronze buckle, potsherds of a small earthen vessel and poorly survived human bones were found. Bones and artifacts had proba-

bly been buried in a box made of wood or other perishable material, partly surrounded by a wall of small limestone slabs, and covered by other smaller slabs. It is likely to suggest that other obscure stone constructions were the remains of similar burials.

Some obscure lines of stones were uncovered at the NE side of the pit, where some finds and bones were also unearthed. However, no remains of a limestone slab zone were detected here.

THE FINDS

The finds consisted of weapons and jewelry, both more or less equally represented, belt buckles and fittings, and toilet equipment (Fig. 6). Iron items were generally very poorly preserved, and the shape of the artifact could not be determined in most cases. The better-preserved iron artifacts or fragments were knives, socketed spearheads, saxes, shield bosses, and buckles (Fig. 7). Bridles were represented by iron plaques and bits.

Common ornaments were crossbow-brooches (Fig. 6: 9-11) that in most cases were found only in fragments and were often made of silver and covered with gold plating. The fragments came from at least 10 different silver brooches and 12 different bronze brooches. Silver neck rings (Fig. 6: 1-2) were represented by parts of 6 different items. Almost intact spi-



Fig. 7. A spearhead and knives from Lepna. (SM 10372: 16, 446, 325.)
Joon. 7. Odaots ja noad Lepnast.

ral bracelet (Fig. 6: 6) and tweezers were the best-survived silver artifacts (Fig. 8); other silver finds were fragments of plating or pieces of unknown artifacts. Triangular-head decorative pins (Fig. 6: 5), spiral finger-rings and pieces of chain were the most common bronze finds. Quite a number of bronze and iron belt buckles were found (Fig. 6: 7-8), as well as both bronze and iron tweezers. The amount of ceramics was much smaller than in Estonian graves normally, and several potsherds came from small carinated cups.

All silver artifacts, as well as the majority of other finds were unearthed inside the mortuary house. All finds can be dated to the 5th-6th, perhaps the 7th centuries.



0 1 cm

Fig. 8. Silver tweezers.
(SM 10372: 223.)
Joon. 8. Hõbepintsetid.

THE BURIALS

The study of bones found in and around the mortuary house is incomplete but some conclusions can already be drawn. All individuals were represented only by a few parts of the skeleton, which were brought to the burial ground as bones; thus, the bodies had been defleshed elsewhere. This is the same custom of secondary burials that was found earlier in the Tuulingumäe grave (Mägi-Lõugas 1996; 1997; Mägi 1999), as well as in several other graves dated from the Bronze Age up to the Roman Period (e. g. Lang 2000). The finds at Lepna indicated that, at least on Saaremaa, the custom was alive even as late as in the 6th century AD.

Both inside and outside the mortuary house, artifacts and bones were normally found together, often many items in the same spot. This is likely, therefore, to suggest that the human remains, together with the artifacts, were originally stored in containers of some perishable material, which became displaced and were broken when the building collapsed. Inside the pit, most of the burial remains were found on the floor along the walls, and among the debris of the collapsed stone foundation. The latter had probably been originally stored in containers on top of the stone wall. Ethnographic parallels in such type of buildings demonstrate that stone walls form a shelf underneath the eaves, widely used for storage.

DISCUSSION

On Saaremaa and in coastal Estonia, some household buildings were erected of stone without mortar even as late as the beginning of the 20th century (e.g. Ränk 1939; Tihase 1974; Fig. 9). Ethnographic parallels can also be found for houses partly dug into the ground (Tihase 1974, 167–171). Unfortunately, no dwellings of 5th–7th century Estonia have been excavated, and it is therefore impossible to compare the mortuary house of Lepna with contemporary living houses. The only possible counterpart in Estonia is the Paju 5th–6th century burial ground on western Saaremaa where remains of a rectangular timber construction were unearthed around a layer of stones. Human bones and burial goods were found among these stones (Tamla & Jaanits 1977). It is likely that the construction was originally a timber building, a mortuary house without a stone foundation. Possible timber

buildings on stone foundations have been suggested previously also for the Tuulingumäe Roman Period *tarand*-grave and the Preroman Iron Age platform of a cult site (Mägi-Lõugas 1997; Mägi 2001). The possibility for wood to survive in Saaremaa limestone graves is minimal, and the timber remains at Paju can be explained only by the sand that covered the site there.

The mortuary house at Lepna marks a transformation stage in burial customs on Saaremaa. It was probably the last time period when family members were buried together, with their bones intermingled. The 8th century dead already rest in individual stone circle graves, one person in each (Mägi 2002, 125–128). Another important change is the choice and treatment of the grave goods. Never before had so many weapons placed in graves; from the 5th–6th century onward, until the very end of prehistory, weapons were an important attribute in burial customs. Those buried at Tuulingumäe had always received intact items with them to the grave while their descendants at Lepna had some of their grave goods intact, others broken and represented only by small fragments. In graves of the following centuries, all grave goods were intentionally damaged. This change suggests that the interpretation of the Great Beyond had thoroughly altered.



Fig. 9. Possible ethnographic parallel to the Lepna mortuary house – archaic summer kitchen on Saaremaa (Ränk 1939).

Joon. 9. Võimalik etnograafiline paralleel Lepna surnumajale – arhailine suveköök Saaremaal (Ränk 1939).

The change in burial customs towards strongly emphasized warrior-attributes and individuality probably indicate crucial changes in the family structure and the power systems of the society. The transformation was synchronized with changes in communication. The 5th–7th century was the last period when the archaeological evidence of Saaremaa predominantly resembled Couronia. Mutual connections between these areas also persisted later, but, since the 7th–8th century, communication with Scandinavia and especially Gotland became dominant. The mortuary house at Lepna can thus be considered as a symbol of old attitudes where, however, first signs of a new era were already evident.

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LEPNA SURNUMAJA LÕUNA-SAAREMAAL

Marika MÄGI

Arheoloogilised kaevamised Lepna Katkuauguks nimetatud matusekohal toimusid aastatel 2002–2003. Koht asub praeguseks maha jäetud Lepna külas Maadevahe jõe kunagise suudme lähedal. Matusekohast 1,2 km põhja poole jääb aastatel 1995–2001 läbi kaevatud Tõnija Tuulingumäe kalme. Ilmselt kuulusid nii Lepna kui ka Tuulingumäe matusekohad samale asustusüksuse keskusele, mis võis paikneda hilisema Rõõsa mõisa lähikonnas.

ÜMBRITSEV KULTUURMAASTIK

Tänapäeva Tõnija, Põllu ja Rõõsa külasid ümbritsevad põllumaad moodustavad selgepiirilise asustusüksuse, mida idast, põhjast ja läänest piiravad sood, lõunast aga madal ja liigendatud mererand (joon. 1). Läbi asustusüksuse voolab Maadevahe jõgi, mille suudmeala oli sobiv sadamakohaks. Asustusüksuse vanimad keskused näivad olevat põllumaade keskel paiknevad Rõõsa mõis (praegu taas küla) ja Tõnija küla tuumikust lõuna poole jääv majadegrupp (vahel nimetatud ka Rõõsa külaks). Tänapäeva Tõnija küla jääb põllumaade äärealale ning on ilmselt hilisema tekkega.

Ümbruskonnast on teada rohkesti eri aegade muistiseid, millest enamik paikneb asustusüksuse põhjapiiril. Otsustades ajaloolistele kaartidele joonistatud teede järgi, oli tähtsamaks asustusüksuse keskuseks hilisem Rõõsa mõis. Selle lähedusse jääb ka Paemõisa-nimeline kindlustatud koht Maadevahe jõe arvatavas kunagises käärus. Seal 2003. aastal läbi viidud proovikaevamistel paljandus nõrk kultuurkiht, mille üksikud, juba inspektsiooni käigus saadud metallesemed dateerisid 5.–7. sajandisse. Võimalik, et tegemist on kunagise jõesadamaga. Jõe tolleaegses suudmes manifesteeris sadamakohta Lepna matuseehitis, mis paiknes lagedal ran-
nal silmatorkaval kõrgemal künkal.

SURNUMAJA JÄÄNUSED

Lepna matusekoha keskel oli juba enne kaevamisi selgelt näha umbes 50 cm sügavune lohk. Kaevamistel selgus, et lohk oli korrapäraselt ristkülikukujuline, selle sügavus ümbritsevast maapinnast oli 80 cm. Lohku ümbritses umbes 20 cm kõrgune ja 1 m laiune madal vall, mis koosnes lohust välja visatud mullast. Lohku ümbritsevad kivikonstruktsioonid paiknesid nimetatud valli peal (joon. 2). Lohku

ümbritses paeplaatidest ehitatud madal müür, mis oli paremini säilinud kaevendi N-osas. Müüri välisserv oli laotud sirgelt. Vundamendi välismõõtmed olid 8,8 (NW-SO) x 5,3 m. Selle sisse jääv lohk (7,8 x 4,3 m) oli suures osas täitunud varisenud kivide ja mullaga. Varingukiht oli õhem keskosas ja paksem seinte lähedal, kus sellest enamiku moodustasid lohku ümbritsevast müürist varisenud kivid. Lohu SW-küljel puudus müürialus sein S-poolmikus. Kuna siin puudusid ka piki lohku seina sisse varisenud kivid, oli müür selles osas puudunud või oli siin olnud tegemist puidust seinaga. Mõlema lühema seina keskel olid müürialuses samuti tühikud, mis ilmselt tähistasid sissepääse hoonesse.

Lohu põhi oli kaetud hästi säilinud paeplaatidest põrandaga (joon. 3). Lohu SO-nurgas, otse oletatava sissepääsu kõrval, leiti tuleaseme jäänused – 10–15 cm paksune ja 60–70 cm läbimõõduga söelaik (joon. 4). Söelaigu ümber leidis põlenud kive, leiud ja luud aga puudusid. Tuleaset polnud ilmselt kuigi sageli kasutatud, mis hoone funktsiooni arvestades ei ole ka üllatav.

Taoline maasse süvendatud ehitis (joon. 5) pidi olema olnud kaetud katusega. Etnograafilised paralleelid osutavad, et Saaremaa ilma mõrdita laotud kiviehitistes toetus katus palkidest raamistikule, mis oli püstitatud otse maapinnale. Kuna selles konstruktsioonis puudusid postiaugud, ei ole mõeldav, et see võiks jätta arvestatavaid arheoloogilisi jälgi. Lepna müürialuse loodenurgas leiti siiski mõned ringikujuliselt paiknevad paeplaadid, mis ilmselt ümbritsesid nurgaposti.

LOHKU ÜMBRITSEV ALA

Lohu põhja-, loode- ja kirdekülge ümbritses väiksemast kiviklibust koosnev, umbes 1,5 m laiune vöönd, millest saadi ka leide ja luid. Kihi paksus oli 10–15 cm. Kiviklibu seas leidis üksikuid suuremaid paekive, mis kohati moodustasid ridu või isegi poolikuid “kaste”. Kõige selgepiirilisem konstruktsioon paljandus lohku ümbritseva müürialuse läänenurga lähedal. Üksteise peale laotud paeplaadid moodustasid siin U-kujulise konstruktsiooni, mille keskelt leiti halvasti säilinud inimluid ja terve leiukompleks: neli odaotsa, võitlusnuga, kilbikupal, pronkspannal ja väikese savinõu killud. Võimalik, et luud koos panustega olid olnud asetatud puust kasti, mis oli ümbritsetud väiksematest paeplaatidest müüri- ning kaetud pealt paeklibuga.

Paeklibusest vööndist väljapoole jäi kaevendi põhja- ja lääneosas paeplaatide vöönd, mis koosnes sinna kas visatud või kukkunud, ilmselt mingi ehitise jaoks valitud paeplaatidest. Võimalik, et vöönd on tekkinud lammutustööde käigus.

Samasugune vöönd liitus lõunaosas vahetult lohku ümbritseva müürialusega, idosas puudus aga täielikult.

MATUSED

Enamik inimluudest ja leiumaterjalist saadi lohu seest, osalt aga ka sellest väljapoolt paeklibusest vööndist. Leiud koosnesid umbes võrdses osas ehetest (joon. 6) ja relvadest, viimased olid enamasti äärmiselt halvasti säilinud. Üksikute tervete esemete ja paremini säilinud osade põhjal otsustades oli tegemist peamiselt nugade, odaotste, võitlusnugade ja kilbikupaldega (joon. 7). Ehetest olid mõned terved, osa aga katkised ja esindatud vaid üksikute tükkidena. Kõige levinum ehtetüüp oli ambsõlg (joon. 6: 9–11). Leiti fragmente vähemalt 10 erinevast hõbedasest ambsõlest (neist mõni kaetud kuldplekiga) ning vähemalt 12 erinevast pronks-sõlest. Hõbekaelavõrude tükid (joon. 6: 1–2) pärinesid vähemalt 6 erinevast ehest. Ülejäänud hõbeesemetest võiks mainida peaaegu tervena säilinud spiraalkäevõru (joon. 6: 6) ja pintsette (joon. 8). Pronksesemed olid peamiselt spiraalsõrmused, ketikatked ja ehtenõelad (joon. 6: 5). Enamlevinud leidudeks olid nii pronksist kui ka rauast valmistatud pandlad (joon. 6: 7–8), samuti pintsetid.

Kõik inimluud olid põletamata, kuid esindatud vaid tükkidena – seega valitses jätkuvalt sekundaarsete matuste kombestik, mis oli iseloomulik ka varasematele kalmetele. Enamik leide esines koos inimluudega ning sageli hulgakaupa koos. See lubab oletada, et matused olid algselt paiknenud puust ehk tohust nõus või olid olnud näiteks mässitud riidesse. Kõige rohkem leiti luid ja leide põranda pealt piki lohu seinu ning müürivaringu seest. Viimased olid ilmselt paiknenud algselt müüri peal. Etnograafiliste paralleelide järgi otsustades moodustus taolistes hoonetes müüride peale räästaalune riul, mida kasutati panipaigana.

ARUTELU

Lepna ehitisele võib leida mitmeid etnograafilisi paralleele Saaremaa ja Mandri-Eesti rannaalade taluarhitektuuris (joon. 9). Ainus võimalik samaaegne paralleel on Paju kalme Lääne-Saaremaal, kus 1975. aastal avastati neljakandilise puitkonstruktsiooni jäänused. Puitehitisi kivikonstruktsioonide peal on varem oletatud ka Tõnija Tuulingumäe rooma rauaaegse tarandkalme ja kultusliku kiviplatvormi puhul.

Lepna surnumaja markeerib silmnähtavaid muudatusi Saaremaa matiskombestikus. Alates 5.–6. sajandist ilmuvad kalmetesse rohked relvad, järjest

enam matusepanuseid on tahtlikult purustatud ning esindatud vaid fragmentidena. See on hiliseim teadaolev periood, mil perekonnaliikmete luud on maetud kokku; alates 8. sajandist on Saaremaal tegemist juba individuaalsete kiviringkalmetega. Need nähtused peegeldavad ilmselt muutusi perekondlikus struktuuris ja ühiskonnas tervikuna, samuti ettekujutuses teispoolisusest. Samaaegselt on täheledatav kultuuriline ümberorienteerumine: tihedad sidemed Kuramaaga asenduvad alates 7.–8. sajandist Skandinaavia ja eriti Ojamaa mõjudega.