ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS AT TÕNIJA TUULINGUMÄE, SAAREMAA

Marika MÄGI-LÕUGAS

Ajaloo Instituut (Institute of History), Rüütli 6, EE-0001 Tallinn, Eesti (Estonia)

Archaeological excavations at Tõnija Tuulingumäe *tarand*-grave were carried out in July 1995. Tõnija, nowadays a small village off the main road, was situated in a strategically important place in ancient times. The only road from eastern Saaremaa to the centre of the island ran through Tõnija. This explains why a large number of graves, dating from about 1000 BC up to the 13th century AD, occur in this area. We found also remains of Celtic field systems, probably dating from the last millennium BC. Closer investigation of these will, we hope, take place next summer.

Some small-scale diggings were carried out in the graveyards of Tõnija by B. von Toll in 1911 and Arnë Michael Tallgren in 1921. The latter investigated a part of the Tuulingumäe grave and decided that it had been a Roman Iron Age stone grave with cremations. A bone comb found in this grave was dated to the 4th century by Tallgren (1925, p. 47, Fig. 60). However, no report of his digs has survived.

THE GRAVE

Two *tarands* (43 m^2) were opened in 1995, covering about a third of the area of the whole grave (Fig. 1). Towards the west, there is evidence of walls of at least two more *tarands* under the turf level. The western end of the grave has been destroyed by a small road. A vaulted cellar was built in the eastern part of the grave in the beginning of this century. Next to the cellar was a low 3 × 3 m hollow, probably a ditch dug by Tallgren. Thus, the soil of the eastern end of the Tuulingumäe grave is mixed.

The *tarands* we opened, named I and II from east to west, were *c.* 6 m long and 2 m wide. Most of their foundation was built of large stones. In some parts walls of as many as five layers of limestone slabs were preserved. The *tarands* had been filled with smaller stones and cobbles, between which there were bones and artefacts.

During the excavations it became evident that higher layers (*c.* 40 cm) of the southern part of the *tarands* had been destroyed by some earlier digging. The mixed layer covered about a third of the total area of both *tarands*. The hollow must have been made in the 19th century at the latest, because the upper part of the mixed soil was strongly turfed. The hollow can be hypothetically connected with some earlier windmill on the top of Tuulingumäe (Windmill Hill), whose existence local people do not remember any more.

In *tarand* II a 2 × 1 m area paved with limestone slabs was unearthed, which we interpreted as a burial platform. In fact 50% of the human bones in *tarand* II and all finds of Group II (see below) were placed on these slabs and covered with other slabs that were not so well preserved.

The walls between *tarands* I and II and between *tarands* II and III had both their straight sides towards east, which shows that *tarand* II had been built earlier than *tarand* I. *Tarand* III, from which only a corner was unearthed this summer, was the earliest of the three.

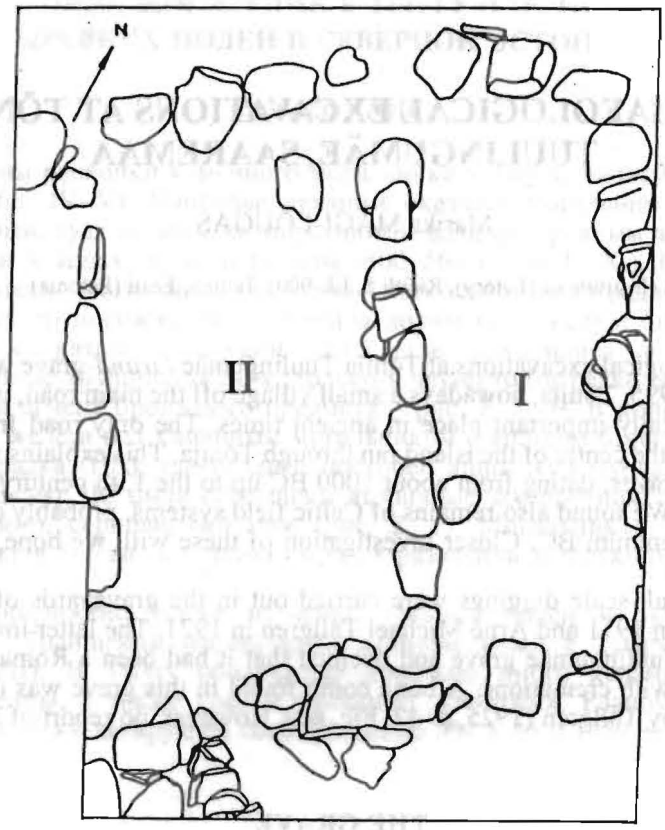

Fig. 1. Tõnija Tuulingumäe *tarand*-grave. Ditch dug in summer 1995.

It is interesting to note that at least the western and southern walls of *tarand* II were not laid on the original ground level, but there was an earlier cultural layer below them. This fact together with the presence of some large stones outside the structure of the *tarands* points to a possibility that there could have been an earlier stone grave at the same place, which was mainly destroyed by the *tarand*-grave. As our ditch was comparatively small, the possibility of an earlier grave remains theoretical and could be solved by future excavations at the Tuulingumäe grave.

THE ARTEFACTS

Altogether 323 finds were unearthed from the Tuulingumäe grave (AI 6066). No weapons or tools, excluding a knife, were found this summer. The artefacts can be divided into two groups, clearly separated in time.

Group I. Finds of this group (Plate VIII) come mostly from *tarand* I, but also from some places in deeper layers of *tarand* II. Quite many of these finds were made outside the *tarands*, close to their walls. The finds were mostly sherds of rather primitive pottery – hand-made jar-like pots of medium size with rough

surfaces. The rim and upper part of these ware were sometimes decorated with simple lines or string impressions (Plate VIII, *1*). Similar decoration occurs on pottery found from some earlier *tarand*-graves on Estonian islands dated to the beginning of our era (Lõugas, 1977, Plate II; 1986, p. 351, Plate IV; Лыугас, 1988, p. 349, Plate III).

Iron crook-shaped pins (Plate VIII, *2–5*), tiny blue beads, and a couple of iron tweezers (Plate VIII, *8*) belong to the same group. Similar tweezers have been found from Pre-Roman Iron Age graves in East Prussia (Engel, 1935, Plate 122, k, 127, c). Unique in Estonian archaeological material are two iron belt hooks (Plate VIII, *9*, *10*), which could be dated to the same period (Petersen, 1929, pp. 67–68). It is worth noting that no bracelets or their pieces were found from the Tuulingumäe grave, though these artefacts have been quite common in the other *tarand*-graves in Estonia. Another common ornament type, bow-brooch, was representated by a single bronze pin of a fibula (Plate VIII, *6*). Group I can be dated to the Pre-Roman Iron Age (500 BC–100 AD) and it can easily be connected with the presumed earlier grave.

Group II. Finds of this group (Plate IX) were without exception unearthed on the burial platform. These were mostly potsherds and women's ornaments. Some of them, such as the bucket-like pendants and an iron pin with a profiled head, are unique in Estonian archaeological material.

Simple bucket-like pendants (Plate IX, *5*), eight of which were found in the Tuulingumäe grave, were spread in Lithuania, East Prussia, and Poland mostly in the 3rd and 4th centuries (Blume, 1912, pp. 97–99; Godłowski, 1970, p. 20; Michelbertas, 1986, p. 105). We have not found an exact counterpart to the iron pin with a profiled head (Plate IX, *4*), probably because iron usually survives poorly in Estonian soil. The closest parallels, though of bronze, have been found from the Jäbara B grave in North-West Estonia, dated to the 5th or the first half of the 6th centuries (Шмидехельм, 1955, pp. 88–90, Fig. 20, 12), and from the Gąsior grave in East Prussia found together with 21 glass beads (Schmiedehelm, 1990, p. 56, Plate XI, 5, Plate XVIII). The profiled pin of Tuulingumäe was found together with an iron crook-shaped pin (Plate IX, *2*); the two pins had been connected with an iron chain. Eleven glass beads were found in the same place and these had probably hung between the two pins.

Altogether 22 beads belong to Group II (Fig. 2). They are bigger than those of Group I, of different colour, and sometimes decorated with dots, wavy lines, or zigzags. It is not easy to date them. Quite a large number of glass beads, some of

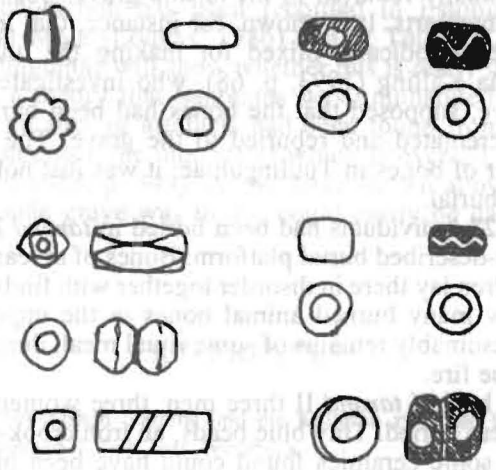

Fig. 2. Bead types of Group II.

them similar to the beads of Tuulingumäe, were found from Viimsi I *tarand*-grave near Tallinn, which is dated to the 2nd half of the 4th or to the 5th centuries (Lang, 1993, pp. 54–55). The beads from Tuulingumäe could be dated to the same period: more plausibly to the 4th century, because of the bucket-like pendants and other parallels in neighbouring countries (Blume, 1912, p. 102; Schmiedehelm, 1990, Plate XVIII).

One find, quite unusual in the Estonian Iron Age material, was a collection of nine amber pendants (Plate IX, *6*). As amber used to be found mostly from East Prussia, we may infer that these pendants came from the same direction. Various kinds of amber pendants and glass beads are common in East Prussian graves from the 3rd and 4th centuries and occur often together with bucket-like pendants (Blume, 1912, p. 60; Schmiedehelm, 1990, p. 31, Plate XVII, 1–4).

The ceramics of Group II differs clearly from that of Group I. These sherds are from smaller so-called carinate vessels with thin walls and dark smoothed surface, well fired (Plate IX, *1*). Some of them have simple line decoration. It is rather difficult to date this pottery, because we know virtually nothing about ceramics in Saaremaa during the Roman Period. Similar ceramics has been found from some *tarand*-graves in North-West Estonia. Lang (1993, pp. 52–53) dates it not earlier than the middle of the 5th century. The pottery of Group II from Tuulingumäe belongs probably to the same time as the whole Group II, i.e. the 4th–5th centuries AD.

THE BURIALS

We found only inhumation burials in the two *tarands* opened in 1995. Only five small pieces of burnt human skulls were found in the mixed upper layers, which obviously come from some other parts of the grave. All the other burned bones that we found proved to be animal bones.

The bones were investigated by anthropologist Raili Allmäe and ostheologist Liina Maldre, who both participated in the excavations at Tuulingumäe.

Human bones were concentrated to five places. A minimum of 32 individuals could be distinguished, 16 of them children. Not a single undisturbed skeleton was found. Both human and animal bones were lying in great disorder. This is a phenomenon that occurs quite often in Estonian *tarand*-graves (Шмидехельм, 1955). It indicates that we were most probably dealing with secondary burials. The dead may have first been buried elsewhere and some years later their bones were dug up and ritually reburied in the *tarand*-grave. Such a custom has also ethnographical counterparts. It is known, for instance, that in megalithic graves the skeletons were periodically mixed for making the union with ancestors maximal. In Estonia Kalling (1993, p. 68), who investigated the bones of the Viimsi *tarand*-grave, supposed that the bones had been buried for some years before they were cremated and reburied to the grave. The same custom may explain the disorder of bones in Tuulingumäe: it was just not traditional to burn the bones before reburial.

As a minimum 23 individuals had been buried in *tarand* II, 13 of them were found on the above-described burial platform. Bones of at least four women, four men, and four children lay there in disorder together with finds of Group II. There were comparatively many burned animal bones in the upper levels above the burial platform, presumably remains of some ritual meal, during which the bones were thrown into the fire.

In the southern half of *tarand* II three men, three women, and a juvenile of unidentified sex were buried. Tiny blue beads, an iron crook-shaped pin, a piece of iron chain, and some ceramics found could have been buried together with these persons.

In *tarand* I the burials were concentrated to the northern part. A man, two women, three children, and an infant had been buried there. Tiny blue beads, bronze spirals, a spiral finger-ring, tweezers, and ceramics of Group I were found together with these bones.

Both burned and unburned animal bones occurred in the Tuulingumäe grave, in similar disorder as the human bones. Of the animal bones 35.9% belonged to oxen, 29.4% to sheep or goats, 11.1% to pigs, and 4.4% to horses. From the mixed part of the ditch bones of a very old dog were found, which quite obviously belong to some later period. We found also some bones of cat, part of them among the bones and artefacts on the burial platform, dated to the end of the 4th century. So far it has been supposed that cat appeared in Estonia only sometime in the second half of the 1st millennium AD. It is interesting to note that though in most cases almost all parts of the skeleton were represented, there occurred only pieces of leg bones and skulls of horses. This indicates that the horse must have been only a sacrificial animal, while other animals were obviously eaten up during a ritual meal and their bones were put to the grave.

In addition, some bones of wild animals (hare), birds (hen etc.), and fishes (pike, perch, and roach) were found in the Tuulingumäe grave.

A part of the burned animal bones were found together with potsherds. These can be interpreted as food for the deceased. Fire pits where the bones were burned had been situated outside the grave. Only some very small pieces of charcoal were found from the *tarands* and were usually connected with potsherds and burned animal bones.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

As the ditch dug in 1995 was quite small, the process of the formation of the Tuulingumäe *tarand*-grave could not be completely cleared. Moreover, some layers in part of our ditch were mixed because of some earlier digging. We can say that the burial platform was built together with *tarand* II, which means that the grave in its latest form belongs to the 4th–5th centuries AD. Though it was supposed for a long time in Estonian archaeology that no more *tarand*-graves were built so late, Lang (1993, p. 55) showed that at least in North-West Estonia graves with many *tarands* were erected also in the 4th century, maybe even in the 5th century.

The possibility of an earlier stone grave below the *tarand*-grave is of interest. Earlier such a phenomenon has been recorded in Estonia only four times, especially clearly at Mäla (Lõugas, 1986) and at Tõugu (Lang, 1995). Future excavations at Tuulingumäe will show whether this is really the case there, too.

There has been a theory that Saaremaa was uninhabited during the Roman Iron Age, because no sites or artefacts had been found from 100–400 AD. All *tarand*-graves in Saaremaa, the number of which is over 20, lack material from this period (Лыугас, 1988, p. 349). As we have shown above, the latest period when the Tuulingumäe grave was in use could easily be dated to the "empty" period.

REFERENCES

Blume, E. 1912. Die germanishen Stämme und die Kulturen zwischen Oder und Passarge zur römischen Kaiserzeit. I. Teil: Text. Würzburg.

Engel, C. 1935. Vorgeschichte der altpreussischen Stämme. Untersuchungen über Siedlungsstetigkeit und Kulturgruppen im vorgeschichtlichen Ostpreussen. I Band. Königsberg.

Godłowski, K. 1970. The chronology of the Late Roman and Early Migration Periods in Central Europe. – In: Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, CCXVII. Prace archeologiczne, zeszyt 11. Kraków.

Kalling, K. 1993. Viimsi kalmete luuainese antropoloogiline analüüs. – In: Lang, V. Kaks tarandkalmet Viimsis, Jõelähtme kihelkonnas. Tallinn. Lisa 1, 67–69.

Lang, V. 1993. Kaks tarandkalmet Viimsis, Jõelähtme kihelkonnas. Tallinn.

Lang, V. 1995. Archaeological excavations and inventories in the villages of Tõugu and Võhma, North Estonia. – Proc. Estonian Acad. Sci. Humanities and Social Sciences, **44**, 4, 417–422.

Lõugas, V. 1977. Ausgrabungsergebnisse eines Steingräberfeldes von Kurevere. – ENSV TA Toim. Ühisk., **26**, 1, 48–52.

Lõugas, V. 1986. Die Bodendenkmäler der Zeitwende im Dorf Mäla (Insel Muhu). – ENSV TA Toim. Ühisk., **35**, 4, 349–351.

Michelbertas, M. 1986. Senasis geležies amžius Lietuvoje. I–IV amžius. Vilnius.

Petersen, E. 1929. Die frühgermanische Kultur in Ostdeutschland und Polen. Berlin.

Schmiedehelm, M. 1990. Das Gräberfeld Gąsior (nach Materialien von F. E. Peiser). – Archaeologia Baltica, vol. IX, Polonia 89, Łódź, 5–126.

Tallgren, A. M. 1925. Zur Archäologie Eestis, II. Von 500 bis etwa 1250 n. Chr. Dorpat.

Лыугас В. 1988. Каменный могильник в дер. Выхма (о-в Сааремаа). – Proc. Acad. Sci. Estonian SSR. Social Sciences, **37**, 4, 348–350.

Шмидехельм М. 1955. Археологические памятники периода разложения родового строя на Северо-Востоке Эстонии (V в. до н.э. – V в. н.э.). Таллинн.

ARHEOLOOGILISED KAEVAMISED TÕNIJA TUULINGUMÄEL SAAREMAAL

Marika MÄGI-LÕUGAS

1995. aasta suvel Tõnija Tuulingumäe tarandkalmel toimunud kaevamiste käigus avati kaks tarandit (43 m^2), mis moodustab kalme säilinud osast umbes kolmandiku. Tarandite mõõtmed olid *ca* 6 × 2 m (joon. 1). Müürid olid ehitatud peamiselt suurtest raudkividest, mille peale oli laotud kohati kuni viie kihi kõrguselt säilinud paeplaatidest kuivmüür. Kaevamistel selgus, et kaevandi lõunapoolsesse otsa oli tehtud suur sissekaeve, millega osa tarandeid oli rikutud. Säilinud olid vaid kalme alumised kihid.

Leidude enamiku moodustas keraamika. Leiud jagunesid kahte ajaliselt erinevasse rühma. Neist vanemad (tahv. VIII) dateeruvad eelrooma rauaaega. Need saadi peamiselt I tarandist, aga ka II tarandi sügavamatest kihtidest. Võimalik, et need on seotud mõne varasema kalmega tarandkalme all.

II tarandi põhjapoolses osas paljandus paeplaatidega sillutatud ja pealt paeplaatidega kaetud umbes 2 × 1 m suurune matmisplatvorm, millelt saadi kõik hilisemad leiud. Tegu oli vähemalt 13 indiviidi matustega. Nivendiline peenkeraamika, rauast ehtenõelad, klaashelmed, ämbrikujulised ning merevaigust ripatsid (joon. 2, tahv. IX) dateerivad need 4.–5. sajandisse. Leitud ripatsid on Eestis unikaalsed ning viitavad sidemetele Ida-Preisimaaga.

Kahte tarandisse oli maetud vähemalt 32 indiviidi. Maetud oli põletamata, kusjuures luud paiknesid täiesti korrapäratult. Põlenud luid küll saadi, kuid enamasti kuulusid need loomadele.

АРХЕОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ РАСКОПКИ В ТЫНИЯ НА ТУУЛИНГУМЯЭ, САРЕМАА

Марика МЯГИ-ЛЫУГАС

Летом 1995 г. в ходе раскопок, проведенных в дер. Тыния на Туулингумяэ, обнаружены две могильные оградки (рис. 1). Раскопки охватили площадь в 43 кв. м, что составляет около трети сохранившейся части могильника. Находки представлены в основном керамикой и по четким временным различиям подразделены на две группы. Старейшие находки (табл. VIII) датируются доримским железным веком, вторая группа находок (рис. 2, табл. IX) может быть отнесена к 4–5 вв. В числе последних уникальные для Эстонии ведрообразные подвески и девять янтарных подвесок, указывающих на связи с Восточной Пруссией.

Умершие не были подвергнуты сожжению, но их кости были сильно перемешаны. Можно говорить о пяти скоплениях костей. В двух оградках захоронены, как минимум, 32 индивида.

ISSN 1406–0094

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE ESTONIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

EESTI TEADUSTE AKADEEMIA TOIMETISED

HUMANITAAR- JA SOTSIAALTEADUSED

1996 45/4