



Osiliana

ABOUT US

Foundation Osiliana was established in 2020 with the support and initiative of Kristjan Rahu and Alo Lepik, who consider it important to contribute to the research of Saaremaa's history. In addition to them, the board of Osiliana also includes Marika Mägi and Jegor Klimov.



TEAM



Marika Mägi, archaeology doctor, has led Osiliana since it was founded in 2020. She has extensively explored and excavated Saaremaa for the past thirty years. Most of her research is dedicated to the Viking, Late Iron Age, and Medieval periods of Saaremaa, but she has also investigated earlier centuries. During her long research career she has published several books and numerous articles in Estonia and abroad, taught archaeology at Tallinn University, organised several exhibitions, advised and participated in documentary films on the prehistory of Saaremaa, and been invited to speak at many conferences and seminars in different countries. Marika spends her summers in Rõõsa, near Valjala, Saaremaa. She attaches great importance to the input given by the locals and values highly the involvement of the people of the island. Due to this, she has given many lectures and organised excursions, and always has open days at her archaeological excavations, to which everyone is welcome. For more information (publications, books, etc.): [https://www.etis.ee/CV/Marika M%C3%A4gi/eng/](https://www.etis.ee/CV/Marika_M%C3%A4gi/eng/).



Piia Sandra Palm is an assistant of Osiliana and in 2022 she joined the PhD programme at Tallinn University as part of the Osiliana project. Her doctoral thesis is titled "The sociopolitical landscape of the 13th century Saaremaa in the context of the Baltic Sea" and her supervisors are Marika Mägi, PhD, head of Osiliana, and prof. Kersti Markus. The island of Saaremaa was already the focus of her Master's thesis, and while her doctoral thesis aims to cover the whole of Saaremaa and the wider Baltic Sea area, in this one she focused mainly on the so-called twin parish of Valjala-Karja and also dealt with the similarities of the laws of Gotland and the treaties of 1241 and 1255. Although Piia grew up in northern Estonia, she has spent all her summers in Saaremaa near Leisi, where her maternal side of family is from (Veske and Parasmetsa villages), however, her paternal roots reach Põide as well (village of Mui).



Lisanna Lee Leiman has been involved in archeological fieldwork since 2021 with Osiliana. In her BA thesis "Iron and medieval horse bits in Estonian archaeological material" (2023), she describes many horse bits found in Saaremaa graves. She finished University of Tartu in 2025 with her MA thesis "Horse in medieval and early modern Tallinn according to archaeological data". Lisanna is a native of Saaremaa who grew up in Keskvere, one of the northernmost villages in Kaarma parish. The Piila graves near her home (excavated in 1997.-1998 by Marika Mägi) sparked her interest in history and archaeology at a young age. Lisanna maternal are in the villages of Kärla, Valjala, Haeska and Kõljala, and her paternal roots are in the villages of Eikla, Piila, Saikla and Iruste.



Karin Rannaäär is a master's student in the department of archaeology at the University of Tartu. In her MA thesis, she is analyzing the Late Iron Age burial site and its artefacts at Vilitna in Saaremaa. Her supervisors are PhD Marika Mägi, head of Osiliana, and Professor Heiki Valk from the University of Tartu. Previously, she has studied archaeological textiles and the clothing of Saaremaa women in the 13th century. Within the Osiliana project, she has taken part in excavations in Saaremaa since 2022, and she has also conducted excavations herself at the Koigi and Mäla burial sites in cooperation with Mairi Kaseorg. Karin is a native of Saaremaa, with roots in the village of Ruhve in Põide parish, while her current family farm is in the village of Veere. She considers it important to study and introduce the history of her home region, as well as to collaborate with local people.



Maris Niinesalu-Moon, Osiliana member and doctoral student in archaeology at the University of Tartu. Among other things, she studies human bones and the diet of ancient islanders. Her doctoral thesis is titled: "Reconstructions of Ancient Foodways: Stable Isotopes and Analysis of Microfossils."



Janek Ojasaar, Osiliana detectorist and keen history and archaeology enthusiast. He knows the local landscape well and can handle all kinds of tasks, from making tools to photography and flying drones.



Indrek Teppan, Osiliana detectorist and IT support. He is a master at flying drones and tirelessly participates in landscape inspections.



Jegor Klimov, Osiliana detectorist and a fellow. In 2019, he found a gold bracelet, which is known to be the most valuable single find ever made during archaeological fieldwork in Estonia.



Osiliana also has a number of collaborators who have made a very important contribution to the study of Saaremaa's history over the years by participating in archaeological excavations and landscape surveys:

Kalev Kuusk, who has been a hobby detectorist on Marika surveys and excavations for many years.

Kaupo Surva, a very experienced hobby detectorist, who has been all over the Saaremaa with Marika over the years, and also makes sure that Osiliana's accounts are in order.

Jegor Klimov, a hobby detectorist with good hands and skills. In 2019, he found a gold brooch, which is known to be the most valuable single find recovered in archaeological fieldwork in Estonia.

Edvards Puciriuss, a blacksmith, specialist in historical metalwork and maker of replicas of archaeological artefacts, who has participated in many archaeological fieldwork projects in Saaremaa over the years.

Alar Rosentau, a geologist at the University of Tartu, he has collaborated extensively with Osiliana in interpreting the natural landscape.

Hannes Tõnisson, a geo-ecologist at Tallinn University who has helped Osiliana interpret georadar analyses.

Olav Harjo, from ELERMO OÜ, which assists Osiliana in conducting ground-penetrating radar surveys.

Kristiina Tambets, a geneticist at the University of Tartu who is assisting Osiliana in researching the DNA of 13th-century islanders.

Toomas Mägi, an experienced hobby-detectorist, archaeology enthusiast and maker of copies of antiquities, who has been involved in the discovery of many sites in Saaremaa.

Ester Vaiksaar, who has invaluable knowledge of Saaremaa's folklore and antiquities, and works daily as a history teacher at school in Valjala.

We have benefited from the advice and support of many people of Saaremaa, and we are especially grateful:

Andrus Raun

Mare Kallas

Tiina Tohv

Karl Laane

Kaljo Lilp

Roland Koit

Tiit Lember

Mehis Tulk

Tõnu Veldre

Mairi Kaseorg

Roland Pärn

Kristjan Aus

Ott Sandrak

Teddi Rull

Risto Vahimets

Uku Vaabel

Gerda Porovart

Laura Aljas

Alo Ervin

Kaia Kokkota

Leelo Kald