

RUPTURED SPACE AND TIME IN LAHEPERA BURIAL SITE IN EASTERN ESTONIA

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‘They never quite made it *back to the future*’

(Hinz 2011)

Abstract

This article discusses archaeological landscapes as narratives. Artefacts tell stories, but they are also parts of larger stories told by the landscapes of their time. Landscapes are considered to comprise not only the physical setting to people’s activities, but also the social space of the inhabitants. As the social world itself always consists of stories, it is possible to read landscapes as narratives of an area in a certain period. However, these narratives are subjective, because the landscape has been ruptured by time: the physical and social landscape has changed a great deal over the centuries, and due to the temporal distance, it is not always easy for an archaeologist to tell the story of a past period.

Narratives can be collective or individual, and so can landscapes. Usually, archaeological landscapes represent the laws and traditions of a past society, so they are collective landscapes. Iron Age burial landscapes are at present spatially and temporally ruptured landscapes that narrate the collective stories of their time.

The notions of collectivity and individuality are also used in the discussion of the case study, for understanding these concepts in society is an interesting problem, especially in the case of the Late Iron Age in Estonia. The transition from collective to individual burial is a spatial rupture, both in the sense of the physical landscape and the social space of society. In this article, the rupture will be studied first and foremost from the perspective of the landscape of the burial site, and this will be combined with different archaeological data from other areas and hypotheses on the Late Iron Age social system previously published. In conclusion, the spatially and temporally ruptured burial landscape of Lahepera will tell its story.

Key words: narrative, story, individuality, collectivity, burial landscape.

Introduction

According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ‘rupturing’ means tearing or breaking apart, with reference to physical activity (Encyclopaedia Britannica Online, article ‘rupture’); or, in other words, creating a gap in a whole. Time and space¹ can be ruptured, and this article discusses how ruptured time and space meet in a burial landscape.

Archaeological landscapes are never a whole, they are ruptured spaces. Several components have been lost over time, especially when Iron Age² landscapes are considered. But the gaps in the landscape are later filled with narrative, so that the landscape turns into a narrative itself. Thus, the main purpose of this article is to show that archaeological landscapes can narrate the stories of the people who created them. Questions of subjectivity and objectivity in these stories will also be discussed in the article.

Concepts of individuality and collectivity are an important part of this article. They are also one of the links between the theoretical and the empirical part. The collective narration of the landscape reflects the

¹ Space in this chapter is understood as the physical and social landscape, which includes the material and the imagined worlds of the inhabitants (Latham 2004, p.384; Soja 1996). Landscape, however, has been defined as ‘a social construction, combining the natural, cultural, cognitive and temporal aspects’ (Palang 2001 p.9). Thus, as the meaning of the terms is similar, the term *landscape* will be used instead of *space*. Another reason for using *landscape* instead of *space* is the fact that the author positions herself in landscape archaeology according to which landscapes are studied in a transdisciplinary way, from physical, social, cultural and metaphysical points of view (Keller 1994).

² The division of the Iron Age in Estonia is as follows: Early Iron Age (Pre-Roman Iron Age, 500 BC to 50 AD, and Roman Iron Age, 50 to 450 AD), Middle Iron Age (Migration Period, 450 to 600 AD, and Pre-Viking Age, 600 to 800 AD), and Late Iron Age (Viking Age, 800 to 1050 AD, and Latest Iron Age, 1050 to 1208/1227 AD) (Lang, Kriiska 2001).

social space of the people who created it. Society itself also comprises understandings of these two notions, which are represented in the burial landscape in the shape of individual or collective burial traditions. The social world is formed out of stories, which are narrated by and on the basis of the landscape.

The case study used in the article is a burial site in the village of Lahepera in eastern Estonia. The site was used for a long time. In fact, a *tarand* grave was established in the second or third century AD, but it is also possible that there was an earlier stone structure or an underground burial place. It was used for cremations until the 11th century (there seems to be a gap in burials in the fifth and sixth centuries, though), when inhumation, a new type of burial, started to be made to the east of the *tarand* grave. In the Medieval and Early Modern periods, the burial site was still in use; the latest burial can be dated to the 17th century, according to deposits, but there are also several unfurnished burials, mainly to the south of the *tarand* grave. The shift from collective cremations to individual inhumations is an interesting transition that took place in different parts of Estonia. The change of burial rite can be considered as a spatial rupture, a change in the physical landscape, but this article will also discuss what kind of ruptures in society might have preceded it. The discussion will be based mainly on the settings of the burial landscape, but different hypotheses about similar changes in other areas will also be used to support this case study.

In conclusion, the burial landscape of Lahepera stands at the crossroads of spatial and temporal ruptures, which have to be taken into account when the story of the people of its time is narrated.

Landscapes as narratives

A narrative is considered to be a spoken or written account of connected events (a story), with a beginning, a middle, and an end. In other words, the practice or the art of telling stories (Lawler 2009, p.39; *Oxford Dictionary* 2012). In this section, the concept of a narrative will be discussed in the context of landscape, because landscapes can function as narratives,³ and they can also tell stories to those who understand, in order to uncover the past reality.

Landscapes of any time are social constructions, combining natural, cultural, cognitive and temporal aspects (Palang 2001, p.9). The number of landscapes is infinite, and narratives about the surrounding landscape,

either physical or cognitive, are formed in the minds of the narrators. Overlapping versions of the narratives constitute collective narratives about landscapes that, in the process, become collective landscapes. However, parts of these narratives always remain individual.

People understand and make sense of the social world through stories, because stories run through social life in such a way that the social world itself is composed of stories. However, these social narratives are never fully told, and only the most meaningful parts are selected to be narrated (Ricoeur 1991; Lawler 2009, pp.33-38).

There are two important aspects to narratives concerning the subject of this article: there is always more than one story about an event, and stories cannot be produced out of nothing (Lawler 2009, p.37). Narratives about the past are diverse, but they always rely on and are constructed from archaeological evidence (see also Bender *et al.* 2007). Or in other words, the past lives in representations of itself, in stories which bring together mediated fragments in another representation (Lawler 2009, p.39). Accordingly, archaeological evidence, either artefacts or monuments, can be interpreted as fragments that can be turned into narratives. Furthermore, there are several narratives to one set of fragments, and this set can vary according to different narrators (Kunin 2009, pp.20, 51, 199). Here also appears the question of truth: who interprets the data most correctly? When archaeological data can be seen as elements of narratives, it is essential to understand that truth depends on location, embodiment and contingency (Haraway 1997, p.230). Any story has an authority; therefore, historical representations should always be questioned for political, ethical and epistemological reasons (Pickering 2009, p.193). This is why there is and should be a diversity of narratives.

The truth has always been a matter of argument in archaeology. The question of truth comes to play a role especially in archaeological landscapes with rather few studied remains, one of which is definitely eastern Estonia. The past is a foreign country whose features are shaped by today's predilections (Lowenthal 1985, p.xvii): the more time passes, the less is preserved. The pieces tell their own story, which then combines into the larger story of a landscape. However, the small narratives do not always all harmonise; therefore, many versions of the wider story, in other words several versions of the truth, occur. Thus, some landscapes may not be understood, because the social and cultural context of it is foreign to us (Widgren 2003, p.462); moreover, because of the temporal rupture.

³ Story and narrative are considered to be synonyms in this chapter.

Landscapes function as mediators between the past and the present (Bormane 2006, p.136). As mediators, they bear meanings, but are they also narrators? Archaeological landscapes definitely tell stories (let them be called primary narratives), but 'hearing' these stories needs knowledge to interpret them. Moreover, different skills can unlock different stories. More stories are created in the process of interpretation, which can be called secondary narratives. Primary narratives most likely include more of the past reality, but it is not always perceivable, due to the temporal rupture. It is even more difficult to unlock the several individual stories of the members of a past society; therefore, archaeologists deal mostly with collective narratives.

To conclude the above discussion, it can be said that there is a temporal rupture between the past and the present, and because of that rupture, the truth of narratives created about the past must be questioned.

Individual and collective narratives

Every person has individual narratives, and when they overlap in the minds of different narrators, they become collective narratives. The individual mind has also been seen as a copy of a social unit (Niklas 1986), which defines poorly the limit between the individual and the collective narrative, imagining the individual as a collage of the perceptions of other individuals. So, perceiving social life needs an understanding of individual life stories, because no material or mental conditions are shared by all the members of a community (Meskell 2002, p.4, quoted in Beranek 2009). As collective narratives are formed out of individual stories, there is a certain amount of individuality even in the collectivity.

The people living in a landscape create their own individual narratives about it, while the landscape is a narrative about them, and that is a collective narrative. So the narrative about any landscape is a collective narrative compiled of individual stories, whereas the individuality or collectivity of burial customs, and thus a society, can also be uncovered thanks to the story the landscape tells.

Individuality and collectivity in past societies are discussed mostly in the context of burials, which are an integral part of a society's life. It has been acknowledged in archaeology that the context of a grave or a cemetery is ritualistic, and might give an idea of the contemporary social life and ideology (Bell 1992; Härke 1997; Wickholm, Raninen 2006 p.153; Mägi 2002; 2006;

2007, p.264); thus, different narratives concerning a society's life should be reflected in burials. Burials can either be collective or individual. Haimila (2002; 2005; see also Wickholm, Raninen 2006, p.152) has distinguished two kinds of collectivity: small-scale collectivity, which means that a certain group is buried together but is still distinguishable from other groups; and complete collectivity, which means that people are buried with no reference to social groups. Collective burials are also believed to show the importance of belonging to a group, in the case of Estonia to a family or a line of kinship (Wason 1994; Mägi 2007), and the physical grave buildings on the ground are considered to represent the power of a certain social group over important resources like arable land (Lang 1999) or harbour sites (Mägi 2004, and references).

Individual burials, on the other hand, are explained by a greater emphasis on personal achievements and increasing social stratification (Wason 1994, p.92), and even by a shift towards warrior ideology (Mägi 2007); but individuality in burials can also be viewed as a way of representing a group (Wason 1994, p.92). The latter case can thus be seen as a representation of the formerly mentioned small-scale collectivity, which refers to the importance of family membership.

The importance of family membership refers to the possibility that a deceased person becomes a part of the ancestral world after death (Mägi 2007; see also Metcalf, Huntington 1999, pp.79-161), and thus receives a new identity (Van Gennep 1960, p.147ff). In the case of cremation burials, the deceased is cremated, deconstructed, and therefore unrecognisable to the living (Wickholm, Raninen 2006, p.153). In the case of Estonian Iron Age burials, the grave deposits are also fragmentary, and were probably cremated with the deceased. However, in the case of inhumations, the appearance of the deceased is not distorted, as in case of cremations. This means that ideas about the deceased entering the ancestral world were probably different in those burial methods. But it is also likely that the principle of placing the deceased where the ancestors were buried was more essential to society than the actual burial method.

It is possible that the practical importance of collective burial buildings might have defined some of their constructional features, but the location and the method of the burial (the way the deceased was placed in the grave, and what was deposited with them) were probably determined by the social structure and the religious beliefs of society (for burial buildings of Iron Age Estonia, see e.g. Mägi 2005; Lang 2007). Therefore,



Fig. 1. Large image, the village of Lahepera and its vicinity: 1 the burial site; 2 the central hill-fort and/or trading place; 3 the 17th-century settlement site in the present vil-
lage of Lahepera. Main map: Estonian Land Board, dots by Krista Karro. Small image, the location of the site in the eastern Baltic (drawn by Kersti Siitan).

where and how the body was buried, more specifically the individuality or collectivity of the burial, tells a story about the society, which is, again, a collective story.

The burial site in the village of Lahepera in eastern Estonia

The burial site under discussion is situated on the higher ground on the shore of the former Lake Lahepera (Fig. 1). Lake Lahepera used to be a bay of Lake Peipsi, which is connected with the Gulf of Finland, and also with inland areas of Russia through rivers.

The cemetery consists of two parts: a stone grave (probably the tarand grave type of stone grave [see e.g. Lang 2007], which spread in the Roman Iron Age in coastal Estonia, including the shores of lakes Peipsi and Pskov, northern Latvia, and, according to the latest data, also on the Izhorian plateau in northwest Russia, and even near the town of Pskov⁴), and an inhumation cemetery. Both the tarand grave and the cemetery were excavated by Ain Lavi in the 1970s (Lavi 1977; 1978a; 1978b); but according to the land-use history of that area, and the excavation reports, it seems that both were vandalised in the 19th century, and the cultural layer was mixed up in the course of farming. The site was also excavated earlier in the 19th century, but there are no reports of this. However, several artefacts collected by landowners and the 19th-century excavators have been preserved in the Cabinet of Archaeology Collections at the University of Tartu. It should also be mentioned that the majority of artefacts found at the site are from earlier centuries, and the documented artefacts form only a minority of the total number of finds. However, non-documented artefacts can be added to the dating material of the site.

Archaeological material shows that the tarand grave was built during the second or third century AD (Karro 2008; Karro 2010c), but a shepherd's-stick-shaped pin from the grave might refer to the possibility that there was an earlier cemetery with cremations in ground pits underneath it. However, the excavator has not proposed this possibility, but during excavations in a better-preserved inhumation cemetery at Raatvere, about 25 kilometres north along the shore of Lake Peipsi, some ground pits with presumably earlier cremations were discovered (Lavi 1981).

The ground to the east of the tarand grave was put to use in the 11th century for inhumations with rich de-

⁴ Oral information from Heiki Valk of the Department of Archaeology in the University of Tartu, and Boris Kharlashev of the Institute of Archaeology in Pskov.

posits. The latest burial with deposits can be dated to the 17th century, but quite a few burials with no deposits have also been found. It is customary to consider them part of a Medieval village cemetery, which was a tradition in Estonia until the 18th century (Valk 2001), but it is also a possibility that some of the unfurnished graves may be contemporary with the richly deposited graves. However, this statement needs to be proven by radiocarbon dating of the bones, which has not yet been conducted.

It seems that the place was used as a burial site for about 1,500 years, and maybe even longer. However, due to the rupture of time, we have only a few fragments of the ancient landscape.

As has been said, the burial site is located on the highest knoll in the area. To the southwest of the burial site, to the west of Lake Lahepera, there is a settlement site (Fig. 1). Small-scale excavations at the site have shown that the cultural layer is mixed, and can be dated at the earliest to the 17th century, which corresponds with the information on the 17th-century map (Anonymous 1684). As there were no earlier finds whatsoever from the site, it seems very possible that the settlement related to the burial site is somewhere else. It is also very likely that, considering the fact that the water of Lake Peipsi probably reached further west in the Ancient Period (Liblik 1969), the burial site was connected instead to the centre in Peatskivi, being a part of a harbour site. Further fieldwork on this will continue in the spring of 2013.

The rupture in space: the shift from collective to individual burials in Lahepera

In this section, the landscape of Lahepera will be discussed on the basis of the above-mentioned theoretical part and the case study description. The landscape will narrate the collective story of the Iron Age people of Lahepera, a story of a spatial rupture, as much as the temporal rupture enables.

Archaeologists try to read the minds of past peoples through the artefacts they used. Thoughts can never be fully reconstructed, but decisions and choices can to some extent be analysed according to the artefacts. After all, artefacts are man-made items that express their ideas (Johnson 2001, p.66; Wylie 2002, p.129; Luik 2005, p.11), and are definitely parts of past landscapes. However, we have to be careful in analysing past societies through the preserved artefacts they made and

used, because the social and cultural contexts of the artefacts may be unknown to us (see Widgren 2003, p.462). However, artefacts are only a small part of the information available to archaeologists. The position of the deceased in the grave, the way of treating the body, the location of the cemetery in relation to natural land forms, and surrounding settlement patterns, also provide information on several possible questions about the cemetery, including the main problem that will be discussed below: what kind of rupture does the shift from collective to individual burials represent? Was it social, economic, religious, or maybe several of these ruptures?

Estonian Iron Age burial traditions are considered to be very collective, which has been argued on the basis of stone graves with no individual burials. In the Bronze Age, stone cist graves started being erected in the coastal zone of Estonia (see e.g. Lang 2007). The hierarchical society of the time and the power of certain lines of kinship were reflected in them (stone cist graves were only for elite families). Even though the shape of the grave changed in time, the burials remained at least seemingly collective until the end of the Iron Age (see Mägi 2007, for a discussion on collectivity and individuality in the society of Saaremaa). Inhumation cemeteries with richly furnished burials appeared on the coast of northeast Estonia (the present districts of west and east Viru) in the second half of the tenth century, on the coast of Lake Peipsi in the 11th century, and on the west coast of Saaremaa in the 12th century, and it is arguable whether the earliest inhumation burials in the Zalakhovye cemetery on the east coast of Lake Peipsi originate from the second half of the tenth century or from the 11th century (Mägi-Lõugas 1995a; 1995b; Khvoshchinskaia 2004; Karro 2010a; 2010b). In the same period, *zhalnik* graves with individual furnished or unfurnished graves started being used in the lands of Novgorod and Pskov, where inhumations also first appeared in long barrows (Nerman 1926; Sedov 1976; Popov 1995; Lopatin 2004; Grushina 2009, p.60ff; Valk forthcoming). An inhumed body with personal depositions seems to be essentially different to earlier cremations scattered among stones with small pieces of artefacts and almost no possibility to connect artefacts and single burials. However, in the stone-circle graves of Saaremaa, a certain level of individuality from the sixth century onwards can be noticed, even in the case of cremations (Mägi 2006).

It is through the burial method that collective and individual burials can be distinguished: when there are no individual burial complexes, then the burials are considered to be collective (the grave belongs to a family

or a line of kinship). However, when such complexes occur, it is quite likely that an integral change has taken place in society's way of thinking. In this article, let this change be called a rupture. In the case of Middle Iron Age burials on the island of Saaremaa, the rupture was probably ideological (Mägi 2006; 2007b), but a shift from cremations to inhumations as happened in Lahepera seems to reflect a much deeper rupture in society. Inhumation as a burial method, first and foremost, refers to a Christian way of burial, in other words, to a religious change in society. A religious change might also result in an ideological and/or social change, which happened in the territory of present Estonia after the German conquest. A shift towards individual burials in Lahepera took place earlier; therefore, it is possible that influences from the new religion reached the area before the conquest. This indicates knowledge of a new, probably religious, narrative (Christianity), which was most likely taken over from the people the locals had contacts with (Mägi 2003). However, the question remains whether the people who buried their dead in a seemingly Christian way (inhumation, head pointed to the west in most cases) had already accepted the narrative as well, or were they just influenced by the 'new style'?

All religions are narratives, and are either accepted or not by the people. The Christian narrative was probably known to some extent by the Late Iron Age population of Estonia (Mägi 2003, p.99), but it is not clear when it was fully accepted.⁵ It seems that in southern Estonia, totally Christian burial practices were not accepted until the 18th century, and that there was a clear religious distinction in Medieval south Estonia between the people of the towns (mostly of German origin) and the people of the rural areas (Valk 2001, p.105). Thus, it is likely that the new Christian culture and the stories connected with it were mostly imported by inhabitants of Christianised areas in Europe. But it also influenced the life of the local people, by creating a syncretistic folk religion in Estonia.⁶

⁵ By full acceptance, Roman Catholicism, the form of Christianity which is believed to have reached the Estonian area first, is meant. However, it is a matter of debate which form reached the coast of Lake Peipsi, which was under the cultural influence of Russian principalities (which accepted Orthodox Christianity in the tenth century AD) since the 11th century AD.

⁶ The form of acceptance of Christianity varied in different areas of Europe, but archaeological evidence shows that it took more time for the people of Estonia and their close neighbours to accept the canonical form of Christian burials (inhumations, the head towards the west, no deposits, and burials only on land consecrated by the Church). The last two conditions were probably adopted most slowly, as is also discussed in Valk (forthcoming), mostly by the

Folk religion is quite difficult to follow archaeologically, but Valk has made what may be some of the most successful attempts at it (Valk 2001, forthcoming). He interprets the *zhalnik* graves which appear in the lands of Novgorod and Pskov in the 11th and 14th centuries as a transitional grave form (Valk, forthcoming), and south Estonian village cemeteries as almost a Christian type of cemetery (Valk 2001). However, Christianity may have been expressed in daily life differently at the end of the Iron Age to how it was in the 19th and 20th centuries, and although there were certain rules concerning Christian burials, it is possible that they were not followed everywhere. The migrants who brought Christian ways with them to Estonia had to make concessions in imposing new rules, because they also brought with them a new social system that was completely different to the ancient Estonian one.

However, political changes took place mostly after the 12th century, but individual burials in the areas around Lake Peipsi already appeared in the tenth and 11th centuries. The burial site at Lahepera sits on the shore of a former bay of Lake Peipsi. As Lake Peipsi was probably used as part of a trade and communication route, ideas also spread along it (Sorokin 1999; Karro 2010c; Mägi, forthcoming). Another branch of the trade route was to Lake Ladoga from the Gulf of Finland, so this might be how the same changes reached the lands of Novgorod. However, it is not very likely that people who started to bury their dead in a way which might have been influenced by Christianity were already Christian by that time, but they probably accepted this religion as one of many. In the 11th century, there was probably no radical political or social change, but some Christian ways in burial methods might have been accepted as a modern form of burial.

Mägi (2002) has referred to the possibility that in order to trade with Christians one had to accept Christianity, and she has called it *prima signatio*. It is quite likely that the hill-fort close to the Lahepera burial site was used as a trading place at the end of the first millennium and the beginning of the second millennium AD (Aun 1969; Karro 2010c). If it was, then it is quite possible that *prima signatio* was accepted by some of the traders from that area, too. A cross pendant found in burial XIV might refer to this (Lavi 1987b; Mägi 2003, p.99ff).

The fact that a new form of burial started to be used next to a tarand grave, which represents the older traditions, shows that a particular social or political change did

example of *zhalnik* graves, and in Valk (2001) by rural cemeteries.

not happen in the 11th century. The old place was still (economically) important, and the old family was still in power, because the new cemetery was established next to the old tarand grave, a 'container of ancestral forces' (Bender *et al.* 2007, p.31). The burial places might have marked important places in the landscape: mainland roads (Veldi 2009), water routes and harbour sites where possible (Mägi 2004; 2007a, forthcoming), power centres (Veldi 2009; Valk forthcoming). Inhumation cemeteries which are considered to comprise individual burials and probably represent a shift to the new religious system in Estonia seem to have been located close to earlier stone graves in many places in Estonia (Mägi 2002, p.74), including in Lahepera.

The choice of who was buried in the inhumation cemetery also seems to have been made according to old traditions. Most likely, only the social élite, the family in power, continued to be buried there, because there are not so many graves to make up the whole settlement unit.⁷ There is also, of course, the possibility that some of the deceased may not have been local, and they came with their own traditions. There are some artefacts that may refer to this, but as those artefacts are from the earlier collection with no reports, it is difficult to tell if they were found in the tarand grave or in the inhumations.

In conclusion, after discussing several aspects of the burial site at Lahepera, it can be stated that a rupture in space happened in the form of changing burial methods. However, no social or political rupture preceded it, because larger political changes took place more than a century later. Inhumations instead of cremations in the tarand grave were probably a result of cultural influences, brought about by people who came to trade with the locals, and also brought by locals who had been to other parts of the region. Thus, the spatial rupture is most likely not even a religious influence, but the result of the area being open to areas with different beliefs.

Another point can be derived from the above discussion. Although such inhumations were individual (a single body was placed in a grave of its own, with ornaments belonging to him/her), they still probably represent the collective family power, so they are not entirely individual after all.

⁷ Altogether, 27 graves have been found. According to the artefacts, they date from the 11th to the 17th century.

Conclusion

The social world of any society always consists of stories, and as the landscapes they have created represent their social space, then the story of a society can be told by and on the basis of the landscape created by this society. Stories of the society are collective narratives, including numerous individual stories of the members of the society. Archaeologically, the individual stories are very difficult to follow, but the collective narrative of the society can be told on the basis of their landscape. However, landscapes of long-gone societies, in other words, archaeological landscapes, stand at the crossroads of temporal and spatial ruptures, for their stories are always subjective. Thus, this article has attempted to discuss a spatial rupture that seemingly took place in a Late Iron Age society on the basis of a burial landscape, which is itself temporally and spatially ruptured.

The ruptured landscape of Lahepera tells the story of a change in Late Iron Age society, but instead of a strong social rupture, it really seems to be a rupture in burial methods. Evidence about the religious perceptions of the people of this area is lacking, but it is also likely that there was not a severe rupture between the individuality and the collectivity in this society after all. The question is more about prestige, and the Christian way was probably more 'modern', and thus prestigious.

So, in conclusion, let us go back to the statement cited at the beginning. Did they make it *back to the future*? Not quite, but hopefully this narrative has shed some new light on an interesting question in Estonian archaeology.

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NUTRŪKĒS LAIKAS IR ERDVĒ LAHEPERA KAPINYNE, RYTŲ ESTIJOJE

KRISTA KARRO

Santrauka

Šiame straipsnyje rašoma apie Lahepera kapinyno išorinius bruožus, kurie kraštovaizdyje išliko iki šių dienų. Tačiau kapinyną supusiame kraštovaizdyje pastebimas laikinas nelaidojimo jame laikotarpis ar savotiškas kraštovaizdžio nenaudojimo laikas. Laidojimo kraštovaizdis gali būti interpretuojamas kaip bendras pasakojimas, netgi jei jį ir sudaro individualūs pasakojimai ar gyvenimo istorijos. Šiame straipsnyje yra aptariama bendra kapinyno kraštovaizdžio istorija.

Tos pačios sąvokos individualumas ir bendrumas taip buvo pat pasitelktos nusakant erdvinį Lahepera kapinyno kraštovaizdžio naudojimo nutrūkimą. Taigi čia aptariama XI a. laidojimo papročių kaita nuo kolektyvinių degintinių palaidojimų tarandų tipo kape iki pradedant mirusiuosius laidoti nedegintus šalia tarandų. Kremavimas tarandų tipo kape yra klasikinio kolektyvinio laidojimo pavyzdys, kai asmenys yra neatskiriami vienas nuo kito, ir tai pabrėžia šeimos vieningumo svarbą. Kapo vieta rodo galimą ekonominę vietos svarbą čia, matyt, todėl, kad šalia uosto buvo prekyvietė ir piliakalnis (1 pav.). Taigi iš pirmo žvilgsnio atrodo, kad bendruomenės gyvensenos raidoje susidarė didelis nenaudojimo laikotarpis – religinis, socialinis, ekonominis ir / ar politinis. Tačiau panašūs procesai vyko

ir XI a. ar net X a. aplinkinėse vietovėse. Pskovo ir Novgorodo žemėse pasirodė individualūs kapai pilkapiuose ir žalnik tipo palaidojimai. Šiaurės rytų Estijoje, rytinėje Peipsi ežero pakrantėje buvo įrengtas panašus kapinynas su nedegintų mirusiųjų kapais kaip ir Lahepera vietovėje. Be to, šalia Lahepera kapinyno keli panašūs kapinynai atsirado ir vakariniame Peipsi ežero krante, tarp jų Raatvere kapinynas buvo išsamiai ištirtas.

Politiniai pasikeitimai, vykę Estijoje, keliais šimtmečiais vėliau, tikriausiai neturėjo įtakos XI a. įvykiams. XI a. Rusios kunigaikštystei užėmus Tartu, galėjo būti užimta ir tiriama vietovė. Nauja politinės valdžios įtaka galbūt palietė taip pat ir Lahepera vietovę, tačiau tai, matyt, radikaliai nepakeitė nusistovėjusios hierarchijos ryšių šiame regione.

Vieta, kur anksčiau buvo tarandų tipo kapinynas, išliko svarbi ir vėliau, kai buvo įrengtos kapinės, tikėtina, kad tai pačiai šeimai ar šeimoms, kurios vis dar buvo apylinkės valdžioje. Taigi ir nuostata, pagal kurią buvo sprendžiama, kas ten turi būti laidojama, matyt, išliko ta pati – tai elitas.

Ši vietovė, matyt, buvo svarbi ekonominiu požiūriu, nes tai buvo uosto gyvenvietė. Tai reiškia, kad čia laidojami mirusieji galėjo būti ne vietiniai – tai žmonės, kurie atkeliavo prekybiniu keliu į Peipsi ežero vietovę, kuri buvo to prekybinio kelio dalis. Tačiau tikimybė, kad čia palaidoti žmonės buvo ne vietiniai, yra labai nedidelė.

Jeigu ši vietovė buvo prekybos vieta su uostu, galimai skirtingos kultūros darė įtaką šiai vietai, tarp jų galėjo būti krikščionybė, kuri X a. jau buvo oficialiai priimta Skandinavijoje ir Novgorode. Taigi laidojimo apeigos galėjo būti paveiktos krikščionybės, tačiau žmonės dar nebuvo krikščionys. Marika Mägi (2002) nurodė, kad prima signatio, arba svetimos religijos priėmimas, buvo svarbus tam, kad būtų galima prekiauti su krikščionimis, o tai lėmė, kad kai kurios krikščionybės įtaką patyrusios veikos tapo prestižinės, taigi ir laidojimo būdas galėjo būti vienas iš tų „modernųjų“ metodų.

Aptariamojoje vietovėje perėjimas nuo kolektyvinio laidojimo prie individualaus buvusio antropogenizuoto kraštovaizdžio įtrūkis, nors mažai tikėtina, kad šie pokyčiai vyko kartu su radikalia vietinių žmonių religijos kaita. Taip pat nėra jokių įrodymų, kad visuomenės struktūra pasikeitė kartu su laidojimo tradicijų kaita. Taigi galų gale galima teigti, kad tas erdvinis kraštovaizdžio įtrūkis įvyko dėl ekonominių bei religinių pokyčių, dėl to krikščionybė tapo prestižinė pasaulyje. Kiek šie pokyčiai pakeitė žmonių mąstymą, galima tik

spėlioti, tačiau manytina, kad čia jokių radikalių pasikeitimai neįvyko.

Taigi kapinyne nutrūkęs laidosenos kraštovaizdis įvairiais aspektais pasakoja mums istoriją apie visuomenę, kuri gyveno ten XI amžiuje. Jei kraštovaizdis yra nutrūkęs laike ir visi aspektai šių laikų žmonėms yra nežinomi, vadinasi, tai iš tikro yra tik pasakojimas, lyginant su realybe, kuri yra daug sudėtingesnė.

Vertė Algirdas Girininkas