

**Arvi Haak and Erki Russow**

## **ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN OF VILJANDI IN THE LIGHT OF EARLIEST ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIND COMPLEXES**

Numerous attempts have been made to reconstruct the development of the medieval town of Viljandi (south Estonia), yet the source material is extremely scarce. The current article reviews the existing written sources and reconstruction maps, and introduces to provide an introduction of the existing archaeological sources, on the basis of context-related analysis of finds from the earliest deposits all over the territory of the medieval town, with special attention on pottery as the most numerous find type. On this basis, a new development scheme of Viljandi, based on the dating of the find complexes, is suggested and the concept of Paul Johansen of Viljandi as a typical “founded” town is examined. The authors reach the conclusion that all strata with 13th-century finds (with the exception of the complex of a pottery kiln in Pikk Street) were located in the northern part of the town, and a spatial connection between the castle and the emerging town is not as striking as has been stated earlier. The diversity of pottery imports, on the other hand, increased from the end of the 13th century.

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### **Introduction**

Among the nine medieval towns in the territory of the present-day Estonia, Viljandi was one of the four members of the Hanseatic League. The inland town of Viljandi was situated next to the castle of the Livonian Order, one of the mightiest in Livonia, and it has widely been suggested that the development of the town was heavily dependant on the castle. However, the traces of the Medieval Period still visible in Viljandi today are all but numerous. In addition to the castle ruins, only the church of St. John, and the location of the main streets within the medieval town date back to the Middle Ages. The medieval town was fully destroyed during the Livonian War (1558–1583) and the following Polish-Swedish

Wars (1600–1622/23), and town privileges were granted anew to Viljandi only in 1783. A few remains of buildings dating from the Middle Ages have been recorded during archaeological investigations, but it is impossible to reconstruct the town structure solely on that basis.

Written sources concerning medieval Viljandi are also far from abundant (see the following chapter). Thus, investigators have turned to other sources. A long-established tradition for research is the analysis of town plans (Neumann 1911; for Viljandi: Altoa 1978). Other sources for studying the medieval period in Viljandi and especially the formation of the medieval town are the finds collected during archaeological excavations. These have also been discussed in regard to Viljandi (Valk 1993; 1995; 2005; Haak 2005<sup>1</sup>), but a detailed analysis of the finds from the early contexts needs another research.

A great share of archaeological finds from Viljandi, although originating from rescue investigations, has been collected from stratified contexts, thus making context-based analysis possible. As usual, the strata that have deposited just upon the virgin soil have been better preserved than those originating from the periods of well-established urban life. In the case of Viljandi, strata from the 13th–14th centuries and those connected to the destructions caused by the Livonian War (from 1560 onwards) have yielded most of the finds. In the present study, we concentrate on the former contexts, in an attempt to reconstruct the pattern of town formation in Viljandi.

As mentioned above, the data concerning buildings from that period are extremely scarce, most likely due to the fact that wood and other organic materials survive only in certain circumstances in Viljandi, namely in waterlogged contexts, which are not very numerous. Thus, in most cases we have little if any clue from where the strata unearthed during archaeological investigations actually originated. Taking this into account, our main objective was the reinvestigation of the collected finds, and the drawing of conclusions on that basis.

### **Investigation of the genesis of Viljandi on the basis of written sources**

As the medieval town archives of Viljandi have not been preserved, there exist only limited data about medieval Viljandi in the written sources. In addition to the beginning of construction works at the castle of the Livonian Order in 1224 (Wartberge 1863, 4), there exists a note that the master of the Livonian order, Willekinus de Endorpe, had confirmed the town privileges and established the borders of the town *mark* in 1283 (LGU I, 40). The letters of confirmation of the privileges from 1481 (Freyman 1918, No. 1) and from 1533 (Freyman 1918, No. 3) have been preserved. In connection with the former, the destruction of the

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the ideas presented here were first introduced in a presentation given by Arvi Haak at a seminar on town formation in Narva (7 September 2005) and published as Haak 2005. The current paper is a significantly extended version on that issue.

town of Viljandi by the Russian troops in 1480 has been mentioned (Russow 1993, 60 f.; Kelch 2004, 114), as the town privileges were burnt during that event (Freyman 1918, No. 1). During the Livonian War, the town was totally demolished, so that only five (Russow 1993, 127) or six (Renner 1995, 145) houses survived.<sup>2</sup> This was followed by a fire in 1591 (Bergengrün 1897, 37).

There are some sources regarding the appearance of medieval Viljandi. The most informative of these is an inventory carried out by the Poles in 1599 (Jakubowski & Kordzikowski 1915; Viljandi linn 1998; Altoa 1999). In addition to the owners of property at the end of the 16th century, it also includes the names of ca. 50 citizens of Viljandi before the Livonian War. The sources also contain the date of construction of the Franciscan monastery of Viljandi (1466–1472, Altoa 1995, 164), the church of which is the only medieval building that has survived within the town and is currently named St. John's – the church of the town congregation.<sup>3</sup> In addition to that, a will of a citizen of Tallinn mentions two houses by the market square in Viljandi (Freyman 1918, No. 5; Altoa 1977, 28). However, there exists nothing else, and all of that had been published by the 1920s.

The situation concerning documents from the early periods of town development is pretty much similar in other towns of Livonia. Only in a few cases, the documents listing town privileges from the 13th century have survived (e.g. Angermann 2001; Kala 2002), although the process of discussing the privileges to be granted to a small town in the territory of the Livonian Order has been recorded (Johansen 1938). As historian Juhan Kreem (2002, 39 f.) has pointed out, the privileges of Livonian towns were renewed in writing before the 16th century only in cases when the earlier document had been damaged or destroyed. Only from the 16th century, there are sources showing that the master of the Livonian branch of the Order had confirmed the privileges of Livonian towns in writing after his succession to the office (Kreem 2002, 39 ff.).

Until the 16th century, written sources other than town privileges are minimal about most of Livonian towns except Tallinn, where the town archives include a remarkable collection of documents from the Middle Ages. In all other cases, we have to rely on casual documents, and data from archaeological investigations. It is only during the 16th century that a full treatment of the Livonian small town, based on written sources, becomes possible (Põltsam-Jürjo 2009).

The earliest writing on the history of Viljandi (if we exclude notes from chronicles) has survived from 1784 (Pullat et al. 2006, 309 ff.). It seems that the city council answered to some kind of a questionnaire. The oldest town plan with street network and plots, drawn by Johann Christoph Brotze, originates from the same period (Pullat et al. 2006, 315). Interest toward the glorious past of Viljandi

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<sup>2</sup> The first to point out this difference of numbers of surviving houses was art historian Kaur Altoa (1977, 46).

<sup>3</sup> The medieval town and parish church of Viljandi, situated next to the market place, was dedicated to St. John and St. Clara (Viljandi linn 1998, 114).

increased remarkably during the 19th century, and several Baltic German authors published their studies of the history of the town. The most comprehensive of these was written by Friedrich Amelung (1898). He was the first to offer his interpretation regarding the oldest part of the town. According to him, it was located next to the castle, containing St. John's and the market place (Amelung 1898, 15); however, he gave no reasons to his point of view.

The first drawing depicting an author's reconstruction of medieval Viljandi was made by **Karl von Löwis of Menar** (1914, first published in Löwis of Menar 1922). His drawing shows the location of streets, town church and the Franciscan monastery. As has been pointed out, the map combines the Swedish map from the 1650s<sup>4</sup> depicting town fortifications with the street network from Brotze (Altoa 1978, 48). Fragments of the town wall had survived at the beginning of the 20th century, so that the combination of the maps might not have been difficult at that time. Although the map of Löwis of Menar added details to the drawing of the main castle, probably his personal recording of the excavated ruins of the late 19th century, it does not add much to our knowledge about the medieval town. Despite that, his drawing has been reprinted several times.

Chronologically the next reconstruction drawing was published by **August Westrén-Doll** (1929), a pastor of Viljandi, deeply interested in history. He could use the Polish inventory (Jakubowski & Kordzikowski 1915), and attempted to locate the plots mentioned in this. Although it was clear that the author attempted to reconstruct the plan of medieval Viljandi, he neither gave clearer temporal hints, nor discussed the development of the situation shown on the plan.

In an article about medieval Livonian towns, American geographer **John Leighly** (1939, 275, fig. 14) published his reconstruction of medieval Viljandi. As the former investigators, he had combined the Swedish map from the 17th century with the street network from Brotze. However, he was the first to group Viljandi/Fellin, Valmiera/Wolmar and Koknese/Kokenhusen on the basis of their location on interfluvial spurs (1939, 271). He stresses that this type of castle and town combination is typical of Livonia, as glacial and glacialfluvial deposits provide smooth surfaces, where towns could easily be built next to castles, in contrast with most of Europe, where the landscape is uneven and usually hilly (1939, 271 f.). In case of Viljandi, he stressed that the location of the market-place in the centre of the town indicates a commercial town not too dependent on the castle, as could be the case in Koknese and Valmiera, where the market place was situated just in front of the castle (1939, 275 f.).

The comprehensive article on the formation of Viljandi by historian **Paul Johansen** (1955) gives his interpretation of the development of the town, connecting the most influential period with the activities of Bernard of Lippe and the years

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<sup>4</sup> Earlier authors have proposed 1680s (Altoa 1999, 156) or even the year 1688 (Westrén-Doll 1929, 74) as the year when the map was compiled. As the map itself has not been dated, the current dating is based on the inventory of the Swedish War Archives (Krigsarkivet; <http://www.ra.se/KRA/0406h.html#Fellin>). Of course, this dating is arbitrary as well.

between 1217 and 1223 (Johansen 1955, 219 ff.). His treatment includes a reconstruction drawing (Johansen 1955, plate), where he tried to depict the 99 plots, known from the Polish inventory. Johansen's drawing has some of the characteristics from Löwis of Menar and Westrén-Doll.

On the question of town formation, the article by Johansen pointed out several parallels between Viljandi and Lippstadt, which he connected with the activities of Bernard of Lippe (Johansen 1955, *passim*). He distinguished a group of towns, characterized by the location of the town just in front of the castle, so that the town walls are located on the extension of the castle walls, and introduced them as a group called town "on a shield" (Germ. *Auf dem Schilde*) (Johansen 2005 (1941), 373 f.). From the latter article, the concept was used by Estonian art historian Armin Tuulse (1942, 55).

Architecture historian **Elmo Raadik** discussed the formation of Viljandi town area in his graduation thesis (Raadik 1960). His view was most likely influenced by the ideological paradigm of the period that stated that the towns in Estonia could not have been a German innovation (see Mäll & Russow 2004; Lang 2004 for that cause). According to Raadik, the town was preceded by a settlement of Estonian artisans next to the market square (Raadik 1960, 56). Simultaneously with the construction of the castle, German artisans started to settle in front of the castle, thus almost the whole town area was inhabited. In the further developments of the town, Raadik was the first to discuss the location and function of roads starting from or passing by Viljandi (Raadik 1960, 54 ff.). The argument of a prehistoric settlement in the territory of the later town, which also determined the location of the market place, was also given in the general treatment of history of architecture in Estonia (Arman 1965, 31), but this was stated on purely hypothetical basis.

In the second half of the 1970s, art historian **Kaur Altoa** compiled a historical overview of the old town of Viljandi (Altoa 1977). His main arguments regarding town formation were published as an article (Altoa 1978). Altoa tried to find functions to the medieval streets (Fig. 1) if there existed a prehistoric settlement, and concluded that in that case, only Pikk Street and Väike-Turu (Small Market) Street (medieval Kauba Street) could have any function, while the main streets of the medieval town – Lossi and Kauba (medieval Storke) did not lead anywhere before the medieval town and its market place had formed, and bridges had been erected across the moats (Altoa 1978, 53). From that basis, he produced a hypothesis that a prehistoric settlement site could have been located near the crossing of Pikk and Väike-Turu streets (Altoa 1978, 53). In his reconstruction drawing (Fig. 1), Altoa included only the houses and fortifications, which can be located with greater certainty on the basis of the Swedish map or the text of the above-mentioned Polish inventory.

A brief look at the interpretations of the written sources, which are of interest in studying the development of Viljandi in the 13th century, results in the following conclusions:

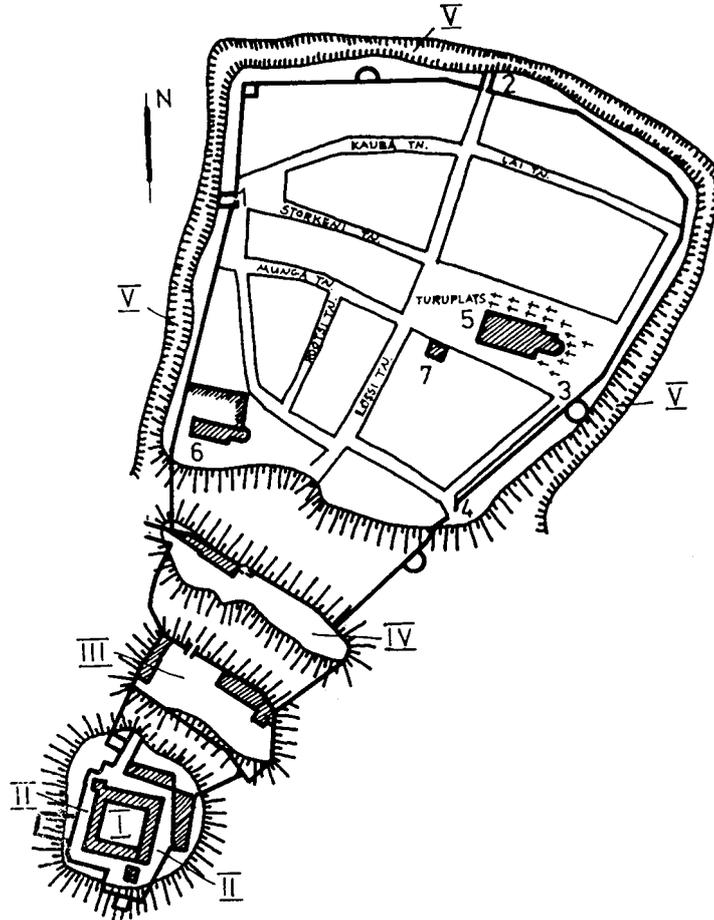


Fig. 1. Reconstruction of medieval Viljandi according to Kaur Altoa (Altoa 1978, fig. 2).

1. The conquest of the prehistoric hill fort in 1223 and the beginning of the construction of a stone castle in 1224 form the *terminus post quem* for any medieval settlement in Viljandi.
2. By 1283, a settlement must have existed, which was granted the privileges of a town.
3. All the other arguments for any date of town formation, or earliest settlement areas within the territory of the medieval town are hypothetical in nature. The attempts to reconstruct the earlier roads are interesting, but cannot be relied upon without any supporting evidence from archaeological sources.
4. As for the town plan, there are sources from the late 16th century (Polish inventory) and 17th century (Swedish map). Even if we take it for granted that the overall layout had formed by the end of the 13th century (which remains

rather doubtful), the alterations during the following three centuries are beyond doubt. Thus, it is only with the help of archaeological sources that it might be possible to develop a reconstruction of the scope and spatial organization in Viljandi in any period before the end of the 16th century.

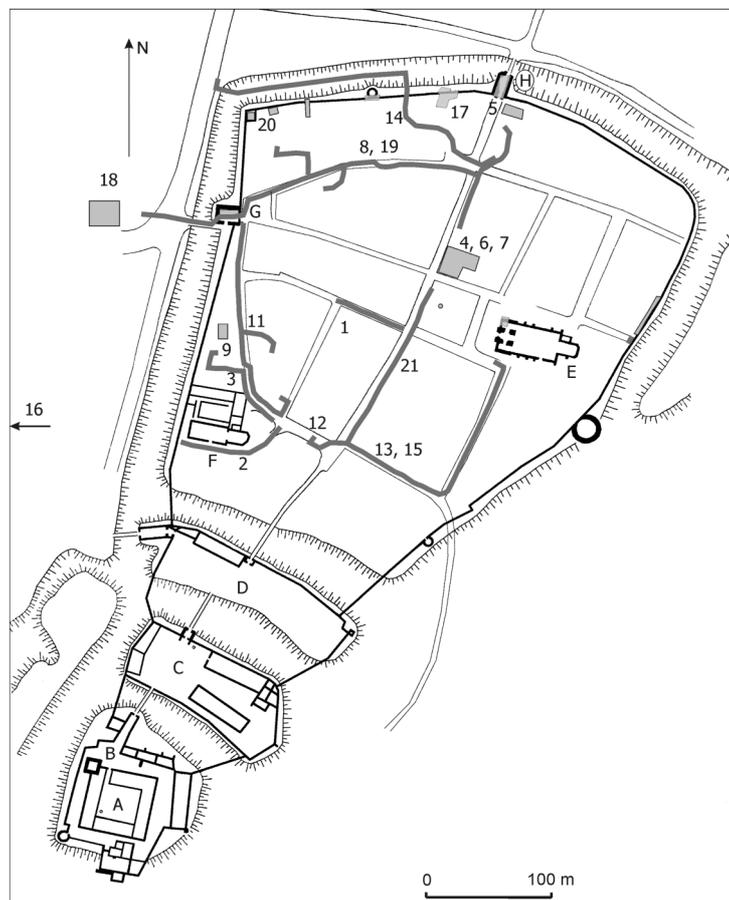
### **History of archaeological investigations in Viljandi: sites and issues**

First notices concerning the medieval town of Viljandi on the basis of material remains were made in 1911, as water pipelines were constructed in the medieval town area. During those works, the remains of two principal town gates were unearthed. In addition to that, three older cobblestone pavements were traced below the street level (Freymann 1918, VI). In addition, a few finds from the pipelines have been preserved in the Museum of Viljandi (VMT 84). At least one of them, a fragment of a Russian-style field flask, dates from the second half of the 16th century (cf. Tvauri 2004, 403 f.; Kildyushevskii 2006, 101 ff., fig. 5.8: 1–9).

The first archaeological investigations in the town area of Viljandi took place in 1979. Under the direction of Henn Moora, the museum archaeologist, and art historian Kaur Alttoa, an attempt was made to locate the town wall in the block between Oru, Tartu and Lossi streets at the northern border of the town. In the next two years, archaeological excavations took place in the territory of the medieval monastery of the Franciscans, located north of the church of St. John's, and in 1981 also in the territory of the Riga Gate of the medieval town (Selirand 1981; 1982b). Both of these works, directed by Alttoa and archaeologist Urmas Selirand, took the localization of medieval constructions as their main task. However, some of the archaeological finds from the area of Riga gate were dated to the prehistoric period by Selirand (1982a, 18). This may be the result of the hypothesis by Alttoa about the possible location of the early settlement site, but the finds themselves do not allow the present authors to agree with the suggestion.

The first archaeological excavations in today's sense of the word took place in 1989, as a water pipeline was established at Munga Street (Fig. 2: 1). These investigations, as well as the excavations in the territory of the churchyard of St. John's (Fig. 2: 2, 3; 1990–1991), a small area in the block north of Market Square (Fig. 2: 4; 1991) and at the Tartu Gate of the town (Fig. 2: 5, 1992) were directed by archaeologist Heiki Valk. On the basis of the results of his excavations, Valk published the first article concerning the formation of Viljandi on the basis of archaeological studies (Valk 1993). He supplemented it with data collected in the meantime by 2001 (Valk 2005).

According to Valk, the most intensive layer connected with the early town development was around St. John's, as well as in the area to the north. As during the excavations near the choir of St. John's, no remains of buildings could be traced, Valk proposed that the area might have been used as the first market place of the town (Valk 1995). Thus he stated that habitation near St. John's had probably started together with the founding of the potter's workshop, and considerably



**Fig. 2.** Areas investigated archaeologically in medieval Viljandi and its suburbs. 1–17 according to Table 1, 18 investigations in suburb in front of Riga Gate in 1999 (A. Tvauri), 19 supervision at Väike-Turu Street in 2003 (A. Haak), 20 investigations in and near the NW corner tower (Tvauri 1997), 21 supervision at Lossi Street in 1995 (A. Kodar). A main castle, B first outer bailey, C second outer bailey, D third outer bailey, E town church, F St. John's Church. Fortifications according to a map from 1650 (see footnote 4). Ground plan: Marge Konsa & Andres Tvauri, excavations marked by Arvi Haak.

earlier than in other parts of the town (Valk 2005, 103 ff.). It seems that his dating was mostly based on the locally-made pottery, as he stated that the pottery decorated with straight and wavy lines should belong to the 13th century (Valk 1993, 222). The habitation traces north of the market-place, and next to Tartu Gate he dated to the second half of the 13th century, and those at Munga Street to the beginning of the 14th century. These dates were based on radiocarbon dating (Valk 2005, 103 f.), which, however, had not been duly calibrated. Valk also stressed that excavations near the Tartu Gate and those in the vicinity of the market square had produced a considerably larger share of imported ceramics in comparison to local

products than those in the vicinity of St. John's. He interpreted the large share of local pottery, found in the area, as an indication of population of ethnic Estonian origin (Valk 2005, 104).

Large-scale archaeological excavations took place in the town centre, north of the market square in 1993–1996 under the guidance of Aare Kodar (Fig. 2: 6). As currently only the finds are available for detailed study, the results of these investigations can be used for this cause only partially. Still, the great amount of material dating from the last third of the 13th century should be pointed out.

On the basis of the results of his investigations at the site 4 Pikk Street (Fig. 2: 8), in the territory of a medieval potter's workshop, Andres Tvauri has concluded that the production of pottery in that workshop took place between 1224 and the end of the 13th century (Tvauri 2000a, 21). The first of these dates has obviously been taken from written sources, the second one is probably a generalization of a radiocarbon dating, collected from below the town wall in the same area, where the layer containing production remains of the workshop has been piled up against the town wall (Tvauri 2001a, 106 f.). Still, it seems that the excavations did not give a definite answer to the question whether pottery production had ended in the workshop by that date, let alone the question of how long similar pottery was in use in Viljandi.

During the last decade, most of the archaeological investigations in the medieval town area have been small-scale, usually connected to the repair of pipelines. Still, remarkable information has been obtained during these works, most notably from the northern part of the town, the area between Väike-Turu Street and the town wall (Fig. 2: 13), next to the former cinema "Rubiin" (Kriiska et al. 2007). As such monitoring works have been numerous, but the early finds collected are relatively few, and have so far not led to alterations in the general scheme of town development, we will not introduce them here, but information available to date will be included in the find analysis, and discussion about the development of different parts of the medieval town.

The latest large-scale investigations took place east of the mentioned former cinema and just south of the northern part of the town wall (Fig. 2: 16; Tvauri 2010). In the excavation results, Tvauri has pointed out strata of "13th–16th century", and a drainage system just above the virgin soil, but no clear construction remains (Tvauri 2010, 158 ff.).

In addition to topics mentioned above, special articles have been dedicated to such topics as the construction and appearance of the town wall of Viljandi (Tvauri 2001b), the archaeological ascertaining and dating of medieval streets (Haak 2003) and the formation and destruction of the suburb in front of Tartu Gate (Haak 2006). Although all of these are based on the dating of finds collected during archaeological investigations, the sources have not been discussed in depth in these writings.

As a conclusion about the existing studies it may be said that the question of the formation and development of medieval Viljandi has been quite topical. Still, the usage of archaeological finds for that cause has been limited, and some of the

collected material (imported pottery in the first place) has only been marginally used. There lies the reason for the current attempt to include the dating of archaeological finds from the earliest contexts to the sources available for discussing the genesis of Viljandi.

### 13th-century finds from Estonian towns and castles

Strange as it may seem, most of the conclusions regarding the 13th century in Estonian towns have either been made on the basis of pottery finds, or the location of the stratum considered above virgin soil or strata clearly of prehistoric origin. At the same time, articles considering the “earliest” pottery can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Thus, a short introduction to what kind of finds can be considered as evidence of 13th-century habitation is necessary (see also Mäll & Russow 2000, 120 ff. for that cause).

The shift from “Final Iron Age” to “medieval period” in Estonia is by no means obvious in the material culture (see also Russow et al. 2006, 159). Although “new” item types appear, which have not been used in pre-conquest Estonia (e.g. proto-stoneware, highly decorated redwares, and greywares from Germany and neighbouring territories, window glass, some decorations, etc.), there are many everyday items which follow earlier traditions. On the other hand, the find material of the period has not been a subject of thorough studies either. So, usually the dating of the deposits in question is based on coins, the existence of imported wares, or the type of local pottery, similar to that found in hill forts, which have been in use during the 13th century conquest, or the existence of brick fragments in the strata.<sup>5</sup>

There are other item types which have undergone clear changes during the 13th century (e.g. brooches, crossbow bolts, etc.), but such finds are relatively scarce in urban contexts, and examples have been collected either from cemeteries, hoards, or castles (weaponry). The question concerning the end of 13th century on the basis of archaeological material is even more complex, as the only indisputable change recognized so far is the appearance of Siegburg stoneware and the absence of certain earlier pottery groups (e.g. Paffrath-type globular pots and possibly also highly decorated redwares).

So, the current study starts within the same framework. In order to establish contexts that can be dated to the period of town formation, we have started from their position in stratification, as well as the items collected thereof. The results of our analysis were summarized in Table 1 (see next section). Criteria for dating the pottery finds are discussed in the following chapter.

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<sup>5</sup> Although suggestions have been made of brick manufacture in Estonia before the 13th-century conquest, these are not based on solid data and can be dropped. However, although a few earlier examples exist, the appearance of iron nails in greater quantities seems to be a phenomenon that starts in Estonia with the Middle Ages.

Table 1. Finds from earliest archaeological contexts of Viljandi

No.	Excavation	Collection number	Investigator	Total number of pots/shards from 13th-early 14th-century contexts	Total number of imported wares	% of imported wares from the pottery assemblage	Stieburg proto-stoneware	Stieburg near stoneware	Mid-rhenish near stoneware	Pattath ware	Southern Lower Saxony	Greywares	Stieburg stone-ware, 1st half of 14th c.	Local wares	Incl. rim sherds	% of rim sherds	Wavy orn.	Line orn.	Wavy and line orn.	% ornamented from all sherds
1.	Munga Street (1989)	VM 10235	Valk	69	25	36.2	2	1	1		11		6	44	5	11.4	2	2	3	15.9
2.	St. John's churchyard (1990)	VM 10258	Valk	846	39	4.6	1				6		2	807	153	19.0	9	42	4	6.8
3.	Pikk Street 4 and 6 (Inkeri Keskus; 1991)	IK 1991	Valk	3054	4	0.1					2			3050	384	12.6	223	268	163	21.4
4.	Laidoneri Square 10 (1991)	VM 10326	Valk	66	20	30.3	1	3		4	6		3	46	5	10.9	3	7	3	28.3
5.	Tartu gate (1992)	VM 10322, 10323	Valk	21	4	19.0			1	1	2			16	4	25.0	2	1	2	31.3
6.	Laidoneri Square 10 / Lossi Street 14 (1993)	VM 10536	Kodar	24	21	87.5	2	5		1	3			3	2	66.7	1	1		66.7
7.	Laidoneri Square 10 (1994-1995)	VM 10942	Kodar	151	25	16.6	7	10		2	1	3	1	126	21	16.7	11	11	3	19.8
8.	Väike-Turu Street 6 (1996)	VM 10533	Valk	61	11	18.0					5	2	1	50	5	10.0	1	3	1	10.0
9.	Pikk Street 4 (1998)	VM 10620	Tvauri	Ca. 5000	0	0.0								Ca. 5000	326	6.5	125	489	35	13.0
10.	Town Wall (1999)	VM 10830	Tvauri	353	5	1.4								348	40	11.5				0.0
11.	Pikk Street (2000)	VM 10810	Haak	44	5	11.4					2			39	1	2.6		8	20.5	
12.	Pikk Street 13 (2002)	VM 10873	Valk	22	0	0.0								22	4	18.2	2	2	3	31.8
13.	Eastern part of Pikk Street (2002)	VM 10932	Haak & Tvauri	17	1	5.9								16	1	6.3		1		6.3
14.	Väike-Turu and Oru Streets (2004)	VM 11087	Kriiska et al.	32	15	46.9	8	1	1		1		2	17		0.0	3	2		29.4
15.	Eastern part of Pikk Street (2004)	VM 11001	Veldi	381	28	7.3					5			353	51	14.4				0.0
16.	Hariduse Street 3A (2006)	VM 11120	Haak	10	0	0.0								10	1	10.0				0.0
17.	Lossi Street 21 (2009)	VM 11272	Tvauri	14	8	57.1	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	6	2	33.3				0.0

### The finds from Viljandi

In the framework of the current study, the finds from the earliest complexes, collected from 17 excavation plots (see Table 1) were revisited. For that cause, all the archaeological investigations in the territory surrounded with the medieval town wall, where finds from strata deposited just above the virgin soil had been unearthed, were taken into account. In order to get some kind of an overview from the intensity of 13th-century habitation, all the stratigraphically later contexts which included a reasonable amount of 13th-century finds were included as well (i.e. contexts where one or two fragments, which can be dated to the 13th century, appear side by side with overwhelmingly 16th-century material, were omitted).

#### *Local pottery*

The amount of potsherds from 13th-century contexts is enormous, and for a better understanding of the situation, a large share of finds, which have been mixed up with later strata should be added. It should still be noted, on the one hand, that at least at the current state of research, only rim sherds, or those which give an overview of the ornament, can be used for dating purposes. The situation with the chronology of medieval local pottery is, however, unsatisfactory. As for the available data, the complex of the potter's oven (Fig. 3) can be used as an "early" example, and the complexes at the Castle of the Teutonic Order, as indicators of the last quarter of the 13th or the beginning of the 14th century. As no later ovens have been found so far, the origin of the later pottery remains uncertain.



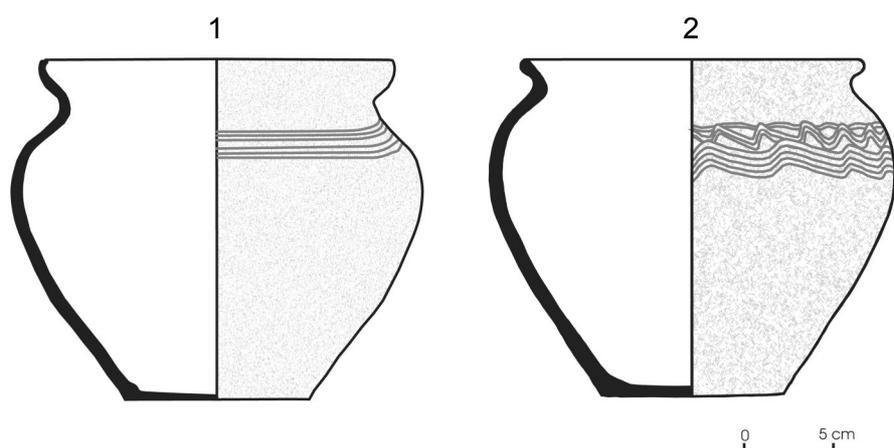
**Fig. 3.** An almost fully preserved vessel from the potter's oven in Viljandi (VM 10620: 935). Photo by Herki Helves.

It has long been stated that pottery with wavy and line ornament is probably the oldest (Valk 1993, 222), as it resembles the products of the Final Iron Age. To sum up, current investigations have not yet produced a reliable chronology, while the complexes of early 14th century also contain numerous fragments of such wares, so the existence of the ornamentation alone cannot be used as a clear indicator of 13th-century habitation. The main focus on dating should thus be on vessel shapes, especially rim shapes, with ornamentation as a supportive argument.

The rim profiles of vessels of local clay, used in south and east Estonia during the 13th century, have been classified according to Pskov ware types, namely their local variants 3: 2 and 3: 3 have been identified (Tvauri 2000b, 100 ff.). While the former form was in use already since the 12th century, the latter was introduced during the second half of the 13th century (*ibidem*). As the vessels are rather similar in broader terms, but have some local differences, an attempt to elaborate the classification might produce a more precise typology, especially if more closely-dated complexes could be included.

As marked by Tvauri (2005, 50), vessels with a curved rim and without a neck should be the oldest. These have been found in abundance from the territory of the potter's workshop (Fig. 4). However, it should be noted that from the analysed contexts, there exist none with a greater number of rim sherds, which have not included a few sherds of the 3: 3 type. Also the early contexts from the Castle of the Teutonic Order, most likely originating from the 1260s – ca. 1300 (Haak & Rannamäe in print), included both variants. It can also be stressed that those rim sherds of the 3: 2 type, where the connection to the vessel body could be established, had a neck.

The lowest strata at the yard of the Museum of Viljandi, which seem to be the oldest context on the basis of the imported wares, included both variants 3: 2 and 3: 3, although the former dominated in the strata just above the virgin soil. In the



**Fig. 4.** Development of local pottery in Viljandi in the 13th century. 1 vessel from the pottery oven, decorated with straight lines, 2 reconstructed vessel probably from the same workshop, decorated with wavy lines (VM 10620: 935; IK 1991: 21/1). Drawing by Arvi Haak.

burning chamber of the potter's oven, only pots belonging to subtype 3: 2 were found. So it seems that the proportion of the share of these ware types might give additional arguments for dating, but the current situation of research does not allow including a more specific dating to the shift.

### *Imported wares*

While concentrating next on the earliest fragments of imported wares, found from the town area, it should be noted first that the use of the finds connected with detailed discussions about the town genesis in the 13th century is not without problems. Several reasons for that can be pointed out. Firstly, fragments which could be dated to a narrow period on the basis of morphological or typological criteria are lacking among the finds of Viljandi. Although archaeological investigations in west Estonian towns have unearthed rim fragments of proto-stoneware jugs, or wall fragments with rolled stamp ornament, typical to the first half of the 13th century (Russow 2006, 144), not even one such fragment has been found from Viljandi. The wall and bottom fragments without specific characteristics allow in some cases to suggest that the vessel might have been produced even before 1250, but no solid proof can be found to such a statement. Paffrath-style globular pots, connected directly to the early phase of colonization, have been used until the last decades of the 13th century, or even later, as shown by the results of archaeological investigations in the Viljandi castle during recent years (Haak 2004, 115). Thus, the use of the existence of fragments of such vessels in the find material as an indicator of settlement distribution is rather doubtful.

A second problem which cannot be ignored is the physical appearance of the sherds. Usually the sherds are extremely small, and their breaks show strong traces of wear. In addition to that, the find complexes include very few conjoinable fragments. Both of these characteristics refer to the fact that the deposition process of the broken vessels has included many steps. An explanation may be the fact that a share of the finds has been collected from excavations in the street areas of Viljandi and thus the findspots might not indicate the original place of usage of the vessels. The finds from the excavations in the yard of the Museum of Viljandi (VM 10326; 10942), and near St. John's Church (VM 10258) can be pointed out as exceptions. In spite of the reservations listed above, the finds of sherds of imported wares from the early stages of Viljandi still remain an important component in assessing the topographical situation in the town.

In order to determine the dating of the earliest find complexes of Viljandi, it is not sufficient to take into consideration only the finds from that particular town. For a more reliable evaluation, it is unavoidable to compare the finds from Viljandi to material related to the founding period of other urban centres. From Estonian towns, we can currently rely on analyses of material from coastal towns of north and west Estonia, i.e. Tallinn, Haapsalu, Lihula and New Pärnu (Mäll & Russow 2000; 2004; Russow 2006). Of the urban centres of south Estonia, the authors are familiar with pottery finds from Tartu. Material unquestionably dating from the

first half of the 13th century has been found from three centres: Lihula, Tallinn and Tartu. Comparison of the earliest complexes shows that a common trait of all these settlements is the existence of glazed redwares from southern Scandinavia and the Low Countries, in addition to Paffrath-style globular pots and proto-stoneware. In Lihula and Tallinn the redwares are more numerous, while in the inland town of Tartu the number of such finds is somewhat smaller.<sup>6</sup> As a hypothesis, it can be stated that a large amount of fragments of glazed redwares in the early contexts of Estonian towns might indicate a greater age of the settlement. As an example, among the finds from excavations in Haapsalu and New Pärnu, both of which emerged during the second half of the 13th century, the share of glazed redwares is almost non-existent. At the same time, both proto- and near-stoneware can be identified among the finds, which allows to date the formation of urban settlement in these centres to the last quarter of the 13th century and the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries respectively, on the basis of the different frequency of such finds (see more at Russow 2006, especially Appendix 3).<sup>7</sup> Still, it should be stressed that without a doubt, coastal towns had better opportunities for acquiring imported ceramics than inland towns, so that the more fragile glazed redwares could not be distributed in so large areas as the more easily transportable early forms of stoneware.

The analysis of the pottery from Viljandi leads to parallels with material from the west Estonian coastal towns, with certain reservations. On the basis of archaeologically collected finds, glazed redware jugs have not featured widely here either. Only two fragments have been recognized so far among finds from the town area<sup>8</sup>, so the earliest “horizon of usage” of imported pottery from western Europe consists of proto-stoneware which can be dated to the middle /or third quarter/ of the 13th century (Fig. 5). These complexes were unearthed in archaeological excavations in the surrounding of cinema “Rubiin” (VM 11087) and in the yard of the Museum of Viljandi (VM 10326; 10942). To be added are two fragments of proto-stoneware from Munga Street, so it can be stated that all the oldest fragments of imported wares originate from the northern part of the town, the only exception being one sherd from St. John’s churchyard. Thus, on the basis of the imported wares, a more widespread habitation of the town area took place at the end of the 13th century, as the distribution of pottery from southern Lower Saxony, found from almost all archaeological investigations in the area, seems to indicate (Fig. 6). As a preliminary hypothesis, it can be stated that the diversity of

<sup>6</sup> This is currently only a subjective assessment based on finds from the intramural area and suburbs of Tartu. It cannot be excluded that a statistical analysis could show that a similar proportion of glazed redwares was used in Tartu as in the coastal towns.

<sup>7</sup> This view might change soon as the finds from recent excavations (2011) in New Pärnu include a higher proportion of proto-stonewares as the earlier investigations, which tended to concentrate on the southern part of the town, i.e. not on the initial core area of the urban settlement. See also Heinloo & Vissak 2012, especially fig. 8.

<sup>8</sup> These finds originate from mixed contexts and therefore are not shown in Table 1. In addition to that, archaeological excavations in the Castle of the Livonian Order have unearthed ca. ten fragments of glazed redwares.



**Fig. 5.** Imported pottery from Viljandi, dating from the mid-13th century. 1 Siegburg proto-stoneware, 2 mid-Rhenish near-stoneware, 3 Paffrath ware. Photo by Herki Helves.



**Fig. 6.** Imported pottery from Viljandi, dating from the late 13th or early 14th century. Photo by Herki Helves.

imported vessels, or more specifically, the number of ware types simultaneously in use in Viljandi, grew remarkably by the end of the 13th century.

### **Habitation in the town area**

#### *Phase 1. The period before ca. 1250*

Unlike the medieval castle of Viljandi, which was built on top of the prehistoric hill fort, there exist no traces of a prehistoric settlement site in the territory of the medieval town. The find of several ard marks in the area around St. John's (Tvauri 2001b; Valk 2005, 99) have led to the suggestion that the territory of the medieval town was used as a field during the prehistoric period (Valk 2005, 99). As written sources state that the construction of the castle started in 1224 (Wartberge 1863, 4), this has usually been seen as a starting point for activities in the territory of the medieval town (Altoa 1978; Valk 2005, 102 f.; see also Johansen 1955, 119 ff. for a different view). The existence of roads in the would-be town territory is fairly likely, but as no archaeological traces have been found, we will not stress it again. However, the existence of roads connecting the castle area to the town territory would become a necessity once habitation had started in the area.

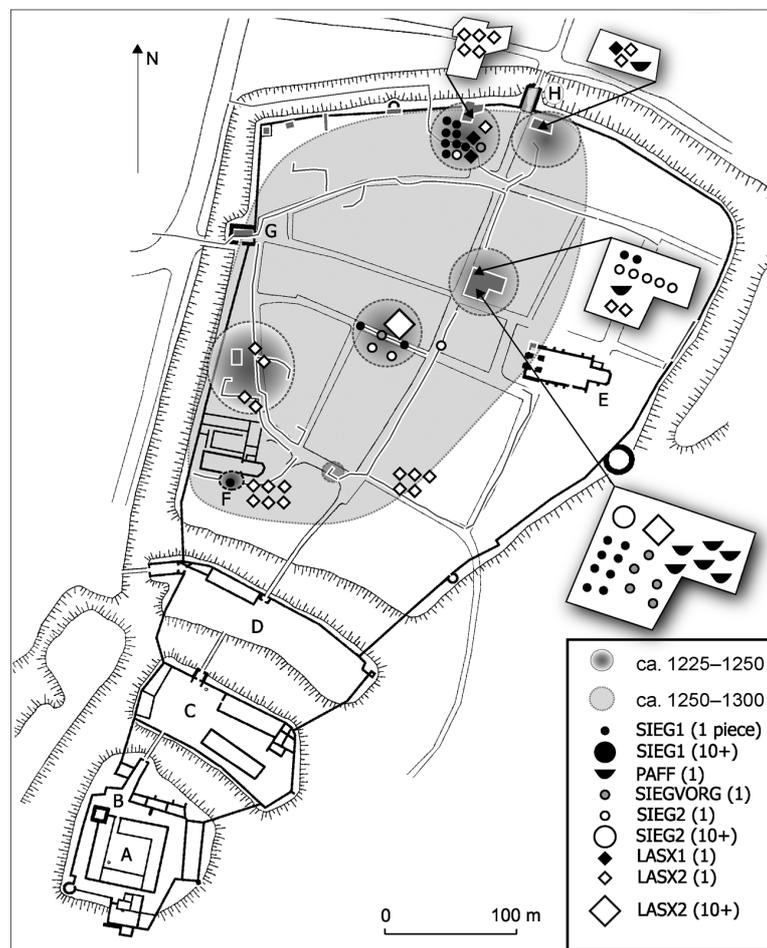
Of the settlement traces investigated so far, only the earliest layers in the area of the potter's workshop might be connected to that stage. However, the fact that coins which could be dated to the period before the 1260s, imported pottery more characteristic of the early stages, and even the products of the potter's workshop which were found in the burning chamber were all missing from the town territory should lead to the conclusion that although habitation in the town territory had started during the period in consideration, it has not been intense, as finds from that period are not comparable to those from other Estonian urban centres, as stated above.

The question whether the remains of daub from the area in front of the castle (VM 10873: 3; Valk 2002) should indicate a house, which originates from the same period, is disputable. On the one hand, the earliest layers did not contain imported pottery, and the sherds of local ceramics can be connected to the production of the potter's workshop. On the other hand, the existence of such a house during the third quarter of the 13th century is not excluded either.

#### *Phase 2. Ca. 1250–1300*

Whatever the situation was before ca. 1250, the town formation has been rather intense since then. Pottery production in the potter's workshop continued, as the layers that have deposited onto virgin soil just next to it contain also fragments of imported pottery, which can be dated to that period. If habitation had started in the area of the market square even before 1250, it clearly saw an increase during the period in question. This can be seen in the large share and

variety of imported wares (highly fired products of Siegburg and from Cologne foothills, Paffrath-type wares, south Lower Saxony, etc.). It extended toward Tartu Gate, but probably also the territory east of the market square, as the excavations next to the town wall also yielded finds from the same period (e.g. pottery decorated with wavy lines). The earliest finds from the excavations at the north-west corner of the medieval town (Fig. 2: 20) also included similar wares (Tvauri 1997, 83). In the block of houses west of Lossi Street, and north of Väike-Turu Street there were areas that yielded similar finds, but the existence of drainage ditches might show that this area was not suitable for early habitation – it became possible once drainage was erected. It seems likely that at first place, the inhabited areas were rather small and these were few and far between (Fig. 7, dark shaded areas).



**Fig. 7.** Settlement distribution in Viljandi on the basis of archaeological sources, with find spots and amount of sherds of imported wares shown together with approximate inhabited areas. Drawing by Kristiina Zadin.

The difference between two investigated areas in the latter quarter: one with early finds (Fig. 2: 14) and the other (Fig. 2: 17) without any early finds despite larger investigated area may hint that not all plots may have been inhabited simultaneously.

However, it still seems that the whole area surrounded with the town wall had not been inhabited even by 1300. Investigations at the town wall in the north-eastern corner of the medieval town unearthed a brown layer of soil, interpreted as the original soil of the area, which did not contain any finds, but was heaped up against the town wall (Tvauri 1999; 2001b, 100; 2010, 158 f.). The layers above it contained finds from the 14th century (see Table 1). In addition to the border areas, there exist no solid data of habitation in the southern part of the town, except the territory of the potter's workshop, and the house (?) remains mentioned in the last section. As seen in Fig. 7 (lightly shaded area), the area habited is oblong in east–west direction, and should have considered the territory of the northern moat as its natural border. It seems that the natural hollow in this area has been a clear border to human activities at that time, as the investigations north of the moat, in the territory of the medieval suburb, have not produced contemporary finds. It seems that human activities in the territory of the suburb started during the first half of the 14th century (see also Haak 2006, 71).

According to the existing radiocarbon dating, collected from charcoal below the town wall, the wall was built by the end of the 13th century or shortly thereafter.<sup>9</sup> If the town wall was built in one stage, as has been stated (Tvauri 2001b, 100, 105 f.), the area chosen for the medieval town had been finally approved by that time. The question whether the town wall was actually constructed all at once remains, however, uncertain, as it has been located only on a few spots, and charcoal could be collected only from under the western part of the wall. However, stratification as recorded by Tvauri supports the view that by the end of the 13th or early 14th century Viljandi was surrounded with a town wall.

### *Phase 3. Ca. 1300–1350*

It seems that a lack of space in the town area appeared only at the beginning of the 14th century, now surrounded with the wall, so that areas with less favourable conditions were adapted for living. This goes for the area of Munga Street, as radiocarbon dating from a woven branch fence of a drainage ditch<sup>10</sup> indicates. Approximately the same dating can be given to the earliest find complex from the area (see Table 1).

The eastern part of Pikk Street may have been inhabited even slightly later, as the finds from there include Siegburg stoneware. The same goes for the most

<sup>9</sup> TA-2615, 740 ± 30 BP, calibrated with program OxCal v4.1.7 (Bronk Ramsey 2009); 1257–1286 cal. A.D. with 68.2% confidence (atmospheric data from Reimer et al. 2009). See also Tvauri 2001b for results of archaeological investigations of the town wall of Viljandi.

<sup>10</sup> TA-2216, 620 ± 40 BP, calibrated with program OxCal v4.1.7 (Bronk Ramsey 2009); 1297–1325; 1344–1394 cal. A.D. with 68.2% confidence (atmospheric data from Reimer et al. 2009).

intensive layer around St. John's. However, as the complex also includes finds of clearly 13th-century origin, it cannot be excluded that some kind of a habitation had taken place in the area before the intense layer, connected to the market-place, had deposited, and the finds were mixed up during the later stage.

The finds from the area north of the market square, next to the Tartu Gate and at Munga Street also show signs of permanent habitation during the period, but it seems that the activities of the potter's workshop have ceased, and the territory has not experienced any imminent restructuring. The finds from the layers just above the remains of the stoves contain a few fragments of pottery from that period, but these can be connected neither to any structures nor to layers which have primarily deposited in that area.

The beginning of habitation in the territory of the northern suburb should also be mentioned here, although the reasons for that are uncertain. It seems likely that the suburban settlers were active in trades considered dangerous or unacceptable within the town walls (e.g. smithery, as the finds include remarkable amount of iron slag). Fire hazard might also have been the reason for shutting down the potter's workshop.

By mid-14th century, Viljandi had become a Livonian small town, clearly distinguishable from nearby villages also on the basis of material culture. It should be noted, however, that the inhabitants still had land within the walls to use for gardening even at the beginning of the 16th century (Freymann 1918. No. 3). In addition to that, the townspeople owned arable land next to the town. So, connections between townspeople and agriculture were very active in small towns during the whole Medieval Period.

### Discussion

As the present analysis has shown, the "early" material of Viljandi seems to be pretty homogeneous. The stratigraphically earliest contexts all include finds which arrived in Estonia only around ca. 1250, and many of these also contain finds from the 14th century.

While comparing the two areas regarded as possibly the oldest: the territory near the market square and that surrounding St. John's, we should conclude that the contexts which have yielded 13th-century finds, are much more intense near the market square. Thus, we cannot support the idea of earliest settlement "core" just in front of the castle. Moreover, finds with a roughly similar dating to those from the market square have even been collected in the excavations just next to the Tartu Gate. The finds from Munga Street are of slightly later origin, as it seems likely that the complex formed around the year 1300.

The complex collected from the churchyard of St. John's is of still later origin. On the basis of Siegburg stoneware, it cannot have deposited earlier than during the second quarter of the 14th century. Still, the interpretation of this complex is hindered by the presence of a few sherds, dating from the 13th century. These, however, happen to be the only traces of permanent activities during the 13th century.

Thus, on the basis of datings of imported pottery, we cannot support the view that habitation in the territory of the medieval town was first centred around the supposed market-place at the site of later St. John's. On the basis of finds of imported ware, the situation seems to have been quite the opposite: the largest share of "early" finds (Paffrath-type ware, Siegburg proto-stoneware and Cologne foothills, etc.) has been deposited in the blocks north of the medieval market square. These originate from early contexts, while many strata with 13th century finds could be distinguished in stratigraphical sequence in the area.

The question of the dating of the potter's workshop is not easily solved with the help of the few sherds of collected imported wares. Still, it should be noted that the layer just above the burning chamber of one of the ovens also contained fragments of imported wares, which can be dated to the mid-14th century at the earliest. In that sense, we should also consider the possibility that the potter's workshop (though perhaps not that particular stove) also functioned at the beginning of the 14th century. At the very least, wares very similar to those collected from the waste of the workshop are present in the deposits of early 14th century.

From outside the medieval town, no sherds of imported wares earlier than 14th-century origin have come to light. Although finds of pottery with wavy and straight lines has been collected from these areas, it should still show that the suburbs in the true sense of the word started to emerge no sooner than during the 14th century.

If we look at the scarcity of settlement remains that could be dated before 1250, naturally the question arises whether a settlement in the town area existed at all, which could have been granted town privileges. Arguments supporting this idea have usually been indirect ones.<sup>11</sup> However, as historian Tiina Kala has recently questioned the early dating of Tallinn as a town (Kala 2002, 401 ff.), we can note that there is no "must" in Viljandi being granted the privileges before 1283: all earlier dates are of hypothetical nature. Interpretation of the archaeological data regarding Viljandi in the first half of the 13th century, would not favour a rapidly developing urban centre.

A small comparison to other medieval centres of Estonia would reveal a strikingly similar situation. There are a few written notices, which have been used to show a quick formation of medieval centres, which cannot be actually seen in the collected archaeological material. It seems that such a possibility has so far been a priori excluded: either by dating some (in our opinion) not so precisely datable finds or strata to the "intermediate" period (e.g. Mäesalu & Vissak 2002, 154 f.), or assigning the earliest settlement core to areas not investigated archaeologically (cf. Russow 2006, 164). Although neither of these possibilities can be denied without

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<sup>11</sup> R. Kenkmaa (1937, 89 ff.) took it as a prerogative that the inhabitants of the castle needed various services, thus there was a need for several activities typical of a medieval town. Thus, the town should have emerged rather quickly. K. Altoa (1978, 53 f.) compared Viljandi to Paide, where the temporal distance between the founding of the castle, and the acquiring of the town privileges was ca. 25 years. On the special situation of Paide, see also Johansen 1938.

a good argument<sup>12</sup>, the possibility that the formation of centres of medieval type took somewhat longer also needs consideration. So far, finds of “medieval” type which can definitely be dated to the first half of the 13th century have been obtained only from Toompea in Tallinn, Lihula and Tartu. If we include castles, we should add Otepää and probably also others, but the fact remains that it took some time for the newcomers as well to form the “medieval” structures we mostly know of later sources.

The hypothesis of the distribution of imported against local pottery as an ethnic indicator is intriguing, but should, in our opinion, by no means be overestimated. The neighbourhood of a potter’s workshop is a much more likely reason for the abundance of local pottery, including wasters. This is not meant to diminish the role of local population in the town formation process: there are several indicators for that (e.g. the abandoning of settlement sites in the close vicinity of the town, the presence of pottery with decoration similar to the Final Iron Age, as well as ornaments, etc.; remains of clay daub in the medieval town area). The question of ethnicity in a Livonian town of the medieval period is a most interesting one, but should, in our opinion, be examined in a more complex manner, which would exceed the limits of the current article.

Finally, to return to the question whether Viljandi was a typical “founded” town, we should return to the question at what time we can see evidence for the founding of the town. If we see the foundation in connection with the castle, it should be remembered that the convent house was constructed most likely at the beginning of the 14th century (Altoa 2003, 104). The existence of large-scale fortifications in the outer baileys during the 13th century can also be doubtful. As stated above, the dating of the town wall is not much earlier. However, the fact that there has been only one spot near the medieval town, where 13th-century settlement traces have been found, leads to the conclusion that the territory where settlers could start their activities was strictly defined. Whether it was natural causes, land ownership, or any other reason, we cannot determine, but all the existing signs lead to that conclusion. However, the planning of a town and castle complex in the middle of the 13th century, just after the conquest, would seem a bit too optimistic. However, a monumental project by the Livonian Order, which was never realized (Valk 2005, 106) is a reasonable hypothesis. We would still question the dating of this project. Almost unanimously, the “plan for Viljandi” has been dated to the period just after the German conquest. Although the possibility that the plan was still up to date half a century later cannot be excluded, it is just as possible that it was only drawn considering the existing situation at the end of the 13th century, when Viljandi had already become a place of importance. The fact that many remaining features of Viljandi (Convent House, town wall, permanent settlement of several areas, several street pavements) can be dated to that period, should indicate that the development of that period followed an existing plan. The question remains whether this was the first and original plan, or whether it had been redrawn.

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<sup>12</sup> See Mäll 2004 for a hypothesis for the missing of finds from the first half of the 13th century from most contexts in Tallinn lower town.

### **Conclusions**

In the period of increasing understanding of the interpretive nature of the whole archaeological process, the aim of the current article is by no means to state that the question of the town development process of Viljandi has finally been solved. Still, we believe that the arguments presented so far are convincing enough to show that the development of the medieval town of Viljandi cannot be seen simply as an expansion from the castle northwards. Although the links between the castle and the town are clearly visible, it seems likely that the cradle of the medieval town was situated either at the marketplace or at the potter's workshop, in other words, it needs trade and handicraft to "make" a medieval town. In addition, we cannot outline a clearly bordered "cradle area", rather there were several "seeds" that were later shaped to the bordered pattern that we know from late 16th-century documents and the 17th-century town plan.

The relations between seemingly totally irrelevant events and circumstances make the investigative process quite exciting and allow new conclusions to be made. Fortunately, there has been a lot of creative thinking in earlier works on the town development in Viljandi. The current article cannot manage all that, but hopefully it has added the dating of imported ceramics, and the reconsideration of the "contemporary trends" of town formation in the 13th century to the pack of variables which have to be taken into account while discussing urbanism of the 13th century in Livonia. What is more, it is not only new archaeological investigations which change the existing concepts. Although it is often new excavations that offer valuable insight into the archaeological sources investigated now and then, there are only too many archaeological investigations in medieval Livonia, which have stopped together with the end of fieldwork. The more comparative material we have, the better is our understanding of the trends and peculiarities, and finally, the more we find problems still without a reasonable solution.

There was not much chance to demonstrate the importance of complex usage of all available sources, but hopefully it was clear enough that the possibilities of a reliable interpretation of archaeological finds were greatly diminished by the lack of contemporary written data. An analysis of the situation in either Tallinn or Riga, with an attempt to use all kinds of available sources, would thus be most interesting.

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### Arvi Haak ja Erki Russow

#### VILJANDI LINNA KUJUNEMISEST VARASEIMATE ARHEOLOOGILISTE LEIUKOMPLEKSI PÕHJAL

##### Resüme

Viljandi oli keskajal üks üheksast tänapäeva Eesti ala keskaegsest linnast ja neljast hansalinnast. Põhjendatult on arvatud, et linna kujunemist mõjutas võimas Viljandi ordulinnus, mille kaitseehitistega linnamüür liitus. Keskaegseid ehitusjäänuseid on Viljandis maapinnal säilinud siiski minimaalselt ja ka kirjalikud allikad linna keskaja kohta pole kuigi arvukad. Seega on linnaplaanide kõrval linna arenguloo selgitamisel väga oluline arheoloogilistel uuringutel kogutud info.

Käesoleva artikli eesmärk on linna kujunemisloo kohta olemasolev arheoloogiline allikmaterjal kontekstipõhiselt läbi töötada ja esitada selle põhjal oma nägemus Viljandi linna kujunemisest.

**Kirjalikes allikais** on esimene mäрге linna kujunemisloost 1283. aastal, kui ordumeister Willekinus de Endorpe määras kindlaks linnasarase piirid (LGU I, 40). Linna ülesehituse ja kodanikkonna kohta annab rohkem andmeid Poola revisjon (Viljandi linn 1998; esmakäsitlus: Westrén-Doll 1929), kuid see ei lisa otseseid vihjeid linna kujunemisloole. Antud teemal on arvamust avaldanud mitmed autorid (Amelung 1898; Leighly 1939; Johansen 1955; Raadik 1960; Altkoa 1978; Valk 1995; 2005). Kirjalike allikate andmed võib kokku võtta järgnevalt: linn kujunes pärast Viljandi linnuse vallutamist 1223. aastal ja 1283. aastaks on linnasarase piirid võimalik kindlaks määrata. On oletatud, et linnaõigusi saadi juba varem, 1250. aasta paiku. Linna kujunemisperioodi aegse teedevõrgu kohta puuduvad kindlad andmed, kuid arheoloogilisi tõestusmaterjale antud teema kohta tasub kindlasti otsida. 17. sajandi plaani põhjal teadaolev linnakindlustuste võrk ja linna põhiplaan pole automaatselt 13. sajandisse tagasiviidavad, ehkki linnamüür ise pärineb tõenäoliselt 13. sajandi lõpust või 14. sajandist. Seega tuleb varasema linnaplaani rekonstrueerimisel tugineda ka arheoloogia andmetele.

**Arheoloogilised uuringud** Viljandi vanalinna alal algasid sisuliselt 1979. aastal, ehkki esimesi leide korjati juba trassitööde käigus 1911. aastal. Alates 1989. aastast saame rääkida tänapäevasel tasemel dokumenteeritud välitöödest. Mitmed uurijad on esitanud ka seniste välitööde tulemuste põhjal oma nägemuse Viljandi kujunemisloost. H. Valk (1993) pakkus välja, et linna varaseim tuumik asus Jaani kiriku piirkonnas, linnuse vastas, ja seal paiknes ka varaseim turuplats. Teised piirkonnad asustati märkimisväärselt hiljem. Turuplatsi ümbruse ja Tartu värava piirkonna suuremat importkeraamika hulka seletas ta Saksa (koloniaal)asustusega, samal ajal kui Jaani kiriku piirkonnas võisid elama asuda kohaliku päritoluga elanikud. Viljandi turuplatsi põhjaküljel asunud kinnistuid uuris A. Kodar (1993–1996) ja Viljandis avastatud keraamikaahju A. Tvauri (2000a). Hilisematest uuringutest mahukamad leidsid aset keskaegse linna põhjaosas, Väike-Turu ja Lossi tänava vahelisel alal (Tvauri 2010). Väiksema ulatusega järelevalvetöödest on huvitavama leiumaterjaliga uuringud toimunud äsja nimetatud kvartalis (Kriiska jt 2007).

Kokkuvõtlikult võib seniste arheoloogiliste uuringute tulemusel nentida, et linna kujunemise ja edasise arenguga seotud temaatika on senistes käsitlustes kesksel kohal. Paraku pole sellekohane allikmaterjal väga rikkalik ega ka mitmekesine, kuid arheoloogilisi allikaid on seejuures läbi töötatud ja süsteemselt kasutatud suhteliselt vähe. Seetõttu keskendub käesolev artikkel importkeraamika kasutusvõimalustele varasimate leiukomplekside dateerimisel ja sealtkaudu ka linnatekke temaatika käsitlemisel.

Eesti arheoloogiline leiuväine pakub eelkõige 13. sajandile iseloomulike leidude eristamiseks seni ebapiisavalt pidepunkte. Järeldused vallutusjärgse perioodi kohta on tehtud kas ladestuste füüsilise paiknemise põhjal – vahetult looduslikul aluspinnal või selgelt muinasaegse päritoluga ladestuste kohal – või keraamikaleidude, sageli kohalikus keraamikatoodangus täheldatud muutusi arvestades. Lisaks eel-

toodule on võimalik tugineda mündidateeringutele ja tellisetükkide esinemisele keskaegsetes ladestustes. Ehkki 13. sajandi algul toimunud poliitiline muutus ei väljendu materiaalses kultuuris sedavõrd järsult, on siiski võimalik välja tuua teatud hulk kitsama ajavahemikuga dateeritavaid esemeid ja keraamikaliike, mille esinemise põhjal on tehtud järgnevad järeldused.

**Viljandi kohaliku keraamika** killud moodustavad 13. sajandi leiuainesest väga suure osa. Praeguse uurimisseisu juures saab dateerimisel tugineda siiski vaid keraamikapõletusahju (joon 3; Tvauri 2000a) ja ordulinnuse 13. sajandi viimase kolmandiku või 14. sajandi alguse (Haak & Rannamäe ilmumisel) leiukompleksidele. Ehkki on välja pakutud, et enamik laine- ja joonornamendiga keraamikast pärineb samuti 13. sajandist, siis Viljandi linnuse arheoloogiliste leiukontekstide analüüsi põhjal oli selline kaunistusviis kasutusel vähemalt 14. sajandi alguseni ning ainuüksi ornamendi põhjal ei saa keraamika vanuse kohta järeldusi teha. Savinõude vanuse määramisel on esmatähtis nõude servakuju muutumine, ornamendi saab rakendada täiendava tunnuseks (vrd Tvauri 2000b). Seni on Viljandist leitud keskaegset keraamikat käsitletud Pihkva keraamikarühmade kontekstis, millest 13. sajandil on esindatud alarühmad 3: 2 ja 3: 3 (Tvauri 2000b, 100–105). Tvauri on eristanud veel mõned 13. sajandi esimesele poolele iseloomulikud tunnused (Tvauri 2005, 50), eelkõige nõu kaela puudumine ja kaarjas servakuju. Kui keraamikaahju põletuskambris 3: 3 rühma keraamikat ei leidunud, siis kõigis vaadeldud leiukompleksides oli see esindatud, sh ka Viljandi turuplatsi põhjaküljel uuritud varasemates ladestustes. Võimalik, et edaspidi on dateerimisel võimalik argumentina kasutada 3: 2 ja 3: 3 tüüpide esinemise suhtelist arvukust, samuti tuleks täpsustada 3: 2 tüübina käsitletavate vormide esinemisaega.

Ka **importkeraamika** kasutamine 13. sajandi linnatekke selgitamiseks pole probleemitu. Esiteks pole Viljandi importkeraamikaleidude seas katkeid, mida saaks kindlalt just 13. sajandi esimese poolega dateerida, ehkki Lääne-Eesti linnalistest keskustest on selliseid leide (protokivikeraamika servakatked, rulltempelmustriga küljetükid) saadud. Osa leitud külje- ja põhjakatketest, samuti paffrathi tüüpi nõude katked, võivad teoreetiliselt pärineda perioodist enne 1250. aastat, kuid kindlalt seda väita ei saa. Leitud keraamikakatked on väga väikesed ja murdekohad on tugevate kulumisjälgedega, liituvaid kilde esineb väga vähe. Ilmselt on põhjuseks asjaolu, et enamik leide pärineb tänavate alal paiknenud ladestustest ja seega ei leitud neid algsest kasutuskohast. Erandiks on siinkohal Viljandi Muuseumi hoovis (VM 10326; 10942) ja Jaani kiriku juures (VM 10258) toimunud uuringud. Siiski on importkeraamika vanusemääragud linnakujunemise selgitamisel oluliseks allikaks.

Võrdluses teiste Eesti arheoloogiliselt uuritud linnaliste keskustega on seni kahtluseta 13. sajandi algupoolega dateeritavat importkeraamikat leitud Lihulast, Tallinnast ja Tartust. Nimetatud keskusi iseloomustab ka varase glasuurkeraamika esinemine lisaks protokivikeraamikale ja paffrathi tüüpi kerapottidele, ehkki kergemini purunev glasuurkeraamika ei pruukinud sisemaal olla rannikulinnadega võrdsest kättesaadav. Viljandi linna alalt on leitud kaks varase glasuurkeraamika katket (segatud ladestustest, tabelis ei kajastu), varaseim importkeraamika on 13. sajandi

keskpaiga või 3. veerandiga dateeritav protokivikeraamika (joon 5), mida esineb peamiselt linna põhjaosas (ainus erand on üks katke Jaani kiriku juurest). Seevastu 13. sajandi lõpule iseloomulikku Lõuna-Alam-Saksi varakivikeraamikat (joon 6) leidub peaaegu kõigis uuritud kaevandites. Ilmselt muutus just 13. sajandi lõpul importkeraamika valik Viljandis mitmekesisemaks.

Tuginedes eeltoodud leiumaterjali analüüsile, võib asustuse kujunemises Viljandi linna alal eristada kolme perioodi. Enne 13. sajandi keskpaika (tinglikult umbes 1250. aastani) on andmeid asustuse kohta napilt. Muinasaegne asustus linna alal puudub, adrajälgede põhjal otsustades oli sel alal põllumaa (Valk 2005, 99). Hetketeadmiste põhjal on võimalik, et sellest perioodist pärineb keraamikatöökoda ja ka Pikalt tänavalt leitud savitihendite katked koos samaaegse keraamikaga võivad viidata 13. sajandi teise või kolmanda veerandi hoonetele.

Ilmselt oli linna ala tihedamalt asustatud alles pärast sajandi keskpaika (umbes 1250–1300), sest linna alal looduslikul aluspinnal paiknevates ladestustes leidub selle perioodiga dateeritud importkeraamikat. Leidude paiknemise põhjal jääb mulje, et asustatud olid üksikud kinnistud (joon 7, tumedamad alad), sest mõnekümne meetri raadiuses toimunud kaevamistel erineb varaseima leiuainese üldilme suuresti. Osal linna alast oli vajalik veel kuivendussüsteemi rajamine. Ilmselt polnud ka sajandi lõpuks (joon 7, heledam ala) veel kogu linnamüüri ümbritsetud ala asustatud (linnamüüri ehitusaeg võiks radiosüsinikudateeringu põhjal jääda 13. sajandi lõppu), eelkõige pole varaseid leide linna lõuna- ja idaosast. Keskaegse linna alalt väljaspool, vallikraavist põhja ja lääne pool toimunud uuringud näitavad, et sinna pole varasem asustus ulatunud.

14. sajandi algusest pärineb leidude põhjal Munga tänava ja Jaani kiriku ümbruse intensiivseim elutegevuskiht. Võimalik, et Pika tänava idaosa piirkond asustati veelgi hiljem, sajandi keskpaigaks. Keraamikaahju piirkonnas oli savinõude valmistamine lõppenud, sest selleaegsed ladestused asusid juba ahjujäänuste peal. Seega tundub, et 14. sajandi alguseks oli Viljandi kujunenud tüüpiliseks Vana-Liivimaa linnaks, mille leiuaines eristus selgelt ümbritsevate maa-asulate omast. Siiski tuleb silmas pidada, et veel 16. sajandi lõpul oli osal Viljandi kodanikest aiamaa linnamüüri piiratud alal ja mõnedele kuulus põllumajandusmaa linna territooriumilt väljaspool. Seega jäi Viljandi elanikkond põlluharimisega seotuks keskaja lõpuni.

Vaadeldes veel kord Viljandi varaste leiukomplekside leiuainest, tuleb tõdeda, et üldmulje on kogu piirkonna puhul sarnane: kõigis neis leidub 13. sajandi keskpaigale iseloomulikke leide ja vaid sajandi algupoole leide sisaldavad ladestused puuduvad täielikult. Kahest võimalikust varasema asustusega piirkonnast on leiu-rohkem ja intensiivsemate ladestustega turuplatsi ümbrus. Seega ei tundu väljapakutud idee algsest asustuskeskusest linna lõunaserval, linnuse külje all, kuigi tõenäoline. Kuna laine- ja joonornamendiga keraamikat esineb ka 14. sajandi algul, ei ole alust rääkida asustusest eeslinnades enne 14. sajandit. Seega pole ka selge, kas Viljandis oli kujunenud asula, mis oleks pidanud linnaõigused saama varem kui 1283. aastal. Samuti pole meie hinnangul põhjust rääkida kohalikku päritolu keraamikast kui etnilisest markerist, sedasorti keraamika arvukat esinemist Jaani

kiriku piirkonnas seletab eelkõige keraamikaahju lähedus ja praaktoodangu suur hulk. Etniliste rühmade väljaselgitamine keskaegses Viljandis väljuks käesoleva artikli raamidest.

Küsimus Viljandist kui rajatud linnast on meie hinnangul asjakohane, kuid tundub märksa tõenäolisem seoses konvendihoone ja eeslinnuste rajamisega umbes 14. sajandi algul. Võimalik, et tulevane linna territoorium oli varem esialgselt paika pandud (varasemad asustusjäljed hilisemalt linna alalt väljaspool senistel andmetel puuduvad), kuid tundub vähe tõenäoline, et järgiti kolmveerand sajandit varem paikapandud plaani.

Vana-Liivimaa keskaegsete linnade kujunemine on kahtlemata põnev ja edasist käsitlemist vajav küsimus. Loodetavasti õnnestus Viljandi näitel tähelepanu juhtida importkeraamikaleidude kasutusvõimalustele antud küsimuses ja välja tuua kirjalike ning arheoloogiliste allikate kooskasutamise võimalused. Selline analüüs oleks veelgi tulemuslikum ja huvipakkuvam Tallinna või Riia puhul, kus kirjalikku infot on oluliselt rohkem.