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A landscape biography of the 'Land of Drumlins': Vooremaa, East Estonia

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Citation

Veldi, M. (2020, December 3). *A landscape biography of the 'Land of Drumlins': Vooremaa, East Estonia*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/138482>

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Author: Veldi, M.

Title: A landscape biography of the 'Land of Drumlins': Vooremaa, East Estonia

Issue date: 2020-12-03

9 Example of combining historical GIS, archaeological data, and the 13th century *Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*

Roads and hill forts in southern Estonia during the German conquest in Henry's *Chronicle of Livonia*

Martti Veldi

The article discusses the communication possibilities of the central hill forts of Saccala (Sakala) and Ugaunia (Ugandi) provinces (southern Estonia) and their place in the network of land roads in the early 13th century. To re-construct the network of roads, maps from the late 17th century are used.

Artikkel käsitleb Ugandi ja Sakala kesksete linnuste kommunikatsiooni-võimalusi 13. sajandi alguses ning nende kohta selleaegses maateede süsteemis. Teedevõrgustiku rekonstrueerimiseks on kasutatud 17. sajandi lõpu kaarte.

Keywords: southern Estonia, Final Iron Age, hill forts, 17th century maps, roads, communication

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Introduction

Henry's *Chronicle of Livonia* is the main historical source for the German conquest at the beginning of the 13th century. This source has been thoroughly analysed and discussed in the Estonian historiography (e.g. Vahtre 1990; Selart 2002; Tvauri 2000; Mäesalu 1993; 1996), and recently a special volume of articles discussing this chronicle was published (Tamm *et al.* 2011). One of the problems less discussed is the question of war roads and the interaction between Estonian hill forts as local centres of power. We have a rough vision how the land was conquered, but not much is known about interaction and conditions for information flow¹ between Estonian hill forts. The efficient movement of the troops largely depended on the roads and their conditions. The time of year also played a crucial role. During the wintertime, it was possible to use winter roads, which winded over swamps and marshes, making it easy to cover long distances in shorter periods of time; also, frozen water bodies could be crossed. This was quite important, for in summer a large river in front of a large army could be a serious complication. For example, the conquerors had to wait for three years for a suitable winter to cross the sea to the Island of Saaremaa in 1227, though continental Estonia had been subjected already in 1224. Henry gives his opinion of winter roads as follows (this is in 1227 describing the campaign to Saaremaa):

*When the feasts of the Lord's birth and Epiphany [Jan. 6, 1227 AD] were over, snow covered the land and ice covered the waves; for the surface of the deep was solidified and the waters were as hard as stone. Ice was formed and it made a better path over both land and sea (HCL XXX, 3).*²

The beginning of winter was also good for looting because winter supplies had not yet been used up and sleighs were much more efficient for hauling away the booty than carriages.

A brief description of the conditions of the roads in summer time can be found in the passage depicting the campaign to the province of Saccala

¹ There is only a short popular article analysing scouting and intelligence during the warfare (Juurvee 2007).

² For direct citations from the chronicle of Henry of Livonia the English translation by James A. Brundage (Brundage 1961) is used.

(Sakala) in 1211. This was the infamous and 'bottomless' campaign along the western coast of Estonia to Saccala, which concluded with the capture of the best-known Estonian war chief Lembitu and burning down his hill fort. The record itself goes as follows:

They assembled a great army in Metsepole, marched to the sea, and went for a three-day journey beside the sea. They turned, after this, toward the province of the Saccalians [Saccala] and journeyed for three days through forests and swamps by a very bad road. Their horses gave out on the road and about a hundred of them fell down and died. At length, on the seventh day, they came to the villages /.../ (HCL XV, 7).

This is why it is important to make a difference between the campaigns in winter and summer conditions. The campaigns carried out in summer required some kind of land roads that enabled both horseback riding and carriages. The other problem with roads was that they had to be known, both land roads and winter ways. This was especially difficult for the conquerors at the beginning of the conquest, but problems with finding suitable roads existed in Livonia until the middle of the 14th century (Simiński 2004). It was the time without maps or any other written descriptions of the region; at least we know of nothing that has survived. Thus, it was essential to find a road guide or send out pathfinders or scouts, who provided the main army with the information it needed. Henry emphasizes the importance of road guides several times, for example, during the campaign against Saccala in 1218; the record goes as follows:

On the following day they crossed Saccalia [Saccala] and came near the fort of Fellin [Viljandi]. There returned to them the scouts whom they had sent to call together the elders of that province, so that they could as usual be their guides (HCL XXII, 2).

This passage also suggests that elders as socially high-ranking individuals were preferred as guides. One can only speculate if these elders could be regarded as collaborators or they were threatened with pain or death.

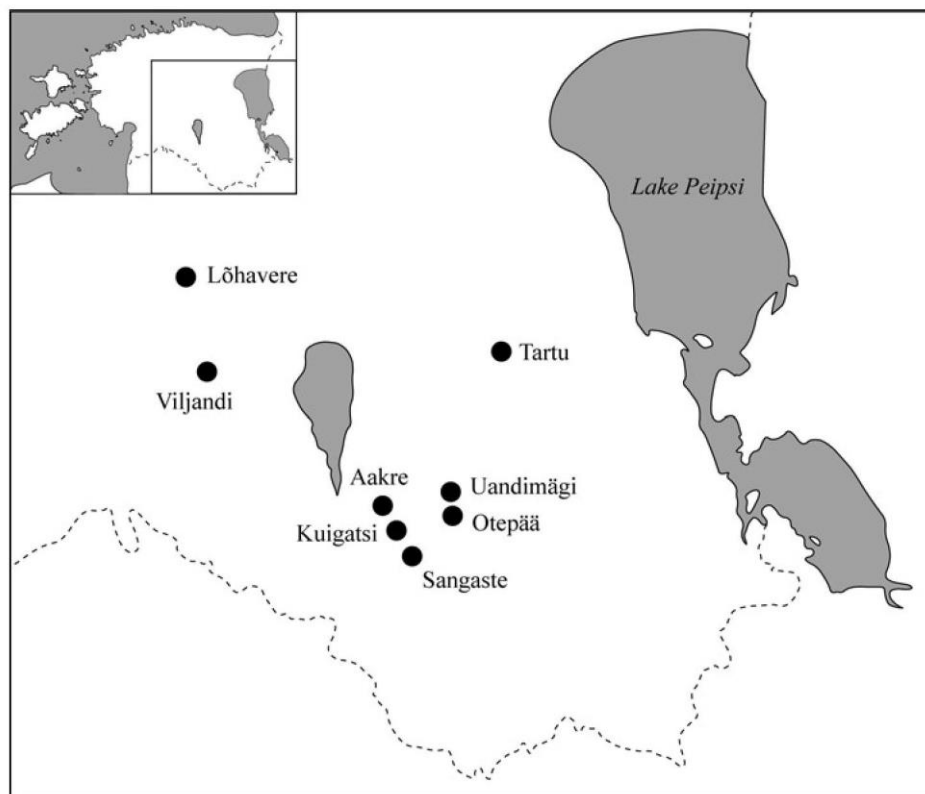
As it turns out, the scouts lurked advancing the main army and gathered information from the local people; at least this was the case before the notorious battle of St Matthew's Day on September 21, 1217. The day before the battle Henry reports:

There were about three thousand chosen men in the army. They decided that the Germans should take the middle course, placed the Livs on the right, and gave the Letts the left side. They sent others to the villages and when they had taken certain men they learned from them the size of the enemy army and that it was now approaching and was ready to fight (HCL XXI, 2).

Now I will take a brief look at the central hill forts of the provinces of Ugaunia (Ugandi) and Saccala during the warfare, considering some aspects of their communication options. The hill forts under discussion include Otepää, Tartu, Viljandi, and Lõhavere (Fig. 1). The study aims to combine Henry's written records with archaeological data from the Late Iron Age (11th–13th cc.)

Fig. 1. Hill forts mentioned in the text.

Jn 1. Tekstis mainitud linnused.



in correlation with the oldest historical maps of the region. The goal of the article is to offer a few glimpses of the Late Iron Age road network in Ugaunia and Saccala provinces during the German conquest (1208–1227 AD).

Historical maps and method of analysis

In order to provide a broader context for possible historical roads connected with hill forts under discussion, historical maps from the 17th century are used. As the maps were drawn before the extensive landscape changes of the Modern Era, they still to some extent characterize medieval and even prehistoric landscapes. The maps used for the analysis are as follows:

- 1) The district map of Kambja, Nõo, and Tartu-Maarja parishes, 1684 (EAA 308-2- 85)
- 2) The district map of Kambja, Kanepi, Otepää, and Urvaste parishes, 1684 (EAA 308- 2-88)
- 3) The district map of Kõpu, Suure-Jaani, and Viljandi parishes, 1683 (EAA 308-2-200)
- 4) The general map of Livonia, 1686 (EAA 308-2-3)

The digital analysis of historical maps with GIS software (e.g. MapInfo, ArcGis) implies that the physical maps stored in the archives are digitized into raster images, georeferenced with the Earth's coordinates (e.g. with the Estonian map in scale 1: 20 000), and supplied with vector data.³ The easiest way to digitize historical sources is by scanning or digital photographing. Thanks to major innovations during the past decade the Estonian Historical Archives⁴ have digitized a great number of historical documents including hand-drawn maps, and made it possible for researchers to access them on the Internet (<http://www.ra.ee/kaardid>).

³ Digital maps of Estonia are available in the Geoportal of the Estonian Land Board <http://geoportaal.maaamet.ee/>. (20. 10. 2014). By vectorising, raster images on the map are converted to vectors or lines, which have their own coordinates that are equal to their position in the real landscape.

⁴ Estonian Eesti Ajalooarhiiv (EAA). See also: <http://www.eha.ee>. 20.10.2014

The georeferencing of hand-drawn historical maps with the Earth's coordinates poses several obstacles, which have been addressed in numerous cases (e.g. Koppel 2002; 2005; Koppa 2006; Shuppert & Dix 2009; Veldi 2009). Because the historical maps of Estonia and Livonia were not based on triangulation before 1839, i.e. before Rücker's special map of Livonia (Varep 1957, 11), the georeferencing of the maps demands digital manipulation of the maps to some extent – in some cases the maps need to be shrunk, in other cases stretched. This means that large-scale maps must be georeferenced and analysed in smaller fragments and later 'stitched' together. While the georeferencing of modern physical maps can be based on latitude and longitude lines or specific pre-given coordinates (Koppa 2006, 17–18), then the georeferencing of historical maps can only be based on characteristic landscape features, such as rivers, lakes, or hills, which have not changed considerably over time, and can be exclusively recognized, both on modern and historical maps. In spite of that, it is almost impossible to georeference the older maps with 100% accuracy, for very often the objects and distances on historical maps are out of proportion. Still, the Swedish Era regional maps with the approximate scale of 1: 48 000 (Must 2000, 255) are surprisingly accurate, and the shifts in the locations of landscape features are relatively minimal.

In the present study the majority of the illustrations are from the 1686 general map of Livonia (EAA 308-2-3), for it provides the most general and schematic overview of the possible routes used.

Centres and roads in Ugaunia

Several researchers, including the historian Sulev Vahtre, have suggested that after conquering the Livs and the Latgallians one of the main motives of the conquerors for expanding the conquest to the Estonian territory was direct pressure from German merchants who wished to consolidate their connections with Pskov and Novgorod, seeking substantial profits from transit trade with Russia (Vahtre 1990, 55). An episode of brigand robbery carried out by looters from the prehistoric province of Ugaunia against German merchants sometime before the beginning of the conquest became one of the decisive impulses to expand the campaign to Estonia. Henry's account is as follows:

At the same time [1207 AD] Alabrand the priest, with certain others, was sent to Ungannia [Ugaunia] to demand the goods that had been taken away from [German] merchants before the construction of Riga [i.e. before 1201 AD]. As the merchants were journeying from the Dvina [Daugava] toward Pskov in their carts, the Ungannians, upon the advice of the Livs, had despoiled them on the road of many goods, to the value of nine hundred marks and more. The Ungannians, indeed, neither gave back their goods nor gave any definite answer about returning them in the future (HCL XI, 7).

If the value of the merchandise is converted into Lübeckian marks (233.85 g of silver), the cost of the whole loot would be more than 200 kg of silver (Vahtre 1990, 53). The robbing of this magnitude was a reason enough to initiate a larger campaign against the Ugaunians.

This record by Henry is remarkable for at least two reasons. Firstly, it gives evidence that already at the end of the 12th century one of the trade routes connecting the mouth of the Daugava River and Pskov went through the province of Ugaunia, probably passing its economic and political centre in Otepää. Secondly, Henry uses the phrase *in vehiculis suis* (in their vehicles) to describe the vehicles used by the German merchants, which might imply that these were wheeled carriages, and the land route from the Daugava to Pskov was decent enough to drive them. Some segments of the same road in Latvian territory could be the bases for the later historic stone road from Riga to Pskov. Väino Einer, an Estonian researcher of road history, on the contrary, states that the word *vehiculum* used by Henry means without doubt a sledge used during wintertime (Einer 1988, 52). When drawing parallels with ethnographic evidence (Viires 1980; Raid 2005), prehistoric and medieval transportation in Estonia mainly took place along snow ways in winter and on horseback during summer.

As a parallel from Western Europe, John Langdon (1984; 2000, 608) has pointed out that the revolution in land transportation took place somewhere during the 12th and 13th centuries when a technical improvement in horse harness – padded collar – was introduced. The improvement allowed using horses instead of oxen for hauling carriages. One has to emphasize that the improvement took place at first in Flanders on flat terrain while in other regions oxen were still used on rough terrain. The other difference between the central parts of Europe and the periphery was that most of the western

and central European road network at that time was very much based on Roman roads, which were flat and straight, and therefore more suitable for wheeled carriages. At the end of the Late Iron Age Estonia certainly lacked that kind of infrastructure. In spite of that, it does not rule out the use of oxen for hauling carriages, which was of course much slower and did not exceed slow walking speed. While the plunderers were very often in haste, and also in fear of pursuit, I believe, a considerable amount of the looting also took place on horseback.

In connection with Henry's chronicle the main roads in Ugaunia province can be mostly associated with two central strongholds – Otepää and Tartu. While during the first part of the conquest Otepää is the principal objective of hostile campaigns, then in the 1220s the focus shifts to Tartu.

Otepää

The Otepää hill fort is located on a separate larger hillock in the valley at the eastern edge of Otepää town. Geographically, the Otepää hill fort is situated in the middle of Otepää highlands. It is one of the few hill forts in southern Estonia that was not built in the borderlands of landscape regions; nor has it a direct river connection to a larger water network. The main active using time of the Iron Age hill fort is dated to the 7th–13th century (Tõnisson 2008, 308–309). According to written sources, at the end of the Late Iron Age the Otepää hill fort acted as the most important military centre of Ugaunia province (Mäesalu 1993; Selart 2002, 102). Less than 5 km north of Otepää is another hill fort – Uandimägi (Oandimägi), which is also dated by ¹⁴C to the last centuries of the Late Iron Age (Tõnisson 2008, 307). In 1224 the Germans started to build the bishop's castle made of stone in Otepää, and for about 10 years Otepää remained the focal castle of Ugaunia province. In 1235 the bishop moved his seat to Tartu, which became his new residence. This decision marked the start of Otepää's decline, and Otepää remained in the shadow of Tartu throughout the Middle Ages.

Otepää played an important role throughout the whole conquest, being the main target in the prehistoric province of Ugaunia. During the conquest Otepää was under attack for numerous times, the hill fort was also sacked several times by the Russians. There are two main directions where the enemy

armies to Otepää originated from: 1) from Russia through Pskov, and 2) from northern Latvia, Beverin, Valmiera, Cēsis, and Turaida.

For the first time Henry mentions Otepää in connection with the German campaign to Ugaunia province in 1208, and similarly to Old Rus chronicles, he translated the toponym of Otepää as *Caput Ursi*, Head of Bear (HCL XII, 6). According to the chronicler, a great army led by Theoderic, brother of the Riga bishop Albert, was assembled in Turaida and when moving during both 'day and night', villages of Ugaunia were plundered and pagans killed. It appears from Henry's chronicle that the first campaign against Otepää took place in early winter. Henry does not mention the exact date, but he says that during the Estonians' counter attack against Beverin and Trikāta, which shortly followed, it was freezing outside – the Latvians could not chase the Estonian riders for long because the weather became too cold, and their horses started to limp.

After the end of truce in 1210 the Germans organized the next campaign to Ugaunia, which was also presumably targeted mainly against Otepää, though the chronicle does not mention Otepää by name. This time the campaign was initiated from Cēsis (Vahtre 1990, 64–65). At the beginning of 1210 the Novgorodian prince Mstislav the Bold with his brother Vladimir, the prince of Pskov, also besieged Otepää with their armies. After an 8-day siege the defenders were forced to surrender to the Russians for the lack of water and food and had to pay 400 marks in silver (80 kg) as tribute (Vahtre 1990, 66).

An important military counteraction carried out by Estonian troops was the campaign against Cēsis in 1210, which culminated with a morally inspiring victory over the crusaders at the Ymera River (Latv. *Jumara*; Est. *Ümera*). The Estonian army besieged the hill fort of Cēsis for three days, but were compelled to return back to Ugaunia after receiving news about a large army that had set out from Riga to confront them. At this point the chronicler also describes the route the Estonians took, crossing the Gauja River on their way back:

On the same day, the Estonians heard that a great congregation of Livs had come together with Caupo and his friends. They accordingly left Fort Wenden [Cēsis] and crossing the Aa [River Gauja], spent the night which is on the Beverin road (HCL XIV, 8).

Enn Tarvel, who edited and commented the translation of Henry's chronicle (by Richard Kleis), assumed that the camping site might have been at Lake Brieze or at Lake Rievine next to the historic Cēsis–Valmiera road (HCL 1982, 109, comment 24). In later times the crossing of the Gauja River on the Cēsis–Valmiera road took place next to Skundriki tavern with the Kieni raft, which was located about 5 km north from Cēsis (Vahtre 1990, 69). In this account Henry used the phrase *via Beverin*, i.e. the road of Beverin, implying that it was a known and often used land route for crossing the Gauja River. Despite this fact, the precise location of the Beverin hill fort remains unknown, though, it has been speculated that the fort might have been situated in today's Valmiera (HCL 1982, 89, comment 7). Similarly, the chronicler uses the term *via in Puidise* (HCL XX II, 2) to designate a road which crosses the Väike-Emajõgi (discussed below), though today the village of Puide is located some 10 km away from the river.

Because Turaida, Cēsis, and Valmiera were directly connected with Riga, the course of the road in northern Latvia can be quite easily followed, and part of the Beverin road described by Henry presumably coincides with the later historic route between Riga and Pskov. In Estonian territory this most used war road heading to Ugaunia from the south must have passed Lake Kaagjärve⁵ (*Restjerw, Rastigerwe*) in Karula parish (HCL 1982, 177, comment 15), which Henry mentions on several occasions. The Latvian equivalents for the name are Rautina and Rautite. In March 1217, when Russian and Estonian troops besieged the Otepää hill fort occupied by the crusaders, a German helping party of 3000 men from Cēsis set out, and near Kaagjärve they met a boy coming from Otepää whom they captured and used as a road guide:

They came to Lake Restjerw [Kaagjärve] and met a boy who was coming from the fort [Otepää]. They took him as a guide and came to the fort at dawn. Leaving the Oeselians on the right, they advanced toward the Russians and fought with them (HCL XX, 7).

The second time when Lake Kaagjärve is recorded is the conquest of Tartu in August 1224 AD. It seems that Henry was present at the siege himself, for his record is extremely vivid. The passage, which must be focused on, is as follows:

⁵ For further discussion see Valk *et al.* 2013a.

They all faithfully obeyed him and assembled with their army at Lake Rastigerwe [Kaagjärve] and called to them the venerable bishop of Riga and his no less venerable brother, Bishop Hermann, with all their men, priests, and knights. When the mysteries of counsel and prayer had taken place there, they sent on ahead the best and strongest men from the army so that crossing Ungannia [Ugaunia] during night and day, they might be able the following morning to take by surprise the fort of Dorpat [Tartu].

Thus, according to toponymic evidence, one of the main land routes used during the conquest started from the mouth of the Daugava, and following the bank of the Gauja (Скытанс 2001) headed towards Valmiera through Turaida and Cēsis. From Valmiera the road continued north-east and reached Lake Kaagjärve, where it turned north to Ugaunia, and its centres Otepää and Tartu.

Now I will discuss some of the possible roads to and from the Late Iron Age Otepää in connection with Early Modern maps. There are three main possible directions to consider: 1) one of the roads came from Tartu, and headed through Otepää to northern Latvia; 2) another main direction was from Otepää to Saccala over the Väike-Emajõgi; 3) the third possible direction was through today's Kanepi, Kirumpää, and Vastseliina to Izborsk and Pskov.

According to an Early Modern Swedish road map from 1686 (EAA 308-2-3), the Tartu–Otepää route (Fig. 2) ran via Maaritsa and Neeruti through Vana-Otepää and not via Pangodi and Nõuni as it is today. The modern version of the road is the main Tartu–Otepää connection also in the atlas by Mellin (1798) and on Rücker's map (1839). At the same time one can see that the Uandimägi hill fort, which is contemporary with Otepää, more likely correlates with the new road via Pangodi. While the distance between the two hill forts is relatively small (c. 5 km), one can speculate that Uandimägi belonged to the same defence system with Otepää and took part in traffic regulation between Tartu and Otepää. As for the roads on the Early Modern maps, they give us clues of the direction of the roads, but surely it is not the exact match of the 13th century road network; the truth must be somewhere in between.

The road from Otepää to northern Latvia can also be followed on the Swedish map of 1686 with some exceptions, and the reservation that the positions of the hill forts and the location of Lake Kaagjärve must be kept in mind

(Fig. 3). One of the vital checkpoints on the road from northern Latvia to Otepää must have been the Sangaste hill fort situated some 13 km south-west from Otepää. The excavations carried out on the rim of the hill fort's plateau in 2007 (Valk 2008, 45–52) revealed that the last, and the largest earthworks at the hill fort date from the first half of the 13th century and are most probably linked with the German conquest, more specifically with the Estonian uprising of 1223, as proposed by Heiki Valk (Lang & Valk 2011, 310–311). In this context Sangaste can be compared with Uandimägi, both being so-called pre-fortifications of Otepää on an important war and trading route.

When taking a look at the road from Otepää to the prehistoric Saccala province, there is very little to rely on the Early Modern Times maps. We only know that there are two main crossing points over the Väike-Emajõgi – Pikasilla and Jõgeveste – which will be discussed further in more detail.

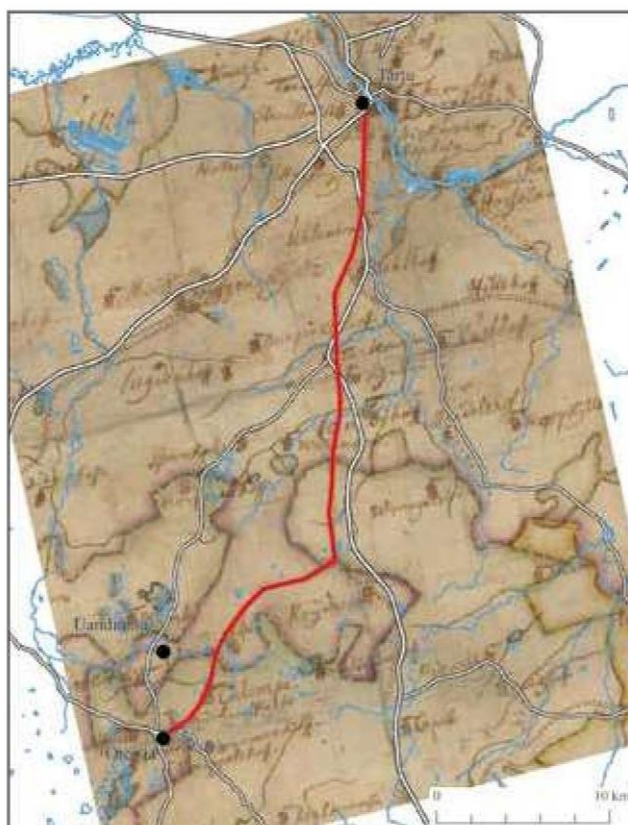


Fig. 2. Tartu–Otepää road on 1686 general map of Livonia (EAA 308-2-3) in comparison with the modern road network.

Jn 2. Tartu–Otepää maantee Liivimaa 1686. a üldkaardil kõrvutatult nüüdisaegse teedevõrguga.

As for the crossing in Jõgeveste, the hill fort of Kuigatsi had some control over the traffic. Although there is no substantial archaeological evidence (only very few potsherds dating from the Late Iron Age (Valk *et al.* 2013b) from Kuigatsi, the logic of the landscape suggests that this hill fort also belonged to the protective rim of hill forts around Otepää.

The most problematic direction to exactly pinpoint with the help of the historical maps is the connection with Russia. It can be assumed that the land route from Russia proceeded via Vastseliina and Kirumpää, where during the 13th and 14th centuries border castles of the Bishopric of Tartu were erected. However, there is no archaeological evidence that these places were also used as fortified strongholds at the end of the Late Iron Age, and in case of Kirumpää the evidence is clearly negative (Valk 2006, 130–132). When looking at the map, one can presume that the Russian campaigns, if they were not

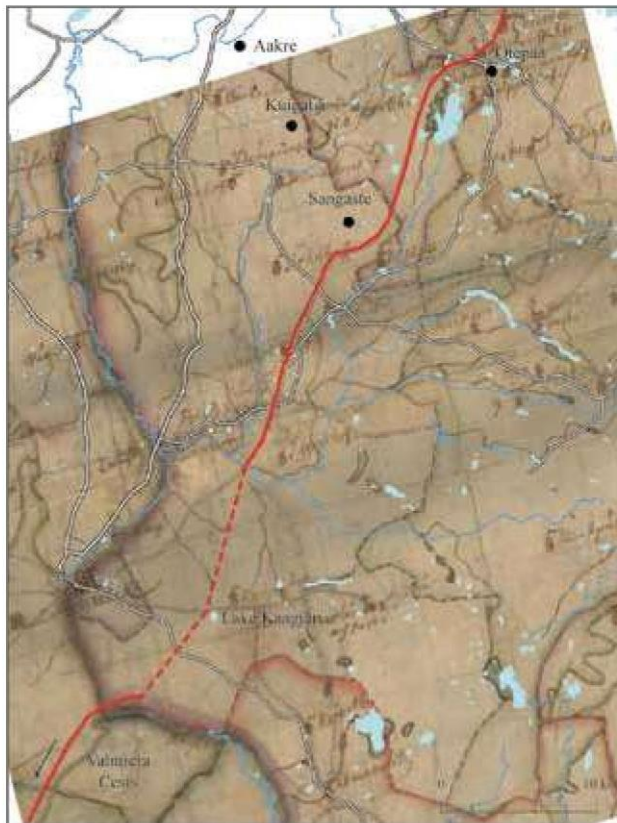


Fig. 3. Possible road from northern Latvia to Otepää. 1686 general map of Livonia (EAA 308-2-3) in comparison with the modern road network.

Jn 3. Võimalik tee Põhja-Lätist Otepäele. Liivimaa 1686. a üldkaart, kõrvutatult nüüdisaegse teedevõrguga.

carried out in winter, came to Otepää somewhere via present-day Vastseliina, Kirumpää, and Kanepi (Fig. 4).

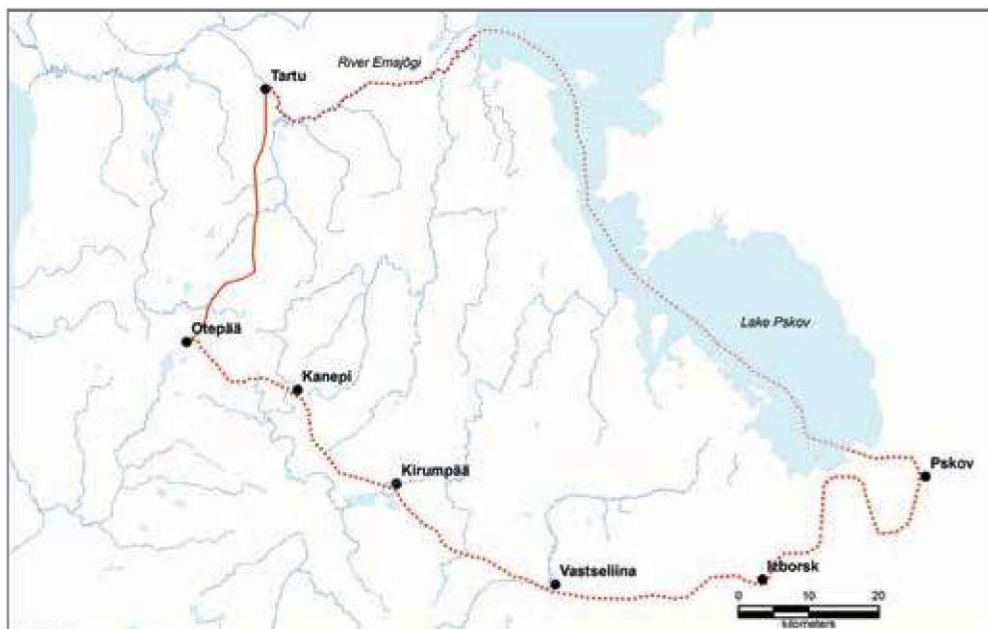


Fig. 4. Possible routes for Russian campaigns to Tartu and Otepää. Map by the Estonian Land Board (Maa-amet).

Jn 4. Võimalikud Vene sõjaretkede marsruudid Tartu ja Otepää vastu.

Tartu

From a geographical perspective Tartu is situated in a very suitable location – it lies at the higher meeting place of the banks of the Emajõgi, which is mostly bordered by low flood plains. Tartu is also one of the most suitable places for crossing the river. In this context Tartu is one of the communication bottlenecks of land routes between southern and central Estonia. According to landscape regions, Tartu stands in the middle of the Ugaunia plateau, which is characterized by deep sandstone river valleys (Arold 2005, 174). To the west from Tartu Ulila, Sangla, and Laeva swamps obstruct the traffic, in the

east the Great Swamp (Emajõe Suursoo) and the lowlands of Lake Peipsi are large natural barriers.

The archaeological excavations carried out on the Tartu hill fort (Trummal 1964; Mäesalu 1980) indicate that the occupation layers of the Viking Age and the Final Iron Age have been disturbed by later building and earth works, and for this reason the data on these periods is slightly vague (Trummal 1964, 10–11). Still, there are at least three radiocarbon dates gathered from the southern foot of the hill fort, which all date between 880–1280 AD (Tvauri 2001, 76–77).

During the first half of the German conquest, Tartu seems to be an insignificant place, and most of the military action in Ugaunia takes place in Otepää, as was discussed previously. In the chronicle Tartu is first mentioned only in 1211, when the war had been going on already for three years. At the beginning of the winter the Germans made a longer looting campaign to Ugaunia, and *found the whole land laid waste by the Letts, and the fort of Dorpat [Tartu] was deserted, burnt by the Letts* (HCL XV, 7). It has been speculated that the hill fort had been deserted since 1192 when it was burnt down by the Russians (Tvauri 2001, 232). Several researchers, though, believe that such a long settlement gap in Tartu is unlikely from the geopolitical perspective of the hill fort (Vahtre 1990, 88; Mäesalu 1993). The previously quoted passage by Henry also states that the Germans crossed the Emajõgi in Tartu, plundering also the region north of the river. Later in the chronicle Tartu is several times mentioned as the place for crossing the river. The hill fort in Tartu is mentioned again only in 1223, and it appears that it had been fortified by the Germans sometime between 1220 and 1223 (HCL XVI, 7; XXVII, 3).

In January 1223 there was an uprising against the Germans in the Viljandi (HCL XXVI, 5), Tartu and, Otepää hill forts (HCL XXVI, 7), which at that time were jointly ruled by the Estonians and the Germans. The information about the uprising spread quickly all over the country, and information was efficiently communicated between Tartu, Otepää, Viljandi, and also Lõhaverre. Right after the Germans had been expelled, the elders of Saccala province sent messengers to Russia to ask for help. Essential is the passage by Henry where he describes the arrival of the Russian army:

They came into Ungannia [Ugaunia] near Dorpat [Tartu], and the people of Dorpat sent them large gifts /---/ The king placed his men in the fort so that he

would have control in Ungannia and throughout all of Esthonia. The king went on to Odenpäh [Otepää] and acted similarly there (HCL XXVII, 3).

As stated in the chronicle, the Russians came first to Tartu and after that moved to Otepää. It can be assumed that the Russian army came across the frozen Lake Peipsi, which was used as a water route in summer and a sleigh track in winter (Fig. 4). In 1223–1224 the Germans tried to conquer Tartu several times, which they finally succeeded in August 1224 (HCL XXVIII: 5, 6). Tartu was the last stronghold to be conquered in continental Estonia.

It is generally acknowledged that Tartu as a settlement and hill fort was established in the valley of the Emajõgi on the most suitable spot for crossing the river. The crossing has been analysed in detail in several writings (e.g. Moora 2002; Alttoa 1995; Tvauri 2001), and its two most probable locations are at the end of today's Lai Street or across the Holm Island, which used to be opposite Town Hall Square – the medieval market place. The river harbour was also probably located near the Holm Island (Alttoa 1995).

It seems that during the prehistoric times Tartu was the focal place where main roads between hill forts crossed the Emajõgi. For example, in the winter of 1211 AD, when the earth had frozen, the Germans gathered a 4000-strong army at the hill fort of Beverin and moved through Ugaunia to Tartu, where they crossed the river and headed towards central Estonia (HCL XV, 7). There might have been alternative crossings of more local importance, e.g. in Vana-Kastre, where in later times a stone castle was built.

River crossings on the Väike-Emajõgi

As for crossing the Väike-Emajõgi (Fig. 5–6), which was the main natural obstacle on the road connecting Saccala and Ugaunia provinces, it is possible to draw some conclusions from Henry's account of the battle of Puide, which took place in August 1218 between the German and Russian troops. The Germans were on their way through Saccala to Viljandi when they received news that "a large army of Russian kings" is arriving in Ugaunia. The Germans turned around and met the Russians for battle on the 'Puide Road' (HCL XXII, 2):

When they had heard this, the Livonian army returned immediately on the same road by which it had come. On the following day they went by the road into Puidise [via in Puidise, Puide] toward Ungannia to meet the Russians. The Russians spent the whole day crossing the river which is called the Mother of Waters [Emajõgi] and they came toward the Livonians. Our scouts returned to us suddenly and said that the army of the Russians was approaching.

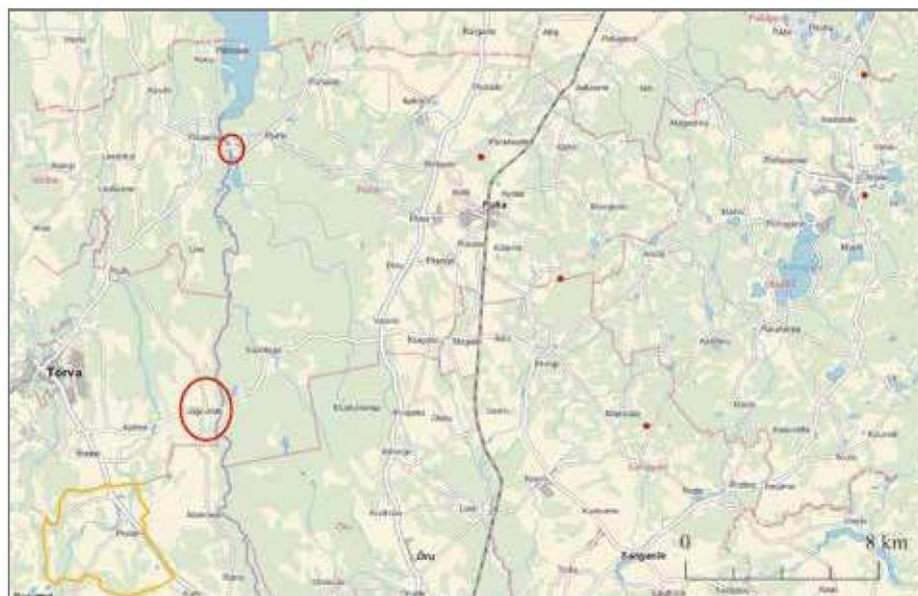


Fig. 5. Possible crossings of the Väike-Emajõgi. Map by the Estonian Land Board (Maa-amet).

Jn 5. Võimalikud Väike-Emajõe ületuskohad.

The first encounter took place probably somewhere near Taagepera (Vahtre 1990, 131) where the Germans forced the Russian troops to flee and followed them about two miles to a small river, which the Russians crossed and remained in defence on the other bank of the river. Despite the large Russian army, their every attempt to cross the river was hit back by the Germans. Several researchers, including Enn Tarvel (HCL 1982, 187, comment 12) and Sulev Vahtre (Vahtre 1990, 131), have speculated that the small river might

be the Õhne River or its tributary Rulli. As when describing the battle, Henry speaks of a 'small mound' where the troops gathered; the clash of the armies probably took place somewhere near Koorküla where the Õhne River runs through a deep valley with 20–30 m high banks, and on the western bank of the river there is a small drumlin-like slope named Anikesemäe (Eesti jõed 2001, 288). According to this account by Henry, it is possible to conclude that the Russians crossed the Väike-Emajõgi somewhere near Koorküla and Puide, probably near today's Jõgeveste. This direct land route that connected

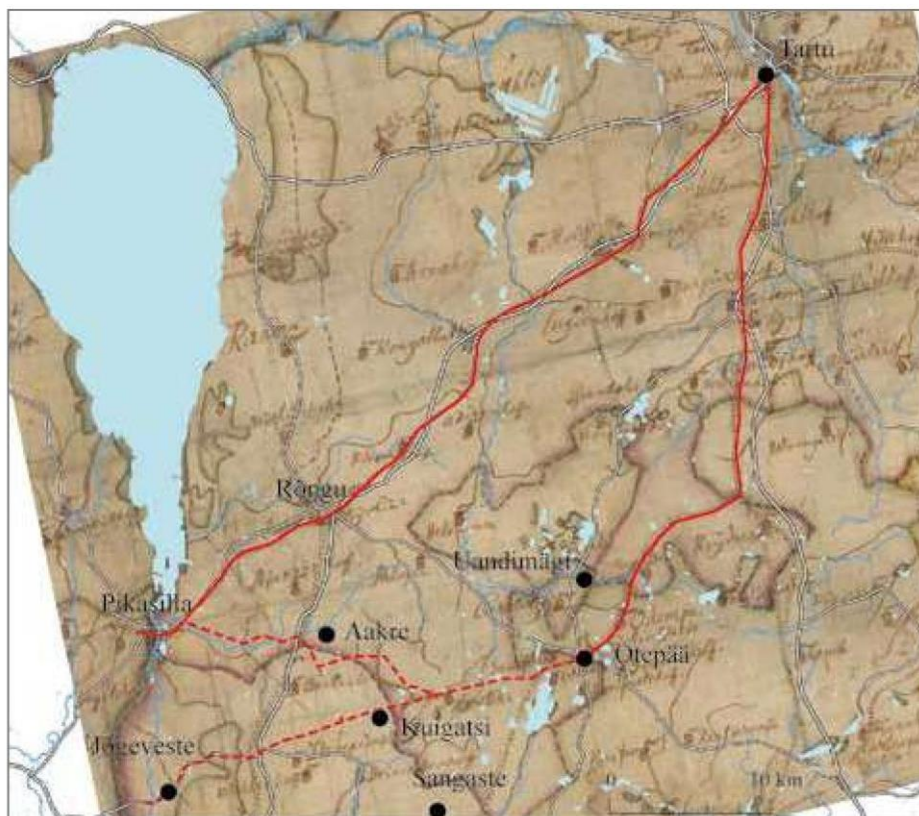


Fig. 6. Connections between Ugaunia and Saccala. 1686 general map of Livonia (EAA 308-2-3) in comparison with the modern road network.

Jn 6. Ühendusteed Ugandi ja Sakala vahel. Liivimaa 1686. a üldkaart, kõrvutatult nüüdisaegse teedevõrguga.

Tõrva, Kuigatsi, and Otepää hill forts could have been used already in the Viking Age.

In 1223 the elders of Saccala sent money and numerous presents to Russia in order to obtain help against the Germans. Yuri Vsevolodovich, the grand duke of Vladimir-Suzdal, sent his brother Jaroslav Vsevolodovich with a large army allied by Novgorodians and Pskovans to Ugaunia and Saccala. The army first reached Tartu, where the ruling power was taken over, and after that moved to Otepää, where similar actions were carried out. From Otepää the army of 20 000 by Henry's account moved across the Väike-Emajõgi via Puide to Saccala (HCL XXVII, 3). While moving from Otepää to Puide, the Russians might have passed the hill fort of Kuigatsi on their way. Although the mentioned road is not shown on Swedish maps, the accounts by Henry and the locations of the Late Iron Age hill forts show that this might have been one of the main roads connecting Ugaunia and the southern part of Saccala during the German conquest.

Another suitable place for crossing the Väike-Emajõgi is at Pikasilla, which is close to the Pikasilla Vooremägi hill fort. The archaeological investigations carried out in 2009 at the hill fort showed that the fort was not in use during the Late Iron Age, and the small hillock functioned as a stronghold during the second half of the 13th century and the first half of the 14th century (Veldi & Valk 2010). Still, some potsherds dating from the end of the Late Iron Age have been found from the occupation layer at the foot of the hill fort, probably indicating a trading or harbour site on the shore of Lake Võrtsjärv. In spite of the fact that the hill fort was not used as a fortification during the first half of the 13th century, the river crossing must have played an important role in the communication between Saccala and Ugaunia provinces already in the pre-historic times. The toponym *Langebrücke* is first mentioned in 1398 in connection with a peace treaty between the Bishopric of Tartu and the Teutonic Order (Ortslexikon 1985, 288); the place name refers to a constructed bridge.

When looking at the historical maps (Fig. 6), there are at least two potential roads to travel from Tartu to Pikasilla. One is the contemporary road through Rõngu, the other alternative might have been through Otepää. It is extremely difficult to determine which of them could be the main road at the end of the Late Iron Age, but as Otepää was the focal centre of the province, it also served as a vital crossroads.

Centres and roads in Saccala

The two main centres of Saccala, which were the targets of crusaders during the German conquest, were the Viljandi and Lõhavere hill forts. In this respect, their fate as the conquest developed was rather similar to Otepää and Tartu. At the beginning of the conquest Lõhavere and its leader Lembitu played a key role, but after the St Matthew's Day battle in 1217 when Lembitu was killed, Lõhavere's central position in the war started to decline. Now I will briefly consider the communication possibilities of these two hill forts with the surrounding areas.

Viljandi

The Viljandi prehistoric hill fort was situated on the high western shore of Lake Viljandi, on the location of the medieval Order castle. At the end of the Late Iron Age, especially during the German conquest, the Viljandi hill fort was the main centre of Saccala province. Altogether the hill fort was mentioned in the Livonian Chronicle on 18 occasions (Tõnisson 2008, 275).

In the case of Viljandi there were two main sieges, respectively in 1211 (HCL XIV, 11) and 1223 (HCL XXVII, 2), which must be considered, and the last-mentioned uprising started on the 29th of January 1223 (HCL XXVI). The first siege of Viljandi took place at the beginning of 1211, right before the 25th of March. Therefore, it has to be kept in mind that it was still winter or early spring. At least there was still snow, as stated in the chronicle while Henry describes how the besiegers used snow and ice to put out the fire on the burning besieging machines (HCL XIV, 11). The campaign originated from Turaida, and possibly the previously discussed road by Lake *Astigerwe* was used. This was also a suitable time to haul along the small stone throwing machine that the Estonians had never seen before, and it was effectively used against the defenders of the hill fort (HCL XIV, 11). Finally, the defenders had to surrender and accept the new faith.

After the uprising in 1223 (discussed above) the Estonians gained once again power over the Viljandi hill fort. The first objective for the Germans was to conquer Viljandi as the main stronghold in Saccala. The second siege took place in the August heat of 1223. The siege lasted for 15 days, and finally

the defenders had to surrender, though the hill fort itself was not destroyed. After conquering Viljandi the army moved on to Lõhavere, which surrendered quickly without longer resistance. This once again emphasizes that at the end of the war Lõhavere was only of local importance. The possible roads connecting Viljandi with Ugaunia, Latvia, and northern Estonia will be discussed below.

Lõhavere

The Lõhavere hill fort is located on a separate hillock, which has largely been shaped by man and is therefore independent of the surrounding landscape (Tõnisson 2008, 272). The hill fort is best known for being the residence of Lembitu, the best-known Estonian war chief. In connection with roads and communication concerning Lõhavere Henry's accounts on sacking the hill fort during the Lent of 1215 (4th March – 16th April; HCL XVIII, 7), the battle of St Matthew's Day in 1217 (HCL XXI, 2), and the Estonian uprising in 1223 (HCL XXVI, 5) are the most informative ones. According to Henry's record on plundering Lõhavere in the spring of 1215, the enemy troops moved to Saccala and passed the Viljandi hill fort, leaving it untouched, and organized a surprise attack on Lembitu's stronghold, which surrendered and accepted the Christian faith. Probably the same road from Latvia to Saccala was used two years later when the Estonian army encountered their enemies somewhere in a field between Lõhavere and Viljandi for the St Matthew's Day battle, which was a major loss for Estonians with the death of Lembitu. Before entering Saccala the German army assembled for a prayer near Evele (Wohlfart) in northern Latvia (HCL XXI, 2), which seems to have been a focal place situated on the road from Valmiera by Lake *Astigerwe* (today Lake Burtnieki, Fig. 8).

Roads in Saccala

Considering the roads to the province of Saccala, three main directions call for discussion: 1) two of the most used land routes crossed the Väike-Emajõgi, and connected Viljandi and/or other parts of Saccala with Tartu and Otepää – the main strongholds of Ugaunia; 2) the second direction was Saccala's connection with northern Latvia, the land road from Cēsis and Valmi-

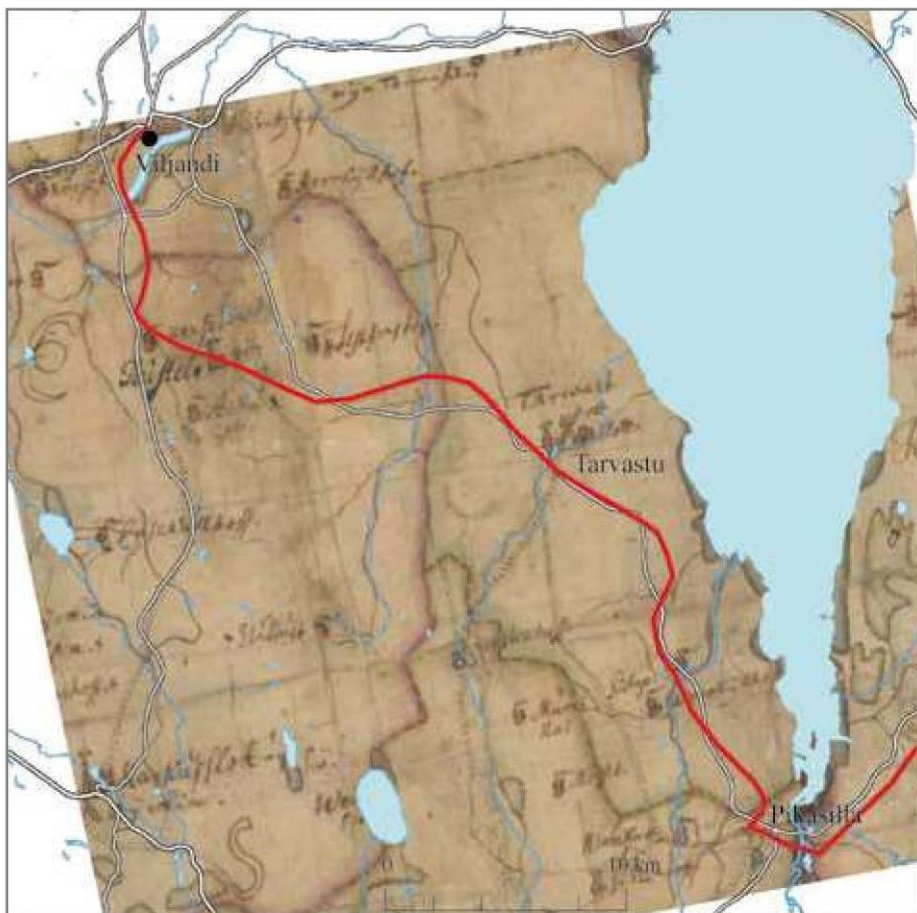


Fig. 7. Pikasilla–Tarvaste–Viljandi road. 1686 general map of Livonia (EAA 308-2-3) in comparison with the modern road network.

Jn 7. Pikasilla–Tarvaste–Viljandi maantee. Liivimaa 1686. a üldkaart, kõrvutatult nüüdisaegse teedevõrguga.

era (Wolmar) to Viljandi, respectively; 3) the third main direction was from Viljandi to northern Estonia across the Navesti River; this road also passed the vicinity of the Lõhavere hill fort.

As noted, the two possible crossings of the Väike-Emajõgi provided two routes connecting Ugaunia and Saccala. It is most probable that the crossing at Pikasilla was used if the destination was the northern part of Saccala, primarily Viljandi and Lõhavere, and the *via in Puidise*, as described in the



Fig. 8. Ruhja, Lake Burtineki (Asti), and Wohlfart. 1686 general map of Livonia (EAA 308-2-3).

Jn 8. Ruhja, Burtnieki (Asti) järv ja Wohlfart. Liivimaa 1686. a üldkaart.

chronicle, was chosen for moving to southern Saccala or farther onwards to northern Latvia. The land road from Pikasilla to Viljandi (Fig. 7) presumably proceeded through Tarvastu, which has been regarded as a Late Iron Age hill fort (Tõnisson 2008, 279), though, there is no archaeological proof for this assumption.

There are several episodes in the chronicle where Henry mentions Lake Burtnieki (*Astigerwe*) in northern Latvia as a significant waypoint from Cēsis or Valmiera to plunder the province of Saccala. For example, shortly after the siege of Beverin (probably, present-day Valmiera) by Estonians in 1208, Latvians assembled a strong army to avenge their killed fellow countrymen, and again going “both day and night”, they attacked Saccala, *and from morning*

to evening they killed those whom they found, both women and children, together with three hundred of the better men and leaders of that province, not counting innumerable others (HCL XII, 6). Henry claims that they captured so much booty that they had to use special draft animals to haul it back to Livonia. There is an important detail that while going back to Livonia, the allied armies made a stop near Lake Burtineki (Asti) on the 14th of December 1208 (Sunday Gaudete), where they rested and shared the booty.

It seems that Lake Burtineki was a well-known resting and army assembly point, but also a place for religious procedures before battles. Another passage describes how the enemy army was gathering near the lake in January 1211 but was forced to flee, for they encountered the Estonian troops who were on their way to plunder Livonia (HCL XIV, 10). These accounts allow us to assume that one of the main land routes connecting northern Latvia with Saccala passed Lake Burtneki.

When looking at the 1686 map of Livonia, one can presume that the most possible route from Cēsis through Valmiera passed Lake Burtneki and went through Rujiena (Ruhja) towards Saccala (Fig. 8). Actually, the Swedish Era map gives us three opportunities to travel from Rujiena to Saccala: the first one heads north-east towards Karksi, and the two others direct north-west, towards the south-western coast of Estonia. It is evident that in order to go to Viljandi and Lõhavere, the route through Karksi was chosen (Fig. 9).

As for the road from Viljandi to Lõhavere, and from there to northern Estonia across the Navesti River, the regional map of 1683 (EAA 308-2-200) and the Livonian map of 1686 (EAA 308-2-3; Fig. 10) show almost the same road as it is used today via Olustvere with the river crossing in the village of Navesti. The alternative branch of this road, which is also presented on the historical maps, winds through Vastsemõisa and Suure-Jaani ending up at the same place in Navesti village. Neither branch of the road goes directly through the Lõhavere hill fort, but the distance from the roads is not long – only 1.5–3 km.

According to the Swedish Era map of 1686, the road from the village of Navesti onwards to central and northern Estonia at first went through present-day Võhma and then headed somewhat north-east where it joined the Põltsamaa–Paide road somewhere near present-day Imavere. The same route might have been also used during the German conquest while the landscape north-west of Navesti is difficult and covered with forests and swamps. Even today the local roads follow only the highest parts of the terrain. Thus,

it was not possible to go straight from Navesti to northern Estonia, but a short detour to north-east was in order.



Fig. 9. Rujena–Karksi–Viljandi road. 1686 general map of Livonia (EAA 308-2-3) in comparison with the modern road network.

Jn 9. Ruhja–Karksi–Viljandi maantee. Liivimaa 1686. a üldkaart, kõrvutatult nüüdisaegse teedevõrguga.

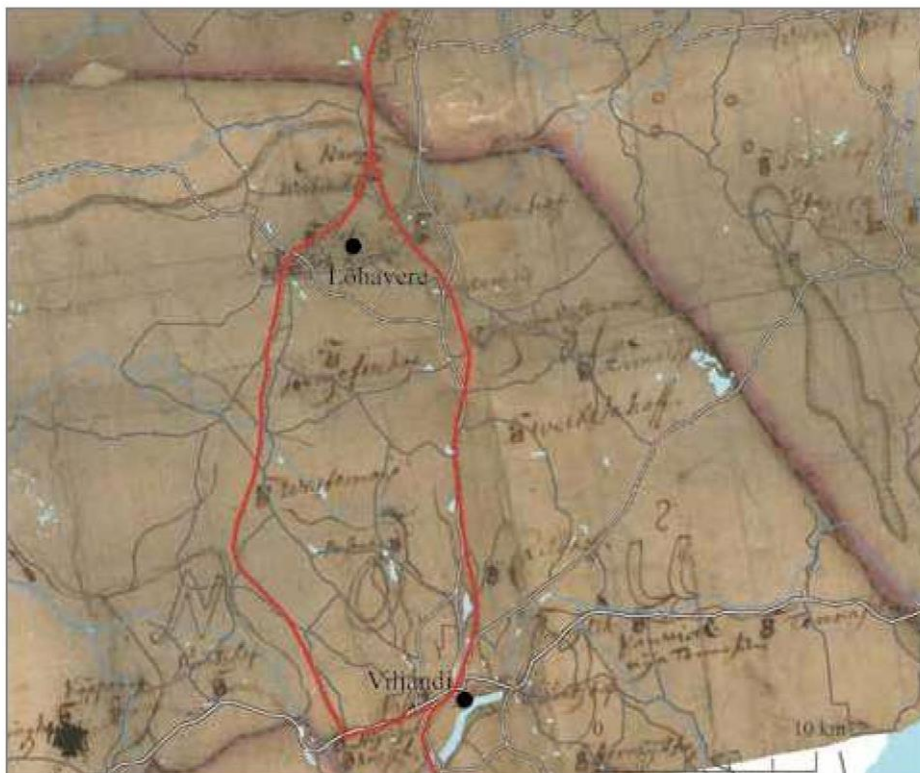


Fig. 10. Viljandi-Lõhavere-Navesti road. 1686 general map of Livonia (EAA 308-2-3) in comparison with the modern road network.

Jn 10. Viljandi-Lõhavere-Navesti maantee. Liivimaa 1686. a üldkaart, kõrvutatult nüüdisaegse teedevõrguga.

Conclusions

To sum it up, the two main directions to Ugaunia and Saccala provinces during the German conquest originated from Russia (Novgorod and Pskov) and today's northern Latvia.

- 1) From the Russian territory there were two possible main routes: either the water way (winter way) of Lake Peipsi and the Emajõgi to Tartu or the road probably coming from Vastseliina through

Kirumpää and Otepää to Tartu. In cases when the water or winter way was used, Tartu was always attacked before Otepää.

- 2) The road from northern Latvia, i.e. through Cēsis, Valmiera, and Turaida had two diverging branches:
 - a) When the campaign was targeted against Ugaunia, i.e. Otepää or Tartu, the road through south-eastern Estonia passing Lake Kaagjärve was chosen.
 - b) When the campaign was targeted against Saccala, i.e. Viljandi and Lõhavere, the road passing Lake Burtnieki (Asti) was chosen. From that lake the armies probably moved via Rujiena and Karksi to Viljandi, and from there to Lõhavere. From Lõhavere to northern Estonia the main natural obstacle – the Navesti River – was most probably crossed near the village of Navesti.

When discussing the communication between the Estonian hill forts of Ugaunia and Saccala provinces the crossings of the Väike-Emajõgi can give us an idea where the main roads might have been situated:

- 1) One of the possible crossings mentioned in the chronicle, also referred to as the Puide road, was located next to the village of Puide (today Jõgeveste) and used for the connection between Ugaunia, i.e. from Otepää, and the southern parts of Saccala.
- 2) The other crossing was probably at Pikasilla, on the lower course of the river, and served the connection from Tartu and Otepää to Viljandi and the northern part of Saccala, most probably via Tarvastu.

Presumably, larger campaigns followed the main roads that connected the Estonian hill forts. As in several cases the conquerors used the help of road guides, it seems that at first they had no knowledge of the local road network. At the same time the written sources do not say anything about building new roads, which means that the medieval road network is largely based on the prehistoric road system. The extent of the campaign indicates that the network of roads between the Late Iron Age hill forts was considerable, and at some places it could be even used for hauling carriages.

The hill forts that the Germans captured and did not re-build into stone castles (for example Lõhavere and Sangaste) remained away from the main

medieval roads, lost their importance as centres, and became part of the periphery. Tartu and Viljandi, situated at the crossroads, became important nodal points of long-distance travel and later grew into Hanseatic towns, very much carrying the German town culture.

Otepää did have some importance at the beginning of the Middle Ages, but after the war between the bishop of Tartu and the Teutonic Order at the end of the 14th century it lost its centrality and continued to exist as a local rural centre never becoming a real town. The case of Lõhavere is somewhat different – after the battle of St Matthew's Day it remained in the periphery, and conquerors were not interested in building it up as a stone castle. In this sense Otepää and Lõhavere were alike – at the beginning of the German conquest both acted as provincial centres, but later Viljandi and Tartu took over their leading position and grew into medieval towns.

Acknowledgments. The author is grateful to Heiki Valk for comments and improvement of the manuscript.

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Lõuna-Eesti teed ja linnused Henriku Liivimaa kroonikas. Resümee

Martti Veldi

Henriku Liivimaa kroonika on Eesti ajaloo teaduses põhjalikult analüüsitud ja arutatud. Mõnevõrra vähem on uuritud vallutuse käigus kasutatud teedevõrku ja selle seost kohalike linnuste-võimukeskustega.

Artikkel käsitleb Ugandi ja Sakala muinasmaakondade kesksete linnuste kommunikatsiooni võimalusi ja nende kohta maismaateede võrgus. Lähemalt vaadeldakse Otepää, Tartu, Viljandi ja Lõhavere linnuseid (jn 1). Metoodiliselt seob uurimus Henriku kroonika teated arheoloogiliste andmete ning 17. sajandi kaartidega, mis on koostatud enne laialdasemaid uusaegseid maastikumuudatusi ja seeläbi võimaldavad teatud määral iseloomustada ka muinas- ja keskaegset maastikku. Teksti illustreerimiseks on kasutatud peamiselt 1686. aasta Liivimaa kaarti (EAA 308-2-3).

Välisvallutuse seisukohalt lähtusid kaks peamist liiklussuunda Ugandi ja Sakala maakondadesse Venemaalt (Pihkvast ja Novgorodist) ja tänapäeva Põhja-Lätist (Cēsisest, Valmierast ja Turaidast). Venemaalt tulles oli võimalik kasutada nii maa- kui ka veeteed (jn 4), viimast külmal ajal ka taliteena. Veeteel kulges Pihkvast üle Lämmijärve ja Peipsi järve Emajõe suudmesse ja

sealt Tartusse. Venemaalt tuleva maatee peasiht oli ilmselt Otepää ning see tee kulges arvatavasti läbi Vastseliina, Kirumpää ja Kanepi.

Põhja-Läti aladelt Ugandisse liikumiseks kasutati maateed, mis möödus kroonikas mitu korda mainitud Kaagjärve (Rautina) järvest (jn 3) ning suundus sealt edasi Otepää ja Tartu (jn 2) poole. Juhul, kui sihtmärgiks oli Sakala (Viljandi ja Lõhavere), kogunesid võõrväed Asti ehk Burtneki järve juures (jn 8), kust liiguti edasi ilmselt Ruhja (Rujena) ja Karksi kaudu Viljandisse (jn 9). Viljandist Põhja-Eestisse minev maatee (jn 10) möödus Lõhavere linnuse lähiümbrusest ning suundus Navesti jõe poole, kus üks peamisi ületuskohti oli Navesti küla juures.

Ugandi ja Sakala maakondade linnuste omavahelises suhtluses oli suurimaks looduslikuks takistuseks Väike-Emajõgi, mille ületamiseks muinasaja lõpus oli vähemalt kaks peamist kohta – Jõgeveste ja Pikasilla (jn 5, 6). Jõgi ületati Jõgevestes, kui suhtlus toimus Otepää ja Sakala lõunaosa (ning edasi Põhja-Läti) vahel, ja Pikasillas, kui suhtlus toimus Tartu või Otepää ja Viljandi vahel (jn 7).

Võib arvata, et suuremad sõjalised kampaaniad tuginesid juba toimivale, kohalike linnuste vahelisele teedevõrgule. Kuna kroonik mainib mitmel korral teejuhtide kasutamist, siis ei olnud vallutajad vähemalt esialgu kohaliku teedevõrguga kuigi kursis. Samuti ei räägi kroonik midagi uute teede ehitamisest, mis tähendab, et keskaja vältel kasutuses olnud teedevõrk võib osaliselt põhineda hilisrauaaegsel. Sõjakäikude ulatus näitab, et selleaegsete linnuste vahelised teed olid täiesti arvestatavad ja kohati võisid olla piisavalt head isegi ratasveokite kasutamiseks.

Sakslaste vallutatud linnused, mida ei ehitatud üles kivilinnusteks (nt Lõhavere), jäid kõrvale peamistest keskaegsetest teedest ning kaotasid oma tähtsuse keskustena. Seevastu Tartu ja Viljandi, mis paiknesid teede ristumiskohas, kujunesid hansalinnadena olulisteks kaubanduslikeks pidepunktideks. Otepääl oli küll keskaja algul mõningane tähtsus, kuid koht kaotas peagi oma keskse positsiooni. Selle poolest jagasid Lõhavere ja Otepää sarnast saatust: Saksa vallutuse algusaastail olid mõlemad aktiivsed maakonnakeskused, kuid sõja jätkudes suurenes Viljandi ja Tartu roll; mõlemad kujunesid hiljem keskaegseteks linnadeks.