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THE FORTRESS OF KIVENNAPA ON THE KARELIAN ISTHMUS:
THE RESULTS OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

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INTRODUCTION

The locality and parish of Kivennapa, situated 70 km southeast from Vyborg (Fig. 1), are first mentioned in 1445 when the dean of the church parish of Pyhäristi (En. Holy Cross) Makerland granted three marks in silver to the new churches of Måla (Fi. Muolaa; at present Pravdinskoye), Nyökyrkka (Fi. Uusikirkko; at present Polyany) and Kivennapa (at present Pervomayskoye) (Kiuru 1961: 13). The church of Kivennapa was dedicated to St. Olaf. In the period 1539–61, the parish was called Hanttula and the church was located in the village of the same name, but afterwards the parish got back its original name and third church was built on the place of the first one (Kiuru 1961: 13; Balashov 1996: 84).

The origin of the name of the parish and the fortress is variously interpreted to derive either from the Swedish words *Kifva nebb* – vanguard fortification, or from the Finnish words *Kivi* – stone, and *napa* – navel (Sillman 1912a: 4–5; Kiuru 1961: 14; Balashov 1996: 85). If the Swedish etymological version is to be accepted then the first defences appeared here not later than the first mention of this name, i.e. in the mid-15th century.

HISTORY OF THE FORTRESS

The exact construction time of the fortress has not been defined. It has been proposed that it was not built until the times of king Gustav I Vasa (ruled 1523–60), when the strengthening of Sweden's eastern border took place. The initial fortifications were wooden (*blockhus*) but the aggravated international situation forced the Swedes to take

additional measures and, in 1552, the rampart was strengthened by means of a stone foundation (Sillman 1912b: 99; Kiuru 1961: 21). The fortress of Kivennapa held an extremely advantageous strategic position not far from the Swedish–Russian border, which was the Sestra River (Fi. Rajajoki). Located on a high hill dominating the locality (127 m asl) and towering over the old Vyborg road, Kivennapa served from the moment of its foundation to defend the frontier territories (Fi. Riitamaa – ‘Disputed Land’) against local intrusions and to confront the first strike by detaining Russian troops who would fight their way towards Vyborg Fortress. Only before the mid-16th century, these attempts took place repeatedly in 1294, 1322, 1323, 1351, 1411, 1495, 1523, 1555 and 1556 (Lovén 1996: 97). Its importance as a frontier fort was confirmed on March 11, 1555, when the fortress's garrison together with a small militia force of peasants from the neighbouring villages defeated a large Russian army at Joutselkä (present Simagino) (Kiuru 1961: 23–4; Gipping 2003 [1909]: 150–1). That conflict expanded into a large-scale war. Next year, a raid of a large Russian army to Vyborg took place and the fortress of Kivennapa was devastated (Nikonovskaya letopis 1904: 264; Gipping 2003 [1909]: 156). During the Northern War (1700–21), Russian troops seized redoubts here in 1706 (Timchenko-Ruban 1901: 183–4).

The fortress is represented in a map ‘Euräpä Häräd Kijvännäbs Sochn’ from 1643 by royal land surveyor Erick Nilsson Aspegreen (1643; see also Kiuru 1961: 22). The drawing depicts a fortress of quadrangle plan with semi-circular bastions (*basteas*) at the corners oriented roughly to the

four cardinal points (Fig. 2). The exact time of construction of these defences is unknown. The bastion-type fortification spread over Sweden under king Johan III (ruled 1568–92) owing to the activities of military architects from Italy (Duffy 1979: 164). The plan of the fortress with bastions conforms in general to the early bastion defences. No other installations inside the fortress are shown in Aspegreen’s map. Beyond the limits of fortifications, on the northeastern side, the *prästegårdh* – pastor’s estate is located. On the southern and western sides, the fortress was adjoined by fields, while immediately in front of the southern bastion and southwestern curtain wall a bogged area is represented in the map. This area has survived until now.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

At present, the fortress of Kivennapa presents a well-preserved architectural and archaeological site. It is situated at the southeastern outskirts of what is now the village of Pervomayskoye, 0.8 km southeast from the crossroads in the centre of the village, on the high hill of Linnamäki (at present called Gora Staraya Krepost – Mount Old Fortress) (Fig. 3).

The area of the fortress was actively exploited both in the Soviet period and when it was part of the Finnish Republic. Until the Soviet period, on the Linnamäki hill there was the manor of the parish minister – *Pappila*, and the parish church. On

the fortress platform, foundations of 20th-century buildings are preserved. The area of the fortress, scarped slopes and the ramparts are overgrown by deciduous trees and bushes. Around the site there are fields; at the southwestern side, a lime alley is preserved which constituted a part of the park of the pastor’s manor.

Information about finds made on Kivennapa hill can be found in an article published in Savo-Karjala newspaper in 1893 (pen-name U.L.). It is reported that while foundations of the new vicarage were dug, plenty of bones (skulls and other human bones) were found and that several horse wagons were needed to transport all of the bones to the contemporary cemetery (U.L./Savo-Karjala 1893). Iron armour, two swords (one with words *Pro virtute et patria*), cannon balls of iron and stone, bullets, spearheads, and ‘smaller artefacts’ were found as well.

Archaeological prospecting in the fortress of Kivennapa was conducted in 2003 (Belskiy 2003). On the basis of the results, documents have been prepared for inclusion of this site into the list of protected sites of cultural heritage. The studies of the site were continued in 2013, and included the visual examination of the fortress and its close neighbourhood in order to define the boundaries of and damages suffered by this object; in addition, test excavations were conducted. On the basis of these investigations, the limits of the area to be protected were proposed (Fig. 3).

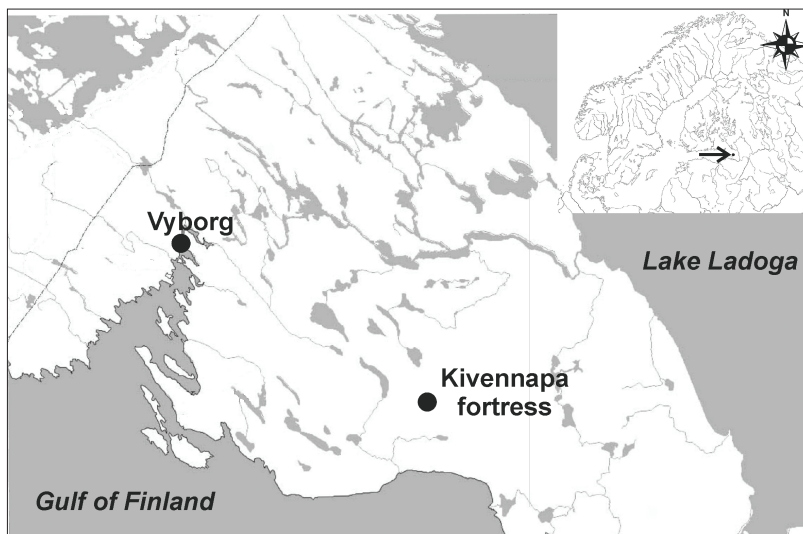


Fig. 1. Map of the Karelian Isthmus and the location of Kivennapa fortress. Drawing: S. Belskiy.

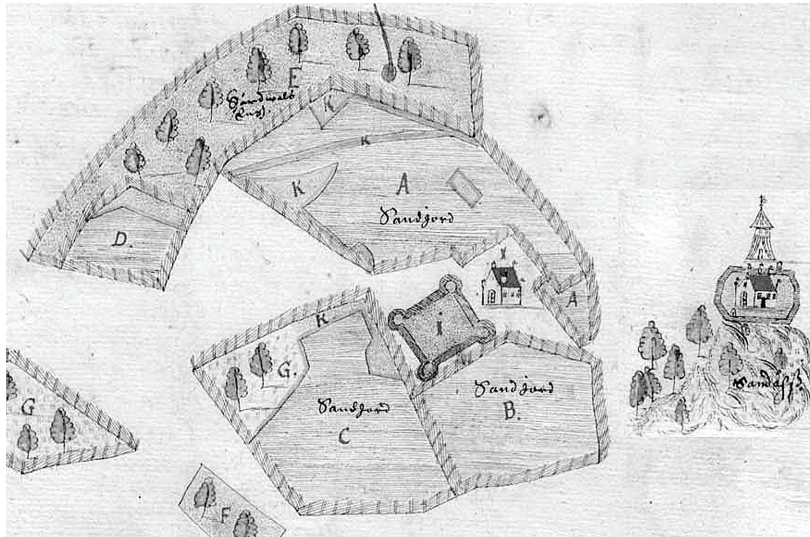


Fig.2. The fragments of map 'Euräpä Härad Kivvennäbs Sochn', from 1643 by royal land surveyor Erick Nilsson Aspegreen, depicting the fortress (left) and the church (right) (original image: Geometrisch affrijningh och calculation uppå Euräpä härad Nykirkio, Kyvennäbs och Måla sochner anno 1643 arbetat af Erich Nilsson Aspegreen // MHA G 1 57-58. National Archives Service, Helsinki).

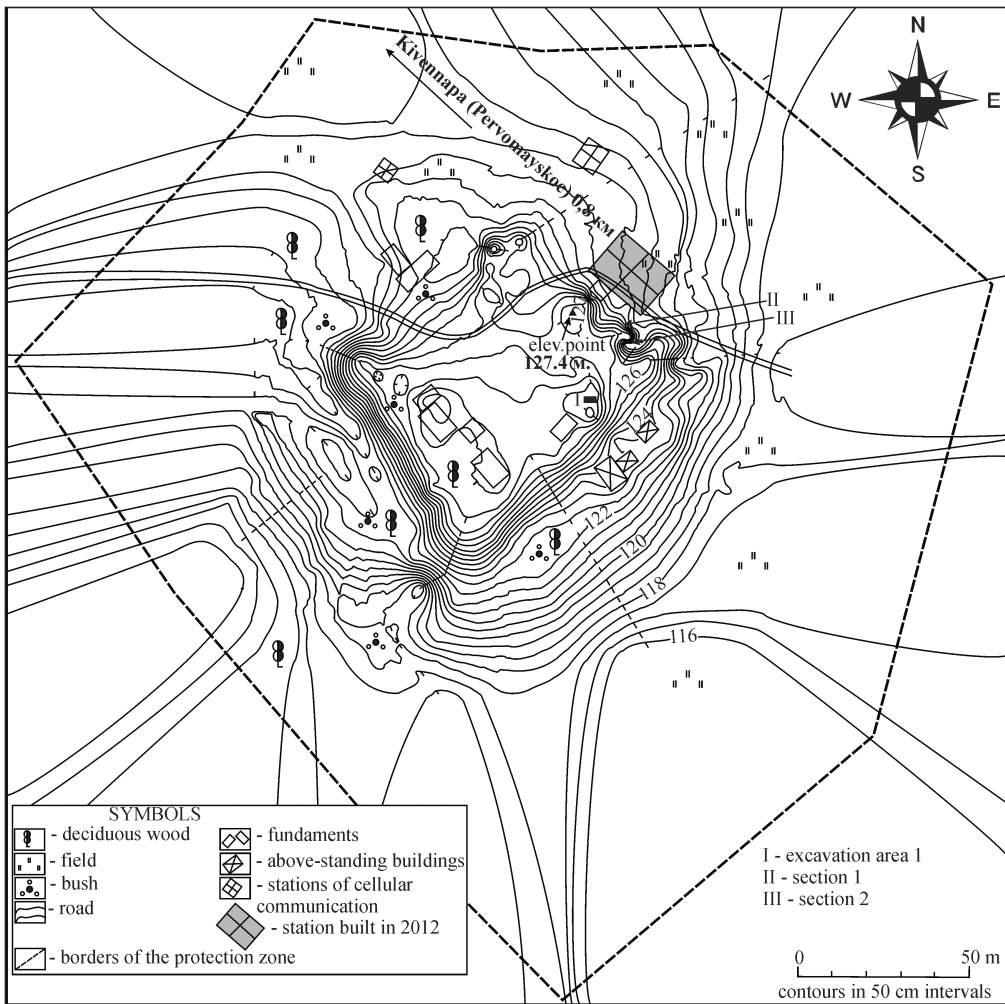


Fig. 3. Modern plan of the fortress and excavation units. Drawing: S. Belskiy and P. Sorokin.

Fortification

The fortress with a flat platform occupying the top of the hill is of quadrangular plan measuring about 90 m along the southwest–northeast line, and ca. 80 m from southeast to northwest (Fig. 3). It was oriented with its bastions approximately to the four cardinal points. The southeastern and southwestern curtains, limited by the slope of the hill, are preserved almost completely, while the northwestern and northeastern ones turned out to have been disturbed by recent–past economic buildings (Fig. 4). The southern and western bastions of the fortress are better preserved than the other two (Fig. 5). The northern bastion is especially badly disturbed, and represented by an accumulation of granite boulders, which once probably were part of the earthen ramparts. At the external side of the eastern bastion there are two pits presenting the remains of structures of World War II period.

On the northeastern side, the earthen defences of the fortress are adjoined by granite foundations of three buildings of the 19th to early 20th centuries, which are supposedly related with the pastor's manor (Fig. 3). In the northwestern and northeastern curtain walls there are entrances. A road paved with cobblestones leads from the Vyborg highway to the hill by the northwestern curtain, where presumably a passage into the fortress was located. It seems that the route of this road has never been changed since the construction of the fortress, or perhaps since even earlier times.

In the course of construction of the fortress, the slopes of the summit of the hill were scarped and a rectangular platform was built in the centre. It is

best traceable on the western and southern sides where the platform is raised to the height of 7 to 12 m (Figs. 4 and 5). The inner area is not horizontal but falls northeastwards; the parapet of the rampart and its rise over the inner area are not traceable. On the western side, near the foot of the scarped slope, a ditch 5–6 m wide is distinctly recognizable and preserved to the depth of 2–2.5 m. At the same time, this ditch is not discernible on the other sides. Near the western foot of the hill, beyond the ditch, there are ruined concrete structures of World War II period. Thus, even those elements of the structure of the fortress that are discernible today demonstrate that we are dealing with a fairly powerful fortified installation

A number of surface areas were cleared and test pits dug in the disturbed areas of the western and eastern bastions and northeastern curtain wall in order to get an idea of the constructive features of the defences (Fig. 6). The excavations demonstrated that the fortifications were constructed with due regard for the original relief by scarping the natural slopes of the hill and constructing a quadrangular defensive platform. It was established that the thickness of the erected platform varies from 1 m in the centre on the hill's summit to several metres at its edges. Courses of granite boulders and cobbles strengthening the construction of the ramparts were traced in places inside the earthen bastions.

Cemetery

Along with clearings, a test excavation unit with an area of 11 square metres was laid out in the centre of the relatively flat platform, in its slightly depressed area (Fig. 3). In this unit, the stratigraphy



Fig. 4. General view of the fortifications; southwestern curtain. Photo: S. Belskiy.



Fig. 5. General view of the fortifications; western bastion. Photo: S. Belskiy.



Fig. 6. Section of the defensive ramparts; southern bastion. Photo: S. Belskiy.

of cultural deposits was studied. The upper soil layer of highly humic sandy loam was 0.35–0.6 m thick and evidently resulted from the recent economic activities. Beneath it there was a horizon of mixed, slightly humic yellow sand 0.3–0.4 m thick. In this stratum, outlines of four grave pits were revealed.

Burial no. 1

The outline of grave pit no. 1 was traceable at the depth of 0.56 m from the present-day surface in the central area of the excavation, and was distinguishable as an oval spot of slightly humic yellow sand. Its dimensions were approximately 1.8 m in the southwest–northeast direction and 0.6 m in the northwest–southeast direction.

The dead was buried in a pit at the depth of 0.65 m from the modern surface and sunk into the virgin soil to a depth of up to 0.2 m (Figs. 7 and 8). The grave was measuring 1.65 m along the southwest–northeast axis and 0.5 m in the northwest–southeast direction. It had vertical walls and a flat bottom. The skeleton was poorly preserved, lying in an anatomical position extended on the back, and oriented to southwest (azimuth 262°). The skull was fragmentary and lying on the right side. The partly preserved bones included the vertebral column, clavicles, the right and left humeri, left forearm, fragments of the pelvis, femoral bones, and tibiae. Judging by the position of the forearm bones, the arms of the buried were crossed in the pelvic area. No artefacts or

remains of a coffin were found near the skeleton. A noteworthy feature revealed during the excavations of this burial was represented by three stones ranged over the bottom of the grave around the skull. The largest of the stones, measuring 0.33×0.23 m, was installed near the occipital part, while the two others of lesser dimensions were at the sides of the cranium.

Burial no. 2

The outline of burial pit no. 2 was traceable at the depth 0.54 m from the modern surface as an oval spot of slightly humic yellow sand. It was measuring approximately 1.9 m from west to east and 0.8 m from north to south. In the central area, graves no. 1 and no. 2 joined suggesting that grave no. 2 was dug slightly later than grave no. 1 and partly cut its northwestern wall.

No remains of a skeleton, a coffin or artefacts were found in grave no. 2 (Figs. 7 and 8). However, there is no doubt that we are dealing exactly with a grave. It was deeper than pit no. 1 with a depth of 0.45 m from the level of virgin soil. After excavations, its dimensions were determined as 1.75 m from west to east and 0.6 m in the north–south direction. It had vertical walls and a flat bottom.

Burial no. 3.

The outline of grave no. 3 became visible in the southern area of the excavation at a depth of 0.77

m from the modern surface. It was traceable as an oval spot of slightly humic yellow sand. It was measuring roughly 2.1 m along the southwest–northeast axis and 0.8 m in the northwest–south–east direction.

The deceased was buried in a pit sunk into the virgin soil to the depth of 0.16 m (Figs. 7 and 8). It was measuring 2 m along the southwest–northeast axis and 0.7 m in the northwest–southeast direction. The pit had vertical walls and a flat bottom. The skeleton was poorly preserved, lying in an anatomical order extended on the back. It was oriented with the head to southwest (azimuth 253°). The cranium was fragmentary and lying on the right side. Partly preserved skeletal remains included bones of the right humerus, forearms, fragments of the pelvis, left femur and tibia, as well as bones of the left foot. Judging by the position of the forearm bones, the arms of the buried were crossed in the area of the pelvis. No remains of a coffin were found.

A poorly corroded iron one-piece buckle of nearly oval form was found in the inside area of the distal end of the left femur (Fig. 7). No other artefacts were found in the grave.

Burial no. 4.

Grave no. 4 was partly uncovered in the northwestern corner of the excavation at the depth of 0.32 m from the modern surface (Figs. 7 and 8). The

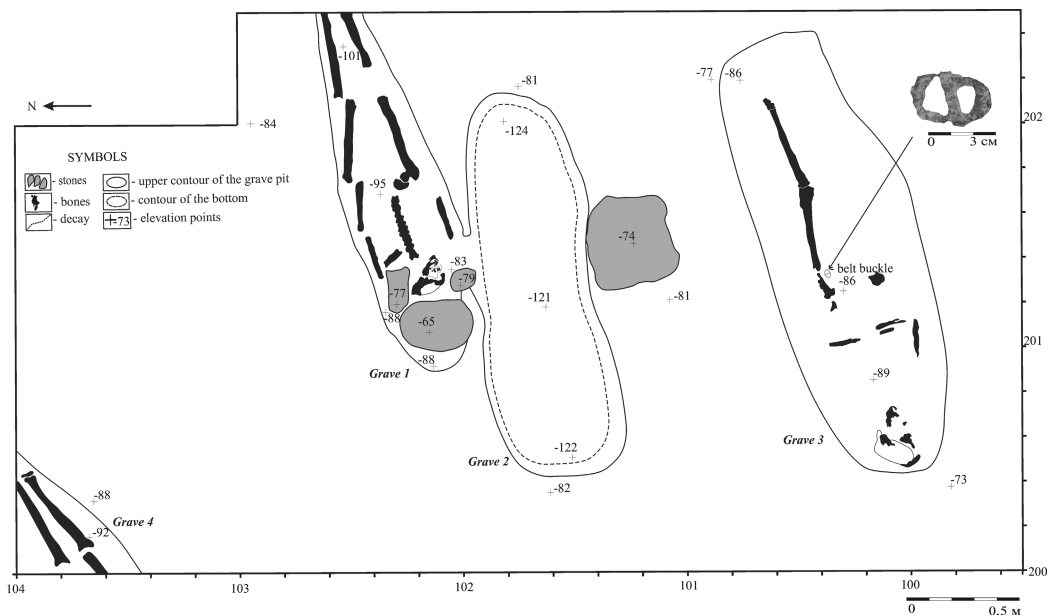


Fig. 7. Plan of excavation unit I showing the graves. Drawing: S. Belskiy.



Fig. 8. Unit I, the graves. Photo: S. Belskiy.

skeleton evidently is preserved *in situ*, oriented along the southwest–northeast line similarly to the remains described above. Since the character of this burial was generally clear, continuation of its excavation at the current stage of investigation of the site was considered unnecessary. For this reason the burial was not completely uncovered but preserved on the site.

CONCLUSIONS

Investigations of the fortification structures and historical plans of the fortress of Kivennapa on field helped to define the limits of the site: it comprises the main territory of the fortress with the ramparts and bastions, defensive ditches and a levelled area adjoining the fortress. On the western and southern sides, the area under study included remains of Finnish military installations of World War II period, and on the northern side foundations and bases of the buildings of a pastor's manor of the 19th and 20th century. Within the limits of the site there is also a historical road leading from the Vyborg highway towards the northwestern curtain wall of the fortress.

The preliminary archaeological investigation on the platform of the fortress of Kivennapa resulted in discovery of a flat-grave cemetery with inhumation burials. The graves were oriented towards southwest and were made in pits 0.4–0.7 m deep from the present-day surface. As stated above, the church of Kivennapa is mentioned first in 1445. Evidently, a cemetery was attached to it. However, we cannot rule out that the excavated burial ground may have existed here even during an earlier period – the exact dates of its functioning will possibly be defined during further investigations.

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