

Managing the managers: state control over the monuments in Estonia

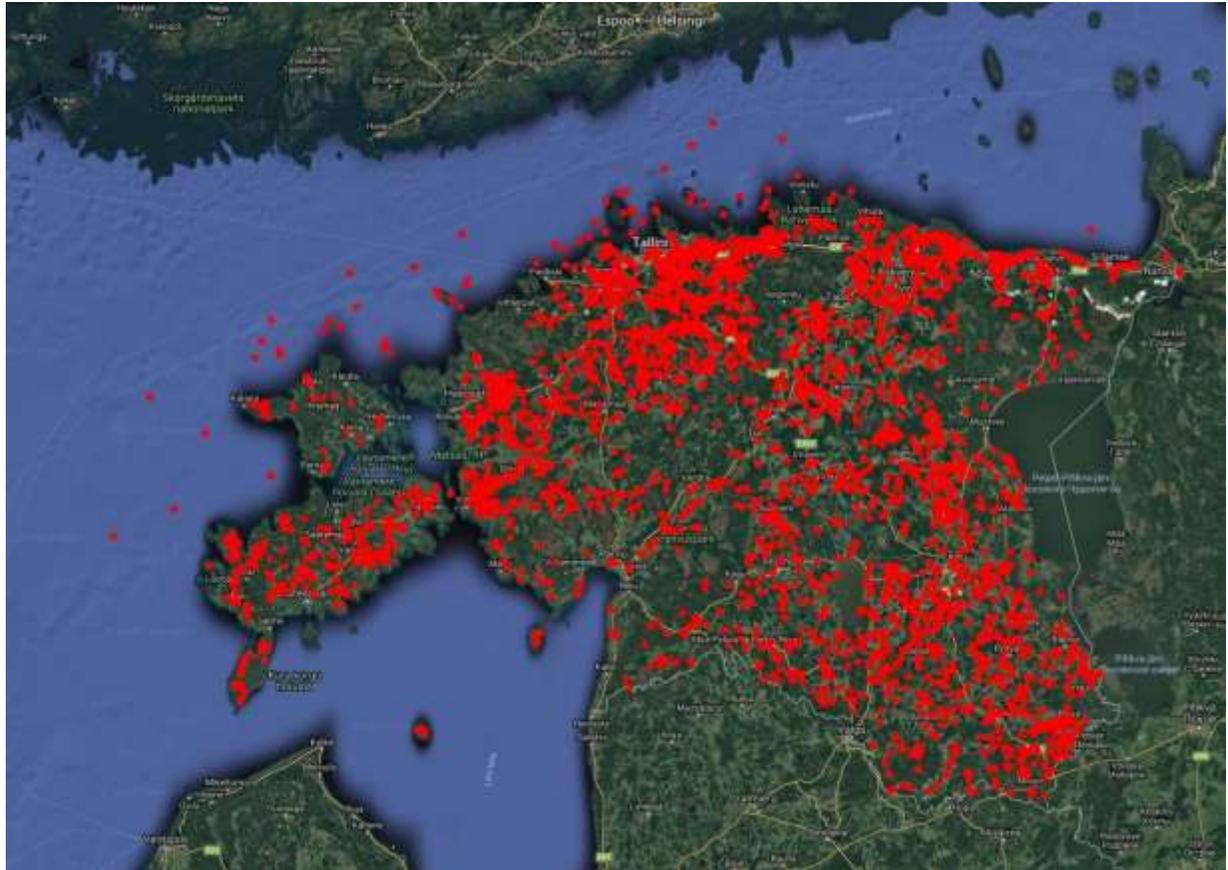
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Topics discussed

- Archaeological heritage and land usage
- Legal background
- Enhancing visitor experience
- Finding balance between development, exposition and preservation.



Altogether **6702** listed archaeological monuments





Dwelling sites,
strongholds,
field systems.

Most of these are
not too visible on
the landscape.



E. Väljal 1984

Burial and sacred sites – cemeteries, holy groves or cult-related boulders

Ca half of the archaeological monuments are burial sites – most of them do not have any above ground features.

Stone graves and barrows are slightly easier to spot.

Sacred groves as well as stones may have offerings in/on them, but the cultural and scientific value may not be evident at first sight.

Other sites: shipwrecks, bog roads, smelting sites – also, rarely visible above ground.



Dry walls – without mortar until 13th century



All prehistoric stone structures were constructed without mortar.

In areas with intensive farming, there are no walls left as the constructions have been plowed through.

Nicer stones on the ground may have been reused as building material.

In medieval cities and power centres, there may be walls, foundations, even whole cellars.



Owners and usage of the monuments, legal background

Monuments with their protection zones can take 0.8 – 40 ha of land.

The size of the monuments as well as complexity varies, meaning one archaeological site or complex may have several owners, including governmental organisations.

The NHB directs the management of archaeology, but there is more to manage –forest, field, a road or a private garden.

Access to the monuments is freely allowed for everyone from dawn to dusk, unless the monument is surrounded by a barrier (e.g. museums, private properties surrounded by fences etc.).

It is compulsory to preserve and maintain the monument. This must be done by the owner, but a small contribution to cut the brushwood or mow the area can be asked from the NHB.



Legal background: new law, similar commitments

Heritage Conservation Acts of 1994, 2002, 2011

New Heritage Conservation Act (1.05.2019) says that archaeological monument

- Shows the different layers of historic land use
- Carries scientific information

Principles of heritage management

- Obligation to preserve and maintain the monument
- Monument can be used according to contemporary needs as long as it does not harm the monument or its preservation
- Every new addition must cherish and preserve the existing layers and values
- If possible, disabled access must be provided



Reconstructing vs restoration and new buildings

Reconstructing more than it has been recorded is not permitted (any more).

Restoration is ok, even favoured.

Conservation is considered the best practice.

Reconstructions created years ago still exist and create confusion among those who have new reconstruction plans. Nevertheless, the existing reconstructions reflect the history of heritage management and academic research.

New buildings as well as enhancements are allowed, but they must be distinctive, yet suitable for the environment and not damage monument.



Which one would a non-archaeologist prefer to visit?



Purtse fort – first built in 16th century, rebuilt several times, in ruins in 1969 (photo by V. Raam), reconstruction works finished in 1990.

Best building of 1991, but several layers of historical building layers were removed. Also, the top floor relies solely on the written descriptions and fantasy of the historians.

Rakvere castle and hill fort

Plans to rebuild a section of the castle using wood – more room for the museum and theme park.

Problems:

Some building volumes have never existed – the reconstructions would not represent any historical period.

Full reconstructions would be allowed off site on an empty field, the monument should represent what has preserved and why the site looks the way it does.



Inspiration: Puy de Fou amusement park in France.

<https://www.natura-resort.com/accueil/la-residence/puy-du-fou-hebergement/>

Examples of reconstructions and ambitious plans



Rakverelinnus.ee

The restoration of Kuressaare Castle (1970s) and conservation of bastions (2014)





A postcard from 1930s



Land Board ortophoto

Architects have thought of a stationary approach with minimal damage to the ground while clearly marking the walls and buildings:
plans to build an elevated pathway on the wall level with some volumetric representation of the buildings/towers.

Problems: the „buildings“ are based on an artist reconstruction; the pathway on the walls will have to be secured into the ground i.e. the actual medieval walls – still damages the archaeological values. Engineer will probably make everything sturdier.

Will it help people’s understanding enough to accept the damage to the walls?



Signs of archaeology in the pavement



Excavations on Küüni street in 2009, photo M. Ansu. Street line after the great fire of 1775, a few bits may be older.

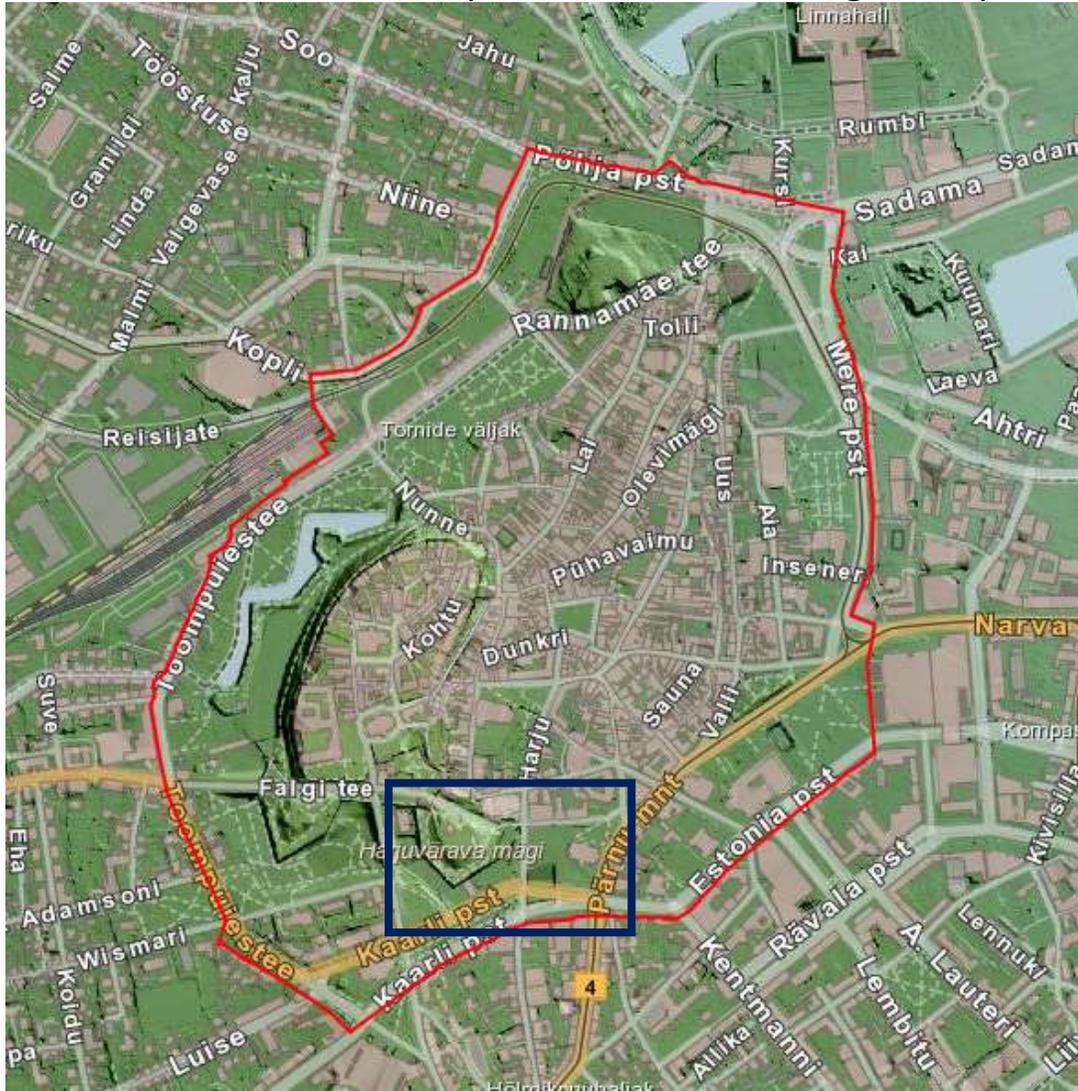
City walls and gates were marked already in 1990s.



Signs of archaeology in the pavement

Excavations in Vabaduse Square, Tallinn. Photo: E. Russow

Bastions from the 18th c. were marked during the reconstruction of the square in 2009. The walls were preserved in an underground parking lot.



Needle's Eye – Excavated Trepki street



www.ajapaik.ee



P. Langovits



Vastseliina bishop's castle – adding values



Plan to create a centre for pilgrimage.

The 19th century tavern was added museum space in 2011.

There was a plan to put a roof onto the Holy Cross chapel, the place where a miracle took place.

Our climate does not support the preservation of uncovered walls in due to freezing cycles – the moisture in the walls expands while freezing and breaks the stone.





Visitor centre is ready, working as extension of the museum, medieval SPA and an event venue.

Chapel was not fully „opened“, but has been conserved by filling it with gravel, there will be a floor area for a white cross, an altar and postholes for a temporary roof.



Subtle example, enhancing the visiting experience

State Forest Management Centre with Finnish colleagues has written project „Lights On!“ to add modern infrastructure to three 12th century hill forts.

Includes cutting trees and strategically placing lights to enhance features, pathways with information boards explaining the features and adding railings where needed.



E. Antson



T. Tamla

Conclusions

± The sites are accessible, but not attractive enough.



+ Archaeological/ heritage tourism is becoming more popular meaning the owners want to develop the sites bringing more tourists (= money) in the region.

± NHB does not own any monuments, other stately organisations and local authorities often do.

- Financial support from NHB is close to none. We can offer consultation, provide archaeology-friendly conditions prior to the project, but some of the restrictions shape after the project has already started. *E.g.* in cities, the preservation (if at all possible) as well as exhibition of found structures is mandatory.

- The stately management practice has not been persistent, changes in principles during last decades seem to be poorly communicated.

± New projects are compromises – in order to support the owners, keep the site maintained and spread knowledge, a few concessions have to be done. NHBs work is to assess the risks for every project, be persistent and figure out the best solution for the monument.





<https://g1.nh.ee/images/pix/900x635/kAdrLIX-Pqg/6193e5800d1074cd2a-75922641.jpg>



www.narvamuuseum.ee



Riigikantselei.ee

Thank you!

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