

VELLO LÕUGAS 1937 – 1998

On May 21 1998 died an outstanding Estonian researcher, Vello Lõugas, who had dedicated his whole life to archaeology. Vello Lõugas was born on April 6 1937 in the small town of Suure-Jaani, Central Estonia, and he studied at the secondary school there. In 1956 he entered Tartu University, where he graduated in 1961 as an archaeologist. In the same year he came to work as an assistant in the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences. His research subject was the Early Metal Age and his supervisor was Professor H. Moora. To compile material for his dissertation he investigated several monuments of the Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age. The most outstanding of these were the fortified settlement of Asva

from the Bronze and Iron Ages, which gave the name to the whole archaeological culture; the ship settings of Lülle, Saaremaa; the stone graves of Lehmja Loo in the vicinity of Tallinn; the stone graves and remains of fossil fields in Kõmsi, Western Estonia, etc. The excavations in Kõmsi were the first excavations of fossil fields in the whole of Eastern Europe. In 1970 he maintained his thesis "The Early Metal Age in Estonia". Vello Lõugas was a real field researcher. During his nearly forty excavation seasons, more than a hundred various archaeological monuments were investigated, from cup-marked stones to settlement sites and hill-forts of the Late Iron Age. Vello Lõugas paid much attention to systematic archaeological inventories. Being one of the initiators of the new all-Estonian campaign of registration of monuments 30 years ago; he himself discovered more than a thousand. Among these are the Late Bronze Age cemetery at Jõelähtme, which attracted wide international attention; graves and fossil fields' systems around the Rebala village; traces of the earliest settlement near Võhma, Saaremaa, and on the Kõpu peninsula, Hiiumaa, and many others. Vello Lõugas was one of the first to realise the importance of cup-marked

stones (which presently form the most numerous group of archaeological monuments) for the investigation of early settlement history. The lifework of Vello Lõugas

in the field of heritage protection culminated in the establishment of the reserve and museum of Rebala near Tallinn, where, thanks to his firmness, his skilful and uncompromising struggle, Soviet industrialists' efforts to turn this region, singularly rich in monuments of more than 2000 years of settlement, into a lifeless mining desert. In 1990, he organised the search for the remains of the first President of Estonia, K. Päts, who was de-



ported to Russia and died in prison there, to be reburied in the soil of his native country (Fennoscandia archaeologica published a special paper on this so-called archaeology of terror in vol. VIII). V. Lõugas was the author of nearly 80 scientific articles, more than 100 popular papers, and three films concerning archaeology and heritage protection. His knowledge of languages (besides English, German and Russian he also spoke Finnish, Latvian, Lithuanian and Swedish) favoured contacts with researchers from various countries. Due to his creative activity and wealth of conceptions he was one of the few archaeologists in Estonia (together with A.M. Tallgren and H. Moora), whose activities have influenced the whole generation of Estonian archaeologists.

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