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## TIME CAPSULE FROM THE LATE 17TH OR EARLY 18TH CENTURIES: CLOTHING OF A WOMAN FROM RABIVERE BOG (ESTONIA)

### Introduction

The specific acidic and oxygen-poor conditions of the raised bogs have preserved several hundreds of bog bodies in Northern Europe. Although these finds have been mainly dated to the end of the Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age, in addition also younger finds from the medieval period and modern era have been discovered<sup>1</sup>. The present article deals with the clothes found by a woman's body from the end of the 17th century from the Rabivere bog in Estonia (Fig. 1). For example, exactly contemporaneous finds have been come to light in Ireland and Scotland<sup>2</sup>. The Rabivere woman has remained the only bog body known from Estonia so far.

The bog has preserved one moment from the life of past human being. The Rabivere find allows us to see how the clothing of this person has looked like at this moment. In more general it is an example of everyday wear in rural areas at given period. In Estonian context the clothes of Rabivere woman belong to the period from which we have only few sources about clothing and textiles used, especially concerning rural peasant community. From the Middle Ages the main sources about clothing of village inhabitants are sporadic and fragmentarily preserved archaeological cemetery finds that disappear by the Modern Era. The ethnographical, written and pictorial sources become more numerous only since the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards<sup>3</sup>. In this article first the overview of the find will be given followed by discussion about



Fig. 1. Location of Rabivere bog in Estonia.

the historical background and social context of textiles and clothing items.

### Find circumstances

On 26 March 1936 a fully clothed body of a woman was discovered about 110 cm below the surface in the course of peat-cutting in Rabivere raised bog, near Hageri in Harjumaa district in north Estonia (Fig. 1)<sup>4</sup>. The well preserved mummified body gave the peat-cutters to fear they were dealing with the victim of some recent crime or accident and they notified the local police. This scenario is similar to many other discoveries of bog bodies<sup>5</sup>. It shortly came out that for this moment the body had been laid there already for some 200 years. On the left side of the body close to her palm a coin was found which turned out to be a Swedish copper coin from the year 1667<sup>6</sup>. Actually it does not give very accurate date for

<sup>1</sup> P. V. Glob, *The Bog People. Iron Age Man Preserved*, London, Boston 1977, p. 101; J. van der Plicht, W. A. B. van der Sanden, A. T. Aerts, H. J. Streurman, *Dating bog bodies by means of 14C-AMS*, "Journal of Archaeological Science", Vol. 31: 2004, pp. 471-491.

<sup>2</sup> A. S. Henshall and S. Maxwell, *Clothing and other Articles from a late 17<sup>th</sup>-century grave from Gunnister, Shetland*, "Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland", 86 (1951-1952), 1952, pp. 30-42; H. Bennet, *A murder victim discovered: clothing and other finds from an early 18th century grave on Arnish Moor, Lewis*, "Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland", Vol. 106: 1974-1975, 1975, pp. 172-183; M. Dunlevy, *Dress in Ireland*, Doughcloyne – Wilton – Cork 1998.

<sup>3</sup> For example: I. Manninen, *Eesti rahvariiete pildistised välismaa kirjanduses möödunud sajandil*, [in:] *Eesti Rahva Muuseumi Aastaraamat VII*, Tartu 1931, pp. 76-92; E. Värvi, *Riietumine ja rahvarõivad*, [in:] *Eesti rahvakultuur*, Tallinn 1998, p. 368-369.

<sup>4</sup> All the information about find circumstances following origin from the report of archaeologist E. Laid: *Inspektiooni aruanne Hageri Rabivere rabalaiba leiu kohta*, manuscript in Archives of Estonian National Museum.

<sup>5</sup> For example: P. V. Glob, *The Bog People...*, p. 63; H. Bennet, *A murder victim discovered...*, p. 172; M. Nockert, *The Bocksten Man's Costume*, "Textile History", 18 (2): 1987, p. 175.

<sup>6</sup> Sweden, Karl XI, 1/6 ore.

the bog body, because small copper change minted in 1660s had rather long-term circulation period<sup>7</sup>. Hence the woman may have lost her life sometime in the last third of the 17<sup>th</sup> or in the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The archaeologists Erik Laid documented the circumstances of the find on the spot. According to his report, the clothing items had been removed “in hurry” from the corpse already before his arrival. The body with clothes and other finds were sent to Tartu and the human remains were examined by Department of Forensic Medicine of the University of Tartu; unfortunately the report of this analysis is not extant. After the examinations the body was buried in the St Mary’s graveyard. In addition to the report of the archaeologist Erik Laid I had possibility to use the protocol of interrogations conducted by local constable<sup>8</sup> and some photographs from examination in Tartu. All the documentation and the clothing items – two coats, a skirt and knitted fragments – have been preserved in the Estonian National Museum<sup>9</sup>.

Unfortunately no exact information about the age or measurements of the woman’s body exists. Estimated by photos and the length of clothing items, the woman was no more than 160 cm in height. The legs were cut off amidst of shinbone during the peat-digging already before the discovery of the body; thus no clear traces of shoes or leg coverings have been preserved. Her hair was long and braided in pigtail which was lost on the find-spot.

### Textiles

All surviving items of dress are made of sheep’s wool. The wool used is a blend of varicoloured fibres, and there is some coarse staple mixed with it. Unless otherwise stated, the cloths are 2/2 twill, woven from single relatively hard-spun yarn with z-twist in warp and weft. The warp and weft yarns are different – the weft is slightly thicker and softer spun than the yarn for warp. The thread count of all these 2/2 twills is quite similar – in average 10 × 7 threads per cm, i.e. the warp yarns have been placed more densely than the weft yarns. The preserved selvages are simple, without any reinforcement. The fabrics could be described rather coarse. For sewing – both for seams of garments and patchwork – woollen plied yarns of different colours and linen threads as well have been used.

### The costume

Next to the skin she had probably worn a linen shirt, which has for the present completely disappeared due to plant

fibres’ poor resistance to the acid surroundings in the bog. Only the imprint of a tabby weave, which was characteristic to the linen fabric, on her jaw on a preserved photograph from the body’s examination in Tartu, suggests its earlier presence. In addition, in the middle of her chest beneath of other garments a small round brooch made of silver was found<sup>10</sup> (Fig. 2). In the past obviously it fixed the linen shirt.

Over the shirt she wore a woollen skirt sewn together with a waistband (Fig. 3). Now separately kept fragment of the waistband was attached to the skirt with linen yarn now disappeared. The skirt is formed at least from three rectangular pieces of cloth – two of them are complete and one has been preserved only as a narrow strap; rest of it was probably lost on the find-spot. The cut of panels is relatively straight and the skirt needed only slight gathering at the waist to fit to the waistband. Hence the skirt had to be relatively tight-fitting. This kind of narrow and unicoloured clothing item resembles the oldest type of skirts with side seams from later periods collected by the ethnographers<sup>11</sup>. The length of preserved part of skirt is 70 cm and it reached at least to the middle of the shinbones, but it could have been longer. The lower edge is frayed and maybe damaged while peat-digger accidentally cut off her legs. The colour of skirt is very dark blackish brown. The difference between warp and weft is especially obvious here – the tighter warp is almost black and the softer weft yarn is brown.

On the top she wore two coats, one with and other without sleeves which exact sequence is a little bit unclear; the descriptions from the find-spot where the clothing was removed from the body are mixing the components of both coats. Now stained brown, they were probably some kind of natural colour of wool, possible that greys. Nevertheless, it is far more likely that the next layer on the shirt and skirt was the sleeveless coat (Fig. 4). The weft yarn has been spun from varicoloured darker wool and for the warp more even and lighter wool has been used. Its back length from the shoulder seam is 85 cm. The back part was made of one piece of cloth which becomes wider from the armholes downwards. At the lower edge which is the widest part of back within ca 25 cm both selvages of fabric exist. The width of the woven cloth was 77 cm. Meanwhile, the widths of the lower hems of the front parts which have straight cutting edges have been increased by two small triangular gussets. For the sewing thread of this coat some kind of plant fibre, probably linen was used. The sleeveless coat was fastened with the help of two small leather straps. Remains of the first of them are

<sup>7</sup> M. Kiudsoo, *Täiendus Varbola Jaanilinna müntide osas*, [in:] *Linnusest ja linnast. Uurimusi Vilma Trummali auks, Muinasaja Teadus 14*, eds. E. Russow, A. Haak, A. Tvauri, Tartu-Tallinn 2004, pp. 77-93.

<sup>8</sup> O. Johanson, *Protokoll*, on 27 March 1936. Manuscript in Archives of Estonian National Museum.

<sup>9</sup> The photos: A 747: 1-5; 748: 1-8; the finds: A 445: 1-8.

<sup>10</sup> This type of brooches appear only since the 1630s and are also numerous in the 18th and 19th centuries. H. Valk, *Rural Cemeteries of Southern Estonia 1225-1800 AD*, CCC papers: 3, Visby-Tartu 2001, p. 47.

<sup>11</sup> For example: A. Voolmaa, *Eesti rahvarõivaseelikud*, [in:] *Etnograafia Muuseumi Aastaraamat 25*, Tallinn 1971, p. 124; M. Kaarma and A. Voolmaa, *Eesti rahvarõivad. Estonian Folk Costumes. Estnische Volkstrachten*, Tallinn 1981, p. 75.



Fig. 2. Brooch (A 445: 7; photo by Merylin Suve, Estonian National Museum).



Fig. 4. Sleeveless coat (A 445: 2; photo by Merylin Suve, Estonian National Museum).  
1 – selvages; 2 – holes; 3 – remains of the leather strap.



Fig. 3. Preserved panels of skirt (A 445: 1; photo by Merylin Suve, Estonian National Museum). 1 – selvages; 2 – gather; 3 – folded.

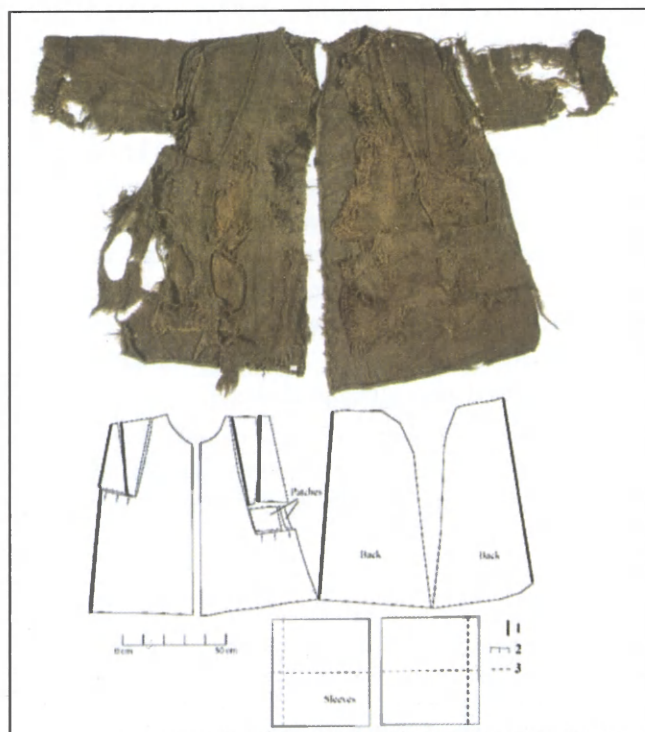


Fig. 5. Sleeved coat (A 445: 3, 6; photo by Merylin Suve, Estonian National Museum). 1 – selvages; 2 – gather; 3 – folded.

below the throat and the position of the other is indicated by a hole on the hem in the chest area (Fig. 4). The flaps are not symmetrical and right one remains partly beneath the other. Noteworthy feature is the narrow (5 cm) upright collar which has been cut out together with the back part of the garment and then sewn around the neck opening.

The outer coat is sleeved and it covered the body slightly over the knee-length while unearthed (Fig. 5). The back length of this coat is 90-95 cm. The trunk part is formed from four pieces of cloth, i.e. it has central back seam. The coat is rather wide and the flared shape has been achieved by skewed cutting edges within whole length of garment. This kind of garment resembles one archaic type of long-coats which were worn on Estonian islands until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in some special occasions even up to 1880s<sup>12</sup>. The other distinctive features of this type of long-coats are irregular trapezoid pieces used to fill in the empty area on the front flaps by the sleeves and V-shaped neck opening both on front and back part of the garment<sup>13</sup>. The cut of sleeves is very simple – the rectangular piece of cloth was folded and sewn together and then attached to the main body of garment. The ends of the sleeves were turned back (within 7 cm) and gathered with the help of plied yarn. There is no evidence of the way how to fasten this coat.

The sleeved coat is considerably worn-out and repeatedly repaired. Its original function was obviously festive, because the edges of the coat have been adorned. The neck opening of the front part has been edged with a strip of bluish-greenish 2/2 twill which is finer<sup>14</sup> than the fabrics used for the garments. This fabric has been made of z-spun yarn in warp and s-spun yarn in weft. Inside of this greenish-bluish edge, another strip of tabby red cloth; carefully felted, teaselled and sheared can be seen. Although the latter mentioned red strip represents most likely the finest textile of the whole find assemblage, it was completely covered with secondary 2/2 twill trim. The same bluish-greenish fabric has been used for a small patch on the right sleeve. Finally the neck opening was edged with rough and simple stitches made of thick and dark thread of two-ply. In addition, to the gathered ends of the sleeves two-ply yarn, currently pink but in the past obviously red has been sewn. The seam inside of a lower edge of the coat includes an additional light yarn. This had practical function to avoid unravelling of the hemline, but it was also demonstrated to others by chance.

Fragments of knitted items in simple stocking stitch have also been preserved<sup>15</sup>. A mitten (Fig. 6) was made of coarse

and undyed plied yarns (mainly ss/Z, but also zz/S occurs sporadically). The wool used is visible hairy. There are circa 3 stitches and 3 rows per cm. Two smaller fragments of the same type probably indicate to the other mitten from this pair. Other knitted item, preserved with two fragments, has been made of finer yarns (again besides ss/Z also zz/S occurs) than the above described mitten and with 4 stitches and 5 rows per cm. On the edge of the larger fragment (24×19 cm) there is a geometrical pattern 8.5 cm in width constituted of red, bluish and different brownish yarns (Fig. 7). The main colour of this knitwear is natural light. The function of this item is arguable. First it has been ascribed to the cap<sup>16</sup>. Other opinion regards it as a fragment of a short sock<sup>17</sup>, which could have been accidentally preserved although the feet were lost. If look at the triangular decreasing on the top of the larger fragment the latter attribution sounds more plausible<sup>18</sup>. In this case the technically most complicated part of a sock, namely the heel, has been not preserved. Few comparable relatively short socks have been preserved in ethnographical collections<sup>19</sup>, although since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century successively more common were long knitted stockings.

In Estonia the earliest knitted textile which belonged to a mitten from a rural grave, has been dated to the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> century<sup>20</sup>. By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century knitting was already widely spread in Estonia, the mittens knitted by native women were sent even abroad<sup>21</sup>. Nevertheless, the older naalebinding technique was conclusively superseded by knitting only by the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>22</sup>.

### Repairing the clothes

Almost all the garments have been repeatedly patched and mended. For the repairing two ways were used. First, the worn-out areas of the textile have been strengthened with the help of darning. For this purpose different plied yarns have been used (ss/Z, zz/S, zzz/S). Second, larger holes were patched with pieces of different fabrics. The patches were sewn to the main fabric with rough stitches and also the shape and colour of a patch are rather arbitrary. Most of the patches are from the same type of coarse twill as those of main fabrics described above. Exceptional are three patches that have been made of yarns of opposite twist

<sup>16</sup> For example the description of the find in the catalogue of Estonian National Museum.

<sup>17</sup> K. Kõnsin, *Silmkoeesemed*, Tallinn 1972, pp. 22-23.

<sup>18</sup> The length of the larger fragment from the patterned brim to the top of the triangular decreasing is 24 cm, thus if feet are small (e.g. about 36 in European system) the sock reaches some centimeters over the ankle.

<sup>19</sup> I. Manninen, *Eesti rahvariiete ajalugu*, Tartu 1927, pp. 441-442.

<sup>20</sup> J. Peets, *Totenhandschuhe im Bestattungsbrauchtum der Esten und anderer Ostseefinnen*, [in:] *Fennoscandia archaeologica IV*, Helsinki 1987, pp. 108-109.

<sup>21</sup> K. Kõnsin, *Silmkoeesemed*, p. 7.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>12</sup> A. Voolmaa, *Lääne-Eesti saarte rahvarõivaste omapärast*, [in:] *Etnograafia Muuseumi Aastaraamat 29*, Tallinn 1976, pp. 196-197.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 204-205.

<sup>14</sup> Thread count is 13 in warp and 11 in weft.

<sup>15</sup> The knitted items from Estonia referred by Irena Turnau are the same from the Rabivere find: cf. I. Turnau, *History of Knitting before Mass Production*, Warszawa 1991, p. 43.



Fig. 6. Knitted mitten (A 445: 5; photo by Merylin Suve, Estonian National Museum).



Fig. 7. Fragment of a knitted item, probably a sock (A 445: 4; photo by Merylin Suve, Estonian National Museum).

direction (z in warp and s in weft). Otherwise these fabrics are coarse 2/2 twills similar to the main fabrics. Some of the patches appear to be the remains of another garment re-used. For example one of these textile fragments used for mending has seam in the middle of it. The patchwork indicates to the value of textiles, probably all scraps that could be were used.

Especially extensively was darned and patched the front part of sleeved coat and it is almost impossible to say where one patch or darned area begins and another ends – already patched areas have been badly used up as well and darned and repaired again (Fig. 5). Also the sleeves are extremely worn-out and frayed. On the other hand, the back of the coat except for some darned spots has been remained remarkably intact in comparison with the flaps. One can only guess at the reasons for this kind of intensive wearing pattern. For example the badly worn front part and sleeves could indicate to some kind of specific labour or activity, e.g. carrying the wood. The skirt has been mended as well; the light reddish and yellowish patches and yarns for needlework are striking against the dark background of the main fabric (Fig. 4). The sleeveless coat on the other hand looks in despite of some small darned areas – e.g. below of the right armpit – remarkably undamaged (Fig. 4). The mitten is worn-out and darned, the putative sock fragment is on the contrary in rather good condition.

#### Historical background

From the point of view of textile technology the Rabivere fabrics mostly represent cloth type characteristic to the local rural tradition with prehistoric background. The 2/2 twill woven from z-spun yarns was the most common cloth type at least from the 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards<sup>23</sup> and it remained important fabric for overdress until the mid-nineteenth century; since then various purchased cloths and urban fashion were more and more preferred. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the customary loom type used in rural areas was of horizontal type which started to spread in Estonian areas already in the 14<sup>th</sup> century<sup>24</sup>. All the textiles from Rabivere have been woven on this latter type of loom as indicated for example by simple selvages.

The garments represent the development of peasant clothing with local background different from the general European fashion. However, starting with the 17<sup>th</sup> century, new elements of foreign fashions spreading via towns and manors, albeit at the distance, occur more frequently in traditional local clothing<sup>25</sup>. The Rabivere find evidences these

<sup>23</sup> Since then more information about textiles and textile technology have preserved, because during the Viking Age (850-1050 AD) in place of cremation the practice of inhumation spread more widely in Estonian area.

<sup>24</sup> J. Peets, *Eesti arheoloogilised tekstiilid kalmetest ja peitleidudest III-XVI saj. (Materjal, töövahendid, tehnoloogia)*, unpublished MA thesis in the University of Tartu Library, Tartu-Tallinn 1992, p. 62.

<sup>25</sup> M. Kaarma and A. Voolmaa, *Eesti rahvarõivad...*, p. 16.

new trends combined with the old traditions. The skirt made of separate panels and sewn to the waistband is the oldest example of this type preserved in Estonia. The direct predecessor of this narrow and unicolour skirt was the wrap-skirt – an oblong piece of cloth (e.g. a shawl) wrapped around the hips, thus tight as well<sup>26</sup>.

The coats with flaps in front and standing collar were also relatively new traits in peasant clothing at the time Rabivere woman lived<sup>27</sup>. The most innovative is the pattern of sleeveless coat; in place of earlier straight cutting edges the more curved lines and armholes appear (Fig. 4). The standing collars belonged to the men's clothing of high fashion in Europe at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and continued to spread to the lower classes; for example similar collars can be found by clothing of contemporary finds to the Rabivere woman from Scotland, e.g. Gunnister and Arnish Moor men<sup>28</sup>. Whether the sleeveless coat from Rabivere could originally have been men's garment re-used by a woman, is not given; for example the archaic long-coats in Estonia had the same cut for men and women<sup>29</sup>.

### Social context

Clothing can be divided into categories, for example, by its function (e.g. outfit for festive occasions, second-best clothes for more routine visits and work-clothes for everyday wear) or season (winter and summer time)<sup>30</sup>. In addition almost all the researchers stress the function of traditional dress in peasant world as a means of communication – clothing is a complicated system to signal social information. Thus the clothes should express for example the wearer's social status, marital status, age group, territorial location, etc<sup>31</sup>. What about the readability of the dress of Rabivere woman? Which type of clothing was it and what could it reveal about the wearer's herself?

She was clearly dressed rather for cold weather – two woollen coats, woollen skirt, knitted mittens and maybe socks. Certainly her dress is not the best clothes to visit the church or some kind of festive event (e.g. weddings), but meant for everyday wear or most likely for some kind of heavy physical work. This is indicated, first and foremost, by her worn-out and patched garments. Possible that she could not afford herself new garments, but rather put on clothing already used by someone else. The person who was wearing this kind of clothes and involved in heavy physical work belonged rather to the poor persons of the lower rank of the society.

Especially the sleeved over-coat evidences a long and multistage life course of a garment. In the beginning of its life cycle it belonged most likely to valuable festive attire. Until the mid-nineteenth century a long-coat was an obligatory element for visiting, going to church or attending weddings. For instance, a traveller<sup>32</sup> from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was surprised to see Estonians wearing their long woollen coats on festive occasions even on the hot summer days<sup>33</sup>. Finally this coat has been turned into the working clothing obviously with low status. It is known that when a worn out festive dress was turned into work clothes, its ornaments were unstitched<sup>34</sup>. Maybe this can be the explanation why the most valuable and attractive red strip of cloth among the Rabivere fabrics which edged the neck opening of this garment was covered by more modest trim probably made of cheaper material.

The way of repairing garments is rough and arbitrary, as can be seen from the technique, shape and colour of patches. Although it remains the subjective assessment of the author of this article, it seems that the Rabivere woman did not care about how she looked like. For her the clothing, at least in this occasion, had rather pure practical function to cover the wearer's body and protect it against cold. Could it mean that she was so poor that she did not have choice what to put on? Thus the choice of clothes was rather arbitrary. This raises another question – if this is the case, what can her clothing tell us in addition to the social status about the person's identity in the first place?

Actually, almost all the components of the dress that have strong communicative function according to the ethnographical data are missing currently in Rabivere find. For example, in the village the status of a married woman was clearly distinguished from the maiden by hairdo, headgear, apron and/or ornaments<sup>35</sup>. In addition important protective power was attributed, for example, to the belts, especially at the work. In this context it is interesting to note that her hairdo, which was described as braided plait is contrary to the information known from the very few written notices from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. According to these both maidens and the married woman wore their hair rather cut short, the long hair came into fashion in the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>36</sup>. Obviously it simply reveals that the hairdos were actually more varied.

On the other hand, the reasons for absence of these communicative details could partly be caused by the preservation conditions in the bog. In addition it must be taken into account that the communicative function was more stressed in the case of festive outfit, not by the work or everyday clothes. At the same time the absence of these signs could be

<sup>26</sup> A. Voolmaa, *Eesti rahvarõivaseelikud...*, p. 124.

<sup>27</sup> For example: R. Piiri, *Eesti talurahva ülerõivas 19. sajandil*, Tartu 2007, p. 3; cf. E. Värvi, *Riietumine...*, p. 369.

<sup>28</sup> H. Bennet, *A murder victim discovered...*, p. 178; A.S.Henshall and S. Maxwell, *Clothing and other Articles...*, p. 32.

<sup>29</sup> M. Kaarma and A. Voolmaa, *Eesti rahvarõivad...*, p. 82.

<sup>30</sup> For example: E. Värvi, *Riietumine...*, p. 384.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 368.

<sup>32</sup> J. A. Brand, *Reysen durch die Marck Brandenburg, Preussen, Churland, Liefland, Plescovien, Gross-Naugardien, Tweerien und Moscovien*, Wesel 1702.

<sup>33</sup> E. Värvi, *Riietumine...*, p. 386.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 385.

<sup>35</sup> For example: E. Värvi, *Riietumine ...*, pp. 382-383.

<sup>36</sup> I. Manninen, *Eesti rahvariiete ajalugu...*, pp. 23-24.

the mark itself. For example the indifference to her appearance might indicate to the rather high age which was enough to exclude her from fertility cycle of woman; thus her appearance became simpler. Finally, it should be noted that actually nothing convincing about her position in the community, except for the social status, can be said on the basis of the dress she wore. Hence, the clothing does not reveal always the personality of wearer or at least it is not possible for the present day researcher to understand the code of clothing at the distance.

#### Instead of a summary

Taking together the story of Rabivere woman the question arises, how she found her end in the moor at all. The cause of death of Rabivere woman could not be established because of lack of documentation. According to the testimony, the local village doctor who scrutinised the body on the find-spot did not detect signs of violent death. Meanwhile the archaeologist E. Laid did not recognise boundary lines of a grave. Was it an unlucky accident and she simply drowned? It can no longer be controlled. On the other hand quite often the bog bodies from historical times have been interpreted as the burials of suicides or victims of a murder<sup>37</sup> and this possibility cannot be completely ruled out also in the case of Rabivere find.

#### Streszczenie

26 marca 1936, podczas wydobywania torfu na torfowisku wysokim w Rabivere, koło Hageri w dystrykcie Harjumaa w Północnej Estonii, odkryto ciało kobiety w kompletnym stroju (ryc. 1). Znaleździśko to pozostaje do tej pory jedynym odkrytym na bagnach ciałem z terytorium Estonii. Na podstawie szwedzkiej monety z 1667 roku odnalezionnej razem z ciałem, znaleździśko datowano na koniec XVII – początek XVIII wieku. Nie udało się ustalić przyczyny śmierci kobiety z Rabivere. Cała dokumentacja oraz wszystkie elementy stroju – dwa płaszcze, spódnica oraz dziane fragmenty odzieży – przechowywane są w Estońskim Muzeum Narodowym.

Prawdopodobnie kobieta miała na sobie lnianą koszulę, która nie przetrwała do naszych czasów. Wszystkie zachowane elementy ubioru wykonane są z wełny w splocie skośnym 2/2. Zarówno wątek, jak i osnowa, utkane zostały ze względnie mocno splecionej pojedynczej przędzy w skręćcie Z. Gęstość nici wynosi średnio 10 x 7 nici na 1 cm. Na koszuli nosiła ściśle przylegającą do ciała ciemną, wełnianą spódnicę z doszytym paskiem (ryc. 3). Następnym elementem stroju noszonym na koszuli i spódnicy był płaszcz bez rękawów ze stójką, zawiązywany za pomocą dwóch rzemyków (ryc. 4). Płaszcz zewnętrzny miał rękawy i szerokie

rozcięćcie. Zachowały się również fragmenty odzieży dzianej – rękawiczki z jednym palcem i prawdopodobnie skarpetka – wykonane prostym śćiegiem pończochowym z kilkuwarstwowej, grubej, skręćcanej przędzy wełnianej. Zwykle podkreśla się rolę tradycyjnego ubioru w środowisku wiejskim jako sposobu komunikacji i przekazywania informacji społecznej (statusu społecznego, stanu cywilnego, grupy wiekowej, miejsca pochodzenia itd.). O czym mówi nam ubiór kobiety z Rabivere? Po pierwsze, wydaje się, że ubranie było w sposób oczywisty ubranie roboczym przeznaczonym do ciężkiej pracy fizycznej i że kobieta, która je nosiła, była osobą ubogą, należąćca do niższych warstw społecznych. Wskazują na to znoszone i po wielokroć łatanne ubrania, które prawdopodobnie były już wcześniej noszone przez kogoś innego. Przednia część płaszcza z rękawami jest najbardziej zużyta, co może wskazywać na jakiś specjalny rodzaj zajęcia, np. noszenie drewna. Bez wątpienia, płaszcz pierwotnie pełnił funkcję ozdobną, jako że brzegi – kołnier, mankiety, dolne wykończenie – były zdobione. Poza statusem społecznym, na podstawie noszonego przez kobietę odzienia, nie można wyciągnąć żadnych dalszych wniosków co do jej pozycji w społeczności. Faktycznie, w przypadku znaleździśka z Rabivere, prawie żadne

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<sup>37</sup> For example: H. Bennet, *A murder victim discovered...*, p. 173.

<sup>38</sup> O. Johanson, *Protokoll...*

<sup>39</sup> J. Siim, *Kaks kohamustendit Hageri lähedalt. Truta mägi, "Oma sulega"*, Rapla 1959.

części stroju, które jako materiał etnograficzny pełnią istotną funkcję komunikacyjną (np. nakrycie głowy, fartuch, ozdoby, pasek) nie zachowały się do dnia dzisiejszego.

W związku z tym strój nie dostarczył wiadomości o osobowości właściciela lub przynajmniej współczesny badacz nie jest w stanie zrozumieć zakodowanej w ubiorze informacji.