

Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen & Visa Immonen
 LOOKING AT ARCHAEOLOGY THROUGH 30 YEARS OF
 FENNOSCANDIA ARCHAEOLOGICA – AN INTERVIEW

Professor Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen (b. 1951) edited *Fennoscandia archaeologica* (FA) from its first volumes in the early 1980s to 2004. He had graduated in 1977, and at the time the journal was created, Taavitsainen was working as a researcher at the National Board of Antiquities in Finland (NBA). He became a PhD in 1991 after defending his dissertation *Ancient Hillforts of Finland: Problems of Analysis, Chronology and Interpretation with Special Reference to the Hillfort of Kuhmoinen* (1990). In 1995, Taavitsainen started as a professor of archaeology at the University of Turku.

Through his work as a professor and as the editor of the FA, Taavitsainen has gained a long-term perspective on the development of archaeology both internationally and in Finland. In order to explore his insights and experiences, we engaged in a dialogue at his home on 18 November 2013, and in the following, we present the discussion with its questions and answers.

The first issue of the FA was published in 1984. It was preceded by one volume of a journal titled Fennoscandia antiqua in 1982. You played a pivotal role in the publication of both journals, and continued to edit the FA for twenty years. How did the idea of a new journal come up, and what were your motivations and aims when you started?

Pondering on the details of the beginnings of the FA does not perhaps appear relevant for the international readership, but rather as gossiping on the national level. However, as such, its history can be seen as an example of how national administrative structures affect archaeology in Finland as well as in any other country.

It is quite difficult to pinpoint who actually first suggested founding a new journal. Ari Siiriäinen (1939–2004) was heavily involved, though. In 1982, he worked at the NBA, but in 1983 Ari

became a professor of archaeology. His support was vital, but it was I who did most of the practical work.

The founding was motivated by the age-old debate on the scholarly role of the NBA, where I was working at that time: to what extent was the NBA a research institute and to what extent an administrative authority? Already when I had begun at the NBA in 1970, the question was acute, since the planning of land-use, and the protection of ancient monuments required more and more of the institution's resources. In the early 1980s, there were, however, still members of the staff oriented towards research and academic work. They understood how fertile academic research actually is for the archaeological work conducted by the NBA, and were thus anxious to defend and resuscitate archaeological research.

In addition to such scholarly ambitions, Ari told me that the fact that the NBA lacked an international publication series raised bafflement in the community of archaeologists abroad. I, too, wondered why there could not be a Finnish archaeological journal meeting the international standards, instead of scholars just sending their work to be published in foreign journals. Well, actually, at that time Finnish archaeologists did not even send their work to be published outside the country.

Due to the historical circumstances, the Finnish Antiquarian Society had been responsible for publishing national and international journals on archaeological topics, but by the early 1980s, its publication activity was in crisis. The incompetent editors had gotten tired and could not keep up with the publication deadlines. This resulted in delays of several years in publication, and some volumes of *Suomen Museo* ('Finnish Museum') and its Swedish counterpart, *Finskt Museum*, were published even before the preceding volumes had appeared. For instance, I had a submitted an article – *Löppösenluola hällmålning i Valkeala*

(‘The Löppösenluola rock painting in Valkeala’) – to *Finskt Museum* already in 1974, but it was not published until 1981 in the volume for 1979. Problems particularly with *Finskt Museum* were fatal as it was a channel to Scandinavia.

These problems worried the NBA Library, because all irregularities in publication endangered the international networks for exchanging scholarly literature. Moreover, the Denmark-based journal *Acta archaeologica*, where Finns potentially could have published their work, seemed to be in an equally erratic state regarding its Finnish editors. Consequently, the *Norwegian Archaeological Review* was the only functioning international archaeological journal in the Nordic countries in the early 1980s.

In the course of the 1980s and 1990s, the FA published several articles by Russian authors. Was their prominence in the journal planned from the very beginning?

Certainly, one of the very motivations for creating a new journal was the well-functioning co-operation between Finnish scholars and archaeologists working at the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Another important target group were Baltic archaeologists – the journal was to revitalise the intensive scholarly contacts that had existed between Finnish and Baltic scholars before the Second World War. Access to Russian and Baltic archaeological scholarship in western languages was bound to make any journal appealing to the international audience.

The fame of Aarne Michaël Tallgren (1885–1945) still lived strong, and the new journal could be seen, in a sense, as a successor to his east-orientated work, and the journal *Eurasia Septentrionalis Antiqua* published in 1926–38. We thought that by attracting attention to the Soviet articles the journal would perhaps also give Finnish work prominence as a by-product.

The new journal was to be peer reviewed, written entirely in English or other major western academic languages, and furnished with an internationally respected editorial board. In fact the journal became very important for the international exchange of publications that the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies was in charge of – there were not too many Finnish scholarly journals aimed at an international readership in the field of the humanities then.

The NBA funded the first volume of the journal. Ari and I wrote the actual articles, because other Finnish archaeologists did not have anything ready for publication. Our aim of interdisciplinary research, however, was realised in the appendix articles written by scholars from other fields such as geology, numismatics, and radiochemistry.

Due to lack of funds, we had to publish some of the texts without translating them into English. The lack of time and available material also led us to discard our initial plan of having preliminary reports of the previous year’s archaeological fieldwork published alongside the articles. Eventually in 1987, the NBA launched the journal *Arkeologia Suomessa – Arkeologi i Finland* (‘Archaeology in Finland’) which serves this purpose.

The first volume of the journal published in 1982 was titled Fennoscandia antiqua (Fig. 1), but two years later, the journal was re-established as Fennoscandia archaeologica (Fig. 2) and the numbering of the volumes began again from one. What were the reasons for such a change?

The reasons were purely administrative. The journal was initially founded, when the Director of the Department of Research at the NBA, Torsten Edgren, was on a 12-month leave of absence. The official permission for publication was granted by the acting director. When Edgren returned to the post, however, he withdrew the permission which he saw as invalid. Administratively it was nevertheless entirely legitimate.

I had collected the material for the second volume, but Edgren did not want to continue publishing the journal. He argued that it was not in the interests of the NBA, and pointed out that there were the series already published by the Finnish Antiquarian Society. Moreover, he claimed, there were not enough articles by Finnish archaeologists to be published. Finally Edgren stated that ‘we don’t need a mouthpiece for Pan-Slavism’. His outright irritation affected the rest of my career at the NBA.

The official reaction being this, we sought new ways of justifying and publishing the journal. As a daring act, I contacted the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Education, Jaakko Numminen. He realised the relevance of such a journal, wrote a preface for the second volume, and pleaded to the NBA to continue the series. The NBA nonetheless stood adamant in its refusal.

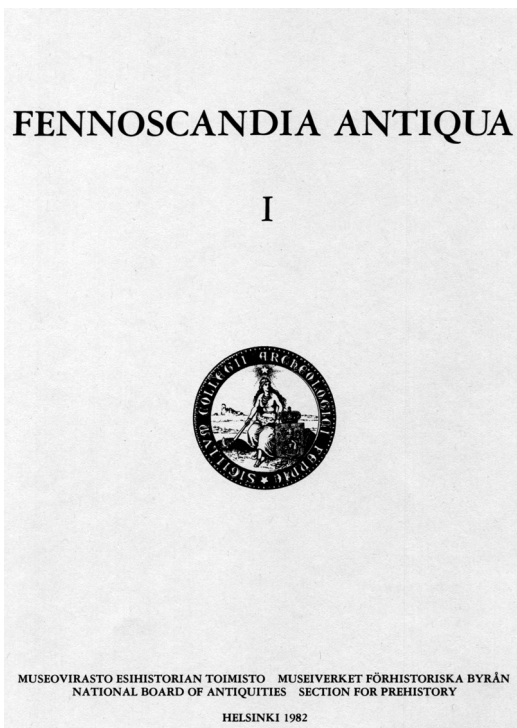


Fig. 1. The first and last volume of *Fennoscandia antiqua* came out in 1982. The journal was published by the National Board of Antiquities and edited by J.-P. Taavitsainen. It consisted of three articles by the editor, and two articles by Ari Siiriäinen.

The Archaeological Society of Finland had been founded in 1982. One of its unofficial aims was to act as a sort of opposition against the NBA, and the Finnish archaeological establishment. The society took the journal into its publication programme. The title had to be changed as well as the small figure on the cover. The figure was based on the NBA's old official seal, and in the new series, its original inscription had to be taken away.

Although the NBA initially denied that any need for such a publication existed, the FA seems to have motivated the institution to introduce a series of publications in the following decades. In addition to *Arkeologia Suomessa – Arkeologi i Finland* (1987), the series *Kentältä poimittua* ('Picked up on the field') was launched in 1992. Moreover, two English-language monographs were published in the 1990s and early 2000s (Paula Purhonen [ed.], *Vainionmäki: A Merovingian Period Cemetery in Laitila, Finland*, 1996, and Helena Ranta [ed.], *Huts and Houses: Stone*

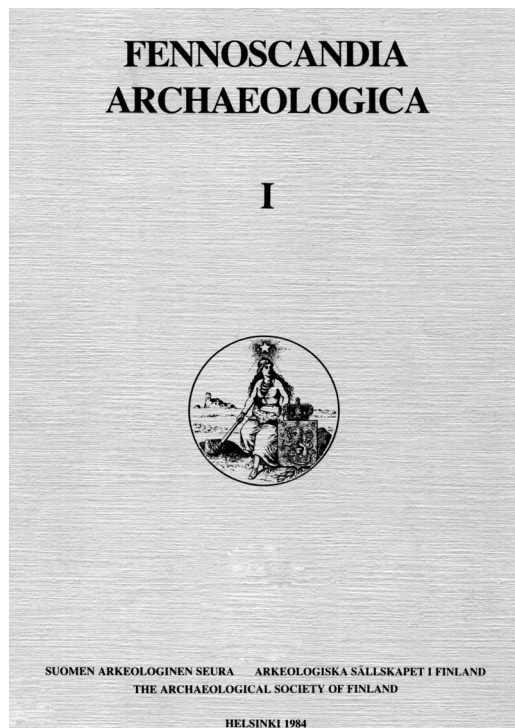


Fig. 2. The first volume of *Fennoscandia archaeologica* was published by the Archaeological Society of Finland in 1984. It was edited by J.-P. Taavitsainen. In addition to seven articles, it included a preface by the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Education Jaakko Numminen.

Age and Early Metal Age Buildings in Finland, 2002), showing that the NBA indeed had archaeological material to be published.

Did the new publisher have an effect on how the journal was edited?

Because the society was quite young, it did not have any funds to allocate for the publication. The Ministry of Education partly funded the first volume of the FA, but after that, getting resources always remained a difficult task. This did, however, develop my skills of acquiring funding even from very unlikely sources. The second volume was funded by the Kone Foundation, and the third by the Finnish commercial bank Kansallis-Osake-Pankki.

From the fourth volume onwards, the funding became more or less established as the Academy of Finland and Thure Gallén Foundation kept granting funds volume after volume. The force

behind the Thure Gallén Foundation was Professor Jarl Gallén (1908–1990), an eminent medieval historian, who had a high esteem for archaeology, but a poor opinion of the NBA. That the NBA had rejected something, I can imagine, was a good recommendation for Gallén.

Archaeologist Anne Vikkula (1954–1997), who served on the board of the Archaeological Society, was another person to understand the importance of the journal for the society, and for raising its scholarly profile. The most important person, however, was the librarian and scholar Jarl Pousar (1941–2004). Working for the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies, he was in charge of the international exchange of publications of the Finnish learned societies and other scientific publishing bodies. Pousar always helped in securing the necessary funds from early on.

How have the editorial work and the content of the journal changed during the years?

After the first volumes had been launched, and the journal had become more or less established, I sought to develop its contents by introducing volume-specific discussions on a certain topic. The first discussion took place in the fifth volume in 1988. It was based on an article by the Soviet archaeologist V. F. Starkov, which had appeared in the previous volume and focused on the discovery of Svalbard (Spitsbergen). This practice of dividing the discussions into two successive volumes continued in the following years, and probably reflected my inexperience in organising them as well as the difficulty of getting the comment texts before the volume with the original article went into press.

I think the most interesting and influential discussions were sparked by an article on Soviet archaeology by Leo Klejn, and an article on the Slavic colonization of north-west Russia by Estonian archaeologist Priit Ligi (1958–1994), which inspired Klejn and Bruce G. Trigger (1937–2006) to write a reply focusing on ethnicity in archaeology. The discussion based on Michael Shanks's article on the lives of artefacts in interpretative archaeology also initiated heated theoretical reactions.

The heterogeneity of the authors increased throughout the years. The first volume of the FA had only Finnish writers, but already the second

volume had some foreign contributions. The ratio of Finnish and international authors in the 1980s and 1990s was about equal. Some of the Finnish authors connected with the NBA remained, in contrast, very cautious in submitting contributions.

The first Soviet author Aleksandr Saksa, who is actually an Ingrian, appeared in the second volume in 1985, and after that, their number remained quite significant. In the late 1980s, however, *Perestroika* began to affect the profile of archaeological publication. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union and establishment of the Russian Federation in 1991, other international forums became easily accessible for Russian scholars, diminishing their contributions in the FA. Nowadays especially *Eurasia Antiqua*, launched in 1996, is a major forum for Russian archaeologists.

The last volume that I edited had the number 21. It appeared in 2004 after which new editors appointed by the Archaeological Society took over.

What is the situation of archaeological publication in Finland today? Should its profile and infrastructure be developed in a certain direction?

The role of the NBA in archaeological research has waned considerably during the last decades. There are no longer academically oriented civil servants in the NBA, and administrative duties have taken over all resources and time. Moreover, serving urgent statutory requirements routinely overrides such long-term activities as research and publishing to such an extent that the situation appears permanent – ‘the life itself’ destroyed its academic functions. This is a general trend in all government funded research institutes in Finland.

In addition to the drastic change in the NBA's role, due to the poor economic situation in general, and the crisis in Finnish public funding, all academic publishing has taken a downturn. And there does not seem to be anything in the horizon that would change the circumstances. In archaeology, this should lead to the examination of the arrangement of our publications.

We need one internationally attractive and well-resourced journal. In order to secure the infrastructure for such a journal, and for high-profile archaeological publishing in general, a rationalisation of the Finnish Antiquarian Society's publication policy should seriously be contemplated. Should the two generic antiquarian series, *Finskt*

Museum and *Suomen Museo*, be merged? What is the actual role of such wide-ranging journals in academic publishing?

Though I emphasise the need for an international archaeological journal, Finns do have the right to read academic texts in their native tongue. Scholars should be allowed to engage in relevant academic debates in their own language. In addition to the customary Finnish archaeological journals *Muinaistutkija* ('Archaeologist') and *SKAS* – the journal of the Society for Medieval Archaeology in Finland – perhaps also *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* ('Historical Journal'), and its Swedish equivalent, *Historisk Tidskrift för Finland*, could fulfil this requirement.

As the NBA has also engaged in publishing activities, perhaps publication in Finnish and Swedish should be its responsibility, while other available resources should be concentrated on publishing in world languages. These international publications could be made the responsibility of academic societies. In all Finnish academic journals, the editor-in-chief should hold a doctorate and some permanent position, allowing her or him to engage in the work in full.

What is the relation between national and international developments in archaeological publishing?

The international development of academic publishing has not really been reflected in Finnish archaeology and related fields, so far. We should, however, be prepared that it will in the future. None of the big multinational publishing houses have been interested in making deals with Finnish academic journals. In contrast, for instance, publishing and distribution of *The Antiquaries Journal*, originally published by the Society of Antiquaries of London, was taken over by the Cambridge University Press in 2009. The same development has led such Nordic journals as *Acta Borealia: A Nordic Journal of Circumpolar Societies* and *Norwegian Archaeological Review* to be published by Taylor & Francis. In Finland, university presses have not taken a similar role, and it is doubtful if they even want to take it.

Internationally, the progressing commercialisation of academic publishing is a quite criticised phenomenon, but it has substantial benefits from the perspective of editors. The essence of the academic editorial work has not changed – it in-

volves the same quality control, and the balanced selection of appropriate and high-ranked referees as before – but the tough competition makes keeping up the standards ever more demanding. Here the infrastructure that the big publishing houses offer is quite appealing. It allows separating academic quality control, the responsibility of the editors, from the practical editing work which is outsourced, often to countries of low labour costs. Such an arrangement might just be the thing that tips the balance in the academic competition over quality publications.

During the three decades of the FA, Finnish archaeology has also changed. From your perspective, what have been main trends in this change?

It has become a cliché to say that Finnish archaeology has become more international than before (Fig. 3). This is true only if one looks at the last five decades. The earliest phases of the discipline in Finland – the times of the pioneers as well as the generation of archaeologists working between the world wars – were, however, even more internationally oriented than today.



Fig. 3. Prof. Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen examining archaeological finds from the Vendel era boat-graves in Salme, Saaremaa, Estonia in 2010.

Johan Reinhold Aspelin (1842–1915), the so-called founding father of Finnish archaeology, was widely involved with and influenced by archaeologists in Central Europe and Russia, and he received his archaeological education from Oscar Montelius himself. Another example is A. M. Tallgren, an internationally renowned and connected scholar, while Carl Axel Nordman (1892–1972), who made his career in Finland as the State Archaeologist, studied archaeology under the Dane Sophus Müller (1846–1934). Of course, the international character of these scholars was based on the special social and cultural standing of archaeology at that time. The circles were small, and possibilities for becoming internationally connected were better. The academic competition over resources was also less fierce than nowadays.

Nonetheless, at the moment, Finnish universities and archaeologists along with them are being forced to become international. Publishing in English is a routine, and there are more opportunities available to study and work abroad. Finns and foreigners appear more often side by side in the lists of contributors of co-authored articles, and Finnish scholars take part in international debates. All this does not differ from the developments in Europe or other parts of the world. In fact, in comparison to Swedish and even Estonian archaeologists, Finnish scholars are less equipped to develop their international profile in terms of funding and career opportunities. Being a Finn and writing on Finnish archaeology have no longer the beneficial exotic flavour as they did before.

Ari Siiriäinen was among the forerunners who took Finnish archaeologists to participate in international projects in Africa, South America and the Near East. His legacy is still present through his students and their theses and dissertations, but Finnish archaeologists do not seem to initiate innovative new projects abroad anymore. In the Mediterranean region, for instance, all Finnish archaeological projects appear to be led by classical philologists or historians, while archaeologists have an assisting role.

The drive to become international is not confined to the academia. Although the academic impact of the NBA has declined, also it has become more international. This has been legislative and administrative in nature, and brought about by the EU membership and various international treaties concerning cultural heritage.

Are there any problems in the increasing internationality of Finnish archaeology?

The form that the international activity has taken is not all that desirable. It is often reduced to Anglo-American scholarship and the use of English. The other traditional languages of the academia, such as German and French, are considered less valuable. Many students do not speak or read any other foreign language than English, although many important publications in Finnish archaeology are available only in the Scandinavian languages and in German.

In a similar vein, the appreciation of Russian scholarship has suffered. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, there was a marked international interest in Russian archaeology, but during the last decade that seems to have considerably withered. The situation is worrying, because the east is such a vital geographical dimension for Finland, especially when the oldest archaeological material is concerned. However, there are no longer joint meetings between Finnish and Russian scholars as in the times of the Soviet Union. Yet establishing personal contacts with Russian archaeologists is still crucial, especially as the country's politics seem to be turning increasingly unpredictable.

Keeping up an international stance is not easy given the current state of Finnish universities. The distances from Finland to European and American academic centres and museums are long, and securing travel funding has become more and more difficult. University faculty, burdened by academic obligations, lacks time to travel and do the required research. The continuous administrative reforms in universities simply eat up much of their mental capacity. Moreover, many students in archaeology choose not to become exchange students, because they calculate that a period in a foreign university will postpone their graduation.

In addition to increasing globalisation, do you see other trends affecting Finnish archaeology?

There is one thing in which Finnish archaeologists are still better adjusted than many of their foreign colleagues. That is the cooperation with the natural sciences, and the application of and experimentation with new scientific methods in archaeological work. The historical reason for this is the need to collaborate with geology. In

Finland, the post-glacial rebound, its effect on shorelines and subsequently on the positioning of ancient settlements has been pivotal for establishing the chronology of the Stone Age. The dating of shorelines is based on geology, linking archaeology with geology from early on. Such archaeologists specialised in the Stone Age as Julius Ailio (1872–1933) and Aarne Äyräpää (1887–1971) had strong contacts with geology in the early 20th century, and the collaboration has continued since.

Finnish archaeologists are ready and willing to cooperate with the sciences. That endeavour, however, requires a great deal of resources, and resources are something that archaeology in Finland is short of. Moreover, the utilisation of Finnish scientists in such interdisciplinary work is increasingly diminishing, a consequence of the developing international emphasis as well as the lack of funds needed to maintain up-to-date scientific infrastructure.

More and more foreign scientists are involved in Finnish projects. This is exemplified by osteological studies, or the collaboration between one of my projects, studying the medieval relics at Turku Cathedral, and the Swede Göran Posnert who is developing the techniques of AMS dating. The project is also engaged in a similar international co-operation in regard to isotopic and DNA analyses.

Another clear trend in Finnish archaeology is that we are getting rid of the theory-free positivism which was typical of our archaeological scholarship for so long. Many younger archaeologists take part in international theoretical discussions without a difficulty. There still remains the problem of getting funding for purely theoretical topics as we still have so many unsolved problems in our understanding of local archaeological material, chronology and so on.

In an organisational perspective, the NBA and the universities are major players in Finnish archaeology, but what about smaller provincial and specialised museums?

In Finland, there is a long history of attempts to create a network of provincial archaeologists working under the NBA. The idea was introduced already before the Second World War. These plans were never realised, and in the 1970s and 1980s, the general attitude in the NBA was condescend-

ing, almost hostile towards provincial museums. In the 21st century, however, the general administrative pressures and need to fulfil purely legislative duties has led the NBA to amend its earlier stance and to invest into the network of state subsidised provincial museums.

More and more archaeological activities are transferred to local-level institutions, to provincial and specialised museums such as the Finnish Glass Museum in Riihimäki which has made an important contribution to industrial archaeology. In the case of the Museum Centre of Turku, such archaeological work has long traditions, beginning already in the late 19th century. At the moment, nevertheless, the most innovative and dynamic provincial museum in terms of archaeological fieldwork and exhibitions is the Pirkanmaa Provincial Museum in Tampere.

The value of the provincial museums is in how they have almost unnoticed provided opportunities for archaeological fieldwork and given it a lasting presence on the local level, irrespective of the NBA and the universities. Another institution which has made similar grassroots-level work in relation to archaeology and cultural heritage, is Metsähallitus, the state enterprise that administers state-owned land and water areas. In recent years, Metsähallitus has become aware of the cultural heritage on its lands, and has accordingly invested in surveying and protecting heritage. This applies as well to Stone Age sites as to the material remains of modern forest industry.

The work done by Metsähallitus as well as provincial and specialised museums is very promising and important for archaeology as a whole. Hence this archaeological work should be even more meticulously developed and cherished. Perhaps if archaeology was formulated even further into an issue of regional policy that would help getting funding for fieldwork and research.

So far we have mostly been discussing the infrastructure and social context of archaeology. But how has the content of Finnish archaeology changed? Are there any major shifts detectable in its foci and paradigms?

It is quite difficult to detect clear thematic trends in Finnish archaeology. Its professionals have seldom produced syntheses over particular topics or periods – the research is very fragmented and developed in individual articles. One interesting

field of research, though, which has clearly made its way into the Finnish discipline, is the archaeology of religion. There is not any particular school or group of archaeologists specialised in the topic, but ancient religious phenomena are scrutinised in a quite sophisticated manner in a number of theses and dissertations.

Another much more prominent development is that historical archaeology has established its position in the field of archaeology during the last two decades. When I was a student of archaeology in the 1970s, Professor Carl Fredrik Meinander (1916–2004) rejected historical archaeology as a non-subject. In fact, nowadays it has become so popular that the study of the prehistoric period seems to have become overlooked. Of course, there is a lot of fieldwork done on Stone Age sites, but the results do not seem to be developed into interesting academic research. This is particularly pertinent, as the three archaeology departments in the country have not managed to create their own distinct research profiles – all seem to be engaged in studying the historical period.

As the interest in historical archaeology has grown, the old interest of Finnish archaeology in the roots of the Finns has eroded. The study of the ancestors of the Finns and the reconstruction of their migrations to Finland has progressively come to depend on DNA analyses and related sciences in which archaeology seems to have little to offer.

This does not mean that patriotism has disappeared from Finnish archaeology, on the contrary, considering the surge of emotions raised by such sites as the Late Iron Age settlement of Varikonimi in Hämeenlinna interpreted as a proto-town, or Susiluola Cave in Kristiinankaupunki with its alleged traces of the Neanderthals. I would argue, however, that purely nationalist considerations are no longer in the interests of Finnish mainstream archaeologists – the present funding structure and the need to be international do not simply allow that. On the other hand, this lack of national enthusiasm is a drawback, since the funding of Finnish archaeology remains much less than, for instance, in Iceland. As the controversial theatre and film director Jari Halonen has recently claimed, resources made available to archaeology in Finland are shamefully small.

The diminished national interest in Finnish archaeology is perhaps partly a consequence of the lack of popularisation. Archaeologist Matti

Huurre wrote some widely read books on Finnish prehistory in the 1980s and 1990s, but after that, no scholar has taken up the task. Archaeologists are being educated in three universities, administrative duties have increased in the cultural heritage sector, and many museums have employed archaeologists, but the popularisation of archaeology has come to a halt. There is a clear demand for an archaeologist who would specialise in popularising Finnish archaeology, presenting its results in various media and authoring books for wider audiences.

One recent phenomenon, which has clearly showed the difficulties plaguing Finnish archaeology, and the NBA in particular, is the boom of amateur metal detecting. It is not illegal, and it requires no permit in Finland. As some very prominent discoveries have been made in recent years, attracting considerable media attention, awareness of the hobby has increased, and the number of amateurs grown. Consequently, we have exponentially increasing amounts of ancient finds and sites uncovered by amateurs. Most of the non-professionals are conscientious, but too many are interested only in treasure hunting. The NBA is incapable of coping with the situation. It lacks the resources and archaeological competence. The result is quite chaotic and dangerous, but at the same time, the amateurs and their discoveries could present a great potential in popularising archaeology and increasing its resources.

As you mentioned, there are three Finnish universities – in Helsinki, Oulu and Turku – with departments of archaeology. What is their role in the development of the discipline in the future?

I am increasingly worried about the lack of distinct profiles and the division of labour between the three departments. On the one hand, in principle academic research should be as free as possible. Competition can be invigorating and motivates to excel in research. In Finland, there is a long tradition of dividing the field of research among the few archaeologists, usually on the basis of chronology or geographical areas, which has led to an almost paralysing fear of overlapping research interests. This is something we should be rid of.

On the other hand, we currently have three quite small and under-resourced departments that cannot cope on the international level without some sort of coordination of their areas of focus.

I am particularly alarmed by the confused policies of my *alma mater*, the University of Helsinki. More clearly defined profiles could help the departments not to harmfully compete with each other on scarce resources. If all three departments study similar topics and apply for similar funding, the lack of collaboration will undoubtedly lead to a situation in which none of them will succeed. Profiling would also guarantee the chronological and thematic diversity which seems so limited at the moment. Lastly, it would help prospective students to compare departments and choose the one that suits their interests best.

Although one can look on the dark side, and emphasise all the dangers threatening Finnish archaeology, what would be your best possible scenario for the future?

Indeed, we live in perilous times. It seems that small departments in Finnish universities face the threat of being exterminated as the university administrators seek new means of balancing the budget. This is a dire picture, but at the same time, archaeology as a discipline is doing relatively well. A lot of quality research is being done and published, and doctoral dissertations are completed at a steady pace. Moreover, the community of amateurs is active and enthusiastic, although the popularisation of archaeology needs quick improving. On the regional level, the presence of archaeological work is established through provincial and specialised museums – it has be-

come a sort of humanistic science of engineering. Archaeology takes part in community planning in all sorts of ways.

As the importance of the NBA for academic research diminishes, the universities have a much more important task of establishing the scholarly basis for archaeology and museum work – including the design of exhibitions. However, there is definitely an urgent need to trim the three departments and coordinate their work, perhaps even to combine them – along with the archaeological remnants of the NBA – into one large department with several professors. At least the departments in Turku and Helsinki should be merged. Only such a department could develop all facets of archaeology – prehistoric and historical archaeology, world archaeology, marine archaeology, and archaeological sciences – in a balanced manner.

One institution would really be a contributing partner in international collaborations, not a partner that keeps moaning about its lack of appropriate resources. One department would have the infrastructure and resources needed in the tightening competition. With such a radical manoeuvre, Finnish archaeology would definitely be something to take into account for on the international stage.

This sweeping vision is an apt way to conclude our interview. Thank you for your time and interest in sharing your views on archaeology as well as editing the FA for two decades.