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## A.M. TALLGREN AND ETHNIC INTERPRETATION IN ARCHAEOLOGY

## Abstract

The Finnish archaeologist Aarne Michaël Tallgren is remembered for his article on archaeological theory, which he published in Finnish in 1934 and in French for the international readership in 1936. There he denied the possibility of making ethnic conclusions on the basis of archaeological material. However, Tallgren's relationship to ethnic questions has never before been analysed as a whole. This article examines how Tallgren's conception of ethnicity developed. He inherited the ethnic paradigm of archaeology from his teachers but was initially rather cautious in his conclusions. Up to 1920, Tallgren's own approach to ethnic questions gradually consolidated. In contrast to the view prevailing today, it is shown that ethnic conclusions were a central part of his reasoning in the 1920s but only in relation to the question of the roots of the Finnish people. Criticism against the ethnic paradigm of archaeology was voiced both in Finland and elsewhere in Europe in the 1910s and 1920s, and in the early 1930s, Tallgren also began to doubt this approach. Becoming acquainted with the new Soviet archaeology in the late 1920s sparked Tallgren's interest in archaeology as social history, and the political use of the ethnic view of prehistory first in Germany and soon thereafter in the Soviet Union probably eventually led him to deny any ethnic conclusions.

Keywords: history of archaeology, A.M. Tallgren, ethnic archaeology, 1920s, 1930s

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## INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The Finnish archaeologist Aarne Michaël Tallgren (1885–1945) is remembered for his articles published in the 1930s, in which he denied the possibility of identifying archaeological cultures with ethnic groups or peoples. However, there is very little discussion of Tallgren's earlier thinking concerning the possibility of drawing ethnic conclusions from archaeological finds. This article examines how Tallgren's thinking evolved and whether his thoughts show any influence of earlier or contemporary research or discussion.

More specifically, the questions dealt with here can be formulated as follows: 1. To what extent did Tallgren make ethnic conclusions

in his works? 2. How was his conception of ethnicity in archaeological material formulated and how did it possibly change? 3. How and in what contexts did Tallgren identify ethnicities in his material? 4. How and why did he end up denying the possibility of ethnic conclusions in archaeology and did he apply his theoretical considerations in practice?

## ETHNICITY IN TALLGREN'S EARLY WORKS

Tallgren touched upon the question of ethnicity for the first time in his review of Alfred Hackman's (1864–1942) work *Die ältere Eisenzeit in Finnland* (Hackman 1905) in the newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* in 1906. He accepted Hackman's conception of an

immigration of Finnish tribes from the Baltic region to Finland as individual smaller groups but not Hackman's assumption that the Balts had perhaps pushed them towards Finland due to increasing population pressure caused by the Slavic expansion. In Tallgren's opinion, in line with Hackman, the new Germanic settlement of the Baltic after the Gothic wanderings in the 3rd century could have caused the Finnish immigration to Finland. On the other hand, he believed that Finnish tribes could have migrated to Finland already before the East Germanic wandering (cf. Hackman 1905: 356–358). In any case, Finnish, Tavastian, and Karelian immigrants would have lived in Finland together with an earlier Germanic population for some centuries before assimilation. In spite of his suggestion of smaller groups, Tallgren's view is based on the idea of whole tribes as such moving from one place to another (Tallgren 1906).

After this, Tallgren did not write about ethnic questions in public before his review of some of Gustaf Kossinna's (1858–1931) works in the magazine *Päivä* in 1909. Kossinna established the ethnic reading of prehistoric material, drawing parallels between archaeological cultures and ethnicities. He called his approach *Siedlungsarchäologie*, 'settlement archaeology'. One part of it was the idea of Germanic superiority compared with other peoples. Kossinna's method was later declared an official dogma in Nazi Germany (Grünert 2002: 71–76). Tallgren's reception of Kossinna's assumption of the Finno-Ugric movement from France to the Baltic Sea region during the Early Neolithic is ironic, but he does not deny the basic concept of whole peoples moving from one place to another or the existence of Finno-Ugrians at such an early point in time (Tallgren 1909). In his entry on Gustaf Kossinna in the encyclopaedia *Tietosanakirja*, Tallgren stated that Kossinna had also dealt with the past of the Finno-Ugric peoples but that his views had not gained general acceptance (Tallgren 1914a: 1413).

The first time Tallgren himself attempted to answer a question with ethnic content was in his dissertation in 1911, which dealt with the eastern and northern Russian Chalcolithic and Bronze Age. He left the question of the ethnicity

of the people(s) without a definitive answer but stated that there could have been Finno-Ugric tribes in the area. Thus, it can be understood that he assumed Finno-Ugric peoples to have existed at that time. He also considered it probable that the finds of the Anan'ino Period would belong to Finno-Ugrians because, in his opinion, the Iron Age from the beginning of the Common Era was certainly Finno-Ugric (Tallgren 1911a: 217–218).

In his article in honour of Johan Reinhold Aspelin's (1842–1915) 70th birthday in the journal *Valvoja* in 1912, Tallgren wrote that Aspelin had worked on the prehistory of the "blood relatives" of the Finns, whom Matthias Alexander Castrén (1813–1852) (Fig.1) had found in the east. Seemingly also Tallgren himself was committed to the idea that a linguistic relationship also meant a biological one (Tallgren 1912: 654). In his biography of

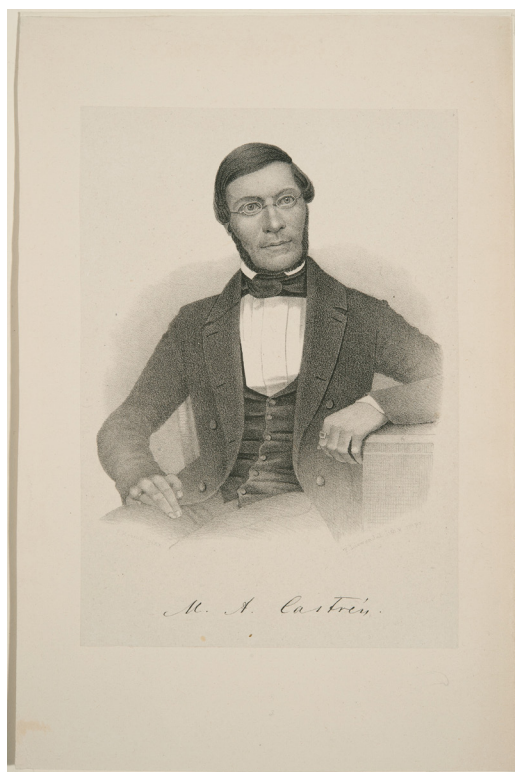


Figure 1. Matthias Alexander Castrén's views, formulated in the 1840s, influenced Finnish archaeologists' ideas of ethnicity still in the 20th century. Portrait E.J. Löfgren. Finnish Heritage Agency (CC by 4.0).

Castrén a year later, Tallgren does not identify a linguistic relationship with a genetic one, although he does not explicitly deny it either (Tallgren 1913a: 128–131).

In his article on the eastern European Bronze Age culture in Finland, Tallgren follows the already established way of thinking. He assumes that the cultural boundary between the coast (western) and inland (eastern) cultures in the Bronze Age in Finland would also have been an ethnic barrier. There would have been immigration from Scandinavia to the coastal areas of Finland, and the tribes of eastern Finland would have had a genetic relationship with the inhabitants of northern Russia (Tallgren 1914b: 21–22; cf. Aspelin 1885: 39; Hackman 1905: 312). It is especially interesting that three years earlier he had not automatically regarded the cultural similarity between the Finnish Comb Ceramic culture and the central Swedish “sub-megalithic” culture as evidence of an ethnic relationship, and he had also not suggested any ethnic connection between the eastern Finnish Bronze Age and its cultural equivalent in Russia (Tallgren 1911b: 27–30).

Tallgren’s semi-popular overview of the eastern Russian Bronze Age, published in 1913, is based on the question of whether we can see that culture as the original metal civilization of the Finno-Ugric peoples. Because he supported this view, he must have assumed that ethnic entities in the area had stayed more or less unchanged and continued from the Bronze Age to the Late Iron Age and historical times, which was supported by later linguistic research. Here, he also labels archaeological cultures more generally with ethnic terms, which is seen in the identification of the Fat’yanovo Culture as belonging to the Lithuanian-Latvian peoples (Tallgren 1913b: 676, 678–679, 682).

In his monograph on the Anan’ino Culture, Tallgren again expresses more cautious views on the ethnic identity of the Anan’ino people. The only thing he considers certain is that they were not Scyths, but he is willing to see a continuation from the preceding Bronze Age bearers to the Anan’ino Culture, further to the P’yanobor Culture, and still further to the Magyars. However, he states this very briefly (Tallgren 1919: 184).

## CONSOLIDATING A VIEW OF PEOPLES AS ACTING ENTITIES

Tallgren continues his reasoning on the original home and wanderings of the Finno-Ugric peoples in the early 1920s, now based on the linguist Eemil Nestor Setälä’s (1864–1935) new overview. In general, in this period Tallgren becomes more and more interested in ethnic questions. It is noteworthy that in his article, Setälä explicitly denies the automatic identification of a linguistic relationship with a genetic one (Setälä 1914: 39–40, 43). Tallgren considers the south-western Stone Age Culture in Finland (i.e. the Battle Axe Culture) as Indo-European because of its wide distribution in Europe and the eastern cultural area as Finno-Ugric. He had never previously expressed this opinion as clearly as here. He also labels the Bronze Age cultural provinces of northern Eurasia with ethnic names, calling the easternmost region Ugrian, the western one Finnish-Permian, and the northern one Lappish. In principle, he follows the interpretation expressed already in the 1840s by M.A. Castrén (Castrén 2017: 120–124). He identifies cultural continuity as both linguistic and ethnic despite Setälä’s cautiousness towards or even denial of such a relationship (Tallgren 1921a: 67–71). At the end of the decade, Tallgren has again assumed Finno-Ugrians to be the original inhabitants of northern Russia (Tallgren 1929a: 66, 68, 70). In central Russia during the Late Iron Age, he distinguishes two different cultural areas with their own grave forms and artefact assemblages and interprets them from an ethnic viewpoint as belonging to Finns and Slavs (Tallgren 1929a: 68–69).

Tallgren’s view on peoples as acting entities who can move and wander from one place to another is consolidated in his article on the immigration of the Estonians to Estonia. He identifies the Comb Ceramic culture and Bronze Age of eastern Russia with Finno-Ugrians. The Bronze Age people would have divided into smaller groups, one of which would have moved to Estonia during the Pre-Roman Iron Age. The so-called gorodishche (hillfort) civilization of north-western Russia he assumes to be Finno-Ugrian. Tallgren now also uses the concept of the “Finno-Ugric race”. The actual aim of the article was to show that the Roman Iron Age of



the Baltic, earlier identified by Baltic German researchers as Gothic (Tvauri 2003), is actually ethnically Estonian, although Tallgren admits that there were probably smaller groups of Goths in the Baltic at that time, thus not rejecting the older view altogether (Tallgren 1921b: 188–189, 191–194).

Again, we see a contrary example in Tallgren’s article on Swedish influences in Estonian prehistory, which does not contain a single word about any ethnic Swedishness in the Baltic countries but concentrates strictly

on similarities in the material culture (Tallgren 1921c).

In the 1920s, Tallgren published two articles about the central Russian Fat'yano­vo Culture (Fig. 2), one in French in 1920 and another in Swedish in 1924. The role of ethnic interpretation in the earlier article is marginal except for Tallgren’s assumption that the roots of the Fat'yano­vo Culture were in the west and that it suggests that the European branch of Indo-Europeans spread to the east (Tallgren 1920: 19, 21–22). In the later article, Tallgren assumes that cultural differences between the

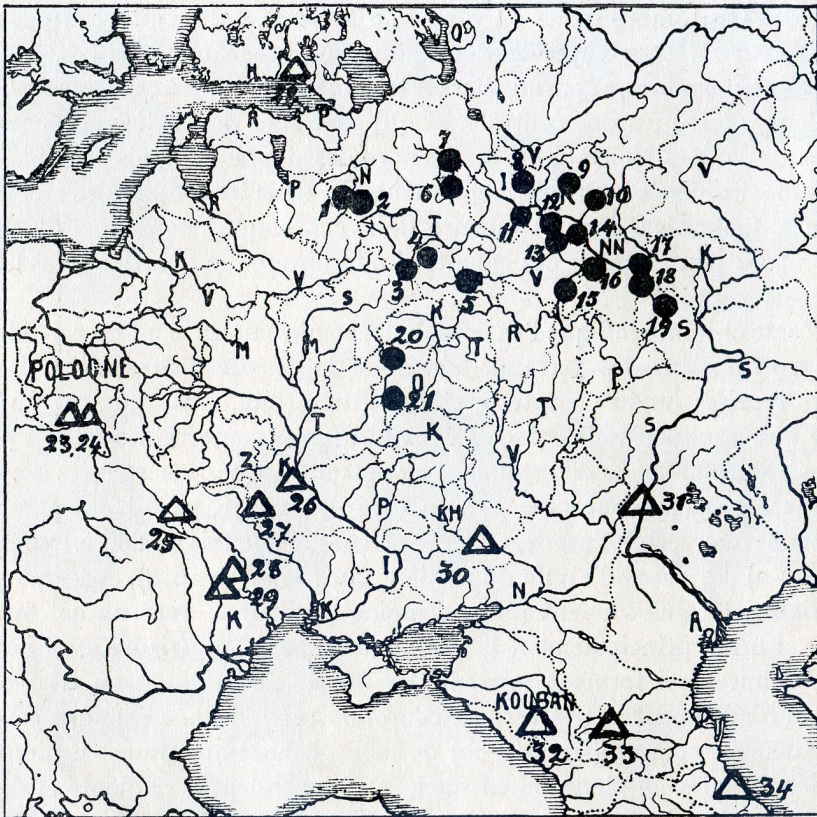


Fig. 59. ● Trouvailles dites de Fatianovo, △ Analogies. 8 Fatianovo, 11 Velikoé, 12 Goviadinovo, 16 Seïma, 21 Brasovo, 25 Schipénitz, 26 Tripolié, 27 Iackowica, 32 Maïkop, Tsarevskaïa, 33 Piatigorsk, 34 Kaïa-Kent.

Figure 2. Distribution map of Fat'yano­vo Culture finds, and their analogies as known to Tallgren. Tallgren 1926b: 88 (Fig. 59).

two Chalcolithic cultures in central Russia are probably also a sign of ethnic differences. He also states that the Fat'yanovo Culture emerged from western impulses, but the article contains no actual ethnic identifications (Tallgren 1924a: 1, 15–16). Russian researchers like Aleksandr Andreyevich Spitsyn (1858–1931) and Vasily Alekseyevich Gorodtsov (1860–1945) did not accept the western origins of the Fat'yanovo Culture but instead assumed its roots to be in the south, emphasizing the independence of the Russian Chalcolithic from the west (Salminen 2014a: 144; 2017).

In his two-volume monograph on the prehistory of Estonia, especially in its first volume, Tallgren repeated his views on the Indo-European ethnic character of the Battle Axe people of the Baltic and Russia (the latter meaning the Fat'yanovo Culture). They would have arrived as immigrants and conquerors from the Wisla region. He also cited anthropological (craniological) materials but without any definite identifications, although he assumed that there were two separate ethnic groups living in Estonia in the Stone Age (Tallgren 1922: 52, 62, 71). Comb Ceramics are presented without an ethnic definition (Tallgren 1922: 68). According to Tallgren, the Stone Age population had moved further south from Estonia before the beginning of the Bronze Age, and he considered it impossible to say anything about the nationality of the Bronze Age inhabitants of the country, especially because practically no finds from the Late Bronze Age and Pre-Roman Iron Age were known (Tallgren 1922: 73, 77).

In Tallgren's book, Iron Age material is divided into four groups: a Gothic group, which was prevalent until the end of the 5th century, and Late Iron Age Estonian, Latvian, and Liv groups from the 9th to the 13th centuries (Tallgren 1922: 79). The Middle Iron Age between these two phases was very little known in Estonia at that time (Tallgren 1925a: 3–32). Although the Early Iron Age artefact types were Gothic, Tallgren was “inclined to assume” that the population was ethnically Estonian. Thus, his expression contains less certainty here than in some of his earlier texts published in Finland (see above). In any case, he does not seem to consider the cultural

character of the artefacts as an ethnic indicator in this context. In his view, the most important evidence for an ethnically Finnic population in Estonia were the grave forms known from Finland at the same time, which had seemingly arrived with a new population from Estonia to Finland; this conclusion was largely based on linguistic interpretations. Like Hackman and the Estonian amateur archaeologist Adolf Friedenthal (1874–1941) before him, Tallgren interpreted the difference between grave forms in Estonia and Latvia as meaning also an ethnic boundary between these areas (Tallgren 1922: 123–126). He considered it probable that there were Germanic colonies in northern Estonia (Tallgren 1922: 127–129). In the second volume of Tallgren's book, ethnic terms are used in connection with the Late Iron Age (Tallgren 1925a: 171–173).

In the middle of the process of writing about the prehistory of Estonia, Tallgren attended an international congress of historians in Brussels in 1923 and delivered a presentation on the “prehistoric ethnography” of the Baltic countries. He must have assigned a special significance to this paper because he published it as a scholarly article in the Estonian, Finnish, French, and Swedish languages, as well as a popular newspaper article in Finnish (Tallgren 1923a; 1923b; 1923c; 1923d; 1923e). According to this study, the Comb Ceramic Culture was Finno-Ugrian, the Battle Axe Culture was Indo-European, and the West Baltic Bronze Age as well as the East Prussian Bronze Age were Germanic. The ethnicity of the Early Iron Age in East Prussia was assumed to be either Germanic or Baltic. The cultural continuity in western Finland from 100 to 600 CE was seen as evidence of the Finno-Ugrian ethnicity of the inhabitants of this area. Consequently, Tallgren viewed it as certain that by then, also the population in Estonia and partly in Livonia had been Finno-Ugrian and the population in Latvia had been Baltic (Tallgren 1923b: 335, 339–346). Thus, although Tallgren had earlier made ethnic conclusions about the inhabitants of Finland on the basis of the probable ethnicity of the population in Estonia, his reasoning now was the opposite. He viewed archaeological cultural areas as ethnic areas from the Bronze Age onwards.

## SYNTHESES OF THE ETHNIC READING OF FINNO-UGRIC PREHISTORY

In his installation lecture as Professor of Finnish and Nordic Archaeology at the University of Helsinki in the beginning of 1924, Tallgren presented a broad overview of western and eastern elements in the Finno-Ugric Iron Age until the year 800 CE (Tallgren 1924b; 1925b). Here, his reading of prehistory is completely based on the ethnic paradigm with peoples as acting elements. However, even in this lecture, cultural similarity did not, in his view, always imply ethnic similarity, as in the case of the Gothic culture in central Russia from the 5th century onwards. Even though the population was replaced by another, the culture developed further along the lines it had adopted during the Gothic occupation. Another area with a similar development, as Tallgren had stated also in his earlier works, was the Baltic. There the overall character of the material culture was Gothic because of the strong and expansive Prussian industry spreading its products to the area, not because of any Gothic population (Tallgren 1925b: 136–141). In a popular context, Tallgren gave cultural spheres ethnic names from the Roman Iron Age on, and also here, he assumed Estonian immigration at that time (Tallgren 1926a: 244–245).

Tallgren continued his analysis of the Finno-Ugric Iron Age with an account of Late Iron Age cultural spheres in 1927. In this article, he analysed the period from ca 900 to 1200. Also, this article was published in both Finnish and French (Tallgren 1927a; 1928). Undoubtedly because of the growing number of historical sources, the ethnic approach is emphasized here more than in the study of the earlier period, and artefacts are characterized with ethnic names. Tallgren has been seeking the “national character” of the material culture in each region, just as J.R. Aspelin had done in the 1870s. On the other hand, when “cultural hegemony” had been in the hands of an exterior element like the Varyags in Karelia, Tallgren could not distinguish any national groups even in areas where there must have been distinct tribes like the Karelians and Veps (Chuds) (Tallgren 1927a: 122).

Tallgren published a synthesis of his view of the prehistory of Finland in 1931 (Tallgren 1931a). The book must be seen in connection to the articles published at the same time or a couple of years earlier (Tallgren 1929b; 1929c; 1929d; 1931b; 1931c). In his article on the prehistoric settlement of Tavastia in 1929, Tallgren explicitly says that continuity in material culture also means ethnic continuity in Tavastia from the year 500 to 1100 (Tallgren 1929b: 149), but he says nothing else concerning ethnicity. Another article on the settlement of Finland Proper again proposes Finnish settlement continuity from around 100 CE and immigration from Estonia but, notably enough, also states that we cannot say anything about the race and nationality of the Stone Age inhabitants of the province. According to Tallgren, Finnish immigration had taken place little by little in small groups (Tallgren 1929c: 21–26). He may have meant this also in his earlier works, but here he formulated the statement explicitly.

Tallgren also wrote a special article in order to answer the question of when the ancestors of present-day Finns had arrived in Finland. The article does not contain anything new compared to his earlier statements; also here, the explanation is based on the idea of migrating tribes (Tallgren 1929d).

The ethnic explanations in *Suomen muinaisuus* (Tallgren 1931a) can be summarized as described here. The arrival of the Battle Axe Culture is for Tallgren an immigration of new, probably Indo-European inhabitants, because there are no earlier artefact forms known from which the culture could have developed in Finland. Although uncertainly, he assumes also ethnic differences between western and eastern Finland (Tallgren 1931a: 66, 70–71). The western Bronze Age is a sign of immigration from the west, while the eastern Bronze Age is, in his opinion, a continuation of the local Stone Age culture. He does not express any views on whether there have been only small immigrant groups or a larger movement of new people coming to western Finland (Tallgren 1931a: 91). In the Pre-Roman Iron Age, the western parts of the country were not completely deserted, but they were very sparsely inhabited (Tallgren 1931a: 96). Actual Iron Age settlement begun



around 100 CE, and here Tallgren repeats what he had written in his articles of 1929 – in places the text is identical to the article Tallgren 1929d. The Finnish migration would have taken place gradually between 100 and 600 CE (Tallgren 1931a: 101, 135–136, 141–151).

In the book *Suomen kulttuurihistoria* (Cultural History of Finland), Tallgren formulated the same idea as settlers coming to Finland across the Gulf of Finland during the first three centuries of the Common Era. The chapter has been titled “East Baltic culture and the move of Finns to Finland”, but in the text itself, Tallgren leaves it open whether the settlers were already “Finns” when leaving Estonia or whether they became Finns only after crossing the sea (Tallgren & Toivonen 1933: 46).

#### PREHISTORY OF UKRAINE, THE CAUCASUS, AND EUROPE

In the second half of the 1920s, Tallgren mainly turned his attention to other topics, such as Ukraine and the Caucasus. Ethnic questions had very little significance for him in that context. In his monograph on the Bronze Age of the Pontic Steppes or Ukraine before the Scyths Tallgren mentions migrating peoples and writes about Scyths, Thracians, and Cimmerians supported by Herodotos’s descriptions, assuming that the rise of the Bronze Culture in Ukraine was probably caused by the immigration of Cimmerians to the steppes, but he often sets “ethnic” terms like Hungarians or Cimmerians in quotation marks, indicating that his usage of these terms is of a regional rather than an ethnic character (Tallgren 1926b: 217, 220, 223–224; 1927b: 22; Salminen 2023). Otherwise, there are practically no attempts at ethnic explanation in any of his work on these parts of Eurasia.

The same attitude is reflected in the Estonian-language prehistory of Europe that Tallgren published in 1927. Ethnic labels are used in connection to Scyths, Sarmates, and Germanic peoples, especially Goths. There are speculations about the ethnicity of the Minusinsk Bronze Age in western Siberia. The Roman Iron Age in Finland is interpreted as the period of Finnish immigration into Finland, and the Late Iron Age in northern Russia is divided into ethnic cultural spheres according to the different Finno-Ugric

peoples known there from historical sources. Ethnic conclusions are retrospective and based on information from later, historical times. In other contexts than these, ethnicity does not play any role in the book (Tallgren 1927c: 94–95, 103, 107, 114, 117–118, 120–121, 141–143, 157–176).

#### INGREDIENTS OF TALLGREN’S ETHNIC CONCLUSIONS

Were Tallgren’s ethnic conclusions based on typology, cultural similarity on a more general level, or some other factors? For this closer comparison, we will use the works Tallgren 1911a; 1920; 1921b; 1922; 1923a; 1923b; 1923c; 1927b; 1929d; 1931a.

In his dissertation, Tallgren based his still very cautious ethnic conclusion on a retrospective from the Late Iron Age, discovering probable cultural continuity extending from the Bronze Age through Anan’ino to the Iron Age (Tallgren 1911a: 217–218). There is no actual comparison of finds on which the assumption would be based. Tallgren uses the concepts of Kulturkreis and Kulturgruppe, consisting of a uniform complex of finds, to distinguish, for example, the Fat’yanovo Culture (Tallgren 1911a: 10–11, 49).

Ten years later Tallgren was more convinced of the ethnic identity of at least some archaeological cultures connecting the Battle Axe and Fat’yanovo Cultures to the Indo-Germans or the Aryan branch of the Indo-European people wandering from Scandinavia to Persia and India (Tallgren 1921b: 187; more details in Tallgren 1920: 16–22). He considered the Comb Ceramic Culture as Finno-Ugric, because “we don’t know anything about the existence of a foreign culture in northern Russia” (Tallgren 1921b: 188). Thus, the retrospective view was extended to the Stone Age now and the result was supported by an *ex silentio* argument. According to Tallgren, the disappearance of the Fat’yanovo Culture meant the wandering of those people and the replacement of the population by Balts, Slavs, and Finns (Tallgren 1921b: 189). He also views the Gorodishche Culture from 500 BCE to 800 CE as belonging to the “West Finnish” peoples (Tallgren 1921b: 190–191). His arguments for the presence of Estonians in Estonia in the Early

Iron Age were based on cultural continuity, a Finnish migration to Finland from 100 CE on, and linguistic results. Here, it is especially noteworthy that Tallgren does not infer ethnicity directly from material culture: a Gothic artefact assemblage does not imply Gothic ethnicity (Tallgren 1921b: 194–196).

Thus, we can see that Tallgren made his ethnic conclusions on the basis of cultural continuity and the presence or absence of cultural phenomena. In his view, cultural areas were equivalent to ethnic areas, changes in culture were mostly explained by immigration or emigration of peoples, and when internal development occurs in a culture, the impulses for it come from other peoples with a higher cultural level (see also Tallgren 1922: 124–129). The articles Tallgren 1923a–c do not add anything new to the reasoning presented two years previously, and it seems that Tallgren had formulated the principles along which he makes ethnic conclusions already around 1920.

In the mid-1920s, the same basic idea still prevails: cultural areas are ethnic areas and significant changes in the material are also signs of an ethnic change (Tallgren 1926b: 217; 1927b: 22). At the end of the decade, the basic idea is still unchanged and Tallgren's image of prehistory is based on migrating tribes, which he follows retrospectively, at least as far as the prehistory of Finland and the Finns is concerned (Tallgren 1929d; 1931a). Tallgren's reasoning does not differ in any significant way from that of Gustaf Kossinna and other adherents of the ethnic paradigm of archaeology.

#### ATTENTION TO THEORETICAL QUESTIONS

The first time that Tallgren paid attention to the question of the conditions on which ethnic conclusions can be drawn from archaeological material was while explaining the archaeological research method in the introductory chapter to the prehistory of Finland in 1931. At least he had not published any such considerations before. He describes here how cultural provinces are distinguished from each other. After the borders between cultural areas are identified, the next task is to find out whether a geographically distinct area is also a national one or whether the differences can be explained by different

economic or societal factors. If a sudden change in material is found, the question to ask is whether it is associated with wanderings of peoples or economic upheavals (Tallgren 1931a: 8–11). These reflections are the embryo or first phase of the reasoning Tallgren took further some years later. At this point, Tallgren had said everything he had to say concerning ethnic questions in his research areas without going deeper into the theoretical foundations of his results.

Tallgren's theoretical thoughts resulted in an article that was published in three slightly different versions in 1934 (in Finnish), 1936 (in French), and 1937 (in English). In addition to these, also translations into Polish (1936, from the French version) and Spanish (1941, from the English version) appeared. According to Tallgren himself, the main reason that had led him to think critically about the research methods used in archaeology was the political use of prehistory in Germany and the Soviet Union. In his article, Tallgren especially criticizes the identification of archaeological cultures with ethnosés as such. He points out that two different ethnic groups may have very similar material cultures, and on the other hand, the material culture within one people does not need to be uniform. He shows examples from both the Finno-Ugric peoples of Siberia and 18th-century Europe to illustrate the difficulty of drawing ethnic conclusions from archaeological finds. Despite these reservations, Tallgren still considered it possible to indisputably identify the nationality of the Finnish Iron Age population. Wanderings of peoples have occurred, not to such an extent that a certain people would have completely replaced the former inhabitants of a certain region but rather in the form of smaller groups of immigrants arriving and settling among the existing population. Tallgren also sets the study of social and economic history and the function of artefacts instead of form as archaeology's foremost tasks. For him, archaeology is a historical discipline (Tallgren 1934: 204–210; 1936a: 19–23; 1937a: 156–159).

In 1939, Tallgren took his reasoning on the emergence process of different peoples still further. Now he denied the whole existence of homogeneous primeval peoples that would as such form the basis of each present-day people. There were never any "original homes" from



which peoples would have wandered and spread. All peoples and especially the so-called cultural peoples are conglomerates of heterogeneous elements coming from different directions, and it is questionable whether even any uniform original form of language has existed. Again, in Tallgren's view, the western Finnish people formed an exception, because in the more remote regions the emergence process would have been simpler, and the existing population would have assimilated newcomers more easily (Tallgren 1939: 40–45).

#### THE FEW PRACTICAL ADAPTATIONS OF THE NEW APPROACH

Tallgren's productivity was already declining in the second half of the 1930s, and he did not have many opportunities to adapt his new approach into practice. In his short essay on the settlement history of the region extending from the Gulf of Bothnia, he still seemed to support the idea of wanderings of peoples, as he states that northern Russia is not an original land for any Finno-Ugric peoples but only their former usufruct area and that it is not the starting point for any wanderings of peoples either (Tallgren 1935: 232).

In a short overview of prehistoric settlement and population in 1936, Tallgren says that the Finno-Ugric peoples and Arctic peoples “probably originate” from the hunters and fishers of the Comb Ceramic cultural area, and he indicates the Indo-European background of the Battle Axe Culture with the word “perhaps” and a question mark. The “Indo-Germanic” population would soon have assimilated with the original inhabitants of the country and the heritage of the Stone Age hunter-gatherer culture is continued as Lappishness or the Lappish ethnos (“lappalaisuus”) (Tallgren 1936b: 417). For the Bronze Age, Tallgren considers it possible that Scandinavian immigrants would have lived on the coasts of Finland and the actual settlement of the country would have happened in the Early Iron Age with the migration of the Finns to Finland, arriving in small groups (Tallgren 1936b: 419–420). In these latter contexts, Tallgren again identifies an archaeologically observable change in settlement with a certain ethnicity, as he had done before.

In 1937 at the Finnish Society for Sciences, Tallgren delivered a presentation about the Scandinavian Bronze Age in Finland. It is one of the relatively few syntheses of any prehistoric period that he published after the theory article of 1934/1936. In this analysis, the Bronze Age of Finland is viewed through a social and economic approach more consistently than before and the signs of the Scandinavian Bronze Age in Finland are considered as indications of entrepreneurs, merchants, and immigrants coming from the west to Finland at that time. On the other hand, this conclusion includes an ethnic dimension as such, an assumption that they were foreign in Finland and that, therefore, the whole Scandinavian Bronze Age is actually an ethnic phenomenon in Finland (Tallgren 1937b: 11–12, 16). The term ‘lappalaisuus’, Lappishness, which he uses to describe the inland or eastern Bronze Age in Finland, is now set in quotation marks (Tallgren 1937b: 17). His two articles on the prehistory of Russian Karelia contain very few ethnic conclusions, even the latter, which was published in both Finnish and Swedish just after Finland had started its occupation of the area, which was to last three years (Tallgren 1938: 15–19; 1941a; 1941b).

#### THE ROOTS OF TALLGREN'S THINKING

A.M. Tallgren became an archaeologist in the first years of the 20th century, completing his MA degree in 1905 (Kivikoski 1954: 80–82; Salminen 2001). The leading Finnish archaeologists at the time were Johan Reinhold Aspelin, Hjalmar Appelgren (from 1906, Appelgren-Kivalo, 1853–1937), and Alfred Hackman. The somewhat younger generation was represented by Kaarle Soikkeli (1871–1932), Julius Ailio (1872–1933), and the medievalist Juhani Rinne (1872–1950). There were no other young students of archaeology than Tallgren until 1907, when Aarne Europaeus (from 1930, Äyräpää, 1887–1971) began his studies, and he did not turn to archaeology in earnest until some years later (Fig. 3).

The main goal set for Finnish archaeology by J.R. Aspelin in the 1870s was to search for the roots of the Finnish people and traces of their wandering from their original home to Finland, which meant that ethnic problems formed the



Figure 3. A.M. Tallgren and Alfred Hackman on the excursion of the Second Baltic Archaeology Congress, held in Riga in 1930. Photo Karin Hilden. Finnish Heritage Agency (CC by 4.0).

core of the discipline. Aspelin thought that the national character of each people was reflected especially in their ornaments. Thus, also areas inhabited by these nationally identified peoples could be distinguished and the roots of a present people could be traced at least to the Bronze Age (Aspelin 1875 passim; Nordman 1968: 32–38; Salminen 2003: 43–46, 60–63, 169–172). Hjalmar Appelgren-Kivalo continued along similar lines but with an emphasis on more specific details, such as bronze spirals as ethnic indicators (esp. Appelgren-Kivalo 1915; 1926). Despite methodological differences, both believed that ethnic conclusions could be drawn from archaeological finds. Also, in their view, peoples were recognizable units that had wandered from their original homes to their present locations. Aspelin was also familiar with the idea of archaeological cultures from earlier and contemporary Scandinavian researchers and called them 'civilizations'

in a French text (Meinander 1981: 106–107; Salminen 2003: 152–153). The approach of both scholars was closely related to the way of thinking usually connected with the German linguist-archaeologist Gustaf Kossinna. Appelgren was formally Tallgren's supervisor during the latter's studies of archaeology, but Tallgren never developed into a real typologist like Appelgren (Nordman 1968: 39–41). Instead Tallgren followed Aspelin, who based his conclusions on more general comparisons of forms and cultural similarities (Salminen 2003: 173).

Alfred Hackman knew Kossinna personally, and among the Finnish archaeologists, he was the one with the closest ties to Germany. He also largely followed the main concept of Kossinna's *Siedlungsarchäologie* but was more cautious in his ethnic conclusions (see esp. Hackman 1905: 331–337; Nordman 1968: 45–47; Salminen 2014a: 27). Julius Ailio was both archaeologist and geologist as well as a Social Democrat politician. Such a background meant that ethnic questions in the nationalist sense were of secondary importance for him, although he did not reject them altogether and was highly interested in questions of race and physical anthropology. Ailio's work and interpretations have never been analysed (Autio 1999/2017; Nordman 1968: 50–52; Salminen 2014a: 27).

During his visit to Sweden in 1905, Tallgren studied under Oscar Montelius (1843–1921) and Oscar Almgren (1869–1945) (Kivikoski 1954: 86). Montelius had been inclined to study ethnic questions and especially the roots

of the Germanic peoples since the 1870s. He also had a significant influence on Kossinna when the latter formulated his research methods and identification of archaeological cultures with ethnoses. Almgren, on the other hand, criticized the identification of today's "linguistic tribes" with earlier human races (Baudou 2004: 182–186; 2012: 346, 352–353).

There were, however, also other Finnish archaeologists who discussed the question of parallelism between archaeological cultures and ethnoses in the 1910s and 1920s. Carl Axel Nordman (1892–1972) denied a direct equivalence between these two for the first time in a presentation in 1914, and he repeated his views in 1915, 1928, and, for a German audience, in 1937 (Nordman 1914: 25; 1915: 6–9; 1928: 132–133; 1937: 480; Meinander 1991: 31–32; Salminen 2011: 284–285; 2014a: 223–226).<sup>1</sup> Despite his rejection of a self-evident ethnic reading of finds, Nordman accepted Oscar Montelius's conception of a Germanic cultural continuity in Sweden from the Stone Age to the present and called the Battle Axe people arriving in Finland "Swedes, or more correctly proto-Germans". On the other hand, he regarded it as uncertain whether the Comb Ceramic people were Finno-Ugrians or not (Nordman 1914: 27–29). Fourteen years later, he said more cautiously that the Battle Axe Culture "could be Indo-European" and the mixed culture following thereafter in western Finland "could possibly be called Germanic" (Nordman 1928: 145).

The most striking difference occurs in Nordman's interpretations of the Early Iron Age ethnic circumstances in Estonia. In 1914, he stated that the Baltic German scholars' view of culturally weak Finno-Ugrians subdued by a superior Gothic culture and people has been declared false "by excellent experts", but in 1928 he had again adopted the view of cultural domination by ethnic Goths in the Baltic countries (Nordman 1914: 36; 1928: 135; also 1937: 485–486; Tvauri 2003). Thus, Nordman had returned to a direct ethnic reading of material culture, which he had previously rejected. Nordman's conclusions about the past of the Swedish population of Finland are expressed with more certainty

than his ideas about the Finnish inhabitants, while e.g., Tallgren was more convinced of the roots of Finnish-speaking Finns than those of the Swedish-speaking population. As Nordman published all analyses of ethnicity in contexts discussing the age of the Swedish settlement in Finland and its relationship to the Finnish-speaking population, language political background influences cannot be excluded. Nordman was most consistent in his application of the idea of distinguishing between archaeological cultures and ethnic groups in his article in *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* in 1922, where he kept most of his ethnic interpretations to a hypothetical level (Nordman 1922: 35–36, 38, 40–43).

Aarne Äyräpää did not explicitly write anything about ethnic questions in his most important work of the early 1930s, but his conclusion that the Battle Axe Culture can have spread only from central Europe to central Russia (Fat'yanovo) implies its Indo-European ethnicity, as Tallgren had also written some years earlier (Äyräpää 1933: 154; note also the title of his study).

Elsewhere Gordon Childe (1892–1957) expressed his critical attitude towards the possibility of tracing ethnicities in archaeological material in the 1920s but was nevertheless bound by old ethnic stereotypes (Trigger 1980: 49–52; 2006: 243–246). Both Tallgren and Nordman corresponded with Childe and met him personally, and Tallgren also influenced his archaeological views (Salminen 2014a: 152–153, 220–222, 229–230, 376). Thus, a reverse influence is also possible.

Tallgren's Estonian pupil Harri Moora (1900–1968) was not convinced in 1932 that the Finns' forefathers would have arrived in a completely empty country. He also questioned the Estonian origins of the Early Roman Iron Age graves of Finland but did not deny the immigration itself. In 1925, another Estonian pupil, Marta Schmiedehelm (1896–1981), asked under what conditions a culture can change without a change of population. Tallgren replied that such a change is possible (Salminen 2014a: 115, 158). Tallgren also closely followed the debate that Aarne

Europaeus had with his Swedish colleagues about the origins of the Battle Axe Culture in Finland, which also touched upon ethnic questions (Salminen 2014a: 132–142; 2014b).

#### WHY DID TALLGREN REASSESS HIS VIEWS ON ETHNICITY IN ARCHAEOLOGY?

As we have seen above, Tallgren's thoughts about how archaeology could be used to trace past ethnicities experienced two changes, firstly the consolidation of the ethnic interpretation in the 1910s and secondly its rejection during the first years of the 1930s. Tallgren has not left us any explicit material to clarify what led him to abandon his earlier approach and, with some exceptions, exclude ethnicity from the tasks of archaeology. Nevertheless, because this topic had been discussed even in Finland since the 1910s, it is not surprising that also Tallgren chose his side in the question. Most probably the explanation must also be sought in external factors. Two developments are especially crucial here.

In the 1920s, Tallgren made three journeys to the Soviet Union, developed an extensive network of acquaintances among archaeologists there, and founded, together with the ethnologist Uno Taavi Sirelius (1872–1929), the journal *Eurasia Septentrionalis Antiqua* just to publish studies on Russian and eastern European prehistory (Kivikoski 1954: 105–108; Salminen 2014a: 97–116). This meant familiarizing himself with the new Soviet archaeology, the theoretical basis of which was just created in the late 1920s by applying Marxism to the interpretation of prehistory. Eventually Soviet archaeology ended up adhering to the theory of languages as being socioeconomically determined, developed by Nikolay Marr (1864–1934) – or rather it was gradually commanded to adhere to this theory – but the preceding transition phase at the end of the 1920s provided several ideas that clearly influenced Tallgren, such as a focus on how prehistoric societies had lived and especially the use of a sociological approach (Kivikoski 1954: 110–111; Trigger 2006: 335–339; Sveshnikova 2009: 65–73; Platonova 2010: 122–124, 161–165, 177–180, 196–197; Salminen 2014a: 115; on the

influence of Soviet archaeology on Childe and parallelism with Tallgren here, Trigger 1980: 92–95).

However, a counter-reaction to the ideas of the 1920s was soon to follow both in the Soviet Union and elsewhere. The ethnic reading of prehistory was dogmatized first in Nazi Germany and combined there with the search for German superiority in the past. The Soviet Union replied in 1935 with a programme to emphasize Slavic cultural superiority (Shnirelman 1995; Wiwjorra 1996; Grünert 2002: 336–342; Trigger 2006: 251). Several of the scholars who had developed Soviet archaeology in the 1920s were repressed, even executed (Platonova 2010: 124, 184–188). Tallgren's criticism of the political misuse of archaeology in the two totalitarian states resulted in a fierce debate with some German archaeologists and was one of the factors preventing him from entering the Soviet Union again (Salminen 2011: 274–283; 2014a: 241–248). Tallgren's distancing from ethnic interpretation seems to have resulted from the combination of three impulses: domestic discussion since the 1910s on the possibility of drawing ethnic conclusions in archaeology, the sociological emphasis in the Soviet archaeology of the late 1920s, and the rise of new nationalist archaeologies in the 1930s. Tallgren had also expressed his views against the extreme rightist phenomena in Finland in the early 1930s (Kivikoski 1954: 114–115).

#### CONCLUSIONS

Tallgren's scholarly background was within a paradigm of ethnically coloured archaeology. He learned it from both of his teachers, J.R. Aspelin and Hjalmar Appelgren-Kivalo. Gustaf Kossinna's *Siedlungsarchäologie* was also introduced in Finland in a moderate form by Alfred Hackman in the first years of the 20th century. While studying in Sweden, Tallgren may have been exposed to opposing influences with respect to ethnicity in prehistory. However, Tallgren avoided straightforward ethnic conclusions in his earliest works.



There was at least some discussion of how archaeology could be used to reach ethnic results in the 1910s in Finland, when C. A. Nordman published two papers on the topic. At this point, his critical attitude did not yet influence Tallgren, who instead sought more certainty about the conditions on which he could draw ethnic conclusions, more specifically trace the roots of the Finno-Ugric peoples. At this phase, he viewed peoples as rather static entities that could wander from one place or area to another. Tallgren's ethnic reasoning consolidated in the early 1920s and did not change much for the next ten years.

Tallgren made most of his ethnic conclusions retrospectively from late prehistory or medieval times back to earlier periods. Linguistics provided support for him but remained in the background. Tallgren attempted to combine certain historical phenomena with archaeological remains, such as hillforts. However, he seldom considered any artefact types as ethnic indicators as such, and when other arguments like linguistics pointed in another direction, such as in the case of the so-called Gothic Early Iron Age in Finland, Estonia, and Latvia, artefacts lost their evidential value altogether.

The ethnic question was most important for Tallgren in connection with so-called Finno-Ugric archaeology. Otherwise, he did not pay much or practically any attention to prehistoric ethnicities. It could even be said that for Tallgren, the ethnic approach mostly belonged together with one specific question, that of the history of the Finno-Ugric peoples and especially the Finns' arrival in Finland.

In the beginning of the 1930s, Tallgren questioned most of what he had said or thought about archaeology so far, including the ethnic paradigm. During his journeys to the Soviet Union in the 1920s, Tallgren had become interested in the new possibilities of archaeology as a historical-sociological discipline, and in the 1930s, archaeology and especially ethnic archaeology was applied for political purposes first in Nazi Germany and soon thereafter also in the Soviet Union. Thus, several currents running in parallel led Tallgren to the reassessment of his earlier approach and resulted in the theory article of

1934/1936/1937. Tallgren took his rejection of ethnic conclusions in archaeology even further in 1939, but still with one exception, the roots of the Finns.

Tallgren did not apply his new thoughts much in practice because of the Second World War and his own deteriorating health. Thus, we do not know what kind of archaeology he would have practised if he had followed the path he had pointed.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Nordman 1937 presentation is mostly a direct translation of Nordman 1928, although complemented with an overview of the Stone and Bronze Ages, rich illustrations, and a reference to the influence of national characteristics on material culture. Salminen 2014a: 225.