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PROJECT REVIEW: DAILY AND AFTERLIFE OF CHILDREN (1300–1900) – NEW PERSPECTIVES IN IDENTIFYING CHILDHOOD IN THE PAST

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The project 'Daily and afterlife of children (1300–1900): New perspectives in identifying childhood in the past' was funded by the Research Council of Finland. The project received funding through the Academy Project call for younger generation of researchers and ran from September 2019 to August 2023. The total implemented costs amounted to approximately 685,000 euros, of which the Research Council funded around 480,000 euros.

The research was closely tied to PI Sanna Lipkin's Academy Research Fellow project, 'New perspectives on childhood in Finland (1600–1900) – Funerary attire as an indicator of status of children', which ran from September 2017 to August 2022. It was also connected to Tiina Väre's postdoctoral project, 'Breastfeeding, weaning, and nutrition in Post-medieval Finland: Nitrogen and carbon stable isotope analyses of dentin collagen', conducted between March 2020 and February 2023. Both projects were likewise funded by the Research Council of Finland. Altogether, the three projects received approximately 1,224,000 euros in funding from the Research Council of Finland, while the host institution, the University of Oulu, contributed about 525,000 euros in support.

The 'Daily and afterlife of children (1300–1900)' project focused on the emotional bonds children and adolescents formed and how these bonds shaped their lives during the Post-Medieval period. It examined childhood and adolescence in Finland from the 17th to the 19th centuries, aiming to explore the socialization of children

and youth from the perspectives of emotion and performance theories. Beyond socialization, the project investigated children's agency as well as parents' care and dedication toward their children. Children's identities were studied through graves and burial clothing, revealing that young people were also responsible for making burial clothing, thereby allowing us to trace their agency (Lipkin et al. 2021; Lipkin et al. 2022). The agency of children and youth was further studied in the context of factory work (Kuokkanen & Hemminki 2023).

The project aimed to better understand the development of emotional bonds between children and their caregivers. The study focused on the applicability of attachment theory in archaeological research, a mostly unexplored topic in archaeology. From archaeological and historical perspectives, studies included emotional bond development between foster parents and foster children in the Clementeoff family of Keminmaa (Tuovinen 2024), the influence of breastfeeding on attachment formation (Väre 2024), and the emotional ties of children who grew up during the Great Wrath (1714–1721) and how they potentially evolved with their parents and later with their own children (Lipkin 2024). We also explored how disruptions in these emotional bonds manifested in an increase in child murders (Kuusisto 2023) and, conversely, how strong emotional ties to natural places emerged (Lipkin 2024). Additionally, the research reflected on how later scholars and contemporary society have viewed

those children who died or were enslaved during the Great Wrath through literature, popular culture, and memorials (Lipkin 2023; 2024).

The project also considered the impact of war on children's and youths' emotional development, using the case of a young soldier who died in the Finnish War (1808–1809). We investigated his diet, the effects of military life on his skeleton, and insights into his origin (Northern Ostrobothnia), battlefield conditions based on his clothing (Lipkin et al. manuscript). Overall, our research provided a better understanding of how children and youth in the 18th to early 20th centuries perceived their environment (Lipkin 2022). Emotional bonds were studied from the broadest possible archaeological and historical perspectives.

In addition to historical sources, burials and burial clothing played a significant role in the research. The project used a multidisciplinary approach to examine the burial textiles. Notably, it employed computed tomography (CT) scanning in collaboration with the Research Unit of Health Sciences and Technology at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Oulu. CT technology was applied at clinical, micro, and nano levels. While the application of CT technology in textile archaeology had been explored previously, this project explored its potential more extensively than previous studies (Karjalainen et al. 2023). We addressed the benefits and challenges of this methodology (Lipkin et al. 2023). These findings generated interest, leading to invitations for presentations and a collaborative Horizon consortium project, TEXTaiLES (<https://www.echoes-ecch.eu/textailles/>).

Understanding childhood in the past allows for broader perspectives on modern childhood. In our research, we addressed sensitive topics, such as children's involvement in war, which resonated with the public, especially after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. The dissemination of research findings has positively impacted well-being. Discussions of death often arose during the project, involving not only researchers but also priests and the general public. These conversations, facilitated by attachment theory and readings on mentalization, helped us connect and engage with people in a meaningful way (Lipkin et al. 2024). Death is a challenging topic for many, but using historical examples – especially

those concerning children – sparked important discussions. I remember vividly the words of Chaplain Outi Pohjola when we were designing the church burial museum in Haukipudas. She expressed the church's role to talk about topics such as death and said that she and others had drawn strength from our research to have these important conversations with the parishioners. The permanent display of the findings in the church burial museum, which opened on September 18, 2022, at Haukipudas Church underscores the significance of outreach.

Besides church burial museum, we have contributed to several temporary exhibitions in museums. These exhibitions curated in collaboration with museum staff, the 'Church, Space and Memory' project (PI Titta Kallio-Seppä), and conservators included the following: Carefully Buried – Archaeological Research from Northern Finland, June 17 – August 30, 2020, 'Changing Church Burial Practices', January 31 – August 30, 2020 at the Northern Ostrobothnia Museum; 'Rungius, Buried in the Church', September 12 – December 1, 2019 at the Kemi City Museum; and 'Anna, Buried in the Church', September 12 – December 1, 2019 at the Torne Valley Museum.

Feedback from visitors highlighted exhibitions' value. One memorable comment came from a mother who appreciated how the exhibition facilitated a conversation about death with her child. Many exhibitions occurred during the pandemic, providing a meaningful experience for visitors when other activities were limited.

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