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Death, Destruction and Commemoration

Tracing ritual activities in Finnish Late Iron Age cemeteries (AD 550–1150)

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Academic dissertation to be publicly discussed, by due permission of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Helsinki in auditorium XV, on the 4th of September, 2010 at 10 o´clock.

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Preface

Death is something that both fascinates and frightens people more than anything else. What happens after we die is a fundamental question which has also formed the basis of all religions.

As long as I can remember, I have been intrigued with the nuanced culture surrounding death and dying. It is as been with a slight sneer, and sometimes even with a hint of repulsion, that my family, friends and colleagues have reacted to my enthusiastic stories about various peculiarities and anomalies in burial customs both past and present. Many of them have rolled their eyes and shaken their heads of my exhilaration. Death is, perhaps, still considered to be something dark and chilling, and young people especially do not want to think about their own mortality. Death is quite mundane, however, since we are, in spite of everything, all potential cadavers. Thus we are forced to accept that there are powers within us that we can not forestall; before death we are forced to humble ourselves.

The idea of writing a thesis about cremation arose in 2000 when I visited the city of Death, Varanasi (Benares), in India. After witnessing a funeral with an open-air cremation on the bank of the Ganges I was convinced that this was something I wanted to study more. At that time, however, I had no idea that the thesis would take me to Iron Age Finland.

Death also goes hand in hand with a wide range of emotions, perhaps mostly with grieving and commemoration. People have mourned and remembered their dead loved ones, particularly at certain times of the year. Many cultures even today have special days when they commemorate and remember the dead. This commemorative practice also often leaves material traces for the archaeologist. Through repetition, these ritual acts are remembered and stored in our bodies as are the emotions, smells and pictures which might enhance our ability to remember, especially events we have experienced ourselves.

One of my earliest memories from childhood is from a summer vacation in Italy with my parents and my older brother when I was four years old. We had rented an apartment in Riva del Sole in Tuscany and every morning we were awakened by an Italian man who pushed his barrow down the street selling croissants and doughnuts. While he was walking down the street he was shouting out in Swedish (!) the items he was selling. After breakfast we usually walked to the beach. Tall rosemary *(Rosmarinus officinalis)* bushes lined the path to the beach and I used to strike the bushes with my hand as we walked by. Today, the smell of the rosemary still recalls memories from my childhood, and when I use the herb in cooking I tend to travel back to the warm and sunny Italian west coast. Rosemary is one of my favourite herbs, but as it happens, it is also a symbol of memory because it is believed to improve people's capacity to remember.

Acknowledgments

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Over the years, I have also received several travel grants from the University of Helsinki. The first grant took me to a conference on interpreting the Iron Age in Linz, Austria, in 2004, resulting in my first theoretical article about cremation cemeteries under level ground. The next grants enabled me to take part in two EEA conferences (European Association of Archaeologists) in Krakow (2006), Poland and Zadar, Croatia (2007) and the VIII Nordic TAG conference in Lund, Sweden (2005). Through the Nordic Graduate School in Archaeology (Dialogues with the Past) I took part in a one-week course on Violence, Coercion and Warfare in Nauplion (Nafplion), Greece (2005). The Swedish-Finnish Cultural Foundation (Kulturfonden för Sverige och Finland) gave me a one-week travel grant for Stockholm in December 2006. During my stay, I gave a guest lecture at the University of Stockholm about the Finnish cremation cemeteries under level ground and the discussions held after the lecture have helped me a lot.

The Finnish PhD School in Archaeology financed my seminar at the Third Theoretical Seminar of the Baltic Archaeologists (BASE 3) held in Ventspils, Latvia, in 2007. I also want to express my gratitude to Nick Thorpe and the European Science Foundation (ESF) for inviting me to the "Burial in 'other' Places in the European Past" exploratory workshop held in Winchester, UK, in 2007.

At these conferences and seminars I have been able to present my ideas and get valuable feedback from the audience. The Papers I presented later resulted in the articles on which this thesis is based.

Several people have contributed to this work. Without their help, feedback and companionship this work would never have been finished in time.

In Estonia, I wish o thank: Professor Valter Lang from the University of Tartu for always giving his time to write me recommendations for my scholarship applications and for inviting me to attend to several excavations in Estonia; Marika Mägi for showing me around the Institute of History in Tallinn during my first visit there, Andres Tvauri for showing me the artefact collections at the University of Tartu, Heiki Valk for a long discussion concerning speared inhumation burials and tips for further reading, Marge Konsa for many marathon discussions

that often ended in the small hours of the morning. Over the years, she he has also driven me all around Estonia to see sites. Tõnno Jonuks is thanked for discussions about prehistoric religion and Mari Lõhmus for her company in both Winchester and the Base 2 seminar.

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This book is dedicated to my grandparents Runar Wickholm (1900-1970), Tuomo Hyrkki (1912-1945) and Ilse Hyrkki (née Monrad-Eber) (1917-1971), whom I never had the chance to meet and also to my German grandmother Carla Wickholm (née Lübker) (1909-1998). You have always had a special place in my heart and all the stories I have heard about you, have made you alive to me.

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List of papers

This thesis is formed by an introductory essay and five peer-reviewed papers. In the introduction, the papers are referred to according to their Roman numerals.

Paper I

Wickholm, A. 2008. Re-use in the Finnish Cremation Cemeteries under Level Ground – Examples of Collective Memory. In F. Fahlander & T. Oestigaard (eds.). Materiality of Death – Bodies, Burials, Beliefs. British Archaeological Report (BAR) International Series 1768, 89–97.

Paper II

Wickholm, A. 2006. "Stay Where you Have been Put!" The Use of Spears as Coffin Nails in Late Iron Age Finland. In H. Valk. (ed.). Ethnicity and Culture. Studies in Honour of Silvia Laul. Muinasaja Teadus 18, 193–207. Tartu-Tallinn.

Paper III

Wickholm, A. 2007. Commemorating the past. A Case of Collective Remembering from Alsätra cemetery in Karjaa, Finland. In A. Merkevičius (ed.). Interarchaeologia, 2. Papers from the Second Theoretical Seminar of the Baltic Archaeologists (BASE) held at the University of Vilnius, Lithuania, October 21-22, 2005. Colours of Archaeology. Material Culture and the Society, 107–116. Vilnius – Helsinki – Rīga – Tartu 2007.

Paper IV

Wessman, A. 2009a. Reclaiming the Past: Using Old Artefacts as a Means of Remembering. In A. Šnē & A. Vasks (eds.). Interarchaeologia, 3. Papers from the Third Theoretical Seminar of the Baltic Archaeologists (BASE) held at the University of Latvia, October 5-6, 2007. Memory, Society, and Material Culture, 71–88. Rīga – Helsinki – Tartu – Vilnius 2009.

Paper V

Wessman, A. 2009b: Levänluhta – a place of punishment, sacrifice or just a common cemetery? Fennoscandia archaeologica XXVI: 81–105.

Abstract

The thesis is connected with death, memory and ancestor commemoration during the Merovingian period, the Viking Age and the beginning of the Crusade period (AD 550-1150) in Finland. During this time, cremation was the dominant burial rite. It was not until the end of the Viking Age that inhumation became more common but both cremations and inhumations are performed even at the same sites throughout the time.

Three different burial types 1) cremation cemeteries below level ground, 2) inhumation burials and 3) water burials are discussed in five articles. I consider these burial forms from three different viewpoints; collectivity-individuality, visibility-invisibility and cremation-inhumation. The thesis also discusses the topics of memory and monument re-use. Both cremation cemeteries below level ground and inhumation burials have been re-used during their time of usage, and on most occasions are situated in a landscape that is overlaid by other monuments as well.

The main questions of the thesis are:

- What kinds of ritual behaviour can we detect in the burials during the period (AD 550-1150)?
- How did people perceive the moraine hills that functioned as burial places?
- What kind of re-use can be detected in the Iron Age cemeteries?
- Why have ancient sites and artefacts been re-used?

This thesis shows that it is possible to claim that both artefact and site re-use is a much more widespread phenomenon than has previously been thought. It is also a conscious and deliberate behaviour that can be related to an ancestor cult and commemoration of the dead. The funerary rituals during this time period show great variation and complex, both regionally and nationally. Not only have the dead been buried using elaborate rituals, they have also been mourned and commemorated in intricate ways that proves that death was not an end product, but the start of something new.

1 Introduction

1.1 Burial archaeology in finland

Theory and methods

Burials are a very important source of information to archaeologists because they tell us of the past living societies. Naturally, burials cannot be studied uncritically because they do not display the past lives of people as in a mirror. The mirror is actually shattered and as archaeologists we need to piece it back together with the best knowledge we have at hand at the moment (Härke 1997; Rundkvist 2007).

Finnish Iron Age studies have mainly focused on studying graves and our knowledge of settlement sites is certainly under-represented. Our understanding of Iron Age society has thus become one-sided and even distorted. Even though the excavations have primarily focused on burials and cemeteries, the theoretical framework has been narrow.

While the Scandinavian study of burials has focused mainly on religious beliefs and ritual archaeology from the mid 1990s onwards (Artelius 2000; Østigård 2000; Price 2002; Nilsson Stutz 2003; Svanberg 2003; Rundkvist 2007) the situation has been completely different in Finland, where attention has been mainly on typology and later in the use of natural sciences.

Artefact studies have traditionally been very popular in Finnish archaeology and burials have served as a great source of information in these pursuits. The context of these finds, the grave and its construction, has not played any great part in these studies (Ailio 1922; Appelgren 1897; Salmo 1938; Erä-Esko 1965). Through typological and chronological analyses of grave-goods archaeologists have achieved some understanding of the organization of the Iron Age society, especially mobility and trade. This line of study has not become any less popular even though new theoretical schools have appeared in archaeology (Salmo 1938; Cleve 1943; Meinander 1980; Pihlman 1990; Lehtosalo-Hilander 2000b). The study of social stratification, especially through "rich" graves, such as weapon burials, has also been a topic of research (Lehtosalo-Hilander 1982a-c; Schauman-Lönnqvist 1996; 1999) and its popularity does not seem at an end amongst archaeologists, even though the interpretations are now mixed with post-processual notions and ritual theory (Mäntylä 2005; Raninen 2005a; Kuusela 2009).

The natural sciences have played an important part in Finnish archaeology especially in the study of Late Iron Age inhumation burials. Even though post-processual archaeology was introduced in the late 1980s or early 1990s it never played a major role in Finland. Instead, the focus has been on studying small details in graves, such as the wood materials used for the coffins, their construction or the study of the ancient Finnish costumes often decorated with bronze spiral ornamentation (e.g., Lehtosalo-Hilander 1984a; Tomanterä 1987; Jäkärä 2005; Riikonen 1990; 2005). These studies have recently been augmented by fibre-analysis from funeral garments and by DNA analysis (Kirjavainen 2005; Mikkola 2009).

Religious aspects of the burial data did not figure largely in the Finnish literature until the middle of the 1990s, when some archaeologists started to use the term ritual in connection with burials (Shepherd 1997; 1999; Purhonen 1996b; Pihlman 1999). Most of these articles refer to the early works of the Swedish archaeologist Anders Kaliff (1992; 1997) but they do not take the discussion any further.

During the 21st century, Finnish burial archaeology has changed a great deal. Even though computer-aided studies are few in Finnish burial archaeology, local density analysis has been tested at two cremation cemeteries under level ground (Haimila 2002).

It is apparent, especially when reading through the more recent M.A. theses and articles that new approaches and ideas have been put into practice and been tested mainly among the new generation of archaeologists. Thus studies of ritual archaeology, memory, cognition, commemoration and re-use have been published (e.g., Hymylä 2004; Holmblad 2005; Pietikäinen 2006; Wickholm & Raninen 2006; Lappalainen 2007: Wickholm 2006; 2007; 2008; Muhonen 2009; Wessman 2009a).

Excavation techniques

In Finnish burial archaeology, excavation methods have varied depending upon whether the burial in question is a cremation or an inhumation. Needless to say, the excavation methods have been more precise with the inhumation burials since they are considered to be closed finds, while the bones in the cremation cemeteries are commingled and thus not of the same importance. Moreover, if we consider the published literature on Finnish Iron Age burials, these are mostly from inhumation cemeteries (Cleve 1943; 1978; Hirviluoto 1958; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1982a-c; 2000b; Riikonen 1990) with the exception of the mound graves from the Åland Islands (Kivikoski 1964; 1980) and the fully excavated Vainionmäki cremation cemetery in Laitila (Purhonen 1996a).

While the bone material was not usually collected during cemetery excavations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Appelgren 1897a), the situation had not improved much by the late 1930s and the 1940s. Even though the bones were now collected and catalogued, it seems that some of the bone material was not stored in the collections. This was revealed to the author when the bone material from the famous cremation pit grave from Alsätra in Raasepori (formerly Karjaa) was supposed to undergo osteological analysis in 2007. According to the catalogues, the bone material weighed 8kg, but only one kilogram was found for analysis at the storages of the National Board of Antiquities (Kivikero 2008: 15). Burned bones have perhaps not had high status in the collection policy of the National Board of Antiquities and some materials have either been lost or thrown away over the years.

Burned bones are also a difficult find category in the sense that they are small and fragmented and thus difficult to document precisely in the field. They are also often found in sieves (Hietala 2003: 28).

During the end of 19th centuries and early 20th centuries the excavations methods were quite crude. Not much attention was paid to explaining excavation techniques in the reports, but merely by looking at photographs of digs one is able to see that excavating in levels was not considered to be of importance. Crowbars and large shovels were mostly used and sieving was not yet a custom, even though already used by some archaeologists (Fig. 1-2). The finds were collected in grid squares of 1 x 1 or 2 x 2 metres (see Tallgren 1914).

Fig.1. The excavation of the Imatran voima cremation cemetery in Hämeenlinna in 1938 was mainly carried out using shovels and crowbars. Photograph by S. Pälsi 1938/ National Board of Antiquities.

Fig.2. The excavation of the Ristimäki 1 cremation cemetery in Turku (formerly Kaarina) in 1914. The newly built school building is on the left. Photograph by A.M. Tallgren. 1914/ National Board of Antiquities.

Metal detectors were introduced at cremation cemetery excavations in the 1990s. The archaeologists have usually asked amateur archaeologists to do this work. With the metal detectors it has been possible to estimate the size and borders of the cremation cemeteries under level ground, to search though parts of cemeteries already destroyed but also to find possible nearby settlement sites (Miettinen 1996; Saukkonen 1996). Unfortunately, there are also negative aspects to metal detectors as was shown in summer 2009 during the excavations of the Vainionmäki B cemetery. Artefacts which clearly derive from a cremation cemetery were found in an unknown place, some hundreds of metres from the cemetery. They had been displayed on the internet on a web-page for metal detector enthusiasts (Mikkola 2010).

The use of a total station is generally the practice today in archaeological excavations. At some cremation cemeteries, all finds have been measured precisely (Haimila 2002), but the custom seems to be different among archaeologists, depending on the purpose of the excavation as well. Often only the complete metal finds are measured with the total station, while mass finds, such as ceramics, slag, burned clay and bones are registered only by their level and their grid which is usually either 100 x 100 cm or 50 x 50 cm, as was the case at Vainonmäki B (Mikkola 2010).

The Vainionmäki B cremation cemetery under level ground in Laitila parish (Fig. 3) is a sad example of how poorly cremation cemeteries under level ground are still treated by the archaeologists. Even though the site has been excavated recently (2004-2009) and will also be excavated in the coming years, only the finds from 2008 excavation have been conserved. Only a sample of finds (the most spectacular ones?) from 2004-2007 and 2009 excavations has undergone conservation (Mikkola 2010: 16). This is a tragedy, taking into consideration the fragmentary and fragile state of the finds. Moreover, the amount of burned bone which now comes to 25 kg, is mostly unanalysed, the exception being the bone material from the 2004 excavations. Neither has an osteologist been present at the excavations (Mikkola 2010; Salo, K. 2004).

Fig.3. The excavation of a probable Iron Age settlement site adjacent to the Vainionmäki B cremation cemetery under level ground in Laitila in 2005. The cemetery is located on the moraine hill in the background. Photograph by the author.

1.2 Research questions and aims of this study

Death is a complex and multifaceted process that affects the daily lives of people. During prehistoric times especially death was everywhere and was probably considered as a normal part of life. In this work, I will suggest that we should not look at burials as an end product, but as a continuous process, and perhaps even the beginning of something new. The emotional aspects of death and dying will also be addressed.

Just as death is a process, so is writing an academic dissertation. The five articles discussed here have been written over a period of five years. Thus, the process of learning and developing as a student of archaeology can clearly be read in the pages of the various articles.

This thesis centres on three themes: death, memory and ancestor commemoration[1] during the Merovingian period, the Viking Age and the beginning of the Crusade period (AD 550-1150) in Finland (Fig. 4). During this time, cremation was the dominant burial rite. It was not until the end of the Viking Age that inhumation became more common but over this period both cremations and inhumations were performed, even at the same sites.

I have selected three different burial types which I use as comparative material in this study. These are 1) cremation cemeteries under level ground which is the dominant burial form in Finland during the Merovingian period and the Viking Age and thus an obvious choice; 2) inhumation burials which dominate towards the beginning of the Crusade period and 3) water burials because, even though scarce in number, they reflect the complexity of death rituals at a regional level. Both cremation cemeteries under level ground and inhumation burials have been re-used during their time of usage and are often situated in a landscape that is overlaid by other monuments as well. The Levänluhta site with its water burials is an exception, because it is not a case of re-use, but it still fits neatly into the concept of memory and memory-building since the site has become a *lieu de mémoire* because of its vast history of research and its prominent display at the National Museum. At the same time, Levänluhta is also an example of forgetting because the site is today overgrown by vegetation and not tended by the National Board of Antiquities even though it is considered of national importance. Moreover, only the bone material was published in detail before Paper V was written (Formisto 1993; Niskanen 2006; Paper V, Wessman 2009b).

In this thesis, I consider three cemetery forms through various aspects such as collectivity-individuality, visibility-invisibility and cremation-inhumation. These fit well with the cemetery forms discussed here. The summary ends with a discussion about memory, commemoration and aspects of re-use, issues that have not been debated before in Finnish archaeology.

My research questions are the following:

- What kinds of ritual behaviour can we detect in the burials during the period (AD 550-1150)?
- How did people perceive the moraine hills that functioned as burial places?
- What kind of re-use can be detected in the Iron Age cemeteries?
- Why have ancient sites and artefacts been re-used?

1 James Whitley (2002) has criticized the use of the term ancestor and its one-sided use in archaeology. Even though he is right in many ways Whitley's critics is mostly aimed towards the British Neolithic and does not, in my opinion, apply for Late Iron Age Scandinavia (see also Thäte 2007).

Fig.4. Sites mentioned in the thesis (see also Fig. 15). Map by W. Perttola

1. Levänluhta, Isokyrö
2. Pukkila, Isokyrö
3. Käldamäki, Vöyri
4. Pörnullbacken, Vöyri
5. Leikkimäki, Kokemäki
6. Vainionmäki A and B, Laitila
7. Kalmumäki, Uusikaupunki
8. Ylipää, Lieto
9. Aittamäki, Lieto
10. Ristimäki I-II, Turku
11. Alsätra, Raasepori
12. Stora näset, Raasepori
13. Vesitorninmäki, Hattula
14. Kalomäki, Hämeenlinna
15. Pukkisaari, Kouvola

1.3 A brief description of the material

The cremation cemeteries under level ground

By the end of the Migration period, a new and complex burial form, called cremation cemeteries under level ground, appears in Finland. Similar cemeteries are currently also known from Estonia, the Karelian Isthmus in Russia and on the Curonian peninsula in Latvia. The phenomenon is thus quite widespread, extending in the north to Finnish Ostrobothnia, Lake Ladoga in the east, and Estonia and north Latvia in the south (Uino 1997; Mägi 2002; Kriiska & Tvauri 2007: 150; Paper I, Wickholm 2008). Lately, it has seemed that this cemetery form may also be found in Svealand in Central Sweden (Graner 2006).

This cemetery form has many names in Finnish *(Fi. polttokenttäkalmisto, suomalainen polttokenttäkalmisto, maanalainen polttokenttäkalmisto, kenttäkalmisto, kenttä-polttokalmisto, tasaisen maan polttokalmisto, Swe. brandgravfält på/under flat mark)* but it does not translate well into English. What I consider important is that the name explains the cemetery form. Level-ground cremation cemetery, cremation cemetery under level/flat ground, cremation cemetery below ground level, flat cremation cemetery or level-ground and subterranean collective cemeteries are just a few examples of how this burial form has been translated into English. Unfortunately, even though I have tried to be consistent in my use of terminology, the terms have often changed during the language revision of my articles. Thus, this unfortunate variation in the term use will be seen in the different texts.

What distinguishes this cemetery is that it is only weakly visible above ground, since it lacks visible grave markers, such as cairns. Thus, the cremated bones and the artefacts are found in the stone structures which are below ground level (Fig. 5-6) with only occasional stones or erratic boulders apparent to the eye (Hackman 1897; Tallgren 1920).

This makes the burials merge into the landscape which seems to have been intentional. These cemeteries are thus quite hard to find

Fig.5. The bones and artefacts are scattered under a low pavement of stones; as a consequence, the cemetery is below level ground and not visible. Photograph by the author.

Fig.6. The Aittamäki cremation cemetery in Lieto. Photograph by T. Jäkärä 1994/University of Turku.

Fig.7. The Haimionmäki cremation cemetery under level ground in Lieto was discovered in 1953 when the road between Turku and Hämeenlinna was improved. The road runs right through the cemetery. Photograph by C. F. Meinander 1954/ National Board of Antiquities.

during surveys, and are unfortunately frequently found by accident during earth-moving (Fig. 7) (Lehtosalo-Hilander 1984b: 281-2). The cemetery is built of stones of variable size that form a compact but irregular structure or pavement. The stone structures might be either extensive or very few and the thickness of the stone layers varies from 1-4 layers or up to 60 cm. Under this layer of stones and charcoal there is untouched yellowish moraine (Fig. 8-9). In some areas, such as the Häme region, cemeteries can either lack a stone setting completely or consist of only one layer of stones (Aspelin 1885; Tallgren 1918: 55; Aroalho 1978: 5; Kivikoski 1955: 64-5; 1964: 171; Söyrinki-Harmo 1996: 103). The structure of the cremation cemeteries under level ground varies greatly depending on the geological factors of the sites.

The lack of an above-ground structure and the flatness of this cemetery type transform it into an almost invisible cemetery, even though only a few of these cemeteries are actually found on level ground. The majority are, in fact, located on top of small moraine hills, slopes or ridges.

Fig.8. The second stone layer at the Hätilä cremation cemetery in Hämeenlinna. Photograph by J. Saukkonen 1981/ National Board of Antiquities.

Fig.9. The third stone layer at the Hätilä cremation cemetery in Hämeenlinna. Photograph by J. Saukkonen 1981/ National Board of Antiquities.

These hills are very often situated in an agrarian landscape which makes them prominent in the surrounding topography (Fig. 10-11). It seems appropriate to say that this society buried their dead in an invisible way but still made sure that the hills of the ancestors were visible in the topography (Paper I, Wickholm 2008). Since the cemeteries are mostly situated on top of moraine hills the soil consists of natural stones and bedrock. The cemetery is typically built at least partly on top of visible bedrock, which means that the funerary ashes are placed in the cracks of the bedrock (Fig. 12). The thickness of the cemetery layers is also affected by the existing bedrock. Sometimes there is only some 10-20 cm of soil over the bedrock (Salmo 1980: 57; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1984b: 282; 1988: 191; Fast & Jansson 1999: 4). Cremation cemeteries built almost completely on top of the bedrock are found, for example, in Moisio in Mikkeli, Vammonniemi in Taipalsaari, Rupakallio in Valkeakoski and Huhkonkallio and Mahittula in Raisio. The cracks in the bedrock typically function almost as "burial urns" for the funeral ashes and grave-goods (Sarasmo 1945; Lehtosalo 1960: 36; Kirkinen 1994: 95-6; Pietikäinen 2006).

During excavations the first finds from the cremation cemeteries under level ground are usually made when removing the turf from the upper layers of the cemeteries. At times, these are less than 5 cm under the grass layer (Fig. 13). This makes one wonder whether or not the cremations have actually been covered by earth and stones during the funerals (Aspelin 1885; Söyrinki- Harmo 1984: 118-9). At least parts of the cemetery could perhaps have been left open for public display.

The cultural layer, from the turf layer to the clean moraine layer or bedrock is usually 30-60 cm thick (Tallgren 1918; Salmo 1980).

Fig.10. The Stora näset cremation cemetery under level ground in Raasepori (formerly Karjaa) is situated on a small moraine hill. Photograph by the author.

Fig.11. Rikalanmäki Hill in Salo is famous for its inhumation cemetery, which was used from the end of Viking Age to the end of Crusade period. The same hill also contains a cremation cemetery under level ground dating mainly to the Merovingian period. The cemetery lies on the near right side of the hill. Photograph by the author.

Fig.12. The Siiri 1 cremation cemetry in Raisio is a completely excavated cremation cemetery under level ground that is dated to Viking Age. The cemetery was founded partly on bedrock. Photograph by T. Pitkänen 1988/University of Turku.

Fig.13. The stone pavement lies immediately under the turf, as in the Vainionmäki B cemetery in Laitila. Photograph by the author.

Another significant characteristic of these cemeteries is that they are collective by nature. This means that the burned bones, artefacts, pottery and charcoal from the funeral pyres have been strewn over a large area into the stone pavement, either on top of the stones or between them. The scattering seems to have happened in a more or less random fashion. Moreover, the majority of the weapons have been deliberately broken either before or after being laid on the pyre. The same custom is also known from Sweden and Estonia. The pieces from one single artefact can be found several metres from each other, but there may also be clusters of artefacts in the cemetery, suggesting single burials (Hackman 1897: 82-4; Tallgren 1931: 113-4; Kivikoski 1960: 18-19; 1961: 161-3; Salmo 1952: 12-4; 1980: 57; Edgren 1993: 195-6; Söyrinki-Harmo 1984: 114-5; 1996: 102-3; Karvonen 1998; Mägi 2002: 130; Konsa 2003: 124-7; Mandel 2003; Moilanen 2008). The collective character is a significant change in the Finnish funerary custom, as there are only sporadic signs of collective burials during the Roman Iron Age (see, e.g., Keskitalo 1979). However, in Estonia the collective burial practice was widely practised during the Bronze Age and early Iron Age (Lang 2000; Mägi 2006: 54).

The cremation cemeteries under level ground have frequently been in use for several centuries and are thus often very large. This has led some researchers to believe that they had been village cemeteries (Meinander 1980). On the other hand, cemeteries with the same dating are often situated very close to each other, which might suggest that they were more perhaps more probably reserved for separate farms (Kivikoski 1964: 170).

Fig.14. The Ylipää cremation cemetery under level ground lies by the Aura River. The author took the photograph while standing on the Aittamäki cremation cemetery.

In Lieto, for example, Ylipää, dated mainly to the Merovingian period, and Aittamäki, dated to Viking Age, cremation cemeteries are situated on each side of the Aura River, only 200-300 metres from each other (Fig. 14). Both cemeteries are situated in an agrarian landscape surrounded by smaller moraine hills. There seems to be a concentration of cremation cemeteries under level ground in this area. Next to the Ylipää cemetery there is another cemetery hill called Pahamäki, used as a cremation cemetery from AD 700 to 1150. Only 400 m NW of Pahamäki is the next cemetery hill called Pitkämäki, used between AD 550 and 1050 (Luoto 1988; Korkeakoski-Väisänen 2002). In the Turku, Raisio, Laitila and Uusikaupunki areas, the density of the cremation cemeteries under level ground is the same.

The only distinguishable individual graves seem to be weapon burials from the Merovingian and early Viking periods (Heikkurinen-Montell 1996: 94-6; Raninen 2005a: 226-8). Thus, the majority of the dead were buried collectively. The rich individual weapon burials have traditionally been studied from a typological perspective and all ritual aspects have been neglected (Schauman-Lönnqvist 1994; 1996a). Lately, Sami Raninen has contributed greatly to understanding the rituals of the individual weapon graves (Raninen 2009). In Finland, the weapons are scattered in the cemetery from the Viking Age onwards and individual burials can be rarely discerned in the material any longer (Wickholm & Raninen 2006).

Inhumation burials

At the end of the Viking Age and the beginning of the Crusade period, the first inhumations appear in the cremation cemeteries under level ground (Fig. 15), often placed either at the outer limits or in the middle of the cemetery (Fig. 16-17). There are usually only a few inhumations in each cemetery, even though some inhumation cemeteries are also known in the present-day surroundings of Turku and Tampere (Nallinmaa-Luoto 1978; Sarkki-Isomaa 1986; Purhonen 1998; Pietikäinen 2006).

One possible reason for this is that these inhumations were the last pagan burials before the Christianization process started. When inhumation became more common, the inhumation cemeteries moved to new locations, perhaps to the places where the first churches were built (Aroalho 1978: 73; Edgren 1993: 250-252; Paper II, Wickholm 2006).

These early inhumations have confused earlier researchers, because their context is vague. The inhumation burials have normally been dug through the cremation cemetery layer, leaving burned artefacts, ash and charcoal in the fillings of the graves. Thus, it has remained uncertain during the excavations whether the inhumations have been dug into an older cemetery or whether people have burned bonfires on top of the inhumation graves at a later stage (Tallgren 1919).

Unfortunately, not all inhumations are properly documented and unburned artefacts sometimes suggest that there might have been inhumations made in the cemetery that have already been destroyed.

Fig.16. One of the inhumation burials from the Siiri 1 cremation cemetery under level ground. Photograph by T. Pitkänen 1988/ University of Turku.

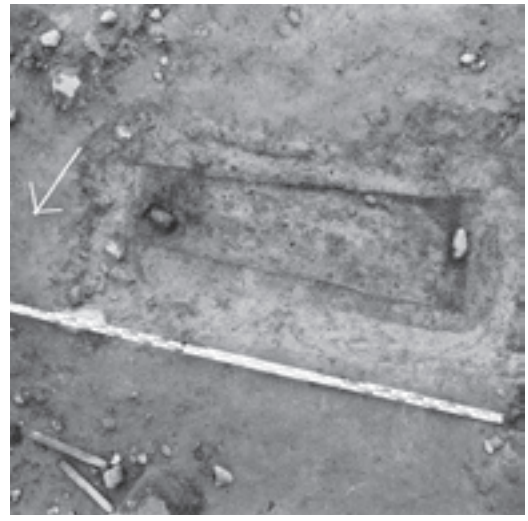

Fig.17. The remains of a wooden coffin from the Kalomäki cremation cemetery in Hämeenlinna. Photograph by L. Söyrinki 1971/ National Board of Antiquities.

Fig.15. Cremation cemeteries under level ground containing inhumations. Map by W. Perttola

1-2) Männistönmäki and Kalomäki, Hämeenlinna
3) Pahnainmäki, Hämeenlinna
4) Honkaliini, Hämeenlinna
5) Makasiininmäki, Janakkala
6-7) Haaksivalkama and Toivonniemi, Hämeenlinna
8) Lempoinen, Lempäälä
9) Haimionmäki, Lieto
10-12) Kalmumäki, Nohkola and Vähävainionmäki, Uusikaupunki
13-15) Mahittula, Siiri 1 and Pappilanmäki, Raisio
16) Vilusenharju, Tampere
17) Franttilannummi, Mynämäki
18-21) Kirkkomäki, Ristimäki II, Saramäki and Virusmäki, Turku
22-23) Kiiliä and Kokkomäki, Valkeakoski
24) Mikkola, Ylöjärvi

Water burials

Water burials are known only from two locations in Finnish Ostrobothnia; Levänluhta (Fig. 18) and Käldamäki (Paper V, Wessman 2009b). Even though they are clearly an anomaly in the Finnish Middle/Late Iron Age burial customs, they serve as excellent examples of the complex mortuary behaviour during this period. Moreover, they exemplify how different people's perceptions of the afterlife were on a local level, especially during the Merovingian period. They are also representations of a sense of otherness.

At Käldamäki in Vörå (Fi. Vöyri) commingled bones were found during excavations in 1935. A total of six individuals have been calculated to have been found based on the crania (Formisto 1993: 153). Unfortunately no datable artefacts were found in connection with the bones. The deceased had probably been buried in shallow brackish water, either directly in the water or in the immediate vicinity on the beach (Meinander 1946: 92; 1950: 138-40). The two 14C-dates from a single bone date the bones to Migration period or the beginning of the Merovingian period (Formisto 1993: 152-3; 1997: 149; Purhonen et al. 2001: 220-1).

Levänluhta is situated only ca 28 km from Käldamäki in the parish of Isokyrö. A large bone collection consisting of ca 100 individuals and some animal bones has been collected from the marshy soil, both during archaeological excavations and as stray finds over a period of several hundreds of years. The research history is thus both complicated and long. While the site has persistently been interpreted as a bog (Meinander 1946: 91; 1950: 137; Kivikoski 1961: 182; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1984b; Niskanen 2006) or as systems of several natural springs (Tallgren 1918: 76-7; Edgren 1993: 209-10) by previous researchers, the soil samples taken and analysed from the site in 1912 suggest that the site was a lake or a pond during the Merovingian period when the burials took place (Paper V, Wessman 2009b).

Another striking feature, beside the water, connects Levänluhta and Käldamäki to each other; namely, the lack of weapons and tools made of iron. While the artefacts collected from Levänluhta show investment through the deposition of imported and relatively costly objects, such as a Roman cauldron, a gold foil brooch and a button ornamented with garnets, the lack of weapons is somewhat surprising. Hence, not only the ritual treatment of the deceased but also the process of selecting the grave-goods seems to be different in Käldamäki and Levänluhta from contemporary burial sites in the vicinity. The osteological analysis of the bones suggests that Levänluhta was reserved mainly for women and children (Niskanen 2006), which might suggest that the males were buried somewhere else. This would perhaps explain the lack of iron weapons. On the other hand, it does not explain why there are no knives in the material, tools that were an important part of the female dress.

Fig. 18. Levänluhta in Isokyrö during August 2009. Photograph by the author.

1.4 Late iron age burial archaeology in finland

The definition(s) of a grave

The concept and the definition of the term grave has not been debated before in Finnish archaeology. A grave is simply considered to be a deposit consisting of bones together with artefacts/grave-goods. A scarcity of bones is not considered to be a problem. Moreover, since the bones are only seldom analysed it is not even clear whether the bones are human.

Clearly, this categorisation is not as simple as this, but one must bear in mind that Finnish archaeology is only now approaching a more theoretical stage and that the research has not focused on burial archaeology during past decades. Still, it is strange, taking into consideration how complicated the cremation cemeteries under level ground are, that the definition of these sites has not been discussed more. Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen (1991) is the only archaeologist who has raised questions about some cremation cemeteries under level ground, suggesting that these are secular sites, such as refuse heaps from smithies or partly destroyed settlement sites. Even though the mythical and sacred characteristics of smithing have become relevant in the debate today (as in Gansum 2004), this was still not the case at the beginning of the 1990s in Finland.

In Sweden, the definition of a grave as against ritual deposit has been widely discussed, especially in the late 20th century. The discussion has mainly focused on deposits with a small amount of human bones or deposits that lack bones completely (Kaliff 1997; 2005; 2009; Artelius 2000; Andersson 2008). A good example of this is the recent discovery of a very complex sacrificial site called Lunda in Strängnäs, Södermanland. The site actually strongly resembles a cremation cemetery under level ground with the exception that only a few fragments of human bones have been found (Andersson & Skyllberg 2008).

As archaeologists, we tend to categorise things and simplify them at the same time. The terms we decide to use are affected by our modern values and become emotionally charged. Thus, as Anders Kaliff has rightfully said, we might be completely wrong when we define and interpret a ritual deposit containing burned human remains as a grave because we cannot know what the ancient people wanted to express in these deposits. Hence, the term grave is much more complex than we have been able to admit (Kaliff 2009: 24-6).

Naturally it is probable that there are ritual deposits, in addition to graves, within the cremation cemeteries under level ground. I have tried to point out in this thesis and my previous articles that the concept of the grave was perhaps different within the tradition of the cremation cemeteries under level ground. This is partly

Fig.19. The distribution of major cemetery areas in Finland during the Middle and Late Iron Age (AD 400-1150). Map by W. Perttola.

because the cemeteries are mostly collective, a phenomenon that is not common in places like Sweden during Middle and Late Iron Age. Thus, the concept of a grave must have been different amongst the people who buried their dead in these cemeteries. The reason for this is that the remains of one individual were spread over a large area and commingled with other bones and not placed in a pit or an urn. The deposits that have been interpreted as individual graves have, in fact, later been verified as containing bones from several individuals when analysed. Hence, it seems that the belief in an afterlife was perhaps different amongst the people who buried their dead in these places, as compared to those who buried their dead in inhumation burials or in earth-mixed cairns.

The moraine hills these cemeteries were erected on had often been used for burial before. Moreover, there are also signs of ritual activity in between the burials, suggesting the more complex ritual character of these hills, probably related to broader activities involving death, fertility and the afterlife.

The character and distribution of Late Iron Age burial types in Finland

Numerous cremation cemeteries dating to the Late Iron Age (Fig. 19) have been excavated in Finland during the past 100 years. However, only a few of them have been completely excavated and even less have been documented with precision or been published.

Even though the majority of the cremation cemeteries dating to the Late Iron Age are so-called cremation cemeteries under level ground, earth-mixed cairns without a structure are also frequent, becoming dominant in SW Finland before the cremation cemeteries under level ground during the Roman Iron Age and the Migration period. Earth-mixed cairns are still in use during the Merovingian period and the Viking Age, mostly in the Lake District of the Häme region and along the Kokemäki River in W Finland, forming large cemeteries. The earth-mixed cairns date approximately to AD 300-1000. While the majority of the burials are cremations, there are also occasional examples of inhumations within the earth-mixed cairns. (Heikel 1899: 19-22, 28-30; Salmo 1952: 5-8; Edgren 1993: 181, 196-7; Salo 2003; Raike & Seppälä 2005: 44-5, 65)

During the Merovingian period and the Viking Age, the cairns are often, but not always, built around a central stone or erratic boulders and the cairn might also be surrounded by a border ring or stone kerb (Heikel 1899; Raike & Seppälä 2005; Edgren 1993; Shepherd 1999). There have been suggestions that cairns containing a central stone were reserved for prominent people, but this has not been confirmed by archaeological excavations (Edgren 1993: 181, 196-7).

The earth-mixed cairns are often low (0.5-1.5 m) and quite small (4-15 m). However, they might form large cemeteries consisting of several hundred cairns. Cemeteries of this kind are found in Kauttua in Eura, Kaukola in Sastamala, Päivänniemi in Lempäälä and in Retulansaari in Hattula (Heikel 1899; Kivikoski 1961; Edgren 1993). The primary burial is often in the centre of the cairn, around the central stone, either on the surface of the ground or in the upper layers of the cairn. The finds are often scarce, consisting of burned bones and small fragments of artefacts. Even though the cairns are mostly built for one individual in the centre of the cairn, some cairns have also been re-used and contain several cremation clusters per cairn. Thus, it is possible that the cairns have been used as e.g. family burials. The cairns have also often been extended and thus increased in both height and diameter over time. The shape of the earth-mixed cairns varies from round to oval. The proportions of soil and stones also vary between the cairns. Some cairns might consist of mostly stones, while in other cases there might be more earth than stones. There do not seem to be any clear local variations in this cairn type (Kivikoski 1961: 146; Edgren 1993: 181).

The earth-mixed cairns are typically easy to find during surveys, but their function and dating often remain unclear until excavation. Often only one cairn is excavated and thus it remains unclear whether or not all cairns in the cemetery are in fact burials. Excavations have shown that some cairns might also be refuse heaps, sacrificial cairns or structures associated with farming

activities such as forest or field clearance. Empty cairns have also been excavated. Sometimes the finds might be difficult to interpret when they consists of only iron slag, fragments of ceramics, unburned bones or animal teeth (Kivikoski 1961; Sarkamo 1970; Salmio 1980; Edgren 1993; Raike & Seppälä 2005; Muhonen 2009).

Mounds, like those found in Scandinavia occur only on the Åland Islands. These are mainly round stone cairns covered by a sandy mound dated to the Vendel (Merovingian) period and the Viking Age. They are mostly small in size, between 4 and 7 m in diameter, but the largest mounds can have a diameter of up to 12 metres. The mounds on the Åland Islands are traditionally low, the lowest being only 20-30 cm, while the highest are still only one meter from top to bottom (Kivikoski 1964: 3; 1980: 10).

The cremated bones are laid either in a burial urn, a pit, or placed in a heap on the original ground surface. There are also boat nails, suggesting cremations in boats and rare occasions of inhumation burials within the mound tradition. Sometimes there are round stone balls *(Swe. gravklot)* on top of the mounds. In Sweden, these have been interpreted as female graves, something which has also been proven by osteological analysis (Kivikoski 1964: 63; 1980: 10-11; Karlsson 1984: 61-2, 67).

Only four mound cemeteries of the 381 known have been completely excavated. These are Kvarnbacken in Saltvik parish, Långängsbacken and Stenhagen cemeteries in Sund parish and Bol in Godby, Finström parish (Kivikoski 1964; 1980; Karlsson 1984; Tomtlund 1999). The material from both Kvarnbacken, with 140 mounds, and Långängsbacken, with 113 mounds, has been fully published by Ella Kivikoski (1964; 1980).

The find material from the mounds in Åland Islands has an interesting character. It has been assumed that there was colonization from the Mälar Valley area at the beginning of the Vendel period (Kivikoski 1964; 1980; Tomtlund 1999). Even though the burial type is Scandinavian, the grave-goods imply that contact with the east and south has been frequent as well. Amongst the female jewellery there are several brooches of so-called western Finnish types. Moreover, the find material shows strong connections with the Baltic countries (Kivikoski 1964). The author has gone through samples of the find collections from several burial mound excavations at the Ålands Museum in Mariehamn. The collections include several examples of bronze spirals, which suggests that the Finno-Baltic female dress types were present in Åland from the Merovingian period onwards. It seems that the archaeologists working with these materials have mistakenly interpreted the spirals as bronze pearls and not details belonging to the dress. It has, thus, been presumed that the ancient dress was similar to that in Scandinavia during the Viking Age (Tomtlund 1999).

As already noted with the earth-mixed cairns, the mounds from Åland also seem to include sacrificial cairns and clearance cairns. This clearly indicates how important archaeological excavation is in contrast to mere surveys. At Bol in Godby, a survey had suggested that the cemetery consisted of 40 burial mounds, but by the end of the excavation the burial mounds led only 7 (Karlsson 1984:61).

Inhumation burials are uncommon in Finland during the Merovingian period. However, during this period, the area around the Lake Pyhäjärvi region in Lower Satakunta, W Finland, becomes distinguished by rich inhumation cemeteries. These are Vanhakartano cemeteries A and B in Köyliö with 31 excavated inhumation burials and the Luistari cemetery in Eura with 67 burials. At Eura there is another Merovingian period inhumation cemetery called Pappilanmäki, also famous for its rich weapon burials. During the Viking Age, yet another large inhumation cemetery was founded around the same lake in Anivehmaanmäki in Yläne (Salmo 1941; Cleve 1943; Lehtosalo-Hilander 2000b: 227-8).

The rich inhumation burials from Eura and Köyliö have frequently been compared to the so-called Reihengräber tradition on the European continent or to inhumation cemeteries in the Lake Mälar Region in Sweden, and small-scaled immigration from these areas has even been proposed. The burials clearly show that this area of Finland had a special character, because Merovingian period inhumations are not known from anywhere else in Finland. It is probable that they are a result of social and political change that might have been caused by a growth in the economy (Cleve 1943; Schauman-Lönnqvist 1999; Raninen 2005a).

The Luistari cemetery was used continuously from the Merovingian period until the end of the prehistoric period, c. 13th century. Over 1300 inhumation burials were excavated between 1969 and 1979. In Köyliö, c. 65 inhumations dated to the end of the Viking Age and the Crusade period have been documented from the Vanhakartano C-cemetery (Lehtosalo-Hilander 2000b: 11; Cleve 1978). The Vanhakartano and Luistari cemeteries are well known internationally since they are fully published in English and Swedish. The Anivehmaanmäki cemetery, however, is less known since it is not published (Cleve 1943; 1978; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1982a-c, 2000b).

Inhumation becomes more common in SW Finland during the 11th century. There are several excavated inhumation cemeteries from the end of Viking Age and the Crusade period. At the Kirkkomäki cemetery in Turku, SW Finland, 43 inhumation burials were excavated between the 1950s and the 1990s and 44 burials are known from the famous Rikala inhumation cemetery in Salo (Katiskoski 1992; Mäntylä 2006; Asplund & Riikonen 2007).

1.5 A brief account of the research history and chronology

The cremation cemeteries under level ground have traditionally been thought to represent a burial form typical of Finland or even SW Finland (Meinander 1950: 69; Kivikoski 1971: 71; Aroalho 1978: 5; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1984b: 281, 285; Edgren 1993: 195). Today, the picture is different, similar cemeteries having been excavated in the neighbouring countries (Uino 1997; Mägi 2002; Mandel 2003).

The majority of the cremation cemeteries under level ground are dated to the Merovingian period (AD 550-800) and the Viking Age (AD 800-1025/1050), even though there are sporadic signs of usage during the Migration period (AD 400-550/600). Since these occasional artefacts might actually derive from earlier burials, it would be safest to suggest that this burial form starts to spread during the beginning of the Merovingian period.

Most of the cremation cemeteries remain in use over several centuries, which makes the chronology of the cemeteries difficult. The scattered bones and artefacts might thus derive from the Merovingian period to the Crusade period and sometimes there are also artefacts from older burials commingled with the grave-goods, as suggested in Papers I-IV.

During the Crusade period (AD 1025/1050-1150/1300), new cremation cemeteries are no longer built, older ones remaining in use. Hence the inhumation burials found in the cremation cemeteries derive from cemeteries that have been used during the Merovingian period or the Viking Age (Purhonen 1998; Paper I, Wickholm 2008).

A majority of the cremation cemeteries under level ground discovered at the end of 19th century or the beginning of the 20th century were found accidentally by farmers who were erecting potato-cellars, gardens or digging foundations for various farm buildings (Fig. 20) (Cleve 1933a; Keskitalo 1956; Sarvas & Sarkki 1973) or during the building of structures like public school buildings (Fig. 21) (Tallgren 1914). The farmers had often performed illegal excavations at the site in order to retrieve more artefacts (Nordman 1921). Thus, when the archaeologist arrived, the sites were often at least partly if not completely destroyed and the context of the site was even more difficult to understand. In excavation reports, the archaeologists also frequently describe how children or farm animals had been allowed to trample on the already known cemeteries, degrading them even further (e.g., Rinne 1905).

During these early days, most attention was paid to describing the burial form. Thus it was stated early on that the burial remains had been thrown or scattered all over the cemetery area in a disorderly way. The burned bones and partly molten and destroyed artefacts, in addition to the ceramics, were found commingled in the black and sooty soil, both in the upper layers of the turf and deeper down in the cemetery layer. The long continuity of these cemeteries was also recognised. According to the archaeologists, they had been in use over several generations, possibly even centuries (Aspelin 1885; Hackman 1897; Rinne 1905; Tallgren 1920).

At the end of the 19th century and the early 20th century, the excavation techniques were quite crude and sieves were not commonly used. A

Fig.20. The Kiiliä cremation cemetery in Valkeakoski was discovered in front of the veranda of cotter Kalle Rauhala's house in 1913. Photograph by A. Hackman 1913/ National Board of Antiquities.

Fig.21. When the new school at Ristimäki, Turku (formerly Kaarina) was built in the summer of 1914, a large cremation cemetery under level ground was discovered on the moraine hill. The large cemetery is located in front of the school building and on its left side all the way down the slope to the Aurajoki River and also around the outhouse on the left. Photograph by A.M. Tallgren 1914/ National Board of Antiquities.

large part of the cremation cemetery was usually excavated in less than a week. For example, the famous Ylipää cremation cemetery in Lieto, SW Finland, was excavated in 1913 for 5-6 days. During this time, five men excavated 170 m^2 but most of the soil was said to have been sieved (Tallgren 1914: 30). As a comparison, some of the same cemetery was excavated in 1993 over 4 weeks by archaeology students from the University of Turku, during which time 88 m^2 were excavated (Hietala 2003: 11).

Another example of the early research comes from the famous Ristimäki cremation cemetery in Turku. When A.M. Tallgren excavated parts of it in May 1915, he was in a great hurry because of an upcoming field trip to Russia. The excavation report states that heavy rain enabled sieving all the soil. Moreover, because of the frozen soil the excavation was performed with crowbars. Even so, an area of over 30 m^2 was excavated in only 4 days (Tallgren 1915).

Kalmumäki cremation cemetery in Uusikaupunki serves as a good example of how small excavation areas can make the interpretation of the site difficult. The cemetery, one of the largest in Finland, has been excavated frequently during the past hundred years. It was first excavated in 1923 when a sawmill was built on top of the cemetery, partly destroying it. The last excavation was performed there in 1991 but, according to estimate by archaeologists, there are still large unexcavated areas left (Huurre 1964; Vanhatalo 1991).

The cemetery had originally been erected on top of a 100 x 60 m wide moraine hill with partly exposed bedrock, which has carved cup marks. The cremation cemetery is dated to the Merovingian period and the Viking Age and there are also inhumation burials, suggesting that it might still have been in use still at the beginning of the Crusade period (Huurre 1964; Salmo 1938; Ranta 1990).

When Helmer Salonen (later Salmo) excavated parts of the Kalmumäki cemetery in July/August 1928 he excavated an area of 500 m^2 in only 17 days. According to the excavation report, no sieving was done owning to the limited time (Salonen 1928). Alfred Hackman, who continued the excavations in 1931 excavated an area of 61 m^2 in only one day. During the examination of the find material the following autumn, he found some unburned artefacts with preserved woollen textiles still attached to them obviously deriving from inhumation burials. In his report, Hackman is clearly disappointed at not excavating the cemetery with greater care since he would otherwise have been able to collect the unburned bones (Hackman 1932).

In sum, the excavation areas in Kalmumäki have typically been either small or the excavation techniques inadequate. Moreover, no osteological analyses have ever been done on the bone material, and the vast amount of artefactual data has never been published, except for an unpublished M.A. thesis concerning the glass bead material (Ranta 1990).

Today the cemetery has been partly destroyed by the same sawmill which still functions next to the cemetery (Fig. 22). Timber has frequently been stored on top of the cemetery and the National Board of Antiquities have had to turn to

legal action in order to keep the timber and the mill activity on the other side of a fence they have built in order to safeguard the cemetery.

The research history clearly shows that the attitude towards the cremation cemeteries under level ground was a bit dismissive during the early 20th century. Not much time or effort was put into the excavations, probably because of the already known fact of the commingled and collective nature of the cemetery form. The cemeteries seem to have been too difficult and complicated to study.

Even though the situation has improved since then, many cemeteries are still being destroyed by roadworks and farming activities. Moreover, the excavation areas are often too small to enable theories concerning the cemetery formation processes or structure. The reasons for this might be lack of time, money and interest in excavating the whole cemetery since this would burden the limited resources of the National Board of Antiquities and the universities too much. Hence, most of the cemeteries excavated have been over several fieldwork seasons and over several decades. The small excavation areas, the lack of proper research questions and the poor quality of documentation have made it difficult to use the material for later studies, such as spatial analyses of the bone and finds (Seppälä & Haimila 1998; Wickholm & Raninen 2003; Svarvar 2002; Pietikäinen 2006).

Something also worth mentioning in this context is the excavations of cremation cemeteries under level ground performed by the Department of Archaeology at the University of Turku. They have excavated such sites as training excavations for students but they have also performed their own

Fig.22. The Kalmumäki cemetery has been partly destroyed by a modern brick transformer installation and a sawmill business. Photograph by the author.

research excavations from the 1970s till now. The cemeteries at Pahamäki, Ylipää and Aittamäki in Lieto, Siiri and Mahittula in Raisio, and Leikkimäki in Kokemäki have all been excavated by the university (Korolainen & Kolehmainen 1987; Korkeakoski-Väisänen 2002; Hietala 2003; Pälikkö 2009). In addition, the University keeps the finds in their own collections, which serve as excellent study material for students. This probably explains why the M.A. theses concerning this grave type are so numerous at this University.

The number of completely excavated cremation cemeteries is unfortunately very low in Finland. Of over 250 known cemeteries (Wessman 2009c), the only completely excavated cemeteries I know of are Siiri 1 in Raisio excavated in 1987-1991, and Vainionmäki A cemetery in Laitila, excavated in 1985-1994. In addition, the Mahittula cemetery in Raisio was completely excavated in 1972-1975, but large parts of the cemetery had unfortunately been destroyed before the excavations and no excavation reports were ever written (Pietikäinen 2006: 3-4, 29). Only the Vainionmäki material has been published (Purhonen 1996a), while the Mahittula cemetery has been covered in detail by Taina Pietikäinen in her M. A. thesis (2006).

The Vainionmäki B cemetery in Laitila serves as a good example of how these sites are treated by the central authority for antiquities administration in Finland, The National Board of Antiquities. The cemetery is located only 50-60 metres from the completely excavated Vainionmäki A cemetery. The B cemetery has been excavated as an audience or PR-excavation since 2004 organised by the Board. Every summer, during a course lasting two weeks, anyone wanting to try what it feels like to be "an archaeologist for a day" can come and excavate the cremation cemetery for a small fee, under the guidance of professional archaeologists and archaeology students. The excavation has been very popular (Fig. 23) but, unfortunately, this also means that the work-force is very heterogeneous, consisting of children aged 7 to adults aged 80 with no or very little experience in archaeology. Because the audience might try this only for one or two days, one might justly ask whether they ever understand the complex nature of this cemetery form. The excavations have provoked much criticism amongst archaeologists since the cemetery was intact before excavation and nothing threatened its preservation (cf. Mikkola 2008b) but there are also several other ethical issues of concern. The cemetery excavations get relatively great media attention, which is a good thing for archaeology as such, but the concentration seems to be on the artefacts and the joy of finding them (Yle web news 2005), not on the cemetery as a context or as a final resting place for the dead. The excavation areas have been quite small, varying from 13-41 m^2 and the excavation budgets have been low. Still, there is one osteological analysis available from the six- year excavation campaign (Luoto & Pälikkö 2004; Mikkola & Pälikkö 2006; Mikkola 2007; 2008a; 2010; Salo, K. 2004).

There might be other reasons for this dismissive attitude. Several researchers have wanted to explain the collective nature of the cemetery form by pointing out that the cremation cemeteries under level ground might have originated from earlier burial types, such as tarand-graves or earth-mixed cairns (Keskitalo 1979; Söyrinki-Harmo 1979; Kivikoski 1971; Söyrinki-Harmo

1984; Edgren 1993). According to Ella Kivikoski, the cremation cemeteries under level ground were merely the result of several cairns growing into one another and thus into one big cemetery. This, she thought, happened because the earth-mixed cairns were low and without clear kerbs. The separate cairns would merge into each other developing slowly into something we call cremation cemeteries under level ground (Kivikoski 1971: 71). Torsten Edgren also seems to agree with Kivikoski's hypothesis, having claimed that the cremation cemeteries under level ground are merely variations of extended earth-mixed cairns (Edgren 1993: 196).

The collections of finds from these cemetery excavations are usually extensive consisting of both complete and broken artefacts together with small and partly molten pieces of bronze and iron which are difficult to recognize and interpret. Perhaps the collective and commingled nature of the grave-goods has kept most archaeologists working with this cemetery form to focus on typological studies of the complete artefacts such as weapons or brooch types. The cemetery form has in other words been seen as a difficult subject of study and the focus has been on the grave-goods when the other questions have perhaps been understood as too resistant to study. Thus, the interests have mainly been in typology, geographical origin, and the chronology of the separate artefacts. Questions concerning cultural relations, settlement history and social order within the Iron Age societies have

Fig.23. Excavation in progress in excavation area 2 at the Vainionmäki B cemetery in Laitila during the summer of 2009. Photograph by E. Mikkola 2009/ National Board of Antiquities.

also been of interest. The emphasis has also been on relative chronology and not absolute chronology, which means that there are not many 14C-dates available from these cemeteries (Aroalho 1978; Nallinmaa-Luoto 1978; Söyrinki-Harmo 1979; Purhonen 1996a).

The cemeteries have, in other words, been treated as mere containers of grave-goods. Because of the mixed find material it has not been considered important to excavate and document the cemeteries in detail. As a consequence, mortuary behaviour, burial rituals and ideology has not been discussed on any larger scale until recent years (Wickholm 2005; Paper III, Wickholm 2007: 91; see also Rundkvist 1999: 288).

This attitude is quite typical of Finnish burial archaeology, but to me it sounds strange to suggest that the Merovingian period people would suddenly have started to treat their cemeteries so casually. Since several cremation cemeteries under level ground also contain older burials dating to the early Iron Age, it seems more probable that the evolutionary interpretations would stem from here. Thus, the cremation cemeteries do not develop from tarand-graves, they are occasionally built on top of older cemeteries, which has led to confusion amongst archaeologists.

However, assuming that the context of the cremation cemeteries is troublesome also justifies the previous research, since there is nothing worth studying.

The collective nature of the cremation cemeteries under level ground has also led to another interpretation of the cemetery type. Professor emeritus Unto Salo has suggested that the cremation cemeteries are in fact mere fields of pyre refuse and debris, not real cemeteries. His theory is based on an article by Professor Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen, who questioned some of the known cremation cemeteries. However, the criticism was not directed to all cremation cemeteries under level ground (Taavitsainen 1991). According to Salo, only the cremation process itself was important to Iron Age society, because the soul of the deceased was released in the pyre. What happened to the bones and the grave-goods after the cremation was thus not important to the society that buried the dead (Salo 2003: 57; 2004: 206-7). I do not agree with Salo and the complex nature of the cremation rituals is addressed in chapter 2.

In a way it seems strange that the collective nature of this burial form has met with so much neglect and distrust. Collective burials are not unique to Finland, but they have been questioned and treated very differently than the Baltic tarand-graves or the European megalithic tombs, where collectiveness has not been seen as an insuperable problem.

Even though cremation cemeteries under level ground have been excavated since the end of the 19th century, not many studies have been published. The cemetery form is often described only briefly in popular studies of Finland's prehistory (Kivikoski 1961; 1964; Edgren 1993).

In the late 1970s, a few case studies were written about cremation cemeteries in SW Finland. These were all M.A. theses, and mainly focused on the artefact chronology and typology of each

cemetery (Aroalho 1978; Nallinmaa-Luoto 1978; Söyrinki-Harmo 1979).

During the 1980s and early 1990s, only two articles were written about this burial form (Söyrinki-Harmo 1984; Taavitsainen 1991). Both articles criticise the way the burial form has previously been studied and excavated. They also address the question of the origin and nature of these cemeteries.

In 1996, the National Board of Antiquities published a monograph on the Vainionmäki A cemetery in Laitila (Fig. 24), also containing an attempt to understand the mortuary practice of the cemetery form (Purhonen 1996a).

At the beginning of the 21st century, a minor boom seem to have happened in the study of cremation cemeteries under level ground at the University of Turku. Several M.A. theses have been written on various cemeteries (Haimila 2002; Hietala 2003; Hymylä 2004; Pietikäinen 2006) and many are still in progress. These works clearly show that the focus has finally shifted from an artefact-based analysis to a broader burial archaeological approach concerning ritual context and mortuary behaviour (Hymylä 2004; Pietikäinen 2006).

Fig.24. The Vainionmäki A cemetery in Laitila. Photograph by the author.

Fig.25. Finds from the Kalmumäki cemetery. On the left: pommel from a ring-sword, mounts from the hilt and a tip mount from a scabbard. On the right: a crayfish brooch, an oval-shaped brooch and equal-armed brooches. Photograph by E. Laakso 1931 & T. Syrjänen 1977/ National Board of Antiquities.

1.6 The find material

Because so much focus has been put on chronological and typological artefact analyses in the previous research concerning burial archaeology (Cleve 1943; 1978; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1982b; 2000b) and the cremation cemeteries under level ground (Aroalho 1978; Nallinmaa-Luoto 1978; Söyrinki-Harmo 1979; Purhonen 1996a), this thesis will not deal with grave-goods. This is a deliberate choice, which might confuse my Finnish colleagues. My point however is to separate myself from the previous studies in order to show that a new approach can bring much new information to Finnish cremation cemetery research. Thus, in the following section I will only discuss the nature of the most common grave-goods briefly.

When the cremation cemeteries under level ground appear at the beginning of the Merovingian period, several changes occur in the material culture. New domestic artefact forms emerge in the find material, even though these are mostly influenced by Scandinavian and Baltic artefact types (Raninen 2005a).

A cremation cemetery under level ground typically produces various weapons, jewellery and dress ornaments, such as bronze spirals from the aprons of the female dresses and bronze chains. In addition, tools such as knives and axes as well as pottery are frequently found. Molten bronze artefacts, slag from both clay, bronze, iron and glass and burned clay and clay daub are usually considered as mass finds and thus not documented in greater detail (Haimila 2002; Pietikäinen 2006).

The domestic weapon types, such as types of angons, funnel-shaped shield bosses, dagger-shaped spearheads and battle knifes with a wide blade are typical finds in the individual burials of the Merovingian period cremation cemeteries (Kivikoski 1971: 82-84). The angons, a very common spearhead type in Finland during this period, are long and tanged, with barbed blades and usually up to 30-80 cm long (Salmo 1980: 60; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1982b: 19).

The majority of the weapons were imported during the Merovingian period and the Viking Age. For example, the swords that are usually of very high quality were imported from the Rhineland in Central Europe or from Scandinavia. The mounts of the hilts and pommels are often ornamented with Germanic animal art and made either of bronze, gilt bronze or silver (Fig. 25) (Schauman-Lönnqvist 1996a: 53-62).

During the Viking Age the weapons also becomes scattered in the cremation cemeteries, and well-definable individual burials disappear even though some individual weapon burials still occurs. Thus hilts and pommels from swords are mostly found scattered throughout the cemetery. The majority of spearheads dated to the Viking Age are of the E-type or variants of it and the G-type (Lehtosalo-Hilander 1982b: 25-32; Edgren 1993). They are frequently partly destroyed by bending the blade from the shaft. Shield bosses are not known from the Finnish Viking Age.

During the Merovingian period, the dominant jewellery types are the equal-armed brooches and crayfish brooches (Fig. 25) that are worn in pairs on the female attire. The brooches are attached to each other by bronze chains. Even though the model for these brooch types comes

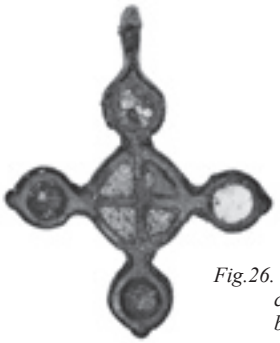

Fig.26. The cross pendant from the Haimionmäki cremation cemetery in Lieto. Photograph by National Board of Antiquities 1970.

from Scandinavia, they acquire domestic features here and stay in use until the beginning of the Viking Age. The connections to the Baltic area remain important during the whole Merovingian period, as is evident from the finger-rings and arm- and neck-rings.

During the Viking Age, a domestic type of round brooch comes into use. Even though the ornamentation on these brooches can be traced to Germanic animal art, it develops into a geometric line-ornamentation here with very specific pegs on top of its surface (Appelgren 1897b). A typical set of jewellery from the Viking Age would have consisted of two round brooches on each side of the shoulders, attached to each other by long bronze chains and an equal-armed brooch in the middle to fasten the blouse, glass beads around the neck and a knife hanging from the belt. Various types of penannular brooch are also typical of this period. They are made of bronze, iron and silver and occur with rolled ends, flat end knobs, faceted end knobs, and funnel ends with poppy-shaped knobs. A Finnish variant is the penannular brooches with faceted end knobs that have four pegs (see Kivikoski 1960: 21; 1973; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1982b; Ranta 1996). At the beginning of the Viking Age, massive arm- and neck-rings of bronze come into fashion. The chain arrangements also become more abundant. Imported glass beads, dress pins and penannular brooches with zoomorphic heads are also represented in the Viking Age material (Kivikoski 1960: 23; Kivikoski 1971: 82–84).

Towards the Crusade period, the dress ornaments become less heavy, consisting of pairs of small pennanular brooches. The bronze chains are no longer in use, but bronze spiral ornaments are still sewn on to the aprons and cloaks (Edgren 1993). Occasional cross pendants (Fig. 26) have also been found in inhumation burials (Cleve 1948; Purhonen 1998).

The numbers of weapons found in burials become scarcer towards the Crusade period. The swords and the spear heads are mainly found in the inhumation graves, such as in the rich Rikala inhumation cemetery in Salo. A new spearhead type with a knife-like blade (Kivikoski 1973 fig. 993; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1982b:36), commonly interpreted mistakenly as a harpoon (as in Salmo 1952: 392-94) have been found in cremation cemeteries containing inhumations (e.g., Saramäki in Turku, Mynänummi and Otikan mäki in Mynämäki, Kansakoulunmäki in Laitila, Vilusenharju in Tampere, and Pahnainmäki in Hämeenlinna). They are dated mainly to the end of 11th century in Finland (Kivikoski 1973).

2 Separating the living from the dead

2.1 The ritual activities in mortuary practice

Death is a life crisis in which many practical actions have to be done. There are two ways of looking at death. First is the biological problem; the rotting cadaver must be buried or disposed of somehow. The second is religious; the deceased has to be helped on the way to be transported to the afterlife.

Mental structures, such as beliefs concerning death and the afterlife are usually considered to be stable, which means that they do not change much for centuries. Even if these beliefs change slowly they do, however, transform in time and space. The changes might have to do with shifts in social structures, livelihood or settlement patterns (Siikala 1992: 105).

The term ritual is an extremely broad term that is almost impossible to explain comprehensively. Many researchers before me have explicated their views on the subject much more comprehensively than what I am able to do in this work (Bell 1992; 1997; Rappaport 1999; Nilsson Stutz 2003). In this chapter, I will restrict the explanation to concern only death rituals. These follow the death of a person and are a composite of many different rituals.

Rituals are typically formal events with rules and purposes. They are often stereotypical and static in their performance, which means that they can remain unchanged for a long time. When ritual actions are repeated regularly over a long period, the act is stored in us as embodied memories. Rituals may also serve as a comfort in various life crises (Bell 1997; Rappaport 1999; Connerton 1989). Important questions include who performs a certain ritual, who watches over the dead body, who washes the body, where and how, who cries and when, what kinds of taboo are valid and for how long, how to dress for the funeral, etc. (Pader 1982).

Modern ritual theory is based on Pierre Bourdieu's practice theory (1977). Bourdieu argues that it is the agent/actor and the action or performance that follows that is of importance in the ritual. Since the agent functions as the actor or executor of the ritual practice, it is always a person who performs a ritual act and it is the performance of this actor that establishes the ritual (Bell 1997). Liv Nilsson Stutz has argued that the central component for understanding a ritual is to study the act itself (Nilsson Stutz 2006: 95, 97).

Arnold van Gennep (1960) was the first anthropologist who emphasized the importance of rituals in the transitional stages of people's lives in *The Rites of Passage.* These important

events might for example be birth, initiation/puberty, marriage, becoming a mother/parent and finally death. Van Gennep argued that there were three sequences in these ceremonies; separation, transition and incorporation, which means that when a person dies he/she is separated from the society of the living. The dead person becomes a cadaver, a non-person that has to be disposed of by burial. During this transitional sequence, the deceased is in a liminal phase standing at a boundary where the body is neither living nor yet an ancestor. The body is thus in an intermediated phase until the ritual is performed. This might be seen as a frightening or dangerous phase and, in order for this transition to happen, the body has to be treated in the right way during the burial process. Ritual performance slowly incorporates the deceased into the world of the dead ancestors. The deceased is in other words being helped on his journey by the living. Death rituals have to be performed correctly in order for the deceased to travel safely to his destination. Only when the right rituals are performed is the deceased able to become an ancestor. This transformation means that the deceased now has a new status and a new identity as an ancestor (van Gennep 1960: 147-52; Hargrove 1979: 26–30; Rowlands 1993:144; Artelius 2000: 210; Nässtrom 2001: 219-21).

Death might strike a family or a community very abruptly. The social persona is gone and in its place there is a body that might be frightening in the eyes of society since it might be polluted, certain rituals are needed in order to transform the body from one status to the next. The society has to help the body in this transformation process. To begin with, the deceased has to be helped to the other side, but at the same time the people who are left behind also have to continue with their everyday lives. Before this, the loss and the variety of feelings have to be dealt with properly. Thus, death rituals can also help the mourners to accept the death and the loss of the social persona. The cognitive and emotional aspects of death should never be excluded even though it is difficult or impossible to reconstruct ancient feelings. In time, someone else will take the place of the deceased, possibly as an important economic provider for society. This means that society is in the process of re-organizing itself after someone's death and certain things have to be said and done before society can return to normal again. In this process, rituals are the main tools for dealing with these issues (Huntington & Metcalf 1979; Bloch & Parry 2001).

Following the ideas of van Gennep, we might conclude that rituals have a socially transformative quality. The rites of passage change the identity and the social status of people, which means that rituals help a person to become something new through a particular ceremony.

These rituals all have a wide range of similarities in their performance while they mark the passages from one stage to another in people's lives. Ritual behaviour also maintains stability. They give feelings of safety; if some things are done through ritual actions, everything will be-

come better again, the gods are satisfied and everything will return to normal (Hargrove 1979: 26-30).

It is important to bear in mind that the burial is not the remains of one single event but the outcome of a complex pattern of actions. Thus graves are not the end product of ritual activity, but are somewhere in the middle (Härke 1997: 22; Svanberg 2003: 16). Following the ideas of van Gennep, the Swedish archaeologist Tore Artelius (2000: 207-8) has divided the cremation burial rituals into three stages; 1) the preparation of the deceased and the cremation, 2) post-cremation treatment of the dead, the funeral, and finally 3) the building of the grave monument. In my opinion a fourth stage could be added, being the commemorative rituals. This I will address in chapter 4.

Death is a complicated phenomenon that affects everyone in the community. Instead of only focusing on the emotional and psychological effects of those who are left behind to mourn the dead, burial archaeology should also focus on the deceased both as decomposing cadavers and as social and mnemonic agents. Thus, death is a complex process that affects the dead – but most of all the living. It should thus be approached from many different angles (Tarlow 1999; Parker Pearson 1999; Hallam & Hockey 2001; Nilsson Stutz 2003; Fowler 2004; Williams 2003; Williams 2004; Jones 2007).

2.2 Cremations: Destroying bodies by fire

Cremations are often hard to interpret because the bones are fragmented and because much has disappeared or been destroyed in the flames. Additionally, it is hard to compare cremations with inhumations. Our own modern Western values, attitudes and subjectivity are a problem and this has limited the archaeological interest in cremations. These problems, in addition to the great variety of mortuary practices involving fire, has made the archaeologists belittle cremations by comparison with inhumation. Cremations have even been seen as the poor man's disposal method, even though the grave-goods from the burials are rich (Sigvallius 1997: 71-4; Mägi 2002: 10-11; McKinley 2006; Williams 2008: 239-40). Some Finnish researchers have, however, been of another opinion. In his study of the Levänluhta cemetery material, C. F. Meinander suggested that people of lower social class would not have been able to afford cremation as a burial form and were thus forced to bury their dead uncremated in lakes and bogs (Meinander (1946: 94). Nonetheless, the belittling attitudes towards cremation are clearly shown in the study of cremation cemeteries under level ground. Perhaps the commingled bones and the mixed structure of this cemetery form have made the archaeologists underrate it and its documentation. During past times, cremated bones were not even catalogued and preserved after the excavation. While many of our largest cemeteries under level ground were excavated a long time ago, the poor documentation and lack of osteological understanding at present is hard to explain in any other way than by the dismissive attitude many archaeologists still have towards this burial form.

Even though the analysis of cremated human remains, pyre experiments with animal carcasses, and ethnographic studies of contemporary cremations have interested osteologists and archaeologists for several decades (Gräslund 1978; McKinley 1989; 1994; Kaliff 1994; Sigvallius 1994; Moilanen et al. 2007; Jonuks & Konsa 2007; Kaliff & Østigård 2008), theoretical approaches to the phenomenon of cremation have been relatively sparse in archaeology. Cremation is, however, not simply a technological and taphonomic process but a ritual transformation of the human body. According to Jacqueline McKinley (2006), cremation ought to be considered as the primary mortuary rite while the burial itself is secondary. Moreover, cremations should be theorized in a much broader sense such as through social structures, symbolism, power, personhood and social memory, because cremation is a spectacle performed in public. Cremations have evoked feelings and memories both amongst those who have eye-witnessed the funeral and those who have performed the ritual acts (Williams 2004: 253, 264, 269).

The pyres

The location of the pyre is significant in discussing the amount of bone in a cremation cemetery, but pyre sites are rarely excavated by archaeologists or osteologists (McKinley 1994: 82; 2000: 135). Traditionally, the assumption is that if the pyre has been on top of the cemetery then the quality and quantity of the bones should be greater. There are examples of this in Sweden (Iregren 1972: 66-9). This has recently been

disputed by Caroline Arcini because of new pyre excavations in Sweden. Osteological analysis of these pyre sites shows that the amount of bones might be quite small if the pyre has been used only once. Moreover, the bone material consists of only small bones, such as finger and toe bones, the roots of the teeth and fragments of the skull and bone shafts. While the amount of human bones is small in such pyre sites, the animal bones may be high and consist of bones from the entire animal (Arcini 2005: 67, 69).

Arcini also studied the frequency of the *pars petrosa* (a part of the temporal bone of the cranium) in cemetery contexts. While this bone was frequently found in cemetery contexts, it is lacking in the pyre sites. Thus, only those bone collections containing the *pars petrosa* are "real" burials (Arcini 2005: 65-6). This interesting idea is however yet to be tested for the Finnish materials. Perhaps, it is important to acknowledge that the types of pyre must have differed from one area to another (Gräslund 1978; Kaliff 1994).

Traces of fire within the cremation cemeteries under level ground has sometimes been used as evidence that the funeral pyre was placed on the same moraine hill, even though excavated funeral pyres are very rare (Söyrinki-Harmo 1996: 118; Mägi 2002: 130). While two hearths excavated at the Pörnullbacken cremation cemetery in Vöyri were too small (Ø 0.5 m) to be pyre sites (cf. McKinley 2000: 136), they contained fire-cracked stones, ash, and the earth underneath was reddish in colour. Adjacent to one of the hearths was a cremation burial. These features have been interpreted as hearths used in the funerary or commemorative rituals, such as for burning sacrificial fires or preparing funerary or commemoration meals (Kaliff 1992: 93, 122; Svarvar 2002: 125, 149). Hence, traces of fire in cemetery contexts may have nothing to do with pyre constructions *per se*. The lack of pyre sites in Finland means that the burned bones were brought to the cremation cemeteries from some distance away from the cemetery (Miettinen 1998: 115). This could explain why the amount of bone is so low in these cemeteries.

To my knowledge, there are only a few cases from Finland where it has been demonstrated that the funeral pyre has been located within the cremation cemeteries[2]. These have been found during excavations either on top of the cremation cemetery or in its vicinity. Indications of pyre sites seem to be black soil with charcoal, partly fire-cracked stones and burned clay (Tallgren 1914; 1920). I am, however, quite sceptical of this interpretation because these pyres do not generally contain smaller bones, artefact fragments, fuel ash slag (silica oxide) or greasy and fat soil which might be considered as a criterion (Iregren 1972: 73; McKinley 1989; 1994; Arcini 2005). Nonetheless, it is possible that there are pyre sites that have not been recognized or documented. While the pyre sites at Ylipää, Virusmäki and Moisio were excavated at the beginning of the 20th century, when the excavation standards were very different (Tallgren 1914; Hackman 1914; Sarasmo 1945), there are also two recent excavations to consider.

2 Ylipää in Lieto, Moisio (Latokallio) in Mikkeli, Kokkomäki in Valkeakoski, Pörnullbacken in Vöyri and Virusmäki in Turku.

The excavated pyre from Kokkomäki cemetery in Valkeakoski was found inside a trench during trial excavations of a cremation cemetery under level ground. The pyre was approximately 2 x 0.9 m in size and consisted of fire cracked stones, charcoal and ash. Under this feature was a layer of moraine that was reddish in colour, suggesting that it had been burned. However, the pit was completely devoid of finds, burned clay or bones (Haggrén 2001), which make one suspect that the feature in question is something other than a pyre. To be sure of the accuracy of this interpretation the excavated area should also have been much larger and the sieving and documentation more meticulous (McKinley 2000: 136-7). The name of the moraine hill, Kokkomäki, (Eng. "Bonfire Hill") suggests that this "pyre" could in fact derive from later times.

The pyre site that was excavated at Pörnullbacken in Vöyri consisted of ash, charcoal and fire-cracked stones but no artefacts or bones. It was situated at a higher elevation in the landscape, in connection to a settlement site, which was adjacent to the cremation cemetery from the Merovingian period. In connection to this, a large amount of burned clay and clay slag was collected and was interpreted as building material from the pyre construction. However, the same find assemblages were found all over the cemetery as well (Svarvar 2002: 149).

There is also historical evidence from the cremation cemeteries under level ground at Vammonniemi in Taipalsaari, Mahittula in Raisio, Vuolle in Kokemäki and Franttilannummi in Mynämäki, implying that the village youth have assembled on top of these hills at Easter, Whitsunday or Midsummer Eve to light bonfires and to play round games. The black and sooty areas and damaged bedrock might thus be evidence of much more recent bonfires (Nordman 1921; Sarasmo 1946; Kirkinen 1994: 95; Pietikäinen 2006: 66-67, 81). The same activities have also been documented for several Migration period cairn cemeteries, e.g., in Kokemäki, Valkeakoski and Vesilahti (Maajoki 1939; Sarasmo 1946; Koski 1967; Vuorinen 1996).

Fire as transformation and fragmentation

The cremation process can be divided into several stages. The body of the deceased has to be prepared for the funeral and the pyre has to be built. After the cremation, the bones and the grave-goods are collected or selected from the pyre. When the funeral with its sacrifices is over, the grave must be concealed or the monument raised, not forgetting the commemorational rituals that follow the funeral (Artelius 2000). The deceased were thus the subject of several open-air performances and acts relating to the cremation (Back Danielsson 2009: 58). Moreover, these rituals might all take place in different places. Thus, cremation is a complicated process that shows investment both in time and fuel (McKinley 2006: 81). According to Terje Østigård (1999: 346), cremation is the result of technological, social and ritual transformation which changes the body and the perceptions of it in many ways. An attempt is below made to consider these transformations in forms of the Finnish material.

The Finnish material reveals no evidence of the deceased ever being ritually treated before cremation. Still, there might have been several possible preparation rituals on the body, such as a

delay or intermediate period between death and cremation. The deceased might have been buried somewhere else during this time or kept on display for the mourners (McKinley 1994: 79; 2006: 82). In the Estonian Pre-Roman and Roman Iron Age tarand-graves, de-fleshing and decapitation has been documented. There, the deceased were either buried or left in the openair, leaving the body to become skeletonised before cremation. Moreover, it seems that cremation was performed only on certain bones, not the entire body. Some bones were also crushed before burial (Kalling 1993: 68; Kalman 2000: 427-28; Mägi 2006: 55, 58). In sum, it seems that the preparation of the deceased was sometimes much more complex and diverse than has been thought. The famous description by Ibn Fadlan of the cremation of a Rus chief in 921/922 also describes how the chieftain was first buried in the ground for ten days in order to make preparations for the burial. During this time the mead was made and the burial clothes sown for the deceased. Only then was the body exhumed and burned on the pyre in a boat (Parker Pearson 1999: 1-3).

A high temperature is needed to enable the cremation of a human body, and for that there has to be plenty of high quality wood. The temperature of the pyre shows in the quality of the cremation (Iregren 1972: 62). The weather conditions, such as wind, and oxygen supply also contribute to the final result when performed in open air (McKinley 1989: 66; 1994: 78). The lowest temperature that makes the body fat burn and maintains combustion is 500°C (McKinley 1989: 65). It takes approximately 7-8 hours to cremate a human body on a pyre at a temperature of 600-800° C. However, after an hour most of the soft tissues have disappeared and the torso and skull has disintegrated. The hottest temperature is in the centre of the pyre while the periphery has a lower temperature. In a modern cremation oven, the burning process takes only 2 hours (McKinley 1989: 65-67; Schultz et al. 2008: 78). If all the bones are left on the pyre, the average amount of bones from an adult varies between 1600 and 3600 grams, depending on the person's weight and size (McKinley 1989: 66; Sigvallius 1994: 28).

The bone material from the Finnish cremation cemeteries under level ground has revealed that the quality and the temperature of the cremations were relatively high. This has resulted in very small and fragmented bone size, which in turn makes determining the sex of the deceased very difficult or even impossible. The commingled bones also make the calculation of the minimal number of individuals (MNI) in a cemetery material very challenging (Formisto 1996; Söderholm 2002; Salo K. 2004). The bone colour, according to the classification by Holk (1984), suggests that the majority of the bones from the Alsätra III cremation cemetery in Raasepori (formerly Karjaa) were in a temperature of 500-800°C. The average length of the bones was between 1.3 and 2 cm (Kivikero 2008: 26). Similar findings come from the cremation cemeteries at Hiidenmäki in Jämsä as well as Vainionmäki B in Laitila, where the majority of the fragments were less than a centimetre in size (Söderholm 2002; Salo, K. 2004). The average length of the burned bones from the nearby Vainionmäki A cemetery was also very small, only 2-3 cm (Formisto 1996: 81). Molten glass beads and bronze jewellery, sometimes found fused to the bones in these cemeteries, suggest that the temperature could have been much

higher on the pyre, since glass and bronze melt at a temperature of 940-1100°C (Moilanen et al. 2007: 42). This is also the temperature in which fuel ash slag will develop in the underlying soil of the pyre, a criteria often used for defining pyre sites (McKinley 1994: 82-4). Thus the bone and artefact categories seem to suggest variations in the cremation temperature. One reason may be that while some of the bones and artefacts were selected and removed from the funeral pyre for burial, others were perhaps left at the pyre sites. If the same pyre site was in use several times, these artefacts would have been exposed to heat several times, possibly resulting in severe melting and unrecognized pieces of glass and bronze that were later selected and brought to the cremation cemeteries under level ground.

It has recently been demonstrated that burned bone becomes fragmented during archaeological excavations and during the cleaning and washing stages (Harvig et al. in press). Thus taphonomic processes apparently affect the preservation of bones greatly. CT scans of Danish Bronze Age urns containing bones has shown that the bone material might look well preserved in the scans, even though exposed to low cremation temperatures, but when the urns are excavated only the white and mineralized parts of the bones survive, while the less heat-altered fragments, such as the spongious bones, are dissolved during the post-excavation. Thus the estimate of the cremation temperature tend to be overestimated when only the white bones survive the after treatment of the bone material (Harvig et al. in press).

There are both functional and ritual ways to fragment cremated human bones.

Human bones burn and become fragmented on the funeral pyre. This was probably a very important thing for the spectators, since the fragmentation of the corpse transformed the body and de-individualized the deceased. The person was no longer recognizable in the flames. An often-quoted belief is that the body and the soul were separated during the cremation (Ström 1961: 19-20; Nilsson Stutz 2004: 91-3). Thus the fire also transported the deceased from this world to the next. The heat from the fire, the light and the smell of the burning flesh and smoke was probably an intense experience for the spectators of a cremation that must have evoked a variety of emotions and beliefs about the transforming body (Williams 2004; Back Danielsson 2009). Charred juniper seeds *(Juniperus communis)* from the Vainionmäki cemetery in Laitila have been interpreted as deriving from wood used in the funeral pyre (Aalto 1996: 77-8; Lempiäinen, M. 2008). The strong but pleasant smell from burning juniper as well as its thick white smoke might have had an important role in the cremation process (Back Danielsson 2009: 70).

Movement and falling timber in the pyre could fragment the bones, especially when they were hot and frail, but the anatomical position of the body remains the same during the cremation process (McKinley 1989; 2000).

After the cremation, the next step would be to collect the bones and the objects from the pyre. This was, however, not possible immediately after the cremation, since the bones were hot and they took hours to cool down, unless this was done artificially with cold water or snow (Lang 2000: 214). This was also probably an important phase in the mortuary practice. The hot and

fragmented bones were visible on the pyre during this time but it was not yet possible to undertake the funeral. This display of fragmented bones probably greatly affected the spectators emotionally (Williams 2004: 271, 278).

It is possible that the people attending this ritual went back home and returned the next day, as has been documented amongst the Aborigines in Australia during the 18th century (McKinley 1994: 80). Alternatively, it was possible to perform other rituals and sacrifices in the meantime.

Smaller bones are usually missing from cremation cemeteries. This has to do with the selective collection of bones from the funeral pyre. It is evident that smaller bones, such as the hand, fingers, feet and toes are more difficult to find in the remains after the cremation since they get buried in the ashes. The quality of the burning process also relies on how the pyre is built. If the body is placed on the ground, the back of the body would not be burned because of lack of oxygen. The best burning process would thus be gained by building a platform of wood and placing the body in the centre of it in an extended supine position. Even so, certain areas of the body, such as the skull and the long bones, survive the pyre better because of the bone density (Schurr et al. 2008: 96).

Since the feet are not situated in the centre of the pyre, they are usually less completely burned than the rest of the body. The torso usually burns well because of its high percentage of body fat. Since the feet lack body fat, they also burn less well, which makes them porous and more prone to fragment and disappear (McKinley 1989: 65-8, 72). Larger bones, such as the long bones and skull fragments, are naturally easier to find in the ashes and are also easier for an osteologist to recognize and determine. While it is not surprising that these bones are most frequent in the bone assemblages from the cemeteries it is possible that some rules were followed doing the collecting phase. There might have been beliefs about certain body parts (such as the skull) that affected the selection process.

The deceased was probably placed in a supine position on the funeral pyre in Finland as well. The body was probably fully dressed since there are several examples of dress ornaments and bronze spirals from the Finnish cremation cemeteries under level ground that have clear signs of having been on the pyre. In fact, most of the grave-goods would have been destroyed in the flames and thus be unrecognisable due to melting. Some individuals were probably laid on top of a bearskin, since bear phalanges are frequently found in the cremation cemeteries, even though in small numbers (Formisto 1996: 84; Söderholm 1998; 2002; Hårding 2002: 217; Salo, K. 2005; Kivikero 2008: 26, 34). At Vainionmäki A cemetery, phalanges from seals suggest that other hides could also be used (Formisto 1996: 84). Nails and rivets are often found in the cremation cemeteries, either in small or large numbers, suggesting cremations in boats (Raike 1996), but when the number of rivets is low they may also derive from wooden boxes, chests, coffins or pyre constructions (Mägi 2002: 130). It has also been debated whether the boat nails derive from old boats used as firewood in the funeral pyres (Raike 1996).

Animal bones are often said to be a social link when they are found in graves. The quantity of animal bones and the number of species found in a cemetery context gives valuable information about the social status of the dead (McKinley 1989: 71; 1994: 92; Sigvallius 1997). In Scandinavia some animal species seemed to be reserved for persons of high status. These included horse, bear and birds of prey (Iregren 1972: 84-85). Certain animal species could also be reserved to either women or men (Jennbert 2004; Hedeager 2004). Berit Sigvallius has justly suggested that it would be better to study the quantity and diversity of animal bones in the cremations instead of looking at the number of artefacts, because not all artefacts were deposited in the cemetery and many of them were burned, fragmented and unidentifiable in the pyre (Sigvallius 1997).

The animals that have been laid on the pyre next to the deceased can be divided into two groups; those which were perceived as following the deceased into the other world and those that were consumed as food. Horses, cats and dogs can be regarded as in the first category, while sheep/goat, cattle, pig and domesticated birds were eaten (Sten & Vretemark 1988: 149-51). Horses are extremely rare in the Finnish material, except of unburned teeth of cattle and horses that are often found in the upper layers of the cremation cemeteries (Formisto 1996: 84; Hårding 2002: 217). Horse trappings are frequently found in the Merovingian period weapon graves, suggesting that the horses were possibly too expensive to sacrifice on the funeral pyres. Dogs, on the other hand, are relatively common in the cremation cemeteries in Finland (Söderholm 2002; Hårding 2002; Salo, K. 2004; 2005; Kivikero 2008; 2009).

While the amount of animal bone in cemeteries is quite large in Scandinavia during the Iron Age (Iregren 1972: 74), the amounts in Finland constitute of only one or two per cent of the total bone material. For example, in the Alsätra study, the amount of burned human bones was 6.4 kg, while the animal bones weighed only 337 grams (Kivikero 2008: 23). In the Vainionmäki A material, approximately 10% of the bone material was from animals (Formisto 1996: 86).

Both coarse and fine pottery is found in the cremation cemeteries, implying that it possessed multiple functions in the funerary rituals (Svarvar 2002: 133). Ceramics that have been burned almost to slag indicate that vessels containing food and/or drink were placed on the pyre (Mägi 2002). Pottery was probably also used to transport the cremains[3] from the pyre to the cemetery and in later commemorative rituals.

Artefacts made of wood, textiles and fur are unfortunately find categories that are no longer traceable in the cremation cemeteries. Nonetheless, these should not be forgotten. The grave-good assembly probably looked very different on the pyre before ignition from after the cremation. Hence, one should remember that the collecting process that followed the cremation is always a selection of the grave-goods and the body. Various rituals determine what is placed on the pyre, what is removed from it, what is buried and what items may be recycled and put back

3 Cremains are are the remains of the human body after cremation (e.g., Schultz et al. 2008).

into circulation, either during the funeral process or some time after it (Williams 2008: 244).

After the cremation, the burned bones were probably put into a clay vessel, a wooden box or a bag from the pyre sites and transported to the cremation cemeteries under level ground. The Finnish bone materials show no traces of being washed before burial and are frequently found together with charcoal and ash. At Kalomäki cremation cemetery in Hämeenlinna, the bottom of a flat bottomed ceramic vessel was found together with cremated bones in the cremation layer. The bones were found both on the inside of the vessel and around it (Söyrinki-Harmo 1979: 28), suggesting that the burned bones had been carried to the cemetery in the vessel from the funeral pyre and then crushed. The same phenomenon of smashing the clay vessels has been documented in the stone graves on Saaremaa in Estonia (Mägi 2002: 113-4). Pottery is, on the other hand, frequently found on the surface of the cremation cemeteries which indicates that commemorative rituals were performed on these hills as well. Ceramics might thus have had multiple functions in the mortuary practice (Aroalho 1978: 67; Söyrinki-Harmo 1979).

Collection and selecting the burned bones seems to have been quite crudely done. The whole individual is never recovered in these cemeteries, suggesting that, regardless of the obvious taphonomic problems (Baker Bontrager & Nawrocki 2008; Schmidt & Symes 2008; Harvig et al. in press), it was not necessary to bury the whole individual in the cemetery. In fact, it is probable that only a sample of the body was buried while the rest of it was deposited somewhere else, such as the settlement sites, fields, sacred groves, water or perhaps in another cemetery, as has been suggested for the Scandinavian Bronze Age or contemporary funeral practices in Nepal. The deceased would thus have been divided into several parts and placed in earth, air (smoke), fire and water. Empty graves and the small quantity of burned bones in cemeteries which is widely documented in Scandinavia may be examples of this (Kaliff 1992: 71; 1997; Kaliff & Østigård 2004: 93; Eriksson 2005). Burned bones could also be brought back to the sphere of the living by mixing them into the clay during pottery-making or by using them in the iron-making processes (Back Danielson 2007: 92-3). Moreover, one has to remember that the definition of a grave might have been something completely different during the Iron Age. A grave might not have needed all the bones from the individual in order for it to be considered a grave; neither is it obvious that that only one place was reserved for the burial (Kaliff 2009).

Physical dismemberment of the human body is also well known amongst the medieval relics of saints. The bones of Saint Birgitta, for example, were divided and spread over a large area between Rome and the Vadstena monastery in Sweden (Heikkilä 2003). Relics were often used for healing and people believed they could protect entire cities from various dangers (Krötzl 1997: 296). Even during the 20th century, bones might have been re-used for magical purposes, such as for healing or fertility beliefs, in Finland and

Sweden (Hagberg 1937: 636-43). The variability of the cremation process cannot be studied in detail in this thesis because there are not enough osteological analyses of the Finnish bone material. Thus we can only speculate on how the rest of the remains were treated and what secondary rituals there might have been.

It has become quite obvious that the quantity of burned human bones inside the cremation cemeteries is often quite sparse. Poor preservation and later activities has been used as explanations in Finland. The small number of burned bones in the Finnish cremation cemeteries could also be explained by the fact that only parts of the cremains were buried in the cremation cemetery (Söyrinki-Harmo 1984: 118; Heikkurinen-Montell 1996: 96). The rest of the cremains could have been left on the pyre or deposited somewhere else. There might also have been some kind of selection of the body parts even before the burning process (Iregren 1972: 73; Kaliff 1992: 121-2; Mägi 2002: 131). This is by no means unique to Finland; similar behaviour is documented in Scandinavia and the UK amongst cremation burials (Sigvallius 1994; McKinley 1989: 71; 2000: 137; Kaliff & Østigård 2004: 85; Back Danielsson 2007). Thus, it seems that the deposition of bones in the cemeteries was merely symbolic.

Unburned bones which are frequently found in the cremation cemeteries might suggest that only parts of the human body were cremated, as for example at Vainionmäki A cemetery in Laitila (Heikkurinen-Montell 1996: 96, 100). These unburned bones can often be explained by later inhumation burials, but in this case there were no documented inhumation burials. Hence, there must be alternative explanations for these unburned bones. The quality of the cremation depends on the conditions in the pyre. Also draft and lack of fuel can result in a partially burned body with bones that are unaffected by the fire (Walker et al. 2008: 129). Partial cremation can also have ritual reasons, as was suggested by Alfred Hackman (1912: 54, 63) in relation to the Penttala cemetery in Nakkila dating to the early Roman Iron Age. Terje Østigård (2000: 41, 45-7) has distinguished two different kinds of cremation burials depending on the heating, namely, cooking and burning. Burning often happens at high temperatures, while the cooked bones are a result of lower temperatures and have thus not been in direct fire.

In the archaeological literature it is also commonly claimed that burned bones have been ritually treated and even crushed after cremation. This phenomenon will be discussed in chapter 2.4.

As already stated in this chapter, there are a number of taphonomic reasons why bones disappear from our cemeteries. The main reason for the Finnish cases are probably animal activity which both fragments, moves and commingles the burials. Another reason might be the quality and extent of the cremation and the organic activity in the soil. Our long winters may also make the freeze-thaw effect a damaging factor for the preservation of organic material. It has even been reported that the freeze and thaw can transport an artefact at a site leading to post depositional distortion (Iregren 1972: 36; Hilton 2003). Moreover, one should not forget the effects an archaeological excavation will have on fragile bone materials (Harvig et al. in press). Personal experience of cemetery excavations has shown that dry-sieving destroys the burned bones quite effectively.

2.3 Collective burials

From the Merovingian period to the Crusade period (AD 550-1150/1300), the cremation cemeteries are both collective and individual depending on the type of cemetery.

Among the cremation cemeteries under level ground, the burned bones are scattered randomly in the cemetery in a way that makes it is difficult to distinguish the burials from each other. It is possible that the bones from one individual are buried in several different places within the same cemetery, creating a burial form with a very complex and mixed manifestation. Thus the dispersal of the body seems to conceal the identity of the dead, de-individualizing the community at the same time.

Miikka Haimila has discussed the term collectivity, dividing it into two different senses; "small-scale collectivity" and "complete collectivity". Small-scale collectivity means that a social group, such as a family, is buried together, but are still distinguished from other groups in the cemetery. Complete collectivity, on the other hand, means that nothing divides these people; they are all buried together, the bones commingled, without any reference to social group (Haimila 2002: 26; 2005: 89).

In Finland, the deliberateness of the commingled bones and grave-goods has been debated, suggesting that collectiveness is a result of later activities and unintentional processes. Thus the disorganized nature of these cemeteries is often explained by constant disturbance by both people and trampling animals. The original form of the cemeteries could therefore have looked quite different (Söyrinki-Harmo 1984; Edgren 1993: 196; Heikkurinen-Montell 1996: 101; Haimila 2002: 17-8; Wickholm & Raninen 2003: 3-4). Another popular explanation of the commingled state of these cemeteries is that the cemetery form has developed from another grave type, such as tarand-graves or cairns. Alternatively, the cemetery might have consisted of several earth-mixed cairns that have grown together in time, thus becoming unrecognisable (Kivikoski 1966: 51-2; 1971: 71; Salo 1968; Keskitalo 1979). These evolutionary approaches are mostly excluded nowadays.

The cremation cemeteries would also have been easy to access by blacksmiths who could loot valuable bronze and metal objects for scrap metal. It has been suggested that several cremation cemeteries under level ground are in fact smithy sites or refuse heaps (Taavitsainen 1990: 44-5; 1991: 7-11) but this theory has since then been questioned (Kirkinen 1994: 30). The criticism of the structure of this cemetery form is partly justified, but to suggest that all cemeteries were plundered or destroyed does not sound reliable. There are over 250 cremation cemeteries under level ground in Finland and it is unlikely that all would have undergone destruction. Moreover, the supposedly close connection between the settlement sites and the cemeteries (Uino 1986; Karlsson 1987; Kotivuori 1992; Raike & Seppälä 2005; Vuorinen 2009) would probably have made unauthorized plundering difficult (Söyrinki-Harmo 1979: 93). It is also possible that people guarded their cemeteries somehow. Professor Emeritus Unto Salo has gone even further in his denigration of this cemetery form, suggesting that the users of these cemeteries no longer perceived them as actual cemeteries but as fields of debris and refuse (2003: 57, 381; 2004: 203-7). This line of thinking has, however, not won support among other archaeologists.

Collective burials are not unique to the cremation cemeteries under level ground. In Finland, collective cremation burials are known from the Roman Iron Age and seem to be dominant among such cemeteries until the end of the Viking Age (Keskitalo 1979; Wickholm & Raninen 2006). In the Swedish collective burials, which date from late Bronze Age and early Iron Age, the scattering of the burned bones is seen as an intentional ritual act (Sigvallius 2005: 167). As I have already described, cremation is a form of transformation, but so are the collective burials. By scattering the burned bones into the cemetery, the deceased are transformed and de-individualized even more from what they have been on the funeral pyre. Through fire and scattering of the pyre remains, the social being is both remembered and forgotten at the same time. The scattering is thus a way to get the dead become more clearly a part of the collective of ancestors. Hence, I argue that the collective nature of these cemeteries is the result of intentional complex funeral rituals in which the scattering of the bones was an important part. One must remember the ritualistic context of graves (Härke 1997; Bell 1992; Parker Pearson 1999; Artelius 2000).

The cremation cemeteries under level ground are notorious for being both poorly excavated and documented. The assumptions about the mixed nature of these cemeteries may have influenced the archaeological methods used. Some recent excavations and publications have tried to distinguish individual burials among the collective finds on the basis of spatial relations between scattered, commingled bones and artefacts. However, the osteological analyses have shown that these find clusters also consist of several individuals (Heikkurinen-Montell 1996: 94-9; Haimila 2002: 72-5; Hårding 2002: 214-9; Svarvar 2002: 150-1). The bone and artefact clusters from Rikala cremation cemetery were recently analysed by an osteologist revealing that they consited mainly of animal bones (Mäntylä & Storå in prep.). The method of distinguishing burial complexes in this cemetery type has also provoked criticism (Pihlman 2002; Mandel 2003: 138-9). It seems that individual burials can be defined with reasonable certainty only when sizable metal artefacts, mainly weapons, are found in very narrow concentrations.

Even though the bones and artefacts have been scattered and commingled, there is one important exception. In the cremation cemetery on the Island of Pukkisaari in Kouvola, 99% of the brooches found during excavations in 1994-1996 had been placed in the cremation layer with their front side or face towards the soil (Fig. 27). The same phenomenon also occurred among other jewellery types, such as pendants. The inverted deposition of the Pukkisaari grave goods has been explained by the excavator, Timo Miettinen, as a ritual act indicating that the people have believed in a reversed afterlife. Placing the artefacts in the soil with their face down helped them to cross the border into the world of the dead (Miettinen 1998: 120-2). Even though there is no mention of this phenomenon elsewhere in the literature, the present author has seen similar cases of inverted round brooches from excavation pictures at both the Aittamäki and Haimionmäki cremation cemeteries in Lieto and at the Kirstula Riihimäki cemetery in Hämeenlinna (Hirviluoto 1956; Seppälä 1998;

Pihlman 1999). Unfortunately this has not been discussed in a larger context by the archaeologists who have done the excavations. However, this should be discussed in a wider context in the future, even though it is unfortunately not possible here. This interesting insight should certainly be tested at future excavations.

Scattered bones as expressions of fertility

Anthropological studies have often shown similarities between death, sexuality and fertility. In many cultures, this means that someone dying enables something else to be born. This is called regeneration. It also means that the society needs to re-organize itself after the occurrence of a death. The fertility ideas and the continuation life gave hope and comfort to the society that was affected by the death. This is also crucial inthe mourning process (Huntington & Metcalf 1979: 93; Bloch & Parry 2001: 1-7).

In Scandinavia, burned bones, both human and animal, have also been found outside the sphere of cemeteries, especially during the Iron Age. Burned bones have, for example, been found inside ceramic vessels, in post holes and thresholds of buildings, hearths and cooking pits, on property borders and in forges. This suggests, according to Ing-Mari Back Danielsson, that bones had multiple roles in the society and

Fig.27. A round brooch (face down) and a glass bead in situ during the excavation of the Pukkisaari cremation cemetery in Kouvola. Photograph by T. Miettinen 1994-1995/Museum of Kymeenlaakso.

they circulated widely. Not only did the bones have transitional qualities but they also possessed regenerative powers. The white colour of the crushed and burned bones could from a metaphorical point of view be seen as flour or semen. The habit of crushing the bones during the Late Iron Age in association with finds of grind stones also suggests ideas of regeneration and fertility. Burned bones would thus have possessed life-giving properties (Back Danielsson 2007: 245-6, 251, 289).

Some researchers have suggested that the collective nature of the level ground cremation cemeteries is a result of such ideas about fertility. The burned bones could be scattered in the cemetery; in a metaphoric way, like sowing seeds in a field (Purhonen 1996: 126-9). This is not an unlikely explanation, which could be understood in two ways; one is with sexual connotations, the second the implication of agriculture. The act of scattering the burned bone in the cemetery would have been very similar to the act of sowing seed on a cultivation plot, which had possibly been transformed by fire just like the human body. It would have been quite easy to see these two practices as analogies of each other. Perhaps the idea of the collective burials was associated with the idea of scattering bones as a ritual technique to reproduce life. Perhaps it released the fertile substances inherent the seed grain as well as in the human remains (Wickholm & Raninen 2006).

It is worth nothing that the topographical location of the cremation cemeteries has been agrarian; they are often still found on small moraine hills that are surrounded by cultivated fields (Wickholm 2005). The excavations in the Vainionmäki cremation cemetery A in Laitila, SW Finland, uncovered some plough-marks in the bottom soil of the cemetery. It has been suggested that these marks do not derive from earlier cultivation but are examples of ritual ploughing, since the small area had only been ploughed once. This is so far the only suggested example of ritual ploughing at a cremation cemetery in Finland (Purhonen 1996: 123-4; Söyrinki-Harmo 1996: 116).

The resemblance between cultivation and burned bones has also been suggested elsewhere. In Swedish Bronze Age cremations, grind stones have been found in association with burned human bones that bear clear marks of having been crushed. It is believed that these tools would have been used to either crush the burned human bones or merely used as symbolic indicators of a fertility cult. The Swedish archaeologist Anders Kaliff has studied the eschatological views of Bronze Age Scandinavia. He sees the cremation processes as a transitional phase in which the body and the soul are separated from each other. In order for the soul to travel to the afterlife the bones have to be burned, crushed and returned to the earth (Kaliff 1992; Kaliff 1997; Kaliff & Østigård 2004). Similar ideas have been suggested for the Scandinavian Late Iron Age (Back Danielsson 2007).

Hence, it seems likely that the grind stones, stone cubes and pestles fulfilled another

function than just grinding grain when found in a cemetery context. They might have functioned as bone crushers or merely been symbolic indicators of a fertility cult (Kaliff 1997: 88-90).

Ethnographic parallels from South America reveal that some tribes crushed the bones of the dead in order to mix them with food, which were then consumed by the mourners as part of the mourning process (Chagnon 1983: 14-5).

Several stone cubes have been recovered in the cremation cemeteries under level ground in Finland. The very fragmented bones found in these cemeteries supports the idea of symbolic crushing (Söyrinki-Harmo 1996: 70-1), but there is no evidence of this on the bones that have indeed been analyzed by an osteologist (e.g., Formisto 1996)[4]. Nevertheless, Finnish researchers have suggested that these tools were used for other things than to crush grain. They have, in other words, followed the ideas of Kaliff, suggesting that the same kind of fertility beliefs also existed in Finland during Late Iron Age (Purhonen 1996: 120-4; Söyrinki-Harmo 1996: 70-1; Shepherd 1999: 55-9). Naturally, the extent of the fragmentation of the bone material may derive simply from the breakage on the pyre, the burial and from the archaeological excavation process (McKinley 1994: 84) but the grind stones and charred grain found in cemetery contexts could still be understood as metaphors, thus associating cremation with farming, crop processing, fertility and re-birth (Artelius 1999; Back Danielsson 2007; 2009).

The Icelandic Sagas relate that significant persons could sometimes be buried in several burial mounds in different locations. This was believed to increase the good fortune in agriculture (Jennbert 2004: 194). According to Finnish and Swedish folklore, human bones could be removed from churchyards during sowing and placed in fields in order to get a good crop. After the harvest the bones were dug up and replaced in the churchyards. In Sweden, there are records from the 19th century telling that bones or earth from the churchyards could be used also for healing or for magical purposes. Bones, earth and even coffin nails could also be sufficient to increase the crop or to get good fortune in e.g. fishing or hunting (Hagberg 1937: 636-43; Kaliff 1997: 94).

There could have been alternative uses for the human bone. Terje Gansum, for example, has written an interesting paper on the use of burned bones in the iron carbonization process. His study also shows strong metaphoric connections between fire, the heated iron in a smithy and the cremation of a human body. This theory also follows the ideas of regeneration (Gansum 2004). Gansum´s theory would also explain why so many traces of smithing are found in the immediate vicinity of these cemeteries in Finland. It is possible that the Iron Age cemeteries were seen as powerful places which the local smith tried to take advantage of in his own iron-making (Meinander 1943: 46).

4 Only 12 cremation cemeteries under level ground have been osteologically analysed in Finland. These cemeteries have unfortunately not been fully excavated.

2.4 Individual burials: Weapon burials and inhumations

Individual or dividual graves?

Individuality, the idea that our bodies belong to us and that our personal concerns are private, is a fairly modern conception (Fowler 2004). In a recent PhD from the University of Stockholm, Ing-Mari Back Danielsson deconstructs the concepts of identity, body, person and individuality, terms she does not believe to be fixed or static. She argues that the Western term individual is a modern definition we should not use in discussing Late Iron Age burial archaeology because people in the past were perhaps not individualized in the same way as modern people are. Following the ideas of Chris Fowler (2004), we should remember that there are other, more diverse conceptions of personhood, which go beyond the individual (Back Danielsson 2007: 91-2, 285).

The term dividuality refers to the partible and divisible aspects of a person's agency. A person's identity might be strategically attached, detached or permeated by someone or something else. This divisibility, a mode of personhood, could according to Back Danielsson explain why human remains are found in so many other contexts than just graves in Scandinavia during the late Iron Age. The bodies of the deceased were divided and deposited in several places or used as regenerative substances in objects, both metaphorically and more literally (Back Danielsson 2007: 251-3, 286; see also Fowler 2004: 8-9).

The weapon burials

Among the cremation cemeteries under level ground there are weapon burials in pits from the beginning of the Merovingian period and the early Viking Age (ca 550-850 AD). A typical weapon grave consists of a shield boss, a sword, one or more spearheads, a seax and/or knives and sometimes horse trappings (Fig. 28-29). The sword is always broken or bent several times, and the weapons and bones have frequently been placed inside the shield buckle (Schauman-Lönnqvist 1994: 41-3; 1996a: 60-2). The intentional destruction of the weapons and other artefacts has been explained as a way of setting the soul free. As the deceased was destroyed and de-humanized in the cremation, it was also important for the artefacts to be freed. Another explanation for this damage is as a precaution, and fear of the dead rising from the grave to exact revenge for some wrongdoing (Karvonen 1998: 5). In a recent article, Mikko Moilanen, both archaeologist and smith by profession, has pointed out that iron weapons, especially swords, might also become bent in the heat of the funeral pyre (Moilanen 2008: 21).

The tradition of individual weapon burials exists only for a short period of time within the cremation cemeteries under level ground; from the Viking Age onwards the weapons are mostly strewn about the cemetery (Wickholm & Raninen 2006).

Needless to say, the weapon graves in question have unquestioningly been labelled male graves, even if the biological sex has not been determined by skeletal sexing (Hackman 1938: 22, 53; Schauman-Lönnqvist 1994: 48-9; Salmo 1944: 23-7). Female individual cremation deposits or double burials including a female are rare in Finnish cremation cemeteries under level

Fig.28. A weapon burial in situ at the Ristimäki 1 cremation cemetery in Turku (formerly Kaarina). Photograph by A. M. Tallgren 1914/ National Board of Antiquities.

Fig.29. A weapon burial in situ at the Vainionmäki A cemetery in Laitila. Photograph by L. Söyrinki-Harmo 1994/ National Board of Antiquities.

ground, although some are known, for example, in the famous late Merovingian period cemetery of Ristimäki I in Turku (formerly Kaarina) (Tallgren 1931: 78-9). Typical of the Merovingian period (AD 550-800) is the marked increase in the number of weapons in the burials. In fact, during the 7th and 8th centuries, the weapon burial was, with some local exceptions, more common than during any other Iron Age period. Even though the number of weapon graves is significant in the cremation cemeteries during the Merovingian period, they decrease in number towards the Viking Age. (Wickholm & Raninen 2006.) The widespread assumption that these warrior graves are remains from a very violent and turbulent time (Tallgren 1931: 75; Kivikoski 1946: 30-1) has been disputed recently (Wickholm & Raninen 2003; 2006). The idea behind the individual weapon burials could actually derive from different concepts of personhood or identity within the Merovingian period society. It is possible that the male elite felt a need to distinguish themselves from the rest of the society during this time. This would have resulted in an individual burial practice during a time that otherwise practiced collective burials (Wickholm & Raninen 2006). In some of the cemeteries, the individual weapon burials are concentrated in a specific area in the cemetery showing some kind of horizontal stratigraphy. Examples of this are seen in both Finland and Estonia. This observation underlines the possibility of the "warrior" elite wanting to stand out from the rest of the cemetery (Lõugas 1973; Heikkurinen-Montell 1996: 94-9).

The individual weapon burials found from the cremation cemeteries under level ground strongly resemble the Kärsämäki type burials that were common during the Roman Iron Age (Raninen 2005c). Even though Sirkku Pihlman (1990: 269-72; 1992) has concluded that the individual cremation pit burials end by the beginning of the Merovingian period because of the new burial form of cremation cemeteries under level ground, the individual weapon graves of this time might also be understood as a continuation of the old Kärsämäki tradition (Wickholm & Raninen 2006: 154). It is perhaps even possible to take this assumption a bit further; the long continuity of burying the elite in individual burials might be a reason why the old Roman Iron Age cemeteries were re-used during the Merovingian period and the beginning of the Viking Age. Thus, it would not be a coincidence that the cremation cemeteries under level ground, containing individual weapon graves, are sometimes erected on top of older individual burials of the Kärsämäki type. The bonds between the warrior elite were perhaps too strong to be broken or it was important to strengthen the ties with the ancestors once more. Hence, it would seem that some deceased had an especially important function in the manifestation of social memory (Paper I, Wickholm 2008). Even if the graves were marked, it probably also meant that they were maintained by someone, possibly even for centuries. This could have been the case especially for the individual weapon burials that were probably perceived differently because of their status or gender conceptions (Wickholm & Raninen 2006). If these sites were also used between the funerals for other ritual activities, it is possible that the landscape was kept open.

The individual burials are mainly in pits. No burial vessels are found amongst these burials; if there ever were boxes or bags of organic material, these have disappeared by now. However, there are some indications of possible containers. These are weapon burials where the burned bones have been collected into shield bosses and two cases of burials inside a bronze cauldron of

Vestland type, found from Mynämäki and Vöyri (Wessman 2009a; 2009b). Thus these containers have been transformed ideologically into burial urns, even though their original purpose was battle or food and drink. Perhaps we have an example here of a dividual concept of personhood (cf. Back Danielsson 2007). The Vestland type cauldrons are especially valued because they reached Scandinavia through import, barter or plunder. They might thus be symbols of high rank, respect and honour (Østigård 1999: 357-8). Moreover, the Vestland type cauldrons were of considerable age when finally placed in the cemetery context (Wessman 2009a; 2009b).

There are also examples of stone-slabs that have been placed on top of cremation pits from the Vainionmäki A cemetery at Laitila, covering the weapons and the bones (Söyrinki-Harmo 1996: 110). This tradition might derive from the Kärsämäki burial type and thus the Roman Iron Age, since this behaviour is well documented amongst these burials (Salonen 1928; Salo 1968). The idea of covering the individual burials with a stone probably indicates some sort of wish to mark the individual graves out from the rest. They may also be understood as sealing the burials, even though no burial urns are present. Perhaps the cremation pit itself was conceived as a container or vessel.

The deceased's social identity is difficult to assess since almost no osteological analyses of the bone material have been done. The quantity of burned bones in these burials is also low, suggesting that they have a merely symbolic role or that the bone material has been divided up somehow before burial. The pits often contain only 100-200 grams of burned bones, but sometimes even less (Hackman 1938: 11, 178; Formisto 1996: 83; Söyrinki-Harmo 1996: 94; Kivikero 2009).

The individual burials from Vainionmäki A in Laitila revealed that there is in fact more than one individual in these individual cremation pits, often an adult and a child. The occasional small stone enclosures or rings that contained weapon burials (Heikkurinen-Montell 1996; Söyrinki-Harmo 1996) also seemed to contain more than one individual. In fact, there is only one case from this cemetery where the stone enclosure was made for an individual; a child burial (Formisto 1996: 84; Heikkurinen-Montell 1996: 94-5; Söyrinki-Harmo 1996: 107-8). The "individual" cremation pit burial from the famous boat cremation in the Pukkila cremation cemetery under level ground in Isokyrö also proved to be a double burial when finally osteologically analysed in 2009 (Kivikero 2009). The same can be said for the "individual" burials in Pörnullbacken cremation cemetery in Vöyri (Hårding 2002: 214).

In sum, it is appropriate to suggest that the weapon burials were not entirely reserved for male adults since there are women and children in these burials as well. Naturally, it is possible that the reason is communal pyre sites that have been used over a longer period of time. Several individuals being burned at the same site results in double burials when the bone materials from other individuals are mistakenly collected from the pyre (Iregren 1972: 40). However, as Sami Raninen's research has shown, dividual concepts of personhood were probably also present in Late Iron Age Finland and this might have become apparent in the weapon burial custom especially (Raninen 2007; 2009). We should perhaps have to re-think the concept of these "individual" weapon burials in the future research.

One may ask why two antithetical ways of burial, individual and collective, were performed

simultaneously at the same cremation cemeteries. This might perhaps be the result of two existing conceptions of the soul or identity. With particular individuals, it seem to have been important to keep the bodies intact both physically and psychologically after the cremation, while for others the bones were scattered over a large area. As the majority of these individual burials are weapon burials, it seems that this burial practice was reserved for a specific group, possibly the male elite (Wickholm & Raninen 2006). The next group of individual graves among the cremation cemeteries under level ground are inhumations that appear in the material from the end of the Viking Age onwards. It is probable that it was still the members of the elite who decided to distinguish themselves through individuality in the inhumation burials. However, during this stage, the grave-goods suggest that the individual burials include females as well (Wickholm & Raninen 2006), even though this has not been osteologically proven.

Cremations in boats

The remains of boat cremations have been found in several cremation cemeteries under level ground. The majority of the iron rivets are scattered across the cremation cemeteries together with the burned bones, suggesting collectivity, but there are also some cremation pits containing iron rivets (Hackman 1938). Their commingled nature makes it impossible to estimate how many cremations in boats there originally were in a cemetery, especially if we assume that not all boat nails were collected from the funeral pyre. The long continuous use of the cremation cemeteries also makes it difficult to date the boat cremations. In addition, estimating the size of the boats is difficult because they were also built with wooden pegs and even sewn with roots which do not leave any archaeological traces after burning (Taavitsainen 1999: 308-9; Matikka 2000: 95). Thus, it is misleading to try to estimate the amount of boat cremations in a cemetery context as Gunlög Andersson has done (1963), by the number of surviving rivets (cf. Wessman 2009c). The boat cremations were perhaps originally individual burials. Because only a couple of dozen rivets were found in the famous cremation pit from Pukkila at Isokyrö, Alfred Hackman assumed that the remaining rivets had been spread collectively across the cemetery, together with iron slag, after the funeral (Hackman 1938: 55-8).

In the literature, boat graves are perceived as a foreign burial rite originating from Scandinavia. They are often compared to the famous boat graves from Vendel and Valsgärde in Central Sweden. The occurrence of boat cremations in association with rich grave-goods, such as weapons ornamented in Salin II Style, has been interpreted as proof of strong trade connections with the Mälar valley in Sweden during the Merovingian period and the Viking Age, possibly even small-scale immigration (Kivikoski 1946: 31; 1971: 72, 79). Alternatively, it has been suggested that these graves belonged to a warrior aristocracy that was allied with the early Svea kingship by taking part in their retinue and even by serving in their army (Schauman- Lönnqvist 1999). The Ristimäki I cemetery in Turku contained approximately 1500 boat nails. Some 500 of these were found within a 2 m^2 area together with richly ornamented weapons and jewellery dating to the end of the Merovingian period or the beginning of the Viking Age. Because of the artefact assemblage, the burial has been interpreted as a double burial of a man and a woman (Kivikoski 1946: 29), even though no osteological analysis has been done.

2.5 Visual and invisible cemeteries

The cremation cemeteries, their topography and the landscape

There are around 250 cremation cemeteries under level ground in present-day Finland. The most typical topographical character of this cemetery form is that it is situated on top of smaller elevations, such as natural moraine hills (69.5%) with the bedrock sometimes partly visible above ground (34%)[5]. The only signs of the cemetery, except the hill itself, might be some large natural stones that stick up from the ground surface (Fig. 30-31) (Wessman 2009c). The moraine hills are usually surrounded by a fairly flat terrain consisting of heavy clay soils that are suited to cultivation (43%) (e.g., Mansikkaniemi 1988: 25; Haimila 2000). In 50% of the cases the cemeteries are situated close to either a lake or a river. Especially on the coasts of SW and W Finland, the Iron Age settlement has been concentrated on the upper reaches of river valleys and around smaller lakes (Salmo 1952: 432; 1980: 15, 57). Hence, the cemeteries were centrally located close to the waterways and the sites of livelihood (fields, pasture and fishing waters).

In Finland, since the settlements and burial sites are often excavated separately, the focus being on cemeteries, there are only a few studies available

Fig.30. The Virnamäki 1 cremation cemetery under level ground in Turku, with a possible sacrificial cairn and cup marks. Photograph by Ulla Moilanen.

5 The percentages are calculated through information taken from the database of ancient sites at the National Board of Antiquities. All sites do not, however, include a description of the topography and the numbers are thus only indicative.

Fig. 31. The Siiri 1 cemetery in Raisio. Photograph by Ulla Moilanen.

on both the settlements and the cemeteries in a particular area (Uino 1986; Schauman-Lönnqvist 1986). However, there must have been a connection between these two since settlement debris is frequently found in both cremation cemeteries under level ground and inhumation cemeteries.

The location of the cemeteries on top of moraine hills with surface bedrock means that the soil is more gravelly on top of the hill, making the vegetation probably less lush than in the surrounding silt and clay soils. The difference in vegetation might have left the moraine hills more open and thus also more visible in the landscape (Haimila 2002: 95) which might have been a factor in choosing suitable places for burial. Visibility might hence have been of greater importance than we have previous believed.

Today the cremation cemeteries are often overgrown with grass and occasional trees and low junipers, but they are mostly still today located in an agrarian landscape. (Fig. 32) Their location on top or on the slopes of small and stony moraine hills probably preserved the cemeteries during the Iron Age, since they were not suitable for cultivation. Unfortunately, this has not stopped them being destroyed during historic times because of building activities and roadworks. The location of the cremation cemeteries might have other reasons than the strictly economic and utilitarian. We should not presume that the ancient people's concepts of the place or land was the same as for modern people (Chippindale & Nash 2004: 12). The answers may lie in the topography and thus the visibility or view to and from the cemeteries, or there might be cosmological or symbolic reason for their location.

Richard Bradley has argued that some natural places in the terrain, such as rock formations, caves, mountains and rivers, might have had a specific sacred character for the people in the past which has attracted them to bury their dead at these places (Bradley 2000). Ethnographic research has also shown that ideological, mythological and sociological meanings might contribute to the choice of burial. A burial mound or a barrow in an open field might represent the house of the dead. Many cultures believed that the dead continued to live in their graves, which meant that the relatives could come to visit and communicate with their ancestors (Williams 1997: 2-4; Zachrisson 1994: 220).

Fig.32. The Määksmäki cremation cemetery in Masku, dated to the Migration period – Viking Age. The site consists of a cremation cemetery under level ground, a stone setting, cairns, and cup marks. A settlement site dating to the Iron Age is also located nearby. Photograph by Ulla Moilanen.

In the cremation cemeteries under level ground, the burials are not clearly visible above ground since there is no cairn or mound erected over the dead. Normally only a few stones break through the ground surface, which makes the burials merge into the landscape. One might imagine that the ancient people have wanted to hide the burials on purpose, possibly to protect the graves from robbers or other disturbance. Thus the unobtrusive way of burying the dead may well have been intentional.

The contemporaneous way of burying the dead was cremation in cairns, which were clearly visible. However, the cremation cemeteries under level ground were also visual and perhaps even monumental in their character because they utilized prominent features in the terrain, such as natural elevations. In that sense, the moraine hills conform with the visual idea of erecting a cairn. Perhaps visibility was the factor that made the moraine hills sacred ancestral places even though the graves were situated below the ground surface. According to Sirkka-Liisa Seppälä, the new custom of burying the dead inconspicuously at the beginning of the Merovingian period shows that people perceived the landscape in a different way (Seppälä 2003: 49).

According to the human geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, people tend to search for landmarks or prominent features on the horizon when looking at a panoramic scene. It is not possible to look at a general scene because our eyes are always searching for something to rest on (2008: 161). According to Tuan, a space becomes a place as we get to know it better and when we endow it with values and feelings (Tuan 2008). Prominent landmarks such as hills can acquire deep meanings for

people through their attachments to the site. The visual character of a cemetery hill, for example, also engages individual and collective memories. The daily experience of walking by the hills or seeing them from far away also evokes feelings. A place can thus tell a story; either positive *(topophilia)* or negative *(topophobia)*. The term topophilia can be defined broadly as including the totality of people's affectionate ties with a particular place. It may be either aesthetic values in the landscape in general or affectionate ties with particular places in the terrain (Tuan 1974). This is probably also the case among the cremation cemeteries under level ground, which have been used for 500 years or more.

Other natural features might also have attracted burials. There are cemeteries which have been erected close to particular geographical features. Honkaliini cremation cemetery (AD 850-1100) in Hämeenlinna (formerly Lammi), erected on a sandy hill without stones, is situated next to a large sacred spring (Kivikoski 1955: 63-4; 1961: 255). Nils Cleve, who excavated the cemetery in 1932, states in his report that there might be a connection between these two sites (Cleve 1933b). Lennart Ehrnrooth who continued the excavations in 1964 cites some local folklore in his report, which mentions hidden treasures inside the spring (Ehrnrooth 1964). In Janakkala, in the Häme region, there is another cremation cemetery under level ground called Räikälä 2 found close to a sacrificial spring called the spring of St. Laurence *(Fi. Pyhän Laurin lähde)* but it was probably already in use during pagan times (Kivikoski 1964: 261). A.M. Tallgren mentions a sacred spring in the village of Tursunperä in Mynämäki parish, SW Finland, which is close to the Myllymäki cremation cemetery (Tallgren 1918: 75).

Some cremation cemeteries have been erected on islands, some of which are still there, such as Pukkisaari in Kouvola (Fig. 33), Kartanonlahti and Ala-Pietilä in Asikkala, Aittosaari (formerly called Makasiinisaari) and Siivolanpelto in Sysmä. Others are, because of the land-uplift process, now on land, such as Lilla näset (Fig. 34) in Raasepori (formerly Karjaa), Majamäki/Siikaniemi cemetery in Jalasjärvi and the Haapasaari cremation cemetery in Sysmä (Fast 1996; Miettinen 1998; the NBA database for ancient sites)

Even though most cremation cemeteries under level ground lie on top of low moraine hills, there are also some interesting exceptions. The Hiisimäki cemetery in Jämsä is in fact situated on top of a small mountain. The Hiisimäki cemetery in Rusko, Aittamäki cemetery (Fig. 35) in Lieto and Moisio cemetery in Mikkeli are also located on high stony hills (Tallgren 1919; Sarasmo 1945; Huurre 1962; Wessman 2009d; Pälikkö 2009). Finnish folklore has numerous analogies concerning the afterlife. In the runosongs that were written down during 19th century, the afterlife is recognized by a river and rocks or mountains (Siikala 1992: 137-9). Mountains and stones are also associated with death in Scandinavian mythology (Artelius & Lindqvist 2005: 26). The deceased were believed to have lived both in mountains and grave-mounds. Birgitta Johansen has pointed out the visible similarities between mounds and mountains, suggesting that the burial mound was a stylized miniature mountain (Johansen 1997: 132-8, 145). The cremation

Fig.33. The cremation cemetery of Pukkisaari lies on an island in Kouvola. Photograph by T. Miettinen 1994-1995/ Museum of Kymeenlaakso.

Fig.34. The Lilla näset cremation cemetery in Raasepori (formerly Karjaa) still lies close to Lake Läppträsket, although during its use period it was on an island. Photograph by the author.

Fig.35. The Aittamäki cremation cemetery in Lieto is situated on top of a high hill. Photograph by the author.

cemeteries under level ground which are erected on top of small mountains could perhaps symbolize the same thing.

The connection between water, cliffs, and death are features that also connect the Levänluhta and Käldamäki water burials to the beliefs concerning the afterlife. Both sites contain water burials and next to the sites are steep cliffs with a view over the former lake and the shallow bay, as if these places were some sort of platforms or stages in the funerary process (Paper V, Wessman 2009b). Water, such as lakes and springs, might explain why these sites were chosen for burial. People might become very attached emotionally to natural features in the landscape. In many human cultures, water has also been understood as ancient symbols and representations of life and death (Schama 1995: 246-7; 255-61; Tuan 2008: 158-9).

In addition to the visibility factor, the cremation cemeteries under level ground are also monumental in another way. The mere size of some of these cemeteries varies from dozens of square metres to hundreds (Salmo 1980: 57).

However, there are also surprisingly large cemeteries ranging from 1500-2500 m^2 in size. It is possible that the variations in cemetery size are local, but the enormous size might also derive from the long period of usage. One of the largest cemeteries in Finland, Kalmumäki in Uusikaupunki (Fig. 36), probably had an original size of 2500 m^2, while the Mahittula cemetery in Raisio was believed to have been 1660-2300 m^2 before being partly destroyed by roadworks. The Vilusenharju cemetery was estimated to have been 2800 m^2 before being destroyed and Myllymäki cemetery in Sauvo 1600 m^2. The Riihimäki cemetery in Hämeenlinna had a size of more than 2000-2500 m^2 before being destroyed by later activities (Salmo 1980: 65-7; Vanhatalo 1991; Koivisto 1996: 18; Seppälä 1998: 14; Wickholm 2005; Pietikäinen 2006: 3). The cemetery sizes also conform closely with those from Estonia. Madi cemetery, near Viljandi in

Fig.36. The Kalmumäki cemetery in Uusikaupunki is one of the largest cremation cemeteries under level ground in Finland. Photograph by the author.

central Estonia was estimated to have covered 1890 m^2 before it was first excavated; Maidla II cemetery in W Estonia 2060 m^2 and Kõmsi III cemetery in W-Estonia covered an area of 3500 m^2 (Konsa 2003: 124; Mandel 2003: 42, 85).

Both the location, size and long continuity of these cemeteries express intentional behaviour. The people buried their dead inconspicuously but in a conspicuous place. There was no need to erect a visible cairn or monument on top of the burials – it was the place, the moraine hill that was of importance. These places were important because of their long tradition. These cemeteries were often in use for several centuries, sometimes even 800 or 1000 years (e.g., Alsätra in Raasepori, Saramäki in Turku, Franttilannummi in Mynämäki, and Kalmumäki in Uusikaupunki). This kind of resumption must have been of an ideological or mythological character.

Even though there might have been intermissions between the burials, the site still lived on in the myths. With time the site acquired new significance, perhaps no longer associated with the landscape but with the cemeteries themselves. The older burials had a direct genealogical with the later cemeteries. However, the place remained known to the inhabitants because of the stories relating to it. This might have been the reason why the site was used much later as well (Paper I, Wickholm 2008; Paper III, Wickholm 2007).

Were the graves marked?

What did these cemeteries look like during the Iron Age? Were they free from grass and turf so that both the stones and the black sooty soil were visible to everyone? If this was the case, it would have been easy for contemporary grave-robbers to plunder them, since the artefacts would have been right at the surface. Experience of modern excavations have, however, shown that the cemeteries become overgrown with grass only some months after the excavation, making them invisible quite soon.

Today the cremation cemeteries are often overgrown with grass. Depending on the thickness of the moraine on top of the bedrock, they might be completely obscured by trees or be quite open places with only occasional trees and low juniper (Hackman 1897; Korolainen & Kolehmainen 1987).

The appearance of these cemeteries during past times has been debated in the Finnish literature. The vegetation on the hills could, for example, have played a role since it probably affected the visibility of the cemeteries. If, for example, the hills were treeless visibility would have been unrestricted as they would have been open places. This would probably also have been the case if the funeral pyre lay on the same hill. If, on the other hand, the hills were covered by trees/forests as they are often today it would have blocked visibility. (Söyrinki-Harmo 1984; Purhonen 1998; Seppälä 2003) Naturally, it is impossible to verify the visibility levels in the past, but it probably played an important role whether or not the landscape was open, humanized or wilderness (Tilley 1994; Cummings & Whittle 2003: 255-6; Williams 2006: 195; Tuan 2008: 166).

Particular trees could have been left untouched on the hills to remind the living of the dead souls. They could even have been marked or carved, such as the karsikko and cross-tree tradition, performed by Lutherans in E and SE Finland until the beginning of 20th century. These trees were used in many ways. The branches could be cut down, the bark partly removed, carved with cross-marks, symbols or writing, either directly on the tree or on top of a board. These memorial markings were made on trees growing between home and the burial ground and people would usually stop at these trees during funeral procession to rest and to perform various rituals. Stones and the bedrock could also be carved with symbols, dates or the initials of the deceased. The trees were part of the rites of passage, separating the dead from the living. They also functioned as liminal boundaries, preventing the deceased from returning to his/her home as a ghost. The long tradition of usage also meant that the trees became invested with memories and folklore (Vilkuna 1992).

Stones, the building material of these cemeteries, has not been discussed in any broader context in Finnish archaeology. This is perhaps rather strange, considering the fact that they played an important part in the structure of the cemeteries. The symbolic significance of the stones is difficult to assess, but worth a try. If we consider the moraine hills and the cemeteries as sacred places, these stones were probably important as well. Stone is a lasting building material that kept the dead in their graves quite literally. Moreover, they might have marked the cemeteries, even separate burials, in some way, as the stone circles might have done in the Vainionmäki A cemetery in Laitila (Söyrinki-Harmo 1996). Although the cemeteries became overgrown with grass soon after the funeral, the stones were visible, at least for a short time, during the funeral process. The investment of people who organized and attended the funeral was also important. Collecting the stone material for the cemeteries, perhaps from far away, and bringing it to the hills might have had a special meaning (cf. Muhonen 2009: 319-20). Moreover, it is possible that stones were chosen for their visual characteristics, such as their colour. Unfortunately, the stone materials from the cemeteries are never commented upon in the excavation reports, leaving all interpretations speculative.

Another question that has remained open is whether or not the burials have been marked in some way. It is possible that some graves were distinguished from each other by a small stone heap or a wooden pole, but it is difficult to prove by archaeological methods. A fence could help to stop wild animals and dogs from digging in the cemetery, but these light structures would not leave any traces either (Söyrinki-Harmo 1984). The idea of fencing cemeteries is not unfamiliar in Scandinavian prehistory. The Swedish archaeologists Tore Artelius and Anna Kristensson have written an interesting article about fences surrounding part of a Late Iron Age cemetery in northern Småland, in southern Sweden. The fence was built of stones, earth and wooden poles and is clearly visible even today. The authors believed that it was built as a boundary between pagan and early Christian graves (Artelius & Kristensson 2005: 175).

Boundaries are often visible in the topography because of special natural features such as hills, mountains, cliffs, caves, streams, rivers and waterways. Forests can also have a sacred character (Tilley 1994: 39; Arsenault 2004: 74). Crossing these borders has an essential role in the rites of passages and the culture of death. The topographical location of the cremation cemeteries on top of small moraine hills or sandy ridges close to waterways could be explained as such liminal boundaries. The moraine hills in the otherwise flat landscape could have symbolized the mountains of the afterlife, because the cemeteries have a clear connection to both water and rock. The hills thus separated the living from the dead in both a physical and a psychological way, creating boundaries between life and death (Parker Pearson 1999: 124-6). If we take into account that the funeral pyres were probably situated somewhere away from these hills, the funeral procession and moving from one place to another could be understood as crossing liminal boundaries in the landscape. When crossing these boundaries the living could meet the dead and people could pass from one world into another (Johansen 1997: 145). Physical boundaries such as fences were perhaps not even necessary, because the people knew how to read the landscape and what these boundaries meant. The probable visibility between the settlement sites and the cemeteries offered the opportunity for the people to look towards the hills of the ancestors and to remember dead in a most literal way.

Water as a visual element

Both Levänluhta and Käldamäki were cemeteries performed in water. Hence, they contrast with burials performed on land. While Levänluhta was a small lake or pond during the Merovingian period, Käldamäki was probably a shallow bay (Paper V, Wessman 2009b). Nonetheless, water as an element connects both to each other. Lakes and bays are naturally visual by nature, even though water in itself is non-visual. The sea, lakes, and rivers might have been important aspects in the ritual landscape, functioning as boundaries between the sacred and the profane (Westerdahl 2005). Hence, if the burials of Käldamäki were performed directly in water or on the beach of a bay, they could be interpreted as being placed at a liminal boundary between land and water. The water burials are also examples of burying the dead in a visual place but in a non-visual way. When the bodies were placed in water and kept under the surface by wooden poles it made the cemetery merge into the landscape, just like the cremation cemeteries under level ground.

2.6 The rare inhumation graves

The mortuary behaviour changes at the end of the Viking Age with a shift from cremation to inhumation. With the exception of the Lake Pyhäjärvi region in Satakunta (Cleve 1943; 1978; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1982a-b; 2000b), the first inhumation burials occur in the cremation cemeteries under level ground approximately AD 1000/1050. At the present there are c. 24 cremation cemeteries under level ground containing inhumations in Finland (see, Fig. 15). These are mainly found in SW Finland in the vicinity of the Aurajoki and Kokemäkijoki Rivers and in the lake district of Näsijärvi, Pyhäjärvi, Vanajavesi lakes in Tavastia (cf. Paper I, Wickholm 2008). Hence, the first inhumations occur at the same time over the whole Late Iron Age agrarian settlement area (Purhonen 1998: 135).

The inhumation burials are mostly dug into the centre of the cremation cemetery or at its edges. Often, only occasional inhumations are found at a cemetery (Kivikoski 1961: 192). Paula Purhonen has suggested that the reason is the gravelly soil of the moraine hills which was difficult to dig. Thus it would have been more practical to move the inhumation cemeteries to new locations in flat, sandy soils (Purhonen 1998: 115). These practical explanations do not, however, explain why there are also fairly large inhumation cemeteries found on top of cremation cemeteries. The inhumation cemeteries of Vilusenharju in Tampere, Mikkola in Ylöjärvi, Ristimäki II & Taskula cemeteries in Turku and Mahittula in Raisio are spread over the whole cremation cemetery layer. Moreover, when it comes to mortuary practice it sounds doubtful that practical reasons would have outrun the importance of continuity and the loyality to the ancestors.

One might think that the cremation cemeteries are older than the inhumation burials but this is not always the case. Cremation and inhumation seem to have been simultaneous at several sites, which indicates that it is not an example of reuse of any older site but a continuation of usage, even though the mortuary practice has changed (Kivikoski 1961; Nallinmaa-Luoto 1978; Sarkki-Isomaa 1986; Purhonen 1998; Pietikäinen 2006). Cremation and inhumation also seem to have existed simultaneously in the Mikkeli region and Karelia during the Crusade period (Schwindt 1893; Lehtosalo 1960: 10-2).

The early inhumations found inside the Finnish cremation cemeteries are seldom questioned in the archaeological literature. They have often been approached from an evolutionary perspective, suggesting that they are pagan burials during a transformation phase before becoming definitely Christian and being performed at consecrated Christian burial grounds (Kivikoski 1961; Purhonen 1997). Nils Cleve, however, has suggested that the location of the early inhumation burials was perhaps not important. The idea of burying the dead unburned was principal, even though the deceased were still buried in the old cremation cemeteries (Cleve 1948: 76-7). Thus, the continuity of the place, the moraine hills, and the connection with the kin and the ancestors must have remained important, even though the burial custom changed. The same phenomenon has been noted in the Mälar region in Sweden (Gräslund 2002: 51). The contrasts to the old cremation burial rites are strong, however. The shift from cremation to inhumation is a radical change that might have caused ideological conflict, especially at the sites where inhumation and cremation were performed next to each other.

There are several taphonomical problems with these early inhumations. Firstly, they are often dug through the cremation layer, which means that grave-goods, stones and charcoal from the cremation cemetery is also found in the fillings of the inhumations and inside the grave pits. The stratigraphy is thus disturbed, which makes the dating of the burials more difficult. Because organic material preserves badly in Finland, there are usually only fragments of the deceased left-together with dress ornaments and unburned artefacts. Sometimes the only thing left is a pit with occasional grave-goods, shaped and oriented like the inhumation burials. This makes sex or age estimate very difficult. Evenso, archaeologists often make estimate based only on the artefact types found inside the burials (as in Heikel 1889; Keskitalo 1950; Salmio 1980; Sarkki-Isomaa 1986; Pietikäinen 2006). Since the inhumation pits are coloured by the ash and charcoal from the cremation cemetery they become also difficult to distinguish during excavations. Some inhumations are thus identified only after the excavation (Aroalho 1978; Söyrinki-Harmo 1979; Pietikäinen 2006: 60-5).

The deceased have traditionally been buried either in pits or in different types of coffin, such as log coffins (Aroalho 1978: 6; Pietikäinen 2006: 52-9, 91). In Mahittula cemetery in Raisio, inhumation number 18 contained plenty of coffin nails, rivets and a hinge-like artefact which might suggest that the coffin was a re-used trunk (Pietikäinen 2006: 56-7). Similar trunks have also been found in the Kirkkomäki cemetery (graves 27 and 16) in Turku (formerly Kaarina) dated to the middle and the end of 11th century. In Denmark and Scania trunks were used as coffins during the Viking Age (Jäkärä 2005: 67-70).

Isolated unburned artefacts are frequently found in the layers of the cremation cemeteries under level ground. Artefacts such as knives, weapon parts, brooches, pendants and pieces of bronze fittings still attached to fragments of leather and organic material are often interpreted as indications of destroyed inhumation burials, settlement activity or stray finds due to their dating to the Viking Age or the Crusade period (Kivikoski 1960: 21; Aroalho 1978: 6, 47, 51-2, 73; Söyrinki-Harmo 1979: 32, 93 appendix 13-28; Pietikäinen 2006: 60-5, appendix 8-9). These objects could perhaps also be something else. They may derive from offerings, suggesting that not all items found in cremation cemeteries are automatically burned on the pyre or derive from destroyed inhumation burials.

As Howard Williams has suggested for the Anglo-Saxon cremation burials in Britain, certain artefacts, such as bronze toilet implements, were deposited in the cremation burials intact, without ever being placed on the pyre or being ritually killed. This implies that not all grave-goods were placed on the pyre next to the deceased; post-cremation rites were equally important (Williams 2007: 78). While the examples from Anglo-Saxon burials may not be related directly to Finland, Williams' example serves as a good reminder of how diverse and complicated the mortuary behaviour was during the Late Iron Age. To my knowledge, similar studies have not yet been conducted in Finland but probably ought to be.

Traces of fires on top of inhumation graves have been documented from Vilusenharju inhumation cemetery in Tampere. A fire had been lit on top of grave 46 after it had been filled but on top of

grave 20 a fire had been lit when it was still partly unfilled. A third fireplace was found some 20 metres from this burial, but it was not associated with any graves (Koivisto 1996: 78). The fire that has been lit on grave 20 during the funeral is interesting and might be associated with sacrificial rituals while the two other fires might be associated with later commemorative rituals. Fireplaces have also been excavated among the Karelian inhumation cemeteries (Schwindt 1893).

While the inhumations from Käldamäki and Levänluhta cannot perhaps be perceived in the same way as the rest of the inhumation burials discussed in this thesis, they are a variation of the same theme since the deceased are placed in their cemeteries unburned and no ritual use of fire is detected on the bones. The early date of these bones, the Merovingian period or perhaps earlier, corresponds with the first inhumation burials in the Satakunta Region, around Lake Pyhäjärvi. However, despite the similar chronology, the two areas are situated far from each other geographically. Because water and fire are antithetical elements, Käldamäki and Levänluhta could be seen as representations of "otherness" and not as typical inhumation burials for the period.

Christianity and inhumation burials

Even though this dissertation is not about Christianity, the first inhumations are proof of a changed ideology which must be associated with new beliefs. I thus feel that a brief introduction to the problematic subject of the conversion to Christianity is in order, even though there is not enough space to address the questions thoroughly here.

In Finnish archaeology, the criteria for Christian burials have traditionally been (1) the transition from cremation to inhumation, (2) the orientation of the inhumations in an E-W direction, (3) coffins, (4) the lack of grave goods, (5) the presence of cross pendants, and finally, (6) the position of the arms of the deceased (Pälsi 1938; Cleve 1948: 70-5; 1952; Purhonen 1998: 114). Lately, however, these criteria have been criticized by Scandinavian archaeologists because it has become apparent that the Christian church was in fact quite flexible when it came to burial (Gräslund 2002: 45-63; Andersson 2005: 104-9).

The archaeological evidence for conversion to Christianity in Finland is suggested to have had three phases. The first phase, that began c. AD 1100 is inhumation burials in E-W orientation still containing grave-goods. This phase cannot be understood as Christian, even though the religious ideas have started to change. The second phase, c. AD 1150 is inhumation burials that only contain details of the dress (Purhonen 1997: 373). During this time, the so-called first crusades to SW Finland are organized by the Swedes and, according to Markus Hiekkanen, during this stage the missionary activity was strong (2003a: 14). The third and last phase is described by clearly discernible Christian burials without any grave-goods (Purhonen 1997: 373). By this time, c. AD 1200, the church has also started to collect taxes (Hiekkanen 2002a: 488-91; 2003b: 496). Around 1225-1250, the diocese of Turku established a system of 40 parishes. During this time, the first wooden churches were built and the cemeteries were established in the churchyard. The old village cemeteries were thus abandoned, which can be understood as the beginning of a genuine

organized Christian rule. The oldest stone churches were built on the Åland islands in the late 13th century (Hiekkanen 2002a: 495; 2003a: 14-5).

If we follow this three-stage division suggested by Purhonen and Hiekkanen, the inhumation burials found in the cremation cemetery would be associated with phase one and the beginning of phase two.

Even though the first inhumations still contain grave-goods, the artefact ornamentation shows Christian elements. Aarni Erä-Esko (1965) for example, has suggested that the Migration period Germanic animal art contained Christian motifs. Unto Salo has also argued that the first Christian elements appear in artefact ornaments as early as in the 4th century AD, even though the Christian elements do not become common, he claims, until the Merovingian period (Salo 2006). Naturally, artefacts, especially imported ones, do not express unambiguously whether or not a person is Christian. Nonetheless, with the support of place-names Salo has suggested that the famous Merovingian period/Viking Age inhumation cemetery from Luistari in Eura was a congregation during the Merovingian period (Salo 2003; 2008), a claim taken with a pinch of salt by other archaeologists (Raninen 2005b: 56).

Paula Purhonen suggest's in her doctoral thesis that both the Visulahti and the Tuukkala Crusade period inhumation cemeteries in Mikkeli had been "church sites" because of empty spaces in the middle of both inhumation cemeteries. According to Purhonen, the spaces (4 x 10 m & 5 x 13 m) found in the middle of the cemeteries could have accomodated small wooden churches or chapels (1998: 125-9). No building remains, post holes or remains of fences have however been detected at either site, with the exception of some charred timbers at Visulahti, which makes this interpretation questionable. Moreover, the early date of the excavations at Tuukkala, 1886, mainly performed by soldiers, should question the context even more. An empty space in the middle of an inhumation cemetery also seems odd because it is a known fact that burials have been performed under church floors as well. Why would they be absent in these two churches (Hiekkanen 2001a-b; cf. Purhonen 2001)? The earliest proofs of a stone-fenced Christian burial ground have traditionally been taken to be the Ristinpelto site in Lieto. According to Nils Cleve, the stone-fence surrounding 149 inhumation burials dated to the end of 12th century, is proof of a Christian burial ground. Moreover, because the burial ground was Christian, Cleve assumed that all built structures within the surrounded fence would thus also belong to the Christian sphere. Thus he interpreted a 7 x 7 m rectangular structure as a possible bell tower (Cleve 1952: 159-66). The idea of a fenced churchyard from this early period had not been questioned by Finnish researchers (cf. Purhonen 1998) until 2002 when Markus Hiekkanen suggested that the structures might derive from a later time and belong to something other than a churchyard. In comparison with Scandinavian cases, he suggested that the earliest enclosures were not fences but ditches, which should still be visible in the terrain (2002b: 64).

According to Hiekkanen the earliest churches were built by the elite. Instead of situating in the vicinity of the cemeteries he argues that the

privately owned churches were built of wood at the settlement sites. Due to their small size and light construction they have not been found during settlement excavations. Hiekkanen is probably right. In Finland the research situation concerning large excavations of settlements is poor, which probably explains why we do not know of any early church sites (Hiekkanen 2007: 15).

The orientation of the inhumation burials within the cremation cemeteries under level ground is heterogeneous, varying between NE-SW, NW-SE, N-S and E-W, even within the same cemeteries (Keskitalo 1950; Sarasmo 1961; Kivikoski 1961; Sarkki-Isomaa 1986; Koivisto 1996; Pietikäinen 2006; Asplund & Riikonen 2007). In the archaeological literature in Finland, it is often argued that only the inhumation burials built with E-W orientation can be considered as true Christian burials (Pälsi 1938: 30; Cleve 1948: 71; 1952: 167; Purhonen 1998). The conformity in the grave orientation has been seen as crucial in defining early Christian burial grounds in Scandinavia (Andersson 2005: 105). However, if the E-W orientation is clearly and always a sign of Christian burials, then how should burials in E-W orientation that still contain grave-goods be understood? In the Mikkeli region, for example, several E-W oriented graves from the Crusade period still contained grave-goods, while the situation in Karelia has been the reverse. Inhumation burials without grave-goods, taken as an indication of Christian graves, are also often found oriented in a NW-SE direction. Hence, Pirkko-Liisa Lehtosalo Hilander has justifiably questioned whether the grave orientation has anything to do with the deceased's pagan or Christian status (Lehtosalo 1960: 43-4). Ella Kivikoski has resolved the question by defining only those inhumation burials found in consecrated burial grounds as Christian burials (Kivikoski 1961: 243-5). Scandinavian research has also rightfully questioned the importance of grave orientation since inhumation burials oriented E-W might still contain large amounts of grave-goods and pagan elements which cannot be associated with Christianity (Gräslund 2002: 46-7). Yet grave-goods have been found in graves placed under church floors dating to the 17th and 18th centuries in Finland (Hiekkanen 1985; 2006) and the custom of placing grave-goods inside the graves is seen even today amongst Christians (Hagberg 1937; Valk 2001).

Cross pendants have been found both in inhumation burials and cremation cemeteries under level ground. The 15 cross pendants found in Finnish inhumation burials (Purhonen 1998: 190) have been interpreted as evidence of *primsignation*[6], from the first stage of the Christian conversion (Cleve 1948: 75; Purhonen 1997: 381). However, a cross pendant found in a burial context can also be understood as a mere grave-good and not as a sign of Christian faith (Hiekkanen 2001a). He has also raised criticism to the fact that the number of cross pendants is very low (Purhonen 1998). Markus Hiekkanen has seen two clusters in the distribution of cross pendants; the Kaukola/Käkisalmi area in the Karelian Isthmus and Taskula in Turku, SW Finland. He has suggested that the cross pendants could be connected to demonstrating kin affiliation and not to Christianity *per se* (Hiekkanen 2003: 496-7). Moreover, it seems that the orientation of the inhumation burials containing cross pendants is of no relevance because, in the Mikkeli Visulahti inhumation cemetery for instance, only one grave contained

6 A Primsignation (lat. primum signum) mean that a person has promised to convert into Christianity but is not yet baptized (Tagesson 1995: 203).

a cross pendant, even though Purhonen has defined it as a church site. Interestingly, this was a child inhumation oriented SW-NE (Lehtosalo 1960: 44). At Suotniemi inhumation cemetery in Käkisalmi, one inhumation burial in SW-NE orientation contained a wooden box with three silver cross pendants, all on one chain (Schwindt 1893: 3-5). At the Taskula inhumation cemetery which is built next to a cremation cemetery under level ground, an inhumation burial contained both a cross pendant and a Thor's hammer pendant. While the cross pendant was found at the chest of the deceased, the Thor's hammer was found inside the pouch of the deceased (Cleve 1948: 75). In the inhumation cemeteries that overlay cremation cemeteries, the context of the cross pendants is more problematic, especially if they are found as stray finds and not clearly associated with the inhumation burials. The cross pendants found in the cremation cemeteries of Vilusenharju in Tampere, Kevola in Hattula, Leikkimäki in Kokemäki, Haimionmäki in Lieto (see, Fig. 26), Moisio in Mikkeli, and Virusmäki in Turku might derive from destroyed inhumation burials but their proximity to fire should perhaps not be overlooked either. Both cross pendants found at Vilusenharju cemetery bore traces of fire, which implies that they had not been placed in inhumation burials (Purhonen 1998: 105, 190; Hiekkanen 2001a-b).

Not much attention has been paid to the study of arm positions in the Finnish inhumation burials. One obvious reason is that we lack well-preserved bone materials in order to study this phenomenon. Another reason might be that the arm positions might vary from country to country, and even at local level, which makes the interpretation difficult (Jäkärä 2000).

3 Burials, time and social memory

3.1 Conceptions of time

People have always perceived time in different ways. Time is a human invention and thus means different things to different cultures (Murray 1999: 1). The concepts of time also vary. Traditionally we would, for example, suggest that a week consists of seven days, but this has not always been the case. In ancient Rome, the week consisted of eight days, while until 1912 it was considered in China to last for 10 days. According to Maurice Halbwachs religious groups look at time differently. This is because a lot of religious groups or believers organize their weekly work and rest differently. For Christians, Sunday is the day of leisure while for Muslims and Jews it is Friday. Thus, their perception of time is also different and the same historical events are remembered, memorized and understood differently (Halbwachs 1992: 88, 95-9).

Time may be both linear and cyclic. The differences between the past and present are essential for the various perceptions of time. In the western world of today, we look at time as a linear sequence of events, while in ancient Greece time was measured in cycles. Many aboriginal cultures and the Hindu world view have a cyclical time concept that divides time into varius passages that re-appear after a while again, e.g., spring, summer, fall, winter or childhood, youth, adulthood and old age (Le Geoff 1992; Cremo 1999).

The archaeological data can also be multi-temporal, which is especially apparent in the re-use of sites and objects. Even though we as archaeologists often consider a burial to belong to a particular time period, the artefact assemblage can, in fact, display great chronological variation. The artefacts might cover the whole life time of the deceased or might have been an antique showing considerable signs of wear and repair before being placed inside the burial. Thus objects have a biography, a cultural history, which changes through time. A good example explaining this phenomenon is a study by Laurent Olivier of the famous Hochdorf burial in Germany. The grave-good assemblage revealed artefact types of varying chronology. Some artefacts had belonged to the deceased and showed traces of wear and repair; other objects had been incorporated into the assemblage between death and the funeral. The third group of artefacts had been manufactured for the funeral and had been used only during the funeral act at the site of burial. A broad chronological timescale for the grave-good assemblage is not unique to Hochdorf. According to Olivier, long artefact biographies are also seen in other European princely burials from the same period, suggesting that the meaning and use of imported objects was different depending on the cultural and social context they were used in (Olivier 1999: 118-22, 125). Heinrich Härke has also discussed the long circulation of precious objects, such as swords and helmets in the Anglo-Saxon burial rites of Britain. Old swords, showing considerable wear and tear, have been found in burials, suggesting that they could have been handed down over several generations before being deposited in the grave (2000: 393-5). This means that the existence of artefacts from different periods in a burial context can depend

also upon how the grave-goods have been gathered together, something worth noting when assessing the chronology/typology of a burial. The early date of the Vestland type cauldron from Levänluhta might be a particular example of this (Paper V, Wessman 2009b).

Two different concepts of time are possible to distinguish in the re-use of monuments and landscapes. The genealogical history means that a site has been in use continuously for a long period of time. The people who have been re-using the site can thus demonstrate a direct link to their ancestors conversely; the mythological history is not possible to associate with the immediate past of the people. Certain myths and stories can be associated with the place but the people have no direct history to it (Gosden & Lock 1998).

3.2 Memory, sites of memory and burial archaeology

Memory studies have been a popular field of research especially among social scientists. In archaeology, social memory was introduced fairly late, in the 1990s, but has become increasingly popular in the 21st century (Rowlands 1993; Holtorf 1997; Bradley & Williams 1998; Van Dyke & Alcock 2003; Williams 2003; Thäte 2007). I have addressed aspects of memory in Papers I-IV and will therefore only briefly address the theories here in the summary.

Memory can include both private (individual) and public (collective/social) memory. It is the social process that influences our perception of time and memory (Halbwachs 1992; Connerton 1989). A suitable example is the tragic events of 9/11. While the news about the crumbling towers reached all corners of the world and probably affected most of us somehow, every person has different memories of that day, depending on where and with whom the person experienced the event. The differences might be even greater when we look at it from a Christian or Muslim point of view.

Memory and recollections function in many different ways. We can remember through symbols, words, references and objects (Bourdieu 1977). Memory can thus be understood as representation. The medieval church in Finland, for example, used visual images such as paintings and statues as mnemonic tools when they told biblical stories. This was a way to keep the story and the image together as a narrative in the congregations' minds at the same time as the pictures served as excellent pedagogical tools for the sermon (Hiekkanen 2003a: 147, 151). We can also remember through music, sounds, smells or tastes (Proust 1951). In addition, space and place, such as looking at a particular beach or a tree in the landscape, or merely at a postcard or a photograph, can recall memories that become sites of memories or lieux de mémoires (Nora 1996a).

Memories are also connected to bodily action and behaviour as embodied memories. These memories are not learned by teaching or explaining but by showing how it is done. A central part of the collective memory and the transmission of cultural knowledge is thus associated with repeated actions, such as learning how to bicycle or make pottery (Lucas 2005: 77, 84; Connerton 1989). Hence, communally performed rituals are passed on from one generation to the next through the act of repetition.

The environment and the landscape are important aids to memory.

The places and spaces of memory are defined by Pierre Nora as "any significant entity, whether material or nonmaterial in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community" (Nora 1996a: XVII). According to Nora, anything that is related to the cult of the dead could be defined as a site of memory (Nora 1996b).

Cemeteries and burials could be defined as sites of memories because they recall real events and myths and are also repeatedly used and re-used. Thus cemeteries are expressions of people's comprehension of time, being reminders of continuation, and store and manage collective memories. A cemetery might have several different meanings attached to it depending on its lifecycle. In the histories they could have been regarded as the residences of heroes, ancestors, ancient peoples or supernatural beings (Tilley 1994: 36, 59; Williams 2006: 181). Ancient monuments may have functioned as meeting places between the living and the dead and the present and the past. Cemeteries are thus places bind the people to their ancestors (Paper III-IV, Wickholm 2007; Wessman 2009a).

The purpose of sites of memory is to stop time and to prevent forgetting. On the return to this place, even after a long time, it starts to evoke memories which become links to the past. Places can thus become memory aids, mnemonics or gateways into the past (Olausson 1993; Tilley 1994; Nora 1996a-b; Demoule 1998: 167–76; Holtorf 2001; Williams 2006, Thäte 2007). Since memories and landscape awake emotions, people also have an emotional attachment to the places they visit (Tuan 2008).

The place may remain important and acquire completely new significance even if people are no longer burying their dead there (Thedéen 2004: 21). Ancient sites mark time in the landscape and can therefore be also seen as timemarks. The sites become symbols of a lost time at the same time as they might symbolize continuity for a collective group. Hence, the timemarks might become important places for social action during the life-cycle of a site (Chapman 1997: 42-4).

Monumental graves such as megaliths and barrows are visual monuments that have been frequently re-used during prehistoric and historic times. This later activity is often explained by the term the past in the past (Tilley 1994; Williams 1997; Holtorf 1997 Bradley 2002), which can be understood as ways of studying how ancient people read their landscape and how they comprehended the ancient monuments in their surroundings. People may well have somehow related to the monuments visible in their environment regardless of the monument's age. Surely Stonehenge or the Egyptian pyramids did not leave people untouched when they passed by these monuments (Lucas 2005: 41-3). Monumental sites have affected people and their conceptions of time in Scandinavia as well. One of the largest ship settings (42 meters) in Sweden is found from Blomsholm in Bohulslän. It has been dated to Migration period but has been used also long after this. In the middle of the ship there is a commemorative stone from the 17th century raised by the local landowners in appreciation of the glorious past. People were even buried inside the ship setting during the 18th century (Ottander 1999).

The importance of a specific site is also affected by archaeology. We as archaeologists and heritage protectors mark ancient sites with signs, which give the site status. But interaction with heritage also changes its nature (Lowenthal 1986). For example, the water cemetery from Levänluhta is an example of how sites also acquire meaning and memories during and after excavations. As a site, Levänluhta is nationally important (Purhonen et al. 2001) and, although now overgrown, it has had a profound meaning for the local population as a site of memory, especially during the time it was excavated. Coins deposited/offered in the natural springs and plans to raise commemorative stones on the site are examples of this (Paper V, Wessman 2009b). The site is also marked by a sign that "tells the story of the site" (Fig. 37). People have always had a need to become aware, recall and identify themselves with the past because it gives their existence meaning and value. History thus gives them a stronger local and national identity, which strengthens the sense of continuity (Lowenthal 1986: 41, 265-71). Levänluhta as a site of punishment is also explained by texts and illustrations in the popular but fictional history series by Aarno Karimo. The story has probably affected the local people a great deal (1934: 189-91).

Fig.37. The commemoration sign at Levänluhta, raised by local enthusiasts. The sign states that the site was a cemetery for slaves belonging to Louhi, mistress of Pohjola, one of the key figures in the Finnish National epic, the Kalevala. Photograph by the author.

4 Commemoration, ancestors and re-use

4.1 Remains of commemorative rituals in the cemetery material

Commemoration means both to remember and to mourn the dead. Thus, it has to do with both memory and emotion (Tarlow 1999; 2000). The cemetery has often functioned as the arena of this commemoration, expressed through various ceremonies and rituals designed to honour the memories of the dead ancestors. For archaeologists, the ancestor cult and commemoration is primarily demonstrated through the findings of animal bones and ceramics. In the following section I will try to distinguish other remains of commemorative rituals from the cemetery materials, especially for cremation cemeteries.

Cup-marks

There are often cup-marks, either on stones, erratic boulders or on outcrops of bedrock associated with the Finnish cremation cemeteries. In fact, one-third of the known Finnish cup-marks have been found in the immediate vicinity of Iron Age cemeteries. The cups are round, approximately 5 x 5 cm in diameter and 2-4 cm deep, man-made depressions on the rock surface (Luoto 1988: 150; Tvauri 1995). They might form several groups or clusters, like at the Leikkimäki cremation cemetery under level ground in Kokemäki parish and at the Kalmumäki cemetery in Uusikaupunki (Huurre 1964; Korolainen & Kolehmainen 1987: 95-6).

Cup-marks occur in connection with cemeteries dated to the Roman Iron Age. Their closeness to cemeteries suggests that their function is somehow connected with the commemoration of ancestors (Äyräpää 1941: 180-2; Huurre 1990: 209; Edgren 1993: 253), but their time of usage is difficult to determine because so few cup-marked stones have been archaeologically excavated. The excavation of the areas around the cup-marks at Leikkimäki revealed that the cup-marks had probably been used for sacrificial purposes during historic times as well. Amongst the finds was a coin from 1818-1844, pieces of clay pipes and ceramics (Korolainen & Kolehmainen 1987: 96). During Historical times, the cup-marks were again used for offerings, the first harvest of the crop or the first milk from the cows particularly being offered (Shepherd 1999).

Settlement debris in the cemeteries

During fieldwork, excavation leaders often mention settlement debris within cemetery contexts, consisting of iron slag, pottery, stone, burned clay and daub for example. In Finland, this phenomenon has been explained mainly in functional terms, meaning that the debris derives from earlier or later settlement activity, thus being considered as mere refuse (Uino 1986: 171-3; Shepherd 1997: 17; Muhonen 2009). In Scandinavian archaeology, on the other hand, the debris has often been explained by the burial ritual making the meaning symbolic (Bennett 1987; Burström 1991: 262; Kaliff 1992; 1994; Artelius 2000). Typically, this find material is overlooked in the research and is often seen as mere mass finds. Because of its quantity, the

precise coordinates are seldom measured with a total station, but are localised only by square and level (e.g., Hirviluoto 1996; Seppälä & Haimila 1998; Pietikäinen 2006).

The reason for this approach might according to Bjørnar Olsen (2003) be that material culture has been studied merely as a source material and not as something which is part of the society. Artefacts have been used as examples in trying to access the cultures and societies behind the artefacts but their function as objects of action is often overlooked. Moreover, dull and silent materiality, such as everyday materials, might be entirely forgotten in the studies because they are so obvious. Olsen stresses that one should remember that it is the objects that construct the subjects and not vice versa (Olsen 2003: 89-90, 93-4, 99-100; Se also Fowler 2004: 7).

Hence, even though the slag and burned clay are perhaps a bit mundane or even boring in comparison to the weaponry or jewellery found in the cemeteries, they should still be studied with the same care, especially since they are so common in the cremation cemeteries.

Anders Kaliff has studied the use of settlement debris as building material in Swedish Bronze Age cairns and Early Iron Age graves. His asking why anyone would build a grave from rubbish and broken artefacts is a fair question especially when people have been putting so much time and effort into building the graves. He leans towards the ritualistic and symbolic aspects of using settlement debris in graves (Kaliff 1994: 45-8). I tend to agree with my Scandinavian colleagues. Everything found inside a grave is there for a reason, objects are not dropped there by accident. Instead of looking strictly at the archaeological material through its physical characters, as Unto Salo has done in the Finnish cremation cemeteries under level ground (2003: 57, 381; 2004: 203-7), one should also look at the symbolic and ideological significance of the material. Materials that resemble settlement debris might have had a completely different meaning for prehistoric people.

Stone materials

Flakes and other flint and quartz handicraft debris are commonly found in cremation cemeteries. While the pieces of flint are traditionally interpreted as being parts of fire striking flint, the quartz is usually explained as not belonging to the grave-goods (Söyrinki-Harmo 1996: 72). However, the phenomenon of placing stone flakes in Iron Age burials could also be understood as an imitation of an ancient habit. In W Sweden, a Pre-Roman cemetery in Vittene was re-used after a 600-year break during the Viking Age. Both cemeteries contained numerous small flakes of natural stone, a habit typical of Roman period urn graves but non-existent in other Viking Age cemetery contexts. Moreover, the older burials seemed to have been of importance to the Viking Age people because they were utilized in several different ways. This phenomenon has been explained by a wish to interact with past ancestors through behaviour that copies ancient ritual actions, such as placing stones inside the graves. Thus the stones were a necessary link to the ancient ancestors and the mythical past (Artelius 2004; Artelius & Lindqvist 2005).

Anne Carlie (2000) has documented the rich symbolic language of Early Iron Age graves in Sweden where burials might contain large amounts

of quartz. In her study she found the field documentation often to be insufficient concerning the amount and deposition of quartz in graves, which she thought could be explained by the excavactor not regarding it as significant. Excavations, however, revealed that quartz could be used both as building material in cairns, mounds and stonesetttings and as symbolic bedstones in the bottom layers of burials. This was interpreted as a deliberate act that was an important part of the burial ritual expressing the strong symbolism of certain materials. They could have functioned as symbols of rebirth and fertility but the white colour of quartz could also have had a magico-religious function in the funerary rituals (Carlie 2000).

Other worked stones, such as stone cubes, grinding slabs and granite pestles of have also been found in cemetery contexts in Finland (Söyrinki-Harmo 1996: 70-1). In Scandinavia, grinding slabs are often sacrificed inside Iron Age long houses, the post holes, the corners or under the fireplaces (Carlie 2004: 84-92)

Burned clay, daub and pottery

Cremation cemeteries under level ground often contain large amounts of burned clay and clay daub. The function of the burned clay is generally difficult to explain because it is so poorly recovered and documented. Another problem is that the cremation cemeteries often contain traces of both older and later activities, which makes the context seem mixed.

At Ylistaro Leikkimäki in Kokemäki there was over 12 kg of burned clay and clay daub was found in a cremation cemetery under level ground, even though some of it might derive from more recent times (Korolainen & Kolehmainen 1987: 97-8). At Vainionmäki A cemetery in Laitila there was nearly 3 kg of burned clay, most of it clay daub (Hirviluoto 1996: 79). At Pörnullbacken in Vöyri, 12 kg of burned clay was found (Svarvar 2002: 127,149) while at the Mahittula cemetery the amount was almost 200 kg (Pietikäinen 2006: 36, 51). Burned clay has also been found in Iron Age inhumation graves. At Vanhakartano inhumation cemetery in Köyliö, W Finland, there was over 3 kg of burned clay and nearly 5 kg of clay discs (loom weights) in one single grave (B 10), placed both on top and under a stone setting that was found just above the grave (Cleve 1943: 56-8, 160-2).

There are several possible explanations for the clay daub and burned clay. Researchers have explained the clay as belonging to the wooden structure of the funeral pyre. On this interpretation, the clay daub was taken to the cemetery by accident when the funerary remains were brought to the cemetery (Europaeus 1914; Hirviluoto 1996: 79, Purhonen 1996: 121; Hietala 2003: 71). Some researchers have seen the clay daub as a proof of that the actual funeral pyre was at the cemetery (Svarvar 2002: 127, 149).

The clay could also have been laid inside the graves as a ritual act symbolizing the house of the dead (Tegengren 1934). The burned clay could thus be remains of small houses dedicated to the cult of the dead or to smithing activity. Aarne Europaeus was the first archaeologist to suggest ritual activity as an explanation of the clay daub found in an Iron Age cemetery (1914: 37-8). Nils Cleve has suggested that the clay daub could derive from a burned house construction, suggesting that the house could have belonged

to the deceased and would have been burned after the death as part of the funeral rituals (Cleve 1943: 57-8). Remains from cult houses have been found in both Estonia and Sweden. It has been suggested that the human bones have been treated in some way inside these houses before or after the funeral (Mägi 2006).

Another alternative is that the clay originates from previous settlement activity. At the Ristimäki cemetery in Turku, SW Finland, the clay daub was explained as deriving from house structures that were of purely profane significance (Tallgren 1931: 118).

Pottery is frequently found on the surface of cremation cemeteries, which indicates that commemoration rituals were also performed at these hills. Ceramics might thus have had multiple functions in the mortuary practice (Aroalho 1978: 67; Söyrinki-Harmo 1979).

Even though there is no pottery found either at Levänluhta or Käldamäki cemeteries, there are elements of settlement debris in both sites. The burned clay, the piece of daub and the charcoal from Levänluhta (Wessman 2009b), are find categories that are normally associated with settlement sites, but as it has been brought up here, they could also be related to funeray rituals.

Iron slag

According to Deborah Shepherd, the iron slag found in cemeteries can be explained in two ways, either as grave-goods or as settlement site residue (Shepherd 1999). While the slag found inside inhumation burials has been interpreted as ritualistic (Cleve 1943: 55-6, 160-1; Lehtosalo 1960; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1982a: 41) that found in cremation cemeteries under level ground seem to be questioned more often, being explained as remains from smithing or settlement activity (Hirviluoto 1996: 80). However, when iron slag is found at the bottom of a cremation pit burial, the context should not be questioned (Cleve 1943: 55; Svarvar 2002: 127, 146).

The amount of iron slag collected from cremation cemeteries is usually quite large, reaching as much as to several kilograms. At Vainionmäki A cemetery, the amount was 2.6 kg (Hirviluoto 1996: 79; Söyrinki-Harmo 1996: 79) while at Pörnullbacken in Vöyri, Ostrobothnia, 4.7 kg of slag was excavated (Svarvar 2002: 127). The Mahittula cremation cemetery contained over 30 kg of iron slag (Pietikäinen 2006: 36, 51). The slag came from the bottom of the cremation pit burials, indicating that in fact placed there intentionally. It is possible that the slag symbolized the attractiveness of iron and thus wealth and prestige, especially during turbulent times when it was not possible to place valuable iron artefacts in the grave (Svarvar 2002: 146-8).

Archaeologists traditionally believed that the cremation cemeteries under level ground were easy to loot, because the artefacts were not covered by a mound or cairn. Many have suspected that the artefacts and the burial remains lay open on the surface of the cemetery, ready to be picked up at any time by, for example, a smith (e.g., Taavitsainen 1990; 1991). In the archaeological literature, two things are thought to have confirmed this theory. First, folklore mentions

cemeteries being looted. Second, there is a hoard from Hattelmala at Hämeenlinna dated to the Viking Age which consisted of bronze jewellery with a time span of 300 years. This suggests that the hoard had been a stash, possibly of a smith who had looted old cremation cemeteries from the Merovingian period (Ailio 1928; Leppäaho 1951; Taavitsainen 1990). On the other hand, one might imagine that the looting of cemeteries was merely symbolic and not meant as an intentional search for scrap metal. As I have tried to show in Paper IV (Wessman 2009a) old artefacts might have possessed special significance as the belongings of the ancestors.

According to Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen, the characteristics of a smithy site are old and broken artefacts, melted pieces of metal, bent and broken pieces of iron, slag, organic materials such as animal bones as fluxes for lowering the melting temperature, burned stones, and ash (Taavitsainen 1991: 7, 12). These characteristics are, in fact, also typical of cremation cemeteries under level ground. However, the presence of a smithy at the cremation cemeteries may not even be too surprising. It has been considered that there is a strong metaphorical connection between fire and heated iron in a smithy and in the process of cremating the human body (Gansum 2004). The transformation from iron ore to the final product can be seen as a transformation from something dead to something living. Just as the corpse is a by-product of human life, the slag is one representation in the long chain of the iron-smelting process (Gansum 2004; Kaliff 1994: 48-9; Burström 1990: 265-7; Shepherd 1999). It is possible that the Iron Age cemeteries were seen as powerful places which the local smith tried to take advantage of in his own iron-making (Meinander 1943: 46). The Swedish folklore also mention human bones and earth being removed from Christian churchyards and brought to smithies and buried under their floors in order to bring good luck to the smith (Creutz 2003: 199).

Settlement sites have often been recorded in the immediate vicinity of cremation cemeteries under level ground. If we assume that these are contemporary with the cemeteries, it was probably more difficult to loot the cemetery without the people's knowledge. Hence, if the cemeteries were looted it probably happened with the approval of the people (as ritual looting) or was done much later in history (Söyrinki-Harmo 1979: 93).

Wooden poles and postholes

Several wooden poles were found in both the Levänluhta and Käldamäki materials, and were interpreted as belonging to the burials. Their function was perhaps to keep the bodies under water and to prevent them from floating to the surface (Paper V, Wessman 2009b).

There are still wooden poles visible in the Levänluhta springs (Fig. 38). These are recent birch poles which have been used to open or close the spring. If one strikes a pole in the spring, one can control the water flow.

Occasional postholes are sometimes found during archaeological excavations of the cremation cemeteries under level ground. Since there are usually only a few of them and it is difficult or

impossible to relate them to house structures, their function has been difficult to explain. If we assume that they do belong to the cemetery context they could be explained as marking particular burials. Their function could also be strictly ritualistic. At the Vainionmäki A cemetery in Laitila, burned clay was found inside one posthole, even though it remained unclear whether it came from an actual house or whether its purpose was symbolic (Hirviluoto 1996: 79). The same cemetery included also a sacrificial pit (Ø 40-50 cm, 20 cm deep) containing large amounts of plant macrofossils, such as crushed seeds and cereal grains from wheat, barley and rye, in addition to food. The pit also contained unburned clay and charred wood, which

Fig.38. Wooden poles in one of the visible springs of the Levänluhta site in Isokyrö. In August 2009 the spring was covered by algae. Photograph by the author.

suggested that the sacrifices had been performed around a wooden pole that was held in place by clay (Söyrinki-Harmo 1996: 115; Purhonen 1996: 124).

Unburned animal bones and animal teeth

Archaeologists have traditionally divided the unburned and burned animal bones into two categories. The burned animal bones were on the funeral pyre together with the deceased, while the unburned bones were placed in the cemeteries during commemorative sacrifices.

As already stated in chapter 2, horse bones are only rarely found in Finnish cremation materials (Formisto 1996: 84; Hårding 2002: 217; Kivikero 2008). Most of the unburned animal bones, however, consist of the unburned teeth of horses and cattle. Some 400 cattle and horse teeth were found at the Mahittula cremation and inhumation cemetery in Raisio. The teeth were not only found in the upper layers of the cemetery but also in the deeper layers (Pietikäinen 2006: 94).

In Scandinavia, the horse has been considered to establish aristocratic identity which has also been implied in the Icelandic sagas (Jennbert 2002: 121). Riding gear in the graves has traditionally given the deceased high status, belonging to the horse-riding elite. This interpretation has also been accepted in the Finnish research concerning the cremation cemeteries (Pihlman 1990; Schauman-Lönnqvist 1996b: 130-5). Ironically enough, although if we have artefacts connected with the horse we have no burned horse bones from Iron Age cemeteries in Finland.

The unburned teeth probably derive from later sacrifice. It is has been suggested that only parts of the horse were deposited in the cremation cemetery because a complete horse would have been too costly to offer. A tooth could be removed from the animal without killing it and could thus have functioned as pars pro toto (Purhonen 1996: 125). Pieces from the mane or tail could also have been sacrificed in the cemetery as a symbolic gesture to represent the animal (Taavitsainen 1976). Horse teeth have been found also on top of some inhumation burials in Karelia. Theodor Schwindt proposed that the unburned teeth derived from sacrificial meals that had been thrown on top of the coffin before the grave was covered with earth. Pieces of pottery found on top of the graves he explained as remains of later commemorative meals (Schwindt 1893: 188).

The unburned teeth are problematic because it is difficult to determine whether or not they have been deliberately placed in the cemetery or are accidentally mixed settlement site refuse. The question is especially difficult when it comes to the cremation cemeteries under level ground because their context is often disturbed and they are difficult to study. The fact that unburned teeth are poor choices for 14C-dating does not make it any easier.

4.2 The re-use of sites and objects as a means of remembering

The re-use of ancient sites and objects is a worldwide phenomenon. Cemeteries in particular are often affected by traces of overlapping activities. What was formerly believed to be accidental has now been accepted as intentional behaviour in the European archaeological literature (e.g., Zachrisson 1994; Gosden & Lock 1998; Bradley 2002). Thus cemeteries, objects and landscapes had commemorative and mnemonic roles and were re-used and manipulated in different ways by the people in the past (Tilley 1994; Bradley 2002). Memories, myths and tales were probably associated with these sites, which maintained their importance for a considerable amount of time. In a non-literate society, this knowledge was probably passed orally from generation to generation.

Most of the European re-use seems to happen in the visible monuments from the Bronze Age or the Early Iron Age (Jennbert 1993; Tilley 1994; Williams 1997; Holtorf 2001; Bradley 2002). This might perhaps be correct, but one has to remember that re-use in visible monuments is also easier to detect, interpret and accept by archaeologists because these objects have functioned as visual reminders of the dead. Lately, examples have been published of Swedish materials where also sites that have been invisible to the human eye show traces of re-use (Artelius 2004; Nilsson Stutz 2004; Artelius & Lindqvist 2005).

Cemeteries are not only places social and political display (Østigård & Goldhahn 2006) but also places of remembrance, memories and emotion (Tuan 1974; Tarlow 1999; Williams 2006). The repeated use of cemeteries made them important at several levels. It gave stability during a time that was perhaps otherwise undergoing change.

One might fairly ask why ancient sites were reused and what might have influenced this behaviour. Naturally, the first thing which comes to mind is that older constructions such as cairns or mounds were easier and less time-consuming to re-use. However, I think that re-use has deeper significance than merely functional.

Sites that have been re-used after a considerable break of several hundreds of years, like the case described in Paper III (Wickholm 2007), is probably not an example of direct collective memory but one example of how certain sites, such as visible monuments, can remain important at a mythical level. It might also be an example of appropriation of the landscape. It means that the people had to justify their presence, possibly after settling into a new area (Artelius 2004; Williams 2006).

When the same site is re-used over and over again, like the cremation cemeteries under level ground containing inhumation burials (Papers I- II, Wickholm 2006; 2008), one might suggest that it was caused by land ownership and thus legitimized hereditary rights to the land. Naturally, the long continuation meant that the sites were important communal places and the links with the ancestors were considered to be strong. The people probably had a genuine interest in their past and that it was important to express continuity through re-use, which could be seen as an expression of an ancestor cult (Burström 1991; Zachrisson 1994; Williams 1997; 2006).

There are also inhumation burials, like Maksiininmäki in Janakkala, where the inhumation is much later than the cremation cemetery, which means that the people have returned to the old burial places for some reason. This derived perhaps from a desire to re-connect with the ancestors as a way of bonding with them in spite of new religious ideas (Paper II, Wickholm 2006). The fact that re-use becomes more widespread during the Merovingian period and the Viking Age is perhaps a sign of nostalgia for the past. The people became more conservative, which was expressed through imitation of old ways and re-use (Holmblad 2005; Artelius & Lindqvist 2005).

In Sweden, old burial mounds could also be reused because of negative associations (Artelius 2005). This has also been documented from England where old monuments have served as burial places for criminals (Semple 1998: 121-3).

Artefacts have also played a part in the collective memory. The mnemonic significance of artefacts has been widely documented (Lillios 1999; Williams 2005; Paper IV, Wessman 2009a).

Certain important artefacts could be hidden or deposited in a secure place such as burial mounds, hills, natural places or wet areas. The artefacts were thus given to the ancestors and gods for safe-keeping and could be retrieved again (Geibig 1991; Myhre 1994: 74-5, 79–80; Fabech 2006: 28-9). The medieval literature also mentions this, especially concerning swords (Ellis Davidson 1962: 126-9; Bradley 1990). Weapons are often personified and have the ability to evoke memories from a lost time or recall its past owner. It is possible that certain weapons were actually dug up from old burials and transferred to new ones because of the mnemonic value they possessed (Lillios 1999: 237-4; Williams 2005: 253-5, 264).

Re-use in Finland

In Finland, archaeologists have traditionally seen re-use as accidental or random, thus discounting ritual significance. There are however several kinds of re-use documented in Finland, of both overlaying burials and artefacts. Several cases are presented in Papers I, III & IV.

Some moraine hills with cremation cemeteries under level ground have been used continuously for almost 1000 years. These include Alsätra in Raasepori (formerly Karjaa), Saramäki in Turku and Franttilannummi in Mynämäki (Wickholm 2007; 2008; Wessman 2009a). Recent 14C-dates from the Rikala cremation cemetery in Salo revealed that the site has been used from Early Roman Iron Age until the Viking Age. Finds of pottery suggest, however, that the site had been in use already during Pre-Roman Iron Age (Mäntylä & Storå in prep.).

The traces of earlier cemeteries or burials found underneath the cremation cemeteries under level ground are quite diverse, including cremation pits and urn graves from both the Roman Iron Age and the Migration period. These Kärsämäki type burials are known from Ristimäki and Saramäki cremation cemeteries in Turku and from Aittamäki cemetery in Lieto (Salo 1968; Pälikkö 2009). It is possible that yet another one is known from the Pahamäki cremation cemetery in Lieto.

The cemetery has been in use from AD 700 to the end of the prehistoric era. Amongst the finds there is a brooch that is much older than the rest of the finds, dating from AD 300. According to the excavator, Jukka Luoto, this implies earlier burial activities on the hill (Luoto 1988: 113) which could suggest yet another Kärsämäki type burial in this area.

Tarand-graves and traces of cairns from the Bronze Age and Pre-Roman Iron Age are found under cremation cemeteries. The Mahittula cemetery in Raisio has a stone circle in the lower layers of the cremation cemetery and a dress needle dated to the Pre-Roman Iron Age, suggesting that there was an earlier cairn at the site before the later cremation cemetery was created (Kivikoski 1941a; Kivikoski 1941b; af Hällström 1946; Pietikäinen 2006).

In Estonia, the cremation cemeteries under level ground are sometimes built either next to or partly on top of Roman period tarand-graves. Several tarand-graves were also re-used as cemeteries during the Merovingian period and the Viking Age (Lõugas 1973; Deemant 1993; Lang 2000; Mandel 2003; Kriiska & Tvauri 2007). The tarand-graves, on the other hand, might have been built on top of older stone-cist graves of the Late Bronze Age and Pre-Roman Iron Age as, for example, in Tõugu II, in N Estonia (Lang 2000). This means that there seems to be continuity in the place of burial at many sites in Estonia.

It is possible that there is some kind of connection between burials of the Roman Iron Age (AD 1-400) and the cremation cemeteries under level ground. It seems that most of the re-used sites are urn graves and cremation pits from this period, which means that the place of burial has either had a special character (e.g., topography) or that the burials have been marked somehow in the landscape (Söyrinki-Harmo 1984: 118; Seppälä 2003: 49-51; Wickholm 2005; Paper III, 2007; Paper I, 2008; Paper IV, Wessman 2009a). It is possible that something happened during the Merovingian period that resulted in an interest in old burial places. At the same time as the first cremation cemeteries under level ground, ca AD 600, other new burial forms come into use as well. These include the inhumation cemeteries around Lake Pyhäjärvi and the water cemeteries of Käldamäki and Levänluhta in Ostrobothnia (Paper V, Wessman 2009b). In addition, there are many new features in the material culture. The number of weapons in the burials seems to increase during this period as well. Interestingly, several old cemeteries are now resumed and used again (Tallgren 1931a: 74; Cleve 1943; Raninen 2005a; Wickholm & Raninen 2006; Paper III, Wickholm 2007; Paper I, 2008), making the connection between the Merovingian period/Viking Age and the Roman Iron Age seem clear.

The cremation cemeteries under level ground were used over a long period of time, often for several hundreds of years. This long continuity, in addition to later site re-use, suggests that it was the moraine hills as the place of burial that were of importance. The place of burial might have contained several different meanings, all connected with history, identity and social structure. Certain landscapes and sites could thus be deeply rooted in both the individual and collective memories (Tilley 1994: 27).

The continuity of the site continued at the end of the Iron Age when the first inhumations appeared inside these cremation cemeteries (Wickholm 2005; Paper II, 2006).

One might ask why the cremation cemeteries

were re-used in this way. It is possible that the status and personal character of the deceased or his/hers affinity influenced who was buried in the cremation cemetery (Paper II, Wickholm 2006; Wickholm & Raninen 2006). The practice of inhumation burials among the earlier cremation cemeteries is restricted mainly to a particular period of time, which could be understood as a transitional phase in both a religious, social and political sense. However, the Crusade period (AD 1025/1050-1150) also present some difficulties. The inhumation burials are traditionally dated by their grave-goods, i.e., typology. Unless coins are found in the graves, they are not possible to date precisely (Purhonen 1998). Without a proper chronology or radiocarbon dates, these early inhumation graves inside the cremation cemeteries are problematic to date.

It is also possible that at least some of the inhumations were placed inside the old cemetery as a normal continuation at a time when no other burial place was yet available. The people who were inhumed in the cremation cemeteries were probably part of the same group of people who had been using the cemetery for centuries. It thus appears that they would wish to be buried in the old cremation cemetery with their forefathers, even if the burial tradition had begun to change. There are some cemeteries where inhumation and cremation has been practised simultaneously, which means that the transition from cremation to inhumation happened slowly. However, there are also cremation cemeteries that were used first during the Merovingian period and again during the Crusade period after a 200-year break, like the Makasiininmäki cemetery in Janakkala (Paper II, Wickholm 2006). This means that there was some other reason for returning to the place. The way these inhumations are placed in the old cemetery, either in the centre or at its boundaries, seems to resemble some sort of statement or desire to express continuity. These cemeteries are particularly interesting in terms of commemoration. There might have been ideological or religious changes that contributed to this tradition. It is possible that the people needed to bond with their ancestors, because of the pressures that the incoming new religion brought to the community. Hence, the old burial sites became important and came into play once again.

There are a few examples from Finland where artefacts have been placed in old burials, which have been discussed briefly in Paper IV (Wessman 2009a). This phenomenon is not exclusive to Finland. On the contrary, it has long been debated in European archaeology, while the debate is only starting here in Finland. The Finnish examples have often been explained as artefacts that have been lost or hidden in the grave and thus do not belong to the original burial (Meinander 1973: 146) but there are also rare occasions when the archaeologist has interpreted the visible burials as mnemonic or commemorative monuments (Kivikoski 1945:142-4).

In my opinion, re-use seems to be so common that it cannot possibly be the result of random selection of location for a new burial site. I believe that this was a result of reclaiming an older site, at which the earlier burials or landscape features probably influenced the choice of location. These locations were probably also selected carefully and became invested with memories through time (Tilley 1994: 26-9, 67; Williams 1997: 2-4; Bradley 2002). Hence it seems that hills, slopes and the ridges were places that were repeatedly visited throughout the centuries. This meant that as time passed the site also acquired new meaning.

4.3 Peculiar or deviant cases

In the archaeological literature, one might stumble upon peculiarities, especially concerning burial archaeology. These burials are commonly labelled as deviant, odd, peculiar or queer.

Eight factors have been suggested to account for deviant burials in Anglo-Saxon England. These are battle, execution, massacre, murder, plague, sacrifice, suicide and superstition. The motivation behind deviant burials might thus be driven by a wide range of different causes of death. Typically these burials are identified as deviant due to their physical attributes, such as injuries on the bodies, or through their geographical context, which is often specified by a remote location (Reynolds 2009: 37-8).

What seems to connect the Finnish deviant burials is that they are mainly found in the Häme Region, dating to the end of the Viking Age or the beginning of the Crusade period and are inhumation burials that have been dug into old cremation cemeteries under level ground (Paper II, Wickholm 2006; Wickholm 2009). The Levänluhta and Käldamäki water burials have been seen as deviant in the previous research and could thus fit well into the factors presented by Reynolds (2009: 38). These burials are, however, not considered to be deviant by the present author and are thus not included here (Paper V).

Older artefacts in inhumation burials and locked coffins

In Finland, it seems to have been relatively common to place old artefacts inside the graves. These are mainly Stone Age tools, such as axes, chisels and arrowheads (Schauman-Lönnqvist 1988: 75-6; Lehtosalo-Hilander 2000b: 95, 107; Huurre 2003; Muhonen 2006: 4) but there are also cases of Iron and Bronze objects being found in burial or settlement contexts (Wessman 2009a). The deviant examples discussed here are those where older artefacts have been removed from a cremation cemetery and placed inside inhumation burials, either inside the coffins or to "lock" or "nail" the coffins (Paper II, Wickholm 2006; 2009; Paper IV, Wessman 2009a).

Even though the following cases have been interpreted as deviant burials by the previous research there could be alternative explanations to this behaviour also. It is probable that these re-used objects were already considered to be antiques at the time of burial. The items that had been removed from a cremation cemetery had often been in a fire, and thus looked different. The closeness to the ancestors who were buried in these cemeteries became perhaps closer through this re-use. It is well known from later times that certain artefacts might sustain memories and thus it is probable that their historical significance was apparent to the people who reburied these items. Thus these objects would express respect towards the dead and the past generations.

I will explain my thoughts through a few examples presented below.

A single female inhumation burial was found at the Vänniä cremation cemetery in Sastamala. Amongst the finds was a small Scandinavian axe that bore traces of being exposed to fire. The axe had probably been taken from the cremation cemetery and placed inside the coffin on purpose during the funeral (Salmio 1980: 41, 198).

Similar examples are also known from the Vilusenharju cremation and inhumation cemetery in Tampere. Some 50 inhumation burials, dated from the 11th century to the mid 12th century, were excavated between 1940 and 1970 (Nallinmaa-Luoto 1978: 1-3, 240; Koivisto 1996: 20) but, according to Paula Purhonen, only 41 of these are certain inhumation burials (Purhonen 1998: 253). In addition to the inhumation graves, hundreds of artefacts from destroyed inhumations have been collected together with finds from the 10th and 11th centuries that seem to derive from a cremation cemetery under level ground. Unfortunately the majority of the cremation cemetery had been destroyed during gravel quarrying before the excavations had begun (Nallinmaa-Luoto 1978: 1-3, 240; Koivisto 1996: 14).

Inhumation burial 12 in Vilusenharju was a coffin burial in E-W orientation. The burial contained two swords, a horse bit, two spearheads, a scythe and an arrowhead that were all collected from the cremation cemetery. The two spearheads had been struck vertically into the coffin. In addition, the coffin lid had been nailed with a knife and an arrow that had also been taken from the cremation cemetery. A spearhead, found struck into the ground at the head end of the grave, might have been used as a "coffin nail" as well (Sarasmo 1961; Paper II, Wickholm 2006; Wickholm 2009).

Inhumation burial 12a was found almost attached to the previous one in E-W direction. It lacked a coffin but at the foot end of the burial pit there was a heap of 12 artefacts that had been collected from the cremation cemetery (Paper II, Wickholm 2006). These were seven spearheads, a knife, a sword and the guard of another one, an iron hook (or possibly a hinge?) and a fire striking steel. In addition to these finds there was also an axe that still contained pieces of the wooden handle. Since the axe had not been exposed to fire it was interpreted as the only grave-good (Sarasmo 1961; Nallinmaa-Luoto 1978: 14-15). The examples from Vilusenharju has been interpreted as accidental or meaningless behaviour (Sarasmo 1961) or as pacifying gifts to the deceased, meaning that the deceased's relatives placed an artefact picked up from the cremation cemetery in the burial as a variation of the *pars pro toto* belief (Koivisto 1996: 78).

The collective "bunch grave" excavated in 1936 at the Toppolanmäki inhumation cemetery in Valkeakoski (formerly Sääksmäki) contained four individuals, two men and two women, all buried in the same coffin. The deceased had been tied up with ropes so that two individuals had their heads to the west and the two others to the east. There were no grave-goods inside the coffin but the west corner of the coffin had been nailed with a long iron object that, according to Jorma Leppäaho, resembled the hilt of a sword (Leppäaho 1936; Purhonen 1998: 257).

Similar coffin nails were also found in other inhumation graves the following year, only 5 metres from the so-called bunch grave. One male inhumation (VIII) was nailed with two spearheads and another female grave (VII) was nailed with an iron "harpoon" (Pälsi 1937; Pälsi 1938: 32-5), which in fact is a spearhead as well (Uino 1997: 381; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1982a: 36; Taavitsainen 1990: 190). These graves have been interpreted as a sign of fear of the dead (Leppäaho 1936; Pälsi 1938: 32-5).

A female burial from Makasiininmäki cemetery in Janakkala dating to the end of the Viking Age and the Crusade period (Purhonen 1998: 241) was treated in the same way as the bunch grave and the Vilusenharju burials. During the excavations in 1950, Oiva Keskitalo found five edged weapons of the coffin to one inhumation burial. These were an iron hook, a small knife, a sword and two spearheads. In addition, a large stone (40 x 25 cm) had been laid on top of the coffin lid as if the deceased had been feared. Interestingly, the two spears were much older than the inhumation burial and it became apparent that they had been picked up from the Merovingian period cremation cemetery. The spears were thus 500 years older than the burial and, even though the rest of these edged tools could not be dated more precisely owing to their fragmentary nature, it was assumed that they had also been picked up from the cremation cemetery. (Keskitalo 1950: 45-6, Purhonen 1998: 241)

A peculiar inhumation burial was excavated at the Mikkola cemetery in Ylöjärvi in 1976. The cremation cemetery is dated to the Viking Age and the inhumation cemetery to the Crusade period. The inhumation in question published under the title "The Evil man from Mikkola" *(Fi. Paha mies Mikkolasta)* (Sarkki-Isomaa 1986) had a wooden coffin nailed with 4 spears and two nails. These weapons had not been exposed to the fire so they were probably contemporary with the burial. Inside the coffin lay an intact sword with its sharp edge inverted towards the head of the deceased. While the placement of the sword is unique for Finland, the same phenomenon has been documented in the early Hallstatt burials in Central Europe (Olivier 1999: 125). In Finland, the sword has been interpreted as a warning to the deceased in case he tried to rise from the dead (Sarkki-Isomaa 1986: 149-50, 156). Paula Purhonen, on the other hand, has interpreted the location of the sword as the manner of death, comparing it to the national epic, The Kalevala, in which one of the characters, Kullervo, ends his life by throwing himself on his sword (1998: 165). Suicide is extremely difficult to recognize by archaeological methods (Reynolds 2009: 52) especially in this particular case where the bone material was preserved only poorly.

An often-debated female inhumation burial containing two swords is known from the Pahnainmäki cremation cemetery under level ground in Hämeenlinna (Taavitsainen 1990). Burials containing two swords are very rare in Scandinavia, with the exception of Hedeby-Busdorf in northern Germany and Valsgärde in Sweden (Staecker 2005: 7). Moreover, female sword burials are normally not known from the Viking Age or the Crusade period burials, but another example is know from the nearby municipality of Hattula, only 13 km east of Pahnainmäki (Keskitalo 1969: 95). This inhumation, known as Vesitorninmäki consisted of a female burial with two swords. Even though this inhumation seemed to be an isolated grave it is probable that there are more inhumations or maybe even a cremation cemetery on the same hill that have been destroyed (Keskitalo 1969: 96).

The Pahnainmäki cemetery was excavated in 1911. The cremation cemetery is dated to the

11th and 12th centuries, which means the end of the Viking Age and the beginning of the Crusade period, and the inhumation graves to c. AD 1150 (Nordman 1924: 79-82).

Whether these swords belong to the inhumation burial or not has been debated. Both swords were found at the foot end of the grave. One is said to have been struck vertically into the soil and its hilt bore traces of being in the fire. The other sword was also badly damaged and broken into several pieces, something which is typical of artefacts found in cremation cemeteries (Appelgren-Kivalo, undated report). While Julius Ailio (1922: 54) interpreted the swords as grave-goods that clearly belonged to the inhumation, C. A. Nordman (1924: 143-5) considered them as deriving from the old cremation cemetery, dating the best preserved sword to AD 1100. Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen (1990: 89), on the other hand, believes that these swords are somewhat later, perhaps from the end of the 12th century or the 13th century which could indicate that cremation remained in use after the inhumation burial custom was introduced. The deceased also had a severely time-worn coin pendant around the neck. The coin is a German Otto-Adelheid penny dated AD 983/991- c. 1040 (Talvio 2002: 75, 193). When coins are used as jewellery they have usually been in circulation for a long time. Thus the worn coin was probably old when placed inside the burial and cannot be used to date the grave (Nordman 1924: 80-2). The fact that both swords derive from a cremation cemetery and are older than the inhumation grave suggests that these swords were perhaps considered to be retrieved heirlooms which were now to become mnemonics (Paper IV, Wessman 2009a).

At the time this burial was excavated, no similar burials were known. In 1968, another female burial which also contained two swords was excavated at Vesitorninmäki near Suontaka manor in Hämeenlinna. One of the swords had been found during construction works so that its context can no longer be verified, but the second sword was *in situ* on the left side of the deceased. The typology suggests that the burial dates from c. AD 1000-1050 (Keskitalo 1969: 84, 95).

It has also been suggested that the inhumations from Pahnainmäki and Vesitorninmäki were double graves since swords are not conceived as normative grave-goods for a woman. The interpretation is thus that a man and a woman were buried on top of each other. Since organic material preserves poorly in the acid Finnish soils, this could explain the swords in an otherwise purely female context (Keskitalo 1969: 95-6). On the other hand, sword finds should not be automatically associated with men. Grave-goods, and especially weapons, have several meanings other than being merely the property of the deceased (Gosden & Marshall 1999; Theuws & Alkemande 2000; Fowler 2004; Paper IV, Wessman 2009a).

The fragmented nature of the sword and the fire patina on the hilt of the sword found in the Pahnainmäki burial suggests that the swords were picked up from the cremation cemetery. The symbolic gesture of picking up artefacts from older cemeteries is also documented elsewhere among the inhumation graves mentioned above. All burials have contained items/grave-goods that somehow link the deceased to their ancestors, which I think is an important aspect of these burials.

Cremated bones in inhumation cemeteries

As I have mentioned in Paper II, there are also several inhumation burials in Finland dating to the end of the Viking Age and medieval period containing cremated bones (Wickholm 2006). These bones have either been found in piles on top of the inhumation burials or even inside the coffins, in wooden boxes, urns or as heaps at the foot end of the coffins (Purhonen 1998: 129).

Since I have not been able to discuss the phenomenon in a wider context before, I will try to illuminate it here.

There are five documented cases of burned bones from inhumation cemeteries in present-day Finland as well as two cases from the Russian Karelian Isthmus (Taavitsainen et al. 2009; Schwindt 1893) (Fig. 39).

The burned bones have previously been interpreted in two ways. They have either been seen as evidence of a pagan reaction or as the remains of people who have died far away or abroad. The fact that some cremations are situated inside the coffins of the inhumation burials suggests that this ritual was not performed secretly (Kivikoski 1955: 67-8; 1961: 233; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1984b: 377; 1988: 197; Purhonen 1998: 129-31, 164-5). It has also been suggest that it might be a way to deceive the deceased by burying the remains in several places (Lehtosalo-Hilander 1994: 33-4).

It has recently been suggested that these late cremations indicate *translatio,* which means that Christian descendants exhumed their ancestors from old cremation cemeteries and re-interred them in Christian burial grounds (Lehtosalo-Hilander 1988: 198; Taavitsainen 1991: 9; Purhonen 1998: 164; Taavitsainen et al. 2009). A wellknown example of a probable *translatio* is known from Jelling in Denmark, where the earthly remains of the pagan King Gorm were moved from a grave mound by his son King Harald to a Christian church (Roesdahl 1997; see also Staecker 2005; Sindbæk & Arwill-Nordbladh 2005). From Vilusenharju inhumation cemetery in Tampere there are two examples of secondary activity which suggest *translatio*. The bodies from graves 43 and 44 seem to have been exhumed at some point, even though the coffins and the grave-goods are still in the grave. This rules out traditional grave robbery and might according to Satu Koivisto be a Christian response to the burials (1996: 78-9). This might suggest that bodies were removed from their graves and transported to consecrated burial grounds, but naturally the bodies might have been cremated or re-used somehow as well.

There are written records telling of later cremations. The chronicle of Henry of Livonia mentions cremation as a pagan reaction in Estonia in 1223. Here, the dead who have been inhumed are later dug up by their relatives and cremated in a pagan way (Henrici Chronicon Livoniae, book XXVI, chapter 8). A similar interpretation

Fig.39. Inhumation cemeteries containing burned bones. Map by W. Perttola.
1) Kirkkailanmäki, Hollola
2) Toppolanmäki, Valkeakoski
3-4) Tuukkala and Visulahti, Mikkeli
5) Valmarinniemi, Keminmaa
6) Suotniemi, Käkisalmi
7) Hovinsaari, Räisälä

has been made for the cemetery of Myllymäki in Nousiainen. Here the inhumation burials were overlain by a younger cremation layer, suggesting a pagan reaction after the Christianisation process. These inhumation burials have been dated to the end of the 11th and early 12th centuries (Purhonen 1998: 249).

Kirkkailanmäki cemetery in Hollola was excavated in 1935-36, 1978-79 and during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Unfortunately the documentation is relatively poor since excavation reports and artefacts catalogues from the 1978-79 excavations were never made. The cemetery consists of some 140 inhumation burials and 28 cremations dated from the end of the Viking Age until the 14th century. Most of the inhumations are interpreted as Christian burials but there are also richly furnished female graves with textiles from the Crusade period. Amongst them is a female grave with an elaborate preserved hairpiece of reddish hair (Hirviluoto 1985: 28-32, 34, 1986: 37-8; Purhonen 1998: 239-40). The cremations were almost always found in connection with the inhumation burials, either on top of them or next to them. It seemed that the bones might have been placed inside textile bags without any grave-goods. Some burials contained a lot of bones, between 1650 and 2380 grams (Leppäaho 1935; Salmo 1937). A bracteate that was found in one of the cremations and dated to the 13th century suggests that at least some of these burials are medieval. Anna-Liisa Hirviluoto (1985: 32-3) has interpreted these cremations as a pagan reaction to Christianity, which would imply that cremation was reintroduced into the local society.

Toppolanmäki inhumation cemetery in Valkeakoski (formerly Sääksmäki) was partly destroyed during sand digging in 1936. A total of 20 to 30 inhumation graves have been detected, oriented east-west (Kivikoski 1955: 66-7). During the same year, an inhumation burial in east-west orientation was excavated. In front of the skull, a wooden urn was found that was covered by a flat stone. The urn had been repaired with a bronze plate and contained 250 grams of burned human bones, but no grave-goods (Leppäaho 1936). Another cremation, unfortunately destroyed before excavation, has also been found in the Toppolanmäki cemetery. The lack of any grave-goods in the cremations might suggest that they are late, as in the Kirkkailanmäki case. Ella Kivikoski suggested that the Toppolanmäki cemetery had been a pagan cemetery that was still used during Christian times. This would, according to her, explain why there are inhumations both with and without grave-goods in the same cemetery (Kivikoski 1955: 67-8). According to Paula Purhonen (1998: 258), the cemetery dates to the mid 12th century and the beginning of the 13th century.

A similar cremation burial has been found from Suotniemi inhumation cemetery in Käkisalmi. The cremated bones had been placed inside a wooden box together with two pairs of partly melted brooches, bronze chain and spirals,

a knife, an ear spoon and glass beads. Theodor Schwindt interpreted the cremations as belonging to two women. On top of this cremation burial was a thick stony layer of sooty soil and charcoal, which indicates the presence of a cremation cemetery under level ground. The finds from these upper layers consisted of pottery, animal teeth, iron slag and burned bones (Schwindt 1893: 3-8, 185), which suggests commemorative rituals. The site was excavated once more in 1991 as Soviet-Finnish co-operation. During the excavations, two fireplaces were excavated, both found in the cremation cemetery layer. These were radiocarbon dated to the Merovingian period and the Viking Age[7]. No inhumation burials were found under the cremation layer. According to Pirjo Uino (1997: 258-60), the sooty layer might also derive from a settlement site. She has also suggested that the stone layer may derive from some sort of a ritual pavement or offering cairn on which commemoration rituals had been performed and offerings left.

Tuukkala inhumation cemetery in Mikkeli, the largest and possibly also the richest cemetery in the Savo area in eastern Finland, was found in 1886 when a training field was erected for the army (Heikel 1889). Some inhumation burials were destroyed before excavations, but some 59 burials have been examined. It has been estimated that the cemetery had consisted of 70-80 burials, among them are 2 cremation burials with artefacts and 11 cremations without grave -goods. The oldest burials probably date to the 11th century and the latest ones to the 13th century (Lehtosalo 1960: 5; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1988: 193-4). In autumn 2009, more inhumation burials were excavated at Tuukkala by the National Board of Antiquities. Within the inhumation grave H3, two concentrations of cremated bones were found between the legs, while a third concentration was found on the side of the body adjacent to the right knee. Both the inhumation and the cremations were unfurnished. Since the osteological report is still not finished it is not possible to determine whether or not these are from one cremation or whether they are separate burials (Mikkola 2009: 179-84).

Another inhumation cemetery is known in the vicinity of Tuukkala. The Visulahti cemetery was excavated in 1954 and 1955. In all, 28 inhumations and 5 cremations were excavated, of which three were without artefacts. While the majority of the cremations were found in pits, one burial (XXV) was found inside an inhumation burial. The cremation was found between the legs of a male grave and partly on top of one of the femurs. The cremation was interpreted as a female grave while the inhumation was believed to have belonged to a man. Among the inhumation burials were two peculiar heaps of unburned bones placed inside pits (70 x 30 cm and 60 x 60 cm) with the human skull placed in the middle. No artefacts were found with these bones, which makes the dating more difficult. The inhumation burials were usually covered by stones, a common phenomenon also in other

7 Fireplace 2 (Hel-3160) 1180 100 BP (cal AD 740-980)
Fireplace 5 (Hel-3161) 1070 90 BP (cal AD 900-1030)
(Uino 1997: 259).

early inhumation graves in Finland (Lehtosalo 1960: 12-21; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1988: 194-6).

Pirkko-Liisa Lehtosalo-Hilander (1988: 198) has interpreted the cremated bones found at Tuukkala and Visulahti as *translatio*. She argues that Christian relatives of the deceased had removed the bones from the funeral pyres and transported them to be buried in Christian inhumation cemeteries in the hope of salvation for them as well (see also Lehtosalo 1960: 39). The two cremations from Visulahti and Tuukkala containing artefacts are, however, more difficult to explain.

Hovinsaari inhumation cemetery in Räisälä was excavated at the end of the 19th century by Theodor Schwindt. In 1886, cremated bones were found in one of the inhumation burials. Moreover, in the 1888 excavations, a large 120 x 45 cm wooden chamber (coffin?) was excavated, which contained the cremated remains of 2-3 women. No inhumation was found in this burial, only scattered burned bones and grave-goods inside a wooden structure. In addition to these burials, there were some stone structures containing ash, bones and charcoal and several fireplaces. Schwindt interprets these structures as evidence of a sacrificial place, but they might perhaps derive from cremation cemeteries as well. It seems that cremation was still in use during the Crusade period in the Karelian region and that the first inhumation burials had been made within cremation cemeteries under level ground (Schwindt 1893: 54, 76-9, 184-5; 191; Lehtosalo 1960: 35-9; Uino 1997: 292; Purhonen 1998: 251).

Valmarinniemi cemetery in Keminmaa consisted of 151 inhumation burials from the 14th century. All 88 burials excavated in 1981 were Christian burials in E-W orientation dug around a wooden medieval church. However, amongst the inhumations there were also a dozen cremation burials in the centre of the cemetery, some on top of the inhumation burials (Koivunen 1982: 49-51). Recent AMS-dates from six cremations have now been published. The dates indicates the first half of 11th century and the 13th century, which means that cremation was in fact performed during the early medieval period in Northern Finland (Taavitsainen et al. 2009: 207). One may wonder what this means in a clearly Christian context. The bones perhaps derive from people who have died abroad. Cremation would thus have been the only alternative in order to transport the deceased back home. The fact that there are concurrent cremation and inhumation going on at the same cemetery proves that they all belonged to the same collective, even though they were buried in a different manner.

Stones placed on top of inhumation graves

Stones laid on top of the burial coffin are a phenomenon widely documented among the early Finnish inhumation burials (Cleve 1948: 72-4; 1943: 58; Kivikoski 1955; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1988: 194-6; Asplund & Riikonen 2007: 24). This has been interpreted as either continuity with the old cremation cemetery tradition in which the bones were covered by stones (Kivikoski 1955: 67; 1961: 192, 242) or as a symbolic way to hinder the deceased from rising from their graves

(Pälsi 1938: 35). The stones might also have marked the graves (Lehtosalo-Hilander 2000a; 2000b) or even have kept animals away from the decaying bodies (Barber 1988: 126).

In one of the inhumation burials from Visulahti in Mikkeli, the deceased's head had been detached from the body and laid at the side of the corpse. The inhumation burial was also covered by a considerable heap of stones. Both the stones on top of the burial and the decapitation were seen as evidence for fear of the deceased as a person who might try walk (Lehtosalo 1960: 60). Decapitation has also been documented from the Kirkkomäki inhumation cemetery in Turku, SW Finland. In two cases the skull of the deceased had been placed either on the belly or on top of the femurs (Asplund & Riikonen 2007: 24). However, since this occurs only in some burials, it seems that the fear was not of all the dead, but merely of particular individuals (Purhonen 1998). I will discuss this below.

Were the dead feared?

The folklorist Anna-Leena Siikala has suggested that the cremation cemeteries under level ground are an example of a long-way afterlife belief system, which means that people feared their dead ancestors. According to Siikala, the dead were efficiently separated from the living in the cremation process and the following scattering of the bones (1992: 114-7). I do not agree with her hypothesis. Both the 1) long-term use of the cemeteries, 2) the overlapping later inhumation burials and 3) the immediate vicinity of the fields and the settlement sites indicate that the dead were not feared and that the place of burial was valued and visited frequently. If we look back to the time when this new cemetery form becomes dominant, it happens just as there is a shift from, single isolated burials to a collective tradition of burying the dead. This is not a result of fear in my opinion. On the contrary, the collective way of disposing of the dead by scattering the bones to the cemetery is the result of ancestor worship. It has been suggested that the burned bones are scattered in the cemeteries as seeds would be sown in fields. The idea originates from an often-quoted poem in Finnish folklore (Hirviluoto 1987; Purhonen 1996). Thus, the bones are deliberately commingled with the bones of the ancestors as some kind of confirmation of the community.

Most of the Finnish deviant or peculiar graves mentioned above have been interpreted in the earlier research as preventive measures against haunting by the dead (e.g., Pälsi 1938; Sarkki-Isomaa 1986; Purhonen 1998). One reason for these similar interpretations is that they are easy and rational explanations, at least seen in the terms of our modern values and standards. Moreover, these cases do not confirm fear of all the dead, merely some individuals.

Naturally, some individuals might have possessed personal or magical qualities that made

them fearsome or hostile but why would they have been buried in the collective cemeteries, surrounded by normative burials, and not somewhere far away? In the Scandinavian literature, the dead were prevented from haunting by precautionary actions such as burying them in a remote place, decapitation, placing a pole through the body or by binding the body with ropes. The deceased could also be exhumed and cremated. After this, the ashes would be thrown in to the ocean as is suggested in the Scandinavian sagas (Ström 1958: 433; Honko 1960: 254; Ohlmark 1983: 98). It has also been suggested that the coffin burials with spears in Finland are manipulated because of the new Christian beliefs that mixed the beliefs about resurrection and hauntings (Cleve 1948: 72-4).

Alternative explanations of these deviant burials should also be considered, as is argued in Paper II (Wickholm 2006). Perhaps social unrest made the need to strengthen the ties with the ancestors especially important during this time. The changes that Christianity brought were probably radical and affected all aspects of life, including attitudes to life and death, even though the changes happened slowly. Thus, it would have been important to display the connections to past generations and to prove a long continuity in concrete ways as well, such as placing old artefacts collected from the cremation cemeteries in the inhumation burials and by using them to fasten the coffin lids. Even though a new faith was on its way, the old traditions and the old burial places remained important. The region of Häme can perhaps be considered to be a periphery in comparison to the coast of Finland Proper. Hence, new ideas would have reached this area somewhat slower or they would have become customized by the local people in a way that might have resulted in using weapons as coffin nails. I believe that the "spear graves" are just one example of re-use during a time period when several cemeteries and burials were used as links to the past and the ancestors. Thus, they express respect towards the dead rather than fear.

The North European bog bodies are often interpreted as deviant and non-normative burials. The same can probably also be said for the Levänluhta and Käldamäki water burials (Wessman 2009b). However, while the bog bodies seem to be examples of punishment or fear of the dead (Glob 1965; Kaul 2003; Williams, M. 2003), the same cannot be said for the Finnish cases, since there are so many individuals buried at these sites (Wessman 2009b). There are, however, no contemporary settlement sites found surrounding either cemetery, which might leave the question open. If we assume that the sex estimate made by Markku Niskanen (2006) are true and the majority of the deceased from Levänluhta were women, there are still no indications that they would have died in childbirth or died a bad death. Thus Levänluhta seems to be an example of something else.

5 Conclusions

At the beginning of the thesis I raised several questions concerning the vast burial material addressed in both my articles and this summary. It is now time to answer them.

• What kind of ritual behaviours can we detect in the burials during the period (AD 550-1150)?

The dead body goes through several transformations before becoming an ancestor. In the cremation cemeteries under level ground, the dead were treated in several different ways. While the majority were cremated, there were also some inhumations.

The cremation rituals were complex. Those whose bodies were destroyed by fire were transformed in a visible way, probably as a public event. The find material suggests that some were cremated in boats, others lying on top of animal hides. When the remains of the funeral pyre had cooled down, people returned to select and collect the bones which were transported to the burial place. At this stage, the bones were either scattered to join the collective of the Dead or buried individually in a shallow pit.

The collective burials are complex and difficult to understand. The ritual implies that in order for the deceased to become an ancestor he/she had to be de-individualized by fire so that the bones were no longer recognizable, and finally commingled with the bones of the ancestors. In other words, the social persona was transformed into something unrecognizable.

The individual burials are not easy to define, either. It seems that the majority of these are weapon burials from the Merovingian period and the early Viking Age. It is possible that particular groups of people were chosen to be buried individually. Even though these burials have been interpreted as being those of male warriors with dominant status, the analyses of the bone material suggests that there are females and children among them as well. The number of ostelogical analyses is, however, too small to allow any broader conclusions.

At the end of the Viking Age and during the beginning of the Crusade Period, occasional inhumations are performed in the cremation cemeteries under level ground. Even though their number is low, they clearly result from different ritual activities and statements of a new ideology. The shift to inhumation burials has probably been influenced by Christian beliefs. Thus, it seems that only particular people, probably belonging to the elite, were chosen to be buried in this new way at the outset. During this time, the burial custom also changed from collective to individual burial. The transition did not happen overnight and at some cemeteries cremation and inhumation were still performed side by side. The inhumations are also examples of site re-use and continuity, which implies that the moraine hills and the ancestors remained important.

It thus appears that there were two distinct burial practices in concurrent use in cremation

cemeteries under level ground. First, both individual and collective burials were performed contemporaneously during the Merovingian period and the early Viking Age. Later, cremation and inhumation were contemporaneously in use towards the end of the Viking Age. This must have been a conscious choice that was articulated, reflected and made explicit in the funeral rituals. The meaning of these two different burial practices probably arose from the ideas and beliefs concerning the deceased, the soul, and the afterlife.

Commemoration of the dead can also be understood as the final stage in the funerary ritual process. The unburned bones and the pottery found on the surface of the cremation cemeteries imply that offerings of food and possibly even animal sacrifice was performed for the ancestors, possibly on separate wooden poles or sacrificial pits, such as at the Vainionmäki A cemetery.

Site re-use is a way of commemorating the dead because through the re-use, one was able to communicate with the ancestors. Several examples of re-use have demonstrated that particular items and even body parts could be removed from burials while some objects were being placed (perhaps back) into burials at a later stage, when the cemeteries were no longer in active use. Ritual activities were, in other words, performed at these sites even though the activities were not solely connected to funerals.

The water burials from Käldamäki and Levänluhta are clear examples of how complex the death rituals were during the Merovingian period. It seems that there were several different methods of burying the dead during this period. Although the cremation cemetery under level ground was the new burial form that became dominant, various burial customs were expressed locally. While water burials are examples of otherness in Ostrobothnia, early inhumation cemeteries, such as Luistari at Eura and Vanhakartano at Köyliö, are known from the Lower Satakunta area. These are also obvious anomalies in the Finnish Iron Age material. Expressions of local difference may have been associated with social or ideological changes.

To bury the dead in water is a sign of different conceptions of death. Water, as the antagonist of fire, is both a visual and a non-visual element. As the moraine hills were clearly visible in the landscape, so were the sea, the lakes, the ponds and the rivers. But burying the dead under water renders them invisible, especially if they were kept under water by wooden poles, as both Finnish cases suggest.

• How did people perceive the moraine hills that functioned as burial places?

The cremation cemeteries under level ground are frequently found on top of heights, such as moraine hills and ridges, which implies that the visual elements were of importance to the people who buried their dead there. The moraine hills were probably visible from the settlement sites, but their importance may have lain in what could be seen from the moraine hills. The view towards the cultivated fields or the rivers and lakes was also perhaps of ideological importance.

The cremation cemeteries' being used over a long period and often also re-used indicates that the moraine hills were also important places for portraying and storing collective memories. Old burials beneath the cremation cemeteries suggest that the location had also been important before. Nor did the people re-locate to another place when the burial custom changed to inhumation, which suggests that the myths, history and memories of the ancestors were focused on that place. To be buried in an old cremation cemetery expressed continuity and affinity with both the place and the ancestors. It also gave the dead the right to become part of the same shared past.

• What kind of re-use can be detected in the Iron Age cemeteries?

As has been shown in Papers I-IV and in chapter 4, several kinds of re-use have been documented from different cemetery contexts in Finland. The re-use does not focus simply on the cremation cemeteries under level ground, as has been noted in Paper IV. Old artefacts have also been found in inhumation burials and cremation cairns, and cases of "young" artefacts found in old burials have also been documented. There are, however, no examples of placing hoards in ancient monuments in Finland, even though the practice is widely known from other Scandinavian countries. In Finland, Late Iron Age hoards are traditionally found in modern fields.

An interesting issue is the absence of Migration period re-use. It seems that re-use flourished during the periods before and after the Migration period. This can probably be explained by the fact that we have rather limited archaeological knowledge of this period in Finland.

• Why have ancient sites and artefacts been re-used?

The re-use of old cemeteries is a global phenomenon, even though not much attention has been paid to it in Finland before. It is a widely-held belief among Finnish archaeologists that re-use has been merely accidental. As I have stated in most of my Papers, I do not believe that this is the case. Re-use is an important part of the commemoration rituals.

Although not all cemeteries were re-used during the Late Iron Age and it concerned only particular sites, some cemeteries were important places for creating and constructing the collective memory. Earlier burials or particular landscape features could have influenced the choice of burial location. Thus, some moraine hills were selected as burial sites during the Roman Iron Age. Through time, these places became mythical, which was perhaps the reason why they were re-used again at the beginning of the Merovingian period. This re-use attached new myths and stories to the hills, so that they remained important and in use until the end of the Viking Age and even the end of the Prehistoric period. Thus, the attitudes towards the ancient sites were not static and probably also changed through time.

When the tradition of cremation shifted to inhumation at the end of the Viking Age, old and new ideas mingled, as is also apparent in the mortuary practices. The re-use of old objects found in some burials in the region of Häme could have

been meant to bind the deceased to the cemetery, either symbolically or functionally. The inhumation burials with old weapons and tools used as coffin nails, addressed in Paper II, are examples of this. Taking weapons from an older cemetery is an important ritual that is not discussed in previous research. The intention could have been to link the old ancestors of the cremation cemetery and the dead who were buried in the new way, unburned. What could be more explicit than to use antique objects in this pursuit? The spears and weapons from the Makasiininmäki burial in Janakkala express the mnemonic value of weapons. Thus, the weapons used in the ritual related the deceased, both physically and psychologically, to the world of the ancestors, rendering them a part of the shared past. It is also possible that the new ideas introduced by Christianity affected the way in which people looked at their past and their history.

Once the links to the ancestors were no longer important, perhaps as a result of increased missionary activity, the continuum was broken and the cemetery locations changed. Large new inhumation cemeteries were established in other locations, away from the moraine hills.

Re-use may also have been affected by social and economic factors, as I have suggested in Paper IV. The biography of objects has been considered in burial archaeology only recently. Certain artefacts were probably valued due to certain details of their life histories, such as their previous owners. Weapons, in particular, might have been invested with strong symbolic value. Items could be placed in the grave but they could also be removed at times and put back into circulation. These objects, already associated with death, could become retrieved heirlooms that were valuable possessions, not only for their mnemonic aspects but due to their physical connection with past ancestors. Thus, old objects could unite the deceased both physically and psychologically with the world of the ancestors. People could also manipulate time with these objects in order to create a longer history and another kind of origin myth.

Even though cremation cemeteries under level ground have been excavated and studied since the late 19th century, the research is still only in its early stages. This thesis has not been able to present a final truth about this complex burial form but has, nevertheless, demonstrated that it includes several different aspects of memorialisation of the ancestors. The same moraine hills have often been used and re-used over the centuries, transforming them into collective monuments to past generations.

This thesis has attempted to review and re-interpret old cemetery materials, but in order for us to acquire more information, new excavations are also needed. They should be carried out only by trained archaeologists and should include the expertise of an osteologist in the field, preferably someone specializing in the analysis of cremated bones. The majority of cemetery excavations are connected to various land-use projects such as public road works or other planned construction projects. They are carried out by the National Board of Antiquities, the government authority that deals with the preservation of our archaeo-

logical heritage. Often, the excavation areas and budgets are small. Rescue excavations also tend to have a tight schedule, which burdens the excavators even more. Naturally, these excavations produce new information in the form of artefacts, but an excavation can not be regarded as successful if the only information about the site is its size and date. Excavations should be more carefully planned and research questions asked already before the excavations take place. Moreover, a GIS-based analysis of the site locations could give valuable information about their topography and view.

Naturally, in an ideal situation there would be funds in the excavation budgets for basic analyses, such as AMS, soil samples and osteology. This should be a much higher priority during negotiations with contractors. The excavation areas should be larger and include also the outer rims of the cemeteries. This would give more information about the ritual activities that went on on these moraine hills. Only with proper research questions and a contextual approach can we extract relevant archaeological information from cemetery materials, not forgetting that we are dealing with the dead and thus with the end products of a series of complex death rituals.

The cremation cemeteries under level ground need to be more highly valued by our archaeological community. They are, after all, a unique burial form in a relatively small geographical area and serve thus as a remarkable source of information about our past. This thesis has attempted to show how interesting they can be when one but scratches the surface.

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Paper I

Wickholm, A. 2008. Re-use in the Finnish Cremation Cemeteries under Level Ground – Examples of Collective Memory. In F. Fahlander & T. Oestigaard (eds.). Materiality of Death – Bodies, Burials, Beliefs. British Archaeological Report (BAR) International Series 1768, 89–97.

Chapter 8

Reuse in Finnish Cremation Cemeteries under Level Ground – Examples of Collective Memory

Anna Wickholm

ABSTRACT This article presents site reuse in the cremation cemeteries under level ground, one of the dominant burial forms in Finland and Estonia during Middle and Late Iron Age (AD 450-1100). These cemeteries are sometimes erected on top of older burials and settlement sites. It is probable that either the memories of these other monuments or the landscape influenced the choice of location. Towards the end of the Viking Age occasional inhumations have been dug into the cremation cemeteries. The idea of making inhumations in an older cemetery suggests a degree of continuity even if the ideas changed. By re-using a site the dead becomes a part of a shared past and the same group of ancestors. The moraine hills were important places because they gave the people a stronger identity, especially during a time of change. The repeated rituals performed at the sites helped the people to sustain their collective memory.

Over the past decade Memory studies have become an increasingly important part of burial archaeology (e.g. Hallam & Hockey 2001; Lucas 2005; Van Dyke & Alcock 2003; Williams 2005). It seems that archaeologists have accepted the idea that the cemeteries are not only static containers for the dead, but also important places for creating and maintaining the collective memory. Past peoples did not passively read meanings of the surrounding landscape with its ancient monuments, they also manipulated them. Monuments, landscapes and specific sites evoked memories of mythical or historical events. These memories could have been reminiscent of certain persons, people or actions. Even though the concept of time was probably different to past people, they were naturally conscious of the passing of time (e.g. Tilley 1994; Johansen 1997; Zachrisson 1998; Bradley 2002).

Memory is a socially constructed phenomenon, associated with repeated actions that can be either inscribing or incorporating practices (Connerton 1989:72). While inscribing practices are needed to be taught and explained in order for them to be understood (e.g. learning the alphabet), incorporating practices have to do with bodily actions. Incorporating practices are thus practical experiences performed with the body, often called embodied memory. Embodied memories are maintained and remembered through repeated actions such as performing a certain ritual, learning how to type or ride a bicycle (*ibid*: 22pp; Bell 1992:118).

The French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs first introduced the term collective memory to a broader public. His main point was that personal memories and also the community's shared memories of the past are influenced by social processes. Therefore, our recollections are not completely personal; memory goes beyond the individual capacity (Halbwachs 1992). "It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories" (*ibid*: 38). Different groups of people might in addition have completely different memories of the same event. The collective memory is thus connected to the social group that you experience it with, such as in families, among believers of a religion or in social classes (*ibid*). Memories are also often connected to a certain place. When we return to this place, even after a long time, it starts to evoke memories. Places can thus become sites of memory (Nora 1996; Holtorf 2001).

Secondary burials are sometimes found on top of older cemeteries. This re-use of sites that was formerly believed to be accidental has lately been understood as intentional behaviour (e.g. Zachrisson 1994; Gosden & Lock 1998; Bradley 2002). This article will present some cases of cemetery re-use from Finland, namely in cremation cemeteries under level ground. There are quite often layers from older settlement sites or burials under the cremation cemeteries.

The cremation cemeteries under level ground were used during several hundreds of years, and one particular cemetery might have been used for over 500 years. The connection between cremation cemeteries under level ground and older graves indicates that there is something special in the place or in the location of these cemeteries. There must have been a reason for the continuous burials at the site. Also, the long chronological continuity in these cemeteries suggests that the place remained important. The place of burial might have contained several different meanings, all connected with history, identity and social structures. Certain landscapes and sites are thus deeply rooted in both the individual and collective memories (Tilley 1994:27).

Well-organized cemeteries or messy and chaotic fields of debris?

Fig. 1. A part of the stone structure in Vainionmäki A cemetery in Laitila, SW Finland. Excavation layer 1. Photo: National Board of Antiquities 1993.

The cremation cemetery under level ground is a complex burial form currently known only from Finland, Estonia and the Karelian Isthmus in Russia. In Finland the burial form is commonly known from the historical counties of Finland Proper, Satakunta, southern Ostrobothnia, Häme, western Uusimaa, Savo and Karelia. This means that the northernmost frontier for this burial form goes around the 63rd latitude. The burial form has not been observed in the Åland Islands or the archipelago. What distinguishes the cemetery from others is that it is only faintly visible above ground, since it lacks an outer grave marker. The cemetery is built of stones of varying size that form a compact but irregular structure (Fig. 1). The burned bones and artefacts have been strewn over a large area on this stone pavement (Hackman 1897:82pp; Tallgren 1931:113p; Salmo 1952:12pp; Kivikoski 1961:161pp; Mandel 2003), and after this the grave goods have been covered with a layer of smaller stones. There are often only 5 cm of soil on top of these cemeteries. The lack of an aboveground structure and the flatness of this cemetery type transform it into an almost invisible cemetery, meaning that it disappears very easily into the landscape. Still, the cemeteries are often placed on small moraine hills, slopes or ridges, especially in western Finland. These hills are often situated in an agrarian landscape which makes them prominent in the surrounding topography (Fig. 2). It seems appropriate to say that the society buried their dead in an invisible way but still made sure that the hills of the ancestors were visible in the topography (Wickholm 2005).

The scattering of the grave goods and burned bones makes this a collective form of burial. The burned bones are scattered randomly into the cemetery in such a way that it is difficult to distinguish the burials from each other. Pieces from the same artefact can be found several meters from each other. It is possible that the bones from one individual are buried in several different places within the same cemetery, creating a burial form with a very complex and mixed manifestation. The dispersal of the body seems to conceal the identity of the dead, and de-individualising the community at the same time. It is difficult to believe that this could have been the result of plundering, grazing animals or later activity (cf. Söyrinki-Harmo 1984:114; Taavitsainen 1992:7-10). The collective nature of these cemeteries looks therefore intentional (Meinander 1950:69; Keskitalo 1979:133; Söyrinki-Harmo 1996:103).

The material from these cemeteries is often quite rich, even though it is bent, broken and burned. Most of the grave goods have been on the funeral pyre and they also show signs of being deliberately broken before being strewn into the cemetery. Amongst the grave goods are imported swords of high quality from Scandinavia and Central Europe, many different domestic weapon and ornament types, Oriental and European coins and jewellery of both Scandinavian and Fenno-Baltic origin. There are often also scattered iron rivets implying that there have been at least occasional boat cremations (Karvonen 1998; Wickholm 2005; Wickholm & Raninen 2006).

Fig. 2. Stora näset cemetery in Karjaa, S Finland, is situated on a small moraine hill at the shore of Lake Lepinjärvi. Photo: Anna Wickholm 2005.

However, the data show that clearly discernible individual burials are also found inside cremation cemeteries. These are weapon burials, buried in pits, from the Merovingian period and early Viking Age (ca AD 550-850). A typical weapon grave consists of a shield boss, a sword, one or several spearheads, a seax and/or knives and sometimes horse gear (Fig. 3). This tradition seems to exist only for a short period of time; from the Viking Age onwards the weapons are also strewn about the cemetery. The amount of weapon graves is significant during the Merovingian period but it regresses towards the Viking Age. Hence, there is something special in these individual weapon burials that could derive from their different concepts of personhood or identity within the Merovingian period society. It is possible that the male elite felt a need to distinguish themselves from the

rest of the society during this time. This would have resulted in an individual burial practice during a time that was otherwise practicing collective burials (Wickholm & Raninen 2006).

Fig. 3. Weapon grave 4 from Vainionmäki A cemetery in Laitila, SW Finland. The weapon combination consists of a shield boss, a bent sword, a so called typical Finnish angon, a knife and a ringed pin. Photo: National Board of Antiquities 1994.

During the end of the Viking Age and the beginning of the Crusade Period (ca. AD 1000-1050)[1] the first inhumation graves appear inside the cremation cemeteries under level ground. It is important to point out that not all cemeteries contain inhumation graves and that there are usually only a few inhumations per cemetery. However, this practice could relate to the concept of memory. A closer study of these graves and their meaning will be presented in the next chapter of this article.

In Finnish research the cremation cemeteries under level ground have been seen as quite disorganised and difficult to study. These cemeteries have often been understood as mere containers of grave goods, without a proper context, because the bones and the artefacts have been scattered in a random fashion into the cemetery. Most of the studies that have involved these cemeteries have concentrated on typological details of the artefacts (e.g. Salmo 1980:57; Söyrinki-Harmo 1996:102pp; Salo 2003:57pp). However, there are many possibilities to analyse them if only one looks beyond the mixed nature of the grave goods.

The cremation cemeteries under level ground are sometimes, as mentioned above, built on top of older cemeteries or settlement sites. These older remains are of various dates and thus quite heterogeneous. Previous research has seen this as random or accidental. It could, in my opinion, also be a result of an intentional way of reclaiming an older site. This is an additional activity which connects the site to memory. It seems that the hills, slopes and the ridges were places that were repeatedly visited throughout the centuries. This meant that as time passed the site received new meanings.

A break in the tradition

An interesting phenomenon occurs in the cremation cemeteries under level ground towards the end of the Viking Age. Occasional inhumation graves are now dug into the cremation cemeteries and at some places both inhumation and cremation is practiced at the same cemetery. This time could be understood as a transitional period in Finland between the practices of cremation and inhumation, and also of pagan and Christian times (Purhonen 1998:115pp, 143; Hiekkanen 2002; Wickholm 2006:201).

Over 20 cremation cemeteries with inhumations are known from Finland.[2] There are usually only a few inhumations per cemetery, but some bigger inhumation cemeteries that are built on top of older cremation cemeteries are also documented (e.g. Purhonen 1998:253; Pietikäinen 2006:4). As a result, the cremations become disturbed. One could ask why the cremation cemeteries were reused in this way. It is possible that the status, the personal character of the deceased or his/her affinity

[1] The Finnish Iron Age does not end with the Viking Age, as the case is in Scandinavia. In Finland the Viking Age is followed by the Crusade Period that in SW Finland ends ca. AD 1200, but continues in Eastern Finland and Karelia until AD 1300.

[2] Cremation cemeteries under level ground containing inhumations:
Hauho Männistönmäki, Hauho Kalomäki, Janakkala Makasiininmäki, Kalvola Pahnainmäki, Uusikaupunki (Kalanti) Kalmumäki, Uusikaupunki (Kalanti) Varhela Vähävainionmäki, Uusikaupunki (Kalanti) Hallu Nohkola, Lammi Honkaliini, Lempäälä Lempoinen, Lieto Haimionmäki, Mynämäki Franttilannummi, Raisio Mahittula, Raisio Siiri, Tampere Vilusenharju, Turku (Maaria) Ristimäki II, Turku (Maaria) Saramäki, Turku (Maaria) Virusmäki, Turku (Kaarina) Kirkkomäki, Tuulos Haaksivalkama, Tuulos Toivonniemi, Valkeakoski Kiiliä, Valkeakoski Jutikkala Kokkomäki, Ylöjärvi Mikkola.

influenced who was buried inside the cremation cemetery (Wickholm 2006; Wickholm & Raninen 2006). The practice of inhumation burials among the earlier cremation cemeteries is mainly restricted to a certain period of time, which could be understood as a transitional phase in a religious, social and a political sense. However, the Crusade period (AD 1025/1050-1150) also has some difficulties. The inhumation burials are traditionally dated only on the grounds of their grave goods, e.g. typology. Unless coins are found in the graves, they are not possible to date precisely (Purhonen 1998). Without a proper chronology or radiocarbon dates these early inhumation graves inside the cremation cemeteries are problematic to date.

The Finnish Christianisation process is considered by researchers to have happened in three stages. The first stage, beginning in ca AD 1100, is identified by inhumation burials in east-west orientation that still contain grave goods, even though these goods are decreasing. This stage can not yet be considered as Christian, but as a time when religious ideas started to change. During the second stage, approx. AD 1150, the inhumation graves are without grave goods or alternatively they contain only a few items mostly related to the dress. This stage is distinguished by the first crusade to SW Finland in the 1150's by the Swedes, and by missionary activity. This was followed by colonisation of large areas of Finland. During the third stage, which started at the beginning of the 13th century, the church had already begun to collect taxes (Hiekkanen 2002:488-491). The inhumations from the cremation cemeteries are most likely predecessors to the first stage, but because of the lack of an accurate chronology it is likely that some graves also belong to the first stage.

The occasional inhumation graves that are found from cremation cemeteries could be explained in many ways. I do not consider these graves as Christian, but merely as a sign of breaking a tradition due to influences from new ideas. It is also possible that at least some of the inhumations were placed inside the old cemetery as a normal continuation, at a time when no other burial place was yet established. The people who were inhumed in the cremation cemeteries were probably part of the same group of people that had been using the cemetery for centuries. It is thus understandable that they would wish to be buried inside the old cremation cemetery with their forefathers, even if the burial tradition had begun to change. There are some cemeteries where inhumation and cremation have been practiced simultaneously, which means that the transition from cremation to inhumation happened slowly. However, there are also cremation cemeteries that were first used during the Merovingian period and again during the Crusade period after a 200 year break. This means that there was some other reason for returning to the place. The way these inhumations are placed in the old cemetery, either in the centre or at its boundaries, seem to resemble some sort of statement or desire to express continuity. These cemeteries are particularly interesting in the view of commemoration. There might have been ideological or religious changes that contributed to this tradition. It is possible that the people needed to bond with their ancestor because of the pressures that the incoming new religion brought to the community. Hence, the old burial sites became important and they came into play once again.

The past in the past: continuity or repossessions of older sites?

Two different concepts of time are possible to distinguish in the reuse of ancient monuments and landscapes. First, there is the genealogical history, where a site has been in use continuously for a long period of time. The people who have been reusing the site can thus prove a direct link to their ancestors. Secondly, there is the mythological history that is not possible to associate with the immediate past of the people. This means that certain myths and stories can be associated with the place, but the people have no direct history to it anymore (Gosden & Lock 1998).

For an archaeologist it can be difficult to assess which kind of reuse is present at a certain site. As a rule, one can look at the time gap between the different actions that have been performed at the site. If a Bronze Age cairn is reused during Late Iron Age it is difficult to prove that there is a direct genealogic link between these two groups of people. It is thus possible that the people that are buried inside the cairn are not direct ancestors to the Iron Age people, but the place itself is important for some other reasons to the Iron Age society (Wickholm 2007).

As stated above, many Finnish cremation cemeteries under level ground have either an older settlement layer or an older cemetery under the cremation cemetery. Why are the cremation cemeteries under level ground built on top of these places? Was this intentional or merely accidental? In my opinion, too many sites have been re-used in order for them to be the result of random selection of location for a new burial site. It is probable that the earlier burials or landscape features influenced the choice of location. It is likely that these locations were selected carefully and became embedded with different memories through time (Tilley 1994:26-29, 67; Williams 1997:2pp; Bradley 2002).

The traces of earlier cemeteries or burials found under these cemeteries are quite diverse. There are cremation pits and urn graves from both the Roman Iron Age and Migration period (e.g. Salo 1968:57-60, 87). Tarand graves and traces of cairns from Bronze Age and pre-Roman Iron Age are also found under cremation cemeteries (e.g. Kivikoski 1941a, Kivikoski 1941b; af Hällström 1946; Pietikäinen 2005).

It is possible that there is some kind of connection between burials from the Roman Iron Age (AD 1-400)

and cremation cemeteries under level ground. It seems that most of the re-used sites are urn graves and cremation pits from this time period. This means that the place of burial has either had a special character (e.g. topography) or that the burials have been marked somehow in the landscape. The small moraine hills or slopes might have been treeless, which would make them quite visible in the landscape. The grave markers might have been either stones or wooden poles. The cemeteries could also have been surrounded by a fence (Söyrinki-Harmo 1984:118; Seppälä 2003:49pp; Wickholm 2005).

If the graves were marked, it probably meant that they were also maintained by someone, possibly even throughout the centuries. This could have been the case especially for the individual weapon burials that were probably perceived differently due to their status or gender conceptions (Wickholm & Raninen 2006). If these sites were used also between the funerals for other ritual activities it is possible that the landscape was kept open. I will address this issue through some examples.

Franttilannummi, in Mynämäki, SW Finland, is a long-term cremation cemetery under level ground. The cemetery has originally been erected on top of a large moraine ridge and the cemetery layers cover almost the whole ridge (Salonen 1927; Salonen 1928). The earliest signs of burial are from the Roman Iron Age, but the cremation cemetery was in use between the Merovingian and Crusade period. The context is quite difficult to distinguish, because the moraine in the ridge has been utilised by the landowners during the beginning of 20th century. A big gravel pit has thus unfortunately destroyed the central parts of the cemetery. In 1927, private entrepreneur August Laine found an urn grave from the edge of the gravel pit during an independent digging. The finds were all reclaimed by the National Museum in 1928. The grave consisted of the remains of a wooden urn, pieces from a bone comb and a number of burned bones. The urn had been covered with a slab of red sandstone. This burial can be dated to the late Roman period (AD 200-400). Another early burial was found during archaeological excavations in 1928. This cremation pit was also covered with a red sandstone slab. The pit contained charcoal, soot and burned bones (Salonen 1928; Salo 1968:59pp).

These two burial forms, the urn and the pit graves, are reminiscent of the well-known Kärsämäki cemetery in Turku, SW Finland, which consisted of approximately 90 burials dated to the Roman Iron Age (AD 1-400). This place has also given the name to the burial form known as the Kärsämäki type. The type consists of urn burials, cremation pits and occasional inhumations, often with abundant metal finds such as imported weapons and jewellery (Salo 1968:192pp; Raninen 2005:40-44).

A few artefact finds from Franttilannummi also belong to the Roman period. These are, for example, two bronze fibulas and their fragments, some spearheads and a knife. The above mentioned graves and finds can be dated to both the early and late Roman period with reasonable certainty (Salo 1968:59pp; 205pp). After this there seems to be a 200 year break in the continuity before the area is used again.

Franttilannummi cemetery is an interesting example not only because it is re-used but also because it has a long continuity. The cemetery was in use from the middle of the 6th century to the end of the Crusade period, which means that the cemetery was in use over 600 years. Additionally, 11 inhumation graves have been excavated from the cremation cemetery. These were all quite badly preserved, but the deceased had all been buried in a wooden coffin which had been covered with a stone setting. In particular, the female graves contained remains of jewellery and dress such as bronze spirals from both the headdress and the apron. One of the female inhumations also contained silver coins, the youngest of which had been minted between 1023 and 1029 (Cleve 1933; Purhonen 1998:248).

A similar example is known from the nearby Saramäki cremation cemetery under level ground in Turku. It was originally believed that the burial form started as early as the Roman period, because the oldest finds seem to have been mixed into the cremation cemetery (Rinne 1905:8-12). However, later excavations revealed that there had been older burials under the cremation cemetery. One of them was an urn grave of the above mentioned Kärsämäki type. Inside the ceramic vessel two knives and a spearhead was found among burned bones. According to the director of the excavation, the burned bones had been very finely ground. The urn grave had been covered with a layer of stones (Tallgren 1919:7pp). Two other weapon graves are also known from this period. Both of them included a sword, one being a *Gladius*. The Roman period cemetery seems thus to have been abundant in finds. Amongst the finds are different types of arm rings, fibulae, knives, a pair of scissors and ceramics. Of special interest are the bronze end-fittings from two drinking horns of a type that probably originated from the island of Gotland. These are quite rare in the Finnish material. However, the fittings were unfortunately collected as stray finds from the cemetery and thus their specific context is uncertain (Salo 1968:57pp, 174, 204pp).

All Roman artefacts in the cemetery derive from cremations. Besides the urn grave and the cremation pits from the early Roman Iron Age (AD 1-200) there are also different stray finds from the late Roman period (AD 200-400) as well as sparse finds from the beginning of the Migration period (AD 400-550). It is possible that these finds derive from a partly destroyed tarand grave (Kivikoski 1939:16pp; Lehtosalo 1961).

If the finds from the Migration period are dated correctly, then it is possible that the place had been used continuously during the whole Iron Age, from the 6th century up to the Crusade period. If there was a gap, then

it was quite short, which could indicate that the memories stayed quite vivid to this place. Two weapon graves from the Merovingian period belong to the cremation cemetery under level ground. Four excavated inhumation graves, of which two were intact, date to the end of Viking Age or the beginning of the Crusade period. One of the intact inhumations belonged to a woman who was seemingly rich. It consisted for example of two round brooches of bronze with connected chains, a neck-ring, a penannular brooch, a bracelet and two finger-rings, all made of silver. Pieces of bronze spirals from the remains of the dress were also found (Tallgren 1919:1, 8pp; Kivikoski 1939:16; Purhonen 1998:255pp).

The best example of the past in the past is however found from Karjaa (Sw. Karis), on the south coast of Finland. Here, at Hönsåkerskullen, two earth-mixed cairns from the end of the Bronze Age were manipulated in different ways during the Iron Age. Two cremation pits from the Migration period were at the edge of one of the cairns, one of which with over 80 artefacts and 6.5 kg of burned bones. During the Merovingian period, a cremation cemetery under level ground was built on top of the cairn. The activity destroyed the earlier structure, and today the cairn is somewhat hard to detect. However, in the middle of the cemetery there is still a reconstructed rectangular stone coffin belonging to the original cairn. The other cairn, which until the 1990's was believed to be completely intact, had also been reused during the beginning of the Merovingian period. A weapon burial was found inside the cairn, near its edge. The burial was surrounded by a stone circle and consisted of 2 angons, one spearhead, two knives and some rivets and a mount that were probably from a shield boss (af Hällström 1946; Wickholm 2007).

It is safe to say that the earth-mixed cairns were visible in the beginning of the Merovingian period when the cremation cemetery under level ground was built. Even today, the cairn with the Merovingian cremation pit is still very prominent in the surrounding landscape (Fig. 4.). However, most of the reused sites have not been visible above ground. It is therefore relevant to ask how it was possible that both the Merovingian and the Viking Age society started to make cremations precisely above the older graves. I personally believe that it had to do with the manifestation of the collective memory. It is also possible that the Merovingian and Viking Age society wanted to express some kind of superiority over the older cemeteries and thus also the past. This might have originated from social, political or religious motivations.

Some interesting parallels to the cases from Franttilannummi and Saramäki are found in Sweden. During an excavation of a ship setting from 9th century in Vittene, in western Sweden, a cremation pit from the Pre-Roman Iron Age was found in the north end of the setting. According to the director of the excavation, the ship setting had been built at this place because of the older burial. The cremation pit had probably been re-opened and a big stone had been placed on top of the burial as a marker. It is even possible that the cremation pit had been moved in order for it to fit inside the ship setting. There are also other similar examples from the same cemetery. Several Viking Age burial mounds seem to have been erected on top of Pre-Roman urn graves. It seems that the connection to the old burials has been emphasised by this behaviour (Artelius 2004:109-111). What is remarkable in the examples from western Sweden is that the reused sites have been cemeteries under level ground, not visible monuments like mounds or cairns. According to Artelius, these burials must have originally been marked by wooden poles and raised stones, but even after they had decomposed the site remained important on a mythical level (Artelius 2004:114-116). I agree with Artelius, but it is also possible that the graves have been tended by the community over centuries, creating a site of memory with "real" visible graves.

Fig. 4. The earth-mixed cairn from the Bronze Age at Hönsåkerskullen in Karjaa, S Finland, also contained a weapon burial from 7th century AD. Photo: Anna Wickholm 2004.

In England, Bronze Age barrows were routinely re-used, especially during the Roman Period. The barrows were used for ritual purposes through the deposition of coins or other artefacts in their interiors. Sometimes burials were also dug either directly into the barrow or in its immediate vicinity. During the Anglo-Saxon period, the re-use seems to have been even more widespread. At that time, Roman settlements and different kind of fortifications were used in addition to the Bronze Age barrows. The reason for making Christian burials inside barrows might be related to an ancestor cult. The tradition was still so strong during early Christian times that the church could not break the bond between the Anglo-Saxons and their ancestors (Lucy 1992:97-99; Williams 1997:4-22; Semple 1998:121-123; Petts 2002:198).

In Sweden, it seems that site re-use takes place routinely during the Viking Age. Torun Zachrisson has stated that this could have derived from a need for the Viking Age

people to re-connect to their ancestors. The Viking Age inherited right to own a farm, the Odal, was often expressed through ritual activity. It was important to take care of both the living and the dead. This right could therefore be displayed in the landscape by erecting a burial mound on top of a Roman or Migration period cemetery. This was not only an expression of strong family connections but also a will to belong to the same group of ancestors that had once possessed that place. It was important to take care of both the living and the dead (Zachrisson 1994; *ibid* 1998:120.)

Mats Burström has pointed out that Viking Age re-use is a sign of interest in the past. In his opinion, the Viking Age people wanted to express their own unique local character, especially during times of social or religious change. By re-using the past the society could confirm the stability of history, even though times were changing. Cemeteries were thus important places for identity and the collective memory. The importance lay in the monumentality and the visibility of the burial mounds (Burström 1991: 144pp; Jennbert 1993:76, Burström 1996:25, 32; Artelius 2004:115).

Towards a site of memory

By comparing the above-mentioned examples of site re-use from Britain and Scandinavia with the Finnish cremation cemeteries, one might make some conclusions.

When older settlement layers and burials are found under cremation cemeteries I believe it could be connected to the cognitive landscape. The Finnish cremation cemeteries under level ground have a prominent location in the landscape and their visibility might have made them into sites of memory. The burial site, as such, might have possessed characteristics that made it important. These reasons might have influenced how the site was selected to become a burial place. Over a long period of time people came back to this place to bury their dead and to perform their cult. Even though there might have been intermissions between the burials, the site still lived on in myths. Through time the site received new meanings that may no longer have been connected to the landscape, but rather to the cemeteries. It is thus possible that the older sites were not connected to the later cemeteries through a direct genealogic link. However, the place stayed known to the people because of the stories that were connected to it. This might have been the reason that the site was taken into requisition much later.

The ritual activity that took place at the cemeteries gave the place a specific meaning for several centuries; the cemeteries became sites of memory that also strengthened peoples' identity. However, this tradition only lasted for a short period of time. When the original phase of crisis was over new inhumation cemeteries were established at new locations. It was no longer important to manifest the bond to the ancestors. This could also explain why there are only a few inhumations inside the cremation cemeteries.

Conclusions

In this article, I have presented some features concerning the Finnish cremation cemeteries. The reuse points out that certain places, especially cemeteries, have had a special meaning for past people and their identity. Memories, myths and tales that were connected to these sites kept them important for a considerable amount of time. Cemeteries could thus have a mnemonic value. This knowledge might have been transferred orally as a long chain from generation to generation.

I see the cremation cemeteries under level ground as sites of memory: places that bind the past and the present together and that have maintained the collective memory. Past people could relate to these places and they knew that not only did their ancestors live there but that their identity was also buried there. The cemeteries thus became places where a common and shared identity was stored. "Who are we, where do we come from and where are we going?" were all questions that could be answered at these places.

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Paper II

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"Stay Where you Have been Put!" The Use of Spears as Coffin Nails in Late Iron Age Finland

Anna Wickholm

The article will address some peculiar inhumation graves dating to the end of the 11th and the beginning of 12th century in the Häme region in Finland. The inhumations mentioned in the article are located in the flat cremation cemeteries (AD 550–1150), and their coffins are nailed with spears or other weapons. The custom could be explained as a precautionary measure to prevent the dead from haunting, but alternative interpretations should also be taken into consideration. The peculiar graves could be interpreted as an expression of ancestor cult.

Artikkel käsitleb mõningaid erilisi Häme laibamatuseid 11. sajandi lõpust ja 12. sajandi algusest. Kõigi nende hauad on kaevatud läbi maa-aluste põletuskalmete kultuurkihi (550–1150 pKr) ja kirstude kinninaelutamiseks on kasutatud odasid või muid relvi. Kommet võib seletada kui ettevaatusabinõud surnu tõkestamiseks, kuid arvestama peab ka alternatiivsete tõlgendustega. Erilisi haudu võib seostada esivanematekultusega.

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Introduction

The study of grave rituals allows one to understand better the ancient people and their beliefs regarding death. Death has aroused feelings of sorrow, fear, and aggression throughout time. Death is a constant reminder of mortality, and it forces people to reflect upon dying (Tarlow 1999, 30, 35f). On the one hand, death can disturb or threaten the social order, but on the other hand collective feelings help to re-organize the society (Huntington, Metcalf 1979). One should remember that death is a serious threat to the social organisation because it can disrupt power and leadership structures (Sjöberg 1994). A funeral could be seen as an arena where the structures are re-created, old alliances are broken, and new ones re-established. The funeral itself is the beginning of something new, which might involve new possibilities, but it is also the closure of something that has once been (Oestigaard, Goldhahn 2006).

Some burial contexts may be so peculiar and odd that one might start to question the ancient people's relation to death. For example, the body of the deceased may have been treated in a way which seems a disparagement of modern values and standards. Some death rituals are almost impossible to explain in a rational way. Maybe it is not surprising that archaeologists tend to associate some burial rituals with banishment or ghosts. Was the society afraid of its dead? Was the person buried in this way because he/she had been a threat to the others or a bad person? Was the society afraid that the deceased would rise from the dead at some point and start haunting them? What was the deceased engaged with during his lifetime to pose a threat? Had he been a criminal or simply a disliked and hated person?

The article will analyse some inhumation graves from the Häme region in Finland dating to the end of Viking Age or the beginning of Crusade period that reflect unusual mortuary behaviour. The graves have been dug into a flat cremation cemetery or in its close vicinity. What makes them special is that weapons were used to lock the deceased in their coffins. The coffin lids were all nailed with either spears, swords, or some other sharp weapons. All weapons bear traces of wood, which suggest that they have indeed been nailed into the wooden coffins. Spears and other items, which were over 500 years older than the inhumation grave, had been used in one case. It seems that the spearheads were taken from the much older cremation cemetery because all the items have been in fire.

The inhumation graves raise many questions. Why are they located inside an older cemetery, and is the place of burial of any significance? Why are the coffins locked with weapons? Do the weapons posses some kind of special characteristics, or are they merely functional? Were the Late Iron Age people so afraid of their dead that they had to use weapons for locking the deceased inside their coffins, or is there some other explanation?

Presentation of the material

The chapter presents a brief overview of three cemeteries in Häme where the grave coffins have been nailed with spears or with some other weapons. The cemeteries are all located in an area of 80–90 km from Janakkala in the south to Ylöjärvi in the north.

The Makasiininmäki cemetery in Janakkala is situated approximately 20 km southwards of the town of Hämeenlinna. The area was first excavated already in the 1850s. The flat cremation cemetery dating to the 6th and 11th centuries has revealed some inhumations from the Crusade period. Oiva Keskitalo excavated the cemetery in the 1950s, and he found a strange inhumation grave with a western orientation.

The inhumation occurred inside the cremation cemetery, and the fill of the grave included charcoal, burned bones, and artefacts which had been in fire. The contours of the original coffin had left a 1-cm-wide dark band in the earth. A big stone had been placed on top of the coffin at the head end. Five artefacts were found at the contour of the presumed coffin. Keskitalo claims that the items had been placed there vertically to fasten the coffin lid. The artefacts included an iron hook, a small knife, a cutting edge of a sword, and two spearheads. After fastening the artefacts to the coffin lid they had also been bent downwards so that the sockets and the handles of the artefacts followed the edges of the coffin (Keskitalo 1950b, 45f; Purhonen 1998, 241).

The excavation report shows that only small pieces of skeleton had been preserved. These were parts of the skull, some teeth, and a neck vertebra. At the height of the breast there were a small penannular brooch dating to 12th century, a glass bead, and a small iron ring that could have originated from a necklace. The find material also included a knife handle and pieces of sheath that had been covered with bronze. Some pieces of woollen cloth had been preserved under the sheath. The jewellery suggests that the grave had belonged to a woman, but no anthropological analysis of the bones was made (Keskitalo 1950a).

The spearheads from the grave were much older than the inhumation grave itself. They were dated to 7th century, and thus there is a 500-year interval between the origin of the spears and the inhumation grave. It was impossible to date the rest of the edged artefacts used for fastening the coffin lid due to their fragmentary nature, but Keskitalo assumes that they originate from the older cremation cemetery because they were covered with patina from the funeral pyre (Keskitalo 1950b, 46).

Later excavations of the site revealed no new similar inhumation graves with spears as coffin nails. Therefore, it seems that the grave was a rare case. The Makasiininmäki cremation cemetery was probably used during the Merovingian Period and Viking Age. The first inhumations occurred at the end of Viking Age, and they continued until the 12th century (Purhonen 1998, 241).

The Vilusenharju cemetery in Tampere was excavated in 1961–1962. The site consists of a flat cremation cemetery and 41 inhumation graves (Purhonen 1998, 253). The oldest inhumation graves date to the beginning of 11th century. It seems that both inhumation and cremation was performed side by side at the cemetery at the time. The Crusade period inhumation cemetery was founded on the Viking Age cremation cemetery (Sarasmo 1961; Koivisto 1996, 21).

Two inhumation graves from the Crusade period seemed odd or peculiar. An arrowhead and a knife, which had been used as coffin nails, lied at the feet end of grave 12. An upright spearhead stood at the head end. All the items had been in fire, which suggests that they originated from the older cremation cemetery. Only a sin-

gle iron nail was found in the coffin. Additional weapons that had all been on the funeral pyre were found in the northern end of the coffin. The weapons included two swords, a horse bit, two spearheads, a scythe, and an arrowhead. Esko Sarasmo claims that the items had been carelessly thrown into the coffin (Sarasmo 1961).

Similarly to grave 12, grave 12a had a western orientation, but it lacked a coffin. The two graves were almost attached to each other. A bunch of artefacts that had been in fire lay in the foot end of the grave pit. The twelve artefacts, mostly consisting of spearheads and swords, had been taken from the flat cremation cemetery. Sarasmo claims that the weapons were thrown in the pit simply because they had been found and picked up during the digging of the grave pit (Sarasmo 1961). It was a rather common approach in the 1960s. The cemeteries were interpreted as the result of practical conduct, and they were not seen as an outcome of religious or emotional activity. It seems odd to gather and place items at the feet of the deceased, unless it had a meaning to the people who had buried the dead.

The Mikkola cemetery in Ylöjärvi consists of a Viking Age flat cremation cemetery and a Crusade Period inhumation cemetery. The significant feature of the flat cemetery is the lack of a stone pavement, which is rather characteristic of the cremation cemeteries in the southern Häme district (Kivikoski 1961, 163). The absence of the stone pavement made it much easier to dig later inhumations inside the cremation cemetery. 13 or 14 inhumations are known from this cemetery. They all date to the end of the 11th century or the beginning of the 12th century (Purhonen 1998, 259).

A peculiar grave was found from Mikkola cemetery during the excavations in 1976. Seija Sarkki-Isomaa published a study called *Paha mies Mikkolasta* about the grave in 1986, and thus the grave is the most famous example of the phenomenon. The burial was orientated NNE–SSW. Two vertical spears stuck in the ground were found already at the beginning of the excavations; one was located at the head and the other at the foot end of the coffin. A third spearhead seemed to have wedged the skull between the two spears. The leader of the excavations assumed that the spears had been placed in the grave to keep the deceased in his grave (Sarkki-Isomaa 1986, 147 f). A small bent spearhead was found in the foot end of the grave and only two iron nails had been used to secure the coffin (Sarkki 1976). Unlike the other burials, the weapons that were used to nail the coffin lid had not been taken from the cremation cemetery. They bear no signs of fire, and they co-occur with the inhumation. A small knife was found inside the coffin. There was a solid Crusade Period sword with the edge pointing towards the deceased's face on top of the deceased's left leg. So far, the orientation of the sword is unique in Finland. The sword bears the inscription *In Nomine Domini* (In the name of the Lord). Sarkki-Isomaa suggests that the sword was placed in the grave as a warning to the deceased not to rise from the grave and haunt the relatives. Paula Purhonen, on the other hand, has interpreted

the orientation of the sword as an explanation of the cause of death. She compares the grave with the tale of Kullervo in the national epic of Kalevala; Kullervo takes his own life by throwing himself on his own sword after a series of tragic events (Purhonen 1998, 165).

Where the dead feared or banned?

The term ban/banishment originally meant an ecclesiastical punishment such as excommunication where the person is excluded from his religious group. The term will be used in a non-catholic way in the article for explaining the peculiar burials. The term ban is used here because it often occurs in the archaeological literature**.** A grave can be labelled as odd, peculiar, or queer when the burial deviates from the cultural or religious standard or practice of the time (Andersson 2000, 10).

Most graves discussed in the article have earlier been associated with banishment to prevent the dead from haunting. Such interpretations were common because they seem easy and rational, at least from the viewpoint of modern values and standards. The rituals might have been performed because of the personal or magical characteristics of the deceased, the cause of death, or the status of the deceased. He/she might have been a criminal or a violent and despised person. The reasons for nailing the coffin with spears might have been a fast and sudden death or a slow and painful death, which could have raised fear. Maybe it was believed that the dead could rise from the grave and avenge themselves on the living for their improper burial or the absence of some grave goods.

The inhumation graves analysed here all date to the transitional period from paganism to Christianity. The change in beliefs might have caused fear among the people, and the burial rituals might reflect the precautionary measures. The revolutionary idea that the place of burial was no longer the home of the deceased but only a container for the body before its Resurrection must have confused the people (Cleve 1948, 72ff). Maybe it even caused fear of the dead?

Archaeologists have interpreted a range of phenomena as either banishment or precautions against the walking dead. It has often been an explanation for broken, twisted, and bent artefacts found in the Iron Age cremation cemeteries (Huurre 1990, 207f; Hirviluoto 1976, 67; Karvonen 1998). Several burial customs were associated with banishment or precautionary measures, including burials where the deceased had been decapitated (Lehtosalo-Hilander 1988, 194) or had a knife on the throat (Lehtosalo-Hilander 1982, 21; Sarkki-Isomaa 1986) as well as graves surrounded by weapons (Mägi 2002, 131f) and tied-up bodies (Leppäaho 1936; Hagberg 1937, 205–207).

The belief in ghosts was especially strong in Scandinavia in the transitional period from paganism to Christianity. It was believed that ghosts were people who had possessed negative traits already during their lifetime. They were fearful, evil, and revengeful. Special events, such as accidents or epidemics like the plague, could have brought about the belief (Ström 1960, 252f; Näsström 2001, 319f). Certain precautions had to be taken to prevent the dead from haunting, including burial in a remote place, decapitation, putting a pole through the body, or binding the body with ropes in order to prevent the deceased from moving. The deceased could also be exhumed and cremated, and the ashes were thrown into the ocean (Ström 1958, 433; Ohlmark 1983, 98; Honko 1960, 254).

Scissors, knives, needles, and other sharp items were used as protection against ghosts in the Historical Times (Cleve 1978, 86; Mägi 2002, 132; Hagberg 1937, 124, 202–208). People placed an axe on the threshold or under the pillow in Greek-orthodox Karelia to protect themselves from haunting ghosts. If the ghost did not disappear, one had to place two branches of alder both in the head end and in the middle of the grave, and a single branch in the foot end and say: "Stay where you have been put!" (Fi. *Pisy paikallas, mihin olet pantu!*, Paulaharju 1995, 120f, 211f). Estonian folk tradition associates the axe with the magic surrounding the livestock (Selirand 1974, 87).

Makasiininmäki and Mikkola have revealed knives inside the coffins. In addition to a group of burned artefacts, an axe had been placed inside the coffin in Vilusenharju. Sarasmo claims that the axe had served as a grave good because it was the only artefact that had not been in fire, whereas the rest of the items had been placed in the coffin accidentally or randomly (Sarasmo 1961). Knives were definitely common in the graves of the time because they were part of the ancient costume of both men and women. However, all the grave goods were sharp items, which could be associated with the belief in protection against the walking dead.

Spearheads in the vertical position have also been found in other cemeteries in Finland. Two inhumation graves are known in the Toppolanmäki cemetery in Valkeakoski where the coffins were nailed with spears. The graves dated to the Crusade period (Purhonen 1998, 258). Another inhumation grave with two males and two females, on top of each other and facing different directions was located five meters away from these graves. These individuals had been buried in a coffin that was nailed with one small spearhead. This grave was also interpreted as a sign of fear of the dead (Leppäaho 1936, Pälsi 1938, 32–35). What distinguishes these graves from the graves mentioned earlier is that they are not connected to an earlier flat cremation cemetery.

Similar behaviour can be noticed in the case of a few closed complexes of cremation burials in Finland. The burials suggest that throwing spears in graves is a much older tradition; however, the sites will be discussed only briefly because of the limited

scope of the article. Ella Kivikoski excavated a large cremation cemetery consisting of grave mounds dating to the Merovingian Period and the Early Viking Age in the Kvarnbacken cemetery, which is located in the Saltvik parish on the Åland Islands. Four graves contained spears and swords that surrounded vertically the cremation pit or urn. In addition, four graves revealed some spears and swords that had been placed in a slanting position (Kivikoski 1963, 68f). Anna-Liisa Hirviluoto excavated the Ainola cemetery in Lieto, south-western Finland where four spearheads vertically surrounded the cremation pit dating to the Migration Period (Hirviluoto 1976, 60, 67). Andreas Nordberg claims that spears in the vertical position have been documented in several cremation cemeteries in the parishes of Södermanland and Uppland in Sweden. A burial mound with vertical spearheads has also been found on the Öland Island. Three boat graves with inhumations are known in Norway, including a inhumation grave in a coffin. All the burials contained axes instead of spears, which had been thrown into the grave or in the coffin lid (Nordberg 2002). Spears were interpreted as means for marking or separating burials and burial complexes from each other in stone graves in Saaremaa and western Estonia (Mägi 2002; Mandel 2003). An interesting burial mound was excavated in Västergötland in Sweden in 2001. The mound had been erected in the Migration period, and it contained a single urn grave. Another burial had been made on top of the old mound at the end of the Viking Age. The grave belonged to a woman, and the cremation layer was vertically surrounded by five spearheads which had not been in the funeral pyre. Tore Artelius assumes that they had been thrown deep in the ground with great force (Artelius 2005). The spearheads and the re-use of the mound carry a symbolic value. Spear symbolism can be noted also in case of the Scandinavian inhumation graves such as the rich chamber graves of Birka (Gräslund 1980, 30f, 76).

Are the graves dedications to the Spear God Odin?

Personal status or activities of some people could also have raised fear. Important people such as shamans, sorcerers, healers, and even smiths could have been treated with precaution because of their significant role and powers. Their body or spirit might have posed a threat due to their powers after the death (Cleve 1978, 86f; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1982, 21; Sarkki-Isomaa 1986, 156; Paulaharju 1995, 89f; Purhonen 1998, 166; Price 2002; Creutz 2003, 145–150).

The spear has been associated with Odin, the god of war and death, in the Scandinavian tradition. Odin could talk to the dead, and he often appeared in different shapes or forms because he was the master of *seiðr* and the god of all sorcerers (Price 2002, 91–101; Näsström 2001, 240ff). Odin is also called the Lord of the Walk-

ing Dead in some sagas (Ström 1958, 434; Price 2002, 91–100). Odin was the one to decide which side should win a battle and who should die, by throwing his spear. The cult of Odin was practiced in Scandinavia especially in the Migration Period and at the end of the Viking Age (Price 2002). The abnormal orientation of the sword from the Mikkola cemetery could be associated with Odin. Odin makes a drunken king fall on his own sword a as a sacrifice to Odin in Grímnismál. This should not be interpreted as suicide but as a metaphor for Odins role as the master of death on the battle field (Drobin 1991, 126f). The sagas tell that Odin had also sacrificed himself (Nordberg 2003, 276–279). The occurrence of spears stuck vertically in the ground could also have been dedications to Odin. A spear thrown vertically in the surface of a house, a battle field, or a grave could be understood as part of a sacrificial ritual, that is, a ritual killing. If an honourable warrior did not die on the battle field he could be killed ritually during his funeral and dedicated to Odin (Artelius 2005, 269–272; Nordberg 2003, 275–283; see also Kitzler 2000).

Whom did the graves belong to? Were they members of the warrior aristocracy, or shamans, or sorcerers? Of the above mentioned graves only one belongs to a woman. It is important to remind, however, that a physical anthropologist has not analysed any of the graves and all the gender interpretations are based on the grave goods. The Odin cult was associated with aristocracy in Scandinavia. A warrior would have wanted a weapon in his burial to express his faith in Odin. If this is the case, then only the Mikkola grave could be interpreted as a dedication to Odin. None of the other inhumations are strikingly rich compared to the chamber graves of Birka where spear symbolism can be seen. Naturally it is possible to analyse only the burial customs. Inhumation could be associated with wealth or high status because cremation was still performed in Häme at the time. The inhumation graves in the region date to a rather early period, even if one excludes the 6th century inhumation grave tradition in the Eura–Köyliö–Yläne region. An alternative explanation would be that this tradition became accepted also among the common people, and thus it occurs at least in a small scale also in the more common graves (Nordberg 2003).

The shamanistic practice of *seiðr* was according to Snorri connected to women (Price 2002, 111–122). It can be that the woman from Makasiininmäki was a sorcerer, although it is highly speculative. However, there are no magical objects in the grave (cp. Price 2002). She looks like any other Late Iron Age woman.

Were the religious beliefs the same in Scandinavia and in the Finno-Ugric area? Could the Odin cult have reached as far as the Häme region in Finland? Why can one see manifestations of the cult in Finland at the time when the religious and burial customs were changing?

Stronger connections with the ancestors

All the inhumations under discussion have some commonalities. First, they are all from the end of the Viking Age or the beginning of the Crusade period, which was a time when the burial and religious customs were changing. Secondly, they are all located in the area of Häme. However, no one seems to have asked before why the burials occur inside cremation cemeteries. The context of the burials is relevant because the re-use of the site also unites them.

The earlier interpretations related to banishment and precautions taken against the dead are not easy to accept. If the dead were feared then why did the settlement pattern stay the same, that is, the dwelling sites were situated close to the cemeteries? Why to bury the feared and hated people in a common burial place surrounded by normal inhumation graves? Why were these people not buried far away from the settlements in some remote and distant place, as suggested in the Scandinavian sagas (Ström 1958, 433)?

The funeral was an important event not only for the deceased but also for the relatives and the society. A valuable member of the community – a parent, a provider, a skilful farmer, hunter or craftsman – had passed away. People experienced different feelings such as sorrow, shock, and possibly fear for the future. The mourners had to deal with the feeling of loss during the funeral. Death should be seen as a transformation. First, there is the social persona, then the corpse, and finally the deceased who is incorporated into the community of his ancestors. The society needs to adjust to this change and re-organize its social order. The funeral followed the pattern of the agreed and shared norms of the society where every attendant knew what was going to happen next. Nothing in the ritual was left to chance or done by accident.

The assumptions of some researchers that the older weapons occurred by accident in the coffins in Makasiininmäki and Vilusenharju seem to be invalid. It is hard to believe that the weapons were taken from an older cemetery simply because they were there and accessible. Throwing spears and other weapons through a wooden coffin requires great force, and it would not have been done without a purpose.

The inhumations date to an early period, and they belong to the transitional period from paganism to Christianity. Thus, the burial rituals could have taken new forms, which were a mixture of the old and new ideas. Several inhumation cemeteries that are located on top of a flat cremation cemetery or in its close vicinity are known in Finland. Sometimes there are only a few inhumations but there might also be a whole cemetery on top of the older one. All the burials date to the end of the Viking Age and the Crusade Period. They reflect customs that could be both Christian and pagan, and thus it is difficult to distinguish the graves as Christian or non-Christian. It can well be that it is the transitional phase that is important in the case of the burials.

The location of the inhumation graves inside the old flat cremation cemeteries is an important feature. The re-use of old cemeteries should not be seen as accidental but as a manifestation of the relationship between the living society and its ancestors. It seems that it was the site itself that became important to the people at the end of the Iron Age, which could also explain why these sites were re-used for a long time. The site had a symbolic value. When the spears were re-used they served not as weapons or as nails *per se* anymore but as locks. The spears were probably used to bind the deceased symbolically or functionally to the grave and the cemetery. The deceased became part of a larger group – the ancestors – through the ritual.

Burial inside an older cemetery connected the deceased to their ancestors, especially if the coffin was actually nailed with ancient weapons. Thus, the cemetery became a site that stored the memories and the history of the society. Belonging to this community could have been significant, especially in turbulent times. It gave the people a shared past (Artelius 2004, 102, 115).

The re-use of sites became common also in Scandinavia towards the end of Viking Age. It is believed that it can be explained by the change in the ideology of the time, which made the people more conservative in regard to the place of burial (Bradley 2000; 2002; Artelius 2004, 99; Burström 1996, 24–29; Wickholm in print, 1).

The weapons that were used in the ritual were probably not grave goods or the possessions of the deceased. It is the symbolic value of the spear itself that is of importance. The spear as the attribute of Odin had a direct connection to death. The weapons that were re-used in the burial ritual were probably considered as antiques already at the time of the burial. It is well known from later times that certain artefacts can sustain memories. Weapons are often personified, and they have the ability to bring back memories of the past or of their previous owner. It is possible that certain weapons were dug up and placed into a new grave because of their symbolic value (Williams 2005, 253ff, 264; Lillios 1999, 237f).

The Finnish inhumation graves with spears are manifestations of the same phenomenon that occurred in Scandinavia during the Viking Age. The changes in the beliefs and the turbulent times made the people more conservative. Weapons served as means of bonding with the ancestors in Finland (Wickholm in print, 2).

Conclusion

Nailing coffins with spears or other weapons should not be interpreted as fear of the dead but a ritual that connects the deceased with their ancestors. Taking weapons from an older cemetery is an important ritual, which has not been previously discussed. It can well be that the aim of the practice was to link the old ancestors

of the cremation cemetery to the dead that were interred, which was a new burial custom. Maybe it became important to bond with the ancestors in a more concrete way because of the changeover from paganism to Christianity? What could be more explicit than to use antiques? The spears and weapons from Makasiininmäki have a symbolic value, and maybe they even functioned as relics or heirlooms. Therefore, the weapons used in the ritual united the deceased physically and mentally with their ancestors because they reflected the shared past.

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"Püsi paigas, kuhu oled pandud!" Odad kirstunaeltena hilisrauaaegses Soomes

Anna Wickholm

Resümee

Hämest on teada mõned erilised 11. sajandi lõpu – 12. sajandi alguse laibamatused, mis on kaevatud maapealsete välistunnusteta põletuskalmetesse. Eriliseks teeb nad asjaolu, et kõigi vaadeldavate matuste kirstukaaned on kinni naelutatud odade, mõõkade või teiste terariistadega. Käesolevas artiklis käsitletakse haudu Janakkala Makasiininmäki, Tampere Vilusenharju ja Ylöjärvi Mikkola kalmetest. Nii Makasiininmäki kui Vilusenharju kalme relvaleiud pärinevad varasemast põletuskalmest, sealjuures on Makasiininmäki odaotsad 500 aastat vanemad kui laibahaud, millest nad leiti.

Kõnesolevad hauad tõstatavad mitmeid küsimusi. Miks paiknevad matused varasemas kalmes ja kas matmiskohal on mingi tähendus? Miks suleti kirstud relvade abil? Kas relvadel oli mingi eriline tähendus või on nad üksnes funktsionaalsed? Kas rauaajal kardeti surnuid sedavõrd, et relvi kasutati surnute kirstu „lukustamiseks" või tuleks otsida vastuseid kusagilt mujalt?

Vaadeldaval matuseriitusel võis olla mitmeid põhjusi. Esiteks võis seda tingida usk surnutesse kui üleloomulikesse, maagiliste omadustega olenditesse. Teisalt võis põhjuseks olla ootamatu või, vastupidi, väga aeglane ja piinarikas surm. Hirmu või erilist toimimisviisi võis põhjustada ka surnu isiksus või staatus. Vertikaalsete odade esinemist haudades võiks tõenäoliselt seletada ka pühendatusega Odinile, oda ja surma jumalale.

Skandinaavias olid surnutega seotud uskumused muinasuskumustelt ristiusule ülemineku ajastul eriti tugevad. Kõik odadega naelutatud Soome laibamatused pärinevad nimetatud perioodis. Usundi muutumine võis tekitada hirmu, mis võis omakorda tingida ettevaatusabinõude rakendamist matuseriitustes. Siiski on komme Soomes tervikuna väheesinev. Kui surnuid tõepoolest kardeti, miks maeti nad tavalistesse kalmetesse asulate lähedal ja mitte kaugetesse kõrvalistesse paikadesse?

Vägagi oluline on vaadeldavate matuste kontekst. Kuna kõik hauad on kaevatud vanemasse kalmesse, võiks oletada, et tähtis polnud mitte hirm surnu ees, vaid

side esivanematega. Vanade, põletuskalmest pärit relvade taaskasutamine oleks seega konkreetne viis surnu sidumiseks esivanemate maailmaga. Vanade relvade ja kalmete mnemooniline väärtus sai kahe konkureeriva usundi vahelisel üleminekuajal ehk veelgi tähtsamaks kui varem. Seega sidusid riituses kasutatud relvad surnu nii füüsiliselt kui mentaalselt esivanemate maailmaga, muutes ta ühise mineviku osaks.

Paper III

Wickholm, A. 2007. Commemorating the past. A Case of Collective Remembering from Alsätra cemetery in Karjaa, Finland. In A. Merkevičius (ed.). Interarchaeologia, 2. Papers from the Second Theoretical Seminar of the Baltic Archaeologists (base) held at the University of Vilnius, Lithuania, October 21-22, 2005. Colours of Archaeology. Material Culture and the Society, 107–116. Vilnius – Helsinki – Rīga – Tartu 2007.

COMMEMORATING THE PAST. A CASE OF COLLECTIVE REMEMBERING FROM ALSÄTRA CEMETERY IN KARJAA, FINLAND

Anna Wickholm

The article discusses the meaning of social memory in burial archaeology. The author suggests that site re-use might be an expression of collective remembering. Through a case study of a multi re-used site the author implies that the reasons for the continuous manipulations at the Alsätra cemetery in Karjaa were not only the will to repossess a place, but also an expression that linked the present with a more distant, mythological past.

Key words: social memory, embodied memory, grave ritual, past in the past, monument re-use, Alsätra cemetery, Finland.

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Introduction: why memory?

> "Memorial monuments are made of sandstone and marble, but they are also made from feelings, thoughts, memories and aspirations. As they are now covered in moss and lichen, so are they also encrusted with meanings and emotions."
> (Tarlow 1999, 184)

Memory is something we all have and find important. For some people it starts to fail while getting older, for others it stays clear until the end. Without memory and recollections we would not have an identity, we would be completely lost (e.g., Hallam & Hockey 2001, 181; Halbwachs 1992, 47). Memory studies have been a popular field of research, especially among social studies and anthropology. In burial archaeology, the use of social memory has become more common just recently (e.g., Bradley 2002; Van Dyke & Alcock 2003; Williams 2003; Artelius 2004; Nilsson Stutz; Wickholm 2006).

Commemoration has to do with remembering the dead, and thus memory, but it also has to do with emotions associated with the mourning of a deceased or a loved one (Tarlow 1999, 1, 21). There are a variety of feelings and reactions to death: shock, anger, fear, sorrow, joy, laughter and even the desire for revenge (Huntington & Metcalf 1979, 1, 23; Tarlow 1999, 28). Commemoration and bereavement can be shown through clothing, music or certain food. The dead are commemorated in all cultures, but in different ways. In Mexico, the Day of the Dead is celebrated by, e.g., eating skulls made of sugar, while in Finland we go to the graveyards to light candles on All Saints' Day. Today commemoration is often associated with post-modern nostalgia. It seems that people are almost obsessed with memories connected to war (Tarlow 1999; Prost 1992; Nora 1996). There are war memorials erected for World War II in almost every European city. We commemorate the ending of WW I and II, the Holocaust victims and those killed during 9/11 and the tsunami.

Cemeteries such as burial mounds, barrows, megaliths and pyramids are all examples of commemoration in prehistoric societies. These are not only elaborate grave structures for the elite: they are visible above ground and thus are memorials that were meant to be lasting. Some of the most visible

commemorative ritual activities at a cemetery revolve around ancestors and the commemoration of the dead. In ancient Egypt, tombs and mummies were seen as celebrations of life. It was believed that the person could live forever in the Afterworld as long as he / she was remembered. Ancestor busts were made of the deceased and commemoration meals were eaten in front of them. The name of the deceased was inscribed on both steles and on the doorways of tombs. People had to read the name aloud in order to keep the memory of the deceased alive. If this was not done, the deceased became a non-person, someone without an identity and someone who would cease to exist. This was the worst case scenario in Egypt, even during the Graeco-Roman period (Ikram 2003, 21–26).

In this article, the author argues that during the Iron Age social memory involved not only commemoration of the dead ancestors, but also active utilization of the past. Through a case study the author implies that the reasons for site re-use at the Alsätra cemetery in Karjaa was a desire to repossess a place and also an expression that linked the present with the distant, mythological past.

What is social and embodied memory?

We can look at memory in two ways. One is our own personal recollections which are thus individual; the other is how we remember collectively as a group and is thus social memory. Social process influences both people's personal memories and the community's shared memories (Connerton 1989, 3; Halbwachs 1992, 182). Maurice Halbwachs' (1877–1945) book *On Collective Memory* made him a major figure in the history of sociology. Halbwachs argued that human memory can only function through its social space, hence within a collective context. Such collective memories are crucial for the identity of families, ethnic groups, religious communities or social classes. It is the peoples' shared collective memory that gives them an identity (Halbwachs 1992, 38, 52; Van Dyke & Alcock 2003, 2).

There are different ways to remember. We can remember through symbols, words, references and objects (Bourdieu 1977). Music, sounds or tastes are also ways of recollecting past events. Hearing footsteps on stone stairs, hearing a church bell or eating a *Madeleine* cake are just a few examples from Marcel Proust's famous memoirs *The Past Recaptured* (Proust 1932).

Artifacts are often connected to a person and can thus evoke memories through their function and form, but they can also help to forget (e.g., Küchler 1987). Some artifacts and objects can get an enormous symbolic value due to, for example, their age, and they can also get completely new functions as family heirlooms or genealogical mnemonic (Lillios 1999; Lillios 2003). An adequate example of the mnemonic value of artifacts would be King Arthur's sword and the legends surrounding it; another example is the Swedish picture stone that was re-used in graves during the Viking Age (Burström 1996; Rowlands 1993; Williams 2005).

According to Connerton, memory is passed on from one generation to the next through activity that can be either commemorative or bodily practice (Connerton 1989). Repeated habitual actions, or embodied memories, help us to sustain memories. Bicycling is a great example of this; once we have learned how to do it, the memory is stored inside our body and we never forget how it is done. When we ride a bicycle after a long time, it will probably also awaken memories from the past, maybe even from our childhood (Nilsson Stutz 2004: 84). Another example would be writing. We tend to make notes when important things are said to us. It is quite instinctive to us (Connerton 1989, 22, 76).

Ritual practice is traditionally seen as an embodied memory. The person who performs a ritual act might not understand anymore *why* this is done, however, he/she knows or remembers *how* the ritual is performed (Bell 1992). When we, for example, light a candle in a church or take flowers and spruce twigs to graves during Christmas, we might not think of why we do it, it is just something instinctive, but it is still a ritual.

The main ingredient in death and disposal is ritual activity. Rituals are performed immediately after the death of an individual (sometimes even before), and many of them are rites of passages that are associated to the preparation of the funeral, the funeral itself and with the actions after it such as bereavement and ancestor cult. Rituals help the society maintain its stability after the crisis of death. They are thus transformative acts that are often quite complex in their character (Hargrove 1979, 26-30; Artelius 2000, 209–213; Hallam & Hockey 2001, 179-185). Rituals are also conservative by nature, and they are even said to involve a different conception of time. Therefore rituals should be seen as timeless (Pader 1982, 37, 43). Commemoration of the dead and ritual behavior is thus only a few examples of social memory.

The concept of past in the past

It is a generally accepted idea that ancient people are related to the monuments visible in their environment. Stonehenge or the Egyptian pyramids did certainly not leave people untouched when they passed by these monuments (Lucas 2005, 33).

Places are often connected to time, meanings and memories. Richard Bradley has argued that certain forms and places in the landscape, such as rock formations, caves, mountains and rivers, might have had a specific sacred character to people in the past and that this could explain why these places were used for grave monuments and settlements (Bradley 2000). Monumental graves, such as megaliths and barrows, were also important in the ritual landscape due to their visibility. It is possible that they even functioned as links between the present and the distant past. This might also explain why they have been re-used so frequently. Later activity around old monuments is often interpreted using *the past in the past* theory which means that the past people had a reason for returning to these places (Bradley 2002; Williams 1997; Holtorf 1997; Tilley 1994). Thus, it should not be understood as random or accidental behavior.

Sometimes the monuments and sites that were re-used acquire completely new meanings. It seems that some menhirs in Continental Europe were carved with Christian symbols while other megaliths were re-built into chapels (Tilley 1994; Holtorf 1997, 82–86; Semple 1998; Williams 1997) Single pieces from a megalith or other ancient remain were sometimes used as altars, there are also some documented cases of local people dancing around menhirs during commemoration days or other village festivities (Bradley 2002, 113; Demoule 1998, 173).

Cemeteries probably marked the time in the landscape, creating them into symbols of a lost time. At the same time they also symbolized continuity for a collective group. These timemarks or sites of memories would hence have functioned as important places for social action during the lifecycle of a site. The purpose of these sites would have been to stop time and to prevent people from forgetting. The cemetery could thus function as a memory aid or a mnemonic tool in the social memory of a community. As a site of memory, the cemetery would be a place that stored the society's collective memories (Olausson 1993; Tilley 1994; Nora 1996; Chapman 1997; Babelon 1998; Le Goff 1998; Demoule 1998; Hallam & Hockey 2001, 5).

In Finland, archaeologists have traditionally seen the site re-use as accidental or ran-

dom, thus leaving any ritual meaning outside the interpretation.

In the following, a case of a Finnish monument re-use is given. Attempts are made to explain the re-use through the concept of past in the past.

Collective remembering at Alsätra cemetery in Karjaa

In the summer of 1939, Olof af Hällström, a Finnish Swede archaeologist, excavated an earth-mixed cairn in Karjaa, on the south coast of Finland. The site consisted of two cairns, one of them being much lower than the other. The cairn he decided to excavate (Alsätra I) seemed untouched to af Hällström, even though it was lower. During the excavation he mistakenly thought that he was excavating an earth mixed cairn from the Merovingian Period (AD 550/600–800). It was only later, in 1946, that he realized that he had been excavating a re-used Bronze Age cairn (af Hällström 1950). During the last day of excavation af Hällström discovered two cremation pits (Alsätra II) dating to the end of Migration Period (AD 500–550) in the bottom layers of the stone setting just outside the cairn. This site is so far one of the best examples of a site re-use in Finland, but Alsätra is mainly remembered for its rich grave finds from one of the cremation pits displayed in the National Museum in Helsinki (af Hällström 1946, 30pp).

The cairn that af Hällström excavated was approx. 15–20 meters in diameter.

In the middle of the cairn, on the initial ground surface, he found a 3-meter long and 1- meter wide stone cist filled with smaller stones and burnt bones (fig.1). All artifacts found inside the cist and around it were from the Merovingian Period. Around the stone cist there was a circle of larger stones probably originating from the cairn. Approx. 2.5 meters north from the cist there was a large stone surrounded by an irregular stone structure. Only later it was found out that this belonged to a cremation cemetery below the ground-level. During the last day of excavation af Hällström made some test sticks with his spade in this area in order to be certain that the sand was clear of any more finds. It was then that he discovered an oval-shaped cremation pit on the south side of the large stone (ibid, 30pp).

The pit was 70 × 45 cm in size, but only 20 cm deep. The pit contained approx. 6.6 kg burnt bones and over 80 artifacts, but only little charcoal, soot or soil. The artifacts consisted of both jewelry and weapons. On the top of the pit lay a neck-ring, nine bracelets, seven knives, a crossbow fibula, some needles, tweezers and fragments of bone combs (fig. 2). In the bottom of the pit lay a shield-boss, two spears, an edge mount to a scabbard, two neck-rings

Fig. 1. The reconstructed stone cist from the cairn in Alsätra I, Karjaa, South Finland.

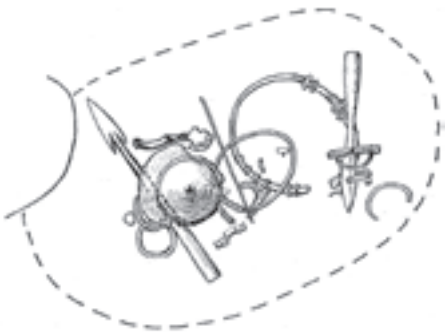

Fig. 2. The bottom layer of the rich cremation pit from Alsätra II.

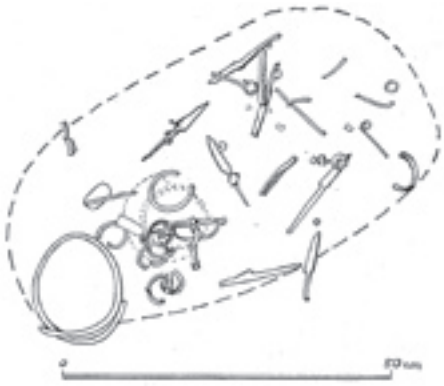

Fig. 3. The upper layer of the cremation pit from Alsätra II.

of which one had silver ornamentation, four bracelets, a puncher, a crossbow fibula with a spade-like foot, and fragments of other ones (fig. 3). (af Hällström 1946, af Hällström 1948) The mount belonging to a scabbard is an interesting hint. Even though these is not enough evidence to prove that a sword was ever put on the funeral pyre, it might indicate that the scabbard was given as a symbolic gesture during the funeral ritual. Maybe it was not necessary to sacrifice the whole expensive sword if the scabbard was enough to represent the weapon. Howard Williams has written an interesting paper about the mnemonic meaning of weapons inside burials. He argues that some artifacts are put into graves because of their commemorative meaning. At the same time other objects, such as weapons, might be absent from the grave because they are seen as powerful and even dangerous. According to Williams, this was a means of masking the dead person's identity as a less violent and more idealized social person (Williams 2005, 254–264). Was the sword left at the pyre or is it possible that it was removed from the cremation pit at some later time?

The artifact assemblage in the cremation pit indicates that the jewelry is almost completely of Baltic origin while the weaponry is Scandinavian or of Scandinavian influence (af Hällström 1948, 50). af Hällström interpreted this burial as belonging to a male district chief (af Hällström 1946, 47) or a warrior who had been buried with either one or two female slaves *or* wives (af Hällström 1948, 51). The female presence became evident for af Hällström because he rejected the idea that a man could bear jewelry. The originally Hindu idea of *suttee*, the wife sacrificing herself by throwing herself on the funeral pyre was still a liable interpretation in Finland during this time (ibid, 51). Ella Kivikoski thought that the cremation pit tradition originated from Gotland. According to her, the buried man was a foreigner, "possibly a soldier, merchant or another entrepreneur" who had moved to the area and married a local woman (Kivikoski 1961, 148).

Only a meter from the first pit another cremation pit was found. However, this grave has never been given any importance because of its less significant grave goods. The second pit contained 1.3 kg of burnt bones, a mount and a piece of the handle of a shield-boss, fragments of both a bracelet and a crossbow fibulae with a spade-like foot, a knife, two iron nails, pieces of an iron chain and several pieces of at least two bone combs and some pieces of unornamented ceramics (af Hällström 1946, 32, 34).

af Hällström interpreted this burial as to have belonged to a poor or a "penniless man" because the grave contained no complete artifacts (ibid, 47). However, when Christian Carpelan re-inspected the material from both the cremation pits in 1961, he saw that this was not the case. He realized that comb fragments found from the two pits actually fit together (KM 11138:429, 527) and the fragment of the crossbow fibulae with a spade-like foot from the poor burial (KM 11138:425) belonged to the very same fibulae in the richer cremation pit (KM 11138:447). Hence, the two cremations belonged to the same burial, and the division to rich and poor by af Hällström was inaccurate. Carpelan thought that these graves could have been from one single cre-

mation pit and that the context could have been disturbed (Carpelan 1961, 47). Yet, there might as easily have been two original cremation pits. The reason for making two pits instead of one could lie in the burial rituals. The large amount of burned bones in the two pits suggests that they belong to several individuals. But where they all cremated at the same time? Is it possible that the bones and artifacts derive from several burials that have been moved to a new location? If this was the case, then why was it done? There is unfortunately neither osteological analysis nor any AMS-dates from the bone material, but the author intents to seek financing for this in the near future.

The cairn af Hällström excavated in 1939 was never re-constructed, and due to World War II af Hällström did not return to the site until 1946. He was then convinced of the fact that the cairn he had excavated was from the Bronze Age and that it had been partly destroyed during the Merovingian period when a cremation cemetery below the ground-level was erected on top of the cairn (Alsätra III). Hence, the stone cist that was found in the middle of the cairn belonged to the Bronze Age, and the finds dating to the 7th century AD from inside the cist were secondary.

af Hällström did a small additional excavation at the site in 1946. He excavated a small area on the north side of the stone cist inside the cairn. Under the bottom of the Iron Age layer he found the original soil surface from the Bronze Age. He also found burnt bones, quartz and charcoal. Even though he was not able to get any absolute dates from the finds, he concluded that the cairn originated from the Late Bronze Age due to some similar cairns in the close vicinity (af Hällström 1950).

The cremation cemetery below ground level is a fairly typical Merovingian Period cemetery with over 230 finds, mainly from the area in the middle of the cairn and around it. The finds consist mainly of weapons and jewelry. Amongst the find material there were three shield-bosses and three spears (*angons*), a seax, three even-armed brooches and an arched brooch. The ornamented and unornamented ceramics might originate from both the funeral and later sacrifices. Over 14 kg of burnt bones were collected from this cemetery (af Hällström 1940; 1948, 53).

af Hällström never debated why the level-ground cremation cemetery was erected on top of the Bronze Age cairn. He only suggested that the location of the cremation pits could have something to do with either the large nearby stone or alternatively the old Bronze Age cairn (af Hällström 1948, 49).

A test excavation took place in the second cairn in 1991 (fig. 4). The cairn was 17 meters in diameter and 1.5 meters high. In the middle of the cairn there was a stone circle and around the cairn an edge-chain. The excavated area inside the cairn was only 11m^2 and the centre of the cairn was not excavated. Near the edge of the cairn a weapon grave was found dating to the Merovingian Period. It was found inside a small stone circle. The weapon grave contained two angons, one spearhead of the so-called Yliskylä type, two knives, a bronze rivet and some mounts possibly deriving from a shield-boss; 300 grams of bone was also found inside the cremation pit. Some of it was unburned animal bones and several fragments of horse teeth. Most of the burnt bones derived from human teeth. The grave

Fig. 4. The second cairn from Alsätra, after the test excavation in 1991.

was dated according to its finds to the beginning of the Merovingian Period (Moisanen 1991).

Due to the small excavation area inside the cairn, it was impossible to draw any conclusions on the dating of the second cairn. Thus, it is still unclear whether this cairn is from the Bronze Age or was made during the Merovingian Period. Test pits that were made between the two cairns showed traces from a settlement layer dating to the Iron Age. The finds consisted mainly of burnt clay or clay daubs, ceramics, burnt bones and quartz. Also traces of forging, such as iron slag and some pieces from crucibles, were found. No structures were found except a single post hole (Moisanen 1991).

It seems probable that also the second cairn was re-used during the Iron Age, even though it has not been verified by a thorough excavation. The shape and size of the cairn are coherent with other Late Bronze Age cairns in the area.

The settlement layer between the two cairns could also easily derive from later ceremonial activity at the site because the area is very small and would not have been suitable for permanent settlement. Traces of later activities, such as ceremonial gatherings and commemoration meals, are often missed during archaeological excavations. Such a possibility is also often left out of mainstream interpretations because they seem vague and difficult to prove. That is why clay daubs, ceramics and iron slag are often labeled as settlement finds, even though they can be regarded as evidence for ritual activity at the same time. It is also worth noting that forging of both bronze and iron is often associated with sacrificial sites, hillforts and cemeteries due to its dangerous image and the taboos surrounding it. It is believed that forging had to be done in restricted areas, often far from the settlement sites. When smithy sites were situated in the settlements, they were often at some distance from other buildings. The ritual character of forging is thus self-evident (Cunliffe 2003, 44; Creutz 2003, 143–163; Gansum 2004, 41–46; Haaland 2004, 1). Hence, the ritual dimension of cemeteries, especially when they were re-used several times, should not be excluded from the interpretations.

Discussion

A visible monument, such as a cairn, could easily become a site of memory. The making of two cremation pits and later a cremation cemetery below the ground-level around an older monument but also on top of it, destroying it at the same time, could be seen as a manifestation of memory and hence as ancestor cult (cf. Artelius 2004).

The site re-use at Alsätra can probably not be explained by a direct continuation because the time gap is too big between the Bronze Age cairn and the Migration period cremation pits. The more likely explanation is that the place has been repossessed because of its connections to a mythological history. The place, with its two cairns, could have been associated to certain myths and stories that made it important enough to be re-used under several occasions (Gosden & Lock 1998). This could have derived from topographical factors in the landscape. The cairns were easy to detect in the landscape due to their monumental character, so they were also easy to manipulate. It has been suggested that monumental graves could function as markers of the territory in the ritual landscape (Bradley 2002; Tilley 1994).

The reason for erecting a new cemetery on top of an older site could be a sign of showing respect to the older generations or a sign of nostalgia towards ancient times (Burström 1996). Maybe it became important for the Iron Age community to re-create the relationship with the mythical ancestors of the past. This would give people a stronger identity because the body thus becomes a link between the past and the present.

The idea of building something new on top of something old is always a sign of continuation (Tilley 1994; Williams 1997; Olausson 1993; Zachrisson 1994). The cairns in Alsätra could be understood as links between the past and the present, creating a bond between people and the mythical ancestors: gateways into the past.

But why did the Iron Age community wish to communicate with heir ancestors in such a concrete way? In Sweden, the re-use of older sites seems to have become more frequent during the Viking Age when the religion changed (Artelius 2004; Burström 1996; Zachrisson 1994). There the site re-use seems to have happened especially in the visible monuments from the Bronze Age or the Early Iron Age. Were cairns and mounds actually important parts of the ritual landscape?

Ethnographic research has shown that ideological, mythological and sociological meanings might contribute to the choice of a burial. A burial mound or a barrow in an open field might represent the house of the dead. In many cultures it was believed that the dead continued to live in their graves, which meant that the relatives could come to visit and communicate with their ancestors (Williams 1997, 2, Zachrisson 1994, 220). According to Artelius, the place of burial not only secured history and the identity of people, but also gave them social stability through ritual activity (Artelius 2004, 114pp).

Finally

In this article, I have tried to argue that cemeteries are much more than places where the dead are buried. A cemetery was a place that connected people to their ancestors. The ancestor cult and the rituals performed at the cemetery should be seen not only as commemorative activity but also as celebrations of the social memory. Cemeteries are expressions of the people's comprehension of time, but they are also reminders of continuation: the cemetery functions as a monument for the collective memory and identity. We should remember that commemoration and remembrance walks hand in hand through the whole process of death, dying and disposal.

As we have seen, later activities at cemeteries can indicate that they were erected in topographically important places. Site re-use is probably much more common than we as archaeologists want to believe.

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Paper IV

Wessman, A. 2009a. Reclaiming the Past: Using Old Artefacts as a Means of Remembering. In A. Šnē & A. Vasks (eds.). Interarchaeologia, 3. Papers from the Third Theoretical Seminar of the Baltic Archaeologists (base) held at the University of Latvia, October 5-6, 2007. Memory, Society, and Material Culture, 71–88. Rīga – Helsinki – Tartu – Vilnius 2009.

RECLAIMING THE PAST: USING OLD ARTEFACTS AS A MEANS OF REMEMBERING

Anna Wessman

This paper provides an overview of the occasional ancient artefacts from Iron Age burials in Finland. These artefacts, which are often much older than the grave itself, have sometimes been interpreted as the remains of an older settlement or burial layers, but the question of deliberate deposition should be taken into consideration, too. Old monuments and landscapes are appreciated not only for their ritual but also for their commemorative role. Ancient burial mounds and abandoned houses were re-used, especially during the Viking Age, in both Scandinavia and the British Isles. The choice of burial location seems thus to be connected to the selective remembering or forgetting of the past. Burials are sometimes also manipulated in other ways; certain artefacts might either be removed from or deposited into the grave. In this paper, I will suggest that portable artefacts could play an important part in the construction of social memory. Especially weapons could accrue new meanings and mnemonic values through their recycling. They could become heirlooms or objects of memory that played a public role in society.

Keywords: social memory, heirlooms, artefact re-use.

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Introduction

In burial archaeology surprising discoveries are commonplace. Archaeologists often find artefacts that seem to be much older than the grave itself. These old artefacts confuse us, archaeologists, and make our imagination spin. Why are they there? Have the prehistoric people valued heirlooms or are these objects merely bizarre amulets without a context? There are three types of re-use documented in prehistoric Finland. First, there are burials that contain one or more old artefacts. Second, there are old burials that contain much younger artefacts. Third, there are burials that are overlaid with more recent burials, often of different type. To this category also belong burials that are erected on top of older settlement sites.

It is a widely recognized fact that monuments and landscapes are appreciated for their commemorative role (e.g. Bradley, 2002; Tilley, 1994). However, artefacts can also play a part in the construction of collective memories. Such artefacts objectify both memories and history. During a funeral, such kinds of objects might obtain new meanings depending on their life histories. They acquire a mnemonic significance and can even function as memory-aides (Gosden & Marshall, 1999; Lillios, 1999, 236; Lillios, 2003; Williams, 2005, 253–255). This kind of re-use has often been overlooked by archaeologists. However, in this article, I will argue that re-use was not random. Instead, it should be understood as meaningful, because it was a visual and tangible way of communication with real or perceived ancestors. Re-use could also provide a means of legitimising control or claims on the land. For this reason, this behaviour should not be seen as an anomaly (Bradley, 2002, 122–124; Hållans Stenholm, 2006; Pedersen, 2006, 351).

How Does Social Memory Work?

We can look at memory as both emotional and conscious. It can thus be remembered and understood through awareness and experience. Memories are shaped by social and cultural contexts. The historical experience has to do with deep-structured mental images. Memories are often very individual and private. An adequate example of the kinds of personal memories is Marcel Proust's famous autobiographical novel series *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913–1927). Historical awareness, on the other hand, concerns ideology and it identifies itself by collective and public memories. We have, for example, not experienced the French revolution ourselves, but we still have the knowledge and understanding of its historical significance for European history. In other words, our memories are mixed, possessing both personal and social aspects (Fentress & Wickham, 1992, 7).

Of course, it is individuals who do the remembering but when people remember they actually do it collectively as parts of a community. This means that people remember within their social group. According to Maurice Halbwachs, the grandfather of social memory theory, these groups can be families, believers of a religion, or social classes. It follows that we remember our childhood as being part of our family and our working life as part of an office community. These memories are all group memories, memories that we share with others. This is what is referred to as social memory (Halbwachs, 1992 [1941, 1952]). As Barbara Misztal states, "memory is social because every memory exists through its relation with what has been shared with others: language, symbols, events, and social and cultural contexts" (Misztal, 2003, 11). The past is thus commonly shared and remembered (ibid., 13).

Paul Connerton extended the concept of collective memory to include the human body. In his book *How societies remember* he suggests that it is bodily gestures, manners, performances and other socially negotiated practices that function as sites for the collective processes of memory. The things we learn to do with our body (the so-called incorporating practices) are not learnt by teaching or explaining, but instead by showing how it is done (Connerton, 1989). Classic examples of embodied memory are how to ride a bicycle, to swim or to skate (e.g. Baddeley, 1976, 255; Misztal, 2003, 9; Nilsson Stutz, 2004).

Pierre Nora has contributed to this approach by drawing the places and spaces of memory into the debate. Certain memories are often connected to certain places; he calls them *lieux de mémoire* or realms of memory (Nora, 1996). This means that our memory is bound to the context.

The Art of Remembering and Forgetting

Our memory is a complicated system for storing and retrieving information. It can "range in storage duration from fractions of a second up to a life-time" depending on whether the memory is working sufficiently or not (Baddeley, 1997, 3). It is often said that our memory resembles a library. There does not seem to be any problem in our ability to store information; instead, it is our ability to retrieve information that limits our memory (Baddeley, 1976, 285; Baddeley, 1997, 191). Memory also tends to mythologize the past since it appeals to our emotions. Memory is thus subjective, selective and sometimes also inaccurate (Misztal, 2003, 99). On the other hand, our memory is

never accidental. This relates to both oral and written history (Fentress & Wickham, 1992). Material culture can also be associated with memory even though this has attracted little interest of archaeologists before the 21st century (Jones, 2007; Van Dyke & Alcock, 2003; Williams, 2003). Places, buildings and monuments are physical reminders of the past, but ethnographic and archaeological examples have shown that objects have mnemonic functions, too (e.g. Bruhns, 1994; Gosden & Marshall, 1999; Høilund Nielsen, 1997; Lillios, 2003; Schuster & Carpenter, 1996).

Amongst the Nuers of Sudan, only important ancestors are remembered and the less significant individuals are forgotten. The important ancestors are usually males who form the apex of a triangle of descent. Among the Nuers, the past goes back only 10 to 12 generations (Evans-Pritchard, 1968 [1940], 199–200) which means a time span of at least 300–400 years. The Nuers are thus selective in their ways of remembering but they have some kind of strategy to remember things that were important. On the other hand, amongst the Enga people that live on the main island of Papua New Guinea, the oral tradition covers a period of 250–400 years. The memories passed down by men concern historical information about the past, such as subsistence, trade, wars, migrations, cult and ceremonial activity (Weissner, 2002, 237).

We usually become aware of our memory when it starts to fail (Baddeley, 1997, 169). To many of us, losing our memory, through amnesia or dementia, is frightening because memory helps us to understand who we are. Thus, memory also shapes our identity (Halbwachs, 1992). Since we use our memory constantly, the result of loosing it would produce much frustration and in the end probably also an identity crisis. Forgetting is, of course, normal even though it can be embarrassing at times. We might, for example, not remember exactly how we looked like ten years ago even though we look at ourselves in the mirror every morning. If we see a photograph from 10 years ago, we realize how much our faces have changed. Hence, the habitual act of looking in the mirror every morning has erased our previous memory of looking in the mirror (Fentress & Wickham, 1992, 39).

Forgetting can also be organized and strategic. In authoritarian societies the political machinery could remove important monuments and statues in order for the people to forget the past, while new ones, more politically correct, were created. Remembering can be thus placed under censorship. Also, some memories could be too difficult to live with and thus they became intentionally forgotten or erased from people's memories. This has been well documented in Milan Kundera's *Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1979) and in Imbi Pajus' documentary film about Estonian post-Soviet memories (Finnish *Torjutut muistot*). In Finland, the Civil War of 1918 is still being emotionally processed. This is partly because of the fact that the loosing side was not allowed to raise any public monuments over their causalities which led to suppressed memories. The winning side, on the other hand, commemorated their dead in different ceremonies involving statues, memorial stones, parades, and speeches. Heroism and patriotism were especially fostered in these memories (Roselius, 2007).

However, it is important to recognize that when people have found it relevant, their memories can be extremely exact. Memory is thus both objective and subjective at the same time; the objective part includes facts and knowledge while the subjective part consists of feelings that are based on our consciousness (Fentress & Wickham, 1992).

Re-use of Old Sites

As stated above, re-use of sites and artefacts is often ignored in the archaeological literature. However, this kind of re-use is such a thoroughly recognized pattern in Europe that it must also have been conceived as a ritualized way of both remembering and forgetting during prehistoric times. The practice of re-use has seldom been studied in a framework of ritual theory, even though it is implicitly analyzed as a kind of ritual. The premeditation and the function of the practice are often described, but a wider discussion of what it means for the burial ritual itself is often dismissed (Hållans Stenholm, 2006, 341).

Monument re-use, or old burials that are overlaid with more recent burials, are found primarily in Roman Iron Age cemeteries, in both Sweden and Finland, and the behaviour seems to be popular especially during the Viking Age. We have examples from Finland where there is a continuous usage of the same burial place for over a thousand of years (Hållans Stenholm, 2006, 342; Wickholm, 2007; Wickholm, 2008). The same phenomenon also exists in Estonia, where the *tarand*-graves[1] of the Roman Iron Age period often seem to be re-used or manipulated on several occasions during later times (e.g. Lang, 2003).

There are a few examples from Finland of contemporary artefacts that have been placed in old burials. For example, at the famous Luistari cemetery in Eura, south-western Finland, there are six cairns from the Bronze Age or Early Iron Age on the perimeter of a large inhumation cemetery dated to the Late Iron Age (Lehtosalo-Hilander, 2000b, 172–175). In one of these cairns (Cairn 422) dated to the Late Bronze Age or Pre-Roman Iron Age (763–465 cal BC), a Late Iron Age spearhead and miniature sickle was found during the excavations (ibid., 13–17). It would seem right to say that this cairn was manipulated during the time when the inhumation cemetery was erected, but it is uncertain whether the artefacts derive from a later burial inserted into the monument or whether they are merely later depositions. However, I find it probable that the whole inhumation cemetery was established at that place because of the recognized presence of the older cairns. The mnemonic value of visible monuments, such as cairns and mounds, has been illustrated by several researchers (e.g. Bradley, 2002; Jennbert, 1993; Thäte, 2004; Tilley, 1994; Williams, 1998). A very interesting addition to this specific cairn was the base from a battle axe. The axe was found on the northern side of the edge-chain of the cairn and it seemed to have been reshaped, possibly at a much later date (Lehtosalo-Hilander, 2000b, 13).

There are two cases of re-use from Ostrobothnia in western Finland which are both quite similar. In one of the Bronze Age cairns (Cairn No. 5) at the Niemenmaanmäki in Isokyrö, a Migration-Period secondary burial had been made at the outer edge of the cairn. This was an inhumation grave, which are actually very rare in this period[2] (Meinander 1950, 53, 199). Another example comes from the large Bronze Age cairn at Högberget in Lappfjärd, Ostrobothnia. A well-preserved Migration Period

[1] A *tarand*-grave consists of one or several stone enclosures, often linked together. They were built from the Pre-Roman Iron Age to the end of the Roman Iron Age but some were still in use during the beginning of the Migration period (AD 400–450). *Tarand*-graves are known in eastern Sweden, the Finnish south and southwest coast, Estonia, and Latvia. There are both inhumations and cremations known from these graves (see, for example, Lang, 2007; Feldt, 2005, 127–139).

equal-armed brooch was found inside this cairn. According to Meinander, the brooch had clearly been placed there as a sacrifice (Meinander, 1977, 26). Peter Holmblad has studied the Migration Period re-use of the Bronze Age cairns in this area. He has suggested that there is a similarity in the monumentality of the Bronze Age cairns and the cairns of the Migration Period. It means that the Migration Period population would not only have been aware of this likeness but actually aspired towards it. Sometimes this interest in the past would also have been concrete, as the two above-mentioned examples show (Herrgård & Holmblad, 2005, 172; Holmblad, 2005, 43–44).

From the Åland islands comes another example. In Sundby, in Sund parish, a large Bronze Age cairn with elaborate finds of a bronze sword, a dagger and burned bones was found in 1894. During the excavations in 1953, some Merovingian Period artefacts were suddenly found in the same cairn (Meinander, 1954, 107, 211).

In the Brobacka single *tarand*-grave in Karjaa, southern Finland, a Permian brooch (NM 17055:269) dated to the 8th century AD was found during excavations in 1966. The *tarand*-grave was dated by its finds to the Late Roman Iron Age. The brooch was found near the outer frame of the *tarand*, quite unexpectedly, according to the excavator Carl Fredrik Meinander: "It was as if the object had been lost or hidden into the grave" (authors' own translation). His interpretation was that the find did not belong to the burial; instead, it must have been a later addition, possibly from a votive offering (Meinander, 1973, 146).

There is another example from Turku (in former Kaarina), south-western Finland. In the Ravattula cairn dated to the 6th century AD, both the pommel and the guard of an S-type 10th century sword were found. The pieces were both found in the north-eastern part of the cairn, near its outer edge. The original burials consisted of two cremations from the Migration Period. Ella Kivikoski, the excavator, explained the sword as a sacrifice that happened 400 years after the original burial took place. Interestingly, she also tried to explain this behaviour. She was convinced of the fact that prehistoric people were able to understand the historical significance of the old monument (Kivikoski, 1945, 142–145). She seems to have been one of the first Finnish archaeologists who realized the significance of monument re-use.

The Penttala cemetery in Nakkila is famous for its long-term use. It is dated to the Pre-Roman Iron Age and to the Early Roman Iron Age. There is an older settlement layer under the cemetery dated to the Bronze Age underlying the cemetery. Just outside the cemetery a Viking Age axe (NM 5716:5) was found during excavation, but Unto Salo never problematized the find (Salo, 1968, 75–77).

Having considered the re-use of ancient monuments, I will now consider examples of the re-use of artefacts from earlier times.

Placing Old Artefacts in New Graves

Stone Age tools from Iron Age inhumation graves are interesting examples because they seem to be quite frequent. Moreover, reviewing the known cases of old artefacts inside Iron Age cemeteries, one realises that these are mostly Stone Age tools of different kinds, such as different types of axes, adzes, and arrowheads.

[2] Traditionally the first inhumations appear in the Finnish material during the 11th century AD. The only exception is the Lake Pyhäjärvi region in western Finland where inhumation starts already during the 6th century AD.

A common theme they all share is that they are edged weapons. However, one must bear in mind that for archaeologists, stone tools are much easier to recognize and date when they are found in a pure Iron Age context than, for example, old metal objects that are often badly burned when found inside cremation cemeteries. This disparity in the material might thus be a mere coincidence.

There are two examples of this practice, Graves 812 and 854, from the Luistari inhumation cemetery in Eura. There were a stone chisel and the fragment of a stone axe. According to Pirkko-Liisa Lehtosalo-Hilander, these tools should be understood as ritual objects, in other words, as amulets or talismans (Lehtosalo-Hilander, 2000b, 95, 107). Another Late Iron Age inhumation cemetery in Käräjämäki, in Eura, revealed more Stone Age tools. Unfortunately, there are no excavation reports from these excavations, only some references in the find catalogues at the Finnish National Board of Antiquity. In Grave 5 a slate arrow of the so-called Pyheensilta type (NM 2995:5) was found in 1894. The arrow lay in 60 cm depth just above the coffin. In the excavation of 1912, another similar inhumation grave was found. In the NE end of the grave a small polished stone adze (NM 6127:50) was found. However, this adze was also found in the filling of the grave, making the context more or less vague. These objects could be dated roughly to the Middle and Late Neolithic (for a picture of the finds, see Lehtosalo-Hilander, 2000a, 165). In Yli-Nuoranne in Eura, a small Stone Age adze (NM 18317:8) made of green slate was placed in the foot end of a Merovingian-Period inhumation grave (Grave 26). Since the adze was placed inside the coffin, it is evident that it was not there by accident (Lehtosalo-Hilander, 1970). In the nearby Köyliö region, the fill of inhumation Grave A3, from the Migration/Merovingian Period inhumation cemetery Kjuloholm, contained a Stone Age chisel (NM 9725:4), and Grave A5 contained some flint. The excavator, Nils Cleve, did not believe that the flint belonged to fire strikers, but that they more probably had been older artefacts (Cleve, 1943).

In Peltokutila in Kalvola, Häme, a Migration Period cairn was altered during the Merovingian Period into a cremation cemetery under level ground. When Nils Cleve excavated the site in 1933, he found a small (10.4 cm) battle axe (NM 9726:19) amongst the fragments of an arm-ring and a ring dated to the 7th century AD (Cleve, 1933).

The Kakkulainen cremation cemetery under level ground in Kokemäki, west Finland, is dated to the Merovingian Period and Viking Age. Unfortunately, this cemetery was partly destroyed by construction work before the excavations in 1924 (Salmo 1952, 62–63). Here, a fragment of a Stone Age chisel (NM 8338:83) was found inside the cremation cemetery. In the immediate vicinity an almost complete silver ornamented sword and a half penannular brooch were found. Since on the base of the chisel there were traces of drilling, it seemed that someone had tried to drill a hole through the chisel, probably at some later point (Kampman, 1925).

In the Vanhalinna hillfort in Lieto, south-western Finland, dated from the Late Iron Age to the Middle Ages, a stone chisel (TYA 818:64) was found inside a fireplace within a settlement context. It was first believed that the stone chisel had been placed inside the fireplace as some kind of votive offering during the Late Iron Age or in the Middle Ages. However, the radiocarbon dating showed that the fireplace was already in use during the Early Roman Iron Age, which seems to make the re-use associated with these sharp stone tools much earlier than it was believed (Asplund, 2005).

Stone Age tools are also frequently found in Swedish and Danish graves dated to the Iron Age and medieval times. At the end of the Viking Age, runic inscriptions were occasionally made on these stone axes that imply that they had an amulet function (Horn Fuglesang, 1989, 22; Moltke, 1938, 144–147). Ethnographic parallels tell of a widespread belief in the axes of the Thunder God (Carelli, 1996, 157; Huurre, 2003, 168–169; Muhonen, 2006, 4; Siikala, 1992, 172–177). There are many beliefs concerning these axes throughout Scandinavia (Finnish *Ukonvaaja*, Swedish *Torvigg*). For example, it was believed that these axes could protect their owner from fire and lightning and that they could protect livestock and afford success in hunting. According to these folk traditions, an axe could also make its owner invulnerable (Almqvist, 1974, 534). Due to these strong beliefs, stone axes and chisels were still used in Finland for many purposes during the 19th century (Huurre, 2003, 169). The partially drilled hole on the chisel found in Kokemäki suggests that the artefact had indeed been in use at a later point.

It seems that most of the research has focused on the meaning of stone axes inside later graves, resulting in the fact that other objects have become overlooked. Nevertheless, other types of ancient artefacts have been found in Iron Age contexts.

In a Migration Period cairn (Cairn No. 55) from Palomäki in Salo, south-western Finland, a Bronze Age button was found (Fig. 1). According to Marianne Schauman-Lönnqvist, the button could have been an antique amulet that the deceased had worn during his lifetime (Schauman-Lönnqvist, 1988, 75–76). In a low earth-mixed cairn dated to the Merovingian Period in Hiidentöykkä, Huittinen, pieces of an enamel ornamented penannular brooch of the so-called Estonian type from the 4th century were found (Fig. 2). These pieces were found together with artefacts and 1.6 kg of burned bones that dated mainly to the 6th century AD. The enamel brooch seemed to have been in much more intense heat than the other objects; some of the grave goods had probably not even been in the pyre. The enamel was almost gone and it was no longer possible to see the original colours of the brooch. Kivikoski was still convinced that all the finds were from a single burial. The first piece of the enamel brooch (NM

Fig. 1. Above: the button from Palomäki in Salo. Below: the fragments from the scabbard chape from the Tiitusmäki cemetery in Piikkiö. Photographed by M. Haverinen, 2008, National Board of Antiquities

10361:36) was found in 25 cm depth and the second two pieces (NM 10361:56) in the deepest part of the burial, in 51 cm depth. She thus interpreted the brooch as being placed in the grave at the same time with the burial. However, she did not suggest that the brooch could have been an heirloom. Instead, she interpreted that the brooch type had been in use much longer than archaeologists had earlier believed (Kivikoski, 1936; Kivikoski, 1937, 10–11). This explanation is interesting because only five years later at the excavation site of Ravattula did she explain a similar situation as sacrifice. However, the latter case concerned pieces of a sword that were to the contrary much younger than the burial. It thus seems likely that when an artefact is in fact much older than the grave, it is easier to explain through a long usage time or as deriving from an older burial. The Pre-Roman Iron Age spiral needle (NM 19000:5385) found in a level-ground cremation cemetery in Mahittula in Raisio, south-western Finland, is another good example. The needle was the only ancient find in a cemetery that was otherwise dated to the 7–12th century AD. However, instead of explaining the find as a later offering, the needle was explained to have derived from an older, already destroyed cairn situated under the cremation cemetery (Pietikäinen, 2006, 79).

Fig. 2. The pennanular brooch from Loima in Huittinen. Photographed by E. Laakso, 1936, National Board of Antiquities

There are at least two cases in Finland where the ancient artefact is part of a weapon. In Piikkiö, south-western Finland, there is a Viking Age cremation cemetery under level ground called Tiitusmäki (Fig. 1). When the cemetery was excavated in 1941 by Ella Kivikoski, there was a find that was seemingly older than the other finds. This was a broken chape (NM 11285:109) from a sword scabbard that was found quite near the surface of the cemetery. This is quite specific for this cemetery type; finds are often found immediately under the thin turf layer. There are similar chapes from a Danish Roman Iron Age bog finding (Nydam); therefore, the chape was dated in comparison to the Late Roman Iron Age (AD 200–400) (Kivikoski, 1941). Jukka Luoto has suggested that the cemetery actually dates to the Late Roman Iron Age and that it has come into use again during the Viking Age (Luoto, 1989, 39). On the other hand, one might ask why there is only a single find from this period. It would thus seem justified to suggest that the chape was placed in the cemetery at a later stage. A very interesting example also comes from the aforementioned inhumation Cemetery A in Köyliö. In Grave A5, the same grave that contained flint, lay a Merovingian period sword with a pommel that was much older than the sword itself. It seems that the pommel had originally belonged to a ring sword dated to the 5th century AD. In the re-investigation of the sword

it also became evident that the ring had been removed from the pommel at some point before it had been attached for the second time on the new sword (Erä-Esko, 1973, 7, 19–20; Tomanterä, 1973, 23–24; Raninen, 2007, 22). An interesting feature of this grave also is that the deceased had been placed in a different orientation (with the head to south,-south-east) than the rest of the 21 inhumation graves that were placed with the heads to the north, and that the sword lay on the right side and not on the left side of the deceased as usually (Cleve, 1943, 25–26). In addition to the re-used sword, this perhaps reflected some special traits of the personality of the deceased or his status (Raninen, 2007, 22).

One last example of this kind of re-use comes from Mynämäki in south-western Finland. There, at the graveyard of a medieval stone church, a Merovingian period cremation cemetery consisting of cremation pits and a cremation cemetery under level ground was excavated in 1927. However, in 1943 the local gravedigger stumbled upon a very extraordinary burial that probably belongs to the same cemetery. The cremated bones and the grave goods were not placed in a simple pit as most of the surrounding graves (even though it is highly likely that these graves have also included some kind of a container of an organic material). The grave goods – a sword, a shield, a spear, a Finnish battle knife, a knife, a Permian belt, horse bits and pieces of harness, the handle of a whip (or a rattle?), a dress pin, rings, an arm-ring, a deformed silver artefact, and a bone comb – were instead all placed inside the so-called Vestland cauldron (NM 11353:32). The grave is dated to the end of the 7th century or the beginning of the 8th century according to the typology of the artefacts (Salmo 1946, 20–22, 31). These cauldrons are believed to have been manufactured in the Roman Empire and they were used as burial vessels in Scandinavia during the Late Roman Iron Age and the Migration Period. They were especially common in Norway, and it seems that they never contain any weapons and only occasionally jewellery. In Scandinavia, bone artefacts such as combs and game pieces, gold artefacts in Salin's style I and small accessories to the dress such as belt fittings are much more common amongst the grave finds (Hjørungdal, 1999, 81, 84). The bronze cauldron is by itself a very rare find in Finland. Only three other examples are known, all from Ostrobothnia in western Finland.[3] The fact that this burial contained a large amount of weapons and jewellery differentiates it from the rest of the Scandinavian finds. Furthermore, what made this burial so special is that the cauldron was at least 200 years older than the rest of the grave goods, suggesting that it was an antique already when being placed inside the grave (Salmo, 1946, 30–31). An interesting fact also is that the Merovingian Period cremation cemetery was built on top of some older burials. During the excavations, an urn grave was dated to the Early Roman Iron Age or the Migration Period (Salo 1968, 87–88).

As we have seen from the examples above, not all ancient artefacts derive from the Stone Age, nor are they all sharp objects. It is clear that these old objects must have looked different from the other

[3] These cauldrons are from Levänluhta in Isokyrö (NM 2441:1) and from Gulldynt (NM 68) and Kaparkullen (NM 2891:14) in Vöyri. They are all considered to come from cemetery contexts (Salmo, 1946, 30; Wessman, in press). These cauldrons are still part of our collective memory since both the Levänluhta and the Mynämäki finds are displayed at the National Museum of Finland.

artefacts. Therefore, it is probable that the historical significance was apparent to the people who reburied these items.

How Were These Objects Obtained?

The question of the accessibility of the ancient artefacts is an interesting question that, however, is very difficult to answer. Were these old artefacts looted from older graves or were they obtained in some other way? That also raises the question of how long a single artefact was in circulation. Is it, for example, possible that these objects were in circulation during all this time, so that the artefact was never looted from an older grave? And what in that case did these objects mean for their owners? Did their owners understand the original meaning of the artefacts or were they symbolic or mythological objects?

In order for us to answer all these questions, we must try to establish the context of these finds. This is not a simple task, since they often derive from excavations that are not documented or of the highest quality. The above-mentioned cases derive from both cremations and inhumations. This shows that the mnemonic aspect of portable objects was important throughout the Middle and Late Iron Age regardless of the burial custom.

I believe that most of the ancient artefacts mentioned in this article have been removed at some point from older burials. The old burials had either been marked in some way or the social memory had in fact lived on for several centuries. It is possible that these artefacts were perceived as belonging to the context of the dead. This is also suggested by the fact that some of the artefacts bear signs of fire. In addition, the artefacts seem to be fragments, as, for example, the above-mentioned find from Tiitusmäki where only the chape of a sword was placed inside the grave. The ancient sword pommel from Köyliö suggests the same, making it an evident example of a connection between material culture and memory. The ancient fragments inside burials would thus be examples of *pars pro toto*, which means that only a small piece is enough to symbolize the original artefact.

The graves that were re-opened were probably special in some way. Stories or myths were presumably associated with them or with the surrounding landscape. Therefore, these graves were open and certain artefacts were removed from the graves.

Discussion

A culture with a strong oral tradition has to remember vast amounts of information. Mnemonic systems can help people to remember and retrieve valuable information (Baddeley, 1976, 369). Oral tradition was still important in the Middle Ages, especially among the common people. Written culture was at that point still restricted mainly to the elite. In many cultures oral tradition and thus also memory is helped by a specialist, such as a memory-man or a singer who preserves the memories of rituals, technologies and local knowledge (Misztal, 2003, 29–31). In the Hawaiian chiefdoms, the ability to recall lineage histories was a key component in the legitimatisation of chiefly status and power. Memory specialists were enlisted to keep track of these chiefly genealogies (Lillios, 2003, 147). Some Malaysian and South American tribes record genealogies, kinship, and clan affiliations in different kinds of tattoos on their bodies (Schuster & Carpenter, 1996, 154, 166–169). Oral tradition thus combines mythology, genealogy and narrative history (Fentress & Wickham, 1992, 82).

There also are early examples of written genealogies from Scandinavia. The Norse

skaldic poem *Ynglingatal* is a list of 27 deceased kings and their genealogical line from Fjolner to Rangvald (Noreen, 1925). The poem is believed to derive from the 9th or 10th century AD and it mentions not only the name of the king but also place names like Vendel, Uppsala, and Borre (Burenhult, 1999, 301, 337). The famous rune stone Rökstenen, in Östergötland in Sweden, is an excellent example of a prehistoric attempt to preserve both the oral and written history. The inscriptions describe events, legends and myths covering several generations. The stone, which is dated to the 9th century, is an obituary where a father (Varin) is honouring the memory of his dead son (Vämod). In the text, the father strongly draws out his influential descent and status, rendering the stone a status symbol for his kin. According to some researchers, it is possible that the father was in fact responsible for remembering the genealogy and history of his kin, thus giving him the status of a memory-man. Hence, the runes not only transmitted memories but also preserved and passed on mythical traditions (Arwill-Nordbladh, 2008, 173–174; Zachrisson, 1999, 341–342). Also, the picture-stones from Gotland show the myths and sagas of the Old Norse world, even though this is not demonstrated through writing but instead through illustrations (Meulengracht Sørensen, 1992, 166).

Below I will give two possible explanations to the phenomenon of ancient artefacts inside later burials.

A. *Translatio* or grave robbery?

There are many examples from European prehistory of graves that have been re-opened some time after the funeral. It seems that certain items have been removed from the graves due to their emotional, historical or material value. Occasionally, the body has also been manipulated or even removed from the grave. These re-openings and the removal of objects have traditionally been explained as grave robbery, but alternative approaches have been introduced, too (e.g. Leskovar, 2005; Staecker, 2005). The economic motive is a logical explanation for grave robbery, but there must also have been deeper meanings to this. Certain objects, such as swords, helmets, valuable jewellery or rings, could have been important symbols for legitimating and passing on ownership, hereditary rights, and power. These objects were removed from the grave and used in a particular way in rituals involved in the crowning of new political or religious leaders (Myhre, 1994, 74, 79–80). An excellent example of this is found in some early manuscripts of the Legend of Olav the Holy. When the king is born and baptized, a pre-Christian grave mound is re-opened and a sword, a ring and a belt, all symbols of leadership and power, are removed from the burial and given to the newborn king (Røthe, 2000, 173–174). Graves were also opened and manipulated at later times. The tombs of saints were, for example, opened frequently during medieval times. Relics, such as clothing, objects or the human remains of saints, were popular collector items in Europe during this time. According to the Catholic Church, the saint was present even in the smallest piece of a relic. The relics were thus real; they possessed high powers and had great ritual value (Geary, 1986; Lahti, 2007).

Hence, the re-opening of the graves might be something called *translatio*. Traditionally the term means that a pagan grave is opened some time after the funeral and that the deceased is removed from the grave and placed in a Christian burial ground. The Danish Jellinge monuments are often referred to in this context (Krogh, 1983; Roesdahl, 1997; see also Staecker, 2005). In my opinion, *translatio* could also involve removing an object from the grave and taking it into

circulation once again. This act might have nothing to do with the transition into Christianity; it probably happened during pagan times as well. One should not mistake this for grave robbery. Instead, it should be understood as ritual activity that involves the removal of certain objects that have been chosen beforehand (cf. Myhre, 1994).

According to the Norwegian archaeologist Bjørn Myhre, the motive for removing objects from graves was not of an economic but of a religious character. He explains it by pointing out that not all items are removed from the graves. Many valuable objects remain inside the manipulated burials. Hence, it seems that only occasional objects with a probable symbolic character are removed from the grave (Myhre, 1994, 74–75). These artefacts legitimized the link between the past and the present, creating a genealogy between the living and the dead. As it is often stated, the one who owns the past also owns the present (Steinsland, 2002, 94–96).

B. Heirlooms and inalienable possessions

Heirlooms are objects that have been in circulation for a long time. These antiques are often passed down through several generations so that they are inherited from father to son or mother to daughter. Heirlooms are valuable because they are historic and they have passed through the hands of historic persons (Malinowski, 2005 [1922], 68). The possession, display and transmission of heirlooms are important. Through heirlooms people were able to differentiate themselves from the others while the object served as a link to the ancestral past and as a symbol of an inherited rank (Lillios, 1999). When an heirloom was finally taken out of circulation and placed in the grave, it possibly no longer had any meaning for its owner. The reason might be that the deceased left no relatives behind to inherit the heirloom or that the object no longer had any significance to the people who where left behind. At the same time, the heirloom might have been perceived as belonging to the ancestors; thus, its context inside a grave would be self-explanatory.

Keeping-while-giving is a model of exchange developed by the American anthropologist Annette B. Weiner (1992). Her approach is based on the kula shell exchange system amongst several tribes living on a number of islands in Melanesia. This exchange system has also been widely studied by Bronislaw Malinowski (2005 [1922]). In the kula tradition certain shells are received, held and passed on by men in a complex ritual exchange system. The shells are always gifts; through the exchange system their function is to maintain social relationships. Each transaction results in a lifelong relationship or partnership between the giver and the receiver, involving different duties and privileges. The shells that are mostly worn as long necklaces (*soulava*) or bracelets (*mwali*) carry the history of their former owners and as such they become important for their new owners' identity and status (Malinowski, 2005 [1922], 62–68). Since the kula exchange system covers a fairly large geographical area and many different tribes, it also involves expressions of power and political control (Weiner, 1992, 133; Persson, 1999, 12). The mnemonic value of the shells should not be forgotten either. According to Weiner, these hierarchical shells would often be withheld from circulation and kept as trophies for as long as possible. To keep a shell out of circulation even for a short time is seen as a triumph by its present owner. As such, some shells become famous and hence inalienable possessions or heirlooms. Some shells can be so old and worn down that one can clearly see the history on them. When

the shell is finally placed back in circulation, it is considered to be a huge loss and an emotional moment for the former owner (Weiner 1992, 133–137, 145). This means that each shell is unique; they bear a name, they have a personality and a history attached to them (Mauss, 1990 [1950], 24).

Objects naturally have a practical function but, as I have shown, they carry social messages too. Alfred Gell has illustrated this by suggesting that objects are social agents and that people often attribute their things with a personality (Gell, 1998, 16–21). Thus, objects play an important role in the social structure and in maintaining social relationships.

Weapons have several qualities and they are often treated in various ways before being placed inside a grave. Weapons do not only indicate the presence of a warrior elite, they have a symbolic and social meaning too. Swords are often associated with their owners or with certain events. The swords might have a name, a personality or a story attached to them. This is shown, for example, in the medieval myth of King Arthur (*Excalibur*), Beowulf (*Hrunting* and *Naegling*), and in *Skáldskaparmál* in the Edda (*Gram*) (Beowulf, lines 1290–1298, 2369; Bradley, 1990, 1–4; Ellis Davidson, 1962, 126, 129; Sturluson, 1997, 146). The mnemonic aspects of weapons should not be overlooked either. Beowulf, for instance, describes swords as 'precious', 'priceless', 'fabled', 'ancient', 'old' or as 'heirlooms' (Beowulf, lines 1605, 2680, 2276, 1799, 710, 1319). The Scandinavian sagas, on the other hand, tell of broken swords that are remade into new weapons (Ellis Davidson, 1962, 135, 142, 162–163). The presence or absence of certain weapons in graves might thus suggest inheritance and commemoration (Williams, 2005).

In Finland, the weapons are often burned, bent and broken before being placed inside a cremation cemetery. It is probable that the weapons were broken in order to kill or free the soul that the people thought lived inside the weapons (Karvonen, 1998). Sometimes the purpose or the meaning of the weapons inside graves changes. In the cremation cemeteries under level ground in Finland, the Merovingian Period weapon graves seem to be the main type of individual burial, while the rest of the cemetery is collective in its nature (Wickholm & Raninen, 2006). In some of these burials the burned bones of the presumed male warriors are placed inside shield bosses, transforming the defensive weapon into a container or urn for the deceased's earthly remains (Hackman, 1938, 11; Heikkurinen-Montell, 1996, 95). The same phenomenon can also be seen in the coeval Finnish boat burials (Appelgren, 1897, 60).

In some cremation cemeteries in Finland and in the Åland islands, there are vertical spears in the cemetery layers suggesting that they have been thrown in the graves as some sort of funeral ritual. The spears are, for example, struck down around grave urns or cremation pits (Wickholm, 2006). There is evidence of similar rituals from Scandinavia and Estonia as well (Artelius, 2005; Mägi, 2002; Nordberg, 2002; Price, 2002). It has been implied that these vertical spears could either have been associated with the cult of Odin and would thus be votive sacrifices (Nordberg, 2003; Price, 2002), or that their verticality could be associated with the life-history or biography of these spears (Gosden & Marshall, 1999).

Old weapons could in fact have been used as a way of fixing social memories. In some inhumation graves from the 11th century AD in the Häme region, it seems that the coffin has been "nailed" with weapons that are considerably older than the inhumation grave. In addition, these weapons are often taken from an old cremation cemetery under level ground. In Makasiininmäki cremation cemetery

in Janakkala, Häme region, there is an inhumation grave where the coffin was fastened with two spears, a knife, and a hook. These objects were 500 years older than the grave and probably derived from the older cremation cemetery (see Wickholm, 2006). This means that ancient artefacts were indeed taken from old burials at times and re-used in other burial rituals. This might have been a particular way to connect the past and present generations.

Conclusion

The above-given explanations for ancient artefacts could possibly be variations on the same theme. What unites them is that they are old artefacts with several owners during their life history. It is evident that these objects must have had some kind of value for their owners. This value might have been of religious, symbolic, memorial or economic significance. The objects probably also played an important part in communal ceremonies and would thus be of collective significance. When these objects finally were put into a grave, their role was possibly to display the deceased individuals' status or personhood within the community. By reburying old artefacts inside younger burials, people were able to express continuity even if these old objects did not come from their own past. It could have been a way to manipulate time by creating a longer history and another kind of origin myth. Also, territorial rights or claims for more land could have triggered the use of older artefacts. This deliberate disturbance of the graves, both by erecting a new grave on top of an older one or placing an old artefact in a new grave, involved emotions and the commemoration of the dead (Williams, 2007).

Given this discussion, I think it is possible to conceptualise Iron Age funerals as rituals concerned with keeping-while-giving. To renounce something valuable or important is not always easy and during funerals this is possibly even more explicit. As I have shown above, certain grave goods have more value than others. It is not impossible to think that some items perhaps never made it into the grave. They might have played an important part in the funeral ritual, but in the end they were too valuable to be given away. These objects might have been placed inside a grave at some later point, possibly because they had lost their value for their owner. Alternatively, it was a way to bring to an end a long tradition.

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Abbreviations

NM = The National Museum of Finland, archaeological collections

TYA = Turun Yliopisto arkeologia, University of Turku, archaeological collections

Paper V

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LEVÄNLUHTA – A PLACE OF PUNISHMENT, SACRIFICE OR JUST A COMMON CEMETERY?

Abstract
Levänluhta, located in southern Ostrobothnia, is one of the most famous archaeological sites in Finland. The finds consist of scattered human bones from almost 100 individuals and some artefacts, mainly dating to the Merovingian period (AD 550/600–800) and interpreted as grave goods. Previously, the site has been seen as a sacrificial place, a place of punishment, a battlefield or as a cemetery for slaves or people who had died of an epidemic. These negative connotations probably stem from the fact that the site itself is interpreted to have been a bog or a sacrificial spring. It will be argued here, however, that the Levänluhta site was more likely a small lake or a pond. The custom to bury the deceased in water is a global phenomenon that might be linked to new ideological views towards the landscape as well as the deceased and their ancestors.

Keywords: Levänluhta, bog, human bones, Käldamäki, burial practice, lake cemetery

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INTRODUCTION

Levänluhta, located in the municipality of Isokyrö in southern Ostrobothnia, is among the most well-known archaeological sites in Finland. Today, a selection of the artefacts and human bones are displayed in the National Museum in Helsinki where it keeps intriguing the visitors year after year. In all, the peculiar find consists of bones from almost 100 individuals together with some artefacts and animal bones. The material is traditionally thought to have been placed into a bog or a natural spring sometime during the Merovingian period (AD 550/600–800). The prehistoric human bone assemblage is not only exceptionally large for Finland but also strikingly well preserved due to the wet mud and clay, although the iron-rich water running in the natural springs has darkened the bones dark. Their interpretation, however, has been somewhat difficult because the bones were not found in anatomical order.

It has long been unclear whether the site was a spring, a fen, mire, swamp or a bog in the Iron Age. While the archaeologist Aarne Michaël Tallgren (1918: 76–7) interpreted the site either as a peatland meadow or a spring, it has later been defined as a low meadow, a former bog, with a visible water hole or spring (Meinander 1946: 91; 1950: 137; 1977: 38). More springs have been found in the excavations that have taken place at the site (Heikkurinen-Montell & Erä-Esko 1984). The site has thus frequently been interpreted as a bog (Kivikoski 1961: 182; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1984; Niskanen 2006) or as natural spring (Tallgren 1918: 76–7; Edgren 1993: 209–10). Regarding the latter interpretation, it is worth noting here that no preserved folklore tells us of any later sacrifices at the site, nor has the water from the site ever been used for healing. Both of these uses are typical for ancient springs (Europaeus 1925: 165), while the springs now occupying the site does not freeze even in the wintertime (Miettinen 1981). In all, as

archaeologists have not agreed on the type of bog they are referring to, the neutral word bog will be used in this article. Moreover, it is to be borne in mind that the geology of the Levänluhta site during the Iron Age is of crucial importance regarding its interpretation.

In English, Levänluhta means a marshy, wet meadow or swamp with algae, which suggests standing water or that the meadow has at least occasionally been flooded. During archaeological excavations in 1912, thirty five peat samples were taken and analyzed by the biologist Harald Lindberg (1871–1963) at the Department of Botany in Helsinki. He identified remains of several aquatic and mire plants taxa like sedges (Carex), mare's-tail (*Hippuris vulgaris*), gypsywort (*Lycopus europaeus*) and bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliate*). In addition, he also found diatoms (Bacillariophyta) and water fleas (Cladocera). Plant species that only grow in fresh water, such as white water-lilies (*Nymphaea*) and common club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*) were also detected. As most of the bones and artefacts had been found in this peat layer, Lindberg interpreted the burials to have been made in standing water, such as a shallow lake or pond, that had been surrounded by marshy lakeside meadows. In particular, the water flies implied that the site must have been waterlogged during most of the year (Lindberg 1913). This conclusion, drawn already in 1913 and repeated by an osteologist, Dr. Tarja Formisto in 1993[1], did not reach many archaeologists for an unknown reason. Therefore, the idea of Levänluhta as a bog has been prevalent, and has apparently affected the interpretations concerning the site: bogs are marginal areas that are commonly understood as frightening and negative.

The aim of this article is to present a detailed research history of the find. An attempt will also be made to propose an alternative explanation to the site in the discussion part.

THE RESEARCH HISTORY

The Levänluhta site is first mentioned in a letter written in 1674 by Israel Alftanus, the vicar of Isokyrö parish, to the Antiquity Commission in Stockholm, in which he tells about a spring in the wet meadows of Orismala parish where human bones have been seen throughout the times[2] (Meinander 1950: 136).

This information was probably forgotten as the next written records regarding the site are from 1884 and 1885, when the wet meadow was planned to be drained to arable land by ditching. While the area was hoed, human bones were found, but as they were thought to be fairly recent, these finds were re-buried into the original find spot by the local marshal (Catalogue, NBA archive). The text of a site map drawn in 1885 at the site indicates that the bones supposedly date to so-called Cudgel War in 1596–1597 (NBA archive) and shortly thereafter Oskar Rancken (1886) also arrived to the same conclusion.

The first archaeological excavations were organized as two separate campaigns in summer 1886 under the supervision of Professor Oskar Rancken (1824–1895). The excavations produced several finds, while additional stray finds were donated by locals involved in the 1880s ditching works (NM 2440:1–9, NM 2441:1–3)[3]. Unfortunately, the exact find spots of the artefacts were not documented (Hackman 1913a: 300, 303). 'Birch clubs' (Swe. 'björkklubbor') that were reportedly found at the site supported the previous assumption about a burial site for the victims of the Cudgel War. Rancken (1886) even reports that the diversity of the deceased (men, women and children) is indicative of an execution or a massacre and that the scattered human bones might even suggest dismemberment (Rancken 1886). Rancken was a local historian and collector of folklore, not an archaeologist, which probably affected the interpretation. The aforementioned 'birch clubs', which are actually wooden poles, have never been analyzed in detail, but they were probably used to hold down the bodies and thus to keep them from floating up to the surface.

When Alfred Hackman from the Antiquarian Commission photographed the site in July of 1894 (Fig. 1) he also recovered some human bones (NM 2996:125) around the spring (Hackman 1894). When he returned to the site as a Doctor of Philosophy in 1906 to draw a map of the site he reported that the area once excavated by Rancken was now filled with water. He also proposed that a geologist should inspect the site in order to establish whether or not it had previously been a lake (Hackman 1906). The

Fig. 1. Levänluhta in 1894 when Alfred Hackman first visited the site. The site seems to be quite wet even though the drainage works had started ten years earlier. One of the natural springs is clearly visible in front of the boy. The Momminmäki hill is in the background. Photograph by A. Hackman 1894/National Board of Antiquities.

soil samples that confirmed Hackman's idea and that were studied by Lindberg (1913) were taken during A.M. Tallgren's five day excavations in 1912.

While excavating a substantially large area (199 m^2) in fairly short time, Tallgren came across a spring that had been covered and blocked with wooden planks, sticks and stones, probably during the time when the place was transformed into arable land. Under this barrier, at the bottom of the spring, he found human bones. Tallgren (1912) also reports that 'small beads of bog-ore were found in large amounts' in the ferriferous and wet soil, a notion which is interesting regarding the interpretation of the site.

While Tallgren found only a small brass ring (NM 6110:4) and a half of a probably recent horse shoe (NM 6110:7), Hackman's campaign in 1913 was slightly more fruitful as he recovered vertically struck birch poles (NM 6373:17) in connection to human bones. Most of the finds were concentrated to natural springs. The excavation report (Hackman 1913b) states that the exuding spring water made it impossible to sieve the excavated soil and for this reason the excavators were forced to split the soil into smaller slices with their trowels. Therefore, Hackman suspected that smaller finds might have been missed by the excavators.

The excavations of Hackman were followed by several decades of inactivity, in spite of frequent correspondence between the Local History Association in Isokyrö and the Antiquarian Commission in Helsinki. In March 1936 the Local History Association acquired a small lot of land (517 m^2) around the spring for a sum of 1000 Finnish marks. The lot was donated to the State represented by the Antiquarian

Commission (Aro 1936; Rauramo 1936a; 1936b; copy of the contract from 1936, NBA). Moreover, local enthusiasts started to collect for funds to finance future excavations at Levänluhta and its surroundings (Klemetti 1937). In only 3 months a fairly large sum of 70.000 Finnish marks (almost 22.000 €) was raised. In a letter to the Antiquarian Commission the donators made some suggestions on how the money should be spent. First, they wanted archaeological excavations to be carried out in Levänluhta as soon as possible. Second, they wanted to raise commemorative stones with short inscriptions, surround the site with a fence, benches to sit on and road signs to guide visitors from the main road to the site (Järviluoma & Salmenkallio 1937). All these wishes were ignored, as nothing happened until the 1980s.

In 1981 archaeologist Mirja Miettinen from the National Board of Antiquities inspected Levänluhta due to new ditching works in the surrounding fields. In her report she suspects the site to be much larger than previously thought, because Martti Arkkola, the local farmer, informed her of repeated human bone finds from fields surrounding the site. Miettinen (1981) concludes the report by expressing her concern about the destruction of the remaining find material unless further excavations are carried out at the site. In 1982–1984 docent Aarni Erä-Esko from the National Board of Antiquities excavated what was left of the burial site[4], but as excavation reports on most campaigns were never completed, the exact location of his trenches is not known. Nevertheless, the number of finds from the site grew considerably, thanks to the more advanced techniques of excavation and the use of a metal detector (Heikkurinen-Montell & Erä-Esko 1984). Coins, burned clay and charcoal were the new find categories, whereas bones and artefacts were found adjacent to several new springs discovered in the excavations. One of these springs yielded a skull that was suspected to contain brain mass (Heikkurinen & Erä-Esko 1984). Thus, the find was preserved in surgical spirit (Edgren 1994: 656). When the brain mass was later analysed in a CAT scan, it was verified that the clay inside the skull had preserved only the shape of the cerebellum, not actual brain mass (Tomanterä, pers. comm.).

The majority of the bone material is reported to have been found close to the surface, at a depth of 25–35 cm, inside and in the surroundings of the natural springs. Some finds were reportedly made deeper, in the Litorina clay (Tallgren 1912; Lindberg 1913; Heikkurinen-Montell & Erä-Esko 1984). The bones were not retrieved in anatomical order due to the ditching works and ploughing activity (Meinander 1950: 137; Formisto 1997: 144). In addition, it is probable that both water and frost had disarticulated, moved and broken the bones. This means that, even though the water in the springs is told not to freeze during winter, the soil around them is frozen. According to Carl Fredrik Meinander (1950: 136), unexcavated areas might still remain at Leväluhta, while Formisto (1993: 19) states that after the excavation of Aarni Erä-Esko in 1984 the site was completely excavated. Due to absence of 1984 excavation report one has to question this interpretation. In the only available literary source from 1980s, the 1983 excavation report, it is stated that bones and an artefact were found outside the excavated areas, that is, in the fields not under the protection of the National Board of Antiquities (Fig. 2). The fact that some of these areas were also lusher could refer to the existence of additional springs and burials outside the protected area (Heikkurinen-Montell & Erä-Esko 1984).

THE BONE MATERIAL

Several scholars have analyzed parts of the bone material and the first osteological analysis was carried out only shortly after Rancken's excavations in 1886. However, the analysis with the largest impact on archaeological interpretations was made in 1902 by anthropologist Fredrik Wilhelm Westerlund, who proposed that the Levänluhta population had been long-skulled and thus of a different ethnic origin from the Finns. Hence, the bones were interpreted to have belonged to people of Germanic origin (Formisto 1993: 39; 1997: 147), which was the prevalent interpretation until dentist Pentti Kirveskari studied the teeth in 1983. Kirveskari concluded that the teeth belonged to people of the Fenno-Ugrian origin, and later on Formisto (1997: 149) also went along with this line of interpretation.

In fact, Tarja Formisto was the first person to deal with all the Levänluhta bone material (73.8 kg) for her doctorate thesis published in 1993.

Fig. 2. Levänluhta in August 2009 before the barley harvesting. Photograph by the author.

Until then the size of this bone collection had been unknown. For example, she painstakingly reconstructed the crania from the excavations in order to have a better estimate on the amount of individuals (Formisto 1993: 41–2). From the material that was organically very fragmented, approximately 98 individuals were identified and further divided into 32 infants, 6 juveniles, 41 adults, 18 matures and 1 senile (Formisto 1993: 103). Her sex-assessment was based on the crania, femurs and long bones. From 41 crania, 31 were morphologically identified as male, while in the analysis of 48 femurs, 37 females were identified. The conclusion based on long bones was that the assemblage included more females than males. The average stature for males was between 156.1–161.7 cm, and 147.8–150.7 cm for women (Formisto 1993: 97–100, 113). The only ^{14}C-date (St-9855) from a human bone, a tibiae, from the site is dated to 1475 ± 120 BP or cal. AD 437–655 (Formisto 1993: 42).

Some of Formisto's methods have been criticized in a recent article by an anthropologist, Dr. Markku Niskanen from the University of Oulu (2006), who was mainly interested in the stature and the sex-assessment of the deceased and compared his own measurements from the Levänluhta material to Formisto's work. While Niskanen used European skeletons from, for example, England and France (AD 350–1066) as reference material, mainly Japanese reference materials had been used by Formisto. The result was that the stature estimates were systematically taller than the ones suggested by Formisto. The difference was attributed to different sex-assessment criteria. When Niskanen re-studied the joint sizes in a sample of 14 femurs and long bones, he saw that many of the bones previously interpreted as male bones were in fact female, when compared to European reference materials (Niskanen 2006: 29–30). None the less, the new stature estimations indicated that the Levänluhta population was still shorter than the average population during this time period. Niskanen (2006) suggested that this confirms the low social status of the deceased.

Most of the animal bones are from horses and

cattle (2.8 kg) while the remaining 1.1 kg consists of sheep, dog, domestic hen and birds (Formisto 1993: 138–141). As the bones of domestic hen have also been identified as a capercailzie or a large seagull (Hackman 1913a: 310-311), the assemblage should perhaps be re-analyzed by a zooarchaeologist. Two animal bones have been ^{14}C-dated: a cattle rib (St-9854) to 2120 ± 210 BP or 429 cal. BC–cal. AD 76, and a horse radius (St-9856) to 640 ± 70 BP or cal. AD 1289–1384. As these dates differ from the rest of the find material, they might belong to a different context than the main body of finds (Formisto 1993: 42). On the other hand, the identified animal bone species correlates with the majority of the Iron Age cemetery material in Finland, which might suggest that the site was in fact used for a much longer period than has earlier been thought. Thus, without a more detailed analysis the bones should not be excluded from the material.

THE ARTEFACTS

The only detailed analysis on the artefacts from the Levänluhta site was made already by Hackman (1913a). Thereafter, the artefacts have been either described in brief (Meinander 1950: 138; Formisto 1993) or simply ignored (Niskanen 2006). This is partly understandable, as Formisto and Niskanen are both scholars specialized in physical anthropology, but on the other hand, balanced interpretation of the site should be based on all the evidence available. Moreover, the section on archaeology in Formisto's thesis was criticised severely by docent Torsten Edgren (1994: 653), which might be the reason why Niskanen decided to exclude the artefacts from his own interpretation (Niskanen 2006).

While the number of artefacts found from Levänluhta is not particularly high, the finds themselves are more diverse than the previous research has been actually willing to admit. In addition to jewellery and artefact fragments, such as fragmentary metal finds, also wood, charcoal and burned clay have been found. These are not usually mentioned in the literature when the find is described. It is also worth noticing that no weapons have been found from Levänluhta. In a letter written in 1892 professor Johan Reinhold Aspelin suggests, that the wet mud might have 'eaten' all weapons in Levänluhta (Aspelin 1892), which is an important observation to consider. The ferriferous water running in the ditch in Levänluhta suggests that the water has been corrosive already during its usage. However, this does not explain why the bronze objects are preserved.

The cauldron

Amongst the first finds made in 1886 was a badly damaged bronze cauldron (NM 2441:1, Fig. 3) with a round bottom and small triangular ears. The object is lacking holes for a handle, which seems a bit strange (Hackman 1913a: 309; Meinander 1950: 224). The cauldron was probably broken on purpose before deposition (Kivikoski 1961: 182), but as it has been made of soft and sheer bronze, the fragile nature of the object should neither be forgotten. The cauldron belongs to a so called Vestland-type, a name pertaining to SW Norway where it was a common burial vessel in cremation cemeteries during the Roman and Migration period. Vestland-type cauldrons are frequently found also in Central Norrland which suggests contacts between these two areas during this period (Lindqvist & Ramqvist 1993). Nevertheless, the cauldron is a Roman import (Shetelig 1912: 80–6; Hjørungdal 1999) and altogether three such cauldrons have been found in Ostrobothnia: the other two come from Gulldynt (NM 68) and Kaparkullen (NM 2891:14) in Vörå (Fi. Vöyri) (Salmo 1944: 30). In addition, a fourth vessel has been recovered from a cremation cemetery in Mynämäki (NM 11353:32), SW Finland, where the cauldron

Fig. 3. The Vestland type cauldron as published by Alfred Hackman in 1913.

served as a burial urn for cremated bones, weapons and artefacts during 7th or 8th century AD (Salmo 1944).

The Mynämäki cauldron is particularly interesting as it is probably at least 200 years older than other artefacts in the burial. This means that the cauldron was antique when it was placed in the burial (Wessman in press). The same can possibly be said of the Levänluhta cauldron, as AD 350–500 is the suggested date for this vessel type in Finland and Sweden (Salmo 1944: 30; Ramqvist 1992: 223). If the earliest burials in Levänluhta were made around AD 600, as suggested by previous research, the cauldron was at least 100 years old when it was deposited there. Thus the cauldron could have been a family heirloom like the Mynämäki cauldron. Another possibility not to be excluded is that Levänluhta was used as a cemetery already during the Migration period.

Arm rings

Of the ten arm rings found in Levänluhta, seven (NM 2440:1–3, 5, 8–9; 6373:2) belong to so-called concave-convex type, which is typical for the Merovingian period in Finland. According to the find catalogue pertaining to the 1886 excavations, an 'arm bone' was found inside one of these arm rings (NM 2440:1) thus making it the only find that can clearly be defined as a belonging of a deceased (Klemetti 1934).

Of the two multi-zoned arm rings – a type that is believed to have originated from the Baltic area – one is intact (NM 2440:4) and the other one is fragmentary (NM 6373:4). Arm rings of this type were common in Finland during the 7th century AD (Kivikoski 1973: 69), although Nils Cleve (1943: 96–97) dates them from AD 500 onwards.

The finds also include an arm ring made of a plain round bronze rod (NM 21926:2). Similar rings are known from Gotland, where they date to the Vendel period (Nerman 1919: 75, fig. 130; Kivikoski 1973: 69), but simple arm rings of the same kind of are also found in older contexts. For example, several arm rings of this type are known from Finnish and Baltic tarand graves dated to the Early and Late Roman Iron Age (Kivikoski 1973: 33–4, fig. 117–8; Hirviluoto & Vormisto 1984: 27–8).

Neck rings

A half of a silver neck ring (NM 6373:6) with saddle-formed ends was found from Levänluhta during Hackman's excavation in 1913. Although these neck rings are common in Finnish cemetery contexts, the origin of the type is to be found in the Baltic area. In Finland the type is most often dated to the Merovingian period (Kivikoski 1973: 68), while in the Baltic countries it remained in use until AD 1100. Another neck ring was found in the 1886 excavations, but Rancken did not recognize it as jewellery and it was catalogued as a 37 cm long angular bronze rod (NM 2441:2) with convergent ends that had been bent into a ring (catalogue NBA archive). Later on, Hackman (1913a: 308) re-interpreted the find as a bronze neck ring belonging a type that was quite rare in Finland.

Brooches

The site has yielded altogether five brooches. A small, round bronze button (NM 2440:6) decorated with garnets and edged with silver was found in the 1886 excavations. The button had probably been fastened to another object, such as a button-topped brooch (Hackman 1913a: 308–10) or it might have been a separate ornament (Meinander 1950: 224). Button-topped brooches are usually considered to be luxury items due to materials used in their manufacture (e.g., gilded bronze, silver and garnets) and their ornamentation (Salin's style II). In Scandinavia they are dated (Stjerna 1905: 137, 162; Nerman 1919: 24–25) roughly from the end of the Migration period to the Merovingian period (AD 550/600–800). In Finland these brooches are quite rare, although the nearest 3 examples are from the Gulldynt cemetery in Vörå (Kivikoski 1973: 63; Meinander 1950: 100, 179–80), while they are especially common on the island of Gotland and in Norway (Stjerna 1905; Nerman 1919: 25).

A bronze serpent brooch (NM 2441:3) was also found in the 1886 excavations. It is formed by two serpents with their bodies twisted around one other (catalogue NBA archive). Another brooch of this type, but consisting of one serpent only, was found in 1983 (NM 21926:1). The brooch had 12 hollows for infillings and during

its conservation traces of gold-plating was found on the surface (catalogue NBA archive). Serpent brooches are thought to have developed from the Scandinavian loop-shaped brooches into an independent, domestic brooch type. The gold-plated single serpent brooch can be dated, based on the typologies of Knut Stjerna (1905: 137) and Nils Cleve (1927: 5–12; 1943: 77–9.), to AD 550–675, while the other brooch is of a later date, probably from AD 675–750.

In 1982 Kyllikki Arkkola, a local woman visiting Erä-Esko's excavation, donated a small equal armed brooch (NM 21813) found around 1978–9 in the flower bed of her estate. The earth for the flower bead had been taken from the 'sacrificial fount' in Levänluhta. The brooch was in excellent condition as it even lacked the normal green patina from its surface (catalogue NBA archive). Another small equal armed brooch (NM 21926: 3), possibly the pair of the other find (catalogue NBA archive), was found in 1983. Small equal armed brooches of this type are usually dated to the Merovingian period both in Finland and on Gotland (Stjerna 1905: 170; Kivikoski 1973: 61).

Chains and finger rings

Two spiral finger rings of bronze (NM 6373:3, 9) and a 15 cm long bronze chain (NM 6373: 5) have also been found. A small (Ø 0.7 cm) brass ring (NM 6110: 4) found in 1912 might, according to Hackman (1913a: 39), also derive from a chain. Spiral finger rings were used in Finland throughout the Iron Age (Kivikoski 1973: 70) so they are difficult to date.

Other finds

Many of the finds in this category cannot be dated precisely and some classes, such as unidentifiable metal finds, are also difficult to interpret. Resulting from the progress in excavation techniques more finds and even new find categories were encountered in 1980s. Pieces of burned clay, over 55 grams in total (NM 21926:1710–15; NM 22403:144–5), clay daub (NM 22395: 59) and charcoal (NM 21814:1052–6; NM 21926:1716–20; NM 22403:146–7) represent these new finds. Although found in small quantities only, they are not to be excluded from the interpretation. Burned clay and clay daub are often connected to settlement sites, but they are also found frequently in cemetery contexts, as they possibly had a ritual character in the funerary process (Hirviluoto 1996: 79; Wessman 2009: 33–4).

A bone comb found by the locals in the 1880s is the subject of a letter by J.R. Aspelin (1886) to the crown marshal Liljeqvist of Isokyrö parish, as Aspelin asked the marshal to take action in order to retrieve this find. In his reply (Liljeqvist 1886), the marshal states that the bone comb was already given to a local collector, Mr. Salomon Wilskman (1821–1913), who collected ancient artefacts on the behalf of the Antiquarian Society and thus the comb was probably already sent onwards to Helsinki. The information about the bone comb is however missing from the find catalogue, which suggests that it was lost or forgotten before it was catalogued.

As stated above, several pieces of birch wood, some of which were found positioned upright (NM 6373: 17), were recovered during the excavations. Additional birch wood and bark (NM 6373:18; NM 21814:1048–51; NM 21926:1721–35; NM 22403:148) were also collected as samples in the different excavations. In the 1983 excavations wooden poles were documented in the same context with human bones, which suggests that they are coeval (Heikkurinen-Montell & Erä-Esko 1984). Similar wooden poles have also been found in connection to the famous bog bodies in Europe, and they are interpreted to have fixed the bodies into the bog in order to prevent them from floating up to the surface. It is possible that the poles also had another meaning than keeping the dead under the water. The liminal character of the deceased in a burial process might result in fear towards the dead and by fixing the deceased with wood could have prevented the dead from rising again in a more ideological way too (Williams 2003: 95).

Some finds, like pieces of iron (NM 6373:7; NM 22395:60, 64) and fragments of bronze objects (NM 6373:8; NM 21926:1741) are very difficult to identify and date. The same comment also applies to the iron rods[5] (NM 22395:61, 63) and a bronze rod (NM 22395:62) recovered in 1983. Metal rods might, for example, be remains of jewellery or belong to a previously unknown artefact form. For example, they might have been symbolic artefacts that somehow

connected the deceased to the water. A bronze rod has also been found from the Käldamäki site (see below) suggesting that these objects could have played a special role in the funerary process or their occurrence in watery burials is mere coincidence.

In the 1886 excavations a Stone Age chisel (NM 2440:7) made of green slate was found. Stone Age tools are not rare in the Iron Age burials and the chisel could thus belong to the find context. The find catalogue informs us that one end of the tool has been broken, which could imply secondary use of the artefact, as for example for magical purposes (Wessman in press).

The finds of more recent date include horse shoes and coins. Several fragments of a horse shoe have been found during the excavations (NM 6110:7; NM 21814:4, 7, 10). All but one of the 25 coins found date to the 1960s and 1970s (NM 21814:1058; NM 21926:1739), while the remaining example is from the 18th century (NM 21926:1740). They are possibly commemoration coins of some kind that have been 'sacrificed' in the spring by locals or tourists visiting the site between the excavations.

The dating

In the previous research, attention has been mainly paid to specific finds like the bronze cauldron, the silver neck ring and the bronze button with garnets, which C.F. Meinander (1950: 137–9) saw as the only artefacts of real value. Of the later finds, the gold-plated brooch, for example, could also be included in this list.

The Levänluhta find has been most often dated to the beginning of Merovingian period (AD 600–650) based on the typology of the artefacts (Meinander 1950: 138; Formisto 1993: 42; Purhonen et al. 2001), but a date between AD 600 and 700 would be a bit safer, while the site would still have remained in use for a relatively short period of time (Hackman 1913a: 316; Meinander 1946: 92). In a letter by J.R. Aspelin (1892) the find is dated to AD 500 making it is somewhat older. This is corroborated by the bronze cauldron and possibly also by the plain arm ring, which seems to be older than the other finds. This suggests that not all burials derive from a short period of time. In addition, the neck ring with saddle-formed ends belong to a type that might have been in use for a much longer time than the Merovingian period, even though it unlikely pre-dates the early Viking Age. Hence, the finds might even derive from a much longer time period, from the 5th century to the end of the 8th century AD.

KÄLDAMÄKI – A VARIATION OF THE THEME?

Käldamäki, a very similar site to Levänluhta, is located some 28 kilometres away from Levänluhta in Vörå (Fi. Vöyri) parish in Ostrobothnia. There, human bones were found in 1935 during the drainage works of the ditch Käldamäkibäcken that runs between two cliffs. Jacob Tegengren, an amateur archaeologist and bank manager, visited the site and reported in a letter to the National Museum[6] that human bones had been first found by the locals already in 1901. An informant told Tegengren that two generations earlier, when people used to collect sedge (*Carex*) from the site, the help of the 'marsh spirits' prevented them from sinking through the squashy soil. Some bones had later been found from the site, but they had been placed in an ossuary located in the Vörå church (Formisto 1993: 151–2). Archaeological excavations were organized at the site in 1936 by Dr. Aarne Äyräpää and student C.F. Meinander (Catalogue, NBA). The excavations were continued by C.F. Meinander and Carl Olof Nordman (Catalogue, NBA) in June–July 1937. Despite efforts to retrieve them, the excavation reports have not been found from the archive at the National Board of Antiquities, but fortunately the excavation has been described later by Meinander (1950: 139–40; 1977: 37–8) adn photographs are still avaliable from the excavation.

According to Meinander, the human bones were found at a depth of 1 meter. A few cow bone fragments were also found in the same layer in addition to some wooden poles (NM 10202:3; 10438:1, 3–12; 10622:1–2), similar to the ones found from Levänluhta. This suggests that they were used for the same purpose (Meinander 1950: 139; 1977: 37). In 1967 a human cranium (NM 17276) was found from the same place (Catalogue, NBA). In addition, an axe shaft (NM 10438:2), a nearly complete fish trap (NM 10622:4) and a bronze rod (NM 10622:3), similar

to the ones in Levänluhta, have been recovered. Unfortunately, the assemblage does not include a single datable artefact (Catalogue, NBA).

At first, the crania of eight individuals were reported to have been recovered from the site (Meinander 1950: 138–40; 1977: 37; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1984: 303). However, their number was later on corrected to six by Formisto (1993: 153), as archaeologists with no training in human osteology had done the first count. While the bones from Käldamäki were not as well preserved as the ones from Levänluhta, at least two males and two females could be identified in the material and their age ranged from juveniles to adults and mature individuals (Formisto 1993: 153).

Meinander (1946: 92; 1950: 138–40) proposes that the deceased had been buried in a shallow bay, either directly in water or on the beach, but it is uncertain whether all of them were buried simultaneously. The disarticulation of the bone material he explains by currents that have moved the bones from their original location. According to a sediment analysis the deceased have been placed in shallow brackish water. The sediment layer from where the bones derive contains both water plants and alder (Hyyppä 1936). The two ^{14}C-dates from a single bone done in Uppsala are (Ua-991) 1500 ± 85 BP or cal. AD 451–614 and (Ua-992) 1550 ± 80 BP or cal. AD 419–579 (Formisto 1993: 152–3; 1997: 149). Thus the Käldamäki site possibly dates either to the end of Migration period or to the beginning of Merovingian period (Purhonen et al. 2001: 220–1), which coincides with the dating of the Levänluhta site.

PREVIOUS INTERPRETATIONS

As Levänluhta has been habitually interpreted as a bog burial, the site has often been associated with negative connotations. Bogs are often understood as demeaning and non-normative burial places for people who have been unworthy for any other type of burial. The bog has thus dazzled researchers into believing that something queer or out of the ordinary must have been associated with this place of burial. Thus, the Levänluhta site has frequently and unsurprisingly been interpreted as a place for punishment, sacrifice or as a place where less significant people like slaves or the poor were buried. Also the presumed short stature of the deceased has added the mysticism around the find.

Human sacrifice

Levänluhta was first interpreted as a place for human sacrifice by Alfred Hackman (1913a) and for archaeologists it was the prevailing theory until the 21st century. The famous Scandinavian bog bodies were seen to confirm this interpretation (Hackman 1913a), although they are mainly single depositions and not cemeteries. Moreover, the bog bodies often lack artefacts that could be interpreted as grave goods and the deceased have been found either completely naked or wearing only minor items of clothing such as caps or capes (Williams 2003: 98–9). The dress ornaments, such as the brooches and pieces of chain, found from Levänluhta do not fit well into this picture.

By the time Hackman drew his conclusion, there was already plenty of accurate information available on Scandinavian bog bodies, but it was still believed that the victims had been drowned alive into the bogs (Hackman 1913a: 313). Later research has shown that these bodies have often severe head injuries caused by blows or they have been strangled, which proves that the people deposited into a bog were actually dead (Kaul 2003: 40; Williams 2003: 92).

The interpretation of Levänluhta as a site for human sacrifice might also derive from the famous war booty sacrifices in Denmark. Also the variously dated Iron Age sacrificial sites found in wetlands in Europe might have had an effect, although this tradition seems to end already by the end of the Migration period, around AD 450–500. The cult probably moved from the lakes and the bogs to be performed in special buildings at the settlement sites (Fabech 1991)[7]. The items that were sacrificed are also more diverse – food, ceramics, animals, weapons, precious metals, jewellery and occasional humans (Kaul 2003; Larsson & Lenntorp 2004) – than at Levänluhta.

Hackman (1913a: 314) found further support for human sacrifice at Levänluhta from written sources, for example in the famous passage of the Icelandic Saga *Ynglingatal* (chapter 15, see Johansson 1991: 37). It tells the story of the Swedish king Domalde who is sacrificed in the Uppsala temple after several years of crop failure. During the first year of crop failure, the

people had tried to soothe the gods by offering animals. As this did not help, human sacrifice was performed during the second year with similar results. In the end, during the third year their king was sacrificed. Adam of Bremen, the German priest and historian, also mentions human sacrifice in a text written in AD 1076, as he describes in chapter 27 a human sacrifice at the pagan temple of Uppsala (Ubsola). The chapter tells us that sacrifices were performed in the sacred grove every ninth year and that one of each living species, including humans, of the male sex had to be offered in the grove. Adam of Bremen never visited the site himself, but he reports that up to 72 corpses had been seen hanging from the trees at times (Lindqvist 1923: 85–7). However, the text should not be taken as an eyewitness account and as a Christian priest Adam of Bremen had very likely religious and political motives to write about it.

The sacrifice interpretation was later picked up by Professor Ella Kivikoski (1961: 183), according to whom the combination of artefacts and the animal bones supported the idea. Also Dr. Pirkko-Liisa Lehtosalo-Hilander (1984: 304–5) was in favour of sacrifice interpretation, although she was dazzled by the fact that such a large force of labour had been wasted into a bog. She further stated that the population performing the sacrifice was probably local since the artefacts were domestic, but also suspected that the victims could have been of a foreign origin. Hence, the interpretation followed the old idea about the Germanic origin of the deceased.

The fragmented bone material of Levänluhta has been seen even as evidence of cannibalism. While this interpretation appeared in a journal published by the Local History Association as late as in 1985 (Kaakkuri et al. 1985: 28), it should be understood as mere fiction, as the fragmentary state of the bone material is most likely explained by taphonomy. The bones have dried out during summers, wet in spring and autumn and frozen in the wintertime (Formisto 1997: 144).

A place of punishment

Tacitus' account *Germania* (AD 98) has been frequently used in archaeology, especially during the early 20th century when its historical accuracy was seldom subjected to source criticism. The early date of the text with somewhat vague geographical definitions used in it mean together that it cannot be projected per se to Merovingian Finland. Nevertheless, Tacitus' text has been used in connection to Levänluhta. *Germania* (chapter 12.1, see Önnerfors 2005) reveals that cowardliness and unmanly behaviour, such as desertion, were crimes that could result in a death sentence by drowning into a bog. This interpretation became very popular thanks to bog bodies found during peat cutting in Denmark, northern Germany, the Netherlands and the British Isles (Kaul 2003: 20; Williams 2003: 91).

There is also historical evidence of burying the dead in bogs. For example, people who had committed suicide, criminals and suspected witches could be doomed to be buried there (Lindsten 1933: 329). In 1599, Olof Gustafsson Stenbock, former councillor to the Swedish king Eric XIV, was captured and executed in Finland for violent behaviour and crimes against the Swedish crown. He was shot in the woods and his body was buried in a nearby bog (Fryxell 1900: 298–9). Bogs were thus places where feared people could be buried.

Finnish folklore and the national epic *Kalevala* have also functioned as popular 'evidence' in the search for an interpretation for Levänluhta. *Kalevala*, frequently cited in older Levänluhta research (e.g., Meinander 1946; 1950; Kaakkuri et al. 1985), should not be used as a source material in itself. It is mainly a creation of Elias Lönnrot, the author of the book. Instead, one should refer to the authentic folklore collected in the 19th century (Lahelma 2008: 148; SKVR-corpus).

The negative associations to bogs are found from old Finnish poems, where bogs are sometimes described as places of punishment. For example, in some poems the leading shaman Väinämöinen curses the young and arrogant Joukahainen into the bog by singing (SKVR I1: 170, 177, 184). In the Finnish folklore, the location of the Afterworld is placed behind a bottomless swamp. The bog could also serve as a place of punishment, where the souls of sinners would be tormented (Meinander 1950: 144; Siikala 1992: 157–8). Folklore connected to the beliefs of water spirits and bog spirits is also numerous in the Baltic countries, Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. While water spirits inhabiting

lakes, ponds and rivers were mostly connected to fertility, bog spirits were seen as supernormal beings connected to death. Hence, bogs were the gateways into the Afterworld (Johansons 1968).

To sum up, a bog has been comprehended as a somewhat scary and mystical place used only for desecration or punishment. But if Levänluhta was not a bog but a lake during the period of its utilization, the whole concept is changed. Moreover, the demography of the deceased shows that people of varying ages were buried there, while a claim that circa 100 people in a very small area of Ostrobothnia had committed a crime and were sentenced to death is simply absurd.

Famine or plague

A new interpretation of the Levänluhta site was put forward by Tapio Seger (1982), who assumed that the deceased could be victims of a plague or some other hazardous disease. By referring to previous research carried out on Gotland in Sweden, he suggested that the Justinian plague of AD 541–2 had devastated the settlement in the Ostrobothnia and the site was thus the mass grave for the victims.

While the interpretation has been very popular among the Finnish researchers (Formisto 1993; 1997), even Seger (1982) was ready to admit its weaknesses. For example, the evidence on black rat that used to spread the disease is lacking from Scandinavia before the medieval period. Moreover, during the Merovingian period in Finland, people probably still lived in small farmsteads instead of villages that became more common towards the medieval period. Hence, it would have been more difficult for the bacteria to spread over such a large area, and although plague does not leave visible traces on bones, there should be more evidence of this in other cemeteries if the plague really reached Finland.

Famine is another improbable alternative, as the living in Ostrobothnia during the Merovingian period was based on a combination of farming and animal husbandry. The occurrence of certain weeds suggest that animal dung was used to fertilize the fields (Engelmark 1991: 89; Engelmark & Viklund 2002: 18; Herrgård & Holmblad 2005: 153), while the importance of fishing and hunting – wild game, birds and seals – as a supplement to both the diet and the economy (Hårding 2002: 215–6) has been proven with osteological analyses from settlement sites and cemeteries. Thus, had the crop failed, forests, rivers and the sea would have offered plenty of food for the inhabitants. Failing crop would not affect the animal husbandry either, because the fodder was gathered from wet meadows that were highly productive (Engelmark 1991: 89–95; Engelmark & Viklund 2002: 16–8; Segerström & Wallin 1991: 64; Herrgård & Holmblad 2005: 153).

Only 3 individuals in the Levänluhta material (Formisto 1993: 125–6) have so called Harris lines on their tibiae's (1 adult and 2 young individuals). Harris lines are growth arrest lines in the long bones that might result of malnutrition, infectious diseases or trauma (White & Folkens 2005: 310). Moreover, there is only one skull (a child) that seems to belong to a person suffering from *cribra orbitalia*, a disease that Formisto (1993: 116, 129) interprets to be a cause of nutrition deficiency. However, nowadays it is no longer believed to have been caused by deprived diet, but rather by infections, such as diarrhoea (White & Folkens 2005: 320, 329) It is also worth mentioning that no dental hypoplasia that would suggest dietary stress and/or starvation has been reported from the Levänluhta material. Thus, should the population had died of starvation it should also be more visible on the bones.

A mass grave for special people

The analysis of the bone material from Levänluhta has clearly shown that the demography reminds of a common cemetery with both children and adults. Despite of the grave goods, some researchers have suggested that it was a cemetery for people of low social status like slaves (Meinander 1946; 1950; Niskanen 2006). The logic behind it is probably connected to the view of bogs as demeaning places, that could not be the final resting place for people belonging to the norm.

Meinander (1946: 94) proposed that only higher social classes could have afforded to cremate their dead and had the manpower and status to raise cairns or cremation cemeteries for their deceased. Thus, people of lower status would have been forced to bury their dead un-cremated in bogs and lakes[8]. Interestingly, Finnish archaeologists have traditionally

associated inhumation graves with high social status, for example the Merovingian period inhumation cemeteries from Lake Pyhäjärvi area (e.g., Cleve 1943). Yet for Meinander the shift in the burial custom was not important but the place of burial. Personally, I doubt that cremation would have been reserved for the rich, while the poor would have been buried in bogs or lakes. In the context of Levänluhta Meinander seems to ignore the fact that find material includes some prestige artefacts. The imported Roman cauldron of Vestland-type, the garnet button, the silver neck ring and the gold-plated serpent brooch are clearly finds that did not belong to the poor or to slaves (Kivikoski 1961: 183).

In fact, Meinander revised later on his interpretation (1977: 38) due to the discovery of Skedemosse offering site on the island of Öland in Sweden. There, not only weapons, jewellery, food and animals but also people had been sacrificed into a former lake around AD 250–500 (Hagberg 1963:1 44, 146–8; 1964: 227–8). However, the find categories are very different and the weapons dominating the Skedemosse find material are absent in Levänluhta

In a recently published article Markku Niskanen (2006: 34) suggests that the relatively short stature of the deceased in Levänluhta was caused by deprivation of food and that they would have, in fact, belonged to a lower social class. In other words, he agrees with the ideas put forward by Meinander (1950), who later on changed his opinion in favour of sacrifice theory.

The earlier belief that the bones would have belonged to people of Germanic ethnicity, and thus to foreigners, made the slave interpretation quite popular in Finland (Lehtosalo-Hilander 1984: 304), even though the ethnicity of the deceased was later revised. In addition, only a minor part of the bone material bear signs of hard labour that would support this idea (Formisto 1993: 115–30; 1997: 148–9).

The bones of children have been explained as unwanted or disabled individuals because of oral poetry that describes child abandonment in bogs[9]. According to Professor of Comparative Religion Juha Pentikäinen (1990: 84), child abandonment was mainly based on economic and social reasons. Also the Icelandic Sagas refer to child abandonment in case of poverty or the birth of an illegitimate child. In fact, child abandonment was the first thing made illegal by the Christian medieval laws in Scandinavia (Pentikäinen 1990: 73–81). However, it would be somewhat unjustified to suggest that all children in the bone material would have been abandoned, due to the high number of individuals and their age distribution. Their presence could possibly be better explained with high infant and child mortality.

Victims of war

The beginning of the Merovingian period has traditionally been seen as a turbulent time by the Finnish archaeologists (Pihlman 1990: 45–7 with references). The interpretation is based on the high number of weapon burials, but the material culture also shows new features (Wickholm & Raninen 2006: 155). Especially, the increase in the number of weapons inside the cemeteries could refer to violent and restless times (Raninen 2009) and thus, it is unsurprising that both Levänluhta and Käldamäki have been interpreted as mass graves that would have resulted from warfare.

The large number of bones could support this idea, but the absence of severe trauma from them does not. The worst pathologies found are different inflammations, some of which are chronic and others are degenerative changes, such as osteoporosis and osteophytosis, which might result from age and/or hard labour. However, only a few bones show such traces (Formisto 1993: 115–30). In addition, weapon finds lack from both sites in Ostrobothnia, while the famous war booty sacrifices in southern Scandinavia and northern Germany never contain human remains (Jørgensen 2003: 16; Lund Hansen 2003: 89) and are also much older than Levänluhta. Similar war booty sacrifices from the Latvian and Lithuanian wetlands are much later, AD 900–1400, and consist mainly of weapons and jewellery without human bones (Vaitkevičius 2004: 41–2).

The archaeologist Jorma Leppäaho (1949: 79) has written about the connections between archaeology and oral poetry. Without offering further explanation, he dates much of the poetry to AD 500–700 and places the heroic epic of *Kalevala* in Satakunta and Ostrobothnia (1949: 62, 79). Leppäaho probably refers to certain poems that describe warfare between the two

geographical areas, Kalevala and Pohjola, a story that is well known to the Finns because of the *Kalevala*. According to Leppäaho (1949: 80, see also Meinander 1946: 93) Pohjola, situated in Ostrobothnia, was also called 'the village that eats and drowns men'[10]. The interpretation is somewhat strange considering that the osteological report was probably known to him. If he honestly believed that soldiers had been buried or sacrificed at Levänluhta after a battle, then how did the demography of the deceased vary so much? One might also ask, where had all the weapons gone?

DISCUSSION

The Merovingian period in Ostrobothnia – what happens during the Viking Age?

The very rich material culture that flourished in southern Ostrobothnia during the Migration period changed along with the settlement pattern during the course of Merovingian period. The amount of grave goods decreases and the settlement seems to concentrate into smaller areas. During the 8th century AD the number of cemeteries is further decreased and the archaeological evidence on settlements virtually disappears by the early Viking Age implying that the area was depopulated (Meinander 1946: 99; 1977: 42–3; Edgren 1993: 229–32). The settlement continuity is indicated only by some stray finds and single burials in Kurikka, Töysä and Teuva. In addition, pollen analyses and ^{14}C-dates from charred plant remains also indicate cultivation in parts of the area after the depopulation. In Vörå, cemetery and settlement activity is detectable until the end of Viking Age (Engelmark & Viklund 2002; Viklund 2002), but nothing is known archaeologically regarding the following Crusade period.

An alternative explanation to the discontinuity in Ostrobothnia has been put forward by archaeologists and botanists from the Umeå University in Sweden suggesting realignment in the settlement pattern that would have caused the population to move from their former settlement sites. This is believed to have been caused partly by the land upheaval process but also due to new agricultural innovations (Baudou et al. 1991; Engelmark & Viklund 2002; Viklund 2002). However, clear evidence in form of settlement sites or cemeteries reaching from Viking Age until the end of Crusade period have not yet been found in Ostrobothnia (Wickholm 2000). Similar changes in the settlement pattern has also been observed in the western Uusimaa region during the Merovingian period where the discontinuity in the settlement is believed to have taken place in the end of Viking Age (Wickholm 2005b). A rapid downswing in the economy is also observed in Central Norrland, Sweden during the beginning of Merovingian period (Meinander 1977: 43; Selinge 1977: 288-90; Flink 1990: 199–200). Large settlement sites like Gene in Ångermanland and the Högom cemetery in Medelpad seem to have been abandoned around AD 550–600. Earlier this phenomenon was explained by changing trading routes that resulted in an economic and political crisis (Selinge 1977: 288). Lately, however, ecological reasons have been stressed. In particular, it has been suggested that the changing effects of land upheaval process could have resulted in settlement realignment (Selinge 1977: 415; Ramqvist 1992; Lindqvist & Ramqvist 1993: 129–32).

A volcanic eruption or a series of comet impacts around AD 536–7 and/or AD 545 has also been suggested to explain settlement changes during the Iron Age (Baille 1999; Keys 1999). Hence, the catastrophic change of the environment, observed for example in tree-ring samples (Baille 1999), would have had a global effect on the human livelihood. 'Fimbul-winter', a cold and long winter that lasted uninterruptedly for three years in a row, is described in Scandinavian sagas (Widgren 2005). The 'Fimbul-winter' is also described as a time when the sun was of no use, suggesting that there still was a summer, even though it was very cold. It has, however, not been possible to date this long cold period exactly (Gräslund 2007). Mediterranean written sources do not confirm the extent of this catastrophe, as suggested by David Keys and Mike Baillie, but they do describe a cold and damp time period that lasted approximately for a year resulting in crop failure. Also tree-rings samples from pine in Scandinavia and oaks in Northern Europe clearly indicate that something happened between AD 536 and AD 546, but

the phenomenon is not global. Interestingly, it seems that the best growing season for pine trees in Finland was in AD 535 (Arjava 2002; Arjava 2007). What are the implications of this regarding Ostrobothnia? Can sudden climate changes impact the livelihood in a way that would have altered the settlement pattern or even led to decolonization, or was the pattern now observed in archaeological evidence merely caused by social and economic changes?

Elsewhere in Finland the settlement seem to extend. The Satakunta area in western Finland becomes more important during the beginning of the Merovingian period, and it seems to have reached its peak during the Viking Age. The number of cemeteries increases both in Satakunta and in the Finland Proper and the grave goods express wealth. The few inhumation cemeteries of this era all derive from the Lake Pyhäjärvi region in Lower-Satakunta. They are richly furnished with weapons and jewellery and date from the end of the Migration period/beginning of Merovingian period to the end of Crusade period. They are often described as burials of people belonging to small social elite that was in close contact with Scandinavia and even Central Europe. Elsewhere in Finland cremation burials prevailed until the middle of the 11th century AD (Cleve 1943; Pihlman 1990; Raninen 2005).

During the Merovingian period, settlement activity is also found around Lake Ladoga in Karelia, where the cemetery finds suggest a migration from SW Finland (Uino 1997). Thus, some areas seem to become more densely populated by the end of the Merovingian period while in other areas, like Ostrobothnia and western Uusimaa, settlements are rather abandoned or alternatively settlement pattern underwent structural changes.

A lake cemetery?

In previous interpretations the macrosubfossil analysis made by Harald Lindberg has not been taken into account. The plant remains found in the peat layer of Levänluhta suggest that the burials took place in fresh water, while the plant species are such that thrive around and in lakes or ponds (Lindberg 1913). Hence, the site was probably a small lake with several underwater springs that have also been observed in the excavations. No traces of moss have been detected among the subfossils, which makes it unlikely that Levänluhta would have been a bog at some point.

Although the idea about cemetery is not new (Meinander 1950), some essential things have been previously omitted from the discussion. The population demography based on the bones fits well for a cemetery, although I do not personally believe that the site would have been reserved only for persons of lower social status (Meinander 1950; Niskanen 2006). The bones have neither injuries suggesting war or sudden death. If the people died from disease, they must have died because of an epidemic as there are no disease induced signs on the bones (Formisto 1993: 198). If the people were sacrificed there should, in my opinion, be signs of blunt injuries in the head as in the European cases (Williams 2003: 91).

The artefacts are both of domestic and imported origin and they were found together with the bone material. This suggests that they are grave goods, some items may even be indicative of high social status. The bronze cauldron could imply that food or drink was offered to the dead, because feasting was an important burial rite in Scandinavia during the Iron Age. However, in Finland, these cauldrons have been used mainly as burial urns in cremation cemeteries. By the time of deposition the cauldron was probably old suggesting that it had been an important mnemonic item within the society (Wessman in press). On the other hand, it may simply prove that the cemetery was used for much longer time than has previously been thought. One has also to bear in mind that the Vestland type cauldrons are found in cemetery context also elsewhere (Shetelig 1912; Hjørungdal 1999) and the disposal of such item shows investment.

Another find often associated to cemeteries is burned clay and daub. To my mind, the fragments of burned clay found at Levänluhta constitute an additional proof of a cemetery and not, for example, a sacrificial site. Excavation techniques might be the reason for why the amount of burned clay has been so low. It is highly unlikely that burned clay would have been kept as a find in the late 19th century excavations and, therefore, the only examples of burned clay recovered and catalogued pertain

to the excavations in 1980s. Clay daub might have had an important role in the interplay between the living and the dead. When a person was buried it was perhaps important to bring something concrete from the settlement site to the cemetery in order to connect the dead to their new dwelling place, the cemetery. Thus, burned clay and clay daub might have been symbolic gifts or memories from home that reassured the dead in their new resting place.

The animal bones also support the idea of Levänluhta being a cemetery. The identified species of cattle, sheep, dog and bird conforms to contemporary cemetery material in Vörå (Hårding 2002: 215). Bones from dog and goat/sheep was also found in the nearby Pukkila boat burial (Kivikero 2009). The previously mentioned early ^{14}C-date from the cattle rib (429 cal. BC–cal. AD 76) could imply earlier activity at the lake. Is this perhaps an indication of the fact that the lake had been used already long before for ritual purposes? Maybe this was the reason to why people decided to bury their dead here in the first place? Naturally, the cow drowning in the lake might have been a mere coincidence, but considering the complicated context of this site the first alternative can not be excluded either.

Several things in the Levänluhta burial are atypical for the time period. Firstly, the idea to bury the dead in a lake or a pond without cremation indicate a burial custom that was out of the norm, since the vast majority of contemporary societies cremated their dead and scattered the bones in cemeteries under level ground[11] or in small cairns. The closest cremation cemetery under level ground is located only 1.5 kms from Levänluhta in Ylistaro parish. Secondly, the lack of weapons and ceramics amongst the finds at Levänluhta is also atypical for the Merovingian period. The quantity and quality of metal grave goods during this time period is relatively high which differs from the Levänluhta material. Does the lack of weapons show that the deceased in Levänluhta were mostly women and children, as Niskanen has argued, or is the status and personhood of the deceased expressed in a different way from the majority of the men who identified themselves through their weapons? The weapons and other iron implements were perhaps deliberately removed before the final stages of the burial rite (Williams 2005).

Levänluhta would not be the only cemetery in Finland that has been reserved mainly for women and children. Naarankalmanmäki (Eng. 'The cemetery hill for the female sex') cremation cemetery in Lempäälä, Southern Finland contained 10 burial cairns dated to 4th–9th centuries AD with burned bones of children (*Infans I-II*) and young adults. One cairn contained a burial with a small child (*Infans I*) and a young adult; thus it was interpreted to belong to a young mother and her child. It was also the only cairn with grave goods – a pair of small equal-armed brooches –suggesting female gender (Formisto 1998; Söderholm 1998; Raike & Seppälä 2005). Also in the Vainionmäki cremation cemetery under level ground in Laitila, SW Finland, the female and male graves had been distinguished by digging them into different areas of the cemetery. The women were buried in the centre of the cemetery, on the top of the hill, while the men were buried on the slopes (Heikkurinen-Montell 1996: 94–5; Purhonen 1996: 126).

In Sweden, the famous cemetery Tuna in Badelunda, Västmanland, shows a striking contrast in the burial custom between the women and men during Vendel and Viking periods. All boat-burials belonged exclusively to high-status women[12] and the burials were all concentrated around a wealthy chamber-grave belonging to a woman from Late Roman Iron Age. Moreover, the women were buried in the centre of the cemetery while the majority of male burials had been placed at the edges. The rich female burials in Badelunda have been explained by the women's leading function in the religious sphere. The boat itself can be understood as a having a religious significance since it is often connected to Nerthus/Njord or Frö/Freyr/Freyja cult. However, also the find material suggests that the women had an active role in the fertility cult and as transmitters of tradition (Schönbäck 1981: 128, 131; Nylén & Schönbäck 1994a; 1994b; Gräslund 2001: 92–5; Fernstål 2004; Gerds 2006: 156).

Several rich weapon graves are known in cemeteries neighbouring Levänluhta; like the famous boat burial Pukkila in Isokyrö (AD 500–800) and the cemetery and settlement complex of Gulldynt in Vörå (AD 450–700). These cemeteries contain imported jewellery and weapons decorated with ornaments belonging

Fig. 4. A view from the Momminmäki cliffs. In 1913, the excavations took place on the right side of the hay barn. The result of the drainage works and the cultivation is clearly seen in the picture. Photograph by A. Hackman 1913/National Board of Antiquities.

to Salin's style I and II. Also objects implying long distance contacts – Roman gold coins, a Vestland -type cauldron, cowries (*Cyprae moneta*) and numerous glass and amber beads – have been found at Gulldynt (Hackman 1938; Erä-Esko 1965; 1986; Kivikoski 1973). Hence, the difference between these cemeteries and Levänluhta in both the burial custom and in the composition of grave goods is striking. The reasons for this might lie in the economy but I personally believe that it is more probably a sign of a different ideology.

The land uplift process is more rapid in Ostrobothnia than in other parts of Finland transforming the former seashore to marshy meadows, bogs and lakes. This dramatic change in the landscape did not only affect the livelihood, but possibly also people's minds as it changed the way the surrounding landscape was perceived. These new areas became important places, because they were different from the nearby agricultural fields. Instead of cremating and burying their dead on top of small moraine hills, some groups apparently chose different ways, as indicated by Levänluhta and Käldamäki. It is thus possible that the land upheaval process was also reflected upon the beliefs towards the dead. Had the lake been perceived as a special place already before, as the date from the cow rib suggests, the connection to the site is even stronger.

Ostrobothnia is generally a fairly flat province lacking any higher hills. The Momminmäki hill is the closest rise in topography to Levänluhta, situated only a dozen meters ENE from the visible spring. It is a fairly long forested hill with exposed bedrock top on its south side. This steep cliff, which clearly stands out from the surrounding cultivated fields, has a fairly flat cliff top. It is possible that the cliff played some part in the funerary process, as the former lake can be clearly seen from this place (Fig. 4). Funerals are not only assemblies with the first and foremost function to dispose the dead body. Instead, the

funeral is more important for the living than for the dead. They are public meetings were old alliances are broken and new ones are re-established in order to recreate social structures (see Oestigaard & Goldhahn 2006). The visual attraction of burying the dead in the water, as well as the rituals performed during the process, has most likely impacted the people attending the funeral. In this process the Momminmäki cliff could perhaps have functioned as a 'stage' or arena from where the funerals were viewed. The hill could also later function as a place where the living interacted with their dead ancestors through different rituals such as shared meals and offerings. Interestingly, similar cliffs are also connected to the Käldamäki site (for fig., see Meinander 1950: 140). It is thus possible that these cliffs had a deeper meaning in both the funerary process and later on.

Parallels from other countries

Wetland burials are known from many other sites in northwest Europe, from the Mesolithic to the medieval period. Symbolic and ritual aspects are often connected to natural places, such as wetlands. Lakes could thus be perceived as liminal spaces where people could enter and exit, for example, the Afterworld. Levänluhta and Käldamäki, however, are the two known lake burials in Finland. Is it a mere coincidence that these two sites are located quite close to one other?

The idea about bogs and lakes as supernatural places may be related to iron-bearing ore extracted from these places. The transformation of ore, first to iron and then to a final product, is not only functionalistic but also a ritualistic, symbolic and mythological process as Terje Gansum (2004) has proposed. This metamorphosis, which is very close to death, rebirth and fertility has probably intrigued Iron Age people and might even have led to superstitious beliefs towards these sites. The Finnish folk poetry contains several poems that connect marshy areas and iron making. In one poem (SKVR I1:379) iron, water and fire are defined as the elements that bring people to the Afterworld. This connection is also highlighted in a recent colour photograph from Levänluhta, in which the ferriferous water has coloured the water reddish (Herrgård & Holmblad 2005: 171). The 'small beads of bog-ore' found by Tallgren further underline the connection to iron. Thus, is it strange that no iron slag, iron objects or weapons have been found in the cemetery. Could it perhaps be intentional or is it possible that they have corroded away due to the ferriferous water, as Aspelin suggested already in 1892? Moreover, the lack of soft tissues and clothing, even though seemingly well preserved bone and wood material adds to the mysticism. One might ask why the preservation environment is like this. It is probable that the ditching works and the later ploughing have disrupted the preservation somehow. Extensive chemical analysis of the soil and the water should be made in order to clarify what the preservation environment is like in the Levänluhta area. Thus, the conditions could be assessed and it would also be possible to see if there are any variations within the area.

A belief known in Central and Eastern Europe tells that the souls of the dead are living in a lake or a bog. Much of the folklore connected to lakes in the Baltic Countries informs us that lakes had magical characters and that people were superstitious towards them. All sacred waters like lakes, springs or rivers, were thought to provide people with health, fertility, harvest and knowledge. Thus, people performed sacrifices and other rituals at these sites even as late as in the 19th and 20th centuries (Vaitkevičius 2004: 37–40). In the shamanistic worldview, running waters like rivers and streams, can also be gateways to the Afterworld (Siikala 1992: 163, 182, 256–7).

Jordanes describes in *Getica*, written in AD 551, how Attila, the king of the Huns was buried after his unexpected death in a dried river bed with expensive grave goods at night-time. After the burial, the slaves that had performed the burial were killed and the water was led back to the river bed. This was done to prevent looting but also in order for Attila to rest in peace in his grave (Nordenstorm 1994: 270; Nordin 1997: 167–71).

Archaeological parallels can be pointed out from Britain and Ireland, for example, where several excavations have revealed that people have also been buried in rivers and lakes, especially during the last millennia BC. Human remains, in connection to weapons and jewellery, found in rivers and lakes suggest that metal hoards could possibly be associated with funerary rituals, especially during Bronze Age

and early Iron Age (Bradley 1990: 108–9, 113; Denison 2000; Fredengren 2002: 191–2).

The Irish crannogs, multiperiod and man-made islands often with defensive palisades, have recently been studied in greater detail by Ireland's state funded research institute in archaeology (Fredengren 2007). Modern research had not been carried out on crannogs to any appreciable extent before this project. Before, it was believed that the crannogs were simply defensive islands with links to high status residences and metalwork production. However, Christina Fredengren (2002) has proposed there are also ritual and religious aspects to the crannogs from the Mesolithic into at least the early medieval period (AD 400–1100). During the Lake Settlement Project 70 human skulls were estimated to have been found in connection to the Irish crannogs (Fredengren 2007). The connection between life and death and land and water is thus evident.

Recent underwater excavations in the harbour of the famous trading post Birka in Sweden have also yielded human remains. Four human vertebrae found in 2008 could suggest an alternative burial rite during the Viking Age, although this find might also be the result of an accident (Olson, pers. comm.). When an oval brooch, an item that is mostly connected with burials, was found in the water close by the assumption for a watery burial should not be completely excluded, but the connection has to be confirmed by future research (Cassel 2008).

Parallels where the dead are buried in ponds, springs and bogs can also be pointed from Florida, where this custom was practiced among the Native Indians of the Early Archaic period (Clausen et al. 1975). The Windover cemetery, with its 160 children and adults, buried in a pond between 6000–5000 cal. BC is one of the most famous wetland cemeteries in Florida. The preservation of the dead and their grave goods is excellent; for example brain tissue could have been extracted for DNA analysis from over 90 individuals (Doran et al. 1990; Fagan 1995: 367; Snow 2003: 848). The Republic Grove is another cemetery site in Florida consisting of a bog with several springs. There human remains and artefacts were excavated in the end of the 1960s. In addition to the rich bone and artefact material, some 33 wooden poles that had been struck vertically into the bog to keep the deceased under water have been recovered. Similar poles were also found at the Windover site (Purdy 1991: 167–70).

The idea of trying to draw parallels to Stone Age Florida is of course somewhat farfetched. However, the landscape dominated by large areas of wetlands, such as ponds and bogs, has been similar both in Florida and Ostrobothnia. This probably reflected in the way the people perceived their surrounding landscape and this, in turn, had an effect on their ideology.

CONCLUSION – WHERE ARE WE TODAY?

Levänluhta has intrigued both researchers and the general public for over a century. The recent studies have mainly focused on the bone material and pretty much disregarded the archaeological site with its artefacts. For this reason, some of the old and apparently false interpretations have been able to live on for an unjustly long time.

This article has shown that a lot can be still learned from the Levänluhta material. It seems more likely that this was a shallow lake and not a bog during the period of its active utilization. The fact that Levänluhta belongs to something else than cremation, signifies an otherness in the burial tradition. The demography of the buried based on the bone finds, in addition to the artefacts, indicates that the deceased were neither poor nor slaves, but people of relatively high social status. Moreover, the grave goods probably derive from a much longer period, from the 5th century to the end of 8th century AD than has been proposed earlier.

The question, why the cemetery is lacking iron objects is intriguing but also difficult to answer. It is imaginable that the people did not think that they needed to put iron in the lake because it was already filled with iron ore. The ferriferous water might actually have been the initiative for people to bury their dead at the site. The ideological beliefs toward lakes are documented in the vast folklore collected in Finland and the neighbouring areas. The rapid land uplift process in the area might have given impetus for these beliefs, because it probably had an effect on the way the people perceived the surrounding landscape.

Recently a group of archaeologists, biologists

and researchers in forensic medicine have started a project aiming, among other things, at extracting ancient DNA from the Levänluhta bone material (http://www.helsinki.fi/bioscience/argeopop/members/putkonen.htm). If they succeed in this task, the outcome will be intriguing also for archaeology and for the whole interpretation of the site. We are hopefully entitled to learn the precise date or dates of this find, whether the deceased were related to each other and what their diet was like.

Hence, the Levänluhta story is not a finished chapter. This article is merely an opening or a beginning. In the future the author will continue working with this material in order to address some of the questions that were portrayed here but remained unanswered due to the limits of this article.

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NOTES

[1] Formisto (1993: 32) misspelt Lindberg's (1913) interpretation as (Swe.) 'ett grundvattenbäcken med sött vatten' (a subsoil water basin), while the report should actually be read as 'ett grunt vattenbäcken' (a shallow water basin).

[2] Swe.'Een Kella på en Sänch Engh Emellan Riarcetoby och Orismala thär Een hoph Meniskio been skall alla tijder wara sedth, och än sees' (Ståhle 1960: 299).

[3] The National Museum of Finland, archaeological collections.

[4] In her thesis, Formisto (1993: 20) states that the 1982–1984 excavation reports were not available for her, and even if the find catalogues were at hand, she does not refer to them in her work. As the excavation reports were still missing from the archive of the National Board of Antiquities in 2009, the author contacted Liisa Erä-Esko at the National Museum of Finland who kindly supplied the 1983 excavation report to the archive – the other two reports were probably never completed, neither have any notes or diaries from the 1982 and 1984 excavations been archived. This might explain why the 1984 excavations were also forgotten by the National Board of Antiquities, as the relevant information is lacking both from their on-line database and the book *Maiseman muisti* (Purhonen et al. 2001: 220), where the site and its research history are introduced to the general public.

[5] Fi. rautavarras.

[6] The letter has been transcribed by Formisto (1993), while the author has not been able to locate the original from the archives of the National Board of Antiquities.

[7] Recent studies concerning south Scandinavia has suggested that wetland sacrifices did not end in AD 500 as proposed before. There are several weapon depositions, especially swords and axes, found in river estuaries and lakes dating to Viking Age and the Middle Ages in both Scania and Zealand, but similar finds are found also in Britain, Ireland, The Netherlands and northern France. The depositions have probably been made in connection to bridges and natural harbours (Fredengren 2002: 259; Lund 2004). These depositions are however not connected to human remains.

[8] 'believe that the poor lie in the swamps and on the bottom of the lakes'[Swe. 'jag tror att fattigfolket ligger i kärren och på sjöbottnarna.'] (Meinander 1946: 94).

[9] 'Take the boy away to the bog and hit him on the head with a wooden pole' [Fi. 'Poika suolle vietäköhön, puulla päähän lyötäköhön'] (SKVR I1: 682, 683, 689); 'We have a ditch at home, a small stream under the field, into where the boy is dropped, into the girls child is thrown' [Fi. 'On meillä oja kotona, pellon alla pieni virta, mihin poika puotetahan, tytön lapsi työnetähän'] (SKVR XIII 1: 1279).

[10] [Fi. 'Pimeä Pohjola […] miehen syöjästä kylästä, Urhon upottajasta'] (SKVR I1: 467).

[11] In the beginning of the Merovingian period the so-called cremation cemeteries under level ground (Fi. polttokenttäkalmisto) appear also in Ostrobothnia as a new cemetery type. The burned bones and the artefacts from the funeral pyre are scattered into a low, irregular stone pavement. Hence, this type of cemetery is very difficult to detect in the landscape. The grave goods comprise a large amount of weapons, especially during the Merovingian period, jewellery,

ceramics and tools (see Wickholm 2005a; Wickholm & Raninen 2006; Wickholm 2008).

[12] In the nearby boat-graves of Vendel and Valsgärde the boat-graves were reserved for men only (Gräslund 2001:92).

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