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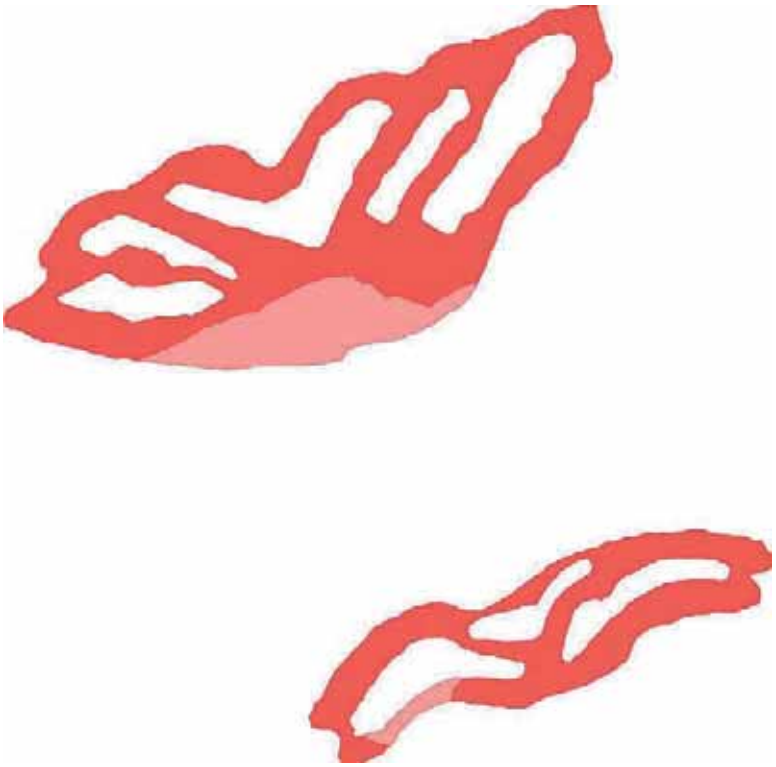

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Redaktör:
Per H. Ramqvist
epost: per.ramqvist@umu.se

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Innehåll

Closed and open

Access to coastal and inland interaction networks in Northern Finland in the Late Iron Age

Jari-Matti Kuusela

English summary

This article examines spatial aspects of Late Iron Age societies and activities in northern Finland. The key issue addressed is the reason why much higher volumes of Late Iron Age archaeological materials have between found in inland parts than in coastal parts of the region. Instead of explaining this difference in terms of population density, the authors argue that it is due to differences in levels of access to interaction networks. In the coastal area certain environmental and social structures restricted direct access to these networks, resulting in the monopolization of trade and contacts, while the inland regions were more open in this respect. Thus, the author postulates that competition for social status was more limited in the coastal than in inland areas.

Jari-Matti Kuusela, Archaeology/Faculty of Humanities, University of Oulu, P.O. Box 1000, 90014 University of Oulu, Finland. jari-matti.kuusela@oulu.fi

Introduction

The Iron Age of Northern Finland has not received much attention form Finnish archaeologists compared with the so-called Iron Age core areas of southern Finland. Considering the fact that, the development of recent years notwithstanding, the tradition among Finnish archaeologists has been to primarily publish in their own language I would imagine northern Finland's Iron Age would be even less known to non-Finnish speakers. Therefore although the space allotted for a journal article does not allow a very detailed review, this paper aims to highlight the current picture of northern Finland's Late Iron Age from the perspective of some of the differences that the natural environments and communication routes on the coast and in the inland region imposed on the societies living in these regions.

Jari-Matti Kuusela *(b.1980). Postdoc researcher in the University of Oulu. Finnish Academy funded early stage researcher at the University of Oulu 2010–2013. Post-doc researcher in the "Sisämaa ja rannikko Pohjois-Suomen rautakauden löytöjen valossa"-project (inland and coast in the North Finland during the Iron Age), funded by Kone Säätiö.*

Studies the interaction networks and their effects on local societies along the Finnish coast of the Bothnian Bay during the 9th - 14th centuries AD.

The period examined in this paper compasses roughly the time between the 9th and the 14th centuries AD. Sometimes the end period of this timeframe, mainly the 14th century, is referred to as Early Middle

Fig. 1. Study area. The area north of the black line is referred to as northern Finland in the paper while the area referred to as coastal region is marked in dark red.

Ages, but I see little reason using this term as the definition of this term is vague and has little basis on account of the fact that very few historical sources dating to this time exist.

The study area of this paper is presented in Figure 1. The region referred to as coastal area is highlighted with dark red with areas outside being referred to as inland regions. The border of what is viewed as being "northern Finland" is the area north of the black line. The latter is arbitrary and does not reflect archaeological realities, but due to the limits of space the examined area must be limited somehow. The author is most familiar with archaeological material north of this border so it thus forms a natural limit for the needs of this paper. The coastal area is limited thus due to distribution of the archaeological record common for coastal regions throughout prehistory (on this see Kuusela 2013:38ff).

The coastal area is still affected by post-glacial isostatic rebound and, having been near the centre of the ice sheet, it has never undergone a period of transgression. This fact, combined with the flat topography of the area, has resulted in a relatively systematic phenomenon where older archaeological sites are generally on higher elevations than younger ones. When sites have been radiocarbon dated they have, by and large, shown that the age of the site corresponds relatively well with a contemporary shore-line (see Okkonen 2003; Kuusela 2013:appendices 1-3) making shoreline displacement chronology a useful tool when assessing the age of a particular site. This is not to say that exceptions do not occur, only that the general trend appears evident in light of current knowledge.

General characteristics of the Late Iron Age (c. AD 800 – 1300)

The beginning of the Late Iron Age is marked with a change in the composition of the archaeological record in northern Finland. After AD 600 burial in cairns and stone-settings, a tradition tracing back to the Late Neolithic (Okkonen 2003), comes to an end (see Kuusela 2013:76ff) and at first sight it appears as if all signs of human activity in the coast disappear. However the only thing that can with some certainty be said of the period after AD 600 is that building of cairns and stone-settings comes to an end as, for example, Iron Age dwel-

ling sites are still largely unknown. Recent Late Iron Age finds in the coast suggest that the change after AD 600 is not as radical as may at first appear. Common for both the coast and the inland regions is that Late Iron Age archaeological record is composed mainly of stray finds. These have, in the past, been interpreted as having been left by "outsiders", i.e. merchants, hunters etc. from other parts of Fennoscandia (e.g. Koivunen 1975:12ff; Huurre 1983:342ff; 1992:86; Taskinen 1998:157). In this interpretation local societies have been relegated into a passive role being practically invisible in the archaeological record. In reality, when the distribution of stray finds is observed, we note that, both in the coast and inland, they cluster around the same areas as the archaeological sites of previous periods (Huurre 1983:403; Kuusela et al. 2011:196ff; Okkonen 2012a; 2013; Hakamäki & Kuusela 2013; Hakamäki et al. 2013a; 2013b; Kuusela 2013:143). Additionally in several cases when stray find sites have been excavated an archaeological site has been found (Huurre 1983:389ff; Taskinen 1998; Kuusela & Tolonen 2011; Kuusela 2012a; Hakamäki et al. 2013c; Kuusela et al. 2013).

Whereas the archaeological record in the coast and the inland region is similar in its composition a clear difference also exists – the number of finds in the inland is far larger than in the coast (Fig. 2). On a general level, the increase in the volume of archaeological material during the Late Iron Age is nothing special as this phenomenon is linked with the increasing human activity in the Baltic sphere at the time (see Vahtola 1980:606; 1991:144; Lindkvist 2003:163; Enbuske 2006:41ff). The difference between the coast and the inland region, however, is of interest and I will return to this later.

Before going into a deeper analysis of the archaeological record, a few observations regarding the nature of the Late Iron Age sites in the study regions should be made. In some cases, of which one is in the coast and the rest in the inland, the site is a burial or a cemetery (Huurre 1983: 389ff; Taskinen 1998; Jarva et al. 2001; Hakamäki et al 2013c; Kuusela et al. 2013) in addition to which a very common context for Iron Age finds in the inland is a multi-period dwelling site (Okkonen 2012a: 12ff; Kuusela 2013:appendix 4). In the latter cases, the Iron Age occupation layer is very difficult, if not impossible, to observe as, excluding metal artefacts, the Iron Age material may not be discernable

from the rest of the assemblage. One reason for this difficulty is that the use of ceramics appears to come to an end in northern Finland some time around AD 300 (Huurre 1983:258ff), meaning that no Iron Age ceramics exists that would help in the identification of Iron Age layers in a multi-period site. In the coast, the isostatic rebound solves this problem to a degree, but known dwelling sites of this period are not yet numerous though not non-existent (see Kuusela & Tolonen

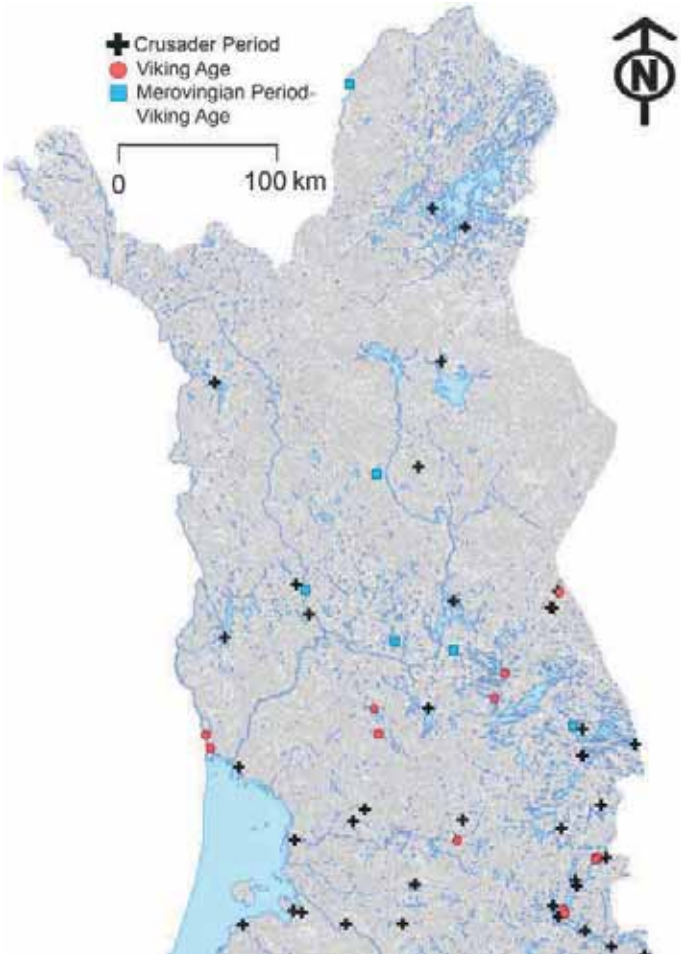

Fig. 2. Distribution of Late Iron Age finds with accurate enough spatial data available to enable presentation on a map.

2011; Kuusela 2012a). In the inland, in addition to burials and dwelling sites, a third category of Iron Age finds is the silver hoard. Seven such hoards are currently known (Kuusela 2013:77ff).

Signs of trade

Considering that the Iron Age artefactual archaeological record comprises mainly of metal artefacts, it is evident that the societies living in what is today northern Finland were engaged in trade. However, in order for the interpretations presented in this paper to gain a context, we must examine the nature of the activity called trade as it has a very definitive connotation in the present world. What is meant by trade in this paper is not the free exchange of goods for currency or even goods for goods, i.e. barter, and neither is the activity specifically geared towards the generation of profit, or at least not in the conventional sense.

The idea that humans have a natural tendency for barter and trade was presented by Adam Smith in his famous *Wealth of Nations* (1776 [2012]:18), and although it may be questioned whether this tendency is truly an inherent trait of the human nature, the statement itself appears to be grounded in relatively solid facts of which archaeological record itself is a significant part of. However, as Karl Polanyi has astutely pointed out, economic actions (trade included) are always subservient to underlying social structures and are not the results of inevitabilities of market economy (Polanyi 1944 [2009]:93ff). Polanyi maintained that the belief of profit as the end-purpose of trade is false, but Polanyi was also slightly off as he himself defined profit based on the conceptions of modern market economy. Instead the concept of profit itself needs to be redefined as an individual's quest for recognition within the society (see Kuusela 2013:29ff). In light of this, commodities gained through trade, i.e. material capital, are merely means to an end. Although trade, as an activity, necessarily involves an exchange of one thing for another analysing it "as is" fails to grasp its larger role in the society as it is equally important to observe the reason that trade exists in the first place. This can be done by examining the way in which wealth is used among human societies.

Though wealth, however it may be defined from society to society, may generally be assumed to be a thing to be striven for, it is not an

end in itself as to gain recognition, it must be used properly (see Reay 1959:96; Mead 1965:40; Sahlins 1972:91ff; Bourdieu 1990:131). What appears to be a relatively common proper use of wealth is generosity and it is especially expected of men of status (Sahlins 1972: 205ff; for an in-depth analysis see Mauss 1954). Generosity in turn creates a power structure of one kind – the recipient is symbolically in an inferior position until the generosity shown towards him may be repaid and if it cannot be repaid, then he must acknowledge the symbolic, and in some cases even concrete, superiority of the one they are indebted to (see Malinowski 1922:176; Mauss 154:7ff, 35ff; Rohner & Bettauer 1986:97ff, 103; Kan 1989:231; Bourdieu 1990:125ff; 1997:236ff). In light of this it is logical that generosity should be common, if not universal (see Gouldner 1960) perceived quality of individuals of status, or those aspiring for status. This also explains how wealth becomes a necessity in retaining social status as in this kind of a system people vote with their feet – if one person stops being generous, the others will eventually switch allegiance sooner or later perceiving that they are no longer indebted to their former benefactor in lieu of further shows of generosity towards them. This creates a continuous and consistent need for wealth among individuals of status and accordingly also the need to control the source(s) of this wealth – e.g. trade.

Some postulates may be drawn based on the above. Firstly, in prehistoric societies the redistribution of material wealth has likely formed an important part of the construction of social prestige and status and the volume of prestige gained is commensurate to the volume of wealth redistributed. Secondly, in a society where social positions and privileges have not been institutionalised and/or restricted, such as may be the case in any society lacking hereditary nobility or an equivalent group and/or state control, anyone attaining a sufficient amount of wealth may vie for a higher social status. Thirdly, given the second postulate, should the volume of wealth suddenly increase within a society without restrictions, or with very flexible restrictions, regarding access to wealth, a situation emerges where more people have access to wealth and therefore will begin to vie for the social status wealth can bestow. This, in turn, will increase activities pertaining to status competition. This last postulate is fundamental in understanding the difference between the coast and the inland.

Late Iron Age in the coast – river mouths and ecclesiastical interest

Returning now to the aforementioned difference in the number of finds between the coast and the inland regions, it might at first appear that the coast would be more sparsely populated than the inland, but this would be a peculiar conclusion. In order to understand the situation we must understand what past individuals and societies may have wished to manifest with the artefacts. If we first examine the coast, we may observe how Late Iron Age finds have a tendency to be located near major river mouths (Fig. 2). What is more important is that these sites are not trivial as two examples may demonstrate.

In 2011 a local metal detectorist[1] found two Late Iron Age artefacts, an oval brooch (Fig. 3A) and a cross-shaped chain divider (Fig. 3B), in a large island, Illinsaari, in the middle of Iijoki nearby the centre of the modern township of Ii (Fig. 4). Today Illinsaari is located roughly 5 km from the coast, but during the 12th-14th centuries AD it sat directly at the mouth of the Iijoki river. The find site was excavated by the author in 2013 and again in 2014, and was found to contain a Late Iron Age cemetery comprising both inhumations and cremations. In 2013 altogether eleven inhumations and two cremations were observed and five of the former (Graves 1, 2, 3, 9 and 11) and both of the latter were excavated (see Kuusela et al. 2013 for a full report). In 2014 eight graves and a rectangular structure of indeterminable

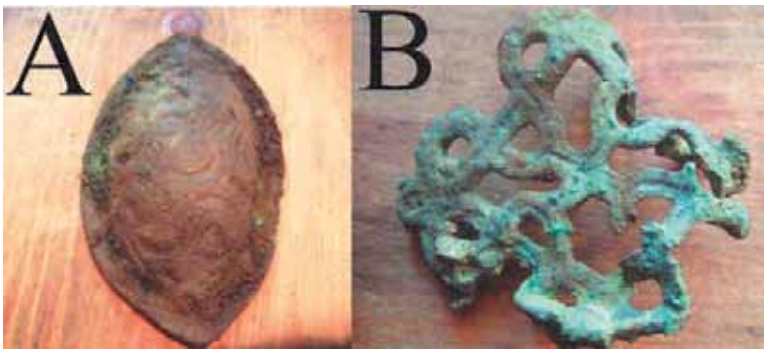

Fig. 3. A. Oval bronze brooch dating to the 12th-14th centuries AD. B. Bronze chain divider dating to the 12th century AD. Photograph by Vesa Ruotsalainen.

age with dimensions of 4 x 4 metres evident as a tightly packed and consistent clayey cultural layer, possibly a floor level of a building, were observed. The building remnant was lined to the southeast by a trench and a small earth bank to the northwest. These features are possibly related with the walls of the building of which no remains, aside from moderate amounts of burnt clay, had survived. Of the features observed in 2014, the rectangular structure and three graves (Graves 12, 13 and 14) were excavated (see Fig. 5)[2].

Currently two burials have been radiocarbon dated – Grave 3 and the adjoining Cremation 2 the former dating with 68% (one sigma) probability to cal AD 1300-1330/1340-1370/1380-1395 and with 95 % probability to cal AD 1290-1410 (610 ± 30 BP, Beta-382691). The latter dates with 68% (one sigma) probability to cal AD 1030-1155 and with 95% (two sigma) probability to cal AD 1020-1165 (940 ± 30 BP, Beta-382690), thus signifying a use of the site as a cemetery from the 11th-12th century onwards to at least up until the 14th century AD. Though the radiocarbon dating of Grave 3 makes it possible that the cemetery would still have been used at the beginning of the 15th century AD, this is unlikely taking into account the fact that the nearby cemetery of Iin Vanha Hamina was already in use during this time (Kallio-Seppä et al. 2011).

Fig. 4. Location of the Suutarinniemi cemetery in Ii, North Ostrobothnia.

Suutarinniemi cemetery is of some interest as tradition places a medieval Christian chapel on the island (Vahtola 1994:208; 1998:25; Kallio-Seppä 2011:34; Sarkkinen 2011) in addition to which the cemetery is located only a few hundred meters from the aforementioned

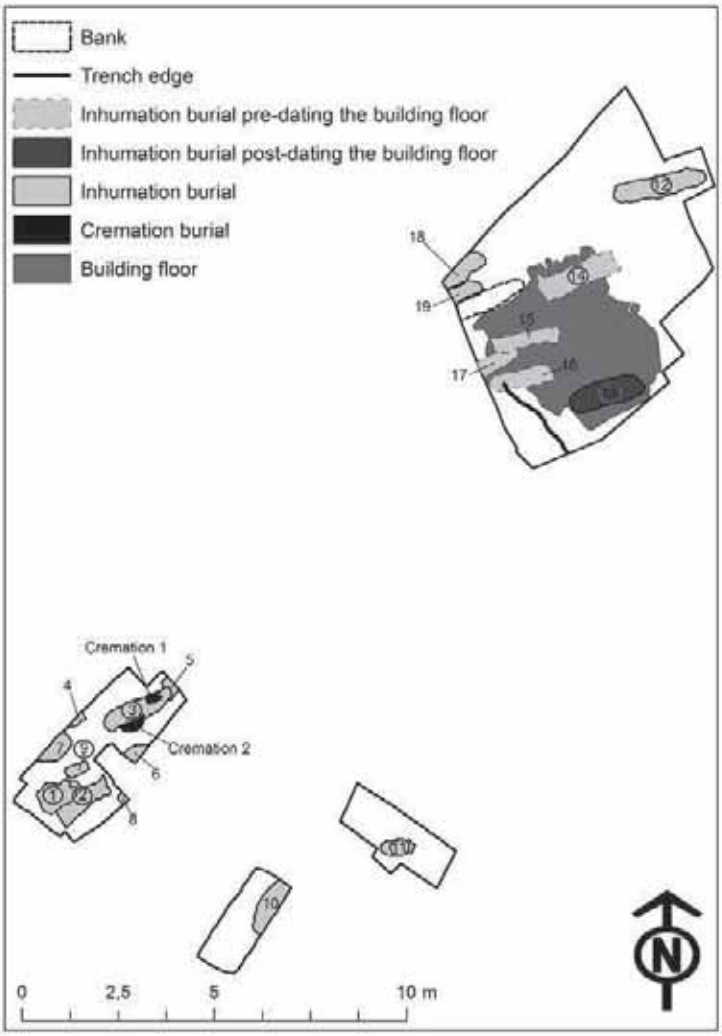

Fig. 5. The graves and features of Suutarinniemi cemetery observed during the excavations of 2013 and 2014. Numbers with circles denote excavated inhumation graves. Both cremations were excavated in 2013.

15th century chapel, cemetery and trading place of Iin Vanha Hamina (Kallio-Seppä 2011). Although the tradition regarding the Christian chapel in Illinsaari should be viewed with healthy criticism it is a his-

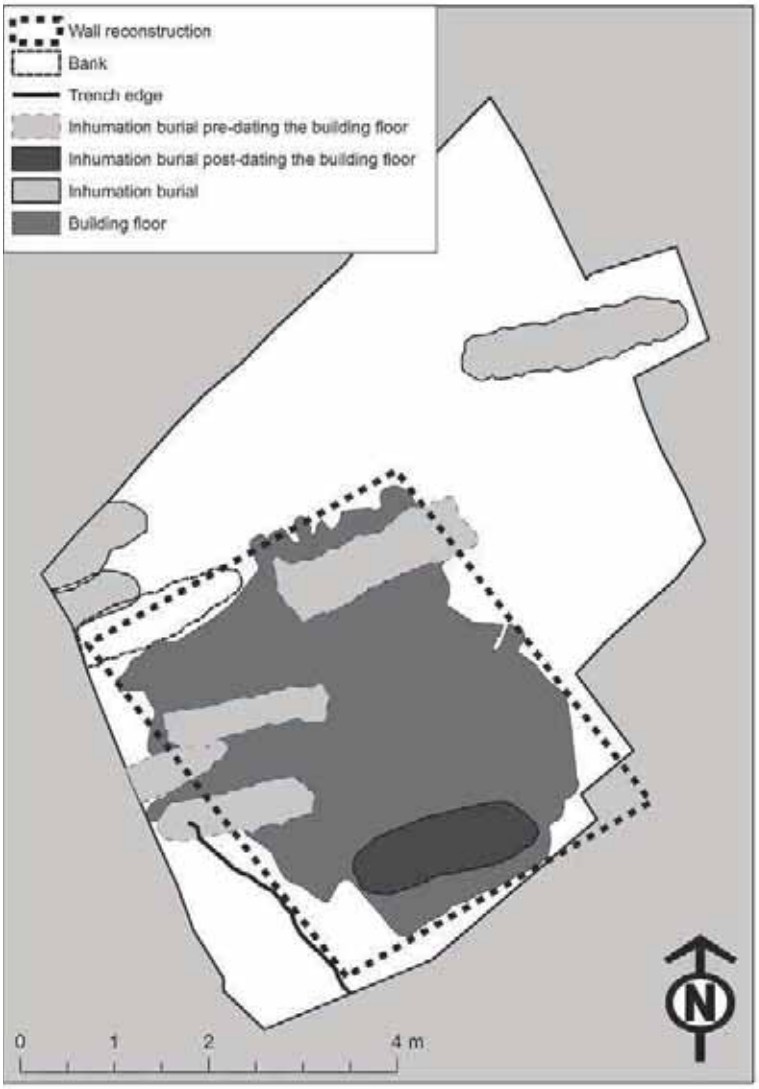

Fig. 6. The assumed position of the walls of the structure found in the excavation of 2014 at Suutarinniemi.

torically known fact that Ii was a chapel parish during the 14th century at the latest (Vahtola 1988:51). In this regard the structure found in 2014 might be of some interest, but it should be noted that nothing directly indicating the age of the building was found. The structure was located below a field layer, thus pre-dating the field, and known historical maps do not seem to give an explanation for the structure thus making it possible that it is of considerable age. Yet it evidently post-dates at least some of the burials because its walls, as far as their position may be estimated, would have cut several graves. On the other hand the grave-pit of grave 13 was dug through the floor of the building signifying that the cemetery was still in use after the building was no longer in existence. As none of the graves excavated in 2014 have been dated yet, no dating for the building can be given and therefore its possible connection with the fabled "first chapel" of Ii should be held in question.

A similar case to Suutarinniemi is found in Valmarinniemi, Keminmaa, in the mouth of the Kemijoki river where a cemetery and a 14th century church were found in the 80's (Koivunen 1982). In the manner of Suutarinniemi, Valmarinniemi cemetery also contained both inhumations and cremations (Taavitsainen et al. 2009). Though the inhumation burials and the church have been dated mainly to the 14th century AD (Koivunen 1982; Paavola 1998:140ff; Jylkkä 2006:165ff), recent radiocarbon datings of the cremations indicate a wider chronology with margins ranging from the 11th century in the earliest and 14th century the latest, with at least two samples having margins completely within 11th and 12th century AD (Taavitsainen et al. 2009:207). This indicate that at least some of these cremations have been contemporary with those in Suutarinniemi.

Essential to both places is that they are not trivial – a 14th century church was located in Valmarinniemi and in the case of Suutarinniemi the question of the possible chapel exists, but even if this has not been located on the island, the fact remains that the cemetery is located right beside the 15th century chapel, cemetery and marketplace in the mainland. Considering these facts we may state that the coast must not have been uninhabited – to the contrary it appears to have been important enough for the Church to take interest in. Considering the location of both sites – the mouth of a major river, one may plausibly

suggest that the importance of both of these sites has been their role as trading places, moreover as churches and trading places appear to have a connection (Ylimaunu 2007:28ff). Therefore the lack of finds in the coast is not that the coasts would have been uninhabited, and consequently another explanation must be sought.

The answer might be sought by acknowledging the nature of the finds. First of all they are mostly jewellery and weapons. Secondly their deposition is not random, but displays consistent topographical patterns indicating that their deposition was the result of conscious action (Hakamäki & Kuusela 2013). Thirdly, these finds represent material capital –wealth. By combining these three aspects, we may observe that the deposition of these artefacts represents action that can be defined as a conscious disposal of material wealth. The key-question now is: what is the reason for such behaviour? Randomly occurring concealment is not a plausible explanation due to the topographical regularities observed in their distribution not to mention the fact that stray find sites have consistently turned out to be archaeological sites when they have been examined more thoroughly. An interesting feature in the disposal and/or display of material wealth is that it is often associated with status competition (e.g. Myhre 2003:85ff; Kuusela 2009; 2012b). As for competition, in order to exist, it requires both a reason and enabling circumstances, or it will not emerge. Based on this it would appear that the difference between the coast and inland is due to difference in the degree of competition – in the coast competition did not exist to the same degree as in the inland. If this is the case, one must once more ask: why?

Closed coast and the open inland

Jari Okkonen (2012b) has recently pointed out that the Bothnian Bay has a characteristic environmental trait that he terms the ice winter. This means that on average the Bothnian Bay is frozen over for several months of the year – roughly from November to May (Okkonen 2012b:168) during which, without the aid of icebreakers, a sea voyage is impossible. Movement across the sea by skis or sledges is also difficult if not impossible due to the ice not forming into a flat field, but a dangerous maze of pack ice and crevasses (Okkonen 2012b:168). At the same time, however, movement from the coast to the inland

is easy across frozen waterways and swamps (Okkonen 2012b:169ff). When the sea is open and sailing is possible the situation reverses – now movement between the coast and the inland is difficult and restricted to a limited area via major waterways (Okkonen 2012b:169). In this kind of a situation the societies living in the coast are in an advantageous position regarding interaction networks as they effectively control the movement between the coast and the inland (Okkonen 2012b:170). This would in part explain the popularity of major river mouths – the coastal societies are in a controlling position regarding the interaction networks between the inland and the coast, and river mouths are good places for network hubs. Historically known trading places, for instance, have often, but not without exception, been located on river mouths (see Ylimaunu 2007:24ff). Societies controlling these hubs become gateway societies effectively controlling the traffic going through their hub. This, however, does not yet explain why the coast would have been subject to a lesser degree of status competition than the inland. In order to understand why this should be so, we need to examine the nature of trade during prehistoric times.

Prehistoric trade networks functioned differently than today – whereas modern corporations might have a more or less holistic perception of the network they are a part of, this was not so in the past. Technological limitations alone posed restrictions on how interaction networks could be perceived by the individuals operating within them and to these individuals these networks appeared as a collection of personal acquaintances. What this means is that, for example, a trader coming to the shores of the Bothnian Bay from across the sea did not operate in a "free market" where the providers of the same product/service compete for the attention of the consumer. Instead trading was based on personal relationships and contacts which resulted in the stability of this interaction pattern (Sindbæk 2007:60; 2008:150). If one of the parties of this interaction relationship was a part of a gateway society, his position would be secure – the gateway society controlled the traffic going through their hub and an individual controlled the trade partnerships that were dependent on his personal contacts. Because these interactions were based on personal acquaintances one party could not simply be replaced. Only if a third party was willingly brought within the sphere of the interaction, i.e. introduced to the other partner, could

one party be replaced in this relationship. By combining the gateway nature of the societies in the coast and the nature of prehistoric trade we may now argue why the coast was not apparently subject to heavy status competition – the circumstances were such that they affected the birth of monopolies on trade interactions and with monopolies the prerequisites for competition do not exist.

In the inland regions, the situation was different as one mechanism, the ice winter that affected the birth of gateway societies in the coast, was not present or was lesser in effect. Consequently the interaction networks were more open – whereas in the coasts the traffic was funnelled into the hubs, in the inland more options were available. However, the distribution of Iron Age finds is not even in the inland regions either. Like in the coasts, river mouths as well as confluences and islands appear to be relatively common topographical features meaning that in the inland regions the interaction network was also restricted, but not to such degree as in the coast.

The basic principle of the above may be illustrated by reducing the subject into a simple game. In the game depicted in Fig. 7A the player must choose two adjacent squares with the highest combined value and a winner of each round of the game may play first the next round. In such a situation, the choice is always targeted towards the two squares in the river mouth and the game is deadlocked – the winner will consistently remain the same. Observing this game from the perspective of prehistoric interaction networks, the river mouth is chosen because it fulfils three criteria. Firstly it provides a safe harbour, secondly a landmark, i.e. it is relatively easy to find making it a natural destination and finally thirdly, and most importantly, the variable required in any interaction relationship – people. Traders go where people are, this is a simple fact that is beyond dispute and the archaeological record demonstrates that it was the river mouths where people were. When observing the situation from the perspective of the coastal societies, it may be stated that controlling trade is relatively simple – only the areas where traffic is funnelled through, represented by the two squares with the highest value in the game of Fig. 7A, must be controlled in order to effectively dominate the network. Thus only a limited number of local societies had direct un-intermediated access to this network. In the inland the situation is more complicated as in

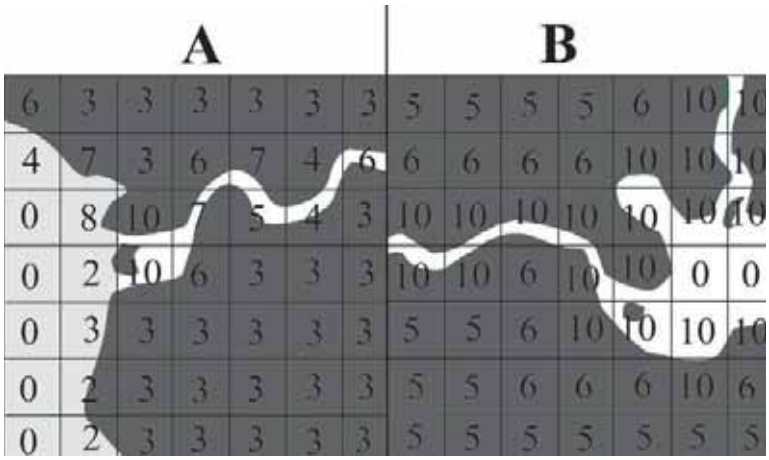

Fig. 7A. A game demonstrating how, in the coast, only the hub-area of a network needs to be controlled. In this game the players must choose two adjacent squares with the highest value and the winner of each round may play first the next round. The result of this game is always the same, the two squares by the river mouth are chosen, and the game is deadlocked.
B. A game demonstrating that in the inland regions, control and supervision of the interaction network is far more difficult than in the coast and the players are more likely to remain on an equal footing.

there, mathematically, more suitable sites for landing exist than in the coast – basically any shore along the travelled route, for instance a river, will do. This is illustrated in the game in Fig. 7B. In this situation it is difficult, if not impossible, for a single society to control all potential harbours therefore making direct access to trade open for a potentially larger group of local societies. In such an open network, societies are relatively equal with each other and when participants are equal, competition may occur.

It is noteworthy to observe that the amount of finds increases quite clearly as the Late Iron Age progresses as can be seen in Figure 8. This is not a coincidence as it is connected with the increase in the flow of wealth during the Late Iron Age. As already noted before, from the Viking Age onwards, activity in the Baltic sphere increased and interest towards the northern parts of Fennoscandia began to rise. This resulted in increased trade causing the volume of material wealth flowing to the north to increase accordingly. In the coastal areas

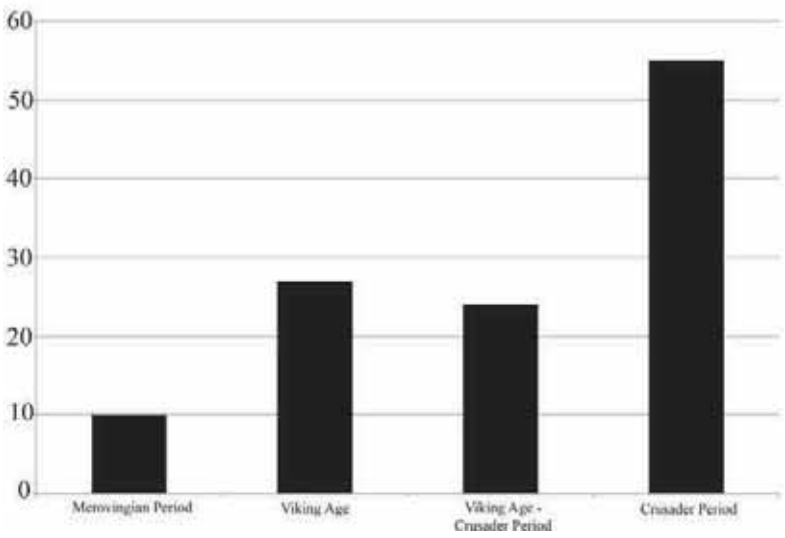

Fig. 8. The number of datable finds from the Merovingian Period up to the Crusader Period in the study area.

the environmental and social factors in play resulted in the situation remaining stable as trade, and the flow of wealth, was under control, but in the open environment of the inland, the increase in wealth caused intensified status competition as more and more people gained access to material wealth.

Social implications of competition

What are the implications of an open and competitive situation as in the inland regions of northern Finland during the Late Iron Age? Concerning the archaeological record an interesting difference arises between the coast and the inland. Barring one exception (Hakamäki et al. 2013b), all weapon finds are located in the inland regions. Weapons in burials, a context where the ideology of the society is mirrored, have been interpreted as signifying the inclusion of violence in the society's ideological world view (Raninen 2005; 2006; Kuusela 2012c). If we should interpret the Late Iron Age weapon finds along similar lines, we may state that the competitive relationships between the inland societies might not have remained completely peaceful. This violence

would have likely been part of the peer-polity interaction between the inland societies and not, at least primarily, targeted towards outside traders. The reason for this practise would have been practical – the traders, as the source of material wealth, would have been viewed as something to be protected. An attack on traders might have been dangerous to the continued flow of material wealth. Whereas eliminating one's rivals' source of material wealth might seem like an efficient way to end competition it must be remembered that visitors may have had multiple contacts in the inland regions and therefore might be in partnership with competing individuals simultaneously. Thus violent intervention in the trade relationships of competitors would be risky as it might endanger one's own trade relationships.

Violence is not likely to have been the sole, or perhaps even primary, manifestation of a competitive relationship between inland societies. Considering the fact that, for instance in the case of silver hoards (see Okkonen 2002), considerable volumes of material wealth has been "destroyed"[3] it is likely that a significant part of this competitive process was manifested by symbolic gestures of aggression including the destruction of material wealth. As the Late Iron Age finds in the inland are mainly artefacts that may be assumed to have been of some value, we may once again take note that to willingly destroy wealth is associated with competition and/or the display of wealth. The latter is true *de facto* whether or not the individual(s) performing the act of destruction had a motive to display wealth or not – to destroy wealth one must first have it and to destroy wealth is to display it.

Conclusions and discussion

The difference between the coast and the inland-regions is due to the fact that, counter-intuitively, the inland regions were more open than the coast in regard to equal access to communication- and interaction routes. By being a more closed environment than the coast it ironically created an open environment by simply offering more places to meet than the coast. This created a situation where it was very difficult, practically impossible, for a single society to control interaction with travelers traveling along these routes.

This difference in the level of control created a difference in the level of competition. In a situation where a single society controls

trade, a competitive situation may only exist between individuals of this society and as trade is reliant on personal acquaintanceships it may be relatively limited in scope. In such a situation, the need to express one's status through aggressive (symbolic or otherwise) displays is limited. Accordingly this means that archaeological material pertaining to such activities would be limited in scale both in volume and geography. In an open system the situation is reversed – whereas competition between individuals belonging to the same society is still dependent on the respective individuals' personal relationships with potential trade partners, inter-society competition is now enabled as no single society may effectively control the trade routes. Such an open network enables a peer-polity interaction while also creating the need for status competition between individuals from different societies because between peers no clear status hierarchy may be established. This means that archaeological material associated with activities pertaining to status competition will be present on a larger scale in volume and geography as opposed to a closed system.

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Footnotes

1). Unlike in Sweden, metal detecting is not illegal in Finland and due to several high-profile discoveries the hobby has garnered a great deal of media attention resulting in an explosive increase in the number of hobbyists. Although the advent of metal detectorims has resulted in the discovery of a large amount of hitherto unknown sites (Suutarinniemi being a case in point), the darker aspect of metal detectorism has also surfaced. In the spring of 2014 a hillfort in South Finland was hit by treasure hunters apparently armed with metal detectors. Finnish Police is investigating the crime.

2). A full report of the excavation of 2014 including a deeper analysis of the Suutarinniemi site is forthcoming and will be published later.

3). In this context the term destroy includes non-destructive methods, such as hoarding, to remove wealth from circulation. Material wealth found in archaeological contexts has been removed from everyday use, whatever this may have been, and has effectively thus been ”destroyed”.