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**THE BROKEN PEOPLE:
DECONSTRUCTION OF PERSONHOOD
IN IRON AGE FINLAND**

The article is an attempt to characterize the concept of personhood as seen in the existence of collective **cremation cemeteries under level ground** in Iron Age Finland. It is argued that the tradition of collective cremations was fused with that of individualistic weapon burials in the level ground cremation cemeteries of the 6th and 7th centuries. This resulted in a kind of bi-ritualism, where collective and individual cremation depositions were made in the same cemeteries side by side. This is interpreted as an indication of dualism in the conceptions of soul and ancestral existence, possibly related to status- and gender-related differentiation among the buried individuals. The male elite seems to have wished to express their status through individual burial rites. This tension seems to disappear during the 9th century, when the collective burial practice prevails. The next individual burials in the cemeteries are from the end of the Viking Age when occasional inhumation graves were dug in the cemetery.

On püütud iseloomustada isiksuse kontseptsiooni, nagu see kajastub Soome rauaaja madala kivistikuga ja kollektiivsete põletusmatustega kalmeväljades. On väidetud, et 6. ja 7. sajandi kivivarekalmetes on kollektiivse iseloomuga põletatult matmise traditsioon segunenud individualistliku relvastatult matmisega. Selle tulemuseks oli teatavat tüüpi kaksikrituaalsus, mille puhul pandi ühte ja samasse kalmistusse samaaegselt nii kollektiivseid kui individuaalseid põletusmatuseid. Artiklis on seda tõlgendatud kui märki hingekujutelmades ja esivanematega seotud uskumustes kehtivast dualismist, mis seostus võib-olla maetute diferentseeritusega staatuse ja soo järgi. Individualistlike matuserituaalide kaudu tahtsid oma staatust väljendada eliidi meessoost esindajad. Seesugune pingestatus näis kaduvat 9. sajandi jooksul, mil valitses kollektiivne matmine. Individuaalsed matused tekkisid taas viikingiaja lõpul, kui kalmistusse maeti üksikuid laibamatuseid.

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Introduction: what is a cremation cemetery under level ground?

In the beginning of the Migration period a new cemetery form appears in Estonia and Finland. In Finland it is called “cremation cemetery under level

ground” (Fin. *polttokenttäkalmisto*) and in Estonia “stone grave-field without inner constructions” (Est. *madala kivistikuga põletusmatuste väli*). The two typical features of this cemetery form are weak visibility above ground and collectivity. The cemeteries are typically placed on small moraine hills that are prominent in the topography. 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 (e.g. Keskitalo 1979). However, in Estonia collective burial was a practice strongly present already in the early Iron Age.

The collective character of the cemetery type is shown through the burned bones and broken artefacts that have been scattered around the cemetery. In the present paper, the collectivity is contrasted with individual deposition of cremation remains. Individuality is defined here as a narrow concentration of metal artefacts in the cemetery. We shall not enter into a detailed discussion about attempts to reconstruct individual burials among the finds found in a collective state (e.g. Mägi 2002; Hietala 2003), but we see them as problematic (see below).

The readily distinguishable individual graves are usually weapon burials from the Merovingian and early Viking periods (e.g. Heikkurinen-Montell 1996, 94 ff.; Raninen 2005, 226 ff.). These burials are known mainly in Finland. Individual cremation deposits that can be interpreted as female burials or double burials including a female are rare in Finnish level-ground cremation cemeteries, although some are known, for example, in the famous late Merovingian-period cemetery of Ristimäki in Kaarina (Turku) (Tallgren 1931, 78 f.). Most members of the groups that were using the level-ground cemeteries, including some males, were buried collectively.

In Finland weapons are also scattered around the cemetery from the Viking Age onwards, which makes individual burials rarely discernible in the material. The first inhumation graves are situated either inside the cremation cemeteries or in their close vicinity. In Finland they appear at the end of the Viking Age. These inhumations could be understood as a new form of individual deposition after a long period of collective burials (Wickholm & Raninen 2003; Wickholm in print 2).

The cemeteries under level ground are often enormous in size as they have been in use for several centuries, some over 500 years. One of the largest cemeteries in Finland, Kalmumäki in Uusikaupunki, has probably had an original size of 2500 square meters, while Mahittula cemetery in Raisio was believed to have been between 1660 and 2300 square meters before being partly destroyed by road work. In Estonia, Madi cemetery, near Viljandi, was estimated to have been over 1890 square meters, while Maidla II cemetery in West Estonia was more than 2000 square meters before excavations (Konsa 2003, 124; Mandel 2003, 42, 175; Pietikäinen 2005, 3; Wickholm 2005). Due to their large size, the cremation cemeteries under level ground have often been interpreted as village cemeteries (Selirand 1974; Meinander 1980). Marika Mägi, on the other hand, has argued that in Saaremaa the cemeteries have belonged to just one or two elite families (Mägi 2002, 11, 74, 123).

In Finland, rich weapon burials are first and foremost studied from a typological perspective, leaving out all ritual aspects. The collective nature of the cemeteries seems to have dazzled the Finnish researchers. It almost feels as if the collective way of disposal would be too disparaging for them and thus hard to accept. In Estonia the collective nature of the cemeteries seems to have been easier to accept since collective burials are known already from the stone-cist grave tradition.

It is rarely discussed, however, what the term “collective” actually means (Haimila 2005, 87). Miikka Haimila has discerned two different meanings of the term – small-scaled and complete collectivity. Small-scaled collectivity means that a certain group, a family, for example, is buried together but they are still distinguished from other groups in some way. Complete collectivity, on the other hand, means that nothing is dividing those people; they are all buried together without any reference to different social groups (Haimila 2002, 26; Haimila 2005, 89). In a dictionary the term is synonymous with something shared, combined, joint and common to a group or community; in archaeology the term is often connected with mortuary practice, especially within the tradition of cremation.

Many archaeologists have argued that the collective character of the level-ground cemeteries is not intentional but due to post-depositional processes. The main reason for this suspicion is that the structure of the cemetery is so different from other contemporary cremation cemeteries (Wickholm 2005). The long-term use of these cemeteries, grave robbery and grazing animals are believed to be some of the reasons for the collective and mixed nature of the grave material (Söyrinki-Harmo 1984, 114; Taavitsainen 1990, 44 f.; 1992, 7–11; Edgren 1993, 196; Heikkurinen-Montell 1996, 101; Haimila 2002, 17 f.). Another popular explanation is that this cemetery type either develops from another grave type, such as *tarands* or cairns, or that the cemetery actually consists of several earth-mixed cairns that have grown together in the course of time (Kivikoski 1966, 51 f.; 1971, 71; Salo 1968; Keskitalo 1979; Selirand 1989). It is hence believed that it is those activities that have disturbed the original features beyond recognition.

Also, the excavation methods should be looked upon when deciding if the cemetery is collective or not. The level-ground cremation cemeteries are notorious for being both poorly excavated and documented. The archaeologists’ starting assumptions of the mixed nature of the cemeteries may easily have influenced their methods. Some recent excavations and publications show attempts to distinguish individual burials among collective finds on the basis of spatial relations between the scattered bones and artefacts. However, osteological analyses have shown that even those find clusters consist of several individuals (Haimila 2002, 72–75; Heikkurinen-Montell 1996, 94–99; Svarvar 2002, 150 f.). The method of distinguishing burial complexes in this cemetery type has also raised critique (Pihlman 2002; Mandel 2003, 138 f.). It seems that individual burials can be defined with reasonable certainty only when sizable metal artefacts, mainly weapons, are found in very narrow concentrations.

But is it really possible that *all* collective characteristics of cremation cemeteries under level ground are a result of later plundering or of trampling livestock? Can the context really be so destroyed that *no* individual graves are left except from the Merovingian and early Viking period weapon graves? And why do most of the individual burials consist of weapons? If we presume that it was the warrior elite that wanted to stand out from the rest of the group then why are there no individual weapon graves from the middle Viking Age and onwards?

In this article we argue that the collective character of this cemetery form is intentional and an important part of complex funerary rituals. We proceed from the assumption that there has been an intentional reason for most behaviour elements in the funerary ritual. The major patterns of the cemetery record cannot be merely a result of unintentional processes. The context of a cemetery is thus ritualistic and it could impart some knowledge of the conceptual life and ideology of the time (Härke 1997; Bell 1992; Parker Pearson 1999; Artelius 2000). Even though the ritual character of grave material has become more important in post-processual archaeology these interpretations are still in a minority in Finnish burial archaeology.

Burial as a rite of passage

We believe that in order to become an ancestor a person had to be destroyed both mentally and physically. When someone dies, his/her social persona disappears as well. In its place there is a body, a cadaver that will quickly start to decompose unless the body is disposed of by burial. The cadaver might also be frightening in the eyes of the society; it might be polluted, and hence 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. Arnold van Gennep's theory of rites of passage (1909) follows this line of thought. When a person dies he/she is separated from the society, and slowly incorporated into the world of the dead ancestors. In order for this transition to happen the body has to be treated right in the burial process. The body is thus in a liminal phase when the deceased is neither a living person nor yet an ancestor. This might be seen as a frightening or dangerous phase and in order for everything to go right funeral rituals have to be performed. Only if the right rituals are performed the deceased is able to be transformed into an ancestor. This transformation process means that the deceased is being reborn again as an ancestor. He has thus got a new status and a new identity (Van Gennep 1960, 147–152).

The body of the deceased is also deconstructed physically during the cremation process, making the transformation process visible. The dead person is no longer recognizable and can thus be incorporated into the collectivity of the ancestors. It is almost like the people have not wanted to recognize the person anymore; he is transformed into something unrecognizable (Rowlands 1993, 144; Parker Pearson 1999; Artelius 2000, 210; Näsström 2001, 219 f.; Wickholm in print 1).

The tradition of individual burials with weapons in SW Finland

Already in the Roman Iron Age both collective and individual cremation burials were well known in south-western Finland (Keskitalo 1979). Of special interest here are the individual cremation burials that belong to the group of the so-called Kårsämäki type of cemeteries. The level-ground cemeteries of the Kårsämäki type include urn burials and cremation pits, together with a small number of inhumations. The male burials often include weapons. Cemeteries of the Kårsämäki type are reminiscent of the Late Pre-Roman cemeteries in eastern Sweden (Salo 1968, 193–197) as well as in the Oksywie Culture on Upper Vistula River (Kivikoski 1939, 233–237). Many artefact types, especially in male burials, are similar to the types found in Scandinavia and Continental Europe (Salo 1968, 232–234). According to Salo, cemeteries of the Kårsämäki type were used by immigrant groups who had moved to south-western Finland from eastern Sweden and gradually assimilated into the local Finnic-speaking indigenous populations. Not all migration hypotheses and ethnic interpretations typical of the culture-historical approach might necessarily be correct. It is, however, safe to say that the communities that lived in south-western Finland participated rather intensively in the trans-regional systems of ritual and material exchange in the northern Baltic Sea region. The burials of the Kårsämäki type ended in the Migration period, giving way to groups of cairns containing cremations as the prevailing cemetery form. However, according to Pihlman (1990, 269, 270; 1992), many of the 5th and 6th century weapon burials inside cairns can still be understood as representing direct continuity from the burials of the Kårsämäki type. This continuity is seen in the deposition practice (individual cremation, now apparent as an artefact concentration inside a cairn) as well as in the material symbolism of the deposited artefacts (weapons suggesting prestigious long-distance contacts and identification with the Germanic areas of Scandinavia and Continental Europe; often also lack of dress accessories in male burials). A continuation of the Kårsämäki tradition is even seen in the artefact assemblages in the richly furnished Early Merovingian weapon burials, including the well-known inhumations in Eura–Köyliö region (Pihlman 1992).

According to Pihlman, this long tradition ended only during the 7th and 8th centuries when a new ritual system, now called level-ground cremation cemeteries, spread in south-western Finland (Pihlman 1990, 271, 272; 1992). However, we might ask if the individual weapon burials in level-ground cremation cemeteries could still be seen as continuation of the Kårsämäki tradition, even if the practice was now heavily transformed in the context of a cemetery form that was different from the previous ones.

It is obvious that weapon burials used to be an integral part of the ritual systems of Iron Age communities in south-western Finland. It reflected and constituted the ideology of a “warrior”, presumably deeply embedded in the male norms and dispositions of that era.

The symbolic capital objectified in weapons, weapon carrying practices and weapon burial rites could be manipulated in social strategies in most variable ways: for example to negotiate group identities and alliances, positions in the local social systems, relations of dominance or resistance etc. It is not surprising that the weapon burial practice was sustained in the level-ground cremation cemeteries, despite the fact that they stood out from the earlier burial practices. During the 7th and 8th centuries, the weapon burial was, with some local exceptions, actually more common than during any other Iron Age period.

The wide adoption of level-ground cremation cemeteries was concurrent with the appearance of many new features in the material culture. This influenced the artefact assemblages of the weapon burials as well. If the weapon burials of the Käsämäki tradition were “referentially Germanic”, then the 7th and 8th century burials cannot be characterized so in any objective sense. Some of the Merovingian weapon types are of a distinct local character, and many other types, as well as some dress accessories, indicate frequent contacts and possibly conscious identification with the present region of Latvia (Cleve 1943, 214 f.; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1982a, 20 ff.). However, contacts and exchanges with Scandinavian elite groups were still active, as is shown by the wide distribution of the artefacts, mostly two-edged swords (an artefact form quite foreign to the Merovingian period Baltics), ornamented with animal art of Salin Styles II and III (Erä-Esko 1984; Høilund-Nielsen 2000; Raninen 2005).

The social context of level-ground cremation cemeteries

A comprehensive interpretation of the level-ground cremation cemeteries requires us to look upon the adoption of this burial rite in a wider socio-cultural context. Most probably the social, political, economical, religious, cultural and political aspects of the Iron Age society were very closely intertwined. This does not imply that rituals would be best explained by reducing them to different social, economical and material determinants, as different functionalistic and materialistic approaches have maintained. For the present purposes, we are interested to analyse burial as an event in which the *belief-systems* related to death are objectified and expressed (see also Jonuks 2005). However, ritual traditions are often consciously manipulated in social strategies. At the same time, participation in a ritual can influence the participants. Thus, even if the burial ritual should never be seen as a direct reflection of the social structure, ritual practices and non-ritual social practices are often modifying and constraining each other (Bell 1992; 1997).

In the present paper we shall not make any far-reaching and conclusive interpretations of the socio-cultural context of the level-ground cremation cemeteries. However, we will make some preliminary suggestions and observations here.

Our knowledge of the settlement sites and land use in Finland during the Merovingian period is so far quite limited. Thus it is not easy to define the social,

economical or other transformations that might have been contemporary and possibly even influencing the adoption of level-ground cremation cemeteries. There are some indications of a more intensive farming practice during the Middle Iron Age (Roeck-Hansen & Nissinaho 1996). This is an essential observation considering the fact that level-ground cremation cemeteries are presumed to have been associated with fertility rites. The large number of weapons deposited in the burials indirectly implies an increase in iron production. A sharp increase in the number of known burial sites (e.g. Seger 1982) suggests population growth and expansion of settlement. However, this growth might be partially explained by the assumption that a bigger percentage of the population was now buried with grave goods.

Still, some general assumptions of the social structure of the Merovingian and Viking period Finland can be made. According to a recent hypothesis made by Pihlman (2004), only part of all Iron Age settlements had an easily recognizable cemetery. The cemeteries could also be understood as places where fertility and legitimating rituals were performed. Those settlements with cemeteries dominated over some other settlements, which were dependent on the rituals monopolized by the dominant groups. This mode of ritual and symbolic dominance could have been associated with an economic-material exploitation of the dominated settlement units. In other words, Pihlman suggests that there was a clearly expressed social stratification in the Merovingian and Viking periods in south-western Finland.

Many researchers have even suggested the existence of social stratification among the settlements (or other social groups) maintaining the cemeteries, attempting to define a group of “richly furnished” burials by different qualitative methods. Those burials have often been given meaning with suggestive but ill-defined concepts originating from the agrarian society of historical times. Together with “farmers”, “traders”, “wealthy farmers” and their “wives”, the existence of “aristocrats”, “nobles”, even “princes” and “petty kings” has been either argued or denied (e.g. Salmo 1938, 309, 335–337; 1952, 459f, 464 f.; Cleve 1943, 214, 224; 1978; Lehtosalo-Hilander 1982b, 49, 63; 1995; Meinander 1980; Salo 1984, 235; Luoto 1988, 175; Schauman-Lönnqvist 1996, 1999). Those terms are rather open to criticism, as they are implying that the social positions, representations and dynamics of Iron Age communities would have been essentially similar to the ones of the medieval, or even worse, early modern societies. Pihlman (1990) has coined the concept “leading innovators” to describe one of the presumed functions of the Iron Age elites. This was the initial adoption of new artefact types that could later become widely distributed among other social groups.

Schauman-Lönnqvist (1996; 1999) has proposed a three-partite ranking for the Merovingian period weapon burials. During the 7th century, the richest burials include swords ornamented with Salin Style II, comparable to the swords known in the celebrated Swedish boat-cemeteries of Vendel and Valsgärde.

The ideology of individual burials

It is not completely impossible that two different burial practices – individual and collective – were used randomly and casually, without any reflection of their deeper meaning. Big iron artefacts were easy to find in the remains of a cremation pyre, and this may have contributed to the fact that many weapons were often deposited simultaneously and placed together. However, it seems unlikely that this would have been the whole truth. Of course, there is no need to insist that every single detail of a prehistoric ritual would have been given a coherent and verbally expressed meaning. Possibly some things were done in a particular way just because they had “always” been done that way, as part of a long tradition. Rituals are known for being timeless and conservative to their nature (Bell 1992; Artelius 2000).

But when two obviously different practices were repeatedly performed in the same context, a more or less conscious choice had to be made between them every single time. In such a situation, the differences between the two alternative practices would have been articulated, reflected and made explicit. Obviously people often choose the alternative which is going to save work, energy and time for them. But it is not very likely that an act of burial would have generated meanings related only to laziness or pragmatic concerns! The meaning of the two different burial practices lies more probably in the ideas and beliefs concerning the deceased, his soul and the afterlife, and this is hence the base of our interpretation. If we follow Haimila’s division of small-scaled and complete collectivity, then the Merovingian period burial tradition could be seen as belonging to small-scaled collectivity, since the “warrior” elite still feels the need to distinguish themselves from the others in the cemetery. The use of weapons would thus be an important part of the individual burial tradition (Söyrinki-Harmo 1979, 92). From the middle Viking Age onwards we could, however, talk about complete collectivity, since nothing seems to distinguish the burials from each other. They seem, in fact, quite homogeneous and even the number of weapons decreases significantly in the cremation cemeteries during this time. The next significant change in the burial ritual happens during the end of the Viking Age and the beginning of the Crusade Period when a new form of burials appears – the inhumation graves (Kivikoski 1961, 229 f.; Aroalho 1978, 73; Lehtosalo-Hilander 2000).

In some of the cemeteries weapon burials are concentrated in a specific area showing a kind of horizontal stratigraphy. Examples of this are seen both in Finland and Estonia. This observation also underlines the possibility that the “warrior” elite may indeed have wished to stand out from the rest of the cemetery (Lõugas 1973; Heikkurinen-Montell 1996, 94–99). It is difficult to define the principles for how certain males were chosen for an individual burial. It might have involved a certain kinship group, possibly having a dominant status in the settlement.

Cemeteries were sites of memory, i.e. places where the collective memories were stored. As such, those sites were also very important for the identity (Halbwachs 1992; Nora 1996, XVII; Williams 1997, 2 f.). Thus, the cemeteries had many roles in the society, but first and foremost they were places where people came to commemorate their loved ones and to perform their cult. It would seem that some male deceased had an especially important function in the manifestation of the social memory. This could explain why it is usually the weapon graves that are individual in these cemeteries and why individual female burials are rare. The next group of individual graves are inhumations from the end of the Viking Age. Was it also the members of the elite who were buried in these early inhumations? During this stage, individual burials include females as well.

To change the burial customs from cremation to inhumation is an enormous ideological leap. It is a sign of change in the Afterlife beliefs. This must also have affected the conceptions concerning the body and the soul. Did the dead body become frightening in some way? Were special protective rituals needed? How did the community of the ancestors perceive this new way of disposal? Did they accept it?

The idea of making inhumations in an older cremation cemetery suggests a degree of continuity in the ancestors' cult and the beliefs surrounding it, even though the rituals had changed. The inhumation graves were maybe not even perceived as individual graves by the Iron Age society. It is possible that the most important thing for the ritual was simply to incorporate the dead into a collective cremation cemetery. This would have given the dead the right to be a part of a shared past within a collective group of ancestors. It is thus the place of burial that is important. It is more than possible that only certain people were allowed to be inhumed inside the cremation cemeteries, otherwise there should be more inhumations at these cemeteries.

Is the collective nature due to fertility ideas?

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

Some researchers have suggested that the collective nature of the level ground cremation cemeteries would be a result of the same kind of fertility ideas as stated above. The burned bones could be scattered in the cemetery – in a metaphoric way, like sowing seeds in a field (Purhonen 1996). This is not an unlikely explanation. It could be understood in two ways: one has sexual connotations, the other implies agriculture. The act of scattering burned bones in the cemetery would have been

very similar to the act of sowing seed on a cultivation plot, which possibly had been transformed with 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 soul was thus connected to the idea of scattering bones as a ritual technique to reproduce life. Maybe it released the fertile substances, inherent in the seed grain as well as in the human remains?

It is worth noting that the topographical location of the cremation cemeteries has been agrarian; even today they are often found on small moraine hills that are surrounded by cultivated fields (Wickholm 2005). The excavations in Vainionmäki cremation cemetery in Laitila, south-western Finland, uncovered some plough-marks in the bottom soil of the cemetery. It has been suggested that those marks do not derive from earlier cultivation but are traces of ritual ploughing, since the small area had only been ploughed once. This is so far the only example of ritual ploughing at a cremation cemetery in Finland (Purhonen 1996, 123 f.; Söyrinki-Harmo 1996, 116).

The resemblance between cultivation and burned bones is also seen elsewhere. Swedish archaeologist Anders Kaliff has studied the eschatological views of Bronze Age Scandinavia. He has seen the cremation processes as a transitional phase where the body and the soul are separated from each other. In order for the soul to travel to the Afterworld the bones have to be burned, crushed and cultivated into the earth. He sees this as evidence for fertility ideas during the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. Many cairns and stone settings might also contain both grinding stones and cube stones. It is believed that these tools would have been used either to crush the burned human bones or merely as symbolic indicators of a fertility cult (Kaliff 1992; Kaliff 1997; Kaliff & Oestigaard 2004). Several stone cubes have been recovered also in the cremation cemeteries under level ground in Finland. Even though we have no traces of ritual crushing of bones in Finland¹, it has been suggested that these tools were in fact used also for other things than to crush grain. The Finnish researchers have followed the ideas of Kaliff and suggested that the same kind of fertility beliefs also existed during the Late Iron Age (Purhonen 1996; Söyrinki-Harmo 1996; see also Shepherd 1999, 55–59).

It has turned out that the amount of burned human bones inside cremation cemeteries is often quite sparse. In Finland, this was earlier explained by poor preservation and later activities at the site. Now it has become more evident that only a part of the burned body actually ended up in the cemetery (e.g. Söyrinki-Harmo 1984, 118; McKinley 1989, 71; Heikkurinen-Montell 1996, 96; Kaliff & Oestigaard 2004, 85). It seems that the deposition of bones into the cemetery was merely symbolic. But where did the rest of the bones go? It is probable that parts of the burned bones were left at the pyre, but they could also have been deposited elsewhere.

¹ Only 12 cremation cemeteries under level ground have been osteologically analyzed in Finland. Unfortunately these cemeteries have not been excavated fully.

Icelandic sagas tell that significant persons could sometimes be buried in several burial mounds in different locations. This was believed to increase good fortune in agriculture (Jennbert 2004, 194). According to Finnish folklore human bones could be removed from churchyards in sowing time and placed in fields in order to get a good crop. After harvesting the bones were dug up and placed back into churchyards. In Sweden even the earth from a churchyard as such was considered efficient enough to increase the crop (Kaliff 1997, 94).

There could also have been some other 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 iron heated in a smithy, and the cremation of a human body. This theory also follows the ideas of regeneration mentioned earlier in this paper (Gansum 2004). Gansum's theory would also explain why so many traces of smithy activity 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).

One may ask how the act of a coherent individual burial would have been conceptualized against the dominant practice of dispersing the cremated body. Possibly it might be expressed as binary opposition between *scattering and keeping/drawing together*. This would have been analogous to the opposition between collective and individual souls. The function of keeping or drawing the body together after cremation was the affirmation of a singular individual identity. But if the practice of scattering was actually conceived as an analogy of sowing, one might look for a technical analogy for the practice of keeping/drawing together as well. It is far from obvious what this analogy might have been. The Iron Age people certainly knew many technical processes which involved separation of elements from their sources that also "draw" them back together again. For example, the making of pottery, iron or bread involved some extraction of materials from their sources. They were also transformed by fire and then connected in the finished product.

Conclusion

The simultaneous existence of two different and seemingly conflicting conceptions of the soul, afterlife and ancestral existence is not necessarily strange or surprising. Cultures are not logically coherent systems, and in different contexts people may have been acting on different sets of beliefs, values and practices. But it is certainly interesting that the different conceptions of soul seem to have been present in the same contexts (burials) and among the same group of people (users of a single cemetery). Apparently the dead who were constituted as individual ancestors were males, whereas both females and males were included among the

mass of anonymous, collective ancestors. The two-edged swords, which are easy to interpret as prestigious high status items, were usually included in individual depositions. Thus it would seem that high social status was often associated with the individualized ancestor. However, all sword burials were not individual, and all individual burials were not particularly richly furnished. It is probable that this kind of variation often reflected differences among the dead, which cannot be easily induced from the material remains (e.g. age group, individual life histories, circumstances of death, circumstances of burial, etc.).

Although our interpretation deals mainly with beliefs related to the soul and afterlife, it might be relevant for studies of Iron Age social systems as well. Conceptions of afterlife and ancestral existence are probably related to how the living individual is constituted in a cultural setting (Fowler 2005). Conceptions of personhood have certainly influenced the way how the relationships between individuals are constituted and represented. This might result in new interpretations of agency, social strategies and formation of inequality in the Iron Age societies of Finland and Estonia.

We believe that when discussing variations in the burial customs it is the values, manners and habits of the people that are significant. Thus the ritual dimension should not be excluded from burial archaeology just because it feels somewhat speculative or difficult to prove.

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Anna Wickholm ja Sami Raninen

**PURUSTATUD INIMESED: ISIKSUSE DEKONSTRUKTSIOON
RAUAAJA SOOMES**

Resüme

Rahvasterännuaja algul ilmusid Eesti ja Soome aladele uut tüüpi kalmistud – madala kivistikuga põletusmatuste väljad (inglise *cremation cemetery under level ground*, soome *polttokentäkalmisto*). Selliste kalmistute tüüpilisteks tunnusteks on suhteline silmapaistmatuse (madalus) ja kollektiivsus. Kalmetüübi kollektiivne iseloom avaldub põletatud luudes ja lõhutud esemetes, mis puistati üle kogu kalmela laiali; ainsateks eristatavateks üksikmatusteks on tavaliselt merovingi- ja varasest viikingiajast pärinevad relvi sisaldavad matused. Seega näib, et üksnes osale meessoost “sõdalastele” võimaldati seesugust teistest erinevat individuaalset matmist. On selge, et relvastatult matmine oli Edela-Soome rauaaegsete ühiskondade rituaalsete süsteemide lahutamatu osa. See peegeldas “sõdalas-” või “kangelas-ideoloogiat”, mis arvatavasti oli ajastu normides ja arusaamades sügavalt juurdunud. Individuaalmatustes esineb tavaliselt kaheteraline mõök, mida on lihtne tõlgendada kõrget staatust märkiva prestiižesemena. Seetõttu võib arvata, et kõrge sotsiaalne staatus ja individualiseeritud esivanem olid tihti omavahel seotud. Siiski ei ole kõik mõõgaga matused individuaalmatused ja mitte kõik individuaalmatused ei ole panuste poolest silmapaistvalt rikkalikud. Tõenäoliselt peegeldas seesugune varieeruvus surnutevahelisi erinevusi, mis ei paista arheoloogilisest ainesest välja (näiteks vanuserühm, isiklikud elulood, surma asjaolud, matuse-tingimused jne).

Enamik põletusmatuste välju kasutanud rühmade liikmetest, sh mõned mehed, maeti kollektiivselt. Alates viikingiajast hakkasid Soome kalmistutes ka relvad laialipillutult esinema, nii et märke individuaalsusest on siitpeale väga raske leida. Ent viikingiaja lõpul ilmusid põletuskalmistutesse või nende vahetusse lähedusse taas laibamatused, mida võib vaadelda kui uut tüüpi individuaalsuse avaldumist pärast pikka kollektiivmatuste perioodi.

Autorite arvates tuleks matust analüüsida eelkõige kui sündmust, millega objektiviteeritakse ja väljendatakse surmaga seonduvaid *uskumussüsteeme*. Sotsiaalsetes strateegiates tuleb siiski tihti ette teadlikku rituaalidega manipuleerimist. Samas võib rituaalis osalemine muuta osalejate alateadlikku *habitus*'t. Seega: isegi kui matuserituaali ei saa kunagi pidada sotsiaalse struktuuri otseseks peegelduseks, siis rituaalsed praktikad ja mitterituaalsed sotsiaalsed praktikad ikkagi sageli muudavad ja piiravad üksteist vastastikku.

Kalmistud olid paigad, kus säilitati kollektiivset mälu. Identiteedi jaoks olid need kohad väga olulised. Kalmistutel oli ühiskonnas palju rolle. Need olid kohadeks, kuhu tuldi mälestama oma lähedasi ja läbi viima neile suunatud kultustoiminguid. Paistab, et mõnel meessoost lahkunul oli sotsiaalse mälu manifestatsioon eriti oluline funktsioon. See seletaks, miks ainult relvadega matused on

kõnealustes kalmetes individuaalsed ja miks naiste individuaalmatused on haruldased. Ajaliselt järgmiseks individuaalmatuste rühmaks on viikingiaja lõpu laibamatused. Kas need varased laibamatused kuulusid samuti eliidi esindajaile? Sel ajal hõlmasid individuaalmatused juba ka naiste omi.

Mõned uurijad on oletanud, et põletusmatuste väljade kollektiivsus on tingitud viljakusega seonduvatest kujutelmadest. Põletatud luid võib kalmistule puistata samamoodi, nagu külvatakse põllule seemneid. See ei olegi nii ebatõenäoline seletus: põletatud luude puistamine kalmesse võis olla väga sarnane seemnete külvamisega põllule, mis oli võib-olla tule läbi teisenenud nagu inimkehagi. Üsna lihtne on neid kaht toimingut vaadelda üksteise analoogidena. Võib-olla ühendati seeläbi kollektiivhinge kujutus luude laialipuistamise kui elu reprodutseerimise rituaalse tehnikaga? Võib-olla vallandas see viljakusjõud, mis olid olemas nii vilja-seemnetes kui ka inimjäänustes? Inimluid võidi kasutada ka muul moel. Näiteks on Terje Gansum kirjutanud põletatud luude kasutamisest raua tsementiitimisel (st süsinikuga rikastamisel terase saamise eesmärgil). Tema uurimus näitab ka, et tulel, separaia kuumutamisel ja inimkeha põletamisel olid tugevad metafoorilised seosed. Ühtlasi lähtub see teooria ka taassünni ideest, mida on ka käesolevas artiklis mainitud. Gansumi teooria seletaks sedagi, miks Soome põletusmatuste väljade läheduses on nii palju jälgi sepatööst.

Kahe erineva ja näiliselt vastuolulise hinge, teispoolsuse ja esivanemate käsitluse samaaegne olemasolu ei olegi tegelikult nii kummaline ega üllatav. Kultuurid ei ole loogiliselt koherentsed süsteemid ja erinevates kontekstides võivad inimesed käituda erinevatest uskumustest, väärtustest ja praktikatest lähtuvalt. Kahtlemata on aga huvitav, et ühes ning samas kontekstis (matused) ja ühes ning samas inimrühmas (teatava kalmistu kasutajad) paistab olevat olnud käibel kaks erinevat hinge kujutlust.

Autorid usuvad, et matmiskombestikis täheldatava varieeruvuse käsitlemisel on olulised inimeste väärtushinnangud, kombed ja harjumused. Rituaalset mõõdet ei tohiks matusearheoloogiast välja jätta lihtsalt põhjusel, et see tundub olevat spekulatiivne või raskesti tõestatav.