

The seminar series

Viking Phenomena: current research on late Iron Age Scandinavia

Introducing

Dr. Tuija Kirkinen

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Awarded by Gustaf Adolf Akademien 2019 for her doctoral thesis *Between skins*.

Date: 7th of November 2019

Time: 15 – 17

Place: Uppsala Eng/ 2-0024 – Uppsalarummet, A30, Campus Gotland

FIBERS AND FUR REMAINS FROM BURIALS - microscoping the roles of furs in the past

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In Finnish archaeology, furs have been discussed almost entirely from the points of view of trade. Moreover, fur trade has had a strong explanatory power in interpreting the colonization of Finland, social differentiation and material culture.

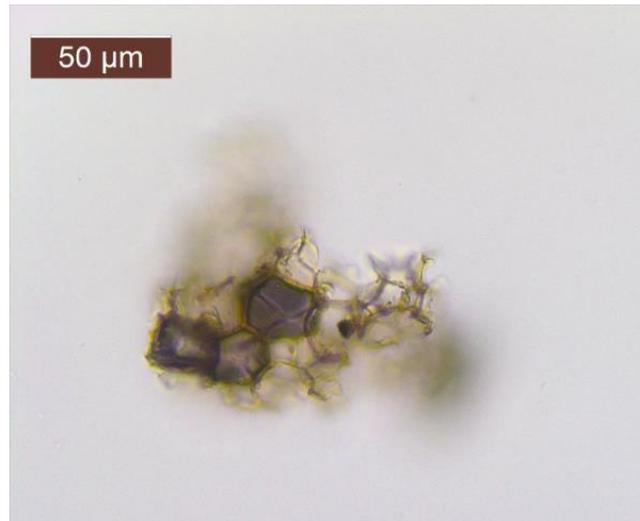
In this presentation, I focus on the roles that animal skins held in populations which have been classified as producers of furs. For these groups of people, the lives of humans and wild animals were closely engaged and the skin had specific agency, which can be reached in Kalevala epic poems and ethnographic materials. In contrast to this, for people who didn't live in close contact with wild animals, the products hypothetically represented otherness and were rare and exotic, even status items.

Forecast Fennoscandian Iron Age research, this study brings new information about the roles that animal skins and wild animals held in societies, which presumably produced furs for international trade networks. Compared to previous research, the work evidences the legacies of hunting traditions in populations, which have been seen foremost as agrarian.

First, I present the animal skin material identified from Iron Age and medieval burials in Finland and Karelia (Russia). Second, I discuss the preservation of fibers and the identification methods used. Finally, I discuss human-animal relationships and the agency of furs on the basis of the fur finds.

The presentation is based on my PhD thesis *Between skins - animal skins in the Iron Age and historical burials in Eastern Fennoscandia* (<https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/299558>).

Additionally, I show some preliminary results of the ongoing research of microfibrils from Mesolithic red ochre graves and Viking Age inhumation burials.



Cervidae hair fragment from a soil sample from a Late iron Age inhumation burial, Hollola Santahaudanmäki.

Welcome!

Neil, John & Charlotte