

**Hilkka Oksala**

**CULTURAL PROBLEMS OF NORTH BOTHNIAN STONE AGE RELATED TO THE CONCEPTS OF LOCALITY AND SOCIETY — TOWARDS AN ARTEFACT ANALYSIS OF SOME MATERIAL ASSEMBLAGES IN SW FINNISH LAPLAND**

*Abstract*

A literature review on the concept of the North Bothnian Stone Age culture was given according to the research tradition on the subject. The concepts of locality and society are to be handled from a personal perspective based on the previous writings, not from a point of view of any general theoretical framework.

The main problem under locality is the definition of the cultural area. In this case it is situated around the Gulf of Bothnia. The local and regional culture traits can best be seen in the amount and distribution of the most typical archaeological findings in relation to outside influences. Two outside cultural mainstreams are debated in the literature: one is from the south to the north and the other from the east to the west. The local and regional area has originally been defined through the densest findings of the so-called North Bothnian implements (Rovaniemi picks) and other artifacts of greenstone. Recent topics of discussion are the cultural borders between the archaeological material and its relationship to the ideological levels of culture. This leads to the question of prehistoric cultural provinces.

The categories and distribution of material observed lead to suggestions about the Stone Age societies in the North Bothnian area. The starting point has been the characteristic subsistence strategies which range from the meaning of different niches for hunter-gatherers to the possible transition to agriculture of the northernmost Neolithic type. A further question is the relation of subsistence strategies with settlement patterns, especially the seasonal mobility. Recent dwelling site group finds from the area have given material to the discussion on the Stone Age social networks. Changes at the end of the Stone Age have been interpreted as an indication of the birth of the Sami ethnicity.

A special attention is going to be paid to the different methodological and qualitative approaches to the finds from the area. What is aimed at is to develop an artefact analysis for some of the case material from the SW Finnish Lapland. The purpose is to understand the prehistory of this area and to try to reach a Stone Age individual as a social actor behind the material.

*Hilkka Oksala, Yo-talo C 1002, FIN-20500 Turku, Finland.*