

## **ANALYSIS OF DISPERSED CREMATIONS**

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The paper will focus on the analysis of the flat cairn cemetery with dispersed cremations. This type of burial ground was widespread in Finland and in Estonia during the Iron Age and has occasionally occurred elsewhere. In connection with this type of the cemetery there are two problems of special interest. Firstly, there is no clear correlation between the number of the artefacts and the number of buried individuals. The amount of grave goods is surprisingly large for the number of the individuals derived from the initial osteological analysis. We will discuss the peculiarities of the burial custom, deposition process and research methods as possible reasons for this phenomenon. Secondly, the process of the funeral ritual and the treatment of the cremains are concerned. By studying the distribution of bones, charcoal and artefacts it is possible to distinguish series of ritual acts performed directly on the burial place. Our presentation is based on the case study of the 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century AD cremation cemetery of Madi in Estonia. Although the cemetery was excavated in the 1920ies and 1960ies the excavations were carefully recorded enabling us to use modern digital methods to analyse the distribution of the artefacts and bones and to create the spatial models.

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