

Climate has changed before Cooling that happened 6,000 years ago ended prosperous living on the same latitude as Finland

Caption:

Cooling of climate ended luxurious days in Kierikki. Samuel Vaneeckhout (left), Ezra Zybrow, and Michael Wing consider area a terrific research site.

Yli-Ii

Although changes in climate do not happen everyday climate has changed before. Approximately 6,000 years ago climate on the same latitude as Finland became cooler for 2,000 years. Cool weather ended a long prosperous period and broke settlement into small communities.

During the same period, when Finland's climate became cooler, Russia and Canada's climate became warmer. International research groups are now studying the magnitude of these changes and how people adapted to them.

Ezra Zubrow, professor of anthropology from the University of Buffalo, is leading research in Kierikki in Yli-Ii. He says that the research site is extremely interesting. Accordingly, funding has been received from science funds from the U.S., Canada, and Europe.

Change increased differences

Hunters and fishermen lived prosperous life in coastal regions 6,000 years ago; climate was a couple of degrees warmer than the current climate. Their houses had 6-7 rooms and many houses were built together. These finds conclude that trading was widespread and there were plenty of goods available.

When climate became cooler, smaller accommodations were built and communities broke up into smaller units.

Zubrow finds it interesting that social differences between people increased when living conditions became strained. More people became poor.

Samuel Vaneeckhout, who is working on his archaeological dissertation at the University of Oulu, says that he does not know for sure if population decreased. It is possible, but it is also possible that traces of settlement are harder to find when settlement was so dispersed.

Similar challenges now

Mankind may now be facing the same kind of challenges as they did in Stone Age. This increases interest in archaeological research results.

Vaneeckhout estimates that mankind has now better chances to adapt than in the Stone Age when people lived more 'under nature's rules.' Climate change has complicated living conditions in several areas. Examples can be found, among other things, in Africa.

Even now social differences are increasing.

“Rich people have better possibilities to adapt to change, just as they had in the Stone Age.”

Many international research groups know the area of Kierikki in Yli-Ii. Zubrow praises Kierikki in his American way. Interest in the area has increased not only because of the Kierikki centre and the museum, but also because there have been a lot of finds and there should be something to research at least for the next 20 years.

Kierikki’s archaeologist Samuli Viljamaa says that the last year’s most interesting find was the red ochre grave. Most likely more of them will be found because graves usually form a graveyard.

Michael Wing, a teacher from California, has been accompanying the research work in Kierikki. PolarTREC made his 3-week travel possible. PolarTREC is an educational research project and its goal is to advance scientific teaching in American schools.