

Saarenoja 2 dwelling site (SE-Finland)

The missing link between the Early Mesolithic flint and quartz industry?



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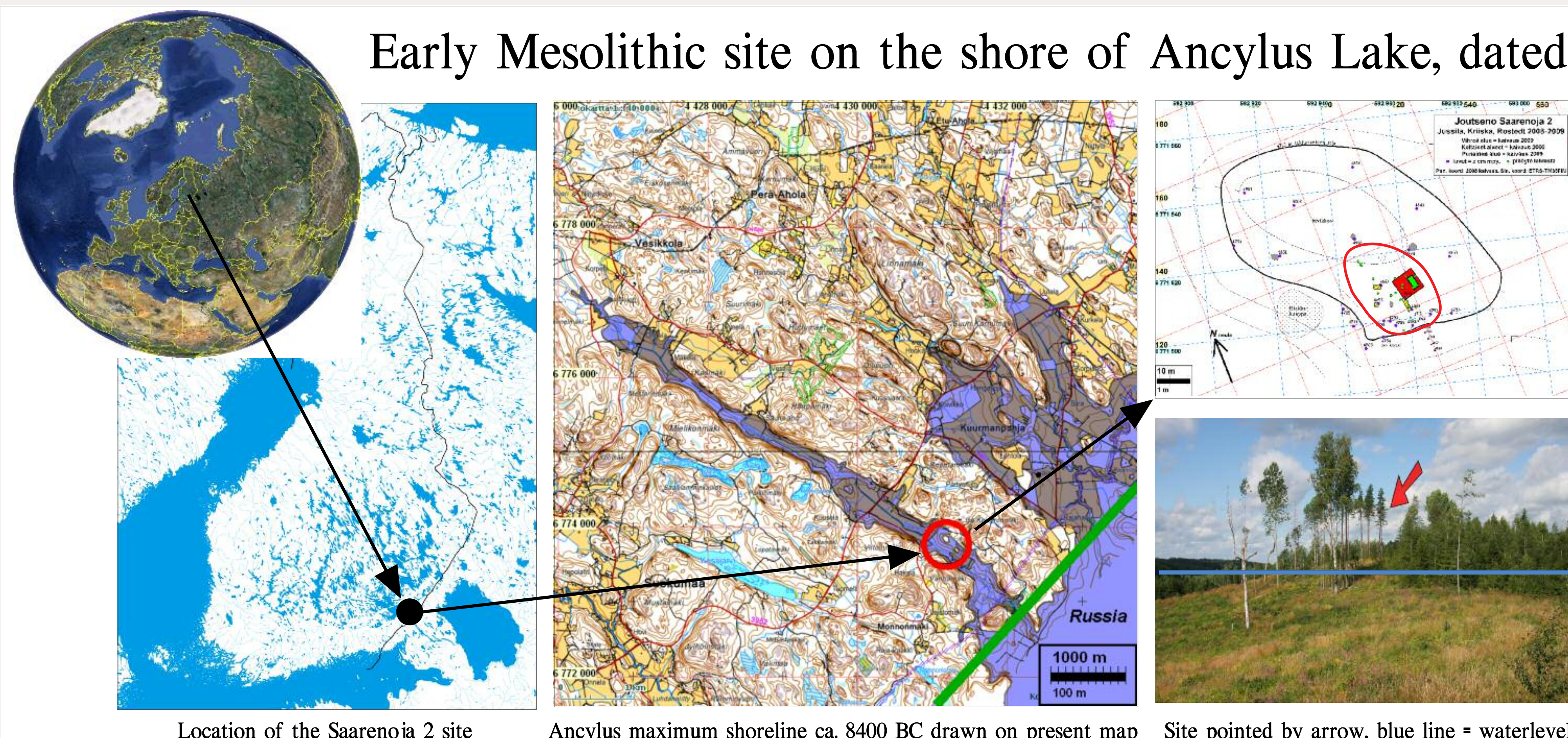
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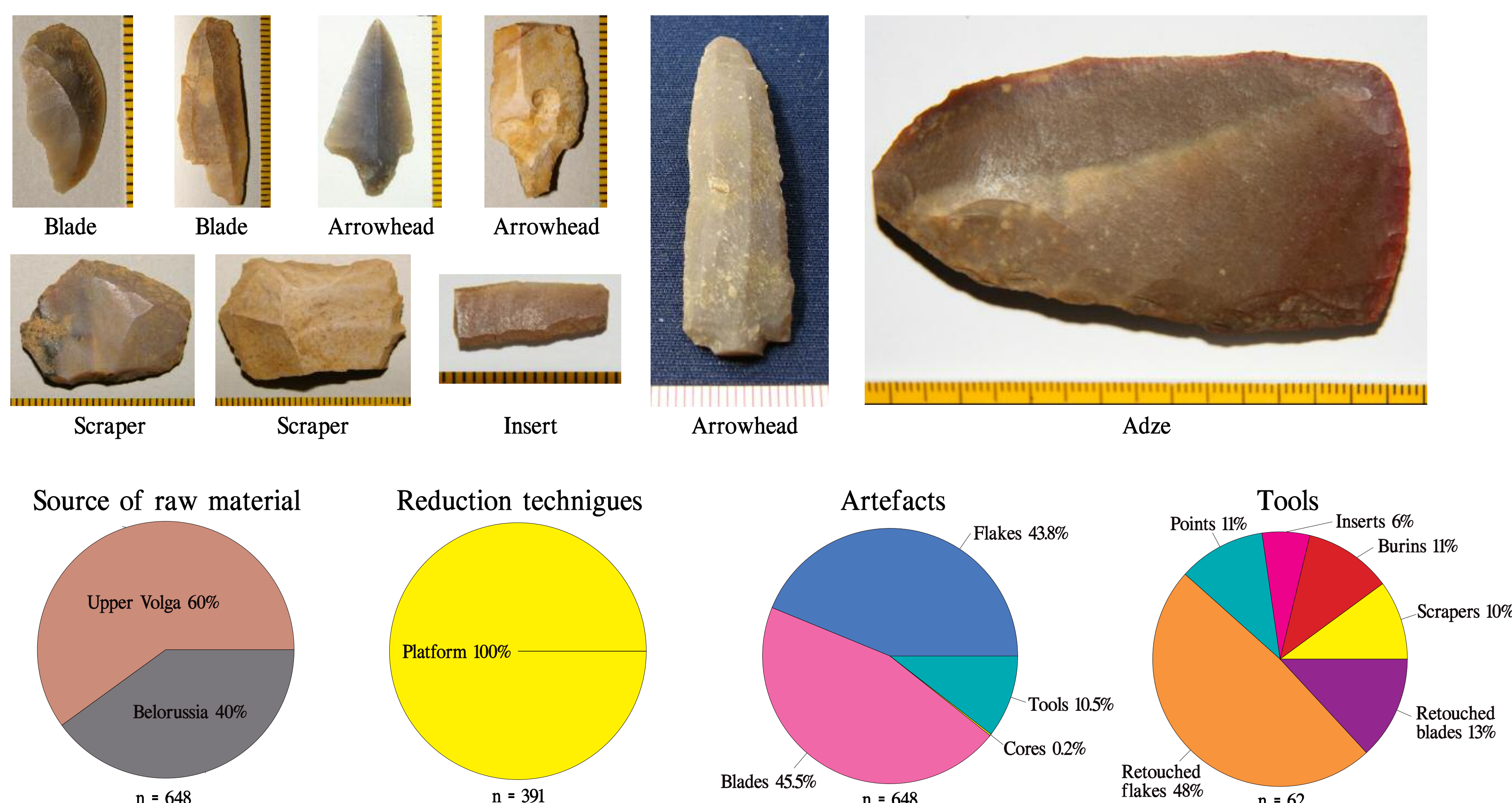


Location: N 61,06734 E 28,72253 Z 48 m
Found: Jussila 1999 survey
Estimated site size: 400 m²
Excavated: 2000, 2008-2010 by authors
Excavated area: 55 m²
Average thickness of the cultural layer: 40 cm

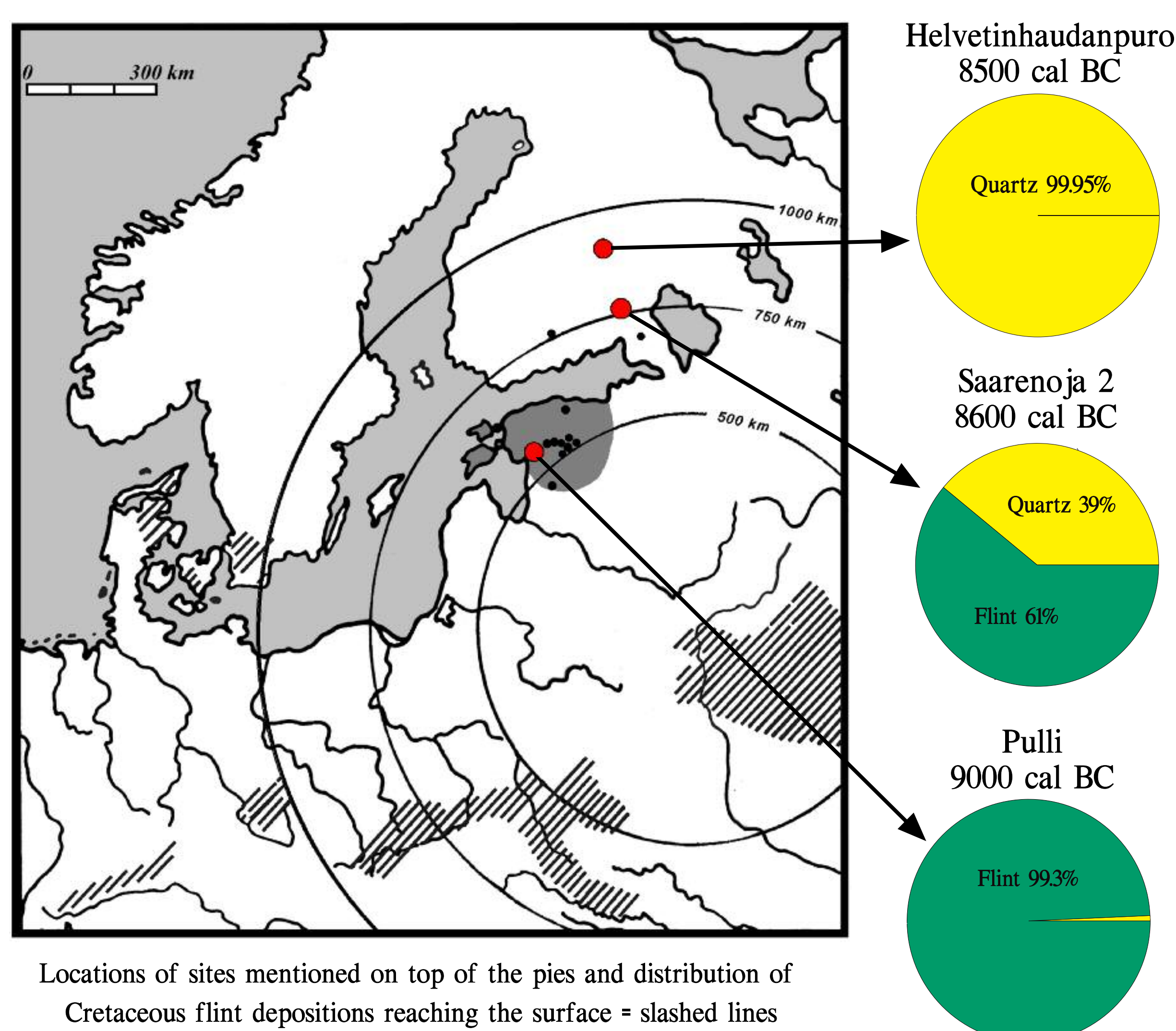
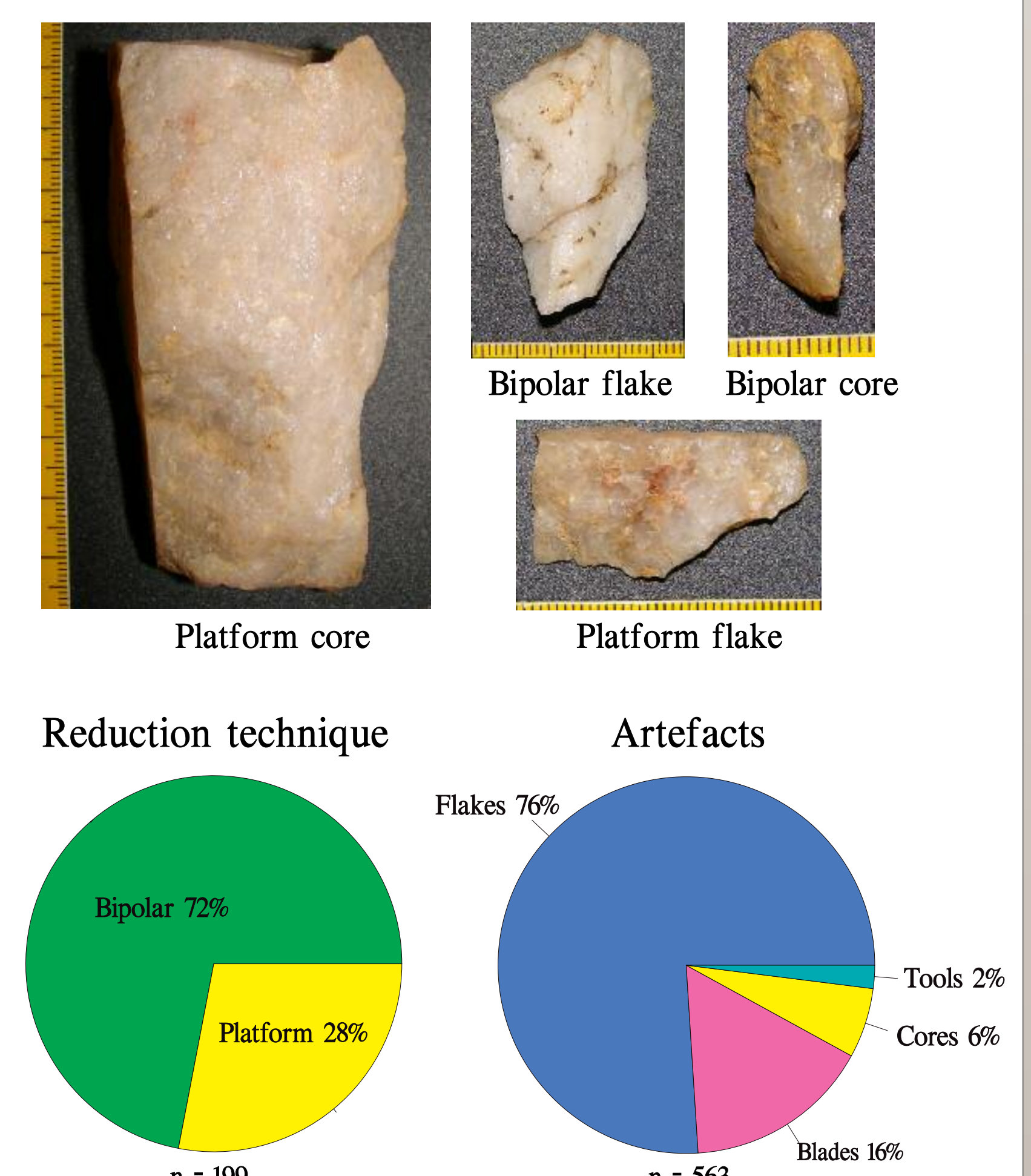
C14 dating 1:
 8600 cal BC (Hela 758, 9350±75 BP),
 burnt bone; *Alces alces*
C14 dating 2:
 8550 cal BC (Hela 728, 9310±75 BP),
 burnt bone; *Alces alces*

The link between the Early Mesolithic flint and quartz technology

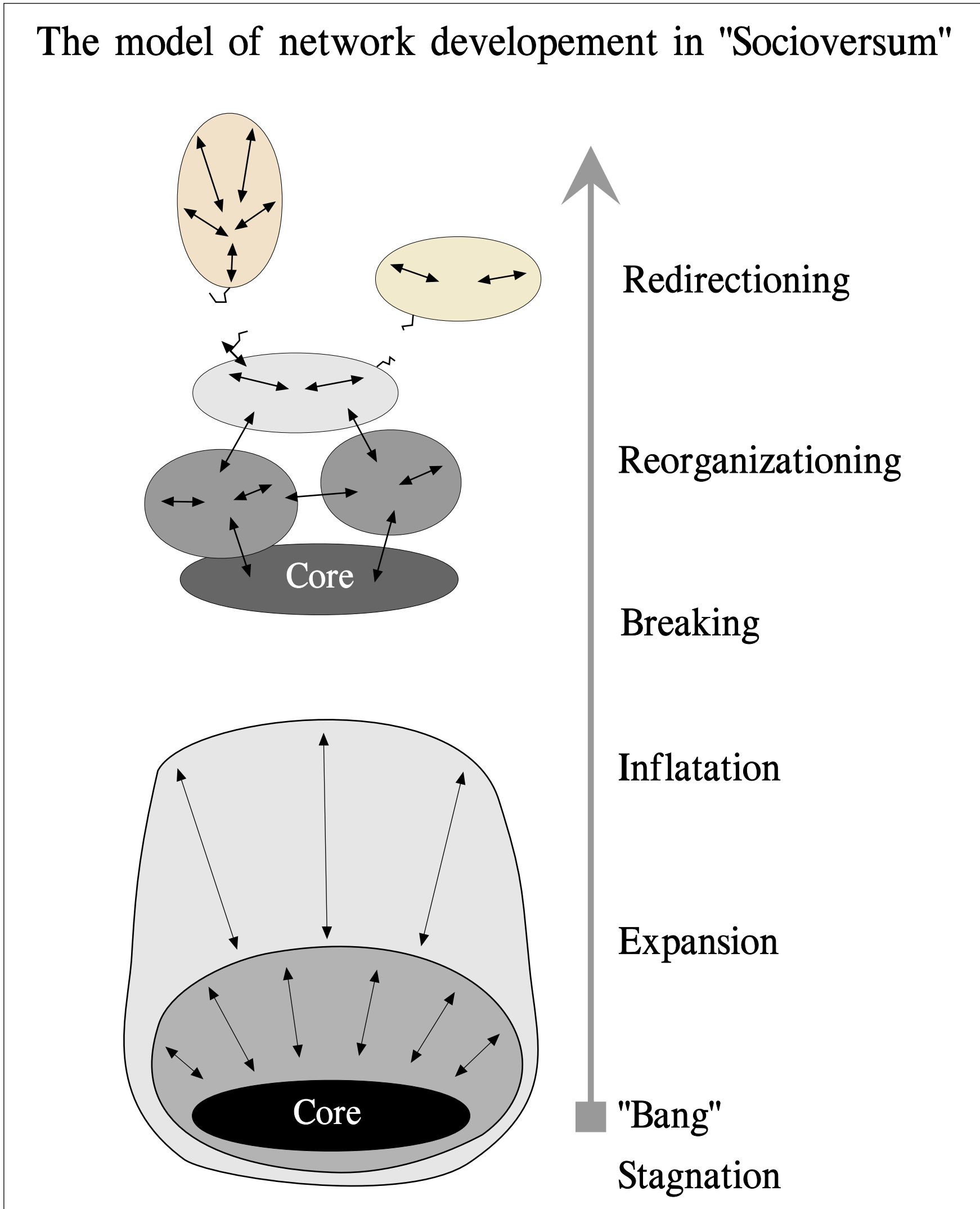
Flint



Quartz



One of the greatest problems for understanding the beginning of the post-glacial habitation in Finland is differences in the Early Mesolithic lithic material of Finland and neighbouring areas. In Finland the dominant Mesolithic lithic material is quartz, since natural flint cannot be found. In neighbouring areas flint is the most common lithic material and the percentage of quartz is very small during the Mesolithic. As a result the comparison of Finnish lithic collections with the collections in Russia and the Baltic region has been difficult or even impossible. New archaeological fieldwork in SE-Finland has offered a possibility to cross this contradiction.



During the Early Mesolithic large-scale social networks existed in the E-European forest zone, which is characterized by the exchange of raw material as well as ready-made tools between the neighbouring nodes of the networks. Sometimes the flint natural sources inventory spread hundreds of kilometers away

from its original, natural sources. On the territory of Finland the major raw material changed completely from flint to quartz during a couple of hundred years. As a result the social networks were reorganized. Contacts to the "native" areas faded and soon almost totally ended when local materials

began to dominate as the tool material. We can consider this process as a stabilization of the habitation and conclude that the occupation of virgin areas then reached to such extent that it finally created new and more locally emphasized networks.