

Session title: ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES BY THE NEXT GENERATION: LOCAL AND REGIONAL ENVISAGEMENTS

Organizers: Anna-Karin Andersson, University of Kalmar, Sweden/University of Sheffield, UK
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Discussant: John Barrett, University of Sheffield, UK

Time: Saturday morning

Room:

Session abstract:

Our session invites the younger generation of archaeological researchers to respond to the currently available general models for the Mesolithic, Neolithic and early Bronze Age research and material. In particular we invite young researchers that move away from current models that may appear to homogenize processes that are regionally and locally very diverse matters. This could include issues of expressions of identity and material culture, as well as how triggering factors for change are manifested in archaeological remains.

There has been a great deal of research undertaken in the field of northern European Stone and Bronze Age archaeology during the last years. This has made it difficult to follow which topic, theoretical position and choice of material the new generation of researchers has selected. This session will highlight the aims and achievements of new European archaeologists. Issues should address current problems regarding Stone and Bronze Age settlement preferably in a regional or local context.

We believe that this session should be seen as a first step in the creation of new connections between archaeologists on a European scale. The validity of a session and a further collaboration on a European level should not be underestimated; if we do not reach beyond the borders our research will in the end simply be seen as a peripheral phenomenon.

Paper abstracts:

CLADISTICS AND FLAKED STONE TOOLS: PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES

Jan Apel, Univeristy College London, UK and Kim Darmark, University of Uppsala, Sweden

Recent studies on the phylogeny of flaked stone tools rely heavily on morphometric characters, which basically is a description of size and shape. This approach tends to overlook some of the special problems that are associated with a study of lithic

material, such as transformation through resharpener and the effect of raw material or blank shape on the morphology of the tool. We suggest that tracing technological elements, which we believe to be important units of transmission, can result in different patterns in the archaeological record than those obtained through morphometric analysis. Similarities and differences between two contemporaneous but spatially separated projectile point industries – Kunda/Butovo and PPNB – are discussed from this viewpoint

LISTENING TO THE BREATH OF COLLAPSED BUILDING REMAINS: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH OF NEOLITHIC ARCHITECTURE IN NORTHERN GREECE

Styliani Kaltsogianni, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

Although it does not constitute a recently discovered method of identifying the physiognomy of neolithic architecture, nevertheless the study of structural clay fragments has not been widespread applied as a practical way of reconstructing the superstructure of collapsed buildings. In fact, the available information about neolithic architecture in Greece derives mainly from excavations conducted in Thessaly. Furthermore, any attempt to reconstruct buildings' superstructure is based principally on their contemporary so-called "house models", which unfortunately miss a specific context, as far as the majority of them are random findings.

On the grounds that the existing bibliography has not incorporated the conclusions of the couple of studies that deal with structural clay fragments and moreover it homogenizes in a way the architectural practices despite the different geographical areas, the focal point of the present paper is to underline the necessity of such specialized studies that lead to exact, verified information. Such a study shall be attempted for neolithic architecture of Northern Greece, too.

UNDER THE BOGS OF TREES

Tom Carlsson, National Heritage Board of Sweden, Archaeological Excavations Department, Sweden

This paper takes its points of departure from the Late Mesolithic settlement; Strandvägen in Eastern Middle Sweden. The traditional illustration of a Late Mesolithic settlement is an open, light place near a shore; where large trees had been cut down to make room for people in the dense, deciduous, Atlantic forest. The macrofossil analyses of seeds from the waterlogged layers outside the site did not match this picture, however. On the contrary: the settlement appears to have been situated under the boughs of trees, and the people had not cut down many of the large trees in the settlement or just outside it. Only the underbrush had been cleared, it seems, to make room for houses and activities. The prehistoric plants and the prerequisites for them are interesting in several respects; in particular, the different needs of the plants for growth show the type of environment the people created. My interpretation is therefore that plants and trees were included in the ritualizing of space and in the interpersonal relations and had links to the immaterial world-view during this period.

FOLLOWING MESOLITHIC PATHS

Anna-Karin Andersson, University of Kalmar, Sweden/University of Sheffield, UK

The concept of culture can be acknowledged in two ways; either as a product, an outcome of agreed values and meanings, which produce closed units of singular systems, or as resources and possibilities, created by networks of intentions and ideas. This view acknowledges the diversity and disparities between people, artefacts and landscapes in relation to time. In the first apprehension change is a problem while in the second change is a resource. Accordingly, the Neolithisation is a huge obstacle in the first, but not a problem in the second. My argument therefore, is that there may be a series of different local paths to the building of the Neolithic.

I am studying the Ertebölle culture of southern Scandinavia and following the above argument, I argue that every group of people in the late Mesolithic created their own presumptions of what was later to become the Neolithic. This brings back the accumulated sites with both Ertebölle and Funnel beaker material in the cultural layers into the debate, as well as questions of origins and cultural belongings.

RICHLY ORNAMENTED AMPHORAE IN FUNNEL BEAKER CULTURE: A MEDIUM IN THE CONTACTS WITH THE SUPERNATURAL?

Danuta Prinke, Poznań Archaeological Museum, Poland

The religious perspective delivers probably the most convenient attitude to revisit the still controversial origin of a certain local ceramic feature within the Funnel Beaker Culture of North Eastern Poland: the Wiórek-Jezuicka Struga stylistics, defined due to the fact that on some newly discovered sites of this culture the custom of the specific and extremely abundant ornamentation of the clay vessels, mainly amphorae, occurred which was contradictory to the universal ornamentation canon of that time – poor in decoration means (Baalberge Culture).

The shift of the hitherto discussion from the chrono-genetical to the symbolic-functional considerations allows us to associate a set of features registered also on other territories of the older stages of FBC in which a richly ornamented amphora might have played a role of an important medium. In this perspective, to the already accepted metaphysic behaviours of the FBC societies of the Polish Plain (megalithic idea, bog deposits), one could add a new category: separated places of ceremonial practices functioning within and out of the settlement area.

ALONG THE SHORES OF LAKE HJÄLMAREN AND BEYOND...

Kim von Hackwitz, University of Stockholm, Sweden

Around 2800BC the archaeological picture in Sweden changes. The change is indicated by the appearance of the Boat-Axe Culture. In particular, the change can be noted by the introduction of new types of inhumation-graves that differ from the graves belonging to the previous and contemporary Pitted Ware Culture. As the

different sites have different geographical distribution, inland – coast, as well as a different material culture, the two cultures are said to have been representing two ethnically different groups.

In my opinion there are several problems concerning the presumed cultural dualism. An obvious predicament is that the interpretations of the different sites maintain that these sites were places where people lived and expressed their ethnicity. In contrast to the distribution of Middle Neolithic sites, studies have indicated that the stray finds from the two cultures complicate and perhaps even change the picture.

In this paper, an alternative view on the two material cultures will be presented. Instead of considering the two assemblages as indicating two different ethnical groups I will suggest that they can be understood as to express different actions within one society.

AN ERA OF CISTS AND DAGGERS: LOCAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE INTRODUCTION OF TRADITIONS AND MATERIAL CULTURE IN SWEDEN'S LATE NEOLITHIC/EARLY BRONZE AGE

Johan Gunnarsson, University of Kalmar, Sweden/University of Reading, UK

An understanding of the Late Neolithic in Sweden is synonymous with a thorough understanding of the Cist Grave tradition and an appreciation for the impact of metal. These topics have been debated since the late 19th century but a clear consensus is yet to be formulated, the beginning of those traditions is more pronounced than the ending. A geographically holistic view applied on a specific set of artifacts dominated the archaeological approach in the past. Emphasizing local, rather than general, perspectives will enhance our awareness of how traditions and material culture was received and interpreted in prehistory. A number of cist graves, in south eastern Sweden, provide evidence for a uniform material culture along with numerous local variations which range from subtle alterations to obvious anomalies. Grave contents exhibits a collateral existence of objects interpreted as belonging to separate segments of prehistory, characteristic artifacts of the Neolithic are mixed with Bronze Age objects. The diversity of shapes and contexts creates a complex set of processes that needs to be addressed one at a time within finite areas.

BEYOND BORDERS OF THE BALTIC SEA: AN INTRODUCTION TO A PHD PROJECT ABOUT MARITIME LIFE IN BRONZE AGE BALTIC SEA REGION

Joakim Wehlin, University of Gotland/University of Gothenburg, Sweden

My paper is an introduction to my PhD project where I place the meeting between people as the starting point. At times when transmissions and transformations of the society is visible it is of importance to study different influences and group dynamics. During the Northern European Bronze Age, contacts can be traced over a large geographic area, and in this perspective it is of importance to view the Baltic Sea region and its maritime environment as central in interaction networks. My aim is to construct a maritime model and through studies of interactions, networks and social

organisation trace evidence for a maritime institution, both concerning the material and symbolic culture. As a final aim I will open up for a wider European perspective to get an understanding of regional as well as local aspects of cultural interactions. This will be carried out through comparative studies of the material culture and metallurgy/metal analysis and an ethno-archaeological perspective. The islands of Gotland, Öland, Åland, Bornholm, Dagö and Ösel are the main study areas, and the Sea in-between, which sometimes is seen as a border between cultures in the prehistoric discussion, is rather viewed as a link and crossway making interactions and exchange possible.