

Becoming European? The transformation of third millennium Europe - and the trajectory into the second millennium BC

Session organisers:

Professor Christopher Prescott

Institute of Archaeology

University of Oslo

Dr Håkon Glørstad

Museum of Cultural History

University of Oslo

hakon.glorstad@khm.uio.no

The aim of the EAA is to promote the management and interpretation of the European archaeological heritage. Since Childe's day the concept of a European archaeology and identity - the concept of *Europe* - has varied concurrently with theoretical trends in archaeology. Both processual and post-modern archaeology have, with notable exceptions, been small-scale archaeologies. A number of recent studies have again explored explanations and accounts on a continental scale, not the least concerning the Bronze Age. In the wake of these studies, renewed theoretical and methodological approaches are being hammered out.

We would argue that elements of a European heritage can be identified not only as a national strategy of the present, but also as a process in prehistory - the cultural and political transformations of the third millennium BC in European prehistory sparking of this process. The transformation of third millennium society initiated the processes and mechanisms that led up to the complex political, social and cultural institutions of the first half of the second millennium BC. From this time on an authentic historical continuum leading towards present society can be identified. In some places - like Scandinavia - this process seems to sever the bounds to the past, creating a new historical trajectory. This break is, i.a., represented by the introduction of permanently occupied farms, more intensively tilled fields, deforestation in order to create pastures, an evolving metal industry and distribution of prestige objects, long-distance contact, and the initial establishment of hierarchical political institutions, promoting a predatory culture.

In this session we want to focus on processes in the past and the present leading towards a unifying concept or appearance of culture, making up a fundament for the creation of our part of the world as a unity, as *Europe*. To this end we would like to welcome papers dealing with *the transformation of third millennium Europe or the local impact of this transformation*. We would also like to welcome papers that follow *the initial historical trajectory into the following centuries*. Finally, we also invite papers that explore *the ideological, political and social context of the renewed interest in narratives that incorporate large scale - indeed continental - factors in their exploration the final Neolithic/ earliest Bronze Age*.

Paper abstracts of about 200 words are being accepted by the session organisers.