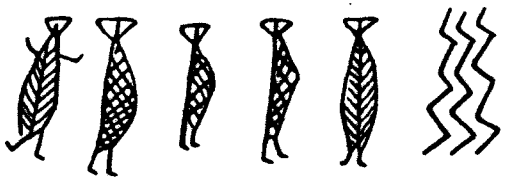


MESOLITHIC MISCELLANY

* *

UNION INTERNATIONAL DES SCIENCES PREHISTORIQUES ET PROTOHISTORIQUES
COMMISSION 14

Volume 3, Number 1 MAY 1982

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The publication of Het Mesolithikum te Mendonk, Gent, 1982, 80 pp., with French summary, can be obtained from the following address: R. Van de Walle, Ottergemsesteenweg 323, 9000 Gent, Belgium. Payment (250 BF) by postorder.

Jan Vanmoerkerke

* * *

Contributions to the Study of the Mesolithic of the Belgian Lowland, ed. by Pierre M. Vermeersch, 1982, Studia Praehistorica Belgica 1, Koninklijk Museum voor Midden Afrika, Tervuren, is available from the Laboratorium voor Prehistorie, Redingenstraat 16 bis, B-3000 Leuven, Belgium, for 350 B.F.

The volume presents reports on three recently excavated sites:

R. Lauwers & P.M. Vermeersch, Un Site due Mesolithique Ancien a Neerharen-De Kip (39 pp., 21 figs., 4 tables). Les fouilles sur ce gisement, situé dans la vallée de la Meuse, ont révélé une seule concentration dont le centre est occupé par une structure en pierres. La concentration est nettement délimitée aussi bien dans le plan horizontal que dans le plan vertical. Les remontages et le microwear analysis ont largement contribué à l'étude de l'organisation spatiale du site. La datation au 14C situe l'occupation vers la fin du Préboréal/début Boréal.

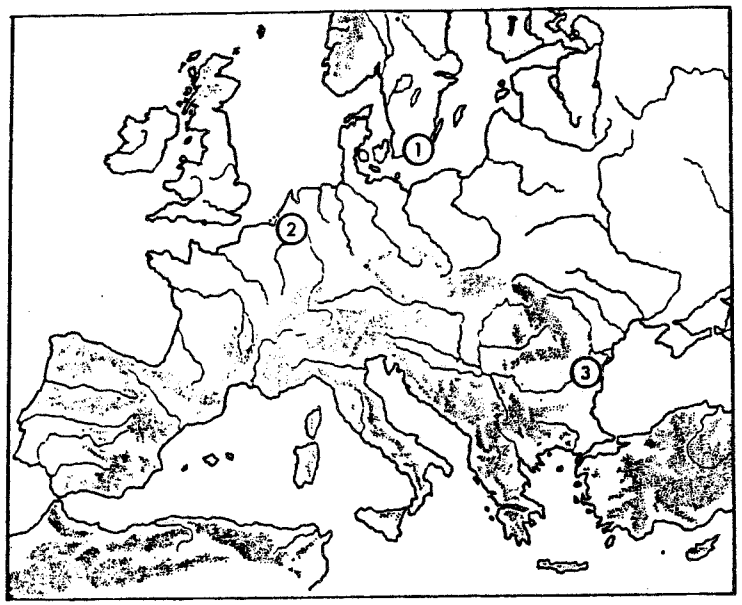
R. Lauwers & P.M. Vermeersch, Mesolithique Ancien a Schulen (56 pp., 23 figs., 10 tables). Ce rapport traite les résultats de plusieurs campagnes de fouille sur quatre sites différents, situés sur des dunes dans la plaine alluviale de la Demer. Avec le site de Neerharen-De Kip, le matériel recueilli à Schulen constitue une unique documentation sur le Mésolithique Ancien régional.

D. Huyge & P.M. Vermeersch, Late Mesolithic Settlement at Weelde-Paardsdrank (80 pp., 34 figs., 20 tables). This report presents the study of three high artifact density areas located atop a tardiglacial continental dune. Both from a technological and a typological standpoint, the vast assemblages recovered may be related to the scantily documented late Mesolithic trapeze industries from

sandy northern Belgium and the southern Netherlands. Detailed physical analysis of the site includes stratigraphy, sedimentology, pollen analysis, and radiocarbon dating. The study of the archaeological material focuses on the processing of the raw material resources and tool typology. In spite of unresolved problems regarding settlement organization and chronology, the present report substantially contributes to a better understanding of the Late Mesolithic occupation of the Belgian Lowland and its adjacent area.

* * *

Location of sites mentioned in this newsletter



1 Skateholm
2 Lepelare Zand
3 Ostrovul

RESEARCH REPORTS

A 7000 Year Old Site at the Southern Coast. New Things about Old Things from Skateholm, Southern Sweden.

The spring of 1980 saw the initiation of excavations at the Mesolithic site of Skateholm, containing the remains of both settlement and burials. Preliminary analysis of the season's finds was made during the winter of 1980-81. The high frequency of organic matter in the documented material afforded cross-scientific co-operation with mutually rewarding results. These, as well as future excavations have now been incorporated in a program entitled the Skateholm Project, with the subtitle A Late Mesolithic Settlement at a South Swedish Bay.

The Graveyard

Eleven graves were excavated during 1980 and ten of these have been described earlier (Mesolithic Miscellany 2,1). The eleventh grave contained the burnt bones of an elderly individual. These had been placed in small pits below the culture layer and were spread over an area containing several square meters. Seven more graves were discovered and examined during the 1981 season, as follows:

Grave 12. The grave was discovered during the course of examination of a large, shallow pit at the topmost part of the slope, to all intents the remains of a hut with a sunken floor. It contained the remains of a young woman, aged 19-21 years, laid in a supine position with arms akimbo. The skeleton had unwittingly been disturbed in antiquity, apparently in the course of building the hut complex, with the result that the individual's skull and left shoulder were destroyed. Above the legs a piece of amber was found, probably representing a grave offering. By the right shin bone a point made from wild-cat bone was placed. Limited areas of the body had been strewn with red ochre.

Grave 13. This was of extremely restricted dimension - only 1 m long and 0.50 m wide - and contained the bones of a male, aged approx. 40 years in an anatomically impossible arrangement. It may be a secondary burial, but certain factors, such as the anatomically correct position of the foot bones in relation to one another, tend to disprove the theory of removal of the body long after death. It could, however, be extablished that this individual had been the object of severe mistreatment even prior to his death: a depression in the left femur was registered, the result of an oblique from below direct thrust and cut action. The nature of the wound is consistent with an injury inflicted by a wild boar. The injury caused inflammation of the periosteum and changes in bone construction of the femur neck, were also documented. Furthermore, a transverse arrowhead was found lodged in the pelvis at such an angle as to indicate that the individual was killed by a frontal-obliquely fired missle which penetrated the lower abdomen. The lower part of the pit was strewn with red ochre.

Grave 14. A double grave was found in the western part of the examined area, containing a male aged 40-50 years and a female aged 17-19. The male was placed in a supine position with arms akimbo, while the female lay on her side in a hocker position to the left of, and slightly above, the male. Her right arm was folded upwards, so that the right hand was placed palm upwards under the right cheek, while the left arm was arranged in such a position that the hand rested on the male's left hip. Beside the female's jaw there lay a small stone of red ferriferous material. Above the legs of the two were found parts of jaws of red deer and roe deer, together with the front part of an otter skull.

Grave 15. Less than one meter away from the dog grave 9, excavated last year, one more dog grave was found. It was placed on it's right side. The dog was the size of a German Shepherd.

Grave 16. This grave had been severely damaged through the agencies of erosion and cultivation which had claimed the skull, torso, upper arms and vertebrae with the exception of a few of the latter conjunctive to the pelvic region. The grave contained the remains of an adult male in a supine, half-sitting position with arms akimbo. A serious malformation of the pelvis was documented and showed that the individual had, in his younger days, suffered an injury to his left leg whereby the thighbone ball had pressed the pelvic bone inward. More than thirty perforated red deer teeth were placed under the feet, while a transverse arrowhead lay by the left femur. The area between the femora was strewn with red ochre.
Grave 17. A dog grave which had been disturbed due to its shallow depth. The skull was destroyed and the remainder was in a very poor state of preservation. All four paws were drawn tightly together.
Grave 18. In a pit some dog bones were found together with red ochre indicat' burial.

Altogether, eighteen burials have been investigated, containing fifteen humans and five dogs. Human teech and fragments of other parts of the human skeleton have, however, been found in the occupation layer, indicating the existence of more graves originally. The large number of perforated animal teeth found in this layer also points in this direction. Although the cemetery contains several graves, this does not necessarily mean that the connected site was used for any greater length of time, or that all who died at the site were buried there.

The graves were found within a seven meter wide belt running along the hill, in places very close together, and in others further apart. The graves five a heterogeneous view of the burial custom in southern Scania during the late Mesolithic. The suprine, as well as hocker position, is common to both male and female graves, while the half-sitting position is only found among males and the sitting position proper is exclusive to females. Red ochre is found in both male and female graves as well as in the dog graves, but not in all in any of these categories. The number of grave gifts is few, represented by transverse arrowheads, a flint blade, bone artifacts, perforated animal teeth and parts of mandibulae of various animals.

The dog graves have been the object of special interest. But this custom may not be unique to Skateholm - finds of unsplintered leg bones and complete skulls, indicating disturbed graves of originally intact dog skeletons have been found in other Late Mesolithic sites such as Segebro and Ertebølle.

The distribution of age groups is uneven. Only one baby is represented (grave 6) but, on the basis of demography, there should be several more. Perhaps the small pits containing no finds, found close to some graves, can have been baby grave- where skeletons have totally disintegrated. Two young females, aged about 20 present, while the two remaining females were older. The eight males all di between the ages of 25-55.

The occupation layer and hut remains

A stratigraphy of the occupation zone within the site could be registered. A black-colored find-bearing layer underlies the plowed topsoil. Where this layer is thicker, another layer, lighter in color and with fewer artifacts, is distinguishable. Below both these layers traces of pits and post holes have been substantiated. Hearths, marked by bridal stones, have also been excavated. Small spots with red ochre were also discerned below these layers, one such covering the skull and other bones of a young wild-cat. A grave - or an offering?

Finds include stone axes, extremely small flake axes, transverse arrowheads, burins, borers and scrapers. Harpoons made of bone and antler, bone chisels and daggers, as well as many bone points were found. More than ten of these objects were decorated.

The large, shallow pit situated at the highest point of the examined area has proven to be the remains of a hut with a sunken floor cut into the top of the hill. Traces of larger, as well as smaller, post holes were found here. The presence of Ertebølle pottery within this area suggests a younger age for this construction than for the bulk of the occupation layer.

The final evaluation of the site is far from complete, but it seems as though the earliest settlement area was restricted to the foot of the hill. A rise in sea level forced the inhabitants even higher up the slope. Most of this small island was covered by water at the time of the transition to the Neolithic, but the site had been abandoned prior to this time.

During the 1981 campaign, traces of Mesolithic settlement remains were registered on several other islands in the prehistoric bay. A limited excavation on one of ese yielded, among other things, transverse arrowheads of a type older than the jority of those from the central site.

Some results of analyses

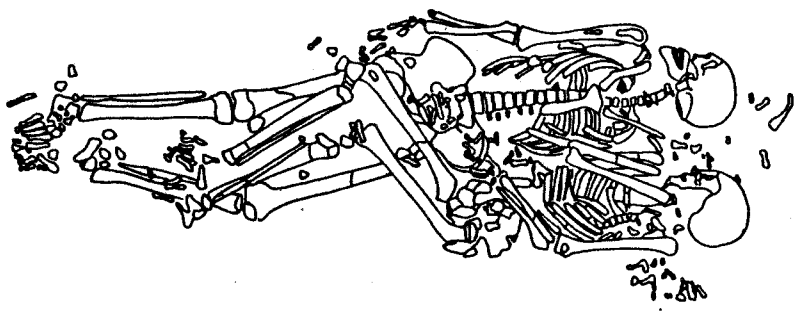
Altogether eight radiocarbon analyses are so far available from Skateholm, Bones from grave 4 are dated to 6240 B.P. Charcoal samples from the filling of grave 9 - the first dog grave to be excavated - and grave 14 were dated to 6220 and 5930 B.P. respectively. Charcoal, together with the burned human bones from grave 11 gave the value 6290 B.P.

A pit below the occupation layer, filled with burned hazelnut shells, was dated to 6020 B.P., while two samples of charcoal, taken from the occupation layer close to grave 9, gave values of 5800 and 5790 B.P. A sample of charcoal found in the gyttja layer outside the site was dated to 6900 B.P., indicating the presence of an even older site in the vicinity.

Charcoal analysis shows that oak, ash, lime, elm, hazel, beech, maple, poplar, elder and pine were all used for firewood.

Osteological analysis has identified no less than 53 animal species present in the Skateholm bone material. Red deer, wild boar, and grey seal dominate among the animals, while pike, herring, and perch are the most common fish. The high frequency of fish bones, moreover, suggests that th e inhabitants of Skateholm were rather more fishers than hunters.

Lars Larson, Institute of Archaeology
University of Lund



Grave 14 at Skateholm

Tilburg-Lepelare Zand I. A Preliminary Report on a Late Mesolithic Settlement in the Southern Netherlands.

Since October of 1980, amateurs have been collecting a number of stone artifacts in a recently planted sand-drift area in the municipality of Tilburg, province of North Brabant, southern Netherlands. The site lies in a coversand area at the edge of a former fen. The upper part of the coversand consists of an eroded podzol. Among the surface finds were a number of typical Mesolithic artifacts, made from flint and Wommersom quartzite, and a large number of stones.

The site was to be destroyed completely in 1981 by the expansion of the regional household refuse burial site. In April, May, and June of that year, a rescue excavation was undertaken in order to investigate the nature of the site and to look for the presence of features. The excavation was supported by the Department of Archeology of the Municipality of Tilburg. The site was excavated by recording the number of artifacts per square meter. Artifacts were collected with water seiving. A total of 116 square meters were excavated in an area of roughly 35 by 40 m.

From the 116 excavated square meters, almost 15,000 artifacts were recovered in the seiving and another 2,000 were collected from the surface. The excavations were not successful in discovering features such as fire hearths and the Mesolithic level had been disturbed somewhat by sod removal, probably during the Middle Ages, and by erosion.

The total of 17,000 artifacts includes 7,000 flaked artifacts (flint, ftanite, gres lustre, and Wommersom quartzite) and 10,000 non-flaked stone artifacts. In general, the flint is of poor quality. Most of the flint is likely of local origin. The 333 retouched and utilized artifacts include 82 points, with a crescent, trapezes, triangles, surface-retouched points (surface-retouched triangles, leaf-points, and feuilles de gui) and a transverse point; 57 backed blades; 4 borers; 3 burins; 65 scrapers, and a number of retouched, utilized, notched, and truncated blades and flakes.

A remarkable phenomenon in this site is the enormous number of non-flint artifacts, consisting of almost 10,000 lumps of quartzite and sandstone, as well as some lumps of ochre, a burnt piece of bone, a burnt nut shell, and some tools (a hammerstone, a whetstone, and a macehead). Some lumps of sandstone have been used as cores. Although no charcoal was found, the large amount of fire-cracked rock is indicative of use for boiling or roasting foods. The most interesting tool is the macehead, made from a quartzite pebble. Currently, the known distribution of these artifacts is in north and northwestern Europe: Scandinavia, Germany, England, the Netherlands, and northern Belgium (Clark 1975: 112, 228; Gob & Pirnay 1980: 5-Hulst & Verlinde 1976; Mellars & Reinhardt 1978: 277-279; Tackenburg 1960, 19 In the Netherlands, maceheads occur in both Mesolithic and Early Neolithic contexts. There are two kinds of maceheads: those with a bi-conical deepening (like the one Lepelare Zand), and those with an hour-glass shaped perforation. The function of these tools is still unclear. Mellars & Reinhardt (1978:279) suggest three possibilities: (1) weights for digging sticks, (2) hafted percussion tools, and (3) weights for drills. These explanations are not totally satisfactory: a number of the maceheads have no perforation and many maceheads are asymmetrical and therefore unsuitable as weights for drills or diggins sticks. It is noteworthy that many of the Dutch maceheads are broken. In view of the hardness of the material, fracture of the macehead must have occurred through the application of heavy forces, perhaps suggestive of the function.

The excavation of Lepelare Zand recovered only a small portion of the total settlement. Although no limits could be defined, we may suppose that this site corresponds with the most extended Mesolithic settlements known to date. Such extended settlements with huge numbers of artifacts may be considered as aggregation sites, occupied by a macroband (Arts & Deeben 1981: 88-93).

Radiocarbon dating of the site is impossible because of the absence of charcoal. Thus, we are dependent upon typology for information regarding chronology. The presence of Wommersom quartzite together with surface-retouched points and the transverse point are indicative of a Late Mesolithic occupation. This suggestion is strengthened by the occurrence of only a few burins and some notched blades (of the Montbani type). As such the date of this site is similar to many of the more than 600 southern Dutch Mesolithic sites. Some kind of connection may exist among these sites and this is one of the aspects of the southern Dutch hunter-gatherer adaptations being studied by the author.

References

Arts, N. 1981. Een Laat-Mesolithische nederzetting in het Lepelare Zand te Tilburg. Een voorlopig verslag van de opgraving en de vondsten. Tilburg.

Arts, N., & J. Deeben. 1981. Prehistorische jagers en verzamelaars te Vessem: een model. Eindhoven.

Clark, J.G.D. 1975. The Earlier Stone Age Settlement of Scandinavia. Cambridge.

Gob, A. & L. Pirnay. 1980. Utilisation des galets et plaquettes dans le Mesolithique du bassin de l'Ourthe. Etudes et Recherches Archeologiques de l'Universite de Liege, Serie A, No. 5.

Hulst, R.S., & A.D. Verlinde. 1976. Gerölkeule aus Overijssel und Gelderland. Berichten van de Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek 26: 93-126.

Mellars, P.A., & S.C. Reinhardt. 1978. Patterns of Mesolithic land use in southern England: a geological perspective. In The Early Postglacial Settlement of Northern Europe, P.A. Mellars (ed.), pp. 234-293. London.

Tackenberg, R. 1960. Die Gerölkeulen in Nordwestdeutschland. Steinzeitfragen der Alten und Neuen Welt, pp. 507-538

Tackenberg, R. 1970. Die Gerölkeulen in Nordwestdeutschland. Quartair 21: 81-92.

Nico Arts

* * *

NATIONAL RESEARCH SYNOPSES

THE MESOLITHIC OF EASTERN MIDDLE SWEDEN

Research in the field previous to 1970 is outlined in (1) together with the starting point of a systematic research program.

Field and laboratory work from the period 1971-1975 is reported in (2). Two groups of settlement sites are distinguished using the stone inventory. The two groups of sites might possibly be distinguished as well by a few economic characteristics. The two groups overlap chronologically.

Attempts at full economic/ecological interpretations of the two groups of sites are reported in (3) and (4). (3) outlines a model of the Mesolithic economy in the area 7000 - 6000 B.P. The model is based upon a small group of sites characterized by microblades of flint. A refuse fauna, a comparison with the more informative Finnish Mesolithic, site catchement analysis, and site localization analysis is used in the process. (4) tries to outline the Mesolithic economy of the period 6000 - 5000 B.P., that is immediately prior to the introduction of agriculture. A chronologically less well defined group of sites with quartz waste is used. The result is not convincing.

The first report from the field program presented at the Warsaw meeting in 1973 had best not be studied today (5).

(1) Welinder, S. 1973. The pre-pottery Stone Age of Eastern Middle Sweden. Antikvariskt arkiv 48. Stockholm.

(2) Welinder, S. 1977. The Mesolithic Stone Age of Eastern Middle Sweden. Antikvariskt arkiv 65. Stockholm.

(3) Welinder, S. 1980. "The disappearance of a hunting-gathering economy." Veröffentlichungen des Museums für Ur- und Frühgeschichte Potsdam, 14/15.

(4) Hulthen, B., & S. Welinder. 1981. A Stone Age Economy. Theses and Papers in North-European Archaeology 11. Lund. (Chapters 12 - 16).

(5) Welinder, S. 1973. "Mesolithic sites with flint in Eastern Middle Sweden." The Mesolithic in Europe (ed. S.K. Kozlowski). Warsaw.

Stig Welinder
Universitetets oldsaksamling
Oslo

* * *

A SURVEY OF RECENT RESEARCH ON THE NORWEGIAN MESOLITHIC

The study of hunting/gathering adaptation during the Mesolithic in Norway presents three unique features:

(1) the possibility of studying the very first exploitation of the resources of an arctic/subarctic coastal area during the Late Weichselian and the very earliest Holocene.
(2) the study of the exploitation patterns along gradients from the outer archipelago to inland forest and mountain areas, and from subarctic to temperate zones.
(3) the investigation of the exploitation of a remarkably stable resource during several millennia in a remarkably stable environment, i.e., the reindeer herds above the tree-limit.

One hundred years of Mesolithic in Norway may be divided into three main stages focusing on different ecosystems and problems:

(1) 1880-1950, the first discoveries of Mesolithic sites and the establishment of the three coastal "cultures": "Nøstvet", "Fosna", and "Komsa". Origin and dating of greatest importance.
(2) 1958- . excavations of several hundred Mesolithic sites in the mountains and the inland forest areas due to watercourse regulations for the development electric power. The introduction of radiocarbon dating. Focus on problems of adaptation.
(3) 1960- , new interest on coastal sites. More sophisticated excavations, site analysis, revised chronology, and local adaptational studies. A widening of the subjects of research. Open sites with animal bones preserved.

Since 1958, interests have also been focused on the relations between coastal, inland and mountain sites and the interpretation of those relationships. Here a brief survey of Mesolithic research since 1975 will be given. That year, S. Indrelid and E. Mikkelsen were summing up the typological and chronological situation to date. In 1978, they summarized the economy, settlement pattern, and seasonal variation to be found in the Norwegian Mesolithic.

In November 1980, a research seminar on the Norwegian Mesolithic was held at the Utstein Monastary near Stavanger, with 23 participants. The following discussion is drawn from that seminar.

It is typical that the majority of Mesolithic research in Norway is carried out by students for their magister thesis. Publication of the results are very often missing or at least several years delayed (and largely written in Norwegian). The number of archaeologists (including students) working with the Mesolithic in Norway is at the moment about a dozen, a doubling in the last few years.

Excavations of Mesolithic settlement sites have in the years 1975-81 been concentrated along the western coast of Norway from Rogaland to Trøndelag. Little work has been done in eastern Norway, where sites in Norland and Troms have been discovered in the last few years and will be further investigated. Due to the oil exploration in the North Sea, interests have also been focused on the possibilities of finding traces of early Mesolithic sites here.

Some early Mesolithic sites have been excavated; inland forest sites in Buskerud, eastern Norway coastal sites in Rogaland, and in the Møre-Trøndelag region. It is, however, excavations of the sites belonging to the microblade phase that have dominated this phase of the research, most of them C14 dated between 7000 and 5500 B.P. A few transgrediated sites have been investigated. Often shore displacement curves have been worked out in connection with archaeological projects.

What characterizes this Mesolithic research?

(a) The establishment of more detailed Mesolithic phase sequences, based on C14 determinations, traditional typology and the analysis of waste and flakes.
(b) The study of the subsistence economy, based on ecofacts and interdisciplinary research. Seasonal strategies.
(c) The study of the microstructure at the sites: traces of huts and tents, the distribution of artifacts.
(d) Studies of stone quarries with different raw material: quartzite in the Laerdal Mountains, greenstone in the Bømlo area and diabase near Flora. The distribution of stone axes.

Norwegian Mesolithic Literature, 1975-1981.

Bang-Andersen, S., Kjos-Hanssen, O. 1978. På spor etter de første mennesker i høyfjellet. AmS-Småtrykk 3: 31-45. Stavanger.

Clark, J.G.D. 1975. The Earlier Stone Age Settlement of Scandinavia. Cambridge.

Helskog, K., Indrelid, S., & E. Mikkelsen. 1976. Morfologisk klassifisering av slåtte steinartefakter. Universitetets Oldsaksamlings Arbok 1972-74: 9-40. Oslo. English summary.

Indrelid, S. 1975. Problems relating to the Early Mesolithic settlement of Southern Norway. Norwegian Archaeological Review 8(1): 1-18.

Indrelid, S. 1977. Eldre steinalder i sørnorske høyfjell. Boplasser, bosetningsmønstre og kulturformer. Viking 40(1976): 129-146. Oslo. Engl. summary.

Indrelid, S. 1978. Mesolithic economy and settlement patterns in Norway. In The Early Postglacial Settlement of Northern Europe. An Ecological Perspective, P.A. Mellars (ed.), pp. 147-176. Duckworth.

Johansen, A.B. 1978. Høyfjellsfunn ved Laerdalsvassdraget II. Naturbruk og tradisjonssammenheng i et sør-norsk villreinområde i steinalder. Universitetsforlaget, Oslo. Engl. summary.

Johansen, A.B., Kjos-Hanssen, O., & E. Wishman. 1978. Mennesket, reinen, og snøen i Dyraheio. AmS-Småtrykk 3:49-69. Stavanger.

Mikkelsen, E. 1975. Frebergsvik. Et mesolitisk boplassområde ved Oslofjorden. Universitetes Oldsaksamlings Skrifter, Ny rekke, Nr. 1. Oslo. Engl summary.

Mikkelsen, E. 1975. Mesolithic in southeastern Norway. Norwegian Archaeological Review 8(1):19-35.

Mikkelsen, E. 1978. Seasonality and Mesolithic adaptation in Norway. In New Directions in Scandinavian Archaeology, K. Kristiansen & C. Paludan-Mül (eds.), pp. 79-119. Copenhagen.

Mikkelsen, E. 1979. En tidlig-mesolitisk mikrolitt-fase i Telemark og Buskerud. Eksempel på analyse av "blandete" boplasser. Universitetets Oldsaksamlings Arbok 1979:71-79. Oslo. English summary.

Mikkelsen, E., & Nybruget, P.O. 1975. Jakt og fiske i steinbrukende tid i Hedmark. Norsk skogbruksmuseums årbok 7(1972-75): 87-112. Elverum. English summary.

Mikkelsen, E., & Høeg, H.I. 1977. Hakker av elg- og hjortehorn funnet i Norge. Universitetets Oldsaksamlings Arbok 1975/76:11-28. Oslo. English summary.

Moe, D., Indrelid, S., & O. Kjos-Hannsen. 1978. A study of environment and early man in the southern Norwegian highlands. Norwegian Archaeological Review 11(2):73-83.

Møllenhus, K.R. 1977. Mesolitiske boplasser på Møre- or Trøndelagskysten. Gunneria 27. Trondheim. English summary.

Sanger, D. 1981. An alternative approach to Norwegian Mesolithic chronology. Norwegian Archaeological Review 14(1):39-43.

Simonsen, P. & A. Nummedal. 1975. Finnmarks-Fundene. Acta Borealia B. Humaniora 15. Tromsø.

Welinder, S. 1981. Den kontinentaleuropeiska bakgrunden till Norges äldsta stenålder. Universitetets Oldsaksamlings Arbok 1980/81: 21-34. Oslo.

Østmo, E. 1976. Torsrød. En senmesolittisk kystboplass i Vestfold. Universitetets Oldsaksamlings Arbok 1972/74: 41-52. Oslo. English summary.

Egil Mikkelsen & Stig Welinder
Universitetets Oldsaksamling
Oslo

* * *

GENERAL SURVEY OF EPIPALEOLITHIC (MESOLITHIC) RESEARCH IN ROMANIA (1978 - 1981)

From 1978 to 1981, a series of archaeological excavations dealing with the Epipaleolithic (Mesolithic) were undertaken as well as the investigation and publication of re-examined materials from previous fieldwork.

With regard to recent excavations, mention must be made of salvage excavations in the Ostrovul Mare and Ostrovul Corbuli settlements, located in an area where the Porţile de Fier II hydroelectric station, Department of Mehedinţi, will be constructed and where the pool of the plant will flood the settlements. On Ostrovul Mare Island, Gogoşu Commune, we have identified seven localities with habitations belonging to the Schela Cladovei-Lepenski Vir civilization. Excavations have been undertaken only at Kilometers 873 and 875. In both settlements was found a facies belonging to the same civilization that developed within the large and easily flooded plain of the Danube, where the stone industry was more complex, including a greater number of flint tools, with trapezes, triangles, crescents, "en corche" plates, etc., together with many tools of quartzite and other stone materials specific to this culture, along with many artifacts made of stag antler and boar tusk. Particularly noteworthy are the discoveries made at Kilometer 873 in Layer I, i.e., a stag antler coulter, the upper portion of which was purposefully thinned in order to be introduced into a wooden handle, and, by means of a horizontal cut to which a thong could be bound, could be tightened in place. The piece, thus assembled, could be both pushed and drawn. In Layer III at this site, old Neolithic ceramics and polished stone axes appear sporadically and geometrically decorated pieces have been found both inside and outside the dwellings.

Between 1977 and 1978, excavations were undertaken at Ostrovul Corbului by Florea Mogoşanu and later by Alexandru Păunescu. Layers of habitation have been identified but without spectacular results. These discoveries have been radiocarbon dated as follows: S.M.U. 587: 6017±298 B.C., S.M.U. 588: 5917±754 B.C., and Bln. 2135±80. without association with layers or levels.

With regard to the Tardenoisian, Alexandru Păunescu investigated Dobrudja at Albeşti-Cetate, Department of Constanţa, and has undertaken soil investigations at Jijila, Garvăn Village, Department of Tulcea, in the place called Bugeac. At the same time, he has re-examined the older discoveries made by P. Samson and C. Rădulescu at Tîrgşor near Grădină and La Adam, Department of Constanţa, and has published and discussed the older discoveries from the shifting sandhills at Cornul Malului and Calintir, Larga Commune, Department of Buzău. In addition, the finds from Lapos-Poiana Roman, Department of Prahova, were also presented along with the type list of I.C. Rozzoy and the cumulative graphs for this material. All of the discoveries which were considered were described as belonging to the Northwestern Pontic Tardenoisian. However, this will remain an open question because of the Neolithic transgression which eroded the older sediments and also explains the fact that the materials were found at the surface or in more recent sediments with the single exception of the discoveries from Lapos, situated in a hilly area. This may well explain the absence of old

Neolithic in the southeastern Romanian Plain. On the other hand, there are the same types of tools in the inventory of the old Neolithic cultures from the neighboring zones, belonging to the Criş type and in the inventory of the Hamangia culture, which covered Dobrudja as in the Tardenoisian presented above.

In another article, Alexandru Păunescu raises again for discussion the older discoveries from Ripiceni-Izvor, Department of Botoşani, and Erbiceni, Department of Iaşi, including them with the North Pontic Tardenoisian. With regard to the technical processing of metals, the persistence of the Tardenoisian types up to the beginning of the the Bronze Age is to be explained on a typological basis and not through the maintenance in this part of our country of certain ecological or economic resource conditions similar to those of former periods with the tools specifically adapted to those conditions.

References

Boroneanţ, V. 1980. Probleme ale culturii Schela Cladovei-Lepenski Vir în lumina noilor cercetări. Droheta IV: 27-42.

Boroneanţ, V. 1980. Săpăturile arheologice de la Ostrovul Mare-Porţile de Fier II. Materiale şi Cercetări arheologice, Tulcea, 1980: 636-640.

Boroneanţ, V. 1982 Probleme der Schela Cladovei-Lepenski Vir Kultur im Lichte der neuen Forschungen. Journal of Mediterranean Anthropology and Archaeology, 2. In press.

Păunescu, A. 1979. Tardenoisianul din sud-estul României şi unele consideraţii asupra perioadei cuprinse intre sfîrsitul paleoliticului si începturile neoliticului în această regiune. Studii şi Cercetări de Istorie Veche şi Arheologie 30: 507-526.

Păunescu, A. 1981. Mezolitic. Studii şi Cercetări de Istorie Veche şi Arheologie 4: 479-509.

V. Boroneanţ, Academia de Ştiinţe Sociale
şi Politice
Bucharest

* * *

A REPORT ON THE PALEOLITHIC-MESOLITHIC SYMPOSIUM Xth UISPP CONGRESS, MEXICO CITY, 1981

Un colloque sur "La Préhistoire de la Grande Plaine de l'Europe" a été oganisé pendant le X^e Congrès U.I.S.P.P. à Mexico par les commissions 10^e et 14^e. Dans ce colloque ont participé les membres des commissions évoquées ainsi que plusieurs chercheurs invités:

A. Broglio(Italy): De la fin du Paléolithique au commencement de Néolithique au Sud des Alpes.
J.M. Burdukiewicz (Poland): Creswellian and Hamburgian.
R.M. Jacobi (Royaume Unie): The Late Weichselian peopling of Britain and northwest Europe.
S.K. Kozłowski (Pologne): Single-barbed Havel type Harpoons in the European lowland.
D. Mania (RDA): Eine Fundstelle des Perigordien-Gravettien von Bilzingsleben.
M. Otte (Belgique): Les industries à pointes foliacées et à pointes pedonculées dans le Nord-Ouest Européen.
B. Schmieder (France): Les particularités dans le développement du Magdalenien du Centre du Bassin Parisien et ses relations avec les cultures de la Plaine de l'Europe du Nord.
G. Tromnau (RFA): Die Hamburger Kultur.
J.K. Kozłowski, S.K. Kozłowski (Pologne): Paléohistorie de la Grande Plaine Européenne.

Ces rapports ont été publiés avant le colloque dans un volume spécial de la publication "Archaeologia Interregionalis" (Vol. 1, Krakow-Warszawa 1981).

Les autres rapports, présentés à Mexico, seront publiés dans le vol. III de cette collection. Il s'agit notamment des rapports suivants:

J.B. Campbell (Royaume Unie): The leaf-point and Aurignacian industries in their European context.
J.B. Campbell (Royaume Unie): The problem of Creswellian origins.
J. Combier (France): Gisement épipaléolithique de Varennes-les-Mâcon et ses possibles relations avec la Plaine du Nord.
B. Gramsch (RDA): Friesack, Brandenburg, a new key site of the Earlier Mesolithic in northern Central Europe.
A. Montet-White (USA): Paleolithic industries of northern Bosnia.
M. Otte (Belgique): Le site Tjongerien de Meer.

Le but principal de ce colloque était de mettre en valeur l'importance des cultures septentrionales occupant la Grande Plaine de l'Europe du Nord en opposition aux cultures de régions des Plateaux. Cette opposition, assez évidente pout le Tardiglaciaire et l'Holocène ancien, a été étudié pour la permière fois aussi dans l'Intérpléniglaciaire Wurmien. Les rapports présentés ont mis en valeur des civilisations dont les traces ne se sont préservées que sur la frange méridionale de la Grande Plaine (comme par ex. le Lyncombien, le Maisièrien ou la culture de Ranis-Mauern) don l'extension occupait une grande partie de la Plaine du Nord-Ouest de l'Europe. Ces civilisation ont joué un rôle important dans l'origine de plusieurs entités des zones classiques (par ex faciès Font-Robert, Protosolutréen, etc.), bien que leurs systèmes d'adaptation sont opposés à ceux des régions classiques (par ex.. de l'Aurignacien ou du Périgordien-Gravettien).

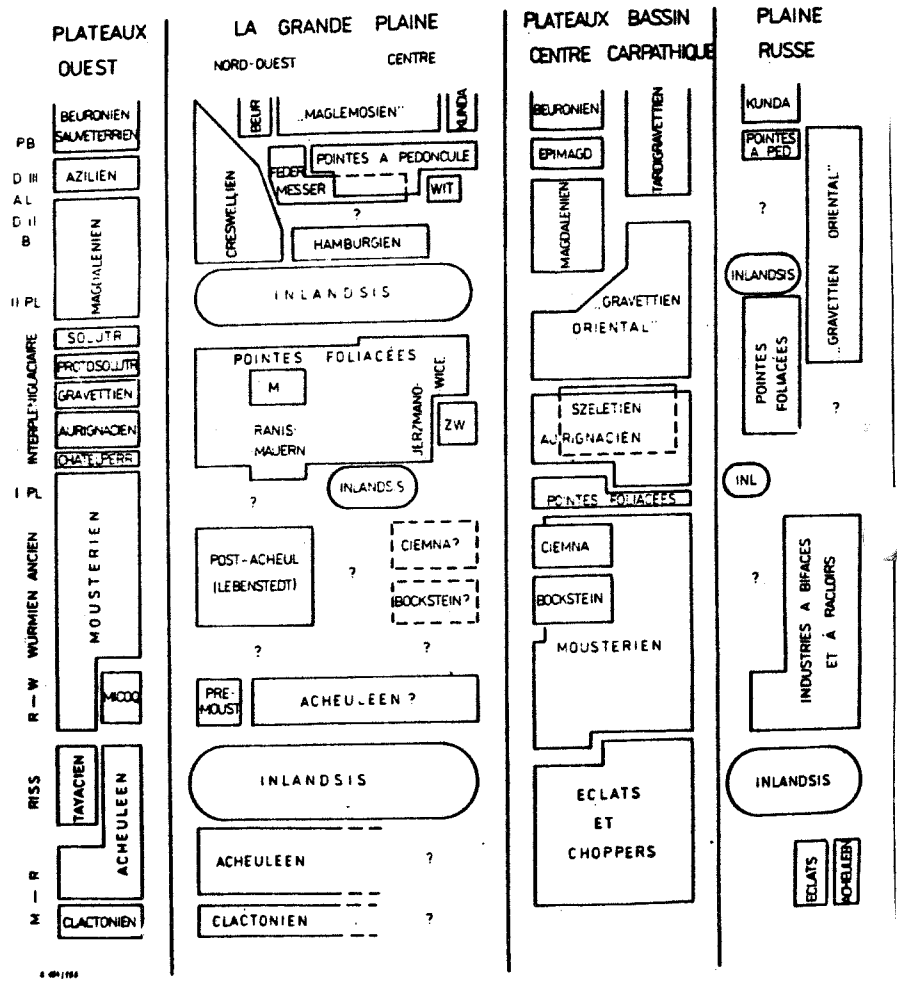
Fut aussi discuté la problème de l'origine des cultures tardiglaciaires de la Grande Plaine, spécialement de Creswellien. Parmi les opinions émises:
-la Creswellien est à rattacher aux cultures interpléniglaciaires à lames à dos convexe ou angulaire (Zwierzyniecien).
-Creswellien et Hambourgien sont des phénomènes récents (pas antérieurs à Bölling) à rattacher au Magdalénien.

Plusieurs autres rapports ont opposé les autres cultures et les systèmes d'adaptation caractéristiques de la zone des plateaux à celle de la Grande Plaine.

Janusz K. Kozłowski
10e Commission UISPP

Stefan K. Kozłowski
14e Commission UISPP

Chronological table constructed for the X UISPP Congress, Mexico, 1981.



CONTINUING DEBATE

The following two responses were received in regard to the statement by P.A. Mellars "Towards a definition of the Mesolithic". The comments from S. Palmer are also in concern to the previous statement by Lewthwaite and Rowley-Conwy regarding the nature of hunter-gatherer adaptations.

Towards a definition of the Mesolithic: the view from the Pyrenees

P.G. Bahn
Department of Prehistoric Archaeology
University of Liverpool

Pyrenean archaeology - and notably the cave of the Mas d'Azil - made an early and major contribution to plugging the gap between the Magdalenian and the Neolithic. The Azilian still serves in some areas to show an unbroken transition from the final Magdalenian to industries such as the Sauveterrian. In view of the large measure of continuity that can be traced in many regions, the question of where to place a boundary is rather delicate. If one looks at lists of radiocarbon dates in La Préhistoire français or La Fin des Temps Glaciaires, then those around 10,000 b.p. are associated with a wide range of cultural phases.

I would therefore agree with the statement for debate: that the name Mesolithic should be retained as an umbrella-term for local facies, and that 10,000 B.P. is a suitable and convenient point at which to place a boundary. The Pyrenean evidence would support this: the most complete postglacial stratigraphy in the region is that of the cave of Poeymaü at Arudy (Pyrénées-Atlantiques), excavated by Dr. Georges Laplace (1953); the site has recently produced a whole series of radiocarbon dates (Evin 1979:12; Rigaud 1980:416). The Couche à petits éléments, dated to 11,540 b.p.±220, contains an azilian or final epigravettian industry; the next layer, the Blocaille Supérieure, is called azilo-sauveterroid and dates to 10,420 b.p.±230; while the Foyers Inférieurs à Hélix (dense beds of snails) contain a sauveterroid industry (aziloid plus geometric microliths) and begin around 9960 b.p.±210.

Thus, a 10,000 b.p. boundary here would coincide neatly with an adjustment of economic strategy - the accumulation of vast numbers of snails which, although a minor resource, may have been a psuedo-industry at the site (Bahn 1979) - and also with the development of microliths, the phenomenon used as a lower boundary by Rozoy (1978) in his synthesis.

Since the Azilian is certainly a final Paleolithic, while the true Sauveterrian is indubitably Mesolithic, it seems sensible for the boundary to fall somewhere between the two. At Poeymaü this grey area occurs around 10,000 b.p. The only problem left is the reconciliation of a universal limit of 10,000 B.P. (absolute date) with dates in radiocarbon years. Perhaps the boundary should be expressed as b.p.?? (*Ed. note: Paul Mellars has concurred with this suggestion.*)

References

Bahn, P.G. 1979. The French Pyrenees: an economic prehistory. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cambridge 574 pp.

Evin, J. 1979. Réflexions générales et donnés nouvelles sur la chronologie absolue ^{14}C des industries de la fin du Paléolithique Supérieur et du début du Mésolithique. In La Fin des Temps Glaciaires en Europe, D. de Sonneville-Bordes (ed.), pp 5-13. Colloque Int. C.N.R.S. No. 271, Vol. 1.

Laplace, G. 1953. Les couches à escargots des cavernes pyrénéennes et le problème de l'Arizien de Piette. Bull. Soc. Préh. fr. 50: 199-211.

Rigaud, J.-P. 1980. Circonscription d'Aquitaine. Gallia Préhistoire 23:391-426.

Rozoy, J.-G. 1978. Les Derniers Chasseurs. Bull. de la Soc. arch. champernoise, Numero special, 3 vols.

* * *

To: James Lewthwaite
Peter Rowley-Conwy
Paul Mellars

Dear Sirs,

Both these statements for debate have been very skillfully tackled by their authors, although, I am sure, a great deal more can be said about both problems. The first point which occurred to me is that both statements reveal the same hidden danger: definitions, by their very nature, can severely restrict progressive research by blinding workers to the facts outside the limits of the definitions. In the first statement, the term "hunter-gatherer" is retained even thuogh the authors themselves, quite correctly, point out that many of the peop' so-classed were sometimes stockholders: at the site of Winfrith Heath, southe England, ivy was brought in probably to keep herds of deer (Palmer and Dimbleby 1979, just published). Also implied in the term is an element of nomadism, which again is becoming outmoded as not all Mesolithic people were nomadic (see e.g., Culverwell. Dorset, in Palmer 1977). Another example: there was a time when pottery fell within the definition of the Neolithic period, but now we talk about an aceramic Neolithic and a Ceramic Mesolithic (Price, Nov. 1980).

It should be pointed out that a greater deal of caution is required in using the names "hunter" and "gatherer" hyphenated together as one concept. These words embody two totally different styles of life. Any group surviving mainly from animals must be on the move for at least part of the year according to the needs of the animals and changing facilities, i.e., whether the group hunts the animals, herds them or domesticates them. We see an example of this in the Connacht area of Eire, where transhumance was still practiced by cattle-herders earlier this century (some of their turf temporary dooley huts still exist). Gatherers, on the other hand, can adapt more readily to changing seasons and circumstances and survive from what they can scrape together without having to migrate. This is particularly true of groups who find a niche of optimum favorability, more likely near the sea, so that we can expect to find more stable groups in coastal areas, as pointed out by Lewthwaite and Rowley-Conwy (see also Palmer 1977). Any definitions or descriptions relating to the Mesolithic peoples and their styles of life, should therefore surely recognize the inherent contradictions in the term "hunter-gatherer" and should point out that the balance between these two economic systems could be a most important matter of degrees, so important that this may even lead us to a true definition of "Mesolithic" and the beginning of "Neolithic". Maybe too many laymen and specialists alike still look first (al often in vain) for the "arrowheads" in assemblages classed as Mesolithic; may the humble gatherers played a more important role than previously thought.

I can see Dr. Mellars' predicament in providing a definition and it may well be that a chronological definition is the only "easy way out" (as he says!), but this definition only takes ona meaning if we can somehow link it to the adaptations mentioned in the first statement. The problem is: which adaptations to which changes, where?

Susann Palmer

References

Palmer, S. 1977. Mesolithic Cultures of Britain. Poole.
Palmer, S., & G. Dimbleby. 1979. "A Mesolithic habitation site on Winfrith Heath, Dorset", Proc. of the Dorset Nat. Hist. & Arch. Soc. 101:27-50.
Price, T.D. 1980. "Ceramic Mesolithic on the Dutch Coast", Mesolithic Miscellany 1:6-7.

* * *

REVIEWS

Gramsch, Bernhard (ed.). 1981. Mesolithikum in Europa. 2. Internationales Symposium Potsdam, 1978. Museum für Ur- und Frühgeschichte Potsdam. Berlin: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaft. 472 pp., illustrated. DDRM 95.

Review by Grahame Clark, Peterhouse
Cambridge

This handsome volume comprises 44 contributions to the Potsdam Mesolithic Symposium of 1978, approximately half each from east and west Europe. The papers, only a few of which can be cited in a brief review, are arranged under the three sections of the Symposium, dealing with the genesis of the Mesolithic in different parts of Europe, the process of neolithicisation and the results of recent excavations and research. Taken together they illustrate the main theme of the Symposium, namely the continuity of European prehistory.

On the genesis of the Mesolithic in different parts of Europe Jean-George Rozoy's treatment of the data from France and Switzerland is exceptional for the fullness of its documentation. Amilcare Bietti's treatment of the Italian material is notable for its emphasis, acknowledging the lead of M. Taschini, on the economic factor. Stress is laid on the manner in which the stone age inhabitants of Italy adapted to the onset of neothermal conditions by extending the range of their food quest. Instead of concentrating on hunting large mammals the mesolithic inhabitants also took in fishing, bird-catching, and the collection of molluscs in the interior, as well as focusing to a notable extent on coastal resources. Doubtless because of a deficiency in the evidence presently available, no account is taken of plants as a food resource, a gap which badly needs filling by research involving more systematic data recovery. Although primarily a contributor to the first section, Bietti cannot resist pointing to the continuity of mesolithic and neolithic settlement in Italy. He observes that the greater adaptability shown in the extension of the food-quest is likely to have made the mesolithic population receptive to the idea of cultivating crops and breeding livestock. Further, he cites the lithic industries of neolithic Italy as proof of the continuity of the mesolithic tradition. The role of the Mesolithic in the process of neolithicization is also discussed by a number of contributors to the second section, among others by J.K. Kozlowski, in relation to the bandkeramik culture and Nina Gurina on the genesis of the Neolithic of the Oka-Volga region of Russia.

In respect to the third section interest inevitably focuses for western readers on discoveries made in eastern Europe, more particularly in the Soviet Union where, until Stalin gave the green light in 1950, the bare existence of the Mesolithic was impermissible. Dmitrij Telegin's account of the chronology and periodization of the Mesolithic in the Ukraine, although brief, is invaluable for the mass of detail conveyed in clearly designed maps and tables. Considerable interest attaches, also, to two primary contributions bearing on an early stage of the Mesolithic in the East Baltic, already famous for the rich assemblage of antler and bone artifacts from an ancient lake deposit at Kunda. K. Jaanits reports on excavations at Pulli on the right bank of the Pärnu River, Estonia, some 15 km above its present mouth. The site is dated from several radiocarbon samples to the pre-boreal climatic phase. It is archaeologically important because, in addition to antler and bone artifacts of Kunda type, it also yielded a full assemblage of flint artifacts including microliths, tanged points, burins and scrapers. In addition it has provided a useful assemblage of faunal material, indicating a predominance of elk together with beaver, but including also dog, wild pig, roe deer, and bear. Ilga Zagorska describes material of comparable age from north Lithuania. It comes from the site of Zvejnieki II, which at the time was situated on a peninsula projecting into Burtnieku Lake. The lithic component is less comprehensive but includes a tanged point and blades and the antler and bone forms are of Kunda type. Pollen samples yielded from 78-93%

birch. The vertebrate fauna was again dominated by elk, but horse, beaver, wild pig, various small forest animals and several kinds of fish were also present. From Western Europe it may not be invidious to note T. Douglas Price's wide-ranging survey of data from the north European plain, and on a more restricted scale studies by Clive Bonsall and Alexander Morrison which bring out very clearly the coastal orientation of mesolithic settlement in Cumbria and south-west Scotland.

© Antiquity 215: 243-44. 1981.

* * *

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Jochim, Michael A. 1979. "Catches and caches: ethnographic alternatives for prehistory." In Ethnoarchaeology, C. Kramer (ed.), pp. 219-246. New York: Columbia University Press.

Utilizing ethnographic and historic data, Jochim develops a set of predictive models in an effort to evaluate the hypothesis that salmon, a harvestable, abundant, and reliable resource, play an important role in supporting high levels of population density, aggregation, and sedentism. Faunal remains, tool types, and site sizes and locations from Mesolithic Germany provide the data set against which the alternate models are compared, allowing him to select one as most useful in retrodicting some of the seasonal and demographic parameters of prehistoric land use. Jochim's analysis bears on the widely discussed role of abundantly harvestable wild resources (in this case, anadromous fish) in the development of storage technologies and increasing sedentism, both thought to have contributed to the transition from food-gathering to food-producing economies.

Straus, L.G., J. Altuna, G.A. Clark, M. Gonzalez Morales, H. Laville, Arl. Leroi-Gourhan, M. Menendex de la Hoz, & J.A. Ortea. "Paleoecology at La Riera (Asturias, Spain)." Current Anthropology 22: 655-682.

Excavations were conducted at La Riera to test hypotheses concerning variability among Upper Paleolithic/Mesolithic artifact assemblages and to define and begin to explain changing hunter-gatherer adaptations to the coastal region at the end of the Würm and the beginning of the Holocene. The 36 strata contain assemblages that can be assigned to Augignacian (?), Solutrean, Magdalenian, Azilian, and Asturian culture-stratigraphic units. However, there is considerable non-traditional variability and great similarity between certain "Solutrean" and "Lower Magdalenian" assemblages. Shifts in raw material procurement patterns are noted, and the variable lithic debris fractions reflect changing tool-manufacturing activities. All of these indices suggest differing uses of the cave or fundamental alterations in settlement-subsistence systems and cast doubt on the strict validity of the classic "cultural" subdivision scheme for the Stone Age of Western Europe. Inter-level faunal variability may be attributed in some cases to environmental changes and in others to changes in subsistence practices or the role of the site. The faunal data indicate increasingly diverse, intensive exploitation of wild food resources throughout the sequence, perhaps the result of regional demographic pressure.

Straus, L.G. 1979. "Mesolithic adaptations along the northern coast of Spain." Quaternaria 21:305-27.

Clark, Geoffrey, & Shereen Lerner. 1980. "Prehistoric resource utilization in Early Holocene Cantabrian Spain." Anthropology UCLA 10:53-96.

Odell, George H. 1981. "The morphological express at function junction: searching for meaning in lithic tool types." Journal of Anthropological Research 37:319-42.

Several archaeological studies of stone-tool function have recently demonstrated that certain formal categories are functionally heterogeneous. A detailed functional analysis of retouced flint artifacts from the Mesolithic settlement Bergumermeer in the northern Netherlands, one of the primary goals of which was to inspect the correspondence between form and function, serves to support this finding, and to provide information on the relationship between function and technology. The categories of microlithic points, burins, and backed blades, all of which correspond to specific techniques of manufacture, appear to be discrete functional units, whereas the formal categories of knives, side-scrapers, end-scrapers, borers, and axes, all of which are less discrete technologically but defined more by shape and location of retouch, show varying degrees of functional heterogeneity. It is argued that morphological groups are not suited for use as functional units and should not be so employed.

Johansen, Arne B. 1978. Høyfjellsfunn ved Laerdalsvassdraget, Vol. II. Naturbruk og tradisjonssammenheng i et sør-norsk villreinomrade i steinalder. Universitetsforlaget, Oslo. (Prehistoric Sites in the Laerdal Basin, vol. II, Stone age adaptation and tradition in a south-Norwegian caribou area. with English summary.)

Larsson, L. 1981. "En 7000-aarig Sydkustboplats. Nytt om gammalt fraan Skateholm." Limhamniana 1981: 17-46. (A 7000-year old site at the southern coast. New things about old things from Skateholm. English summary. See Research Reports this issue.)

Burov, G.M. 1981. "Sledge fragments from the settlements of Vis I (The Mesolithic) and Vis II (1st Millennium A.D.)." Soviet Archaeology 1981 (2): 117-131. (In Russian with an English summary.)

In the deposits of the old river-bed in the vicinity of the settlement of Vis I (the Vychegda River basin) archaeologists discovered 21 fragments of runners from, evidently, nineteen sledges belonging to two types. The first of them is represented by eleven fragments. They were trough-like bow-shaped artifacts with a skirting along the sides and two pairs of horizontal holes at the head of the sledge and at some distance from the end. This type may be called the Heinola type because the only previously known Mesolithic runner came from Heinola in the south of Finland. According to the present author, the sledge was a construction of two symmetrical runners connected with straps. The second, Vis, type includes flat-bottomed artifacts with a handrail at one of the sides and several pairs of vertical holes for connecting poles. The toboggan of the Canadian Indians presents an analogue to them.
In a peatbog of the old riverbed at the settlement of Vis II, two runners were found. One of them, of the Novgorodan type, has a rectangular slot for a poppet and a horizontal hole for its fixing. A board with a groove for fixing a strap and a long twig on which the sledge platform rested served as a poppet. The second runner with a massive lug,and perhaps slotted, belongs probably to the construction with coupled bow-shaped poppets known by ancient sledges of the Kamchdals.

Straus, L.G. 1980. "Late Pleistocene/Early Holocene man-land relationships in northern Spain." AMQUA Abstracts, 6th Biennial Meeting, AMQUA Orono, pp. 183-84.

Andersen, Søren H., & Claus Malmros. 1981. "A revised dating of layers 3 and 4 from the Norslund settlement." Kuml 1980: 60-62.

Andersen, Søren H. 1981. "Ertebølle art: new finds of patterned Ertebølle artifacts from East Jutland." Kuml 1980: 7-59. In Danish with English summary.

The artifact material discussed shows that the decorated objects were made of bone, deer antler, stone, and amber.
Only very few defined forms out of the total Ertebølle find material were ornamented. Axes, shafts, and skinning knives of deer antler were preferred, whereas other types, such as deer antler chisels and roe deer antler harpoons, were only rarely patterned. In addition, there are the amber lumps which were also occasionally ornamented.
It holds true for all of these categories that only a small percentage of the total group of objects was ornamented.
The finds show that the polishing of scraping smooth of the surface was always a prerequisite for patterning. This surface treatment can therefore be regarded as the preliminary or "lowest" stage of ornamentation. On the basis of this view, the deer antler shafts are unique. Whereas only very few of the deer antler axes were scraped smooth and later patterned, all of the shafts, without exception, were polished.
The decorative techniques employed included engraving, pontillé ornament, and drilling. The first technique is most common and is executed with both bold strokes and thin, fine, lightly incised lines. On some implements the two line-types appear together, although it cannot be determined whether or not they are contemporary. In any case, the type with the thin fine lines is clearly dominant and is also found on both deer antler implements and amber ornaments. This patterning technique can therefore be regarded as characteristic of the Ertebølle culture in eastern Jutland about 4000 B.C.
In eastern Jutland, the drilled ornamentation on bone and deer antler is dated to the period about 4400 B.C. by the patterned skinning knife from Norslund, layer 3. But as this dating is still the only one of its type, it is not possible to draw any conclusion regarding the lifespan of this technique.
Finally there is a smaller group of implements patterned in the so-called pointille ornament.
In one case (Hjarnø) the pattern bears unmistakeable traces of inlaid dyes (tar or resin) in the pattern.
The motifs are geometric and consist of straight lines; zig-zag; groups of parallel lines; rows of dots; bundles of lines, from parallel to criss-crossing, with fan-shaped ends--"sheaves of grain"; triangles filled with cross-hatching or parallel lines; pointed oval figures together with net patterns with rhombic or oval "meshes". The dominant motif is the net pattern, which seems to be particularly characteristic of Ertebølle. It is commonly used on objects of bone, deer antler, and amber, and is found in several variations; it can either appear as a surface-covering motif or as a single row of "meshes". Investigation has singled out one motif as especially characteristic. It is formed of a row of parallel groups of lines, "sheaves of grain": a motif known only from Ertebølle, in which it was apparently used only about 4000 B.C. (conv. C-14). We have here a completely typical and special Ertebølle pattern which moreover seems to have a limited geographic distribution.
The composition in all cases is distinct and structured with unmistakeable regard for the form of the implement (or ornament) and for any possible (shaft) holes together with the face or faces which would be visible.

The deer antler shafts are also a typical Ertebølle tool form at the coastal sites in eastern Jutland. The material includes several variations and a chronological difference between the types seems to be distinguishable. The shafts are always smoothly polished and often show patterning--either in the form of drilled or linear patterning. Even though the archaeological record is scanty, there is much to indicate that the patterned shafts are the oldest and date from the period before or about 3700-3600 B.C. (conv. C-14). The later shafts are all unornamented but are scraped smooth. A number of other patterned objects are also older that this date, which seems to mark a change in the Ertebølle culture of east Jutland, with regard to the frequency of ornamented weapons and tools.
If this assumption is correct, then the explanation as to why the Ertebølle culture has so often been described as "poor" in decorated artifacts is perhaps simply that the settlement finds upon which this view was based were almost all from the late Ertebølle culture.

Zvelebil, M. 1981. From Forager to Farmer in the Boreal Zone: Reconstructing economic patterns through catchement analysis in prehistoric Finland. British Archaeological Reports, International Series S115. Oxford.

Palmer, Susann, & Geoffrey Dimbleby. 1981. "A Mesolithic habitation site on Winfrith Heath, Dorset." Proc. Dorset Nat. Hist. & Archaeology Society 1979, 101:27-50.

On the summit of Whitcombe Hill, Winfrith Heath, a very rich Mesolithic site has been found on sandy heath country. The grey (Llc) and brown (Lld) sands at 6-20 ins. (15-50.8 cms) were undeniably deposited during the Atlantic period. Many Mesolithic artifacts occur throughout this horizon. At the base of the grey sand and within the brown sand (L2) there is evidence of an early Mesolithic occupation on or near the site, associated with a high percentage of ivey pollen very probably derived from fodder gathered elsewhere for some form of animal husbandry, perhaps of deer.
There is pollen evidence for somewhat open, deciduous forest broadly contemporary with this early phase of activity and perhaps due to man's influence, following which, but still within the Atlantic period (Zone VIIIa) there was an intensification of the mixed oak forest. Later clearance was associated with the emergence of heather as the dominant vegetation, probably from the Bronze Age onwards.
Features consist of areas of black sand and big stones concentrated in hollows and associated with an abundance of Mesolithic artifacts; the larger and better defined area is roughly oval in shape. Smaller circular patches may possibly be postholes. The archaeological and pollen evidence for this Layer 1b is not in harmony but is reconcilable, and various arguments are put forth to support a claim for regarding the features and occupation at this level as in situ Mesolithic. If these arguments are accepted, the features may be regarded as the remnants of flimsy huts or shelters.
A problem is presented by the presence in the same areas of small patches of imported clay containing pollen indicative of Iron Age or later conditions and which are therefore not reconcilable with the Mesolithic occupation.
The assemblage from all levels of the occupation is most nearly comparable with that from Iwerne Minster, Dorset, but with differences probably resulting from the site's position within walking distance of the coast.

Mesolithic Miscellany is issued twice a year, in May and November, as an informal communication for individuals interested in the Mesolithic of Europe. If you would like to subscribe and contribute to the newsletter, please send your name and address to the editor.

The cost of a yearly subscription is US$3 or 2 pounds sterling. There are several methods for payment of subscriptions:

1. Payment may be made directly to the editor in US$.

2. European subscribers may send payment in sterling directly to Clive Bonsall, Department of Archaeology, University of Edinburgh, 16-20 George Square, Edinburgh.

3. Individuals for whom currency exchange may be a problem should write directly to Dr. Bonsall at the above address. Dr. Bonsall has arranged for the Institute of Archaeology of the University of Edinburgh to provide subscriptions in exchange for publications. Dr. Bonsall can provide the details for this arrangement.

Contributions to the newsletter are always welcome with regard to any of the topics that are covered. Major categories of the newsletter include recent publications with abstracts or tables of content, short research reports, book reviews, recent radiocarbon determinations, letters to the editor, requests for information, changes of address, synopses of annual research on a regional basis, and anything else of relevance to Mesolithic studies.

Deadlines for the newsletter are 1 May and 1 November for the May and November issues respectively. Material requiring translation may be sent to the editor for distribution to volunteers or directly to the individual translators listed in volume 1 of Mesolithic Miscellany.

Editor:
T. Douglas Price
Department of Anthropology
5240 Social Sciences
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin
USA 53706