

tions which might have supported the local efforts, the result being that we had to go abroad to have our phosphate analyses, pollen analyses, etc. done. I guess that a re-orientation at least of the Geological Survey potential for palynology is under way and this could probably prove the starting point of a most important trend in the 1980'es. Leading back to the organisation of the 1940'es when archaeologists and scientists worked closely together with a common goal. Perhaps the scientists felt that they were subordinated to the archaeologists. This could explain the emancipation trend of the peatbog laboratory of the National Museum.

I should like to know how many regional museums have settlement projects going. I think KK overemphasises their number. Let me mention the fact that my predecessor Erling Albrechtsen broke the tradition of local replicas of the National Museum all over the country by concentrating on the pre-history of the region Fyn (Albrechtsen 1951, Thrane 1980). Fyn is still the best example of what a small regional museum is (was) able to do by a sustained effort (Albrechtsen 1954–73). His publications are good examples of the possibilities as well as the limitations of an isolated provincial archaeologist working in the Müller tradition. There is still a great need for corresponding publications of other Danish regions.

It has been the pride of Danish archaeological university education that schools were not found. This is another relict of the Müller tradition, which has had great advantages but which has left the departments without their own research profiles. I agree with KK that it would be time for Copenhagen and Århus to formulate overall policies. A crucial question for the coming years will be the uniting of efforts and pooling of resources for a joint archaeological policy. Danish archaeologists have not been used to this sort of restraint on their own wishes and today no common forum for a formulation of a common policy exists. The new Archaeological Board could become the nucleus of such a forum, provided it is given the scope necessary for a leading role in policy making. One of the first things to do will be to create an overall view of what is going on and what is wanted in the various archaeological periods. This will have to be discussed generally and openly by all archaeologists in Denmark so that a consensus of opinion may be reached. This could become the most important innovation in the archaeology of the 1980'es where the continued pressure of land use and perhaps a revival of the building activities of Danish society, augmented by the metal detector bug, will mean that even increased central funding will be insufficient for many years to come.

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NOTE

1. It is a euphemism when KK (1983, 204) writes "regional museums carried out final excavations". The fact is that these museums were only allowed to do the final excavations as their share. There is no methodological reason for separating survey and (or) trial excava-

tions from the final excavation of pipeline or any other sort of archaeology. It is deplorable that the Archaeological Council (now Board) has not been willing to change this unhappy practice introduced by the National Agency for the Protection of Ancient Monuments and Sites. It will take some time before the bitter resentment caused by this unscientific practice can be overcome.

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Danish Archaeology in the 1980's – beyond theoretical poverty?

by DITLEV L. MAHLER, CARSTEN PALUDAN-MÜLLER & STEFFEN STUMMANN HANSEN

1968 was in many ways an important year. The anti-authoritarian movement swept over cities and universities all over the industrialized world. Also Danish universities were affected – with minor exceptions. There was quiet at the institutes of archaeology, where nobody challenged the established structure and content of the studies, nor did anyone enquire into the role of archaeology in contemporary society.

But still the late 1960's, and early 1970's saw the beginning of a gradual reorientation within Danish Archaeology. This development was in concordance with, and stimulated by similar developments elsewhere, responding to growing

frustrations with the inconsistencies, and obvious naivety of traditional archaeological analysis and explanation of prehistoric processes.

One important factor, often mentioned in this context, is the calibration of the C-14 datings, that dealt a serious blow to much of the traditional diffusionist framework.

But still more important – though seldom mentioned – was the declining star of the traditional humanistic disciplines, fading against the sparkling achievements of the “hard” sciences with their prominent role in the rapid development of the economic basis of the industrialized world. The very same hard sciences that provided archaeology with so much vital, and puzzling information, also set the standards for scientific work which many archaeologists wanted to make their own.

The apparent objectivity of the natural sciences exercised a compelling influence, the demands for exactitude had long been recognized in the excavations. But during the 60’s, and 70’s they gained a strong role also in typological analyses, where earlier impressionistic type-definitions were readily accepted. Likewise, new methods of spatial analysis were employed. The classic example of the penetration of these new methods are found in Malmer’s “Jungneolitischen Studien” from 1962.

But archaeologists, also in Denmark, wanted a greater share in the quasi-objectivity of hard sciences. They wanted new standards to be applied also in the socio-historical interpretation and explanation of the prehistoric record.

In response to similar currents in the Anglo-Saxon countries a “new” archaeology was developed under the influence of neo-positivism, which had strong ties with the hard sciences. This development became a main source of inspiration for a new generation of Danish archaeologists. And hence during the last decade the local archaeological literature saw an upsurge of a new conceptual frame of reference. Old, vaguely defined concepts such as diffusion, migration, trade and culture gradually went out of use, and new ones became regarded as meaningful: adaptation, population pressure, surplus, status, prestige-goods, exchange, competition, consumption, band, tribe, chieftdom, big-man, chief, and elite are among the terms now regarded, also in Danish archaeology, as passwords to scientific respectability.

But evidently the mere use of a new terminology, without theoretical clarification, does not constitute a sufficient advance into the realm of science.

The typological system, into which the prehistoric societies of prehistory were classified, was the band-tribe-chieftdom-state model of neo-evolutionism. And to “explain” the transition from one stage to the next, reference was made to concepts such as “population-pressure”, and “competition”, as if these possessed an inherent explanatory value. This resembled only too closely previous abuses of magic formulas such as “migration” and “diffusion”, to explain changes in the prehistoric record. Just like the old concepts, these new ones cover phenomena, that are parts and/or products of social behavioural patterns, which themselves call for an explanation.

If we as archaeologists are willing to accept resource crisis or competition as explanations per se of, for examples, the rise of

inheritable political leadership, we have also doomed our discipline to a role as a normative and conservative undertaking, in which we refrain from any serious attempt to achieve a deeper insight into man’s social behaviour. We will then end up with a mechanistic “correlation archaeology”.

In our opinion archaeology is in an advantage-position, and therefore obliged to penetrate into essential questions such as: what are the (social) forces that stimulate population growth and the depletion of resources? – What is the nature and origin of social inequality?

Is social inequality a necessary precondition for the intensification of production beyond a certain level, or is the intensification beyond such a level a necessary, but insufficient precondition for social inequality? To cope with such questions archaeologists must engage on a much more profound level in the development of theories about the dynamics of prehistoric societies.

For the authors of the present paper there can be no doubt that such theories are best developed within a historical-materialistic framework, because this provides the most coherent vision of societies in their dynamic totality. Surely, however, we are not calling for a flood of pseudo-theoretical literature, or case-studies claiming allegiance to historical-materialism by the employment of yet another ill-defined vocabulary. Many of the traditional concepts of historical-materialism were never developed to cope with the phenomena reflected in the prehistoric record. Key concepts such as “class”, “production”, “reproduction”, and “surplus” need serious rethinking in order to be of genuine relevance to us.

Some important work in this direction has already been going on for quite some time within French anthropology, and lately also within the Anglo-Saxon. This engagement is slowly beginning to percolate into archaeological writings of varying profundity.

It surely will be useful, if archaeologists and anthropologists can join forces in the development of a new conceptual framework for the analyses of pre-state/early state societies. Such an integrated effort is – whether it be historical-materialistic or not – is necessary, for we need better guidance in our praxis as archaeologists, if we want to cultivate the many promising methodological innovations of New Archaeology.

Without well-defined theoretical models of past societies, there will for instance be little sense in discussing source criticism. If we have no idea about the economic basis of a given society, and of the constraints this imposed on society as a whole, how can we then talk about what is representative of that society?

Surely a statistically representative sample of e.g. bronze hoards is not necessarily the same as a historically representative “sample” (expression) of Bronze Age society’s determinant features. As long as we know and think so little about the content, and structure of Bronze Age subsistence economy, and about the mechanisms by which it was linked up with the production, flow, and consumption of bronze goods, how can we then hope to evaluate the historical significance of observed changes in bronze finds?

With its strong empirical foundation Danish archaeology

should recognize particular obligations in the dialectical development of a theoretical framework for the analyses of pre-historic processes. Hitherto the mechanistic, neo-evolutionist inspired New Archaeology has been unable to meet this obligation. This lack of historical perspective in the analysis of the past is matched by the inability to discuss, and understand archaeology's role in relation to contemporary society.

The neo-evolutionistic trends grew up during an economic boom, and this meant that many of the demands made in the archaeological institutions could be met. The expansion of the social welfare state was matched by an explosive expansion of museums, and other antiquarian institutions. Legislation underlined the growing state-involvement also in this sector of Danish society. The expansion and optimism in many ways offered a favourable background for a radical shift in the archaeological discipline.

The reaction against the "traditional" archaeology was in many ways directed against uniformity and conformity, and the pessimistically narrow view of archaeology and its possibilities. These features were very much identified with the old, centralized scientific, and educational environment. But with the simultaneous growth, and expansion of the archaeological institutions this object for critical evaluation seemed to vanish. The expansion, and here in particular the professionalization of the regional museums was at least a formal opening up of the archaeological milieu, and as such it also represented a decentralization.

In this way, it could be said that the rise of New Archaeology correlated with the "anti-authoritarianism" of '68, but this correlation can hardly be ascribed any direct causal significance. The new Archaeology never took up the other aspect of the '68-movement: the social, and political critique.

It is symptomatic that while major parts of the progressive elements within social and humanistic sciences discussed Marx-inspired theories, then at the same time "progressive" archaeologists discussed mechanical evolutionary theories, inspired by Service and Sahlins. This is perhaps one of the best indicators of archaeology's academic isolation nowadays. A foundation in historical materialism would have implied a useful critical evaluation of the institutional and ideological content of archaeology, and its context.

The expansion during the 1970's in the educational system made a restrictive internal centralism impossible. The academic staff was multiplied several times but there were no systematic courses in *historical* theory and method. The result of this is that the discipline today, even more than earlier, is characterized by an almost irresponsible lack of theory and therefore ridden by methodological inconsequences.

The satisfaction with mere quantitative expansion is also found in the internal discussions of the administrative, and economic structures of archaeology. Here the distribution of authority in connection with rescue archaeology was the subject of violent disputes between various archaeological institutions, whereas very little interest indeed was paid to the question of how to make use of the disputed authority. Nobody seemed interested in discussing the aims and content of rescue archaeology, not to speak of the general role and content of

archaeology in relation to general cultural-political perspectives.

Symptomatically archaeology seems to restrict its own cultural-political perspective in a period, where the general public shows a growing interest in history. Archaeology's inability to see itself in a historical perspective has also made it impossible for it to respond seriously to the public interest in history. On the one hand, popularization has been developed in a direction where quantity seems to be the main guiding criterion, without open discussions of content and significance. On the other hand, the professional strategy and tactics of archaeological institutions have solely aimed at demonstrating "responsibility", and "modesty", to the political decision-makers. The negotiations about the rescue-archaeological project under the Ancient Monuments Administration in connection with the establishment of gas pipelines is a typical example. Many archaeologists felt uneasy about the professional justifiability of conducting the project under the conditions imposed by the interests behind the gas pipelines. But nobody dared to discuss the matter in public, for fear that this would attract the anger of political decision-makers.

In our opinion that kind of logic has little justification, and the same can be said about the kind of archaeology, which is guided only by these considerations. It will inevitably end up with archaeology being conducted for its own sake or as a service industry. Instead we should promote a general public understanding of the necessity of archaeology as part of our collective memory to help us act in today's chaotic mass-society. The interests of the general public, and not the political decision-makers should be the aim and justification for archaeological work. And let it be a comforting thought for pragmatic minds, that a strong popular backing has often proved the best argument in discussions with the political decision-makers.

Neo-evolutionism produced a succession of general type-models for the classification and analyses of prehistoric societies, and their members. These models reflect a mechanical, ahistoric view of society which has gradually revealed its stereotyped shortcomings. In much the same way, it has become clear that the archaeological situation today is much too complex to be described merely as an antithesis to traditional archaeology. We believe that if the contrasts between "traditional" and "new" archaeology are allowed to remain an isolated question of methods, then New Archaeology will gradually merge with and vanish into the traditional. If on the other hand, contrasts could be developed into a question of *fundamental* theoretical differences, then we might get a chance to see archaeology develop into a humanistic discipline, and a science of history with an ability to engage people rather than merely to entertain them.

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