

## Debate

In this *Debate* we continue the discussion about archaeology in the 1980'es with contributions from Norway and Sweden by Björn Myhre and Åke Hyenstrand. They have both contributed to the development of archaeological method and theory in Scandinavia during the 1970'es and 1980'es, especially within settlement studies.

Finally Peter Rowley-Conway from Cambridge and Kristina Jennbert from Lund introduce a debate on the transition from the mesolithic to the neolithic in southern Scandinavia as seen from the mesolithic. We hope also to receive comments on the transition as seen from the neolithic and from the perspective of vegetational history.

The editors

## Trends in Norwegian Archaeology

by BJØRN MYHRE

### INTRODUCTION

In the foregoing issue of *JDA* (vol. 3, 1984) Kristian Kristiansen presents a very personal version of Danish archaeology, its history and future. He is mainly describing the Danish situation, but especially in the retrospective part of his article he leaves us with the impression that the development of archaeology was almost identical in all Scandinavian countries. This may be correct concerning the main trends, but each country has its own traditions which have been of decisive importance for the content and organization of the discipline.

Kristiansen indicates that Scandinavian archaeologists during the latter century were so oppressed by the burden of tradition and data, that new ideas and theories could not be accepted before the end of the 1960's. The ideology and paradigms of a discipline must, however, be evaluated according to the main scientific theories that are prevailing at the time in question. When Scandinavian archaeologists during the first half of this century gave priority to the study of chronological problems and "archaeological cultures" they operated within the existing theory of all disciplines of culture history; typology, diffusion, "Kulturkreislehre" and migrations were accepted tools, and during some periods were even radical new ideas.

It was only when the theoretical basis for the "new anthropology": social anthropology in England and cultural anthropology in the U.S.A., developed during the 1930's and 1940's, that the new understanding and the new theories were formed, which later also changed archaeology. But even in England and U.S.A. it took a long time before the new anthropological ideas became common archaeological tools. Archaeologists like G. Childe (1951, 1958), G. Clark (1939, 1952, 1953), W.W. Taylor (1948) and Ph. Philips and G. Willey (1958) were pioneers, who not until the late 1950's and early 1960's were followed by a larger group. The advances in philosophy and scientific theory and the development of computers, new dating methods and statistics, that have been of such importance to the new archaeology, were mainly achieved as late as the 1950's and early 1960's.

Scandinavian archaeology has therefore, according to my view, followed an international trend through most of this century, and has even contributed with new aspects and results. When searching for the reason why it lasted so long before Scandinavian archaeologists began orientating themselves towards the new anthropological theories, we must remember that Scandinavian archaeology was in no exceptional position in the world. Even in England and U.S.A. very few archaeologists in the 1940's and 1950's were actively developing in the new direction. To understand the position of Scandinavian