Journal of Danish Archaeology vol.14, 2006, pp. 45-85

Strandet Hovedgaard Children's graves of the late Single Grave Culture in North Jutland, and some social and cultural considerations

by John Simonsen

ABSTRACT

This article focuses upon a destroyed barrow with an exceptional number of children's graves. The different types of grave and grave goods are discussed and the development of the barrow described. The finding of a large number of short stone cists at Strandet Hovedgaard is of special research interest, and provides an opportunity to present a survey of several important finds from North Jutland.

The explanation of the presence of the children's cemetery is discussed in relation to the problem of the child-adult threshold in traditional societies. The possible social role of children in the late Single Grave Culture is discussed along with other socio-cultural considerations. The analysis indicates that in certain areas entirely new lines of thought may be appropriate with regard to social structure in this phase of the culture. Also two contemporary house sites are briefly presented below.

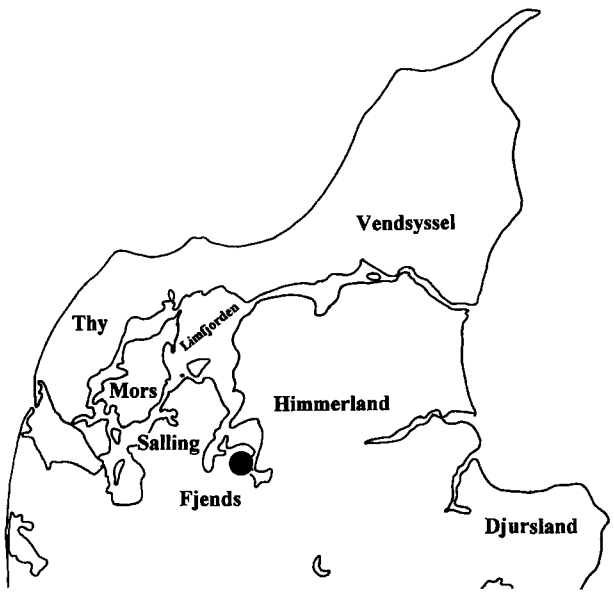


Fig. 1. North Jutland, showing the district names. Strandet Hovedgaard marked with a dot.

INTRODUCTION

The manor Strandet Hovedgaard is located in North Jutland in the area west of Hjarbæk fjord, which forms the central southern part of the Limfjord (Fig. 1). The agricultural lands of the farm, which have been under intensive cultivation for many years, have now been given over to permanent greenfields, while large tracts have been planted with trees. Before this planting the soil was subject to deep ploughing ("subsoiling"). In deep ploughed areas such as this about half a kilometre north of the farm, at the end of 1996 the plough

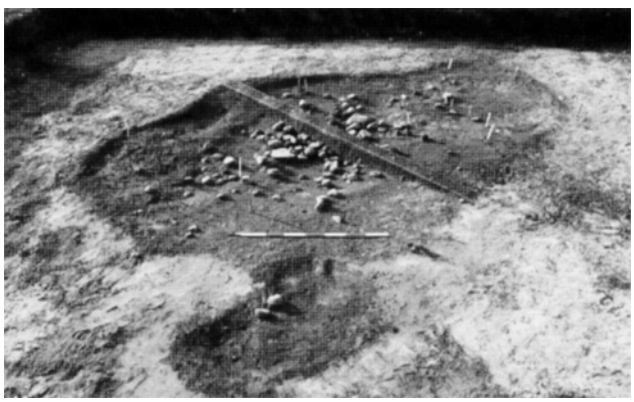


Fig. 2. Strandet Hovedgaard. Sinking in the southern building plot ("House 1") of the late Single Grave Culture under excavation. Seen from the east.

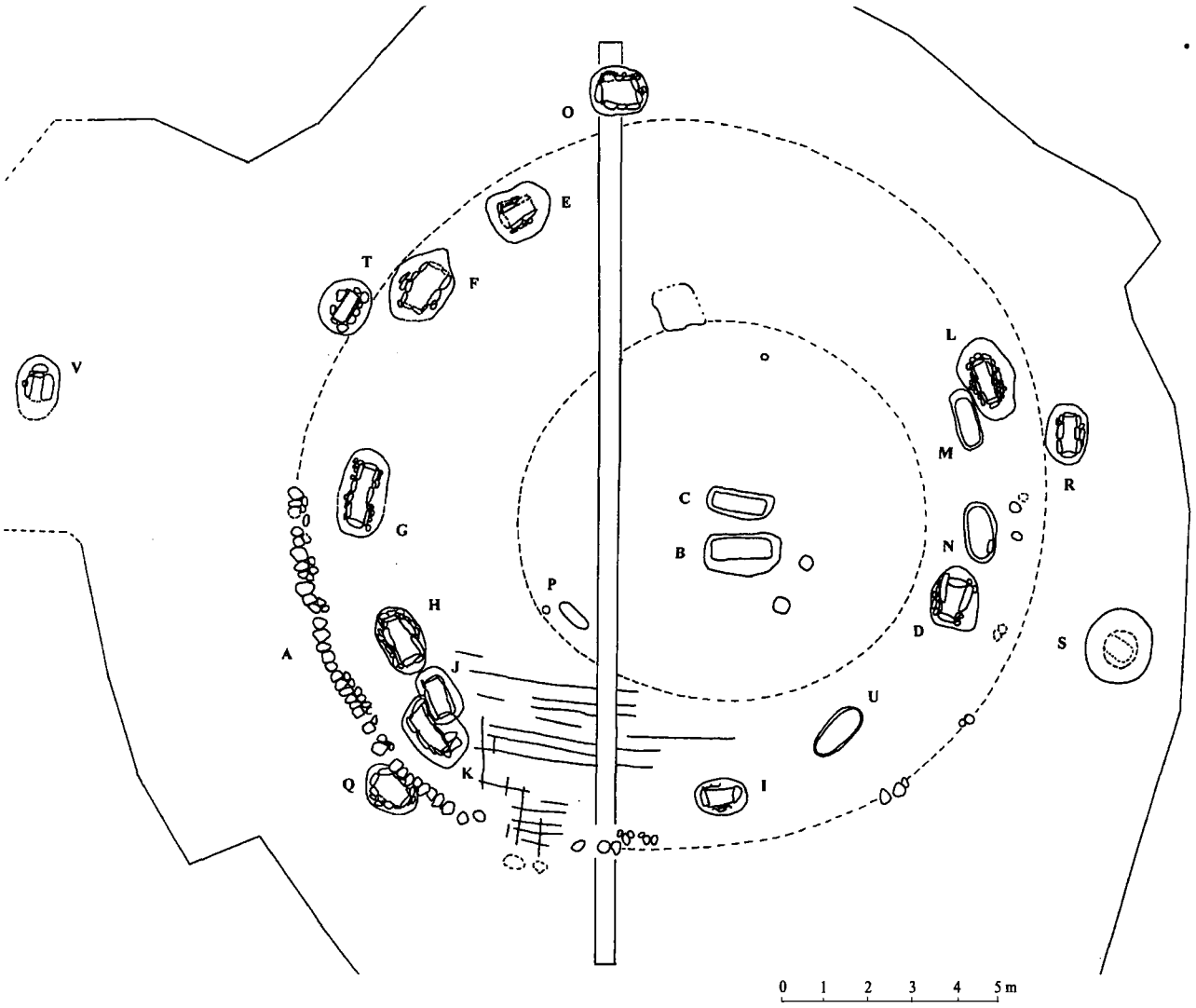


Fig. 3. Strandet Hovedgaard, feature V. Two phases of barrow construction were distinguished, with diameters of c. 9 and 16.5 m respectively. Only the later phase had a kerb ring of two closely spaced stone strings.

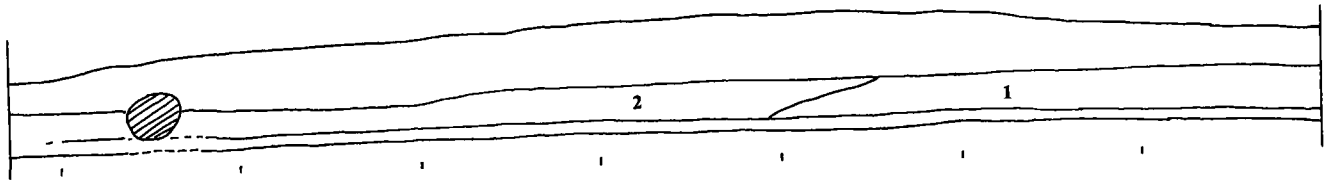


Fig. 4. Strandet Hovedgaard. Southern segment of the main section (N–S) through the severely plough-damaged barrow (feature V). At the top the plough soil, then the two phases of the barrow clearly visible, and then the old ground surface. To the left a protruding stone from the kerbstone ring.

brought hitherto unknown settlement remains up to the surface. These were the subject of repeated surveys followed by excavation between April and December 1997. On the higher land towards the west extensive traces of Bronze-age settlement in the form of pottery ploughed up from pits, ploughed-out cooking pits and ploughed-up soil which was fairly certainly from building post-holes were found.

In a lower area towards the east, meanwhile, settlement evidence of the later Single Grave Culture was found. There were traces of two building plots corresponding to the type with a hollow that is known from, inter alia, the late Single Grave Culture and Dagger Period (Hvass 1978; Simonsen 1973; 1986; 1987). These buildings were discovered during surveying of the ploughed-up soil and lay about 10 m apart from north to south. The excavation following the removal of the topsoil showed that the base of the hollows of these buildings was untouched and contained quite a lot of finds. The southern building had a sunken floor about 6.7 m long (Fig. 2). In the basal layer and the soil above it a significant assemblage of pottery was found, including many decorated sherds. The decoration of several of these sherds matches that of what is known as the N group (Glob 1945, 117). There was also an unusually large number of scorched stones and querns and worked flint etc. Ploughing with an ard could be seen to have taken place immediately after the building went out of use. The northern building had a sunken floor about 7 m long. The basal layer contained a more limited collection of pottery, including some decorated sherds which similarly were decorated in the style of the aforementioned N group and others. There were also some scorched stones and other stone and flint finds. As with the first building, ard-ploughing could be observed.

Immediately west of the building plot there was a pit whose contents included several quernstones. Four ^{14}C-dating of carbonized grain from the basal layer of the building plots have been made (AAR-4415 – 18) at the AMS Laboratory, Institute of Physics and Astronomy, Aarhus. The laboratory reports that the four results (3890±45 BP; 3885±45 BP; 3815±55 BP; 3990±50 BP) could all represent the same date. The weighted average age of the four results is 3874±24 BP (uncalibrated). With this dating (in respect of which we have to note that problems concerning the own age of the carbon are not relevant) we also have a precise dating for the use of pottery of the N group that is of interest in respect of the particular topic of this article, a destroyed barrow that was excavated about 70 m east of the two buildings, under the direction of the author. In this barrow (feature V) and immediately outside it were found many graves, all of them child-sized (Fig. 3). These small graves contained a variety of pots, several of which were, according to their decoration, probably contemporary with the pottery from the buildings. The barrow and its immediate surroundings must be assumed to have been in use as a cemetery for a longer period of time than the buildings found, and it is my understanding, based on their close chronological and geographical connexion, that some of these burials may have been made by the residents of these houses.

The barrow and its development

The barrow has been ploughed down for a very long time, and the local people could not remember any visible remains of a destroyed barrow here. By chance only parts of the ploughed-out barrow were subsoiled by the trench plough in 1996 (Fig. 7a). The excavation of the lost barrow with its many short stone cists and other types of small grave will be presented below.

The earliest barrow (mound 1) was fairly small and corresponded, in diameter, to many small barrows of the Single Grave Culture (Fig. 5a). This barrow was constructed on a slight prominence located on a surface sloping slightly to the east that runs for about 200 m to the south, east and north with no significant topographical variation and 100 m to the west, where the plain meets a distinct hill.

Mound 1 had had a diameter of about 9 m and it is possible that it was turf-built, although this could not be demonstrated with certainty. The height of the barrow was not great, probably about a metre, to judge by the small segment of its profile that was preserved at the foot of the barrow to the south in the main section (Fig. 4). Three graves were found in this small barrow.

Two remarkably small features might be regarded as traces of markers associated with mound 1. One hole was found about 3 m north of grave C while the second was found about 0.2 m west of grave P. Both were emptied and proved to be regularly circular at the surface with diameters of 14 and 15 cm respectively. Both had vertical, cylindrical sides and were 37 and 31 cm deep. Both were filled with the same loose fill as the make-up of this small barrow, and could have

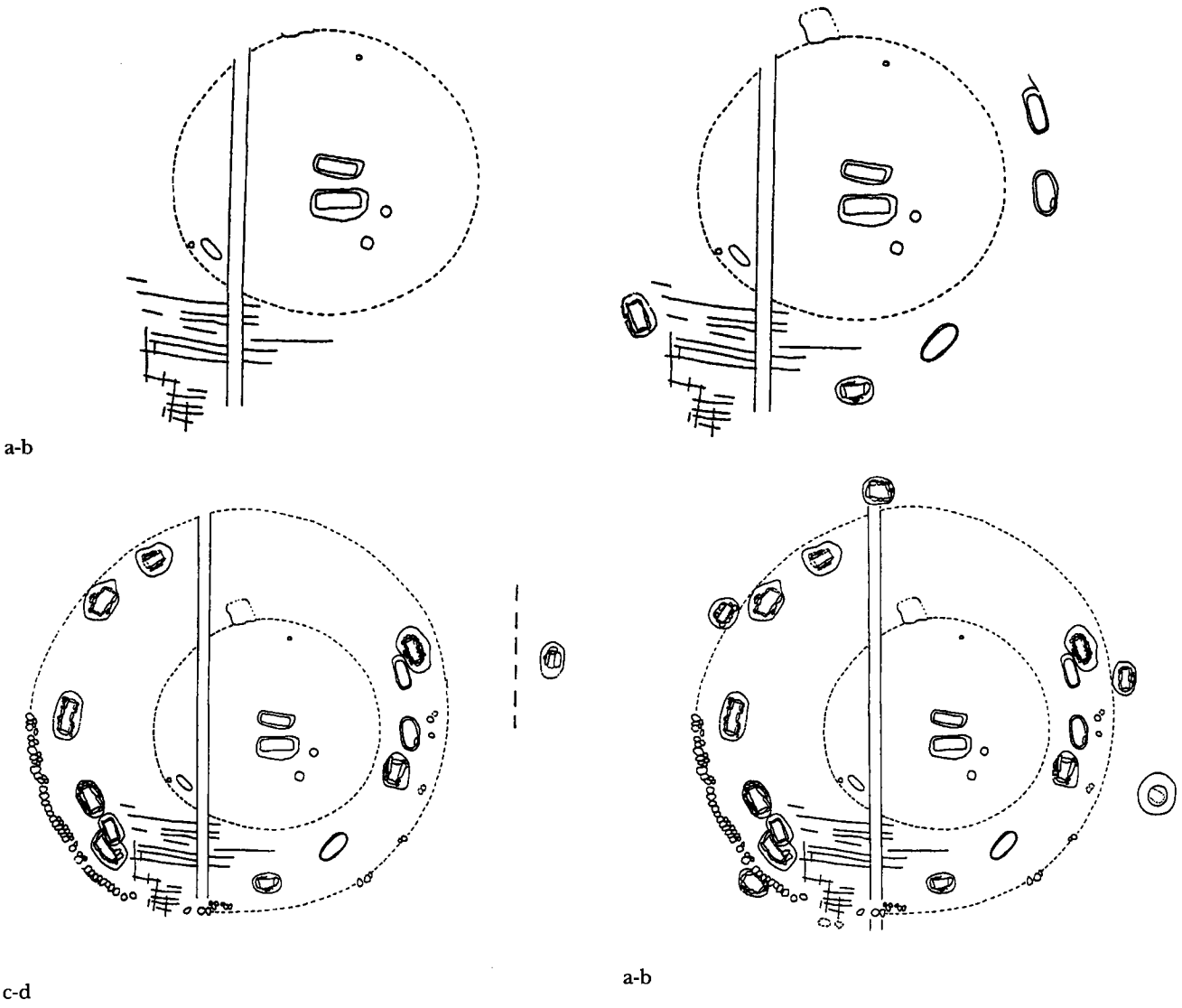


Fig. 5. Strandet Hovedgaard, feature V. The author's interpretation of the development of the cemetery with its many child-length graves. a) the first small barrow (mound 1) with its flat graves dug into the ground; b) later flat graves etc in the ground outside the foot of the barrow; c) larger barrow (mound 2) with a kerb and many new graves (short stone cists) dug into the ground; d) graves outside the foot of the barrow (including short stone cists) dug into the ground.

contained wooden stakes.

There were four graves to the east of the foot of mound 1, and one to the west (Fig. 5).

In the next phase the barrow was greatly enlarged (mound 2). Seven more children's graves were added and the extended barrow now covered a total of 15 graves (Fig. 5c). After this enlargement the barrow was one of the larger ones of the Single Grave Culture. On the basis of observations of the presence of the darker barrow fill in the surface, the preserved segments of the kerbstone chain and the occurrence of barrow fill in the main section, it has been established that it was about 16.5 m in diameter. It could not be determined how much of this larger phase of the barrow was turf-built. The height of the grave mound may have been quite substantial for a barrow of the Single Grave Culture, but it is of course impossible to provide an exact measure.

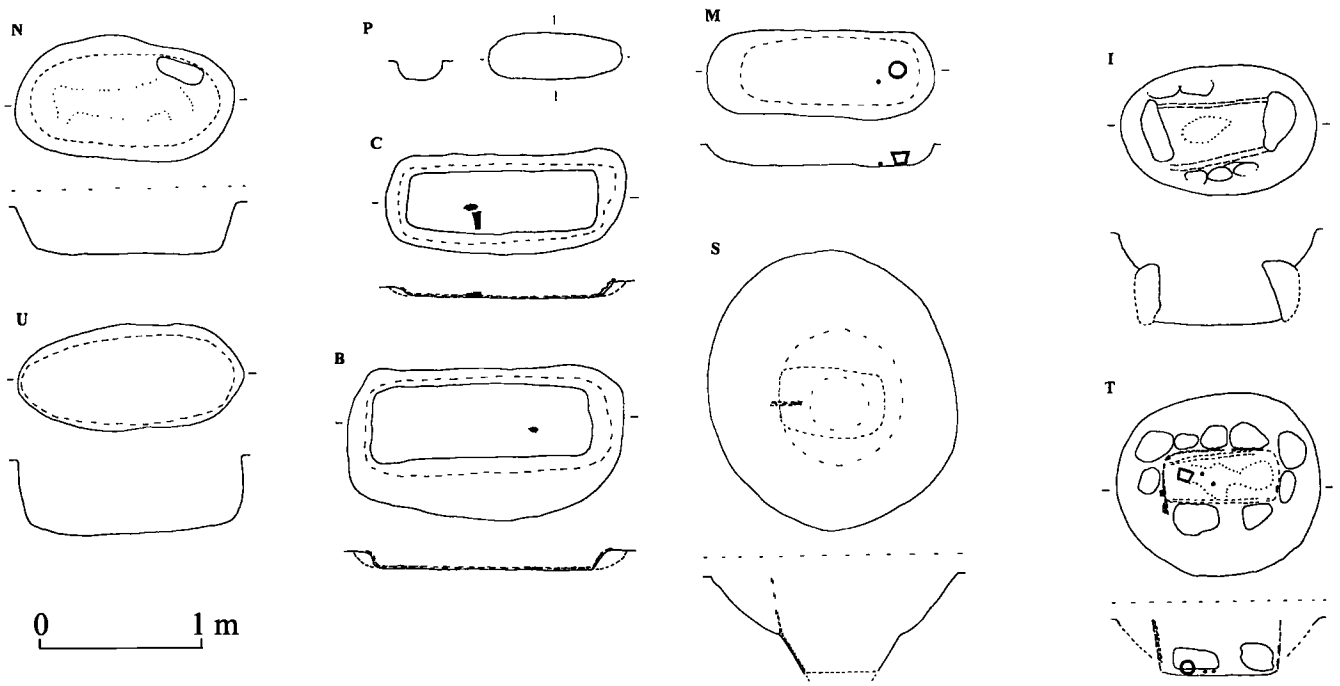


Fig. 6. Strandet Hovedgaard. Small flat graves and edged graves etc from the cemetery.

Unlike in the first phase, the new mound had a stone kerb ring (Fig. 7b). In the well-preserved segment to the south-west the construction of this kerbstone chain (designated "A") could be seen to consist of a circular trench with two closely spaced rows of selected, usually rounded, field stones. The outer circle consisted of stones up to about 40 cm long in any dimension. Immediately to the inside these were supported by smaller stones, most of them up to 20 cm long. The upper surface of both rings of stone was consistently at the same level, although the kerbstone chain as a whole sloped regularly up towards the north. Over the 8 m or so over which the kerbstone chain is largely preserved there is a height difference of 24 cm. One could not otherwise see whether both stone circles or perhaps only the innermost one had been covered by the make-up of the barrow.

The area of excavation extended about 5 m north of the barrow and 7 m south. There was absolutely no trace of any further extension of the barrow. On the contrary, substantial precipitation deposits were observed in the section both south and north of the barrow as well as at other places on the surface as a clear record of the location of the barrow edge. The total area excavated around the barrow measured about 500 m^2.

The concentration of graves was now tight in certain areas within the barrow, and five burials were made outside the mound. At a slightly greater distance one further burial was made towards the west. Altogether 21 graves, generally well-preserved, were found in the cemetery. All of the graves are illustrated and described in the appendix, while in what follows important features of the graves are highlighted in relation to the barrow phases.

The graves in mound 1

In the centre of mound 1 there were two E–W graves, B and C (Fig. 7c). The graves were of similar construction:

Grave B was an undisturbed grave with a carbonized wooden cover. In the eastern half of the grave tooth enamel from a child of 6–8 was found. There were no skeletal remains or grave goods.

Grave C was likewise an undisturbed grave with a carbonized wooden cover. In the western half of the grave there was a small flint axe and tooth enamel from a child of 3–5, but no skeletal remains otherwise.

These graves may not originally have been very deep, as the compression of the old surface can hardly have affected more than a few centimetres and the outer edges of the charred wooden covers rest on soil matching the old ground surface.

Grave C is probably the earlier, both because it is most centrally located within the small mound and also because evidence found at the surface indicates that the barrow was not raised until after this grave had been constructed.

At the edge of mound 1 grave P was found, appearing as a small feature to the south-west. No skeletal or dental remains were found, nor any grave goods.

During survey work in 1983, an experienced amateur archaeologist found a small battle axe. It is reported that this axe was found approximately on top of the ploughed-out barrow. Three years later the same amateur archaeologist found a small flint axe of darker flint on the central part of the barrow. These two stray finds of axes could derive from secondary graves in mound 1 higher up in the body of the barrow.

The graves outside of mound 1

Immediately north of mound 1 a small, irregular pit was found in the subsoil, barely 1 x 1 m and about 10 cm deep. This pit contained greyish-brown sandy soil with flecks of charcoal. The pit may have been constructed after the raising of the small barrow but before it was enlarged into mound 2. At the moment, we cannot really exclude the possibility that this pit may have been produced by rituals associated with burial.

South of mound 1 cultivation traces in the form of ardmarks sealed beneath mound 2 were found. These comprise traces of an approximately E–W ploughing and individual marks of a roughly N–W ploughing which crosses the other marks towards the west. The E–W ploughing appears slightly curved, possibly because of the presence of mound 1 as no ardmarks were found beneath this barrow. In this case, ploughing would have been done right up to the edge of the barrow. The ploughing was thus certainly done before the construction of mound 2 but probably after the raising of mound 1.

Four interments of different types (Fig. 6) and a short stone cist were apparently constructed before the enlargement of the barrow and may therefore, following their location, be regarded as burials outside the edge of mound 1 but associated with it. In none of these graves were skeletal or dental remains found, and grave goods were found only in graves M and J. The four graves were:

Grave I, undisturbed grave with large end stones and supporting stones.

Grave U, postulated undisturbed flat grave.

Grave N, undisturbed flat grave with a single supporting stone.

Grave M, undisturbed flat grave. In the southern end a small beaker (corresponding to Glob 1945, type P4) and a little north of it an amber bead.

Grave J, undisturbed stone cist (Fig. 7e). At the southern end was found a small beaker (corresponding to Glob 1945, type N3). No sunken barrow fill was found in the top of grave J (although the grave chamber was filled up by the infiltration of loose, fine-grained sand), and it therefore appears probable that it was constructed about the same time as the aforementioned graves outside of mound 1. Grave J is also stratigraphically earlier than grave K, as the pit of grave K cuts that of grave J. Since grave J is also the only stone cist that is reminiscent of the flat graves in the fill of the pit and its outline, and since it was also of an unusual form with, for instance, a paved floor, it can cautiously be presumed that it was the first of the short stone cists to be constructed.

The graves in mound 2

No graves from the central part of mound 2 were found. However, many secondary graves belonging to this phase were excavated. Altogether seven short stone cists were found along the inner edge of the barrow. No skeletal remains or tooth enamel were found in any of these, although there was a faint "shadow" in one of the graves, which are as follows:

Grave D, undisturbed stone cist. In the northern part lay a small beaker (corresponding to Globe 1945, type L3). Fragments of oystershell on the floor.

Grave L, undisturbed stone cist. No grave goods found.

Grave E, incompletely preserved stone cist. In the southern part stood a small beaker (corresponding

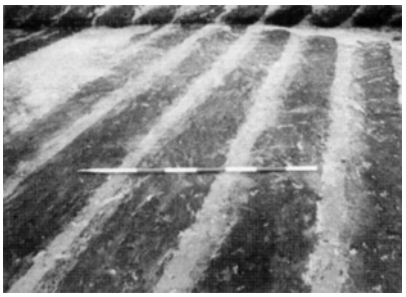


Fig. 7a

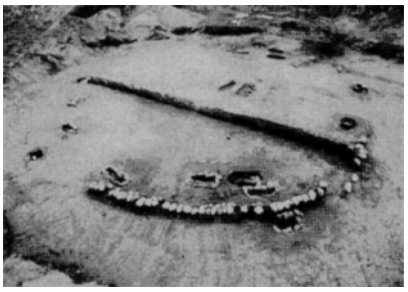


Fig. 7b

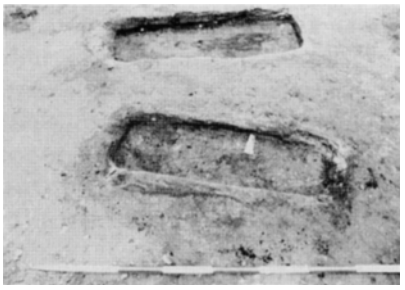


Fig. 7c

Fig. 7d

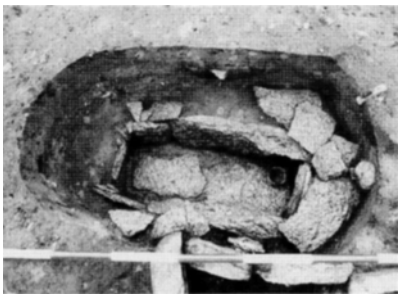


Fig. 7e

Fig. 7. Strandet Hovedgaard. a) The tracks of the modern trench plough in the north-eastern part of the barrow, feature V. Seen from the east. b) General view of the base of the barrow in feature V. Only the westernmost of the 21 graves lies outside the view. Seen from the south-west. c) In the foreground, grave C with its flint axe and tooth enamel from a 3–5-year-old. In the background grave B with tooth enamel from a 6–8-year-old. Seen from the north. d) In the foreground, part of the surviving kerb and behind it the short stone cist, grave H. Seen from the west. e) The short stone cist, grave J, built mainly of reddish granite, with the supporting stones exposed. Seen from the west.

to Glob 1945, type L6), which had evidently been partially damaged by the recent subsoiling.

Grave F, incompletely preserved stone cist. At the southern end stood a well-preserved small beaker (corresponding to Glob 1945, type P6) with an amber bead close by. In the sandy base was seen a faint greyish feature that further excavation revealed as the (possible) shadow of an individual in a crouched position. If so, the beaker stood by the stomach of the body and the amber bead in front of the neck. These details have to be treated with the greatest caution.

Grave G, undisturbed stone cist. In both the northern and southern halves was found a small pot (corresponding to Glob 1945, types P6 and O5).

Grave H, undisturbed stone cist. In the middle of the southern half lay four amber beads.

Grave K, undisturbed stone cist. At the western side of the south-western part of the grave stood a small pot (corresponding Glob 1945, type N3). Five amber beads lay practically in the middle.

The graves outside of mound 2

Outside mound 2 a total of five graves which had not been covered by any mound were found at various distances from the foot of the barrow. These comprise three short stone cists, one flat grave and one grave with a stone lining. No traces of skeletons or tooth enamel were found in any of these graves, which are the following:

Grave R, undisturbed stone cist. On the base at the southern end of the grave lay a pot (corresponding to Glob 1945, type N3) on its side, while further north at the same side (to the west) was an amber bead.

Grave O, undisturbed stone cist. At the eastern end

two small pots were found (corresponding to Glob 1945, types N3 and I3). An amber bead was found approximately in the middle of the south side.

Grave Q, undisturbed stone cist. At the eastern end of the grave stood a pot (corresponding to Glob 1945, type N1/3), about 1 cm above the base of the grave.

Grave S, undisturbed flat grave. No grave goods found.

Grave T, undisturbed grave with partially charred sides flanked by a supporting stone lining. In the northern half stood a small pot (corresponding to Glob 1945, type L6), and further south were two amber beads.

Grave V, incompletely preserved stone cist. In the southern part stood a small beaker (corresponding to Glob 1945, type I4). Right beside it were two amber beads. At the northern end of the grave stood a small beaker (corresponding to Glob 1945, type N4).

The sequence of grave-types

With the gradual construction of the graves and the enlargement of the barrow into mound 2, the base of the barrow provides a sort of horizontal stratigraphy extending from its original centre and spreading outwards rather like a ripple in a pond. As I understand it, the development of grave-types must have followed this sequence at the basal level of the barrow:

1. Shallow flat graves with charred wooden covers.
2. Deep or shallow flat graves, both types without traces of burning (and the grave with the large end stones).
3. Short stone cists.

There are naturally some questions that cannot be answered straightaway. Were all the interments in the base of the barrow made before the first stone cist was constructed? Was grave T, with its charred cist and supporting lining of stones constructed before the last stone cists or later, thus forming a fourth stage in the sequence above? In the following, the short stone cists are subjected to more thorough description and analysis.

The short stone cists

Nearly all the short cists in and around the barrow were extremely well built. They did not typically show haphazard approaches in their construction or the choice of materials. Some of the cists, however, were more harmonious than others, which may be because access to stone from the morainic landscape varied. The cist of grave J was particularly specially constructed, built as it was of cut stones of the same reddish granite in its long sides and for the capstone and — uniquely — with a paved floor, also in the same stone. It should be noted too that all of the cists were constructed in pits dug into the sandy subsoil.

In spite of intensive efforts no definite traces of skeletons or teeth were found in any of the stone cists. The sandy soil at this site does not preserve these organic materials over thousands of years.

The position of the stone cists in and beside the barrow

By far the most common orientation for Single Grave Culture graves is approximately E–W. For the construction of the solid stone cists, however, position in relation to the stone kerb of the barrow was decisive. At the edge there were graves which lay both within the kerbstone ring (aligned as chords in relation to the circular kerb) and outside of it (positioned as tangents to the circular kerb).

Nearly all of the small stone cists are linked to the rim of mound 2. One exception was probably cist J, which was early and, as noted above, is considered to have been a secondary grave outside of mound 1. Another exception may be grave V.

The position of the stone cists in relation to the kerbstones was roughly the same all around the barrow, but could best be studied in the reasonably well-preserved south-western segment of the kerb. Grave K was constructed like a chord in relation to the circuit at a distance of 1.2 m from the outer side of the supporting stone of the cist to the outer row of kerbstones. Grave H was similarly constructed at a distance of c. 0.6 m from the outer side of the supporting stone of the cist to the outer row of kerbstones. Grave G was constructed more or less the same way (albeit with the northern part of the grave turned a little more towards the centre of the barrow) with the kerbstones at a distance of c. 0.8–1.0 m from the outer side of the supporting stone of the cist to the outer row of kerbstones. Graves D, L, E and F were positioned in roughly the same way as these

examples.

Outside of the barrow, grave Q was positioned at a tangent to the foot ring, albeit with the supporting stone at one side partially covered by the kerbstones at a slightly deeper level. By graves O and R the kerbstones were not preserved, but the location of these cists must also have been tangential to the foot of the barrow.

A long way outside the barrow to the west was the cist, grave V. It could not be determined straightaway whether the alignment of this grave should be regarded as tangential to the kerbstones or if some other circumstances were decisive.

The general plan of the whole grave structure shows how the two earliest graves, flat graves B and C, were constructed approximately E–W. All the later graves at the base of the barrow structure, both flat graves of various types (including lined graves) and stone cists, were arranged according to their position in relation to the edge of the barrow-phase, which therefore governed nearly all of the alignments.

The plan of the stone cists

The outline of the cists appeared in most cases to consist of supporting stones which delineated a grave base of approximately rectangular shape (Fig. 8). A particular exception was grave Q, the outline of which was almost oval.

The dimensions of the cists varied somewhat, but all were consistent with child burials. The longest, grave G, was probably a double grave, as grave goods (pottery) were placed in each half of the grave and at the opposite sides. It was also very narrow in proportion to its length. Many of the stones in this grave sloped markedly inwards and thus exaggerated the impression of a distinctly narrow grave.

The external length of grave G was 1.38 m. This can be contrasted with the shortest cist, grave V, the external length of which cannot be given absolutely precisely but must have been about 0.70–0.75 m. The inner measurements of these two cists are 1.25 and 0.55 m respectively. The other cists range between these with external measurements from 0.93–1.17 m and internal measurements between 0.61 and 0.99 m.

The supporting stones of the cists

The number of supporting stones in the long sides varied considerably (Figs. 8-10). There were cists with an unequal number of supporting stones in the two long sides, although in most cases the numbers were the same. In the longest cist, grave G, there were five supporting stones in each side. In grave K there were four on either side and in grave R three. In the very short cists there were, for instance, two on each side in grave D. Finally there was only one stone on each side in grave V (Fig. 10).

In several cases there seems to have been a definite order in the placing of the supporting stones. They were often symmetrically positioned in relation to one another in respect of size. The largest stones were often placed at the wide end of the grave, and sometimes the position of the grave goods indicated that this was the head end of the grave. In the case of grave Q, however, which, as noted, differed somewhat from the other stone cists in form, the pot was untypically placed at the narrower end. In grave V there was a pot on the same side at each end, but since this cist was ultra-short the distance between them was inevitably small.

The short ends of the stone cists were also of varying construction. They usually consisted of either one larger or two smaller supporting stones. The largest supporting stones were often found in the short sides. In grave V a quernstone had been carefully placed as a supporting stone in the northern short side, the lower end of which had been broken off.

The upright supporting stones generally leant in towards the grave chamber. A few stones in the undisturbed cists were leaning at a considerable angle, others much less so. There was, however, only a small number of supporting stones in respect of which minor shifts in angle since their original positioning could be confidently discounted. Measurement showed that angles varied from 4 to 33 degrees. Grave G had the most extreme angles and appeared, as has been noted, very narrow in proportion to its length in respect of the position of the top of the supporting stones. Apart from this grave the angles of slope ranged from 4 to 18 degrees, and the mean measurement on ten stones was a 12 degree lean into the grave chamber.

The majority of the supporting stones of the stone cists had split surfaces facing into the grave chamber, while many — a slightly smaller number — were judged to have natural surfaces. In the case of cist F it

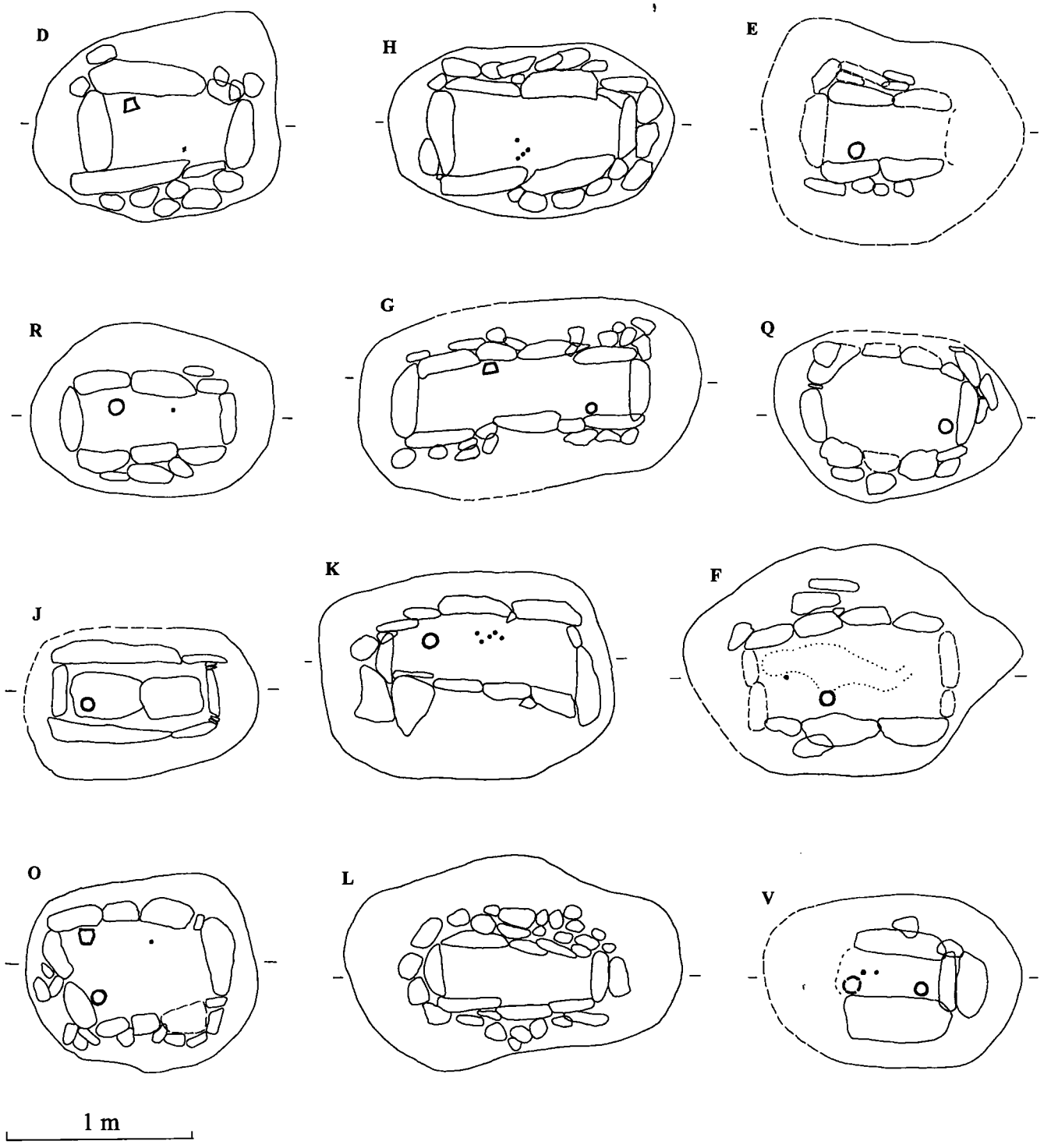


Fig. 8. Strandet Hovedgaard. Ground plans of the twelve short stone cists from the cemetery.

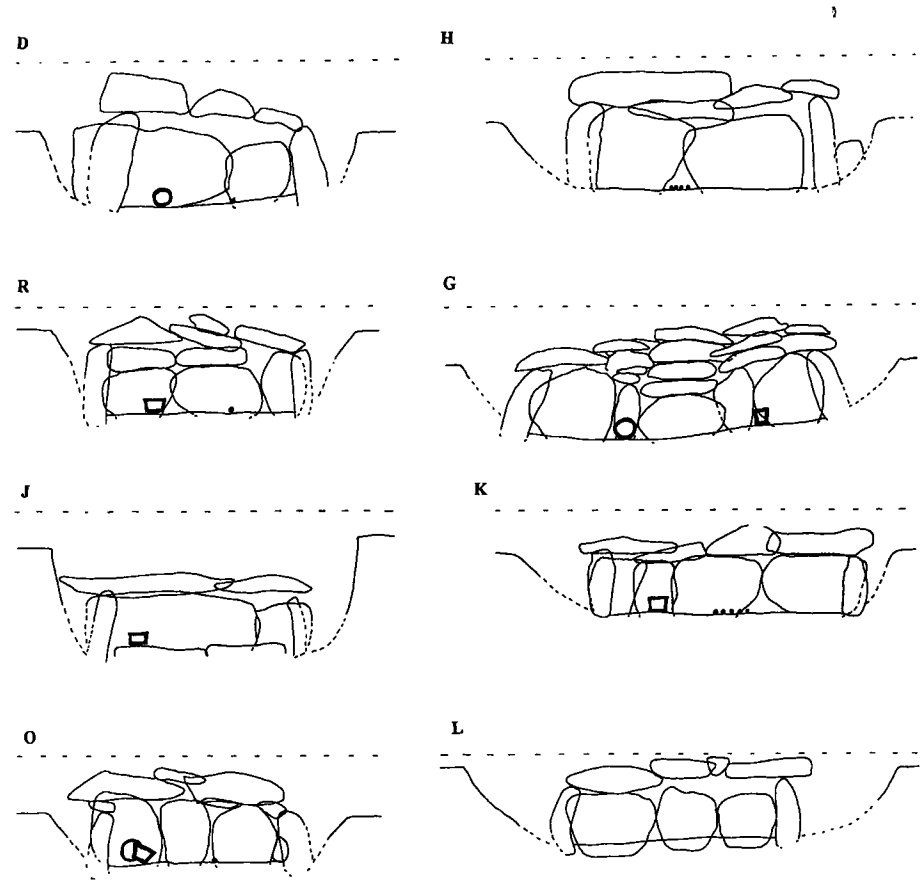


Fig. 9. Strandet Hovedgaard. Long sections of the cemetery's eight short stone cists with capstones preserved. One long side projected in. Scale c. 1:30. Drawn by Ingelise Faursby/John Simonsen.

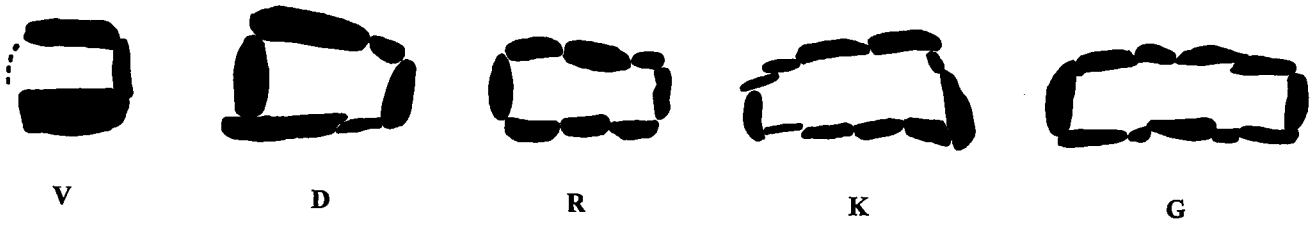


Fig. 10. Strandet Hovedgaard. Five examples of the number of supporting stones (1–5) in the long sides of the short stone cists.

was noted that what was evidently a split stone surface had been placed facing out from the interior of the grave, but this was the only exception to the norm.

In just one of the graves, stone cist L, all the upright supporting stones (with the possible exception of a small wedging stone) had split surfaces facing into the grave. Stone cist Q was the opposite extreme with no clearly split stones amongst the upright supporting stones. In most graves, however, there was a mixture of split and natural stone surfaces facing into the interior of the grave. In the long sides of the other ten stone cists there were therefore from zero to eight split and zero to four naturally shaped supporting stones. Slightly more characterful stones were often selected

for the short sides, and here the same ten cists had zero to two split and zero to two naturally shaped supporting stones.

The basal and capstones of the stone cists

The cists varied considerably in long profile. In eight of the twelve stone cists the capstones were found in situ. These will be described in detail here. In respect of the other four cists it will just be noted that they fell within the range of variation of the eight well-preserved specimens.

As has been noted, all of the stone cists were found in pits. The pits consistently sloped regularly down to a level around or just above the base of the stone cists. Grave J, with its steep pit, once again is an exception. In most of the cists no floor other than the greyish subsoil could be identified. Some organic material such as wood or hide may have been used in burial, however, which would not have been preserved in the sandy soil. Only in one cist, grave J, was a regular floor consisting of two thin stone flags found.

The depth of the pits beneath the top of the subsoil varied in the eight cases from 0.38–0.62 m, with a mean of 0.49 m (excluding grave J, which was not, however, the deepest). The longest pit was that for the narrow grave G, at 1.85 m. With this excluded, the others range from 1.26 to 1.78 m, with an average of 1.43 m.

There were no capstones protruding above the surface of the ground. The top of the capstones in fact lay generally just under the surface (again with a distinct exception in grave J, which lay 21 cm underground). The depth of the capstones beneath the ground surface thus varied from 2 to 7 cm, with an average of about 5 cm.

The height of the cists (measured from the top of the capstone to the base, and thus not to the deepest buried stone) ranged from 0.36 to 0.57 m. Grave J was 0.35 m deep measured to the upper side of the flags at the base. The average outer height of the seven intact cists was 0.44 m.

With all of the cists there were rounded stones placed against the outer side of the supporting stones, undoubtedly to stabilize the cists. These propping stones were found in varying quantities seen from the surface. In the case of grave J we dug down on the outer side in one small area where no propping stones could be seen from the surface. Here "strategically" placed round rocks were found supporting the cist deeper down.

With several cists only one row of upright supporting stones was found with the capstones placed directly on top of them. In some cases, however, horizontal or roughly horizontally positioned, relatively flat stones were put in between the supporting stones and the capstone, increasing the inner height of the cist or evening out to the height of the tallest supporting stone. Making-up stones of this kind were found in the short, compact, and very well-constructed grave D. In grave H the height of the supporting stones had been increased with one large flat stone, and in grave R with two larger stones side by side. Most striking in its construction in several layers was grave G. Here, around the centre of the cist, there were two layers of flat stone on top of the upright supporting stone. Above these in turn were two layers of capstone.

To construct the grave covers a large number of true capstones were used as well as smaller stones serving as props and true packing stones. In the cist with the most complex capstone-structure, grave G, about 20 stones were found in the capstone-construction in addition to the true capstones. In constrast there were also cists that had simpler capstone-structures with only a small number of stones in addition to the capstones.

In the case of the eight stone cists with preserved capstones, split capstones were the norm. The numbers range from eleven split capstones (and one further possible specimen) in grave G to one split capstone and two possibly split ones in cist L. In cists O and H there were three and two split capstones respectively, combined with one naturally shaped capstone in both cases.

The grave goods

The surviving grave furnishings from the whole monument were of considerable significance in view of the number of graves, but were very simple. The assemblage comprised amber beads, pottery and one flint axe. There were also the two stray axes from the barrow area. In one of the graves there were a few minor pieces of oystershell which could possibly have been secondarily deposited by animal activity, although oyster shells thought to have been votive deposits by capstones are known (Albrectsen 1936, 264). In the graves there may also have been organic

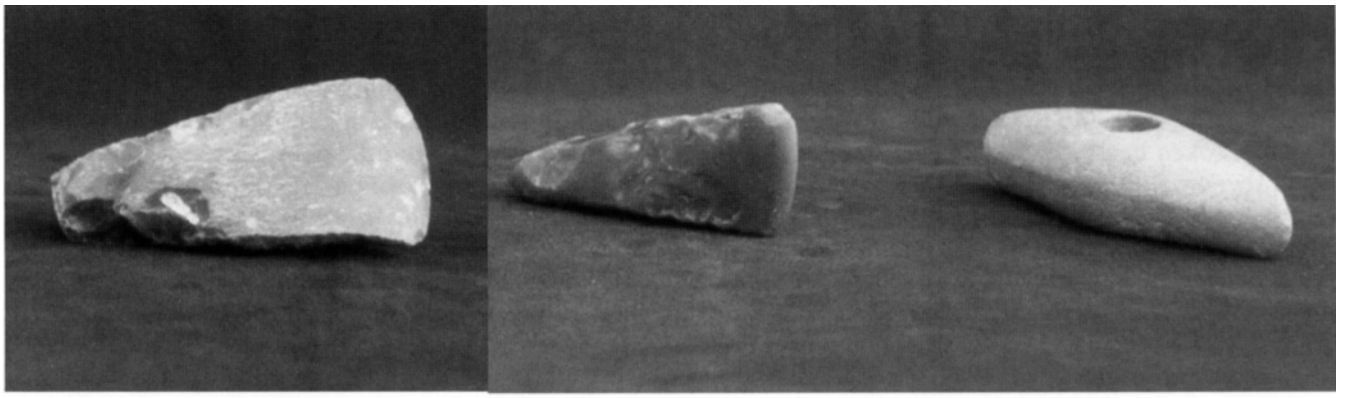


Fig. 11. Strandet Hovedgaard. a) The small flint axe with hanging edge from grave C. b) A small flint axe and a stone battle axe found at the top of the barrow site in 1983 and 1986 respectively.

material which has long since decayed. This could particularly have been the case in those graves that appeared empty of finds on excavation.

Axes

From all of the graves investigated, an axe was found only in grave C (Fig. 11a). This was made of light grey flint with a very characteristic, "hanging" edge, 56 mm wide. The axe is 115 mm long, and thin-bladed, up to c. 20 mm thick. It is polished on its broad faces for the whole length and on one of the narrow sides (opposite the hanging edge), while the other narrow side, which was marked by secondary chipping towards the butt, does not appear to have been polished.

As noted, two further axes were found a few years before the excavation that probably derived from higher graves, now lost (Fig. 11b). One of these is of dark grey flint with a similar slightly "hanging" edge 38 mm wide. This axe is only 97 mm long, and thin-bladed, up to 11 mm thick. The higher areas of the broad faces and the edge section in particular are polished, while the polishing on the narrow sides is limited to the area close to the butt. Around the middle of the side of the axe the surface of the flint has an especially shiny quality, possibly the result of wear from hafting.

The other axe, which was found on the ploughed-out barrow, is a battle axe of a "soft" brownish and very fine-grained stone. It is 111 mm long, 38 mm wide and 30 mm high. The shaft-hole is positioned in the middle of the axe and is perfectly cylindrical, 19 mm in diameter. The butt-end is decorated on both sides with a finely incised motif.

Of these three axes, only the battle axe is typologically diagnostic of the Single Grave Culture. In my view it corresponds most closely to Type H (Glob 1945, 38) with its convex upper side, plane lower side, and the position of the shaft-hole. Incised lines also occur on several type-H axes. In this light, this axe should belong typologically to the Ground-grave Period, the central period of the Single Grave Culture, although it might, of course, have spent some time in "circulation" before being deposited in the grave. In respect of the axe from grave C, it is to be noted that coming from the earliest grave in the barrow it must be older than this battle axe. In the case of the other stray flint axe, we should note that it is presumably later than its counterpart from grave C.

Amber beads

A total of 17 amber beads comes from eight graves. Half of these graves contained only a single bead, while in the other four the quantity ranged from two to five. Most of the beads are of the type of short, "tubular" beads. Their diameter ranges around 1 cm (varying from 0.6 to 1.5 cm). This type is represented in graves M, H, K, T and V (and evidently enjoyed a very long period of use with no obvious changes in fashion). A

slightly longer tubular bead was found in grave R.

Another type is a narrow, oblong amber bead provided with a perforation at one end. This is known from two graves, F and K. One of these was produced from a broken bead.

Only one grave contained amber beads as its only grave goods — its only surviving grave goods at least. In the other seven graves the amber beads were found in association with pottery. These are graves M, F, K, O, T, R and V, indicating that the custom of burying amber beads and beakers together is maintained throughout the main period of use of the cemetery.

Pottery

There is reason to make a bit more of the pottery vessels, as they can be inferred to take on gradually more and more importance in comparison with the axe-based chronological system of the Jutlandic Single Grave Culture. The total of 15 pots derives from twelve graves (Fig. 12), and all are decorated. Amongst the pots there are 13 that belong to the category of straight-walled beakers. The other two have a slightly convex side, faintly marked shoulders and an out-turned rim. Typologically these belong with the beakers of Type I and are decorated with pricking and cardium shells. Vessels of Type I are principally distributed in Himmerland, Salling, Fjends and central Jutlandic areas south of here (cf. Glob 1945, Fig. 59), and the find-combinations show that their production starts only late in the Single Grave Culture.

P. V. Glob divided the straight-walled beakers into seven stylistically defined main types according to their decoration (straight-walled beakers of Types H and K — which also include beakers of other forms — and Types L, M, N, O and P). Main types O and P, however, are not types as conventionally understood, as Type O comprises vessels whose decoration is a mixture of patterns from the other main types and P comprises straight-walled beakers that could not be assigned to any other type.

There are three straight-walled beakers (from graves D, E and T) that match best with group L, most similar to Types L3, L6 and L6 respectively. There are five straight-walled beakers (from graves J, K, O, R and Q) that belong to group N3 (one of them possibly N1). From grave V there is a vessel belonging to Type N4. A straight-walled beaker from grave G matches best with Type O5. A straight-walled beaker from grave M is best assigned to Type P4.

As a formal type, straight-walled beakers are known from the whole Jutlandic peninsula and are the most frequently used type of burial pottery of the late Single Grave Culture, while the forms of ornament used often have more limited areas of distribution. According to the above classification, six straight-walled beakers can be assigned to Type N, the principal concentration of which lies in the area around the central, southern part of the Limfjord, i.e. Salling, Fjends and Himmerland and the areas immediately to the south of this. In addition, three of the straight-walled beakers could be assigned to Type L and three to Type P, both of which are found in Jutland generally. Several of the straight-walled vessels from Strandet Hovedgaard are decorated with very wide, flat collars (Fig. 13), which are also typical of the areas mentioned above around the southern part of the Limfjord, and of areas slightly to the west (Glob 1945, 120).

It must briefly be noted in connexion with the distribution of pottery-types in Jutland that we may lack finds from areas with heavier types of soil. These areas have, as a rule, been subject to long-term intensive cultivation which could have destroyed grave finds with straight-walled beakers of the types discussed. This problem is probably most acute further to the south in the eastern parts of the Jutlandic peninsula. On the Salling peninsula by the Limfjord there are also significant areas with more or less distinctly clayey soil. But here the problem of the geographical representativity of large areas is counteracted by the interspersal of lighter soil-types that have in several cases remained heath far into historical times. And as several distribution maps show (Glob 1945), there are in fact many finds of straight-walled beakers from the Salling peninsula.

The vessels and their grouping

As far as the relative dating of the 15 beakers is concerned, 13 of which are from short stone cists, the find associations in the cemetery reveal certain new possibilities. From the sequence of construction of the graves in and around the barrow given above could support a certain relative chronology of the pottery related to the chorology of the graves. It appears that

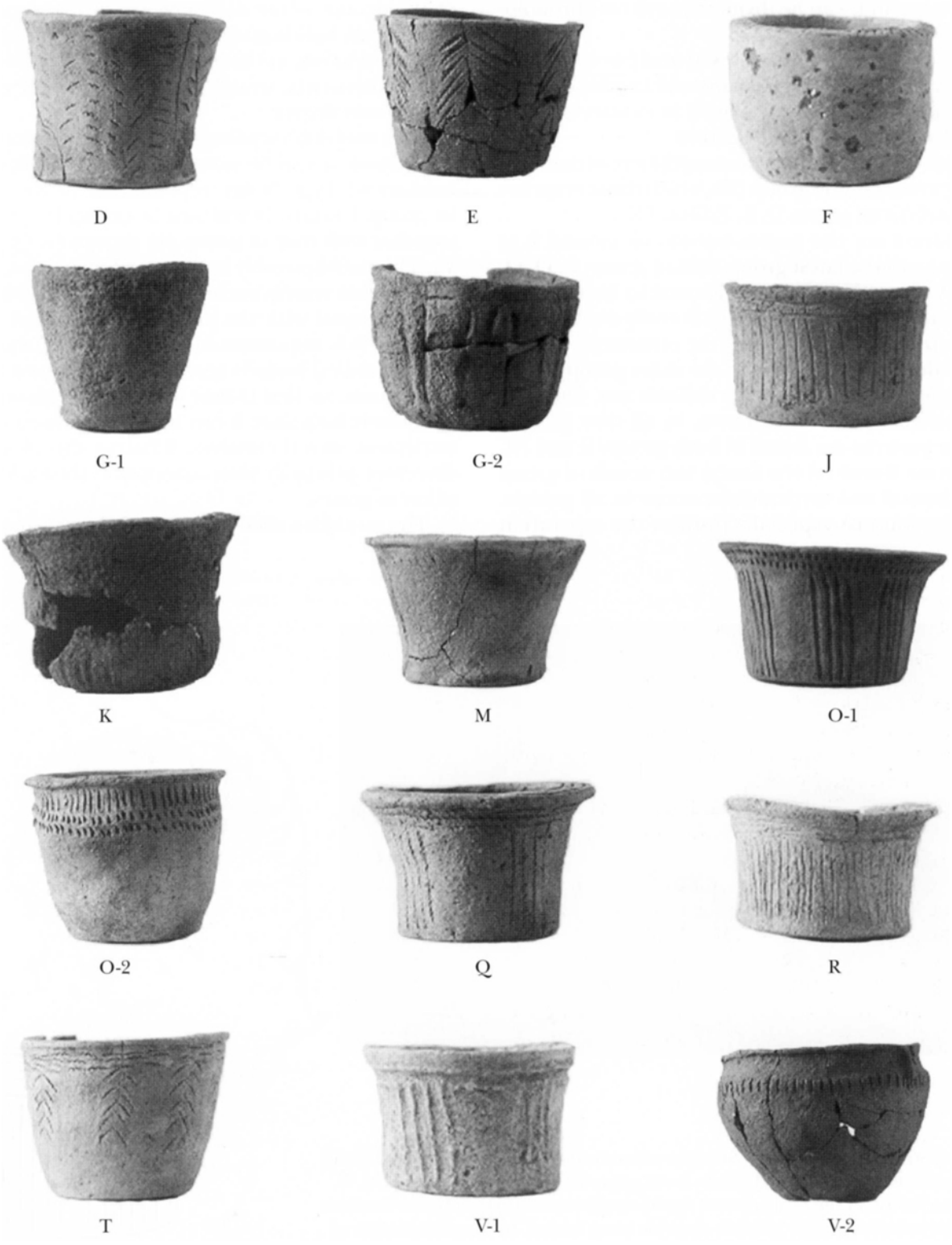


Fig.12. Strandet Hovedgaard. From 13 of the 21 small graves in the cemetery came a total of 15 small pots of the late Single Grave Culture. In some of the graves (see the letters) there were two pots.

the pottery finds can be divided into three chronological groups (Fig. 14).

I see the vessels from graves M and J as belonging to the earliest group (I) from mound 1 and the graves that appear to have been placed in connexion with this outside the rim of the barrow.

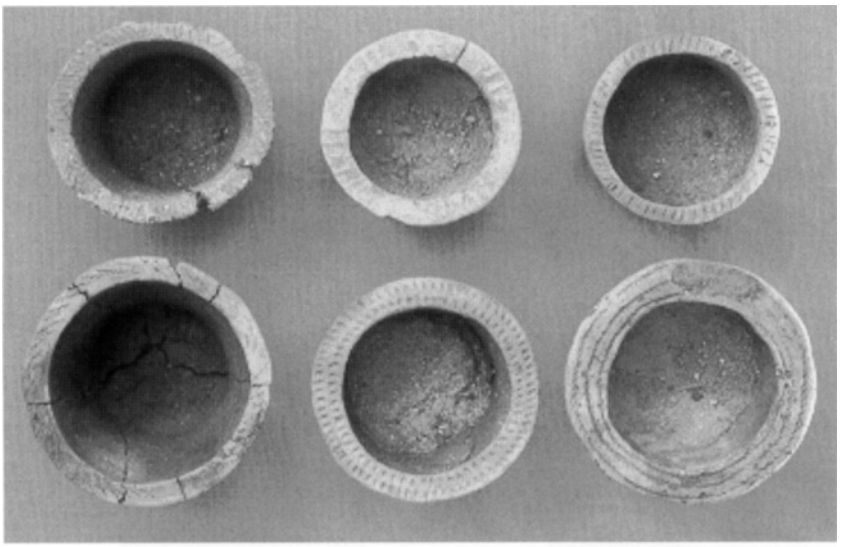
Several graves from the inner periphery of mound 2 belong to the middle group (II), which thus comprises the vessels from graves D, E, F, G and K.

Finally, I see the graves outside of mound 2 as belonging to the latest group (III) of graves R, O, Q, T and V. Grave V, however, is located so far from the barrow that it is not certain that it really does fit in to the horizontal stratigraphy of the cemetery.

The decorative elements in the three groups specified appear not to vary in any definite way. Cardium impressions occur, for instance, in all thre groups. Feather patterns are found in both groups II and III, but are not found on the (only) two vessels of group I. Horizontal and vertical lines occur in all groups. What by contrast especially justifies the separation of the groups is the different use of the decorative elements in building up the patterns and a degree of formal variation in the group of straight-walled beakers, which can be straight but also concave or convex to a certain degree.

If we use Glob's typology, which combines form and decoration, it can be noted that the straight-walled beakers of Type N are represented by one vessel in group I (grave J) and one in group II (grave K) together with four in group III (graves O, Q, R and V). This could possibly be due to a long period of use of these fine vessels, such that the date of production is not coequal with the period of deposition. Here, however, it is important to appreciate that sherds of straight-walled beakers are rarely found at excavated settlements, so that if they were in "circulation" for a relatively long time it can hardly have been on the settlement sites themselves. What we can observe is therefore primarily their association through deposition in graves.

The straight-walled beaker in grave M should be



a

b

Fig.13. a) Strandet Hovedgaard. Straight-walled beakers with their typical flat and decorated collars. Upper left, beakers from graves R, V and F, lower graves M, O and Q. In several of the beakers were found remains of soil, which future analyses may allow to indicate their possible contents when buried. b) The distribution of straight-walled beakers of type N3. The principal area is clearly in the same area as Strandet Hovedgaard (based on Glob 1945),

older than grave J as the latter grave, as indicated, is probably the first in the series of short stone cists in the cemetery. The decorative patterns on the straight-walled beaker in grave J with closely spaced vertical striping recur in grave K and again in grave R. This type therefore occurs in all three groups.

On the other hand, straight-walled beakers with patterns including vertical striping broken by undecorated fields appear to be introduced as a new element in group III. This could, then, indicate that this decorative motif is later than the straight-walled beakers with close vertical striping of Glob's N-types. Otherwise the finds from the barrow also indicate that the two beakers of Type I (graves O and V) occur very late — whatever the actual case, here they occur only in group III.

It is evident that despite the large number of graves there are no grounds for asserting that the development sketched here at the cemetery (feature V) at Strandet Hovedgaard can serve as a general representation of the North Jutlandic areas such as Salling, Fjends, Himmerland and the areas immediately to the south (Fig. 16). In my view, however, the development indicated at this site appears to be corroborated by the studies of the Single Grave Culture pottery carried out a number of years ago (Hvass 1986). The straight-walled beakers with vertical striping interrupted by undecorated fields beneath horizontal lines match very closely with her latest ceramic phase (IV). Straight-walled beakers with vertically oriented, feather-like motifs occur in her penultimate ceramic phase (III), and two of these occur in cemetery group II at Strandet Hovedgaard.

There thus appears to be a certain agreement in stylistic development with the ceramic phases proposed by Lone Hvass. In respect of the Single Grave Culture, there is no doubt that there were virtually synchronous shifts in decorative style over considerable areas of Jutland (cf. also the discussion of settlement pottery: Simonsen 1987). The possibilities that many recent excavations of grave finds of the late Single Grave Culture in particular offer have not as yet been exploited to improve the chronological framework or for the construction of a truly pottery-based chronology.

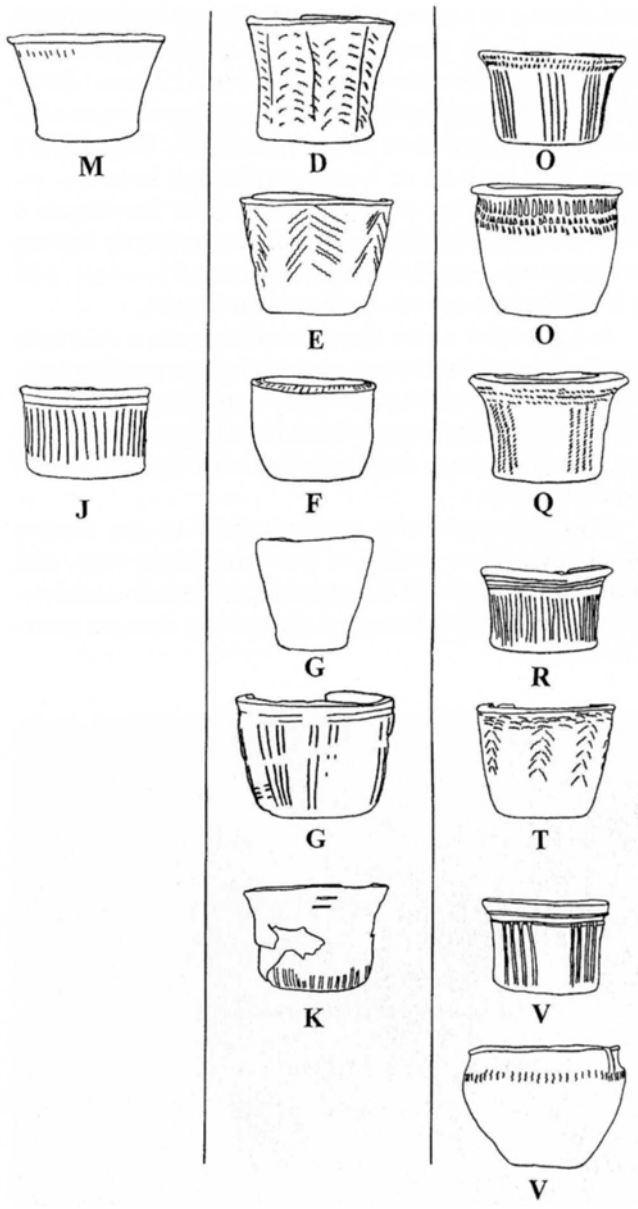


Fig. 14. Strandet Hovedgaard. Pottery from the cemetery divided into three groups, the earliest to the left, the latest to the right.

Short stone cists in North Jutland

Body-length, closed cists built of stone occur in several periods of Danish prehistory. Amongst the oldest are the cists of the Single Grave Culture and Dagger Period constructed of flat stone slabs. While the stone cists later in the Dagger Period are found mostly in northern Sealand, the late Single Grave Culture and early Dagger Period cists are found most frequently in North Jutland. The short stone cists that were descri-

bed above are known principally from North Jutland in Denmark. By short stone cists is here understood cists with an interior length of no more than 1.40 m (measured along the central axis), in agreement with P. V. Glob's discussion of the cists (1945, 197). Glob's lower limit of 0.65 m is not applicable, however, as, for instance, at the cemetery of Strandet Hovedgaard there are even smaller cists which manifestly belong to this group. Interior lengths below 0.5 m occur, and it is difficult to specify a minimum length.

As I perceive it, the short stone cists are a relatively simple form of cist that was only meant for smaller individuals, which would normally mean children. On the whole, these cists seem only to have been constructed for one individual, although there are indications of double graves.

The museums have intermittently in the distant past undertaken studies of the short stone cists, and some plans may still lie unnoticed in their archives. The earlier investigations of short stone cists are generally affected by the fact that very small areas were excavated, with the result, amongst other things, that it is only rarely determined whether or not the cists were associated with grave mounds. An example of this is an excavation at Strandet (Fig. 15), undertaken by the local road engineer C. Sørensen in 1933. This has left us one photograph and some summary information.

Fig. 15. This short stone cist was found at Strandet in November 1933. Its interior length is given as 0.95 m. In the grave can be seen a straight-walled beaker (VSM 160B). Photographer unknown.

It is fairly certain that most of the then extant investigations were included in a fundamental study of the stone cists of the late Single Grave Culture from the beginning of the 1970's (Sterum 1976). This work contains a comprehensive catalogue of the stone cists of the Single Grave Culture, although at this time there were only a relatively few general plans of barrow sites with short stone cists.

After the more extensive uncovering of complete barrow sites became possible with the aid of contractors' machinery, several excavations have been added through which complete barrow sites have been examined. These excavations provide a gradually more secure picture of several aspects of the occurrence of these short stone cists in relation to burial mounds.

There is thus good reason to offer a new overview of the distribution of short stone cists below, their location in cemeteries and their dating, including new evidence from the last quarter-century in particular.

Recent excavations

Here we shall first go through the most important features of several of the more recent excavations of short stone cists in North Jutland (Fig. 18a-f.), most of which are unpublished.

At Skringstrup, Skals parish, excavations were carried out at single site at intervals of several years between 1930 and 1971 (Fig. 18c). First small excavations in parcels were undertaken (by Erling Albrectsen amongst others), and finally a full area excavation by Jens Vellev in 1971. It appears probable that this site involved a lost barrow of at least 15 m diameter, although traces of the fill of the barrow itself could not be directly identified (Vellev 1971; 1972; 1975). A total of 17 graves was found, 13 of them stone cists, with the position of the graves at the edge of the barrow particularly clearly visible, although there is not full clarity over the interrelationships and stratigraphy of the features located more centrally. The grave-types at this site comprise short stone cists, flat graves and lined graves, most of them child-sized.

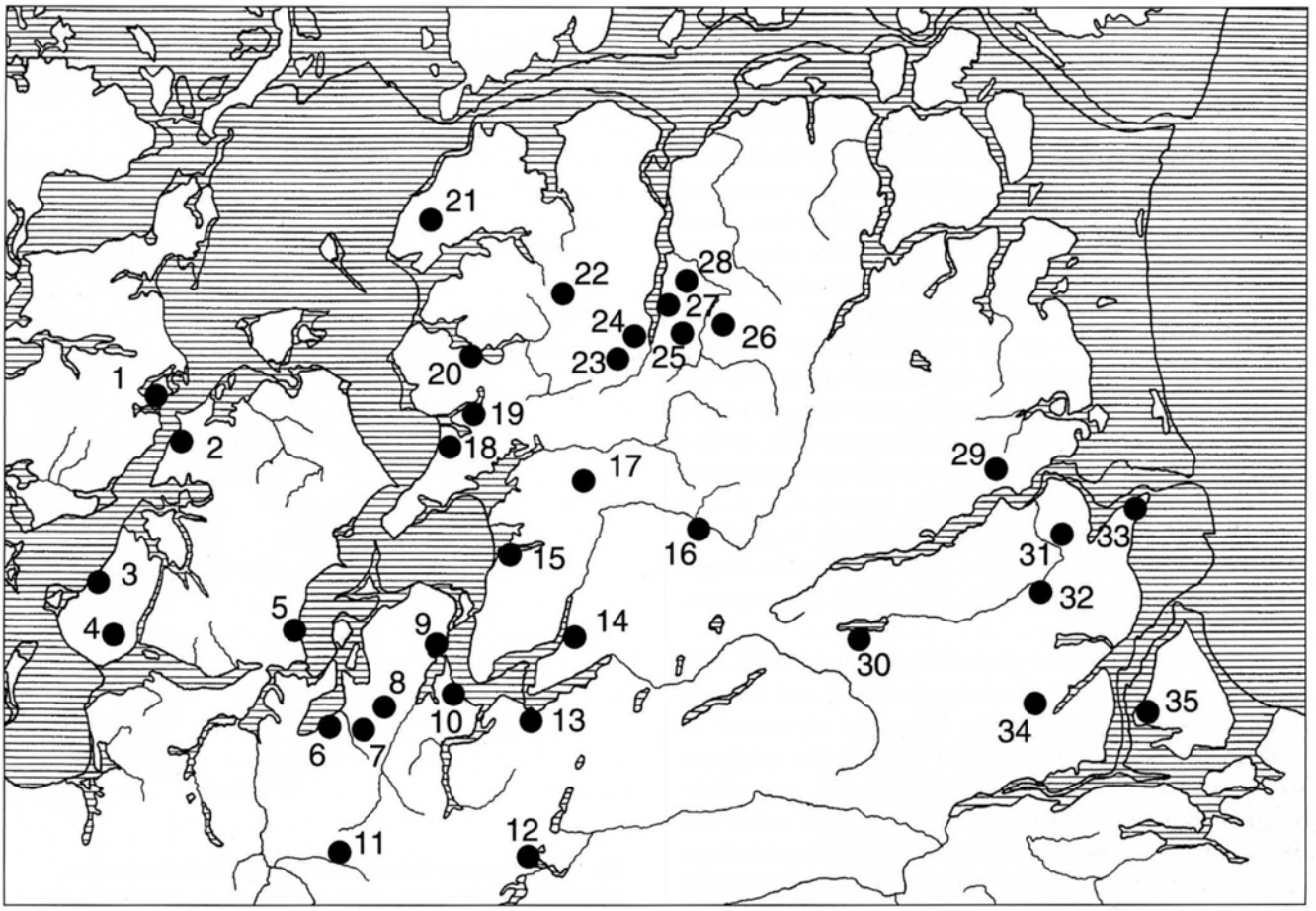


Fig. 16. Important cemeteries with short stone cists. 1) Fårup, 2) Møllegård, 3) Ålbækparken, 4) Lem, 5) Resengaard, 6) Kobberup, 7) Thorsøgård, 8) Ajstrupgårde, 9) Strandet Hovedgård, 10) Tårupgaarde, 11) Engedal, 12) Nonbo, 13) Kjølsen, 14) Skringstrup, 15) Gjørup, 16) Hvilsom, 17) Østerbølle, 18) Foulum, 19) Fandrup, 20) Fredbjerg, 21) Kirkebjerggård, 22) Vesthimmerlands Flyveplads, 23) Slemstrup, 24) Stenildvad Mark, 25) Hovknold, 26) Tøttrup, 27) Lynnerup, 28) Skivum Østerkrat, 29) Merritsholt, 30) Glenstrup, 31) Langvad, 32) Toftelund, 33) Klattrup, 34) Mejlby og 35) Voer. Drawing by Hans Erik Christensen and John Simonsen.

The short stone cists are the predominant type, and are amongst the first examples of this type described (Albrectsen 1936; 1941; Becker 1936). The finds as a whole consist of amber beads and 16 pots, mostly straight-walled beakers.

At Langvang, Nebstrup, Vindblæs parish, in 1982–83 Ole Schmidt directed the excavation of a severely ploughed-out barrow with eight short stone cists and two adult-length cists (Fig. 18e). The barrow was situated on the gently sloping southern side of a hill. There were no certain traces of a central feature and the majority of the cists were at the edge of the barrow. There was generally no trace of the bodies buried, although grave goods were found in several of the graves. In graves a and g (the two adult-length cists) were found straight-walled beakers. Straight-walled beakers were also found in graves k, u and x. Grave t contained a round-bodied beaker and the other graves were void of finds.

A few kilometres to the east, at the site of Rosengård, Udbyneder parish, a short stone cist was excavated by Ernst Stidsing in 1992. No grave goods nor evidence of the individual buried were found. At Klattrup in the same parish in 1955, O. Warthoe Hansen

had excavated a short stone cist which contained a pot (Sterum, 1976, 95).

At Glenstrup, Glenstrup parish, Svend Søndergård excavated the remains of the monument "kvindehøj" (the woman's barrow) (Sterum 1976) (Fig. 18d). This barrow survived to a height of 0.6 m. In the centre of the barrow a timber structure with earth-fast posts was found at the base of the mound. Some way above the base of the mound, in the undisturbed fill of the barrow, a log coffin was found (grave 17). Approximately NNW of this was an adult-length lined grave (grave 16). At the edge of the barrow were two log coffins (graves 12 and 13) with external charring (as was probably also the case with grave 17). At the edge of the barrow there was an adult-length stone cist (grave 8) and six short stone cists (graves 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 11) and three uncertain graves. Only in grave 12 was there a pot, which can be dated to the late Single Grave Culture (Sterum 1976, 67). Only one barrow-phase was identified.

At Toftelund, Enslev town and parish, in 1982, Ole Schmidt excavated a severely ploughed-out barrow with, amongst other things, a central structure in addition to one flat grave with a log coffin and one stone cist of uncertain length (grave e), one adult-length stone cist (grave ag) and one short stone cist (grave af.) (Fig. 18b). Here again no remains of those buried in the stone cists were found, although all three cists contained a straight-walled beaker.

At Lynnerup, Skivum parish, a lost barrow was excavated under the direction of Erik Johansen and Egon Hasselgren in 1983, containing a large, centrally placed, stone-built burial cist with its entrance to the south, of the later Single Grave Culture, and several stone cists around the edge (cf. Hansen 1996). Various artefacts were found in the chamber that must come from burials, including 14 pots, most of them straight-walled and decorated with elements such as toothed pegs, plied cord, cardium shell, and vertical moulded lines. There were also two battle axes, a tanged wedge, 20 pieces of amber, and more. South-west of the passage of the chamber were two stone cists (labelled A6 and A5) which were apparently built together. The western cist contained two straight-walled beakers and amber beads, the eastern one a pot and amber beads. East of the chamber were found three stone cists, one of them adult-length (A3) with a few amber beads, the other two short (A2, interior length c. 0.66 m and A4, interior length c. 0.7 m). Both of these were unfortunately void of finds, but a dating to the late Single Grave Culture seems probable on the basis of a general assessment of the finds from the barrow.

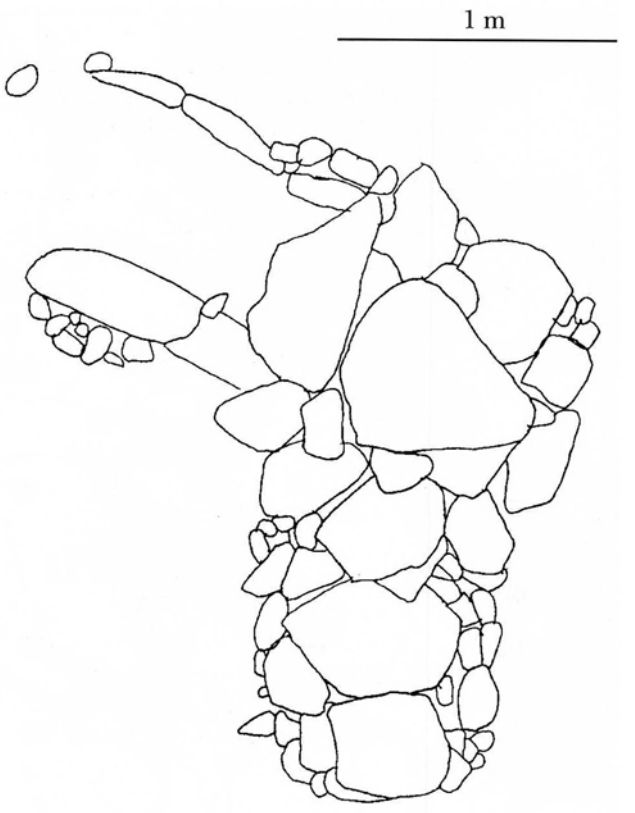


Fig. 17. Lynnerup. Excavated 1983. Plan of the two conjoined short stone cists (A5 and A6), scale 1:50. Drawn by Egon Hasselgren/Erik Johansen.

At Vesthimmerlands Lufthavn in 1980, Mogens Hansen excavated a lost barrow with a timber-built chamber with its entrance to the ESE in the centre of the mound. This chamber is dated to the Ground-grave Period (Hansen 1996). Three further graves were found in the barrow, the southernmost of which beyond the edge of the earliest phase of the mound was a short stone cist (labelled A5). Two amber beads were found in the cist, which had an interior length of about 1 m.

At Kirkebjerggård, Malle parish, in 1957, the south-western part of a ploughed-over barrow was excavated (Fig. 18f.). In 1970–71 Jens Vellev led further investigations of the barrow site (Jensen & Vellev 1971). The barrow had three phases, an earliest mound 1 about 7 m in diameter, followed by mound 2 about 12 m in diameter with a stone footring, and finally mound 3

with traces of a line of kerbstones and an outer diameter of about 16 m. The central grave, grave b, was an E–W oriented charred cist of limewood, buried within the ground. The excavator interpreted it as a double grave. To the east were found surviving teeth from a child of about 10. A beaker and an amber bead were also found here. To the west were the teeth of a baby of 3–6 months and a straight-walled beaker and an amber bead. East of this, in grave n, there were the preserved dental remains of a child of barely one year together with seven amber beads and the remains of a pot. In graves c, j and m (an uncertain grave) and the possible edged grave 1 no grave goods nor traces of bodies were found. In a flat grave, d, were dental remains and possible fragments of a pot that were not lifted. In the short stone cist e, there were no remains of either the deceased or of grave goods. All of the graves mentioned so far were dug into the ground beneath mound 1. From mound 2, flat graves i and k produced only a pot from grave i. In the short stone cist, f, there was a pot. In the partially preserved grave q there was an amber bead. A large stone cist of the North Jutlandic type was later constructed in the centre of the barrow. This yielded a battle axe and an amber bead.

Barrow 3 may be of the Late Neolithic, as two fragments of a pressure-flaked flint dagger were found there to the south-west. Outside of this mound were two stone cists of the Roman Iron Age.

At Engedal, Daugbjerg parish, Ole Faber examined a protected barrow that had to be removed in advance of roadbuilding in 1977. As well as central features the edge of the barrow included, amongst other things, two short stone cists that had been constructed one immediately above the other.

At Møllegård, Glyngøre parish, in 1999, Agner Nordby excavated a short stone cist (Fig. 19). The interior length of the cist was very small, only 0.46 m along the central axis. The cist was constructed relatively deep within the ground, with the underside of the stone plate of the cist at the bottom about 80 cm down. This short stone cist was also remarkable in that several layers of hand- to head-sized stones were found above the flat capstone, while the grave had possibly been constructed on a slight natural rise in the terrain. A larger area was opened up but no sign of a barrow could be found.

Short stone cists in North Jutland

The geographical distribution of short cists is not the product of deliberate research interventions in particular areas or of special types of construction work that could introduce distortion into the distribution pattern. At the same time, the number of cists is now sufficiently high that the distribution is reasonably representative geographically of the original pattern.

Figure 16 shows that the principal area of distribution is a definite zone within North Jutland, primarily Himmerland, Salling-Fjends and the areas immediately to the south. It is also appears that it was particularly within certain districts in this zone that the short stone cists were constructed.

There are clusters of the short stone cists in the areas around Mariager and Randers Fjords, and Glenstrup Sø. There is also a cluster in the areas east and west of Halkær River, which debouches at Sebbersund. Up along the coast of Himmerland to the west there are several instances of short stone cists. There are occurrences by the Lerkenfeld River and Simested River, and several instances around Hjarbæk Fjord, which is part of the central Limfjord area. Finally there is a number of sites in the west of Salling and in the area south-east of Tastum Sø.

In a large part of north-eastern Himmerland, meanwhile, no securely dated stone cists of the Single Grave Culture or Dagger Period are known. This area is not completely void of finds, however, as some excavated examples of short stone cists are known from Suldrup, Rostrup and Gudum parishes.

It must be noted that short stone cists are known in Djursland too, as at Svampekæret, Rimsø parish, where a stone cist (with no grave goods) with an interior length of c. 1.1 m was excavated in 1968 by Niels Axel Boas below the kerbstone ring of a barrow covering an early Late-neolithic grave. Another excavation in the north-east of Djursland, undertaken by Bo Madsen and Niels Axel Boas in 1970, was at Kastbjerg, Kastbjerg parish. The short stone cist found here, with an interior length of 0.65 m, had no grave goods but very probably belongs to the group of cists under discussion here as its method of construction, dimensions and position at the edge (in this case of the entrance area to a passage grave) corresponds exactly with the classic short stone cists. Finally a cist from Rønde has been assigned to the type of stone cist under discussion (Becker 1936). This one was unusual

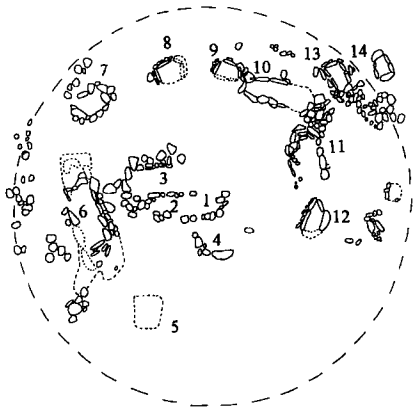


Fig. 18a. Important cemeteries. Hvilsom (a). Excavated (mostly) 1965. Sterum (1976) noted that to the west were found possible remains of a stone kerb ring and that both of the stone cists to the north-east might have been outside the barrow, which he suggested could have been about 10 m in diameter.

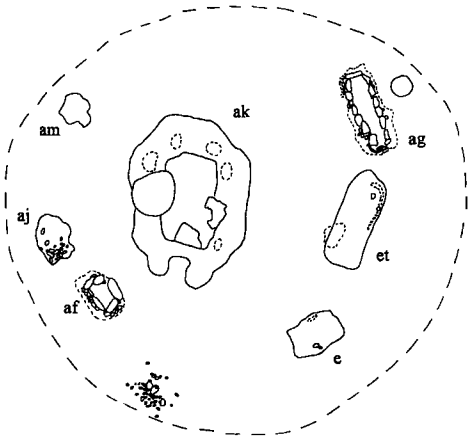


Fig. 18b. Toftelund. Excavated 1982. The barrow fill was identified and its diameter, in which only one phase could be recognized, was c. 12–13 m.

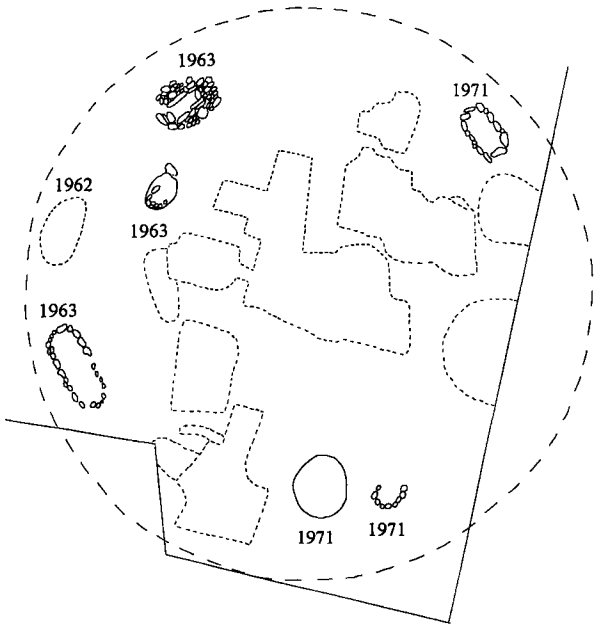


Fig. 18c. Skringstrup. Several short excavations at this classic site between 1930 and 1971. No barrow fill was recognized, but Vellev (1975) indicates the possible outline of a barrow about 15 m in diameter. The earlier pits, in which short stone cists and other types of graves were found, and a grave excavated in 1962, are marked with a closely stippled line.

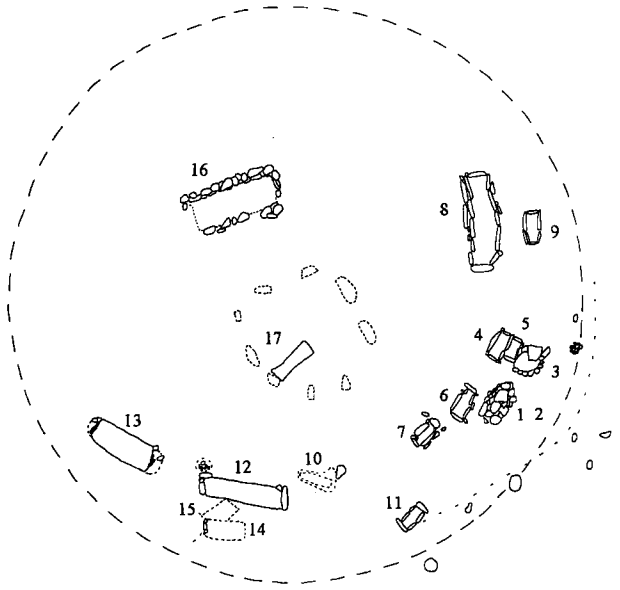


Fig. 18d. Glenstrup. Excavated 1960. No barrow fill was identified, but the northern and north-western area was not excavated (the limit of excavation is not marked). Stones that could have come from a kerb ring were found to the south-east.

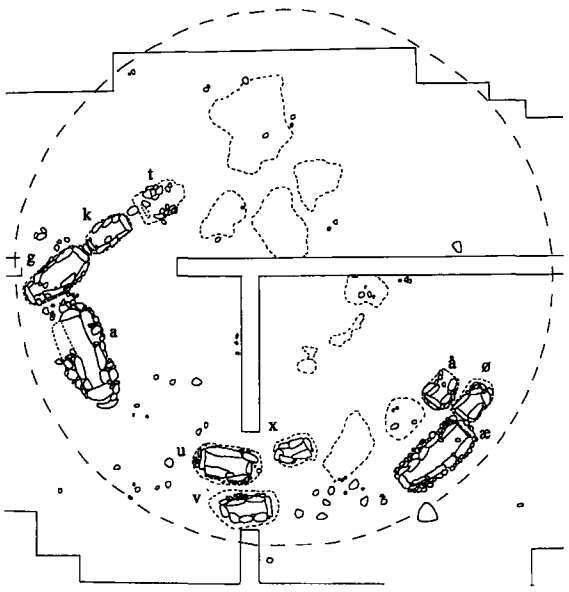


Fig. 18e. Langvang. Excavated 1982–83. The fill of the barrow was recognized but its limits were not given by the excavator and no central grave was found.

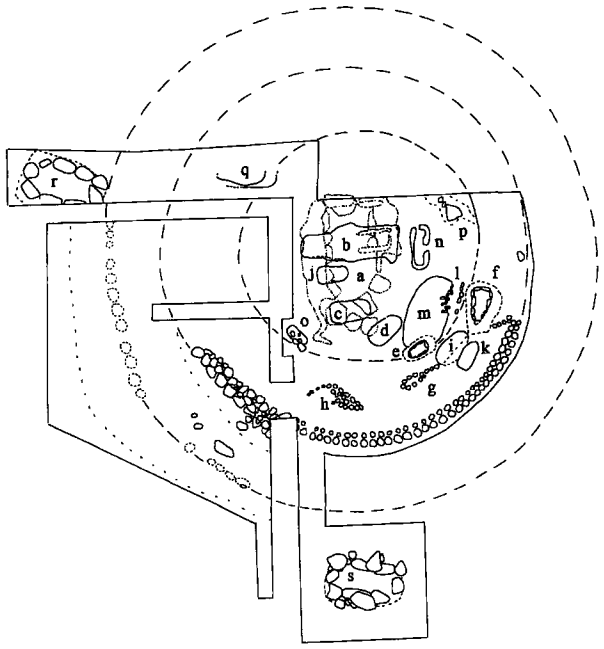


Fig. 18f. Kirkebjerggård. Several short excavations between 1957 and 1971. The second phase of the barrow is diagrammatically reconstructed to the south-east. The three phases of the barrow were demonstrated by the excavators in the southern and south-western parts.

Fig. 18a-f. Drawn by John Simonsen on the basis of drawings by Svend Søndergård/Niels Sterum (a and d), Ole Schmidt (b and e), Jens Vellev (c), and Bent Jensen/Ib Radoor/Jens Vellev (f.). The possible boundaries of the barrows and their phases are tentatively indicated by stippled lines added by the author with diameters of c. 11 m (Hvilsom), 16 m (Glenstrup — the excavator suggested a diameter of about 18 m), 15 m (Langvang) and 7, 11, 14 m (Kirkebjerggård, in three phases).

in that it was both situated as the central grave in a small barrow and had an unusual basal layer of broken flint. The grave contained the skeletal remains of a child of 2–3 with a straight-walled, cardium-decorated beaker as grave goods.

Position in cemeteries

From the more recent excavations in which whole barrow sites are excavated, it is clear that the short stone cists do not normally occur as primary graves. It is also seen that by far the majority of the short cists were constructed at the edge of existing barrows or that a barrow has been enlarged (as at Strandet Hovedgaard) after which burials are made around the edge. It is also found that the cists at the edge in a very high number of cases occur both as "chords" and as "tangents" to the rim of the barrow or the stone footring. To what extent examples of graves or cemeteries under the normal ground surface may be hiding amongst earlier excavations of just a few or isolated short cists is unknown and cannot be determined (cf. Sterum 1976). But many recent, professional excavations uniformly reveal the place of construction to have been in and beside grave mounds. Nevertheless the excavations at, for instance, Møllegård, indicate that short stone cists with no association with a barrow can occur.

The deposition of the peripheral burials took place as a rule without the central graves or grave structures being disturbed in any way. In the case of the graves

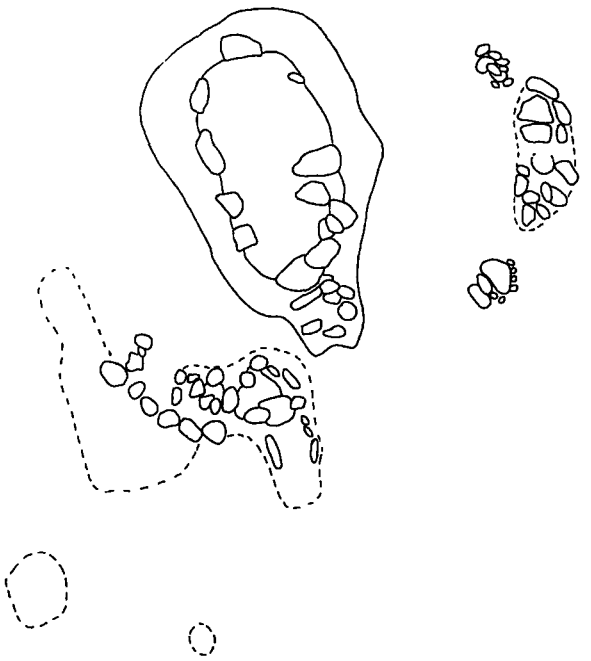


Fig.19. Møllegård, Glyngøre parish. Short stone cist excavated 1999.

outside the bounds of the barrow, I regard these as generally being later. Perhaps a change in the view of the proper place to locate the cist took place, so that just outside the barrow became acceptable when there was no longer space just inside the barrow at the particular site (see below, on the clustering of graves). The barrow, feature V, from Strandet Hovedgaard is not alone in having been enlarged from a small barrow to a larger structure. We now have several documented cases of the enlargement of small burial mounds in the late Single Grave Culture and the construction of graves in and around their edges. The built-up barrows of this kind are most properly to be described as medium–sized burial mounds in Danish terms. The barrows from Toftelund, Glenstrup, Skringstrup, Kirkebjerggård and Strandet Hovedgaard have diameters ranging from 12–13 m right up to 16–17 m.

The idea of constructing the cists at the edge of the barrows involves not only short cists, but also adult-length stone cists and graves of quite different type, such as flat graves. The distribution of this feature is likewise not restricted to the areas with short stone cists but rather occurs as a phenomenon in many other parts of Jutland at the same time.

Already about half-a-century ago (in connexion with the excavation of a barrow at Esbjerg), Harald Andersen drew attention to the fact that what found expression here in the later Single Grave Culture was an entirely new phenomenon in the context of Stone-age barrow graves (Andersen 1952). In Himmerland indeed, which lies within the core area of construction of short stone cists, we already know from an earlier date a find from Vebbestrup (Fig. 20) that shows that even in Himmerland there are barrows with only flat graves in the same positions as the short stone cists (Pedersen 1949). Matching examples are also known from, for instance, Redsted parish on Mors (Siemen 1980). The new concept which thus broke through in the later part of the period of the Single Grave Culture seems frequently, amongst other things, to involve the enlargement of existing barrows and the construction of graves at the edge of the barrow, whether in the form of flat graves or stone cists, and

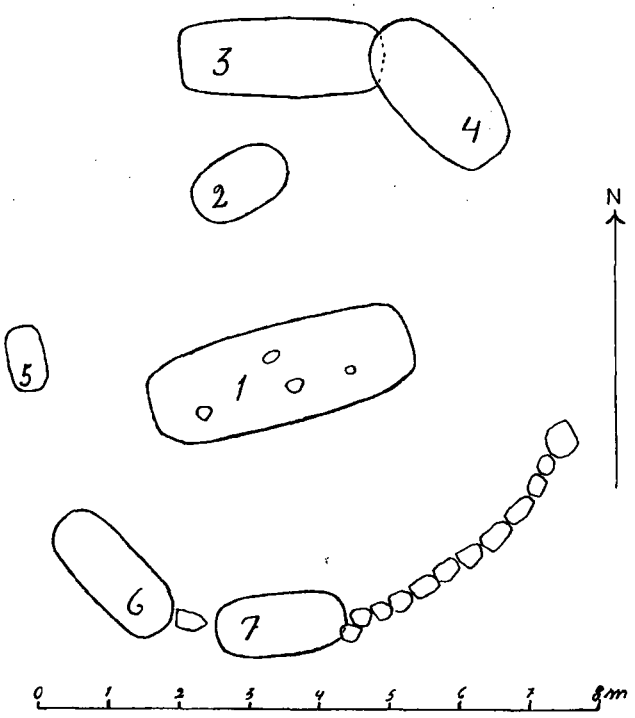


Fig. 20. Vebbestrup. Excavated 1945. The barrow fill was identified and the excavator gives the diameter of the barrow as c. 9.5 m. Seven flat graves were found, several of which were at the edge in the same positions as short stone cists are known in. Drawn by Ragnar Pedersen.

irrespective of whether it were an adult or a child that was to be buried.

This new concept seems really practical and straightforward, as in fact on the one hand it maintained the old burial mounds with earlier burials as the place where the dead were interred at the same as it substantially increased the capacity of these barrows to accept new burials around the edge.

It is quite interesting that although the short stone cists were an important element in northern Jutland, they did not find a place in central or southern Jutland, which are otherwise seen as central and innovative areas in the earlier phases of the Single Grave Culture.

The occurrence of a series of common traits (grave-forms, building-types, pottery) in the area of northern Jutland south of the Limfjord might possibly indicate some form of unity in the population of these lands.

Particulars of the short stone cists

Ever since the first comprehensive study of them, the cists have been assigned to the late Single Grave Culture and the early Dagger Period (Becker 1936, 204). In Ebbe Lomborg's account of the grave-forms of the Danish Late Neolithic, he noted that genuine "Oder cists" are practically impossible to identify in the Late Neolithic (1973, 121). Niels Sterum, on the other hand, drew attention to the fact that there actually were two cists that could be dated to this period on the basis of their contents (1976, 74).

The paucity of cists dated to the Late Neolithic may, however, also be linked to the fact that the basis for dating is not the grave-type itself but rather the grave goods alone. When only the grave goods date the features a large number of graves from which no datable artefacts have come are excluded, unless the graves occur in contexts in which they can be dated by stratigraphy or association with other features.

In 1970, about 125 short stone cists could be counted, most of them with no reliable dating (Sterum 1970). Only about 35 cists, some of which had no preserved capstone, could be dated to the later Single Grave Culture (Sterum 1976). There are now about 30 short stone cists that have been excavated in North Jutland since Sterum's survey. Of these, 26 can be dated to the late Single Grave Culture in my view, and one to the Late Neolithic. Thus the total number of short stone cists is about 155 of which a good 60 can be dated to the Single Grave Culture. It can be assumed that the majority of the whole corpus of short stone cists is to be dated to the later Single Grave Culture.

With regard to the latest cists, no increase in the number has occurred in recent years. A short stone cist from Ålbækparken, Lem parish, excavated by the author in 1982, might be added (Fig. 21), as the form of the pot from the grave appears to belong to the transitional stage between the Single Grave Culture and the Late Neolithic, but its fabric clearly has more in common with Late-neolithic pottery, so that it is best dated to that period. Previously two other short stone cists were excavated a few kilometres to the south-east of this example, in 1942 and 1969, but unfortunately with no datable finds.

When the tradition of constructing short stone cists really came to an end is not clear at present. Two small stone-built cists which unfortunately lacked finds were excavated by Poul Mikkelsen and the author at Resengaard. One of these in particular links itself very closely to those of the Single Grave Culture in respect of form, but both of them were constructed close to buildings that are provisionally dated to the period Late Neolithic – earliest Bronze Age.

C. J. Becker derived the short stone cists from cists of the Corded Ware Culture around the mouth of the Oder (Becker 1936, 205ff.). This view was soon endorsed by other scholars (Glob 1945, 199) and subsequently (Brøndsted 1966, 306f.). However even in the 1950's Becker himself pointed out that derivation from the Oder area was impossible, for chronological reasons in particular (Becker 1954, 76ff.).

It is not the intention of the present article to introduce new perspectives on this problem, which has been discussed by Niels Sterum (1976, 89ff.). The term "Oder cists" should be avoided, as no convincing connexion has been demonstrated (Hansen & Rostholm 1993, 118). A more suitable term is "short stone cists", as is used here, but the term "Skringstrup cists", coined after the find which has been of great importance in the history of the study with the early excavations at this site, would also be acceptable. By this term is understood short, North Jutlandic stone cists of the Single Grave Culture and Dagger Period with a maximum interior length of 1.40 m, constructed of supporting stones and capstones with a flat surface facing into the grave chamber, entirely or partly surrounded by prop stones and sealed around the capstones with packing stones. The majority

Fig. 21. a) Ålbækparken. Excavated 1982. The stone cist had an interior length of c. 0.75 m. The grave is probably an example of a very late stone cist, as shortly before the museum's excavation the landowner had picked up a small, undecorated beaker, the form, fabric and surface treatment of which may belong to the Late Neolithic. b) The small beaker from the grave. Photo: John Simonsen/Mogens Hartmeyer.

of the short stone cists were probably constructed within a period that can hardly have been more than a century.

The individuals buried

From Reersø in eastern Denmark an example has been noted of a small stone cist housing the severely contracted body of an adult (Becker 1936, 199). This grave unfortunately is undated and cannot immediately be regarded as relevant to the short stone cists of North Jutland. A different view of those who may have been buried in the short stone cists was clearly expressed by Erling Albrectsen even alongside the earliest scholarly excavations at Skringstrup: "At the time of the investigation of 1931, the thought occurred to me, that a burial space only 90 cm long and 40–50 cm wide could not possibly be the resting place of an adult individual, even if the deceased were interred there in the common position of the Single Grave Culture: lying on one side with the legs drawn right up" (Albrectsen 1936). In 1933 two barrows were excavated at Merritsholt, Vive parish by the same excavator. In one of these, "Hesthøj", a short stone cist (grave B) was found, 1 m long and 35–50 cm wide on the inside (Albrectsen 1936, 264; Brøndsted 1966, 306). The base of the grave consisted of a 5 cm-thick layer of cockle shells and oysters together with charcoal. In the middle of the floor of the grave were found the remains of a new-born baby or a child from the final stage of pregnancy. There is no doubt that it was the presence of the shells themselves that was a decisive factor in the preservation of the skeletal material. As grave goods, there was a decorated, straight-walled beaker. This lucky find is unfortunately exceptional. But the find gives us a clear indication of the possible original contents of other cists, as it is a short stone cist of quite classical form.

In the many graves from Skringstrup no skeletal or dental remains were found, but Jens Vellev postulated that they could be children's graves (1975, 74).

The short stone cists around the edge of barrows are sometimes found very close to graves in which bones or teeth of children have been identified. At Kirkebjerggård (Malle), for instance, remains of a child's skull were found in one of the seven graves that lay at the edge of the barrow, which could support the view that the short stone cists around the edge may

also have been meant for children (Jensen & Vellev 1971, 7). At least ten of the 16 graves in this barrow were viewed by the excavators as children's graves. In the three cases of tooth enamel being found in this barrow it was from children.

At those sites where short stone cists have been excavated up to now, the soil-type has been of such a character that both unburnt bone and dental remains have decayed without any visible traces left after thousands of years have passed. If, however, the bones were burnt, they would fairly certainly be preserved. Children's bones in particular survive very poorly in the lime-poor, sandy soils of Jutland, and this must be a determinative factor in why more traces of children have not been found in the short stone cists. Although adult skeletons survive somewhat better in the same soil conditions, it is important to note that no traces of adults have been found in the short stone cists in the now really high number of graves from North Jutland, and this is itself conclusive, not least as tooth enamel from adults is practically indestructible even under these soil conditions and would therefore unquestionably be found in the large number of careful excavations. The short stone cists of North Jutland of the late Single Grave Culture and early Dagger Period must therefore generally be regarded as children's graves. It is to be added that the dimensions of the grave goods such as pottery also support this view (further, below).

With regard to the next difficult question, which concerns the age and sex of the deceased children, no survey of the short stone cists of North Jutland will be attempted. In this context, there may be reason, however, to turn back to the excavation at Strandet Hovedgaard. The large number of small graves in the cemetery cannot be directly ascribed to particular age groups amongst the children as no skeletal parts were found in the excavation. Only in two cases were there dental remains (as noted, from a 3–5-year-old and a 6–8-year-old respectively). Most of the graves, however, are surprisingly short (Fig. 23).

We know very little about the general conditions of life for children in this period, and the mean height of children in relation to their age is naturally purely a matter of guesswork. Even though the maximum human stature of that period is now thought generally to have been lower, it does not follow that growth and stature in the earliest years was markedly different from the present.

If, however, we allow ourselves to compare the length of the Strandet graves with the modern average growth charts that are used by the Danish health authority for the routine measurement of children nowadays, the following speculative picture can be produced, assuming an extended position in the grave and use of the full length of the cist: twelve inviduals under or at most 1 year old; four at most 2–3 years old; and four at most 5–10. These figures should of course be taken with every conceivable reservation. It should be added that since the excavators, as noted above, interpret the narrow grave G as a double grave, there may here have been two very small children.

With regard to the question of whether the burials were made extended or in some other position, we do not have a lot to build upon. In one of the short stone cists (F.), however, there may be traces of a burial lying on one side in the form of a diffuse dark feature on the floor of the grave. If the graves did contain burials on the side with slightly flexed legs the individuals buried may have been a bit older than postulated above.

Aspects of the social and cultural circumstances of children in the late Single Grave Culture

With the occurrence of a small flint axe in grave C and of both amber beads and pottery in seven other graves it would be all too easy for present-day archaeologists to imagine that these represent one boy's grave and seven girls' graves. But in the context of this period's farming society, we could not be certain about such sexings. Of the many questions that assert themselves just a few will be listed: Did small girls also use axes as tools or playthings in daily life, so that they could even have had some close association with such implements? Did boys too have pottery or amber beads in their world? Did some causes of death demand special grave goods? Or was the child's position in, for instance, a sequence of brothers and sisters marked by some particular grave goods?

An explanation of the presence of the children's cemetery is not obvious. If the whole grave assemblage from all 21 of the graves is taken into consideration there is immediately a striking lack of battle axes, and the question therefore arises of whether their absence in the graves excavated can be considered significant in this case. Is it conceivable that the barrow was constructed purely as a burial place for individuals of a special group, namely for those who had perhaps not

yet become "recognized" adults and passed through possibly associated rites of passage linked to that? In the case of the boys, is it conceivable that they were given the so-called battle axe — or obtained the right to carry one — only after such rites of passage as a symbol of their social position and gender?

To try to understand the possible implications of age groupings in a society, it is necessary briefly to take a look at anthropological studies which reveal that in many societies worldwide one or more important rites of passage are a common phenomenon, the purpose of which is to dramatize the transition from one social state to another by creating a boundary or margin between them. In some societies there are a number of age sets (Barth 1987, 12) and rituals of different character mark the transition from one group to another. In the rite of passage the individual is within a sequence in which he or she belongs to neither the one state nor the other. In so far as our basic understanding of human society is directed towards a system of social positions we can regard the liminal position as being a situation between two structures. In several societies it is particularly the rite of passage between child and adult that marks one of the most important social boundary lines between individuals, and these rituals are frequently some of the most meaningful in the course of an individual life. It is also often in this context that the individual has confirmed his or her gender in addition to the biological sex.

The Belgian anthropologist Arnold van Gennep defined the category of transitional rituals, which he labelled *rites de passage*, in 1909. He showed that rites of passage have a tripartite structure, consisting of three phases, namely a separation phase, a liminal phase and an integrational phase. The British-American anthropologist Victor Turner has pointed out the doubleness of the rituals, in that they are functionally integrational in the way they hold the community together as a collective social unity, and symbolically significant at the same time. Through the liminal phase of the ritual, which is partially characterized by mystical experiences, the participants achieve a strong feeling of community, which is necessary for the society to continue to be integrated. The sense of community experienced is decisively different from that which is obtained by way of the fixed and stable relationships inhering in the general community. In the liminal phase the participants are placed beyond connexions to previous classes and groups (Turner 1967).

Accounts of rites of passage all around the world show how the participants are frequently subjected to a number of difficult tests by means of a range of symbolic events and mystical experiences — hunger, want, flogging, circumcision or terror of various forms, etc. The process also often leaves immediately visible signs of the rituals having been performed on the individual: scarring left by deep cuts into the skin, missing teeth, tattooings and circumcision etc. It is older age groups in the community who arrange the events, but this is a dangerous moment which involves potential unrest against the community. In the liminal phase the young are placed outside the normal regulation of society. After the liminal phase the individual is re-integrated at a new level in the community, as an adult man or woman.

The time for the holding of rites of passage can in certain cases be drawn out or accelerated in accordance with the community's immediate needs. There are cases where groups have waited until a large group of children were "ready" to pass through the rituals and be initiated into adult society. By contrast "external" factors such as war, crop failure, trading opportunities, epidemics, spirit possession etc can create circumstances in which it is difficult to get the eldest children through the rites of passage, e.g. in the case of boys possibly even some time before sexual maturity, if there is an acute need for weapon-bearing males.

If we turn our view back to the end of the Stone Age, it is generally accepted that the average life-expectancy was much lower than nowadays. We do not, of course, know whether this may have meant that the transition from child to adult generally took place early.

Irrespective of the theoretical possibility that the cemetery excavated at Strandet Hovedgaard was meant for individuals who had not passed through rituals of the type discussed above to mark their transition from child to adult, the finds from this site can in any case be regarded as building bricks in an incipient discussion (cf. Andersson, Welinder & Westeson 1995) of the circumstances affecting the youngest individuals of the neolithic farming society.

Grave goods equivalent to those of adults

As noted above, what appears to be a crucial difference in the grave goods of children's and adult graves in a general view is the absence of battle axes from children's graves. Apart from that there is a remarkable similarity in the grave furnishing.

If, once again, we take the burials at Strandet Hovedgaard as our reference point, it is clear that the form, decoration and motifs of the pottery match closely with those in adults' graves elsewhere in the area. The tempering, the treatment of the surface, the technique of decoration, and the firing, are all exactly as in beakers from local adult graves of this date. The vessels are simply smaller.

The flint axe from grave C is also small, as indeed are the other two unstratified axes from the barrow. The amber beads are all fairly small, as, however, they can be in adult graves. Two longer amber beads are clearly fragments of even larger beads that had been re-used by being reperforated across the original longwise perforation.

It seems quite evident that this assemblage does not represent special products that could relate to the children's world but matches the inventory of adults, albeit at a smaller scale. Burials in these graves accompanied with grave goods such as axes, pottery and amber beads see thus to have been subject to the same set of norms as the burials of adults both in terms of the production of the artefacts and their location in the graves etc. Just as in adult graves, decorated, straight-walled beakers are thus prominent. In the children's graves these vessels form a particularly marked and conspicuous element in grave furnishing in the area of North Jutland, and occur in small flat graves, small lined graves and short stone cists *et al.* The type of grave that was preferred thus seems not to have influenced the choice of grave goods.

We cannot, of course, entirely rule out the possibility that in some cases the pots may have been on the settlements for some time, possibly used for children. They do not, however, generally show signs of wear, and in excavations of settlements sherds of straight-walled beakers have in fact proved rare. It seems still to be the case that these were beakers produced to be used in ritual deposition in graves.

The conclusion has to be that the children's graves are in many ways like the adult graves, just of smaller dimensions. This includes, amongst other things, the stone cists, which have the same method of construction, the same form and the same location. It applies to the grave goods too, which in the case of the pots have the same form and decoration, but, as noted, are consistently of smaller size.

The role of children in the late Single Grave Culture

We do not have a full overview of evidence from Denmark for children's graves of the late Single Grave Culture and the early Dagger Period. Amongst the various types of children's graves the most striking is the short stone cists which have attracted attention and been discussed for a long time. If one looks for information on the role of children in the late Single Grave Culture, one has to assume that it is precisely these burials that best reflect the situation. Settlement finds and hoards seem, by contrast, not to be able to provide any answers to questions about the role of children. The large burial chambers of stone (Ebbesen 1985) and wood (Hansen 1996) that are associated with collective burials are likewise unable to make any contribution at present. It is therefore only the grave finds from especially those graves in which one or two individuals were buried that for the time being can act as the basis for analyses and evaluations. The difficulty of finding neolithic children's graves, or of identifying graves as those of children, have occasionally led to speculation about the extent to which children in general were afforded burials of the ordinary type.

With the finds from cemeteries or barrows of the late Single Grave Culture we have come to know about a relatively large group of children's graves from the Danish Neolithic for the first time. It is also evident that at an increasing number of cemeteries the children's graves constitute a significant proportion in comparison to the number of adult graves (e.g the sites referred to at Skringstrup, Langvang, Glenstrup and Kirkebjerggård), or are the only category present, as appears to be the case at Strandet Hovedgaard. Children's graves also occur as central graves in the late Single Grave Culture. This is now well documented by several finds. As noted above, those buried in the central grave at Kirkebjerggård were a child of about 10 and a baby respectively. At Strandet Hovedgaard it was a 3–5-year-old buried with a small axe. This phenomenon is also known from the Single Grave Culture outside of North Jutland, for instance from the abovementioned grave from Esbjerg in South Jutland, where a child of about 18 months was buried in the central grave, which is interpreted as a boy's grave (H. Andersen 1952).

The phenomenon of the foundation of cemeteries (burial mounds) with primary children's graves is also

known from later periods in North Jutland, e.g. from Egshvile with early urn graves (Olsen 1992) of the Early Bronze Age. A second example excavated within recent years is Hjordkær in Southern Jutland, where a child's grave of the middle of the Early Bronze Age was constructed as the central grave in a secondary barrow phase (Jørgensen 1984).

That children's graves of the Single Grave Culture occur at the edges of barrows along with both children's and adults' graves and as central graves over which barrows with either adult graves or children's graves were raised, could possibly be interpreted in terms of children having played a significant role, perhaps in certain cases on a par with adults. This tendency towards equality seems also to hold between the sexes. The grave goods appear on the whole to be balanced between women and men, and other aspects of the construction of the graves and their location in the cemeteries do not immediately show any preferential treatment of either sex. With the large number of graves that have become available since the comprehensive survey of the evidence (Glob 1945), this is, however, an area that needs a new study. The strong marking of social roles seems to have been an especially characteristic feature of the period. Both male and female grave goods can be seen as expressing symbolic values. In this way, many of the so-called battle axes with very narrow shaftholes can hardly have been of great use in actual battle and were probably more meaningful signs in a social context.

There is nothing to suggest that in the period of the Single Grave Culture in Jutland there was some definite class of both adults and pre-adults of lower status than the rest of the population. The appearance of a more "aristocratic" segment of society that maintained the culture, such as has been proposed in respect of the Swedish-Norwegian Battle Axe Culture (Malmer 1975, 120) seems quite simply to lack support in the finds from Jutland.

There could, however, of course have been certain differences in society. Whether, for instance, the presence of battle axes, several axes, or symbolic axes in particular men's graves may have signalled higher status than weaponless graves can probably only be revealed by new analyses of the grave finds.

In the children's graves that have been found there may be differences in the presence or absence of grave goods. But some of the grave goods may very probably have been of organic material and therefore not been preserved. Even in respect of the interpretation of the children's graves with surviving grave goods of primarily inorganic materials, care has to be urged. It is not certain that the position of the living children in the late Single Grave Culture is directly reflected by the dead children's graves in some immediately proportional way. With the occurrence of this eventually large group of children's graves, however, one of the possible interpretations could be something like changes gradually taking place in the relationship between the individual and the group. These may have been changes in inheritance rights as a result of which the position of the children may have been something different even from a very early age.

It has recently been argued that in the Early Bronze Age a hierarchical power system was established, based primarily on the individual, and that this evolved from a power structure of the Late Neolithic in which it was primarily groups of people who possessed the majority of the power (Vandkilde 1996). The dynamic of this process is suggested to have included conflicts, with consequences for the relationship between the individuals of society and its groups of people.

In the present author's view, it can be taken for granted that at the start of the Single Grave Culture and in its later course there were extensive social changes, and possibly even decisive breaks with previous norms and habits. It is not inconceivable that precisely those social structures which may appear in the Early Bronze Age were actually the result of trends that had their roots back in the Single Grave Culture. This development may, however, very well have proceeded in waves, which also had their regressions. In any case, it is important to be aware that the changes between the Single Grave Culture and the Early Bronze Age do not have to follow a linear course of development.

Social structure in the late Single Grave Culture

In cemeteries pertaining to the Jutlandic Single Grave Culture, graves are often encountered which were constructed very closely together, e.g. on top of or immediately adjacent to other graves. Such observations were noted as soon as the period was discovered in the 19th century, and immediately gave rise to theories of these closely spaced graves containing closely linked, i.e. a family's, graves (Müller 1898, 163). At the above-mentioned barrow from Esbjerg three graves were found, with the

child's grave (Fig. 22) in the middle and a woman's grave and a man's grave parallel to it on either side. The excavator wrote that it was likely, although unprovable, that these were the parents of the boy, and that together with the other graves in the barrow this was very probably an example of a family burial place (Andersen 1952, 160f.).

In many barrows of the Single Grave Culture in Jutland, however, only graves which are regarded as adults' graves have been found. With the occurrence of the small graves at the cemetery at Strandet Hovedgaard, and their location in and around the barrow, these circumstances may immediately lead to comments in respect of some of the cemeteries, and can possibly contribute new aspects to hypotheses concerning social relations in this period.

It should first of all be noted, for the sake of order, that the cemetery cannot reflect something like a brief, deadly epidemic which could conceivably have forced hasty burials at the same site. Amongst other things there are too many phases in the structure and too many types of grave. It is, however, particularly interesting, and thought-provoking in respect of social structures, that the site —for what was evidently more than a very short period — was maintained as the cemetery for burials, all of which were of child length. This continued despite the gradual introduction of new strategies of location in the barrow or in its immediate surroundings, and irrespective of the introduction of new grave-types.

Secondly, the quantity of children's graves in this find and the absence of adult graves show that we ought perhaps to think in completely new directions when the social structure of these areas in the period of the late Single Grave Culture is being described. There are several features that indicate that the development in the pottery represented in 17 (possibly 18) graves around the edge of barrow phases 1 and 2 cannot as a whole have covered any more than an advanced part of the late Single Grave Culture. This could mean 50 to 75 years, or, in other terms, 2–3 generations.

In a really large number of the grave finds of this period it has been observed that people usually knew very precisely where the earlier graves had been placed in the barrow. During the construction of new graves, the older burials were respected. One must therefore assume that probably they knew where would be a good place for new graves.

All the same, the graves at Strandet Hovedgaard

Fig. 22. Esbjerg. Child's grave of the late Single Grave Culture. Photo: Harald Andersen.

show a distinctively uneven distribution. To the south-west there appears a marked clustering of graves (G, H, J, K, Q and possibly V). To the north-west there is another cluster of graves (O, E, F and T). To the east there is yet another cluster (L, M, R, N, D and S). Close to the latter cluster there are just two graves (I and U) and otherwise there is a free, unexploited area in the ground around the edge of the barrow.

It is tempting, as a result, to propose as a working hypothesis, that these three clusters principally represent deceased children from three contemporary households over, probably, two to three generations. One could then suppose that per household there were on average three child deaths per generation in the course of two generations, or two deaths per generation across three generations. One can then postulate that adult individuals were probably buried in or beside nearby barrows.

This hypothesis of a possible common burial place for the children of a district over a short period is decisively contrary to the common perception of barrows as burial places for individual families. There is unfortunately no space here to go further into this hypothesis or its presuppositions and consequences. We shall simply here point to special circumstances concerning the position of graves in several North Jutlandic barrow sites that were briefly surveyed in a previous section.

It appears, indeed, that the distinct clustering of graves interspersed with free, unused space, is not at

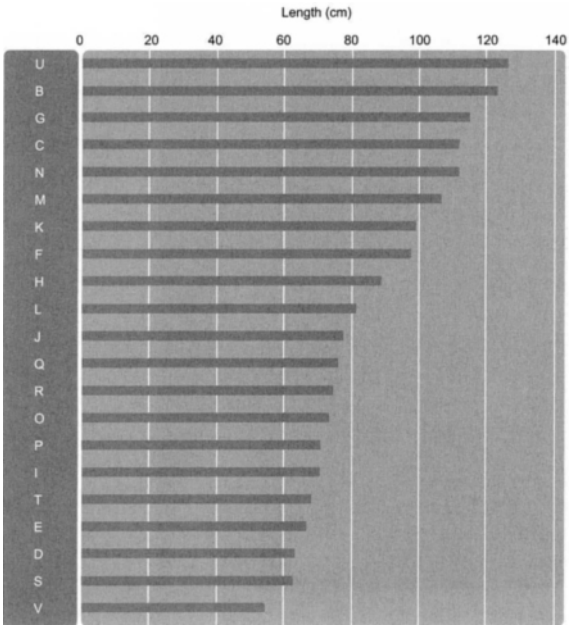


Fig. 23. Strandet Hovedgaard. As the histogram shows, the interior lengths of the graves are consistently significantly below an adult height, and many of them are quite exceptionally short. In graves with end stones the measurement is taken along the central axis between these stones (in grave E, F, V, however, to stone marks at one end). In grave S the measurement was taken to the edge of the pit. For the other graves the length of the flat floor of the grave is given.

all unique to Strandet Hovedgaard. On the contrary, it seems to occur in quite a large number of cases, including those with stone cists. At precisely the same time there also appears to have been a clear knowledge of where the earlier graves lay, as there was often digging very close beside these, but emphatically done so carefully that they were not damaged: a) end to end, and at consistent intervals (e.g. Toftelund, Hvilsom, but occurs also at many other sites); b) end to end, partly built together (e.g. Langvang); c) parallel, side by side (e.g. Langvang, Glenstrup, also Mejlby [Sterum 1976, Fig. 11]); d) parallel but built together, possibly with a common long side (e.g. Glenstrup; also Dalgaard in Fårup [Nørgaard 1968, 152]); e) parallel, but partly at a different level from one another (e.g. Strandet Hovedgaard); f.) immediately on top of one another (e.g. Engedal); g) close together but at an angle to one another (e.g. Langvang); h) at an angle to one another and partly built together (e.g. Lynnerup).

There is thus a great deal of evidence for the clustering of graves which cannot be explained by lack of space in the barrows in question but must be due to other factors, such as the hypothesis suggested above.

The graves from feature V at Strandet Hovedgaard derive from the late Single Grave Culture in Jutland. They also form an integral part of the North Jutlandic milieu of the late Single Grave Culture. Unique at this site is the occurrence of 21 graves all of lengths that fit children. This number of times must the ceremonies and rituals of burial have been played out in a way that we can scarcely ever have experienced.

The ideas that have been proposed here after the survey of the known grave finds of the Single Grave Culture (and the early Late Neolithic) in North Jutland are first and foremost to be seen as working hypotheses and as a contribution to a discussion of society and culture in this period. I have in any case attempted to point out certain key questions concerning the social and cultural circumstances of this period which also affect our general understanding of the settlement structures of the age.

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Acknowledgements
In addition to museum employees, several volunteer archaeologists participated in the excavation at Strandet Hovedgaard. Many colleagues have kindly answered written enquiries concerning possible recent excavations of short stone cists during the preparation of this article, given permission for illustrations to be used, or provided help in other ways: Verner Alexandersen, Niels Andersen, Harald Andersen, Pauline Asing, Jens-Henrik Bech, Pia Bennike, Niels Axel Boas, Palle Eriksen, Ole Faber, Christian Fischer, Mogens Hansen, Jan Heinemeier, Johnny Højgaard, Sven Østergaard Jensen, Jens Jeppesen, Erik Johansen, Lars Jørgensen, Per Lysdahl, Mette Iversen, Bo Madsen, Torsten Madsen, Jens Nielsen, Poul Otto Nielsen, Svend Nielsen, Per Noe, Poul Mikkelsen, Lis Helles Olesen, Ib Radoor, Niels Sterum, Ernst Stidsing and Jens Vellev.

For permission to use short reports, simplified general plans etc of unpublished finds, several of the colleagues listed above are thanked, together with the following institutions: the National Museum, the Culture Historical Museum, Moesgaard Museum, Viborg Stiftsmuseum, Vesthimmerlands Museum.
The excavation was funded by the State Antiquary, and support for the preparation of this article was provided by the the Archaeological Board.

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Grave B

Undisturbed grave with charred wooden cover, base 0.11 m under ground surface. Above the grave and partly sunken into it was found greyish soil like the fill of the barrow. The pit appeared as an oval feature 1.62 m long. Within the feature were traces of a rectangular grave with an interior length of 1.28 m at the base. This grave had been covered with a wooden cover with a charred surface, which in size was a bit larger than the grave chamber itself. The direction of the grain of the charcoal was seen in several places to be parallel with the long axis of the grave and the charcoal from the cover was found sunk into the grave. In the eastern half of the grave, to the south, tooth enamel was found. No grave goods or skeletal remains were otherwise discovered.

Grave B (from N).

Grave C

Undisturbed grave with charred wooden cover, base 0.09 m under ground surface. The pit appeared as an oval feature 1.41 m long. Within the feature were traces of a rectangular grave with an interior length of 1.12 m. This grave had been covered with a wooden cover with a charred surface, which in size, as in grave B, was a bit larger than the grave itself. The direction of the grain of the charcoal was seen in several places to be parallel with the long axis of the grave, and the charcoal from the cover was found sunk into the grave. In the western half of the grave to the south was found a small flint axe with a "hanging" edge. Immediately beside the edge of the axe tooth enamel was found, but there were no other skeletal remains.

Grave D (from N).

Grave D

Undisturbed stone cist, base c. 0.62 m under the ground surface, but since the cist was very short, compact and relatively high, the top of the capstone was found only just below ground surface. Above the grave was found soil like the fill of the barrow. The pit appeared

Grave D (from W).

as a feature 1.30 m long. The interior length of the stone cist was c. 0.64 m, and the long sides consisted of both one larger and one smaller stone, placed symmetrically. The capstone construction was formed principally of one large and two smaller stones. In the northern part of the grave to the east lay a small beaker and in the southern half to the west fragments of oyster shells. It cannot be excluded though that these were brought into the grave by animal activity. No skeletal or dental remains were found.

Grave E (from W).

Grave E

Stone cist, incompletely preserved. The cist was constructed at a considerable depth below ground surface and it is considered that its capstone must have been at a level in relation to the ground surface corresponding to the mean of the stone cists with preserved capstones. Above the grave was found soil like the fill of the barrow which had been turned over by subsoiling. Parts of the cist had been pushed somewhat to the west. The pit appeared as a feature 1.40 m long. The interior length of the stone cist was 0.61 m measured from a slight stone mark to the north-east. The long sides of the cist both consisted of two large stones placed symmetrically. The capstones had undoubtedly been removed by the ploughing, and in the western part of the grave stood a small beaker that had clearly been partly crushed in the same way. No skeletal or dental remains were found.

Grave F (from NW).

Grave F

Stone cist, incompletely preserved. The supporting stones of the cist were slightly pushed out of place by subsoiling. The cist was constructed at a considerable depth below ground surface and it is considered that its capstone must have been at a level in relation to the ground surface corresponding to the mean of the stone cists with preserved capstones. Above the grave was found soil like the fill of the barrow which had been turned over by subsoiling. The pit appeared as a feature 1.83 m long. The interior length of the stone cist was 0.99 m measured from a stone mark to the north-east. The long sides of the cist consisted on the eastern side of two large and one small stones. The

Grave G (from c. W).

other side consisted of four stones of approximately equal size. The capstones had been ploughed away. In the southern part of the grave to the east stood a small, well-preserved beaker, and a short distance away from it lay an amber bead. On the sandy base of the grave was observed a greyish feature, possibly a body stain. No other skeletal or dental remains were found.

Grave G

Undisturbed stone cist, base 0.55 m beneath the ground surface. The cist was very long and narrow, but had more than one layer in its complex capstone construction, producing a significant external height with the top of the capstones lying just under the ground surface. Above the grave was found soil like the fill of the barrow. The pit appeared as a feature 1.85 m long. The interior length of the stone cist was 1.13 m. The long sides consisted of four stones to the west and five to the east. The capstones consisted to the south of a single large stone. Further north was what was practically a double layer of capstones. In the northern half of the grave stood a small beaker and in the southern half lay a small beaker. The grave is regarded as a double grave. Beneath the northern beaker was found about 5 mm of soil, which could be interpreted in terms of some organic material originally having lain beneath the vessel. No skeletal or dental remains were found.

Grave H

Undisturbed stone cist, base 0.56 m beneath the ground surface, but since the cist was very short and relatively high the top of the capstone was found just beneath the ground surface. Above the grave was found soil like the fill of the barrow. The pit appeared as a feature 1.52 m long. The interior length of the stone cist was 0.89 m. The eastern long side of the cist consisted of two large stones and its western long side two large and one small stones. The capstone construction consisted primarily of one large and two small stones. Approximately in the centre, but in the southern half of the grave, lay four amber beads. No skeletal or dental remains were found.

Grave G (from c. W).

Grave H (from c. E).

Grave H (from c. W).

Grave I

Undisturbed grave with large end stone and supporting stones, base 0.64 m beneath ground surface. The pit appeared as an oval feature consisting of greyish-brown sandy soil 1.16 m long. Within the pit were traces of a rectangular grave with an interior length of 0.58 m. The sides of this grave could be seen as strips of rotted material 20–30 mm wide but nothing of the kind could be seen at the ends. The sides must have consisted of wooden planks that were externally propped up by stones. It is possible that only the large stones at each end of the grave formed the ends. No signs of a coffin cover were found, nor were any grave goods, or skeletal or dental remains.

Grave I (from E).

Grave J

Undisturbed stone cist, base 0.62 m beneath the ground surface (measured to the lower edge of the stone flags). The pit appeared as an oval feature 1.27 m long. The interior length of the stone cist was 0.73 m. The floor consisted of two split stone planks around 30–50 mm thick. The long sides of the cist both consisted of one large and one small stone, symmetrically placed. The capstone construction consisted primarily of one large and one small stone flake. In the southern part of the grave was found a small beaker, standing upright about 5 mm above the stone flag, which may indicate that there was originally some organic material beneath the vessel. No skeletal or dental remains were found.

Grave J and K (from NE).

Grave K

Undisturbed stone cist, base 0.43 m beneath the ground surface with the top of the cist found a little below the ground surface. Above the grave was found soil like the fill of the barrow. The pit appeared as a feature 1.56 m long. The interior length of the stone cist was 0.97 m. The long sides both consisted of four stones, symmetrically placed. The capstone construction consisted primarily of four large stones with some smaller ones wedged between them. In the southern part of the grave stood a pot. Approximately in the centre, in the northern half of the grave to

Grave J (from SW).

the west, lay five amber beads. No skeletal or dental remains were found.

Grave L

Undisturbed stone cist, base 0.38 m beneath the ground surface with the top of the capstone found just beneath the ground surface. Above the grave was found soil like the fill of the barrow. The pit appeared as a feature 1.77 m long. The interior length of the stone cist was 0.80 m. The long sides both consisted of one large and two small stones, symmetrically placed, with an additional small stone wedged into the eastern side. The capstone construction consisted primarily of three large stones. There was also a small, almost acutely angled triangular stone between two of the capstones. In the southern part of the grave stood a pot. No grave goods, skeletal or dental remains were found.

Grave M

Undisturbed flat grave, base 0.22 m beneath ground surface. The pit appeared as an oval feature consisting of greyish-brown sandy soil 1.33 m long. No barrow fill that had sunk into it was observed. The inner, plane section of the base of the grave was 1.05 m long. No signs of a coffin were seen. In the southern end was found a small beaker and an amber bead. No skeletal or dental remains were found.

Grave N

Undisturbed flat grave base 0.38 m beneath ground surface. The pit appeared as an oval feature consisting of greyish-brown sandy soil 1.30 m long. No barrow fill that had sunk into it was observed. The inner, plane section of the base of the grave was 1.02 m long. No signs of a coffin were found at the bottom, but an oblong stone with one surface facing into the grave could have supported a wooden coffin. No grave goods, skeletal or dental remains were found.

Grave K (from SW).

Grave K (from NE).

Grave L (from NE).

Grave O

Undisturbed stone cist, base 0.45 m beneath the ground surface. Above the grave was found no soil like the fill of the barrow but rather soil with clear precipitation deposits, turned by the subsoiling. The pit appeared as a feature 1.13 m long. The interior length of the stone cist was 0.74 m. The long sides both consisted of three slightly larger and one small stones. The capstone construction consisted primarily of two large and one small stones. There was also a small, flat stone on top of one of the capstones. In the eastern end of the grave two pots lay on their sides on the base of the grave, one to the north and the other to the south. Approximately in the middle of the southern side was found an amber bead. No skeletal or dental remains were found.

Grave P

Undisturbed flat grave, base 0.09 m beneath ground surface. The pit appeared as a regular, long oval feature, 0.78 m long, with a light brownish fill. There were no signs of a coffin or grave goods. No skeletal or dental remains were found.

Grave Q

Undisturbed stone cists, constructed (secondarily) directly beneath the surviving kerbstone ring. Very deep beneath the ground surface, and the top of the capstone must have been approximately at (or slightly below) ground level. No barrow fill found above the grave. The pit appeared as a feature 1.35 m long and the surrounding soil was marked by precipitation from the barrow. The interior length of the stone cist was 0.72 m. The long sides consisted of four supporting stones in the southern side and three in the northern. The capstones consisted originally of two large stones. These, however, had collapsed into the grave. No filler stones were found at the upper edge of the supporting stones. In the eastern end of the grave stood a pot about 10 mm above the floor of the grave, which may indicate that there was originally some organic material beneath it. No skeletal or dental remains were found.

Grave M (from SW).

Grave N (from W).

Grave O (from W).

Grave R

Undisturbed stone cist, base 0.44 m beneath the ground surface with the top of the capstone found just beneath the ground surface. The pit appeared as a feature 1.30 m long in relation to the surrounding soil, which was marked by precipitation from the barrow. The interior length of the stone cist was 0.75 m. The long sides both consisted of three stones. On top of the two upright supporting stones to the south of the western side lay two large flat stones, so that the supporting stones here formed two "layers". The capstone construction consisted primarily of three large stones. There was also one large stone on top of the middle capstone. In the southern end of the grave a pot lay on its side, and further north was an amber bead. No skeletal or dental remains were found.

Grave S

Undisturbed flat grave, base 0.58 m beneath ground surface. The pit appeared as an almost circular feature c. 1.46 m in diameter. The fill consisted of a virtually stone-free but very sandy soil. To judge by the traces of sinkage with lighter soil in the upper part of the pit, the coffin was of a short, rectangular form, approximately E–W. At what is assumed to have been base of the grave its length must have been 0.70 m. At the western end was found charcoal in an approximately vertical position. No grave goods, skeletal or dental remains were found.

Grave T

Undisturbed grave with partly charred sides, flanked by a supporting stone lining. Base 0.43 m beneath ground surface. The pit appeared as an almost circular feature consisting of yellow-brown sandy soil, c. 1.15 m in diameter. Inside the pit was found a rectangular grave with an interior length of 0.50 m. The sides were distinguished by 20–30 mm wide marks left by decayed material and the partly surviving charred outer sides of a wooden coffin that was propped up by stones practically all around on the outside. The wooden planks lay horizontally (direction of the grain) on the eastern side and vertically on the short northern side.

Grave Q (from SW).

Grave Q (from SW).

Grave R (from E).

No signs of a coffin cover were seen. In the northern half stood a pot about 5 mm above the base of the grave (which may indicate that there was originally some organic material beneath it), and two amber beads were found further south. On the floor of the grave were seen patches of darker soil, possibly body stains. No skeletal or dental remains were found.

Grave U

Possible flat grave, undisturbed, base 0.53 m beneath ground surface. The pit appears as an oval feature of yellow-brown soil 1.34 m long. No traces of sunken fill from the barrow were observed, and the grave appeared as an almost bath-shaped pit with a light brown fill. There were, however, a large number of small stones in the fill, unlike in any other grave from the cemetery. No grave goods, skeletal or dental remains were found.

Grave V

Stone cist, incompletely preserved. The base of the grave was placed very deep beneath the ground surface and it was inferred that the level of the capstone relative to the ground surface must have been approximately at the average position of the surviving stone cists' capstones. The pit appeared as a feature 1.40 m long. The interior length of the stone cist was 0.55 m along the axis measured from the stone mark to the south. Each long side comprised just one large stone. By the northern end of the cist stood a finely curved quernstone. The capstones were missing. In the southern part of the grave to the east stood a small beaker, partly crushed, probably by the machine digging. Right beside it were found two amber beads. In the northern end of the grave to the east stood a straight-walled beaker. No skeletal or dental remains were found.

Grave T (early, from W).

Grave T (late, from W).

Grave V (from W).