

Reviews

Eva Koch: *Neolithic Bog Pots from Zealand, Møn, Lolland and Falster*. Nordiske Fortidsminder. Serie B. Volume 16. Det Kongelige Nordiske Oldskriftselskab. København, 1998. 575 p., 131 illustrations in the text + 155 plates + 1 distribution map in pocket. 500 DKK + VAT, postage and packing.

This is a book of substance. This solidly bound, comprehensively illustrated and beautifully laid out monograph immediately signals quality and long-term validity and the contents live up to these first impressions.

The book is a reworked and expanded version of a PhD thesis which was defended at the University of Århus in 1996. It takes as its starting point about 700 bog pots found at around 100 localities on Zealand and the adjacent islands. This is a find group which has had a central position in Danish research since C.J. Becker's treatise in "Aarbøger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed" in 1947. The extent and research potential of the find group has increased markedly in the intervening period. Eva Koch has, among other things, been given access to the unique and so far practically unpublished primary source material which was brought to light through J. Troels-Smith and his collaborators' work in Aamosen.

This monograph is a significant contribution to the debate concerning the origin, regional grouping and typological development of the North European Funnel Beaker culture. It gives, furthermore, an authoritative view of the status of the international debate concerning neolithisation in Southern Scandinavia and at the same time delivers essentially new empirical evidence for this classical debate.

In the book the concept of "bog pots" is defined as "clay vessels which, in still useable condition, were placed in wetland areas". The find group originates primarily from the Funnel Beaker culture – mainly from the Early Neolithic and the first half of the Middle Neolithic, i.e. c. 3950-2900 BC (cal.). A small number comes from the preceding (Mesolithic) Ertebølle culture, and some are from the later parts of the Neolithic. The find group appears in Northern Europe across the whole area

of the Funnel Beaker culture and is particularly common on Zealand. In Eva Koch's opinion, this concentration of finds is largely due to the effectiveness of Danish Museums and popular support for their work in past decades when intensive peat cutting for fuel took place.

The book begins with a comprehensive historical overview concerning the study of Funnel Beaker pottery and the debate on the neolithisation process in Southern Scandinavia. This chapter is highly recommended for those in search of an updated and multi-faceted introduction to these much-debated topics.

The formal core of the book is the chapter dealing with the definition and dating of vessel types. The typological classification applied is based on measurements of pots, which are so well preserved that one or more entire vertical profiles can be established. Through standardly-scaled drawings of the profiles, all vessels are compared and grouped manually into nine funnel beaker types; types 0-VIII. The grouping is broadly reminiscent of C.J. Becker's type series of 50 years ago. In Eva Koch's classification, however, the subjective elements of the divisions are considerably reduced. A significant new feature is the recognition of a vessel type (type 0) which apparently represents a developmental step between typical Ertebølle and typical Funnel Beaker pottery.

C.J. Becker placed great emphasis on the chronological potential inherent in his pottery classification. It is therefore surprising that Eva Koch rejects the possibility that her grouping can be taken as an expression of a general chronological sequence. On the contrary, types I, II and III are presented as being, in principle, contemporaneous. The reason for this is the considerable series of radiocarbon dates linked to these vessel types. Taken at face value, these dates indicate that all three types are almost contemporaneous and were in use over a period of 3-400 years.

The classification system's principle dependence on the presence of whole vessel profiles results in practice in a limitation of its usefulness. It is not fully operational relative to the large

body of fragmented vessels from settlements. Furthermore, it has to be said that in places there is a need to tighten up definitions relative to the type classification. For example, according to the reviewer's experience it appears that there are vessels which can, according to Eva Koch's system, at the same time be characterised as both Ertebølle vessels and funnel beakers.

A critical evaluation of the central part of the book can similarly not avoid mentioning problems relating to the lack of a critical approach to the many radiocarbon dates which are included. These are partly dates for the contexts in which the vessels were found and partly a significant number of AMS-dates for food crust from the vessels themselves. Through a critical re-evaluation of the radiocarbon dates presented it appears that the wide scatter of the dates for the individual vessel types is, to a great extent, due to well-known and commonplace sources or error. In particular, there are the problems of the internal age of the dated samples (e.g. charcoal from the inner part of large oak trunks) and the presence of secondarily-deposited humus in the samples. In addition to this comes a previously unrecognised problem concerning the dating of food crust from vessels. Eva Koch's data suggests that the food crust dates are often too old. She draws attention to this problem several times with remarks such as "this date is somewhat older than expected" (p. 96), "... 200-500 years earlier than expected" (p. 98) and "... appears to be 2-300 years too early" (p. 101).

A subsequent investigation inspired by reading Eva Koch's book has shown that the surprisingly old dates for food crusts from vessels from inland bogs is probably due to a form of reservoir effect, of which we presumably have been unaware. It arises apparently from freshwater fish cooked in the vessels.

If the problematic radiocarbon dates are removed, a pleasantly surprising situation is revealed – the type series apparently represents a chronological series. For example, it appears that types 0-III represent successive phases each of about 100 years' duration. After several decades of being viewed with considerable scepticism by researchers working on the Early Neolithic in Southern Scandinavia it would appear that typological chronology is in line for rehabilitation.

The lack of a critical approach to the radiocarbon dates used is formally a negative aspect of the book. In the reviewer's opinion the precise and honest presentation of the data and the arguments in practice compensates to a very great extent for this defect. Observations that may contradict the views expressed have clearly not been excluded. Data are presented in such detail and with such stringency that the reader has ample possibilities for further work on the basis of alternative points of view. Accordingly, the book is assured great durability as a source in studies of the Funnel Beaker culture.

The last part of the book comprises a series of chapters in

which the bog pots form the starting point for important considerations of Funnel Beaker pottery and the Funnel Beaker culture in general. First there is a section on technological and social aspects of the production of Funnel Beaker pottery. Included in this is personal experience from extensive experimental archaeological research along with ethnographical information of importance for an understanding of the finds gleaned from the literature.

Following this there is a thorough treatment of the original purpose of depositing Neolithic pottery in wetland areas. The conclusion is reached, which will hardly be surprising to the majority, that these are in general sacral depositions which in a series of cases can be shown to have been linked to wooden platforms or stone pavements. To this has been added an important new detail in that the votive offerings are apparently always deposited in open water, albeit often close to land. After inspection of the find sites it is Eva Koch's opinion, furthermore, that she can demonstrate a tendency for them to be placed in the vicinity of prominent areas of high ground. Her conclusion that the sacrificial sites are often found very close to the contemporaneous settlements and relatively close to megalithic graves is rather better documented.

Thanks to Danish archaeology's long tradition of careful mapping of find sites, Eva Koch is able to deliver a comprehensive documentation of the bog offerings' overwhelming proportions and temporal extent. It is apparent that wetland areas with Neolithic bog pots were often also used for sacrifices of domesticated animals and humans as well as flint axes, battle axes etc. In the same bogs flint axes and flint chisels were often sacrificed in later parts of the Neolithic. In many of these bogs sacral depositions also often took place in the Bronze Age and the Pre-Roman Iron Age. With reference to other bogs with votive offerings from later parts of the Iron Age, it is postulated that there has been an unbroken sacrificial tradition, which was maintained from the Early Neolithic and right up to the introduction of Christianity in the area. The author has even gone so far as to claim that the common belief in the 19th century in spirits associated with bogs and rivers has its roots right back in the first offerings of pottery around the time agriculture was introduced. This fascinating point of view must be expected to give occasion for a good deal of debate in the future.

In concordance with the tradition for academic treatises of this kind the book's concluding chapter gives a summary of the typological, economic and social development in the period in question. In this case this means the Early Neolithic and the adjacent parts of the Ertebølle culture and the Middle Neolithic. This is a very useful overview although it does not present any new information of consequence.

The reasons for the change from the Ertebølle culture

to the Funnel Beaker culture are discussed first, then the closely linked introduction of cereal cultivation and animal husbandry. Both external natural influences and the internal social changes in the Ertebølle society are highlighted. The conclusion is reached that it could have been some rather subtle changes in the environment that triggered the change.

Finally, the Funnel Beaker culture's epoch is dealt with in its entirety. The period is divided up into four stages, of which the first is characterised as a short transitional phase between the Ertebølle culture and the Funnel Beaker culture. The next stage comprises, according to Eva Koch's interpretation, two contemporaneous and geographically overlapping groups each with its own material culture and identity: The Oxie group (funnel beakers of type I) and the Svaleklint group (funnel beakers of type II and III). Offerings of the former are more austere than those of the latter. Correspondingly, the former apparently comprises only simple inhumation graves, whereas the latter also has long barrows and wooden chambers. In the subsequent stage (funnel beakers of type IV to VIII) the sacrificial activities in the bogs and at Neolithic graves and causewayed enclosures escalate. In the final stage of the Funnel Beaker culture (Middle Neolithic A III/IV and V) the sacrificing of pottery goes into sharp decline and is replaced by deposition of axes and chisels of flint.

Eva Koch gives a lot of thought to the reasons surrounding the presumed contemporaneous existence of the Oxie and Svaleklint groups. In the opinion of the reviewer, this question, which has long been paid great attention by Scandinavian researchers, is possibly irrelevant, as these groups more probably represent two successive time periods. If this evaluation is accepted then this treatise becomes even more interesting. It delivers the weightiest typological-chronological arguments against the theory that the neolithisation of Northwestern Europe was an expression of a package solution. It appears that the deposition of pottery, Funnel Beaker ceramics and monumental long barrows were introduced successively in Eastern Denmark over a period of several hundred years.

The book's main text is supplemented by data lists and a very comprehensive catalogue with beautiful and informative drawings of a greater part of the pottery dealt with in the book. This is documentation of the highest quality. This book will undoubtedly be used diligently in many research situations for years to come.

In general, it can be concluded that this is both a useful and an inspiring book, which geographically and subject-wise spans far wider than the title suggests. It is recommended both to those who have need of a clear introduction and to those who wish deeper insight in the fundamental source material for studies of the Funnel Beaker culture and the neolithisation of Northwestern Europe.

Anders Fischer
The National Cultural Heritage Agency
Slotsholmen 1
DK - 1218 København K.

Gabriel Cooney: Landscapes of Neolithic Ireland. Routledge/
London 2000. 276pp, 65 figs., 10 plates.

The plural form "landscapes" in the title of Cooney's highly recommendable book on Neolithic Ireland is a well chosen one for two reasons. First, because the physical setting in Ireland differs from region to region as well as within any region due to human impact through time. Second, because human perception of what we normally term the "natural landscape" or "environment" always is rooted in social conventions and thus cannot be treated as an objective dimension of the human experience. *"In this sense all landscapes are social landscapes. ... An implication of this statement is that there never is just one landscape, there are many, different landscapes"* (Cooney 2000, 20). This is exactly what Cooney sets out to demonstrate using archaeological material tied up by well-balanced theoretical and anthropological insight. And he succeeds. In this way his book challenges a widespread traditionalist archaeology rooted in a positivist culture historical vein where landscape is seen as some kind of natural backdrop for human action offering no more, no less than pure resources, places to dwell as well as exerting constraints for human action. However, such a notion of landscape is only two-dimensional. People do not live their lives in space only. They also live in time. And when time and space combine in lived human experience *place* and *history* occurs. And this takes us to the heart of Cooney's argument. Landscapes do not consist of abstract, quantities of matter existing independent in anyone time. Instead, our archaeological investigation must cope with landscapes as social entities with once specific names, meanings, histories, myths and qualities. Just as they are today. In so doing, can we try to gain an understanding of what life was like for the people who lived and created that past, that we as archaeologists and laymen are so intrigued with. However, as Cooney points out, if we are to get as close as possible to the once lived, complex reality we have to complement traditional chronology with notions of individual lifetime. Traditional chronology built on typology has created a fragmented past consisting of arbitrary, consecutive time periods of considerable length void of any human experience on the personal level. However, as Cooney stresses, this way we tend to forget, that past life were actually

lived on a day-to-day basis and the material culture employed once expressed those people's behaviour and ideas (Cooney 2000, 3). One way to approach this realm of past ideas and beliefs is to start by viewing the material traces left as once part of a coherent, meaningful system. This central viewpoint, which runs throughout the book, Cooney acquires from anthropologist Clifford Geertz whose original and most relevant statement may well be reiterated at this occasion: "*Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it may at best be characterised as incomplete. Put shortly, metonymic relations encompass words, actions or objects belonging to the same domain or context where one object may signify, or stand for, other objects belonging to the same domain or class. E.g. a crown is a headdress worn by a king, but at the same time a crown can also be a sign for royal power. Metaphoric relations on the other hand, are characterised by combining objects, events or actions belonging to different domains or classes on an arbitrary basis. That is, there is no self-evident connection between a given object and the meaning it communicates. Deciphering that meaning, which furthermore may still be ambiguous, depends on the context where these objects appears. Thus, metaphors act as symbols. E.g. a certain animal species or a colour may represent social notions such as the snake symbolising evil in Christian iconography or the colour red symbolising danger in the context of modern traffic signs. For a more thorough explanation of these terms, the reader may profit from the works of Leach (1976), Holten (1997) and Tilley (1999) none of which are included in Cooneys bibliography. Nevertheless, Cooney takes on an important and very welcomed task in bringing these notions into the fore of archaeological enquiry. "By thinking along these lines we may be able to see some of the webs of significance in which people were anchored."* as he rightly stresses (Cooney 2000, 4). And it is exactly through such concepts that Cooneys analysis of landscape proves very valuable. With the background of landscape the physical relations we observe between different pieces of material culture, may not only hint at how past people structured their space and time in daily life, but also how such a structuring was related, reworked and changed through generations. The seemingly fragmented past of archaeological remains can be transformed through interpretation into a more coherent history, or rather the *narratives* of mind. Again Cooneys plural use of the form is deliberate. The fact that we write the past through the present inevitably renders our data theory-laden because as our point of view always will be that of an outside observer's, we work trying to grasp what was going on inside a world different to our own (Cooney 2000, 5f.). Hence, we should approach the past from different perspectives. Cooney suggestion "... is to tack between our analytical

approaches (experience-distant concepts) and the human intentions and practices that produced the past (experience-near lived human reality) in the particular social and historical contexts that we are trying to understand." (Cooney 2000, 21). In practice Cooney demonstrates this approach by means of two perspectives. First, by shifting between the regional and the local perspective. Second, by shifting between the immediate or particular event and the long time perspective constituted by an accumulation of events. In this way his book may be described as a series of biographies of different landscapes populated by different people who in some ways followed different trajectories and in other ways entered upon the same paths. This approach is certainly the true force of his book. Cooney manages to respect the obvious complexity of material evidence from the Irish Neolithic and at the same time give a qualified and coherent interpretation of *how* these differences and similarities were perceived and *why* they came into being. By constantly keeping these questions in mind Cooney can be said to complement what we might term the *what, where* and *when* questions of the typical positivist, culture historical archaeological tradition. Thereby, he avoids the limits and entrapments of this approach and its tendency to reduce material complexity in order to fit a preconceived box or drawer of classifications disguised as so-called "objective" typologies. So instead of writing of a past solely populated by things, as the latter approach tends do, Cooney ends up with a (pre-)history populated by people *using* things as part of daily life routines but also as part of deliberate and changing social strategies in ritual and power relations. Thus, it is a relief as well as a pleasure to experience an author who dares to include a paragraph entitled *The sunny side of the hill* in the final chapter of the book. In this chapter Cooney indulges us with a fictional account, drawing on available archaeological evidence, of how life may have proceeded through approximately 1,500 years (from 4000-2500 BC) in the Brú na Bóinne valley, and more precisely around the well known passage tomb complex Newgrange (Cooney 2000, 213ff.). Such an enterprise sets an admirable example, for showing the relevance of archaeology as the understanding that *people* do matter, instead of focusing solely on *things* that do not really matter *per se*. This, of course, is my personal statement for which I am solely responsible. For those who might disagree with me, Cooneys book also has far more to offer in terms of empirical background descriptions, quantitative diagrams, lithological analysis, distribution maps as well as plans and sections of a variety of archaeological features. After this short discussion of Cooneys conceptual framework and theoretical stance it is to these more empirical aspects of the book that this review shall confine itself.

Cooney progressively develops his ideas on Neolithic landscapes and society throughout 7 chapters. Hopefully,

Cooney's coherent interpretation still will shine through this review's eclectic presentation, which rather reflects the reviewer's personal observations, theoretical affiliation and Danish perspective than claim to be most relevant for a discussion of the specific trajectories and interpretations of the Irish Neolithic.

Chapter 1 (Cooney 2000, 1-19), *Looking at the Irish Neolithic - a landscape perspective* presents the reader with a review of the general state of research focusing mainly on the different approaches' methodological and theoretical advantages as well as shortcomings. With this as a background Cooney develops his own frame of reference and presents his arguments for applying a landscape perspective as I have outlined above in order to gain a more thorough and holistic understanding of what life was like for the people who lived and created the Irish Neolithic. Also included is a brief chronological frame of reference (Early Neolithic 4000-3600 BC; Middle Neolithic 3600-3100 BC; Late Neolithic 3100-2500 BC) supplemented, among other things, by the main material developments in house and tomb construction within each period.

In chapter 2 (Cooney 2000, 20-51), *Irish Neolithic landscapes*, Cooney discusses how the physical environment in different regions looked and how it may have developed during the Neolithic. Pollen analyses, macrofossils and Carbon 14 dates combined with archaeological features such as e.g. field walls and burial mounds are intended to produce a landscape collage. Although forest and woodland dominated it was interspersed with farmed land thus showing different degrees of land organisation. This varied from large, organised field systems up to 1000 ha, regulated by low stone dykes as exhibited by the *Céide Fields*, Co. Mayo (3700-3200 BC), to the smaller farmed clearances or other areas which may be used either on a short term or repetitive, seasonal basis. This *Western Neolithic* landscape is traditionally seen as representing a somehow different economic and worldview which later developed into the ritual landscapes of the *Passage Tomb Tradition* in the east of Ireland as exemplified in the Brú na Bóinne area. In this region huge passage tomb complexes were constructed in the later part of the Neolithic (3350-2900 BC) at Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth. However, Cooney speculates whether this difference in landscape organisation is a prehistoric reality or a modern construct. Perhaps it is rather a reflection of our present's focus on the monumental, whereby we tend to ignore other, though smaller, but perhaps functionally similar ceremonial centres in areas in between as e.g. *Loughcrew*, Co. Meath and *Carrowkeel* and *Carrowmore*, Co. Sligo (Cooney 2000, 33). Likewise, Cooney questions the common distinction in "ritual landscapes" as sacred and thus separate from secular landscapes: *More usefully we should think of the sacred and secular not as separate but rather as interwoven aspects of life* (Cooney

2000, 21). Following this line of thought he suggests that e.g. the introduction of cereals in the EN would not only fulfil nutritional needs but also carry important religious and symbolic connotations. Cereals may at the same time have acted as a metonym marking the altered relations between man and land as documented by the decline in tree pollen. This might explain why cereals often are found in ceremonial contexts throughout Britain as well as in southern Scandinavia (Cooney 2000, 39). However, parallels in such contextual circumstances indicating some similarity in symbolism throughout wide geographical areas are not to be confused with direct similarity in lifestyles and processes of neolithisation. The occurrence of organised field systems, as *Céide Fields* right from the EN of Ireland have as yet no counterparts in England, and where instead organised fields is a Bronze Age phenomenon. Thus, Cooney concludes (Cooney 2000, 36ff.) "...it should not be surprising if there was considerable diversity of lifestyles and landscapes across Ireland and Britain during the fourth and third millennia BC as people made local accommodations between their social world and the rhythms of the land."

Chapter 3 (Cooney 2000, 52-85), *Home is where the hearth is*, focuses on the domestic dimension of landscapes understood as a *system of settings* comprising houses, their immediate surroundings as well as their settings in the landscape (Cooney 2000, 56). From a similar holistic point of view Cooney tackles the common archaeological distinction between "ritual" and "domestic" architecture (Cooney 2000, 57). Certainly from a Danish perspective this is a welcome and most needed statement where the problematic distinction is widespread. This preconceived split fails to recognise that "ritual" is not an "object" *per se*, but a *quality*, which, according to context and use, may be attributed to even the most mundane of things. Another point of general interest presented by Cooney is how traditional archaeological documentation of Neolithic houses in the form of two-dimensional ground plans often leads to a similar two-dimensional *perception* of houses in archaeological interpretation. It may well be that conditions of preservation provide us only with two-dimensional representations of houses but this does not automatically infer that we only can ask ground-level questions regarding typology, house size and activity areas. So Cooney is correct to stress that houses originally were created as 3-dimensional spaces and thus structured human movement and experience (Cooney 2000, 56). From these considerations it follows, that our interpretation of them should try to incorporate a similar 3-dimensional perception focusing on bodily movement and vision and look at how these experiences were orchestrated by the placing of doors, internal screens, fireplaces or other barriers and thus creating zones of inclusion and seclusion, lightness and darkness, etc (Cooney 2000, 56). All such architectural dimensions were exactly

part and parcel of the daily *experience-near lived human reality* and may thus help us *experience-distant viewers* to catch a faint glimpse of the distant daily lives we excavate. In doing so, we can reflect how architecture is on the one hand a product of original human ideas but, once created, come to have an objective existence of its own. Seen in this way architecture is not only a neutral product sprung from human ingenuity to fulfil functional needs. Architecture also shapes the experience of future generations in favour of certain worldviews or ideologies by means of constantly recurring designs and use-patterns. As with landscapes, the lesson being taught is that houses are much more than just containers for human action. Rather they are *mediums* used in social discourse. Put shortly architecture “constrains” as much as “contains”. Unfortunately, the archaeological house material in Ireland is for now very sparse though increasing. Thus Cooney’s interpretations of house architecture seem naturally generalised offering no more than the rather sterile conclusion that all elements had significance one way or the other (e.g. Cooney 2000, 64). Much more important is his analysis of the general developments of architecture and settlement in two separate regions; *Knockadoon*, Lough Gur in Southern Ireland and *Knowth*, Brú na Boinne in the north-west. The two sites both display repeated use throughout the Neolithic and thus are perfectly suited to show the importance of *history* and *place* (cf. above). Even though both localities show similarities in their EN beginnings they end up very different by the end of the Neolithic. Knockadoon still a place of local importance only, while Knowth becomes of regional significance. Thus, Cooney concludes: “*What we have to get away from is the perception that island-wide contacts and use of similar styles of artefacts can be read as implying island-wide cultural uniformity.*” (Cooney 2000, 84f.).

Chapter 4 (Cooney 2000, 86-126), *The Dead Are Everywhere*, probes further into the complex issue of interpreting links and differences in material culture. The focus is on megalithic tombs normally classified in four main types; court tombs, portal tombs, passage tombs and wedge tombs. Furthermore, these types are traditionally seen as representing different cultural groupings (Cooney 2000, 92f.). While the later wedge tombs are of early Bronze Age date the other types have now been shown to overlap in time as well as in space during the Neolithic. Furthermore, the court, portal and passage tombs are linked by morphological similarities, accessibility, the occurrence of identical artefacts as well as the phenomenon of repeated burials. These tomb types are in one area, *Munster* and *Leinster*, supplemented by a contemporary but otherwise very different tomb type known as *Linkardstown burials*. They consist of small stone cists that hold either one individual or the remains of a few people deposited on one specific occasion. A cairn and a mound to make it inaccessible and complete

then cover the burial. Thus, Cooney stresses, “*More important than any concept of a generalised diachronic sequence was the extent of contemporary variation. There were recognised ways of treating the remains of the dead but the way these customs were put into practice to integrate the living, the dead and the ancestors were very different at a regional and a local level and may have supported different social strategies.*” (Cooney 2000, 121). However, as he shows, social strategies could also turn very dissimilar burial features into quite similar monuments through time. This is brilliantly illustrated by the example of two contemporary megalithic tombs *Fourknocks I* and *Fourknocks II*, Co. Meath (Cooney 2000, 105ff.). Though a distance of some 50 m only separates them at time of their initial construction they remain “a world apart” due to their marked differences in architecture. *Fourknocks I* was laid down as a classic passage tomb, while *Fourknocks II* originally consisted of a circular ditch around a small cairn and an oblong cremation pit. However, through generations, repeated use and architectural transformation the outer structure of *Fourknocks II* was made to *look like* a passage tomb. What started out as two different stories - or narratives - finished with similar endings. Eventually, as a postscript, both monuments ended up as Bronze Age cemeteries. Cooney points out, that such a recurrent use of specific locations and monuments through long spans of time is unlikely to have been the product of unrelated later activities. Instead, such patterns displayed through reuse demonstrate how landscape and monuments served as important memory prompts where knowledge could be passed on from generation to generation in societies relying on oral and visual narrative traditions (Cooney 2000, 90f., 112).

In chapter 5 (Cooney 2000, 127-173), *Monumental Landscapes*, Cooney follows this line of thought in order to explain how monuments changed and humanised Neolithic landscapes. One important characteristic of monuments is, that once erected their presence and permanence not only alter the physical landscape but also alter the later generations mental perception of it (Cooney 2000, 127f.). It is likely that the points in the landscape where monuments were erected in the first place may already have been experienced as special. Ample ethnographic evidence shows, that many societies see landscapes as living entities, where special topographic features mark *liminal* places suited for contact to the spirit world (see also Cooney 2000, 89). Thus, a monument may serve to identify a place, which was already regarded as special. This can explain why some megalithic tombs either “grow” out of natural rock formations or are directed towards distinctive topographic features (Cooney 2000, 130). Likewise, incorporation of earlier standing stones into later megalithic monuments may also have served to transfer spiritual powers into the new monuments (Cooney 2000, 134f.). Using a similar phenomenological approach Cooney compares the topographic affinities of the

traditional megalithic tomb types in two regions, Cooley and Mourne Mountains in Northeast Ireland and the northern part of the Dublin/Wicklow Mountains further south: "Instead of the traditional chronological approach, perhaps a more realistic way of looking at this evidence is to think of different tomb types being deemed appropriate for different locations. We could think of this as a sacred landscape with a number of focal points, some being relevant for particular communities while others seem to have served as a wider, visible regional focus." (Cooney 2000, 142). Cooney demonstrates how the architectural "closed" passage tombs are situated on high, visible grounds while the more "open" portal and court tombs are situated in lower, more accessible terrain (Fig. 5.4, 5.6). Cooney therefore suggests that the passage tombs represented more widespread ancestral allegiances, which should be visible from far and away while portal and court tombs served more local, ancestral lineages. Cooney's attempts to unravel the general relationships between topography and monument types in terms of social and religious strategies are persuasive and deserve general interest from anyone who engages in landscape studies. His analysis of the development of passage tomb complexes such as Newgrange is however far less convincing (Cooney 2000, 152ff.). The chronological relations between the smaller passage tombs and the more substantial ones is far from clear-cut in the archaeological evidence and using a simple "evolutionary" model where mounds less than 15 m in diameter precedes mounds between 15-36 m in diameter again to be followed by mounds up to 85-90 m in diameter is questionable. Much more interesting, and resting on firmer empirical ground, is Cooney's understanding of the relationship between the large passage tombs and their orientation towards important celestial phenomena: "It seems very likely ... that this indicates a concern with control over the knowledge and ordering of time, which was linked to the ancestral world by being "captured" in the tomb structure. Now this time was fixed by the monuments, rather than the monuments being built at the right time. By merging the concepts of ancestral, celestial and temporal power, authority in society could be deemed to have a quasi-divine basis." (Cooney 2000, 157). Again, such an explanation pays due consideration to the nature and function of rituals and it demonstrates how ritual knowledge also can be used in power relations between different social groupings and thus can be reworked and transformed through time: "After all one of the values of ritual is that it is open to different, sometimes apparently contradictory, meanings." (Cooney 2000, 173).

Chapter 6 (Cooney 2000, 174-211), *Living in a Material World*, lends further anthropological insight to the complex ways people interact with material culture - as producers of objects, and also through the ways people themselves become "produced" and "reproduced" through object use and identification: "Much of the significance of objects lies in the way that,

through metaphor and metonym, they can be seen to stand for or symbolise many different kinds of social realities and relationships." (Cooney 2000, 174). What Cooney emphasises is that artefacts - like landscapes and monuments - possess *biographies*. Object biographies are composed of production, use and eventually discard history, but at the same time it is important to remember that "objects have "lives" only because they are endowed with meaning by the people who make and use them." (Cooney 2000, 175). One way to try to approach such meanings in prehistoric societies is through contextual analysis of the find circumstances. Using axes as one example Cooney carries out a persuasive interpretative analysis of this tool, which reveals it as an object where practical function merges with symbolic notions. While Mesolithic axes primarily were made on easy workable stone materials, their Neolithic successors encompass a greater material variety demanding more complex manufacturing as well as complex organisation in production. This development, Cooney suggests, signifies the greater social role of the axe in Neolithic societies (Cooney 2000, 202). This conjecture is further accentuated through the appearance of the axe object in all sorts of contexts: causewayed enclosures, blockings of megalithic tombs, hoards, as well as in items of long distance trade (Cooney 2000, 189, 209). The latter use is especially concerned with axes which possess certain "valued" qualities and may be more visually distinct in terms of length, colour and materials even though these very same features often render them the poorer as functional items (Cooney 2000, 199). Examining production sites, Cooney objects to the traditional functionalist perspective on quarrying: "If we see the landscape as a living entity ... Extracting stone from the earth can be seen then, as providing a contact with the spirit or ancestral world. This both imbued the stone with power but for the same reason it would have been seen as a dangerous activity for the people involved." (Cooney 2000, 190). Such an understanding of landscape and its exploitation, supported by examples from ethnography and Irish folklore, also explains why Neolithic people often chose to exploit the most inaccessible rock sources while leaving more easily approachable, but otherwise identical, sources unused. Thus, Cooney argues that certain topographical features were endowed with powerful liminal qualities, which furthermore may have been thought of as enhancing the "physical" qualities of the resulting stone axes (Cooney 2000, 192).

In the final chapter 7 (Cooney 2000, 212-232), *Local Places, Big Issues*, Cooney stresses that the regional never can be properly understood without thorough examination of the local on its own terms. Again, this is a most relevant warning against the frequent assumption among archaeologists that similarity in one material aspect of life, as in e.g. monument building, automatically infers similarity in all other aspects of life, be it beliefs, social organisation, etc. (Cooney 2000, 220). Even

though material culture evidence often displays similarities, such a reductionist view of culture tends to ignore, that the same evidence also shows apparent differences. Cooney convincingly demonstrates this by means of three maps of Ireland subdivided after three phenomenons: biogeographical regions, monument types and axe types (Fig. 7.2, Cooney 2000, 222). None of the resulting regions show congruence and all combine in different ways depending on the actual area. Thus, such obvious complexities justify Cooneys call for an interpretative, contextual analysis which pays due attention to the uniqueness of each individual setting and its history of place. Another warning of general interest presented by Cooney is the tendency to evaluate the advent of the Neolithic from a core/periphery perspective where the land of Ireland - one might also be tempted to add Scandinavia - is viewed as peripheral to a greater landmass. However such a "Euro-centric" view, as one may term it, is historical determined and differs markedly from the perspective of the people in the Irish Neolithic. Thus, Cooney argues for a different perspective in accordance with these ancient peoples near lived experience and demonstrates this in a most original and brilliant way by redrawing our traditional European map with Ireland as its centre (Fig. 7.5). So doing, Cooney at the same time disputes the tendency to treat the Neolithisation of Europe as an event and instead view it from a local level as a *process*, whether or not newcomers or indigenous communities were involved (Cooney 2000, 230). Thus, drawing to conclusion Cooney states that "...we need to look at places and landscapes in a historical context. People make their histories and create places in the context of the local conditions of life and society which both enable and constrain the conduct of life" (Cooney 2000, 232).

Likewise, drawing to a conclusion the present reviewer may well express the hope that Cooneys original and well-written book may gain much more than local importance. Not only will it be of interest for scholars working on Neolithic societies in specific but Cooneys work will also be of general interest for anyone engaged in archaeological discourse as a most valuable methodological exercise in the intriguing and complex relationships between man, memory, material culture and milieu.

Lars Holten
 Lejre Archaeological Research Centre
 Slangealléen 2
 DK - 4320 Lejre
 Denmark

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Malcolm Todd: Die Germanen. Von den frühen Stammesverbänden zu den Erben des Weströmischen Reiches. Stuttgart: Theiss Verlag, 2000. ISBN 3 8062 1357 7. 270 pages, 41 black-and-white figures/plates. DM 59.00.

Works taking an overview of developments within a given period over large regions or continents are often very useful and should therefore always be welcomed. This is also the case for the English archaeologist Malcolm Todd's synthesis of the history of the Germans in the period from the 4th/3rd century BC to the 7th/8th century AD, which is now available in a German EDITION.

This very stringently organised account falls into two main sections. The first of these (pp. 9-131) uses a wide range of archaeological and historical sources to address a series of subjects which together give an overview of the history of the Germans and their significance for the development of Europe in the period in question. The second section (pp. 135-240) deals with the history of the Germanic tribes. The book concludes with a summary of research history, a list of written sources, a reference list and a very useful and comprehensive glossary.

The book, which was originally published in England in 1992 under the title *The Early Germans*, has, according to the colophon, been updated by the author in connection with the publication of this German edition. Despite this, account has not been taken of some of the more recent literature. Similarly, several important archaeological finds from the last decade are not mentioned. This could, of course, be a conscious choice on the part of the author. Mention of the epochal identification of the site of the slaughter of Varus' legions in 9 AD would, however, have been of relevance (cf. for example Schlüter (ed.) 1993; Schlüter & Wiegels (eds.) 1999).

A general feature of the book is that it is built up around written sources. This has resulted in many very readable and informative accounts. In the description of the structure of Germanic society (p. 33ff.) this method has, however, its shortcomings. Decades of study, and the very precise chronological insight which this gives, makes it possible, on the basis of the archaeological record, to describe the development from the small autonomous power configurations of the Pre-Roman and the Early Roman Iron Age to the centralised supra-regional power centres of the Late Roman Iron Age and the subsequent development of royal power (cf. for example Hedeager 1992; Jørgensen 1995). This is not, however, expressly stated in the book, in which the terms *rex*, *duces* and *comitatus* are discussed solely on the basis of the written sources, without involving the stratification which is apparent from analyses of the war booty deposits from Ejsbøl and, not least, Illerup (von Carnap-Bornheim & Ilkjær 1996, 483ff.), the grave finds (e.g. Lund Hansen 1998a) and discussions regarding the use of gold rings as aristocratic insignia (cf. Lund Hansen 1998b).

In the section on Germanic settlements (p. 61ff.), the author does, however, make use of the archaeological source material. This has resulted in a good overview with respect to the Netherlands, Northwestern Germany and Denmark. The source material relating to settlement in Barbaricum varies considerably, for various reasons, from area to area and a collective description is therefore impossible. Knowledge of settlements of the Wielbark culture is, for example, only very sporadic (cf. Martens 1989), whereas Southern and Western Norwegian farm units from the Roman Iron Age and the Migration period are well documented. Together with grave finds and hoards the latter provide a picture of a well-developed power structure (Myhre 1987; 1997), which is, to a great extent, relevant in an evaluation of the military-aristocratic society in Barbaricum and could therefore very appropriately have been discussed in this book. The Sântana de Murés-Cernjachov culture's settlements north of the Black Sea are also well-known. These could also have been discussed in the light of their great variation, which extends from buildings with stone foundations in the coastal areas, to pit-houses and post-built long-houses of North European type (cf. for example Häusler 1979).

In the section on relations between Germans and Romans (p. 79ff.), a useful overview of the written sources regarding this theme is given in the introduction. As a supplement to this, mention should perhaps have been made of the production of Roman pottery in Haarhausen, Thüringen (Dušek 1992), as this find gives reason for a significant gradation of the terms "Roman" and "Germanic".

Roman-Germanic relations are nowhere more clearly expressed than in the wealth and power centre concentrated around the aristocratic burial site of Himlingeøje in Eastern

Zealand of which oblique mention is made on p. 84: „In der westlichen Ostseeregion stoßen wir auf so viele Importe aus dem Römischen Reich, daß wir ernsthaft von einem größeren Verteilungszentrum, vermutlich auf einer der dänischen Inseln ausgehen müssen, von dem aus die Waren in andere Gebiete Südskandinaviens weitergeleitet wurden". Himlingeøje represents the most thoroughly analysed and published power structure of any from the Late Roman Iron Age in Barbaricum (cf. Lund Hansen *et al.* 1995) and it functioned as a catalyst for the fundamental changes in society which took place around the fighting of the Marcomannic Wars. Eastern Zealand was therefore more than just a "distribution centre" for Roman imports, as the distribution of imports is, along with the various types of jewellery, today the visible evidence of a power centre which was the hub of an aristocratic network extending from the Sântana de Murés-Cernjachov culture north of the Black Sea to Central Sweden and Southern Norway. The oldest graves at Himlingeøje date from the second half of the 2nd century AD and are, accordingly, contemporary with the fighting of the Marcomannic Wars. The participation of the Zealandic aristocracy in these wars appears to have been a contributory factor behind the development of the power centre on Eastern Zealand. The problem is just that the equipment in the graves sends conflicting signals with regard to which side they supported; was it the Germans or the Romans.: The kolben arm ring in grave 1894 from Himlingeøje suggests the former, whereas the two silver beakers (mentioned on p. 121) found in grave 1829, and decorated with warriors armed with Roman ring swords, could indicate the latter. Features from the citadels of Saalburg and Zugmantel, dated to the time prior to the abandonment of *Agri decumates*, have produced a relatively large number of bi-sectioned crossbow fibulae with a high pin catch of Almgren's group VII (Beckman 1995). The distribution of fibulae of this type shows concentrations on Zealand and Funen, and the finds from Southwestern Germany could suggest Southern Scandinavian involvement in the Roman border defences. Whether this was also the case as early as the 2nd century AD, and whether the consolidation of the Eastern Zealandic centre is, to a certain extent, a consequence of this, are so far still open questions.

In the discussions relating to trade and market places, the trade and craft centre at Gudme, Southeastern Funen can naturally not be ignored. With its associated workshops and landing place at Lundeberg it played an important economic role from the 3rd century AD onwards (p. 91f.). The author mentions several contemporaneous and later parallels to the complex on Funen, but omits unfortunately to mention the very interesting, and relevant, settlement at Jakuszowice in Southern Poland (Godowski 1995), which in many ways is reminiscent of, and contemporary with, Gudme/Lundeberg.

Gudme/Lundeborg and, not least, Himlingeøje with its very direct relations to the Roman Rhine provinces on the one hand and a very broad contact surface to the rest of Barbaricum on the other, could have been used to present a description of Barbaricum as a dynamic entity, with a hinterland which in no way was marginalised relative to the Continent and which was characterised by extensive, supra-regional alliances both between Germanic peoples and Romans and between the Germanic aristocracy in areas lying distant from one another. This applies not only to the Late Roman Iron Age but to just as great an extent in subsequent times, as illustrated, for example, by the distribution of the different variants and media of the artistic styles.

In the section on religion, art and crafts (p. 97ff.) a series of spectacular archaeological sources are touched upon; the bog bodies and the two gold horns from Gallehus in Southern Jutland very naturally occupy a prominent position. With regard to the gold horns, the author quite correctly draws attention to the fact that their symbolic content has not yet been fully deciphered and probably never will be. The fact that several elements of the decoration seen on the horns can also be found on pottery from the Süderbrarup cemetery (Bantelmann 1988) is hardly insignificant relative to a more detailed understanding of the horns' symbolism. Another well-known find from Denmark which is found worthy of mention, although not in the section of the religion of the Germanic peoples, but on p. 25f., is the silver cauldron from Gundestrup in Himmerland. As the author remarks, the provenance of this cauldron has, as a consequence of the mixture of both Celtic and Thracian elements, been vigorously discussed and has actually formed the basis for the formation of different schools. This discussion has, however, now been terminated with the appearance of F. Kaul's thorough and well-argued studies which have localised the cauldron's origin to the Thracian Triballoi in Northwestern Bulgaria and Southwestern Romania (Kaul 1991a; 1991b).

A special aspect of Germanic religion, also mentioned by Roman authors, is shown by the North European war booty deposits (p. 100ff.). These give a unique insight into the military potential of the aristocracy and into the battles which raged between different North European power constellations in the Roman Iron Age and Early Migration period. The earliest war booty deposit, from Hjortspring on Als, still stands alone in the Pre-Roman Iron Age (dated to the 4th century BC – not as given in the book (p. 101) 100 BC; cf. Randsborg (1995, 20)), while the other votive finds bear witness to the fact that Northern Europe was a veritable battleground in the period from the 3rd to the 5th centuries AD. Both German and Danish scholars are involved in intense research into this group of finds. Their research includes renewed analyses of old finds and new excavations at already known sites (cf. for example von

Carnap-Bornheim 1997; Bemann & Bemann 1998; Rieck *et al.* 1999) through which our knowledge of the ruling military-aristocratic social hierarchy is continually being expanded. Despite this, it is hardly correct when the Torsbjerg find is said (p. 101) to be one of the best investigated votive finds of this type, as the author, accordingly, overlooks J. Ilkjær and C. von Carnap-Bornheim's treatment of the systematically excavated votive find from Illerup Ådal (Jutland Archaeological Society publications XXV:1ff., Århus 1990ff.). A good example of what modern analysis of a well-known find can produce is, incidentally, C. von Carnap-Bornheim's investigation of the decoration on two *phalerae* from the Torsbjerg find (von Carnap-Bornheim 1997). These can now be shown to have been made by the same craftsman, whereas it was previously thought, as cited in the book (p. 117), that a Germanic craftsman had added to the original Roman ornamentation.

In the section on Germanic art, the appearance of the polychrome style and the use of metal foil are both quite justifiably given a prominent position (p. 115ff.) as these are phenomena which clearly cast light on innovation and mobility. Significant new knowledge has also been acquired within these areas in recent years (von Carnap-Bornheim 1994; 1999a), in that serious doubt has been expressed regarding Gothic influence on the development of polychrome jewellery art. With respect to the spectacular East European finds of polychrome art, R. Harhoius' very praiseworthy and richly-illustrated work on the Early Migration period in Romania (Harhoius 1997) should not be forgotten.

In his excellent account of artistic styles in the Migration period (p. 125ff.), the author could, in addition to the animal styles, also have included the Sösdala style. This punch-based style, which has a wide distribution extending from Scandinavia along a belt running down over Eastern and Central Europe, provides very important evidence concerning the maintenance of a supra-regional aristocratic network subsequent to the Hunnish raids. The style is also represented in the hoard from Jimleul Silvaniei, Romania (not Hungary as stated on p. 129) (Capelle 1994), which has close relations to the hoard from Brangstrup in Central Funen.

In the opinion of the reviewer, the second half of the book, with the main heading of "Das germanische Europa" stands much stronger than the first. The author gives an extremely readable summary of the history of a series of Germanic tribes based primarily on written sources. The history of the Goths is of great interest, not least for North European archaeologists. It is therefore very pleasing that this receives so much attention in the book (p. 138ff.). Even through serious doubt is cast on the value of Cassiodorus' and Jordanes' history of the Goths (Søby Christensen 1999) there are indisputable bonds between Scandinavian and both the Wielbark and

the Sîntana de Mureş/Ernjachov cultures (cf. for example Bierbrauer 1994; Heather 1996).

Also of significance in a North European context are, of course, the Franks, who had a great influence on the development of new political structures in Scandinavia in the Late Iron Age (Jørgensen & Nørgård Jørgensen 1997, 111ff.; Nørgård Jørgensen 1999, 156ff.). Once again this underlines how important it is not to underestimate the great degree of mobility which characterised the history of Europe in the 1st century AD. Incidentally, a couple of corrections should be made to the section on the Franks. On p. 184 it is stated that the well-known female grave from St. Denis in Paris represents Queen Arnegunde; this is hardly in agreement with recent research (cf. Roth 1986, 140ff.). On p. 182 it is stated that Childerich was buried with a gold neck ring. This is in fact a kolben arm ring, i.e. the same aristocratic insignia which was introduced to Barbaricum with Himlingeøje grave 1894 (most recently von Carnap-Bornheim 1999b, 57ff.).

In summary, it must be concluded that Malcolm Todd has, despite the comments raised here, written a fairly good introduction to a very complicated subject. The book's strength lies decidedly in the many compilations of written sources. The book's weakness, on the other hand, is clearly the relatively few references, which makes it less useful for the interested layman or younger student, who requires a basis for further immersion. To these people I would, therefore, rather recommend some of the professionally innovative works which have seen the light of day in recent decades; for example books by B. Cunliffe (1988), P. Geary (1988; 1996), K. Randsborg (1991; 1995), L. Hedeager (1992), J. Collis (1997) and P. Wells (1999). There is, furthermore, a series of marvellous and well-illustrated German language exhibition catalogues in which stringent professional knowledge, accompanied by comprehensive references, is made available to a broader audience, for example *Gallien in der Spätantike* (1980), *Germanen, Hunnen und Awaren* (1987), *Schätze der Ostgoten* (1995), *Die Franken: Wegbereiter Europas* (1996), *Die Alamannen* (1997), *Barbarenschmuck und Römergold: Der Schatz von Szilágysomlyó* (1999) and *Römer zwischen Alpen und Nordmeer* (2000).

Birger Storgaard
National Museum of Denmark
Frederiksholms Kanal 12
DK-1220 Copenhagen K.
birger.storgaard@natmus.dk

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Michael Stafford: From Forager to Farmer in Flint. A Lithic Analysis of the Prehistoric Transition to Agriculture in Southern Scandinavia. Aarhus University Press in cooperation with Kalundborg Regional Museum and the National Forest and Nature Agency, Aarhus 1999. 147 pp, 34 tables, 101 figures.

In this book, M. Stafford pursues the goal to detect changes in flint technology during the transformation from the Mesolithic to the Neolithic in south Scandinavia c. 4000 BC. The book is a much welcomed contribution to the research in this much debated transitional period as it focuses on aspects that have not previously been systematically examined. Stafford is seeking data "with which to evaluate precisely how the Mesolithic foragers and Neolithic farmers differed" (p. 13).

Flint technology reflects the behaviour of its masters: The knowledge about where to obtain suitable raw materials, and what tools should be used for preparing them, reveals the knowledge and tradition of the producers. The types of flint artefacts produced indicate the need for specific tools to manage production and consumption. The flint manufacturing process itself implies a number of operations, all carried out on the basis of learning and practice. By studying the flint technology one should therefore be able to answer questions regarding cultural continuity and change.

The author presents his project in Chapter 1. He studied primary material from eight old and new excavations in the Åmosen bog, Western Zealand, including the Muldbjerg settlement excavated by J. Troels-Smith 1951-66, the Præstelyngen settlement excavated under the supervision of J. Troels-Smith 1966-67, and sites excavated by A. Fischer in the 1980s. As a sort of middle-Mesolithic reference site, he includes a settlement find, Flækkemagle, of the Kongemose Culture in the Åmose basin. Also included is material from the stratified shell midden at Norsminde in Eastern Jutland, excavated by Søren H. Andersen. For the time being, the Åmose sites and Norsminde layers make up the group of Danish assemblages that can most exactly be related to the transition from Ertebølle to the TRB Culture, and which can be tied on the time scale as a string of pearls by means of C-14 dates.

In Chapter 2, 'The Cultural and Theoretical Framework', Stafford presents an up-to-date survey of the research situation concerning the late Mesolithic and early Neolithic in South Scandinavia and gives a review of theoretical explanations for the Meso-Neo transition. In Chapter 3, M. Stafford says that generally, research has been focussing on the pottery from the time of the Meso-Neo transition, and 'the analysis of flint assemblages has suffered as a result' (p.42). In that chapter he presents the various flint tools belonging to the late Ertebølle and the early Neolithic TRB Culture.

Being an experienced flint-knapper, M. Stafford has a good background for characterising working methods (soft and hard techniques) and for the classification of waste material accumulating during the production of flint tools. In Chapter 4 he presents his methodology comprising six measurements and nine technological field values for the analysis of flint debitage and retouched flake and blade tools, including attributes such as stepping intensity, edge outlines, length of working edge, percussion technique, etc.

The analyses are presented in Chapter 5 where the different attributes of the flint material are being compared. Although there are some differences between the material from the Åmose sites and material from the layers at the Norsminde shell midden (weight of flint cores, length of blades), there are general trends through time at both locations like the increase in flake technique and the decrease in blade technique from Meso to Neo. The technical differences and similarities between the two periods are evaluated and interpreted in Chapter 6. The differences are summarized as follows: 1) A change from blade to flake tools, 2) a shift from soft percussion technique to hard-hammer flaking, 3) more scrapers in the TRB assemblages, 4) the appearance of polished flint axes in the early Neolithic.

Interesting are also the similarities between late Mesolithic and early Neolithic assemblages: 1) The production of largely the same retouched tool types result in debitage that is virtually indistinguishable between periods, 2) flake axes were made in both periods, 3) there was a continuous production of blades in the early Neolithic, although they occur in less quantities than before.

M. Stafford presents some possible reasons for the gradual decline in the use of flint blades and the change from soft to hard percussion technique. It sounds plausible that blades were preferred by mobile hunters who had to carry with them a stock of blanks that could be used for making arrow-heads as well as other tools. The need for multi-transformable, light material for making tools was not so pronounced among sedentary people. The scarcity of antler material for making punches at the end of the Mesolithic, due to a decrease in the number of antler-bearing game, is presented as a possible cause for the change from soft to hard hammer technique. During the following early Neolithic period, however, there was an intense production of flint axes using punch-technique, for which antler punches must have been supplied.

If the author had chosen other sites from the early Neolithic than Muldbjerg, being a site especially used for hunting and fishing activities, he may also have found that at inland sites of this period, the debitage is very much different from what is usually found at the Ertebølle settlements. Especially at sites where flint axes were produced. The numerous flakes result-

ing from this working process provided suitable blanks for scrapers, flake axes and knives. Re-using the debitage from the flint axe production was probably done for simple practical reasons.

Concerning continuity, there is a problematic attempt to link the late Mesolithic, so-called 'specialized core axes' with the pointed-butted flint axes of the early Neolithic. It is rather a detail, but in fact we are speaking of two different tools, an adze and an axe, respectively.

Looking at the broad similarities between flint industries on both sides of the Meso-Neo transition, M. Stafford opposes the perception that there was a radical change in cultural development. He can finally dismiss immigration as explanation for the introduction of agriculture. His opinion is valid as far as the production of the flint tools is concerned, and his analysis has given us a much clearer picture of the development from Ertebølle to TRB regarding this aspect of the archaeological source material. The majority of continuous, flint technological traits, and the use of basically similar tools, speak in favour of population continuity and make us see the introduction of agriculture and husbandry as an event taking place among the indigenous people of south Scandinavia who acquired the means of food production from neighbouring peasant communities.

The author goes further, as he advocates for a long, gradual development towards sedentism. Novelties that appear during the rather long time-span, such as imported amphibolite shaft-hole axes, the use of pottery, the beginning of agriculture, introduction of polished flint axes (which he finds connected with the early appearance of imported metal axes), erection of the first grave monuments - all are given equal priority in his model of gradual change towards a more sedentary and hierarchical society. There is a remarkable statement about the evidence 'suggesting that the neolithisation of south Scandinavia had a largely social, not subsistence-based, cause' (p. 134). Like Ian Hodder he sees 'the Neolithic as a *symbolic* transformation within indigenous cultures, of which the control of domesticates was but a part' (p. 135).

M. Stafford is thereby much in line with the present trend in interpretative archaeology. There are many aspects of the Neolithic societies that cannot be explained on the background of subsistence needs but are more likely reflecting social ranking and may be seen as symbols thereof. So why not explain the beginning of the Neolithic along the same lines?

A few things prevent a total acceptance of M. Stafford's conclusions: His attempt to deprive the adoption of agriculture and husbandry of its significance and to slow down the speed of change. Maybe the study of what we now know - thanks to M. Stafford - was a long-lived flint-knapping tradition on both sides of the transition has blurred the picture. If we turn to

other evidence, it looks differently. Alongside the adoption of cultivated plants and domestic animals the settlement pattern changed dramatically as the first farmers started to populate inland areas that were not inhabited before. The continued use of hunting and fishing sites such as those studied by M. Stafford was only part of what quickly became a much wider settlement pattern. A new set of pottery vessels and a whole new ceramic technology accompanied the advent of agricultural food processing. The onset of new sacrificial practices at specially chosen locations was soon accompanied by the construction of status-dependant burial monuments. There began an intensive circulation of valuable objects. There is no reason to believe that the development from the beginning of the Neolithic was slow and gradual. During the first two or three centuries of the early Neolithic things were changing at least ten times faster than during the last millennium of the late Mesolithic.

The Meso-Neo transition is a fascinating event that caused accelerating change altering the society. It offers all the opportunities we may want for the study of culture change, social interaction and symbolic behaviour. - Why not call it a revolution?

Poul Otto Nielsen
The National Museum
Danish Prehistoric Collections
Frederiksholms Kanal 12
DK-1220 Copenhagen
poul.otto.nielsen@natmus.dk