
Diachronic trends in the Early Mesolithic site types of Norway

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Abstract

The Post-glacial is a period of great changes in temperatures, landscape and resources. Studies of the conditions during the Early Mesolithic in Norway, show two important events: 1) A cold pulse, known as the Preboreal oscillation (PBO) c. 9300–9200 calBC, is identified by temperature drops on land and at sea, readvancing ice sheets and retreating forests. 2) Midway through the Early Mesolithic period, c. 8800 calBC, the Norwegian Atlantic Current was established, bringing warmer watermasses along the coast. This changed the marine environment and brought stable conditions for a new range of species. At the same time the fjords become ice free, air temperatures increase and larger tree stands establish on land. Recent studies of adaptive strategies related to these climatic and palae-oceanographic developments along the coast of Norway have suggested that the toolkit used by the Early Mesolithic hunter-gatherers remained unaffected throughout the whole period. The settlement pattern, however, changed from being almost exclusively connected to the outer coastal zone in the first half of the Early Mesolithic, to being relatively more related to the mainland coast and sheltered coastal locations during the second half. It thus seems that generalized toolkits and flexible mobility systems were ways of coping with the changing environment. In this paper, I explore if *site type* was also an active variable of their adaptive strategy within this period.

Keywords: Site types, Early Mesolithic, Norway, Marine environment, Coast

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