Transitions in Mesolithic Societies of Baltic Scandinavia

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Abstract

Mesolithic societies of Scandinavia and the Baltic has been viewed upon as dull and static characterized by cultural continuity and only slow gradual changes - until the neolithisation. In this paper we oppose this perspective by presenting recent research that account of several major cultural transitions in Mesolithic Scandinavia. The transitions that we will address, derive from analysis of genetic and proteomic data and archaeological materials, i.e., lithic technology and bone point typology, and consider human migrations from western Russia into Fennoscandinavia and subsequently southern Scandinavia during the 9-8th mill. BC. Further, we argue for a decrease in human population during the onset of the 8th mill. BC in regions of southern Scandinavia and northern Europe, that are linked to regional climatic and environmental factors, i.e., low precipitation, drying out lake-systems and forest fires,. The introduction of the trapeze horizon c. 6800 BC, concern another transition that is most likely connected with pan-European Mesolithic influence, and finally do the introduction of ceramic technology c. 5000 BC from eastern Baltic Mesolithic societies mark a technological transition with economic perspectives. Our point is that these transitions evidence trans-regional communication within Mesolithic societies of northern and eastern Europe, meaning that the contact and the communication with Neolithic societies, and the ongoing neolithisation process of western Europe was, limited until c. 4000 BC, when the first farmers made their way into Scandinavia.

Keywords: human migration, genetics, proteomics, ltihic technology, trapeze horizon, ceramics, climate

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