Using residential data as proxy for population dynamics: Aoristic modelling of shoreline dated sites in coastal SE-Norway

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Résumé

The Mesolithic in Norway is represented by a vast archaeological material, where South-Eastern Norway alone holds sites numbering in the thousands. The concentration of settlement in coastal areas and a continuous land-rise in the Holocene means that Mesolithic sites in South-Eastern Norway can be dated with reference to their elevation above present day sea level. This offers a great possibility for elucidating general, long-term tendencies in societal variation.
Modelling relative fluctuations in radiocarbon dates has proven a valuable proxy for prehistoric population dynamics. Shoreline dated sites can offer a large, independent source of temporal data that is not contingent on the preservation of organic material. While this data can be leveraged to model long-term societal fluctuations, it is, however, associated with its own set of underlying assumptions and uncertainties.
Here we draw on works that have attempted to combine several, disparate sources of data for studying long-term population patterns. By applying a probabilistic approach, using aoristic modelling, we offer preliminary results and methodological considerations pertinent for the handling of both a material on this scale and the uncertainty associated with dating and summing site counts by means of shoreline displacement.

Mots-Clés: demographics, aoristic modelling, shoreline displacement, Norway

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