

UBAS



University of Bergen Archaeological Series

The Stone Age Conference in Bergen 2017

Dag Erik Færø Olsen (ed.)



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

12
2022

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Preface

This anthology is based on contributions presented as part of *The Stone Age Conference in Bergen 2017 – Coast and Society, research and cultural heritage management*. The conference was co-organized by the Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion (AHKR) at the University of Bergen and the Department of Cultural History at the University Museum of Bergen (UM). The organizing committee included Dag Erik Færø Olsen (leader) and Tina Jensen Granados from AHKR, together with Leif Inge Åstveit and Knut Andreas Bergsvik from UM.

The Stone Age Conference in Bergen 2017 was the third instalment of the “Stone Age Conference” series to be organized in Norway. The first conference was held in Bergen in 1993 (Bergsvik *et al.* 1995) and the second in Molde in 2003. The purpose for the 2017 conference in Bergen was to gather archaeologists with common interest in the Norwegian Stone Age and from all parts of the national Stone Age community. Several prominent research communities exist in Norway today and representatives from all University departments and from the majority of the County Municipalities was gathered to share current results and to discuss common issues and strategies for future research.

Since the last conference in 2003, the cultural heritage management in Norway has made large quantities of new archaeological data accessible for research. Such extensive new data has provided new methodological and theoretical challenges and opportunities which is reflected in the scope of research published within the last 20 years.

The Stone Age Conference in Bergen 2017 wanted to reflect the new empirical, theoretical and methodological diversity, and to highlight how these developments could be integrated into the cultural heritage management and within future research. The conference was structured by current themes and approaches and divided into five main sessions (including a poster session) and seven session themes (see Sessions and papers at the end of this volume).

An increasing association with the *natural scientific approaches* was one important theme of the conference focusing on research on climate change, aDNA and new and improved methods for analysis and dating. Related to this was the general theme *technology* were studies on raw material and technological studies are used in mobility- and network analysis.

Managing and utilizing the large quantities of data generated over the last two decades was the basis for the themes *demography* and *subsistence changes*. The theme *methodological developments* included increasing digitalization and how this is used in rescue archaeology, with challenges and new possibilities. The conference also wanted to explore aspects of *ritual communication* where various forms of expressions, such as rock art, could elaborate and increase our understanding of several of the other main themes mentioned.

During the three days of the conference a total of 46 15 minutes presentations addressed various topics and aspects within the seven session themes. All sessions were led by session leaders and three of the conference sessions were introduced by key note speakers.

After the conference, it was decided to publish an anthology, inviting all participants to contribute including the poster participants. The publication was to be in the University

of Bergen Archaeological Series, UBAS, and with Dag Erik Færø Olsen as editor of the anthology. Ten papers were submitted from all the sessions and is representative of the topics presented and discussed during the three-day conference. The papers included in this volume are organized mainly geographically starting with Northern Norway moving southwards.

Kenneth Webb Vollan focuses on housepit sites in Arctic Norway using radiocarbon dates for distinguishing reuse or occupational phases. He presents a method for analysing dates following the Bayesian approach and shows that the housepits were reused to a much larger degree than previous acknowledged.

Skule Spjelkavik and *Axel Müller* explores similar topics in their paper about quartz crystal provenance. By using laser ablation inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (LA-ICP-MS) they were able to compare debitage from the Early Mesolithic settlement site Mohalsen I at the island Vega with samples from 19 known sources in Norway. This is especially interesting since there are no known quartz crystal occurrences at Vega and was consequently brought from the main land or other areas. This study shows the potential for using this method, even though no clear parallel to the Mohalsen debitage could be identified in the analysed material.

Jan Mangerud and *John Inge Svendsen* explores colonization processes from a geological perspective. They document how an ice sheet margin presented a physical barrier across the Oslofjord preventing human immigration until the onset of the Holocene, providing an interesting backdrop for discussing aspects of colonization processes in the Early Mesolithic.

Arne Johan Nærøy discusses the use of tools and behaviour patterns based on use-wear analysis of quartz assemblage from the site 16 Budalen in Øygarden, Hordaland County. He is able to distinguish two individuals operating at the site suggesting spatially segregated work operations. Nærøy shows through this study the potential for functional analysis of lithic material from settlement sites.

Astrid Nyland, *Kidane Fanta Gebremariam* and *Ruben With's* contribution represents both the new technological and methodological developments and the interdisciplinary nature of archaeology today. This paper explores the potential for using pXRF for regional provenance analysis of greenstone adzes in western Norway. This study revisits an older interpretation of the division of this region into two social territories in the Middle and Late Mesolithic. The results show that the method is robust and well suited for studying green stone and the authors can also largely confirm the original interpretations based on distribution networks of Mesolithic adzes.

Birgitte Skar discusses the early postglacial migration into Scandinavia based on aDNA studies on two Early Mesolithic Norwegian skeletons. Skar's results confirms the recent interpretation of a second migration into Norway from the Northeast thus contributing to the overall narrative of the colonization of Norway.

Almut Schülke revisits the topic of Mesolithic burial practises in Norway based on new data from recent excavations. Schülke highlights that human remains are often found at settlement sites, opening for discussions of various relationships between the living and the dead and human-nature engagement.

Krister Eilertsen presents results from an excavation of an Early Neolithic hut in Rogaland, Southwestern Norway. He discusses classical interpretative challenges where the lithic material and ¹⁴C-datings are not comparable. Eilertsen emphasise the importance of not dismissing difficult results but rather try to find an answer to the differences in light of a wider analysis of the area including various natural and cultural processes. He is thus able to explain the contrasting data and provide new insight into settlement patterns and economy at the start of the Neolithic.

Dag Erik Færev Olsen reviews the rock shelters in the mountain regions of Hardangervidda and Nordfjella. The previous interpretation of these settlement sites as primarily from the Late Neolithic and onwards is discussed based on a reclassification of archaeological material. The results show that rock shelters have been used from at least the Middle Mesolithic and in some cases with an intensification and stronger continuity after 2350 BC.

Gaute Reitan discusses the chronological division of the Mesolithic based on new data from excavations the last 20 years. Reitan presents a revised chronology for the Mesolithic in Southeast Norway dividing each of the three main phases into two sub-phases, adding two new phases to Egil Mikkelsen's original from 1975.

Acknowledgements

On the behalf of the organizing committee, we would like to thank all participants of *Steinalderkonferansen i Bergen 2017* for sharing their knowledge and for the discussions that followed at the conference. We also want to express our gratitude to the conference key note speakers, Prof. Kjell Knutsson (Dep. of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University), Assoc. Prof. Per Persson (Dep. of Archaeology, Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo) and Prof. Charlotte Damm (Dep. of Archaeology, History, Religious Studies and Theology, The Arctic University of Norway) for introducing three of the conference sessions. This gratitude is also extended to five session leaders, Assoc. Prof. Arne Johan Nærvøy (Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger), Prof. Marianne Skandfer (The Arctic University Museum of Norway), Assoc. Prof. Birgitte Skar (Dep. of Archaeology and Cultural History, NTNU University Museum), Prof. Hans Peter Blankholm (Dep. of Archaeology, History, Religious Studies and Theology, The Arctic University of Norway) and Prof. Almut Schülke (Dep. of Archaeology, Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo).

During the three-day conference the committee received assistance from voluntary students from The University of Bergen and they provided valuable help during the conference.

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The editor of this anthology would further like to express gratitude to all the anonymous peer reviewers whose valuable comments and insights has made this publication possible.

Last, but not least, thank you to the authors of this anthology for the patience and work on the papers that make out this volume.

Dag Erik Færø Olsen and Tina Jensen Granados – Oslo 2021

References

Bergsvik, K.A. Nygård, S. and Nærøy, A.J. 1995, eds. *Steinalderkonferansen i Bergen 1993*. Arkeologiske Skrifter, 8. Bergen, University Museum of Bergen.

In this volume, 10 papers from the Stone Age Conference in Bergen 2017 are presented. They range thematically from the earliest pioneer phase in the Mesolithic to the Neolithic and Bronze Age in the high mountains. The papers discuss new research and methodological developments showing a diverse and dynamic Stone Age research community in Norway.



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