ANALECTA PRAEHISTORICA LEIDENSIA 29

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# PRAEHISTORICA
# LEIDENSIA

# 29

# contents

# Ideology and social structure of stone age communities in Europe

## preface

This volume is the result of a conference held at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies, Wassenaar, Holland, on April 28 and 29, 1994. The subject of the conference focussed on the social organisation and ideology of the stone age communities in Europe during the later Mesolithic and Neolithic periods (ca. 8000-4000 BP).

The questions of social structure, social organisation and ideology of hunting and gathering and early farming communities in the stone age are becoming increasingly central to our understanding of these societies and of their transformations. This realisation has provoked a lively debate on the subject in recent publications. At the same time, many archaologists and prehistorians approach this question from the position of their own period of research (either Mesolithic or Neolithic), and/or from the point of view of a particular paradigm they favour. This has resulted in many conflicting views which provide a polemical background to the subject of the volume.

The contributions to the volume focussed on three particular questions: 1) what do we know about the social organisation and ideology of these societies today, 2) how can we use archaeological evidence and our conceptual frameworks to gain greater knowledge of the social domain of the Mesolithic and Neolithic societies, 3) what patterns of social change attend the Mesolithic-Neolithic transition?

We would like to thank the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies (NIAS) for making the conference financially possible and the staff of both NIAS and the Institute for Prehistory of the University of Leiden for giving generously their time and resources which made the conference such a success. The preparation of the volume was made possible with the financial support of the Faculty of Archaeology, University of Leiden. Finally, the volume would not have come into being, were it not for the contributors from six different countries who gathered at Wassenaar. The presentation of papers and the lively discussions were enhanced by sun-drenched strolls along the beach in Wassenaar and sessions at St. Moritz aan de Zee. We would like to acknowledge the *genius loci* as a source of inspiration.

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# Stone age, ideology and scaling the ladder of inference

## 1. The good intentions

Trying to understand the ideology of stone age communities has always been a major challenge, a view encapsulated by Ch. Hawkes in his famous 'ladder of inference' (Hawkes 1954). According to the 'ladder of inference', ideology is the aspect of human behavior so far removed from the more evident functional attributes of archaeological data that any inferences about ideology must be tentative, circumstantial and speculative. It follows, then, that ideology is the aspect least substantiated by empirical data and therefore the most difficult to interpret. The reaction to this position is well-known: while some have been reticent to even address the issue of social structure and ideology, others have placed it at the center of their investigations.

The major purpose of this book is to break down dichotomies. The first is the one between so-called processualists and post-processualists, the other is the one between hunter-gatherer, Mesolithic societies and farming, Neolithic ones. For a whole range of reasons, including philosophical orientation of researchers, scholarly traditions, the respective antiquity of the Mesolithic and Neolithic remains, and the nature of the evidence, the Mesolithic has been treated mainly from a processualist perspective, whereas the later periods have attracted their full share of post-processual interpretations.

Much of our archaeological interpretations of the stone age reflect period-specific modeling and theorizing. The Mesolithic hunter-gatherers have been regarded as acephalous and egalitarian communities, as prisoners of their natural surroundings; what little has been written on ideology and social structure was from a processual perspective. Neolithic people, in contrast, were seen as engaging in complex social relations and were regarded as in control of their natural environment. One reason for this view is that post-processualists were attracted by the standing monuments, ditched enclosures and various forms of artistic expression, aspects of material culture which are clearly linked to the social and ideological focus of their research. In contrast, the Mesolithic appears to have a limited number of such remains. As this volume illustrates, this apparent absence is due more to paradigmatic indifference rather than being the reflection of past reality.

There are other reasons as well. The subliminal link, tacitly recognized by both post-processualists and processualists, between hunter-gatherers, nature and the priority of human biology on the one hand, and farmers, culture and the priority of cultural life on the other, recreates the Neolithic in our own image. This is the society of small individual farmers, located in neatly organized field systems as a replication of our own idealized farming landscape. Implicitly then, we are more capable of relating to Neolithic farming culture as our own ancestors; we cannot comprehend hunter-gatherer cultures as ancestral to our European heritage. Consequently, a large conceptual gap has been created between the Mesolithic and the Neolithic. In our view, both the Mesolithic and the Neolithic were internally far more heterogeneous than we have recognized. This is the major reason why this dichotomy needs to be abolished.

The associated separation between processualists and post-modern archaeologists has also been an artificial construct, generated by often competitive debates about the merits of each approach. In practice, very few processual archeologists are consistently adhering to their programmatic statements and, equally, very few post-modern researchers stick to their own proclamations. In practice, archaeologists eclectically pick and choose from both theoretical approaches. However, it is also true that there are fundamental differences in the use of some basic concepts (the existence of a real past, culture as meaningfully constituted, social action and behavior) between the two schools of thought. In theory they are irreconcilable. In practice, however, the variation in approaches to specific problems and case studies spans the entire spectrum between post-modern and processualist archaeologists, as exemplified in the present volume. This range is reflected in the differing scales of investigation and levels of abstraction. Processualists tend to operate on longer time scales and focus on larger organizational units, while post-modernists concentrate more on shorter time scales and smaller, more specific units of organization.

Within archaeology two themes are providing a forum for reconciliation and cross-fertilization between the two schools of thought: one is landscape, the other is social organization and ideology. The conference, of which this

volume is an outcome, has been at least partly organized with the aim of bringing together representatives of different points of view.

## 2.　　　　Conceptual issues

Both the culture-historical archaeologists and the New Archaeologists thought of the reconstruction of the past as value-free. Their investigations started from the premise that the past could be objectively reconstructed and that such reconstruction could be evaluated by the scientific examination of the evidence. As a part of the broader post-modern critique, this premise was challenged by the post-processual archaeologists. The basis of this challenge is the premise that archaeological evidence passes through at least two hermeneutical cycles of understanding and interpretation. Consequently, the nature of the archaeological record as an objective reflection of past behavior was questioned. For example, the discard of rubbish was no longer considered an incidental deposit reflecting, for instance, subsistence. It was instead an intentional and selective deposition of waste, a signature of concepts of dirt and purity and their ideological correlates. As such, it did not reflect directly past subsistence behavior. This is the first of the two hermeneutic cycles that affect the archaeological record (Shanks/Tilley 1987).

The second hermeneutic cycle rests in the interpretation of this evidence by the researchers who are prisoners of their own preconceived ideas and ideological prejudices. Because every archaeologist interprets the past in terms of his or her agenda the interpretations cannot be objective. Post-modernists believe that the evaluation of different interpretations of the past by means of formal testing of hypotheses (the hypothetical-deductive method) is impossible for two reasons: first, because of the hermeneutics inherent in archaeological inference, and, second, because the complexity of the archaeological evidence is such that there is no direct correspondence between the material remains and human behavior or social action. The removal of formal testing as an appropriate criterion for choosing between alternative interpretations, leaves the way open for the discriminating criteria being defined by the morality and ideology of the individual researcher.

We would certainly agree that no interpretations are value-free. All interpretations of the past are contingent on our own ideology and historical background; the inter-pretation itself is historically situated. From that it follows that there are several alternative interpretations of the past possible. However, the extent to which this idea has been promoted as the desirable form of discourse led to the emergence of the relativist dilemma (Binford 1987; Hodder 1988; Wylie 1989). The basis of the relativist dilemma is the existence of several competing interpretations, all of which

are held to be of equal value. The problem then becomes how to identify a criterion by which to judge one explanation better than others: logico-positivism no longer supplies such a criterion.

At this point there is a divergence of views how to deal with this problem. There are those like Shanks and Tilley (1987, 1989) who do not appear disturbed by this dilemma: there is no inherently preferable or better explanation, the real past is an illusion, there are many different pasts which can only be apprehended through our own western viewpoint. In such a relativist situation, "the truth" becomes a matter of convincing the reader through rhetoric and presentation (the poetics of discourse). Shanks and Tilley never state clearly how they choose their favorite representation of the past, but the implication is that "the merit, or justness or accuracy of any reconstruction of the past is ultimately to be judged whether or not it is useful (in the political sense) in the modern world" (Renfrew 1989, 36, see also Shanks/Tilley 1987, 198). Chosen in concordance with their own political beliefs and prejudices, the past then becomes part of politically-motivated propaganda.

On the other hand there are others, such as Hodder (1982, 1986, 1990), who, although not believing in the reality of the past, nevertheless believes that some criterion of selection has to be applied. For Hodder such criteria can be found in Collingwood's concepts of coherence and correspondence (Collingwood 1946(1957)).

A third position is taken by Colin Renfrew (1990) for whom a real past does exist and is the object of inquiry. In his critique of Shanks' and Tilley's programatic statement, Archaeology into the 1990's (1989), Renfrew clarifies his choice of criteria by which to evaluate alternative archaeological explanations in the pursuit of systematic knowledge, or Wissenschaft (1989, 34-40). This includes the deliberate adoption of the scientific method, the rejection of extreme positivist position, the use of critical self-analysis, frequent appeal to the data by testing, the rejection of Hempel's deductive-nomological formulation (laws), but at the same time, the search for good generalizations as explanatory frameworks, the rejection of researcher's political stance as a criterion of validation, acceptance of 'correspondence' as stronger than 'coherence' as criterion of truth, and emphasis on processes rather than specific events.

In our view, the evaluation and validation of our understanding of past societies can be implemented only as a multi-dimensional exercise, carried out at several levels of resolution. Archaeological record refers to events of different duration, ranging from short or 'single event' episodes, to long-term events, more appropriately described as processes. Different sorts of evidence, so defined in a temporal sense, may require different means of evaluation.

For example, the evaluation of some aspects of a single event – the presence/absence of grinding, polishing or cutting at a site for example – may lend itself to rigorous testing by formal hypotheses. Other evaluations – such as the meaning of disarticulated human bone deposits in a surrounding ditch – will require a more ambiguous assessment in terms of coherence and correspondence. Other forms of evaluation still, for example that of 'the adaptive success' of a prehistoric community, will permit only an exercise in controlled speculation guided by the Darwinian theory of evolution, common sense and the record of the past. As is implied by this argument, different forms of interpretation operate at different temporal scales, and refer to different assemblages of archaeological evidence. It is the skill of the researcher in the reconstruction, evaluation and understanding of the past at such multi-dimensional level, employing both the 'processual' and 'post-processual' approaches, that marks, in our view, a desirable step forward from the earlier entrenched positions on both sides of the processual/post-processual divide.

Why are we so concerned with the interpretation of archaeological evidence and with the validation of alternative views of the past? Because it has been argued for a long time that ideology and social structure of societies living in a remote past is, effectively, beyond the reach of archeological inquiry (for example, as in C. Hawkes' ladder of inference). One of the outcomes of the post-processual relativist approach to archeological interpretation was that ideology and social structure became accessible, because testing by way of formal hypothesis and proof was removed. In relationship to the subject of the book, our concern remains that ideology and social structure of stone age societies are comprehended as accurately as possible, in other words as close to the prehistoric reality as can be achieved.

## 3.        Implementation

The role of ideology and social structure in society in general, and in past societies of the stone age more specifically, is, of course, a vast subject, the summary of which is beyond the remit of this introduction and beyond our capacity. The pertinent philosophical positions range from regarding ideology as an all-inclusive, encapsulating phenomenon which determines the course of our lives, to attributing a specific place and role to ideology and social structure within a broader structural framework characterizing any social order (a.o. Durkheim 1938; Marx 1967; White 1949). An alternative view, which is gaining currency in archaeology , is that if the social fabric is undifferentiated in simple societies (Mauss 1954), it would be inappropriate to impose our modern Cartesian frame-works on social life of the past societies (Hodder 1982,

1990; Shanks/Tilley 1987, 1990; Thomas 1991, 1996). In practice, however, it is difficult not to adopt some form of presently known social or ideological structure as a heuristic devise for 'reading' – or interpreting – the archaeological record of the past and the operation of past societies as a system (i.e. Hodder 1990; Thomas 1991; Zvelebil 1992a, b).

From this it follows that the use of analogies is central to every archaeological interpretation. In our view concrete analogies and, more generally, analogical reasoning, is the most important vehicle for linking archaeological evidence with social structure and ideology and for understanding its dynamic role in transforming society. As this volume shows, different people deal in different ways in the use of analogies. What is common to all contributors is that they all use some sort of analogy, whether explicitly (Bradley, Verhart and Wansleeben, Zvelebil) or implicitly (Thomas, O'Shea). Each form of explicit analogy has its own justification and its own methodology, while implicit analogy is often presented either as an enlightenment, or it is imported into the argument as part of an already established idea.

There are different types of analogies, such as the general-comparative analogy, direct-historical analogy or structural analogy. The general-comparative analogy is actually the most widely used, but also most strongly criticized. It provides the least convincing link between the observed and the inferred, because the only justification for the employment of this type of analogy commonly is the existence of some formal similarities between source and subject. An example is the relationship between size of a dwelling and number of inhabitants. More often than not general analogies are used implicitly and not subjected to a critical assessment in the light of the extant archaeological data.

The direct-historical analogy is based on the assumption that similarities between two chronologically distant societies have more validity if they share the same historical trajectory and geographical location. Such a form of analogy is generally held to be more convincing than the general analogy, but a crucial assumption is that of historical continuity. In this volume Zvelebil's contribution on prehistoric hunter-gatherer ritual landscapes uses direct-historical analogy in the interpretation.

The basis for a structural analogy lies in the belief or expectation that societies share a certain structure regardless of their historical situation or spatial location. The common nature of such structures provides the justification for the use of analogy. So, for example, in Marxist thought the underlying structure of societies is held to be always the same. Societies are organized in terms of relations and means of production and this framework is applied not only to the capitalist industrial societies for which it was originally

developed, but also to pre-industrialized societies and indeed societies in the past on the assumption that the Marxist structure can be used to explain social relations in these societies as well. Structuralism of Lévi-Strauss and others can be used as another example where humanity is expected to share certain cognitive structures organized in terms of binary oppositions. As a third example, it could be argued that ideology and, more broadly, belief systems share certain structures and patterns which could be employed in linking ethnographic and prehistoric evidence for such systems. So, for example, the killing of a bear during a ritual symbolizing structural relationships between people and their resources will result in a certain patterning which may correspond with prehistoric configurations; such prehistoric patterns will then act as signatures of ideological structures known ethnographically. This latter example of a structural analogy also rests on the assumption of historical continuity and, from that perspective, is akin to the direct-historical analogy.

The fourth analogy is the chronological, temporal one, a type of analogy we may be hardly aware of and which, consequently, we tend to employ implicitly. Societies operate on different time scales, because the perception, division and measurement of time is a cultural construct. Moreover, even within the same society, different temporal scales are operative simultaneously as, for instance, sacred versus secular time (Bourdieu 1977): the secular time is linked to the seasonal round and the recurrent daily activities, the sacred time is related to the cosmology and to ritual practices which may have a time depth far exceeding our western conceptions of practical, measured time. These different time scales have a direct impact on the formation of the archaeological record: a ritual act, perhaps occurring at very long intervals, produces a different configuration of material remains than an activity which occurs on a daily basis. To complicate matters, our western one-dimensional concept of measured time is implicitly used in our interpretations of past remains and the chronological implications thereof. From that perspective long-term change could only be the result of natural, environmental (i.e. external) circumstances, whereas, using a different temporal analogy, we can now accept that such change can be due to social processes, guided by long-lasting ritual constructs (Gosden 1994). An example pertinent to the contents of this book is the unidirectional evolutionary fashion in which we have long regarded the transition from the Mesolithic to the Neolithic (Zvelebil 1993).

Clearly, the source for most analogies, whether general-comparative, direct-historical, structural or temporal, lies in ethnographic and ethnohistoric accounts. In that sense these two lines of inquiry provide most of the images with which we try to make the past 'come alive' so to speak. This seems especially pertinent to the subjects addressed in this book: social structure and ideology.

## 4.        E-merging ideologies:
##          the themes in the volume.

Anyone reading as far as here will not then be surprised to find that the variety of approaches, viewpoints and concerns which we have briefly introduced is matched by a variety of views among those who have addressed the area of social structure and ideology among stone age societies (compare, for example, Bradley 1984; Larsson 1989, 1990; O'Shea 1984; Thomas 1991; Van de Velde 1979; Zvelebil 1997). This situation is also reflected in this volume. Yet, there are also areas of common concern, issues that come to the fore repeatedly in different papers, and occasional areas of consensus. In a way, these themes represent, implicitly, the new, emerging agenda for future investigation.

Richard Bradley's paper addresses the evidence for patterned burial practices in the Mesolithic – burial traditions – at a pan-European scale, and discusses the differences in treatment of Mesolithic and Neolithic burial practices by the archaeologists. He notes that while the Mesolithic specialists emphasize adaptation to the natural environment, students of the Neolithic are more often concerned with ideology and social relations. This leads also to a difference of scale. While the Neolithic period is interpreted through close reading of the archaeological record, Mesolithic society is often interpreted through the ethnographic record. This may be, perhaps, because prehistoric hunter-gatherers in Europe are not perceived as ancestral to our own, European society; consequently, there is no sense of historical continuity or of analogues other than those in the ethnographic record outside Europe.

Bradley goes on to discuss the major features of Mesolithic burial traditions which are shared across large areas of Europe. These include the use of red ochre, organic artifacts, antler and food remains in the funerary rites, of dog bones and dog burials, of the circulation of disarticulated human bones and of votive offerings. Bradley notes that isolated human bones are treated in the same way as isolated animal bones and that dogs appear to have been treated as individuals in their own right, suggesting that the inhabitants of Skateholm made no distinction between the human and animal populations of the site. In fact, it was only dogs, the sole fully domestic animals at the time, which have been treated in such a way. This makes sense in terms of ethno-graphic analogies from among northern Eurasian hunter-gatherers, as discussed later by Zvelebil (this volume).

Bradley also notes the paucity of stone structures in the burial practices of the Mesolithic societies in Europe, which is in marked contrast with the megalithic traditions of the Atlantic Seaboard during the ensuing Neolithic. The implied discontinuity may be more apparent, than real, however. There are indications of mortuary houses made of wood at carefully excavated sites such as Skateholm (Larsson 1988),

and slab-lined cists were constructed not only by Mesolithic hunter-gatherers in Brittany, but also by the hunter-gatherers of the Jäkärlä culture in the 4th millennium bc in Finland (Edgren 1966). In this volume, Thomas emphasizes the architectural antecedents, evident in the Mesolithic mortuary architecture, for the later Neolithic monuments.

Finally, Bradley's paper introduces two major themes which are subsequently discussed in most other contributions. One is the importance of fertility and regeneration in the symbolism of the Mesolithic burial traditions, symbolism which is in concordance with the prevailing perception of the natural world among modern hunter-gatherers as a creative force and as "giving environment" (Bird-David 1990). The second theme is the gradual nature of the transition to farming economy and the moderating role ideology of hunter-gatherer communities would have had on such a change: this issue is also addressed by Zvelebil, Jennbert, Thomas, Radovanovic and Voytek, and Edmonds.

Many of these themes are further developed by Ivana Radovanovic and Barbara Voytek in their treatment of the Djerdap Mesolithic in the Iron Gates Gorge along the Danube. The authors present a model which combines sedentism, subsistence and social complexity as a set of inter-acting forces, leading to social elaboration and the development of symbolic codes associated with increased social control, gender role/status differentiation and symbolic manifestation of group cohesion at the time when the identity of Iron Gorge communities was being eroded through contact with the neighboring farmers.

Radovanovic and Voytek emphasize a retreat from individualization, and the prevalence of the collective group identity over the individual in the later phases at Vlasac and Lepenski Vir I and II: developments which find parallels in other areas of Europe in the Neolithic and which are discussed by Thomas and Edmonds in this volume as well as elsewhere (i.e. Chapman 1993, 1994; Thomas 1991). They go on to discuss gender roles and gender-based status differentiation, suggesting that the preference of women for a different lifestyle – that marked by plant and animal husbandry – was an important factor in the eventual adoption of farming. The lesson here appears to be that ideological constraints, although capable of delaying the adoption of farming, failed to support the hunter-fisher lifestyle in the long run, because ideology could not deliver the practical benefits to women which had become available with farming.

Marek Zvelebil, in his contribution on hunter-gatherer ritual landscapes, employs a direct historical analogy of recent hunter-gatherer societies in western Siberia as a key to comprehending the meaning of ideology and of the ritual landscapes of the prehistoric hunter-gatherers in Northern Europe. The different conceptions of time (Gosden 1994;

Vasicek 1994; Zvelebil 1993) and the conceptual framework of structure and agency (Giddens 1984) are applied in an effort to interpret the operation of social and ideological factors in a dynamic, historical perspective. In this perspective the use and meaning of symbols change as part of the process of negotiation for control between different segments of the society, by appealing to an enduring ideological code, shared by many northern hunter-gatherer societies, which provides the frame of reference for changes in interpretation. Nämforsen in Northern Sweden and Olenii Ostrov in Karelia are used as the examples of ritual landscapes, thought to have been at the center of such activities.

The contributions of Kristina Jennbert, Julian Thomas and Leo Verhart and Milco Wansleeben all address the same broad theme of the Mesolithic-Neolithic transition. Although they approach the topic from different perspectives and deal with different areas – Jennbert with Scandinavia, Verhart and Wansleeben with the Netherlands and Thomas with Britain, they all emphasize the continuity of subsistence practices across the Mesolithic-Neolithic transition, the importance of gift exchange, and of the shifting meaning and symbolism of material culture. In her contribution on mentality and the social world, Jennbert also focuses on gender roles in the Late Mesolithic and Early Neolithic in Scandinavia, on the conceptual tyranny of our terminology, and on the slow pace of social and ideological change in southern Scandinavia during the 'transitional' period between 3200 and 2600 bc. Thus, the gradual nature of the economic transition (Zvelebil/Rowley-Conwy 1984; Zvelebil in press) is conjoined with the social and ideological one.

Thomas considers the role of material culture in the Mesolithic-Neolithic transition in Britain. He argues that material culture "does not so much encode meaning through its fashioning as provide an apparatus for the creation of meaning" (Thomas, this volume). The introduction of the Neolithic material culture into Britain enabled the aboriginal inhabitants of Britain to redefine and manipulate social relationships, and to "transform the meanings of their landscapes through their engagement with material things", regardless of any particular economic regime. The adoption of the new 'Neolithic' traits, such as ceramics, polished stone axes and megalithic architecture occurred rapidly between ca. 3200-3000 bc, and did not necessarily correspond to the adoption of farming practices.

This is contrasted with the continuity in economic patterns in the Atlantic zone of Europe where hunting and gathering remained a major subsistence activity. In Britain in particular, there were whole areas of the country in which domesticates had only the most marginal of impacts (Armit/Finlayson 1992; Dennell 1983; Zvelebil/Rowley-Conwy 1986). The same pertains to the Netherlands (Louwe

Kooijmans 1993; Van Gijn 1990). This leads Thomas to the interesting conclusion that the adoption of farming could be regarded as an 'optional extra' to Neolithic innovations in the material culture, such as ceramics, polished stone axes and megalithic architecture; these innovations represented a set of social and symbolic resources which was adopted by the indigenous hunter-gatherers and re-invested with meaning to fit the regional conditions.

Waste and Prestige, a contribution by Leo Verhart and Milco Wansleeben, focusses on the circulation of gifts and other forms of exchange across the Mesolithic-Neolithic frontier in the eastern Netherlands. The authors use the ethnographic evidence of a recent introduction of modern western artifacts in Papua New Guinea to impart meaning to the distribution patterns of Neolithic imports, such as pottery and polished stone axes among the hunter-gatherers of Late Mesolithic Netherlands. Despite the marked differences in approach, their conclusions often correspond to Thomas': the economic practice remained, at least initially, unaffected by these exchanges, the meaning of the objects shifted in passage from one social context to another, the social value of artifacts declined as their circulation increased, thereby creating a continual demand for other, more exotic valuables. This in turn creates a need for economic intensification, and eventually, for the transition to another economic system. In this scenario, the neolithisation process is seen principally as a process of social intensification, initiated by the exchange of (Neolithic) prestigious objects for raw materials in an exchange system based on kinship and alliances: a view that has a long and distinguished tradition (see for example, Bender 1978; Hayden 1990; Sahlins 1972).

Torsten Madsen examines the evidence from burial practices, physical anthropology, material culture and causewayed enclosures in Southern Scandinavia to obtain insight into the character of the transition from the Ertebølle to the TRB culture. He is using implicit analogical reasoning, employing such concepts as segmented or hierarchical societies. Madsen argues that in terms of social structure there does not seem to be a notable difference between the late Mesolithic and the early Neolithic. Both periods are characterized by the presence of a segmented society, existing of many smaller, strongly territorial groups, with their own specific material culture and their own burial grounds; communal rituals were very important in both periods. The relationships between groups seem to have had a violent undertone, considering the strong evidence for physical deformations on human skulls.

The second part of Madsen's paper deals with ideology. Here he does observe a discontinuity between the Ertebølle and TRB culture and for that reason he only discusses the evidence from the Neolithic (however, papers by Bradley and Zvelebil do address the Mesolithic). The TRB period sees the emergence of an enormous number of causewayed enclosures and monumental burial tombs. These formed the focus for a great deal of communal rituals, some of which, Madsen argues, are so alien and odd to us that it is very difficult to comprehend the underlying ideology: large quantities of high-quality pottery were destroyed and the floors of the tombs were covered with huge amount of burnt flint. Fire, both as destructor and creator of life, seems to have been important in ritual behavior.

Mark Edmonds, like most authors represented in this volume, adheres to the current point of view that the transition from Mesolithic to Neolithic was not a sudden one and that there is more evidence for continuity. He substantiates this point of view by looking at the 'biography' of those places which play a crucial role in the daily lives of prehistoric peoples: stone sources, shell middens, tombs and enclosures. To examine these places in their structural relationship, Edmonds uses Ingold's (1993) concept of a 'taskscape', itself a construct of ethnographic analogy. He notes a continuity in the importance accorded to certain places, across the Mesolithic/Neolithic transition. For example, stone sources which were already important for Mesolithic communities, formed the focus for the construction of megalithic tombs and enclosures for Neolithic groups. Rituals, procurement and exchange of materials, the use of pottery and domesticates all supported and modified the identity and the internal and external relationships of the communities. Edmonds considers that the archetypal succession of various phenomena, commonly adhered to by archeologists, does injustice to the complexity of the process of change.

With the paper by Piet van de Velde we have come to the full Neolithic, the Bandkeramik culture. Van de Velde adopts an explicitly positivist stand and, like O'Shea, uses implicit analogy to attribute meaning to the archaeological patterning he observes. On the basis of the type of grave goods present in the burial grounds of Elsloo (Southern Netherlands) and Niedermerz (Rhineland in Germany), he concludes that Bandkeramik society was matrilineal. There are no arguments in favor of an hierarchical ordering of Bandkeramik communities; an egalitarian society is more likely. In the second part of his paper he discusses the representativity of the Bandkeramik burial data, arguing that the presence of burial grounds is real only in the two above-mentioned settlements and not due to conservation or excavation circumstances. It remains to be explained, however, why only these two settlements have cemeteries. It is probably not incidental that they are also the two largest within their respective micro-regions, whereas the dead from other villages were given a different treatment.

Marjorie de Grooth addresses a very different subject matter, the social implications of the way flint was procured in Southern Bavaria, Germany. She compares the extraction and production mode during the Early Neolithic (Linearbandkeramik) period and the Middle Neolithic. During the first period chert, mostly of nodular kind, was procured at different places and only initially tested for suitability before being brought to the settlement; De Grooth refers to this as the 'domestic mode of production'. Gradually, tabular chert became the most preferred raw material and deep-shaft mining started. In analogy with the stone-using peoples of Papua New Guinea and Australia, De Grooth argues that the mining was not an organized enterprise by the privileged few having access to the mine-site, but a seasonal activity for the people from about 30 known settlements located in the near vicinity of the mine. De Grooth's paper shows that by a careful examination of one data set, the stone implements, in relation to settlement location, distribution of raw materials, location of monuments and so forth, it was possible to explain the deep-shaft mining in terms of the intensification of both regional and long-distance communication and inter-group interaction.

John O'Shea deals with the 'dawn' of the Early Bronze Age on the south Hungarian Plain. At that time there was a mosaic of regional cultures, probably reflecting the existence of a well-defined tribal landscape. The paper addresses the burial practices of the Maros-group, one of the regional cultures represented. These practices were highly structured, with age and gender being the primary organizing principles. The burial gifts and the patterning therein, combined with settlement information, give indications about the organization of the Maros-community. There is some social differentiation, at least four hereditary offices being differentiated and wealth being unequally distributed across the various households. Each community consisted of six to eight households and the communities were interrelated as a loose confederacy.

In keeping with the processualist, positivist paradigm, O'Shea advocates an anthropology of the past, whereby the patterns observable in the archaeological record will represent the consistent repetition of these behaviors by the living society. For this reason analogies to the ethnographic present are not required as a justification, because the coherence in the patterning should be self-evident. However, as O'Shea himself stresses, the burial practices of the Maros communities *happen* to highly structured, in a way, moreover, which is recognizable in the archeological remains. The question remains, however, whether we can dispose of analogies where the archeological patterning is less evident.

In contrast to O'Shea, John Barrett reaches into post- post-modernism, thereby leaping over some of the paradigmatic statements common to post-processualism. He starts with a moving account of a prehistoric family event and asks if the resolution of the archeological record will ever be good enough to reveal 'an archaeology of talk'. This is unlikely. As Barrett himself notes, "to assert that material culture is meaningfully constituted is one thing, to understand how those meanings were created and operated historically, and to establish the means by which archaeological analysis can explore such issues, is quite another" (this volume). He goes on to attempt to separate meanings located in the long term structural relationships, directly observable in the archaeological evidence from those which were a recognised part of the living experience of the people we as archaeologists claim to study. In a critical appraisal of the recent work by Tilley (1994) and Thomas and Tilley (1993) he shows how archaeologists tend to confuse the two phenomena.

The fall-out from Barrett's passage of arms is thought-provoking. Agency is regarded as the only-vehicle of change, while structures are "the conditions which exist and which humans recognize as resources with which they can work... Structure and agency do not form a duality because each interpenetrates the other through the consciousness of agency... Agency is therefore situated within particular structural conditions which it comprehends and through which it is able to act and to communicate the basis of that comprehension" (Barrett, this volume).

Douglas Lewis, an anthropologist who acted as a discussant at the original conference, has written an evaluative paper about the relative merits of anthropology and archeology in their attempts to make statements about ideology. Lewis notes that the objects of study of anthropologists and archaeologists are not that different. There are, however, important differences between the two disciplines in making inferential statements about social structure, ideology and culture of the societies in question. An anthropologist can infer social action directly from the statements of his informants – action for which the motivation, including ideas and beliefs, are known by interviewing the informants. An archaeologist has to make two inferential leaps: from material culture to behavior, from behavior to social action (including ideology). Lewis goes on to discuss the meaning and significance of culture, concluding ".... culture is not a *thing* an archaeologist infers (or an ethnographer observes). It is, rather, a theory devised to explain what can be observed and described (artifacts, in the most comprehensive sense, for archaeologists, action for ethnographers)" (Lewis, this volume). Lewis' remarks offer a healthy amount of caution, with which we should treat our inferential statements and our conclusions about the beliefs, motivation and social structure of prehistoric communities.

## 5.        Conclusion

All of the papers in this volume arrive at inferences about ideology and social structure. It seems that the dichotomy between the processual and post-modern approaches has been moderated by our common concern for the social structure and ideology of stone age society. However, with respect to the other dichotomy prevailing in this book, that between the Mesolithic and Neolithic, here distinctions remain. Perhaps, we are far too constrained and structured by our own terminology and chronological schemata and we should abolish the distinction alltogether, as Jennbert (this volume) suggests. But as Barrett has shown in his own paper, terminological and interpretative confusions are already endemic among archaeologists: given this situation, can we communicate if we grasp the degree of freedom of expression he is advocating? Our opinion is that we cannot do so, but that one solution out of this dilemma is to think more in terms of processes rather than events, and to deal with diachronic research questions rather than 'ethnographic instants' in the past. Not everyone is likely to agree with this recommendation: we invite you, the reader, to read through the volume and make up your own mind.

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