

# The Prehistoric Society Europa Conference 2023

## Peopling the Past: Reflecting on Prehistoric Europe

2-4 June 2023

Jesus College, University of Cambridge

A conference to honour the achievements of Prof Marie Louise Stig Sørensen, University of Cambridge, in the field of European Prehistory.

Image: Clay figurine from the Neolithic Vinča Culture, Serbia. Illustration by Rob Hedge, after photograph by Marie Louise Stig Sørensen

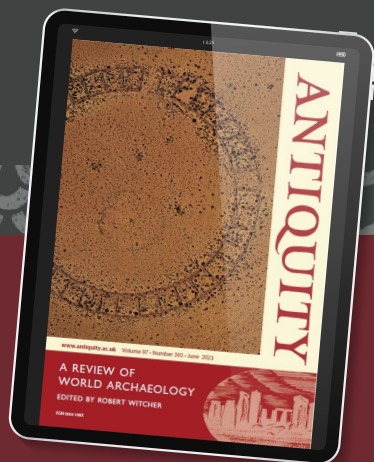


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# Friday 2 June 2023

09:00–10:00 **Registration**

10:00–10:15 Welcome and introduction: Prof. Linda Hurcombe

**Session chairs: Prof. Joanna Bruck and Prof. Niall Sharples**

10:15–10:35 *Symbols and power in Copper Age Iberia: Bell Beakers displaying Schematic Art depictions as a mechanism of political legitimacy* - Dr. Elisa Guerra-Doce

10:35–10:55 *Shifting networks and mixing metals: The trans-European metal networks in the 2nd millennium from a Scandinavian perspective* - Dr. Heide Wrobel Nørgaard

10:55–11:15 *To the south of the English Channel: modelling the flux of metalwork in the Bay of Biscay (2900- 1100 cal. BC) using multivariate clustering* - Dr. Juan Latorre-Ruiz

11:15–11:30 **Questions and discussion**

11:30–11:50 **Tea & coffee break**

11:50–12:10 *Children's Jet and Shale Bracelets in Iron Age Britain and West-Central Europe* - Megan Kimmelshue

12:10–12:30 *Centaur and sex: embodied equestrian life in the Bronze Age Carpathian Basin* - Dr. Katherine S. Kanne

12:30–12:50 *Bodies that Mattered: Dress, Adornment, and the Social Body in the Portuguese Late Bronze Age (12th – 8th /7th centuries BCE)* - Dr. Francisco B. Gomes

12:50–13:05 **Questions and discussion**

13:05–14:10 **Lunch (provided)**

14:10–14:30 *Changing female identities in the Late Nordic Bronze Age* - Laura Ahlqvist

14:30–14:50 *Gender and the herd: the shaping of agropastoral lifeways in Bronze Age Denmark and Ireland* - Mark Haughton

14:50–15:10 *Tropes and Isotopes. A Relational Approach to Mobility in the Nordic Bronze Age* - Dr. Louise Felding

15:10–15:30 *Being(s) in the Bronze Age. The entanglement between personhood, complexity and cognition* - Dr. Guillermo Díaz de Liaño

15:30–15:45 **Questions and discussion**

15:45–16:15 **Tea & coffee break**

16:15–16:50 Collective discussion on all papers

16:50–17:00 Summary and closing: Prof. Linda Hurcombe

## Saturday 3 June 2023

08:30–09:00 Registration

09:00–09:10 Welcome: Prof. Linda Hurcombe

**Session chairs: Chris Evans and Dr. Alison Sheridan**

09:10–09:50 *Hunting the molecular past* - Prof. Eske Willerslev

09:50–10:30 *The Age of Ancestors: Reconfiguring the 4th-3rd Millennia BCE* - Prof. John Robb

10:30–10:40 **Questions and discussion**

10:40–11:10 **Tea & coffee break**

11:10–11:50 *Culture-historical perspectives on genetic transformations and mating practices in the Bronze Age* - Prof. Philipp Stockhammer

11:50–12:30 *Bronze age families in Central Europe – motherhood, relatedness and kinship* - Prof. Katharina Rebay-Salisbury

12:30–12:40 **Questions and discussion**

12:40–13:40 **Lunch (provided)**

13:40–14:20 *Thoughts about social inequality and gender roles in Bronze Age societies* - Prof. Harry Fokkens

14:20–15:00 *On the trail of Metal-for-Amber connections c.2100-1200 BC* - Prof. Helle Vandkilde

15:00–15:40 *Two sides of Százhalombatta, Hungary:*

15:00-15:20 Prof. Joanna Sofaer

15:20-15:40 Dr. Magdolna Vicze

15:40–15:50 **Questions and discussion**

15:50–16:00 **Tea & coffee break**

16:00–17:00 Prehistoric Society AGM and presentation of the Baguley Award

17:00–18:00 **Europa lecture.** *A mess of inferences, insights, and data: On the engendering of European Prehistory* - Prof. Marie Louise Stig Sørensen

18:00–19:00 Evening wine reception sponsored by:



## Sunday 4 June 2023

11:00–16:30 Field trip to to the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA) and Wandlebury hill fort. We will meet at the MAA for a private tour led by Senior Curator Dr Jody Joy. After a break for lunch (not provided), we will board a coach for a tour of Wandlebury Hillfort led by legendary Cambridge archaeologist Chris Evans.



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## Venue information

If you wish to take some time out from the conference, all attendees have access to a quiet space, signposted from the registration desk, which you can use at any time.

Posters are displayed in the Elena Hall where refreshments and lunch will be served. We invite you to look at the posters during coffee breaks and over lunch. Authors will be around to discuss their research.

Exhibition stands with book stalls from Oxbow Books, Archaeopress and BAR Publishing are also located in the Elena Hall.

A wine reception on Saturday evening will be held at Jesus College from 6pm in the Elena Hall; everyone is welcome.

## Friday 2 June: abstracts

*Symbols and power in Copper Age Iberia: Bell Beakers displaying Schematic Art depictions as a mechanism of political legitimacy* Dr. Elisa Guerra-Doce, Universidad de Valladolid, Spain / McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge

Bell Beaker package is widely accepted to be connected to powerful groups all over its area of distribution (Central and North-western Europe and Northern Africa) during the mid-late 3rd millennium BC. In Iberia the prominent social position of these individuals has been traditionally explained in economic terms, as archaeological evidence suggests that Bell Beaker groups established their control over the access, production and distribution of certain materials (copper ores, gold, ivory, cinnabar, salt) and technologies (metallurgy). This paper focuses on the active role that the Beaker pots themselves played in this dynamic. Bell Beakers are obviously vessels, but they are also pieces of visual and material culture, the significance of which surpasses their utilitarian value. This is more evident when considering Beaker pots

displaying symbolic decoration, that is, similar motifs to those of the Schematic Art tradition. The origins of this artistic style in Iberia can be traced back to the Early Neolithic, ca. mid-6th millennium BC, but it is by the late 4th-early 3rd millennia BC, during the Pre-Bell Beaker phase of the Chalcolithic, when it had its heyday. Considering that Beaker pots with symbolic decoration are extremely rare (so far limited to around thirty pots for Iberia as a whole), it is argued that beyond its aesthetic value, this ancestral imagery was monopolised by the Beaker groups as a mechanism of political legitimacy.

***Shifting networks and mixing metals: The trans-European metal networks in the 2nd millennium from a Scandinavian perspective*** Dr. Heide W. Nørgaard, Moesgaard Museum, Aarhus, Denmark

Based on over 550 metal analyses, this presentation will shed light on how the Nordic Bronze Age was founded on metal imports from shifting ore sources associated with altered trade routes. On-and-off presence of copper characterised the Neolithic. From 2100–2000 BC, a continuous rise in the flow of metals to southern Scandinavia begins. First, networks connected the southern Scandinavian region with Slovakia, the Austrian Inn Valley, and the British Isles. High-impurity metals arrived via the central German Únětician hubs complemented by high-tin metals from the British Isles. These high-tin bronzes enabled the early local production of tin bronzes through remelting of incoming artefact metal. Increased metal use locally fuelled the leadership competitions visible in the metal-led material culture. The Únětice downfall c.1600 BC resulted for a short period in a raw materials shortage, visible in the reuse of existing stocks, but stimulated direct Nordic access to the Carpathian basin. This new access expedited innovations in metalwork with reliance on high-impurity copper from Slovakia, as well as opening new sources in the eastern Alps. The production of high-status shaft-hole axes of the Fårdrup-type with metal from Italian Alpine sources testifies to the first attempts to extend the metal-trade network across the Alps. Typological evidence and stylistic development within the southern Scandinavian material culture suggest an eastern route conveying Baltic amber as far as the Aegean. British metal plays a central role during this period. Finally, from c.1500 BC, when British copper imports ceased, the predominance of novel northern Italian copper coincides with the full establishment of the NBA and highlights a western route, connecting the NBA with the southern German Tumulus culture and the first transalpine amber traffic.

Cooperative partners: Helle Vandkilde (Aarhus University), Ernst Pernicka (CEZA Mannheim, University of Heidelberg)

***To the south of the English Channel: modelling the flux of metalwork in the Bay of Biscay (2900- 1100 cal. BC) using multivariate clustering*** Dr. Juan Latorre-Ruiz, Department of Archaeology, Durham University

A multivariate cluster analysis of a dataset of 1273 metal findings containing 4554 metal artefacts from western France and northern Iberia around the Bay of Biscay in southwestern Europe reveals five multiregional clusters with distinctive



distributions, chronologies, content and contexts. Changes in distribution and chronology show how metalwork from faraway regions was deposited in similar ways reflecting changing patterns of interregional connectivity. Changes in context and content suggest social transformations. The results of the analysis are linked with current debates about the nature of Bronze Age societies and changes in how the region of Atlantic Europe were connected during the interval studied.

***Children's Jet and Shale Bracelets in Iron Age Britain and West-Central Europe***  
Megan Kimmelshue, Bangor University

This paper discusses the distribution of child-sized jet and shale bracelets across Britain and west-central Europe in the Early to Middle Iron Age. A survey of sites across the study area demonstrates that domestic spaces and workshops were fashioning bracelets sized to 65 millimeter diameters or smaller, and this pattern is interpreted as evidence for a possible child-centred market for valuable objects with roots beginning in the Bronze Age. Additionally, jet and shale rings rarely appear in formal burial contexts during this period but are often found deposited in pits, ditches and postholes, giving rise to the question of their social meaning and how these objects may have been involved in the enactment of personal and communal biographies. This study aims to demonstrate a methodology for incorporating the younger members of Iron Age communities into the wider dialogue and highlight their active participation in processes of cultural inheritance and transmission.

***Centaur and sex: embodied equestrian life in the Bronze Age Carpathian Basin*** Dr. Katherine S. Kanne, University of Exeter

Domesticated horses appear in the Carpathian Basin by the Middle Bronze Age (c. 2200/2100 cal BC) at the latest, alongside the decrease of strictly gendered burials, appearance of new subsistence economies, and the foundation so-called 'tell societies'. The earliest probable riders are identified as female-sexed, potentially traveling on horseback in opposite patterns as expected by extant narratives. In honour of Professor Stig Sørensen's ground-breaking research on life, death, and gender in the Central European Bronze Age, this paper interrogates the osteobiographies of female-sexed equestrians, exploring how they may have lived an equestrian life in practice, moving between the household, settlement, and region. The changes in animal husbandry and mobility afforded by equestrian herding and travel have particular consequences for gendered divisions of labour and economy, possibly increasing female autonomy in unexpected ways. Contextualising by ethno-historical examples of gendered equestrian practices and material culture, suggestions are made for how these early centaurs embody gender transformations in the Middle Bronze Age of the Carpathian Basin.

***Bodies that Mattered: Dress, Adornment, and the Social Body in the Portuguese Late Bronze Age (12th – 8th/7th centuries BCE)*** Dr. Francisco B. Gomes, UNIARQ – Centre for Archaeology of the University of Lisbon

Marie Louise Stig Sørensen's 1997 paper *Reading Dress* paved the way for a

reconsideration of the roles of dress and bodily adornment as ways to communicate social identities in the European Bronze Age. However, and while echoes of the research perspectives laid out in that contribution have certainly reached Portugal, regional scholarship (with some honourable exceptions) has remained primarily focused on the typological and technological features of dress and adornment elements, overlooking for the most part their relations to social identities.

Building on recent scholarship which has begun to highlight the role of the body as a primary locus of identity construction and display in the regional Late Bronze Age, this contribution will review the available evidence for a discussion of dress and bodily adornment in this area during the late 2nd – early 1st millennium BCE. The primary focus will be on material culture, through a review of the different classes of dress and adornment elements in bronze, gold, but also exotic materials such as amber and carnelian.

It will be argued that, despite the challenges posed by the almost complete absence of funerary contexts, a contextual approach to these materials can nonetheless support a semiotic analysis in the line of that deployed by M. L. Stig Sørensen. In fact, looking not only at the objects, but also at the ways they were regularly combined and at the compositions they formed, it will be argued that the available documentation can be related to different spheres of identity based on gender, status, and perhaps other variables, which were displayed and enacted in specific social and political contexts.

All in all, this contribution aims to add to a recent revalorization of the role of the body and regimes of embodiment in the Portuguese Late Bronze Age, which is still taking its first steps. It will be suggested that a continuous focus on this topic can make a decisive contribution to a broader understanding of the social and ideological underpinnings of local communities and the ways in which identities were built and performed in the frame of inter- and intra-group social interactions.

### ***Changing female identities in the Late Nordic Bronze Age*** Laura Ahlqvist, Aarhus University

The Nordic Bronze Age (1700-500 BC) is famous for its well-preserved oak coffin burials, which have afforded important insights regarding identity, body, and society. However, in the final centuries of the period (i.e. 1100-500 BC), the graves expressing female gender largely disappear. Simultaneously, a development in hoarding practices occurs as the deposits come to centre around female jewellery, suggesting a reconfiguration of ritual practices that somehow links up with gender. The deposited sets of jewellery almost all include belt boxes and neck-rings, often elaborately ornamented. These artefacts represent one of the only enduring traces of the “missing” females in the Late Nordic Bronze Age. Drawing on insights from gender archaeology, it is possible to explore how female identities materialized and were constructed through personal, ornamented objects and what it reveals regarding the societal changes taking place around this time.

In this talk, I use the study of the ornamentation on the artefacts as a point of departure to investigate female identities in relation to these societal changes.



Previous research has outlined how the ornamentation on Nordic Bronze Age objects could reflect a cosmological narrative, and the perceived lack of figurative motifs on female objects have prompted a general understanding that ritual matters exclusively were undertaken by men. However, my approach demonstrates that the cosmological motifs from the male objects are present on the female objects, too, albeit represented in a more conceptual manner. The geographical trends in the ornamentation on the female and male artefacts also suggest a gendered differentiation. The ornamentation shows varying levels of communality and individualization in the way the female and male artefacts express the cosmology, which suggests gender specific levels of individuality. I relate my findings to an assemblage of contemporary female figurines in my pursuit to understand what these developments may have meant for the experience of female identity in the Bronze Age world and explore how these findings might entangle with the changes in ritual practices occurring at this time.

***Gender and the herd: the shaping of agropastoral lifeways in Bronze Age Denmark and Ireland*** Mark Haughton, Aarhus University

Though widely recognised, the agropastoral activities of Early Bronze Age communities across Northern Europe have had little bearing on interpretations of social organisation in the period. This is curious given the contemporary emergence and expansion of pasture landscapes – both grassland and heathland – across Northern Europe, the paucity of permanent settlement evidence in many regions, and the cosmological and economic importance of mobility. This paper engages in a speculative re-peopling of Northern European pastures in the Bronze Age, taking inspiration from both ethnographic insights and the rich evidence for pastoral mobility and multifaceted gender systems.

I focus on two areas with contrasting signatures for gender systems – the hegemonic and largely binary gender displayed in Jutland, Denmark, and the contextual and varied performances of gender from Leinster, Ireland. The speculative re-peopling follows the entanglement of these gender systems with agropastoral lifeways by tracing how people related to embedded rhythms of mobility and proximity to/ distance from animals, pasture, and domestic structures. Interactions with and care for herd animals and pastoral landscapes reveal ways in which Bronze Age kin groups and social structures could be radically recast in different settings, despite similarity in economic practices, exchange networks and cosmological imagery. This has important ramifications for how we understand the interconnected European Bronze Age and the lived experiences of people within these communities.

***Tropes and Isotopes. A Relational Approach to Mobility in the Nordic Bronze Age*** Dr. Louise Felding, Vejle Museer Denmark

Bronze Age research has undergone huge transformations as part of the ongoing 'mobilities paradigm' and mobility studies in archaeology has in the last decades risen to a new high. The mobility paradigm explores the movement of people, objects and ideas through the relations that forms when mobility takes place in the social

world.

By focusing on individual mobility in the Nordic Bronze Age, this paper takes a relational approach to recent human mobility studies. It argues that the aspect of multi-locality offers the potential to investigate past gendered mobilities and identities of belonging in so-called multi-local individuals. Multi-local individuals are identified through strontium isotope analyses when isotopic ratios are observed to change over the life course of an individual. Due to bone formation, hair growth and crown mineralization at known stages of human growth, we have the possibility to create a relative chronological focus on when in the individuals lifetime these Sr values are obtained. The study is thereby focused on the social institutions intersecting with mobility and, how these are related to age and gender. The study thus wishes to shift a previously predominantly geographical focus on mobility towards a more social perspective by focusing on when and why mobility takes place in the life course of an individual.

***Being(s) in the Bronze Age. The entanglement between personhood, complexity and cognition*** Dr. Guillermo Díaz de Liaño del Valle, Museum of London Archaeology / University of Edinburgh

In this talk, I will explore the main features of personhood during the Bronze Age in the so-called Argaric society, in the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula (2250-1500 BC). I will analyse how personhood was constructed and maintained, and explore its entanglement with social structures, material complexity, and the way in which the world was conceptualised, perceived in this Bronze Age society.

I will do so using a model of personhood that focuses on the structural relationships between identity, socioeconomic complexity, and cognition, and which is based on the work of archaeologist Almudena Hernando and philosopher Charles Taylor. This model explicitly engages with -and contradicts- some recent accounts (e.g., Graeber and Wengrow 2022, Wengrow 2015) that might have over-emphasised the freedom and agency of past individuals and societies, and also downplayed the structural relationships between the complexity of past groups (in social, political, economic and material terms) and their available notions of identity.

## **Saturday 3 June: abstracts**

***Hunting the molecular past*** Prof. Eske Willerslev, University of Cambridge / University of Copenhagen

For the past ten years ancient human genomics have focused on population genomics: the origins and spread of human groups. More recently my group has attempted using ancient genomics to understand the origins and spread of phenotypic traits and differences disease susceptibility. In this talk, I will provide insight as to how our results can inform us on the origins of western Eurasian populations on traits such as height, and diseases like diabetes and multiple sclerosis.

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***The Age of Ancestors: Reconfiguring the 4th-3rd Millennia BCE*** Prof. John Robb, University of Cambridge

Caught between regional sequences, the Three Age system, and unilinear evolutionary schemes, prehistorians have never really understood the 4th-3rd millennia BCE in Europe as a unique period with its own characteristics, rather than as a regional fragmentation zone or a transient “transitional” period. This article discusses the nature of society in this span. There were widespread and enduring changes in settlement, technology, economy, trade, gender and personal biography – changes that laid the basis for many later periods and made this truly an axial age. However, the most unique feature, and one which cannot be assimilated to either the preceding Neolithic or the subsequent Bronze Age, is a combination of cosmology and political leadership which resulted in a highly specific and unique concept of “ancestors”. The social order this anchored lasted for 1000-2000 years before evolving into a different kind of society and historical process characteristic of the Bronze and Iron Ages.

***Culture-historical perspectives on genetic transformations and mating practices in the Bronze Age*** Prof. Philipp W. Stockhammer, Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich / Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig

Within the last decade, archaeogenetic analyses have unraveled several major transformations of the European gene pool and enabled us to understand the biological dimension behind collective burials or whole cemeteries shedding light on marital practices and residential rules. In my lecture, I will ask about the social dimension which enabled the successful spread of the “Steppe signature” during the 3rd millennium and compare different co-existing systems of social organization, marital practices and child raising during the 3rd millennium in different parts of Europe and their correlation with and relevance for genetic transformations. I will argue that we have to differentiate between kin-group and network-based systems in social organization and their potentials to show resilience in times of changes.

***Bronze age families in Central Europe – motherhood, relatedness and kinship*** Prof. Katharina Rebay-Salisbury, Austrian Academy of Sciences

The combination of archaeological context analysis and archaeogenetic data provides significant insights into the social fabric of the Bronze Age, including mother-child and other family relationships. Whereas women and children buried together have typically been interpreted as kin, it is only through the advances of archaeogenetics that biological links can be accurately ascertained. However, although genetic relatedness is cross-culturally a key aspect of kinship, meaningful social relations emerge through enactment. Personal, emotive connections and the social status to individuals may be expressed in the way bodies are handled, treated and placed in relation through each other after death, and to material culture in the grave. In this contribution, examples of double and multiple burials illustrate what

family relations might have looked like in the Early Bronze Age of Lower Austria (c. 2200-1600 BC), and what genetic testing of biological relatedness contributes to their understanding. The analysis of twenty individuals from the small cemetery of Drasenhofen, for example, discloses the logic and sequence of cemetery use and the way in which the order of burials reflects families and kin groups. Two graves of plague victims at the cemetery display similarities in how Bronze Age communities addressed unforeseen deaths.

***Thoughts about social inequality and gender roles in Bronze Age societies*** Prof. Harry Fokkens, Leiden University

Due to the male elite focussed narratives of scholars like Kristian Kristiansen, Harald Meller and Roberto Risch our image the past is a spitting image of present day's economic, political and gender inequality. And even though it is undeniable that inequality existed in the Bronze Age and that there were weapons and warfare., that is a very imbalanced view of Bronze Age society. So where do we start if we want to create a more gender balanced image of the past?

My answer to that question is to leave the burial data on which those narratives mainly are based alone, and focus on settlement data. But the approach needs to be different as well: burial data yield almost instant interpretative data, settlement data are much more resistant and indirect. We will find little direct evidence for the role of women. Instead we need to discuss how skills like cooking, potting, weaving, farming, animal husbandry, maintaining the yard, but also the maintenance of social networks, etc. were essential for existence, and how these may have impacted the importance of certain gender roles. Only then we can make a balanced assessment of the undoubtedly quintessential role of women in past societies. One of the tools I will refer to is time-geography as discussed by Tommy Carlstein (Carlstein 1982); much inspiration is also derived from reading Annette Weiner's account of how women have almost invisible but crucial roles in Tobriand society (Weiner 1988).

Carlstein, T. 1982. *Time Resources, Society and Ecology. On the Capacity for Human Interaction in Space and Time. Volume 1: Preindustrial Societies.* London: George Allen & Unwin.

Weiner, A. B. 1988. *The Tobrianders of Papua New Guinea.* Fort Worth: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

***Metal-for-Amber in the European Bronze Age*** Prof. Helle Vandkilde, University of Aarhus & Clara Fischer Stephansen, Paulina Suchowska-Ducke, Laura Ahlqvist, Louise Felding, Mathias Bjørnevad-Ahlqvist, Janusz Czebreszuk and Heide Wrobel Nørgaard

This paper presents recent inquiries into the validity of the so-called Metal-for-Amber principle. The idea that amber was a counter-commodity for metal was coined back in 1882 by Danish archaeologist Jens-Jacob Asmussen Worsaae and has been at work in several Bronze Age studies, explicitly or implicitly, throughout the history of research. It has never been scientifically verified. We here for the first time demonstrate that amber and metal flows correlate in their spatiotemporal

trajectories in the EBA and MBA respectively. There are clearly correlating shifts in amber distribution and in the isotopic and trace compositions of Danish metal artefacts, as well as coinciding tracks of amber and metal throughout. We can establish major differences between EBA and MBA in Europe regarding metal-amber liaisons, but the basic principle endured. The Nordic region and the Aegean were start- and endpoint in the long-range trade and communication network, which may explain labrys and sun symbolisms in both regions. Humans and luxuries of glass and weaponry also moved as did innovations and ideas about the world. At the local Nordic scale, the dispersed group of amber-bearers was small, but rich in symbolic markers. Overall, this aligns with the view that power in early NBA society operated in a decentral mode along kinship lines, which came to define hierarchical developments. This social structure could easily function in nexus with significant portions of entrepreneurship and other forms of competitive behaviour. We conclude that metal-for-amber almost certainly was the very logic underpinning connectivity already from 2100 BC.

### ***The Temporality of a Pot* Prof. Jo Sofaer, University of Southampton**

Archaeologists frequently focus on the technical process of ceramic manufacture, such that the various steps of production are set within a chaîne opératoire. Using the single example of a fine ware bowl from the Bronze Age tell at Százhalombatta, Hungary, in this paper I argue that vessels can also be understood as embodying a series of nested scales of time that both complement and intersect with technical understandings. Reflecting on these different scales offers insights into the complexity and temporality of human interactions with materials. In turn, this allows consideration of the ways in which the Bronze Age potters of Százhalombatta worked with, and against, time in satisfying the demands of their craft. It sheds light on how they may have been aware of time and duration as an integral part of their practice, and the varied nature of temporality for this prehistoric community.

### ***Százhalombatta: a special or an average site? Sundry thoughts on some display vessels* Dr. Magdolna Vicze, Archaeological Institute of the Hungarian National Museum**

Excavating and being involved with the understanding and interpretation of a site for over 20 years sometimes inevitably skews one's perspective. That site becomes the centre of not just one's analyses, but can easily become something it may have never been to such an extent, namely a unique and extraordinary place. With the lack of equally fine and detailed comparable data it is very easy to slip into a distorted view in regards to any site, including ours. At Százhalombatta-Földvár we are in a privileged position to be able to work in a uniquely large trench with a yet unparalleled detailed find recovery method. Still, with Marie Louise we constantly have to remind ourselves to avoid the pitfalls of overestimating our data. Nevertheless, certain finds, time and again force us to consider where we would like to situate our site within the larger Vátya entity. One such find type what we may call 'display vessels' shall be considered here as a relevant case study.

## Europa Lecture

### *A mess of inferences, insights, and data: On the engendering of European Prehistory*

Prof. Marie-Louise Stig Sørensen

After several decades of introducing gender to our studies of prehistoric communities engendering may begin to look easy and straightforward. In this paper, I want to slightly problematise this position to find out whether it can be done better, with more sensitivity to the questions we must ask. To do so I will focus on what kind of data we explore, its range and challenges, and what questions we ask. Despite shortages in this date, such as the paucity of depictions, patterns and trends inform us about underlying ideas about gender. But within this, we see changes through time, not as a linear progression but as a more disruptive and discontinuous history of gender as a dialogue about the social person – their behaviour, roles and values. Within these ongoing configurations of the socially normative, gender contributed to the history of prehistory, and with care we may be able to disentangle the outline of that story.



Image: Marie Louise Stig Sørensen at Százhalombatta  
by Rob Hedge, after a photograph by Maikel Kuijpers

## Posters

*Virtuality VS reality: combining virtual and physical approach for the analysis of Middle-Late Bronze Age urns from Northern Italy* LM Scalise, University of Cambridge, with MP Morigi, C Cavazzuti, R Brancaccio, M Seracini, C Bulletti, C Leoni, S Stoddart, S Benazzi, E Pomeroy

When cremation is involved, osteologists usually handle highly fragmented and altered remains. This study aims to improve the quality and quantity of information that could be retrieved by combining two analytical approaches. We performed Computerised Tomography analysis of ten non-excavated urns from the Middle-Late Bronze Age (15th-12th centuries BCE) necropolis of Vicofertile (Parma, Italy).

After the extraction of the remains from four out of ten urns, we reconstructed the individuals' biological profiles, analysed the heat-induced changes to the bones, and compared the preliminary results of the two approaches. The results of the virtual approach were mostly confirmed by the physical investigation. The exceptions were regarding the bones' taphonomy (e.g. the presence of concretions that were not identified in the scans) and the addition of data about the individuals' sex and age at death. The scans proved to be an essential tool to guide and speed the excavation process.



***A diachronic study of monumentality and cosmology in mid-Holocene southern England and Wales*** Pamela Armstrong, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Bournemouth University

The Cotswold Severn long barrows are the giants of their time. Built over five thousand years ago, these monumental mortuary houses brought a radical new architecture to southwestern Britain. This research explores the belief systems of the communities who created these sentinels to a lost time. The question at the heart of this project asks whether the Cotswold Severns had a celestial cosmology, one that linked to the sun, moon or stars, embedded in their design. The research process involved choosing barrows that are not only extant but which have either original stonework or a substantial mound still standing. Sixteen such structures were identified. Fieldwork included an assessment of each barrow's orientation towards its local horizon. This involved surveying the axis of each monument and, where they existed, the chambers and horned forecourts as well. Deskwork then involved the application of software to replicate Neolithic skies. The resulting findings indicate that these houses for the dead did connect to the sky. Traditional skyscape archaeology argues that solar and lunar alignments were integral to Neolithic design but this research indicates that where the people of the long barrows are concerned, the stars were given preference.

***Smoke on the Water: Burnt Mounds and their Ceramic Evidence in Britain*** Nick FitzGerald, University of Nottingham

Burnt mounds are a common prehistoric feature found in Britain and Ireland. Their function is currently unresolved, and their role within society is also an unknown quantity. This thesis will explore the burnt mound phenomenon and their social and technological role through their physical characteristics and material remains. The primary methods used to explore these questions will be threefold. The first will be the construction of a geospatial database, to explore location, excavation status, morphology, proximity to geographical features and other contemporary or then-historical activity, finds, structures and palaeoenvironmental data such as palynology to elucidate possible patterns and connections between sites. The second will be the use of organic residue analysis to reconstruct specific instances of activities taking place at burnt mounds and associated settlements. Finally, the use of experimental archaeology will help to clarify both the results from residue analysis and to help investigate hypotheses around burnt mound use.

***Investigating the mobility of the probable corded skirt wearer from Ginderup Mound in Thisted County, Denmark*** Samantha S. Reiter and Karin M. Frei, National Museum of Denmark

Ongoing mobility research regarding the movements of ancient individuals has opened our eyes to new possibilities and patterning in past movements. This poster presents the results of new strontium isotopic analyses ( $87\text{Sr}/86\text{Sr}$ ) from the probable female Nordic Bronze Age III individual interred in the central stone cist of Ginderup Mound in Thisted, northern Denmark. Alongside the many bronze objects

in the grave, the deceased was also buried with what excavator Brøndsted suggested may have been the remains of a corded skirt or wool blanket.

Here, we present the results of the strontium isotope analyses conducted on the enamel of the individual's second and third molars and compare that data with the results of other recent research on her contemporaries with particular emphasis on the mobility patterns of corded skirt wearers. Finally, based on our new results at Ginderup Mound (Reiter et al., in press) we suggest several possible scenarios.

***A puzzling complex: burial inventories and identity of deceased from the Late Neolithic site in Żąbie, NE Poland*** Aleksandra Cetwińska, University of Warsaw, with Manasterski, D., Januszek, K., Wawrusiewicz, A., Kwiatkowska, K., Cetwiński, K.

In the Late Neolithic, the Mazury Lake District in NE Poland was still dominated by hunter-gatherer communities, classified as belonging to the Neman Cultural Sphere. This cultural situation persisted despite the penetration of the area by agricultural and pastoral population groups as early as the 5th millennium BC, which intensified in the 3rd millennium BC. They contributed to the formation of the Żąbie-Szestno group, a syncretic cultural unit belonging to the Neman Cultural Sphere. One of the unique context showing a dynamic cultural situation of the time is the funerary and ritual complex on the former island in Łańskie Lake. We present the social and chronological framework for the complex emergence, as well as we propose a model of cultural diffusion that lead to the formation of the syncretic Żąbie-Szestno group.

***Bell Beakers on the eastern frontier of the Northern European Lowland revisited*** Aleksandra Cetwińska, University of Warsaw, with Manasterski, D., Januszek, K., Wawrusiewicz, A., Kwiatkowska, K., Cetwiński, K.

Until recently, the identified eastern border of Bell Beaker influence associated with local variants of this cultural phenomenon was across the Vistula River Basin. Presence of records identified with BB influence was also suggested further in the East European Plain. They were, however, some isolated artefacts of unknown origin. Recent discoveries from north-eastern Poland brought evidenced on the presence of new Late Neolithic materials of foreign provenance being associated with this cultural phenomenon. We present newest finds and analyses showing enormous impact of the Bell Beakers on local communities.

***Scratching the Surface. Investigating use-wear on wild boars' tusks from the Neolithic Vlaardingeng culture (3400-2500 BC), the Netherlands*** Tatiana Crombeen, Leiden University

The research project Putting Life into Late Neolithic Houses investigates daily life activities of the Vlaardingeng culture (3400 – 2500 BC), a generic term for Neolithic sites in the Rhine-Meuse delta (the Netherlands). While the project is a comprehensive study of Late Neolithic daily life, this research focuses on tools made from wild boars' tusks, which show distinct artificial modifications and use-wear. However, their function remains obscure. Through experimental archaeology

and microwear analysis, I examine how they functioned within the domestic toolkit. The main research question is whether these tusks were covering the same tasks as flint tools or if they had specific functions. My research is the first study of how tusk tools functioned within the Dutch Neolithic domestic toolkit. It is a first step in a broader geographical and chronological analysis of these artefacts in the prehistoric Low Countries and an inquiry if they were part of a long-term tradition rooted in the Mesolithic.

***Reflecting on Transformations in Prehistoric Europe*** Nicole Taylor, on behalf of the Collaborative Research Centre 1266 "Scales of Transformation", Kiel University

In the Collaborative Research Centre 1266 "Scales of Transformation" we research transformation processes and their related parameters from 15,000 to 1 BCE across a large swathe of Europe. By combining archaeological, palaeoenvironmental, ethnoarchaeological, theoretical, natural science and modelling approaches, we have thus far been able to gain insights not only into specific transformation processes but we have also been able to recognise key factors which play a role in these processes, whether they be upheavals or gradual developments which lead to the irreversible and enduring change that characterises transformations. As our research continues, we are now using a synthetic approach in order to work towards a general history of transformation as pertains to past human lives within their specific environments.

***Lifting the Lid on the Hebridean Neolithic: Using Organic Residue Analysis to Reconstruct Foodways at Neolithic Islet Sites*** Daniel Brown, University of Bristol

This poster will present preliminary results from the analysis of dietary practices associated with Early-Middle Neolithic (c. 3700-3200) islet sites in the Outer Hebrides. The project utilises cutting-edge organic residue techniques to extract and analyse lipids embedded within ceramics from these sites.

Hebridean islets are small, often-artificial islets set within lochs. Large assemblages of highly decorated pottery have been found around many of them. It has been hypothesised that these sites were centres of commensal activities such as feasting. Therefore, understanding dietary patterns at them is essential to interpreting their functions and role.

The ceramic assemblages found around these islets conform to the distinctive forms of 'Hebridean ware'. This poster presents comparisons between the dietary functions of these different vessel types to reveal the use of pots and their role in the social life of this unique region.

***Sounding the Past: Levantine art and the acoustics of rock art sites*** Margarita Díaz-Andreu García (1,2,3), Lidia Alvarez Morales (1,2), Daniel Benítez (1), Neemias Santos da Rosa (1, 2)

1: Departament de Història i Arqueologia, Universitat de Barcelona. 2: Institut d'Arqueologia, Universitat de Barcelona (IAUB). 3: Institució Catalana de Recerca i Estudis Avançats (ICREA)

In the last few years, there have been a series of articles exploring the acoustics of Levantine rock art, a post-palaeolithic tradition found in eastern Spain. Between 2011 and 2015, several areas with a concentration of painted shelters were acoustically tested, identifying sites in which the abundance of motifs coincided with reverberation and sometimes also echoes. Since 2018, as part of the ERC Artsoundscapes project we have tested several rock art areas around the world, including new Spanish Levantine sites and landscapes. In the Valencian area, we recognized Cuevas de la Araña as an aggregation site surrounded by a large number of additional minor sites, sixteen of which we were able to acoustically examine. The acoustic characterisation of Cuevas de la Araña indicates that its reverberation conditions might have been particularly favourable for the production and appreciation of music, contrasting with the “dry” conditions found in the other sites. These results, however, are not replicated in the northernmost area of the Levantine style in Catalonia to the north of the Ebro river, where none of the sites tested revealed special acoustics. The possible reasons behind such differences between the two areas will be the focus of our discussion.

*The spirals in the neolithic art at Newgrange all run clockwise, either clockwise-inwards or clockwise outwards – they form complex and dynamic solar icons depicting deities, seasons and calendrical events* William Murphy, School of Medicine, University College Dublin

The spiral motifs on the entrance stone K1 at Newgrange clearly have some solar association, and may imply the sun in some way. The change in direction of the spin across the line of the solstice sunrise, carved vertically up the middle of the entrance stone, could imply the apparent change in direction of the spin of the sun at the winters solstice: to a geocentric, flat-earth assuming, observer looking due south, a spiral spinning clockwise-out recapitulates the apparent motion of the sun from midwinter to midsummer, and a spiral spinning clockwise-in similarly represents the apparent motion of the sun from midsummer to midwinter. Thus it is plausible to consider that the spin of the spirals is always sunwise – i.e. clockwise, either clockwise-in or clockwise-out, and that as such different solar quantities or qualities were intended in the different directions of spin of the spirals in the art.

*Life and Death in the carvings at Newgrange* William Murphy, School of Medicine, University College Dublin

Based on a clockwise-only reading of the spiral motifs, combined with analysis of the idiosyncratic shapes and siting of the three fully carved stones in the Newgrange kerb, K1, K52 & K67, the carving on the entrance stone at Newgrange can be interpreted to show a male solar deity mating with a female earth/moon/underworld deity at the winter solstice to generate the new year in the Earth; carvings along the left side of the passage and chamber (L19, L21, L22, C3) show the subsequent funerary rites of the old year/sun god (decapitation, interment of the torso for defleshing), his crossing to the underworld, and his entombment. Narrative sequences in the carvings at Newgrange can be extended to propose the existence of further

cycles of carvings: fertilisation, planting, harvesting, storage and threshing of wheat, and a winter sequence of the descent of the sun god into the underworld.

*Exploring the archaeological potential of the annually-laminated lake record of Diss Mere, Norfolk* Anna Bloxam, University of Nottingham, with A. A. Walsh, , S.P.E Blockley, P. Harding, M. Czymzik, I. Candy, P.G. Langdon, I.P. Matthews, W. Bowden, A.M. Milner, H. Bennion, C. Martin-Puertas

Evaluating human responses to rapid climate and environmental change requires the integration of archaeological and environmental data at the resolution of a human lifetime. Lake records provide a wealth of climatic and environmental information but they are often difficult to date with this level of precision.

Diss Mere is a lake in Norfolk, with a 15-m sediment record spanning much of the Holocene. The sequence includes 4.2-m of well-preserved annually-laminated (varved) sediments, spanning ~2070–10,290 cal. BP, with the last ~2,070 years represented in the upper 9-m, giving a resolution of 2-years per cm. The combined Diss archive is the highest resolution record of its type for the UK. Diss also contains multiple volcanic ash markers that can be used for correlation to other lacustrine and appropriate archaeological sites.

The chronological, palaeoclimate and palaeoecological value of Diss has unprecedented potential to refine the picture of human and environmental interaction across the Holocene.

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