

Abstracts: Dynamics

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Keynote address

Christian Wichmann Matthiessen, Department of Geography and Geology, University of Copenhagen

Scandinavian Links: Regional development perspectives

The European Round Table of Industrialists identified in the 1980ies 14 missing links in the transportation network of the continent. Three of them were found around the Danish island of Zealand. One link is within the nation, the other two are between nations. One link connects heavy economic centres, one joins more thinly populated regions, and the last one links peripheral areas. Two of them (The Great Belt Link and the Oresund Link) have been constructed and are in full operation. The third (the Fehmarn Belt Link) has been decided 2008 on bilateral government level. The three links are impressive mega structures spanning international waterways. These waterways between the Baltic Sea and the North Sea have played major roles in history. The length of each of these crossings is around 20 km. The fixed links closes gaps between the Scandinavian and European motorway and rail networks. They concentrate traffic flows and create strong transport corridors. They are the basis of new regional development regimes. "Ferries connect systems, fixed links unite systems".

Continuity and Discontinuity

Martin Appelt, Mari Hardenberg, Jens Fog Jensen, Ulla Odgaard and Bjarne Grønnow, Ethnographic Collection

Signatures in Stone

Pre-Inuit (Palaeo-Eskimo) technology, identity, space and cosmology are key topics of the research carried out by team members of the Carpenter-Meldgaard Project under the umbrella of 'Northern Worlds'. With point of departure in re-analyses of archaeological datasets covering 3.500 years of Arctic prehistory from two archaeological key areas of the Eastern Arctic, Igloolik (Canada) and Disco Bay (West Greenland), the paper discusses pre-Inuit stone built dwelling structures, site organization, technology and symbolic carvings as identity markers. Furthermore, these archaeological materials provide glimpses of cosmologies, where humanness and individual and group identities are variable and probably at stake.

Peter Steen Henriksen, Danish Prehistory, Unit of Environmental Archaeology

Norse Farming in Greenland: Agriculture on the edge

The aim of this project was to determine whether the Norse farmers actually cultivated crops in Greenland during colonisation in the Viking age and the medieval period. This was investigated by analysing macrofossils extracted from soil samples of middens, combined with phosphate analyses of the area around Norse farmsteads.

In two field seasons 300 kg of soil was sampled from 12 Norse farmsteads together with samples for phosphate analysis covering an area of 20 ha from four farmsteads.

The soil samples contained numerous seeds from wild plants giving information about the local vegetation. Charred grains and threshing waste of barley was found in samples from three sites, strongly indicating that barley was cultivated in Greenland by the Norse farmers.

The phosphate analyses showed no sign of any deliberate manure of the infields as high concentrations of phosphate were only found around the houses and pens.

Mobility and Organization

Einar Lund Jensen, Modern Danish History

Settlements policy in a colonial context

During the first half of the 20th century, large changes took place in the settlements structure in the Cape Farewell area in the southernmost part of Greenland. Settlements were deserted, the population lived in fewer settlements and some even moved out of the area. This should be seen in the light of changes in commercial circumstances which were the consequences of climate changes. Besides, the situation in the Cape Farewell area became a contributing factor in developing a settlements policy for the country as a whole.

The issue can be looked at from different perspectives: firstly, a reconstruction of what happened in the area and the local population's position on the development and their motifs to move; secondly, the national Greenlandic politicians' position and demands for an active settlement policy in Greenland; and thirdly, the issue on settlement in relation to the Danish colonial policy of that time.

Jette Arneborg, Danish Middle Ages and Renaissance

Subsistence and Settlement Patterns in Norse Greenland

Isotope diet studies, church excavations and studies in settlement patterns in the Vatnahverfi region have been associated the project *Northern Worlds* under the title *Resources, Mobility and Cultural Identity in Norse Greenland*. The interaction between humans, systems and environment has been brought into focus with identity, communication and human strategies as key concepts.

The socio-economical foundation of the Norse Greenland society was based on pastoral farming combined with seal hunting and long-distance trade and within all three basic aspects the Norse Greenlanders experienced changes from the initial settlement in the late 980's to the ultimate depopulation in the late 1400's.

Based on isotopic studies and church excavations in the Norse Eastern Settlement I will discuss the changed dietary habits and changed settlement patterns, which apparently were opposed to each other. While the dependence on the outer coast marine resources increased over time in the same period settlement concentrated in the inner fjord regions farthest away from the outer coast resources.

Lasse Sørensen, Danish Prehistory

Farmers on the move....

The expansion of agrarian societies during the Neolithic and Bronze Age in Scandinavia

Expansions of agrarian societies during the Neolithic and Bronze Age in Scandinavia can be studied in a long-term perspective lasting from 4000 to 500 BC. Through a series of ¹⁴C dates on new evidence of agriculture in Scandinavia it is possible to document the introduction of domesticated animals and cereal cultivation. Especially the speed of the agrarian advance with shifts between expansion, stagnation and decline through the Neolithic and Bronze Age is of particular importance. The reasons for these shifts are discussed and it is argued that diversified climatically zones together with environmental and ideological factors played a central role in understanding the expansion of agrarian societies.

Christopher Prescott, Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History, University of Oslo
The transformation of third millennium northwestern Scandinavia

Third millennium Norway and Scandinavia was fundamentally transformed from hunter-gatherer economies to societies that were a pre-sequel to the Bronze Age. A cultural tradition was terminated and the trajectory into the Bronze Age was initiated. In this narrative agro-pastoral practices are but part of a suite of elements - and probably not the most important or dynamic at that. Generating an understanding of the *how and whys* of this history are essential – the results reflect on broader European discourses concerning. This paper discusses issues central for developing a more historically responsive narrative of what happened in the third millennium.

Techniques and Environment

Jens Fog Jensen, Ethnographic Collection

The battle of the Weather

Soon after the outbreak of the Second World War, the Axis Powers were denied access to data from international weather stations under allied control. Germany thus had to establish her own network weather stations throughout the North Atlantic. In Greenland the Marinewetterdienst established several manned weather stations. The most successful were 'Holzauge' and 'Bassgeiger', each in operation in for almost an entire year in 1942/43 and 1943/44, respectively. The Allied forces, in return, had established the North-East Greenland Sledge Patrol in 1941, in order to defend the coast against German activities. The well preserved ruins from the stations that were destroyed during the skirmishes are easily recognizable and unique Second World War historic monuments in Northeast Greenland.

Niels Bonde, Danish Prehistory, Unit of Environmental Archaeology

Timber houses in Greenland – diffusion and innovation

As the first missionaries settled in Greenland in the 1720's, it soon became clear that they needed good housing. The oldest preserved house from these colonial times is dated to 1734 by written sources. The house building method (log cabin) is strongly influenced by Norwegian traditions and it has been suggested that this house originally was a Norwegian timber house which was bought, dismantled and then transported to Greenland. Tree-ring research on samples taken from the house confirmed the construction date AND ALSO revealed that the trees that were used for the logs had not grown in Norway but somewhere in the Baltic region, most likely in present Poland.

More analyses on material from 10-15 houses sampled in 2010 revealed that the timbers used derived from pine trees from a wide area, especially Poland but also from Sweden, perhaps Finland and very, very little from Norway. This is a totally different picture to the traditional idea, where you expect that the area that is closest, i.e. Norway, would be the major supplier of timber. In this case it wasn't, other forces and trends were important in the 18th and 19th Century.

One of the advantages of dendrochronology dating is that it is rooted in a biological context. It is totally independent of all other dating methods, be they historical, archaeological or geological and radiocarbon dating. The results can therefore be used as an independent contributor to the study of Greenland's old buildings, not only with respect to dating but also with respect to trade and communication.