



Session organisers: Ulrike Sommer, Petr Kvetina

Theme:

Archaeology and Material Culture: Interpreting the Archaeological Record

Session title:

Space for people and their stuff: Intra-site spatial analysis of settlement.

The aim of the session is to describe different theoretical foundations and methodological approaches used in the research of the internal structure of prehistoric settlements.

Although human settlement remains represent the basic source of understanding the economic and social units of past societies, synthetic concept of their research does not exist. It is usual to proceed from the primary or evident problems to the more complicated or latent questions.

To the first level of topics studied in relation with the settlement context may belong: 1) settlement chronology and changes of settlement patterns in time; 2) structure of settlement space (types of buildings and other features and their distribution; 3) activity definition and their localization (tool production, raw material processing, subsistence and storage facilities identification, detection of sacred activities etc.); 4) palaeoenvironmental evidence and reconstruction.

The other sphere of issues concerns 5) formation of archaeological material both from the viewpoint of refuse management at a live settlement and the post-deposition processes. Profound study of these processes may subsequently significantly influence and change the original interpretation of settlement activities.

This study of taphonomic processes should be the first step in any analysis of distribution patterns, in order to: a) differentiate between anthropogenic and biological/geological processes; b) find out at which level of deposition human behavior occurs: are artifacts, refuse or sediments deposited, shifted and trampled etc. The distribution of artifacts also contains a type of "stylistic" information which can be understood as 6) the symbolic communication between individuals and groups. This means that differences in shape or decoration of artifacts are not connected with their primary function or chronologic variability, but with style which is considered as a strong vehicle of social information.

"Structured deposition" has been a buzz-word in recent years. It has been used to describe both the deposition of artifacts and of "settlement refuse" or "feasting remains". But the criteria to distinguish between "normal" settlement refuse and formal deposition have never been made very clear, and the deposit of artifacts and of refuse should clearly be kept apart, even if we accept that our modern concept of "rubbish" may not be applicable in a pre-modern context.

While presenting different approaches to the depositional and post-depositional processes, the goal of the session is to arrive at a firmer methodology for interpretation.

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Abstracts of the session papers:

Activity areas in Neolithic settlements?

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While the research into the activity structure of hunter-gatherer sites is well developed and can call on a number of ethno-archaeological studies, the taphonomy of longterm-settlements is far less well known. While a heavy smearing of artefacts is to be expected, an established set of rules on the use of space should also lead to more stable activity areas which might still be archaeologically visible. If, on the other hand, the building of houses predates the full "domestication" of Neolithic people, as has been suggested, among others, by Hodder and Whittle, a less organised depositional behaviour may be expected.

There is a rich body of data of Neolithic and later waterlogged sites, especially from the circumalpine area, but most of these sites have not been studied in a comparative perspective. In this paper, I will attempt a short and necessarily very selective comparison of dry and waterlogged sites and discuss the effects deposition-processes and varying time-scales.

Mapping of pottery assemblage from a Neolithic village

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The aim of the contribution is to map the pottery assemblage from a Linear pottery culture Neolithic settlement. Structure of the pottery complex changed in time and also with respect to the spatial distribution of its separate parts. Chronological and spatial changes of Neolithic pottery relate to different meanings that artifacts assume during their existence in systemic and archaeological contexts. Changes of style in time could be linked with fashion trends within the population; they could document the change of artifact's function or indicate the change of identity of material culture bearers. Spatial distribution of pottery could also be linked with its function but first of all it apparently reflects the ways of refuse management. Hypothetically, the divergences in spatial structure of pottery assemblage could be related with different definitions of individual and group identities within the settlement. Chronological and spatial changes of pottery are observed on the example of the Bylany site (Czech Republic), because long term excavations there provided sufficient data set.

Taphonomy and site structure: ceramics from a cultural layer of a Linear Pottery Culture settlement

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Within Linear Pottery culture research the study of formation processes of pottery assemblages, of the abrasion of pottery from different contexts and the spatial analysis of taphonomic attributes play hardly any role. This is surprisingly so, as such analyses can provide insights into the intra-site spatial organisation (living spaces, work places, refuse areas). The Linear Pottery culture settlement of Hanau–Klein-Auheim (Germany) offered the unique opportunity to study depositional, taphonomical and spatial aspect of decorated pottery from a cultural layer, i. e. walking surface. Beyond presenting a case study this paper will also try to overcome the distinction between ‘refuse’ and ‘structured deposition’.

The Prehistoric settlement pattern at Halasarna, Kos: some preliminary results of the Halasarna Survey Project

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In this paper the results of the prehistoric settlement pattern from the Halasarna Survey Project will be presented. The aim is twofold, on the one hand the role of the palaeoenvironment in this survey will be highlighted and on the other the diachronic character of the prehistoric settlement pattern will be discussed. The occupation of the Halasarna region from the Late Neolithic period (i.e. 5th millennium BC) until the end of the Late Bronze Age (i.e. the end of the 2nd millennium BC), is a long period during which many changes occurred. Thus, it will become possible to demonstrate how the prehistoric people used the landscape in different socio-economic phases and what their main concerns were at those times. Additionally, it will become clear the extent of information that can be provided by the application of an organised survey with a clear methodology in contrast to earlier chance finds.

Reading the Neolithic site. Intra-site spatial analysis of Funnel Beaker culture settlements from central Poland.

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The aim of this paper is to analyze sites of Funnel Beaker culture people from central Poland on their settlement patterns, social organization, decision making units and demography.

Interdisciplinary (archaeological, palynological, paleogeographical) studies are conducted in two regions of central Poland: in Grabia river basin from 1982 and in Gostynin Lake district from 1991. In results of multiple systematic surface survey most of 120 settlements and camp sites of FBC were found, and 27 of the have been excavated (some to its limits).

Research has been conducted on four levels:

- (1) individual structures and zones of various human activity inside a household and settlement;
- (2) individual household;
- (3) individual settlement;
- (4) settlements located within a region.

An important part of the study was identification and interpretation of empty areas (zones where no artifacts were found) on the settlements.

The study concerns permanently occupied relatively small (to 1 hectare in size) sites settled from several to about 50 years. Such settlements are one of most typical Funnel Beaker

culture sites in Polish Lowland. My paper will be focused on the intra-site spatial analysis, and methods of such analysis, of the Funnel Beaker culture sites from the period between ca. 3700-3300 BC (so called Wiorek phase of this culture in Polish Lowland). Results of them will be the base of the reconstruction of spatial organization of settlements and organization of Funnel Beaker culture communities from central Poland.

The social context of space and the interpretation of intra-site analysis. The case study of a 13th c. AD castle.

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Mali grad in Kamnik (Slovenia) called *castrum inferior* was built around 1100. It was rebuilt to twice its original size during the last decades of the 12th century. Written sources inform us of the castle's hey-days between 1208 and 1228 when the castle was the seat of the most powerful lord in the country, the count Henrik IV. of Andechs-Merania. However, the majority of archaeological data derives from the second half of the 13th century when a part of the castle was burnt down and never rebuilt.

The distribution of finds from the layers formed on the pavement prior to the fire and from the layers formed by the fire is very informative. Due to the small sample of metal finds and the raw scale of documentation regarding the pottery distribution a simple method was used. However, in my opinion the interpretation of the finds can be instructive beyond the mere interpretation of the site itself.

A well preserved stratigraphy enabled us to reconstruct the use of at least two floors beside the ground floor of the main building, the *palatium*. The kitchen and working space were situated on the ground floor, the granary on the first floor and the living quarters most likely on the third floor. The taphonomy of the pottery enables us to differentiate between the finds broken during the fire and those broken prior to this event.

The distribution of keys, parts of locks and bolts found *in situ* are a strong indicator of restricted movement within the castle.

It is the latter combined with the location of the granary in the most important building of the castle that drew our attention. One can not predict such a situation based on any written sources, at least that we know of. In fact this is somewhat contradictory with the existing written sources for this castle. At the time – 2nd half of the 13th c. – the castle was the site of local feudal lords and some other *castelani* with unknown functions. However, we do know that all of them served the same regional lord. The internal control of the food resources within the castle and therefore among the servants of the same regional lord comes as a surprise and therefore calls for a detailed regional study.

Methodologically, this case study is far from cutting-the-edge technology, for the quality of the data did not allow such an approach. Rather, this case study shows the importance of the social context of space in intra-site analysis and its archaeological interpretation. The definitions of such spatial social contexts are far more difficult to recognize in most of the prehistoric settlement sites. Perhaps this is the importance of the case study with the given social dimension (the castle – *palatium*) for the session. It can point towards the questions one can pose.