



Evidence of excellence: re-assessing the status of Neolithic long-blades in Scandinavia

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Abstract

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The introduction of Neolithic long-blades in Scandinavia is tangent with the establishment of the earliest farming communities, i.e. the Funnel Beaker culture, yet the production of long-blades continued throughout the Middle Neolithic period (3300–2350 cal BC). This paper aims to further enrich our understanding of the 3rd millennium BC in Scandinavia by focusing on the occurrence and significance of long-blades. A re-assessment of the archaeological record from Norway has identified eight sites with long-blades and five settlement sites where the presence of long-blades was indicated by blade fragments and formal tools. In Scandinavia and northern Germany 41 long-blade deposit sites, comprising a total of 529 blades, are known. Based on the contexts in which the long-blades occur, it is argued that the Scandinavian long-blades played a central part in the everyday lives of both Neolithic farmers and Sub-Neolithic foragers – but for different reasons, e.g. hunting tools, weaponry, and harvesting equipment.

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