

**STEFANIE KLOOß, Mit Einbaum und Paddel zum Fischfang. Holzartefakte von endmesolithischen und frühneolithischen Küstensiedlungen an der südwestlichen Ostseeküste.** Untersuchungen und Materialien zur Steinzeit in Schleswig-Holstein und im Ostseeraum volume 6. Wachholtz, Kiel, Hamburg 2015. € 50.00. ISBN 978-3-529-01858-9. 431 pages, 313 figures and 104 tables, 57 plates.

Beginning in the 1990s and continuing into the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a number of Late Mesolithic Ertebølle and Early Neolithic coastal sites in the German Baltic have been subject to extensive investigations. The sites mainly date to 5500–3800 cal. BC, with a few deviances, and have produced impressive finds of well-preserved organic materials that led to detailed scientific insights. The author of the present book, Stefanie Klooß, is highly experienced in German coastal archaeological project-based research and coastal rescue excavations. The well-preserved and numerous wooden finds from the excavations provide the starting point for this volume, which is the printed version of Klooß' doctoral thesis, defended at the University of Kiel.

The book opens with a foreword by the editors of the series (S. Hartz / H. Lübke, pp. 15–16), followed by the author's own foreword (pp. 17–18) and a detailed Table of Contents (Inhaltsverzeichnis). The volume includes five main chapters (1–5). Chapter 1 takes up the background and methods of the coastal investigations, the general chronological positions of the sites and artefact inventory, and discusses the sites with regard to the Neolithisation of the region. Chapter 2 describes each location chosen for the thesis in more detail. A geographical and contextual description is given, followed by the research history, chronology, and survey of the finds of each site, as well as an overview of analyses applied to the material. Chapter 3 describes and classifies the artefacts and discusses their various functions. Chapter 4 summarises the results, while Chapter 5 enlarges on the many different tree species documented in the area of investigation. Next follows a German Zusammenfassung (Chapter 6), an English Summary (Chapter 7) and an extensive reference list (Chapter 8). The book closes with a section of plates with explanations (Tafeln 1–57; and Vorbemerkung zu den Tafeln).

This is a well-organised and methodical book of an outstanding standard, with an attractive layout. The high quality illustrations were prepared by Klooß herself and by the skilled staff at the archaeological authorities in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein. Among them is mentioned the legendary Professor Joachim Reichstein, who also is remembered as a promoter of underwater archaeology in the region. A question, however, concerns the mode of presenting maps: How wide a geographic area is a map expected to cover in order to guide the reader? This concerns the map on page 21 (fig. 1), a square covering the very northerly Germany and the easternmost Danish islands. The confines of the map lead to the questions of where we are, as readers less familiar with the Baltic region will not immediately find out. A suggestion would be to add a map in the corner of the local one, a map which shows North Europe with an indication of the investigated area. The English Summary is short and takes up less than two full pages; a more extensive summary would be useful. The reason why this is mentioned here is that students outside German-speaking areas are often reluctant to read German texts and thus overlook an entire tradition of knowledge. (This reluctance is an odd paradox after all: young people today frequently listen to German music – not least to famous representatives of NDH [Neue Deutsche Härte] – and know the lyrics of the tracks, too, which certainly leads to some hope of them learning the language!) German classificatory terms of artefacts are generally not similar to English terms, and more detailed descriptions would certainly facilitate reading for colleagues and students less familiar with German terminology. The wooden material presented in the book is an extremely important contribution to European Stone Age archaeology in general; the ability to thoroughly understand it would be aided by a more complete English summary section.

Concerning the content, Stefanie Kloöß' thesis, as presented in this book, is a systematic, comprehensive and detailed work. Close acquaintance with and classification of the artefacts and their contexts make up the strength of the dissertation, as expected in the solid German academic tradition. From the perspectives of Scandinavian and Anglo-American scholars, however, the lack of explicit theoretical approaches and, thus, of subsequent social interpretations would not only have surprised, but would possibly have placed the work in a category other than a doctoral dissertation. From a wider view it can be stated that in spite of the Bologna reform process, criteria for doctoral theses do vary within the reform's own geographic area. This variation raises the question of where the boundaries between descriptive reference work and analytical, explanatory work are.

The book invites constructive curiosity, stirs an enthusiasm for discussions and a wish to know more. On this background a few comments will follow on some complex issues and their potential. The aim of the work was after all confined to *dendrochronological* and *technological-ergological* investigations of the wooden material from the coastal areas in question (p. 15). *Ergology* is the study of the relationship between humans and their setting / context / circumstances of work, including their tools. However, Kloöß focuses on forms and details of tools, while unfortunately there is no suggestion of how this human-work relationship should be approached methodologically. It would have been an excellent opportunity to explicitly relate to the currently much-applied *chaîne-opératoire* approach to making and using tools, and thus to give an excellent occasion of integrating the methodology with wooden technology. Here is a potential for future research.

What is impressive is the high number of different species of wood recorded on the sites – close to 30. Their use as raw material for making artefacts reveals and confirms the fact that people of the late Mesolithic and early Neolithic possessed extensive knowledge about how to find, transport and use wooden materials, and also that particular species were more suitable for specific objects than others. The individual species selected are also of wider interest, because comparisons of artefacts and devices are made widely in time and space. This gives an overview of the materials used, the constructions and the ways of use. Although a comparative anthropological-ethnological method has been widely debated in archaeology, it is a method that certainly can support the archaeologist in defining the use and function of tools. In some cases, tools seem not to have changed much through time; examples are the eel-spears and trap baskets that were widely used in the Stone Age Baltic, as well as in modern contexts (p. 238). Moreover, some items suggested to be children's bows are fascinating. Textiles are another organic material found to be relatively plentiful in the coastal sites. Chapter 4 (Ergebnisse) presents the results in a very clear, brief and pragmatic manner. It concisely summarises the choices of plant species for different devices, as well as the reconstruction of the local arboreal vegetation. Further the summary focuses on fishery, on tools as well as on fish bones, and the chapter closes by a brief assessment with fishery in comparable locales.

When theoretical frameworks and tools for social interpretation are not present it will reasonably follow that the scholar is unable to construct a wider social and cultural analysis and interpretation. Who were the makers and users of the materials and these fantastic artefacts, how did they acquire their skills, how were they socially organised; how did they practice and organise their specialisations in tool making, fishing and consumption? These are only a few of the possible questions that would encourage and require further in-depth analysis and discussion.

The results of the German coastal projects are presented in the wider geographical context of examples that are close in time and space, including the extensive Danish coastal / underwater investigations, known not least through the Tybrind Vig project. The documented extensive use of wood and aquatic resources in the end of the Mesolithic (not only in the geographic area of this book, but also, for example, in the Danish regions) goes beyond a traditional hunter-gatherer con-

cept and should therefore have been enlarged on. How would the extensive use of aquatic and botanical resources and a specialisation in exploitation, production and use affect social organisation and social development? How does the presence of specialised fishing locales and the standardisation of the choice of certain plant species for certain pieces of equipment affect social organisation? And how important is it to have concluded that fishing seems to have been as important in the early Neolithic? How could it more profoundly support a demonstration of the complex nature and nuances of hunter / gatherer- and agricultural societies? How can research into these issues add to the knowledge of Ertebølle communities and their geographical networks? The dugouts, paddles and imported artefacts provide further evidence that lives of the communities in question were mobile and flexible. Klooß addresses this issue briefly, indicating the extensive exchange in goods and the mobility of people (p. 189). It seems exciting to have had the opportunity to problematise on some of these questions that are only just introduced by her.

Chapter 1.6. (pp. 28–33) demonstrates a lack of integration of later wooden finds. The transition between the Mesolithic and the Neolithic is generally presented as an almost teleological process. Materials from settings like those discussed in this book would have given the opportunity to paint a nuanced picture of the long period of Ertebølle and the transition to the Early Neolithic. The wide-scale use of hazel twigs and nuts and the imported axes stir curiosity: do these, taken together, indicate a maintenance or even cultivation of hazel? Questions such as this seem to be among the real challenges for future research of the era and setting investigated. The reader might be motivated by the title of the book – *With Dugout and Paddle to the Fishery Ground* – which makes us imagine that we will come across paddling, fishing and generally visible, active people in the coastal sceneries. However, the image we are presented with is full of data and information, but devoid of people.

In conclusion, the thesis presents impressive and extremely well-preserved archaeological material with careful documentation of physical find contexts, which is certainly required procedure for excellent scientific work. Unfortunately, the extensive sets of data and their meticulous systematisation and description seem to have no makers or users; the data are disconnected from any social and cultural context. One might hold the opinion that the attention to detail has come at the cost of social and cultural analysis. The data from the find materials have a high potential for a wide variety of research questions, including those on practices of subsistence, tool manufacture and the practices of social life during the ostensibly ambiguous phase of the Ertebølle and Early Neolithic.

This review has pointed to the many assets as well as the rich potential of the archaeological material and its contexts discussed in the book. It is impossible not to be impressed by the detailed survey, by the variation in the material itself, as well as by the vast knowledge the volume makes accessible concerning the importance of wood, of other organic materials and of the extensive and specialised fishing practices in the transition of the middle to the late Stone Age. And the author must be credited, as she has indeed presented an admirable publication. The book is the result of an extensive process of investigation in the field, in the museum and laboratory, and at the desk.

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