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Burial in the Swedish-Norwegian Battle Axe Culture : questioning the myth of homogeneity

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Abstract

Since its publication in 1962, Mats P. Malmer's book *Jungneolithische Studien* has heavily influenced subsequent work on the Swedish-Norwegian Battle Axe Culture. Malmer characterized burial customs as strictly regulated and conservative. Recent archaeological activity in the province of Scania, southern Sweden, provides us with an augmented empirical basis for testing Malmer's conclusions. In addition, osteological analyses give us new information on e.g. age and sex of buried individuals. The aim of the article is to re-examine Malmer's tenants, using both his data and new data available to us, emphasizing variability rather than similarity. While the overall picture of homogeneity painted by Malmer remains, it is also apparent that the...

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The Lihult axe (Norwegian Nøstvet axe) is a roughly hewn greenstone axe. The edge is polished and the butt bears signs of hammering. Characteristic of Western Sweden, Southern Norway and particularly the Oslofjord during the latter part of the Early Stone Age. The thin-butted axe is usually made from flint, but some versions in other stone occur in both flint-rich and flint-poor areas. It occurred mainly around Rügen in Germany and on Zealand in Denmark, as the Battle Axe culture established itself in the surrounding areas. The axe has a flared edge that became very prominent among the later types, which also gained a flared butt. The double-edged axes were always made from hard and homogeneous stones such as porphyry, and they were also finely polished.