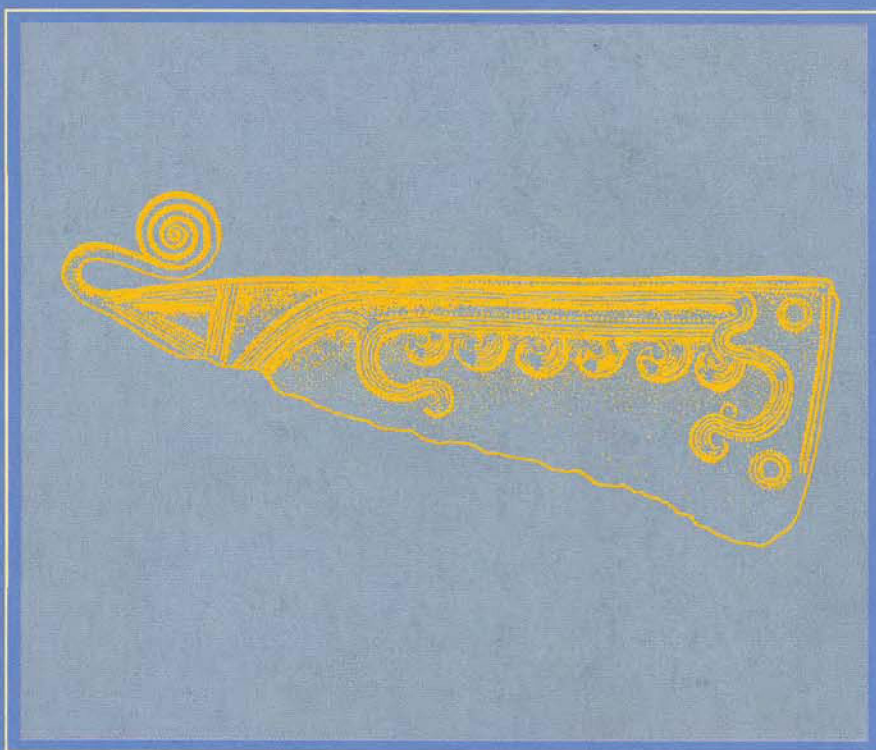


in Situ

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2003

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Framsida
Rakkniv. Exempel på det upp- och
nedvända skeppsperspektivet på
bronsföremål från yngre bronsåldern.
Se vidare artikel av Joakim Goldhahn.

Tryck
Billes AB, Mölndal

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Från redaktionen

in Situ har fått nya redaktörer, och som vid flertalet redaktionsbyten leder detta till att nya ambitioner och målsättningar testas, samtidigt som de tidigare volymerna av tidskriften analyseras. I vårt fall kommer redaktionsbytet att leda till vissa förändringar, där somligt kommer att vara sig likt, som att vi fortfarande vill försöka spegla frågor och verksamheter som berör västsvenska arkeologer, medan annat kommer att förändras, som att de flesta nummer i framtiden får ett mer tematiskt innehåll. Det kommer också att ges utrymme till debatt och recensioner. Dessa ambitioner har inte förverkligats i detta nummer då vi ”ärvt” innehållet efter föregående redaktion. 2003 års volym behåller därför sin tidigare karaktär.

Några analyserande kommentarer kan ändå vara på plats. Fram till utgåvan 2002 har 74% av författarna varit män, en trend som förstärks genom detta nummer där samtliga artiklar är skrivna av män. I fortsättningen kommer redaktionen aktivt att försöka få fördelningen mellan manliga och kvinnliga författare jämnare. Vid en hastig översyn över författarnas institutionstillhörighet kan konstateras att nästan 70% har sin hemvist vid universitet och/eller Riksantikvarieämbetet. Detta innebär att redaktionen i framtiden gärna ser bidrag från regionens museer och länsstyrelser.

Vid valet av teman kommer redaktionen i fortsättningen att välja dessa på ett sådant sätt att personer verksamma vid olika institutioner i regionen kan ha något att tillföra. Det är vår förhoppning att de ambitioner och målsättningar redaktionen har med *in Situ* i framtiden skall leda till att tidskriften fortsätter att utgöra ett levande forum inom den västsvenska arkeologin.

Åsa Gillberg

Håkan Karlsson

our Mesolithic sites in southern Halland – problems concerning chronology and territoriality

Staffan Anberg

Abstract

Research on the Mesolithic of Southern Halland has been limited until 1990. Late Paleolithic sites are not known at all, even if the climate provided good possibilities for making a living. The focus of the paper is on four sites in the area excavated until 1991. They are all inland sites. Karsefors lies by the river Lagan. It has thick cultural layers and the richest find material of the sites discussed. It was inhabited c. 8000 - 3500 BP. The stratigraphy of Ysby, Perstorp and Hästhagen consisted of thin find bearing layers between the topsoil and the underlying sand. They may all be roughly dated to c. 8500 - 8000 BP. All sites have varied tool kits, including microliths. The typological differences of Western Sweden and South Scandinavia is discussed in terms of in which area to put Southern Halland. It seems to share similarities with both regions. A proposal is given to see some of the differences between the regions as a result of differing research traditions.

Introduction

In Halland, the main archaeological activities in the southern part of the county, south of the river Ätran, are conducted by Stiftelsen Hallands länsmuseum, while Riksantikvarieämbetet, UV-Väst executes archaeological surveys and excavations in the middle and northern parts of Halland. When it comes to larger projects, for example road constructions, these two institutions often cooperate. In 1991, "länsmuseum" had about 6 major excavations, and several minor.

Schematically expressed the topography of Southern Halland is more or less flat with low ridges. It is an open agricultural landscape with some wooded, hilly areas, especially to the east. There are also some smaller lakes, rivers and streams. There are a lot of known prehistoric settlements throughout the landscape, representing different periods, but also graves, especially huge Bronze Age mounds (fig 1).

The intense excavations on settlement sites the last few years have yielded a wealth of information concerning the Early and Middle Neolithic, the Bronze Age, the Pre-Roman and Roman Iron Ages. However, not until 1990 any Mesolithic sites had been found and excavated, with one exception, namely the Karsefors site.

Of course, the existence of mesolithic sites has been known for many years, as a relatively intense surface collecting activity has yielded a huge material including mesolithic artefacts (Ewald 1925, Welinder 1975). But although there is a rich collected material, up till now no deeper analyses have been made concerning the Mesolithic in Southern Halland.

Geological background and preliminary interpretation

From the work conducted by scientists working in the fields of Late Glacial and Early Postglacial environmental history, we have good possibilities to draw conclusions about when man first could have come to the region, and also which climate that must have existed.

Without going into any detail, there are as far as I can see no reasons why southern Halland could not have been inhabited during the periods of the relatively warm Alleröd as well as the colder Younger Dryas (fig 2). There was enough dry land, the inland ice had retreated and there was at least sparse vegetation (Mörner 1969). However, tundra environment during the Younger Dryas in the Laholm plain has



Fig 1. Map showing the county of Halland in SW Scandinavia. Modified from Anberg 1996.

been documented (Svensson 1964).

After a very fast regression during the Late Glacial and very early Postglacial times, we come to a situation at around 9500 BP, when the shoreline was situated at least 12 - 14 meters below the present level in the Laholm bay. After that there is a complex system of transgressions which culminate at c. 6200 BP when the shoreline was up to a level of about 12 meters above the present level in the area under study.

ate aleolit i in i ations

As far as I know there are as yet no finds from the Late Paleolithic in southern Halland, but there a few finds including tanged points of Late Paleolithic type that have been found in the area of Varberg in central Halland. I would not exclude the possibility that finds from the Bromme and Ahrensburg complexes already exist in the older collections,

perhaps also in excavated materials, but that they have not gotten any attention in that they, so to speak, have drowned in the masses of younger artefacts deposited at the same places.

a ate mesolit i sites

In the following I will concentrate on the hitherto excavated mesolithic sites in southern Halland (fig 3).

Karsefors

The site is situated by the northern bank of the river Lagan, only a few meters from the stream, just downstream some major rapids. The first excavations took place in 1928 and were conducted by Harald Nilsson, Laholms museum. These were simple trial excavations and although the find material is to be found at the museum of Halmstad no report or documentation has yet been found. Some information on this excavation is however given by Ewald (1926).

In 1950, the Department of Archaeology of Lund University undertook new excavations at Karsefors. They were led by professor Holger Arbman. Trial trenches were laid out and a good part of the excavation was done with a good stratigraphic method so that different layers were kept apart. The findbearing layers were up to 1 meter deep. Holger Arbman wrote a report in 1952 and published the material in 1954 (Arbman 1954).

In 1991, the present author had the opportunity to re-study a good part of the finds from the excavations in 1950. This means most of the "tools" including blades and microblades and probably also most of the cores. Most flakes and waste seem also to have been kept in separate bags. However, a short check in a few bags shows that tools and cores may be found together with the waste material. About 4700 artefacts are registered at the moment and I guess that at least 10 000 more finds are to be reclassified (Anberg 1991).

In the find material there are narrow triangular micro-liths, broad romboids and trapezes, but also transverse points and tanged points. Some ceramics found in the upper layers are of the Pitted Ware type. Of the cores the handle core is frequently occurring and it is striking that numerous micro-

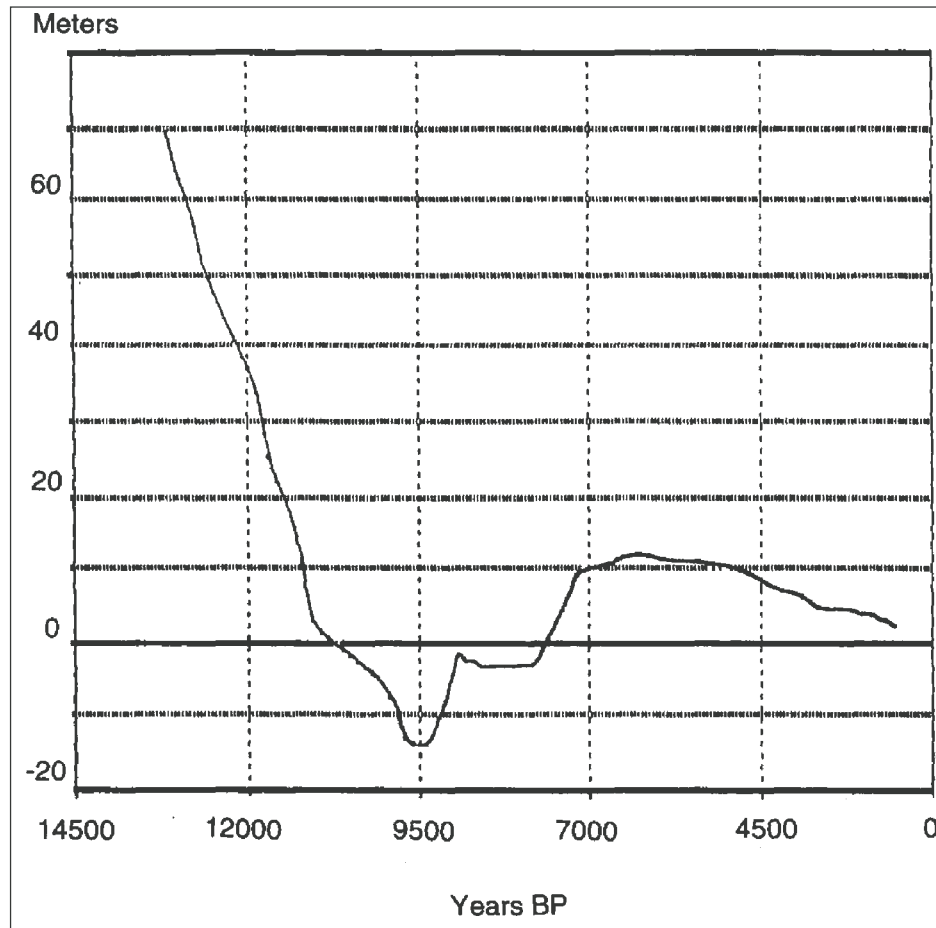


Fig 2. Shore displacement diagram for Halmstad. The curve shows level above present sea level. Data from Mörner's distance diagrams; plates 4-6 (1969). Diagram by Staffan Anberg and Bengt Westergaard.

blades occur at all levels.

It is obvious that there have been several habitations at the site. The first one can be dated to the transition from Maglemose to Kongemose culture, around 8000 BP, or early Atlantic time. Then we have, as I understand it, a few more habitations during Kongemose time and most probably also during Ertebølle. The last major settlement can be dated to the Middle Neolithic Pitted Ware Culture, but a few Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age finds also occur.

There can be no doubt that the location of a site at Karsefors is connected to the fishing of salmon in the stream but the toolkits suggest other activities also, which must have included hunting. It must also be stressed that at least for some of the occupations the open sea has been much

closer than today, and that probably a very rich ecozone must have existed around the mouth of the Lagan.

Ysby

Only a few kilometres from Karsefors lies Ysby. This site was first excavated in 1987 and thereafter in 1991. Except for a big farm or perhaps a small village, dated to Roman Iron Age, Roman coins (!), Neolithic Funnel Beaker sherds and other finds there is also a rich Mesolithic find material. The distance to the river Lagan, to which a steep slope leads, is a few hundred meters (Westergaard 1993a).

The stratigraphy is simple, just a findbearing layer, about 10 cm deep, between the topsoil and the underlying sand. The sum of finds is about 5000, including 10 microlithes,

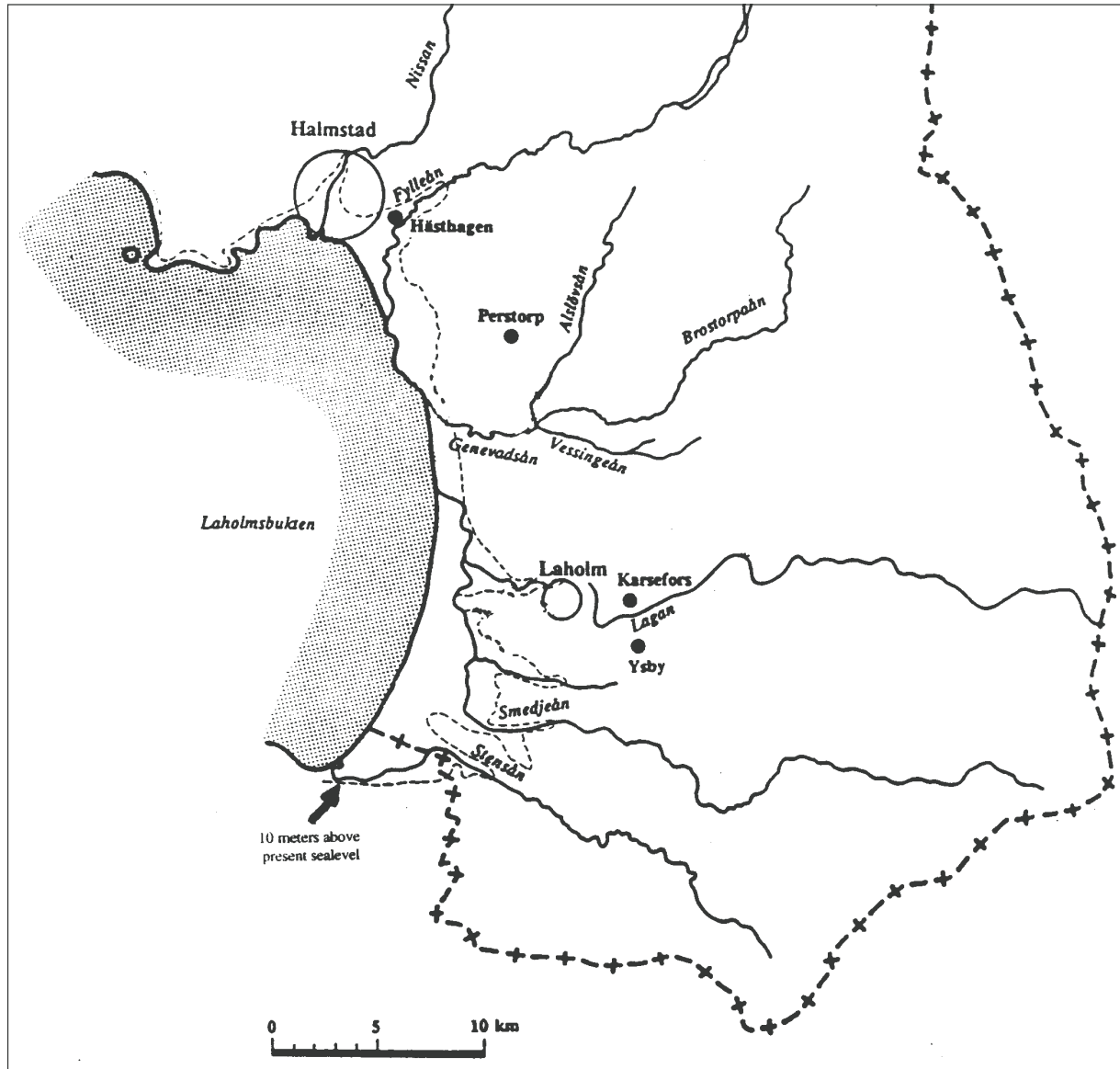


Fig 3. Map showing southern Halland with excavated sites mentioned in the text. Modified from Anberg 1996.

25 microblade cores and 50 other cores.

The combination of triangular and lanceolate microliths together with small flake scrapers, small round scrapers and conical microblade cores suggests a dating to the later part of Maglemose, c. 8000-8500 BP. The absence of handle cores is notable.

As in the case of Karsefors, the fishing of salmon may have been of importance but as the site is located at some

distance from the stream perhaps other activities have dominated. My present hypothesis is that Ysby was a winter base camp. The inhabitants stored their food supplies and made their living at some distance from the cold river as well as from the stormy and foggy open sea.

Perstorp

This site, near Eldsberga, was excavated in 1990 (Pålsson &

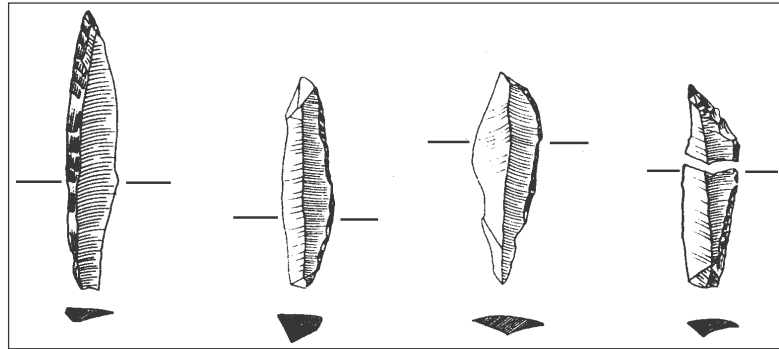


Fig 4. Selected Microliths from Ysby. Scale 1:1. Drawing Bo Lundevall. After Westergaard 1993a.

Åkesson 1991). The settlement is situated at a sandy slope near a small stream with a small lake in the neighbourhood. Among the 2500 finds there are narrow microliths (maybe lanceolates), flake scrapers and conical microblade cores. A C14-dating on carbonized hazelnut shells gave 8040±90 BP (uncal).

Hästhagen

Hästhagen east of Halmstad was excavated in 1991 (Westergaard 1993b). The site lies in a flat slope and the ground consists of sand and sandy gravel. A few hundred meters away there is a small lake and bog system, and at a distance of 1 kilometer we find the river Fylleån.

Among the finds of different houses and other constructions from different prehistoric periods including Early/Middle Neolithic Funnel Beaker Culture, there is a Mesolithic find material concentrated in c. 30 square meters. The stratigraphy is uncomplicated like in Ysby, with a findbearing layer of about 10 cm, between the topsoil and the undisturbed underlying sand. Some of the material was found in for the site as a whole characteristic prehistoric tree fall features. Although the settlement is of open character and later prehistoric activities have taken place nearby, I nevertheless think that it should be possible to preliminarily interpret the Mesolithic finds as representing one archaeological unit.

The flint artefacts are about 3000 and include 40 microliths; 1 lanceolate, 8 triangles, 1 barbed point, and 30 fragments. Furthermore there are 20 flake scrapers including some small circular scrapers, 8 burins and one presumed tanged point; unfortunately in a fragmentary condition. If it

is accepted as a tanged point it is not of neolithic type but rather Ahrensburgian. There are only 10 cores and just 1 fragment of a microblade core although microblades frequently occur.

With a dominance of triangles, of which a few long and narrow, a typological dating comparing with Skåne and Denmark points to late Maglemose, perhaps around 8500 BP or somewhat later (Brinch-Petersen 1973, Welinder 1973). But we also have to consider that one of the triangles is of the type "dreiecke mit hohlem basis", (=triangle with concave base), which is a type artefact at sites in northern Germany belonging to the older Duvensee group, dated to around 9000 BP (Bokelmann 1971). Then we have the probable tanged point which suggests a dating at the latest in Preboreal time, 10000-9000 BP. Finally, we must pay attention to the barbed point, an artefact which does not exist at all (?) in South Scandinavian Mesolithic, but is typical for the Sandarna Culture in the area of Göteborg, Bohuslän, and Västergötland. The Sandarna Culture can be dated to around 9000-7000 BP (Fredsjö 1953, Cullberg 1972, 1974, 1975, Wigforss 1983, Andersson et al 1988).

Quite a lot of the flints are burned and in the find material there are also some burned bones as well as charcoal and charred hazelnut shells. The analysis of the bones points to the presence of wild boar, some species of deer and dog (Jonsson in Westergaard 1993b). Finally, we have one dating of charcoal to 9260±90 BP and one on charred hazelnuts to 8630±80 BP.

From all this the site seems to be of a mixed character, with two or more phases. In that case, however, why are a

few small Mesolithic activity areas of different age located at exactly the same little spot in the landscape?

i territory or i chronology

For many decades it has been obvious that there is a certain difference between South Scandinavia as compared to Western Sweden, not least when it comes to the Mesolithic. This distinction is expressed in that different tool types have dominated in different periods in the two regions. Just a few examples are that the triangle microliths are very rare in Western Sweden, that lanceolate microliths have been in use for a longer time in Western Sweden but that trapezoids are lacking, that the handle core disappears just after 7000 BP in South Scandinavia while handle cores just have been introduced in Western Sweden at the same time. The flake axe is common already in early Mesolithic in Western Sweden while the situation is the opposite in South Scandinavia. We have already mentioned the barbed point which is typical in Western Sweden, and so on.

This can be interpreted as the two regions represent different territories of different people or tribes or such alike. There has also been attempts to distinguish different regional and local groups in South Scandinavia, based on typological differences in tool forms (Vang-Petersen 1984). Without more than just mentioning the problems with defining the southern borders for South Scandinavia and the northern border for West Sweden, what is of greater interest is the question, what is the south of Halland? With the example of Karsefors it is quite clear that the best parallels

are to be found in for example Skåne. This is relevant for this site and this period, the Atlantic period. The site of Perstorp seems to fit in well in both Sandarna and Maglemose. This holds true for Ysby as well, if one accepts that triangles sometimes occur in Sandarna too. In Hästhagen the dominance of triangles points to Maglemose, but then we have the Sandarna type artefact, barbed point, in the material.

I do not attempt to present a solution to this problem. That the area concerned lies between the two so-called regions of South Scandinavia and West Sweden is quite clear. But the question is the relevancy of these fixed regions at all. I want to suggest that there may have existed a lot of territories which were not stable seen over a shorter or longer time-span. Different groups of people, having more or less different tool traditions, can have lived nearby each other. A flow of people, traditions and ideas can have moved in different directions. Of course there are tendencies, sometimes strong, which point to big differences between for example the areas of Göteborg and Själland (Zealand). But it is very possible that some of the differences between South Scandinavian and West Swedish Mesolithic are best explained by the location of the different universities and museums and their working areas as well as their respective histories of research.

Note: This text represents a slightly modified and updated version of a lecture held the third of december 1991 during the seminar mentioned in the preface. The development of Mesolithic research in Southern Halland after 1991 is also summarized in Anberg 1996.

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