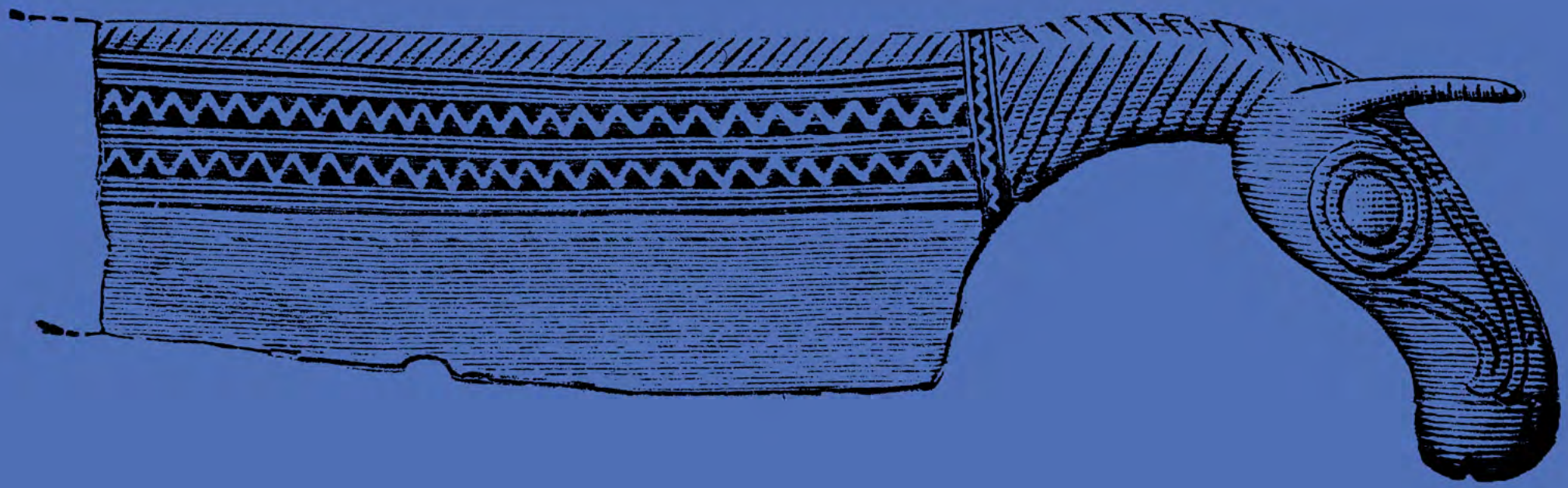

Razor, Nordic period II, c. 1400 BC, from Valsta, Närke, Sweden.

RAZORS,

BRONZE AGE TRANSFORMATIONS, LONG DISTANCE EXCHANGE AND GUEST-FRIENDSHIP

Flemming Kaul

Karin Margarita Frei

Samantha S. Reiter

In A. Ballmer & D. Neumann (Eds.), *Imitations, Simulations, Mock-ups and Illusions: Special Variants and Interpretations in Material Culture. Case Studies from Prehistoric Europe.* Propylaeum. https://doi.org/10.11588/propylaeum.1445.c20615

This study examines the single-edged razor with a horse-head handle, a distinctive object of the Nordic Bronze Age culture closely associated with males. These razors, which evolved in form and decoration, likely originated in the Eastern Mediterranean, reaching their Nordic finalization and widespread use around 1450 BC. Despite changes in appearance and symbolism, the razor's role as a practical tool remained consistent as it spread swiftly northward. Evidence of Bronze Age long-distance exchange suggests the paths of travelers who carried both the razor and related cultural ideas. The ancient Greek concept of *xenia*, or guest-friendship, offers insight into the social mechanisms that may have facilitated such exchanges. As a moral and religious obligation to provide hospitality, *xenia* could explain how trade and contact routes remained open, even during times of conflict. This model thus illuminates how fashion, ideas, and practices could spread widely, enabled by bonds fostering both material and cultural exchange across vast distances.

Bronze Age; razors; daggers; exchange of ideas; guest-friendship.

INTRODUCTION

Researchers into prehistoric archaeology have since long been able to identify evidence of long distance exchange of ideas, as expressed in form and decoration of objects of material culture. Stylistic features of the Middle Bronze Age such as spiral ornaments seemingly demonstrate influences from the Mediterranean into the Nordic Bronze Age culture, even though the exact 'back-up' by related imported objects in many cases seems missing. The ideas related to decorative art and many types of objects did not fly on the wings of imaginative birds, but in the mind of travelers, who in a period of dramatic changes of exchange patterns and increased mobility, brought ideas back to their homeland (the North). As the prominent Danish archaeologist, Sophus Müller wrote in 1921: *'Elements of decorative art, and in particular the spiral patterns, were brought here in connection with travels for the sake of the amber trade and through personal connections'* (Müller, 1921, p. 8; translated to English by F. Kaul).

Such foreign elements were re-interpreted in a creative process of transformation. Parts of that process may have taken place elsewhere, as already hinted at by Müller, somewhere in between the primary sources of inspiration and the areas where the new types turned up. However, cultural and economic conditions should be existent in order to receive impact and refashion the knowledge of certain object types into 'new or changed types' – being swiftly spread over larger areas in re-translated shape. Such a 'hotspot zone' was the southern Scandinavia area, with excellent farmland conditions and not the least the valuable Nordic/Baltic amber that was collected along the shores of South Scandinavia (Vandkilde, 2014), and which has been found in the Mediterranean area and even beyond, in Syria and Mesopotamia (Mukherjee et al., 2008; Bunnefeld & Martin, 2020), and Egypt (Hood, 1993; Bongianni et al., 2001; Varberg et al., 2019).

THE SINGLE-EDGED RAZOR, FROM EGYPT TO NORTH NORWAY VIA CRETE

The introduction of the single-edged razor into South Scandinavia in the decades before 1400 BC was due to influences stemming from the Eastern Mediterranean (Kaul, 2013a; Kaul, 2015; Kaul, 2018a) (Fig. 1). Even though the razor as such represents a common European Bronze Age phenomenon, the shape of the Nordic razors differs markedly from almost all other Middle Bronze Age razors: The Nordic razors are one edged and asymmetrical, whereas all other razors are two-edged and symmetrical (Jockenhövel, 1971; Jockenhövel, 1980). There is one exception from this, where we find the same design, namely in the Aegean/Minoan area. The Aegean one-edged razor appeared at the transition between the Late Helladic/Late Mycenean II and III A. It continued without many changes until and including Late Helladic/Late Mycenean III C. Before that the Aegean razor was two-edged and symmetrical, and with a leaf-shaped blade (Weber, 1996).

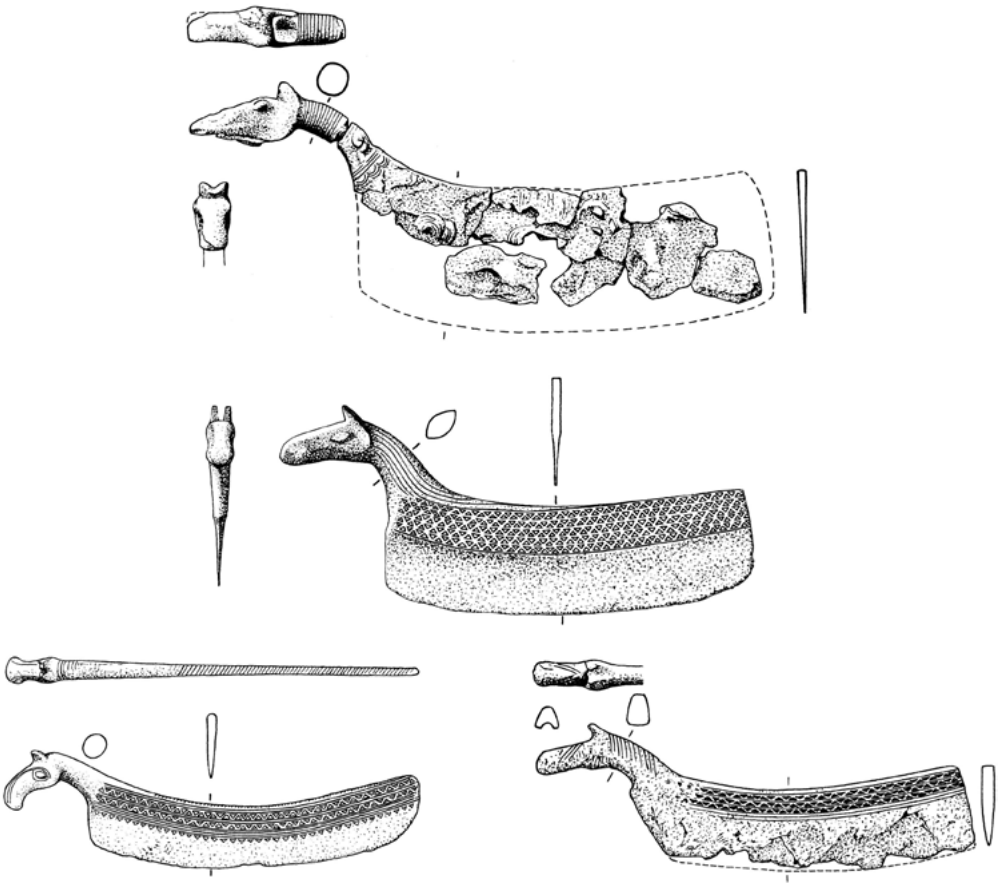

Fig. 1. Razors with horse headed handle, Nordic period II, c. 1400 BC. Ubby, Darup, Karlstrup and Petersdal, all Zealand, Denmark. Length: 9.0–10.8 cm.

THE CRETAN DICTE CAVE EVIDENCE

Whereas the handle with its horse's head is fully cast on the Nordic razors, the handle of the Aegean razors is flanged and with holes for rivets (Fig. 2). Since being partially of organic material (wood, horn, ivory), it has not been possible to determine the full shape of the handle of the Minoan and Mycenaean one-edged razors. However, votive objects found in the Dicte Cave at Psychron, Crete, throw light on this matter. Some votive razors were cut out of thin sheet bronze. On these votive representations of Minoan razors, the full shape of the handle is present. In some cases, the handle is in the shape of an animal's head, and in one case, it forms a stylized horse's head (Boardman, 1961; Weber, 1996). Not just the overall design of the early one-edged razors but also the shape of the horse headed handles thus show striking resemblance between the Aegean and Southern Scandinavia (Kaul, 2013a; Kaul, 2015) (Fig. 3).

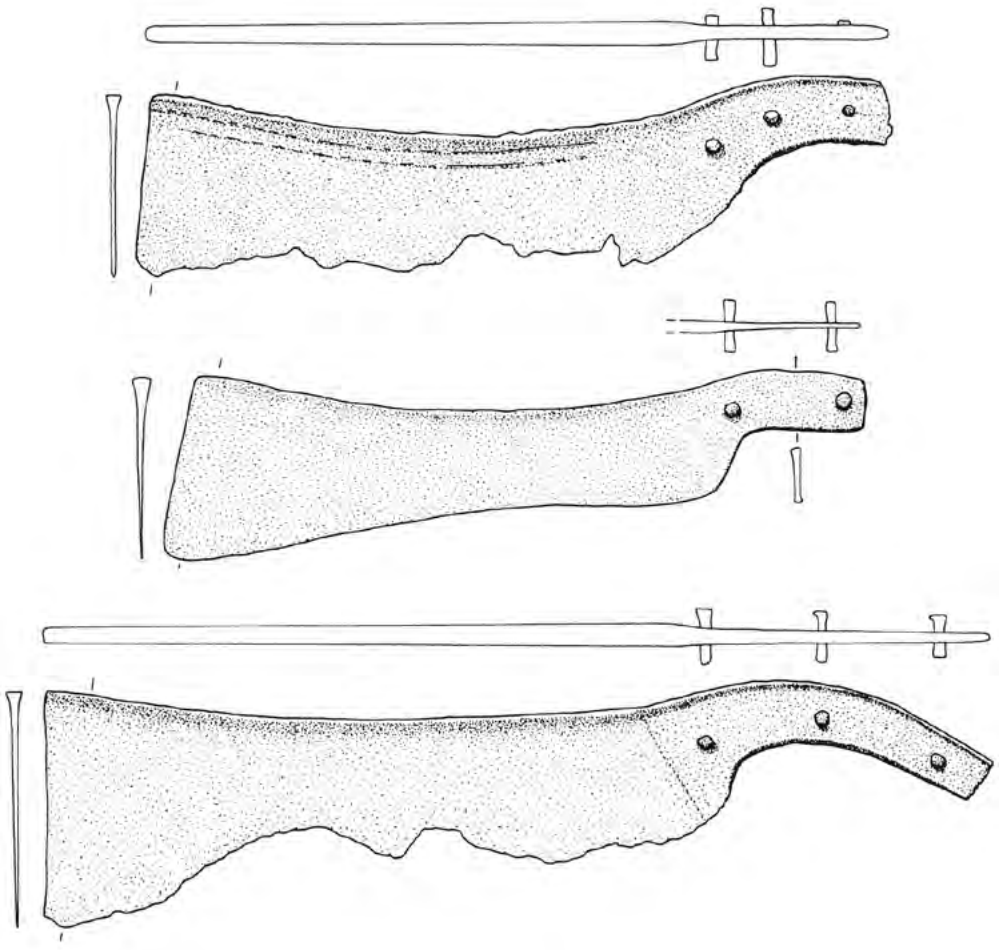

Fig. 2. Razors, Late Helladic/Late Minoan III A, from Zapher Papoura and Epano Gypsades, Knossos, Crete, and Prosymna, Argolis, Greece. Length: 17.5–23.6 cm.

Fig. 3. Votive razor with handle in the shape of a horse's head, from the Dicte Cave, Psychron, Crete, Greece. Length: 8.6 cm. Upper, the full razor; lower, handle detail of the same razor.

In Crete, it is fascinating to follow the physically alteration and transformation of the Minoan razors from functional razors following the warrior in his grave, for instance in the Zapher Papoura cemetery at Knossos (Evans, 1905; Weber, 1996), into practically unusable thin sheet objects recreated into a sort of 'symbolic currency' of votive objects substitutes. These changes from social 'warrior appearance' into a religious votive context are further emphasized by the sanctity of the Dicte Cave itself, one of the most holy places in the ancient Greek world, as recorded by a number of classical authors, some seemingly regarded the cave as the birth place of Zeus, others that the infant Zeus was hidden and nurtured here in order to avoid him being swallowed by his father, Chronos (Boardman, 1961) (Fig. 4).

At the bottom of the cave, there is a pool out of which rises a forest of stalactites. Most of the bronze votive objects, including knifes, razors, tweezers, pins, chisels, some totally unusable, as the razors, and double axes were found in crevices in the stalactite pillars (Hogarth, 1900). The main period of the bronze votives includes Middle Mycenean (MM) III to LM III, but there are also later depositions (Boardman, 1961; Weber, 1996).

Fig. 4. View from the mouth of the Dicte Cave over the fertile Lasithi Plain, Central Crete, Greece.

Some objects found in the depth of the Dicte Cave (also some later than Bronze Age) should be recognized as imported objects, including a bronze statuette of Amen-Ra and a Syrio-Phoenician ivory figurine and a Late Bronze Age Central European Urnfield dagger (Boardman, 1961). Such pieces could in broader terms be understood as exotic imports. However, when bearing in mind the paramount sanctity of the Dicte Cave, a more specific explanation should be considered: that such objects were brought to the site by travellers, guests visiting the cave together with their hosts. As sort of guest-friendship approval in admiration of the sacred place, these objects were deposited here.

PESCHIERA DAGGERS, MAKING CONNECTIONS

When considering Bronze Age network and routes of interaction, one particular type should be highlighted, the Peschiera dagger, named after find spots at Peschiera at the South end of Lago di Garda, with large amounts of Bronze Age and Early Iron Age depositions, including amber. The Peschiera daggers are flange hilted daggers; production began at around 1300 BC or a little bit later, thus representing a time a later than the dissemination of the razors in question. There are a number of types of these daggers, with different Central European distributions. Here, the Peschiera daggers of R. Peroni's group A (Peroni, 1956; Bouzek, 1985), including 'tipo Pertosa' and 'tipo Cascina' (Peroni, 1994) should be taken into consideration. These are flanged hilted daggers with rather narrow and parallel running flanges of the hilt. The blade is relatively narrow, with the edges running almost parallel. Many of the daggers of this shape come from the area south of the Lago di Garda and from Peschiera, where the Mincio River runs out of Lago di Garda, including finds from Castellaro Lagusello, Imboccatura del Mincio and Bacino Marina in Peschiera (Fig. 5). Some daggers have been found in southern Italy, including Scoglio del Tonno at Tarent, and Sicily. Four Peschiera daggers, belonging to this type (Group A), were found in the Dicte Cave at Psychron on Crete (Boardman, 1961). A similar dagger comes from

Fig. 5. A Peschiera dagger from Bacino Marina, Peschiera del Garda, Veneto, Italy. Length: 21.3 cm.

a burial at the Zapher Papoura cemetery at Knossos, without further grave goods. These Peschiera daggers from Crete and a dagger from the Aegean island of Naxos north of Crete are very similar to the daggers from North Italy, in particular those from Castellaro Lagusello and Bacina Marina. The daggers found in Greece may have been produced at Peschiera/the Mantua region south of Lago di Garda, and the dagger from Scoglio del Tonno could represent a step on the route. At Peschiera, at the south end of Lago di Garda, where the Alps meet the Po Valley, two network systems could have met, and travellers from the North could meet travellers from the South, some might have continued their journey.

When from Peschiera looking north, a dagger of R. Peroni's group A has been found in a burial at Peiting, Schöngau, Oberbayern (Sprockhoff, 1936). By means of a Rixheim sword, this burial should be dated to around 1300 BC or a bit later. In Denmark, an example of a Peschiera dagger closely related to R. Peroni's group A has been found in a burial at Brundby Mark on the island of Samsø (Randsborg, 1970).

EGYPTIAN RAZORS AND THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS INTO 'GREEK' RAZORS

The path of the single edged razor brings us to ancient Egypt, where shaving traditions had deep roots going back to at least Early Dynastic time (Petrie, 1917, p. 49). For the ancient Egyptians, shaggy beards and overall hairiness indicated bodily negligence and uncleanliness. The face, the neck, limbs, armpits, chest and pubic regions were regularly shaved (Davies,1982, p. 189). Men and women wore their natural hair close-cropped, attiring themselves with wigs on public occasions (and the ceremonial beard for the Pharaohs). The wigs would have been expensive and were probable restricted to the nobility (McCreesh et al., 2011). Generally, men were clean shaven, facial stubble being allowed only in special circumstances such as at times of mourning. Professional barbers played an important role in Egyptian society, called *chaku*. They were attached to the permanent staff of the royal and noble households, of temples, and seemingly to the army (Davies, 1982).

It has been suggested that the Minoan/Mycenaean one-edged razor, considering its outline, could have derived from an 18th dynasty type of razor (Evans, 1905; Weber, 1996). It is tempting to compare the outline of the blade of the so-called rotating razor of Egypt with the blade of the Minoan/Mycenaean one-edged razors (Kaul, 2018b). During the New Kingdom

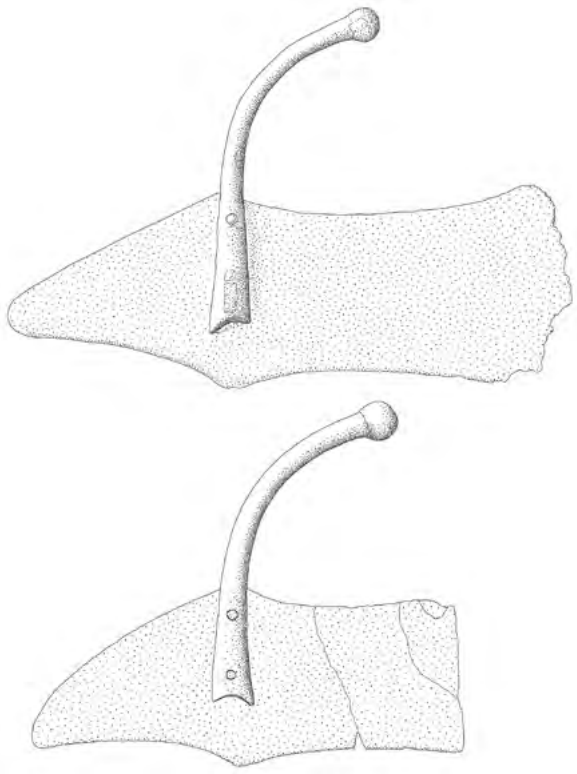

Fig. 6. Egyptian razors, 'rotating razors'. Upper without find provenance, lower allegedly from Abydos. Originally the lower razor should have had a longer blade, the primary cutting edge at its end now missing, and a new edge has been created. Upper razor: c. 16 cm, originally the two razors should have had approximately the same length. Both seem to have an extra cutting edge along the blade at the opposite side of the handle. The Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, London, and the National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen.

the so-called rotating razor turned up (Petrie, 1917; Davies, 1982). A long, broad bronze blade ends in a relatively narrow cutting edge. From the middle of the blade a handle fastened by rivets projects at a right angle (Fig. 6). By making a rotating movement, the short edge could be used in swift cutting movements, cutting upwards and downwards, or differently sideward, alternatively. This seems to be an excellent tool for the skilled barber – especially when realizing that these alternatively up-and-down cuts or slashes are most easily employed by another person than the one being shaved. We may be dealing with a practical tool, not necessarily closely related to the person being shaved. In a couple of cases these razors had another sharp cutting edge, apart from the one at the end of the blade, in these cases along the side of the blade (*The Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology,* London inv. nos. UC 40550; 40545; 40538). The extra edge does not alter the concept of this razor being for professional use, but it seems easy to use this edge by the person himself without involving a barber. This observation could be of interest when considering the possible transfer of a similar razor shape to Crete and Greece. Apart from a zigzag-like pattern on the handle and one short hieroglyphic inscription, these razors are not decorated.

When removing the peculiar handle projecting from the blade at a right angle, then we are close to the shape of the Minoan/Mycenaean razor, especially when considering that some of the Egyptian razors in question did have a supplementary cutting edge along its longer side (Kaul, 2018b). Furthermore, the handle of the Minoan/Mycenaean razor was placed at the end of the razor, making it easier for a man to shave himself, instead of having a second person, a barber doing the job. In this process, the context of the razor seems to have changed from a professional 'barbershop' item to a more personal thing, often found in warrior's graves.

Another Egyptian type of razor should be included, since it carries decoration. Like the rotating razor this razor has a narrow cutting edge at the one end of the blade, but with a handle with plastic figural decoration at the opposite end. There is no handle projecting at a right angle at the middle of the blade. Because of its small size and delicacy, it has been suggested that it was a woman's razor (Davies, 1982, p. 190). It could also be argued that the decorated handle indicates that we are dealing with a personal belonging, and for more individual use. Among the handles we could mention one with a plastic rendering of a hippopotamus, the goddess Taweret (The Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, inv. no. UC 40665) and one with an ape plucking palm-nuts over a lotus decoration (ibid., inv. no. UC 30135) (Fig. 7). In such cases the decoration should not be considered merely as decoration without meaning, but as iconography with an underlying religious significance.

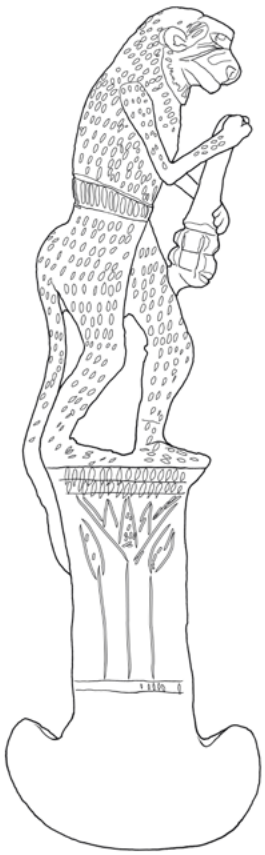

Fig. 7. Egyptian razor with a handle in the shape of a plastic rendering of an ape. 18th Dynasty. Height: 9.4 cm. The Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, London.

A piece of toilet equipment belonging to the 18th Dynasty (c. 1550–1292 BC) in some cases carries a handle in the shape of could be a horse in flying gallop, here a representation of a royal horse, because of the plumes on its head (Petrie, 1917; Davies, 1982, p. 190; Freed, 1982, p. 195). Probably it is the horses of the chariots that are represented, and the military connection seems clear, these implements seemingly belonging to members of the highest military ranks. The meaning of such horse representations was not a religious one, since the horse in Ancient Egypt as such did not became related to the religious sphere. The horse (with chariot) became a symbol of the military capacity of Egypt, a social symbol of power. A small razor blade and a pin for curling hair (wig) were inserted into the horse shaped holder. Thus, this piece toilet equipment can be seen both as a practical piece for body care ready at hand in the field, before battle, and a sort of military distinction.

In a creative process, at a time when contacts between Egypt and Crete were close, just before 1450 BC, a hybridization of these razor types could have taken place: the Aegean-Minoan one-edged razor was created by an amalgamation of shape and meaning of these three different types: 1: the overall shape from the 'rotating razor', a practical barber shop item without decoration; 2: the small, narrow razor, carrying iconographic decoration; 3: the toilet/razor equipment with horse decoration, the horse decoration not related to the religious sphere, but to the social military sphere, probably being a personal item of a high ranked officer.

The new razor type spread swiftly, and it is not possible to detect any differences in the development on Crete, on the Greek islands or on mainland Greece. Perhaps these razors were introduced at certain centres of production such as at Knossos. No Egyptian razors have been found in the Aegean area, and *vice versa* (Weber, 1996, p. 39–40). Ideas and influences can 'travel' without the occurrence of detectable import material.

The relation to the warrior remains, since many of these razors are found in warrior's grave with weapons. In some cases, the horse headed handled can be detected (Dicte Cave, Crete). However, in this transformation process the meaning of the horse may have changed from being of military significance into being of religious significance (Kaul, 2018b).

Considering renderings of horses it may seem difficult to find religious aspects represented. The Mycenaean vase paintings for instance show representational processional scenes or hunting scenes with horses. However, when a procession including horses pulling a wagon where solar discs seem to be involved, then the horse might have gained a higher divine status. This could be the interpretation of scenes depicted on a Late Minoic III *Larnax* from Episkopi, Crete (Davaras, 1976, p. 176–177), but it is quite possible that we are not dealing with a procession in the world of the living, but with rendering of the dead going in his horse drawn chariot to the afterworld (Mellink, 1991, p. 301). During the last Minoan periods, 1300–1200 BC, the-

re seem to a growing interest for the horse as a divine animal (Kaul, 2018b). Later, in the Geometric period, many bronze votive horse figurines deposited at major Greek sanctuaries, as well as horse representations surrounded by solar symbols on the funeral pottery yield evidence of the horse's religious significance.

THE NORDIC RAZOR

When the next spatial leap of the one-edged razor took place – this time a gigantic geographical leap – the religious character of the horse representation increased considerably. The introduction of the single edged horse headed razor into South Scandinavia took place in the decades before 1400 BC, thus shortly after the appearance of this type in the eastern Mediterranean (for absolute chronological considerations see Kaul, 2013a; Kaul, 2015; Kaul, 2018b with further references). The introduction of the razor, reflecting an idea of the shaven warrior, should not be regarded as an isolated phenomenon, but as part of a larger picture of south-north social interaction. It should be considered as component of an 'aristocratic package', reflecting a new chiefly elite culture (Kristiansen & Larsson 2005). At the same time elements such as the folding stool, bronze drinking vessels and the horse-drawn chariot were introduced or chosen in the North, all to be considered as ruling symbols. These features, together with the razors, indicate the acceptance of parts of a Minoan/Mycenaean lifestyle (Kaul, 2013a; Kaul 2018a).

Even though the basic shape was the same, some changes appeared when the ideas of the one-edged razor somehow were carried from the South to the North, the ideas probably being mediated at some places *en route*. The handle of the Aegean razor was flange hilted, and with holes for rivets holding the 'full handle' made of organic material, such as wood, bone or ivory, secured by the flanges and rivets (Weber, 1996). The handle of the Nordic razor was fully cast together with the blade. The horse heads of the handle are finely executed, small pieces of art and craftmanship. A few of the early Nordic razors carry a spiral handle, a feature, which is also seen among the votive razors of the Dicte Cave. Finally, the size of the razors became smaller. Generally, the length of the Nordic razor is about the half of the Aegean razor.

When the single-edged razor was introduced in the North, it swiftly spread and became accepted over larger parts of northernmost Germany and southern Scandinavia as a sort of fashion or ideal. Carrying the horse's head, the razor should be regarded as one of the most important bearers of iconography, the horse referring to the sun horse as demonstrated by the Chariot of the Sun from Trundholm Bog, Zealand, Denmark: the horse being the divine sun-horse securing the transport of the sun over the heavens at daytime and through the underworld at night (Kaul, 1998; Kaul, 2004).

In a burial cairn at Valsta, Närke, Central Sweden, at Stockholm, a typical example of a Nordic period II razor has been found (Fig. 8) (Montelius, 1917, no. 927; Oldeberg, 1974). Together with a razor from a burial cairn at Todness in North Trøndelag, Norway (Rygh, 1906; Kaul, 2013b; Kaul & Rønne, 2013), it demonstrates the quick dissemination of the razor before 1300 BC, even reaching the northern border zone of the Nordic Bronze Age culture.

The northernmost of all razors with the handle in the shape of a horse's head, though from Nordic Bronze Age period III (1300–1100 BC), was found in a stone cist inside a cairn, at the farm of Skjeggesnes, Nordland, Norway (Fig. 9) (Binns, 1985; Rønne, 2011; Kaul, 2013b, Kaul & Rønne, 2013). The cairn is part of a larger cemetery of cairns. Due to the mild climate (the Golf Stream), here less than 100 km's South of the Arctic Circle, the fields are well suited for growing barley, but grass for hay harvest is preferred today (Fig. 10).

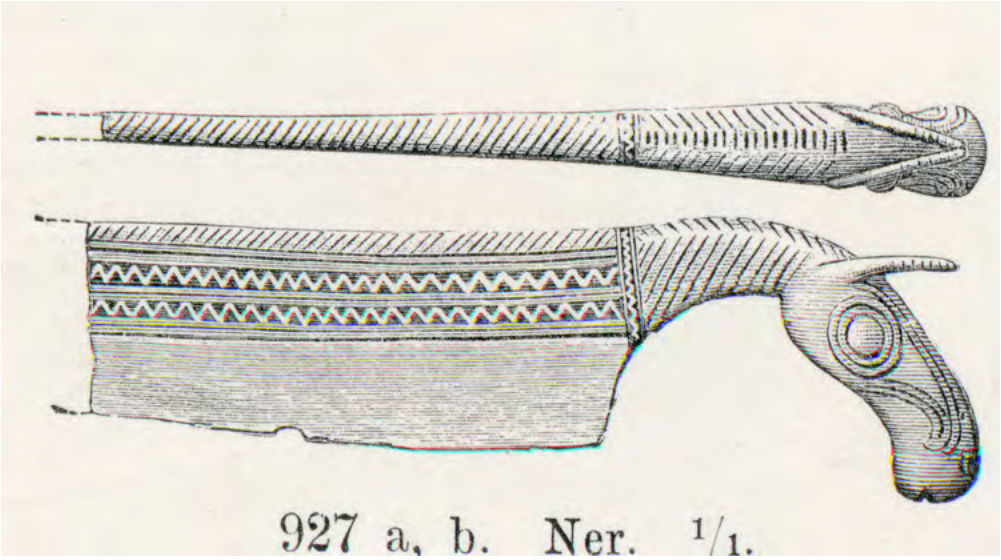

Fig. 8. Razor, Nordic period II, c. 1400 BC, from Valsta, Närke, Sweden. Preserved length: c. 5.0 cm.

Fig. 9. The northernmost razor of all razors with horse headed handle, Nordic period III, 1300–1100 BC, Skjeggesnes, Helgeland, Nordland, Norway. Length: c. 8.0 cm.

Fig. 10. Skjeggesnes, Helgeland, Nordland, Norway. View over the landscape seen from the cairn cemetery, where the northernmost razor was found.

A PATH OF TRANSFER AND TRANSLATION OF DESIGN FROM EGYPT TO CLOSE TO THE ARCTIC CIRCLE

Above we have followed the long way of the single-edged, asymmetrical razor, from 18th Dynasty Egypt to Bronze Age Scandinavia. Even though the razors in all cases had a practical function, changes in values can be observed. Probably, there was not any deeper meaning behind the so-called rotating razor of Egypt, except being an instrument for the generally accepted hair fashion. It was well suited for a professional barber. On other types of razors religious motifs turn up, here probably on those for more personal use. Also, motifs of a more secular kind, with horse representations, probably of the chariot horse, are found.

When the horse's head appears on at least some one-edged razors of the Aegean – then it was probably its social meaning related to the warrior that was transferred. When considering the context of the horse in the Late Minoan/Helladic period, then the horse seems to have had an increasing association to the religious sphere, the horse probably being related to a great female goddess, Athena-like. Perhaps the religious aspects of the horse were being embedded soon after the introduction of the one-edged razor.

Soon after the emergence of the one-edged razor in the Aegean the idea of this razor travelled through Europe, to South Scandinavia/northernmost Germany where it became more popular than in the Mediterranean. Even though the association with the warrior and ideals as to the shaven warrior were transferred, the religious connotations up in the North became apparent. The meaning of the horse head may have changed at the dissemination of the razor, since the horse and the horse head in the North should be considered as a representation of the divine sun-horse being the most prominent helper of the sun (Kaul, 1998). The religious message of the razors became even clearer when a complex miniature iconography exploded over the surfaces in the Nordic Late Bronze Age (Kaul, 1998; Kaul, 2004; Stig Sørensen & Appleby, 2018; Kaul, 2018b).

The introduction of the razor, reflecting the idea of the shaven warrior, should not be regarded as an isolated phenomenon, but as part of a larger picture of south-north social interaction. It should be considered as component of an 'aristocratic package', reflecting a new chiefly elite culture (Kristiansen & Larsson, 2005), and it should be underlined that the context of the razors, both in the Mediterranean Minoan-Mycenaean room and in

Southern Scandinavia, is often that of warrior's graves. At the same time elements such as the folding stool, bronze drinking vessels and the horse-drawn chariot were introduced or chosen in the North, all to be considered as ruling symbols. These features, together with the razors, indicate the acceptance of parts of a Minoan/Mycenaean lifestyle (Kaul, 2013a; Kaul, 2018b).

EXCHANGE NETWORKS

Such ideas related to the dissemination and re-interpretation of certain elements of material culture did not travel by themselves but were related to the development of long-distance exchange networks. Between 1600 and 1300 BC considerable and increasing amounts of metal came into circulation. The Mitterberg mines in Austria and the North Italian Trentino extraction sites reached industrial proportions. At a time just before and during the Nordic period II, marked changes appeared in the patterns of exchange and mobility. The dominant sources of copper for South Scandinavia became the Italian Alps, in the Trentino region north-east of the Lago di Garda, even though the Slovakian ore mountains, and Mitterberg, Austria, were still of importance (Ling et al., 2014; Bunnefeld, 2016; Ling et al., 2019; Reiter et al., 2019; Nørgaard et al., 2021). In Nordic Bronze Age period II, British copper is no longer detectable in the dataset. This takeover coincided with the establishment of the 'full grown NBA', and these changes coincide with burial mounds by the thousands and a unifying metalwork style that branded the upper echelons of men and women in distinct, yet shared ways. This tie-up with western riverine and land-based routes now connected the Nordic Bronze Age region with the South German/Central European Tumulus culture and the first transalpine amber routes (Nørgaard et al., 2021). There are many examples of close contacts between the Tumulus culture region and the North, some objects being 'imported', other being reshaped in decoration patterns and craftmanship, here just mentioning the octagonal hilted swords and the Nordic reshaping of South German multiple neck-rings into the characteristic Nordic neck collar (Kristansen & Larsson, 2005; Bunnefeld & Schwenzer, 2011; Nørgaard, 2011; Bunnefeld, 2016).

Abundant finds of Nordic/Baltic amber in the rich burials of the South German Tumulus region, as well as the opening for amber reaching areas of the Mediterranean south of the Alps at about 1700 BC, mark an increasing 'globalization' taking place in the European Bronze Age societies, where Nordic/Baltic amber has turned up in Greece, for instance in the shaft graves of Mycenae (Harding & Hughes Brock, 1974; Czebreszuk, 2013). Even beyond the Mediterranean Nordic/Baltic amber has been found, in Syria and Mesopotamia (Mukherjee et al., 2008; Bunnefeld & Martin, 2020),

and Egypt (Hood, 1993; Bongianni et al., 2001; Varberg et al., 2019). The extreme long-distance exchange of commodities seems to culminate just before and around 1400 BC, as documented by numerous glass beads of Mesopotamian and Egyptian glass found in burials in Denmark and North Germany, also following the 'amber routes' through Europe (Angelini et al., 2003; Mukherjee et al., 2008; Nicolis, 2010; Bellintani, 2010; Bellintani, 2014; Vandkilde, 2014; Varberg et al., 2015; Varberg et al., 2016; Kaul & Varberg, 2017; Varberg et al., 2019; Nørgaard et al., 2021). There were of course many amber routes along the many rivers of Europe, along the Elbe and Rhine River systems in the west and along Oder and Wistula in the east, as already noted early in the research history (Montelius, 1906). The different routes of exchange can also be seen by the glass bead evidence (Varberg et al., 2019).

The observed changes in exchange patterns seems to coincide with changes in mobility patterns of single individuals as demonstrated by a larger strontium isotope study on human bone and teeth from Danish burials (Frei et al., 2019). Seen on the background of evidence from the Neolithic, the recent results show a tendency for more individuals related to distant areas. The turning point seems to be around 1600 BC. Among these individuals with a background outside the Danish area are famous female oak coffin burials of Egtved and Skrydstrup Jutland (Frei et al., 2015; Frei et al., 2017). It should be noted that some individuals had still a local background, such as the woman from Ølby, also buried in an oak coffin, covered by a large burial mound (Reiter et al., 2019; Frei et al., 2019).

Even though the changing exchange patterns to a certain degree can be understood in geographical terms, it may be difficult to understand these changes in social terms: how was the opening of the world possible? When dealing with the Nordic Bronze Age razors in particular, it seems difficult to understand how specific traits and their re-interpretation were possible, when no finds in between the Eastern Mediterranean and the North yield bridging evidence. Since direct contact systems between the Minoan/Mycenean seems unfeasible, even though the dissemination of ideas appears to have been swift, some middle stations or 'hot spots' should be considered. Hot spots, where travelers met and ideas as well as commodity were exchanged. Considering the importance of the copper ores of Trentino, Italy, north-east of Lago di Garda, it would not be totally unattainable that areas at this very lake, perhaps at Peschiera, where many palafitte villages has yielded Nordic/Baltic amber, could be such a hot spot of social and cultural interaction, where 'the North' and the South', at certain guest-friendship occasions could meet. The Peschiera daggers themselves perhaps testify the connections in both directions.

For understanding the social mechanisms that would have made such connections and meetings possible, the ancient Greek concept of *xenia*, guest friendship, should be included as an elucidatory model.

XENIA, GUEST-FRIENDSHIP

The ancient Greek concept of guest-friendship, *xenia*, may give us an idea of those social mechanisms that would make such voyages practically feasible (Kaul, 2017; Kaul, 2018a). *Xenia* was a concept of hospitality and friendship of individuals of non-related groups – city-states, ethnic groups – distinctly separated from the notions of friendship relations between members of the individual's own society, kinship and family. Xenia was generally seen as a moral and religious obligation of hospitality securing food and accommodation to travellers – *xenia* ensured that a traveller would not be turned away from any house. *Xenia* was instituted by the gods, Zeus being the protector of the traveller, and those who did not obey the rules of guest friendship would call down divine wrath. Even a humble traveller could be a god in disguise, testing the host (Felher et al., 1998; Herman, 2002). The word *xenia* can be traced back to linear B inscriptions from Knossos and Pylos in the form *ke-se-nu-wo or ke-se-nu-wi-ja*, probably with the same elements of meaning (foreigner, guest) as in classical Greek (Hiltbrunner, 2005; Garcia, 2017).

In more specific terms, *xenia* was an institution of mutual guest-friendship relations of individual partners, including rituals of gift exchange. *Xenia* could promote the exchange of goods and services, even though the transactions were supposed to be in a non-mercantile spirit. There was always an insider-outsider dichotomy with respect to the partners' own social units. *Xenia* relationships could exist between members of Greek cities, between Greeks and non-Greeks, such as Persians, Lydians, Egyptians, Phoenicians and Romans, and between non-Greeks. Thus, there is no reason to believe that *xenia* should be regarded as an essentially Greek institution. The more formal guest-host relationships could also include friends of the partner. A friend of Socrates, Crito, has made this suggestion to Socrates: *'If you wish to go to Thessaly, I have there xenoi who will make much of you and protect you, so that no one in Thessaly shall annoy you'* (after Herman, 2002, pp. 10–12). Escort through foreign land could also be provided by means of xenia connections (Herman, 2002, p. 119).

The *xenia* bond did not expire with the death of the partners themselves but outlived them and were passed on to their descendants, apparently in the male line. Even in death *xenia* seems to have been of importance, since it could be the duty of a guest-friend to look after the earthly remains of a dead partner and celebrating his memory (Herman, 2002). The great importance of *xenia* relationships, even for generations, is demonstrated by an episode described in the *Iliad*. Two heroes, Diomedes and Glaukas, were about to engage in fierce combat when they suddenly realized that their grandfathers were bond by *Xenia*. Diomedes, pleasantly surprised at the revelation, drove his spear into the earth and spoke to his former rival in a friendly tone: *'Therefore I am your friend and host in the heart of Argos; you are mine in Lykia, when I come to your country. Let us avoid each other's spears,*

even in close fighting. There are plenty of Trojans and famed companions in the battle for me to kill [...] *But let us exchange our armour [equipment, weapons], so that these others may know how to be guests and friends from the days of our fathers'* (*Iliad* 6.224, after Herman 2002, p. 1).

It is important to note that the bonds between Diomedes and Glaukas are personal and related to ties between their grandfathers. Their revealed connections of guest-friendship were more important than where they served as soldiers. Thus, such bonds should not be described as chiefly alliances, even though there may have been occasions of more politically toned *xenia* bonds, for instance between a leader and a whole foreign people (*Odyssey* 9.18, after Herman, 2002). In certain cases, *xenia* should not be seen as something in conflict with marriage alliances between noble families, 'political' marriages being an outcome of already established *xenia* bonds (Hiltbrunner, 2005).

At first glance, the behaviour of the two heroes, Diomedes and Glaukas, might seem to be disloyal. On the other hand, the text demonstrates that their conduct was regarded as being morally appropriate, the ideas of the God-given guests-friendship for a time overruling the decided progress of battle. Anyway, there were other warriors to kill for the two guest-friends. In a Bronze Age society, even in Northern Europe, such personal guest-friend connections – in this case of formerly opposed heroes – could indeed be very practical. At times of war and hostilities between the chiefdoms, such more personal guest-friendships relations would ensure that the routes of exchange would remain open, not being disrupted. Or, after a conflict, the connection networks would be easily re-opened not being weakened and destabilized by the effects of hatred and revenge, the *xenia* bonds enhancing friendly connections.

This episode of the *Iliad* reveals what may be understood as a Bronze Age situation. Here, the hero could see the guest-friendship as his own private obligation. Such notions of the guest-friendship of the heroic, Homeric age were in conflict with the notions of loyalty to the Greek City state. Two competing moral systems were involved, one archaic and pre-political, another steaming from the ideas of the *polis* structure. There are many references, where army leaders or political leaders seemingly were forced to abandon their *xenia* friendships in order to uphold their loyalty to their state and people (Herman, 2002). When armies of hoplite structure met under firm command, there was a limited room left for personal guest-friendship discussions on the battlefield. Nevertheless, discussions related to the conflicting obligations as to the objective of the army command, versus the *xenia* bonds, still occurred, creating virtually rebellious situations.

When initializing such a friendship, feasting, declaration and gift exchange were indispensable for its validity. The gifts could include drinking gear (Felher et al., 1998). When referring to relations with royals or leaders, gifts of value not only served as marks of prestige for the owner, but also as proofs of being under the king's protection (Herman, 2002).

The patterns of social relationship of *xenia* outlined above, including the exchange of gifts – is not peculiar to the ancient Greek world. Institutions displaying similar features have – naturally – been observed in many other societies (Service, 1971; Morris, 1986; Mauss, 1993; Felher et al., 1998; Hiltbrunner, 2005). Instead of finding a model framework among societies far away in time and space from the European Bronze Age, it would seem more straightforward to utilize the contextually closer evidence of *xenia* to gain an impression of the organization of long-distance connections and exchange. We should not forget that Nordic amber did reach Mycenae, and that the episode from the *Iliad* discloses the ideal behavior of Homeric heroes.

Thus, the God-given obligations of the guest-friendship of *xenia* can provide us with an elucidatory model for Bronze Age communication. Even though the notions of guest-friendship can give us a better understanding of the social mechanisms lying behind the networks of exchange, we have only vague ideas as to how the journeys and transport of valuable commodities were organized.

There were no hotels or guesthouses in our modern sense (Felher et al., 1998) and in principle, any farm on the routes could be a place of guest-friendship. Perhaps there were places where guest-friendship was employed on a larger scale, where many friends related to a wealthy and famed host were well treated, and where people from different regions could meet, establishing further *xenia* connections. It is tempting to consider certain (lightly defended) middle Bronze Age villages in the Alps, such as Sotciastel, Albanbühel and Ganglegg (Tecchiati, 1998; Steiner, 2007; Tecchiati, 2011) in Südtirol/ Alto Adige, and Padnal, Graubünden, Schweiz (Rageth, 1986) as places were guest-friends – travelers belonging to the highest echelons of the Bronze Age societies – could meet. Also, a number of palafitte villages in the area of Lago di Garda should be included (Kaul, 2018a).

The *xenia*-like bonds would make possible not only the exchange of goods over long distances, but also of gift exchange, including valuable drinking (feasting) gear. Furthermore, close bonds between '*xenoi*' living far away from each other could provide us with an explanatory model of how ideas could spread over long distances.

The introduction of the single-edged razor in the North, and the idea of the appearance of the shaven warrior, could easily be understood as an outcome of meetings of guest-friends. At such occasions when guest-friends came close to each other, an atmosphere could be created well suited for imitating distant habits. Furthermore, the curious distribution of the octagonal hilted swords could excellently be understood within the contextual framework of the *xenia* concept. The occurrence of foreign swords, such as the octagonal hilted swords in South Scandinavia and their replica might in some cases reflect the exchange of weapons as an act of sealing the guest friendship.

CONCLUSION

The spread and the distribution of the single edged razor and its appearance in the North, provides an excellent example of the complexity of the transfer of ideas (Fig. 11). Many questions arise when we simply do not reject our observations as 'coincidences'. How can we connect the Mediterranean with the North when similar object types are absent in-between? – Where can we find those places where *xenia* interaction made transfer and translation of ideas possible? Candidates for such places could be in the Po valley, at Lago di Garda, and close to the Alp passes, and in the areas just north of the Alps; though many other sites following the palimpsest of different lines of exchange are to be considered as well. We do not necessarily speak of direct contacts, but of possible 'middle-stations' where *xenia* was observed. Here, dialogues and exchange of ideas at the crossroads took place when feasting and drinking practices according to the ancient rules of *xenia* were respected.

The diffusion of the razor and the ideas behind just prior to 1400 BC should not be seen as part of a wave that overwhelmed the passive receivers in the North. Terms like 'influence' or 'diffusion' do not seem sufficiently explanatory. We could perhaps talk about active 'diffusion', where leading members of the societies having knowledge of the world of the South – probably after long journeys – deliberately picked up certain elements that could be used in self-promotion in a dynamic time of change. We could speak of inventive reinterpretations or creative processes of iconographic translations. This happened at a time, when the world opened, early steps of globalization processes.

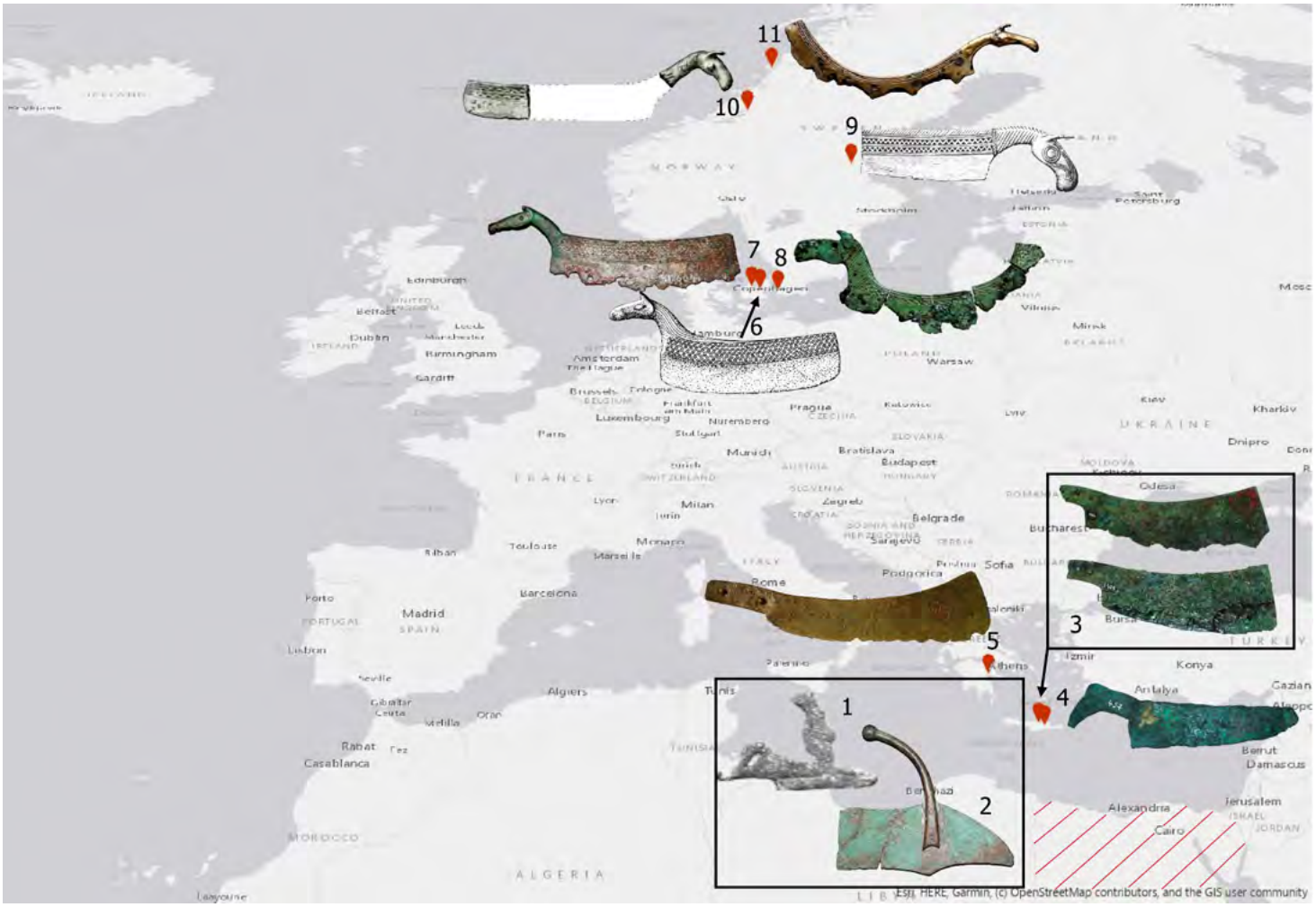

Fig. 11. Map locating examples of the Bronze Age razors. 1: Toilet equipment, with razor, the handle in the shape of a horse, Egypt; 2: Rotating razor, Egypt; 3: Single-edged razors, Zapher Papoura at Knossos, Crete, Greece; 4: Votive single edged razor with horse headed handle. Dicte Cave, Crete, Greece; 5: Single edged razor, burial at Nafplion/Tiryns, Greece. 6: Darup, Zealand, Denmark; 7: Kastrup, Zealand, Denmark; 8: Skivarp, Scania, South Sweden; 9: Valsta, Närke, Central Sweden; 10: Todness at Steinkjer, North Trøndelag, Norway; 11: Skjeggesnes, Nordland, North Norway.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The present paper is rooted in the interdisciplinary research project *Tales of Bronze* Age People of the National Museum of Denmark, supported by the Carlsberg Foundation. Furthermore, the research project *Creativity and Craft Production in Middle and Late Bronze Age Europe* (CinBA) under *The Humanities in the European Research Area* (HERA) programme, European Commission, and the research initiative of the National Museum of Denmark, *Northern Worlds*, supported by the Augustinus Foundation, have yielded splendid possibilities for research and studies in European museums and landscapes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aner, E., & Kersten, K. (1973). *Die Funde der älteren Bronzezeit des nordischen Kreises in Dänemark, Schleswig-Holstein und Niedersachsen: Vol. 1. Frederiksborg und Københavns Amt.* Karl Wachholtz Verlag.

Aner, E., & Kersten, K. (1976). *Die Funde der älteren Bronzezeit des nordischen Kreises in Dänemark, Schleswig-Holstein und Niedersachsen: Vol. 2. Holbæk, Sorø und Præstø Amter.* Karl Wachholtz Verlag.

Angelini, I., Artioli, G., & Bellintani, P. (2003). Progretto 'Ambre e materiali vetrosi protostorici della Valle dell'Adige nel quadro delle coeve attestazioni dell'Italia del nord'. Primi risultate sulle ambre. *Preistoria Alpina,* 39, 227–241.

Bellintani, P. (2010). Ambra, una materia prima del nord (ma non solo). In F. Radina & G. Recchia (Eds.), *Ambra per Agamemnone. Indigeni e Micenei tra Adriatico, Ionio ed Egeo* (pp. 141–146). Mario Adda Editore.

Bellintani, P. (2014). Baltic amber, alpine cupper and glass beads from the Po plain. Amber trade at the time of Campestrin and Frattesina. *Padusa,* 50, 111–139. https://doi.org/10.1400/240159

Binns, K. S. (1985). De første tegn til jordbruk. In K. Pettersen & B. Wik (Eds.), Helgeland Historie: Vol. 1. *Helgeland Historielag* (pp. 148–171). Helgeland Historielag.

Boardman, J. (1961). *The Cretan Collection in Oxford.* Oxford University Press.

Bouzek, J. (1985). *The Aegean, Anatolia and Europe: Cultural interrelations in the second Millenium B.C.* Paul Åströms Förlag; Academia.

Bunnefeld, J. H. (2016). *Älterbronzezeitliche Vollgriffschwerter in Dänemark und Schleswig-Holstein. Studien zu Form, Verzierung, Technik und Funktion.* Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur; Wachholtz Verlag.

Bunnefeld, J. H., & Martin, L. (2020). Von der Ostsee nach Assur – zum Bernsteinaustausch im frühen 2. Jt. v. Chr. In H. Meller & M. Schefzik (Eds.), *Die Welt der Himmelscheibe von Nebra – Neue Horizonte* (pp. 160–163). Theiss.

Bunnefeld, J.-H., & Schwenzer, S. (2011). Traditionen, Innovationen, und Technologietransfer – zur Herstellungstechnik und Funktion älterbronzezeitlicher Schwerter in Niedersachsen. *Praehistorische Zeitschrift,* 86, 2011, 207–253. https://doi.org/10.1515/pz.2011.012

Bongianni, A., Croce, M. S., & Accomozzo, L. (Eds.). (2001). *The Illustrated Guide to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.* The American University in Cairo Press.

Czebreszuk, J. (2013). Mysterious Raw Material from the Far North: Amber in Mycenaean Culture. In S. Bergerbrant & S. Sabatini (Eds.), *Counterpoint: Essays in Archaeology and Heritage Studies in Honour of Professor Kristian Kristiansen* (pp. 557–563). Archaeopress; BAR Publishing. https://doi.org/10.30861/9781407311265

Davaras, C. (1976). *Guide to Cretan Antiquities.* Eptalofos S.A.

Davies, W. V. (1982). Razors. In R. E. Freed (Ed.), *Egypt's Golden Age: The Art of Living in the New Kingdom 1558–1085 B.C.* (pp. 189–190). Museum of Fine Arts Boston.

Evans, A. (1905). The Prehistoric Tombs of Knossos. 1 The Cemetery of Sapher Papoura. 2: The Royal tombs of Isopata. *Archaeologia* 59(2), 391–562. https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.7525

Felher, H., Wiesehöfer, B. W., & Wagner-Hassel, B. W.-H. (1998). Gastfreundschaft. In H. Cancik & H. Schneider (Eds.),

Der neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike: Vol. 4. Epo-Gro (pp. 793–798). Verlag J. B. Metzler.

Freed, R. E. (1982). Toilette implement in the shape of a horse. In R. E. Freed (Ed.), *Egypt's Golden Age: The Art of Living in the New Kingdom 1558-1085 B.C.* (p. 195). Museum of Fine Arts Boston.

Frei, K. M., Bergerbrant, S., Sjögren, K-G., Jørkov, M. L., Lynnerup, N., Harvig, L., & Kristiansen, K. (2019). Mapping human mobility during the third and second millennia BC in present-day Denmark. *PLoS ONE,* 14(8), Article e0219850. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0219850

Frei, K. M., Mannering, U., Kristiansen, K., Allentoft, M. E., Wilson, A., Skals, I., Tridico, S., Nosch, M.-L., Willerslev, E., Clarke, L., & Frei, R. (2015). Tracing the dynamic life story of a Bronze Age Female. *Scientific Reports,* 5, Article 10431, 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1038/srep10431

Frei, K. M., Villa, C., Jørkov, M. L., Allentoft, M. E., Kaul, F., Ethelberg, P., Reiter, S. S., Wilson, A. S., Taube, M., Olsen, J., Lynnerup, N.,Willerslev, E., Kristiansen, K., & Frei, R. (2017), A matter of months: High precision migration chronology of a Bronze Age female. PLoS ONE, 12(6), Article e0178834. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0178834

Garcia, C. V. (2017). Mycenaean Terms with Stem /XENWOS/: 'Foreigner, Guest, Host'. In M.-L. Nosch, & H. Landenius Enegren (Eds.), *Aegean Scripts. Proceedings of the 14th International Colloquium on Mycenaean Studies, Copenhagen, 2-5 September 2015: Vol. 1* (pp. 417–427). Istituto di Studi sul Mediterraneo Antico.

Harding, A. F., & Hughes-Brock, H. (1974). Amber in the Mycenaean world. *Annual of the British School at Athens, 69,* 145–172. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068245400005505

Herman, G. (2002). *Ritualized Friendship and the Greek City.* Cambridge University Press.

Hiltbrunner, O. (2005). *Gastfreundschaft in der Antike und im frühen Christentum.* Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Hogarth, D. G. (1900). The Dictaean Cave. *The Annual of the British School at Athens, 4,* 94–116. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068245400001945

Hood, S. (1993). Amber in Egypt. In C. W. Beck & J. Bouzek (Eds.), *Amber in Archaeology. Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Amber in Archaeology Liblice 1990* (pp. 230–235). Institute of Archaeology, Czech Academy of Sciences.

Jockenhövel, A. (1971). *Die Rasiermesser in Mitteleuropa.* Prähistorische Bronzefunde, Subdiv. 8, Vol. 1. Verlag C. H. Beck.

Jockenhövel, A. (1980). *Die Rasiermesser in Westeuropa.* Prähistorische Bronzefunde, Subdiv. 8, Vol. 3. Verlag C. H. Beck.

Kaul, F. (1998). *Ships on Bronzes. A Study in Bronze Age Religion and Iconography.* The National Museum of Denmark.

Kaul, F. (2004). *Bronzealderens religion. Studier af den nordiske bronzealders ikonografi.* Det Kongelige Nordiske Oldskriftselskab.

Kaul, F. (2013a). The Nordic razor and the Mycenaean lifestyle. *Antiquity,* 87, 461–472. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00049061

Kaul, F. (2013b). The One-edged razor – northernmost and southernmost. In D. L. Mahler (Ed.), *The Border of Farming. Shetland and Scandinavia. Neolithic and Bronze Age Farming. Papers from the symposium in Copenhagen September 19th to the 21st 2012* (pp. 156–176). The National Museum of Denmark.

Kaul, F. (2015). Aegean Influences in the Nordic Bronze Age. The Evidence of the Razors. In P. Suchowska-Ducke, S. S. Reiter & H. Vandkilde (Eds.), *Forging Identities. The Mobility of Culture in Bronze Age Europe. Report from a Marie Curie Project 2009–2012 with Concluding Conference at*

Aarhus University, Moesgaard 2012: Vol. 2 (pp. 85–93). BAR Publishing. https://doi.org/10.30861/9781407314402

Kaul, F. (2017). The *Xenia* Concept of Guest-friendship – Providing an Elucidatory Model for Bronze Age Communication. In: P. Skoglund, J. Ling & U. Bertilsson (Eds.), *North Meets South. Theoretical Aspects on the Northern and Southern Rock art Traditions in Scandinavia* (pp. 172–198). Swedish Rock Art Series, Vol. 3. Oxbow Books. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvh1dpgg.11

Kaul, F. (2018a). Middle Bronze Age Long Distance Exchange. Early Glass, Amber and Guest-Frienship, *Xenia*. In B. Nessel, D. Neumann & M. Bartelheim (Eds.), *Bronzezeitlicher Transport, Akteure, Mittel und Wege* (pp. 189–211). Tübingen University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.15496/publikation-26722

Kaul, F. (2018b). The One-edged Razor: A Vivid Medium of Creativity and Meaning. In L. B. Jørgensen, J. Sofaer & M. L. Stig Sørensen (Eds.), *Creativity in the Bronze Age. Understanding, Innovation in Pottery, Textile and Metalwork Production* (pp. 161–176). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108344357

Kaul, F., & Rønne, P. (2013). Bronzes, farms and rock art. The agrarian expansion of North Norway. *Adoranten,* 2013, 25–56.

Kaul, F., & Varberg, J. (2017), Danish beads of Egyptian and Mesopotamian glass in context, and the amber connection. In S. Bergerbrant & A. Wessman (Eds.), *New Perspectives on the Bronze Age. Proceedings of the 13th Nordic Bronze Age Symposium held in Gothenburg 9th to 13th June 2015* (pp. 375–386). Archaeopress.

Kristiansen, K., & Larsson, T. B. (2005). *The rise of Bronze Age society. Travels, Transmissions and Transformations.* Cambridge University Press.

Ling, J., Hjärtnar-Holdar, E., Grandin, L., Stos-Gale, Z., Kristiansen, K., Melheim, A. L., Artioli, G., Angelini, I., Krause, R., & Canovaro, C. (2019). Moving metals IV: Swords, metal sources and trade networks in Bronze Age Europe. *Journal of Archaeologicl Science: Reports,* 26, Article 101837. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jasrep.2019.05.002

Ling, J., Stos-Gale, Z., Grandin, L., Billström, K., Hjärtner-Holdar, E., & Persson, P.-O. (2014). Moving Metals II: Provenancing Scandinavian Bronze Age artefacts by lead isotope and elemental analyses. *Journal of Archaeological Science,* 41, 106–132. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jas.2013.07.018

Mauss, M. (1993). *The Gift. The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies.* Routledge.

McCreesh, N. C., Gize, A. P., & David, A. R. J. (2011). Ancient Egyptian hair gel: new insight into ancient Egyptian mummification procedures through chemical analysis. *Journal of Archaeological Science, 38*(12), 3432–3434. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jas.2011.08.004

Mellink, M. (1991). The Origin and Iconography of the Late Minoan Painted Larnax. *Hesperia,* 60, 285–307. https://doi.org/10.2307/148065

Montelius, O. (1906). *Kulturgeschichte Schwedens von den ältesten Zeiten bis zum elften Jahrhundert nach Christus.* Verlag von E. A. Seemann.

Montelius, O. (1917). *Minnen från vår forntid.* P. A. Nordstedt och Söners Förlag (Reprint ARKEO-Förlaget, Gamleby).

Morris, I. (1986). Gift and Commodity in Archaic Greece. *Man, N. S., 21*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.2307/2802643

Mukherjee, A. J., Rossberger, E., James, M. A., Pfälzner, P., Higgitt, C. L., White, R., Peggie, D. A., Azar, D., & Evershed, R. P. (2008). The Qatna lion: scientific confirmation of Baltic amber in late Bronze Age Syria. *Antiquity,* 82, 49–59. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00096435

Müller, S. (1921). *Oldtidens Kunst i Danmark: Vol. 2. Bronzealderens Kunst i Danmark.* C. A. Reitzel.

Nicolis, F. (2010). The role of the central-eastern Alps in connecting Mediterranean and central European elites during the Bronze Age. In H. Meller & F. Bertemes (Eds.), *Der Griff nach den Sternen. Wie Europas Eliten zu Macht und Reichtum kamen. Internationales Symposium in Halle (Saale) 16.–21. Februar 2005* (pp. 253–259). Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie in Sachsen-Anhalt; Landesmuseum für Vorgeschichte.

Nørgaard, H. W. (2011). *Die Halskragen der Bronzezeit im nördlichen Mitteleuropa und Südskandinavien.* Dr. Rudolf Habelt Verlag.

Nørgaard, H. W, Pernicka, E., & Vandkilde, H. (2021). Shifting networks and mixing metals: Changing metal trade routes to Scandinavia correlate with Neolithic and Bronze Age transformations. *PLoS ONE 16*(6), Article e0252376. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0252376

Oldeberg, A. (1974). *Die ältere Metallzeit in Schweden.* Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien.

Peroni, R. (1956). Zur Gruppierung mitteleuropäischer Griffzungendolche der späten Bronzezeit. *Badische Fundberichte, 20,* 69–92. https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.43787.11

Peroni, V. B. (1994). *I pugnali nell'Italia Continentale.* Prähistorische Bronzefunde, Subdiv. 6, Vol. 1. Franz Steiner Verlag.

Petrie, W. M. F. (1917). *Tools and Weapons. Illustrated by the Egyptian collection in University College, London, and 2000 outlines from other sources.* British School of Archaeology in Egypt, University College; Constable & Co. Ltd.; Bernard Quaritch.

Rageth, J. (1986). Die wichtigsten Resultate der Ausgrabungen in der bronzezeitlichen Siedlung auf dem Padnal bei Savognin (Oberhalbstein GR). *Jahrbuch der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Ur- und Frühgeschichte, 69,* 63–103. https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-116989

Randsborg, K. (1970). Zwei Peschiera-Dolche aus Südskandinavien. *Acta Archaeologica, 41,* 1970, 191–195.

Reiter, S. S., Frei, K. M., Wrobel Nørgaard, H., & Kaul, F. (2019). The Ølby Woman: A Comprehensive Provenance Investigation of an Elite Nordic Bronze Age Oak-Coffin Burial. *Danish Journal of Archaeology, 8,* 1–22. https://doi.org/10.7146/dja.v8i0.114995

Rygh, K. (1906). Videnskabsselskabets oldsagssamling. Tilvækst i 1906 af sager, ældre end reformationen. *Det kgl. norske videnskabers selskabs skrifter, 5,* 1–32.

Rønne, P. (2011). Highlights from the Northernmost Bronze Age societies in Norway. In: D. L. Mahler & C. Andersen (Eds.), *Farming on the edge: Cultural Landscapes of the North. Short papers from the network meeting in Lerwick, Shetland September 7th–10th 2010* (pp. 58–69). The National Museum of Denmark.

Service, E. R. (1971). *Primitive Social Organization.* Random House.

Sprockhoff, E. (1936). Ein Peschieradolch aus Niedersachsen. *Germania, 20*(3), 1936, 166–170. https://doi.org/10.11588/ger.1936.41662

Steiner, H. (2007). *Die befestigte Siedlung am Ganglegg im Vinschgau – Südtirol. Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen 1997-2001 (Bronze/Urnenfelderzeit) und naturwissenschaftliche Beiträge.* TEMI Editrice.

Stig Sørensen, M. L., & Appleby, G. (2018). To decorate a Nordic Bronze Age razor. A design challenge. In L. B. Jørgensen, J. Sofaer & M. L. Stig Sørensen (Eds.), *Creativity in the Bronze Age. Understanding, Innovation in Pottery, Textile and Metalwork Production* (pp. 191–205). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108344357

Tecchiati, U. (1998). *Sotciastel. Un abitato fortificato dell'età del bronzo in Val Badia.* Istitut Cultural Ladin 'Micurà de Rü'; Soprintendenza ai Beni Culturali di Bolzano.

Tecchiati, U. (2011). Albanbühel Bolzano (Italia). In A. Piccoli, & R. Laffranchini (Eds.), *Enigma. Un antico processo di interazione europea: le Tavolette Enigmatiche. An ancient European interaction: the Enigmatic Tablets* (pp. 94–98). Museo archeologico dell'Alto Mantovano.

Vandkilde, H. (2014). Breakthrough of the Nordic Bronze Age: Transcultural Warriorhood and a Carpathian Crossroad in the Sixteenth Century BC. *European Journal of Archaeology, 17*(4), 602–633. https://doi.org/10.1179/1461957114Y.0000000064

Varberg, J., Gratuze, B., & Kaul, F. (2015). Between Egypt, Mesopotamia and Scandinavia: Late Bronze Age glass beads found in Denmark. *Journal of Archaeological Science, 64*, 168–181. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016%2Fj.jas.2014.11.036

Varberg, J., Gratuze, B., Kaul, F., Haslund Hansen, A., Rotea, M., & Wittenberger, M. (2016). Mesopotamian glass from Late Bronze Age Egypt, Romania, Germany and Denmark. *Journal of Archaeological Science, 74*, 184–194. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jas.2016.04.010

Varberg, J., Kaul, F., & Gratuze, B. (2019). Bronze Age Glass and Amber. Evidence of Bronze Age long distance exchange. *Adoranten,* 2019, 5–29.

Weber, C. (1996). *Die Rasiermesser in Südosteuropa,* Prähistorische Bronzefunde, Subdiv. 8, Vol. 5. Franz Steiner Verlag.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

FLEMMING KAUL

The National Museum of Denmark, Department of Prehistory, Middle Ages and Renaissance, Copenhagen, Denmark

Flemming Kaul is senior researcher at the National Museum of Denmark. He is internationally known for his works on Bronze Age religion, iconography and cosmology. His research includes Bronze Age long-distance exchange, following the amber roads connecting the North with the Mediterranean. Also, Neolithic burial practices, megalithic tombs, have been among themes covered by his research. Recently, Kaul has been working with Late Bronze Age/Early Iron religious art in a broader European perspective, including comparative analyses of the zoomorphic repertoire, South Scandinavia, Italy and Greece.

KARIN MARGARITA FREI

The National Museum of Denmark, Department of Environmental Archaeology and Material Sciences, Copenhagen, Denmark

https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5198-073X

Karin Margarita Frei is Professor of Archaeometry at the National Museum of Denmark (NM). She is both the first appointed professor in her field in Denmark, and the first permanent professor at the NM. K. M. Frei is renowned for her pioneering applications of isotope analysis in archaeology. With an interdisciplinary approach, she has significantly advanced the understanding of ancient human mobility, trade routes, cultural interactions, and female identity. Her work has garnered national and international recognition, earning her several prestigious awards, including the *L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Award* and the *Shanghai Archaeological Forum Research Award.* K. M. Frei is member of *The Danish Royal Academy of Sciences and Letters.*

SAMANTHA S. REITER

The National Museum of Denmark, Department of Environmental Archaeology and Material Sciences, Copenhagen, Denmark

https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8872-0640

Samantha S. Reiter is a prehistoric archaeologist who has worked throughout Europe as well as the Caribbean and Near East. Since 2017, she has been employed at the National Museum of Denmark's Department for Environmental Archaeology and Materials Science, most recently for the *Tales of Bronze Age Women* and *Tales of Bronze Age People* projects (PI of both: Karin Margarita Frei) and by the *COREX* project (PI: Kristian Kristiansen).