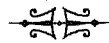


A B S T R A C T S
B O O K



4TH ANNUAL MEETING

GÖTEBORG, SWEDEN

SEPTEMBER 23-27 1998

European
Association of
Archaeologists

EAA 4TH ANNUAL MEETING
ABSTRACTS BOOK

Editorial

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COVER ILLUSTRATION

Rock-carving RAÄ 614 (detail) at Skee, Tanum, Bohuslän
Photo: Lasse Bengtsson

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BURIAL ANALYSIS: NEW APPROACHES

ORGANISER: KALIEF A. (UPPSALA, SWEDEN)

Session Abstract

Date:	Thu 24
Time:	900-1900
Building:	H
Room:	Ensemblesalen

Since the infancy of archaeology, burial analysis has been significant to studies of virtually every aspect of human life. Different elements in the form and in the content of the grave enable studies of almost every aspect of human society, such as eschatological conceptions, religious rituals, demography, ethnicity, social stratification, regional variations, cultural contacts and interaction as well as economical aspects. Closed contexts graves have the potential to leave undisturbed messages to our time. The problem is to find possible keys to the understanding of those messages. During recent years there has been a lot of progress on different aspects of burial analysis, and graves remain one of the most important sources to the archaeological interpretation of different societies. The different participants in this session will present results and material from a variety of chronological and geographical contexts. The contributions cover a time-span from the Mesolithic up to historical periods, and from different European regions. The main purpose with the session is to focus on new theories and methods concerning the archaeology of death and burial analysis, as well as on new sites and excavated material. The ambition is to present burial analysis from several different angles, including regional structures, chronology, chemical analysis, burial rituals, social structure, interpretation through ethnographical analogies and experimental approaches.

PAPERS

Date	Thu 24
Time	900-920

Bernts V. (Russia)

THE ANALYSIS OF THE FUNERAL RITUAL IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MAIN PROBLEMS IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCIENCE

In Russian archaeology much attention is paid to the theoretical discussion of the description of the funeral ritual and those concepts linked with it. Researchers come across the previous lack of correspondence between the existing methods and their aims. Among publications dated between 1970-1990 the funeral rite is considered in two ways: 1) as an independent object of the analysis, 2) as an element of a global infrastructure that involves the whole sum of social life concepts.

Today the consideration of burial and funeral rite as separate categories cannot completely satisfy the researcher. The idea of a peculiar ritual sphere in the ancient society where the rite was an instrument of influence on "that" and "these" worlds is gradually abandoned. Many authors agree that the funeral ceremony (funeral tradition) cannot be considered separately from social, cultural and ideological factors of ancient societies. For the ancient peoples all the customs, including funeral ones, were both expedient and necessary, moreover this unity was provided by the existing religious and mythological conception of the ancient societies.

In my opinion the successful development of this scientific direction depends exactly on the answer to the question: "what role did the funeral (funeral tradition) and cults connected with it play in the past?" However, the problems of studying funeral rituals are also connected with the general situation in archaeology. We should point out several problems;

1. The necessity in research to develop a complex theory, corresponding to the scientific aims and tasks.
2. The disparity of the potential information contained in the source to the methods used.
3. To avoid gaps in the general conceptual system.
4. The improper usage of the facts of adjacent sciences.
5. The authenticity of the re-constructions;
- 6a) The appearance of the new methods (incompetence in its potential means)
- 6b) The discovery of sources of a new kind, which requires the research on new methods.

In my opinion the most important point is: 1. The creation of a more complete theory, on the hypothetical level, on the basis of the complex approach. 2. The creation of a less split up conceptual system. 3. A more proper usage of the existing and new methods for processing the materials.