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# Ertebølle pottery in southern Sweden – a question of handicraft, networks and creolisation in a period of neolithisation

By Kristina Jennbert

*Schlagwörter:* Südschweden – Mesolithikum – Frühneolithikum – Ertebølle-Kultur – Trichterbecher-Kultur – Keramikgefäße – Ornamentik – Stil – Kontinuität – Diskontinuität – Neolithisierung

*Keywords:* Southern Sweden – Mesolithic – Early Neolithic – Ertebølle culture – Funnel Beaker culture – ceramic vessels – ornament – style – continuity – discontinuity – neolithisation

*Mots-clés:* Suède du Sud – Mésolithique – Néolithique ancien – culture d’Ertebølle – culture des vases à entonnoir – vases en céramique – ornementation – style – continuité – discontinuité, néolithisation

Ertebølle vessels in southern Sweden were characteristically faintly S-shaped with pointed, flat, or tap-shaped bases. The vessels were sometimes decorated with ornaments covering the entire surface or a part of it. Shallow, oval, or round depressions are characteristic southern Swedish ornaments. Circular or rectangular insets on some of the Scanian vessels are also found on vessels at sites in Denmark, Schleswig-Holstein, and lower Saxony. A few lamps are known in southern Sweden<sup>1</sup>.

Ertebølle pottery has been found at about 11 sites mainly around the coasts of Scania, and in southernmost Blekinge (*Fig. 1; Appendix 1*). On the Öresund coast in the western part of Scania in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century K. Kjellmark registered Soldattorpet. The site was located at the coastline on Järvallen in Limhamn near Malmö city<sup>2</sup>. Kvarteret Nore and Gränsstigen are other localities nearby that presumably could have had a direct connection with the Soldattorpet site<sup>3</sup>. Around 3 km southwards, located on a former small island, was the Elinelund site. This was reported by C.-A. Althin and later excavated by B. Salomonsson and E. Jonsson<sup>4</sup>.

Further north on the Öresund coastline, Löddesborg was a similar site to the southern ones. It was excavated in the 1960s and early 1970s and it contained the largest amount of Ertebølle pottery in Scania<sup>5</sup>. Nearby, at the Stenbocksvallar site, and further north at the Lerhamn site, only a few sherds were found, and at the surveyed Jonstorp sites as yet no Ertebølle pottery has been excavated<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> JENNBERT 1984.

<sup>2</sup> KJELLMARK 1903; Id. 1905.

<sup>3</sup> SALOMONSSON 1971.

<sup>4</sup> ALTHIN 1954, 32 f.; SALOMONSSON 1971; KRÄMER/LÖWE 1973; JONSSON 2002.

<sup>5</sup> JENNBERT 1984.

<sup>6</sup> STREIFFERT/PRAHL 1994; ROGIUS 2006; STENTORP 2001; LIDÉN 1938.

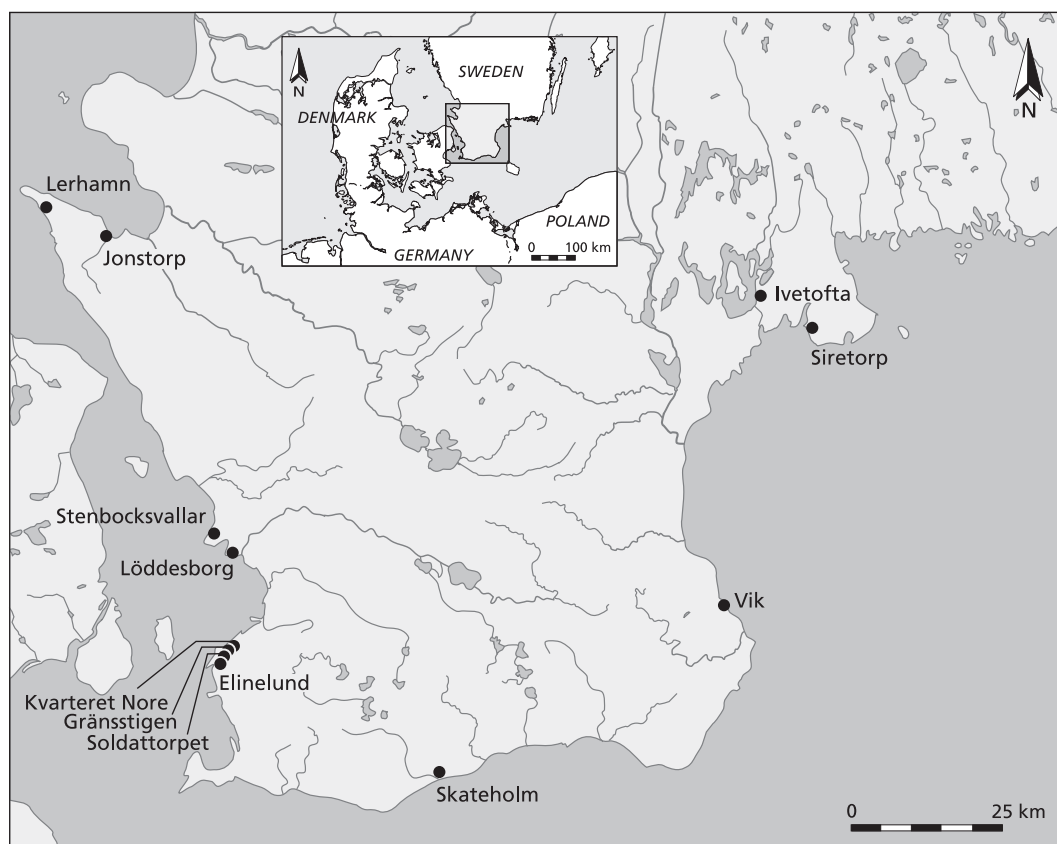


Fig. 1. Sites with Ertebølle pottery (besides Jonstorp) in southern Sweden, provinces of Scania and Blekinge (cf. Appendix I).

On the southernmost Scanian coast and the more well-known Mesolithic grave fields of Skateholm<sup>7</sup> in the settlement areas (sites I and III) Ertebølle sherds have been excavated. They are in a small and fragmented condition and in the same minor quantities as the Soldattorpet finds<sup>8</sup>. Vik and Ivetofta in the eastern parts of Scania, and Siretorp in southwestern Blekinge are classical sites with Ertebølle pottery known from there since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>9</sup>.

A complicated and source-critical archaeological matter that concerns most of the Scanian Ertebølle sites is that Funnel Beaker sherds were also found in the same culture layer. Kjellmark noted the context at Soldattorpet<sup>10</sup>, Salomonsson made the same observation at Kvarteret Nore, Gränsstigen, and Elinelund<sup>11</sup>, as Jennbert did at the Löddesborg site<sup>12</sup>. Also at the Vik site the two styles were found in the same culture layer<sup>13</sup>, and at Siretorp within a complex stratigraphy<sup>14</sup>, later discussed in relation to renewed geological-archaeological investigations<sup>15</sup>.

The sites have a similar stratigraphic sequence, and several culture layers. The sites are comparable in the nature and proportions of finds, e.g. the pottery handicraft, the flint and stone technology, and the presence of both wild and domesticated animals. There are sites with

<sup>7</sup> LARSSON et al. 1988.

<sup>8</sup> STILBORG/BERGENSTRÅHLE 2000.

<sup>9</sup> BAGGE/KJELLMARK 1939; ALTHIN 1954; HULTHÉN 1977; JENNBERT 1984.

<sup>10</sup> KJELLMARK 1903, 121.

<sup>11</sup> SALOMONSSON 1971, 45 ff.

<sup>12</sup> JENNBERT 1984.

<sup>13</sup> ALTHIN 1954, 41 f.

<sup>14</sup> BAGGE/KJELLMARK 1939.

<sup>15</sup> BERGLUND/WELINDER 1972.

solely Ertebølle pottery, e.g. Stenbocksvallar and Skateholm. Likewise there are some with only Funnel Beaker pottery, mainly located in the inland and dated to the Early Neolithic, that is, after 3900 cal BC <sup>16</sup>.

This paper will focus on the Ertebølle pottery and discusses its role in the time in question, as part of networks, creolisation, and in neolithisation. The interpretation of the meaning of the ceramics and the materiality provides further perspectives for the interpretation of this early pottery handicraft, its technological conditions and artistic design. In this respect the Ertebølle pottery, and its grand and prolonged scientific interest, once again challenge preconceived notions when interpreting Stone Age societies, and the meaning of material culture in a wider social context.

The Ertebølle ceramic handicraft surely played a role during the neolithisation in southern Scandinavia. The Mesolithic–Neolithic transition in this region, as in other parts of Europe, is extremely complex in nature and involves many dimensions to be analysed and merged. The research has a long history; the period has already been studied for more than 150 years since the first kitchen midden commission. A large and differentiated corpus of data has been collected and investigated in the Baltic since then and the research has been widened to outside of southern Scandinavia. The scholarly work has of course undergone changes, and these days diverse theoretical approaches are to be seen. Hence, research within the Ertebølle period and area has shifting research paradigms in different research environments.

The perceptions of humankind and culture are of major importance if we are to approach social structures and agency in Stone Age societies. For many years there has been a considerable debate in archaeology and other disciplines about the possibilities of understanding societies in the present, as well as in the past. One of the topics concerns ‘Us and the Others/Us and Them’, and how to grasp the study of other cultures and societies<sup>17</sup>. How do we force these ideas on the Ertebølle people, those people who designed and handcrafted the earliest pottery in southern Sweden?

### Ertebølle pottery per se

The first step is, however, to describe and analyse the pottery itself, the archaeological sites, contexts and chronology, source critics and representativity.

The production of ceramic ware from many sites has been analysed through thermal analysis of clays and petrographic examinations in order to be able to say something about raw materials, shaping techniques, and firing. The Ertebølle pottery was manufactured with similar methods all over southern Scandinavia and northern Germany. This is confirmed by technological analysis of sherds from several sites: Löddesborg, Vik, Ivetofta, Skateholm, Soldattorp in Scania<sup>18</sup>, Ringkloster, Flynderhage and Norsminde in Jutland, Rosenhof, Siggeneben<sup>19</sup>, and Neustadt in Ost-Holstein<sup>20</sup>.

The pottery has a variation of fine and coarse clay and is tempered with crushed granite, quartzite, and sandstone, in Löddesborg also chamotte. Quite a common and an important diagnostic feature in the Scanian handicraft is that the pottery is often tempered with larger red quartzite grains<sup>21</sup>. The lamps, which will not be further discussed in this paper, were made of fine clays and tempered with organic material, crushed stone and grog<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> LARSSON 1984; Id. 1992.

<sup>17</sup> FABIAN 1983.

<sup>18</sup> HULTHÉN 1977; Id. 1984; JENNBERT 1984, 43 ff.; STILBORG/BERGENSTRÄHLE 2000.

<sup>19</sup> HULTHÉN 1977, 44 ff.

<sup>20</sup> GLYKOU 2008.

<sup>21</sup> JENNBERT 1984.

<sup>22</sup> HULTHÉN 1980.

The structure of the sherds reveals the way the pot was built. From the base lump, clay coils were laid in rings pressed onto the underlying roll with fingertips. Analyses of the building of the vessel show that rolls were merged in different ways, e.g. H-, U-, and N-techniques<sup>23</sup>. From the Lödödsborg collections all three building techniques exist in the Ertebølle pottery. Sherds from different parts of larger and smaller vessels are present and several techniques for pressing the roll can be seen, from fingertips with impression of nails to distinct marks of a tool (Fig. 2). Local clays were used and the pots were fired at a temperature of 500–700°C.

Of course pottery handicraft involves not only questions of technology but it is also the matter of design. The Ertebølle vessels in the Baltic region as well as Scania had a kind of formula within the basic form with pointed bases and S-shaped pots. All rim sherds found at Lödödsborg are slightly everted<sup>24</sup>. The Scanian pottery tradition has a distinguishing characteristic in the ornamentation of the vessels. At Lödödsborg 15 % of the sherds were decorated with eight different types of ornamentation. Round and oval shallow depressions in considerable variations were most common (Fig. 3), followed by circular and rectangular insets in lines and fields (Fig. 4). Unfortunately, the sherds are too fragmentary to allow a particular pattern to be deduced, but it looks as if figurative and geometrical patterns were designed<sup>25</sup>.

Rim sherds were ornamented not only on the outside but also on the inside of the rim. The edges of the rims were decorated with finger tips, nails, short strokes or dots from other tools and with perforations or pits (Figs. 5–6).

Ertebølle pottery at Lödödsborg and on other sites in Scania, had pointed, flat, or tap-shaped bases (Fig. 7). On one flat base in particular displays shallow ornamentation at the true bottom (Fig. 8).

Ornamented pottery is known from several sites. When K. Kjellmark first noticed Ertebølle pottery at Soldatorpet he compared it with pottery in Jutland and found a significant difference in design regarding the tap-shaped bases and the decorated vessels with shallow depressions (Fig. 9)<sup>26</sup>. The similarity to the design at Lödödsborg is striking.

The same type of shape and decoration is also found at Kvarteret Nore<sup>27</sup>, Vik (Fig. 10), and Skateholm (Fig. 11). A parallel phenomenon on Ertebølle sherds is documented at the coastal site of Grisby on Bornholm<sup>28</sup>.

The Ertebølle pottery in Scania as well the sort of pottery known in the Baltic area were built with similar technology and had a design with variations in form and decoration. The pottery decorated with shallow, oval, or round depressions is a *signum* in Scania and Bornholm.

Clearly, central standards did not exist. Clearly, the definition of Ertebølle pottery cannot be formulated from a few sites on Jutland in Denmark where it originally was found in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is not a single Ertebølle formula. The Baltic region is distinguished by an Ertebølle theme and variations.

### Ertebølle and Funnel Beaker pottery

It is impossible to avoid the discussion about the South Swedish relationship between Ertebølle and Funnel Beaker pottery, as several of the sites have both pottery traditions. At the Lödödsborg site they were found together in the different culture layers. This situation has been a subject of lively debate for decades (and soon centuries) following the growth of knowl-

<sup>23</sup> Id. 1977; KOCH NIELSEN 1986.

<sup>24</sup> JENNBERT 1984, Fig. 40, 53.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. Fig. 42, 55.

<sup>26</sup> KJELLMARK 1903, 120 f.

<sup>27</sup> SALOMONSSON 1971, 46.

<sup>28</sup> PETERSEN 2001, Fig. 9, 169.



Fig.2. Sherds with different buildings techniques from Lödöborg  
(Photo: I. Kristensson, LUHM). – Scale 1:1.

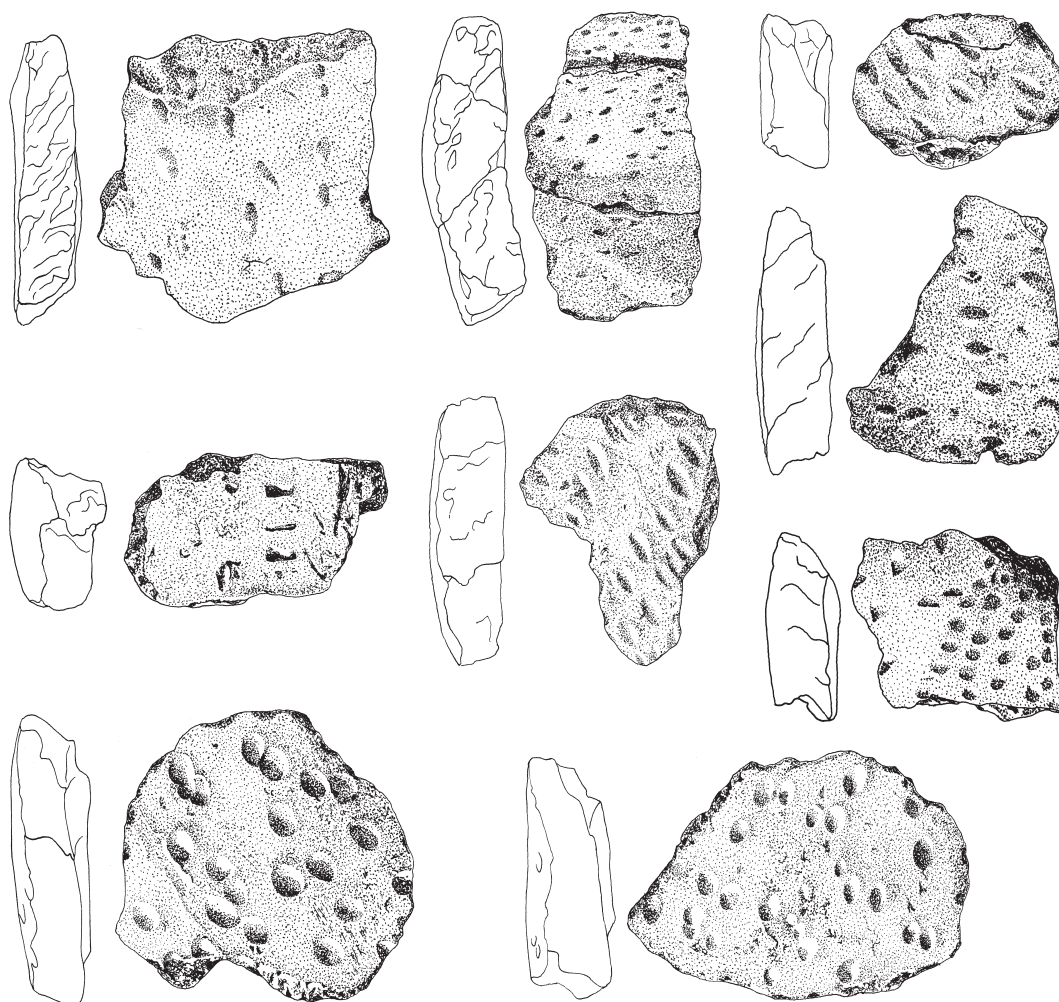


Fig.3. A selection of sherds with decoration of shallow depressions at Lödöborg  
(Drawing: M. Centerwall, JENNBERT 1984, Figs. 45–47, 56–58). – Scale 2:3.



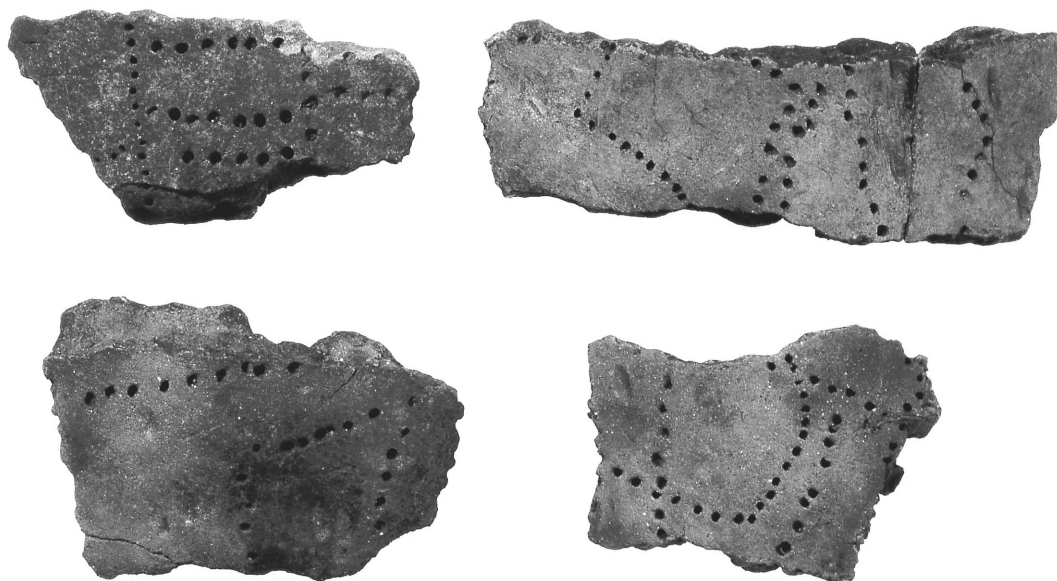


Fig. 4. Ertebølle sherds with circular or rectangular insets, Lödödesborg  
(Photo: I. Kristensson, JENNBERT 1984, Figs. 78, 141). – Scale 1:2.

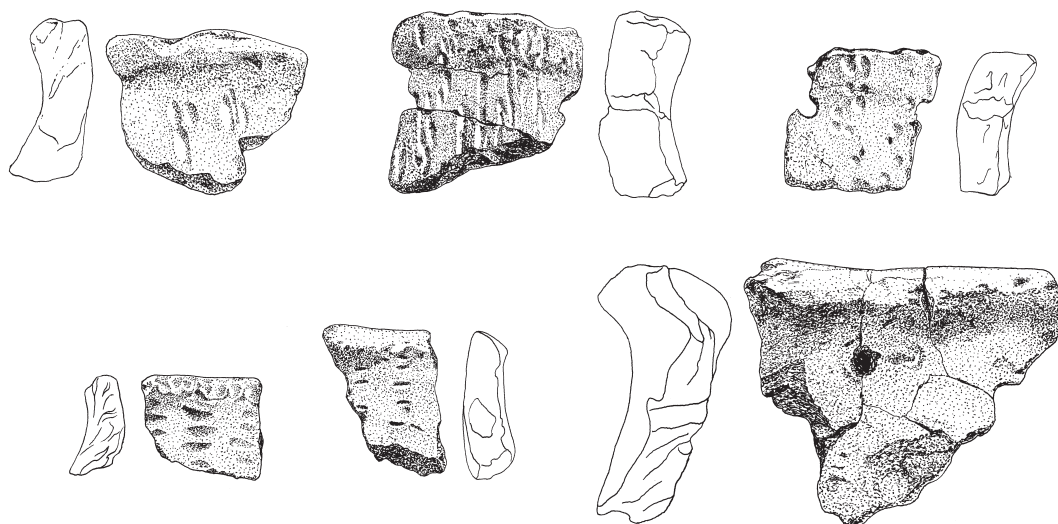


Fig. 5. Ertebølle rim sherds from Lödödesborg  
(Drawing: M. Centerwall, JENNBERT 1984, Figs. 46, 46 (?), 56–57). – Scale 2:3.

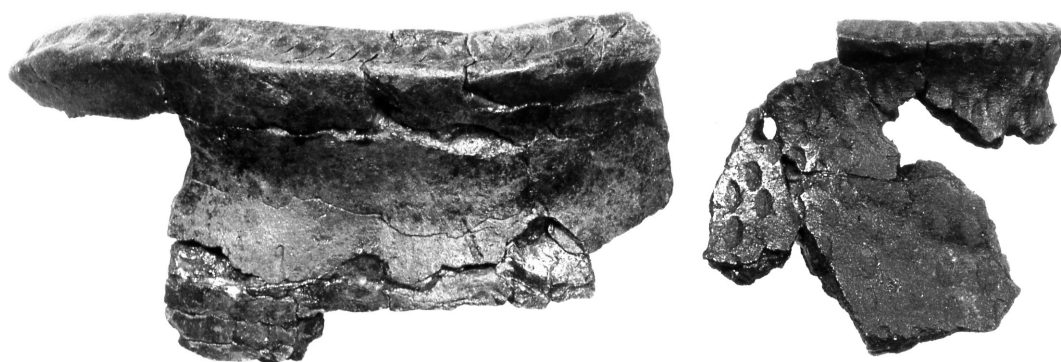


Fig. 6. Ertebølle rim sherds from Löddesborg (Photo: I. Kristensson, LUHM). – Scale 1:2.



Fig. 7. Ertebølle bases from Löddesborg (Photo: I. Kristensson, LUHM). – Scale 1:2.

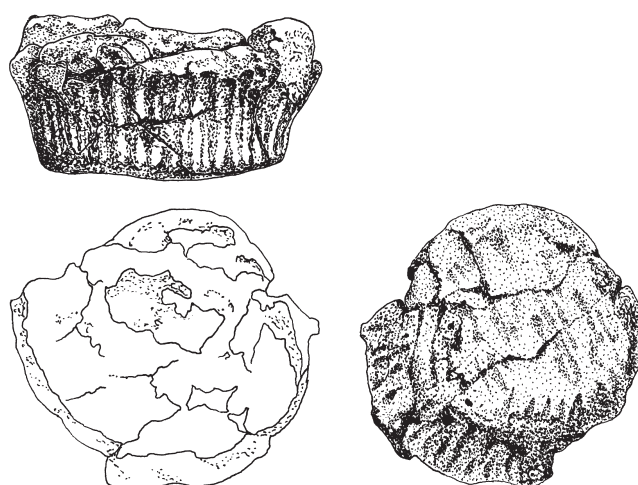


Fig. 8. Ertebølle ornamented flat base from Löddesborg (Drawing: M. Centerwall, JENNBERT 1984, Figs. 45, 7, 56). – Scale 1:1.



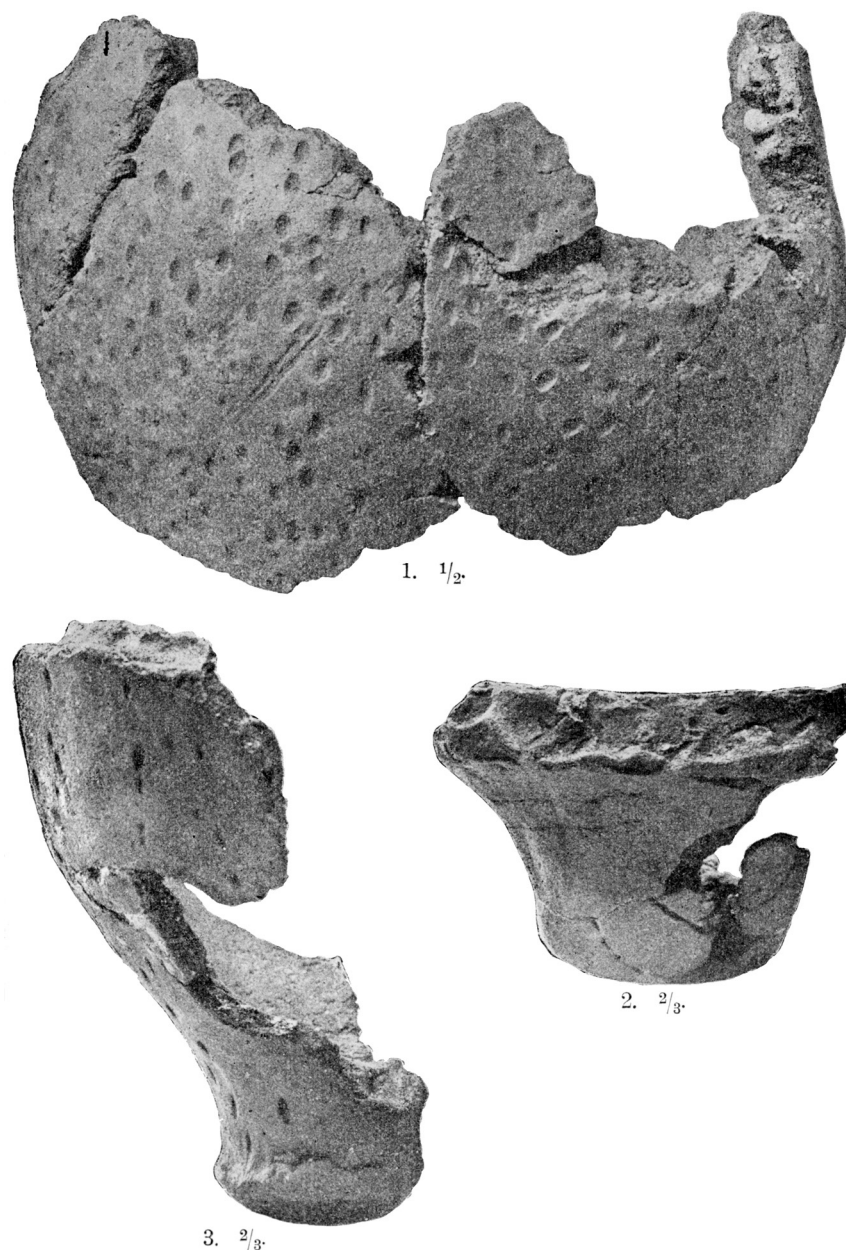


Fig. 9. Ertebølle pottery from Soldattorpet (after KJELLMARK 1903, Fig. VII).

edge and shifting paradigms within archaeology. The research history is filled with animated discussions about the question, and source-critical issues as well as the fundamentals for understanding the change in pottery styles and the overall material culture. It will surely continue in the future.

From my point of view the question of contemporary pottery styles challenges archaeologists to modify their statements from “how it was” to “could it be the other way?” As archaeology is intellectual scientific work with source criticism and discussions of representativity

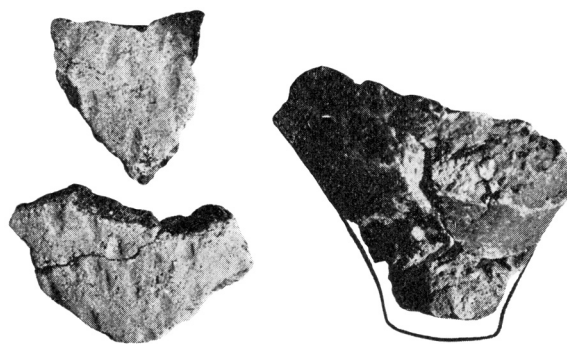


Fig. 10. Ertebølle pottery from the Vik site, Rörium parish (after FORSSANDER 1940, Figs. 1, 277). – Scale 1:1.

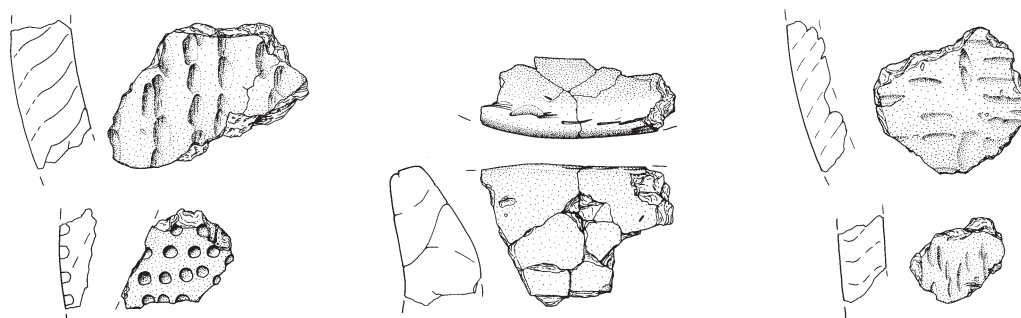


Fig. 11. Ertebølle sherds from Skateholm (Drawings: E. Koch Nielsen, STILBORG/BERGENSTRÄHLE 2001, Figs. 7, 34). – Scale 1:1.

Layer	number / cm <sup>2</sup>
2	0.9
2M	0.9
2U	1.4
2UM+2UN	2.2

Tab. 1. Density of ornament type 8 in layers at Löddesborg (after JENNBERT 1984)

as a major force, doubt about empirical data is part of the quest for knowledge. It is a matter of reflection and evaluation of knowledge, and the opening up of other possibilities to understand a phenomenon. Still, there is a risk of categorically binding interpretation to well-known knowledge. The separation of the Mesolithic from the Neolithic, the Ertebølle pottery from the Funnel Beaker pottery, into two separate boxes is one such scientific problem.

Concerning Löddesborg the number of Early Neolithic sherds is small in the lower layers. In the upper ones, however, the incidence increases. There is also a significant difference, in that the number of types of ornaments increases in the upper layer. There is a higher density of type 8, decorated with shallow depressions, in the lower layer (*Tab. 1*). Evidently, there is

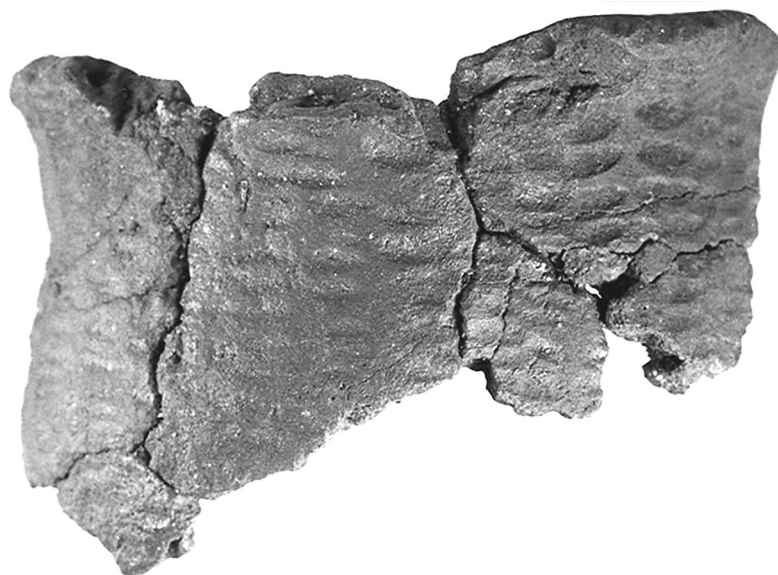


Fig. 12. An Ertebølle vessel from Lödödesborg (Photo: I. Kristensson, JENNBERT 1984, Figs. 50, 61). – Scale 1:1.



Fig. 13. Parts of Funnel Beaker vessels from Lödödesborg (Photo: I. Kristensson, LUHM). – Scale 1:3.

a change in the nature of the Ertebølle design, as well as the fact that funnel beakers became more evident in use. Is this chaos towards order or how do we interpret a changing materiality?

Analyses of the ceramic and raw clays, and the occurrence of Ertebølle and Funnel Beaker ware in the same clay groups, suggest that both types of ceramics were manufactured on the spot. The thickness of the Ertebølle sherds is between 8 mm and 27 mm, while the Funnel Beaker sherds vary between 4 mm and 17 mm. There are thin-walled and small Ertebølle pots, as well as thick-walled Funnel Beakers. There are no distinct differences between the Ertebølle and the Funnel Beaker ware that might be regarded as evidence of dissimilar manufacturing

traditions. Analysis of tempering material, sherd thickness, vessel-building techniques and firing methods have shown as much. Nor do the different layers display any major divergences of a kind that might suggest abrupt breaks in the settlement history. The good state of preservation might be an indication that the ceramics were deposited at the same time, and that the culture layers are deposits and were not subjected to subsequent disturbance<sup>29</sup>. As Eva Koch Nielsen has pointed out, the definition of the wares from a technological point of view is not obvious<sup>30</sup>.

However, there are fundamental differences with regard to the shape and ornament. The Funnel Beaker ceramics are represented by sherds from funnel beakers, collared flasks, and suspended vessels. Due to the high neck of the Funnel Beaker vessels, and the impressions along their mouths, Early Neolithic ceramics can be placed in Becker's A/B group. However, vessels forms do exist between the learned groupings of "archaeological culture". A vessel with typical Ertebølle decoration (*Fig. 12*) shows a resemblance to funnel beakers (*Fig. 13*).

In Scania the Ertebølle ceramic handicraft is often connected with funnel beakers. The question is: how do we understand this coexistence? Do we accept it or do we neglect it?

### Datings and representativity

What do we really know? Despite more than a hundred years of research, the archaeological sites and finds from the Ertebølle period are limited. The most extensive investigation of Ertebølle pottery was performed with material from the Löddesborg site in the early 1980s. The site has the largest South Swedish collection of Ertebølle pottery, and 26 % of the 33.5 kg has been analysed in detail<sup>31</sup>. The other sites have nothing like the same amount. The conclusion is that the Ertebølle pottery is a comparatively restricted category of archaeological material.

This is problematic concerning the Scanian Ertebølle sites, most of which were investigated a long time ago (*Appendix 1*). Today coastlines are protected by law. It has therefore been a seldom occurrence in recent decades that rescue excavations have found new sites. Even if investigations are possible, it is a difficult task to find sites such as Löddesborg with such an extensive and rich Ertebølle ceramic material. For the future a site like that in Vik would be interesting to investigate. As C.-A. Althin wrote: "Vik is the only large settlement in Scania undisturbed by transgressions and regressions of the Litorina Sea"<sup>32</sup>. Of course, a better-filled calendar would give a firmer foundation.

Turning directly to the Scanian Ertebølle pottery, unfortunately, very few <sup>14</sup>C datings are available as yet (*Tab. 2*).

From a much larger geographical perspective we know that the Ertebølle ceramic handicraft in the western part of the Baltic, in broad outline, was limited to a few hundred years, c. 4700–4000 cal BC<sup>33</sup>. The Ertebølle ceramic in the overall picture is dated to the Late Mesolithic. This means that the Ertebølle potters were at work just before and at the beginning of cereal cultivation and livestock breeding, in the late Atlantic chronozone.

Do we have examples of Ertebølle pottery in the earliest Early Neolithic as well? Going back to Scania, the Early Neolithic sites are mainly from the inland. They are dated after 3100 BC (uncalibrated)<sup>34</sup>. To my knowledge no Ertebølle pottery was found. The question is whether the coexistence of Ertebølle pots and the Funnel Beakers was only present very early on, and only at coastal sites. Do we lack important key sites?

<sup>29</sup> JENNBERT 1984.

<sup>30</sup> KOCH NIELSEN 1987.

<sup>31</sup> JENNBERT 1984.

<sup>32</sup> ALTHIN 1954, 41.

<sup>33</sup> E.g. GLYKOU 2008; BRINCH PETERSEN 2008.

<sup>34</sup> LARSSON 1984; Id. 1992.

Site	Lab-code	Date BP	Date cal BC
Stenbocksvallar	Lu-2198	5390 ±100 BP	4207 ±117 cal BC
Löddeborg	Lu-1842	5260 ±80 BP	4111 ±103 cal BC
Elinelund	U-48	5310 ±210 BP	4122 ±223 cal BC
	Ua-17211	5275 ±70 BP	4120 ±96 cal BC
	Ua-13663	5030 ±85 BP	3830 ±97 cal BC
Grisby, Bornholm	K-4484	5450 ±90 BP	4271 ±109 cal BC
	K-4485	5250 ±65 BP	4103 ±97 cal BC
	K-4483	5120 ±90 BP	3915 ±106 cal BC
	K-5530	5480 ±95 BP	4315 ±112 cal BC

Tab.2. Uncalibrated  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates, Ertebølle sites in Scania and Bornholm. Dates were calibrated with the program Calpal (B. Weninger/O. Jöris/U. Danzeglocke; see [www.calpal.de](http://www.calpal.de)).

The question is: to what extent does the Ertebølle pottery tradition belong to the Late Mesolithic or the Early Neolithic? Is it still fruitful to argue for a ‘pure’ Ertebølle period in the Late Mesolithic, followed by a ‘pure’ Early Neolithic Period?

The question of a borderline between the Mesolithic and the Neolithic is tantalising, and several aspects must be taken into consideration. What about localisation of the sites, and the representativity of the archaeological contexts?

Viewed as a whole, many excellent Late Mesolithic and Early Neolithic sites in southern Scandinavia have been excavated and reported. However, working with such a distant past also raises questions of representativity as well as the question of how much information we really have to have before going into interpretations of traces and fragments. Sites similar to those in Scania, with a coexistence of Ertebølle pots and funnel beakers, have not been reported in Denmark, even though funnel beakers have been found in Ertebølle layers, e.g. the classical locale Dyrholmen<sup>35</sup>.

The paradigm of closed archaeological cultures is certainly the foundation of archaeological thought, especially in constructing the chronological frameworks, but going beyond that, no static societies will ever have existed. Thereby, the biased interpretation of culture groups with a specific artefact collection impedes further dialogues discussing societal changes and the meaning of material culture, and materiality in wider cultural terms.

To sum up, and by taking sociological/practice theory into consideration, cultural settings were undoubtedly of various kinds within the Baltic area. People certainly did not do the same things all over the area. They did not express themselves through central standards in ceramic handicraft or other kinds of materiality. They did not have the same way of living, but they did establish contact with other people in other places.

Of course, the shortage of  $^{14}\text{C}$ -dated chronological sequences of the Late Mesolithic Period is a source-critical problem. Still, based on an overall empirical knowledge of the Ertebølle sites, I do not hesitate to go further and plot Ertebølle pottery to the ideas of networking and creolisation in the period of neolithisation.

<sup>35</sup> MATHIASSEN et al. 1942, 29; BECKER 1948, 128.



## Networking

The Löddesborg site is situated by the Öresund coast, approximately 1 km to the west of where the Lödde River flows into the Sound. The site was located on the beach ridge on the southern side of a small peninsula, which bordered on the ancient lagoon of the Barsebäck bog to the North. Several of the other Scanian sites have the same elements, an outlet, a lagoon, peninsula etc. Vast amounts of pottery, flint axes, and flint assemblages were documented at Löddesborg, Soldattorpet and the nearby sites Vik, and Siretorp. A large amount of flint and stone implements, but no pottery, was recorded at the surveyed areas of Ertebølle sites on the former small cape in Jonstorp. In fact, the much younger Pitted Ware coastal sites excavated at Jonstorp have similar assemblages to other the Ertebølle sites around the Scanian coast, especially Löddesborg. How can that be?

I have an intuitive feeling of a likeness between the Löddesborg site further south in Öresund and the Jonstorp sites<sup>36</sup>. They are located at the shore on a headland, strategically located with many physical possibilities for communication with people from elsewhere. The sites are open to the sea, not hidden behind natural boundaries. The open position in the landscape and the character of the material culture are alike. Is it possible that the meaning of these sites could be similar, and not bound to the traditional household with its everyday practices? In their placement the sites could be locales for people with a need for social negotiations.

I have once suggested that early farming, whether Late Mesolithic or Early Neolithic, was not important for survival, and that farming products were mainly used for social prestige, as fertile gifts. The neolithisation process has been interpreted as a slow, gradual process influenced by external and internal relations<sup>37</sup>. In the light of the presence of Ertebølle sites and Pitted Ware sites in Jonstorp, and the locations of other Ertebølle sites in Scania, I suggest that the location itself is a means to plot the Ertebølle pottery into a network system.

Material culture is not a passive reflection of social reality, but an active component for people to define themselves in relation to other. Materiality in itself is as much an active social force as an expression of skill in handicraft, and technology. Regional and interregional signatures can be interpreted from the point of view of Ertebølle ceramic handicraft, with all the technological aspects in mind, as well as the design of shape and decoration.

To start with the regional features, the Scanian Ertebølle pottery shows coherence between building techniques, shapes, and decorations. Especially the decoration with round or oval shallow depression is typical in Scania. The pottery at Löddesborg has more variants and combinations - probably because of the larger quantity of sherds examined. On the other hand, there is another typical ornamentation in Jutland that reflects a local and regional approach to design. The decoration with lines running crossways over the vessel is known from only a few sites restricted to an area of northeastern Jutland<sup>38</sup>. The vessel from Rugholm with its rhombic pattern lines is another excellent example of a local decoration<sup>39</sup>.

The pointed bases are another distinguishing feature in the regionality of ceramic design in southern Scandinavia. The classical map by Birgitta Hulthén (*Fig. 14* with additions) illuminates the differentiation in the Ertebølle ceramic handicraft on a regional scale. At the Löddesborg site there are three varieties of bases, a kind of combination of an eastern and western approach to moulding the pointed bases. A local artistic volition should be taken into account in evaluating the pottery handicraft.

<sup>36</sup> JENNBERT 2007.

<sup>37</sup> Id. 1984.

<sup>38</sup> ANDERSEN 1998, 42 f.

<sup>39</sup> KLINDT-JENSEN 1947, Fig. 11.

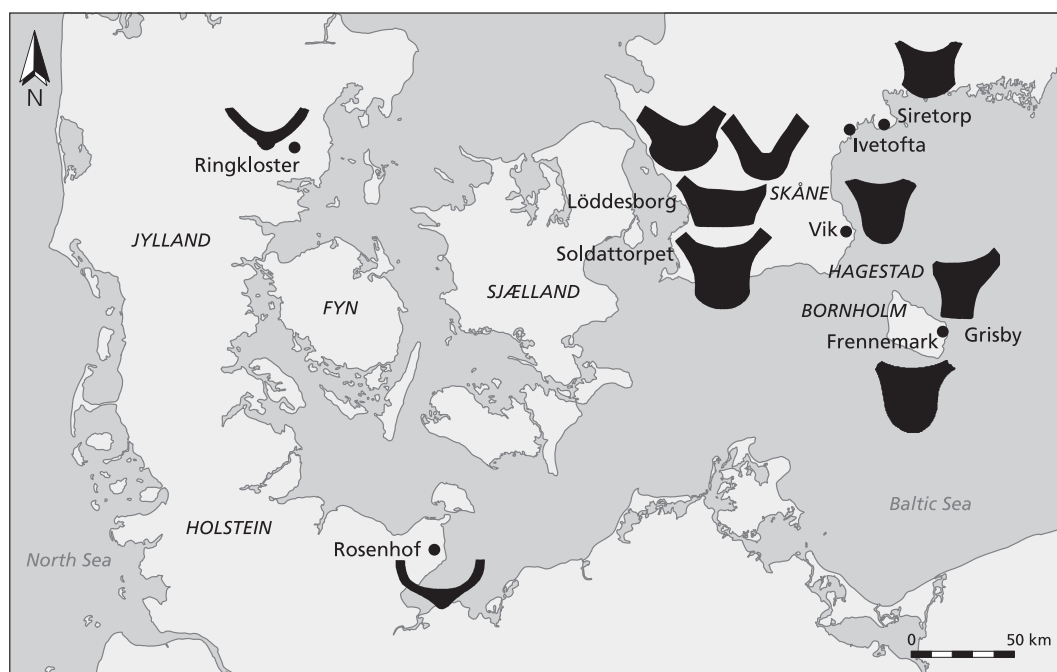


Fig. 14. The geographical representation of variations in Ertebølle vessels with pointed, flat, or tap-shaped bases (after HULTHÉN 1977, 39 with additions, Fig. 19).

On the other hand there is a certain interregional phenomenon in another type of decoration. The circular and rectangular insets on the Ertebølle sherds at Löddesborg<sup>40</sup> and on one sherd from Skateholm<sup>41</sup> show interregional relations to the West, South, and East. This kind of decoration is found in southern Scandinavia, Schleswig-Holstein, and Lower Saxony; it can be associated with the Stroke Ornamented Pottery tradition. The decoration (such as the crossways lines from Ringkloster, for example) also arouses associations with the East, to the Narva pottery from Sventoji 6 in Lithuania<sup>42</sup>. On some sherds at Löddesborg there is a combination of the very south Swedish shallow depressions, and the interregional rectangular insets (Fig. 15). What a combination! The potter must have had references to other people.

The imprint of grains and tips of cereals in the Ertebølle pottery from Löddesborg is another result of networking, as grain did not occur naturally in the local Ertebølle communities. The ecological prerequisites were lacking. Grain may therefore have been introduced into communities in southern Scandinavia through exchange relations. The imprints are seldom (Fig. 16). The botanist H. Hjelmqvist had gone through Ertebølle sherds from sites in Denmark without finding any. This caused C. J. Becker to assume that the two pottery styles, Ertebølle and Funnel Beaker, were not made at the same place. From the technological examination of sherds from Löddesborg we can assume the contrary. Grains from cereals and other plants (Tab. 3) indicate not only the import of grain but also provide information on the local environment at the coastline.

Over time, there were not only local traditions, but also regional traditions that were similar to each other in the West and East of southern Scandinavia. I do not believe that the

<sup>40</sup> JENNBERT 1984, Fig. 48, 58.

<sup>41</sup> STILBORG/BERGENSTRÄHLE 2000, Fig. 7, 34 f.

<sup>42</sup> RIMANTIENĖ 2005, Fig. 249–251, 355 ff.

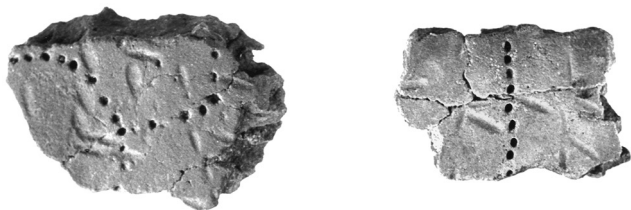


Fig. 15. Ertebølle sherds decorated with a combination of insets and the local Scanian oval depressions, Löddesborg (Photo: I. Kristensson, JENNBERT 1984, 58, part of Fig. 48,). – Scale 1 : 1.

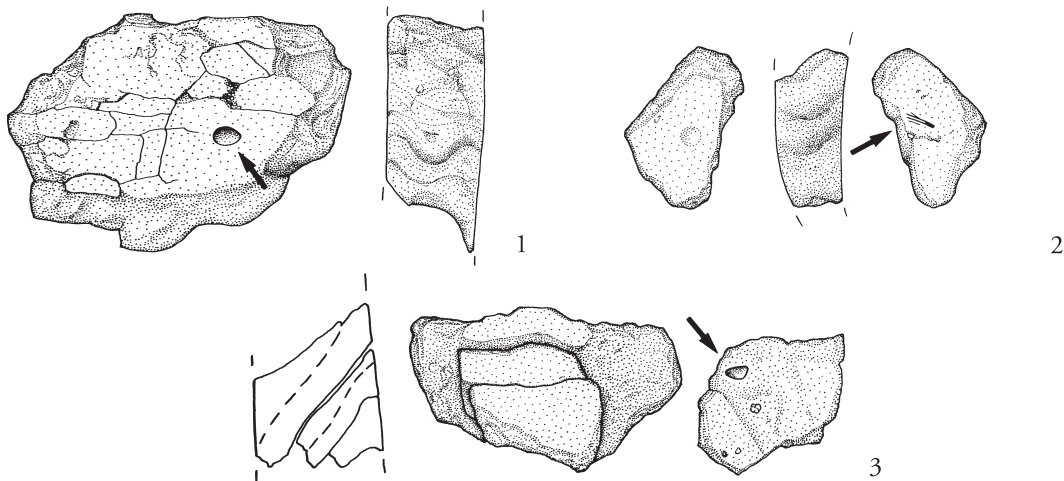


Fig. 16. Grains impressions in Ertebølle sherds in Scania. 1 Löddesborg, sherd with impression of wheat *Triticum compactum*; 2 Löddesborg, sherd with impression of einkorn wheat *Triticum monococcum*; 3 Vik, sherd with impression of a tip of emmer wheat, *Triticum dicoccum* (after JENNBERT 1984, 94, examined by Hakon Hjelmqvist, drawings by E. Koch, In: KOCH 1998, Figs. 19, 49). – Scale 1 : 1.

		Ertebølle	Funnel Beaker
Löddesborg			
einkorn wheat	<i>Triticum monococcum</i>	1	1
emmer wheat	<i>Triticum dicoccum</i>		1
wheat	<i>Triticum compactum</i>	1 + 1?	5
barley	<i>Hordeum</i>	1	–
Apple pip	<i>Malus</i>		2
Lady's thumb	<i>Polygonum persicaria</i>	1	
Rounded weed		1	
Mollusc		1	
Sand leek	<i>Allium scorodoprasum</i>		1
Lyme-grass	<i>Elymus arenarius</i>		1
Sedge	<i>Carex</i>		1
Quitch grass	<i>Agropyrum repens</i>		1
Vik			
Tip of emmer wheat	<i>Triticum dicoccum</i>	1	

Tab. 3. Imprints of cereals, and other plants in Ertebølle and Funnel Beaker sherds at Löddesborg, and one Ertebølle sherd from Vik (identified by Hakon Hjelmqvist, In: JENNBERT 1984, 94).

whole area of this region can be analysed as one entity, since there are many different local traditions<sup>43</sup>. The existence of the local Mesolithic groups can be interpreted according to different local traditions in the material culture within different regions, e.g. Limhamn axes, flake axes, harpoons etc.<sup>44</sup>. The archaeological evidence – artefact styles and pottery design – points to a regionalisation in southern Scandinavia from the Mesolithic onwards.

The Ertebølle pottery handicraft played an active part in the plot during the Late Mesolithic. The making and designing of vessels with functional and artistic powers was surely a part of people's networking. During the period in question interregional contacts were obviously essential in the production and use of material items and the knowledge about cereals and cultivation.

### Creolisation and neolithisation

The division between the Mesolithic and the Neolithic is also a division between two ideas about people. The Mesolithic individual has been characterised, as J. Thomas wrote, "in terms of adaptive responses to environmental pressures". The Neolithic people have been described "as purposive subjects, acting in pursuit of socially-defined goals"<sup>45</sup>. The debate on the transition in this part of Europe has a long tradition and various interpretations have been presented. There have been many discussions on the scenario in southern Scandinavia, and many ideas have been put forward<sup>46</sup>.

I have suggested that social dynamics and exchange of gifts were central in the plot of neolithisation. The metaphor of "the fertile gift" emphasises the slow and gradual transition from hunting-gathering to tillage. Since people cannot live in isolation, there must be contact areas between groups of people. Gifts and return gifts can be important elements in the contact network. Gift exchange often depends on prestige or diplomacy, or is motivated by both. Gifts can circulate, or they can be handed over as a tribute. They can be given for reasons of both peace and war. They are not in themselves functional. Another important aspect of exchange relations is the exchange of women or men in marriage alliances. I therefore see marriage alliances as a significant feature of the pattern of alliances that must have existed between Neolithic societies in Europe and the Ertebølle period in southern Scandinavia<sup>47</sup>.

In fact, it is not at all peculiar that the Ertebølle pottery and the funnel beakers have similar technological features but differ in form and ornament in this gradual change of society. The pots were very good for cooking. Food crusts suggest cooking as well as fermenting with blood, nuts etc.<sup>48</sup>.

The density of settlement sites in southernmost Sweden at this time gives no indications that people were forced to adopt agriculture because of shortage of space for hunting or fishing. Agricultural production is assumed to have been exclusive and of minor importance for people's survival. The locations and the archaeological contexts of the Ertebølle sites in Scania urge the interpretation that these sites were important in networking. The Ertebølle and the Funnel Beaker pottery are found in the same layer. Hence, the dissimilarities with regard to shape and decoration need not to be due to the vessels having been manufactured by different groups of people. For if the idea of life in creolised corporate cultures, expressed in the material culture, is altered in connection with change in production conditions, the appearance of the material culture will alter too.

<sup>43</sup> JENNBERT 1997; STILBORG 1999.

<sup>44</sup> JENNBERT 1984; PETERSEN 1984.

<sup>45</sup> THOMAS 1991.

<sup>46</sup> PRICE/GEBAUER 1992.

<sup>47</sup> JENNBERT 1984; Id. 1985.

<sup>48</sup> ARRHENIUS 1984.

The inhabitants might even have preceded their Danish counterparts of the Ertebølle area in incorporating farming into their subsistence base<sup>49</sup>. Or was southern Scandinavia empty of people between the Late Mesolithic and the Early Neolithic? Still, no one has a preferential right of interpretation.

### Ertebølle handicraft

Thus, it seems that the Ertebølle handicraft had something to do with changing habitats. Symbolic representations within the pottery need to be balanced with practical activities: what people did, and whom they met. Truly, the handicraft was significant in the cultural settings in the wake of neolithisation. It is however obvious, that discussion of the whole process in a long-term perspective is a more convincing way forward than just comparing the two periods as largely different cultural entities.

Our perceptions of humankind and culture and the way we perceive the significance of farming and material culture are of major importance if we are to approach the change from hunting-gathering to agriculture. If a less rigid concept of periods and other well-known abstractions concerning Stone Age societies is applied, other interpretations emerge. By making the social and cultural dynamics visible in analysis of material culture, it is possible to plot Ertebølle pottery into the ideas of networking and creolisation in the period of neolithisation.

### Appendix 1

Sites with finds of Ertebølle pottery (besides Jonstorp)  
in Scania and Blekinge, southern Sweden (e.g. *Fig. 1*)

LUHM	Lunds universitets historiska museum (Historical Museum, Lund University, Lund	<b>Stenbocksvallar</b> , Barsebäck parish, Kävlinge municipality. Ertebølle pottery Excavation: Jennbert 1985 <sup>14</sup> C dating: Lu-2198, 3 440 ± 100 BC (uncalibrated), charcoal LUHM 30565 <i>References:</i> STREIJFFERT/PRAHL 1994; ROGIUS 2006.
SHM	Statens Historiska Museum (The Museum of National Antiquities, Stockholm)	
MHM, MM	Malmö Museer (Malmö Museum)	
<b>Jonstorp</b> , Jonstorp parish, Höganäs municipality. Survey by Lidén, several Ertebølle sites without pottery (Lidén S, RB, RÅ, K, T, Å, and O), and several sites with Pitted Ware pottery LUHM 29237–29250, 29263–29272 <i>References:</i> LIDÉN 1938; Id. 1940; ALTHIN 1954, 8 ff.		
<b>Lerhamn</b> , Brunnby parish, Höganäs municipality. No excavation, survey by Stentorp since the 1940s, a few sherds of Ertebølle pottery not published, but finds from this multi-period site Reference: STENTORP 2001.		
		<b>Löddesborg</b> , Löddeköpinge parish, Kävlinge municipality. Ertebølle and Funnel Beaker pottery Excavation: Ohlsson and Hörberg, 1964–1970, Jennbert 1985 <sup>14</sup> C dating: Lu-1842, 3 310 ± 80 BC (uncalibrated), charcoal LUHM 30955, 31661 <i>References:</i> JENNBERT 1984; Id. 1985a,b,c.

<sup>49</sup> RAEMAEKERS 1999, 53.



**Soldattorpet**, Hyllie parish, Malmö municipality.  
Ertebølle and Funnel Beaker pottery  
Excavation: Kjellmark 1901–02; Rydbeck 1903; Schnittger 1907

SHM 11882, 13286 etc.

LUHM 16087, 16949 etc.

MM 9283 etc.

*References:* KJELLMARK 1903; Id.1905; RYDBECK 1928; ALTHIN 1954, 30ff; SALOMONSSON 1971; JENNBERT 1984, 64f.

**Gränsstigen**, Malmö town, Malmö municipality.

Ertebølle and Funnel Beaker pottery

Excavations: Salomonsson 1960, Silow 1961

MM without number

*References:* SALOMONSSON 1971, 48f; JENNBERT 1984, 65f.

**Kvarteret Nore**, Malmö town, Malmö municipality.

Ertebølle and Funnel Beaker pottery

Excavation: Salomonsson 1968

MM 1814

*References:* SALOMONSSON 1971, 48f; JENNBERT 1984, 66.

**Elinelund**, Hyllie parish, Malmö municipality.

Ertebølle and Funnel Beaker pottery

Survey Stadler 1920s

Excavation by Salomonsson 1957, 1959, Jonsson 1995, 1996

<sup>14</sup>C datings: U-48, 3 360±210BC (uncalibrated), charcoal

Ua-17211, 3 325±70BC (uncalibrated), burnt shell of hazelnut

Ua-13663, 3 080±85BC (uncalibrated), food crust, funnel beaker

LUHM 28431, 28564, 28715

MHM 8531 etc.

MM 4585, 33124

*References:* ALTHIN 1954, 32f; SALOMONSSON 1971, 44f; KRÄMER/LÖWE 1973; JENNBERT 1984, 66f; JONSSON 2002.

**Skateholm I and III**, Tullstorp parish, Trelleborg municipality.

Ertebølle pottery

Excavation: L. Larsson 1980–1985

LUHM without number

*References:* LARSSON et al. 1988; Id. 1993; STILBORG/BERGENSTRÄHLE 2001.

**Vik**, Rörum parish, Simrishamn municipality.

Ertebølle and Funnel Beaker pottery

Excavation: Lönnberg 1927, Althin 1950, Strömberg 1963, Jacobsson 1977

LUHM 25497, 26954

SHM 18454, 19285, 19413:7

Simrishamn Museum without number

*References:* FORSSANDER 1941; ALTHIN 1954, 37ff; Hulthén 1977, 23ff; JENNBERT 1984, 68.

**Ivetofta**, Ivetofta parish, Bromölla municipality.

Ertebølle pottery

Survey/excavation: Ekenstam 1914, 1915; Lönnberg 1930

SHM 15484 16019, 18881–85

*References:* BAGGE/KJELLMARK 1939, 145f; ALTHIN 1954, 129f; HULTHÉN 1977, 36.

**Siretorp**, Mjällby parish, Sölvesborg municipality.

Ertebølle and Funnel Beaker pottery

Excavation: Rewentlow 1902, 1907, Kjellmark 1912–1914, Bagge and Kjellmark 1931–1932, 1935, Welinder 1971

SHM 14905, 15226, 15719, 18471–74, 20090, 20043, 20985, 22529 etc.

*References:* BAGGE/KJELLMARK 1939, 123f; HULTHÉN 1977, 36; JENNBERT 1984, 69f

**Zusammenfassung · Abstract · Résumé**

**ABSTRACT** This paper will focus on the Ertebølle pottery in southern Sweden, which serves as an entry to a discussion of its role in the time in question as part of networks, creolisation, and in neolithisation. The interpretation of the meaning of the ceramics and the materiality gives further perspectives to interpret this early pottery handicraft, its technological conditions and artistic design. In this respect the Ertebølle pottery, and its grand and prolonged scientific interest, once again challenge preconceived notions of the interpretation of Stone Age societies, and the meaning of material culture in a wider social context.

**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG** Die Ertebølle-Keramik im südlichen Schweden steht im Zentrum der vorliegenden Analyse. Sie bildet den Ausgangspunkt für eine weiterführende Diskussion zur Rolle der Keramik im Verlaufe der Zeit und ihre Bedeutung als Teil von Netzwerken, der Kreolisierung und der Neolithisierung. Die Interpretation der Bedeutung der Keramik und ihrer Materialität eröffnet weitere Perspektiven zur Deutung des Töpferhandwerks, seiner technologischen Bedingungen und seines gestalterischen Potentials. In dieser Hinsicht ist die Ertebølle-Keramik vor dem Hintergrund des bedeutenden wissenschaftlichen Interesses eine Herausforderung, die steinzeitliche Gesellschaft und die Bedeutung der materiellen Kultur in einem weitergespannten sozialen Kontext zu sehen.

**RÉSUMÉ** Cet article vise la céramique Ertebølle du sud de la Suède qui permet d'aborder la discussion du rôle de la poterie à cette époque comme facteur de réseaux, de métissage et de néolithisation. L'interprétation du rôle de la céramique et de sa matérialité ouvre de nouvelles perspectives permettant de décoder les débuts de la poterie, ses conditions technologiques et son design artistique. En ce sens, la céramique Ertebølle, avec son grand intérêt scientifique, remet une fois de plus en question des notions préconçues en plaçant dans un contexte social plus large l'interprétation des sociétés de l'âge de la Pierre et du rôle de la culture matérielle.

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