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# THE ROLE OF FIRE IN NEOLITHIC RITUAL ACTIVITIES

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## ABSTRACT

Massive demolition of flint and stone artefacts by fire has been found at two sites in south-eastern Scania, the southernmost county of Sweden. During the late 1980s, Svartskylle was found, a site dated to the Funnel Beaker Culture at the transition from the Early Neolithic to the Middle Neolithic at about 3400 BC. At the site fragments showed that several thin-butted flint axes as well as a small number of thin-bladed axes had been heavily fragmented by fire. The burnt flints were distributed on a hill which has a dominant position in the landscape.

During an extensive survey in the 1990s, another site with fragments of flint artefacts destroyed by fire was found about 17 km to the east of Svartskylle. The site is situated on a small plateau on the southern side of the river valley. The site has been surveyed and excavations were conducted in 1998 and 1999. More than a hundred flint axes and chisels as well as a large number of arrowheads, scrapers and blades were damaged by fire. Non-flint tools such as axes and battle axes had also been broken into pieces intentionally. The excavation revealed a number of pits of various size in which the damaged flint and stone artefacts had been deposited together with pottery and crushed human bones. The material includes regional types as well as long-distance items. They are dated to the Battle Axe Culture at c. 2300 BC.

What is expressed at this site differs from the destruction of single artefacts by fire which is evident at settlement sites, megalithic tombs and causewayed enclosures throughout the Middle Neolithic. On certain occasions destruction of flint tools seems to achieve an imposing effect.

Ritual burning has a public, direct, evocative and magical appearance. Flint undergoes a colour transformation from natural black or grey, sometimes to red and finally to white. This change is similar to the cremation of a human body. The destruction of material culture must have been very obvious, and the wealth

represented by the number of tools and exotics included must have been considerable.

Through finds and find circumstances, Professor Rimute Rimantiene, among many other aspects, has attributed special importance to the role of rituals in Stone Age archaeology of northern Europe. This role will be the subject of this presentation.

In her analysis of the Nida site in south-western Lithuania related to the Corded Ware culture, Professor Rimantiene describes a pit which distinctly differed from the other hearths as regards the size and the stratigraphy of the filling (Rimantienė, 1989). She interprets the pit as a structure related to offerings in which repeated fires played an important role. In Scandinavian Neolithic as well, fire played an important role in rituals.

## MASSIVE DEMOLITION BY FIRE

In south-eastern Scania, in the southernmost part of Sweden, two sites have evidence of massive intentional demolition by fire. During surveys for Neolithic settlement, as part of research involving the cultural landscape in the 1980s, one such site was found at Svartskylle (Fig. 1). Several thin-butted flint axes as well as a small number of thin-bladed axes, flake scrapers and blades, along with some ordinary flakes, had been heavily fragmented by fire (Fig. 3). The axe types date the finds to the later part of the Early Neolithic, c. 3500 cal. BC (Larsson, 1989). The burnt flints lay in four concentrations on a hill with a dominant position in the landscape (Fig. 2).

Svartskylle is situated 12 km from the coast. During the Early Neolithic this area as well as the coastal area bore evidence of well-established settlement (Larsson, M., 1991). The area in between was sparsely settled and probably used as hunting grounds and pasture land (Berglund, 1991).

During the extensive revised survey of monuments carried out in Scania during 1990s, fire-damaged flint



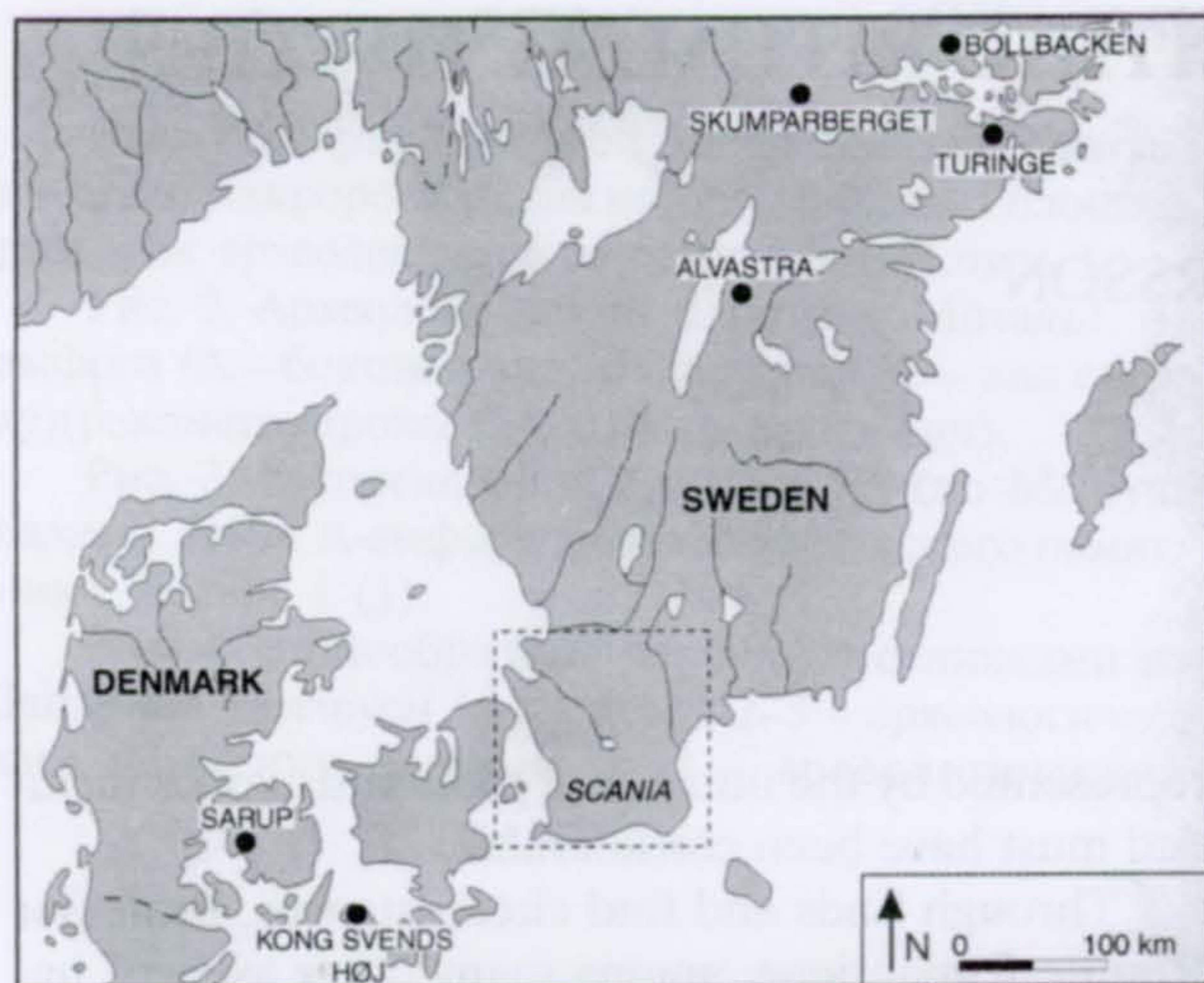


Fig. 1. Southern Scandinavia (top) and Scania – southernmost part of Sweden (bottom) – with the sites mentioned in the text.

artefacts were spotted in a field at Kverrestad about 17 km east of the previously mentioned site and at about the same distance – about 15 km – from the sea (Fig. 1). Just like the site at Svartskylle, this new site is situated in a specific setting. A river valley at Kverrestad runs from east to west, delimited to the south by a marked ridge. The site is situated on a small plateau on the southern side of the river valley (Fig. 4) with marked slopes on three sides and with a wetland below the site. The bedrock at the site is made up of slate. In the main part of the excavated area the bedrock is covered only by a thin layer of clayish sand which equals the plough zone.

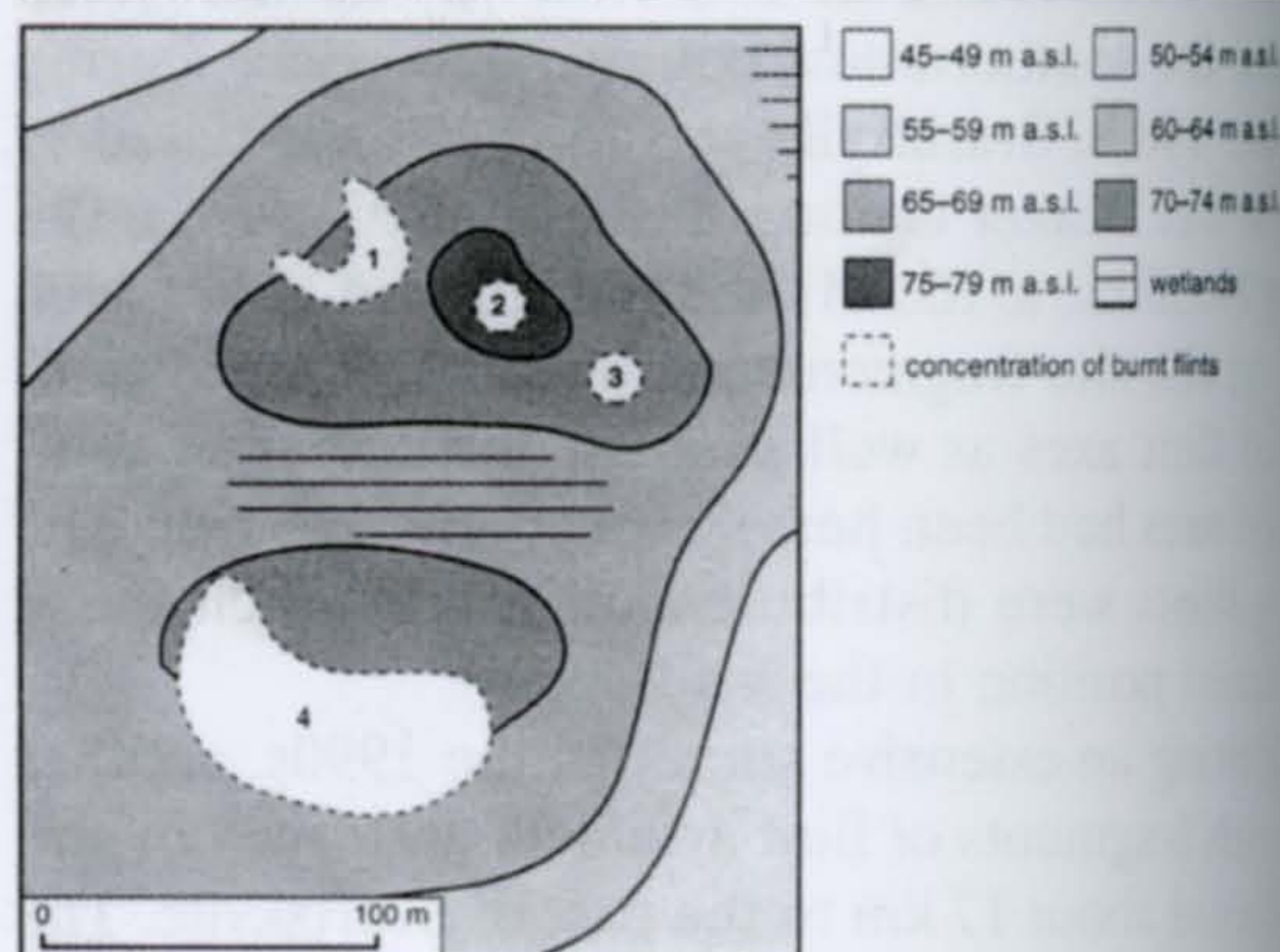
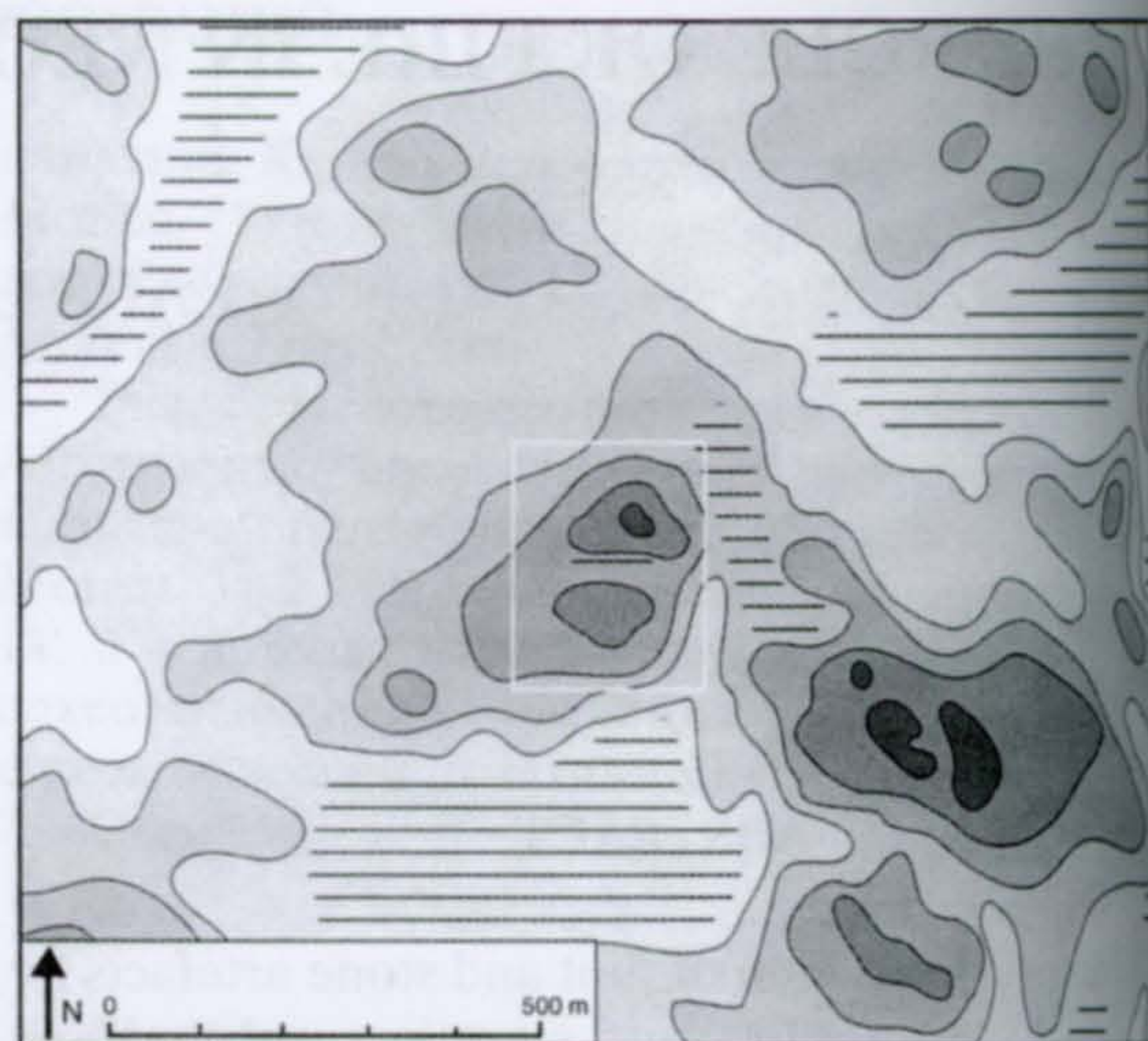


Fig. 2. Top: The topography of the surroundings of Svartskylle, south-eastern Scania. Legend; 1: 45–49 m a.s.l., 2: 49–54 m a.s.l., 3: 55–59 m a.s.l., 4: 60–64 m a.s.l., 5: 65–69 m a.s.l., 6: 70–74 m a.s.l., 7: 75–79 m a.s.l. and 8: wetlands. The delimited area in the centre is enlarged below with the location of the four areas with concentrations of flint destroyed by fire.

Fire-damaged flints could be found on the plateau within an area of approximately 70x70 m. The site was surveyed on several occasions, when every find was recorded in order to determine patterns in the spatial distribution.

Excavations were carried out at Kverrestad in 1998 and 1999. They revealed a number of pits of varying size and depth in which damaged flint and stone artefacts had been deposited together with a considerable amount of fragmentary pottery. The largest pit was about 4 m long, the shortest less than 0.5 m. The depth varied from more than a metre to less than ten centimetres below the topsoil. Finds were made throughout the filling which show that the artefacts were deposited during the entire process of filling in the pits. A small number of burnt human



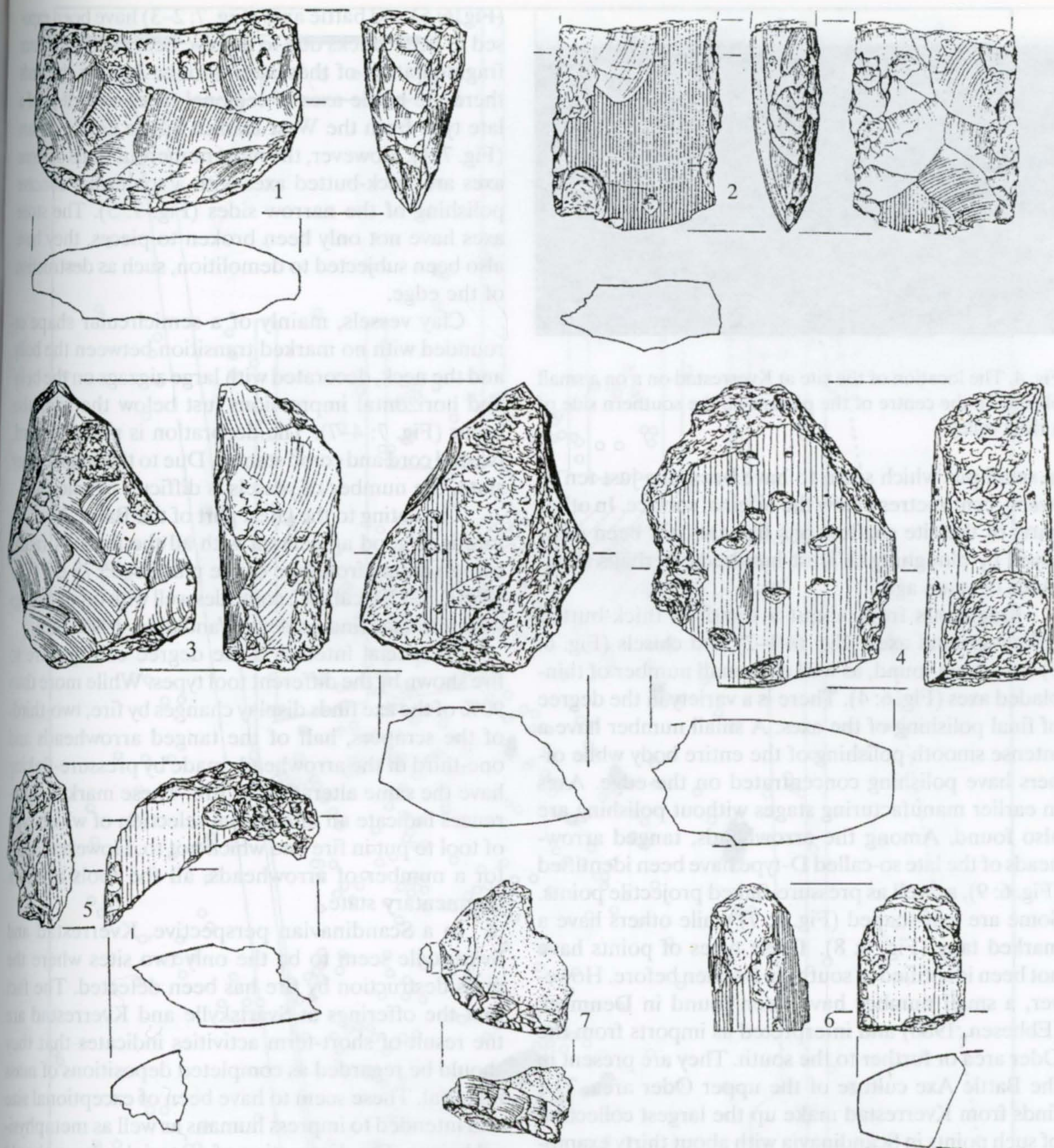


Fig. 3. Artefacts from Svartskylle destroyed by fire. Fragments of thin-butted flint axes (1, 3-6), fragment of a thin-bladed axe (2) and fragment of a flake scraper (7). 1:2.

bones, intentionally cracked into small pieces, were also found.

The distribution of surface finds does not coincide with the spread of pits filled with deposition remains (Fig. 5). These pits had been cut into the soft bedrock and the contents has been protected during later ploughing. At the northern edge of the site an area

has been protected from deep ploughing, due to large stones in the moraine just below the present surface. In this part a layer, probably part of the Neolithic surface, with a mixture of artefacts has been preserved. When excavated it gave an insight into the circumstances of deposition. Although finds were made throughout the layer, concentrations of artefacts were found





Fig. 4. The location of the site at Kverrestad on a small plateau in the centre of the picture on the southern side of a river valley.

in small pits which seem to have been dug just ten to twenty centimetres below the original surface. In other parts of the site shallow pits like this has been destroyed by ploughing at least hundreds, perhaps thousands of years ago.

Fragments from about a hundred thick-butted hollow-ground axes (Fig. 6: 1–2) and chisels (Fig. 6: 3) have been found, as well as a small number of thin-bladed axes (Fig. 6: 4). There is a variety in the degree of final polishing of the axes. A small number have a intense smooth polishing of the entire body while others have polishing concentrated on the edge. Axes in earlier manufacturing stages without polishing are also found. Among the arrowheads, tanged arrowheads of the late so-called D-type have been identified (Fig. 6: 9), as well as pressure-flaked projectile points. Some are leaf-shaped (Fig. 6: 7) while others have a marked tang (Fig. 6: 8). These types of points have not been identified in southern Sweden before. However, a small number have been found in Denmark (Ebbesen, 1980) and interpreted as imports from the Oder area or further to the south. They are present in the Battle Axe culture of the upper Oder area. The finds from Kverrestad make up the largest collection of such points in Scandinavia with about thirty examples. Fragments of a prototype of daggers, known as feeding-knives (Nielsen, 1976), have been identified as well (Fig. 6: 10). Flake scrapers and large blades have also been damaged by fire (Fig. 6: 6).

Not only flint tools were damaged by fire, however. The damaged finds include flakes from an early stage of tool production, as they show a considerable cover of lime cortex. Fragments of flint cores have also been identified. Non-flint tools such as thick-butted axes

(Fig. 6: 5) and battle axes (Fig. 7: 2–3) have been exposed to fire. Cracks due to intense heat facilitated later fragmentation of these stone tools. Among the finds there are battle axes of regional types as well as of a late type from the West Danish Single Grave culture (Fig. 7: 1). However, the most numerous finds of stone axes are thick-butted axes with a somewhat concave polishing of the narrow sides (Fig. 7: 5). The stone axes have not only been broken to pieces, they have also been subjected to demolition, such as destruction of the edge.

Clay vessels, mainly of a semicircular shape or rounded with no marked transition between the belly and the neck, decorated with large zigzags on the belly and horizontal impressions just below the rim, also occur (Fig. 7: 4–7). The decoration is made by cord twisted cord and comb stamps. Due to the fragmentary state, the number of vessels is difficult to calculate.

The dating to the latest part of the Battle Age Culture is in good agreement with all the finds. A radiocarbon dating from one of the pits,  $3860 \pm 75$  BP (Up-14883), c. 2300 cal. BC, coincides well with other datings with a similar find context (Vandkilde, 1996, 166).

Of special interest is the degree of exposure to fire shown by the different tool types. While more than 90% of the axe finds display changes by fire, two-thirds of the scrapers, half of the tanged arrowheads and one-third of the arrowheads made by pressure-flaking have the same alteration by fire. These marked differences indicate an intentional selection of which type of tool to put in fire and which not to. However, apart for a number of arrowheads, all the tools are in a fragmentary state.

In a Scandinavian perspective, Kverrestad and Svartskylle seem to be the only two sites where the mass destruction by fire has been detected. The fact that the offerings at Svartskylle and Kverrestad are the result of short-term activities indicates that they should be regarded as completed depositions of mass material. These seem to have been of exceptional size and intended to impress humans as well as metaphysical beings. The destruction of material culture should have been very obvious and the wealth represented by the number of tools and exotics included must have been considerable.

This type of public sacrifice of rare objects and with a direct effect may have been practised on special occasions, probably in combination with external or internal threats. In addition this could be an act which was primarily meant to legitimate power by impressing representatives of another community.



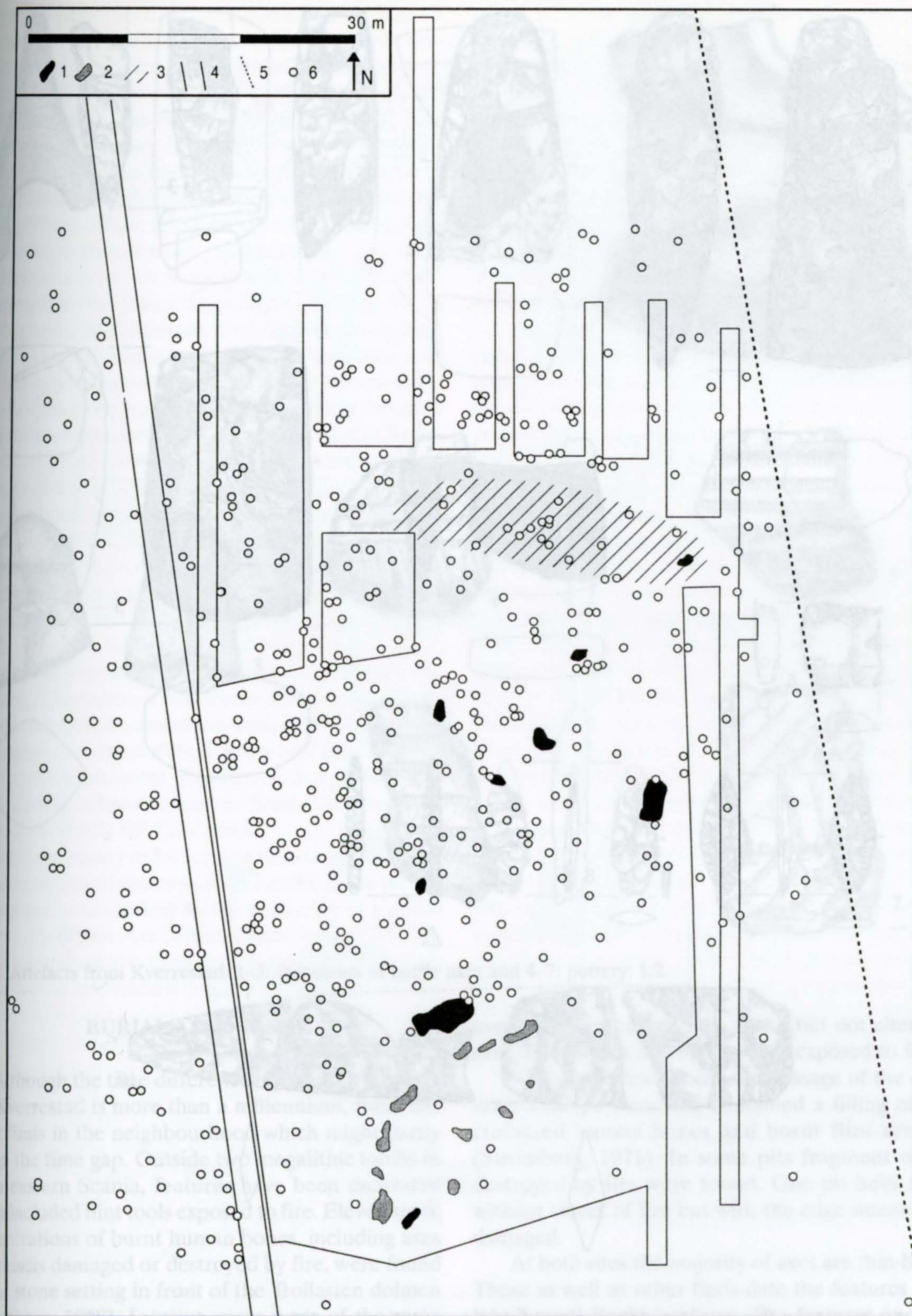


Fig. 5. The distribution of finds and features at Kverrestad. Legend: 1: pits with finds, 2: pits with a clay filling, 3: area with a thin plough zone, 4: field-road, 5: field boundary, 6: surface finds.



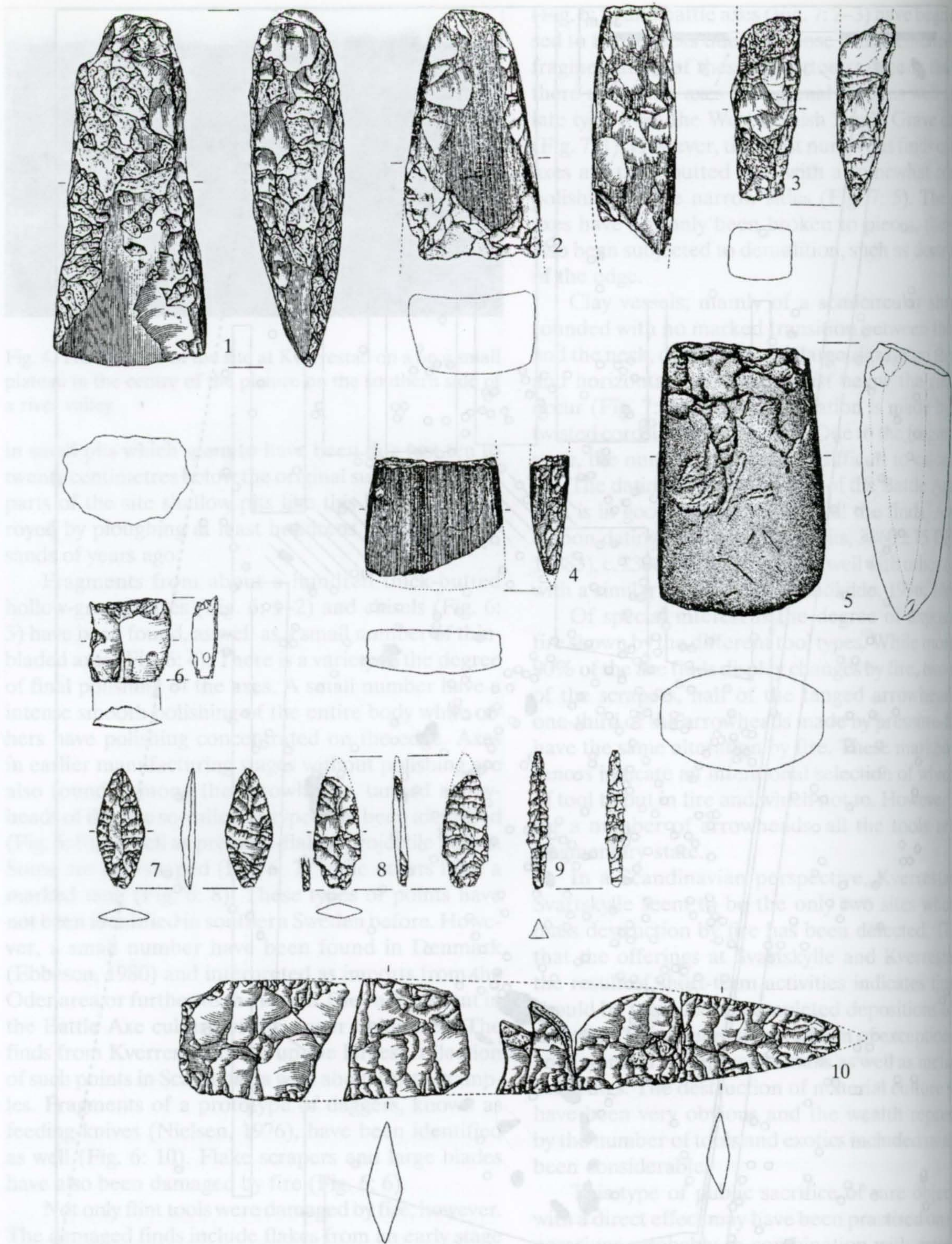


Fig. 6. Artefacts from Kverrestad. 1-2: fragments of thick-butted flint axes, 3: fragment of a chisel, 4: fragment of a thin-butted flint axe, 5: fragment of a thick-butted stone axe, 6: fragment of a blade, 7-8: lanceolate arrowheads, 9: tanged arrowhead and 10: fragments of a proto-dagger. 1:2.



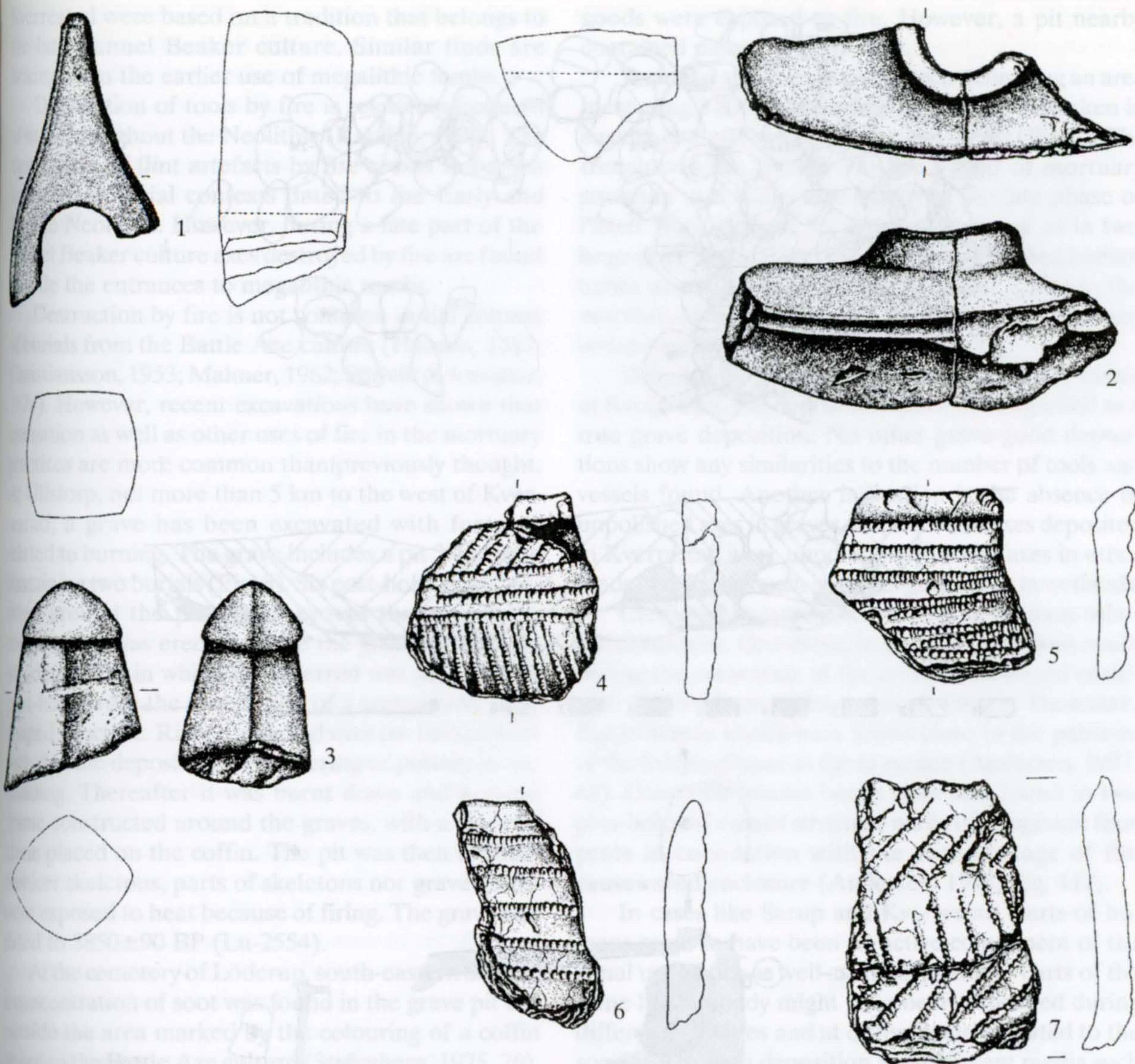


Fig. 7. Artefacts from Kverrestad. 1-3: fragments of battle axes and 4-7: pottery. 1:2.

## BURIALS AND FIRE

Although the time difference between Svartskylle and Kverrestad is more than a millennium, there are other finds in the neighbourhood which might partly bridge the time gap. Outside two megalithic tombs in south-eastern Scania, features have been excavated which included flint tools exposed to fire. Eleven small concentrations of burnt human bones, including axes and chisels damaged or destroyed by fire, were found on the stone setting in front of the Trollasten dolmen (Strömberg, 1968). In some cases parts of the same axe originate from different concentrations. Axes without polishing were damaged by fire as well. Some

axes had been broken into pieces but not altered by fire. Arrowheads and blades were exposed to fire.

Nine small pits outside the passage of the megalithic tomb of Ramshög contained a filling of soot, cremated human bones and burnt flint artefacts (Strömberg, 1971). In some pits fragment of axes destroyed by fire were found. One pit held an axe without traces of fire but with the edge intentionally damaged.

At both sites the majority of axes are thin-bladed. These as well as other finds date the features to the late Funnel Beaker culture. The features and their contents are interpreted as remains of rituals. They show that the activities which are represented in



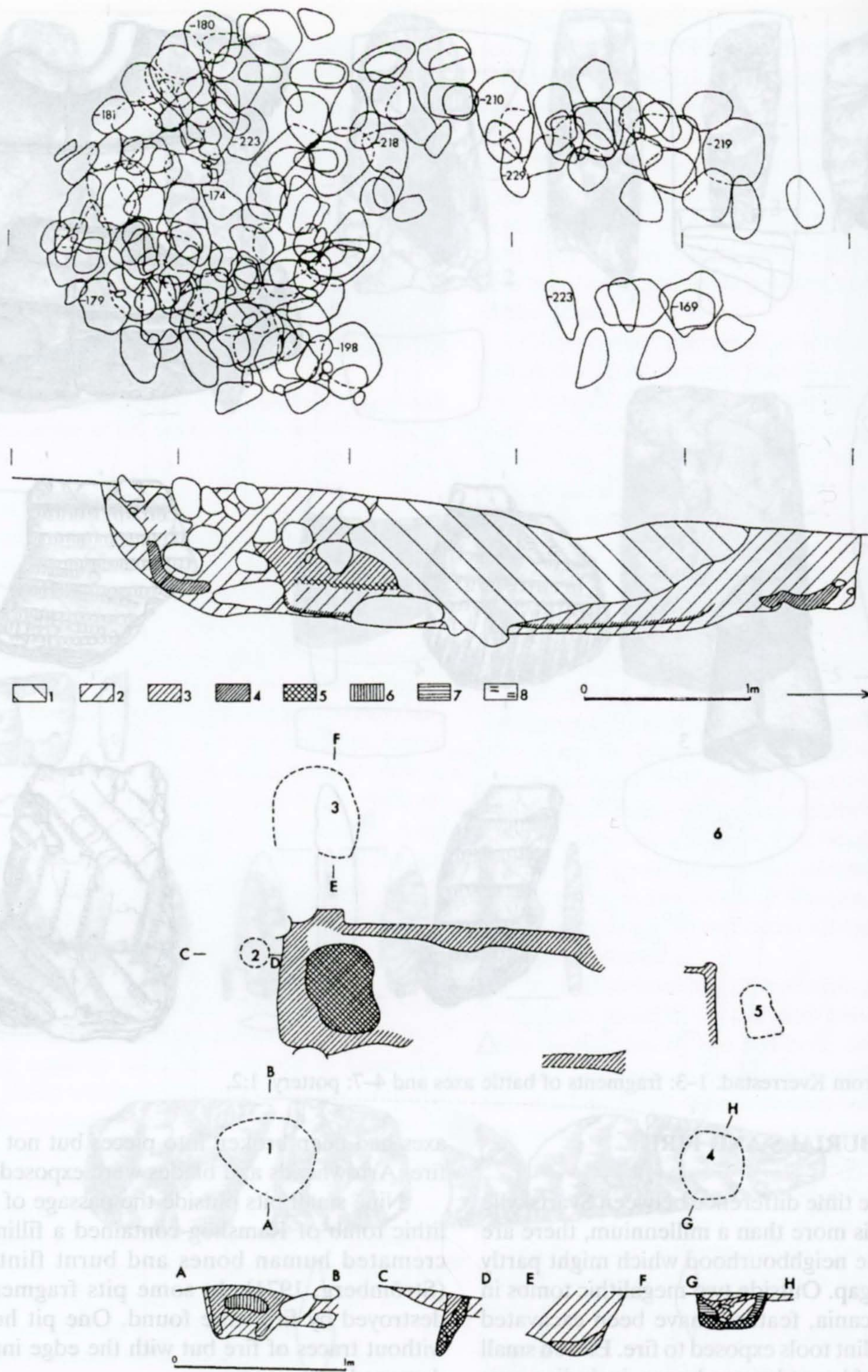


Fig. 8. Top: Plan and profile of the grave at Ullstorp, southern Scania, dated to the late Battle Axe culture. Legend: 1 disturbed layer, 2: light, humus-mixed filling, 3: dark, humus-mixed filling, 4: wood colouring, 5: sand mixed with charcoal and soot, 6: dark brown sand, 7: clay mixed with sand and 8: charcoal. Below: Plan of the lowermost part of the pit with colourings of wood (diagonal hatching) and post-hole colourings (1-6, profiles A-F). The cross-hatching denotes a concentration of soot and charcoal.



Kverrestad were based on a tradition that belongs to the late Funnel Beaker culture. Similar finds are lacking from the earlier use of megalithic tombs.

Destruction of tools by fire is relatively frequent at sites throughout the Neolithic (Karsten, 1994). The destruction of flint artefacts by fire seems to be less common in burial contexts dated to the Early and Middle Neolithic. However, during a late part of the Funnel Beaker culture axes destroyed by fire are found outside the entrances to megalithic tombs.

Destruction by fire is not common in the context of burials from the Battle Axe culture (Hansen, 1917; Christiansson, 1953; Malmer, 1962; Särilvik & Jonsäter, 1974). However, recent excavations have shown that cremation as well as other uses of fire in the mortuary practices are more common than previously thought. At Ullstorp, not more than 5 km to the west of Kverrestad, a grave has been excavated with features related to burning. The grave includes a pit 2.4 m long containing two burials (Fig. 8). Six post-holes were identified around the pit, which proves that a wooden construction was erected above the grave pit and the wooden coffin in which the interred was placed. The post-holes were the foundation of a rectangular tent-shaped structure. Rites connected with the burial ritual included the deposition or scattering of pottery in the building. Thereafter it was burnt down and a stone frame constructed around the graves, with a layer of stone placed on the coffin. The pit was then refilled. Neither skeletons, parts of skeletons nor grave goods were exposed to heat because of firing. The grave was dated to  $3850 \pm 90$  BP (Lu-2554).

At the cemetery of Löderup, south-eastern Scania, a concentration of soot was found in the grave pit but outside the area marked by the colouring of a coffin dated to the Battle Axe culture (Strömberg, 1975, 26). Burnt bones were also found in this soot concentration.

In the same cemetery a concentration of soot was found in a large grave pit of which the coffin occupied a small part. The sand below was coloured red by heat, which is evidence of a fire burning in the pit (Strömberg, 1975, 41 f.). Charcoal from the fireplace was dated to  $3860 \pm 60$  BP (Lu-658).

At Turinge in eastern central Sweden a mortuary structure was excavated (Bratt *et al.* 1994; Lindström, 1995). Four posts and a shallow trench between the posts delimited an area of 4.6 x 2.8 m. In the trench small pits contained cremated human bones, pottery and flint axes. The artefact had not been exposed to fire. The bones belong to young as well as old individuals. Most bones had been cracked to pieces. However, the buried people must have been cremated elsewhere. Of special interest is that none of the grave

goods were exposed to fire. However, a pit nearby contained pieces of burnt flint.

A similar structure with a trench delimiting an area measuring 3.8 x 2.6 m was excavated at Bollbacken in eastern central Sweden (Artursson, 1998) (Fig. 1). The trench was the foundation for a kind of mortuary structure at a settlement dating to the late phase of Pitted Ware culture. In the trench as well as in two large post-holes inside the structure, cremated human bones as well as dog bones were found. Close to the mortuary structure a pit containing cremated human bones was found.

Despite the presence of cremated human bones in Kverrestad, the deposition cannot be regarded as a true grave deposition. No other grave-good depositions show any similarities to the number of tools and vessels found. Another indication is the absence of unpolished axes in graves, while several axes deposited in Kverrestad were unpolished, just like axes in other kinds of offerings such as the large number in wetlands.

Cremated human bones do appear in many other circumstances. One example is the observations made during the excavation of the initial causewayed enclosure at Sarup on south-western Funen, Denmark. Burnt human bones were found close to the palisade of the first enclosure at the same site (Andersen, 1997, 62). Cremated human bones were also found in two post-holes of a small structure made of altogether four posts in connection with the second stage of the causewayed enclosure (Andersen, 1997, Fig. 117).

In cases like Sarup and Kverrestad, parts of humans seem to have been an active component of the ritual use of fire as well as the deposition. Parts of the same human body might have been deposited during different activities and at different sites related to the society. Through deposition and different media such as soil, water and fire, the human body was transferred to the supernatural world. In such a way the deposition of some people might have enclosed the entire space in which they played an active part during their lifetime.

## RITUAL BURNING IN DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Ritually significant burning is evident in connection with settlement sites from the Battle Axe culture as well (Larsson, 1992). At the excavation of a settlement from the late part of the Battle Axe culture at Kabusa, 14 km to the south-west of Kverrestad and situated rather close to the shore of the Baltic Sea (Fig. 1), remains of a house as well as pits were found (Larsson, 1992). The sand at one of the pits showed



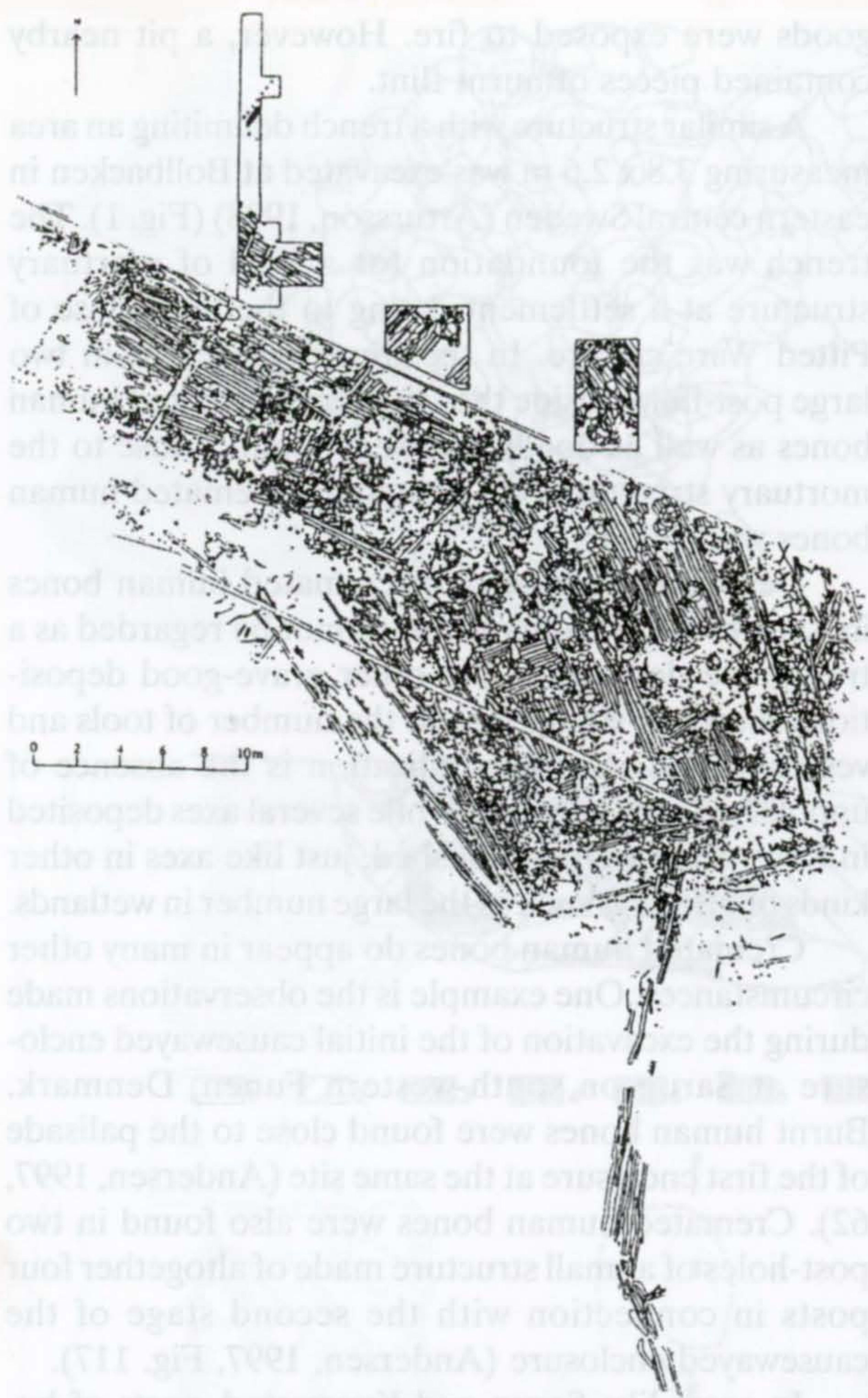


Fig. 9. The wooden platform at Alvastra, central southern Sweden, from the late Middle Neolithic.

traces of intensive fire, as it was been partly coloured red. Its contents were charcoal and burnt hazelnut shells as well as sherds of pottery.

But traces of intentional fire appear in many other cases during the Middle Neolithic. The pile dwelling from the Middle Neolithic at Alvastra, western Östergötland (Fig. 1), includes remains of ritual activities. The site is dated to about 2800 cal. BC. It consists of two square wooden platforms joined at an oblique angle (Browall, 1986). These two square parts are in turn divided into several rectangular "rooms", each with a hearth (Fig. 9). Based on dendrochronological studies, the pile dwelling was not used for more than 42 years, but this included long periods when parts of the platform were unused. Large collections of burnt fruits and seeds have been found beside the hearths, such as crab apple, cereals and hazelnuts. Human and animal bones also occur. The structure has primarily

been viewed as an assembly place where each family had its own rectangular cell. Such a clear division may have been needed if two social groups, for example, two kin groups, used the same structure for activities of a sacral character. The site includes artefacts characteristic of the Pitted Ware culture as well as the Funnel Beaker culture (Browall, 1991).

Fire in ritual acts connected with settlements is by no means restricted to the Middle Neolithic. Intentional burning is thought to be the most plausible interpretation for the remains of a house at Skumparberget from south-eastern central Sweden, dated to the Early Neolithic (Apel *et al.*, 1997) (Fig. 1). When houses were destroyed, culture was in a way transformed back into the nature from which the building material originated.

At several Neolithic sites in south-east Europe houses, destruction by fire can be found (Stevanovic, 1997). These houses have previously been interpreted as destroyed by accidental fire. The number of houses in question and the way they have burnt down might give these finds another meaning. The fire was intentional and a formal way to end the use of a house to show the social and material continuity of Neolithic society.

Accidental fires of houses cannot be ruled out. However, traces of temperatures higher than reached in accidental fires have been observed. The contents and the arrangement of tools within the houses signify deliberate depositions which were included when the houses were killed by fire (Chapman, 1999). In some cases skeletons were included in these houses. It might be justifiable to regard the burnt houses as "mortuary sets", even if there is no body in the house (Chapman, 1999, 121).

The habit of intentionally destroying structures and clay artefacts by fire can be found as early as the Upper Palaeolithic. In Dolni Vestonice in the Czech Republic, clay figures cracked in pieces when exposed to fire (Soffer *et al.*, 1993). These may have exploded when heated. The number of fragmented clay figures is a strong indication of intentional destruction. The same procedures took place in the Funnel Beaker culture and Pitted Ware culture of Sweden (Janzon, 1983, 10) as most zoomorphic figures are in fragments. This is also the case for anthropomorphic figurines in the Finnish Neolithic (Kivikoski, 1964, 65).

Alteration of flint by fire is practised in other circumstances. Large quantities of unworked flint are often found in connection with megalithic tombs. Burnt flint is found mixed with clay which covers the orthostats and sometimes the entire chamber. In these cases the flint has been interpreted as constituting a



material with a special quality, namely, the ability to absorb moisture in order to keep the chamber dry (Strömberg, 1971). Another purpose relates to the aesthetic quality of burnt flint — the white colour. A thick layer of burnt flint covered the surface along the southern side of a passage grave, Kong Svends H, j, on the Danish island of Lolland (Fig. 1). Based on the amount of finds from some test pits, between 4 and 5 tons of burnt flint were used (Dehn *et al.*, 1995).

## AXES AND FIRE

That axes represent the majority of finds at Kverrestad as well as Svartskylle is by no means remarkable. Axes seem to be the most used component in many activities of ritual relations during the Neolithic. In the large number of votive depositions in wetland of southern Scandinavia, axes make up the majority of finds (Karsten, 1994; Nielsen, 1985). Burnt axes rarely appear in wetland depositions. An excavation of a small bog near Hindby in south-western Scania (Fig. 1) yielded remains of votive practice running through the Late Mesolithic, most of the Neolithic and into the Bronze Age (Svensson 1993). There are examples of axes deposited in pairs, a very common form of wetland depositions, but it is more common to find combinations of tools, sometimes broken up before deposition, as well as bones of animals or humans such as a deposition of a burnt fragment of an axe, two human bones and three pig eye-teeth.

As already mentioned, single axes or small numbers of burnt axes have been found associated with megalithic tombs.

In some settlement sites axes have the highest percentage of traces of fire while other tool types show less fire damage (Karsten, 1994, 157 ff.).

During the late part of the Middle Neolithic, finds from the Pitted Ware culture contemporaneous with the Battle Age culture provide examples of destruction involving axes. Of the axe fragments from the late Pitted Ware culture site at Jonstorp RÄ in north-western Scania (Fig. 1), about two-thirds had been exposed to fire (Malmer, 1969, 14). Of the axe fragments from the excavation, 6% have no polish. But in the surface collection from the same site 21% of the axe fragments are not polished. The interpretation is that offerings of unpolished axes in which fire was involved were performed in the neighbourhood of the settlement, and later spread by ploughing.

The Alvastra pile dwelling mentioned above contains the largest number of double-edged stone axes from any site in Sweden. Of forty axes just one is

finished while the others are preforms or fragments. Most have a weathered surface and fragments of a longitudinal break are present. Of the entire flint axes or large pieces of axes, most examples show effects of fire alterations (Browall, 1991). The shape of some fragments of double-edged stone axes might be caused by intentional contact with fire followed by fragmentation. As shown in Kverrestad stone artefacts exposed to fire have been cracked longitudinally and are more fragile to weathering.

In the Funnel Beaker culture cremated human bones as well as axes exposed to fire appear in several different contexts such as settlement sites, graves, causewayed enclosures and wetland offerings. Bones and axes might have acted within a common cosmology but used as agents in different rituals.

## FIRE – DESTROYER AND CREATOR

There is a very marked difference in the attitude towards burning compared with offering in wetlands which was very frequent in southern Scandinavia (Karsten, 1994). In wetlands the deposition of artefacts does not change their function. In the former, the destruction of the artefact is easily visible at the point when the practical function of the tool ceases to exist. Fire is the destroyer. Destruction by fire had a direct visual as well as an auditory impact. Flint explodes with a distinct sound. The artefact undergoes remarkable and rapid changes during the act. A colour transformation takes place from natural black or grey to white. Some changes are similar to the cremation of a human body when the colour of the bones changes to white. Ritual burning has a public, direct, evocative and even more magical appearance.

Fire as a medium for transformations connected to *rites de passage* has mainly been applied to the mortuary practice but has also been used in many other circumstances (van Gennep, 1909; Douglas, 1966; Block, 1971; Perlès, 1977; Huntington & Metcalf, 1979). Fire was the destroyer but at the same time the creator.

Fire as a reproductive medium has recognised at least from the Early Mesolithic. During that period, burning of the zone of reeds surrounding lakes was carried out on a regular basis (Mellars & Dark, 1998). During the Late Mesolithic in Great Britain there are strong indications of burning the primal forest in order to increase the grazing and browsing and thereby the number of prey (Simons, 1996). This method of improvement was known long before swidden was practised in connection with agriculture.



The deposition of artefacts recorded at Kverrestad is a ritual practice which seems to be a part of a process with several analogies during the Neolithic. The first ones are probably the destruction by fire of the palisade of posts in front of the grave which was then covered with soil – the first stage in the construction of earthen long barrows during the earliest part of the Neolithic (Larsson 2000). There are examples of firing around some of the earliest stone chambers in long dolmens which were totally covered by earth (Ebbesen 1990, 58). There are several examples in megalithic tombs where layers of

stones covers the deposition of intentionally cracked pottery and other representatives of the material culture some of which combined with fire. After the transitional stage when the artefacts were transferred from this to a supernatural world, they might have been regarded as dangerous or even evil to the existing society. The simplest way to get rid of this material was to cover it in order to prevent contact with members of the society. This practice is not much different from the mortuary practice related to dead members of the society. So in a way the artefacts at Kverrestad were actually buried.

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## UGNIES VAIDMUO RITUALINĖSE NEOLITO APEIGOSE

Lars Larsson

### Santrauka

Tyrinėjant dvi neolito gyvenvietes Skanios pietvakarinėje dalyje, Pietų Švedijoje, aptikta ugnies apnaikintų akmeninių ir titnaginių dirbinių. Ankstyvojo-vidurinio neolito Piltuvėlinių taurių kultūros gyvenvietėje Svartskylle, datuojamoje apie 3500 m. pr. Kr., buvo surasta keletas titnaginių kirvių, pabuvojusių ugnyje. Apdegę titnaginiai radiniai buvo pasklidę ant kalvos, dominuojančios apylinkėje.

1998 ir 1999 m. 17 km į rytus nuo Svartskylle gyvenvietės buvo tyrinėtas kitas paminklas su apdegusiais titnaginiais dirbiniais. Kverrestad gyvenvietėje buvo aptikta per 100 titnaginių kirvių ir skobtų bei daugybė

strėlių antgalių, gremžtukų, skelčių, pabuvojusių ugnyje. Surasta taip pat ugnies apnaikintų akmeninių darbo bei kovos kirvių. Kasinėjimų metu gyvenvietėje buvo aptiktos įvairių matmenų duobės, kuriose kartu su apdegusiais dirbiniais surasta keramikos fragmentų ir suskaldytų žmonių kaulų. Gyvenvietė datuota 2300 m. pr. Kr. ir priklauso Kovos kirvių kultūrai. Tarp sudegintų dirbinių tipų šiose ir kitose neolito gyvenvietėse vyrauja titnaginiai ir akmeniniai kirviai – svarbūs to meto žmonių įrankiai bei ginklai. Titnaginių ir akmeninių dirbinių deginimas buvo neatsitiktinis reiškinys, turėjęs aiškią magišką prasmę ir susijęs su žmonių kremacijos papročiu.



1 pav. Pietų Skandinavija (viršuje) ir Skanija – didesnė pietų Švedijos dalis (apačioje) – su tekste minimais archeologiniais paminklais.

2 pav. Viršuje: Svartskylle (pietryčių Skanija) apylinkių topografija. Užrašai: 1: 45–49 m a.s.l., 2 – 49–54 m a.s.l., 3 – 55–59 m a.s.l., 4 – 60–64 m a.s.l., 5 – 65–69 m a.s.l., 6 – 70–74 m a.s.l., 7 – 75–79 m a.s.l. ir 8 – drėgna žemė. Atribotas plotas centre yra paplatintas į apačią, įterpus keturis plotus su ugnies sunaikinto titnago koncentracijomis.

3 pav. Ugnies apgadinti dirbiniai iš Svartskylle. Plono galo titnaginių kirvukų fragmentai (1, 3–6), plono ašmens kirvukų fragmentas (2) ir gremžtuko fragmentas (7). 1:2.

4 pav. Archeologinio paminklo Kverestad išsidėstymas mažoje lygumoje paveikslo viduryje pietinėje upės slėnio dalyje.

5 pav. Radinių ir kultūrinės veiklos pėdsakų pasiskirstymas Kverestade. Užrašai: 1. Duobės su radiniais, 2 – duobės su molio užpildu, 3 – plotas su plona išarta zona,

4 – kasamo lauko takas, 5 – lauko riba, 6 – paviršiaus radiniai.

6 pav. Dirbiniai iš Kverestado. 1–2: storo galo titnaginių kirvukų fragmentai, 3: kalto fragmentas, 4: plono galo titnaginio kirvuko fragmentas, 5: storo galo akmeninio kirvuko fragmentas, 6: skeltės fragmentas, 7–8: ieties formos strėlių antgaliai, 9: įkotiniai strėlių antgaliai ir 10: pirmykščio durklo fragmentai. 1:2.

7 pav. Dirbiniai iš Kverestado. 1–3: kovinių kirvukų fragmentai ir 4–7: keraminiai indai. 1:2.

8 pav. Viršuje: Kapo Ulstorpe, Pietų Skanija, datuojamo vėlyvąja virvelinės keramikos kultūra, planas ir profilis. Legenda: 1: išardytas sluoksnis, 2: šviesus, sumaišytas su juodžemiu užpildas, 3: tamsus, sumaišytas su juodžemiu užpildas, 4: medienos spalvinimas, 5: smėlis, sumaišytas su medžio anglimi ir suodžiais, 6: tamsus rudas smėlis, 7: molis, sumaišytas su smėliu, ir 8: medžio anglis.

9 pav. Vidurinio neolito pabaigos medinė platforma iš Alvastros, centrinė pietų Švedijos dalis.

## РОЛЬ ОГНЯ В НЕОЛИТИЧЕСКИХ РИТУАЛЬНЫХ ОБРЯДАХ

Ларс Ларссон

### Резюме

При исследовании двух неолитических поселений в юговосточной части Скании (Южная Швеция) обнаружены кремневые и каменные орудия со следами воздействия огня. В поселении раннего–среднего неолита Свартскилле, датированном 3500 л. д. р. Х., было найдено несколько кремневых топоров, побывавших в огне. Кремневые находки были обнаружены на холме, возвышавшемся над окрестностями.

1998 и 1999 гг. в 17 км к востоку от поселения Свартскилле был исследован памятник Кверрестад, в котором обнаружено свыше 100 кремневых топоров и тесел, а также большое количество наконеч-

ников стрел, скребков, пластин, побывавших в огне. Во время раскопок поселения были обнаружены ямы различных размеров, в которых находились фрагменты керамики и раздробленные человеческие кости. Поселение датируется 2300 л. д. р. Х. и относится к культуре боевых топоров. Среди сожженных изделий самое большое число составляют кремневые и каменные топоры – важнейшие орудия труда и оружие людей того времени. Сжигание кремневых и каменных орудий было не случайным явлением, имеющим явный магический смысл и связанным с обычаем кремации.

### СПИСОК ИЛЛЮСТРАЦИЙ

Рис. 1. Южная Скандинавия (вверху) и Скания – большая часть южной Швеции (внизу) – с упомянутыми в тексте архитектурными памятниками.

Рис. 2. Вверху: Топография окрестностей Свартскилле (юго-восточная Скания). Надписи: 1: 45–49 m a.s.l., 2 – 49–54 m a.s.l., 3 – 55–59 m a.s.l., 4 – 60–64 m a.s.l., 5 – 65–69 m a.s.l., 6 – 70–74 m a.s.l., 7 – 75–79 m a.s.l. и 8 – сырая земля. Ограниченная площадь в центре внизу расширена четырьмя вставками с концентрациями кремня, уничтоженного огнём.

Рис. 3. Изделия из Свартскилле, пострадавшие от огня. Фрагменты кремневых топоров с тонким концом, 3–6), фрагмент топорика с тонким лезвием (2) и фрагмент скребка (7). 1:2.

Рис. 4. Расположение археологического памятника Кверрестад на маленьком плато в центре картины в южной части долины реки.

Рис. 5. Распределение находок и следов культурной деятельности в Кверрестаде. Надписи: 1. Ямы с находками, 2 – ямы с наполнителем из глины, 3 –



площадь с не глубоко вспаханной зоной, 4 – тропа на поле раскопок, 5 – граница поля, 6 – находки на поверхности.

Рис. 6. Изделия из Кверрестада. 1–2: фрагменты кремнёвых топориков с толстым концом, 3: фрагмент долота, 4: фрагмент кремнёвого топорика с тонким концом, 5: фрагмент каменного топорика с толстым концом, 6: фрагмент лезвия, 7–8 – копьеобразные наконечники стрел, 9: наконечники стрел с ручками и 10: фрагменты первобытного кинжала. 1:2.

Рис. 7. Изделия из Кверрестада. 1–3: фрагменты боевых топоров и 4–7: керамическая посуда: 2.

Рис. 8. Вверху: План и профиль погребения в Уллсторпе, южная Скандинавия, датируемого концом культуры шнуровой керамики. Легенда: 1: разобраный слой, 2: светлый, смешанный с чернозёмом наполнитель, 3: тёмный, смешанный с чернозёмом наполнитель, 4: окраска древесины, 5: песок, смешанный с древесным углём и сажой, 6: тёмно-коричневый песок, 7: глина, смешанная с песком, и 8: древесный уголь.

Рис. 9. Деревянная платформа конца среднего неолита из Алвастры в центральной части южной Швеции.

## INTRODUCTION

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In this paper I will present new interpretations of the rock art from the Vingen area which is Norway's most extensive rock art location. The area is almost exclusively known for its carvings (e.g. Hallström 1938: 115ff; Foss 1941; Bakka 1951; 1979: 115ff; Mørch 1989; Mørch 1993: 211ff). In this paper, excavated finds and geo-archaeological data will also be discussed in order to provide information on how the area was used and what activities were performed. This is called 'contextualisation' of the rock art. The purpose of this paper is to interpret the production of rock art as a social practice. What kind of social practice was rock art production associated with? In addition the excavated finds and the radiocarbon datings give important information for the further approach towards dating of the rock art. It will be argued that the rock art was produced during the Late Mesolithic, chronologically parallel to the time span between 7500 and 5200 cal BP (present, uncalibrated). It will further be argued that the Vingen area played an important role among early Norwegian hunter-gatherers during periods of changing ideology during this period. The investigations in Vingen are still being carried out, the results presented in this paper are therefore of a preliminary character.

## THE AREA OF INVESTIGATION

The Vingen (Fig. 1) is located in the municipality of Nordfjord in the north western part of the County of Sogn og Fjordane, in a narrow steep sided fjord, surrounded by mountains (Fig. 2). The area is covered by moraine and numerous fans of debris, but the rock is regularly exposed by the many smooth rock boulders. Some more level areas exist, covered with thin layers of vegetated soil. Large boulders and small piles of stones are scattered all over the area. The area is



Fig. 1. Plan and profile of the burial site in Ullstorp, southern Scandinavia, dated to the end of the Corded Ware culture (Mørch 1993: 211ff).



Fig. 2. Illustration covering the western part of the Nordfjord area with the location of the Vingen and the Skarvstranda area. (Illustration by Knut Andreas Bergvik).

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