



Boundaries of Mind and Nature – Human responses to changing landscapes over 2000 year during the Neolithic in Uppland, Sweden.

Kim von Hackwitz and Daniel Löwenborg

Uppsala University, Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala, Sweden (kim.vonhackwitz@arkeologi.uu.se)

In the near future we are facing a global environmental situation where hydrological changes undoubtedly will take place. These changes will have an impact on the landscapes and affect socio-environmental systems. An understanding of the effects of the long-term interplay between society, hydrology and landscape must become one of the main platforms on which societies prospects for the next century will be based. In this paper I will present new information derived from a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to put forward the experience of the landscape and different boundaries; topographical, ideological and historical by using methods such as water catchment areas and regression equations. This is combined with the archaeological record and theories on experience derived from the concept of Historical Ecology. The main aim is to identify Neolithic territories from a long term perspective. The question to be discussed is: How did people experience and respond to different boundaries in a changing coastal landscape?

Emphasis is given to the hydrological patterns and the role of water for the construction of geographically defined, social and sustainable landscapes. Just as human-environment interactions are crucial in creating landscapes, environmental changes are likely to have strong impacts on social constructions. Environmental changes cause diverse social effects and social relations are essential for understanding the responses to such changes as well as for understanding patterns of land use and the social and political construction of the landscape. An important aspect of reconstructing land use is therefore to analyse the cultural, social, and economic factors that drive land use decisions in relation to the initial conditions and emergent properties of the landscape. The Uppland area has undergone dramatic changes since the inland ice retreated around 10,000 BC. This process offered new land for occupation and at the same time changed waterways and access to places influencing the choice of locations and the outline of regions. The results point to historical maintenances of ancient territories that both ignore and follow natural topographies in a rapidly changing landscape.

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