The Bronze Age Smith as Individual
by Heide W. Nørgaard

The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement no. 212402

A working sequence is the thought process which accompanies the crafting of a piece. Knowledge about the specific order of steps is fundamental to the successful completion of the object. This knowledge is developed through experience and is in many cases learned and adopted.

Actions of the right hand:

The semi-circular imprints are added in the wax model of the collar from Lüb, Kr. Parchim. Due to the fact that the right side is punched deeper into the wax, one could conclude that the craftsman used his left hand to hold the tool and his right hand to place the punch.

Actions of the left hand:

The bulges on the disc-pin show distinct, repeated punches and the resulting destructions in hitting direction. The orientation of the crack in the bulge suggests that the direction of the punch came from the right side – ergo, the tool was handled with the left hand.

Intuitive and unconscious actions:

Unexpected situations are common to the crafting processes and require intuitive action. The result of such actions in the material culture can be traced in unique patterns like the waves at the collar from Lubmin (A). This intuitive behaviour can also lead to the development of new styles.

Learned and adopted actions:

The technical way of constructing specific ornamental details like spirals is a learned behaviour. The modern example of master and apprentice cannot be calibrated directly to prehistory. However, it shows one possible way in which acquired knowledge is shared. Commonly the learned working sequences were adopted and were subsequently developed and improved.

Similar recurrent patterns cannot be explained as simple, adopted actions. They should be seen rather as internalized behaviour dictated by society and mindset. More than 90% of the spirals from period II and III turn counter-clockwise. They are connected with various lines most commonly from the left bottom side to the right top side.

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