TRADITION, INNOVATION AND NETWORKS - METAL WORKING AROUND THE BALTIC SEA FROM THE BRONZE AGE TO THE MIDDLE AGES

Abstract nr. TH4-10

From the rock carvings depicting ships in the Scandinavian Bronze Age to the age of the Hanseatic League and its mighty cargo ships, the Baltic Sea has always played an important role as a travel zone, facilitating interregional contacts and dissemination of cultural and technological knowledge. The study of metallurgical practices is indicative of the spread of innovation and the movement of craftsmen, and therefore not only shows the movement of goods but also the transfer of new ideas and the dissemination of people. Prehistoric and medieval production of metals in the Baltic Sea region demonstrates both shared practices and discrete traditions, making it central for our understanding of cultural relations and networks within this area.

This session aims to bring together archaeologists and archaeometallurgists exploring the traditions, continuity, and developments of metal crafts through external influences and innovation from the Bronze Age to the medieval period around the Baltic Sea. The focus will be on the history of technology and traditions of metal production, including aspects of metal working techniques, utilization of tools, and the layout and “chaine opératoire” of workshops. The interdisciplinary nature of the session will encourage discussions between cultural-historical approaches, experimental and archaeometric studies, to enrich our understanding of technological practices and to explore how metals, technologies and traditions were spread and shared within the region.

Presentation Preference - Regular session (half day)