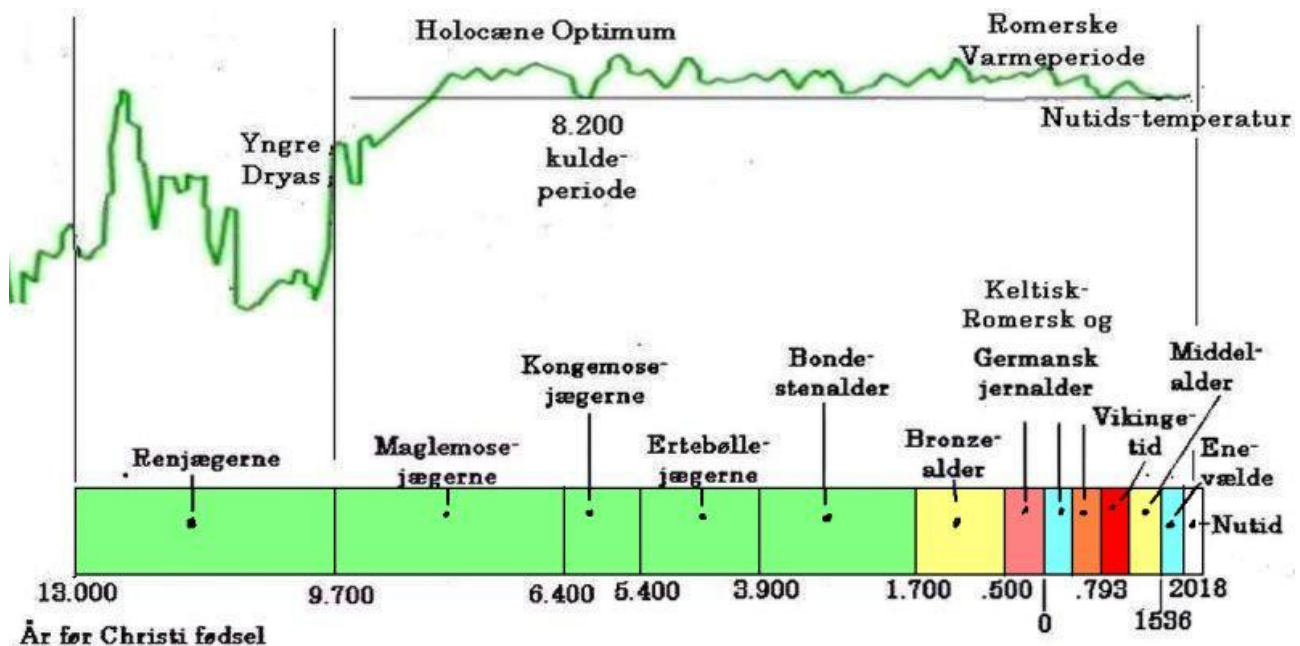


5. Denmark's History

5.0 Maglemose Culture

The Maglemose Culture is named after a series of settlements at Maglemose on Western Sjælland. They were found in 1900 and shortly thereafter excavated by the archaeologist George Sarauw. Since then, many discoveries of this type have been made in Denmark, northern Germany and southern Sweden. Findings, which can be attributed to the Maglemose hunters, have been dated to 8,900-6,400 B.C. (that is 10,800-8,400 before present).



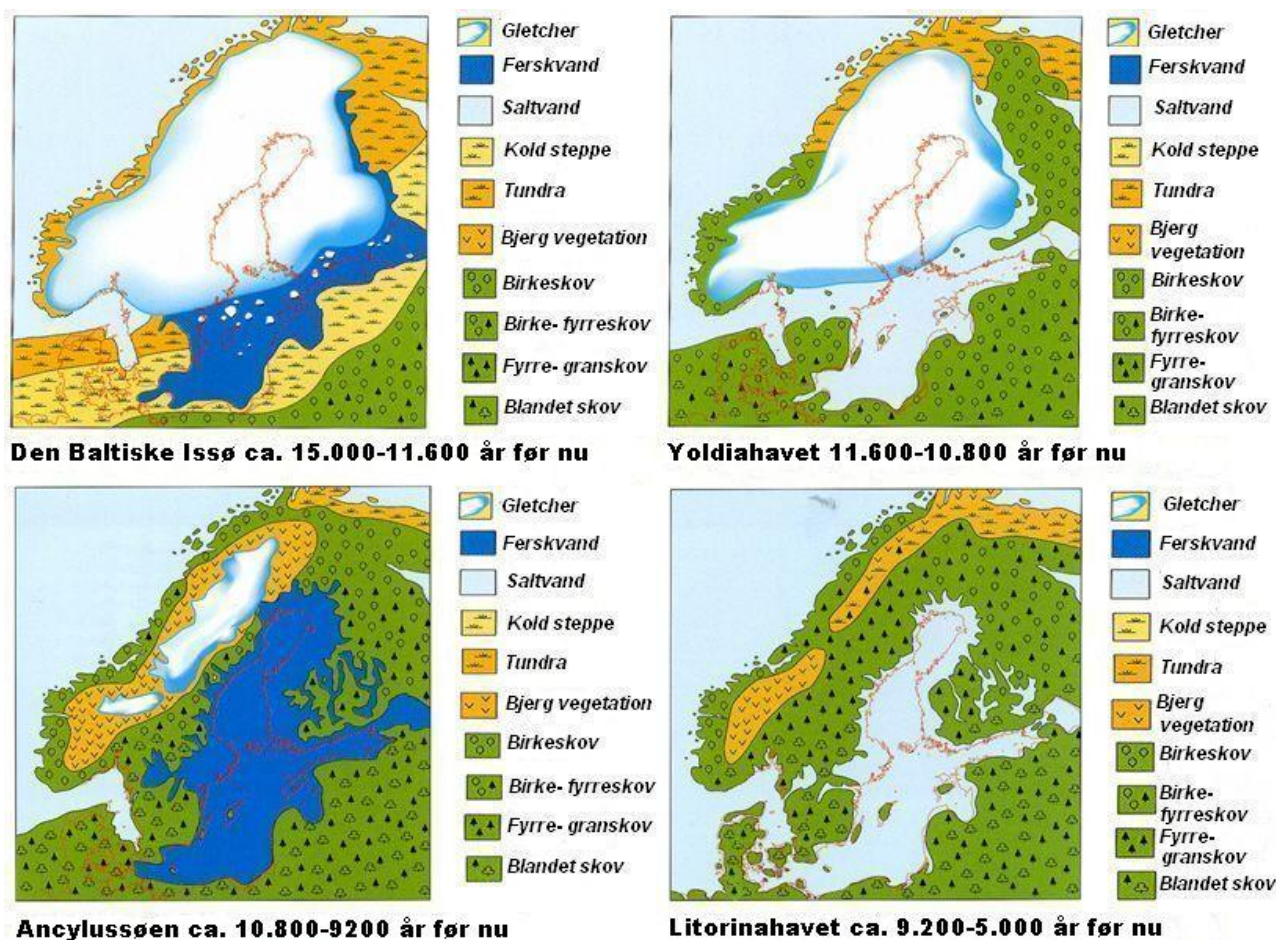
About 13,000 years before birth of Christ the ice sheet, that covered almost all of Scandinavia, slowly began to melt away. The reindeer walked against north followed by the reindeer hunters. It is decided that the Ice Age in Denmark finally ended about 9,700 years ago. The green line represents the temperature on the surface of the ice. Dryas is the Latin name for the Arctic plant mountain avens, which is very hardy and the first to grow up after the ice has melted.

The temperature rose, and Denmark became completely covered by forest in which the Maglemose people hunted and fished. In 60% of Denmark's history, the main occupations have been hunting and fishing. In 75% of the time has been a kind of Stone Age. About 500 BC the Bronze Age was replaced by the Iron Age's three periods. The Viking Age began with the attack on the monastery St. Cuthbert on the island of Lindisfarne in England in 793 AD and ended with the killing of Canute the Holy in 1086 AD in Odense. The Middle Ages ended in 1536 with the Civil War, the Count Feud, and the Lutheran Reformation.

The Maglemose period is characterized by major climatic changes; during the period the landscape changed from open sub-arctic birch forest to close, almost subtropical deciduous forest.

The Maglemose tribes were advanced hunters, who had thousands of generations of experience in hunting and fishing methods and animal behavior.

The settlements, which have been found, usually seem to be only temporary settlements, perhaps used during hunting trips in the summer. It is believed that their permanent settlements were located on the erstwhile coastline, which today is often located under deep water.



When the kilometers-thick Scandinavian ice sheet began to melt the freshwater lake, the Baltic Ice Lake, was formed. It was a cold sea with drifting icebergs. The lake's surface level was higher than the World Sea. Some believe that the ice lake emptied as a major flood disaster around the year 9,600 BC, but most believe that it happened gradually.

The landscape of that time Denmark was dominated by icy steppes and regular tundra roamed by a small number of reindeer hunters.

After it had got connection with the World Sea it became a brackish sea, as it is nowadays, called the Yoldia sea. This sea is named after the mussel Yoldia Arctica. The Yoldia sea was linked to World Sea through a strait that was located where the Swedish lakes and the Gøta River runs today.

The Maglemose hunters could benefit from an increasingly warmer climate. At beginning of their period, the tundra became overgrown by an open and light birch forest mixed with aspen, willow, mountain ash and pine.

As Scandinavia was freed from the weight of the huge masses of ice, the land lifted, and the uplift cut off the forthcoming Baltic Sea's connection with The World Sea, and once again it became a freshwater lake called the Ancylus Lake, named after the freshwater snail, Ancylus fluviatilis. Ancylus Lake had perhaps drain through middle Sweeden at the Great Lakes.

As the ever-milder climate, where summer average temperature rose to 18-20 degrees and winter temperature barely fall below freezing, also the composition of the forest trees changed; pine pushed back birch and hazel; elm, oak, ash, alder, fir and linden immigrated.

At the end of The Maglemose hunters' period, around 7,200 BC, the climate in Denmark had been changed to the so-called Atlantic climate. It was a mild and humid maritime climate with summer temperatures 2-3 degrees higher than today. The sea surface level in The World Seas rose, which caused the salty seawater after some time again to enter the Ancylus Lake, and the waters again became salty. The new sea is called Littorina after the seawater snail Littorina Littorea. It lasted several hundred years before the salt content reached its maximum.

Plants like mistletoe and the subtropical water chestnut and animals like Dalmatian pelican and pond turtle became widespread in Denmark. Lind, elm, fir and oak became the most common trees in the dense forests, which slowly closed the interior into an impenetrable primeval forest.

5.1 Prey and Hunting Techniques

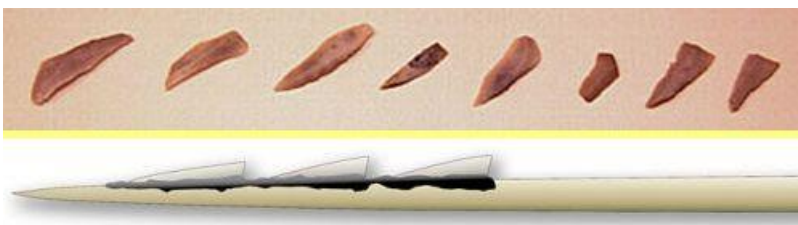


Sub-Arctic birch-pine forest. Wikipedia.

It must have been such that each game type had its season. Early in the winter big game was hunted, which was then easy to track because of the bare trees and thanks to their tracks in the possible snow. It is known that The Maglemose hunters killed aurochs, elk, red deer, roe deer and wild boar.

Winter may also have been the season for the hunting of animals with fur like lynx, fox, ferret, badger, marten and wildcat.

Moreover, it was easy to get hold of some of the many seals in late winter, when they went on land to give birth to their young ones.



These small flint pieces - called "microliths" - is very characteristic for the Maglemose period.

Bottom: Some were used for arrowheads. Below is the microliths applied to the arrow-shaft by means of birch bark resin. Near the tip of the

shaft, a groove was cut for the microliths. Birch bark resin can be extracted by gently heating of birch bark.

Spring may have been a difficult time, but then they could collect eggs and go for bird hunting. The Maglemose hunters were in general very versatile in their choice of prey. The trapped cranes,

lapwings, mergansers, grebes, coots and herons. It has been shown that, when everything else failed, they did not refrain from eating hedgehogs.

Their preferred hunting weapon was bow and arrow.



One of The Maglemose hunters fish hooks, made of antler or bone. Photo Cowans Auction House.

All excavations of settlements from Hunter Stone Age always produce large quantities of fish bones, which shows that fish have played a very big role. They gathered oysters and other seafood, but not nearly to the same extent, as it was done in the later Ertebølle culture.

Autumn is the season for gathering roots, nuts and berries. In many huts, which has been excavated, the floor and the area in front of the hut have been covered with shells of hazelnuts. In some cases, they appear to have been eating acorns from oak trees, which we call pignuts, they are very bitter, so it must have been in case of emergency.



This harpoon of bone from The Maglemose period has been found near Tørning Mølle. It is on display in Gottorp Slot in Slesvig - From: Maglemose

bopladsen omkring Hammerlev.

In 1944 two almost intact bows were found in Holmegaard Mose on Sjælland. They are considered to be among the world's oldest - perhaps the oldest bows. They are estimated to be from about 6,000 - 7,000 BC.



One of the bows found in Holmegaard Mose. The bows can be seen in the National Museum.

They are made of shade grown, that is slowly grown, knot-free elm with a diameter between 6 and 10 cm. The bow makers have avoided using the heartwood. The shortest of bows measures approx. 154 cm. and the longest somewhere between 160 and 170 cm. The long bow may originally have been close to 180 cm. long. Some details indicate that they on the outside have had reinforcement of sinews to give them greater elasticity.



Two Maglemose harpoon heads found in Aamosen on the island of Sjælland.

They have had a very considerable tension; that you see from the animal bones that have been found in the settlements; they often show injuries from arrowheads, which have penetrated deep into the bones.



Fire mikrolitter isat pil fundet i Agerøds Mose and Rønneholms Mose i Skåne.

Øverst: Pilens og mikrolitternes oprindelige position på findestedet.

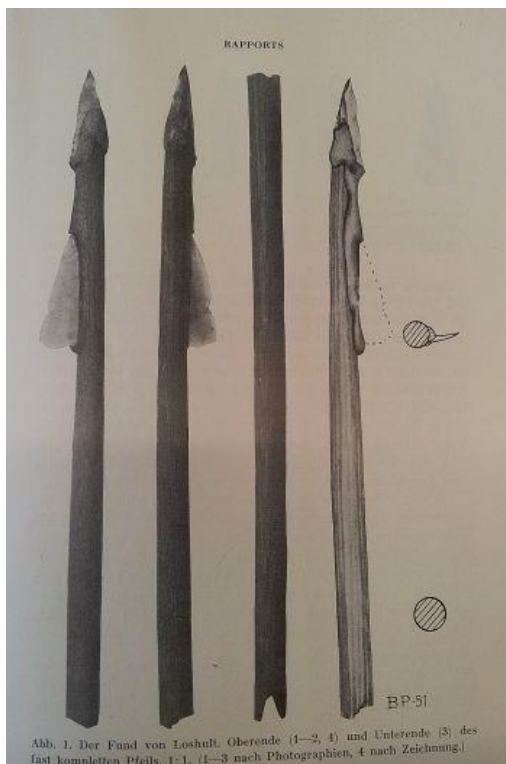
Nederst: Delene sat sammen - En femte mikrolit blev fundet i en position, som indikerede, at det var en af de tilfælde, hvor en mikrolit blev brugt som pilespids.

Pilen er omkring 10 cm. lang og med en diameter på knap 1 cm. Den er fremstillet af en et årig hassel gren. Foto Arne Sjöström.

It is estimated that the bow's draw weight has been about 25 kg.

The bows have handles on the center, and they are made thinner on the outer quarter of each end. They do not seem to have had notches in the tips to tie the string into; maybe they originally have been equipped with glued ends of bovine or bone with notches.

The Maglemose hunters' arrows were made in two parts. That is one part with the arrowhead and about 10 cm. shaft, and the other part was the rest of the arrow shaft, probably with guiding feathers. The advantage was that when an arrow was shot into an animal, the longer part with guiding feathers would fall off and could be collected and reused, in case the animal escaped with the shorter part included the arrowhead. The major work by making an arrow must have been to straighten the arrow shaft and fit the guiding feathers.



Two almost complete arrows from the Maglemose period found in Lilla Loshults Mose in Scania. Number 1-2 and 4 from left show the tip ends, while Number 3 shows a trailing end with a slot for the bowstring. The first three are photographs, and number 4 is a principal drawing.

Very often arrows did not have an actual flint arrowhead, but microliths were attached in a groove at the tip. We can imagine that such an arrow would make a large entry hole so that the animal would bleed to death faster.



Spear with flint-edge - fitted with microliths

In Lilla Loshults Mose in Scania, two intact arrows from Maglemose period were found in 1951. The arrowheads were still attached to the shafts with tar or resin.

Microliths were attached to the tips, and more microliths served as a kind of barbs.

The Maglemose hunters did not hesitate to attack even the largest animals.

The aurochs lived in Europe's forests through thousands of years. It was bigger than our domestic cattle and with longer legs. A full-grown bull was between 165-185 cm tall, while the cows were somewhat smaller - between 140 and 150 cm. The horns were long, thick and forward curved.

In Denmark there are two complete aurochs' skeletons, both found in Odsherred of Sjælland.

The first skeleton, called the Vig-aurochs, was found in 1904 during peat cutting. It is now on display in the National Museum, where it had been dated to be from around 7,500 BC. In its skeleton, two of Maglemose hunters' arrowheads are firmly buried.



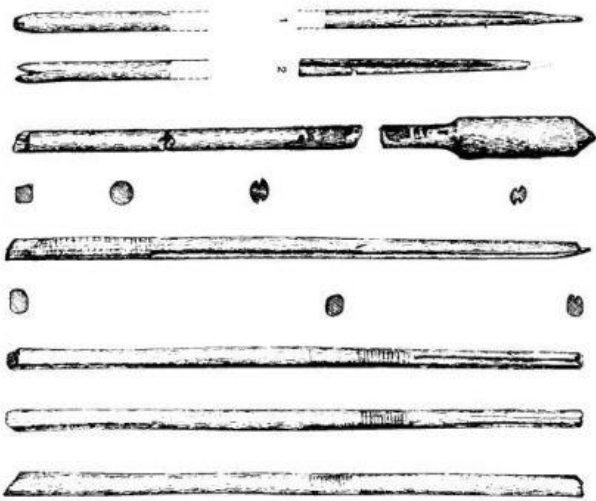
Left: The complete skeleton of The Aurochs from Vig can be seen in the National Museum. Photo Pinterest.

Right: Bull that looks like the extinct Auroch in Lille Vildmose. Wikipedia.

The moose from Tåderup on the island of Falster. Private foto.

Around one arrowhead the bone has grown, so that did not cause the death of the ox, it must have lived for several years after the hunters' first attack. But the second arrow must have hit it shortly before its death. Some round holes in its shoulder blades have been interpreted as traces of a spears that have pierced the aurochs.

The hunters emerged from their hiding and shot several arrows into the side of the ox with their powerful bows; it escaped, they followed it and attacked with spears, it fled again, and perhaps it ran out on the ice of a small lake - and fall through.



Maglemose arrows. Note that the two in the top and the three in the bottom are composed of two parts: a part with the actual tip and microliths glued in grooves near the tip and another part that is the shaft. The third from the top is designed for small fur animals and possibly birds, then the fur will not be damaged. The fourth is the front piece with a groove for microliths.

And there the skeleton lay buried for thousands of years, until it was discovered in 1904 by smallholder Jens Peter Jensen, as he was cutting peat in a small bog, outside his homestead at Jyderup. He produced most of the skeleton, and also found three small flint arrowheads.



Arrowhead inserted in a red deer skeleton - It gives a good impression of the force with which the old hunters' arrows were shot into the animals. However, to be fair it must be mentioned that this is a transverse-arrowhead, which was shot off from an Ertebølle hunter's bow. - From Maglelyng on Sjælland.

In Prejlerup, a few kilometers from Vig-aurochs finding place, another aurochs skeleton was found in 1983. It was a huge bull with a height of 190 cm, maybe 18-20 years old. It is now on display in Odsherred Museum, and it has been dated to be from about. 6,400 BC Thus, both aurochs belong to the period of the Maglemose culture.

Also, the Prejlerup ox bears traces of the hunters' attack. At least nine arrows made of pine have been buried in its body when it escaped the hunters, two in the right and seven in the left abdomen. The arrows were fitted with flint tips and attached microliths and therefore produced large bleeding wound. With the blood gushing out of wounds the ox fled over a cliff into a small lake. About 25 meters from the shore, it overturned to its left side, died and sank to the bottom.



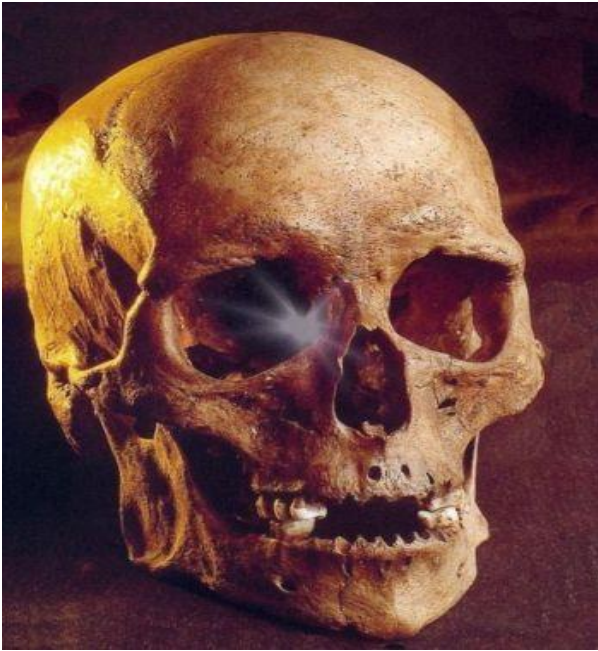
Microlith with remains of birch bark tar found in the Southern Alps.

8,700 years ago, a wounded and exhausted moose sank to the bottom of a lake at Taaderup on the island of Falster. There it lay for thousands of years until it was found by peat cutting in 1922. Among the bones was found an arrowhead of bone, which a stone age hunter must have shot into the animal.

5.2 How did the Maglemose Hunters Look Like?

The earliest human skeleton in Denmark was found by Svend Andersen in 1941 when digging peat in a small bog at Koelbjerg near Vissenbjerg on Funen, not far from the Funen Motorway.

He was a man about 25 years old. He lived 10,000 years ago, that is at the beginning of the Maglemose period. He was approx. 155 cm. tall and had slender and finely shaped limbs, thus somewhat of an exception to other early hunters



Left: The Koelbjerg man's skull is on display in the museum of Odense. [Wikipedia](#)

Right: The Koelbjerg man's skull in profile.

The skeleton shows no trace violence, maybe she had fallen through the ice in the small lake and drowned. The body floated around on the surface for some time, after that it sunk to the bottom.

Since he was found in 1941, he has suffered the misfortune of being categorized as a woman, due to the somewhat flimsy bones. But in 2016, a DNA study showed unequivocally that he is a man. A strontium isotope analysis, also in 2016, also showed that he was most likely local and grew up in the area where he was found.

Not far from Vissenbjerg many traces of Maglemose settlements have been found, perhaps he came from one of them.

The Archaeologists Brøste and Fischer-Møller described her skull a few years after she was found: She had a narrow face, she had a long skull with gently sloping forehead, somewhat prominent brow ridges and nose bridge, slightly protruding jaw with powerful jaws and jaw muscles. Her teeth are very worn. They concluded: *"The result of the study is that the Koelbjerg skeleton represents a*

type closely related to the reindeer hunters from the Madeleine period's Cro-Magnon race, who have left their mark on Denmark's ancient population".

At Holmegaard near Næstved parts of two skeletons have been found in a bog.

In a bog at Bislev near Nibe part of a skull has been found. It is said that also skeletal remains from the Maglemose time have been found in Køge Bugt.

At Hammerlev in Jutland, a proper burial from the Maglemose period has been excavated, but the deceased had been burned.



The skull from Bislev at Nibe - He had pronounced brow ridges and a mark after a powerful blow to the head.

The Maglemose people belonged to Homo sapiens sapiens, as we modern humans do, but they are said to have been barely as tall and more powerfully built with strong bones.

They had long skulls with big eyebrow arches, powerful chewing muscles and protruding jaws with large teeth. This description must, however, largely be based on Maglemose skeletal findings outside present Danish territory; because, as mentioned above, only a few skeletons or skeletal parts have been found in this country.

5.3 Sailing in the Maglemose Period



DDrawing of paddle oar made of hazelwood from the Maglemose period found at Ulkestrup in Aamose on Sjælland - it is about. 120 cm. long. It can be seen in the National Museum. It is too long to paddle in a dugout boat, which suggests that they must have had other and larger boats, perhaps skin boats. Alternatively, they may have paddled standing upright in the boat.

Stammebåde blev udhugget af en hel træstamme med flinteøkser, og de er et godt bevis på stenalder håndværkernes kunnen. De kendes op til 12 m. lange, med en bredde på ca. 60 cm. og med sider, som kun er et par centimeter tykke.

Der er ikke fundet stammebåde fra Maglemosetiden i Danmark, men ved Pesse i Holland, som også tilhørte datidens Maglemose kultur, har man fundet en stammebåd, næsten 3 m. lang og 44 cm. bred. Den er lavet af fyrretræ. Den er blevet dateret til perioden 8.040 - 7.510 f.Kr.

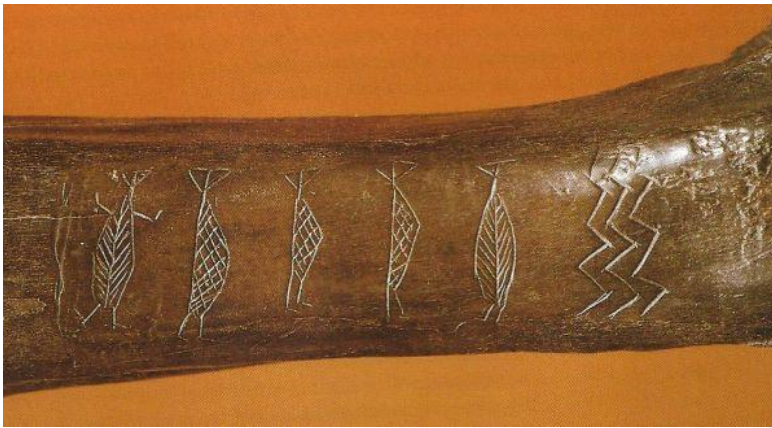


Til venstre: To mænd røgter garn fra en rekonstruktion af en stammebåd. Foto Pinterest.



Til højre: En stammebåd fra Maglemosetiden fra Pesse i Holland - Drenthe Museum, Assen.

5.4 The Culture of the Maglemose Hunters



Aurochs bone with carved human figures from the Maglemose period found at Ryemarksgaard on Sjælland. There are five figures, three viewed in profile and two viewed from the front, besides a kind of symbol, which consists of three parallel zigzag lines, is shown. The bone can be seen in the National Museum. Wikipedia

In a bog near Ryemarksgaard on Sjælland a bone from an aurochs with incised human-like figures was

found. It was not made to be a tool, and it was only carefully polished on that part of the bone on which five figures and three parallel zig-zag lines are scratched. They have triangular heads; legs are just lines and their bodies are shaded. Only one of the persons have arms. Three of the figures are seen from the side, and two are apparently seen from the front. The two figures, which are seen front, have a vertical line through the center of their body, which separates the shadings, as joints in a suit. To the right three parallel zig-zag lines have been scratched with strong lines like it was something important.

Most authors believe that the figures show the Maglemose hunters themselves, taken directly from everyday life; some suggest that the figures depict pregnant women making the bone a kind of fertility amulet.

But social realism belongs to the present. The ancient Greek vases and Roman mosaics were not decorated with motifs taken out of daily life. They were adorned with images of gods, heroes, kings and emperors. Depicting ordinary people's daily lives is a kind of social realism, which we have known only the last hundred years. It is not likely that the Maglemose hunters would depict ordinary tribal members or pregnant women taken out of everyday life.



Left: Antler ax from Maglemose period with carved human figure found in Lille Aamose on Sjælland - We notice his somewhat special "bucks' feet"; His head is not round, it looks more like he has a kind of snout, besides the head is very small and has no details just like the well-known Cro Magnon Venus figurines. Photo Quora.

Mid: Profile of humanoid figure on a small stone from the Madeleine culture. It looks like the Maglemose figure. It appears as a kind of person that has a snout instead of a face, while his snouted face is turned backward. He also has a kind of buck's feet. It is reported to have been found in a Madeleine cave in the south of France. Foto Arretetonchar.fr.

Right: The Lion Man from Hohlenstein-Stadel from 30,000 years ago. It is made of mammoth tooth with flint tools. The figure is almost 30 cm. high. It was originally found in scattered pieces but were gathered by Professor Joachim Hahn in 1969. The Lion Man has rather short legs, as the hunters probably had. Note also the slanted stripes of the lion's upper arm, they resemble the stripes on the man from Lille Aamose and on the figures on the aurochs' bone. Moreover, his feet are a little bucks-like, if not the tips of his feet have been lost during time. Foto Reddit.

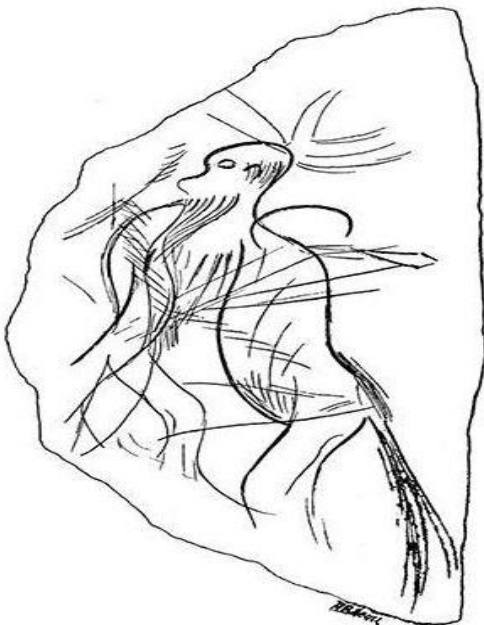
How can one imagine that a hunter people's gods should look like? They must have been half animal-, half human-like; maybe they could transform themselves from animal to human figure and back again.

Their Cro Magnon ancestors depicted such half humanoid- half animal-like creatures in the caves in the south of France, such as the so-called "shaman" in the Trois Freres cave and the image of a half-man half ox in a cave in the Dordogne in France, both with horns. Hunters must often have met mysterious and disturbing animals on their daily hunt in the endless forests.



Left: The "shaman" or "sorcerer" in the Trois Freres cave in France. Drawn by Henry Breuil when he was one of the first since the ice age to enter the cave in Dordogne in France between 1912 and 1914. Many later researchers have assured that the drawing is a good likeness. Many believe that it must represent a shaman, a kind of priest, but when have you seen priests depicted on vases and wall paintings? It is more likely that the painting depicts the god himself. Photo Wikipedia.

Right: Photo of the "sorcerer " from recent times Photo. Don Hitchcock, donsmaps.com



Left: a drawing by Henry Breuil of a subject from the cave of Trois Freres from around 1920, showing a man with a large beard, a long tail and some kind of antlers. Photo Don Hitchcock, donsmap.com

Right: The horned, buck-footed god Pan sneaks up on a sleeping nymph - Roman mosaic. Photo Wikipedia.

Det synes meget rimeligt at et jægerfolks guder er i stand til at optræde i dyreskikkelser eller som halvt dyr halvt menneske.

God-like beings, who are half human and half animal, exist in many cultures. In the later Danish history of the Viking period, there are many examples of gods disguising themselves as animals; especially Odin and Loki often disguised themselves as animals. Freja had a falcon disguise that she could even lend to others. The jotun Tjasse occurred in the guise of an eagle. In Egil's Saga, it is reported that Egil's grandfather, Kveldulf (In old Danish "kveld" means evening, so his name was evening-wolf) had earned his name because he towards the evening "became sleepy and uneasy with people". There were many, who believed, that his soul at night, when sleep came to him, transferred itself into the body of a wolf. In the last stand of Rolf Krake's household troops, the hero Bjarke fought shaped as a bear.

In the Cro Magnon people's caves in the Dordogne is a drawing of a creature - half ox and half human. He brings our thoughts to the Greco Roman god Pan, the horned god, who is hanging around in the forest playing on his flute that sounds like the wind in the trees.



In the last stand of Rolf Krake's household troops, Bjarke fought shaped like a bear. [Louis Moe Wikipedia](#)

The god Pan is hanging around in the forest together with other volatile creatures, including the nymphs. Pan has almost always had a strong erotic importance; He is known in mythology to have seduced several women, both humans and gods.

But when the horned god has had his time on Earth for so many years, ever since the Cro Magnon people lived in the caves of south of France, then one might not be surprised that he has been reduced to a symbol may be the three powerful zigzag lines to the right of the five individuals on the aurochs' bone from Ryemarksgaard.

One can also imagine that the lines symbolize a god of thunder; children always draw lightning as a zigzag line, to see a bolt of lightning struck down is a very dramatic experience - for all times and all places.



Red ochre was used in the Maglemose burial at [Hammerlev Photo Sønderjyllands Museum](#).

At Hammerlev, Sønderjyllands Museum has found a grave from the Maglemose period, which is something quite rare. The

body has been cremated and the ash, skeletal remains and grave goods have been strewn with red burned ochre, bunched together in a skin and dug into the earth. Apart from the human skeleton remains, the grave contained a small but very finely worked flint ax, a bone needle, some flint flakes and some burned bones of a wildcat.

Use of red ochre in funerals has very deep roots in human history. Both Neanderthals and Cro Magnon used to sprinkle red ochre over the body, so it was found in the Neanderthal grave at Shanidar in Iraq and in almost every Cro Magnon burial.



Tooth beads from a tomb at the upper Vannborga on the island of Øland - 9,000 before present. Photo Magnus Reuterdaahl

The Swedish archaeologist Magnus Reuterdaahl from Kalmar Museum found eighteen tooth pearls from various deer species in a tomb at Övra Vannborga on Øland. They were from late Maglemose period, 9,000

years before present. They had most likely been sewn onto the clothes. They are all pierced at the root. One wonders how they did this without vice and drill. Tooth is indeed a very hard material.

Tooth Beads also have a great tradition in early European history. Cro Magnon used them, the reindeer hunters used tooth pearls sewn on the clothes or as a necklace. In the Kongemose burials at Nivaa in northern Sjælland, some of the deceased also received tooth beads as grave goods. In the Ertebølle culture tooth pearls also were used.

It has been suggested that the population density during the early Maglemose period was one person every 20-50 km². That is to say somewhere between 1,600 and 4,000 throughout what is now Denmark, Scania and Slesvig-Holsten.

It is very close to some estimates for the reindeer hunter period. But the temperature was higher in the Maglemose period, so it is reasonable to assume that the biomass, and thus the catch, was also greater. There have been many findings of lusters and fish hooks and big quantities of fish bones have been found in the settlements' waste heaps; so, it is reasonable to assume that the Maglemose hunters ate both meat and fish.

Perhaps one can assume that there has been a population of between 5,000 and 10,000 individuals in the early part of the Maglemose period. Towards the end of the period the temperature rose, and therefore we can believe that the population size also rose and approached the estimate for the Kongemose period of 10,000 to 20,000 individuals

5.5 Literature

[Østersøens Udviklingshistorie Wikipedia](#)

[Maglemosekultur Wikipedia](#)

[Pan \(god\)](#)

Previous section: [4. Denmark's History – 4.0 Reindeer Hunters Culture](#)

Subsequent section: [6. Denmark's History – 6.0 The Kongemose Culture](#)

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