

Notes on the Maglemose Culture.

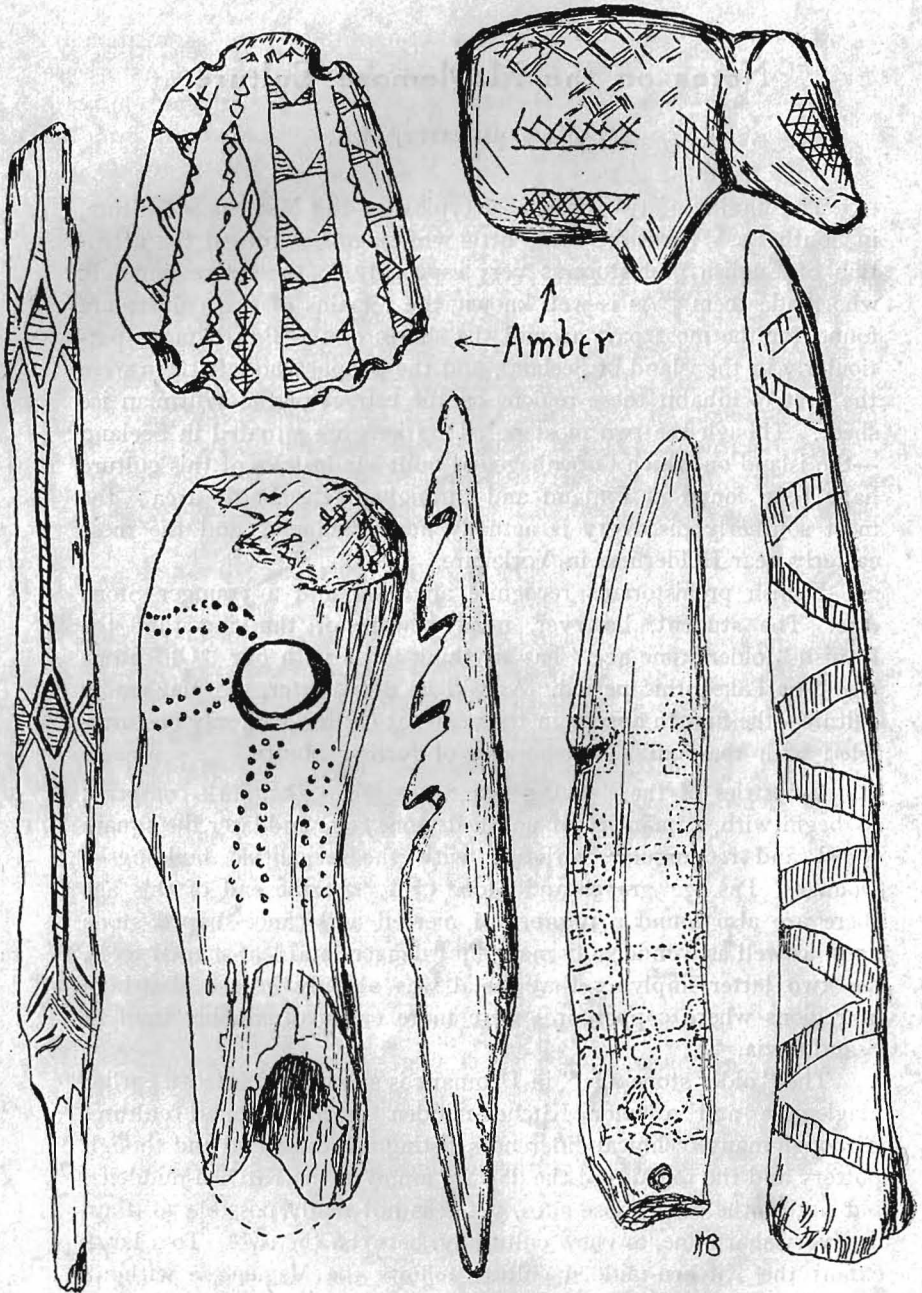
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The finding of two harpoons, typical of the Maglemose culture, in South East Yorkshire some little while ago has turned the attention of English prehistorians very especially to the interesting folk who made them. As is well known, the remains of this culture are found for the most part around the shores of the Baltic, more particularly in the island of Seeland, and the people who left them were the first to inhabit these regions on the retreat of the Würmian ice sheet. Though the two most noted stations are situated in Seeland—the island on which Copenhagen is built—industries of this culture have been found in Finland and throughout the Baltic area; the most southerly discovery is actually near Boulogne, and the most easterly near Holderness in Yorkshire.

Danish prehistorians recognise an older and a younger Stone Age. The student, however, must beware of thinking that the Danish "older stone age" has anything to do with our "Old Stone Age" or Palæolithic period. As will be noted later, the Maglemose culture—the first to appear in the area—at earliest can only be correlated with the Azilio-Tardenoisean of further South.

Industries of the "younger stone age" in Denmark comprise, to begin with, a quantity of polished stone celts and later the square edged and rectangular varieties, with the megalithic buildings—Dolmens, Passage graves and Stone cists. At the end of this age there are also found a number of pierced and canoe-shaped stone axes, as well as wonderfully made flint daggers and leaf-shaped tools, the two latter implying that metal was already in use elsewhere in regions where copper ores were more easily obtainable than in Scandinavia.

The "older stone age" in Denmark is subdivided into an earlier Maglemose and a later Kitchen-midden or Shell-mound culture. Although many technical differences distinguish these two and though pottery and the remains of the dog are found in the Kitchen-middens, but not in the Maglemose sites, yet it is not really possible to draw any very sharp line, anyhow culturally, between the two. To a large extent the Kitchen-midden culture follows the Maglemose without a break, though the former are classed as Neolithic, because pottery is found in the Shell-mounds, while the "Maglemoseans" are still called "Palæolithic," because of its absence. In reality both cultures



MAGLEMOSE AGE.

Carved amber ornaments, objects decorated with incised lines, in one case representing conventionalised human beings, antler adze and typical harpoon.

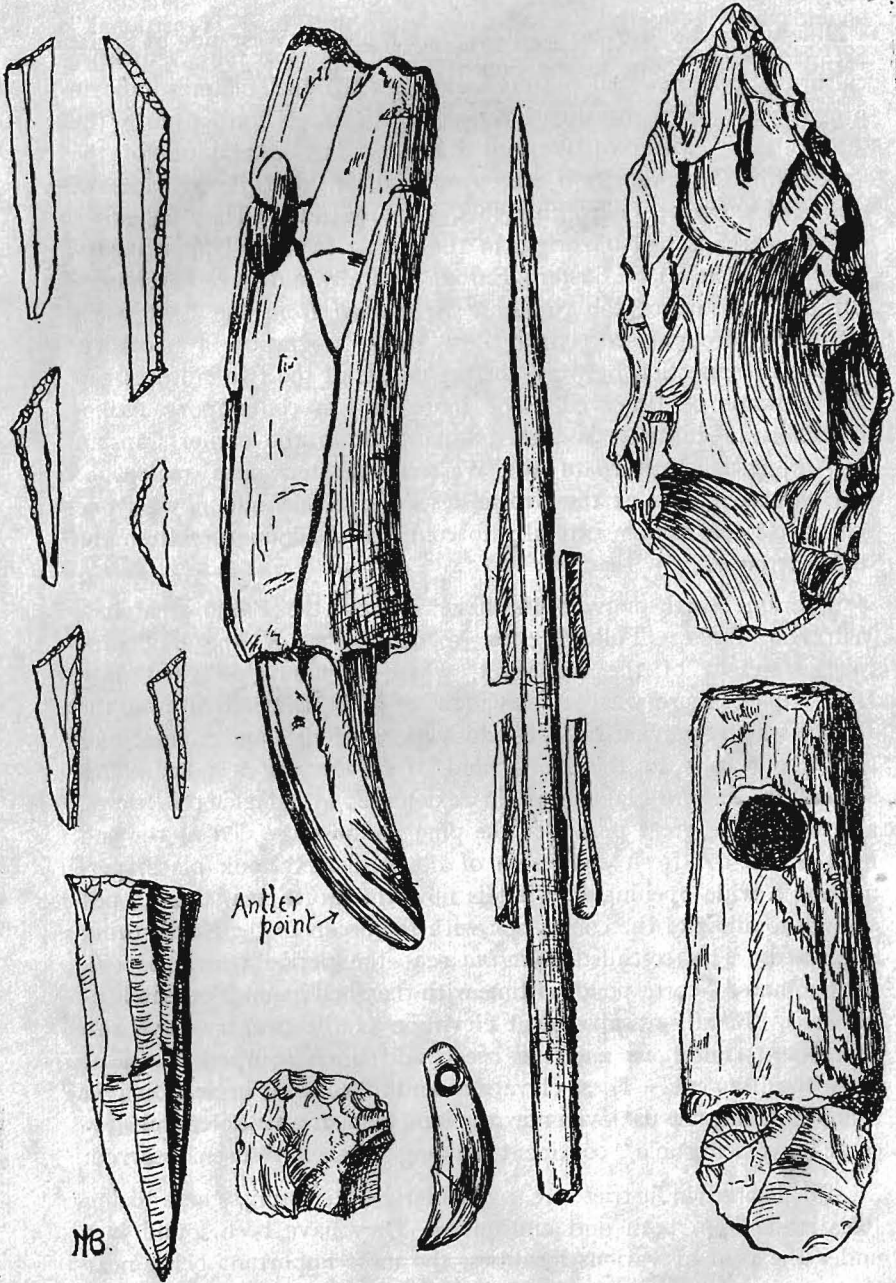
FIG. 1.

should more properly be called "Mesolithic" or "Transitional," corresponding in time with the Azilio-Tardenoisean and Asturiense cultures elsewhere. The pottery and dog of the Shell mounds indicate probably a first infiltration of true Neolithic civilisation into the "mesolithic" world of Western Europe. The inhabitants of the "mesolithic" world itself were probably in part descendants of the earlier Upper Palæolithic folk, at any rate. The Maglemose variety perhaps had its origin in the rather peculiar Upper Palæolithic development of Eastern Europe where would have early been felt the pressure of the Neolithic civilisation from the East when increasing drought in central Asia made migration a necessity. A certain connection between the art motifs of the two cultures can also perhaps be observed. The more or less contemporary Azilio-Tardenoisean cultures descended directly from the earlier Capsian or Aurignacian culture of the Western Mediterranean region, as can be clearly seen at the Grotte des Enfants, Mentone¹, by anyone who takes the trouble carefully to compare the industries from the different layers.

Various earth movements have affected the Baltic area since Würmian times. Following on a depression of the land due to the weight of the ice sheet, which certainly persisted until Bühl times, there was an elevation of the whole area and the Baltic, which previously had had wide openings and connections with the oceans to the North and West, became a lake. This so called *Ancylus* lake was in existence in Maglemose times, and it was the great period of the pine to be succeeded at the end by the oak. A fresh depression of the land next took place, permitting a wide opening to what is now the North sea, though not enough to allow of the connection with the ocean to the North being re-opened. This so-called *Littorina* sea—the period when the oak predominated—corresponds in time with the Shell-mounds or Kitchen-middens. Finally a subsequent elevation of the country gave rise to modern conditions and the beech and birch usurped the chief place from the oak. These elevations and depressions in Scandinavia should not surprise us; even now the land is far from stable, and slow earth movements on a "continent-building" scale have been observed.

Maglemose industries are particularly interesting, there being tools made from both flint and antler. They have been found just under the peat at various localities, the most important being near

¹ The industries from the Grotte des Enfants are to be seen in the prehistoric museum at Monaco.



MAGLEMOSE AGE.

Pigmies and hafted tools in flint and antler, pick, scraper, core, etc.

FIG. 2.

Millerup in the *Maglemose*, or big heath on the West side of Seeland and at Svaerdborg to the South East of the island.

FLINT INDUSTRIES.

Scrapers of various kinds, pigmy tools, especially elongated triangles which are common from Svaerdborg; picks, smaller but otherwise of the usual Neolithic type. These were all hafted in antler. The pigmies were let into two grooves on each side of a long bone, and kept in place with some kind of mastic—possibly made from amber. Such tools have been actually found. The picks were let into the hollowed-out ends of pieces of antler in the usual way.

ANTLER INDUSTRIES.

In many ways these are the more important, and true tools as well as mere hafts for stone tools are common. A piece of antler was detached, worked to a sharp convex edge at the end, and then pierced for hafting on a wooden staff. The direction of the hafting hole relative to the working edge is interesting. In *Maglemose* times it was generally at right angles, making the tool into an adze; in the Kitchen-middens on the other hand the direction is as a rule parallel to the working edge thus making a chisel of the tool. There are also bone awls, the typical harpoon (similar to the two found in Yorkshire), and the little bone hafts carrying small sharp flakes, etc., embedded in a sort of mastic, along two horizontal grooves down each side of the haft, which have been described above.

Decoration is common, for the most part in the form of engraved geometric patterns. Conventionalisation of the human form is known as well as naturalistic engravings of animals. Some small rough sculptures of animals in amber also are probably to be referred to this date. This less known but fascinating culture is worthy of attention, more especially as the two English harpoons are probably not unique, and the question may well be asked whether some of the peculiar types—especially a number of the pigmy tools—occurring on the surface of East Anglia may not belong to this culture.
