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THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE PASSAGE GRAVES IN JUTLAND

(Figs. 1-5)

In 1954 the first mortuary house from the Neolithic was found in Denmark, more exactly at Tustrup, p. Nørager, c. Randers on the peninsula of Djursland (Kjaerum, 1955). It was a horseshoe-shaped building open to the NE (Fig. 1-2). Its stone walls were up to 1 m. thick and faced on the outside with about 1 m. high stone slabs. Inside, the rear wall was faced with 4 orthostats of 1.6 m. height, while the side walls were boarded with split oak trunks set in ditches like palisades. The wall filling was of rough stones of varying size. The house was roofed with birch-bark covered with turves.

In the western wall an outer niche enclosed a pit, nearly 2 m. long and 0.8 m. wide, filled with stones. The size and shape of the pit indicates that it is a grave, and though no remains of grave goods nor of a skeleton were left in the lime-deficient, sandy subsoil, this assumption may be correct.

Whatever the function of the pit, offerings were deposited in the house. Near the wall were deposited two groups of pottery, consisting of 26 vessels and clay spoons, which seem to have been standing complete in their respective groups when the roof and walls collapsed during the fire which ruined the house, evidently soon after its construction. The find comprises the following types: 10 pedestalled bowls, 8 earthenware spoons each belonging to its pedestalled bowl, 2 shouldered bowls, 1 shouldered hanging vessel, 1 bowl with a low funnel neck, and 6 funnel beakers (Fig. 3a-b).

The house was situated in the center of a cemetery, and around it in a semi-circle with a radius of about 50 m. were situated 3 megalithic graves (Kjaerum, 1957): 1 polygonal dolmen, 1 small passage grave, and 1 oval passage grave (the biggest in Jutland) with a lateral chamber which is entered from the main chamber through a triangular entrance similar to entrances to other lateral chambers in the Limfjord area, and an entrance to a dolmen in Bohuslän. All the graves in the Tustrup cemetery contained pottery belonging to the same restricted period as the mortuary house, and details in the ornamentation of some of the vessels seem to show that they have been made by the same potter. Hereby other types than those represented in the

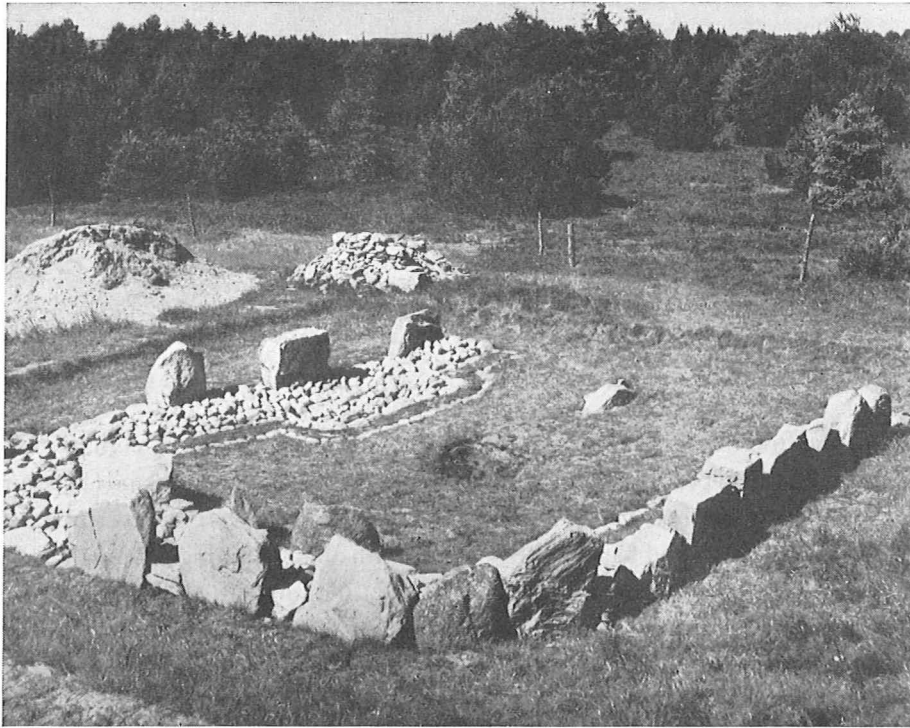


Fig. 1. The mortuary house at Tustrup after reconstruction of the ground plan. The lines of small stones mark the foundation trenches of the inner wall boarding.

closed find are connected to the complex: simple bowls ornamented with vertical ribbons, and pedestalled bowls totally covered with horizontal stamped lines.

These facts do not surprise as Per. Ib in the "established" relative chronological scheme for MN consists of the same complex (Berg, 1951), but still it is important as the complex here for the first time is found in Jutland and in a ritual context. Besides, we had here the opportunity to obtain a Carbon-14 analysis for a collection of Early MN pottery indisputably deposited together within a very short span of years, or most probably at one time. The Carbon-14 date from the Copenhagen laboratory was 2470 ± 110 B.C. (K 718 + K 727B; Tauber, 1964, p. 218).

As often happens when a new type of construction is discovered the next find of a mortuary house of nearly the same type soon followed. In 1959 another house was discovered at Ferslev, south of Aalborg, and was excavated by the Aalborg Historical Museum (Marseen, 1960).

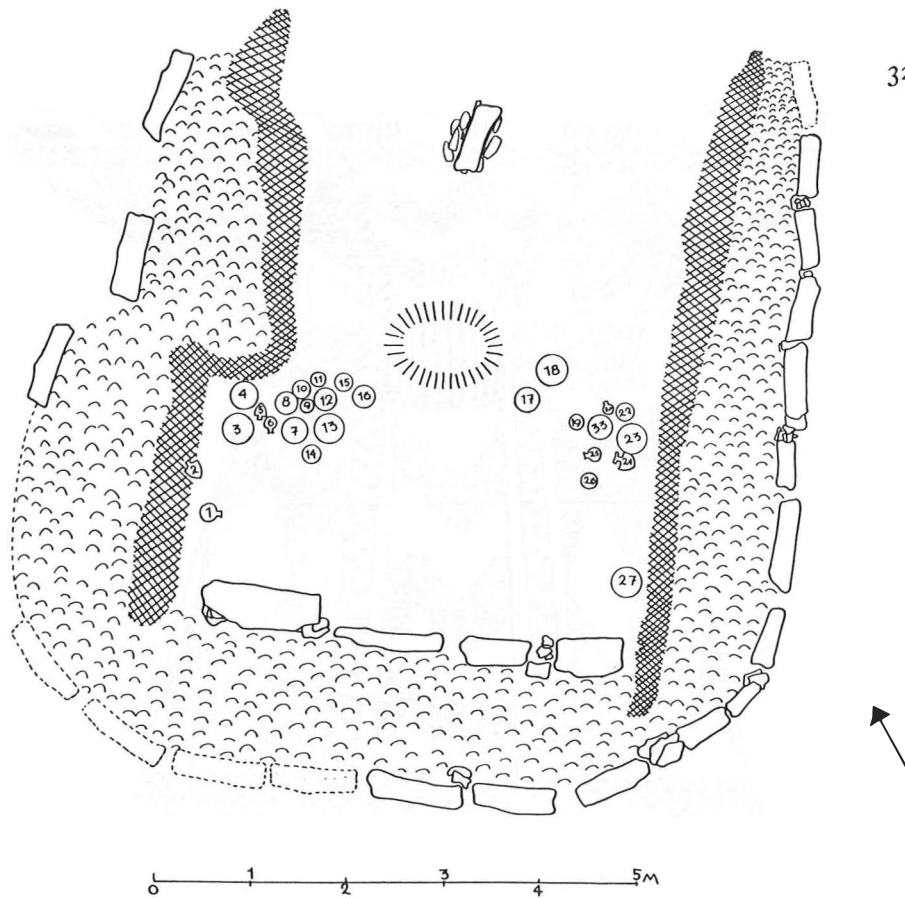


Fig. 2. Map of the Tustrup house with the position of the pots.

This house was 6×5 m. in area with an inner wall-boarding consisting of timber, and as in Tustrup the side walls were constructed as palisade walls while the rear wall seems to have been made in bole-construction (Fig. 4). Large parts of these walls were still preserved in a charred condition and were found covered with rough stones and a thin layer of earth. Along parts of the side walls were found remains of a stone setting like the one facing the stone wall in the Tustrup house, but too little is preserved at Ferslev to give a detailed impression of the wall construction except for the inner boarding. Inside, the south-western part of the house was occupied by a stone setting of 4×1 m. made of 25 cm. high slabs on the long sides and two c. 1 m. high slabs at the gable ends. The interior of this stone frame was filled with a thin layer of burnt, crushed flint mixed with charcoal, and 7 complete pots stood within it. Between the stone setting and the south-western wall 27 pots were found complete and in their original position. Finally one pot was found protected by a post in the southern wall.

Besides these 36 pots, a number of sherds was found trodden down into the floor

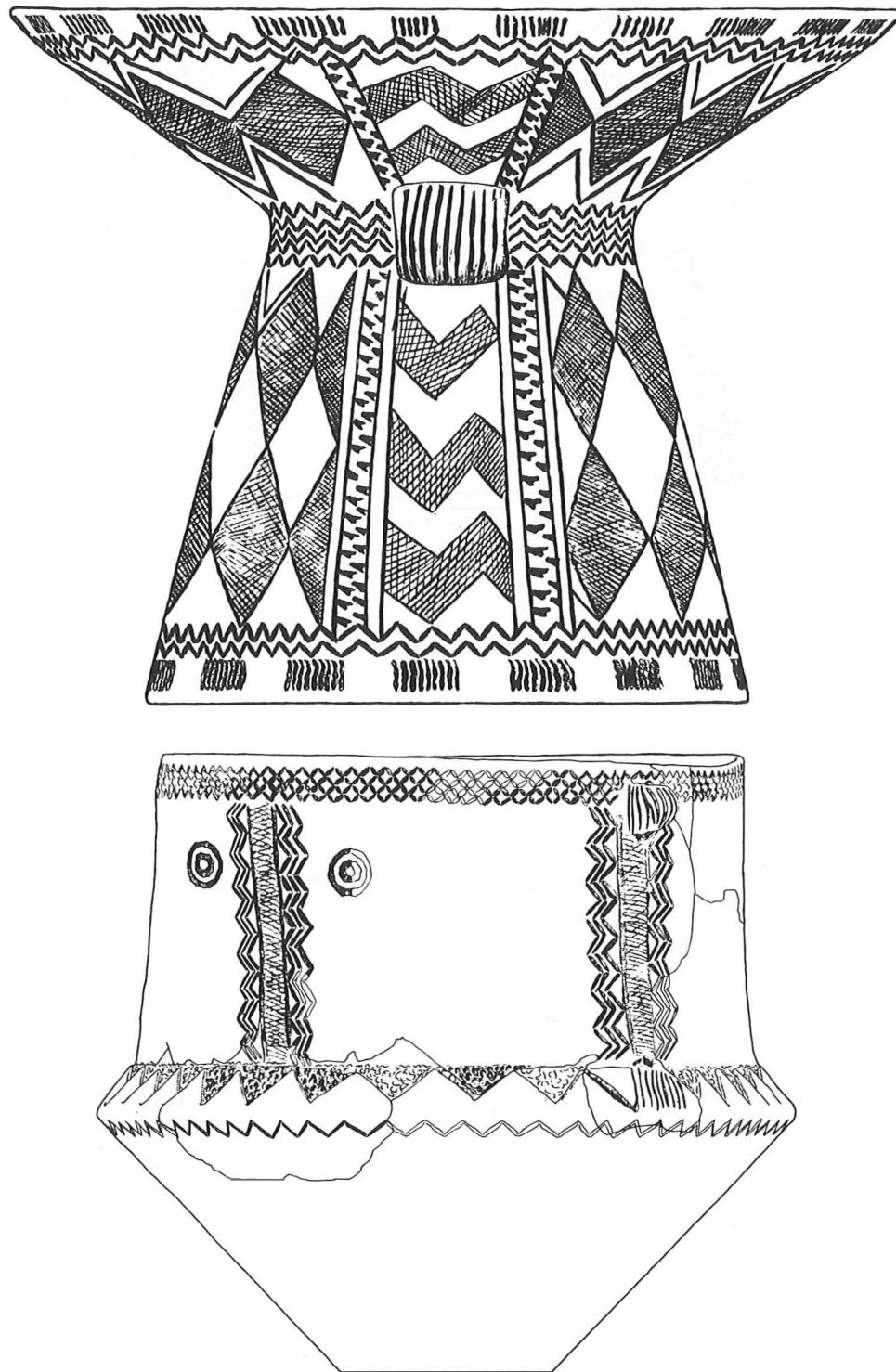


Fig. 3a. Typical pots from the Tustrup house.

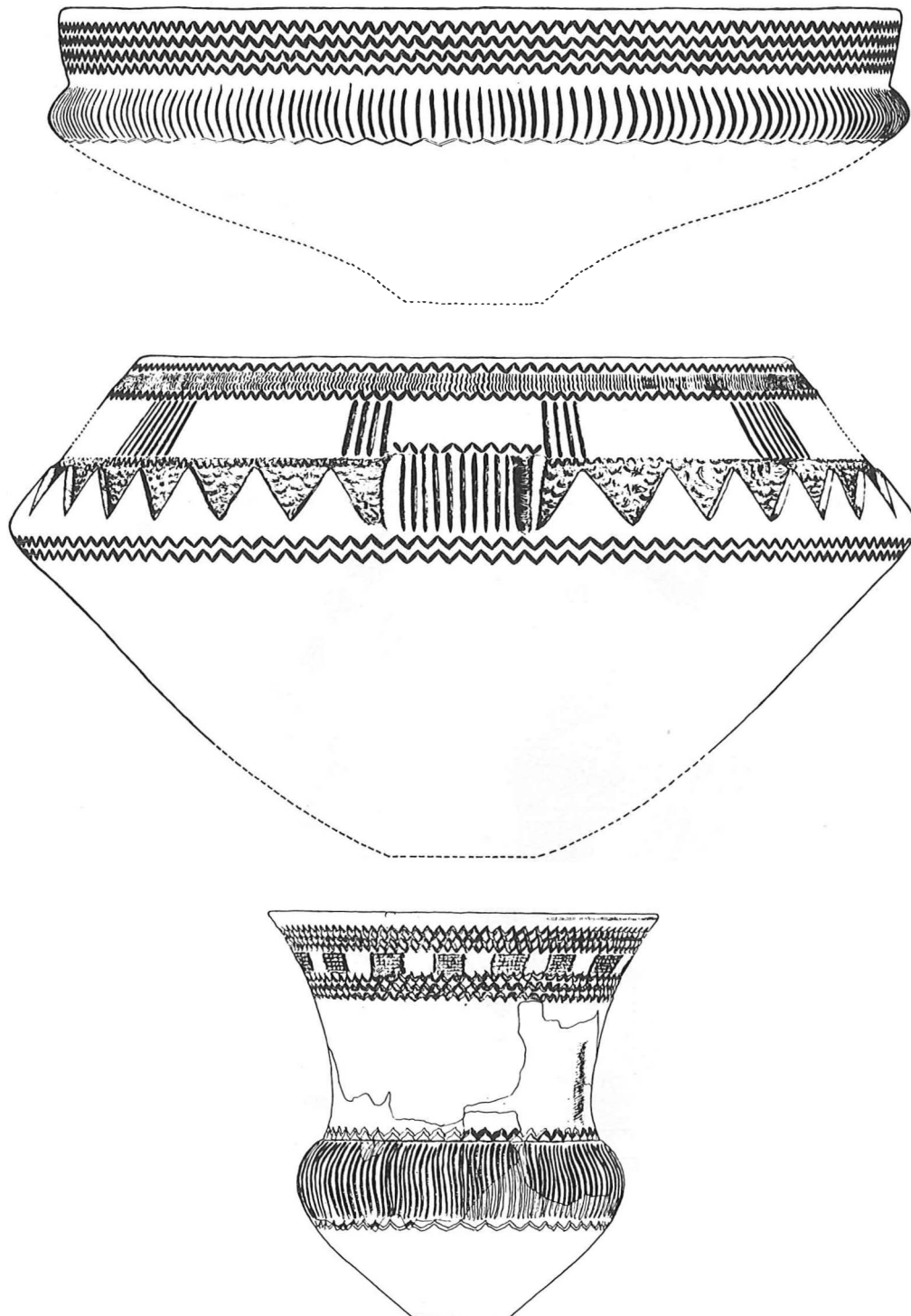


Fig. 3*b*. Typical pots from the Tustrup house.

in the area along the western wall inside the stone frame and outside the house. Excavation around the house showed that they were confined to a small area just outside the entrance. It seems as if the sherds have been thrown out of the house just as equipment from older burials in the passage grave chambers often was thrown out at later interments, and the house in Ferslev does seem to be a mortuary house.

The stone setting in the interior reminds one most of all of the cists for separate burials so commonly found in the passage graves both in Scandinavia and Northern Germany (*e.g.* a passage grave close to the Ferslev house, and the passage grave in Tustrup) which are found with a paving or filling of burnt, crushed flint and charcoal as in the stone setting in Ferslev. In my opinion it is the actual grave that

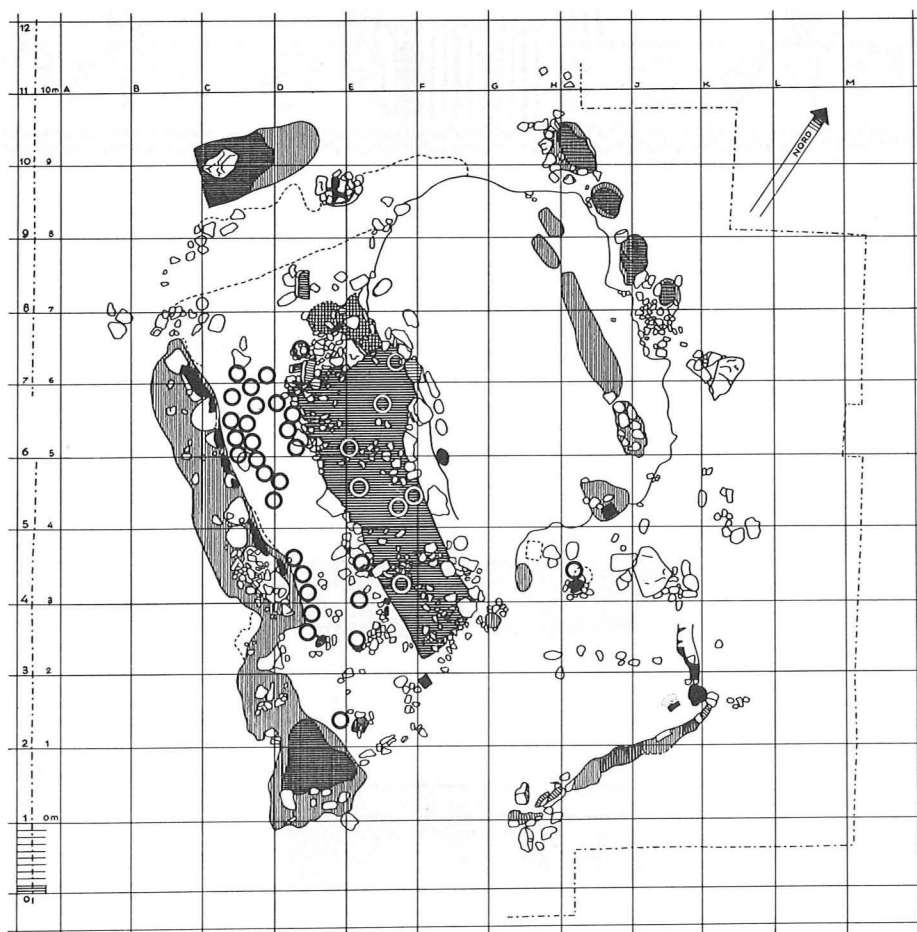


Fig. 4. Ground plan of the Ferslev house with the cist (left) and the position of the pots from the last offering.

we have here, and I think it gives the clue to the understanding of the oblong pit in the Tustrup house.

Of the 36 intact vessels in the Ferslev house most are open bowls with a cylindrical, conical or, most commonly, splayed neck joining the body in a narrow shoulder or a curve; one is bi-conical, one looks like a big funnel beaker but is doubtless related to hanging vessels with a shoulder and one is nearly cylindrical with a splayed foot. With one exception all ornaments are impressed with a dentated tool and in a style related to the Bundsø style (Mathiassen, 1939, 1944; Becker, 1954*b*; Bagge & Kaelas, 1950, p. 13; Winther, 1943), though better executed, representing Per. III in the established relative chronology for South Scandinavian MN (Fig. 5). For the first time we have here a reliable, closed find from this period, showing its contents of pot shapes and further details of its style of ornament. The Ferslev house also contained lots of charred wood for Carbon-14 datings. The results from the Copenhagen laboratory are 2480 ± 120 (K 717; Tauber, 1964, p. 218). This date is nearly exactly the same as the dating given to the Tustrup house (2470 ± 110), an astonishing fact indeed, if it had been the date of the main find: the 36 intact pots from the cist and the area between it and the western wall. It is, however, the date of the construction, and to date this from the intact find would really be the same as to date the construction of passage graves from the complete skeletons and the daggers lying in the chambers, and not from the finds of tiny potsherds in the floor and outside the passage. The sherds from the floor and the area outside the entrance confirm the date or better, the agreement between the two dates. Among these sherds are remains of an earthenware spoon, 2 pedestalled bowls of which one is ornamented with hatched lozenges, impressed with a dentated tool and identical with one in the find from Tustrup. Moreover there are sherds of a shouldered hanging vessel with cylindrical neck, a funnel beaker with splayed funnel neck, and a vessel with a hatched ribbon outlined by arcshaped impressions, all typical derivatives of Per. Ib and Tustrup types. So the Carbon-14 dates of the two mortuary houses cannot correspond much better than they do, though it should perhaps be supposed that Ferslev was a little younger than Tustrup.

In Ferslev there are no traces of the specific Blandebjerg style (Winther, 1943), representing period II, and if it existed in this region there is not left much time for it. Really not longer than the lifetime of the house, from its erection to its destruction by fire. This in spite of the fact that there is neither much similarity nor any typological line directly from the Klintebakken-Tustrup style to the Ferslev style. This may be an indication of a regional differentiation of the styles of MN pottery in a period preceding the Ferslev Style. Schwabedissen (1953) has already pointed out that pedestalled bowls ornamented with hatched lozenges belong only to parts of North-Eastern Jutland, Zealand and Southern Sweden. In fact, this distribution is still more limited than Schwabedissen's map indicates, and recent finds confirm

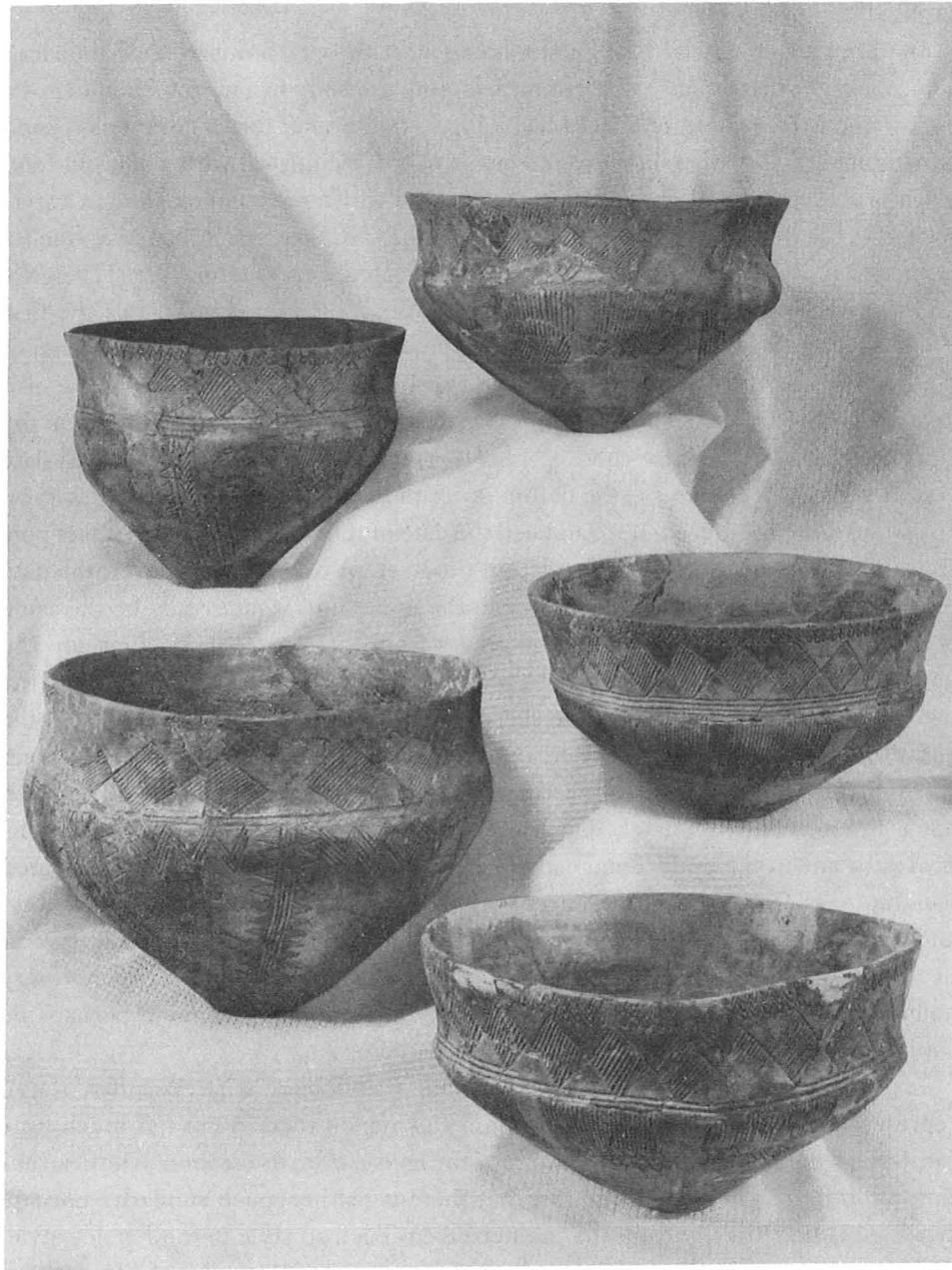


Fig. 5. Typical pots from the last offering in the Ferslev house. (Photo Lennart Larsen).

that this type of pedestalled bowls in Jutland is restricted to Northern Djursland and the area around the Limfjord and its tributaries, and one of the pedestalled bowls from the Ferslev find itself belonged, as mentioned, to this type. In the same area where these pedestalled bowls are found, we find concentrations of the predecessors of the Ferslev bowls (Kaelas, 1951, fig. 3-5, Ørum Å) with neck, faint shoulder and conical body, with the neck ornamented all over with lozenges, hatched, angular ribbons or metope ornamentation as the Ferslev Style proper. Outside this region the Ferslev Style and its predecessors occur only sporadically.

In the passage graves and dolmens with MN Funnel Beaker inventory in Jutland the finds consist all together of about a thousand pots, or better, pots and sherds of vessels, representing the Funnel Beaker Culture. Of these the bulk, say about 90%, belong to the Tustrup Style and its direct derivatives. The rest of the material consists mainly of pots in the Ferslev Style proper and its predecessors, which, except for sporadic finds in North Schleswig and South Jutland, is concentrated along the Limfjord and to the north of it and on Djursland. The Lindø Style (Winther, 1926) is still more poorly represented, only known from 4 finds, 2 from North Schleswig and 2 from Middle and North Jutland. Finally Store Valby (Becker, 1954a, p. 176) is represented in 8 finds, 6 of which are from North Schleswig, and 2 from Eastern Jutland. Comparing these numbers with the percentual representation in the Swedish finds differences and agreements seem evident. According to Bagge and Kaelas (1950 I and II, statistics for each tomb) Per. Ib, mainly represented by funnel beakers, shouldered bowls, pedestalled bowls and spoons, amounts to only 1-5% of the material, Per. II (represented mainly by bowls with funnel necks and funnel beakers ornamented with metope ornamentation or hatched lozenges or angular ribbons, and pedestalled bowls ornamented with hatched lozenges) constitutes 50-65% of the finds, Per. III up to 30% and Per. IV 1-5% (Store Valby Style had not been defined when these calculations were made). From Zealand I have no exact numbers, but the material gives the impression that the proportions of the various styles here is not much different from those in Scania.

Finally it seems that in Scandinavia a differentiation of pottery types and style had taken place already in Per. Ib, and in II and III the South Scandinavian area had divided into two or more separate areas.

This agrees with the conditions within the megalithic area in North Germany and Holland, where already Langenheim (1935) has found evidence for a division between Schleswig and Holstein, in some respects according to the same criteria as here. This division doubtless could be further enlarged, but by and large the Holstein group seems to be related to Mecklenburg-Rügen, North Jutland, Eastern Denmark and Scania, while South Jutland and Schleswig are nearer related to Oldenburg-Holland, though without any identity.

But back to Jutland and its passage graves which are found in a number of nearly

200, about – of the total amount in Denmark. The bulk of the graves are situated along the Limfjord and its tributaries and the coast-line from the Limfjord to Djursland, and a few are found on the west and east coast, and some, and these are the richest, in North Schleswig and the adjoining parts of Southwest Jutland.

Most of the graves have a lateral passage and are enclosed in round barrows encircled by large orthostats, though rectangular barrows with stone settings are also known. As it would be too involved to enter questions of the morphology of the tombs I just want to mention that few graves in Jutland have a regular T-shape, and none are rectangular, except for a few, small chamber tombs in South Jutland and besides that 20 graves in the Limfjord area and along the coast from there to Northern Djursland have lateral chambers behind the main chamber, one of these even consisting of 3 chambers parallel and behind each other (Nordman, 1918, fig. 96), reminding of British types (Daniel, 1950, fig. 14).

The pottery of which I have just given a survey is found in about 50 of these graves either in the chambers or, more often, outside the passages, cleared out of the chambers, or on both sides of the entrance along the facades, where they were deposited as offerings (Thorvildsen, 1946, p. 74, fig. 1). With few exceptions the construction of the graves is dated to MN I (b) by finds in Tustrup Style.

The absolute date is given by the Carbon-14 datings from Tustrup (2470 ± 110 B.C.) and besides by a sample from a passage grave at Katbjerg (p. Mariager, c. Randers; Kjaerum, 1965) dated by the Copenhagen C14 laboratory to 2450 ± 120 B.C. (K 978). The latter date is a direct dating of the erection of the passage grave, as the sample for the C14 dating consisted of birch-bark plates found between stones in the drywalling, filling the gaps between the orthostats in the chamber, and so put there during the construction of the grave.

These dates agree well with the date of the construction period of a Dutch megalithic grave as indicated by the sample from the Odoorn earth grave (2630 ± 80 B.C.; Bakker, 1960) antedating the overlying *Hunebed*. The megalithic burial practice has in Jutland been continued up to the time of the Ferslev Style, while from Ferslev on to St. Valby (period V) pottery belonging to the Funnel Beaker Culture has only sporadically been deposited in or by the tombs.

Absolute dates for this final period have hitherto not been obtained from Scandinavia. A reference to the dating of the Dutch Late Havelte period at Angelsloo (2360 ± 60 B.C.; van der Waals, 1964) may however compensate for this. After this time the passage graves are only secondarily occupied by the single grave-, the bell beaker-, and the LN dagger people or peoples.

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