Fish and resilience among Early Holocene foragers of southern Scandinavia: a fusion of stable isotopes and zooarchaeology through Bayesian mixing modelling

Adam Boethius*[1]

[1]Lund University – Suède

Résumé

Here I will explore the importance of different protein sources in the diet of Early and Middle Mesolithic humans in Scandinavia and show how their protein intake changed over the following millennia. By combining previously published stable isotope data with new analyses of human and animal bone remains, in a Bayesian mixing model, I will show that fishing rather than hunting or gathering provided a sustainable economy. By demonstrating that aquatic systems were more important than previously anticipated, the prerequisites for understanding Early Holocene resilience, social dynamics, permanence in residence and sedentism will change; because a diet dominated by fish generate abundance and create a surplus similar to that gained from the cultivation of plants. This research suggests that Scandinavian foragers became increasingly territorial and were able to live sedentary, already, at the beginning of the Holocene, i.e. several millennia before the introduction of agriculture. Furthermore, by incorporating the zooarchaeological record in human stable isotope analysis advanced palaeodietary studies is enabled, which can generate enhanced protein diet estimations through a method that can be applied when investigating subsistence strategies in a diverse set of human cultures.

Mots-Clés: Early Holocene Diet, Scandinavia, Stable isotopes, Bayesian Mixing models, Zooarchaeology, Mesolithic, Forager subsistence

*Intervenant