

# **The Waterlogged Stone Age Sites of Central and Northern Europe: Progress and Challenges of Research**

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**Abstract:**

Within the large number of archaeological sites dated to the Stone Age in Central and Northern Europe, waterlogged or peatbog sites are very unique occurrences. These sites are characterized by excellent preservation of organic materials in biogenic deposits. Thousands of animal and plant remains and various residues, provide an excellent archive and allow reconstruction of the environment and the subsistence strategies of Late Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic societies. Studies of objects made of antler, bone, and wood provide an in-depth look into the details of prehistoric technology. Various organic remains, including human bones, recorded in a biogenic context, alongside the deposits themselves, are excellent sources for isotopic and aDNA research. Last but not least, the botanical record acquired from waterlogged sites and their surroundings enables palaeoenvironmental reconstructions on both local and regional scales, documenting the dynamics of palaeoenvironmental and palaeoclimatic changes. This helps build a more comprehensive, multidimensional picture of Stone Age societies, far beyond the limited typological portrait based solely on lithic studies.

On the other hand, investigations of waterlogged sites face numerous challenges. These include problems with establishing firm chronologies due to the reservoir effect; difficulties linking archaeological objects with stratigraphic layers caused by taphonomic processes; and related issues with accurate radiocarbon sampling. Finally, waterlogged sites are increasingly endangered by the effects of climate change and modern human activity. In consequence, biogenic layers preserved for thousands of years starting now to dry out and disintegrate, together with unique palaeoenvironmental record and material traces of prehistoric human activity.

We invite colleagues involved in various aspects of waterlogged sites research to present recent results of their studies. We welcome papers reporting research on both old and newly excavated sites, presentations focused on diverse analyses of remains from these sites, as well as palaeoenvironmental studies.