

DEADLINE EXTENDED!

CALL FOR PAPERS

Fragmentation in archaeological context: accidental breakage, deliberate gesture and beyond

21-22 October 2021 - Dept of Archaeology & Classical Studies, Stockholm University

The term fragmentation, 'a breaking or separation into fragments' has been used to conceptualize a variety of phenomena across academic disciplines, from sociology and economics to biology and computer science. Within archaeology, fragmentation became an eye-opener at the turn of the millennium, through John Chapman's work on deliberate use of broken objects in prehistoric societies of Central and Eastern Europe. Chapman showed that fragments were not just discarded scrap, but were sometimes distributed among people and deposited in the landscape in order to manifest social links – to create *enchainments*. A multitude of studies has followed this theoretical framework, either through fully implementing it, or by critically re-defining it. It has, as Brittain and Harris note (2010:582), proven to be a potent way to think about the world.

Awareness of deliberate fragmentation adds complexity to several archaeological key issues. For instance, in relation to object biographies it demonstrates how fragments and 'scrap' can live on with continued but transformed meanings. It also enriches our understanding of how material culture can create references to the past - as one way of transmitting relationships and memories into new contexts. Fragments can invoke a sense of 'pastness' precisely because they are parts of a lost whole. It is undeniable therefore, that fragmentation is closely connected to the archaeological project, considering the roles of ruins and fragments in building sentiments towards and narratives about the past (Burström 2013).

In terms of case studies, Appleby has demonstrated how fragmentation could be a concept for understanding ageing in prehistoric societies. By studying post-mortuary handling and curation of body parts in Late Bronze Age Britain, Brück has shown how personhood was transformed and transmitted through the circulation of body parts as relics. Fragmentation also opens for a range of methodological reflections: how to identify dispersed fragments coming from the same whole? Was fragmentation deliberate or not, and what are the tools at our disposal for its recognition and understanding before, during and after fieldwork? What skills and tools were needed in order to separate different objects into fragments?

Fragmentation – in all its variety - will be the topic of a two-day PAG workshop in Stockholm (and/or online) in October 2021. The workshop discussants and keynote speakers will be Professor Joanna Brück (University College Dublin) and Professor Andrew M. Jones (Stockholm University). **We are also happy to announce the participation of Professor John Chapman and Dr. Bisserka Gaydarska as panellists and expert guests.**

We warmly invite postdoctoral researchers and early career scholars to participate. This call invites papers on topics such as, but not limited to: fragments in repairs and reuse, fragments as relics, fragmentation as transformative act, partition of human or animal bodies, fragments in exchange and depositions, fragments as material memories in the present, sampling as a process of fragmentation, and more.

This theme holds potential for all archaeological sub-disciplines. The aim is to create a stimulating meeting where we can share our research and advance our insight into a classic archaeological issue. The aim is also to present the contributions as an edited volume on fragmentation in archaeology, planned for autumn 2022.

If you wish to participate, please send a title and an abstract (max 250 words) to pagfragmentation@gmail.com no later than **May 1st 2021!**

Welcome!

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Suggested readings:

- Appleby, J. 2010. Ageing as fragmentation and dis-integration. In: Rebay-Salisbury, K., Stig Sørensen, M. L. & Hughes, J. (eds.) *Body parts and bodies whole: changing relations and meanings*. pp. 46-53.
- Britton, M. & Harris, O. 2010. Enchaining arguments and fragmenting assumptions: reconsidering the fragmentation debate in archaeology. *World Archaeology*, vol 42(4): 581-594.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00438243.2010.518415>
- Brück, J. 2017. Reanimating the dead: The circulation of human bone in the British Later Bronze Age. In: Bradbury, J. & Scarre, C. (eds.) *Dealing with the dead: Exploring changing human beliefs about death, mortality and the human body*. pp. 138-148.
- Brück, J. 2016. Hoards, fragmentation and exchange in the European Bronze Age. In: Hansen, S., Neumann, D. & Vachta, T. (eds.) *Raum, Gabe und Erinnerung: Weihgaben und Heiligtümer in prähistorischen und antiken Gesellschaften*. pp. 75-92
- Burström, M. 2013. Fragments as something more: Archaeological experience and reflection. In: González-Ruibal, A. (ed.) *Reclaiming archaeology: Beyond the tropes of modernity*. pp. 311-322.
- Chapman, J. 2000. *Fragmentation in archaeology: People, places and broken objects in the prehistory of South Eastern Europe*. Routledge. London. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203759431>
- Chapman, J. & Gaydarska, B. 2007. *Parts and wholes: fragmentation in prehistoric context*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Frie, A.C. 2020. Parts and wholes: The role of animals in the performance of Dolenjska Hallstatt funerary rites. *Arts* 9, 53. <https://doi.org/10.3390/arts9020053>
- Jones, A. 2005. Lives in fragments? Personhood and the European Neolithic. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 5(2): 192-224. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469605305053367>