ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

PAPER TITLE

Looking at hoards through networks: A new approach to research early medieval depositions in the Middle Dnieper Area

ABSTRACT

At the turn of the 7th and 8th centuries AD, numerous metal objects were buried in the ground in the Middle Dnieper region. As these depositions had no recognizable burial or settlement context, they are referred to as hoards. These hoards consist of a mixed inventory of mostly non-ferrous metals, primarily in the form of jewelry such as brooches, belt sets, arm and neck rings, and various pendants. Research into this early medieval hoarding phenomenon has focused particularly on distinguishing between 'profane' and 'ritual' motivations for these actions (Derevianko & Volodarets-Urbanovych 2017, 35–50; Rodinkova 2018, 670–681).

Past research on hoards in general has clearly demonstrated the challenges by interpretation of hoards (Bradley 2017), as well as the issues connected to the duality of possible motivations (Fontijn 2002, 13–22). In my project, I propose that a deeper understanding of the complexity of 'hoarding' can be achieved through the view on depositions as a part of a socio-environmental relational system (Müller et al. 2022, 19–21). My theoretical concept enables depositions to be analyzed using network analysis, shifting the focus from motivation to modelling the underlying relational systems. This approach aims to provide new insights into the possible interactions of responsible communities and social groups. In this paper, I am going to present and discuss my theoretical concept, as well as some preliminary results and limitations of my ongoing work.

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