

Ornamented artifact may indicate long-distance exchange between Mesolithic communities

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Ornamented bâton percé. Credit: Osipowicz et al (2017)

An ornamented bâton percé found in Central Poland may provide evidence of exchange between Mesolithic communities, according to a study published October 4, 2017 in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* by Grzegorz Osipowicz from Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland, and colleagues.

Artifacts and [raw materials](#) can provide insight into how Prehistoric communities exchanged gifts, such as stone transported for its technological significance, or metal products adorning graves. Recently, researchers found an ornamented bâton percé carved from antler of unknown origin in the Go??biewo site in Central Poland.

To investigate the antler source species and its geographic origin, the researchers conducted DNA and stable isotope analyses of the artifact. The source material was identified as antler from a reindeer species which dispersion analysis revealed to have a range limited to northern Scandinavia and north-western Russia during the Early-Holocene. This may suggest that the artifact was transported from North Karelia to Central Poland.

The reasons why this [artifact](#) was transported are subject to speculation, but the authors suggest that their results are possible evidence for the flow of goods between hunter-gatherer groups at a large distance. This study provides new insight into how ideas and items were exchanged in Mesolithic communities within North Eastern Europe.

"The route taken for transporting the Rangifer tarandus antler from nearby North Karelia to Central Poland, and the motive for transporting it, remain impossible to determine conclusively," says Osipowicz. "However, the obtained results are the first direct evidence for the flow of goods between [hunter-gatherer groups](#) in the Early Holocene at such a great distance."

More information: Osipowicz G, Witas H, Lisowska-Gaczorek A, Reitsema L, Szostek K, Płoszaj T, et al. (2017) Origin of the ornamented bâton percé from the Gołbiewo site 47 as a trigger of discussion on long-distance exchange among Early Mesolithic communities of Central Poland and Northern Europe. *PLoS ONE* 12(10): e0184560. doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0184560

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