

## ABSTRACT

# Mobility and Aesthetics

## The Nuuk Fjord on the west coast of Greenland as a human life-world 4 000 years ago.

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The dissertation deals with newly excavated archaeological finds from the Palaeoeskimos who lived around the Nuuk Fjord on the west coast of Greenland about 4000 years ago. The purpose of the study is to present as full a picture as possible of the whole *life-world* that was theirs. The life-world concept referred to lies closest to Husserl's and Merleau-Ponty's definitions, where experience is the basis of all knowledge, and the life-world is the whole world that is vitally present in our awareness – both the archaeologist's and the prehistoric human being's.

The finds from the settlement sites in question indicate that the life-world of the Palaeoeskimos was typified by mobility and aesthetics. Mobility is discussed on the basis of what can be considered reasonable examples of building-blocks in the material basis of the Palaeoeskimo life-world in this area of Greenland. An account is also given of the movements of nature and the fluctuations in the fauna over time. Furthermore there is a discussion of the origins, migration patterns and life-mode of the Nuuk inhabitants of the time as regards the exploitation of the resources of the fjord landscape for food, clothing and equipment. The problem that is given special attention is that the *aesthetic*, in the sense of the beautiful, which is often tangibly present in Greenlandic archaeology, has not been granted a great deal of scholarly attention in relation to the early Palaeoeskimo society. The possibilities that exist for gaining insight into the emotional-cognitive world of the Palaeoeskimos have thus not been utilized to any great extent. Aesthetics in the broad sense is therefore dealt with along with the archaeological analytical tools typology and style. Art as a concept and phenomenon, as well as perception, intuition and experience, are discussed, as are human beings' different conceptions of reality, with a view to clarifying the significance of these concepts in relation to archaeological practice. On this basis the finds are then analysed from an aesthetic and ideational perspective, and in the concluding synthesis one of the excavated settlement sites is suggested as a centre of a Palaeoeskimo life-world in the Nuuk Fjord area.

The methods used in the dissertation are traditional archaeological field methodology and artefact analysis, ethnological and ethnographical analogies, theories of style, aesthetics and art as well as phenomenology, and what could be called everyday dialectics or universal human conceptions. The methodology in the first part of the dissertation is described as traditional, and in the later part as experimental archaeology with a qualitative approach. The methodology is based on both hard-science research results and theories from the humanities, and on the insight that everything is interrelated in a dialectical world where every single factor can impinge on one or more others, and thus form more or less active patterns in the structure of a larger tapestry.

### Keywords:

Palaeoeskimo, life-world, Nuuk Fjord, Greenland, mobility, aesthetics, art, style, everyday dialectics.