



# HOUSEHOLD GOODS

IN THE EUROPEAN MEDIEVAL AND  
EARLY MODERN COUNTRYSIDE

---

edited by CATARINA TENTE & CLAUDIA THEUNE

**RURALIA XIV**





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# Household goods illuminated by motivation and need theories in Hanfelden Castle in the early modern countryside of Styria, Austria

*Iris Winkelbauer\* & Claudia Theune\*\**

## Abstract

Motivation theories and need theories offer an interesting possibility for archaeological investigations to look at household goods and other archaeological finds from a new perspective. This is based on the concept of M. Max-Neef, who does not hierarchise needs and does not distinguish between needs and luxury goods. This is followed by the concept of distinguishing between needs and fulfillers of needs. In combination with H. Heckhausen's motivation-theoretical approach, household goods can be evaluated and interpreted in an archaeological context on a solid theoretical basis. Objects of all kinds and the actors can be analysed in relation to the aspect of motivation and needs on different levels. The constant and dynamic influence of the individual, the community and the environment is considered. The aim is to reconstruct the life situation of the actors, taking into account the changing fulfillers of needs. Here, in addition to a detailed theoretical and methodological introduction, the potential of these theories of motivation and needs is illustrated by three examples from Hanfelden Castle.

**Keywords:** *Motivation theories, need theories, fulfillers of needs, Hanfelden Castle, tiled stove.*

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## Résumé

*Les biens domestiques éclairés par les théories de la motivation et du besoin au château de Hanfelden dans la campagne de Styrie, Autriche, au début de l'époque moderne*

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Les théories de la motivation et des besoins offrent aux recherches archéologiques une possibilité intéressante de considération des objets domestiques et autres découvertes archéologiques sous une nouvelle perspective. À la base se trouve le concept de M. Max-Neef, qui ne hiérarchise pas les besoins et ne fait pas de distinction entre les besoins et les biens de luxe. Il s'ensuit le concept de distinction entre les besoins et les personnes qui les satisfont, ce qui permet d'examiner comment les besoins peuvent être satisfaits et ceux qui les motivent et les stimulent. En lien avec l'approche de la théorie de la motivation de

H. Heckhausen, les mobiliers domestiques peuvent être évalués et interprétés dans le contexte archéologique sur une base théorique solide. Les objets de toutes sortes et les acteurs peuvent être analysés sous l'angle de la motivation et des besoins à différents niveaux. La influence constante et dynamique de l'individu, de la communauté et de l'environnement est prise en compte. L'objectif est de reconstruire la situation de vie des acteurs, en tenant compte de l'évolution des besoins à satisfaire. Outre une introduction théorique et méthodologique détaillée, le potentiel de ces théories de la motivation et des besoins est illustré par trois exemples tirés du château de Hanfelden.

**Mots-clés :** *théories de la motivation, théories des besoins, satisfaction des besoins, château de Hanfelden, poêle en faïence.*

## **Zusammenfassung**

*Haushaltsgüter als Basis für motivations- und bedürfnistheoretische Untersuchungen im frühneuzeitlichen Schloss Hanfelden in der Steiermark, Österreich*

Motivationstheorien und Bedürfnistheorien bieten für archäologische Untersuchungen eine interessante Möglichkeit, Hausrat und andere archäologische Funde aus einer neuen Perspektive zu betrachten. Zu Grunde liegt

das Konzept von M. Max-Neef, der keine Hierarchisierung der Bedürfnisse und keine Unterscheidung zwischen Bedürfnissen und Luxusgütern vornimmt. Daran schließt sich das Konzept der Unterscheidung zwischen Bedürfnissen und Bedürfniserfüllern an, mit dem untersucht werden kann, wie Bedürfnisse befriedigt werden können und was sie zum Handeln motiviert und anregt. In Verbindung mit dem motivationstheoretischen Ansatz von H. Heckhausen können Haushaltswaren im archäologischen Kontext auf einer soliden theoretischen Grundlage bewertet und interpretiert werden. Objekte aller Art und die Akteure und Akteurinnen können unter dem Aspekt der Motivation und der Bedürfnisse auf verschiedenen Ebenen analysiert werden. Dabei wird ein ständiger und dynamischer Einfluss des Individuums, der Gemeinschaft und der Umwelt in Betracht gezogen. Ziel ist es, die Lebenssituation der Akteure und Akteurinnen zu rekonstruieren, wobei die sich verändernden Bedürfniserfüller berücksichtigt werden. Neben einer ausführlichen theoretischen und methodischen Einführung wird das Potenzial dieser Motivations- und Bedürfnistheorien anhand von drei Beispielen aus dem Schloss Hanfelden illustriert.

**Schlagwörter:** *Motivationstheorien, Bedürfnistheorien, Bedürfniserfüller, Schloss Hanfelden, Kachelofen.*

## **Introduction**

Theories of motivation and theories of needs offer significant opportunities for the study of household goods in an archaeological context. The research presented here applies economic and psychological approaches that have received little attention in archaeological research on household organisation and its interpretation. Based on this theoretical framework, case studies of archaeologically preserved household wares (for example, medieval wooden drinking cups and elaborately designed glass nuppa cups) can be used to provide interpretive approaches to the use and perception of these objects from the perspective of human 'needs' and 'motivations'.

The paper aims to argue that the concept of 'need' is undergoing a paradigm shift due to the integration of theoretical approaches. It consists of a limited number of fundamental human needs (Max-Neef *et al.* 1991), which, unlike the well-known theoretical approach of A. Maslow, are not structured hierarchically. The qualitative development of a person depends on his quality of life, which in turn depends on the different possibilities of satisfying the mentioned needs. Thus, on the basis of objects (household goods), the potential for the reconstruction of the life situation of persons as actors, who are in connection with the object under investigation, can be realised.

## **Theoretical concept**

Household goods can form a central point for the reconstruction of a person's everyday life. However, we often talk about the everyday life or living world (the term refers to the sociological concept of 'Lebenswelt') of past societies or communities without subjecting them to a more detailed reflection. This gives them a certain vagueness and arbitrariness. The German epistemologist B. Kraus therefore distinguishes between the living world, which forms a subjective reality construct as a result of individual human construction processes (= 'Wirklichkeit'), and the life situation, which is formed by the material and immaterial equipment of a human being (= 'Realität'). Thus, the living world is about the perception of the persons as actors (reality). This is to be distinguished from the life situation of the manifested reality. The living world constructs itself under the conditions of the living situation (Kraus 2017, 31-32). In these two cognitive spaces, individuals and all their actions, their satisfaction of needs, but also their relations to the physical, sociocultural environment and to things, such as household objects, can be located and examined (cf. Doneus 2013, 20).

In order to be able to draw conclusions about the needs of individuals, their fulfillment and subsequent

reconstruction of the living situation on the basis of household goods, it is necessary to introduce the theoretical model.

Concepts of human needs and their fulfillment are addressed in psychology and in business psychology primarily within the framework of motivation theories (cf. Heckhausen 2018 (1980), 15-23) and activation theories. For the Hanfelden Castle case study, a content model developed by the Chilean economist M. Max-Neef in the 1990s was used – the so-called Human-Scale Development Model (Max-Neef et al. 1991). Therefore, the development of the personality theory aspect of motivation research is relevant for this analysis (Young 1936, 251-265). In this case, the problem is approached exclusively from a human psychological perspective. P.T. Young was the first who assumed that needs, wants or desires, depending on the strength of their expression, determine behavior and thus regulate the approach to action. H. Murray can be seen as a pioneer of a motivational psychological line: in his work 'Explorations in personality' (Murray 1938) he defined 36 different needs. These can be innate (hunger, thirst) or socio-culturally influenced (self-expression, interpersonal relationships or the use of power). For him, they were permanent variables of individual expression and lead to certain actions. From this a personality-psychological line emerged in the 1930s, as represented by W. Stern, G.W. Allport and A. Maslow, the last of whom is considered the most important. As mentioned at the beginning, Maslow (1954) pursued the concept of a hierarchy of needs and developed a model that only incorporates personal factors.

The theoretical approach of M. Max-Neef, on the other hand, takes into account the interaction of person and situation factors and does not have a hierarchical construct. Furthermore, it offers a separation of needs and need fulfillers, which are composed of the immaterial (e.g. emotions, feelings, perception, power, coercion or violence) and the material (in the archaeological context, these are finds and findings, the building and its spaces, and the body as physical remains) (see diagram, Fig. 1). In this way, it offers a promising concept for answering the questions of how needs are fulfilled and what motivates their fulfillment. The needs and the fulfiller of needs form the motive, from which the motivation is derived, which stimulates the action with the help of volition (the formation of an intention). The result or the consequences of these actions again enable, among other things, by the consideration of extrinsic and intrinsic incentives, conclusions as to the motive. In this way, it can be recorded in which way the needs are satisfied by the choice of the respective fulfiller of needs or that they are no longer satisfied. The material culture, the objects (the mobile and immobile archaeological remains) therefore serve as a starting point. The individual categories of

needs are seen as essential to understanding how and why purposes are pursued (Deci – Ryan 2000, 228).

The household goods are embedded in a network of relationships that follows the philosophical knowledge organisation concept of rhizomatics (root network) (Deleuze – Guattari, 1976). This concept is used to illustrate the Human-Scale Development Model (see diagram, Fig 1). It forms an ordering model to link the individual theoretical contents without forming a hierarchical structure. Thus, seven nodes (rhizomes) to be studied can be formed. These are motives as an expression of needs and need satisfaction, the individual (micro level), motivation, including intention, action, goal with outcome and consequence, community (meso level), and environment (physical and sociocultural), including nature (macro level). All rhizomes are connected and indicate the permanent, dynamic influence.

Human needs are interconnected and interact. Commonalities, contradictions and compromises are features of the process of need satisfaction. Needs are the same in all societies and across all historical periods and have a sociocultural character. For this reason, nine universal needs were defined by Max-Neef: subsistence, affection, freedom, idleness, identity, protection and security, understanding, participation and creativity. However, the way needs are fulfilled varies or changes over time and within societies. Thus, each group, embedded in an economic, social and political system, develops different methods to ensure the fulfillment of the same basic human needs. Thus, it is not the basic human needs that are socially determined, but the fulfillers of needs. If one follows this approach, food, for example, does not constitute a need in itself, but serves to fulfil the subsistence need. Through a physical state (namely hunger), an individual is motivated and stimulated to act (food is picked up from a plate with a fork and knife, for example). The result is the partial satisfaction of the subsistence need. Through this action, several needs are served simultaneously. Subsequently, however, new needs may be met, generated, or not met. The individual has to visit a latrine, for example, or wants to eat from a more representative plate in order to express belonging, or a lack of food means that fulfillment is no longer or only insufficiently guaranteed.

### **Archaeological adaptation of the theoretical approach**

Max-Neef divides needs into two categories. One category is formed by the universal needs mentioned before. In the course of archaeological research it is helpful to differentiate the second category in a more detailed manner. The need category of being, having, and interacting and acting is therefore divided into

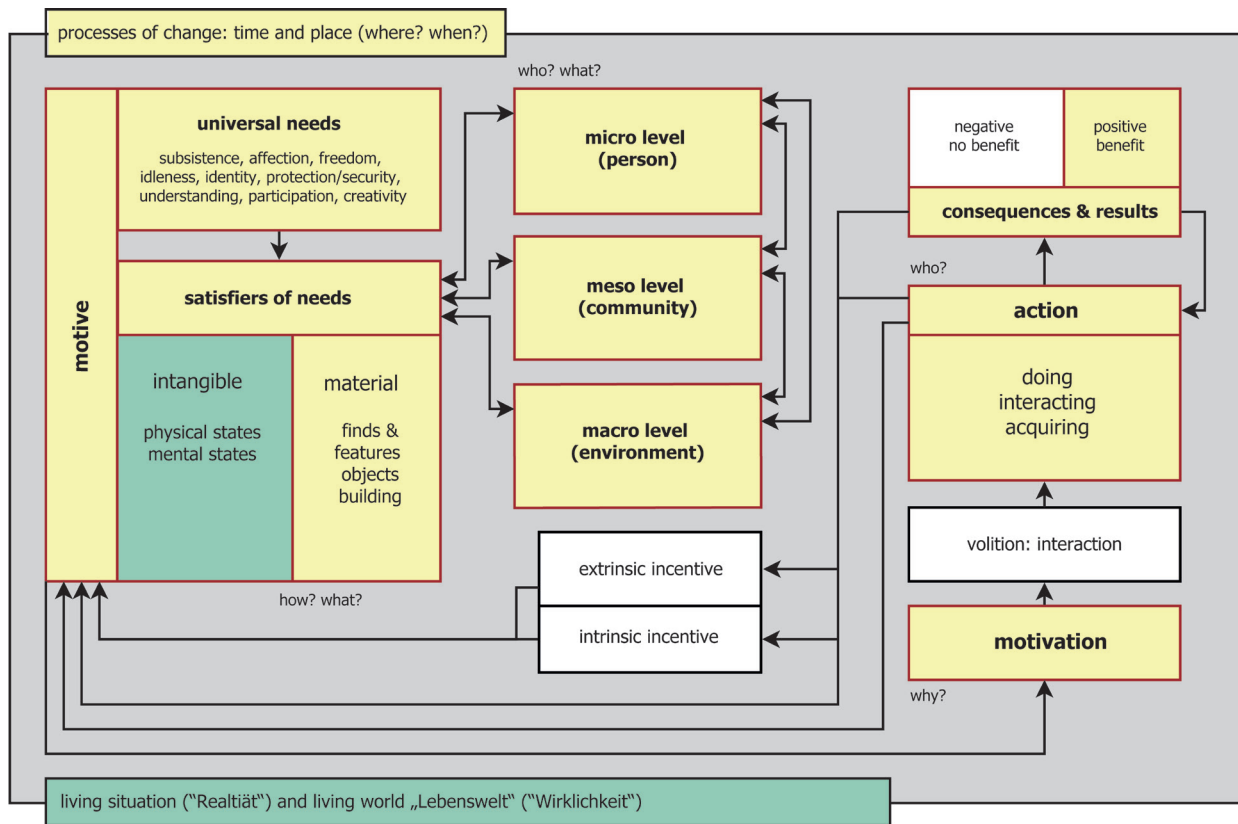


Fig. 1. Model of the fulfilment of needs in Hanfelden Castle: grey – living world and living situation, red frames – rhizomes, arrows – connections, yellow – archaeologically well graspable, green – archaeologically partly graspable, white – not graspable (© I. Winkelbauer).

two rhizomes for this analysis. This creates the nodes of motivation, including intention and the node of acting. This better captures the active, acting individual.

In the course of this analysis, the individual is viewed as an active organism capable of development, but not growth per se, and tending to integrate into larger social structures (Max-Neef et al. 1991, 8). Growth is finite, whereas development occurs until the end of a life. With the help of this view, the archaeological context of household archaeology avoids projecting a capitalist social order of the present onto the past, which, for example, shaped by feudalism or absolutism, was based on entirely different economic and social models. On the micro level, we find the acting individual (for example, the castle inhabitant(s) interacting with the respective household goods). The individual acts consciously or unconsciously or automatically. At the meso level, for example, the village community becomes active, and at the macro level, the physical and sociocultural environment, including nature, influences the fulfillers of needs or household goods. To satisfy the need for subsistence, for example, food intake must be ensured. Among other things, a cooking pot serves this purpose. This is produced by a local potter (individual of the micro level), the clay comes

from a supra-regionally existing clay pit (from nature – the macro level) and comes to its final destination through trade and is used by a community (meso level). The objects must also be considered from the perspective of the human-thing relationship (cf. Tietmeyer et al. 2010; Hahn 2014; Eggert et al. 2014; Stockhammer 2011; Stockhammer – Hahn 2015).

Through an individual's engagement, motivation, and mobilisation, needs become a potential and subsequently a resource – the fulfiller of needs (Max-Neef et al. 1991, 17). Material culture is understood in archaeology and cultural studies as a combination of the mental and the material (Eggert et al. 2014). This definition roughly corresponds to Max-Neef's concept of fulfiller of needs. They are derived from the micro, meso, and macro levels and have a permanent and dynamic influence.

Fulfillers of needs are used to fulfil needs and are the focus of this paper. Accordingly, household goods are fulfiller of needs. They change with the rhythm of history and vary according to circumstances (e.g. an important means of transportation in the Middle Ages was the horse/mule, now it is the car). They are related to all motivations and actions that enable the realisation of human universal needs and are in turn influenced by the outcomes and

consequences of the action (cf. the Rubicon model of Heckhausen [2018, 13–48]). There is no static and fixed relationship between needs and fulfiller of needs.

A fulfiller of needs can be used to satisfy multiple needs simultaneously. Conversely, a need may also require multiple fulfillers to be satisfied. Some needs can be inferred directly from archaeological source material (for example, a well for water collection) others only indirectly (for example, the desire for representation or power through prestigious buildings and elaborately designed household tableware) or are not tangible at all (for example, mental states, such as dreams or imaginations). Household goods can increase or decrease the performance or efficiency of a fulfiller of needs. They are subject to change (for example, fashion and style) and vary across communities and within communities across social classes (Max-Neef 1991 et al., 28).

### **Methodology of the interpretation process of household goods**

The graph (number) is intended to show a simplified methodological procedure that takes into account the theoretical model. With the help of this work process model, the household goods recovered are analysed.

First, the sources have to be identified. For the interpretation of the different rhizomes a taxonomy is used, which deals with the substance and materiality as well as the effective power of the things. The defined taxonomic ranges 1 to 8 are 1) spatial and temporal excavation or discovery data; 2) status documentation; 3) substance; 4) manufacture and use; 5) designation, meaning and function; 6) taphonomic processes; 7) dating and 8) a detailed description. The selection of categories is question oriented in order to capture the rhizome. The taxonomy contains eight data domains generated by the ongoing work process. It is important to mention that the processing of each level within a rhizome is not chronological, but depends on the lifetime of the mobile and immobile objects or household items. The materiality of a household good is constituted through human actions, such as production and use, and one can see what needs are met with it. By transforming an object, the perception of materiality or the substance of the object may change. As a result, other needs may be met. When the object is disposed of, another change takes place and a need may no longer be satisfied by the object.

The questions of 'how', 'through what' and 'why' are answered with the rhizome 'need fulfiller' and 'motivation', the 'who' with the rhizome 'action' and the transformation processes are captured with the 'consequences and results'. Through a synthesis of the elaborated material, different strategies of need fulfilment emerge. A synchronous and diachronic comparison can take place.

### **Discussion of the preliminary results on household items and their conclusions for need satisfaction based on Hanfelden Castle**

Hanfelden Castle in Styria, Austria, serves as a case study for the theoretical approaches. Hanfelden Castle was built in its compact form on the basis of older building fabric at the end of the 15th century on a toll road in the Pölstal valley and is located near an Alpine crossing, an important historical transit route. The four-winged complex shows numerous building phases. Today it presents itself mainly in its baroque state. Until the mid-19th century, the castle was owned by members of the lower nobility or the bourgeoisie (cf. Aigner 2002; IASH 2018). In addition to the archaeological finds and features (excavations 2016–2020), the building structures are another important source for shedding light on the household composition in the castle. In addition, there are pictorial and written sources (e.g. Theune – Winkelbauer 2019). Several inscriptions, inventory lists and church records exist, as well as numerous historical illustrations.

Mobile and immobile objects are presented to illustrate initial findings. A pruned beaker fragment as well as a chamber pot fragment from the archaeological excavations and an estate inventory list from 1767 in combination with a tiled stove serve as illustrative objects.

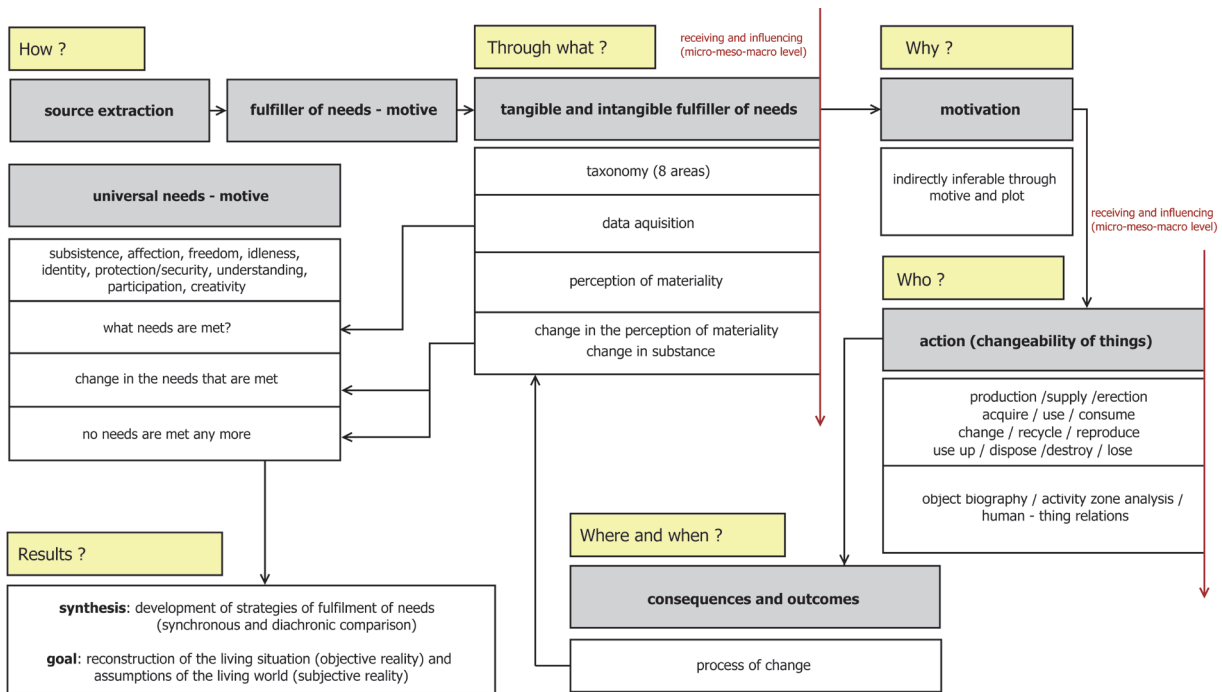
Partial satisfaction of the need for life is provided, for example, by the intake of liquid (action) by means of a cup filled with water or another liquid (fulfiller of needs). The physical state of thirst is found as the triggering motive. The need fillers 'water', 'liquid' and 'pruned beaker' motivate an action and, on the one hand, they lubricate from the micro, meso and macro level and are influenced by previous actions (e.g. water is obtained by digging a well, wine by cultivation, the pruned beaker has come into possession by trade, etc.). On the other hand, they are also influenced by the levels themselves (e.g. acceptance of wine drinking, accessibility of water in nature and a pruned beaker in an individualised style through forest glass production). Although numerous excavations in recent years have recovered a significant number of pruned beaker fragments in simple households, the cup from Hanfelden is more elaborately designed and does not correspond to a simple design. Such a pruned beaker has a certain representational character and can fulfil the need for participation and representation. However, the object may also have been acquired or used for pure aesthetic pleasure (fashion or style) or reflect the need for identity. It already represents ideas of the individual in its substance, but also in its materiality. As mentioned above, its use as tableware (daily or on special occasions) to hold liquids should not be forgotten. It fulfils the need for subsistence. However, the need for subsistence can also be fulfilled





Fig 2. Hanfelden Castle, Styria, view from the south to the four-winged castle (© W. Werner).

Fig. 3. Methodological model of investigation of archaeological features and objects (© I. Winkelbauer).



Micro level: individual (castle residents (nobles, servants, refugees) and associated persons (e.g. visitors), gender, sex, age, skin colour, regional and ethnic affiliation)  
 Meso level: community (castle community and associated groups (e.g. village or town nearby))  
 Macro level: physical and socio-cultural environment including nature (e.g. political system or climate)

Action: the acting individual (doing, interacting, acquiring resources, etc).

by other fulfillers of needs (e.g. a simple wooden cup). This leads us to different strategies of need fulfilment. Different inhabitants have differently crafted drinking vessels in use at the same time to satisfy the need for subsistence. Whether the cup was deliberately discarded, perhaps because it was out of fashion or broken, cannot be

determined from the find context. In any case, it could no longer guarantee the satisfaction of universal needs (cf. the rhizome 'Result and consequence' in the diagram, Fig. 1).

The inventory of 1767 lists the movable remains in Hanfelden Castle room by room. In combination with the documented building structure (e.g. immobile objects



Fig. 4. Pruned beaker fragment from Hanfelden Castle  
(© W. Werner).

such as tiled stoves or inscriptions), conclusions can be drawn about patterns of room use and living. The data of the building structure are evaluated by means of an activity zone analysis (cf. Schmid 2020). A heated room serves as a recreation room and provides protection from cold and security. It forms a central space for participation. The design of the tiled stove may also reflect the creative realisation of the builder/constructor as well as the client/principal in terms of style and fashion. The written source does not show the specific object, but refers to it. In order to make statements about form, construction, etc., we have to consider them in the context of the archaeological objects. A comparison of the source categories from Hanfelden shows that objects found in an archaeological context are not listed in the inventory due to the state of preservation or the value of the objects and vice versa. This means that both source categories do not reflect a complete household, but together they enable a more accurate reconstruction of the living situation of the inhabitants. In the case of Hanfelden Castle, there are quite a few tiles that have religious connotations. Some of the pieces can possibly be assigned to the tiled stove in the so-called Maximiliansstube. They convey the demands that were made on the spatial effect of this room. Due to the manufacturing technique and motifs of the tiles, e.g. with representations of saints (St Michael), the tiled stove can be dated with some caution to the first half of the 17th century (Winkelbauer 2018, 22). Based on the dating, according to written tradition, the Rauchenberger or Stübich family – both belonging to the lower nobility – are possible clients and users.

In addition to the tiled stove, an existing inscription in the Maximiliansstube – the so-called Maximilian's inscription – can also be used to attempt an interpretation of the identity-forming and participatory character of this room. The inscription was commissioned by Maximilian Rauchenberger around 1620. The end of the inscription is a clear statement of loyalty to the House of Austria. The inscription was placed in the castle practically



Fig. 5. Remains from the tiled stove in the so-called Maximiliansstube at Hanfelden Castle and one tile that probably belong to this tiled stove (© 5a: I. Winkelbauer; 5b: R. Fürhacker).

simultaneously with the beginning of the massive enforcement of the Counter-Reformation in Austria. The Rauchenberger, as Protestants, may have attempted in this situation to show publicly their allegiance to the



Habsburgs despite their non-Catholic denomination; perhaps even the word 'freyhait' is a small reference to the desire for religious freedom. It seems, therefore, that the commissioners around 1620 with the inscription clearly pursued the goal of establishing the memory of the great Habsburg, Maximilian I, respectively a close connection of Maximilian with the family of the Rauchenberger. The desire for participation in the social life of the lower nobility in Styria was great. The expression of loyalty was however of no use: the Rauchenberger had to sell Hanfelden Castle in 1628 and leave the country, as did numerous other Protestant noble families (*Theune – Winkelbauer 2019*, 95-97). Due to supra-regional, political factors of influence (macro level), the need for participation could not be fulfilled, although some course was set by the Rauchenberger to fulfill their needs. This illustrates that the fulfiller of needs is not only lucrative on the micro, meso and macro levels, but is also influenced by these levels or arises from them and influences the respective individuals and their actions (rural exodus).

The third example is a chamber pot found in the latrine. It was probably in use at the end of the 18th century. It is a household object that was in use almost every day and was intended to serve the substantial need (relieving oneself of the need to urinate). The need filler 'chamber pot' represents thereby a not compellingly necessary object – the course to the latrine would be possible – but it facilitates everyday life. The chamber pot from Hanfelden is not subject to any elaborate stylistic or fashionable form. It is a simply made pot with a wide brim, which can be found in this design from the 16th to the 19th century. Thus, with little effort in production and easy availability, it was possible to improve the quality of life of the occupants who used it. However, it can be assumed that it was not a luxury item and was therefore accessible to every social group. Accordingly, the chamber pot could have been used by the nobility or servants. For this reason, we cannot speak of a representative object or a status symbol. Therefore, no identity claim is derived by the object. However, the chamber pot does serve the need for freedom and idleness. By using the object, one gains time and the use is simply more comfortable than taking a longer way to the latrine. In addition to the physical states, the performance of the emergency toilet, the mental states should also be briefly mentioned. The use of the chamber pot shows that neither discretion nor shame was associated with this act, for example. The idea of privacy while doing one's business played no or a subordinate role.

Presumably, the chamber pot broke in the course of use and was therefore disposed of in the latrine. With the disposal, the life cycle of the object ends and no more need is met.

## Conclusion

The examples have made it clear that the fulfiller of needs can have different characteristics and are under a permanent and dynamic influence with regard to motivations, actions and the micro, meso and macro levels. Through the presented household objects, often in connection with written sources and the building structure, the realisation of the universal needs can be recorded and results as well as consequences of the action can be assessed. It becomes clear that there is no static and fixed connection between needs and their fulfillers. A fulfiller of needs can be used to satisfy several needs at the same time.

Furthermore, it becomes clear that no hierarchical structure of needs is obvious. Household objects can serve different needs as well as several needs at the same time and represent the individual and dynamic meaning of the respective users or owners. What a wooden drinking cup is for one person an elaborately designed printed beaker is for another. Central to this is the idea that the household object does not represent a need per se, but is merely used to fulfil delineated, universally valid human needs. This opens up a change of perspective for household archaeology in terms of the interpretation of the objects.

The individual as an actor is inextricably linked to fulfiller of needs. Need satisfaction, as already indicated in the examples, can only be achieved by the acting individual's taking into account the micro, meso and macro levels. Moreover, the individual is not only a social but also a biological being (*Schroer 2017*), which is why the need for subsistence should not be underestimated and physical issues such as violence, dying and death must also be taken into account. Again, not all elements can be recorded through archaeological sources. This means that household goods alone are not sufficient to provide a more complete picture of the living situation of the former castle inhabitants. Other sources, such as the inventory lists or inscriptions, must be included, even if other perspectives and aspects are in the foreground here.

Communities and societies are formed by people (figurations) or consist of people. For the satisfaction of almost all needs, humans need the help of the community. The community and the socio-cultural environment therefore also have agency (in the sense of 'agency') vis-à-vis the individual (cf. *Bourdieu 2015, 1983, 1990; Elias 1969, 1987*). The individual is also guided and motivated by, for example, social norms and laws. If the macro level is to be considered and evaluated in terms of human needs, it is not enough to recognise only the possibilities that groups or individuals have to satisfy their needs. It is also necessary to examine the extent to which the environment suppresses, tolerates or promotes people's possibilities. One question is to what extent it is possible for individuals to influence the structures that affect their

opportunities (*Max-Neef et al.* 1991, 24). While the household objects and actions of the Rauchenberger in Hanfelden, for example, push participation in aristocratic life in Styria as a possible central message and show a willingness to conform to a certain extent, the external political structures force them to abandon their need to participate. In the field of medieval archaeology, R. Schreg (2018) has recently argued for the assumption of a complex interaction between humans and nature. This complex approach ultimately yields different strategies of need fulfilment and enables a reconstruction of the life situation as well as assumptions about the lifeworld to be made.

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