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Mats Burström & Anders Carlsson

The Swedish Archaeological Society

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The Swedish Archaeological Society

The Swedish Archaeological Society was founded in 1947 and the area of interest comprises all aspects of archaeology, both native and foreign. The Society is the only common body for professionals, independent of their posts at different departments and institutions. In 1947 it counted about 60 members and today more than 500 scholars belong to the Society. The Society can therefore act as spokesman for Swedish archaeological opinion on matters of national and international importance.

From 1951 to 1978 the Swedish Archaeological Society presented six volumes of *Swedish Archaeological Bibliography*, reviewing archaeological research published during the period 1939-1975. However, after the appearance in 1974 of *Nordic Archaeological Abstracts* (published annually), the

need for these brief reviews diminished. Instead, the Society published two volumes of *Swedish Archaeology*, each containing somewhat more exhaustive comments on research published in a five-year period (1976-1980 and 1981-1985). This tradition will be continued within the journal *Current Swedish Archaeology*. In volume 3, 1995, there will be a retrospective analysis of the period 1986-1990.

This journal, *Current Swedish Archaeology*, was started in 1993, and is an important part of the work that the Society is engaged in. The Society also organizes seminars and excursions. Formal matters are dealt with at the annual general meeting. The Society also holds a thematic meeting every year for Swedish archaeologists, the first of which will be held in Gothenburg this year (1994).

Editors' Preface

Last year - 1993 - the first volume of *Current Swedish Archaeology* (CSA) was published. The motivation for starting the magazine was the belief that Swedish archaeology ought to become more fully integrated into the international debate and be made available to a non-Scandinavian public. To our delight, the magazine has attracted considerable interest and it is therefore a pleasure for us to present the second volume.

In many respects the past year has been an eventful one for Swedish archaeology. At the start of the year a State investigation was presented, which treated the question of whether privately owned companies should be given the right to conduct archaeological rescue excavations. The type of change proposed by the investigation led to an intensive debate where most archaeological institutes were critical of the change. A parliamentary decision on the question has not yet been taken.

As a consequence of the current economic recession, the State has undertaken during the past year large infrastructural projects in the form of motorway and railway development. This has led to many, extensive archaeological rescue excavations. It has once again brought to the fore the question of the scientific and popular-scientific output of the rescue excavations. The output is not satisfactory and the responsibility for it rests with the entire archaeological community.

The general public's interest in archaeology, however, is great and appears to be growing. One indication of this is the record

number of people who want to begin university studies in the subject. Other expressions of the interest in archaeology are the amateur archaeological societies as well as the many courses available in educational associations.

The great interest in history is also reflected in the commercial success of historical novels during recent years. During 1993 this interest has also been channeled through a large exhibition project - "The Swedish History" - which has engaged museums in the entire country. Archaeology has, however, been given surprisingly small space in these exhibitions.

In the interdisciplinary debate the discussion on archaeology's position between science and art has intensified. Many believe that it is no longer important to maintain the traditional boundaries between disciplines, and that archaeology should instead be regarded as a general humanistic subject. Another question in the debate is how archaeological texts should be formed - objectively analysing or subjectively interpreting?

The next volume of CSA will contain a retrospective analysis of Swedish archaeology during the period 1986-1990. In this way we continue the tradition begun by CSA's predecessor, *Swedish Archaeology*. The following volume of CSA - vol. 4, 1996 - will have the same character as the present volume. We hope for many thought-provoking contributions!

Mats Burström & Anders Carlsson
The Swedish Archaeological Society

