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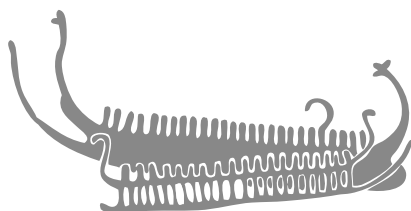
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Editors:
Fredrik Fahlander & Anders Högberg

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THE SWEDISH ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

In 1947 the statutory meeting for the Swedish Archaeological Society took place at the Museum of National Antiquities. The Society is a common body for professional Swedish archaeologists, regardless of specialty. According to the statutes the purpose of the Society is to further Swedish archaeological research and to support this research by granting scholarships. The Society shall especially take care of the vocational interest of the archaeologists. This task shall be carried out by taking part in the public debate, by influencing the public opinion, and by being a body to which proposed measures are submitted for consideration. The Society arranges discussions and seminars on different archaeological topics, and every second year the Society holds a thematic meeting for Swedish archaeologists.

In 1993 the annual journal *Current Swedish Archaeology* began to be issued. The journal has since then contained articles mirroring current archaeological research and theoretical trends. The Society's board has eleven members from universities, museums and archaeological institutions in various parts of Sweden. Anita Synnestvedt, from the Department of Historical Studies at Gothenburg University, is the present chairman.

EDITORIAL

2014 has been a turbulent year for the humanities in Scandinavia. The financial support for Swedish scientific journals we reported in last year's issue still remains to be resolved. We have been granted support for the next two issues of CSA, but the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet) will no longer support scientific journals financially after 2017. Another debated issue this year was the proposal to end the financial support for Sweden's three Mediterranean institutes. The proposal was later withdrawn, but the future funding of the institutes is still uncertain (see the notice by Anders Högberg in this issue). And, in Denmark, a Minister has proposed sharp cuts in the funding of a category of "unnecessary" university courses (mainly in the humanities) that do not directly lead to employment. We will continue to report on these matters and the status of the humanities in coming issues.

On a more positive note, the last year's keynote theme on the possible convergences between archaeometric and traditional humanist archaeologies spawned a dynamic debate and discussion in the Scandinavian archaeological community. This year we follow up that topic by looking ahead and reflecting on how the new types of data, mainly from archaeometry, might change the way we do and think archaeology. Besides the growing number of this type of studies, there is also an increasing implementation and standardization of ICT in heritage studies that has enabled archaeologists to handle a much wider range of "big data". The European Union supported project *ARIADNE* is but one example which aims to enable trans-national access of European research data for digital analysis. This work is far from completed, but as a consequence of digitization and standardization, different heritage data can be combined and used on a much larger scale than previously. Interpretations of local data now have a significantly greater potential to go from generalization to synthetization.

A question that arises is how this development could affect the way we do archaeology and our interpretations of the past. Do these developments mean that we face a new paradigm, or even a revolution in archaeological knowledge? If that is so, what consequences will ensue? Will the access to such databases necessarily lead to a return of generalizing “grand narratives” or will it still be meaningful to work on the small scale with singularized histories? Kristian Kristiansen at the Department of Historical Studies in Gothenburg took on the challenge of writing a keynote on these topics, and we are pleased to present a thought-provoking and not always consensual discussion with comments from Elizabeth Chilton, Alfredo Gonzalez Ruibal, Isto Huvila, Stefan Larsson and Elisabeth Niklasson.

This year’s issue also contains five research articles which all reflect current topics in Scandinavian archaeology. Sophie Bergerbrant conducts a critical discussion of the corded skirt during the Bronze Age. Corded skirts have been suggested to be an attribute of unmarried women, or primarily ritual attire. Bergerbrant shows that when the full range of data is considered it seems apparent that corded skirts were worn by women of any age, from children to elderly. Joakim Goldhahn’s article likewise concerns the Bronze Age. He discusses engraved depictions of Bronze Age metal objects in different contexts and argues that these should be understood as representing special animated objects with a certain level of agency. Frederic B. Pearl reassesses the chronological and iconographical debate regarding the Gotlandic picture stones. In particular, he discusses the artistic style and iconography of the Hablingbo Havor II and När Smiss III stones, and suggests a date to a period between the early 5th and the mid 7th century AD. Anna Arnberg and Göran Gruber present new perspectives in public archaeology based on the recent excavations in Motala. They argue that the full potential of contract archaeology only can be reached by an upgraded self-image that embraces a broader range of public approaches. Finally, Johan Normark discusses the fluid and flexible aspects of water in archaeological contexts. Water, Normark argues, can only be fully understood as a “hyperfact” – something that is neither natural nor cultural, but is manifested in different states and forms in various archaeological features such as ceramics and architecture, as well as in agricultural systems and ritual contexts.

We hope that you will find this year’s issue interesting and stimulating. Do not forget to submit manuscripts for the next issue before the end of March.

Fredrik Fahlander & Anders Högberg, editors