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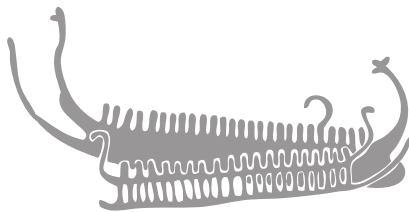
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Editors:  
Fredrik Fahlander & Anders Högberg

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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.

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 sixteen members from universities, museums and archaeological institutions in various parts of Sweden. Joakim Wehlin from Dalarna museum, is the present chairman.

# EDITORIAL

*Current Swedish Archaeology* has published keynote discussions over the last eight years. Introduced for the first time in volume 17, 2009, urgent archaeological topics have been discussed by Scandinavian and international researchers from many different perspectives. Over the years we have received much positive feedback on keynotes, and many of the discussions are well referred to and also used in the teaching of archaeology students at several universities. This is something we are glad and proud of.

In this year's keynote, however, we have done things somewhat differently. The theme of this year's volume is *The changing roles of archaeology in Swedish museums*. In the last few decades archaeology in Swedish museums has undergone major changes. From being a recognizable part of museum activities, archaeology has increasingly disappeared from the museums' field of work. National regulation and development within contract archaeology is an evident contributory factor to this. In a competitive market, a transparent economy is required. No grants, subsidies or contributions are allowed. All work must be financed by the market. In many regions, the consequence of this has been that former archaeological departments at museums have been cut off from the rest of the museum organization. Instead of being run by a museum, contract archaeology is now run by companies. As a result museums have lost their connection to research-based knowledge production within archaeology, and contract archaeology has lost its link to the many skills a museum holds. This has had consequences:



For the first time since the regional museums of cultural history were established in Sweden, archaeology and archaeologists no longer have a given role in these museums.

This is the topic of this year's keynote discussion in *Current Swedish Archaeology*. And, since it is a topic that involves and affects many persons working with archaeology, we have decided to make this keynote special. Instead of having one main text for others to comment upon and then leave space for a comment on comments, we have decided to invite a great many more persons to participate. And instead of one main text, we have written a short inspirational piece to start the discussion and then invited others to comment on and discuss the topic. In all, this year's keynote discussion includes fourteen texts with contributions from archaeologists working in companies, at museums, at universities and within administrative state authorities.

The current issue also contains six articles which reflect a broad range of topics in contemporary Scandinavian archaeology. Sigmund Oehrl has performed 3D analyses of three Gotlandic picture stones and discovered new figures as well as additional details, which allows for new interpretations of the imagery. Ylva Sjöstrand's contribution also focuses on images. In her analysis of three Neolithic rock art sites with red ochre paintings from northern Sweden, she demonstrates how they do not fit within a single coherent northern tradition of rock art. Instead, Sjöstrand argues for the semiotic flexibility of the elk motif at different places.

Anna Kjellström discusses the practical handling of holy corporeal remains during the Middle Ages in Sweden. Proceeding from detailed osteological analysis of osseous materials from three different contexts, Kjellström distinguishes three physical phases in the cult of corporeal relics. Alexandra Ion's contribution also discusses human remains, but focuses on how they are studied within ancient genomic research. She points out how the new scientific methodologies influence research questions and narratives of the past and argues for a more balanced interdisciplinary approach.

Gustav Wollentz examines how the Iron Age ring fort of Sandby Borg on Öland might fit the concept of difficult heritage. He reveals how the alleged idea of long-term avoidance of the site is not sustained by interviews with the local population. On the contrary, the older generation generally has positive memories of the place. Wollentz concludes that the idea of avoidance is a result of the recent discovery of the massacre, which illustrates how archaeology can trigger new sets of engagements and responses with respect to the recent past. The last article by Helene Martinsson-Wallin and Joakim Wehlin concerns "south stones" and

other constructions in relation to Bronze Age cairns on Gotland. Based on new C14 dates and recent excavations they establish a rather long chronological span of various practices in relation to these features. They suggest that the constructions were ritualized places and part of an ancestral cult, which over time form a link between the cairns and the ship settings.

Last but not least, a notice from the board of the Swedish Archaeological Society is written to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Society.

As some of you might have read in previous editorials and notices, the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet) has over the years been slightly unclear about how they intend to fulfil their commitment to finance the publication of Swedish peer-reviewed research journals. This year the research council decided to cut funding for *Current Swedish Archaeology*. Even though this is a major drawback for our journal, we are optimistic about finding alternative funding to keep on delivering weighty volumes to you readers each year.

Fredrik Fahlander & Anders Högberg,  
editors of *Current Swedish Archaeology*