

WITHOUT MUSEUMS WITH A LONG-TERM PERSPECTIVE, PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY IS AT RISK OF BECOMING A DAY-TO-DAY EVENT

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Public archaeology within contract archaeology represents a considerable communication effort. This is also the aim of the government expressed in the change of legislation in 2014 when communication came to be comprised by the Historic Environment Act. Communication is done at most of the larger excavations, with guided tours, lectures, information on websites and exhibitions. Sometimes more ambitious communication projects are also undertaken, such as popular science books and other publications.

From a European point of view Sweden is a pioneer in including communication as one of the products covered by the budget paid for by the developer. Many countries are still struggling for contract archaeology to include something more than the basic documentation and to get resources for conservation of artefacts. In other places very good communication is done. In France, for example, thematic and regional overviews for the general public are presented based on the archaeological results.

Contract archaeology constantly produces new source material and interesting results that give new knowledge about the past. But, contract archaeology has difficulties reaching out in society with its results and creating research about relevant subjects. These problems originate

from the connection to individual projects. There are resources within the project budget for research about the excavated site, but it is more difficult to meet the demand for historic knowledge. What society needs is not research about the individual sites excavated by that contract archaeology, but histories such as: *Mälardalen during the Iron Age* or *The Medieval Town*. The results of contract archaeology could be an excellent means to create relevant and useful knowledge but today much of its potential is unexploited. Syntheses are constantly in demand but resources are lacking in the system.

For communication of the results to the general public the picture is the same. Communication takes place about the different sites during the excavation. The communication stops when the excavation is over but the results need to be transferred to continued communication activities. There has to be a base for long-term activities where contacts between different parties can develop. There is a need for comprehensive knowledge building as a basis for communication and a permanency in time and space. This is where the museums have a role that cannot be filled by anyone else.

Museums have a very important role as a link between the archaeologist in contract archaeology or the researcher and the general public. The assignment for the regional museums is not clear in this area but when it comes to archaeology it should be to give the citizens access to new knowledge and recent archaeological results. This can hardly been done without relevant competence in the museums. That the museums consider archaeology to be an important activity and that they have good archaeological competence is necessary if we want to meet the national goals for culture heritage as regards people's participation, education and knowledge.