

THE MARVEL OF CAULDRONS

A Reflection on the United Stories of Archaeology

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Archaeology and heritage, in whatever form, can be understood today as either the past that should be managed as something outside the present and by professionals who shape a master narrative, or as something present and open to a diversity of interpretations and narrations in the present. In this text I will examine the consequences of both these perspectives and end with the conclusion that it is a question of ontological care, the kind of care which, by means of a critical narrative, must be open to all the stories involved.

Keywords: Gotland, Vestland cauldrons, narration, care, heritage, stories

INTRODUCTION

Using an example from an excavation on the island of Gotland, this essay focuses on different stories and their relationship to a dominating master narrative. It is stressed that this narrative, as well as a directive for archaeological practice that is sanctioned by the State and governed by authorities, is based on an obsolete system that not only misses the ontological aspects of care but also the multitude of stories that evolve around heritage and archaeological practice. This text is structured around four ‘stories’. Inside these stories a fifth story is at work – the ‘story’ of debate, discussion, polemics or rhetoric, a story that must, like the others, always be there if archaeology and heritage are to make any sense beyond a repetition of the master narrative. This ‘story’ is written in italics.¹

1 I want to thank Anders Högberg for making me aware of this.

‘Archaeology’ is for me ‘heritage’ or a part of heritage because it creates and builds on a narration of the past that is significant in the present. My examples might be conventional and already extensively discussed, yet the point of this text is to emphasise the relationship between the united stories of archaeology/heritage and the ontology of care.

STORY NUMBER ONE: THROUGH TRAVELLING

I am on my way to doing it again. I will travel across the Baltic to a place that hardly anyone knew or thought about before we started to open the doors to the past. It is 3 July 2004 and the weather is warm. People have left the doors of their cars open and are sitting in the cars or standing in the parking lot smoking and talking. Most of the people are on their way to their summerhouses, some of which are newly built and others of which are very old farmsteads rebuilt into modern luxury homes. The old farms have lost their future; the farmers have vanished into the contemporary world, and rich people from the same world have reoccupied the farms, turning them into lively places in the summer but closed and lifeless buildings in the winter darkness. I am on my way to Gotland, an island in approximately the middle of the Baltic Sea and an ‘atoll’ with an appealing history. Visby is the main town and a World Heritage site. Looking back at the moment when I was standing in the harbour waiting to board the ship, I visualise myself as someone taking part in a ‘caretaking’ activity. An archaeological excavation is a caretaking enterprise, I recall, and it is the absence of a caretaking context that makes the object historical (Heidegger 1990:432; see also Karlsson 1998). It occurs to me that in archaeological narratives we use the word ‘belong’, which places us at a distance from the object. The object is ‘thrown’ back into a past to which it should belong according to our teleological perspective and the time/space paradigm. Yet, the object is still in our hands. This means that it is we and our time that take care of the (historical) object and it is among us that it will find its meaning. Heritage does not exist because it is historical and has belonged to a distant time-context, but because we are taking care of it in the present.

A historical object cannot exist side by side with objects that are logically linked to each other in our everyday activities, but neither can the object float in some kind of void. We have therefore constructed special actions, such as archaeology, museums and heritage management, with which to deal with all the (historical) objects that insist on our attention. We have done this with the intention of caring for these objects and allocating them a meaningful place in the present through narration.

Many years have passed since I first sat waiting in the parking lot, and the archaeological project would have been nothing but memories if it were not for two marvellous cauldrons. These two 'Roman Age' bronze vessels have haunted me since 2003 and it is time to end the story. The point of departure is the ruins of a 1500-year-old building situated in Vamlingbo parish in the southern part of Gotland.

Gotland holds a special position in Swedish heritage, history and tourism, dating back to the late nineteenth century when members of the Swedish royal family started to use the island for recreation. This brought not only the bourgeoisie to the island but also artists and scientists.

The famous Swedish eighteenth-century scientist Carl Linnaeus spent time on the island already in 1741 (Linnaeus 2007), which not only has an impact on today's tourism but also affected scientists, artists and bourgeoisie tourism during the nineteenth century (Bohman 1994; Nilsson & Lindquist 2006:8). The tourists travelled to Gotland to experience the exotic and authentic (Bohman 1994:12). In 1885 the *Swedish Tourist Association* became an important part of the tourist organisation on Gotland (Bohman 1994:14), promoting the authentic and exotic. Heritage and tourism is significant for Gotland and the island is linked to something that has been called 'cultural tourism' (Nilsson & Lindquist



Figure 1. The author excavating the marvellous cauldrons. Photo Johan Hegardt.

2006:8), a form of tourism that differs from 'eco-tourism' and the more common 'mass tourism'. Gotland also has, which already Linnaeus pointed out, an exceptional environment (Linnaeus 2007) and it holds a special place in Swedish history (Lerbom 2003:138ff; Olesen 2001).

During the last fifty years Gotland has undergone vast social and economical changes. One hard blow was the closing in December 2004 of the military forces that for centuries had been stationed on the island (Ellebring 2005). The Social Democratic government, which had ordered the shutdown, tried to replace the loss of workplaces by moving parts of the State-governed and Stockholm-based Swedish National Heritage Board (hereafter SNHB) to the island. The politicians thought that Gotland had a fantastic heritage and it was therefore reasonable to move parts of the SNHB to the island. This gives an indication of the impact Gotland has on cultural heritage thinking in Sweden and how entangled the Swedish heritage is with the political structures of the Swedish society.

Cultural heritage management has become an industry in today's global and postcolonial setting, sometimes playing a problematic part in national, political, ethnical and social situations and occasionally even serving as a trigger of conflicts. Sweden, as well as other Scandinavian countries, has a long history of heritage management, which can make us believe that we only have to turn to Sweden if we need a good example. But this is not the whole truth.

Swedish heritage management and archaeology are organised in a way that keeps the 'field' (Bennett et al. 2009 with reference to Bourdieu 1984) fixed. When someone becomes a part of the sector there is no need to do anything else than repeat a master narrative that has been in use for decades. It might be reasonable to avoid the risk of being questioned by avoiding questioning the structures that one lives off, but on the other hand this is the unsound part of a well organised, politically structured and by a bureaucracy governed national heritage management. The interesting thing is that the education system delivers – usually, but not always – a very loyal group of employees to the system (Hegardt 2005; Hegardt & Källén 2011).

Archaeology, heritage and tourism are about travelling to remote places such as Gotland (Clifford 1997; see also Holtorf 2004). Märten Stenberger's (1898–1973) famous volume *Vallhagar: A Migration Period Settlement on the Island of Gotland, Sweden* (Stenberger 1955) is introduced through a travel description. 'If we follow the coast...' Stenberger writes, and he continues by picturing how the traveller slowly, and on smaller and smaller roads, reaches the 'remains of the Iron Age settlement', a settlement 'concealed in a meadow, sparsely covered with hazel,

ash and a few oaks, which is enclosed by two branches of the “church road”” (Stenberger 1955:18f).

The difference between the past and the present is expressed in the travel metaphor, or as John W. Griffith has put it in his book *Joseph Conrad and the Anthropological Dilemma: ‘Bewildered Traveller’* (1995:2): ‘Both Conrad and anthropologists, Victorian and modern, occupy a position similar to that of the traveller in Kierkegaard’s allegory; they are borderland observers’.²

Yet, as travellers we must return. If we don’t there is something wrong with us. Being ‘out there’ includes the enigmatic, cryptic or even paradoxical aspect of coming back. We must return. In *Textual Traffic*, Subramanian Shankar examines this phenomenon in more detail and concludes that the colonial travel narrative ‘projects the journey as circular’ (Shankar 2001:87). Shankar underlines that: ‘The traveller departing from Europe in quest of a difference which is presumed by the “rhetoric of distance” is expected to bear witness to what he (or, more rarely, she) finds there’ (ibid). For the colonialist traveller, as well as for any archaeologist travelling to a nearby site, it is the possibility of returning with testimony that justifies the journey.

Both Stenberger and I begin our stories as travellers, which becomes a metaphor for the archaeological project and for the narrative itself. The picture shaped in words relates to a process and to a beginning, a starting point from which the process of the archaeological excavation slowly expands and transforms itself from this physical and practical procedure into the text, the narrative, which is then, when the book is again opened by me, or by you, restarted in the process of reading. There is always a beginning, though it is also always enigmatic, a point from which every narrative embarks, such as the traveller.

The physics of travelling and the metaphor, for example the absurd statement that archaeologists travel in time, give archaeologists glamour. We use the travel metaphor to highlight our competence and position as people who have the intellectual and physical powers to overcome the hardship of travelling and the borderline of time. The travel metaphor also has an important role in making the past exotic, primitive and wild (Fabian 1983).

Both the explicit aspect of travelling and the metaphoric and allegoric are used by Stenberger to give a special nerve to the narrative. The narrow road that Stenberger describes tells us that we are travelling not

2 In his allegory Kierkegaard describes a traveller on the borderline of an unknown kingdom, a line that he cannot cross yet from which he can still obtain a general idea of the kingdom on the other side.

only on an old road but also on an old unknown road to the past that is 'concealed in a meadow, sparsely covered with hazel, ash and a few oaks.' With Stenberger we are travelling on a road into a dark and historically lost wilderness.

I am on my way to a place further south of the Vallhagar Iron Age settlement. I will pass this settlement at a speed not comparable to that of my former archaeological travellers. There will be a sign on the right side of the road telling me when I pass it.

STORY NUMBER TWO: THE EXCAVATION

We travelled and we returned. This testimony justifies our journey.

Together with my colleagues Fredrik Andersson and Gullög Norquist, I received a grant in 2000 from the Faculty of Arts at Uppsala University for a project on the historiography of Swedish and Greek Bronze Age archaeology (Andersson 2005; Hegardt 2007). Initially we had no intention of excavating, but we changed our minds when given the opportunity to investigate the remains of an early 'Iron Age' building. It might sound contradictory to excavate an Iron Age site within a project dealing with the archaeological construction of the 'Bronze Age'. However, since we were interested in the construction of narratives these remains were a perfect place for such a study.

Our aim was to use the outcome of the excavation in the publications that would come out of the larger project. An archaeological excavation is, however, not always predictable. Building remains have been excavated before and the constructions and finds are often similar. Our excavation would probably only confirm this. Instead we could focus on the narratives. This plan was cruelly disturbed by the appearance of two bronze vessels, a discovery that we could not predict, even though Frands Herschend has argued to the contrary (Herschend 2007:18). One summer morning in 2003 the two cauldrons materialised out of the soil. We could see the story coming, but it was too large for us to deal with at first.

Most archaeologists would probably be very happy if they found something like this, since if you travel as an archaeologist this is exactly what you should return with. For us, however, this was not pleasant. We had no intention of returning as 'heroes'. Nevertheless, they did open for an analysis of the narratives of archaeology and cultural heritage management in Sweden, a story that I had no chance to stop from slowly taking form. I had to deal with it in one way or another, and maybe I should have understood from the beginning that if you are studying narratives you are very close to where power is.

Fridarve 1:4, RAÄ 37, Vamlingbo parish, Gotland, Sweden (56058'44.33"N –18016'19.72"E)

As of 2006 archaeological excavations must be reported to the authorities following a digital report format (Redovisning av utförd arkeologisk undersökning). Through this standardisation excavations will be reported in exactly the same way in the first stage. The second stage is called 'Basic Documentation'. These two stages of documentation are related to what the authorities call 'General Excavations'. The next step is called 'Special Excavations' and should be reported by means of, for example, books and lectures. When this has been done a concluding report should be published (Vägledning för tillämpning av Kulturminneslagen).

Through these directives the authorities not only control contract archaeology but also university research. It might not appear problematic at first, but when one studies the directives in more detail it becomes clear that SNHB together with local authorities controls the questions and therefore the narrative, something that is extremely problematic not only for university research but also for contract archaeology. I am not, however, against reports. The critical point here deals with the question of who defines what a report or a scientific text is and what it should include.

The evolving narrative

The excavation was done every summer between 2001 and 2004. Our questions were: What happens when an archaeological excavation is placed in the middle of a summer paradise peopled by wealthy summer holiday visitors from the mainland and by local farmers? Are archaeological excavations based on a narrative that already exists and does this narrative evolve, like a text, in front of the excavation process?

We were allowed by the authorities to start the excavation on these premises. Yet, when it became clear to the authorities that we did take our questions seriously they changed their minds. The confused question that the authorities asked themselves was what would happen to archaeology, the finds, the report, and all other aspects of the standardised archaeological master narrative that they hang on to and which gives them a living. The two Roman Age vessels did not make the situation easier for anyone.

The remains of the building measured approximately 25 x 10 m and were oriented in a north-south direction. A construction roughly 12 x 3 m was situated about 12 m to the north. We placed a trench in both constructions.

The trench in the building remains measured about 7 x 3 m. There was an accumulation of stones against the wall and boulders scattered outside the building, material that originated from the wall. When the accumulation of stones and boulders was removed, flat sandstone and Burgsvik limestone appeared underneath a thin layer of soil. They must have been placed there to create a kind of terrace. In between the stones were small fragments of pottery.

We also came across three hearths. One appeared in the eastern part of the trench. The other two belonged to the western part of the trench.

One third of the hearth in the eastern part of the trench was covered by the wall of the building remains, which clearly shows that the hearth is older than the building remains. A ¹⁴C sample gave a date of 1450 +/- 45 BP (calibrated). The two hearths inside the building remains were clearly contrasted against the white sand. A ¹⁴C sample gave a date of 1650 +/- 35 BP (calibrated) (Possnert 2004, 2009).

There were no indications that the house had been on fire. Yet, two boulders inside the skin-wall showed fragmentation. Soil covering more than a square metre close to the boulders was dark and 'greasy' and directly connected with the fragmentised stones in the wall. Gravel of limestone, sandstone and granite appeared in the soil, underlining that this was not a geological phenomenon but something made by humans.

A stone or a boulder lives a chemical life. If the chemical code is changed, the character might change. As a consequence, the boulder might fall apart. One of the most effective chemical devices for achieving such an effect is urine from pigs. We therefore believed we were dealing with a pigpen. However, earth samples, which were impressively analysed by Sven Isaksson, did not confirm this notion (Isaksson 2009).

We identified two 'Jotnian' sandstones inside the building. This type of stone often has one flat side and one side more rounded, making it a perfect roof-bearing fundament. Both stones had the flat side up. This is ethnographic candy and empirical hot stuff. When John Nihlén reconstructed the remains of a building at Lojsta in the 1930s (Nihlén & Boëthius 1933) he used the flat stones that the excavation had uncovered as fundaments for the roof-bearing posts of the reconstructed house.

The marvellous cauldrons

Since we had a metal detector at hand we searched through the entire area. We found nothing but bottle caps and other small things such as parts of modern machines, which are usual in places like this, but we did get a very concise indication at the southern part of the northern construction. It would be not only stupid but also irresponsible not to make use of the metal detector indication in a situation like this.



Figure 2. The marvellous cauldrons. Photo Johan Hegardt.

We do not think that this construction is the remains of a building. The absence of a skin-wall technique and the non-existence of any kind of wall in the north and in the west strengthen this assumption.

The trench measured approximately 5 x 1 m and was oriented north-west/south-east. At first, we had to work through a fairly tough layer of large stones. Underneath this layer and roughly 0.5 m below the surface and inside a soil-filled 'room' were two so-called Vestland cauldrons. The cauldrons stood in greyish sand, and 0.2 m west of them was a concentration of lightly burned animal bones, excellently analysed by Jan Storå (Storå 2009). Fragments of fine ceramic were also uncovered here. The ceramic pieces were of a different type than the ones found in the terrace.

The two cauldrons, each measuring roughly 0.3 m across, did not contain anything except soil that was similar to the surrounding sand-mixed soil.

When the two cauldrons had been removed, the rest of the trench, east of a large boulder in the middle of the trench, was excavated down to a level of sterile sand. A firm surface of small stones, mostly limestone and sandstone, appeared at the top. This packing of stones was 1.2 m long and 1 m wide, and ended in two boulders. Underneath the stone packing, a layer of 'greasy' soil appeared. This layer included small sections of burned and unburned bones, ceramics and charcoal. The impression was that we were dealing with a layer affected by organic material (Isaksson 2009; Storå 2009).

The condition of the vessels

The two bronze cauldrons were in good condition, according to Margaretha Klockhoff (2007) who was able to conserve them beautifully. However, the bottom part of each vessel had been separated from the rest because of pressure on the vessel and tension in the bronze itself due to the manufacture technique. The vessels were carefully hammered out of one piece with the result that the bronze became thinner and thinner. As a consequence roots could work their way through the cracks and slowly separate the bottom part from the rest of the cauldron.

The vessels had been in contact with fire, but this happened before the vessels were placed in the position in which they were found. Other signs inside the vessels, such as brown or dark marks, showed that they had been used in another context, presumably in cooking. One of the vessels had marks from repair work.

The cauldrons had been in use before they were left where they were later found. They have stories to tell about a previous 'life' somewhere else.

We found two large bronze vessels, which was an unwanted surprise. The vessels had to be conserved by professionals. The authorities on Gotland estimated the costs to SEK 150,000 (15,500 Euro). *I later understood that they wanted to use some of the money for other expenses.*

Having accepted the excavation, the department at Uppsala University was responsible for the cost, but the department was on its knees due to earlier financial shortcomings and did not want to pay. My project time was up and the department did not have any obligations to me and wanted to use their money for other things. *The SNHB had money for extra expenses, such as unexpected and special funds (Herschend 2007:18), but kept quiet about it.*

Having no job, no money, no department, and the authorities on Gotland accusing me of neglecting my responsibilities, and the financial foundations refusing me for fear of prejudice and having to pay all conservation costs in the future, I was stuck in a rather precarious situation.

After some years, the prefect – who had been called in from outside due to conflicts at the department – let me know that the department had to take its responsibility and pay the cost of the conservation. The cauldrons were fetched from Gotland in 2006 and conserved for the more sensible price of SEK 84,000 (9,200 Euro).

The master narrative

The purpose of the fieldwork was to study the creation of a narrative and at the same time analyse its structures and history. As archaeologists we

do not always reflect over the connection between narrative and practice. The inherent logic of the narrative forces us to reproduce it rather than criticise it. This was exactly what we slowly started to find out.

All the decisions we made, and every movement of our spades as well as the work at the sieve, the finds of potsherds and bones, and the identification of construction details in the trenches, were all related to a master narrative. Archaeology was there in front of us all the time, clear, present and simple. There was, of course, no particular story in sight at first. I am telling it now and I am telling it because of special circumstances without which this story would never have been told.

Through the excavation we incorporated the building remains in the master narrative. The story or the narrative, or what can be called the precognition, stipulated our actions, i.e. what we cognitively understood and focused on, and we did not know what we had come across until we had linked it to the narratives of archaeology.

It might be viewed as arrogant to start an excavation with the motives mentioned above. However, our actions and our fieldwork were no less scientific than a more conventional excavation. We worked hard and fought a battle against the powers and structures of the master narrative, the tradition and the attitudes in the archaeological community, and we lost (for an interesting explanation see Herschend 2007). We lost because we wanted to illuminate the question of how narratives create meaning instead of working in line with it.

Nevertheless, we also came across structures that surround the archaeological practice and the master narrative, and this was good enough for us. Here we found a perspective to work with that had to do with questions interconnected with our being, cultural heritage, development, essentialism and so forth, concepts linked to the present care-taking context. The defeat was our victory.

STORY NUMBER THREE: THE FARMER

On 29 September 2010 a local newspaper wrote that the county administration had reported the Farmer to the police. (The Farmer is the landowner of the site for the archaeological excavation.) A representative of the authorities had visited the Vamlingbo parish because a neighbouring farmer had applied to cut down woods on the premise that the Farmer had been given permission some years ago to clear forests for a new meadow. The representative declared that the Farmer must have done so illegally (Fornåkrar, *Gotlands Tidningar* 2010).

The obvious question is why we settled for a site in Vamlingbo parish if it really didn't matter where we excavated. In the summer of 2000 I visited friends who were renting an abandoned farm in Vamlingbo parish. A few days later my friend and I helped the next-door Farmer with his hay. It happened that we started to talk about archaeology and the Farmer mentioned that he had prehistoric sites on his land. The Farmer also told me about the problems he had had with the county administration when he wanted to cut down forests to clear for a new field many years ago. There were 'prehistoric fields' in the area that the authorities wanted to protect, and this is where the story starts that we read about in the local paper.

The Farmer is interested in archaeology and he became a close friend with the archaeologists who in the 1970s registered the 'prehistoric fields' they had found on his land. The 'prehistoric fields' that the Farmer was accused of damaging became a cultural heritage in the 1970s, when the archaeologists found them. The Farmer took part in the process as an interested citizen.

In the *Antiquarian Topographical Archives* in Stockholm I found the correspondence between the Farmer and the county administration on Gotland, dating back to the 1980s. At first the Farmer was allowed to cut down the trees and open a new field. All he had to do was pay a small sum for an archaeological survey. However, the Farmer lacked the time and the money to start the work immediately and he was only given one year. After that he had to apply for permission again.

Prehistoric sites in Sweden are always owned by the State, and it is the county administration that has to ensure that the sites are not disturbed by any activity that is not sanctioned by the administration. It is important to recognise that the cultural heritage authorities in Sweden understand the master narrative that has been constructed over the decades. It is the legitimacy of the master narrative that they are administering and not the sites themselves. If they were guarding the sites there would be no archaeological excavations at all. The point is instead that when there are excavations, or when old buildings stand in the way of development, the process of removal must be documented according to the master narrative and the procedures inflicted by SNHB on all sorts of archaeological research including contract archaeology.

In the correspondence between the Farmer and the authorities I found that the attitude of the county administration suddenly changed and that the cost of the archaeological survey was increased from a sum that the Farmer probably could handle to a sum way beyond what a small-scale farm could afford. At the same time the 'prehistoric fields' were classified as a national interest. By now the project was closed to the Farmer.



Figure 3. The Farmer lifting hay into the barn with an old machine. Photo Johan Hegardt.

If we look behind the bureaucratic structure, we find other, even more powerful, structures. It was not only the authorities that prevented the Farmer from opening a new field; it was also the power of the master narrative that prevented the farmer from doing so, a power not inherent in the past as something in itself, but a power inherent in the present.

‘Prehistoric fields’ is a relatively new and sometimes even disputed archaeological concept. Nonetheless, when a word or a phrase has been created and found its position in the ‘text’ of archaeology and in the regulations of the authorities, it gains power over a reality in constant change. This means that the power over change is connected with a narrative of past conditions guarded by the county administration. Civil servants cannot by themselves define a prehistoric phenomenon and launch ideas about past conditions. Professional archaeological researchers do this work.

The authorities and archaeologists have collaborated in constructing a history – a master narrative – in the landscape that is conserved and governed by the Swedish State through its county administrations. The vague concept ‘prehistoric fields’ is turned into something that should concern us all, but mostly without the citizen’s knowledge.

In the case discussed here, the authorities after some time pointed out that the ‘prehistoric fields’ were a national interest. The Farmer, of course, did understand that the fields had an archaeological importance,

but for him the area was also of economic importance. Other authorities, for example social and community authorities, would probably argue for the economic importance because of the social and economic pressure on the parish and the threat that the parish would become even more depopulated. Such perspectives are often overruled by a State-financed university research that has, as in this example, identified a phenomenon on the land of a local farmer. The county administration is assigned by the State to watch over the cultural heritage and in this case to watch over the State-financed concept of prehistoric fields. This means that the State, the archaeologists and the authorities have identified a phenomenon that they can nurse and care for together.

By doing so they – or we – give legitimacy to an organisation apparatus that we are a part of and through which we earn our income. History and cultural heritage becomes a ‘milk cow’ for a whole cadre of civil servants and researchers, against which a local farmer stands no chance. I touched upon this question earlier, stressing that people hardly would risk their jobs by questioning the structures they live off.

If the county administration did take the ‘prehistoric fields’ seriously they could have solved the problem in a completely different manner, but they were not interested. Instead they and the local archaeological expertise were more interested in manifesting their privileged position and in holding on to the master narrative, dismissing any local needs and demands. If the ‘prehistoric fields’ really were of national interest and if the people of Sweden really were interested, and if the State and the authorities did believe that they were dealing with something of great importance, they could, if they wanted, always have helped the Farmer and worked together with him, but they didn’t. Despite the extensive debate and discussion concerning the public’s part in heritage management and archaeological excavations today (for example Fairclough et al. 2008, yet with no discussion of Scandinavian heritage management), the local authorities would probably act the same, something that is emphasised by the newspaper article that introduced this chapter.

After some years the Farmer received permission to cut down the trees and open the field. By that time everybody had lost interest in the whole question.

A local landowner does not stand a chance against a master narrative that archaeology has constructed and which is guarded by State-financed authorities. There are strong commercial powers and brutal modernisation forces that we must stand up against, and Sweden has a reasonably good legislation that ensures that short-sighted interests do not damage heritage. *Nevertheless, we must not forget that we are*

dealing with the present and not the past, and that we work with cultural heritage and archaeology not because of our privilege to define phenomena and invent phrases but because heritage is a question of ontological caretaking.

In the newspaper article that I opened with, the Farmer's lawyer asked the very significant question: 'Doesn't the county administration know what decisions they have made?'

In November 2010 the Farmer telephoned me. He had gone all the way to Visby to have a look at the vessels. The museum would not let him see them, he told me. I wrote an e-mail and asked the authorities 'why'. The answer was that I had not followed the directives of the county administration, and the civil servant emphasised that *if I did not write a report that followed in detail the directives produced by three civil servants at the SNHB, the county administrations around Sweden would never again allow Uppsala University to excavate anywhere in Sweden. It is understandable that a system like this creates officials that report a farmer to the police without even checking the documents.*

No university researcher with a position has had any chance whatsoever to comment on SNHB directives. I do not know if any university archaeologist has even read the directives. I myself have, and I find them extremely problematic, but that's another story that I will tell some other time.

However, this is my 'report' and I will end this essay by explaining why it is important to unite the stories that so far have been separated.

STORY NUMBER FOUR: THE OLD MAN

Why don't I play by the rules?

Heritage and archaeology are no longer, and cannot be, a national concern governed by State authorities. Instead they are a political question, which is clearly underlined today when right-wing groups and political parties want to appropriate heritage, and when indigenous people and local groups demand the right to their heritage. It is also underlined by the fact that the nation-state has long since been questioned, and by the existence of a global cosmopolitanism (Anderson 1996; Appiah 2006; Bhabha 1990; Mignolo 2002; Meskell 2009). The caretaking endeavour can no longer be in the hands of State-governed authorities. The story is no longer about the nation and its people. This master narrative is obsolete. Yet, it is exactly to this narrative that I should contribute according to the county administration and the directives from the SNHB.

Questions and problems – reports and scientific texts – concerning archaeological remains and heritage must in my opinion be returned to the universities, even though I have criticised university practice. The national heritage sector has an enormous budget compared with the research departments at the universities. It employs hundreds of people, most of them very polite and nice. But the system they are a part of is obsolete and we all know this. It is obsolete because it is not dynamic and critical and because it views heritage as a national concern. There is an enormous amount of reports and books that in a descriptive tone contribute to the national master narrative. The SNHB and the county administrations are responsible for most of them (Riksantikvarieämbetet Förlag (Publisher)). The universities have done their part. As always there are exceptions (see e.g. Högberg 2004; Karlsson 2008; Hegardt & Källén 2011 and references in the texts).

The university departments are becoming increasingly marginalised, working in the backyard of a State-financed heritage management and contract archaeology, and it is in this sector that the jobs are, not at the university departments where they should be.

I might be stubborn, but I will not contribute to a system that clings to an obsolete perspective and allows civil servants to dictate the scientific rules. Imagine this in medicine or technology.

The SNHB and the county administrations claim that they work democratically and for the people of Sweden. Yet, they systematically worked against the Farmer. In the directives, they speak of the importance of science. Yet, they will not accept my perspectives and other theoretical and critical perspectives. The system provides its own perspective on democracy and science and it has the power to perform this perspective. It is the master narrative that is guarded.

I was not aware that my perspectives and my small excavation would end in a text like this, but this is current Swedish archaeology – and heritage management – and it is time that we wake up. The stories must be connected and understood as one, right from the start (Byrne 2007; Henare *et al.* 2007, see also Bennett *et al.* 2009 on cultural omnivorousness; Holton 2009 on cosmopolitanism)!

We had chosen the place for our archaeological fieldwork on social grounds rather than on archaeological incitements. The overall idea with the project was to study the construction of archaeological narratives. The southern part of Gotland also related to my own social background, and I had a network of friends, and friends of friends, in the area. The close contact with the Farmer also meant that I would meet with farmers and other people who lived on the island year round.



Figure 4. The author uncovers the narrative of archaeology. The old man, far left. Photo Johan Hegardt.

By turning the excavation site into a ‘stage’ for our own activities and those of visitors, as well as for agendas and perspectives, we created a well-working platform for a dialogue, which made it possible for us to express ourselves in a more critical manner than otherwise.

During recent years ‘we have come to recognise that heritage, in its many different forms, constitutes an influential force in society’ (Stig Sørensen & Carman 2009:3), which leads, for example, to ‘public archaeology’ and other similar approaches to contemporary heritage problems and questions. I both agree and disagree with much that has been said in this rather broad discourse. What I disagree with most of all is the positive and enthusiastic tone that has come with these new approaches. This is, of course, a rather rhetorical statement, but in general there is an enthusiastic tendency that ‘public archaeology’, ‘community archaeology’, and similar new approaches to heritage will lead to a broader understanding of heritage among the public, and this is probably also true. However, as long as there is no deeper criticism involved nothing will change except that the master narrative will be carved into the public through a simplified and ingenuous narrative in an attempt to persuade a gullible public to believe in it.

It is rather obvious that we had a ‘public archaeological’ approach in our project, but most important was to publicly question archaeological

and heritage narration and the master narrative and at the same time try to understand its significance. In my opinion, critique and criticism are of major importance in any narrative concerning heritage and archaeology.

At this point we are back to where it all started, in the text itself and in the project as such, namely with travelling, archaeology and tourism.

The visitors to the site and the excavation can be divided into three groups: 'natives' living on Gotland year round; mainland people – often wealthy individuals – who come to Gotland as 'culture tourists' or have a summerhouse (an old farm) on the island; and 'natives' living on the mainland of Sweden who come to Gotland as 'tourists' or have a summerhouse (not an old farm) on the island.

Mainland visitors mostly come to Gotland during the summer, an activity that peaks in July. For these people Gotland is a summer paradise, with its beautiful and spectacular nature, the sea and the beaches, the culture and the cultural heritage. For people living on Gotland all year round, archaeology and heritage play a slightly different role. History is much more personal and local. These people have an ambivalent relationship to heritage. It is a question of history as well as identity, but at the same time a question of something that hinders them from living in the present, creating a local economy and identity in a flexible global world.

Tourists do not have the same complex relationship to heritage. For them it is more a question of a didactic ideal and a fascinating practice, which has the power to enchant by making the past visible in the present. Nonetheless, the past in the present is something that both tourists and people living on the island share and can relate to. The past becomes an expression of people's relation to being. The precognition will guide the people's interest in specific questions. If you are a farmer, for example, economy and past living conditions might be the most important questions. Are you, on the other hand, a tourist from an urban region on the mainland, more metaphysical questions might be of interest, for example past religions.

The Farmer's elderly father, who was 97 in 2004, emphasised since the start of the excavation his concern with the stones in the terrace. He was very troubled when we removed them, which he pointed out to his son. It was important to the old man that we replace the stones. So we did.

For the old man, the terrace stones were remindful of a farm in a neighbouring parish where people in the eighteenth century had used stones in a similar way to construct a terrace. It is, the old man emphasised, easier to walk in snow when stones are arranged like this. He also stressed that the stones in the prehistoric terrace were placed in a proper order, and he thought they were beautiful and he wanted to show them to his friends.



Figure 5. The terrace replaced. Photo Johan Hegardt.

We had carefully saved the stones from the terrace, so there was no major problem in putting them back. They neatly fell into place in the trench. The trench is now closed and the old man has since died.

An archaeological site is an anachronism in the present in a similar way as culture is a hybrid (Bhabha 2004). That is why archaeologists remove things that are ‘time wrong’. Archaeologists and heritage managers are time cleaners. When the site is cleaned it becomes metaphysical. Through metaphysics the site is turned into a launching place for a time trip created in our fantasy.

Our site was an anachronistic hybrid when we started the excavation. Things from different time periods were spread not only on the surface of the site but also in the ground. There was nothing there that at first could be said to dominate, just as in any culture before someone decides what is essential. In our case we pointed to the building remains. The old man did not approve of our destruction. For him the living and active hybrid or anachronism was much more significant than the archaeological time/space order.

All the different stories dealt with in this text reflect my own position in the context of ontological care, regardless of the quality of the text itself. This means that at the end of the day, archaeology and heritage management are a question of care through practice and narration. *Such questions cannot be reduced to a State-sanctioned report that is stipulated by the authorities and that emphasises a national master*

narrative, nor can they be isolated inside a university discourse that emphasises the past by cutting the cord between the present caretaking context and a caretaking context that is forever gone.

The heart of heritage and archaeology exists in the present, in the debate, the rhetoric and the polemic expressions, and in the care and being. As I see it, heritage and archaeology are summed up in narration. However, most constructive and positive narratives – scientific or public – contain the seed of oppression. They are dangerous because they bring with them an 'influential force' that is hidden in the narrative itself, which makes us mix the ontology of care with the ontology of politics, the ontology of care with the ontology of 'us', and so on, something my examples clearly show. Thinking of heritage as the ontology of care rather suggests thinking of it from a personal, narrative and cosmopolitan position. It is not a question of taking archaeology out of heritage (see Waterton & Smith 2009), but rather of taking heritage, and archaeology with it, out of a master narrative – a narrative so strong that it even guides the debate – and putting it into other forms of narration that unite the stories rather than separate them.

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