

MARK, the professional association of museum archaeologists, and a little about contract archaeology in company form

January 2009 saw the establishment of MARK, the first professional Swedish organization in development-led archaeology. Unlike the Swedish Archaeological Society or MUSARK, membership is open only to organizations, not individuals. In this respect MARK is a pioneer not just in archaeology but also in Swedish heritage management as a whole.

The museums have a special responsibility for ensuring the provision of local and regional knowledge and communicating the results to the community. Through their public archives and collections, the museums have openness, continuity, and a genuinely long-term perspective that is usually lacking in commercial operations. At the same time, the link to a municipality, a county, or a region involves a limitation of the market that other actors do not suffer from. The conditions for the museums' development-led archaeology, and the underlying ideology, therefore differ from that of other actors.

The aim of MARK is to stimulate interaction and cooperation, thereby creating the conditions for long-term sustainability and development in operations. Through cooperation MARK seeks to further the development of the contract archaeology that is pursued in or close to local and regional museum institutions in Sweden. This cooperation can comprise, for example, research, education, public work, and strategic analysis.

A concrete effect of the network that has been built up between the members of MARK is that it is more common now to bring in sub-consultants or experts from other museums in connection with major excavation projects. Another trend that is steadily increasing is that the museums' contract activities are being done in company form. In 2010, for example, the Regional Museum in Kristianstad started a wholly owned subsidiary, Sydsvensk Arkeologi AB, at the same time

as it took over Malmö Museums' development-led archaeology. In a time of increasing competition and a shrinking market, there will be more amalgamations, and we will see constellations that no one could have envisaged.

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