

Research Restarted at the Museum of National Antiquities

Archaeological research in Sweden more or less began at the Museum of National Antiquities in Stockholm during the 19th century. Well up to the 1960s and 1970s the museum played a leading role in research, always employing top-ranking academics in different fields; they often left their positions at the museum to become professors or hold other prestigious offices. The museum produced a wide range of high-quality publications, which still make up the foundation for much that is being done today. For a number of reasons, this stronghold of research and knowledge production declined and fell during the later decades of the 20th century.

Research projects and publications have been scarce during the last ten years or so. Since 2008, however, the museum has a new research and development programme which states the ambition to do research and which also outlines a range of priority fields and subjects for the period 2008–2012. The museum has recently employed a research and development coordinator, intended to facilitate research, start projects and see to that these are followed through.

Thanks to these improvements, and also thanks to an initiative by the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities and the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond foundation to finance post-doctoral positions at museums, the Museum of National Antiquities is once again employing a group of researchers and running at least four large-scale research projects.

The scope of research includes: a major three-year project about the history of the museum itself, which surprisingly has never been investigated; a five-year post-doctoral project about post-medieval archaeology in relation to colonialism and hegemony (a similar post-doctoral project dealing with the 14th-century coins of King Magnus Eriksson is currently underway at the Royal Coin Cabinet, in close relation to research at the Museum of National Antiquities); as well as work on a major new publication about the famous, Neolithic Alvastra pile-dwelling site. Furthermore, there is another large-scale three-year project that deals with the material remains of a very interesting

modern historical event and heritage site – the 1897 Stockholm Arts and Industry Fair. This project aims to produce new knowledge about modern heritage processes in relation to public involvement in heritage. Presentations of all these projects may be read (though as yet only in Swedish) at www.shmm.se/fou

Fredrik Svanberg, Research and Development Coordinator
The Museum of National Antiquities, Stockholm