

Fulfilling the Promise...

An Essay on Swedish Archaeology and Archaeology in Sweden

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This paper presents a vision of archaeology in Sweden intended to transcend traditional Nordic and Euroamerican perspectives and build on the potentials of Swedish diversity and geography. Sweden is viewed as the northwestern corner of Eurasia and a meeting ground of long-term European and circumpolar cultural and environmental forces. As a player in world archaeology, Sweden can make major contributions to the growth of new theoretical and methodological perspectives incorporating western and non-western (indigenous) ways of knowing. The subject of archaeology is undergoing post-national reformation and must redefine its institutions, better assert its public roles and clarify its message to achieve its full promise.

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INTRODUCTION

I have been asked to present some personal reflections on Swedish archaeology and the directions the subject is taking towards the future. The theme “Sweden, Scandinavia and the World” is an opportunity to comment on both Swedish archaeology and education, and Sweden as a place to do archaeology. These are not necessarily the same thing. I hope I can give a balanced insider and outsider perspective. The first part of this essay relates to the field of archaeology in general and the trends and forces shaping the discipline today. Secondly, I wish to project a vision which I believe represents a major potential of archaeology in Sweden.

My research vision is the result of a realization about Swedish geography. I refer to this as the “60th Latitude Problem.” Simply expressed, unlike Norway and Finland which have little or no territory south of this latitude, Sweden has consistently taken her cultural and intellectual identity from the lower third of her landmass, the land south of the 60th parallel. Even the most recent archaeological textbooks have this remarkable bias. The northern two-thirds of the country have been viewed as a peripheral wilderness which only becomes part of the Swedish past when agriculture and bronze and iron age hegemony and history, emanating from the south, extends northward. This has had a number of consequences: It has minimized the importance of eastern and Circumpolar influences in Swedish prehistory. It has peripheralized the significance

of northern Scandinavian, Saami and Finnish prehistory, and it has failed to build on the diverse and complex mixture of ecological, socioeconomic, cultural and intellectual capital available within this northwestern corner of Eurasia. Nowhere else in the Circumpolar world is there such a long-term, diverse and complex combination of economy, technology and identity as found in the Nordic North. From an international perspective, this is the single greatest potential of Swedish archaeology which has yet to be realized.

This said, the theme of this issue of *Current Swedish Archaeology* also makes it necessary to define the world outside of Sweden and the issues which are driving global science in general. This is actually not as hard as it might seem since these are issues which are considerably more discussed and available in science literature and the popular press than archaeology.

My main interest in Nordic and Swedish archaeology today, as opposed to the archaeology I practised 10 years ago, is that I believe that this is an exceptional place to study the past with respect to global issues, which I will expand on later. I certainly respect the national and regional interests of the majority of my Nordic colleagues but the archaeology I envision has an entirely different basis. Obviously, not being Swedish has a lot to do with this. I prefer to think of archaeology today as an international science, but one which has not yet risen to its full potential for understanding the broader scales of human history. This is not a naive search for general laws of human behavior which characterized archaeology in the 1970s, but rather a recognition that we can for the first time go beyond our local sites and surveys to a better understanding how what has gone on in the past was highly interconnected ecologically, biologically and culturally across the landmasses of Eurasia and beyond. This is exactly what the geologists have done with tectonic plate theory and the climatologists and oceanographers with global climate models. These two fields have also built on one another's results for understanding climate change and biogeography. We archaeologists must now learn to think in the same range of scales and develop the theoretical and methodological tools and projects which are appropriate to such thinking. We need to move beyond national historicism and into the realm of integrated world systems. It is argued that the particular can best be understood if it is put against the common fabric of ancient human cultural origins. The initial spread of humanity across the continents is certainly discussed this way, but when we write of culture, Swedish and otherwise, we tend to successively ignore the bigger world from which we derive. The barriers of national borders and the Cold War led to a restriction in thinking from which we are only now emerging. I honestly believe that the future of archaeology in the 21st Century will depend on how well we achieve this broader vision. Swedish archaeology is no exception and has great potentials for developing the theories and methods which can accommodate these ideas.

SCIENCE ISSUES TODAY

Science and technology are "in", perhaps with more public interest and support since the heady days of the 1950s. Certainly the information and technology revolution, i.e.

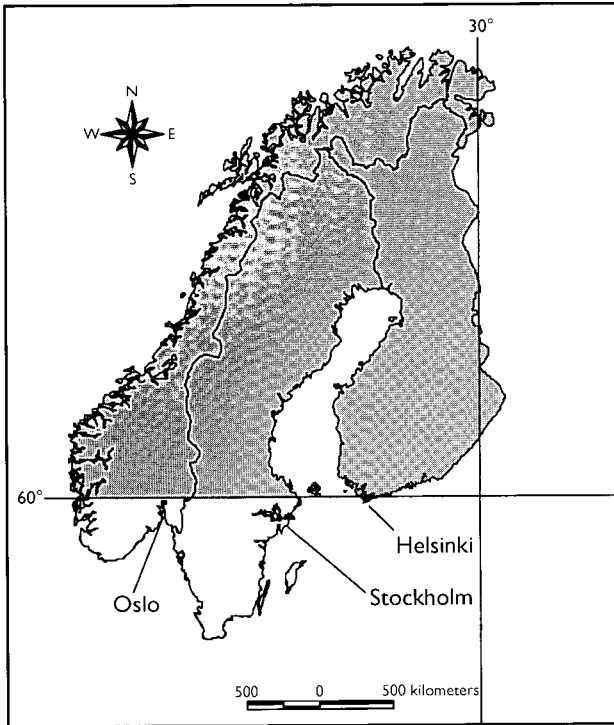


Figure 1. Map of the Nordic region showing Norway, Sweden and Finland, the three capitals, and the land areas north and south of the 60th parallel. Sweden has consistently taken her identity from the area south of this line and thereby denied her northerness. The 30th meridian has also been an intellectual barrier exacerbated by both language and the Cold War. It is argued that the single greatest potential of Swedish archaeology which has yet to be realized is the mixture of European and Circumpolar cultural and environmental history. The Nordic region should not be seen as just a periphery of Europe; it is the north-western corner of Eurasia.

computers, has much to do with this. But DNA and human genome research, space research, remote sensing and global change have caught public attention and political support. This is the good news. The bad news is that the humanities are “out”, at least as far as the ruling Swedish political forces are concerned. Sweden is increasingly seeing its future in terms of technocratic competition: a country of engineers and an educational system based on this model. No Ph.D. will take more than 4 years according to recently adopted national guidelines. I presume that this is part of the commodification trend which is transforming the country, but I think one must put some blame on the academics themselves who have failed to convey to or convince the public or politicians that they are doing anything worthwhile, and that we are in fact other than self-serving. Mats Burström’s article in the newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* (1996 /03 / 13), “Arkeologer läser ofta in samtiden i det förflutna” (Archaeologists often project the present into the past), described these problems to the public. But he also asked for a different theoretical basis for archaeology which can expand understanding beyond these limitations. From the point of view of archaeology, this is a time of threat as well as opportunity. As one of the few subjects which bridges the natural, biological and social sciences, we can adapt. But we must be not lose sight of our humanistic goals (Hegardt 2000). This is our challenge. It is contingent upon ourselves to make archaeology not only understandable, but worth knowing. No one else can, or should, do this for us.

I am convinced that archaeology can be aligned with some of the greatest questions of our times: human-environment interactions, sustainability, globalization, identity, and diversity. The long-term historical perspective, which only archaeology can provide, offers the best basis for understanding how humans have evolved, survived and changed. If nothing else, change can be understood as the essence of all that made us human. To do this, we must also confront our responsibilities as professionals based on ethical standards, and embrace the potentials of different interests in the past and diverse ways of knowing and understanding. Swedish archaeology is embarking on the first step toward this goal but has a long way to go towards the second.

THE FOURTH REVOLUTION

According to Michael Dertouzos in his article, “Networks and Nations” (1998) which discusses the future of civilization and the “gleaming gigabyte-infested world called Cyberspace”, we have entered the Fourth Great Revolution of human history: The first was the Agrarian Revolution; the second, the Industrial Revolution; the third, the Information Revolution. The Fourth Revolution is that of Understanding Ourselves.

It is our challenge to make use of prehistory and history and to synthesize meaning from the overwhelming mass of information we have acquired about the past. The problem today is not so much that we do not have enough information, but rather knowing what is important and what it all means. Information itself, the problem of the 19th century, has today become a form of garbage (Postman 1995). Yet archaeological practice and funding is still primarily focused on data acquisition, not synthetic interpretation. Our museums are overflowing with unstudied materials and field archaeologists move from one site to the next without resources for research.

Synthetic interpretation also demands better books and home pages, better museums and classroom materials, and, above all, greater diversity. We not only need to make our subject more important, but to make our questions more important to more people.

The dilemma is that as the need for better research synthesis and understanding grows, the commitment of society to pay for it is decreasing. Something is wrong. Either we have not been making our objectives clear, or there is a lack of interest in what we think. Either way, archaeology loses.

WHOSE ARCHAEOLOGY ?

It is hardly necessary to provide an historical overview of the subject of archaeology for the readers of this journal. The field has existed for over a century in Sweden and the subject is associated in the public mind with “great finds” and the excitement of discovery. The subject has also ridden on the shoulders of both nationalism and imperialism and been used to justify everything from ideas of higher and lower cultures to the truth of the Bible. Indigenous cultures around the world, including the Saami in Sweden, are hoping archaeology will help them argue for land rights and are demanding the return, or repatriation, of artifacts and skeletons. Great museums, such as the British Museum, are being forced into dialogues about the return of objects to their homelands. In a recent conference at the *Ajtte, Svenskt Fjäll- och Samemuseum*, “*Vem äger*

kulturarvet?" (Who owns cultural heritage ?), representatives of the *Statens historiska museum*, the *Nordiska museet*, *Statens museum for världskultur*, among others, discussed Saami claims for the return of human remains and artifacts. This is a bit of a shock to those who guard these collections in Sweden. Sweden seems behind the other Nordic countries in addressing this issue. Somehow, the idea of separate rights has not been seriously considered, although repatriation has been legally binding for a decade in other countries.

WAYS OF KNOWING

Beyond this administrative and moral issue, however, is another challenge. Non-western ways of knowing and interpreting the past are opening the door to completely new perspectives about research and understanding. These challenge the very foundations and intellectual imperialism of Euroamerican archaeology, both processual and post-processual (Smith 1999). I believe that this challenge is an important key to the expanding theoretical and methodological diversity which will shape the archaeology of the future. Sweden is in an exceptional position to embrace these potentials. But this will mean accepting its northernness and the diversity of its own cultural past.

WHO SETS THE AGENDA ?

While archaeology is at its most fundamental level about the recovery, preservation and interpretation of materials from prehistoric and historic sites, it is also about land, identity, cultural property and ethics. If these aspects are not recognized and acted upon by its practitioners, educators and the public, the field of archaeology and its value, outside of academia at least, is at risk of becoming more defined by the needs of local politicians and the tourist, entertainment or other industries, than by professional archaeologists. For the politicians and the land developers, Indiana Jones and Viking clichés are more palpable than having to foot the bill for studies with little monetary or tourist value, or for exhibits that deconstruct historical myths and challenge the public mind.

PROTECTION

The laws which exist today protecting cultural resources and the illicit trade of artifacts are weak internationally, unevenly enforced and under constant threat. Even Sweden, which has one of the best legal systems in the world for the protection of cultural-environmental resources, is losing ground as the practice goes private and cost, rather than the best science, increasingly determines management. This is as much a threat as land development itself. The fact that Sweden has not ratified the 1970 Unesco convention on the sale of illegal antiquities was made embarrassingly public in a program (*Striptease*) aired on Swedish Television on February 29, 2000.

I firmly believe that the justifications for archaeology as a research field in Sweden have never been more relevant than they are today. But, this will require clearer definitions of the goals of archaeological education and training, the aggressive defense of cultural resource management institutions, laws and resources, and strong ethical

principles. We must, furthermore, convey these goals in a clear and understandable manner to our students, politicians and the public. Simply put, once again, this means making the subject relevant to science, education and society.

ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY: A MAJOR STEP TAKEN

On May 5, 2000, the Swedish Archaeological Society (*Svenska Arkeologiska Samfundet*) adopted seventeen principles for good archaeological practice. These follow in large part the European Association of Archaeologists' (EAA) Code of Practice, but expand on this document in a number of ways. The Swedish statement, like EAA, takes a clear stance against illegal trade in antiquities, something the Nordic governments have yet to do. But the statement also recognizes the need for collaboration with local and indigenous peoples in research planning and execution. Another point of importance is the recognition that special attention must be given to the risks of discrimination and racism in archaeology which could be associated with or communicated through teaching materials, research projects or exhibits. This Swedish Archaeological Society document is the first of its kind in Scandinavia and represents an important step towards professionalism and accountability in our field. It is one more step towards achieving the full potentials of archaeology in Sweden.

THE UNREALIZED POTENTIALS OF SWEDISH ARCHAEOLOGY

Sweden is blessed with numerous highly educated archaeologists, superb facilities and strong national laws. There is hardly any place on earth that can match this infrastructure. Knowledge of prehistoric chronology, settlement and environment is par none. Unlike much of the rest of Europe, Sweden was in an outstanding position to assume leadership following World War II. The famous Vallhagar excavation on Gotland was a manifestation of this potential leadership role (Stenberger 1955). But somehow, little happened after this effort. Sweden did not become a European or world leader in archaeology and foreign students do not seek to study here to any noticeable extent. Even today, with a 25% Swedish population having a foreign background, very few students of non-Scandinavian origin study the subject. This is one of the great wasted potentials of Swedish archaeology. This means, returning to the title of this issue, that there is little of the world in Swedish archaeology and far too few Swedish-trained archaeologists are involved abroad. To my delight, however, the new regional college at Södertörn south of Stockholm, is attracting more minority students to the subject. But this is not enough.

The weakness of the system is not so much one of quality and scale, which are frequently mentioned issues, but one of accessibility and openness. As long as this high-quality university system is based almost entirely on the Swedish language, it will never become the dynamic and diverse academic environment necessary to achieve world class stature. As an English-competent country using a majority of textbooks written in English, there is little reason why more regular courses in archaeology should not be taught in English or other world languages. These courses need to be advertised internationally. Certainly the EU Socrates program is intended to open doors, but so

much more could be done. While there may be a fear that Sweden would lose its national identity by doing so, which I truly doubt, the benefits of making Sweden a place to learn about archaeology and prehistory far outweigh those concerns. If anything, it would revitalize understanding and interpretation and make Swedish archaeology a more interesting and dynamic subject within the country. Sweden has much to teach the world about heritage management, environmental archaeology, laboratory archaeology, maritime archaeology, and critical archaeology, to name a few subjects. Swedish archaeology has much to learn about diversity, global science, indigenous research and anthropology. What kinds of discourses would emerge when more non-Scandinavians became involved in archaeological research within Sweden?

EDUCATION TODAY: ARCHAEOLOGY AS A PROFESSION AND A SKILL

Against this background, one must ask whether or not our educational system is preparing archaeologists to meet the new challenges in the field or in the job market. The answer is a qualified no. Our curricula and textbooks are pretty much still based on scientific and professional concepts from the 19th century. We add on new finds and data all the time but the basic thinking has not changed very much.

The increasingly teacherless curricula forced by economic restraints at the universities adds insult to injury. What are the students supposed to make of our subject if they don't know what is important or why they are studying it?

Since archaeology is often based within the humanities faculties in Sweden, the subject has expanded more towards philology, philosophy and literature than the social sciences. This has also contributed, in some cases, to an estrangement from the natural sciences, and laboratory-based archaeologists have become increasingly territorial in their home departments and faculties. In addition, the scale of inquiry has increasingly shrunk from the broad-brush interdisciplinary perspectives typical of the late 19th and early 20th centuries to narrower regional levels. These are limiting and even potentially dangerous trends. Two things could happen: 1) archaeology in Sweden, judging from the present funding of universities, could eventually become a regional science in the service of limited political and economic goals or, 2) archaeology will become a form of literature and divorce itself from contemporary science issues. While popular with some politicians and the extreme post-modernist end of the field, this is not necessarily a safe place to be in the long run. Politicians are necessarily opportunists and the arts and humanities are dealt with even more harshly when resources are prioritized. The sustainability of the field will, in my opinion, be based on its interdisciplinary breadth and international relevance. Even those critical of natural science in archaeology, would agree with this conclusion (e.g. Hegardt 2000). As pointed out by Kristiansen (1996) and others, archaeology has a pluralism of functions and identities. One answer to the dilemma of where this field belongs in a university setting is to do as the Dutch have done and create faculties of archaeology. This could also happen by default if the humanities and social science faculties at Swedish universities are combined, but ideally also combined with the natural science faculties and thereby given an equal economic foundation from which to work.

STEPS TOWARDS NEW SWEDISH CURRICULA

One of the first goals I had in coming to Umeå was to create a new thematically cross-cutting curriculum which broke the mold of the old Stone, Bronze and Iron Age paradigm. My colleagues and I in Umeå met to discuss this issue and subsequently created a new course program. The new beginning A/B course, which lasts one year, was initiated in 1997 and is divided into seven themes: 1) Introduction to Humans and Society; 2) Humans in Time; 3) Humans and the Landscape; 4) Humans and Material Culture; 5) Humans and Settlement; 6) Humans and Belief Systems, and 7) Humans in Systems.

The second year of study is entitled: Humans, Environment and Landscape, and involves a field course, more in-depth seminars on human/environment interactions, research strategies and the production of archaeological texts. With the administrative merging of archaeology with Saami studies in Umeå, new opportunities have arisen which will require new types of thinking on both parts. New courses, new students and new ideas are on the horizon.

These courses conform well with the general goals I believe archaeology should convey, to both those who wish to only have a general background in the subject as well as those who wish to go on with it as a career.

The problem arises later, however, as the archaeology which is taught in universities in Sweden and in the United States is still primarily oriented toward creating more academics. The majority of archaeologists around the world, nevertheless, no longer work in university settings but rather for governments at national and regional levels, in museums or for consulting firms. The archaeologists we are training are often unskilled in the basic tenets of cultural environmental resource management, the law, or in the practical day-to-day workings of public archaeology. Our educational programs therefore need to be revamped to include both good scientific training with professional management skills. It is also necessary that we focus more attention on graduate education and training at the MA (or FL level) in Sweden.

The Society for American Archaeology (SAA) has recently responded to the new educational imperatives facing the field through its Task Force on Curriculum (Bender and Smith 2000). I was privileged to be included in the SAA Walkulla Springs Workshop in 1998 and many of the workshop conclusions are relevant to Sweden. Worth noting is that the SAA Principles for Archaeological Ethics provided inspiration for a number of these benchmarks for reform (Bender 2000). The following is a list of the Walkulla Springs workshop principles for curriculum reform:

- 1) Stewardship
- 2) Diverse Pasts
- 3) Social Relevance
- 4) Ethics and Values
- 5) Written and Oral Communication
- 6) Fundamental Archaeological Skills
- 7) Real-World Problem Solving

The first concept relates to our basic commitment to cultural resource protection and management. Archaeological resources are non-renewable. The second concept is of major importance today. It entails that there are many pasts and that no single group has exclusive rights to interpretation. Social relevance refers to the need for public support of archaeology as a discipline and as a force in contemporary society. Following Charley R. McGimsey III and Hester Davis (2000), “public archaeology is not some kind of ‘add-on.’ It IS archaeology.”

As noted earlier, ethical principles are fundamental to all archaeological practice. Principles 5 and 6 relate to the skills necessary in archaeological practice and the ability to clearly report and communicate results and interpretations. Real-world problem solving refers to the world outside of academia and the ability to deal with the public, authorities and all the stakeholders having an interest in archaeology and cultural resources.

These criteria must be incorporated into our educational programs, starting at the undergraduate level and continuing through the Ph.D. While there is an ongoing debate about the need for more Ph.D.’s in archaeology in Sweden (Welinder 2000), I beg to differ on this point. Not everyone who works in archaeology necessarily needs a Ph.D. today, but the more people working in the field who have this degree, the better positioned we will be to deal with the demands of research and management in the 21st century. With properly trained Ph.D.’s, and more positions requiring the degree outside of academia, the more highly trained people will apply for them. This “total archaeological field” is in fact a very broad base and deserves highly qualified practitioners.

In the introductory lectures I give to our beginning students, I spell out some of the generic goals of our field. Every teacher of archaeology must make it clear that every student who studies this subject can answer the question of why the subject is important, what our basic values are, and what we want to convey through archaeological education. Among these general themes, besides those relating directly to knowledge and skills within the field, are:

To convey the importance of past cultural heritages and the basic principles of cultural-environmental resource management.

To contribute to the public understanding of research.

To encourage and stimulate interdisciplinary thinking in research (including gender-critical and non-western ways of knowing).

To convey long-term and global thinking about human/environment interactions and human history.

To convey the importance of accountability in research and the necessity of ethical principles in the conduct of archaeological research and education.

THE UNRECOGNIZED SKILLS

I have never regretted my Ph.D. in archaeology as an academic, but it was first when I left academia and entered the field of government that I recognized the added value of this education and training. For seven years I worked as a program director at the National Science Foundation in Washington, D.C. In addition to my duties as a manager

for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research, I worked with staff from nearly all the other federal agencies, including the Department of State, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Defense, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency. Everywhere I went I met archaeologists and anthropologists. There is even an organization of Washington Area Practicing Anthropologists (WAPA).

It quickly came to my attention that archaeologists, in particular, have unique skills valuable in other sectors of society. These are 1) interdisciplinary skills 2) leadership and administration skills, and 3) communication skills.

The mix of science which characterizes our field is of tremendous value today. For Swedish archaeologists, expertise in management and environmental science is widely appreciated. Archaeologists are, furthermore, used to working in and leading teams. This responsibility also involves managing logistics and budgets, collections, archives and samples, as well as the writing of reports. As a publically visible activity, archaeology promotes good communication skills and archaeologists tend to be good speakers and writers. Archaeological training and experience is more than an academic deadend. It can be one of the best general educational and training experiences obtainable in a humanities and arts faculty.

In conclusion, there are many unrecognized strengths in Swedish archaeological research and education. These can be exploited to maintain and expand the subject but this will require considerable reform and coalition building. University Ph.D. programs are essential and must not be sacrificed for regional political purposes. The international value of Swedish archaeology should be given more credence and exposure. More foreign students should be encouraged to study and work in Sweden. More Swedish trained archaeologists should be working internationally.

WHY THE NORDIC REGION IS A GOOD PLACE TO DO GLOBAL RESEARCH

Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland occupy the northwestern corner of the Eurasian landmass. This is an endstation for Circumpolar and European cultural influences and the single most unique aspect of Nordic prehistory is the meeting of these two forces. The origins of the Scandinavian, Saami and Finnish cultures, in all their diversity, can only be understood as a result of this geography and its 15,000 year prehistoric past.

The Baltic and Gulf of Bothnia cut deeply into the Nordic landmass, creating a 2000 km long north-south corridor of water which has served as both a barrier and a travel route. This body of water and the influences of the Gulf Stream have mitigated climate to the extent that farming and livestock raising were possible as far as 70 degrees north latitude by ca 2500 B.C. The domestication of reindeer is almost certainly connected with this meeting of northern hunters and herders from the east and south. During the winter, the interior north becomes a snowbound landscape of trappers and moose and reindeer hunters and the Gulf of Bothnia turns into an ice landscape of seal hunters with more in common with Greenland and Alaska than Europe. But all the major prehistoric influences of Eurasian technology, stone, bronze and iron, and ideology, from shamanism to Christianity, can also be found in the Nordic region and,

unlike anywhere else in the world, in a far northern climate and environmental system. These economic and cultural forces are separated by huge distances in Siberia, North-west Asia and in North America. There was little if any contact between them until European expansion in the 16th century.

This is a world of marked seasonality, with short summers and very sensitive ecosystems. Nordic climate is part of the North Atlantic system and its intersection with the Eurasian landmass and its continental climate. The people of the Nordic region had to become the masters of economic flexibility with skills that enabled them to survive major variability, skills which later enabled them to colonize much of the North Atlantic region from Great Britain to Greenland and Newfoundland.

It is precisely for these reasons that Nordic archaeology has a global potential for studying climate change, social and cultural change, problems of sustainability, as well as the formation of different cultural manifestations and identities. This north-western corner of Eurasia, a geographic periphery linked by land, water, snow and ice, is an ideal place to do archaeology beyond that of local or national significance.

NON-WESTERN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AND POST-NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Swedish archaeology has traditionally been aligned with European thought. The influence of Germany was strong before World War II, and British and American thinking gained dominance until the 1980s when French thinking led to post-modernist theoretical orientations. The influence of American processualism had replaced nationalism: science was to replace politics. This, in turn, was challenged by the Marxists and post-processualists who emphasized individualism, contextualism, interpretations, meanings and archaeology as a political act. Today there is a mix of these ideas in Sweden but no forceful leadership in any one direction (Varenius 1995). Added to this, the loss of Swedish neutrality following the end of the Cold War and the growth of the European Union, combined with the new pay-as-you-go mentality, has led to a sort of overall confusion about the role of archaeologists in Swedish society. This has even been described as a crisis (Karlsson 2000). Yet, to my mind, Sweden has one of the greatest potentials in Europe for building on its infrastructure and skills to make the most of its diversity of geography and culture. Sweden is not merely a northern periphery of Europe; it is part of the Circumpolar world and has an indigenous population unlike anything in the south. The theoretical potentials do not need to be sought in France, Great Britain or the United States. They exist in Sweden's own backyard. Yet, in the most recent extensive presentation of theory and philosophy (*Philosophy and Archaeological Practice. Perspectives for the 21st Century*, Cornelius Holtorf and Håkan Karlsson, Eds.), there is a notable lack of truly innovative European thought. In the introduction, written by Kristian Kristiansson (2000:vii), it is perceptively stated: "...one may of course ask whether we are really breaking away from the major paradigms of thought, or whether we are lured by the illusion of (individualising) philosophical pluralism into believing so."

My many years of work with native groups in Alaska, such as the Alaska Federation

of Natives, and the Alaska Native Science Commission, have influenced me a great deal regarding the ways we think about research and education. While anthropology has given me a good basis for understanding the sociocultural dynamics of behavior, the native perspective has given me a greater appreciation of non-western ways of knowing. This is not the same thing as native rights or ownership of ideas, skeletons, artifacts and programs, which is more political than scientific, rather this relates to the kinds of relationship which we have towards knowledge and how we endow knowledge with meaning. This is a necessary part of the Understanding Revolution and one that is growing in significance as native peoples reclaim their cultural heritage from Euro-american interests.

An almost universal aspect of native epistemology (ways of knowing) is the incorporation of spiritual values and ethics into the human and natural worlds (Bielawski 1990; Kawagley 1995; Oakes *et al.* 1998; Helander & Kailo 1998). Using our terminology, this is a model which incorporates and integrates the religious, moral and ideological with the sociocultural and physical/natural worlds. This is also the hardest part for Western science to grasp and incorporate into our scientific models. And yet the study of rock art, ritual sites, the formation of identities, and environmental change are all active themes studied in archaeology. In a fascinating new dissertation in Stockholm, *Shamanic Shadows. One Hundred Generations of Undead Subversion in Southern Scandinavia, 7,000 - 4,000 BC* by Jimmy Strassburg, interpretation is couched in a characteristic Euroscandinavian mindset which is remarkably lacking in spirituality in the native sense, but full of fanciful interpretations about ancient spiritual relations. It is hard to know what to make of this brilliantly written journey in Strassburg's mind. I suppose it is the egocentric "cyborg" focus which makes it most unlike native ways of knowing. Here the world and what we know is not separated from self. But in the native way of knowing there is no central ego. For the Yup'ik Eskimo, "Individuality, as we understand it, was not a valued attribute. On the contrary, the pursuit of individual ends was often seen as conflicting with the good of the whole and was considered reprehensible" (Fienup-Riordan 1990:76).

The Euroscandinavian view, even this semi-post-processual perspective, can be viewed as "imperialistic" as it places individuals of all gender right in the centre of knowledge. This is pretty arrogant stuff from both the extreme positivist, we can know everything, and the relativist, we can't know anything, point of view. In my opinion, we are far behind native ways of knowing as far as integration and the understanding of meaning are concerned. We left the land, nature and our diverse pasts and places generations ago and have tended to disconnect knowledge from understanding and ethics. We are, in this sense, knowledgeable orphans by comparison with Alaska natives living on the land.

I certainly do not wish to idealize non-western epistemology, but to point out that the Circumpolar world offers Swedish archaeology new opportunities to crack open the limitations of our own thinking, challenge us and expand our understanding. The Saami cultures are a rich and diverse source of untapped opportunity. This Circumpolar world, which includes many cultures from the Saami to the Inuit, shares an integrated

systems worldview which is very reminiscent of the observations made by Capra in the *Tao of Physics* (1991). Modern physics, the ultimate bastion of science, has much in common with native concepts of time, space, energy and materia. We need a Tao of Archaeology, not more tiring debates about processual and post-processual archaeology.

To conclude, contrasted with non-western ways of knowing as I have experienced them in Alaska and other parts of the north, Euroscandinavian archaeology has been historically obsessed with national identity, been primarily based on southern agrarian precepts, and has as a consequence been preoccupied by questions of the appropriation of territory, control, hierarchy and power (refer also Broadbent 2000). This tendency also gives rise to ego-dominated (especially male) discourses which limit integrated world systems and global thinking.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Returning to my introduction, I think there is something odd about the intellectual geography of Sweden. Although having worked for decades in Sweden it was only within the past year that I came to recognize one of the great conceptual problems of Swedish archaeology.

Unlike Norway and Finland, Sweden takes its unifying cultural and intellectual identity from its territory located south of the 60th parallel. While all three capitals, Oslo, Stockholm and Helsinki, are at about this latitude, only Sweden has major territory south of this line. And this territory is very important. Sweden sees itself as a formerly pure peasant nation which only recently became a part of the wider industrialized world. In the history of agriculture program, organized by the Nordic Museum, it was stated that if one scrapes a Swede one finds a farmer. But what about the other two thirds of the Swedish landmass and all those other people? They surely existed, but are inevitably seen through southern agrarian eyes, something exploitable and marginal, but not Swedish. This view misses the point of why archaeology in Sweden can really be exciting.

I suggest it is the *combination* of the north and the south, the Circumpolar and European peoples, cultures and identities, which makes Sweden a unique place to do research. This is the promise I mention in my title.

Nordic archaeology, like most European archaeology, has been tied to the interests of individual nation states. The subject developed in the 17th century under the royal patronage of Gustavus II Adolphus and Christian IV and by the 19th century took on regular government support. Today, in the shadow of the European Union and global science, Nordic archaeology needs to move on. This move must involve better education, broader research and internationalization. The archaeological chairs, in all but one department in Sweden, are in fact no longer referred to as North European or Nordic archaeology, but simply as archaeology. The field of archaeology is undergoing a post-national and post-colonial reformation. It must reassert its value and relevance to survive. It must reform its institutions, assert its public basis and clarify its message. All the potentials for change exist in Sweden, and I feel confident that Swedish archaeology has all the resources necessary to become a part of world archaeology.

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