Håkan Karlsson

*Ekornavallen. Mellan mångtydighet, demokrati och etnografi*

Lindome: Bricoleur Press 2008
160 pages

Review by Fredrik Andersson

Today, most archaeology is conducted within a digging industry that produces a massive amount of information, often represented as a more or less grasped and complete history. This has left ancient monuments and historical environments to play a less significant role as representations of the past, despite the existential quality many of them possess with their awkward presence and unreachable pastness. So I find it gratifying to open up a book where ancient monuments and the professional practices around them are critically and theoretically examined. Håkan Karlsson contributes with this book to the relevant discussion on the role of archaeology and cultural heritage in our contemporary society. With the site of Ekornavallen as a starting point, the text explores the continuously changing meaning of ancient monuments in relation to the archaeological and antiquarian practices. Like previous work by the author this book is well rooted in a hermeneutic postprocessual tradition, where the meaning of material culture is seen as constructed in the present and archaeological knowledge is understood as contextually and historically constituted. It is an awareness that emphasises archaeology’s political function, since the ambiguity of ancient monuments poses critical questions concerning who has the right to interpret and ascribe meaning to them.

The text is composed around three explicit themes. One theme is epistemological, how the history of material culture affects the act of interpretation; another is political and ethical, how the ambiguity of material
culture influences the relationship between the professional practices and the public; and finally, there is a methodological theme that aims to explore ethnographic methods to generate knowledge about the interception of interpretation, antiquarian practice and the public. Although the themes are intertwined, they more or less correspond to three different chapters and are tied together in a concluding discussion.

In the first part a biography is outlined for Ekornavallen and its monuments, from the creation of Neolithic megaliths to the so-called restoration of the site in the 1940s. This biography would, perhaps, be quite similar to an ordinary long-term history if it was not for the focus on the 20th century and the ontological dimension of the site. It is more what the monuments do than what they are that plays the main role in the story of Ekornavallen. Influenced by the philosophies of Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer, the author argues that material culture through its effective history has an important (and by most archaeologists neglected) influence over the interpretation — in the past and in the present. The interpreter does not just ascribe meaning to the monument; the horizon of interpretation is constructed by its effective history. Following Karlsson’s discussion one important consequence becomes apparent: each ancient monument possesses a unique effective history. This is quite a blasphemous and revolutionary idea for a heritage practice consisting of directives and management plans based on taxonomy and homogeneity. The biography of Ekornavallen shows how meaning continuously changes, so the archaeological task should not be to cement the significance of the traces of the past in the present, but to confront and give in to their radical singularity.

The next chapter explores the plurality of meanings and interpretations connected to a site like Ekornavallen, which has an effective history still active today. The multitude is demonstrated with the help of two different sets of interpretations. The first is represented by pamphlets from the Swedish National Heritage Board, information signs at the site, and an interview with a representative from the local museum. This official interpretation is synonymous with the great national narrative: a well-known history focusing on chronology, linearity and contextuality. It is contrasted with an alternative history summarized from books and discussed in an interview with the author of these books, who understands Ekornavallen as part of a large system of power lines. The chapter aims to advocate epistemological relativism, which Karlsson guarantees does not mean a political or ethical
relativism. The familiar postprocessual argument goes: even though there is no absolute or value neutral knowledge, the interpretations and knowledge produced must be weighed against their political and ethical consequences. Although this statement brings the ethical dimension of archaeology to the surface, the question of what constitutes an ethical archaeology remains. I believe the postprocessual legacy calls for a concept of ethics that allows the question of what is ethically just to be asked; not simply stating what is morally just is that which is opposite to the unjust. An ethical archaeology would in this case be a practice which keeps the game of meaning free and open and which can see that the end may differ. In light of this, I find Karlsson's choice of alternative interpretation misleading and counterproductive. In the text the antiquarian approach comes across as considerate and open-minded, at least compared to an interpretation that sees the Truth in power lines and megalithic yards. This kind of "New Age" history is common in examples of a multivocal archaeology, representing the opposite of professional history. It is clearly a rewarding object of study, quite articulated and coherent – not like most people standing in front of an ancient monument, whose approach to the traces of the past is more fluid and indecisive. These visitors are confined, as Karlsson points out, to reading the official information signs when trying to understand the ancient remains. So I would have liked to see more emphasis on the greatly needed critical discussion on the hegemonic antiquarian practice of communication.

The third part of the book focuses on this interception between official meaning and the public. The purpose is to show how visitors to Ekornavallen engage with the monuments and the official interpretation of the site. A large part of the text consists of an exploration of different ethnographical methods: questionnaires, studies of movement patterns, and photographic documentation. Although some of the methods are quite intriguing (such as giving visitors disposable cameras) the discussion almost drowns in an empirical noise. There are, however, some important points made. For instance that the heritage management speaks to an unknown reader, a relationship that Karlsson aims to change with his study, at least in the case of Ekornavallen. Regardless whether he succeeds or not, this should be a crucial insight for present-day antiquarians. Their predecessors did not see the identity of the individual as a problem since the ancient remains were part of a spatial argument, historically defining and promoting a
modern national citizen. But hopefully the aim for the contemporary antiquarian is not to create a public but to engage in discussions with them. This is at least the kind of archaeologist Håkan Karlsson hopes to see in the future, and he gets support from developments within cultural politics.

The final part of the book discusses current developments in Swedish heritage management. This is a sector facing political directives that emphasise the importance of accessibility, participation and communication and that wants to see cultural heritage contributing to the progression of a democratic and sustainable society. Karlsson concurs with these ambitions but realises that, as much as the new directives are inspiring and challenging, they are problematic. How is one to concretise the fine words in everyday practice? Karlsson has several suggestions for what a new heritage practice could contain. He sees, for example, an archaeologist who no longer is the almighty expert with precedence of interpretation. Instead there emerges an inspiring supervisor who engages with the public in thought-provoking and reflective conversations. But this requires a change of focus for the whole heritage sector, from unanimousness and agreement to ambiguity and resistance. This reminds me of Jean-François Lyotard’s idea for an alternative to the modern striving for consensus – a “permanent dissensus”. It is a condition for discourses that not only allows but also aspires to achieve heterogeneity and incommensurability, and that can create the possibility for representations of the past to allow for the identity of the present to stay open. This is a practice quite similar to the one Håkan Karlsson envisions for Ekornavallen’s monuments.

These are just some of the many inspiring trains of thought that come when reading this very accessible and extensive book. It is a stimulating injection for further discussions on a subject that should be on every archaeologist’s and antiquarian’s mind today.
Revievv

Emma Bentz

*I stadens skugga. Den medeltida landsbygden som arkeologiskt forskningsfält*

Lund Studies in Historical Archaeology 8
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309 pages

Review by Martin Hansson

Emma Bentz's doctoral thesis in historical archaeology is a study in how an archaeological field emerged during the 20th century. The thesis has two major aims: firstly, to investigate the emergence and establishment of medieval rural archaeology as an archaeological field, from the 1930s until today; and secondly, based on the results of the study, to discuss in general how new fields of research are incorporated and maintained within the humanities. The starting point of the thesis is the situation in Sweden, and together with examples from Germany, Denmark and Great Britain the continually changing practices and approaches within the field of medieval rural archaeology are discussed and analyzed. The reason for using other European examples alongside the Swedish ones is based on two important observations. Firstly, in Sweden the more continuous archaeological excavations of medieval rural sites are a rather late phenomenon compared to many other countries. Secondly, the emergence of a new archaeological field is not something that occurs within the borders of a single nation. Even if many factors are dependent on the national context there is communication and exchange of information between researchers from different countries, and this development is important for the overall understanding of the emergence of a new scientific field.
The thesis consists of nine chapters. After an introduction in chapter one, chapter two discusses different approaches to the writing of subject history. In chapter three theoretical observations concerning how medieval rural archaeology was established is in focus. According to Bentz, this was a process where technical, disciplinary and ideological conditions were significant. While technical conditions mainly relate to the excavation techniques applied to rural settlements, and how these practices have changed over time, the disciplinary conditions concern the internal relationships within an academic field that must exist before a new research field can be said to have emerged. Conditions of disciplinary type concern different networks, such as the existence of regular conferences and specific journals. Ideological conditions focus on the interaction between archaeology and society.

Chapters 4 to 7 present the empirical parts of the thesis, where publications and excavation reports have been studied together with archives. In chapter 4 the study of the medieval village of Hohenrode in Germany is presented. Hohenrode, excavated by Paul Grimm 1935–37, is often seen as the starting point for the archaeological study of the medieval landscape. Chapter 5 presents the work of the Danish ethnologist Axel Steensberg, primarily his excavation of Store Valby. Steensberg introduced new techniques, such as open area excavation, and began collaboration with British archaeologists. While his ideas and influence were rather limited in Denmark, they had great impact in Britain, where John Hurst introduced open area excavations in Wharram Percy, a project which is discussed in chapter 6. The Wharram Percy excavations are significant in many aspects, not least because their duration for almost 40 years meant that a large number of archaeologists interested in the medieval landscape came to take part in the fieldwork.

Chapter 7 discusses the development of medieval rural archaeology in Sweden, which in a European perspective was rather late. Most examples discussed come from Scania in southern Sweden, where excavations of medieval villages started in the 1970s and became a regular activity from the 1980s onwards. The reasons for the late Swedish development are discussed and found to be twofold. Firstly, medieval villages had an ambiguous legal status. Secondly, there were also internal, disciplinary conditions that had a constraining influence. Intense urban redevelopment in the 1970s and 80s led to a focus on urban archaeology, overshadowing the rural sites. The difficulties in excavating rural
sites with their thin layers and fragmentary remains led to uncertainty about the archaeological potential of rural sites. In chapter 8, the widening scope of the last two decades of medieval rural archaeology is discussed, primarily with Swedish examples. Some current trends are distinguished, such as the relation between town and countryside, studies of the microcosm – the household level including studies of spatial organization and gender – and finally studies of previously “virgin” landscapes, for example forested outland regions of Sweden.

Finally, chapter 9 tries to summarize the development of medieval rural archaeology during the period 1930–2005. One important factor over the decades is the idea that the study of medieval rural settlements has been seen as the same as the study of ‘common’ man. By this, rural studies become opposed to studies of castles, churches and towns, which represent more manifest material culture and are regarded as being connected to the upper strata of society. But at the same time this argument has had a constraining effect on the research, since the seemingly unspectacular nature of the rural remains has led to ambivalence about their archaeological potential. Something else that is striking is the medieval village as a boundary object for researchers from many disciplines. Another theme is the connection between medieval rural life and the national project in some countries.

Emma Bentz’s thesis is an enjoyable read in many ways. There are other theses in Sweden that focus on the history of archaeology, but Bentz’s thesis is perhaps the first to follow the history up to the present. Unlike many of the other theses, it has its starting point in a field of practice and a specific type of remains. However, when reading the text some questions arise. Even if the wide international comparison in the thesis is one of its strengths, it is also a problem. German studies of medieval rural sites are more or less absent in the text after the example of Hohenrode from the 1930s, and the latest examples of rural studies discussed come almost exclusively from Sweden. It would have been interesting to also include some more recent examples of German, British and Danish studies in the discussion. This would have strengthened the analysis further, even if it probably would have meant a considerable number of more pages. It is a pity that the thesis is written in Swedish, since it also has interest for an international audience. In conclusion, this is a book that can be recommended for those interested in the history of archaeology, and for those interested in the medieval rural life.
Paul Åström & Karin Nys (Eds.)
Sävedalen: Paul Åströms Förlag 2008
208 pages

Review by Jenni Hjohlman

In September 2007, the 80th anniversary of the start of the Swedish Cyprus Expedition (SCE) was celebrated in Stockholm with a symposium in honour of Einar Gjerstad in the Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities. The symposium was first initiated and later published by Professor Emeritus Paul Åström. The publication became the last volume published by Åström in his series *Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology* (SIMA).

The fieldwork done by Gjerstad and his colleagues started in 1927, ended in 1931, and resulted in the 12 volumes of *The Swedish Cyprus Expedition* (published between 1932 and 1972), which is still a much cited and highly valued publication. The work of SCE still stands out as one of the major achievements in Cypriote archaeology and the beginning of modern archaeology on the island. Their extensive analyses and publications constitute a solid foundation for much of the research carried out in the area during the second half of the 20th century.

The Gjerstad symposium is not only a commemoration of SCE’s fieldwork, research and publications. It also has historiographical input, including some contributions where the scholars present their per-
sonal experiences, evaluating the legacy of SCE and its leader Einar Gjerstad in their own areas of research.

In the first chapter, “Cypriote Archaeology, the eighty years after the Swedish Cyprus Expedition”, Vassos Karageorghis, regarded as the Nestor of Cypriote archaeology, gives his view of the history of the discipline. Starting with the first “discovery” of Cyprus by French archaeologists, continuing through the British colonial explorations to the SCE and ending with the development of modern archaeological investigations, the chapter is a useful overview of Cypriote archaeology. An extensive bibliography and a map of the locations of all Bronze Ages sites identified since 1962 add further value to the chapter.

In the next paper, “Einar Gjerstad: Father of Cypriote Bronze Age Topography”, Gjerstad’s topographical work in his dissertation *Studies on Prehistoric Cyprus* (1926) is reviewed by Hector W. Catling, a specialist in Cypriote topography. Analyzing Gjerstad’s listings of identified Bronze Age (and later) sites, Catling tries to decide which sites were first recorded and visited by Gjerstad, and which were already known. The review is followed by an overview of the development of topographical work and the progress of surface surveys made in Cyprus in the modern era. All published sites identified through surface surveys since 1962 (when Catling’s work on settlement patterns of Bronze Age Cyprus appeared) are listed together with their bibliographical references in an appendix at the end of the chapter.

Another review of Gjerstad’s work is presented in Karin Nys’ contribution, “The study of Cypriote Iron Age pottery after the Swedish Cyprus Expedition: Inflation or deflation of Gjerstad’s legacy?” The pottery typology and classification method created by Gjerstad in his *Cypriote Pottery. From Neolithic to the Hellenistic period* (published in 1931, six months after the end of the excavation campaigns) were adopted by many archaeologists in Cyprus, but have also been challenged over the last 30 years. Looking at how pottery has been studied from the variables shape, decoration and technique, Nys tries to evaluate Gjerstad’s work and methods. She concludes that Gjerstad’s general observations and classifications are still valid, but that, as Gjerstad said himself, a series of monographs dealing with all the regional variations of pottery is still needed.

In “The Contribution of the Swedish Cyprus Expedition to the Research in Cypriote Sculpture”, Reinhard Senff from the German Archaeological Institute at Athens looks at SCE’s work on sculpture, for
example the famous findings at the sanctuary site of Ayia Irini. Again, SCE’s work is put forward as the basis for modern research on Cypriote sculpture, representing the context-oriented approach rather than the earlier and widespread art-collecting approach. It can also be mentioned that after the Symposium volume was published, the new Levantis Gallery of Cypriote Antiquities of the Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities in Stockholm was opened, presenting about 1,500 archaeological finds; among these is the large group of terracotta figures and figurines from the sanctuary at Ayia Irini.

Pavlos Flourentzos, Director of the Department of Antiquities, reports on the recent excavations at Amathous, one of the sites excavated by SCE, in his contribution “The Swedish Cyprus Expedition and the results of 15 campaigns at the site of Amathous Lower Town”. When SCE visited Amathous, they excavated the necropolis but did not excavate inside the settlement. Since 1975, however, the French School at Athens and the Department of Antiquities have carried out a series of excavations on the acropolis and in the lower town. One of the most spectacular finds in the lower town is a Hellenistic temple to the Egyptian queen Arsinoe. Numerous Egyptian and Egyptianizing finds speak of the island’s relation to Egypt and its position in the eastern Mediterranean.

A short contribution by Berta Stjernquist, “Einar Gjerstad as Teacher”, adds some private memories of Einar Gjerstad as a teacher and a friend, drawing attention to Gjerstad’s enthusiasm for Roman archaeology and Early Roman chronology as well.

Paul Åström’s contribution, “Gjerstad’s Cypriote Researches before SCE 1927”, is a presentation of Gjerstad’s academic career before SCE. The notes that Gjerstad made during his visits to Cyprus and to museums around Europe give insight into the preparatory work on his doctoral thesis, and his letters to friends and family (also by Alfred Westholm) speak of personal experiences during these travels.

Before the concluding remarks written by the Australian diplomat and specialist in Cypriot archaeology R.E. Merrillees, Paul Åström chose to publish the find contexts of vases previously published by Gjerstad in his doctoral dissertation (at that point without any references of provenance). This list of pottery includes nearly 600 vases listed according to wares, and will surely be appreciated by scholars working on Cypriote pottery.

Not surprisingly, a symposium in honour of the memory of Einar
Gjerstad brings forward the achievements made by SCE, emphasizing the members of the expedition as the founding fathers of many of the main aspects of Cypriote archaeology: Bronze Age topography, pottery studies and sculpture studies. Gjerstad is of course well known to all Swedish students and scholars of classical archaeology, but after reading the contributions in this book he stands out even more as a heroic archaeologist (many times traversing Cyprus on a mule’s back or a bicycle, held back only by malaria) and an absolutely indefatigable scholar with “phenomenal energy”, as Catling puts it. The book is interesting as a historiographic overview of the development of Cypriote archaeology as a discipline, the island many times being squeezed between the “Big Three” Egypt, Greece and the Levant, and its steps towards modern archaeology. It is a useful first choice for anyone who needs an introduction to the history of Cypriote archaeology (including recent bibliographical references) and to the work done by SCE.
Kerstin Cassel

*Det gemensamma rummet. Migrationer, myter och möten*

Södertörn Archaeological Studies 5
Huddinge: Södertörns högskola 2008
151 pages
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Review by Fredrik Svanberg

In this study, Kerstin Cassel focuses on the issue of migrations in Swedish prehistory and to some extent history. This issue has long been neglected by archaeologists, who instead have concentrated on studying (and constructing) origins. The central problem revolves around a question of historical perspectives: origins/essence or mobility/transformations? Cassel takes a clear stand for the latter, the outspoken purpose of the book being “to further the study of migrations within archaeology based on new perspectives”.

The study is entirely in Swedish and consists of five chapters. “The hunt for origins” (Jakten på det ursprungliga) comes first and introduces the subject. Cassel goes straight into research history demonstrating how migrations, from being the preferred explanation for most major social and cultural changes in prehistory, were more or less abandoned by archaeologists as a subject of study and an explanatory strategy by the mid-20th century. This has opened the door for a major problem: the very widely spread view that the movement of substantial numbers of people is a modern phenomenon and, consequently, that our origin is a more or less pure, unmixed group, having been unaffected by migrations for a very long time. Cassel finds this view at the core of a currently revived interest in the background of contemporary peoples and groups within genetics. Furthermore, such a view, which implies
the idea that humanity consists of essential groups, gets dangerously close to or even becomes racism.

Cassel notes a new interest in migrations within archaeology but also identifies the need for a more thorough theoretical discussion. She finds inspiration in researchers outside archaeology, for example in sociologists such as Saskia Sassen and most notably in anthropologists such as James Clifford, Akhil Gupta, and James Ferguson. Cassel argues that the study of migrations and the inclusion of its results into national historical narratives will build a more inclusive history: if history is a history incorporating migrations, immigrants in the present will be able to find themselves in it. The latter part of the first chapter discusses definitions of the concept of migration: should it denote many or few people, and are there general processes to be found in all migrations or not? Cassel notes the promising possibilities for archaeologists to look at and apply concepts worked out in other disciplines – such as transmigrancy, diaspora, identification, and transhumance – but concludes that migration is a broad concept that she will continue to use in that way, including a wide variety of phenomena.

The second chapter, “Migration myths” (Migrationsmyter), first discusses the historical mythology about an unmixed, homogeneous Nordic context, untouched by prehistoric migrations. This view was powerfully argued by the early giants of Swedish archaeology such as Oscar Montelius and has lingered ever since. Cassel then relates the complex new research about the “peoples” and migrations of early medieval Europe, as represented by Peter Heather, Patrick Geary, Herwig Wolfram and others. Cassel points to the problems with using the scanty written sources of this period. She then reviews some recent research on travel in history, primarily represented by Mary Helms.

The third chapter, “The common room” (Det gemensamma rummet), deals with the way in which archaeologists and historians tend to think about the world geographically, in “homogeneous rooms”. Patrick Geary is a major critic of this view, having argued that geographical boundaries are hardly relevant to the understanding of early medieval peoples. Alternative views and models can easily be found in anthropology, for example that of “discontinuous rooms” and of how the same geographical rooms can be understood very differently by different groups inhabiting them at the same time. Cassel forcefully demonstrates this by taking as an example the large numbers of Finnish immigrants to middle Sweden in the 16th and 17th centuries. These Finns
constituted a defined cultural group that maintained a specific identity while inhabiting the same space as other groups – all in a continuous process of cultural hybridisation. Thereafter follows a discussion of the concepts of transmigrancy, diaspora and transhumance. Transmigrancy is the most interesting one and denotes how the migrant has not simply left one context for a new one – the hybrid identity and culture of the migrant is created in relation to several areas and places.

The fourth chapter deals with “Meeting places”. A number of archaeologically investigated sites are discussed, mainly the Stone Age site of Hedningahällan in Hälsingland, the Iron Age site of Gudme on Funen in Denmark, Helgö in Lake Mälaren, and Stora Karlsö just outside of Gotland. These are places where different people and groups of people met. Cassel’s point is to try to see these places from the perspective of the travellers/migrants, and she notes that several things were common to such “meeting places”. She is partly critical of the “central place” concept, which figures prominently in current research on the late Scandinavian Iron Age. The suggested basic shift in perspective here, from viewing a place of power as dominating a geographical area to regarding it as a meeting place – a node for the processes of migration – is interesting, though I have a hard time seeing how the presented analysis of the selected sites really relates to the understanding of migrations.

The last chapter, “Histories about mixes” (Historier om blandningar), starts with a note on the importance and possibilities of cultural hybridity. The “Nordic” animal art of the Iron Age as well as a gold medallion of the Roman Iron Age serves to exemplify how mixed influences create new and continually transforming wholes. Cassel also gives a number of examples of the redesign and reuse of artefacts as well as graves and burial grounds with “mixed” contents. There never was any original, unmixed, authentic Swedish, Roman, Gotlandic, etc. culture.

It is inevitable that a study like this must touch upon associated questions such as the understanding of ethnicity, the new research on early medieval peoples, nationalism and suchlike, though in my opinion focus could have stayed longer on the central questions of migrations and how archaeologists may proceed to study this. The examples of the two concluding sections are of relevance though none of them really gets to the heart of how archaeologists may actually study migrations.

The book is written in an essayistic style and lacks an initial introduction to the overall line of argument and the methods used. Neither
is there a concluding section – the book starts and ends in medias res. In my opinion, this free style works fine though perhaps it gets slightly disorderly at times, and I think many readers would have benefited from a bit more introduction to the line of argument.

All in all, this is an important and inspiring study. The perspectives on migration that it introduces to Swedish archaeology, and the consequences for the understanding of culture as well as historical and present-day human groups that these perspectives entail, are of prime relevance. The main contribution is this introduction to migration studies and associated concepts (from anthropology) such as transmigrancy, diaspora and transhumance. It should definitely be read.
Research School of Studies in Cultural History at Stockholm University

Research education is rapidly changing at Swedish universities. In recent years research schools for one or several subjects have been established at different universities as well as at national levels. The Faculty of Humanities at Stockholm University has been organizing graduate schools since 2003. A new research school of cultural history is now on its way. A number of PhD positions were announced in the autumn of 2009, and another announcement will be made in the autumn of 2010. The new research school is directed towards historical and cultural disciplines, such as archaeology, ethnology, history and the history of ideas, but also towards subjects with cultural and historical elements, such as languages, literary studies and media. The research school is directed by a steering committee, representing these fields of research. The activities of the research school, which will start in the spring of 2010, will comprise seminars, guest lectures and PhD courses.

The research school has two aims. One aim is to critically investigate how the past has been constantly recreated and used in the present, since the 19th century. Important aspects are politics, ideology, identity, reception, education, heritage, canon and popular culture. The other aim is to develop new interpretative perspectives on the more or less distant past. This includes issues concerning how material culture, images, oral culture and texts have actively created and changed cultural categories such as body, individual, collective, identity, cultural encounter, myth, narrative and linguistic culture. For further information, see: www.fokult.su.se

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Finnestorp – New Excavations at an Important War-Booty Site

The Finnestorp site in Västergötland was discovered in the year 1902, when a road was constructed across the wetlands of Finnestorp. The construction work revealed bone remains and metal objects such as weapons and horse equipment. After that, there were minor excavations in 1904, 1980 and 1992. From these it was concluded that Finnestorp is a war-booty site dated to the Migration period (in Swedish terms). New investigations in 2000–2004 and 2008–2009 have now produced interesting results.

First, a survey with metal detector offered an extensive view of the 400 x 100 m wetland area. The results showed that there were objects more or less throughout the entire area. This suggests that large-scale war-booty offerings have been made repeatedly during the Migration period. Second, excavations in four areas (approx. 240 m²) gave insights into ritual activities not previously observed on an offering site. Fire pits contained burned animal bones and small drops of silver. The pits were dated by 14C to the same time period as the metal artefacts (c. AD 350–550).

More than 700 artefacts were found. Among the metal objects were exclusive swords and horse equipment. Many have elegant ornaments and represent the equipment of high-ranking warriors. These warriors seem to have belonged to the elite level of society during the Migration period. Other finds of similar type have been made on war-booty sites in Denmark and northern Germany. There are also parallels to other artefact finds from all over Europe.

In the research field of war-booty sites, Finnestorp is exclusive in the sense that all finds are integrated in a GIS database. Finnestorp is also the only war-booty site where radiocarbon analyses have been done on skeletal remains, wooden artefacts and structures. For further information, go to: http://www.finnestorp.se/

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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
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