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# Historical Archaeology in Sweden

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## 1. Introduction

Historical Archaeology is an archaeology for periods and societies which are known to have writing. Thus Historical Archaeology operates at the methodological meeting point between different sources – material culture, texts and also pictures. Historical Archaeology in Sweden covers the period from around AD 300 until the present, that is from the Roman Iron Age when the first runic inscriptions appeared.

Historical Archaeology is a broad and inclusive concept covering several disciplines or specialities, partly using other designations such as Medieval Archaeology, Marine Archaeology, Archaeology of Modernity and Contemporary Archaeology. Of these Medieval Archaeology was established in 1962 as an academic discipline in Sweden at Lund University; in 2005 it was expanded and renamed Historical Archaeology. Marine Archaeology has existed at Södertörn University College since the 1990s and is to a large degree concerned with the investigation of Early Modern warships in the Baltic Sea, inspired by the recovery of the *Vasa* in the harbour of Stockholm in 1961. Archaeology of Modernity and Contemporary Archaeology are current research trends, which are not (yet) established as separate disciplines.

Historical Archaeology in Sweden is a very large part of the total archaeology in the country. Historical Archaeology is conducted at univer-

sities, university colleges, at the National Heritage Board and its regional excavations units, at larger museums and a few archaeological foundations and private companies.

Some special conditions for Historical Archaeology in Sweden ought to be noted, especially for an international public: first of all, the Middle Ages in a Swedish context is normally defined as the period from Christianization to the Reformation, *c.* 1000/1050–1527/1536. Furthermore, the borders of Sweden have changed through time. Finland was a part of Sweden from the 13<sup>th</sup> century until 1809. The Norwegian provinces of Jämtland and Härjedalen became a part of Sweden in 1645, Bohuslän in 1658, the Danish provinces of Scania, Halland and Blekinge also in 1658.

As a consequence, Medieval Archaeology covers a slightly different period than in other European countries. The study of Historical Archaeology in Sweden today to some degree focuses on the history not only of Sweden, but also of Denmark, Norway and Finland. Furthermore, Historical Archaeology in Sweden has the ambition also to study questions and areas outside Scandinavia.

The aim of this article is to present the origins, development and present state of Historical Archaeology in Sweden. The article is divided into nine short sections: 1) First this introduction. 2) Identification of early initiatives back in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. 3) The two roots of Medieval Archaeology in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. 4) The establishment of Medieval Archaeology as an academic discipline in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. 5) The transition to Historical Archaeology from the 1980s. 6) A presentation of Historical Archaeology of today. 7) An Archaeology of Modernity since the 2000s. 8) Finally, some sentences on the challenges of Historical Archaeology.

## 2. Early initiatives

Almost every academic discipline legitimizes itself by referring both to a long tradition, and to its capacity for innovation. The discipline is to be perceived as both old and new. Thus, Historical Archaeology has its direct predecessor in Medieval Archaeology. And Medieval Archaeology owes its existence to both individual initiatives and structural changes in society, which can be traced back through the centuries. From these traces we create traditions to recall at anniversaries. In our story we incorporate individuals and their actions as early examples of our discipline, even if they themselves necessarily perceived their actions in quite a different context. Apparently there is a hunt for early beginnings – from the 1830s to 1779 and now back to the 1670s.



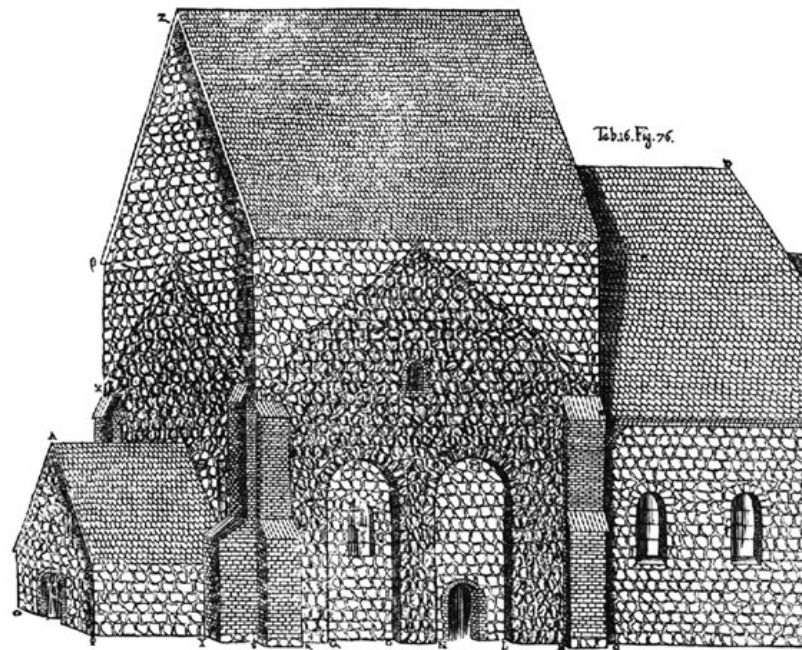


Fig. 1. The Old Uppsala cathedral 1679. Drawing from Rudbeck 1938, fig. 76.

The first traces of historical archaeology in Sweden can be identified back into the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the kingdom used a glorious past to legitimize its present ambitions as a great power in Europe. The historical archaeological investigations appear as a part of the general interest in antiquities and archaeology, with runestones, barrows and finds in focus. The first archaeological excavations in Sweden started in the 1650s and often had their point of departure in texts or folklore, and were encouraged by a new empirical attitude towards the past. The aim was to prove statements in the texts or to identify kings or locations mentioned (Baudou, Moen 1995; Jensen 2002, 2004).

The very first historical archaeological excavation in Sweden can be identified at the church of Old Uppsala in the 1670s and '80s. The medieval church (fig. 1) and former cathedral was investigated by a polymath to see if it was built on the ruins of the heathen temple, which was mentioned in written sources, and maybe also identical with the temple of Apollo in Atlantis, which was thought to have been situated at Uppsala. The investigation at Old Uppsala might also be denoted as the very first example of buildings archaeology or church archaeology in Sweden; furthermore, in the same context we find the first example of experimental archaeology and the use of a stratigraphic analysis for dating. The church walls were investigated in 1674 and 1677 and excavations conducted

around the building in 1677 and 1681 (Olof Rudbeck, cf. Lindqvist 1930, pp. 27f; Jensen 2002, p. 269, 2004, p. 77; Alkarp 2009, pp. 174ff).

The first urban archaeological excavation was conducted in the 1680s. Two antiquarians observed remains, excavated and collected finds from the Black Soil on the island of Björkö in Mälaren, which was then identified as Birka, the Viking Age town known from written sources and the possible origin of the Björkö town law (Johan Hadorph and Johan Peringskiöld, cf. Hadorph 1687; Jensen 2002, pp. 268f, 2004, pp. 67, 77).

Much later, the first archaeological investigation of a medieval town and convent took place. A Linnaean apprentice, a botanist and veterinary, documented remains when a new school was built on the site of a former Franciscan nunnery in Skara in 1779 (Peter Hernquist, cf. Andersson 1993, pp. 7f).

All these early initiatives, however, had no impact on the later creation of the academic discipline called Medieval Archaeology. We have to travel to the 1830s and from central Sweden to Scania, former a province of Denmark, to catch the beginning of a continuous scholarly tradition. Here we meet another polymath who was once called the first medieval archaeologist in Sweden and had his focus on church architecture (Carl Georg Brunius, cf. Cinthio 1965, pp. 21f).

### 3. Roots of Medieval Archaeology

The appearance of Medieval Archaeology in Sweden (and perhaps in all of Europe) has two acknowledged roots in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – Monumental Archaeology from which grew buildings archaeology with its study of churches and castles – and Cultural History from which grew urban archaeology (cf. Andersson 1997; Andrén 1997, pp. 35ff, 133ff). However, there are two ideological roots to be found below Monumental Archaeology and Cultural History, namely Romanticism and Nationalism, which both grew from the turbulence in the decades around 1800.

In an ideological and also political reaction to the Enlightenment, the ideas of the French Revolution and the chaos of the Napoleonic Wars, the Middle Ages became an ideal epoch characterized by social and religious stability. The 19<sup>th</sup> century enjoyed the Middle Ages as a romantic dream and created a revival for the Romanesque and Gothic styles in architecture (Clark 1928; Kåring 1995; Larsson 2000, pp. 75f; Fritzsche 2004). This is the background to the study of monuments in Christian Europe.

Paradoxically, it was the same period that admired the remains of the Middle Ages which also destroyed the authentic buildings when trying to

improve them. The real innovation was that the medieval buildings were carefully documented and analysed before or during destruction. In my office I have had a portrait of an architect and professor of Greek in Lund, once also called the first medieval archaeologist in Sweden, who did just this – rebuilding and documenting medieval churches (Carl Georg Brunius, cf. Grandien 1974).

An archaeology of churches, of art and architecture or a Christian archaeology continues up till today. Thus the complicated history of Lund Cathedral and its architectural hinterland in the diocese has been a recurrent subject of several proto- or formally established medieval archaeologists (e.g. Brunius 1836; 1850; Otto Rydbeck 1923; Monica Rydbeck 1936; Cinthio 1957).

The medieval dream is also visualized at the Historical Museum at Lund University, which dates back to 1805. The main focus here, when it comes to the Middle Ages, is on churches and their fittings, with exhibitions created and preserved in their design from 1918 and 1932 (Cinthio 2013; [www.luhm.lu.se](http://www.luhm.lu.se)).

Today, in line with Postmodernism, we see a New Romanticism, where the Middle Ages are popular again, as reflected in new-born medieval markets, re-enactments and the erection since the 1990s of a Hanseatic suburb, Jakriborg, between Lund and Malmö; but that is another story.

As another reaction to the Enlightenment, the ideas of the French Revolution and the chaos of the Napoleonic Wars, the nation was imagined as a community defined by its people and language (Anderson 1983). The central concept in nationalism and nation building is the people. The central concept in Cultural History is the very same people. The aim is to explore and illuminate the life and culture of ordinary people in contrast to a political or an ecclesiastical elite. This is the background for the study of culture in defined nations.

Cultural History as a perspective on the past is well represented in Sweden by the impressive three volumes of *Sveriges Medeltid* ("The Middle Ages of Sweden"; Hildebrand 1879–1903; cf. 1882); they have been and are still inspirational and an everlasting source of illustrations (fig. 2). Another important work produced in Scandinavia is *Dagligt Liv i Norden i det sekstende Aarhundrede* ("Daily Life in Scandinavia in the Sixteenth Century"; Troels-Lund 1879–1901).

The creation of *Kulturen*, the Museum of Cultural History in Lund in 1882 ([www.kulturen.com](http://www.kulturen.com)), was decisive for the development of urban archaeology in medieval towns. The museum aimed broadly at exhibiting the four orders – nobility, clergy, burghers and peasants. Archaeological ex-

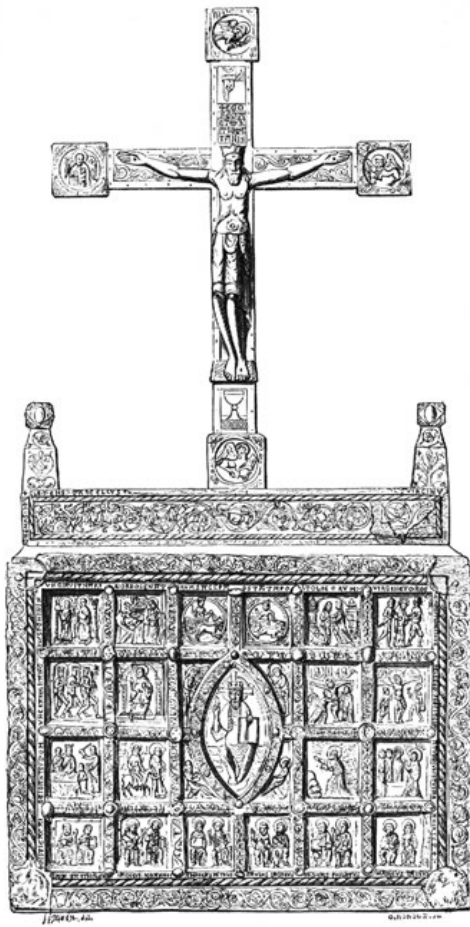


Fig. 2. The 12<sup>th</sup>-century golden altar from Broddetorp in Västergötland, now in the Swedish History Museum in Stockholm. Drawing from Hildebrand 1898–1903, III, p. 259.

cavations were conducted by the museum in the town of Falsterbo in 1887–88. However, the breakthrough for urban archaeology happened in Lund, where observations and excavations have continued since the 1890s under the direction of the Museum of Cultural History. Finds from excavations for sewer pipes in the streets, and soon also from building plots, were collected from 1890 onwards, and the activity was gradually transformed into orderly archaeological excavations, which have continued to the present into the thick “cultural” layers (Bengtsson 1968; Mårtensson 1980; Larsson 2000, pp. 165ff).

Excellent expressions of the growing knowledge from the urban excavations were a volume on the medieval history of Lund (Blomqvist 1951) and the medieval exhibition hall at the Museum of Cultural History, which opened in 1957. Cultural history, urban archaeology and the finds from the excavations have converged into a strong line of archaeological studies of material culture (e.g. Carelli 2001).



The Historical Museum and the Museum of Cultural History lie within sight of each other, and since 1918 at a distance of less than 100 metres. There was fierce rivalry between the two museums and their leaders. The archaeological territory of the town had to be divided between the Museum of Cultural History and the Ethnological Society under the supervision of the state antiquarian in 1909. The rivalry stretched to the summer paradise of the bourgeoisie on the coast, the nearby medieval twin towns of Skanör and Falsterbo with their royal castles in the decades around 1900. The Museum of Cultural History excavated the castle of Falsterbo, whereas the Historical Museum excavated the castle of Skanör – the latter conducted with stratigraphic methods and (much) later an exemplary publication (Rydbeck 1935).

The first mention of the term “Medieval Archaeology” in Sweden in 1904 (Rydbeck 1904, p. 83) and the creation of a professorship of Prehistoric and Medieval Archaeology in 1919 (and in fact until 1968) at Lund University belong, in my opinion, to this context of rivalry.

The importance of this professorship with a double definition, “Prehistoric and Medieval Archaeology”, for several decades has later been downplayed in retrospect, probably so that it would not overshadow the new start in 1962 of a separate and independent Medieval Archaeology. In fact, even if the first professor of Prehistoric and Medieval Archaeology, and also head of the Historical Museum in Lund, managed to cover most periods from the Stone Age to the Baroque, his main efforts lay in the Middle Ages and church archaeology (Otto Rydbeck, cf. Andersson 2000–02; Stjernquist 2005, pp. 24ff).

There were, however, both professional and personal connections between the two roots of Medieval Archaeology. The city antiquarian at the Museum of Cultural History, who for decades conducted investigations into the “cultural layers” of medieval Lund, had in his luggage an art-historical dissertation on churches (Blomqvist 1929).

In the years just before the formal creation of the discipline of Medieval Archaeology in Lund there was an intensification of urban excavations. The Historical Museum of Lund University conducted excavations in the medieval town of Tommarp in Scania (Thun 1967). And the Museum of Cultural History conducted the first large urban excavation in Sweden, the *Thulegrävningen* (The Thule Dig) in Lund in 1961 (fig. 3) (Blomqvist, Mårtensson 1963).

All of this happened in Scania, the former province of Denmark. In central Sweden there was for a short period at Uppsala University an associate professor (“docent”) of Art History and Medieval Archaeology (Bengt Thordeman, 1920–26, cf. Andersson 1993, p. 14). In Finland, a



Fig. 3. The “Thule Dig” in Lund, Sweden. Photo Ragnar Blomqvist, The Museum of Cultural History in Lund, May 1961.

former province of Sweden, also with lively research into monuments, churches and castles, plans in the 1920s for a discipline of Medieval Archaeology were never implemented (Drake 1993). An academic discipline of Medieval Archaeology only developed in Lund.

In my narrative of the appearance of Medieval Archaeology I have emphasized the roots, the rivalry or competition between institutions and their people, which created a “critical mass” of research into the Middle Ages, located almost too close together for comfort. And we observe that antiquarian and archaeological practice appeared before academic establishment.

#### 4. Medieval Archaeology

Medieval Archaeology was formally established at Lund University in 1962. From the beginning Medieval Archaeology was a complement to the studies of Prehistoric Archaeology, but soon it became a full-cycle study and later also open directly for beginners (Cinthio 1963, 1988).

Lund University was the first place in Scandinavia to establish Medieval Archaeology as a discipline. Therefore many students of archaeol-

ogy from all over the country and also from abroad came to Lund to take courses. If you wanted to work as an archaeologist, you were expected to have passed exams in both Prehistoric and Medieval Archaeology.

From Lund a large number of dissertations appeared: 11 licentiates in the period 1963–2005 and 33 doctoral dissertations in the period 1976–2005; the majority were published, first in the series *Acta Archaeologica Lundensia* and later in *Lund Studies in Medieval Archaeology* (1986–2005) ([www.ark.lu.se/forskning/forskarutbildning/medeltidsarkeologi-historisk-arkeologi](http://www.ark.lu.se/forskning/forskarutbildning/medeltidsarkeologi-historisk-arkeologi)).

Although in the first proclamation Medieval Archaeology was open to post-medieval periods, the discipline was in practice totally focused on the Middle Ages. “Nordic Historical Archaeology” was even suggested as the new name of the discipline during the planning, but it was rejected locally (Cinthio 1963, p. 192; 1988, pp. 5f, 13). The professor claimed the Middle Ages as a distinctive period that really existed between prehistory and modern times, with four fields – the written sources, Christianity, kingship and economy (Erik Cinthio, cf. Cinthio 1984).

The geographical focus of the discipline was on a regional level, meaning Scania or the former diocese of Lund and more broadly on “Southern Scandinavia”; a more neutral description of medieval Denmark, where the diocese of Lund was an essential part.

From the late 1980s and in the 1990s, however, the geographical perspective was broadened to medieval Sweden or even Scandinavia. The chronological borders were likewise gradually crossed towards a wider Historical Archaeology (cf. Andersson *et al.* 1997).

The establishment of Medieval Archaeology in 1962 was really new in one important sense, that it united the two roots of the discipline – Monumental Archaeology and Cultural History. The initiative came from an art historian and archaeologist who had written a dissertation on Lund Cathedral (cf. Cinthio 1957), but the programme of the study was much broader and inspired by Cultural History and the ambitions of the Museum of Cultural History in Lund.

At the beginning the discipline was obviously connected to Cultural History and the four medieval orders (cf. Cinthio 1988). The orders represent an ecclesiastical ideology based upon four functions in society – those who pray, “oratores”, e.g. church archaeology; those who fight, “bellatores”, e.g. castle archaeology; those who work, “laboratores”, e.g. agrarian archaeology; and those who trade, “mercatores”, e.g. urban archaeology (cf. Duby 1980).

In a theoretical perspective Medieval Archaeology in Lund was always sensitive to new trends and often argued for bold theses. From the 1970s Medieval Archaeology in Lund was influenced by New or Proces-

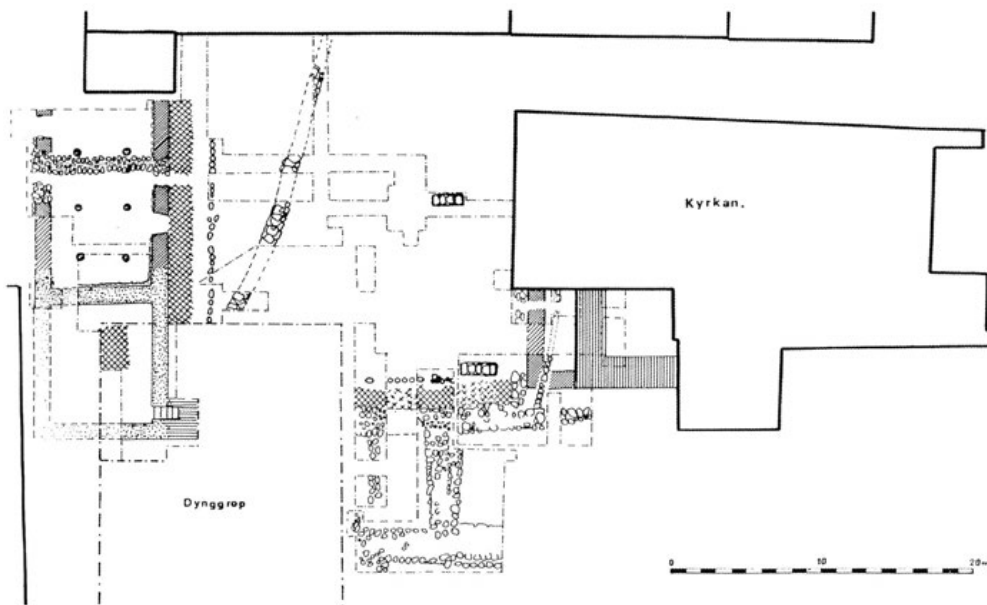


Fig. 4. Remains of the supposed royal palace west of Dalby church in Scania, Sweden. Plan from Cinthio 1983, p. 90.

sual Archaeology with its emphasis on explicit theoretical reasoning, social and economic perspectives and also quantitative analysis. As a consequence the prefix “cultural” in the teaching courses was replaced in the 1980s with “social” or “society” (cf. Cinthio 1988, p. 11). Later during that decade Processual Archaeology was gradually replaced with influences from Post-processual Archaeology, with its emphasis on interpretation and multiple symbolic meanings.

Three larger research projects ought to be mentioned: Excavations at the church, monastery and manor of Dalby near Lund were of great importance in the 1960s (fig. 4) (summarized in Cinthio 1983). The department participated in the project “The Cultural Landscape during 6000 Years” (1982–88), familiarly known as the “Ystad Project”, where two districts in southern Scania with their villages, manors, castles and churches were investigated from the perspective of landscape and power (Andersson, Anglert 1989). Finally, “Is it possible to survive on a deserted farm?”, an investigation of the deserted medieval village of Hemvidakulla in Skavarp in Östergötland (Andersson, Widgren in prep.)

The questions typically raised, the theories used, the methods and materials in Medieval Archaeology in Lund are represented in four collective publications – the festschrift *Medeltiden och arkeologin* (“The Middle Ages and Archaeology”; Andrén *et al.* 1986), *Visions of the Past* (An-



dersson *et al.* 1997) prepared for the Medieval Europe conference in Bruges, the festschrift *Från stad till land* ("From Town to Countryside"; Andrén *et al.* 2001), and finally *Medeltiden och arkeologin* ("The Middle Ages and Archaeology"; Andersson, Wienberg 2011), celebrating a 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, many decades of practising and also the impending 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discipline.

At the climax of Medieval Archaeology the division between the two roots of the subject and the rivalry from the earlier turn of the century were just distant history. Church Archaeology and Urban Archaeology were integrated when churches were used as source material in the analysis of urbanization (cf. Andrén 1985); however, the priority given to the institutions and buildings over the finds from the urban excavations, the conspicuous monuments over the more latent cultural history, created critical debate. The ambulating research seminar on Medieval Archaeology became (and still is) a melting pot for theory and practice, for academics, antiquarians and others. The melting pot was apparent in *Visions of the Past* (Andersson *et al.* 1997) as a joint venture between the department and the Swedish National Heritage Board. The new town exhibition, *Metropolis* opened in 1999, at the Museum of Cultural History, replacing the old Medieval Hall, was likewise a joint venture between the department and the museum (Wahlöö 2001).

There were and still are number of important institutional actors in Medieval Archaeology outside Lund in practice doing research, publications and exhibitions: the Swedish National Heritage Board, the Swedish History Museum in Stockholm and the larger regional museums, for example the museums in Skara, Sigtuna, Visby and Malmö.

Contract archaeology in Sweden is split between several actors – state units, museums and private firms – the number, distribution and size of which have depended on both legislative and economic conditions. By far the largest actor is the Swedish National Heritage Board, which started doing contract archaeology in 1959 and at present has regional units in Stockholm, Uppsala, Mölndal, Linköping and Lund (Ersgård 2009). These five units are to be transferred to the Swedish History Museum in 2015. Since 2007 the field of contract archaeology has to an increasing degree been open to a bidding process, where the provincial governments decide who should be in charge of the investigation.

For decades urban archaeology dominated contract archaeology in Sweden as a consequence of development. Different towns have carried the torch of being the most important and innovative place of urban excavations – Lund, Old Lödöse, Stockholm, Sigtuna, Malmö and Skänninge – resulting in important publications and sometimes even special museums e.g. the Museum of Medieval Stockholm and the Museum of



Fig. 5. The reports from the Medieval Town project. Photo Jes Wienberg, 2013.

Lödöse (e.g. Dahlbäck 1983; Tesch 1990; Larsson 2006; Hedvall *et al.* 2013).

The single most important research project in Medieval Archaeology has been the Medieval Town project (1976–84). Reports were produced on the current archaeological and historical knowledge focusing on the urbanization process in almost all the 76 medieval towns of present-day Sweden (fig. 5); one aim of the project was to establish an antiquarian tool for urban planning. A generation of Swedish medieval archaeologists were involved creating an excellent environment for discussion (summarized in Andersson 1990).

An important project at the Swedish National Heritage Board was *Sveriges kyrkor* (The Churches of Sweden) although mostly carried out by art historians and architects. The intention was to systematically publish an inventory of all older churches in Sweden. The project started in 1912, but in practice ceased in the 1980s, except from a few volumes and a project on the Cathedral of Uppsala (*Sveriges kyrkor* 1912ff). The inventory was replaced by a research project, *Sockenkyrkorna – kulturarv och bebyggelsehistoria* (The Parish Churches of Sweden – cultural heritage and settlement, 1996–2001), which was meant to produce reports and overviews from all provinces in present-day Sweden; this has not yet been completed (preliminary synthesis in Dahlberg, Franzén 2008).

The current knowledge on medieval archaeology in Sweden is excellently summarized in a number of regional guidebooks written by specialists (e.g. Hansson 2008). So far the guidebooks (in Swedish) cover the capital Stockholm and nine provinces.

## 5. Transition to Historical Archaeology

The transition from Medieval Archaeology to Historical Archaeology has been a protracted process accompanied by a long-standing debate, not least in the Scandinavian society and periodical *META* (1979–2006), which was edited and published in Lund. A new generation wanted to and actually did cross the limiting borders of conventional medieval Europe and its four orders (fig. 6). However, it took time before Historical Archaeology was established as a known concept and deliberate practice.

The existence of *META* almost coincided with the period of transition. Thus the debate started in 1981 in a theme issue with arguments for



Fig. 6. Escape from the Middle Ages? Drawing from the period of discussion on Medieval Archaeology and Historical Archaeology in the periodical *META* 1988: 1–2. Drawing Sofie Norin/Fogden.

an archaeology of recent times. A precedent existed in the already established Historical Archaeology in the United States and in the Post-Medieval Archaeology in Great Britain. However, Historical Archaeology here was used as a concept covering both the Middle Ages and later periods (Andersson 1981). In the following years many contributions to the debate were published – on the core or borders of the disciplines of Medieval and Historical Archaeology and their relation to other subjects such as Prehistoric Archaeology and History.

The concept of the Middle Ages itself was also criticized as an invention of the Renaissance and a story where the main plot was written by a few authors and scholars in the twentieth century (Wienberg 1988, 1993, pp. 180f; cf. Cantor 1991).

Belonging to the debate are a few attempts to compromise by redefining Medieval Archaeology, but simultaneously preserving its name, probably in veneration of its founders. Instead of the conventional period used in Scandinavia, where the Middle Ages are defined from Christianization to the Reformation, one should use the term “the extended Middle Ages”, where the period stretches from Antiquity to around 1800; the period of the feudal mode of production in a Marxist perspective or a *longue durée* in the sense of the *Annales* school (cf. Le Goff 1985; Ersgård 1990; Wienberg 1990, 1993, p. 181).

However, the extended Middle Ages belong to a continental context, where the Roman Empire and the French Revolution were of great importance. In Scandinavia the discontinuity at Christianization and at the Reformation is difficult to ignore.

In the debate there were at least two viewpoints on Historical Archaeology: Either Historical Archaeology in the methodological meeting between archaeology and history (e.g. Andrén 1988) – or Historical Archaeology as an archaeology of a historic period (e.g. Christophersen 1992). These viewpoints may seem close to each other, but represent an important difference: Historical Archaeology as both archaeology and history – or Historical Archaeology as primarily archaeology.

Gradually the debate, at least in Lund and its academic hinterland, converged towards the viewpoint presented in the book *Mellan ting och text* (“Between Artifacts and Texts”): Historical Archaeology denotes the meeting between archaeology and history, where new methodical possibilities (and problems) arise. Thus Medieval Archaeology was only one of many historical archaeologies; others might be Biblical Archaeology, Classical Archaeology and Industrial Archaeology (Andrén 1997).

At first sight, one might get the impression of a long intellectual process in which medieval archaeologists argued for the benefits of a Historical Archaeology, but this was hardly the case. The almost 25 years of



discussion must be seen against the background of a simultaneous shift in the practice of archaeology away from the towns to the countryside and the outlands, where the concept of the Middle Ages and its four orders simply was less relevant (cf. Svensson 1998). A quantitative shift from urban development to investment in infrastructure such as railways and highways changed the focus of rescue archaeology and thereby also academic priorities. Thus excavations connected to the building of the Öresund Bridge between Sweden and Denmark and a ring road around Malmö in Scania gave insights into the organization of the landscape (Jönsson, Persson 2008). Excavations for a new railway line resulted in knowledge on farmers and villages in western Scania (Mogren 2005).

Not surprisingly there has been an almost parallel development between academic debate on the existence of Historical Archaeology and the antiquarian practice expanding into the post-medieval period. Since the 1980s there has been a growing acceptance in Sweden of the archaeological importance of recent remains, which were previously just shovelled away.

As a paradox, the romantic narrative of the Middle Ages was gradually deconstructed and abandoned in research, practice and education at the same time as it flourished in popular culture. Even if the Middle Ages are an invention, it is a well-known brand (Wienberg 1999).

## 6. Historical Archaeology

In 2005 Medieval Archaeology in Lund was formally transformed into a Historical Archaeology at all levels of teaching and research. Historical Archaeology was defined as an archaeology at the methodical meeting point of material culture, texts and pictures. At the beginning the period studied was defined as between the Late Iron Age and Industrialization, in other words defined as an extended Middle Ages (Wienberg 2005). However, influenced by archaeologies studying industrialization, modernity and the present, we recently (2011) revised the definition. Historical Archaeology in Lund studies material culture, texts and pictures from the Late Iron Age until the present. And Lund is still the only place in Sweden with a full education in the archaeology of post-prehistoric periods.

Historical Archaeology is here to stay, and a first impression of the present state of Historical Archaeology in Lund, heading in partly new directions, was to be seen in the collective publication *Triangulering: Historisk arkeologi vidgar fälten* ("Triangulation: Historical Archaeology Widens the Fields"; Mogren *et al.* 2009).

One can see that the transition is an ongoing process characterized by diversity. In practice the Middle Ages are still at the core of the discipline, but we consciously work with earlier and later periods. The focus is still on Sweden, Scandinavia and Europe, but we are working outwards to the Byzantine and Muslim world and also to the European colonies, aiming at a more global perspective.

Since 2006 four licentiate dissertations and nine doctoral dissertations have been published, most of them in the new series “Lund Studies in Historical Archaeology” ([www.ark.lu.se/forskning/forskarutbildning/medeltidsarkeologi-historisk-arkeologi](http://www.ark.lu.se/forskning/forskarutbildning/medeltidsarkeologi-historisk-arkeologi)).

The current Ph.D. projects cover everything from the Iron Age to Modernity, however with a numeric emphasis on the Middle Ages: a project on Iron Age and medieval animal ornamentation (by Domeij Lundborg); a project on settlement and landscape in medieval Halland (by Anders Håkansson); a project on the landscape of medieval monasteries in Scania (Jan Kockum); a project on altars and relics in the diocese of Lund (by Mattias Karlsson); a project on medieval manors in Scania (by Anders Ohlsson); a project on urbanization and the bourgeoisie in Eastern Denmark during the Middle Ages and Early Modernity (by Joakim Thomasson); and a project on a modern cemetery, Assistens, in Copenhagen (fig. 7), excavated in 2009–11 (by Sian Anthony).

Among the many research projects the Middle Ages are still important: Thus there is ongoing research into the castles, settlement and outland production of Northern Scania (e.g. Ödman, Ödman 2011); into the town of Sigtuna and its international network (e.g. Roslund 2010, 2011); a revival of research into Dalby church, monastery and manor, although now in cooperation with the theological faculty and also using digital archaeology (Borgehammar, Wienberg 2012; Dell’Unto *et al.* in press); and a renewed emphasis on buildings archaeology as a part of the department’s teaching and research profile.

Since the transition to Historical Archaeology there is a clear tendency to explore new territories in time and space using different strategies: Comparison of processes in different countries, e.g. the formation of aristocratic landscapes in Sweden and England (Hansson 2006); comparing urbanization in Scandinavia and Eastern Africa or South Asia using World Systems theory (Andersson 2009; Mogren 2012); the study of encounters and identities using material culture, e.g. Viking Age Birka in relation to Finland (Gustin 2012), in the Baltic Sea in the Viking and Early Middle Ages (Callmer *et al.* in press), in early medieval Sicily (part of “‘Followers of the Books’ – Islamic and Jewish perspectives on medieval Europe”, a new project by Mats Roslund), in the Swedish



Fig. 7. Excavations at Assistens cemetery in Copenhagen, Denmark. Photo Sian Anthony, July 2010.

colonies at Delaware in America in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Naum, Nordin 2013) – and in Ravensbrück, a German concentration camp, where the belongings of prisoners evacuated in 1945 are stored at the Cultural Museum in Lund (“When bereaved of everything”, a new project by Johanna Bergqvist).

Thus the overall ambitions for Historical Archaeology are to transgress the straitjacket of the four medieval orders and also to transgress national and sometimes even European borders. Historical Archaeology needs a global perspective (cf. Eriksdotter, Nordin 2010).

Outside Lund, at other Swedish universities and university colleges, another transition took place during the same decades. Instead of a transition from Medieval Archaeology to Historical Archaeology there was a gradual broadening of Prehistoric Archaeology into a general Archaeology including the possibility to teach, do research and specialize also in historical periods. As a consequence of this broadening a number of dissertations dealing with historic periods have been produced, most of them at Stockholm University.

## 7. Archaeology of Modernity

Since the new millennium there have been remarkably many archaeological investigations into post-medieval remains in Sweden, mainly urban excavations (cf. Ersgård 2011). Two illustrative examples may be the pioneer excavations of an early modern manufacturing industry (fig. 8) and settlement in Jönköping (Pettersson 2011) and the excavations of settlement from the same period in Kalmar. The research project “The Early Modern Town” at Gothenburg University focuses on the social practice in a number of Swedish towns (Ersgård 2013).

Historical Archaeology is a broad and inclusive concept, although alternative terms are used for the archaeological study of problems, periods or sources within the historic period. Thus the archaeological studies of post-medieval remains have been done under a number of different names: Historical, Post-Medieval or Post-Reformation Archaeology. There are also more thematic or defined studies: Marine Archaeology, Contemporary Archaeology, Industrial Archaeology, Historical Ethno-Archaeology (cf. Welinder 1992), Cottage Archaeology, the Archaeology of Capitalism, the Archaeology of the Modern World and Colonial Archaeology (e.g. Johnson 1996; Orser 1996).

Following an international line, many of these investigations in the last decade have been gathered under a new heading as “Archaeology of Modernity” (cf. Thomas 2004) and in Sweden have been presented in two publications, *Modernitet och arkeologi* (“Modernity and Archaeology”; Ersgård 2007) and *Modernitetens materialitet* (“The Materiality of Modernity”; Lihammer, Nordin 2010; also Lihammer 2011), where many of the articles focus on the so-called early modern period. Behind the Archaeology of Modernity stand a number of archaeologists mainly connected to the Swedish National Heritage Board and the Swedish History Museum in Stockholm.

In a postmodern world Modernity has been doomed as a part of the past and is therefore a new field for archaeological investigations, museum exhibitions and efforts at preservation. The question is whether Modernity really is dead or has just moved on from the West to other parts of the world. The present Modernity has become a “Foreign Country”.

Also following an international line, a partly different group of archaeologists have focused on the recent past, mainly remains from the First and the Second World Wars and also from the Cold War. The aim is to use the material remains as a point of departure for existential reflections and to recall the memories of living people (e.g. Burström 2007; cf. Buchli, Lucas 2001; Holtorf, Piccini 2009). Archaeological studies of the recent past attracted attention in a popular Swedish television series called





Fig. 8. Ceramics uncovered in the urban excavations in Jönköping, Sweden. Photo Claes Petersson, Jönköping County Museum, 2004.

*Utgrävorna* ("The Diggers"; Swedish Television 2005), inspired by the British *Time Team* (since 1994). The archaeologists working with the recent past have mostly been connected to the Swedish National Heritage Board, the University College of Södertörn and Gothenburg University.

Among the examples of studies we may mention the birthplace and cottage of the archaeologist's grandmother in Medelpad, a German V2 rocket which fell in Bäckebo in Småland in Sweden in 1944, the remains of the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 in Cuba today and hoards from the 1940s and 1950s in Estonia (Campbell, Ulin 2004; Arén *et al.* 2007; Burström *et al.* 2011; Burström 2012).

The experience from an Archaeology of Modernity and the Recent Past is that materiality can never be totally replaced by written sources. There is a need for archaeology regardless of time and place, also up to the present. It is only in relation to other neighbouring disciplines, to developers and antiquarian authorities trying to minimize budgets that we have to legitimize our efforts (cf. Larsson 2011). And the best way of convincing is in my opinion by good examples.

Contemporary archaeology motivated by the reflections or recall of memories might be of interest in academic investigations or popular presentations, but hardly when it comes to rescue archaeology, not yet at least. In addition, the remains are not contemporary but studied because they are abandoned. Personally I am also sceptical about the construction of a new

story on Modernity after having participated in the deconstruction of the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages and Modernity are both metaphors creating simplified images, which help to preserve artificial divisions between periods. However, there seems to be a fundamental need for grand narratives to give meaning to the fragments of the past in the present.

## 8. Historical Archaeology as Archaeology

Historical Archaeology embracing the Iron Age, the Middle Ages and Modernity is a great challenge. It is a challenge to release the discipline from the romantic and national roots which defined the subject of study as Christian Europe and the nation. Where Medieval Archaeology was a study of a period and an area, Historical Archaeology is a study defined quite openly by its methods.

The global ambitions of Historical Archaeology are also a challenge. We begin, not surprisingly, in the security of the well-known, e.g. in the colonies; for an American or a British historical archaeology the colonies or empire means half the world, for Scandinavian historical archaeology some scattered spots, but it is still a beginning. We can also follow questions, phenomena and processes out into their global context using as an example World Systems theory (e.g. Andersson 2009).

However, a Historical Archaeology defined by the presence of written or oral history is a discipline more tied to History than ever. The occurrence of texts, stories and historians might set the agenda for Historical Archaeology (cf. Moreland 2001).

Medieval archaeologists had to know the Scandinavian languages and also Latin; a double competence in both Archaeology and History was necessary. Historical archaeologists may be confronted with all kinds of languages around the world; a double competence is no longer possible as a common skill. This forces the historical archaeologist to become more an archaeologist than a historian. In my opinion, Historical Archaeology has to be archaeological before it can be historical or anything else\*.

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