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The Swedish Archaeological Society

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The Swedish Archaeological Society

In 1947 some well-known archaeologists proposed the formation of a Swedish archaeological society because Sweden lacked a scientific organisation in the archaeological field, in contrast to the situation in other comparable countries. An archaeological society could bridge the gaps between the research branches. Only archaeologists well known for very important scientific results would be members of the proposed society. The society was named the Swedish Archaeological Society. A statutory meeting took place 5th May 1947 in the National Museum of History. Professor Bernhard Karlgren was elected the first Chairman of the Society.

The Society is the common body for all professional Swedish archaeologists, regardless of specialty. According to the revised statutes the purpose of the Society is to further Swedish archaeological research and to support archaeological research by granting scholarships. The Society shall especially take care of the vocational interest of the archaeologists. This task shall be carried out by taking part in the public debate, by influencing the public opinion and by being a body to which proposed measures are submitted for consideration.

Of additional importance is that the Society shall follow and inform about the development within primarily Swedish archaeology. In the beginning of the Society qualified scientific lectures were arranged. Annual meetings were combined with excursions to well-known ancient monuments. Currently the Society arranges discussions and seminars on different archaeological topics of interest to archaeologists. Every second year the Society holds a thematic meeting for Swedish archaeologists.

Support from various funds enabled the Society to issue an archaeological bibliography, *Swedish Archaeological Bibliography*, which comprises 1939-1948, 1949-1952, 1953-1957, 1960-1965, 1966-1970, 1970-1975. It was followed by *Swedish Archaeology*, issued 1976-1980 and 1981-1985. In 2001 the Society issued *Swedish Archaeological Bibliography 1882-1938*. In 1981 *Gjallarhornet* began to be issued – the newsletter of the Society and in 1993 the annual journal *Current Swedish Archaeology*. The journal has since then contained articles mirroring the current archaeological research and theoretical trends. The journal is an important part of the Society's work.

Over the years various funds have been created through, among other things, donations. *The Rosa Tengborg scholarship fund* - later *Rosa and Valter Tengborg's scholarship fund* - has its origin in a donation in 1976. In 2002 the Society decided to create a *Swedish Archaeological Society's memorial fund* to be administered by the Society based on the money remaining in other existing funds.

Editors' Preface

The theme of air concludes the series that revolves around the basic elements of antique and medieval natural philosophy. In this fourteenth volume of *Current Swedish Archaeology – Airborne*, four articles touch upon this theme in some way. To symbolise air, on the cover, we have chosen an illustration freely based on the depictions of the Montgolfier brothers' balloon, which was airborne in 1783.

The so-called air torpedo of Bäckebo leads off the thematic treatment of air. In their article, Mats Burström, Anders Gustafsson and Håkan Karlsson examine both the material and the immaterial memories formed when a German test rocket (A4) crashed down on Swedish soil in 1944. The study is an example of how contemporary archaeology can help to create a dialogue situation during archaeological fieldwork.

Archaeology in radio broadcasts (on the air) in Sweden in the 1930s and 1940s is the departure point for Åsa Gillberg's discussion on the processes surrounding the mediation of archaeology and how such studies can help us better understand the changing relationship between professionals and the public.

A very tangible use of air is featured in Åsa Gillberg's and Ola W. Jensen's discussion of the relation between technological and social aspects of archaeological fieldwork. By means of a historical case study, they analyse the introduction and use of compressed air technology in Swedish field archaeology.

The last of the thematic contributions treats, among other things, aspects of cultural heritage sites and the opportunities these sites may offer when it comes to people's health and well-being. The author, Anita Synnestved, discusses outdoor education and by what means ancient sites can provide an arena for this pedagogical method. The author also advocates a type of interpretation that benefits provocation instead of information, giving cultural heritage sites a renewed life.

As in previous volumes, we also include articles not directly related to the main theme – and this time they are in the majority. Henrik von Stedingk and Evert Baudou challenge the opinion that a traditional hunter-gatherer culture existed during the Iron Age in the forested interior of central Norrland. Charlotta Hillerdal's article focuses on the use of ethnicity in archaeology, in the context of the Vikings in Russia. In the previous volume of CSA (no. 13, 2005) Claes-Henric Siven discussed the time of use for the medieval cemetery of Västerhus, Jämtland. In the present volume Olof Holm suggests, on the basis of different dating methods, that the cemetery was established between c. 1125 and 1250, and that it ceased to be used between c. 1375 and 1500. This time period is later than the dates proposed by Siven.

Anne Monikander, in her article, focuses on the fact that many Early Iron Age wetland sacrifices were deliberately placed in liminal zones, and that the sacrifice

of horses as well as the manipulation of their heads, hoofs and tails turned them into liminal creatures. Carl-Gösta Ojala addresses the issue of how the Saami constantly have been conceptualised as the Others in relation to the (pre-) history writing of the modern nation-states. The discussion focuses on Saami archaeology and representations of Saami prehistory in Sweden. Finally, Eva Stensköld gives an account of the life history of a horse skull found in a bog in Scania. The story of the horse skull is the centre of a discussion on how material culture is created and recreated in time and space, resulting in completely new communicative fields.

With this volume we not only conclude the thematic series that has been going on in some form since 2001, but we also now hand over the editorial responsibilities to Åsa Gillberg in Göteborg and Björn Nilsson in Malmö. During our time as editors, Swedish as well as international archaeology has been in an exciting phase of development, where questions about archaeology's goals and functions in modern society have been under discussion. We hope and believe that the new editors will be working during a time that is just as archaeologically exciting.

Kerstin Cassel & Anders Gustafsson