

Arriving in Antiquity

The Living Past in Scania

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Abstract

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When visiting Scania one will find many archaeological and historical reconstructions spread all over the province. These reconstructions constitute an attractive form of mediation. They have in fact in recent times become important competitors to the museum exhibitions in presenting the past to the public at large. But how is the past presented? What knowledge and experience does one achieve by visiting these places? The Scanian reconstructions are presented as the author makes a journey back in time, from the Middle Ages to the Stone Age. Expectations and reality are confronted during this voyage in the world of reconstructions. The examination reveals some typical traits in the mediation of each period. These traits are then related to evolutionist thought and research traditions in archaeology. The article also discusses whether there is a characteristic regional way of reconstruction in Scania.

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Reconstruction in Scania

Experiencing history in the form of full-scale reconstructions has become a great attraction in recent years. Nowadays it is possible to experience all periods of the past as real, four-dimensional happenings. Museum exhibitions have encountered a strong competitor in visually presenting the past to the public. It seems obvious that as we live in a multimedia world relying more and more on immediate visual impressions, the demands on experience and mediation of knowledge are changing. Reconstruction is a live, four-dimensional experience which at its best is unsurpassed as visual mediator of knowledge.

With the starting-point in Scanian reconstructions from the Stone Age to the Middle

Ages (Fig. 1), I will give an example of how different periods are reconstructed. Reconstructions are then related to research traditions within archaeology supposed to affect the mediated picture of the past. Another discussion concerns the question whether there are regional characteristics in Scanian reconstructions. To begin with, I would like to introduce three themes of discussion:

- The evolutionary way of presenting reconstructions.
- The relationship between the mediated picture of each epoch in the form of reconstruction and the spheres of interest and research traditions of the researchers within archaeology.



Fig. 1. The Scanian reconstructions from the Stone Age to the Middle Ages treated in this article.

- Possible regional political arguments presented through reconstructing activities, in this case in Scania.

In this article I will present reconstructing activities in Scania so that they can be discussed in relation to these themes.

The Middle Ages

Glimmingehus castle is standing proudly in the slightly undulating landscape of south-east Scania the day I arrive. Red and yellow streamers are hanging from the apertures of the building, high up on the thick walls. *Glimmingehus* was built by the Danish councillor of the realm, Jens Holgersen Ulfstand. This late summer day he is arranging tournaments with colourfully dressed knights and horses. The yard surrounding the castle is filled with market stalls and craftsmen demonstrating their skills to the public. Behind the castle is a small garden with plants typical of the late Middle Ages. Two women dressed in medieval clothing are strolling around, talking animatedly. Inside the castle some Englishmen are residing. They have furnished the interior of *Glimmingehus* to look as it might have done in the late Middle Ages.

Glimmingehus castle is a late medieval building, suitable as a backdrop in a medieval context. Once a year since 1991 there are arrangements with tournaments, a market, theatrical performances, music, crafts, and food. In 1995 a group of people from the Medieval Centre for Historical Technology in Sundby, Denmark, visited *Glimmingehus*. They brought a catapult to show an example of medieval war equipment. Medieval buildings in the immediate vicinity provide the typical medieval setting. The medieval market at *Glimmingehus* is a clear-cut example of this strategy. In medieval reconstructions newly-built “infrastructure” is seldom needed, it is borrowed from existing settings. This gives the event an authentic atmosphere. Often, as is the case at *Glimmingehus*, the reconstructed event alludes to history, in some cases to families known to have lived in the place during the Middle Ages (cf. Ödman 1997, pp. 7 ff.). So the tournament at *Glimmingehus* is held by the Dane Ulfstand. In leaflets *Glimmingehus* is referred to as “the symbol of Danish history in Scania” (Alebo 1996).

A family who were at the market, baking and selling bread during the arrangements in 1995, told a journalist why they were involved in the market: they were inspired by J. R. R. Tolkien’s medieval-influenced novel *The Lord of the Rings*, and their participation was also a way of life and had for their part led to increased environmental awareness (Roijer 1995).

Now, let us leave the eastern part of Scania to go to *Lindholmen* castle and an event that took place there about a hundred years before *Glimmingehus* was built, i.e. in 1395. *Lindholmen* was the site of the so-called *Lindholmen* agreements, which pointed forward to the establishment of the Kalmar Union in 1397. This union meant that the three Scandinavian countries Sweden, Denmark and Norway were politically federated.

In 1995 the 600th anniversary of the *Lindholmen* agreements were celebrated in the vicinity of the ruins of *Lindholmen* castle. Like *Glimmingehus*, it is situated in the middle of



Fig. 2. Knights taking part in the tournaments held in summer 1997 next to the Landskrona citadel. Photo: Bodil Petersson.

wetland and surrounded by a moat. It is early summer and thousands of people have gathered. A medieval market is in progress, with tournaments, crossbow shooting, music, dancing, and food served in a tent. A play is performed with the political theme of the prelude to the Kalmar Union. Music from the Middle Ages is played. A festivity is held for specially invited guests in a large tent within the area on the opening day. During the days of the festivity archaeologists have opened a shaft in the green grassy hill that covers the ruins today, so that parts of the castle walls are visible to the public. The whole event is arranged by the municipality of Svedala. Representatives of the town of Kalmar have been invited to the event, and three years later, in 1997, the town of Kalmar also arranges a jubilee on medieval theme related to the date of agreement concerning the Kalmar Union.

The Lindholmen jubilee is inspired by the annual arrangement at Glimmingehus, and by Medieval Week in Visby (cf. Jonsson 1990). Inspiration also comes directly from the scene of the ruins, where archaeological excavations have been conducted both in the 1930s and since 1994. The latest excavations have been performed by the Institute of Archaeology at Lund University. One result of these excavations is a publication with articles on the subject, written by archaeologists and historians. The book, functioning as a commemorative publication, is financed by the local authorities in Svedala (Mogren & Wienberg 1995). The event was performed only once, but as an effect of the knowledge acquired, a medieval guild was constituted in Svedala. The purpose was to take advantage of the newly obtained knowledge of the Middle Ages and to spread it locally and with special focus on medieval Svedala (Jakstrand 1995).

The keen medieval interest sometimes seems almost like a fever. In late summer 1997 the still standing Scanian citadel in *Landskrona* was used as a medieval backdrop, even though it was built by the Danish king Kristian III as late as 1549 as a defence against the Swedish attacks. The use of

the citadel is an example of an intentional extension of the Middle Ages. Probably the ambition is to make annual arrangements out of the event. A medieval market was held with almost the same ingredients as at Glimmingehus and Lindholmen, e.g. with tournaments (Fig. 2), crossbow shooting, a siege of the castle, theatre, music, crafts, dress parade, and food. In the Landskrona case there were almost no archaeologists or historians involved. Instead it was the tourist agency and the party organizers connected to the castle restaurant that arranged the event.

The Viking Age

Just as the medieval period tends to be extended beyond its traditionally defined boundaries, so does the Viking Age within the world of reconstructions. Let us now turn from the tournaments and market places of the Middle Ages to the Viking Age in Scania. How is this period recreated?

In the south Scanian town of *Trelleborg* an archaeological excavation of great interest was made in the years 1988–91. It was an excavation of a “trelle fortress” (Swedish *trelleborg*), a ring fortress from the Viking Age. This kind of fortress is connected with the gradual establishment of the Danish kingdom ruled by Harald Bluetooth in the latter part of the 10th century. He is said to have erected ring fortresses all over the Danish territory, perhaps in his endeavour to unite the kingdom (Jacobsson *et al.* 1995, pp. 55 ff.). In present-day Denmark there are known remnants of four fortresses named after the first excavated one called *Trelleborg*. The traces of the trelle fortress in Scania was found in the central parts of Trelleborg. Archaeologists and professional reconstructors were engaged in reconstructing one fourth of the trelle fortress *in situ* (Jacobsson *et al.* 1995). This was accomplished, and the opening ceremony was held in 1995. The re-created trelle fortress stands together with a reconstructed house from the 14th century, also erected *in situ* inside the ring fortress

and today used as a museum building and souvenir shop. Once a year since 1995 a Viking market is held that offers the visitor, among other things, "the greatest warrior show in Scandinavia" (*Program* 1997). As the trelle fortress is interpreted as a manifestation of the Danish kingdom and its extension to Scania, the erection of the reconstruction must be seen in this context. "Rising out of a millennium of oblivion, the mighty Trelle Fortress comes to bear witness to Trelleborg's ancient, exciting – and Danish – history" (Trelleborg folder n.d.).

The warrior show is performed as a fight between the inhabitants of the fortress and an invading group of warriors outside the wall. The warriors, in 1996 as well as in 1997, to a large extent came from England. They belong to a group of people interested in performing historic war games.

Of course the war games are not the only activities taking place during the summer arrangements. The market place offers Viking Age clothing, weaponry, craft products such as combs, jewellery, household utensils, and a great many other things. Food is prepared and served to the visitors. Man-to-man combats are also performed. The technique of Viking "glima wrestling" is demonstrated. The rune carver Erik "the Red" Sandkvist is present during the market days to show his artistic abilities.

There is however a slight change from the more "civilized" medieval market atmosphere to the berserk Viking market. This is evident not least in the programme for the Viking market in Trelleborg 1997, where "most of the berserks have now arrived and pitched camp", "combat training and preparations for the siege of the fortress in the weekend are practised by the warriors all day", "Sale of slaves. Beware!", "The siege of the Trelle Fortress: 200 berserks stage the greatest warrior show in Scandinavia" (*Program* 1997, my translation). A catapult is used during the siege of the fortress in 1997. It is loaded not with stones but with heads of cabbage. A battle is fought in the field in front of the trelle fortress. At the end lots of "dead" bodies

are lying around. A local reaction against the violence used in this Trelleborg Viking context is expressed in a staff magazine in Trelleborg municipality and it is later referred to in the press. The message is that all Viking arrangements glorify violence (Olsson 1996).

In connection with the excavations and the reconstruction of the fortress and its surroundings, a book was published containing contributions from archaeologists, reconstructors, and an author who wrote a short story inspired by the results of the excavations. The book was financed by the municipality of Trelleborg (Jacobsson *et al.* 1995). The idea of the Trelleborg book can be compared with the Lindholmen book mentioned above.

The arrangements are conducted by the local tourist agency together with local merchants and enthusiasts interested in the Viking Age. An association was formed in 1992 with the purpose of acting for the preservation and reconstruction *in situ* of the excavated trelle fortress. The local debate was intense until the politicians finally decided to allow a reconstruction. Members of the association were both professionals such as archaeologists and museum staff, and amateurs enthusiastic about the project.

One intention of reconstructing the trelle fortress is formulated in the introduction of a small book issued by the "Trelleborgen" association. They say that Swedes from the central part of our country often forget that Scania did not belong to Sweden during the Viking Age and the Middle Ages. The plans to remove the only trelle fortress in Sweden today would be to contribute to Swedish oblivion concerning the fact that Scania once belonged to Denmark. Trelleborg becomes really Swedish only when the traces of the trelle fortress are definitely annihilated. "May it not happen!" they exclaim (Riddersporre & Bingsgård 1995, pp. 13 f.). These formulations clearly express a reason for the local and regional interest in re-erecting this fortress from the past.

Near *Foteviken* in the south-west of Scania there is a so-called Viking reservation. For many years there have been activities in the area related

to maritime and land-based archaeology. In 1995 the Foteviken Maritime Centre (FMC) started to create a Viking village. In summer 1997 they arranged a Viking market for the first time. As in connection with all other Viking arrangements of this kind, Foteviken is full of life. Lots of visitors are strolling around among the buildings and tents. The village looks like a building site. Houses are being erected. Some of them stand as skeletons, waiting for walls and roofing. A Viking ship is being built. With a great view out over the sea, it is understandable that the place, in spite of the fact that it is situated on top of a garbage dump, is attractive to use for the erection of a Viking reservation with special focus on ships and navigation. According to the manager, Björn M. Jacobsen, they want to create an image associated with fishery, trade and navigation (Gustafson 1995). Besides the abundance of wrecks in the surrounding waters, the area is well known in connection with a specific historical event, *pugna forensis* (Crumlin-Pedersen 1984, pp. 60 ff.), which is Latin for "the battle at the market place". This battle occurred in the year 1134, and I personally would say that the event occurred during the Middle Ages. But this is not the case in the Foteviken Viking reservation. Here it is incorporated in the long Viking Age stretching far beyond the usually conceived transition to the Middle Ages. But of course boundaries are artificial. And the dating of the shipwrecks found in a marine stone barrier in Foteviken is placed in the transition period.

The Foteviken battle was a conflict between the ruling Danish king Nils and his rival Erik Emune, who was a pretender to the throne. Erik won the battle, where among others five bishops were killed. This event was celebrated with the Viking market in the reservation in June 1997, probably recurring as an annual event in the future.

People taking part in Viking arrangements, and also medieval events, tend to travel from place to place with their tents and craftsmanship. I saw the rune carver Erik "the Red"

Sandkvist in Foteviken for the second time in my life. The year before he had been at the Viking village in Hög. He then appeared in Trelleborg. He is also part of the extended Viking Age, as all the other participants probably are too. The difference between 980 and 1134 does not seem to be of any great relevance in the reconstructions.

What is offered in the Viking reservation market? There is single combat with sword and shield, a market place, a reconstructed Viking ship called Sigrid Storråda, specially built for taking people on trips, and equipped with all the security features required by the authorities (Nylén 1996).

Our last visit within the realm of the Vikings in Scania is a little further to the north at a place called Hög. This is the oldest reconstructed Viking village in Scania. It was established in 1987. Before the village was built, a very popular Viking play had been performed annually in the area. The owner of the land wanted to expand the Viking theme by establishing a reconstructed Viking village (Ödman 1990, p. 7). It focuses on other aspects of Viking life than the fortified site in Trelleborg and the maritime setting at Foteviken. In Hög we arrive at a Viking Age farm with pigs and poultry among the buildings, which consist of two long-houses and a couple of pit-houses for weaving and iron-forging purposes. The village reflects everyday life in the Viking Age. It gives the impression of a living farm, at least during summer. Once a year since 1995 this pastoral milieu – even though it is situated in the middle of an industrial area – is transformed into a lively Viking market called "Fröja Thing". The market demonstrates crafts and sells the products, there are man-to-man fights with swords, food, Erik "the Red" Sandkvist and his runic artistry, music, belly dancing, joking and jesting, a horse show with riders looking like Mongolian horsemen and -women. This place has the character of a well established market place where the real enthusiasts go to live as Viking Age people. The international character is clear. Danish and Norwegian are spoken



Fig. 3. The result of the bell-founding experiment in Hög during Fröja Thing in summer 1997. Photo: Bodil Petersson.

regularly, but there are also many Englishmen present. In 1997 an experiment with bell-founding was made. The bell was made as a copy of the Hedeby bell (Fig. 3). This was surely an unusual activity.

Next to the Viking village in Hög there is a phenomenon which is interesting because it is placed in close connection with the village. It is called "The Garden of Pegasus". This is an ecological experiment garden started by a theatre group and with the ambition of showing alternatives to the cultivation methods of today. They have built a small house with solar cells and a type of earth closet. An outdoor ecological shower has also been constructed. These inventions are used by the "Vikings" staying overnight in Hög during the Fröja Thing market.

What can be said about the medieval and Viking Age reconstructions is that the places have varying character and qualifications. But the arrangement of the markets is rather similar. They transform the shifting impressions into a rather uniform experience. Lots of people come to visit the reconstructions during markets and in that way they miss the content that actually is shifting from place to place.

Another conclusion about Viking Age reconstruction is that the backdrops have been created out of archaeological traces. To do this a portion of land is needed. Access to this land depends on the willingness to make it available. In the centre of Trelleborg there was considerable discussion because land is expensive in the middle of a town. In Foteviken they had to put up with a garbage dump – but it was on the other hand well situated on the coast. In Hög the land was offered from an industrial area. The authenticity claims are of course much more difficult to cope with in Viking Age created settings than within settings from the Middle Ages with standing buildings, as in Glimmingehus.

The Iron Age

The Iron Age is in one sense a transition period between the power, trade, war and fighting of

the Middle Ages and Viking Age on the one hand, and the ecological, small-scale and ritual Bronze and Stone Ages on the other hand. Both parts are mirrored in the mediated picture of the Iron Age in Scania. When I visit the Iron Age farm in *Ekestad* I see it as an exponent of the peaceful, small-scale, household-related society. The farm was reconstructed in 1993 on the initiative of Elisabeth Ekstam, interested in pre-historic techniques and employed by Kristianstad municipality cultural department. The reconstruction in *Ekestad* consists of a reconstructed long-house situated in extremely idyllic and peaceful surroundings. Close to the long-house is a smithy and a garden where plants resembling those known from the Iron Age are cultivated. Seeds for the garden come from the Nordic gene bank and from an open-air museum in Scania where they preserve and grow old plant species. A cult site has been established among some trees in close vicinity to the long-house. There is a carved tree pole showing a god, probably alluding to the Æsir cult (Ekstam pers. comm.).

The place is primarily used in educational activities and therefore not open to the public all the time, only on special occasions such as the "Kristianstad Days", a yearly local arrangement in the summer. Then the farm is re-enacted with people living in the farm and performing daily life and work. This small-scale Iron Age reconstruction of a single farm makes it a reconstruction on the household level. It is not possible to use a small place like this for arrangements as they are performed in Viking Age and medieval reconstructed contexts.

In marked contrast to this peaceful Iron Age site is the visit of the Ermine Street Guard to *Malmö* in 1996. They were used as an attraction in relation to the exhibition "Roman Reflections". This British group has been re-creating Roman armoury and war techniques for 25 years and have shown what the field life of a Roman soldier would have been like (Victorson 1997, pp. 37 ff.). They tour around Europe to show their activities and knowledge of Roman times. The Romans were not primary actors in

Scandinavia at the time, but this Roman unit nevertheless expresses the military side of the Iron Age. The act of taking a Roman unit to a museum to re-enact history in front of visitors is in itself proof of how reconstructing activities are seen as a resource and an alternative and powerful mode of mediating the past.

The Roman re-enactment group together with the museum exhibition "Roman Reflections" are, according to the organizers, a way to express connections between Roman and Scandinavian culture, and also to show the existence of European relations long before the European Union was established (Magnusson 1996).

A newspaper journalist finds a resemblance between the Ermine Street Guard and the "Viking fever" which makes many people today travel on Viking "raids" and take part in Viking plays (Tackman 1996). One performance of the Roman unit in Malmö was the anachronistic siege of Malmöhus castle where the museum is situated. The castle is originally from the late Middle Ages but has changed a great deal. This act is really very like the sieges of castles and fortresses presented above as part of the medieval and Viking Age reconstructions.

The members of this Roman unit make their own equipment based on archaeological evidence. They have achieved respect and popularity because they have been very careful to achieve authenticity in every detail (Victorson 1997, p. 38).

The Bronze Age

The most famous, and actually until recently the only, reconstruction from the Bronze Age in Scania is the *Kivik* grave. It is a reconstruction of a very large stone cairn *in situ*. It was built at the beginning of the 1930s. The highly typical thing about this reconstruction related to the Bronze Age is its most obvious theme: death and ritual. The general tendency concerning reconstructions within the period is that they relate mostly to mental themes such as death and ritual, cult, and beliefs. Probably this is done because one

very important remnant from the Bronze Age is the large number of rock carvings. The rock carvings in the *Kivik* stone cairn are among the most famous. In the middle of the reconstructed cairn there are stone slabs with rock carvings on them, probably showing events and things related to the buried person's life and death. There is a vault surrounding the stone slabs. This vault makes it possible for visitors to gain access to the stone slabs. When the grave was originally erected during the Bronze Age the cairn was totally covered with stones with no way of entering the cist. Today there is an imposing entrance passage leading toward a door of strongroom character. This construction has much resemblance to Mycenaean building traditions. The Mycenaean-inspired architecture reflects another research theme related to the Bronze Age: contacts between regions and the question of centre and periphery.

Recently a project has started to reconstruct a Bronze Age long-house in *Boarp*. The site of the reconstruction is in a district in the north-west of Scania with a multitude of Bronze Age remains. One purpose of erecting this house is to highlight the district within the field of archaeological reconstruction. The society involved in the reconstruction has received money from the European Union to make cultural tourism out of the Bronze Age theme (Nilsson and Sterner, pers. comm.). The house is not yet ready (May 1998), because funding for this kind of activity is often very sporadic. There are also seasonal reasons connected with the building process. Interestingly enough, the ambition is to reconstruct a house with decorated walls. This shows a concern with more than structure and house plan. The ground plan of the house is taken from an excavation of a Bronze Age long-house in southern Halland, the neighbouring landscape in the north (Ängeby 1994). The prototype for the painted wall is taken from Denmark, where such remnants have been found (cf. Thrane 1979). The small-scale household focus is obvious. In a project plan the reconstruction of the house is described as snug (Sterner 1996). In

relation to the Danish finds of wall-painted Bronze Age houses, the comment is "Prehistory has become a little less dull" (Thrane 1979, p. 13, my translation).

The Stone Age

Now let us go to the archaeological period that is farthest away in our time travel. We are now definitely beyond wartime and market places. Since 1982 there has been a reconstructed Stone Age settlement in the middle of Scania, next to the zoo *Skånes Djurpark*. Different scholars in archaeology made their reconstructions here, related to their respective fields of research. The settlement is primarily in two parts, one belonging to the Neolithic farming period, the other related to the Mesolithic hunter-gatherer period. They contrast each other, but they lie close together so that it is possible to look from one place to the other, actually to see through millennia. One obvious effect of this is the perception of primitiveness the farther back in time you go. The Neolithic long-house is built on a hillside. Inside it has a hearth surrounded by pots for food production, and along the walls are benches for the inhabitants to sleep on. There are also hides and a standing loom, indicating the manufacture of textiles. It looks dark and primitive, but related to the Mesolithic hunter-gatherer huts it is close to paradise, as we shall see. There is also a ritual aspect connected with the Neolithic settlement. In 1983 a long dolmen was erected on top of the hill where the house stands. The experiment was made to see how much manpower and time were needed to perform the building of the grave (Burenhult 1986, pp. 284 ff.). Next to the dolmen a skull house was built. It cannot be seen as anything but a representation of cult.

Outside the Neolithic long-house there is a wood and a small lake down the hill. Some huts stand there, crouching under the trees. These Mesolithic huts do not have hearths inside, because they were probably erected for seasonal use during the summer. There was no need for

heating because of the warmer climate. These dwellings of the Neolithic and the Mesolithic are so close to each other that the visual evolutionary impression dominates my own picture, in spite of my knowledge of the background reasoning.

Parallel with the building of long-house, huts and long dolmen there was an environmental project. The aim was to re-create prehistoric environmental milieu (Säfvestad 1990, p. 25). The place next to *Skånes Djurpark* was attractive since it already had the preconditions required for the re-creation of a Stone Age landscape.

The focus in this Stone Age place is on subsistence. The presentation is made to contrast the different forms of subsistence during the Stone Age. The reconstruction of the interior of the long-house is justified because the reconstructors find it important to express clearly that people really did live in this house. Furnishings and objects have been placed inside the house to give a snug and vivid impression. One reflection made by the authors of a report on the long-house reconstruction is that non-furnished reconstructions of prehistoric houses only confirm the possible prejudices about the primitiveness of prehistoric times (Björnhem & Säfvestad 1987, pp. 42 f.).

One interesting argument presented regarding the long dolmen experiment is that the result concerning the use of manpower clearly shows that no complicated or centralized social system would have been needed (Burenhult 1986, p. 289). A clear conception of the Stone Age as small-scale is covered in this statement.

What can be concluded about reconstructions in Scania? Let us return to the three themes of discussion mentioned at the beginning of this article: the evolutionary way of presenting reconstructions, the relationship between the mediated picture of each epoch in the form of reconstruction and the spheres of interest and research traditions of the researchers within archaeology, and possible regional political arguments presented through reconstructing activities.

Period presentation and evolutionist thought

I have found that there is an obvious evolutionary way of presenting archaeological reconstructions, in spite of the fact that many places only represent a single period. Evolutionist ideas become visible when different reconstructions are compared.

The Middle Ages are represented by political power manifestations, Danish representation in the region, a clear and obvious wish to relate the past to the present for political reasons. Trade is presented as important and well developed.

In the Viking Age presentations too, the wish prevails to manifest regionality through Danish symbolism. The Vikings themselves are well known for their individuality and strength within our own mythical stories (cf. the novel about the Scanian Viking Orm the Red, *The Long Ships*, written by Frans G. Bengtsson, 1941). They are good ambassadors for the region of Scania. Power is not as much only politics as in the medieval case. The Viking Age power is an armed one, but the organized amusement tournaments are replaced by "war shows" like the one performed at Trelleborgen. The Vikings were not dependent upon the same politics as the medieval people. Trade is also important during the Viking Age.

The Iron Age in Scanian reconstruction is represented in two different ways: either as war, or as local households with animals, weaving, and iron production. The warfare in Roman dress is presented in an artistic manner. The peaceful local settlement has a garden with plants and a place for devotion in the woods. The smithy is a symbol of the Iron Age essence: the metal specific to the period, in itself a manifestation of development.

The Bronze Age is often poorly represented, probably as an effect of research traditions that prefer some kind of empirical base for reconstructing the period. The characteristic traits of remnants from the Bronze Age are often related to cult. And cult is not very easy to reconstruct.

Anyway, the example here is a grave, which besides cult also presents power and interregional contacts. The ongoing house building focuses on decoration and interior in addition to house structure.

The Stone Age is the real ecological, small-scale, concern. Surroundings have now become more important than ever, seen as a resource for the local settlement. The wish is to show the changing conditions for hunter-gatherers and farmers respectively.

There is a tendency to accelerating primitiveness, or at least simplicity, the farther away we travel in time. Reconstructed life becomes simpler and more natural, local and uncomplicated during Bronze Age and Stone Age. Medieval and Viking Age structure, power, politics, trade, and warfare are replaced by household, food production, ecology, and decorative art. But there is also a general connection between "ecology" and "the past" as shown by "The Garden of Pegasus" close to the Viking village in Hög, and by the family participating in the medieval market at Glimmingehus.

Research traditions

I have found that the mediated picture of each archaeological epoch in the form of reconstruction to a large extent is a reflection of the spheres of interest and research traditions of the archaeological researchers.

Let us make a trip through history with the aid of the latest volume of *Nordic Archaeological Abstracts* 1994. Words and expressions have been collected by the author of this article (Table 1). They show the interests of the researchers. These interests can then be related to the reproduction of archaeological times in reconstructions as presented above.

To find out whether there is a connection between this tendency and the research traditions within the separate periods in archaeology, I have made use of the 1995 issue of *Current Swedish Archaeology (CSA)* where archaeologists sum up Swedish archaeological research during

Table 1. Expressions collected from the latest volume of *Nordic Archaeological Abstracts (NAA)* 1994 related to each of the periods discussed above.

Archaeological period	Words and expressions from NAA 1994
Middle Ages	state formation, political power, royal farms, power and dissolution of power, transport structures, merchandise and trade, administration, colonization, parochialization
Viking Age	urbanization, weapons, monetary circulation, warrior economy – trading economy, metal-working, trading farmstead, creation of the state, when the Vikings became Europeans, plants and Vikings
Iron Age	central place, iron manufacturing, settlement, everyday practice, farmsteads, settlement pattern, settlement structure, metal analyses, houses and graves, deforestation, houses and rooms, body, small Iron Age states, hill-forts and graves
Bronze Age	world systems, local variations, concepts, metallurgy, import, hoard, meaning and perception of rock carvings, cult artefact
Stone Age	Neolithic: Neolithic economy, ecological approaches, Neolithic farming practice, landscape changes, ritual tradition, plant remains Mesolithic: sedentariness, environments, plant use, environmental change, faunal remains

the period 1986–1990.

Mesolithic research is here conceived of as dominated by an interpretation framework in which economic and social change during the late Mesolithic is due to climatic change (Knutsson 1995, p. 23). In this conclusion I see the environmental approach that is also found in Stone Age reconstruction. Here reconstruction expresses a research perspective.

Neolithic research is characterized in a more varied way, as settlement studies with both social and economic aspects. Palaeoecological studies are current. And from this perspective Neolithization processes are discussed (Holm 1995, pp. 39 ff.). This research focus is mirrored in reconstructions at Skånes Djurpark, where the transition from the Mesolithic to the Neolithic is explicitly shaped within a settlement structure on a local level.

Bronze Age research is characterized as containing both tradition and renewal. The processual approach cooperates with the post-

processual ones. Areas of research are settlement archaeology and spatial analysis, metalwork, regionality, centre–periphery, burial practices and rock art (Jennbert 1995, pp. 45 ff.). Here the research traditions seem so shifting that only elements of it can be traced within the reconstructions. It is primarily burial practices and rock art related to Kivik, where the Mycenaean-influenced appearance expresses these things. In the reconstruction of a Bronze Age house at Boarp with a cosy interior and with wall paintings and decoration there is a definite decision favouring a post-processual research tradition in which individuals become visible as actors.

Iron Age research is occupied with questions such as settlement pattern, social organization, handicraft, trade, and religion (Bergström 1995, pp. 55 ff.). This is a mixture of large-scale and small-scale, visible in reconstructions.

The Viking Age has a diversity of research focuses according to the CSA contribution. Viking Age research moves within the spheres of

state formation, urbanization, Christianization, numismatics, social stratification, and iron production (Kyhllberg 1995, pp. 76 ff.). Here the connection with reconstruction is obvious. State formation is expressed in Trelleborg. Christianization is a phenomenon which in the Viking Age reconstructions makes paganism interesting to re-enact. Paganism is a marked contrast to the succeeding Christian society.

Medieval research in the period 1986–90 has produced a majority of works concerning the categories “towns”, “church”, “castle” (Redin 1995, pp. 88 ff.). In a broad sense this has a connection with medieval reconstructions that primarily focus on markets, castle milieus, and urban sites. But there is not much within the reconstructions concerning churches. Redin mentions that “the countryside” is a coming theme (Redin 1995, pp. 88 ff.). This theme is not seen in the medieval reconstructions either.

Regional political arguments

I have found that there are explicit regional political arguments within reconstructing activities in Scania which make reconstructions a contribution to regional policy today.

Scania is a region in the south of Sweden with close historical ties to Denmark, the neighbouring country to the west. As an effect of the ambivalent nationality during historical times, and because Scania is often included in an archaeological “South Scandinavian” context, the contents of reconstructions become interesting from a regional point of view. How does this geographic and historic ambivalence affect the content of these reconstructions?

In reconstructions from the Middle Ages and the Viking Age references are made to Danish connections. Lindholmen involves the union between Denmark, Sweden and Norway, the Kalmar Union. Trelleborg is seen as the archaeological evidence of Danish dominance in the region during the 10th century, when Harald Bluetooth was king of Denmark and probably also Scania. And Glimmingehus is, as

we saw above, mentioned as the symbol of the Danish history in Scania.

Although Scania actually belonged to Denmark at the time, I see the references to Denmark as a way to express regional independence in relation to today’s political centre of Sweden, Stockholm, usually seen as very far away from a Scanian point of view. The references made to Danish superiority are probably to be seen as a parallel to the hoisting of the Scanian flag, a manifestation of the region as independent or at least claiming an identity of its own.

The manifestation today of a supra-regional union, like the Kalmar Union, can be seen as a support parallel to the European Union, in which Sweden joined in 1995. This supra-regional organization also makes it possible for smaller units, regions, to receive more attention. An emphasis on both Europe and Scania is the result. The importance of the nation state is reduced.

Unlike those who think that the past is not obviously used in today’s politics, I see the above examples as proof of the opposite. It is indeed highly revealing how Scanian local patriotism finds its way into historic re-presentations.

Reconstruction in a wider perspective

The chosen region of Scania is to be understood as the object of a “case study”. The accelerating interest in heritage management in the form of reconstruction, and the establishment of heritage centres, is part of a worldwide tendency today, at least in the western world (Fowler 1992; Walsh 1992, pp. 94 ff.; Lowenthal 1997). Examples of expanding reconstructing activities are numerous and have in recent years been compiled and only partially discussed by different people (Anderson 1984; Ahrens 1990; Vadstrup 1993; Carlsson & Söderberg 1995; Foldøy & Lundström 1995; Ipsen *et al.* 1995). I will return to the general tendency of growing reconstructing activity with a focus on Scandinavia in other contexts. It is obvious that

regionality is a perspective frequently in use these days, both politically and within the heritage sector (Petersson 1999). Scania is a specific example of how a region makes use of its relationship with surrounding nations and states in an era when regionality is promoted politically, in this case within the European Union.

There is also a general history concerning the development of reconstruction, for example on Sweden and Denmark (Petersson 1998). In Scandinavia as a whole there are two powerful established prototypes for the reconstructions being made today. One is the open-air museum of cultural history, *Skansen* in Stockholm, Sweden, founded by Artur Hazelius and opened in 1891. It has influenced the way of exhibiting the past all over the world, with its whole milieu populated with costumed dolls as representations of human beings, in clothes typifying the historical sequence presented (Carlén 1990, pp. 90 ff.). In Denmark the *Historical-Archaeological Experimental Centre in Lejre*, founded in 1964 by Hans-Ole Hansen, has been the great prototype for almost all endeavours to recreate archaeological times all over Europe and even in the United States. Lejre has become famous as an example of integrating experiment in archaeology with educational purposes and cultural tourism (Coles 1979, pp. 150 ff.; Meldgaard & Rasmussen 1996).

Re-presenting the past

Even if we can see all these signs of period representation and regionality in a discussion about the message communicated by reconstructions, what do the public at large perceive? A newly conducted study on intended and achieved reception of messages in a couple of exhibitions on cultural history (Lundberg & Ågren 1996) states that the intention of the exhibitor seldom corresponds to the visitor's impression and experience. As professionals we must always bear this in mind, so that we are not surprised by the fact. We cannot anticipate the experiences of the visitors, but we can discuss the

unintended or subconscious messages in the world of reconstruction that we as archaeologists create in our pictures of the past.

Reconstruction seems to reflect research results to a larger extent than the researchers themselves are aware of. The visibility of research in reconstruction is a good argument for the relevance of this form of mediation. It mediates both for the public at large and for the researchers. Reconstruction can thus be seen as feedback on research results.

Reconstruction is a relatively new and not very much discussed form of mediation. It does not have the same systematic organization as traditional museums. Therefore the conditions for its survival and success vary a great deal. Until now it has mostly been the traditional museums that have been the subject of analysis in museological terms. But precisely because the accelerating interest is connected to the four-dimensional reconstructions, it is all the more important to discuss the content in the recreation of the past. I find reconstruction highly valuable as a form for mediation, but I also think it needs to be observed and analysed. In its simplest form it is pure amusement, but even amusement can be of good or bad quality. In combining amusement with knowledge, something special is required in re-presenting the past. This something partly comes out of knowledge about how reconstructions work. I think a debate concerning the content of reconstructing activities is a way to this knowledge.

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