

Magnus Bruzelius, Jacob Adlerbeth and the Invention of the Stone Age

BY PÅVEL NICKLASSON

Abstract

Nicklasson, Pål. 2011. Magnus Bruzelius, Jacob Adlerbeth and the Invention of the Stone Age. Lund Archaeological Review 16 (2011), pp. 61–83.

In 1822 the teacher at Lund University, Magnus Bruzelius, published the paper *Nordiska fornlemningar från Skåne* in *Iduna*, the journal of Götiska Förbundet. The paper is one of the most important ever written on archaeology. It was the first time the Stone Age was defined based on archaeological findings. This opened up for the Three-Age System explored by Bruzelius' contemporaries Christian Jürgensen Thomsen and Sven Nilsson. Bruzelius based his study on his excavations of the Åsahögen passage grave in Kvistofta outside Helsingborg and a dolmen outside Fjälkinge. Instrumental for Bruzelius' research and the publication of the paper was Jacob Adlerbeth, the leading member of Götiska Förbundet, who even saved the Stone Age from being given away. In this paper I explore how Bruzelius' paper was written. It is based on contemporary letters, manuscripts and other documents.

Pål Nicklasson, Silvergården 7B 261 43 Landskrona pavelnicklasson@bahnhof.se

Introduction

In 1822 the Swedish antiquarian Magnus Bruzelius (1786–1855) identified a prehistoric Stone Age based on the study of archaeological artefacts (fig. 1). He came to his conclusions after the excavation of a passage grave in Kvistofta outside Helsingborg and a dolmen at Fjälkinge in Scania. The results were presented in a paper with the somewhat anonymous title *Nordiska fornlemningar från Skåne* ("Ancient Nordic Remains from Scania", Bruzelius 1822). This was the first time a Stone Age was identified from archaeological sources. It is a truly canonical text in archaeological literature.

The question of Man's oldest history had been a subject of controversy since antiquity. Bengt Hildebrand has charted different views



Fig. 1. Magnus Bruzelius, the inventor of the Stone Age. Picture from Hofberg *et al.*, *Svenskt biografiskt handlexikon*, 1906.

of Man's oldest history (Hildebrand 1937a, pp. 44 f.). There were two main approaches. The first was to see Man's origin as a primitive brute, not dissimilar from Bruzelius' theories. This view was held, among others, by Lucretius and Hobbes. The second approach is the Biblical one, according to which where Man has fallen from a divine paradise into primitive existence on earth. The interpretations are built on philosophical speculations on Man's origin and nature. They are projected back to the ancient past and the Creation. Bruzelius identified the Stone Age, not from speculations, but from archaeological artefacts. He not only presented the results of his excavation and the theory of a primordial Stone Age. He used a comparative method that later was developed by the famous professor Sven Nilsson in his *Skandinaviska nordens ur-invånare* (*The Primitive Inhabitants of the Scandinavian North*, Nilsson 1838-1843). Bruzelius suggested that the brutal savages from the Stone Age and their tools should be compared to living primitive tribes, for instance in the South Pacific. This is the foundation for an anthropological approach, still used in archaeological research.

Bruzelius is sometimes mentioned in textbooks on the history of archaeology (Hildebrand 1937a, pp. 314 f.; Gräslund 1974, pp. 92 f.; Baudou 2004, pp. 113 f). In my opinion he was one of the most important early antiquarians, and deserves more attention. His views on prehistory and the study of archaeological artefacts were among the most groundbreaking in the early 19th century.

In this paper I focus on the research process that led to the discovery of the Stone Age and the publication of Bruzelius' paper. This is done through Bruzelius' letters to the most prominent figure in early Swedish archaeology, Baron Jacob Adlerbeth (1785–1844). Adlerbeth was the leading member in the famous Götiska Förbundet. The letters contain neglected aspects of the history of archa-

eology. Adlerbeth in fact saved the Stone Age from oblivion and made Bruzelius publish his paper. The letters are combined with other sources, such as Adlerbeth's diary, for a view of how the revolutionary idea of the Stone Age was born.

Magnus Bruzelius

Magnus Bruzelius was a student and teacher at the University of Lund. His main subjects were the natural sciences and he became docent in chemistry. Early on he became fascinated by prehistory and began to collect prehistoric artefacts. His collection was one of the largest in Scania and all of Sweden. In the summers Bruzelius travelled through southern Sweden and bought artefacts from farmers who had found them when tilling or removing ancient monuments. He also conducted excavations of damaged ancient monuments. Bruzelius refers to himself as a "collector", not by the more usual words for antiquarian: *antikvarie* or *fornforskare*.

His collection was enthusiastically commented on by visitors. When the officer and author Clas Livijn passed Lund in 1814, he wrote to friends about Bruzelius and his collection: "a young antiquarian Bruzelius, whose collection, especially of old sacrificial knives, stone axes and the like, is the most complete I have seen. He collects with zeal and passion" (Livijn to Hammarsköld, 26 June 1814; quoted in Livijn 1909, p. 198) and: "I made the pleasant acquaintance of Bruzelius, collega scholae in Lund [...] He was a great collector of antiquities and had one of the most complete collections of stone knives and other antiquities found in barrows and other ancient places that I have ever seen. His assessments of these were combined with great knowledge about such things found in other places and with true expertise" (Livijn to Rääf July 28 1814; quoted in Livijn 1909, pp. 218 f.).

Bruzelius' activities soon caught the attention of Götiska Förbundet, an important patriotic society. Both the addressees of Livijn's letters, Lorenzo Hammarsköld and Leonard Fredrik Rääf, were prominent members. Götiska Förbundet had opted for national unification after the catastrophic war with Russia in 1808–1809, when Sweden had lost Finland. Götiska Förbundet encouraged patriotism and a return to the habits of the ancient Götar, supposedly one of the major tribes that settled Sweden in prehistory. The society encouraged members to do research on prehistory. Under the stewardship of *skriftvårdare* (secretary), Jacob Adlerbeth, Götiska Förbundet evolved into an important meeting place for antiquarians. In 1816 Bruzelius was invited to join the society. Bruzelius was very proud over the invitation and enthusiastically answered yes. From now on he and Jacob Adlerbeth exchanged letters on a regular basis. It is obvious that Bruzelius admired Adlerbeth, both as the leader of Götiska Förbundet and on a personal level.

Bruzelius soon became one of the most important authors on antiquarian matters in Götiska Förbundet's publication, *Iduna*. Bruzelius published papers in volumes six, seven, eight and nine (Bruzelius 1816; Bruzelius 1817a; Bruzelius 1820; Bruzelius 1822). It was in the ninth volume that his revolutionary paper on the Stone Age was published. Adlerbeth was main editor of *Iduna*. He commented on submitted papers and maintained close correspondence with authors.

In the first paper, *Beskrifning af några antikviteter af koppar funna i Skytts härad, Malmöhus Län* ("Description of Some Antiquities of Copper Found in Skytt Hundred, Malmöhus County", Bruzelius 1816), it is the collector Bruzelius who lectures. He presents some of his most valued antiquities, mostly artefacts from the Bronze Age. The second paper starts a sequence of three, with the common title *Nordiska fornlemningar*. Despite the common

name, there is no connection between them. In the first paper, it is again Bruzelius the collector, who speaks. Bruzelius pleads that it is important to study prehistoric artefacts, not only ancient monuments. "It has sometimes been claimed that descriptions of old weapons and household utensils are among the less significant subjects for the study of antiquity" (Bruzelius 1817a, p. 89). Bruzelius' way of doing archaeology is an early version of the museum discipline that archaeology would evolve into during the late 19th century (Ljungström 2004). Among the artefacts Bruzelius presents is a golden pendant from the big cemetery of Albäcksbacken outside Trelleborg in southern Scania. Bruzelius says that he had shown several of the objects to Christian Jürgensen Thomsen in Copenhagen. Thomsen (1788–1865) was the leading Danish authority on prehistory and the main contributor to the development of the Three-Age System. Bruzelius' statement shows that there was collaboration across Öresund and Bruzelius and Thomsen shared ideas. This must have been beneficial to them both.

The second paper is a follow-up. Bruzelius presents more artefacts from his collection, this time from Halland and Scania. The chapter on Scania shows Bruzelius as a field archaeologist. He describes his excavation of a badly damaged barrow in Norrvidinge outside Landskrona, where "one of Scania's largest burial mounds once stood" (Bruzelius 1820, p. 191). Since Bruzelius' time most visible ancient monuments have been destroyed. If he states that the barrow was one of the biggest in Scania, we should believe him. The artefacts Bruzelius found in the barrow belong to a princely burial from the early Bronze Age.

Despite the lack of a word to denote the Bronze Age, antiquarians understood that what they called the Copper Age was an early part of prehistory. They described it as the age before the arrival of Odin, who according to the Icelandic sagas, immigrated to Sweden

from Asia as the leader of a mighty tribe, the Svear. The sagas were seen as the historical truth and the framework that all antiquarians worked within. Odin's arrival roughly equals the beginning of the Iron Age. Bruzelius could not identify the princely tomb in Norrvidinge through the sagas. His conclusion was thus that the barrow was older than the sagas and that the barrow must have been erected over "some bygone powerful champion or petty king" (Bruzelius 1820, p. 197).

The chronology used by Bruzelius and his contemporaries were based on a combination of prehistoric burial customs described in the saga literature, and archaeological artefacts and monuments. According to Snorri, Odin introduced the cremation burial custom. This is roughly comparable to what we call the Early Iron Age. Cremation burials from this period are often found in ceramic vessels or burial pits. After Odin the burial customs were reformed by Yngve Freij, who introduced mounds as proper resting places. This is what we call the Late Iron Age. Iron Age graves are occasionally possible to date by coins, which show that they just precede the Middle Ages. Coins are never found in Bronze Age graves. Burials without iron or coins but with objects of bronze were identified as a phase preceding Odin's immigration. The graves were seen as belonging to older tribes such as the Götar, who were already present in Sweden when Odin arrived. The understanding of chronological differences based on the combination of sagas, artefacts, and ancient monuments, was well established. It is not true that the Three-Age System superseded a state of "total confusion" (Gräslund 1987, p. 28). Bruzelius initiated a long process where the *Sagas* were abandoned as a foundation for prehistoric chronology.

Besides writing in *Iduna*, Bruzelius wrote schoolbooks on Swedish history (Bruzelius 1817b, 1821). He solely used written sources for the oldest periods, not archaeological re-

sults from his excavations and research. The part on prehistory is short, but contains notable passages. Bruzelius starts by declaring that before the immigration of Odin, Sweden was inhabited by giants. "The Jotic age, which comprises the entire time Sweden was inhabited by giants or Jotar before the arrival of the Æsir" (Bruzelius 1817b, p. 20). It may seem surprising that the man who, just a few years later, invented the Stone Age and laid an important foundation for modern archaeology, believed in giants in prehistory. Bruzelius was not alone. Sven Nilsson devoted more than a quarter of his *Ur-invånare* to giants and dwarfs. I believe that the pioneers found it very hard to think along fundamentally new lines. Bruzelius and Nilsson were trained natural scientists. They were used to observing the actual world and not speculating about fantastic bygone eras, totally different from what could be observed around them. Bruzelius and Nilsson needed giants to be able to imagine an unobservable, strange world. The giants were a necessary part of the formation of modern archaeology, not a temporary slip-back into traditional or unscientific thinking (Nicklasson 2009a). Giants in prehistory made sense since they were mentioned in the sagas as early inhabitants driven away by the Götar and Svear. It was thus possible to link chronological systems to established historical knowledge. Speculations on prehistory that lacked support in the sagas had little credibility. The new ideas about the Stone Age and the Three-Age System were not created in opposition to a literary tradition. They were part of it.

Bruzelius' first three papers in *Iduna* are good antiquarian handiwork. He was a good field archaeologist and skilled in classifying artefacts. He discusses artefacts and monument in an informed and innovative way. It was with the fourth paper in the ninth volume of *Iduna*, published in 1822, that the revolution came. It is here Bruzelius outlines

the new age – the Stone Age. To understand how it came about we must acquaint ourselves with Jacob Adlerbeth, the strong man in Götiska Förbundet.

Jacob Adlerbeth

Jacob Adlerbeth and Götiska Förbundet, with which he is so closely associated, have been hotly debated ever since the society was founded in 1811. Adlerbeth has been seen as an extreme patriot or proto-fascist in the positive (Böök 1929), and in the negative (Hagerman 2006) sense of the words. Fredrik Böök described him as a dutiful and friendly, but mediocre civil servant. Göran Hägg has portrayed him as a vengeful evil genius, who drove Erik Johan Stagnelius to his death (Hägg 2007). Hägg calls Adlerbeth bizarre, intolerant and “not an independent thinker by nature” (Hägg 2007, pp. 130, 274). This extreme portrait and the grave accusations lack support in the sources. Adlerbeth enjoyed the company of almost all Swedish intellectuals such as Erik Gustaf Geijer, Esaias Tegnér, Jöns Jacob Berzelius and Per Daniel Amadeus Atterbom. No one ever calls him a half-wit. Adlerbeth helped several poor scholars and poets. It is hard to see anything intolerant in his actions. As Stagnelius’ supervisor, Adlerbeth helped him on several occasions. He invited him to his home and mediated contact with Erik Gustaf Geijer.

Some scholars have seen Götiska Förbundet as a kind of secret society, almost of a masonic character, with Adlerbeth as Grand Master. It is said to have had profound influence on Swedish society. According to Ingmar Stenroth, Adlerbeth was a grey eminence, who ruled Swedish politics even long after his death (Stenroth 2005). It is somewhat surprising that Stenroth earlier came to the conclusion that there were no unified political views promoted by the society (Stenroth

1972, vol. 1; Stenroth 1981, vol. 2) Adlerbeth never advanced past a position as a supervisor at middle level in the *Ecklesiastikexpeditionen*, the government department responsible for church matters and education, chiefly appointments to positions at the universities, teachers and priests. It had nothing to do with foreign affairs or other central areas of political decision making. Adlerbeth represented his family in the parliament, but never became a leading politician. His main political battles concerned cultural politics, such as asking for extra money to hire the Danish linguist Rasmus Rask to translate documents kept in the *Kungliga Biblioteket* (Stenroth 2001). Other scholars have arrived at the conclusion that the influence of Götiska Förbundet was negligible, in politics as well as in cultural life (Grandien 1987, p. 49) There have been discussions as to whether Götiska Förbundet had its roots in French (Blanck 1911) or German philosophy (Böök 1913).

On a personal level Adlerbeth has been ridiculed. At meetings in Götiska Förbundet members sang, marched and clinked glasses under his aegis. In our time this way of socializing is viewed as somewhat strange. In the early 19th century it was highly appreciated and cultivated. Even if Adlerbeth has been portrayed as an epitome of conservative, patriotic or nationalistic ideals, he was decidedly liberal on a personal level. He befriended farmers and persons below his class. Adlerbeth never married, but lived together with his beloved Johanna Sophie Lindgren. Since she was not of noble blood, marriage was impossible. The relation was heavily criticized, most vehemently by his close friend Leonard Fredrik Rääf. For more than twenty years Rääf refused to visit his friend in his home and meet Miss Lindgren (Landen 1997, pp. 110 f.). On a personal level Adlerbeth was more liberal than his friend Erik Gustaf Geijer, who made a big affair of his shift from conservatism to liberalism in the 1830s.

As this short exposé demonstrates, there is far from consensus on how to look on Adlerbeth and Götiska Förbundet. Was Adlerbeth a good or evil genius? An epitome of mediocrity? Conservative, Liberal or Fascist? Opinions on nationalism and patriotism have gone through major changes and have been hotly debated during the 20th century. Conclusions about the character of Adlerbeth and Götiska Förbundet have been biased by changes in political climate. Scholars have found the society and the Adlerbeth they were looking for. Somewhat surprisingly, there is only one biography of such a multi-talented man (Landen 1997). It portrays a jovial and cultivated person, appreciated by all around him. I believe that Landen's Adlerbeth is mostly accurate.

Several scholars have noted Adlerbeth's interest in prehistory and archaeology. Few attempts have been made to study it. Henrik Schück is the one who has done most on the subject. Schück focuses on Adlerbeth's extensive engagement in the Academy of Letters (Schück 1943). Adlerbeth's interest in archaeology went far beyond that. Adlerbeth's diary, letters, notes and journals all revolve around archaeology. Archaeological and antiquarian matters dominate the enormous amount of writing he left at his death. Archaeology must have been what Adlerbeth really was thinking about on boring days at work or in parliament. Comments on political matters are rare, disappearing in vast piles of antiquarian notes.

In 1818 Adlerbeth was asked to become the secretary of the Academy of Letters, with the title of Riksantikvarie (Custodian of National Antiquities), but turned the offer down. In Sweden the Riksantikvarie was the highest ranking official with responsibility for prehistoric monuments and artefacts. It is an enigma why Adlerbeth turned the offer down. Henrik Schück speculates that Adlerbeth disliked the bureaucratic routines of the Academy. He saw Götiska Förbundet as a better way to promote

antiquarian studies (Schück 1943, pp. 378 f.).

Adlerbeth supported several antiquarians. He financed antiquarian travels and publication of archaeological books. In his youth he carried out excavations on his domains in northern Småland and wrote studies on prehistory in *Iduna* (Adlerbeth 1811, 1813). The papers show that Adlerbeth had a good understanding of archaeology, fieldwork and theory. His special interest was Viking Age travels and contacts to the east. Adlerbeth did not have the time or inclination to become a full-time scholar. There were social taboos for noblemen writing scientific papers that could be publicly criticized. Noblemen instead acted as benefactors (Christensson 1999). Adlerbeth was one of the biggest Swedish sponsors of archaeological research. He is undoubtedly one of the most important persons in early archaeology.

Magnus Bruzelius held Adlerbeth and Götiska Förbundet in high regard. After a visit to Stockholm where he attended a meeting in Götiska Förbundet, he wrote an enthusiastic letter to Adlerbeth: "Götic strength and ancient simplicity prevailed both in the drinking bouts and at the meetings. If conflicting opinions were sometimes voiced amongst us, this too was typical of men of strength and independence." He portrays Adlerbeth as a good steward: "After you spoke on the matter, the different thoughts were soon assembled in a single opinion" (ATA GFOJAA Arkiv, Bruzelius to Adlerbeth, 26 March 1819). Bruzelius was equally enthusiastic after later visits to Stockholm: "One is never happier than when one can take oneself back to a happy childhood; and I thought that I was entirely a child again when I strolled with all the brethren and sang the beautiful horn song" (GFOJAA Bruzelius to Adlerbeth 18 February 1821). Singing, drinking and marching around the room was highly appreciated. The youthful character of the meeting is important. Youth was associated with prehistory, the childhood of

humanity. The youthful meetings were a way to bring the ancient past back to life, a kind of experimental archaeology. This was an incentive for men like Bruzelius and Adlerbeth to study the past.

Götiska Förbundet held its meetings in Stockholm. Bruzelius, who lived in Scania, was member from a distance. Despite this he fully supported the society. He declined payment for papers in *Iduna* with the words: "I consider it a perfect reward to receive the honour of tendering my small contributions to a society that I both love and esteem with heart and soul" (ATA GFOJAA, Bruzelius to Adlerbeth, January 1821). The letters show that Adlerbeth and Bruzelius were close friends and shared ideas about prehistory and life as a whole.

The passage grave at Åsahögen in Kvistofta parish

In the summer of 1819 Magnus Bruzelius excavated the badly damaged passage grave of Åsahögen in Kvistofta outside Helsingborg, western Scania. The site is located in an archaeologically rich part of Scania with several ancient monuments from the Stone Age nearby. Even during excavation, Bruzelius was convinced of the importance of the site and the excavation. The finds were astonishing and the quality of excavation was top class. It was possible to study features that had been impossible to discern in other passage graves due to poor excavation or prior destruction. Bruzelius excavation was one of the best excavations in the early 18th century. By modern standards, of course, there is much to desired. (Figures 2–3)

Bruzelius was especially proud to have found something to top the Danes: "I have completed an antiquarian dissertation, probably the most interesting I have ever written, concer-

ning finds in two burial mounds, where I have found extremely remarkable things, of a kind that the busy Danes have never before seen or owned, and which shed considerable light on our ancient monuments" (ATA GFOJAA, Bruzelius to Adlerbeth, January 1821). In Scania there was (and is) friendly rivalry with Danish colleagues.

Bruzelius' report is as good as the excavation. He compares features with other passage graves. Bruzelius mentions that the skulls were the first remains of the humans buried in the passage grave to be encountered. Although he never explicitly says so, this could be interpreted as suggesting that the bodies had been buried in a sitting position. There is evidence from other passage graves that bodies were buried in a sitting position. The position of bodies was regarded as important. Sitting bodies were viewed as remains of Finns, Jotnar or Lapps, peoples that were identified as the original primitive inhabitants of Scandinavia. Bodies found in a lying position were considered to be the remains of Götar or Svear (Ahlström 2009, pp. 23 f.). A notable feature is that Sven Nilsson wrote the part on the identification of the animal bones (Bruzelius 1822, pp. 295–297). This was Nilsson's first appearance in archaeology. He did not begin to write extensively on the subject before the 1830s (Fig. 4-5.)

Åsahögen and the artefacts from the excavation are objects in the history of science on the highest level. They are archaeological parallels to Newton's apple. They changed the way we perceive the world. Despite this Bruzelius' excavation has not attracted much attention. Åsahögen is nowadays called Ancient Monument 3:1 in Kvistofta Parish in the inventory of ancient monuments kept by the National Heritage Board. The monument has been further destroyed since Bruzelius' days. It is located on a low ridge in an intensively farmed landscape. A few stones that mark the construction of the passage grave are visible.



Fig. 2. Åsahögen in Kvistofta outside Helsingborg, the birthplace of the Stone Age. The barrow is heavily damaged by gravel digging and tilling. There are several stones marking the construction of the passage grave. Photo: The author.



Fig. 3. Just a few hundred yards from Åsahögen are these surrealistic grooves. They indicate that Åsahögen may have been part of a large Stone Age community, which specialized in industrial production of flint axes. Photo: The author.

That the monument was excavated by Bruzelius, and is the place where the Stone Age was first identified, is not stated on the inventory forms or signs at the site.

The artefacts are hard to trace. Bruzelius seems to have kept them all his life. After his death they were inherited or transferred to a relative, Johan Bruzelius. Johan Bruzelius sold a large collection of prehistoric artefacts to the Historical Museum in Stockholm in 1856 for the high sum of 2500 Riksdaler. The collection has accession number SHM 2549. Johan Bruzelius stated that the artefacts were the result of his own studies of prehistory over 25 years. Some objects can be positively identified with artefacts from Åsahögen and thus are the results of research carried out by Magnus Bruzelius. The identification is possible thanks to the drawings in *Iduna*. Some artefacts from Johan Bruzelius' collection were transferred to the Nordiska Museet. I think it is impossible to trace all the artefacts from Åsahögen.

The excavation of Åsahögen was a turning point in the history of archaeology. It was an important step towards the construction of the Three-Age System and a methodological breakthrough that emphasized the study of archaeological structures and artefacts instead of literary sources. Bruzelius' methodology is the foundation for Sven Nilsson's comparative method developed a decade later. Bruzelius, Åsahögen and the artefacts from the excavation deserve a better fate than has been the case.

The Stone Age for a parish

It seems as if Bruzelius did not begin working on the paper about Åsahögen immediately after the excavation in 1819. The revolutionary paper took time to conceive. The long process emphasizes how hard the idea of a Stone Age was to formulate. The excavation is first mentioned in the quoted letter from Bruzelius

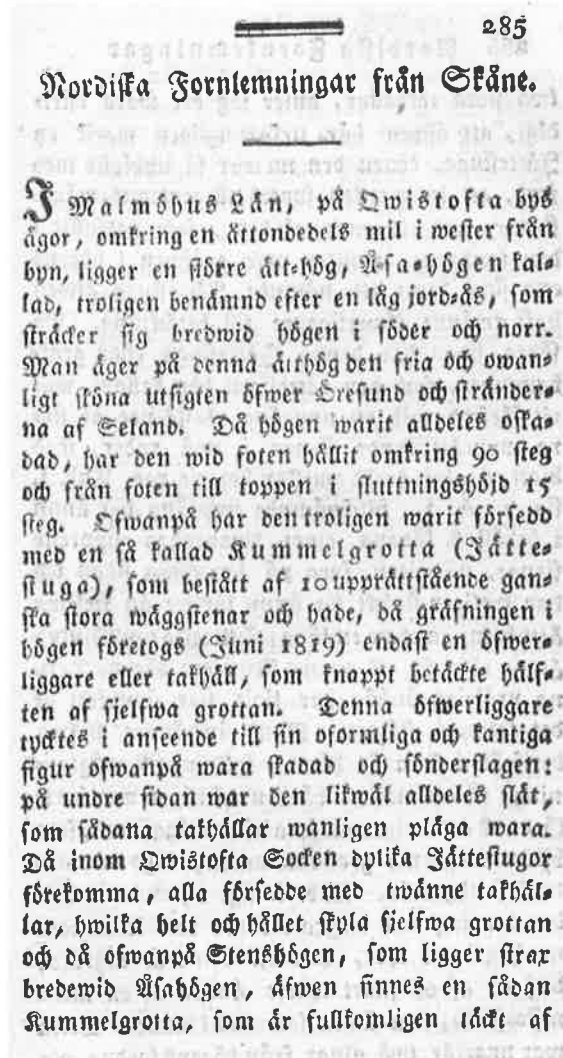


Fig. 4. The first page of Magnus Bruzelius' revolutionary paper "Nordiska Fornlemningar i Skåne" in *Iduna* IX about Åsahögen. It is in this paper the Stone Age was conceived. It is one of the most important papers on archaeology ever written. Reproduction: LUB Media.

to Adlerbeth from 5 January 1821. The letter also reveals that the Stone Age was almost given away.

Bruzelius was not a rich man. His career moved slowly. The salary at the university was low. Bruzelius was not even a professor. In 1817 he had advanced from being a *docent*

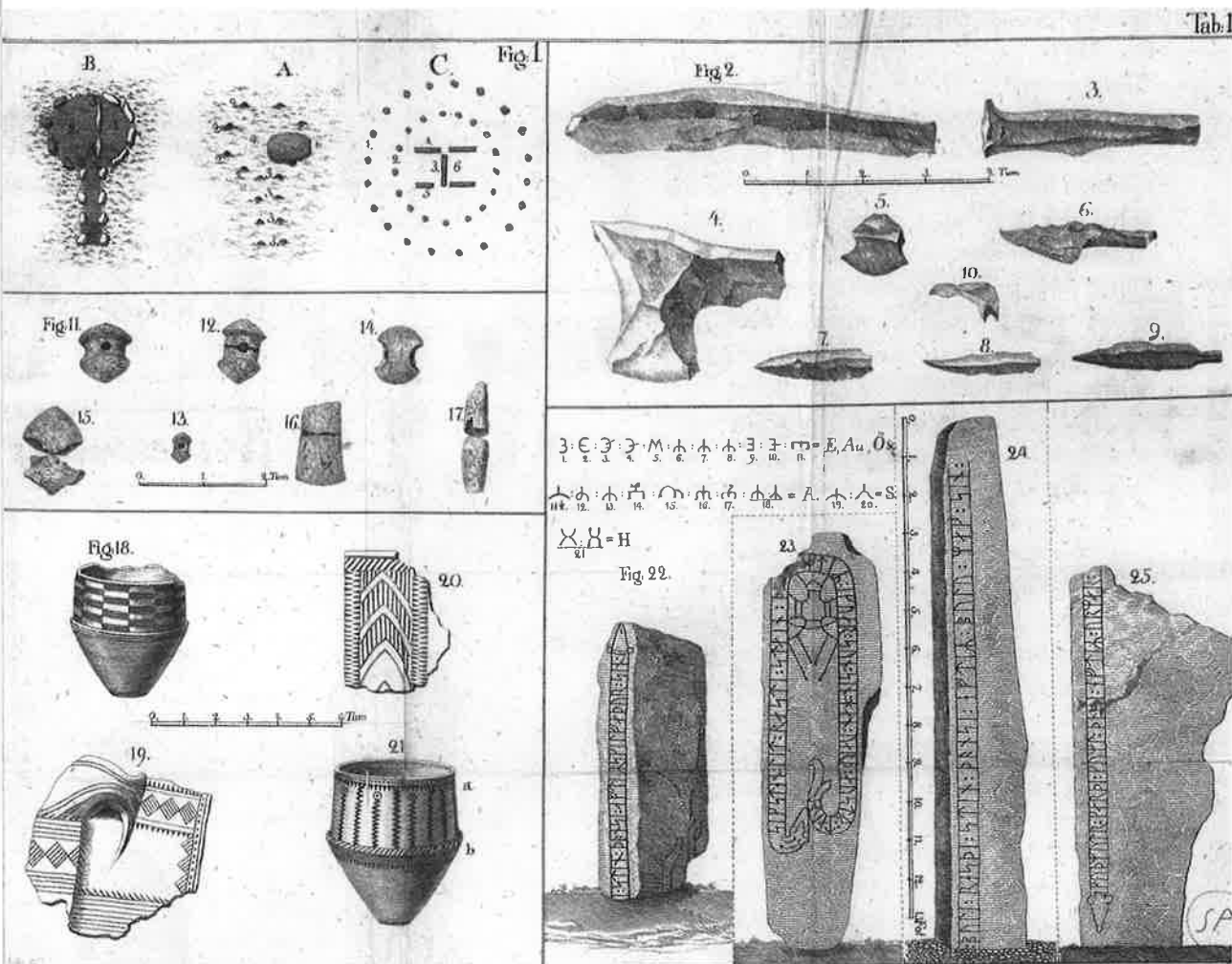


Fig. 5. The drawings for Bruzelius' paper in *Iduna* are excellent. Bruzelius took great care that archaeological drawings must be of good quality. The actual drawings were made by a Major Södermark in Stockholm. The rune stones on the lower right belong to a paper by Johan Haquin Wallman, who had found Indic writing signs on them. Wallman had a fundamentally different view of Man's oldest history from Bruzelius', and refused to acknowledge the Stone Age. According to Wallman, Man's origin was to be sought in a Golden Age in the Himalayas. Reproduction: LUB Media.

in chemistry to be come and *adjunkt* or assistant lecturer in history. As *adjunkt* he had access to the collections of the Historical Museum. This was beneficial to his research. The pay was meagre. A common way for scholars and academics to support themselves was to become priests. Priests were entitled a certain income from their parish. Many Swedish in-

tellectuals became priests. Several antiquarians – Sven Nilsson, Johan Haquin Wallman, Abraham Ahlqvist and Nils Isak Löfgren – all became priests. Magnus Bruzelius reached the conclusion that a career as priest was more profitable than remaining at the university. In 1819 he was ordained. From now on the letters to Adlerbeth are full of complaints about

lost appointments. As a secretary at the Ecklesiastikexpeditionen, Adlerbeth had some influence on church appointments. He certainly tried to help his friends, but the competition was fierce and the positions were too few. He could not help everyone.

In January 1821 Bruzelius' frustration peaked. He threw the Stone Age into the bargain to obtain a position. He told Adlerbeth that he planned to give the paper on Åsahögen away. The person he wanted to court was Lars von Engeström, one of the most powerful civil servants in Sweden, with the title Statsminister. He was also chancellor of the University of Lund and an influential member of the Academy of Letters. He thus had an interest in prehistory, although he never did any research of his own. The purpose of Bruzelius' gift, was to gain Engeström's support in upcoming decisions on appointments to parishes. The Stone Age was the price for a parish and a secure old age.

Bruzelius asked Adlerbeth how the gift to Engeström ought to be packaged. He could either give him the manuscript with no strings attached. Engeström could then publish it in his own name, or choose not to publish. Alternatively, Bruzelius could publish a book dedicated to Engeström. An abbreviated version of the text could later be published in *Iduna*. Bruzelius preferred the first alternative, since it was more generous. It is doubtful whether Engeström had grasped the importance of the paper. He would most probably not have bothered to publish it. The Stone Age would have remained unknown and perished in an archive.

Now followed Adlerbeth's perhaps greatest contribution to archaeology. Sadly enough, its details are unknown. He convinced Bruzelius that he must not give away important research. His letter is one of the most important in the history of archaeology, but it is not preserved. We know about it from Bruzelius' answer, a draft among the papers left by Adlerbeth, and

an entry in his diary. That Adlerbeth must have known that he was writing an important letter is proved by the draft. It is the only draft of a letter to Bruzelius that Adlerbeth kept. In the draft Adlerbeth discusses the organization of a branch of Götiska Förbundet in Lund. He also gives advice on strategies for job application. The draft does not cover the subject of publication of the paper on Åsahögen. The final letter must have been supplemented with Adlerbeth's thoughts on this matter.

In the diary Adlerbeth wrote: "Letter to [...] Acad. Adj. Bruzelius. The latter was urged to submit to *Iduna* a detailed description of the remarkable finds in two burial mounds" (Diary, 5 January 1821; the entry is written in pencil on thin paper and is hard to read). The entry shows that Adlerbeth saw the publication as important and that he pleaded with Bruzelius not to give the paper away.

In his reply Bruzelius stated that he had been totally convinced on the course of action proposed by Adlerbeth (ATA GFoJAA, Bruzelius to Adlerbeth, 18 February 1821). The suggestion to give away the paper was never discussed again. A publication in *Iduna* was the only scientifically feasible option. As editor Adlerbeth struggled to get good manuscripts and to guarantee high quality. He certainly saw the importance of Bruzelius' excavation and paper.

One could only speculate about what would have happened if Bruzelius' paper never had been published. Ideas about an ancient primitive primordial age were in circulation. What we call the Stone Age would most probably soon have been recognized, if not by Bruzelius then by Thomsen, Nilsson or some other Danish or Swedish antiquarian. The question is whether it would have been called the Stone Age. Sven Nilsson called it *Vildestadiet*, "the savage stage". Perhaps the period would have been studied under another name. Its contents would have remained largely the same.



Fig. 6. Esaias Tegnér was instrumental in the Götic revival during the early 19th century, although he himself remained largely unconvinced about of the Götic ideals. The idea of a Stone Age was probably born when Baron Jacob Adlerbeth visited Tegnér in Lund in 1821 and met Magnus Bruzelius. Adlerbeth had greatly appreciated the statue of his dear friend in front of the Historical Museum, which houses vast archaeological collections. Photo: The author.

Adlerbeth in Lund

In the late summer of 1821 Adlerbeth visited Lund. Adlerbeth had long since been invited by his friend, the poet and professor of Greek at the university, Esaias Tegnér. Tegnér was one of the most illustrious members of Götiska Förbundet, although he never became a convinced Göt. Adlerbeth and Tegnér had quarrelled about the future of the Götiska Förbundet and the soundness of the Götic ideals. Tegnér felt that the quality of *Iduna* was in decline: “for our last booklet is indeed not worth much, neither in poetic nor prosaic regard.” His conclusion was: “One should abandon the public before they abandon us” (Tegnér

to Adlerbeth, 12 November 1820; quoted in Palmberg 1954, p. 151). The critique from Tegnér is somewhat hard to understand, since he himself was the star contributor in *Iduna* (Figure 6).

This was the worst thing one could say to Jacob Adlerbeth. He furiously answered the accusations concerning lack of quality of *Iduna*, “a journal which has been, is and, I have good grounds to hope, always will remain one of the best and most desirable published in our country” (Adlerbeth to Tegnér, 21 November 1821; quoted in Tegnér 1882, p. 138). Adlerbeth and Tegnér quarrelled by letter for a year. Finally they reached some sort of understanding. Adlerbeth decided to

accept the invitation to Lund and visit the poet in the late summer of 1821. His visit was highly anticipated. Tegnér wrote to his brother-in-law a fortnight in advance with delight mingled with terror: "In a fortnight I am expecting Adlerbeth to come down. There will no doubt be some terrible drinking here" (Tegnér to G. Billow 29 July 1821; quoted in Palmborg 1954, p. 194).

Apart from heavy drinking, this is one of the most important journeys in the history of archaeology. Adlerbeth describes the trip in his diary. He stayed in Lund for two weeks, living in Tegnér's home. Tegnér and Adlerbeth indulged in drinking bouts and excursions around south-western Scania. Next to Tegnér, the man Adlerbeth met most was Magnus Bruzelius. They had probably not met each other in person before. They felt an affinity at a personal level and as fellow antiquarians. Bruzelius joined Tegnér and Adlerbeth on some of the excursions. One day they visited the newly built stud farm in Flyinge. This was a high-profile project that the state had invested a large amount of money in. Adlerbeth briefly mentions the stud farm. Then he and Bruzelius found a stone-setting in a group of trees. They began to make equivocal jokes about the names of the horses buried in the prehistoric grave, while Tegnér and the others admired the beautiful real animals. Archaeologists will be archaeologists!

A great attraction in Lund was Bruzelius' collection of prehistoric artefacts. It made a profound impact on Adlerbeth. When he had some minutes to spare, he rushed to Bruzelius' home to study the collection and discuss the artefacts with Bruzelius. Adlerbeth is very sparse with details of what was discussed. I suspect that it was now the Stone Age was born. If one wants to set a date for the invention of the Stone Age, it should be 18 September 1821, the day Adlerbeth first visited Bruzelius "whose rich and precious collection of antiquities I then viewed the majority of" (Diary,

18 September 1821).

There is no catalogue of the collection, but its contents can be deduced from descriptions and from the contents of contemporary collections in Scania. It must have mostly consisted of flint artefacts from the Stone Age. He also had some bronzes from the Bronze Age, but few objects from the Iron Age. Adlerbeth was likely the one most familiar with the collections entrusted to the Academy of Letters in Stockholm. This was the biggest collection of antiquities in Sweden north of Scania. Later it became the foundation for the collections of the Historical Museum. Besides frequent visits to the collection, Adlerbeth corresponded with leading antiquarians. He read papers on antiquarian matters submitted to *Iduna* and to the Academy of Letters. He had an excellent general view of ancient monuments, artefacts and the latest research. His position was in many ways comparable to that of a modern professor of archaeology. His knowledge of prehistory and overview of research was second to none.

The collection in Stockholm was almost a mirror image of the collection of Bruzelius. Some years later Johan Gustaf Liljegren wrote a very good catalogue, which reveals its structure (Liljegren 1830). The artefacts almost all belonged to the Iron Age. There were a few objects from the Bronze Age, and almost none from the Stone Age. It was impossible to draw any conclusions about the presence of a primordial Stone Age from the collection. The few artefacts of stone and flint could be interpreted as regional differences, or as a temporary lack of metals in prehistory. The collections in Lund, on the other hand, showed faint traces from the Saga Age, what we call the Iron Age. Adlerbeth's discussions with Bruzelius must have been revelatory. Their combined knowledge in the midst of Bruzelius' collection must have been instrumental for the invention of the Stone Age. Big collections of archaeological artefacts, such as the ones in

Stockholm and Bruzelius' in Lund, were geographically far apart. Skilled antiquarians had rarely the opportunity to study them. It was even more rare that they did so together with a highly skilled colleague. Of course Adlerbeth and Bruzelius noted the differences and began reflect on causes. They very well knew that there was a prehistoric period described by Snorri, Roman and Greek chroniclers, and medieval sagas. That is the Iron Age. They also knew that an early part of prehistory was the Copper (or as we call it: Bronze) Age. Bruzelius' collection contained a wealth of objects of stone and flint that could not easily be placed in any of these periods. The conclusion must be that there was an even older age, an age when man used only stone tools – a Stone Age. The size of Bruzelius' collection ruled out regional differences, or temporary lack of metal as causes for the use of stone as raw material. It is a pity that Adlerbeth is so brief on what he discussed with Bruzelius in Lund. Their discussions is one of the most fundamental in the history of archaeology.

Writing a revolutionary essay

Formulating scientific ideas is no easy task. When the ideas are about an unknown age in human history it is very hard indeed. Modern archaeologists are seldom aware of the pain and difficulties pioneers went through when they formulated basic archaeological concepts such as "Stone Age". It is possible to trace some of Bruzelius' pain in the letters to Adlerbeth. It is a pity that the letters from Adlerbeth to Bruzelius have not been preserved. They would have told us what Adlerbeth, as an informed reader, saw as problematic about the new ideas. They would also have revealed to what extent Adlerbeth was co-inventor of the Stone Age. Adlerbeth's letters can sometimes be guessed from Bruzelius' replies, or from entries in Adlerbeth's diary. The entries

in the diary are often short and too brief to enlighten us. Adlerbeth's role in the invention of the Stone Age was important. The details remain unknown.

Adlerbeth's visit to Lund inspired Bruzelius. Adlerbeth left Lund on 24 August. On 9 September Bruzelius wrote to him. He and Adlerbeth must have agreed that Bruzelius would submit the paper on Åsahögen to *Iduna* as soon as possible. Bruzelius reported that he was working as fast as he could. That the ideas were hard to formulate is illustrated by Bruzelius' words: "I am working on my antiquarian dissertation with all my might and hope to be able to send it very soon. It is not yet as I want it" (ATA GFOJAA, Bruzelius to Adlerbeth, 9 September 1821). After this Bruzelius became quiet for a long period. Adlerbeth was anxious about the delays. Bruzelius did not respond to his reminders. He therefore wrote Esaias Tegnér several times during the autumn and asked him to encourage Bruzelius to deliver the missing parts of the paper, and especially the illustrations, as soon as possible (LUB, Adlerbeth to Tegnér, for instance 19 October and 9 November 1821).

On 25 October Bruzelius reported that the paper was as good as finished. The missing parts were attached to the letter. The draft is not preserved. It would have been interesting to know how much of it reached the pages of *Iduna* in the end. From the letter we learn that the finished parts were the account of the excavation, descriptions of artefacts and some general conclusions. Bruzelius describes what was missing as: "my own conjectures about all manner of things in this mound" (ATA GFOJAA, Bruzelius to Adlerbeth, 25 October 1821). This should be understood as the latter part of the essay, where Bruzelius presents his theories on the Stone Age. This was certainly the hardest part to write.

Adlerbeth was a thorough editor. His goal was that *Iduna* should contain papers of the highest scientific quality. Since there were

no professional archaeologists, the papers are what we would call popular science. The scientific papers were interspersed with poems of some by the best Swedish poets of all times. Adlerbeth was also a busy man. He could not read Bruzelius' paper until 26 November, when he noted in his diary: "Bruzelius' description of the Åsa-Högen mound opened at Helsingborg was read out" (Diary, 26 November 1821). It was not until December that he had time to study the paper thoroughly, and make editorial changes and suggestions. That he was an energetic editor is shown by his diary: "This day was devoted to serious scrutiny and revision of Bruzelius' description of the finds in Åsahögen. It was not until 1 o'clock in the morning that I finished this task" (Diary, 16 December 1821). Adlerbeth does not mention what comments he made. Adlerbeth read other papers time and again and made long lists of suggestions. Even after several discussions with the author, he could still note in his diary that changes had to be made before publication. Sometimes he was assisted by friends and colleagues in Götiska Förbundet, such as Erik Gustaf Geijer and Nils Magnus af Tannström.

Bruzelius' paper did not need any major revisions. Nevertheless, Adlerbeth wrote to him and asked him to make some clarifications: "Bruzelius was asked by letter to send information urgently about the as yet obscure circumstances" (Diary, 18 December 1821). On 22 December Adlerbeth read the paper at a meeting of Götiska Förbundet and the paper was accepted for publication in *Iduna* (Diary, 22 December 1821).

Even archaeologists must take some time off during Christmas, even if Adlerbeth did not accept it. For him archaeology was Christmas. The ninth number of *Iduna* was almost complete and ready to print. What was lacking was the clarifications from Bruzelius. Adlerbeth became anxious when he did not get swift answers. He wrote a new letter (Diary,

11 January 1822) to hurry things up. Bruzelius had spent Christmas with his relatives and had not received the first letter in time. When he returned to Lund he immediately began working on the last details of the paper. In January and February he wrote several times about the paper (ATA GFOJAA, 13 January, 3 February, 10 February 1822). I suspect that what really delayed Bruzelius was that he needed extra time to polish his thoughts about the Stone Age.

The drawings also needed extra consideration. Bruzelius was very firm when he stated the importance of good drawings. The drawings must not be too small. The artist had to emphasize details on artefacts and constructions. The reader must be able to distinguish objects made of different materials, such as flint or amber. The engravings were made in Stockholm by a certain Major Södermark and Adlerbeth noted in his diary that he had several lengthy discussions with the major about Bruzelius' drawings. The artist had not seen the ancient monument, nor the objects he was supposed to draw. Bruzelius sent sketches which were supposed to be transformed into high-quality illustrations. Some drawings were based solely on written descriptions. This seem to be the case for the construction drawings. The appearance of the passage grave presented in *Iduna* should be viewed with suspicion. One of Adlerbeth's questions was how many stone slabs there were in the entrance passage to Åsahögen. Bruzelius had to consult his notes from the excavation before he could answer. From the context it is clear that Bruzelius did not have any actual field drawings. At least he did not send any. The communication was verbal and Adlerbeth relayed the information in the letters to Södermark.

Some of the difficulties had to do with the fact that Adlerbeth had limited personal knowledge of passage graves. He came from the northern part of the province of Småland. In the summers he stayed at his manor, Ram-

sjöholm. For the rest of the year he lived in Stockholm. He was very familiar with ancient monuments in northern Småland, Östergötland and along the roads between Småland and Stockholm. He also had a special interest in Visingsö. In these parts of Sweden there are no passage graves. Except for a voyage in his youth to Copenhagen, the visit to Lund in 1821 was the longest trip Adlerbeth ever made. Adlerbeth does not explicitly state in his diary that he ever saw a megalith. One of the few occasions when he must have seen passage graves was during a trip to Västergötland in 1818. He made a quick visit to the great cemetery at Ekornavallen. He mentions the beautiful cemetery, but not the megaliths in the diary (ATA GFOJAA, Antiquariska och Topographiska anteckningar under en resa i Västergöthland år 1818). Bruzelius' letters are partly about explaining what megaliths look like. Adlerbeth was certainly not the only person who needed explanations. The majority of *Iduna's* readers lacked personal experience of passage graves.

During early summer of 1822 Bruzelius' paper was printed in the ninth issue of *Iduna*. It had been a process of three years since the excavation. The result was one of the most important papers in the history of archaeology.

Bruzelius also presented his research in a lecture in the Physiographic Society in Lund on 2 December. A short survey was published in the society's yearbook (Bruzelius 1823). The paper is focused on prehistoric chronology. Bruzelius summarizes the arguments for a Stone Age in a brilliant way: Stone artefacts are older than the arrival of Odin, the king of the Svear. Stone tools and weapons are never mentioned in the saga literature. Sweden was already settled and the stone artefacts belonged to these primeval inhabitants. A strong argument is that Stone Age artefacts have never been found in Iceland, which was first settled during the Iron Age. There are so many stone artefacts that they could not be interpreted as

amulets or *ad hoc* tools in later ages. It is rare indeed to find graves with artefacts of both stone and metals. Thus stone tools, weapons and "instruments" were used in the same way as similar objects of metal from later ages. Most Stone Age artefacts are not recovered from graves at all. Many are found in bogs. They must have been sacrificial objects: "They were given to Thor as an image of earthly activity, and not to the graves as an image of the activity of the immortals" (Bruzelius 1823, p. 55). According to the sagas Thor was an old deity that was worshipped before the arrival of Odin. Bruzelius' understanding of Stone Age artefacts as sacrifices stands up to modern interpretations made by professional archaeologists.

Jacob Adlerbeth, the grey eminence in Swedish archaeology

Adlerbeth had a central and very important role in Swedish archaeology. He saved the Stone Age from oblivion and was deeply involved in shaping Bruzelius' paper on Åsahögen. This is only a small portion of his heavy engagement in archaeology. Adlerbeth simultaneously worked with several other projects. Some can be seen as scientific antitheses to Bruzelius' research. This shows the excellence of Adlerbeth as a scholar and editor. Totally different views on prehistory were allowed on the pages of *Iduna*.

In the ninth issue of *Iduna* there are two papers by the antiquarian Johan Haquin Wallman (1792–1853). Wallman was a fanatical antiquarian. He lived in Linköping in Östergötland. Despite tuberculosis and extreme poverty, he made annual antiquarian tours through southern Sweden (Nicklasson 2009b; Nicklasson 2009c; Nicklasson 2008; Nicklasson 2009d). He was heavily influenced by the German idealists; Friedrich Schelling

and Friedrich Schlegel. These were central in European romanticism. They, and other romantic thinkers, constructed a mythical vision of the history of the world and its future. Schlegel's *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (1808) was Wallman's greatest source of inspiration. Following Schlegel, Wallman could not accept that Man's beginning was as a brute savage. Instead the origin was in a pre-Biblical paradise in the Himalayas. From there tribes wandered off and settled the earth. The god-king Odin/Buddha led the mighty Svear tribe to Troy, the area north of the Black Sea, and finally to Sweden.

For modern archaeologists this conception of the birth of Man is absurd. At the beginning of the 19th century matters were different. The recent discovery and translation of ancient Indian texts had shaken the foundations of the European historical consciousness. The texts were written in Sanskrit, a language of extreme antiquity, showing similarities to most European languages. The Romantic era could partially be understood as an Oriental Renaissance (Schwab 1984). The conception of a pre-Biblical paradise in the Himalayas was an attempt to connect the ancient history of Europe to an even more ancient Indian one. Wallman was the leading Swedish antiquarian who explored the romantic visios and his research must be understood in a broad European context.

Adlerbeth admired Wallman the genius. It was on Adlerbeth's expert opinion that the Academy of Letters bestowed a prestigious award on Wallman in 1822 for a treatise that is among the strangest one could possibly read (Wallman 1826). The paper charts Man's origin in a Himalayan paradise. However baroque the treatise may be, it is important to understand that this was top research at a European level. Wallman's award was well deserved. It is all too easy to look on apparently crazy ideas with modern eyes, forgetting their context. In the early 19th century it was not

decided whether Man originated in a paradise or in a Stone Age. Adlerbeth and Wallman became close friends. In 1822 Adlerbeth founded a company to support the miserable Wallman. The company provided for him for several years.

Wallman's two papers in the ninth volume of *Iduna* present the reverse view of Man's early origin compared to Bruzelius'. Man originated in a Golden Age, not a Stone Age. In the first paper Wallman makes a scrupulous study of the Icelandic sagas concerning the Battle of Samsö (Wallman 1822a). Very soon we are transported to India to look for the origin of Man and Norse mythology. The second paper is even more speculative. Wallman had found Indian signs on Swedish rune stones (Wallman 1822b). Thus ancient connections between India and Sweden were strengthened.

Adlerbeth corresponded with both his authors. It is remarkable that he encouraged them to present mutually exclusive ideas in the same volume of *Iduna*. One could interpret this in terms of bad judgement and amateurism. When studying Adlerbeth's correspondence it is obvious how engaged he was, and that he had exceptional understanding of antiquarian matters. Adlerbeth did not accept bad papers. Papers were rejected, or had to be heavily reworked before publication. Adlerbeth did in fact want to reject Wallman's second paper. After several changes Adlerbeth was persuaded by co-editors to publish it.

Adlerbeth was driven by a desire to spread archaeological research. Different opinions fuelled debate. From this viewpoint, the ninth volume of *Iduna* must be one of the most important and well conceived volumes on archaeology ever written. Two views of prehistory was presented for the readers to judge. The papers by Bruzelius and Wallman were accompanied by the second part of Esaias Tegnér's prime opus, *Frihiöfs Saga*. This makes the volume not only a treasure for archaeologists, but for Swedish national literature as

well. I believe that few editors will ever succeed as well as Adlerbeth did in 1822. He was as far from amateurism as one can get.

It is impossible to tell what view of Man's origin Adlerbeth himself believed in. Adlerbeth gave Bruzelius all possible support to present his ideas about the Stone Age. He was at least as enthusiastic about the achievements of Wallman. Wallman's oriental research coincided with Adlerbeth's own interest in Scandinavian contacts with the east. To Tegnér he enthusiastically described Wallman's paper as a "historical and geographic dissertation with outstanding genius and learning" (LUB, Adlerbeth to Tegnér, 19 October 1821). The tolerant and supportive attitude are marks of a good editor. Different views were allowed in *Iduna*.

In the end, Wallman's papers were heavily criticized. *Iduna* was reviewed by an anonymous author in *Stockholmsposten*. The reviewer agreed with Bruzelius, that Man in prehistory "belonged to a crude and uncivilized people" (anon. *Stockholmsposten* 185, Monday 12 August 1822). The reviewer did not believe at all in Wallman's Golden Age. The paper on Indian signs on rune stones was dismissed as mere fantasies.

The importance of the Stone Age

In textbooks on the history of archaeology there is a consensus about the significance of the invention of the Stone Age. It was fundamental for the formulation of the Three-Age System by Thomsen and Nilsson. Bruzelius' research is thus seen as the first step towards a scientific archaeology (Gräslund 1974, pp. 97 f.; Baudou 2004, pp. 113 f.; Gräslund 1987, pp. 31 f.). Scholars have contrasted this approach with older, non-scientific antiquarian research based on a literary tradition. This is wrong. Wallman's research was as scientific as what Bruzelius did. Wallman also worked em-

pirically and they both used literary sources. They did not represent different "schools". Bruzelius and Wallman met in Stockholm in early 1824. Bruzelius held Wallman in high esteem and recommended him to Thomsen (LUB, Bruzelius to Thomsen, 24 April 1824, transcript).

In a letter written some years before Bruzelius' paper Pehr Tham (1737–1820), a legend in Swedish antiquarianism, formulated his fears about the new theories in a letter some years after 1810: "that in Scania they would even deny the existence of Odin. But what then will happen to Moses, David and Solomon? Of the latter's seven hundred wives we do not know the name of a single one. But we know about Odin that his wife was called Friggä" (Tham, letter to Ahlström; quoted in Schiller 1930, p. 197). The written sources contained the whole history of humanity. To deny a part of it was to deny everything. In the end this would lead to denying the truth of Christianity, on which society was based. That would have been equal to blasphemy. The antiquarians never went that far.

Wallman was one of the few who commented on the idea of a Stone Age (Wallman 1823; Wallman 1838). Wallman agreed that Sweden was first settled with primitive tribes such as Finns or Lapps. He explained the abundant stone artefacts in Scania in terms of a temporary or regional lack of metal. Most stone tools are found in cultivated areas. Even if prehistoric peoples had used stone tools, they must thus have been civilized and knew how to till the earth. If they had lived as savages, their traces ought to be found in wilderness areas. At first sight the criticism may seem crazy, but second thoughts reveal that the objections are founded on sound scientific principles. Wallman used empirical evidence from eastern central Sweden to counter the arguments for a Stone Age. Criticism is part of the scientific process.

The breakthrough of modern archaeology

is often presented as a breach with a tradition of interpreting archaeological artefacts and monuments from written sources. Anthropological interpretations and studies based on artefacts and monuments were introduced. Modern archaeology is regarded as empirical. Magnus Bruzelius and Sven Nilsson did not break with the literary tradition. Bruzelius thought Sweden had been inhabited by giants until the arrival of the Svear. Sven Nilsson based many assumptions on the sagas. It was the literary tradition that in fact made the Stone Age possible. The Iron Age was well covered in the sagas. Odin and the Svear did not come to an empty land. Sweden was inhabited by the Götar. There were even older, more primitive, tribes known as Jotnar in the sagas, identified with giants, Finns, Lapps or dwarves in historical and antiquarian literature. The existence of these peoples in the sagas was the foundation that made a savage age before civilization possible. The invention of the Stone Age was based on written sources. The ideas of a primordial Stone Age was only possible to conceive in Sweden, with its specific historical traditions and inheritance from the sagas. Bruzelius and Adlerbeth never saw the paper on Åsahögen as a breakthrough, or a breach with traditional research. They saw it as a piece of interesting antiquarian research, not as a confrontation with established antiquarian knowledge.

It is hard to find texts expanding upon the ideas of Bruzelius before Sven Nilsson published his *Ur-invännare* around 1840 (Nilsson 1838–1843). The concept of a Stone Age was grasped in a way very different from our own. In 1844 Peter Wieselgren, a competent but fanciful antiquarian, wrote: “There probably still lived in caverns a timorous people (the Savages in Nilsson’s historical language) who seemed to be afraid of the sea shore, but when no danger appeared to threaten them from the colonists [Phoenicians], they came down [...] to the farms that now arose by the

shore” (Wieselgren 1844–1846, p. 104). The cultural clash between Phoenicians and Stone Age peoples are based more on European travellers and their encounters with savage peoples on other continents in the 19th century, than on any study of prehistory. At a meeting in the Academy of Letters in 1838, Bror Emil Hildebrand had to calm down an elderly civil servant who feared that Sven Nilsson had made our ancestors into Eskimos. Hildebrand explained that this savage and primitive people had nothing to do with us. Our ancestors arrived later and expelled the savages. The elderly gentleman was satisfied and exclaimed “Bravo, Bravo!” (Hildebrand 1937b, p. 719). Hildebrand’s arguments are as strange as the objection. A more modern view of the Stone Age, based on evolutionism, only came later. The arrival of civilization in the form of the Svear, led by Odin, was firmly rooted in historical consciousness. The sagas were seen as the historical truth. The immigration of Odin had powerful ideological implications, a fact that is easy to overlook. The king, Carl XIV Johan, was an immigrant to a land in the deepest of crises. He was sometimes portrayed as Odin, another immigrant who brought order and prosperity (Almer 2000, pp. 64 f). It was only after 1850, or even later, that the Stone Age was more or less accepted and referred to in archaeological publications (Hildebrand 1937b, p. 732 f.).

Thomsen accepted the Stone Age as a part of the Three-Age System. It has been said that scientific archaeology was introduced in central Sweden when Thomsen’s pupil, Bror Emil Hildebrand, moved to Stockholm in 1833, and sorted the collection of the Academy of Letters according to the new ideas. This is not entirely true. Hildebrand was very good at exaggerating his own contributions. The study of prehistory was of course scientific before Hildebrand. If one studies the catalogue of the collection in Stockholm, it is obvious that Stone Age artefacts were very few (Liljegren

1830). It could not have taken many days to sort out the Stone Age artefacts.

I think that the slow acceptance of Bruzelius' new ideas was due to the fact that the Stone Age was a non-issue north of Scania. There was almost no empirical material to study, even if one accepted the existence of a Stone Age in theory. An assumption of a Stone Age could even be seen as unscientific. There were few empirical observations to base such an assumption on. Other questions were more important. Among these were Wallman's and Nils Henrik Sjöborg's attempts to establish methods to classify ancient monuments (basically Iron Age graves) (Sjöborg 1797, 1815, 1828; Wallman 1838).

The importance of the invention of the Stone Age and the Three-Age System has to a certain extent been exaggerated to form a founding-myth of archaeology. Bruzelius' paper was only a step in a long process towards modern archaeology. It was not until the 1920s and a couple of decades later that Christian Jürgensen Thomsen, Sven Nilsson, Bror Emil Hildebrand – and to a much lesser extent Magnus Bruzelius – were canonized as the founding fathers of archaeology (Weibull 1923; Hildebrand 1937a; Hildebrand 1937b; Schück 1943; Schück 1944). The main contributor to this school was another Hildebrand, the professor of history, Bengt Hildebrand. One of his objectives was to glorify his older relatives, the Secretaries of the Academy of Letters, Bror Emil and Hans Hildebrand (Hildebrand 1934, 1943). He diminished other scholars and their achievements. His views have to a high degree determined how archaeologists look on the history and character of their discipline.

Loose ends

Magnus Bruzelius' career problems worsened. The letters to Adlerbeth reveal growing bitterness and disappointment. "I will soon be

40 years old, lagging behind all my acquaintances in the path of promotion, even those who have not done anything for literature or education. I suppose I have not accomplished much: nevertheless, it seems to be enough for a second-class parish, which is much less than I initially supposed. If I lose this I can never again put my hand to paper on any literary subject; for then it must be something other than literary merits that render a haven in old age" (ATA GFOJAA, Bruzelius to Adlerbeth, undated [1823?]). All his scientific research had led to no personal gains.

The letters from Bruzelius to Adlerbeth cease in 1823. Bruzelius stayed in Stockholm during the autumn of 1823 and winter of 1824. In letters to Tegnér he writes about problems with his promotion and politics (LUB, Bruzelius to Tegnér, 7 and 21 October 1823, 9 January 1824). At last he received a promotion to vicar and wrote to Tegnér in an enthusiastic, not to say slightly intoxicated tone: "Rolf, the marksman, walked like an honest man on the last day in full uniform, holding long and forceful speeches. He was also one of the first to squeeze my hand" (LUB, Bruzelius to Tegnér, 9 January 1824). Rolf was Adlerbeth's name in Götiska Förbundet. The letter shows that Adlerbeth and Bruzelius were still close. Bruzelius also mentions that Adlerbeth had supported him.

In a letter to Thomsen, Bruzelius revealed that he stayed five months in Stockholm, and that he had studied the collections of prehistoric artefacts entrusted to the Academy of Letters (LUB, Bruzelius to Thomsen, 8 April 1824). Bruzelius notes that the collection has "a particular abundance of precious gold and silver pieces". It must have been instructive for Bruzelius to study the collection and note the obvious differences from his own collection. The visit to Stockholm was also beneficial for his career. He returned to Scania as vicar of Löderup and Hörup parishes in southern Scania.

The southern section of the Götiska Förbundet in Lund was scattered. It is possible that there was some sort of disagreement with Adlerbeth. In one of his last letters to Adlerbeth, Bruzelius mentions that Tegnér, the most prominent member in Lund, had decided not to deliver any more poems to *Iduna*. In 1824 Tegnér became Bishop of Växjö. He suffered from a period of depressions, which was crowned by the poem *Mjältsjukan*. The fit, and the episcopal see, signalled the end of the poet's engagement in the Götic revival. He did not deliver any more poems to *Iduna*. Tegnér and Adlerbeth kept writing. The letters became fewer, increasingly official and less personal.

Nor did Bruzelius send any more papers to *Iduna*. In letters to Thomsen he describes an ivory comb (as Thomsen noted on the letter, the material most probably was bone, or possibly walrus tusk), with a runic inscription. He told Thomsen that he planned to write about it in *Iduna* (LUB, Bruzelius to Thomsen, 12 September 1823; 8 April 1824, transcript). The paper was never written.

There are in fact no signs that Bruzelius ever did anything archaeological again. His last preserved letters about archaeology are the ones to Thomsen. Knowing that Bruzelius would never more write on prehistory, the end of the last letter can be interpreted as a farewell to archaeology: "I have now been promoted to a parish not far from Ystad, roughly opposite Bornholm [...] Although I shall have a great many chores, I nevertheless hope to be able to spend a few hours on the scholarship I have loved above all else, and shall with the same diligence as before collect remains of antiquity and shall consider as a pleasant surprise every line I receive from you concerning the Nordic past. I am moving all my collections with me and wish to live and die with them" (LUB, Bruzelius to Thomsen, 24 April 1824, transcript). At the University Library in Lund there is a collection of letters

to Bruzelius from his years as vicar. There are no letters from antiquarians. The letters are about official matters in the church, the parliament and society. Bruzelius lost contact with Thomsen, Adlerbeth and other antiquarians.

Lack of good scientific papers and poems meant the end of *Iduna*. Quality declined. Another volume was published in 1824, the tenth. Wallman was the main contributor in the antiquarian section. Young poets, such as Carl August Nicander, could not measure up to the level of Esaias Tegnér. To publish further volumes of *Iduna* was financially impossible. After the tenth volume publication ceased. The first antiquarian journal in Sweden thus passed away. The Götic ideals that had forged Götiska Förbundet in the stormy 1810s were no longer commanding during the peaceful 1820s. The heyday of the society was over. Few brethren gathered at the meetings. Adlerbeth became increasingly isolated. The only brother with the same ardent interest in prehistory was Wallman. They exchanged advanced ideas on prehistory in letters until Adlerbeth's death in 1844.

In 1833 the brethren in Götiska Förbundet convinced Adlerbeth that the society had to be declared dormant. There was no point in a society without a publication and activities. Adlerbeth saw the decision as the hardest one in his life. His old friend Erik Gustaf Geijer pushed for a total close-down. Adlerbeth must have seen this as treason. The intimate correspondence between them ceased abruptly. It was impossible for the traitors to close down the society before the death of Adlerbeth, however. Adlerbeth believed to the last in a Götic revival and in archaeology.

Only after Adlerbeth's death was it finally possible to put Götiska Förbundet to a well-deserved rest. A last number of *Iduna* was prepared as a retrospect of the activities carried out by the society. Geijer wrote a paper describing Adlerbeth as a kind of fool, with an ardent interest in prehistory, but a stranger

in his own time (Geijer 1845). The caricature has decided the perception on Adlerbeth, one of the most important men in the history of archaeology, ever since.

The theories about the Stone Age developed. Bror Emil Hildebrand gave Sven Nilsson's new book *Ur-invånare* to Adlerbeth at a meeting in the Academy of Letters in 1838. According to the letters between him and Nilsson, this was the most revolutionary book on antiquarian matters ever written, especially the ideas about the primordial Savage Age, or, as we say, Stone Age. The facts presented by Nilsson should shake all old-fashioned antiquarians. Somewhat disappointedly, Hildebrand reported to Nilsson that Adlerbeth "found himself more convinced of the truth of your opinions than I had expected" (LUB, Hildebrand to Nilsson, 5 March 1838). Hildebrand and Nilsson had brought Adlerbeth yesterday's news. He and Bruzelius had invented the Stone Age seventeen years before.

References

Sources

ATA GFOJAA Vol. 18, Letters from Magnus Bruzelius to Jacob Adlerbeth.

ATA GFOJAA, Antiquariska och Topographiska anteckningar under en resa i Västergöthland år 1818.

LUB Saml. Hildebrand B.O.H. Ser 5:162 (Bruzelius' letters to Thomsen, transcripts)

LUB Letters from Bror Emil Hildebrand to Sven Nilsson

LUB Brevsaml. Bruzelius M.

LUB Adlerbeths letters to Tegnér

UUB Jacob Adlerbeths dagbok (diary): UUB 850b 1818–22

Literature

Adlerbeth, Jacob. 1811. Om några Fornlemningar i Nordvästra delen af Småland. *Iduna* Andra häftet: 20–26.

– 1813. Om Biarmaland. *Iduna* Fjärde häftet.

Ahlström, Torbjörn. 2009. *Underjordiska dödsriken: Humanosteologiska studier av neolitiska kollektivgravar*. Göteborg: Institutionen för arkeologi, Göteborgs universitet.

Almer, Johan. 2000. *Variation på götiskt tema: En studie i C.J.L. Almqvists Sviavigamal*. Göteborg.

Baudou, Evert. 2004. *Den nordiska arkeologin – historia och tolkningar*. Stockholm: KVHAA.

Blanck, Auguste. 1911. *Den nordiska renässansen i sjuttonhundratalets litteratur. En undersökning av den "götiska" poesins allmänna och inhemska förutsättningar*. Stockholm.

Böök, Fredrik. 1913. *Svenska studier i litteraturvetenskap*. Stockholm.

– 1929. *Fem porträtt essayer*. Stockholm.

Bruzelius, Magnus. 1816. Beskrifning af några antikviteter af koppar funna i Skytts härad, Malmöhus Län. *Iduna* Sjätte häftet: 45–70.

– 1817a. Nordiska fornlemningar. *Iduna* Sjunde häftet: 89–105.

– 1817b. *Swerges historia för Ungdom*. 1st ed. Lund.

– 1820. Nordiska fornlemningar. *Iduna* Åttonde häftet: 189–205.

– 1821. *Swerges historia för Ungdom*. 1st ed. Lund.

– 1822. Nordiska fornlemningar från Skåne. *Iduna* Nionde häftet.

– 1823. Om Nordiska Sten-Antikiteternas ålder och bruk. *Physiographiska Sällskapets Årsberättelse*, pp. 53–55. Lund.

Christensson, Jakob. 1999. *Vetenskap i provinsen. Om baronerna Gyllenstierna på Krappertup och amatörernas tidevarv*. Stockholm: Atlantis.

Geijer, Erik Gustaf. 1845. Berättelse om Göthiska Förbundets stiftelse och verksamhet. *Iduna* Elfte häftet: 14–35.

Grandien, Bo. 1987. *Rönndrövans glöd. Nygotiskt i tanke, konst och miljö under 1800-talet*. Nordiska museets Handlingar 107. Stockholm: Nordiska Museet.

Gräslund, Bo. 1974. *Relativ datering. Om kronologisk metod i nordisk arkeologi*. TOR. Uppsala.

– 1987. *The Birth of Prehistoric Chronology. Dating Methods and Dating Systems in Nineteenth-century Scandinavian Archaeology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hagerman, Maria. 2006. *Det rena landet. Om konsten att uppfinna sina förfäder*. Stockholm: Prisma.

Hägg, Göran. 2007. *I världsfurstens harem. Erik Johan Stagnelius och hans tid*. Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand.

- Hildebrand, Bengt. 1934. Bror Emil Hildebrand hans liv och gärning. *Fornvännen*: 257–316.
- 1937a. C. J. Thomsen och hans lärda förbindelser i Sverige 1816–1837. *Bidrag till den Nordiska forn- och hävdaforskningens historia i Tiden till 1826*. Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademiens Handlingar 44. Uppsala.
- 1937b. C. J. Thomsen och hans lärda förbindelser i Sverige 1816–1837. *Bidrag till den Nordiska forn- och hävdaforskningens historia II. Tiden 1826–1837*. Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademiens Handlingar 44. Uppsala.
- 1943. Hans Hildebrand ett sekelminne 1842–1942. *Fornvännen*: 1–27.
- Landen, Leif. 1997. *Jacob Adlerbeth*. Filologiskt arkiv 39. Stockholm: KVHAA.
- Liljegen, Johan Gustaf. 1830. Strödda anteckningar om Fynd i Svensk Jord med en dertill hörande Förteckning. *KVHAA Handlingar Trettonde delen*: 153–278.
- Livijn, Clas. 1909. *Bref från fälttågen i Tyskland och Norge 1813 och 1814*. Stockholm: Ljus.
- Ljungström, Olof. 2004. *Oscariansk antropologi. Etnografi, förhistoria och rasforskning under sent 1800-tal*. Hedemora/Uppsala: Gidlunds.
- Nicklasson, Pål. 2008. Johan Haquin Wallman, Sven Nilsson och den moderna arkeologins genombrott. *Fornvännen* 103: 102–110.
- 2009a. On Giants in Swedish Archaeology. *Current Swedish Archaeology* 17.
- 2009b. Birkas belägenhet. En 1800-talsdebatt med sentida ekon. *Fornvännen* 104: 274–287.
- 2009c. En romantida guldring från Misterhults skärgård. Johan Haquin Wallman och de arkeologiska dubbletterna. *Fornvännen* 104: 81–88.
- 2009d. Johan Haquin Wallman Sveriges förste arkeolog? *Personhistorisk tidskrift* Årgång 105, no. 2009:1: 17–33.
- Nilsson, Sven. 1838–1843. *Skandinaviska nordens ur-Invånare. Ett försök i komparativa ethnografien och ett bidrag till menniskoslägtets utvecklingshistoria*. Lund.
- Palmborg, Nils. 1954. *Esaias Tegnér's brev*. Vol. IV. 1818–1823. Malmö: Utgivna av Tegnérssamfundet Allhems förlag.
- Schiller, Harald. 1930. *En originell herre. Pehr Tham till Dagsnäs den siste Rudbeckianen*. Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag.
- Schlegel, Friedrich. 1808. *Ueber die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier. Ein Beitrag zur Begründung der Altertumskunde*. Heidelberg.
- Schück, Henrik. 1943. *Kgl Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien dess förhistoria och historia*. Vol. VII. Akademien 1794–1826. Stockholm: KVHAA.
- 1944. *Kgl Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien dess förhistoria och historia*. Akademien 1826–1837. Vol. VIII Stockholm: KVHAA.
- Schwab, Raymond. 1984. *The Oriental Renaissance. Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680–1880*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sjöborg, Nils Henrik. 1797. *Inledning til kändedom af fäderneslandets antiqviteter*. Lund.
- 1815. *Försök till en nomenklatur för nordiska fornlemningar*. Stockholm.
- 1828. *Uppgift på fornlemningars kännetecken*. Stockholm.
- Stenroth, Ingmar. 1972. *Göthiska förbundet*. Vol. 1. Göteborg: Litteraturvetenskapliga Institutionen Göteborgs universitet.
- 1981. *Göthiska Förbundet*. Vol. 2. Hovås: Pierre Racine.
- 2001. *Rasmus Rask hos göterna*. Göteborg.
- 2005. *Sveriges rötter En nations födelse*. Stockholm: Atlantis.
- Tegnér, Elof, (ed.) 1882. *Ur Esaias Tegnér's papper. Urval af samtidas bref till Esaias Tegnér*. Stockholm: F & G Beijers Förlag.
- Wallman, Johan Haquin. 1822a. Om striden på Samsö. Ett historiskt och geografiskt bidrag till Nordens fornkunskap, i anledning af Herwara sagan. *Iduna Nionde häftet*: 38–118.
- 1822b. Ett Indiskt skriftecken ibland runorna. *Iduna Nionde häftet*: 359–370.
- 1823. *Anteckningar öfver Gamla Fylkeslandet Verends Historia och Fornlemningar, samlade under Resor igenom Provinsen, åren 1819, 1822. Ista Häftet, Landets Historia och Hedniska Fornlemningar. Concept – Utkast*.
- 1826. Historisk och Geographisk Afhandling om Skandinaviens bebyggande, efter Orientaliska och Vesterländska källor. *KVHAA Handlingar* 12.
- 1838. Öfversigt af Svenska fornlemningar, med anvisning till deras kändedom och beskrifning. *KVHAA Handlingar* 14.
- Weibull, Lauritz. 1923. Det arkeologiska treperiodsystemet. Dess uppkomst och giltighet. *Historisk tidskrift för Skåneland* 5:247–266.
- Wieselgren, Peter. 1844–1846. *Ny Smålands Beskrifning inskränkt till Wexiö stift*. Wexiö.