

Summaries

Source criticism – more than a routine-handicraft

A study in common sense(s)

Göran B Nilsson

History theorists most often consider source criticism as a simple handicraft, its rules being seen as a systematized form of ordinary common sense. This view is here called into question out from the general standpoint taken in my essay "History as an Artificial Science" (in B Dahlbom, S Beckman & G B Nilsson: *Artifacts and Artificial Science*, A&W International, Stockholm 2002).

The application of the rules of source criticism is here depicted not as a mechanical routine but as a complicated, creative process triggered by the scientific historian's paying attention to important contradictions in his source material. In this process, aiming at more objective knowledge, the scientific common sense differs from ordinary common sense by its greater reluctance to accept statements from social authorities. Like *all* producers of historical sources those authorities are supposed to be potentially affected by the human memory's general propensity to forget, simplify, coarsen and embellish. Hence the historian should prefer sources which comply with the three fundamental requirements of being

- near (in time/space)
- independent
- non-biased.

It should be especially noticed that the requirement of nearness is both critical and constructive, forcing the historian to hard work in hunting up new source material.

This programme was practised in a very rigorous way from around 1910 and 50 years onwards by the Scandinavian school of source criticism; in Sweden represented by the so called weibullians, named after professors Lauritz Weibull (1873–1960) and his brother Curt (1886–1991). Two of the weibullians' *tours de force* are here scrutinized, Curt Weibull's reevaluation of a famous episode in the Swedish-Danish war of 1658 ("Tåget över Bält", *Scandia* 1948–49) and Hans and Elsa Villius' likewise revolutionary study (*Fallet Raoul Wallenberg*, 1966) which maintains that Wallenberg died in a Soviet prison in July, 1947.

Both cases are here seen as remarkable instances of the rigorous source criticism's capacity for transcendence, i. e. attaining the scientific objective of "systematically eliminating our mistakes and prejudices" (K R Popper). But of course in both cases opponents have sought refuge and refutation in the rules of ordinary common sense.

Furthermore, even when the scientific reevaluation has been universally accepted and the old fact has consequently changed into a *factoid*, the factoid still makes

SUMMARIES

repeated comebacks. This can be due to simple ignorance, but other cases show how the factoid may be more consciously exploited by skilled charlatans (like Herman Lindqvist) or by astute politicians (like the Swedish Foreign Office).

In order to establish and maintain the greatest possible "deliberative community" (B Williams), the historians should continually explain and propagate the doctrines of scientific common sense, which of course would be a gift of heaven to ordinary common sense if we only could acquire it for use in our constant writing of ongoing history.

The Formation of the Swedish Peasant Estate in the Diet

Johan Holm

How old is "the Swedish peasant"? Or in other words, how did peasants in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries view the significance of their Swedish identity?

The questions are easy to ask, but finding answers to them is a complicated matter. Harald Gustafsson works with them in his book *Gamla riken – nya stater* ("Old Kingdoms – New States"). His conclusions are difficult to sum up briefly, but his fundamental idea is that the national level at least was of completely different significance and dignity for people in the early sixteenth century than the level of the Kalmar Union. In relation to local and regional levels, however, Gustafsson seems to believe that the national level played an important role as early as the 1540s.

A body of evidence that Gustafsson has chosen not to use in his study is the minutes of the diet. My study of them makes it likely that a Swedish identity cannot have been of any importance for peasants in the sixteenth century. The peasants acted in the diets chiefly as representatives of the provinces and the hundreds. They pursued local and regional issues. They rarely cooperated across provincial boundaries and they did not arrive at joint responses to royal bills in the name of the whole peasant estate. Instead it was the hundreds or provinces that responded, singly or a few together. The diet also suffered from a lack of legitimacy for a long time. During virtually the whole of the sixteenth century the kings were forced to go out locally to get hundreds or provinces to ratify decisions of the diet, or to swear oaths of allegiance. All this indicates that the local and regional levels remained most significant for the peasants throughout the major part of the sixteenth century. This means that it is not unreasonable to conceive that regional identities were what the peasants felt to be most important.

The change came with the many national sessions held by Duke Karl in the 1590s. From now on, national diets and sessions became much more common than they had previously been. At the same time, the pressure of the central

government on the local community increased. Sweden as a martial and rapidly expanding great power needed huge resources, which were extracted from the peasantry. These two factors made it obvious to the peasants in the Swedish diet that they had a common problem, and it taught them to collaborate across provincial boundaries. During the period 1610–1633, the peasants learnt to unite in their responses to bills in the diet. They learnt to compose joint appeals, they learnt to pursue a great many other issues at national level, as a united estate, such as the question of the construction of a regency or the aim of the war policy. Contributory factors to this development were that the legitimacy of the diet's decisions also increased, and that several functions, such as legislative power, were officially raised from the provincial level to the national level.

When we speak of the development of an identity, this is of course a process that takes generations. However, for the peasant representatives in the diet at least, there was a significant change between 1595 and 1635. Before that period the national level was in large measure unknown territory for the peasants. Support for the decisions made there often had to be established at lower levels, and no great cooperation across provincial boundaries can be traced. After that period, we encounter a closely knit peasant estate, making binding decisions on behalf of the entire Swedish peasantry. It is therefore not unreasonable to assume that the national identity, at least for an élite stratum of the peasants, was now at least as significant as the local or regional identity.

Peasants within different manorial systems

Carsten Porskrog Rasmussen

The article tries to evaluate the socio-economic effects of different manorial systems to the peasant population. The area of investigation are the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein.

The peasant population was structured into the same basic social groups irrespective of the manorial systems. Both in areas of Gutsherrschaft and areas of Grundherrschaft there was a fairly clear division between farmers and cottars. Farmers held farms more than large enough to feed a family, and they held horses and normally servants, while cottars met none of these characteristics. The effect of the manorial systems lay in the relative size of the farmers' and cottars' groups. In Grundherrschaft areas the numbers of farmers and cottars were roughly the same, in Gutsherrschaft areas cottars clearly outnumbered farmers. Furthermore there were more servants in Gutsherrschaft areas. All in all the farmers' group was thus relatively much smaller in Gutsherrschaft areas, that were mainly peopled by cottars and servants.

SUMMARIES

The direct effects of the manorial system on peasant economies differed with the system. In areas of Grundherrschaft peasants primarily had to pay high rents and taxes in cash. In areas of Gutsherrschaft the obligation of peasant farmers was in stead one of keeping people and horses for corvee. To meet this demand, the farmer needed some cash for wages, but not as much as the Grundherrschaft farmer needed for taxes and rents. Other things equal also the Gutsherrschaft farmer had less to sell, as the extra horses and servants consumed parts of his produce.

Further it is investigated, how farmers reacted to these different forms of pressure in the way they used and formed their means of production. In their grain growing they hardly reacted at all. The amount and kinds of seed sown differed with the natural environment, but not with the manorial system. The number of milking cows was roughly the same everywhere. The only clear difference in the productive apparatus of farms under the different manorial systems lay in the numbers of horses and oxen. Gutsherrschaft peasants regularly held 8–14 horses, of which 4–8 were solely for corvee purposes, while Grundherrschaft peasants held only 4–5 horses, but in stead a number of oxen. It is further argued, that this had greater economic consequences than it may first appear. The oxen production was a production only for the market, and it is argued, that money economy was further developed in Grundherrschaft areas than in Gutsherrschaft areas. Also the same production of grain and butter left the Grundherrschaft farmer with more to sell of these products as his household was smaller and thus consumed less.

It is more difficult to say something about the cottar group apart from the fact that it was relatively larger under Gutsherrschaft. There was the same difference in burdens toward landlord and state. Under Grundherrschaft cottars had to pay rent, under Gutsherrschaft most of them performed corvee in stead. Their means of living were a mixture of small size farming, day labour, craftsmanship, and home industry. No difference can be seen between manorial systems as far as cottars' agriculture was concerned. However it appears that home industry was concentrated in areas of Grundherrschaft. In Gutsherrschaft areas young people had to work as agrarian servants for many years, probably for longer than in Grundherrschaft areas..

Our Happiest Thought: C.J.L. Almqvist about Scandinavism *Anders Burman*

Scandinavism developed during the first half of the nineteenth century, particularly from the 1830s, as a counterpart to that period's national movements in, for instance, Italy and Germany. In the beginning, Scandinavism aimed at closer cul-

tural and scientific collaboration between the Scandinavian countries, but from the early 1840s voices were also heard urging political co-operation, and in the last resort a union between Denmark, Sweden, and Norway.

This essay examines the Swedish author, journalist, and political thinker C.J.L. Almqvist (1793–1866) and his ideas of Scandinavism. Almqvist had early shown an interest in the cultural movements for the unity of the Scandinavian countries, and from the mid 1840s he was a convinced political Scandinavianist. During a four-month period in 1845–46, he was living in Copenhagen, where he gave a talk on the practicability of Scandinavism and wrote a series of articles about the true politics of Scandinavia. He argued for different practical measures to promote the Scandinavian movement towards unity, from common language dictionaries and a Scandinavian perspective in school teaching to a gradual merger of the countries' legislation as well as their constitutions. He tried to justify these practical proposals and the Scandinavian movement by situating them in a larger historical context. The world becoming more and more liberated and integrated, and accordingly a unified Scandinavia would be a future reality.

During the next few years, however, Almqvist to a certain extent changed his views of Scandinavism, in part as a consequence of the fact that the movement lost much of its oppositional quality. When the German-speaking population in the Danish provinces of Schleswig and Holstein rose in rebellion in 1848 and called for liberation from the Danish monarchy, an uprising that received political and military support from Prussia, Almqvist claimed that Swedes (and Norwegians) should not intervene on the side of the Danes. After some hesitation, the Swedish government followed this non-aggressive line. Although troops were sent to Fyn in Denmark, which was now at war with Prussia, Sweden-Norway refrained from intervening, which caused disappointment among many Scandinavists. After Denmark's and Prussia's conclusion of peace in 1850, Scandinavism never succeeded in mobilizing the same political devotion as it had done in the 1840s. In contrast to the national movements in Italy and Germany, nineteenth-century Scandinavism must be regarded as a failure.

Fascinating Pictures from a Remote Corner of the World Conceptions of Finnish Landscape in the early nineteenth century *Pirkko Leino-Kaukiainen*

The aim of this article is to study how the growth of Finnish nationalism affected the ideas of the typical Finnish landscape at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The study concentrates on printed pictures and popular paintings. At that time, the new growing middle class started to buy books, printed pictures and

SUMMARIES

paintings. The most famous paintings became well known, and as printed copies they enjoyed quite a large distribution among the public.

The idea of the “national” landscape with open lakes bounded by forests which still lives, for example, in tourism advertising, was first presented in the literature (especially in the poetry). Landscape painters followed a few steps behind. First the illustrators depicted towns, historical places and monuments or other famous sights (e.g. cascades). And they decorated their pictures with objects of nature (trees, bushes, plants) after European models. Those plants were often unknown in the Nordic nature.

Painters like Magnus and Ferdinand von Wright started to depict the Finnish landscape as a wide panorama, as seen from the top of a hill, in the 1840s. This tradition was changed by the naturalists who started studying in the Düsseldorf school in the 1850s. Werner Holmberg (1833–1860), in particular, led the spectators down from the hill into the shelter of the forest. He also started to paint trees and wild plants which are easily identified as typical objects of Finnish flora.

The painters presented the beauties of Finnish nature and showed that not only the picturesque was beautiful but also familiar objects of nature could be appreciated. The people learned that Finnish nature is an important part of their national identity. After that it was only a short step towards the demands for the protection of those nature treasures.

Demos, ethnos, oikos – a Nordic history from the between war-period *Niels Kayser Nielsen*

The Nordic democracies had in the between war-period a far closer affinity to Fascist Europe than normally presumed, but – paradoxically – this affinity, combined with a distinct political will to create a social democracy as a hybrid between early modern heritage and visionary socialist masspolitics, saved the Nordic countries in the “years of danger”. The result of the Fascist impact was a change of democracy into a consumer-democracy which eventually ended up into a relation of mutual dependency of state, citizens and civil society, established with rights and duties as a political and social basis.