

Summaries

"Svitjod the Great" and Scythia – an example of Nordic interpretation of Latin geographical names

Lars Gahrn

The geographical name Svitjod (which means "the people of the Swedes") is used in four respects: 1) about the provinces Uppland and Västmanland (north of Lake Mälaren), 2) about the provinces Uppland, Västmanland and Södermanland (all provinces around Lake Mälaren), 3) about the whole Swedish Kingdom (Sweden before 1645 except Finland) and 4) about great countries north of the Black Sea, which are called "Svitjod the Great" or (by Snorri Sturlason) "Svitjod the Great or Cold".

The first three meanings I have dealt with at length in my dissertation "Sveariket i källor och historieskrivning" (1988), but about the fourth meaning I will deal with it in the present article.

Scythia was the name of the provinces north of the Black Sea. Here lived the Scythians from the Danube in west to the Don in the east. South of the mouth of the Danube "Scythia minor" (Little Scythia) was situated. The Romans however used the name Scythia of the great countries and areas north and east of the original Scythia, and so the countries around the Baltic were included, too. The anonymous geographer of Ravenna (in the eight century) calls Scandinavia Old Scythia. Adam, the famous chronicler of the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen, calls all peoples around the Baltic (even the Norwegians) Scythian tribes, and so on.

A lot of Nordic sources (Theodricus monachus, the Skjoldunga Saga, Saxo Grammaticus, the Saga of Didrik of Bern and the Prosaic Chronicle of Sweden) translate Scythia with Svitjod. The Romans translated barbaric names with similar Latin ones. The learned men of the Middle Ages did in the same way, and here we have a Nordic translation. The learned men of the North translated the Latin name Scythia with a similar Nordic one, i.e. Svitjod. In other and later sources Scythia is translated with Svitjod in the same manner, but Svitjod is called "Svitjod the Great". When the learned men had two areas, both called Svitjod, it was convenient to give one of them an epithet to distinguish between them.

The sources give some geographical notices about Svitjod the Great, and these notices show that Svitjod the Great and Scythia are the same area. Two sources, Theodricus monachus and Stjorn, expressly say that "we" call Scythia Svitjod.

Scientists as Sophus Bugge, P. A. Munch and Henrik Schück have noticed that Svitjod the Great is a translation of Scythia, but they wrote just en passant about this. Andreas Heusler suggested in 1908 that this translation was the work of a

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learned man of Iceland and not a popular etymology from Nordic settlers in Russia.

He is obviously right, but he advanced just one piece of evidence: the translation is used by learned geographers of the Middle Ages and is not used in contemporary chronicles. This piece of evidence is sound, but I will add more:

The Swedes settled and operated mainly in Russia. If "Svitjod the Great" had been used by ordinary people in the age of the settlement, Russia and not Scythia would have been denominated from Svitjod.

During the Viking Age and the Middle Ages the name Scythia existed just in the books of the learned geographers. The Scythians had disappeared and other tribes lived in their countries.

"Interpretatio romana", i.e. the use of similar Latin names instead of barbaric ones, is a method of learned geographers, and a Nordic interpretation of course must be so too.

The author of this interpretation has used the Latin forms of the geographical names, Scythia and Svithia (a latinized form of Svitjod). During the Middle Ages Scythia was pronounced (and often spelled) Sithia. The forms Svithia and Sithia were very similar, although their origins were completely different. Learned men, familiar to Latin forms of geographical names, did not exist in the Nordic countries during the Viking Age. The Nordic countries had such men, when the North was christianized, and from this time (the 12th and 13th centuries) we have the first sources, mentioning Svitjod the Great.

The author of the interpretation has obviously worked with the form Svithia, which is a latinized form of Svitjod, the Icelandic name of Sweden, used in Iceland, Greenland and Norway. The name used in Sweden and Denmark was Svetjud, which was latinized Svetia or (in most instances) Suecia. These forms (particularly Suecia) do not resemble Scythia at all. The author of the interpretation and identification must obviously have been a learned Icelander of the 12th century. The interpretation and identification is obviously a work of a learned man of Iceland and not a popular etymology from Nordic settlers in Russia.

Rousseau invoked in absentia

Inger Hammar

The nineteenth century was the century when women's emancipation gained momentum, challenging the gender order that had steered relations between women and men for centuries. The sexes were viewed as complementary. Men and women were considered fundamentally different and were therefore assigned separate roles in society. The education and upbringing of boys and girls thus emphasized and reinforced a gender difference sanctioned by tradition and law. Ever since the emergence of research in women's history in the 1960s, the philosopher J. J. Rousseau has been given a significant role in the construction of gender in Sweden as well. This thesis is questioned in the article, which is based on a lecture summing up the author's earlier research. Against the background of a survey of the Western view of the position of women since ancient times, the article shows the importance of the religious discourse for the understanding of female/male in nineteenth-century Swedish society. The view of the woman's vocation as primarily wife, mother, and housewife was not a new creation, however; it had influenced gender relations ever since the Reformation. For most of the nineteenth century, the Swedish state church system retained its grip on citizens, and the gender order it affirmed was of biblical origin. An analysis of the rich educational and advisory literature aimed at young women from the upper classes in nineteenth-century Sweden shows the significance of the Lutheran context for the gender order of the times. Rousseau is conspicuous by his absence.

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Between Religion and Science. Spiritualism in the nineteenth and twentieth Century*Jesper Vaczy Kragh*

In the second half of the nineteenth century spiritualism entered Scandinavia. In the 1890s the spiritualist movement attracted a great deal of attention in Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Especially in Denmark spiritualism reached a large audience, and for a number of years it became one of the most discussed and controversial religious movements. Danish spiritualism was influenced by dominant cultural values in the nineteenth century – although scholars often have described the movement as a reactionary religious sect. The spiritualist movement had an immense belief in progress and science, and the Danish spiritualists also promoted women's rights and liberalism. New ideas from Danish free thinkers as Georg Brandes and scientific theories as Darwinism were incorporated in the religion of spiritualism. The Danish spiritualists were influenced by the French spiritualist, Allan Kardec. But also traits from Catholicism, Unitarianism and Neo-Platonism played a major role in the religion of spiritualism. Syncretism was a pronounced feature, and the spiritualists integrated old religious and new scientific ideas. The religion of spiritualism was a response to the conflict between science and religion, which had become a serious problem for many Danes in the end of the nineteenth century, and the solution was a religion based on methods and theories of empirical science. The spiritualists felt that the Danish National Church (the Evangelical Lutheran Church) could not cope with the scientific critique of the Bible and a lack of progressiveness and humanism characterized the Church. Spiritualism's challenge to the National Church, and the claim about communication with the spirits of the dead, drew large attention to the spiritualist movement, but a series of exposures and trials against Danish spiritualists weakened the movement and in the 1930s it began to decline. However, spiritualism gave rise to other religious groups who were to succeed the spiritualists in the twentieth century.

The Swedish Conservative party and Democracy 1904–1940

Torbjörn Nilsson

The article discusses the conceptual meaning of *history* and *democracy* in the ideology of the Swedish Conservative party 1900–1940. One can discern both continuity and change regarding to this relationship. In the beginning of the century conservative politicians dismissed the idea of parliamentary rule with reference to the old Swedish traditions of self-government and peasant freedom. Party politics, modern democracy and parliamentarism were seen as foreign ideas, incompatible with Sweden's history. In the 1930s authoritarian rightwing groups challenged the moderate Conservative party. In the conflict with these groups the party still referred to old traditions in Swedish history. However, this time the traditions were used as weapons against fascism and other forms of antidemocratic movements. *Democracy* had been integrated in the conservative ideology, converted to an element in the unique form of freedom that has characterized Sweden. Instead the authoritarian groups were seen as alien to the nation's history.

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Sweden as a Model

A Discussion of Swedish Self-Images Based on Three Travel Accounts/Reports from the Latter Half of the 1930s

Sten Ottosson

In this article I demonstrate the awareness of a positive Swedish self-image in the latter half of the 1930s. The content of this self-image is illuminated by means of three travel accounts/reports from the period: Marquis Child's *Sweden, the Middle Way*, Fredrik Böök's *Det rika och fattiga Sverige*, and Ludvig "Lubbe" Nordström's *Lort-Sverige*. Certain characteristic features which are part of a positive self-image emerge from these books. Sweden was able to serve as a model for a world that was restless at the time. In later research on states and international relations, the focus has partly shifted from the perspective of power realism to a perspective emphasizing states' perceptions of themselves, their image and prestige. It should be possible and rewarding to use this approach to study modern Swedish history as well.