

Summaries

Jakob Christensson

When the stones remain silent

On the influence of the classics in 19th-century Scandinavian archaeology

The study of Scandinavian archaeology has a long and multifaceted history. Many methods and theories have been developed. Today a mostly scientific approach dominates the field. This has been the case since the 1830s, when researchers like Sven Nilsson, Christian Jürgensen Thomsen and later also Jens Jacob Worsaae and Bror Emil Hildebrand abandoned the well-trodden path of textual explication of classical authors like Herodotus and Tacitus. At least this is how we usually perceive the matter.

However, this is making things simpler than they really are. This article tries to show how persistent a conception of Scandinavian prehistory based on the close reading of a few classical authors was. Leading 18th-century scholars like Olof Dalin and Sven Lagerbring could never free themselves from these ancient authorities. Indeed, later even one of the chief proponents of a scientific approach to archaeology, the prominent zoologist Sven Nilsson (1787–1883), never ceased to make use of his reading of the classics. Procopius provided him with a timely solution of the problem of the ethnic background of the dominant people in Iron Age Sweden: they were Herules. A close reading of the few extant fragments describing Pytheas' voyage to Thule made him convinced that this ancient explorer indeed had sailed to Scandinavia and that what he had seen on this trip corroborated the heavy Phoenician influence on the Scandinavian Bronze Age civilizations. Critical in this case was what Pytheas may have meant when saying he had seen something that looked like a "Pneumon Thalassios", something the naturalist Nilsson explained as formation of ice on the sea. The very proof of Nilsson's Phoenician interpretation of the Bronze Age was displayed in the second edition of his influential work *The Primitive Inhabitants of Scandinavia* (1862–64), and consisted of his skilled comparison of the renowned Kivik burial-mound and the works of authors like Strabo and Lucian, especially the latter's *De Syria Dea*.

The article also gives glimpses of how and to what extent the classical heritage dominated Swedish school curricula throughout most of the 19th century.

*Þorsteinn Helgason***Out of his mouth came a sword****A Danish–Icelandic altarpiece from 1650**

The sword in the article is depicted in an altarpiece in the parish church of Kross, Landeyjar, on the southern coast of Iceland. A clear inscription in Danish indicates that it was donated in 1650 by Kláus Eyjólfsson, a prominent farmer and member of the Althing, and Niels Clemensson, a Danish merchant trading with the Westman Islands. Both of them had connections with the so-called Turkish Raid on Iceland in 1627, which the author of the article has extensively researched. That summer corsairs from North Africa raided the coastal regions of Iceland and abducted some 400 people who were sold into slavery. Kláus Eyjólfsson wrote a “journalistic” report of the Raid, based on the testimony of eyewitnesses, immediately after the attack. Merchant Clemensson supervised the reconstruction of the main church in the Westman Islands after it had been burned down by the “Turks” in the Raid. The subjects of the altarpiece, a rather crudely made triptych, are Christ in lamentation (left), the Resurrection (middle) and the Vision of John from the opening of his Apocalypse, in the Book of Revelations (right). The piece was probably made in a workshop in Denmark.

The article brings together the elements mentioned above to establish the sources for the altarpiece and to place it in a religious and cultural context in general and the context of the Turkish Raid in particular. In this effort, the Vision of John is of central value. This subject is apparently very rare in Nordic iconography, but the altarpiece in its entirety can nevertheless be identified as a direct copy of the frontispiece to the New Testament published in Copenhagen in 1647. As to John’s Apocalypse, a survey of Martin Luther’s exegesis reveals that it was finally accepted by him when he interpreted its main theses as a description and a prediction of the “Turkish menace” to Christian Europe. Luther’s comments were still printed in the 1644 Icelandic edition of the Bible. Although it is hard to prove that the two donors of the altarpiece were aware of every detail of its religious references, they were preconditioned to relate its main elements.

The Vision of John can also be seen in an altarpiece in Hornslet Church, Jutland, home church of the Rosenkrantz family, one of the foremost noble families in Denmark. One of its members was Governor-General of Iceland at the time of the Turkish Raid in Iceland. Characteristically, the artistic style of the Kross altarpiece is marked by fluid brushstrokes and ingenious solutions, while its Rosenkrantz counterpart has the modelled and smooth surface suggestive of greater diligence and more highly paid painters.

Tommy Gustafsson

National Honour and Masculinities – a historical film analysis of *Karl XII* (1925)

During the 1920s, when the Swedish defence was under heavy debate, military and conservative forces on the right tried to turn the Swedish public opinion towards a climate more in favour of the defence by producing a big budget war film – *Karl XII*. In several senses the film became a great success. In Sweden the attendance figures were as high as one million (of a population of six) and the film was also exported to 19 countries. In addition to that the film was also hailed, by an almost unanimous critical body, as a great Swedish artistic success. *Karl XII* was seen as a credit for the Swedish film production, and by that it also contributed to the Swedish national honour in the competition with foreign film production, especially American.

With a gender perspective on this matter this artistic success was characterized as a specific male achievement by the Swedish reviewer's. In some cases explicitly, but overall implicitly since this success was connected to the national honour with its male connotations.

However, the propaganda piece that *Karl XII* was meant to be didn't turn the Swedish opinion around. Both the right and the left wings in Swedish political life showed a clear awareness about the film's underlying motive, and in spite of the success, *Karl XII* could only awaken patriotism among groups where it already existed. The same year as the film had its premier, 1925, the Swedish Parliament also took the decision to heavily cut the defence budget.

With the notion that *Karl XII* was a propaganda piece meant to strengthen the Swedish defence, and the fact that this film is the only fully produced war film in the history of Swedish filmmaking, it becomes an interesting object for an examination of representations of masculinities in Sweden in the 1920s. A close reading of four of the film's male characters, the effeminate dandy Hans Küsel, the boyish man Lasse Ulf-clou, and the two rivals Charles XII and Peter the Great, showed that the film included a wide gallery of masculinities which didn't always correspond with its articulated propaganda purpose to strengthen the Swedish defence, and in extension, to harden the Swedish masculinity in general.

The reason for this lies not in the fact that the filmmakers and the initiators failed entirely with their purposes. In one important sense they did succeed. By avoiding to apply every male character in the film with traits of ideal hegemonic masculinity, they managed to produce a contemporary and complex representation of male gender and its mutual relations. And even though the film didn't influence the complicated political struggle over the Swedish defence, they produced a film that worked just because it contained credible male characters with whom the contemporary audience could relate. Had all of the film's characters been as unreal as Charles XII, with his strong hegemonic masculinity, the audience would most certainly have felt alienated and not bought a ticket for the film, but the audience didn't fail *Karl XII*.

Jan Molander

Frisendahl's River Drivers

Idea, financing, and strange events

When the sculptor Fredrik Frisendahl passed Sollefteå during a trip to his home district in 1937, a new bridge was being built across the falls of Sollefteåforsen. As he passed he noted that the middle pillar of the three stone pillars surviving from the old bridge from 1885 could serve as the base for a large sculpture. The radical social democrat Frisendahl had long dreamed of raising a magnificent tribute to the working man, and his first sketch for this had been drawn back in 1919. He managed to instil enthusiasm for the idea in the legendary senior physician at Österåsen Sanatorium and in his artist friend Helge Dahlstedt, who in turn engaged the Sollefteå Art Society. Soon a committee was set up, with a working group to manage the task.

The stone pillar proved inadequate as a base. A new one was needed, which the county architect Harry Kjellkvist designed. It is faced with stone blocks from the foundation of the oldest bridge, carved with seventeen different motifs "from the world of the forest and the river" connected with the motto of the monument, "In honour of labour, to the Ådalen district". What are, if possible, even more difficult for us to discern, over 60 years later are the logging company badges carved on the lower part of the actual sculpture. This is the way the project thanked those who had made the largest financial donations, namely, the lumber companies in Ådalen. It was Kramforsbolaget, later merged with SCA, that made the largest contribution and its badge was given the most conspicuous position. The collection campaign, however, had mainly been geared to the general public, and if it had become known that the project had received assistance from the directors Torsten Hérnod, SCA, and Carl Kempe, Mo & Domsjö AB, to collect 75 per cent of the total cost, which was around 100,000 kronor, the open collection – the people's tribute and support – would have come to nothing. The symbolism of a monument for and of the people of Ådalen would have been deprived of meaning.

The artistic advisor was Ivar Johnsson, possibly because he had shown with his *Woman by the Sea*, a highly respected monument in Majorna, Göteborg, how to place a sculpture so that it can be seen from a long distance across water. In terms of composition it is also interesting to compare the River Drivers with Antoine Bourdelle's *Herakles at Prince Eugen's Waldemarsudde*. It could be said that Frisendahl excelled his teacher in complexity. Whereas in *Herakles* there is just one line of tension, between the archer and the bow, in Frisendahl's work there are three such lines, between each of the river drivers and the logs they are hauling in.

Translation: Alan Crozier