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The "bulwark" at Tingstäde

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kan man, menar han, överhuvudtaget inte lägga någon precis innebörd i något begrepp eller term. Ord som "klar" och "begriplig" saknar "universell status" och "klar, tydlig och stringent" är inte en "nøytral, idieell skrivemåte". Och vem, frågar Olsen, skall sätta kriterierna? Alltså kan man inte kräva av den arkeologiska teorien att den skall formulera sig klart och begripligt.

Min kritik kunde inte ha illustrerats tydligare. Den "kritiska" teorien innefattar en värdenihilism som undanröjer det för all vetenskap oundgängliga kravet på entydighet och begriplighet. Det är det vi ser konsekvensen av i dagens teoretiska arkeologi.

Såväl Herschend som Olsen vill göra reservationen att det kan finnas oprövade tankar, som i sin komplexitet är så vaga att de inte kan formuleras klart, men som ändå är värda att diskutera. Naturligtvis är det vällov-

ligt att på detta sätt treva sig fram i det veder-tagnas utmarker. Men jag envisas ändå med att tro att även detta vaga kan uttryckas klart. Det är ju inte frågan om att skapa en klarhet som inte finns, inte att formulera vaga tankar så att de förefaller distinkta. Det saken gäller är endast att försöka uttrycka den vaga tanken så att den vaga tanken framstår klart.

Naturligtvis får kravet på klarhet inte drivas in absurdum, men begriplighet kan ändå aldrig bli ett självändamål. En teoretisk text måste, som Herschend framhåller, tåla en närläsning. Det viktiga är en attityd där vi alla efter bästa förmåga försöker undvika att göra det enkla krångligt och det svåra ännu svårare.

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The "Bulwark" at Tingstäde

Crannog, an artificially constructed house or settlement site built of timber, sometimes with stones, situated off the edge of a lake in Ireland or Scotland (and now known also from Wales). They range in time from the late Bronze Age into the Middle Ages . . . they were fortified by single or double stockaded defences around the margins. Their distinctive substructure of brushwood and logs built up from the bottom sets them apart from other kinds of pile constructions. (*Encyclopedia Britannica.*)

Fortified sites in lakes which depend upon the water for their defence, are really only justified when and where the winter ice is not strong enough to carry potential attackers or where war is not, for one reason or another, waged in winter. Thus, the waters hardly ever freeze in Ireland and in those parts of Scotland where crannogs were built. On the other hand, there are many lake sites and bog sites in Poland, mostly dating from the late Bronze Age and from the Iron Age, fortified villages in a land where the winter ice is certainly strong enough but where wars were evidently not waged in wintertime. In Scandinavia, on the other hand, prehistoric fortifications are almost exclusively located on inaccessible rocks or hilltops. For reasons of logistics, win-

ter was the favoured season for war in Scandinavia. (In the *Edda*, Snorre quotes an earlier poem describing the battle "on the ice" [that of Lake Vänern?] between Ale and Adils, probably in the first half of the 6th century.) Under such conditions crannogs were not justified. Had crannogs ever been built in Scandinavian lakes we would have expected to find them in the shallow lakes of the plains, in Scania, Västergötland, Östergötland and Uppland. But as yet, there is no trace of any. (The neolithic site in the Dags Mosse at Alvastra was something else again. But it was certainly not a "fortified site".)

The "Bulwark" in lake Tingstäde on Gotland is thus quite unique. It has nothing in common with either the Polish fortified sites or with the British crannogs. It consisted of a square of four wharves, the northern, eastern and southern ones consisting of double rows of square caissons of logs dovetailed together, the western one of a triple row of such caissons. The whole structure measured about 170×170 m. Each caisson measured approximately 7×7 m. The wharves had once carried a deck, on which had stood log houses with

dovetailed corners. Since we cannot be certain that all the logs have been preserved we can not determine how high were the caissons and consequently not how high was the deck above the surface of the water, but the impression we get is that the deck was quite low. The wharves enclosed a central open water surface measuring approximately 130×130 m, i.e. some 17,000 square meters, to which there was an entrance from the north-west. The whole structure was surrounded by double concentric palissades. The four long wharves presented a long and vulnerable front to any attacker and would have made it very difficult for the defenders to concentrate their forces and efforts at any one threatened point. Had the Bulwark been laid out as a fortress the very large empty inner space and, even more so, the entrance to the latter, are incomprehensible. The Bulwark can thus hardly have been a fortification or a fortified site.

But we are all too apt to believe any large prehistoric engineering work to have had a military function. The Bulwark's geographical position suggests other possibilities. About a hundred years ago the Chief of the Army Fortifications Corps pointed out that "Tingstäde commands the main crossroads of north Gotland". But not only generals need roads, and crossroads—so also do merchants. On frozen winter roads you could reach Tingstäde from all parts of Gotland, formerly, before the lakes and bogs were drained, even more easily than today. In summertime the lake formed a harbour, at some distance from the coast where sea-borne attacks were always to be expected, but still to be reached by boat from Ire bay on the Baltic, by way of lake Elinghem.

At a time when heavy land transports were only possible in wintertime and the sailing season lasted less than six months there must have been a great need of places where goods could be stored between the two seasons, and where markets could be held. In such a setting the Bulwark wharves, with their warehouses and "offices", fit perfectly, not as a fortress but as a breakwater for the central "harbour basin" which, in wintertime, was also the market-place. The palissades may have defined its

legal border, that within which the "peace of the market" protected everybody. There seems to have been an ice market also in Birka—so many of the graves there contain bone skates ("islägggar"), indispensable for travelling on ice.

There were probably many ice markets in the Middle Ages. In the reign of queen Elizabeth I there was an annual ice market even in London, on the frozen Thames below the walls of the Tower. The hypothetical Bulwark marketplace, 130×130 m or about 17,000 square meters, is about the same size as another, and better known, market square: the Markt in Lübeck, which measured approximately 125×140 m, or 17,500 square meters. Both seem to have been laid out to serve large-scale commerce. Mediaeval Stockholm's main square (Stortorget), which served local trade only, transit business being relegated to the quays (Skeppsbron), was much smaller, some 2,600 square meters.

To judge by published plans the total deck surface was about 11,000 square meters. Space being at a premium we assume the buildings to have covered at least $2/3$ of the available space (which is considerably less than what seems to have been the case in medieval walled cities), that is that the warehouse floor area was about 7,300 square meters. This would mean that the storage capacity would fit the needs of a market square where we may assume the booths to have taken up no more than $1/10$ to $1/5$ of the area, i.e. say 2,000 to 3,000 square meters. It is of course impossible even to guesstimate the tonnages involved but they would seem not to have been considerable.

But why have so very few objects been found at the Bulwark? The explanation may be simple. Anything lost in a town market disappeared immediately into the thick layer of waste and rubbish deposited over years, to be lost forever, whereas anything lost at an ice market was easily found on the ice and retrieved. But the small test investigation was limited to a few square meters beneath the wharves themselves. The bottom of the open central area has not been sampled.

Radiocarbon seems to date the structure to

late Viking Age and early Middle Ages (990, 995, 1100 and 1160 A.D. \pm 80–100 years). Could the Bulwark, a seasonal market-place, possibly be Visby's long-missing predecessor as Paviken was Västergarn's?

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Bulverket i Tingstade

Gad Rausing betvivlar att Bulverket med sina omfattande träkonstruktioner ute i Tingstade träsk varit en senvikingatida–tidigt medeltida vattenborg. Sådana anläggningar hade troligen föga betydelse inom områden där isläggningsen vintertid gav fritt tillträde för en angräpare. Vintern var ju en uppskattad säsong för krigsföretag. Mot borgteorin talar också anläggningens sårbarhet med sin eldfarliga timmerkonstruktion liksom dess vidsträckt grundplan med en inramad ca 130×130 m stor vattenbassäng.

Mot borgteorin ställer Rausing hypotesen att Bulverket skulle fungerat som en säsongmässigt utnyttjad marknadsplats, närmast kanske som en föregångare till Visby. Parallellen ställs med Pavikenanläggningen som före-

gångare till Västergarn. Träkonstruktionerna ser Rausing dels som en form av vågbrytare som skyddar hamnbassängen/vintermarknadsplatsen, dels som fundament för ett plattformbygge på vilket lagerhus m.m. varit uppförda. Inom det av förtimringarna begränsade området hävdades marknadsfrid. Sommartid kunde man nå Bulverket sjövägen via Ireviken–Elinghemssjön. Bulverket låg sålunda skyddat från den direkta kustkontakten. Vintertid hade Bulverket ett för vintervägs-transporter så fördelaktigt läge att man kan förmoda att de viktigaste handelsaktiviteterna bör ha ägt rum under denna årstid. Ismarknader har förekommit både i Birka – varom de många isläggsfynden vittnar – och på andra orter. Hittills har mycket få föremålsfynd gjorts i Bulverket, vilket skulle kunna tala emot den framlagda teorin. Dock menar Rausing att detta endast skenbart är fallet. Fyndmassorna bör förväntas finnas just inom "hamnbassängens" yta där ännu inga undersökningar gjorts. Rimligen saknas dock värdefullare föremål där eftersom ismarknader är renligare tillställningar än vanliga marknader, som bedrevs där skräp och sopor anhopades. Tappade man något på isen var det lätt att återfinna.

Jan Peder Lamm

Indoeuropéerna åter på vandring

Colin Renfrew, *Archaeology and Language. The Puzzle of Indo-European Origins*. xiv + 346 s. Jonathan Cape, London 1987 (ISBN 0-224-02495-7), Cambridge University Press, New York 1988. ISBN 0-521-35432-3. £16. US\$ 29.95.

Med orden "Jag kan inte rekommendera denna bok, vare sig till forskaren eller till den läsare som är allmänt intresserad i ämnet" avslutar Marija Gimbutas sin recension av denna viktiga bok i *Times Literary Supplement* (Gimbutas 1988). Colin Renfrew har alltså till den grad lyckats provocera henne genom att, på sitt eget sätt, ge sig i kast med det urgamla problemet om de indoeuropeiska språkens ursprung. Detta är också ett ämne vars hante-

ring erbjuder både provokativa möjligheter och betydande svårigheter, eftersom det är av både arkeologisk och språkvetenskaplig art. Att med utgångspunkt dels i arkeologisk teori-bildning och det arkeologiska fyndmaterialet, dels i språkvetenskaplig teori och i dagens och den historiska tidens kända språk återskapa en bild av Europas förhistoriska språkutveckling är att ge sig i kast med ett problem som har små utsikter att nå en lösning som kan accepteras av de flesta. Hur skall vi någonsin kunna veta hur många förhistoriska språk och språkgrupper som spårlöst försvunnit? Hur skall vi någonsin kunna kartlägga de äldsta språken i Europa?