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Hollingstedt an der Treene. Ein Flusshafen der Wikingerzeit und des Mittelalters für den Transitverkehr zwischen Nord- und Ostsee. Ed. Klaus Brandt. Schriften des Archäologischen Landesmuseums 10. Neumünster 2012. 416 pp. ISBN 978-3-529-01811-4.

This anthology deals with the so-called North Sea harbour of Hedeby and Schleswig: Hollingstedt, the departure port at the portage across the Schleswig isthmus at the base of Jutland. It summarises the main results of the research project “Hollingstedt – Schwabsted. Medieval Settlement Development in the Eider-Treene Area” (1995–98), funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). Also it largely completes the academic life’s work of the excavator and former vice director of the Archaeological State Museum Schleswig-Holstein, Klaus Brandt, who retired in 2004. The book ties in with another volume on Hollingstedt published in the Hedeby report series (Hoffmann et al. 1987, *Hollingstedt – Untersuchungen zum Nordseehafen von Haithabu/Schleswig*, Neumünster). The present publication contains five papers: one on the archaeological features of the river port, one on caulking cramps (*sintels*) used in the cog ship-building tradition, one on the animal bones and two brief Dutch contributions that round out the volume. The latter deal with a flood canal from 1600 and with the post-Medieval surface lowering of the river valley due to damming and draining. Each paper has an English summary.

The central paper by excavator Brandt presents the results of the first modern excavations at Hollingstedt after Herbert Jankuhn’s trial trenching in 1932/33 and a river regulation in 1938. It is subdivided into excavations at Lahmenstraat on the shore of the River Treene in 1995–96, at Fünf Schwaben at the brook Süderwiesenbach in 1998 and surveys in the apse of St. Nicholas’ church during construction work in 1995. The Lahmenstraat excavation consisted basically of two main sites of 253 & 260 m² behind the Treene dyke, separated by the eponymous street. They were accompa-

nied by some minor test trenches in the dyke foreland, systematic coring and geophysics. The fieldwork uncovered two successive open piling platforms measuring c. 13 by 7 m and c. 8 by 5 m respectively, a c. 10 m wide moist river bank reinforced partly with wickerwork and partly with gravel, and a shoreline fortification towards the eastern river channel. The older of the two platforms – in preparation for whose construction an older cultural layer was moved – dates from the winter of 1161–62. Interestingly, five mooring poles along the western river channel were also recorded in one of the trial trenches (site 1995/5). The discussion of the water level, depth and shifting channels of the Treene at the still tidal-influenced inland landing site is exemplary and indispensable for any interpretation of a harbour site. With these considerations a function for the platforms as jetties can be excluded: they must be treated as solid accesses to landing sites.

Pieces of charcoal and burnt daub suggest the existence of buildings on the platforms, though quite how these were built on a detached piling bridge foundation is not clarified. On the higher part of the 1996 site were traces of two houses, a well and wheel tracks from the later 11th century onward. The artefact finds from the 1995/1–2 site are exclusively Medieval and Early Modern, but the 1996 site also yielded some Viking Period material, e.g. a cubical padlock, a soapstone vessel sherd and two glass beads. The oldest coin, a stray find made in 1938, is a denier of the East Franconian king Louis the Child (900–911).

The excavation at Fünf Schwaben on a minor brook emptying into the Treene was opened at a place where imported tuff from the Eifel region had been found already in 1960/61: another point of embarkation was expected here. The crucial survey map fig. 18 is unfortunately printed six pages before the beginning of the relevant subchapter. The main trench of 244 m² (site 1998/3 with trial trench 1998/1) uncovered a shallow backwater that would only have been navigable

during flooding events, even with flat-bottom lighters. Numerous finds of tuff and Rhenish pottery indicate a rather muddy landing site of the later 12th century located north of the trench. Though there were post holes and scattered timbers – interpreted as catwalks – no harbour facility was found here.

The tuff-built church of St. Nicholas is situated on the outskirts of the village of Hollingstedt in the immediate vicinity of the Lahmenstraat site. 17th century sources refer to it as a “warehouse of the English”. Nevertheless, surveys showed clearly that it was not a rededicated building, but built as a church on a c. 35 cm thick culture layer from its very beginning in the later 12th century. It probably catered to the spiritual needs of overseas seamen and merchants, while a second church served the local population.

Eike Sieglöff's paper is based on a diploma thesis presented at the university of Kiel in 2004. It deals with *sintels*, ship caulking cramps, from the isthmus of Schleswig. The finds from Hollingstedt are by far the largest collection from a settlement site in Germany. Apart from 56 iron clench nails from clinker-built vessels in the Anglo-Scandinavian shipbuilding tradition, it is particularly the 191 *sintels* and fragments that document the presence of ships in the “Kollerup-Bremen tradition”, or put more simply, early cogs. On the basis of Karel Vliermann's typology for *sintels*, Sieglöff develops a new refined one. The Viking Period phase in Hollingstedt is again supported by a high frequency of type 1A cramps, dating roughly from 900 to 1100. In the 10th century strata on the higher part of the Lahmenstraat 1995 site, rivets and *sintels* appear side by side. From c. 1100 the shipyard activities then shift to the lower-lying part of the site, and produce exclusively caulking cramps. However, the Scandinavian boat-building tradition ended only in the 12th century. A clever comparison with finds from Hollingstedt's departure port Schleswig (the Schleswig-Schild excavation of 1971–75) shows that here – but notably not already in Hedeby – the typologically earliest *sintels* of the Baltic sea appear. This suggests that about 1100 the Frisian cog shipbuilding tradition entered the Baltic via the Schleswig isthmus and the portage from Hollingstedt to Schleswig. In this

context it cannot be excluded that hybrid vessels such as the Kollerup cog may have been built in Schleswig. The crucial development from coastal proto-cog to ocean-going ship may in fact have taken place there.

Dirk Heinrich's paper on the animal bones treats finds from Lahmenstraat 1996 and Fünf Schwaden 1998. It summarises and re-evaluates the results of three theses presented at the zoological department at the University of Kiel between 2001 and 2003. These studies aimed to infer on-site activities: the supply of dockers, seamen and waggons at the portage with meat, the question if animals were kept and slaughtered on-site or imported as butcher products, and whether draught animals can be identified. Both find complexes contained more than 99% domesticated mammal bones, of which more than half represent cattle. While an absence of calves indicates off-site cattle breeding, the high age at slaughter suggests labour or milk production rather than meat supply as the main aim of the husbandry. An interpretation of the cattle as draught animals is supported by a sex ratio of 17:10 in favour of bulls or oxen at Lahmenstraat, and by certain pathological alterations due to heavy wear on the limb muscles etc.

It is a credit to the persistent dedication of the excavator and editor that this book is now available, adding important information on the modern excavations in Hollingstedt and about the character of the site. It also rehabilitates Hollingstedt's recently questioned active status in the Viking Period. Note though that some of the material has been available before through more comprehensive articles (in *Haithabu und die frühe Stadtentwicklung im nördlichen Europa*, 2002; and *Es war einmal ein Schiff*, 2007). Other important studies, such as Jörg Nowotny's 1995 diploma thesis on the chronologically important pottery from Hollingstedt-Lahmenstraat, are referenced but did not make it into the volume. The same is true for Hans Rudolf Bordemann's 2008 master's thesis that confirms that the Danevirke did not originally end at the village of Morgenstern in its western extension, as it does today, but indeed once stretched all the way to Hollingstedt and the river Treene. Finally it is unfortunate that the discussion of transit traffic across the portage –

laudably bringing up its western extension along the river Eider towards the Wadden Sea, discussing settlement mounds, hoards and further notional transshipment sites – almost disregards structural comparison with its departure ports at the Baltic side of the isthmus (cf. Kalmring 2010, *Der Hafen von Haithabu*; and Hilberg et al. 2012, *Zwischen Wikingern und Hanse*, p. 69 f).

There is narrow-spectrum artefactual evidence for a Viking Period phase of use at Hollingstedt. But the absence of Viking Period harbour facilities there should be seen against the background of massive harbour development in Hedeby in the 890s. Even assuming that different types of vessels called at the two ports, one might conclude that in fact not all of the North Sea and Continental trade headed for Hedeby can exclusively have gone through Hollingstedt. It probably arrived via other routes as well, such as Hamburg and the overland route Ochsenweg/Hærvejen. However, regardless of any criticism, the publication on Hollingstedt fills an important gap on the bookshelf, and allows the site to step out of the shadows, as it were, of its overpowering contemporaries Hedeby and Schleswig. As such it is warmly appreciated!

Sven Kalmring

Arkeologiska forskningslaboratoriet
Stockholms universitet
Wallenberglaboratoriet
SE-106 91 Stockholm
sven.kalmring@arklab.su.se

Mats G. Larsson, *Kensington 1898, Runfyndet som gäckade världen*. Stockholm 2012. 189 s. ISBN 978-91-7353-586-1.

År 1898 visade svenskamerikanen Olof Öhman (eller Ohman), bosatt i Kensington i Minnesota, upp en runsten, som han skulle ha funnit under rötterna på ett träd på sina ägor. Inskriften berättar att åtta göter och 22 norrmän skulle ha varit på platsen under en upptäcktsfärd år 1362. Om detta hade varit sant, skulle inskriften ha varit en av de äldsta källorna till USA:s historia, men inskriften är en förfalskning. Varken runorna eller

språket är medeltida. Språket är en sentida blandning av svenska, norska och engelska, med andra ord sentida invandrarspråk.

Vem hade då huggit in runorna? Forskningen har fortsatt eftersom en och annan – särskilt lekmän – hävdar att inskriften är äkta. Mats G. Larsson sammanfattar dessa studier i sin bok och lägger upp den som en detektivgåta. Vi får steg för steg följa hur gärningsmannen ringas in för att till slut bindas vid sin gärning med avgörande bevis, nämligen sin egen skriftliga bekännelse, skriven med chiffer på själva stenen. Forskningsarbetet tog drygt ett århundrade.

Öhman fanns givetvis bland de misstänkta från början. Han var lantbrukare men visade sig ha varit bokligt bildad och intresserad av allehanda. Inte minst ägnade han sig åt runor, som han ristade på väggar, fönsterbågar och magasinsbyggnader. Tillsammans med den försupne prästen Sven Fogelblad och farmaren Anders Andersson bildade han en treklöver av märkliga män, som hade det gemensamt, att de var besatta just av runor. Man hade alltså tre skäligen misstänkta.

Larsson har en lång utveckling att beskriva. Han skriver fångslände och medryckande. Framställningen är lättfattlig men har ändå mycket att ge även åt forskare. Men hur är det nu med den skyldige? Det blev Larsson förunnat att efter drygt ett århundrade kunna lägga fram de bindande bevisen.

Han visar att ö-runan på stenen är ett vanligt ö med en n-runa inuti. Runan kan läsas som Ön, namnet på det hemman som gav namn åt släkten Öhman. Den kan även läsas som Ö-n, en förkortning av släktnamnet Öhman. Med hjälp av inskriftens många siffror får Larsson fram ett kodat budskap: »Öhmans fann [underförstått stenen]. Vi vedade [d.v.s. högg eller skaffade ved] ved [d.v.s. vid] sten[en].» Efter drygt ett århundrade är Öhman bunden vid sin gärning.

Kanske tycker man att det är beklagligt att lärda människor under ett århundrade har sysslat med forskning kring en uppenbar förfalskning. Den som läser Larssons bok får dock säkerligen en annan syn på saken. Forskningen har tillfört mycken kunskap i allsköns ämnen vid sidan av huvudämnet. Vi har fått en inblick i utvandrarnas värld och deras ibland överraskande stora kunskaper. Olof Öhman är en intressant personlig-

het i - eller kanske på grund av - all sin egensinlighet och oberäknelighet. Han är väl värd att lära känna. Forskningen kring stenen har gett oss ännu ett exempel på hur gamla misstag kan leva vidare på grund av en tro trots allt, fastän sakskalet redan från början var så starka att alla klarsynta borde ha insett att detta var en förfälskning. Slutligen har vi fått lära oss tidigare okända runor och tidigare okända sätt att skriva siffror.

Dessa runor från Kensingtonstenen var nämligen tidigare okända för forskningen. De blev kända från annan källa först 2002. Det är verkligen häpnadsväckande att svensk-amerikaner på Minnesotas landsbygd kände till runor som var okända för de lärde och förblev så i ytterligare ett århundrade. Hela denna historia är en påminnelse om att vi bör forska mer om sentida runinskrifter. Även dessa har mycket att ge. Kunskaperna hör kanske hemma i kulturhistoriens utkanter, men även där finns som synes lärdomar att hämta.

Lars Gahrn

Mölnalds stadsmuseum

SE-431 82 Mölnald

lars.gahrn@molndal.se

Mats Burström, *Minnesgömmor. Berättelser om föremål gömda i jorden i Estland under andra världskriget*. Lund 2012. 125 pp. ISBN 978-91-85509-72-0.

Mats Burström is one of the the best-known scholars practicing contemporary archaeology in Scandinavia. It is still a rather new approach in the Nordic countries, although in other parts of the world, notably in the US and UK, it has been pursued for several decades. In Estonia, the country that Burström's book deals with, the field is well-known in theory but hardly practised at all.

The subject of contemporary archaeology is the material evidence of the recent past or nearly our present day, viewed through the lense of archaeological attitudes. It is an approach overlapping several disciplines - e.g. cultural history, traditional archaeology, ethnology - and is in my opinion closest to studies of material culture in socio-cultural anthropology.

The study of archaeological (or material) evi-

dence of the recent past offers scholars a perspective on history that can differ considerably from that based on written documents and dominant history-writing. The different nature or even contradistinction of so-called "big" and "small" histories is critical here. Material evidence is frequently the only way to reach the small narrative, that is, the history experienced by individuals and families who did not play crucial roles in big history.

Burström has particularly emphasized the ability of contemporary archaeology to provide interpretations with an emotional dimension. Things enable people to recall memories of their own lives or those of their loved ones, they re-create feelings, and can therefore even have a therapeutic effect. Things can generate a special relationship between a person and his previous life, or between him and his dear ones, thus acquiring a symbolic value considerably higher than ordinary memory. The phenomenon is well demonstrated by the cases in Burström's book, where families have regained things that were once hidden.

Most of the book is taken up by an introduction to recent Estonian history and narratives about buried artefacts. The overview of theoretical approaches is regrettably short, perhaps because Burström published a proper handbook of contemporary archaeology in 2007: *Samtidsarkeologi: introduktion till ett forskningsfält*. A greater concern, however, is the brevity of the final, analytical chapter. 23 stories of hidden treasures could have led up to a much more thorough discussion than is given in the last nine pages of the book. It is largely left to the reader to reflect upon interpretations of the evidence presented.

An interesting aspect is the uneven distribution of knowledge about burying possessions, described in chapter 3. This demonstrates the unavoidable subjectivity of interpretations. Being Estonian, I grew up knowing that in times of emergency belongings can be buried in the earth, and that this had been widely practised during and after World War II. I was surprised to learn from Burström's book that such behaviour might be considered unusual and even fascinating in some countries or by some observers. The intriguing question is how such differences in cultural background might influence the interpretation

of archaeological material, especially when comparing academic discussion in different countries.

Most of Burström's informants have similar backgrounds – an absolute majority fled Estonia at the end of World War II, and have since lived in various Western countries. Owners of buried possessions who stayed in Estonia are represented, but only with a few cases – although their actual number was hardly smaller than that of those who fled. Many or even most of them could not dig up their belongings either, at least not shortly after the war. During the Soviet occupation it was dangerous or impossible to search for buried belongings in confiscated houses and lands, and later it became complicated to locate the buried goods. Houses were destroyed, sites became covered by new buildings or roads. In short, the obstacles were similar for both groups.

Although I am certainly also influenced by my personal background (I too have tried to find tableware buried by my family towards the end of the last war, unfortunately without success), it does appear likely that much of what was hidden during the war, and was not accessible soon afterwards, was never even looked for again. Particularly in cases when it was hard to find the exact spot. The main reason, however, seems to be that the hidden belongings were rarely very valuable. Even their emotional value was often probably not great enough to justify the trouble of searching for them – which contradicts Burström's conclusions. However, small histories are characterised by their great variability.

The symbolic value of buried belongings, however, might not be the same to someone living in Estonia as to someone living in exile. At least theoretically, we might therefore ponder the connection between the symbolic value of the hidden belongings and the memory of a lost homeland. Things brought from the homeland usually have a much higher symbolic value to an exiled Estonian than similar things could ever have to one living in Estonia. The question is thus, has the emotional value of the belongings treated in Burström's book been increased by the fact that they were once buried? Or is their significance so great mainly because their owners lived outside their one-time homeland? Or should we perhaps consider a sample bias where only people to whom

these belongings have a value contacted the researcher? I would have expected at least some comparative material and a discussion of these issues.

Scholars in contemporary archaeology often emphasise the independent character of their field – it functions in its own right. The main aim is not to develop models for interpreting the more distant past, as in ethno-archaeology. I however do not entirely agree with this. Burström's book triggers associations and points to possible ways of interpreting archaeological material that is much older than the past few centuries. That is true even without an obvious intention on the author's part – one reference to the widespread interpretation of prehistoric hoards as ritual deposits being the only exception. This line of reasoning is not developed further.

I am one of those who often ponder parallels with recent times when interpreting much older archaeological evidence. Reading this book raised a question about the selection of artefacts buried when owners were fleeing. As the examples in Burström's book demonstrate, the belongings buried were in most cases not among the most valuable of the family's possessions. Jewellery and money were normally brought along, presumably because of their high commercial and therefore also practical value, and their portability. Mainly, things with great emotional significance or comparatively high value but large size or weight were buried. What new interpretive possibilities for prehistoric and early historic deposits can we see here? Can it be that people escaping hostilities tried, for practical reasons, to take with them valuables like jewellery and coins, as well as weapons, but hid or buried other things of great value – such as kitchen utensils, certain tools, textiles (carpets, blankets, clothes), and some food supplies? This is what people did in one of the few of cases in the book involving informants who stayed in Estonia. Possible deposits of organic material would decay in the course of centuries, but depositions of e.g. clay pots and iron kettles do not really occur in the Estonian archaeological record. And if we find deposits of valuables, can it then be justified, at least in some cases, to believe that these did not number among the most valuable belongings of the people who once buried them?

I would also like to question Burström's suggestion in the final chapter of a special meaning of earth for Estonians, who in the late 1930s still lived in a strongly agrarian society. Instead of a deeply symbolic meaning for soil, it perhaps makes more sense to point to the political circumstances, which forced innumerable people to leave their homes and hide their possessions. Estonians – as well as people in many other countries – found themselves in situations which forced them to bury their valuables if they wanted to hide them.

A good book is one that stimulates new thoughts – and that Burström's book has definitely done. Although I would have preferred more analysis on the author's part, it was an interesting read, and I recommend the book to anyone who is interested in human societies and material culture.

Marika Mägi

Institute of History, Tallinn University

Rüütli 6

Tallinn 10130

Estonia

marika.magi@mail.dk

Forntid längs ostkusten 3. Blankaholmsseminariet år 2011. Red. Kenneth Alexandersson, Michael Dahlin, Veronica Palm, Ludvig Pappmehl-Dufay & Roger Wikell. Västerviks museum, Tjustbygdens kulturhistoriska förening, Studieförbundet, Samhällsföreningen Blankaholm-Solstadström 2012. Västervik 2012. 213 s. ISBN 978-91-979639-2-3.

Sedan några år är Michael Dahlin den drivande kraften bakom det årliga arkeologiseinariet »Forntid längs ostkusten» i Blankaholm i Västerviks kommun, Småland. Seminarierna riktar sig till yrkesverksamma och studenter samt andra intresserade av lokalhistoria och ostkustens historia. Föreliggande bok innehåller tio artiklar baserade på föredragen från seminariet 2011. Författarna är ömsom arkeologer och historiker och artiklarna handlar om allt från pågående forskningsprojekt om Norrlands stenålder i samarbete med andra nordiska länder samt Tyskland till hur arkeologiska undersökningar kunde gå till

under 1800-talet och vad dokumentationen kan ge oss för information idag.

Som boktiteln antyder är det ostkusten som står i fokus. Läsarna får resa från södra Norrland ner till Småland via Öland och Gotland. Flertalet av artiklarna berör Småland vilket kan ha att göra med att seminariet hålls där och flera av föreläsarna är yrkesverksamma i området. Därför är bokens rubrik en aning missvisande: stora delar av ostkusten berörs inte alls. Förutom en större geografisk spridning hade jag också, med tanke på bokens titel, förväntat mig en tydligare koppling till de maritima miljöerna som dessa områden faktiskt utgör. Hur har just vattnet påverkat människors handlande och liv? Småland är ett av Sveriges sjötätaste landskap: hur såg vattenvägarna ut under forntiden och hur påverkade detta människors rörelsemönster och produktionen av olika material? I några av artiklarna kan vi ana vikten av kustmiljöerna för människors liv. Ett exempel är Sven-Gunnar Broströms och Kenneth Ihrestams artikel »Fyra skeppshällar i Casimirsborg». Här berättar författarna om hur de i samband med inventeringar i Gamleby socken hittade ett stort antal tidigare okända hållristningar där det dominerande motivet som vanligt är skepp. Författarna sätter ristningarna i relation till hamnlägen, men där saknar jag en vidare diskussion om skeppets betydelse för bronsålderns människor.

I Roger Wikells och Mattias Petterssons artikel är de maritima miljöerna i fokus när de beskriver delar av sitt projekt »Skärgård i 10 000 år». De menar att man ifrån forskningshåll har fokuserat på inlandsfjärdmiljöerna i Stockholms skärgård, på jordbruk och boskapsskötsel, varvid stora delar av skärgården har glömts bort. Länge ansåg man att öarna koloniserats först i historisk tid och än idag framställs området som en sent koloniserad vildmark. Jag tycker att delar av deras kritik är befogad, men det är på väg att förändras. Numera kan man exempelvis läsa marin- arkeologi vid Södertörns högskola, Sjöhistoriska museet har blivit bra på att förmedla sina forskningsresultat i media, Stockholms läns museum har projekt som »Upptäck länet» där man uppmantrar länets invånare att besöka fornlämningsmiljöer bland annat i skärgården, och inte minst författarnas egna projekt »Skärgård 10 000 år»

bidrar till att kunskapen om Stockholms skärgårds forntid ökar. Men som författarna skriver får man sällan i turistbroschyrer vetskap om skärgårdens forntid, och tar man en titt på kommunernas hemsidor är det inte ofta man finner något om den äldre historien. Där har vi yrkesverksamma mycket att göra.

Beträffande bokens målgrupp är de yrkesverksamma lättpreciserade, men när man även vänder sig till allmänt intresserade, vilket vi som arbetar med kulturarvet ofta gör, så blir det svårare. Vad har dessa för förkunskaper och vad finner de intressant? Är bokens syfte att vara populärvetenskaplig eller syftar den till att hålla en vetenskaplig ton? Det är svårt att veta då de olika texterna har väldigt olika tonläge. I en får läsaren exempelvis veta vad en skålgrop är för något och hur man tror att dessa användes, medan man i en annan text använder familjebegreppet som en självklarhet men inte klargör vad som menas med termen. Detta begrepp är viktigt att problematisera om man vänder sig till yrkesverksamma, men kanske ännu mer om man vänder sig till allmänheten då det är författaren som förmedlar en bild av forntiden och den bild som yrkesverksamma målar ofta blir en sanning i allmänhetens ögon. Detta skulle kunna innebära att läsaren tänker sig exempelvis en kärnfamilj då det är den rådande normen i samhället idag. I en tredje text får läsaren möta något som påminner väldigt mycket om en grävrapport.

Vad har författarna fått för anvisningar när de skrev sina artiklar? Fick de veta vilka de skulle skriva för? Kan man balansera en text så att det både passar den som är mycket kunnig och den som kanske precis har börjat intressera sig för ämnet? Jag tror det. Det är givetvis svårt att få tio författare att skriva texter på samma nivå, men att texterna är väldigt olika i tonfallet behöver inte nödvändigtvis vara dåligt. Det finns något för alla i denna bok och det som jag tycker är det bästa med den är just bredden, både i ämnesvalet och i vad som förväntas av läsaren. Den som har mindre förkunskaper utmanas och för den redan insatta läsaren finns det flera artiklar i ämnen som ligger utanför den egna direkta intressesfären som kan ge en kompletterande bild av ostkusten.

2013 hålls ett nytt seminarium och därefter skulle det vara trevligt med en ny publikation.

Något som jag skulle önska då är att redaktörerna kastar ett extra öga på illustrationerna. I vissa bilder och tabeller är typgraden alldeles för liten, och några illustrationer är så pass svårtolkade att man hade klarat sig utan dem. Det kan vara så att bilderna gör sig bättre i färg men att trycka i färg är dyrt.

Överlag gav mig boken mycket trevlig läsning. Michael Dahlin ska ha en eloge för sitt arbete med seminarierna då det krävs mycket tid och engagemang att anordna dylika tillställningar. Att man dessutom har lyckats publicera tre volymer med artiklar som bygger på föredrag finner jag extra glädjande. Det är viktigt att sådana skrifter ges ut då den sortens texter utgör fina komplement till föredragen, med mera information än vad föredragshållarna hinner med på en halvtimme. Det är även en tillgänglighetsfråga då människor tar till sig kunskap på olika sätt och texterna kommer även dem som inte kunde vara på plats i Blankaholm till glädje. Artiklarna visar på vad som görs inom svensk arkeologi och äldre historia idag och varför exempelvis inventeringar är så viktiga. Det var väldigt spännande att se hur mycket ny kunskap om forntiden vi får tack vare dessa. Boken ger även exempel på exploateringsgrävningar och forskningsgrävningar samt vad man kan få ut av historiska källor. Trots nämnda brister tycker jag att boken är ett välkommet bidrag bland böcker om Sveriges maritima miljöers historia och jag ser fram emot nästa publikation.

Jennifer Shutzberg

Stockholms läns museum

Järnvägsgatan 25

SE-131 54 Nacka

jennifer.shutzberg@stockholmslansmuseum.se

More than mythology. Narratives, ritual practices and regional distribution in pre-Christian Scandinavian religions. Eds Catharina Raudvere & Jens Peter Schjødt. Lund 2012. ISBN 978-91-85509-71-3. 287 pp.

This book is an outcome of a conference in Copenhagen a couple of years ago, which in turn took place as a consequence of the Nordic Network for

Research on Pre-Christian Religion. The network was initiated by the editors of this volume and intended to give historians of religion in Scandinavia an opportunity to exchange ideas, and to provoke further interest in pre-Christian Scandinavian religion in particular. The contributions to the conference – presented as chapters in this book – were made by specialists from different areas of expertise outside the network and reflect the interdisciplinary approach of this meeting. Each of them emphasises a specific perspective on the study of Old Norse religion.

The beliefs of the northern peoples of Europe before the imposition by law of Christianity have been a matter of endless speculation. Tales of goddesses and gods are preserved in various Medieval manuscripts and have done a great deal to shape current views of the beliefs of pre-Christian Scandinavia. Treatments of Old Norse religion are therefore often confined to mythology and the most well-known gods. The earliest studies in the history of religion of the Norsemen – mainly performed by philologists – were also dominated by mythology and the “romantic” aspects of the Vikings, a tendency which became especially widely propagated during the 18th and 19th centuries when scholars were searching for an older and ostensibly purer belief system. Remnants of old traditions were frequently reconstructed in homogeneous form, applied to the entire Germanic-speaking area, and set in clear contrast to the new “invasive” religion. This created a somewhat melodramatic picture of life and religion in pre-Christian Scandinavia and of its sudden deterioration with the coming of Christianity.

In more recent years scholars have increasingly emphasised regional, temporal and social variability, which means that the evidence we have must be interpreted more carefully than it has been in the past. On the one hand, we might argue that the earliest written evidence about life in the North – penned by the Norsemen themselves and not outsiders – comes mainly from a time when Christianity had been widely accepted, and when major changes had already taken place in society. This, of course, makes attempts at reconstructing earlier religious practices difficult, and our interpretations must always remain

tentative. On the other hand it is reasonable to assume that as a complex and time-consuming process, religious conversion must have taken place at different times in different places and have varied a great deal from region to region and even from individual to individual. It would have been essential to make Christianity meaningful to those of pagan origin by merging the new kind of thought with pagan elements. This means that blending of older and newer religious ideas must have been common, at least at the start of the conversion process.

In this light, the distinction between Christian religion and Norse pre-Christian belief systems is inevitably an artificial one. Combining the various religious practices and cultures of different pre-Christian periods together and labelling them as an isolated religion called *Paganism* seems too limited. More than that, is any religion – pagan, Christian or otherwise – ever static and uniform? The answer seems evident: religion is always changeable and affected by local cultures, mentalities and belief-systems – the environment within which it is embedded. This is visible in the endless contradictions and variations found in the source texts – which at least in part must derive from the differing backgrounds of the beliefs – as well as in references to belief in various small-scale protective spirits, apparently associated with elements of individual worship until fairly recent times. Any attempt to understand Old Norse religion thus definitely presupposes a degree of flexibility in a variety of areas, openness to diversity and variation, as well as interdisciplinary co-operation, which are the underlying arguments of the book under consideration.

Within the past three decades or so, an interdisciplinary approach has come to occupy a central place in discussions of Old Norse religion. Despite this development, however, the subject is still often overshadowed by the mythological references and viewed – at least by general audiences – as a static, supposedly homogeneous cultural system. *More than Mythology* integrates and consolidates the interdisciplinary approaches, and fills the gap between general textbooks and more specialised monographs on specific topics. The book covers all these important issues in an engaging manner, providing informative and thought-

provoking examples that help convey a much better idea of religion, the study of religion, and the study of Old Norse religion.

The book offers insight into the problems, but also into the possibilities of new approaches. It is encouraging and helpful in providing an overview of the vast diversity of religious traditions in terms of gender, social status, ethnicity, geography and a number of other factors. It is based on research that has been carried out by scholars in archaeology, history of religion and folklore, among others, and covers a broad range of topics related to culture, language, religion, social structures and power, continuity, social interaction, and the problems with source materials, to name a few. Personally, I think the greatest value of this collection is that the authors have succeeded in addressing most of the fundamental components of their vast, yet highly specific subject, providing explanations and examples from many different areas of study to effectively get their point across to the reader. Moreover, the essays range from more specific cultural analysis (presenting useful information that for reasons of language would not otherwise be readily accessible to everyone: see the chapters by DuBois, Stark and Anttonen on Sámi and Finnish cultures), to broader and more theoretical discussions regarding how to approach Old Norse religion and society with its manifold variations and dimensions of time and space (see especially Nordberg and Schjødt). Nor have more traditional research areas been overlooked (see Jackson on comparative philology), and some Eddic poems are analysed (see e.g. Raudvere on *Völuspá*). Sundqvist discusses socio-political formations in places with different historical backgrounds and conditions, and Price offers an archaeologist's point of view in his chapter on funerary practices. The issues discussed are described in simple and comprehensible language, and arguments are supported by examples. This makes things easy to follow even for those who are not deeply involved in the branch of expertise of a particular author.

No book of this kind can fully address the richness of every issue, but *More than Mythology*, in my opinion, finds an agreeable balance between depth and a variety of different perspectives. Ranging from ancient Indo-European influences to

modern Finnish folklore it covers almost every significant field that deals with and sheds much light on Old Norse religious thought. The aim of the book is clear and the consensus of the experts from different perspectives helps broaden one's understanding of the problems. The full range of sources, whether literary, material, oral, linguistic or otherwise – no matter how revealing or problematic they may appear to be – should be taken into consideration, although a dose of scepticism is required. I can only conclude that this book is a valuable contribution to the field of Old Norse studies and relates to current issues and approaches in the many streams of on-going research. It should be of interest and value to every reader interested in Old Norse religion, and in Viking societies more generally. The book achieves its purpose: it demonstrates that Old Norse religion *is* more than mythology, just as the title says.

Triin Laidoner

Centre for Scandinavian Studies
50/52 College Bounds
King's College
University of Aberdeen
Aberdeen AB24 3DS
Scotland
triin.laidoner@abdn.ac.uk

Nytt ljus över Långhundraleden. Bygder, båtar, natur. Arbetsgruppen Långhundraleden. Vallentuna 2011. 180 s. ISBN 978-91-633-8925-2.

Arbetsgruppen Långhundraleden står bag en fin bog, der er en opfølgning på en tidligere bogudgivelse fra 1993: *Långhundraleden – en resa i tid och rum*. Jeg har ikke læst den, men i forordet til den nye udgivelse beskrives den som omhandlende »allt». Den nye bog er mere fokuseret og opregner seks områder, som behandles mere indgående: bådene, bebyggelsen, kulturlandskabet, landhævningen, vandet og vegetationshistorien. Forfatterne til de ni artikler er for de flestes vedkommende fagfolk indenfor de respektive områder.

I den indledende artikel beskrives Långhundraledens geografiske udstrækning og dens rolle som vandvej i jernalder, vikingetid og tidlig mid-

delalder. Fascinationen af denne fortid har inspireret til et mere end 30-årigt engagement fra hembygdsforeninger langs leden, der ville erkende og dokumentere den tidligere vandvej mellem Østersøen og Uppland. Et samarbejde mellem amatører og professionelle fandt sin form i Arbejdsgruppen, der bl.a. har til opgave at værne om kulturlandskabet og fortidsminderne.

I artiklen »På Långhundraleden med viksbåtar och kanot« afprøves den gamle vandvej, som den tager sig ud i vore dage. Forfatteren er bl.a. gymnasielærer og bådbygger, og der er tale om en meget personlig beskrivelse af turene, nærmest i dagbogsform med et journalistisk snit. Man fornemmer vandet, men også at vandvejen er en saga blott.

Den efterfølgende artikel er skrevet af en naturgeograf og en kvartærgeolog. Den omhandler landhævningen og strandforskydningen, og redaktionelt kunne den med fordel være anbragt først i bogen, for de iso- og eustatiske bevægelser er forudsættningen for at leden blev skabt og atter er forsvundet. Artiklen er en god indføring i det vanskelige stof, og den er forsynet med gode og oplysende illustrationer.

Under overskriften »Kulturlandskapet« beretter en kulturgeograf om de geologiske forudsætninger for landskabets udseende og udvikling. Långhundraledens basis er en sprækkedal i grundfjeldet, og dalens tværprofil er både smal/stejl og bred med en tilhørende lerslette. Landhævningen har siden skærgårdens dominans i yngre stenalder gjort stadigt større arealer til tørt land med muligheder for landbrug. Forfatteren peger på gamle træer i vore dages kulturlandskab og kritiserer myndighederne for manglende vilje til at beskytte kulturhistoriske elementer som hegn, gærder, enge, sankmark og småbrugene mod udviklingen. Som læser får man indtrykket af en forfatter, der har en ganske romantisk indstilling til, hvad et kulturlandskab skal være. Jeg kan sagtens følge ham, men man skal erindre, at selvom det moderne landbrugsland forekommer industrielt og ensidigt, så er det stadig et kulturlandskab, uanset om man kan lide det eller ej.

En arkæolog har forfattet kapitlet om den forhistoriske bebyggelse. Der er kun få spor fra yngre stenalder langs Långhundraleden, men fra bronzealderen, hvor strandlinjen findes ved kote

+20 m, er sporene flere. Der redegøres for, hvordan Arbejdsgruppen har kortlagt bebyggelsesmiljøer fra bronzealderen ud fra nogle forudbestemte kriterier, f.eks. røser, helleristninger, beliggenhed i kote +20 m eller mere, plads til ager og eng samt tilstedeværelse af løsfund. Det anføres, at det er sjældent, at alle kriterier kan påvises, og at det ofte er vanskeligt at datere forekomster som røser uden udgravninger. At de arkæologiske spor er for få til at illustrere udviklingen fra bronzealder til tidlig middelalder kompenserer forfatteren for, ved at referere mere givende udgravninger og undersøgelser på Lovö i Mälaren.

Långhundraledens rolle som gammel vandvej kommer for alvor i fokus i artiklen om både og søfart, skrevet af en marinarkæolog. Fokus er rettet mod vidnesbyrd fra yngre jernalder til middelalder, en periode som er repræsenteret af mange bådfund (eller rester af både), der tilfældigt er dukket op ved markarbejde og grøftgravninger. Et eksempel på bådbyggertraditionen i slutningen af vikingetiden og begyndelsen af middelalderen er Viksbåden fra Söderby-Karl, Uppland. Bådtypen er tilpasset sejlads på søer og åer i Mellemsverige, og dens beskedne størrelse (ca. 10 m lang med seks par årer) gør den egnet til at blive trukket over land, hvor vandet er sluppet op. Viksbåden er dendrodateret til midten af 11. årh., men som fartøjstype sammenlignes den med bådene fra Valsgårdgravene fra vendetid og vikingetid. En anden bådtype, som har været almindelig i området, er den udspændte stammebåd. Fund af kløvede egestammer fra moser og søområder ved Långhundraleden antages at være råmateriale til både. Dateringen er dog ikke helt på plads, og kløvet egetræ kan benyttes til andet og mere end skibsbyggeri. Der refereres desuden til en stribe af fund af trædele fra skibe, mulige spærringer og efterretninger om jagttagelser. Långhundraledens betydning som forbindelsesled knyttes sammen med stednavne, der antyder helligsteder og kult, ligesom ældre ting- og markedspladser.

Middelalderen langs Långhundraleden bliver præsenteret af en middelalderhistoriker. Artiklen inddrager skriftlige kilder om ejendomsforhold, runesten og stednavne med særlig betydning i sig selv eller med efterled, der signalerer alder eller funktion. Efterledet *-hamra/-hammar* fremhæves som et farledsnavn. Den almin-

delige tolkning er, at navnet henviser til »stenet bakke«, men forfatteren mener, at der er tale om pejlemærker for sejlede. Jeg er på ingen måde specialist i svenske stednavne, men umiddelbart er det vanskeligt at se nødvendigheden af pejlemærker i en farled som Långhundraleden. Den er netop kendetegnet af åer og langstrakte søer, som i sig selv anviser ruten. Forsøg på at udpege stormandssæder eller godser tager typisk udgangspunkt i ejendomsforhold i højmiddelalderen, hvor der projiceres tilbage ved brug af stednavne og store gravhøje. Det kan der være meget ræson i, men når en lokalitet med det sigende navn Rickerby (krigerby) underbygges som særlig ved at henviser til ejendomsforhold i første halvdel af 14. årh., hvor tre generationer ejere var af »Gustav Vasas farfarsfars mödernsläkt«, bliver argumentationen noget spekulativ.

Indføringen i det sydlige Upplands vegetationshistorie er i gode hænder med Arbejtsgruppens palæobotaniker. I relativt korte – men meget informative – afsnit introduceres læseren til grundlaget for den tilgængelige viden (pollendiagrammer), man følges en tur i skoven og til ellesumpen, og landhævningsens påvirkning af forholdene forklares. Forfatteren bemærker den faglige diskussion om den tidlige løvskov har været meget tæt eller præget af en mere åben og lys skov, som følge af urokers, hjortes og visenters spisevaner. Forfatteren hælder til den lukkede skov, men andre synspunkter får plads. Pollendiagrammerne viser, hvordan behovet for græsningsarealer og agre medførte afbrænding af elleskov ved begyndelsen af ældre jernalder, og samtidig bliver grantræet en mere og mere almindelig vækst i skoven. Enen ses markant i pollenspektret fra 500 e.Kr., hvilket viser, at bøndernes behov for græsning til deres dyr kunne gå hårdt ud over vegetationen og give plads for andre arter.

Bogens sidste kapitel er tilegnet topografi, geologi og vand og er skrevet af en tidligere professor i agronomisk hydroteknik. Bag den tekniske titel gemmer sig en formidler, som formår at beskrive og illustrere sit stof på glimrende vis. Der er enkle oversigtskort, som belyser teksten, og længdeprofilerne af dele af leden giver en god fornemmelse af de tærskler og vandskel, som er blevet omtalt flere gange i de foregående artikler. Områdets afvandringsforhold og *torrläggning*sfø-

tag bliver gennemgået og fører læseren frem til nutidens Långhundraleden efter den lange tur gennem forhistorien og middelalderen.

Nytt ljus över Långhundraleden er en publikation, der med sit relativt snævre geografiske fokus ind i mellem synes at få placeret sig mellem to stole. Arbejtsgruppens ønske om at dække et meget bredt spektrum af emner og tidsperioder er forståelig, og når man har et så indgående kendskab til et lokalområde, kan man komme til at overdimensionere betydningen og bæredygtigheden af få og/eller vage oplysninger. Med andre ord er der en tendens til at lade det spekulative få meget plads. Hér tænker jeg ikke så meget på, at der flere gange gribes ud efter undersøgelsesresultater udenfor Långhundraleden for at give mere fylde. Det er der for så vidt ikke noget forkert i, og det viser blot, at arkæologi og historie som fag nødvendigvis må beskue fortiden i et større perspektiv end Långhundraledens snævre dalgange. Når dette er sagt, er der tale om en bog med mange kvaliteter. Indtil jeg fik bogen i hånden, har jeg været aldeles ubekendt med området. Det er jeg ikke længere. Bogen er på fornemste vis et udtryk for, at en levende interesse for lokalhistorie kan samle amatører og professionelle om et fælles mål til fælles (og andres) gavn gennem mange år. Min kompliment.

Jens Ulriksen
Roskilde Museum
Munkebro 2
DK-4000 Roskilde
jensu@roskilde.dk

Neglected Barbarians. Ed. Florin Curta. Turnhout 2010. 629 pp. ISBN 978-2-503-53125-0.

The “barbarians” in this book are peoples of Late Roman and Early Medieval times, most of whom inhabited parts of Europe, especially its eastern and far western regions, but also including groups in western Asia and northern Africa. The volume consists of an introduction by the editor, 16 papers by contributors, and an afterword by Peter Heather. As the editor notes in the introduction, most familiar books and films that concern “bar-

barians" deal with Anglo-Saxons, Franks and Huns. The papers in this volume treat peoples less familiar to most readers, including Antes, Astures, Balts, Cantabri, Frexes, Gepids, Herules, Tetraxite Goths and Vascones, and therein lies its greatest strength.

The papers provide the reader with well written and often very well illustrated overviews of both historical and archaeological information about peoples of the eastern Baltic coast, the Balkans, regions north and east of the Black Sea, central northern Africa, and Iberia. Footnotes, generally copious, provide excellent bibliographies. Being an up-to-date overview in English of what is known about these peoples and the regions they inhabited, this book is an excellent resource.

Of particular value are some detailed discussions of artefact typologies, which will be useful to readers who are not familiar with the archaeology of these groups and regions. Treatment of the historical sources is strong in many papers. A number of authors emphasize connections with other parts of Europe. These papers will be particularly useful for archaeologists and historians concerned with western, central, and northern regions of the continent. Among the many interesting papers is one by Radu Harhoiu titled "Where Did All the Gepids Go? A Sixth- to Seventh-Century Cemetery in Bratei (Romania)", which provides detailed treatment, with many illustrations, of the distribution of different burial practices and grave goods within this cemetery, as well as documentation of the systematic looting of the graves, complete with diagrams showing different locations of the shafts dug by grave robbers. All too often in archaeological publications we read simply that a grave had been looted; yet in some cultural contexts, it appears that removal of objects from burials was part of a regular ritual practice. A paper by Igor O. Gavritukhin and Michel Kazanski on "Bosporus, the Tetraxite Goths, and the Northern Caucasus Region during the Second Half of the Fifth and the Sixth Centuries" provides an informative and well illustrated discussion of several important types of brooches and buckles and their chronologies and distributions.

It would however have been helpful to read more consideration of the concept "barbarian"

The editor discusses this issue in the introduction and provides a good bibliography in the footnotes, and Heather says more about it in the afterword, but given that the concept is the unifying feature of all of the papers, it would have been useful to have more detail on exactly what the writers understand by this term. The word is used much more readily by historians, who often draw sharp distinctions between societies that had writing and societies that did not, than it is by archaeologists. An essay dealing with the idea of the "barbarian" in relation to the papers in this volume, written from the perspective of modern anthropological archaeology, would have been a welcome addition.

In this connection, it would also have been instructive to see more critical discussion of the links between texts and archaeology. Many of the papers provide excellent treatment of both historical sources and material culture concerning the different groups, but not often in terms of critical theoretical thinking about how the sources might be integrated.

Overall, the volume is well illustrated. Precise drawings of artefacts and distribution maps are important in a publication such as this one, and many of them are excellent. Map 1, the first plate at the back of the book, is a topographic map, in colour, and it is marked with boxes that show the regions covered by each of the papers. This is a useful illustration to orient the reader geographically to the different regions (it might have been even more helpful placed at the front of the book). It is followed by a series of 13 smaller maps that indicate where individual sites are situated within each region. Unfortunately, the majority of illustrations throughout the book are too small. Although the outline of objects such as fibulae and belt buckles can be seen, often their decoration, which is important with regard to a variety of questions, is not readily made out. The number and size of illustrations that a book can include are always limited, and here it seems that a compromise had to be made between numbers and sizes of figures.

A reader can always wish for more in a book, and these observations should not detract from what is an important contribution to the literature on the "barbarians" of Late Roman and Ear-

ly Medieval Europe. This book will be a valuable resource to archaeologists and historians working in all regions of Europe and the greater Mediterranean world.

Peter S. Wells
Department of Anthropology
395 HHH Center
University of Minnesota
301 19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55455
U.S.A.
wells001@umn.edu