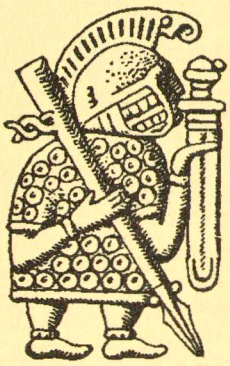

FORNVÄNNEN

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Konserveringsproblem under debatt : smärre meddelanden
Geijer, Agnes
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KONSERVERINGSPROBLEM UNDER DEBATT

Då undertecknad av hälsoskäl måste avstå från att närvara vid den i Rom i september 1961 anordnade stora internationella konservatorskongressen, åtog sig Mr. Harold Burnham, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, att där föra min talan. Mr. Burnham har insänt följande meddelande, vari han rapporterar om förhandlingarna, framför allt rörande textilkonservering, och även berättar om den därpå följande konferensen i Lyon, Centre International des Études des Textiles Anciens, där även vissa konserveringsmetoder kom under debatt.

"During the autumn of 1961, two series of meetings were held in which the conservation was discussed. The first of these was the Rome Conference of the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works which was held during the last week of September. Mr. N. S. Bromelle, Secretary-General of the organization was responsible for the arrangements, and the meetings were attended by interested delegates from many countries. The programme was very full, and covered a wide range of conservation problems ranging through paintings, metals, paper, glass and textiles, and also dealing with such related subjects as lighting, humidity control and the education and training of conservators and restorers. Each meeting had a panel of speakers and a chairman, these being drawn from the membership of the Institute, and coming from Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Great Britain, India, Italy, Japan, Norway, Poland, Sweden, The Netherlands, and the United States of America. This wide geographical coverage alone shows the importance with which the meetings were regarded.

Various receptions were held for the delegates, and excursions were arranged to points of interest in the neighbourhood of Rome. One of the special meetings was the Forbes lecture given by Dr. H. J. Plenderleith in the Palazzo Barberini. The speaker who is President of the Institute gave a review of the work of Mr. Edward R. Forbes whose ideas were the original incentive that led to the Institute being organized. He went on to give a review of his own experiences in the field of conservation which was both instructive and interesting.

The panel discussions were held at the Istituto del Patologia del Libro, and the papers presented by the various speakers had been circulated to the delegates well in advance of the conference.[1] What was probably the most valuable and illuminating contribution was made by the staff of the Istituto itself. Not only are their published papers most valuable to all those working with books, documents and archives, but the scope of their approach and the excellence of their laboratories were welcome knowledge to all. The thorough and exhaustive investigations which precede the solution of a given problem set a standard that others in different fields of conserva-

[1] Samlade till en volym på 376 stencilerade sidor. De slutgiltiga anförandena samt referat av diskussionerna förberedes nu för tryckning.

tion might well emulate. A number of the meetings dealt with paintings, and considered primarily new advances in this field. Of all aspects of conservation, it is probable that the problems raised by paintings have been more thoroughly investigated than any others. The panels dealing with other problems showed advances in all fields, but also brought home the fact that much remains to be done.

From time to time, new aspects and new fields are considered at conferences of this kind. The Rome Conference was no exception, and the addition of a discussion on textile conservation must be welcomed for at least two reasons. First and foremost, international recognition and collaboration is essential in any field of research and, in the second place, there are at the present time two opposed trends. One question is if irreversible methods should be allowed or not. Obviously some of the methods used hithertoo for the conservation of textiles are not fully reversible, among them some special kinds of chemical treatment. Critics of such procedures maintain the necessity of avoiding, as far as possible, such irreversible methods, the use of which would mean that no further action could be taken in the future when better methods may have been evolved, or if further deterioration should have occurred.

No better guide among those problems could have been chosen than Dr. Agnes Geijer, spokesman for the reversibel methods.[2] She emphaized the importance of leaving the door open for the future, not least for the benefit of renewed research. During the thirty years or so that she has been directing 'Pietas', work has been carried out in Stockholm under her supervision that is the equal of anything done in any other part of the world.

Dr. J. E. Leene, leader of the Laboratory of Textile Technology, Technische Hogeschool, Delft, The Netherlands, presented a report of her investigations in which she described the results obtained by impregnating fragile material with various compounds, but admitted that no fully satisfactory solution had yet been found. Some of the consolidants used, although soluble at the time, change in character with the passage of time and cannot be easily removed at a later date.[3]

As the time for the Rome Conference drew near, Dr. Geijer felt it would be inadvisable for her to make the trip, and asked the present writer to present her views. Due to the excellence of the standards maintained by Dr. Geijer, this honour was a pleasure, and her views were both presented and defended during the discussion following the panel. Two other delegates

[2] Jfr A. Geijer, "Farliga konserveringsmetoder" och "Modocoll som prepareringsmedel för textilier" (Svenska Museer 1959, 3—4, och 1961; engelsk översättning i stencil: "Dangerous Methods for the Conservation of Textiles" and "Modocoll as a Preservative for Textiles and Other Fragile Materials") samt den i UNESCO:s tidskrift MUSEUM publicerade artikeln om textilkonservering, i lätt omskrivning i Svenska Museer 1962: 3.

[3] Jfr de i föregående not citerade artiklarna.

were also on the panel. Miss Louisa Bellinger of the Textile Museum of the District of Columbia, Washington, gave a report of the behaviour of fibres in the various steps involved in washing fabrics, and Mr. E. R. Beecher, of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, gave a report on a method of backing fragile materials.[4] Both added considerably to the interest of the meeting.

Following the Rome Conference, the regular meetings of Centre International d'Etude des Textiles Anciens were held in Lyon. On the second day, two short papers were presented on the washing and conservation of tapestries. One was given by Senhora Donna Taxhina of Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon, in which she described their methods of washing, and the extent and manner in which the problem of re-weaving was handled. The other was given by Mlle. Diehl of the Haarlem Workshop, The Netherlands, in which the major emphasis was on restoration. The two views presented are typical of the divergence in the field of textile conservation today. In Lisbon, weak parts are strengthened and missing parts are re-woven in a neutral colour that can always be distinguished from the original yarns used. In Haarlem, on the other hand, after full photography and after detailed notes have been made, all silk and all dark colours are removed and replaced, while any missing sections are re-designed in the spirit of the original and entirely re-woven. Although the result of this latter work is aesthetically pleasing, it is no longer possible for the art historian and student to be certain what parts of the tapestries are original and what are replacements: their value as historical documents is seriously lessened if not lost.

The results of these meetings were beneficial to all those that could attend, and emphasize the importance and the necessity of fuller contact between those actively working in the field of conservation as well as with and among art historians and students of ancient textiles."

Så långt vår kanadensiske kollega. Det kan tilläggas att ytterligare en "panel speaker" från Skandinavien hade inbjudits till Rom: Anna Rosenqvist, Oslo, Oldsaksamlingens konservator, som talade om "New methods for the consolidation of fragile objects—wood, ivory, metals etc.". Från Danmark och Norge voro många deltagare anmälda; från Sverige deltog fem, samtliga specialiserade på tavelkonservering (K. G. Hedén från Göteborgs Konstmuseum, S. Sörman, Konstakademien, G. Schiller och B. Titov från Nationalmuseum samt H. Kristenson, Örebro Museum). I sammanhanget kan det vara anledning fästa uppmärksamheten vid det betydelsefulla norska initiativet att inbjuda professor Coremans från Bryssel för att informera i konserveringsfrågor.[5]

Om intresse för textilkonservering vittnar en inbjudan till undertecknad

[4] Se Svenska Museer 1962: 3.

[5] Utförlig redogörelse i Meddelelser fra Norsk Kunsthistorisk Forening III: 2, 1961.

att deltaga i ICOM Comity's möte i Barcelona, anordnat i direkt anslutning till Romkongressen, liksom studiebesök i Stockholm av flera personer, som varit speciellt inriktade på att studera riksantikvarieämbetets textilkonserveringsanstalt och diskutera olika hithörande problem. Sommaren 1961 kom bl. a. Dr Leene och ingenjör Lodewijks från Tekniska Högskolan i Delft och nu i vår deras landsman, miss J. M. Balkenstein vid Dräktmuseet i Haag, den senare för att förbereda en konferens rörande textilkonservering inom ramen för den ICOM-kongress, som denna gång förlagts till Holland.

I sammanhanget bör också nämnas ett betydande amerikanskt företag, en verklig högskola för utbildning av konservatorer, vilken nyligen startats inom ramen för the New York University Institute of Fine Arts — även före den definitiva starten, hösten 1960, stödd med betydande bidrag från Rockefeller Foundation. Undervisningen är både konsthistorisk och naturvetenskaplig och bygger på en intim samverkan mellan specialister från olika amerikanska forskningsinstitut. Grundutbildningen omfattar i princip fyra år, vartill beräknas ytterligare praktik. Som "Administration Officer" för detta "Conservation Center" har utsetts Mr Lawrence Majewski. Han är både kemist och konsthistoriker och har tidigare bl. a. tjänstgjort som chef för det amerikansk-bysantinska institutet i Istanbul. Vid ett besök sommaren 1961 på vår textilavdelning, uttalade han sin uppskattning av de här tillämpade arbetsprinciperna — vetenskaplig analysering och dokumentering i direkt samband med det praktiska konserveringsarbetet — vilka han betecknade som förebildliga för all konserveringsverksamhet.

A. G-r

LITTERATUR OCH KRITIK

W. F. GRIMES: *Excavations on Defence Sites 1939—1945.* I. Mainly Neolithic-Bronze Age. Ministry of Work. Archaeological Reports No. 3. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London 1960. 259 s., 48 planscher och 102 textfig.

Som framgår redan av bokens titel redovisas här undersökningar av de fornlämningar — mest gravhögar — som hotades av total förstörelse vid utbyggnaden av örikets försvarslinje under andra världskriget. Trots att dessa undersökningar skedde under svåra förhållanden och inte sällan i tidsnöd, har utgrävningsledaren, London-professorn Grimes, ändå lyckats genomföra dem på ett föredömligt sätt.

I England liksom på andra håll i Europa har man vid tidigare undersökningar av stenkammargravar nöjt sig med att undersöka endast valda delar av dessa monument, i huvudsak kammaren och förgården, samt dra upp några provschakt för att i stora drag fastställa högens uppbyggnad, dess yttre kontur m. m. Inte sällan har samma gravhög "bitvis" undersökts i flera omgångar och av olika forskare. Grimes beslöt sig emellertid att frångå den tidigare praktiserade metoden och undersökte i stället monumenten i dess helhet. Detta visade sig vara synnerligen värdefullt. Han gjorde en hel