Trends in Scandinavian Cultural Heritage Management in the 2000s

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Abstract
Since the 1990s Scandinavian countries have been adjusting the way they manage their cultural heritage and development-led archaeology. They align it based on the nations' political beliefs, as well as pan-European legislation. Out of the Scandinavian countries Sweden has implemented the most radical and modernistic reforms. Although it is unclear whether these reforms have been entirely successful, many Scandinavian countries continue to introduce change. This paper addresses some of the new trends, and analyses their effect on Scandinavian archaeology as a scientific discipline. Theoretical trends that undermine the importance of humans usually enhance the role political directives play in shaping Scandinavian archaeology. Archaeological engagement with politics on a national level is of major importance for the future of European Archaeology.

Keywords: *Scandinavian archaeology, cultural heritage management, development-led archaeology, privatisation of archaeology*

The Honourable Tradition of Heritage Management Under Pressure

One of the remarkable aspects of early Scandinavian archaeology was its strong legislation for protecting archaeological monuments and objects to ensure they would be available for research at museums and universities (Trøim 1999). Cultural heritage management was primarily a tool for archaeology as a scientific discipline and not as a political domain.

In the last decades of the twentieth century cultural heritage management in Scandinavian countries has increasingly come under political control (Andersson, et al. 2010). Heritage as a source for public experience, recreation and identity has gained more importance over heritage as a source of research material. Heritage management is commonly considered as a means to increase economic growth and the quality of public life or as a cultural framework for other societal activities.

Another common tendency is the expanding divide between archaeological research and public management of heritage resources (Kallhovd 2006).

Scandinavian countries have all faced variable developments. Sweden, with its seemingly most progressive state organization, privatized archaeological excavations and made development-led archaeology subject to competitive tendering (SOU 2005: 80). In Norway and Denmark public museums are still mostly conducting the development-led excavations inside their defined museum districts or public administrative borders.

Increasing Political Division and Control

Changes in heritage management and development-led archaeology have continued throughout the twenty-first century. There are two factors of crucial importance in this transformation. The first one is the conscious de-nationalization of Scandinavian archaeology. Both scholars and politicians have contributed to this actively. Throughout their research scholars of archaeology have emphasized concepts of diversity, shifting ethnic identities, plurality, and the importance of interregional developments. Publication strategies at universities and museums favour international journals as opposed to local journals and books in Scandinavian languages, which leads to the growth of international perspectives and agendas. Furthermore, they have formed a critical attitude toward the political use of archaeological research in national or colonial projects (Gustafsson & Karlsson 2011). Nationalistic archaeology is no longer considered as an acceptable research strategy.

At the same time, however, politicians have worked eagerly to incorporate archaeology and cultural heritage into local identity. Selected sites and monuments

have been chosen as scenes or tools for creating identity and social cohesion. Local museums and initiatives have been prioritized over national undertakings. The European Union has contributed positively to this trend in several ways: financially and ideologically it has done so by shifting focus from the national to the international. To some degree it has also contributed to a homogenized heritage legislation based on pan-European legislation (e.g. the Valetta Treaty from 1992). National solutions are currently not as attractive as European solutions.

The second important factor is how politics have increasingly influenced the academic environment, and particularly the academic interest in cultural heritage management, as well as the scientific potential of development-led archaeology. Legislation in Scandinavian countries obliges the developer to pay for the expenses connected to rescue archaeologican abuse this institute. A common solution has been to make a clear division between research and management, as well to turn over development-led archaeology to political control.

Decision-making Institutions in Scandinavian Heritage Management

Scandinavian countries have appointed the decision-making process regarding heritage management to various organizations. In Sweden the County administration referred to as Länsstyrelsen (County Governor) is the local state authority that manages decision-making regarding development-led archaeology. In Denmark Slots-og Kulturstyrelsen (The Agency of Culture and Palaces) has the same function, and in Norway the task is delegated to Riksantikvaren (Directorate for Cultural Heritage).

There are, however, small yet important differences between these organizations. The Länsstyrelsen in Sweden is a de-centralized government organ. This means local political concerns are often at stake, which contributes to the de-nationalization of Swedish archaeology. The value of local investigated heritage is given priority. Excavations in Sweden are carried out by local museums, privatised firms, and by a newly created excavation unit from the national museum in Stockholm. The different organisations all compete for excavation assignments. Some of the private firms and the excavating unit of the national museum compete for assignments throughout the country. Most units, however, operate on a local scale. The national museum, which is directly financed by the Ministry of Culture, has a privileged position concerning finds of national importance. The majority of finds from excavations performed by local museums and firms are however not considered as heritage of national importance.

In Denmark, The Agency of Culture and Palaces is a national directorate under the Ministry of Culture, which ensures cultural heritage management remains in line with national standards and views. Local museums are responsible for effectuating

the decisions of the directorate concerning development-led excavations. Danish museums are only considered *state-recognized museums* if they live up to certain quality requirements. These include the state of collections and exhibitions, as well as whether or not they can match sufficient research standards. The requirements are partially funded by the local municipality and partially by the Ministry of Culture. Having dual patrons, they often find themselves struggling between delivering a national standard or going against the local authorities, as well as how to remain loyal to their local patrons. It is often the local municipality that funds most of the basic activity museums execute. The presence of 27 state-recognized archaeological museums leads to a rather decentralised structure. This generates local variations within the framework of the national standard, specifically in terms of excavation, and management and research focus. The National Museum of Denmark is funded directly by the state and is considered the parent museum. It often takes in the most precious finds with significance that is above-regional. It also takes in all notable detector finds and coins that are considered of national value (*Danefæ*).

In Norway, The Directorate for Cultural Heritage is placed under the Ministry of Climate and Environment. There are five university museums in five museum districts, which are responsible for development-led excavations. In addition, the excavations in medieval towns are temporarily delegated to the Norwegian Institute of Cultural Heritage Research (NIKU) and three other museums that are not a part of the university structure, and have responsibilities for archaeological excavations. The Norwegian system of cultural heritage management probably represents the most centralized system because it is only divided into five museum districts. There is no parent museum in Norway. Instead, the five university museums function as decentralised national museums. This is a virtue in Norway's system for heritage management and development-led archaeology. In addition, some strong advantages include the integration of development-led archaeology into universities' research portfolios, their collection management, and their education (Glørstad & Kallhovd 2011; 2013; Glørstad 2010; Ravn 2013).

New Trends in Scandinavian Heritage Management

Certain trends become apparent while analysing the three national aspects of heritage management. One common inclination visible in the twenty-first century is to divide cultural heritage management into two levels: a generalized national level closely connected to legislation and internationalization, and a local level responsible for the day-to-day management of heritage. This is not a unique model for cultural heritage management, but rather a standard bureaucratic solution to the

challenge of balancing local and national interests and activities. The willingness to delegate decision-making to a lower or more local administrative level is inversely proportional to the considered importance of the field in question. In other words, the importance of archaeology is gradually decreasing in Scandinavian countries. Although it is a general feature of modern Scandinavian states, the idea of delegating decision-making to a local administrative level can potentially erode the system's original intentions of using it as a beneficial tool for archaeological research. On a practical level, national legislation and policy outlining have a lesser effect in a decentralized system of decision-making. Sweden and Norway are good examples of this trend.

Case Study, Sweden

The privatization of Swedish archaeology at the end of the 1990s fragmented the system of development-led archaeology in several ways. An evaluation from 2014 documented substantial regional differences, even though this practice is expected to follow a national standard (RAÄ 2014). As an attempt to counteract this tendency, the Riksantikvarieämbetet (Swedish National Heritage Board) has been redesigned into a directorate for the Ministry of Culture, quite similar to the Norwegian Riksantikvar function. However, the effect of this reform can be questioned because the actual decision-making process in development-led archaeology will still be appointed to the different counties across Sweden.

The Swedish reform has revealed some dysfunctionality in the present system. In order to recreate the Riksantikvarieämbetet as a directorate, the excavating units of this institution were moved to the National Museum of Sweden. At first glance, this seems to be a good solution; museum activities such as research, systematic collection development, and public outreach through exhibitions and curating can be strategically combined with development-led archaeology. In this way, the original intentions of cultural heritage management as a tool for scientific archaeology can be recreated. However, the fact that development-led archaeology is subject to competitive tendering prevents the National Museum of Sweden from benefitting from the reorganisation. Merging museum activities and research with development-led archaeology would be an unacceptable competitive advantage, and cannot be allowed in the market system. The administration of development-led archaeology must be strictly separated from the rest of the museum, thus unintentionally preventing any creative or efficient synergies from arising.

These are practical implications of a market-driven ideology combined with the political desire to prevent the scholarly temptation of viewing development-led

archaeology as a tool for producing knowledge – which is the original intention of cultural heritage management.

Case Study, Norway

The Norwegian example has a different starting point, but may lead to the same results as the case in Sweden. Norwegian development-led archaeology is not organised in a market system. Consequently, there has been an urgent political agenda to ensure that public institutions do not abuse the organization of development-financed excavations. Institutions must ensure that the developer pays for no more than a strict rescue of the archaeological source material, which otherwise would have been lost.

This has been achieved by dividing the tasks of cultural heritage management between three types of institutions. The county administration is responsible for archaeologically surveying the areas under development, and to assess the range of conflict between the development plans and archaeological monuments. The university museums are responsible for evaluating the scientific value of the monuments threatened by planned development, and to present project plans and budgets for rescuing these monuments in case development plans are realised. Riksantikvaren (Directorate of Cultural Heritage) is responsible for making decisions on whether development plans should be allowed, and whether the rescue plans suggested by the museum are reliable. This way there are no conflicting roles in the management system.

However, transforming the Riksantikvaren into an updated modern directorate under the Ministry of Climate and Environment clashes with its role as an archaeological decision-maker in development plans. A more essential legislative and policy-making role is suggested for the future. There are various reasons that museums cannot take over the decision-making role. The only solution is to delegate this function to county administration as the regional political authority.

This development represents a potential conflict of interest. Counties have an immediate interest in local jobs and tax incomes. They could weaken the national system of cultural heritage management and undermine scholarly influence on the system in favour of a stronger political influence. It seems as though local and regional development in economy and infrastructure will always be considered more important than archaeology and heritage. Many politicians and developers believe that paying for the development-led excavations is too heavy of an economic burden, even though the costs of archaeological excavations seldom exceed 2-3% of the total budget. The result of the reform will be that the academic and scholarly engagement in archaeology as an academic practice will move further away from the most important institutional means of acquiring new knowledge and data through development-led archaeology.

A clear trend of the twenty-first century is therefore a growing divide between academic archaeology and cultural heritage management. This erodes the pillar of the strong Scandinavian archaeological tradition. It can also jeopardize the tight connection that exists between archaeological education and training, and cultural heritage management.

The Role of the Scholar

The growing division between academic archaeology and development-led archaeology cannot be considered solely as a politically driven process. It is also intimately connected to the theoretical developments within the discipline. The relations between archaeological theories and society at large have been analysed and discussed by scholars on numerous occasions (e.g. Shanks & Tilley 1987; Trigger 1989). There is, however, a marked unease in analyses that focus on the relations between archaeology as part of a larger social fabric, i.e. archaeology as a means of subsistence, and archaeology as a theoretical and scientific discipline. On one hand archaeology is structured as a choice out of necessity, and on the other as a pathway to knowledge. This double truth about archaeology is crucial to understanding its function in a wider social setting (Bourdieu 2000).

The anti-nationalist and anti-colonial theories developed in the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century are essential to archaeological theory discussion (e.g. Wobst & Smith 2005). The movements evolved in line with growing anti-humanism beliefs in archaeology, and the fascination with different structural and post-structural theories (e.g. Tilley 1991). Paradoxically, this perspective facilitated a stronger belief in the individual, and a greater interest in the individuals of the past. This combination of enhanced emphasis on anti-humanism and individuality has made way for a strong disbelief in social perspectives and collective solutions. Individuality is no longer reserved only for humans. Objects, animals, and places have individual features as well. Consequently, humans must be placed in a web of material and living relations, where matter, animals, and humans equally contribute to the trajectories of history. Hence the individual's ability to imprint this entanglement – whether human, animal or matter – defines the uniqueness of the situation in question, but does not define any real option for systematic changes. Individuals stand on their own with a background of prefixed social-material relations. In this way, post-structuralism disfavours the belief in the ability of humans and groups to change their terms of existence; rather, they are considered functions of a larger structure. Individualisation disagrees with the belief in the social group and redefines reality as a private or singular concern.

It is apparent that the full effect of the commercialisation of archaeology in Europe coincides with the breakthrough of theories downplaying the impact of the individual. This created a comforting buffer for scholars who did not want to fight for the original unity between academic archaeology and development-led archaeology in Scandinavian countries. Archaeologists were best off focusing on the ontology of the past and the career opportunities of the present inside a strictly defined university system.

At first glance, this argument can be seen as naïve or stunted because the relations between archaeological thinking and contemporary social relations are not causal or direct. However, it is pertinent to recall an argument of Pierre Bourdieu, which he mentions in his analysis of the political ontology of Martin Heidegger (Bourdieu 1991); he clearly demonstrates that Heidegger's scholarly *habitus* was structured by the social-political relations of early twentieth-century Germany. His impact as a philosopher was strongly influenced by his ability to mobilize the individual experience of social insecurity in a philosophical setting. This had a recursive effect on political thought because his thinking appealed to and mobilised these two social fields simultaneously. It is not unlikely that our present era's fascination with desirable objects, such as with certain individuals or pets, is nothing but a social manifestation of the same disposition apparent in post-humanistic thought. The same disposition is mobilised in two different social fields: the field of consumption and the field of academia (also confer Bauman 2007).

The need to engage in the political shaping of modern archaeology cannot be underestimated. The good intentions of cultural heritage management and the original definition of development-led archaeology in Scandinavia as tools for archaeological research and knowledge production were not created by chance or by visionary politicians. They were the direct product of the scholars' engagement in political processes in the twentieth century.

Today Scandinavian cultural heritage management and development-led archaeology face great challenges due to changes in political thinking and ideologies. From a scholarly perspective it may seem like this has little to do with archaeology as a scientific discipline or as a subject of university research. However, development-led archaeology is the most important source of new data sets in archaeology, and it enables us to write new histories and different pasts. Excavations are meaningless if not guided by academic principles and goals. Knowledge production must guide development-led excavations—or else they are little more than treasure hunts and penance. The future of cultural heritage management and development-led archaeology should be a concern to us all.

University scholars should feel the obligation to address the issues of political distrust toward academia. When faced with the ghost of the Danish king, Shakespeare's

Marcellus from *Hamlet* says: *"Thou art a scholar. Speak to it, Horatio"*. As scholars, we should feel that same obligation. If we are not able or willing to defend the value of development-led archaeology for the discipline at large, who else will?

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