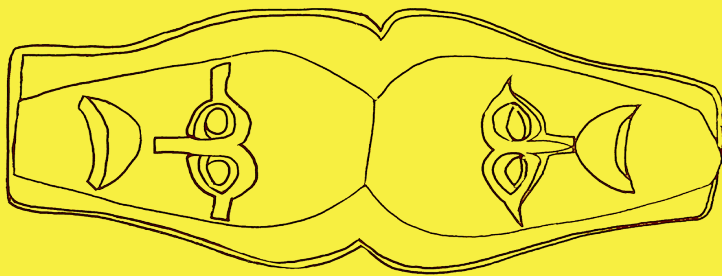


Change

The Shift from the Early to Late
Scandinavian Iron Age
in the First Millennium AD



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Neue Studien zur Sachsenforschung Band 13

herausgegeben vom
Braunschweigischen Landesmuseum

in Verbindung mit dem
Internationalen Sachsensymposium

durch
Babette Ludowici

Change
The Shift from the Early to Late
Scandinavian Iron Age
in the First Millennium AD

herausgegeben von
Torun Zachrisson & Svante Fischer

Alle Beiträge wurden einem Verfahren zur Qualitätssicherung unterzogen

Umschlaggestaltung: Svante Fischer

Satz und Layout: Barbro Björnemalm, Stiftelsen Upplandsmuseet

Redaktion: Torun Zachrisson und Svante Fischer

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek: Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

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Druck: By Wind, Ödeshög, Sweden

ISBN: 978-91-86145-46-0

Vorwort

'Change' was the overall theme for the 69th International Sachsen Symposium held at Stockholm University, 15-19 September 2018. The papers focused on various transformations from the Roman Iron Age and Migration Period to the Vendel Period and the Viking Age. During this time, different types and patterns of transformation in society were accompanied by dramatic climactic events in the form of several volcanic eruptions and a major pandemic. The combined effects brought about changes in the environment and landscape. This is witnessed especially in eastern Scandinavia during the mid-sixth century, which was a turbulent period that also saw a restructuring of supra-regional networks.

Workshop

Before the actual symposium began, 35 of the participants attended a scientific workshop on ancient DNA at the Archaeological Research Laboratory of Stockholm University. The workshop was chaired by the project managers of the ATLAS/1000 genome projects: Professor Mattias Jakobsson, Genetics, Uppsala University, Professor Anders Götherström, Archaeological Research Laboratory, Stockholm University, and Professor Jan Storå, Osteology, Stockholm University, who all shared their experiences in the field. Mattias Jakobsson first presented an overview of the basics of genetics and inheritance. Anders Götherström followed with a discussion of the last fifteen years of progress in archaeogenetics, presenting some case studies from different time periods and contexts. Finally, Jan Storå presented a discussion on ethical aspects in the research field.

The conference

The conference was officially opened by Stockholm University Rector Astrid Söderbergh Widding, who offered a perspective on interdisciplinary studies, followed by Professor Anders Andrén, introducing the Department of Archaeology and Classical Studies at

Stockholm University, and finally a welcome from the chair of the Sachsen Symposium, Professor Claus von Carnap-Bornheim, Zentrum für Baltische und Skandinavische Archäologie, Schleswig.

The first keynote lecture, 'A tree-ring perspective on the Late Antique Little Ice Age, 536 to c. 660 CE' was given by Professor Ulf Büntgen, Cambridge University / Swiss Federal Research Institute, providing an overview of the principles and methods of the modern, interdisciplinary-oriented research on annual growth rings in trees. He then presented the newly reconstructed climate changes that occurred during the first millennium, in both Europe and Asia. Two dendro-climatological examples from the Russian Altai and the European Alps were used to demonstrate the ability of annual ring width and variability in composite time series combining live and dead tree samples grown at high altitude, near the tree line, to reconstruct summer temperature variations during the last two millennia. These new data reveal the unprecedented, long-lasting, and spatially synchronized cooling that took place after a cluster of large volcanic eruptions that occurred in AD 536, 540, and 547, likely maintaining rising sea levels, sea ice, and the atmosphere, concurrent with distinctly low solar activity. The interval from AD 536 to about 660 has therefore been called the 'Late Antique Little Ice Age (LALIA)'. It coincided with the rise and fall of civilizations, with pandemics, human migration, and political unrest across much of Eurasia.

The following session highlighted climate change and transformation through papers covering themes such as the sixth-century crisis in 'The Barbarian hinterland' and its roots in changes in the fourth century, illustrated through archaeological material, as well as how analyses of ancient DNA in bacteria have demonstrated that plague bacteria were present in several of the individuals buried in graveyards in southern Germany, thus demonstrating that the 'Justinian' bubonic plague had reached further north than known from historical sources. The effect of environmental changes on a local level was also discussed, for example, in an Iron Age settlement in southern Norway, as well as in the change and con-

tinuity between the fifth and eighth centuries seen in the light of the Danevirke, the large fortification rampart built across southern Jutland. Other topics discussed were changing settlement structures, trade, and society, as well as the rise of ports-of-trade (emporium), and urbanization.

The next session focused on change in material culture and settlement, and covered a range of topics from those focusing on cultural, territorial, and landscape dynamic changes in the Old Prussian lands during the first millennium, via material traces of warlike events in Jutland, Denmark reflected in sacrificial sites and settlements, to an early Viking Age woman's grave in Norway within a European context.

The second keynote lecture was given by the English historian Peter Frankopan, Oxford University. He addressed changes in society during the long sixth century, as well as in the global networks, in relation to eastern connections and the role of Byzantium. The ensuing session consisted of papers on changes in material culture. The topics included the new military structure established in the seventh century in southern Scandinavia; a massacre at a ring-fort in southern Öland in the late fifth century; Scandinavians and Scandinavian influences between the rivers Oder and Vistula during the Roman Iron Age and Migration Period; changes in the sixth century seen in the light of the animal bone material from Helgö; the central place of Åker in Norway which survived the great change; and the rise and fall of pottery production in Norway from the fourth century to the sixth century.

The conference ended with a session on the world of ideas, religion, and politics, with papers that highlighted changes in art, pre-Christian religion, and craft production, and bridged over to the Viking Age. At the beginning of the conference there was a poster session with themes such as change and continuity in settlement and land use in central Sweden, the rise of the Northumbrian kingdom AD 300-800, body postures in graves in Anglo-Saxon England, burial landscapes and identities beyond ethnic and religious 'labels', and sacrificing near the coast in Iron Age Denmark; finally, a book launch also took place. The conference concluded with Professor Emeritus Barbara Yorke, Winchester University, who provided a summary and reflections on the conference theme and the program of the previous days.

In all, the conference consisted of two keynote lectures, 31 papers, and seven posters, and took place in Aula Magna at Stockholm University. A total of 96 participants attended from universities, re-

search centres and museums in Denmark, Norway, Finland, Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Switzerland, Poland, the USA, and Sweden. In addition to this, attendees included several doctoral students, and colleagues from both the Department of Archaeology and Ancient Culture and the Department of History at Stockholm University.

We are very pleased with the outcome of the conference, which provided a plethora of interdisciplinary perspectives. Many of the conference participants have contributed to the resulting volume, along with two additional papers. As the keynote speakers were not able to contribute to this volume, we decided to add an article by Maria Riep of Leiden University, on the relationship between Al-Shah and Scandinavia from a long-term perspective. This provides an eastern view, along with an article on grave openings in the fifth century AD in Romania, which together enrich the theme.

The excursion

The aim of the excursion, which took place after the first day of papers, was to highlight the theme of change in the sixth century in Uppland. It included three locations that all connect to important questions presented by the keynote speakers and several of the papers, and which were brought up during the introductory aDNA workshop. The first stop was the ancient fortification of Runsa, one of the largest hill-fort settlements in Sweden, with its large stone walls, ruins of a hall building, and smaller terraces on what was once an island in the main waterway towards Old Uppsala. A guided tour of the excavations by late Associate Professor Michael Olausson showed the traces of the destruction in the late sixth and early seventh centuries that marked the end of Runsa as an important ceremonial and political site. The deliberate arson and destruction of not only the ceremonial building but all the constructions on the site must be understood against the background of the transformation of the sixth century.

In Gamla Uppsala, the participants were guided in groups by the project managers for the latest major commissioned archaeological project, Anton Seiler and Lena Beronius Jörpeland, archaeologists and scholars themselves, around the various parts which were investigated. John Ljungkvist, Associate Professor at Uppsala University and project manager for the research project *Gamla Uppsala - a mythical centre*, also offered a guided tour of the latest excavations of the hall plateaus of the royal seat of

Gamla Uppsala and the kings' burial mounds. The relationship between several elements of the royal court complex, such as the monumental burial mounds, the great hall, the workshops, the farm buildings, fences, paved surfaces, pole monuments, and adjacent settlement and landscape development was presented. The Gamla Uppsala museum exhibition was also open to the conference participants. Then followed a visit to the famous boat burial ground of Valsgårde, established in the same period as the monuments in Gamla Uppsala (550-600). The excursion ended in the city of Uppsala, the successor of Gamla Uppsala, further downstream on the Fyris River, where archaeologist, county antiquarian Roger Edenmo, Uppsala County, gave a brief overview of Uppsala Castle and the site's early history.

During the excursion and conference dinner at the Swedish History Museum in downtown Stockholm, the participants were guided by colleagues from the Swedish History Museum and by archaeologists at the Department of Archaeology at Uppsala University, Uppsala County, Old Uppsala Museum, and the Runsa research project. The conference dinner was held at the Swedish History Museum; the evening began with a guided tour of the Gold Room led by Associate Professor Kent Andersson, head of the museum's collections, followed by dinner in the baroque hall.

The conference became the fruitful mix between natural sciences and humanities that we had hoped for. The varied program with a field trip and visits to Uppsala Castle and the Swedish History Museum, where the participants were guided by skilled colleagues, researchers themselves, all contributed to the social aspect of the program, which gave ample opportunities for the participants to chat casually, gain new insights into material culture and landscapes, and establish new networks.

We would like to thank the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, the Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy for Swedish Folk Culture, and the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation for their financial support without which the conference could not have been held. Adding a keynote paper subsequent to the conference has prolonged the preparation of the volume for publication, and we are truly grateful for the authors' patience. We would also like to thank Kristin Bornholdt Collins for improving the English, Barbro Björnemalm for her work with the layout, and finally the main editor Babette Ludowici for publishing this book.

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Inhalt

<i>Maria Riep</i>	11
Scandinavia and Chach: Between spheres of influence and local strategies from the third century to the eighth century	
I Climate change and transformation	
<i>Bartosz Konny</i>	29
Roots of later turbulence? The barbarian hinterland and crisis of the third century in the light of archaeology. A Central European perspective	
<i>Doris Gutsmedl-Schümann</i>	41
The Early Medieval plague pandemic and its appearance in the archaeological record of Merovingian cemeteries: examples from modern day Bavaria	
<i>Thorsten Lemm</i>	59
The 'tip of the iceberg' – continuity and change between the fifth and eighth centuries in the hinterland of the Danevirke	
<i>Volker Hilberg and Sven Kalmring</i>	85
On the Origins of Viking Towns: the Earliest Evidence from Birka and Hedeby	
II Change in material culture and settlement	
<i>Pernille Kruse</i>	119
Rise and Fall – settlement evidence in the region of Ejsbøl Mose, southern Jutland, Denmark	
<i>Karin Lindeblad and Maria Petersson</i>	133
The Migration Period Crisis – Change and Continuity in Local Society	
<i>Wojciech Nowakowski</i>	151
Von den <i>Galindai</i> zu den <i>Galinditae</i> : Kontinuität oder zwei Umbrüche? Ein Hauptproblem der altpreußischen Archäologie des ersten Jahrtausends	
<i>Alpár Dobos and Alison Klevnäs</i>	161
Grave reopening in the 5th century AD: new evidence from Ernei-Köles-kert, Romania	
<i>Michael Olausson (†), Andrea Olausson, Björn Hjulström and Svante Fischer</i>	171
The Rise and Fall of a Migration Period Hilltop Settlement: Runsa Borg, Ed parish (Uppland, Sweden)	

III	Change in material culture	
	<i>Ingunn M. Røstad</i>	183
	Continuity in times of change: The Iron Age centre at Åker in Hedmark	
	<i>Sami Raninen and Ulla Moilanen</i>	197
	An equal-armed relief brooch from Sastamala – a glimpse of the Finnish Migration Period in the shadow of Helgö	
	<i>Nancy L. Wicker</i>	209
	Changes in Imagery, Techniques, and Artistic Modes of Representation from the Early to Late Iron Age in Scandinavia	
	<i>Bettina Stolle</i>	223
	Use, refuse, and transformation at Iron Age Helgö: The deposition of faunal remains at Terrace IV in the light of contextual taphonomy	
IV	Realm of ideas – religion and politics	
	<i>Elna Siv Kristoffersen and Unn Pedersen</i>	241
	A close-up view: Animal art and crafts in times of change	
	<i>Alexandra Pesch and Michaela Helmbrecht</i>	253
	Surviving the crisis: gold foil figures as evidence of cultural and religious reorganization	
	<i>Birgitta Hårdh</i>	271
	Silver rings and marten skins – Contacts between the Volga Region and the Baltic in the early Viking Age	
	<i>Johan Hoorne, Rica Annaert, Brigitte Cooremans, Koen Deforce, Anton Ervynck, Kristof Haneca, Nele Heynssens and An Lentacker</i>	281
	An enigmatic eighth/ninth-century deposition at Gentbrugge (Ghent, Flanders, Belgium): pre-Christian traditions surviving Christianization?	
	<i>Ulrich Lehmann</i>	295
	Ulfberht's innovation – the transition from pattern-welded to all-steel blades in early medieval Europe and its possible causes	