

The choices made by the conservator during the conservation process are as important in the making of history as any decision made by the archaeologist, the museum curator, historian etc. How can and should the practice of conservation contribute to the common goal of communicating the past?

Our ways of communicating the past are affected by numeral elements. The process of selection of artefacts by the archaeologist during fieldwork, as well as the choices made in the subsequent conservation process greatly affect which and how the stories of the past are mediated in the present as well as in the future.

As Swedish legislation emphasizes the need for communicating archaeology already at the stage of contract archaeology, it is a time to also re-assess the role of the conservator in communicating the past.

#### The aim of the research project

Traditionally archaeological collections are constituted by the products of careful selection (one way or another). During the 19th and 20th century archaeological excavations were primarily comprised of specific research questions. For decades now however, the gross of new museum acquisitions consist of the accumulated products from field work initiated by development projects for infrastructure, housing, etc. How does this affect archaeological collections and our ways of communicating the past to the public? And how can we ensure that the selected material is of relevance for society today?

# THE MAKING OF HISTORY

OR THE SYNERGY EFFECT BETWEEN  
CONTRACT ARCHAEOLOGY  
THE CONSERVATION INSTITUTE  
AND MUSEUMS

As a part of this research project I aim to address the issue of the role of archaeological conservation in the communication of the material heritage. How can a synergy effect through collaboration between Contract Archaeology, the Conservation Institute and the receiving Museum be reached?

#### Method

Through interdisciplinary research on the topics of among others Conservation, Archaeology, Museology, Cultural Heritage studies, and Intermedia the synergy effect of collaboration between the involved partners is being studied. The marketing activities of the ongoing archaeological investigations of the area of Nya Lödöse in Gothenburg, Sweden will serve as a case study.

#### Expected results

A deeper understanding to the roles and possibilities of each partner involved in the making of history is needed in order to improve collaboration between these. This will not only optimize the use of resources available, it will also aid the targeting to a wider public with more differentiated focus groups through mediation of socially relevant topics. This will be of assistance in our work on making and keeping history relevant.

## GRASCA GRAduate School in Contract Archaeology

[www.lnu.se/grasca](http://www.lnu.se/grasca)

GRASCA is the initiative of Linnaeus University in Kalmar, Sweden. Supported by the Knowledge Foundation, and in collaboration with four Swedish Companies in Contract Archaeology or associated fields of Competence, the Graduate School supports eight PhD students as of November 2015. The supporting companies are Studio Västsvensk Konservering in Gothenburg, Bohusläns Museum in Uddevalla, Jamtli i Östersund, and Kalmar läns museum/Museiarkeologi Sydost in Kalmar.

In recent years the entire sector has undergone comprehensive changes in the way the aims for Contract Archaeology in society are defined. Bids for contracts are increasingly being evaluated in relation to their societal impact. GRASCA will strengthen the knowledge base and increase company proficiencies focusing on advancing knowledge and competencies through research in those areas that have become critical for successful bidding, related to the academic fields of public archaeology, conservation, heritage studies and public history. As a result of their participation the involved companies will obtain an increased competitiveness which provides them with a unique opportunity to develop a leading role in Swedish Contract Archaeology and the associated Academic Field of Archaeological Conservation.

## Studio Västsvensk Konservering (SVK)

[www.svk.com](http://www.svk.com), [www.vastarvet.se](http://www.vastarvet.se)

SVK is the largest Conservation Studio in Sweden. The studio offers a wide range of services in the field of conservation of contemporary, historical and archaeological artefacts. With 16 conservators specialized in different disciplines SVK is unique in its kind. We offer long term strategies for the management and use of cultural environments as well as hands on conservation and restoration of historical and archaeological artefacts, environments and public art. Specially developed studios are set up with advanced technical equipment in order to facilitate the national and international demands on professional conservation as expressed by E.C.C.O. and ICOM.

SVK is run by Västarevet, the county organization for cultural heritage in Västra Götaland. We are a proud participant of the GRASCA project.



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