

*Lennart Edlund*

**ON CHANGES IN  
CULTURAL HERITAGE  
MANAGEMENT  
ON GOTLAND BACKGROUND**

The Swedish model of cultural heritage management has undergone a series of great changes during the past 25 years. Moving from bureaucracy to hierarchy and to expert market, we now find ourselves in the process of development where terms such as democracy, participation, people and international perspectives are at the centre of focus. This is no coincidence but rather a result of trends and general social development that have been taking place in Sweden as well as entire Europe.

**THE NON-SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVE**

This article is not based on scientific research at all. Instead, it presents highly personal reflections on 25 years (and perhaps, too many) that I have spent in the field. However, I hope the value and insight of my experience will outweigh any shortcomings.

Why have I decided to communicate my experience? Hopefully, it can give young talented architects and students some perspective on their own work that involves the contemporary cultural heritage management. Alternatively, it is a purely selfish idea and the beginning of my legacy. Like others at my age, I would like to sum up the results of my effort and, at the same

time, observe with greed the performance of younger generation that has everything ahead. Or perhaps, I would also like to address those who are in the middle of intensive work, burning with desire to preserve the cultural values of our society.

**THE PERPETUAL PROCESS**

Like everything else in life, working with cultural heritage is subject to constant change, even if we do not realize it at the moment. To believe anything else is deceitful. What I learnt as a student and antiquarian some years ago can be passé today or need re-examination tomorrow. The need to re-examine one's principles, values and, maybe, listen to what others have to say puts high pressures. However, it should be revisited by all means if our field is to have any future.

Society has been changing ever so quickly as never before. Sweden faces rapid and revolutionary changes; just entering the European Community has caused great changes in perspective and has influenced our mission of cultural heritage. Globalisation, information flow, network thinking, new political borders, quick economical shifts, ever stronger market forces and many more processes radically have

change the starting point for our task. How do we in this sector react to the situation? Do we employ any new strategies?

#### MOTIVATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

We need new strategies and, therefore, it is important that we all contribute to creating motivation for change by putting something to test and raising questions. It is likely that developing the social skills of communicating, listening and comprehending is just as important as getting deeper knowledge of historical facts. And most importantly, we need to try to understand those outside our field who have other starting points for their ideas and to understand the meaning and content of cultural heritage.

I think that much of the dynamics in cultural heritage management and our right to exist in a society that has become ever commercialised and competitive has much to do with these starting points. This encompasses so many aspects of life, such as our ability to be in tune with the period, to see and understand what is happening around us and to feel that we are act by patterns with or against the demands and expectations that society imposes upon us. We also need to be quite manipulative. Understanding “the other powers” in society can provide the arguments we need in debates and discussions about cultural heritage and its importance for the good of society.

#### IS TIME OUR FRIEND?

It depends entirely on us whether we make friends with time. The most fascinating thing about the time factor in relation to rapid development is that, paradoxically, it changes and erases cultural heritage at the same time as it produces heritage at the rate no one faced before. But can we manage to continue working by using our traditional methods? Are we talking about becoming more effective? And where does our focus in cultural heritage management lie? And where should it lead? Will it be directed more towards our epoch than towards historical aspects? The historical phase is relatively static while the contemporary changes speed up at a furious rate, which can lead us to losing a massive store of invaluable information for life. Do we want it to be like this?

The first successful IT-companies in Sweden serve as a good example of lost heritage. Hardly anyone keeps a photo, a piece of furniture and even less the facts stored digitally because they will soon decay due to poor storage qualities. On the other hand, the medieval ruins are still there undergoing the process of slow decay so that is where we are put much of our energy.

#### FROM DRAINPIPE TO WIDENED PERSPECTIVE

The development of cultural heritage management in a structural way in Sweden during the past 25 years is very much a matter of democracy and increased trust. In the middle of the 1970s the central authorities in Stockholm, the National Heritage Board or the national museums, controlled nearly the entire cultural environment. They would make all the decisions, regardless of the nature of issues. Very knowledgeable experts with drainpipe visions would decide what to preserve or protect and how to manage cultural heritage. Obviously, this has biased the ways of looking at things and eliminated the opportunity for taking a local perspective or putting something under query. Possibly, they used to involve people from our antiquarian circle from time to time just to inform us of new rules to apply and conform to.

Nowadays, we see that it is a matter of cultural heritage ideology, which has aged immensely since the time when cultural heritage management supported the glorious national state. This seems a strange starting-point in the context of cultural diversity and trends. Today we are rather challenged to illustrating and show diversity in our work in a practical way for many new groups in our multi-cultural society. Another challenging task is examining the negative and dark sides of our history, nor being discouraged to show and discuss them for a sake of collective learning.

#### A DEAD-END

The old system has found itself in a dead-end. Simultaneously, the political circles and municipal local communities discussed extensively such concepts as decentralisation, democracy, opportunities in order to assert influence and proximity. The reform has

transferred gradually the responsibility for protection, management and preservation to the regional level – namely, to county administrations. Finally, the local authorities have taken responsibility of the churches as they are regarded as the most valuable. Naturally, the reform has received criticism by opponents whose one of the argument is that we would never acquire as “deep knowledge” as the central institutions did. And what has happen to the national overview? Most of criticism has come from the antiquarian trade itself, which has damaged its reputation for a long time and led to internal squabbling; meanwhile, the politicians and the general public have applauded the reform.

As mentioned earlier, Sweden is a diverse society. Fore example, there is no longer room for any great standardisation of cultural heritage management nowadays. Every region looks after its own situation in its own way based on individual circumstances. And it seems to be working well. In terms of the built monuments, for example, being situated on Gotland, we tend to assess what is worth preserving without making much comparison with other regions. Consequently, the national perspective has disappeared from the Swedish pattern of working.

But it is also important to remember that no one talked about such concepts as the will to change at that time. It is likely that the cultural heritage including buildings, the ancient remains, churches, etc, was felt to be a personal interest area for the antiquarians, almost as private property. This was ideal for reluctance to change anything in this area. Hopefully, the situation is different nowadays when we do our job in the public service on a democratic basis.

#### TWENTY TIMES OVER

Today, 25 years later, I doubt whether anyone wants to return to the old situation. We have 21 counties with the staff of antiquarians, with wide scope of knowledge, working closely with cultural heritage and combining other public interests. I strongly believe that we keep taking qualified decisions. One may say that our opportunities have increased twenty times. More than likely, the wide public interest and success of cultural heritage is a result of decentralisation. The fact that an average person is close to cultural heritage has turned building preservation

into somewhat of a popular movement. Most people are aware of their local cultural heritage and are very committed to preserving it.

#### WHAT COMES NEXT?

And what comes next? Or maybe our ambition to democratise cultural heritage has reached the culmination? Are there other interesting areas of development? Let me try to discuss and interpret what is happening now, with reference to Sweden and, especially, Gotland. I believe that some aspects of development involve the following:

- Further steps in decentralisation;
- Increased integration of cultural heritage management with other public sectors;
- Increased cooperation between interested parties;
- Increased focus on citizenship;
- Increased responsibility for sustainable society;
- Network building and international cooperation.

I would like to explain and give the rationale to the different aspects of development in the context of telling about a few projects as we are currently engaged in the field of cultural heritage.

#### AGENDA CULTURAL HERITAGE: FORCE FOR RENEWAL?

During the past 3 years we have carried out a renewal project in Sweden, in the field of cultural heritage, involving nearly the entire county administration and museums as well as a number of non-profit organisations. The project has been called “Agenda Kulturarv”, or “Agenda Cultural Heritage”. Partly, the Minister of Culture who said she felt that the sector values were old-fashioned and, partly, the discussion about knowledge we give to young antiquarians through the recurrent internal courses triggered the idea. What exactly do we teach? These two observations led to a collective decision to take an unbiased look and work in museums, county administration and the National Heritage Board.

Initially, we have asked a basic question about where we stand today. What do we want to accomplish with our work? How we can become more visible and more public? We have received 200,000 Euros from the government

for the purpose of in-depth studies and experimental projects in formulating a strategy for the future.

#### CHALLENGE

This has started the process where we discuss and debate the goals and ideas behind the concept of cultural heritage management to a great length. We have heard many opinions, interpretations and questioned many old beliefs. The process has been very creative and has resulted in a number of policy decisions for our future undertaking. Attempt to question and discuss one's own role and principles with others is of great value. We would not have been able to carry out the project if we had not had confidence in ourselves and, moreover, if cultural heritage management had not had such a prominent status in society. Naturally, many have been in doubt and they still are, but I am convinced that "Agenda Cultural Heritage" project makes a valuable contribution to the development of Swedish cultural heritage.

#### FURTHER DIRECTIONS OF AGENDA

What have we reached? Maybe we have not reached great or decisive standpoints. And maybe some methods have been already established prior to us. However, the process has clarified and indicated by all means the direction our work should take. Our strategy states the following:

- Everyone uses cultural heritage which is important because it is used and not because it exists;
- People are the central focus of our job. We preserve, protect and take care of cultural heritage and physical monuments not for their own sake; we do it for ourselves to live in good environment;
- What we preserve and take care of today is the cultural heritage of tomorrow;
- The narrative is the motive for preservation. The physical objects are of no interest by themselves and not worth preserving without the narrative;
- Increased participation in making choices and setting values is a central future issue.
- Cultural heritage management is an important contribution to a sustainable society.

#### IS THIS OF ANY IMPORTANCE TO GOTLAND?

As a result of the project, the cultural heritage council has been set up on Gotland. It includes authorities, educational institutions and various non-profit organisations. The council has prepared a plan of action for preserving cultural heritage, highlighting different priority areas and tasks. The program is meant to serve as a guide for different interest groups in their operations. The council is a good example of how civic participation can be improved and how increased diversity can be ensured. Hopefully, the council will present suggestions about what they think is worth preserving and how to broaden awareness of what is valuable. We may also expect that it will encourage us attend to heritage and environments that we consider as a kind of "dead monument" or that we have not even noticed.

We also hope that this will increase cooperation with local population. Thanks to its set-up and its close local ties, the council can constructively contribute to reducing traditional scepticism towards authorities that is present, particularly, in rural areas.

#### THE RUINS OF ST. NIKOLAI CHURCH

There are very few cities in Europe, and not only, that have as many medieval church ruins as Visby. There are the ruins of 12 churches inside the medieval city walls. In modern times they have been treated as museum pieces to research, observe and enjoy. But they were hardly used for any other reason due to the threat they were exposed to in the previous centuries. And this has influenced our collective attitude. However, it seems that a new attitude is about to emerge, says that cultural heritage (e.g. the ruins) should be used as long as it persists with common sense and careful consideration. The ruins can be a source of knowledge and experience for us today. One example is the ruins of St. Nikolai church.

At the very beginning Nikolai was built as a monastery church for the Dominican monks around the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Adding some extras at different times changed it and, finally, it was abandoned at the time of the Reformation leading to accepting the Lutheran faith in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The ruins are a very visible feature of the townscape due to the location, the grand size and the attractive architecture. The ruins of St

Nikolai church stood there abandoned until the 1930s when someone started exploiting it for a musical drama about Petrus de Dacia, a monk and his relationship with a nun named Kristina af Stommeln. There is a stage construction, though rather clumsy, and moveable benches in the church. The ruins are used at for occasional summer concerts at present.

In the last several years, it has been intended to turn the church ruins into a concert locale for the year-round use. We have been discussing what position the antiquarian authorities should take towards these ideas. Shall they say yes? Or shall they refuse them? And how should we deal with other strong forces such as music, sound experts, commerce, tourism, etc? Can we manage it at all? Can different interests be united in a good mix? I tend to think positive about it. On one hand, drawing on the basic idea of "Agenda Cultural Heritage" with regard to the use of cultural heritage, we should say yes. On the other hand, we need to make ensure that we will be able to influence plans so that they are in agreement with the basic antiquarian principles of respect and carefulness. The next thing to happen is a competition among architects.

#### THE FISHING HAMLETS ON GOTLAND

In old times nearly all the farmers on Gotland engaged in coastal fishing for the household use. Fishing business carried on until the 1950s. After that it kept gradually decreasing until today when it is practically non-existent. But the fishing hamlets are still there. And people from the island discuss it extensively how they should or can use the hamlets in the future. They are now preserved as cultural heritage, and people weigh up the possibilities to use them either for fishing or holiday cottages. Many summer visitors to Gotland would fancy nothing more than buying or renting a fishing shack and using it as a holiday cottage. You can find there everything you could possibly wish in terms of proximity to the sea and the beautiful surrounding. Nowadays some of these shacks are converted with or without permission, some are illicitly used as holiday cottages and some others are denied permission for change.

The issue is complex and requires more than purely opinions and judgement by experts and decision-making authorities. The local Agenda

K-group has taken the initiative to call for meetings and creative discussions with people concerned. This initiative is a good example of civic participation ever increasing. Hopefully, the discussion will lead the authorities take a different stance with the view on long-term development.

#### WHAT IS VALUABLE?

All regions and places have their unique history, cultural heritage and nature. I have been wondering on some occasions if one could find some things that would be of no interest or of less value than other things. I think it is more a question of our ability and desire to describe and explain things, putting our perception of what has happened into words and pictures. In this way, the world heritage is no more valuable than any other cultural heritage. Designating something as a world heritage site involves a great responsibility in the form of national and municipal planning. Everyone else who lives, works and runs a business in Visby is responsible of this. You will no doubt recognise this statement in your world heritage sites.

Visby has been on the list for 10 years. One of the most urgent issues for us is to find out how to keep interest and commitment alive? The society has changed and the conditions are different now than they were 10 years ago. New powers-that-be and forces keep emerging, which all makes us realize that long-range planning and process thinking is most important to the world heritage. We need to strive for achieving the position of being able to continuously influence what happens around us, with the world heritage issue present in all planning. Here I see an opportunity for growing cooperation and establishing network with not only the Baltic world heritage. By sharing experience, we may build a joint sustainable strategy for our world heritage. It is probably necessary to consider the free movement of capital within the EU. Let us counterbalance it with free movement of knowledge.

#### CULTURAL LANDSCAPE – A COMMON ARENA?

Gotland is really a single big cultural landscape, famous for its spectacular scenery and its rich cultural heritage. It features the coast with its sea stacks and beaches, the flat rocky ground

where sheep grazed for thousand years, and its special biological diversity. The cultural heritage spans the historical presence of humans from the Late Stone Age and onwards, where certain periods stand out more clearly thanks to the monuments that have been saved, e.g. Bronze-age stone cairns, the Iron-age and the silver hoards, the medieval presence in the church buildings and Visby as a Hanseatic town.

In an administrative sense, we have separated the issues of nature, culture and environment despite the fact that we still deal with the same arena and material. The landscape on Gotland is a product of human influence. And this is probably true of most places. Nature, animals and plants are all connected, especially, with the patterns of Gotlandic farming.

Here at County Administration, we try to bridge this gap in thinking and identify what is common admitting that grazing land, forests, ancient monuments and buildings all belong together. This makes it possible to see the entire landscape and conserve the whole instead of individual objects or elements. Identifying the connection between humans, landscape and environment explains how social systems work. The local citizens often see their landscape as a whole. We can move from building the fragmentary picture of a landscape's history to explaining the preservation of its basic values in this way. And this is only one example. There are numerous other areas where the cross-sector approach would produce constructive effects.

It is important for us working in the cultural heritage sector to be able to broaden your perspectives and see our roles in the future context. Naturally, we should not undermine our expertise; however, cooperation with other social interests can give us strength and assertiveness we need for continuing strong development. It also contributes to building a sustainable society.

#### KNOWLEDGE AND POWER

The seminar in Kaunas is an excellent example of how we can work together with institutions within and across the borders. There are few areas that are as international as culture and cultural heritage. Many times they have acted as a battering ram in democratic processes and as a bridge-builder between people where politicians made no way forward.

We need to cooperate even in the micro-perspective on a daily level. For us who are part of decision-making authority, with expert antiquarians for everyday operations, it is interesting to learn where we are today with current knowledge and what basic antiquarian principles to apply. Being able to delegate decision-making means greater independence in interpretation and more grounds for attitudes. Therefore, the power over managing cultural heritage belongs not to the heads of departments high up the hierarchy, as one may suppose, but to the individual public servants. This is where interpretation and decisions are formed and presented. It is worth thinking about this task and the responsibility it implies in daily work.

I think we are all quick at realizing the importance of the connection between the authorities and the educational institutions. The most pressing issues are concerned with educating people for a labour market or a possible employer, educating them to shape a society and influence their. What we currently do has a significant effect on people. What we do has significance for a society in terms of meaning and content.

Therefore, I would like to exchange more knowledge and start the dialogue on what knowledge we need and how it should be used. And this is not only a question of specific expertise in the historical sphere. We should be concerned with the ability to act in future social contexts.

#### STEERING CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT IN THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

I have made attempts to discuss some issues that have emerged in the task of steering and administrating cultural heritage management under change on Gotland. Some conclusions to this are as follows:

- Gotland is a fantastic, inspiring environment to work. And I appreciate my staff and their efforts highly;
- We inherit attitudes and values that we easily subscribe to without questioning and testing. At the same time, it is difficult to gain support for renewal;
- We must become more aware of how society works and changes;
- The power of cultural heritage management

- lies to a large degree in the hands of individual staff members;
- Cultural heritage management is of great importance to good society;
- The ongoing democratic development of cultural heritage is an important and decisive success factor.

*Lenmart Edlung*

## KULTŪROS PAVELDO VADYBA GOTLANDE

### S a n t r a u k a

Per pastaruosius dvidešimt penkerius metus švedišką kultūros paveldo vadybos modelis patyrė daugybę permainų. Po buvusio biurokratinio, hierarchinio ir direktyvinio įvertinimo dabar iš naujo atrandamas raidos procesas, kuriame dėmesio atsiduria tokie terminai, kaip demokratija, dalyvavimas, žmonės ir tarptautinė perspektyva. Švedijos bei Europos kontekste tai ne atsitiktinumas, o veikiau Gotlando visuomenės tendencijų ir bendrosios raidos rezultatas.

Švedijos kultūros paveldo vadybos struktūrinė raida labai susijusi su demokratijos ir pasitikėjimo plėtra. 1970 m. beveik visą kultūrinės aplinkos priežiūrą kontroliavo svarbiausios Stokholmo įstaigos – Nacionalinė paveldo taryba ir nacionaliniai muziejai. Jos priimdavo visus sprendimus nepriklausomai nuo jų reikšmingumo. Daug žinantys ekspertai sprendavo, kas turi būti išsaugota ir apsaugota arba kaip turi būti valdomas kultūros paveldas. Aišku, vietinės perspektyvos atžvilgiu tai vedė į vienkryptę požiūrį.

Šiandien matyti, kas sudaro paveldo esmę ir kas yra kultūros paveldo ideologija, atgyvenusi tais laikais, kai kultūros paveldo vadyba turėjo stiprinti nacionalinį pasididžiavimą. Tai atrodo keistai, turint omenyje gyvenamojo meto kultūros įvairovę ir kultūros sroves. Šiandieniai iššūkiai veikiau kreipia į daugiau nukreiptas mūsų veiklos ir daugiakultūrės visuomenės įvairovės iliustravimą ir eksponavimą. Kiti nelengvi uždaviniai, susiję su negatyviają ir tamsiąja istorijos puse, verčia išdrįsti parodyti ir diskutuoti ją bendrajame mokymosi procese.

Senoji sistema atsidūrė akligatvyje kaip tik tuo metu, kai politiniuose sluoksniuose, taip pat savivaldybės vietinėse bendruomenėse vyko diskusijos dėl demokratijos ir decentralizacijos. Pakopomis vykdyta reforma sprendimų galią ir atsakomybę dėl apsaugos, vadybos ir išsaugojimo perdavė į regioninių lygmenį – apygardų administracijai. Tad šiandien jau nebėra kultūros paveldo vadybos standartizavimui skirtų kabinetų. Kiekvienas regionas sėkmingai rūpinasi savo situacija, susiklosčiusia tik dėl jam būdingų aplinkybių, ir naudojami savo priemonėmis.

Gotlande įsteigta kultūros paveldo taryba jungia valdžios ir mokslo įstaigas, taip pat ne pelno siekiančias organizacijas. Tai geras pavyzdys, kaip skatinti visuomenės dalyvavimą ir laiduoti didėjančią įvairovę. Dėl savo pobūdžio ir artimų vietinių ryšių taryba gali konstruktyviai prisidėti prie tradicinio skepticizmo valdžios įstaigų atžvilgiu mažinimo, ypač provincijose. Tik žmonių susidomėjimas kultūros paveldu įgalina pastatų saugojimą paversti populiariu sąjūdžiu. Todėl labai svarbus vaidmuo tenka kultūros paveldo vertybių propagavimui. Gotlande dauguma žmonių žino apie savo vietinį kultūros paveldą ir yra suinteresuoti jo likimu. Kultūros paveldą naudojami kiekvienas, todėl paveldas svarbus dėl to, kad juo naudojama, o ne dėl to, kad jis tik egzistuoja. Tad kultūros paveldas ir turimi paminklai saugomi, ginami ir prižiūrimi ne jų pačių, bet žmonių ir tinkamos gyvenimo aplinkos labui. Būtina suvokti, kad tai, kas saugoma ir prižiūrima šiandien, yra rytojaus kultūros paveldas.

Gotlandas iš tiesų yra vienas didžiulis kultūrinis kraštovaizdis, daugeliui žinomas dėl specifinio peizažo ir turtingo kultūros paveldo. Kultūros paveldas čia apima istorinį žmonių egzistavimą nuo vėlyvojo akmens amžiaus iki šių dienų, kur tam tikra epocha aiškiau išsiskiria išsaugotais paminklais, pavyzdžiui, bronzos amžius – akmenų piramidėmis, geležies amžius – sidabro lobiais, viduramžiai – bažnyčiomis ir Visbiu kaip Hanzos miestu. Gotlando kraštovaizdis – žmogaus rankų darbo rezultatas. Gamta, gyvūnija ir augmenija ypač susijusi su Gotlando ūkininkų žemės apdirbimo papročiais. Ganyklos, miškai, senovės paminklai ir pastatai – visa tai dera tarpusavyje. Taip įgalinama veikti darnoje su visu kraštovaizdžiu ir saugoti bei rūpintis visuma, o ne individualiais objektais ar elementais.

Sėkmingą kultūros paveldo vadybos kaitą Gotlande lemia procese išsikristalizavusios nuostatos. Keletą jų reikėtų paminėti:

Dirbdami kultūros paveldo vadybos srityje, mes privalome daugiau išmanyti apie tai, kaip visuomenė veikia ir kinta.

Kultūros paveldo vadybos pajėgumas labai priklauso nuo konkrečių personalo narių.

Kultūros paveldo vadyba labai reikšminga visuomenės gerovei.

Besitęsianti demokratinė kultūros paveldo plėtra – svarbus ir lemiamas sėkmės veiksnys.

*Gauta: 2004 10 08*

*Parengta spaudai: 2005 10 20*