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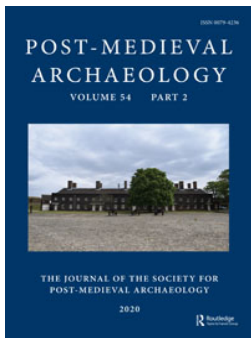
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‘As far below as you can come’? Historical archaeology on vulnerability and marginalization of life at the bottom of the social ladder

By EVA SVENSSON, MARTIN HANSSON and PIA NILSSON

SUMMARY: In the 19th and early 20th centuries there were numerous non-proprietors and paupers in the Swedish countryside, such as crofters, boarders and inhabitants of rural slums. Multisource methods such as triangulation of written documents, historical maps and archaeological evidence are used to study the living conditions, vulnerability and marginalization of boarders and inhabitants of rural slums from an environmental justice perspective. Being poor also meant being more exposed to risks than people with greater resources and having fragile safety nets. Marginalization could offer new possibilities to the poor, but also weaker security nets and increased vulnerability.

REMEMBERING PAUPERS

‘The inhabitants of Swede Hollow are, as you can expect, too often as far below as you can come when it comes to intelligence and morality... Walking the block, a huge concentration of hidden as well as perfectly apparent vice becomes evident.’¹

The quotation is taken from a newspaper describing a slum area, Swede Hollow, in St Paul, Illinois, where poor immigrant Swedes settled in an unplanned manner in badly constructed houses. In the newspaper, reflecting views of more well-to-do citizens, it is presented as self-evident that poverty and vice went hand in hand. Being poor and living in slums was thus presented as self-inflicted, a way of marginalizing the poor by picturing them as ‘the other’ in society. Concerning Swede Hollow, the idea was that settlement should be temporary, and that the immigrants should establish themselves in the new country and on the labour market, and then move up in the world, both socially and geographically. For many people, however, Swede Hollow became their new

home, with the mark of poverty invisibly, but clearly, branded on them.²

The inhabitants of Swede Hollow had taken the long and dangerous journey across the Atlantic in search of a new and better life. There were large groups of paupers, and poor people clustered in badly built houses in slums, also in the ‘old’ country, Sweden, in the 19th and early 20th centuries, that is, shortly before Sweden took off on a journey towards a famous welfare state model. Most of these houses and slums are gone or transformed without proper documentation as the welfare state project included tearing down the physical memories of the poor past.

It is important to state that poverty was not only about economy. Living in poverty meant being more vulnerable and more exposed to risks. It also included being marginalized in society, with fewer options to create a good life. In this paper, we will focus on the states of vulnerability and processes of marginalization of people living at the bottom of the social ladder in the 19th-century Swedish countryside, using historical archaeology. How did marginalized people handle their situation, and what can historical archaeology contribute to this field of research? Proceeding

from an environmental (in)justice perspective, we will inquire into the interplay of risk exposure and socio-ecological conditions to investigate the conditions in life and the empowerment possibilities of subalterns. The theoretical framework of environmental justice addresses how social stratification, (lack of) access to power, environmental degradation and risk exposure intersect, thus reinforcing the unjust conditions of subalterns, and the importance of having empowerment strategies to reverse the situation.³

The empirical focus of the paper is on paupers in rural environments, boarders, and inhabitants in rural slums. We will use a multisource approach, triangulating information from scarce archaeological surveys and excavations, written documents and narratives, photos, and historical maps. We will especially argue for the importance of archaeology in this context, as there often are arguments against the usefulness of archaeology in periods rich in written sources. The paper uses Swedish case studies and has its starting point within a Swedish legislative context, but the problem of studying subalterns with archaeological methods goes beyond present national borders.

The Swedish Heritage Conservation Act⁴ was changed in 2014, introducing the year 1850 as the dividing line. Many previously unprotected recent sites, remains of activities and constructions now can become protected by the Heritage Conservation Act. As the Act stipulates the 'polluters pay' principle these 'new' sites are increasingly becoming the objects of expensive rescue archaeology. There are numerous remains connected to the paupers among the 'new' protected sites and far too little previous research and method development to meet the challenges to heritage management, including rescue archaeology, posed by the changed legislation. The changed legislation thus opens both new possibilities and new challenges for archaeology, especially rescue archaeology, to produce new knowledge.

The purpose of this paper is thus twofold. First, to address the concepts of vulnerability and marginalization among paupers in different rural environments in Sweden. Secondly, to demonstrate the capacity of archaeology within a methodological framework of source triangulation to generate new knowledge also concerning recent chronological periods.

BEING POOR – CROFTERS AND BOARDERS

In the 18th and 19th centuries Sweden witnessed a considerable growth in population – and a considerable growth in the number of poor and landless people. In 19th-century Sweden, not being able to pay any tax meant that you were officially poor. For some of these people, there was hope of betterment

and becoming a taxpayer. Others were considered hopeless, and forever lost to poverty. According to this view, being poor meant lacking a surplus (to pay tax). In the 1860s about 25–30% of the population in the Norrland regions of northern Sweden and parts of the provinces of Småland and Blekinge in southern Sweden were officially poor. The average figure for the whole of Sweden was roughly 20% of the population.⁵

Many, or most, of the persons behind the poverty figures were crofters. All crofters were tenants of peasants or large estates, but there was a great formal difference between crofters who not only rented a house but also land for subsistence agrarian production, or rather received seed for agrarian production (Sw. *torpare*) and crofters who had only a cabin and maybe a little land and no seed (Sw. *backstugusittare*). The latter relied to a great extent on handicrafts or wages, whereas the former benefited from their agrarian production, supplemented with handicraft and wages. Rent was regulated and could be produced in money, labour and commodities. The lease was negotiated regularly, and it was common for crofters to move between different estates or between different crofts on the same estate. Sometimes the name of the croft moved with the crofters to a new place.⁶

In reality, however, there appear to have been fluctuations between the two groups, as some crofts were alternately referred to as *torp* (Sw. for a unit inhabited by a *torpare*) or *backstuga* (Sw. for a unit inhabited by a *backstugusittare*). There were also regional differences and special arrangements in larger estates concerning both conditions and the entitlements of different groups of non-proprietors, but these will be ignored here.

Crofters holding a pawn contract were more privileged. A 'pawn contract' (Sw. *förpantningskontrakt*), was obtained by the crofter lending money to the landowner, often a farmer, for the right to use the land. This gave the crofter greater security and made it much more difficult for the landowner to evict the crofter. An eviction meant that all money, plus interest, had to be repaid, as well as a sum for all the farming that had been done. In practice, a crofter who had this type of contract got tenure to his land. In order to obtain such a contract, the crofter first needed to gather a large sum of capital.⁷

Boarders (Sw. *inhyser* or *rotehjon*) were people without a house of their own, and often in need of some kind of poor relief, which was organized by the parishes. Sometimes the boarders lived in the same household as the owner of the house, and shared in their household. Sometimes they were placed in a separate house owned by someone else, and thus had a household of their own. If they were able to work they relied on wages, and sometimes handicraft. Some of the boarders were paupers who were auctioned out to the lowest bidder for poor relief, and



FIG. 1

Beggar's badge (in the museum Våse Hebygdsgård).
Photo: Eva Svensson.

worst off were those who did not receive regular board with a specific landowner for the stated period, but lived in ambulatory conditions, constantly transferred between different landowners to whom they were allotted for short-term boarding, called *rotehjon* in Swedish.⁸

There were also beggars, itinerant people, who received the right to beg within a special district as a kind of poor relief. In many districts it was common to give one of the local beggars the mandate to chase away, if necessary, using violence, beggars from other districts. There was also a system of 'certifying' the 'right' beggars with badges (Fig. 1).⁹

The historian Peter Olausson has studied the estate inventory of the widower Anders Persson, whose family did not touch poor relief, and can therefore be considered as 'average poor'. The family croft had two acres of land. They had possessed a plough, a sledge, two harrows, a few other agricultural tools, a cow, a lamb and a hen. Most of their possessions had been household utensils, such as a coffee roaster and two coffee cups. The furniture consisted of a double cupboard, a gate-legged table, two other tables, two chairs, a clock and a bed lacking bedclothes. The deceased wife, Lisa Larsdotter, left two dresses, two skirts, a black silk cloth, a shawl,

three linen, a pair of old socks, two pairs of boots, a tablecloth and three other cloths of cotton.¹⁰

Many of the objects listed in this estate inventory are not likely to appear in archaeological excavations, either for taphonomic reasons or because they were valuable enough to be circulated to new owners. On the other hand, other kinds of objects are commonly found in archaeological excavations, such as pottery, glass, nails, clay pipes etc. Combining information from estate inventories and archaeological excavations provides a richer and more complex picture of the material culture and patterns of consumption in everyday non-proprietor life.¹¹

Being poor was not only about income and possibilities to support oneself, it was also about living conditions, reputation, and possibilities to make choices. In the quotation from the *St Paul Daily Globe* above, poor immigrants are depicted as less intelligent than others and as living frivolously. Poverty was thus pictured as a combined economic and moral dilemma.¹² However, there were different opinions on this matter in society, not least concerning how to deal with poor relief. The common view that the paupers were to blame themselves was contested by more visionary advocates suggesting that poor relief should be used to prevent the poor from becoming impoverished when times were bad. A point was made that there was a great difference between being poor with hopes of a better future and being impoverished without any alternatives. Being able to keep a simple, but tidy, home, and be dressed in mended clothes, was something completely different from living in filth and wearing rags – both for the self-esteem of the poor themselves, and for the respect from the surrounding world.¹³

The combination of dreadful overcrowded housing (e.g. Fig. 2), poor hygienic conditions, dirt, unemployment and poverty in the 1930s was exposed in a famous reportage series for radio, later published in a book, called 'Dirt-Sweden' (Sw. *Lort-Sverige*) by the journalist Lubbe Nordström.¹⁴ Through Lubbe Nordström's interviews and observations the entanglement of dirt, poverty, lice, different kinds of sicknesses and handicaps, cold and draught was put on display, including a critique both of the poor for not being able to help themselves to better conditions, and of the unequal society for not taking care of the vulnerable poor.

It is important to point out that being poor meant being more vulnerable and exposed to risks, living with the threats of impoverishment, disease, starvation, and homelessness a heartbeat away. Even landowning peasants were vulnerable when facing bad harvests, loss of extra income from work and commissions, and of course when affected by diseases and death causing the demise of supporting family members. But landowning peasants usually had more security, such as savings in food, seed, money and often circles of support from relatives and neighbours



FIG. 2

Example of poor housing, a dugout cabin. Photo: Våse Hembygdsförening, no. 17176_bg-by-025, courtesy of Våse Hembygdsförening.

with more resources. The loss of a head of the family seldom meant loss of home and land. The poor did not have the resources to achieve the same security, and – as tenants – the death, sickness or invalidity of the rent-paying adult often meant losing the home. On such occasions, it was common that the remaining family members were shattered through the poor relief system of auctioning out the paupers to the landed peasants.¹⁵

Women and children tended to be more vulnerable than adult men, as they had fewer work opportunities. For women this was especially the case when they had children, whether as widows or as unmarried mothers. Having children outside of wedlock or other kinds of stable relationships appears to have been relatively common among poor women. It usually meant that the women were left on their own to support their children, even if there are examples of fathers taking care of, or in other ways supporting, their illegitimate children. However, children of single mothers were more likely to appear at pauper auctions than other children. Still, it seems that children had even worse situations when their mothers

died, and their fathers were to cope with bringing them up.¹⁶

ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE – VULNERABILITY AND MARGINALIZATION

Paupers may appear to have been doomed from the start, that they had everything against them. Here we would like to stress that this ‘everything’ was a web of entangled factors of inequality, in line with the environmental justice theory.¹⁷ Environmental justice, encompassing social justice, addresses how social stratification, marginalization, (lack of) access to power, environmental degradation, (lack of) access to natural resources and risk exposure intersect, thus enforcing the unjust living conditions of the subalterns.¹⁸

A cruel example of exposure of the powerlessness of the paupers in need of poor relief was the pauper auctions mentioned above. At such auctions, paupers were auctioned out to the lowest bidder, that is, the



FIG. 3

Four young paupers in 1913. Photo: Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=8971433> (Nordiska museet: Julius Ejdestam: De fattigas Sverige).

person requiring the lowest compensation from the district's poor relief foundation. Normally the bidders were looking for a pauper able to perform some kind of work, at the same time as they received money for their support. Even though there was some control within the system, negligent care was a problem. The system appears especially cruel when it comes to the children (Fig. 3), orphans or those with incapacitated parents, who were auctioned out. Siblings were divided, and they were often transferred between host families as both the children's work capacity and the

host families' needs changed over time. For instance, when a family no longer needed a young babysitter, the babysitting girl was auctioned out again.¹⁹

The concepts of risk and resilience, that is, the capacity to manage disturbances or changes, together with the alignment of power and property, are crucial in the theoretical framework of environmental justice for understanding how processes were played out in different socio-ecological settings. In an investigation of rural communities during the Middle Ages and modern times in Italy, England and Holland, Daniel

Curtis²⁰ found a clear connection between more equal distribution of power and property and resilience in the communities. The more equal of the investigated communities were less vulnerable when faced with different kinds of either exogenous or endogenous threats, more capable of managing risks and able to recover better from crises. Or to use Curtis's words 'equality in the distribution of property and power was a vital component in the pre-industrial societies' capacity to deal with or recover from crises.'²¹

Dirt-Sweden, the entanglement of overcrowding, substandard housing, bad hygienic conditions, dirt, unemployment, and poverty,²² stands out as a state of environmental injustice with people experiencing a high degree of risk exposure and a low degree of resilience. Many of the informants in Dirt-Sweden pointed out that the insecurity in housing, the short-term lease contracts combined with the hard, sometimes near inhuman, work conditions, made people unwilling and unable to invest money, time and effort to improve their housing. With no secure future ahead, few were willing to make necessary improvements, and even if they wanted to, they might not be allowed by the landowner. Still, the scenes transmitted in Dirt-Sweden were played out very shortly before the establishment of the Swedish welfare state. Thus, there were ongoing processes of change hidden below the dirt, pointing towards a society with better and more equal conditions and possibilities for its citizens.

If we go back to the 19th century, however, we rather detect processes of increased socio-ecological and geographical segregation, often expressed in increasing spatial segregation of the landed and the non-proprietors. Things appear to have been getting worse for the poor than during previous periods. The marginalization of landless people included allocation to marginal and environmentally poorer land, at a time when lack of property became a constant state for many people throughout their lives.²³

In the late 18th and 19th centuries there was a forceful expansion of settlements, crofts, into land on the margin of the settled rural communities, such as forests and uplands.²⁴ It was a question of both new settlements and transforming seasonally used sites, such as shielings, into permanent settlements. Thus, more and more poor and non-propertied people moved out, and out of sight, of the settled rural communities. Crofts grew up in clusters at certain distances from the villages and infields, or at specifically assigned areas which were geographically as well socially marginal. There are also examples of paupers and people with few resources being assigned, or even forcibly moved, to environmentally poor, marginal soil where there were few opportunities to make use of the land.

However, the geographical marginalization could also function in an empowering way. Access to

(natural) resources was key to what kind of life could be staged in the croft. To many of the poor, a croft opened up new opportunities, and there are examples of strategies of croft acquisition where the crofters appear to be the instigator, for instance in the case of the *förpantningstorp*, where the crofter lent money to the landowner and thus acquired long and stable contracts. Behind such strategies there could be attractive (natural) resources available for the crofter to exploit. In the mid-19th century, the peasants were 'jacks of all trades'.²⁵ The wide economic spectrum included farming, animal husbandry, trade, handicraft, transportation, fishing, forestry, hop farming, tar burning and a whole world of exchange and reciprocation. This is a phenomenon that goes back at least a couple of hundred years.²⁶ However, access to natural resources was often prohibited to the crofters or strongly restricted, but (geographical) distance from the landowner appear to have opened up informal or illegal opportunities such as poaching, indicated in the finds of weapons and cartridges in estate inventories and archaeological finds.²⁷

Thus (geographical) marginalization could contribute both to worsened living conditions and to new opportunities for crofters. But crofters were the lucky ones among the non-proprietors when they had land to cultivate, work opportunities and legal or illegal access to natural resources. What were conditions like for the paupers further down the social ladder?

AN HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY OF POVERTY, MARGINALIZATION AND VULNERABILITY? IN SEARCH OF METHODS

In relation to heritage management, heritage being an important environmental component, environmental justice is a useful concept for illuminating the downgrading of the heritage of the paupers, compared to the heritage of the wealthy. This can be seen in all aspects of heritage management, such as surveying, recording, excavation, conservation, and transmission. The paupers and their material culture are also underrepresented in Scandinavian research.²⁸ Even after the changed legislation in Sweden, the heritage of the paupers, like most archaeology of the more recent past, is treated as second-rate archaeology. The most obvious example of this inequality within the same legislation is that the material culture of the paupers is seldom the subject of a full-scale archaeological excavation. There seem to be two main reasons for this. First, a surveying strategy that relies mainly on information in historical maps. For many reasons, this has proved insufficient, and has so far resulted in the estimation that some two thirds of the observed remains of non-proprietor housing and living are considered 'too recent' and therefore not

protected. Second, there is often hesitation and vagueness about how to handle these remains, with the result that archaeologists are regularly given too little time for excavations and small resources for important analyses. Thus, despite good and inspiring exceptions, there is a strong tendency to rely on repetitive investigation strategies.²⁹

We claim that archaeology has the potential to give information on the complexity of the sites and the living conditions of the poor, not least by taking a landscape approach and including traces such as clearance cairns, charcoal and tar pits and the single buildings, such as stables, smithies, sheds for different purposes which are seldom listed in written sources or marked on historical maps. The surveying and archaeological excavations also show the frequency of the croft's life span. Sometimes the crofts (as well as their names), were moved frequently, over longer or shorter distances. This means that they are unlikely to appear on maps, or at least the map shows only a snapshot of a long-term history of land use. Through archaeology questions such as acreages, movement patterns, 'miniature societies' and in some cases, information on monetary economy, *urbanness* and economic diversity may also be discussed. The interpretation of crofters' housing is often 'small cabin, negligible acreage and a poor material standard'. Lack of certain kinds of artefacts, such as farming tools, might also be taken as proof of poverty, albeit not often found in more affluent contexts.³⁰

However, the potential of archaeology to provide information on the poor remains to be realized. The small number of excavations touching non-proprietors have almost exclusively been carried out on crofts.³¹ Also, there are notable methodological problems in detecting the paupers, as we need to learn more about the signals of poverty in the material culture, a problem also for older chronological periods. It is thus important that historical archaeology has the benefit of being able to combine archaeology with information from archives and historical maps, and triangulation of these sources provides useful openings. Through advanced stratigraphic excavations of recent cultural layers in urban environments, archaeologists have started to locate boarders by observing patterns of locations of secondary housing with very simple accommodation. By combining these observations with information from archives, it has been possible to connect this type of accommodation with boarders and non-proprietor tenants.³²

In rural environments different types of housing, or layouts of settlements, might provide ways to find paupers. The houses themselves represent a great variety, which archaeology can expose. They differ in size, building material, absence or presence of a stone foundation and complexity, and the excavation situations reveal that economic and social standard is expressed not only in the material remains, but also in the location of the actual cabin and the

surrounding production land. Is it built on a spot where it is meant to be visible and dominant in relation to surrounding cabins, or almost hidden? Where is the entrance – welcoming and facing the other cabins, or turned away? For instance, dugout cabins deserve special attention. Dugout cabins were associated with the poorest in society, although people living in dugouts most often owned the cabin but not the land on which it was located, and therefore were not boarders.³³ However, people appear to have moved in and out of dugout cabins frequently, and it therefore quite possible that they were used also for housing boarders now and then.

Other possibilities of detecting boarders might be by analysing the spatial use of dwelling houses and plots in order to detect whether there might have been separate households or other kinds of divisions within a house or if there are several dwelling houses connected to a plot, some of them with 'poorer' material culture. For instance, by combining survey and excavations in a spatial analysis, one such secondary house was detected at Rost Tappa in southern Sweden.³⁴ The secondary house was interpreted this time as a retreat housing for the elderly generation (in Swedish *undantag*), but housing for boarders with separate households may well be located in similar ways.

RURAL SLUMS

In the late 18th century, but mostly in the 19th century, a new form of poor settlements emerged, namely rural slums. Rural slums, clustered pauper housing, were most often located on the fringes of parishes or other 'left-over' spaces where natural conditions offered few opportunities to make a living off the land. The subaltern inhabitants were thus forced to seek employment elsewhere. Among the inhabitants of the rural slums, some had homes and others were boarders (Sw. *inhyser* or *rotehjon*), some made their living from work and others were dependent on poor relief.

Rural slums, being concentrated poor settlements, would thus provide archaeological experiences for learning to recognize the poor in the archaeological material. But rural slums can also be considered as something new, and thus not representative of poor housing and conditions of life. In their time, the rural slums were known under different names in Swedish such as *Allmäningsbebyggelse* (in English 'settlement on the commons'), *Tåbebyggelse* (in English 'toe- or tang-settlement'), *Malmbebyggelse* (in English 'sandy plain settlement'). The impression is that the concepts to a large extent were synonyms, and that it was rather a question of regional differences concerning which concept was used. However, there was also a difference of scale of the rural slums, where settlements on *Häradsallmänningar* (the

'commons of a jurisdictional district' equivalent to an English 'hundred') formed larger, rural slums. *Tå-* and *Malmbebyggelse* were smaller rural slums on 'left-over' spaces in connection with the villages in southern Sweden. The term *Malmbebyggelse* is interesting as it signals the 'urbaness' of the rural slums, as the term *-malm* was also used for suburbs or town districts, often with slum origins.

Rural slums as a phenomenon are slowly becoming more recognized among archaeologists, but they are hard to find in the register of ancient monuments. The practice at registration was, in the lucky cases, to record the single settlement units, and not the rural slums as a whole. Very often neither settlement units nor the slums as such were recorded at all. Rural slums appear to be best known when there have been local amateur historians and local heritage associations taking an interest. Such organizations have carried out surveys and documented local memories and stories, and often published their results either in books or online.

A description made by a local heritage association reads 'Each village also had a so-called *tåbebyggelse*. Here those who lacked the right to settle in the village were allowed to live. It became a kind of small village, outside of the (real) village, of non-proprietors, that is people owning no land in the village. It was those who had to find a livelihood (outside the agrarian economy). Handicraft and trade become the important sources of income for those who could not own more than maybe a cow, a goat or a couple of hens.'³⁵

This description emphasizes the entanglement of spatial and social segregation. The poor, the non-proprietors, had to live outside the village, in a space of their own. They were the people on the outside, whereas the landowners in the village were the people on the inside. It was not only a question of practicalities, but of separating the growing number of more or less permanently poor people from the proprietors and making the social differences even more visible.

The phenomenon of rural slums appears to be confined to the southern part of Sweden, and mainly the champion agrarian areas. As far as we have been able to find out, they do not appear in the forested northern part of Sweden. Important tasks for archaeology could thus be to investigate whether there really was such a difference between southern and northern Sweden, and, if so, conditions were different in the forested, northern part of Sweden. There might have been more opportunities to access natural resources in the forests and jobs related to these natural resources. Also, concentrated poor housing in rural environments might have been structured and expressed differently across Sweden.

In our quest to find the people at the bottom of the social ladder, we will examine several cases relying on, when possible, a multisource approach

triangulating information from written documents, historical maps and archaeological material. We will start by looking into the sad life story of a poor man 'without defence'.

OLOF PETTERSSON – THE LIFE STORY OF A MAN 'WITHOUT DEFENCE'

Some of the cruel life stories of the vulnerable poor are to be found through the archives. The life of the poor, and criminal, Olof Pettersson may here serve as an example.³⁶ Olof Pettersson was born in the year 1800 in a poor but functioning family. In 1816 his father drowned, and as the oldest of the children Olof had to shoulder the role of supporting not only his brothers and sister, but also his grandparents who were old and unable to work. He moved out of his home and started working as a farmhand, and later as a day labourer, for a number of peasants. When working as a day labourer in Näsvisen he met the maid Britta Persdotter, who became his wife. In 1826 Olof Pettersson and his growing family were registered as crofters under the farm Näsvisen. They were also registered as recipients of poor relief.

On 28 February 1840, Britta Persdotter died, leaving Olof Pettersson as a widower with seven children aged four to nineteen. But even before the death of his wife, Olof Pettersson had been found guilty of his first theft. In 1839 he was convicted of stealing cloth. In 1843 he was convicted again, this time for stealing food, and was sentenced to ten days in prison on 'bread and water'. By then he was no longer a crofter but a homeless and landless boarder on poor relief. The children had been separated from him, although their fates at the time are not fully known. At least two of the younger girls were so-called *rotehjon*, that is, boarders who had to move between a number of farmsteads as a form of poor relief.

During the years 1851–1855 Olof Pettersson was noted as constantly moving, unemployed, without income. The Swedish expression at the time was 'a person without defence' (Sw. *person utan försvar*) emphasizing the state of exposed vulnerability. At times one of his daughters and her illegitimate daughter were staying with him. In 1849 Olof entered a relationship with, and later married, Maria Andersdotter, a pauper widow with seven children. Her late husband, incapacitated by illness, had also been completely impoverished. It appears that the new couple established themselves as a household, probably in a dugout cabin (Sw. *jordkula*; Fig. 2.) called Bogberget on the borders of two parishes, which is as marginal as it gets. It is unclear how many of their children came to live with them.

In 1869 Maria Andersdotter fell ill, and Olof Pettersson was arrested the third time for theft, this time for stealing clothes. He was sentenced to five years in prison but seems to have served only a year

or two. In 1871 he was back, only to commit a fourth theft. Again, he was sentenced to five years in prison, where he died in 1873. His widow Maria Andersdotter became a *rotehjon*, living with different households on poor relief.

The dugout cabin is marked on a map from late 19th century, and at the site there are remains of a double, two-room dugout cabin with chimney hole, and some small fields probably for potato cultivation and rough haymaking. A minor test excavation, consisting of two small test pits, revealed thin cultural layers underneath the rubble from the collapsing walls. Both rooms in the double dugout cabin had been used for living, although only one of them seems to have been equipped with a stove. The finds consisted of 37 items: iron fittings and iron plate, sherds of green bottle glass, two horseshoes, a porcelain button, a clay pipe, porcelain sherds from at least three different vessels, pottery sherds from at least one vessel, an iron spoon, nails and horseshoe nails and some burnt clay. The finds, albeit modest, problematize the archaeology of poverty to some extent. In fact the finds are quite equivalent in quality, but not in quantity, to the material from a quite well-off nearby croft. Apparently, even a pauper family was included in a more general pattern of consumption. The dugout cabin was located fairly close by an iron-works community, Älvsbacka, where there was at least one shop providing consumer goods similar to what was on sale in cities. The two horseshoes and the horseshoe nails deserve a comment. In other contexts, these finds would have been taken as indication of the presence of horses at the site. But as it seems unlikely that the paupers was in possession of a horse, the horseshoes had most likely hung over the doors to bring the family good luck.³⁷

MJÖTTAN – THE UNEXPECTED BOARDERS

The sad reality of the archaeology of poor people in the fairly recent past in Sweden is that most of it has been done by accident. Archaeologists have come across these sites while looking for something else.³⁸ But many big discoveries have been made by accident, so it does not necessarily have to be a bad thing. The excavations of Mjöttan, in search of a deserted medieval settlement, is one such example.³⁹

Mjöttan was selected for excavation as it had all the attributes indicating that it might be a deserted medieval farmstead. The farmstead appears in the oldest tax ledger from 1540 onwards, and the site was well defined geographically on a map from 1640. There were also visible remains of houses on the site indicated by the historical map. The farmstead appears to have been deserted in the 18th century after having been appropriated by a local manor. Mjöttan is stated as deserted on a map from 1778,

and the farmstead is no longer listed in the tax ledgers.

The case appeared to be clear-cut, only to be completed with an archaeological excavation. The excavation, however, would tell a completely different story. The excavation revealed a dwelling house and a possible outhouse (Fig. 4). Both could be dated to the second half of the 19th century, due to the use of local bricks, a production that started c. 1850. The character of the finds – nails, glass sherds, faience and a clay pipe – supports the dating mainly to the 19th century. So what was the explanation for the unexpected result? Thanks to a skilful historian with extremely good knowledge of the area, information from a diary written by a local vicar was brought out. According to the vicar, Mjöttan was used for housing boarders. The place was thus not deserted in reality, only in official documents. Poor people such as boarders were thus made invisible on an official, societal level.

Still, the houses and the few artefacts do not signal poverty. The finds appear to be rather average consumer goods, and it is clear that some important investments had been made in the house, such as a new fireplace and chimney of brick sometime after 1850. Maybe the boarders had been allowed bricks from the estate owner and built the fireplace and chimney, or maybe the estate owner had taken care to ensure an acceptable housing standard.

THE KINGDOM OF SVÄNAN AND THE CITY OF CROFTERS – RURAL SLUMS IN LOCAL HISTORY

The rural slums could sometimes have colourful, and somewhat ironic, names. For instance, in the region of Småland in southern Sweden there was a rural slum called the Kingdom of Svänan (Sw. *Kungariket Svänan*) and another called the City of Crofters (Sw. *Torparstan*) signalling an association with urbanness. Both have been investigated by local historians.⁴⁰ The rural slums were established on parish and district commons, quite barren land of hilly and stony moraine intersected with mires, in the late 18th century. The slums expanded vigorously in the 19th century, and consisted of 20 to 30 settlements each, all of them densely inhabited. In Svänan as many as 130 persons were squeezed together into 20 cabins. Whereas the cabins in Svänan were spread out, the cabins in Torparstan were built along a road, adding to the urban impression. The inhabitants were former soldiers, others were carpenters, shoemakers, knitters, stone blasters, farmhands, maids, pedlars etc. There was also a lot of rotation of inhabitants, as they moved in and out of the slums. It was also common to undertake seasonal long-distance jobs building railways and picking beets.



FIG. 4

Mjöttan during excavation, corner of a building. Photo: Eva Svensson.

Neither Svänan nor Torparstan have been thoroughly investigated archaeologically. Torparstan has not been surveyed at all, whereas most of Svänan has been surveyed in a summary manner by the Forest & History project.⁴¹ The cabins vary in character from better-built houses and stone-cleared fields to dugout houses (Sw. *jordkula*). According to preserved photos, it was not only the buildings but also the maintenance and care of the houses that differed, indicating differences in means and standard among the inhabitants. Interestingly, there was a tradition of

begging for building material for the cabins from the landowning peasants, and a tradition among the landowning peasants of giving a log or two.⁴² Such traditions of reciprocity can be interpreted as a way to maintain, and legitimize, the uneven relationship, with the peasants recognizing some kind of responsibility towards the non-proprietors of the rural slum. The different spatial layouts of the two rural slums may indicate that they differed in character, with Torparstan appearing to have been deliberately planned.

VÄSE HÄRADSALLMÄNNING – THE LITTLE GREY TOWN

The most historically investigated rural slum is *Väse häradsallmanning*, in the province of Värmland. Due to several generations of local historical interest there is a great deal of information on many of the former inhabitants, and photos of people and places have been collected and published. However, most of the detailed information on the inhabitants concerns the first half of the 20th century when living conditions were improving.⁴³

The story of the rural slum starts when a sandy, remote area was split between all the villages and landed estates in the parish in a process stretching over two decades in the middle of the 18th century.⁴⁴ After the land division, a few crofters moved in and erected small crofts, just as everywhere else at the time of great population increase in the 18th century. Importantly, the *Nyttöjden* area was established. Nyttöjden was later to become the core area of settlement of the most impoverished people.⁴⁵

The number of poor, landless people increased drastically in the 19th century. In Väse, inviting – or forcing – poor people to settle in Väse häradsallmanning was one effort to ease of the pressure of too many beggars walking around the villages. Many small and badly built houses were erected, especially in the Nyttöjden area, forming a clustered settlement of poor, landless people: a rural slum.⁴⁶ An investigation into the distribution of poor relief in the parish of Väse for the year 1869 found that more than a quarter of the poor relief went to the inhabitants of Väse häradsallmanning and especially to those living in Nyttöjden.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the majority of the poor in Väse häradsallmanning were able to manage without poor relief.

Compared with other rural slums, Väse häradsallmanning stands out as having been unusually voluminous, in terms of area and population. A map from 1885 gives a snapshot of the more than 100 cabins, the inhabitants and their occupations – at least the male occupations. There were building workers, casual labourers, including labourers doing heavier work, ditchers, ore knockers, pedlars, charcoal burners, basket makers, agricultural workers, bunchers, rag pickers, locksmiths, soldiers, gardeners and agriculturists, railway workers, forest workers, shoemakers, tailors, smiths, carpenters, stoneworkers/masons, turners, sieve makers, woodcarvers, tar burners, clockmakers etc. However, the population in Väse häradsallmanning fluctuated, with people regularly moving in and out of the area, so the information from the map relates to a moment in time, and not to a permanent situation.

Still, the map gives information on the considerable size and character of the settlement, that is, a concentration of people performing a number of different handicrafts and general labour.

Contemporaries perceived the settlement not only as a concentration of poverty but also as urban-like, and Väse häradsallmanning went under the name of ‘The Little Grey Town’, or in the local dialect *Lelle grå stan*. There were also some other urban-like traits in the spatial organization of the rural slum. First, there was a concentration of settlements along the small dirt roads or paths. Second, there were tendencies for practitioners of the same or similar handicrafts to cluster spatially (Fig. 5). The inhabitants in the rural slum were thus creating a new kind of rurality, leaning towards urbanity. Probably a similar process was present also in the previously described Torparstan. The question remains whether this was a process initiated by the landowners or by the poor in the rural slums.

The population of Väse häradsallmanning was in fact even more dense than what is shown in Fig. 5. Not only did the families produce unusually many children, they also earned some money by housing boarders in their small cabins.⁴⁸ Thus, there was a social stratification also among the poor at Väse häradsallmanning between those who had a cabin and those who had not. Having a cabin, albeit a poor one, was an asset rendering the holder a sense of establishment and status. Some of these families came to have a long pedigree at Väse häradsallmanning.

Of the earlier inhabitants, the fate of the gardener Oldin is the best documented.⁴⁹ In contrast to many other cabins, the remains of Oldin’s life and work are well visible. The plot measured 36 × 30 metres. The remaining cornerstones show that the cabin was about 20 m² large, and that an outhouse had been slightly larger, 25–30 m². There are also remains of a well and a cellar. Apart from the plot, there had also been land, albeit very poor land, for cultivation surrounded by the remaining stone foundations of fences. On a field trip in the summer of 2017, possible traces of small dams in a little watercourse were detected. Probably Oldin the gardener had tried to secure regular water supply for his small fields. Oldin had tried to cultivate rye and potatoes, and had also planted apple trees, but due to the poor quality of land and lack of manure-producing cattle he had problems getting things to grow well enough. Most of his income came from his work, about 10 kilometres away from home, as a gardener. Despite both paid work and cultivation of rye, potatoes and apples, Oldin ended his days starving to death.

The remains of buildings and fields commemorating the sad life of Oldin the gardener is well visible when surveying. This is not the case, however, with the remains of other cabins at Väse häradsallmanning. On the 1885 map, the locations had been given for more than 100 cabins, and as very limited development of the area had taken place in the 20th century, conditions were very good for the survey of the area in 1988. Still, finding traces of the cabins turned out to be a challenge, or rather a

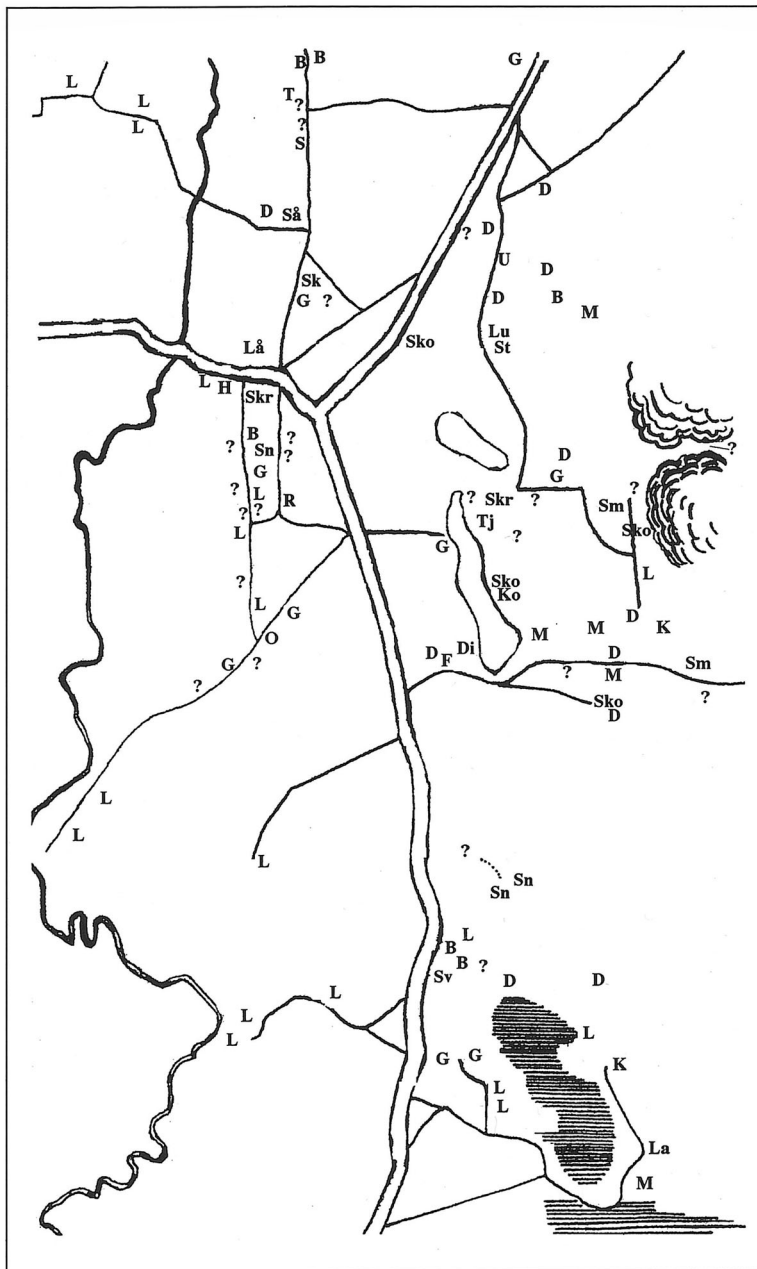


FIG. 5

Väse häradsallmänning in 1885, spatial distribution of cabins and professions. After Svensson 2001, fig. 5 and sources therein. B = Building worker; D = Odd-jobbers/casual labourers; Di = Ditcher; F = Ore knocker; G = Rough odd-jobber; H = Shopkeeper; K = Charcoal burner; Ko = Basket maker; L = Agricultural worker; La = Buncher; Lu = Rag picker; Lå = Locksmith; M = Soldier; O = Gardener/Agriculturist; R = Railway worker; Sk = Forest worker; Sko = Shoemaker; Skr = Tailor; Sm = Smith; Sn = Carpenter; St = Mason/Stoneworker; Sv = Turner; Så = Sieve maker; T = Wood carver; Tj = Tar burner; U = Clockmaker; ? = Unknown trade.

disappointment, as remains of only 20 buildings were located, some of which were earth cellars and not cabins. The sites, without visible remains, were identified for another 35 cabins. The most likely explanation for the meagre result is that the cabins left few traces due to their frail and flimsy construction.⁵⁰ How frail they were can be illustrated by the following quotation: 'some were so badly built that a strong man could grab the corner of the cabin, lift it a bit upwards, and have a conversation with those inside.'⁵¹

However, there were also sites located by the survey indicating that far better-built cabins had existed parallel with frail ones (Fig. 6). Thus, it is likely that social differences within Våse häradsallmanning held several levels such as boarders, families in frail cabins and families in better-built cabins, as in the rural slum Svånan described above. There may also have been changes over time, which would require archaeological excavations to shed light on.

KJULA HAGE – DETECTING A RURAL SLUM THROUGH ARCHAEOLOGY

In 2006, an archaeological survey of part of the Österrekarna häradsallmanning in the province of Södermanland, Kjula Hage, was conducted due to large-scale development planning. In the historical maps there were indications, albeit no local tradition, of a rural slum in the area, and during survey remains of 16 cabins were located. Also, 750 pits of unknown function and dating were registered (Fig. 7).⁵² The rural slum area could also be connected to a previous survey conducted at Lida Hage just south of Kjula Hage, where the remains a minor rural slum of ten cabins were registered.⁵³

After survey three cabin sites, one of which was a dugout cabin (Sw. *jordkula*), two smithies and a number of pits were selected for excavation in the ongoing development process.⁵⁴ The cabins were dated to the 18th and the late 19th century, but as pottery from late 17th/early 18th centuries was found on one of the site, it is possible that the rural slum was preceded by an older settlement. The excavation showed that the dugout cabin had been frail in construction, and the finds were of pauper character. The two other cabins, however, appear to have been well built, and the finds, chiefly the pottery, were of high quality.

The two smithies turned out to be three smithies during excavation and were dated to the late 17th/early 18th centuries, 19th century and early 20th century respectively. The dating and succession of smithies show that smithing had been an ongoing trade in the area, and that handicraft had been an important way earning a living in the rural slum. It was harder to date the pits and determine their function, but they were mainly interpreted as remains of

stump quarrying for tar production in the 17th and 18th centuries, some charcoal burning and clearing of trees for the planning of a (never realized) military training field in the early 19th century. The stumps were probably used in two tar production sites located in the area.

The archaeological excavations showed a more complex picture of life in the rural slum than could be anticipated. There was an unexpected depth in time of the rural slum, with indications of an earlier settlement and smithing activity already in the late 17th/early 18th centuries. Also, the social differences, expressed in the quality of house construction and finds, between the three investigated cabin sites were held up by the excavators as an important result worthy of future research.⁵⁵

THE PAUPERS – PERSPECTIVES ON MARGINALIZATION AND VULNERABILITY

Archaeological material, albeit scarce, together with archaeological readings of written documents and narratives, photos, and historical maps, provides some insights into the living conditions of paupers in the century preceding the welfare state. It should be noted that the very limited archaeological material available, e.g. from Bogberget, Mjöttan and Kjula Hage, indicates a more complex, or nuanced, picture of paupers' living conditions than anticipated. They appear to have been able to participate in the consumption culture of the time, and some of them were able to maintain a high standard of living. But there were also those whose material standards were far lower.⁵⁶

There was a strong process of environmental injustice through geographical marginalization and spatial control of paupers in the rural communities in the 19th century. The growing number of paupers were moved out to left-over spaces in villages or districts, whether to a croft or to rural slums. These left-over spaces were of environmentally poor quality, such as the sandy heath of Våse häradsallmanning, offering few possibilities to earn a living from the land. Settling in rural slums in badly built houses on infertile land meant being exposed to risks. Living in cold and draughty homes with sparse opportunities to grow food was often followed by health problems and occasionally starvation. Also, being moved out could mean being separated from known places and social networks, creating both perceived and real insecurity.

At the same time, new communities and new opportunities arose. For some this was an opportunity to create a house and a household of their own, like the crofters in the Kingdom of Svånan who begged for and received timber from landowners,⁵⁷ instead of boarding with other families. The association of



FIG. 6

Houses on Våse häradsallmänning. Photo: Våse Hembygdsförening, a. no. 17176_bg-by-182, b. 17176_bg-by-124, courtesy of Våse Hembygdsförening.

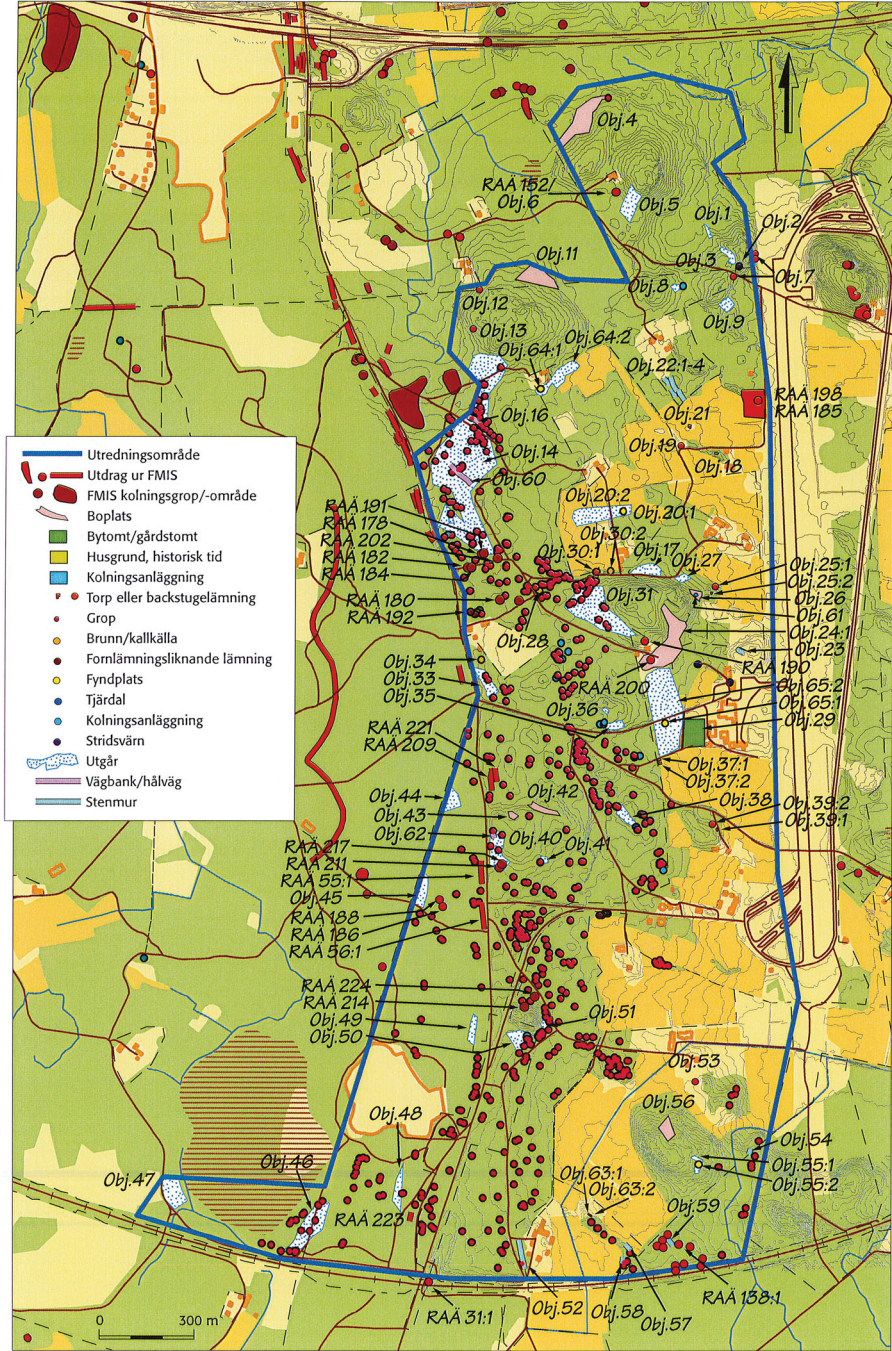


FIG. 7

Surveyed remains, Österrekarne häradssallmanning. After Bondesson 2007: p. 7, courtesy of V. Bondesson.



FIG. 8

Remains of fences around the barren plots of gardener Oldin. Photo: Eva Svensson.

rural slums with urbanity, expressed in the spatial organization and in names such as the City of Crofters (Sw. *Torparstan*) and the nickname Little Grey Town (Sw. dialect *Lelle grå stan*), indicates that there was a feeling of something new having been built and that new forms of community were developed. In this, the poor inhabitants of the rural slums may have been more progressive and more willing to take on new ways of organizing their lives than other groups in the rural communities.

Being geographically marginalized in relation to the settled farmers and villages could mean proximity to natural resources which could be used legally or illegally. The digging for stumps for tar production

and charcoal burning at Kjula Hage, and the previously mentioned poaching are examples of this.⁵⁸ Some of the many different handicrafts present in the rural slums could also have made use of different natural resources not available otherwise. However, the geographically marginal position must have complicated customer relations, and the craftsmen had to be willing to walk long distances to procure and deliver commissions. The same went for the wage workers, who had to earn their living away from home, whether in the district or on distant seasonal work.

Still, as long as working capacity was there, life went on. The biggest problem was the vulnerability of the poor. Sickness, accidents, death, and other

disasters were never far away, and the poor often lacked safety resources. The geographical marginalization in many cases meant that social networks with capacity to help had been shattered and replaced by a clustering of other vulnerable persons. Inability to care for oneself, and lack of a social network to rely on, meant reliance on poor relief, in worst cases as an ambulatory boarder (Sw. *rotehjon*) or a life in the poorhouse.

We shall return to Olof Pettersson and the gardener Oldin, two cases of vulnerability on display. The series of misfortunes that struck Olof Pettersson appear to have been initiated by deaths or diseases. When his father died, he was forced to leave home and start a wage-earning career. When his first wife, Britta Persdotter, fell ill and later died, he descended into crime. But when Olof met his second wife, Maria Andersdotter, they tried to start a new life in a dugout cabin with household utensils of porcelain, glass and pottery. They even hung up two horseshoes to assure themselves of future luck. In spite of the horseshoes over the doors, Maria fell ill and Olof reverted into crime.

The gardener Oldin had practised risk management, that is, he had tried to create security both by doing some cultivation of his own (Fig. 8) and by earning a living working for wages. The problem was that neither of these was enough and neither of them produced any margins. When things grew less well than necessary in his plots, in spite of his efforts, nothing stood in the way of starvation and death.

Both Olof and Oldin stand out as highly vulnerable persons. They had both been geographically marginalized, Olof in a dugout cabin on a district border and Oldin in the rural slum of Våse häradsallmänning. Apparently, they had not been able to compensate for geographical marginalization by creating new, stable social networks to rely on. To Olof and Oldin and many others, the security offered by the welfare state came too late.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Written documents and historical maps are still the dominant sources for studies of recent historical periods, including studies of subalterns. But archaeology is increasingly producing new information, often contributing to more complex and nuanced narratives. In the cases presented here, archaeological material has added new perspectives, especially concerning livelihood and consumption patterns among the poor. This sends new questions back to archaeology, such as (how) can we detect poverty in the archaeological record alone? Which signals of poverty can we identify in the material culture? In order to develop a stronger archaeological knowledge of the poor in recent times, heritage management has to upgrade the importance of the heritage of the poor, and not treat their remains as second-rate heritage. In other words,

increased environmental justice is needed in heritage management.

The concepts of vulnerability and marginalization among paupers in different rural environments have been highlighted in the paper. Vulnerability and living constantly exposed to risks were probably worse than poverty as such, although poverty was an important cause of vulnerability. Vulnerability was thus a socially uneven phenomenon, an environmental injustice. Marginalization was a more complex process, and it depended on context. On one hand it usually meant weaker security nets, and thus increased vulnerability. On the other hand, marginalization could offer new possibilities, such as proximity to useful natural resources. In some of the examples, especially from the rural slums, marginalization had brought about new ways of organizing their lives in communities that were in between urban and rural. In these cases, the poor appear to have been more forward-looking than the more privileged peasants in their local communities.

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NOTES

¹ Larsmo 2017, 180, quotation from *St Paul Daily Globe*, unknown year and issue, translation by the authors.

² Larsmo 2017.

³ Walker 2011.

⁴ KML.

⁵ Lundsjö 1975.

⁶ Gadd 2000, 85–91.

⁷ Elgeskog 1945, 226, 241–245, 249–252.

⁸ Olausson 2016, 91; Skoglund 1992.

⁹ Olausson 2012, 139–141.

¹⁰ Olausson 2012, 160–161.

¹¹ Bodin *et al.* 2005; Bodin *et al.* 2007.

¹² Orser 2011, 535.

¹³ Olausson 2012, 176–178, and sources therein.

¹⁴ Nordström 1938.

¹⁵ e.g. Losman 1986.

¹⁶ Losman 1986.

¹⁷ Walker 2011.

¹⁸ e.g. Mrozowski 2006.

¹⁹ Olausson 2012, 147–149; 2016.

²⁰ Curtis 2014.

²¹ Curtis 2014, 270.

²² Nordström 1938.

²³ Gadd 2000, 221–230.

²⁴ Elgeskog 1945.

²⁵ Charles Loring Brace, in Boquist 1978, 9.

- ²⁶ Andersson Palm 1991; 1993; Bergsten 1946; Boquist 1978; Husberg 1994; Jansson 1998; Myrdal 1999; Nilsson 2008; 2010.
- ²⁷ Bodin *et al.* 2007, 193–194.
- ²⁸ Svensson *et al.* 2018.
- ²⁹ Nilsson, Hansson & Svensson, work in progress.
- ³⁰ Kjellberg 2008.
- ³¹ Lind & Svensson 2001; Nilsson, Hansson & Svensson, work in progress.
- ³² Lindström & Tageson 2016; Pettersson 2014.
- ³³ Jönsson 1976.
- ³⁴ Knarrström 2008, 83–86.
- ³⁵ *Ödenäs natur och kultur*, translation by the authors.
- ³⁶ Lind *et al.* 2001, 56–58; 2002–2003.
- ³⁷ Lind *et al.* 2001, 68, 79; Lind *et al.* 2002–2003, 83–84.
- ³⁸ Lind & Svensson 2001.
- ³⁹ Svensson 1992.
- ⁴⁰ Andersson 2003, 322–323; Parmestål 1971.
- ⁴¹ *Skogens pärlor*.
- ⁴² Parmestål 1971.
- ⁴³ Carlsson & Jansson 2015; Diserud 1983; Losman 1986; Olausson 2012.
- ⁴⁴ Carlsson & Jansson 2015, 45–54.
- ⁴⁵ Carlsson & Jansson 2015, 58–65.
- ⁴⁶ Carlsson & Jansson 2015; Diserud 1983.
- ⁴⁷ Olausson 2012, p. 158.
- ⁴⁸ Carlsson & Jansson 2015; Diserud 1983, 7.
- ⁴⁹ Diserud 1981, 8–9.
- ⁵⁰ Svensson 2001, p. 359.
- ⁵¹ Diserud 1983, 4 and source cited there.
- ⁵² Bondesson 2007.
- ⁵³ Beckman-Thoor 1993.
- ⁵⁴ Appelgren & Strucke 2013; Strucke & Englund 2015.
- ⁵⁵ Appelgren & Strucke 2013, 41–42; Strucke & Englund 2015, 29–30.
- ⁵⁶ Appelgren & Strucke 2013, 41–42; Lind *et al.* 2001, 68, 79; 2002–2003, 83–84; Strucke & Englund 2015, 29–30.
- ⁵⁷ Parmestål 1971, 17.
- ⁵⁸ Appelgren & Strucke 2013; Bodin *et al.* 2007, 193–194.
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SUMMARY IN FRENCH, SPANISH, GERMAN, ITALIAN AND SWEDISH

RESUME

Vivre au bas de l'échelle sociale

L'état-providence suédois est un phénomène récent. Au XIXe et au début du XXe siècles, la campagne suédoise comptait de nombreux sans-propriété et indigents, tels que des petits fermiers, des pensionnaires et des habitants de taudis. Être pauvre impliquait des filets de sécurité fragiles et une exposition aux risques plus importante que pour des personnes bénéficiant de plus de ressources. Cet article traite de ces personnes pauvres du passé récent, étudiées d'un point de vue de la justice environnementale. Avec un changement dans la législation du patrimoine, le champ des possibles pour investiguer archéologiquement le passé récent des sans-propriété s'est élargi, bien que le matériel archéologique soit toujours éparpillé et redondant. Par conséquent, des méthodes multi-sources telle que la triangulation de documents écrits, cartes historiques et indices archéologiques ont été employées pour étudier les conditions de vie, la vulnérabilité et la marginalisation des petits fermiers et habitants des taudis ruraux. Le poids de l'archéologie est important dans ce contexte, contrairement aux fréquents arguments qui réfutent l'utilité de l'archéologie pour des périodes riches en sources écrites. Dans les cas investigués, l'archéologie montre une image plus complexe des possibilités, de la vulnérabilité et de la marginalisation des pauvres. Bien que la marginalisation offrait de nouvelles possibilités aux pauvres, elle impliquait également des filets de sécurité plus fragiles et une vulnérabilité accrue.

RESUMEN

**“¿El escalón más bajo al que puedas llegar?”
Viviendo en la parte baja de la escalera social**

El Estado de bienestar social sueco es un fenómeno reciente. En el siglo XIX ya principios del XX había numerosas personas no propietarias y pobres en el campo sueco, como pequeños agricultores y habitantes de barrios marginales rurales. Ser pobre también suponía estar más expuesto a riesgos diversos que otras personas, además de tener unas redes de asistencia muy frágiles. Este artículo trata sobre estas personas pobres del pasado reciente, vistas desde una perspectiva de justicia ambiental y con un enfoque en las posibilidades, la vulnerabilidad y la marginación geográfica y social. El cambio en la legislación patrimonial nos ha proporcionado mayores posibilidades de investigar arqueológicamente a este grupo, aunque el material arqueológico aún es escaso y de carácter repetitivo. Por lo tanto se han utilizado métodos diversos como la triangulación de documentos escritos, mapas históricos y evidencia arqueológica para estudiar las condiciones de vida, la vulnerabilidad y la marginación de los habitantes de barrios marginales rurales.

Argumentamos la importancia de la arqueología en este contexto, ya que a menudo se critica su utilidad para el estudio de períodos que cuentan con abundantes fuentes escritas. En los casos investigados, la arqueología nos proporciona una imagen más compleja de las posibilidades, vulnerabilidad y marginación de la gente pobre. La marginación podría ofrecer nuevas posibilidades a los pobres, pero también redes de seguridad social débiles y una mayor vulnerabilidad.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

“So weit nach unten wie möglich”? Leben am unteren Ende der sozialen Leiter

Der schwedische Wohlfahrtsstaat ist ein relativ junges Phänomen. Im 19. und frühen 20. Jhd. gab es im ländlichen Raum Schwedens eine große Anzahl von Besitzlosen und von Ärmsten der Armen, die als Kleinpächter, Kostgänger und Bewohner in ländlichen Elendsquartieren untergebracht waren. Arm zu sein bedeutete auch größeren Risiken ausgesetzt zu sein, als es Wohlhabendere waren, und nur über eine unsichere Absicherung zu verfügen. Dieser Artikel hat diese Ärmsten der Armen der näheren Vergangenheit zum Thema und fokussiert sich dabei auf eine Perspektive aus der Umweltgerechtigkeit und setzt einen Schwerpunkt auf Möglichkeiten, Verletzlichkeiten und geographische sowie soziale Ausgrenzungen. Eine Änderung in der Gesetzgebung zum Kulturerbe ermöglichte eine bessere Anwendung von archäologischen Untersuchungen von Besitzlosen, jedoch verbleibt das archäologische Material selten und hat einen eher wiederholenden Charakter. Methoden, die Material aus verschiedensten Quellen, wie Dokumenten, historischen Karten und archäologischen Untersuchungen kombinierten, wurden genutzt um Lebensbedingungen, Verletzlichkeiten und die Marginalisierung von Kostgängern und Bewohnern der ländlichen Elendsviertel in einer Anzahl von Fällen nachzuvollziehen. Wir möchten hierbei noch einmal die Wichtigkeit der Archäologie in diesem Kontext betonen, da es oftmals Argumente gegen die Nützlichkeit der Archäologie in Zeiten mit vielen schriftlichen Quellen gibt. In den untersuchten Fällen halfen archäologische Untersuchungen ein komplexeres Bild der Möglichkeiten, Verletzlichkeiten und der Marginalisierung der Ärmsten der Armen zu darzustellen als es ohne möglich gewesen wäre. Marginalisierung konnte neue Möglichkeiten für die Ärmsten der Armen eröffnen, aber endete oftmals in schwächeren, sozialen Netzen und mit einer erhöhten Verletzlichkeit.

RIASSUNTO

“Quanto in basso si può scendere”? Vivere sul gradino più basso della scala sociale

Lo stato sociale svedese è un fenomeno recente. Durante il XIX secolo e all'inizio del XX, risiedevano nelle campagne svedesi numerosi nullatenenti, nonché persone povere e indigenti quali i proprietari di piccoli poderi, i fittavoli e quanti vivevano in baracche nelle aree rurali. Essere poveri significava anche essere maggiormente esposti a rischi rispetto a quanti avevano accesso a delle risorse, nonché disporre di una rete di sostegno più fragile. Questo lavoro parla dei poveri e degli indigenti del recente passato, considerando queste persone dal punto di vista di una ‘giustizia ambientale’, ponendo l'attenzione sulle loro possibilità, sulla loro vulnerabilità e sull'emarginazione geografica e sociale. Con i cambiamenti nella legislazione del patrimonio culturale sono emerse maggiori possibilità per indagare archeologicamente i nullatenenti del recente passato, anche se il materiale ad oggi disponibile è ancora scarso e non variegato. Per questo, in molti casi, per studiare le condizioni di vita, la vulnerabilità e la marginalizzazione dei fittavoli e degli abitanti dei bassifondi rurali, si impiega un metodo multidisciplinare, che incrocia le fonti scritte, le mappe storiche e i dati archeologici. Sosteniamo la rilevanza dell'archeologia in questo contesto, in considerazione del fatto che

spesso ci sono discussioni riguardo la sua utilità per periodi ricchi di fonti scritte. Nei casi presi in esame, l'archeologia ha contribuito a mostrare la complessità delle possibilità, della vulnerabilità e dell'emarginazione dei poveri e degli indigenti. La marginalizzazione poteva fornire nuove possibilità a queste persone, ma allo stesso tempo implicare reti di sostegno più fragili e una maggiore vulnerabilità.

SAMMANFATTNING

‘Så långt ned man kan komma’? Att leva på den sociala trappstegens nedersta steg

Under 1800- och tidigt 1800-tal fanns många obestämda och fattiga människor på den svenska landsbygden, såsom torpare, backstugusittare och inhyses. I denna artikel har källpluralistisk metod, triangulering av skriftliga källor, historiskt kartmaterial och arkeologiskt källmaterial, använts för att studera levnadsvillkor, sårbarhet och marginalisering av inhyses och inbyggare i rurala slumområden (tåbebyggelse / allmänningsbebyggelse) ur ett miljörettsperspektiv. Att vara fattig innebar också en högre grad av riskutsatthet, och att man hade svagare skyddsnät än resursstarka personer. Marginalisering kunde medföra vissa möjligheter till nya utkomster för de fattiga, men innebar i allmänhet svagare skyddsnät och ökad sårbarhet.

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