

Gösta Bågenholm, Arkeologi och språk i Norra Östersjöområdet. Gotarc B:12. Göteborg 1999, 212 p., English summary, appendix.

This book is a doctoral dissertation in archaeology that will no doubt surprise every archaeologist who reads it. We know archaeology to be a discipline seeking to elucidate human culture in pre-historic and historically documented times with reference to antiquities and individual finds. Bågenholm's book, however, does not discuss any artefacts or antiquities. Mats P. Malmer's old prediction that archaeology will develop into a discipline for which individual finds will be of no consequence and antiquities of only minor importance seems to have come true in this book.

Bågenholm presents a kind of series of lectures in historical philology, in which the lecturer chooses to elucidate the questions discussed through quotes. To my knowledge, philology, too, operates to some degree with material of a primary nature. The study is strangely structured also in the sense that, despite its heading, it is not limited to the Baltic sphere, but also treats the whole history of the Indo-European and Fenno-Ugrian languages.

The author seeks to prove that all discussion to date on the origin and relations of the Indo-European and Fenno-Ugrian languages is erroneous. His main idea is that countless languages were spoken in Europe during the Ice Ages. Bågenholm maintains that languages display simultaneously disintegrating and consolidating tendencies. Depending on the balance of these trends, languages will either form larger entities or split into increasingly smaller languages. In Europe, where relatively few languages or language groups are known, the course of development has been predominately one of integration. He also claims that in addition to vocabulary also the basic structures of languages can change and can be borrowed over time. The total extinction of a language also appears to play an important role in Bågenholm's argumentation.

He does not give archaeology many tasks in solving his problem. If I have understood him correctly, he claims that crises in settlement will lead to demographic and linguistic change, among other developments. The crisis of the 7th century AD, the Black Death and contemporary process

of urbanization are such periods of change and transition, in other words three very recent events in overall post-glacial history. They are apparently only some kind of example of the relationship between crises of settlement and changes in languages. The author clearly does not set out in any specific area or with reference to any particular language to discuss how language is shaped as the result of crises of settlement.

Bågenholm's study is an interesting statement of opinion regarding a subject that has somewhat surprisingly become topical after the mid-1980s. It also demonstrates an admirable familiarity with philological studies on the part of an amateur. I do not know what the author's previous education is, but the work is nonetheless a doctoral dissertation in archaeology and not in philology.

The presentation and style are markedly polemic. Bågenholm sees political agendas underlying different interpretations, and even family relations in the case of the archaeologist C. A. Nordman. It is obvious that the political views of archaeologists will in some way also be reflected in their scholarly output. Gustaf Kossinna was no doubt pleased to find the original home of the Indo-Europeans in the area of Germany and Denmark, while Gordon Childe no less readily placed it as far as possible beyond the borders of Germany. Today's intelligentsia regard themselves to be cosmopolitan and Bågenholm's work, in which he seeks to negate the whole concept of an original home region, must be viewed against this background. It should be borne in mind, however, what Professor A. M. Tallgren wrote in 1933 concerning the prehistoric roots of Swedish settlement in Finland: "Det är mig motbjudande att beröra frågans politiska sida, emedan den för mig totalt saknar en sådan, ock jag begriper ej cui bono professor Wiklund så starkt drar fram dessa synpunkter. Jag hatar all nationalism, och frågan är uteslutande vetenskaplig" (Tallgren 1933:186). (I find it unpleasant to deal with the political aspect of this question, as for me it completely lacks such an aspect, and I do not understand *cui bono* (to whose benefit) Professor Wiklund presents these views in such strong terms. I hate all manner of nationalism, and the question is solely a scholarly one.)

In his critique, the author rejects the family-tree model in explaining the history of languages, for the reason, among others, that it operates only

with reference to existing languages and ignores those that have become extinct long ago. He thus rejects Proto Indo-European (PIE) as an unhistorical reconstruction as well as interpretations that seek to outline conditions at the time of that language with the aid of it. Discussion on the original home of the Fenno-Ugrians also receives short shrift from Bågenholm.

I agree with his point that the original home of these language groups cannot be sought in the regions of the Black Sea just because the oldest historical information on the peoples speaking these languages comes from this area, for we do not know the name of any Late Stone Age European peoples, from which we could surmise what languages were spoken at the time in places like Denmark or near the great bend of the Volga. Also the observation that discussion on the original home area of the Indo-Europeans is largely based on the prehistory and early history of Greece is correct. The fact that Linear B has proven to be an Indo-European language has now posed problems for speculations concerning the late Indo-Europeanization of Europe.

Bågenholm therefore seeks to prove that in fact we have hardly any information on the original non-Indo-European population of Europe.

Here, too, he is, in principle, correct, but fails to note the observation expressed by Finnish philologists that the Basque language does not contain any early Indo-European loan-words, while such loans are common in the eastern languages. This presents a strong case for the eastern origin of the Indo-European languages. Suggestions of an eastern origin of the Indo-European languages are largely based on the 19th-century observation that Proto Fenno-Ugric contains Indo-European loan-words. Bågenholm does not dispute these similarities, but he has found, in the research literature, five explanations for Indo-Iranian loan-words in Finnish:

1. The Fenno-Ugric and Indo-European languages have common origins.
2. The words are very old loans from Proto Indo-Iranian.
3. They are loans passed on by the Slavic or Baltic languages.
4. They are loans passed on by the Romany languages into South Slavonic, from where they spread into Finnish, i.a. via Church Slavonic.
5. The similarities are only apparent.

Of these alternatives, Bågenholm denies only the last one. It is surprising, however, that in the appendix of his book he notes that some of these loans are Baltic, i.e. he has made use of observations supporting alternative number 3 above. He does not, however, discuss this point in the text and the reader is left with the impression that the work as a whole has not been completely thought out. The author seems to have been inspired more by writing than thinking. A number of other details are also discussed in various parts of the book, and even though reference is made to previous discussion in one or the other subject with a catchingly phrased heading, one cannot avoid a diffuse impression.

In the area of archaeology the author is interested i.a. in the idea, originally suggested by Gordon Childe, that the Black Sea region was a home area of the Indo-European languages and peoples and that the Indo-Europeans presumably migrated to Europe along with the appearance of the Battle-Axe, or Corded Ware, cultures. Following his way of thinking, the author takes a critical view of such interpretations.

Along with Childe, Bågenholm mentions Marija Gimbutas, who no doubt has considerable influence on the establishment of his *kurgan* hypotheses. Characteristic of the book are tiring quotes from different examples of research. The author is no doubt correct when he notes that the current literature on Indo-European archaeology is so extensive that no summary, however superficial, is possible.

As a supporter of interpretations stressing continuity, Bågenholm could have been expected to mention E. Neustupny, who in the 1960s, along with Mats P. Malmer, was a prominent protagonist of the local origin of the Corded Ware Cultures (Neustupny 1969). I was also surprised to observe that he does not mention the article by L. Kilian (published in the same volume as the articles by H. Moora and K. Mark with which Bågenholm is familiar), in which it is clearly demonstrated that the Corded Ware, or Battle Axe, culture cannot be derived from the ochre-grave (*kurgan*) culture (Kilian 1958). This article refers to research and statements in support of this viewpoint by T. Sulimirski and V. G. Childe. The article also cites T. Sulimirski's well-known interpretation according to which the eastern branch of the Battle Axe Culture belonged to the Fenno-Ugrian peoples. Kilian's dissertation marked the return of

discussion on the origins of the Battle Axe Cultures to the original *Nordischer Kreis* theory (Kilian 1955).

Marija Gimbutas's and Harri Moora's concepts apparently dominated to such a degree that differing views remained unknown not only to Bågenholm but to archaeology in general. Bågenholm pays special attention to researchers whom he calls neo-migrationists, who have again begun to interpret the appearance of the Battle Axe Cultures as signifying a new population. He also points to Norwegian studies in which the boat images of petroglyphs are interpreted as indicating the immigration of Indo-Europeans (Prescott & Walderhaug 1995). I agree with Bågenholm's criticism, but in view of the vast literature on the subject is it necessary to focus on a work that is obviously of little import? The fact that Bågenholm pays special attention to the Battle Axe Culture shows that, despite all his critical views, he has not rid himself of the heritage of past research. Notably, when speaking of the Battle Axe Cultures, he restricts his discussion almost uniquely to the Corded Ware tradition. The term Battle Axe Culture has now come to be used of this culture as it has been seen that the previous generic term, Corded Ware Culture, does not encompass the whole phenomenon at hand.

Criticism of cartographic presentations appears to be characteristic of Bågenholm and his book contains two maps published by Gimbutas on presumed Indo-European expansion. He also appears to be completely ignorant of the basis of such presentations. This is an old well-argued Swedish interpretation which Mats P. Malmer has criticized.

Bågenholm pays special attention to the history of cord-impressed pottery decoration, which he derives from the Early Neolithic Vrå group of Scandinavia. According to him, in Finnish studies cord impressions are systematically associated with the pottery of the Battle Axe Culture and he suspects that some kind of crude generalization in this connection. Cord impressions, however, also appear in Comb Ware, as is known to all Finnish experts on the Stone Age. I have tried to address this problem, even though I feel that it does not provide any key to establishing the possible domestic origin of the Battle Axe Culture of Finland.

I have sought parallels to the cord impressions in Comb Ware mainly from the Globular Amphora

Culture, where cord impressions are common, and in the Para-Neolithic cultures of the Baltic-Polish regions. Both can be dated older than the Battle Axe Culture, and the oldest cord impression that I have come across is from as early as the fourth millennium BC. Bågenholm ignores this whole East European group. On the other hand, he places some weight on Torsten Edgren's observations that in Finland and Sweden alike garland motifs were made with cord impressions. This motif also appears in the *Haffküstenkultur*, as I have noted in my publications (Luoto 1987:7).

Bågenholm has also discussed the problem of continuity of the Finnish Battle Axe Culture by addressing its economy, choices of sites and independent nature. He observes that in Finland, this culture subsisted on seal hunting. The claim can naturally apply only to those sites that are in connection with bodies of water suited to sealing.

Experts in the various countries around the Baltic have maintained that the seal stock considerably diminished during time of the Battle Axe Cultures. This observation was originally made in the cave of Stora Förvar in Gotland, but also the Narva Culture stage of the Svetoij site is characterized by seal bones, and the Battle Axe Culture stage by fish bones. Despite hunter-gatherer modes of subsistence, the local population also practised some degree of agricultural means of livelihood. There are also observations of a diminished seal stock from the Åland Islands, but I have questioned the veracity of this data. Generally speaking, the relationship of the Battle Axe Culture with seal hunting has been given undue notice, since many of the culture's dwelling sites are in inland locations. Bågenholm presents a different view the Battle Axe Culture's choice of dwelling sites. He points to the widely known fact that in many cases the Finnish Battle Axe Culture sites are not situated on ancient shorelines but at a distance from the contemporary shore, often at a location that had been previously occupied.

With reference to the Finnish archaeologist Sakari Pälsi, he explains this phenomenon with the suggestion that for several centuries the sites remained meadow locations, being thus excellently suited to later occupation. This problem is basically a paleo-botanical one and by no means unknown in scholarly discussion and debate of the past few decades. It has very little to do with the history of language. However, with reference to this phenomenon, the author obviates the fact that

very few sites reveal continuity of settlement from the Comb Ware period to the Battle Axe Culture.

According to the original interpretation of this situation in Finnish scholarship, the Comb Ware and Battle Axe Cultures had different means of livelihood, the former being bound to shore locations while the later was, at most, bound to the coast. This point is often ignored, not only by Bågenholm, as well as the fact that we have nonetheless a few items of data also pointing to agricultural means of livelihood, one observation of lamb/goat remains and one of a bovine. Amounts of cereal pollen from the Battle Axe period are, however, small, and the relationship of the analyses specifically with this culture remains unclear (Häkkinen & Lempiäinen 1996:143-144; Meinander 1983a).

The history of forests in the environs of the Perkiö site in Hauho can be interpreted as having been caused by means of livelihood involving with cultivation. The archaeologist originally sought to demonstrate that the Battle Axe Culture practised cultivation, with reference to its distribution and criteria for selecting sites (Äyräpää 1940). These arguments have subsequently been criticized by M. Zvelebil (1981) and T. Edgren (1984). All in all, Bågenholm does not regard the Finnish Battle Axe Culture to have been a separate culture, but rather interprets its phenomena as some kind of Comb Ware Culture loans from the Battle Axe Cultures of the regions further to the south. He even regards the so-called barbaric (Comb Ware Culture) imitations of battle axes to be genuine battle axes, of which only the material differed. Along with the discussion on cord-impressed decoration, this claim shows that the author is not familiar with the Battle Axe Culture of Finland.

The small number of burial finds and the mixed nature of dwelling sites naturally make it difficult to explore the independent nature of the Battle Axe Culture in Finland. The very fact that it is difficult to demonstrate Comb Ware settlement coexisting with the Battle Axe Culture in the same regions is a strong argument in favour of a separate culture, if not a completely independent phase of settlement. Opposing this claim is the author's observation that more dwelling sites of the Battle Axe Culture are known from Finland than elsewhere. Basing on this, he suggests that the centre of the culture was in fact in Finland. He is not aware that there are also large numbers of sites in

the context of the Haffküstenkultur and in Switzerland. Here we are dealing with the opposition between the dwelling-site cultures on the one hand and the grave cultures on the other. The Battle Axe Cultures, the Early Bronze Age culture and the Iron Age culture are all typical grave cultures, while in Finland the Kiukainen and Comb Ware Cultures are dwelling-site cultures. Apparently economy, settlement pattern and social structure dictate whether we know a culture primarily from its graves or from its settlements. With regard to the Battle Axe Culture of Finland this would indicate that the Comb Ware and Battle Axe Cultures did not differ as radically as assumed in past decades. In fact, Bågenholm's suggestion that the Battle Axe Culture did not mark a new population in the prehistory of Finland, is by no means alien or unacceptable to me. I do not believe, however, that Bågenholm's approach can shed light on the relationship of the Battle Axe Culture with the Comb Ware Culture, let alone the language spoken by these populations.

Another theme of Finnish archaeology chosen by Bågenholm concerns Iron Age settlement in Ostrobothnia. In this connection the author seeks to elucidate the origins of the Swedish-speaking regions of Ostrobothnia. He claims that there is no evidence a migration from Sweden in historically documented times, and it can therefore be assumed that the Swedish-speaking population is of Iron Age descent. One of the main problems of the Ostrobothnian Iron Age is the apparent depopulation of the region during the Viking Age.

Bågenholm's dissertation makes short shrift of the results put forth in recent years by the popular archaeological movement of Swedish-speaking Ostrobothnia, the Vöyri rune inscriptions, cited palynological analyses and dwelling-site excavations, of which the first two are regarded by him to indicate the continuity of Swedish settlement past the Viking Age. He would like to interpret the excavated house remains as evidence of settlement from Sweden, but he has to reject this claim. Bågenholm is aware of pre-Viking Age settlement on the basis of Swedish-language toponymic studies, indicating the occurrence of place-names with the elements *minnilä-minne-joensuu, strand, havände, sund, vik, fjärd, näs, ö* and *holme* deep in the inland parts of Ostrobothnia. The Vöyri runes are a highly disputed group of antiquities, upon which nothing can be based. In connection with the runes, Bågenholm discusses the occur-

rence of rune inscriptions in a few coins found in Finland as if they were of some importance. Coins with Latin and Arabic inscriptions have also been found in Finnish soil, but this does not mean that these languages can be conceived to have had any influence on languages spoken in Finland. In connection with the runes, however, Bågenholm neglects to mention the Unni cross of Sund in the Åland Islands, and the existence of a copy of its inscription on an outcrop of bedrock in the yard of a nearby farm (Drejjer 1950; 1965).

He is aware of the recently discovered rune stone of Hiittinen (Åhlén *et al.* 1998; Tuovinen 1998).

Pollen analyses pertaining to Ostrobothnia cannot be directly interpreted as indicating the continuity of settlement as such from the Migration Period to historically documented times. All experts no doubt concede that the termination of use of the rich cemeteries of Ostrobothnia at some stage of the Merovingian Period signified a radical change in settlement, and there is no basis for speaking of the continuity of settlement through the Viking Age. It is difficult to establish whether this discontinuity implies the depopulation of the whole province or only a reorganization of settlement.

This chapter in particular gives the impression that the author is not quite versed in his subject matter, even though he is familiar with the main points of related discussion in the pages of *Fennoscandia archaeologica* (Baudou 1993; Engelmark *et al.* 1993; Orrman *et al.* 1993; see, however, Orrman 1992). Bågenholm does not know of my contribution to the Ostrobothnia depopulation debate or its later stages. His diffuse way of thinking is perhaps best expressed by a term that he uses surprisingly in this connection, viz. *etniskt baltiska artefakter* (ethnically Baltic artefacts). Despite his criticism in other connections of earlier studies for their ethnic attribution of prehistoric cultures, he now maintains that a certain artefact form represents an ethnic group.

All in all, Bågenholm maintains that the history of language differed in Southern Ostrobothnia from the course of development elsewhere in Finland insofar as in Ostrobothnia the Swedish language had a good reputation, which led to its widespread use, while elsewhere in the country the opposite trend ensued. His discussion does not clearly tell if this linguistic change was associated with decreased population in the Viking

Age or whether is evinced by some other archaeologically observed phenomenon.

In this connection I would have liked to have seen reference to C. F. Meinander's article on the immigration of the Swedes into Finland, *Om svensskarnes inflyttning till Finland* (Meinander 1983b). Although Meinander does not particularly treat the origin of Swedish settlement in Ostrobothnia, he nevertheless discusses the question in regard to the whole eastern coastal zone of the Baltic, concluding that the settlement itself is historically young, although the Swedish element in Finland has roots reaching back at least three millennia.

Bågenholm also deals with the problems of Iron Age population and settlement with regard to Western Finland, among other areas, apparently assuming that the Finnish language strengthened and gained ground in this period at the cost of Swedish. Here, too, the reader is left uncertain as to the grounds of these conclusions, although Professor Unto Salo's views on the history of language in the Laitila area of SW Finland and the origins of settlement at Kårsämäki in Maaria (Turku) appear to be important in this connection (Salo 1994; Salo 1981; see also Nissinaho 1995).

In principle, it must however, be pointed out that the issues of language history and related conditions are no clearer in Laitila than elsewhere. With regard to Kårsämäki I have tried to demonstrate that the origin of the culture that it represents cannot be solved without knowledge of the Iron Age of Poland and Lithuania.

Bågenholm seems to hold the view that the cemetery of Kårsämäki in Maaria has some kind of central role with regard to conditions related to language. The women buried at Kårsämäki belonged to the local population and the men came from either Scandinavia or the region at the mouth of the River Vistula.

There is, however, a long-standing tradition of research in Finland that has interpreted the existence of a Swedish-speaking nobility amidst the local Finnish population during the Iron Age. This view is based on the material of the Ristimäki cemetery in Kaarina, published by A. M. Tallgren in 1915. Among others, C. A. Nordman developed this theme further. In this connection Bågenholm discusses early Germanic loan-words and Baltic loans, which he regards – no doubt correctly – to be primarily of Iron Age date. With regard to early Germanic contacts, one must note with surprise

that Bågenholm is completely unaware of Jouko Vahtola's study – published in Swedish – on Germanic place-names, and of the ensuing discussion (Vahtola 1983).

Bågenholm has drawn up a detailed list of Baltic loan-words, but its purpose remains somewhat unclear to the reader, as a previously published list is available, and the subject was taken up in the form of a new list immediately after Bågenholm's dissertation came out. Apparently his list is not of importance to philology. How an archaeologist can expect to benefit from Bågenholm's list remains unknown to me.

In demonstrating the Iron Age date of the Baltic loan-words, the author states in several connections that wool from sheep was not spun in the Nordic countries until after the Stone Age. *Villa*, the Finnish word for wool, is a Baltic loan. Spun materials, however, are so rare in the Stone Age material that no conclusions can be drawn concerning the lack of wool from sheep. Another singular item of information related to the dating of loan-words concerns the occurrence of Iron Age wooden spades in Viking Age graves in Finland. I have made a study of the European history of this type of artefact, but despite efforts I am not aware of any Viking Age spades in Finland, or in fact in any of the neighbouring regions.

In the anthropological section of his dissertation, Bågenholm takes a critical view of possibly demonstrating migration with reference to craniological measurements. This position is correct insofar as contemporary research in this area, which has remained completely unknown to Bågenholm, attributes change in the craniological material to changes in nutrition rather than to population transfer or migration. It is nevertheless strange that he bypasses the Baltic countries with only one mention despite the fact that a great deal of craniological material is available from this region, with its solid tradition of research in physical anthropology. Basing on my lectures of the 1970s, I have presented the results of anthropological studies on the Battle Axe Culture in a congress report published a couple of years ago. The language barrier has apparently prevented Bågenholm from familiarizing himself with this material. The points that I already presented in my lectures are by no means classified information and one could well expect Bågenholm to be more familiar with the related literature than he now appears to be.

Discussing blood groups, Bågenholm presents sound criticism of the way in which researchers reflect their results on prehistory and different populations. He does not even attempt to take the positive course, i.e. to find indications of different populations in the various studies.

The above examples are only a kind of random sample of the ambiguities of Bågenholm's dissertation. My review does not do justice to Bågenholm mainly because I do not by any means mention all the problems of philology and archaeology discussed by him. I am of the opinion that Bågenholm's book is worth reading, for it gives the uninitiated an idea of how complex the prehistory and formation processes of our present languages can be.

In terms of scholarship, however, Bågenholm's work offers very little. No theme is discussed in manner that would lead one to refer specifically to Bågenholm's study when dealing with a particular problem of prehistory or ancient linguistic conditions. The author's approach is more of an outside observer's than that of a scholar. It is of course positive to see a foreigner make an attempt to study the prehistory of Finland, but language restrictions alone make Bågenholm's presentation uncertain.

Bågenholm is obviously an admirer of Finnish archaeology; I admire Danish archaeology. The guiding star in the latter area used to be Johannes Brøndsted's *Danmarks Oldtid* (Brøndsted 1957, 1958, 1960), containing a detailed presentation of the archaeology of Denmark as a whole, with due reference to sources. This now obsolete work is ably complemented by the compendium *Da klinger i Muld - 25 års arkæologi i Danmark* (Hvass & Storgaard 1993).

Should Finnish archaeologists seek to produce in some international language similar works on the prehistory of Finland to permit the international readership to have sufficient and up-to-date information on Finnish archaeology?

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