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Figurativ bildkommunikation av ideologi och kosmologi under sydsandinavisk bronsålder och förromersk järnålder

Akademisk avhandling som för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i arkeologi vid institutionen för arkeologi, Göteborgs universitet offentlig försvaras av Åsa Fredell, FM i sal T 219, Arkeologen, Olof Wijksgatan 6 lördagen den 20 december 2003 kl 13.00 efter godkännande av humanistiska fakultetsnämnden som även utsett betygsnämnd, opponent och ordföranden vid disputationen.

ABSTRACT

BRIDGING IMAGES

Pictorial Communication of Ideology and Cosmology in the Southern Scandinavian Bronze Age and the Pre-Roman Iron Age

This thesis deals with figurative, pictorial materials during the southern Scandinavian Bronze Age and the Pre-Roman Iron Age. The purpose is to investigate the function of the pictures within and in relation to a society in which cultural transmission was based on oral tradition. The abilities and unique characteristics of the picture are emphasised in relation to and compared with the phonetic writing.

My theoretical effort comprises the uniting and adapting of multiple theoretical fields selected for the objectives of the thesis. It is a bricolage with roots in context structures, communication theory, picture semiotics, a comparative method in space and time (that gives the material a historicity and social dimension), and different aspects of the concepts of time, space, landscape and the elements as arenas and inspiration for practice and movement.

Firstly, the bricolage of theories and its different methods are practised locally in two minor contexts in Norrköping and Tanum respectively, where the archaeological material and its structures are treated in general with the help of a cumulative discussion pattern. Fifteen selected, rock-art panels are subjected to a thorough, picture-semiotic analysis and the time and space relations of the motifs are discussed in detail. These studies of material provide the background for the following discussion concerning the narrative characteristics of the figurative phenomenon i.e., the different forms of expression, directions of orientation, scenes, compositions, gestures and attributes and the active use of it in society. As a consequence, problematic areas considering the relation between concepts such as shape and contents, origin and transformation, and continuity and change are also addressed.

One conclusion that is drawn, among others, is that the figurative, pictorial material possesses an active archival function in society, since the material acts together with speech, myth, ritual and memory for an effective legitimisation of ideology and for a cultural transmission.

The pictorial material mainly displays an ideology and cosmology that is founded on and firmly established in phenomena such as the import of bronze - for the establishment of an origin and identity and for the practice of power. The ways in which the pictorial material communicates ideology and cosmology are transformative over time but can in general be characterised by different types of codes and directions of communication. The pictorial material shows a development in character with manipulation and transformation, in which the narrative function becomes more important and diversified.

It is concluded that the figurative picture is, in several ways, a bridge between object and thought, between peoples, and between different times and places.

Keywords: Figurative, pictorial material, rock art, pictures on objects, figurines, Bronze Age, Pre-Roman Iron Age, Picture semiotics, meta-context, trans-context, situational context, borderlands, power/ideology, cosmology, communication, oral tradition, pictorial narratives, memory, shape/contents, continuity/change, origin/transformation, space/time.