

Dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy submitted by Terje Gansum, October 29th 2004, 13.00 in room T219 Arkeologen, Olof Wijksgatan 6, Department of Archaeology, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

## ABSTRACT

Hauger som konstruksjoner - arkeologiske forventninger gjennom 200 år. Published in Gotar Serie B, Gothenburg Archaeological Thesis No 33.  
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The production of archaeological knowledge is the main focus in this thesis. Archaeological expectations and praxis is analyzed through the study of barrows. Are all barrows grave mounds, or is this only an archaeological interpretation that has not been challenged? In the last 200 years the search for artefacts have dominated the expectations among Scandinavian archaeologists. We will take a closer look at the excavation techniques, strategies and documentation from 1830 to 2003. Changes within these three analytical categories are located. In which ways did or did not new knowledge and know-how change praxis?

The main theme in this study is to analyze mounds as constructions in many different perspectives. In the archaeological literature mounds are treated as graves or empty graves. This interpretation has dominated the discourse in the archaeological discipline. We want to challenge the notions we use, and the concepts and categorizations we make, by treating the mounds as constructions. Constructions are built and may be rebuilt. The language and metaphors that has connotation to constructions are not bound up with the concept of grave. This shift of focus guides us in new directions in our analysis of archaeological praxis and production of knowledge.

The mounds are the locus for transformations over long time spans. Such constructions cannot be empty by definition, since they are built on purpose. We analyzed the excavation reports from the Swedish National Heritage Board from the period 1990-2003 to get an overview on praxis. By examine the original documentation and conduct new excavations (single context planning) to produce relevant data we were able to get a better grip on the construction sequences. Through these sequences we were able to interpret the actions behind the different deposits and interfaces. We were able to understand the building process; the re-building and re-openings of the constructions and by this way get knowledge about the rituals that took place. Mounds are materialized rituals and we believe that this change of perspective may lead to a better understanding of the pre Christian rituals including the cult of the dead.

Key words: expectations, production of knowledge, graves, barrows, mounds, constructions, rituals, single context.