

5 Contested Classicism

Reconciling Classical Studies in Twentieth-Century Sweden

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Abstract

This chapter elaborates the contested position of Classical studies in twentieth-century Sweden through two case studies. The first case study is the classicism of Erik Hedén, a leading social democrat. In order to reconcile classicism with his political ideology, Hedén distinguished between classicism and the conservative connotations of classicism.

Classicism is often associated with conservative sentiments. In post-war Sweden, this was coupled with a wider resentment against the humanities. The renaming of several academic disciplines in Sweden around 1970 was an attempt to come to terms with this setting. I suggest, in the second case study, that the change of the official Swedish name for the academic discipline Classical archaeology and ancient history aimed to reconcile classicism.

Keywords: classical studies, social democracy, conservatism, educational politics, Sweden, humanities

Introduction

The relations between classical studies and social democracy are often viewed as strained. According to this kind of reasoning the Swedish Social Democratic Party adheres to a view on higher education which emphasizes the functional and practical sides of education, subordinating knowledge production to the agenda of social engineering, which was prioritized in the welfare state of the twentieth century. Within this educational policy regime, classical studies and classicism were associated with outdated

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ideals of *Bildung* and self-promotion and viewed to have little direct value to the needs of the society. However, neither political ideologies nor academic disciplines are monolithic. There are disagreements within social democracy as well as in classical studies. Furthermore, being part of the same society, it is only reasonable to expect some interaction between them. This chapter aims to elaborate the interaction between social democracy and classical studies in twentieth-century Sweden through two encounters.

The first case study takes its cue from the works of Erik Hedén (1875–1925), a social democrat with a PhD in Classical archaeology and ancient history. In particular I will address Hedén's articles concerning classical matters. His views on classical antiquity are important since they illustrate an interaction between social democratic ideology and classicism. However, Hedén was not the only classicist with a socialist political persuasion. On an international level several prominent classicists were influenced by socialist ideas during the first half of the twentieth century. In order to situate Hedén's view on classical antiquity I will compare his views with the work of other socialist classicists.

The second case study centers on Swedish education politics, in particular after the Second World War. Recent studies have analyzed the history and politics of the humanities in Sweden during the twentieth century. Building on these studies, I will address how the awkward position of classical studies in post-war Sweden was reconciled. In particular I will situate the renaming of the Swedish academic discipline *Klassisk fornkunskap och antikens historia* [Classical archaeology and ancient history] to *Antikens kultur och samhällsliv* [Ancient culture and societal life] within the context of Swedish education policy.¹ I tentatively suggest that the renaming should be regarded as an attempt to reconcile classicism in post-war Sweden.

A Conservative Big Tradition

Let me, however, begin with a brief sketch of the ideological foundations of classical studies.²

1 I have aimed to give literal English translations of the Swedish terms in the parentheses throughout this article. All translations of terms and quotes are mine.

2 I use "classical studies" to denote studies of classical antiquity in general, internationally and/or in Sweden. When it is used for Swedish classical studies it denotes also studies of classical antiquity outside the academic discipline "Classical archaeology and ancient history," such as and mainly "Classical philology."

Classical studies are often, and for good reasons, perceived to have conservative connotations. Classicism is frequently employed in ideologies and discourses which aim to preserve social, cultural, or political conditions. The classical is associated with the traditional and viewed to signal elitism.³ That is, classicism is associated primarily with exemplary high culture and contrasted to popular culture.⁴

The conservative sentiments of classical studies have been articulated in several ways. Numerous prominent classicists have expressed conservative political views and served as political representatives for conservative parties. The conservatism of Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, probably the leading classicist in Germany during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, is well known.⁵ Furthermore, the political profile of German classical studies during the early twentieth century has been characterized as “staunchly conservative.”⁶ The political profile of classical studies in other nations has been similar. In late nineteenth-century France, the leading classicist and historian Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges supported the nationalist and ultra-conservative *Action Française*.⁷ Likewise, the Swedish classicist Vilhelm Lundström was a member of the parliament representing the Swedish Conservative Party in 1912–1914.⁸

Conservatism has also influenced how classical antiquity has been studied. Mainstream classical studies, often denoted as the “big tradition,” continues to sustain practices and models which promote the study of exemplary features of classical antiquity.⁹ This reflects the history of classical studies. Modern academic classical studies date to the early nineteenth century. *Altertumswissenschaft*, mediating the ideals of neo-humanism, did in many ways symbolize Wilhelm von Humboldt’s reforms of the university in Berlin. Classical studies, at the time with an emphasis on philology,

3 E.g., Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, p. 81; Bloxham, *Ancient Greece*; Budelmann and Haubold, “Reception and Tradition,” p. 14.

4 The distinction between high and popular culture has been increasingly blurred during the last 50 years or so, but it was crucial during the twentieth century. Moreover, the tensions between the notion of culture in Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, and in Tylor, *Primitive Culture* were cemented in classical studies, see Siapkas, *Antikvetenskapens Teoretiska Landskap 1*, pp. 144–146.

5 Hardtwig, “The Prussian Academy”; Norton, “Wilamowitz at War”; Siapkas, *Antikvetenskapens Teoretiska Landskap 2*, pp. 228–230.

6 Losemann, “Classics in the Second,” p. 306.

7 Hartog, *Le XIX^e siècle*; Wilson, “Fustel de Coulanges”.

8 Blennow and Whitling, “Italian Dreams,” p. 144.

9 This is a well-known trope by now, see Siapkas, *Antikvetenskapens Teoretiska Landskap 1*; Siapkas, *Antikvetenskapens Teoretiska Landskap 2*; and below.

flourished during the nineteenth century. Furthermore, classical philology spearheaded the methodological development of the humanities during the early nineteenth century.¹⁰ Classical studies were therefore often viewed as the very symbol of the humanities and classicism was equated with *Bildung*, also in Sweden.¹¹

It was, however, only in the late nineteenth century that archaeology became established as a research field in classical studies. Archaeological excavations, in a pre-professional antiquarian sense, have been conducted since circa 1500. Pre-professional expeditions peaked between the 1770s and the 1820s when antiquaries from the European aristocracy conducted excavations to collect classical antiquities. During the 1870s archaeological excavations developed rapidly both in quantity and quality. The number of archaeological excavations in the Mediterranean area increased dramatically, and new methods, such as archaeological stratigraphy, became widely implemented in these projects. This contributed to the transformation of classical studies, which from now on also incorporated a strong archaeological research field.¹²

In 1890, Theodor Mommsen coined *Grosswissenschaft* in order to characterize the tendency to organize research in large projects which emulate the hierarchical administration of corporations and operate continuously for several decades and even centuries.¹³ Several of these projects employ antiquarian methods, and the big tradition is therefore often used also to denominate research that emphasizes empiricism and, more or less, explicitly claims to be objective and un-theoretical.¹⁴ The big tradition signifies a kind of research that is epistemologically belated, at least in comparison to archaeology, history, and other disciplines in the humanities.¹⁵ Proponents of the big tradition tend to cultivate a view which holds science to be unaffected by its settings.

10 Dyson, *In Pursuit of Ancient*; Marchand, *Down from Olympus*; Östling, *Humboldts universitet*.

11 See Hammar, "Klassisk karaktär"; Hammar, "A Conflict Among."

12 Siapkas, *Antikvetenskapens Teoretiska Landskap* 1, for details.

13 Klinkhammer, "Grossgrabung und grosse"; Marchand, *Down from Olympus*, pp. 75–91. Large projects include archaeological excavations – often called "big digs" – of sites such as Olympia (1875–), and the collection and publication of ancient materials, e.g., vases in *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum* (1922–) or inscriptions in *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (1847–). Most large projects are ongoing.

14 This also indicates the conservative connotations of classical studies. For the association of scholarship claiming to be objective and un-theoretical with conservatism, see e.g., Novick, *That Noble Dream*, pp. 27, 265.

15 See e.g., Dyson, "From New to New Age"; Renfrew, "The Great Tradition"; Shanks, *Classical Archaeology*; Snodgrass, *An Archaeology of Greece*.

The big tradition has also been challenged repeatedly. Already in 1817, the classicist August Boeckh criticized the myopic practices of classical studies.¹⁶ A decade later in 1827 the philosopher Friedrich Hegel also voiced criticism against the minute detailed studies which had become normative in classical studies.¹⁷ Similar criticism has been repeated since then. Another famous example is Friedrich Nietzsche's criticism of mainstream classical studies, and Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendoerff's vindication of the big tradition.¹⁸ The debate has continued during the twentieth century.¹⁹

Classical studies were more uniform until the 1970s than they are today.²⁰ During the last fifty years or so we have witnessed the proliferation of several new theoretical perspectives which often are viewed as challenging the big tradition. Nevertheless, the big tradition remains strong albeit in co-existence with several other theoretical perspectives.

Classical studies in Sweden do not exhibit any major differences from classical studies in other nations. Classical studies have a strong international profile, classicists interact with each other at the foreign institutes in Rome and Athens, and there is a well-established tradition of international co-operation within the discipline, despite periods of national antagonism. In other words, the epistemology of the big tradition is also dominating Swedish classical studies. However, the history of Swedish classical studies remains to be written and details about, for instance, the impact of other theoretical perspectives are still obscure.²¹

Erik Hedén: A Socialist Classicist

The publications of Erik Hedén shed light on the interaction between classical studies and social democracy in early twentieth-century Sweden. He joined the Swedish Social Democratic Party already in 1905 and was excluded

16 Boeckh, *Die Staatshaushaltung der Athener*, p. xix.

17 Hegel, *Encyklopädie der philosophischen*, pp. 41–42.

18 Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*; Wilamowitz, *Zukunftphilologie! Zweites*. See also Gründer, *Der Streit um Nietzsches*.

19 See Selden, "Classics and Contemporary," pp. 161–166.

20 Morris, *Archaeology as Cultural*, p. 38.

21 Some aspects of the history of Swedish classical studies have been studied, see e.g., Berg, *Kalareia 1894*; Frängsmyr, *Uppsala universitet*, pp. 77–88, 133–157; Lindberg, *Humanism och vetenskap*; Whitling, *Western Ways*. Also, articles about the history of classical studies with an anecdotal content are common in the journals *Hellenika*, *Romhorisont* and *Medusa*.

from it in 1916.²² Hedén became one of the founders of the Swedish Social Democratic Left Party in 1917. He opposed however fundamental features of the Left party's political program, such as the Marxist notions of a world revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat and resigned from it in 1919.²³ Hedén is largely forgotten today, but he was a leading social democrat at the time.²⁴ Hedén is better known for his work as a journalist, cultural critic, and eloquent speaker, than as a classicist.²⁵

Hedén explicated his views on education in the article "Klasskamp och bildning" [Class struggle and *Bildung*]. In it he argues that knowledge should be pursued free and independently from ideological constraints. Furthermore, he views historical research to be equally important to social and natural sciences, although the humanities have a different function in Hedén's view. He mentions ancient Greece as an ideal past society where the pursuit of knowledge was independent. This is contrasted to the ideologically constrained sciences in the Soviet Union. Hedén views education to facilitate a happy good life in dignity, and contrasts this to class struggle, which he puts in opposition to *Bildung*.²⁶ In other words, Hedén was critical against several features in Marxism, and he prioritized independent education when he had to choose between them.

Hedén was already a productive journalist and cultural critic with social democratic engagements, before he began his PhD-studies. His dissertation *Homerische Götterstudien* from 1912 was the first in the academic discipline of Classical archaeology and ancient history in Sweden.²⁷ This was his only academic publication, and he left the university soon after he had completed his PhD.²⁸

Homerische Götterstudien is an analysis of the portrayal of gods by Homer. Hedén's dissertation is a representative study of ancient religion in the context of early twentieth-century classical studies. He employs an evolutionist perspective and argues that the Greek pantheon developed in

22 Levander, "A C Erik Hedén." Hedén was put on trial for treason but was acquitted by the Supreme Court in Sweden. He opposed Germanophile political sentiments and had participated in a congress in March 1916 arguing against the war.

23 Landquist, "Erik Hedén"; Levander, "A C Erik Hedén."

24 Lindberg, "Socialism och klassicism," p. 42.

25 See Fahlgren, *Litteraturkritiker i arbetarrörelsen*; Landquist, "Erik Hedén"; Lindberg, "Socialism och klassicism," pp. 59–61; Martinsson, *Hedéns estetik*.

26 Hedén, "Klasskamp och bildning." See also Hedén, "Bildningsarbetet och personförgudningen."

27 Hedén, *Homerische Götterstudien*.

28 Moreover, Hedén's archive, *Erik och Eva Hedéns efterlämnade papper*, housed by the National Library of Sweden, does not contain any correspondence with other classicists.

several phases.²⁹ Different gods are associated with different evolutionary stages. Evil chthonic spirits from the underworld like the Erinyes and the Harpies were the initial gods and belong to the deep prehistory of humankind, according to Hedén. He also argues that these gods are common to several peoples. The Olympic and anthropomorphic gods, like Zeus and Hera, were introduced later. The former category was subordinated by the later in classical Greek religion.³⁰ In other words, Hedén identifies that Homer portrays different categories of gods in different ways. The classical Greek pantheon consists of a mixture of gods originating from different chronologically ordered cultures.

Hedén's detailed interpretation of Homer's works is in line with the research of Sam Wide and Martin P. Nilsson. Wide and Nilsson were appointed as the first two chairs in Classical archaeology and ancient history in Sweden and both were specialists in ancient Greek religion. In addition, both employed evolutionary theories in their research on ancient Greek religion.³¹ Evolutionist perspectives were widespread in studies of ancient religion between the 1870s and the 1920s and characterize the works of prominent scholars such as Wilhelm Mannhardt, Hermann Usener, Erwin Rohde, Albert Dieterich, Jane Harrison, and James Frazer.³² Another feature of the evolutionist perspectives is that rituals are regarded as the essence of religious sentiments while myths are regarded as later etiological narratives which were introduced to explain more or less incomprehensible rituals. These scholars did furthermore emphasize popular mundane low-level rituals instead of large-scale public rituals as the primary domain of religion. This stands in contrast to religious studies in the above-mentioned big tradition.³³ In other words, Hedén's research was in line with a school of thought emphasizing other features than mainstream classical studies.

A major part of Hedén's writings concerns contemporary Swedish literature. I will leave this substantial part of his production aside and restrict my elaboration to Hedén's non-academic articles dealing with classical matters.

29 E.g., Hedén, *Homerische Götterstudien*, pp. 8–10.

30 See Hedén, *Homerische Götterstudien*, pp. 141–144. See Hedén, "J. L. Heiberg som grekisk," pp. 119–121, for a summary of the dissertation. Hedén's view on ancient Greek religion resembles Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study*; Harrison, *Themis: A Study*.

31 Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen*; Nilsson, *Greek Popular*; Nilsson, *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion*; Wide, *De Sacris Troezeniorum*; Wide, *Lakonische Kulte*. See also Siapkas, "Classical Primitivism."

32 Dieterich, *Mutter Erde*; Frazer, *The Golden Bough*; Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study*; Harrison, *Themis: A Study*; Mannhardt, *Wald- und Feldkulte*; Rohde, *Psyche: Seelencult*; Usener, *Götternamen: Versuch*. See Siapkas, *Antikvetenskapens Teoretiska Landskap* 1, pp. 153–158

33 See Schlesier, *Kulte, Mythen*, pp. 307–328.

It deserves to be noted that Hedén was primarily interested in the ancient Greek culture and less so in the Roman culture. In addition, he addressed ancient poetry and ancient religion, and to a lesser degree archaeological and art historical topics.

In his non-academic mediation of classical antiquity, Hedén contributes to sustain the big tradition mentioned above, in sharp contrast to the tendency in his dissertation. In his non-academic articles he opts for themes and perspectives associated with the idealization of classical antiquity. He is for instance portraying the Caryatids on Acropolis in Athens according to established conventions, which regard them as exemplary aesthetic representations.³⁴

Three more features in Hedén's writings are noteworthy. First, in several articles he identifies "modern" features in classical studies.³⁵ Hedén never defines what he means by modern, but it has positive connotations for him. For instance, in his review of Martin P. Nilsson's *Olympen*, Hedén presents Nilsson's evolutionist framework as a modern perspective on ancient myths. It is however surprising that Hedén argues against Nilsson's characterization of the Mycenaean culture as Greek.³⁶ The Mycenaean culture – the Late Bronze Age culture on mainland Greece – was initially regarded as Oriental when it was excavated in the 1870s but redefined as Greek during the 1890s.³⁷ The Greekness of the Mycenaean culture was initially championed by a group of scholars challenging mainstream classical studies. Hedén would probably have regarded the Greekness of the Mycenaean culture as a feature of modern classics. In this respect, Hedén's understanding of classical studies seems outdated in relation to mainstream classical studies in the 1910s and 1920s.

Second, Hedén opposed the reform of the Swedish school system in 1904, which resulted in the reduction of the weekly teaching hours in the classical languages in the Swedish *gymnasium*, the upper secondary level schools.³⁸ The reduction of classical languages, which Hedén also perceived as a threat against the humanities in general, was presented as part of a modernization of the educational system of Sweden. His argumentation

34 Hedén, "Jungfrurnas hall."

35 E.g., Hedén, "Recension av Martin"; Hedén, "J. L. Heiberg som grekisk."

36 Hedén, "Recension av Martin," p. 510.

37 See Fotiadis, "Factual Claims"; Siapkas, "Karian Theories"; Voutsaki, "The 'Greekness' of Greek." This issue was not settled until the decipherment of Linear B – a Late Bronze Age syllabic script – in the 1950s.

38 Hedén, "Den klassiska bildningens dödsfara." Also, Hedén, "Den klassiska bildningen i nutidens," p. 482.

for the relevance of classical *Bildung* contains several arguments which articulate the idealization of classical Greece.³⁹ He also argues for instance that education should focus on the cultivation of the person and not on practical, detailed knowledge.⁴⁰

Third, Hedén championed classicism but he opposed the conservative sentiments often associated with classicism. In 1920, he mentions that social democrats in their majority are sympathetic toward classical studies, naming the leading Swedish social democrats Hjalmar Branting and Bengt Lidforss among them.⁴¹ This is repeated in 1922, but with an interesting terminological shift: “Nobody has the right to regard the broad layers of the Swedish population as hostile toward high culture ... The Worker’s party has during the new [century] exhibited substantial and perceptive generosity also toward the demands of high culture ... Nevertheless, hostile sentiments against classical studies as ‘undemocratic’ persist among some representatives of the workers.”⁴² It is noteworthy that Hedén associates classical studies with high culture in this quote. Furthermore, this indicates that Hedén, and presumably other social democrats with similar views, was not opposed to classicism as such, but rather opposed to the conservative sentiments with which classicism often is associated.

Hedén’s understanding of socialism and classicism has previously been discussed by the historian of ideas Bo Lindberg. In the article “Socialism och klassicism” [Socialism and classicism], Lindberg characterizes Hedén as a left-wing social democrat with conservative views on culture and idealized views on antiquity.⁴³ This characterization is valid for Hedén’s non-academic writings, but it is at odds with Hedén’s academic production. Hedén belonged to the first generation of scholars in the nascent discipline Classical archaeology and ancient history. The emergence of Classical archaeology and ancient history can be viewed as a consequence of the increasing interest in historical issues, *Realphilologie*, among Swedish classical philologists from the 1870s onwards.⁴⁴ Since Lindberg ignores both the establishment of

39 Hedén, “Den klassiska bildningens dödsfara,” pp. 442–443.

40 Hedén, “Den klassiska bildningens dödsfara,” p. 434.

41 Hedén, “Den klassiska bildningen i nutidens,” p. 484. Also, Hedén, “Den klassiska bildningens dödsfara,” p. 434.

42 Hedén, “Den klassiska bildningens dödsfara,” pp. 445–446. “Man har ingen rätt att anse Sveriges breda folklager som fiendliga mot den högre kulturen ... Arbetarpartiet under det nya [seklet] ha visat stor och klarsynt frikostighet mot även den högre kulturens krav ... Emellertid kvarlever nog motviljan mot den klassiska bildningen såsom ‘odemokratisk’ hos en del arbetarrepresentanter.”

43 Lindberg, “Socialism och klassicism,” pp. 39–63.

44 Callmer, “Tillkomsten av professurerna.”

Classical archaeology and ancient history and Hedén's dissertation, he does not note that Hedén's classicism incorporates a divide between academic and popular classicism. This divide is also evident in Hedén's article "Den klassiska bildningen i nutidens Sverige" [Classical *Bildung* in contemporary Sweden] which consists of an assessment of contemporary Swedish classical studies. Hedén concludes that Swedish classical studies are obsessed with details and that his former colleagues fail to account for the important cultural achievements of the classical cultures.⁴⁵ That is, Hedén identifies a divide between specialized academic works and mediations of classical research to the public. He articulates the above-mentioned criticism raised against the big tradition which holds mainstream classical studies to be myopic. Crucially, Hedén's criticism is also valid for his own dissertation *Homerische Götterstudien*. Lindberg however fails to realize the divide between Hedén's academic conceptualization of classical antiquity and his popular non-academic works.⁴⁶

Hedén's bifurcated classicism is not idiosyncratic. I argue that the divide between academic and non-academic mediations of classical antiquity was cemented in Classical archaeology and ancient history already with the foundation of the discipline in the works of Martin P. Nilsson and Sam Wide.⁴⁷ It is also evident in the works of several later scholars, for example Arne Furumark.⁴⁸ On an epistemological level, this means that Classical archaeology and ancient history incorporated a scientific ideal of objectivity. As Lorraine Daston has elaborated: "In the *techniques* of historical criticism lay the source of historical objectivity ... the methods of the historian – and above all the historian's awareness of the limitations of these methods – qualified scientific history as ... objective."⁴⁹ By following a strict methodology the researcher strove to minimize the effects he/she had on the actual analytical process. This was coupled with a sense of "scientific restraint," meaning that scholars were careful not to push the evidence to far.⁵⁰ Specialized academic output was thus reduced to seemingly value-free

45 Hedén, "Den klassiska bildningen i nutidens," p. 485, 494.

46 Lindberg, "Socialism och klassicism," p. 44.

47 Siapkas, *Antikvetenskapens Teoretiska Landskap* 1, pp. 170–178.

48 See Siapkas, "Negotiated Positivism."

49 Daston, "Objectivity and Impartiality," p. 32. Emphasis in original.

50 Daston, "Objectivity and Impartiality," pp. 31–32. As mentioned above, archaeology is a dominating field in classical studies, not least in Sweden, and archaeology is influenced to a higher degree by the methods, in particular the field methods, of the natural sciences than other disciplines in the humanities. The notion of objectivity in Classical archaeology and ancient history was also influenced by the "mechanical objectivity" Daston associates with the natural sciences.

objective observations and categorizations, often without any explicit links to the high-end classicism which was mediated in non-academic contexts.

In other words, classical research in Sweden has been highly specialized and formulated by internal concerns. This has shielded research from the shifting public attitudes to classicism. In my view this suggests why Swedish classical research only has been marginally influenced by shifting public attitudes to classicism, changing educational regimes, and reorganizations of academic disciplines.

Socialist Classical Studies in the Western Tradition

The interrelation between classicism and socialism has several facets.⁵¹ Briefly, it deserves to be mentioned that socialist organizations have made use of classicism in order to articulate their ideology.⁵² Socialist notions have also been employed in classical studies. An early example that has received scholarly attention is the German ancient historian Robert von Pöhlmann, who applied Marxist historical materialist theory in his studies of ancient history. He used a Marxist framework according to which history evolves in different stages defined by the socio-economic organization of society.⁵³ A second aspect of Pöhlmann's socialism is that he criticizes ancient historians of idealizing classical antiquity and thus of producing biased accounts.⁵⁴ In other words, Pöhlmann, like Hedén, reacted against the above-mentioned big tradition in classical studies. However, in contrast to Hedén, Pöhlmann's socialism explicitly influenced also his academic works. This practice of employing Marxist theory and historical materialism in ancient historical studies was eventually repeated by other classicists, like Pöhlmann's student William Abbott Oldfather.⁵⁵ Similarly the German high ranking communist and historian Arthur Rosenberg conducted a study on the class struggle in classical antiquity.⁵⁶

51 The distinction between branches of socialism is of minor importance here. Furthermore, I am not considering classicism in the twentieth-century Communist Bloc.

52 See e.g., Arvidsson, *Morgonrodnad: Socialismens*; Hall and Stead, *A People's History*; Stead and Hall, *Greek and Roman*.

53 Pöhlmann, *Geschichte der sozialen*. See Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff*, pp. 201–247; Näf, *Von Perikles zu Hitler*, pp. 100–103.

54 Pöhlmann, *Aus Altertum und Gegenwart*, pp. 34–55.

55 See Calder, "William Abbott Oldfather."

56 Carsten, "Arthur Rosenberg"; Rosenberg, *Demokratie und Klassenkampf*. See also, Näf, *Von Perikles zu Hitler*, pp. 96–99.

The influence of socialism in classical studies increased gradually during the second half of the twentieth century. Beginning in the late 1960s, Marxist historical materialism was increasingly adopted in classical studies. In addition, several classicists in the western world were accused of being communists and forced into exile during the Cold War.⁵⁷ The charges against Moses Finley stand out in this respect, not the least because of the impact of his research in later classical studies.⁵⁸ The wider impact of socialism in classical studies in the 1970s can in part be explained by the tendency of the social turn to pursue social everyday issues in antiquity.⁵⁹ The impact of socialism on Swedish classical studies has however been limited, and this should in my view be explained by the above-mentioned strong adoption of objectivity as an epistemological ideal and the tendency to separate academic research from non-academic features.

Renaming Classicism

The ideology of Swedish social democracy evolved with time, and the questioning of the relevance of classical studies increased steadily. Negative sentiments toward classical studies seem to have crystallized after the Second World War.⁶⁰ A case which illustrates the negotiations of the awkward position of classical studies concerns the change of the official Swedish denomination for Classical archaeology and ancient history in 1970. In Sweden, Classical archaeology and ancient history was established in 1909 with the foundation of two chairs, one at Uppsala University and one at Lund University.⁶¹

The first attempt to separate archaeological and historical studies of classical antiquity from classical philology in Sweden dates to 1875.⁶² This was however stalled for several decades. In the negotiations leading up to

57 See de Baets, *Censorship of Historical*.

58 Finley was a victim of McCarthyism. He was accused, but never convicted, of being a member of the Communist party and therefore fired from Rutgers University. He later became a professor at the University of Cambridge, and a champion of the social turn in classical studies, see e.g., Harris, *Moses Finley and Politics*; Rose, "Moses Finley and Politics."

59 See also e.g., Frank, "Marxism and Ancient"; Konstan, "The Classics and Class"; Rose, *Class in Archaic*.

60 Lindberg, "Socialism och klassicism," pp. 62–63.

61 See Berg, *Kalaureia 1894*, pp. 262–266; Callmer, "Tillkomsten av professurerna," pp. 155–165; Frängsmyr, *Uppsala universitet*, pp. 77–86; Hillbom and Rystedt, *Antikens kultur*, pp. 5–15; Siapkas, *Antikvetenskapens Teoretiska Landskap 1*, pp. 15–16.

62 Callmer, "Tillkomsten av professurerna," p. 155.

the foundation of the chairs, the actual name of the discipline was discussed extensively. It was clear beforehand that Sam Wide and Martin P. Nilsson were to be appointed to the chairs and this had an impact on the discussions. Names like *Antikens historia och klassisk fornkunskap* [Ancient history and classical archaeology], *Allmän arkeologi* [General archaeology], and *Religionshistoria* [History of religions] were proposed only to be rejected. Wide used his connections in the ministry and argued successfully, in agreement with Nilsson, for the name *Klassisk fornkunskap och antikens historia* [Classical archaeology and ancient history]. The actual order of the wording was regarded as significant, and it was agreed that it reflected the actual content of the new discipline, that is, an archaeological discipline including historical studies. *Religionshistoria* had been suggested because both Wide's and Nilsson's area of specialization was ancient Greek religion.⁶³ This was also the field of Hedén's research, and this field has furthermore received wide attention in Swedish Classical archaeology and ancient history since then.

The foundation of *Klassisk fornkunskap och antikens historia* occurred during a period when the humanities in Sweden expanded. Several academic disciplines were founded or redefined by way of the establishment or renaming of professorial chairs during the early twentieth century. Research during the period from circa 1900 to the 1960s was characterized by the emphasis on specialization, empiricism, source criticism, notions of research objectivity, and the ideal of the autonomy of the universities.⁶⁴ In other words, the establishment, expansion, and consolidation of classical studies in the early twentieth century should be understood as part of a wider development encompassing Swedish humanities on a more general level, reflecting a strong notion of positivism.

In 1970, *Klassisk fornkunskap och antikens historia* was renamed *Antikens kultur och samhällsliv* [Ancient culture and societal life].⁶⁵ This renaming was accepted in the sense that the official denomination of the discipline was changed at the four Swedish universities in which it is still represented. Furthermore, according to a narrative – cultivated internally among Swedish classicists – the reason for the renaming was that the Ministry of Education was planning to defund the discipline. This was perceived as a concrete

63 Callmer, "Tillkomsten av professurerna," pp. 162–165.

64 See Ahlund and Landgren, *Från etableringsfas till konsolidering*, pp. 31–38; Åman, "Före och efter 1970"; Gustavsson, "Litteraturteorins expansion," pp. 467–478; Odén, *Forskarutbildningens förändringar*, pp. 63–92.

65 Brunnsåker, "Classical Archaeology," p. 19.

threat to the continued existence of the discipline. Renaming as a solution was suggested by Sture Brunnsåker, who was appointed as chair in Uppsala in 1970. He made the ingenious proposal that *samhällsliv* should be part of the name since its connotations were in line with the spirit of the time.⁶⁶

The internal classicist narrative should however not be taken at face value. The new name was mentioned in Swedish newspapers already in October 1968 when the Swedish Higher Education Authority [*Universitetskanslersämbetet*, UKÄ] announced that the chairs in *Klassisk fornkunskap och antikens historia* at Uppsala University and the University of Gothenburg, which were going to be replaced in the following year, would be renamed to *Antikens kultur och samhällsliv*.⁶⁷ Brunnsåker's influence in this matter was thus possibly exaggerated in the aforementioned narrative. It seems instead that the renaming was a slow process initiated by UKÄ.⁶⁸ This would mirror the process of renaming other humanities disciplines at the same time. The renaming of Art history was, for instance, accepted without any debate.⁶⁹ In contrast, the name *Antikens kultur och samhällsliv* was contested.⁷⁰ Today, it remains contested, and a possible new renaming is occasionally discussed at recurring national conferences.⁷¹

It was in particular the initial word of the old name, *klassisk*, which was regarded as a liability. Classicism and classical studies are often viewed as a symbol of the humanities, and there was an anxiety that classical studies would be made to bear the brunt of potential economic reductions.⁷² Nevertheless, opting for *Antikens kultur och samhällsliv* does not follow naturally from the decision to abandon *Klassisk fornkunskap och antikens historia*. Alternatives such as *Antikvetenskap* [Ancient studies] or *Medelhavsarkeologi* [Mediterranean archaeology] might seem closer at hand.⁷³ *Samhällsliv* is an unusual Swedish word that denotes "public life,"

66 Furumark, "Arkeologi och historia," pp. 4–5. See also Scheffer, "Studying Classical," p. 199.

67 E.g., N.N., "Klassisk fornkunskap"; Wik-Thorsell, "Faran över."

68 The renaming is mentioned in "UKÄ PM angående de klassiska ämnena vid universiteten," dated to May 28, 1968. See also Lindberg and Nilsson, *Göteborgs universitets*, p. 164.

69 Åman, "Före och efter 1970," pp. 208–209.

70 Lindberg and Nilsson, *Göteborgs universitets*, p. 110.

71 E.g., Scheffer, "Studying Classical," p. 199; Widell, "Här firar jämställdheten." See Siapkias, *Antikvetenskapens Teoretiska Landskap* 1, pp. 15–16. E.g., at the national conference arranged in Stockholm 2017.

72 See Hillbom and Rystedt, *Antikens kultur*, p. 104; Lindberg and Nilsson, *Göteborgs universitets*, p. 110; Scheffer, "Studying Classical," p. 199. Classical studies, together with Greek and Latin, were commonly referred to as "lyxämnen" [luxury disciplines] or "exklusiva ämnen" [exclusive disciplines] in several newspapers at the time, see e.g., Nyblom, "Studentprotest till UKÄ."

73 *Antikvetenskap* is the term used by The Swedish Research Council.

as a contrast to “private life.” However, the renaming was not associated with the introduction of the theoretical social turn in Classical archaeology and ancient history. The social turn, which emphasizes the mundane and private life as historiographical themes and has been clearly influenced by logical positivism, was not introduced in Classical archaeology and ancient history until the 1980s.⁷⁴ I propose that the renaming instead articulates a negotiation. *Samhällsliv*, with its resemblance to the term *samhällsvetenskap* [social sciences], was adopted in order to reconcile classical studies with the widespread resentment of the humanities and classicism.

The renaming of Classical archaeology and ancient history complies with Swedish educational politics on two levels. On one level, a number of academic disciplines in Sweden were, as stated, renamed around 1970. Several of them would then include *vetenskap* [science] in their name. For example, *konsthistoria* [Art history] became *konstvetenskap*, and *litteraturhistoria med poetik* [Literary history with poetics] became *litteraturvetenskap*.⁷⁵ The renaming of literature studies was associated with a debate about the nature of the discipline, and the use of *vetenskap* reflected the growing impact of the social turn.⁷⁶ The abovementioned *Antikvetenskap* would thus comply with a wider development in the humanities at the time.

On a second level, the renaming of Classical archaeology and ancient history in 1970 can be regarded as an attempt to come to terms with widespread negative sentiments against the humanities during the post-war period in Sweden. Anders Ekström, Sverker Sörlin, and Hampus Östh Gustafsson have elaborated the redefinition of higher education in the welfare state.⁷⁷ The welfare state invested much more in higher education, and the number of students in the Swedish universities increased during the 1950s and 1960s. As an effect, higher education became accessible also to students from social groups previously excluded from the universities. This democratization of higher education was coupled with the adoption of a policy emphasizing the democratic and economic usefulness of higher education. Within this

74 Siapkas, “Negotiated Positivism,” pp. 7–11, for logical positivism. See e.g., Linders, “Nya trender i antikforskningen”; Nordquist, *A Middle Helladic*, for the introduction of the social turn in Swedish Classical archaeology and ancient history.

75 Ahlund and Landgren, *Från etableringsfas till konsolidering*, pp. 31–38; Åman, “Före och efter 1970”; Lindberg and Nilsson, *Göteborgs universitets*, pp. 107–108; Odén, *Forskarutbildningens förändringar*, pp. 63–92.

76 Aspelin, *Textens dimensioner*; Gustavsson, “Litteraturteorins expansion,” pp. 467–478; Tideström, “Termen litteraturvetenskap.”

77 Ekström, “A Failed Response”; Ekström and Sörlin, *Alltings mått*; Östh Gustafsson, “Elfenbenstornet under belägring”; Östh Gustafsson, “The Discursive Marginalization.”

regime the humanities were regarded as a social problem. The humanities in general, and often classical studies in particular, were associated with outdated ideals of *Bildung*.⁷⁸ The contribution of the humanities to the advancement of the welfare state was thus questioned. This was coupled with the notion that the humanities educated too many students with little value on the job market. The negative sentiments against the humanities were further propelled by the administrative separation of the humanities and the social sciences in Swedish universities in 1964.⁷⁹ This facilitated an educational policy regime premiering the social sciences, since they were perceived to contribute to the advancement of the welfare state. The humanities on the other hand were contested and became increasingly involved in struggles over legitimacy.⁸⁰

The challenging conditions for the humanities in post-war Sweden should however not be equated with an elaborated social democratic ideological view. There were different opinions regarding research within Swedish social democracy, and the implemented educational policy regime was negotiated by several parties and academic organizations.⁸¹ In other words, the social democrats may have been the leading part in the negotiations, but in the end the politics reflected wide-spread sentiments present in settings well beyond the leading political party. The renaming of *Klassisk fornkunskap och antikens historia* to *Antikens kultur och samhällsliv* should be viewed as an attempt to reconcile the awkward position of classicism in the context of an educational policy regime valuing research by its perceived contribution to the advancement of society.

Conclusions

By way of conclusion, then, classical studies and classicism are often associated with conservative sentiments. Viewed from the outside, classical studies may appear as a uniform and mainly conservative discipline. However, if we adopt an internal perspective, we can identify several, in part opposing, fields in classical studies. This facilitates an understanding of the history and organization of Swedish classical studies during the twentieth century.

78 See Lindberg, "Socialism och classicism," pp. 39–40.

79 Östh Gustafsson, "The Discursive Marginalization," p. 360.

80 Ekström, "A Failed Response," p. 11.

81 Nybom, *Kunskap politik*, pp. 117–121. See also Östh Gustafsson, *Folkhemmet styvbarn*, pp. 44–45.

Erik Hedén was politically active as a social democrat before he pursued his PhD in Classical archaeology and ancient history. However, in contrast to other socialist classicists he did not employ socialist ideas in his research on classical antiquity. Furthermore, in his research Hedén adopted a theoretical perspective which challenged the big tradition of mainstream conservative classical studies. In contrast, Hedén contributes to the idealization of classical antiquity in his non-academic works about classical antiquity. But, then again, for Hedén classicism was an educational ideal which could be reconciled with socialism, and he opposed the conservative sentiments with which classicism often is associated. Hedén's work illustrates how social democracy before the Second World War resolved the conservatism of classicism.

In the postwar period, however, the humanities were questioned with the crystallization of a new educational policy regime. In this, higher education and research were increasingly valued by their perceived contribution to the advancement of the welfare state. The humanities, and in particular classical studies, were regarded as a problem in this context. Classical studies struggled to justify their continuing existence. It is against this background that the renaming of *Klassisk fornkunskap och antikens historia* to *Antikens kultur och samhällsliv* in 1970 should be viewed. Several academic disciplines in Sweden were renamed around 1970, and a common construction was to adopt a name ending with *vetenskap*. The new name given to Classical archaeology and ancient history stands out since it includes the unusual *samhällsliv*. I tentatively suggest that the renaming of Classical archaeology and ancient history does not reflect an epistemological rejuvenation but should rather be regarded as an attempt to reconcile the questioned position of classical studies. Furthermore, it seems that while external intellectual currents affected the organization of the humanities at large, they had a limited impact on the actual research conducted in Classical archaeology and ancient history.

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