DISSERTATIONES PHILOLOGIAE SCANDINAVICAE
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'HE DROWNED IN HOLMR'S SEA –
HIS CARGO-SHIP DRIFTED TO THE SEA-BOTTOM,
ONLY THREE CAME OUT ALIVE'
RECORDS AND REPRESENTATIONS OF BALTIC TRAFFIC
IN THE VIKING AGE AND THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES
IN EARLY NORDIC SOURCES

KRISTEL ZILMER

Department of Germanic and Romance Languages and Literatures, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Tartu, Estonia.

In memory of my grandmother Lidia Zilmer
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CONTENTS

ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

The thesis is based on the following publications:

Publication I: Zilmer, Kristel. 2002. "Nordiske runeinnskrifters opplysninger om kontakter innenfor Østersjøområdet i vikingtiden og tidlig middelalder." In: Svante Lagman & Stig Örjan Ohlsson & Viivika Voodla (Eds.). *Svenska språkets historia i Östersjöområdet*. Studier i svensk språkhistoria VII & Nordistica Tartuensia VII. Tartu: Tartu University Press, Rätt Satt Hård & Lagman HB.

Publication II: Zilmer, Kristel. 2003. "Learning about Places and People: Representations of Travelling Connections and Communication Situation in the Sagas of Icelanders." In: Stefanie Würth & Tõnno Jonuks & Axel Kristinsson (Eds.). *Sagas and Societies: International Conference at Borgarnes, Iceland. September 5-9, 2002*. University of Tübingen, electronic book: http://w210.ub.uni-tuebingen.de/portal/sagas.

Publication III: Zilmer, Kristel. 2003. "Representations of Intercultural Communication in the Sagas of Icelanders." In: Rudolf Simek & Judith Meurer (Eds.). *Scandinavia and Christian Europe in the Middle Ages. Papers of the 12th International Saga Conference, Bonn/Germany, 28th July-2nd August 2003*. Bonn: Hausdruckerei der Universität Bonn. 549-556.

Publication IV: Zilmer, Kristel. 2003. "Texts and Historical Tradition: A Hermeneutical Approach." In: Kristel Zilmer & Stig Örjan Ohlsson (Eds.). *Perspectives on Text and Context*: *Report from an International Symposium Held at the University of Tartu, Estonia, 17-18 May 2002*. Nordistica Tartuensia VIII. Tartu: Tartu University Press. 53-68.

Publication V: Zilmer, Kristel. [forthcoming]. "Kommunikatsioonist ja kontaktidest Läänemere piirkonnas islandlaste saagade andmetel." In: Mare Kõiva (Ed.). *Sator 3: Artikleid usundi- ja kombeloost*. Tartu.

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

ABBREVIATIONS

For the abbreviations used when referring to individual runic inscriptions, see Appendix I. Abbreviations for different skaldic poems and sagas are provided in relevant subsections of chapter IV. Publication details are given in the list of references.

ATA	Antikvarisk-topografiska arkivet, Riksantikvarieämbetet, Stockholm
DRI	*Danmarks Runeindskrifter*
Fsk	*Fagrskinna*
FV	*Fornvännen*
GR	*Gotlands runinskrifter*
GsR	*Gästriklands runinskrifter*
Hkr	*Heimskringla*
ÍF	*Íslenzk fornrit*
ÍS	*Íslendinga sögur*
KLNM	*Kulturhistoriskt lexikon för nordisk medeltid från vikingatid till reformationstid*
Knýt	*Knýtlinga saga*
LP	Finnur Jónsson, *Lexicon poeticum antiquæ linguæ septentrionalis*
NIyR	*Norges Innskrifter med de yngre Runer*
NOR	*Nytt om runer*
NRL	Peterson, *Nordiskt runnamnslexikon*
OGNS	Fritzner, *Ordbog over det gamle norske sprog*
ÖgR	*Östergötlands runinskrifter*
ÖlR	*Ölands runinskrifter*
ON	Old Norse
RAÄ	Riksantikvarieämbetet, Stockholm
RD	Runic Danish
RS	Runic Swedish
SEP	Skaldic Editing Project, *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages*
Skj	Finnur Jónsson, *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning*
SmR	*Smålands runinskrifter*
SöR	*Södermanlands runinskrifter*
SRD	*Samnordisk runtextdatabas*
SRI	*Sveriges runinskrifter*
SRR	Peterson, *Svenskt runordsregister*
UR	*Upplands runinskrifter*
VgR	*Västergötlands runinskrifter*
VsR	*Västmanlands runinskrifter*

I GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

As with any other newborn book – no matter whether it belongs to the world of science or fiction, or perhaps both –, a person who either out of interest or duty takes this one in their hands will most likely wonder: "And what exactly is the title supposed to mean?"

Therefore, before proceeding according to the more traditional rules of academic writing that any young author who has not yet defended their doctoral dissertation will feel most obliged to follow, I would like to take the liberty of trying to entertain the reader with a step-by-step analysis of the components of the title of this current study, and in this way open up a few aspects of the research topic that has been my main engagement for the past few years. It is at the same time my humble hope that such a strategy will provide the reader with the first glimpses into some of the theoretical and methodological standpoints that have taken shape during the writing process, as well as illuminate the research emphasis in as simple a manner as possible.

The first part of the title – with its depiction of a shipwreck and death through drowning in Holmr's Sea – is a quote from a runic inscription from the Swedish landscape of Uppland, a verse that is here used in its translated form. The inscription, dated to ca. 1100, occurs on a rune stone found in the Vallentuna church; its beginning explains that a woman called Ingibjǫrg is commemorating her dead husband. That stone forms a pair monument together with a second rune stone known from the same church where two other women are named as commissioners; the deceased is thus also identified as someone's father and brother.[1] The name of the dead man has not been recorded but we learn about his fate – he drowned when his ship sank, and according to the statement on the rune stone only three men survived. They were perhaps the ones to inform the people back home of the tragic event that had occurred somewhere in Holmr's Sea.

The reason why part of this runic inscription has been quoted in the title lies in its interesting and also ambiguous nature. For one, the reference to Holmr's Sea conceals in itself a past place name that has not received one precise interpretation – two possible candidates are the seawaters around the Danish island of Bornholm, or the region in the present-day Gulf of Finland.[2] In this way the inscription demonstrates the limits of our modern attempts at establishing the facts, even behind what seems to us as an otherwise clearly formulated reference. At the same time there is enough reason to locate Holmr's Sea somewhere within the Baltic region – and in this, the reference appears to be the only mention of the sea as such in the runic material; although, of course, it is only related to a certain part

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[1] The two rune stones have the signatures U 214 and U 215 in the corpus edition of Swedish runic inscriptions, SRI. The fragmentarily preserved U 215 with its two commissioners made up the beginning of the joint commemorative inscription that continues on U 214, as demonstrated by the use of the conjunction 'and' at the start of the latter inscription.

[2] For further comments on both interpretations, see the analysis of U 214 in chapter III, subsection 3.1.15.

of what we today call the Baltic Sea.[3] Furthermore, the runic inscription from Vallentuna also functions as a good example of how the commemorative record of the death of a family man gets combined with a poetically formulated addition concerning the circumstances around his death – and this textual message is presented in a visual manner on a stone that through its size, shape and appearance signals monumentality. That is to say, different levels of expression are at work here – a realisation of which brings us over to the second part of the title.

From the formalistic point of view you may observe that the following wording "records and representations" consists of a pair of alliterating words. The real argumentation behind this choice of words naturally reflects two important dimensions that I wish to focus upon. The notion 'record' thus connects with a documentary approach, taken to mediate certain pieces of information, and containing evidence of some (past) events; although at the same time 'record' can also carry connotations to something being preserved visually. The notion 'representation' would in other words be a depiction or an image of something with more illustrative and perhaps even fictitious nuances attached to its meaning; and yet, in the case of historical narratives, it can also claim to figure as an objective presentation of a certain reality. Already here we notice how the two differently labelled concepts start to overlap.

The sources analysed in the frames of this study – among which runic inscriptions make up the core – are due to their specific nature (which will be clarified below) expected to unfold both as records and representations of the studied matter. At the same time, as mentioned above, the practices of recording and representing do not necessarily function as counterparts to each other, and the line between them is not always that clear – as we shall see during the analysis, it is rather a case of intermingled modes of expression where different dimensions are equally essential in understanding the complex phenomena.

The matter that lies in the focus is in the title determined as Baltic traffic – in other words, traffic in the region of the Baltic Sea. General guidelines for how the Baltic region is to be understood in the frames of the current study will be outlined in subsection 1.4.1.; our main point is to include areas that lie fully or partly within the Baltic Sea drainage basin. Considering the further fact that we are dealing with Nordic sources, it may seem somewhat unlucky that in the English language we have to refer to this arena as located within and around the Baltic Sea – thus using a designation as recorded in Latin e.g. by Adam of Bremen, i.e. 'Mare Balticum'[4] –, whereas in Scandinavian and several other Germanic languages it is known as the 'east sea'. This naming concept goes back to the Viking Age; in Old Norse prose the name *Eystrasalt* (eastern sea) – which is still used in modern Icelandic – is recorded alongside the other possible form *Austmarr*. The latter also occurs in skaldic poetry where the sea may further be identified in terms of the phrase *austr í salt*.[5] On the other hand, since the focus is placed on traffic within the whole region, the name 'Baltic' may be regarded as a suitable blanket designation.

What I am thus interested in, is to study traffic within the Baltic region in the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages as articulated in written sources – and by this I mean the study of

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[3] U 214 uses the formulation *a Holms hafi*. Another part of the Baltic Sea is recorded in a runic inscription from Södermanland, Sö 333, but there the reference is made more precisely to the sound of Kalmarsund: *i Kalmarna sundum*. Similarly, in the Danish inscription, DR 117, the sound of Øresund is mentioned: *i Ørasundi*.

[4] See for example the references and the map provided by Bjørnbo (1910: 143-144, 150).

[5] It is also of interest to mention that even in Old English the sea is recorded as *Ostsæ*. The name *Ostsæ* is thus used in the context of describing Northern Europe in the Old English version of Orosius – and there it has been understood not only as a designation of the Baltic Sea, but of also the straits of Skagerrak and Kattegat (Lund et al 1984: 66).

motives related to travel, exchange and communication. The temporal frames – the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages – will be specified below, but in general we are dealing with the period from ca. 900-1150. My main aim is to study expressions of mobility between different parts of the Baltic region – more precisely, how this mobility is documented and depicted from the Nordic point of view. In the title the source material is determined to be early Nordic sources. In subsection 1.6. we shall take a closer as well as a critical look at the nature of the sources. As already mentioned above, runic inscriptions form the backbone of this study, and they owe this central position to their particular nature as authentic materialised messages from the period in question. The evidence gained from the runic material will be broadened with relevant examples from skaldic poetry and saga literature in order to develop a more dynamic contextual understanding around the narrative tradition, both with regard to the depiction of Baltic traffic and travel and communication in general.

Here, in fact, lies the reason why the general term 'Nordic' has been chosen for the title. When viewed collectively, the sources represent Swedish, Danish, Norwegian and Icelandic perspectives; that is to say, from the cultural-historical point of view, they belong either under the sphere of East Norse or West Norse influences. At first sight, the source material as a whole may even seem too heterogeneous and complex to be made to serve the interests of studying one particular question (i.e. the way they express Baltic traffic); and even more so, because this precise matter enjoys only relatively marginal attention in the sources. Our choice of material as well as the manner in which it is approached will be discussed in further detail in subsections 1.5. and 1.6., and also throughout the thesis. At this point I simply wish to underline that we can find several features inside the historical and cultural reality that connect the sources, and this makes it natural to analyse evidence gained from one type of source against the broader background of other types of sources. One such connecting feature is, for example, the fact that their perspectives offer a kind of backward look at the events that they recollect – even though the time gap between a given source and a given event varies considerably, extending from perhaps a few months or years (in the case of runic inscriptions) to a few hundred years (in the case of Icelandic sagas). The fact that runic inscriptions can be regarded as being more or less contemporary with the events of the Viking and early medieval period, whereas the Icelandic sagas belong to the reality of the High Middle Ages, naturally calls for distinctive critical treatment. At the same time the inclusion of different temporal horizons allows us to study the records and representations of Baltic traffic in transition, and also to follow the dynamic developments leading from original expressions borne out of primary literacy into more full-fledged narrative literacy.

1.2. Structure of thesis

The thesis consists of five main chapters alongside summary in Estonian, a list of references and appendices. The current chapter (chapter I) offers a general overview of the research emphasis, explains its background motivation and clarifies the main objectives. Central theoretical as well as methodological considerations are introduced – and they will be further built upon in the following chapters. Among the theoretical perspectives, the concept of Baltic traffic is explained in detail; and from the methodological side, the central features of the adapted hermeneutical approach are outlined. Chapter I is concluded by an introductory discussion concerning the selected source material, where the focus lies on gaining a critical

understanding of the nature of the sources. There will be provided separate reviews of related literature, and discussions of essential theoretical and methodological standpoints with regard to different types of sources throughout the thesis.

Chapters II and III deal with runic inscriptions, and constitute the focal point of the thesis. In chapter II the functions and the cultural-historical meaning of rune stone inscriptions are discussed, critically assessing a number of theories, and underlining the importance of taking into consideration the communicative value of the monument as a whole. Outlined theoretical and methodological principles focus on the matter of providing contextually grounded qualitative methods for studying runic inscriptions. A survey of relevant previous studies is also undertaken, so as to identify the premises that distinguish this current study from earlier works.

Chapter III analyses and discusses the collected data about Baltic traffic as reflected by the runic material. The study of textual aspects of individual inscriptions is combined with an analysis of the various visual, physical and communicative features of runic monuments. Besides the in-depth analysis of separate cases, chapter III will also demonstrate their collective significance and discuss their meaning in the light of other contemporary runic evidence.

In chapter IV the focus lies on skaldic and saga depictions of Baltic traffic. Three groups of sources will be treated as potential complementary evidence to the analysed runic inscriptions. Characteristic perspectives from skaldic poetry (i.e. poetical narratives) will be introduced; followed up by an outline of relevant motives from prose, i.e. certain kings' sagas and sagas of Icelanders. Introductory subsections will be provided with regard to the general features of skaldic poetry and saga literature, and their important theoretical and methodological consequences.

The skaldic and saga material is studied with the purpose of understanding the wider cultural background around depictions of travel. The concluding chapter V thus undertakes the final discussion around previously analysed evidence and places their records and representations of Baltic traffic into the context of the narrative tradition of travelogue.

1.3. Research objectives and motivation

As already mentioned in the introduction, the main aim is to explore expressions of Baltic traffic in runic inscriptions, with additional perspectives from skaldic poetry and saga literature. The key research questions – listed in this particular order to demonstrate movement from the primary foci that are taken up for analysis to the complementary discussion of more general theoretical concepts – are the following:

1. In what manner are the references to Baltic traffic incorporated into runic inscriptions: how do they function both with regard to the textual structure and patterns of layout; what messages do they record and/or represent?
2. When viewed collectively, can such references illuminate narrative and communicative purposes other than that of immediate commemoration?
3. How is the relationship between the practices of recording and representing aspects of Baltic traffic reflected when comparing different types of sources to each other? Is it possible to trace the dynamics of expression on the path from runic references into saga depictions?

4. How are the modes of narrativity and historicity expressed in depictions of travel and communication? Does the nature of the source material allow us to draw conclusions about the potential cultural-historical significance of the collected evidence?

In studying Scandinavian runic inscriptions we concentrate first and foremost on their mention of different destinations located within the Baltic region; their repertoire of place and ethnic names will be analysed in combination with other items of applied vocabulary, both with regard to their textual as well as broader communicative meaning.[6] An important additional goal in connection with the analysis of runic inscriptions is the application of a methodological model that takes into consideration the different levels of expression that are active around a runic monument; this is why the textual study goes hand-in-hand with the mapping of patterns of layout.

In terms of communicative meaning, we follow the theoretical assumption that any preserved textual message has been produced by someone and addressed to someone. The fact that such a message has meant something both to its producers and receivers, and still means something for us as well, is what provides witness to an act of communication taking place – be it connected with an exchange of information, the passing on of certain knowledge, the recording of a significant event or experience, or simply fulfilling entertaining functions.

At the same time the study of runic inscriptions does not limit itself strictly to analysing records and representations of Baltic traffic, but wishes to a certain degree to bring in information on further travels with the purpose of providing a broader context around the Baltic references. This is further combined with the introduction of perspectives from other types of sources and their ways of depicting travel and communication.

Furthermore, we shall to a certain degree engage in a discussion around the deeper theoretical significance of the joint source material, for example with regard to the related features of narrativity and historicity. The relationship between these concepts will be illuminated in the framework of the final discussion in chapter V but relevant theoretical observations will also be presented during the main analysis. We propose that the study of the narrative tradition of travelogue can reveal connections between various types of sources – they are governed by similar principles of recollection, honouring and commemoration, and thus take part in an interesting cultural-historical discourse, leading a dialogue with past events from the perspective of the present.

In other words, the study serves two overarching objectives, briefly defined as the practical and the theoretical perspectives. Such a combination results logically from the realisation that even when focusing on rather limited aspects of texts and treating them primarily as reservoirs for a particular content, it is at the same time necessary to show concern for the texts themselves from a broader perspective. A remark made by a scholar in connection with saga studies is particularly revealing: "We must both reconsider the content of sagas and attempt to comprehend their whole mode of expression, their style, rhetoric, motives" (Meulengracht Sørensen 1993b: 179). Comprehensive matters like that would normally require extensive study within the frames of separate research projects – hence, it has to be remembered that in this current context they remain subordinate to the primary research questions. The theoretical background of the sources that record/represent Baltic traffic is included mainly in order to reveal the importance of contextual understanding.

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[6] It should be specified that the study of proper names is not guided by etymological research objectives, neither is it undertaken with the purpose of tracing the exact geographical span of the region. The emphasis in this context lies on the expressions of traffic as such.

The motivation behind the research questions posed above springs out of the following observations. In Nordic history the period of the Viking Age is particularly well known for its expansive outward orientation – as witnessed by the great amount of traffic unfolding in different directions – including both long- and short-distance communication, comprising both larger and smaller expeditions and connecting both with raiding and trading purposes as well as with other types of activities. In fact, this traffic that accelerated during the Viking Age had been introduced already prior to that, and it continued to evolve in a more administrated and organised form throughout the Middle Ages. These are some basic historical considerations, which may be further discussed according to a variety of approaches, and from a variety of perspectives.

To our mind it is interesting and at the same time challenging to examine how the matters of traffic in the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages are reflected in Nordic sources, where we can expect the practices of factual recording and more expressive representation to unfold together and intertwine. This is the reason why we turn to runic inscriptions, skaldic poetry and sagas. Questions regarding Viking Age mobility and cultural exchange with other regions have previously been studied on the basis of similar source material, but then mostly treating the sources as distinctly separate groups, and providing either supporting evidence or counterarguments for their value as particular historical statements. Here the attempt is made to combine different types of evidence, and to also make use of a more complex approach in which the dimensions of narrative imagery and historical actuality are considered equally important. Hence the focus lies on identifying the related practices of representing and recording, a study of which will hopefully demonstrate the deeper significance of the sources. In other words, even if the extent of available source material cannot be extended to include previously unknown evidence, the applied approach can make a difference; and a focus on the matter from a slightly different angle may yet bring about fresh knowledge and ideas.

Our primary research object has in the meantime been determined as traffic within the Baltic region. From the practical point of view it has been useful to concentrate upon one relatively limited area. But the Baltic region has been chosen as the focal point for several reasons; some among these will be clarified in more detail below. In this context it is sufficient to underline that the region is historically known as an important scene for trade contacts and as a lively communication arena, within which the above-mentioned sources indeed also identify a number of places and districts. Traffic in the Baltic area reveals itself both as short-distance mobility between closely located places, and movement over somewhat longer distances along popular sea routes. To that we can add the fact that the coasts of the Baltic Sea have long hosted different cultures and ethnicities – and there is ample reason to assume that the sea has connected, rather than separated them. Perhaps these Nordic sources in their own way may even help us to rethink our earlier history, the understanding of which was clearly shaped by the reality of strict borderlines between the east and the west during much of the 20th century. It is obvious that during the last decade a shift of paradigm has taken place in our ways of approaching a whole range of questions.

1.4. Scope of research and theoretical considerations

1.4.1. The concept of Baltic traffic

In this subsection we present the central theoretical framework and delimit the focus of study. As will be demonstrated, the foundation of the problem treatment is anchored in concrete, geographically and historically grounded considerations, whereas the actual exploration process depends very much on broader analytical-reflective argumentation.

We start with the concept of Baltic traffic, already shortly commented upon in connection with the introduction and main objectives. Concerning Baltic traffic, it is on the one hand necessary to define the boundaries of the overall region from a geographical as well as historical perspective. And on the other hand, we have to distinguish between certain districts in order to be able to trace patterns of traffic between different parts of this general arena.

Although the obvious fact is that we deal with the area around the Baltic Sea, it is in the meantime not so easy to determine its actual natural borders. The logical point of departure is the Baltic Sea itself, according to *Encyclopædia Brittanica*: "the arm of the North Atlantic Ocean, extending northward from the latitude of southern Denmark almost to the Arctic Circle and separating the Scandinavian Peninsula from the rest of continental Europe".[7] The same source informs: "The Baltic Sea covers about 149,000 square miles (386,000 square kilometres). The catchment area drained by the rivers bringing fresh water into the Baltic is about four times as large as the sea itself."[8] Within the Baltic Sea we can distinguish between its main basin, called the Baltic proper, and major arms. We may thus determine the Baltic region as comprising the Baltic Sea and the immediate coastal lands with direct access to the sea, or extend it also over adjacent areas that are connected to the Baltic Sea by the many rivers it receives.

We have chosen to use the geographical concept of the Baltic Sea drainage basin as the primary theoretical premise, with a few minor modifications along the lines of historical argumentation. The present-day countries of Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Denmark and Sweden belong either fully or partly to this region; furthermore, they all have extended coastline along the Baltic Sea. Parts of modern Ukraine and Belarus as well as minor borderline regions of Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Norway are strictly speaking also located within the drainage basin, but their ties with the sea are based on river connections, and thus indirect.[9] From the point of view of studying Baltic traffic, the potential references made to these areas – this concerns first and foremost Norway – are therefore treated as complementary evidence. We do not consider Norway itself as an automatic destination within the framework of Baltic traffic but at the same time we do not exclude from discussion such cases where the sources speak of voyages leading from

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[7] For further information, see the article "Baltic Sea", Encyclopædia Britannica Online. http://search.eb.com/eb/article?tocId=33208. In the case of references to web-based resources more precise data (including access dates) is provided in the list of references.

[8] The data of 386,000 square kilometres is based upon the idea of the Baltic Sea including the Danish straits; when adding the strait of Kattegat (which by some is considered to be the arm of the North Sea), the overall area reaches 420,000 square kilometres.

[9] Norway could perhaps be considered an interesting exception – on the one hand, the parts of Norway that do belong to the drainage basin do not lie on the sea, but are located along its eastern borders with Sweden. In the meantime the strait of Kattegat, and hence the Baltic Sea, is within an easy reach from southern parts of Norway, separated only by the North Sea inlet of Skagerrak.

Norway into the Baltic. In general, we thus take into the consideration the patterns of traffic that the sources themselves provide witness to.
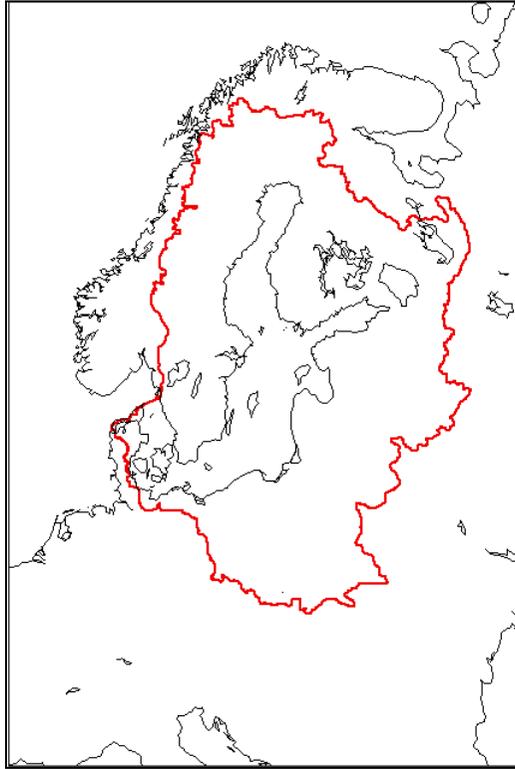
Figure 1. The Baltic Sea Drainage Basin, according to *Baltic Sea Region. GIS, Maps and Statistical Database.* http://vitalgraphics.grida.no/balticmap.

The premises presented above follow modern political and geographical realities, whereas we have to consider the historical context. The limitations of literary evidence do not rule out the possibility of characterising areas around the Baltic Sea as a common and interrelated communication arena already in the context of the Viking Age. Historical and archaeological studies underline the importance of water routes in early communication. With regard to the Baltic region – where the centrally positioned sea and numerous big rivers and lakes connect lands both to the east, west, north and south – waterborne traffic was most certainly a historical reality. This justifies the application of the concept of the drainage basin as a manner of grasping the range of Baltic traffic from a cultural-historical perspective as well. Naturally the maritime landscape of the past was not the same as today; on the other hand, the significance of early water routes grows considerably when taking into account the fact that since the Viking period the ground has in places been constantly rising, which means that in certain parts of the Baltic region the water level used to be higher. Owing to its strategic position, the Baltic Sea thus functioned as a major transportation link, and not merely for communities located along its immediate coasts.

In our study the Baltic region therefore covers not only the sea basin and surrounding coastal areas but radiates out to include further inland territories that are either fully or in a

substantial part located within the drainage basin.[10] In this we follow a more unified and flexible approach than many other previous cultural-historical studies, in which the Baltic region is related primarily to the territories of modern Baltic countries on the eastern coast of the sea, and sometimes extended by the areas of Finland, Kaliningrad, Poland and Germany. Here we have found it reasonable to include northwestern Russia, i.e. the historical territory of the Old Rus, falling partly into the drainage basin.[11] It should be separately emphasised that Scandinavia is also treated as part of the same general communication arena, i.e. inter-Scandinavian contacts qualify as evidence of Baltic traffic. This may in itself seem to be a simple observation, but it is nevertheless often overlooked; usually one tends to characterise such forms of Scandinavian mobility as contacts between close neighbours or even as homeland activities. In the meantime we believe that such a distinction between domestic and foreign ventures is, at least in the case of the Baltic region, not really significant. Apart from the obvious cultural and linguistic ties between different Scandinavian communities, there is no particular reason for undermining the importance of mutual contacts blossoming along common water routes all around the Baltic Sea. In this light it does not seem likely that a trade or perhaps plunder voyage to Gotland was in the eyes of some Danish or mainland Swedish travellers perceived as something completely different from a similarly purposed venture to Courland.

From this inclusive argumentation we turn to the discussion of the Baltic region as one consisting of various minor districts. The notion of traffic presupposes in the least some movement from point A to point B, and potentially back to A. The scale of movement, i.e. the relative distance between points A and B, needs to be taken into account. Since inter-Scandinavian communication has been included in the discussion, we have to specify on what level the traffic is studied.

In general, we can draw an arbitrary line between local and regional communication – this study understands Baltic traffic as the expression of the latter, i.e. the focus is on contacts on the level of bigger districts. At the same time we cannot establish rigid parameters for such a distinction; this is also the reason why the phrase 'relative distance' was used above. In order to understand the actual scale of traffic further assistance has to be gained from the sources themselves – as will be demonstrated by the analysis. We can therefore also discuss such cases where the recorded destination is physically not that far away from the point of departure, but from the regional perspective still represents a different zone –for example traffic leading from Jylland (Jutland) to the sound of Øresund (the Sound).[12]

Regional communication and contacts between districts are thus the primary tools for characterising Baltic traffic. As far as historical administrative divisions in the area around the Baltic Sea are concerned, the situation is complicated.[13] In the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages there existed various regional entities and communities around the Baltic Sea –

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[10] It should be specified that certain parts of present-day Denmark and northern Germany may according to the strictly geographical map remain outside the drainage basin, but are nevertheless considered as partakers in Baltic traffic, since they possessed easy access to coastal areas and to the sea.

[11] In particular contexts, as is the case with *Garðar* references in runic inscriptions, it can be hard to determine what exact part of the Old Rus has been referred to, but in general we can regard that area as an attractive destination for traffic that at least led through the Baltic region.

[12] Throughout the thesis we prefer using the local forms of various Scandinavian place names instead of their English equivalents (with the exception of common country names). With certain other names we also constantly refer to them in their ON form (e.g. *Garðar*, instead of Russia).

[13] See e.g. the discussion of state formation processes and the characteristic features of structures in the early Scandinavian society in S. Brink (1996; 1997).

as witnessed also by their mention in the sources that interest us. With regard to the Scandinavian countries it is generally held that their medieval subdivision into different lands (provinces) and even smaller settlement districts builds to a certain degree upon earlier regional units, or at least allows certain reconstruction. We cannot, of course, equate modern nation-states and their administrative districts with historical countries and formations.[14] That is to say, the Denmark of today differs from the Denmark of the Viking Age and the Middle Ages; which, as described by Randsborg, included also parts of southern Sweden and northern Germany: "The state of Denmark, having attained its form and extension in about 1000, comprised the whole present-day Denmark and southern Slesvig, the area from the Danish-German border down to river Ejder [...], as well as Skåne, Halland and Blekinge" (Randsborg 1980: 2).[15] Or to take Sweden – historically it used to be divided into two major regions: Götaland and Svealand. Thompson (1975: 4) writes, with regard to the Viking Age Sweden: "Svealand included the provinces of Gästrikland, Uppland, Västmanland, Södermanland and eastern parts of Dalarna, Värmland and Närke. To the south lay Götaland, the kingdom of the Götar, or Geats. The north was largely uninhabited".[16]

The very fact that the sources refer to different areas and places attests to the existence of knowledge about certain territorial structures; those are in themselves reflective of regional division, even if their political meaning, geographical boundaries and/or precise locations cannot always be established or may be disputed.

To conclude, Baltic traffic is being analysed here on the level of regional and inter-regional communication. In general we take such regional formations as landscapes/provinces to function as the key premises for the study of interaction; but minor districts are also taken into account to the extent that they are distinguishable. A suitable example could in this case be taken from the Swedish context, where the landscape of Uppland is known to have comprised the 'folklands' of Attundaland, Tiundaland, Fjädrundaland, alongside a coastal area called Roden (Roslagen) (cf. e.g. Larsson 1990: 38-43). Similar historical division into old lands is well known with regard to Småland, with Finnveden, Njudung, Värend and Möre among its four bigger districts in the south (cf. e.g. S. Brink 1997: 432-433).[17]

This, on the other hand, does not mean that in the actual study of Baltic traffic we concentrate only upon references made to landscapes/provinces – the nature of regional communication is manifold, and can be traced through the mention of various countries, provinces, and minor districts, as well as through more limited centres and settlements. All these types of references do indeed occur in the chosen source material.

All in all, this means that the application of the concept of Baltic traffic is not a strictly automatic theoretical tool, but operates within reasonable and flexible frames of understanding where the analysed material itself proves to be most useful in determining both the reach and limitations.

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[14] Though trivial, this remark has to be kept in mind when later referring to country names such as Denmark, Sweden, Estonia, etc.

[15] From this isolated quote it may appear as though the borders of the Danish kingdom were by that time firmly outlined; the actual historical situation with regard to the reach (and stability) of the Danish territory was, of course, more complicated.

[16] With the further expansion of the unified Swedish kingdom, two other major districts, Österland (areas of Finland) and Norrland (northern parts of Sweden), were formed.

[17] Naturally, such districts were further divided into smaller units – for example the much discussed and studied units of 'hundred' (in Swedish *hundare*), or ship districts (*skeppslag*); but in the frames of this study we limit the scale of regional communication to bigger formations, as determined above.

Moving along to some terminological aspects, the idea of flexibility also demonstrates itself through the designation 'traffic' that has been chosen among other alternatives, since it encompasses a wide range of semantic components, such as travel, communication, movement, trade, exchange, etc.[18] At the same time, 'traffic' appears as a term, which despite its broadness – and unpleasant modern connotations to traffic jams – carries a meaning that proves itself most useful and precise when considering the fact that the focus is on contacts within the Baltic region. Depending on the context and stylistic considerations, it may occasionally be replaced with the more or less synonymous designations 'travel', 'communication' and 'mobility' – especially when discussing the more general features of the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages. With regard to Baltic contacts, it is nevertheless primarily the designation 'traffic' that is being applied throughout the thesis.

Concerning the runic material, the term of Baltic traffic inscriptions will be used exclusively as opposed to former terminology, such as voyage inscriptions (in Swedish 'utlandsfärds-inskrifter'), travellers' inscriptions, etc. – in case of the latter the emphasis is placed upon runic evidence of longer journeys, leading outside the so-called homeland area. In the meantime, from our perspective of Baltic regional communication – where inter-Scandinavian contacts belong to the same communication arena – it proves more correct to use the term 'traffic', free of imperative connotations to longer travels, and at the same time not excluding them. That is to say, 'traffic' comprises mobility both within and beyond Scandinavia, combining the traditional dimensions of home (internal communication) and abroad (external communi-cation).

Baltic traffic is understood as an expression of contacts between different districts, and it is studied on the basis of references to places/regions/communities all around the Baltic Sea – a communication arena that has long functioned as a meeting place for people.

1.4.2. Temporal frames

The adjustment of the temporal scope to include the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages relies on historical argumentation as well as the selection of the main source material. The former aspect has already been commented upon in connection with research motivation. As for the latter, it has been necessary to ask what temporal frames would be productive from the point of view of the chosen sources.

Inscriptions on rune stones function in this connection as contemporary evidence of central importance; they are particularly well represented towards the second half of the 10th century and throughout the 11th century.[19] Preserved skaldic poetry – in as far as it may be regarded to be the authentic production of original poets – fits into a wide period, reaching back to the beginning of the 9th century.[20] Sagas that focus on the events of the 9th-11th centuries have in the meantime been written down from ca. 1150-1300.[21] Most of the weight here will be placed on runic inscriptions, but even with regard to other sources, it seems reasonable to

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[18] See for example *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary and Thesaurus*, http://www.m-w.com.

[19] Different types of runic inscriptions were common throughout the Middle Ages, but such later inscriptions contain only very sporadic references to travelling in general.

[20] Skaldic poetry also continued to be composed during the whole of the Middle Ages, and in Iceland even later.

[21] For more information on the sources, see subsection 1.6. as well as separate chapters.

place major focus on the period around 900/950-1100/1150. That is to say, we study Baltic traffic on the basis of sources that either date directly from that period or claim to represent it.

The period has been labelled as the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages. In fact, it should be mentioned that both the beginning and the end of the Viking Age are a disputed matter among historians and archaeologists. On the one hand, it has been argued that similar expansive socio-economic developments were prevalent already in the late 7th century and early 8th century. On the other hand, it is uncertain how long into the 11th century the Viking Age should be stretched; some scholars would claim that it lasted only until the beginning of the 11th century. Traditionally the dates 793 (the viking attack on Lindisfarne) and 1066 (the year in which king Haraldr harðráði was killed in the battle of Stamford Bridge, and Haraldr Guðinason in the battle of Hastings) are given respectively as the start and the end point of the Viking Age.

The Middle Ages are in the Scandinavian context normally divided into the Early Middle Ages (ca. 1050-1200), High Middle Ages (ca. 1200-1400), and Late Middle Ages (ca. 1400-1525).[22] At the same time, in traditional runic studies a somewhat different periodisation has been used – with the period from ca. 650-1025/50 known as the Viking Age, and the period from ca. 1050-1400 as the Middle Ages (cf. Moltke 1985a: 24).

In light of the above, we find it justified to operate with more flexible periods, and not necessarily draw a sharp line of demarcation between the end of the Viking Age and the beginning of the Middle Ages, but rather permit the 11th century to figure under the joint label of late Viking and early medieval period. Furthermore, by combining the study of the Viking Age with that of the Early Middle Ages, we do not simply terminate the evidence found in contemporary runic inscriptions (and for that matter, also skaldic poetry) by the mid-11th century, but follow its natural dynamics.

1.4.3. Narrativity and historicity

It was explained above that besides practical research goals, an additional aim is to undertake a theoretically orientated discussion around the nature of the sources. This discussion is in itself an outcome of the chosen focus on the practices of recording and representing – the notions were briefly characterised in the introduction – aspects of Baltic traffic. On a deeper theoretical level we therefore seek an understanding of how the features of narrativity and historicity intermingle in the sources that depict the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages.

It is necessary to establish the essential premises for understanding the concepts of narrative/narrativity and history/historicity.[23] We are in both cases dealing with complex theoretical matters, whose different connotations cannot be opened up in full detail – they will be introduced only along the lines necessary for following the current research focus.

According to one simple definition, narrativity could be determined as "the state of having a narrative; the storytelling character of a text" (Belton 1996-2000, http://www.arts.ouc.bc.ca/fina/glossary/n_list.html). Narrative, in the most usual and simplistic sense, connects with

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[22] In the European tradition the division would be: the Early Middle Ages (ca. 500-1000), the High Middle Ages (ca. 1000-1350) and the Late Middle Ages (ca. 1350-1500).

[23] For a concluding discussion of the features narrativity and historicity, see also subsection 5.2.

some sort of story that relates events and actions; although it is not completely synonymous with a story but rather a more abstract representation of that.[24] Narrativity appears as a specific feature of this process of representation – it is what makes a narrative into a narrative, or in other words, helps us to establish a meaning in the form of a unified story. White (1980: 5) determines narrative to be "a form of human comprehension that is productive of meaning".

Historicity, on the other hand, can be shortly explained as historical actuality (Belton 1996-2000). In order to understand what is meant by the adjective 'historical' (i.e. something related to history), we add a possible definition of history as "the discipline that studies the chrono-logical record of events (as affecting a nation or people), based on a critical examination of source materials and usually presenting an explanation of their causes" (*Encyclopædia Britannica*).[25] In the meantime, as pointed out by Ricoeur (1981: 288), "in most European languages, the term 'history' has an intriguing ambiguity, meaning both what really happens and the narrative of those events". Historicity can be understood as a feature that characterises the historical presentation of actually observed and recorded past circumstances, and in a broader sense as a foundational feature of existence "which signifies the fundamental and radical fact that we make history, that we are immersed in history, that we are historical beings" (Ricoeur 1981: 274).

The relationship between narrative and history, and distinctions/parallels between fictional and historical narratives have been widely discussed by a number of theoreticians and philo-sophers; an overview of the main trends in the debate around the narrative character of history can be found in Carr (1991: 7-17) and Lundmark (1990). Lundmark identifies five main approaches in the debate around (historical) reality and narrativity: 1) Narrative is in corres-pondence with the very form reality itself possesses; 2) Fictional narrative and historical writing are mutually dependent, and the latter cannot exist without making use of the narrative form; 3) Reality and narrative structure stand in opposition to each other, narrative is merely a means of binding reality together, and therefore historical narrative offers a distorted picture of reality; 4) The coherence and unity of meaning sought by narrative do not correspond to the actual fragmentary nature of reality, as understood in poststructuralist terms; 5) Narrative form is applied as a tool of pressure, it wishes to subordinate reality (op. cit. 128-129).

Carr is himself the representative for the first approach that interprets reality itself in terms of a narrative structure. He takes a step further from other influential "narrativist philosophers of history", such as for example Mink and White (both belong under Lundmark's third cate-gory), who according to Carr's wording have argued that "the narrative, as literary artifact produced by historians, reads into the reality of the past a narrative structure that the past does not 'really' have" (Carr 1991: 13). Indeed, White explains narrative in terms of imposing "certain formal components on a virtual chaos of events, which in themselves cannot be said to possess any particular form at all, much less the kind we associate with stories" (White 1980: 5). In Carr's own opinion, "narrative is not in any way adventitious or external to the

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[24] *The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* defines narrative as: "1: something that is narrated: story 2: the art or practice of narration 3: the representation in art of an event or story; *also*: an example of such a representation" (http://www.m-w.com). White (1984: 32) expresses the ambiguity of narrative in following terms: "Narrative is at once a mode of discourse, a manner of speaking, and the product produced by the adoption of this mode of discourse".

[25] See "History", Encyclopædia Britannica Online. http://search.eb.com/eb/article?tocId=9040600.

actions and experiences of real life but is part of its fabric" (1991: 168). In other words, Carr sees narrative as "the structure inherent in human experience and action" (op. cit. 65).[26]

We might not completely agree with Carr's method of establishing a unity of meaning in all human existence through the help of narrative – in fact, he himself admits that this may pose a culturally-bound Western conception, and represent simply one way of living in time (see Carr, pp. 183-185). Also, one may question the validity of such an overall narrative structure in light of poststructuralist and postmodernist ideas.[27] However, in light of recent thoughts around the restrictions of human life – above all its termination through death –, objections to the existence of a grand narrative structure may again feel overly emphasised. From this point of view, as expressed by Pihlström: "Death then plays a decisive role in the modern human being's understanding of her or his life as a unified narrative […] The modern person, often without noticing it, conceives of her or his life as a 'story', and this narrativist attitude to life has been conceptualized in various ways in the history of modern thought" (http://www.bu. edu/wcp/Papers/Amer/AmerPihl.htm).

Important for this present discussion is the argumentation around narrative as an extension of history, its continuation by other means (cf. Carr 1991: 177, 185). We interpret the latter thought in the concrete sense of expecting interaction between the features of narrativity and historicity, both with regard to fictional and historical narratives. To evaluate such interaction we must examine the main characteristics of narrative, and find out how the features of narrativity may overlap with our expectations towards what may be called the historical presentation of circumstances.

"Narratives, whether historical or fictional, are typically about, and thus purport to represent, not the world as such, reality as a whole, but specifically *human* reality," writes Carr (op. cit. 19). Characteristic features of narratives are: 1) temporal unfolding of events, the presence of a kind of beginning-middle-end structure; 2) the existence of a narrator – be it either 'the voice' of a story-teller or of a narrativist historian – who mediates information about certain characters/historical figures and events; and 3) orientation towards an expected audience.[28] White (1980: 7) means that narratives may be characterised by a central subject, a specific progressive structure, an identifiable narrative voice, and connected events. Narrative thus possesses both formal and internal cohesion and coherence – expressed in the unity of meaning.

The temporal organisation of actions and events and the existence of the informed narrator provide narrative with the possibility of a retrospective (and even prospective) grasp. In this we find an interesting difference between narrative and chronicle: "The chronicler simply describes what happens in the order in which it happens. The narrator, by contrast, in virtue of his retrospective view, picks out the most important events, traces the causal and motivational connections among them, and gives us an organized, coherent account" (Carr 1991: 59).

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[26] Carr's views are to a certain degree related to those of Ricoeur (representative of Lundmark's second category), who speaks of "the irreducible narrative character of history", and analyses the correlations between narrativity and historicity (see Ricoeur 1981: 274-296).

[27] See Lundmark's fourth category, above. As a representative, Lundmark names LaCapra, according to whom historians striving for coherence in their narrative accounts of reality and historical processes are in fact distorting those accounts, because reality is manifold and lacks unity (Lundmark 1990: 133). LaCapra (1980: 272-274) advocates instead a documentary view of history for an intellectual dialogue or conversation with the reality of the past, unfolding as "a two-way affair".

[28] See e.g. Carr (1986: 46). It should be underlined that with regard to our source material, we witness various forms of narrativity, which may appear deviant in relation to the traditional principles – see the introduction in subsection 1.6. and the discussion in chapter V.

These basic features apply both to fictional and historical narratives (i.e. historical writing that applies the narrative form). We find the same requirements of logical sequence, clarity, coherence and structure (chronological framework) in historical presentations; the recording of events there is inevitably combined with constructing a meaning as well.

What would differentiate one from another is, primarily their content: "The content of historical stories is real events, events that really happened rather than imaginary events invented by the narrator" (White 1984: 2). That is to say, historical narrative at least seeks objective representation, and makes a claim about being true. At the same time, White highlights the problems of using a narrative mode of representation in historical writing; in his opinion, "the problem of narrativity turns on the issue of whether historical events can be truthfully represented as manifesting the structures and processes of those met with more commonly in certain kinds of 'imaginative discourses'" (ibid.).[29] Ricouer, on the other hand, has quite differently attempted to show that "all narratives make, in a certain sense, a referential claim", by introducing the concept of "crossed reference" into the discussion of the relationship between narrativity and historicity (Ricouer 1981: 289). According to Ricouer, "the references of 'true history' and 'fictional history' *cross* upon the basic historicity of human experience" (op. cit. 293-294).

Our approach to these questions does not serve the point of view of historical theory with the purpose of revealing the so-called true essence and meaning of history and human existence. The previous discussion merely purports to illustrate deeper levels of interaction between the features of narrativity and historicity – as witnessed in both fictional and historical narratives.

With regard to our source material, it is important to underline that on such a theoretical level our aim is not to analyse to what extent certain elements in them appear as imaginative fiction or factual history, but rather to explore the sources as complex modes of discourse, reflective of their contemporary communicative context. That is to say, the primary goal is not to evaluate the exact truth-value of the sources, which is the reason why we do not necessarily make assumptions on the basis of the overall manifestation of particular events/actions as for what did indeed occur, and what did not. The general emphasis lies rather on analysing the belonging-together aspect of the features of narrativity and historicity in the sources as such. We examine the practice of recording, active on the level of informational content (through the inclusion of particular facts), as well as the practice of representing this informational content in more depictive and illustrative terms. In this we find that meaning is produced not in terms of a non-dialectical either-or relation, but rather through the fusion of different perspectives. Onto potential historical facts a figurative and narrative account may be projected; and by doing this, the sources follow their own modes of reality.

Naturally, on the more practical level of studying the recorded evidence of Baltic traffic, it is also necessary to engage in a discussion around the cultural-historical significance of the sources, as well as to evaluate the relevance of offered interpretations – particularly with regard to determining the referential value of authentic runic messages. But what follows from this is rather often a warning against building up naive historical connections. At this point it should further be remembered that in the selection of sources there lie clear limitations to the overall nature of evidence; their obvious biases would give too simplified a picture of the

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[29] Furthermore, White has illustrated the problematic nature of narrative history by claiming that the narrative mode imposes a demand for moral authority; it is related to the urge to moralise reality, or even to dramatise it (White 1980: 13-14; 1984: 9-10). Nevertheless, the narrative mode continues to be highly functional in historical writing, which does not necessarily have to constitute a setback (see e.g. Lundmark 1990: 136).

actual historical conditions. Only other forms of historical as well as archaeological knowledge can provide assisting/confirming evidence – on this basis, for example, every-day trade contacts may be revealed on a larger scale.[30] In the meantime, this study has its main purpose in exploring WHAT is indeed recorded/represented in the written sources, and HOW this is done.

1.5. General methodology – adapted hermeneutical approach

To start outlining the methodological approach, we wish to borrow an expression of Jesch from her book *Ships and Men in the Late Viking Age*: "It is a work of neither history nor linguistics" (Jesch 2001: 6). Indeed, such a consideration applies also to this present thesis, although the actual research process has benefited from the perspectives of history, linguistics and literature. Jesch continues her remark by adding that her work is "rather of philology in the old sense", and exemplifies this by quoting O. E. Haugen and Thomassen (ibid.).[31] In general we may find even this statement to be in accordance with our own standpoint, with an important modification that we do not necessarily have to call this approach "philology in the old sense". It may just as well be determined as philology in a renewed sense – to support the call for understanding philology again as an integrated science about language in the broader context of history, and thus combining the perspectives of linguistics, literature and history; this is an idea expressed for example by Jordheim in the book *Lesningens vitenskap* (2001). Jordheim attests that philology may (again) be expected to deal with questions around language and history, texts within their historical context.

An application of certain historical perspectivism in the study of texts as utterances belonging to a broad cultural setting accords well with previously stated research questions that focus both on textual and contextual understanding. By admitting that different levels of contextuality that surround a given text are all productive of meaning, we are already engaging ourselves in a hermeneutical process of interpretation.[32]

Hermeneutical perspectives in studying texts in the broader (historical) setting are in themselves nothing new. The concept of hermeneutics is in the meantime a broader one – besides functioning as a methodology for humanistic sciences, it also comprises its own metatheory, a philosophical discussion of "hermeneutic ontology" (Harnow Klausen 1997: 43). On one extreme, hermeneutics may refer to the concrete practice of interpreting some obscure parts of texts, whereas on the other end we are dealing with a universal philosophy; and in between these two points we find a wide range of other hermeneutical activities. From a more generalised point of view, the hermeneutics of today can be determined as: a set of methodological principles within the frames of a variety of disciplines; a general theory of

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[30] Among recent studies the dissertation by Markus (2004) contains a systematic overview of communication within the Baltic region from the point of view of archaeological finds (see particularly pp. 114-126).

[31] In their book, Haugen and Thomassen discuss different definitions of philology, but underline – as also mentioned by Jesch – that the legitimacy of philology still depends upon a broad interpretation of the past based both on linguistic and cultural considerations (Haugen and Thomassen 1990: 36).

[32] The following outline of the concept of hermeneutics and of what is addressed as the adapted hermeneutical approach builds upon argumentation presented in Zilmer (2003c). In parts it is a shortened review of aspects already discussed there, but certain new observations have been added.

scientific methodology; and as a universal philosophical reflection. Palmer (1981: 461-462) calls these the regional, general and philosophical categories of hermeneutics.

The term 'hermeneutics' as such originates from the 17th century, but corresponding practices go back to antiquity (Palmer 1969: 35); hermeneutics in the oldest sense was related to revealing the hidden meanings of biblical texts (see e.g. Kjørup 2000: 267-268). The principles of general methodological hermeneutics were introduced in the 18th and 19th centuries through the tradition of German scholars, such as Schleiermacher, Boeckh and Dilthey (see Palmer 1969: 84-123; Kjørup 2000: 271-274; Jordheim 32-62).[33] The ontological dimension was added to hermeneutics by Heidegger, who saw understanding as a principal feature of all human existence (see Palmer 1969: 124-161; Kjørup 2000: 274-276). In the 20th century hermeneutics was further developed as a means of analysing human understanding and behaviour by a series of philosophers; Palmer (1981: 454) speaks in this context of "the quartet of Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur and Derrida". Gadamer has discussed historical understanding in the framework of philosophical hermeneutics, without proposing any concrete methodologies (see Palmer 1969: 162-217; Kjørup 2000: 276-281). Nevertheless, his ideas have had important consequences for methodological discussions in a number of disciplines. For Gadamer, there is no presuppositionless understanding; understanding is always interpretation, and hence a productive process.[34]

In this current context hermeneutics is approached as a regional category (to use the terminology of Palmer), with the purpose of gaining qualitative research methods and techniques. Our task is to study and interpret texts that represent a certain historical tradition, relating their meaning to research questions that have been formed within our present research context. The central principles to observe are the following.[35]

One of the primary features of this adapted hermeneutical approach (adapted to meet the needs of the current research) connects the event of understanding with the traditional notion of hermeneutical circle/spiral – based on the dialectics between the whole and the part, where "an individual concept derives its meaning from a context or horizon within which it stands; yet the horizon is made up of the very elements to which it gives meaning" (Palmer 1969: 87).[36] This circular or cyclic process of interpretation gives us the opportunity to return to the object of study from different angles and constantly derive new meanings. At the same time it is by no means a clear one-way movement, but has a complex character where foreknowledge and prejudices (both positive and negative) also play an important role.

Kuhlmann (1989: 42) has identified the different constituents of pre-understanding with regard to text interpretation: assumptions about the text, its genre, its historical context, as well as about the function of the parts of the text that are seen in relation to the whole. We do not possess the ability to free the interpretation process from various conscious or subconscious forms of foreknowledge; perhaps without any pre-given ideas about the whole of the situation, we would not even be able to recognise its various components.

In any kind of interpretation process, and particularly with texts that derive from a temporal horizon that is different from ours, the double structure of understanding (the dialectics

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33 Important predecessors to the tradition were Ast and Wolf (Kjørup 2000: 269-271).

34 Gadamer's theories have been criticised by a number of philosophers, e.g. Betti, Hirsch, Jauss and Habermas (cf. Kjørup 2000: 279-281). A critical assessment of Gadamer's hermeneutics is undertaken in an article by Harnow Klausen (1997), who argues rather for the return of the classical paradigm in light of the ever continuing search for original intentions behind texts.

35 Additional methodological guidelines with regard to runic inscriptions will be provided in chapter II.

36 The historical origin of the concept is clarified in Kjørup (2000: 270, 272). For a more philosophical approach to the hermeneutical circle, see Fløistad (1982: 8-12).

between part-whole and foreknowledge-modified knowledge) is thus active on different levels of textuality and contextuality.[37] In general terms, the texts may be analysed in relation to a certain period of time, and at the same time, our understanding of this period is in itself shaped by these very texts.
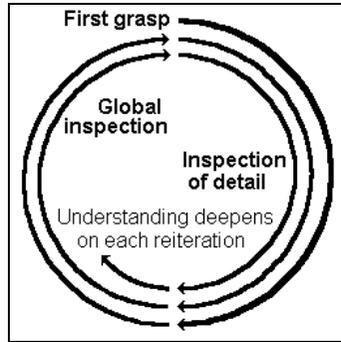
Figure 2. Hermeneutical circle, after Routio 1999, http://usuarios.iponet.es/casinada/arteolog/140.htm. The hermeneutical circle is here explained in terms of alternating between the so-called global study of the object and an analysis on the level of its components.

But there is more to the overall picture than the image of an altering historical context that one seeks to approach through a part-whole interplay. The interpretation process is always directly dependent upon its own contemporary premises. According to a more radically articulated standpoint, our modern understandings in fact fuse into the same historical tradition – and the result is the integration of the past and the present, not a simple restoration of history. This brings us to Gadamer's argumentation concerning the fusion of horizons – i.e. those of the present and the past. According to Gadamer (1975: 264), the past and the present are linked to each other and overlap; "temporal distance is not something that must be overcome".

Even if one does not accept Gadamer's philosophical reflections on the value of methodological guidelines, it remains obvious that the past cannot simply be reconstructed in order to understand a given text properly. For one, we have to face the apparent limits for our understanding, and by critically assessing the sources determine possible risks for projecting modern concepts onto a past reality. We, for our part, believe that the examination of texts in their historical setting can still be guided by an ideal effort to gain an understanding of the premises of the tradition; but at the same time it should never aim for a naive revitalization of the past, but rather lead an informed conversation with what is preserved of it.

The first key factor of the adapted hermeneutical approach – the notion of a circular interpretation process – thus centres on a dialectically shaped conversation with texts and their tradition, where the importance of different levels of contextuality is underlined. The second key factor – which in itself follows the same idea of approaching the matter from various angles – emphasises the meaning of multi-disciplinary perspective, and the fusion of various forms of knowledge. In fact, the importance of integrating knowledge from different

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[37] For a discussion of different levels of context, see Zilmer (2003c: 58-59).

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disciplines was already underlined at the beginning of this subsection in connection with discussing philology in its renewed sense.

A historical text can be regarded as a response to something that was asked at some point in history. With regard to the strategies of different research fields, it is obvious that their interests and foci vary; sometimes they ask similar or even identical questions, but the way in which they present the question varies, as also do the pursued procedures of searching for a solution. The realisation of the fact that we can combine the idea of a text as an answer with alternative forms of questioning supplied by numerous disciplines will undoubtedly broaden the scope of the interpretation process. Idealistically we have a rich arsenal of techniques at our disposal for identifying the so-called textual responses and trying to understand their referential value with regard to a given communicative setting. In this way the analysis may be expected to cast light on various sides of a text, as belonging to a historical tradition where it finds its meaning in the context of other activities. Multi-disciplinary perspective also corresponds to the principles of integrating the study of different levels of contextuality.

After having identified the two main features of the adapted hermeneutical approach, a simplified methodological scheme may be set up for a given interpretation process. Different phases within this scheme are mutually dependent and tend to get activated simultaneously, according to the concepts of circular movement and multi-disciplinary perspective. It is only for the sake of clarity that we have provided the steps in a linear order:

1. Establishment of a group of signs as a text, identifying its basic components;
2. Determining a (preliminary) meaning for the text as a whole, shaped by our foreknowledge and expectations;
3. Examining the text in relation to different levels of contextuality, which are integrated and form part of its historical tradition, modifying the understanding of its meaning;
4. Discussing the limits of modern understandings, which leads to further modifications and alterations;
5. Gaining a deeper understanding of the text and its historical tradition by combining knowledge from various disciplines.

It is again suitable to borrow the terminology from the philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer, and characterise the nature of the scheme as a specific "fusion of horizons". The scheme can help us understand how the meaning of a text is not fixed on beforehand, but keeps changing. In our case, "fusion of horizons" points first of all in the direction of overlapping techniques and strategies in the event of understanding the texts, and demonstrates the character of any text as a process.

To summarize, the methodology of the adapted hermeneutical approach is based upon the following principles: examination of the text from various angles and viewpoints according to the idea of the cyclic interpretation process and the part-whole dialectics; focus on identifying and understanding different levels of contextuality (co-text, intertextuality, physical/material and spatial context, communicative and cultural setting, etc.); and application of perspectives and knowledge from different disciplines in order to provide alternative angles and identify the importance of various contexts. All this has to be combined with a critical evaluation of one's own research horizon and standpoints as well as of the limitations and the validity of the analysis; as with any form of qualitative research, there are no means of reaching absolute objectivity, and there will always be an element of subjectivity and personality present in the study. This form of critical reflection is especially inevitable within research that purports to gain a deeper understanding of texts in their historical tradition.

What we are doing is in a way participating in the reception history of texts, since we study their meaning in the light of modern research questions. There exist no fixed pre-given

meanings that we can reconstruct with 100% objectivity, but with full awareness of different temporal horizons we can lead a hermeneutical dialogue with the historical tradition.

The general approach can thus be determined as that of an in-depth analysis, where the qualitative procedures of identification, description and explanation are combined with the application of more specific models of understanding.

1.6. Sources – introduction and critical assessment

1.6.1. Introduction

Earlier we emphasised the dynamic and integrative nature of the current study by introducing various theoretical concepts as well as the principles of hermeneutical methodology. In this subsection the integrative aspects will be further illuminated through a closer description of the sources, their interrelatedness, and forms of dynamics.

As stated above, our key sources are runic inscriptions (cf. chapters II and III), but skaldic poetry and sagas provide important alternative angles (cf. chapter IV).[38] In this introductory part of the thesis we must present some central features that allow us to see the sources in relation to each other.

Most of the runic inscriptions that either belong to the primary analysis group or are being referred to as supplements are inscriptions on stone; they can be dated to the period around 900/950-1100/1150 and come mostly from Sweden and Denmark. As the name says, these inscriptions were inscribed in the specific runic writing, following the system of *fuþark* – the oldest Germanic script known to us. Commemorative inscriptions on rune stones demonstrate how runic writing was made use of in the context of the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages. Their textual statements may often appear laconic, but through the distinctive interplay between the inscription, ornamentation, as well as the materiality of the stone monuments, their semantic and pragmatic meaning is considerably extended.

Runic inscriptions sometimes include shorter or longer versified formulations, thus offering glimpses into the original poetry of the Scandinavian countries. The poetical tradition reveals itself in a more full-bodied appearance through preserved stanzas labelled collectively as skaldic poetry. The term 'skaldic' is derived from Old Norse/Icelandic, as explained by Turville-Petre (1976: xi): "In Old Norse *skáld* (*skald*), n., meant a poet of any kind, and *skáldskapr* meant poetry". Turville-Petre names some of the main subjects of skaldic poetry: praise of chieftains, laments in memory of the dead, pictorial description of the scenes painted on shields, and also themes in connection with women and love (op. cit. xvii). A significant amount of the preserved skaldic poetry has been attributed to named Norwegian and Icelandic poets, and even received approximate dating on that basis, although sometimes it has to be questioned whether the stanzas do indeed belong to the named poets of old times or represent later creative inventions. As mentioned in subsection 1.4.2., we shall mainly focus on such skaldic stanzas that, through their assumed authors, context of preservation or content, make the claim to represent the period from ca. 900-1150 (certain earlier and later stanzas may be drawn in as parallel examples).

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[38] Skaldic and saga depictions will be studied to the extent possible within the limitations of the current study.

Skaldic poetry is known thanks to secondary works of medieval prose literature where the stanzas were quoted as documentation, commentaries to particular scenes or as examples of traditional poetry.[39] Many skaldic stanzas (that are also referred to in the present study), have been preserved in the framework of medieval sagas, more precisely in the kings' sagas (*konungasögur*) and the sagas of Icelanders (*Íslendingasögur*).

Saga literature represents a remarkable tradition of writing prose narratives, which blossomed in medieval Iceland. Its concerns were also related to the events and characters of the Viking Age and Medieval Scandinavia; some sagas demonstrate clear Norwegian connections, and certain kings' sagas must indeed originate from Norway. The term 'saga' – related to the verb *segja* (to say, tell) – may in a very general sense refer to any kind of prose narrative.[40] Broadly speaking, saga literature would thus comprise also hagiographical literature, works of historiography (including ones written in Latin), as well as Norse adaptations of romances of chivalry. In a more limited sense, the term connects with historical and legendary narratives written in vernacular, such as the above-mentioned kings' sagas and the sagas of Icelanders (also called the family sagas) as well as contemporary sagas (*samtíðarsögur*) and legendary sagas (*fornaldarsögur*).[41]

Viewed as a whole, the two former groups of sagas deal with an extended period of time, but major focus is placed on the events of the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages. The kings' sagas may also take a look back at the very remote past, but in the centre of the attention is the period from ca. 800-1200; in the sagas of Icelanders, the core period is ca. 870-1030.[42] The actual sagas themselves were written down some time between the second half of the 12th century and the beginning of the 14th century. In this regard there are certain differences between the two categories; to quote T. M. Andersson (1985: 197): "Whereas the family sagas are a thirteenth-century phenomenon, the productive period of kings' saga writing falls in the century ca. 1130 (Sæmundr Sigfússon's and Ari Þorgilsson's lost books) to ca. 1230 (Snorri Sturluson's Heimskringla)". Andersson further explains that the kings' sagas depict events outside Iceland concerning the rulers in Scandinavia, on the Orkney and the Faroe islands; and we know many of their authors. The sagas of Icelanders appear as a more collective Icelandic product due to their anonymous writers and primary focus on the Icelandic matters (ibid.).

The origin and the historical versus the imaginative grasp of corresponding saga narratives have been much discussed. In modern scholarship it is generally agreed that saga narrators/ authors built both upon oral tradition (the art of storytelling and traditional poetry) as well as certain written sources, and combined all of this with their own creative approaches – but there is still no consensus as to the actual relationship between these different elements. In any case, the sagas figure as interesting representations of past realities – on their own premises.

After this brief and simplified introduction into the source material, we continue with the attempt to place them into closer relation with each other. At one extreme, from a very general

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[39] A few fragments of skaldic poetry are also preserved in runic inscriptions. The only complete example of such a runic-skaldic stanza that dates from the Viking Age is found on the Karlevi stone, Öl 1 (cf. 3.1.1). For a discussion of runic inscriptions as sources for skaldic poetry, see Marold (1998) and Jesch (2001: 1-18).

[40] For a detailed discussion of the term, see Meulengracht Sørensen (1993a: 33-36; 1993c: 165-166). According to him there lies a double meaning in the word – it can mean both a narrative of certain events and the events themselves, and as such appears to be an equivalent to the modern term 'history'.

[41] The use of corresponding labels does not mean that the distinction between one type and another, and the exact constituents of the groups, are always clear. Cf. also 4.2.1.

[42] The temporal scope of individual sagas, of course, varies.

perspective, we can treat these three main categories of sources as the expressions of a more or less collective Nordic cultural sphere, unifying the traditions of the countries of Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Iceland. From a completely different point of view, we have to admit that we are dealing with distinctively different types of texts.

In the following we try to identify certain overlapping features as well as dynamic forms between the sources, despite the apparent heterogeneous nature. For one, runic inscriptions and skaldic poetry, and even sagas, each in their own way express the tradition of honouring and commemoration. The commemorative content of runic inscriptions is direct and explicit. Skaldic poetry functions in several ways, both as a parallel phenomenon and an artistic continuation of the basic runic tradition through its varied expressions of praise and commemoration.

Even the kings' sagas as well as the sagas of Icelanders centre to a certain degree around the same concepts – in the form of a narrative that presents itself as historical, they focus on the development of a saga hero's career and his memorable deeds. Needless to say, questions in relation to honour form one of the driving forces of the plot in the context of the sagas of Icelanders. Furthermore, the orientation of the sagas towards the significance of some past events extends their meaning into functioning at the same time as commemorations of and monuments to that past.

We can observe interesting, multi-level dynamics between the selected sources, as expressed by the following lines of development:

1) Dynamics on the level of structural concepts leads us from runic mini-narratives and the poetical narrative of the skaldic stanzas to advanced saga narrative. We lay emphasis on the features of narrativity, and not without reason. All the sources demonstrate in their own ways the application of certain narrative techniques. We are told about events from the perspective of the informed – we call him/her either the saga narrator, the skald or the commissioner/carver of the runic monument. These so-called storytellers have at their disposal the narrative grasp, which they most usually apply retrospectively; that is to say, events that are being referred to gain their meaning from a certain end-point. The storytellers have also had the possibility to select what is to be mentioned in the frames of the inscription/stanza/saga. From the formalistic point of view even the spatial arrangement of the written text appears as a narrative category. Naturally the extent of such narrativity is different – runic brevity sets its own limits, and the inflected poetical narrative of skaldic poetry has to be followed in a different manner than one may be used to.

2) Dynamics on the level of treating the content – runic inscriptions can in general be said to follow a more record-like, documentary approach, although imaginative expressions may be added. Skaldic poetry, on the other hand, portrays the content – which may nevertheless be based upon facts – in more artistic and expressive terms; whereas sagas appear as a unique mixture of a variety of techniques and motives. Also, we can notice a shift from runic commemoration of ordinary individuals (though presumably belonging to the elite in the society), to the primary concern of the skaldic poetry with great chieftains and kings; the latter are also the focus in the kings' sagas, whereas in the sagas of Icelanders we meet people from broader layers of society, who may at the same time be presented from a dramatic and heroic angle.

3) Dynamics with regard to monumentality – all the sources are artefacts of the verbal culture of the past, but they also all have what we may call a physical, visual or wider existential side. In case of runic inscriptions the verbal dimension cannot be separated from its physical and visual presence on the stone monument. In case of skaldic poetry, the artistic

and performative aspects, underline its being a monument of verbal art. The sagas appear as narrative monuments to the past in that they use the tools of both realistic expression and creative imagery, and as such are grounded in the complex oral and literary tradition of storytelling. In the landscape of "cultural monuments" all these bodies of text (however hard it might be to actually attach a certain form and shape to them) have a monumental position and function.

4) Temporal dynamics reveals itself through the obvious fact that the sources stem from different temporal horizons, and relate themselves differently to the period that they record and represent. In that we can observe both contemporary and later views.

5) Dynamics on the level of perspectives is connected with what we know of the spatial distribution/origin of the preserved sources – in general, the sources may be divided as representing the East-Norse or the West-Norse perspective. Also on this level, the interaction of different viewpoints takes place, with the East-Norse perspective being more directly involved in the Baltic traffic, and the West-Norse functioning more as a bystander that nevertheless shares the same overall cultural setting.

6) Dynamics concerning the possibilities of establishing an authentic, original text – this brings us already to the critical evaluation of the sources. Whereas many runic inscriptions are preserved in the original form, skaldic stanzas and saga narratives – having their roots in the oral tradition – are known only through later manuscripts and cannot automatically be fixed in one original form. With skaldic stanzas the chances for originality are better due to their potentially strict metres – but even then it has to be remembered that the sources do not reveal full poems but mainly scattered fragments, which have been fitted together by modern scholars. With sagas the idea of one fixed version seems to be more or less meaningless; if we accept the idea of the important role of the oral tradition, it is much more sensible to presume that the texts that have been "captured" by surviving manuscripts are simply the so-called accidental results of a series of narrations whose form is fixed only in this particular context.

1.6.2. Critical assessment

Viewed together, the three categories of sources combine in themselves the aspects of written, material and even traditional evidence – to use the terms of historical methodology.[43] In the frames of this study, relative weight is given to the written evidence, which combines the elements of both literary and documentary nature.[44] The material aspect reveals itself through the fact that runic inscriptions are found on preserved objects – rune stones. The traditional aspect may be connected to the discussion of the role of oral tradition in the composition of skaldic poetry and sagas.

From the conservative point of view the mere nature of the chosen sources (e.g. their literary subjectivity) could thus be criticised, especially if our aim was to study the formal course of events and actions in their strictly historical actuality. In the meantime, as was clarified above (1.4.3.), our angle is different, and the sources are studied as integrated

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[43] See for example the article "Historiography", *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. http://search.eb.com/eb/article?tocId=58878.

[44] We prefer in this connection to use the term 'documentary' instead of 'official' as applied in *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

modes of discourse where the features of historicity and narrativity are mutually important. What we explore is thus not so much the history of events and actions as such, but their records and representations through texts; that is to say, the revealing of the tradition in texts. Both contemporary and later texts are being used – since it is interesting to also analyse the period in question through the eyes of the following generations who must in comparison with us still have been more closely acquainted with the past, and were to a certain degree building upon tradition.

Nevertheless, there are other serious risks and obstacles that have to be dealt with. To start with, already the determining of the exact corpus of study poses problems that need to be clarified in detail. This will be done in relevant chapters, alongside explanations concerning the use of various editions and followed conventions.

One obvious limitation has to be named right away – in general we have had to follow a so-called indirect approach. Only runic inscriptions (those among them that have been preserved until this day) can indeed be studied in their authentic form on a first-hand basis. The approach becomes more dramatically indirect with regard to skaldic poetry and sagas – with gaps between the assumed original composition and existing written records. What can be found of original skaldic poetry are at best longer fragments that may be more or less meaningfully attached to each other, but naturally the poems have not been preserved in their assumed original context; that is to say, we cannot learn about the actual conditions of composition and performance (except for the descriptions provided in those prose contexts where the stanzas are quoted, which cannot be taken at face value).

With regard to saga literature, no saga is preserved in its supposed original form – in as far as this fixed concept may make sense (see above). What we have are copies of copies; various manuscripts from the 13th century onwards contain versions that may differ with regard to their length and content. That is to say, not only are the sagas second-hand representations of the period we study, but the actual texts are also intermediated only through the voices of later manuscripts.

Besides the indirect approach it is problematic to realise that the question of Baltic traffic that is our primary involvement functions more as a marginal element of content in the source material; also, the sources are coloured by various biases. The relevance and the validity of posed research objectives may therefore be questioned. In general the statements provided by runic inscriptions may appear as rather laconic, and not particularly informative, especially when viewed in isolation. Skaldic praise poetry – with its idealised depictions of great battles and fallen heroes, expressed in terms of specific formalised vocabulary – makes it difficult to reach particular bits of information. As Jesch (2001: 32) has pointed out, skaldic poetry "does not give much away, with its brilliant formalism drawing attention from the message to the medium". Extended saga narratives, on the other hand, contain manifold information, and the short references that interest us are there interwoven into complicated series of events.

In light of the above it may seem as though a question like Baltic traffic is in a way forcing a modern interest onto some old material that itself had completely other interests in mind. Nevertheless, the references that do appear in the sources witness to extant knowledge; for some reason it was thought necessary to make use of this knowledge in particular contexts. Furthermore, with regard to historical actuality, it is reasonable to expect to find certain factual elements stored in form of geographical references.

Such a perspective makes even more sense in the general context of travel and communication. Travelling does constitute an important motive in the source material. The image of a travelling chieftain or a king is for example well recorded in skaldic poetry as well as in sagas.

Travelling makes up an important theme connected with the exploits of young men. With regard to skaldic poetry it should be underlined that the skalds already in them-selves represent the idea of travelling – they are thus known as travelling poets visiting the courts of kings and chieftains. To this we can add, on the one hand, travels on a more everyday scale, for example smaller raiding and trading enterprises, as well as personally motivated journeys. The runic material from the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages offers authentic glimpses into the activities of some of these individual travellers. Besides that, runic inscriptions also witness of men behind bigger campaigns – which coincides with motives provided by skaldic poetry and sagas.

These different indications of travel in runic inscriptions, skaldic poetry and sagas express what we could call the "outgoing nature of the Viking Age", to borrow a wording from Page (1995a: 12).[45] The following study purports, on the one hand, to individualise the runic evidence, and at the same to understand the inner parallels and forms of connections between runic inscriptions and other early Nordic sources. In other words, individual pieces of evidence find their *raison d'être* in relation to the analysis of the complexity of the tradition.

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[45] Page has used this expression when describing a runic inscription on a Gotlandic whetstone (G 216).

II RUNIC EVIDENCE

2.1. Rune stone tradition – central questions and concepts

2.1.1. Introduction

It was established in the introductory chapter that runic inscriptions make up the core of analysis. In order to fully comprehend the nature and significance of runic evidence we must first place the inscriptions into a wider context of historical and communicative meaning. Since the runic source material is with a few exceptions made up of inscriptions on stone mediums (cf. subsection 2.3.2.), the focus lies on the characteristic aspects of rune stone tradition. The custom of raising rune stones will be discussed from a functional perspective; that is to say, with regard to what purposes the monuments and their messages fulfilled.[46]

Roughly speaking, rune stones account for around half of the total number of approximately 6000 Scandinavian runic inscriptions. The earliest rune stones with inscriptions in the older *fuþark* are known from Norway and Sweden, and date from the 4th and 5th centuries.[47] Some rune stones of older type have also been found in Denmark, belonging to the 6th and 7th centuries. It is traditionally considered that it was in Denmark that after a certain transitional period the premises of the real Viking Age rune stone fashion were set, which then flourished in different parts of Scandinavia and reached its peak in 11th century Sweden. The period from approx. 950-1100 is therefore often regarded as the actual age of rune stones.[48]

The regional distribution of rune stones from this period of blossoming productivity demonstrates varied patterns. The central and eastern landscapes of mainland Sweden (especially Uppland) together with the islands of Öland and Gotland form the heartland of the tradition. From Sweden more than 2500 rune stones are known. The number of Danish rune stones exceeds 200, with Nørrejylland, Bornholm and Skåne among the leading districts;[49] whereas from Norway, only around 50 Viking Age rune stones have been found.[50] But rune stones were also raised in areas outside Scandinavia – among the Norse colonies, the Isle of Man stands out with its collection of approximately 30 stones from the 10th century and the beginning of the 11th century (see e.g. Page 1995b: 207-244). Viking Age stone inscriptions are known from England, Scotland, Ireland, and the Faroe Islands.[51] Iceland and Greenland, on the other hand, have no Viking Age rune stones to boast of – but instead we find there a tradition of medieval and even later grave monuments equipped with runes.

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[46] For the sake of simplicity, 'rune stone' is here being used as a general term that designates traditional raised stones, stone slabs and bigger rocks. More precise references to different types of stone mediums will be provided during the analysis.

[47] The older *fuþark* consisted of 24 signs, and it was in use during the first phase of runic tradition, from ca. 0-600/700. Changes in language led to the reduction of signs and the formation of the younger *fuþark*, which consisted of 16 signs, around 700-800.

[48] Some later rune stones (e.g. from Bornholm) have received a wide date range of ca. 1050-1150.

[49] Regional division of the runic material is based upon medieval districts, cf. subsection 2.3.1.

[50] The numbers given are again very rough.

[51] To that we could add the famous example of the stone monument found on the island of Berezan in Ukraine.

The distribution seems to reflect the original situation: "The fact that new discoveries of rune-stones are nearly always made in areas that already have some suggests that the original distribution of these monuments was much the same as it is today" (B. Sawyer 2000: 11).

Several explanations have been given for this uneven distribution, with some of them underlining the importance of relating the amount of inscriptions to characteristic topographical features in order to get a more reliable picture (Palm 1992: 107). Most likely we are dealing with a combination where factors such as settlement, population density, wealth and social rank as well as certain cultural and ethical motives have had their say (see e.g. Page 1995a: 11).

As for the locations – rune stones are monuments that were once raised on a certain spot, under particular conditions. The question is whether the sites where they have been found are the original ones. B. Sawyer (2000: 26) explains: "We know where 95% of the stones were found but this was apparently the original location of less than a half of them". According to her data almost 40% have been found in connection with churches or churchyards; among other sites she mentions roads, waterways, bridges and causeways, prehistoric graves and grave fields, and farms (ibid.).

A-S. Gräslund discusses some of the reasons why the stones were moved: "Flyttning av runstenar har skett när man velat använda dem som byggnadsmaterial. [...] Flyttning av stenar har också företagits när dessa stod eller låg i vägen för t.ex. jordbruksarbete" (Gräslund 1987: 254).[52]

In general scholars agree that most rune stones could not have been moved too far from their original sites, i.e. it was normally not a question of transportation over long distances.[53] In this way we can be fairly sure about what general districts and landscapes they belonged to. On the other hand, if the monuments no longer stand on the exact original site, it is harder to make claims about the concrete circumstances around their physical setting.[54]

In traditional overviews the uneven regional distribution gets connected with general chronological considerations, according to which the first remarkable boom in rune stone raising occurred in Denmark in the 10th century, especially during its second half. From Denmark the custom spread further to the Götaland provinces in southern Sweden, and to a certain degree also to Norway and the British Isles – in these areas we find both 10th and 11th century inscriptions. In other parts of Sweden, rune stones figured mainly as a true 11th century convention, gaining a unique popularity in the landscape of Uppland during the second half of the century (there it lasted until the beginning of the 12th century and according to some scholars even longer). In the same time span as in Uppland, the rune stone tradition also blossomed in Bornholm – which in this way differs from other Danish areas. These are the main chronological lines, but at the same time we know that most Viking Age rune stones have not been dated precisely.

Calling for a more complex understanding, Palm (1992: 259) has suggested that the spread of the rune stone fashion was, in fact, not such a gradual movement from Denmark to southern Sweden and further on to the Mälaren region. According to him the picture of both regional and chronological distribution is more complicated, and rather represents different waves of fashion unfolding along various communication routes under the influence of

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[52] "Moving of rune stones occurred when one wanted to use them as building material [...] Moving of stones was also carried out when those stood or lay in the way of for example agricultural activities" (my translation).
[53] See e.g. Christiansson (1959: 37); Gräslund (1987: 254); Williams (1990: 9); Palm (1992: 17).
[54] Comments concerning the study of spatial aspects can be found in 2.2.3.2.

economic, political and cultural factors (ibid.). Nevertheless, until more detailed models are presented and tested, we can operate with some of these general considerations. It is simply important to keep in mind that traditional (in the worst case dogmatic) depictions of the development and spread of the rune stone custom may oversimplify its actual historical complexity.

2.1.2. Motives for raising rune stones

Equally sophisticated has been the question concerning the motives behind this custom of raising rune stones – what needs did it meet, and what messages did it carry? To start with, we may even wonder whether it is at all correct to speak of a certain fashion. The strongest argument has been found in the uniformity of the inscriptions (cf. e.g. B. Sawyer 2000: 10) – indeed, most of them express the same basic content "X raised this stone after Y", and the range of additional information remains limited.

Influential factors such as the tradition of commemoration and the role of Christianity have been mentioned alongside the more pragmatic motives – including social status, inheritance, political regulations, etc. Some scholars understand the rune stone fashion as guided by a combination of several purposes. In the following we shall present a short overview of central theories, divided into three main groups that may briefly be labelled as: commemoration, Christianity, and status & inheritance. In addition, a fourth alternative will be presented that emphasises the broader communicative as well as individual value of the monuments.

A) Commemoration
Most scholars agree upon the explicit commemorative function of rune stones as expressed by their inscriptions. What varies is the extent to which commemoration is seen as the decisive factor in the <u>development</u> of the fashion. When emphasising the meaning of comme-morative tradition, references are usually made to the pre-Christian custom of putting up uninscribed memorial stones of different forms and sizes, either individually or in groups – these stones are in ON known as *bauta-steinn*.[55] In order to demonstrate the importance of the ancient tradition of setting up *bauta*-stones, scholars often quote verses from *Hávamál* (stanza 72) that refer to such a custom; although the particular poetic context does not in itself provide any evidence of continuity between old memorial stones and actual rune stones.

Those who object to the idea of continuous development leading from the earliest native stone memorials to the "explosion" of Viking Age rune stones would rather search for possible inspiration from abroad – suggestions have been made with regard to Anglo-Saxon stone monuments (Palm 1992: 250). However, it is interesting to note that concerning the find-sites, some rune stones are actually documented as existing more or less side by side with stone settings and uninscribed *bauta*-stones. In the very least this may speak in favour of the rune stone raisers' conscious choice of spot for carrying out the act of commemoration – if not to establish a certain frame of continuity.

Fitting the commemorative tradition into the context of the Viking Age, it has been proposed that rune stones were raised to commemorate people who died abroad and could not be buried in an ordinary way. The focus lies in this case on the importance of Viking Age

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[55] For one such explanation, see Knirk (1997: 88).

expeditions. S.B.F. Jansson even explains the decline of the rune stone fashion with the end of corresponding enterprises (Jansson 1984: 42-43). Also, Moltke (1985a: 184) assumes that the viking campaigns were at least partly contributing both to the growing popularity of rune stones as well as to their later disappearance. Criticism to similar approaches underlines that the actual number of inscriptions with information about death abroad is limited – according to B. Sawyer, around 10% of the total material.[56]

The public aspect of commemoration has been emphasised in combination with studies that focus on the location of rune stones. Some scholars characterise rune stones as road monuments; the point was to make them visible for as many people as possible in order to promote their messages (Ekholm 1950: 143).[57]

B) Christianisation

Many scholars who admit that a native commemorative tradition must have functioned as a source of inspiration do not consider this to be the main motive causing the boom of rune stones. In numerous cases the introduction of Christianity has been given as the triggering factor. Obviously the most intensive period of raising rune stones corresponds to the phase of missionary activities. Furthermore, many rune stones reveal explicitly Christian connections, for example through the inclusion of prayers or cross ornamentation. Therefore one must wonder: are rune stones and Christianisation processes by chance parallel or do we find deliberate connections? Theories that interpret rune stones as a predominantly or partly Christian phenomenon cannot be presented in full here, but certain tendencies will be discussed in chronological order.

Among early scholars, von Friesen suggested that rune stones could be used as a kind of Christian propaganda tool to express support for the new religion – especially in regions like Uppland where missionary processes were not guided by central initiatives and unfolded in a slower manner (von Friesen 1928: 75). The custom must have remained short-lived and the number of stones limited in areas where conversion was controlled and favoured by central power structures (cf. also von Friesen 1933: 170). At the same time von Friesen linked the raising of rune stones to (changing) burial customs.[58]

Other scholars have developed theories about the missionary background even further. Ljungberg (1938: 271-272), for example, regarded rune stones as a Christian protest against the heathen temple in Uppsala. The distribution of rune stones would then stand in proportion to the relative distance from the temple (the closer to the temple, the more stones); needless to say, the existence of such a temple is a disputed matter, and more importantly, it seems too narrow-sighted to place all rune stones under one rather limited denominator.

Palme also has explained the rune stone fashion in clear connection with missionary activities – according to him their stereotypically formulated messages reflect missionary teachings and sermons (Palme 1959: 87). In Palme's opinion, runic inscriptions were formulated by newly converted carvers who could have been working under the supervision of missionaries (op. cit. 92).[59]

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[56] Cf. Sawyer (1989: 186-187; 1991a: 234-235; 2000: 1, 16).

[57] According to one theory the main function of rune stones was to mark roads and help people find the right way – see Åhlén (1997: 19), with a reference to the lectures of Greta Arwidsson; Åhlén herself argues, in the meantime, that this could not have been the primary motive.

[58] See the discussion in von Friesen (1933: 168-170).

[59] Hallencreutz (1982: 50), who understands Christian runic inscriptions as authentic expressions of local perceptions, has argued against the idea of treating runic messages as an echo of missionary sermons.

Hyenstrand (1972: 187) connects the profession of rune carvers with missionary strategies by stating that the carvers belonged to some centrally run institution and worked in the interest of the church and the royal power.[60] Furthermore, Hyenstrand believes that rune stones were used with very specific aims in mind – as a kind of indulgence to help the deceased through purgatory (op. cit. 186). As an additional possibility, he sees in rune stones political statements of one's religiosity.

Segelberg (1983: 56) considers runic inscriptions to be evidence of how the new religion was gaining a foothold among wealthy families who ordered inscriptions as a form of indulgence. He suggests that the great age of rune stones was introduced in connection with the establishment of king Knútr's Danish-English empire (op. cit. 48, 56).[61]

A-S. Gräslund argues in general for double-natured motives behind rune stones – on the one hand, practical and rational, and on the other hand, emotional and spiritual (see e.g. Gräslund 1987: 241). Focusing on the connectedness of rune stones with Viking Age grave fields – according to her more common than often assumed – she suggests that cross-marked rune stones may have "served to consecrate the cemetery, or a part of it. Christians could then be buried there until access was acquired to a churchyard" (op. cit. 260-261).

B. Sawyer (2000: 17) regards missionary activities and changes in burial customs as one important factor behind the rune stone fashion.[62] She seems to be in agreement with Gräslund's theory by pointing out that the lack of churches and churchyards called for the raising of rune stones, and that the rune stones may then have functioned as Christian gravestones (see e.g. Sawyer 2000: 18, 124). Furthermore, Sawyer (1991a: 235) proposes that the abandonment of pre-Christian grave rituals (with grave goods as a means of demonstrating status and wealth) paved the way for rune stones as a new Christian type of status display. In order to explain uneven regional distribution, Sawyer turns to the political aspects of conversion, characterising rune stones as official declarations of one's acceptance of the new religion. At the same time Sawyer believes that the change of religion cannot explain the whole fashion – her main emphasis is placed upon the theory of runic inscriptions as a documentation of inheritance rights (see next paragraph).

According to Larsson (1990: 32, 89) almost all Swedish rune stones may have been Christian monuments, whether or not this was directly expressed in the text and/or ornamentation – that had more to do with the carver's individual choices. Larsson expresses his support for the hypothesis that raising rune stones promoted the Christian religion and earned salvation for the soul of the deceased (op. cit. 33-34).

Williams also favours the idea that all (or nearly all) rune stones were Christian, since they followed a custom that was in itself Christian. According to him the typical commemorative formula "N.N. raised this stone after N.N." can be said to carry the same message as the formulation "after N.N.'s soul", and therefore reflects the Christian practice of prayers (Williams 1996b: 293).

The overview above relates first of all to the Swedish and to a certain degree to the Danish rune stones. It is harder to make claims about the Norwegian material due to its scarcity. Still, it has been suggested that one can analyse the distribution pattern of Norwegian rune stones

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[60] For criticism, see Åhlén (1997: 20).

[61] Segelberg has also conducted studies on the origins and meaning of the prayer formula, e.g. in an article from 1972. Other scholars who have studied the theological content of runic inscriptions are Hallencreutz (1982); Beskow (1994); Williams (1996b); and Gschwantler (1998), etc.

[62] Cf. also Sawyer (1989: 187-189; 1991a: 235-236).

in the context of conversion, which in Norway was guided by central initiatives just as in Denmark (Spurkland 2001: 130).

To conclude – the Christian functions of rune stones have thus been determined in the light of certain missionary strategies and teachings, changing burial customs, and official religious statements. Different weight has been given to the actual role of Christinisation in the formation of a specific rune stone tradition – ranging from a characterisation of virtually all rune stones as Christian monuments to acknowledging that rune stones illuminate certain aspects of Christian practices. From the chronological perspective we see that some of the earliest ideas also find supporters today, in a slightly modified form.

In our opinion, it is too far-fetched to regard Christianity as the sole cause of raising runic monuments – especially when interpreting the whole custom as a reflection of limited missionary concepts. At the same time the apparent and important ties between the two phenomena cannot be denied – obviously a majority of rune stones belonged to a cultural setting that was influenced by the introduction of Christianity.

C) Status and inheritance

A third influential category of ideas sees rune stones in connection with social status, inheritance, property and political rights, as well as other practical needs of the society.

Regarding the typical pattern of a Viking Age rune stone inscription – "X raised this stone after Y" –, B. Sawyer finds it significant that the names of the commissioners are mentioned first; this makes it logical to understand the monuments as status markers (see Sawyer 1989: 189; 1991a: 236). According to her the obvious functions of a rune stone, besides commemoration, are paying homage to the living and displaying one's status and wealth in public (Sawyer 2000: 146). The motive of status has further been emphasised by E. Lönnroth (1983: 17-18, 22), who describes rune stone raisers in the Mälaren region as representatives of a new-rich class of "rune-stone boasters" – many among them people who had been abroad, obtained wealth and become Christian.

Palm (1992: 255) suggests that the greater number of rune stones in northeastern parts of Scandinavia can be interpreted as reflecting a wider elite in society, with more individuals having the necessary economic resources at their disposal. In Palm's view the rune stone material witnesses of alternating power-structures in different parts of Scandinavia, as well as of varying individual ambitions, political and social aims (ibid.).[63]

The understanding of rune stones as a reflection of social status may also be connected with motives of inheritance and/or succession of social and political rights. It is a clear fact that most runic inscriptions specify the relationship between the commissioner (X) and the deceased (Y). More importantly, runic inscriptions may contain additional explicit references to matters related to inheritance and/or ownership (and can even physically function as ownership markers).[64] This has provided several scholars with the necessary basis for identifying documentation of inheritance as the common cause for the whole tradition.

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[63] At the same time Palm acknowledges that rune stones could function as personal religious statements in regions that were not christianised by central initiatives (op. cit. 257)

[64] Typical examples of runic references to inheritance or ownership are e.g. the inscriptions Sö 145†, Sö 208, Sö 367, U 29, U 73, U 114, U 127, U 164, U 165, U 212, U 259, U 261, U 308, U 331, U 332†, U 348, U 579, U 590, U 729, U 862. These inscriptions either refer to a person as the heir of someone, or emphasise that he/she owns a certain estate.

Carlqvist (1977: 10) thus works out of the hypothesis that rune stone raisers were guided by rational needs to mark their social position and establish inheritance patterns. In studying the latter he combines the inscriptions with information from medieval law codes.

In a book concerning political and social structures in Viking Age Denmark, Randsborg focuses on runic records of various occupational and rank titles – which he interprets as references to different institutions linked to the royal power and its vassalage system (Randsborg 1980: 22-44). Randsborg connects the blossoming rune stone custom with "the emergence of new social categories or new social conditions, where the monuments should sustain the position of the successor of the deceased" (op. cit. 25). He thus characterises rune stones as legal documents containing data about the succession of titles and grants of property. Randsborg's conclusions have in the meantime been criticised because his focus lies only on Danish material and excludes comparative Swedish evidence. Furthermore, his argumentation is grounded on old typological dating of inscriptions, the principles of which have been re-examined by newer research.[65]

B. Sawyer treats runic inscriptions as important public documents, and explains regional differences as reflections of varying political and societal principles for how inheritance and division of property were to be regulated.[66] From the regional perspective, she has identified three main zones in Scandinavia: southwest, east and intermediary (see e.g. Sawyer 2000: 43-46), where different sponsorship and corresponding inheritance patterns can be traced.

Critics to that theory find it problematic to analyse the whole material synchronically according to one uniform perspective (Stoklund 1991: 295-296). Weaknesses in Sawyer's argumentation can also be found in the attempts to do away with significant deviations occurring within her three main zones by constructing possible historical explanations for each case.

D) A fourth alternative – communication

The discussion of reasons and motives behind the custom of raising rune stones has revealed certain common tendencies. Whereas some scholars favour one strong factor – either Christianisation, inheritance or something else –, others operate with several parallel possibilities.

To provide alternative, although slightly controversial ideas, we turn to Gren's theory of communication through monuments and then modify his approach with regard to the communicative value of rune stones. In his view monuments are "the most expressive and lasting means of communication" (Gren 1994: 87). He understands monuments as attempts to provide solutions to problems and challenges that ancient people were facing and wished to overcome by giving their messages a powerful, materialised form (op. cit. 90-91).

Gren's examples range from megalithic chambered tombs to Gothic cathedrals and Easter Island colossal statues, including as well Viking Age cemeteries and an example of one rune stone (the Högby stone), which commemorates men who have fallen abroad.[67] All these monuments are expected to have their origins in a communication situation that was experiencing great stress.

Gren explains that the purpose of the Högby stone is to justify the choice of going abroad and participating in viking ventures in the eyes of more traditionally minded people who stayed at home (op. cit. 103). Thus, his psychological interpretation of the monument

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[65] See e.g. Stoklund (1991: 295).
[66] See e.g. Sawyer (1989: 194-195; 2000: 47-91).
[67] Ög 81, more about the stone in 3.1.15.

highlights tensions between the older and the younger generation. It is not possible to fully acknowledge Gren's theory. Focusing on just one runic example and not seeing it in the context of other rune stones and their inscriptions is one of its clear problems. We can, of course, assume that Gren might be prone to interpret the whole custom of erecting rune stones as a signal of existing tensions in the society. But its psychology remains too simplistic in the light of general tendencies of the Viking Age.[68]

Certain social stress is a constant factor in any given society; societies are always undergoing change, and this makes it fairly easy to analyse the monuments belonging to a particular period as signals of conflicts. Symptoms of stress should not be taken as the only guiding principle for the existence of monuments. Any kind of monument is a reaction to something; but it is not necessarily a product of negative and critical challenges.

What is important for us is the realisation that in analysing the meaning of monuments we need to look at the underlying general features of their contemporary society while at the same time not forgetting about individuals and their potentially differing motives. Too often rune stones are treated only as a certain type, ignoring their individuality and the fact that they reflect the actions and choices of individual people in particular situations. Looking at the rune stone fashion both as a symptomatic reaction to certain changes in the society and as expressions of individuals belonging to that society is another possibility to consider. It may seem as a vague approach compared to some of the specific explanations given above, but its advantage is that it does not rule out the interplay between several parallel factors; neither does it automatically reduce the complex custom to merely one predominant factor.

Another important aspect should be mentioned in connection with the idea of rune stones as materialised images of specific communication situations. According to Jesch, it is necessary to take into consideration the relationship between the features of orality and literacy when trying to understand the dramatic increase of runic inscriptions in the Viking Age; she claims that "the inscriptions represent a crucial point in the encounter between orality and literacy in which we are able to trace the cultural significance of both these practices" (Jesch 1998: 462). In other words, she has characterised runic inscriptions as "a form of primary literacy", explaining that this literacy is "reinforced by the monumentality and decoration of the rune stones" (Jesch 2001: 11).

Jesch brings out something very significant that is often forgotten – whatever purposes one may have had with raising rune stones that carry commemorative inscriptions, the actual background to the custom was shaped by the projection of certain oral tradition features onto this developing form of primary literacy that the runic inscriptions represent.[69]

Viewed as a whole, rune stones were naturally also connected to the purpose of commemoration in a wide sense. Favoured by certain cultural, ideological, social as well as political developments, the raising of rune stones developed in parts of Scandinavia into a kind of fashion of materialised messages (to borrow wordings from Gren). These messages gained their special expressive form through the interplay between orality and literacy, and they fulfilled both public and private functions. Their value as public documents may, for example, be seen from the sites where they were set up, and also from their parallel

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[68] After all, the Viking Age is known for its expansive external exploitation; travelling and acquiring wealth from abroad was an accepted way of living, which would normally contribute to increasing the authority at home. See for example Lindkvist (1993), who discusses external exploitation as an important factor in the Swedish state-building processes, cf. subsection 2.4.

[69] The significance of the transition from prehistoric (oral) culture to historic (written) culture in connection with runic inscriptions has also been emphasised by Knirk (1997: 86).

formulations, which point in the direction of existing common conventions. But we should not forget their individuality and private value either.

That is to say, despite the seemingly overwhelming uniformity, we can take notice of individuals with their own attitudes behind these monuments. In this light we could characterise rune stones as original mediums that could express varied messages and therefore also fulfil various tasks besides the explicit commemoration. These tasks were shaped by the particular conditions occurring around any given monument, and the only way to approach them is to realise that all runic monuments have an extended, communicative meaning. This meaning arises from the dialectics between the written inscription, the various features of the physical medium and its spatial context, and the wider historical-communicative setting.

Some scholars have already emphasised similar thoughts; Jesch (1998: 466) for example speaks of the "interrelated functions of display, permanence, commemoration and documentation" and "the interplay of material and text". Andrén (2000: 7) calls even more explicitly for a fully contextual re-reading of rune stones and for "a new type of interpretation based on the complex interplay between images and texts on the rune-stones". He finds that "the rune stones with their intricate compositions can be viewed as contemplative monuments, which demanded that the persons passing them had to stop and discuss their meaning" (op. cit. 27). Along the same lines, Øeby Nielsen (2003: 165) argues that "it is necessary to see the rune stones as aggregate symbols communicating not only by virtue of their inscriptions but also by their physical appearance: size, material, layout, decoration and location".

The perspective of the present study underlines the communicative value of rune stone tradition as a whole as well as that of individual runic monuments. Rather than searching for one systematic pattern that could explain the existence of virtually all known rune stones, we should concentrate on studying their role as monuments that communicate in a variety of ways, and as such manifest more individualised functions and meanings – even if their inscriptions at first glance centre on conventional forms of expression. This realisation has direct influence on the chosen analytical and methodological approach, discussed in detail in subsection 2.2.

2.1.3. Chronologies and regional variation

In the introduction to the current chapter, some features of regional and chronological distribution of rune stones were outlined, concluding that the main chronological lines seem to be valid, although the actual picture must have been more complicated. In the following we wish to draw attention to some methods of dating rune stones – dealing with concepts that have certain consequences for the way in which we treat the material and relate it to its contemporary setting.

From a collective perspective, most of the Danish and southern Swedish as well as Norwegian rune stones figure as somewhat earlier than the ones from the central landscapes of Sweden (the Mälaren region) and Bornholm. In the meantime, attempts at providing more exact chronologies and dates for rune stones have met severe complications.

Different strategies for dating rune stones have been developed by runologists, art historians, historians and archaeologists.[70] **Periodisation** is one of the possibilities of dating runic inscriptions. The existing runic material can be divided into main periods – and one can operate with wider or more limited intervals.

The two other options are **absolute dating**, sometimes also called historical dating, and **relative dating**. The former determines either an exact or approximate point of time – but in order to achieve that one must have historically trustworthy touchstones (from other formal sources) to base the dates upon. Relative dating establishes the relative age between different objects by studying their internal relationships and building up chronologies. In reality, the techniques of approximate historical dating and relative dating may coincide, in as far as they can both decide whether two objects are contemporary, or whether one is younger than the other (*terminus post quem*) or older than the other (*terminus ante quem*). Palm (1992: 22-23) underlines that at the end, both approximate historical dating and relative chronologies offer only rough suggestions.

Relative dating is by Palm further divided into: relative chronology on the basis of content, and relative chronology on the basis of typological considerations (op. cit. 22, 27-33). The latter technique makes use of an evolutionary perspective and studies changes that one assumes have occurred over time.[71]

Palm's overview (see op. cit. pp. 22-33) highlights important criteria that are being used in dating runic inscriptions. Christiansson (1959: 43) uses five main categories as a point of departure: dating on runological, historical, genealogical, stylistic and archaeological grounds – all of these are usually combined with each other. In the following we shall shortly refer to some of these criteria that are applied, focusing mostly on the historical and stylistic criteria. The former have certain relevance for the background understanding of inscriptions that concern travelling, whereas the latter offer insight into the aspects of design (although doing so from a typological perspective).

A) Archaeological, runological and genealogical criteria

Archaeological criteria are mainly functional only as far as there can be found other datable items that can be related to rune stones. For example, in certain cases the inscriptions refer to the construction of a bridge, and the actually-preserved remains of a wooden bridge construction can be dated dendro-chronologically. Archaeological data has been especially fruitful in dating smaller inscribed objects (such as runic sticks) found from medieval towns.

When turning to genealogical information, it is the inscriptions that identify people within the same kin that are in focus. Usually genealogical connections enable us to trace family members within two or three generations, but there also exist cases of more extended genealogical chronologies. The kin of Jarlabanki is without doubt the most well known case in

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[70] The following discussion is first of all based upon Swedish and Danish studies, but some Norwegian examples will also be referred to. Certain Swedish works contain observations that are valid for the whole Nordic material, e.g. Palm (1992). As for separate studies on dating Danish rune stones, see DRI (columns 1013-1042); Moltke (1985a); Stoklund (1991). Information on dating Norwegian rune stones can be found in NIyR (V: 238-245); Hagland (1991); Spurkland (1995 and 2001).

[71] Typological dating has perhaps been brought to its most advanced form in DRI (columns 1013-1042). A limited number of inscriptions that contain historically relevant information have there been used as a "skeleton", and on the basis of various runographical and linguistic features as well as content and design, a typological division of all Danish inscriptions is undertaken. For criticism, see Stoklund (1991, especially pp. 289-294).

the Swedish context.[72] The problems with using genealogical information lie in the fact that family ties do not let themselves to be identified that easily, and in several cases the established links may be questioned. Usually genealogical criteria are not applied in complete isolation but in combination with argumentation on runological, historical and/or stylistic grounds.

The runological criteria deal according to Williams (1990: 127-128) with changes in rune forms; changes in the sound value of runes; general sound changes; lexical changes; morphological changes; and syntactical changes.[73] Spurkland (1995; 2001) has discussed the possibilities of dating Norwegian rune stones on the basis of grapho-phonological correlations. In addition to runological features he uses different extra-linguistic factors, at the same time pointing out that all of these must be used carefully, especially when building up relative chronologies (Spurkland 1995: 17). Although certain runological criteria may provide evidence to support rough dates, they cannot be applied as precise tools.

<center>B) Historical criteria</center>

Runological criteria have often been combined with historical argumentation – which can also be used on its own. In general terms any kind of runic inscription may be called historical – an idea expressed by Palm (1992: 23), who at the same time emphasises that the number of inscriptions that can be <u>dated</u> historically remains very limited, and even in these few cases we can only arrive at approximate dates.

Despite their limited numbers, these inscriptions have caught the attention of many scholars. Among earlier examples we can mention von Friesen, who on several occasions discussed the explicitly historical contents of runic inscriptions, combining such textual information with the study of ornamentation.[74] Similar approaches were applied by Brate (e. g. 1925) and Wessén (e.g. 1960). The latter discusses the concepts of absolute versus relative chronology, and concludes that there are only two apparent historical connections in Swedish runic inscriptions that offer more or less approximate dates: firstly, the references to men who took king Knútr's payment in England;[75] and secondly, the information about Ingvarr's expedition (Wessén 1960: 8).[76]

The inscriptions commemorating men who died on Ingvarr's expedition have attracted most of the attention, and both the number of the inscriptions and their dates have been discussed.[77] On various grounds dates between 1010-1060 have been suggested by different

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[72] See e.g. Gustavson & Selinge (1988). Williams (1990: 185-188) provides a list of Swedish inscriptions that are genealogically connected.

[73] Variation in the sound value of the os-rune has been among the most popular runological criteria. Williams has showed that the apparent variation may rather point in the direction of regional and/or individual features in certain carvers' works (Williams 1990: 134-147, 148-178). Similarly critical attitudes have been expressed about other runological criteria as well, see e.g. Lagman (1990), who has examined the usage of dotted runes.

[74] See e.g. von Friesen's studies (1909; 1910; 1913; 1928; 1933).

[75] In this case the year 1018 (the last great 'danegeld'-payment), functions as a *terminus post quem*. Wessén includes inscriptions that mention *þingalið* (traditionally interpreted as referring to Knútr's troop) under the Knútr stones. For criticism on that latter interpretation, see Jesch (2001: 190-192). For critical remarks on the whole convention of connecting rune stones with king Knútr ríki, see also Christiansson (1959: 44) and Williams (1990: 131).

[76] As for the Danish and Norwegian rune stones, the historical examples are even fewer. The Norwegian cases are discussed by Spurkland (1995; 2001), as well as Knirk (1994; 1997). The historical Danish runic inscriptions are treated in DRI (column 1013); cf. also Stoklund (1991).

[77] The number of the inscriptions is ca. 25, plus possibly a few uncertain cases. For a general discussion of the Ingvarr stones and the expedition, see e.g. Wessén (1960: 30-46); Larsson (1983; 1986; 1990: 106-114); Shepard (1982-85: 231-240); Salberger (1989a: 80-84); Melnikova (2001: 48-62). See also subsections 3.3.2. and 3.3.3.

scholars; most commonly the year 1041 (or 1040) is identified as a *terminus post quem* for the Ingvarr inscriptions – according to the information about Ingvarr's death in the medieval Icelandic saga *Yngvars saga víðfǫrla*, as well as Icelandic annals.[78]

The value of the medieval sources – and therefore also the exact dating of the Ingvarr stones – has in the meantime been questioned and also rejected.[79] Thulin (1975: 19-21) and Hofmann (1981: 191-193) have implied that Ingvarr's death-year is not an original notice in the annals, but builds upon saga tradition, and that its mention in the saga is an invention.[80] In this light, considerable doubt can be expressed about the whole convention of dating the Ingvarr stones and using them as tools for establishing dates for other rune stones. However, the debate around the Ingvarr tradition as well as the contribution of relevant rune stones seems to continue.

The conclusion is that a limited number of inscriptions do contain references that connect with concrete historical events and/or people (that is to say, concrete in the sense that they are referred to also in other written sources); but the possibilities for arriving at exact dates are nevertheless not so many.

It may perhaps seem more fruitful to operate with relative chronologies based upon the historical attribution of runic inscriptions to particular rune carvers. The questions of attribution have been studied by a number of scholars, and main periods of production have been suggested for known carvers.[81] However, it is possible to find relative temporal frames only for these inscriptions that can be attributed to one or another carver with complete certainty. And within the productive phase of one certain carver it still remains a complicated task to establish the exact chronological order of inscriptions.

C) Stylistic criteria

The design of the runic text band and the decorative ornamentation of runic monuments have been the most popular variables in establishing relative chronologies on the basis of typological dating.[82] We could even claim that most rune stones that demonstrate any ornamentation have been dated according to an evolutionary view. Main principles for an evolutionary scheme of style and ornamentation were presented by von Friesen (1913). According to him, in the initial phase rune stones were unornamented, followed by the classical stage of ornamentation, and finally a kind of degeneration was reached when one no longer stayed true to the classical patterns (op. cit. 29).

In a series of studies that deal with the possibilities of dating Upplandic rune stones, Gräslund claims that ornamentation is still the best tool available for dating runic inscriptions, especially in comparison with further archaeological material.[83] In the articles from 1992 and 1998, Gräslund presents the results of a detailed study of zoomorphic rune stone orna- mentation. The stones where the head of the runic animal is seen in profile are divided into

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[78] See e.g. Shepard (1982-85: 255-258). Suggestions for earlier dates than the traditional 1041 can be found e.g. in Wessén (1960); Lindqvist (1969); Thulin (1975); Fuglesang (1998).
[79] See e.g. Christiansson (1959: 43-44); Thompson (1975: 153); Williams (1990: 132-133).
[80] Same comments can also be found in Glazyrina (2003: 13).
[81] Information on rune carvers and attribution is given e.g. in S.B.F. Jansson (KLNM XIV: 496-505); Axelson 1993; Stille 1999.
[82] Earlier we determined typological dating to be a subdivision of relative dating. Palm (1992: 29) has identified two main categories of typological dating: content-related (text and picture) and form-related (language and design).
[83] See Gräslund (1991; 1992; 1998).

five groups or profiles (PR1 – PR5) on the basis of six stylistic criteria.[84] In addition, Gräslund has also identified a sixth group (FP) where the serpent's head is seen in the bird's-eye-view (see e.g. Gräslund 1998: 84-86). The stylistic analysis is combined with information about genealogically connected inscriptions and historical inscriptions, and on that basis Gräslund establishes the relative order of the groups. At the same time Gräslund does not consider her groups as strictly chronological but rather as strongly overlapping.[85]

Gräslund's style-based chronology has been put into use by other scholars. B. Sawyer (2000) has thus attempted to combine Gräslund's chronology for Upplandic stones with chronologies established for other regions.[86] Herschend (1984) uses Gräslund's groups in a study of serpents' heads on the Södermanland rune stones, and in a study of correlations between changes in textual expression and zoomorphic style on Upplandic rune stones.

Some of Gräslund's chronological statements have been criticised and contradicted by Fuglesang (1998), who underlines the importance of a critical approach when bringing in later medieval sources. Fuglesang (1998: 206) supports an earlier date for the Ingvarr stones, i.e. around 1000-25, and questions Gräslund's re-dating of the Knútr stones.[87]

Conclusions and consequences

A typological study of rune stone ornamentation can reveal interesting style developments, but it is much harder to prove their chronological validity, especially when the supporting historical and/or archaeological criteria are limited or in themselves of disputed nature. Also, we must not forget that subjective, aesthetic evaluations play their role in analyses of style. Therefore, typological dating still remains widely debated, with strong opposing poles present.

At one extreme we find a belief that most inscriptions could be related to each other and ordered chronologically, at the other end there rules a total rejection of any typological considerations. In any case one must remain aware of the fact that "typological dating does not correspond to real dating" – to quote the words of B. Sawyer (2000: 29). She points out: "In some cases archaism may have been deliberate, and in others the features are due not to chronological but to regional differences" (ibid.). One has to be cautious about treating all variation as an expression of diachronic changes (cf. also Spurkland 1995: 17-18).

In dating rune stones the possibilities for reaching absolute historical dates are limited and therefore one has mostly attempted to build up relative chronologies. Many of these chronologies are unfortunately based upon mere typological dating.

We know that the inscriptions are distributed in time, but the texts themselves do not reveal the accurate temporal setting. A natural step is then to consult both linguistic and extra-linguistic criteria, and try to set up various minor intervals in the runic fashion in as far as this proves possible. But taking into consideration the existing criticism of almost each and every one of the above-mentioned tools, it seems unreasonable to try to fit the rune stones into exact decades.

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[84] The criteria are: the head, the feet, the tail, the serpents' coils, the arrangement of the pattern, and the overall impression. See Gräslund (1992: 178-185; 1998: 76-84).

[85] Gräslund's chronology: PR1 ca. 1010-1040; PR2 ca. 1020-1050; PR3 ca. 1050-1080; PR4 ca. 1060/1070-1100; PR5 ca. 1100-1130; FP ca. 1010-1050 (1992: 198; 1998: 86). The date given to older and unornamented stones, the so-called "straight" stones (RAK), is ca. 990-1010. An additional early group consists of cross-band stones (KB) (see Gräslund 1995: 460).

[86] References to Gräslund's style identifications are now included in the information files of the electronic database SRD.

[87] A detailed description of different chronological groups is provided in Fuglesang (1998: 205-208).

It is characteristic that in modern scholarship more attention has been turned to the regional features present in the runic material. An early example of the application of regional perspectives is Christiansson (1959) who has studied ornamentation and identified two main style complexes – South Scandinavian style and Middle Scandinavian style. Regional variation in runological features has been taken into consideration by Williams (1990) and Lagman (1990). A comprehensive study in regional variation has been conducted by Palm (1992). Palm shows how the variation in the distribution of monuments and in the applied commemorative formulas corresponds to regional cultural differences in Scandinavia. Regional perspectives are to a certain degree followed by B. Sawyer (2000) in her study of the whole custom of rune stone raising.

The purpose of the discussion above was to demonstrate the weaknesses of common strategies of dating. Such a conclusion seems to force us to operate with somewhat larger margins (and corresponding wider groups of inscriptions) – a condition that would normally come as a disadvantage, because it does not allow one to trace concrete phases of historical developments. In this current study, though, we do not consider this a real problem; as explained in chapter I the main emphasis is different. From our perspective, wide dating is in most cases sufficient for gaining an idea about the nature of the sources, and for examining their way of expressing a certain content. We simply have to keep in mind that the selected material functions both as a dynamic group as well as a collection of individual cases, which all belong to a particular point of time – even if we are unfortunately unable to establish their exact dates.

That does not mean that we completely ignore the possibilities and importance of dating the inscriptions. When analysing separate inscriptions, comments will therefore be provided with regard to possible dates/typological groupings that have been suggested by scholars. We shall take into consideration the existing information on absolute dating and/or relative chronologies, but all such details have to be treated with caution – especially the ones that originate from typological considerations. This may seem as too conservative an approach, but it is necessary to underline that no analytical argumentation should be built upon dating one's material on uncertain (and maybe even false) grounds.

2.2. Analytical and methodological principles

2.2.1. Runic mini-narratives

In this subsection we establish a closer analytical and methodological framework for studying the inscriptions on rune stones, according to an integrated approach that corresponds to the foci presented above. This provides us with the essential premises for the further study of Baltic traffic inscriptions (cf. also 2.3. and 2.4.).

While searching for the underlying motives of raising rune stones, the importance of considering both their general patterns and individual features was emphasised; the interplay between the written inscription, the physical medium and the wider historical-communicative setting was also brought into focus.

Obviously it is the textual message that nevertheless forms our point of departure – it is the way inscriptions record and represent motives related to Baltic traffic that makes up the

backbone of the analysis.[88] In chapter I (1.6.) the term of runic mini-narratives was introduced, as a means of exploring the potential storytelling-like character of runic inscriptions. With regard to the runic narrativity the selection of information that had to be presented on the rune stone may reflect the decisions reached by the person who was commissioning the monument. But there is more to the situation than that – we are also facing a kind of convention that foresaw what and who was to be mentioned in commemorative texts, and how this was to be done, although even individual and regional patterns must have played their role.

Many scholars have emphasised the uniformity of expressions in Viking Age runic inscriptions, offering a schematic overview of typical inscriptions. Structurally, one can on this basis distinguish between standard and additional information – the concrete labels used by different scholars may vary, but the basic idea remains the same. Jesch (1998: 463) has, for example, used the terms 'standard elements' and 'optional elements'. The terminology of Palm (1992: 133) distinguishes between 'genre-obligatoriska formler' (obligatory genre formulas) and 'fakultativa formler' (facultative formulas). These are a few examples of commonly used terms.

Standard information corresponds to the typical commemorative message: "X raised this stone (or: had this stone raised) in memory of Y his/her father/brother/son/mother etc." According to Jesch (1998: 463) standard elements comprise: "the commissioner of the monument, the statement of commissioning the monument, the commemorated, the relationship between the commissioner and the commemorated". Palm (1992: 134-135) uses the term 'resarformel' (i.e. sponsor formula) to focus on the significance of the commissioner. Syntactically the formula follows the pattern: subject + verb + object (+ pronoun) + prepositional phrase (preposition + proper name + apposition (noun + pronoun) (Palm 1992: 175). The subject expresses who has commissioned the monument; the verbal phrase – which according to Palm consists of main verb and auxiliary verb – refers to the activity; the object identifies the monument type (monument marker); whereas the prepositional phrase expresses the commemoration, as its meaning is "in memory of" (ibid.). Palm's scheme can be compared to the slightly more detailed approach of Hübler (1996: 39); the latter author characterises this "Errichtungsformel" as "der obligatorische und meist einleitende Teil jeder Inschrift". That is to say, the commemorative formula is excluded only in exceptional cases, which does not mean that we would find no variation with regard to its components and their order.[89]

The so-called optional/facultative elements may appear in the form of a few words or as complete formulations. Most often they provide additional information about the deceased. Palm (1992: 136) places such information under 'statusmarkörer' (status markers), a category that may also refer to the sponsors of the monument. In Thompson's view additions mainly deal with "the honored dead: his exploits, the manner of his death, his relationships to others"; other examples concern ownership and inheritance (Thompson 1975: 18-19). He proposes a basic pattern for such additions: personal pronoun + verb + prepositional phrase (op. cit. 18).

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[88] When talking about runic inscriptions as texts we here and in the following use the term 'text' in the sense of the verbal representation of written discourse; in other studies it may also relate to spoken discourse and the non-verbal dimensions of communication.

[89] Note that we do not distinguish between the terms 'sponsor formula' and 'commemorative formula' in the way Palm does. The latter is understood in its wide sense – that is to say, it covers the role of sponsors, as well as the self-honouring contents of some inscriptions.

Among other common facultative elements we find prayers and carver signatures (Palm 1992: 133, 135-136). Typical prayer is the formulation "God help his soul", but longer and shorter alternatives can be found.[90] Carver signatures usually provide the name of the carver and add a suitable verb as well as the object, although shortened versions are frequently found.

In some inscriptions we meet expressions that highlight the importance of the monument – poetical formulations may relate how the monument was produced and/or express future expectations as to its permanent character and significance. According to Jesch, such information belongs under the category 'deixis', which she defines (referring to Lyons) as "the orientational features of language which are relevant to the time and place of utterance" (Jesch 1998: 464). Hübler (1996: 139) speaks in connection to this of "Wunschformeln, die Formeln, die sich auf Wünsche hinsichtlich des Steins beziehen".[91]

As an alternative to drawing a line between "obligatory" and "facultative" components, some scholars have even tried to compose comprehensive models to cover the contents of runic inscriptions according to a multi-segmented system.[92] In our opinion, it does not matter from the strictly textual point of view where the arbitrary line between standard and supplementary information is drawn – the consequences for the analysis of textual components are mainly formal. It remains a fact that commemorative runic inscriptions mostly demonstrate the existence of the common phrase: "X raised this stone (or: had this stone raised) in memory of Y + *relationship statement*". For the sake of simplicity we regard this basic expression as the main memorial formula, and treat all other pieces of information by which the formulation may be expanded as additional information (despite the fact that syntactically some of the extra components may be incorporated into the same base formula).

It should be remembered that such a textual division is in any case arbitral, and based upon our modern structuralist mind. After all, it is not so likely that in its time the sponsors/carvers consciously chose between standard and facultative formulations. That being said, the occurring variation may reflect (deliberately) taken choices. The reason why it appears useful to distinguish between standard elements – i.e. main memorial formula – and various additions, is that we obtain tools for comparing existing forms of runic textuality and narrativity. Despite common criticism of being mainly laconic and repetitive in nature, we do meet some interesting variation in runic formulations; in some cases we find rather unusual and expressive additions.

However – as already stressed upon – we do not limit ourselves to the textual dimension; instead, we intend to analyse a combination of different features. In this light the actual layout of the textual components on the rune stone may give a better idea of what should potentially be regarded as the main memorial formula, and what remains of additional value. The analysis in chapter III will, in fact, raise several such considerations.

To summarize the formal discussion of textual content and structure – runic mini-narratives offer information that mostly centres on the person(s) who has/have arranged the monument; the act of carrying out commemoration through a particular monument; and the person(s) who the monument has/have been addressed to, i.e. the deceased. Little "stories" are told with regard to the deceased, the commissioners and/or the monument, into which other messages

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[90] Herschend (1994: 48-49) sees in this basic four-word structure the root of all prayers.

[91] As an example, we could mention the inscription U 838 that states "Here will the stone stand near the path" (**hir maa ᛫ stanta ᛫ stain ᛫ ner ᛫ brautu**).

[92] See e.g. Lundqvist (1991), who treats runic texts as a genre; she has established one model to describe all the content segments in inscriptions.

may be incorporated. The narrativistic features of runic inscriptions also reveal themselves through the way in which the inscription is arranged on the monument (there is more about this in the following subsections).

2.2.2. Cultural-historical connections

Earlier it was emphasised that the relationship between the features of narrativity and historicity needs consideration with regard to the source material. As a necessary premise for later discussions we shall outline a few comments on the possible cultural-historical significance of runic mini-narratives, as defined above.

The following is thus limited to dealing with what has been the most obvious focus of historical studies – the cultural-historical relevance of runic inscriptions as texts that mediate certain content. It should be pointed out, though, that other features of runic monuments are also studied from the historical and archaeological point of view. Studies of their decoration reveal historical style preferences and illuminate the development of ornamentation, as well as the nature of arts and crafts in the Viking Age. Furthermore, rune stones can be examined as material evidence, as "archaeological remains" (cf. Larsson 1990: 131).

The most traditional historical data is nevertheless found in textual statements, which explicitly concern certain people, places and events. Several scholars have characterised runic inscriptions as a valuable and varied source of information, despite their laconic and seemingly uniform formulations.[93] The contributions of runic material to a variety of research questions have been implied, by stating that "they can throw light on such varied matters as language and orthography, art and poetry, place-names and personal names, kinship, settlement, communications, Viking expeditions, and, not least, the spread of Christianity" (P. Sawyer and B. Sawyer 1993: 11). The above-mentioned authors, as well as Melnikova, have underlined the importance of studying the corpus of runic inscriptions as a whole – to refer to the latter, it is exactly through a comprehensive study of runic vocabulary and its messages that we can examine a wide range of socio-economic, military, political, geographical and cultural matters (Melnikova 1977: 32).

The significance of runic inscriptions lies, for one, in that they provide direct insight into a period in the Norse history that is otherwise characterised by a scarcity of authentic written evidence. "They are original documents contemporary with the events they describe, and are usually of varied authorship, although one author may have written several inscriptions. As a historical source, they are thus not particularly susceptible to conscious or unconscious distortion of facts" (Liestøl 1970: 121; cf. also Melnikova 1998: 647).

Naturally the nature of runic evidence has called upon critical remarks. Liestøl has therefore found it necessary to remind others that due to their limited extent and uneven distribution in time and space, runic sources must be treated with caution (ibid.). Page (1995a: 10) mentions the possibility that "epitaphs do not always tell the truth about the dead and certainly not the whole truth". Other scholars, though, have objected to the latter assumption by focusing on the memorial function of these texts. Melnikova (2001: 39) claims that as memorial texts runic

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[93] At the same time it is interesting to note that concerning studies written in the English language, Page (1993: 145) has found it necessary to criticise the general "neglect of the runic evidence for the Vikings". According to him it is only recently that more concern has been shown towards runic inscriptions as primary evidence.

inscriptions could not contain consciously twisted facts, because those would have been considered as an offence and disgrace to the deceased; furthermore, the people in the vicinity would have realised that the inscription did not tell them the actual truth.

It is hard to claim with certainty that all information recorded in runic inscriptions is the absolute truth – at least some forms of boasting or more imaginative expressions must have occurred – but it can indeed be considered likely that in as far the texts functioned as public documents announcing someone's death and/or honourable deeds, they followed commonly accepted criteria.

In connection to this, one should ask: what kind of history is it that we expect the inscriptions to record? And what kind of inscriptions could at all be called historical – that is to say, presenting circumstances in their historical actuality? Inscriptions that refer to historically identified persons and/or events (and to a certain degree those that mention different travelling destinations) have been the traditional focus. The principles of dividing inscriptions into historical and non-historical go back to the Danish scholar Wimmer.[94]

One of the first modern scholars to introduce broader historical perspectives into the study of runic inscriptions was Ruprecht. He divided runic inscriptions into three groups according to their content: 1) historical inscriptions in a narrow sense, with concrete identification of events and persons recorded in other sources; 2) historical inscriptions in a broad sense, offering insight into events that go under known historical processes, confirmed with the help of other sources; 3) and inscriptions that comprise different types of information about the deceased (e.g. concerning their status and occupations) and which first become historical when we can prove their value as indications of certain historical phenomena (Ruprecht 1958: 10). Melnikova (1977: 30) has criticised Ruprecht's approach, pointing out that any inscription which is said to belong to one of these categories can also be placed under some other group, or even appear simultaneously in all of these. But at the same time Melnikova recognises the importance of Ruprecht's attempt at gaining new historical data from the inscriptions (1977: 29-39; 2001: 38-39).

We could claim that in a very wide sense all runic inscriptions can be treated as historical documents, since they refer to real people (see e.g. Palm 1992: 23). From the point of view of narrow historicity, the problem would lay in how to relate their mostly general statements to the actual course of history. One of the modern research solutions is to not focus so much on the actual events and facts, but rather to treat runic inscriptions as evidence of certain processes that were going on in the society (Melnikova 2001: 40). The inscriptions could be expected to reflect common attitudes, and "public values" (Page 1995a: 10.) Also, according to Jesch (1994: 149), "runic inscriptions provide a body of evidence which may be large enough to permit valid generalisations about the social history of the Viking Age". On the other hand, Jesch makes it clear that there lie certain risks in quantative runic studies of social structures and patterns. One problem to consider is that people who are mentioned in the inscriptions most likely do not present a random sample of population (op. cit. 150).

At the same time, runic messages do also offer more precise historical data, the significance of which should not be undermined even if we get only a very limited insight into matters. But there is more to realise about the significance of runic inscriptions. One point to emphasise is the need to treat runic inscriptions as particular modes of expression in their own right. Their premises are authentic and as such historical; and viewed collectively, they appear as a body of evidence, which despite its conventional content reflects varied features

94 See Jacobsen (1931; 1932), who at the same time criticises Wimmer's methods and conclusions.

of a genuine tradition of monumental commemoration. At the same time, runic inscriptions are the individual, materialised images of past communication.

Here we touch upon similar conclusions as reached above in connection with the functions of the rune stone custom. Runic inscriptions thus appear both as evidence of general tendencies, as well as individual expressions of particular people and their experiences – and can be used to study both of these dimensions either separately or in combination.

In a qualitative study like the present one, we do not examine the factual history in its strict and formal sense – that is to say, we do not aim at identifying patterns of political and/or social history, which would also require the establishment of a more precise chronological order among the inscriptions, among other pre-conditions. Our primary analysis group (see 2.3.2.) is a limited selection of inscriptions belonging mainly to the 10th-11th centuries, and from the point of view of social and political history, their meagre number would in any case remain statistically irrelevant. The analysis presented is first and foremost a qualitative, content-related study of certain types of runic messages.

What we intend to do is to study runic inscriptions as complex forms of expressions and as signs of communication. For one, they function like minimal stories containing pieces of knowledge about particular circumstances that must have been significant enough for their contemporaries – and already as such, they are grounded in a cultural-historical context. We wish to demonstrate how an in-depth analysis of what we may call the practices of recording and representing casts light on the nuances of authentic experiences.

Secondly, there is a whole set of intermingled expressions that connect with the seemingly modest verbal content of runic mini-narratives. The details we observe in connection with runic inscriptions are the outcome of a tradition within which people consciously materialised certain messages, and mediated them to others in a very visual, outspoken manner. In this (often disregarded) expressiveness and actual individuality lies also the true cultural-historical significance of runic inscriptions.

The conclusions that will be reached during the analysis should not automatically be treated as valid historical generalisations, even though we logically assume that their origin lies in the common tendencies of that period and society. At the same time it is worth mentioning that although only a minority of inscriptions is here being treated as the primary analysis group, comparisons are drawn to a considerable number of other inscriptions – analysed inscriptions are seen in the context of other contemporary inscriptions. This is a deliberate step in order to distance current research from such qualitative studies where one considers only these inscriptions that provide the exact information one is looking for.

2.2.3. Methodological guidelines

2.2.3.1. Runic methodology

General characteristics of the applied methodological approach were presented in the introduction (subsection 1.5.). There the so-called adapted hermeneutical approach was introduced, according to which texts are analysed from various angles with an understanding of different levels of contextuality. In the following we shall discuss some basic methodological concepts in runic studies, and then specify in which way the chosen hermeneutical approach relates to runic inscriptions in particular.

We could claim that in runic studies – more precisely addressed as runology – there is no strictly institutionalised tradition of either widely acknowledged theory or methodology, a shortcoming that has occasionally been brought into the critical spotlight by scholars working within this field.[95]

The obvious fact that every runic enthusiast would most likely agree upon is – to quote the words of another scholar – that: "En runtext är en fragmentarisk yttring av en försvunnen verklighet, som vi med hjälp av fragmentet försöker förstå" (Peterson 1997: 143).[96] But the question is: WHAT exactly are we trying to understand and HOW are we attempting to do that? Is it the language and its different historical forms, the content of the inscription, or the wider significance of its historical message that we seek to understand? Are we conducting a study based on linguistic or extra-linguistic criteria or a combination of both?

For certain scholars, runology in the traditional sense has been and must remain linguistically orientated. It has been claimed that despite the fact that runic studies do comprise cross-disciplinary perspectives, the core of the discipline should still be determined as linguistic, since much of the runological work has to do with the linguistic establishment and reading of the inscriptions (Peterson 1995: 41; 1997: 141). In this light one has even found it reasonable to operate with two definitions of runology, the first one being considered the narrow ('snever') definition, according to which runology belongs to the sphere of linguistic studies; and the second one, the broad ('bred') definition, where input from a number of other human sciences is recognised (Peterson 1995: 41).

The identification of rune signs and the establishment of words and formulations as they appear in their certain linguistic forms indeed make up the logical basis of runology. But even this work cannot be done in total isolation and ignorance of contextual matters – any kind of interpretation depends upon an understanding of the meaning of the inscription as a whole. Widmark (1997: 165) has identified various levels in a study of runic inscriptions, the first one being connected with "själva runorna och deras läsordning" (the runes themselves and their reading order), the second one with "vad de tillsammans ger för innebörd" (the message that they transmit together), and the third one with fitting the inscription into "ett rimligt sociokulturellt sammanhang" (a reasonable socio-cultural context). Her conclusion is that the study of runic inscriptions combines all of these three levels.

Lerche Nielsen (1997: 39) emphasises the necessity of a qualified combination of such aspects by drawing attention to the fact that there exist so many different interpretations of certain more complicated inscriptions, to which he finds an explanation in the idea that one normally cannot base an understanding upon text-internal grounds only. According to him various external considerations constitute a natural part of the runological practice – but what varies is the degree of knowledge and critical understanding of what data is accepted and what is of disputed value (ibid.) That is why Lerche Nielsen states that runology must also open up to input from other disciplines (op. cit. 49). At the same time, the methodological treatment of external information needs to become more formalised and systematised (ibid.).

The role of internal versus external information in runic studies has been treated by Spurkland (1987: 52), who characterises runology as a synthesis of a number of disciplines, for example, linguistics, philology, archaeology and cultural-history. The terms 'internal method' and 'external method' were put into use by Jacobsen as part of her methodological

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[95] To name a few examples, Williams (1990: 10); Barnes (1994); Lerche Nielsen (1997: 37-39, 49); Braunmüller (1998).

[96] "A runic text is a fragmentary expression belonging to a past reality, which we seek to understand with the help of this fragment" (my translation).

debate against Olsen.[97] As the names indicate, the internal method is a text-centred approach, whereas the external method works out of various extra-linguistic considerations and expectations. Spurkland (1987: 50) understands these two methods as the extreme points in the use of runic sources as narratives and remains, at the same time suggesting that they should not be automatically set against each other as a question of either/or, but rather be combined. But in any case, it is important to clarify one's research goals and choose an appropriate way of treating the material on that basis (op. cit. 53).

The limits of this work do not allow us to discuss the definition and nature of runology in more detail. In light of the above, we conclude that the study of runic inscriptions has to be a sound combination of text-internal and text-external criteria – the weight given to one or another aspect naturally depends on concrete research goals, but usually no qualified results can be achieved with the total negation of information other than one's main interest.

2.2.3.2. Runic inscriptions and the adapted hermeneutical approach

In the following step, we demonstrate in which way the adapted hermeneutical approach can contribute to understanding the interplay between text-internal and text-external considerations in the case of runic inscriptions.[98]

In general, runic inscriptions can pose various interpretative problems and gaps, where the meaning of the text is closely associated with gaining an understanding of its different contextual levels, and where foreknowledge and expectations also play an important role. Starting on the level of smaller units, Salberger has identified several problems that arise when we try to interpret runic inscriptions. The system of writing runic letters is in itself an act that needs to be understood – we have to be able to identify the signs in order to approach the first layer of meaning in the text, that is to say, read it. Other complications according to Salberger are, for example, the cases when it is hard to identify word boundaries, because the inscription does not indicate these at all or only does this sporadically or with great inconsistencies; when unclear and incorrect runes or various defects and lacunae on the level of single runes, syllables and whole words occur – all of this contributes to problems of interpretation (Salberger 1978: 207-208).

These are some of the shortcomings on the level of minor textual units and intra-textual context. There are other peculiarities that can make the overall event of understanding a runic inscription a challenging matter, as for example their mention of concepts and practices that are either unknown to us or can be understood in alternating ways – which often results in competing interpretations of both their verbal meaning and the historical reality that they represent.

Naturally, it is not only with regard to complications and/or peculiarities that one – in order to find solutions and meaning – has to enter the interplay between 'the parts' and 'the whole' both on the linguistic level and on the level of the subject matter and its historical meaning. As discussed previously, the whole practice of interpreting runic inscriptions is a process where both linguistic (internal) and extra-linguistic (external) considerations overlap, constantly adjusting and modifying both our readings and corresponding interpretations.

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[97] For more information on the historical background, see Spurkland (1987: 49-50), as well as a Cand. Philol. dissertation from the University of Oslo by Berg (2003: 33-35).
[98] Some of the ideas have already been expressed in Zilmer (2003c), see also subsection 1.5.

Another important aspect in connection to this is the realisation of the fact that in the case of runic inscriptions, it is not only the inscribed text itself that carries the message we are trying to understand. The text is, in fact, only one part of the visual entity, which also includes the authentic medium of a certain size and shape, often further characterised by decorative images. Furthermore, in cases where the runic medium – most likely a rune stone – is still preserved in its original location, the spatial context also adds to the overall understanding of the meaning of the monument (cf. 2.2.1).

The process of understanding runic inscriptions then becomes a much more visual and contextual matter than one would perhaps assume when limiting oneself to merely establishing a linguistic reading of the inscription. We are dealing here with messages that have been formulated and mediated by certain people at a certain point in history. There must have been special communicative aims attached to the inscriptions and their mediums in their original historical setting – something that may even be impossible for us to truly revitalise within the modern horizon.

By acknowledging the importance of various forms of contextuality in interpreting runic inscriptions, we are engaging ourselves in a hermeneutic research process. The dialectic 'part-whole' relationship between linguistic and extra-linguistic considerations that we make use of on different levels of textual and contextual analysis signals hermeneutical reflection. In this connection, we also have to realise that we always approach a certain source, in this case runic inscriptions, with some form of pre-understanding as to their possible contents and functions. During the following interpretation process our pre-understanding will be tested against actual observations, and therefore ideally go through a series of adjustments and modifications.

In a previous article a scheme for describing hermeneutically guided interpretation processes was presented, using one hypothetical runic text as an example (Zilmer 2003c: 64-65, cf. subsection 1.5.). We shall briefly refer to its main emphasis, and then proceed to more precise guidelines. The scheme takes into consideration the interplay between the inscription's different units and the inscription as a whole, as well as between the inscription and various contextual phenomena. Interpretation processes are undertaken on the intra-textual level (with regard to immediate co-text); inter-textual level (with regard to other inscriptions); visual, physical, spatial, temporal and socio-cultural level (historical setting in a wide sense); and cross-disciplinary level (with input from other disciplines). Finally, critical reflection takes into consideration the present interpretational situation; that is, the limitations that our modern understandings face. The scheme functions as an imitation of circular interpretation processes, where previous expectations and understandings are being modified and/or developed as a result of observations gained during different phases of study.

Possible methodological scheme

In the current study the so-called Baltic traffic inscriptions are being analysed according to the principles of qualitative, hermeneutical interpretation methodology, where the purpose is to gain an in-depth understanding of the inscriptions and their various features. On a general methodological level it is possible to use the above-mentioned scheme as our point of departure; but besides that, it is necessary to specify more concrete analysis variables and tools that support the idea of combining different types of criteria and knowledge.

In an overall analysis of runic inscriptions, of course, a whole complex of features could be studied, according to the principle that everything in and about an inscription is important and should be analysed. We could, for example, start with what Thompson (1975: 10) calls the

runographic features in a wide sense; his five categories are: design/ornamentation, carving technique, rune forms, orthography, and formulation. Thompson studies Upplandic rune stones, especially the works of the well-known carver Ásmundr. Nevertheless, his suggested categories are of general value, since they focus on features both on the intra-textual level (rune forms, orthography and formulation) and on the physical level of the monument (carving technique and design/ornamentation), while at the same time showing that these dimensions are mutually dependent. Furthermore, similar categories show that on each level we can theoretically distinguish between more formal features and content-related features. In the focus of the current study is the textual meaning related to the content of the inscription, as well as the communicative meaning of the monument as a whole.

Thus, on the intra-textual level the semantic content of the inscription will be analysed by relating the inscription's different segments to each other and to the runic formulation as a whole.[99] This strategy serves to illuminate the narrative structure and content of runic inscriptions (according to the schemes explained in 2.2.1.). We operate with terms such as main memorial formula (MMF) and supplementary information or additions, drawing an arbitrary textual line between the components of a given inscription.

The study of textuality is inevitably combined with further analysis on the visual level of the carving (which is especially important in cases where the original medium and the original carving have been preserved). In this connection we support the basic methodological considerations that do not reduce runic inscriptions simply to linear texts, "without questioning whether they are indeed like other texts" (Jesch 1998: 462).[100] Jesch, for example, explains that the textualisation of runic inscriptions has led scholars to believe that the commissioners of the monument gain primary attention, because they are mentioned first in the inscriptions (an idea that we referred to in connection with theories about the significance of sponsors and patterns of inheritance). Jesch wishes to direct attention towards the layout of the inscription on the monument itself, which can easily place the name of the deceased in a visually much more central position, for example at the top of the stone (op. cit. 469; cf. Øeby Nielsen 2003: 167). Andrén speaks of the interplay between images and texts, and labels his approach "visual literacy" (Andrén 2000: 10). According to him it is essential to look both at the texts and the layout of the carvings on rune stones, and "interpret the rune-stones in a new kind of linguistic and visual totality" (op. cit. 11). Although we do not agree with Andrén's interpretation of runic serpents as visual representations of different families, we most certainly agree with the basic principle of the importance of design and layout in understanding the inscriptions.

In order to limit the study – because unfortunately, reality dictates that not everything significant can be analysed here – we do not attempt to present yet another analysis of different ornamentation styles. Instead, we wish to focus on one visual aspect of every runic inscription that so far has gained only limited attention, despite the fact that it forms an important component of the overall composition. Design is here understood not simply as the pattern of the runic text band, but as the layout of the inscription on its medium, especially

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[99] Rune forms, spelling and different linguistic aspects are not under study here, but occasional remarks can be made as to some interesting features. With regard to rune forms these may, for example, concern their reversed order, their fit into the text band and spacing; cf. Thompson (1975: 33-36).

[100] Cf. also Andrén (2000); Øeby Nielsen (2003: 165). The latter author says: "To focus on only the inscription is an anachronistic way to decode the messages of runestones, since the inscription is strongly related to the symbolic act of raising a runestone".

with regard to the placement of different pieces of information on the actual object.[101] This strategy is used to gain an understanding of how the runic message was visually perceived by its contemporaries. Short comments will be added as to whether the runic medium has some sort of ornamentation alongside references to sources where more information can be gained on these aspects.[102] In certain cases it is necessary to include more detailed considerations as to the overall visual impression, for example when we are dealing with unique artistic decorations.

Moving on to the **physical level** of the monument, it is obvious that general observations regarding the material, size, shape and other features of the rune stone in their own way contribute to the analysis. Naturally, the physical appearance of the monument must have played an important role in the way its message was received by the people. Andrén (2000: 11) has pointed out: "Unfortunately one important element for the interpretation of rune-stones is generally lacking today, namely colour". Nevertheless, what is preserved still offers an idea about the original impressiveness of the monument.

This brings us to the **spatial level**, which in cases where the monument stands on its original site deserves extra attention, because this helps us to understand the communicative setting around the inscription and its medium. Some rune stones, for example, may be standing along roads and waterways, and therefore, already form a clear act of communication in themselves.

The information gained from the study of the above-mentioned aspects will be combined with further analysis undertaken on the **inter-textual** and **inter-monumental level**, where formulations and messages occurring in other runic inscriptions as well as the features of other monuments will be taken into consideration. That is to say, we analyse the meaning of certain expressions not in isolation, but also in the light of other inscriptions and other monuments.

Such an integrative approach will gain further ground from a discussion of different features of the **historical setting** – both on the temporal and socio-cultural level, in as far as this proves possible (keeping in mind the limitations outlined above). From the cultural-historical point of view – and in combination with insights from other disciplines – the runic messages are glimpses into a past culture; the inscriptions and the monuments contain information about certain situations and at the same time receive their wider meaning in relation to contemporary communicative context.

What we have tried to outline is a possible model for studying the runic material from a perspective that takes into consideration different levels of expression; textual, visual, physical, spatial and further communicative features are considered equally important. In this way we can approach the verbal and non-verbal messages of runic inscriptions from a variety of angles – and illuminate both traditional patterns and individuality.

And yet, at the same time we cannot forget the obvious distance between our modern experiences and the original form and context of the inscriptions. Bearing such limitations in mind, we wish to present an overview of materials that have been used as sources in approaching the object of study.

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[101] Concerning the first aspect, i.e. the pattern of runic bands, we apply the criteria as described by Thompson (1975: 24-26), with additions from Sawyer (2000: 193). See Appendix II.

[102] We can in general distinguish between unornamented and ornamented rune stones; the latter can again be divided into groups according to whether they contain zoomorphic or non-zoomorphic ornamentation. For more information, see for example Thompson (1975: 24-30); Gräslund (1991; 1992).

2.3. Materials

2.3.1. Sources and conventions

The material that will be analysed has been excerpted from the following main sources. For the first overview of inscriptions from a textual perspective, the electronic database *Samnordisk runtextdatabas* (SRD) has been used.[103]

Further information about the inscriptions has been acquired from standard national editions of runic inscriptions from Sweden, Denmark and Norway: *Sveriges runinskrifter* (SRI, 1900-), *Danmarks Runeindskrifter* (DRI, 1941-42) and *Norges Innskrifter med de yngre Runer* (NIyR, 1941-). In parts, these editions are now out of date and naturally they do not include the inscriptions found after the publication of respective volumes – therefore other sources also have to be examined.

In general, when it concerns the Swedish inscriptions the journal *Fornvännen* (FV) is a valuable source of information on runic inscriptions not published in SRI, as are the archives of ATA (Antikvarisk-topografiska arkivet, Stockholm). The Gotlandic material has been presented in an updated form in a dissertation by Snædal Brink (2002). With regard to the Danish material, a book by Moltke (1985a) contains information on many inscriptions not included in DRI. As for Norwegian inscriptions, the materials of Runearkivet (the Runic Archives of the University of Oslo) offer information on inscriptions not published in NIyR. Runearkivet has since 1986 been issuing a yearly publication *Nytt om runer* (NOR), which contains information on new runic finds from Scandinavia and elsewhere. The materials in the above-mentioned sources have been used to the extent necessary for analysing the group of inscriptions excerpted according to the principles explained below (cf. 2.3.2).

In addition a variety of other sources have been consulted. Another electronic database that has proven useful in the study of place names and personal names is *Nordiskt run-namnslexikon* (NRL).[104] Information on runic vocabulary can be found in *Svenskt runords-register* (SRR, Peterson 1994). For systematised information on commemorative rune stones, the catalogue compiled by B. Sawyer (2000: 190-262) has also been examined. Both separate articles and general surveys have been used in order to find information about new interpretations, dates, etc.[105]

The inscriptions are being identified according to the customary system: with a signature consisting of a letter code and an identification number, following the practice of SRD. The letters indicate the country/province of origin, and may also include the source where the inscription has been (first) published or registered. The numbers stand either for a registration/archive number or refer to the publication year of a particular source and the page on which information on the inscription is to be found.[106]

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[103] The database is available at http://www.nordiska.uu.se/samnord.htm. In the analysis the version from 18.09.2004 has been used. The database provides runic texts in their transliterated and normalised forms, as well as translations into English, alongside information concerning location, dating, etc.

[104] Compiled by Lena Peterson, http://www.sofi.se/SOFIU/runlex/. The latest available version from February 2002 has been used.

[105] It is not possible to list all of these, but several among them will be referred to while discussing different interpretations of inscriptions.

[106] For explanations concerning different signatures, see Appendix I.

The provenience of a given inscription is determined according to generally accepted regional units, as presented in the standard national editions. Runic inscriptions are localised with reference to main administrative districts that to a certain degree build upon the concept of medieval kingdoms. Therefore, runic inscriptions from Skåne, Halland, Blekinge are included among the Danish material. On the other hand, although Jämtland and Bohuslän belonged administratively to Norway, they are usually treated as part of the Swedish material. With other Swedish material the customary division into different provinces (landscapes) is being followed, although the relevancy of their geographical borders may be discussed.[107]

When quoting runic inscriptions, we will as a rule give their transliterations in non-normalised form (using a particular font 'runlitt' developed by Svante Lagman), according to SRD.[108] In some cases we cite the normalised versions of (parts of) inscriptions – these will be marked in italics. In SRD the Scandinavian runic inscriptions are supplied with normalisations into Old Norse (ON), and in the case of Swedish and Danish inscriptions also into Runic Swedish (RS) and Runic Danish (RD) respectively. In such studies that include all Scandinavian runic inscriptions, one has usually been inclined to use ON as a general standard, which may cause certain problems. Here we choose to follow a different strategy, and – in order to save the idea of regional differences and variation (although in any case an idealised image) – we use ON with Norwegian inscriptions, RS with Swedish inscriptions and RD with Danish inscriptions. We deviate from this practice in general references made to personal names and place names, and when discussing the meaning of certain items of vocabulary (unless directly quoting the inscriptions) – in all such cases the ON forms are the basis.[109]

We do not make it a practice to supply full citations of every single inscription in discussion; all the texts can be easily accessed in SRD, alongside the English translations. Besides that, Appendix III provides necessary data about the inscriptions as well as the transliterated, normalised and translated versions of primary texts. When providing English translations within the analysis, the ones from SRD have normally been used, but in certain cases they have been modified either on the basis of other sources (which are then referred to), or by the author. It is, for example, preferable to let some disputed terms stand in their normalised ON form instead of suggesting approximate translations.

In connection with transliteration, normalisation and translation of inscriptions, we should remember that the actual experience of interpreting a runic inscription should still start from examining the runic signs as they appear on the object. The practice of examining runes on the object is also compulsory when we think back to the methodological guidelines that have been set up. In the preceding subsection, the contextual aspects and the experience of the visual and material sides of the monument were emphasised. In this light we finally have to explain what source material has been used to achieve that point of view.

Some Scandinavian rune stones have been experienced on a first-hand basis during visits to Sweden, Denmark and Norway. Unfortunately it has not been in the author's capacity

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[107] Certain scholars find it more correct to distinguish between different historical regions when discussing the runic material from some of these landscapes, e.g. Uppland (cf. 1.4.1.).

[108] That means certain simplifications in the use of different symbols, e.g. with regard to word dividers. We have in the meantime not followed the SRD practice for marking the occurrence of bind runes; these will be indicated with a bow above relevant runes. Instead of using brackets () to mark damaged/incomplete runes, we use a small dot under those runes, as done in corpus editions. All other details are provided in the help file of SRD, under the section "Special characters".

[109] Varying principles of normalisation may naturally become visible in quotations from other scholars. For example, Peterson follows a uniform normalisation into Runic Nordic in her dictionary of proper names.

(neither time-wise nor financially) to examine in this way all the preserved rune stones that belong to the primary analysis group. This is a shortcoming that can naturally be criticised. Still, with every inscription the guiding principle has been to examine as many materials as possible on the basis of available secondary sources. For that purpose various drawings, photographs, maps and descriptions of locations have been consulted.[110] Some of the sources – such as the national corpus editions – have been mentioned above, but Internet resources have also proven to be useful. The Swedish Riksantikvarieämbetet (RAÄ) has a number of rune stone photographs available (http://www.raa.se/kmb). Another webpage with photo material on Swedish rune stones is compiled by Thomas Carlson and Gunnar Nordin (http://www.runebru.se); the Norwegian web page by Arild Hauge (http://home.no.net/ahruner) includes pictures of both Swedish, Norwegian and Danish rune stones.

As for exploring the geographical locations of Swedish rune stones, the maps provided by SRI have been used to a certain degree, but mostly the sites have been studied through the maps of Swedish Lantmäteriet (http://www2.lantmateriet.se/ksos/index.html). The Danish material has been localised according to the maps of Kort & Matrikelstyrelsen (Miljøministeriet, (http://www.kms.dk/landetrundt/danmarkskort/se_mapit_en.html). Geographical maps of the Baltic region, as provided by the Baltic Drainage Basin Project (www.grida.no/baltic) have also been consulted.

2.3.2. Data set, principles of selection and presentation

The analysed Baltic traffic inscriptions are listed in a separate table in Appendix III.[111] For the excerption of data all Swedish, Norwegian and Danish Viking Age inscriptions that are included in SRD have been examined. It is not always easy to draw the line between early and later medieval inscriptions – especially since not all inscriptions have been dated precisely – and therefore the medieval material has also been taken into consideration. Runic inscriptions from regions other than Scandinavia have been regarded, in as far as they may add interesting perspectives to the main sources.[112]

The main data set – i.e. inscriptions in the primary analysis group as well as various additional examples – belongs to the period between 900 and 1150, the great age of rune stones. Only very few earlier and later examples that are of relevance have been noted (and they are separately referred to). These are the logical temporal frames, which take into consideration the unfolding of the Scandinavian rune stone fashion and the evidence that can be found in the inscriptions. In the absolute majority of the studied cases, the medium is indeed the traditional rune stone and the inscription is of commemorative nature. A few exceptions are inscriptions found on smaller objects (e.g. a copper box). In a broad sense even these inscriptions can be compared to the memorial announcements on rune stones: they preserve information about certain people (owners) or about events connected to them, and function in a particular way as 'reminders'. From the textual point of view they can be analysed according to the same principles as the inscriptions on rune stones. The whole data set therefore appears as rather homogenous and well grounded.

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[110] The photographs included in the thesis are published with the kind permission of Runverket (RAÄ); Thomas Carlson and Gunnar Nordin (Runebru); and the Moesgård museum.

[111] There is also an index at the end of the thesis of all runic inscriptions that are referred to in the present study.

[112] Besides SRD, Melnikova's overview of runic finds from Eastern Europe (2001) is a comprehensive source.

A primary analysis group has been distinguished, which will be analysed in full detail according to the methodological schemes presented above. The group consists of runic inscriptions that refer to traffic within the Baltic region (cf. chapter I); they do it by identifying certain place names and/or names of groups of people, at the same time witnessing of mobility between that particular place/district and their own place of origin. Alternatively, the inscriptions may contain personal names that are either inspired by the idea of travelling (compounds with *-fari*) or function as distinct bynames. Also included in the primary group are a few cases that document mobility by other types of references. The guiding principle is the concept of traffic – we study contacts between different districts as recorded and represented through explicit textual references. The number of corresponding Baltic traffic inscriptions is 64, including a few cases where alternative interpretations could be suggested for the recorded place names.

Not included in the primary analysis group, but referred to separately, are some further uncertain/unidentified cases. Most of them contain place names that have not received acceptable interpretations, and must therefore be considered highly doubtful. The inscriptions are mentioned only as illustrative examples of earlier interpretations.

In addition to the group of Baltic traffic inscriptions, supplementary runic evidence will be consulted and referred to in as far as it contributes interesting perspectives around the analysed inscriptions. One type of supplement consists of inscriptions that generally refer to travels to the east – by designations *austr*, *austarla*, *austrvegr* – without specifying the destination(s). There is at least a theoretical possibility that corresponding inscriptions relate of traffic within the Baltic region (or at least passing through that area), but since they do not mention concrete place names, they are treated only as possible additions. In some cases the designation 'east' is clearly given in connection with other, more faraway destinations, which shows that its meaning was rather wide.

Of supplementary nature are also inscriptions that record particular types of monothematic or dithematic personal names, construed on the basis of names of ethnic groups. In their own way such personal names may indicate intensified connections within the Baltic area, though not directly contributing to the concept of Baltic traffic. These inscriptions have not been included in the analysis group, since it is virtually impossible to determine as to whether they are reflective of actual contacts between different communities, or simply represent a functional naming practice. Relevant examples may be found in more than 200 inscriptions; and some among them most certainly belong to the common naming repertoire.[113]

In order to see the Baltic traffic inscriptions in the broader context of travelling and communication, we wish to also take into consideration runic references to other destinations that lie outside the Baltic region – leading both further to the east and to the west.

Certain parallels will be drawn even to other interesting inscriptions – they may contain references to local places (i.e. mention the place/region identical with the locality of the inscription); demonstrate the need to improve local-scale or even regional communications by the construction of bridges and establishment of causeways; or in some other way function as complementary evidence to the Baltic traffic inscriptions.

All additional examples will be used with the purpose of providing a broader inter-textual/inter-monumental and communicative context around the Baltic traffic inscriptions. Without these comparisons, the information gained from the primary analysis group would

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[113] The inscriptions are discussed in some detail in 3.3.1.

remain too one-sided and accidental, and in the worst case leave us under the false impression that the inscriptions existed as a separate group – which they obviously did not. The Baltic traffic inscriptions have been picked out in order to gain a deeper understanding of one specific matter, but their cultural-historical meaning would get severely distorted if we did not at the same time regard the inscriptions as part of a complex tradition.

In describing the principles for data selection we have used the label "uncertain cases" – a condition, which among other disadvantages, makes it complicated to establish the absolute number of inscriptions in a given group.

   In certain cases we are dealing with inscriptions that are long lost. Some among them are known only through the records and drawings of early antiquarians, and the interpretations offered by them are not always reliable. In general, one should therefore follow the principle according to which all such information about inscriptions as well as their mediums that cannot be checked against existing evidence has to be treated with caution. Naturally, with every individual case the final judgement would have to depend on the actual quality and number of preserved records. The more documentation there is, the more convincing grounds we have for trusting their parallel evidence. Nevertheless, a certain general conservatism in the applied approach is a sound device.

   Extant inscriptions, on the other hand, are of varying quality – with some among them known only in parts. The conditions certainly depend on how badly damaged the objects themselves might be: is it only a case of a few missing bits, or do we, on the contrary, only have a few bits left of the original rune stone? Information from older sources can again be consulted, but cannot automatically count for 100% valid evidence.

   Even inscriptions, which are otherwise relatively well preserved, may in some parts pose problems either due to occurring lacunae or complications in identifying runic signs and/or establishing linguistic forms. These problems may result in that inscriptions cannot be established in a complete form – rather often this, in fact, concerns proper names. As explained above, place names (and to a certain degree personal names) form the key founda-tion of the present study. In case there is no widely accepted reason according to modern runological standards for considering suggested alternatives as correct, the names have been left uninterpreted and corresponding inscriptions have not been included in the primary analysis group (see also above). Still, their references are being mentioned among the uncertain and/or disputed cases – to demonstrate what certain (earlier) scholars have seen in these inscriptions, though their suggestions are of questionable value.

   In general it could be said that in all such inscriptions where scholars encounter great problems with reading/interpreting certain words and/or formulations, it is wise to follow the so-called "cautious interpretation strategy", leaving the disputed words uninterpreted, but taking into consideration various alternatives that have been suggested (Lerche Nielsen 1997: 46).

2.4. Review of previous studies

The final part of chapter II offers an overview of previous studies that are of relevance when studying runic references to Baltic traffic, and to travelling in general. The latter aspect is included with the purpose of widening the understanding of Baltic traffic inscriptions (cf.

2.3.2.). The following is by no means a complete review of all contributions; the aim is to illuminate main research lines and important results. In discussing previous work, we build upon their terminology, and therefore, in general, speak of voyage inscriptions/travellers' inscriptions.

Viewed as a whole, we can identify three main approaches in analysing runic inscriptions that mention travelling: 1) general surveys of runic references to either eastern or western voyages, or both; 2) discussions of certain groups of inscriptions with reoccurring travelling destinations (may be labelled as 'historical', such as the Knútr/'danegeld'-inscriptions and the Ingvarr inscriptions cf. 2.1.3.); 3) studies of voyage inscriptions in light of their contemporary society or vice-versa (e.g. with a focus on the socio-economic background of the travellers, the political organisations behind the expeditions, the purpose of voyages). To that we can add numerous studies that focus on the interpretation of individual inscriptions.[114]

We concentrate for the main part on studies that belong under the first category – to show in which ways the material is usually structured, and how the Baltic region is understood in this connection. Other contributions will be consulted in as far as they may cast extra light on the matters of travel and communication.

Runic evidence of travelling in the Viking Age has been a popular topic of discussion. While studying their identification of different destinations, one has traditionally operated with two main groups, which correspond to the general concept of the voyages – geographically determined as the western route and the eastern route.

Runic references to eastern and western voyages were observed and discussed already in works from the 17th and 18th centuries. Among the 19th century scholars Liljegren (1832: 104) included information about recorded destinations in his book *Run-Lära*, explaining that voyages were orientated towards the more profitable areas – along the sea to the east and to the west. Liljegren briefly referred to common routes, which many later scholars have also commented upon (see below) – over Ladoga to *Garðar* and *Holmgarðr*; and past *Dómisnes* further along the Western Dvina (Daugava) river.[115] An important 19th century observation originates from Cronholm (1832), who claimed that the designation *Grikkland* in runic inscriptions referred to Byzantium, more precisely to Constantinople.

During the first half of the 20th century more and more scholars found the information in the voyage inscriptions to be of interest. Von Friesen focuses in two articles (1909; 1911) on the 'danegeld' inscriptions and other references to England, identifying historical figures behind the named persons. Also, in the latter article he analyses a few trade-related inscriptions that use the term *gildi*. In his view, all such inscriptions are historical documents.

Montelius has provided surveys of inscriptions that refer to both eastern (1914) and western connections (1924). In the first article he presents an overview of inscriptions that contain general references to travels to the east, or mention various areas in the east and south, such as the Baltic region, northern Russia, Byzantium, the territory of *Serkland*, etc. Montelius emphasises the meaning of ancient lively ties between Sweden and regions to the east (including areas along the Baltic Sea), pointing out that the motives could be both trading and raiding and that the division line between those two activities was not always so clear (Montelius 1914: 85). As part of his discussion he describes important travelling routes, and defines the main areas of Scandinavian activity. Among other conclusions he argues that "antalet av de män, till vilkas minne runristade stenar restes, naturligtvis var försvinnande litet

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[114] The runic inscriptions contain specific formulations and interesting place names, which have been extensively studied in a series of articles. Many of their arguments will be presented during the analysis.
[115] For an overview of destinations listed by Liljegren, see op.cit. (pp. 104-111).

i jämförelse med dem, som verkligen dragit ut i österväg" (op. cit. 122-123).[116] When dealing with western destinations Montelius (1924) underlines that the Swedish people of the Viking Age did not only go to the east, but were also actively involved in journeys westward, leading particularly to England; additionally, he discusses Sweden's links with Denmark.

S.B.F. Jansson has examined runic evidence of travelling in several articles (e.g. 1949; 1954; 1956), and also in a book on Swedish runic inscriptions (first published in 1963). In the first survey he focuses upon several faraway destinations, among which Byzantium is the most popular one (Jansson 1949: 102). As for the western direction, England is mentioned almost as often as Byzantium (op. cit. 121); whereas Gotland and Denmark are rather common references in the vicinity (op. cit. 108). Characterising Swedish contacts with neighbouring countries to the east, Jansson claims that in the Viking Age these connections gained a particularly intensive form, which is why they enjoy the attention of runic inscriptions (op. cit. 110). References to places/regions in present-day Finland, Estonia and Latvia are given as examples. *Garðar* – by Jansson determined as an area located further east of the Baltic shore lands (op. cit. 112) – is treated separately. In accordance with earlier scholars, Jansson identifies the importance of common travelling routes (op. cit. 111-112).

Jansson returns to the same basic ideas and concepts on several occasions. In the article from 1954 he offers a more detailed analysis of various place names and ethnic names. He discusses their linguistic forms and the construction of different compounds, as well as their historical meaning. References to Byzantium again form his point of departure; Jansson points out that one most commonly refers to that region through the name of its inhabitants – the expression *i Grikkium*, in fact, means: "among the Greeks" (op. cit. 34). Other distant destinations, such as Jerusalem and *Serkland* are also discussed in some detail. Similarly to the previous study, the attention is then turned to Scandinavian regions (i.e. Denmark and Norway) and finally to areas along the eastern Baltic.[117]

A comprehensive study of the whole Swedish and Danish material (with relevant Norwegian examples taken into consideration) is offered by Ruprecht (1958). He studies the socio-economic aspects of the late Viking Age society by searching for information about the people who participated in the voyages.

Ruprecht's catalogue of "Auslandsfahrer-Inschriften" contains 197 inscriptions (plus five Norwegian examples).[118] The analysis is undertaken according to different age groups (i.e. older generation, younger generation, people of uncertain age) and marital status (single/married).[119] On that basis, Ruprecht states that in general, participants in the voyages were younger men. Ruprecht gives significance to the observation that: " [...] der Anteil der Verheirateten an den Auslandsfahrern mit dem Fortschreiten der Runensteinsitte von Süden nach Norden und dem Übergang von der Wikingerzeit zum Mittelalter merklich steigt" (op. cit. 86).

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[116] "[...] the number of men in whose memory the rune stones were raised is naturally strikingly limited compared to those who in reality set out on the eastern road" (my translation).

[117] In the article from 1956 most of the previously discussed examples gain renewed attention. In addition, Jansson draws attention to runic inscriptions that have been found outside Scandinavia (cf. also Jansson 1949: 116). Jansson's book *Runinskrifter i Sverige* (1984) contains a separate chapter on Viking Age voyages; the material is structured to represent the eastern direction (pp. 43-79) and the western direction (pp. 79-96). Special emphasis is laid on potential historical information on various battles (pp. 88-92).

[118] Included in the study are several inscriptions that strictly speaking do not contain any direct references to travelling; Ruprecht builds his argumentation upon specific formulations that in his opinion reflect travel-related vocabulary.

[119] The criteria for determining age groups are presented in Ruprecht (op. cit. pp. 41-47).

Criticism of Ruprecht has been presented for example by Jesch (1994) who uses the Upplandic material as her point of departure. Jesch believes that there must have been established conventions concerning the inscriptions on memorial stones; the rune stone raisers "may in fact very well have been married, without its being considered appropriate or necessary to mention this in the inscriptions" (op. cit. 160). It is therefore a complicated task to draw conclusions about any such social dimensions on the basis of runic inscriptions.

Wessén's study from 1960 falls into two parts: the first one is labelled 'journeys to the west' and focuses on the inscriptions that mention 'danegeld' and the *þingalið*-organisation (pp. 10-29); the second one is called 'journeys to the east' and concentrates on the group of Ingvarr stones (pp. 30-46). After a summary of relevant studies new observations are made with regard to the chronology of inscriptions, particularly in connection with the Ingvarr stones.[120] Wessén further assumes that the goal for Ingvarr's enterprise was not to carry out a geographical expedition (as depicted by later Icelandic authors) – rather it had to do with a search for riches (gold), and possibly with a wish to open up new trade routes (op. cit. 34).

A contribution by Liestøl (1970) differs to some extent from earlier studies on eastern connections. For one, Liestøl also takes into consideration the sparse testimony of runic inscriptions that precede the traditional era of rune stones on the basis of runic finds from the Viking Age trading centres, characterising runic inscriptions as a common means of communication. Secondly, Liestøl is not only concerned with significant travel references as expressed in runic inscriptions from Scandinavia – he looks simultaneously at finds from outside Scandinavia, which in their own way illuminate the scale of contacts. And finally – although admitting that we are dealing with interesting material – Liestøl articulates a warning about the limitations of runic evidence; all attempts at statistical analysis are on a very weak ground (op. cit. 126).

Despite the obvious limitations, scholars have nevertheless applied voyage inscriptions in differently purposed historical studies, for example as a means of gaining insight into the missionary phase in Scandinavia. Palme (1959: 104-108) thus uses runic evidence of international contacts in order to find out which direction the mission came from. Segelberg (1983) explores why Saxony and other areas of modern-day Germany did not gain much attention in the runic inscriptions, despite connections reflected in archaeological finds, and the background of missionary politics guided by Hamburg-Bremen. He finds an explanation in that the politics introduced by Knútr ríki and the English missionaries turned out to be more influential, particularly in Uppland (Segelberg 1983: 48).

Düwel (1987) analyses runic inscriptions from the point of view of trade contacts; also, he is interested in runic depictions of the means and ways of communication. An important part of the study centres on the possibilities for identifying trade-related voyages. Düwel explores both the terminology and the recorded motives in order to determine whether a certain inscription can be characterised as trade-related or not; at the same time he underlines that the line between trading/raiding was probably not that clear (cf. Montelius).[121]

Salberger (1989a) concentrates on runic evidence of Viking Age campaigns to the east, underlying the fact that these are mostly records dating from the 11th century – only very few

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[120] Traditional dating of these inscriptions to a time after 1040 contradicts the ornamentation on the stones, which seems to represent an earlier phase. Still, Wessén finds a suitable explanation to this contradiction in possible regional style divergences. See also subsection 2.1.3.

[121] In this connection, Düwel (1987: 347-348) has provided a list of destinations occurring in the Swedish, Danish and Norwegian inscriptions, with main subgroups following the division into western and eastern travels.

earlier examples are preserved. Among characteristic eastern designations, he names travels to *Grikkland*, *Garðar*, *Serkland* and *Langbarðaland* (i.e. southern Italy).

Lindkvist (1993, pp. 43-51) has used voyage inscriptions as sources for studying the formation of the feudal state in Sweden.[122] In his opinion their messages witness to a societal system that was based upon external appropriation through plundering, military expeditions and (ir)regular tribute taking. Lindkvist supports some of Ruprecht's conclusions and states that in the Mälaren region journeys abroad functioned as an established enterprise (with a greater number of older, married men among the participants), whereas in Västergötland they figured more as a supporting activity (op. cit. 46). In the Mälaren region the processes of state building also took a longer time due to the domination of local chieftains who engaged in plundering expeditions. At the same time, Lindkvist admits that besides exploitation a more peaceful exchange of products was taking place in the form of regular trading contacts; but he finds these harder to trace in the inscriptions. Lindkvist differs from certain other scholars (e.g. Düwel) by claiming that raiding and trading were two separate undertakings (op. cit. 74).

Larsson (1990) has analysed runic inscriptions from central Sweden with the aim of gaining insight into the purpose of voyages, as well as the social status of the participants. 161 'utlandsfararstenar' (voyage stones) are linked to their settlement units in order to analyse connections with other types of archaeological finds. Comparisons with a randomly selected group of reference stones from other settlement units leads to the conclusion that the "voyages were, to a large extent, carried out by inhabitants of settlement units which had, for a long time, enjoyed a high social status and which, probably, had belonged to clans with a tradition of foreign voyages and warring activities" (op. cit. 133).

Larsson studies various destinations quantatively in the light of historical events and activities. In this connection he has divided the material into several groups (op. cit. 100-124). One of the subgroups under the eastern references is labelled 'the Baltic region', and contains 17 inscriptions that refer to southern Finland, the Baltic countries and the island of Gotland (pp. 119-120). Northwestern Russia (*Garðar*) is examined separately (pp. 117-119). Scandinavian destinations, such as Denmark and Skåne, form a subgroup under the western references (pp. 104-105). England, Byzantium, *Garðar* and *Serkland* are regarded as the most important destinations, and Larsson believes that the popularity of main destinations varied chronologically during the 11th century according to where mercenary soldiers were needed (op. cit. 134). Thus, most inscriptions do not seem to illuminate Viking Age raiding and trading in its traditional sense – with the group of Baltic-inscriptions as a possible exception (op. cit. 126, 134). Larsson agrees with earlier scholars like Montelius that "trading voyages within the Baltic area were more common than the small number of runestones suggests" (op. cit. 134).

Page (1987: 48) has focused on the more adventurous side of the viking exploits and finds it interesting that the runic inscriptions do not record the journeys over the Atlantic. According to Page (1995a: 80) the inscriptions offer a kind of "minimal picture" of where people travelled and what purposes they had; he emphasises the wide range of the places that were reached by the Swedish vikings. Runic evidence of Swedish communications across the Baltic Sea – with particular interest in the territory of present-day Estonia – has been discussed by S.Ö. Ohlsson (1999, see pp. 138-142).

Textual and structural perspectives on voyage inscriptions can be found in a study on runic poetry by Hübler (1996). Hübler has divided the inscriptions that include versified formulations

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[122] For information on other relevant studies of the social and political background of the voyage inscriptions, see Larsson (1990: 12-13).

according to their content elements; 'Auslandfahrersteine' is one of his main categories under inscriptions that contain additional information besides the memorial formula (see op. cit. pp. 79-126).

Foreign place names and ethnic names in runic inscriptions have been a popular research topic for Russian scholars, particularly in connection with studying the image of Old Rus in the Old Norse sources. Runic evidence has been considered in the frames of both shorter and longer surveys – such as Jackson (1991), Melnikova (1999), to name just a few examples. The latter author has also published detailed studies of Scandinavian rune stones as evidence of voyages to the east (i.e. to the eastern Baltic region, Russia, Byzantium). In addition to that, Melnikova has analysed inscriptions found from eastern parts of Europe.

In Melnikova's first book (1977), 97 references to Eastern Europe are discussed alongside 23 references to Byzantium. In the updated and enlarged book from 2001, new finds and interpretations have been added, whereas some earlier examples have been excluded – the total number of inscriptions with information either about Eastern Europe or Byzantium is now 124.[123] Above all, the amount of runic finds from Eastern Europe has increased considerably due to recent archaeological excavations.[124] In this manner the author wishes to highlight the different stages of interaction between the Scandinavians and the local inhabitants of Eastern Europe.

Melnikova underlines that among inscriptions found from Scandinavia there are considerably more references to the eastern than to the western voyages (1977: 32; 1998: 648; 2001: 44). She points out the varied nature of the geographical nomenclature: "Eastern Europe, including Byzantium, is presented by ca. 20 place and ethnic names, while those for Western and Southern European countries do not exceed ten" (Melnikova 2001: 492; cf. also 1998: 651). The main claim of the author is that "the names of places and peoples which occur in the inscriptions throw light on the spread of geographical knowledge and the perceptions of Eastern Europe in Scandinavia" (Melnikova 2001: 492).

Among other more recent contributions, we could mention B. Sawyer's book from 2000 that contains a discussion of runic evidence of travelling.[125] As mentioned in subsection 2.1.2., Sawyer actually claims that too much attention has been paid to these inscriptions; in reality they make up less than 10% of the total material (op. cit. 1). In her opinion it is the people who stayed at home who should be the focus – with regard to ownership, inheritance and status (op. cit. 116-122). We do not agree with Sawyer's argumentation that the reason why we hear about travellers is to be found primarily in the matters of inheritance. There must have been other more significant motives at play – these will be discussed in further detail during the analysis.

Jesch (2001) has conducted an integrated study of the vocabulary of runic inscriptions and skaldic verse. Besides analysing the semantics of certain lexical phrases, Jesch even discusses the cultural-historical meaning of runic and skaldic depictions of the typical Viking Age activities – travelling is described as an important enterprise. Jesch starts with an overview of common travelling directions. She presents a large number of place names that occur in the runic and the skaldic corpus, and divides the recorded destinations into four main

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[123] For further comments, see Melnikova (2001: 44). Among these 124 inscriptions there are also some uncertain and disputed examples.

[124] Melnikova presents the findings that most certainly bear runic inscriptions, as well as numerous objects with rune-like inscriptions (e.g. a vast number of Islamic coins with graffiti-like signs, see op. cit. 102-174).

[125] In the catalogue (op. cit. 185) Sawyer has identified 210 travellers' stones from all of Scandinavia, including references to traffic within Scandinavia as well.

groups: the western route; the European continent and further south; the eastern route; and Scandinavia (op. cit. 69-118). The Baltic area is understood as the nearest region along the eastern route, e.g. "the countries on the south and east shores of the Baltic sea" (op. cit. 90).[126]

In a recent article Krøvel (2003) searches for runic documentation of contacts between Scandinavia and Russia. He starts with a general discussion of voyage inscriptions as such, with a certain focus on the inscriptions that tell about travels to the east. He identifies 24 inscriptions that refer to the Baltic region – in his understanding comprising Gotland, present-day Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and northern Germany (op. cit. 108). Main emphasis lies on 13 inscriptions that, according to the author, mention Viking Age Russia, either by direct references to *Garðar* or by the identification of other places or ethnic groups within that area (see op. cit. 133-136). Krøvel's aim is to analyse the inscriptions in their historical context, discussing the underlying social, economic and military factors.[127]

As for the author of this current research, a brief article on runic perceptions of the Baltic region has already been published (Zilmer 2002b) – meant as an introduction into the topic and thus dealing only with a limited selection of examples. Some points made in that article are here built upon (for example with regard to the comprehensive understanding of the Baltic region), whereas others undergo critical modifications.[128]

Conclusions

Most studies discussed above follow the general perspective that divides the runic material into a western and an eastern group. The former usually refers to England and other parts of the British Isles, as well as the western parts of the European mainland. The latter connects with eastern and southern Europe, including northwestern Russia (*Garðar*) and Byzantium (*Grikkland*). Among particular destinations, references related to England, *Grikkland* and *Garðar* have gained most of the attention, alongside the Ingvarr inscriptions, which connect with the much discussed region of *Serkland*.

It is within the eastern group that we normally find a subgroup of references to the areas along the northern, eastern and southeastern coasts of the Baltic Sea. As for the runic data on various Scandinavian destinations, these are usually treated separately from the rest, and understood as records of contacts between neighbourhood or homeland regions.[129]

We have chosen to determine the Baltic area according to a more unified approach, building upon the concept of the Baltic Sea drainage basin (1.4.1.). It has already been emphasised that the focus lies on mobility that concerns the whole area around the Baltic Sea. First and foremost, this means that Scandinavia is also in itself regarded as participating in the same communication arena, besides the traditional target territories of the modern Baltic countries. In other words, runic references to inter-regional Scandinavian connections are to be considered as evidence of Baltic traffic. According to this broader perspective,

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[126] Jesch has made important contributions as to the interpretation of military and/or trade-related terminology in runic and skaldic sources, and many of her suggestions are referred to in the course of analysis.

[127] Krøvel has even tried to trace chronological developments by dating the inscriptions according to Gräslund's system (cf. 2.1.2.) – a step that may be questioned with regard to the very meagre number of the inscriptions.

[128] Among other Estonian scholars, the topic of runic references to the Baltic countries has been brought up on two occasions by Tarvel. In an article from 1978, he has mainly referred to the results presented in Melnikova's book; whereas in a later work, published in Swedish in 1994, he gives a more thorough overview of both runic and saga evidence. Runic evidence has also been included in the discussion by Palmaru (1980).

[129] In certain cases, Denmark has been included among the western references – i.e. from the Swedish point of view.

references to *Garðar* are also understood in a similar manner; much of that traffic was without doubt connected with the Baltic region. This is one of the theoretically grounded premises that distinguishes the current study from the rest. From such argumentation the notion of Baltic traffic inscriptions has evolved; it is a blanket designation that allows the inclusion of mobility both on the level of shorter and longer distances.

Regarding the approaches of previous works, runic voyage inscriptions have mostly been treated as limited, and yet as concrete historical documentation. Depending on research orientation, they are often interpreted using the background of various historical and social phenomena. This is a logical step – the inscriptions dating from the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages most certainly function as authentic records of that period. On the other hand, it still has to be questioned how much quantitative, statistical value one may attribute to such evidence. In this connection the studies carried out for example by Hübler and Jesch form a welcome exception, since they also demonstrate an interest in the structure and semantic content of the inscriptions as such, which broadens our understanding of their cultural-historical significance from a qualitative perspective.

In this current study much consideration is given both to the narrative structure and content of the inscriptions, as well as to various visual, material and communicative features that modify their messages according to the analytical and methodological guidelines determined in subsection 2.2.. Runic inscriptions are formulated and designed in a particular manner, and they are found on visually and physically impressive monuments that reflect the cultural landscape of the past. In this manner, the Baltic traffic inscriptions should also be recognised as complex modes of expression – and treated as such even when our primary interests concentrate upon their verbal practices of recording and representing contacts within the Baltic region. In the case of runic inscriptions, the verbal dimension is inevitably linked to the layout and the general imagery of the carving, as well as to the monument as a whole. This will be demonstrated during the analysis in chapter III.

III ANALYSIS OF BALTIC TRAFFIC INSCRIPTIONS

3.1. Individual inscriptions

The first and the most voluminous part of the analysis concentrates in part on the study of 64 individual inscriptions, identified as belonging to the group of Baltic traffic inscriptions. The various interrelated features of a given inscription will be examined according to the methodological model defined in 2.2.3., with the purpose of developing an understanding of both its textual and broader communicative meaning – as opposed to a treatment that has the inscriptions serve only a particular linguistic/stylistic goal of study. In order to gain a better basis for critical judgement, even questionable references to Baltic traffic will be presented in accordance with the same principles, along with a clarification of what different interpretations that have been offered.[130] On the other hand, it should be specifically pointed out that even if the major focus lies on the in-depth study of the individualised value of the inscriptions, parallels will be constantly drawn to complementary runic evidence.

The next section relates the analysed Baltic traffic inscriptions more explicitly to each other by offering a summary of observed patterns and characteristic features, as well as of variation. General conclusions will be reached with regard to the structure, content, purpose and significance of the inscriptions when viewed collectively.

In the final part of the analysis, the Baltic traffic inscriptions are set more systematically against the background of the complexity of the runic tradition, with an emphasis on additional evidence from groups of inscriptions that in one way or another deal with matters of travel and communication (cf. 2.3.2.). The discussion around runic inscriptions as a particular mode of expression, will be continued in the concluding chapter V.

There are different possibilities for presenting the individual inscriptions. For one, they could be ordered regionally according to their provenience. Alternatively, one could compose small groups of inscriptions based upon the recorded destinations and/or ethnic references, starting with the regions/places that appear most popular. Another possibility is to apply an administrative and structural perspective and operate with subdivisions of runic references that concern: countries and main provinces or "lands"; various minor mainland and maritime regional units; and more limited localities.

The summarising section of the analysis will to a certain degree return to such considerations, but in this current subsection we have chosen to undertake a geographically motivated roundtrip, in as far as the material allows this, and thus have the recorded destinations form a kind of circle around the Baltic Sea and its catchment areas. That is to say, the starting point is the very western zone of the Baltic drainage basin, with Denmark and various Danish destinations as the touchstones; we then move to the east along the sea and parallelly through mainland Sweden, reaching the Baltic focal point – the island of Gotland. From the area of present-day Finland we reach out to the northwestern parts of Russia, then turn back and focus on the territories of present-day Baltic countries. Finally, moving along the southeastern and southern coasts of the Baltic Sea, we arrive in northern Germany. Naturally,

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[130] With certain inscriptions, it has to be argued in detail why they are <u>not</u> included in the primary analysis group.

the described route is not always an even and logical movement from one geographically established point to another – along the way we have to deal with multiple references occurring within one inscription, as well as certain place name ambiguities that allow different localisations. Such cases require a separate focus, as do a few inscriptions that may witness of Baltic traffic in a more unique manner, without referring to concrete destinations. However, in general it is justified to follow the above-mentioned path, since it reaches in a clear manner throughout the whole Baltic region and helps us to grasp the unfolding runic narrative imagery connected to mobility within this area.

The following formalities should be explained before we set out on our Baltic journey. In order to achieve a more orderly structure of analysis we have found it necessary – when moving our perspective from one region to another – to firstly present runic references that at least seem to connect with bigger (possibly unified) areas, and then focus on their mention of smaller districts and localities.[131] At the start of the discussion, relevant examples that concern a particular zone/place of study are listed, providing the runic signature and the corresponding reference in transliterated form. When recorded more than once, we also take into consideration frequency, and start with those designations that are more common in the preserved material.

The analysis presented in the current chapter has to be combined with systematised information provided in appendix III that comprises essential data on the runic mediums, their visual/typological and material features as well as the full texts. Certain features may be highlighted during the analysis, but mostly they belong to the background understanding of the runic material.

It is marked both in appendix III and in the analysis when the runic medium is lost, or when the state of the inscription is severely fragmentary so that its complete textual meaning cannot be restored. In the first case, the runic signature is complemented with a cross †; in the latter with the letter 'F'. When the recorded reference is of questionable character or may be interpreted alternatively, a question mark is placed in the brackets (?).[132] As for the provenience of rune stones, in the current subsection only the particular find site will be given, according to the corpus editions and SRD, combined with considerations about the characteristic features of the general district.[133]

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[131] This principle cannot be applied exclusively, since not all references relate to each other on such a regional scale; a certain amount of flexibility is needed with regard to individual and more unique formulations.

[132] It should be noted that † is applied with lost inscriptions throughout the thesis, whereas F and (?) are only used when first presenting corresponding inscriptions.

[133] More detailed information on the administrative division of runic material into parishes and counties/landscapes can be found in SRD. General regional perspectives will be commented upon in 3.2.3.

3.1.1. Danmǫrk[134]

Öl 1	i · tanmarku
Sö FV1948;289	-țan…-k̦u
U 699	a t[an]m̦arku
U 896 (?)	i tai·ma…
N 239	o : țonm̦arku

Karlevi stone, Öl 1

The Karlevi stone is in many respects the most remarkable rune stone on the island of Öland. The stone still stands on its original site – on a field on the western coast of Öland, off the sound of Kalmarsund. The distance from the sea is ca. 370 steps (ÖlR: 16). The stone is commonly dated to the late 10th century.[135] The shape of the runic monument is almost rectangular, but at the same time its carved sides and top are rounded, giving the inscription an image of running along a rotund.

The inscription occupies nine vertical lines, and the reading direction changes between bottom-top and top-bottom (i.e. boustrophedon).[136] The inscription is partly damaged in places where the stone has weathered down or lacks a piece; most of the long formulation is nevertheless well preserved and clear, and even the damaged parts allow for certain reconstruction.

According to the traditional description, the inscription falls into two distinct parts: the commemorative formulation in prose, and a rather unique addition in verse.[137] The Karlevi stone contains the only example of a complex skaldic stanza – following the elaborate *dróttkvætt* metre – preserved on a Viking Age rune stone. In this way it functions both as a runic and a skaldic memorial.[138]

The carver has marked the starting points of both parts by placing small cross-like marks at the bottom of the stone in front of corresponding lines. From the structural point of view the prose formulation functions as the main memorial formula (hereafter MMF) – although it demonstrates a scheme of composition different from what is typically seen, since it starts by mentioning the object (i.e. the stone) instead of the noun (the commissioners).[139] The part in skaldic verse is a unique, expressive addition, honouring the deceased and his memorable features, while at the same time signifying the meaning of the monument and the act of commemoration. Into the second half of the stanza, a reference to Denmark has been

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[134] Note that in the titles of subsections, the place names will be used in normalised ON (in the form customary for runic inscriptions), whereas during the actual discussion they can also occur in RS or RD when quoting inscriptions.

[135] Cf. ÖlR (pp. 28-29); SRD.

[136] The term 'boustrophedon' originates from Greek; the meaning is "the way an ox ploughs", i.e. the direction alternates from one surrow to another.

[137] On the western side of the stone there is also a short inscription with capital roman letters and cross-marks: +INONIN... (or ...NINONI+, if we take the cross to mark the end of the line), and ...EH+. This may be contemporary with the runic inscription; however, similarities in carving technique do not exclude the possibility of later imitation and re-use of the monument for particular purposes.

[138] For comments concerning the formal features of skaldic poetry, see chapter IV.

[139] In RS *S[t]æ[inn] [sa]s[i] es sattr æftiR Sibba Goða, sun Fuldars, en hans liði satti at...* A reconstructed version of the whole prose formulation, as translated into English, could be: "This stone is placed in memory of Sibbi the Good, Foldarr's son, and his retainer placed on Öland this memorial to honour the dead" (Jesch 2001: 2). See also DRI (columns 475-476), with the identification of the assumed name of Sibbi's retainer. In SRD no ending is provided for this part of the formulation.

incorporated as an identification of the domain of rule, with a parallel reference to Endill's (i.e. the sea god's mighty dominion).

While reading and interpreting this inscription, scholars have ordered the two parts differently. In ÖIR the verse is placed first (part A), followed by the prose lines (part B). The usual practice is to cite the inscription as starting with the prose formulation – which is more in accordance with the typical memorial formula. But when looking at the layout of the inscription on the stone, we see that the two lines that introduce the prose and the poetic formulation, respectively, are actually adjoining (placed on the right-hand corner of the northern side). These two lines stand out – and not only because of the initial cross-marks – since they are the only adjoining lines in the inscription as a whole where the reading direction is the same, i.e. from bottom to top. Also, content-wise they make up a certain focal point: the prose line informs that the stone has been set up after Sibbi, whereas the verse line introduces the observation that he lies hidden.
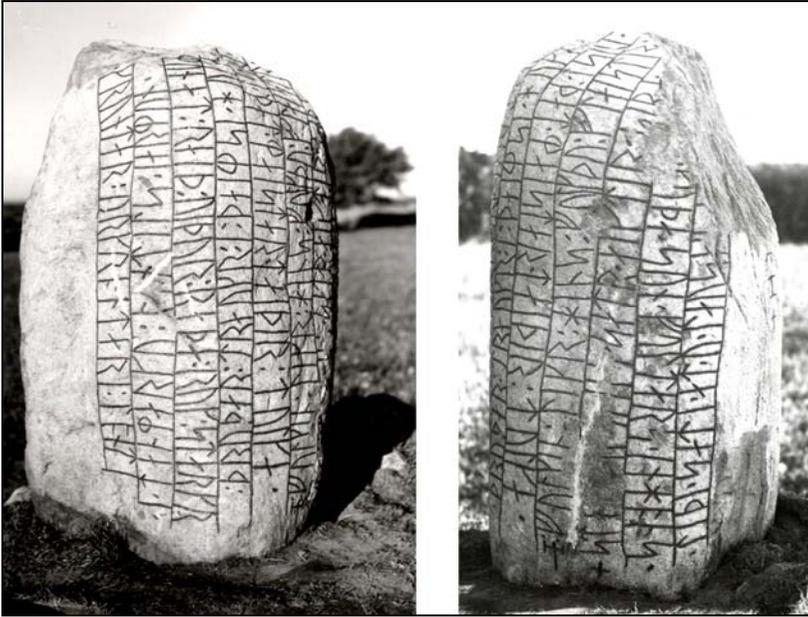
Figure 3. Karlevi stone (Öl 1). Photo: Runverket, RAÄ.

From that focal point on, the prose formulation covers three lines to the right (i.e. to the west), and the poetic formulation leads six lines to the left (covering the northern and some of the eastern side of the stone). In a way, the inscription does seem to contain two separate paragraphs.[140] However, judging from the actual layout it is not possible to claim with certainty in which order the parts were meant to be experienced. The design of adjoining vertical lines and the rounded image of the monument leave us rather with the impression of a coherent

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[140] According to one principle of boustrophedon, the end of one paragraph and the beginning of the next one should head in the same direction. On the Karlevi stone, the parallel text bands indeed separate the two main parts of the inscription.

whole, where the inner starting points are given but where the order of information in its traditional and strict sense is not determined (at least not visually).

Such a visual image of continuity is further strengthened by the use of syntactically complex and inflected skaldic verse, where the meaning cannot be automatically deduced from the actual order of the elements. At the same time, the Karlevi monument is a particular case, because the understanding of the inscription is further connected to the practice of alternating reading order. Obviously it is easier to grasp the three vertical lines that constitute the prose formulation – which could have therefore been experienced as the introduction – than the six lines of verse.[141]

Another influential factor would have to be the actual position of the stone with regard to which part of the carving a potential reader was assumed to approach first. Unfortunately, it is not certain that the Karlevi stone is still placed in the exact same way as it originally was; it is known from its earlier history that on several occasions the stone was found fallen over and had to be raised again (ÖIR: 16-18). Provided that the current placement is indeed the original, and taking into account the fact that the stone was set up close to the sea, at some distance from settlements, certain emphasis may be given to the following observation: when approaching from the sea one would immediately pay attention to the western side of the stone, and probably first of all notice the end line of the prose formulation, starting with the statement **liþi · sati · at · u**, *liði satti at øy*. To use the translation given by Jesch (see above), this means: "a retainer placed on Öland"; *øy* with the meaning 'island' is thus taken to denote Öland (Jesch 2001: 114; NRL). If we are correct in our previous assumptions, then the communicative context around this short phrase in itself signals the sea-related content of the inscription, while at the same time identifying the setting and determining the memorial function of the monument. On the other hand, the placement of the stone was probably also connected to an old road leading down to the sea – which could bring even other aspects of its message into the focus.[142] As for the semantics of the ON word *liði*, Jesch explains that it is a derivate of *lið*, and marks a member of the *lið*. According to her the word is found in the same form in U 479, there as part of the carver signature. In the context of the Karlevi stone, Jesch understands *liði* as "a member of the shipborne troop led by Sibbi" (op. cit. 201).

This has brought us closer to the broader historical-communicative significance of the inscription. As a whole the inscription on the Karlevi stone serves as a memorial for a certain Sibbi Góði/Goði, son of Foldarr.[143] Through the expressive and figurative verse account, Sibbi is characterised as a captain and a warrior. It is also stated that he lies buried in a mound; the memorial thus consisted of at least two monuments: a rune stone and a mound. Judging from early antiquarian records, a burial mound did belong to the site. The oldest records even refer to two mounds, and the rune stone is said to have stood in between those (cf. ÖIR: 16-18).[144] People who arranged the memorial for Sibbi belonged to his troop, explicitly referred to on the rune stone.

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[141] On the other hand, for an accustomed person the enterprise of reading (or inscribing) lines that head in opposite directions becomes time-saving, because one does not have to turn back to the starting point when reaching the end of the line.

[142] The apparent limitations do not allow us to study the original cultural landscape around the monument; see also the following discussion concerning the burial mound(s).

[143] It has been discussed whether the runic word **kuþa** should be understood as referring to Sibbi the Good or the noun *goði*, which would mean a priest and/or a chieftain.

[144] This adds further nuances to the understanding of the landscape around the monument.

On the basis of the recorded information and the context around the monument, one may suggest that Sibbi and his men were not local. Rather, they were seafarers who on their way through Kalmarsund landed on Öland – probably in connection with the death of Sibbi. Since Sibbi is said to have ruled land in Denmark, it seems logical to assume that he himself was Danish.[145] However, that understanding of the inscription is complicated by several factors. For one, we cannot be sure what the denotion *Danmǫrk* meant in its contemporary context. The reference to Denmark marks neither a destination nor a death place but focuses more on the origin of the deceased; it forms a kind of label for Sibbi's spacial dominion. Also, this identification belongs to the poetic formulation, where it at the same time fulfils functions in relation to the skaldic metre and rhyme. But what could it more precisely signal?

During the Viking Age the Danish kingdom grew stronger and extended its domination in Scandinavia, including the surrounding coastlands (i.e. southern parts of Sweden and Norway); the end of the tenth century marked a renewal of this Danish power.[146] Some scholars have therefore been inclined to consider Öland as also part of the Danish rule, and in this light determined Sibbi as a local chieftain.[147] Strid (1991: 46) claims that even if the Karlevi inscription refers to Denmark in the modern sense, this does not automatically mean that Sibbi himself was Danish. Strid regards place names such as Karlevi and Eriksöre, which are known from the surrounding area, to be evidence of the cultural-historical significance of the region; he concludes that it was no accident that the rune stone commemorating a chieftain was placed at that particular spot (ibid.).

Secondly, while certain linguistic features in the inscription point in the direction of East Norse influences, there are others that witness of West Norse impact. The occurrence of the skaldic verse in *dróttkvætt* metre and its specific figurative language are significant moments, although it is, of course, possible that Danes and Swedes also mastered the skaldic art. Several scholars have favoured the idea of the rune carver being either a Norwegian or an Icelander. The inscription may have been carved by a Norwegian skald who belonged to the retinue of a Danish chieftain (ÖIR: 27, 30-34). Or perhaps he was even an Icelandic skald who took up the custom of rune carving during his stay in Denmark and Sweden (DRI: 473). In the meantime, Jesch (2001: 6) offers an alternative explanation by emphasising that the rune carver and the skald could easily have been two different persons.

On the other hand, it does not really matter whether Sibbi himself was Danish or not, and whether the rune carver and the skald was/were of Norwegian or Icelandic descent – the Karlevi stone does in any case stand out as an interesting cultural mixture. The position of the monument as well as the textual content mediate that a seafaring chieftain is commemorated by his men; they were travellers, no matter whether they came from near or far. From Öland there is a short journey across the sea to the mainland southern Swedish landscapes of Blekinge and Skåne. It is possible that Sibbi or at least some of his men came from southern parts of Sweden (which were under Danish dominion); although at the same time it has been pointed out that "the rune-forms and the style of the inscription are closest to those of

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[145] In ÖIR (34-35) it is even suggested that Sibbi and his men participated in the battle of *Fýrisvellir*. Two Danish runic inscriptions, DR 279 and DR 295, have sometimes been associated with this potentially historical battle (cf. 3.1.13). Needless to say, there is no obvious reason to link Öl 1 to such evidence.

[146] The well-known inscription on the great Jelling stone (DR 42) can serve as an illustration of this; the stone is commissioned by Haraldr Gormsson, who is said to have won himself all of Denmark and Norway and made the Danes Christians. The inscription is usually dated to ca. 965/970 or to the 980s. Cf. also below.

[147] For an early example of a corresponding interpretation by C.C. Rafn (1856), see ÖIR (p. 27).

Denmark proper, rather than those of the 'Danish' areas of southern Sweden" (Jesch 2001: 2).

It remains a fact that the people who commissioned the Karlevi monument did for some reason find it necessary to mention Denmark in the poetical part of the inscription. In the context of the carving, **tanmarku** appears in the second last line to the left. The words that surround it in the adjoining lines are **ruk:starkr** (hard-fighting) on the right, and **lonti** (land) on the left. But the general narrative context around the place name tells us of the god of the sea and his wide and mighty grounds, i.e. seawaters – that is to say, the statement of Sibbi ruling land in Denmark is connected with the imagery of the sea. We do not know where the maritime "border" between the Danish dominion and the island of Öland (or for that matter, the rest of Sweden) may have run in the understanding and imagination of the people behind the inscription. It is also a possibility that the reference to Denmark simply underlines that Sibbi died while at sea, perhaps in what were regarded as the Danish waters. The mixture of skaldic and runic practices witnessed on the Karlevi stone leaves us with the impression of a unique monument that expressed its message in several parallel ways.

Aspa stone, Sö FV1948;289

The rune stone is now raised by the Aspa bridge.[148] Originally the stone was probably standing by an old assembly place (cf. S.B.F. Jansson 1948: 290). The monument measures almost two metres, but in parts it is weathered down. The inscription fills four vertical text bands that are made up of two serpents, the bodies of which are tied together on the top by a knot so that they appear to form two arches. In this manner the outer arch begins and terminates with two serpent heads, whereas the inner arch is composed of their tails.

The inscription is relatively long and well designed, although we notice that the final **u**-rune and the end mark have not fitted into the runic band and are thus left outside. MMF runs along the outer serpent arch from left to right, whereas supplements are placed into the inner arch that follows the same direction. The overall visual impression is that of a significant monument, meant to impress both through content and its visual display.

The memorial formula relates that a woman called Ástríðr had the monuments made after two men – Ǫnundr and Ragnvaldr; the latter is further determined as her son. The additions about the deceased are formed poetically, with alliterating words; i.e. **urþu : ta...ʀ : - ṭan...-...ḳu : ua-u : rikiʀ : o rauniki : ak : snialastiʀ : i : suiþiuþu**. Both men are said to have died in Denmark, and then described through phrases that contain local and regional references claiming that they were powerful in *Rauningi* and the ablest in *Svíþjóð*.[149]

The runic inscription thus combines references to a local district, a native region, and an area that was located further away. This underlines the prominence of the commemorated men, who must have been active in different arenas. At the same time the formulation – as well as the monument's assumed position at the assembly place – witnesses of the status and wealth of the family of Ástríðr, which was in the position to make such public statements.

The local place name *Rauningi* has been connected with the district of Rönö and the parish of Runtuna (cf. S.B.F. Jansson 1948: 290, with reference to Hellberg). In the inscription it is expressed in parallel terms with the area of *Svíþjóð* (i.e central Sweden), hence *Rauningi* probably designates an old regional unit of Södermanland, considered a part of what was

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[148] The stone was found during the reconstruction work done on the bridge.
[149] Hübler (1996: 89) points out that the alliterating word pair *dauðr/dauðiR – Danmarku* is also found in U 699 and U 896, see below.

known as the Sweden of those days.[150] The use of designations such as *Rauningi* and *Svíþjóð* reflects what kind of regional units the local people identified themselves with – as opposed to the area of Denmark where the two men died. Combined with the phrases *vaRu rikiR* and *ok sniallastiR* the recording of the place names gets, in the meantime, an even more expressive meaning attached to it.

Figure 4. Aspa stone (Sö FV1948;289). Photo: Runverket, RAÄ.

Examining the communicative setting around the inscription, it should be mentioned that Aspa – which is also known for its other rune stones (Sö 136†, Sö 137, Sö 138, as well as the Löta stone Sö 141) – lies close to the famous medieval route of Eriksgata.[151] In this light the location of the rune stones at Aspa is no coincidence; they connected with an early type of central place – as also demonstrated by the nearby Tingshögen mound – and were

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[150] The name *Svíþjóð* is otherwise recorded in two Danish inscriptions, to which we shall return in 3.1.11.

[151] According to the Swedish medieval laws the newly elected king had to travel along that route to establish his authority (cf. Hasselberg in KLNM IV: 22). According to S. Brink, "the Eriksgatan road ran through the Provinces of Södermanland, Östergötland, Västergötland, Närke and Västmanland before it returned to its starting-point in the central part of the Province of Uppland" (2000: 64, see also pp. 52-55).

surrounded by important communication routes that promoted both local and regional traffic and provided easy lake and river passage to the Baltic Sea.[152]

On another Aspa rune stone, Sö 137, a certain Þóra commemorates her dead husband, who is said to have armed his men in the west. The position of that latter stone on the local assembly place is emphasised: **stain : saʀːsi : stanr : at : ybi : o þik·staþi**. On the equally significant Sö 138 – where the inscription begins within a serpent arch and concludes along an inner arch of freestanding runes – the placement and the meaning of the stone monument are underlined by an introductory statement, similarly in the present tense: **hiar : stainr : stin : at**.

The whole district of Rönö – particularly the parishes of Lid, Ludgo, Bogsta and Runtuna – abounds with rune stones, and several among those refer to travelling destinations. We shall return to other examples of Baltic traffic, such as Sö 130, Sö 148, Sö 166 and Sö 171.

Amnö stone, U 699

The Amnö rune stone is now placed at Ekholmen park; according to the earliest records the stone was raised on a field at Amnö (UR III: 219). In its present state the stone is damaged and is missing both its upper and lower parts; the inscription is not complete but can be supplemented on the basis of extant drawings. Those correspond in general well with the preserved parts of the stone, and can be considered trustworthy.[153]

The whole inner surface of the stone is covered with ornamentation, and judging from the drawing (cf. UR III: 220) the top carried a cross (this is not visible at present). Although the part that contained the carver signature is not preserved, the records tell that it was Balli – an attribution confirmed by Stille (1999: 158). This would suggest a date around the second half of the 11th century.[154]

The inscription runs along the text band framing the stone, and continues inside the frame. The beginning of the inscription has not been preserved, but apparently it started by the lower left-hand corner, running horizontally to the right, then vertically up on the right side, around the top, and downwards on the left side of the monument (which is almost fully preserved) – concluding within the intertwined inner runic serpents. The name of the commissioner (Ingileif) thus gains the low horizontal position at the bottom of the stone, whereas the name of the deceased (Brúni) and the information about the family relationship run along the top.[155] Denmark is named as the place of death, but this is not all – what the inscription tells us is that the man died **i huita·uaþum**.

From the structural point of view MMF informs that a woman had the stone raised in memory of her husband, whereas additions provide a phrase telling of his death, plus a reference to the carver. In the meantime, with regard to the layout, we can distinguish

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[152] When emphasising existing river and lake communications around the monuments here and in the following, we have to face the obvious limitation that the descriptions are based upon modern geographical conditions. In the context of the Viking Age and the Middle Ages, the system of water courses naturally differed from what we experience today, partly due to changes in water level. As will be pointed out below (for example in connection with the district of Vallentuna in Uppland), some of the bigger coastal lakes might even have been bays with direct access to the sea. Nevertheless, in many cases the described waterways fit into the setting of historically known travelling routes (cf. for example the maps provided in UR).

[153] The stone had long been used in a fireplace; it was found in two pieces in the above-mentioned park, and it was repaired and raised again in 1945 (UR III: 219).

[154] For a discussion of Balli's carvings, see Stille (1999: 158-159, 200-204). The style group is PR3, ca. 1050-1080 (for a description of the style, see e.g. Gräslund 1998: 79-81).

[155] Information on the frequency of different personal names can be found in NRL.

between the information inside the main frame band (commemorative formula + place of death) and additions within the inner serpents (expression *i hvitavaðum* + carver signature).

The expression *i hvitavaðum* has been interpreted as "in christening robes", designating the white clothes that a person wore during the act of baptism and for some time after that.[156] The inscription does not only tell us about a man from the Fjädrundaland region who died away from home in Denmark, but also focuses on another significant event, i.e. his conversion to the Christian religion. There are six other Upplandic inscriptions that contain the same formulation.[157] The usual explanation is that the indication to conversion is made while the person was already on his death bed, an event that had to be marked separately in the inscription (cf. UR I: 408). While in most cases corresponding inscriptions commemorate one person, in the lost U 243† two brothers are said to have died in christening robes (in as far as we can trust the evidence of old records and drawings).[158] Death in christening robes does not have to literally mean conversion on the death bed; it is, for example, possible that the two brothers mentioned in U 243† had been recently baptised, and then found their death on some unfortunate occasion. In this case *i hvitavaðum* is more of a symbolic reference to the fact that they had died as Christians. Unfortunately, we are in no position to establish the actual emotional-symbolic and/or pragmatic reasons behind the choice of such formulation, except for admitting its obvious significance. In case of the Amnö stone, this aspect is further demonstrated by the placement of the corresponding phrase on the middle of the stone under the cross mark.

As for the reference to Denmark, on the one hand there is reason to believe that one has meant Denmark proper, where Christianity had by that time been well established due to central initiatives. On the other hand – considering the date of the rune stone from the second half of the 11th century –, it is possible that Brúni did not have to travel all the way to the heart of the Danish kingdom in order to become a Christian. This may have occurred somewhere in the Danish areas of southern Sweden, where the processes of Christianisation required less time than in Uppland. Alternatively, Brúni could even have accepted the new religion while at home, and only later travelled to Denmark, where he died. The so-called narrative grasp of the rune stone commissioner/carver could easily combine these two important events in the frames of one commemorative inscription. However, since the expression of dying in christening robes in Denmark appears also on another rune stone, U 896, there is more reason to connect the conversion with the actual enterprise of travelling. The location of the Amnö stone in the district of Trögd on Lake Mälaren (cf. also U 698†, 3.1.25.) confirms that important water routes leading out to the Baltic Sea were within easy reach – and from there one could head both to the southern parts of Sweden and/or to Denmark proper.

What can be concluded from the statement on the Amnö stone is that the news of Brúni's death – after or during his conversion – reached his family at home, and resulted in raising a rune stone. Again we are left with the problem that it is hard to establish which part of the

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[156] Further discussion around the meaning of the expression is presented in UR (I: 406-409).

[157] U 243†, U 364, U 613, U 896, U 1036 and U FV1973;194. U 896 probably also refers to Denmark, see below. Two other inscriptions – U 1003 and U FV1988;243 – have sometimes been assumed to include the word *hvitavaðum*, but there are not enough grounds to support that.

[158] In the case of U FV1973;194 only parts of the inscription have been established (the stone is built into the Uppsala Dome church), and it is therefore not completely certain whether it commemorates one person or several. Svärdström and Gustavson (1973: 194) have suggested that a place name has to follow the preserved preposition *i*; in fact, they find it likely that whenever the deceased is said to have died in christening robes, this would have happened abroad.

early medieval Denmark the people may have had in mind.[159] Nevertheless, the use of the label in itself witnesses that at least for some people from Fjädrundaland it was a destination that made sense and deserved to be pointed out – here linked with the act of conversion.

Håga stone, U 896

A parallel example to the Amnö stone is a rune stone that originally was situated at a farm in Håga, but was moved to Uppsala at the beginning of the 18th century.[160] The lower part of this tall and slim monument is missing, and as a result part of the text is lost. The stone shows some ornamentation that comprises two big crosses and an additional smaller cross-mark. The carver signature mentions the name Œpir, but the stone does not leave the impression of having been carved by that famous carver. The exact 'carvership' as well as the date of the monument remain uncertain.[161]

Figure 5. Håga stone (U 896). Photo: Kristel Zilmer.

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[159] However, as will be pointed out in the concluding discussion (5.1.) the comparative evidence of skaldic and saga references suggests that in recording travelling destinations distinctions were being made between Denmark proper and the districts of southern Sweden.

[160] The stone is now placed in Uppsala University Park.

[161] The formula **riþ runaR ubiR** is not a typical carver signature; it says that Œpir arranged the runes – i.e. he functioned as an adviser to the actual carver. This opinion is expressed by Åhlén, who finds that U 896 and U 940 (the latter demonstrates an identical carver formula) "were not inscribed by Öpir but rather by someone else who benefited from his advice" (Åhlén 1997: 220). Williams (1990: 165-166) suggests that U 896 and U 940 were carved during a later phase in Œpir's career, when he had gained enough authority to perform as a consultant. Stille (1999: 136) does not agree with seeing Œpir as an adviser; according to him, U 896 and U 940 represent an earlier style version that points to the first half of the century. Œpir's productive phase is usually determined to fall into ca. 1070-1100.

The inscription shows the design of an arch band (probably a runic serpent) running vertically up from the bottom left corner, rounding the top, and coming down on the right. There is also an additional text band placed on the mid-left part of the stone, adjoining the arch band.

Due to its fragmentary condition, the inscription has caused certain interpretation problems. The structural pattern of the text is nevertheless clear: MMF with two additions. Memorial formula and the first addition that concerns the deceased fill the arch band. The second addition is the carver signature, which is placed inside the additional text band and therefore forms an obvious supplement to the main information.

The names of the commissioners are not preserved – but there must have been at least two of them, as indicated by the verb *letu*. Since the deceased is characterised as someone's son, it is likely that these were his parents (UR II: 609). The name of the deceased and information about his relationship with the sponsors cover the upper part of the monument.[162] What makes the memorial formula somewhat different is the expression **fir · ont**, *fyr and*. Instead of using the usual prepositional phrase 'after Y', it is explicitly stated that the stone has been raised for the spirit of the deceased, thus emphasising the Christian content of the message.[163]

On the right-hand side of the monument, information about death in christening robes and an identification of a possible locality are presented. We notice that here the expression *dauðr [i] hvitavaðum* precedes the place name. It can be considered likely that the reference is again made to Denmark. The runes preserved on the rune stone are: ᛁ ᛏ ᚨ ᛁ, followed by what seems to be ᛘ and finally ᚨ, although the side branch of the last **a**-rune is not clearly visible; thus the word is **i tai · ma…**.

If this is the case, the Håga stone witnesses of a situation similar to the one depicted on the Amnö stone, although the deaths of these two persons – the former coming from Tiundaland, the latter from Fjädrundaland – were probably caused by different reasons. It is further characteristic that both monuments demonstrate explicit features of Christianity.

As for the assumed original setting around the Håga stone, its closeness to the communication routes along the river Hågaån should be mentioned.[164]

Stangeland stone, N 239

Our final example of Denmark as an identified destination of traffic – or more precisely, a place of death – comes from the Norwegian province of Rogaland.[165] Originally the stone stood on a field by a local farm, and later it was in use as a bridge stone (NIyR III: 201). The inscription has therefore suffered some damage and has to be supplemented. The stone is unornamented, which is typologically considered to be a characteristic feature of older rune stones. It is considered likely that the inscription belongs to the late 10th century (see NIyR III:

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[162] The name is not fully preserved, but a suggested version is 'Eyndar'.

[163] The same expression is known from some inscriptions that tell of bridge construction; it occurs, for example, on Jarlabanki's self-honouring monuments (U 127, U 164, U 165, U 261) as well as on U 489 and U 947. Otherwise, references to one's spirit are common in prayer formulas.

[164] Larsson (1990: 143) also points out the connections with ancient grave sites and with a huge Bronze Age burial mound.

[165] As explained in chapter I, the evidence found in the Norwegian inscriptions has been included in the analysis, although corresponding rune stones are not physically located within the Baltic region.

207; Spurkland 2001: 107). That is to say, we may here find a reference that is more or less contemporary with the one on the Karlevi stone.

The inscription is designed to proceed in two vertical text bands. The text band on the right holds the first part of MMF: the name of the commissioner and the verbal phrase concerning the raised stone. The name of the deceased alongside additional information about his death in Denmark is placed to the left. The commissioner is identified as Þorbjǫrn skald – the by-name 'skald' may be referring to his position/profession as a poet.[166] Jesch (2001: 6) points out that it is not certain whether the runic word indeed meant 'poet' in the usual sense. At the same time, taking into consideration the West Norse background of the Stangeland monument, this interpretation cannot be excluded.

The name of the deceased is not completely established – its latter part is Þórir, but there must have been a byname preceding that (cf. NIyR III: 205; Spurkland 2001: 107). What we know for sure is that he, the son of Þorbjǫrn skald, found his death away from home: **is o ꞉ ṭonṃarku ꞉ fil**. The statement that he fell in Denmark – indicated by the verb *falla* – probably witnesses of his participation in a raid that had a military motivation. Considering the location of the rune stone in southwestern Norway, it is not completely certain whether the traveller entered the actual waters of the Baltic Sea – but his destination was most likely the heartland of the Danish kingdom.

<center>Additional remarks</center>

A few comparative examples should be mentioned, where 'Denmark' has to be considered a local reference (and as such not witnessing of traffic), since it occurs on rune stones that originate from Denmark. Three runic inscriptions from Nørrejylland refer in their own way to Denmark: DR 41, DR 42 and DR 133.[167]

DR 42, the great Jelling stone, is raised by king Haraldr Gormsson in memory of his father Gormr and mother Þyrvé; Haraldr claims to have won for himself all of Denmark and Norway (**soᴙ · uan · tanmaurk ala · auk nuruiak**), and made the Danes Christian. The date of the stone is ca. 965-970 (alternatively the 980s). DR 41, the smaller Jelling stone, predates Haraldr's stone, being sponsored by his father Gormr and commemorating the latter's wife Þyrvé, who is characterised as Denmark's adornment, **tanmarkaᴙ ÷ but**.[168] In these two inscriptions, the label 'Denmark' is being used while emphasising the status and the power of the Danish royal family. The two Jelling stones form part of a whole monumental complex. On the one hand, they function as explicitly historical documents. At the same time they demonstrate impressive visual features – this applies particularly to the great Jelling stone. Its three carved sides demonstrate unique decorative images, and a carefully designed inscription that consists of horizontal text bands.[169]

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[166] The same byname appears in some Swedish runic inscriptions, e.g. Vg 4 (as commissioner); U 29 and U 532 (as carver, also called Þorbjǫrn); U 951 (as carver). To that we can add U 916, where it is hard to determine whether Skald is a byname or the actual first name. In U 1107 and N A325 we encounter the name Skaldi/Skáldi, which according to NRL is derived from the word *skald*.

[167] In addition we could mention the Latin inscription on a coin (DR M90) dated to ca. 1065-75, which uses the expression *Sven rex danorum* (Sveinn, King of the Danes).

[168] In SRD translated as "Denmark's salvation".

[169] The Jelling stones cannot be studied in detail here; due to their unique monumental nature they have already received much-deserved attention in a number of sources. For an analysis that focuses on the monumental complex, see e.g. Roesdahl (1989; 1992: 162-168); for a further analysis of the various aspects of the Jelling stones, see e.g. Moltke (1971; 1985a: 202-220).

DR 133, the Skivum stone, tells of a mother and two sons who together raised a stone in memory of a man said to have been the most prominent among the landholders in Denmark: **hon : uas : lǫnt:mono : baistr : i : ton¶marku : auk : furstr**. The inscription is roughly contemporary with DR 42. Similarly to the previous examples the use of the place name Denmark signals status and possessions.

3.1.2. Jótland

U 539	ɑ × iutḷati

Rune stone from Husby-Sjuhundra church, U 539

U 539 now stands by the southwestern corner of the Husby-Sjuhundra church. Its original location is unknown; it was found in the church in the 18th century (UR II: 419). From the same church, U 540, an inscription commemorating a man who died in Byzantium (*a Grikklandi*), is also known, which reveals the broader scale of travelling undertaken by men who probably came from the same district.[170]

The monument is tall and slim, and has an almost quadrangular shape. The inscription appears on three sides, and has the design of arch bands that run from right to left. In this way the sides have an almost uniform appearance, except for side B, which also carries a cross on the top.

MMF is rather long, since it contains the names of five commissioners, all of who are brothers. Their names and the verbal phrase designating the act of commissioning the monument are found on side A. The memorial formula continues on side B, which mentions the monument marker, the name of the dead brother, and then introduces further information about his death with an identification of the death place. Since this side bears the cross, it has been suggested that it could have functioned as the front side of the monument (UR II: 421). In any case, we see that the dead brother is put into focus. On side C further supplements concerning the deceased are found, alongside a long prayer where God and God's mother are asked to help his spirit better than he deserved.

Five men have thus arranged the monument after their dead brother Sveinn – and the importance of the circumstances around his death are emphasised both through the design of the monument as well as the formulation that starts on side B: **saʀ x uarþ x tuþr ɑ iutḷati x on skulti**, and continues on side C: **fara x til x iklanþs**.

The Danish landscape of Jylland is the place where Sveinn found his death. In the meantime, that area is determined only as a temporary station. According to the actual statement, Sveinn was supposed to travel to England. With the inscription commemorating a man who died on his way to England, the expression of Baltic traffic – in this case demonstrating mobility from the region of Attundaland to the heart of Denmark – is placed into the context of further travels to the west.[171]

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[170] According to Åhlén (1992: 48), four other rune stones and more than 20 fragments have been found at the church.

[171] Evidence of travels to England are witnessed in the following runic inscriptions from Attundaland: U 194, U 240-U 241, U 343-U 344, U 616; see also subsection 3.3.3.

Figure 6. Rune stone from the Husby-Sjuhundra church (U 539), side C. Photo: Thomas Carlson & Gunnar Nordin 2005. Runebru.se. Uppsala, Sweden.

Taking into consideration the fact that king Knútr's (i.e. Knútr ríki) famous England campaign started out from Limfjord in Jylland, von Friesen (1913: 27-29) has included U 539 among the Knútr stones, dating it to ca. 1010-1020.[172] He has thus drawn parallels to the rune stones from Yttergärde (U 343-U 344) and the Väsby stone (U 194), which commemorate men who took Knútr's payments in England. Objectively, this remains only a hypothetical possibility, since many other raids and campaigns had England as a target. That very fact is even under-lined by references to two other payments, besides that of Knútr, recorded in the above-mentioned U 344 – interestingly enough this explicit evidence is mostly overlooked when discussing the historical importance of runic inscriptions.[173]

It is impossible to decide whether Sveinn was indeed a participant in the great campaign led by Knútr ríki, or whether his intentions were connected with some other enterprise – the rune stone only says that he travelled to Jylland with the aim of reaching England, but never

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[172] See also the discussion in UR (II: 421-422).

[173] U 344 tells of one Ulfr who took three payments in England: the first one Tosti's, the second one Þorketill's and the third one Knútr's. For an historical interpretation of these persons, see von Friesen (1909: 66-67, 71-73; 1913: 24-26). A rune stone from Lingsberg, U 241, refers to two payments taken in England, without specifying whose campaigns they were (see also 3.3.3).

made it there. The historical background of England voyages supports the view of Sveinn as a participant in a viking campaign.[174]

Another main Danish area, Sjælland, may be mentioned in the early Viking Age inscription on the famous Rök stone, Ög 136 (cf. NRL). The inscription is dated to the 9th century; its long, figurative and even mythological formulation includes the phrase: **huariʀ tuaiʀ tikiʀ kunukaʀ satin t siulunti fiakura uintur** ("which twenty kings sat on Sjólund for four winters").[175]

3.1.3. Heiðabýr

Sö 16F	i[hail]… …[iþaby]
U 1048	**i haiþaby**
DR 63F	**hiþabu**

Kattnäs stone, Sö 16

The original location of the rune stone from the Kattnäs churchyard is unknown.[176] The end of the inscription is preserved on what seems to have made up the lower part of the monument. The carving is designed as a version of an 8-shaped serpent.

The exact structure and components of MMF remain uncertain, but the extant part seems to contain the name of the deceased – which is either Auðin or Loðin. The name(s) of the commissioner(s) and the statement concerning the relationship with the deceased can no longer be identified. On the other hand, it is clear that the inscription contains supplementary information about the deceased: **han · unR · tauþr**; continued probably by an identification of his death place (this part is carved in reversed runes). The name has been interpreted as a reference to Hedeby (ON *Heiðabýr* or *Heiðabær*). The inscription ends with a prayer for the spirit of the deceased (also in reversed runes).

The inscription most likely records the death of a man who was at Hedeby, an important Viking Age locality in the southern border region of the Danish kingdom (outside present-day Schleswig).[177] The area around the Kattnäs church in central Södermanland is characterised by its several lakes: to the east lie Klämmingen (more precisely the part that is called Klövsta-fjärden), Frösjön and Sillen, which is connected with the Baltic Sea by the river Trosaån.[178]

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[174] U 539 could further be compared to Sö 166, which contains parallel references to England and Saxony, cf. 3.1.29.

[175] The Rök stone carries the longest preserved rune stone inscription. For commentaries, see e.g. S. Bugge (1878); S.B.F. Jansson (1984: 33-41); Gustavson (1991); Widmark (1992; 1997). Gustavson offers a different interpretation to **siulunti**, as a grove by Sya, a site that lies ca. 30 km east of Rök. A locality on Sjælland may be indicated by the runic reference **uti**, as appearing in Ög 81 (cf. 3.1.15.)

[176] The stone was probably taken out of the weapon house during the reparations in the 1870s (SöR: 11).

[177] One has attempted to connect the Kattnäs stone with historical battles at Hedeby, suggesting that the age of the rune stone points at two possible encounters towards the middle of the 11th century. See the following discussion.

[178] It is also of interest that to the northwest of Sö 16 (and west of Klämmingen) we find Sö 9, where two parents commemorate their son, who died with Ingvarr.

Rune stone from Björklinge church, U 1048

The rune stone U 1048 was found during reparation work on the Björklinge church; it is now placed at the southern church wall, where it stands in a row together with three other rune stones that have been moved there (UR IV: 310). The original site of the rune stone is not known; a suggested date for the inscription is the end of the 11th or even the beginning of the 12th century. The district around the Björklinge church has connections to Lake Langsjön and the river Björklingeån, which is a branch into the river Fyrisån. The latter has formed a historically important water route; in fact, around both rivers certain concentrations of rune stones can be noted.[179]

The inscription runs within a runic serpent arranged around the edges of the stone. The same serpent forms several circles in the inner surface of the stone, and inside one of these a cross is placed. The inscription is formulated briefly; the object (monument marker) has not been included in MMF. The addition concerning the deceased matches the laconic character of the formulation by its simple statement: **ṭo · i haiþaby**. As compensation for the limited content, the runes within the serpent have received wide spacing and run from the starting point on the lower left part of the stone to the slightly lowered end point on the right. The name of the deceased, Jǫrundr, is carved along the top, whereas the place name is positioned to the bottom right.

Figure 7. Rune stone from the Björklinge church (U 1048). Photo: Thomas Carlson & Gunnar Nordin 2005. Runebru.se. Uppsala, Sweden.

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[179] To the east of Langsjön lies the river Vendelån, which at Lena also flows together with the Fyrisån.

In this inscription, a mother commemorates her son – the reference to his death is made in neutral terms ('died in Hedeby'), without specifying the circumstances. It is therefore possible that the son did not suffer a violent death in some conflict, but died during a regular visit to this famous central place, known for its role in trade transit.

As for the actual localisation of **haiþaby**, this designation is in the context of U 1048 (and possibly in that of Sö 16) taken to indicate the trading place which by that time was functioning at the site of Schleswig (cf. UR IV: 310-311). During the 11th century Schleswig took over the important role of the older Hedeby (the settlement at the *Haddebyer Noor*, which was located a few kilometres away, south of the Schlei river), which had blossomed during the 9th and the 10th centuries. Regarding the growth of that original settlement, Marold (2003: 13) sees its importance in connecting the west and the east; that is to say, the site provided the "possibility of entering the Baltic Sea by crossing Jutland at the shortest possible distance instead of sailing the dangerous route around North Jutland".

The name 'Hedeby' appears in runic inscriptions as a blanket designation, which was in continuous use even when the focal point of the settlement was transferred from the southern shore of Schlei to the northern one.[180]

Århus I, DR 63

This rune stone was found from the arcade leading to the Frue church; for a while it went missing but was then rediscovered at the harbour (DRI: 100).[181]

The stone has been shaped into an ashlar, and therefore neither the original size of the monument nor the exact length and content of the inscription can be established. In its present state, the stone is unornamented.

The inscription runs in five vertical text bands, and the reading direction follows boustrophedon. The starting point is the leftmost line, where the inscription heads from the (assumed) bottom to the top. This line contains the runes **...ʀ : þigsla**, which according to Moltke (1985a: 197-198) make up the surname/byname "Thexle (a kind of axe)". The text is, unfortunately, very fragmentary; presumably it once contained a commemorative formula, which can no longer be reconstructed. The place name 'Hedeby' (**hiþabu**) is, in the meantime, clearly visible in the rightmost line (where the reading order is again bottom-top).

On the basis of the typical scheme for commemorative inscriptions, one may suggest that Hedeby identifies the death place of a man from northern Jylland. He may have been called Ámundi – this name appears in the middle text band (reading order bottom-top).[182]

Despite the lack of other content elements, we thus observe the name 'Hedeby' being recorded in one Danish inscription from the coastal region of Nørrejylland, which naturally had a lot of mutual traffic with Hedeby.

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[180] In other contexts both the names *Heiðabýr/Heiðabær* and *Slésvík* could be applied in alternation (UR IV: 311); see also analysis of saga evidence in chapter IV. For a discussion of the development of Hedeby and Schleswig as key ports of the Baltic trade, and the related historical and archaeological evidence, see Crumlin-Pedersen (1992, especially pp. 34-35). Marold (2003) has examined the varied linguistic and literary evidence that witnesses of the presence of different ethnic groups at Hedeby. She explains that the name **haiþaby** in Scandinavian tradition etymologically meant "a settlement on the heath" (op. cit. 15).

[181] The stone is now exhibited at the Moesgård museum.

[182] Interestingly enough, the fragmentary DR 63 at least demonstrates that proper names in this inscription were placed into those text bands that run from bottom to top – taken that this was the original position of the stone.

Figure 8. Rune stone exhibition at the Moesgård museum. In the centre stands DR 63, to the left DR 66 (cf. 3.1.31.). Photo: R. Dehlholm. Moesgård museum.

<div align="center">Additional remarks</div>

Two local references are made to Hedeby in the Danish inscriptions DR 1 (Haddeby I) and DR 3 (Haddeby III) from the district of southern Slesvig (i.e. Schleswig-Holstein).[183] These inscriptions are usually given as complementary evidence to the above-mentioned Sö 16, U 1048 and DR 63; although both SRI and DRI reach the conclusion that since DR 1 and DR 3 predate the others, they do not obviously concern the same historical event.[184]

   DR 1 was found fallen over between two burial mounds on a field close to Wedelspang.[185] DR 3 was lying on the foot of a mound by an old road south of Busdorf.[186] Both rune stones are unornamented; the inscriptions are designed in vertical text bands on two sides.

   The front side of DR 1 has three vertical bands; the reading direction is boustrophedon. The inscription heads up from the bottom of the middle band, comes down on the right and runs up again on the left. On side B three shorter vertical bands are placed into the top part, and below these we find separate lines of same-stave runes; the inscription comes down within the text band on the right, goes up in the middle, continues with same-stave runes, and

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[183] DR 1 and DR 3 do not belong to the primary analysis group, but we shall offer a detailed analysis of these inscriptions due to their general cultural-historical significance. Concerning other rune stones from the environs of Hedeby, the older DR 2 (Haddeby II) and DR 4 (Haddeby IV) should be mentioned – these monuments have been connected to the presumed joint Swedish-Danish dynasty. There is more about the latter two below (cf. 3.1.10).

[184] However, Moltke (1985a: 197-198) still links DR 63 to the same siege as recorded in DR 1 and DR 3. For critical comments, see Stoklund (1991: 292).

[185] The remains of the burials are not contemporary with the rune stone. Now the monument is located at a museum in Kiel (DRI: 7).

[186] The stone has been raised again on top of the mound, which may have been its original location (DRI: 10).

concludes within the left text band. It is the vertical text band on the middle of side B that contains a reference to Hedeby: **satu x um x haiþaxbu**.

With DR 3, most of the inscription is fitted into four vertical bands on the front side – it starts in the leftmost line and runs logically up and down across the whole surface. The fifth text band, with the information **uarþ : tauþr : at : hiþa : bu** is placed along the edge of the stone.

Structurally, DR 1 is made up of MMF that is extended with further information about the commissioner and additions concerning the deceased, which include a clarification of his death circumstances. DR 3 contains MMF and additions about the deceased. In the case of DR 1, a man determined as Sveinn's **himþigi** (retainer) has raised the stone in honour of his **filaga** (partner). In DR 3 the commissioner is in fact king Sveinn, and the commemoration concerns his own retainer. It is claimed that the corresponding references to Sveinn link the inscriptions together.[187] Indeed, both the personal name 'Sveinn' and the place name 'Hedeby' get repeated in the inscriptions, as do even certain occupational titles.[188]

It has been claimed that the men commemorated by the two rune stones found their death during a siege of Hedeby. Different alternatives have been offered with regard to identifying that particular king Sveinn, and the battle in which his men died. An earlier assumption also linked the inscriptions with an attack undertaken by Norwegians under the leadership of Harald harðráði around 1050 – this incident would, namely, fall under the reign of Sveinn Ástríðarson (cf. Jacobsen 1935a: 72-75).[189] According to another theory the inscriptions document the battle led by Sveinn tjúguskegg (Sveinn Haraldsson) against the German emperor Ottó II (around 982-983), after which Danish rule was re-established over the area of southern Slesvig (Moltke 1985a: 200). Even other campaigns by Sveinn tjúguskegg towards the end of the 10th century have been suggested (cf. DR: 8-9). [190]

Crumlin-Pedersen (1992) underlines that Hedeby must have experienced many attacks during its history. Finding support from excavated archaeological evidence – such as a burnt-down shipwreck – he reaches the conclusion that the "ship seems to indicate a serious attack on Hedeby around AD 1000 or within the first quarter of the 11th century" (Crumlin-Pedersen 1992: 32). This could also connect the battle with the reign of Sveinn tjúguskegg.

In the meantime, the actual textual statement in DR 3 – when relating the death of Sveinn's retainer – is merely "who then died at Hedeby". The inscription does not relate anything of the battle indicated by DR 1; the main focus may instead lie on the preceding formulation, which informs us that the deceased, called Skarði, had previously travelled to the west: **ias : uas :** **¶ : farin : uestr**. The reference to death at Hedeby (i.e. at home) appears in this light more as a contrast to travelling engagements – and this image is further supported by the layout of the inscription. The front side of the stone thus relates that king Sveinn is commemorating his retainer Skarði, who engaged in travelling (perhaps campaigning) in the west; and then the information is added about his further fate, as demonstrated by the words **ion : nu** (*æn nu*).

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[187] Criticism to this opinion has been expressed by Jacobsen (1932: 114), who argues that Sveinn as a common name was not reserved only for kings, and that other noblemen could also have retainers. In a later the same author, however, finds it significant that both inscriptions witness of death that has occurred at the same place (Jacobsen 1935a: 76-78).

[188] For a discussion around the specific terminology of DR 1 and DR 3, see Jesch (2001: 231-236).

[189] Sveinn Ástríðarson is also known under the name of Sveinn Úlfsson.

[190] Typologically, DR 1 and DR 3 have been regarded to belong to the post-Jelling group – that is to say, they were raised some time after the great Jelling stone. At the same time the demarcation line between the Jelling and the post-Jelling groups is not that clear (cf. Stoklund 1991: 290-293).

The answer is received when turning to the edge of the monument, where the expression **uarþ : tauþr : at : hiþa : bu** has been placed.

In light of the above, we conclude that the two preserved local references to Hedeby indeed cast light on some historical figures and events that were connected with that site. But it still has to be debated whether the two inscriptions are explicitly linked to one particular battle. Even if it is provided that they both do refer to the same king Sveinn, the men in his service may have fallen on different occasions. And finally – as already mentioned above – there exist no convincing grounds for considering Sö 16, U 1048 and DR 63 as further evidence of the same battle. In their preserved state, the latter three inscriptions can offer only limited glimpses into the traffic that was heading to Hedeby.

3.1.4. Ulfshala

G 207F	**at : ulfshala**

Stenkumla stone, G 207

Two rune stones, G 207 and G 208, are known from the Stenkumla church in Gotland – both designed according to the typical Gotlandic design (see e.g. Sawyer 2000: 26-27). The stones were first noted in the 18th century when they were found in the churchyard; now they stand inside the church (GR II: 199). The inscriptions on the Stenkumla stones are parallel to each other in that they refer to the same people and were done by the same carver. Due to the damaged state of the stones and fragmentarily preserved inscriptions, it is unfortunately not possible to determine whether they were indeed intended as a pair monument and dedicated to the same person.

Only the lower part of G 207 is preserved, whereas its estimated original height must have been around two and a half metres. The inscription is placed inside a runic serpent whose head and tail are tied together on the bottom by extra serpents.[191] The start is by the head on the left; the inscription must have run around the edges of the stone to the right. Judging from earlier drawings, there was an additional horizontal text band crossing the upper part of the stone, and above that a cross was probably placed. The stone has been dated to the second half of the 11th century, more precisely to ca. 1100 (GR II: 210).

The preserved parts of the inscription appear both on the left and the right side. On the left we find the remains of MMF – i.e. the names of commissioners; and on the right, additions concerning the deceased. The inscription has, to the extent possible, been supplemented, but its full contents remain unknown. It is obvious that three men raised a stone in memory of a fourth man. Since the inscription on the second Stenkumla stone, G 208 (which lacks only a top piece), contains the names of the exact same three sponsors, we can assert that they were brothers.[192] In the latter inscription the brothers commemorate their father. Unfortunately, in neither G 207 nor G 208 is the name of the deceased preserved. For that

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[191] The head of the serpent has weathered down and is no longer visible.
[192] The names are Bótmundr, Bótreifr and Gunnvarr (see GR II: 208; NRL).

reason it is uncertain as to whether the stones served the purpose of commemorating the same man.[193]
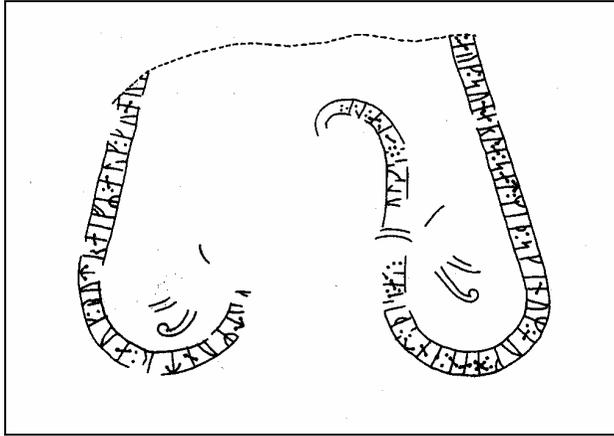
Figure 9. Stenkumla stone (G 207). Drawing after GR.

In the meantime, G 207 presents interesting information about the deceased – whether or not he was the father of the three men. It is thus told: **auk : sunarla : sat : miþ : skinum : auk : han : entaþis : at : ulfshala**. The preceding and proceeding formulations are too fragmentary to allow any interpretation, but it seems that before focusing on the activities of the deceased a reference to a farm estate (*garð*) – which he perhaps owned – is made (**…arþi : karþ**). The alliterating expression "sat in the south with skins" is understood as an indication of engaging in the fur trade somewhere in the south, whereas the designation **ulfshala** identifies the place of death – i.e. Ulvshale, the northern headland of the island of Møn.[194] The linguistic form of the runic reference does correspond to Ulvshale, and significantly enough the place is still known under the same name. From the historical perspective, Ulvshale was located close to a trade route leading from Gotland over southern Jylland towards the western parts of Europe (GR II: 209).

Even alternative interpretations have been offered. Melnikova (1998: 650) has proposed that **ulfshala** should be identified "with one of the Dnieper rapids, *Ulvorsi*, mentioned by the Byzantine emperor Constantine VII in the mid-tenth century". Obviously, Melnikova finds the expression referring to the fur trade in the <u>south</u> as the decisive clue for localising **ulfshala**. However, when looking at the structure of the inscription, the adverb **sunarla** does not connect with the place of death. Rather, the formulations *ok sunnarla sat með skinnum* and *ok hann ændaðis at Ulfshala* are introduced as parallel pieces of information – first we hear about the activities during a lifetime, and then the place of death is determined (cf. the previously discussed inscription DR 3). The exact region where the person engaged in the fur trade remains unknown – it could have been in the Dnieper region, but it may have also been

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[193] The end of his name has been established in G 208, but this does not help us to link the two; supplementary information in G 208 consists of a long prayer in the style that reminds one of U 539 (cf. 3.1.2.).

[194] See GR II (208-209) for the earliest records of the name as well as for argumentation behind the identification.

in a district that was seen as located to the south of Gotland. After all, the Stenkumla stone mediates the perspective of Gotlanders.[195] Perhaps the arena of such southern activities was somewhere around Hedeby and Schleswig – Denmark is in early Nordic sources often referred to as located in the south.[196] Skins and fur were important items in the trade between northern and western Europe; and the important role of Gotland in that transit trade is often underlined (cf. Yrving in KLNM XV: 521; KLNM V: 391-392). In this light, G 207 may relate both about the trade activities of some people from Gotland and traffic that led across the Baltic Sea from Gotland to Denmark. Ulvshale could have functioned as a strategic station along that way.[197]

3.1.5. Eyrarsund

DR 117	i : urɑ:¶:suti

Mejlby stone, DR 117

DR 117 was found inside a garden fence at Mejlby; originally it may have stood by the nearby Bjerge hillock (DRI: 155).[198] The inscription is composed of three long vertical text bands and an additional short line of runes on the left. It starts in the rightmost text band (reading order bottom-top), and continues in the adjoining bands according to the principles of boustrophedon.

The structure of the inscription is simple: MMF and one addition. Memorial formula occupies the first text band and continues in the second, with the name of the deceased divided into two halves on top of the stone. The end of the second text band, the whole third band, and the extra text line contain supplementary information about the deceased. The place name **urɑ: :suti** is introduced at the end of the third band and concludes along the left edge. Here the division seems logical; the name indeed consists of two components, **urɑ** and **suti**.

The Mejlby stone has been arranged by a man called Áni after his son Áskell. About the latter, it is said that he died in **urɑ: :suti** together with a certain Þórir. The reference is made to *Eyrarsund*, the sound of Øresund – located between Sjælland and Skåne. The formulation **mɑþ : þuri** indicates that Áskell participated in an expedition led by Þórir, and that his death in the sound occurred either as a result of a sea battle or a ship wreck.

Øresund connects the Baltic Sea with the strait of Kattegat, which opens up a passage into the Atlantic Ocean. The rune stone itself originates from a place close to the eastern coast of northern Jylland, therefore it is likely that Þórir and Áskell were about to sail deeper into the Baltic region; however, the exact itinerary of Áskell and Þórir unfortunately remains unknown.

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[195] Two other cases of the adverb *sunnarla* occur in Sö 179 and Sö 279, in connection with the faraway destination of *Serkland*. In the fragmentarily preserved Hs 10, we find the formulation **sum sunɑn i nɑ...** (i.e. who in the south…). In U 925 a man is said to have died in the south, without the location being specified. Cf. also 3.3.3.
[196] See the analysis of skaldic and saga evidence in chapter IV.
[197] Parallels could be drawn to the Högby stone (Ög 81) with its possible reference to *Oddr* (i.e. Sjællands Odde) – another locality serving as a station for travellers from the eastern parts of Scandinavia, cf. 3.1.15.
[198] Now the stone is exhibited at the Randers museum.
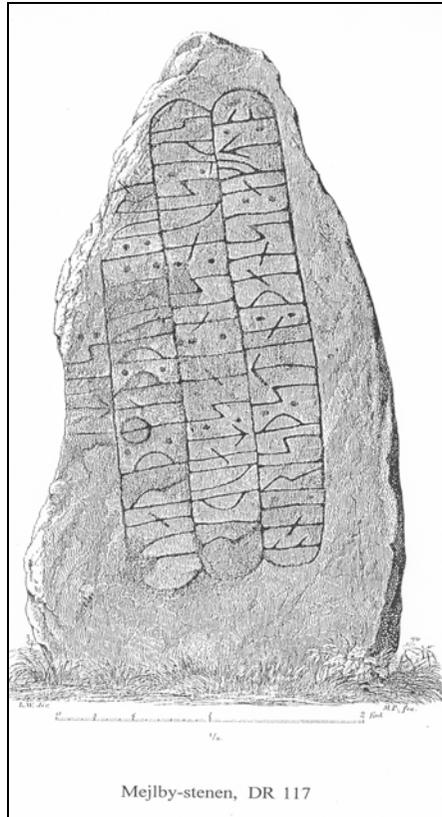
Figure 10. Mejlby stone (DR 117). Source: Wimmer (1893-1908), drawing by Magnus Petersen.

The importance of the inscription lies in the fact that it provides an authentic reference to a particular part of the Baltic Sea, in the runic context marked as **urɑ: :suti**. From Øresund, the men could have easily reached the landscape of Skåne – which brings us to the next destination.

3.1.6. Skáney and Garðstangir; Skáney – Kalmarnir sund

Sm 52	**o : skonu : ṇ : karþ:stokum**
Sö 333	**i · kalmarna · sutuma; afu · skani**

Forsheda stone, Sm 52

The first records of the Forsheda stone locate it by/in a local bridge (i.e. Gästebäcks bro, cf. SmR: 157); the stone was obviously moved and re-positioned a couple of times.[199] Although the present site is not the original one, the local district is still the same.

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[199] Connections to a burial mound and other ancient remains have been described in SmR (pp. 157-158).

The stone has suffered some damage, especially in the top left part. The design shows one text band formed as an arch, and an additional vertical text band in the middle of the stone (joined to the arch band on the right); also, there is a short vertical text band placed at the top right corner above the arch. The inscription starts inside the arch band at the bottom left, runs along the stone to the right, continues within the middle band, and concludes along the top edge.

The inscription contains MMF and two additions that concern the dead and in a way also the living. The arch band mediates the following: **rhulf ꞉ ɑuk ꞉ oskihl ꞉ riþu ꞉ stin ꞉ þo[nsi] ꞉ etiʀ ꞉ lifstin ꞉ fuþur ꞉ sin ꞉ es ꞉ uɑrþ ꞉ tuþr**; judging from the layout, this could thus be considered the main information. The names of the commissioners and the verbal phrase appear on the left, and the formulation about the deceased on the right. We hear about two brothers, Hrólfr and Áskell, who commemorate their dead father Lífsteinn.

Figure 11. Forsheda stone (Sm 52). Photo: Thomas Carlson & Gunnar Nordin 2005. Runebru.se. Uppsala, Sweden.

The vertical text bands specify his death and include three geographical references. The Forsheda rune stone relates that the father of the two men died in *Skáney* (Skåne) at *Garðstangir* (Gårdstånga, a settlement in the vicinity of present-day Lund in southwestern Skåne). From the further alliterating formulation (**furþu ꞉ o ꞉꞉ finhiþi**), we can deduce that the commissioners brought him to *Finnheiðr* (i.e. Finnveden in southwestern Småland). The latter

place name – a local reference to the regional unit that the people behind the inscription must have identified themselves with – in fact gains the topmost position in the right corner.[200]

From the inscription on the Forsheda stone we learn that the two brothers were returning from the neighbourhood landscape of Skåne – and not only with news of the death of their father with them. This fact is in itself remarkable – for some reason the men decided to bring their father's body back home.[201] Waterways along rivers could have made the act of transportation easier. The location of the rune stone in the vicinity of the river Storån is of possible significance in connection with this.[202]

It is interesting to observe how the death place has been determined. Apparently the two brothers had accompanied their father Lífsteinn to Skåne, and thus they possessed detailed information about the actual locality – this could then be included in the commemorative inscription.[203] Attempts have been made to connect the inscription with historical battles – for example the campaigns that the Norwegian king Óláfr Haraldsson and the Swedish king Ǫnundr Jákob had against the Danish-English king Knútr ríki in the mid-1020s (SmR: 160-161). Although it remains a possibility that the three men from Finnveden participated in a battle at *Garðstangir* around the same time, the evidence for connecting them with that particular event is non-existent. What we see here is instead the desire of scholars to connect authentic pieces of evidence recorded by runic inscriptions to historically known occasions, without having direct evidence that would speak in favour of that particular understanding.

<div align="center">Rune stone from Ärja church ruins, Sö 333</div>

Sö 333 now stands by a small brick wall in the ruins of the former church building.[204] The design shows: one runic serpent whose tail reaches high up along the middle of the stone, curving slightly to the left from the tip; a text band placed to the left of the tail; and four additional runes and an end mark that stand outside the text band (to the left of the serpent's head).

At first sight it seems as though the inscription did not completely fit into the serpent, nor into the additionally provided text band. Looking at the content we see that it is the final part of the inscription, i.e. the carver signature, that has been placed into the extra band, **eski · rsti · runa** with the concluding word **þasi** underneath the rest. From this point of view, we may actually deal with the deliberate choice of the carver Áskell – in this particular matter he could separate his "signature" from the commemorative content of the inscription.

The commemoration itself starts inside the head of the serpent, runs along the edges of the stone from left to right and follows the tail of the serpent till its very end. The MMF appears to be extended: the commemoration seems to concern two men. The first one is identified as the son of the commissioner, the second as his brother – their names are positioned along the

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[200] The name *Finnheiðr* occurs in two other inscriptions: as a local reference in Sm 35, and as a traffic reference in U 130, cf. 3.1.8.

[201] Alternatively, it may be asked whether it was indeed the dead body of the father that was the intended object (and not the stone, cf. U 414† in 3.1.16.) The overall formulation in the inscription, strictly speaking, leaves this open; however, the commemorative content of the inscription still supports the offered interpretation.

[202] With regard to the broader communicative setting, it is of interest that the nearby rune stone from the Forsheda churchyard, Sm 51, witnesses of a man who had been to the west (*vestar[la] var[ð]*). A few kilometres away there is the Torp stone, Sm 48, that commemorates a certain Oddi who died on a journey (*[d]o [i] færð*).

[203] This makes Sm 52 to a certain degree different from many other traffic inscriptions. The above-mentioned Sö FV1948;289 also contains three geographical references, but the latter two serve the purpose of local identification.

[204] The stone had been used in the construction of the church (SöR: 316).

upper left corner and the top of the stone, respectively. Supplementary information concerns the deceased and contains references to two regions – these occupy the serpent's rear end.

Figure 12. Ärja stone (Sö 333). Photo: Thomas Carlson & Gunnar Nordin 2005. Runebru.se. Uppsala, Sweden.

The names of the commissioner and of the two commemorated men have caused some problems of interpretation (cf. SöR: 317-318; NRL), whereas the two place names have been clearly established – one of them is again Skåne.[205] There are in the meantime certain ambiguities in the overall formulation **uarþi · uti · terebina · i · kalmarna · sutuma · furu · afu · skani**. It seems as though only one man was actually killed in **kalmarna · sutuma**, i.e. in the sound of Kalmarsund. One explanation is that this statement concerns the man whose name is mentioned last, a certain Hringr(?), the brother of the commissioner (SöR: 318). On the other hand, what follows is an expression in plural, signifying that the men were heading back from Skåne: **furu · afu · skani**. In SRD, the English translation of the whole phrase is therefore: "(He) was killed out in the Kalmarnir sound, (as they) travelled from Scania".

In this light it appears that as the men were returning from Skåne and passing through Kalmarsund, one of them – possibly the brother of the commissioner – was killed. The use of the participle *drepinn* documents a violent death, maybe during a conflict on sea.[206] The exact circumstances around the death of the commemorated son would, according to this interpretation, remain unidentified.

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[205] Sö 333 has gained extra attention due to its runic spelling with runes either omitted, appearing as superfluous or in reversed order (SöR: 317).

[206] According to Jesch (2001: 58) the participle *drepinn* "is frequently followed by an adverbial phrase indicating the place (invariably abroad) where the commemorated person was killed". The following inscriptions use the formulation: Ög 81, Ög 104, Sö 174, Sö 333, Vg 20, Vg 135†, Vg 181, U 533, U 582†, U 654, U 898, DR 380. Seven among these belong to the group of Baltic traffic inscriptions, see below (and also 3.2.1.).

It is in the meantime possible that the deviating spelling and the laconic formulation confuse or even hide certain details. Perhaps the inscription actually meant to commemorate two men who died on the same occasion. Alternatively, one may have chosen to fuse together in the frames of one commemorative mini-narrative the separate deaths of one man's son and brother – laying emphasis on the latter's significant participation in a viking venture.[207] It is also the brother's name that gains the top position on the stone. The plural form recorded in **furu · afu · skani** does not necessarily have to relate to the two deceased, it may simply express that some other men (who have not been named) were involved in that same enterprise during which Hringr(?) got killed.[208]

Relying upon what is explicit, we conclude that Sö 333 reports a death occurring somewhere in the sound of Kalmarsund – a navigable sea passage between the eastern coast of Småland and the western coast of Öland. Since the men are said to have been on their way back from Skåne, we can to a certain degree follow the route that led through Kalmarsund and further along the eastern coast of mainland Sweden into the Mälaren region in southern Södermanland.

In this connection we should also mention a rune stone fragment from the Skärkind church, Ög 174, in which the runic formulation **u̇sut-** occurs. This has been said to remind one of the reference to Kalmarsund in Sö 333. On that basis it has been suggested that Ög 174 may also indicate the name of a particular sound – the first component of the compound name would thus end with **u** (ÖgR: 165). Since the fragmentary state of the Skärkind inscription does not allow us to confirm this assumption, **u̇sut-** has to remain unidentified. The only recognisable element in the inscription is the word *kumblas*, with the meaning 'entombed'.[209] Right at the maritime gateway that leads into the Kalmarsund there lies a small island, which is the focus of the next inscription.

3.1.7. Útlengia

DR 380	**at : ut:laṇk̇iu**

Ny Larsker II, DR 380

From the Nylars church in southwestern Bornholm two rune stones are known (DR 379 and DR 380), which are now placed inside the weapon house. Both have been made by the same carver and commemorate travellers. It is the inscription on DR 380 that is our primary interest.[210]

The bottom part of the stone is slightly damaged, but most of the inscription is still well preserved. Its design is interesting: the inscription runs inside one continuous text band

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[207] With regard to participation in large-scale campaigns, it is of interest that one Ingvarr stone is found from the same church ruins – i.e. Sö 335, which commemorates a certain Ósníkinn, the brother of Ulfr(?), who travelled to the east with Ingvarr and was Holmsteinn's seaman (*skipari*).

[208] A third possibility is that the information actually concerns the dead son Rúnnulfr/Unnulfr, with Hringr(?) functioning as an additional commissioner. However, the collective impression created by the layout and formulation does not support that assumption.

[209] Ög 174 is thus an example of questionable evidence that cannot be included in the study of Baltic traffic.

[210] DR 379 commemorates a man who drowned abroad with the crew of his ship; the exact destination is not given.

(possibly a serpent) along the stone from the bottom left corner to the right; it then curves back to the left, filling the middle of the stone, and finally heads back to the right above that middle curve – thus forming three connected arches (the design reminds one to a certain degree of mainland Swedish style). Small spirals mark the beginning and the end of the inscription, and on top there is a cross. As with other rune stones from Bornholm, the monument has received a wide dating of ca. 1050-1150.

Structurally the inscription consists of MMF, additions about the deceased and prayer formula. In the memorial formula a man called **kobu:suain** commemorates his son Bausi, and this information occupies most of the outer arch, figuring therefore as the main content of the inscription.[211] The damaged bottom right corner has most likely contained the phrase *dræng goþan*, which belongs in the same arch as the main commemoration, and extends its focus by characterising Bausi. Jesch (2001: 229) explains that the exact meaning of *drengr* varied according to the context in which it was applied, but that the basic semantic component was expressing intimacy and in-group belonging; however, it could also mark the element of youth.[212]

It is further said about Sveinn: **þan : is : tribin : uarþ : i : urostu : at : ut:laŋkiu**. This expression occupies the innermost arch on the middle of the stone. The third arch presents a prayer for his soul addressed to Lord God and Saint Michael – a formulation more characteristic of medieval inscriptions.

For one, we hear of a man killed during a sea battle, expressed in terms of an alliterating phrase.[213] Secondly, a reference is made to a place called *Útlengia*, i.e. Utlängan, which is the easternmost island immediately off the coast of Blekinge. Considering that Bausi's point of departure was located somewhere along the western coast of Bornholm (Nylars lies in the southwest), he obviously did not have to travel far to reach that island, or more precisely, the waters around it.

In this light the little island by Blekinge – at that time part of the Danish dominion – stands out as a strategic spot: it may have been a destination of its own, an outpost for traffic that was heading inland or even a suitable station along the sailing route, which could lead further along the southeastern coast of Sweden, perhaps into the previously mentioned Kalmarsund (cf. Sö 333, above). There must have been a concrete purpose behind the trip to Utlängan as recorded in DR 380, since it ended in a proper battle. As a coastal settlement, Utlängan must have been a known target for people from different regions, including Bornholm.

The latter island itself – and possibly the waters around it – may also be seen among the runic references. We shall return to the corresponding examples of Ög 81 and U 214 in subsection 3.1.15. Firstly, we take a look at some regions in present-day mainland Sweden, starting with two localities from the landscape of Småland in the neighbourhood of Skåne, Blekinge and Halland. After that, the attention will be turned to *Svíþjóð* as a more particular designation for central Sweden.

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[211] **kobu:suain** has been interpreted either as "Sveinn of the hooded cloak" or "Sveinn, son of Kápa" (cf. Moltke 1985a: 337; SRD).

[212] For a detailed analysis of the semantic range of *drengr* in the runic and skaldic corpus, see Jesch 2001 (216-232), cf. also Jesch (1993); Strid (1987).

[213] *Orrosta* is, besides DR 380, used in two other Baltic traffic inscriptions – Sö 338 and Vg 40 (cf. 3.1.21, 3.1.31.). An additional case is Sö 126, which applies the word in a reference made to a battle on the eastern route.

3.1.8. Finnheiðr

U 130	**o f iṇaiþi**

Nora rock, U 130

The inscription is carved into the surface of a rock at Nora, close to a small river that flows into the Edsviken bay. In the Viking Age the water level in Uppland was approximately four metres higher than today (UR I: 192). Therefore, the Nora rock must have been more easily approachable and visible from the water than today.

We are dealing here with a well-preserved runic monument that is known from its original spot. The inscription has the design of a runic serpent forming an almost perfect circle on the rock; its front and end part cross two times at the top (creating another little circle), and there is a small serpent tied around them.[214] Inside the main serpent circle there is a big cross; in fact, the runic serpent is pointing at the cross with its stylized leg, emphasising its dominant position.

The inscription starts by the head of the serpent and runs inside its circular body to the conclusion within the tail that curves diagonally down to the left. The rock carving may have been approached from different directions, and for that reason one may wonder what the originally intended visual impression was, with regard to establishing the top and the bottom part of the circular inscription.[215] We describe the inscription – and determine the top and the bottom – from the point of view of those who would come along the water route. This composition makes further sense concerning the position of the serpent's head, which is then pointing upwards.

At the same time a certain visual ambiguity cannot be ruled out; perhaps it was the intention of the commissioner/carver to let the eye grasp the elements of the carving in a varying manner, depending on the direction the viewer approached from. The impression of the overall design witnesses of careful planning and of a well-conducted work process: the rather long inscription fits perfectly into the serpent, and the circular image of the serpent and the central cross underline the significance of the monument. The varying sizes of the runes are in accordance with the dynamically changing measures of the serpent's body, which widens in the middle and narrows down towards the tail.

Structurally the inscription consists of MMF, further information about the deceased, prayer formula, and an addition that focuses on ownership and inheritance.[216] The name of the commissioner is placed by the serpent's eyes and ears, the name of the deceased runs along the left part of its circular body (roughly on the same level with the head), whereas information about the death circumstances is introduced at the bottom. Layout-wise it is interesting to observe that the head of the serpent cuts into the body right above the reference to the dead (**aftiʀ ulaif**); in this manner the initial formulation **biurn · finuiþaʀ sun lit · haukua · hili þisa** appears to stand inside a separate circle. Into the latter is also incorporated the little circle that is formed by the crossing body parts of the serpent (as described above); the additional content elements carried by the tail are the following: **atṛfi · finuþaʀ sun**. The latter word **sun** runs right through the initial name **biurn**. The creation of additional connected

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[214] Furthermore, the head of the serpent actually cuts into the front part of the body.

[215] Pictures of the carving differ in this regard, cf. e.g. UR I and http://www.raa.se/kmb/showdetails.asp?id=823.

[216] U 130 is thus one of the explicit runic records of inheritance, see e.g. Sawyer (2000: 75) and Jesch (2001: 257).

circles has perhaps been a conscious strategy, meant to focus on the commissioner and identify his role as an inheritor.

Returning to the basic memorial, we thus learn that a certain Bjǫrn Finnviðr's son commemorates Óleifr, his brother. Characteristic is the correspondence between the applied phrase *let hoggva hælli þessa* and the rock monument in real life. The same Bjǫrn Finnviðr's son has also arranged another runic monument, U 433, in that case for himself.[217]

What makes U 130 even more interesting is the mention of Óleifr's death through betrayal, demonstrated by the verbal phrase *varð svikvinn*. The expression appears approximately in the middle of the serpent's body and is therefore carved in bigger runes.[218] According to Jesch (2001: 258) the ON verb *svíkja* "broadens its meaning from the betrayal of one associate by another to include death at the hands of foreigners [...] and even to include God's punishment of the wicked".[219] In this way, the unfortunate nature of Óleifr's death is emphasised; and a prayer for his soul is added. The place where all this happened is the district of *Finnheiðr*, Finnveden.

On the other hand, no explanations are given as for who might have betrayed Óleifr. The commemorative runic narrative did not consider it necessary to focus on the incident as such; the commissioner most likely wished to rather concentrate upon what was considered more important in that particular situation. Further formulations indeed document the perspective of the survivor(s) with regard to ownership and inheritance, establishing the current estate as "the allodial land and family inheritance of Finnviðr's sons at *Elgjastaðir*".[220] The latter place name indicates Älgesta, located 30 km away – from that same district, the self-honouring U 433 is known. In the frames of the inscription it provides identification for the mentioned people – the farm at *Elgjastaðir* must have been the centre of the family estate.

The Nora rock carving belongs into a particular communicative setting. The spot for the memorial was carefully chosen, and the natural location of the rock must have fulfilled different purposes. For one, it provided an impressive and solid medium for commemoration. Secondly, through the actual inscription, the firmly grounded rock simultaneously gained the value of being a declaration of ownership and inheritance. It is possible that the estate at Nora had first been in the primary possession of Óleifr, and now, after the latter's death, it was going over to Bjǫrn, who was at the same time the (primary) owner of *Elgjastaðir* (inherited after their father Finnviðr). Thirdly, the site of the rock contributes in its own manner to the image of Óleifr dying away from home – it is situated close to the bay of Edsviken, which makes up an important, though narrow, link with the Baltic Sea.

As for the name *Finnheiðr*, it also appears as a local reference in Sm 52 (cf. 3.1.6.). Furthermore, Sm 35, the Replösa rune stone, is commissioned by a certain Gautráðr after his father Ástráðr.[221] As mentioned above, the designated district comprised the southwestern parts of Småland, particularly the area around Lake Bolmen. In the east, Finnveden bordered

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[217] U 433 is a rune stone found in the wall of the Husby-Ärlinghundra church, ca. 30 km north of Nora (UR I: 194). It is one of the self-honouring examples among Swedish rune stones – an activity for which Jarlabanki is most well-known.

[218] Presumably this piece of information first caught the eyes of travellers who passed the rock along the river.

[219] Jesch reaches that conclusion on the basis of studying the occurrences of the verb in U 954†, DR 387, U 130 and G 134, and emphasises that in the final example the commissioners even "call on God to 'betray those who betrayed him'" (op. cit. 258); that very formulation is also found in U 1028.

[220] For a discussion around the terms **uþal** (*oðal*) and **atᵣfi** (*ættærfi*), see UR (I: 194-195). The visual interaction between such elements of inscription that concern the commissioner have already been described above.

[221] Ástráðr must have been a significant man, since he is characterised as *þann frænda ok þegna bæztan*.

on two other central lands of Småland – Njudung and Värend. The formulation *eR a F[i]nnhæið[i] forðum of vaRi* as recorded by Sm 35 is significant, since it seems to declare that Ástráðr had been to Finnveden – this would mean that the reference was made to the region other than the one he himself came from. In the meantime, the Replösa stone originates from the very centre of the district traditionally known as Finnveden; less than a kilometre to the west we find one of its main arteries, the river Lagan, and within the radius of ten kilometres lies Lake Bolmen. The alliterating phrase *Finnhæiði forðum* demonstrates that the application of the unique word *forðum* is also stylistically motivated.[222] In the context of a commemorative runic inscription it can simply express that the deceased used to live in Finnveden (i.e. he was there <u>before</u> his death).

Strid (1991: 72) explains in connection with Sm 35 that the name of the region as recorded in the runic inscriptions, *Finnheiðr*, contains the word *ed*, which means a road (in Swedish 'färdväg'); that is to say, the naming concept is possibly connected with the route along the river Lagan. S. Brink (2000: 64) underlines the ancient nature of the term *ed*, which according to him "occurs in really old road names such as *Finnveden* (*Finnaeþ*), *Edskogen* ('the forest with roads') etc."[223] The etymology of the name seems to reflect the significance of that territory in southern Scandinavian traffic – it must have received travellers both from Denmark and central Sweden. One among them was obviously the unfortunate Óleifr.

3.1.9. Þjústr

Sö 40	o : þiusti

Rune stone from Västerljung church, Sö 40

Sö 40 was found in 1959 from the tower wall, and is now raised in the churchyard.[224] It is another monument of impressive size and visual features. The rune stone reaches almost three metres above the ground and has carving on three sides. A suggested date for the inscription is the first half of the 11th century.

On the front side (side A) the inscription unfolds inside a runic serpent; on the other two sides there is interesting decorative ornamentation (side B also carries a cross on top). The scenes on side B seem to follow the motives of narrative and pictorial tradition around the hero Sigurðr Fáfnisbani – they depict Sigurðr's brother in law, Gunnarr in a nest full of snakes. We can observe how Gunnarr tries to escape death by playing the harp and charming the snakes, but one of them still bites him.[225] Perhaps that particular motive was chosen to demonstrate the dramatic circumstances around the death of the commemorated man, despite the fact that the inscription uses the rather neutral verbal phrase **iʀ intaþr**, *eR ændaðr*. It is also possible that the ornamentation was motivated by the stylistic intention of connecting the inscription inside the runic serpent with the myth that dealt with snakes. All in

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[222] This is supported by the fact that the preceding phrase also contains an alliterating pair of *þann-þegna*.
[223] See the comments in S. Brink (2000: 51-52).
[224] In SöR the then missing stone was assumed to have had only ornamentation (p. 30). Upon its rediscovery, a presentation was published in FV by S.B.F. Jansson (1959: 263-267).
[225] Decorative imagery around the myth of Sigurðr Fáfnisbani appears also on some other rune stones; especially well-known are the Ramsund rock Sö 101 and the Göksten rock Sö 327 (for a discussion of their iconography and iconology see e.g. Düwel 1986b).

all, the Västerljung rune stone appears as a joint monument of runic commemoration and ornamental imagery.

The inscription runs along the edges of the stone, starts in the serpent's head and concludes in its tail; the head and the tail are tied together at the bottom. The name of the commissioner covers the serpent's head and neck and the name of the deceased and the statement of family relationship occupy the left side of the stone. According to the memorial formula, a certain Hánefr commemorates his father Geirmarr. Information about his death is placed around the top: **haɑ · iʀ intaþr · o · þiusti**. The right side of the monument is reserved for the carver formula.
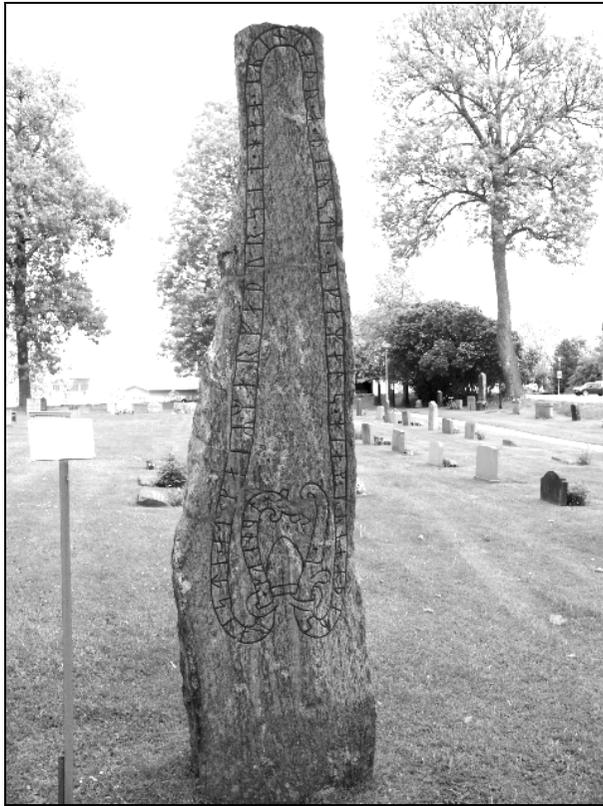
Figure 13. Rune stone from the Västerljung church (Sö 40). Photo: Thomas Carlson & Gunnar Nordin 2005. Runebru.se. Uppsala, Sweden.

The place indication *Þjústr* is understood as a reference to Tjust. As previously explained (cf. 1.4.1.), the Viking Age Småland was made up of several small lands. In connection with Sm 52, U 130 and Sm 35 we discussed the mentioning of Finnveden in the southwest. Tjust is the district around Västervik on the eastern coast of Småland (now it comprises the northern and southern hundreds of Tjust, i.e. Norra Tjusts härad and Södra Tjusts härad). Alternatively, *Þjústr*, could be taken as a local reference to the nearby settlement of Tystberga. In the runic

formulation, *Þjústr* is clearly given as the death place of Geirmarr; whereas local references usually serve the aim of providing a frame of identification for the people.[226]

Although the original site of Sö 40 is not known, it obviously originates from the region on the southeastern coast of Södermanland, which is connected with the Baltic Sea by the river Trosaån. In any case, the journey from that part of Södermanland – either inland or along the coast – to the eastern corner of Småland was not long.

Having discussed the references to two historical districts of Småland, we proceed to runic mentions of *Svíþjóð*, i.e. the land of the Svea people, with its heartland in the Mälaren region (cf. Ståhl in KLNM XVII: 482). As an introduction to that, we take a look at an inscription that in an interesting way connects Swedes and Danes by its identification of the ethnic group/ community of **sutrsuia**.

3.1.10. Sundrsvía

DR 217	**sutrsuia**

Sædinge stone, DR 217

The Sædinge stone comes from the island of Lolland. It was found on a roadside by an old ford; this could have been its original site.[227] Typologically the Sædinge stone is considered to belong to the Jelling group (i.e. to the 10th century).

The stone has inscription on all of its four faces and shows the design of vertical text bands: three on side A, two on side B, again three bands on side C, and two on side D. Small spirals on top of the stone terminate the text bands. The reading direction throughout the inscription is from bottom to top. The established order of the text lines does not completely correspond to our logical expectations: the inscription starts in the rightmost line on side A (i.e. along the edge that corners side B), and continues within two bands to the left, thus heading towards side D. Continuation is found on side B, and only then do the lines follow each other in their "natural order" from B to D. It could be asked whether the carver intentionally guided the reader's attention from the basic memorial formula on the front side towards the information on the final side with its concluding remarks on the significance of the deceased – even though the actual sequence was planned to continue on side B (which also emphasises the features of the deceased). On the other hand, the size and the shape of the monument must have also played a certain role in the design of the inscription.[228]

Unfortunately, the original placement of the monument is not known – if the inscription had to be read in a particular order, one must have worked out a certain position with regard to the surrounding landscape, thus laying extra focus on that side, which potential viewers were supposed to experience first. But considering the fact that the Sædinge stone has inscription

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[226] There are only a few occasions (Sö 318, U 112, U 170† and Nä 15) where local references identify the place of death of the commemorated person (cf. also 3.3.4.).

[227] The stone – put together from preserved pieces – is now placed at the Maribo Museum (DRI: 265).

[228] Another explanation is given by Jacobsen (1929); she asserts that the order of the text bands on side A is caused by the symmetrical planning of the inscription. Jacobsen has divided the inscription into two main parts, pointing out that these are introduced within the longer bands on the two bigger faces A and C (Jacobsen 1929: 145, cf. also p. 121). The meaning units as established by Jacobsen have by now received different interpretations, weakening her argumentation.

covering its four faces, it is possible that the viewers could grasp two of its sides more or less simultaneously. In this way the Sædinge stone may instead appear as an expression of visual unity, where concepts like beginning and end do not really matter.

For us the order of different content elements is nevertheless crucial for understanding the actual message. The interpretation process is further complicated by the length of the inscription, and its use of specific metaphorical formulations; also, certain parts of it are now missing.[229]
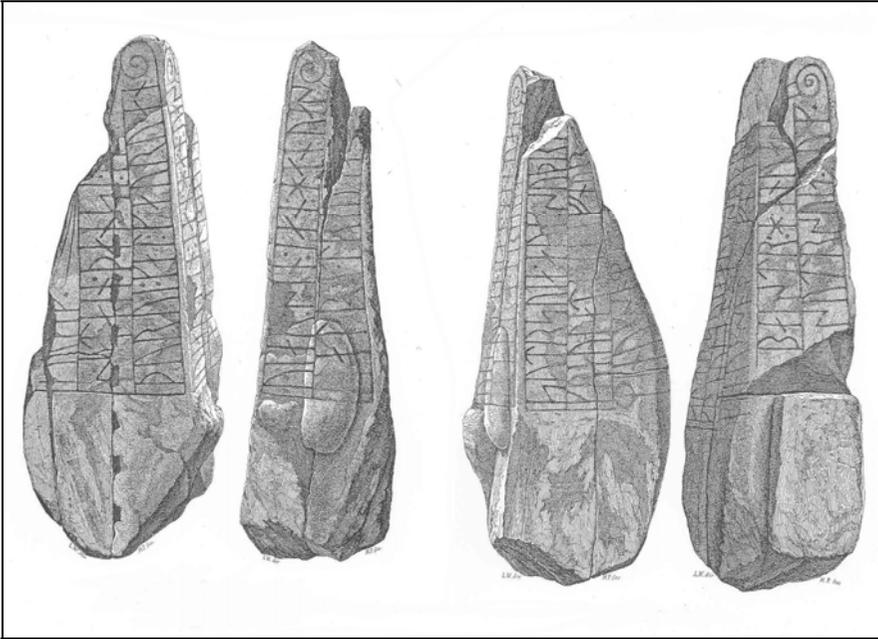
Figure 14. The Sædinge stone (DR 217), sides A-D. Source: Wimmer (1893-1908), drawing by Magnus Petersen.

Structurally, the inscription is composed of MMF (which is fragmentarily preserved) and a rather long and expressively formulated addition. The monument is commissioned by a certain Þorvé after her husband, probably called Krókr. Supplements include references to the honourable deceased as well as to particular groups of people. Of primary interest in this connection is the expression that starts on side B: **ian : han ː uas ¶ --alra · triu--…**, and continues on side C: **sutrsuia ː auk ː suþr**[**tana ·**]. Two distinct groups or communities of people – Sunder-Swedes and South Danes – figure in this description of the "most resolute" man. The first one, **sutrsuia**, also gets repeated on side D, where the deceased is depicted in terms of being something of an end/yoke for the Sunder-Swedes: **han uas ¶ … sutrsuia ː -uk**. Another interesting characterisation of the deceased starts on side C: **kuaul ː at : ha- af nur¶minum som**, and concludes on side D: **baistr**. The first part of the phrase seems to signify the torments the hero had to go through (*kwol at ha[l]/ha[nn]*), while the latter

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[229] For an overview of earlier studies on the inscription, see Jacobsen (1929: 89-150; 1935b: 170-185).

establishes him as the best of Northmen. The reference to the Northmen probably serves as a general designation of the Nordic people, and not as a separate mention of Norwegians.

All the formulations have been incorporated into the inscription, with the purpose of describing Krókr and his memorable deeds. Krókr was possibly a local chieftain of some sort; the narrative content of the inscription makes use of expressions that connect with battle imagery, or at the very least witness of a certain conflict situation. The last phrase on side D – where the man is set against the group of Sunder-Swedes – may point in the direction of Krókr himself being a representative of the South Danes.

According to Moltke (1985a: 302) the inscription refers to a possible "strife between Swedes called 'Sunder' or 'Separate' Swedes(?), living on Lolland, and 'South Danes'".[230] Moltke combines the evidence of DR 217 with another runic inscription from Lolland, DR 216 (cf. 3.1.11.), and even draws parallels to other Danish inscriptions; on that basis he claims that a considerable number of Swedes who were heading towards the trade centre Hedeby must have stayed in the region of Lolland (op. cit. 302, 388). The conflict recorded by DR 217 could in his opinion be understood "against the background of the more-or-less tense relations that must have existed between the Swedish rulers in Hedeby and the Danish royal house in Jelling" (op. cit. 302). Also in DRI, the Sædinge stone is considered to illuminate the existence of a special 10th-century Swedish colony in the area of Lolland and other southern Danish islands – which had evolved from the presumably earlier Swedish invasion into the region of Hedeby (DRI: 265).

However, we find it too far-fetched to connect the limited and metaphorically formulated references appearing on the Sædinge stone (alongside those concerning *Svíþjóð* in DR 216) with the concept of an actual Swedish colony causing political tensions for Danes. The Sædinge stone does indeed identify particular groups of Swedes and Danes, and the way the inscription is formulated gives us reason to assume that the commemorated man was involved in an armed conflict. The communicative purpose of the inscription is connected with the need for providing a proper memorial for Krókr by describing his significance. The actual historical background of that message is, on the other hand, harder to trace – the above-mentioned theories remain only hypothetical.

Instead of treating the inscription as a piece of evidence relating concrete political incidents, we should emphasise its general cultural-historical value. References to Sunder-Swedes and South Danes demonstrate that the people behind the inscription operated with certain local and/or regional identities. It should be remembered that the island of Lolland does not lie far from mainland Sweden. In the context of Baltic traffic the inscription on the Sædinge stone thus witnesses of contacts between groups of people who represented/originated from different districts, but were involved in active encounters. From the perspective of local Danes – themselves identified as southern Danes – those Swedes could be called Sunder-Swedes to emphasise their separate status and different regional identity.

S. Brink (1997: 400-401) claims that people as a collective do not normally name them-selves – the neighbours identify the outsiders; for that reason the names as such are not ethnically significant. When looking at the complex web of names as recorded in DR 217, the case is more peculiar – the names identify groups of people and characterise them. Possibly they simply represent the perspective of "others", but the way the inscription is formulated provides a certain chance for tracing forms of self-identification behind the labels. The location of the Sædinge stone on the island of Lolland (i.e. southern Denmark) confirms that we may

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[230] The linguistic meaning of *sundrsvía* has been discussed in detail by Jacobsen (1929: 138).

witness here the perceptions of some local Danes who appear as an ethnically distinct collective in relation to (their neighbours) Sunder-Swedes.

<center>Additional remarks</center>

In order to demonstrate the problematic nature of traditional historical interpretations concerning the inscription on the Sædinge stone, we have to bring in questions regarding the possible earlier presence of Swedes in the area around Hedeby – a much debated, and to our mind, questionable theory. The following discussion also clarifies why we have chosen to disregard two Danish inscriptions from the environs of Hedeby (DR 2 and DR 4) as indirect expressions of Baltic traffic – despite the fact that they are by many scholars taken as evidence of intensive Swedish-Danish political contacts. Thus, before proceeding with the main analysis, we shall take a little sidestep and focus on these two rune stones and their role in studying what has been called the Swedish dominion or dynasty in Hedeby around the end of the 9th century and beginning of the 10th century.[231]

Haddeby II (DR 2) and Haddeby IV (DR 4) follow the design of vertical text bands: the former has inscription on two sides, the latter on three sides. Historically the stones have been dated to some time after 934, based upon information recorded in written sources (see below). The basic content is the same in both inscriptions, although DR 2 is somewhat shorter than DR 4. They are memorials commissioned by a woman called Ásfríðr after Sigtryggr, her son and Gnúpa's. DR 4 specifies that Ásfríðr was Óðinkárr's daughter, and Sigtryggr is there further identified as a king; a carver formula is also added. The general patterns of layout are similar – in both inscriptions the names of the commissioner and the deceased are placed into adjoining text bands on the front side.[232] Also, both monuments carry some runes at the very top – they run over the tip, from one side to another.

It is first and foremost in combination with a description occurring in the history of the Hamburg-Bremen bishopric – written by Adam of Bremen in the 1070s – that the two Haddeby rune stones have been assumed to provide witness to the Swedish rule in Hedeby. A short synopsis of Adam's account is given here according to Lund: "Adam relates that a certain Danish king Helge was succeeded by one Olaph who came from Sweden and ruled Denmark together with his sons (c. 48), and further that after Olaph, *sueonum princeps*, and his two sons Chnob and Gurd followed one Sigerich (c. 52)" (Lund 1980: 125). Sigerich (i.e. Sigtryggr) was thus the last one in the family to gain the throne.[233] In this light the Haddeby rune stones would be recording the final stage of the Swedish dynasty.[234]

It has been underlined that Haddeby II is a clearly Swedish monument – and that its being carved by a Swede confirms the Swedish origin of the royal dynasty. Since the parallel rune stone Haddeby IV appears to be traditionally Danish, the two monuments are taken as evidence of a specific cultural mixture: Gnúpa must have been Swedish and Ásfríðr Danish

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[231] The Swedish dynasty in Hedeby has been extensively examined; references will be made only to a few studies with extra focus on the rune stones. A review of the earliest scholarship is found in Jacobsen (1929: 19-20); cf. also DRI (10-14); Lund (1980: 114). A discussion of the Swedish and Danish (often nationalistic) standpoints in connection with relevant linguistic evidence is provided by Johansson (2002).

[232] DR 2 has two text bands on the front side, whereas DR 4 has three.

[233] For a historical-philological analysis around the recorded names, see Jacobsen (1929).

[234] Moltke (1985a: 193) refers to the statement in Widukind's Saxon chronicle (ca. 970), according to which Gnúpa was in 934 defeated by the Saxon emperor who made him pay tribute. Around 935/936 Gnúpa was overthrown by the Danish king Gormr; Gnúpa was then succeeded by Sigtryggr, who did not manage to reign long – at some point before 943 he was removed from the power by Hardegunni –, an event that would mark the end of Swedish rule in Hedeby (Jacobsen 1929: 57-58, 86).

<center>110</center>

(Moltke 1985a: 195). Further support for the Swedish presence in Hedeby has been gained from the study of place names, dialects and even archaeological finds.

Lund has in the meantime criticised the ways in which all the above-mentioned sources are being treated. He argues that the specific rune forms of DR 2 should not automatically indicate that the carver came from Sweden; and that even if he did, he might have stood in the service of Danish rulers (Lund 1980: 118-119). That is to say, the presence of a potentially Swedish carver does not prove that the royal family he worked for was Swedish.[235] Moltke (1985b: 17) contradicts Lund by accusing him of having overlooked the Swedish linguistic forms in DR 2: the name of the deceased, which is carved **siktriku** (whereas it is **siktriuk** in DR 4); as well as the occurrence of the demonstrative pronoun **þaun** as compared to **þausi**. In Moltke's view the raising of two distinct rune stones was guided by political motivation – Ásfríðr was obliged to commemorate her Swedish husband but also wanted to emphasise her own Danish nationality (op. cit. 18).

Lerche Nielsen (1994: 178), on the other hand, claims that the name form **siktriku** in DR 2 may be a common carver error where the order of the runes gets changed. As for the pronoun **þaun**, the fact that the form is recorded in Runic Swedish, and not Danish, does not necessarily mean that it originated from and was exclusively applied in Sweden (ibid.).[236]

We cannot therefore automatically label DR 2 and DR 4 as the works of two carvers of different nationalities, neither can we support the idea that the carvings themselves clearly witness of culturally mixed phenomena. When examining their overall visual and material features, such theories are further weakened. From this point of view no sharp distinctions can be drawn between the monuments – they follow the same design of vertical text bands, and even demonstrate parallel schemes of layout. The appearance should presumably be less uniform, provided that the carvers were representing different nationalities and that the monuments aimed to mark that. Also, if Ásfríðr had indeed wanted to make a statement about her own Danish nationality as opposed to the rest of the dynasty, then perhaps she would have chosen to reserve the bigger monument for that purpose – evermore so, since the inscription on that stone was going to be longer. In the meantime, we see that the bigger monument (Haddeby II) carries the shorter formulation.[237]

Lund (1980: 122) has also pointed out that the references in Adam's account concerning the one Óláfr who came from Sweden may mean that he was actually a Dane returning from exile. The fact that Óláfr has been determined as Swedish by Adam of Bremen does not reveal how this concept was understood by him – as well as by the sources he claimed to build upon.

In view of the above, we conclude that there are serious reasons for questioning the validity of theories that use a presumed Swedish dynasty as a suitable background for interpreting the messages on the two rune stones from Hedeby. The fact that DR 2 and DR 4 mention persons who appear to be recorded in other written sources is significant, and in that sense the runic inscriptions can be treated as important historical documents. Nevertheless, we lack any confirmation to regard these two rune stones as the obvious results of a particular

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[235] Lund also critically assesses studies of place names, as well as argumentation based upon archaeological finds (op. cit. 119-121).

[236] For further critical comments, see also Stoklund (1997). A different perspective on the study of early linguistic forms is added by Johansson (2002: 21-22), who emphasises the need for applying an approach based upon the idea of mutual dialectal connections within the whole Nordic (and northern European) territory.

[237] At the same time it is impossible to draw any further conclusions as to the intended communicative setting around the monuments, since we do no know their exact original site(s).

Swedish invasion. Therefore, in the context of the current thesis, DR 2 and DR 4 do not qualify as potential records of Baltic traffic. Similarly negative is the answer to the question as to whether DR 2 and DR 4 could be used for widening the understanding around the Lolland inscription DR 217.

After having excluded DR 2 and DR 4 from further discussion, we now concentrate upon two Danish inscriptions that through their references to Sweden do indeed witness of explicit Danish-Swedish contacts.

3.1.11. Svíþjóð

| DR 216 | o suo¶þiauþu |
| DR 344 | a suiþiuþu |

Tirsted stone, DR 216

The Tirsted stone from Lolland was first noted in the southern wall of the Tirsted church-yard.[238] The stone is covered with circular hollows and may have earlier fulfilled sacral functions (Moltke 1985a: 299). Its ornamentation shows two knots on top of the stone that tie together the vertical text bands on its two sides.[239] The size of the monument, and the length of the inscription make a powerful visual impression – the Tirsted stone is actually the second largest rune stone in Denmark.

On the front side there are four main text bands and a short addition to the left that contains five runes; on the second side there are three text bands. The division into front and second side is arbitrary, and only based upon the content; the actual placement of the stone may have easily displayed both sides simultaneously. The reading direction is from bottom to top throughout the inscription. The inscription starts in the rightmost text band on the front side, and proceeds to the left. Despite the fact that the inscription is well preserved, its general content poses several problems of interpretation (this may partly be caused by possible carver errors).

The structural pattern is the following: MMF and a long addition. The memorial formula – covering three text bands on the front side – identifies two men as commissioners; they have raised the stone after their kinsman.[240] The rest of the inscription contains further information about the deceased; but unfortunately remains unclear in parts due to specific formulations. One thing is, though, certain – the man died in *Svíþjóð*. This information is presented in the fifth and sixth text bands (i.e. on the second side of the stone); the place name appears in two parts: **suo** and **þiauþu**. The indication *Svíþjóð* etymologically means the land of the Svea people.

The expressions that come before and after the identification of the death place seem to underline the admirable deeds of the deceased. The formulations **ian han uas þo foink ¶ uaiʀa** (on the front side), and **auk uas furs ¶ i frikis ioþi þo aliʀ uikikaʀ** (at the end of

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[238] The original site may have been a mound east of the church. Now the monument is located at Nationalmuseet (the National Museum) in Copenhagen (DRI: 262-263).

[239] According to Moltke (1985a: 266, 299-300, 301)the knots are triquetra symbols, and they may have a Christian or a heathen function. Typologically the Tirsted stone has been placed into the Jelling group.

[240] The normalised forms of the recorded names have been hard to establish, cf. SRD and NRL.

side B), have received possible interpretation as: "and he was then the terror of men" and "and was the first in Friggir's retinue and then all vikings".[241]
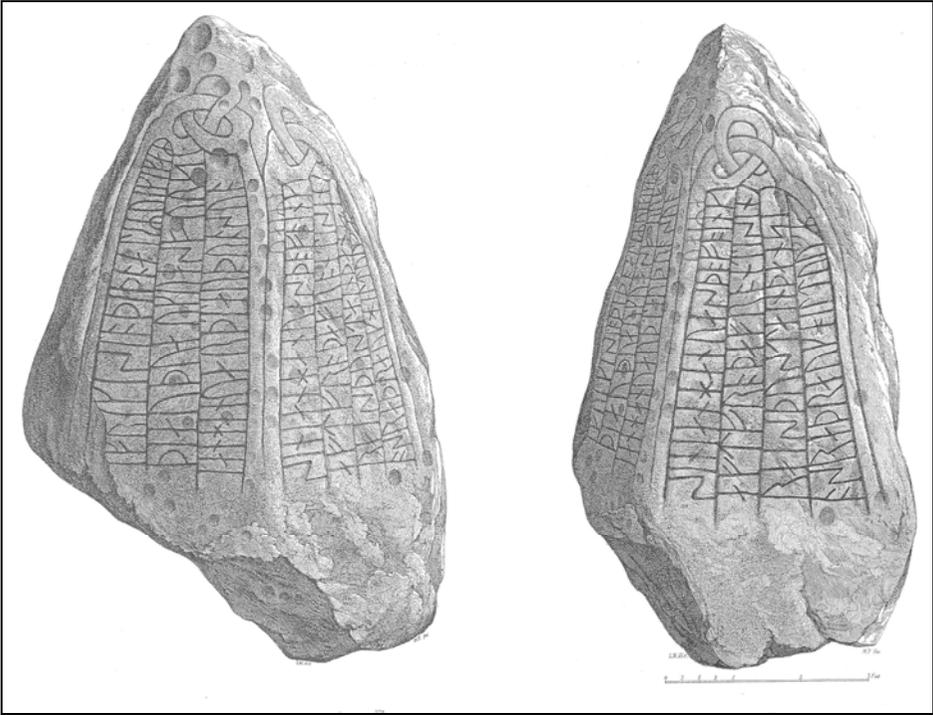
Figure 15. Tirsted stone (DR 216). Source: Wimmer (1893-1908), drawing by Magnus Petersen.

Significant is the reference made to the vikings, which is the last word in the seventh text band, appearing at the very top of the stone. The message of the Tirsted stone thus seems to document participation in a viking campaign under the guidance of a certain Friggir/Freygeirr. The campaign led to central Sweden – possibly to the area around Lake Mälaren. The location of the Tirsted stone – as well as that of the previously discussed Sædinge stone, DR 217 – in the area along the southwestern coast of Lolland demonstrates easy passage into the Baltic Sea.

Simris stone I, DR 344

The Simris stone I was found in the wall of the Simris churchyard, and now stands on its own by the church. The design of the carving follows typical central Swedish style, with the main runic serpent running along the edges of the monument from left to right and additional intertwining serpents covering the inner surface. That is to say, the Simris stone represents the work of a Swedish carver or someone who was familiar with the style. Since the stone originates from the coastal areas of southern Skåne, the Swedish connections fall naturally.

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[241] The latter expression has sometimes been connected with references to the assumed viking leader Freygeirr figuring in a few Swedish runic inscriptions. In the meantime, the uncertain formulation of DR 216 and its earlier date do not favour that theory. For further comments, see 3.1.25.

DR 344 has been dated to ca. 1050-1100, and is thus younger than many other Danish rune stones.

The structure of the inscription is very basic: MMF and a short supplement. A certain Bjǫrngeirr has had the stone raised after his brother Hrafn who is further identified as Gunnulfr's lad in *Svíþjóð*: **su̜in · kunu̜--s · ɑ suiþiuþu**.[242] MMF occupies around half of the runic serpent, with the name of the commissioner placed approximately on the middle of the stone, and the name of the deceased and the relationship statement on the top. The reference **ɑ suiþiuþu** appears at the bottom right corner; there is a bigger space left in between the final **þ**-rune and **u**-rune so as to mark the end of the inscription.

What can be concluded from the laconic formulation is that at some point during his life, Hrafn took service at the household of a Swedish nobleman. We do not know whether he indeed died somewhere in central Sweden, or whether the regional identification functions as a reminder of his previous engagements. The former explanation seems more customary in the context of other commemorative runic references that refer to certain localities, but the explicit narrative content of the inscription does not reveal the actual emphasis. More important for our understanding is the fact that the Simris monument in itself refers to *Svíþjóð* (the land of Svea people) from the southern Swedish perspective. It originates from a region that was under Danish dominion, but culturally nevertheless linked to Svealand – and in this case the connections are demonstrated by particular stylistic features.

Finally, it is interesting to remark that whereas the Simris stone I is speaking of Gunnulfr's lad in *Svíþjóð*, the potentially earlier Simris stone II (DR 345) found from the same church commemorates a man who is characterised as **triks : knus**, i.e. Knútr's dreng. According to one interpretation DR 345 may tell of a man who stood in the service of Knútr ríki (DRI: 390). If this is the case, the two Simris inscriptions function as interesting complementary evidence to each other – one of them pointing in the direction of Denmark, the other one witnessing of ties with the Svea people. At the same time, the ornamentation on the Simris stone II follows the design of one runic serpent – typologically earlier than the design applied on Simris I – and parallels to the style of Swedish rune stones are also here clearly visible.

3.1.12. Sila

U 518	**i silu × nur**

Västra Ledinge rune stone, U 518

The rune stone at Västra Ledinge still stands on its original site, west of a small river whose source is Lake Viren. Two other lakes – Huvan and Addam – are situated in its vicinity.[243] The design of the monument shows one continuous text band running from left to right in the shape of two arches; on the middle of the stone, right above the bottom curve there is an additional short text band. On the very top a big cross is placed. The inscription starts at the

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[242] Alternatively, it has been suggested that the addition may concern the commissioner (cf. DRI: 388; 873).
[243] The stone was found in the 19th century lying on the ground; it was raised again in 1942 (UR II: 376). The find site is connected to ancient graves (Larsson 1990: 140).

bottom left corner and runs up and down along the arches concluding within the separate text band.

Structurally, the inscription consists of extended MMF (with two commissioners and three deceased) and additions. The layout supports in its own way this division, since the memorial formula occupies the first arch (on the left), whereas supplementary information about the deceased is fitted into the second arch. The prayer formula starts inside the same arch with **kuþ ihlbi --ʀạ**, and continues within the extra band where the words are: **ot x uk salu**. Such a separation technique places certain weight on the latter formulation concerning spirit and soul; the big cross further demonstrates the overall Christian emphasis of the monument.

The commissioners of the monument are a woman called Þorgerðr and a man called Sveinn. Their relationship to the three dead men Ormgeirr, Ormulfr and Freygeirr is not speci- fied. On the basis of comparative Swedish runic evidence we can assume that they belong to the same family. Þorgerðr and Sveinn could be a husband and wife commemorating their dead sons; or perhaps Sveinn is one of her sons, whereas one among the deceased is actually Þorgerðr's husband.[244] The people behind the monument obviously did not feel the need to include information that was apparent to them and their neighbours.

Instead they wished to focus upon the deaths that had occurred away from home: **on x etaþis x i silu x nur x ian þiʀ antriʀ x ut i x krikum**. From the formulation it is uncertain who has died where, but probably the last-mentioned Freygeirr – the name is recorded at the bottom of the stone – connects with the first identification **i silu x nur**. In the meantime, we start with the latter reference – an example of travelling that led to faraway areas, in this case to Byzantium (**krikum**).[245] The fact that the two men met their end abroad is underlined by the formulation **ut i**, with the meaning "out/abroad".[246]

In the expression **i silu x nur** we find another reference to Baltic traffic, representing com- munication between more closely located regions. Earlier interpretations have suggested a number of places – both of local and foreign nature; here we should mention two main versions. According to S. Bugge, the runes should be read as **i isilu**, which would then allite- rate with the preceding **itaþis**, normalised as *endaðis i Øysilu norr*, and translated as "döde paa Ösel nord" (Brate & Bugge 1887-1891: 60-61).[247] That interpretation has been objected to by Brate (1925: 19) on the basis of the given direction **nur** (ON *norðr*, north). In his opinion the reference *isilu* (i.e. *i sælu*) can connect with the Finnish harbour and trading site Salo (since 1652 known as Brahestad).

Both alternatives have been convincingly criticised by Otterbjörk (1961: 32-33). Otterbjörk points out that **i silu x nur** functions as an antithesis to **ut i x krikum**, and therefore one should search for a somewhat closer location (op. cit. 33). Indeed, such a relationship would also gain support from the patterns of layout, with two place indications appearing within the opposing branches of the right-hand arch. In Otterbjörk's opinion **nur** is not a designation for north, but stands for the Swedish word *nor*, with the meaning "narrow sound", whereas **silu** is

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[244] The latter explanation is given in UR (II: 378).
[245] For comments on the destination *Grikkland*, see subsection 2.4.; cf. also 3.3.3.
[246] Salberger (1997) has discussed the semantics of this particular expression. According to him the runic formulation ᚢᛏᛁ should in this inscription (as well as in some other cases) be read and understood as **ut i**, i.e. the **i**-rune should not be read twice as proposed by other scholars (op. cit. 68).
[247] Ösel is the Swedish name for the Estonian island of Saaremaa, in ON known as *Eysýsla*. For lack of a better alternative, several scholars have supported Bugge's argumentation.

genitive of *Sila*, an old name for the island of Selaön in Lake Mälaren (ibid.).[248] The formulation *i Silu nor* is thus to be understood as a reference to the sound of *Sila*, a passage between Selaön and the mainland, now known as Kolsund.[249]

The Västra Ledinge stone records the deaths of three men from Attundaland, two of whom died in Byzantium, and one in the sound of *Sila* – maybe as the result of an undertaken plundering trip, or maybe simply through drowning. Although the island of Selaön – which now belongs under Södermanland – does not lie that far from the Upplandic parish of Skederid, the mention of death occurring in its sound witnesses of waterborne traffic between different districts of Svealand. The image of traffic is further strengthened by the location of the Västra Ledinge stone in the area, where communication was based upon the network of rivers and lakes. It would have been possible to reach the sound of *Sila* along inland water routes; alternatively, one could have easily made their way out into the Baltic Sea, and then entered the region of Lake Mälaren. Selaön is in fact the biggest Scandinavian island located within a lake. In this light it is equally possible that the island was the intended final destination for Freygeirr, or functioned as a strategic point on the route that led further inland.

U 518 has sometimes been connected with other runic inscriptions that mention Freygeirr: in UR (II: 378-379) it is related to expeditions led by a certain Freygeirr as possibly illuminated by U 611, U 698† and Gs 13.[250] In the meantime, the mere occurrence of a similar name cannot alone prove any such links. Freygeirr is in U 518 among the commemorated, and nothing is said about his significant role as an expedition leader. The same name occurs in other Scandinavian runic inscriptions as well; according to NRL it is recorded in fourteen cases.

3.1.13. Uppsalir[251]

DR 279	a[t:] ub:salu̧m
DR 295	at : ub:¶:salum

Sjörup stone, DR 279

The Sjörup stone also comes from the landscape of Skåne. Its first recorded site was by a stone bridge, northeast of the Sjörup church (DRI: 333).[252]

Despite the obvious damages, most of the inscription is still clearly readable, and missing bits have been supplemented. The carving is a design of two arch-shaped text bands, which surround an additional vertical text band on the middle of the stone; also, the remains of a horizontal text band are visible at the bottom. In this manner the design demonstrates a continuous outer frame around the stone. The inscription starts in the outer and longer text

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[248] In ON the corresponding form is *nór*.

[249] Cf. also NRL and SRD.

[250] Cf. also Brate & Bugge (1887-1891: 61-66). The analysis of U 611, U 698† and Gs 13 is undertaken below.

[251] A possible early reference to Uppsala is found in the older inscription on the Sparlösa stone (Vg 119), which has been dated to the 9th century. It includes a formulation: **…sa- faþiʀ ubsal**, which has been interpreted as "then(?) the father sat(?) (in) Uppsala(?)." The inscription has been discussed in detail by von Friesen (1940). The iconography of the stone has been commented upon by Hyenstrand (1991).

[252] In the 19th century the stone was used in a bridge construction on the river Skivarpsån (DRI: 333). The preserved parts have been put together, and the stone has been raised again by the Sjörup church.

band, runs along the edge of the stone from right to left, and continues in the horizontal band, where the reading direction is from left to right. The rest of the inscription is found within the inner arch band (right-left), and along the vertical band (bottom-top).

Figure 16. Sjörup stone (DR 279). Photo: Runverket, RAÄ.

The text that could be considered MMF from the structural point of view is found within the outer frame made up of the arch and the horizontal band; in this manner the layout seems to support our identification of basic content elements. The name of the commissioner is found at the bottom right corner, and the name of the deceased along the upper left edge – a man Saxi commemorates his partner (**filαgo**) Ásbjǫrn. The bit within the horizontal band specifies that the latter was the son of Tófi (or Tóki).[253] Additional information about the deceased fills the inner surface of the stone: **sαʀ : flu : αki : α[t:] ub:salu̯m : αn : uα : mαþ : αn : u¶αbn : αf̣þi**. The formulation contains two phrases with alliterating pairs of words (*ægi* – *Upsalum*; *wa* – *wapn*). One of the alliterating elements is the place indication **ub:salu̯m** – placed at the top of the inner arch – referring to Uppsala. According to Hübler (1996: 132-133) the alliteration in the first phrase may be accidental, but through the rather untraditional second phrase a definite shade of stylization is added to the chosen wording.[254]

Although not stated explicitly, the overall expression that focuses on a particular battle situation may still signify Uppsala as the man's death place. The deceased is characterised by the statement that he did not flee, but fought as long as he had a weapon – the narrative imagery here echoes a certain tradition in depicting the hero, as witnessed also by extant skaldic poetry and sagas, where important features can be emphasised in terms of deliberate

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[253] Alternatively, this last piece of information could already be taken as an addition to the basic formula.
[254] For an analysis around the semantics of the expression, see also Jesch (2001: 243).

understatement, i.e. by choosing a wording of opposite meaning.[255] At the same time, the message of the Sjörup stone must have been shaped by actual virtues and ideals of the Viking Age – after all, the inscription functions as the death certificate, and not simply as a poetic dedication to a made-up hero.

With regard to the location, it should be pointed out that the Sjörup stone originates from the coastal region of southern Skåne (the church itself is only a few kilometres from the sea); its early connections to the river Skivarpsån – which leads out into the Baltic Sea – are also significant. From southern Skåne another rune stone is known (DR 295), where the very same expression – *saR flo ægi at Upsalum* – is recorded. The distance between the present sites of the two rune stones is approximately 15 kilometres. The potential historical connections between DR 279 and DR 295 will be discussed in the following.

Hällestad stone I, DR 295

Three rune stones – the Hällestad stones I-III (DR 295-297) – are found from the Hällestad church, east of Lund. They are all visible in the church walls; the original location is unknown. Due to some evident parallels between the inscriptions, and the fact that DR 295 and DR 297 seem to be inscribed by the same carver, these three rune stones are usually treated together. Of primary importance for us is DR 295, with its reference to Uppsala.
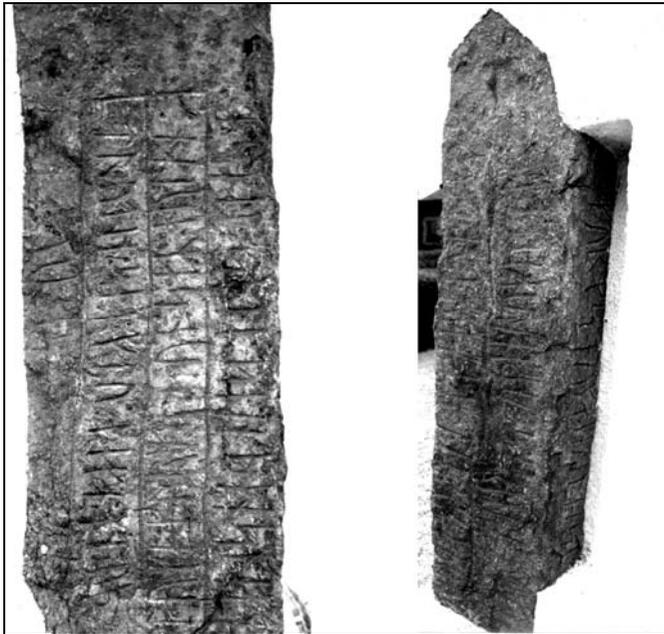
Figure 17. The Hällestad stone I (DR 295), side A and B-C. Photo: Kristel Zilmer.

The inscription on the Hällestad stone I covers three sides with vertical text bands, and is now partly hidden. On side A there are three long text bands and a short additional line. The

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[255] The specific technique of litotes has been analysed by Jacobsen (1932) both in connection with DR 279 and DR 295 (cf. next paragraph).

reading direction follows the principles of boustrophedon; the same applies to the two text bands on side B. On side C we find one text band. At the same time the rightmost line on side A – which introduces the inscription – corners the left line of side B, and the reading direction is in both cases the same (top-bottom).[256] These two lines actually demonstrate parallel contents and at the same time complete each other; the one on side A states: **askil : sati: stin : þansi : ift[iʀ]**; whereas on side B it is said: **satu : trikaʀ : iftiʀ : sin : bruþr**. That is to say, both lines deal with the commissioner(s) and the act of arranging a memorial after a dead man. In this regard they could be considered the focal point of the inscription.

The inscription as a whole is long and can be structured according to the following principles. There is a traditional statement in prose – which corresponds to MMF and one short addition – proceeded by a poetically shaped formulation that combines further references to the deceased with an additional focus on the commissioners, the act of commemoration and the monument.[257] The prose statement covers the first two text bands and the beginning of the third one on side A, informing us that the stone has been placed by a certain Áskell after Tóki Gormr's son, who is characterised as **saʀ : hulan : ¶ trutin** (*seR hullan drottin*). The poetical addition is introduced in the third text band and fills the rest of the inscription. It starts with the formulation: **saʀ : flu : aigi : at : ub:¶:salum**.[258] Additions on side B and C state that there was more than one commissioner involved in the raising of the monument. As mentioned above, the first line on side B casts light on some men who identify themselves as **trikaʀ** (*drængiaR*) and refer to Tóki as their brother. On side C we learn that they were also the followers of Tóki. Thus, on the one hand, the meaning of brotherhood between the men is emphasised, and on the other hand, it is clear that Tóki was their leader.[259]

DR 296 and DR 297 seem to refer partly to the same persons. DR 296 is set up by a man called Ásgautr who commemorates his brother Erra, defined as Tóki's *hempægi* (ON *heimþegi*, retainer), whereas DR 297 is arranged by Ásbjǫrn, Tóki's *hempægi*, in memory of his brother Tóki. Jesch (2001: 223) points out that the word 'brother' as applied in DR 295-297 may carry different meanings, and not necessarily indicate literate brotherhood. In DR 296 and DR 297, Tóki also appears to be the leader – other men can therefore be identified through a relationship to him, i.e. as his brothers and followers.[260] A further parallel between DR 295 and DR 296 lies in their poetical formulations that focus on the location of the rune stone. The former says: **stin : o : biarki : stuþan : runum**, and the latter: **nu : ¶ : skal : stato : stin : o : biarki**. According to these statements both rune stones were raised on a hill – that is to say, meant to be seen. Provided that DR 295 and DR 296 (and perhaps also DR 297) were originally raised in each other's neighbourhood somewhere in the area around

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[256] The top-bottom relationship is based upon the present placement of the stone in the church wall, whereas originally it could have stood in a different position.

[257] For an analysis of the alliterating elements of DR 295 as well as those of DR 296, see Hübler (1996: 133-134, 140).

[258] Note that the place name gets divided into two, the runes ᚢᛒ appear at the end of the text line and ᛋᛅᛚᚢᛘ forms a separate addition to the left of the main band. This corresponds to a certain degree to DR 279, where the word divider : is used in the middle of the place name.

[259] The meaning of the ON terms *drengr* and *dróttinn* in the runic and skaldic vocabulary is discussed by Jesch (2001: 216-232).

[260] As for the design, DR 296 is composed of four text bands (originally probably vertical), whereas DR 297 has one arch band around the edges of the stone.

Hällestad, the image of a hillock with three rune stones on it helps one to visualize the communicative setting around the monuments.

Due to their identical expressions that refer to Uppsala, DR 295 and DR 279 have often been analysed as potential evidence of a battle on the river Fyrisån. On the basis of some skaldic stanzas and saga narratives, the battle of *Fýrisvellir* is assumed to have taken place around 980.[261] The skaldic evidence consists of two stanzas by Þórvaldr Hjaltason, whereas the saga evidence includes passages from the saga of Óláfr Tryggvason by Oddr Snorrason, *Knýtlinga saga*, *Styrbjarna þáttr Svíakappa* in *Flateyjarbók*, and Saxo's chronicle.[262]

The historicity of the battle and possible links between the runic, skaldic and saga references are debated. The first one to present the hypothesis around the specific historical content of the Sjörup stone and the Hällestad stones was P.A. Munch in 1848, followed by Wimmer (cf. DRI: 349; Moberg 1937: 131-132). Soon after followed the critical rejection of the sources, through which no real proof was found for linking the different types of evidence.[263] In a critical article from 1932, Jacobsen focused on the technique of understatement occurring in the runic inscriptions. According to her the expression "they did not flee" actually meant to demonstrate that the men stormed forward (not that they stayed and fought while some others fled). In this way she attempted to show that there was no real correspondence between the runic inscriptions and the relevant skaldic stanzas (op. cit. 127-128).

Her conclusions have not always been completely shared by other scholars. Moltke (1985a: 295), for example, still favours the more literal explanation: "he did not run away (but some others did)". Moberg (1937: 135) does not accept the use of litotes as representing convincing evidence against parallels between the runic and skaldic formulations – according to him the outcome of the depicted battle would still be the same in both cases. At the same time, Moberg presents the argument that the verses composed by Þórvaldr Hjaltason have mostly been misunderstood. He re-examines their content, and arrives at the conclusion that they witness of a different battle and different leaders as compared to the runic references (op. cit. 139-140).

In modern scholarship, the discussions around the runic inscriptions' possible parallels to skaldic and saga evidence have nevertheless continued. Snædal Brink (1985: 19-20) gives emphasis to the localisation of the battle to the banks of the Fyrisån (*Fýrisvellir*) outside Old Uppsala, which in her opinion is supported by well-recorded authentic tradition.[264] More cautious is the position of Stoklund (1991: 292-294), who accepts that argumentation as a possibility, but at the same time underlines the general problems around any typological dating of the Sjörup and the Hällestad stones.

It is our conclusion that when assessed critically, the question of possible direct connections between the above-mentioned runic inscriptions and skaldic/saga evidence must remain open, as well as the question as for which exact battle the men from Skåne participated in.

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[261] A third runic inscription, Ög 81, with its possible reference to the Fyrisån, has sometimes also been included in the discussion (cf. Snædal Brink 1985). For further analysis of Ög 81, see 3.1.15.

[262] See Moberg (1937: 129); Snædal Brink (1985: 15-18); Strid (1993). In fact, the two above-mentioned skaldic stanzas are preserved in the frames of *Styrbjarna þáttr Svíakappa*. See more about the skaldic stanzas in 4.1.2.1., and relevant saga passages in 4.2.3.3. and 4.2.4.1.

[263] The main representatives for such criticism were L. Weibull and C. Weibull. For a discussion, see e.g. Jacobsen (1932: 124-125); Moberg (1937: 130-135).

[264] From a different point of view, S.Ö. Ohlsson (2001) has seeked the historicity of the Skåne rune stones as evidence of the battle that Knútr ríki had on the river Helgeån, partly based upon the theory of B. Gräslund (1986), who suggests that the latter battle should instead of the traditional localisation to Skåne, rather be connected to Helgå in southeastern Uppland.

Uppsala and its environs were without doubt an important locality in the Nordic tradition, a cultural-historical central place. Several battles – both on a local and regional scale – must have taken place there at different times. Attempts to establish connections between bits of history that are known can prove useful, but it has to be remembered that history consists also of the unknown. The mere fact that the name of one locality/region is repeated on a couple of occasions does not automatically connect the circumstances around their description. Furthermore, when we find parallel formulations in the sources it may simply reflect how similar vocabulary was applied in certain types of depictions.

If not linked to the skaldic and saga evidence, the runic references to a battle at Uppsala may at least be mutually connected, and relate a strife at the end of the 10th century or the beginning of the 11th century, where among others a certain Tóki and his followers fought and demonstrated courage. That event was considered important enough to be marked in runes.

3.1.14. Svía

DR 37F(?)	i suiu

Egtved stone, DR 37

The Egtved stone from Nørrejylland – found in the church porch – is now placed in the weapon house (DRI: 62). Only part of the original monument is preserved. The design shows three vertical text bands. The reading direction in the outer bands is bottom-top, and in the middle one top-bottom. When establishing the order of the lines, it is usually assumed that the inscription starts on the right, continues along the left line and concludes in the middle; this order is assumed to make the most sense content-wise.[265]

Presumably the inscription started with memorial formula, where the name of the commissioner was given alongside that of the deceased, extended with the preserved byname Fáinn (the Coloured).[266] Then followed a short supplement concerning the place of death – ṭu ǀ i suiu – and only then was the statement of relationship – i.e. brotherhood – made, followed by additional focus on the monument.[267]

It is not completely confirmed that the preserved text lines have to be read in that particular order. For one, the fragmentary state of the stone does not reveal the actual message in its full length, and we do not how long the missing parts were. Secondly, on many other similarly designed Danish runic monuments, vertical text bands follow each other according to the prin-ciple of boustrophedon. Thirdly, the meaning of the word **skarni** is uncertain. Therefore, theoretically the inscription may just as well have followed the order of lines from right to left, with the sequence: **… at faiṇ [·] ṭu ǀ i suiu · raist ¶ stain · sasi · skarni ·…¶… …uþiʀ ·aft ·bruþur**.[268] Although the exact pattern of composition cannot be established, one interesting fact, though, seems clear. Namely, the Egtved stone records the place of death of

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[265] See Jacobsen (1935b: 194); DRI (column 62); Moltke (1985a: 522).
[266] Jacobsen (1935b: 190) and Moltke (1985a: 343) find it possible that the byname focused on some characteristic aspect of the person's appearance, e.g. perhaps he was tattooed.
[267] For a suggested reconstruction of the end part, see Jacobsen (1935b: 192-193).
[268] It could be suggested that **skarni** represents instead a runic personal name, not recorded otherwise.

that mysterious Fáinn. The interpretation offered for the phrase **t̩u ꞉ i suiu** suggests a location within the Baltic area. *Svía* could be understood as a reference to a settlement located in the present-day Vaksala parish, not far from Uppsala. Jacobsen (1935b: 191-192) explains that *Svía* was situated between two important sailing routes, leading to the east and to the south, which is why it must have also been a familiar (trade) station for people from Denmark.[269] The location of the Egtved stone not far from the eastern coast – as is the case with other Baltic traffic inscriptions from northern Jylland – demonstrates access to the Danish straits and the Baltic Sea.

DR 37 has by its reference to *Svía* provided us with yet another runic expression of traffic between Denmark and Sweden. In the following subsection, where the focus lies on the evidence of Ög 81 and U 214, we shall to a certain degree turn our attention back to some possible mention of Danish areas in the Swedish context (cf. 3.1.1- 3.1.7.) These two inscriptions may add further details to the depiction of Danish-Swedish connections – now also from the perspective of the Högby stone from Östergötland, to which even the ambiguous reference of U 214 could be linked. In the meantime, Ög 81 also contains a reference to a locality in the environs of Uppsala, which allows us to set the inscription in relation to the previously discussed DR 279, DR 295 and DR 37.[270]

3.1.15. Place name ambiguities: Fœri, Holmr, Holms haf, Oddr

Ög 81	**o ꞉ furi; o hulmi; ɑt uti**
U 214	**ɑ · holms · hafi**

Högby stone, Ög 81

The Högby stone is one of the best known and most studied rune stones in Östergötland, besides the Rök stone (Ög 136). The stone was exposed when part of the old Högby church was torn down (ÖgR: 80). It is now raised on the yard, at the spot where the church used to be. Ög 81 has been dated to the end of the 10th or the beginning of 11th century.

The original location of the stone is unknown; it should be pointed out that the parish of Högby is situated on the eastern coast of Lake Vättern. From environs around the Högby church, other rune stones are also known, e.g. Ög 82, which is contemporary with Ög 81 – both are carved by the same man, Þorkell – and reveals the local place name **hugbu** (i.e. *Haugbýr*, Högby). Since Ög 82 claims that Eyvindr Tosti's son owned Högby, we can regard the place name as an indication of an early estate. That is to say, the inscription confirms that the people of Högby identified themselves through that very place name. Also of interest is a third rune stone from the Högby church, Ög 83, which commemorates a man who died in the west (**uʀstr**).

Ög 81 is a monument of impressive size and visual appearance. It measures more than three metres, but is rather slim for its height. The inscription covers the front and the back side of the stone; the latter protrudes along the middle and falls into two halves. On the front side, the inscription runs within a runic serpent along the edge of the stone from left to right. The

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[269] See also the commentaries on the linguistic and historical meaning of *Svía* by Ståhl (KLNM XVII: 482).
[270] For this reason we have chosen to treat Ög 81 in the frames of the following subsection.

serpent's head and tail are tied together at the bottom. The head points in the direction of a cross that is on both sides connected to the runic band. On the back side, the runic serpent forms a continuous line that curves several times around the stone heading inwards and covering most of the inner surface of the stone. The inscription runs from the head of the serpent to its tail. Out of the tail shoots a separate text band, where the reading direction is bottom-top. The final three runes and end mark are placed outside, to the left of the bottom part of that text band. Visually the back of the monument gives the impression of continuity.

Figure 18. Högby stone (Ög 81), side B. Photo: Thomas Carlson & Gunnar Nordin 2005. Runebru.se. Uppsala, Sweden.

The structure of the inscription is the following: MMF, a short addition concerning the man who is commemorated by the formula, a longer addition that also tells of his other family members, and the carver signature. Judging from the layout we could divide the inscription into two parts. On the front side we find the memorial formula, where a it is said that Þorgerðr commemorates her mother's brother Ǫzurr, alongside a simple identification of his death place; he died *austr i Grikkium*.[271] The name of the deceased and his relationship to the commissioner gain a prominent position on the top. The designation **austr** is placed on the right-

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[271] As with U 518 (cf. 3.1.12), we find in the inscription parallel references to various destinations, with one among them being the popular Byzantium.

hand side, on the same level with the cross (ca. one metre above the ground).[272] Unfortunately we do not know the original placement of the stone; otherwise it would have been interesting to explore whether there was any real life correspondence between the inscribed reference 'east' and the actual eastern direction. Hypothetically one may suggest that the stone could have been positioned in such a way that the side including the eastern reference was indeed pointing towards the east.[273]

On the back side of the Högby stone we find a poetically formulated addition, which follows the principles of alliteration according to *fornyrðislag*, a well-known metre from eddic poetry. The addition is in its essence a memorial verse that introduces the kin of Ǫzurr, and points out different death places. The concluding element of the inscription is a short carver formula. Therefore, we may agree with the description of Ög 81 as an inscription where shorter prose formulations frame the memorial verse (cf. T. Andersson 1971: 22).

The verse is formulated in a simple manner, and the language used is not too elaborated. Andersson has even characterised it as a kind of 'katalogdikt' (catalogue poem), with its list of people and places (op. cit. 23). At the same time, the word order underlines the poetical nature of the formulation (cf. Hübler 1996: 82-83). Three place names woven into the memorial verse can be set into connection with localities in the Baltic region; but, as we shall see below, different interpretations have been offered.

The verse is introduced with the statement: **kuþr · karl · kuli · kat · fim · syni**. The following formulations deal with these five sons of Gulli. About the first one, Ásmundr, it is said: **feal · o · furi · frukn · treks · asmutr**. The reference **o · furi** has been taken to designate the area on/around the river Fyrisån. This understanding was first presented by Brate & Bugge (1887-1891: 231-233). An earlier suggestion by Stephens was that **furi** referred to the island of Fur in Limfjord (cf. ÖgR: 82; Ljunggren 1964: 46-47). Ljunggren, on the other hand, regards both options as equally possible (1964: 49-50, 61). Andersson admits that the connection with Limfjord would be acceptable from the historical point of view, since it must have been an important area for England-travellers. At the same time, the preserved runic form in dative is not compatible with the name *Fur*, which most likely had a feminine genus (T. Andersson 1971: 25-27). Therefore, the first alternative is preferable.[274]

The exact geographical site of **o · furi** is nevertheless not certain – here the use of the preposition **o** causes further complications – but the reference seems to correspond to modern designations of lake-like formations that can be found along the river, i.e. the Upper Fyri (in Swedish 'Övre Föret') and the Lower Fyri ('Nedre Föret') (see e.g. Snædal Brink 1985: 20). Andersson (1971: 31) sees in **o · furi** an identification of a marshland district by the river. Somewhere in that region Ásmundr fell in a strife that may have unfolded both on land and on water.[275]

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[272] The right cross arm, in fact, points this word out, whereas the left arm connects with the monument marker **stin**.

[273] This is an important additional question to consider when examining inscriptions that include designations of directions, and are still found on their original sites. The limitations of the current study have not enabled us to explore corresponding cases, so they will have to be the focus of future research.

[274] For the etymology and geographical connotations around the Old-Swedish word *Føri*, see T. Andersson (1971: 27-31).

[275] As mentioned above, the expression **feal · o · furi**, has sometimes been taken to witness of the battle of *Fýrisvellir* in the 980s, and compared to Uppsala-references in DR 279 and DR 295 (cf. 3.1.13.). The context is nevertheless too uncertain, and the evidence too sporadic to allow the confirmation of such claims.

Two other place names occur in Ög 81 that may indeed refer to Danish areas. The runic formulation **uarþ · o hulmi · halftan · tribin** concerns the third son of Gulli, a certain Halfdan.[276] The place where Halfdan was killed is identified as *Holmr*, and most likely it designates the island of Bornholm – this interpretation goes back to Stephens and has been supported by several scholars (cf. e.g. Ljunggren 1964: 61; T. Andersson 1971: 34). The place name *Borgundarhólmr* appears in a shortened form in skaldic poetry, and also in the accounts of Adam of Bremen (Ljunggren 1964: 50-51). An earlier interpretation by Brate suggested instead *á holmi*, with the meaning of fighting a 'holmgang' (cf. Brate & Bugge 1891: 228-229). But the composition of the inscription as a whole – with a focus on the brothers and their death places – favours the former explanation.[277] Alternatively, *Holmr* has been connected with the eastern destination *Holmgarðr*. At the same time we see that the latter place was recorded as *Holmgarðr* in the preserved runic material, where it appears in three cases.[278]

Perhaps most problematic has been the expression **kari · uarþ · at uti**, and its relation to the preceding and proceeding formulations. Clearly it relates the fate of the fourth brother Kári; usually it is suggested that the word **tribin** used in connection with Halfdan's death is also implied here. An interpretation of the reference **at uti** – again deriving from Stephens – relates it to Dundee in Scotland (ÖgR: 83; cf. also S.B.F. Jansson 1984: 96). Being an otherwise unknown destination, this interpretation seems unlikely. A different theory suggests that **at uti** concerns some headland (in Swedish 'udde'). According to T. Andersson (1971: 37) the linguistic evidence points in the direction of an old place name *Od*, i.e. Odde – the northwestern headland of the Danish island of Sjælland. From the formulation it appears as though Kári died somewhere in the neighbourhood of that headland; perhaps he was killed during a sea battle. On the other hand, it has been proposed that the **at** in this phrase expresses negation, which would lead to the conclusion that Kári did not die abroad, but at home – as did indeed the fifth brother Búi, of whom it is said: **auk · tauþr · bui** (cf. Brate & Bugge 1891: 235; ÖgR: 82). T. Andersson (1971: 39) finds that syntactic pattern too complicated to fit into the otherwise simple memorial verse.[279]

The inscription on the Högby stone has through its memorial verse depicted the large-scale activities of a group of brothers: one of them died in Byzantium, the second one somewhere along the river Fyrisån, the third one on Bornholm, and the fourth in the waters around northwestern Sjælland. In connection with Qzurr's death the more neutral verb *endast* is used, whereas with Ásmundr's death the verb is *falla*, and with Halfdan's death *drepa* (the latter can also refer to Kári). The variation of verbs – although fitting well into the poetical scheme of alliteration – must have been to a certain degree motivated by the real circumstances around their deaths. The fifth brother possibly died at home – unless the formulation **auk · tauþr · bui** should instead be connected with the previous announcements about Halfdan and Kári.

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[276] It is introduced after repeating the information about Qzurr's death in Byzantium.

[277] Further evidence that has been linked to that reference consists of the formulation *a Holms hafi* in U 214; see the next paragraph.

[278] Cf. Sö 171, U 687, G 220, in subsection 3.1.22.

[279] For further discussion around the structure and the contents of the last verse pair, see T. Andersson (op. cit. 38-47).

With regard to the verse composition we may note that whereas the first three brothers have each gained a verse pair (consisting of two alliterating phrases), the last two have to share one. This condition has elegantly been explained, as caused by the stylistic and metric strategies of the composer of the verse (T. Andersson 1971: 46-47). In order to avoid introducing new motives besides the identification of death places, he has combined the phrase commemorating Búi's death at home with the one about Kári. To compensate for the lacking elements in the verbal phrase concerning the death of Kári, that expression has been connected by its content to the verse line about Halfdan (ibid.).[280] Indeed, this last strategy would also make sense with regard to the identified localities: both brothers were killed near the Danish islands in southern Scandinavia, perhaps even during related campaigns, although the formulation creates the image of separate occasions.

Finally, we wish to focus on certain other content elements. All the personal names mentioned in the inscription in a way serve as a further identification of Ǫzurr, by letting him figure in the context of other family members (his father and four brothers). On the other hand, the memorial verse demonstrates that the Högby stone is a monument for the whole family. Traditionally the latter explanation is given primary importance; the fact that only one man is named in the main memorial formula is understood as him being the last one to die (cf. T. Andersson 1971: 22). But if this is the case, one may wonder why the brothers are mentioned in that particular order in the memorial verse – does this have to do with metrical considerations; is this a list based upon their age; or do we find certain considerations behind the order of recorded destinations?

The order of the verse pairs could theoretically have been somewhat different (one could have e.g. first related the death of Ǫzurr, and then about Ásmundr or Halfdan); so this was most likely not the deciding factor. As for the age of the brothers, no concrete claims can be made.

Regarding the back side of the Högby stone, it is also hard to search for further explanations from the inscription layout – the design of a continuous curving text band does not reveal much concerning the potential planning behind the placement of elements. The only obvious observation is that whereas the information about the four brothers is placed within the curving runic serpent – and may therefore appear as one entity – the statement of Búi's death (alongside the carver formula) appears in the additional text band.[281]

Concerning the order of established destinations (the river Fyrisån, Byzantium, Bornholm and Sjællands Odde), we observe that first a closer district in the north/east is named, followed by a faraway eastern destination; then the attention is turned to the areas located to the south/west, starting with the island of Bornholm and concluding with the headland of Sjælland that points out to the west. Naturally, this order may be perfectly accidental, and therefore no further conclusions can be drawn on that basis.[282] It is possible that the order of content elements has to do with successive campaigns – arranged at different times – in which one brother after another found his death. With Ǫzurr's enterprise being perhaps the most significant, since this took him all the way to Byzantium, he deserved to be mentioned separately on the front side of the monument.

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[280] On the other hand, Andersson even recognises the possibility that the three first-mentioned brothers died abroad, and the latter two at home; see the discussion (pp. 38-47).

[281] This may even support the idea of the four dying away from home, as opposed to Búi.

[282] With regard to the layout, the first place reference appears along the top right corner; the second in the upper left part; the third one is placed in the centre of the top part; and the fourth one in the bottom left part.

What may be concluded, is that the Högby stone appears as a record of multiple travels undertaken by some brothers from eastern Götaland, both to closer and more remote destinations. The appearance of the monument as well as the formulated memorial verse signify the way in which that particular kin wanted to be seen and remembered.

Rune stone from Vallentuna church, U 214

U 214 – quoted in the title of the thesis – was found during the renovation of the Vallentuna church in 1937 (UR I: 325). Now the rune stone is placed inside the weapon house. It forms a pair monument together with another rune stone from the same church, U 215, where the beginning of the inscription is found.[283] The latter is only fragmentarily preserved but can be supplemented (cf. UR I: 329-331). U 214 and U 215 have been dated to ca. 1100; their original site is unknown.
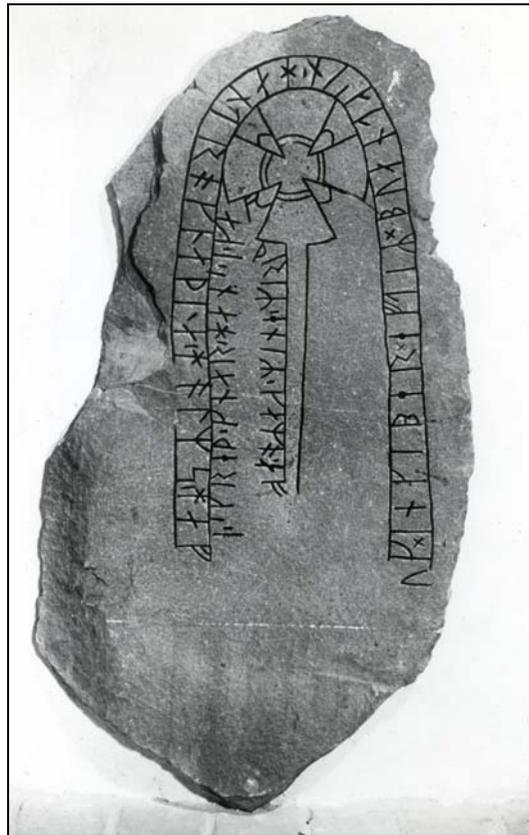
Figure 19. Rune stone from Vallentuna church (U 214). Photo: Runverket, RAÄ.

The carving on U 214 is well preserved. The design shows an arch band around the edges of the stone, and two text lines that are placed in the inner surface, to the right of the arch and to

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[283] Among further connections, U 216 should be pointed out – it also comes from the Vallentuna church, and is carved by Drósbói, who is the assumed carver of U 214.

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the left of a big cross. The upper and side arms of the cross touch the arch, whereas its elongated lower arm forms a frame for the additional text. The inscription starts on the right and runs inside the arch band to the left, continues with the adjoining line to the right, which is directed upwards, and then comes down again along the line that corners on the lower cross arm. In a way, even the additional runic text appear as a small arch, since the final **f**-rune that belongs together with the word on the left is actually placed in between two lines.[284]

U 215 introduces the memorial: there we find the memorial formula that identifies two women as commissioners – the deceased is characterised as a father and brother, but his name is not mentioned. The inscription on U 214 starts with an additional commemoration: **uk x inkiber x eftiʀ x buanta x sin**, which occupies the first half of the arch band. Even here the name of the dead man remains implicit. The supplements concern the circumstances around his death, and are formulated in verse form. What makes the inscription really unique is the fact that besides alliteration, it also applies end rhyme: **han · troknaþi ⦙ a · holms · hafi · skreþ · knar · hans · i · kaf þriʀ · eniʀ · kamo · af**. This is the earliest Swedish example of end rhyme (UR I: 328).

The first phrase, with information that he drowned in Holmr's Sea, is placed inside the left half of the arch band, but the final **i**-rune in the word *hafi* is separated from the rest and appears already in the inner text line. From the perspective of layout, the formulation **skreþ · knar · hans · i · kaf þriʀ · eniʀ · kamo · af** (i.e. his ship drifted to the sea bottom, only three came out alive) functions as an additional explanation to the main statement within the arch band, where the place of death has been identified. The placement of the **i**-rune – for which there would have been enough space in the arch band as well – must have been a conscious strategy. The aim might have been to carry the meaning over to the next part of the inscription, and create some inner continuity and dynamics with regard to the poetic formulation. The same strategy probably also guided the separate placement of **f**-rune in *kaf*, as described above.[285]

The interpretation of the phrase *a Holms hafi* has been a topic of discussion. S.B.F. Jansson has on several occasions suggested that Holmr's Sea could be a short form of *Holmgarðr*'s sea, referring to the Gulf of Finland.[286] That region must have indeed hosted lively traffic – it initiated the water route leading to the Ladoga-Ilmen region, where *Holmgarðr* was one of the main destinations. In the meantime, as already pointed out in connection with the place indication **o hulmi** in Ög 81, the reference could have also been made to the seawaters around Bornholm.

Despite the ambiguity, it can be concluded that Holmr's Sea in U 214 connects with some part of the Baltic Sea; there an event of shipwreck occurred and several men died, since it is emphasised that only three survived. The man commemorated by U 214 and U 215 drowned, as demonstrated by the use of the verb *drukna* (ON).[287] The designation *knǫrr*, as recorded in

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[284] Judging from preserved drawings, U 215 has had the design of a runic serpent, forming an arch on the stone.

[285] It has been proposed that the carver wanted to mark the end rhyme in this manner, see UR (I: 328); Hübler (1996: 121-122).

[286] See UR (I: 327); Jansson (1949: 111-112; 1954: 50; 1956: 20).

[287] Wulf (1997) has discussed eight Swedish and two Danish runic inscriptions that witness of death through drowning, and apply the same verb: Sö 39, Sö 83†, Sö 318, Vg 174, U 29, U 214, U 455, Gs 7, DR 190, DR 379. Sö 39 is another Baltic traffic inscription, referring to *Lífland* (cf. 3.1.25.); whereas Sö 83† commemorates a man who drowned in England, and Sö 318 a man who drowned in *Bágr* (Båven in Södermanland).

U 214, is usually understood as a seagoing ship used for trading and raiding (UR I: 327).[288] U 214 adds poetical flavour to the description by combining the nautical term with the verb *skríða* (ON, 'glide'). Although the exact background of the trip remains uncertain, we know that it ended in a disaster. The three different women who commissioned the rune stones all suffered a personal loss. U 214 is arranged by the wife of the deceased; U 215 by his daughter and sister. At the same time, the inscriptions are connected to each other by their content, so together they make up a unified commemorative monument.

The district of Vallentuna, on the eastern coast of Uppland, is known for its many rune stones; many among them are concentrated around Lake Vallentunasjön, which according to S. Brink (1997: 424) could still have been a bay in the early Viking Age, providing good water routes.[289] With Vallentuna being a district of outstanding men and outstanding activities, it is no wonder that some of them ventured around the Baltic Sea and also beyond it, as witnessed by a number of recorded travelling destinations.[290] A number of Vallentuna monuments offer further insight into the lives of certain prominent families – first and foremost the kin of Jarlabanki. One of these monuments, U 212, also comes from the Vallentuna church (it is now raised in the churchyard). In this inscription Jarlabanki praises himself, and states that he alone owns the local settlement of Täby (*Tábýr*). On the other side of the stone it is further clarified that he made the assembly-place, and owned the whole hundred. From additional runic inscriptions Jarlabanki is known for improving local communications by building bridges and clearing roads.

3.1.16. Gotland

Sö 174	**ɑ : kut:lanti**
U 414†	**ɑf · kutlanti**
U 527F	**o̦ : kutloti**
U 614	**ɑ kutlanti**
DR 259	**o · kutlati**
DR 220	**o : ku…**
Sö 47 (?)	**o · ku…**

Aspö stone, Sö 174

Sö 174 is now raised in the weapon house of the Aspö church, its original location is unknown. Some parts of the inscription have been weathered down, which has, for example, caused problems with establishing the name of the commissioner.[291] Most of the inscription is placed inside a runic serpent; it starts by the serpent's head on the left and follows its body to

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[288] The word is recorded in five other runic inscriptions: Sö 49, Sö 198, U 258, U 654 and U 1016. Sö 198 will be analysed in detail in subsection 3.1.26. U 258 from the Fresta church contains a reference to Norwegians; U 654 is an Ingvarr inscription, whereas U 1016 uses the designation in connection with travels to Byzantium.

[289] S. Brink discusses the possibilities of identifying a prehistoric land, *Valand*, "a settlement district around the lake/bay of Vallentunasjön". He also explains that "the settlements within this district were all situated on the shores of the lake or bay" (op. cit. 426).

[290] Other significant Vallentuna rune stones are U 180 (3.1.20.) and U 209 (3.1.21.).

[291] In SRD the following variants have been listed: Ólafr/Óblauðr/Upphlaupr(?).

the right. The conclusion is formed by an additional line of reversed runes that run around the top right corner underneath the serpent band. The design also includes a big cross.[292]

This inscription demonstrates several interesting features: for one, MMF is extended by supplementary monument markers. The first one, *kumbl*, is the primary marker and refers to the monument itself, *likhus/liknhus* means a kind of hospice for travellers (or alternatively a sarcophagus), and *bro* a bridge.[293] Palm (1992: 177) explains that *kumbl* is a broad term, which besides the stone can refer to other components of the memorial, including the runic inscription. Stoklund (1991: 287) discusses the frequent plural usage of the word in Danish inscriptions and emphasises that it does not necessarily refer to more than one memorial stone; it may have been applied with a certain collective meaning, designating the stone that was covered with runes. The statements of having made a bridge and a hospice carry Christian content; they document the need of the missionary church to improve communications by promoting the construction of bridges, establishment of causeways and small shelters where travellers (missionaries) could stay. With the memorial comprising a rune stone, a hospice and a bridge, the status and wealth of the commissioner are also underlined.

The memorial formula occupies the first half of the runic serpent, with the name of the dead son, Bjǫrn, placed on top. Additional components further illuminate his fate. Firstly, a simple statement – running along the top right edge of the stone – clarifies his place of death: **uɑʀ trebin : ɑ : kut:lɑnti**. As we hear, he was killed in Gotland. The rest of the runic serpent is filled with a more extraordinary addition, which has unfortunately not been completely preserved. It is formulated partly in verse (cf. Hübler 1996: 134). The final word **hɑltɑ** is placed outside the serpent, alongside the prayer formula for the spirit of the deceased. The separation of the prayer from the rest of the inscription may have been a conscious layout strategy; it runs right above the cross, and in this manner brings extra focus to the Christian message of the monument.

The first phrase in the poetical addition relates that the man lost his life because his followers fled: **þy : lit : fiur · sit : fluþu : kɑnkiʀ**. This signals that some strife had taken place in Gotland during which the man was killed. The not so honourable claim that his men left him behind – if we indeed take this literally – could demonstrate the bitterness of the father who had to face the fact that his son's enterprise did not succeed. Such a formulation lets us at least guess at some of the individual motives behind the recorded incident. Parallels could, on the other hand, be drawn to two above-mentioned Danish inscriptions, DR 279 and DR 295, which clearly state that the commemorated man did not flee. Indirectly, the Aspö stone also seems to focus on the courageous traits of the deceased. The rest of the information that concerns his death circumstances remains unclear; it possibly refers to something that the followers did not want to hold.

The inscription on the Aspö stone offers a glimpse into the enterprise of some men who travelled from the island of Aspö to Gotland.[294] Following the route where Lake Mälaren

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[292] The suggested date for the Aspö stone would be the first half of the 11th century, based upon typological dating.

[293] U 818 also has **likhus : ɑuk : bru** as complementary monument markers. U 996 informs about the raising of the stone and the making of **ɑur** (*aur*, 'ford') and **siluɑus** (*sæluhus*, 'hospice'). Interesting is its formulation **kerɑ · ɑur · uṭɑ i̯ ṣu[n]ti**, relating that the ford was made out in the sound. For more information on the so-called bridge inscriptions, see Zilmer (2002a). Further comments can also be found in subsection 3.3.4..

[294] In the vicinity, an interesting rock inscription is also known, still preserved on its original site – Sö 175. The carving is composed of two runic serpents and the figure of a man. The inscription refers to the making of landmarks and contains a unique additional statement, to which we shall return in the concluding discussion (cf. 5.2.).

drains out into the Baltic Sea, it did not take them long to reach Gotland in the middle of the Baltic Sea. The purpose of the trip was possibly a minor raid that ended in fighting and the killing of Bjǫrn.

Rune stone from Norrsunda church, U 414†

The lost rune stone from Norrsunda is known only through 17th century records, and already then it was in damaged condition, with big parts of the stone, and hence the inscription, missing. It is known that the stone had the mushroom shape that is characteristic of Gotlandic picture stones. Preserved drawings depict the stone having a runic serpent running along its edge, and one diagonal and one horizontal band crossing the inner surface. The top part of the stone carried a cross.

Connections with Gotland are further demonstrated by the inscription, which presumably stated that the stone had been transported from Gotland. There is general agreement about this piece of information – placed in the top part of the stone – whereas other components of the inscription have caused greater interpretation problems (cf. UR II: 193-194). It seems that the inscription deviated somewhat from what we call the customary pattern of comme-moration. It probably introduced the names of the commissioners first, followed by the state-ment that they brought the stone from Gotland: **þiʀ · fyrþu · stin · þina · af · kutlanti**. The attention was thus orientated towards this act (of commemoration?), with the purpose of emphasising the origin of the monument. This, without doubt, carried in itself connotations to the wealth of the commissioners, since they were able to afford such a venture.

The following part of the inscription was possibly made up of the actual memorial formula: the name of the deceased is not preserved, but he is determined to be the brother of the commissioners. The final phrase could have contained further information about the deceased and/or the commissioners, probably starting with an ownership declaration: **on iti · þisa**.

Despite such fragmentary knowledge, at least one of the communicative purposes of the Norrsunda monument appears clear: it mediated the choices of some people who must have been so impressed by the Gotlandic style of stones that they decided to transport one of these home. The inscription then probably had the parallel function of declaring that such an event had taken place as well as that of commemorating the dead brother.[295] The recorded reference to the import of a stone from Gotland demonstrates contacts between Attundaland and Gotland. Transportation naturally depended on water routes: coming from the Baltic Sea, one probably sailed again into the Mälaren region and headed along connecting waterways into the district around Norrsunda, where the stone was raised and supplied with an inscription.[296]

Rune stone from Frötuna church, U 527

From the Frötuna church, a few rune stone fragments have been found. U 527 is now placed in the weapon house; what is left of this rune stone probably made up the upper left part of

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[295] The transportation of stones within the same district has been recorded by a few other Swedish runic inscriptions, e.g. U 735, where we hear that the stone was brought from its place in Langgarn; a possible case could be U 736†. In Norway the older inscription on the Alstad stone (N 61, Oppland) probably also suggests stone tranportation, in this case from *Hringaríki, Ulfey*.

[296] In UR (II: 193) it is assumed that the stone was originally raised on a grave close to the church. But it could have also been taken to the church later; from the same church other rune stone fragments are known, as well as a grave slab, U 413.

the original monument (UR II: 395).[297] The design seems to have been a version of an 8-shaped runic serpent.

The structure of the complete inscription has most likely been the following: MMF, additional information about the deceased and finally a separate name, Holmsteinn, which may have indicated the carver.[298] In the supplemented form, the memorial formula seems to have identified a certain Eyndr as the commissioner of the monument; he is commemorating his father. On the actually preserved part, the formulations **...ḳ : sut : ǫ : kutloti : hkni : o : syk** and **buti : uhlmstan** are visible – they thus seem to constitute the end of the inscription.[299] The expression **...ḳ : sut : ǫ : kutloti** that introduces the supplementary part has rather convincingly been interpreted as *[to]k sott a Gutlandi*, i.e. "was taken ill in Gotland". The inscription seems to continue with the name of the dead father, and his further identification through a local place name. SRD reads *Hagni(?)/Agni(?) a Sikum(?)*. Snædal Brink & I. Jansson (1983b: 442) suggest that the place name refers to present-day Sika, located approximately 3.5 km southeast of the church. A description of the dead as the best of husbandmen may also have been added.

The exact content as well as the context of the fragmentary U 527 cannot be established, but significantly enough it contains a reference to someone falling ill in Gotland. The possible local place reference to Sika offers us an idea of the original site of the monument. Sika belongs to the coastal region of Uppland (Roden); it lies on Lake Limmaren, south of Norrtäljeviken, which provides a direct passage into the Baltic Sea.

That runic inscriptions could indeed mention sickness as the cause of death also becomes apparent from the next example.

Torsätra stone, U 614

U 614 originally stood on the roadside at Torsätra, opposite U 613.[300] The design of U 614 shows one runic serpent providing an almost quadrangular frame for the stone, and additional serpents in the inner surface. The head and the tail of the serpent cross at the bottom, with the head pointing to the right and the tail to the left.[301]

The inscription starts in the head of the serpent and runs along its body from left to right, reaching the point where the head and tail cross. Its end statement – **kialt · toku · a kutlanti** – is not found inside the tail, although there would have been enough space there to hold at least part of it. Instead, the phrase is placed on the middle of the stone, where the runes run partly above the tail and partly above the head.[302]

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[297] There is no earlier information avalaible on the monument as a whole, but some extra fragments have been recorded.

[298] Stille (1999: 139) suggests that U 527 was carved by Viðbjǫrn – the same man who has signed U 524. He explains that single names can function either as subject or object – this would point in the direction of finding references to an additional sponsor, or another deceased (although the latter would normally require a corresponding preposition) (op. cit. 146).

[299] For different attempts at unified interpretation, see UR (II: 396-398).

[300] Now both rune stones are located at Statens Historiska Museum in Stockholm.

[301] The carving on U 613 shows partly similar technique: the runic serpent follows the natural contours of the stone, in this case forming an arch; the head and tail cross, with the former pointing to the left and the latter to the right. Both U 614 and U 613 have been attributed to Véseti. The attribution suggests a date in the second half of the 11th century, more precisely around 1060-1070.

[302] U 613 also shows a specific layout strategy: MMF starts at the top of the stone and occupies the right half of the serpent; the supplement about the deceased is introduced within the tail, runs upwards along the left edge and concludes within the extended upper cross arm.

Figure 20. Torsätra stone (U 614). Photo: Runverket, RAÄ.

The structure is simple: MMF and an addition that concerns the deceased and possibly also the commissioners. As stated by the inscription, Skúli and Folki have raised the stone after their brother Húsbjǫrn (or Ásbjǫrn). It is further said: **hn us∣ ∣siok · uti · þa þiʀ · kialt · toku · a kutlanti**. The phrase *hann vas siukR uti* underlines the fact that Húsbjǫrn fell ill while away from home.[303] The disease must have caused his death; the explicit reference to illness probably provided an explanation to the sudden death of a (young) man.

Judging from the layout, a central position is given to information about taking payment in Gotland, which therefore figures as the focal point of the inscription. The man did not just fall ill and die – all this occurred when he and some other men (perhaps his two brothers) were involved in a particular activity. This has by scholars been taken as historical evidence of the regular taxation of Gotlanders, carried out under the iniative of the Svealand king. Supporting arguments have been found from the data recorded in the medieval *Gutasaga* (UR III: 25).[304]

Other runic inscriptions where the term *gjald* (ON) is applied refer to payments taken in England.[305] This observation can confirm that corresponding terminology was used in connec-

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[303] Earlier alternative interpretations to **hn us∣ ∣siok · uti** can be found in UR (III: 22-25).

[304] See also Hjärne (1947: 94-98), who emphasises the meaning of Gotland as a politically important arena for Swedish kings and noblemen. Historical relationships between Gotland and Svealand are discussed by Lindkvist (1983: 281-287).

[305] These are: Sö 166 (*gialdi skifti*), U 194 (*tok Knuts giald*), U 241 (*tu giald takit*), U 344 (*þry giald takit*). Additionally, the word occurs in the early Viking Age inscription Vg 119, the Sparlösa stone (*at gialdi*), where the exact context of the payment is not clear; but there we find a potential place reference to Uppsala (3.1.13.). For an analysis of Sö 166, see 3.1.29.

tion with more or less regular tribute taking. However, in the case of U 614, it is not apparent that a centrally guided taxation campaign was carried out. All the inscription says, is that some men – who came from Attundaland – collected payment in Gotland; it is not specified whose **kialt** it was. Lindkvist (1983: 284), for example, admits that the inscription may just as well witness of privately arranged plundering.

As mentioned above, U 614 stone had a place along a road, together with the more or less contemporary U 613. The inscription on the latter commemorates a certain Eysteinn who died in christening robes.[306] It is interesting that we find two rather different messages recorded on neighbourhood monuments – one refers to the collection of payment, the other one mentions conversion. In their own way, both inscriptions illustrate characteristic processes of the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages.

Fuglie stone I, DR 259

The Fuglie stone I from Skåne stands on its original site on a burial mound by the Fuglie church. Moltke (1985a: 241) explains: "The mound itself may be from the Bronze Age – it […] was adapted to serve as a cenotaph". The stone may have been repositioned; in DRI the inscription is said to face south, whereas according to a 17th century record the direction was north (DRI: 313). The suggested date is the beginning of the 11th century. The location of the rune stone at the southern tip of Skåne demonstrates easy passage into the Baltic Sea.[307]

The inscription has the design of four vertical lines of runes; in all of these the reading direction is bottom-top. The inscription begins on the left and follows the natural order of the lines; on the right, the final part of formulation reaches up to the top edge.

The text is composed according to the traditional pattern: MMF, a short addition about the deceased and prayer formula. Memorial formula – where a man commemorates his brother – occupies the first two lines; its last word, **sin** is placed at the beginning of the third line. The rest of that line contains the verbal phrase relating death: **han · uarþ · tauþr**. The death place is named at the bottom right corner: **o · kutlati**. Thus, the message is simple: a certain Auði died in Gotland, and the family at home set up a commemorative stone on a nearby mound to mark the event, adding a prayer for his soul. The reasons for Auði's death remain unknown.

Sønder Kirkeby stone, DR 220

The Sønder Kirkeby stone is the only rune stone known from the island of Falster. It was discovered in the wall of the local church, on the eastern coast of the island.[308] The stone has suffered some damage and lacks both top and bottom; at some point during the Middle Ages it was cut into an ashlar. The proposed date for the Sønder Kirkeby stone is the end of the 10th century (Moltke 1985a: 231).

The carving is composed of four vertical text bands, with the reading direction bottom-top. On the left there is an extra line that consists of same-stave runes. Furthermore, along the left edge we find the remains of decorative ornamentation, a depiction of a viking ship.

The inscription starts in the rightmost line and concludes with same-stave runes on the left. In the first three lines the preserved parts of MMF may be identified; the rest consists of two

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[306] Compare to U 699 and U 896 (3.1.1.).
[307] The second Fuglie stone, DR 260, carries a short inscription that contains only MMF, placed within a single vertical text band.
[308] Now the stone is exhibited at Nationalmuseet in Copenhagen.

supplements. The established contents reveal that a certain Sassur has placed the stone after his brother Ásgautr. The third and the fourth text line include an identification of his death place: **uarþ : tuþr : o : ku…**. The surviving bit **o : ku** may on the basis of other similar formulations be supplemented as *a Go[tlandi]*, i.e. as another reference to Gotland.[309]

What makes the Sønder Kirkeby stone more extraordinary is the extra line with same-stave runes, which contains a formula where Þórr is asked to hallow the runes. According to the usual interpretation this is meant as a protection formula (Moltke 1985a: 230).[310] The Sønder Kirkeby stone makes the impression of being a monument where the visual side carries some of the message. The depicted ship connects with the imagery of travelling – if the inscription has indeed contained a reference to Gotland, the sea voyage that Ásgautr undertook has in its own way been visualised on the rune stone alongside the specific formula in same-stave runes that asks for protection. As pointed out by Moltke, the same-stave runes "are easily mistaken for the waves over which the ship of the dead is sailing" (op. cit. 230). On the other hand, this link between pictorial depiction and the protective formula may even indicate a motive of a more symbolic travel.[311]

Vålsta stone, Sö 47

Our final example that qualifies as a possible reference to Gotland comes from Vålsta. The rune stone stands on top of a hillock, in the midst of a stone cairn – this is possibly its original site. On the front side the inscription is placed within a text band that forms an arch along the stone. An additional line of runes – introduced by cryptic runes – runs upwards on the middle. A big cross covers almost the whole surface on the back of the stone. The inscription starts at the bottom left corner, runs to the right and continues with the additional line.

The arch band contains MMF and a short supplement – this can therefore be considered the basic content. The beginning is clear: a man has made a monument after his son Ásmundr. The name of the son and the statement of relationship are placed on top of the stone. About the son, it is further said: **han : is : krafin : o · ku…**. Unfortunately, the end of the phrase at the bottom right corner is not preserved, but it is clearly an identification of the place where Ásmundr is buried.

Two main interpretations are: *hann es grafinn a Gu[tlandi]* or *a ku[mbli]*.[312] The latter alternative (i.e. burial in the monument) gains support from the fact that the formula refers to the monument as *kumbl* – the original memorial may have included a stone cairn in which the deceased was buried. The final part of the inscription – found on the centre of the monument – may also signify that such a burial was arranged; it is assumed that **rauʀ uart : at : ryʀ:iks : sun** tells of a cairn made in memory of the commissioner's (Hrœríkr's) son. The actual stone cairn around the rune stone would form a suitable frame of reference. However: "This seems to be an anomaly since cairns are generally dated to the Bronze Age and the

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[309] Convincing arguments for the filling in of the missing parts have been presented by Moltke; he also comments upon alternative interpretations (Moltke 1934: 90).

[310] Similar formulas appear in Vg 150, DR 110, DR 209 and possibly in Sö 140. On a Viking Age copper amulet (Öl SAS1989;43), one asks for Þórr's protection with his hammer. N B380, a runic stick from ca. 1185, calls both for Þórr and Óðinn. The name Þórr is also mentioned in Ög 136, but it is hard to judge whether it is used as a personal name or carries connotations of the heathen god.

[311] To compare the ship pictures found on other rune stones, see Moltke (1985a: 264). Among those pictures, the depiction on the Tullstorp stone (DR 271, from Skåne) is especially striking with its completed details.

[312] An earlier suggestion understood **o · ku** as a reference to a church burial (SöR: 37) on the basis of one similar inscription from Öland (Öl 36: **han x iaʀ x krafin x i x kirikiu**). That interpretation is no longer considered valid.

rune stone is from the Viking Age" (Burström 1994: 77). Burström discusses the connection between the Vålsta stone and the cairn in terms of "ancient use of the past", but admits that no definite conclusions as for the meaning of the monument setting can be derived.

On the other hand, we do not find any examples among the runic inscriptions that document a burial *a kumbli*. In the meantime, we have already taken a look at such records where the runes **o ku** introduce the designation 'Gotland'. In this light, Sö 47 can be treated at least as a potential reference to a burial that occurred somewhere in Gotland.[313]

After the discussion of the above-mentioned references to Gotland as a district, we shall take a look at the possible identification of a particular Gotlandic locality.

3.1.17. Bógi

U 375(?)	**i buhi**

Rune stone from Vidbo church, U 375

According to 17th century records, the rune stone was lying on a roadside north of the Vidbo churchyard, broken into three pieces (UR II: 128). The original location of the stone is unknown; now it is raised at the churchyard.[314]

The carving is composed of two runic serpents – with their heads curving down from the top and the tails reaching high up from the bottom. On the middle of the stone, in between the tails, there are decorative depictions of a rider and a bird. The inscription starts by the head of the right serpent on top of the stone, and runs down along that side to the tail. At the bottom the inscription shifts over to the left serpent and continues upwards, concluding by its head at the top left corner.

Structurally we can divide the inscription into MMF and a simple addition about the deceased. The pattern of layout at the same time shows that MMF gets divided between two different serpents; on the right, the names of the commissioners, the verbal phrase and the monument marker are presented; whereas on the left, we find the name of the deceased and an identification of the death place. The focus clearly shifts from one part to another: firstly we hear about the commissioners, i.e. the parents, and then about their dead son. The names of the commissioners gain top position, the name of the deceased is placed at the bottom left corner, and the place name appears at the top left corner.

With regard to the indication **i buhi**, Brate (1925: 38) and von Friesen (1933: 208) have suggested that the place is *Bógi*, i.e. Boge in northeastern Gotland.[315] On the other hand it has been argued that although from the linguistic point of view the interpretation is solid, it is not likely that Boge was that familiar in the Viking Age (UR II: 130). Otterbjörk (1961: 28-29) proposes in the meantime that earlier Boge – now the name of the church parish – used to designate a village in the area around the ancient Boge bay, which in the Viking Age must have still been connected to the sea, thus making up a navigable passage. Boge could have

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[313] From the same parish of Nykyrka, Sö 46 is also known, which commemorates a man who died in England.

[314] A second rune stone (U 376) was also found from the same churchyard. That monument is commissioned by two women after a certain Ragni, identified as the son and the husband. The memorial formula contains two monument markers, referring to bridge and stones in plural: **let x kiara x bro x ok x staina rita**.

[315] The form **buhi** would represent the fricative pronunciation of the name.

functioned as an important spot along the sailing route – perhaps it was even in use as a harbour. Another alternative is that the name applied to the whole district around the bay (op. cit. 29).[316] Otterbjörk's argumentation has been supported by S.B.F. Jansson (1984: 105) and Snædal Brink & I. Jansson (1983b: 440).

Figure 21. Rune stone from the Vidbo church (U 375). Photo: Thomas Carlson & Gunnar Nordin 2005. Runebru.se. Uppsala, Sweden.

In view of the above, it seems reasonable to regard the runic **i buhi** as a likely reference to a place/district in Gotland that was of strategic importance both for its own inhabitants as well as for people from other regions. From the district around the Vidbo church, the distance to Gotland and to Boge was not long – and the name may indeed have been included in the place name repertoire of the Attundaland people.

We have already observed that certain localities that nowadays may seem to be of minor importance nevertheless figure among the recorded destinations in runic inscriptions. Boge could be considered important enough in the context of the 11th century, since it was situated along a common sailing route – the site could serve both as a destination on its own or as a temporary station for those who headed further east.

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[316] Otterbjörk has analysed the topographical features of that region to demonstrate that the name is derived from the Old Swedish *bogher*, with the meaning "bow (of a ship), shoulder (of an animal)". The likely source of inspiration has, in his opinion, been the Boge klint – which rises 28.5 metres above the sea – located south of the present-day Boge church (op. cit. 30).

Additional remarks

Additionally we mention three runic inscriptions that have not been included in the analysis group, because the references they provide are of a highly doubtful nature, and have to remain unidentified.

Links with Gotland were hinted at by some early scholars in connection with two lost runic inscriptions from Öster Skam, Ög 27-Ög 28†. It is not completely certain whether Ög 27† and Ög 28† were two separate rune stones or inscriptions on the same monument; some records state that they were two stones of similar shape standing at Öster Skam (ÖgR: 25). The inscriptions must have been connected to each other by their content, and they both obviously contained a place indication, read as **ɑ · kautaun**. In Ög 27† a man called Þjalfarr was commemorated by his son Þórir, and it was probably said: **iɑʀ · stranti · ɑ · kautaun** (i.e. who landed in **kautaun**); whereas Ög 28† referred to a person – perhaps the same son – **iɑʀ buki · ɑ · kautaun** (i.e. who lived in **kautaun**). As explained already in ÖgR (p. 25), it is not possible to interpret the reference as 'Guta island'; the place has to remain unidentified. Provided that the inscriptions are otherwise more or less precisely recorded, it is still of interest that one of them tells of a man who landed at that particular place – the expression must indicate travelling along a water route.

There is also an inscription from Södermanland that, according to one interpretation, may mention a locality in Gotland. Sö 360, the Bjuddby stone, was found in two pieces, but the inscription is still well preserved. The carving is composed of two arch bands that run from left to right, with a cross on the middle of the monument. The inscription consists of MMF and a supplement about the deceased. Most of the memorial formula is fitted into the outer text band; it is said that the stone is raised by Þorsteinn in memory of his brother Þorbjǫrn. In the inner band we find the specification that the deceased was the son of Hrútr, and then a reference is made to Þorbjǫrn's travelling activity. The phrase **farit ᛬ uas i ᛬ ᛬ i ᛬ far-nki** probably indicates his destination. Among possible options are: the ethnic name *Færeyinga* (inhabitants of the Faroe Islands), the island of Fårön by Gotland, and the island of Färingön (now Svartsjölandet) in Mälaren (SöR: 351-352); none of them can be established with certainty. It is possible that **i ᛬ far-nki** instead conceals a completely different expression; hypothetically it may even be a shortened version of **farin ᛬ uas i ᛬ faru ᛬ miþ ᛬ inkuari**, and then count as a potential Ingvarr inscription (op. cit. 352). Needless to say, even this interpretation remains a vague assumption. The only thing that can be concluded is that the man engaged in travelling.

Sö 360 has been connected to Sö 54 and Sö 55, which come from the same parish of Blacksta (cf. Larsson 1990: 154). The latter two also have a certain Þorsteinn among the commissioners; but it is nevertheless not apparent that it is the same person as in Sö 360. In Sö 54 Þorsteinn, Eysteinn and Náttfari commemorate their three brothers Finnviðr, Óleifr and Þorkell; they are all identified as the sons of Víkingr. Sö 55 declares that Þorsteinn had the stone raised in memory of himself and his son Hefnir. Even if Sö 360, Sö 54 and Sö 55 are not linked to each other by the same commissioner, it is of interest that both Sö 360 and Sö 55 refer to travelling – the latter even sets the act of travel into opposition with the later death at home: **uaʀ til ᛬ enklans ᛬ ukr ᛬ trenkr ᛬ farin ᛬ uarþ ᛬ þa · haima ᛬ at ᛬ harmi tauþr**. Sö 54 contains interesting evidence in the form of personal names, such as Náttfari and Víkingr (cf. also 3.1.24. and 3.3.1.). All three runic monuments originate from a region around Lake Långhalsen, which through the system of connected lakes and rivers – for example, the river Nyköpingsån – provides a passage into the Baltic Sea.

3.1.18. Finnland

U 582†	o · fin·lonti

Rune stone from Söderby-Karl church, U 582†

The rune stone that was once standing in the yard of the Söderby-Karl church is known only through 17th and 18th century records; since the preserved data shows strong corres-pondence, the reading and interpretation of this lost inscription is well grounded.

The carving was composed of a runic serpent whose head and tail crossed at the bottom. The head seems to have been directed to the right and the tail to the left. The inscription started by the head of the serpent, continued along the neck to the left and then around the edges of the stone from left to right, concluding within the tail by the left-hand corner. The curving tail seems to have formed a little circle at the end. The structure was simple: MMF and one addition. The inscription identified two parents who had raised the stone in memory of their son. The name of the deceased, Ótryggr, was placed in the upper right part. The memorial formula was supplemented by the indication of the death place; the place name **fin·lonti** occurred in the circular part of the tail.

The inscription thus informs that Ótryggr suffered a violent death abroad, i.e. he was killed in Finland on the opposite side of the Baltic Sea.[317] The reference to Finland indicates in this context the southwestern part of present-day Finland, known as Finland proper. For the Svealand people, that particular region was first known as Finland; later the name was gradually transferred to include surrounding areas (cf. S.B.F. Jansson 1954: 47-48; 1956: 10).

Finland is also mentioned in one runic inscription on a grave slab from Gotland, which is dated to the beginning of the 13th century (G 319). The inscription comemorates a certain Auðvaldr(?) who died in Finland. Here the neutral phrase **a : finlandi : do** is used. The lack of context around the statements of U 582† and G 319 does not allow us to trace any trans-formations in the understanding of the geographical range of Finland. But when comparing U 582† to the following inscription from Gästrikland, we observe that distinctions could be made between different areas of modern Finland.

3.1.19. Tafeistaland

Gs 13	a tafstalonti

Söderby rune stone, Gs 13

The Söderby stone now stands in the weapon house of the Heliga Trefaldighet church in Gävle. It was first recorded in the 17th century when found from a field of the former Söderby

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[317] For comments on this participle *drepinn*, see above, DR 380 (3.1.7.). It is of interest that another inscription from the same district (U 533, cf. 3.1.23.) commemorates a man who has been killed, but in this case in *Virland* (UR II: 470).

settlement by Gävle.[318] In the Viking Age the settlement at Söderby was still situated right on the southern shore of the Gävle bay; therefore, it must have functioned as a natural harbour (GsR: 130-131).

The monument measures over two metres, but lacks the top right corner and a big piece on the left – originally it was almost rectangular. The inscription has suffered damage, but can be supplemented. The carving is composed of two serpents whose heads cross and bend down from the top; whereas their tails, which curve into each other at the bottom, rise vertically up almost to the level of the heads.
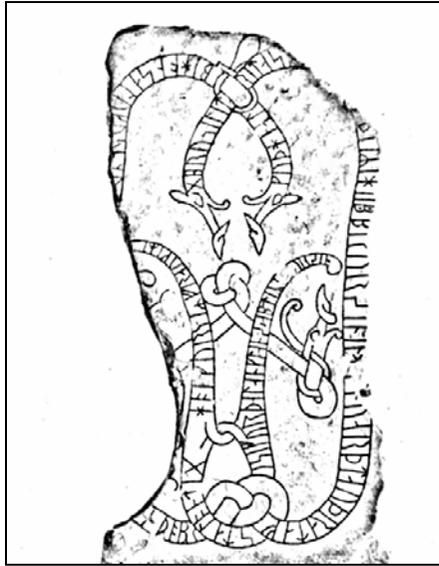
Figure 22. The Söderby stone (Gs 13). Drawing after GsR.

The layout appears complicated with regard to the visual composition and the reading order. According to the commonly accepted pattern, the inscription begins within the right serpent, by its head which is actually pointing to the left; a cross marks the starting point. The inscription then runs along the right edge down to the bottom, where it shifts over to the tail of the other serpent; from that point it continues at first a bit upwards, until another cross mark is reached, and then returns to the bottom left corner, as again indicated by a cross. After heading four runes to the right, a shift is made back into the tail of the right serpent, covering the rest of it, and then doing the same with the tail of the left serpent.[319] The final part of the inscription is introduced by the head of the left serpent; it follows the serpent's body downwards along the left side of the stone, which in its present state is severly damaged.

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[318] During the expansion of the town, Söderby had become part of Gävle – this caused some confusion around the determination of the original site of the monument (GsR: 129-132). A copy is now placed on the site in southern Gävle where the original monument used to stand.

[319] It has to be remarked, though, that the bottom knot formed by the tails is visually ambiguous, leaving open for discussion as to which parts form the body of the left serpent and which belong to the right serpent.

Interpretation problems have arisen both due to layout shifts as well as the application of untraditional formulations.[320] The established structure is in general clear: traditional MMF, followed by additions that concern the deceased and the commissioner, prayer formula, and carver signature. The memorial formula occupies the upper half of the right serpent and informs that a certain Brúsi had this stone erected after his brother Egill. Supplements about Egill and Brúsi are placed inside the lower half of the right serpent and into the tails of both serpents. The main body of the left serpent is divided between the prayer and the carver formula. The former is addressed both to God and God's mother; the latter establishes two men, Sveinn and Ásmundr, as carvers. Gs 13 appears to be one of the works of the well known carver Ásmundr, and could on that basis be dated to ca. mid-11th century. According to the formula, he has worked together with another carver.[321]

When examining the composition and contents in combination, the shifts from one tail into another do not actually appear disturbing, but rather demonstrate the inner logic of the carving and create a visual image of a whole. In this manner, the first supplement that names Egill's death place simply flows from one tail into another as the logical result of connected curves; the shift occurs after the first three runes in the place name **tafstalonti**. The formulations that follow occupy the upward pointing tails of serpents (with the first one beginning at the bottom left corner): **þo brusi furþi lank lans · abtiʀ** [**br**]**u̯r sin** reaches out to the right; **ho̧**[**n**] **fur m̧iʀ fraukiʀi** is introduced at the point where there is an additional linkage between the tails, and the runes run up to the left. From the visual point of view the effect of curves is further emphasised, whereas the use of cross marks helps the reader on the track.[322]

The formulation **furþi lank lans** has been the subject of much discussion. It has been proposed that it marks the land's levy; this would suggest that the inscription on the Söderby stone makes use of an otherwise unknown RS word *læidangʀ* (formed on the basis of ON *leiðangr*, cf. Medieval Swedish *leþunger*) while referring to some sort of a military expedition.[323]

Egill's place of death is identified as Tavastland (ON *Tafeistaland*, i.e. the land of Tavastians), a region that comprised southern parts of central Finland. Further information concerns Brúsi, who seems to have been leading a group of fighters after (or perhaps in

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[320] GsR provides a historical overview of different alternatives; a work by Kempff (1897) has for the most part remained the basis of understanding for today also (pp. 137-147).

[321] Thompson has on the basis of rune forms tried to distinguish which parts of the inscription have been carved by Ásmundr, and which ones by Sveinn (cf. Thompson 1975: 113). The specific composition of the inscription may also be seen in the light of two carvers working on different parts of the monument. Ásmundr is also the carver of Gs 11 and Gs 12, and both inscriptions contain the same prayer formula for God and God's mother.

[322] Alternatively, one could suggest a different order of elements, since **ho̧**[**n**] **fur m̧iʀ fraukiʀi** appears within the same serpent as the end of the place name (**stalonti**). However, there is a big cross mark placed right after the place name, so as to mark the conclusion of that part; also, some empty space has been left in between the cross and the first rune in **ho̧**[**n**]. Therefore, we support the traditional reading order, as established above.

[323] Objections have also been presented;Thompson e.g. sees problems in the carver's use of **lank**, provided that the original form behind it was **laiþankr** (which in Thompson's opinion had *-r* as part of the root) – this would suggest that the carver had to omit four runes. Further complications concern the RS verb *føra*, which according to him "does not mean 'lead' but rather 'bring, take, transport'" (Thompson 1975: 108). In GsR, Thompson's argumentation has not been accepted; the point is made that *-r* could not have been part of the root, and that the carver rather intended to carve **laiþank** (sg. acc.) (GsR: 146). The form **lank** would then simply represent his particular sound analysis. As for the verb *føra*, it may have already had the additional meaning of 'lead' in the 11th century (ibid.).

memory of) his brother. It is of interest that the phrase [**br**]**u̯r sin** occurs at the very tip of the tail, which reaches out to the serpent's body to the right – in this way the exact same word (i.e. **brur**) is underlined in the memorial formula.

The reference **ho̯[n] fur m̯iʀ fraukiʀi** may at first seem unclear in that it does not clarify the name of the person who travelled with Freygeirr. In the overall context of the inscription, it is more likely that the reference is made to the dead brother Egill, for whose soul the following prayer is presented. That does not exclude the possibility of both Egill and Brúsi participating in the same campaign. As we see, the former died (in a battle), leaving it to the other to commemorate the event.

Some scholars have implied that Gs 13 witnesses of a military expedition to Tavastland, arranged under the leadership of a certain viking leader Freygeirr, who himself was following the commands of the Swedish king.[324] The grounds to draw such conclusions remain doubtful, especially since the meaning of **lank lans** has to be still questioned. The explicit information on the Söderby stone tells of a military campaign that headed overseas to Tavastland; the two brothers seem to have played a certain role in that venture, and the name of their leader, Freygeirr, is also given.[325]

From the Viking Age settlement on the Gävle bay, the route across the Baltic Sea to Tavastland in southern Finland was short. The setting is evermore significant, since Gästrikland is one of the northernmost areas for runic finds in Sweden; it may have been the remarkable character of the event that called for the raising of such a monument.

The two runic references to Finland and Tavastland illuminate the labels that the Svealand people used when referring to their neighbourhood regions; those must have been among their common destinations.

3.1.20. Another ambiguity: Véborg

U 180	i uibu̯rkum

Rune stone from Össeby Garn church, U 180

According to the earliest records the rune stone was found by the weapon house at the Össeby Garn church; now it is raised on the lawn between the churchyard and a village road (UR I: 278). The monument measures almost three metres. It shows the design of two runic serpents, whose heads cross at the bottom and tails at the top (twice, thus forming a circle). The main serpents are intertwined with smaller serpents, which surround the cross in the middle. The inscription has been attributed to Véseti, who was active in the 1050-60s (Brate 1925: 76-77).[326]

The inscription starts within the left serpent (whose head actually points to the right), and runs up along the edge of the stone until reaching the lower crossing point of the tails. It then shifts over to the tail of the right serpent and follows its body down to the bottom, where the

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[324] See e.g. von Friesen (1913: 37); Brate (1925: 20); cf. also (GsR: 148-149).
[325] For potential connections with U 698† and U 611, see the comments in 3.1.25. and 3.1.31.
[326] The attribution has been confirmed by Salberger (1990: 21) through a discussion of the characteristic features of Véseti's carvings.

head curves to the left. The end of the inscription is placed inside the lower arm and the centre of the cross.

It is interesting how the contents of the inscription get divided between the two serpents. The left serpent contains only the names of the four commissioners. The memorial formula proceeds with the statement that the stone is raised after their brother, which occupies most of the right serpent.

At the very bottom the supplement about the death place is introduced: **hn to i uibur̥kum**. The place indication **i uibur̥kum** starts in the head of the serpent, where the **i**- and the **u**-rune are placed, and continues inside the cross; the final **m**-rune appears in its very centre. Since the verb is the neutral *deyja*, the exact cause of death remains unknown. The indication **i uibur̥kum**, in ON *Véborg* (*Vébjǫrg*) has caused discussion – partly due to the uncertain reading of its two runes, and partly because the identified place may be localised in two different regions.[327] Despite the former complication, there has been general agreement about interpreting the name as Viborg – but the question is whether one has meant Viborg on the Karelian Isthmus or Viborg in northern Jylland.

The Danish Viborg – situated on Lake Viborg in the central part of northern Jylland – is one of the oldest towns in Denmark; it is known as an ancient cult place and medieval trade centre, which since 1065 served as a bishopric.[328] Presumably the people in Scandinavia were well familiar with that place (cf. Brate 1925: 76; UR I 280-281; S.B.F. Jansson 1956: 34).[329]

In the meantime, there are certain problems with that interpretation – in its earliest form, the name of the Danish Viborg is recorded exclusively as *Viberg*/*Vibiærg* (UR I: 281; cf. also Salberger 1990: 31). That is to say, the last component of the name is based on a form of the word *berg* – which would not correspond to the runic spelling. For that reason, Viborg (Vyborg) in Karelia has been considered a better alternative – this identification goes back to Brocman (1762: 208), and has been supported for example by A. Bugge (1918: 80), Pipping (1926: 413-418), and more recently by Salberger (1990: 31-32).[330] The historical connections between Viborg – situated on the coast of the Gulf of Finland at the head of Viborg bay – and Sweden are solid; in the Viking Age the region was already an important trade and transit station.[331]

Both Viborg in Nørrejylland as well as Viborg in Karelia could have been familiar Viking Age destinations for the people of Attundaland. On the basis of the runic spelling **i uibur̥kum**, as well as close historical ties with Sweden, the Karelian Viborg may seem the preferable alternative. However, it has to be remembered that the two uncertain runes, as well as known

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[327] The discussion around the establishment of runes can be followed in UR (I: 279-281) and in Salberger (1990: 24-27). The latter reads the runes as **uiburukum**, explaining the second **u**-rune as a dittograph (op. cit. 27).

[328] Today the county around it is also called Viborg.

[329] An additional argument in favour of the Danish Viborg could be the fact that the name is also recorded in Sweden in connection with farm estates – they were probably named after the Danish example (A. Bugge 1918: 84-85).

[330] A. Bugge claims that Viborg is an ancient site going back to heathen times, as expressed by its name (*vi* 'holiness' + *borg* 'fort'). For the earliest records of the name, see Pipping (1926); Pipping also emphasises that the name of the Viborg castle, built in 1293, was derived from the surrounding district, which again had been named after an old fortress (op. cit. 415).

[331] In the 13th century Viborg became the main centre for promoting the spread of Christianity and Swedish rule. According to Pipping (1926: 416-417), it is possible that Swedes had an even earlier colony in the district around Viborg.

inconsistencies in the general tradition of runic spelling, do not allow us to claim this with certainty.

The exact original site of the stone is not known, but certain observations can be made with regard to the general setting around eastern Vallentuna.[332] Össeby Garn lies close to the long Lake Garnsviken – known as an ancient water trail; around the banks of the lake other rune stones are found.[333] The canal of Åkers, which still connects the lake with the Baltic Sea, lets us follow the route of those Viking Age travellers. The presence of a runic monument that relates of death away from home is in itself a mark of a cultural landscape that promoted traffic.

3.1.21. Garðar

Öl 28	**karþum**
Sö 148	**austr i kaþuṃ**
Sö 338	**austr + i + garþum**
U 209	**austr i karþum**
U 636	**ausR · i karþa**
N 62	**i uitahol[mi] miþli uṣtaulms auk karþa**
Vs 1(?)	**austr · i · karusm**
Sö 130(?)	**kirþu o…**

Gårdby rune stone, Öl 28

The Gårdby stone still stands on its earliest recorded site in the Gårdby churchyard.[334] The carving is composed of a runic serpent that forms an arch around the stone – the interesting fact is that the serpent does not seem to have a marked head. The inner surface is filled with a carefully designed cross; its extended lower arm is shaped into two parts.

The inscription starts at the bottom left and runs inside the serpent from left to right; three additional runes are placed immediately above the end point, whereas the rest of the inscription has been placed into the cross arm. Judging from the shape and size of the cross this layout tactic seems to have been part of the original planning.

The memorial formula identifies a certain Herþrúðr as the commissioner, and it is said that she raised the stone after her son Smiðr. The name of the sponsor appears at the bottom left corner, whereas the name of the deceased and the relationship statement gain top position. From the structural perspective, that basic formula is extended by a short addition **trak** +

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[332] Larsson (1990: 138) mentions that another Upplandic runic inscription with the name Þorgrímr comes from Sjöberg, which is ca. four kilometres to the south of the Össeby Garn church (U 192); he suggests that this might have been the original place for U 180. In the meantime, the inscription of U 192 is too fragmentary to allow a firm linkage with U 180; only the words **uk x þurkrimr** are preserved. To the northeast of Össeby Garn, from the district of Ärlinghundra, U FV1992;157 is found, which is the third Upplandic example of the same name. Þorgrímr is there one of the three commissioners, and the deceased is their brother Þorsteinn, who died in the east with Ingvarr. Since the names of the other brothers are different, the two Þorgrímrs cannot be identical.

[333] Among those, U 194 – belonging to the Össeby Garn parish – commemorates a man who took Knútr's payment in England.

[334] The stone was probably first raised at a different location and later moved to the church (ÖIR: 89).

kuþan, thus characterising Smiðr as a good dreng. The rest of the runic serpent on the right side is filled with the formulation: **halfburin** + **bruþiʀ ans** + **sitr** + **karþum**. More precisely, the last three runes ᚦᚢᛉ are carved above the serpent, thus dividing the place name into two parts: **kar** and **þum**. The latter half is placed right on top of the first – visually they appear reversed in relation to each other. The final part of the inscription – consisting of the carver formula, and an appeal to interpret the runes – is then found in the very centre of the monument. Through the position within the cross, this line of runes is clearly distinguished from the rest.
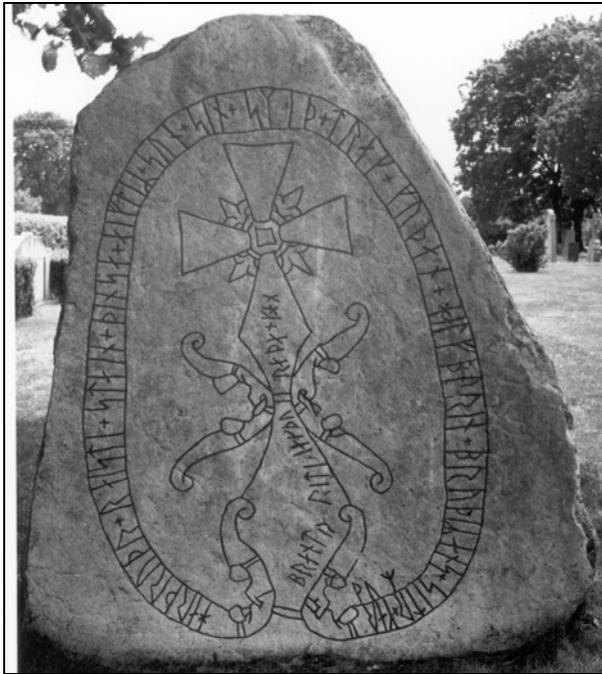
Figure 23. Gårdby stone (Öl 28). Photo: Runverket, RAÄ.

The part that is introduced with **halfburin** has called upon various interpretations.[335] S.B.F. Jansson is the first one to establish the reading **halfburin** – and his interpretation of the following part (when translated into English) is: "Halfborinn, his brother, sits in Garðar. Brandr cut rightly, therefore one can interpret" (Jansson 1947: 193). Halfborinn is in Jansson's opinion a personal name (originally a nickname), despite the fact that it is otherwise not recorded in the runic material.[336] He finds it less likely that **halfburin** + **bruþiʀ ans** would indicate Smiðr's half-brother – if this was the case, the inscription would provide no name for that person (op. cit. 194).

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[335] For an overview of earlier research around the Gårdby stone, see S.B.F. Jansson (1947: 186-192); Salberger (1995: 103-111).
[336] There is a doubtful case in Sö 195, see NRL.

Salberger, on the other hand, favours the latter explanation by emphasising the adjectival or attributive nature of **halfburin**, meant to modify the following expression. He draws parallels to the ON adjective *samborinn* (i.e. born of same mother and father) and the noun *halfbróðir* (Salberger 1995: 111-112). Furthermore, Salberger explains the seeming lack of a name by moving **brantr** from the carver formula over to the previous passage. Salberger's modified interpretation sounds: "Brand, his half-brother, is sitting in *Gårdarike* [...]. Correctly was carved, hence one may interpret" (op. cit. 121).[337]

However, other considerations need to be taken into account. If we regard *halfborinn broðiR hans* as designating half-brother, instead of an uncommon personal name, we should remember that the inscription did not necessarily <u>have</u> to include his name. From the commissioner's point of view it may have been enough to refer to him as Smiðr's half-brother. This family-related designation would then in itself serve as an identification of the person – this could perhaps be compared with occupational references recorded in other runic inscriptions.

As for the (intended) versification, this in itself is not a sufficient argument for transferring the name Brandr over to relate to Smiðr's half-brother. Alliteration may connect components from two passages that are not directly attached to each other content-wise. Furthermore, when looking at the layout, we see that **brantr** + **rit- x iak þu raþa** + **khn** appears inside the cross, and is visually separated from the rest – this indicates that the elements have to be viewed (and read) together.

One thing, though, is certain: the dead man Smiðr is characterised by mentioning another family member (be it then a brother or half-brother), who is said to sit in *Garðar*. The focus lies on the fact that he is not present, but abroad. In this way the Gårdby stone informs us that a man from Öland has headed to *Garðar*. He must have spent quite some time there – and was probably still away when the inscription was being carved – as expressed by the formulation in the present tense *sitr Garðum*. Considerations concerning inheritance and ownership rights may have played a role in this particular context.

The last part of the inscription emphasises the communicative value of the monument. It is asserted that the carving has been cut rightly (by a certain Brandr), and everybody who can is expected to interpret (read) the runes.[338] Due to its central position on the middle of the stone, this message must have immediately caught the attention of people who were approaching the monument – thus inviting them to read further and find out about its background.

As demonstrated by the introductory list, the place name *Garðar* (m. pl.) appears altogether in eight runic inscriptions (two cases are uncertain). Before proceeding with further analysis, we should take a look at its linguistic and historical meaning as well as the possible geographical span of the region that was known under that name.

According to Jackson (e.g. 2003), the name itself originated in the 9th century. She explains *Garðar* as a designation referring to the land of "fortified settlements" – a concept introduced on the basis of the related Old Russian word, and supported by the actual conditions that the Scandinavians met during their journeys into the territory of Old Rus: "Thus, the Scandinavians, who set on their way from Ladoga down the Volkhov into other

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[337] Salberger's argumentation is further based upon patterns of versification, which according to him constitute a version of *ljóðaháttr*; even the remaining carver formula appears as an alliterating couplet (op. cit. 113-117); for other comments, see also Hübler (1996: 150).

[338] The ambiguous meaning of the verb **raþa** has been discussed by Spurkland (1994, see particularly pp. 8-10).

Slavonic territories, came across a chain of fortified settlements, that were called by the local population *города* [*goroda*]" (Jackson 2003: 40).[339]

The name *Garðar* appears as a general reference to the areas along and around the great Russian rivers in what we may call the European (or northwestern) Russia. In its broadest sense, the Old Rus is said to have comprised "the entire area between the Arctic and the Black seas and between Poland and the Urals" (Noonan 1997: 134). Naturally not all of this vast area falls into the Baltic drainage basin, as determined above (cf. 1.4.1.). Nevertheless, references to *Garðar* have been included in discussing the depictions of Baltic traffic, since an important part of that region lies within the drainage basin, and is connected to the Baltic Sea through rivers. The importance of *Garðar* also comes from its central position in the crossing of major trade routes that led from the Baltic down to southern and southeastern Europe. Extensive historical and archaeological research has proven that the Old Rus was a common arena for Scandinavian travellers – they even came to settle in these territories.

On the other hand, we do not really know what parts of *Garðar* the people who used the designation in runic inscriptions may have meant. The area around the Volkhov river and Lake Ilmen has usually been pointed out as the historical heartland of the Old Rus. Melnikova (1998: 654) finds it most probable that the name in runic and skaldic context "denoted the Ladoga region down to lake Ilmen".[340] This further speaks in favour of considering the scene of *Garðar* as a partaker in Baltic traffic. Besides *Garðar* we find three runic references to one of its main destinations – *Holmgarðr* (cf. 3.1.22.). On the other hand, a Norwegian inscription (N 62) may broaden the traditional range of the early Scandinavian concept of *Garðar* (see below).

<div align="center">Innberga rune stone, Sö 148</div>

The rune stone stands on a field at Innberga close to a stream that crosses the road leading from Nyköping to Aspa (SöR: 111). The stone is almost two and a half metres high. In its present condition the inscription has weathered down, especially on the right side of the monument, but most of it is still visible.[341] The design shows one runic band, probably a serpent, running from left to right. On the right, the tail does not completely reach down to the bottom, but remains "hanging". On top of the stone, a cross is placed right below the serpent's body.

The inscription starts at the bottom left corner and runs around the stone, concluding within the tail. The structure is simple: MMF and a short addition. The name of the commissioner is placed at the bottom corner, the name of the deceased and the relationship statement along the top. As we hear from the memorial formula, two men (possibly brothers) have raised the stone after their father. The supplement on the right side states: **han uas antaþ austr i kaþuṃ**. The expression contains an alliterating word pair *ændaðr* – *austr*. This may be simply accidental alliteration – but on the other hand, it is possible that we meet here a certain conventional phrase. The designation of death place apparently includes two components: firstly, the general direction is given, and then the name of the region – *Garðar*. Similar kind of formulations present themselves in several inscriptions – the direction 'east' may also be

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[339] Jackson (2003: 38-40) provides a detailed analysis of the etymology and composition of the name.

[340] See also Jackson (2003: 43), who describes Northern Rus as the "zone of the earliest and the most intensive Slavic-Scandinavian contacts".

[341] According to early records the stone was found lying down, covered by earth, and had to be removed from the stream (SöR: 111). Therefore we cannot be sure of its original placement; now it is said to face north. Larsson (1990: 150) points out the connections of the Innberga estate, with a gravefield and a mound.

combined with other destinations, such as Byzantium (cf. Ög 81, 3.1.15.). On the other hand, there are inscriptions where only the direction is presented without adding the exact place. [342]

Sö 148 from the western coast of Lake Runnviken (parish of Runtuna, district of Rönö) belongs to one of the clear rune stone centres in southeastern Södermanland. Runnviken is connected to Lake Sundbysjön by the river Sundbyån; from Sundbysjön the river Svärtaån leads into the Sjösafjärden, and the Baltic Sea.[343] That travellers from that region could head both east and west is demonstrated, for example, by the Österberga rune stone (Sö 159, from Runtuna), which commemorates a man who had been long in the west.[344] Among neighbourhood rune stones from the parish of Spelvik, Sö 165 and Sö 166 could be pointed out – with the former mentioning travels to Byzantium, and the latter referring to England and *Saxland* (Saxony, cf. 3.1.29.).

<div align="center">Turinge rune stone, Sö 338</div>

The rune stone from the Turinge church is an impressive monument, both with regard to its textual message and visual appearance. It was found from the eastern church wall, and is now raised inside the weapon house (SöR: 323). The original location of the Turinge stone is unknown; despite its rectangular shape it must have been a raised stone. There are some minor damages on the right side of the monument, but in general the inscription is well preserved – partly thanks to the smoothness of the stone surface.

The monument carries an inscription on the front face and along the right edge. The design in front shows a runic serpent whose body frames the stone, and whose head and tail are tied together on the bottom and rise up to the centre of the stone. An additional text band runs along the top left corner right underneath the serpent's body; the upper half of the stone also demonstrates a big cross. On the right side, there is one long vertical line of runes, running from the very top almost down to the bottom; five extra runes and an end mark are separated from the rest and placed along the mid part to the right of the text line.

The inscription starts at the bottom left corner on the front side – thus, at some distance from the serpent's head. It runs inside the serpent from left to right, reaching the tip of its tail. The continuation is found within the raised neck and head of the serpent (which would normally give the starting point), and reading direction is bottom-top; from there the inscription shifts over to the inner text line that rounds the left corner. The rest of the inscription covers the right edge of the stone, with the final word placed separately to the right (as explained above). Although we notice a few runes that have been omitted from the serpent band and therefore been placed below it, the monument as a whole demonstrates careful planning concerning the placement of its different components.

The inscription consists of an extended MMF, where several parallel commissioners are mentioned, and there is a long versified addition that can be divided into two parts.[345] This structure is in certain correspondence to the layout. The memorial formula is thus fitted into the body of the serpent and concludes in its tail. The left half of the body contains the basic commemoration. The name of the deceased (Þorsteinn) and the statement of relationship gain a prominent position on the top. In the top position also appears the name of the second commissioner, Ǫnundr, who is identified as Þorsteinn's brother; the following commissioners

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[342] Cf. also 3.3.2.

[343] Cf. also Sö FV1948;289 (3.1.1.) located to the north of Sö 148 on Lake Ludgosjön, which is connected to Lake Runnviken.

[344] Sö 159 is located ca. 5 km southwest of Sö 148.

[345] As pointed out by Hübler (1996: 113), the addition has five alliteration pairs.

are certain **hu[skar]laʀ** (housecarls) of Þorsteinn; and finally, his wife Ketiley is named within the tail. The first part of the versified supplement – which obviously concerns both the deceased and a brother of his – runs inside the neck and the head of the serpent, and concludes with the separate text band at the left corner. It is of interest to observe that inside the neck and head we find the formulation: **bruþr uaʀu þaʀ bistra mana : a : lanti**; whereas the additional line says: **auk : i liþi : uti : hi̧ļtu sini huskạrla : ui-**. The final formulation that covers the right edge of the stone focuses, according to its wording, only on the deceased, identifying his place of death and characterising him further.

Several formulations in this inscription have been a topic of discussion.[346] One of the question marks concerns the part of the memorial formula where the so-called housecarls are included among the commissioners: **auk hus[kar]laʀ + hifiʀ + iafna**; the same designation is later repeated in one of the supplements. We start with the former, where **iafna** (in **hifiʀ + iafna**, *æftiʀ(?) iafna*) has been interpreted as: a personal name *Iafni* referring to another brother of Þorsteinn; an appellative expressing the equal relationship between the deceased and his housecarls; or as a by-name for Þorsteinn with the meaning 'Just' (cf. SöR: 327-328; SRD). SöR prefers the third alternative; in the meantime, Jesch (2001: 283) has argued in favour of the second option; she draws parallels to skaldic poetry, and emphasises that the adjective *jafn* is frequently applied when comparing men to each other.

The term *húskarl* has on the basis of ON literature been understood as referring to a free man, who followed a leader as a member of his retinue (in later contexts used of the king's men, cf. SöR: 330). The first component of the word signifies that "the follower shared his leader's roof" (Jesch 2001: 237). The supplement **hi̧ļtu sini huskạrla : ui-** may emphasise that Þorsteinn and his brother "held their housecarls well". This piece of information is introduced after stating: **bruþr uaʀu þaʀ bistra mana : a : lanti auk : i liþi : uti**. Both the contexts of being at home and abroad are thus mentioned; and for that reason the exact function of the housecarls may remain unknown. In the meantime, as pointed out above, the layout divides the formulation about the brothers into two parts. In this way separate messages are recorded: one focusing on the 'home' dimension, and the other, on the fact of having been abroad. The reference to housecarls is made within the same text band that contains the statement: **auk : i liþi : uti** (and abroad in the retinue). The layout pattern may even characterise the role of the housecarls – they thus followed the brothers as part of their retinue. However, housecarls also appear as the commissioners of the monument alongside Þorsteinn's family members; this would confirm the hypothesis of these men being involved both in the ventures abroad and at home.[347]

One also has to wonder who these two brothers were – who held their housecarls well and were the best men both in their homeland and abroad. That one of them must have been the dead Þorsteinn seems logical – after all, the inscription is commemorating him. We can then assume that the second brother is Ǫnundr, also present among the commissioners. Counter-

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[346] A survey of earlier interpretations can be found in SöR (326-330).

[347] The noun *húskarl* appears in two other runic inscriptions: U 330 and U 335 – in both cases we are dealing with bridge inscriptions. U 330 informs that a certain Inga had the stones raised and the bridge made in memory of her husband Ragnfastr. In an addition it is said: **asur x uaʀ x huskarl x hans**. In U 335 a son commemorates his father by a stone and a bridge, and the father is further characterised as **uskarl x sifruþaʀ**. These inscriptions may to a certain degree support the idea of housecarls as men who were engaged in activities at home (cf. also Zilmer 2002a: 48-49). In five other runic inscriptions, Húskarl is recorded as a personal name: U 184, U 240, U 241, U 281, U 1139.

arguments point out that the use of the past tense makes this unlikely; rather, one could have meant a third brother who was perhaps commemorated on a separate rune stone (SöR: 329).[348]

In our opinion, the use of the past tense does not necessarily mean that both men had to be dead when the monument was raised – the past form simply emphasises that we are dealing with a record of the deeds of the deceased, Þorsteinn. With Ǫnundr's name figuring in an equally significant position on the stone, it seems justified to regard him as the second identified brother.

Other interesting vocabulary appears in the supplement to the main formula, which refers to the man's death in *Garðar*. Similarly to the above-mentioned Sö 148, the place of death is presented here as being located in the east, alliterating with the word **urustu**. Whereas Sö 148 applied the more general expression of death (*vas ændaðr*), Sö 338 clearly states that Þorsteinn fell in a battle (*hann fioll i orrustu*).[349] The image of an organised raid is further strengthened by the the identification of Þorsteinn as **lis** + **furugi** – it is thus said that he was commanding a *lið*.[350] In fact, *lið* is used twice in the Turinge inscription, appearing also in **i liþi : uti** (*i liði uti*). The term *lið* is known to have carried various meanings; it is often interpreted as 'retinue'. In certain runic inscriptions the word reveals nautical and/or military connotations (Jesch 2001: 187). In the case of Sö 338, Jesch finds it apparent that the use of the adverb (*uti*) in connection with *lið* points in the direction of "a shipborne host, if not a fleet" (ibid.).[351]

Þorsteinn thus appears as the commander of a campaign that ended with a battle somewhere in *Garðar*, during which he died. In fact, his role as an important leader is demonstrated throughout the inscription and receives a suitable conclusion by the last formulation, where he is characterised as the best of landholders (*landmanna bæstr*) – probably a general designation of a man who was the owner of considerable land estates.[352] It is also of interest to mention that **bestr** – the last word in the inscription – is placed separately from the rest. Such highlighting of the word 'best' may again have been a conscious step from the planners' side.

In this way the Turinge stone records the life and death of a man who must have been a member of an outstanding family; this message is at the same time expressed in almost poetical terms. The family had enough resources for engaging in military campaigns abroad and commissioning monuments of remarkable content and appearance.

In the surrounding landscape we may trace different routes that the travellers could have followed (despite the fact that the original site is not known). Turinge is located on the river Turingeån, south of Lake Turingen, which is linked to Lake Mälaren through Sundsörsviken and Gripsholmsviken. To the east of Turinge lies Södertäljeviken, which provides easy connections with Lake Mälaren in the north and reaches the Baltic Sea through Hallsfjärden, Himmerfjärden and Svärdsfjärden in the south. Even along the river Turingeån, one could

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[348] A second rune stone, now lost (Sö 339†), is known from the same church, but it does not seem to be connected to Sö 338, since it commemorated a different man.

[349] For the semantics of the word *orrosta*, see DR 380 (3.1.7.), as well as Jesch (2001: 59-60).

[350] The exact same formulation is also recorded in U 112, there in connection with a campaign leading to Byzantium: **huar a x griklanti · uas · lis · forunki**.

[351] For further examples of runic and skaldic evidence of *lið*, see Jesch (2001: 187-189).

[352] The exact same formulation occurs in DR 133 (*han was landmanna bæztr i Danmarku ok fyrstr*); other relevant examples are Sö 54 (*landburniR mænn*), DR 314 (*landmænnr goþa*).

have followed the trail into the northern part of Lake Yngern (Norra Yngern) and continued along other inland water routes until arriving in Lake Sillen and the river Trosaån.

Veda rock, U 209

With the inscription on the Veda rock, we can be certain about the original location of the monument. The rock lies close to the Veda farm, and stands north of the road that is heading west from the farm; from the surrounding woods a gravefield has been discovered (UR I: 315). U 209 is another interesting example from the rune stone-rich district of Vallentuna (cf. also U 214 and U 180 above).

   The inscription is in the whole well preserved; it has the design of a horizontally placed 8-shaped serpent. The inscription starts within the neck and runs along the body, which first curves into the right loop, and then heads across the rock face to the left to form a second loop. The conclusion is reached within the tail that shoots diagonally out of the loop. Additional small serpents curve around the runic serpent. The loop to the right is considerably wider than the left one, and could be considered the focal point of the inscription.

Figure 24. Veda rock (U 209). Photo: Thomas Carlson & Gunnar Nordin 2005. Runebru.se. Uppsala, Sweden.

Structurally the inscription consists of MMF and an addition that concerns the commissioner. The memorial formula – carved with wide and spacious runes – indeed occupies most of the wide right loop. The carving has been commissioned by a certain Þorsteinn after his son Erinmundr. The object has not been named, and the verbal phrase consists only of the verb **kiarþi**, where the last **i**-rune also constitutes the beginning of the preposition. It was probably not considered necessary to make an explicit reference to the monument, since the medium that carries the message, (a natural rock), was in itself obvious. Also, no active efforts were required for raising the monument; the use of the verb **kiarþi** ('made') is in correspondence with this idea – the focus lies on the actual carving.

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At the bottom of the right loop where the runes appear upside down, the first supplement is introduced by the words: **auk||kaubti**, continued by **þinsa** in between the loops, and **bu** on top of the left loop (still upside down). The second supplement fills the rest of that loop: **auk x aflaþi x austr**, and the tail: **i karþum**. The formulation *ok køypti þennsa by ok aflaði austr i Garðum* is interesting and rather unique; the first phrase emphasises that Þorsteinn bought this estate, whereas the second – containing the alliterating pair *aflaði austr* (cf. Sö 148) – determines *Garðar* as the place where he gained his wealth.[353] Thus, we see that the inscription on the Veda rock in its own way combines the aspects of being at home and abroad (cf. Sö 338).

What makes the inscription special is its information about someone whose eastern enterprise was a success – obviously Þorsteinn did not get killed in *Garðar*, but returned. In the runic narrative sequence the act of buying an estate is named first, and then comes the reference to earning wealth. However, it is logical to assume that the profits that Þorsteinn acquired while in *Garðar* – perhaps as the result of trading or as payment for mercenary service – allowed him to buy the estate at Veda. In fact, it is natural to expect the reference to the present estate being mentioned first – this is what represents the here-and-now for the people behind the inscription. From the point of view of layout, on the other hand, we notice that whereas the information about the estate appears to be upside-down for a reader approaching the rock, the part with information about a profitable enterprise in *Garðar* is perhaps easier to grasp visually. However, when standing on top of the rock and looking down at the inscription from that perspective, the whole impression changes; now the statement of relationship and the information of buying the farm stand out as the most obvious part of the inscription. Again, a certain ambiguity lies in the inscription layout.

The Veda rock carving – although being a memorial to the dead son – appears at the same time as a monument where Þorsteinn honours himself. The same Þorsteinn has arranged another rock inscription in memory of Erinmundr and his own father Geirbjǫrn – i.e. U 360 at Gådersta, ca. 20 km north of Veda (UR I: 316). This fact demonstrates the scale of his activities and resources.

As for the communicative meaning of the carving and the rock, we see that the inscription was carved into a natural medium that was at hand. At the same time, the choice could not have been accidental – the spot must have been considered suitable for presenting the intended message, which had to serve the purpose of identifying the estate and witnessing of the prominence of the commissioner.[354] To the east of Veda rock flows the river Husaån, and through Lake Garnsviken and the canal of Åkers, the Baltic Sea can be reached (cf. U 180, 3.1.20.).

Låddersta rune stone, U 636

This rune stone was found in 1919 on a field at Vilunda, south of the Vilunda-Låddersta road; it was later raised on a stony hillock by another rune stone, U 635 (UR III: 76).[355] The carving

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[353] Another possible case of the verb *kaupa* in the Viking Age runic inscriptions is Gs 14 (**kyfti**, *køpti?*); the verb *afla* occurs in U 792.

[354] From the same parish of Angarn, we learn of the travels of another father, a certain Tóki, who is commemorated by his four sons on a rune stone from the Angarn church (U 201); Tóki died in Byzantium (*hann fors ut i Grikkium*).

[355] U 636 and U 635 both mention a certain Arnfast; but in the former the name is not actually preserved, and is known only on the basis of early records. It remains uncertain whether indeed the same person has been meant. Nevertheless, U 636 is also usually associated with the Låddersta estate, where U 635 presumably stood together with a third rune stone, U 637.

is composed of a runic serpent that forms an arch around the stone; inside its body a big, but simple cross is placed. The serpent's head and tail cross at the bottom, and the latter rises up to the level of the lower cross arm.

The inscription starts inside the serpent's head at the bottom, and runs from left to right, reaching the tip of the tail. The runes are carved spaciously, and most of the serpent is occupied by the memorial formula, which states that a certain Ǫlvé had the stone raised after Arnfast her (his?) son.[356] The name of the deceased is placed at the top. A short supplement identifies the place of death: **hn · fur · ausʀ · i karþa**. The identification of the place – **i karþa** – stands out inside the raised tail, whereas the rest of that formulation is found along the lower right-hand corner. The inscription demonstrates interesting spelling, with several shortened forms used throughout the inscription, such as **stn**, **þtin**, **hn**. On the whole, the Låddersta stone leaves the impression of simplicity and brevity – with regard to its ornamentation, spelling and formulation.
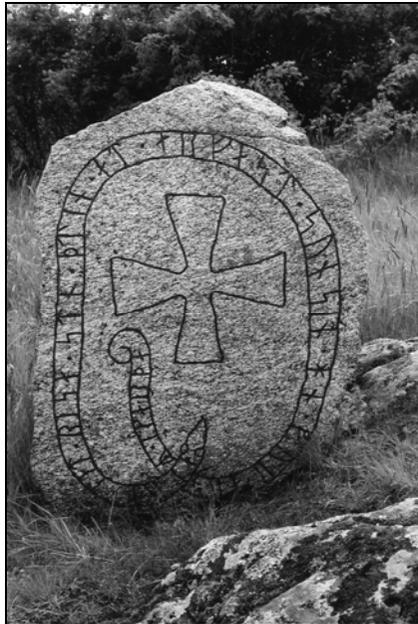
Figure 25. Låddersta stone (U 636). Photo: Thomas Carlson & Gunnar Nordin 2005. Runebru.se. Uppsala, Sweden.

As in the already discussed cases, we again meet the destination *Garðar*, together with the direction east. In the meantime, it is only said that he travelled there (*hann for austr i Garða*), without any explicit reference to his death. It may seem as though Arnfast's fate remained unknown, but he was assumed dead. Possibly the simple form of the inscription only required the mention of the most obvious. Perhaps the modest expression *hann for*, instead of for

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[356] Ǫlvé (RS Alvi) is according to UR (III: 77) and NRL an otherwise unknown female name. The corresponding male name Ǫlvir (AlveR/Ølver), on the other hand, is rather common in runic inscriptions, see NRL.

example *hann varð dauðr*, in itself symbolises the fact that Arnfast died away from home. It may also represent a conscious stylistic device, meant to milden the tragic circumstances behind the raising of a stone after a dead son.[357]

Although we do not know the exact site of the Låddersta stone, the general district is significant through its closeness to Lake Mälaren. Currently the rune stone is located only ca. two kilometres from the lake. In any case, important water routes that could take a man from Tiundaland out into the Baltic Sea and further on to *Garðar* were within an easy reach.

Alstad rune stone, N 62

The rune stone from a farm at Alstad in eastern Toten is a remarkable monument in many senses.[358] For one, it witnesses as to how a suitable runic medium could be re-used: the stone carries two inscriptions from different times, not directly connected with each other.[359] Secondly, both inscriptions demonstrate interesting content, as does the pictorial ornamentation found on the front and back sides.[360]

Alstad stone is a tall and slim monument, measuring around two and a half metres, made of red sandstone from Ringerike. The inscriptions on the stone's two sides are designed in two vertical and three horizontal text bands. The first inscription (N 61) runs vertically along the left side of the stone from bottom to top and continues along the left edge of the front side in the same direction. The second inscription (N 62) is composed of three horizontal lines placed across the front side underneath ornamental images.

We have already referred to the earlier N 61 in connection with the analysis of U 414†, due to its reference to the transportation of a stone that was suitable for runic carving. Indeed, the Alstad stone must have in its time been brought to eastern Toten from the district of Ringerike (cf. NIyR I: 138, 145-146). The reading and interpretation of N 61 poses several problems, but what seems to be clear is that the stone was commissioned by a woman called Jórunnr, most likely after her husband; she was then behind the initiative of transporting the stone from *Ulfeyj[u]* in *Hringaríki* (Ringerike).[361] The second inscription, N 62, contains a Norwegian reference to *Garðar*, and perhaps to the southern borders of that territory. The inscription has been dated to the second half of the 11th century. The inscription starts in the lowest horizontal line on the front side and moves upwards; the reading direction in all three lines is from left to right.

The structure is simple: MMF and a supplement concerning the deceased. The memorial formula takes up the first line and the beginning of the second one; it informs one that the stone has been raised by a father after his son. It is interesting that even with such an apparent re-use of the monument, the conventional sponsor formula has been applied – in

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[357] The verb *fara* is used without explicit focus on the fact of death e.g. in Sö 207, U 922, U 948, U 1143. In Sö 131 the verb *fara* introduces the first phrase, which concerns the fact that the deceased headed east, and is followed by a specification of his death in *Serkland*: *For austr heðan með Ingvari, a Særklandi liggR sunR ØyvindaR*. Note the focus also on the point of departure – *heðan* (from here). Similar ideas are expressed in Sö 179 (*ÞæiR foru drængila fiarri at gulli ok austarla ærni gafu, dou sunnarla a Særklandi*). Cf. also Sö 163 (*for Olæifr/Gullæifr i Grikkium gulli skifti*), U 792 (*for hæfila, feaR aflaði ut i Grikkium arfa sinum*), Gs 13 (*hann for meðr FrøygæiRi*). *Fara* is also a common (neutral) verb to express mobility in saga literature, see chapter IV.

[358] Now the stone is exhibited at the University Museum of National Antiquities in Oslo.

[359] One may at the same time wonder whether the monument was still in use within the same kin.

[360] The images on the front side consist of a big bird, wolf-like figures, a horse without a rider and two horses with riders; on the back side, plant ornamentation is found. An analysis of the ornamentation is provided in Fuglesang (1980: 83-92).

[361] For a detailed discussion of the inscription see NIyR (I: 139-151); Spurkland (2001: 112-114).

this case it must first and foremost focus on the general act of commemoration (Spurkland 2001: 115).

The supplement refers to three places; the first one identifies the death place and the other two specify the geographical location: **is uarþ tauþr x i uitahol[mi] miþli ustaulms auk karþa**.[362] The first place name occurs at the end of the second line, and the other two are given in the third line.

All three place names have been a matter of discussion. *Vitaholmr* was according to earlier identifications assumed to lie somewhere in the Baltic region, perhaps referring to Witland on the mouth of the river Vistula (cf. NIyR: 155-156).[363] Kleiber, on the other hand, has identified *Vitaholmr* with the strategic settlement of Vitičev by the river Dnieper, south of Kiev – where archaeological excavations have revealed remains of Viking Age fortifications (1965: 66, 70).[364] The second place name, established as *Ustaholmr*, has by Kleiber been connected with the Ustje (ON *Usti*) fortification on the mouth of the Dnieper (op. cit. 70-71). Those two places may have functioned as the focal points of the ancient Kiev-state in an otherwise unclear border region of *Garðar* (op. cit. 71).[365]

The possible references to two strategic fortifications located south of Kiev – may suggest that the designation *Garðar* is in N 62 anchored more to the south than otherwise expected in the context of runic inscriptions; that is to say, in the very region along the Dnieper route. However, the inscription states that Þóraldr died in *Vitaholmr*, between *Ustaholmr* and *Garðar*. The use of the word *miðli* is important and characteristic. *Garðar* (historically the most well known among these three) may even here appear as a name for the general territory of Old Rus, used with the purpose of establishing the location of *Vitaholmr*. Þóraldr's death place must have been known by the commissioner of the monument (his father), who may have even witnessed that unfortunate incident – which is why we find three different place references in the inscription. But in the eyes of his contemporaries at Alstad, *Garðar* was perhaps the most familiar destination, and had to be included as a broader frame of reference.[366] Also, it cannot be ruled out that *Vitaholmr* and *Ustaholmr* may in N 62 function as blanket designations for certain districts in the Dnieper region, named on the basis of the above-mentioned fortified centres. N 62 has been included among Baltic traffic inscriptions exactly because of this potential identification of some southern borderline region of *Garðar*, despite the fact that *Vitaholmr* and *Ustaholmr* lie outside the immediate Baltic area.[367]

Rune stone from Stora Ryttern church ruins, Vs 1

During renovation work on the Stora Ryttern church ruins in 1938, Vs 1 and Vs 2 were discovered. Now the stones stand raised on the former churchyard (VsR: 6). The carving of

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[362] The transliteration here differs slightly from the version in SRD; the basis is instead Spurkland (2001: 114).

[363] In NIyR (I: 152, 155) the reading of the second place name has been given as **uiṭaulms**, and the whole phrase is normalised as: *í Vitaholmi, miðli Vitaholms ok Garða*. The double use of *Vitaholmr* is explained in terms of a reference being made both to the particular region bordering on *Garðar*, and a certain place within that region. For an overview of earlier interpretations, see also Kleiber (1965: 64-66).

[364] Among the remnants, one discovered a tower that had been used for fire signalling; this connects with the typically Nordic phenomen, called *viti* in ON (cf. Kleiber 1965: 64, 66, 69; Spurkland 2001: 115).

[365] Another suggestion by Kleiber is that *Garðar* may in this inscription indicate the actual town of Kiev (op. cit. 71).

[366] The frequent mention of *Garðaríki* in sagas confirms this idea (see chapter IV).

[367] Another reference to the Dnieper route occur on the Pilgård rune stone (G 280), which names places located further to the south, on the way to the Black Sea. Further runic evidence of Scandinavian activities in that region consists of a runic stone memorial (part of a stone coffin) found on the island of Berezan, near the mouth of the Dnieper (see e.g. Melnikova 2001: 200-202).

Vs 2 consists only of a big cross, but it is considered likely that the stones formed a monument together, since the inscription of Vs 1 refers to stones in plural (**sena : þasi**). The stones have been dated to around mid-11th century. Stora Ryttern lies right on Lake Mälaren, a few kilometres from Freden (to the west) and Lilla Blacken (to the south).

The carving of Vs 1 has the design of a runic serpent whose body is shaped into an arch, and an additional text band (possibly another serpent) that grows out of the tail of the serpent and builds an outer arch around it. The inscription starts in the serpent's well-expressed head, and runs from left to right; from there it curves back to the left following the outer arch (where the runes stand upside down). The final six runes and the end mark are placed to the left of the band.

The inscription follows the structure of MMF and one addition. The memorial formula contains two monument markers; besides stones, a reference is also made to the placement of a staff.[368] Most of the formula fits into the runic serpent, but the part that identifies the dead son is placed within the additional text band on top of the stone: **slakua : sun : sia**. The supplement starts within the same band on the left – **etaþr : austr · i** – and concludes outside with the place name: **karusm**.[369]

The death place of Slagvi, identified as **karusm** causes questions. One obvious alternative is Chorezm, an ancient region south of the Aral Sea, which was a well-known trade destination in the Viking Age (see e.g. S.B.F. Jansson 1946: 265). Jansson explains that Chorezm lies in the same region as *Serkland*, which may indicate that Slagvi participated in Ingvarr's expedition (ibid.). In the meantime, it is obvious from VsR that Jansson later changed his opinion in favour of *Garðar*. The unusual spelling is taken to reflect carver errors, of which other examples are also given (VsR: 8-9). Further support can be found from an article by Arne (1947: 292), in which the latter explains that by mid-11th century the routes to Chorezm had lost their importance and were not used to the same extent as before. Therefore, *Garðar* might be the preferable alternative; after all, Chorezm is otherwise unknown from the runic material, whereas the expression *austr i Garðum* would make sense on the basis of previously discussed examples. The spelling of **karusm** could be explained either as a mistake, or an example of deviating runic spelling caused by particular sound analysis (Arne 1947: 290-291). Counterarguments claim that one should read what stands in the inscription – i.e. **karusm**, and thus take it as the designation for Chorezm (Lagman 1990: 97).[370] The exact meaning of **karusm** cannot be confirmed, but in light of contemporary evidence, *Garðar* offers a possible solution.

<div align="center">Hagstugan rune stone, Sö 130</div>

The rune stone from Hagstugan, Sparsta was according to 19th century records lying on top of a hillock close to a gravesite and various stone marks (SöR: 96-97). The stone has inscription on two sides. On the front, the design shows a runic serpent that builds an arch around the surface, as well as two separate lines of runes – the first one forms an additional arch underneath the serpent, and the second one is placed to the left of the serpent, where it runs vertically from the bottom to the top. A simple cross-mark is set close to the bottom of the

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[368] This monument marker appears in Sö 196, U 226, U 332† and U 849†. In Sö 56 *stafa marga* (many a staff) may refer to the rune staves, as also made explicit by Sm 16 (*stafiR runa*) and in DR 40 (*þer stafaR*).

[369] Note the simple alliteration *ændaðr austr*.

[370] On other occasions, Lagman himself, however, has listed interesting peculiarities in runic spelling that reflect individual sound analysis.

stone. Most of the inscription is thus found on the front side, where it starts inside the serpent on the left and runs to the right; it continues with the inner text arch, this time running from right to left, and then proceeds along the left edge. There the stone has suffered considerable damage, and the inscription is not fully preserved. The final part of the inscription – which includes two bind runes, five normal runes and a cryptic branch rune – appears on the left side of the stone.

The inscription as a whole demonstrates rather complicated content and deviates from the typical pattern of commemoration. What we could regard as the basic memorial formula at first sight, is in itself rather short: **fiuriʀ : kirþu : at : faþur**. The formulation seems to identify four sons who commemorate their father, without marking the names, or the monument. To this short statement, a rather special extension is added, which characterises the father and focuses on the commemorative act. Viewed together, it is thus said: **fiuriʀ : kirþu : at : faþur : kuþan : tyrþ : trikela**. This formulation could also be treated as the main message from the point of view of layout, since it appears within the serpent arch, with the word **faþur** placed right on the top.

Two interesting words occur here, in ON *dýrð* and *drengila*. The first one is a noun and carries connotations of something honourable and magnificent (cf. S.B.F. Jansson 1984: 144); the latter is an adverb developed from the word *drengr*, thus expressing the valiant/manly manner in which the act (of commemoration) is pursued. The message could be translated into English: "Four made in memory of good father the magnificence valiantly". A monument marker in the usual sense is not included, but a more abstract way of pointing at the memorial is still present. According to Jesch (2001: 229-230), the use of the adverb *drengila* in describing the act of commemoration "reflects how the commissioners wish themselves to be seen, and [the inscription] is thus semantically, if not grammatically, a kind of first-person statement".[371]

In Sö 130 the adverb semantically constitutes a link between the memorial formulation in the runic serpent and the following supplement concerning the deceased that makes up the inner arch: **at : tumara : miltan : urþa uk : mataʀ**. Here the commemoration is continued, as the words **at : tumara** demonstrate. Also, **at : tumara** belongs together with the previous phrase through alliteration. In fact, the whole preserved formulation on the front side of the stone is characterised by alliteration – *FiuriR gærðu at faður goðan dyrð drængila at Domara/domara, mildan orða ok mataR goðan*.[372]

The meaning remains somewhat uncertain; **tumara** is either the personal name Dómari or a byname/indication of a certain position (the judge). What is clear, though, is that the following saying characterises the deceased. The father of the four is said to be gentle in speech and free with food – the latter emphasising his generosity.[373]

The final part on the left side of the stone consists of the following runes: $\widehat{\text{ha}}$ $\widehat{\text{lf}}$ **kirþu o**. NRL and SRD identify there the place name *Garðar*, i.e. *hann(?) fiall(?) [i(?)] Garðum(?)*. In this case the final supplement would be an identification of death in *Garðar*, perhaps in a

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[371] The adverb is used in the same manner in Sö 113 (*gærðu drængila*). In addition, the adverb occurs in Sö 164 (*stoð drængila*), Sö 179 (*foru drængila*), and Nä 29 (*vaR farinn fulldrængila*) – in all three cases used in supplements describing travelling.

[372] For a discussion of the verse, see also (Hübler 1996: 55-56).

[373] What follows after **kuþan** is unfortunately only fragmentarily preserved and does not allow for a full interpretation, although reconstructions have been attempted by S. Bugge (Brate & Bugge 1887-1891: 322) and SöR (pp. 97-98).

battle – a further indication of the significant message that the monument was meant to express. This is a possibility to consider, although it cannot be established with certainty.[374]

Sö 130 belongs to the district of Rönö; from there we know of a number of voyage inscriptions, including a few other Baltic traffic inscriptions. The stone is located within a few kilometres distance from two lakes (Glottran and Kappstasjön). Further to the northeast lie Lake Eknären and the river Storån, which connects the former lake with Lake Ludgosjön.[375] From the neighbourhood of Sö 130 in the parish of Lid, we could mention the Lundby stone (Sö 131) raised in memory of a certain Skarði, who travelled to the east with Ingvarr and is now dead in *Serkland*.[376]

Additional remarks

Six certain and two possible references to *Garðar* occur in the runic material. There is a certain chance that *Garðar* is the intended destination in the fragmentarily preserved Lissby rune stone (U 153). The inscription commemorates two men who met their end somewhere in the east (**aust… …ṃ**), but unfortunately it remains unknown whether this happened **i karþum** or **i krikum**; the eastern direction could be used with both destinations.

Some surveys add a Gotlandic stone coffin inscription (G 114) from the Ardre church to the list of *Garðar* references. The inscription is in parts fragmentarily preserved, but does indeed contain the phrase **i : karþum**. But as explained in GR (I: 216-217) and Snædal Brink (2002: 73), it is a local reference to *Garðir*, i.e. Garda parish, located ca. 10 km from Ardre.[377] Indeed, it is a rather typical Gotlandic feature to identify persons by linking them to their places of origin – this becomes especially popular in later medieval inscriptions (G 114 is dated to ca. 1100-1130, and is an early medieval example).[378] Furthermore, the person com-memorated in G 114 is a woman, which makes it more unlikely that she would be characterised by her trip to *Garðar*. The only recorded case among runic inscriptions, of a woman who at least intended to travel to the east (to Jerusalem) is U 605†.

3.1.22. Holmgarðr

Sö 171	[i h]ulṃ[karþi]
U 687	i hulmkarþi · i olafs · kriki
G 220F	i : hulmka-… …iþị

Esta rock, Sö 171

The carving is found on the western side of a rock that stands on top of a hillock southeast of Esta; the hillock is located close to the eastern end of the drained out Esta Lake

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[374] It should be remembered that at the start of the inscription, the same word **kirþu** was used to designate the act of making a monument.

[375] Cf. also Sö FV1948;289 (3.1.1.) and Sö 148.

[376] The same inscription was already referred to in connection with U 636.

[377] For a detailed analysis of the inscription on the Ardre stone coffin, see GR (I: 210-220).

[378] In the whole Gotlandic runic material from the Viking Age and the Middle Ages, local place names appear in approximately 70 inscriptions; and several among them also contain the component -*garðum*, e.g. G 3, G 42, G 100, G 103, G 114, G 141 and G 231. Cf. also 3.3.4.

(Sätterstasjön) (SöR: 132). The rock has suffered some damage, especially in the lower part – therefore the inscription is not completely preserved, and has to be supplemented.[379]

The design shows a circular text band that is both by its beginning and end attached to a cross on the middle of the rock face; in fact, its two branches form the lower cross arm. At the bottom the branches curve around themselves, forming two small loops. The inscription starts in the left-hand branch that springs out of the centre of the cross, and runs inside the band through the left bottom curve and all around the rock face down to the right, where it is taken through the second curve and concludes within the right-hand branch on the middle of the stone.

Figure 26. Esta rock (Sö 171). Photo: Thomas Carlson & Gunnar Nordin 2005. Runebru.se. Uppsala, Sweden.

Structurally the inscription consists of MMF and a supplement about the deceased. Memorial formula occupies the left side of the rock, with the name of the deceased and the indication of relationship placed along the top. A certain Ingifastr is commemorating his father Sigviðr; the verbal phrase suits the character of the monument (*let haggv[a] stæ[i]n*). The right side of the rock carries the information about the fate of Sigviðr, but this part has weathered down considerably, with only fragments still visible. In supplemented form it says *hann fioll i Holmgarði, skæiðaR visi með skipara*. Again we notice that the final part of the inscription follows the principles of alliteration.

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[379] Originally the rock may have marked the southeastern border of the Esta estate (Larsson 1990: 151).

The dead man Sigviðr is described as the leader of a ship. From the formulation it seems that he was not the only one to fall in *Holmgarðr*, that he died together with his crew during some sort of a battle. This image is supported by the identification of the ship as *skeið* (ON), a term that may carry military connotations (cf. also skaldic poetry).[380]

The word *skiparar* (sg. *skipari*) refers to the members of the ship's crew, i.e. these men must have been under the command of Sigviðr, who is clearly identified as the leader (ON *vísi*). The best comparison to Sö 171 is the Ny Larsker stone I (DR 379, from Bornholm), where it is said of the commemorated Hallvarðr: *druknaþi han uti mæþ alla(?) skipara*.

Only three runes are still visible of the place name *Holmgarðr*: ᚾ ᚱ ᛦ. The etymology and meaning of *Holmgarðr* have been disputed. Prevailing have been such interpretations that connect the place name with concepts of an island-town or an island-region.[381] Kleiber (1957: 216-217) thus explains *Holmgarðr* as *insularum regio* – according to him the settlements on small hillocks stood out like islands during the spring floods, which made the whole area around the river Volkhov and Lake Ilmen look like a country of islands for Scandinavian travellers. Jackson (2003: 47) has criticised Kleiber's explanation both from the linguistic and historical point of view, and also has pointed out that he has built upon modern geographical conditions, which do not correspond to the historical situation. Jackson finds it likely that *Holmgarðr* is reflective of an early name **Holmgorod*, referring either to the settlement called *Holm* in the Slavenskij region (which was to become part of the medieval Novgorod), or to Gorodische settlement (two kilometres from Novgorod) (op. cit. 48-49).

In both cases the surrounding landscape with hillforts supports the assumption. The possible transition of the name is explained in the following way:

> It could have originated as a reflection of **Holmgorod*, the name of what later would be called *Gorodische*, then it might have been removed to what later would be called *Holm*, in the Slavenskij region of Novgorod, but, as long as it was used, this place-name, in the eyes of medieval Scandinavians, was nothing but a designation of the capital of Rus, i.e. Novgorod. (Jackson 2003: 50)

As for the traditional associations with *holmr* (an island), Jackson finds that this results from popular etymology that was gradually developed around the meaning of *Holmgarðr* (op. cit. 48).

The name *Holmgarðr* appears in the runic context thus as a designation of the settlement in Novgorod – one of the main stations in the territory of *Garðar* along the way to Byzantium. The route from the Baltic Sea led through the Gulf of Finland, along the river Neva to Lake Ladoga, then along the river Volkhov to Novgorod and further on to the south. Based on earlier settlements (such as Gorodische), Novgorod had by the 11th century developed into a major centre where manifold activities could be pursued, including trades, crafts and service in the military guards of the Old Rus leaders. Whatever the exact mission of Sigviðr may have been, it is significant that he headed to *Holmgarðr* together with his whole crew.

Sö 171 now belongs to the parish of Säterstad in the district of Rönö (cf. Sö 130, Sö 148 and Sö FV1948;289), to the east of lakes Ludgosjön and Runnviken. Right to the east of Esta lies Lake Svarvaren. In the neighbourhood (less than five kilometres southeast), we find the

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[380] The only other certain case of *skeið* occurring in the runic material is in DR 230; there it is one of the three monument markers and refers to a ship setting of stones, thus demonstrating a metaphorical use of the word (*Ragnhildr, systiR Ulfs, satti sten þænsi ok gærþi høg þænsi æft, ok skeþ þæssi*).

[381] Jackson (2003: 46) has listed four main assumptions around the meaning of *Holmgarðr*: "1) Ilmenskij gorod (a town on Lake Ilmen), 2) a town on an island (from *hólmr* 'island'), 3) settlements in the *insularum regio* (during the high-flood on the Volkhov), 4) *Holm-gorod* (a fortified settlement *Holm*)".

Tystberga stone Sö 173, which refers both to western and eastern travels (*hann hafði vestarla um vaRit længi, dou austarla með Ingvari*).

Sjusta boulder, U 687

The boulder from the grove at Sjusta, close to the Skokloster castle, is known from its original location. The carving covers the northeastern side of the stone (UR III: 192). The inscription has been carved by Œpir – as witnessed by the final phrase **ubiʀ · risti ᛬ ru** – and demonstrates design typical of him. It is composed of an 8-shaped serpent with three loops, one on top and two below. Inside the upper loop a cross is placed; the head of the serpent cuts through that loop on the left.

   The inscription is well preserved. It starts inside the lifted tail that curves into the right loop, runs up into the top loop and continues along the left loop. The conclusion, i.e. the carver formula, has a separate position inside the right loop above the serpent's body, and is being pointed out by its elongated leg. Some of the lines that constitute the serpent's body function at the same time as runic staves.

Figure 27. Sjusta boulder (U 687). Photo: Runverket, RAÄ.

The inscription demonstrates an extended MMF with two parallel commissioners and four deceased; a supplement that concerns one among the dead; and the already mentioned carver formula. The memorial formula occupies the loop on the right as well as the one on the top. The main commissioner is a woman called Rúna, who commemorates four men identified as the sons of her and Helgi (or Egli/Engli).[382] The verbal phrase concerning the commissioning of the monument includes the monument marker **mirki** (ON *merki*), which according to Palm (1992: 188) is a frequent feature in the inscriptions from the whole district of Håbo.

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[382] The husband of Rúna was apparently dead when the carving was made.

One of the sons, Spjallboði, is additionally commemorated by his wife Sigríðr. Sigríðr's commemoration of Spjallboði gains the top position along the upper loop. Spjallboði seems to lie in the centre of attention through the following phrase that also relates about his death: **an uaʀ · tauþr · i hulmkarþi · i olafs · kriki**. This information is placed into the left loop, with the place name **i hulmkarþi** appearing at its very bottom.

The recorded information is a rather unique example of a detailed specification concerning the place of death. Not only do we learn that Spjallboði found his end in *Holmgarðr* – it is stated that this happened in Óláfr's church.[383] At the same time it remains unknown whether the church was indeed the place where Spjallboði was buried. This is a possibility, but it might also be that the inscription simply wished to indicate that he died during some incident related to the church.

The reference to Óláfr's church is generally taken as evidence of the existence in *Holmgarðr* (i.e. Novgorod) of a church dedicated to St. Óláfr. It is assumed that the church must have functioned as an important (trade) station for Scandinavians who came and stayed in Novgorod, i.e. it was formated as a church for merchants. Von Friesen was among the first to discuss the meaning of U 687 from this perspective (e.g. 1913: 70-71), and later scholars have further emphasised the connections between the church and a Scandinavian trade court (cf. e.g. Melnikova 1998: 651).

With Œpir as the carver, the dating of the runic inscription to the latter half of the 11th century is justified. The occurring reference to Óláfr's church from around that time documents Scandinavian influences in the Novgorod region.

Spjallboði died away from home, but we hear nothing about the death of the other three sons. Since they are all commemorated in the same inscription, it is not completely excluded that Spjallboði was their leader and that all four Tiundaland men found their death in the same region.

The communicative setting around the rune stone supports the image of travelling. Sjusta lies right at the gateway of Lake Mälaren; the Skokloster parish is surrounded by two major water routes – to the west lie Gorran and Oxen, and to the east Stavsund and Skofjärden.[384]

Hallfrede rune stone, G 220

There is only a small part preserved of the Hallfrede rune stone. Two pieces of the stone were found near a local farm with a few years' interval (GR I: 244).[385]

In its present state the fragment shows two runic bands (possibly serpents), and additional smaller serpents. The suggested date is the end of the 11th century. What remains of the inscription is the end of the name of the deceased – **…tkaiʀ** – and part of the supplement concerning his death: **aʀ : to i : hulmka-….** In what seems to be the inner runic band, a few additional runes **…iþi** are found.

Despite its very fragmentary condition the inscription thus commemorates a man who has died in *Holmgarðr* – in this manner offering a short glimpse into connections between Gotland

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[383] To a certain degree the formulation echoes of the expression "he died in Denmark in christening robes" as recorded in U 699 and U 896, although the latter two carry a more general, perhaps symbolic meaning. The scale of detailed information found in U 687 could be compared to Sm 101, where we hear about a man being buried in a stone coffin in Bath in England (*Hælgi lagði hann i stæinþro, broður sinn, a Ænglandi i Baðum*); or DR 6 with the commemoration of a person who is resting at *Skía*, also in England (*a Ænglandi i Skiu [h]wilis*).

[384] Among other rune stones from Skokloster, we could mention U 686 with the recorded personal name Víðfari; this may indicate that the man engaged in travelling, cf. also Sö 45 (3.1.24.)

[385] Hallfrede lies southeast of Visby. The fragment is kept at Gotlands Fornsal in Visby.

and northwestern Russia. The name of the deceased could have been either Oddgeirr or Bótgeirr (Snædal Brink 2002: 81).

3.1.23. Virland

U 346†	**a urlati**
U 356	**a uirlanti**
U 533	**a + uirlanti**

Rune stone from Frösunda church, U 346† and Ängby rune stone U 356

U 346† and U 356 will be treated together, since they commemorate the same person and contain almost identical messages. The lost rune stone from the Frösunda church is known through 17th and 18th century records, according to which the stone was located in the entrance to the church (UR II: 88). Originally U 346† must have been standing somewhere in the neighbourhood of U 356 to the northwest of Frösunda; later it was used as building material in the church. U 356 is known from its original site on a pasture land by Ängby, at the landroad Lunda-Markim (UR II: 104). Ancient burial mounds and stone settings have been found around Ängby (Larsson 1990: 139). To the east of Frösunda lie Lake Helgösjön and the river Helgöån, which provides one possible water route into the Baltic Sea along the above-mentioned river Husaån, Lake Garnsviken and the Åkers canal (cf. U 209, 3.1.21.).

U 356 measures over two metres; the assumed height of U 346† was also around two metres. The carving on U 346† was composed of one runic serpent whose elongated neck and tail intertwined at the bottom, with the head and the tip of the tail reaching up to the level of the cross. U 356 demonstrates the design of two serpents – the heads are tied together at the bottom and the tails on the top, creating a small arch in the upper surface of the stone. According to the inscriptions, both rune stones were carved by Ásmundr.

The inscription on U 346† started inside the neck of the serpent at the bottom left corner and ran around the stone from left to right, concluding within the tail that reached diagonally across the stone. U 356 is also introduced within the serpent's neck at the left corner; from there the inscription runs to the top, shifts over into the body of the second serpent, and comes down along the right side of the stone. Then the inscription proceeds to the small arch of tails, covering first the tail on the right and then the one on the left (the reading direction is in both cases top-bottom), with the final five runes placed separately in between the tail and the body of the left serpent.

The structure is in both inscriptions the same – they consist of MMF and three types of supplements. But the order of the supplements and their wording show some variation. In U 346† the statement concerning the place of death was the first addition, followed by the prayer and the carver formula; in U 356 the first component is the prayer, then the identification of death place, and lastly, the carver formula. Judging from the drawings, U 346† had the memorial formula covering the left side of the monument. The supplements were introduced at the top right corner and followed the serpent's body down and up again along the raised tail (within the tail the carver signature appeared). In the case of U 356, the serpents' bodies contain the basic memorial as well as the prayer: on the left we find the name of the commissioner, the verbal phrase and the name of the deceased; on the right the

statement of relationship and the prayer for his soul. The reference to the death place takes up the tail of the right serpent, and the carver signature fills the tail of the left serpent. This placement strategy divides the inscription into four parts, at least from the point of view of layout.

Both rune stones have been commissioned by a woman called Ragnfríðr, and they are raised after Bjǫrn, who is further identified as her son and Ketilmundr's. This indicates that the husband of Ragnfríðr was probably already dead at the time when the monuments were arranged; it was nevertheless considered important to mention him. In U 346† the name of the deceased seems to have been placed along the upper left corner and the relationship statement with reference to Ketilmundr at the very top. In U 356 the name of the deceased again occupies the upper left corner, whereas the name of the father gains a more or less parallel position on the right. The inscriptions must have had both the dead son as well as the father in focus, although the former gains more attention through the proceeding phrases.

The formulations in U 346† and U 356 follow the same pattern, with the exception of the carver formula, which in the latter is shorter and states merely: **in osmuntr markaþi**, whereas in U 346† **runaʀ ritaʀ** were added.[386] The inscriptions make it clear that the man *fell a Virlandi* – in U 346† designated as **a urlati**, in U 356 **a uirlanti**.[387] By the reference to *Virland* (in Estonian 'Virumaa'), one of the old landscapes of present-day Estonia is meant – located in the area south of the Gulf of Finland, i.e. the northeastern part of Estonia.[388] As noted previously in connection with e.g. DR 380 and Ög 81, the verb *falla* indicates that Bjǫrn found his death during some strife, perhaps a battle.

The location of the two Attundaland rune stones is connected to a landscape that favoured waterborne traffic – as explained above, the Baltic Sea lied within easy reach, and from there one could sail straight on to northeastern Estonia. This also applies to U 533 from Roden, where the same destination has been recorded.

Rune stone from Roslags-Bro church, U 533

U 533 was found in 1936 from the northeastern corner of the weapon house of the Roslags-Bro church (UR II: 412). Although the original site is unknown, the monument probably comes from the similar landscape of lakes and rivers as U 346† and U 356 do – Roslags-Bro lies right on the northeastern coast of Uppland, on Lake Brosjön and the river Broströmmen; to the east we find for example Bottenfjärden and to the west Lake Erken. More importantly, from Roslags-Bro there is only approximately ten kilometres to Norrtäljeviken in the south, and Björköfjärden in the east – hence, the Baltic Sea (more precisely, the part known as the Åland Sea) is easily accessible.

From what is visible of the stone, it may be concluded that the inscription is fully preserved. The carving is simple: a runic serpent forms an arch around the stone; its head and tail are lifted up and reach to the middle of the stone. U 533 has been attributed to Þorbjǫrn skald, who has also carved U 532, found from the same church. U 533 and U 532 are further con-

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[386] The prayer formula is in U 346† and U 356 addressed to God and God's mother, also characteristic of Ásmundr's inscriptions (cf. Thompson 1975: 89).

[387] Certain variation thus occurs in the runic spelling, but since one of the inscriptions is missing, they cannot be systematically compared to each other.

[388] In English the region could also be called Vironia, but here we prefer to use the Old Scandinavian form as a basis, and speak of the region as Virland.

nected through their content; they have the same commissioner, Sigþrúðr. In the first case she is commemorating her son, in the latter her husband.

The inscription of U 533 starts inside the head of the serpent and runs from left to right concluding within the tail. Runes are placed spaciously and the inscription appears to be well planned. The structure shows MMF and a simple supplement where the death place of Ǫnundr is given: **han uas · tribin + a + uirlanti**. The name of the deceased has gained the top position. The supplement occupies the lower right half of the runic serpent, whereas the indication **a + uirlanti** appears inside the raised tail on the middle of the stone.

U 533 thus tells of a man who has been killed in Virland – another example of violent death.[389] On the other hand, we do not hear anything specific about the death of Sigþrúðr's husband Kári, commemorated in U 532. Instead we find there a prayer for his soul, as well as an explicit carver signature. It is possible that the two stones were raised together and were meant to complement each other through their varied statements.

3.1.24. Eistland

Vg 181	**i · estlatum**
Sö 45	**aistfari**

Frugården rune stone, Vg 181

The rune stone stands on a small hillock at the Frugården estate. The same place is described in the 17th century records, and can be considered the original one (VgR: 325). Close to that site there is a little stream that flows into the river Ätran ca. one km to the west. Approximately 25 kilometres to the east of Frugården, the great lake of Vättern is situated.

The locality around the monument is also known under the name 'Olsbro', which is why the rune stone is sometimes referred to as the Olsbro stone. The background and the age of that place name are not clear; the name may be a shortened version of "Olles brors sten" (Olle's brother's stone), or may connect with a bridge that leads over the nearby stream.[390] That constructing bridges was considered important is apparent from two other rune stones known from the Norra Åsarp parish – Vg 182 and Vg 183† – which both state that a bridge has been made besides the raising of a rune stone.

The Frugården stone is in itself an impressive monument, measuring over two metres. The carving is composed of a runic animal band (a stylized serpent) that forms an arch around the stone and is tied together at the bottom left corner. Along the left edge an additional line of runes is found. The inner surface of the monument is filled by a cross and complex animal ornamentation of a rather unusual kind for Swedish rune stones. The imagery shows a

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[389] For comments on the verb *drepa*, see e.g. DR 380 (3.1.7.) and U 582 (3.1.18.).

[390] See VgR (p. 325); and web-information (Vg 181 Frugården, Olsbro) by Runverket, RAÄ at http://www.raa.se/ runverket/vg181.asp. The latter source finds it possible that the original bridge was named after the man commemorated in the runic inscription (i.e. Óláfr), and that we are here witnessing a tradition around a memorial complex that consisted of a rune stone and a bridge.

powerful four-legged animal that may be a stylized lion.[391] The visual features underline the significance of the monument.

The inscription starts within the runic band at the bottom left corner, above what seems to be an animal leg, and follows the band all around the stone, reaching almost back to the left corner. Its final part is fitted into the extra line on the left, but there the stone has suffered some damage, and the inscription is not completely preserved.

Figure 28. The Frugården stone (Vg 181). Photo: Thomas Carlson & Gunnar Nordin 2005. Runebru.se. Uppsala, Sweden.

The overall structure is nevertheless clear: MMF, short addition characterising the deceased, identification of his place of death, and finally carver formula. Most of the memorial text covers the left side of the stone; the name of the deceased and the relationship statement are placed at the very top. Along the right side we first find the supplement: **trk · hrþa · kuþan**; and then in the lower part of the runic band: **hn · uarþ · trbin · i · estlatum**. The carver formula is placed outside the band, into the line on the left. From what is preserved it may be proposed that a man called Hávarðr cut the stone. Seeing how the carver formula is separated from the rest, this statement may be considered of supplementary value to the main inscription within the runic band.

The inscription from Frugården tells us about a certain Óláfr, who is commemorated by his father Gufi. Óláfr is described as *dræng harða goðan* (a very good dreng), who got killed

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[391] The pictorial animal ornamentation of the stone reminds one to a certain degree of ornamentation found on Vg 4, Sö 82, Ög 106, DR 271 (VgR: 327; cf. also Christiansson 1959: 125.)

away from home. The formulation **i · estlatum** grammatically marks dative plural, which would actually make it correct to speak of several lands, i.e. the Estlands. In this way the label deviates from other runic place indications that contain the compound -*land*, which always show the name in singular and as a rule use the preposition *a*.[392]

Salberger (1986: 84-85) understands **i · estlatum** in terms of expressing relatively good knowledge about territorial division in a country, which did not constitute a political unity in the Viking Age but was divided into a number of lands/provinces. He draws parallels to the Swedish landscape of Småland, a name which historically denoted several small districts (op. cit. 82-83). Melnikova has set the plural form in connection with the ON tradition, where the western part of the Estonian mainland was known as *Aðalsýsla*, and the Estonian islands (especially the island of Ösel, in Estonian 'Saaremaa') as *Eysýsla* – as we hear from skaldic poetry and Icelandic sagas. The plural form in the runic inscription may have been used as a collective name for these regions (Melnikova 2001: 288). On the other hand, in the sagas *Eistland* appears in singular, alongside references to other regions of present-day Estonia and Baltic countries, such as *Eysýsla*, *Aðalsýsla*, *Rafala* (i.e. *Refalaland*, in Estonian 'Rävala'), *Virland*, *Lífland* (Livland/Livonia, in Estonian 'Liivimaa', in Latvian 'Vidzeme'), and *Kúrland* (Courland, in Latvian 'Kurzeme'). In this setting it could be suggested that *Eistland* corresponded to a certain part of the Estonian mainland.[393]

The isolated runic reference does not reveal whether the inscription on the Frugården stone simply demonstrates an accidental use of a collective term when pointing out the region as a whole, or whether it is indeed reflective of a historically grounded administrative concept. Vg 181 is thus a runic inscription that causes complications when we try to establish the actual historical meaning behind the applied label. In the actual context of the inscription, it seems reasonable to assume that **i · estlatum** did not even intend to address the exact locality where Ólàfr was killed, but rather functioned as a general indication of a territory.

The Frugården stone demonstrates the only certain Baltic destination recorded in an inscription from Västergötland.[394] Meanwhile, Vg 184 from the Smula churchyard commemorates two men who died in the east in retinue (*en þæir urðu dauðiR i liði austr*). It is possible that the eastern route was intended on the lost Hassla stone Vg 135† by the phrase **o tustitki** (*a austrvegi*?). Vg 197 from the Dalum church relates of two brothers: one of them died in the west, and the other one in the east (*eR varð dauðr vestr, en annarr austr*).[395]

Other features also make the Frugården stone a unique example among the rune stones from Västergötland: its specific ornamentation has already been pointed out, but the application of the carver formula is also rather uncommon in this landscape. All of this underlines the broader significance of the monument, illuminating the scale of planning that went into arranging it.

Stora Släbro rune stone, Sö 45

The Stora Släbro stone was found in the Nyköping river near a local farm in the Släbro village; after having been fixed the stone was raised again (SöR: 34). It is now standing on a slope by

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[392] For an overview, see Salberger (1986: 80-81).

[393] See also chapter IV, particularly subsection 4.2.3.5.

[394] The above-mentioned Vg 119 – which dates from the early Viking Age – may contain a reference to Uppsala. Included in the analysis is Vg 40, which does not mention a particular place/region, but refers to a specific battle (3.1.31.).

[395] The western route is also mentioned in Vg 61, whereas two inscriptions, Vg 20 and Vg 187, refer to England (cf. 3.3.3.). The fragmentarily preserved Vg 180 may have also included an indication of death place.

the river, in the neigbourhood of another rune stone found from the same river, Sö 367.[396] On the latter the name **slaiþa:bru** (*Sleðabro*, Släbro) is recorded as the estate of two men, Freysteinn and Hrólfr – thus providing an identification of the local setting around the rune stones.[397] To the right, the remains of an old road – dating back to the 11th century – are still visible. At the spot where the road crosses the river, there used to be a bridge construction (Strid 1980: 195). Sö 367 has been dated to the beginning of the 11th century, and is roughly contemporary with Sö 45.

Despite obvious damages, most of the inscription on the Stora Släbro stone is preserved. The carving is composed of a runic serpent that seems to build a continuous frame around the stone; the inner surface contains some additional lines of runes both on the right and left, as well as a big sunlike cross in the middle.[398] The way the stone is placed now, the inscription starts at the bottom left corner and follows the body of the serpent all around the stone; it continues with the inner line of runes on the right (surrounding the serpent's head), and concludes to the left of the cross.

Figure 29. Stora Släbro stone (Sö 45). Photo: Thomas Carlson & Gunnar Nordin 2005. Runebru.se. Uppsala, Sweden.

The inscription contains an extended MMF where two commissioners (brothers) commemorate two persons, and a short supplement. The meaning of the latter (**u...br : uinurniʀ**) remains unclear, although according to one interpretation it may indicate that two brothers executed the runes (cf. SöR: 35). The first part of the memorial formula is presumably devoted to the father of the brothers, called Freysteinn; the word indicating the relationship is not preserved. This formulation fills the runic serpent and could therefore be considered the

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[396] It is actually not completely clear whether a 17th century record describes the find site of Sö 45 or Sö 367 (cf. SöR: 34; Strid 1980: 187).

[397] For an etymological discussion of the place name, see Strid (1980: 192-200). According to him the name is reflective of an old designation for the Nyköping river, with the meaning "slowly gliding".

[398] Sö 367 demonstrates the design of one arch band and three vertical bands; the latter are placed underneath a mask-like face.

basic information. The name of the father appears at the bottom right corner (close to the serpent's head) – provided that the stone was originally placed the same way as it is standing now. The additional commemoration of the brother is presented inside the frame on the right.

The beginning of the memorial states the names of the commissioners. It is the name of the second brother – **aistfari**, placed along the top left corner – that is of interest for us. In RS the name is *Æistfari* (ON *Eistfari*); according to NRL the components of the name are either the place name *Eistland* or the ethnic name *eistr* (Estonians), and *-fari*. That is to say, the name carries connotations to a traveller who headed to *Eistland*. As such it can be compared to *Ænglandsfari* (ON *Englandsfari*, U 978, U 1181) and *Grikkfari* (U 956, possibly U 270†). In U 978 and U 1181 *Ænglandsfari* clearly functions as a byname referring to the commissioner of the monument (U 978 *Sigviðr [ræist]i stæin þenna Ænglandsfari*, U 1181 *... let haggva ... [si]k sialfan, Æng[la]ndsfari*). The same is the case with U 956, where *Grikkfari* is a byname used together with the name of the deceased (*æptiR Viðbiorn Grikkfara*).[399]

Therefore it is logical to also regard Eistfari as an original byname, meant to mark a person who had been to Estonia (or even came from there). In this light, Sö 45 could be taken as further evidence of traffic between mainland Sweden and Estonia. The use of *-fari* – derived from the verb *fara* – focuses on the event of travelling.[400] Jesch (2001: 92) finds it possible that "*Eistfari* is Guðfastr's nickname, and that the plural form of the verb is a carver's error" (ibid.). Indeed, the two names are not separated by a conjunction but appear side by side.

Although the exact placement of the monument cannot be established, Sö 45 apparently belongs to the old settlement at Släbro on the Nyköping river. The described setting reveals the importance of both inland roads, river crossings and bridges. Viewed together, the two Släbro rune stones are explicit expressions of local-scale communication. At the same time, the general context around them favours the image of traffic – further supported by the occurrence of the personal name Eistfari in Sö 45. As pointed out by Strid (1980: 195) in connection with Sö 367, the Nyköping river is an important historical waterway for Södermanland. The route along the river provides a passage into the Baltic Sea through Stadsfjärden and Mellanfjärden. Several rune stones are found from the region around the river. From Bönestad, to the north of Sö 45 and Sö 367, the lost rune stone Sö 121† is known – which seems to have contained a reference to eastern travels.[401] Worthy of mention are Sö 163 and Sö 164 from the parish of Råby; the former commemorates a man who divided gold in Byzantium, the latter relates of one who steered a ship and died in the west. In this light it is not unlikely that one of the Släbro rune stone raisers had indeed visited the region known as *Eistland* – which earned him the byname (or nickname) of traveller to *Eistland*.

Additional remarks

Two doubtful cases are sometimes added to the above-mentioned references connected with the territory of *Eistland*, i.e. U 439†, U 446†.

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[399] In the lost rune stone U 270† **krikfarn** (*Grikkfari*?), also seems to have made up the byname of the deceased. These examples can further be compared to the medieval Vg 81 where we hear of a certain Bendikt Rome-traveller (**romfarari**).

[400] *-fari* appears as the second component in a few other (nick)names that are recorded in runic inscriptions: Atfari (U 99), Náttfari (Sö 54), Sæfari (U 454) and Víðfari (Sö 256, U 99, U 484, U 686). In U 292, the preserved **…kaþfari** contains the element *-fari*. To that we can add names that have *Far-* as the first component, e.g. Farmaðr (Sö 229) and Farþegn (Ög 222, Hs 21, M 1). The component *Eist-* is visible in other Swedish runic inscriptions (mainly from Uppland), to these examples we shall return in 3.3.1.

[401] More about this inscription in 3.1.26.

U 439†, the lost Steninge stone, is known primarily through the notes of Bureus; around mid-17th century the monument went missing (UR II: 232). Later records of the inscription therefore build upon the information presented by Bureus. According to him the carving was composed of two serpents, and there was a cross in the middle. The inscription consisted of MMF and one supplement. Most of the memorial fitted into the left serpent; it was concluded by the name of the deceased on top of the stone; the statement of relationship as well as the supplement ran within the right serpent. The memorial formula identified two women who commemorated their dead father, Sæbjǫrn. The supplement must have contained information about his death circumstances. According to Bureus (cf. UR II: 232) the formulation was the following: **isturþi x austr x skibi x maþ ikuari askalat-**.

The inscription thus commemorates a man who steered a ship to the east with Ingvarr; on that basis, U 439† may be included among the Ingvarr inscriptions. The place name **askalat** probably reflects a carver error or potential misunderstanding from Bureus' side (UR II: 234). In SRD two variant readings and interpretations are given – *Eistland* or *Serkland*. In the meantime no other runic inscriptions are known that would set Ingvarr's expedition in direct connection with the territory of Estonia – usually they speak generally of travelling with Ingvarr (to the east). Shepard (1982-85: 243-244) has tried to relate U 439† to the evidence of *Yngvars saga viðfǫrla*, where an expedition to the region of Semigallia is mentioned.

However, in connection with Ingvarr's expedition the second alternative *Serkland* would make more sense, since that place is indeed a recorded destination in a few preserved runic inscriptions: the Ingvarr inscriptions Sö 131, Sö 179 and Sö 281. Two other rune stone inscriptions that refer to *Serkland* are Sö 279 and U 785 – they may also be Ingvarr ins-criptions, despite the fact that they do not mention his name.[402] The recorded form **askalat** would also support the idea of being a mistake for **o/a sirklati/serklati/srklati** (as witnessed by other runic inscriptions). The exact identification of the place name in U 439† must nevertheless remain uncertain, since the stone is long lost.

The same should be said about U 446†, a lost rune stone fragment from Droppsta. Judging from earlier records, the lower part of the monument was known. The design probably demonstrated one runic serpent. The inscription consisted of MMF and a simple addition. The memorial statement must have included at least two, if not more commissioners, who most likely were commemorating either their father or their brother. It was further explained that **hon tu i krikum**, i.e. he died in Byzantium. One of the commissioners was identified as **isifara** – the closest alternative would be the name Eistfari as recorded in Sö 45, but this remains highly doubtful.

Additionally, we could mention Öl 37 and Vs 22, which by some have been taken to refer to two Estonian islands. Öl 37 is a rune stone from Lerkaka village in eastern Öland.[403] One side of the monument has suffered considerable damage, but the inscription can be supplemented.

The carving is composed of a runic serpent and an additional inner text band that adjoins the serpent on one side. The way the monument is raised currently, the inscription starts by the tail of the serpent at the top right corner. This is according to Salberger a rather uncommon feature among the Öland rune stones; he finds it more likely that the stone is now

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[402] See also subsection 3.3.3.
[403] Its exact site is unknown, but according to early data (cf. ÖlR: 101), the rune stone was at some point used in a local bridge construction.

placed upside down. Initially, the inscription was supposed to be introduced at the bottom left corner (Salberger 1994: 86, 88).[404] The inscription consists of an extended MMF and two supplements. Three sons commemorate their father, and a woman (probably their mother) her husband. The first addition concerns the deceased and one of the commissioners, and seems to identify a place **at miomu**. One of the sons (Óláfr) has according to the inscription apparently avenged his father, who is called Féar-Unnr (Rich-Unnr); all this happened at a place called **miomu**. The second statement focuses on the property of the deceased and claims that he owned half the village.

Already in ÖIR (p. 102), it is suggested that **miomu** might refer to the Estonian island of Mon/Mohn (in Estonian 'Muhu/Muhumaa').[405] Muhu is a small island located close to Ösel (Saaremaa), otherwise not referred to in ON sources. It does not appear linguistically trustworthy to identy **mio** + **mu** with 'Muhu' + 'maa' (cf. Salberger 1994: 90).[406] Even if Scandinavians were familiar with some local name form of the island, it does not seem likely that they would have adapted it as **miomu** in runic writing.[407]

Salberger suggests a completely different interpretation: *Fear Unn Olaf hæfndi at midhiom mo*; he translates this as "wealthy Unn Olof avenged in the middle of the heath" (op. cit. 99-100). Even if Salberger's interpretation is not correct, this at least shows that the phrase **at miomu** may have indicated something else than a particular place name. There is nothing except for a vague phonetic similarity between **miomu** and Muhumaa that would speak for relating the runic reference to the Estonian island.

Our final comments concern Vs 22, the Ulvsta rune stone that now stands at Svåna (VsR: 65). The monument lacks a lower part, which leaves the beginning and the end of the inscription uncertain.[408]

The inscription obviously comprises a memorial formula and an addition about the deceased. The preserved part relates that the monument is made after a certain Rúnfastr; he is identified as the brother of the commissioner(s). It is further said: **hn : toþr : i : faru + runo : … trka**. In the centre of the attention has been the word **runo**. Brate (1925: 127) identifies it as the Estonian island Runö (in Estonian 'Ruhnu'), situated in the middle of the Gulf of Riga.[409]

S.B.F. Jansson claims in VsR that the state of the inscription does not allow one to establish the exact meaning of **runo**, but mentions that it may stand for the female name *Runa* (VsR: 67). Salberger (1989b, 1991) and Williams (1990: 69-70, 1992) have on several occasions argued in favour of understanding **runo** as a personal name. Salberger explains that

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[404] The size and the shape of the monument do not contradict the observation. The layout of the inscription suggests that the monument could originally have had a different placement.

[405] This alternative is mentioned in SRD, whereas NRL lists **miomu** among the uninterpreted place names. For a discussion of different identifications, see Salberger (1994: 88-99).

[406] 'Maa' means 'land' in Estonian.

[407] It may also be relevant to remind that the bigger island of Saaremaa is in ON tradition known as *Eysýsla* – with the last component (*sýsla*) designating a district.

[408] Among more recent contributions, see the interpretations offered by Salberger (1989b and 1991), as well as Williams (1990: 69-70; 1992).

[409] On that basis **runo** has been regarded as a possible Baltic reference, e.g. in surveys by Ruprecht (1958) and Melnikova (1977; 2001).

the lack of a preposition before **runo** as well as the writing of **–o** for –*ö* makes the identifi-cation of Runö unlikely (1989b: 45-46).[410]

Both Salberger and Williams point out the possibility that *Runa* marks a genitive form of a male name; the final part of the inscription would then be: "He died on Runi's voyage, [the best of] drengs".[411] Salberger nevertheless prefers a different alternative; according to him **runo** belongs to a separate relationship statement, where Rúnfastr is identified either as Runi's son or Runi's father, and further characterised as the best of young men (1989b: 50).[412] Williams emphasises that other options for filling in the lacuna are equally valid and none of them can be considered imperative. In Williams' opinion it is even possible that **runo** designates a female name in nominative; the final part of the inscription could be: "Runa [was the name of the mother (or sister)] of the young men" (Williams 1992: 52).

What we can conclude from the offered explanations is that **runo** indicates either a man's or a woman's name – different reconstructions of the full message are possible, but none can be established with absolute certainty. At the same time, it is apparent that the grounds for connecting **runo** with the place name Runö are not convincing.

3.1.25. Lífland

Sö 39	[ɑ] **lf:lanti**
U 698† (?)	**ɑ liflai|n|þ|i| / ɑ liflai|n|þ|**

Åda rock, Sö 39

Sö 39 is carved into the face of a roadside rock north of Åda. The rock is located on the northeastern side of the Åda alley (SöR: 30), also known as the former Trosavägen (Trosa road). On the same rock a second carving is also found (Sö 359), arranged by three sons after their father.[413] This demonstrates how a suitable medium could be used for memorial purposes on several occasions. Across the road there stands a separate rune stone (Sö 36) by the Trosa bridge; according to the inscription, it is raised by two brothers after their father and brother. To the south of these runic monuments, an old ford has led across the river Trosaån. Larsson (1990: 147) explains that Sö 39, Sö 359 and Sö 36 have thus marked the beginning of the old Åda estate; the borders between Åda and Trosaby ran along the river.

Sö 39 starts approximately one metre above the ground. The carving is remarkable: it shows a circular runic serpent whose head (not completely preserved) and tail intertwine at the bottom in a wave-like manner, forming several loops. Inside the serpent frame a big animal is depicted; it seems to have four legs, and those are attached to worms that curve

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[410] Williams specifies Salberger's observations, but confirms the idea that /øy/ would not be marked by the os-rune (1992: 45; cf. also Williams 1990: 116).

[411] See Salberger (1989b: 48; 1991: 44-45); Williams (1990: 70; 1992: 42, 51).

[412] An important moment in his argumentation is the parallel expression found in Vs 27 that is made by the same carver Litli – **hon x toþr x** [**i**] **faru**. This constitutes an independent phrase, and is followed by the carver formula (cf. Salberger 1991: 45-46).

[413] Sö 359 is placed north of Sö 39.

around the serpent band.[414] Lower parts of the carving have suffered some damage; otherwise the inscription is well preserved.

The inscription starts inside the serpent at the bottom left spot where the tail curves around the serpent's body; it runs along the circle from left to right, follows the loop formed by the tail, and concludes inside what seems to be the serpent's neck. The runes have in general wide spacing; inside the tail and neck they appear upside down.
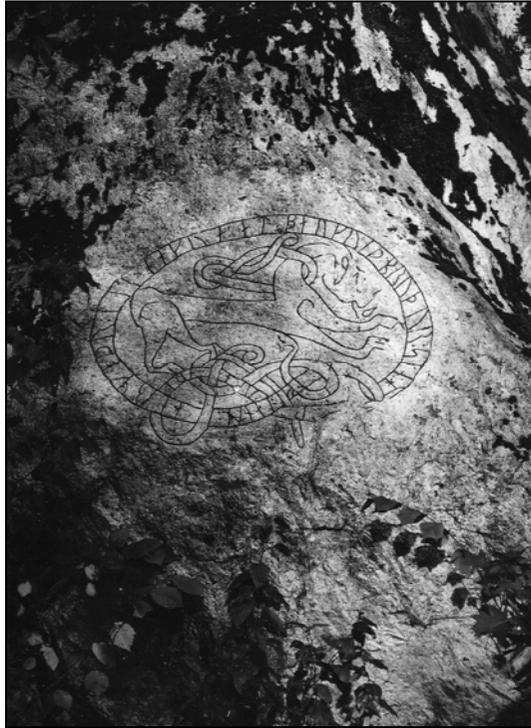
Figure 30. Åda rock (Sö 39). Photo: Thomas Carlson & Gunnar Nordin 2005. Runebru.se. Uppsala, Sweden.

The textual structure is typical: MMF and a short addition about the deceased. Most of the serpent is indeed occupied by the memorial formula, where a certain Hermóðr commemorates his brother Bergviðr (or Barkviðr). The verbal phrase has dismissed the monument marker: **lit : hagua : at**. The name of the deceased is placed into the upper right half of the circle. The supplement about him is introduced at the bottom right corner; inside the tail we find the formulation **h[an] trukn-þi**, whereas the place indication **[a] lf:lanti** appears in the neck.

The inscription commemorates a man who drowned in *Lífland*.[415] The place name stands for Livland, the land of the Livs. The opinions of scholars as to the range of the historical Livland differ, but it certainly comprised areas to the east of the Gulf of Riga, including southern parts of present-day Estonia and northern parts of Latvia. The ancient Livs were

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[414] It even seems as though the animal has two heads.
[415] For comments on the verb *drukna*, cf. U 214 (3.1.15.)

thus inhabitants of a region that had a prime position on the Baltic Sea. [416] The importance of Livland as a strategic arena is further emphasised by the fact the settlements were situated around the Western Dvina river (in Latvian 'Daugava') – known as one of the key routes in the Baltic region.

Earlier we mentioned the communicative functions of the Åda rock inscriptions as markers of the estate borders. At the same time, the river Trosaån provided passage into the Baltic Sea, to the south of Åda. Having entered the seawaters, one could sail more or less straight ahead to reach the Gulf of Riga. The man commemorated in Sö 39 must have drowned somewhere in the Gulf of Riga, off the coast of what was considered to be the territory of the Livs – Livland therefore served as a suitable reference for his death place.

A small concentration of runic monuments can be noticed in the area around the river Trosaån (in the Trosa-Vagnhärad parish). To the northwest of the Åda rock we find e.g. the Skåäng stone, Sö 33, which commemorates a man who died in the east at the Assembly (*ændaðis austr at þingum*). To the east of the Skåäng stone, the two Tjuvstigen rune stones, Sö 34 and Sö 35, are found. The former is raised by two men after two brothers who died on the eastern route (*þæiR ændaðus i austrvegi*). Interesting is the focus on the location of the monument near the path (*brautu næsta*). Similar is the message of Sö 35 – which forms a continuation for Sö 34, being arranged by the mother of the two – since it underlines the visual importance of the memorial (*syna gærði*). A certain ambiguity arises from the formulation as a whole: **lit · igikeʀ · anan · raisa · stain · at · suni · sina · su[n·]a · kiarþi**. Since the medium is here called "another stone", it is logical that the phrase *syna gærði* concerns the two runic monuments. On the other hand, the commemoration is addressed to two sons – perhaps their significance had to also be made visible through the raising of the rune stones.

Rune stone from Veckholm church, U 698†

According to the earliest records, the rune stone was found in the weapon house of the Veckholm church, but by the mid-19th century it had gone missing (UR III: 215). Judging from the drawings, the carving was designed as a runic serpent. The inscription seems to have started in the head of the serpent, running inside its body around the stone, and concluding within the tail. The exact layout remains uncertain.[417] The reading and interpretation of the inscription have caused problems, especially with regard to its end, which must have been severly damaged (cf. UR III: 216-217).

Structurally the inscription consisted of MMF and an addition about the deceased. The deceased was probably the son of the commissioner. The reconstruction of the end of the inscription in *Runverser* (cf. Brate and Bugge 1887-1891: 57-59) has remained the basis until now, despite its hypothetical nature. To support the interpretation of U 698† as a record of an expedition to Livland – in which Ásgeirr may have participated as a member of Freygeirr's retinue –, parallels have been drawn to other inscriptions that may mention Freygeirr's campaigns. Earlier scholars tried to find connections between U 698†, U 611, Gs 13, and even U 518 and DR 216 (cf. Brate and Bugge 1887-1891: 59-66). On closer examination the

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[416] We address the area as Livland – as closer to the ON *Lífland* – instead of using Livonia, which originates from the Latin name first used in the 13th century chronicles. In the medieval context, the name 'Livonia' denoted the broad territory of the so-called Livonian confederation, established after the area was conquered by the Teutonic Order.

[417] It is not clear from the drawings which was the top/bottom part of the stone, but it seems somewhat likely that the inscription ran from left to right.

reasons to include at least the latter two are clearly insufficient (cf. above). The mere mention of the name is in itself no guarantee that we are dealing with identical persons and military operations.

When comparing U 698† to Gs 13 and U 611, connections may seem more justified. The closest parallel to U 698† would then be U 611 (*hann uti fioll i liði FrøygæiRs*), although the interpretation of **i liþi : frekis** as "in Freygeirr's retinue" may be questioned.[418] Provided that the end part of U 698† has been correctly reconstructed, we may observe certain parallelism between the formulations of the two inscriptions. Also, the inscriptions probably originated from neighbourhood districts on Lake Mälaren in southern Uppland.[419] However, U 611 does not mention the exact destination, it merely records that a man died abroad in the retinue of this assumed Freygeirr. And it still remains doubtful whether that very name also figured in the long lost U 698†. Therefore, U 611 and U 698† cannot be automatically linked to each other.

When taking into consideration the Söderby stone from Gästrikland, Gs 13 (cf. 3.1.19.), the inscription indeed says that the men followed a certain Freygeirr – but the expedition went to Tavastland. It is possible that the expedition led by Freygeirr – if he is indeed the same person as in U 611, and U 698† – was a bigger campaign along the eastern coasts of the Baltic Sea. But the meagre and partly questionable runic evidence in itself does not let us prove the hypothesis.[420]

In light of the above, the possible reference in U 698† to the landscape of Livs and its hypothetical connections to U 611 and Gs 13 have to remain an open question – due to the fact that the stone is missing and the preserved drawings show a varying degree of accuracy.

3.1.26. Seimgalir and Dómisnes; Semskr

Sö 198	til · simḳaḷạ; um · tumisnis
U FV1912;8 (?)	af × simskum × moni; i…ọtị̣

Mervalla rune stone, Sö 198

The Mervalla stone from the island of Selaön in Lake Mälaren has been known since the 17th century. The stone was found from the Mervalla pasture, in the midst of a gravefield covered with mounds and stone settings (SöR: 173). Now the stone stands on the same spot, east of the road between Stallarholmen and Åsa.

The carving is composed of a runic serpent whose lifted head and tail connect with the elongated lower cross arm at the bottom of the stone. An additional line of runes runs along the top, placed right underneath the serpent. The inscription has suffered some damage on the left, but is mostly well preserved. It starts in the head of the serpent and runs from left to right and upwards along the tail. The final part consists of the separate line of runes, which stand upside down and run from the tip of the tail to the left, curving down towards the end.

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[418] For an analysis of U 611, see subsection 3.1.31.

[419] U 698† is thus known from the district of Trögd, and U 611 from the district of Bro. This could support the idea that the commemorated men were participants in the same expedition.

[420] Nevertheless, for the sake of completeness, we have chosen to include U 611 as a potential Baltic traffic inscription, despite the fact that it is not certain whether the recorded expedition headed for Livland, Tavastland, or some third region.

The inscription consists of MMF and a versified addition that focuses on the deceased. A woman called Sigríðr has raised the stone after her husband Sveinn; his name is placed on top of the stone. Along the right edge we find the formulation **h[n] · uft · siklt · til · simka̤l̤a · t̤uru[m]**. The latter two words appear within the serpent's raised tail. The conclusion is reached with the extra text line: **knari · um · tumisnis**. The phrase as a whole contains two alliterating pairs (*siglt – Sæimgala* and *dyrum – Domisnæs*).[421]

Figure 31. Mervalla stone (Sö 198). Photo: Thomas Carlson & Gunnar Nordin 2005. Runebru.se. Uppsala, Sweden.

The dead husband is characterised by the fact that he often sailed a valued ship to *Seimgalir*, around *Dómisnes*. In its explicit form the inscription does not inform us of Sveinn's death place, but simply explains what enterprises he engaged himself in and where he did that. The use of the word **uft** (*oft*) underlines the regular nature of his activities.

The overall statement has caught the attention of scholars for several reasons. For one, the inscription on the Mervalla stone may serve as one of the few actual trade records. This has been claimed for example by Düwel (1987: 319), who emphasises the meaning of following components: the word *knǫrr*, which is used together with the adjective *dýrr* and expresses the valuability of the cargo; the identification of both the destination and the travelling route; and the focus on the repetitive character of travelling. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that *knǫrr* could designate both cargo ships and military ships (cf. U 214 in 3.1.15.). Furthermore, the adjective *dýrr* may even characterise the ship as a whole, not only its load (Jesch 2001: 64).

In our opinion, the image of trade-related traffic is supported by the neutral formulation **h[n] · uft · siklt** (he often sailed); nothing is related of a possibly violent death during a strife. Sveinn may have even died at home after returning from one of his voyages – for which he was known and respected for.

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[421] Cf. also Hübler (1996: 125).

The region that Sveinn visited is indicated by two references: **til · simkạḷa** and **um · tumisnis**. The former refers to the group of *Seimgalir*, the people of Semigallia (in Latvian 'Zemgale') – a historical region south of the Gulf of Riga, around the Western Dvina river. Semigallia comprised the southern part of present-day central Latvia and some parts of northern Lithuania.

The latter reference to *Dómisnes* denotes the northernmost cape of *Kúrland* (Courland, in Latvian 'Kurzeme'), which reaches out into the Gulf of Riga; it is now known as the Kolka Cape (in Latvian 'Kolkas rags'). Sailing into the gulf, one had to be careful when navigating around the cape due to its underwater reef – it was literally essential to round it from a safe distance. The formulation **um · tumisnis** (around *Dómisnes*) reflects some of the knowledge that concerned sailing strategies along that part of the route. The design of the phrase on the stone in fact shows how **um · tumisnis** curves dynamically down from the starting point, by the upper cross arm to the serpent's head on the left.

The runic inscription on the Mervalla stone both documents and depicts traffic that led from the Mälaren region in central Sweden to the areas along the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea. The likely purpose of Sveinn's voyages was trading – at the very least the inscription describes a common trading route leading to the Gulf of Riga and further on along the Western Dvina. As mentioned previously, that river was one of the central waterways and formed an important link between northern and southern Europe.[422]

With regard to the communicative setting around the Mervalla stone, it is important to mention that the island of Selaön demonstrates another concentration of rune stones in Södermanland. As we remember, the island is itself referred to in U 518 (cf. 3.1.12.). Three inscriptions provide local-scale identifications that all indicate the place where the deceased lived: Sö 208 (*Freyslundir*), Sö 213 (*Kill*), and Sö 214 (*Árbýr*). A significant example is Sö 196, which relates to the making of an assembly place in the east, and possibly also in the west.

Sö 198 is carved by the same Balli who has done Sö 200 and Sö 207 (also from Selaön), as well as the Ulunda stone, U 792.[423]

Runic inscription from Sigtuna, U FV1912;8

U FV1912;8 from Sigtuna is the only inscription in the primary analysis group that appears on an item other than a rune stone. The inscription is carved onto a copper box found in Sigtuna in 1911. It consists of two parts: the container and the cover; the diametre is approximately 10 cm. The inscription was first examined by von Friesen (1912: 6-19).

The inscription runs along the edges of the container and the cover – and thus falls into two main parts. The marks that introduce them form a triangle when placed above each other (von Friesen 1912: 8). The reading order is from left to right. The inscription on the cover contains information about the owner and the origin of the scales that must have been kept inside the box; a carver formula is added. The inscription on the container is an addition of a more

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[422] The actual extension of ancient connections between Scandinavia and the territory around the Western Dvina and Courland has been an issue of much historical and archaeological research. Scandinavian activities in that area included raiding, trading, tribute-taking and possibly some form of settlement, as also confirmed by the archaeological findings. For a discussion, see e.g. Thunmark-Nýlen (1983); Caune (1992; 1997); I. Jansson (1987; 1992;); Mickevičius (1993; 1994; 1997). The latter author characterises Courland as a specific interest zone for the Scandinavians. See also subsection 4.2.3.5. Among the finds, the fragmentary Daugmale runic inscription (which seems to contain a carver signature), is significant (see e.g. Melnikova 2001: 249-251).

[423] Sö 207 is made after a man who travelled to England; U 792 commemorates a man who earned wealth abroad in Byzantium.

special nature – a metaphorically formulated protective formula with the obvious task of keeping thieves away. The layout and the content both support the division of the inscription into a more ordinary ownership statement and an expressive type of supplement.

The beginning of the inscription makes use of a regional reference; the formulation *af semskum manni* is well preserved, and obviously indicates the ethnicity of the man who sold the scales to Diarfr. Two alternatives have been suggested, according to which the adjective is either derived from the place name Samland referring to a region in eastern Prussia (i.e. the peninsula that separates the Frisches and the Kurisches Haff), or identifies the man as one of the *Seimgalir*, as in Sö 198 (von Friesen 1912: 10-11; Jesch 2001: 64-65). Diarfr thus obtained the scales from a man who came either from Samland or Semigallia. The identification of the place where all this happened (**i...ọtị**) is unfortunately only partly visible, but obviously it contained the component *-land*.

Some time after that event Diarfr arranged for the inscription to be carved onto the copper box in order to mark that he was the owner of the scales. The carver's identity is also known; the formulation in fact states that Vermundr painted these runes.[424] What follows is expressed in more symbolic and poetical terms: **fuhl x ualua x slait x f̣aluon x fon kauk x o nos ɑu-ɑ**.[425] The applied vocabulary is reflective of expressions used in skaldic poetry in connection with battle and death ideology – that is to say, the raven is known as the bird who feeds on the bodies of the dead. Here it is emphasised that any thief would have to undergo death and torment. Possible magical allusions behind the formulation cannot be excluded, but it may also be that a wording known from poetry is being used according to a customary tradition.

The inscription on the Sigtuna copper box is an important piece of trade-related evidence; it relates of the purchase of scales – used to weigh silver and gold – from a man who came from a region on the opposite coast of the Baltic Sea, possibly from Semigallia.

Additional remarks

In connection with the evidence of Sö 198 and U FV1912;8 we should mention two lost inscriptions that in early commentaries were sometimes associated with the region around the Western Dvina and Samland, respectively.

The lost rune stone from Bönestad, Sö 121† is known from 18th century records (cf. SöR: 90). The reading and interpretation of the inscription has to be considered highly questionable; it seems that the inscription contained a memorial formula of which the end was preserved, as well as a supplement about the deceased. Presumably the commemorated person died somewhere in the east, but the identification of **i : tunɑ : asụ** has to remain uncertain. S. Bugge normalised the phrase into *austr í Dyna ósa*, suggesting the locality to be in the east by the estuary of Western Dvina (Brate & Bugge 1887-1891: 184).[426] As commented in SöR, this interpretation is highly doubtful; **i : tunɑ : asụ** may perhaps contain the genitive of the personal name *Tun(n)e*, but no word that would provide the dative form **ɑsu** is known (SöR: 91).

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[424] The term *fá* has a broader meaning and could also be used when the runes, technically speaking, were not coloured.

[425] In SRD the given interpretation is: "The bird tore apart the pale thief: (one) found (i.e. observed) the increase (i.e. from eating) in the corpse-cuckoo (raven)". Cf. also von Friesen (1912: 12).

[426] Discussed also by S.B.F. Jansson (1954: 52-53).

As for the missing Grönsta rune stone Sö 110†, it is similarly uncertain as to whether the inscription contained any form of place name at all. The inscription may have been composed of a memorial formula where a father commemorated his son Þorsteinn and a simple supplement; the final phrase **fauʀi : maisi** has by S. Bugge been adjusted to **faur i saimi**, in order to mean *fór í Sæmi*, "han drog til Semland" (Brate & Bugge 1887-1891: 215). This reconstruction rearranges runes in a lost inscription, and can therefore by no means be considered a qualified alternative.[427]

3.1.27. Vindau

| G 135 | **a : uiṭau** |

Rune stone from Sjonhem church, G 135

G 135 forms a unified monument together with G 134 and G 136†. All three rune stones were found from the Sjonhem church, and were first examined around mid-18th century (GR I: 262). At that time G 135 was found inside the church floor, whereas G 134 and G 136† were lying in the churchyard. The original location of the rune stones is unknown.[428] Rough dating suggests the period from ca. 1000-1150.

G 135 and G 134 have the shape of picture stones. The carving follows the typical Gotlandic design where the serpent band runs around the edges and additional horizontal bands divide the stone into two parts. There is a cross carved onto the upper half, whereas the lower half is covered with animal ornamentation.[429] The main difference between G 135 and G 134 is that the former has only one horizontal text band, whereas the latter has two. The inscriptions on both stones run within the serpent band from left to right and continue inside the horizontal band(s). G 134 is better preserved than G 135, where the left side and the top have suffered damage.

G 134 and G 135 commemorate men who found their death away from home; G 136† was made in memory of a man who died at home. The first part of the inscription on G 134 functions as the necessary introduction, specifying that the commissioners are Hróðvísl and Hróðelfr and that they have raised stones in memory of their three sons. To each son a separate stone is dedicated, the expression that gets repeated in all three inscriptions is *þenna æftiR*.

G 134 is thus made in memory of Hróðfúss, of whom it is said: **han : siku : blakumen : i : utfaru**. It records death through betrayal – an incident that happened during a voyage to a faraway destination, as indicated by the ethnic name **blakumen**. The literal meaning of the

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[427] We find an even more extensive rearrangement as well as adding of (hypothetically omitted) runes, which led early scholars to find meaning – and a reference to the inhabitants of Semigallia – even in the meaningless rune series on the Göksten rock, Sö 327 (Brate & Bugge 1887-1891: 213-215; cf. also SöR: 306-311).

[428] G 136† is known only from 18th century records; later antiquarians were no longer able to trace the stone. G 134 and G 135 were at the end of the 19th century taken to Gotlands Fornsal in Visby, where they are exhibited today.

[429] G 136† must have shared the same visual and physical features as the other two stones.

latter would be "black men"; it is suggested that the reference is made to Wallachians who lived in the region of present-day Romania (GR II: 267-268).[430]

G 135 is raised after the second son whose name is not fully preserved. G 134 forms an essential frame for understanding the message of G 135, because the latter starts with only a shortened memorial formula: **þina : eftir : ai---**. The subject (the names of the commissioners) and the verbal phrase have not been included, since G 134 has already mentioned them. The supplements consist of the identification of death place and information about other family members (perhaps meant as further commemoration). Some parts of the inscription are damaged, which makes it hard to establish the exact message.

What we hear about the second son is that he died **a : uiţau**. *Vindau* (in Latvian 'Ventspils') is identified as a locality by the estuary of the river Venta, on the coast of *Kúrland* (Courland) in present-day northwestern Latvia.[431] The Sjonhem inscription records traffic that again headed to the area around the Gulf of Riga – in this case it is a man from Gotland who has ventured across the sea to *Kúrland*. Unfortunately, the circumstances around his death are not specified; only the neutral phrase *varð dauðr* is used.

The rest of the inscription mentions relatives other than the main commissioners Hróðvísl and Hróðelfr (as established by G 134). It is most likely further explained that the two sisters of the three brothers are also participating in the act of commemoration; after which the four brothers of Hróðvísl are identified. Since most of the space on G 135 is occupied by such information, the inscription must have intended to introduce further related family members besides commemorating the second son.

G 136† must have started in the same manner as G 135. The third son's name seems to have been Heilfúss, and it is said that he died at home and had one daughter; her name is also included. The final part of that inscription provided information about the people who made the three rune stones and carved the inscriptions. Three names were given, the first one indicating a certain **utr : ualtika** (Uddr of Valdinga) who made the stones, and the other two designating the carvers (Danr and Bótbjǫrn).[432]

The rune stones from the Sjonhem church must have functioned both as memorials to the dead sons as well as to their living relatives. As pointed out by GR (I: 273), the inscriptions together mention twelve related persons; to their names we can add the three men involved in the making of the monument. The event of arranging three commemorative rune stones involved several people; nevertheless, the two parents Hróðvísl and Hróðelfr appear to be the main commissioners. Although we do not know the actual intervals between the deaths of the three brothers, the unified nature of G 134, G 135 and G 136† is obvious.

In planning the inscriptions, it was therefore taken into account that they were supposed to form a unity – certain components of the general message were not repeated in G 135 and G 136†, which on the other hand allowed for the introducing of new information. G 135 presents the names of additional family members, and G 136† those of the stone masters. At the same

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[430] The motive of betrayal is further emphasised by the inscription's two prayer formulas placed inside the horizontal text bands: **kuþ : hialbin : sial : roþfoaʀ kuþ : suiki : þa : aʀ : han : suiu**. The latter explicity asks God to betray those who betrayed Hróðfúss (cf. U 1028, Sm 92). Jesch (2001: 258) believes that Hroðfúss "was on a trading voyage and had entered into some kind of contract with local merchants along the way, who then betrayed his trust". As for the use of the verb *svíkja*, see also U 130 (3.1.8.).

[431] The town of Ventspils is nowadays an important harbour. For earlier alternative interpretations of **a : uitau**, see GR (I: 271).

[432] Danr (deriving from the name *Danir*) is otherwise not known from Gotland, but occurs in several inscriptions from mainland Sweden, cf. also 3.3.1.

it was important for the commissioners that there were separate monuments dedicated to the three men, because the circumstances around their deaths differed significantly: the first was killed faraway, the second found his death in a neighbourhood region on the other coast of the Baltic Sea, whereas the third died at home. The joint nature of the monuments has put these three death records into relation to each other.[433]

3.1.28. Mistivir – a Wendish ruler

DR 55	**mistiuis · tutiʀ**

Rune stone from Sønder Vissing church I, DR 55

DR 55 was discovered at the Sønder Vissing churchyard; later the stone was moved into the church (DRI: 93-94). The monument measures almost two and a half metres; it has been dated to the second half of the 10th century. The carving is composed of three longer and two shorter vertical text bands – the latter two are placed above each other; some of the bands terminate with finger-like ornamentation.

The inscription starts in the leftmost text band and follows their natural order from left to right, and the reading direction is throughout the inscription from bottom to top. The inscription ends in the upper text band on the right. The lower band belongs together with the formulation in the adjoining line to the left; it contains a word that has been omitted from the previous text band and is thus carved as an addition.

The inscription consists of MMF – which deviates somewhat from the typical pattern – and supplementary information about the commissioner. The rune stone appears to be more of a memorial to the living than to the deceased, whose name is even not recorded. Already the basic formula is extended by details about the commissioner, focusing on her origin; the monument is arranged by Tófa, Mistivir's daughter, after her mother. It is further told that she is the wife of Haraldr the good, Gormr's son.[434]

The Sønder Vissing stone is in DRI (column 94) determined as one of the historical inscriptions. It refers to two Danish kings, Haraldr and his father Gormr, who are also known from the Jelling stones (DR 41 and DR 42); in this context Haraldr is being called *hins goþa*. DR 55 is the only documentation of the king having married a certain Tófa, the daughter of Mistivir. Mistivir is the Nordic form of the Slavic name 'Mьstivoj' (Lerche Nielsen 1994: 168).[435] Historically, this Mistivir is known as a Wendish ruler, the king of the Obotrites – a Western-Slavic tribe inhabitating the southern Baltic coast in the region of present-day northeastern Germany.[436]

In this light, DR 55 makes up a unique evidence among runic inscriptions of a political marriage that tied together rulers from different districts around the Baltic Sea. As pointed out by Lerche Nielsen, it is interesting that the daughter of the Wendish ruler has a perfectly

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[433] Parallels may be drawn to Ög 81, which commemorates men who died at various places – but in this case the references are made within the frames of one long inscription (cf. 3.1.15.).

[434] It is the word **kuna** that gets omitted and is carved in a separate band side-by-side with the name **harats**.

[435] Lerche Nielsen explains: "In the Nordic context *Mstivoj* was treated as an *īja*-stem and given a svarabhakti vowel in order to facilitate the pronunciation" (op. cit. 184).

[436] 'Wendish' is here being used as a blanket designation for the Western-Slavic tribes living along the Baltic coast. Mstivoj is known to have destroyed Hamburg in 983; he probably died around 990 (Jacobsen 1931: 264).

Nordic name, Tófa; it is regrettable that her mother's name is unknown, because this may have revealed further Nordic-Slavic connections (op. cit. 168).

The inscription on the Sønder Vissing stone does not relate explicitly of voyages leading from one region to another, but happens to record one very concrete result of mutual connections between the Danish royal family and that one of the Obotrites.[437]

3.1.29. Saxland

Sö 166	**a : sahks:lanti**
DR 68(?)	**osur x saksa**

Grinda rune stone, Sö 166

Sö 166 is one of the two rune stones that stand in a pastureland at Grinda; the stones are positioned only a few steps from each other. The stone that is now on the left, Sö 165, was known earlier; it was while rearranging the slanting stone in 1882 that Sö 166 was discovered and raised up (SöR: 127).[438] Significantly enough, both Grinda stones commemorate men who have been abroad – and who most likely came from the same local district. In general, the location of the stones may be considered original, but their exact placement is uncertain. In their own time the monuments must have been connected to an old farm estate.[439]

The carving of Sö 166 is composed of two frame bands that surround a big cross; the cross arms are attached to the inner band.[440] The inscription starts at the bottom left corner and runs within the outer frame to the right corner, where it shifts over to the inner band; it continues horizontally across the stone from right to left, and then follows the band again from the left corner to the right; the end of the inscription appears inside the outer frame along the bottom of the stone.

Structurally the inscription can be divided into MMF and a supplement concerning the deceased, with some deviation from the typical pattern. For one, the memorial formula – where two men commemorate their father – does not include the monument marker; at the same time the formula is extended by a short addition with regard to the deceased. Examining the layout, we see that this basic information is fitted into the outer frame band (with the exclusion of its horizontal part at the bottom, which is reserved for the end of the inscription). The names of the sons, Grjótgarðr and Einriði, are placed on the left, the formulation **suniʀ : kiarþu** appears at the top, and the indication that the tacitly implied monument is made after their able father occupies the right side of the stone.

Within the inner frame band at the bottom of the stone, the personal name **kuþuiʀ** (Guðvér), which must logically identify the deceased, is introduced as the first element. The name connects the previous phrase **faþur : snialan**, with what is to follow about his various deeds: **uaʀ uastr : a : aklati : kialti : skifti : burkiʀ : a : sahks : lanti : suti : kaula**.

[437] The context of mutual contacts can be further broadened by the inclusion of runic findings from the Wendish territories; Lerche Nielsen (1999) discusses the items found during excavations in Starigrad/Oldenburg. We may also take into consideration the frequent references to Wends in skaldic poetry and sagas (see chapter IV).
[438] According to SöR, the latter had been lying in the neighbourhood, partly covered by earth.
[439] An ancient grave site and stone settings have been recorded in their neighbourhood (cf. Larsson 1990: 150-151).
[440] Sö 165 has the design of an arch band and two vertical bands in the middle.

Most of this information is presented within the inner frame band, but the conclusion is reached in the outer frame (as explained above), with the words: **lanti : suti : kaula**. The shift thus appears in the middle of the second place name, which gets divided into **sahks** and **lanti**.

Figure 32. Grinda stone (Sö 166). Photo: Thomas Carlson & Gunnar Nordin 2005. Runebru.se. Uppsala, Sweden.

The supplement about Guðvér contains two place identifications, but neither one seems to be his actual death place – unless this is a poetically indirect formulation. What we observe is a short list of the enterprises Guðvér had engaged in during his lifetime, and most likely the events have been mentioned with the purpose of emphasising the prominence of the man as well as his kin.

There is some built-in alliteration in the formulation – this may have not been a conscious strategy with regard to the first phrase, where we see alliteration between its remote compo-

nents *GuðveR – gialdi* (cf. von Friesen 1909: 76; Hübler 1996: 117); but in the case of *Saxlandi – sotti* the poetic element is clearly present.[441]

The inscription relates of western travels: first we hear that Guðvér was in the west and divided payment in England; then it is said that he manfully attacked townships in Saxony. Due to the latter reference we have included Sö 166 among Baltic traffic inscriptions, although the historical understanding of *Saxland* may be discussed. In the context of the Viking Age, Saxony would in the traditional sense designate the areas south of the Danish kingdom (i.e. south of the Danevirke fortification), in present-day northwestern Germany.[442] In the meantime, some scholars find it possible that the runic inscriptions "refers to Anglo-Saxon land, England" (Page 1995a: 82); after all, the place name *Saxland* also serves the purpose of providing alliteration for the end of the inscription.

However, the general manner in which place references are incorporated into runic inscriptions rather suggests that other elements of wording are made to accord, and if necessary, to alliterate with them, rather than the opposite. Proper names are in this case the touchstones of reality, meant to record particular circumstances. Saxony was a well known region in itself (it also occurs in skaldic poetry and sagas), and communication-wise closely linked to southern Scandinavia. It is not that likely that the people behind the Grinda inscription would have deliberately used both place names of England. Furthermore, the formulation of Sö 166 leaves the impression that two different ventures are mentioned.[443] Possibly Guðvér raided in Saxony on his return from England, but the two campaigns may also have been undertaken at different times. We have to remember that the inscription represents a concentrated backward look at past events, leaving open the question as to whether they were connected or not.

Scholars have naturally been eager to search for potential links between the recorded references in Sö 166 and known historical campaigns. Possible interpretations vary: thus, von Friesen (1909: 75-76) has explained the payment taken in England as part of the tax that the English king Æþelred (Aðalráðr) had to pay to the Danish king Sveinn tjúguskegg and the Norwegian king Óláfr Tryggvason after their raid on London in 994 – an event shortly followed by Scandinavian campaigns to Bretland and Saxony. Confirmation of the undertaken Danish-Swedish raid in the area around Elbe and Weser is found in the accounts of Adam of Bremen, as well as from other continental sources, and even certain skaldic stanzas (op. cit. 76-83). Combining the historical evidence with the features of the inscription, von Friesen finds it reasonable to date the Grinda stone to the 1020s (op. cit. 84-85).

Von Friesen's assumptions have been criticised by Brate (SöR: 128), who connects the campaign in England with the payment Knútr ríki received and divided between his men in 1018; the campaign in Saxony is taken to witness of a raid arranged by Scandinavians ca. 1040 around the estuary of the river Weser – as again recorded by Adam of Bremen. Brate includes the Berga rune stone (Sö 217) as additional evidence of the latter event. Sö 217 in

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[441] There is also alliteration in the preceding memorial formula, *Griutgarðr – giærðu*; *syniR – sniallan*; but as pointed out by Hübler (1996: 47), this does not appear to be intentional due to the common nature of the verb, and the placement of the adjective *sniallan*. On the other hand, we could suggest that the actual layout may signal additional alliteration between such elements that are not directly connected content-wise. Thus, when focusing on the top part of the stone, we notice that the outer frame band contains the words *syniR giærðu*, where the inner band has *gialdi skifti*. This may naturally also be an accidental placement of elements on the stone; it is impossible to verify/falsify the hypothesis of conscious planning.

[442] That territory is at least partly located within the Baltic drainage basin – more importantly, the Baltic Sea lied in any case within easy reach, even if Saxony did not have an extended Baltic shoreline during the 11th century.

[443] As for the layout, the references are placed on the opposite sides of the stone.

fact commemorates a certain Ótryggr, of whom it is said that he fell in the retinue of Guðvér: **is fel · i liþi : kuþuis**. The commissioners of the monument are his five sons. Brate argues that since one of them is called Knútr, the inspiration source could well have been the great king who died in 1035. On that basis he reaches the conclusion that Guðvér's campaign to Saxony took place in the 1040s (ibid.).

Several obvious considerations contradict Brate's argumentation. For one, Sö 217 does not provide a destination for Guðvér's campaign – the target may have been a completely diffe-rent area than Saxony. Secondly, we do not know the age of the mentioned sons, nor the age of their father at the time of death – therefore, it is impossible to claim with certainty that the son had been named after king Knútr.[444] Thirdly, it is by no means proven that the Guðvér commemorated in Sö 166 is the man referred to in Sö 217. The fact that in the former inscription Guðvér is acknowledged for his two enterprises makes it naturally attractive to regard him as the leader whom Ótryggr followed. But the same name also occurs in other inscriptions: Sö 170 (as one of the commissioners), Sö 328 (the deceased, commemorated by his sons), and possibly also in U 818 (as one of the commissioners). Again we have to realise that the age of the Guðvér of Sö 166 at the time of his campaigns, and his later death, remains unknown – further complicating the search for links between Sö 166 and Sö 217 (despite the fact that a rough dating and localisation of the stones would not contradict the connection).

In view of the above, the conclusions have to stay somewhat conservative. The runic inscription on the Grinda stone, Sö 166, could indeed relate to one of the great campaigns mentioned above, but it may also refer to some smaller, otherwise unknown enterprise; after all, many different raids were arranged to these regions during the Viking Age. For the latter assumption speaks the fact that the inscription has recorded the events with a focus on the role of Guðvér, and no names of well-known leaders are added (as for example seen with the Knútr and the Ingvarr inscriptions).[445]

When widening the context around Sö 166, it is of interest that Sö 165 commemorates an-other local man, Heðinn, of whom it is said: **uaʀ : han :: i : krikum iuli skifti**. While Sö 166 has recorded the dividing of payment in England, Sö 165 is speaking of dividing gold in Byzantium.[446] In this manner Sö 165 and Sö 166 reflect the repertoire of phrases that could be used when relating about campaigns leading to different areas.

With regard to Sö 166, parallels could also be drawn to the impressive Kungshållet monument, Sö 106, which uses the same word *borg* – and also in the context of western travels. A certain Alríkr, Sigríðr's son, has raised the stone in memory of his father Spjót. Further focus is placed on his engagements, presented through a poetical formulation: **saʀ x uisitaula x um x uaʀit : hafþi x burg x um brutna : i : auk x um barþa +x firþ x han x karṣaʀ + kuni + alaʀ**. Spjót appears as a man who broke down and fought

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[444] Knútr was a common enough name, appearing also in other runic inscriptions that are not connected with the king.

[445] This, on the other hand, would perhaps speak in favour of connecting Sö 166 to Sö 217, but as argued above, the grounds of proof remain vague; it is just as likely that Sö 166 and Sö 217 refer to two different persons.

[446] To that we can add Sö 163 from Rycksta (approximately 15 km southwest of Grinda), which also commemorates a man who travelled to Byzantium and divided gold: **i : krikium : uli : sifti**.

townships (*borg um brutna i ok um barða*), and he knew all the fortresses on the way (*færð hann karsaʀ kunni allaʀ*).[447]

The two Grinda stones Sö 166 and Sö 165 are located in between various lakes: to the east lies Ljudgosjön, to the southeast Runnviken, and to the west Eknären. As for the general setting, we have already underlined that the Rönö district in southeastern Södermanland abounds in rune stones. The system of water routes and closeness to the coast demonstrate the connections that local communities had with the sea. From the same district several other voyage stones are known, including the above-mentioned Baltic traffic inscriptions Sö 130, Sö 148, Sö 171 and SöFV1948;289 – all within a radius of less than 25 km.

<center>Árhus rune stone V, DR 68</center>

The rune stone was found in 1905 as a foundation stone in the Frue church (DRI: 105); now it is exhibited at the Moesgård Museum.[448] The Árhus stone V is an impressive, well-planned and well-carved monument.[449]

The carving covers two sides of the monument, and includes interesting plant and spiral ornamentation. The design on the front side comprises an arch band and a vertical band in the middle.[450] The inscription starts at the bottom left corner, where the stone now lacks a piece. It runs along the arch to the right and then vertically up along the middle text band. The inscription continues on side B (to the right), where spirals and plant ornamentation connect three vertical text bands to each other. The mutual order of the text bands partly follows the principles of the front side: first we head upwards along the leftmost line and then downwards along the rightmost line, and finally again downwards along the middle band. The middle band extends itself towards the bottom – the first two runes in the final word are considerably bigger than other runes within that text band; in this way the end of the inscription is marked.

Structurally the inscription consists of MMF and supplementary information about the deceased that contains three phrases. Memorial formula occupies the front side of the stone, with the names of the three commissioners, the verbal phrase and the monument marker placed along the arch band. The name of the deceased and the relationship marker are fitted into the middle band: **osur x saksa x filaka x sin**. That text band ends with the word **harþa**, which leads us over to the next part of the inscription on side B, where the deceased **osur saksa** is further characterised: **kuþan x trik x saʀ x tu ¶ x mana x mest x uniþikʀ**. The final part of the inscription in the middle text band also introduces a fourth person, not named among the commissioners: **saʀ x ati x skib x miþ x arno**. The name Árni gains a marked position at the bottom of the stone thanks to its two extended runes.

The deceased is identified by the personal name Qzurr and the byname **saksa**. The latter could mean 'Saxon' – in which case it reveals the man's Saxon origin or speaks of his

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[447] An earlier interpretation understood **barþa** (participle of the RS verb *bæria*, cf. SRR: 9) as a reference to the tribe of Bards, who lived by Bardowick in the region of the river Ilmenau (cf. von Friesen 1933: 191; S.B.F. Jansson 1956: 36). Jansson obviously later distanced himself from that interpretation (1984: 79).

[448] We refer to DR 68 as the Árhus stone V, as for example done by Moltke (1985a: 551). In earlier sources DR 68 is often referred to as the Árhus stone VI; since the Árhus stone II is identical with the stone number I, it is appropriate to renumber the Árhus rune stones.

[449] Moltke has dated the stone to the beginning of the 11th century; according to Stoklund (1991: 292), though, the post-Jelling group may also be a few decades earlier.

[450] The identification of a front side is only arbitrary, because the stone could be easily placed in a manner that made both sides visible at once.

extensive contacts with Saxony.[451] It is further significant that the man is said to have owned a ship together with Árni, and that his partners commemorate him – i.e. he is referred to as their **filaka** (ON *félagi*). Such information speaks in favour of the idea of the deceased as someone who engaged in travelling – in cooperation with his fellows. On the basis of the term *félagi*, it may be assumed that the commissioners of the monument "were also ship-owners, and the enterprise was an expedition of two or more ships on a joint venture of either raiding or trading" (Jesch 2001: 234).[452]

What is interesting is also the way in which the deceased is described as a very good dreng (*harþa goþan dræng*) who died as the most unvillainous of men (*saR do manna mæst uniþingR*) – the emphasis lies on the greatness of the man. The word *óníðingr* (ON) appears in eight other runic inscriptions, all from Sweden. The exact same alliterating expression "the most unvillainous of men" is applied in Ög 77, Sm 5 and Sm 37 – in all cases as a supplement about the deceased. Sm 5, the Transjö stone, in fact commemorates a man who lost his life in England.[453] In the context of DR 68, there is reason to take *óníðingr* as an opposition to *níðingr*; the phrase marks someone whom the others could trust.[454]

We regard DR 68 as a possible example of connections between Denmark and Saxony; considering the fact that the inscription comes from Denmark, such a focus is not unlikely. On the other hand, it cannot be ruled out that the byname **saksa** may have also been applied with clear military connotations in order to signal the man's skills with his sword.

Additional remarks

The runic material contains also a few references to the area west of Saxony – i.e. *Frísland* (Frisia). Due to the region's apparent closeness to Saxony, we can treat these cases as complementary evidence. *Frísland* is thus mentioned in one Norwegian inscription, namely on a silver neck ring from Senja (N 540), which starts with the formulation: **furu- trikia frislats a uit** ("we travelled to meet the drengs of Frisia").[455]

Two Swedish rune stone inscriptions demonstrate trade connections with men of Frisian origin: U 379 and U 391 from Sigtuna. Both inscriptions speak of *Frisa gildaR*, i.e. Frisian guild-brothers – named as the commissioners of the monuments. The Sigtuna evidence offers insight into some established forms of trade partnership between men from Frisia and Sweden.[456]

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[451] A parallel interpretation, presented in SRD, suggests Ǫzurr the Sword-wielder. According to NRL the name *Saxi* originates either from the ethnic name *Saxar* (people of Saxony), or the noun *sax* (short sword).

[452] Jesch also explains that unlike the runic word *drengr* which evolves towards certain generalisation, *félagi* "retains the specific, technical meaning of 'partner', whether for the purposes of war, trade or landowning" (op. cit. 235).

[453] Further examples are: Ög 217 where *óníðingr* makes up the first component of the name of the commissioner with the function of describing him; Sm 131 where *óníðingr* appears as a personal name; and Sm 2† where it is a byname. In Sö 189 and possibly also in Sm 147, the purpose is to characterise the deceased.

[454] Compare for example to U 954† where reference is made to killing and betrayal, which is characterised as a villanous deed.

[455] The inscription has been extensively analysed by Jesch (1997).

[456] The word *gildi* is otherwise recorded in Ög 64 and Ög MÖLM1960;230; in both cases identifying the deceased. The *gildi*-inscriptions have been treated in separate studies, see e.g. von Friesen (1911: 113-125); S.B.F. Jansson (1960); Düwel (1987: 337-341); Jesch (2001: 239-241).

3.1.30. Leybikar

G 138F	**leybikɑ-**

Rune stone from Halla church, G 138

There are two visible rune stone fragments in the outer wall of the Halla church approximately three metres above the ground – one facing east, the other one south. They are considered to have belonged in the same monument (GR II: 5). It is at the same time hard to draw any conclusions as to its size, shape and design, because only small parts of the assumed rune stone have been preserved. Also, the original location of the monument remains unknown.

The Halla stone probably followed the style of Gotlandic rune stones. The edges of the slightly bigger fragment A are framed by three text bands; in the middle we observe the end of a possible runic serpent. This preserved serpent tail fits together with the curving text band on fragment B (cf. GR II: 6). On this basis it may be suggested that the preserved parts formed the lower part of the monument, and that the straight text band above the curving tail on fragment A was the horizontal line dividing the stone into the upper and the lower half.[457]

Since a major part of the carving is missing, it is hard to even fix the order of the surviving bits (cf. GR II: 6-8). The inscription seems to have contained a memorial formula **…-nɑ : hɑs : lit : rist : kuml : ɑ - : ̣kɑiʀielmʀ**, possibly followed by a specification of relationship: **ɑinika : sun : þɑiʀɑ** (provided that the curving lines on the two fragments do indeed go together). It remains uncertain as to whether this formulation is the actual memorial formula or merely an additional statement; other information – about one of the commemorated persons? – may be preceding it: **…rti : legiʀ : koþ̣r̥**. With certainty we recognise a supplement concerning the deceased in the formulation **trabu : leybikɑ-**; and perhaps it is continued by an additional focus on the act of commemoration, alongside a prayer formula.

The formulation **ɑt : feþrka : baþa** (*at fæðrga baða*) indicates that the commemoration concerned two persons, a father and a son. The preserved **…nɑʀ** may stand for [*stæi*]*naR*, which would mean that the memorial consisted of several rune stones (GR II: 7). The son's name must be Geirhjalmr, and since he is identified as *sun þæiRa*, we may logically assume that the commissioner of the monument (or at least one of them) has been the parent who was still alive, i.e. his mother. This would correspond to the introductory part of the inscription where one can expect to find information about her husband; according to GR (II: 8), the reference is made to the profession of the deceased; he is described as a good doctor.

Most interesting from our point of view is the preserved phrase **trabu : leybikɑ**. At least one of the commemorated men, most likely the son Geirhjalmr, found his death through the hands of people from Lübeck. The only other runic inscription that mentions a group of people who are to be blamed for killing someone is U 258, where two brothers commemorate their father, and where it is said that Norwegians killed him on a cargo ship: **on x trabu x nurminr**. The verb *drepa* is both in G 138 and U 258 used in its active form.[458]

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[457] Other layout solutions are also possible; the fragmentary nature of the monument does not allow for the establishing of one certain pattern.

[458] The same applies to U 954† where a certain Sassurr is named as the killer of his partner Helgi (*en Sassurr drap hann ok gærði niðingsverk, svæik felaga sinn*); note the noun *niðingsverk* in connection with betrayal (cf. DR 68, 3.1.29.). The name of the killer has probably been included also in the fragmentary Sö 351 (*…[dr]apu h[a]nn*).

The town of Lübeck was founded in 1143, but already in the 11th century the Wendish settlement of Liubice (Alt-Lübeck) existed in the same district, with German merchants among its inhabitants (GR II: 8). For Gotlanders the Old Lübeck must have already been a familiar trade destination in the 11th century (cf. also Snædal Brink & I. Jansson 1983a: 433).[459] Unfortunately, the fragmentary state of GR 138 does not reveal more about the circumstances around the killing, but it remains a significant fact that the commemorative inscription has identified a certain group of people as *Leybikar*.

3.1.31. Additional examples

U 611	**i liþi : frekis**
Vg 40	**tuþr + i uristu + iR · bþiþus + kunukaR**
DR 66	**tuþr · þo · kunukaR x ¶ barþusk**

In the final subsection, we analyse three runic inscriptions that qualify as potential Baltic traffic inscriptions. They do not identify a particular destination/community within the Baltic region, as witnessed by the absolute majority of previously analysed inscriptions.[460] Nevertheless, the general messages of U 611, Vg 40 and DR 66 in their own way depict mobility – and may reflect rather paticular contexts.

Tibble rune stone, U 611

The Tibble stone has already been referred to in connection with Gs 13 (3.1.19.) and U 698† (3.1.25.). The stone has been known since the 17th century. It stands in a field on the northern side of the road between Lerberga-Granhammar; this must be its original location (UR III: 16-17).[461] To the east of Granhammar lie Skarven and Görväln, which provide an important artery into Mälaren.

There is some minor damage on the left side of the monument, but overall the inscription is well preserved and clear. The carving is composed of a runic serpent that forms a frame around the stone. The serpent's head and tail are tied together at the bottom by the elongated lower cross arm. The inscription runs from the head of the serpent on the left to its tail on the right. It consists of MMF and a simple supplement about the deceased.

The monument has been commissioned by a man and a woman who are probably com-memorating their son, although this is not explicitly stated. The name of the deceased, Gísli, is placed along the upper right corner of the stone, after which the supplement is introduced: **han : uti : fial : i liþi : frekis**.

Gísli fell abroad in the troop of a certain Freygeirr(?). By this formulation the inscription wit-nesses of an expedition that had a named leader.[462] The purpose of the campaign was

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[459] In general the Halla inscription has received a wide date of ca. 1000-1150; according to GR (II: 8) this could be narrowed down to ca. 1100.

[460] The only exceptions were Sö 45, DR 55 and DR 68, included due to the recorded personal names/bynames.

[461] According to UR the stone had to be raised again, and therefore its exact placement is not certain. Currently the carving faces east.

[462] Other runic references to men who died during expeditions led by known leaders occur in Ög 8 (*fioll austr með Æivisli*) and Sö 217 (*fell i liði Guðvis*). Similar content is revealed by some of the Knútr inscriptions and the group of Ingvarr inscriptions.

obviously of a military nature, as the use of the verb *falla* and the noun *lið* seem to emphasise.[463] Provided that the inscription mentions the same Freygeirr as in Gs 13 and perhaps also in U 698†, the implicit destination may have lied in the Baltic region.[464] As pointed out previously, the connections have to remain questionable; the Tibble rune stone serves only as an additional example. In general, the location of U 611 in the Mälaren region shows favourable conditions for heading out to the Baltic Sea.

<div align="center">Rune stone from Råda church, Vg 40</div>

Vg 40 from the Råda church is built horizontally into the wall of the southern weapon house (VgR: 59). The original location of the monument is unknown. The inscription is well preserved and clearly visible. The carving is composed of a frame band and a short diagonal band across the inner surface – the latter actually indicates the spot where the inscription within the frame band starts and concludes.

In its time the stone must have been raised, and in this position the inscription starts at the bottom left corner (introduced by a cross mark). It runs around the edges of the stone reaching almost back to the starting point; the final word and the end mark are placed within the diagonal text band. The inscription consists of MMF and a supplement about the deceased. According to the provided information the stone has been placed by a certain Þorkell after his son. The name of the deceased, Gunni, and the statement of relationship appear along the top. The supplement clarifies the circumstances around his death: **iʀ · uarþ + tuþr + i uristu + iʀ bþiþus + kunukaʀ**. This formulation covers the right and bottom part of the monument, with the word **kunukaʀ** being separated from the rest by its placement within the diagonal text band.

Figure 33. Rune stone from the Råda church (Vg 40). Photo: Runverket, RAÄ.

Gunni died in a battle (*varð dauðr i orrustu*) when kings fought against each other (*eR barðus kunungaR*). The battle must have been well known for his contemporaries – neither the place, nor the names of the kings are specified. We have met the word *orrosta* (ON, battle) already

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[463] See e.g. Sö 338 (3.1.21.).
[464] For critical comments, see subsections 3.1.19. and 3.1.25.

in two other Baltic traffic inscriptions: Sö 338 (the battle in the east in *Garðar*) and DR 380 (the battle at *Útlengia*).[465]

What makes Vg 40 special is the phrase *eR barðus kunungaR* – this points in the direction of a large-scale battle under the command of leaders who could be determined as kings. The expression creates the image of a battle that involved Scandinavian kings and unfolded somewhere within the Baltic region rather than at some remote locality. Unfortunately the exact occasion cannot be identified, although some suggestions have been made. An important argument has in this connection been the fact that the same expression (i.e. *þa kunungaR barþusk*) occurs in one Danish inscription, DR 66 – which leads us over to the final example.

Århus rune stone III, DR 66

The Århus rune stone III was found at an old watermill, where it had been used as a foundation stone; now it is located at the Moesgård museum (DRI: 103). The stone has carving on three sides, and on one of them there is also a depiction of a mask-like face.[466]

The carving is composed of several arch bands, and demonstrates an interesting pattern of layout. On side A the inscription starts at the bottom left corner and runs in the shape of an arch to the right; from there the text band curves back up, also covering the middle part of the stone face. The inscription continues with the arch band on side B (to the right), following it again from left to right; below the arch a small figure is visible. The rest of the inscription is introduced along the left edge of side B, where it is fitted into a separate text band that corners on the two arch bands and runs vertically up until the very top of the stone; then a turn is made to the left, the inscription again crosses side A and concludes on side C (where the mask is depicted). The final word on side C is placed outside the text band, appearing partly above and partly beside the mask.

This rather peculiar design as well as the mask ornamentation confirms the monumental significance of the rune stone – an image that is further strengthened by the applied formulation "when kings fought". As is the case with Vg 40, the inscription consists of MMF and a short addition about the deceased. DR 66 names four commissioners who have raised the stone after their partner Fúl (**eftiʀ x ful ⋮ felaḳa ⋮ sin**). The first part of the memorial formula – with the names of the commissioners and the verb **risþu** – is placed on side A, and the rest occupies the arch band on side B, where the name of the deceased gains the top position. The supplement starts in the leftmost text band on side B and runs across side A and side C as previously described. Thus, on side A, above the arch band we find the word **tuþr** (the runes stand upside down in relation to the arch). The formulation **þo ⋮ kunukaʀ x barþusk** appears on side C, with the word **barþusk** separated from the text band. We see that the expression concerning the kings is placed on the same side with the depiction of the mask – the text and the decorative image could have complemented each other in a manner that we can no longer fully comprehend. The inscription and the monument as a whole reveal careful planning.

Vg 40 and DR 66 have been often understood as parallel records of an identical battle, and thus have been linked to such historically known events as the battle of Svolder (ON *Svǫlð(r)*)

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[465] In addition to that, a rock inscription from Fagerlöt (Sö 126) relates of a battle undertaken on the eastern route (*hann draug orrustu i austrvegi*).

[466] Similar masks appear on a few other rune stones (cf. Moltke 1985a: 257; DRI: 850). The meaning has been debated, but it is traditionally held that the mask fulfils protective functions. See figure 8 in subsection 3.1.3.

around 1000, or the battle of Helgeån (ON *áinn helga*) ca. 1025 (cf. VgR: 60). The battles are a much-addressed issue in historical research on Scandinavian kingdoms. In the battle of Svolder the Danish king Sveinn tjúguskegg and the Swedish king Óláfr skautkonungr fought against the Norwegian king Óláfr Tryggvason. Different theories have been presented about the location of Svolder – according to one suggestion the battle took place on an island near Rügen in the Baltic Sea. In the battle of Helgeå (traditionally localised to Skåne), the Danish king Knútr ríki won over the Swedish king Ǫnundr Jakob and the Norwegian king Óláfr Haraldsson.[467]

In the meantime, there is no explicit textual proof for DR 66 and Vg 40 referring to the same event. As first pointed out by Jacobsen (1932: 120), we may just as well deal with stereo-typical expressions that were applied in describing important battles. The expression 'when kings fought' most certainly represents battle vocabulary (cf. also Jesch 2001: 61).[468]

When taking into consideration the rough dates for DR 66 and Vg 40 as well as their respective localities, the hypothesis of their mutual connections may still remain a possibility. The former originates from the Århus region on the eastern coast of northern Jylland; the latter comes from a district on Lake Vänern, which is connected with the Baltic Sea by the historically known Göta river. In this light DR 66 and Vg 40 might also refer to a naval encounter somewhere in the waters between Sweden and Denmark – for example in the area of Skagerrak. Since we lack convincing grounds for identifying the occasion, it is nevertheless more correct to treat these two inscriptions primarily as records that demonstrate parallel expressions. Most likely they both witness of larger Scandinavian battles where several men fought under the command of their kings.

3.2. Baltic traffic inscriptions as collective evidence

The preceding presentation attempted to bring out the individual features of the inscriptions and the monuments. The analysis was built up in a mainly atomistic manner, concentrating on one inscription at a time and focusing on the interplay of different levels of expression according to the adapted hermeneutical approach. In the following, we shall approach the material from a broader perspective and illuminate the nature and the value of the analysed group as a whole. That is to say, the purpose is to highlight common features and apparent variation in terms of form (i.e. structure and layout), content, as well as meaning and function (i.e. narrative and communicative significance). In addition, certain considerations will also be drawn on the regional, chronological and cultural-historical level.

3.2.1. Structure and elements of content

In terms of structural textuality we have followed the arbitrary division of runic formulations into main memorial formula (MMF) and various supplements; this general technique provided

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[467] For an analysis of saga depictions concerning the battles of the Scandinavian kings, see chapter IV.
[468] Jesch discusses also relevant skaldic examples with the same verb *berjask* (ibid.).

the necessary tools for placing items of vocabulary into their textual context. Most of the references to contacts within the Baltic region belong under additional information, with the exception of Sö 45, DR 55, and DR 68, which are treated as witnesses of Baltic traffic due to specific personal names/bynames that have been incorporated into MMF. An exception may be U 414†, where the place name 'Gotland' might have been part of the introductory statement. U FV1912;8 is also different in that the inscription appears on a copper box and indicates the place of origin in the framework of ownership formula.

A) Components of main memorial formula

With regard to the composition of MMF we have noted that most inscriptions follow the typical pattern of commemoration: the formula is thus introduced by identifying the commissioners, the verbal phrase that expresses direct memorial content and usually also labels the medium follows, and finally the deceased is named alongside the statement of relationship. Among the analysed rune stone inscriptions, certain more untraditional formulas are observable in Öl 1 and Sö 130. It is further possible that the fragmentary G 138 and the lost U 414† were introduced by formulations other than the usual MMF. U 214 and G 135 are interesting cases, both starting with a shortened version of MMF, which at the same time finds its wider reference in relation to other monuments – U 215 and G 134, respectively. An exceptional case is naturally the above-mentioned U FV1912;8.

Starting with the first element of MMF, in the majority of inscriptions (39) we are dealing with only male commissioners.[469] In fourteen inscriptions the named commissioners are women;[470] whereas in six (possibly seven) inscriptions both men and women figure among the commissioners.[471] In two fragmentary cases (Sö 16 and G 220) the preserved state of the inscription does not reveal any information about the commissioners.

Only one explicit commissioner is named in 38 inscriptions;[472] multiple commissioners (two or more) are identified in 22 cases.[473] Among the latter, inscriptions such as Sö 338, U 180, U 539 and DR 66 deserve extra attention due to their long lists of commissioners. In this manner, Sö 338 has been arranged by the two sons, the brother and the wife of the deceased as well as by an unidentified number of *húskarlar*.[474] Five male commissioners are listed in U 539, four in U 180 and DR 66. Sö 130 in its own manner also focuses on the activity of four men, without specifying their names. Three men stand out in G 207 and DR 68. A specific case with regard to determining the number of commissioners is DR 295 – MMF establishes

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[469] Öl 1, Sö 39, Sö 40, Sö 45, Sö 47, Sö 130, Sö 148, Sö 166, Sö 171, Sö 174, Sö 333, Sm 52, Vg 40, Vg 181, U 130, U 180, U 209, U 527, U 539, U 614, U 636, U 698†, Vs 1, Gs 13, G 207, DR 37, DR 63(?), DR 66, DR 68, DR 117, DR 216, DR 220, DR 259, DR 279, DR 295, DR 344, DR 380, N 62, N 239. In U FV1912;8 the marked owner is a man. Male commissioners are possibly commemorating their brother in U 414†.

[470] Öl 28, Ög 81, Sö 198, Sö FV1948;289, U 214, U 346†, U 356, U 533, U 687, U 699, U 1048, G 138, DR 55, DR 217. U 346† and U 356 mention the same person.

[471] Sö 338, U 375, U 518, U 582†, U 611, G 135 and most likely also U 896. G 135 does not include the names in MMF, but according to the complementary G 134 the commissioners are two parents.

[472] Öl 28, Ög 81, Sö 39, Sö 40, Sö 47, Sö 171, Sö 174, Sö 198, Sö 333, Sö FV1948;289, Vg 40, Vg 181, U 130, U 209, U 214, U 346†, U 356, U 527, U 533, U 636, U 698†, U 699, U 1048, Vs 1, Gs 13, G 138(?), DR 37(?), DR 55, DR 63(?), DR 117, DR 217, DR 220, DR 259, DR 279, DR 344, DR 380, N 62, N 239. With a few inscriptions it may be discussed whether additional commissioners have been indicated, cf. e.g. Sö 333, U 527. U 214 is commissioned by one woman, but two more are mentioned on its pair monument U 215.

[473] Öl 1, Sö 45, Sö 130, Sö 148, Sö 166, Sö 338, Sm 52, U 180, U 375, U 414†, U 518, U 539, U 582†, U 611, U 614, U 687, U 896, G 135, G 207, DR 66, DR 68, DR 216.

[474] In this subsection the items of vocabulary will be constantly given in ON, unless providing longer quotations from Swedish and Danish inscriptions.

one man as the main commissioner but later in the inscription it is clarified that the stone has been placed on the hill by **trikɑʀ** (*drengjar*).

As could be expected, we thus observe the dominance of men among the commissioners. However, it is significant that in approximately one third of the inscriptions women figure either as co-commissioners or even take full responsibility for the monument. The number of studied inscriptions is of course too limited, and the selection too arbitrary, to confirm any patterns, but in the least we learn about the people who stood behind the raising of these particular monuments. Also, with male family members travelling around (and possibly dying away from home) it is natural to expect that women are engaged in commemorating their deeds.[475]

Turning our attention to the verbs designating the commemorative actions as well as to the monument markers signifying the medium, we find that the group of Baltic traffic inscriptions comprises the usual as well as some less common variants. As pointed out by Palm (1992: 200), monument markers govern to a certain degree over the choice of verb.[476]

The most stereotypical expression combines the verb *reisa* – sometimes alongside the introductory verb *láta* – with the monument marker *steinn*.[477] The phrase *reisa + steinn* is encountered in 18 inscriptions.[478] Palm (1992: 203) explains that *reisa* and *steinn* have an equally wide distribution in Scandinavian rune stone areas; according to his corpus the verb occurs in 76.5% of the inscriptions that have *steinn* as the monument marker.

The verb *reisa* is further recorded in Sö 40 where the monument marker remains implicit. *Reisa* possibly even occurs in the fragmentary G 138 together with the monument marker *kuml*; another possibility is that the intended verb is *rísta*.[479]

In an additional 13 cases the introductory verb *láta* precedes the phrase *reisa + steinn*.[480] Concerning the inclusion of *láta* one naturally has to wonder whether the verb here purports to emphasise that the commissioner delegated the actual job responsibilities to someone else. One of the scholars to address the issue is Thompson (1975: 13) who finds it "probable that in eleventh-century Uppland, the wording had become strictly formulaic and no longer corresponded to reality".

According to Palm (1992: 217), *láta* is the absolutely dominant auxiliary verb (i.e. introductory verb) in runic inscriptions; other verbs, such as *biðja, geta* and *hafa*, occur only sporadically. He confirms that the construction with *láta* is well grounded in the Upplandic material; this may stand in connection with the abundance of professional carvers in that

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[475] The role of women as rune stone raisers has been discussed by scholars on several occasions; cf. e.g. Düwel (1989); A-S. Gräslund (1989; 1995); B. Sawyer (1991b). The latter author brings out that among the studied corpus of ca. 1620 inscriptions, "we meet women as erectors, on their own (12.5 per cent) or together with men (15 per cent)" (1991b: 216).

[476] For a discussion of the regional distribution of different verbs and monument markers in the commemorative inscriptions from the Viking Age, see Palm (1992: 177-223). In addition to regional factors, the nomenclature as applied by different carvers/rune stone raisers could also have been influential. Furthermore, correspondence to the monument in real-life terms must have played a certain role in the choice of designations.

[477] In constructions of the type *láta + reisa*, some scholars (e.g. Thompson 1975; Palm 1992) determine *láta* as an auxiliary verb. However, linguistically, the verb *láta* carries a clear lexical meaning and is not simply expressing particular grammatical features. Here the general designation 'introductory verb' is used instead of 'auxiliary verb' to mark the first component of corresponding verbal phrases; at the same we acknowledge that even this term does not cover the syntactic function of the verb in the best manner.

[478] Öl 28, Ög 81, Sö 45, Sö 148, Sö 333, Sö 338, Sm 52, Vg 181, U 582†, G 207, DR 66, DR 68, DR 117, DR 216, DR 259, DR 380, N 62, N 239.

[479] The latter verb is otherwise used in the fragmentary DR 37; in that inscription the word *steinn* is also preserved, although seemingly not as part of MMF.

[480] Sö 198, U 180, U 356, U 518, U 533, U 539, U 611, U 614, U 636, U 698†, U 699, U 896, DR 344.

landscape (op. cit. 221). With regard to the limited evidence of Baltic traffic inscriptions, we may in the meantime notice that out of the fourteen previously mentioned inscriptions that have only female commissioners, *láta* is applied in ten cases together with different additional verbs.[481] In these cases the expression may nevertheless accord with reality, in which women let others take care of actual arrangements. On the other hand, the same introductory verb appears in U 539 as well, where five men figure as the commissioners. Altogether, *láta* is recorded in 25 Baltic traffic inscriptions.[482]

Returning to other verbs besides *reisa*, used either with or without *láta*, the analysed inscriptions make use of *gera* (9 occasions), *setja* (6), *hǫggva* (4), *rétta* (3) and *rísta* (1 or 2).[483] The connections with *gera* are rather specific, in that in only one case is the monument marker *steinn*.[484] In four inscriptions the monument marker is *kuml*; one of these (Sö 174) also includes the additional monument markers *líkhús/líknhús* and *brú* (cf. 3.1.16.).[485] In three cases the monument marker remains implicit;[486] whereas in one case the reference is made to *merki*.[487] The verb *setja* gets connected with *steinn* in all recorded cases, but in one inscription, Vs 1, the monument markers are *stafr* and *steinar*.[488] As for *hǫggva*, in two cases the monument marker remains implicit;[489] one uses the verb together with *steinn* and another one with *hellir*.[490] The three cases of *rétta* demonstrate the traditional monument marker *steinn*.[491]

More specific is the lost U 414†, where presumably the verb *fœra* alongside the monument marker *steinn* expressed that the stone had been transported from Gotland. Finally, we could mention U FV1912;8, with its explanation concerning the object of scales (*skálar*), which the owner has got from a foreign man, as indicated by the verb *fá*. The previously mentioned U 214 and G 135 exclude the verb and the monument marker from MMF, but *letu stæin æftiR* in U 215 and *letu ræisa stæina æftiR* in G 134 are of referential value for understanding the messages of these two inscriptions.[492]

As the above overview has demonstrated, most Baltic traffic inscriptions operate with one monument marker, whereas Sö 174, Vs 1 and possibly G 138 have recorded several. On eight occasions, the monument marker remains implicit.[493] Although *steinn* is the most common variant, the combination of particular verbs and monument markers signals to a

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[481] Sö 198, Sö FV1948;289, U 346†, U 356, U 533, U 687, U 699, U 1048, G 138, DR 55. DR 217 demonstrates an alternative introductory verb, i.e. *geta*. Among the inscriptions where commissioners have mixed gender, U 375, U 518, U 611, and U 896 use *láta*. Even G 135 may be added to the latter list, since its pair monument G 134 applies the same construction.

[482] Besides the previously referred inscriptions, these are Sö 39, Sö 171, Sö 174, U 130, Gs 13. Sö 39, Sö 171 and U 130 are rock inscriptions; in Sö 174 the introductory verb is used together with the additional verb *gera* and three monument markers.

[483] The latter verb is recorded in DR 37 and perhaps also in G 138; see above.

[484] This is DR 217, where *gera* is preceded by the verb *geta*.

[485] Sö 47, Sö FV1948;289 (in plural), DR 55, Sö 174 (three monument markers).

[486] Sö 130, Sö 166, U 209. Sö 130 is extraordinary since the basic formulation *fiuriR gærðu at faður* (RS) is followed by an addition, which addresses the monument in a more abstract manner, i.e. through the word *dýrð* (cf. 3.1.21.)

[487] U 687; the inscription is found on a stone boulder. According to Palm (1992: 188), *merki* carries the general meaning of a (land)mark.

[488] Other examples are Öl 1, Vg 40, DR 220, DR 279 and DR 295. Öl 1 contains the phrase *stæinn sasi es sattr æftiR*, (where *es* fulfils the function of an auxiliary verb and marks passive tense).

[489] Sö 39, U 1048.

[490] Concerning Sö 171 and U 130, both are rock inscriptions.

[491] U 346†, U 375 and Gs 13.

[492] Sö 16, U 527, G 220, DR 63 are too fragmentary to allow the reconstruction of corresponding parts of MMF.

[493] Sö 39, Sö 40, Sö 130, Sö 166, U 209, U 214, U 1048, G 135.

certain degree that the actual monuments ranged from (ordinary) raised rune stones to bigger memorial rocks/boulders and even multiple-monuments. The correspondence of the verbal content to the actual material-physical features of the preserved monuments is also visible.

Specific are the cases in which extra focus is placed on the medium, by complementing the monument marker with a demonstrative pronoun (e.g. verb + *stein þenna*); 40 inscriptions make use of this strategy.[494] Palm (1992: 226-227) suggests that the phrase may stand in connection with the role of named commissioners in the actual event of raising the rune stone, so as to mark their responsibility for the rune stone. The essence of preserved formulations does not let us corroborate this assumption. However, the specific meaning of demonstrative pronouns in runic inscriptions is obvious – they are by nature deictic markers, i.e. their meaning depends on the (extra-linguistic) context of the utterance.[495] In the case of runic inscriptions, this context is normally provided by the immediate medium – that is to say, 'this stone' signifies that very stone on which the inscription is found.[496]

It was already explained in chapter II (2.2.1.) that the memorial purpose of runic inscriptions becomes explicit in terms of prepositional phrases, introduced commonly by *eptir/ept* and *at*. Among the Baltic traffic inscriptions, U 896 is a particular case in that it specifies that the stone has been raised for the spirit of the deceased (*fyrir ǫnd*).

This leads us to the final components of MMF – the identification of the deceased and their relationship to the commissioners. The inscriptions may commemorate one person or several at a time; in the case of the latter it is possible that only one is mentioned in the frames of MMF, and others are included in supplements. The majority of inscriptions in the analysis group (56) have been arranged in memory of one person.[497] Two persons are commemorated in Sö 45, Sö FV1948;289, and probably also in Sö 333 and G 138. Three men are mentioned in U 518, four in U 687, and five in Ög 81; the latter inscription identifies only one man in MMF, but the verse addition relates of his four brothers and serves therefore as an additional commemoration. As was clarified during the analysis, in addition to the explicit patterns of commemoration the monuments and their inscriptions may serve as memorials for the living.[498]

For the next step, we shall look at the determined relationship categories. Most commonly the commissioners commemorate their sons, brothers and fathers. The first indication occurs

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[494] Öl 1, Öl 28, Ög 81, Sö 45, Sö 47, Sö 148, Sö 198, Sö 333, Sö 338, Sö FV1948;289, Sm 52, Vg 40, Vg 181, U 130, U 346†, U 356, U 375, U 414†, U 518, U 527, U 539, U 614, U 636, Vs 1, Gs 13, G 135, DR 37, DR 63, DR 68, DR 117, DR 216, DR 217, DR 220, DR 259, DR 279, DR 295, DR 344, DR 380, N 62, N 239.

[495] The term 'deixis' can be defined as "the name given to those formal properties of utterances which are determined by, and which are interpreted by knowing, certain aspects of the communication act in which the utterances in question can play a role" (Fillmore 1997: 61). Typical categories are person deixis, place deixis, and time deixis.

[496] The role of such deictic markers as a specific feature that characterises the mode of expression in runic inscriptions will lie in the focus of a forthcoming study.

[497] Öl 1, Öl 28, Sö 16(?), Sö 39, Sö 40, Sö 47, Sö 130, Sö 148, Sö 166, Sö 171, Sö 174, Sö 198, Sö 338, Sm 52, Vg 40, Vg 181, U 130, U 180, U 209, U 214, U 346†, U 356, U 375, U 414†, U 527, U 533, U 539, U 582†, U 611, U 614, U 636, U 698†, U 699, U 896, U 1048, Vs 1, Gs 13, G 135, G 207(?), G 220(?), DR 37(?), DR 55, DR 63(?), DR 66, DR 68, DR 117, DR 216, DR 217, DR 220, DR 259, DR 279, DR 295, DR 344, DR 380, N 62, N 239. The inscriptions that are marked by (?) are questionable cases due to their fragmentary state.

[498] See e.g. U 130 (3.1.8.) and DR 55 (3.1.28.) where the commemorative texts also set the living family members in clear focus.

in 24 inscriptions.[499] As well, it is possible that the deceased mentioned in U 611 and in G 135 are the sons of the commissioners, although this has not been made explicit in the formulation. The same may apply to the three men commemorated in U 518.

Brothers are commemorated in 14 cases;[500] an additional example may be DR 295, which includes the same designation among its supplementary information (cf. 3.1.13.) – but here the meaning is that of in-group relations. In 9 inscriptions references are made to the death of a father.[501] Other described family relationships are husband, in 7 inscriptions;[502] and mother's brother and mother, in one inscription each.[503]

In addition to that, labels that demonstrate kinship patterns such as partner (*félagi*) and kinsman (*frændi*) have been applied in Danish inscriptions.[504] Also, in certain cases the deceased appears to have been the leader who the commissioners followed. Thus, DR 295 identifies the deceased as *dróttinn*. It is evident that Öl 1, arranged by a member of retinue, commemorates a leading figure. So does Sö 338, where *húskarlar* are listed among the commissioners, although they relate to the deceased as their *jafn*.

Since the runic evidence as a whole demonstrates that travelling is almost exclusively an enterprise for men, it is natural that in all Baltic traffic inscriptions the commemorated persons are men. Only DR 55 is made in memory of a woman, but it does not commemorate a traveller as such; the inscription mentions a Wendish king whose wife the deceased must have been. As for the female commissioners, we see that they commemorate sons and husbands (and on one occasion a mother's brother and mother).[505]

B) Supplements

Main memorial formula can easily be expanded by appositions characterising the deceased (or the commissioner). Attributive adjectives and/or nouns that relate to the commemorated person focus on his status and significance, and may even determine his rank/occupation. Similar additions can appear in the form of independent phrases (i.e. not incorporated into MMF).

Baltic traffic inscriptions thus demonstrate that the deceased may be further described as *drengr*[506] – a label used in Öl 28 (with qualifier *góðr*), Ög 81 (with *frœkn*),[507] Vg 181 (with *harða góðr*), DR 68 (with *harða góðr*) and DR 380 (possibly with *góðr*).[508]

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[499] Öl 28, Sö 47, Sö 174, Sö 333, Sö FV1948;289, Vg 40, Vg 181, U 209, U 346†, U 356, U 375, U 533, U 582†, U 636, U 687, U 698†, U 896, U 1048, Vs 1, G 138, DR 117, DR 380, N 62, N 239. U 346† and U 356 refer to the same person.

[500] Sö 39, Sö 45, Sö 333, Sö 338, U 130, U 180, U 414†, U 539, U 614, Gs 13, DR 37, DR 220, DR 259, DR 344. Note that some of the inscriptions appear under parallel categories, since they refer to several persons who are identified through varying patterns of relationship, or characterise one person in terms of his various relations to a number of commissioners. The former principle applies to Sö 45, Sö 333, G 138, the latter to Sö 338; a specific case is U 687, which lists the names of four sons and then further identifies one of them as the husband of the second commissioner.

[501] Sö 40, Sö 45, Sö 130, Sö 148, Sö 166, Sö 171, Sö 338, Sm 52, U 527. The fragmentary G 207 has also possibly commemorated a father of three men.

[502] Sö 198, Sö 338, U 214, U 687, U 699, G 138, DR 217.

[503] Ög 81 and DR 55.

[504] *Félagi* is recorded in DR 66, DR 68, DR 279, and *frændi* in DR 216. Similar references are a characteristic feature of other early Danish inscriptions.

[505] After son: Öl 28, Sö FV1948;289, U 346†, U 356, U 533, U 1048; after son and husband: U 687 and G 138. For a list of other cases, see above.

[506] For the meaning of *drengr* and following designations, see Jesch (2001); SRR; and OGNS by Fritzner.

[507] In Ög 81 the phrase belongs to the versified addition with information about the brothers of the man mentioned in MMF.

In DR 344, the deceased is additionally determined as *sveinn* of a certain Gunnulfr, in Sö 171 as the ship's leader, *vísi*, and in Sö 338 as a commander of a retinue, *liðs forungi* and the best of landholders, *landmanna beztr*. The fragmentary U 527 possibly determines the deceased as *bezti bóndi*. In G 138, one of the two commemorated persons could have been *lækir góðr*. More expressive is the manner in which the deceased is described in DR 68 – *manna mest óníðingr*.

As for the application of adjectives/qualifiers, *góðr* is, besides the above-mentioned cases, also applied in Sö 130 as an apposition concerning the father. Later in the inscription the same adjective, as well as *mildr*, figure in the poetic formulation.[509] Ög 81 applies *góðr* alongside the term *karl* in the preface to the versified addition, which introduces the father of the deceased and states that the former had five sons. The superlative form *beztr* is in fact recorded two times in the already cited Sö 338 (on the first occasion it characterises both the deceased and his brother), and additionally also in DR 217. The adjective *snjallr* is applied in Sö 166 and in Sö FV1948;289. The latter uses *snjallr* in a separate versified phrase alongside *ríkr*. Further examples of used qualifiers are DR 217 with *allra drjúgastr* and DR 295 with *hollr* (appearing in an apposition with *dróttinn*).[510]

Some of the listed identifiers and qualifiers occur within the frames of longer formulations that refer to mobility in the Baltic region. As briefly mentioned at the beginning of the current subsection, in most of the analysed inscription Baltic references are provided as part of the supplementary information. They are usually concerned with the deceased, although we find certain alternate expressions. In the following we shall describe their features in more detail.

The recorded place names could themselves also be studied as authentic linguistic evidence, focusing on their form as well as on the prepositions that stand next to the names. We mostly concentrate upon their function and meaning in expressing particular content. However, when combining the study of linguistic forms with that of layout techniques, some interesting observations can be made. Several inscriptions demonstrate the division of names into two parts, by placing them into separate text bands/lines or providing a word divider in the middle of the name. In certain cases the strategy seems to recognise different components that the name has been composed of, such as in Sö 39 (**lf** and **lanti**), Sö 166 (**sahks** and **lanti**), Sö 174 (**kut** and **lanti**), Sö 333 (**kalmarna** and **sutuma**), Sm 52 (**karþ** and **stokum**), U 180 (**ui** and **bu̯r̤kum**), U 214 (**holms** and **hafi**), U 518 (**silu** and **nur**), DR 117 (**ura** and **suti**), DR 216 (**suo** and **þiauþu**), DR 279 (**ub** and **salu̯m**), DR 295 (**ub** and **salum**), and DR 380 (**ut** and **lan̤kiu**). Possible cases are the fragmentary U 896 (**tai** and **mɑ…**) and the lost U 582† (**fin** and **lonti**). Interesting is also the division occurring in the ethnic name in DR 217 (**nur** and **minum**).[511] Such carving (and layout) strategies may reflect individual variation but they may also stand in connection with formal patterns of expression that could easily divide place names into two components.[512]

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[508] DR 295 addresses in a separate formulation the commissioners as *drengjar*. Sö 130 focuses on the manner of commemoration by applying the adverb *drengila*.

[509] Additionally, it may be discussed whether the word *dómari* in Sö 130 provides the name of the father or identifies him as a judge.

[510] More special is Öl 1, where the dróttkvætt stanza comprises several figurative expressions, including the adjective *rógstarkr* and the adverb *ørgrandari*.

[511] Other examples of this particular layout division are Öl 28 (**kar** + **þum**) and Gs 13 (**taf** and **stalonti**).

[512] As such they could even be compared to the phenomenon of tmesis occurring in skaldic poetry (see 4.1.2.2.).

Proceeding onto the level of phrases, the applied verbs actually cast light on death circumstances. On the one hand, we find more neutral formulations with *endast* (meet one's end/die), *deyja* (die), and phrases such as *vera endaðr* and *verða dauðr*.[513] On the other hand, specific nuances reveal themselves through *falla*, *verða drepinn*, *drukna*, *verða svikvinn*, and *vera grafinn*.[514]

We may conclude that 42 inscriptions – if a few questionable place references are also included – explicitly state the locations where the person(s) has/have <u>died</u> for one or another reason.[515] Furthermore, the two Skåne inscriptions DR 279 and DR 295, which both emphasise that the deceased did not flee at Uppsala (v. *flýja*), most likely carry the meaning that the men died during the battle over there. Two additional cases are U 527 and U 614, which relate of catching illness (indicated by *taka sótt* in U 527 and *vera sjúkr úti* in U 614), and may in this manner mark Gotland as the death place. The latter inscription is in the meantime more specific in that it speaks of Gotland as the arena for taxation (*taka gjald*).

We also find formulations where Baltic traffic references do not necessarily stand in connection with death at that particular spot. Öl 1 refers to Denmark in the frames of a poetic stanza, where the verb *ráða* makes the claim of ruling over land and thus praises the prominence of the deceased.[516] The use of the present tense in Öl 28 (*sitr* < *sitja*) when introducing the half brother(?) of the deceased indicates that he may have still been living in *Garðar* at the time the stone was arranged (cf. 3.1.21.). That men could attain wealth in the east in *Garðar* and then return home safely is demonstrated by U 209, which contains further information about the commissioner and uses the verb *afla*. Besides the more abstract notion of acquiring wealth, the inscriptions may testify to the transportation of concrete objects, as must have been the case with U 414† and the phrase *fœra stein*.[517]

Sö 166 is more ambiguous in its commemoration of a man who was in the west and attacked townships in Saxony (the phrase is *sœkja borgir*) – it is thus not stated that he found his end out in the west; he could have, in fact, died at home. The same applies to Sö 198, arranged in memory of a man who used to sail (*sigla*) to *Seimgalir*, around *Dómisnes*; the inscription does not reveal whether he actually died during his sea voyage or whether this information is simply meant to underline his previous deeds. DR 344 describes the deceased as the *sveinn* of Gunnulfr *á Svíþjóð*; again the context of death remains unknown.[518] In all three cases it is at the same time at least a theoretical possibility that the formulations were chosen to focus on what was considered most significant; it was perhaps not necessary to

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[513] *Endast, vera/vesa endaðr* – Ög 81, Sö 40, Sö 148, U 518, Vs 1, G 207. *Deyja* – U 180, U 1048, G 220, DR 37. DR 68 also uses the same verb, although not specifying the place of death. (*Verða/vera*) *dauðr* – Ög 81, Sö 16, Sö FV1948;289, Sm 52, U 375, U 539, U 687, U 699, U 896, Gs 13, G 135, DR 117, DR 216, DR 220, DR 259, N 62. Vg 40 and DR 66 apply the phrase *verða dauðr* without identifying the place.

[514] *Falla* – Ög 81, Sö 130(?), Sö 171, Sö 338, U 346†, U 356, U 698†(?), N 239; U 611 uses the verb when relating of death in Freygeirr's retinue. *Verða/vera drepinn* – Ög 81, Sö 174, Sö 333, Vg 181, U 533, U 582†, DR 380. G 138 uses *drepa* when stating that *Leybikar* killed the man. *Drukna* is applied in Sö 39, U 214; *verða svikvinn* in U 130; and *vera grafinn* in Sö 47 (cf. 3.1.16.).

[515] See the lists provided in previous footnotes, with the exception of the following inscriptions: DR 68, Vg 40, DR 66, U 611, G 138.

[516] It can at the same time be discussed whether the commemorated Sibbi indeed died somewhere in the region of Denmark (cf. 3.1.1.).

[517] We have repeated the reference occurring in U 414† in this discussion of supplementary information, although the actual phrase may have constituted the introductory formula in the inscription. The purpose here is to provide a comprehensive overview of the group as a whole. For the same reason, U FV1912;8, Sö 45, DR 55 and DR 68 are also presented below.

[518] Unknown is the purpose of reference to Hedeby in DR 63, caused by the fragmentary state of the inscription.

illuminate the evident – that these men died away from home. Similarly, an indirect implication of death place may occur in U 636, where it is said that the commemorated son travelled to the east to *Garðar* (the applied verb is *fara*).

Death is definitely recorded in the similarly sounding texts of Vg 40 and DR 66; the inscriptions mention men who died when the kings fought (*er barðust konungar*). U 611 is arranged in memory of a man who fell abroad in the retinue of Freygeirr. All three inscriptions indirectly refer to particular battle localities, but unfortunately the exact destinations remain unknown (cf. 3.1.31.).

Finally, Baltic traffic inscriptions express mobility with regard to contacts between people. Three inscriptions contain labels that address certain groups of people. DR 217 thus operates with references to Sunder-Swedes, South Danes and the more general term of Northmen. The commemorated man must have died during some sort of a conflict between the collectives of Sunder-Swedes and South Danes, which probably unfolded in southern Denmark (no place references are provided). It is further possible that the identification of Lübeck-people as killers in G 138 points in the direction of Lübeck being the scene for that unfortunate incident, but the fragmentary state of the inscription does not allow one to establish this with certainty. On the other hand, it is also possible that the event occurred on the island of Gotland. The obtaining (v. *fá*) of a pair of scales from a man from Semigallia or Samland is recorded in U FV1912;8 – unfortunately the location where the purchase took place remains hidden in the fragmentary *…landi*. Three personal names recorded in the memorial formulas – Eistfari in Sö 45; Mistivir in DR 55; ǫzurr Saxi in DR 68 – also, in their own manner, reveal potential evidence of Baltic traffic.

In a structurally orientated overview it is important to point out which further additions belong with the inscriptions. As underlined in the analysis, Öl 1 is characterised by its figurative poetical language. Besides relating about the deceased, the composed stanza focuses on the surrounding memorial context, pointing out the mound (*haugr*) with the help of a demonstrative pronoun. It is possible that **rauʀ uart** in Sö 47 fulfils similar functions by bringing into focus a stone cairn (as part of the memorial). Returning to Öl 1, in the prose part of the inscription it is clarified that the stone was placed on the island (of Öland), *at ey*. DR 295 turns one's attention both to the runic monument and to its location on a hill (*á bjargi*).

The identification of a locality in somewhat more administrative terms can be found from U 130, with reference to *þessi býr* (this estate), further described as allodial land and family inheritance; also, a local place name is included. With regard to ownership statements, parallel evidence becomes visible from U 209, which testifies to the purchase of an estate, and from U 414†, where the end part may have indicated that the deceased owned a certain estate. Identification through local place name also occurs in U 527. On a broader level, Sö FV1948;289 contains two additional place references meant to identify the local settlement unit and the native region.

Other more unusual supplements appear in Sö 174 (provides the reason for death by claiming that the followers of the deceased fled); Sö 338 (emphasises the significance of the deceased and his brother); Sm 52 (records the transportation of the body of the deceased back to the native region); U 214 (depicts shipwreck); U 614 (records the taking of payment); U 687 (specifies that the place of death was Óláfr's church; U 699 and U 896 (both relate of death in christening robes); Gs 13 (refers to a military expedition); G 207 (mentions the fur trade); DR 68 (records ownership of a ship); DR 216 (among other elements uses the designation 'vikings', cf. 3.1.11.); DR 217 (uses specific (battle) terminology, cf. 3.1.10.); and DR 279 and DR 295 (both express courage in battle).

Two inscriptions that focus in an interesting manner on the runic message are Öl 28, which provides an appeal to read what has been cut rightly, and U 346†, which uses the formulation *rúnar réttar* in the carver formula. All in all, fourteen inscriptions contain carver signatures,[519] whereas prayers are recorded in ten cases.[520] An exceptional case is DR 220, which instead of a prayer comprises a protective Þórr formula. Protective purposes are also carried out by the figurative addition in U FV1912;8.

The overview above has registered the inter-textual context around the analysed Baltic references, while at the same time demonstrating that despite seemingly laconic statements, the applied vocabulary shows some interesting variation and creates various verbal images. This is not accidental; correspondence to certain real-life situations may be expected to shine through with the application of particular terms, verbal phrases and other types of expressions – to their broader significance we shall return below.

3.2.2. Design and layout

Whereas the structural perspective reduces runic inscriptions to more or less linear texts and focuses on their content mostly through stereotypical formulas, the study of the various visual and material features (as already shown in the preceding analysis) most certainly individualises the meaning of each monument. Naturally, when approaching the material from a collective perspective, certain conventions still become visible; but it has to be remembered that along the way the inscriptions show many particular individual features.

In this subsection we concentrate first and foremost on the significance of design and layout – but to start with, we shall briefly point out some material and physical aspects of the monuments. Among the studied cases, 31 rune stones are made of granite.[521] This material is typical for the Danish rune stones but it is also common in mainland Sweden. Another nine rune stones from Södermanland and Uppland are made of gneiss or gneiss granite. Eight rune stones belong to the sandstone group, which contains examples from Södermanland, Uppland, Gästrikland, Skåne, Bornholm and Norway; in five cases the material is grey stone (all from Södermanland).

The four Gotlandic examples included in the analysis group are made of limestone, as is Öl 28; presumably the same applies to the lost rune stone U 414†, which was transported to Uppland from Gotland.[522] Limestone is indeed the usual material for both Gotland and Öland; an interesting exception in this connection is the Karlevi stone (Öl 1), made of Småland porphyry.

The sizes of monuments differ – and not all of them are preserved completely – but we do find rather majestic examples where the rune stone measures more than two (or even three) metres above the ground. Specific is the monumental function of inscriptions found on natural rocks/cliffs or bigger boulders. The impressive size – which testifies to much planning and

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[519] Öl 28(?), Ög 81, Sö 40, Sö 333, Vg 181, U 346†, U 356, U 527(?), U 687, U 699, U 896, U FV1912;8, Gs 13, DR 259.

[520] Sö 16, Sö 174, U 130, U 346†, U 356, U 518, U 539, Gs 13, G 138(?), DR 380.

[521] For a list, see Appendix III.

[522] This assumption is based on the preserved data concerning the inscription and the shape of the stone.

costly arrangements – is often combined with other imposing visual features (such as decorative ornamentation) or interesting verbal content.[523]

Moving over to patterns of design and layout, we can observe certain differences between Danish (and Norwegian) and central Swedish rune stones – in accordance with the dynamics of the general rune stone tradition. Whereas the Danish rune stones (except for those from Skåne and Bornholm) favour vertically arranged text bands or simple arches, the Swedish material demonstrates the abundance of various forms of arch/frame bands and runic serpents. Particular is the style of the Gotlandic rune stones, where the serpent band is arranged around the edges of a mushroom-shaped stone, with additional horizontal text bands on the middle.

In order to provide an overview of common tendencies, we set up three main categories of design.[524] Among the studied rune stones we find eleven cases in which the inscription is composed of vertical text bands.[525] As can be expected, most of these come from Danish areas; the inscription on the Karlevi stone (Öl 1) is peculiar in that it originates from Öland but demonstrates a "Danish-looking" design – and as we know, the inscription indeed mentions Denmark. To the above-mentioned cases we may add two more Danish examples – DR 66 and DR 68 have the design that mixes simple curves and vertically running text bands. Exceptional is the Norwegian Alstad stone, where the older inscription N 61 has the form of two vertical bands, while the younger N 62 is fitted into three horizontal bands.[526]

The second main category demonstrates the usage of arch bands/frame bands – we find different versions of arches and frames and sometimes they get combined with additional bands/lines of runes. The number of inscriptions in this group is ten.[527] Interesting examples are Vg 40, which besides a frame band has a short diagonal band running across its inner surface; U 518, where one continuous text band builds two arches and an additional short band is placed above the bottom curve; and U 699, where the inscription gets divided between the main frame band and additional inner serpents.

The biggest category comprises different variants of runic serpents; the serpents occur as arches, frames, circles or 8-shaped loops, and the design often includes additional bands/lines of runes. Sometimes we find that the inscription is composed of two serpents. Altogether, the serpent design seems to be applied on 39 rune stones; some of the stones are too fragmentary, which does not allow for the establishing of the number with certainty.[528] As expected, this pattern of design appears on a large number of central Swedish rune stones as well as on the Gotlandic material. Two of the listed rune stones are Danish; one comes from Skåne, the other one from Bornholm, and both demonstrate Swedish influences.

With regard to the reading direction, we notice in the case of runic serpents and arch or frame-like text bands one usual convention, according to which the inscription is introduced at the bottom left corner (often coinciding with the serpent's head). From that point the inscription runs upwards, rounds the top and comes down along the right side of the

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[523] See e.g. Ög 81, Sö 39, Sö 40, Sö 171, Sö 174, Sö 338, Sö FV1948;289, Sm 52, Vg 40, Vg 181, U 130, U 180, U 209, U 375, U 518, U 539, U 687, Gs 13, DR 216, DR 380, N 62.

[524] For a description of individual solutions within these categories, see the analysis in 3.1.

[525] Öl 1, DR 37, DR 55, DR 63, DR 117, DR 216, DR 217, DR 220, DR 259, DR 295, N 239.

[526] Horizontal text lines also appear on the copper box, U FV1912;8.

[527] Sö 47, Sö 166, Sö 171, Sm 52, Vg 40, U 214, U 518, U 539, U 699, DR 279.

[528] Öl 28, Ög 81 (two serpents, one on each side), Sö 16, Sö 39, Sö 40, Sö 45, Sö 130, Sö 148(?), Sö 174, Sö 198, Sö FV1948;289 (two serpents), Sö 333, Sö 338, Vg 181, U 130, U 180 (two serpents), U 209, U 346†, U 356 (two serpents), U 375 (two serpents), U 414†, U 527, U 533, U 582†, U 611, U 614, U 636, U 687, U 698†(?), U 896(?), U 1048, Vs 1, Gs 13 (two serpents), G 135, G 138(?), G 207, G 220(?), DR 344, DR 380(?).

monument; with serpents, the conclusion is often found within the tail. Naturally, if the text band/serpent builds several arches or lines on the stone, the inscription may change the direction, running first from left to right and then back to the left (and possibly again to the right).[529]

Similar movement from the left side to the right is to a certain degree visible with vertical text bands – the inscription can thus start in the leftmost line and then proceed to the right, following the order of text bands (cf. DR 55, DR 63, DR 259). The reading direction may alternate between bottom-top and top-bottom, or remain bottom-top throughout the whole inscription.[530]

These main principles become visible from the accidental selection of Baltic traffic inscriptions; but naturally we find inscriptions that do not follow the established logic. On the rune stone from the Vallentuna church (U 214), the inscription within the main arch band runs from right to left. The arches on all three sides of U 539 also proceed from right to left. The inscription is also introduced on the right-hand side in the case of N 239, DR 117, DR 216, DR 220 and DR 279.[531] Öl 1, DR 217 and DR 295 have more peculiar designs, where the parallel vertical bands proceed both to the left and to the right, and therefore create the image of visual continuity. Interesting examples are U 375 and Gs 13 – composed of two serpents – that start at the top right corner.[532] Different patterns are visible from U 130, U 209 and U 687 due to their circular composition.

For the next step, we discuss the meaning of layout, i.e. the placement of different content elements on the stone. At one extreme, one may refuse to give any significance to this factor; at another, one can read far-reaching theories into seemingly regular patterns. The perspective followed here acknowledges the important visual dimension in experiencing runic inscriptions. As emphasised above, runic inscriptions are by no means linear texts mediating a particular content simply through the inscribed words. The way these words are arranged on the actual stone medium has its consequences for how a potential reader can approach and understand the given message from the point of view of "visual literacy" to use the term applied by Andrén (2000: 10).[533]

That is to say, the layout of the inscription on the stone can give visual prominence to certain content elements – and it does so even if this was not the deeper intention of the rune stone raisers. This is an important fact to realise; it is not possible to fully corroborate the idea that the chosen pattern of layout reveals careful planning – we may also deal with accidental results caused, for example, by following a conventional design of serpent arches. However, once the text was brought onto the stone, the layout would nevertheless start influencing the event of experiencing a runic inscription in a very direct and expressive manner. Here lies the reason for why the potential visual meaning of inscriptions should not be ignored – it can in fact modify our understanding about the focal points of the inscription.

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[529] The following inscriptions apply the (introductory) left-right principle: Öl 28, Ög 81 (on the front side), Sö 39, Sö 40, Sö 45(?), Sö 47, Sö 130, Sö 148, Sö 166, Sö 171, Sö 174, Sö 198, Sö 333, Sö 338, Sö FV1948;289, Sm 52, Vg 40, Vg 181, U 180, U 346†, U 356, U 518, U 533, U 582†(?), U 611, U 614, U 636, U 698†(?), U 699 (runs horizontally to the right along the bottom, then heads from right to left), U 896, U 1048, Vs 1, G 135, G 207, DR 344, DR 380. Also, the introductory arches of DR 66 and DR 68 proceed from left to right, as do the horizontal text lines of N 62 and U FV1912;8.

[530] Øeby Nielsen (2003: 167) remarks with regard to the general Danish material that "the text almost always starts at the bottom".

[531] A possible case is also DR 37.

[532] Gs 13 demonstrates sudden shifts of direction throughout the inscription; see 3.1.19.

[533] See also the discussion in 2.1.2. and 2.2.3.2.

It would be further instructive to evaluate theories underlining the linear textual fact, according to which the commissioners are almost always named first in the inscriptions (cf. also subsection 2.1.2.), against the actual placement of elements on the stone. Naturally we have only studied a limited amount of inscriptions, but even on this level some characteristic traits as well as individualities are observable. Thus, in a number of inscriptions it is rather the name of the deceased and/or the statement of family relationship that gains top position (or appears in the upper part of the stone).[534]

The monument as a whole may in the meantime also highlight other (parallel) content elements through interesting oppositions between its top-bottom and left-right parts. Design components such as crosses, inner serpents, additional text bands, etc., can easily catch the eye and move the focus to various pieces of information. The following is an exemplification of some potential individual foci. With certain inscriptions, layout provides extra attention to the commissioners or related persons. U 130 and DR 55 focus on the commissioners both through their layout and the text; U 1048 provides the name of the commissioner in the top position; U 375 places the names of commissioners in the top position alongside the place reference. Sö 166 has the names of two commissioners on the left, the phrase **suniʀ : kiarþu** at the top, and the reference to their father on the right. G 135 concentrates on the additional family members of the deceased and the commissioners. In DR 68 the name Árni (a person who owned a ship together with the deceased) figures in a distinguished position at the bottom of the stone, thanks to its two extended runes.

Some inscriptions make the place indication more visible: Sö 40 (top position), Sö 174 (along the top right corner), Sm 52 (top right corner), U 533 (inside the raised tail), U 636 (inside the raised tail), and Vs 1 (the name appears outside the main text band). In the case of U 539, the whole cross-marked side B functions as an address to the deceased and his death place. U 614 tells of taking payment in Gotland on the middle of the stone, whereas the monument marker has the top position. U 356 mentions the death place and the carver formula within the two serpent tails that curve around the top of the stone.

In U 687 the carver formula has a distinguished position inside the right loop being pointed out by the serpent's leg. U 699 places the expression **i huita·uaþum** and the carver formula into the inner serpents. Öl 28 provides an appeal to read the inscription in the centre of the stone. In DR 259 the prayer formula reaches out to the top right edge, whereas U 518 brings out the end of the prayer formula in a separate text band.

Vg 40 singles out the word **kunukaʀ** in a separate diagonal text band. DR 66 focuses on the identical formulation by letting this appear on the side that is decorated with a mask. DR 216 has the reference to vikings appearing in the last text band, at the very top of the stone.

Certain inscriptions are naturally visually more ambiguous; an understanding of their messages would have to depend on the direction from which they could be approached – e.g. U 130 and U 209. The complex patterns of layout appearing on Gs 13 may also be experienced in alternative ways. With some Danish rune stones one has to realise that the division between the front/back sides remains arbitrary, because both sides could indeed be

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[534] See e.g. Öl 28, Ög 81 (the name of the deceased on the front side), Sö 39, Sö 47, Sö 130, Sö 148, Sö 171, Sö 174, Sö 198, Sö FV1948;289 (one of the deceased), Sö 333, Sö 338 (the name of the deceased + the name of his brother), Sm 52, Vg 40, Vg 181, U 214 (statement of relationship), U 356 (statement of relationship), U 533, U 539, U 611, U 636, U 687 (one of the deceased), U 699, U 896, Vs 1, G 207, DR 66, DR 117 (the name of the deceased is divided into two parts), DR 279 (prepositional phrase on top, the name of the deceased on upper left side), DR 344, DR 380. Possible cases are also U 346†, U 582†.

perceived more or less simultaneously. Another good example of such visual ambiguity is the Karlevi stone, Öl 1.

Having described how some content elements appear visually more prominent, the next logical step is to re-examine the textual-structural approach to the inscriptions. In certain cases we can thus distinguish between main information and possible supplements as based on the actual layout (and thus regardless of the frames of MMF). The analysis in 3.1. included several such considerations; here we shall mention only a few interesting examples. The Högby stone (Ög 81) divides information between its front and back side – on the front we find the formulation in prose, on the back the poetic addition. The rune stone from the Husby-Sjuhundra church (U 539) demonstrates division of content on three sides: on side A we find the names of the commissioners and the verbal phrase, while the two other sides are reserved for information about the deceased and other supplements. The Sædinge stone (DR 217) operates with different content on each of its four sides.

In Sö 47 the arch band carries the memorial formula and a short addition about the deceased, which could be considered the basic content. The same may apply to formulations inside the outer serpent arch in Sö 130 (**fiuriʀ : kirþu : at : faþur : kuþan : tyrþ : trikela**), the outer frame band in Sö 166 (**kriutkarþr : ainriþi : suniʀ : kiarþu : at : faþur : snialan**), the outer serpent arch in Sö FV1948;289 (contains the MMF), the outer frame band in DR 279 ([**+ sa]ksi : sati : st[in] : þasi : huftiʀ : o[s]biurn : ṣin : filạgo · ¶ ṭu-a[s : sun :]**); the outer arch in DR 380 (**kobu:suain : raisti : stain : þena : aḟtir : bausa : sun : sin : tri̧… …n**), and the arch band in Sm 52 (**rhulf : auk : oskihl : riþu : stin : þo[nsi] : etiʀ : lifstin : fuþur : sin : es : uarþ : tuþr**).

In Sö 338 the memorial formula is fitted into the serpent's body, whereas additions appear inside separate text bands. In Vg 181 the carver formula is placed into a separate band on the left; the serpent's body contains the memorial formula and a short addition about the deceased. In Vs 1 most of the memorial formula is placed into the runic serpent, but the part about the dead son appears within an additional text band. U 180 demonstrates division between two serpents – the left one contains only the names of the four commissioners; the same goes for U 375, where we hear about the commissioners on the right, and about their dead son on the left. U 356 and Gs 13 also share the elements between different parts of their two serpents.

U 209 applies certain division between two loops – most of the memorial formula is fitted into the loop on the right. U 687 divides content between three loops, and there the memorial formula appears in the right and top loops. The two arches of U 518 place the memorial formula on the left and additions on the right. In N 239 the right text band contains the name of the commissioner and the verbal phrase; information about the deceased appears on the left.

The overview above has demonstrated how the messages of runic inscriptions can be affected (and modified) by the interplay between the inscribed text and its visual presentation on the stone – even if the visible patterns of layout are themselves determined by the linear content of the inscription (which usually starts with the name of the commissioner and concludes with information about the deceased). In this connection it is necessary to acknowledge and appreciate the individualistic features of different monuments – their size, shape, as well as the applied schemes of design. Also, it has to be remembered that judgments passed on design and layout should not be based upon modern evaluations of elegancy and aesthetics, which would automatically label certain features as being the results

of poor planning. The inscriptions reveal patterns of design that in many ways actually make the most out of the monument – and they should be recognised for their own value.

3.2.3. Regional and chronological perspectives

It has been emphasised throughout the thesis that the number of runic inscriptions labelled as Baltic traffic inscriptions is limited. This also means that no particular significance can be given to their distribution in time and space. The following outline serves therefore only as a qualitative contextual frame for a broader understanding of the material.

The analysis group comprises two Norwegian, 14 Danish and 48 Swedish runic inscriptions. Below we have set up a scheme for their provenience according to the traditional provinces/landscapes (cf. table 1 and figure 34).

Among the 14 inscriptions from Södermanland, five belong to the rune stone rich district of Rönö, and two come from Selebo, Jönåker, Hölebo; Daga, Åker and Öknebo have one each. The 22 Upplandic inscriptions are divided between the following districts: Vallentuna and Seminghundra have three; Lyhundra, Bro, Håbo, Trögd have two; Danderyd, Ärlinghundra, Sjuhundra, Frötuna & Lenna, Bro & Vätö, Ulleråker, Norunda and Sigtuna have one each.

Table 1. Regional division of Baltic traffic inscriptions

District	Number
Öland	2
Östergötland	1
Södermanland	14
Småland	1
Västergötland	2
Uppland	22
Västmanland	1
Gästrikland	1
Gotland	4
Skåne	4
Nørrejylland	6
Lolland	2
Falster	1
Bornholm	1
Oppland	1
Rogaland	1
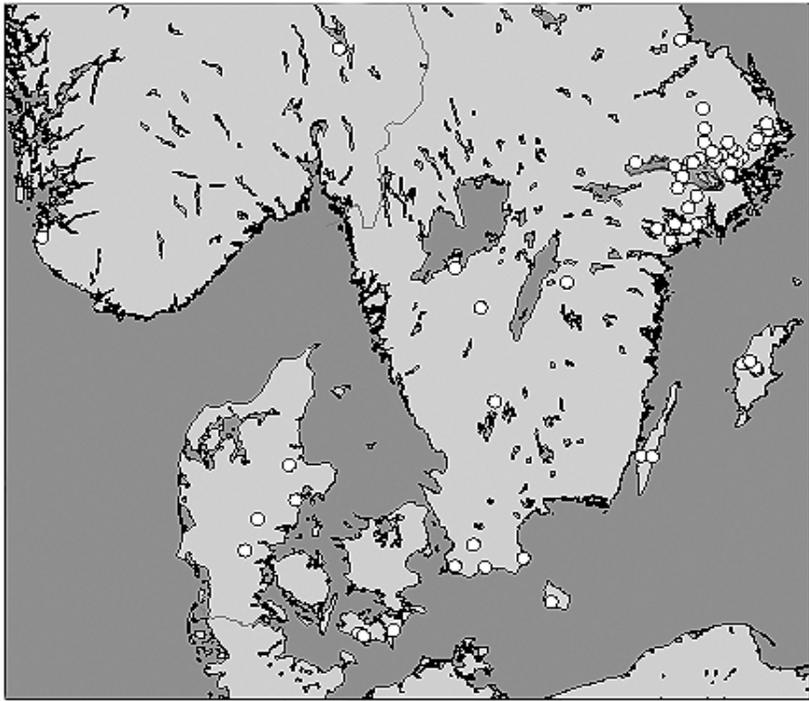
Figure 34. Locations of Baltic traffic inscriptions. Base map created according to the system of *OMC: Create A Map*, http://www.aquarius.geomar.de/omc/make_map.html. Modified by Kristel Zilmer and Mihkel Zilmer.

When taking into consideration the historical 'folklands' or other known regional units, the Upplandic material could also be divided according to the following principle: Attundaland has twelve inscriptions, Tiundaland five inscriptions, Fjädrundaland two inscriptions and Roden (Roslagen) three inscriptions. It is further interesting to note that the Forsheda stone from Småland (Sm 52) itself identifies the regional unit *Finnheiðr*, i.e. Finnveden, as does Sö FV1948;289 from Rönö through its references to *Rauningi* and *Svíþjóð*. Smaller settlement units are indicated by U 130 and U 527.[535]

The only feature that could be considered significant in this connection is the concentration of inscriptions around Lake Mälaren (see figure 35) – altogether 37 inscriptions are located within that region. This fact is in accordance with the general distribution of rune stones (cf. 2.1.1.).

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[535] Identification of local settlement units may also be provided by other contemporary monuments (cf. also 3.3.4.)
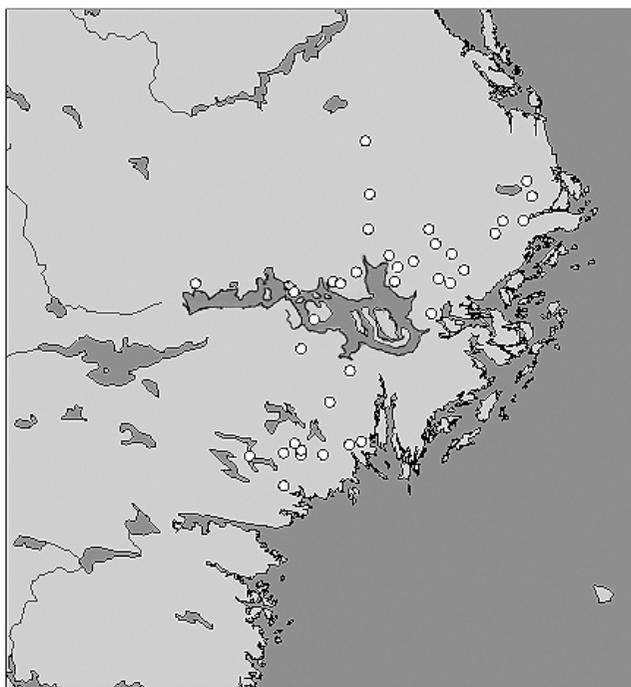
Figure 35. Distribution of Baltic traffic inscriptions in the Mälaren region. Base map created according to the system of *OMC: Create A Map*, http://www.aquarius.geomar.de/omc/make_map.html. Modified by Kristel Zilmer and Mihkel Zilmer.

During the analysis certain attention was paid to the localities of rune stones – in as far as these can be established. With the majority of studied cases the exact original site unfortunately remains unknown; the circumstances demonstrate the re-use of rune stones in church buildings, bridge/road constructions or in other kinds of connections. In these cases we have, in the description of locality, taken into consideration the features of the general district, according to the principle that rune stones were normally not transported over long distances. Naturally, such an approach faces its clear limitations, since the communicative setting around the monument cannot be studied in detail.

With inscriptions on rock/boulder – such as Sö 39, Sö 171, U 130, U 209, and U 687 – we can in the meantime be certain about the location and the position of the inscription. Seven rune stones (Öl 1, Sö 198, Vg 181, U 356, U 518, U 611, DR 259) can be considered to stand on their original spot, although they may have been re-raised/repositioned. It is further likely that Sö 45, Sö 47, Sö 148 and Sö 166 belong to the initial site; with Gs 13 the original location is known, although the rune stone has been moved.[536]

As for the chronological perspective, the group as a whole shows a temporal range from the second half (or the end) of the 10th century to the first half of the 12th century. Among earlier examples we have the Danish inscriptions (DR 37, DR 55, DR 63, DR 66, DR 68, DR

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[536] We shall return to the communicative significance of the sites in the next subsection.

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117, DR 216, DR 217, DR 220), as well as Öl 1, Ög 81, and N 239.[537] A major part of the inscriptions (first and foremost the central Swedish material) falls into the 11th century. The fact that certain inscriptions can be linked to particular carvers provides one possibility for downsizing the presumed period of production (cf. e.g. U 356, U 375, U 687, U 699, Gs 13).[538] A date towards the end of the 11th century or the beginning of the 12th century has been given for U 214, U 1048, G 207, G 220, and a possible case is also G 138. A few inscriptions have a wide date range, such as DR 380 (ca. 1050-1150) and G 135 (ca. 1000-1150).

It was already argued in chapter II that the nature of the material and the available methods do not allow for establishing precise decades for most of the inscriptions. The material is in general accordance with the main chronological lines in the rune stone tradition. The relatively wide date margins mean that no further conclusions can be drawn concerning possible developments within the group, apart from what is already self-evident – e.g. typological developments concerning the appearance and the formulations of older Danish and younger Swedish rune stones, and the obvious fact that particular forms of place names have been recorded at certain points in time, even if the dates cannot be fixed.

3.2.4. Narrative, communicative and cultural-historical significance

The previous study has shown that the Baltic traffic inscriptions follow for the main part the scheme of standard commemoration alongside simple additional comments. There is a causal relationship between the references to different Baltic destinations and the rest of the inscription – their function is to either provide an explicit clarification about death occurring away from home or to point out significant activities that the deceased (or the commissioner) engaged in. According to the traditional structural approach such expressions can hence be placed under the category labelled supplementary information (e.g. about the deceased). That is to say, the narrativistic features of the retrospective commemorative genre that runic inscriptions represent guide the inclusion of corresponding references – they arise from the fact that the text is dedicated to someone's memory. The most evident communicative task of any rune stone inscription is then to mediate a message of commemoration, or alternatively, of self-glorification to an expected viewer in a visual and physical manner.

However, concerning the selection of parallel motives that are included in certain inscriptions as well as the patterns of layout, which can give visual prominence to varying content elements, it is evident that the event of experiencing a runic inscription is a more complex affair. Different types of supplements may extend the basic content, and the way they appear on the actual medium modifies the meaning and functions of the materialised unity of the inscription and the monument. This becomes apparent from the recorded variation both with regard to applied vocabulary as well as the schemes of design.

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[537] The inscriptions from Århus (DR 63, DR 66, DR 68) as well as DR 220 are typologically placed into the post-Jelling group, which would suggest a date towards the end of the 10th century or the beginning of the 11th century; but the validity of such groupings has been questioned (cf. also 2.1.3.), and a possible earlier date has been proposed for the post-Jelling inscriptions.

[538] Cf. also Appendix III and the analysis in 3.1.

A. The role of variation

When analysing the varying wordings, a question naturally arises as to whose formulations we meet in the inscriptions. Although we are not conducting a study on rune forms and the principles of runic spelling, a few observations made on this level may prove helpful. Even rune forms "are not structurally uniform, but exhibit considerable variation in physical shape" – to quote Thompson (1975: 33). Thompson emphasises that standardised rune forms are simply our "convenient fictions" (ibid.). When studying real rune forms as they appear on the stone, one can trace the characteristic features of an individual carver's style; in this way we could even describe runic inscriptions as someone's handwriting in stone.

It is further important to bear in mind that runic spelling is a representation of spoken language; according to Lagman (1989; 1990) and Williams (1990) it reflects the actual pronunciation of the carvers, and does not follow a common norm for "traditional spelling" (cf. e.g. Williams 1990: 10-14). Lagman (1989: 28) states the obvious principle applied by all rune carvers: "Write as it sounds!". From this point of view, clear errors from the carvers' side are generally rare (cf. Lagman 1989: 32-35). In Lagman's opinion it is necessary to leave behind modern demands for one consequent spelling when examining runic inscriptions; he also suggests that some variation may have been deliberate (Lagman 1990: 19).

On the level of formulations Thompson (1975: 76) assumes that what we find are the carver's words, and the sponsor's role was limited to providing certain basic facts. At the same time, Thompson suggests that sometimes carvers may have borrowed expressions from each other. With regard to influences from the commissioners, Williams underlines that this was obviously quite decisive when it came to personal names and local place names; he proposes that the sponsors and their way of spelling proper names could influence the carver's spelling (Williams 1990: 173).

In the meantime, the mere fact that we are dealing with a certain commemorative convention, and that professional carvers existed within this convention, does not automatically prove that the latter always exercised control over the verbal content. It is just as plausible that the decisions were reached beforehand by commissioners following certain (fashionable and acceptable) criteria themselves. After all, the rune stone commissioners belonged to the same tradition and carried the same cultural mentality as the carvers. Also, when taking into consideration theories according to which rune stone raisers belonged to a new, wealthy and influential upper class, we would be undermining their personal authority by not accepting the possibility that they may have had an important say with regard to the contents of inscriptions meant to commemorate their family members. Especially in cases when we find rather unique additions, it seems more likely that these represent the direct wishes/orders of the commissioners and not some sudden innovative contribution from the carver.[539] On the other hand, there might have also existed repertoires of expressions that some professional, well-established carvers were using when they were asked to produce inscriptions (cf. e.g. Thompson 1975: 89); neither should we forget the potentially decisive role of regional variation, such as regionally accepted customs.

Similar questions should be asked with regard to the design/layout of the monument. A-S. Gräslund (1991: 114) concludes with regard to ornamentation that there must have been ways in which the carvers could express personal choices, but the ornamentation as a whole must have been guided by the style ideals of the period.

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[539] As for recorded ways of spelling, this would nevertheless lie within the carver's responsibility, i.e. here we find the products of his sound analysis (with the possible exception of proper names, as pointed out by Williams, cf. above).

With regard to design and layout in the sense as defined in this current study, it seems more logical to conclude that it was the carver who reached individual solutions within the frames of existing style conventions. The carver had at his disposal a number of basic strategies and key elements of design, and he also possessed individual artistic abilities – combining all of this, he could create different patterns of design, even resulting in alternative divisions of content elements.

It is thus reasonable that the variation we experience with regard to verbal content and visual imagery represents a combination of individual choices as reached by the commissioners/carvers, and regional patterns; the variation is also determined by existing cultural expectations (or norms) as to what was to be included in the runic text, and how this content was to be visualised on the stone medium.

However, variation is not only motivated by the above-mentioned individual, regional or cultural factors. More significantly, variation in vocabulary could have been consciously adapted to meet real-life conditions, e.g. the monument marker and the accompanying verbal phrase could be determined by the actual type of stone monument (cf. 3.2.1.). With regard to our primary study object of Baltic traffic, we notice that corresponding references may reflect real death circumstances and even illuminate various forms of contacts, as already indicated during the discussion of applied verbs. The mention of drowning, falling (in battles), getting killed, being betrayed or catching an illness illuminate the dangerous/risky aspects of traffic in general; several among these phrases demonstrate that mutual contacts could easily mean mutual conflicts. As for these 27 inscriptions (cf. 3.2.1.) that relate of death in more neutral terms, it is not automatically guaranteed that they imply non-violent death. With verbs such as *endast* og *verða dauðr*, we most certainly find a conventional narrative technique for referring to the fact of death. On the other hand, some of the applied formulations indeed carry connotations of enterprises that did not necessarily end with death, but rather led to the acquiring of certain possessions (possibly through taxation) and/or to making oneself a name as a man of determination and status (cf. e.g. Sö 166, U 209, U 614). More peaceful forms of contacts may be indicated through trade-related activities (cf. Sö 198, U FV1912;8).

Besides the verbal phrases, it is also the variety of additional expressions that can contribute to the idea of death during a strife or a bigger military expedition, as opposed to a non-violent death (cf. e.g. Gs 13, DR 216, DR 217, Vg 40, DR 66). Alternatively, the supplements provide a broader background for the traffic references and the inscription as a whole; they may, for example, signal its Christian content (as for example done by U 699 and U 896 in connection with recording death in christening robes, or by such inscriptions that comprise additional prayers for the soul of the deceased). Or they may underline that the primary interest of the inscription and its death record lies in the demonstration of the status of the family (see e.g. Sö FV1948;289, U 130).

In the study of various runic formulations it should not be overlooked that the chosen expressions may even serve complementary (formal) purposes; for example, to ensure patterns of alliteration (cf. e.g. the analysis of Ög 81 in 3.1.15.). The latter is a frequent formal feature of runic mini-narratives and adds further expressiveness to the inscriptions.[540] In general we can distinguish between full-fledged poetical formulations, expressions that demonstrate certain attempted forms of stylization, and more accidental occurrences of alliteration.[541] Among the Baltic traffic inscriptions, we find more or less complete versified

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[540] Formulations of alliterative nature may also carry in themselves reflections of traditional oral poetry.
[541] For a more distinctive division of Swedish runic inscriptions that contain poetical features, see Hübler (1996, particularly pp. 157-164).

additions in fifteen inscriptions, which despite the limited number of the inscriptions is quite a considerable feature.[542] Elements of stylization may occur in another 17 cases,[543] whereas in a series of cases alliteration remains accidental – it may for example occur within the main memorial formula, where it is based upon conventional verbal phrases and monument markers or proper names, etc.[544] The line between the latter two groups is, in the meantime, not always that clear; even if alliteration is indeed completely accidental, it may nevertheless add some additional colour to the formulation.

Exploring the interplay between the referentiality of runic statements and the form in which they are expressed contributes to a broader understanding of runic practices of documentation (recording) and depiction (representation) – to these questions we shall return in the final discussion in chapter V.

B. Informative content

Earlier we stated that as a narrative, runic inscriptions follow the basic genre of commemoration, and as an expression of communication they mediate this commemorative content to a contemporary audience. At the same time we focused on the dimensions of variation and individual foci, which demonstrate that besides explicit commemoration other significant pieces of information could also be passed on, with additional purposes in mind. From a collective perspective, references to Baltic traffic qualify as one particular category of information. We proceed by clarifying what types of knowledge are communicated/received through the inscriptions and the monuments themselves, and evaluate their cultural-historical significance.

Runic inscriptions address real people and real situations, even if these remain unknown to us. The group of Baltic traffic inscriptions additionally refers to concrete places/regions and groups of people, applying a number of suitable labels. Such proper names – in certain cases even singled out through layout (cf. 3.2.2.) – are anchored in particular realities; they are the factual touchstones of runic mini-narratives, included when felt necessary (on the presumption that the destination was known and could be identified).

The recorded names provide witness to localities that range in scale and belong to different regional strata. Before offering an overview of their nature, we shall discuss some other particular features that become visible from the material. It is, for example, interesting to observe that 11 inscriptions operate with several parallel place designations. Ög 81 thus mentions three Baltic destinations and Byzantium; the latter is also given as the death place alongside one Baltic reference in U 518. Sö 166 refers to enterprises undertaken in England and in Saxony, whereas U 539 testifies that the man who died in Jylland intended to travel further to England. Sö 198 outlines the sailing route to Semigallians along which one had to round *Dómisnes*. Sö 333 records death in the sound of Kalmarsund when heading back from Skåne. N 62 explains the location of the death place by three separate references. Sö FV1948;289 makes use of two local-scale place identifications, besides clarifying that the men

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[542] Öl 1, Öl 28, Ög 81, Sö 130, Sö 166, Sö 171, Sö 174, Sö 198, Sö 338, Sö FV1948;289, U 214, U FV1912;8, G 207, DR 279, DR 295.

[543] Sö 47(?), Sö 148, Sm 52, U 130, U 209, U 518, U 527, U 611, U 614, U 698†(?), U 699, U 896, Vs 1, Gs 13, DR 68, DR 216(?), DR 380. Although not carrying alliteration, the additional formulations in Vg 40 and DR 66 also make the impression of stylized battle vocabulary, as does DR 217.

[544] Cf. Öl 1 (MMF), Sö 39 (MMF), Vg 40 (MMF), U 130 (MMF), U 346† (MMF + carver formula), U 356 (MMF), U 896 (MMF + carver formula), U FV1912;8 (MMF), Vs 1 (MMF), DR 55, DR 220 (MMF), DR 279 (MMF), DR 295 (MMF), cf. also Ög 81 (carver formula), Sö 333 (carver formula), Vg 181 (carver formula), U 687 (death statement + carver formula), DR 344 (addition about the deceased), N 62 (addition about the deceased).

died in Denmark; Sm 52 also applies three labels – the first two indicate the place of death, the third identifies the native region. In U 130 and U 527 local place names appear alongside one Baltic reference.

In U 687 we meet a different kind of specification with regard to the death place; namely, it is explained that the man died in *Holmgarðr* in Óláfr's church – this is the most detailed evidence one can get from the runic inscriptions, and we may assume that such information must be based upon precise (eyewitness) accounts.

In 8 inscriptions we find the indication of direction: Ög 81 states both on the front and on the back side of the stone that one man died in the east *í Grikkjum*; in Sö 148, Sö 338, U 209, U 636 and Vs 1 the eastern direction is combined with the destination *Garðar*.[545] Sö 166 clarifies that the man was in the west in England, whereas in G 207 it is first said that the deceased traded fur in the south, and then the information about his death place is provided. Another 6 inscriptions focus on incidents taking place away from home (i.e. "out") by the application of the adverb *úti*: Sö 333 (alongside the destination *Kalmarnir sund*), U 518 (with the phrase *í Grikkjum*), U 611 (in the retinue of Freygeirr), U 614 (in the expression *sjúkr úti*, alongside a reference to Gotland) and possibly also U 698† (*Lífland*). Sö 338 uses the adverb in the formulation *í liði úti*.

In 3.1.1. we explained that the inscriptions can commemorate more than one person. In connection with the recorded destinations (death places), we may see how different places get associated with different people, as was done in Ög 81. However, in certain cases these connections remain more ambiguous; in such a manner Sö 333 signals that only one of the two commemorated persons was killed in *Kalmarnir sund,* and one may wonder whether this was the son or the brother of the commissioner. In U 518 it is made clear that whereas one man died in the sound of *Sila*, the other two met their end in Byzantium. However, it remains somewhat uncertain as to which one of the three men is meant by the pronoun *hann* at the beginning of the expression (possibly it points back to the last-mentioned person). U 687 is explicit about the fact that Spjallboði, one of the four deceased, died in *Holmgarðr* in Óláfr's church, whereas no further details are given about the death places of the rest – hypothetically we may even suggest that they followed Spjallboði to *Holmgarðr*, but it is equally plausible that they found their end somewhere else.

As we have seen from the examples above, a few inscriptions thus provide parallel references where they identify a certain district and also point out a more particular locality within that region. In the following step we shall take a look at the main categories of place references that the inscriptions make use of with regard to Baltic destinations. According to table 2 (cf. below), the recorded cases are divided into four groups: a) blanket designations for territories that carry connotations of wider (unified) regional structures and may even coincide with state-like formations; b) references to other regional units, such as 'lands' and provinces; c) designations for marine districts; d) and various minor localities, including early centres and indications of waterways.

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[545] That is to say, out of the 8 possible *Garðar* inscriptions, five use that place name together with the direction.

Table 2. Place names (Baltic destinations) in Baltic traffic inscriptions

Blanket designations for territories (early states)	Lands/provinces/regional units	Marine districts	Minor localities
Danmǫrk	Jótland	Eyrarsund	Heiðabýr
Garðar	Skáney	Kalmarnir sund	Ulfshala
Svíþjóð	Finnheiðr	Holms haf	Garðstangir
Saxland	Þjústr		Útlengia
	Gotland		Sila nur
	Finnland		Uppsalir
	Tafeistaland		Svía
	Virland		Oddr
	Eistland		Holmr
	Lífland		Fœri
			Bógi
			Véborg
			Holmgarðr
			Dómisnes
			Vindau
			Vitaholmr
			Ustaholmr

In the third category (i.e. marine districts) we find three cases, all referring to different parts of the Baltic Sea. Two important sounds for maritime traffic are identified. The exact meaning of *Holms haf* may in the meantime be debated – it either connects with the waters around Bornholm or with the Gulf of Finland (c.f. 3.1.15.). Into the first group we have placed *Danmǫrk*, *Garðar*, *Svíþjóð* and *Saxland*, although the inscriptions and the applied labels themselves do not reveal the actual range of corresponding territories. A problem that we commented upon in the case of *Danmǫrk* is, for example, whether the intended area is indeed always Denmark proper (cf. e.g. Öl 1, 3.1.1.) With a designation such as *Svíþjóð*, the boundaries of the corresponding area in the context of two Viking Age Danish inscriptions (DR 216, probably from the end of the 10th century, and DR 344 from around 1050-1100) remains uncertain. However, when considering the fact that DR 344 (which commemorates a man who took service in *Svíþjóð*) originates from the landscape of Skåne in southern Sweden, and that besides these two cases the name *Svíþjóð* also occurs as a local reference in Sö FV1948;289, it seems justified to regard *Svíþjóð* as a designation for the region around Mälaren, i.e. the heartland of Svealand, which in consolidation with Götaland came to form the backbone of the medieval Swedish state.[546]

The second group contains ten references to various regional units, such as the early Scandinavian landscapes/provinces (*Jótland*, *Skáney*, *Gotland*) and folklands (*Finnheiðr*, *Þjústr*). Also included are references to the regional structures of present-day Finland, Estonia and Latvia. Regarding the reference to *Finnland*, it was explained in subsection 3.1.18. that the designation originally applied to the southwestern part of present-day Finland, becoming gradually extended over adjacent areas. A particular case is the reference to *Eistland*

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[546] For a discussion of references to *Garðar* and *Saxland*, see subsections 3.1.21. and 3.1.29.

occurring in Vg 181, since the inscription actually records the plural form **i · estlatum**. Alternatively, the label may be taken as a collective designation for a territory that comprised various units. However, lacking other parallel occurrences of the designation in plural, we may also consider *Eistland* as an indication of a more limited region in the area of Estonia.

The final, fourth category is made up of seventeen references to various minor sites – some connect with smaller islands and headlands, others mark early focal and/or strategic points. In a number of cases the recorded names have allowed for more or less precise localisation (even if certain question marks may be raised), whereas there also exist uncertainties, such as with *Véborg*, which could indicate the Karelian Viborg or Viborg in Jylland.

Figure 36. Places and people mentioned in Baltic traffic inscriptions. Base map created according to the system of *OMC: Create A Map,* http://www.aquarius.geomar.de/omc/make_map.html. Modified by Kristel Zilmer and Mihkel Zilmer.

Besides the recorded place names, the inscriptions also identify a few collectives of people by applying ethnic/inhabitant names such as *Sundrsvía*, *Seimgalir* and *Leybikar*. The first case, *Sundrsvía*, is not attached to a particular territory; rather, it figures as a label distinguishing a particular group of people from another one (i.e. separating Sunder-Swedes from the so-called South Danes, cf. DR 217, 3.1.10.). *Leybikar*, on the other hand, appears as a clear designation for the people inhabiting the early settlement at Lübeck. *Seimgalir* in Sö 198 is an example of a common naming practice, according to which a territory could be identified by referring to its people (cf. also *Svíþjóð*). As explained by S. Brink:

> A territory may be (linguistically) identified by an object or a feature, normally well known to those who live nearby. To people living far away, it may be identified by a name for the actual territory, i.e. the settlement district, or it may be identified by the name of its people, residing with the territory. (S. Brink 1997: 391)

The described evidence demonstrates different identification labels that have been applied when focusing both on closer and more distant destinations (for an overview consult map 3). Some of these identifications refer to rather limited spots and may even allow for precise localisations, while others have to remain only vaguely outlined territories.

In this connection the natural question arises – to which extent can the recorded evidence reflect common knowledge among the people of the 10th-11th century Scandinavia? The obvious conclusion is that the names mentioned in the inscriptions remain only a fragmentary selection and represent an accidental choice. That is to say, the fact that certain names are recorded and others are not, as well as the frequency of recorded names, is in itself not a historically significant condition – apart from documenting possible labels people have used. For example, we find three references to the well known trade centre Hedeby; the lack of runic mention of other important trading spots does not mean that those would have been less familiar. At the same time it is interesting to note that the evidence placed into the fourth category (i.e. minor localities) offers glimpses into what could be called the more detailed ways of identification.[547]

The inscriptions gain broader cultural-historical significance when regarding the textual evidence in combination with what we know of the communicative setting and the sites of runic monuments. Baltic traffic is in the context of runic inscriptions expressed to a large extent as traffic that was employing major water routes, although inland traffic must have also occurred along inter-regional land roads.[548] The locations of analysed rune stones have demonstrated frequent connections to lakes and rivers that could function as traffic routes (cf. analysis in 3.1.). Also, the stones may lie in coastal regions possessing easy access to the sea; this is a significant fact especially when considering that the water level in the Mälaren region used to be higher, and several coastal lakes could have been smaller bays, making the drainage more intensive. Such a contextual setting – supported by textual references to destinations that could be reached along important sailing trails – expresses the dependence of communication on waterborne traffic. At the same time, the observed pattern is in accordance with the scheme of early settlements that were concentrated around central waterways and land roads.

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[547] This fact gains further significance from the realisation that, besides traffic references, the runic material as a whole also records a number of other minor sites and settlement units, then as part of local identification, cf. subsection 3.3.

[548] S. Brink (2000) discusses the connections of Viking Age land road systems (which could be of both local and inter-regional importance) with rune stones and rune stone bridges (cf. also 3.3.4.).

The communicative setting around a given monument may add further nuances to its overall meaning. Certain rune stones could also be approached along the water, or they marked a place where a river could be crossed, in which case the event of experiencing a commemorative monument that recorded a particular destination in itself became part of its traffic-related imagery. Rune stones have been characterised as signals marking space (cf. e.g. S. Brink 1997: 403). We find it reasonable to extend this concept and regard rune stones also as potential signals of communication and mobility. They are materialised messages where the different levels of expression and the surrounding landscape setting are mutually productive of meaning.

The realisation that the original provenience of a rune stone establishes the place (or in the least marks the district) where we then find the mention of a destination that the person commemorated by the stone (or the commissioner) had visited is also important. We have thus got a point A (the site of the rune stone) and a point B (the recorded destination), and an expression of mobility between A and B within the frames of a commemorative inscription. In most cases the inscriptions do not relate explicitly of a return journey to point A (i.e. point B remains the so-called final destination where death occurred), but some formulations let us conclude that the person in question actually made it back from his travel. This demonstrates that traffic references were not merely included with the task of reporting the fact that someone died away from home (and hence could not be buried in the native ground).

We can outline some general routes for mutual traffic between points A and B; some inscriptions, though, are more informative and indicate strategic sites along the route themselves (cf. Sö 198, Sö 333). More importantly, we can use the information about the locations of rune stones and their recorded destinations to search for traces of small networks of Baltic traffic.

One such obvious example is related to the island of Gotland in the middle of the Baltic Sea. On the one hand, Gotland is the recorded destination in one or two inscriptions from Södermanland (Sö 174 and Sö 47?), three from Uppland (U 414† and U 614 from Attundaland, and U 527 from Roden), and one or two Danish inscriptions (DR 259 and DR 220?). Thus, the preserved runic evidence testifies to traffic leading to Gotland from the Mälaren region, Skåne and possibly from the island of Falster. To that we can add the likely reference to *Bógi* in northeastern Gotland as recorded by U 375 (also from Attundaland). On the other hand, the Gotlandic material itself shows connections to the southern Danish *Ulfshala* (G 207), the *Leybikar* people from northern Germany (G 138), *Vindau* on the opposite coast of the sea (G 135) and *Holmgarðr* further to the east (G 220). The latter destination, as we know, is additionally recorded in one inscription from the district of Rönö (Sö 171) and one from Tiundaland (U 687); another eight examples address the general territory of *Garðar*.[549]

Or, to take another example, the landscape of Skåne is mentioned in an inscription from Småland (Sm 52) and one from Södermanland (Sö 333) – the former also specifies a location in Skåne called *Garðstangir*, the latter points out the sound of Kalmarsund as part of the route leading from Skåne to the Mälaren region. The actual runic material from Skåne mentions traffic to Gotland (cf. above) as well as to *Svíþjóð* (DR 344), and more precisely to Uppsala (DR 279 and DR 295).

We may further add that Finnveden – figuring as the locality for the above-mentioned Sm 52 – appears recorded in U 130 from Roden. *Svíþjóð* is also mentioned in a runic inscription

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[549] For an overview of Gotland's various connections, see I. Jansson (1983).

from Lolland (DR 216); another runic inscription from that same island speaks of the group of Sunder-Swedes (DR 217). Localities in the vicinity of Uppsala are most likely indicated by *Svía* in DR 37 from northern Jylland and *Fœri* in Ög 81.

The latter inscription has been mentioned several times due to its parallel references. In this context it is worth remembering that Ög 81 also provides references to *Oddr* in northern Sjælland, and most likely to the island of Bornholm. Waters around that same island may be indicated by *Holms haf* in U 214. The analysis group also contains one inscription from Bornholm (DR 380), which itself mentions the nearby small island off the coast of Blekinge, Utlängan.

One Attundaland inscription (U 539) contains an identification of the Danish landscape of Jylland. From that general district we know of, besides the previously mentioned DR 37, a reference to Hedeby (DR 63) and to the sound of Øresund (DR 117).[550] The former is also recorded in Sö 16 and U 1048 (from Tiundaland).

On a smaller scale it may be pointed out that the sound of *Sila* (Kolsund by Selaön) is recorded in another Attundaland inscription (U 518). From the island itself comes the inscription Sö 198, which demonstrates contacts with the region of Semigallia. Further inscriptions from the Mälaren region record traffic leading into the territories of modern Baltic countries.

Viewed as a whole the Baltic traffic inscriptions, for one, demonstrate mobility both on a regional level (within and between different Scandinavian districts) and an inter-regional level (i.e. on the level of different countries). Secondly, they present information about names/identification labels that belonged with the geographical repertoire of Scandinavian communities, and as such they express shared knowledge.

The mere fact that a certain place/region existed in the experience of people and was fixed in written form as a destination for traffic counts as interesting qualitative evidence. What the inscriptions provide is the localisation of particular events and actions; they are valuable both as individual records and as a group that contains certain types of references.

The meaning of individuality has been emphasised throughout the analysis; the inscriptions are first and foremost witnesses to a whole range of individual encounters, which would otherwise be unknown. From these extant individual features has arisen the eagerness to extend the historicity of runic inscriptions and connect the recorded references to known battles and incidents; but as shown during the analysis, in most cases the value of reached conclusions has to be questioned. To our mind, the cultural-historical significance of runic inscriptions is above all connected with their different levels of expression, and the general way they combine the practices of recording and representing into one unified mode of discourse, where the elements of narrative technique and historical actuality are equally important.

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[550] To that we add DR 55 and DR 68, which demonstrate interesting personal names/bynames, and DR 66, which speaks of the battle where kings fought. Broadening the perspective, it should be mentioned that the label 'Denmark' itself is used in five traffic inscriptions.

3.3. Contemporary runic evidence

The evidence analysed in sections 3.1. and 3.2. forms a sharply delimited corpus, which in itself is not automatically representative of the runic tradition as a whole. Throughout the analysis parallels were drawn to other runic inscriptions as expressions of similar or complementary tendencies, in order to gain a broader basis for the chosen qualitative approach. During the final part of chapter III, we provide a more systematic survey of some groups of runic inscriptions that may widen the background understanding of our primary inscriptions. The focus will lie on their evidence in relation to personal names, traffic along the eastern route and other recorded travelling destinations, local place identifications and expressions of communication. To limit the discussion, we thus concentrate on complementary runic inscriptions from the point of view of textual evidence.[551]

3.3.1. Personal names

One type of runic inscriptions that may function as supplements to the Baltic traffic inscriptions are those that contain mono- and dithematic personal names, gained from a stock of designations with potentially ethnic connotations. According to Peterson (1988: 121), mono- and dithematic personal names "are formed of one or two themes, respectively". In the primary formation of personal names, she distinguishes between the strategies of composition and derivation; the former results in dithematic names, the latter in monothematic names (op. cit. 121-122). As for secondary name formation, this "is always monothematic, even if the appellative or adjective that forms the base is itself a compound" (op. cit. 122).[552]

At the same time, Peterson points at complications over deciding whether a given name represents primary or secondary formation, because "a morphological analysis of names requires knowledge of the name-giving motive in every single instance" (op. cit. 127). Naturally, these concrete motives are hard, if not impossible to trace. Alternatively, Peterson suggests that a better term, instead of dithematic names (which must always indicate primary formation), would in certain contexts be "two-linked" names – in this manner one can also address the question as to what names functioned as a unit, and what did not (ibid.).

In the following discussion we use a simplified approach, and focus separately on specific elements that may occur in personal names of both unified and two-linked types. However, certain conclusions have to be reached with regard to the assumed motivation behind these names; this will also explain why corresponding inscriptions are not regarded as belonging in the primary analysis group.

Personal names that interest us in this connection contain elements that can semantically refer to groups of people from the Baltic region; these may occur either as the first element (e.g. Finnviðr), as the second element (e.g. Ásgautr), or stand alone as a monothematic personal name (e.g. Júti). The runic material as a whole reveals elements that associate with

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[551] To make it easier to follow the survey in this part of the thesis, where Baltic traffic inscriptions are seen in the light of many other runic inscriptions, we have chosen to highlight the primary analysis inscriptions in bold (cf. also the list in Appendix III).

[552] According to Peterson, secondary name formation is the result of taking over "a linguistic sign unchanged to denote a certain individual", whereas primary name formation foresees creation (ibid.).

people from Götaland (*gautr*), Denmark (*danr, danskr, *halfdanr*), Jylland (*júti, júzki*), Gotland (*goti*), Finland (*finnr*), Tavastland (*tafeistr*), Estonia (*eistr, *eistmaðr*) and Saxony (*saxi*).[553]

The element *gaut-/-gautr* (< pl. *Gautar*) is especially productive, and occurs in several two-linked names, such as: Ágautr, Alfgautr, Algautr, Almgautr, Ásgautr (and possibly in the feminine name Ásgauta(?) in Ög 94), Erngautr, Eygautr/Auðgautr, Holmgautr, Hróðgautr, Þorgautr, Végautr. It is the first element in Gautráðr, Gautulfr and Gautviðr, and possibly in Gautarr(?) and Gautdjarfr(?); it occurs alone as Gautr and is further recorded in the form Gauti (the latter may be a shortened version of names that contained the *gaut-/-gautr* component).[554]

Popular names are Danr (< *danr*) and Halfdan (< **halfdanr*); besides that, a "Danish" element also occurs in the name Danski, derived from the adjective *danskr* (recorded in Ög 221). The name Saxi is also common, built upon the name *Saxar* (or alternatively, upon the noun *sax* that designates a short sword, cf. NRL).

Another common element is *finn-/-finnr*; we find it alone in the form of Finnr, and in two-linked names such as Finnulfr, Finnviðr, Þorfinnr, Véfinnr, Guðfinnr, Kolfinnr.[555] The element *eist-/eistr* (which we mentioned already in connection with Sö 45 in 3.1.24),[556] stands alone in the name Eistr and is included in Eistulfr; from *eistr* may also be derived the name Eisti. Besides that, the name **esmon** in U 771 has been interpreted as Eistmaðr, meaning a man from *Eistland* (Williams 1990: 65-66). Tafeistr occurs as a name on its own, as do Júti and Júzki. The element *goti* is recorded alone as Goti, and as the second component of Ágoti and Eygoti.[557]

We shall first provide a brief overview of the occurrences of such personal names in runic inscriptions that originate from a territory other than that associated with corresponding groups of people (since our study concentrates on the expressions of traffic (i.e. contacts) between different districts). In the following step the potential significance of the names will be discussed.

Table 3 shows that most common are names that contain the element *gaut-/-gautr*, as well as the name Halfdan; they are followed by Danr, Saxi and various names that use the components *eist-/eistr*, *finn-/-finnr* and *goti*.[558] We may notice certain concentrations of Danr and Halfdan in Uppland, whereas names like Þorgautr and Ásgautr are well attested among the Danish inscriptions. Naturally, the dominance of Upplandic examples is at the same time a result of the general distribution of runic inscriptions in Scandinavia. Most of the listed inscriptions are recorded on rune stones, but even inscriptions on other items (e.g. coins) have been included.

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[553] The total number of inscriptions where we find personal names based upon corresponding elements is ca. 230 (including a few uncertain cases where alternative interpretations are possible). To that we can add a few later medieval inscriptions.

[554] For a full list of all of these and the following names in the runic inscriptions from the Viking Age, see NRL, which also provides etymological explanations. Additional sources for the etymology and meaning of personal names are OGNS and Janzén (1947).

[555] Kolfinnr in DR NOR1988;5 is alternatively interpreted as Gull-Finnr; in that case, *finnr* stands together with the byname prefix *gull*. Also, Véfinnr in Ög N288 may actually represent a composition with the byname *vé*.

[556] Sö 45 contains the name Eistfari, composed of -*fari* and *eistr* or *Eist(land)*.

[557] Alternatively, in these two compositions *goti* may be a by-form of *gautr*, cf. NRL.

[558] The component *gaut-/-gautr* is also common in names from Östergötland and Västergötland, which have been excluded from the survey, as explained above. The general frequency of other names is not affected.

Table 3. Occurrences of personal names with potentially ethnic elements in Scandinavian runic inscriptions. The examples originate from districts other than the territory that may be indicated with the name. The names are listed alphabetically.

Name	Occurrences
Ágautr	U 755, Sm 111(?)
Ágoti	Ög 190, Ög 232, Sö 219, Sö ATA6163/61, Vg 74(?), U 719, U 768, U 1018(?)
Alfgautr	U 573, DR SCHL5(?)
Algautr	U 509
Almgautr	Sö 147†, Sö 155
Ásgautr	Öl 9†, Öl 23†, Öl 47, Sö 97, Sö 122, Sö 123, Sö 296, Sö 323†, Sö 336, Sm 1(?), Sm 126†, U 52, U 84, U 124, U 181, U 504, U 610, U 800, DR 90†, DR 135, DR 202, **DR 220**, DR 291, DR 296, DR 392
Danr	Ög 194†, Sö FV1948;295, U 114, U 131, U 177, U 233, U 240, U 241, U 511, U 749, U 814, U 895, U THS10;58, G 136†
Danski	Ög 221
Eisti	U 44
Eistmaðr	U 771
Eistr	Sö 90(?), U 70†, U 181, U 458, U 459, U 461, U 670, U 766, U 780, U 855, U 1050, U 1060, U 1158
Eistulfr	U 791, U 968
Erngautr	U 503
Eygautr (Auðgautr)	Vs 31, **DR 66**
Eygoti	DR 126†
Finnr	Sö 139, Sm 132, U FV1976;99, N 29
-finnr (first element not preserved)	U 512
Finnulfr	DR 81, DR 155
Finnviðr	Ög 134, Sö 54, Sö 190, Sö 319(?), U 115, **U 130**, U 200, U 210, U 337, U 433, U 441†, U 475
Gautdjarfr(?)	U 201
Gauti	Sm 34†(?), U 516†
Gautr	Sö 14(?), Sm 5, Sm 98, U 617, U 627†, N 223, N 259
Gautráðr	Sm 35
Gautviðr	DR 348
Goti	Sö 304, Sm 122, Vg 48, U 700, U 701†, U 723, U 724, U 1076†, U 1096
-goti (first element not preserved)	U 182
Guðfinnr	Sö FV1948;298
Halfdan	Ög 81, Ög 86†(?), Ög 180, Ög 224, Ög SKL4;175(?), Sö 131, Sö 188, Sö 250, Sö 270, Sö 272, Sö FV1948;295, Sm 146†, Sm 154, Vg 7, Vg 39, Vg 176, Vg 199(?), U 34, U 61, U 113†, U 153, U 159, U 229, U 231, U 240, U 300†, U 399, U 462, U 474, U 511, U 650, U 651(?), U 673†, U 737(?), U 749, U 808, U 818, U 913, U 925, U 1022(?), U 1080, U 1157, U 1162, U FV1973;146, Vs 29, D FV1993;174†(?)
Holmgautr	U 210, Vs 24
Hróðgautr	G 135
Júti	Ög 64, U 4, DR 213
Júzki	DR M25
Kolfinnr (Gull-finnr)	DR NOR1988;5
Saxi	Öl 37, Ög 133, Ög 211, Sö 224, Sö 250, Sm 100, U 45, U 459, U 771, U 894, DR 279, DR NOR1998;7, N A53
Tafeistr	U 467, U 722
Þorgautr	Sö 111, Sö 268, Sö 336, Sm 73, Sm 89, U 13, U 308, U 646, U 746, U 958, M 11(?), DR 337(?), DR 354, DR EM85;239(?), DR EM85;306, DR EM85;312(?), DR M96-DR M103, DR NOR1996;7
Véfinnr	Ög N288
Végautr	Sö 25, Sö 285, Sm 111, U 706, DR 96, DR 97

It is worth pointing out with regard to *finn-/-finnr* and *eist-/eistr* that they are more or less equally well represented in the material; together the names Finnr, -finnr, Finnulfr, Finnviðr, Guðfinnr, Kolfinnr and Véfinnr occur in 22 cases. Eisti, Eistr, Eistmaðr and Eistulfr account for 17 cases (plus the additional Eistfari in Sö 45).[559]

Interesting are the cases where parallel names are recorded within one inscription; they can tell us something about the naming practice in a particular family/kin. In this manner, Sö 336 commemorates two men, Þorgautr and Ásgautr; they are the brothers of the commissioner, who himself is called Þorgísl; Sm 111 mentions one Végautr as the commissioner and probably identifies Ágautr as a carver. Potentially more significant may be four inscriptions where the names Danr and Halfdan are used. Sö FV1948;295 refers to a certain Halfdan as the commissioner who is commemorating his father Ragnvaldr and brother Danr. U 240 names Danr as one of the commissioners and the stone is raised in memory of his father Halfdan; the latter's father is known as Ulfríkr as testified by U 241, where the same Danr and his brothers again figure as commissioners. U 511 lists both Danr and Halfdan among the commissioners; in this inscription, four brothers commemorate their father Fasti. U 749 is arranged by two men; the first one is called Halfdan, the second one Signjótr, and they commemorate their fathers Auðgeirr and Danr, as well as Halfdan's two brothers Almgeirr and Vébjǫrn.

More accidental must be the combinations of Vg 74 (Ágoti commemorates his father Ásgautr); U 181 (Ásgautr is one of the commissioners, the stone is raised after their father Eistr); U 210 (Finnviðr is one of the commissioners, the dead father is called Holmgautr); U 459 (Saxi commemorates his father Eistr); U 771 (made in memory of Eistmaðr, followed by the name Saxi that may designate another commissioner or deceased); and DR EM85;239 (Þorgautr commemorates his father Halfdan).

It is, however, a completely different matter to make claims about the actual motivation behind the application of personal names. The question has been addressed on several occasions in connection with names like Eisti, Eistr, Eistmaðr and Eistulfr. Certain scholars have understood them as evidence of "the ancient, possibly matrimonial contacts between the inhabitants of Svealand and the Estians" (Melnikova & Petrukhin 1991: 222). On the other hand, it is possible that they were ordinary personal names without any connotations to special ethnic connections (cf. e.g. Tarvel 1994: 62).

This latter observation would then also apply to other similar names – even if they initially had a clearly ethnic origin and characterised people who came from that particular region or had had extended stays there, it is rather more likely that in the context of runic inscriptions the names had already evolved into common personal names. This is supported by the frequency of certain names, such as Halfdan and names with the component *-gautr*.

On the other hand, it was implied above that parallel occurrences of personal names can cast light on naming traditions within one family. However, looking at a case like Halfdan-Danr (i.e. "half-Dane" and "Dane"), it is by far not certain whether the names did indeed reflect that someone in the family was of Danish origin. Rather, the recorded patterns of relationship and other applied names signify that this was not the case. It is possible that at some point in the earlier history of the family there existed apparent connections to Denmark, which could also

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[559] It is a common misconception among certain scholars that the latter are considerably more frequent, as opposed to the *finnr*-names. Furthermore, when adding some medieval examples, we also find the name Finnr in DR 22, N 182, N 272, N 287, N 691-694, N B599; Finnviðr is additionally recorded in Sm 4. As for other names in medieval inscriptions, Tafeistr is recorded in U NOR2000;21 and Saxi in G 199.

have been indicated by specific bynames; gradually these bynames became first names and could from then on simply be inherited within the same family (cf. also Janzén 1947: 56).

It is therefore basically impossible to establish the actual circumstances behind the application of corresponding names in order to determine whether they could demonstrate ethnical motivation or were simply "empty" labels. It would perhaps be helpful if one could distinguish between the function of recorded personal names as ordinary first names or, alternatively, as absolute bynames (i.e. bynames that occurred alone, without the first name, cf. Williams 1993: 98). However, this line is in most cases difficult to draw; to give but one example – a name like Austmaðr in JRS1928;66 could either be a first name or an absolute byname. In the case of the latter, it would naturally be interesting to ask why this man from Jämtland was identified by the label 'a man from the east'. Also, the runic material in general contains only a limited amount of examples where a person is identified both by his first name and attributive or prefixed byname.[560]

Our final comments with regard to personal names that may signal connections (or traffic) between different regions concern names such as Kylfingr (Sö 318, U 320†, U 419 and U 445), Væringr (Ög 68, Ög 111) and different two-linked names, where we find the component far-/-fari (e.g. Fari, Farmaðr, Farþegn, Atfari, Náttfari, Sæfari, Víðfari) or -liði (Sumarliði, Vetrliði).[561] The etymology of Kylfingr is uncertain; according to one theory, the name is derived from ON kylfingar designating Scandinavians who took service in Garðar (cf. e.g. SöR: 294-296). Væringr is associated with væringjar who serviced in Byzantium. The problems with these two names are the same as with the ones already discussed – it is hard to prove whether they functioned as meaningful (absolute) bynames or were ordinary (inherited) first names. An interesting fact in this connection is that Ög 68 and Ög 111 are both voyage inscriptions, but seem to relate of western connections (Ög 68 uses the label 'west', Ög 111 indicates that the man travelled with Knútr). Names like Atfari, Náttfari, Sæfari, Víðfari (alongside Eistfari, Grikkfari, Englandsfari, Romfarari), and possibly also Sumarliði and Vetrliði, carry clearer connotations to travelling engagements, as does the prefixed byname in Ferð-Kári.[562]

3.3.2. Eastern direction

In six Baltic traffic inscriptions (cf. 3.2.4), the adverb austr is used together with the designation of place, such as austr í Gǫrðum or even austr í Grikkjum. The same geographical term occurs in a number of other inscriptions; alternatively, runic inscriptions may use the adverb austarla or the expression í austrvegi (i.e. on the eastern route).   Significantly enough, in several cases the exact destination remains unspecified, i.e. we learn only that the commemorated person headed somewhere to the east. Corresponding inscriptions are to be regarded as further supplements to the group of Baltic traffic inscriptions – for one, they witness of mobility, and secondly, general references to eastern travels may very well comprise the Baltic region.

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[560] Some examples are: Öl 37, Ög 103, Sö 258, Sm 136†, U 956, U 978, U 1181, N 58†. See also the discussion following the article of Williams (1993: 105-106).
[561] Cf. also 3.1.24. and NRL.
[562] The -liði names are discussed by Williams (1991, see particularly pp. 170-172).

Indeed, as underlined by Jackson (e.g. 1988; 1991; 2003), in the context of runic inscriptions (as well as skaldic poetry) the meaning of the indicated eastern direction was very broad; it was reflective of "the initial stage of the development of the Old Norse toponymy with the root *aust-*, corresponding to the first period of Scandinavian penetration into Eastern Europe" (Jackson 2003: 33). The designation could thus connect with a vast area, reaching all the way from the Baltic Sea to Byzantium (op. cit. 30).

That is to say, with inscriptions that leave the precise destination open, we have at least a theoretical possibility that the recorded events unfolded somewhere in the Baltic area. On the other hand, the broad nature of the indication is confirmed by expressions where *austr* appears together with *í Grikkjum* or other more remote destinations (cf. next subsection). For that reason, the inscriptions that refer to eastern traffic are merely of supplementary value to the primary analysis group.

Ten inscriptions record the term *austr* without providing any information that might suggest a destination or precise occasion.[563] Among those, Vg 197 states that one of the commemorated brothers died in the west, another in the east; similar is the information of U 504, where a certain Ásgautr is said to have been in the west and in the east, i.e. from the formulation it remains uncertain where exactly he died. Sö 308 informs that the sons of the commissioners were in the east (*váru austr?*), thus applying an indirect manner of relating about their death circumstances. Vg 184 is in a way more precise than the others, since it is said that the men died in the east in the retinue (*í liði*).

A further three inscriptions where *austr* is given as the direction do not mention the destination either, but they contain additional references which could have signalled the intended site in an indirect manner (at least for the contemporaries of the rune stone raisers). Ög 8, the Kälvesten inscription that goes back to the late 9th century, contains the formulation **sa fial austr** alongside a reference to a named campaign leader, **miʀ aiuisli**. That is to say, anybody among the local people who had heard of this Eivísl would probably also have known what the intended region for his eastern campaign was.[564] Also, Ög 145 seems to relate of a man perishing in someone's troop – **eʀ : furs : … hilfnai : aṷstr**.[565] Again, the actual destination may have been implied in this manner. Sö 33 is a more specific case, due to the phrase **han : antaþis : austr : at þikum**. Alternative explanations for *at þingum* understand it as a reference to death during some battle(s), or death at the assembly; in the latter case, it is even possible that the eastern direction is given in connection with local-scale traffic.[566] Parallels could perhaps be drawn to Sö 196, where we meet the phrase **aỵulf-ḳiarþi · · þat ausþiki**; possibly indicating the making of the assembly place in the east.[567] It may be concluded that no matter whether the Gulleifr commemorated in Sö 33 met his end in

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[563] Ög 30, Sö 92, Sö 308(?), Vg 184, Vg 197, U 154, U 283†, U 504, U 898, DR 108. Sö 92 is fragmentary but what is missing from the phrase **ha… … austr** is most likely only the verb (indicating death), and not the destination.

[564] From a broader perspective, this consideration would also apply to the previously mentioned inscriptions; in the eyes of contemporaries, the general reference may have easily been enough to know where the men were heading.

[565] The name of the leader of this *helfningi*(?) is not preserved, but it is sometimes suggested that Ög 145 may be an Ingvarr inscription. Due to the lack of evidence this has to remain a hypothetical assumption.

[566] The layout of the inscription demonstrates that **at þikum** has a dominant position along the upper right corner of the stone, and there is some empty space left between the runes ᚦᛁᚴ and ᚢᛘ.

[567] Sö 196 ends with the words **ifnti · kina · uistr**, which may mark that another assembly place was arranged in the west. Another example of *austr* used with local anchoring occurs in the medieval inscription N 103, which determines the site of the border mark ("from here east into *Langaforsinn*").

a battle situation or while attending a (local) assembly, the application of the word *þing* points out a certain spot for that unfortunate event.

Similar to Ög 8 and Ög 145 are a number of Ingvarr inscriptions that apply the label *austr* without specifying the destination, but at the same time providing the name of the known campaign leader, i.e. Ingvarr; from this it follows that even modern rune stone readers can get an idea about the intended route (although discussions about the exact localities continue). Sö 320 commemorates a man who was in the east with Ingvarr (**sɑʀ uɑʀ : austr · miþ ikuari**), thus demonstrating that death may be implied by a relatively neutral formulation. Similar milder or more illustrative expressions occur in U 778 (steered to the east in Ingvarr's retinue) and Vs 19 (travelled to the east with Ingvarr). U 644, U 654, U 661, and U FV1992;157, on the other hand, are explicit about the fact of death occurring in the east with Ingvarr (U 644 in fact uses the verb *falla* and U 654 *vera drepinn*). Two other Ingvarr inscriptions could be added to that list – Sö 131 and Sö 281 state that the journey went to the east, and then add the (final) destination of *Serkland*.[568]

Austrvegr is recorded without clearly specifying the destination in three inscriptions – Sö 34, Sö 126, and Vg 135†. Sö 126 is an interesting example: *austrvegr* occurs there in a poetically formulated addition about the undertaken battle, (in RS) *hann draug orrustu i austrvegi, aðan folksgrimR falla orði*.

In one inscription, Vs FV1988;36, the adverb *austarla* is applied when relating that the deceased travelled to the east. Additional examples could, in connection with this, be a few Ingvarr inscriptions. Sö 173 states that the deceased had been long in the west (*vestarla*) and died in the east (*austarla*) with Ingvarr.[569] Sö 335 commemorates a certain Ósníkinn who travelled to the east (*austarla*) with Ingvarr, and is additionally identified as Holmsteinn's seaman (*skipari*). Sö 179 is of the same type as the above-mentioned Sö 131; it is thus explained in a versified addition (RS): *þæiR foru drængila fiarri at gulli ok austarla ærni gafu, dou sunnarla a Særklandi*.[570] Finally, we should include a few fragmentary (and lost) inscriptions. Sö 216† contained a formulation with *austr*, which could have been followed by a named destination. U 366† is also only fragmentarily known, and it is therefore possible that a place name was added to the phrase *í austrvegi* in the same style as, for example, done in Sö FV1954;22 where **han : iʀ : entaþr : i : austruiki : ut : o : la-...** seems to indicate death on the eastern route in *Langbarðaland* (i.e. in southern Italy).[571]

Unknown remains the place indication applied alongside the eastern direction in Sö 121† **austr · i : tuna : ɑsu̧** (cf. 3.1.26.). The formulation **þair · antaþus x aust... ...u̧m** in U 153 does not reveal whether *í Gǫrðum* or *Grikkjum* has been meant.[572] The fragment of Gs 17, where we find the end of the adverb *...arla*, leaves it open as to whether the reference is

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[568] With the fragmentary Sö 281, it is in the meantime uncertain as to whether *austr* or *austarla* is applied (cf. below).

[569] The inscription in fact mentions two men in the memorial formula, identified as the brother and the father of the commissioners. The addition starts with the word *hann*, which leaves it unclear as to whose activities are being listed. It is a theoretical possibility that the first part with western information concerns one man, and the second part another (or both). On the other hand, the memorial formula also applies the designation *kuml þessi*, indicating that several monuments were arranged. In this light, Sö 173 may have been reserved to commemorate the significant deeds of only one of the two men.

[570] Sö 179 commemorates a certain Haraldr, Ingvarr's brother; on the basis of other Ingvarr inscriptions that set his campaign in connection with *Serkland*, it is likely that Sö 179 is also an Ingvarr inscription.

[571] Another occurrence of *Langbarðaland* is recorded from Sö 65, together with the adverb *austarla* (RS): *hann austarla arði barði ok a Langbarðalandi andaðis* (note the scheme of alliteration and inner rhyme).

[572] Cf. subsection 3.1.21. See also the discussion concerning U 439† in 3.1.24.

made to the east or west. That travels could be undertaken in both directions has already been noted in chapters II and III, as well as during the current subsection.

3.3.3. Other destinations and travel-related references

The following is a limited overview of recorded destinations and directions other than the broadly designated eastern travels; further inscriptions that may relate of travelling are also taken into consideration. The purpose is to place the primary analysis group into the context of large-scale traffic.

To conclude the previous outline of eastern direction, we should note such cases when *austr*, *austarla* or *í austrvegi* are applied in connection with destinations that lie outside the reach of the Baltic region. Ög 81, one of the Baltic traffic inscriptions, provides an example of when the eastern direction is related to Byzantium (*austr í Grikkjum*); other cases are Sö FV1954;20 and Sm 46†.[573] It was mentioned that Sö 65 and possibly Sö FV1954;22 contain references that connect the eastern direction (*austarla* and *í austrvegi*, respectively) to *Langbarðaland*. U 605† is a more specific example, since its self-glorification concerned a woman who at least planned to travel to the east, to Jerusalem: **hn · uil · austr · fara · auk · ut · til · iursala**.

Byzantium is known as one of the most popular destinations as recorded by the runic material; it is mentioned altogether in 30 (or 31) inscriptions. The phrase *í Grikkjum* (among the Greeks) occurs besides the Baltic traffic inscriptions Ög 81 and U 518 (in the latter, *út í Grikkjum*), in another 16 cases.[574] Most of these inscriptions determine Byzantium as the explicit place of death, using common phrases with *endast*, *deyja*, (*verða*) *dauðr*; U 201 in the meantime applies the verb *farast* (perish), stating that the man *fórst út í Grikkjum*. Sö 163, Sö 165, and U 792 do not focus on death in connection with travel; in fact, it is quite possible that the people commemorated in these inscriptions returned from their (profitable) enterprises. In this manner, Sö 163 applies the verb *fara* and Sö 165 *vera* alongside the specification that the deceased divided up gold (*gulli skifti*) among the Greeks (cf. also 3.1.29.). U 792 explains in a versified addition that the deceased travelled competently and earned wealth (*féar aflaði*) in Byzantium for his heir. At the least the latter inscription thus underlines the positive (trade-related?) results of the man's stay in Byzantium, directly connected to matters of inheritance.

A further five inscriptions record a different phrase with *Grikkjar*. Sö 170 applies *með Grikki varð*, followed by a statement with the verb *deyja* and a possible place name (*þum* or *þumþa*).[575] U 358 uses *með Grikkjum* and U 431 *meðr Grikkjum út*; both indicating death among the Greeks. U 104 establishes that the two men were *út til Grikkja*, whereas U 922 commemorates a certain captain (*stýrimaðr*) who travelled *til Grikkja út*.

More specific is the Gotlandic whetstone inscription G 216 that gives *Grikkjar* (in nominative) as one of the four place identifications, without any additional information.

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[573] And possibly U 153, cf. above.

[574] Ög 94(?), Sö 82, Sö 85 (*út*), Sö 163, Sö 165, Sö 345 (*út*), Sö FV1954;20, Sm 46†, Vg 178, U 73, U 136 (*upp*), U 140, U 201 (*út*), U 446†, U 792 (*út*), U 1087†.

[575] It remains uncertain as to whether *þum*/*þumþa* in Sö 170 determines a foreign place name connected to the Greeks or a local place name. In the case of the latter, the inscription would underline that the commemorated person was in Byzantium and then died (at home).

According to one interpretation, U 1016 explains that one of the commemorated sons perished abroad – steering his cargo ship, he came to *Grikkhafnir* (i.e. the "Greek harbours"). The other son obviously died at home as indicated by the following adverb *heima*.[576] An uncertain reference to *Grikkjar* may be **i ukrikis** in U 890.

From the listed examples, it is evident that the territory is first and foremost recognised through its inhabitants. The place name *Grikkland* is applied in three inscriptions: U 112, U 374 and U 540. The latter two identify *Grikkland* as the explicit death place, whereas U 112 – arranged by a certain Ragnvaldr in memory of his mother who died in *Eið* – focuses on the activities of the commissioner; he was in *Grikkland* as a commander of a retinue, *liðs forungi* (cf. Sö 338 in 3.1.21.). Additional Byzantium references are the occurrences of the byname Grikkfari in U 270† and U 956.

U 136 uses a second place indication besides *upp í Grikkjum*, referring namely to Jerusalem (*Jórsalir*). The rune stone is arranged in memory of a certain Eysteinn, who is said to have attacked Jerusalem and then died in Byzantium (RS *es sotti IorsaliR ok ændaðis upp i Grikkium*).[577] Jerusalem is also the intended destination in the above-mentioned U 605†, and appears side by side with *Grikkjar* in the above-mentioned G 216.[578]

The same Gotlandic inscription contains two other place indications, i.e. Iceland and *Serkland*.[579] The whole inscription reads as follows: **ormiga : ulfua-r : krikiaʀ : iaursaliʀ : islat : serklat**. The latter place name is recorded in five or six other inscriptions. It was clarified in the previous subsection that in a few inscriptions the name follows the phrase relating of eastern travels, such as in Sö 131 and Sö 281 (both are Ingvarr inscriptions).[580] Sö 179 specifies that *Serkland* itself could be perceived as lying in the south – by saying that the men died *sunnarla á Serklandi*. The same expression is recorded in the fragmentary Sö 279, whereas U 785 identifies *Serkland* as the death place without further geographical information.[581] The meaning of the place name *Serkland* and the range of the corresponding area are disputed; according to two main theories, it either designates the land of the Saracenes or is derived from the Latin word *sericum* ('silk') (Arne 1947; Shepard 1982-5: 235). Some scholars suggest that the concept of the territory known as *Serkland* expanded during the Viking Age; the region around the Caspian Sea is considered as its possible (early) heartland.

Other known eastern/southern destinations are the already mentioned *Langbarðaland*, which besides Sö 65 and Sö FV1954;22 is recorded in U 133 and U 141† – in all four cases as the death place. G 134, with its reference to betrayal by *blákumenn* (i.e. the Wallachians),

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[576] An alternative interpretation understands **hafnir** as the name of the second son, and establishes the preceding statement as *kvam hann Grikkja*, i.e. he came to the Greeks.

[577] U 136 has been commissioned by the wife of Eysteinn and it forms a pair monument together with U 135, where the three sons of Eysteinn claim that they have raised the stones and made a bridge in memory of their father. In this manner the two inscriptions complement each other.

[578] Jerusalem is additionally mentioned in a medieval runic inscription formulated in Latin, N A188 (runic stick). As a known destination to pilgrims, Rome could be compared to Jerusalem; it is not recorded in the Viking Age runic inscriptions but occurs in a 12th century runic stick inscription (N 607) from Bergen in the Latin formulation *Roma, caput mundi*; cf. also the byname Romfarari/Rúmfari in Vg 81, N 529 and N 530.

[579] G 216 is the only Scandinavian runic inscriptions to refer to Iceland.

[580] The lost Ingvarr inscription, U 439†, perhaps also referred to *Serkland* in connection with the designation *austr*.

[581] It is possible that Sö 279 and U 785 are also Ingvarr inscriptions (due to the recorded destination). If this is the case, then all the *Serkland* references except for G 216 would occur in the group of Ingvarr inscriptions, which altogether contains ca. 25 inscriptions: Ög 155, Sö 9, Sö 105, Sö 107, Sö 108, Sö 131, Sö 173, Sö 179, Sö 254, Sö 277(?), Sö 279(?), Sö 281, Sö 287†, Sö 320, Sö 335, U 439†, U 644, U 654, U 661, U 778, U 785(?), U 837, U 1143, U FV1992;157, Vs 19. For comments upon the Ingvarr inscriptions, see chapter 2.1.3., part B.

has been discussed in connection with its pair stone G 135, which records the Baltic destination *Vindau* (cf. 3.1.27.). G 280 refers to the southern route along the Dnieper river – the inscription commemorates a man who must have died south of Rofstein (*suðr fyrir Rofsteini*) while travelling in Eifor. The latter indicates one of the dangerous Dnieper cataracts, whereas the former has been identified as a cliff located close to the cataract.[582] References to the southern direction occur in U 925, where it is simply stated that the commemorated man died in the south (*var dauðr í suðr*), and Hs 10, where we find the fragmentary expression *sem sunnan í* – possibly followed by a place name that may or may not have been a destination for traffic.[583]

Turning our attention over to the west, the Baltic traffic inscription Sö 166 has already demonstrated how the direction gets combined with England. It is commonly held that the majority of western inscriptions that do not specify the destination are in fact referring to England.

We find the term *vestr* used in eight inscriptions without any details about the intended destination/occasion;[584] five among them establish the fact that the deceased died while in the west. At the same time, with Sö 159 we only learn that the deceased had been in the west for a long time; U 504 does not specify whether the man died in the west or in the east, or perhaps back at home. DR 3, on the other hand, makes it clear that even though the deceased had previously engaged in western travels, he died back at Hedeby (cf. 3.1.3.).

A further five inscriptions that apply the direction *vestr* contain additional information about the event.[585] Ög 68 uses the personal name Væringr in genitive, after which the unidentified sequence ḳ**ai-i** follows; the general message seems to be that the commemorated Eyvindr died during some campaign where he followed Væringr. Parallels could be drawn to the rather extraordinary Sö 14, arranged by a woman and her two daughters after the husband/father Sveinn. When informing about his activities, the first person form is used, and it is said that Sveinn was in the west with Gautr or Knútr. If the recorded personal name **kuti** is indeed Knútr, it is possible that the reference is made to the campaigns of the famous Danish king. On the other hand, other men did engage in similar ventures, as proven for example by Sö 260, where the commemoration concerns a man who was in the west with Ulfr. G 370 does not specify the name of the leader, but explains that a certain Helgi travelled to the west with vikings (*með víkingum*). Generally natured is also the statement of U 668, arranged after a man who sat in the west *í þingaliði*, although it is often assumed that the designation *þingalið* stands for the retinue/troop of Knútr ríki.

Vestr also occurs in three inscriptions together with the destination England (Sö 166, and possibly Sm 104, Gs 8), whereas in Ög 83 we meet the phrase ʀ**s · u**ʀ**str · o · u**ɑ**lu**, probably concealing a place name in the west where the commemorated Sveinn died. Additionally, *vestr* is applied in Sö 62 alongside the word *vegr*, thus signifying that the man died on the western route (*í veg varð dauðr vestr*).[586] The compound *vestrvegr* occurs in Vg 61, where it is explained that a certain Geirr died on the western route on a viking raid (*á vestrvegum í víkingu*).

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582 For a discussion of the place names and the rest of the inscription, see Snædal Brink (2002: 56-60).

583 The adverb *sunnarla* also occurs in the Baltic traffic inscription G 207 (cf. 3.1.4.). An additional example is G 203, where *sunnarst* is used to designate that the deceased lived in the southernmost estate (i.e. as a local reference).

584 Ög FV1970;310, Sö 53†, Sö 159, Sö 319, Vg 197, U 504, DR 3, DR 266.

585 Ög 68, Sö 14, Sö 260, U 668, G 370.

586 In Sö 196 *vestr* is probably used in a local context to point out where the assembly place was made.

As for the adverb *vestarla*, it is applied in five inscriptions – Sö 106, Sö 137, Sö 164, Sö 173, Sm 51. The latter is fragmentary and it is therefore possible that *vestarla varð* could have been preceded or followed by a place indication. The other four inscriptions do not point out a particular destination, but make use of rather lengthy formulations with patterns of alliteration. In this manner, Sö 106 contains a poetical addition, emphasising that the commemorated Spjót had engaged in fighting while being in the west (cf. also Sö 166, 3.1.29.). Sö 137 relates that the deceased armed his men in the west (*vestarla væknti(?) karla*).[587] Sö 164 explains that the deceased stood in a valiant manner (*drengila*) in the staff of the ship (*í stafn skipi*) and now lies buried in the west (*liggr vestarla of hulinn*); significantly enough, even the ornamentation depicts a ship, combined with a big cross on the middle of the stone. The above-mentioned Sö 173 is an Ingvarr inscription, where we find both the adverbs *vestarla* and *austarla*.

England is a destination that in its popularity equals Byzantium, being recorded in 30 inscriptions. An additional reference to English sites occurs in DR 337, which commemorates two men who lie in London – the verb *liggja* thus signifies that they are buried there. In 18 inscriptions, England is given as the explicit death place, sometimes alongside further specifications.[588] Among these we could mention Sm 101, with the explanation that the brother of the deceased laid him in a stone coffin in Bath in England (*á Englandi í Bǫðum*), and DR 6, which by the application of the verb *hvílask* mediates that the deceased rests at *Skía* in England.[589] Further elucidative examples are Sö 160, which relates of death in England in the retinue, and N 184, with information about how the commemorated Bjórr died in the retinue of Knútr when the latter attacked England (*sótti England*). It is possible that a campaign led by a certain Spjallboði is identified in the fragmentary Vs 5, which states that the deceased travelled to England and then adds that he died in Spjallboði's… (unfortunately, the end is missing). The lost inscription Sö 83† commemorated a man who drowned in England; this incident must have occurred somewhere off the coast of England. Sm 5 and Vg 187 demonstrate parallel vocabulary in their application of the verbal phrase *á Englandi aldri týnði*, meaning that the men lost their life in England.[590]

Another 9 inscriptions identify England as the travelling destination or the scene of particular enterprises;[591] but it is still possible that England is the actual death place as well. In this manner, Sö 207 applies the general construction with the verb *fara* complemented by the adverb *hæfila*; the same verb also occurs in Vs 18, whereas Gs 8 states that the deceased was abroad in the west in England (*var vestr út á Englandi*). Sö 55, in the meantime, makes it clear that the son of a certain Þorsteinn (the latter has raised the stone both after himself and his son) first travelled to England and then died at home. An emotional comment is also added to the latter statement by *at harmi dauðr*.

The discussed Baltic traffic inscription U 539 (3.1.2.) informs that the deceased intended to travel to England (but died in Jylland). It is quite likely that the man commemorated by Sö 166 did not find his end in England, since it is added that he also attacked Saxony. U 194, U 241 and U 344 relate of taking payment in England. The first is a case of self-glorification, where a

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[587] Sö 137 is one of the rune stones at Aspa (cf. Sö FV1948;289 in 3.1.1.). Its inscription also underlines that the stone stands on the local assembly place.

[588] Ög 104, Ög FV1950;341, Sö 46, Sö 83†, Sö 160, Sm 5, Sm 27, Sm 29, Sm 77, Sm 101, Vg 20, Vg 187, U 616 (*úti*), U 812, Vs 5, Vs 9, DR 6, N 184.

[589] *Skía* is an unidentified place in England.

[590] Sm 5 also describes the deceased as *manna mestr óníðingr*, cf. DR 68 in 3.1.29.

[591] Sö 55, Sö 166, Sö 207, U 194, U 241, U 344, U 539, Vs 18, Gs 8.

certain Áli/Alli claims that he took Knútr's payment (*gjald*). U 241 forms a pair monument together with U 240, and relates of two payments without identifying the responsible leaders. U 344 (which belongs together with U 343) speaks of three payments, linked to Tosti, Þorketill and Knútr.[592]

With the fragmentary Sm 104, it remains unclear whether England has been given as the death place or travelling destination. Additional cases of English connections are the two recorded cases of the byname Englandsfari in U 978 and U 1181. It is a further possibility that such Knútr references as *er var með Knúti* in Ög 111 and *drengs Knúts* in DR 345 connect with the Danish king and may indicate (western) travel engagements; although this cannot be established with certainty.[593]

The runic material even contains some evidence of northern travels. The Västra Strö rune stone from Skåne (DR 334) thus commemorates a man who died in the north on a viking raid (*norðr varð dauðr í víkingu*). What exactly was the intended destination remains unfortunately unknown. From our modern perspective, we find a clearly northern reference in the above-mentioned G 216 that records the name Iceland.[594]

The overview above demonstrates that the overall number and nature of western (English) references is by all means comparable to the various eastern/southern connections, although the latter demonstrate the existence of several different labels. Some scholars have been eager to give weight to that latter observation, emphasising that the eastern references – including those that concern parts of the Baltic region – testify to much more detailed knowledge as compared to the western group (cf. e.g. 2.4.). It should at the same time be remembered that a considerable amount of such nuanced nomenclature connects with what is in this thesis regarded as the unified arena of Baltic communication (cf. e.g. table 2 in 3.2.4.) – being the natural result of the Scandinavian (i.e. Swedish and Danish) point of view. This balances to a certain degree the scale of detailed knowledge as divided between the traditional eastern and western groups. Naturally, the former still strikes with some rather specific identifications, whereas the latter is centred around the western direction and England. Another important observation in this connection is that the material clearly connects England and the western direction only in three cases. Based upon historical knowledge of travels in the Viking Age, England, of course, has to be considered the most obvious western destination; and yet, an automatic linkage may overlook the fact that when we meet only the label 'west', it actually remains uncertain as to where exactly the travellers were heading. At the same time, with all eastern and western references we should also take into account the approximate point of departure as identified by the localities of rune stones in order to clarify their own perspectives.

Further evidence of already identified or perhaps other traffic destinations may lie concealed in a number of inscriptions that relate of travelling in a general manner, contain unidentified place names or are due to their fragmentary state not particularly informative. Also included are cases when the applied formulations remain unclear, i.e. the inscriptions may indicate travelling but alternative options have to be considered.

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[592] For a discussion around the historical identification, see von Friesen (1909: 61-67), as well as Poole (1991: 106-107).

[593] As for western connections other than with England, we have already referred to the Senja inscription N 540, where the place name *Frísland* is recorded, as well as the two Frisian references (i.e. *Frísa gildar*) in U 379 and U 391, cf. 3.1.29.

[594] An additional interesting example could be the medieval Norwegian inscription on the Hennøy stone (N 422), which relates of men who returned from Risaland with gold. According to NiyR (IV: 232-233), Risaland could denote a northern region somewhere between Greenland and Bjarmaland.

With regard to the first category, i.e. general travel references, parallels could be drawn to certain Ingvarr inscriptions, which can also leave both the destination and the direction unmentioned, and speak of travelling (or travel-related activities) in general terms. Other similar examples are Sö 49 (informs of death on a cargo-ship), Sö 217 (commemorates a man who fell in Guðvé's retinue), Sm 48 (in memory of a man who died on a journey), U 258 (relates of a man who was killed by Norwegians on a cargo-ship), U 349† (after a man who perished abroad with all seamen), U 363† (arranged in memory of a man who perished abroad), U 948 (probably relates of travels to every land, i.e. *hann fór hvart land*),[595] Vs 22 (commemorates a man who died on a voyage), Vs 27 (similar to Vs 22), Nä 29 (comme-morates a man who travelled *fulldrengila*), DR 330 (arranged after men who were renowned on the viking raids), and DR 379 (in memory of a man who drowned abroad with all his seamen).[596]

Unidentified place names occur in Sö 360 (**i : far-nki**, cf. 3.1.17.) and DR 154†; the latter presumably commemorated a man who was slaughtered on **aufu** heath, which appears either as a local place name or refers to some other battle site.[597] Fragmentary inscriptions that seem to relate of travelling (and may have identified a place) are Sö 96, Sö FV1948;291, U 158†, and U ATA4909/78†.

Another 6 fragmentary inscriptions make use of expressions with *verða drepinn/drepa* and *vera svikvinn*;[598] here the question arises as to whether their statements identify death away from home, as demonstrated by other previously studied examples. The same kind of ambiguity is evident with inscriptions that are better preserved, such as U 691 (arranged after a murdered son), U 954† (related of killing and the committing of *niðingsverk* by betrayal) and DR 387 (commemorates a man who was shamefully killed, and adds the name of the traitor). Further interesting examples are: U 617, which characterises the deceased as the viking watch with Geitir; and DR 335, arranged in memory of a man who owned a ship together with the commissioner; as well as U 1161, which relates of the burning of a father and son and may mention the term *lið*.

Special cases are inscriptions that speak of death by drowning. It remains uncertain how the mentions of drowning in U 29, Vg 174, U 455 and Gs 7 are to be understood, although references that connect similar death with a non-native district are well attested among the previously studied inscriptions. On the other hand, Sö 318 relates of drowning in *Bágr* (i.e. Båven in Södermanland).

As a preliminary conclusion (to which we shall return in the final discussion), it may be pointed out that the outlined references to further travels share some common features with the group of Baltic traffic inscriptions. Dominating are the cases when the inscriptions (no matter whether they record a particular destination or not) explicitly establish the place where the commemorated person died. At the same time there exist some interesting variations to that pattern – the runic material as a whole contains several cases where we have good reasons to assume, or even assert, that the commemorated/honoured person did return from his voyage (obvious examples are such inscriptions that fulfil the task of self-glorification).

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[595] See e.g. Salberger (1972).

[596] Among the medieval Norwegian runic inscriptions we also find some indications of pilgrimage.

[597] In U 1028 the preserved end part of the place name *-landi* may also indicate a traffic destination. Additional unidentified cases are Öl 37, Ög 27-28† (cf. 3.1.24. and 3.1.17.).

[598] Sö 348, Sö 351, Sö ATA6163/61, U 324, U 577†, U 1148†. Considered could be fragmentary inscriptions that contain neutral formulations in the style of *er varð dauðr*, since even these may connect with a place name, see e.g. Ög HOV32;27, Vg 180.

However, with certain (poetical) formulations, the meaning remains more ambiguous. Even a simple statement 'X travelled to B' may indirectly claim that the person actually found his end away from home. Good reminders of such indirect (possibly hidden) meaning are, for example, the Ingvarr inscriptions that have already been mentioned on several occasions. In 13 cases among those it is clearly stated that the commemorated person died during the expedition, whereas 8 inscriptions remain more indirect in mentioning either that the deceased travelled with Ingvarr (e.g. by the application of the verb *fara*), or, in more general terms, steered his ship to the east. In light of what is known of the fate of the expedition, we thus observe how even such "milder" expressions refer to the fact of death.

3.3.4. Local place names and communications

The final subsection introduces a few complementary perspectives on the level of local identification (i.e. place names) and matters of communication. The previous discussion of traffic/travel references has emphasised the meaning of place names as a way to identify the destinations that were reached and where the travellers possibly found their end. However, the inscriptions also record a number of other place names – then with the purpose of providing a different kind of identification, i.e. to connect the person with a particular place, which often signifies his/her origin. Hence, the place names are then related to the narrower context of home, i.e. they outline the native setting around a certain person.

As pointed out by S. Brink (1997: 394) in a general discussion around the purposes of naming, "a person is very much identified by his or her dwelling-place, i.e. his or her homestead". Runic material also contains many corresponding examples of place names used as explicit identification labels for people, or as a means of providing additional focus on the local context. With regard to the Baltic traffic inscriptions, it has already been mentioned that U 130 and U 527 include references to local estates/settlements, whereas Sö FV1948;289 and Sm 52 apply somewhat broader labels and relate the deceased to a native district. In the case of Ög 81 and Sö 45, other nearby monuments – i.e. Ög 82 and Sö 367, respectively – add information that draws attention to the local settlement unit.

A good example of how local identification and information about death place can get combined is the inscription on the rune stone from the Harstad church yard, Ög 94; the stone is raised in memory of a certain Oddlaugr, who lived in *Haðistaðir* (**iaʀ : buki| |i : haþistaþum**) and died *í Grikkjum*. Similar phrases that inform of the homestead of the deceased (or alternatively, that of the commissioner) also occur on their own, such as in U 57, where we hear that the deceased lived in *Ulfsund* (**byki| |i : ulsunti**). Sometimes the indications are combined with praise, as done in Sö 213, where the deceased stands out as the best husbandman in *Kíll* (**boanti : bestr i : kili**). It is also possible to focus on matters of ownership; Sö 202 thus explains that Óspaki owned *Kolhaugr* (cf. also Ög 82, Sö 367, U 114).

To exemplify the cases when the place name clearly functions as an identification label we could look at the Sanda stone, Sö 132, raised in memory of a man who is addressed as Bjǫrn of *Sandarr* (**biarn · i snt-m**). Corresponding attributive identifications that follow the pattern 'personal name + the preposition *í* + place name' sometimes also concern the commissioner, the carver, or other persons who are related to the deceased and get mentioned with the purpose of identifying him both with regard to his kin and dwelling-place. Thus, Sö 84

commemorates a certain Þorbjǫrn who is further characterized as Þorsteinn of Skyttingi's son (**sun · þorstainʀ · i skytiki**). Sometimes several parallel identifications may be applied so as to distinguish between people – U 161 thus informs that the stone was cut by Ulfr of *Báristaðir* in memory of Ulfr of *Skolhamarr*. The quoted inscriptions represent only a small fraction of the total evidence, which would definitely also deserve to be studied for its own value.

The material demonstrates that as a rule, local place names concern the deceased and their obvious purpose is to identify the person. However, a few more exceptional connections are also visible. At the end of the previous subsection we pointed out Sö 318, with its information that a certain Vreiðr drowned in *Bágr*; i.e. here the reference actually signifies the place of death (maybe in connection with local scale traffic). Similar are the messages of U 112 (the commemorated woman died in *Eið*), U 170† (the man died in *Eikrey*(?) and is now buried in the churchyard), and Nä 15 (the man died in *Víney*). The fragmentary U 395, a rune stone from Sigtuna, records the expression "who brought her to *Sigtúnir*" (**-ịm hnɑ firþi til sihtunum**), which possibly concerns a person mentioned in the inscription. Perhaps U 395 could be compared to Vs 24, where the local reference is used in the context of a husband commemorating his wife; namely, it is said that no better wife will come to the estate of *Hǫsumýrar*. On the other hand, we find local scale place references recorded in connection with the transportation of objects; as indicated by U 735 (and possibly by U 736†), the rune stone was brought *ór Langgarni*.[599]

More extraordinary messages are attached to native labels as applied in: JRS1928;66, where a certain Austmaðr claims that he christianised Jämtland; DR 42 where Haraldr Gormsson records his power over Denmark and the conversion of the Danish people (with parallel references to Norway and Norwegians); and N 449, which testifies to the Christianisation of Norway. Interesting cases are the references to Hedeby in DR 1 and DR 3 (cf. 3.1.3.), as well as the evidence of Hs 14 (refers to several local estates), N 58† (records fishing activities in *Rauðusjór*) and N 519 (marks the way, i.e. the border, to *Ruðsmark*).[600]

In connection with the Baltic traffic inscription Sö 174 (cf. 3.1.16.), we mentioned that besides raising commemorative stones, the people could also arrange for the construction of bridges and clearing of causeways – such activities are indicated by the inclusion of specific monument markers in the inscriptions.

According to Elgvin (KLNM II: 242), bridges in the medieval context could be understood as constructions that were laid out on the land surface, constructions that were partly supported by pillars, or alternatively, freestanding bridges in the traditional sense. In connection with runic mention of bridges, S.B.F. Jansson explains: "Med 'bro' i inskrifternas språk menas i regel en vägbank över sankmark el. myr, kavelbroar el. stenlagda vadställen" (KLNM XIV: 487).[601] That is to say, the inscriptions normally do not refer to freestanding bridges.[602] Typical

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[599] See also the discussion of U 414† in 3.1.16.

[600] Additional brief records of place names like Lund and Borgeby appear in Danish coin inscriptions, dated mainly to ca. 1065-1075 (cf. e.g. NRL).

[601] "In the terminology of runic inscriptions 'bridge' as a rule means a road bank over wetland or marsh, cordwood bridgeway, or stone-based ford" (my translation).

[602] Possible examples of the latter may have been the bridges mentioned in JRS1928;66 and Sö 101 (cf. S. Brink 2000: 33).

Viking Age bridges could be made out of earth, sand, gravel, stone or wood, and different terms could be applied to designate these varying constructions (S. Brink 2000: 30-39).

The so-called bridge inscriptions most commonly make use of the monument marker *brú* ('bridge'), recorded in 138 inscriptions (including four uncertain cases).[603] It occurs mostly in singular, but U 101, U 143 and U 347 refer to the construction of *brúar*, i.e. bridges. *Brú* may also form compounds, such as *hlaðbrú* (causeway of gravel and earth) in U 114 and *steinbrú* (stone bridge) that is recorded in Vg 4 and possibly also in Sö 157†.[604] In Sö 312 and U 101 we also find, besides the mention of bridges, information about the clearing of a path, expressed by the formulation *ryðja braut*. The latter phrase is applied on its own in Sö 311 and U 149†.

An alternative term to *brú* is *bryggja*, as perhaps recorded in Vs FV1988;36 (*gerðu b[ryggj]u*). The same word also occurs in U 512, where the versified addition explains that the stone will stand by the bridge. Simple (wooden) foot bridges are designated by the word *spǫng* in Ög 147 (*gerðu spengr*) and Sö 74 (*gerði spengr*); both inscriptions apply the term in plural. U 996 and U FV1974;203 mention the making of *aurr (eyrr)*, i.e. a ford; the former even specifies that the ford was made out in the sound. Ög FV1983;240 may indicate a similar bridge construction by *gerði óð(?)*. It is further possible that the phrase **oskutr : kiarþi : tre**[**te**] in Sö 122 informs that a tree road has been made.

With several bridge inscriptions we may notice how the significance of the monument (memorial complex) is underlined by describing it as a remarkable landmark (cf. e.g. U 69, U 102). U 323 contains a longer poetical formulation where the solidness of the bridge is illustrated, in RS: *Æi mun liggia, með aldr lifiR, bro harðslagin, bræið æft goð[an]. SvæinaR gærðu at sinn faður. Ma æigi brautaRkuml bætra verða.* The runic material also demonstrates that bridges could be owned by people (U 316) or be named after certain persons (Ög 162). Some inscriptions specify that the bridge has been made for the soul of the deceased or the commissioner (Sö 101, Vg 76, U 127, U 164, U 165, U 261, U 327, U 345, U 347, U 489, U 947) or as thanks to God (U 1033, N A53).[605]

The bridges mentioned in runic inscriptions logically stand for real-life physical objects, and references to the arrangement of bridges are significant with regard to both local and regional communication. In fact, archaeological research has shown that there was a significant increase in constructing bridges and establishing causeways and roads towards the end of the Viking Age and in the beginning of the Middle Ages (Smestad 1988: 175). Runic references to bridge building gain their meaning in the context of corresponding activities; they are the direct evidence of how communication systems were improved.

With this background, S.B.F. Jansson (1949: 102) characterises the 11th century as an intensive period for road building; since many relevant rune stones still stand by the original road, they can cast light on the ancient road networks. This observation is confirmed by S. Brink (2000: 64), who also emphasises that besides being erected on the roadside, rune stones could also mark a place where a stream could be crossed; that is to say, bridges (fords) could be marked by rune stones even if their inscriptions did not refer to the bridge;[606]

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[603] See for example the list in Zilmer (2002a: 138-157).

[604] Another alternative is that the latter contained the personal name *Steinbjǫrg*.

[605] U 127, U164, U 165 and U 261 are commissioned by the same man, Jarlabanki, in memory of himself.

[606] The Lingsberg rune stones U 240 and U 241 make up one such example; their find site demonstrates that the stones originally stood on each side of a road bank (cf. S. Brink 2000: 41). These two inscriptions do not relate of bridge building, but U 241 commemorates a traveller, a certain Ulfríkr who took two payments in England.

also, the rune stones could belong with the actual construction. "Some of these runic stone bridges were elaborated constructions, with pairs of runic stones on both sides of a ford over a stream, where the ford was often extended in the form of a causeway over adjacent marshy land", says Brink (2000: 64). Such considerations add interesting perspectives to the general communicative function and meaning of rune stones.[607]

As for the cultural-historical significance of runic inscriptions that document bridge building and the improving of road connections, they have long been in the centre of discussion. Corresponding references are traditionally regarded as a Christian feature; popular interpretations extend their practical statements with a symbolic religious message based upon the concept of a sacred bridge that would help one's soul in the afterlife.[608]

The bridge inscriptions do seem to record activities that could be considered charitable in a Christian environment and hence coincide with the interests of missionary authorities and get promoted by them. However, in the context of 11th century Scandinavia it would be too far-reaching to claim (as done by some scholars) that they testify to the establishment of a particular indulgence system. Also, the validity of theories that underline their deeper symbolic meaning may be questioned.[609] First and foremost, these inscriptions function as pragmatic evidence of a contemporary society that was interested in improving its communications on both the local and inter-regional level. In this manner even bridge inscriptions add some additional practical features to the general picture of Baltic traffic as outlined above.

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[607] The connections between runic bridge inscriptions and Viking Age road constructions have also been emphasised by Düwel (1986a) and Ambrosiani (1987). The latter author focuses upon the communications in the Mälaren region.

[608] Discussed e.g. by Olsen (1936); Dinzelbacher (1973).

[609] For further discussion, see Zilmer (2002a, particularly pp. 56-70).

IV BALTIC TRAFFIC FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SKALDIC AND SAGA EVIDENCE

In this chapter skaldic poetry, kings' sagas and the sagas of Icelanders are consulted as a means of providing complementary and broader angles to the evidence of runic mini-narratives. As was explained in chapter I, the following is not an exhaustive presentation of all relevant cases, but according to the research scope limited to bringing out the main lines and characteristic features alongside examples of a more specific kind. As a result, the treatment of the sources has to remain more general – and in parts also simplified – than would otherwise be desirable with regard to the many question marks and complications that the overall material poses. However, we are fully aware of the existing problems and limitations; therefore, the discussion of skaldic and saga depictions of Baltic traffic is preceded by introductory subsections where the various features of the source material are outlined in further detail, extending the general information that was presented in subsection 1.6. Central theoretical and methodological premises and conventions are clarified to the extent necessary in the frames of the present research.

4.1. Skaldic poetry

4.1.1. Description and source treatment

In general terms, skaldic poetry has been characterised as a corpus of verse originating from a period that extends from the ninth to the fourteenth century; it is "distinguished from Old Norse alliterative poetry, or eddic poetry, on the basis of functional and formal criteria" (Gade 1995: 1). Among such criteria we find: the matters of authorship and transmission; metre, stylistic devices and the complexity of poetic diction; and general themes, as well as the manner in which these are addressed. Although there are apparent overlappings between the two categories of poetry (cf. e.g. Frank 1985: 160), the general line of distinction is still well grounded.

   Within the preserved body of earlier and later skaldic poems there exists considerable variation with regard to recorded themes and applied metres and stylistic devices. However, a significant part of the skaldic tradition is by its nature panegyric, it shares common features and motives and fits under the label of Old Norse court poetry. This is especially characteristic of Viking Age skaldic poetry, "composed by named poets for named patrons, and unflaggingly celebratory in content and tone" (Townend 1998: 5). Frank (1978: 120) summarises the prevalent features of court poetry: "Such panegyrics typically included an initial call for silence, a summary of the prince's outstanding deeds and strengths, mention of his generosity to poets, and an affirmation that his fame has spread far and wide over many lands, that his accession has restored order and renewed a golden age".

   The most popular metre for skaldic (praise) poetry is *dróttkvætt* (*dróttkvæðr háttr*); the name is derived from "*drótt* (the king's retainers) and *kveða* (to recite) and, most likely, referred to a poem recited before the retainers at a king's court" (Gade 1995: 3). Besides

patterns of alliteration where "two alliterating syllables in the first line of a couplet chime with the first syllable (always stressed) of the second line" (Jónas Kristjánsson 1997: 84), the characteristic features of *dróttkvætt* required the application of internal rhyme, usually "half-rhyme in the first of a pair […] and full rhyme in the second" (ibid.).[610] The earliest extant *dróttkvætt* stanzas originate from the 9th century and demonstrated already then a highly developed form; although the exact date remains a matter of debate, it is possible that the oldest *dróttkvætt* poem is *Ragnarsdrápa* by Bragi Boddason.[611]

Skaldic poetry is further characterised by agrammatic word order that does not have to follow linear prose narration, and specific poetic diction. Traditional prose designations are frequently replaced by more unusual poetic words (*heiti*) and complex periphrases (*kenning*). A kenning consists of a base-word and one or more determinants. In the composition of kennings, "the referent (i.e. the person or the thing described by a kenning) must be called something which it or he/she is not" (E. Gurevich 1994: 140). Gurevich speaks in this connection of "the rule of incongruity", defined as "the rule implying that the parts of a kenning must not be equal to the concept it describes" (ibid.). She also sees in patterns of kennings "a universal code which in the course of no less than five centuries maintained the continuity and succession of the skaldic tradition" (op. cit. 155).[612]

Whereas the features listed above allow us to treat skaldic poetry as a more or less unified corpus, the actual conditions of preservation complicate the experience. In fact, most of the skaldic poetry that we know of is scattered between a large number of medieval prose works, preserved in vellums dating from the High and Late Middle Ages as well as in younger paper copies.[613] Therefore, with the earliest skaldic poems there is a considerable time gap between the assumed date of composition and the surviving manuscript version(s). The manuscripts themselves are copies and copies of copies, which means that the process of handing down skaldic poetry depended both upon oral and written transmission.[614]

The fact that skaldic poetry is presented in the context of prose has its own consequences in terms of how we can approach the (original) poems and what we can make of their actual functions.[615] On the one hand, we find skaldic verses incorporated into longer prose narratives such as sagas, where individual stanzas or groups of stanzas may fulfil different functions.[616] On the other hand, skaldic poetry is included in poetological treatises and handbooks, where the obvious purpose is to explain and exemplify the nature of the verse. The handbook composed by Snorri Sturluson, known under the name *Snorra Edda*, is a well known example among the latter.

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[610] For a detailed discussion of the origin and the formal features of *dróttkvætt*, see e.g. Turville-Petre (1976: xviii-xxi, xxiv-xxviii); Frank (1978: 21-54); Gade (1995, particularly pp. 7-12).

[611] *Ragnarsdrápa* is a so-called shield-poem of mythological content; the skald describes scenes that are depicted on a shield that he has received from a certain king called Ragnarr (perhaps referring to the mythological Danish king Ragnarr loðbrók).

[612] Of central importance in the study of skaldic kennings are e.g. the contributions by Meissner (1921) and Fidjestøl (1974).

[613] Exceptional are naturally the verses written in runes and preserved on various original items, such as rune stones and medieval runic sticks.

[614] Both aspects of transmission have been discussed by Fidjestøl (1982, particularly pp. 68-81).

[615] These problems relate first and foremost to the skaldic poetry of the Viking Age. As explained by Jesch (2001: 16), in the case of later skaldic poetry "the disjunction between its prose context and the supposedly earlier verse is less significant or non-existent, and many of these poems are preserved as poems, rather than as quotations in prose texts".

[616] For an overview of skaldic tradition as preserved in the framework of different kings' sagas, see Fidjestøl (1982: 25-45).

Furthermore, we have to realise that there must have existed different types of poems (some longer, some shorter) that could have been produced and subsequently quoted under different circumstances. The critical assessment of sources (cf. subsection 1.6.2.) already underlined that, due to the fragmentary conditions of preservation, the surviving bits and pieces of skaldic poetry have to be arranged into meaningful units by modern editors. In reconstruction work, scholars have come to distinguish between quotations from longer skaldic poems that are preserved in a varying state, and brief freestanding stanzas. Different terms can be applied when referring to these two types; the latter is usually known as *lausavísur*, described by Frank as "spontaneous personal verse" (1985: 182), by Poole as "brief spontaneous improvisations" (1991: 3) and by the Skaldic Editing Project (SEP) as "freestanding occasional verses" (*Editors' manual* 2002: 7).[617] The former category is determined by SEP to be "extended poems, complete or fragmentary" (ibid.), whereas Poole (1991: 3) operates with the term "excerpted verses".

Various external and internal criteria help to determine whether a cited stanza belongs into an extended poem or is a freestanding *lausavísa* (cf. *Editors' manual* 2002: 7-9). The external aspects are related to the prose context around the stanza: "[…] whereas a *lausavísa* is normally prefaced by a formula of the type 'þá kvað X'/ 'then X said', an excerpted verse is normally preceded by 'svá segir X' […] or 'þess getr X'/ 'X mentions this', or variants on these formulas" (Poole 1991: 5). Among internal criteria, the use of present tense and direct speech may indicate that the stanza should be taken as a *lausavísa*. Naturally, the distinction line between extended poems and *lausavísur* remains in certain cases arbitrary and uncertain.

Having established a certain group of stanzas as belonging together and making up a more or less complete poem, it is further possible to distinguish between main types of extended poems. *Drápa* is usually understood as a longer poem with refrain (*stef*); *flokkr*, on the other hand, has no refrain. With corresponding longer skaldic poems, the process of reconstruction also has to attempt to find the way back to the original order of stanzas; presumably with certain poems the order was clearly fixed, whereas others constituted more loosely attached sequences. A usual step is again to consult the prose contexts and follow their order of quoting stanzas, in combination with considerations that concern the logical sequence of recorded events.[618] However, as often underlined, identical skaldic stanzas may be quoted in alternative order (and also to a varying extent) in different prose works and/or manuscript versions. Also, their manner of treating skaldic verse may not be that helpful; rather, in many cases we witness how "the individual stanza is treated as a self-sufficient aesthetic entity" (Frank 1978: 10). In the end, much of the reconstruction work still appears to be an arrangement undertaken by modern scholars, although they attempt to build the argumentation upon both text-external and text-internal features.

Until now, we have dealt with the context of preservation and the meaning of prose frames around skaldic poetry. Only very little is known about the original context of composition and performance, as well as the following process of (oral) transmission, other than what is said in sagas − which may or may not offer a trustworthy picture. Gade remarks:

> We cannot ascertain to what extent the sagas give an accurate portrayal of the conditions under which skaldic poetry was composed and performed, but, because this poetic tradition was alive in thirteenth-century Iceland when most of the sagas were recorded, it stands to reason that the descriptions relating to skaldic poetry,

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[617] See http://www.skaldic.arts.usyd.edu.au/docs/manual/2-reconstruction.pdf.
[618] Fidjestøl's *Det norrøne fyrstediktet* (1982) is a systematic study that assesses critically earlier editions of skaldic poetry and reconstructs the order of original skaldic praise poems with an extensive exploration of prose contexts.

although stereotyped and perhaps idealized, could not have deviated too much from thirteenth-century reality. (Gade 1995: 21-22)

The general social context around skaldic praise poetry emphasises the special relationship between the skald and his patron; it was the latter the skald was supposed to deliver his poem to, unless it was a case of commemorative *erfikvæði* that was composed only after the death of the patron. Frank (1985: 182) suggests that "most extant verse was probably composed orally and privately by professionals and memorized for delivery". In certain cases the prose within which the verses are preserved creates the feeling of spontaneous delivery, but this may of course result from an artistic and imaginative reconstruction offered by saga narrators.[619] However, in some ways that sense of immediacy may also rise from the fact that the poets indeed recorded more or less contemporary events or were focusing on the near past; and even if the poem was composed afterwards, the skald could attempt to leave the impression that he was mediating his own, immediate experience.[620]

Another problem in connection with the performative aspects of skaldic poetry is the role of the audience and the question of intelligibility. The specific poetic diction and the agrammatical word order naturally raise the question as to whether the contemporaries of the skald could understand such a complex mode of poetry. On the one hand, it has been claimed that the reception of skaldic poetry was eased by the audience's foreknowledge of the established syntactic patterns in the skald's poetic language (cf. Palm 2000). Also, there might have existed certain norms for delivery; for example, principles for rhythmic recitation, which could contribute to understanding (cf. Gade 1995: 26). On the other hand, the general expectations towards the genre of praise poetry could easily have focused on the act of performance, and not necessarily on grasping all the meaning levels of one particular poem.

A similar idea has been recently put forth by Townend (2001: 272), who suggests that "for praise-poems to fulfil much of their social function, they do not always need to be understood". Townend also points out that within one audience there could be different subaudiences with varying skaldic competence; in his view "it is competence in understanding the significance of the performance itself which is the essential requirement for being part of this particular audience" (op. cit. 273).[621]

Our final comments in this limited overview of the essence of skaldic poetry concern its cultural-historical significance. In this connection we have to address matters of authorship, attribution and authenticity. As mentioned above, a characteristic feature of skaldic poetry is that many of the preserved poems can be assigned to named poets.[622] Furthermore, the skaldic verse itself could create the image of awareness around authorship, thus

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[619] Again, we have to note the problems of distinguishing between extended poems and *lausavísur* (cf. above).

[620] In this context it may be useful to examine in which cases the applied present tense in poems is genuine or rather stands for present historic; see e.g. Poole (1991).

[621] As we know, the composition arena for skaldic poetry was usually Scandinavia or Iceland; but some of the poetry was also produced and performed by Nordic skalds abroad, e.g. in the British Isles. Frequently cited passages from *Sneglu-Halla þáttr*, where a *lausavísa* by Sneglu-Halli is delivered, demonstrate that poetry was not understood and appreciated to the same extent everywhere. In fact, the poet compares the lacking comprehension of skaldic art by the English with that of the meagre skills of the Danes: *verðrat drápa / með Dǫnum verri* (cf. Skj. B I: 359); translated as "Not among the Danes / has a poorer drapa appeared" (*The Complete Sagas of Icelanders* I: 355). In other saga contexts it is mentioned how the (English) king has to ask from his followers whether the delivered poem was any good.

[622] The names of more than 250 Norwegian and Icelandic skalds are known thanks to their mention in different prose works and the preservation of a separate list of poets, called *Skáldatal* (known in versions from the second half of the 13th century). The earliest skalds were Norwegians; gradually the composing of skaldic poetry became more of an Icelandic enterprise.

demonstrating its becoming "conscious in poetry long before it became conscious in prose" (Steblin-Kamenskij 1966: 31).[623] Also, E. Gurevich describes skalds as "self-conscious authors of their poetic production" (1994: 141) and understands variation in kenning patterns as a significantly individualistic feature. She also mentions other features of the establishment of authorship:

> Besides first person intrusions and various short parenthetic inserts into the eulogistic text which we usually meet throughout the poems, we may now and then run across even more extensive accounts of a skald's own experiences. *Upphaf* and *slæmr*, introductory and concluding parts of a *drápa*, can be seen as special "territories" where the skald's authorial presence is to be expected. (E. Gurevich 2000: 104)

Frank (1985: 169) finds expression of artistic individuality in the varying word order, which may also "encapsulate the poet's meaning".

In general, scholars accept the attributions proposed in the prose works that cite skaldic poems. Certain attributions are, however, more disputed; there is no automatic guarantee that medieval saga writers are always correct when assigning stanzas to particular poets. It is further possible that some of the poetry has in reality been created by saga narrators themselves who wanted to leave the impression of quoting older skalds. Alternatively, the narrator could be quoting verses that he thought were an authentic part of the tradition, but were actually composed by someone who lived after the skald in question (cf. e.g. Fell 1981: 108; Frank 1985: 173). Hence, the authenticity of some skaldic poetry has to be questioned, despite the fact that the existence of these poets with whom the works are associated may in itself be beyond doubt.

Of certain importance in identifying the authenticity of skaldic stanzas have been studies that discuss the general meaning and role of verse in saga literature – so as to determine the ways in which saga writers experienced that poetry. Bjarni Einarsson (1974: 118) introduces the distinction between cases when "a stanza is quoted as evidence" and verse that should be "considered as a part of the story". In his view the latter kind is integrated into the artistic framework of the saga and cannot therefore be ignored by the reader "without damage to his understanding of the context as a whole" (ibid.). According to Bjarni Einarsson, the skaldic stanzas in kings' sagas for the main part serve as evidence and confirmation, whereas in the sagas of Icelanders they form the entertaining elements of the story, although there exist certain exceptions to this pattern.[624]

Alongside similar lines of argumentation, one has first of all undermined the authenticity of various *lausavísur* figuring in the episodes of the sagas of Icelanders. The manifested attitudes are fittingly described: "Today almost none of the verse in the family sagas is considered secure; poetry in the kings' sagas still commands credence, for it has not yet seemed likely that these verses are fabrications, falsely attributed to the early skalds" (Frank 1985: 173). Of additional assistance in recognising genuine poetry are various internal linguistic and stylistic features, although even those are not always reliable criteria, since it is quite possible that certain archaisms could be applied by later creators as well. With certain

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[623] Steblin-Kamenskij suggests that the word *skáld* may have originally carried a meaning of "'form authorship' that had a particular function, namely that of assuring fame to or injuring a person" (op. cit. 33).

[624] At the same time, Frank (1985: 173) points out that "attempts to distinguish genuine from spurious stanzas on the basis of the roles they play in the sagas are fraught with uncertainties (the same poem can be cited as evidence in one text and as wit in the next)".

skaldic stanzas/poems there is now general consensus about them being staged by medieval narrators; in other cases the debate around potential genuineness continues.[625]

The previously described textual and contextual uncertainties, the debated authenticity of individual stanzas, and the fragmentary state of preservation alongside assumed errors and modifications that could have occurred during different stages of transmission naturally make us wonder about the general source value of skaldic poetry. Viewed as a whole, skaldic poetry is nevertheless regarded as representing a genuine tradition, and it functions as an important primary source to the period in question. Jesch (1993: 161) underlines that a considerable number of skaldic stanzas is well intact, and the scale of clearly spurious verse among the total corpus remains modest. The fact that much of this poetry connects with real poets and is addressed to historical figures allows us to set the verses into a particular temporal context. Further significance may be given to the fixed metre and rhyme patterns; skaldic poetry is taken to be a relatively stable phenomenon due to its seemingly conservative formal features.

At the one end we may therefore find quite a strong sense of trust in the historicity of skaldic poetry, despite the apparent complications around the nature of the material. In its purest form, a corresponding view could be claimed to go back to medieval prose narrators; a much quoted passage from the prologue of *Heimskringla* thus expresses the confidence that Snorri Sturluson showed towards skaldic verse:[626]

> […] tókum vér þar mest dœmi af, þat er sagt er í þeim kvæðum, er kveðin váru fyrir sjálfum hǫfðingjunum eða sonum þeira. Tǫkum vér þat allt fyrir satt, er í þeim kvæðum finnsk um ferðir þeira eða orrostur. En þat er háttr skálda at lofa þann mest, er þá eru þeir fyrir, en engi myndi þat þora at segja sjálfum honum þau verk hans, er allir þeir, er heyrði, vissi, at hégómi væri ok skrǫk, ok svá sjálfr hann. Þat væri þá háð, en eigi lof. (ÍF XXVI: 5)[627]

Snorri explains here that one could not give false praise to the chieftain in front of him and his men, as that would be considered a farce. Since praise poetry relates of the most prominent events in a chieftain's career, Snorri separately points out that what is said about the expeditions and battles undertaken by these men is indeed true.

In modern scholarship, Snorri's premises have been subjected to critical scrutiny; it is naturally underlined that "public hearing would not prevent such colouring and distortion of the facts as was in keeping with the norms of heroic praise poetry" (Peters 1978: 30). In order to be able to evaluate the informative content of skaldic stanzas, one has to compare their records with other independent sources. Obviously skaldic poetry does convey factual information, and in many cases there is no doubt about the general historicity of the incidents they mention. However, it is normally hard to get any further because, as there are not too

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[625] Examples of the latter could be some stanzas attributed to Gunnlaugr ormstunga Illugason and Egill Skalla-Grímsson (cf. e.g. Townend 2001), as well as to Kormákr Ǫgmundarson (cf. e.g. Bjarni Einarsson in KLNM IX: 142-144).

[626] In this study we follow the general convention of Snorri Sturluson as the author of *Heimskringla*, although there have been expressed opinions according to which his authorship could be questioned.

[627] "[…] and we gathered most of our information from what we are told in those poems which were recited before the chieftains themselves or their sons. We regard all that to be true which is found in those poems about their expeditions and battles. It is [to be sure] the habit of poets to give highest praise to those princes in whose presence they are; but no one would have dared to tell them to their faces about deeds which all who listened, as well as the prince himself, knew were only falsehoods and fabrications. That would have been mockery, still not praise" (*Heimskringla*, Hollander 2002: 4).

many suitable comparative sources.[628] Problems also arise from the complex form of skaldic poetry:

> The poets were so concerned with details of verse structure and vocabulary that often they had little space or energy for historical fact, and the poems tend to be formulaic in wording and limited in subject matter. Yet here and there are poems that transcend these limitations [...] Indeed, for centuries skaldic verses have been adduced to illustrate Viking history. (Page 1995: 17)

The last statement made by Page is characteristic; skaldic poetry as a whole is nevertheless an often consulted source in historical studies, even if the range of illuminated topics remains limited due to the formalistic features of skaldic expression.

At this point we return to the earlier comments on the varying degree of credibility assigned to verses that figure in different prose contexts, and their consequences for the study of skaldic verse. Along the lines drawn by Frank (see above), Jesch (1993: 160) speaks of "the historical 'canon' of both praise poems and *lausavísur* from the Kings' Sagas and the treatises" as opposed to the verse in the sagas of Icelanders.[629] Vésteinn Ólasson reminds us in the meantime that the overall criteria for tracing genuine tradition behind verses preserved in different prose contexts still remain unclear – the sagas of Icelanders may also contain traditional verse, even if this cannot always be proven. However, he adds that in the case of the latter the uncertainties are not so crucial, since "strofene i islendingesagaene sjelden bringer meddelelser av historisk art" (Vésteinn Ólasson 1987: 34).[630] At the same time, Vésteinn Ólason admits that from the point of view of studying mentality, such poetry should still be considered important (ibid.).

We shall proceed to clarifying how the skaldic material is approached in the present study. The goal is to analyse some cultural parametres in skaldic depictions of Baltic traffic; that is to say, we examine their general mode of expression instead of determining the strict historical actuality of references to specific events. From this it follows that we do not necessarily have to draw a sharp line between the skaldic verse gained from the kings' sagas and that of the sagas of Icelanders.

Rather, we pursue matters according to a more comprehensive approach and consult the material in its totality, while at the same time admitting that in parts it could well merely be an illustrative reconstruction. In the centre of attention lies the poetry that on the basis of commonly accepted criteria is believed to have originated from the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages. Also included are relevant stanzas from the sagas of Icelanders, even if they represent later stages of tradition, or are the potential fabrications of saga authors.[631] It is nevertheless significant that skaldic verse has been included in these sagas, i.e. the poems must have served the purpose of mediating certain views. Of additional value are a few skaldic poems with mythical, pre-Viking themes, and those that clearly date from the 13th century but refer to heroes of the Viking Age, and thus also demonstrate some of the perspectives that could be applied in depicting the past.

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[628] One suitable example is a study by Peters where the descriptions provided by Sigvatr Þórðarson in *Víkingarvísur* and Óttarr svarti in *Hǫfuðlausn* are analysed in comparison with the data from Anglo-Saxon chronicles. Peters reaches the conclusion that "the quality and quantity of information available to the skald, would affect his use of the conventional and decide how far it dominated his work" (op. cit. 35).

[629] See also Foote (1984).

[630] "[…] stanzas from the sagas of Icelanders only seldom present data of historical nature" (my translation).

[631] Another matter is the factual observation that verse from the sagas of Icelanders does not contain many relevant references anyway; so the amount of corresponding evidence remains limited.

Regarding the manner in which skaldic poetry is treated in studies with traditionally historical goals, the verse is usually set into very direct relationship with the prose contexts, which then naturally influence the analysis. The conditions of preservation and the dependence of some saga narratives on poetic quotations naturally justify such a strategy. In general it could be claimed that the relationship between prose and verse in sagas is mutually complementary.

The significance of this relationship also depends on the circumstances of oral and written transmission. According to one theory, shorter prose tales were already attached to skaldic verse during early stages of transmission, and these associated units of prose and poetry were passed on together.[632] We could relate to this concept the assumption that after a skaldic poem was performed, the audience could engage in interpreting and discussing its meaning (cf. e.g. Gade 1995: 24; Townend 2001: 273). This may have contributed to the evolvement of explanatory prose tales that were meant to accompany the poetry. Other scholars, however, believe that in its essence skaldic poetry was performed and preserved without such prose references. The unity of saga narratives and skaldic verse is further undermined by textual problems and discrepancies that become visible from extant sources; in some cases the narrator actually seems to have misundertood the content of the cited stanza.

Jesch has argued for a renewed treatment of the skaldic evidence (cf. Jesch 1993: 161; 2001: 32-33). In her view skaldic poetry could also be explored "as a source in its own right and with its own characteristics" (Jesch 2001: 32). Naturally one cannot ignore the obvious: the surrounding prose context is for us an indispensable part of experiencing skaldic poetry, and it can provide helpful keys for understanding the broader (historical) context around the indicated events. Such contextual considerations, however, do not automatically exclude the possibility of also approaching the skaldic material as a separate entity.

In this study we acknowledge skaldic verse as a source of its own, lifting in a way the poetical narrative of skaldic stanzas out of the surrounding prose narratives. That is to say, in the current discussion of imagery around Baltic traffic, we distinguish between the poetic narrative of skaldic poetry and the ordinary prose narrative of sagas – even when the two are mutually dependent. The focus on the poetic narrative as a separate mode of expression is hence the key premise for the chosen approach to the skaldic material. But before we can turn to actual evidence, it is necessary to say a few words about the conventions that are followed.

First of all, any form of skaldic studies has to take a standpoint as to the question of available editions on the source material. Ideally one should of course study all extant manuscript versions in person, notifying the forms as they are actually recorded – this is the closest we can get to the original texts (in their presumed first written state).[633] However, since we do not purport to examine in detail the actual linguistic forms but instead to deal with the level of meaning and expressions of content, we have found it justified and sufficient to work with traditional text-critical editions.

The obvious problem with any available comprehensive edition of skaldic poetry is that they do not explicitly document the fragmentary state in which part of the material is presented, but have seeked to reconstruct assumed original poems by relating preserved stanzas to each

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[632] For a discussion and references, see e.g. Frank (1985: 176-177); Vésteinn Ólason (1987: 35, 45); as well as Poole (1997).

[633] A good example of such an in-depth approach is the study on English place names in skaldic poetry, conducted by Townend (1998).

other and establishing their mutual order. It has to be kept in mind that one scholar's reconstruction may easily be debated by others. This is the case with *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning* (1912-1915, Skj) by Finnur Jónsson, a text-critical edition consisting of two A-volumes with diplomatic texts and two B-volumes, where the texts have been normalised and even translated into Danish. Despite certain errors, inconsistencies and omissions that have been noted by various scholars, this edition served as the main source for scholars throughout the 20th century, and is even currently considered the standard edition of skaldic poetry. The posthumously published *Den norsk-isländska skaldedigtningen* (1946-1950) by Kock, intended as a critical improvement in combination with *Notationes norroena: Anteckningar till Edda och skaldediktning* (1923-1944) by the same author, in fact also depends on Finnur Jónsson's edition as to the order and content of the stanzas. What Kock aimed to do was to establish a more natural word order in skaldic verse, applying techniques for which he was later severely criticised; "in the end his texts are even more idealised than Finnur's" (Jesch 2001: 19).

Many scholars have for that reason preferred to use Finnur Jónsson's edition as the basis, alongside corrections and modifications gained from more recent editions of separate poems or of some of the prose works where the poems are quoted. As fittingly stated by one of these scholars, the advantage of using Finnur Jónsson's edition is that "it represents the standard and most easily accessible edition of skaldic verse, and permits a standardised form of reference" (Townend 1998: 19).

In connection with this it should also be mentioned that a long-awaited new edition of skaldic poetry is on its way, scheduled to be published in 2006-2011. The SEP: *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages* (already referred to above) introduces its main principles alongside sample texts on the project's webpage (http://www.skaldic.arts.usyd.edu.au). On the same webpage one can get an overview of skalds and their work as well as obtain information about the sources and manuscripts in which the verse is preserved; also included are the normalised stanzas from Finnur Jónsson's edition, which thus serves as a kind of point of departure for the project's editors.

Since the new edition is yet to be published, we have had to use Finnur Jónsson's traditional edition, consulting to a certain degree other available sources, both separate articles and more comprehensive reviews of skaldic poetry. For the sake of keeping the presentation simple we shall in the following discussion refer to particular stanzas according to the number they have received in Skj; that is to say, we go after the arrangement of stanzas as undertaken by Finnur Jónsson. It is important to underline that we use his proposals simply as an easy convention for identifying pieces of skaldic poetry, being at the same time fully aware of the fact that these arrangements are often arbitrary.[634]

In recurring references to poems, we shall use the abbreviations according to the list provided in *Lexicon Poeticum* (pp. xiii-xvii).[635] In order to economise the text we avoid in general providing longer quotations from the poems in question (these can be easily obtained from Skj as well as from the webpage of SEP). However, in necessary citations the half-stanza (*helmingr*) is often taken to be the basic unit that allows one to grasp the meaning of a particular reference in its immediate textual context.[636] In other cases it may be sufficient to cite the couplet, the single verse line (*vísuorð*) or simply certain phrases. When referring to

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[634] A more up-to-date source to consult in regard to the order of stanzas in skaldic praise poems is Fidjestøl (1982; for a summarised overview, see pp. 169-177).

[635] In case they lack from LP, we follow the practises of SEP.

[636] On the level of understanding, the general content of the poem naturally has to be considered.

particular verse lines we shall present them according to the number of the corresponding stanza and the number of the line within that stanza. All quotations are given in normalised ON, as applied in consulted editions. Visually, we follow the technique of placing the verse lines into a continuous row, with a slash (/) separating one line from another.

4.1.2. Skaldic references to Baltic traffic

In previous studies of skaldic poetry, certain attention has been paid to their evidence of travel.[637] To name just a few examples, Frank's book from 1978 contains a separate chapter called "The versified travelogue" (pp. 154-164), where she places skaldic travel records into the context of the ancient tradition of a "peripatetic poet" (op. cit. 154). The book by Jesch (2001, see pp. 69-118) combines runic and skaldic evidence in studying travel-related vocabulary and recorded destinations. Travel related topics also figure in analyses of separate poems; some of these will be mentioned below.

Common are linguistically and historically orientated studies of foreign place names that occur in the poems. Two popular spheres of interest are English place names and those that connect with Eastern Europe, more particularly Russia. One such example is the study by Townend in which he compares skaldic forms of English place names with those known from Old English, concluding that "the names have been transmitted orally rather than scribally" (Townend 1998: 94).[638] In this manner, Townend supports the source value of skaldic poetry: "These independent oral origins of the skaldic forms, deriving from the contemporary ear in the Viking Age rather than from a pre-existing document, mean also that as witnesses they are invariably early" (ibid.).

As for skaldic evidence on eastern journeys, the matter has been treated thoroughly by Russian scholars in exploring the nature of Russian-Scandinavian relations. Jackson draws from skaldic source material in connection with studies on kings' sagas (1993; 1994; 2000), as well as in the framework of general articles on eastern references in Old Norse literature (e.g. 1988; 1991; 2003).[639] On the basis of the collective evidence of Old Norse sources (i.e. runic inscriptions, skaldic poetry, sagas and geographical treatises) it is concluded: "Thus, it becomes evident that the ethnogeographical nomenclature of the Old Norse sources is rather archaic. It would be most reasonable to assume that it was formed simultaneously with the Scandinavian infiltration into Eastern Europe" (Jackson 2001: 162).

To my knowledge, there exist no separate studies on skaldic depictions of Baltic traffic where the Baltic communication arena is determined along similar lines as established in chapter I (1.4.1.). In this connection it has to be specified to which extent the unified concept of the Baltic drainage basin that was succesfully applied when examining runic inscriptions serves its purpose in the context of skaldic material, which mostly demonstrates the perspectives of West Norse cultural communities. The range of the study object namely has to be modified to a certain degree.

On the one hand, we will see that skaldic material brings in some additional details (other place names and inhabitant names). On the other hand, certain modifications are necessary

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[637] For a general overview of skaldic studies, see Frank (1985).
[638] For a summary of earlier studies on similar matters, see Townend (1998: 6-11).
[639] See also the surveys of Old Norse sources in Glazyrina & Jackson (1987); Melnikova (1999); Jackson (2001).

when determining which areas should be considered as directly involved in what we call <u>Baltic</u> traffic.[640] In this manner some regions that from the geographical point of view may at least partly lie within the drainage basin, in reality stretch far to the north, east or south (the exact geogprahical span may remain unknown), and obviously their connections with the Baltic Sea are remote; furthermore, these areas could also obviously be reached along travel routes that did not connect with the Baltic Sea and its linked waterways at all (take for example traffic leading from (northern) Norway to northern Finland or northern Russia). Therefore, the focus lies on such points that do not only lie within the range of the drainage basin but also testify to actual traffic within the Baltic region (either water-based or along inland routes).

The following serves as an introduction to the matter, which will be hopefully followed up by more detailed studies. We start by listing relevant examples from a number of individual poems and stanzas (presented in a more or less chronological order as given in Skj), and conclude with a few general observations. The selection of the poems is first of all based upon their relevance for studying depictions of Baltic traffic, but we have also sought to cover different periods as well as consult the work of various skalds.[641]

4.1.2.1. Examples from individual poems

A potentially early skaldic poem that does not depict traffic in the Viking Age but deals with some earlier ancestors of Scandinavian kings and offers images of their mythological past is *Ynglingatal* (Skj A I: 7-15, B I: 7-14), attributed to Þjóðólfr ór Hvini who presumably was active at the end of the 9th or the beginning of the 10th century.[642] It has been discussed extensively whether Yt is indeed an authentic 9th century poem or rather a medieval reconstruction, and what could then have been its exact message and purpose.[643]

Traditionally Yt is called a genealogical poem (as the name says, it is the list of Ynglingar) that provides the death notices of a series of (mythological) Swedish kings, as well as of some Norwegian rulers who are said to descend from the Ynglinga kin. However, it may be debated as to whether the intention of the poem was that of genuine praise or something else, perhaps a weird form of propaganda (cf. e.g. L. Lönnroth 1986). Provided that Yt is indeed one of the earliest preserved skaldic poems, it serves as a suitable introductory example for some of the strategies that skalds could apply – i.e. the interweaving of certain facts into the complex mode of poetical expression. For that reason we shall treat the poem in some detail, focusing on its mention of various place names and ethnic designations.

Since the origins of the royal house of Ynglingar is related to the land of *Svíar* (i.e. the Svea people), we naturally find several corresponding references from Yt, such as *Svía kind* (5:11), *sœnskr þjóð* (20:3), *sœnskr jǫfurr* (25:10), *Svía jǫfurr* (29:8) as well as the phrase *með Svíum*

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[640] This reconsideration becomes even more relevant in connection with saga literature, cf. 4.2.2.

[641] In the following discussion of poems we have to the degree possible sought to paraphrase the quoted verse, so as to make its main content accessible. Systematic and qualified translations of whole skaldic poems into English are (prior to the publication of SEP results) not that well available. However, many of the quoted stanzas can be found in the translations of *Heimskringla* (e.g. Hollander 2002).

[642] For information about prose contexts and manuscripts in which this and other referred skaldic poems are preserved, see SEP, http://www.skaldic.arts.usyd.edu.au. As known, Snorri Sturluson's *Ynglinga saga* (in Hkr) contains the most complete version of Yt.

[643] The latter theory has e.g. been supported by Krag (1991), according to whom Yt dates from the 12th century.

(23:6, 28:4).[644] Also mentioned are various Swedish, Danish and Norwegian localities; among the former we thus find *Fýri* (6:12)*, Taurr* (10:9)*, Uppsalir* (15:2, 22:8, 29:10)*, Ræningr* (27:4); possible examples are also *Skúta* (3:10), *Lófund* (23:4) and *Himinfjǫll* (26:4). The ancient Swedish kings are set into a certain opposition to Danes, more precisely to the people of Jylland, *Jótar*. Thus, in st. 5 the king Dómaldi is described in terms of being a foe of *Jótar* (*Jóta dolgr* 5:10);[645] whereas in st. 23 it is related how *józkir menn* burned the king with his men (23:7-8). From the point of view of traffic we hear of death in northern Jylland, e.g. *Limafjǫrðr*, Limfjord (14:4) and *Vendill*, Vendelsyssel (19:8). In fact, the first half of st. 19 relates of a strife, where king Óttarr fell by Danish arms (weapons).

Interesting references also occur in sts. 9, 25 and 26. In the former we find the expression *á austrvega* (9:2), in relation with describing how the news about king Dagr's death reached the eastern routes. Although the exact meaning of the reference cannot be asserted, it seems possible that in the context of depicting the enterprises of the ancient kings of *Svíar*, *á austrvega* may demonstrate that the story about the event was told in the land of *Svíar* – from the West Norse perspective part of the eastern route.[646] On the other hand, *á austrvega* may also make up a general reference and simply emphasise that the story about the king's death was told in lands around the eastern sea (i.e. the Baltic Sea); the applied plural form could be an indication of that.

In sts. 25 and 26 we find the phrases *Sýslu kind* (25:3), *herr eistneskr* (25:7), *Austmarr* (25:11) and *Eista dolgi* (26:6) in connection with the kings Yngvarr and Ǫnundr. In st. 25 the death of Yngvarr is described with a reference to *Sýslu kind*, possibly speaking of the inhabitants of the island of *Eysýsla*; the army that attacks Yngvarr is further identified as *herr eistneskr* (thus related to *Eistr*).[647] Yngvarr is said to have been buried by the sea; in this connection the reference to *Austmarr* – i.e. (part of) the Baltic Sea – serves to illustrate how the eastern sea is singing songs for the dead king. In st. 26 Ǫnundr is called the foe of *Eistr* (cf. *Jóta dolgr*, above).[648]

The description of the past is in Yt given through the perspective of mythological-genealogical lore – and nevertheless there is a realistic physical context created around the events by the inclusion of a number of place names. Interesting is the fact that whereas the

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[644] Explanations of these and other items of vocabulary can be found from LP and OGNS; many aspects of skaldic vocabulary (related to typical Viking Age activities) are also discussed in detail by Jesch (2001).

[645] The stanza at the same time relates of the sacrificying of Dómaldi by *Svíar*.

[646] From *Ynglinga saga* ch. 18 (ÍF XXVI: 35-36), we learn that Dagr found his end in Gotland, also mentioned is *Reiðgotaland*; it has been suggested that Gotland in this context may actually indicate Jylland (cf. ÍF XXVI: 35) – from that point of view the land of *Svíar* would also be located in the east. Another reference to *austr* occurs in Yt 18:1, there possibly in connection with some forest region of Svealand.

[647] As pointed out by Tarvel, the phrase *herr eistneskr* is the only certain indication that the events can indeed be localised somewhere in the region of *Eistland*. The reference to *Sýslu kind* does not necessarily state that the scene is *Eysýsla*, or for that matter, the other alternative *Aðalsýsla* (cf. the general meaning of ON *sýsla* as an administrative (tax) region) (Tarvel 1994: 63).

[648] From the prose context in *Ynglinga saga* (ch. 33, ÍF XXVI: 62-63) we learn that Ǫnundr carried out a revenge campaign for his dead father, ravaging in *Eistland*. In the meantime, Yt itself does not specify the occasion. For further commentaries on sts. 25-26, see Jackson (1993: 67-70). The eagerness to see historical events behind these descriptions (dated approximately to the end of the 6th or the beginning of the 7th century) even made earlier scholars search for Yngvarr's grave mound in western Estonia, see e.g. Nerman (1919; 1927; 1929: 11-14). The possibility of locating Yngvarr's death to Kiideva (in translation 'stonehead') on the basis of the place identification *at Steini* as recorded in *Ynglinga saga* has among others been undermined by Tarvel (1994: 63). Snorri Sturluson probably derived the place name *Steinn* from the dubious kenning *lagar hjarta* in Yt (25:6), which has received different interpretations (cf. Jackson 1993: 68; Tarvel 1994: 64).

references mostly concern different localities within Scandinavia, the above-mentioned sts. 25 and 26 contain indications to the region of *Eistland* – it is a possibility that the skald chose to apply labels that did derive from a genuine tradition.

Examples from other poems depict events occurring during the Viking Age. *Hákonardrápa* (Skj AI: 61-63, B I: 55-56) is composed by the skald Goþþormr sindri in honour of king Hákon góði (also known as Hákon Aðalsteinsfóstri) some time during the 10th century.[649] The poem is introduced by relating of Hákon's campaign to Denmark, where the noble king killed many *Jótar* in a battle: *mætr hlóð mildingr Jótum / mistar vífs í drífu* (1: 3-4). The actual beginning of that stanza creates the image of how the king approached *Jótland* along the sea with his ships; it continues with a vivid description of the battle that – along the conventional lines of expression – provided food to ravens.[650]

The poem lets us follow the further route of the king along the Danish territory; in st. 2 he is said to have travelled with only two ships from the south (*sunnan*; 2:2) to *á grœna trjónu selmeina* (2:3-4), usually interpreted as a reference to some (green) headland of Sjælland (cf. LP: 487-488).[651] The second part of st. 2 relates how the brave warrior cleared eleven Danish ships, *Dana skeiðar* (2:6). *Skeið* is the most common designation for ships in the skaldic corpus: "The word is almost always used of ships either on the way to or in the thick of battle and clearly connotes a warship" (Jesch 2001: 123-124). In st. 3 (preserved as a half-stanza), it is stated that the king managed to subdue Sjælland (*Selund*, 3:1) and also established his power along the shores of Skåne (*Skáney*, 3:4) where he even won over some Wends (*Vinðr*, 3:3). Then the king must have headed further east, reaching the region of Götaland; as expressed by the couplet *skattgilda vann skyldir / skautjalfaðar Gauta* (4:1-2), he forced *Gautar* to pay tribute.

The rest of the poem (sts. 5-8) relates of other significant events in which king Hákon engaged himself. The perspective of the skald recalling the past is demonstrated by the continuous use of the past tense as well as the explicit phrase 'as I recall' – *en ek þess minnumk* (7:2).

The poem *Gráfeldardrápa* (Skj A I: 75-78, B I: 66-68) by Glúmr Geirason is composed in memory of Haraldr gráfeldr and dated to the 970s.[652] It is a commemorative *erfidrápa* that begins with an address to the audience, in which the skald asks them to listen to his poem. Of interest for us are sts. 3, 4, 9 as well as 5.[653] In st. 3 we find the mention of *Austrlǫnd* (3:1), lands in the east, where the king won a battle. As explained by Jackson (2003: 32), "the poetic text does not reveal the skald's understanding of the name in question". Jackson compares this piece of information to st. 5 where the term *austr* (5:1) is given alongside

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[649] Hákon góði is known to have reigned from ca. 934-960. Cf. also Appendix IV.

[650] Corresponding symbolic expressions of ON battle ideology have been analysed by Jesch (cf. e.g. 2001: 247-254), who points out that typically these motives are connected to feeding ravens, eagles and wolves, the beasts of the battle.

[651] The first part of st. 2 is as follows: *Almdrósar fór eisu / élrunnr mǫrum sunnan / trjónu tingls á grœna / tveim einum selmeina*. Hollander's translation: "Sailed from the south toward / Selund's green sea-nesses / the elmbow-showers-urger, [i.e. king, my addition] with / only two swift sail-ships" (*Heimskringla* 2002: 101).

[652] Haraldr gráfeldr was the king of Norway in the 960s.

[653] Fidjestøl discusses the blurred relationship between the two poems ascribed to Glúmr Geirason, i.e. the above-mentioned *Gráfeldardrápa* and a second poem that he dedicated to Eiríkr blóðøx; they seem to have got mixed with one another in the subsequent prose tradition. He suggests that the second stanza of the fragmentary poem to Eiríkr (as presented in Skj) actually belongs in *Gráfeldardrápa* (for a general discussion, see Fidjestøl 1982: 139-143). The stanza in question mentions a campaign to *Skáney* and another one to *Skotland*. For an alternative order of the stanzas in *Gráfeldardrápa*, see Fidjestøl (p. 272).

references to *bjarmskar kindir* (5:3), i.e. the people of Bjarmaland, and the banks of the river *Vína*, (*á Vínu borði*, 5:8); she assumes that "the place-names with the root *aust-* are here synonymous and refer to some northern territories of Eastern Europe (from the Baltic Sea to the Northern Dvina)" (op. cit. 33).[654]

However, skaldic poems often demonstrate how separate stanzas concentrate on different events at different localities and the provided directional guides have a rather relative meaning; therefore, it is not self-evident that *Austrlǫnd* and *austr* function as parallel references in this case.

The half-stanza 4 informs of a battle where Haraldr gráfeldr coloured his sword in the blood of *Gautar* (*hilmir rauð und hjalmi / heina laut á Gautum*, 4:1-2), whereas st. 9 describes the fall of the king in a battle at Hals (*sendir fell á sandi / sævar bals at Halsi*, 9:5-6), in Limfjord (*Limafjǫrðr* 9:4).[655]

Our next example is formed by two stanzas, the *lausavísur* by **Þórvaldr Hjaltason** (Skj A I: 117, B I: 111) that were already briefly mentioned in the discussion of Danish runic inscriptions (cf. 3.1.13.), with the conclusion that these two sources cannot be automatically taken to witness of one and the same event. The stanzas are preserved in the frames of *Styrbjarnar þáttr Svíakappa* in *Flateyjarbók*,[656] and are dated to approximately 985. The stanzas can be considered genuine; content-wise they share some features with *lovkvæði* (i.e. praise poems), with a direct address to a chieftain and the inclusion of common motives, like that of the beasts of battle (Fidjestøl 1982: 147). On this occasion the mentioned beasts are wolves (see st. 1:7).

Both stanzas contain place indications; the first stanza is introduced with the phrase *farið til Fýrisvallar*, and in line 4 the direction is given, which interestingly enough is *vestr* (probably from the skald's point of view). The second stanza speaks of the unfortunate journey of the vikings from home (*heiman*, 2:4) to *Svíþjóð* (2:3), with the expressionable addition that only those who fled are alive. In this we may experience an interesting mixture of perspectives. On the one hand, the term *víkingar* is used in the stanza to mark the opponents of the Swedish king Eiríkr sigrsæli.[657] *Skaldatál*, in fact, lists Þórvaldr Hjaltason as the skald of Eiríkr sigrsæli (Fidjestøl 1982: 147). On the other hand, the application of the adverb *heiman* signifies that the poem follows the movement from the perspective of these viking warriors. The inclusion of the motive of fleeing – as opposed to the traditional way of glorifying the leader who did NOT run away – also adds interesting imagery to the stanza as a whole.[658]

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[654] The location and range of Bjarmaland have been a matter of discussion, see e.g. Jackson (1993: 248-250) and Koskela Vasaru (2003, particularly pp. 75-77). Metzenthin briefly defines Bjarmaland as "Land im nordöstlichen Teil vom heutigen Russland, an den Küsten des Weissen Meeres (Gandvík)" (1941: 11). Koskela Vasaru explains with regard to the Bjarmians that those "seemed to have lived by the Kantalahti Bay at the White Sea, more closely on the Kola Peninsula (especially the Varguza River) and in Viena Karelia at least from the ninth to the mid-thirteenth century" (2003: 81). The river *Vína* may in this connection indicate the Northern Dvina, although it is also possible that in skaldic poetry it served as a general designation for any river and was only later taken to stand for a proper name (cf. op. cit. 76). Due to the obvious northerly position of Bjarmaland, references to this region are not included in the discussion of Baltic traffic.

[655] Hals (now a small town) has a strategic location on the eastern outlet of Limfjord, and is often mentioned in sagas as well (see below).

[656] Cf. *Flateyjarbók* (II: 73).

[657] Eiríkr himself is mentioned in 1:8.

[658] For comments concerning the regular technique of praise in terms of not fleeing, see Jesch (2001: 243-247). Cf. also the discussion in 3.1.13.

Einarr Helgason skálaglamm is known as the skald of the Norwegian jarl Hákon Sigurðarson, in whose honour he composed the poem *Vellekla* (Skj A I: 122-131, B I: 117-124).[659] That very title is mentioned in various prose texts; it means "'Gold-dearth', presumably because the poet expected the jarl to reward him as he deserved" (Turville-Petre 1976: 60).[660] According to one theory the skald first composed 33 stanzas; in the last stanza of that sequence he thanks the earl for the payment he has received (*hans mæti knák hljóta*, 33:3). If this is correct, it may be further assumed that Einarr added the final four stanzas after the battle of *Hjǫrungavágr* (i.e. Hjørungavåg in the region of Møre in Norway) in about 986, where Hákon jarl is said to have won over the Jomvikings, an event which may be hinted at in st. 34.[661]

Finnur Jónsson actually connects sts. 34-35 and possibly even 36 with that latter battle (Skj B I: 123). However, as pointed out by Fidjestøl (1982: 151), the question as to whether Vell was composed before or after that battle has to remain open; it is also uncertain whether sts. 34-36 can be fitted within the overall poem.[662] To conclude, Vell is apparently a complicated poem – and not only due to textual uncertainties around its preservation, but also because of its specific poetic language of *heiti* and *kenningar*.

The first half of Vell describes the jarl's advancement and the battles he won when establishing his rule over different parts of Norway; in st. 17 it is for example stated that he has conquered all of the land north of Viken. Interesting is the identification of the jarl as the murderer of the Wends (*Vinða myrðir*, 24:1) as a way of identifying him through a common opposition between the Scandinavian rulers and the Wends. That motive gains actual ground during the following stanzas (26-29), commonly associated with a battle where Hákon jarl helped to defend Denmark against the emperor Ottó II. Stanza 26 outlines the route of the jarl – he himself is called the ruler of the Hordaland people (*Hǫrða valdr*, 26:6) and the prince of Dovre (*Dofra dróttinn*, 26:7-8) – from the north (*norðan*, 26:2) over the sea south to Denmark (*sunnr Danmarkar*, 26:4), where he met the Danish leaders (*danskrir jǫfrar*, 26:7). In st. 27 it is explained that the Danish king asked the jarl to defend the Danish fortifications (i.e. Danevirke), *varða virki* (cf. 27:5-8). Specific is the phrase *myrk- Hlǫðvinjar -markar* (27:3), which describes the domain of the king; it may be interpreted as a designation for Jylland by mentioning its dark and deep forest area (cf. LP: 415). Stanza 28 introduces the actual battle situation by focusing on the enemy leader, the so-called battle-Óðinn who came from the south (*fór gunn-Viðurr sunnan*, 28:5) with his army that is claimed to have contained both *Frísir*, *Frakkar* and *Vinðr* (cf. 28:4-8). Since the skald composed the poem some time after that battle, the reference to jarl as *Vinða myrðir* in st. 24 finds its meaning in relation to these later events. The next stanza relates how the Saxons (*Saxar*, 29:5) were forced to flee.[663]

In sts. 30 and 31, references are made to *Gautar* (30:8) and *Gautland* (31:8) in the context of Hákon jarl's raids. It is stated that he travelled on foot through that whole region, which thus witnesses of inland travel (*alt vann gramr of gengit / Gautland*, 31:7-8).[664]

Hallfreðr Óttarsson vandræðaskáld is well known for several poems and *lausavísur*, and he also is the central character of *Hallfreðar saga*. Two of his poems honour Óláfr Tryggvason: *Óláfsdrápa* from ca. 996 (Skj A I: 156-159, B I: 148-150) and the long memorial *Erfidrápa Óláfs Tryggvasonar* from ca. 1001 (Skj A I: 159-166, B I: 150-157).[665] The latter relates of the king's final battle (i.e. the battle of Svolder), which in the poem is said to have taken place in the south of the sea, *fyr haf sunnan* (e.g. in st. 15:2); the direction south gets repeated a few times in the poem. The battle site is further localised as the broad sound of an island, *á víðu Holms sundi* (cf. 17:2-3), on the opposite side of the sea (*fyr sæ handan*, 21:4). Óláfr is among other expressions characterised as *Vinda myrðir* (7:1), and a reference is made to his fight against the Danes (5:4). The poem concludes with a conventional statement that underlines the greatness of the man, expressed in the terms *hann vas menskra manna / mest gótt* (29: 3-4).

Óláfsdrápa contains several interesting place identifications; it is a kind of catalogue of Óláfr's viking raids, including those within the Baltic region. In st. 1 it is told that he was twelve years old when he, the *Hǫrða vinr* (1:4), travelled with his warships out of *Garðar* (*ór Gǫrðum*, 1:4). However, according to Finnur Jónsson (Skj A I: 156) and Fidjestøl (1982: 167), this stanza is a later borrowing and does not actually concern Óláfr; there exists a very similar-sounding stanza in *Magnúsdrápa* by Arnórr Þórðarson jarlaskáld (see below).[666]

In half-stanza 2, possible references are made to Óláfr's campaigns in Bornholm as indicated by the phrase *at Holmi* (2:1) and in the east to *Garðar* (*austr í Gǫrðum*, 2:4), where he reddened his weapons. The following stanzas (4-9) identify various other raids undertaken by Óláfr, both by references to groups of people and particular places. The way they are ordered can cause certain geographical confusion (and has received different explanations in accompanying prose commentaries, cf. Fidjestøl 1982: 168-169). However, we have to remember that the poet's narrative grasp can easily combine several separate events within the frames of one stanza, and these do not necessarily have to form a logical sequence; after all, we see the same inflective techniques with regard to the formal word order.

Hence st. 4 relates of the killing of the people from Jämtland, *Jamta kindir* (4:1) as well as *Vinðr* (4:3) and *Gotar* (4:6),[667] and finally mentions a battle in *Skáney* (4:8). In half-stanza 5 the described battle-scene is identified as *Danmǫrk* (5:2), south of *Heiðabýr* (5:3-4).[668] In st. 6 the attention is turned somewhat more to the west by mentioning that Óláfr also killed *Saxar*

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[664] Hákon jarl is also praised in the roughly contemporary *Hákonardrápa* (Skj A I: 144-147, B I: 136-139) by Tindr Hallkelsson; that poem tells of the battle agains Jomsvikings, and also contains some references to *Vinðr* (4:1) and *Danir* (6:4).

[665] Óláfr Tryggvason was the king of Norway from 995-1000.

[666] See Skj (A I: 338, B I: 311); as well as Whaley (1998: 183-184). For an alternative ordering of the stanzas in *Óláfsdrápa*, see Fidjestøl (1982, pp. 166-170, 273). The latter author attempts to establish the order on the basis of the geographical labels that figure in the poem and in the related prose tradition on Óláfr.

[667] Here *Gotar* probably refers to the inhabitants of Gotland, whereas in other poems it may stand for those of Götaland (LP: 195).

[668] The whole half-stanza is as follows: *Bǫðserkjar hjó birki / barklaust í Danmǫrku / hleypimeiðr fyr Heiða / hlunnviggja bý sunnan*. Note the manner in which the place name *Heiðabýr* is divided into two components. Translation by Hollander: "The steerer-of-sea-steeds then / steel-clad warriors in Denmark / from sarks of mail severed / south of Heithabýr Town" (*Heimskringla* 2002: 168).

(6:4) and *Frísir* (6:6); it is depicted how he fed the wolves with *Saxar* and let them drink the blood of *Frísir*.[669]

Bandadrápa (Skj A I: 200-202, B I: 190-192) by Eyjolfr dáðaskáld is dated to around 1010 and dedicated to the Norwegian jarl Eiríkr, the son of Hákon Sigurðarson. Similarly to our previous example, the poem offers a list of the jarl's battles. Fidjestøl (1982: 176) points out that in the form Bdr is preserved, there are obvious lacunaes in its composition.[670] When looking at what has remained we, however, find several interesting content elements.

Among Eiríkr's earlier engagements is his journey south, *suðr* (i.e. to Denmark) as mentioned in st. 3; it is told that he was not many winters old when he headed out there. The first three lines of st. 4 summarise that Eiríkr had many other battles of which the people have heard: *Mærr vann miklu fleiri / malmhríð jǫfurr síðan / (eðr frǫgum þat) aðra*. It is further told that he raided wide around the coasts of Gotland (*Gotlands strandir*, 4:6).[671] Stanza 5 contains the place identification *Staurr* (5:1); it is described that Eiríkr let his ships lie there by the island, and then follows a typical depiction of a battle scene. Different interpretations have been given with regard to the location of *Staurr* – it may designate a place on the Baltic Sea island Fehmarn (LP: 533; cf. also ÍF XXVI: 399).[672]

According to Fidjestøl, st. 5 should be followed by st. 7, where we hear about a battle in the sound (*í eyja sundi*, 7:3) possibly indicating *Eyrarsund*) where the warrior – described as storm-mild (*veðrmildr*, 7:8) – cleared four Danish ships (*Dana skeiðar*, 7:6). Stanza 6 relates of the jarl's activities in the east in *Garðar*, as demonstrated by a reference to the ruler Valdamarr (6:4), whose land Eiríkr is said to have raided and burnt.[673] The second part of the stanza also names the region in the east in *Garðar* and specifies the site as *Aldeigja* (i.e. Staraja Ladoga): *Aldeigju brauzt, œgir / (oss numnask skil) gumna; / sú varð hildr með hǫlðum / hǫrð, komt austr í Garða*.[674] It is interesting how the skald here turns to the jarl in person, and separately points out that these events are known to the people (i.e. us).[675]

Finally, st. 8 tells that the jarl also fought against *Gautar* (8:3) and made them flee; then the warrior and his men harried around in all districts, *allar sýslur* (8:7), which could mean both *Eysýsla* and *Aðalsýsla* – in the least, such is the content of the related prose. But when looking only at the poem, the expression *allar sýslur* in itself does not necessarily have to connect with one particular territory, unless it was self-evident for the skald and his audience

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[669] The rest of the poem refers to further western engagements in the area of Holland and in different parts of the British Isles, and again it is related how Óláfr fought against different groups of people. In this connection we could mention that Óláfr and his different campaigns are also celebrated in a 12th century poem *Rekstefja* by Hallar-Steinn. This poem mentions that Óláfr was fostered in *Garðar* (see st. 2); his missionary activities are also in focus (sts. 9-11). In the meantime most of the attention is given to his final battle and fall.

[670] Also, in prose commentaries that are provided in *Fagrskinna* (Fsk) and Hkr, there is some variation with regard to the interpretation of the place names in the poem (ibid.). Fidjestøl (1982: 177, 273) rearranges the stanzas of Bdr on the basis of its presentation in Fsk, as well as on the manner in which the poem applies refrain, *stef*.

[671] Fidjestøl (1982: 176) mentions that here Fsk speaks of *Gautland* instead. For a list of Eiríkr's battles according to Fsk, see ÍF (XXIX: 164-165).

[672] Jesch (2001: 207) finds that *Staurr* may stand for Staver in southern Denmark. It is possible that the described situation refers to a battle with Wends.

[673] Valdamarr is identified as the Russian prince Vladimir Svjatoslavich (980-1015).

[674] Hollander's translation: "Didst Aldeigja level / dreaded leader – such news / heard we for sure – when you / harried east in Garthar" (*Heimskringla* 2002: 223).

[675] The motive of Eiríkr burning down *Aldeigja* is commented on by Jackson (1993: 213-215). According to Jackson, Staraja Ladoga is mentioned ca. 40 times in skaldic poems and saga literature, occurring in the form of *Aldeigja* and *Aldeigjuborg* (2003: 42). She also discusses the etymology of the name (op. cit. 44).

that these terms would imply *Eysýsla* and *Aðalsýsla*, and not, for example, some districts of Götaland.

Eiríksflokkr, roughly contemporary with Bdr, is dedicated by Haldórr ókristni to Eiríkr jarl and his fight against king Óláfr Tryggvason. In the poem we hear how the large army, with jarl as the leading man, set out from *Svíþjóð* (1:2) heading south (*sunnr* (1:3), i.e. towards Denmark), with support gained from the people of Skåne (*Skǫnungar*, 2:8). Óláfr at the same time was approaching from the south (*sunnan*, 2:2). Then the two armies met and fought *at holmi* (3:7); this designation may indicate the island of Svolder. Although not identified by name, the southern position of the battle site is pointed out (cf. *Erfidrápa Óláfs Tryggvasonar*, above).[676] Here we also find reference to the famous ship of Óláfr Tryggvason, *Ormr inn langi* (4:4, 5:8, 8:4); and the participation of *Vinða skeiðr* (7:2) in the battle is mentioned.[677]

We continue with the famous skald who was active at the court of Óláfr Haraldsson (Óláfr helgi, reigned from 1015-1030) – and that is Sigvatr Þórðarson. Sigvatr composed several poems in honour of his patron: *Víkingarvísur*, *Nesjavísur*, *Austrfararvísur*, *Erfidrápa Óláfs helga*, as well as some *lausavísur*; besides that, he even managed to celebrate other chieftains, such as Erlingr Skjalgsson, Knútr ríki (in his *Knútsdrápa*) and Magnus góði (in *Bersǫglisvísur*).[678] We shall discuss Sigvatr's *Víkingarvísur*, which relates of Óláfr's early campaigns, and *Austrfararvísur,* which was composed in connection with Sigvatr's own eastern mission.

Víkingarvísur (Skj A I: 223-228, B I: 213-216), which according to Fell (1981: 106) is "a group of poems, or group of stanzas from a single poem", focuses first and foremost on Óláfr's raids in England; but its introductory parts also include Baltic references.[679] The structure of Víkv is logical and straightforward – each stanza deals with a particular battle. The stanzas follow one fixed scheme (with only minor modifications): "1) Nummer på slaget; 2) Namnet på slagstaden; 3) Om kongens kamp; 4) Om forsvaret, eller reaksjonen fra motstandarane elles" (Fidjestøl 1982: 183).[680]

The first stanza of Víkv depicts the young prince heading on his ship out from a sound (or strait) and having his first battle *fyr austan* (1:7), i.e. in the east *við sker Sóta* (1:8). The place identification *Sótasker* is in LP (p. 527) understood as a reference to a rocky islet by the eastern coast of Sweden; in ÍF (XXVII: 475) it is suggested that the place may be Sotholmen off Södermanland. Along the lines of typical battle imagery, in the stanza *Sótasker* is given as the site where Óláfr reddened the foot of a wolf (*ulfs fót*, 1:8).

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[676] As mentioned in 3.1.31. the exact location of Svolder remains a matter of discussion. Jesch (2001: 207) explains with regard to skaldic evidence that *"holmr/Holmr* might be the name of a specific island (but we do not know which one), or might refer to some island whose name is not recorded". The place name *Svǫlðr* itself is recorded in a separate poem about the Svolder-battle by Skúli Þórsteinsson (ca. 1020, see Skj A I: 305-306, B I: 283-284) in the form of phrases, such as *sunnr fyr Svǫlðrar mynni* (2:7), *fyr Svǫlðr* (4:2).

[677] Eiríkr is also honoured by Þórðr Kolbeinsson in his *Eiríksdrápa* from ca. 1014. *Eiríksdrápa* (Skj A I: 213-217, B I: 203-206) opens with picturing how the Danish ships in the south were gathering their forces; in the following stanzas the battle at *Hjǫrungavágr* is described. The latter part of the poem concentrates on the relationship of the jarl with the Danish kings, in which connection Knútr's battles in England are mentioned.

[678] For an overview of Sigvatr's compositions, see Lie (KLNM XV: 231-238).

[679] A thorough study on the evidence of Víkv along the way various prose narratives employ the verse is provided by Fell (1981). Explanations concerning English place names that figure in the poem can be found in Townend (1998).

[680] "1) Number of the battle; 2) Name of the battle site; 3) About the king's battle; 4) About defence or other reaction from the oponents" (my translation).

The second stanza tells of the battle outfolding on the island of *Eysýsla* (2:4), where Óláfr is said to have experienced deceit by local farmers.[681] The imagery of that stanza thus speaks of a weapon-thing (*odda þing*, 2:3) and depicts the flight of the farmers (*þeirs undan runnu*, 2:7).

Óláfr's third battle takes him to the region of Finland; his march onto *Herdalar* (3:2) and his encounter with *Finnlendingar* (3:3) is mentioned. It is further described how the viking ships (*víkinga skeiðar*, 3:6) in the east were moved by the sea, with *Bálagarðssíða* then lying before the sea-skis' (i.e. ships) prows: *Bálagarðs at barði / brimskiðum lá síða* (3:7-8).[682]

Stanza 4 also seems to identify a destination within the Baltic region, more precisely in Denmark. As expressed in the last line of that stanza, the place was *Suðrvík*, known among Danes (*Suðrvík*, *Dǫnum kuðri*, 4:8). *Suðrvík* presumably designates Søndervig in Jylland (LP: 544; ÍF XXVII: 475).

The following stanza mentions *Kinnlimasíða*, which may mark a locality in Holland, whereas sts. 6-9 refer to different places in the British Isles and sts. 10-14 relate of campaigns elsewhere in Europe. The final stanza of the poem is exceptional since it does not speak of a battle, but instead focuses on a meeting between Óláfr and Hákon in Norway. Significant is Sigvatr's application of the phrase *dǫnsk tunga* (15:8) in this context as a way of referring to the common nature of the Scandinavian languages.

Sigvatr's poem ***Austrfararvísur*** (Skj A I: 233-240, B I: 220-225), dated to ca. 1020, is in the prose narrative of Hkr cited as the poet's reaction to events as they unfold. The general mode of poetic expression, with its direct address to Óláfr (see st. 1 and st. 21) and the dominant use of past tense, may nevertheless signify that the poem was composed only after the skald's return. Alternatively, different stanzas could have been made during the journey and arranged together afterwards. In Poole's (1997: 42) opinion Sigvatr's stanzas could be determined as "a poetic sequence describing his vicissitudes while on a diplomatic mission". Following that assumption, the address to Óláfr may then have been provided as an additional frame around the stanzas, alongside the introductory comment, according to which the verses were made about the journey (*þessar vísur of fǫr gerðak*, cf. 1:2-4). Viewed as a whole, Austrv demonstrates a complicated structure, as the sequence of the described parts of the journey is not necessarily chronological – this can further support the idea of the stanzas being first and foremost regarded as independent units evolving around Sigvatr's experiences.

As mentioned above, Austrv follows the mission undertaken by Sigvatr: "The purpose of the expedition was to arrange a reconciliation between the kings of Norway and Sweden" (Frank 1978: 33). The apparent task for Sigvatr was to get hold of jarl Rǫgnvaldr residing in western Götaland, but he seems to have made his way to *Svíþjóð* as well, and maybe even further. On the basis of the poem it seems that "Sigvatr's journey involved travelling by sea, on horseback, on foot and over stretches of water in a leaky boat" (Turville-Petre 1976: 78-79).

A possible reconstruction of the route by Sahlgren (referred to in S. Brink 2000: 51-52) is the following: Sigvatr started off in Oppland, travelled through Edskog (the forest region between Hedmark and Värmland), then came down to Lake Vänern, crossed the lake and

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[681] According to the prose narrative of Hkr, *Óláfs saga helga* ch. 8 (ÍF XXVII: 9-10), Óláfr was supposed to get tribute from the locals but they attacked him instead.

[682] *Herdalar* is an unidentified place in Finland, whereas *Bálagarðssíða* is usually taken to designate its southwestern coast. For a discussion around the formulations in st. 3 see Fell (1981: 112) as well as Jesch (2001: 148, 178). Note again the division of place name components in the verse couplet.

continued along the river Lidan until reaching the strategically located Skara, the crossing point for several important land roads. From there he could then have continued further on to Mälaren.

This precise description naturally has to remain only a modern reconstruction. Whatever the exact route may have been, Austrv does create the image of Sigvatr's journey, taking him all the way through *Gautland*. At the same time *Svíþjóð* is the identified goal in the east, as mentioned in the introductory stanza (1:6-7). The description of the route and Sigvatr's troubles starts in st. 2, with an indication made to *Eið*. The name may refer to a site close to *Eiðaskógr* (or maybe on the Göta river), or alternatively, provide a general place designation (a headland). In this stanza Sigvatr complains about the ship they had, the worst one he has ever seen. In st. 3 we hear about inland travel through the above-mentioned Edskog (*of skóg frá Eiðum*, 3:2). It is told that Sigvatr and his company covered *tolf ok eina rastir* (3:1-4); in other words, thirteen "rests" (miles).[683] The route was tough, an image strengthened by describing how all of the men got sores on their feet. Stanza 4 tells that the travellers made it to a farm called *Hof*, presumably somewhere in the territory of Götaland, and in the following some motives concerning the unwelcoming heathen people are outlined.

The next place identification, or rather directional guide, occurs in st. 8 (1-2), where the route that is taking the travellers eastwards from *Eiðaskógr* is mentioned. In the following we also see the same technique of pointing back to *Eiðaskógr* when describing the eastern journey in general terms (st. 14:3-4). In sts. 9-10 Sigvatr seems to look back at the earlier stages of his mission when he was out in the fjords and on the stormy sea; travel on water and on land are set in relation to each other. Stanza 11 contains another interesting directional guide; it is expressed that the horse carries the skald further away from the Danes (*berr mik Dǫnum ferri*, 11:6). According to Frank (1978: 74) this may mean "'inland', into the forests of Götaland, away from the seaboard which was largely Danish territory (Skåne, Halland, Blekinge)". Among other markers in the poem are *norðan* (13:7) and *vestan* (19:2), signifying the directions where Sigvatr came from.

The poem itself does not make it evident when exactly Sigvatr reached his destinations, but according to the prose commentaries, sts. 14-15 were composed while he was visiting the jarl. The concluding st. 21 (in present tense), on the other hand, clearly demonstrates that now Sigvatr is back with Óláfr and mediates him the message according to which he can trust the jarl. He describes the jarl as the best friend for Óláfr on the eastern route along the green sea: *þann veitk, þinga kennir, / þik baztan vin miklu / á austrvega eiga I alt með grœnu salti* (21:5-8). Here the label 'eastern route' thus must refer to the territories of Sweden.

Another known skald who composed in honour of Óláfr Haraldsson is Óttarr svarti. His *Hǫfuðlausn* (Skj A I: 290-296, B I: 268-272) from around 1023 describes the early events in Óláfr's career (cf. Sigvatr's Víkv, above). In this manner, st. 3 speaks of the young Óláfr coming with his ship from the north to Denmark. In st. 4 we hear that he sailed further on to the lands around the eastern sea (*austr í salt*, 4:2) – a reference to the Baltic Sea. Half-stanza 5 mentions Óláfr's raid on some headland of *Svíþjóð* (*Svíþjóðar nes*, 5:4). The following stanza combines two events; the first part focuses on the raid on Gotland where Óláfr made the people pay him tribute (*Gildir, komt at gjaldi / gotneskum her, flotna*, 6:1-2). The second part depicts how the retinue of *Eysýsla* people (*Eysýslu lið*, 6:8) was forced to flee, but at the same time the hunger of the wolves was satisfied.

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[683] According to S. Brink (2000: 52), thirteen *rastir* would correspond to ca. 4-8 Swedish miles.

As with the above-mentioned *Víkv*, the rest of the poem mostly concentrates on Óláfr's western engagements (see sts. 7-13). However, in st. 14 the scene changes over to Norway, and in the following step Óláfr's rule at home is described. Interesting is the message of st. 18 where the king is directly addressed, saying that now he rules over the whole land that reaches to the east to Ed(skog), which no one before has done. In this manner the range of the Norwegian realm is established.

Arnórr Þórðarson jarlaskáld is known to have celebrated two Norwegian kings, Magnús góði and Haraldr harðráði, as well as the jarls of Orkney.[684] His *Hrynhenda/Magnúsdrápa* from ca. 1046 (Skj A I: 332-338, B I: 306-311) is "the first known example of a panegyric in the flowing, octosyllabic measure *Hrynhenda* […] which Arnórr may well have learnt in Orkney" (Turville-Petre 1976: 93).[685]

In its present state *Hrynhenda* opens with an address to king Magnús in which he is called *Jóta gramr* (1:4) and *Hǫrða dróttinn* (1:5); but in the narrative account of *Morkinskinna* (*Saga Magnús góða ok Haralds harðráða*) it is stated that the original poem actually contained an introductory part where the poet spoke about the Orkney jarls and his own travels.[686] Except for a few fragmentary lines, that part of *Hrynhenda* is not preserved. Fidjestøl thus places the two couplets (numbered 2 and 3 in Skj), where the skald refers to his own sea voyage, before the first stanza.[687] E. Gurevich (2000: 104) finds that this loss was probably caused by the fact that during the transmission of poems in the kings' sagas the parts that did not directly concern the ruler were not considered that important.

From our point of view it is the sts. 4-5, 10-13 and 15 that deserve the most attention. In st. 4 we hear about how the king headed with his warships (*herskip*, 4:1) out on the eastern sea, i.e. the Baltic Sea (*í salt et eystra*, 4:2). As signified by the form *eystri* (comparative of *austr*), the name actually means "more eastern sea" (Jackson 1994: 210; 2000: 291). From the prose tradition and the second *Magnúsdrápa* by the same skald (see below) we know that Magnús was coming from *Garðar*. This becomes further evident from the application of the phrase *gerzku reiði* (4:4), i.e. the tackle from *Garðar*. The nautical term *reiði* is recorded on a few other occasions (cf. Jesch 2001: 165). Jesch emphasises: "It is not clear whether Russian tackle was somehow special, or whether it is a simple practicality, since Magnús was just coming back from there" (ibid.). For the latter assumption would speak the fact that in st. 9 of the same poem we find the phrase *gerzkum malmi* (9:8), i.e. weapons from *Garðar*.[688]

From st. 5 we learn that Magnús and his men went through *sœnskar byggðir* (5:2), gaining support from many men there, and the fact that they were coming from the east (*austan*, 5:5) is mentioned. The same directional guide also gets repeated in st. 6 as a way of showing that Magnús was approaching *þrœnzkar byggðir* (6:2) from the east. In this context the eastern direction can first and foremost point back at *Svíþjóð*; although a certain ambiguity is possible. The following stanzas relate of the establishment of his rule over Norway, whereas in st. 10 a new campaign is undertaken, this time to Denmark, *Danaveldi* (10:8); we also hear that the route led the ships from the north past Stavanger (*of Stafangr norðan*, 10:5). The next stanza

[684] Magnús góði ruled Norway from ca. 1035-1047, Haraldr harðráði from ca. 1046-1066.

[685] For a detailed study of Arnórr's poetry, see Whaley (1998).

[686] See *Morkinskinna* (ed. by Finnúr Jónsson, 1932: 116) as well as Fidjestøl (1982: 201); E. Gurevich (2000: 100-102).

[687] See Fidjestøl's comments (1982: 202, 203, 275). Interesting is the occurrence of the word *kaupfǫr* (trade journey) in st. 2:3, since corresponding indications of trade-related activities are in general rare in battle-orientated praise poetry – at least in the state it has come down to us.

[688] For comments around the use of the adjective *gerzkr*, see also Jackson (2000: 76).

focuses on the king's expedition to the land of the Wends (*til Venða grundar*, 11:2), and Magnús is said to cause sorrow to the Wends (*Venða sorg*, 11:6). Stanza 12 focuses on further events in the territory of the Wends – the raiding and burning that took place in the south at *Jóm* (*suðr at Jómi*, 12:4).[689] In st. 13 the skald describes another battle against the Wends by *Skotborgará* (13:2), which again caused them sorrow.[690]

Stanza 14 offers a kind of summary of Magnús' activities by stating that the king has had four battles during one winter; and st. 15 adds that he won the battle at *Helganes* (i.e. Helgenæs, southeast of Århus) – against the Danish jarl.[691] The last part of the poem (the arrangement of the stanzas remains uncertain) depicts the king's sea voyages and his many praise-worthy features in general terms and forms a suitable concluding frame for the celebratory poem.

In his second *Magnúsdrápa* (Skj A I: 338-343, B I: 311-315), Arnórr relates for the main part the same events, with certain additional details – and that is true also on the level of applied place identifications. The first stanza (which we already referred to in connection with *Óláfsdrápa* by Hallfreðr) informs that Magnús was only eleven when he took his warships out of Garðar (*ór Gǫrðum*, 1:8). In the second stanza it is clarified that the journey from the east (*austan*, 2:6) took the ruler to Sigtuna (*at Sigtúnum* 2:8). Stanza 3 says that Magnús went on land in *Svíþjóð* (*gekk á Svíþjóð*, 3:1); he is characterised as the opponent of the Sveinn (*søkkvi Sveins*, 3:1-2).[692] We then hear how Sveinn is driven out of Norway; in st. 5 the wish of Magnús to also conquer Denmark is expressed. The next stanza then depicts his journey from the north towards *Jótland* (6:8). In st. 7 it is stated that the king got power over both Norway and Denmark.

Then the attention is turned to the battle that the king had against the Wends – one that those will always remember: *Vann, þás Vinðr of minnir / vápnhríð konungr, síðan* (8:1-2). It is said that he burned many bodies at *Jóm*. The half-stanza 9 mentions the battle at *Ré*, i.e. on the island of Rügen; there by the great *Vestland* (probably meaning the coastal region of northern Germany) the king reddened foreign swords: *Fúss lét á Ré ræsir / rammþing háit Glamma; / valska rauð fyr víðu / Vestlandi gramr branda*.[693] Stanza 10 describes the heat of another battle, without specifying the locality.[694] In sts. 12-15 the events in connection with the battle at *Helganes* (12:2) are described, with Magnús' being called the ruler of the Skåne people (*gramr Skǫnungar*, 13:2-4).

Following that battle, Magnús is said to have landed at and raided through Skåne (*á Skáneyju*, 16:4), and then to have continued his campaign on the island of Falster, where the retinue of the Falster-people (*Falstrbyggva lið*, 17:4) fell. The banners were reddened during the fight on Fyn (*á Fjóni*, 18:1); in this stanza it is further emphasised that the king was only twenty when he accomplished all this.

Another skald who celebrated the enterprises of Magnús was Þjóðólfr Arnórsson. His *Magnúsflokkr* (Skj A I: 361-368, B I: 332-338) is dated to ca. 1045. In general he presents the same scheme of events, starting with Magnús coming from the east (*austan*, 1:2), arriving

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[689] *Jóm* is normally taken to refer to a stronghold Jomsborg on the island of Wollin in Pommern (LP: 328).

[690] *Skotborgará* designates the river Kongeå, north of Ribe (ÍF XXVIII: 461).

[691] That was Sveinn Úlfsson, the later king of Denmark, see also below.

[692] Meaning the Danish king Sveinn Alfífuson, who also ruled in Norway.

[693] "Ready was the ruler at / Ré to go to battle. / Welsh swords before Westland / wide then reddened Magnús" (*Heimskringla*, Hollander 2002: 563).

[694] In Hkr, *Magnúss saga ins góða* ch. 28 (ÍF XXVIII: 43-44) the stanza is included as evidence of the battle at *Skotborgará*.

in Sigtuna (*í Sigtúnum*, 2:8) and travelling through *Svíþjóð* (3:2), followed by his eastern army, and scaring the Danish king Sveinn away. Additional details are given in st. 5, which describes the meeting of the king with the Danish jarl Sveinn (i.e. Sveinn Úlfsson) in the east by the Göta river (*austr við Elfi*, 5:1), where Sveinn took an oath to be a man of Magnús – which he, as it is said, did not hold for long. Stanza 6 speaks of the battle in the south at *Skotborgará* (6:4) and the killing of Wends (*Vinðr*, 6:5) near *Heiðabýr* (6:2). The rest of the stanzas depict the further campaigns and activities of Magnús, containing references to a few other sites and districts, e.g. *Selund* (17:4), *Hringstað* (17:8), *Lundr* (18:3), *Helganes* (21:2), *Danmǫrk* (24:6), *Skáney* (24:8). Interesting is the skald's mention of how he got a shield from Götaland (*skjǫldr gauzkr*, 23:1-2) as booty after campaining with Magnús – an indication of his own direct involvement in the king's affairs that he is describing.[695]

Returning to the works of Arnórr jarlaskáld, we should also take a look at the memorial lay *Erfidrápa Haralds Harðráða* (Skj A I: 349-353, B I: 322-326) from about 1067.[696] In its preserved state the poem focuses on Haraldr's ventures after his return to Norway; Haraldr harðráði had serviced as a mercenary in *Garðar* and Byzantium in his youth.[697]

Erfidrápa thus starts with a short description of one of Haraldr's campaign to Denmark, more precisely to the island of Fyn; half-stanza 1 mentions both the place (*á Fjóni*, 1:3) and the retinue of its inhabitants (*Fjónbyggva lið*, 1:4), whose houses were burnt. The second stanza relates how the king who had come from the north *til Hallands* (2:8) reddened his sword in the battle on the *Niz* (*fyr Nizi*, 2:2) – a designation for the river Nissaån in Halland. In the following stanza Haraldr's victory is depicted, and he is said to have cleared the Danish ships (*Dana skeiðir*, 3:2); st. 4 provides the picture of the fleeing Danes. On the basis of Haraldr's success over the Danes, he is in st. 8 called the angry destroyer of Isle-Danes (*reiðr Eydana meiðir*; 8:2). The rest of the poem deals with some other battles of Haraldr, with several references made to England.

Haraldr's earlier activities are briefly mentioned in a poem by Valgarðr á Velli (Skj A I: 390-393, B I: 360-363). Half-stanza 1, which is directly addressed to the king, says that he led his big retinue along the lands in the south; the region of Sicily (*Sikiley*, 1:4) is named as the last point. In st. 4 we meet the term *væringjar* (4:4). Most of the preserved poem, in the meantime, focuses on Haraldr's activities in Denmark.

Stanza 5 describes the return of Haraldr from the east (*austan*, 5:4), and it is told that he brought with him gold (*farðir goll ór Gǫrðum*, 5:3); Sigtuna (*Sigtún*; 5:8) is given as the point where he arrives. The next stanza depicts how Haraldr set out from *Svíþjóð* (6:4) and passed with raised sails the flat Skåne, scaring Danish women: *hýnd bar rif, þars renduð / rétt á stag fyr slétta, / skeið, en skelkðuð brúðir, / Skáney, Dǫnum nánar* (6:4-8).[698] From st. 7 we learn that Haraldr then raided in the whole of Sjælland (*Selund alla*, 7:4), so that the wolves got the

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[695] In a separate *lausavísa* (number 4), the same skald comments upon the beautiful roads while passing through Skåne on his way south to Lund: *skýtra skeifum fœti / Skáney yfir slain / (fár vegr es mér fegri fundinn) / suðr til Lundar* (4:5-8). ("Scuttled the scamps o'er all / Scania in great hurry - / few lands have I found more / fair e'er – south to Lund town", *Heimskringla*, Hollander 2002: 572). As remarked by Foote, "it is hard to be sure whether he means he had never had a better road underfoot, or had never travelled through a lovelier landscape, or had never had a better destination" (Foote 1993: 22).

[696] Comments on the arrangement of stanzas in the poem are provided by Fidjestøl (1982: 205-207).

[697] In the final half-stanza (as presented in Skj), Haraldr is described as *Girkja vǫrð ok Garða* (19:3). Fidjestøl (1982: 206) argues that this piece does not belong into the original poem.

[698] "High, then, to mast's head you / hoisted the sail as you / scudded past level Scania, / scaring women, near Denmark" (*Heimskringla*, Hollander 2002: 591).

fallen; after that he and his men raged on Fyn (*á Fjón*, 7:5). Stanza 8 adds that Haraldr burnt villages south of Roskilde (*brann í bý fyr sunnan / bjartr eldr Hróiskeldu*, 8:1-2) and many men lost their lives. Stanza 9 offers a general description of the results of the battle, and it is told that Danes who fled saved their lives. Then Haraldr sailed away from the south (*sunnan*, 10:4); and in the final stanza (11) he is presented as the ruler over the whole of Norway.[699]

An opponent of both Magnús góði and Haraldr harðráði was Sveinn Úlfsson, the Danish king praised in a **flokkr by Þórleikr fagri** (Skj A I: 396-399, B I: 365-368), dated to ca. 1051.[700] It can be discussed whether the stanzas that are listed in Skj made up a unified poem or whether some among them were *lausavísur* (Fidjestøl 1982: 228). In st. 1 the skald tells of a battle north of Hedeby (*fyr Heiða / […] bœ norðan*, 1: 3-4) where the raven was fed and only a few Wends escaped – the numerous army is said to have lied dead on the heath (*dauðr lá herr á heiði / hundmargr*, 1:7-8). The second stanza focuses on the conflicts between Sveinn and the Norwegians, speaking of the approaching sea battle between the king and the retinue of the Trøndelag people. The following stanza offers a characteristic image of warrior mobility by depicting the two forces coming from opposite directions; thus, Haraldr (i.e. Haraldr harðráði) steers his ships from the north (*norðan*, 3:4) and Sveinn's ships sail from the south (*sunnan*, 3:8). This picture is further built upon in the following stanza, where the victorious Danish king (*fengsæll Dana þengill*, 4:2) is said to have gathered ships by the land (*fyr hauðri*, 4:3) with the purpose of steering as many as *sex hundruð* (i.e. 720) ships from the south (*sunnan*, 4:6) to meet the Norwegian king, who is called *Hǫrða gramr* (4:7).

In st. 5 Sveinn's fleet sails on to the Göta river (*til Elfar*, 5:1), but in st. 6 he is said to have headed *til Heiðabœjar* (6:2), since Haraldr had instead turned his ships to the Danish king's town (*til þengils býjar*, 6:5) from the east (*austan*, 6:6). Jesch (2001: 113) points out that on this occasion "the poet, with his Danish perspective, is naturally critical of the attack". In this manner, "this action is described as *þarflaust* 'unnecessary', and the year in which it happened as *ár þatsǫn of væri* 'a year one should be without'" (ibid.). The next stanza (7) informs how Sveinn wished to redden shields on land, whereas Haraldr preferred to have a battle on the ship. In st. 8 the skald emphasises that he has heard all about (*alt of frák*, 8:1) how Sveinn set out after the Norwegians (*austmenn*, 8:2) and the latter fled, throwing all their captured goods overboard, which then remained floating on the sea around Jylland (probably referring to Kattegat): *fengr varð Þrœnda þengils / (þeir létu skip fleiri) / allr á éli sollnu / Jótlands hafi fljóta* (8:5-8). Stanza 10 concludes that Sveinn has managed to keep the whole of Jylland from one side to the other as well as Denmark (*allri / Jóta-grund með endum / […] ok Danmǫrku*, 10:6-8).

Our last case among Viking Age skaldic praise poems is *Eiríksdrápa* (Skj A I: 444-452, B I: 414-420), composed by Markús Skeggjason around 1104. It is a memorial lay in honour of the Danish jarl and king Eiríkr Sveinsson eygóði, where a list of his different accomplishments is provided.[701] In the first half-stanza the skald turns to his audience and asks them to listen to

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[699] Þjóðólfr Arnórsson also dedicated two poems to Haraldr. A group of stanzas placed under the label *Sexstefja* (Skj A I: 369-377, B I: 339-346) and presumably dated to ca. 1065 offer a longer overview of Haraldr's career, starting off with his earlier faraway battles; in st. 8 he is said to have sailed from the east, from *Garðar* (8:2) coming to the *Svíar* (8:3). In st. 9 his journey from the east to Denmark is mentioned. It has been questioned whether the 35 stanzas that have been included by Finnur Jónsson in *Sexstefja* indeed all belong there; see Fidjestøl (1982: 211-225).

[700] Sveinn Úlfsson ruled Denmark from 1047-1074; he is also known under the name Sveinn Ástriðarson.

[701] Eiríkr Sveinsson is known to have reigned from 1095-1103.

the poem.[702] In sts. 4-5 Eiríkr's eastern engagements are mentioned. It is thus related that he visited the rulers in the east in *Garðar* (*austr i Garða*, 4:2), who gave him gifts of gold; it is also said that Eiríkr became very well known all along the eastern route (*of austrveg allan*, 4:5). In st. 5, his departure from the east in *Garðar* is described – in the early spring the destroyer of the Wends (as he is called) started getting the ships ready. He sailed from *Garðar* at the start of the summer and after a heavy storm landed in Denmark (*við Danmǫrk lenda*, 5:8). Similarly to st. 5, Eiríkr is also in st. 8 identified through his opposition to the Wends, this time being called their oppressor (*Vinða fergir*, 8:1); in the meantime, in this particular stanza we actually hear that the king put stop to viking activities (cf. Jesch 2003: 268). Specific is the manner in which Eiríkr is described in st. 9 – *ungr nam hann á margar tungur* (9:6), meaning that he took up many languages as a young man.

In the following stanzas, Eiríkr's journey to Italy is mentioned, followed by references to his religious activities – half-stanza 13 for example explains that Eiríkr managed to move the site for the arch bishopric over the borders of Saxony (i.e. establish one in Denmark): *Eiríkr náði útan fœra / erkistól of Saxa merki* (13:1-2).[703] In sts. 15-24 the king's confrontation with the heathen Wends and the battle that he undertook in the Wendish territory is presented.[704] In this connection the skald mentions the old heathen castle of the Wends (in st. 21); st. 22 describes how the heathen hearts were filled with sorrow in the Wendish villages: *Heiðin vǫru hjǫrtu lýða hryggðar-full í Vinða byggðum* (22:1-2). The following scenes depict the burning of the Wends' houses, their flight and surrender; a summary of the king's victorious battle is offered in st. 24.

The final part of the poem deals with Eiríkr's further activities, such as the establishment of the arch bishopric near Lund that all Danish-speaking men are said to worship; as well as his journey to Jerusalem (st. 28). Stanza 31 contains the motive concerning the king's death and the sorrow felt all over the world (*of heims-byggð alla*, 31:6).[705]

In addition to the skaldic examples treated above we wish to briefly mention a somewhat younger poem composed by the Orkney bishop Bjarni Kolbeinsson, namely *Jómsvíkinga-drápa* (Skj A II: 1-10, B II: 1-10). This poem may serve as an example of how the people of the Middle Ages continued to address popular themes from the past. One centre for such activity was obviously the Orkney earldom (cf. Frank 1978: 68).

As the name says, the poem deals with the legendary Jomsvikings and their battles. The poem was composed either at the end of the 12th century or possibly in the beginning of the 13th century. According to Megaard (2000: 328), the style and the erotical tone of the poem – which witness that it was composed by a younger man – support the year 1188 as *terminus ante* quem for an early version. In that year, Bjarni Kolbeinsson took up the post as the bishop of Orkney.[706] The motives around unhappy love (presented in the frames of *stef*) mark the introduction of a new approach in skaldic poetry (Holtsmark, KLNM VII: 606).

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[702] The order of the stanzas has been critically assessed by Fidjestøl (1982: 242-243).

[703] In st. 25, the directional guide north of Saxony (*fyr Saxland norðan*, 25:8) is provided in connection with the churches Eiríkr had built.

[704] These events are described in further detail in ch. 76 of *Knýtlinga saga* (ÍF XXXV: 222-227).

[705] Jesch comments with regard to *Eiríksdrápa*'s focus on Christian motives that it is the first clear example among the skaldic poems, which shows "that the new, 'medieval' model of kingship has replaced the old 'viking' model and that Christian concepts of the monarchy are firmly established" (Jesch 2003: 273).

[706] Megaard compares the poem to various prose versions of the Jomsviking legend and concludes that it is based upon a text with apparent similarities to the version of Fsk and Hkr (ibid.).

In the poem by Bjarni Kolbeinsson it is the Jomsviking Vagn who is depicted as the most outstanding hero, as for example stated in st. 9: *frǫgum Vagn at væri / víst ofrhugi enn mesti* (9:7-8). The same idea lies in focus throughout the poem, although other Jomsvikings are also mentioned (see sts. 12-13).

Among place identifications, st. 6 informs that in old times five chieftains sat in the south *at Jómi* (6:2) – this expression provides a suitable introduction for the tale that unfolds in the 40 following stanzas. In st. 10 we hear how the great warriors steered their ships towards Denmark (*heldu dreyrgra darra / Danmarkar til styrkir*, 10:1-2). In st. 16 their movement from the south (*sunnan*, 16:1) over the sea is described, and in st. 17 the skald tells that the Jomsvikings made it to Jæren in Norway on Christmas Eve: *jólanótt at Jaðri / Jómsvíkinga kvæmi* (17:3-4). Stanza 20 provides the name of the battle site where the Jomsvikings and the Norwegian forces met (i.e. *Hjǫrungavágr* 20:8). In the following stanzas the heat of the battle is described in detail (st. 28 for example states that Vagn cut off hundreds of heads), followed by a dramatic conclusion where again Vagn's heroic features are emphasised.

The final examples included in the current overview are a few *lausavísur* by the Icelandic skald Egill Skallagrímsson, who lived from ca. 900-983. The authenticity of the verse – preserved first and foremost in the frames of a separate saga about his life – has in the meantimed been doubted, especially with regard to his various occasional stanzas (cf. the description of sources in 4.1.1.). Certain place identifications that these stanzas provide may also be questioned. Therefore we shall approach the examples below from a generally cautious platform.

Lausavísa number 6 (Skj A I: 50, B I: 43), with a suggested date of around 924, may mention the planning of a raid by Egill and his men on Lund (*upp til Lundar*, 6:5), expressing Egill's opinion that they should go on land and attack.[707] However, it is not completely certain whether the designation *Lundr* should indeed be taken as the proper name 'Lund'; alternatively, it may function as a general poetic term for a site where Egill and his men planned to land and raid.

Lausavísa number 8 (Skj A I: 50, B I: 44), also dated to 924, speaks of another raid by Egill; this time the locality is identified as lying off the coast of Jylland. It is further described how the men fought against the viking Eyvindr, who was defending the Danish realm: *Gerðum hølzti harða / hríð fyr Jótlands síðu, / barðisk vel sás varði / víkingr Dana ríki / áðr á sund fyr sandi / snarfengr með lið drengja / austr af unnar hesti / Eyvindr of hljóp skreyja*.[708]

Lausavísa number 10 (Skj A I: 51, B I: 44) from ca. 925 speaks of the death of Egill's brother Þórólfr and expresses the skald's sorrow over his loss. This example is included here merely to demonstrate the problematic nature of certain skaldic references; it is not directly connected to evidence on Baltic traffic. The assumed place identification near *Vína* (*Vínu nærr*, 10:6) that designates some river has caused confusion. The *lausavísa* itself is included in ch. 55 of *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar* (cf. ÍF II: 141-148), where we hear about a battle in England at *Vínheiðr*, identified as Brunanburh (cf. Townend 1998: 88). However, as stated by Frank: "The relation between this verse and its prose context has been held suspect. There is some reason to believe that the stanza actually commemorates Þórólfr's death in Russia on

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[707] See also ch. 47 of *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar* (ÍF II: 118-119).
[708] "A mighty fierce attack / we made off Jutland's shores. / He fought well, the viking / who guarded the Danish realm, / until swift Eyvind Braggart / and his men all bolted / from their horse of the waves / and swam off the eastern sand" (*The Complete Sagas of Icelanders* I: 91-92).

the Bjarmaland expedition mentioned earlier in the saga" (Frank 1978: 79). The given explanation sees *Vína* as an ordinary ON name for the Russian river Dvina.

Townend presents a counterargument, bringing in the additional evidence of *Íslendingadrápa*, "which claims in its ninth and tenth stanzas that Egill and Þórólfr fought side-by-side in Athelstan's army" (Townend 1998: 90). The poem may therefore be taken as confirming the fact that "the belief in Þórólfr's death in battle in England [...] dates from before *Egils saga*" (op. cit. 91). On this basis it is thus quite likely that *Vína* (OE *We(o)n) stands for an English river (op. cit. 92-93). But again, there also remains the theoretical possibility that *Vína* simply provides a general reference to a river, without necessarily mentioning its name.

4.1.2.2. Conclusions

The preceding subsection offered a selection of skaldic references to Baltic traffic as presented in individual poems. The concluding summary is based upon previously discussed evidence alongside a few additional insights gained from other poems.

The majority of examples that are of relevance when studying skaldic depictions of Baltic traffic occur in poems that belong under the traditional genre of praise poetry. This factor in itself gives us an idea about the general mode in which the accounts of Baltic traffic are presented. The poems celebrate Scandinavian (mostly Norwegian and Danish) rulers and focus on their campaigns and battles – where they are victorious.[709] From such a military bias follows that references to various Baltic destinations are mostly provided as a means of localising various battle sites and identifying target areas for expeditions and campaigns.

The way the applied place and/or ethnic names are interwoven into the complex poetic formulation in the meantime depends upon various formal, stylistic and thematic requirements that make skaldic poetry into what it actually is. That is to say, besides the explicit informative purpose of naming a particular arena where his patron was active, the skald also had to fit these labels into the metrical structure of the poem, which was often built upon a strict system of alliteration and internal rhyme. The studied poems demonstrate numerous examples of how proper names accord with the schemes of alliteration and/or inner rhyme. Due to the apparent formalism of this poetry, it is further possible that sometimes certain designations may have been included for metrical reasons only.[710]

At the same time, it is interesting to observe how these content elements – apparently rather realistic and fixed – fuse with the overall diction. Sometimes place indications even emerge in the form of special poetic phrases, such as for example *á grœna trjónu selmeina* in st. 2 of *Hákonardrápa* by Goþþormr sindri, which seems to indicate some headland of Sjælland, or the formulation *myrk- Hlǫðvinjar -markar* in st. 27 of Einarr Skálaglamm's

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[709] Foote concludes with regard to skaldic poetry on Swedish chieftains that on the basis of the list of *Skaldatál*, and with the reservation of focusing only upon the so-called historical time, "we find fifteen poets who are said to have composed in the service of twelve rulers in Sweden and Götaland from about 1000 down to Birger jarl Magnusson, who died in 1266" (Foote 1993: 20). Furthermore, it is obvious from the preserved narrative tradition that "what composition there was on Swedish rulers was of no great interest to the Icelandic historians" (op. cit. 21).

[710] At this current state I have not been able to examine that last question in more detail; for one, it is hard to distinguish between such cases when proper names function first and foremost as important content elements as opposed to those where they might simply serve the metre and not necessarily derive from an established fact. A systematic study of the placement of proper names within skaldic stanzas, as well as a classification of different types of references that is based on all available skaldic verse, needs to be carried out.

Vellekla – a possible reference to the territory of Jylland where *myrkmǫrk* designates a (dark) forest. The latter example also demonstrates one specific formal strategy of the skaldic language, in which the two parts of a compound word are separated from each other (i.e. tmesis). In fact, a similar phenomenon can be noted on a couple of occasions with proper names that include two connected components (although these did not necessarily have to be experienced as firm compounds by the language users of the past).

One such example would be the name *Heiðabær/Heiðabýr*, as recorded in st. 5 of Hallfreðr's *Óláfsdrápa*, where *Heiða-* and *-býr* occur in different verse lines of a couplet; the same is visible in st. 1 of the *flokkr* for Sveinn Úlfsson by Þórleikr fagri.[711] Similarly, *Bálagarðssíða* in st. 3 of Sigvatr's *Víkingarvísur* gets divided within a verse couplet; it may also be pointed out that the same poem introduces in st. 1 the place identification *Sótasker* as *sker Sóta* (in this case within the same verse line).[712] Also, in st. 2 of *Tøgdrápa* by Þórarinn loftunga the two components of the place name *Limafjǫrð* appear in different verse lines.[713]

In some cases the two components of a place designation are presented in the form of a prepositional phrase. Sigvatr's *Austrfararvísur* st. 3 applies the phrase *of skóg frá Eiðum*, whereas in sts. 12 and 14 we find the unified place name *Eiðaskógr*. In a similar style, stanza 4 of Óttarr's *Hǫfuðlausn* contains a general reference to the Baltic Sea in the form of *austr í salt*. According to the same principle, *í salt et eystra* is formed in st. 4 of *Hrynhendal Magnúsdrápa* by Arnorr jarlaskáld.

The previously mentioned poem by Óttarr also shows that sometimes only one component is enough to mark the intended place – we thus find the phrase *austr til Eiða* in st. 18. And instead of *Gautelfr* one could easily speak of *Elfr*, as for example done by Þjóðólfr Arnorsson in st. 5 of *Magnúsflokkr* and by Þórleikr fagri in st. 5 of his *flokkr*.[714]

Due to the nature of skaldic diction, it may occasionally be discussed whether the applied designations are indeed proper names or rather figure as general poetical labels, which received a concrete interpretation in the subsequent prose tradition.[715] It is further evident that now and then skalds speak of sites such as islands and sounds without specifying their names – perhaps this was unnecessary, since the occasion was in itself well known to the audience of the skald; alternatively, the reference that may seem very general to us may have received clarification with the help of other content elements in the stanza. In such a manner, Haldórr ókristni describes the battle *at holmi* in st. 3 of *Eiríksflokkr*, at the same time emphasising its southern position – the occasion was probably the battle of Svolder. In st. 17 of the *Erfidrápa Óláfs Tryggvasonar* by Hallfreðr, that same battle is localised as taking place *á víðu Holms sundi*.

In certain cases it is, on the other hand, clear that a place name actually belongs into a particular kenning and therefore carries a different meaning – the best example would be *fræ Fýrisvellir* (recorded in *lausavísa* number 8 by Eyvindr Finnson skáldaspillir), which is a

[711] On the other hand, st. 6 of the same *flokkr* has the two components of the place name standing together, as does st. 6 of *Magnúsflokkr* composed by Þjóðólfr Arnorsson.

[712] Stanza 8 uses the same technique with *borg Kantara*.

[713] The couplet is: *fœrði ór firði / fimr gramr Lima* (2:5-6). In this stanza the start of an expedition undertaken by Knútr ríki is described.

[714] The name *Gautelfr* itself occurs in the 13th century poem *Hrafnsmál* by Sturla Þórðarson (st. 1:7). In sagas we find both the shorter and the longer form of the name.

[715] An apparent case is the above-mentioned river name *Vína* from Egill's *lausavísa* (10), and from Glúmr Geirason's *Gráfeldardrápa* st. 5. Sometimes complicated kennings, such as *lagar hjarta* in *Ynglingatal* st. 25, also cause similar confusion.

mythological kenning for gold. In contrary to that, *farið til Fýrisvallar* in a *lausavísa* by Þórvaldr Hjaltason marks the destination.

Moving from corresponding formal, stylistic and semantic considerations over to thematic-informative features, we have to face the fact that skaldic poetry as a general phenomenon follows predominantly West-Norse (Norwegian-Icelandic) perspectives. The selection of places and people that get mentioned in the poems is naturally influenced by that factor. Attention is paid to such arenas within which the Scandinavian kings and leaders moved and acted; since considerable emphasis is placed upon the dealings of Norwegian rulers, many more Norwegian districts and sites are referred to (as compared to the runic evidence).

With regard to mobility within the Baltic region, the overall skaldic material demonstrates a certain concentration of interest around (southern) Scandinavian localities. Place identifications are made both on the level of countries, landscapes/districts and more limited sites, and they mostly serve to establish the setting for the unfolding contact (or rather, conflict) networks between Norwegian, Danish, and to a certain degree Swedish rulers. Denmark (alongside the southern landscapes of present-day Sweden) makes up a focal arena – witnessing first and foremost of Norwegian-Danish confrontations. References are made to traffic that concerns *Danmǫrk*/*Danaveldi* and its different districts (islands), such as *Jótland*, *Fjón*, *Selund*, *Falstr*, as well as *Halland* and *Skáney*, and possibly also *Holmr* (*Borgundarhólmr*).[716] The regions can be identified as such, or alternatively, determined in relation to their inhabitants, i.e. *Danir*, *Jótar*, *Fjónbyggvar*, *Selundbyggvar*, *Falstrbyggvar*, and *Skǫnungar*.[717] The skalds may name the waters around a particular district (*Jótlands haf*) or focus on their coastal areas (*Jótlands síða* and *Skáneyjar síða*). Certain strategic points along travelling routes (inland or water courses), settlements or battle sites are also identified; the discussed poems contain references to *Hals* and *Limafjǫrðr*, *Eyrarsund*, *Heiðabær/Heiðabýr*, *Hróiskelda*, *Hringstað, Helganes, Skotborgará, Lundr, Niz,* and possibly *Suðrvík*.[718]

As for districts/places within the region of present-day Sweden, references are made to *Gautland* and its inhabitants *Gautar* as part of the previously mentioned southern Scandinavian communication scheme.[719] *Svíþjóð* is in the meantime described as a region further to the east; it also occurs as a (preliminary) destination for travellers coming from the east, for example from *Garðar*. Separately mentioned are certain border districts or strategic

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[716] We shall in this connection not list the occurrences of corresponding labels in poems that were already discussed above, unless they require further consideration. Only additional examples that stem from other poems will be pointed out. With regard to the above-mentioned Danish place names it may thus be added that *Falstr* is actually recorded in *Stúfsdrápa* by Stúfr Þórðarson; this poem is dedicated to Haraldr harðráði and the skald mentions how the island got emptied of people: *autt varð Falstr* (5:1).

[717] *Selundbyggvar* is recorded in *Sekstefja* by Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, where the skald celebrates Haraldr harðráði, addressed as *eyðir / aldyggr Selundbyggva* (23:1-2). In fact, identifications in terms of inhabitants are very common in the skaldic material, cf. below. Besides that, various adjectival constructions, such as *józkir menn*, *danskrir drengir* etc. are used.

[718] Besides the possible reference to *Eyrarsund* (*í eyja sundi*) in st. 7 of *Bandadrápa* by Eyjolfr dáðaskáld (cf. above), the name is recorded in a *lausavísa* by a Norwegian chieftain Hárekr Eyvindarson í Þjóttu, where he describes how Knútr's warships lie out in *Eyrarsund* (1:6). Another example occurs in a *flokkr* by Halli stirði, which celebrates Haraldr harðráði. *Eyrarsund* is provided there as part of a directional guide *norðr frá Eyrarsundi* (1:1-2), while explaining that the king had a row of ships set up along the coast; in the same stanza we also find the indication *fyr vestan Hallandi* (1:7-8).

[719] It has to be underlined, though, that in certain contexts, *Gautar* functions as a general designation for 'people'; also, the same component may belong in poetic words such as *Gautatýr*, the name for Óðinn (cf. LP: 173).

points (from the Norwegian point of view), such as *Eiðaskógr* (Edskog) and *Elfr* (the Göta river). Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, we do not find many direct references to the centrally positioned island of Gotland, which as we remember enjoyed a relatively large amount of attention in runic inscriptions; *Gotlands strandir* in Eyjolfr's *Bandadrápa* (cf. above) is one example, alongside a few possible references to *Gotar*.[720] At the same time, minor Swedish localities may be pointed out either in the form of a phrase such as *Svíþjóðar nes* or by more precise identifications: *Fýrisvellir*, *Sótasker*, *Sigtún/Sigtúnir*.[721] The latter locality is on a couple of occasions named as the landing place on the way from *Garðar* (see Arnorr jarlaskáld's *Magnúsdrápa* and Þjóðólfr Arnórsson's *Magnúsflokkr*).[722]

A different question that could also be asked in connection with this is the possible meaning of general references to *Svíar* that we meet on a couple of occasions besides the mythologically-themed *Ynglingatal*. Thus, *lausavísa* number 8 by Þjóðólfr Arnórsson describes a situation in which the skald is approaching the coast of Skåne, and states that he and his men are not afraid of the *Svíar*. Foote asserts that Þjóðólfr must have actually had in mind the people from Götaland:

> He was however a masterly poet and he could undoubtedly have worked Götar into his verse if he had thought it important to single them out. We may think that Þjóðólfr, thirty years before Adam of Bremen, regarded *Svíar* as the name of a *gens*, *Gautar* that of a *populus*, a subordinate part of that larger entity. (Foote 1993: 22).

This is a possibility to consider, although as the studied poems have shown, *Gautaland/Gautar* can in other contexts also be brought out separately – and leave the impression that they are more closely linked to the southern landscapes of Sweden and the realm of Denmark. Another case where we find the designation *Svíar* is in st. 8 of Sigvatr's *Erfidrápa Óláfs helga,* when the skald relates of the *Svíar* who were coming from the east to the battle at Stiklestad; this may nevertheless first and foremost indicate the people of Svealand, *Svíþjóð*.

Concerning destinations on the other side of the Baltic Sea (i.e. outside Scandinavia), it is of interest to observe that regions such as *Virland*, *Eistland*, *Lífland* as well as the land of *Seimgalir*, which all were mentioned in runic material, have received no attention by the skalds (excluding the references to *eistneskr herr* og *Eista dolgr* in *Ynglingatal*).[723] However, we find a couple of references to the Estonian island of Saaremaa, i.e. *Eysýsla* (see *Víkingarvísur* by Sigvatr Þórðarson and *Hǫfuðlausn* by Óttarr svarti).[724] *Finnland* is in *Víkingarvísur* identified by a reference to its inhabitants *Finnlendingar*; the same poem mentions *Herdalar* and *Bálagarðssíða*, which are also understood as Finnish localities.[725]

Connections with *Garðar* are, on the other hand, well-attested to in skaldic poems, as a result of the substantial ON narrative tradition that focused both upon the personal ties of the

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[720] As already explained, it can sometimes be hard to determine whether the latter designation indeed concerns the people of Gotland or rather those of Östergötland, which according to LP would be the traditional interpretation. Otherwise, the adjective *gotneskr* may also signal ties with Gotland.

[721] See also the names listed in *Ynglingatal*, above.

[722] In addition to these examples we could mention phrases, such as: *sœnskar byggðir*, *gauzkr skjǫldr* etc.

[723] This is also commented on by Jesch (2001: 94).

[724] It is further possible that the designation *allar sýslur* in st. 8 of *Bandadrápa* speaks of both *Eysýsla* and *Aðalsýsla*.

[725] A few other occasions of when the skalds speak of *Finnar* and *Finnbyggðir* indicate connections with the Saami people (and the region of *Finnmǫrk*). One such example is recorded in a *lausavísa* (12) composed by Eyvindr Finnson skáldaspillir; in st. 16 of Sigvatr's *Erfidrápa Óláfs helga* we find a reference to the magical powers of the *Finnar*.

Norwegian rulers with *Garðar* and their different exploits and activities over there.[726] The skalds thus refer to the bringing-up of Óláfr Tryggvason and his raids in *Garðar* (though not specifying the circumstances). We also hear of the *Garðar* connections of the Norwegian jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson; the latter is said to have destroyed (burnt down) *Aldeigja*, the settlement of Staraja Ladoga. The poems that celebrate Magnús góði include the motive of the young Magnús returning from *Garðar* (after having been in exile there), with references being made both to that territory and items that must have originated from *Garðar* (as indicated by the adjective *gerzkr*). To the already discussed evidence we may add Bjarni Hallbjarnarson gullbrárskáld's *Kalfsflokkr*, which mentions Magnús' father Óláfr Haraldsson having to make a visit to *Garðar* (which means that he had to leave Norway): *varð at vitja Garða* (3:3). Other poems have presented the motive of Haraldr harðráði's mercenary service in *Garðar* and Byzantium; Arnorr, for example, calls him the guardian of those regions (st. 19 of the *drápa* for Haraldr). In another poem (by Valgarðr), Haraldr's return from *Garðar* with the gold that he had earned is described. Among the Danish rulers, Eiríkr Sveinsson is said to have visited *Garðar*, receiving similar gifts from its rulers.[727]

Much attention is given to the Scandinavian rulers' confrontations with the Wendish tribes who were settled in the region to the southeast of Denmark (first and foremost in the area of Pommern).[728] We find frequent references to *Vinðr/Venðr*, i.e. the territory is identified by talking of its inhabitants. An illustrative example is the phrase *til Venða grundar* (to the land of the Wends) in st. 11 of Arnórr's *Hrynhenda/Magnúsdrápa*. Otherwise it is common to characterise Scandinavian kings and jarls as the murderers and destroyers of the Wends, and to describe the battles where they killed many Wends and burnt down their settlements and houses. Among those actively engaged in such ventures are Hákon góði, Hákon Sigurðarson, Óláfr Tryggvason, Magnús góði and Eiríkr Sveinsson. The battles take place both within Wendish territory or somewhere in (the waters of) southern Scandinavia. It is of interest that Arnórr identifies *Jóm* as one battle site in st. 12 of *Hrynhenda/Magnúsdrápa*; the same place name is repeated in st. 8 of his second *Magnúsdrápa*. Besides that, the *Magnúsflokkr* composed by Þjóðólfr Arnórsson relates of the killing of Wends near Hedeby.[729] That sometimes the Wends could join forces with their neighbours is mentioned in Einarr skálaglamm's *Vellekla*; st. 28 describes the approaching army of the Saxon emperor, consisting of *Vinðr*, *Frísir* and *Frakkar*. The next stanza contains an additional reference to *Saxar*.[730]

The frequent application of the label *Vinðr/Venðr* in skaldic poetry brings us back to the earlier observation according to which the technique of focusing on the inhabitants of various regions is a characteristic trait of skaldic formulation.[731] These designations (alongside various adjectival qualifiers that can be derived from them) serve the purpose of identifying people, places and even particular items or phenomena.

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[726] See also the discussion of saga literature.

[727] It is, however, interesting to note that the popular destination of Novgorod is not mentioned in these skaldic poems.

[728] In this light the fact that one runic inscription from Denmark (DR 55, cf. 3.1.28.) mentions the name of a Wendish ruler gains further significance.

[729] In connection with depicting the Wends, also the motives of their heathen background are included.

[730] *Saxar* are further mentioned in Hallfreð's *Óláfsdrápa* and Markús Skjeggjason's *Eiríksdrápa*; in the latter poem we even find the place name *Saxland*.

[731] The meaning of references to named collectives in skaldic poems has been discussed by Malmros 1999 (see particularly pp. 344-348).

With regard to people they can, on the one hand, signify in-group belonging and/or demonstrate the fact that a person rules/guards over a certain collective – to name just a few examples from the discussed poems, we meet titles such as for example *Jóta gramr*, *Skǫnungar gramr*, and *danskrir jǫfrar*. In the overall skaldic material, similar constructions are especially common with *Hǫrðar*, *Egðir*, *Þrœndir/þrœnzkr*, *Danir/danskr*, and *Jótar*. On the other hand, it is possible to illuminate confrontations and emphasise the status of a given leader as the opponent of others, such as e.g. *Jóta dolgr* or the typical *Vinða myrðir/fergir*.

The names of collectives can explicitly identify territories and settlements – as demonstrated by phrases like *Vinða grund/Vinða byggðir*, *sœnskar byggðir*, and *Jóta grund*. Furthermore, they allow for the indication of (military) formations; in this manner the armies/retinues are for example called *Falstrbyggva lið*, *Fjónbyggva lið,* or *eistneskr herr*. To that we can add common references to *Dana skeiðar/Dana vǫpnum* and *Vinða skeiðar*, as well as more specific identifications of particular objects like *gerzk reiði*. On a more abstract level, the term *dǫnsk tunga* is significant as a label for Scandinavian languages.[732]

In more untraditional connections, references to groups of people also serve as directional guides. The expression by Sigvatr in st. 11 of *Austrfararvísur* (*berr mik Dǫnum ferri*) is one such example. In the meantime, directions that indicate where one is coming from or heading to are typically given in terms of the four major cardinal points: north, south, east, west.[733] When set up against each other as done in some poems, they emphasise the image of mobility from different sides.

Concerning communications within the Baltic region, a few characteristic patterns can be observed. In this manner traffic towards Denmark and the territories of Wends, as well as a static localisation of sites within these regions, is usually determined as southern and marked by phrases that contain the term *suðr/sunnr*. Alternatively, it is possible to designate southern movement by stating that one is coming from the north, *norðan* – indeed, when describing the southern-bound routes of Norwegian kings and jarls, they are often said to be coming from the north. And in an opposite manner, when they or their Danish counterparts are leaving the realm of Denmark, the given direction can emphasise that they are travelling from the south (*sunnan*). Directional guides may in themselves be regarded sufficient; it is not necessary to combine them with precise geographical designations.

Similarly to the runic material, skaldic stanzas contain several examples of the term *austr* being used together with *Garðar* – only here 'east' does not always have to indicate traffic heading to or events taking place in *Garðar*, but can also express movement away, i.e. *austan ór Gǫrðum*. As mentioned above, the skald may even simply state that the king was returning from the east (*austan*) without specifying his point of departure.

Traffic to Sweden is also characterised as east-bound; the territory of *Svíþjóð* is for example identified as the eastern goal for the mission of Sigvatr − in fact, his whole journey is characterised in terms of eastward movement (also demonstrated by mentioning that he was coming from the west (*vestan*), i.e. from Norway). *Eiðaskógr* and *Elfr* are also localised to the

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[732] However, it is not always self-evident that corresponding designations carry connotations of human collectives, as sometimes they may also figure as empty labels for some item that is of foreign origin; such is often the case with the adjective *valskr* (French/Frankish) when used for weapons (cf. LP: 591).

[733] Since we are concentrating on skaldic depictions of Baltic traffic, the direction 'west' has not been that visible among the cited examples; but in a similar style with runic inscriptions it is first and foremost connected with travels to the British Isles, and alternatively, to western parts of Europe.

east by the skalds. Even these limited examples open up the differing perspectives of skaldic poetry. Besides Sweden, eastern references are used in connection with Norway – in this, the approach of the Icelandic skalds is visible. A typical example is the term *Austmenn* that can easily refer to Norwegians.[734]

The broad understanding of 'east' as a directional guide and traffic-related designation may naturally cause some uncertainty and ambiguity, as shown in connection with cited examples. Compounds *austrvegr* and *Austrlǫnd* have especially demonstrated different interpretation possibilities. However, on the general level of depicting travels outside Scandinavia, skaldic poetry shares some similar features with runic inscriptions in that the eastern route seems to extend all the way from the Baltic to Byzantium.[735] *Austr* is applied in connection with the campaigns undertaken by Haraldr harðráði in Byzantium, as recorded by Þjóðólfr Arnórsson in st. 6 of *Rekstefja*; the same meaning is signalled by *austrfǫr* in st. 2 of a poem where Illugi Bryndœlaskáld praises Haraldr harðráði.

4.2. Saga literature

4.2.1. Description, theory and methodology

The second part of the current chapter concentrates on the evidence of saga literature, and more precisely on groups of sagas labelled as the sagas of Icelanders (*Íslendingasögur*) and the kings' sagas (*konungasögur*). First we outline the essential features of both groups and delimit the focus of study, and then we proceed to presenting saga motives concerning Baltic traffic, with separate subsections devoted to the evidence of certain *konungasögur* and that of *Íslendingasögur*.

Traditional research requirements would be to approach and analyse the sagas of Icelanders and the kings' sagas as separate source categories with their own distinctive features. We have chosen an alternative strategy in that we start with a joint description of the general nature of the source material alongside the clarification of essential methodological and theoretical premises. For one, the sagas of Icelanders and the kings' sagas belong to the same (predominantly) Icelandic narrative tradition manifested in prose, and as such they share some important features. Secondly, the essence of saga literature and the manner in which it has come down to us results in at least partly similar questions and complications that have to be dealt with along the way.

Thirdly, it should be remembered that habitual groupings of sagas are based upon the approach of modern scholars; we cannot automatically expect clear-cut genre divisions to reflect the original stage of saga composition. The provided classifications, as useful and logical as they seem, may in the worst case remain strictly conventional and ignore the existence of overlapping phenomena and alternative categories. Some sagas, for example,

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[734] See e.g. *Haraldskvæði* (9:3) by Þorbjǫrn hornklofi and *flokkr* about Sveinn Úlfsson (8:2) by Þórleikr fagri.

[735] Cf. also subsection 3.3.2.; as well as Jackson (1991: 231; 2003: 30-33).

appear as borderline cases, with certain scholars placing them under *Íslendingasögur*, whereas others see in them features that are characteristic of *konungasögur*.[736]

It should further be mentioned that besides traditional sagas we have a great selection of shorter tales, called *þættir (*sg. *þáttr*, meaning 'strand' or 'section') – described as "semi-independent short narratives" by T. M. Andersson (1985: 220). In certain cases it may be problematic to determine whether we are dealing with a short saga or an extended *þáttr*; also, the indebtedness of the *þættir* to the sagas of Icelanders and the kings' sagas is an issue. Many of these tales are in fact preserved in compilations of kings' sagas, but due to their primary focus on the ventures of Icelanders (either at home or abroad) they may show more kinship with the sagas of Icelanders.[737]

Obviously, the actual terminological labels are also modelled upon modern scholars' understanding of the sources. Meulengracht Sørensen (1993c: 168) remarks: "No original designation for *sagas of Icelanders* occurs, and it is indeed doubtful that contemporaries conceived of them as a particular saga type". Similarly, he says with regard to the kings' sagas: "The term was created in recent times as a designation for sagas which have Norwegian or, in a few cases, Danish kings as protagonists" (op. cit. 163).

However, from that last observation arises at the same time a certain justification for operating with various groups of sagas within the rich heritage of Icelandic saga literature. On the level of general subject-matter as well as specific narrative and stylistic devices, we do find that certain sagas share common features with each other, which can further distinguish them from other forms of saga literature. Their assumed circumstances of origin, the subsequent process of written transmission (as witnessed by extant manuscript compilations) and obvious inter-textual relationships have also had their say in the development of ideas around the similarity and belonging-together of particular groups of sagas.

In the course of the following joint approach to groups of sagas thus labelled as *Íslendingasögur* and *konungasögur*, we shall therefore draw attention to their genre-specific features as well, and whenever the sources require, clarify the fundamental differences between them and also between the various sagas that are placed within respective genres.

In fact, it is suitable to start with the latter aspect and describe the constituent parts of the groups of *Íslendingasögur* and *konungasögur* in order to better understand the varying nature of these 'genres'. This topic is partly connected to the discussion around the origins and evolvement of sagas.

The heterogeneity of the kings' sagas can make it hard to determine the boundaries of the group as such.[738] One way of acquiring an overview of various works that qualify as kings' sagas is to set up a scheme of different developmental stages in the process that leads up to the full-fledged Icelandic prose narratives about the lives of Scandinavian kings.[739] In this manner, T.M. Andersson identifies four main periods in the development of the kings' sagas

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[736] One such example is the *Færeyinga saga*. Similarly, the distinction line between legendary sagas (*fornaldarsögur*) on the one hand, and the sagas of Icelanders or the kings' sagas on the other, is not always self-evident. With regard to the kings' sagas, their overlapping features with what have been labelled as contemporary sagas (*samtíðarsögur*) may also be discussed. However, since we focus on how the sagas depict the period from around 900/950-1100/1150, generic problems of the latter kind are of secondary importance.

[737] As shown below, we have also consulted the evidence of various *þættir* in studying saga depictions of Baltic traffic.

[738] Whaley (1993: 45) says: "I do not think anyone would claim that there is any self-evidently right way of delimiting the Kings' Sagas, and indeed it is their variety that is one of their greatest strengths."

[739] It is the latter that some scholars regard as the kings' sagas in the traditional sense, see Holtsmark in KLNM (IX: 41-46).

(as it can be traced today); the first one seeing the birth of "the earliest lost kings' lives by Sæmundr and Ari from the early twelfth century", followed by "the so-called Norwegian synoptics (ca. 1175-90?), the formative period of the Icelandic kings' sagas proper (ca. 1150-1200), and the major compendia (*Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, *Heimskringla*) from 1220 to 1230" (T.M. Andersson 1985: 198).[740]

In view of the above we become aware of one important difference between the sagas of Icelanders and the kings' sagas: "The beginnings of the legendary and family sagas are lost in literary prehistory and can only be the subject of conjecture, but the birth of the kings' sagas is an approximately datable literary event" (T. M. Andersson 1985: 198). The established scheme of development also allows us to give approximate dates to the various kings' sagas, and on that basis to conclude that "the main period of activity was c.1160-c.1230, especially the second half of this period" (Whaley 1993: 47). Furthermore, with a number of the kings' sagas there exist good arguments for attributing them to known authors.[741]

The anonymous and mostly undated bulk of the sagas of Icelanders naturally requires them to be approached in a different manner; no corresponding evolutionary scheme can be set up in their case, although theories about the earliness of certain types of sagas have been presented.[742] A group of sagas characterised as skalds' sagas is sometimes taken to represent a connecting link between the kings' sagas and the later sagas of Icelanders. Clover explains:

> According to this thinking, interest gradually shifted from the Norwegian kings to the poets in their courts (a natural development because the poets and the authors of the kings' sagas, as well as a sector of the early audience, were mostly Icelandic), so that in time the poets, and eventually their Icelandic families and communities, themselves became the subject of sagas. (Clover 1985: 249)

If correct, this view would let us follow the gradual transition from sagas that mostly concern (royal) individuals to ones focused on the typical Icelandic "community chronicle" (ibid.). However, there exist certain contradictions to this idea, since some sagas that are generally considered to be early do not qualify as skald sagas. On the other hand, the early co-existence of different forms of *Íslendingasögur* does not automatically rule out the possibility that the preceding tradition of kings' sagas may have still influenced them. The proven earliness of the kings' sagas would support their "having had a fundamental and formative role in the development of saga-writing generally" (Whaley 1993: 48).

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[740] Certain later kings' sagas and the 14th century compilations *Hulda-Hrokkinskinna* and *Flateyjarbók* have been omitted from Andersson's scheme. Andersson further offers an overview of the much studied and debated relationships between the early generations of kings' sagas (see op. cit. 201-212). See also Jackson (1993: 32-35).

[741] This does not, of course, mean that the concept of saga authorship can automatically be compared to the work of modern authors (of either history or fiction). See also the comments provided below (especially 4.2.2.). In the following discussion, labels such as 'saga author' and 'saga narrator' will be used, in a general sense, more or less synonymously (hence, differing from the practice of modern literary theory) in references made to the role of (known or unknown) medieval saga writers who in the composition of sagas must have been influenced by both oral and literary tradition; at the same time, they were probably not relating themselves to the preceding tradition with the attitude of a conscious author (in the sense we usually understand this), although they may have undertaken certain reconstructions of the material from an authorial perspective. See e.g. Steblin-Kamenskij (1966) and Bagge (2000: 57-63).

[742] In connection with critical editions of the sagas of Icelanders in the series of ÍF, a lot of effort has been made to suggest possible authors and approximate dates of composition for individual sagas. These theories are discussed in detail in the introductory parts of each volume. See more about the principles and the consequences of the so-called Icelandic school for saga scholarship in Clover (1985: 241-253) as well as below.

From the perspective of society, we could add the view of Meulengracht Sørensen, according to whom the earliest forms of saga literature (kings' sagas and hagiographical works) gained their function in relation to the institutions of court and church respectively. He writes that "in the epoch dominated by the Icelandic chieftains, this example led naturally to the creation of a similar literature based on the native social order" (Meulengracht Sørensen 1993c: 130), resulting in the creation of sagas of Icelanders and contemporary sagas.

Whatever the exact relationship between *konungasögur* and *Íslendingasögur* may have been, it is generally held that the main period for the writing of *Íslendingasögur* lasted from the early 13th century to approximately mid-14th century.[743] There are ways in which one can attempt to systematise this varied source material. The newest edition of saga translations (*The Complete Sagas of Icelanders*) refers to the system developed by Vésteinn Ólason, who combines considerations for the assumed age of sagas with thematic features and operates with groups such as the sagas of poets, early feud sagas, classical feud sagas, tragedies, and sagas of champions and wonders (Viðar Hreinsson et al 1997: xxi).[744]

From this limited attempt at grasping some of the in-group variation of the *Íslendingasögur* and *konungasögur*, we turn to identifying their possible main themes and perspectives and also strive to find potential similarities between their approaches.[745]

Both the sagas of Icelanders and the kings' sagas present themselves as "historical sagas about the past" – to use the formulation of Meulengracht Sørensen (1993c: 98). Viewed in broad terms, they cover the period from the end of the 9th century to the end of the 12th century.[746] As already explained in 1.6.1., the main focus of the sagas of Icelanders lies on following the various generations of Icelandic families in the period from around 930-1030, which has therefore earned the name of the Saga Age. But in introductory segments, these sagas often look back at the times of settlement from ca. 870-930 or even prior to that. Naturally, the temporal range of individual sagas varies: whereas some concentrate only on a few decades, others cover the lifespan of many generations and hence offer an extended overview from the settlement period well into the 11th century.

The temporal perspectives of individual kings' sagas also vary. On the one hand, there exist (or are known, or assumed to have existed) shorter or longer prose surveys that chronologically record the dynasties of (mostly) Norwegian kings over several centuries. Occasionally they even deal with the mythological ancestors of Scandinavian kingships. On the other hand, there are the so-called concentrated biographies of separate kings, a tradition that in its known form centres around the two missionary kings Óláfr Tryggvason and Óláfr Haraldsson. From a simplified point of view, when for example looking at the periods covered in the well-known compendia from the 13th century (i.e. *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna* and

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[743] For additional comments upon the theories around the background of saga literature, see the discussion around its source value, as presented below.

[744] In *The Complete Sagas of Icelanders*, Vésteinn Ólason's classification has been complemented by the suggestions of Örnólfur Thorsson. The latter distinguishes between the main categories of biographies and feud sagas, according to which all the above-mentioned groups of sagas can be fitted into a comprehensive scheme that explains their individual foci (see op. cit. xxii-xxiii). For a different categorization, see Mundal (2004: 291).

[745] The following comments concern what we could tentatively call *Íslendingasögur* and *konungasögur* in their traditional sense; especially with regard to the latter group, it has to be underlined that the presented ideas apply to the preserved vernacular prose works that do not simply chronicle events but demonstrate a more full-bodied mode of narration. Such a limitation is also caused by the fact that while studying saga depictions of Baltic traffic, we also do not analyse the whole group but concentrate on the evidence of certain major works (cf. 4.2.2.).

[746] When including the accounts of the more contemporary kings' sagas, the time span is extended into the first half of the 13th century.

Heimskringla), we could roughly consider the period from around 800-1177 as a kind of kernel era.[747]

With regard to the subject matter of the sagas of Icelanders and the kings' sagas, it could be said that at first sight the two groups of sagas deal with rather distinctive themes.[748] Hence, a typical *Íslendingasaga* describes the dealings of significant Icelanders, the main setting is Iceland and the narrative evolves around hostilities between certain individuals or their kin, leading to killing and revenge actions when attempts to resolve conflicts according to legal means fail. A traditional *konungasaga* records the life of a Norwegian king; it depicts his rise to power and his fall (death), and the focus lies on the king's relationship and confrontations with local chieftains and other (Scandinavian) rulers by outlining a series of undertaken campaigns and battles.

However, when looking at the description of conflicts from a social perspective, certain parallels and similarities can be noted between these two types of sagas. Important observations have been made by Bagge in a study on *Heimskringla*, where the author concludes that the depicted pattern of conflicts unfold on the level of individuals: "Rather than regarding them in 'constitutional' terms or from the point of view of the *rex iustus*-ideology, these conflicts are better understood as 'feuds', which in the Nordic countries are best known from the Icelandic sagas" (Bagge 1991: 75). [749]

Bagge thus brings out the importance of individual feuds in *Heimskringla*, a motive that is more commonly emphasised as the bearer of the plot in connection with the sagas of Icelanders, and also *Sturlunga saga*, a collection of contemporary sagas about the Sturlung family. The conflicts as they are depicted in Snorri's work hence "bear a striking resemblance to feuds as they are found in medieval Iceland and other societies" (Bagge 1991: 77).[750] The individual aspect of different forms of confrontation is underlined: "Snorri and his contemporaries thought in terms of individual men and conflicts between them rather than in social groups or opposing ideologies" (Bagge 1992: 67).[751]

On the other hand, even when conflicts unfold themselves through individuals, at the same time the saga narrative accentuates the central meaning of kinship, the role and function of the *ætt* – and again this is obvious both from the sagas of Icelanders and the kings' sagas (cf. Bagge 1991: 112-117). Strong ties around a given individual, be it a leading Icelander or a Norwegian king, are important; or to put this in a different way, "the mentality of ancient Norsemen seems to have been group-determined" (A. Gurevich 1992: 80). A. Gurevich discusses the personality and conduct of saga heroes, which according to him is "almost fatally prescribed by social ethics" (op. cit. 79). The duties that a person has in this connection most often stand in relation to seeking a satisfactory and honourable settlement to a conflict,

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[747] For an overview of the temporal foci (and the possible dates of composition) of individual kings' sagas, see the summarising table in Jackson (1993: 10-15).

[748] Again, it has to be kept in mind that the following is a simplified discussion. The possible (underlying) levels of meaning, ideology and mentality in *Íslendingasögur* and *konungasögur* (both as a genre and as a whole continuum of sagas with individual emphases) have been treated in such a wide variety of studies that it is virtually impossible to demonstrate their full impact in the framework of this limited presentation.

[749] To follow the criteria that allow Bagge to arrive at this conclusion, see particularly pp. 64-75. In an article from 1992 the same author remarks that although his focus lies on *Heimskringla*, these "general ideas are relevant for other sagas [i.e. other kings' sagas, my addition] as well" (Bagge 1992: 62).

[750] See for example the studies on feud in the Icelandic society and its expressions in sagas by Byock (1993a; 1993b) and Miller (1990).

[751] The same is the general message of Meulengracht Sørensen (1993c: 142): "Medieval narrative deals invariably with individuals and only through them with society. We might put it this way: the *hero* is the bearer of social problems and conflicts".

for example by taking revenge. However, even on this level of honour and obligation certain individuality can come into play:

> It is for the person to choose the manner of his or her conduct in a concrete situation and it wholly depends on individual initiative. Saga heroes are, therefore, extremely active and inventive. Nevertheless, their choices are limited. For example, they can only choose the manner of blood revenge; they have no choice whether to accomplish it or not. (A. Gurevich 1992: 79)

The brief discussion around the motives of *Íslendingasögur* and *konungasögur* has already cast light on some characteristic approaches and trends applied by modern saga scholarship. We proceed to bringing out the central concerns of saga studies in a more systematic manner; the following is at the same time greatly connected to identifying crucial theoretical and methodological questions around the source value of saga literature, i.e. its much debated reliability and historicity.

A suitable point of departure is an article by L. Lönnroth, where he summarises four main developments in recent saga scholarship (1993, see especially pp. 86-97). For one, there has been a gradual shift from a strictly text-critical study of sagas to a literary analysis of the meaningful structural patterns that these texts contain. Secondly, more studies are taking into consideration the comparative aspect and hence are analysing the sagas in the context of a contemporary European cultural sphere. Thirdly, the discussions around the saga origins have gained new input from advanced research into the nature of orality. Fourthly, more studies now apply sagas as sources for studying the society and mentality of the Middle Ages. His summary overlaps partly with the earlier overviews of saga scholarship provided by T.M. Andersson (1985) and Clover (1985).[752] The first point that concerns the earlier domination of the text-critical approach is with regard to research into the kings' sagas, well documented by Andersson. The analysis of the various inter-textual relationships and sources of influence (and the search for the assumed original text) has been brought to its most advanced state concerning the earlier generations of kings' sagas, as well as Snorri's *Heimskringla*. In connection with the sagas of Icelanders, Clover (1985: 241) labels these types of studies as "source analysis", which has been the main area of study for the Icelandic school.

As pointed out by Lönnroth and Clover, more studies now acknowledge the independent literary value of sagas, focusing on their applied narrative techniques and units of meaning. In Clover's discussion this approach is placed under the category of "literary formalism", which comprises both studies of direct literary orientation as well as those that show renewed interest in exploring the oral dimension of sagas (the new-traditionalist approach). She finds that the two perspectives have a lot in common: "It is the conspicuous structural orientation of literary and traditional analysis that marks both of them as formalist in spite of their different view of origins" (Clover 1985: 272).[753] The kings' sagas – with the exception of *Heimskringla* – have in general not gained that much literary attention, partly because of their somewhat more chronicle-looking image and presumed stronger foundation upon actual events. Bagge remarks that since the kings' sagas "are not considered to be pure fiction, literary scholars have avoided them, while the historians have had the feeling of putting their hands into a hornet's nest when trying to derive factual information from them" (Bagge 1992: 61).

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[752] Clover has divided her survey into three main approaches: "source analysis (especially as represented by the Icelandic school), literary anthropology (social-historical studies), and literary formalism (which includes the new-traditionalist as well as strictly literary writings)" (Clover 1985: 240, cf. below).

[753] For a detailed discussion around the aspects of literary analysis and studies concerning the oral dimension of sagas, see Clover (1985: 272-294); Lönnroth (1993: 88-89, 91-94).

With regard to the search for potentially historical ideas as reflected in the saga literature, the emergence of studies that interpret both *Íslendingasögur* and *konungasögur* as social and cultural representations of the period of saga writing is another characteristic tendency. Research into the mentality and ideology of the Middle Age as illuminated in the sagas has gained considerable ground. Concerning the kings' sagas, Whaley (1993: 56) comments upon their promising perspective as "twelfth- or thirteenthcentury views of the past". Clover speaks of the literary anthropological approach to the sagas of Icelanders that acknowledges "their significance to the audience that produced and consumed them in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries" (Clover 1985: 255). The rise of the anthropological interest in sagas goes back to the early 1970s, among others to the views of V.W. Turner, who regarded sagas as "authentic expressions of Icelandic culture" (1971: 358) and characterised *Brennu-Njáls saga* as "an anthropological paradise" (op. cit. 361).[754]

The broader significance of common European cultural heritage has received more attention. L. Lönnroth (1993: 89) notes that whereas earlier scholarship carried the (nationalistic) conception of saga literature being a genuine Nordic phenomenon, now more weight is given to influences from various medieval sources, such as Latin chronicles, hagiography and European court literature.[755] However, Bagge (1997: 418) reminds us that in these discussions "one has to consider different works and genres". He finds that the sagas of Icelanders still appear as a rather unique genre; furthermore, in his opinion there are different forms of uniqueness to discover about the kings' sagas as well, since they present "political history in a different sense from their counterparts in most of Europe" (op. cit. 418-419).[756]

The overview above has touched upon a few standpoints in the discussion around the reliability of sagas. In the following we shall concentrate upon this matter in some more detail, in order to illuminate new and alternative ideas that have emerged over the past decades.[757]

Traditional saga scholarship has been very concerned with the matter of whether sagas appear as historical documents or fiction, having much to do with opposing theories around the origins of saga literature. An overview of historical developments shows that in the early days of saga research, two clearly distinctive "schools" were established, now commonly labelled as the freeprose and bookprose theories. The former was shaped during the 19th century, showing strong confidence towards sagas as reliable expressions of an authentic oral tradition. The opposing bookprose theory came about as a reaction to that belief and downplayed the significance of the oral dimension. The sagas were seen first and foremost as written compositions (almost as realistic novels) that could be attributed to individual authors.[758] The debate between freeprosists and bookprosists lasted until the 1920s, after which the critical-conservative orientation of bookprose remained the accepted paradigm well into the 1970s. In reality this meant that at least the sagas of Icelanders were more or less left aside in historical studies. Mundal explains the situation in an article from the late 1970s, saying the following: "Dei fleste kvider seg for å bruke denne litteraturen, ikkje fordi dei kjenner seg overtydde om at kjelda er verdlaus, men fordi dei er usikre på korleis kjelda kan

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[754] The role of the studies of A. Gurevich should also be emphasised in connection with this.

[755] See also Whaley's comments in connection with what she calls the aspect of "clerical influences" in saga studies (Whaley 1993: 50-52).

[756] To exemplify this Bagge compares Snorri's work with those of Thietmar of Merseburg and Widukind.

[757] This part of the chapter derives partly from Zilmer (2003a).

[758] The above-mentioned Icelandic school has been a strong advocate for corresponding views; however, even bookprosists admit the possible oral origins of sagas, but they have doubted the ways used to determine these elements. In modern scholarship new contributions that focus on recurrent patterns of narration etc. have taken things a step further in establishing the possible oral features of storytelling.

brukast" (Mundal 1977: 15).[759] With regard to the kings' sagas it could be said that even if certain attempts were made to derive pieces of factual history from them, most of the 20th century scholarship was coloured by similar distrust in their broader source value, the direct result of criticism introduced by the scholars Lauritz and Curt Weibull during the first half of the century (cf. Bagge 1992: 62-63; 2002: 173, 193).

Along the lines of growing cultural-anthropological interest towards different types of saga literature, one has started to analyse their depictions in terms of the mentality and ideology of the Middle Ages. Furthermore, it is even considered possible to re-evaluate whether sagas could qualify as sources for the past as well.

Vésteinn Ólason has emphasised the collective value of the sagas of Icelanders and the inner consistencies of the overall material; according to him there are two explanations to this – either there existed a whole school of Icelandic saga writers who in the course of the 13th century decided to create an identical image of the past, or the sagas are indeed based upon a tradition with a historical core (Vésteinn Ólason 1987: 38). He concludes: "Vi må etter min mening regne med *forfattere* som ved bruk av *tradisjonelt stoff* og *tradisjonell fortellekunst* formet de helhetsstrukturer som vi kaller sagaer, og i sin utformning var de også i høy grad påvirket av og deltakere i en *litterær tradisjon*" (op. cit. 41).[760]

In the scholarship concerning kings' sagas it is first and foremost Bagge who has tried to introduce new ways of applying sagas as sources. Using *Heimskringla* as his point of departure, he thus argues that "Snorri's picture of society and politics is not simply a series of dramatic narratives of great heroes. It is a consistent picture of a particular way of conducting politics" (Bagge 1992: 70). Bagge admits that the narration builds upon certain exaggeration and idealisation, but at the same time he emphasises their historical anchorage, since "the social conditions which form their background cannot be completely different from the actual ones, at least not if it can be pointed out that they are the same in a large number of stories" (op. cit. 73).[761]

On the one hand, we may therefore see how newer research again discusses the validity of the picture that saga literature has to offer, and does not automatically reject sagas as potentially historical sources. On the other hand, it is important to realise that instead of initial black-and-white oppositions between facts and fiction, sagas can also be experienced as more complex modes of expression. Meulengracht Sørensen (1992: 33) focuses on the failure of the traditional research "to explain why the family sagas – if they are poetic works – appear as historical works – and why – if they are accounts of the past – they use poetic expressions, fiction and borrowings".

Following in the footpath of views that do not necessarily call for a rigid separation between historical facts and fiction in the narrative world of sagas, we can observe different ways of

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[759] "Most people are reluctant to use this literature, and not because they feel convinced of the fact that the source is worthless, but because they are uncertain about how to use it" (my translation).

[760] To my mind we have to consider that these entire structures that we call sagas were formed by *writers* who used *traditional material* and *traditional art of storytelling*, and in their form of composition they were to a great extent also influenced by and participating in a *literary tradition*" (my translation).

[761] Here Bagge agrees with the points made by Vésteinn Ólason. Similar ideas are also expressed in a later article, where Bagge (2002: 211-212) again underlines that although the factual information of the sagas must be treated with utmost caution, they can offer a reliable representation of certain general phenomena. Of additional support in such argumentation is the renewed interest towards *Heimskringla*'s value as a result of Snorri's critical research (cf. e.g. Moberg 1990).

treating sagas as synthetic structures or entire systems of meaning.[762] To a certain degree, the premises for corresponding approaches can be found in the theories of Steblin-Kamenskij, who identifies various forms of truth, i.e. artistic, historical, ecclesiastical and syncretic (cf. 1973: 21-48). According to Steblin-Kamenskij, for modern people, among the truths that concern the past, "one is truth in the proper sense of the word, but not art; the other is art, but actually untruth" (op. cit. 23). However, in the context of the early Icelandic society there existed only one truth, the so-called syncretic truth:

> Syncretic truth is something lost for ever. It is by no means something in between the two other truths. It is far richer and has far greater content than both modern truths. It is fundamentally distinct from both of them. It is a third entity. For this reason, attempting to determine what in the sagas is historical truth and what is artistic truth is tantamount to seeking a difference whose very absence constitutes the essence of the truth presented in the sagas. (Steblin-Kamenskij 1973: 24-25)

Even if not completely agreeing with Steblin-Kamenskij's philosophical argumentation around the way in which the people of the past may have perceived truth, history and time, his ideas contribute to the broader image and experience of sagas as complex phenomena. The sagas' specific way of creating what seems to us a mixture of realistic presentation of circumstances with various devices of (traditional) storytelling in itself calls for abandoning strict lines of distinction when we try to experience them at their own premises. Some scholars might be inclined to explain this mixed image from the point of view of oral storytelling tradition and particular saga style, understanding this as "an imitation of spoken narrative", which has to be taken for what it is (Meulengracht Sørensen 1993b: 174).

In this connection it may be further useful to revise our understanding concerning what indeed is truthful and realistic as opposed to the (seemingly) non-realistic in the sagas. We see that the narrative mode of sagas might actually be even more complex and ambiguous than traditionally assumed. In a recent study Rankovic (2004: 3) thus argues that traditional strategies for determining the realism of sagas remain inadequate, that "the sagas' realism is far more complicated and nuanced".[763] She writes:

> So, rather than approaching the realism of the sagas purely in terms of verisimilitude with which it is commonly associated, I would suggest that it is an emergent feature (*emergent realism*) of various complex (or non-linear) intra- and extra-textual dynamics: those between orality and literacy, fictionality and historicity, aristocratic and democratic ethos, winner and loser attitudes, etc. (Rankovic 2004: 4)

In other words, Rankovic speaks of meaning being created from the interaction of a variety of units and she describes the sagas' nature in terms of representational complexity.

Of certain inspiration to the latter approach have been the ideas presented by Torfi Tulinius (2002: 294), who also focuses on the complex character of sagas, "which is the complexity of human existence with its many dimensions – social, emotional and economic". When comparing *fornaldarsögur* with *Íslendingasögur*, Torfi Tulinius points out that "the Icelandic family sagas are also fictions, but the degree of complexity with which they mediate reality is greater" (ibid.).

To our mind it is therefore essential to realise the manifold levels of meaning in sagas, as well as the necessity to combine different approaches in their study. The sagas are

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[762] Within the anthropologically orientated research P. Durrenberger (1992: 101-102) thus even speaks of sagas as specific "totemic systems".

[763] The paper (in the form of an unpublished manuscript) was presented at the international course "Cultures in Contact: Northern Europe 700-1200 AD", Tartu, August 16-26, 2004.

representations of complex processes where both the context of the saga writer as well "'intertextual' echoes from a distant discourse" (Gísli Pálsson 1992: 21) are equally important. From this follows: "If the factual and fictive go hand in hand and any text or utterance is necessarily a collaboration of generations of writers and speakers, the boundary between literary studies and linguistics, on the one hand, and anthropology and history, on the other, is not as important as is often implied" (ibid.).

4.2.2. Source treatment

Having presented the nature of saga literature and discussed the theoretical and methodological state of saga studies, we proceed to clarifying the basic principles that guide current research into sagas' depictions of Baltic traffic. First and foremost, we wish to express support to the integrative nature of modern saga scholarship. In the present context we find that both *Íslendingasögur* and *konungasögur* can be studied at least partly according to similar premises, with the analysis of the sagas' textual components and structural patterns being combined with exploration into their narrative mode(s) of representation where, as we may observe, different features interact and overlap. On a yet broader level we regard sagas as the products and voices of complex cultural processes, and as such, they naturally have their own cultural-historical significance as well.

However, similarly to the manner in which we approached skaldic poetry, we shall in the following concentrate upon the sagas' way of depicting mobility within the Baltic region without attempting to draw a strict line between what modern people tend to call facts and fiction. Rather, we acknowledge the value of saga expression in its totality, at the same time remaining aware of the fact that every approach has its problems and limitations.

This naturally means that the findings that are presented in the following subsections cannot be simply converted over to historical actuality. What we wish to emphasise here is that the sagas' mode of expression is such a complex phenomenon in itself that traditional attempts to divide between what is real and what is fictitious simply might not serve their actual purpose and in the worst case leave us without a deeper understanding for the sources.

To start with, a few more comments concerning the selection of the source material shall be made. As mentioned above, the study concerns *konungasögur* and *Íslendingasögur* (as well as some relevant *þættir*). The previous overview has already illuminated in which manner these groups of sources can be viewed as related, and at the same time provide a complementary function to each other. At the same time, *konungasögur* and *Íslendingasögur* reflect different perspectives and demonstrate variation in their ways of approaching certain topics. It is thus their interrelatedness as much as their inner differences that speak for the inclusion of both these remarkable sub-genres of saga literature.

It may nevertheless seem somewhat questionable to apply the sagas of Icelanders as sources for this particular study of Baltic traffic. After all, relevant references are fewer in this type of sagas, whereas the kings' sagas – with their focus on the Scandinavian arena – definitely contain more frequent mention of Baltic destinations. However, as will be shown below, the references in the kings' sagas follow certain narrative patterns and despite their (partly) more detailed nature, they accord with rather repetitive schemes of presentation, which can downplay their quantity. The sagas of Icelanders, as we know, are a collection of

stories that focus primarily on the matter of Iceland; that is to say, on the characteristic components of Iceland's local tradition. However, they do also contain some information about the saga characters' travels on a broader scale, and it is interesting to see how these records of the Icelanders' travels are in a natural way fused into the narrative concept of the sagas. The picture that the Icelandic storytellers/saga writers have created in connection with depicting their own past now and then actually allows the sagas to introduce certain interesting approaches to the matters of Baltic travels as well, which may compensate for their generally laconic nature.

With regard to the somewhat more modest amount of references to Baltic mobility in the framework of the sagas of Icelanders, we have found it both preferable and possible to use the total corpus of known *Íslendingasögur* as the point of departure. Despite certain ambiguities in defining *Íslendingasögur* (cf. above), the usual classification comes up to 40 corresponding sagas.[764] Naturally, not all sagas among this corpus refer to travels within the Baltic region, but all in all they contribute to an understanding of general travel depictions.[765] It should, however, be kept in mind that together the sagas of Icelanders cover a wide period, and that their conditions of preservation vary. In addition to *Íslendingasögur* we have examined both linked and separate *Íslendinga þættir*; again, not all among the consulted tales contribute to the evidence of Baltic traffic, but some add interesting perspectives to the sagas.

Concerning the kings' sagas it has been necessary to limit the scope of study and concentrate on two major works from the 13th century – *Heimskringla* (ca. 1220-1230) and *Knýtlinga saga* (ca. 1260-1270). Our motivation for choosing *Heimskringla* and *Knýtlinga saga* is the following. For one, in these works – and especially in Hkr – the tradition of *konungasögur* reveals its truly mature and full-bodied narrative mode. Secondly, both works offer an extended overview of kingships from different periods – and at the same time do so from somewhat different platforms, since Hkr tells the history of the Norwegian kings, whereas Knýt focuses on the Danish kings. As explained above, Hkr looks back at the prehistoric times in *Ynglinga saga*, but most of the attention is given to the period from the second half of the 9th century to the year 1177; the real "historical" narrative thus starts with the saga about Hálfdan svarti and concludes with one about Magnús Erlingsson. *Knýtlinga saga*, in its extant form, introduces the narrative with Haraldr Gormsson and ends with the reign of Knútr Valdamarsson; the temporal scope thus reaches from the second half of the 10th century to the very beginning of the 13th century.

Hkr naturally stands out as the true classic when comparing the two. In fact, the author of Knýt used Hkr as a model and a source; this is attested to by several corresponding textual references.[766] In the manner Knýt is composed, it gives central emphasis to the saint king Knútr Sveinsson (who died in 1086), along the pattern applied by Snorri, whose saga about Óláfr Haraldsson makes up the most voluminous part of Hkr.[767] According to one theory Knýt may have been composed by Snorri's nephew Óláfr Þórðarson (cf. e.g. Jónas Kristjánsson 1997: 164).

The question of Snorri's sources and influences has been much discussed in separate works and cannot be presented in full detail here. As is known, Snorri himself mentions

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[764] This is also the number of translated sagas in *The Complete Sagas of Icelanders*.

[765] Around 20 sagas contain direct references to contacts within the Baltic region.

[766] Knýt must also be directly influenced by earlier and contemporary Danish histories; it has, for example, been discussed as to which extent the saga author knew and used Saxo's chronicle.

[767] Snorri actually wrote a separate saga of Óláfr, which was later incorporated into Hkr, but is also preserved on its own.

skaldic poetry as well as the Icelandic historian Ari Þorgilsson in the prologue to Hkr, where he provides a brief review of his sources. The use of skaldic poetry is indeed rich; throughout the narrative we find both direct citations and paraphrases of court poetry that is attributed to a number of skalds.[768] It is traditionally held that Snorri knew and used great parts of the preceding saga tradition (both the known compilations and separate sagas), alongside potential impulses from hagiographical literature and Latin historiography.

From these considerations follows one serious limitation for the current study. By concentrating only upon the evidence of the 13th century works Hkr and Knýt, we naturally have to sacrifice the possibility of studying saga depictions of Baltic traffic in transition. That is to say, we get a more static picture than might be desirable, and also, we cannot conclude anything about developments prior to the evidence of Hkr and Knýt.[769] However, since we simultaneously concentrate upon the evidence of *Íslendingasögur*, which also represents the context of the 13th century, we on the other hand get a better basis for comparing the imagery of these two types of sources. And again it is important to underline that in this manner we obtain the chance to observe different ways of presenting the material – in the form of stories about Icelanders, Norwegians and Danes.

Having determined the study corpus as such, it is necessary to comment further on the actual conditions of the preservation of sagas. It is important to keep in mind that while focusing on different sagas, the research material is in many ways a modern, standardised version of what may have been there in the beginning in the form of oral narratives or written tales, or both. In much saga-related research the applied "textual bodies" of sagas unfortunately leave a more unified and absolute impression than they were during the times of production and transmission. That is to say, there are different stages in this process that distance us from historical saga tradition. The following remarks serve first and foremost to demonstrate our awareness of the many principal and textual problems that saga research is connected to.

From the collective perspective, the kings' sagas and the sagas of Icelanders appear as the dynamic products of the time in between the 12th century and the first half of the 14th century. In connection with this we have to return to the matters of authorship (that were briefly discussed above); speaking of sagas as the <u>dynamic</u> products of that period allows us to view the role of saga writers from a flexible point of view. Mundal has fittingly described the manner saga writers addressed their work and tradition: "Ein sagaforfattar må likevel ofte ha lagt mykje til av sin eigen skapande fantasi, og den samanhengande skriftlege soga er eit forfattarprodukt. Men han framstiller seg ikkje sjølv som skaparen av sitt eige verk, men som ein formidlar og tradisjonsberar" (Mundal 2004: 270).[770] Of course, it still has to be discussed whether it is at all correct to speak of "den samanhengande skriftlege soga" (a coherent written saga) in the sense of a unified work. This concept is first and foremost an attempt from our side to grasp the tradition of saga narration in the form of written composition.

In connection with this we further have to realise that not all sagas have come down to us in a fully-preserved state, and it is assumed that there must have existed considerably more

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[768] Several among these poems were discussed above, in 4.1.2.1. We also find some skaldic poetry in Knýt, and sometimes the author of the latter refers to poems quoted in Hkr without finding it necessary to cite them himself.

[769] This has to remain the focus of subsequent studies. However, saga references to Eastern Europe have already been studied in this manner by Jackson (1993; 1994; 2000).

[770] "A saga writer must have still brought in a lot of his own creative fantasy and the coherent written saga is an authorial product. But he does not present himself as the creator of his own work but as a mediator and a bearer of a tradition" (my translation).

sagas in the Middle Ages than we see from the extant manuscripts. Furthermore, these texts that we have got are copies and copies of copies; they are preserved in vellums from the 14th and 15th centuries or in even later paper manuscripts.

Similar limitations have led scholars to question the traditional use of sources in saga scholarship, which to a great extent shows trust towards available idealised editions. Meulengracht Sørensen (1993b: 180) emphasises that one should study the actual reception of sagas through "extant manuscript records" more instead of through "hypothetical originals". Similar ideas are in a more directly instructive form expressed by J.G. Jørgensen (2002), who criticises the dominating use of such saga editions where the underlying idea is that of reproducing a definite work of literature, and thus searching back to a text in its original form amongst the manuscript versions. According to Jørgensen this common practice cannot be accepted in studies where the focus lies, for example, on linguistic and stylistic matters.[771]

The ideas presented by this latter text-critical approach, labelled as new philology in the Scandinavian context, are definitely a serious consideration for any scholar.[772] And ideally (as also noted in connection with skaldic poetry) one should connect the study of sagas more directly to exploring the manuscripts. We agree with the principle that it is in many ways meaningless (and impossible) to attempt to find back to one ancient original version of a saga; the only thing that we have are the later written versions of it. However, in the case of this study, where the emphasis lies first and foremost on exploring general content and narrative practices, we find it less problematic to follow the standard editions as done by most scholars within the field of saga research. In practice this means that we build upon the editions in the series of *Íslenzk fornrit* (and when necessary consult the edition of *Íslendinga sögur*).[773] In the meantime, we admit that a greater awareness of such underlying problems is important.

Certain other formalities in the presentation of the material have to be specified. Due to the amount of analysed material and the obvious limitations for the present dissertation, it has been necessary to keep the discussion of relevant saga depictions on a more general level. The emphasis lies on characteristic patterns derived from the overall material – and we have chosen to structure the overview according to the main travel routes and focal arenas for the saga characters' action and mobility – so as to demonstrate the extent of concrete depictions of Baltic traffic in the framework of saga narration. In order to illustrate the discussion (and point out typical saga formulations) we have included a number of relevant saga citations.[774]

Our final comments concern the concept of Baltic traffic in the study of saga literature. Similarly to skaldic poetry, a certain refinement of the basic guidelines has to be undertaken. Saga literature complements the information of runic inscriptions and skaldic poetry with many new details (additional place names, etc.). It is further obvious that in the prose narration certain areas are under concentrated attention – determined by the arenas where the kings and the travelling Icelanders moved and acted. This concerns particularly the setting of southern Scandinavia; in the light of inter-Scandinavian contacts, there is much traffic taking place between the rulers of Norway and Denmark as well as Sweden. From this perspective it is necessary to also include parts of southern and eastern Norway in the scope of Baltic

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[771] Jørgensen underlines that in synthetic editions the use of linguistic forms may deviate from the actual recorded practice of existing manuscripts (op. cit. 7-9).

[772] See also the discussion of new philology by O. E. Haugen (2004: 84-90).

[773] The latter includes a greater number of short tales than ÍF, and is by some scholars regarded as a more up-to-date source of study, despite its somewhat modernised spelling principles.

[774] In general we follow the principle that when the accompanying commentaries explain the contents of the citation, no separate translation will be provided. However, in the case of longer independent quotations, the English translations have been included.

traffic. After all, the region is located right at the gateway of the Baltic Sea and the sagas testify to much traffic heading out into the Baltic Sea from certain strategic points in southern Norway, mostly in terms of communication with Denmark and Sweden.[775]

4.2.3. References to Baltic traffic in the kings' sagas

This subsection concentrates on the evidence of Baltic traffic in *Heimskringla* and *Knýtlinga saga*. To start with, we provide a few comments with regard to previous studies into related matters; some among these also concern *Íslendingasögur*.

Similarly to studies of skaldic poetry, scholars have analysed the sagas' general way of depicting travelling, and its importance for the plot. Some approaches focus on the motive of travelling as a specific component of the saga structure, determined by the scheme of narration. With a point of departure in the sagas of Icelanders and the *þættir*, scholars have identified the typical patterns of feud and travel, which carry the action forth (cf. e.g. Mundal 2004: 297).[776] Several authors underline the importance of travelling for saga heroes – it is not simply a common custom but often a necessary requirement for the advancement of a man's career and his maturing as a person, although the concrete motives and outcomes of travelling may differ from saga to saga.[777]

On a broader cultural-anthropological level, this mode of travelling has been understood as a reflection of the general Icelandic lifestyle during the first couple of centuries after the country's settlement. "Voyaging abroad was in itself regarded as an important element in the training of young men," says Hastrup (1985: 223). Communication with the outside world must have indeed been considered important, since the country itself was settled as the result of travelling, and it maintained regular traffic with Scandinavia, first and foremost Norway.

Based upon the sagas' frequent mention of journeys to different destinations, it has been a natural step for scholars to explore the geographical span of the Norsemen's expeditions. Attention has been given to particular destinations (much discussed are, for example, the records of travels to Vinland), as well as to the sagas' world picture.[778] The information gained from the sagas can also be analysed in combination with other comparative sources, such as medieval Icelandic geographical literature (cf. e.g. Melnikova 1996).[779] Much emphasis is placed upon the occurrence of various place and ethnic names. Among studies of similar orientation, those that deal with saga information about eastern parts of Europe (in particular Russia) are significant. Corresponding references are seen as going back to the experiences and knowledge formed during the Viking Age:

> The cause of the stability of the East-European subjects in the Scandinavian narrative sources one may see in the fact that this layer of information was perceived by the

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[775] Considerations with regard to some northernly positioned areas are the same as with skaldic poetry; that is to say, they are not considered as directly connected to Baltic traffic (cf. 4.1.2.).

[776] Mundal refers in this connection to the studies of Andersson and Harris. See also L. Lönnroth (1976, particularly pp. 42-103).

[777] More about this e.g. in Hermann Pálsson (1989: 31); Meulengracht Sørensen (1993a: 224-226); Vésteinn Ólason (1998: 78-79); Zilmer (2003b: 549-551; 2005, forthcoming).

[778] A M.Phil. dissertation by Radvilavičius (1998) serves as a good example of the latter, since it studies the Icelanders' oecumene both on the basis of the sagas of Icelanders and *Heimskringla*.

[779] A systematic study of the latter group of sources is presented in Simek (1990).

audience as part of Scandinavian history and stories about it – as part of its native culture, carefully preserved from generation to generation. (Glazyrina 1991: 123) [780]

The following discussion of Baltic traffic as depicted in *Heimskringla* (Hkr) and *Knýtlinga saga* (Knýt) purports to bring out some patterns and motives on the level of recorded destinations. That is to say, the presentation is not divided into various sagas, neither is it a chronological overview of the reigns of different kings; the material is instead treated as collective evidence.[781] The reason for this is that Hkr and Knýt are first and foremost unified narratives, although they offer an overview of different periods in the history of Norwegian and Danish kingships.

4.2.3.1. Viken – part of the scene of Baltic traffic

Previously we commented on the vivid contacts of southern and eastern parts of Norway with Denmark and Sweden (depicted first and foremost in Hkr), which to our mind justifies the inclusion of this arena in the context of Baltic traffic. Resulting from the sagas' focus on Norwegian affairs, the region known as *Vík* (Viken) – around the Oslofjord and the now Swedish Bohuslän – stands out as one strategic area; much of the saga action is centred around this region and its different focal points. Viken is not only essential in the context of inter-regional (inter-Scandinavian) traffic, but it also functions as an important station for the kings' travels within the Norwegian realm (cf. e.g. Bagge 1991: 38-39).

When sagas describe the kings' itineraries, Viken is thus often the given destination for mobility from different parts of Norway, and it is determined as situated in the east (expressed by the directional phrase *austr í Vík*).[782] The examples of this kind are many throughout Hkr; to name just one from Óhelg – in ch. 60 it is told that Óláfr set out from the district of Trondheim, sailed south along the country and stopped at various places, and then made his way east (*austr með landi*, ÍF XXVII: 79). Chapter 61 establishes the arrival of Óláfr in Viken, where he proceeded into the fjord (*fór inn eptir Víkinni*, ÍF XXVII: 79). The route of the king is often depicted in terms of sailing south along the coast and then further east into Viken[783] – as we saw above, similar dynamic image is created in the skaldic poetry. Naturally, in this way the poetic narrative of skaldic poems and the prose narrative of the sagas differ from the brief statements of runic mini-narratives that most often simply record the destination.

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[780] The contributions by Jackson, Glazyrina and Melnikova were already named in connection with skaldic poetry (see 4.1.2.). Saga themes that have to do with the Baltic countries (including Estonia) have also been discussed by Estonian scholars. Short surveys of relevant saga passages are provided by Palmaru (1980); Tarvel (1994); Alas (1999); Zilmer (forthcoming); Jonuks (2004; 2005). Some of their observations will be referred to below.

[781] It is at the same time clarified as to which events belong to which kings. When referring to individual sagas of Hkr, we use the following abbreviations: *Hálfdanar saga svarta* (Hsvar), *Haralds saga ins hárfagra* (Hhárf), *Hákonar saga góða* (Hgóð), *Haralds saga gráfeldar* (Hgráf), *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* (Ótryg), *Óláfs saga helga* (Óhelg), *Magnúss saga ins góða* (Mgóð), *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar* (Hsig), *Magnúss saga berfœtts* (Mber), *Magnússona saga* (Mson), *Magnúss saga blinda ok Haralds gilla* (Mblin), *Haraldssona saga* (Hson), *Hákonar saga herðibreiðs* (Hher), and *Magnúss saga Erlingssonar* (Merl). *Ynglinga saga* is not under consideration; its focus lies on prehistoric times and the saga stands very much in debt to the skaldic poem *Ynglingatal*, which was analysed above (4.1.2.1). For a list of the individual reigns of the Norwegian and Danish rulers, see Appendix IV.

[782] The same principle can be applied in the static localisation of events occurring in Viken, see e.g. ch. 52 of Ótryg (*brœðr tveir bjoggu í Vík austr*, ÍF XXVI: 302).

[783] See e.g. also ch. 12 of Hhárf (*um várit eptir fór Haraldr konungr suðr með landi […] Síðan sigldi hann austr með landi ok kom fram í Vík austr*, ÍF XXVI: 107).

Viken forms an important setting for inter-regional traffic from where the Norwegian kings set out on their campaigns, or to which they return after having been away; Viken also makes up a place where the king summons men for his campaigns. The sagas further show Viken as the target area for others, such as Danes. In fact, in the above-mentioned ch. 61 of Óhelg, it is told that when the king arrived, Danish ships that had been in the region left for Denmark since they did not wish to encounter Óláfr.[784] Chapter 6 of Hgóð emphasises the great damage caused by the frequent harrying of Danes in Viken: *Í þann tíma herjuðu Danir mjǫk í Víkina ok gerðu þar opt mikinn skaða* (ÍF XXVI: 157). Besides depicting similar raids into the region, the sagas may also choose to focus on the political-military interests of Danish kings, as part of their campaigns of extending rulership. On this level the sagas also introduce more specific military terminology and do not simply speak of travelling (as usually indicated by the verb *fara*) to this area, but specify that the king took an army with him to Viken, as done e.g. in ch. 27 of Merl: *Valdamarr konungr hafði þat vár úti her mikinn í Danmǫrku ok helt liðinu norðr í Víkina* (ÍF XXVIII: 403).[785]

The central meaning of the Viken area becomes obvious from ch. 64 of Óhelg, with information about the contacts of the people in the district (*Víkverjar*) with Christian traditions as well as with traders from different regions. This is an elucidative passage, since generally the sagas confine themselves to outlining the routes and do not offer that much descriptive information about the places as such:

> Víkverjum váru miklu kunnari kristnir siðir en mǫnnum norðr í landit, því at þar var
> bæði vetr ok sumar fjǫlmennt af kaupmǫnnum, bæði dǫnskum ok saxneskum.
> Víkverjar hǫfðusk ok mjǫk í kaupferðum til Englands ok Saxlands eða Flæmingjalands
> eða Danmerkr, en sumir váru í víkingu ok hǫfðu vetrsetu á kristnum lǫndum. (ÍF
> XXVII: 83)[786]

However, since the narrative context here establishes the fact of the Christianisation of Viken, the comments offered by the saga first of all serve to explain why it was easier for Óláfr to convert Viken, as compared to other regions of Norway.

In general Viken figures in the context of traffic heading both in and out of the region. Due to its location close to the eastern and southern border of the Norwegian realm, Viken may be depicted as a place for learning news about territorial and tax-related issues – as for example described in ch. 13 of Hhárf where Haraldr learns upon his arrival in Viken that the Swedish king has extended his dominion over Värmland. In this manner the sagas introduce the motive of news that travel alongside people.

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[784] [..] *þá fóru Danir í brot, þeir er þar hǫfðu sýslur af Danakonungi, ok sóttu þeir til Danmerkr ok vildu eigi bíða Óláfs konungs,* (ÍF XXVII: 79. "[…] the Danes who had stewardships from the king of Denmark departed and sailed to Denmark, not wishing to bide the coming of King Óláf" (*Heimskringla*, Hollander 2002: 293).

[785] "That spring, King Valdamar assembled a large fleet in Denmark, and with it sailed north to Vík" (*Heimskringla*, Hollander 2002: 810). King Valdamarr Knútsson's interests in Viken are mentioned in ch. 124 of Knýt, with reference to the agreement according to which he was supposed to gain the eastern part of Oslofjord. Among other Danish kings, Knýt relates in ch. 102 of Eiríkr Eiríksson, who travelled to Viken in a joint venture with the Norwegian king Magnús blindi. Eiríkr made it to Tønsberg and Oslo, laying anchor off the island of Hovedøya; it is said that he burnt Oslo and the church of St. Hallvarðr; see also chs. 3-4 of Hson.

[786] "[…] the Christian ways were much better known to the people of Vík than to people in the northern parts, since a great many merchants came there, both summer and winter, Danes as well as Saxons. Also the people of Vík kept up merchant journeys to England, to Saxland, to the land of the Flemings, or to Denmark; and some engaged in freebooting expeditions and had their winter quarters in Christian lands" (*Heimskringla*, Hollander 2002: 296).

Besides recording different forms of traffic, the saga narrative may also pay attention to cases in which such contacts were prohibited due to restrictions laid on inter-regional traffic, as witnessed for example by ch. 61 of Óhelg, where Óláfr forbade the traffic of goods (herring and salt) between Viken and Götaland to affect the inhabitants of the latter region.

Within the region of Viken, Tønsberg stands out as one clear focal point thanks to its known role as a trade centre. The sagas repeat this fact on several occasions, extending from brief statements that Tønsberg was a trade town (*þar var þá kaupstaðr*, ch. 13 of Hhárf, ÍF XXVI: 108) to describing the contact networks around Tønsberg (*til Túnsbergs sóttu mjǫk kaupskip bæði þar um Víkina ok norðan ór landi ok sunnan ór Danmǫrk ok af Saxlandi*, ch. 35 of Hhárf, ÍF XXVI: 140).[787] Tønsberg is naturally also the identified point of departure for traffic to other districts, much of which concerns communications with border regions. In ch. 61 of Óhelg it is for example said that the king sailed from Tønsberg east across the fjord to Svinesund, where the domain of the Swedish king started: *Hann helt austr yfir Foldina ór Túnsbergi ok allt austr um Svínasund. Þá tók til vald Svíakonungs* (ÍF XXVII: 79). This brings us to the next subsection.

4.2.3.2. Border traffic – eastern districts and focal points

The last example demonstrates a characteristic aspect of traffic from/to southern and eastern parts of Norway. Much of this mobility could be called borderline communication, directly connected to disputes over certain territories and a willingness to extend the boundaries of one's rulership.

Traffic (raids) into the border districts to the east of Viken – for example to the coastal region of *Ranríki* (Bohuslän) – are also connected to the purposes of extending one's rule. *Ranríki* is often mentioned in the context of territorial issues, for example the division of lands;[788] in connection with this the sagas also establish the range of the region.[789]

Higher up inland, the (tax-related) status of landscapes such as *Jamtaland* (Jämtland) and *Helsingjaland* (Hälsingland) is on display and leads to much traffic between Norway and Sweden, which according to the saga narrative often unfolds in terms of more purposeful expeditions than occasional raids leading to other areas.[790] The interesting position of Jämtland in this communication is characterised; ch. 12 of Hgóð thus informs that whereas *Helsingjaland* was in trade relationships with and subjected to *Svíþjóð*, *Jamtaland* – being in the middle – had not gained much attention before Hákon's reign; during that reign, though, the people of *Jamtaland* had expressed their allegiance to the Norwegian king.

In connection with inland traffic between Norway and Sweden, *Kjǫlr* (the mountain ridge of Kjølen) is identified as part of a common route on the way to the east and back. The sagas

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[787] "Many merchant ships frequented Túnsberg, both such from Vík and such from the northern part of the country, as well as ships from the south, from Denmark and Saxland" (*Heimskringla*, Hollander 2002: 89). Similar is the formulation in ch. 83 of Óhelg (*Þar kom þá til bœjarins mart kaupskipa, bæði Saxar ok Danir ok austan ór Vík ok norðan ór landi*, ÍF XXVII: 120). Such repetition of motives demonstrates the characteristic features of saga narrative both on the level of particular elements of content as well as the chosen formulations.

[788] See in particular Hsvar, Hhárf.

[789] In ch. 33 of Hhárf we thus hear how king Haraldr gave the rule over Bohuslän to his son; the area is determined as located between the Göta river and Svinesund (*frá Elfi til Svínasunds of Ranríki*, ÍF XXVI: 137). See also ch. 113 of Ótryg.

[790] The matter of collecting tribute from Jämtland is in focus e.g. in Óhelg, see in particular chs. 63, 137, 141.

repeat on many occasions that the journey took one east over Kjølen; whereas the outlined route appears rather stereotypical, the motives for such trips may differ. Chapter 8 of Mgóð relates that Sigvatr skald headed east over Kjølen to Jämtland, Hälsingland and *Svíþjóð* with the purpose of asking from the merchants who were travelling to *Hólmgarðr* whether they had heard anything of Magnús góði. In ch. 1 of Hsig the route of Haraldr harðráði east over Kjølen is described; it is added that the men travelled in the forest and avoided common roads (*ok fóru þeir allt markleiði, þat er svá mátti, en ekki alþýðuveg*, ÍF XXVIII: 69). Again we learn that Haraldr travelled east to Jämtland, Hälsingland and *Svíþjóð*. The reason for avoiding main roads was of course Haraldr's need to escape from Norway.[791]

It is significant that the saga here actually distinguishes between different types of roads – ones that were considered main (public) roads and ones that led through woods.[792] Similarly, it may be found necessary to specify that the undertaken trip followed a land road, especially if another part of the journey involved sailing. In ch. 13 of Hgráf we thus hear of Hákon jarl, who sailed to Hälsingland in the autumn, left his ships there and continued to the west on land, making his way over the above-mentioned Kjølen (*fór síðan landveg um Helsingjaland ok Jamtaland ok svá austan um Kjǫl*, ÍF XXVI: 216) – until arriving in Trondheim.[793]

Another common route marker in the context of border traffic is *Eiðaskógr* (Edskog); similarly to its mention in the skaldic poetry, it is from the Norwegian point of view located in the east. We already identified Edskog as an important part of the route that Sigvatr skald followed on his mission to the east;[794] the saga narrative of Óhelg (ch. 91) is here very much interwoven with Sigvatr's stanzas, but small prose statements, such as *síðan fóru þeir austr til Eiða* (ÍF XXVII: 135), *síðan fóru þeir um Eiðaskóg* (op. cit. 136), *síðan fóru þeir um Gautland* (ibid.), are provided. Sigvatr travelled all the way through Götaland, but a typical point of arrival along the route through Edskog is otherwise *Vermaland* (Värmland). Chapter 14 of Hhárf informs of Haraldr's trip east through Edskog to Värmland, where he attended feasts. In chs. 180-181 of Óhelg we hear about the travel of Óláfr, and more information is given about the route that took him from Värmland further to Närke: *Þat er at segja frá ferð Óláfs konungs, at hann fór fyrst ór Noregi austr um Eiðaskóg til Vermalands ok þá út í Vatsbú ok þaðan yfir skóg þann, sem leið liggr, ok kom fram á Næríki* (ch. 181, ÍF XXVII: 328).[795] The last passage includes an example of one narrative strategy in saga literature – the saga claims to inform us of what is told/known (*þat er at segja*) about the journey.

With regard to Värmland, traffic is typically connected to the extension of one's authority and tribute collecting. In this context the sagas may describe how the king travelled around the whole region, as for example done in ch. 13 of Hhárf. Chapter 17 of the same saga informs that Haraldr, who raided in Götaland on both sides of the Göta river, gained control over the area north of the river and west of Lake Vänern, including Värmland.

The Göta river stands out as another clear focal point in the sagas' depiction of Baltic traffic. For one, the river is said to mark the land border; the sagas thus tend to refer to the Göta river (alongside other territorial markers) during discussions concerning the customary

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[791] The next spring he exiled further to *Garðaríki* (see ch. 2 of Hsig, and also 4.2.3.6.).

[792] Traffic through forest regions is also a common motive in the sagas of Icelanders (see below).

[793] Mobility along a land road through Hälsingland and Jämtland to Trondheim is mentioned among other cases in ch. 54 of Óhelg as well, this time in connection with an intended winter travel. See also ch. 2 of Mgóð.

[794] See also *Austrfararvísur* (4.1.2.1.).

[795] "We are told about the journey of King Óláf that, on his way east from Norway, first he travelled through the Eith Forest to Vermaland and from there to Vatsbú and then through the forest that lies in the way, until he came to Næríki" (*Heimskringla*, Hollander 2002: 474). In the summer Óláfr travelled further on to *Garðaríki* (cf. 4.2.3.6.).

boundary between the kings' territories, as shown in ch. 12 of Mber: *Magnús konungr talði þat hafa verit landaskipti at fornu, at Gautelfr hefði skilt ríki Svíakonungs ok Nóregskonungs, en síðan Væni til Vermalands* (ÍF XXVIII: 225).[796] It is interesting how the saga here emphasises upon the reality of "old times".

Another typical motive is to identify the Göta river (and the region around it) as the meeting place for kings. We hear both about meetings that actually took place – and which could have either a peaceful or military nature – and planned meetings that were scheduled to happen. That is to say, the saga narrative can easily include motives of <u>intended</u> traffic. In this manner, in ch. 59 of Hsig, Haraldr is sending a message south to Denmark to king Sveinn to challenge him to come to the Göta river next spring and fight there. Chapter 67 of Óhelg, on the other hand, relates of a meeting between Óláfr and the Götaland jarl Rǫgnvaldr that took place on the Göta river with the purpose of solving the unfortunate trade restrictions between the people of Viken and Götaland (as referred to above). In ch. 22 of Mgóð we hear about the meeting arranged between Magnús and Sveinn Úlfsson; the latter took an oath to be the man of Magnús.[797]

Interesting is the evidence in ch. 5 of Hher, where king Ingi Haraldsson follows after Hákon herðibreiðr to an encounter in the Göta river; here the saga refers to the different branches of the river. It is told that Ingi set anchor in the northern branch of the river close to the island of Hisingen and sent out his spies.[798] We thus observe that the Göta river and its branches also function as a strategical site where one can lay with the ships. In ch. 32 of Hhárf it is said about the king that he lay with his ships in the mouth of the river. On the one hand, similar identification of rivers and maritime districts as an arena where one's fleet is stationed appears to be a typical scheme of saga narration; on the other hand, the frequent mention of the Göta river must be derived from the acknowledgment of its actual importance for Viking Age and medieval communication and traffic.

The river also provides a suitable passage when one travels further inland or heads towards the sea. In one such description from ch. 14 of Mber, Magnús berfœttr proceeds with a big retinue along the eastern branch of the river, harries around and goes on land at *Foxerni* (Fuxerna, east of the river), and has a battle against *Gautar*. As on many other similar occasions of depicting waterborne traffic, it is specified that Magnús undertook his raid in the spring when the ice broke (*er ísa leysti*, ÍF XXVIII: 227).

Movement in the opposite direction is recorded e.g. in ch. 94 of Óhelg. Emundr from Skara relates as part of the news from Götaland an incident in which a man called Gauti Tófason headed out along the river to *Eikreyjar* (Öckerö) and came upon five big Danish trade ships. Gauti managed to win over four of them and chased the fifth one out to sea, but during a storm he suffered a shipwreck at *Hlésey* (Læsø). In the meantime, his companions, who were waiting for him by Öckerö, were killed by some other Danes. This saga example contains a quite remarkable description of how one man's heroic deeds in the end receive an unexpected outcome – this may be the reason why this little story about the trip of Gauti Tófason is considered important enough to be told as news to the Swedish king himself.

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[796] "King Magnús maintained that in the olden times the Gaut Elf River had been the boundary between the realms of the Swedish and the Norwegian kings, and from there, Lake Vænir up to Vermaland" (*Heimskringla*, Hollander 2002: 687). A longer description can be found in ch. 61 of Óhelg. In ch. 60 of Ótryg we hear of a meeting that is supposed to take place on the Göta river by the land border (*í Elfinni við landamœri*, ÍF XXVI: 309).

[797] The event is also summarised in ch. 22 of Knýt.

[798] It is further related that Ingi's spies spotted two *austrfararskip*, i.e. ships that could sail on the eastern route.

From the district around the Göta river we find another strategically important place, known by sagas as *Konungahella* (the Konungahälla settlement by Kungälv). It is equally common as a site for kings and chieftains to hold meetings. Chapter 61 of Ótryg informs how Óláfr headed east to *Konungahella* in spring to meet Sigríðr. When the two parted, Óláfr headed north to Viken, and Sigríðr east to *Svíaveldi*. The saga may actually find it important to emphasise the peaceful nature of such royal meetings – as told about Óláfr's meeting with the Swedish king in ch. 134 of Óhelg (*þá fóru þeir til stefnunnar ok hittusk í Elfi við Konungahella. Varð þar fagnafundr ok vináttumál mikil*, ÍF XXVII: 235).[799]

Konungahella is further identified as a site along one's travelling route, as done in ch. 72 of Hsig – Haraldr proceeded south from Viken to *Konungahella* and further along the Göta river. The following information actually points out that Haraldr then had his ships dragged from the river into Lake Vänern. In ch. 2 of Hher, the mobility of Hákon herðibreiðr from Götaland down to *Konungahella* is recorded; Hákon also had a great army along.

More specific is the depiction offered by ch. 10 of Mblin, where *Konungahella* is given as the target for a raid undertaken by Wends who were harrying around and killing Christians. The Wendish king Réttiburr came to *Konungahella* with his fleet; the saga actually specifies the time and describes the size of the enemy force: *Láfranzvǫkudag, þá er talat var fyrir hámessu, kom Réttiburr Vinðakonungr til Konungahellu ok hafði hálft sétta hundrað Vinðasnekkjur, en á hverri snekkju váru menn fjórir tigir ok fjórir ok tveir hestar* (ÍF XXVIII: 290).[800] And as we learn from ch. 12, the trade centre at *Konungahella* was destroyed by this raid and never regained its former status.

4.2.3.3. Götaland, *Svíþjóð/Svíaveldi/Svíaríki* and Gotland

In connection with the discussed examples, we have observed some references to traffic and contacts concerning Götaland. The district and its inhabitants are often mentioned in the context of communication across borders – unfolding in different directions and including both Norway and Denmark. The recorded designations demonstrate, on the one hand, the application of the general label *Gautland*, which can refer to the whole landscape, although it often seems to signal western Götaland in particular. On the other hand, if necessary, it can be pointed out that the undertaken journey concerned a certain part of Götaland, or both.[801]

It is characteristic that travels through Götaland can be undertaken by both the Swedish and Norwegian kings, or their envoys who carry out specific tasks and missions. To illustrate the former aspect, ch. 27 of Ótryg tells of Hákon jarl, who fought against the Götaland jarl, after which Hákon travelled through the region and raided in both its parts. In ch. 134 of Óhelg

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[799] "[…] they came to the meeting agreed on and met in Konungahella by the [Gaut Elf] River. It was a joyful meeting, with great attestations of friendship" (*Heimskringla*, Hollander 2002: 408). After that the Norwegian king went back to Viken and further on to Agder, and the Swedish king travelled to Götaland. Various other meetings at the same spot are recorded e.g. in chs. 87, 94, 134 of Óhelg; ch. 15 of Mber (between Norwegian, Danish and Swedish kings); ch 4 of Mblin; ch. 15 of Merl.

[800] "On the day before Saint Lawrence Mass, when high mas was being read, Réttibur, the king of Wends, arrived at Konungahella with five hundred and fifty [660] Wendish swift sailing vessels, and on every boat there were forty-four men and two horses" (*Heimskringla*, Hollander 2002: 726). It is further related that there were nine *austrfararskip* by the river, which the Wends attacked first.

[801] At the very least, we observe here certain strategies for depicting Götaland-traffic from the point of view of the saga writers.

we learn that Ǫnundr, the king of *Svíar*, rode through western Götaland. Chapter 159 of the same saga informs that Óláfr, who wanted to get to Norway along the land road, went first to Småland and then through western Götaland.

With regard to travelling messengers, we have already referred to the journey of Sigvatr skald. In ch. 71 of Óhelg we hear of another mission of the skald to Götaland, in which the travellers made it to the trade town of Skara. In ch. 91 of the same saga the travelling route is described in more detail; Sigvatr is said to have travelled east through the forest region of *Markir* and then to Götaland.[802]

Götaland also lies within easy reach from Denmark and from the Danish districts in southern Sweden. In Knýt ch. 108 it is told that the Danish king Knútr Magnússon was forced to flee the country due to his confrontations with Sveinn Eiríksson and Valdamarr Knútsson. After one battle in Denmark, Knútr fled to *Konungahella* and *Ljóðhús* (Lödöse); it is said that he met his stepfarther in Götaland.[803] A brief summary of traffic between different districts is provided in ch. 20 of Merl, with information about Norwegian men who fled to Denmark but continued to frequent in Götaland and Viken. These, and many other similar saga records, at the same time demonstrate that inter-regional traffic is often motivated by the mere need of the saga character to flee the scene of local action.[804]

Götaland makes up a natural setting for travels that lead further east to *Svíþjóð* (or back from there); a common motive is to send messengers from one region to another. In ch. 90 of Óhelg we hear of messengers moving from *Svíþjóð* down to western Götaland; the men were sent there by Ingigerðr konungsdóttir to meet jarl Rǫgnvaldr. Chapter 93 depicts the jarl himself departing from *Svíþjóð*, where he was visiting the king, and heading towards eastern Götaland to arrange for ships and then proceed to the meeting place with Ingigerðr.

On the level of applied designations for such Swedish traffic, we further notice that besides the traditional label *Svíþjóð*, the kings' sagas use *Svíaveldi* and *Svíaríki*.[805] The description of *Svíaveldi* in ch. 77 of Óhelg with its parallel reference to *Svíþjóð sjálfri* suggests that the former is a broader designation for the area that, besides the traditional Svealand, also comprised Götaland and the islands of Gotland and Öland.[806] *Svíaríki* seems to be a more or less synonymous designation to *Svíaveldi* (cf. e.g. Jackson 1993: 65). At the same time, in the context of saga literature the place name *Svíþjóð* itself can also be used in a wider sense, and the application of *Svíþjóð* and *Svíaveldi* may therefore alternate.[807]

Svíþjóð is a common destination when heading to the east from Norway. Some examples of *Svíþjóð* as a target for east-bound traffic have been listed above. The route from Norway, east over Kjølen through Jämtland and Hälsingland was identified as one typical way of reaching *Svíþjóð*. The motive of the Norwegian rulers' forced exile gets repeated in connection with this road. A well known scene is depicted in ch. 4 of Ótrýg – Ástríðr, the mother of Óláfr Tryggvason, has to find shelter for herself and her baby, and they make their

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[802] See also the description of the journey through Edskog, above.

[803] We also hear of Knútr's travels to *Garðaríki* and south to Saxony.

[804] This becomes especially obvious from the repetitive travel routes of the Danish king Sveinn Úlfsson (cf. below).

[805] *Svíaríki* occurs once in Hkr, in ch. 32 of *Ynglinga saga*. It is recorded in chs. 11 and 110 of Knýt (in the latter case used when referring to the intention of the Danish king Sveinn Eiríksson to attack *Svíaríki*).

[806] Chapter 77 of Óhelg offers an overview of the division of what is determined as *Svíaveldi*; the focus lies on the bishoprics that different districts belong under; and different regions are named, with a specification concerning those that were part of *Svíþjóð sjálfri*, i.e. *Svíþjóð* proper (cf. ÍF XXVII: 109-110).

[807] Therefore, when providing general references to that territory we, for the sake of simplification, use the name *Svíþjóð* as a common designation; in quotations the variation of labels is recorded.

way to *Svíþjóð*. In ch. 5, while Ástríðr is in *Svíaveldi,* their enemy queen Gunnhildr sends her messengers to the Swedish king (*austr til Eiríks Svíakonungs*, ÍF XXVI: 229).

The latter phrase is a common saga formulation; the destination may hence be expressed in terms of the ruler's name that one is seeking to visit, or alternatively, the name of the region and that of the king may be combined – so as to emphasise the individual aspect of traffic. As stated in ch. 51 of Ótryg, men from Norway fled the country and *sóttu austr í Svíaveldi til Óláfs konungs ins sœnska ok fengu þar góðar viðtǫkur* (ÍF XXVI: 299); here it is specified that the men were received well in *Svíaveldi*.[808]

On certain occasions the heathen background of *Svíþjóð* is brought into focus; and in this light the campaigns into that region can, according to the saga, have religious motivation. In ch. 24 of Mson, the reference is made to an expedition that was heading east to *Svíaveldi*, more precisely to Småland to convert the people.[809] From the perspective of the 13th century saga writers, the theme of conversion forms a suitable background for explaining different political ambitions; reports on the conversion of particular rulers are provided. Many of the internal power struggles and conflicts are also presented through the Christian-heathen perspective.

The purpose for travelling to *Svíþjóð* can naturally be explicit raiding. Chapter 5 in Óhelg relates of Óláfr's autumn raid to *Svíaveldi*; he is said to have burnt and harried the land because *Svíar* were responsible for the death of his father. Chapter 6 informs that Óláfr had his first battle off *Sótasker*, fighting against vikings led by a certain Sóti.[810] The following scenes contain references to additional places in Sweden: ch. 7 thus explains that Óláfr sailed east along *Svíþjóð*, entered *Lǫgr* (Lake Mälaren) where he harried on both sides, and then made his way up to the old *Sigtúnir* (Sigtuna). An interesting description follows, where we learn that the Swedish king had closed Mälaren's outlet *Stokk(s)sund* (Norrström) with an iron chain, so that Óláfr could not get through. Óláfr had his men dig a channel to the sea. Due to the heavy rains in the region the water level in Lake Mälaren was high because it only had one narrow outlet:

> Þá váru regn mikil. En um alla Svíþjóð fellr hvert rennanda vatn í Lǫginn, en einn óss er til hafs ór Leginum ok svá mjór, at margar ár eru breiðari. En þá er regn eru mikil ok snjánám, þá falla vǫtnin svá œsiliga, at forsfall er út um Stokksund, en Lǫgrinn gengr svá mjǫk upp á lǫndin, at víða flóar. (ÍF XXVII: 8)[811]

Through the new channel the water rushed out, as did Óláfr and his men; this passage to the sea is according to Hkr called *Konungssund* (Söderström). This description contains some information about the centrally positioned Lake Mälaren and its important communications with the sea as well as about the access it provided to the settlements in the region. Perhaps it was exactly for that reason that even details of the kind quoted above could be considered worth mentioning in the saga narrative (which usually remains uninformative). In any case, the

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[808] Similarly, ch. 89 of Ótryg says about jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson: *Fór Eiríkr jarl austr í Svíþjóð á fund Óláfs Svíakonungs ok fengu þeir þar góðar viðtǫkur* (ÍF XXVI: 337). The same formulation can further be applied when explaining that men were coming from the east, from the Swedish king, as done e.g. in ch. 59 of Óhelg.

[809] Otherwise, the motive of Christian-heathen confrontations is typical in depictions of communication with the territories of Wendland (see 4.2.3.8.).

[810] For an overview of Óláfr's viking engagements, see also the skaldic poems by Óttarr svarti and Sigvatr skald.

[811] "Heavy rains fell at the time. Now all the rivers and creeks [in that part of] Sweden drain into Lake Mælaren, but there is only one outlet from it to the sea, and that is narrower than many a river. Now when there is heavy rain together with the thawing of the snow, then the waters descend so violently that a torrent flows through Stokk Sound and Lake Mælaren rises so high that it floods the surrounding country" (*Heimskringla*, Hollander 2002: 248).

outline of events has been consciously enriched with many factual references, which may also witness of detailed knowledge about that district.

Lake Mälaren is mentioned on a few other occasions; in chs. 94 and 192 of Óhelg that place name is recorded alongside references to *Áróss* (Uppsala).[812] In ch. 94 we are informed of the water route from *Áróss* into Lake Mälaren, whereas ch. 192 depicts movement in the opposite direction – Óláfr, who is returning from *Garðaríki*, sails to Gotland and from there into Lake Mälaren all the way up to *Áróss*.

Another reference to Lake Mälaren appears in ch. 2 of Knýt in connection with Styrbjǫrn's famous battle and fall at *Fýrisvellir*. We are told that the man harried on the eastern route and then came to Denmark to Haraldr Gormsson. The king first accompanied him to *Svíþjóð*, but then headed back to Denmark from Lake Mälaren, whereas Styrbjǫrn carried out the battle against his uncle and was killed alongside many of his men (although some saved themselves by fleeing).[813]

The Styrbjǫrn example from Knýt referred to the involvement of the Danish king Haraldr Gormsson in the expedition from Denmark to Sweden. Interesting is the target arena for the Danish king Sveinn Eiríksson as described in ch. 110 of Knýt. It is told that Sveinn went to *Svíþjóð* and conquered that part of the Swedish realm called *Verandi* (Värend), as well as *Finneiði* (Finnveden) – that is to say, he was active in Småland. Additional remarks explain the administrative and episcopal division of these regions, and it is stated that they lie closest to the Danish kingdom – obviously, the Danish territories of southern Sweden.

Svíþjóð functions in many cases as a suitable setting for further travels; this motive may be expressed both in terms of general campaigns that set out from *Svíþjóð* (where the exact destination remains unnamed), as well as more precisely outlined journeys. An example of the former is found in ch. 11 of Hgráf, where the intentions of Haraldr grenski to find a place on a ship that would take him from *Svíþjóð* out on a viking expedition are mentioned.

In connection with the other aspect, the function of *Svíþjóð* as an arena from where the (exiled) travellers continue further on to *Garðaríki* or to which they return when making it back to Scandinavia is especially significant; in this light we could actually consider *Svíþjóð* as a kind of buffer zone for eastern traffic. The traffic routes that the sagas outline between Norway and *Garðaríki* are directly connected to *Svíþjóð*, as well. This supports, to our mind, the idea of including *Garðaríki* in the context of Baltic traffic.

We already referred to the paths undertaken by the royal travellers as depicted in Ótryg, Óhelg and Hsig. In this connection we focus a bit more on return voyages to *Svíþjóð*. Chapter 1 of Mgóð tells of Magnús góði's return, as he travels from *Garðaríki* to *Svíþjóð* in spring; paraphrasing the skaldic stanza by Arnórr jarlaskáld, it is explained that Magnús sailed to

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[812] More particularly, *Áróss* can refer to the mouth of the river Fyrisån on Uppsala. Uppsala is otherwise recorded in the form of *Uppsalir*, mentioned as a traffic destination e.g. in chs. 78 and 94 of Óhelg. In other saga passages, *Áróss* may also indicate Århus.

[813] Occasional references to that event are made in Hkr: in ch. 11 of Hgráf the battle is used as a chronological marker – it is told that king Eiríkr died at Uppsala ten years after the fall of Styrbjǫrn; in ch. 72 of Óhelg the same is implied when reminding one of the significant events of the past. An overview of ON prose contexts that refer to the battle or to the involved persons is given by Strid (1993), who is inclined to accept the historical core of the tradition. See also the discussion in connection with runic inscriptions (3.1.13.) and the *lausavísur* by Þórvaldr Hjaltason (4.1.2.1.).

Svíþjóð and steered up to Sigtuna.[814] Chapter 2 depicts the following journey through the Swedish territory to Hälsingland and Jämtland in the company of a big retinue of *Svíar*.

The connections of *Svíþjóð* with the eastern route are illuminated.[815] In ch. 43 of Ótryg, we again hear about Haraldr grenski, and it is said that he harried on the eastern route and then came to *Svíþjóð*. Later in the same chapter the ties between the two arenas of action are repeated: *Eptir um sumarit fór hann í Austrveg með liði sínu ok helt þá til Svíþjóðar* (ÍF XXVI: 288). In ch. 54 of Óhelg we hear of the plans of jarl Sveinn to head to the eastern route from *Svíþjóð* and obtain booty.[816]

Included in the context of eastern travels is the island of Gotland. In the above-mentioned ch. 192 of Óhelg, Óláfr arrives in Gotland on his way back from *Garðaríki*. Gotland's central location becomes obvious from the description that, upon his arrival to the island, Óláfr learns the news from different parts of Scandinavia: *Kom Óláfr konungr skipum sínum við Gotland, spyrði þar tíðendi bæði af Svíaveldi ok Danmǫrku ok allt ór Nóregi* (ÍF XXVII: 343).[817] Gotland emerges from this scene as a kind of Viking Age news centre.

Such a position naturally favours viking activities, and Gotland is part of that picture as well. In ch. 25 of Ótryg saga we learn that Óláfr sailed from Wendland to Skåne and harried there, then he sailed east to Gotland where he captured a ship owned by some people from Jämtland. His third battle took place on the island.[818] In ch. 89 of the same saga it is related of jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson that he came to the Swedish king, where he was well received. From *Svíþjóð* the jarl sailed to Gotland, and lay off the island for a long time in the summer waiting for either traders or vikings to show up; sometimes he also went harrying on land.[819] Gotland is also the target for Óláfr Haraldsson after his raid into the Mälaren region, which we outlined above; it is said that he raided and collected tribute from Gotland.

4.2.3.4. *Austrvegr* – the eastern route

In connection with saga depictions of traffic that has an eastern orientation, we should further focus on their application of the designation *Austrvegr*, i.e. the eastern route.[820] As shown in the previous subsection, *Austrvegr* is in itself a popular arena for people who set out from *Svíþjóð* looking for opportunities to raid and collect booty; but it can also be part of a general route to the east (and can be reached from different points of departure), whatever the purpose.

To start with, a few comments shall be made concerning the use of this label (and related designations) in the context of the 13th century kings' sagas. As explained by Jackson, at this stage the explicit meaning of *Austrvegr* becomes more limited than in the preceding phases witnessed by runic inscriptions, skaldic poetry and earlier sagas (see e.g. 1991: 233; 2003:

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[814] The return journey of Haraldr harðráði in ch. 17 of Hsig contains similar information. Additional examples of similar return traffic can be found in ch. 43 of Ótryg and ch. 192 of Óhelg

[815] See more about *Austrvegr* in the next subsection.

[816] In ch. 55 of Óhelg we hear that Sveinn jarl travelled to *Garðaríki*, and after raiding there came back to *Svíþjóð*.

[817] "King Óláf steered his ships to the Island of Gotland, and there he got news both from Sweden and Denmark and also all the way from Norway" (*Heimskringla*, Hollander 2002: 486).

[818] See also the poems by Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld.

[819] See also the poem *Bandadrápa* by Eyjolfr dáðaskáld. That Gotland was a suitable place where one could lie in wait is further remarked in ch. 66 of Óhelg.

[820] Note that in connection with sagas, we mark the designation *Austrvegr* with the capital letter, as customary in the cited editions.

34); now "the place-names with the root *aust-* refer to the territories settled by the Finns, the Karelians, the Estonians, the Kuronians, and the Wends, i.e. to the Baltic Sea region" (Jackson 2003: 35).[821]

However, certain saga passages reveal some ambiguity around the designation. Although the previously quoted examples do not automatically indicate that *Svíþjóð* was perceived as part of the actual *Austrvegr*, in the least they confirm the idea that the eastern route was within easy reach and belonged to the common scheme of Baltic Sea communication. We also find an interesting reference in ch. 72 of Óhelg, where *Austrvegr* is named in connection with the old dominion of the *Svíakonungar*. The king's daughter Ingigerðr asks her father to give up his wish to extend his rule over Norway and instead concentrate upon fighting *í Austrveg* to regain the influence that the former Swedish kings had there.[822]

Occasionally saga contexts connect travelling along the eastern route with one's subsequent arrival in *Garðaríki*. Above we followed some of the activities of jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson as depicted in Ótryg; in ch. 90 it is told that the jarl sailed to the eastern route and then made his way to *Garðaríki*. Chapter 66 of Óhelg informs that Guðleikr gerzki travelled in the summer along the eastern route to *Hólmgarðr*. In ch. 2 of Hsig we hear about Haraldr harðráði's engaments in *Garðaríki* and elsewhere, including *Austrvegr*.

A typical narrative pattern in the sagas is to refer to *Austrvegr* in terms of describing a person who excels as a viking and travels a lot. In ch. 24 of Hhárf we are introduced to a huge viking called Gǫngu-Hrólfr;[823] and it is said that he harried a lot on the eastern routes: *Hann herjaði mjǫk í Austrvegu* (ÍF XXVI: 123). Another moment that deserves attention in this last citation is the application of the plural form, i.e. "the eastern routes". As we remember, we also met the plural form in the poem *Ynglingatal*, where its exact meaning has to remain open. In the context of saga literature the occurrence of both singular and plural form further signifies the broad and partly ambiguous nature of the label.

In ch. 62 of Óhelg a man from eastern Agder, Eyvindr úrarhorn, is characterised by stating that he travelled and raided in different directions; in the west overseas, along the eastern route and south in Frisia.[824] In Knýt ch. 6 the Danish king Sveinn tjúguskegg receives a similar characterisation in terms of his wide journeys, including plundering on the eastern route. Expressive is the statement in ch. 26 of Knýt, according to which Knútr Sveinsson was busy on viking expeditions on the eastern route – with a reference to skald Kálfr Mánason, it is claimed that Knútr had won over ten kings during his raids in the east.

That men could take up such engagements at an early age is claimed in ch. 32 of Hhárf, where it is said of Haraldr's son Eiríkr that he was only twelve when he got five warships from his father, after which he went raiding − heading first to the eastern route, then to Denmark and further on to Frisia and Saxony.[825] Similarly, in ch. 10 of Hgóð it is said of the sons of Eiríkr blóðøx that as soon as they were old enough they went raiding, and gained booty from harrying on the eastern route. Their frequent engagements in the Baltic are also mentioned in ch. 21 of the same saga.[826]

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[821] Jackson adds: "*Austrvegr* denotes only coastal lands, in contrast to the term *Austrlond* that has a wider meaning" (ibid.).

[822] A similar message is repeated in ch. 80 of Óhelg.

[823] He is too big for horses to carry and has to travel on foot, hence the name.

[824] Chapter 65 refers to ones of his eastern campaigns.

[825] Additional campaigns took Eiríkr to the west as well as to the north, to Finnmark and Bjarmaland.

[826] In ch. 35 of Hhárf we hear of Eiríkr blóðøx himself returning from the eastern route.

Austrvegr is also the named arena for raiding in Hgráf; ch. 9 relates the plans of Haraldr and Guðrøðr to go raiding either in the west or in the east (*í víking vestr um haf eða í Austrveg*, ÍF XXVI: 213). In ch 12 of Hgráf, Hákon jarl sails from Norway to Denmark and then further on to the eastern route. In connection with traffic through Jämtland and Hälsingland (4.2.3.2.), we have already described the clever strategy of the same jarl of leaving his ships waiting off the coast of Hälsingland so that he could easily go harrying on the eastern route in the summers (cf. ch. 13 of Hgráf).[827]

In Knýt we also hear about movement in a different direction – with Denmark being the target of the people from the east. In ch. 29, it is said of the above-mentioned Knútr Sveinsson that he was a firmer ruler than his predecessor, in whose time Denmark was plundered by vikings such as *Kúrir* (Courlanders) and other *Austrvegsmenn*; a similar motive is repeated in ch. 86, where it is underlined that Denmark suffered from the raids of heathens and other *Austrvegsmenn*.[828]

The motive of confrontations with heathens is applied in ch. 70 of Knýt, which presents jarl Eiríkr Sveinsson (the later king); it is told that he fought against heathens on the eastern route but let Christians and merchants go unharmed – which made him popular throughout the eastern route.

Even trade connections can be illuminated occasionally. In this manner, Knýt ch. 87 introduces a certain Viðgautr, who is said to have kin in *Sámland*, and have traded regularly on the eastern route: *Hann var kaupmaðr ok stórauðigr ok vel menntr um marga hluti. Hann var jafnan vanr at sigla kaupferðir í Austrveg* (ÍF XXXV: 244).[829] Chapter 52 of Ótryg speaks of a certain Loðinn from Viken who engaged both in trading and raiding. In the following we learn that one summer he went trading on the eastern route and made it to *Eistland* – this brings us to the next subsection.

4.2.3.5. The Baltic countries and Finland

In the framework of the preceding discussion around the meaning of *Austrvegr*, it was pointed out that by this term the sagas usually imply the territories along the eastern and southern coast of the Baltic Sea, although some ambiguity is also visible. A few among the listed *Austrvegr* examples actually included references to particular parts of the eastern route, in the region of the modern Baltic countries.

The last quote from ch. 52 of Ótryg identified *Eistland* as one such district along the eastern route. Loðinn is said to have travelled to *Eistland* to attend summer markets.[830] A parallel example of the association of *Eistland* with the eastern route can be found in ch. 39 of Knýt, which contains information about a ship that set out from Norway. The ship was owned by merchants who were going to *Eistland* or some other part of the eastern route: *Þat skip áttu*

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[827] Other saga mentions of raids along the eastern route occur in ch. 43 of Ótryg; ch. 54 of Óhelg; ch. 2 of Knýt.

[828] Cf. also ch. 23 of Mgóð; ch. 48 of Hsig – the former mentions *Kúrir*, *Vinðr* and other *Austrvegsmenn* as well as *Saxar*, the latter speaks of *Vinðr* and *Kúrir,* and other *Austrvegsmenn*.

[829] "He was a very wealthy merchant, a man of great ability, and he used regularly to sail on trading voyages to the Baltic" (*Knýtlinga saga*, Pálsson & Edwards 1986: 126). Viðgautr's confrontation with *Kúrir* is commented on in the next subsection.

[830] The saga relates that he recognised the mother of Óláfr Tryggvason among the slaves who were on sale there, freed and married her.

kaupmenn, þeir er ætluðu til Eistlands eða annars staðar í Austrveg (ÍF XXXV: 158).[831] Furthermore, in ch. 32 of Hhárf we hear about Hálfdan svarti and Hálfdan hvíti raiding along the eastern route; they had a big battle (*orrosta*) in *Eistland* in which the latter fell.[832]

Much discussed is the reference to *Eistland* in ch. 6 of Ótryg, which describes the events leading to the enslavement of Ástríðr, the mother of Óláfr Tryggvason. As mentioned above, chs. 4-5 depict the arrival of Ástríðr and Óláfr Tryggvason in *Svíþjóð* (see 4.2.3.3.). They continue their travel further east with the intention of making it to *Garðaríki*, but as they set the sail east across the sea they are attacked by some vikings, of whom it is said: *Þat váru Eistr* (ÍF XXVI: 230). Óláfr and his mother get separated; a man called Klerkón, *eistneskr maðr* (ÍF XXVI: 230), obtains him and then sells him further to a certain Klerkr, who again passes him on to a farmer Réás; the names of his wife (Rékón) and son (Rékóni) are also provided. It is told that Óláfr stayed in this exile in *Eistland* for six years; ch. 7 tells of the trip of his uncle Sigurðr Eiríksson, who came to *Eistland* from *Hólmgarðr* to collect tribute, and saved Óláfr.

The interesting thing about this saga passage is its use of specific name forms when referring to persons from *Eistland*. Estonian scholars (Palmaru 1980: 269; Tarvel 1994: 62-63) have argued that the names actually have a Baltic origin, as for example indicated by the sound combination 'kl + vocal + r'.[833] Palmaru draws further parallels to the word *rykuné* ('matron') as recorded in early Lithuanian sources; the name Rékón may carry that meaning (ibid.). On that basis the scholars presume that in this context *Eistland* is used as a broader designation for an area that comprised southern Baltic territories.

On the other hand, Radvilavičius emphasises the necessary task for any saga narrative to provide names for the people whose actions they depict; according to him, names are an important style element both in the sagas of Icelanders and kings' sagas: "Det er sjelden at personer uten navn handler i sagaen" (Radvilavičius 1998: 61).[834] The "exotic nature" of these particular names must have contributed to the narrative, no matter whether they originated from the historical tradition or not.

Along similar lines, Jonuks remarks that the motive of Óláfr's imprisonment must have been considered so important that the names of all involved persons had to be provided – probably constructed according to certain principles (Jonuks 2004: 133-134; cf. also 2005). He admits the partly ambiguous nature of that place name; however, viewed against the recorded evidence of other ON place names that relate to various parts of present-day Estonia, *Eistland* could designate inland Estonia or figure as a general label that was used in such cases when the exact spot of action was not known (Jonuks 2004: 135).

Looking more closely at the saga narrative, it is significant that within the relatively brief description of the episode in question there are provided three 'Estonian' references: *Eistr, eistneskr* and *Eistland*. It seems as though the saga writer has in a way attempted to provide very concrete frames around the foreign personal names – so as to validate their inclusion. As for his and his contemporaries' understanding of the scope of *Eistland*, in corresponding cases it is hard to draw the exact boundaries around the territory as such. The sagas demonstrate certain relativity and flexibility in the application of different geographical labels; the previously discussed examples of the overlapping use of *Svíþjóð/Svíaveldi* as well as the

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[831] According to the saga, the ship sailed to Denmark, passed through Øresund and made it to Bornholm but then vanished without a trace, and there were no news about its fate. The motive of a lost ship, as such, is quite remarkable in the context of depicting Baltic traffic.

[832] A reference to this event is repeated in ch. 33 of the same saga.

[833] Both, though, also acknowledge the possibility that Klerkón and Klerkr may be Nordic derivations.

[834] "It occurs rarely that persons without names are active in the saga" (my translation).

meaning of *Gautland* and *Austrvegr* support the same image. At the same time, taking into consideration the overall saga tradition, it still seems more reasonable to connect *Eistland* with Estonia and not extend it over the southern Baltic territory. In this connection we may also consider the reference to *Eistland* in ch. 80 of Óhelg – while relating of old times, a man called Þorgnýr says of his grandfather king Eiríkr Emundarson that he travelled to different lands and subdued *Finnland ok Kirjálaland, Eistland ok Kúrland ok víða um Austrlǫnd* (ÍF XXVI: 115).

More precisely interpreted are references to *Eysýsla* and *Aðalsýsla* – the island of Saaremaa (Ösel) and the western part of Estonian mainland, respectively. *Eysýsla* is named as a destination in ch. 8 of Óhelg; it functions as a setting for one of the young Óláfr's campaigns, of which we hear also in Sigvatr's *Víkingarvísur*. The saga even informs that at first the *Eysýslir* had offered to pay him a tribute, but then turned up with their troops.

In ch. 90 of Ótryg it is said of jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson that after he returned from his raids in *Garðaríki*, where he spent five years (see 4.2.3.6.), he harried around *Aðalsýsla* and *Eysýsla*, taking four viking ships from Danes whom he killed. In this we thus also find an indirect reference to Danish activities in the region of the Estonian islands, a motive that is repeated in some sagas of Icelanders.

In connection with traffic along *Austrvegr*, we observed a few references to the pirate threat from *Kúrir*, whereas the recent quotation from ch. 80 of Óhelg referred to *Kúrland*. Among saga depictions of contacts with southeastern Baltic territories, the episode described in ch. 87 of Knýt deserves some attention. As previously mentioned, the character introduced here is a merchant Viðgautr, who had kin in the Baltic; the saga depicts him sailing one summer back home from the east. When his ship was west off of *Kúrland*, a fleet of *Kúrir* who had been waiting for the merchant set after him to get his cargo. Viðgautr first turned back towards *Sámland* but was then forced to sail out to the open sea. According to the saga, he now had to choose whether to confront the pirates or head towards Christian countries (*snúa til kristinna landa*, ÍF XXXV: 244). He took the latter alternative and sailed to Denmark. The rest of the chapter depicts his arrival and conversion, after which he is well accepted by the Danish duke Knútr Eiríksson (on whose behalf he later undertakes a mission to *Garðaríki*). The saga underlines that Viðgautr was a smart man because he had travelled a lot; for that reason he could respond to questions about the eastern route as well. Thus, here the importance of telling stories about one's travels – and the interest in such information – is recorded.

In ch. 123 of Knýt saga a fight against *Kúrir* is mentioned; the Danes receive the news that some Courlanders are attacking Blekinge, but they are not sure whether this is true or not. Some time later they hear that the Courlanders are now by the island of Møn, and then the Danes decide to confront them. Upon their arrival, the Courlanders get ready to fight, as they think that the men are Swedes (*Svíar*); however, an older man tells the others that they are about to stand up against Danes (*Danir*), and he himself sails away. The other Courlanders stay behind and all are killed, while only two Danes die. Such focus upon the superiority of the Danes is a common motive in Knýt, and this technique adds illustrative details to the description of battles.

The discussed saga examples of traffic along the eastern route and connections with the Baltic territories on the one hand record activities such as plundering and to a certain degree also trading, but at the same time they accord with the image of being a transit zone for further travels.

As for the region of present-day Finland, saga references remain sporadic; the place name *Finnland* itself occurs in the list of territories mentioned in ch. 80 of Óhelg. In ch. 9 of the same saga, Finland is given as one of the regions where Óláfr harried.[835] It is told that Óláfr went through some forests and came to the settlement of *Herdalar*. The magical powers of the local people *Finnar* are illuminated; they are said to have caused a great storm on the sea, which the king managed to overcome. The men then sailed along the southwestern coast of Finland, (*fyrir Bálagarðssíðu*, ÍF XXVII: 11), and from there out to the open sea.

Scholars have on many occasions pointed out the linking of *Finnar* with magic in saga literature.[836] At the same time the dubious nature of the label itself is emphasised; it may be hard to determine whether references are made to the inhabitants of Finland in its narrow sense or to the Saami people. Also, the relationship between the ON terms *Finnar* and *Lappir* is not clear. Aalto (2003: 1) writes: "This unclear picture of the *Finnar* and *Lappir* may indicate that the speakers of Old Norse knew there were two kinds of *Finnar* – Finns and Saami people – but that they had difficulties seeing differences between them".

Aalto's studies of *Finnar* (2003; 2005) emphasise the negative sides of their depiction in Hkr; according to her they represent "a marginal group" (Aalto 2003: 3). However, the picture that may seem negative to us (expressed in terms of sorcery, heathen background, etc.) may also result from the sagas' complex schemes of narrative representation, which in fact does not have to entail negative <u>evaluation</u>.

4.2.3.6. *Garðaríki*

The sagas' rather frequent references to *Garðaríki* – as already observed from the previous overview – constitute an exhaustive research topic in themselves, and have been the focus of numerous studies that examine the contacts between Old Rus and Scandinavia. The following subsection is merely a modest contribution that addresses the matter, with the purpose of presenting some characteristic saga depictions of travels to and from *Garðaríki* in the context of Baltic traffic; that is to say, we do not attempt to discuss the general nature and potential historicity of the Old Norse saga tradition on Old Rus.[837] However, it is useful to take into consideration the general nature of corresponding saga evidence:

> Its main volume refers to the early feudal period of Russian history, namely the tenth through the late eleventh century, which was the period of formation of a relatively united Old Russian state. Information preserved in the sagas concerns the reign of the two princes, Vladimir Svjatoslavich, the great prince of Kiev in 978-1015, and his son Jaroslav the Wise, the prince of Novgorod in 1010-1016 and the great prince of Kiev in 1016-1054. (Jackson 2000: 358)

Besides that, the sagas treat in some detail the period that extends from the late 11th century well into the 13th century, with "data on matrimonial connections of the Russian ruling dynasty with the Scandinavian ruling houses" (ibid.).

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[835] See also *Víkingarvísur* by Sigvatr.

[836] Additional motives concern trade and marital ties with *Finnar*.

[837] Among recent contributions the books by Jackson (1993; 1994; 2000) approach these questions. In the framework of her study, Jackson systematises the various motives concerning the tradition around the vivid eastern connections of the Norwegian kings Óláfr Tryggvason (1993: 185-217), Óláfr Haraldsson (1994: 140-192) and Haraldr harðráði (2000: 128-159).

The sagas examined in this present study establish *Garðaríki* as a common destination for eastern traffic. The applied designation is *Garðaríki*, which is a younger derivation of the *Garðar* that we met in runic inscriptions and skaldic poetry (cf. e.g. Jackson 2003: 36). *Garðaríki* is often the intended target for people who come from Norway to *Svíþjóð* and who set out on the eastern route. But the sagas actually depict two-ways mobility; several episodes also deal with the return trips of Norwegian rulers who have been in exile.

To exemplify this, we turn once more to the previously outlined scenes from Ótryg (chs. 4-5) that describe the travels of Ástríðr and Óláfr Tryggvason. Chapter 6 includes information about Ástríðr's brother Sigurðr; it is said that he had long been abroad, east in *Garðaríki* where he was highly respected. Óláfr makes it to *Hólmgarðr* six years later (see ch. 7) together with his uncle Sigurðr. The following chapter describes the events in *Hólmgarðr*; it is told that Óláfr was nine when he came to *Garðaríki* and that he spent another nine years there. In ch. 21 we learn about Óláfr's intentions to leave *Garðaríki* and go back to *Norðlǫnd*. Óláfr then sails from *Hólmgarðr* out to the Baltic Sea (*út í hafit í Eystrasalt*; ÍF XXVI: 252), passing the island of Bornholm, where he gains a lot of booty.

In chs. 180-181 of Óhelg the motive of the eastern journey of Óláfr Haraldsson is introduced. Óláfr arrives in *Svíþjóð* with the wish to travel to *Garðaríki*, which he does in the summer. The following chapters illuminate his stay and growing desire to return to Norway; in ch. 192 Óláfr's return voyage is described – his journey takes him first along the frozen rivers to the sea and when spring comes and ice breaks, the ships get ready to leave. The passage overseas is determined as favourable (*ok greiddisk ferð sú vel*, ÍF XXVII: 343); such small pieces of information about the actual travelling conditions form another characteristic feature of the narrative representation of traffic.[838]

In the meantime, we learn that Óláfr left his son Magnús in *Garðaríki*; in ch. 251 of Óhelg some men from Norway sail to *Garðaríki*, where *Aldeigjuborg* is identified as their point of arrival. From *Aldeigjuborg* they send messengers down to *Hólmgarðr* to Jarizleifr with the mission of taking Magnús back to Norway. Chapter 1 of Mgóð relates of the latter's return trip, along similar lines to his father's journey.[839]

In ch. 2 of Hsig, we hear about Haraldr's journey from *Svíþjóð* to Jarizleifr in *Garðaríki*. Haraldr's various engagements in *Garðaríki* and elsewhere are described in the following chapters; ch. 17 informs that he got married to Jarizleifr's daughter Ellisif (Elísabeth), and in the following spring he travelled from *Hólmgarðr* to *Aldeigjuborg* where he got ships and sailed to Sigtuna in *Svíþjóð*; his route is identical to the one of Magnús.[840]

With regard to marital ties we could further mention that the marriage of Ellisif's mother Ingigerðr to Jarizleifr is treated in some detail in chs. 91 and 93 of Óhelg. In ch. 91 it is mentioned that Jarizleifr sent his messengers to Óláfr Svíakonungr to ask for the hand of his daughter. According to ch. 93, Ingigerðr was willing to marry Jarizleifr on the condition that she would get *Aldeigjuborg* and the district around it as a bridal gift, and that she would be followed to *Garðaríki* by her kinsman jarl Rǫgnvaldr. The following scenes depict the preparations undertaken by the jarl and their subsequent journey to *Garðaríki*, where Ingigerðr got married to Jarizleifr and indeed received the gift she had been asking for. Here, for one, the

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[838] As previously told, Óláfr makes the first stop in Gotland. Óláfr's eastern voyage is briefly summarised in ch. 17 of Knýt, with information that Óláfr fled east to *Garðaríki* but came back after two years and fought a battle at *Stiklarstaðir*.

[839] See also the poems by Arnórr jarlaskáld.

[840] See also the poem by Valgarðr á Velli. Haraldr's return from *Garðaríki* is implied in Knýt ch. 22, with extra genealogical information about his wife.

saga refers to travelling women and secondly, outlines that the travellers remained in *Garðaríki* for good.[841]

The example from Óhelg included the motive of messengers being sent from *Garðaríki* to *Svíþjóð* in connection with marital plans. Similarly, in ch. 43 of Ótryg a certain Vissavaldr comes from *Garðaríki* to *Svíþjóð* to ask queen Sigríðr to marry him. However, his mission is not accomplished since Sigríðr has him and his men killed during the night. Traffic in which the aim is to find a bride is further illuminated by Knýt ch. 88; in this case, the journey leads from Denmark to *Garðaríki*. It is the above-mentioned Baltic traveller Viðgautr who undertakes the journey to *Hólmgarðr* and succeeds with his mission of arranging a marriage for Knútr Eiríksson. Interesting is the manner in which Viðgautr's expedition is described; it is thus said that he set off with his men *ok er ekki sagt frá hans ferðum, fyrr en hann kom austr í Hólmgarð á fund Haralds konungs* (ÍF XXXV: 247).[842] The laconic mention that there is nothing further to relate of the journey belongs to the repertoire of typical saga formulations. At the same time, Viðgautr himself is characterised in some length by references to his good reputation and his command of many languages.

So far we have looked at saga episodes that relate of travels to *Garðaríki* in connection with exile or marital arrangements – both themes are rather remarkable in the context of other depictions of Baltic traffic. Naturally, *Garðaríki* can also be determined as the setting for plundering. The well known campaign undertaken by jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson is described in ch. 90 of Ótryg.[843] As mentioned above, the jarl sailed to the eastern route and came to the country of Valdamarr, where he started raiding, burning and killing people.[844]

On the other hand, Eiríkr Sveinsson – the one who was known throughout the eastern route because he did not kill Christians and merchants (as told in ch. 70 of Knýt, cf. 4.2.3.4.) –, when making his way to *Garðaríki*, paid visits to the chieftains there and received a nice reception and gifts, after which he returned to Denmark.

The fact that certain saga persons frequented in *Garðaríki* or had close ties with that region is demonstrated by the application of particular qualifying labels. In this manner, ch. 46 of Ótryg informs that the man had kin in *Garðaríki* (*Áli kallaðisk gerzkr at ætt*, ÍF XXVI: 291). Chapter 66 of Óhelg introduces a man from Agder, called Guðleikr gerzki. He is characterised as a great trader who travelled to many lands; due to his eastern connections with *Garðaríki* he earned the byname *gerzki*.

4.2.3.7. Denmark – a focal area in the south

Denmark – or *Danaveldi/Danaríki*, as it may also be called – enjoys much attention both in Hkr and Knýt. In the latter saga Denmark is naturally the main arena where the saga heroes move and act. From this it follows that Knýt also records local and regional traffic within the

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[841] For comments around the marriage of Ingigerðr, see e.g. Jackson (1994: 153-161). Another saga reference to a person who went to *Garðaríki* and did not return occurs in Knýt ch. 23, where we hear about Þorgísl, the son of Sveinn Úlfsson. According to the saga he travelled to *Garðaríki*, where he had kin on his mother' side; he was brought up there and even made a king (the same information is repeated in ch. 30 of Knýt). As explained by Jackson (2000: 244), there exists no other evidence of such Russian relationships of Sveinn Úlfsson.

[842] "[…] and nothing is said of his travels until he came east to Novgorod, met King Harald" (*Knýtlinga saga*, Pálsson & Edwards 1986: 129).

[843] See also Eyjolfr's *Bandadrápa*, as well as 4.2.3.4.

[844] In ch. 55 of Óhelg, it is told of jarl Sveinn that he travelled east to *Garðaríki*, and harried there during the summer, returning to *Svíþjóð* in the autumn.

Danish realm. Denmark further belongs into the scene of travels in different directions: to the north (Norway), the west (England), the east (*Svíþjóð*, the eastern route and *Garðaríki*), and to the south (particularly Saxony and Wendland). The eastern contacts have been illuminated above in connection with different destinations that could also be reached from Denmark; to southern communications we return below. In this subsection the focus lies for the main part on some patterns of regional communication within the Danish kingdom, in combination with its connections (and continuous confrontations) with Norway. Special attention will be given to the sagas' identification of some of its strategical districts.[845]

From the Norwegian point of view Denmark is determined as a southern destination, expressed through typical phrases such as *suðr til Danmarkar* or *suðr til Jótlands*. This southern mobility may also be demonstrated by statements of the type: *Síðan sigldi Eiríkr suðr með landi ok kom fram í Danmǫrk, fór þá á fund Haralds konungs Gormssonar* (ch. 20 of Ótryg, ÍF XXVI: 250).[846] Here we notice the same formulation pattern that was commented on above concerning traffic to the Swedish kings (4.2.3.3.); that is to say, journeys are guided towards named individuals. Travels from Sweden to Denmark also head south, referred to e.g. in ch. 98 of Ótryg, where a large fleet (*skipaherr*) is gathered from *Svíaveldi* and sent south to Denmark.[847]

Traffic between Norway and Denmark is often part of the kings' power extension schemes; it is related to separate campaigns (and results in big battles), as well as arranged (diplomatic) meetings at named spots. Lasting hostilities find frequent expression in the form of extensive viking raids, which the most significant kings start at an early age. Chapter 4 of Óhelg thus informs that Óláfr was only twelve when he went on board his first warship and sailed to Denmark (and from there east to *Svíþjóð*). In ch. 10 we hear more about Óláfr's Danish activities; he again sails to Denmark and joins forces with the viking Þorkell, and the men head south along the coast of Jylland to a place called *Suðrvík* (Søndervig), where they win over many viking ships.[848] Chapter 145 of the same saga relates of Óláfr's thorough raids through Denmark; the main scene of action is Sjælland (*Sjóland*) and this time the ravaging is connected with Óláfr's and Swedish king Ǫnundr's attempts to subject Denmark. It is told that Óláfr killed many people in Sjælland while the Swedish king was harrying in Skåne.[849]

In a similar manner Danes could carry out raids in Norway – as referred to in connection with the district of Viken, and this can cause extensive revenge action. One such example occurs in the above-mentioned ch. 6 of Hgóð, where it is told that the Danes were harrying in Viken, but upon the arrival of king Hákon they all fled, some to Halland, some south to Jylland. Hákon sets after them and a big battle takes place in Jylland, after which he continues raiding within the Danish realm and makes it also to Øresund, Skåne and Götaland

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[845] Besides the identification of different Danish sites in the context of traffic, Knýt (ch. 32) also offers a general description of the administrative and episcopal division of Denmark (in a similar style to the short description of *Svíaveldi* that we find in Hkr). The main regions and sites of Denmark are there set into a joint geographical-administrative scheme so as to ease the grasp of events that unfold in different parts of the country. The passage is relatively long and provides a list of all Danish islands and important straits as well as the districts of Halland and Skåne.

[846] "Then Eirík sailed south along the land and finally arrived in Denmark. There he sought King Harald Gormsson at his court" (*Heimskringla*, Hollander 2002: 161).

[847] An alternative in these cases is to say that one is travelling from the east (*austan*) to Denmark, see e.g. ch. 19 of Hsig.

[848] In the following step, Óláfr travels south to Frisia and after that we hear more about his western campaigns in England. See also *Víkingarvísur* by Sigvatr skald.

[849] Note that references to Sjælland are recorded in the form of *Selund* and *Sjáland*, *Sjóland*.

(as even recorded in the poem by Goþþormr sindri). Hákon's further raids take him to the coastal area of Skåne where he kills both Danes and Wends, and collects tribute (he proceeds further on to Götaland and finally returns to Viken).[850]

This basic pattern of regional mobility that takes saga characters from one Danish district (island) to another – including traffic within the linked straits – and further on into the territory of southern Sweden is well recorded both in Hkr and Knýt. A typical example in this context is the escape/approach route of Sveinn Úlfsson during his lasting confrontations with Magnús góði and Haraldr harðráði, as outlined in Mgóð, Hsig and Knýt.

In ch. 25 of Mgóð we hear about Sveinn coming down to Skåne from *Svíþjóð* with forces that he has gathered there, and he is well received by the local people, who take him as their king. From Skåne he travels to Sjælland, then over to Fyn and other islands, establishing his rule. After Sveinn loses a battle against Magnús (as described in ch. 29), he flees to Skåne. However, in ch. 30 Sveinn again summons his troops and proceeds to Sjælland, Fyn and other islands and then south to Jylland where he sails into Limfjord. Sveinn suffers another loss in a fierce battle at Århus and has to flee to Sjælland, followed by Magnús. Sveinn's flight continues to Fyn, with Magnús still in his footsteps, which makes Sveinn sail to Skåne (from there he proceeds on to Götaland and travels to the Swedish king).

The same route is repeated in ch. 33, which depicts Sveinn coming back along the same way: first to Skåne, then to Sjælland and Fyn and other islands. Another battle between Sveinn and Magnús takes place at Helgenæs, and again Sveinn has to make his escape east to Skåne, with Magnus following after him along the coast of Skåne.

In Hsig the hostilities continue, now with the involvement of Haraldr, who first supports Sveinn and harries together with him in Denmark (ch. 19), but changes sides after Magnús has agreed to share the kingdom; this turns Haraldr into Sveinn's enemy and leads to further harrying.[851]

In ch. 34 of Hsig, for example, Haraldr heads to Denmark from the Göta river; among other destinations he travels south to Hedeby and burns the trade town. The main battle between Sveinn and Haraldr took place, according to Knýt, when Haraldr had been the king of Norway for sixteen years – it was the battle at Nissaån in Halland.[852] Sveinn is defeated, but later the two kings come to terms with each other and arrange for peace. In this connection we even hear of diplomatic traffic between Norway and Denmark, with messengers travelling back and forth, as expressed in ch. 71 of Hsig: *Þann vetr fóru boð ok sendimenn milli Nóregs ok Danmerkr* (ÍF XXVIII: 158).

Despite the fact that the examples above appear rather repetitive and describe the same traffic routes over and over again, they at the same time include references to certain strategical sites within the Danish realm. In the following step, we add a few comments with regard to two important districts from the point of view of maritime traffic – Limfjord and Øresund.

Limfjord is identified both as a destination and a point of departure for short as well as long distance traffic; it is also often given as the arena where one can summon the troops or lay for a while with one's fleet. In ch. 38 of Ótryg, Limfjord is, for example, the scene from where the

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[850] Similarly, in ch. 28 of Merl, Erlingr skakki undertakes a revenge action after learning that the Danes have ravaged in Viken; he follows after them to Jylland, where he attacks the ships returning from the expedition.

[851] The same events are summarised in ch. 22 of Knýt, which also describes Sveinn's battles and travel routes. For a full account of these events, the author of Knýt, in the meantime, refers to the separate saga about Haraldr (i.e. Hkr).

[852] For a description of this battle, see also chs. 61-63 of Hsig.

Jomsvikings set out for Norway. In ch. 148 of Óhelg the Danish troops are gathered in Limfjord to wait for the arrival of Knútr ríki from England to protect the country from the Norwegian and Swedish threat. In ch. 170 of Óhelg, Knútr is said to have gathered his fleet and sailed into Limfjord – when everything is set, Knútr heads towards Norway.

Chapter 42 of Knýt depicts Knútr Sveinsson mobilising his forces at Limfjord, this time joined by Norwegians who have sailed to Limfjord with the intention of making a joint expedition to England. As we learn, Knútr himself fails to turn up in time and for that reason the Danes leave the army. When Knútr arrives in Limfjord, he tells the Norwegians to return home and he himself heads on to Sjælland.

Limfjord can also be the planned meeting place or the site for battles where kings die. Chapter 12 of Ótryg describes the intentions of Haraldr gráfeldr to travel to Jylland and meet with the Danish king. We hear about Harald's journey from Víken to Hals in Limfjord where the Danish king is supposed to turn up. What follows (in ch. 14) is that the Danish chieftain Gull-Haraldr makes it to the same spot and challenges Haraldr gráfeldr to a battle, where the latter falls.[853] In ch. 1 of Knýt, Limfjord is identified as the place where Haraldr Gormsson killed the Norwegian king Haraldr Gunnhildarson.

At other times, Limfjord appears to be the setting where one has to wait for suitable sailing winds, as mentioned in ch. 26 of Ótryg, about Hákon jarl who intends to sail back north to Norway after a battle: *Eptir þessa orrostu fór Hákon jarl aptr til skipa sinna ok ætlaði þá at sigla norðr aptr í Nóreg, en honum gaf eigi byr. Lá hann þá út í Limafirði* (ÍF XXVI: 258).[854]

Due to the strategic importance of Limfjord, it is not surprising that the sagas may find it necessary to describe the site in some detail. In this manner, ch. 58 of Hsig informs that Haraldr travelled from Norway to Jylland, arrived in Limfjord and raided on both of its shores. It is said that the entrance of Limfjord is narrow, but that once one has come inside the fjord it is as wide as a sea (*sem mikit haf*, ÍF XXVIII: 139).[855] The saga further relates that Haraldr lay in anchor there by some island (*at eyju nǫkkurri*, ÍF XXVIII: 139), which shows that it is not always considered necessary to identify sites by name.

Sagas also illuminate the central function of Øresund as an important passage for sea traffic, but also as a site for naval battles, a place where ships can lay for a while, or even as a setting for meetings. As a destination, Øresund can be reached easily from different places in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, so traffic is unfolding in different directions. At the same time the narrowness of Øresund provides easy access to inland districts. To name one example, ch. 27 of Ótryg saga describes how Hákon jarl sailed from *Mársey* (Mors) east to Øresund, raiding on both sides.

In ch. 152 of Óhelg we learn more about the strategic position of Øresund. King Knútr ríki, who is following Ǫnundr and Óláfr after they have been plundering in Denmark, hears that those two are heading east along the coast; his spies keep him informed of their movements. Knútr then sets up his troops in Øresund: *En er hann spurði, at mikill hluti liðs var frá þeim*

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[853] See also *Gráfeldardrápa* by Glúmr Geirason.
[854] "After this battle Earl Hákon returned to his ships, intending to sail back north to Norway, but he had contrary winds. So he remained anchored in the Limfjord" (*Heimskringla*, Hollander 2002: 166).
[855] In ch. 32 of Knýt it is said of Limfjord that this famous fjord stretches from north to south and is separated from the sea by a narrow headland.

farinn, þá helt hann sínum her aptr til Sjálands ok lagðisk í Eyrarsund með allan herinn. Lá sumt liðit við Sjáland, en sumt við Skáni (ÍF XXVII: 284).[856]

Our final comments concern mobility within Denmark from the perspective of internal affairs – well recorded in Knýt. In this context, certain sites are identified as assembly places; Knýt for example refers several times to assemblies held at Viborg, where kings are appointed. In this manner, in ch. 28 it is told that Knútr Sveinsson was chosen as the king at the *Vébjargaþing* (Viborg assembly), after which he travelled through the Danish realm to assert his authority, reaching also Halland and Skåne where other assemblies were held.[857] Similarly, in ch. 65 of Knýt, it is said of Óláfr Sveinsson that he was made the king at the Viborg assembly; followed by his travels through the country.

Inland travel is connected to regular activities, such as attending feasts, which we hear of e.g. in ch. 31 of Knýt. With Knútr Sveinsson being the central figure of Knýt, we hear of several of his travels. In ch. 37 it is related of the feast he attended in *Borgundarhólmr* (Bornholm); in ch. 40 he again headed to Bornholm as soon as there were suitable sailing winds, with the purpose of learning about the fate of a ship that had gone missing.[858]

In chs. 43-47 we hear of Knútr's several other inland travels. The saga also relates of a rebellious army gathering at Randers; a fleet is arranged to take the army across the strait of *Meðalfararsund* (Lillebælt) over to Fyn. Chapter 53 informs that the army has made its way over Lillebælt and is moving up along the river *Kálfá* (Odenseå) close to *Óðinsvé* (Odense). These scenes focus upon traffic along common waterways and demonstrate how the straits can both connect and separate different districts. In connection with this, the mention of Lillebælt in ch. 111 of Knýt also deserves to be pointed out. The saga tells of Valdamarr Knútsson's travel from Sjælland to Fyn and then across Lillebælt. It is said that there was ice in the strait, which made it almost impossible to travel through it, but Valdamarr managed to do it and continued further on north to Jylland.

4.2.3.8. Wendland and Saxony

The final part of this present discussion around Baltic traffic from the perspective of Hkr and Knýt sagas focuses upon mobility that concerns southern territories in the region of present-day Poland and northern Germany – i.e. *Vinðland* (Wendland) and *Saxland* (Saxony). Both areas figure to some extent in Hkr and Knýt, but Danish confrontations with Wendland enjoy particular attention due to the inclusion of a list of Danish campaigns in Knýt. Wendland is a typical southern target territory for raiding and plundering (alongside campaigns of religious motivation), although the opposite movement of Wends into the Scandinavian realm is also sometimes depicted. At the same time, from the point of view of Knýt, the domination of Danes in this relationship is made very clear (as will be demonstrated below).

However, to start with a few Wendish examples from Hkr, we should first and foremost look at the engagements of Óláfr Tryggvason and Magnus góði. In chs. 21-22 of Ótryg we hear that on his return journey from *Garðaríki*, Óláfr sailed to Bornholm and from there proceeded

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[856] "And when he learned that a large portion of their fleet had left them, he returned with his fleet to Seeland and anchored in the Eyrar Sound with all his force. Some of his ships were moored near Seeland, some near Scania" (*Heimskringla*, Hollander 2002: 444).

[857] The Viborg assembly is also mentioned in Hkr, e.g. in ch. 21 of Mgóð; ch. 29 of Hsig. The same patterns of internal travel otherwise apply to the Norwegian rulers within the realm of Norway.

[858] That incident was referred to in 4.2.3.5.

south to Wendland. He visited the Wendish ruler and married his daughter. For Óláfr, Wendland is for a while the main arena for action; he travels around Wendland, visiting (and subordinating) different districs (ch. 25). After his wife dies of illness, Óláfr no longer wishes to stay there and sets out on western expeditions (ch. 29). However, his ties with Wendland remain a topic throughout the saga. To name one example, in ch. 97 Óláfr undertakes a journey past Denmark south to Wendland to meet king Búrizláfr and discuss his claims for certain possessions – the issue is solved on friendly terms.

Among the sites in the Wendish territory, the stronghold of Jomsvikings, Jomsborg, is mentioned in ch. 34 of Ótryg, with reference to the fight that Sveinn had with his father Haraldr Gormsson.[859] In chs. 99 and 100 of Ótryg the island of Svolder is named; the following scenes depict the final battle of Óláfr.

In the case of Magnús góði, the saga's focus lies on his confrontations with the Wends (as was also obvious from the skaldic poems). In ch. 24 of Mgóð, Magnús heads south to Denmark in spring; there he learns that the Wends at Jomsborg do not want to be his subjects anymore. The saga explains that this district was traditionally under Danish rule. Magnús summons troops from Denmark and travels to Wendland in the summer. It is further told that he made his way to Jomsborg and was victorious, killing a lot of people, burning the fort and forcing the Wends to surrender, after which he could return to Denmark.

Another battle of Magnús' against Wends is described in chs. 26-28, with the motive of Óláfr Haraldsson appearing to his son in a dream and urging him to fight against the heathens (ch. 27). In the fierce battle many Wends are killed but not many among Magnús' men, although there were wounded. It is emphasised that the news of Óláfr's miraculous intervention reached all lands after the battle.[860]

In the above-mentioned chs. 10-12 of Mblin (cf. 4.2.3.2.), the Wends undertake a raid on *Konungahella*. Motives of magic are included in this depiction – one fighter among the heathen Wends could not be harmed by weapons due to his skills in magic. It is only with the help of a consecrated arrow that the Christians managed to kill him. Nevertheless, despite such Christian superiority the outcome of the Wendish raid was unfortunate for the settlement of *Konungahella*, which was basically destroyed; there were also many people taken captive.

Knýt saga's accounts depict for the main part Danish mobility to Wendland in connection with plunder and bigger campaigns, which in the case of later kings turns into systematic expeditions. To start with an example of a more occasional raid, in ch. 35 a certain Egill Ragnarsson sails to Wendland with eighteen ships to raid there. The Wends gather an army and fight against him; it is told that the battle took place aboard ships, thus offering an interesting description of a naval encounter where the hero's "jump" from his own ship to the one of the enemy leader brings about victory. Furthermore, in this particular context the extraordinary features of Egill are also outlined by saying that after the battle he drank water that had been mixed with blood (this was the direct result of all the killings during the battle).[861]

Somewhat different is the reference made to Wendland and Wends in ch. 111, where Sveinn Eiríksson is said to have grown tired of being in Saxony, which makes him travel to Wendland, where he hires Wends to ferry him over to the island of Fyn. However, most of the

[859] See also ch. 4 of Knýt; Jomsborg is further identified as a destination in ch. 99 of Ótryg.
[860] The same events are referred to in ch. 22 of Knýt.
[861] After the battle Egill headed back to Denmark and travelled to Bornholm. In ch. 42 we hear about a planned revenge attack from the Wendish side on Denmark, but thanks to a diplomatic mission of Knútr Sveinsson's messengers this is prevented.

time we hear of bigger campaigns against Wendland. In ch. 76 the focus lies on Eiríkr Sveinsson's battle against Wends in connection with his attempt to re-establish Danish authority over the region that Danish kings had long possessed. The battle results in the massive slaughter and punishment of Wends, and Eiríkr's victorious return to Denmark.[862] The series of systematic campaigns to Wendland are dealt with in chs. 119-130, connected first and foremost with the activities of Valdamarr Knútsson, who is assisted by bishops Áskell and Absalón; his initiatives are continued by his son Knútr. The storyline in these chapters is based upon the repetition of characteristic motives; we shall therefore not outline the undertaken expeditions in detail but confine ourselves to the main features. The premises are set in ch. 119, where Valdamarr announces that he wants to levy troops in the spring to go abroad and convert Wendland, if God so wills it (*at leiðangr skal úti vera at vári, ok hann ætlar at fara til Vinðlands at kristna landit, ef guð vill þess auðit láta verða*, ÍF XXXV: 294).

Valdamarr's overseas expeditions have a regular nature and he reaches different places within the Wendish territory, with many among them named – so as to establish a very concrete factual frame around the narration.[863] There is a clear concentration of action in the district of *Ré* (Rügen), which is also characterised as a powerful region (*þat er mikit herað ok ríki*, ÍF XXXV: 298). In ch. 122 a preliminary summary of Valdamarr's campaigns is provided by the statement that he had led eight expeditions to Rügen before winning control over it. However, as we see his expeditions continued. The same basic sequence of events is presented: after a devastating campaign the Wends surrender and swear their allegiance, but soon they break their agreement, which makes Valdamarr call in another levy and arrange further campaigns.

Among settlements the town of *Arkún* (Arkona) is mentioned several times; the town is the centre of attention in ch. 122, when its heathen temple and idols are destroyed by the Danes. It is said that the Danes converted five thousand people on that particular expedition. Chapter 123 adds that during Valdamarr's time there were eleven churches built in Rügen.

Besides converting, the main activities are plundering, burning and killing. It is frequently emphasised how many people among the enemy forces are killed, whereas the Danes in general suffer only modest losses. Chapter 121 informs that during one battle eleven hundred Wends were killed, but only one of bishop Absalón's men, though it is admitted that two had drowned during a swimming competition. By that latter statement, the impact of the battle against the Wends is even further strengthened.

When Valdamarr dies of illness, it is stated (ch. 127) that he had fought altogether 28 battles against heathens, defending the Christian faith. In chs. 128-130, Knútr Valdimarsson takes over the scene of the fighting. In ch. 129, it is in a somewhat different manner depicted how he has to turn back from one of his Wendish expeditions, since nearly sixty Danes get killed;[864] another campaign has to be terminated since the Danes lack enough provisions. However, with the assistance of bishop Absalón there is a new levy called in for an overseas expedition, and during this campaign Knútr's power and authority are fully established. Absalón's significance in all of this is emphasised – he is characterised as a great commander, warrior and adviser (ch. 130).

In the case of traffic to/from Saxony, it is for the main part the different-natured communications between the Danish and Saxon rulers that colour relevant saga depictions. With

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[862] Cf. also the poem by Markús Skjeggjason.

[863] Among the named sites are rivers, several towns as well as provinces.

[864] This appears to be quite a big number, compared to the usual loss of two or three Danes.

regard to earlier Danish kings the motive of Christianisation – i.e. the Saxon rulers' wish to make the Danes accept the Christian faith – forms a suitable background for explaining Saxony's attempts at expansion. As told in ch. 24 of Ótryg, the Saxon emperor Ottó sent his men to the Danish king Haraldr Gormsson with the demand that the Danes be converted or otherwise the country was under attack. Haraldr decided to face him and had the *Danavirki* (Danevirke fortifications) put in order. While describing the subsequent battle, even some information about the Danevirke is provided, emphasising its strategical constructions.

The border region around southern Jylland and Schleswig gains further attention due to the sagas' references to some focal point(s) in this area; *Heiðabýr/Heiðabær* and *Slésvík* are both mentioned, although the former designation is applied more often (see especially Knýt). In ch. 13 of Mson, the home journey of Sigurðr jórsalafari is outlined with parallel references to *Slésvík* and *Heiðabýr*; it is told that Sigurðr arrived in *Slésvík* in Denmark and met the Danish king Níkulás in *Heiðabýr*; from there he travelled north to Jylland. This demonstrates the partly overlapping use of the labels *Heiðabýr/Heiðabær* and *Slésvík*.

According to the depiction in Knýt, Danish-Saxon relationships otherwise centre around questions concerning dominion over Wendland, which can lead to conflicts. In ch. 75 it is told that while the Danish king Eiríkr Sveinsson was abroad, the Saxon emperor Heinrekr proceeded to Wendland with an army, conquering the whole province previously owned by the kings of Denmark. The Wends then swore their allegiance to the Saxon ruler, and this disloyalty led to Eiríkr's revenge action against Wendland.

In connection with Valdamarr's expeditions to Wendland, there occurred some disagreement between him and the duke of Brunswick with regard to the region of Rügen. However, as a means of reconciliation, both parts decide to undertake a joint expedition against the Wends. After their campaigns they part on friendly terms and even betroth their children to one another. At the same time, in ch. 123 it is mentioned that the tribute that Valdamarr collected from Rügen caused further problems between the two. In ch. 125 another joint expedition is being planned, with messengers travelling between Valdamarr and Heinrekr.

Kinship ties and friendly visits between the Danish and Saxon leaders are also illuminated. In chs. 84-85 duke Knútr Eiríksson, pays a visit to his Saxon cousin and asks for his advice on how to secure the development of his province around Hedeby. He learns that in Saxony the seaports are barred, and one collects tolls from approaching vessels. Knútr follows this example: he has two castles built on either side of the fjord and the water route is blocked with iron chains and timber – in this manner all the ships that sail to Hedeby can be stopped (see ch. 86).[865]

4.2.4. Depictions of Baltic traffic in the sagas of Icelanders

In the preceding presentation of saga passages from Hkr and Knýt, we attempted to bring out the main schemes of saga characters' travels within the Baltic region. In parts the recorded routes occur rather repetitively; at the same time, on the level of inter-Scandinavian communication we can find more specific references to certain focal sites. The previous discussion also showed that it is common for the sagas to unite travels to several various

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[865] In the following chapter we then hear how the Baltic traveller Viðgautr (who is chased by the *Kúrir*) has to stop on his way to Hedeby and explain who he is.

destinations in one narrative sequence – which does not always mean that the given traveller moved straight from point A to point B and then to C. Such comprised travel records are a characteristic feature of the kings' sagas general mode of representing action.[866]

Similar narrative techniques are applied in the sagas of Icelanders. However, here the main focus lies on Icelandic matters, and for that reason references to traffic to/within the Baltic region are, at least at first sight, of a more occasional and general nature and remain much less detailed. We notice a certain correspondence in depicted travel motives and patterns of mobility with those of the kings' sagas. At the same time there exist important differences, as will be demonstrated below.

Already the general premises that determine the nature of travelling differ – in order to be able to move around in the Baltic Sea area, the saga characters usually first have to make a journey from Iceland to Scandinavia (Norway). Although Iceland forms the main setting for most saga events, Norway fulfills an important parallel function. For one, in the introductory episodes many sagas refer to the initial settlers who came to Iceland from Norway – i.e. the country was inhabited as the result of travelling. In this connection it is a typical motive to point out the harsh rule of the Norwegian king Haraldr hárfagri as one of the reasons that made people leave the country. To name one example – in ch. 4 of *Egils saga* it is said that during the reign of king Haraldr many men were forced to flee from Norway and they went to different countries; to Jämtland and Hälsingland in the east, and to various places in the west, and in this manner Iceland was discovered.[867] Here we even find a reference to eastern mobility with Norway being the point of departure.

Traffic between Iceland and Norway unfolds in both directions, and the vivid nature of such contacts is constantly emphasised. Ships from Norway arrive in Iceland at regular intervals, and many saga characters feel the urge to arrange for a passage to Norway, and even buy (a share in) one of these ships. Reasons for why they leave Iceland may be different, but in general trips abroad have great importance for the maturing of young men; the advancement of their career depends on the outcome of their journeys, i.e. the reputation, experience and wealth they gain through this. Other times the cause lies in problematic relationships and violent confrontations; now and then travel is the only possibility, since the man has been declared an outlaw. And then again, there are also very practical reasons for travelling – such as trade, the need to fetch timber, etc. Occasionally the sagas underline the motivating role of news from other lands. In ch. 37 of *Grettis saga* news arrives from Norway about a change in rulership, with Óláfr Haraldsson having become the king. Grettir got his wish to sail to Norway when he heard about this: *Ok svá sem Grettir spurði þessi tíðendi, gerðisk honum hugr á at sigla* (ÍF VII: 125).

The sagas name certain districts and sites in northern, central (western) and southern Norway, where the travelling Icelanders arrive and lay anchor. One such target area is the district around Trondheim; another one is the southern region of Viken, already well known from the kings' sagas. Similarly to the kings' sagas, the picture offered by the sagas of Icelanders demonstrates the importance of Viken – and not only as the point where travellers from Iceland land or from where they sail back to Iceland. Viken belongs in saga depictions that localise and relate events happening in Norway. Furthermore, references to Viken may

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[866] With the purpose of tracing both different destinations as well as connected traffic sequences, it was on the one hand necessary to break some of these sequences into separate stages of travel. On the other hand, we were forced to provide recurrent references to certain major expeditions and campaigns.

[867] In this subsection we shall refer to the sagas using shortened versions of their titles, i.e. *Egils saga* instead of *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar*; full names are provided in the bibliography.

serve to identify the background of people. In ch. 7 of *Gísla saga* we hear of some Norwegians arriving in Iceland with their ship, and they are identified as the Viken people (*váru víkverskir menn at kyni*, ÍF VI: 24).[868]

At the same time frequent references are made to Viken as a destination/point of departure for mobility that concerns Norway and sometimes also regions around the Baltic Sea; the traditional directional phrase is again *austr í Vík*. In ch. 62 of *Egils saga*, Viken (and Oslofjord) is the region the Icelanders reach when coming from England.[869] In ch. 18 of *Harðar saga* some Icelanders led by Geirr plan to head back to Iceland from Götaland; they do not get suitable sailing winds but they make it to Viken, where they set up a camp.

Among particular sites, Tønsberg is mentioned. In ch. 23 of *Grettis saga* Grettir and Þorfinnr get called in to Tønsberg by the Norwegian jarl Sveinn. The jarl intended to stay in Tønsberg for the most intensive sailing period when many ships were coming to the town. In ch. 85 of the same saga we meet the interesting motive of news that travels; it is said that the story of Grettir's killing reached Tønsberg in the autumn (*þessi saga kom um haustit austr til Túnsbergs*, ÍF VII: 270). In ch. 29 of *Njáls saga* Tønsberg is named as the first destination for Gunnarr's travels; in Viken, Gunnar looks for ships for further travels – as we hear he heads east to the island of Hisingen.

The latter saga example already demonstrates in which manner southern Norway becomes the arena for the Icelanders' further travels into the Baltic region. That is to say, once the men have made it overseas, they often continue their journey to nearby areas – and it is in this connection that traffic within the Baltic region gets illuminated.

The following presentation is again set up according to certain focal areas and destinations; since the degree of detailed information remains more limited in the sagas of Icelanders as compared to the kings' sagas, we operate with wider groups.

4.2.4.1. Traffic around Denmark and Sweden

Along the same lines as the kings' sagas, the territories of present-day Denmark and Sweden are identified as target areas in the south and in the east, respectively. Besides general references to countries and landscapes we find saga passages that refer to more specific sites. It is suitable to use a quote from ch. 5 of *Njáls saga* as a point of departure:

> Atli hét maðr; hann var son Arnviðar jarls ór Gautlandi inu eystra. Hann var hermaðr mikill ok lá úti austr í Leginum; hann hafði átta skip. Faðir hans hafði haldit skǫttum fyrir Hákoni Aðalsteinsfóstra, ok stukku þeir feðgar til Gautlands ór Jamtalandi. Atli helt liðinu ór Leginum út um Stokkssund ok svá suðr til Danmerkr ok liggr úti í Eyrasundi. (ÍF XII: 16-17)[870]

The quotation above records the trips of Atli and his father. Similarly to the previously mentioned saga passage from *Egils saga*, where men from Norway fled to Jämtland and

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[868] Cf. also ch. 5 of *Bjarnar saga*; ch. 1 of *Kormáks saga*; ch. 28 of *Njáls saga*.

[869] Other saga passages where Viken is the destination for traffic: ch. 8 of *Bjarnar saga*; ch. 1 of *Droplaugarsona saga*; chs. 19, 57, 69, 70 of *Egils saga*; ch. 39 of *Eyrbyggja saga*; ch 1 of *Flóamanna saga*; ch. 13 of *Harðar saga*; chs. 12, 58 of *Laxdœla saga*; ch. 29 of *Ljósvetninga saga*; *Stúfs þáttr*; and ch 3 of *Þorleifs þáttr jarlsskálds*.

[870] "There was a man named Atli, the son of *Earl* Arnvid of Gotland [i.e. Götaland, my addition]. He was a great warrior and had his base in Lake Malaren, with a fleet of eight ships. His father had withheld paying tribute to Hakon, *foster-son* of King Athelstan, and then fled with his son from Jamtland to Gotland [Götaland]. Atli sailed his fleet from Lake Malaren through Stokkssund and then south to Denmark, and there he lay in Oresund" (*The Complete Sagas of Icelanders* III: 7).

Hälsingland in order to escape the rule of Haraldr, it is told here that Atli's father had to leave due to tax confrontations with Hákon, and that he made his way from Jämtland to Götaland.

This information serves to introduce the background of Atli to then concentrate upon his own activities, which take his Mälaren-based fleet through *Stokk(s)sund* (Norrström) further on to Denmark, to the well known strait of Øresund. The reason for this trip of Atli's is his being outlawed by the Danish and Swedish kings because of his raids into both areas. The saga next tells of a man called Hrútr coming to the south from Norway; he enters Øresund and comes across the fleet of Atli. The two engage in fierce fighting, where the outcome is that Hrútr kills Atli and gains a lot of booty with which he returns to Norway.

This chapter from *Njáls saga* offers a typical picture of traffic that connects different parts of Norway, Sweden and Denmark; interesting are the references to Øresund as a battle site and to Lake Mälaren as a potential base for one's fleet. The sagas of Icelanders contain several other examples of traffic routes that link these or other districts; the focus often lies on Denmark, which is on the whole one of the most common destinations. Therefore, we shall first take a look at saga passages that contain information about travels to Denmark (including southern Sweden) and its contacts with other districts.

To start with the latter, chapter 5 of *Bjarnar saga* (for instance) records the travels of Bjǫrn from England to Denmark, where he concluded a partnership with Auðun bakskika. The latter is characterised as a man from Viken who was partly Danish. Together the two went raiding to the east to *Svíþjóð*; they harried there in the summer, while spending winters in Denmark.

Chapter 5 of *Orms þáttr Stórólfssonar* introduces a certain Virfill from Denmark. When the Icelander Ormr Stórólfsson makes a trip abroad, he heads to Norway and the next summer to Denmark, where he stays with Virfill (ch. 6). Interesting is the description of their further raids to the surrounding islands: *En at vetri liðnum ok vári komnu heldu þeir í hernað með fimm skip ok fóru víða um eyjar ok útsker ok höfðu sigr ok gagn, hvar er þeir kómu. Urðu þá eigi aðrir menn frægri í víkingu heldr en þeir* (ÍF XIII: 407-408).[871] As we hear, in this connection it is not regarded as important to identify the exact targets for Ormr and Virfill – the point is first of all to focus upon their general viking activities. Similar trips have a practical outcome in the form of collected booty as well as the more abstract result of making oneself a name. On a more factual level, it is further told that the men also made a journey to Götaland where they harried and spent the winter, after which they returned to Denmark.

In ch. 46 of *Egils saga*, Denmark is the arena to which Egill and his brother Þórólfr return after a raid to *Kúrland*; here they engage in lurking for trade ships with the purpose of robbing. The following chapter explains that during the reign of Haraldr Gormsson there were many vikings in the waters around Denmark. Egill now wants to get to some place where he could obtain a lot of booty; the course is set for Øresund where Egill learns about the nearby big trade town Lund, which according to Egill's Danish companion Áki would be a good place for harrying.[872] This is what the men indeed do, and afterwards they set the place on fire and return to their ships.

In ch. 48 we hear that Þórólfr then went with his men north to Halland, landing in a harbour. The local jarl Arnfiðr sent his men to meet the vikings and find out the purpose of their trip. Þórólfr commented that it was not their intention to raid a not so wealthy country. After attending a feast arranged by the jarl the men set course for the islands of *Brenneyjar*

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[871] "When winter had passed and spring came they went raiding with five ships, travelling widely among islands and outlying skerries and gaining victory and profit wherever they went. No vikings were more famous than they at that time" (*The Complete Sagas of Icelanders* III: 460).

[872] Cf. also Egill's *lausavísur*.

(Brännöarna); according to the saga it was in that region that the vikings used to lay and wait for passing trade ships.

Another mention of *Brenneyjar* that occurs in *Bjarnar saga*; chapter 7 relates of a trip that Þórðr Kolbeinsson made from Norway to Roskilde in Denmark to claim his inherited property. Þórðr left Denmark towards the end of summer and sailed to *Brenneyjar*; a brief description of the islands is offered: *[…] þat eru margar eyjar ok váru þá lítt byggðar. Þar váru í launvágar, ok var þar jafnan herskátt af víkingum; skógr var þar ok nǫkkurr á eyjunni* (ÍF III: 127).[873] This saga passage, as well as the one above, thus identifies *Brenneyjar* as a scene that was known because of its suitability for viking stakeouts. *Brenneyjar* and viking activities are also mentioned in ch. 26 of *Kormáks saga*, where some vikings kidnap Kormákr's beloved Steingerðr, who had joined Þorvaldr tinteinn on his journey to Denmark. It is said that the two travelling brothers Kormákr and Þorgils sailed in the same direction as Þorvaldr and came to *Brenneyjar* in the evening, where they learned the news about Steingerðr.[874] In ch. 12 of *Laxdœla saga*, *Brenneyjar* are referred to in connection with an expedition undertaken by the Norwegian king to attend an assembly; similar trips to that region were according to the saga arranged every third year. This latter example contradicts to a certain degree the description of *Brenneyjar* as a largely uninhabited region in *Bjarnar saga*.

Denmarks' connections with the eastern route and southern parts of Sweden are demonstrated in ch. 19 of *Egils saga*, which depicts Þórólfr Kveld-Úlfsson arriving in Viken on his way from northern Norway; with favourable winds he heads on to Denmark and then to the eastern route for plundering. In the autumn he returns to Denmark, and around that time a Norwegian fleet sets out from *Eyrr* (Skanör, right on Øresund); the ships were stationed there during the summer. According to the saga Þórólfr sailed past them, heading to *Mostrarsund* (near Kungsbacka in Halland); to the same destination sailed a trade ship steered by Þórir þruma, who had been to *Eyrr* to buy some goods. Þórólfr attacked Þórir and took over the ship, after which he sailed north along the coast reaching the Göta river, where he lay anchor. When it was dark Þórólfr's men rowed up the river and made a raid on a farm; after that they followed the route back to the sea and made their way north to Viken with favourable winds, where they attacked another ship. In this manner the saga provides a frame around Þórólfr's travels – he had good winds both when he set out from Viken and when he returned there – and all along the way he engaged in raiding. Interesting is the following statement according to which Þórólfr took the main sailing route (*þjóðleið*) to *Líðandiness* (Lindesnes) in southern Norway, where the men plundered some more.

In the examples discussed above, Denmark is presented in the context of various networks for inter-regional mobility. However, more traditional for the sagas of Icelanders are the (often brief) references to Denmark as a separate destination that can be typically reached from Norway. Information about Denmark-travels may thus be a part of a person's background description, as for example in ch. 2 of *Þórðar saga hreðu*, where a man called Skeggi is said to have engaged in viking expeditions that took him to Denmark.[875]

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[873] "This is a group of many islands, not much inhabited at that time. There were hidden creeks in them, and they were always exposed to raiders. There was also some woodland on the islands" (*The Complete Sagas of Icelanders* I: 263). The saga further identifies two strategic sites among the islands – they serve to identify the locality there the saga hero Bjǫrn arrives.

[874] Steingerðr got rescued, and afterwards Kormákr and his brother returned to Norway; later in the saga their western raids are referred to.

[875] Cf. also ch. 3 of *Þorsteins þáttr uxafóts*, where a man called Ívarr is characterised in terms of his trading voyages to England and Denmark.

Sometimes the fact of a trip is combined with a statement that the journey went directly to Denmark without any stops along the way. Chapter 18 of *Króka-Refs saga* relates in such manner of Refr's voayge – *þeir léttu eigi fyrr sinni ferð en þeir kómu til Danmerkr* (ÍF XIV: 156). A similar formulation is used in ch. 20 of the same saga where Eiríkr, the brother of a man whom Refr has killed, is sent to Denmark with the task of assassinating Refr.

Another customary saga expression is to state that there is nothing to relate of the journey prior to one's arrival at the intended destination, as done in *Þormóðar þáttr* (*ok er ekki sagt af ferðum þeira, fyrr en þeir kómu fram í Danmǫrk*, ÍF VI: 279). Alternatively, it may be pointed out that there is nothing to say of the time that a saga character spent at a certain place; this motive is applied e.g. in ch. 39 of *Heiðarvíga saga*, where Barði travels from Norway south to Denmark and spends a winter there – without any news to tell about his stay.

With regard to the identified reasons behind such Denmark journeys, we hear of people travelling to Denmark when they have been banished from Norway, as is the case with Eyvindr skreyja (the brother of queen Gunnhildr) in ch. 49 of Egils saga. He is sent south to Denmark, where he enters the service of Haraldr Gormsson and uses his longship to guard the Danish coast.[876]

Trading and raiding are usual activities; in connection with this, the sagas may specify that before making a trip to Denmark one has to ask for the Norwegian king's permission. This is the situation in ch. 73 of *Laxdœla saga*, where Bolli Bollason has to get permission from the king before he can leave for Denmark.[877] Similarly, in ch. 8 of *Sneglu-Halla þáttr*; Halli gets the permission to go trading in Denmark and he arranges for a passage to Jylland with some merchants.[878]

The motive of travelling to Denmark in the company of merchants is also applied in *Þorleifs þáttr jarlsskálds*; chapter 4 informs that Þorleifr got passage with a trade ship and headed south to Denmark, where he stayed with the king for a winter.[879] Sometimes it is described how travellers buy a share of a ship to get to Denmark. Chapter 8 of *Gísla saga* speaks of a man called Skegg-Bjálfi who was planning to sail south to Denmark. Gísli and Vésteinn then bought a share in his ship and they sailed together to Denmark, arriving at the trading place Viborg.

Interesting is the outcome of a Denmark voyage as described in ch. 8 of *Fóstbrœðra saga* – Þorgeirr travels from England to Denmark, and it is said that he became very respected there and was almost regarded as a king by the Danes. In *Gull-Ásu-Þórðar þáttr* we hear of Ingimarr, who first travelled east to Viken (and killed three men there), and then went south to Denmark where he settled.[880]

A rather specific saga motive is to refer to Denmark as a scene where Icelanders accept the Christian religion and/or set out for pilgrimage. In the above-mentioned *Orms þáttr Stórólfssonar* it is told that Ormr took the sign of the cross in Denmark, and that he was later

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[876] The Norwegian kings' travels to Denmark are dealt with in a few *þættir*; in this manner ch. 4 of *Hrafns þáttr Guðrúnarsonar* refers to the well-known hostilities of Magnús góði with Sveinn Úlfsson; and it is described how Magnús sets out with an army south towards Denmark. Magnús' connections with Denmark are also mentioned in *Þorgríms þáttr Hallasonar*.

[877] After spending some time in Denmark in great honour, Bolli travels through many other countries, reaching *Miklagarðr* (Constantinople).

[878] From there Halli travels to England.

[879] See also ch. 17 of *Harðar saga*, where Sigurðr Torfafóstri comes to Norway and then heads with traders to Denmark.

[880] Chapter 16 of *Laxdœla saga* also mentions a man who travelled to Denmark and settled there – so that nothing else is to be told of him (*ok endir þar sǫgu frá honum*, ÍF V: 37).

baptised in Iceland. Furthermore, in ch. 10 we learn that Ormr undertook a pilgrimage to Rome and then came back to Denmark. Similarly, in ch. 38 of *Gísla saga*, Auðr and Gunnhildr get a passage from Iceland to Norway, and it is told that they travelled to Hedeby in Denmark, where they accepted the Christian faith; then they went on a pilgrimage to Rome and did not return. In ch. 1 of *Auðunar þáttr vestfirzka* we learn about Auðunn's plan to travel south to Denmark to meet the king; this is what he does – he sails south along the coast, then east into Viken and further on to Denmark. He stays in Denmark for a while and then makes a journey to Rome and back (ch. 2).[881] In ch. 81 of *Njáls saga*, we hear how Kolskeggr, who had been in Viken for a while, headed to Denmark and entered the service of the king. He was baptised in Denmark; from there he travelled further to *Garðaríki* and Constantinople.

We started the discussion of saga references with a quotation from *Njáls saga* that contained references to Jämtland and Götaland; several among the above-mentioned saga passages also included evidence of traffic to *Svíþjóð*, as well as to different sites in southern Sweden. In the following step we shall outline some other saga depictions of traffic that concerns parts of present-day Sweden.

Similarly to the kings' sagas there is certain attention given to traffic in the border districts – sometimes associated with attempts to collect tribute or carry out specific missions. It is characteristic for the sagas of Icelanders to depict travels through big forest regions.[882]

In ch. 70 of *Egils saga* it is told that Haraldr hárfagri had brought Norway under his rule, and his dominion reached out to Värmland in the east; however, there occurred certain problems with collecting tribute from that region. The son of Haraldr, Hákon góði, made further attempts to regain control over that territory – he sent twelve of his men to the east to get tribute from the jarl there, but as the men were travelling through Edskog they were killed by robbers. Similar was the fate of other men who made the journey to Värmland.[883] The Värmland business ends with Egill setting out on the trip, and his expedition is described in some detail (chs. 71-76). The journey to the east is rather tough, but on the way Egill and his men stop at a couple of farms. In ch. 72, they for example come to the farm of Þorfinnr, who lives by Edskog. In parts, the description of the rough journey through Edskog reminds one of the motives applied in Sigvatr's poems and Hkr.

Egill himself describes the way through the forest as a common route that everybody takes (*þat er alþýðuleið*, ch. 75, ÍF II: 234). The saga also provides a brief description of Edskog: *Eiðaskógr er á þann veg, at mǫrk er stór allt at byggðinni hvárritveggju, en um miðjan skóginn er víða smáviði ok kjǫrr, en sumstaðar skóglaust með ǫllu*, ÍF II: 235).[884] Here we may thus observe an interesting combination of perspectives – on the one hand, the saga lets Egill characterise the route; on the other hand, additional comments are added by the informed narrator. After some fighting and killing, Egill manages to accomplish his mission and heads back to Norway, coming out on the west side of the forest (ch. 76). Since Egill's trip has

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[881] Similar references to travellers heading from Denmark to Rome (or intending to do so) can be found in ch. 24 of *Fóstbrœðra saga*; ch. 20 of *Króka-Refs saga*; ch. 1 of *Þorsteins þáttr Austfirðings*.

[882] With regard to communication in border districts, it is not always necessary to identify the exact destination; in this way ch. 82 of *Njáls saga* simply states that jarl Hákon travelled east to the land border to meet the Swedish king (*jarl átti ferð austr til landamæris at finna Svíakonung*, ÍF XII: 200-201).

[883] The motive of robbers attacking travellers also occurs in other sagas; in *Vatnsdœla saga* ch. 1 one is told of robbers who were active on the route between Jämtland and Romsdal – nobody who travelled that way came back.

[884] "Eideskog is heavily wooded right up to the settlements on either side of it, but deep inside it are shrub and brushwood, and in some places no trees at all" (*The Complete Sagas of Icelanders* I: 146).

revealed the disloyalty of the jarl towards Hákon, the king then sets out on a revenge campaign, travelling with his army to Värmland and then through western Götaland; the saga refers here to the separate saga and poems about Hákon.

Chapter 5 of *Þorskfirðinga saga* speaks of a journey east over Kjølen to Jämtland and from there to Gästrikland, intending to make it to *Svíþjóð*; it is further related that the travellers entered a forest so big and deep that they did not know where they were.

This latter observation connects with the theme of using guides when travelling through forests or other unknown regions. In *Hallfreðar saga* ch. 7, Hallfreðr asks the Norwegian king Óláfr Tryggvason for permission to go trading in the summer. The following journey of the travelling skald is depicted: Hallfreðr first travels to jarl Sigvaldi and performs a poem for him; then he expresses his wish to go to *Svíþjóð*. In the autumn Hallfreðr heads east to Viken and suffers a shipwreck in the Oslofjord, losing a good deal of his possessions. A further destination for Hallfreðr is *Konungahella*, where he meets a certain Auðgísl, who asks him to join the trip east to Götaland. The route they follow is tough and it is said that many people turn back there. Hallfreðr and Auðgísl make it east into the forests and they come upon a man who claims that he knows all the routes in that region. As we learn from ch. 9, with this help, Hallfreðr did indeed reach *Svíþjóð* in the summer and performed a poem for the Swedish king.

In *Gunnlaugs saga* ch. 8 it is told that while visiting the jarl of Orkney, Gunnlaugr got the wish to travel east to *Svíþjóð*. He got a passage to Norway with some merchants and made his way to *Konungahella* in the autumn. From there he was taken by a guide to western Götaland to the trade town Skara. In Skara, Gunnlaugr found a guide to take him east to *Tíundaland* in *Svíþjóð*. Chapter 9 describes Gunnlaugr's arrival in Uppsala during the spring assembly. At the court of the Swedish king, Gunnlaugr met his fellow countryman Hrafn, and both told stories about their travels; they both also performed poems for the king.[885]

In this latter example from *Gunnlaugs saga*, the site of *Konungahella* is identified as Gunnlaugr's destination in Norway. Similarly, in *Droplaugarsona saga* ch. 1, *Konungahella* is the place the Icelandic travellers reach after a long sea voyage; from there they ride east to Jämtland. In *Njáls saga* ch. 3, *Konungahella* is besides its function as a destination for eastern traffic also described as the seat for the Norwegian kings.

Among other strategic points, references are made to the well known Göta river; similarly to the records of the kings' sagas, this can be a place where ships are stationed. In ch. 82 of *Njáls saga* a viking called Kolr is said to have lied in the Göta river in the east with five ships and many men, waiting for an opportunity to go raiding – as we hear he makes an attack on Hallvarðr sóti in the region of the Oslofjord.

The image of the Göta river as a marker between different territories is provided by ch. 18 of *Egils saga*, which relates of two men – Sigtryggr snarfari (travel-quick) and Hallvarðr harðfari (travel-hard). Sigtryggr and Hallvarðr came from Viken; in the meantime, their mother had family in Vestfold and their father (a wealthy farmer in Hisingen) relatives on both sides of the Göta river.

In the discussion of references to Denmark, we observed that Denmark can be named as a place where one converts to Christianity or gets an idea to make a pilgrimage to Rome. In the case of trips to *Svíþjóð*, it is on the other hand the region's heathen background that may be

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885 Hrafn travelled from *Svíþjóð* to Trondheim, whereas Gunnlaugr took course for England. The motive of travelling Icelandic poets who head from one ruler to another is well attested to in the sagas of Icelanders and *þættir*. Sometimes these men are clearly identified as the followers of particular kings, as for example done in *Óttars þáttur svarta*: *Hann var nokkura stund í hirð með Ólafi Svíakonungi* (ÍS III: 2201).

set in focus. In this manner, in *Ǫgmundar þáttr dytts* a certain Gunnarr travels from Oppland all the way east to *Svíþjóð*. The description of Gunnarr's stay in *Svíþjóð* includes information about heathen sacrifices that were held there at that time.

In ch. 4 of *Þórarins þáttr Nefjólfssonar*, Þorsteinn Ragnhildarson tells about his parents and himself, pointing out that he was baptised in Jerusalem and on his return to *Svíþjóð* wanted to teach his mother that faith, but she was not interested: *Ek var í förum, ok fór ek í Austrveg ok allt til Jórsala, ok tók ek þar skírn, ok kom ek norðr hingat til Svíþjóðar. Þá vilda ek kenna móður minni rétta trú, ok hon vildi þat eigi* (ÍF XIII: 335-336).[886]

The sagas of Icelanders in general distinguish between the territories of *Svíþjóð* and *Gautland* along the same lines as the kings' sagas; with regard to *Gautland*, distinctions can be made between its western and eastern part (cf. ch. 5 of *Njáls saga* and ch. 70 of *Egils saga*). Both *Svíþjóð* and *Gautland* are equally common traffic destinations; travels into these regions are often connected with visits to jarls and kings. To the previously listed evidence we add the interesting reference occurring in *Stjörnu-Odda draumr* ch. 6, where one woman leads the troops into Götaland after the death of her father, claiming the right to rule over half of that kingdom.[887]

4.2.4.2. Further southern and eastern travels

In some cases sagas refer to the territories to the south of Denmark, such as the mention of *Suðrríki* in *Svarfdæla saga* and Egill's Frisian and Saxon trips in chs. 49, 50 and 69 of *Egils saga*. Thus, in chs. 26-27 of *Svarfdæla saga* Karl and Bárðr sail to a market in Denmark and then continue raiding in the south, making their way to *Suðrríki* (i.e. southern Europe), after which they head back to Denmark.

In ch. 49 of *Egils saga* Egill and his brother Þórólfr set out on a viking raid, intending to make it to the eastern route. However, it is said that when the men reached Viken they sailed south past Jylland and raided there, after which they travelled to Frisia, where they stayed for most of the summer.[888] In ch. 50 of *Egils saga*, we hear how Egill and Þórólfr sailed south past Saxony and Flanders; from there they travelled to England. Saxony is also the destination in ch. 69; it is said that Egill and his men sailed south from Norway and raided in Saxony during the summer, gaining a lot of wealth. From Saxony the course was set for Frisia and the following scenes depict plundering inland. Afterwards the men returned to Denmark, making it to Hals in Limfjord.

In general, however, references to Saxony are sporadic – additional examples occur in ch. 9 of *Þorvalds þáttur víðförla* (ÍS) where we hear of the Saxon bishop Friðrekr's journeys, as

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[886] "I went travelling, and journeyed out east, all the way to Jerusalem, where I was baptised. I came back north to Sweden, and wanted to teach my mother the true faith, but she was unwilling" (*The Complete Sagas of Icelanders* I: 389). Note the application of the label *Austrvegr* in this connection.

[887] See also references to *Svíþjóð*/*Gautland* in ch. 1 of *Droplaugarsona saga*; ch. 4 of *Egils þáttr Síðu-Hallsonar*; ch. 17 of *Flóamanna saga*; ch. 3 of *Grettis saga*; chs. 14 and 41 of *Harðar saga*; ch. 20 of *Ljósvetninga saga*; chs. 6 and 26 of *Svarfdæla saga*; and ch. 5 of *Vatnsdæla saga*.

[888] On their return trip they stayed overnight in the border region between Denmark and Frisia and learned about the troop of Eyvindr skreyja who was waiting for them off the coast of Jylland.

well as his return to Saxony, and in ch. 20 of *Ljósvetninga saga*, which records traffic from Rome north to Saxony.[889]

The same applies to the sagas' mention of traffic to Wendland – thus differing from the detailed campaign descriptions that are provided in the kings' sagas. In ch. 8 of *Fóstbrœðra saga* we hear of the travels of the well respected Þorgeirr, who among other destinations reached Wendland and traded there during times of frequent conflict: *Þorgeirr fór kaupfǫr suðr til Vindlands, ok var þar lítill friðr í þenna tíma kaupmǫnnum norðan ór lǫndum. Af þessi ferð varð hann ágætr, því at hann hafði þat at hverjum, sem hann vildi* (ÍF VI: 159).[890] Again we see how the information about the journey serves to illustrate the significant features of a particular saga character.

Saga motives that concern *Garðaríki*, the eastern route, the Baltic countries and Finland are more frequent. Similarly to the kings' sagas, references to eastern travels are a way of depicting people and characterising them through their activities. A good example is the presentation of Skeggi, the son of Skinna-Bjǫrn in ch. 2 of *Þórðar saga*. It is explained that his father got the specific name from trading furs in the east: *Því var hann Skinna-Björn kallaðr, at hann var vanr at sigla í austrveg kaupferð ok færa þaðan gráskinn, bjór ok safala* (ÍF XIV: 169).[891]

At other times, the eastern route is the (intended) destination for raiding – and typically the place where one wins wealth and renown. In the preceding discussion of traffic around Denmark, we mentioned the two saga passages from *Egils saga* that spoke of the eastern route in the context of plundering, such as the trip of Þórólfr Kveld-Úlfsson in ch. 19 and the mention of Þórólfr and Egill setting a course towards the eastern route in ch. 49 (as we know, they actually ended up plundering in the south). Another such viking campaign along the eastern route is summarised in ch. 36 of *Egils saga*; the men raided there in the summer and returned with a lot of booty.

In ch. 19 of *Ljósvetninga saga* we hear of a certain Bárðr heading out from Viken to the eastern route; he and his men come upon some vikings, who say that Bárðr and others can either fight or give up their goods and stay alive. With the help of the brave man Hallr Ótryggsson, who is accompanying Bárðr, they manage to win over the vikings.

In chapter 28 of *Njáls saga*, *Austrvegr* is identified as the destination that Gunnarr has in mind. The saga describes how a Norwegian man (*Austmaðr*) Hallvarðr comes to Iceland. Gunnarr talks to Hallvarðr and wants to know whether the man has been to other countries. Hallvarðr explains that he has visited all countries between Norway and *Garðaríki* and even been to Bjarmaland; in this manner the saga emphasises the range of his travelling activities. Gunnarr wonders whether the Norwegian could take him along to the eastern route. We learn that Gunnarr indeed sets out on that journey, and reaches Tønsberg in Norway – from there he can continue his travels into the Baltic.

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[889] Occasional references are made to the Saxon background of people, such as in ch. 100 of *Njáls saga* (about the missionary priest Þangbranðr – *hann var son Vilbaldús greifa ór Saxlandi*, ÍF XII: 256). Chapter 18 of *Kormáks saga* mentions a German man as a member of the partnership that engaged in raiding.

[890] "Thorgeir went south to the land of the Wends to trade at a time when northern merchants had little hope of peaceful reception. He proved his excellence on this journey and obtained all he asked for" (*The Complete Sagas of Icelanders* II: 348). To that we can add ch. 29 of *Eyrbyggja saga* with its reference to Jomsborg.

[891] "[…] who was called Skin-Bjorn because he used to make merchant voyages to the Baltic and bring back grey furs, beaver and sable skins" (*The Complete Sagas of Icelanders* III: 364).

In ch. 4 of *Bjarnar saga*, Bjǫrn asks for permission from the Norwegian jarl Eiríkr to go travelling to the eastern route. He makes his way east to *Garðaríki* with some traders and visits king Valdamarr. In this case the applied designation *Austrvegr* thus seems to designate a transit zone for eastern travels; it is possible that in similar contexts the term has a broader meaning than the traditional area along the eastern Baltic shorelands.[892] The saga further informs that while Bjǫrn was in *Garðaríki*, a big army attacked the country, led by a certain Kaldimarr (obviously the name has been created as an opposition to Valdamarr), who is said to have been a most famous fighter in the eastern lands (*Austrlǫnd*). Bjǫrn managed to win over Kaldimarr, and this earned him great honour and the byname 'champion'.

Another mention of a journey to *Garðaríki* occurs in ch. 81 of *Njáls saga*, where we hear of Kolskeggr's trip to Denmark. It is said that he did not feel satisfied in Denmark and therefore travelled east to *Garðaríki* and from there to *Miklagarðr*. The saga informs that according to what is known of him, he got married in Constantinople and became the leader of the Varangians. In ch. 1 of *Halldórs þáttr Snorrasonar hinn síðari* we hear of Halldórr's return trip from *Garðaríki* to Norway with Haraldr harðráði.[893]

Some sagas also identify items of Russian origin, such as the Russian hat that the Norwegian jarl Hákon sends to Iceland (*hann sendi út hatt girzkan*, ÍF X: 6), as told in ch. 2 of *Ljósvetninga saga*. Similarly, in ch. 12 of *Laxdœla saga*, we are introduced to a man who is wearing a Russian hat (*hafði gerzkan hatt á hǫfði*, ÍF V: 22-23). The man says that he is usually known by the name *Gilli inn gerzki*, i.e. Gilli the Russian.[894]

Turning our attention to the territories of the Baltic countries and Finland, we meet an interesting saga passage in ch. 119 of *Njáls saga*, which deserves to be quoted in full:

> Þorkell hákr hafði farit utan ok framit sik í ǫðrum lǫndum. Hann hafði drepit spellvirkja austr á Jamtaskógi; síðan fór hann austr í Svíþjóð ok fór til lags með Sørkvi karli, ok herjuðu þaðan í Austrveg. En fyrir austan Bálagarðssíðu átti Þorkell at sœkja þeim vatn eitt kveld; þá mœtti hann finngálkni ok varðisk því lengi, en svá lauk með þeim, at hann drap finngálknit. Þáðan fór hann austr í Aðalsýslu; þar vá hann at flugdreka. Síðan fór hann aptr til Svíðjóðar ok þaðan til Nóregs ok út til Íslands, ok lét hann gera þrekvirki þessi yfir lokhvílu sinni ok á stóli fyrir hásæti sínu (ÍF XII, 302-303).[895]

The saga outlines the whole route of action for Þorkell hákr – from the forest of Jämtland to *Svíþjóð* and further on to the eastern route, where he comes to the coastal ares of southwestern Finland (*Bálagarðssíða*) and western Estonia (*Aðalsýsla*). The overview of his travels includes some adventurous killings; at first, while being east of *Bálagarðssíða*, Þorkell finishes off a *finngalkn*, a creature who is a mix between human and animal. In the following

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[892] Cf. also ch. 4 of *Þórarins þáttr Nefjólfssonar* (*fór ek í Austrveg ok allt til Jórsala*) and ch. 10 of *Þorvalds þáttur víðförla*. In the latter case we hear of the wide travels of Þorvaldr, who is said to have journeyed all around the world and visited Jerusalem and Constantinople. He is characterised as a respected Christian who promoted the true faith. According to the saga, Þorvaldr was most honoured along the eastern route, where he had been sent to rule by the Byzantian emperor; his rule applied to all kings *á Russlandi og í öllu Garðaríki* (ÍS III: 2332).

[893] Halldórr had previously been with the king to Constantinople.

[894] In ch. 6 of *Þorskfirðinga saga* reference is made to a man called Geirr inn gerzki.

[895] "Thorkell Bully had travelled abroad and earned fame in other lands. He had killed a trouble-maker out east in Jamtskog, and then went to Sweden and became the companion of Old Sorkvir and they went raiding in the Baltic. One evening, east of Balagardssida, Thorkel had to fetch their water. He met with a creature half-man, half-beast, and fought it off for a long time, and the fight ended with Thorkel killing the creature. Then he went south to Estonia [i.e. western Estonia, my addition]; there he killed a flying dragon. After that he went back to Sweden and from there to Norway and to Iceland, and he had these mighty feats of his carved above his bed closet and on a stool in front of his high seat" (The Complete Sagas of Icelanders III: 143).

step he kills a dragon in *Aðalsýsla*. In the context of other trips into the territories around the Baltic Sea, which make the impression of realistic records, this saga passage may appear rather peculiar, with its mixture of factual place references and imaginary events and creatures, otherwise more known from *fornaldarsögur*. However, the saga at the same time signals that Þorkell hákr himself might stand behind the story – the description of how he arranges for the visual recording of his accomplishments after the return to Iceland demonstrates his own role in the formation of the tradition. Also, his nickname *hákr* creates the impression of Þorkell being regarded as a rowdy person with a big mouth – therefore, his stories remain simply stories.[896]

Bálagarðssíða also figures as a destination in ch. 17 of *Harðar saga*. First we hear of the trip of Sigurðr Torfafóstri from Norway to Denmark, where he joins a group of vikings and later becomes their leader. It is said that one summer he sailed east along *Bálagarðssíða*, reaching the channel of *Svínasund*. Sigurðr and his men stayed there for the night and in the morning they saw seven ships approaching; the encounter led to a battle. At first Sigurðr suffered losses and was captured, but he managed to escape during the night and returned to take revenge.[897]

From ch. 30 of *Njáls saga* we find further references to Estonian territories. Gunnarr and Kolskeggr set out on a series of raids, which take them first to Denmark and Småland. The next summer they travel to *Rafali* (Rävala) where they fight against vikings and win over them.[898] Their next destination is *Eysýsla*, where the men make a stop in the lee of one headland (*undir nesi einu*, ÍF XII: 79). They meet a man called Tófi who informs them that on the other side of the headland there are some ships stationed, and that the vikings have hidden a treasure on the island. Gunnarr and Kolskeggr fight against those men and win another battle.

It has been discussed whether Gunnarr's opponents could have been Estonian vikings; attention has been paid to the specific type of weapon that the saga refers to, i.e. *atgeir* (halberd), which might rather suggest that the vikings were Scandinavian – as their names also signal (cf. Alas 1999: 247; Jonuks 2004: 133). However, when looking at this episode from a broader perspective, these actual 'facts' remain irrelevant. What we witness is a typical narrative scheme that is repeated in several sagas – a viking attack is taking place on/around some island, without identifying where the vikings came from.[899]

When Gunnarr has got hold of the treasure, he asks what Tófi would want in return for his help. At this point the saga brings in information about Tófi's background; he himself explains that he is Danish and wants to return to his kinsmen. Gunnarr wonders about how Tófi ended

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[896] The sagas of Icelanders may make use of supernatural elements both in depictions of events that occur abroad but also with local Icelandic matters.

[897] The place name *Finnland* itself is recorded in ch. 14 of *Egils saga* – there in the framework of describing the location of Finnmark. It is explained that to the south of Finnmark lies Norway; then the list of different regions (including Finland) follows: *En austr frá Naumudal er Jamtaland, ok þá Helsingjaland ok þá Kvenland, þá Finnland, þá Kirjálaland; en Finnmǫrk liggr fyrir ofan þessi ǫll lǫnd* (ÍF II: 36). ("East of Naumdal lies Jamtland, then Halsingland, Kvenland, Finland and Karelia. Finnmark lies beyond all these countries" *The Complete Sagas of Icelanders* I: 46.) Other times the sagas of Icelanders refer to *Finnar*; there also occur various compounds with the element *finn-*, which usually concern the Saami people. Similarly to the manner in which they are treated in the kings' sagas, *Finnar* are often connected with magic and sorcery.

[898] Rävala is in the context of the 13th century known as a designation for a county in northern Estonia, but it could even mark smaller settlements – and later it also designated a town (Tarvel 1994: 59).

[899] Several similar cases were commented on above, see also the concluding remarks.

up here on the eastern route; according to Tófi's explanation he was captured by the vikings and taken to this island of *Eysýsla*, where has been ever since.

The motive of meeting captured Danes on the eastern route also occurs in ch. 46 of *Egils saga* in connection with Egill's and Þórólfr's journey to *Kúrland*. The men go raiding along the eastern route in the summer and gain a lot of booty. They head to *Kúrland* and stay for a while off the coast. After a period of peaceful trading with the locals they engage in raiding again; they go on land and attack various settlements. It is during this harrying that the local people capture the Icelanders and lock them up in a farm house. Egill and his companions manage to break free, and they also save three other men from a big hole underneath the house. One of them is a Danish man Áki, and the other two are his sons; they have been held captive since the previous summer. Before Egill returns to his ships he carries out a revenge action and kills the people in the farm. After that he and his men sail to Denmark and continue their raids.[900]

The story about Egill's *Kúrland* raid differs to a certain degree from other similar saga depictions that usually only state the brief fact that NN raided at some place. At the same time the narrative representation of the event remains general and does not contain any particular information about the territory as such.

It is suitable to finish the discussion of the sagas of Icelanders with an example from the one preserved version of *Gunnars saga keldugnúpsfífls*. Chapter 14 namely mentions viking raids around the Baltic Sea (*um Eystrasalt*, ÍF XIV: 368). The story further tells that one day Gunnarr and his men came to an island and stayed there for a while, fighting against other vikings whose ships were also stationed by the island. As a result they gained a lot of booty. In this little scene we again observe the main motives that characterise many other corresponding references to Baltic traffic.

4.2.5. Concluding remarks

The broader cultural significance of the evidence from saga literature and its relation to runic inscriptions and skaldic poetry will be discussed in more detail in the concluding chapter; in this connection we shall draw attention to the following characteristic features.

Although the preceding presentation was limited to the sagas' depictions of traffic and mobility within the Baltic region, the overall study of corresponding sources has revealed the importance of travel motive for the saga narrative – a feature that is in fact visible on different levels. With regard to the sagas of Icelanders, distinctions are traditionally made between scenes that unfold in Iceland (i.e. at home) and those that take place in Scandinavia or elsewhere (abroad). However, when looking at the saga structure closely, it is obvious that even the setting in Iceland is to an extensive degree based upon travels from one point to another, and this has great significance for the events that occur. To name just one example, in the sagas that depict outlawry constant travels from one point to another often form the backbone for the story, starting from brief summaries and ending with extensive overviews of a series of events. In ch. 61 in *Grettis saga*, it is for example said that Grettir travelled around in summer and winter and visited all the distinguished men, but everybody turned him down:

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[900] Later during the saga, there is a reference made to a sword that Egill got from *Kúrland* (*þat sverð hafði hann fengit á Kúrlandi*, ch. 53, ÍF II: 136).

Var hann í þessarri ferð um sumarit ok vetrinn ok fann alla ina meiri menn, ok bægði honum svá við, at hvergi fekk han vist né veru (ÍF VII: 201). Travelling may also be directly connected to carrying out legal procedures, such as journeys to the main assembly *Alþingi*. That is to say, both forms of travelling – traffic in Iceland and abroad – serve their specific narrative purposes.

In the analysis of the kings' sagas one may in a similar manner be inclined to distinguish between traffic within the realm of the king (e.g. Norway) and outside his domain. The study of Baltic traffic that follows a unified perspective has demonstrated the partly overlapping and interwoven routes along which the saga characters move and act; the same basic schemes can be applied for depicting short- and long-distance traffic. Traffic in the border districts should be particularly emphasised in this connection.

On the one hand, it was pointed out that the comprised travelling routes usually remain general and contain only a limited amount of information about the destinations, although now and then we find more specific and detailed descriptions of sites that were considered important. On the other hand, the repetitive mention of particular paths and target areas brings out the so-called focal arenas for Baltic traffic – the preceding presentation was centred around identifying such main scenes. One main area of concentration is what we could broadly label as southern Scandinavia (Denmark and southern parts of Norway and Sweden), and to that arena we may further link Wendland and Saxony. The other focal area includes regions that from the sagas' perspective lie to the east – such as *Svíþjóð*, the territories along the eastern route and its neighbourhood. Naturally the sagas provide references to various links between these two general areas for mobility; in connection with this certain buffer/transit zones are established.

It is further necessary to note that a considerable part of Baltic traffic deals with strategic sites; the frequent mention of islands, sounds, straits and the descriptions of battles and meetings that take place there exemplify the focus. Islands and sounds are often depicted as sites where one can lay with ships and wait for one's opponent to show up; in these waters it is also possible to hide and lurk for trade ships. Sometimes the sagas leave the names of such places unmentioned (although we may often logically assume from the narrative that the events occurred somewhere in the Baltic region); they may simply speak of some island where the ships are stationed, as done for example in ch. 3 of *Þormóðar þáttr* (*þeir leggja skip sín í lægi síð um aptan hjá ey nǫkkurri*, ÍF VI: 284).

Along with the lines of the latter observation, it has to be remarked that while the sagas in general tend to outline (reconstruct) the main travel routes by inserting various factual labels (place names) into the narrative, it is not always found necessary to specify the scene where one travelled. The saga may simply mention that the man travelled through many lands and finally reached Norway, as done in *Þorsteins þáttr forvitna* (*fór han síðan um lönd ok kom at lyktum til Nóregs ok hitti Harald konung*, ÍF XIII: 437). Similarly, in ch. 13 of *Grettis saga* it is said that Ásmundr sailed to various lands (*hann sigldi til ýmissa landa*, ÍF VII: 34) and was a great and wealthy merchant.[901] It is the fact of travelling itself that is considered important.

The quotes that were used to illustrate saga depictions have demonstrated the application of recurrent items of vocabulary and typical formulations. The actual act of travelling is often indicated by neutral mobility verbs, such as *fara* and *halda*, and for waterborne traffic the verb *sigla* is also common. Additional information may be given about weather conditions, favourable or unfavourable winds, travelling seasons, etc.

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[901] See also e.g. *Þorvarðar þáttr krákunefs*.

The arrival to a place is indicated by the verb *koma*; when one stays at a place for a while this can be signified by *leggja*. That the campaign has military purposes is revealed from the mention of warships (*langskip*), or from the description of holding battles (*orrosta*). *Knýtlinga saga* also frequently refers to the calling in of *leiðangr* in order to signify the king's military expeditions. To express fighting the verb *berjask* is used; for raiding and harrying the typical word is *herja*. All in all, the picture of military campaigns and viking raids is dominating, but at the same time we find references to trading; sometimes raiding and trading are combined, and one activity evolves from the other – as for example demonstrated in connection with Egill's and Þórólfr's *Kúrland* expedition. We further hear of several diplomatic missions and visits where messengers (*sendimenn*) are sent from one country to another to see a king or a jarl; along similar lines the sagas of Icelanders depict travelling skalds who visit one king after another to perform their poems. An interesting motive is to focus upon the traffic of news (*tíðendi*) that reach people, formulated for example in the following manner: *Þá kómu honum tíðendi sunnan ór landi, þau at synir Eiríks konungs váru komnir sunnan af Danmǫrk í Víkina* (ch. 19 of Hgóð, ÍF XXVI: 173).[902]

In connection with the initial description of the sources, we emphasised the manner in which the sagas' focus on the deeds and actions of particular individuals (although at the same time the individuals are bound by the rules of their kin). Baltic traffic is also to a large extent recorded as the mobility of individual persons – even if their troops/followers accompany them. In the kings' sagas the focus lies on the voyages of the Norwegian, Danish and Swedish kings and chieftains; in the sagas of Icelanders the main actors are Icelanders who may join forces with other Scandinavians. This perspective of individual travels finds its best expression in the formulations of the type *fór Eiríkr jarl austr í Svíþjóð á fund Óláfs Svíakonungs* (ch. 89 of Ótryg, ÍF XXVI: 337), where the journey of a named person leads to a named person. Sometimes it is enough to state the name of the person that one is going to meet without adding the destination; and besides men, we also hear of travelling women.[903]

Travelling is also regarded as an essential part of what we may call the saga "personality". References to Baltic traffic thus serve to characterise individuals – for example, in connection with their travels on the eastern route. The aspect of having gathered wide travelling experience and knowledge of routes may be emphasised. In ch. 71 of *Egils saga*, the king's messenger is thus introduced in the following manner: *Maðr sá, er ørendi þetta bar, hann var allra landa maðr, hafði verit lǫngum í Danmǫrk ok í Svíaveldi; var honum þar allt kunnigt fyrir bæði um leiðir ok mannadeili; hann hafði ok víða farit um Nóreg* (ÍF II: 221).[904]

To add another observation, such brief descriptions sometimes include statements that the given person engaged in both raiding and trading, which in a way demonstrates the floating line between corresponding activities. In this manner a person may be called *farmann eða kaupmann* (ch. 35 of Hhárf, ÍF XXVI: 140), or it may be said that sometimes the man went raiding and sometimes trading: *Bjǫrn var farmaðr mikill, var stundum í víking, en stundum í kaupferðum* (*Egils saga* ch. 32, ÍF II: 83). A typical feature of the saga travellers is their young age – several sagas underline the fact that a man started going raiding (or at least got a

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[902] "Then came to him the information from the southern part of the country that the sons of King Eirík had come to Vík from Denmark" (*Heimskringla*, Hollander 2002: 112).

[903] To the examples discussed above, we could add ch. 1 of Hson that records the travel of queen Ingiríðr east to Viken; whereas ch. 29 of Merl informs of the trip that Kristín konungsdóttir made south to Denmark.

[904] "The messenger who brought the command from the king was a widely travelled man. He had spent long periods in Denmark and Sweden and was familiar with the routes and knew all about the people there too. He had also been all over Norway" (*The Complete Sagas of Icelanders* I: 138).

desire to do that) while still in his teens. It may be added that sometimes the saga hero spent years and years travelling around – in *Harðar saga* ch. 20 it is said of Hǫrðr that he returned to Iceland at the age of thirty after having been abroad for fifteen years.

These and other features that were outlined above, illuminate the mode of expression that the sagas apply in depicting Baltic traffic. Their broader meaning is found in the context of the so-called narrative tradition of travelogue, the essence of which will be brought into focus in the concluding chapter.

V CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

5.1. Records and representations of Baltic traffic

The purpose of the present thesis has been to undertake a dynamic and intergrative study of references to traffic within the Baltic region as expressed in runic inscriptions, with additional perspectives from skaldic poetry and sagas. In order to illuminate the complex mode of expression around such references, the notions of 'record' and 'representation' have been launched into the discussion so as to focus both upon the informative (documentary) as well as the depictive (illustrative) nature of the sources and their manner of mediating particular content. At the same time, right from the introductory sections of the thesis, the overlapping character of the two concepts has been emphasised. That is to say, the aim of the study is connected to understanding the complexity of the tradition – and not to the straining of strictly determined facts out of the imagery of the past. The thesis has attempted to treat the sources in their own right, with equal interest towards their different levels of expression, none of which should be undermined or ignored.

This final chapter presents the main practical outcome and conclusions for the study, but at the same time we engage ourselves in a theoretical discussion, in which the different types of sources will be related more directly to each other in order to trace their inner parallels and dynamics.[905] Furthermore, we shall return to the previously discussed concepts of narrativity and historicity (cf. 1.4.3.), and examine the consequences that the corresponding analytical framework may have for understanding the way Baltic traffic, and travelling and communication in general, is depicted in early Nordic sources.

We start on the level of some practical observations. The choice of the arena around the Baltic Sea as the main object of study was motivated in subsections 1.3. and 1.4.1. It could be said that the strategic position of the Baltic Sea and the extent of vivid communication between the regions that are linked together by the sea in themselves provide an explanation for the intensive interest towards the Baltic region in cultural, historical and archaeological research. However, different studies operate with different ways of delimiting the actual range of the Baltic region. We have found it important to apply a broader perspective in analysing the motives in relation with Baltic traffic, focusing upon both inter-regional and regional mobility within a setting that is modified according to the concept of the Baltic Sea drainage basin. This has enabled us to obtain a more comprehensive picture of contacts.

The sea itself is known to have long made up a joining link between various regions and communities – resulting in different forms of interaction. In the context of the Viking Age and medieval communication, the Baltic Sea fulfilled a central role, being a stage for numerous bigger or smaller military encounters and plunder voyages; trade-related and other economic activities; and also, a transit zone for further travels, much of those connected to the large-scale transport of goods.

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[905] Preliminary conclusions with regard to the three main groups of sources were outlined in relevant chapters, see especially subsections 3.2.4., 4.1.2.2. and 4.2.5.

From the military perspective, the historical role of the Baltic Sea has been undoubtedly linked to questions of access and domination, and many of the conflicts unfolding in the region have resulted from territorial issues and the need to gain control over strategic (maritime) districts and sites. At the same time, the general nature of the Viking Age also favoured various encounters on the level of systematic plunder trips.

The meaning of trade contacts has been brought into focus first of all as a result of extensive archaeological studies, with material evidence gathered from findings throughout the region. It has been possible for researchers to follow the establishment and development of early trade centres and trade networks within the region. In this light, the Baltic Sea has even deserved the label of a gateway for Viking Age communications with wider territories to the east and south, reaching all the way down to Byzantium and the Arab countries.

The importance of main waterways along rivers has been emphasised by scholars; trade and development of early focal sites must have resulted directly from available river communications. Various Scandinavian rivers and lakes were important in the context of inter-Scandinavian communications, but they also provided easy passage from various points of departure into the Baltic Sea. When discussing traffic through the territories of eastern Baltic and Russia, we further referred to two common travel routes (cf. e.g. 2.4.); the first one took travellers from the Gulf of Finland along the river Neva to Lake Ladoga and then southwards along the river Volkhov past Ladoga and Novgorod. The second central route led from the Gulf of Riga along the river Western Dvina further inland through the territory of Semigallia.[906]

The application of the concept of Baltic Sea drainage basin in the framework of this current study has, in fact, evolved directly from acknowledging the historical importance of waterborne traffic and communications along main waterways, which with regard to Baltic mobility accelerated both short- and long-distance travel.

Having established the intergrated area around the Baltic Sea from a geographical and historical perspective, we have found it fruitful to address the question of traffic from the point of view of literary sources, derived from the Nordic cultural sphere that in this study has been regarded as involved in that very same communication arena. The designation 'literary sources' is used in its broad sense; the previous analysis and discussion has all along the way demonstrated the complex character of the source material, where the elements of visual expression and oral tradition also have had their important say in the formation of written textual composition (the versions of which we experience today).

Baltic traffic has thus been analysed and discussed on the level of motives and themes that the sources themselves have to offer. A clear point of departure in this analysis has been formed by references to concrete destinations and travel routes, which belong with the directly informative content of the sources and provide witness to their general interest in recording (significant) events and identifying the scene of action by the inclusion of factual labels.

The preceding chapters have presented a systematic overview of the Baltic destinations as recorded in runic inscriptions, skaldic poetry, kings' sagas and sagas of Icelanders. With regard to the informative value of their collective evidence, we naturally have to be aware of the varied nature and biases of the studied groups of sources – they do not constitute an automatic basis for drawing conclusions about the overall nature of mutual contacts within the

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[906] Along both of these routes one could make their way down to the river Dnieper and further on towards more remote destinations.

Baltic region; neither can the references provided by the sources be set into a comparative relation to each other in a mechanical manner.[907]

To exemplify some of these considerations more closely – on the one hand, the sources do contain overlapping references, for example to certain countries and provinces/landscapes; on the other hand, we find differences in their mention of specific sites and focal points, both with regard to what it is that is being identified and how frequent corresponding identifications are. This is a direct result of the apparent quantitative discrepancies between the groups of sources. As was underlined throughout the thesis, our primary group of Baltic traffic inscriptions is limited (with the total of 64 inscriptions), and the meagre number signals that the evidence remains selective. All in all, it must be rather accidental as to what places are spoken of, and what has been left without any attention, although certain repetitive references illuminate at least some common destinations and motives for travel. At the other end we find the comprehensive saga narratives that relate of a series of events, where the degree of detailed information can be considerably higher (although it does not necessarily have to be that way), and which at the same time tend to repeat the same basic themes over and over again, also giving rise to the frequency of recorded cases. From the quantitative point of view one may hence be inclined to give greater significance to the latter type of evidence; however, with sagas we so obviously have to face the crucial qualitative difference in that they are considerably later and more distant representations of the studied matter as compared to the more or less contemporary evidence of runic inscriptions.

There is then more to the varying nature of overall evidence than simply the amount of recorded cases. The reason why certain areas may enjoy relatively more attention in one group of sources also has to do with their general background. In the introductory part of the thesis as well as in chapter IV we emphasised the varying perspectives that runic inscriptions and the skaldic and saga material represent – the former mediating the viewpoints and interests of East Norse (Danish and Swedish) communities, whereas the latter two are borne within the West Norse (Norwegian-Icelandic) cultural context and therefore address matters of Baltic traffic from a more indirect platform. With regard to these varying premises it is only natural to expect differences in the informational content of the sources – their main attention is, at least partly, guided towards different scenes. Areas of interest differ; this is particularly evident with skaldic poetry and sagas (especially kings' sagas), where much more emphasis is given to communications between southern Norway and Denmark – an observation which even led us to include Viken in the discussion of the scene of Baltic traffic (cf. 4.2.3.1.). Such variation and the extent to which one or another destination is recorded in the sources is therefore in itself not automatically reflective of existing historical knowledge, or the scale of actual contacts. What we are dealing with is the picture of contacts as presented by different Nordic sources.

However, bearing such obvious limitations in mind, it is nevertheless possible to observe interesting parallels and similarities in the sources' representation of events and the motives that are applied in this connection. On the general level, the study of runic inscriptions, skaldic poetry and sagas has revealed the narrative purpose of the sources to recollect a nearer or more remote past, and in doing that they naturally cast light upon events considered significant by contemporaries – be it either for the purpose of commemorating, honouring and/or praising certain individuals, or taking care of the historical tradition (and heritage) of the past. Concerning Baltic traffic, we can therefore logically assume that whenever such

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[907] This applies first and foremost when comparing runic inscriptions to skaldic poetry and sagas. The latter two groups of sources can, for obvious reasons, be more easily set into relation to each other.

references were included in the sources, they must have served a concrete purpose of identification – or the purpose of creating an image of such identification. In this light it does not really matter whether a particular site gets recorded five or fifty times; we nevertheless experience the fact that for some reason it was considered important to mark the destination for one's Baltic travels in the framework of a commemorative runic inscription, a praising skaldic poem or a "historical" saga.[908] Further significant is the observation that different labels could be chosen for such identifications.

Based upon the actual analysed references, we have noticed that on the level of bigger territories and districts the recorded evidence brings out certain focal arenas and inter-regional communication networks around the Baltic Sea – which may be characterised in terms of southern and eastern communication scenes, as was already remarked upon in connection with sagas. In a way it has been easier to determine the focal arenas for Baltic traffic as depicted in skaldic poetry and sagas. Once again, the more modest amount of runic inscriptions sets its clear limitations. However, certain characteristic patterns have been identified on the basis of their collective evidence.

In this manner, runic inscriptions also reveal contact networks of eastern and southern orientation; in the centre of their attention we thus find destinations such as Gotland and Russia (*Garðar*) and Denmark, alongside references to various districts/sites in mainland Sweden and the modern Baltic countries. Since a major part of the inscriptions originates from the central Swedish landscapes, the dominance of eastern targets among this material is natural. This observation at the same time accords well with the picture of Baltic traffic as offered by skaldic poetry and sagas; as we remember, Sweden (*Svíþjóð*) was in the latter sources identified as a common scene for travels leading to the east, out along the eastern route (to the Baltic countries) and further on to *Garðaríki*. In this light it is also no surprise that among the 11 potential references to *Garðar* and *Holmgarðr* in the runic material, only one is known from a region outside of Sweden (N 62 from Alstad). Most of these inscriptions come from the region around Mälaren, one from Gotland and one from Öland.[909]

The common elements of the narrative tradition also reveal themselves on the level of applied formulations; both in the context of Swedish runic inscriptions and West-Norse sources, it is customary to speak of traffic heading 'east to *Garðar/Garðaríki*'.[910] The additional perspective that we gain from skaldic poetry and sagas is the image of two-ways mobility; that is to say, the latter sources do not only mention traffic from Sweden to Russia but also record trips from Russia to Sweden, outlining a typical route for similar journeys.[911] It is, however, remarkable that whereas the studied runic inscriptions mostly refer to various destinations in terms of identifying a death place, in two cases of *Garðar* references the circumstances are clearly different – one of them (Öl 28) mentions a person sitting in *Garðar* (i.e. even recording the present situation), the other (U 209) establishes the fact that the commissioner acquired wealth in *Garðar*, for which he obviously could buy an estate back at

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[908] This does not apply merely to Baltic traffic, but travel references in general.

[909] Naturally the general regional distribution of runic inscriptions guides over the pattern of potential foci. Again, we do not underline the aspect of quantity, but simply find it worth remarking that the image of central Sweden as a transit zone for eastern travels also finds certain expression from the point of view of runic inscriptions.

[910] Otherwise the application of common directional guides is easily observable in skaldic poetry and sagas.

[911] The same picture of two-ways mobility also applies to other Baltic destinations as recorded in skaldic poetry and sagas.

home.[912] In skaldic and saga narratives the imagery of contacts with Russia also includes the motive of gaining wealth – for example as payment or gifts from the Russian rulers.

With regard to other east-bound traffic it has been interesting to trace the variation in references recorded in the various groups of sources. Runic inscriptions thus mention districts/sites within mainland Estonia and Latvia, whereas skaldic poetry and sagas contain references to certain other areas, for example the western part of Estonia (*Aðalsýsla*) and the island of Saaremaa (*Eysýsla*) – as the scenes known in the West Norse tradition. *Eistland* is recorded both in runic material and sagas, but the one relevant case in the former group actually uses the corresponding label in plural. As was pointed out during the analysis in 3.1.24. and 4.2.3.5., the designation *Eistland* itself appears to be somewhat ambiguous and does not necessarily connect with the idea of a clearly defined region. Similar ambiguity has been observed and underlined in connection with other applied designations, among which the case of *austrvegr* (the eastern route) is of particular interest due to the transformation of understandings around its scope.[913]

In the context of runic inscriptions the meaning of Denmark was also discussed, raising the question as to whether the references to *Danmǫrk* indeed concern Denmark proper or rather the Danish territories in southern Sweden. In certain cases it seemed as though the question had to remain open. However, when including the perspectives of skaldic poetry and sagas as possible comparative evidence, it is clear that the latter sources customarily distinguish between Denmark and the landscapes of southern Sweden – at least they contain parallel references both to Denmark and its various districts, including those in southern Sweden (i.e. Skåne, Halland and Blekinge).[914] Skåne is also recorded in two runic inscriptions; this further supports the idea of regarding the label *Danmǫrk* as first and foremost reserved for designating Denmark proper. On the level of recorded motives it is of interest that two runic inscriptions refer to the deceased dying in christening robes – i.e. the commemorated persons probably converted to Christianity during their stay in Denmark. According to this cultural understanding that saw Denmark's significance as an early stronghold for Christianity, it is not unexpected to encounter a similar motive among the narrative repertoire of the sagas of Icelanders, which in fact several times depict Denmark as the scene where the travelling Icelanders accept Christianity, and from where they could head on a pilgrimage to Rome.

Whereas Denmark is a well-recorded Baltic destination in all the studied sources, rather different is the case with the territory of Wendland to the southeast of Denmark (and for that matter, also with Saxony in northern Germany). Wendland and Wendish communities figure as common targets for Scandinavians from the perspective of skaldic and saga material, but in runic inscriptions we only find one indirect reference to the Wendish ruler Mistivir, as recorded in the Danish inscription DR 55. The different perspectives of the source groups

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[912] To these examples we may also add U 636, which speaks of travel to *Garðar*, with no identification of the death place. The applied verb is *fara*, which is a typical neutral mobility verb in the context of sagas. However, in the context of runic inscriptions the formulations with *fara* also seem to signify stylized (indirect) ways of expressing the fact of death.

[913] In runic inscriptions the references to the eastern route must in general have carried a broader meaning; therefore, relevant inscriptions were not included among primary evidence, but rather treated as complementary examples. At the same time, in the context of saga literature the designation was more explicitly connected with traffic that concerned the Baltic countries – and in this manner clearly part of the Baltic communication scene.

[914] Denmark emerges from the sources as a true island kingdom, with much regional traffic unfolding between its various districts. This is first of all the picture of sagas (and skaldic poetry), but it is also significant that the runic material contains one reference to Denmark's heartland Jylland, as well as to the strategic strait of Øresund between Sjælland and Skåne.

again provide an explanation; with the majority of Baltic traffic inscriptions originating from the territory of Sweden and only a limited amount from Denmark, the foci of the runic material differ in part from the approach of skaldic poetry and sagas, where connections with the area to the south of Denmark also form an important part of the communicative picture – especially when depicting the activities of the Danish kings.

Besides referring to mobility between bigger regional units, the sources demonstrate that much of the Baltic traffic is depicted as leading to more specifically identified sites. This is to our mind a significant point in itself – it is naturally most apparent with regard to inter-Scandinavian contacts, but also visible with regard to other areas.[915] Despite the observation made above – according to which the overall frequency and the exact types of corresponding references do not necessarily open up the informative value of the evidence – we may give importance to the general practice of identifying minor sites as such. This technique constitutes a characteristic feature of early Nordic records and representations of Baltic traffic.

Furthermore, although the selection of places that get mentioned may appear arbitrary, corresponding references all share certain common qualities – from the point of view of our source material they must have been considered strategically important sites, worthy of being pointed out and also necessary for determining the setting. Developing this line of thought even further, it is quite possible, and even likely, that these sites were not only regarded important in terms of the narrative representation of events, but were modified upon and did indeed reflect the actual knowledge concerning strategic places within the Baltic region. In this context, the generally accepted authentic nature of runic messages provides a suitable point of departure, whereas skaldic and saga evidence proves helpful in understanding the broader meaning of applied practices.

It is sometimes discussed and questioned whether one or another site could have been known enough for the people behind runic inscriptions to be able to determine whether the offered interpretation is correct or not. An obvious case in connection with the analysis of Baltic traffic inscriptions has been the Upplandic inscription U 375 and its suggested reference to Boge in Gotland. According to one opinion, this site could not have been that familiar for mainland Swedish travellers. However, as discussed in subsection 3.1.17., there is ample reason to take the reference to Boge as a qualified alternative, both from the linguistic and historical point of view. In the context of the Viking Age, Boge may have well functioned as a strategic site along a common sailing route. Parallel runic references to other minor sites ('minor' in our contemporary understanding), such as small headlands or islands, confirm the idea according to which places that could be considered important in identifying the traffic routes of the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages do not necessarily have to coincide with our modern realities.[916]

The picture offered by sagas (and to a certain degree by skaldic poetry) supports the image of focus being placed upon recording various minor sites along the Baltic sailing routes. The sagas often localise events on, or in, the neighbourhood of small islands, headlands, rivers and straits, and in this connection they may now and then also present a more detailed description of the site, explicitly illuminating its particular nature for the Viking Age communication (in the sense they understand this communication). We also notice a rather remarkable mixture of narrative techniques – the saga may or may not choose to identify the

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[915] In this manner, runic inscriptions contain a few more specified references that concern the territories along the eastern Baltic; the same applies to skaldic poetry and sagas. The latter (especially Knýt) also list a number of particular sites within the southern territory of Wendland.
[916] See e.g. also the runic inscription Ög 81 in 3.1.15.

site by name, in both cases following the same basic narrative scheme of events, for example in depicting a viking attack. When leaving the place unidentified it may appear as though more attention is given to the general action; although sometimes the saga may state that the exact place has not been recorded in the tradition and is therefore unknown. In these cases, when the setting for action is carefully documented by the application of various place names, there may also lie an actual acknowledgment of the importance of the site behind the given record. This of course does not mean that the described event is historical, or that it indeed took place at that particular spot – but what we witness here is the existence and application of commonly accepted factual labels within the narrative. Again we may experience that the line between recording and representing is not always that sharp.

With regard to the formal-stylistic features, there exist some interesting parallels between runic inscriptions and skaldic poetry.[917] As we know, the poetical narrative of skaldic poetry makes use of systematic patterns of alliteration and inner rhyme. The analysed Baltic traffic inscriptions also demonstrate frequent application of elements of stylization, i.e. alliteration – both in terms of fully formulated poetic additions as well as more occasional alliterating phrases within the frames of prose formulations. Another formal phenomenon that we commented upon concerns the way place names are inserted into the inscription/poem – runic inscriptions may visually mark the separate elements of a given compound name, whereas the free, agrammatic word order of skaldic poetry separates the two parts of the name along the lines of a poetic strategy that creates specific patterns of rhyme and rhythm.[918]

In the expression of traffic, we notice a transformation from the mostly brief and even somewhat static-appearing establishment of the (concluded) act of travelling in the framework of runic inscriptions to the more dynamic picture that skaldic poetry and sagas can offer – for example by depicting the different phases of one's travel, or creating an image of how opposing forces approach each other from different directions. Also, skaldic poems and sagas may speak of intentional travels; that is to say, they may mention someone's wish and motivation to travel – this may or may not find its realisation in an actual trip.

However, throughout the analysis of runic inscriptions we simultaneously focused upon the various dynamic features of the runic mode of expression as well. For one, even on the level of applied formulations, we find certain (poetic) additions that create a more expressive image around the stated fact. In this manner, the inscriptions may speak of one's ship drifting to the sea bottom (to again refer to the inscription U 214, which served as the inspiration for the title of the thesis), or they may explain that as part of his journeys the deceased used to sail around a certain headland (Sö 198), or that he met his end in a particular strait while sailing from one point to another (Sö 333), etc. We even find a rather unique record of intentional travelling in U 539, which commemorates a man who died in Jylland but intended to travel to England. Furthermore, in the analysis of runic inscriptions we constantly emphasised the meaning of the interplay between the textual content of an inscription and its visual representation on the stone monument – to our mind an essential part of experiencing any runic monument. In this manner, the current study distinguishes itself from most previous research, in which the visual dimension of recorded messages is not brought into focus. The many individual layout solutions that have been observed (which confirm that the text should

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[917] On a broader level of understanding these considerations also concern saga literature, because the saga narrative is immersed with direct citations and paraphrases of skaldic poems.

[918] See also subsections 3.2.1. and 4.1.2.2.

not be reduced to a mere linear linguistic phenomenon) also bring out the inner dynamics and the varied focal points of runic inscriptions.[919]

Concerning the imagery around the nature of Baltic traffic, the sagas' and the skaldic poems' manner of casting light upon the different stages of campaigns and expeditions in a way also lets us follow the travel routes of the depicted characters, which take them from point A to point B, and possibly back to point A or further on to point C. The motive of return voyages (which accords with the above-mentioned image of two-ways mobility) is another feature that sets skaldic poems and sagas apart from commemorative runic inscriptions; the latter usually make the impression that the traveller did not return, but died away from home.[920] However, at the same time, skaldic and saga descriptions often figure as comprised travel records where the scheme of different trips may easily result from the summarising narrative grasp of the poet/storyteller. In fact, the narrative now and then simply takes a jump from one destination to another – one (part of a) skaldic stanza may, for example, speak of a battle in Finland, and another of a raid on Denmark, which does not automatically mean that the praised hero made a journey from Finland to Denmark.

The actual course of the route is better highlighted in such cases when the narrative includes various road markers and/or directional guides. In fact, the latter appear to be a typical feature of both skaldic and saga depictions of Baltic traffic; directional guides also bring out the dynamic aspects of mobility, i.e. the route that the traveller is following leads him away from some point and/or further on towards an eastern/western/southern/northern destination. Among more particular road markers the references made to traffic along rivers, through straits, past some island waters or coastal regions, or through forests and over mountain ridges belong to the typical narrative repertoire.[921]

On the level of the actual physical landscape, runic inscriptions bring an important authentic communicative aspect that needs to be taken into consideration. The locality of a given runic monument – especially if it is still known to stand on its original site – opens up the possibility of establishing a hypothetical setting from which the commemorated traveller set out, making his way towards the recorded destination. For this reason, the analysis of Baltic traffic inscriptions was consciously combined with studying the communications around the preserved monuments, in an attempt to reconstruct at least part of the routes that the people may have followed.[922]

Baltic traffic in the form it emerges from runic inscriptions, skaldic poetry and sagas is very much connected to waterborne traffic, based upon communications along main water routes and the maritime districts of the Baltic Sea. In connection with runic inscriptions, we emphasised that the monuments also signal the importance of waterways through their locations. Skaldic poems and sagas further focus upon inter-regional inland traffic, which is often connected with communication between border districts – and hence leading, for example, from southern or eastern Norway into the territory of present-day Sweden. It is in this context that the above-mentioned references to traffic over mountain regions and/or through big forest areas are included in the presentation of journeys. The repetitive mention of

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[919] For conclusions concerning the important meaning of design and layout, see in particular subsection 3.2.2.

[920] But as the analysis has shown, this is not always the case; sometimes the inscriptions refer to travellers who succesfully made it back from the journey; other times the applied formulation leaves the exact circumstances open.

[921] It is also in this connection that the above-mentioned strategy of turning attention to various minor localities serves its purpose of concrete identification.

[922] In most cases similar reconstructions naturally had to be limited concerning the level of possible water routes that may have taken the traveller from Scandinavia out on the Baltic Sea.

travels along some of these inland roads (e.g. through Edskog) accords with the basic idea that central routes were also known and considered to be strategic and important by the saga narrators and writers.[923]

With regard to the motivation behind Baltic mobility, we have previously emphasised the biases in the sources that guide over their depiction of contacts within the Baltic region. It is especially on this level that the representative aspect of the sources becomes obvious – their generic features and interest in particular motives determine the manner in which Baltic traffic is recorded. That is to say, whereas the identified destinations and outlined traffic routes may (despite their quantitative shortcomings) offer rather objectively presented information, the nature of depicted contacts is first and foremost a selective picture of communication. It is for example quite obvious that in general the sources downplay the overall importance of trade connections. The natural emphasis of skaldic poetry and the kings' sagas is to deal with military campaigns and bigger expeditions, although we do also hear to a certain degree about various diplomatic missions, tribute collecting and trading. Motives of the latter kind are somewhat more visible in the narrative of the sagas of Icelanders, which at the same time provide witness to many a viking plunder trip that had the regions around the Baltic Sea as one main target area. Commemorative runic inscriptions that typically record the death of a person also document the role of the Baltic region as an arena in which many strifes and battles took place, although the analysis has shown that besides such an image the inscriptions (and their choice of mobility verbs) also carry connotations to other forms of connections (including trade).

It may at first sight seem as though runic, skaldic and saga references to Baltic traffic are, at least in a cultural-historical sense, in complete accordance with what could be presumed of their way of addressing communication in the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages right from the start. But as emphasised throughout the analysis, the deeper purpose of this study has not been so much the evaluation of particular facts and events (be they related to raiding or trading or something else), but the discussion of the complex modes of expression that runic inscriptions, skaldic poetry and saga literature apply, as well as the general manner in which these significant monuments of the Nordic verbal culture understand and interpret the motive of travelling. In our opinion the discussed records and representations of Baltic traffic find their broader cultural-historical meaning within the narrative tradition of travelogue, a concept that is outlined in the concluding subsection.

5.2. Narrativity and historicity and the tradition of travelogue

In the previous analysis and discussion of the genres of runic inscriptions, skaldic poetry, kings' sagas and sagas of Icelanders, we have emphasised their guiding communicative purposes of commemoration, praise and honour, recollection and presentation of past events from the point of view of the (informed) present.

Throughout the thesis we have attempted to highlight the narrativistic features of the analysed sources; it is in this connection that we have applied the label 'runic mini-narratives' alongside speaking of the poetical narrative of skaldic poems and the prose narrative of the

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[923] It is also interesting that the sagas may identify common land roads and sailing routes as opposed to those (secret) roads that led through unknown regions.

sagas. In a very simplified sense, narrativity has been defined as the story-like character of a given source, although 'narrative' and 'story' are not completely synonymous concepts – rather, the former is a more abstract designation and illustrates the communicative process through which events are organised into a (coherent) temporal sequence in terms of a story.

Important is exactly the temporal focus of a story, as well as its interest towards depicting (a series of) action. In this connection we find a passage from Torfi's Tulinius book, in which he discusses some methodological principles in the study of *fornaldarsögur*, to be particularly illustrative:

> A story, like a description is a representation, but whereas a description represents something in stasis, a story, represents an event, the passage from one state to another, or transformation. The minimal story therefore would be the description of a change in state, as in the phrase "The car departed". The initial state (implied) is that the car is in a certain place; the final state (also implied) is that the car no longer is there. The story represents the departure of the car, which is the event constituting the transformation from the first state into the second. (Torfi Tulinius 2002: 32-33)

Runic inscriptions, skaldic poems and sagas all demonstrate the application of corresponding narrativistic strategies and techniques in their presentation and treatment of events, including the motive of Baltic mobility. Even on the level of runic mini-narratives (or "minimal stories", to use the terminology of Tulinius), we find clear references to some form of "passage from one state to another" (to again quote Tulinius). The main memorial formula establishes the fact that a rune stone has been raised in someone's memory; the characteristic additions found in the Baltic traffic inscriptions, for example, inform that the commemorated person died at a particular spot.[924] The full-bodied prose narrative of sagas is naturally built upon such numerous transformative sequences, which can be viewed in relation to each other or separately; even the poetical narrative of skaldic poetry operates with a temporal scheme of events.

These recorded passages of movement and change in the state of affairs – in our case most obviously connected with references to journeys undertaken by individual people within the Baltic region – are besides their narrativistic function also anchored in time. Such temporal anchorage appears to be a real(istic) category, at least in the framework of the narrative representation of action. The narrative can in the meantime also make a claim about its own historical actuality – which brings us over to the features of historicity and their belonging-together with the overall narrative structure of the studied sources.

On the one hand, it could be said that some of the statements made in the sources may in a very direct way accord with reality, and indeed often build upon real circumstances. To exemplify this observation on the level of simple runic statements – a runic inscription refers to the fact that a rune stone has been raised, and with the actual stone monument still preserved, this claim appears to be not only relevant and realistic but also the historical truth that all are still able to see and feel. Even with other types of statements in runic inscriptions, there is no real reason to question their authenticity and explicit referentiality along the lines of argumentation that acknowledges the primary source value of such evidence. We have previously emphasised that runic inscriptions relate to real people, real places and real situations, even if these remain unknown to us. This means that the inscriptions contain

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[924] As explained in the introduction (with reference to Pihlström 1999), the establishment of the fact of death (i.e. the termination of life) in itself already brings about a narrativistic structure in our experience of events in time. The commemorative runic mini-narrative is in many ways the purest representation of such experiences from the point of view of the people of the past.

concrete information about individuals – to exemplify this, according to the preserved runic statements we can for instance find out that the members of a certain family engaged in travel overseas.

On the other hand, this predominantly explicit referentiality (and potential historicity) does not mean that there occurs no interpretative representation in runic inscriptions; as was demonstrated during the analysis and in the previous subsection, various illustrative features can be observed on the level of: applied formulations (where the techniques of stylization and conscious versification are applied); their visual presentation on a chosen stone medium; and the broader communicative function of the monument. Runic inscriptions combine documentary records of certain facts with the (poetical) principles of commemoration and with the visual-physical features of the monument. Furthermore, the context of the surrounding landscape must have also added specific nuances to the actual meaning of the monument.[925]

In the case of skaldic poetry and saga literature, the validity of their referentiality has been under much debate.[926] In recent scholarship the views that reappraise the historical, traditionalist core of the sources – especially that of the metrically conservative skaldic poetry – have emphasised their referential value on the level of the broader picture that they can offer of the various aspects of the society, as supported by the inner consistencies within the overall source material. At the same time, one admits that even on the factual level many of the people and events addressed by skaldic poems and sagas have their historical anchorage. However, to our mind the referentiality of these sources is more complex than that; the narrative mode itself often employs the features of historicity in depicting motives that lie in the centre of poems and sagas, such as the theme of travel. In this manner, the sources relate of particular events – for example, trips within the Baltic region – and these events are depicted as unfolding in a temporal (or at least logical) sequence, and they are associated with named persons and identified destinations. Such a mode of expression already in itself creates the image of actuality, without necessarily having to correspond to what we may call real events and circumstances.[927] In the context of skaldic poems and sagas, the features of historicity therefore rather appear as one characteristic side of the narrative representation and interpretation of events.

It is further instructive to see in which manner the sources relate themselves to the past and what is their possible attitude to tradition (and history). To start with runic inscriptions, it is clear that in their content the inscriptions follow a commemorative convention that sets its own frames for the applied perspectives – the inscriptions establish the death of a person and record this fact from the point of view of those who were left behind. The information is presented in a predominantly retrospective manner; in the framework of memorial formulas, even the commissioners say that they <u>had</u> the stone raised in memory of the deceased, and typical supplements add comments about what the latter did or was known for. However, the general mode of expression and the communicative functions of runic monuments also allow for the inclusion of the perspectives of the present-day situation, as well as various prospective utterances that may express how something is wished or expected to be. The

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[925] The latter aspect may be harder to grasp and reconstruct, since we cannot experience the monuments on the same premises as the people of the past. But we cannot ignore the fact that the choice of locality for a commemorative runic monument carries in itself an interpretative and representative process as undertaken by the commissioners.

[926] See also the theoretical discussion of sources in chapter IV.

[927] In this we may observe the overlapping features of fictional narratives and historical writing that applies a narrative form.

aspect of 'the here and now' sometimes gives rise to interesting statements that may concern the referentiality and even the truth value of the given inscription. A remarkable case is the Lagnö rock inscription (Sö 175), which actually claims: *Sant iaR þæt sum sagat vaR ok sum hugat vaR þæt* (it is true that which was said and which was intended).[928]

A typical example of prospective utterances would be Christian prayers for the soul of the deceased. Statements about the expected permanent nature of the monument, of the type 'here shall the stone stand', as well as explicit appeals to the potential viewers of the monument to read/interpret the inscription (the runes) also introduce a broader temporal dimension into the runic formulations.

At the same time we know that the motive of commemorating a deceased is not exclusive; it can be equally important to illuminate the significance of the living, and sometimes this is actually the main function of the inscription. In connection with this, the inscription may clearly emphasise both the aspects of present and prospective prominence, but also provide information about the past accomplishments (e.g. the travels) of the person in question. Furthermore, even in the unambiguously commemorative inscriptions, the presence of the (living) commissioners is important.[929] The information about the commissioners and their relationships with the deceased serves as a frame of reference – we are here dealing with genealogical data that outlines the identity and the background of the deceased.[930] In a way, similar statements also focus upon the role of identified informants ("narrators"), according to whose knowledge the inscription presumably has been formed (although the extent of the contribution from the carver's side may also be discussed).

Meanwhile, the Viking Age rune stone inscriptions usually refer to the commissioners in the third person, which distances them from the actual act of recording the content. However, we find certain occasions where the inscriptions introduce first-hand perspectives; a suitable example is the rune stone from the Gåsinge church (Sö 14) that refers to western travels. The inscription has been arranged by a woman and her two daughters after the husband/father Sveinn; besides the main memorial formula and a prayer for the soul of the deceased, it is stated: *Væit iak, þæt vaR Svæi[nn] vestr með Gauti/Knuti* (I know that Sveinn was in the west with Gautr/Knútr).

Direct and personal statements of the latter kind are a much more common feature of skaldic expressions. As was made clear in the general description of skaldic poetry, skalds present themselves as conscious composers.[931] On the one hand, the role of the skald is brought into focus through his direct address to the ruler who he is praising; similar strategies are typically applied in the separate introductory or summarising sections of the poem, but they may also occur in the course of the unfolding poetic narrative. Furthermore, skaldic poems often apply formulations where the perspective of the speaker is made obvious; he

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[928] The preceding part of the inscription follows the pattern of typical commemoration and does not actually reveal what it is that has to be taken as the truth. Nevertheless, the expression as such remains significant and casts light upon some of the attitudes of the people behind the inscription. Another remarkable feature about the Lagnö monument is its ornamentation that depicts the figure of a man.

[929] As pointed out during the previous discussion, some scholars interpret this fact in terms of runic inscriptions as documents of inheritance, which to our mind is only one limited option for interpreting their overall messages (cf. e.g. 3.2.2.).

[930] In this, runic memorial formulas may to a certain degree remind us of the genealogical lists provided in saga literature, which in a similar manner serve to identify people. Such identification strategies may also cast light upon the practices of oral tradition.

[931] Gade (1995: 2) remarks that the skalds "went to great lengths to leave their signatures on the finished product, often by incorporating their own names into the stanzas". She even compares them to the rune carvers who could also sign their work.

may be identified as a witness to the scene that the poem is describing, or he may be emphasising his role as a mediator of the tradition. In this manner, the skald may point out that he is speaking of the events in the way he recalls them, or as they are told and remembered by everybody.

Due to the skald's conscious involvement in the poetical presentation of circumstances, the skaldic art can besides the retrospective recording of events create the impression of immediacy, as though the poem is being composed at that very moment when the event occurs. Some scholars have in this connection emphasised the ahistorical attitude of skaldic poems to the depicted situations – where "the past is conceived of as an aspect of the present" (Fidjestøl 1994: 79); others interpret the application of the present tense as part of the mode of present historic (see e.g. Poole 1991).

Although the action is indeed sometimes presented in terms of a spontaneous commentary in the present tense, usually the general context of the praise poem/memorial lay still asserts that the skald speaks of the events from the perspective of an informed narrator who has made a conscious selection in his representation of events that have already occurred, and is now presenting them to a certain audience. Another important aspect about the skald's relation to past circumstances is exactly the fact that he gives them a fixed form through a poem – which, as we know, has been memorised and passed on to others.[932]

More complex and complicated is the relationship of sagas to the past.[933] In this connection we confine ourselves to emphasising only the essential. The full-fledged saga narrative demonstrates an advanced temporal organisation of action, where the main perspective is again retrospective, although the narration easily allows for various prospective grasps as well. We can further assume that the selection has been undertaken by certain saga narrators whose aim has been to interpret and create a picture of the past – which probably also functioned as a background to modify present perspectives and experiences against. At the same time it is not so much the voices of the narrators that the saga makes explicit, but that of the tradition.

The saga thus records events that deserve to be told from the point of view of tradition; in fact it often explicitly refers to the meaning of traditional knowledge. This technique may serve to either confirm the validity of presented information or explain why something is left unmentioned (i.e. it is not considered part of the recorded tradition). The saga sees itself as the bearer of the tradition, and it employs a conscious historical perspective, which as pointed out above appears to be the dominant feature of its narrative representation of events.

We conclude the previous discussion around the interrelated features of narrativity and historicity by outlining a potential line of development in modes of expression as witnessed by runic inscriptions, skaldic poetry and sagas. Even though with some of these recorded messages (first and foremost those of runic inscriptions) the strictly historical elements of the tradition may appear easier to grasp, we have in this study consciously chosen to examine all the sources according to a more comprehensive approach that does not evaluate their validity according to strictly modern standards, but acknowledges their cultural-historical significance

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[932] Concerning the aspect of the fixation of tradition we may again draw certain parallels between skaldic and runic modes of expression – the former fixates the tradition in terms of a metrical poem, the latter produces inscribed formulations into stone mediums. The specific formalistic aspects of skaldic poetry make Townend (2003: 273) see skaldic art already in its origin as "both oral and (more or less) fixed in form". Townend treats skaldic poetry as a certain symbiosis of oral and literate culture. (The overlapping nature of orality and literacy in early forms of composition has been discussed by Innes (1998), who emphasises their dialectic relationship.)

[933] These problems were discussed in detail in subsection 4.2.1.

in terms of their complex manner of representing the past. We regard runic inscriptions, skaldic poems and sagas as part of the same tradition that they are depicting. What we see here is thus an advancing degree of interpretative abstraction, which leads us from mostly brief and concrete commemorative statements to the poetical level of eulogy and the multi-dimensional prose narrative about the significant past.

This broader understanding of the sources and their inner dynamics provides a necessary contextual frame around their records and representations of Baltic traffic. In a simplified sense – runic inscriptions include references to Baltic traffic in terms of commemoration, skaldic poems typically use such motives as part of celebrating famous leaders, and sagas list the Baltic trips of Scandinavian kings and Icelandic men in the framework of stories that centre around fame and honour. This short summary focuses upon both the parallel themes and the certain obvious differences between the sources.

However, when looking more closely at the manner in which all of the above-mentioned sources relate of trips within the Baltic region as well as of journeys that concern other destinations, one characteristic feature immediately catches our attention.

The motive of travel is in itself an important part of characterising a given individual who is being commemorated or praised, or whose great deeds are brought into focus.[934] In connection with the analysis of sagas we already brought out this aspect of individuality – i.e. we discussed Baltic traffic and other mobility as expressed in terms of named individuals making a journey to an identified destination (and possibly even to another named individual).[935] The same dimension of personal voyages is equally well-represented in skaldic poetry; furthermore, in the latter case the themes concerning travel are also mediated to us by named individuals – the skalds, who praise the activities of their patrons. Similarly, in the case of runic inscriptions, the focus lies upon identifying the accomplishments of individual persons; usually it is the deceased, but sometimes the commissioner himself.

Whereas the preserved items of directly informational content may guide our interests towards travels that connect with trade-related activities or bigger military campaigns or more occasional viking plundering, the narrative representation of events demonstrates that such information is not necessarily the primary focus of the sources. It is rather the statement that these and other forms of journeys were undertaken by concrete persons that serves as the main frame of reference. What we are told about are the personified travels of various people of the Viking Age – even if their trips belong into the scheme of bigger expeditions. A good example in this connection is the group of Ingvarr inscriptions – the manner in which corresponding runic records are formulated does not provide direct witness to the extensive scale of the campaign, but simply attests that a certain person accompanied Ingvarr/died with Ingvarr on his trip. It is not so much the particularities concerning the journey but the fact that certain people engaged in travelling that deserves attention. In the context of sagas and skaldic poetry, great battles and campaigns are similarly connected to named leaders – it is first and foremost their fight against identified opponents that lies in the centre of the narrative, even if the described battle situation may result in the slaughter of thousands of people.

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[934] This does not mean that the quantitative amount of such references (e.g. the amount of so-called voyage inscriptions among the total runic corpus) has to be dominant; we are discussing the qualitative meaning of cases when motives of travel are part of the runic mini-narrative. At the same time, it is of significance that the motive of travel is an essential part of many skaldic poems and sagas.

[935] Another interesting aspect of "personified travels" is the fact that the visited countries are often identified in terms of their inhabitants.

On the other hand, even though the narrative is mostly concerned with the actions of individual persons, this does not mean that the depicted/recorded events as such were not considered significant. As we mentioned above, the motives that were picked out among possible themes certainly had importance in the eyes of the contemporaries – or were meant to create the effect and illusion of prominence.

Nevertheless, our overall source material illuminates in an interesting manner one apparent emphasis of the depictions of Baltic traffic – they provide an identity for the named person, they are part of HIS story. The analysed runic inscriptions, skaldic poems and sagas have demonstrated numerous examples of such personal travelogues, revealing the importance of travelling and the tradition of recording/telling stories about the undertaken journeys.

To illustrate this narrative tradition of travelogue, we focus upon its purest and simplest form of expression, which may also remind one of a summarising catalogue. A good example among the runic inscriptions is the Högby stone (Ög 81).[936] As explained during the analysis, its main memorial formula commemorates a certain Ozurr who he is said to have met his end in the east *í Grikkjum*. The versified addition repeats the same information, but besides that we also hear about the exploits of Ozurr's brothers, who died at different places within the Baltic region. In each case the inscription states the name of the person and identifies the place of death (i.e. the destination that the man reached), whereas the applied verbs cast light upon the death circumstances. It appears from the formulation as though the men all died on various occasions; the end of the inscription remains somewhat ambiguous, but it seems likely that the brother who is mentioned last died at home. The concentrated travelogue of Ög 81 accords with the typical brevity of runic inscriptions, but at the same time we find here the case of a carefully articulated verse, which does not only establish the fact of death but also depicts the men as travellers who died away from home.

The Högby inscription refers to the voyages of several people, whereas other inscriptions may provide evidence that one person travelled to various destinations. The Grinda stone, Sö 166, is one such case among the Baltic traffic inscriptions; from this inscription (again versified) we learn that a certain Guðvér engaged in western travels dividing payment in England, but that he also attacked forts in Saxony.

This brings us over to the typical travelogues of skaldic poetry, in which the target sites for the various campaigns of named kings and chieftains are listed. In a way, we could even say that skaldic poems expand and illustrate the same general pieces of information that we meet in runic inscriptions. Naturally the content is poetically more modified; the skald thus offers us an illustrative poetic interpretation of the act of travelling – in the centre of attention lie different raids and battles, and their dramatic outcome for the opponents of the king are frequently emphasised. A characteristic combination of travel records and skaldic battle imagery occurs, for example, in Sigvatr's *Víkingarvísur*, which relates of the campaigns of young Óláfr Haraldsson.[937] The poem depicts him attacking one site after another – several among them within the Baltic region; no matter what the place, Óláfr is always victorious. Thus, for Óláfr the recorded destinations are like the steps of the ladder that demonstrates the advancement of his career.

Similar is the position of saga literature, which as we know frequently cites and paraphrases skaldic depictions of battles and expeditions, and in this manner provides an extension to the theme of travel within the frame of longer stories. The prose narrative of the

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[936] See also the analysis in 3.1.15.
[937] See also the analysis in 4.1.2.1.

kings' sagas itself is immersed with shorter and longer travelogues, again connected to named individuals. Along similar lines with Sigvatr's *Víkingarvísur* and other relevant skaldic poems, the saga about Óláfr Haraldsson thus provides a systematic overview of the king's travels – in Norway, within the Baltic region and to more distant arenas. In many cases the sagas' travelogue establishes the fact of travelling by stating that a certain destination was reached (with possible additions about what happened next) – in this their formulations may even remind one of those of the concentrated runic inscriptions. But even when mentioned laconically, corresponding information can be considered an important part of the plot. From time to time the sagas also outline details about the different stages of the route and present more specific information about the sites.

As was pointed out previously, the motive of travelling makes up an important component of the saga narrative – both with regard to the kings' sagas and the sagas of Icelanders. Among the latter we find cases where references to travelling engagements form a frame around the whole story. One such example is *Egils saga*; as we know, the saga describes in some detail Egill's viking raids, which also take him to the Baltic region. But besides that, the theme of travelling is emphasised through the introductory and concluding episodes of the saga. In this manner, *Egils saga* starts with introducing a certain Úlfr, of whom it is said that as a young man he became a viking and started going on raids; and the saga concludes with short references to Egill's descendents, explaining that his grandson Skuli engaged in viking campaigns and that he actually participated in the battle where Óláfr Tryggvason was killed. Even the more occasional travel references in other sagas often serve the purpose of introducing a character; altogether they illuminate the significant features of young men who mature and gain renown through their viking activities. The Baltic region is identified as one scene for such engagements.

These and other references to Baltic traffic reveal some interesting sides of the narrative tradition of travelogue that concentrates upon depicting various persons and their travels. Within this tradition the structures and elements of original (oral) storytelling and written composition can be assumed to intermingle; there also occurs a unique blend of records that may build upon actual knowledge and experiences, and the narrative interpretation and illustration of these events.[938]

As an example of features that signify actual knowledge, we have the factual touchstones in the form of concrete proper names, which form the central components of any travelogue, providing both runic inscriptions, skaldic poetry and sagas with the image of specificity – even if the degree of presented geographical information remains general, and the applied formulations (poetically) vague. From the point of view of depicting traffic, the narrative is thus intertwined with various place names that mark the destinations of individual travellers and anchor their action into real space. It seems logical to assume that such a framework of toponymy is deliberately realistic and that place names must have added a specific touch to the story/poem that was told – they must have also been easily recognised and remembered.

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[938] The following observations concern first and foremost the aspects of preserved written tradition, as this is the mode of expression that has been in the focus of the present study. However, we acknowledge the general importance of the oral roots of the tradition (as also discussed in connection with the various groups of sources) – before any travel records were anchored in writing there must have naturally existed stories about the journeys of various people.

Place names can be regarded as the narrative's authentic surface components – whether or not the circumstances that they were meant to define were accurate.[939]

And as an example of the narrative interpretation and illustration of events that may or may not have occurred at these more or less precisely identified destinations – the sources themselves offer an image of how important it was considered to tell/record stories about one's travels and pass on the experience. It is naturally the rich saga literature that addresses this matter most directly; however, the mere fact that skalds were expected to compose poems where they praised their patron's expeditions, as well as the inclusion of similar pieces of information in runic inscriptions, supports the same basic idea.

In sagas it is a common motive to show that the travelling heroes tell about their journeys to others; these stories (even if we do not hear the exact descriptions) thus belong with the general scheme of travelogue. To say this in other words – at first a man travels, then he tells about his travel experience so that others can partake in it. Saga literature contains numerous examples of such situations. In the sagas of Icelanders we, for example, often hear that a person who is travelling (or returning from his journey) finds lodging at someone's house, where he is immediately expected to relate the news and speak of his travels. This and other similar scenes also create the image around the importance of oral travel narratives. On more specific occasions it may be even described how the saga character attempts to preserve the tradition about his spectacular voyages – one such case is the description of Þorkell hákr's return to Iceland, referred to in *Njáls saga*, after he had killed various creatures out on the eastern route.[940] It is said that he had these events carved into wood as pictorial scenes. In this light it is not merely travelling that brings one wealth and renown, but also the fact that the man himself – or even better, others – speak about his accomplishments and record these for tradition.

Such is the broader cultural-historical frame around Baltic traffic references in early Nordic sources – they find their meaning not simply in the context of actual travels that took place but also in terms of the developing narrative culture around travelling, the different dimensions of which also deserve to be illuminated in future studies.

It lies in human nature to travel, and it also lies in human nature to speak or write about travels – even in the form of studies that focus upon the travelling depictions of the past from the point of view of a modern scholar. As Bolli says to Snorri in *Laxdœla saga*, ch. 72, a man is thought to grow ignorant if he never learns about places outside Iceland: *þykkir maðr við þat fáviss verða, ef hann kannar ekki víðara en hér Ísland* (ÍF V: 211). We could change this quotation a little, and end the thesis by saying that a (wo)man is thought to grow ignorant if (s)he does not see beyond her/his own time in order to learn something about the past. This present study has been one modest attempt at overcoming one's ignorance.

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[939] The varied nature of toponymy as recorded in runic inscriptions, skaldic poetry and sagas at the same time casts some light upon the places that the Nordic people knew (about). In cultural-historical sense, some of this recorded knowledge indeed reflects and results from actual travelling experiences that accumulated during the Viking Age, which for one can help us see dynamic links between the period of saga writing and the preceding tradition (cf. also Zilmer 2003a).

[940] See also 4.2.4.2.

SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

'Ta uppus Holmi meres – Tema kaubalaev vajus merepõhja, vaid kolm pääsesid'
Reisikontaktid Läänemere piirkonnas viikingiajastul ja varasel keskajal –
ülestähendused ja ettekujutused Põhjamaade varastes allikates

KOKKUVÕTE

Käesolev doktoritöö analüüsib Põhjamaade varastes allikates (ruunikirjad, skaldiluule, saagad) leiduvaid viiteid reisikontaktidele Läänemere piirkonnas viikingiajastul ja varasel keskajal, tehes rõhuasetuse allikmaterjali üldise väljenduslaadi ning kultuuriajaloolise tausta ja tähenduse mõistmisele.

Töö pealkirjas toodud tsitaat "Ta uppus Holmi meres – Tema kaubalaev vajus merepõhja, vaid kolm pääsesid" moodustab osa kirjest ühel Rootsi Upplandi maakonnast leitud ruunikivil, mis eeldatavasti pärineb 11. sajandi lõpust või 12. sajandi algusest. Tegemist on värsivormis lisandusega tavapärasele memoriaaltekstile, mis omakorda annab teada, et keegi Ingibjorg mälestab oma surnud abikaasat. Nimetatud monument kuulub kokku teise, fragmentaarselt säilinud ruunikiviga, kus sama meest mälestavad ka tütar ja õde – pere naisliikmed on niisugusel viisil kivvi talletanud ühe reisimehe tähelepanuväärse saatuse.

Tsiteeritud ruunikiri illustreerib tabavalt doktoritöös valitud uurimissuunda ja põhiküsimusi: ühest küljest pakub tekst meile näite selle kohta, kuidas alliteratsiooni ja isegi unikaalset lõppriimi kasutavas lausungis põimuvad kroonikalaadsed sisuelemendid ning nende stiliseeritud tõlgendus; teisest küljest tuleb meeles pidada, et tekst ise omab spetsiifilist visuaalset vormi, olles kantud kahe kaarena kivile, mida lisaks kaunistab kristlik ristiornamentika. Eraldi tuleb toonitada momenti, et tekstis nimetatud Holmi meri pole pälvinud ühte kindlat seletust – nimetus võib osutada vetele Bornholmi saare ümber või Soome lahele. Viimatimainitud asjaolust nähtub ühtlasi, et kuigi võime leida allikatest viiteid, mis eeldatavasti seostuvad ühe kindla paigaga, tuleb nende seletamisel tänapäevaste uurijate seisukohast arvestada nii mitmetegi küsimärkidega.

Doktoritöö põhieesmärgid on seotud järgnevate uurimisküsimustega:

1. Mil viisil on viited reisikontaktidele Läänemere piirkonnas kaasatud Skandinaavia ruunikirjadesse, milline on vastavate ülestähenduste tekstuaalne funktsioon ja sisuline tähendus ning missugust rolli omab nende mõistmisel ruunikivide visuaalne dimensioon?
2. Kas ruunikivid ja neil talletatud informatsioon täidavad peale esmase memoriaalse otstarbe ka muid narratiivseid ja kommunikatiivseid eesmärke?
3. Missugune on Läänemere piirkonnaga seotud ülestähenduste ja ettekujutuste dünaamika, kui võrdleme omavahel erinevatest perioodidest pärinevaid allikakate-gooriaid?
4. Kuidas väljenduvad uuritavates allikates narratiivsuse ja ajaloolisuse elemendid ja milline on nende sügavam kultuuriajalooline tähendus?

Ruunikirjad kui autentsed ja konkreetsel materiaalsel kujul säilinud tekstid moodustavad antud uurimuse peamise allikagrupi, ent dünaamilisema ja integratiivsema pildi saamiseks reisi-motiivi tähtsusest erinevat laadi narratiivides on analüüsi kaasatud samuti skaldiluule ja

saagakirjanduse poolt pakutavad ettekujutused kommunikatsioonivormidest Läänemerel ja selle ümbruses.

Sellest lähtuvalt on doktoritöö ülesehitatud põhimõttel, et esimeses peatükis antakse ülevaade uurimuse üldistest teoreetilistest ja metodoloogilistest raamidest ning tutvustatakse peamisi seisukohti ruunikirjade, skaldiluule ja saagade allikaväärtuse ja omavaheliste seoste kohta. Teine ja kolmas peatükk moodustavad uurimistöö keskse osa – kõigepealt käsitletakse lähemalt ruunikivide kultuuriajaloolist tähendust ja võimalikke funktsioone, tuues erinevalt paljudest varasematest uurimustest välja vajaduse võtta arvesse monumendi kui terviku kommunikatiivset rolli. Erilise tähelepanu all on ruunikivide mitmeid kontekstuaalseid tähendustasandeid arvestava kvalitatiivse uurimismetoodika välja arendamine ning vastava lähenemisnurga rakendamine niisuguste ruunikirjade analüüsis, mis viitavad reisikontaktidele Läänemere piirkonnas. Kolmanda peatüki tuuma moodustabki vastavate ruunikivide teks-tuaalsete, visuaalsete ja kommunikatiivsete komponentide süvaanalüüs ja samuti tervikmaterjalile iseloomulike tunnusjoonte välja toomine. Neljandas peatükis valgustatakse reisikontakte Läänemere piirkonnas skaldiluule ja saagakirjanduse perspektiividest lähtuvalt; kuna tegemist on nii teoreetilises kui ka metodoloogilises mõttes komplitseeritud allikmaterjaliga, on mõlema grupi puhul samuti peetud vajalikuks eraldi alapeatükkide raames selgitada neid põhimomente, mis määravad ära nimetatud allikate spetsiifilise laadi ning võimalused neid rakendada kultuuriajaloolise orientatsiooniga uurimustes. Viies, kokkuvõttev peatükk jätkab teoreetilist arutelu ruunikirjade, skaldiluule ja saagade sarnasuste ja erinevuste üle, esitades lõppjäreldused allikate loodud pildist reisikontaktide kohta Läänemere piirkonnas ja samuti reisimotiivi laiemast kultuurilisest tähendusest põhjamaises narratiivses traditsioonis.

Käesoleva doktoritöö üldteoreetiline kontseptsioon rõhutab integratiivse lähenemise olulisust, mida antud uurimuses on järgitud erinevatel tasanditel. Läänemere regiooni määratlemisel on aluseks võetud Läänemere valgala mõiste, millest johtuvalt käsitletakse ühendatud kommunikatsiooniareenina mitte vaid vahetult Läänemere ääres asuvaid rannikualasid, vaid ka neid piirkondi, mida Läänemerega seovad rohked jõed. Ühest küljest tugineb valitud strateegia seega geograafilisele argumentatsioonile, ent teisalt on arvesse võetud strateegiliste veeteede olulisust reaalses ajaloolises kommunikatsioonis. Läänemere piirkonna puhul on ajaloolistes ja arheoloogilistes uurimustes traditsiooniliselt rõhutatud nii mere enda kui ka sellega seotud veeteede kesket rolli interregionaalsete kontaktide arengus. Läänemere piirkonda on selles valguses võimalik vaadelda ühtse taustsüsteemina, mille puhul meri pole toiminud mitte niivõrd eraldava barjäärina, vaid hoopis siduva lülina erinevate paikade ja kogukondade vahel; see on ühtlasi põhjuseks, miks käesolevas uurimuses on põhitähelepanu all põhjamaiste allikate ettekujutused kommunikatsioonist just nimelt Läänemere piirkonnas. Allikates toodud reisimarsruute uuritakse nii piirkondlikul kui ka regioonidevahelisel tasandil; üheaegselt on vaatluse all seega mitmed erinevad reisisihid ja võimalikud kontaktvõrgustikud – nii nagu neid kajastatakse põhjamaiste kirjalike allikate perspektiivist. Üldjuhul on senised kultuuriajaloolised uurimused sarnase allikmaterjali puhul keskendunud küsimustele, kuidas tekstid kajastavad n-ö ühesuunalisi ülemerekontakte (nt reise Skandinaaviast Baltikumi). Meie poolt valitud lähenemine tähendab eelkõige seda, et Skandinaaviamaid vaadeldakse sama kommunikatsiooniruumi osana ning sellest lähtuvalt on huviorbiidis reisikontaktid ka sealsete erinevate piirkondade vahel. Läänemere valgala baasil modifitseeritud ühendatud kommunikatsiooniruumi mõiste kaasab uurimusse samuti kontaktid Venemaa Euroopa osa, nagu ka tänapäeva Poola ja Saksamaa aladega.

Integratiivsus ja dünaamilisus on keskel kohal samuti allikate ja ajalise raamistiku valiku osas. Nagu eelnevalt mainisime on vaatluse all lisaks autentsetele, peamiselt 10. ja 11. sajandist pärinevatele ruunikirjadele (mis on säilinud eelkõige Rootsi ja Taani memoriaalkividel), samuti skaldiluule ja saagad. Varaseim skaldiluule – niivõrd kui tegemist on tõepoolest autentsel kujul säilinud loomega – võib tagasi ulatuda 9. sajandisse; traditsioon sai alguse Norras, kuid saavutas suurima leviku Islandi skaldide hulgas (Islandil komponeeriti skaldiluulet veel ka hiliskeskajal). Tüüpiliseimas vormis võib skaldiluulet iseloomustada kui ülistuspoeesiat Skandinaavia kuningate ja ülikute auks ja/või nende mälestuseks ning valdav osa niisugusest luulest on omistatud 10-13. sajandi nimeliselt tuntud poeetidele, kes enamasti ülistavad oma kaasaegseid kuningaid ning kirjeldavad sündmusi lähiminevikust, kuid aeg-ajalt teevad tagasivaate ka varasemate perioodide kangelastele. Rikkaliku Islandi saagakirjanduse hulgast on antud töös keskendutud kahele peamisele alaliigile, milleks on islandlaste ja kuningate saagad. Kuigi pole täpselt teada, millal üks või teine saaga "loodi", on suur osa kuningate ja islandlaste saagadest tõenäoliselt kirja pandud ajavahemikul 12. sajandi keskpaigast kuni 14. sajandi alguseni. Temaatika ja periood, mida saagad valgustavad, on aga seotud Skandinaaviamaade ja Islandi minevikuga, s.t saagad esitavad meile oma retrospektiivse nägemuse erinevatest minevikusündmustest. Nagu žanrinimetustest näha, on kuningate saagade keskmes Norra (vähemal määral ka teiste Skandinaaviamaade) kuningate ajalugu, samas kui islandlaste saagad kajastavad tähtsamate Islandi suguvõsade ettevõtmisi. Erinevad saagad keskenduvad mõnevõrra varieeruvatele perioodidele, ent kui käsitleme neid ühtse kogumikuna, on kuningate saagades fookuses ajavahemik 800-1200, islandlaste saagades aga 870-1030. Võttes aluseks allikate endi poolt pakutud ajalised perspektiivid, on käesoleva uurimuse keskmeks valitud periood 900-1150, mida kutsume koondnimetusega viikingiajastu ja varane keskaeg; teatud paralleele tõmmatakse aga ka aktuaalsetele viidetele, mis osutavad varasemasse või hilisemasse aega. Teisisõnu, doktoritöö analüüsib allikaid, mis vahetult pärinevad ajajärgust 900-1150 või siis oma väite kohaselt kujutavad vaatlusalust aega.

Siinkohal tuleb toonitada, et skaldiluule ja saagade puhul pole tegemist autentse ajaloolise informatsiooniga, kuigi teatud määral tuginevad allikates esinevad kohanimed ja isegi ettekujutused kontaktide laadist kindlasti ka suulises ja kirjalikus traditsioonis säilinud teadmistele. Eelkõige pakuvad skaldiluule ja saagad meile omapoolse (hilisema) tõlgenduse toimunust, s.t nad loovad teatud stiliseeritud pildi viikingiajastu ja varase keskaja kontaktidest Läänemere piirkonnas. Nii skaldiluule kui ka saagade puhul on allikate võimalik ajaloolisus ja seotus autentse suulise traditsiooniga leidnud laialdast arutelu ning diskussioonid neil teemadel jätkuvad. Tänapäevases teadustraditsioonis rõhutatakse muuhulgas allikakriitilise lähenemise vajalikkust – tuleb loobuda ettekujutusest, et hilisemas kirjalikus vormis säilinud tekstid võimaldaksid meil leida tagasiteed ühe, nn alg- või originaaltekstini juurde. Nõnda on skaldiluule meieni jõudnud vaid fragmentidena – tänu sellele, et poeesiat on oma töödes tsiteerinud 13. sajandi saagaautorid; ja kuigi skaldiluule spetsiifiline värsimõõt tagab žanrile omase konservatiivsuse ning ehk isegi küllaldase autentsuse, pole ometigi garantiid, et suulises vormis edasi antud ja alles keskajal kirjalikku traditsiooni talletatud ülistuslaulud oleksid säilinud täielikult ja moonutamata kujul. Liiatigi on osa skaldiluule puhul kahtluse alla seatud selle tegelik seotus varasemate skaldidega, näiteks islandlaste saagade raamides esitatud luule võib endast kujutada hoopis saagakirjanike omaloomingut, kes on tahtnud jätta muljet, et tuginevad ajaloolistele allikatele. Nii skaldiluule kui ka saagakirjanduse puhul distantseerib meid traditsioonist loomulikult seegi asjaolu, et tekstid ei ole säilinud originaalkäsikirjades; tunneme tekste vaid niisuguses vormis (valdavalt 14-16. sajandi

pärgamentkäsikirjade ja veelgi hilisemate paberkäsikirjade raames) nagu need algsete käsikirjade ümberkirjutajate poolt on kirja pandud.

Selles mõttes on saagade ja samuti skaldiluule seotus autentse traditsiooniga vaid kaudne, kuigi samas ei saa unustada tõika, et materjali kogumaht on suur ning selle sisemine kooskõlalisus nii teatud sisuelementide kui ka nende esituse osas toetab arusaama kirjapandu ühtsest kultuuriajaloolisest taustast. Viimasele aspektile on uusimates uurimustes hakatud taas tähelepanu pöörama käsikäes täiustatud uurimisvõtetega, mis võimaldavad taashinnata suulise traditsiooni osa säilinud skaldiluules ning saagakirjanduses. Käesoleva doktoritööga seoses peame siiski oluliseks rõhutada, et kui autentsete ruunikirjade puhul on tõesti võimalik rääkida nende tõestatud ajaloolisest allikaväärtusest, siis skaldiluule ja saagade näol on meil eeskätt tegemist mineviku kuvandiga, mida kindlasti ei saa automaatselt ajalooliseks informatsiooniks konverteerida. See on ka põhjus, miks käesoleva doktoritöö pealkirjas opereeritakse mõistetega 'ülestähendus' ja 'ettekujutus' (ehk representatsioon) – ruunikirjades, skaldiluules ja saagakirjanduses sisalduvaid viiteid ei kasutata mitte formaal-ajalooliste allikatena, vaid analüüsitakse nende poolt loodud pilti ja viimase tähendust kultuuriajaloolises traditsioonis. Valitud lähenemine tunnustab allikate komplekset väljenduslaadi ning selgitab viise, mille abil nad on sulandanud andmestiku Läänemere piirkonna reisikontaktide kohta erineva žanrispetsiifikaga tekstidesse. Iseäranis skaldiluule ja saagade omanäoline ja unikaalne narratiiv loob tekstidest tervikstruktuurid, kus tihti pole võimalik tõmmata mustvalget eraldusjoont faktide ja fiktsiooni vahel. Meie ees on tekstid, milles ühenduvad reaalsena mõjuvad kirjeldused ja sellesama reaalsuse tõlgendused, ja mille eesmärgiks mineviku kujutamisel on nii ajaloolisuse illusiooni kui ka illustratiivse (poeetilise) efekti loomine.

Tulenevalt analüüsitavate allikate komplekssest ja komplitseeritud laadist on käesoleva doktoritöö esimeses peatükis välja toodud mõned üldteoreetilised, metodoloogilised ja filosoofilised raamid, mis aitavad kaasa nii vastavate allikate kui ka kultuuriajaloolise suunitlusega uurimustööde sügavamate põhimõtete mõistmisele. Muuhulgas käsitletakse ajaloo ja narratiivi suhet, ajaloolise ja fiktiivse narratiivi erinevusi ning võimalikke kokkupuutepunkte. Tuginedes erinevatele teoreetikutele (nt Ricoeur 1981; Carr 1991; Lundmark 1990), ilmestatakse vastavate kontseptsioonide mitmetähenduslikkust – Carr (1991: 177, 185) näiteks räägib narratiivist kui ajaloo pikendusest ning inimeksistensile loomupärasest struktuurist, mis võimaldab tunnetada kogemuste ja tegevuste kulgu ajas. Diskussioon neil teemadel selgitab ühtlasi narratiivsuse ja ajaloolisuse mõistet – teoreetilistele alustele vastavalt on doktoritöö edasises käsitluses välja toodud analüüsitavate allikate puhul täheldatav erinevate tunnusjoonte koostoime ja põimumine. Ruunikirju iseloomustame läbivalt kui mininarratiive, skaldiluule demonstreerib poeetilisele narratiivile iseloomulikke külgi ja saagakirjandus kujutab endast mitmeplaanilist proosanarratiivi – kõigi nimetatud narratiivivormide puhul on tähelepanuäratav nende spetsiifiline suhe möödaniku ja traditsiooniga.

Metodoloogilises plaanis rõhutab antud doktoritöö hermeneutilise paradigma olulisust, mille najal on võimalik luua raamistikku tööks erinevate ajaloolist traditsiooni esindavate tekstidega. Hermeneutiline lähenemine eeldab ühest küljest kvalitatiivset süvaanalüüsi, kus tekstide tähenduse ja kultuuriajaloolise tausta mõistmisel kombineeritakse erinevaid vaatenurki – näiteks võetakse tekstide analüüsis arvesse erinevaid kontekstuaalsuse tasandeid, mis kätkevad endas varieeruvaid tähendusnüansse; samuti on oluline ajalooliste allikate uurimisel kriitiliselt hinnata piiratud võimalusi autentsele traditsioonile läheneda. Mainisime juba eelpool, et meil pole võimalik tekste ja nendega seotud kogemust üks-üheselt taastada, kuid

hermeneutilisest seisukohast saame siiski arendada informeeritud dialoogi säilunud traditsiooniga.

Allikmaterjali analüüsis rakendatud konkreetsete hermeneutiliste võtete seisukohalt on antud doktoritöös uuenduslik just see moment, et ruunikirjade puhul ei keskenduta pelgalt n-ö lineaarse teksti analüüsimisele, vaid vaadeldakse neid kui terviklikke süsteeme, milles ühenduvad tekstuaalsed, visuaalsed ja samuti erinevad kommunikatiivsed tähendustasandid. Inspiratsiooniks vastava uurimismetoodika välja arendamisel on olnud tähelepanekud ruunikivide poolt väljendatavast nn visuaalsest kirjaoskusest, mida seni on esiplaanile tõstnud vaid üksikud teoreetikud (nt Jesch 1998; Andrén 2000; Øeby Nielsen 2003). See tähendab, et ruunikivide üldise tähenduse mõistmisel pole oluline mitte ainuüksi informatsioon, mida meile pakub üks või teine ruunikiri, vaid ka viis, kuidas see on monumendile kantud. Samuti on ruunikivide puhul vajalik arvesse võtta nende asukohta ja monumenti ümbritsevat ruumilist konteksti.

Sellest lähtuvalt ongi primaarallikatest ruunikirjade analüüs käesolevas doktoritöös mitmetahuline. Paari tuhande säilunud viikingi- ja keskaegse ruunikirja hulgast on selekteeritud 64 juhtu, mil tekstides sisalduv informatsioon annab otsest tunnistust reisikontaktidest Läänemere piirkonnas – seda eelkõige erinevatele sihtpunktidele viitamise teel. Ruunikirjade tekstuaalses analüüsis on neid vaadeldud kui mininarratiive, millesse lisaks põhilist memoriaalfunktsiooni täitvale andmestikule on lisatud täiendavaid tähenduskomponente.

Strukturaalses mõttes on runoloogilises praktikas leidnud kasutust eristus ruunikirjade standard- ja fakultatiivkomponentide vahel; lihtsaimaks tüüpfraasiks on lausung "X püstitas (või: lasi püstitada) selle kivi Y-i (oma isa/venna/poja jne) mälestuseks", mis illustreerib järgmisi traditsioonilisi osiseid: monumendi tellija/initsiaator – teadaanne monumendi loomise kohta – mälestatav isik – sugulussuhte selgitus. Niisugust skeemi laiendavad sageli erinevad täiendused, mis juhivad tähelepanu mälestatava isiku tähelepanuväärsetele omadustele ja/või ettevõtmistele, kuid levinud on ka juhud, mil selgitavad märkused puudutavad monumendi tellijat või monumenti ennast. Primaarallikate hulgas on tavapärane, et informatsioon reisisihtide kohta dokumenteerib mälestatava isiku surmapaika.

Käesolevas doktoritöös rakendatud metoodika tõestab samas, et ainuüksi strukturaalne tekstianalüüs ei võimalda lõpuni mõista ruunikivi sõnumi mitmetähenduslikkust, lisaks eristusele standard- ja lisafraaside vahel tuleb arvesse võtta sisuelementide varieeruvat paigutust reaalsel füüsilisel monumendil, mis kohati toob tekstis välja teistsugused keskmed – teostatud analüüs pakub rohkeid näiteid niisuguste erinevate visuaalsete rõhuasetuste kohta. Kuna uurimuses on põhitähelepanu all need ruunikirjad, mis viitavad kontaktidele Läänemere piirkonnas, on samuti eraldi analüüsitud vastavate monumentide asukohti ja nende seotust strateegiliste veeteedega, mis annab võimaluse teatud piirides rekonstrueerida reisimarsruute Läänemere piirkonnas ning uurida ruunikive nende kommunikatiivses taustsüsteemis.

Lisaks primaarallikate individuaalsele süvaanalüüsile on käesoleva kvalitatiivse uurimuse kandepinda laiendatud mahuka komparatiivse ruunimaterjali kaasamise teel, uurides gruppide kaupa mitmesajas ruunikirjas esinevat informatsiooni, mis avardab arusaama primaarallikate kultuuriajaloolisest taustast. Eraldi käsitlemist leiavad ruunikirjades sisalduvad isikunimed, mis võivad olla tuletatud etniliste nimetuste põhjal; samuti analüüsitakse viiteid reisidele idateel ning andmestikku muudest – nii kaugematest kui ka lähedasematest – sihtpunktidest; lisaks on tähelepanu pööratud ruunikirjade poolt pakutavatele tunnistustele kohalike ja piirkondlike kommunikatsioonide arendamise kohta (nt viited teede rajamisele ja sillaehitusele). Nagu eelpool toonitasime, on kultuuriajaloolise konteksti sügavama mõistmise nimel põhjamaiste kirjalike allikate hulgast uurimusse kaasatud veel ka skaldiluule ning kuningate ja islandlaste

saagad. Skaldiluule ja islandlaste saagade puhul on viiteid Läänemere piirkonnale ana-lüüsitud kogu teadaoleva tekstikorpuse põhjal, kuningate saagade osas piirdub antud uurimus kahe olulisema saagakompilatsiooniga, milleks on Snorri Sturlusonile omistatud *Heimskringla* ja anonüümse saagaautori poolt koostatud *Knýtlinga saga*.

Seega on käesolevas doktoritöös analüüsitud reisikontakte Läänemere piirkonnas kui motiivi, mis on esindatud erinevat laadi allikates (narratiivides); ruunikirjade, skaldiluule ja saagakirjanduse poolset motiivikäsitlust analüüsides on ühtlasi võimalik selgitada allikatevahelisi dünaamilisi seoseid nagu ka kategoorilisi erinevusi.

Analüüsi lähtepunktiks on samas selgepiiriliste faktidena esitatud viited reisisihtidele Läänemere piirkonnas, mis moodustavad kõikides nimetatud allikagruppides konkreetse infor-matiivse kihi. Ruunikirjade, skaldiluule ja saagade osutused kontaktidele erinevate paikadega annavad tunnistust nimetatud allikate huvist ja eesmärgist ülestähendada olulisi sündmusi ja kohanimede abil identifitseerida nende toimumispaiku – täpsem ülevaade niisuguste viidete laadist ja tähendusest on toodud doktoritöö III-IV peatükis.

Hinnates allikate võimalikku informatiivset ühisväärtust, tuleb loomulikult silmas pidada žanrispetsiifilisi eelmõjutusi ja asjaolu, et summaarne andmestik ei taga automaatselt ade-kvaatset pilti Läänemere piirkonna reisikontaktide reaalsest laadist, sagedusest ja erinevate sihtpunktide tuntusest tolleaegsete skandinaavlaste hulgas.

Ühest küljest sisaldavad allikad küll kattuvaid viiteid teatud aladele Läänemere ümbruses, ent samas leidub konkreetsete reisisihtide ja nende mainimissageduse osas olulisi erinevusi. Loomulikult saavad siin määravaks ka allikagruppide kvantitatiivsed kõikumised; ruuni-kirjadest primaarallikate hulk jääb arvuliselt piiratuks ja nende poolt esitatud andmestik juhuslikuks ja selektiivseks. Skaala teises otsas on mahukas saagakirjandus, kus just eriti kuningate saagades on fookuses lugematud reisiseeriad ning detailinformatsiooni aste võib ruunikirjade ja skaldiluulega võrreldes olla oluliselt nüansseeritum. Samas aga kahandab saagade raames toodud viidete arvulist ülekaalu asjaolu, et sealne narratiiv on üles ehitatud nii teatud põhimotiivide kui ka keskete reisimarsruutide korduvale mainimisele; nii mitmeski mõttes on tegemist lihtsalt stereotüüpsete jutustusskeemide rakendamisega.

Allikate informatsiooniväärtuse kriitilisel hindamisel tuleb samuti meeles pidada nende varieeruvat kultuurilist tagapõhja. Ruunikirjade puhul on meil valdavalt tegemist allikatega, mis on säilinud Rootsi ja Taani kontekstis ning seega ise otsesed osalised Läänemere kommuni-katsioonitsoonis. Skaldiluule ja saagad esindavad üldjuhul läänepoolsemat kultuuriruumi, järgides Norra ja Islandi perspektiive, mis Läänemere piirkonnas toimuva kajastamisel on ruunikirjadega võrreldes kaudsem platvorm.

Sellest tulenevalt erinevad ka vastavate allikate huviorbiidis olevad tegevusareenid, mille üheks avaldumisvormiks on sündmustiku koondumine Norra, Taani ja Lõuna-Rootsi aladele skaldiluule ja saagade (eriti kuningate saagade) käsitluses; nimetatud asjaolu tõttu kaasasime muuhulgas Läänemere piirkonna reisikontaktide arutelusse skaldiluule ja saagade osas ka strateegilise Oslofjordi ümbruskonna.

Võttesse arvesse eelpoolmainitud piiranguid, on allikate motiivikäsitluses siiski võimalik leida huvitavaid paralleele. Nii ruunikirjad, skaldiluule kui ka saagad lülitavad mitmesuguste sündmuste kirjeldusesse viiteid konkreetsetele reisisihtidele, sõltumata sellest, kas tegemist on autentse identifikatsiooniga (s.t kirjeldatud sündmus toimus, ja seda tõepoolest nimetatud paigas) või autentsuse illusiooni loomisega. Selles mõttes pole kindlate sihtpunktide mainimis-sagedus iseenesest määrav – oluline on hoopis fakt, et teatud paigad on allikates nimeliselt välja toodud, olgu meil siis tegemist memoriaalse ruunikirja, ülistava skaldilaulu või "ajaloolise" saagaga.

Ruunikirjade, skaldiluule ja saagade loodud pilt reisidest Läänemere piirkonnas tõstab ühtlasi esile mõned võimalikud regioonidevahelised suhtlusvõrgustikud ja keskmed. Allikaid ühtse kogumikuna vaadeldes ilmneb, et üldises plaanis on võimalik eristada kahte põhilist kommunikatsiooniareeni, mida allikmaterjali enda seisukohast saab nimetada lõunapoolseks ja idapoolseks reisitsooniks. Eriti selgelt joonestuvad need regioonid välja saagades ja skaldiluules, kuid samad põhimõtted ühtivad ka ruunikirjades toodud viidetega.

Lõunapoolse reisistooni keskmes on Taani alad, mida allikad korduvalt iseloomustavad kui lõunasuunalise liikluse üht põhisihti (seda nii Islandi, Norra kui ka Rootsi perspektiivist); lausungid stiilis "Seejärel seilas ta lõunasse Jüütimaale" on üheks võimalikuks illustreerivaks näiteks iseäranis saagades levinud reisikirjeldustele. Taani alade ümber toimivad erinevad piirkondlikud ja samuti regioonidevahelised reisimarsruudid, mis seovad sama kommuni-katsiooniareeniga ka tänapäeva Lõuna-Norra, Lõuna-Rootsi, Põhja-Saksamaa ja Poola. Erinevad allikad osutuvad siinkohal üksteisele huvitavaks täienduseks ja rakendavad sarnaseid motiive reisieesmärkide kujutamisel; näiteks nii autentsed ruunikirjad kui ka hilisemad islandlaste saagad viitavad Taanile kui areenile, kus ringirändavad skandinaavlased ja islandlased võtsid vastu ristiusu.

Idapoolne reisitsoon ühendab endas liikluse Kesk-Rootsi (allikates tuntud nimetuse all *Svíþjóð*), tänapäeva Soome, Baltikumi ja Venemaa Euroopa alade suunal. Taas identifitseerivad allikad üldjuhul ise, et tegemist on idasse suunduvate reisidega. Skaldiluule ja saagad osutavad korduvalt Kesk-Rootsile kui tuntud transiittsoonile, mida läbitakse Vene-maale (*Garðar/Garðaríki*) reisides. Selles valguses on samuti iseloomulik, et üheteistkümnest võimalikust ruunikirjades toodud viitest Venemaale või Novgorodile (*Holmgarðr*), leidub vaid üks ruunikivil, mis pärineb väljastpoolt Rootsit; ülejäänud ruunikivid on koondunud Mälareni järve piirkonda, üks on pärit Ölandi ja üks Gotlandi saarelt. Oluline osa idasuunalisest liiklusest on samuti seotud reisidega idateel (*austrvegr*), mille sisuline tähendus erinevate allikate lõikes varieerub – ruunikirjades on tegemist laiahaardelisema terminiga; saagades tähistab *austrvegr* eelkõige reisimarsruute Läänemere idakaldal, kuid mõned analüüsi käigus toodud näited osutavad samas ka mõiste ambivalentsusele. Samasugust mitmetähendus-likkust võib täheldada ka teiste toponüümide osas, nagu näiteks *Gautland* ja *Eistland*.

Oluline tunnusjoon Läänemere piirkonna reisikontaktide kujutamisel on mitmesuguste väiksemate sihtpunktide esile tõstmine nii ruunikirjades, skaldiluules kui ka saagades. Kõige selgemini ilmneb vastav tehnika Skandinaaviamaade lõikes, ent samasuguseid spetsiifilist laadi viiteid esineb ka teiste regioonide reisimarsruutide kujutamisel. Kultuuriajaloolises mõttes pole mitte niivõrd oluline fakt, kas üks või teine nimetus esineb analüüsitud allikates viis või viiskümmend korda, vaid tava kui niisugune – allikmaterjali seisukohast on narratiivi lülitatud kindlad kohanimed. Antud mõttekäiku edasi arendades võib samuti pidada võimalikuks, et sel moel identifitseeritud paigad ei demonstreeri ainüksi vajadust kirjeldatud sündmusi lokaliseerida, vaid illustreerivad reaalset teadmistepagasit strateegilist tähtsust omavate sihtpunktide osas. Analüüsitud allikatest ilmneb, et nimetamist leiavad suuremad ja väiksemad saared, neemed, metsad, mäed, jõed, järved ja väinad jms – neid kõiki võib pidada märgistusteks, mis osutavad kindlatele reiseteekondadele. Saagade puhul on tähele-panuvääriv, et aeg-ajalt pakuvad nad mõningatest niisugustest strateegilistest paikadest ka detailsema kirjelduse, mis reeglina saaganarratiivi ei kuulu. Samas leiame saagadest aga ka selliseid juhte, kus räägitakse lihtsalt viikingilahingust mõne saare lähistel, jättes sündmuspaiga täpsustamata (mõnikord lisatakse küll selgituseks, et koht on traditsioonis talletamata jäänud). Need näited illustreerivad saagade poolt rakendatavaid varieeruvaid narratiivseid strateegiad. Skaldiluule ja saagade puhul aitavad mitmesuunaliste reisikirjelduste

lokaliseerimisele samas kaasa ka suunaosutused ilmakaarte abil – põhisuundadeks on põhi, lõuna, ida ja lääs.

Mitmesuguste võtete abil loovad skaldiluule ja saagad reisikontaktidest üldjuhul dünaamilisema ja ekspressiivsema pildi kui ruunikirjad, kus enamasti tuuakse välja vaid fakt surmapaigast, täpsustades, kus üks või teine rändur oma huku leidis. Siiski leidub ka ruunikirjade hulgas huvitavaid erandeid; väljenduslaadi rikastavad nii värsivormis lisandused kui ka teksti visuaalne representatsioon kivist monumendil.

Reisimine Läänemere piirkonnas – nii nagu seda kujutavad ruunikirjad, skaldiluule ja saagad – on eeskätt seotud veeteedel põhineva kommunikatsiooniga; niisugust arusaama toetavad ühtlasi ruunikivide reaalsed asukohad. Skaldiluule ja saagad toovad aga lisaks välja ka sisemaaliikluse, mis on eriti intensiivne Norra ja Rootsi piirialadel, kus teekond kulgeb läbi suurte metsade ja üle mägede – iseäranis saagad kasutavad nende marsruutide markeerimisel stereotüüpseid väljendeid, milles taas segunevad traditsioonilised teadmised ja nende rakendamine ajaloolisust taotlevas narratiivis.

Kujutatud kontaktide laadi osas on otsesteks mõjuguriteks allikate žanrispetsiifilised jooned. Ajaloolise tausta osas on näiteks ilmne, et allikate poolt loodud pilt ei kajasta adekvaatselt kaubanduskontaktide osakaalu – meile avaneb seega selekteeritud ja stiliseeritud pilt võimalikust kommunikatsioonisituatsioonist. Kooskõlas käesoleva doktoritöö eesmärkidega väärib aga just nimelt vaadeldud allikate üldine väljenduslaad suuremat tähelepanu, sest see võimaldab meil uurida nende omavahelist dünaamikat.

Skaldiluule ja kuningate saagade fookuses on reisid, mis seostuvad eeskätt suuremate ja väiksemate sõjalist eesmärki täitvate ekspeditsioonidega, kuid oma osa on ka diplomaatilistel retkedel, maksude kogumisel ja kaubitsemisel. Viimatimainitud tegevus leiab mõnevõrra sagedasemat mainimist islandlaste saagades, mis lisaks annavad tunnistust arvukatest rüüsteretkedest Läänemere piirkonda. Islandlaste saagad loovad seejuures pildi kauba- ja rüüsteretkede vahelisest ähmasest piirjoonest, esimene tegevus võib kergesti teiseks üle kasvada. Relvastatud konfliktidest erinevates Läänemere paikades räägivad samuti ruunikirjad; teatud juhtudel aga osutavad tekstides kasutatud spetsiifilised väljendusviisid rahumeelsematele kontaktidele.

Oma avarama kultuuriajaloolise tähenduse omandavad ruunikirjades, skaldiluules ja saagades toodud viited aga osana põhjamaise reisinarratiivi traditsioonist. Analüüsitud allikad demonstreerivad narratiivsete tehnikate ja strateegiate rakendamist mitmel tasandil; isegi lakoonilist laadi ruunikirjade puhul saame rääkida mininarratiividest, mis edastavad retrospektiivsest aspektist ühe või teise isiku kontsentreeritud reisiloo. Ruunikirju eristab samas teistest allikatest nende tõestatud autentsus, me võime tõepoolest eeldada, et tegemist on reaalsete isikute ja tegelike ettevõtmistega. See aga ei tähenda, nagu edastaksid ruunikirjad alati selgeid kroonikalaadseid fakte – käesoleva doktoritöö analüüs tõi välja mitmed nende eriomadused, mis lisavad tekstidele teatud tõlgendusliku illustratiivsuse. Samuti tõestati, et paljudel juhtudel jäävad varasemate uurijate katsed ühendada ruunikirjades toodud viited konkreetsete ajaloost teadaolevate sündmustega (nt tuntumate lahingutega) pelgalt hüpoteetilisteks konstruktsioonideks, millele säilinud tekstimaterjal iseeneslikku tõestust ei anna.

Skaldiluule ja saagade osas on aga olukord veelgi komplekssem, seal võidakse teadlikult rakendada ajaloolisust rõhutavaid ja autentsele traditsioonile apelleerivaid võtteid, mis on aga ranges mõttes vaid selle traditsiooni tõlgendused. Eriti just saagades on reaalsuse illusiooni loovad viited lahutamatuks osaks üldisest narratiivsest väljenduslaadist, mis esitab meile ühe

võimalikult veenva nägemuse minevikus aset leidnud sündmustest, nii nagu informeeritud jutustaja seda traditsiooni kaasaja seisukohast tõlgendab.

Võrreldes omavahel neid viise, kuidas ruunikirjades, skaldiluules ja saagades viidatakse reisimisele, näeme seega arenevat narratiivse abstraktsiooni ja illustratiivse tõlgendamise astet – ruunikirjade lakoonilistest memoriaaltekstidest skaldide ekspressiivse poeetilise euloogia ja saagade komplekssse, minevikku kujutava proosanarratiivini.

Samas ilmnevad reisimotiivi kasutamisel erinevat tüüpi allikate vahel ka teatud paralleelid – üks silmatorkav ühisjoon on personaalse reisinarratiivi tähtsuse rõhutamine. Reisimist kujutatakse eelkõige kui individuaalset ettevõtmist, isegi kui see on seotud suuremate sõjaliste kampaaniatega – allikad identifitseerivad nimeliselt nii reisijate isikud kui ka sihtkohad, kuhu nad suundusid; skaldiluules ja saagades selgitatakse sageli täiendavalt, kelle juurde teekond viis. Samuti on viimatimainitud allikate puhul ilmne, et nende narratiivses käsitluses ei põhjusta lahinguid mitte niivõrd riikidevahelised, vaid valitsejate personaalsed konfliktid – suurematatgi kampaaniate kirjeldamisel langeb põhirõhk individuaalsuse aspektile.

Reisidele viitamine mängib lisaks olulist rolli isikuomaduste illustreerimisel. Kõige ilmekamalt demonstreerivad seda taas saagad, kus kangelase tähelepanuväärsemaid külgi tuuakse esile tema laialdastele reisidele osutamise teel; siinkohal on sagedased viited just nimelt ettevõtmistele idateel. Samasuguseid põhimõtteid järgivad omal moel ka ülistav skaldiluule ja mälestavad ruunikirjad.

Nõnda toovad erinevad allikad meie ette arvukaid personaalseid reisinarratiive – alustades lühiviidetest ja lõpetades põhjalike ülevaadetega, kus kombineeritakse informatsiooni erinevate reiside kohta. Saagad toonitavad samuti sageli, kui tähtsaks peetakse reisidest rääkimist, ehk teisisõnu nende talletamist suulises traditsioonis; narratiivi ilmestavad arvukad stseenid, kus saagakangelastel palutakse pajatada oma reisidest, mille käigus ta on saavutanud au ja kuulsust ning kogunud rikkust.

Kokkuvõtvalt võibki järeldada, et analüüsitud viited reisikontaktidele Läänemere piirkonnas kuuluvad ühtsesse personaalse reisinarratiivi taustsüsteemi – tegemist on põhjamaise kultuuritraditsiooniga, kus ühenduvad nii autentsel suulisel traditsioonil põhinevad reaalsed reisikogemused kui ka nende illustratiivne tõlgendus kirjaliku narratiivi erinevates säilinud vormides. Käesolevas doktoritöös oli rõhuasetus tehtud viimasele aspektile, ent edasistes uurimustes on põhjust sügavamalt analüüsida ka võimalusi identifitseerida suulise pärimuse kandvat rolli reisimisega seotud narratiivides.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

Runic signatures applied in the thesis

As explained in chapter II (2.3.1.) runic inscriptions are identified by a letter code and identification number (see also *Samnordisk runtextdatabas* helpfile "Signature"). The letters indicate the country/province and/or the source where the inscription has been (first) published or registered. The numbers stand either for registration/archive number or refer to the publication year and page number. For bibliographical details, see *References*.

Danish runic inscriptions:
DR + number = inscriptions published in *Danmarks Runeindskrifter*.
DR EM1985 + page number = inscriptions published in Moltke (1985).
DR M + number = coin inscriptions from Denmark, registered in *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*.
DR NOR + year of publication + page number = inscriptions published in *Nytt om runer*.
DR SCHL + number = inscriptions published in Stoklund & Düwel (2001).

Norwegian runic inscriptions:
N + number = inscriptions published in *Norges Innskrifter med de yngre Runer*.
N + A + number = new finds from Norway (except for Bergen), registered at Runearkivet, Oslo.
N + B + number = new finds from Bergen, registered at Runearkivet, Oslo.

Swedish runic inscriptions:
a) Runic inscriptions published in *Sveriges runinskrifter*.
G + number = Gotland, published in *Gotlands runinskrifter*, or Snædal Brink (2002).
Gs + number = Gästrikland, published in *Gästriklands runinskrifter.*
Nä + number = Närke, published in *Närkes runinskrifter*.
Ög + number = Östergötland, published in *Östergötlands runinskrifter*.
Öl + number = Öland, published in *Ölands runinskrifter*.
Sm + number = Småland, published in *Smålands runinskrifter*.
Sö + number = Södermanland, published in *Södermanlands runinskrifter*.
U + number = Uppland, published in *Upplands runinskrifter*.
Vg + number = Västergötland, published in *Västergötlands runinskrifter*.
Vr + number = Värmland, published in *Värmlands runinskrifter*.
Vs + number = Västmanland, published in *Västmanlands runinskrifter*.

b) Runic inscriptions published or registered in other sources
Province designation + ATA + registration number = inscriptions registered at Antikvarisk-topografiska arkivet, Riksantikvarieämbetet. Example: Sö ATA6163/61.
Province designation + FV + year of publication + page number = inscriptions published in *Fornvännen*. Example: D FV1993;174 [D = Dalarna].
Province designation + RS + year of publication + page number = inscriptions published in von Friesen (1928). Example: J RS1928;66 [J = Jämtland].
Province designation + NOR + year of publication + page number = inscriptions published in *Nytt om runer*.
Province designation + RR + year of publication + page number = inscriptions published in *Runor och runinskrifter*.
Province designation + SAS + year of publication + page number = inscriptions published in *Studia Anthroponymica Scandinavica*.

Hs + number = Hälsingland, inscriptions published in Åhlén (1994), see also *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*.

M + number = Medelpad, inscriptions published in Helbom (1979), see also *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*.

Ög + HOV + number = Östergötland, inscriptions published in Jansson (1962).

Ög + MÖLM + year of publication + page number = Östergötland, inscriptions published in Jansson (1960-61).

Ög + N + number = Östergötland, inscriptions registered in the manuscript of Nordén, at Antikvarisk-topografiska arkivet.

Ög + SKL + number = Östergötland, inscriptions published in Curman & Lundberg (1935).

U + THS + number = Uppland, inscriptions published in Vingedal (1971).

Appendix II

Main design patterns on rune stones

The figure stems from B. Sawyer (2000: 193).

		1. horizontal band
		2. vertical band
a. b. c. d.		3. 'arch' band
a. b.		4. 'frame' band
		5. band/serpent
		6. single serpent
		7. two serpents
a. b. (variants)		8. '8-shaped' serpent
(grave slabs)		9. contour
go öl		10. other types

Designs 6-8 after Thompson

CATALOGUE FIGURE 1. Layout styles of inscriptions
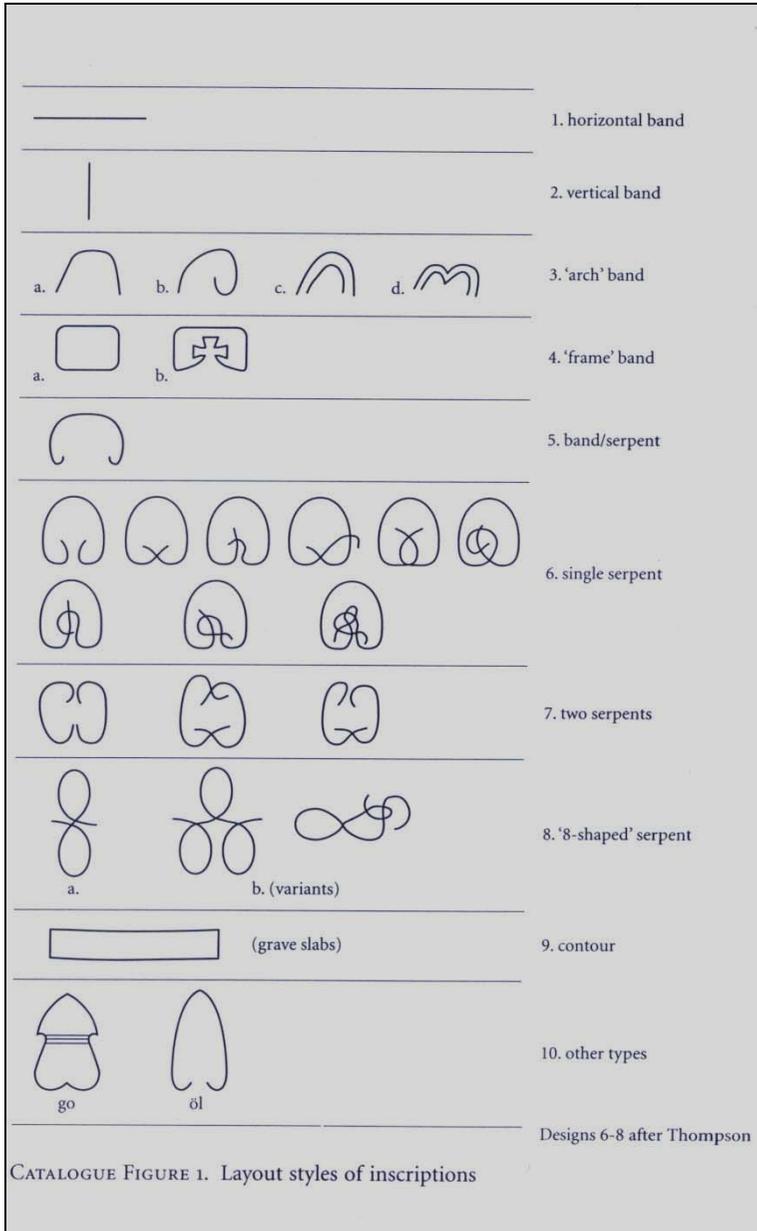
Appendix III

The list of Baltic traffic inscriptions

A. Information about the physical and visual features of the monuments.

For a description and suggested chronology for the stylistic groups, see Gräslund (1992; 1998) and chapter II (2.1.3.)

Sign.	Monument height (above the ground, unless specified)	Material	Stylistic and/or typological group	Carver	Original site	Other features
Öl 1	rune stone, 137 cm	Småland porphyry	RAK		+	
Öl 28	rune stone, 120 cm	limestone	PR2?	Brandr?	—	
Ög 81	rune stone, total height 345 cm	granite	PR1	Þorkell	—	
Sö 16F	rune stone, now ca. 1 m	sandstone	?		—	
Sö 39	rock, inscription height 122 cm, width 145 cm	gneiss	PR3	Hákon	+	animal ornamentation (runic animal with four legs)
Sö 40	rune stone, 295 cm	gneiss granite	PR2	Skammhals	—	decorative images
Sö 45	rune stone, 138 cm	gneiss	FP	Þráinn	(+)	
Sö 47	rune stone, 143 cm	grey stone	?		(+)	contains cryptic runes
Sö 130	rune stone, 182 cm	grey stone	FP/PR1?	Þráinn	—	
Sö 148	rune stone, 240 cm	grey stone	?	Þráinn	(+)	
Sö 166	rune stone, 175 cm	gneiss	RAK		(+)	
Sö 171	rock, inscription height 160 cm, width 103 cm	grey stone	KB	Þórir	+	
Sö 174	rune stone, 207 cm	grey stone	PR1		—	
Sö 198	rune stone, 110 cm	granite	FP	Balli	+	
Sö 333	rune stone, 159 cm	granite	FP	Áskell	—	
Sö 338	rune stone, 209 cm	sandstone	PR4	Eysteinn(?)	—	
Sö FV 1948;289	rune stone, 198 cm	granite	FP		—	
Sm 52	rune stone, 200 cm	gneiss	RAK		—	

Vg 40	rune stone, 203 cm	granite	RAK?		—	
Vg 181	rune stone, 210 cm	granite	PR1		+	animal ornamentation
U 130	rock, length of inscription 190 cm	granite	PR4	Ásmundr?	+	
U 180	rune stone, 275 cm	granite	PR4?	Véseti	—	
U 209	rock, inscription height 90 cm, width 182 cm	granite	PR4		+	
U 214	rune stone, 134 cm	sandstone	RAK	Drósbói ?	—	belongs together with U 215
U 346†	rune stone, ca. 200 cm		PR3-4	Ásmundr	—	
U 356	rune stone, 225 cm	gneiss granite	PR3	Ásmundr	+	
U 375	rune stone, 190 cm	gneiss	PR2	Ásmundr	—	decorative image of a rider and a bird
U 414†F	rune stone, height unknown	limestone	PR1?		—	shape of a Gotlandic picture stone
U 518	rune stone, height 275 cm	granite	RAK		+	
U 527F	rune stone, 84 cm (originally ca. 150 cm)	granite	PR3	Holmsteinn; Viðbjǫrn?	—	
U 533	rune stone, 127 cm	granite	PR1	Þorbjǫrn skald	—	
U 539	rune stone, 248 cm	gneiss granite	RAK		—	
U 582†	rune stone, ca. 180 cm		PR1?		—	
U 611	rune stone, 155 cm	granite	PR1		+	
U 614	rune stone, 145 cm	granite	PR3	Véseti	—	
U 636	rune stone, 127 cm	granite	FP		—	
U 687	boulder (ca. 200 cm), inscription height 148 cm	gneiss granite	PR4	Œpir	+	
U 698†	rune stone		PR2-PR3		—	
U 699	rune stone, 152 cm	granite	PR3	Balli	—	
U 896	rune stone, 136 cm (originally ca. 2 metres)	granite	PR1?	Œpir	—	the carver does not seem to be the wellknown Œpir.
U 1048	rune stone, 132 cm	granite	PR4?		—	

U FV 1912;8	box, diametre 10 cm	copper			—	
Vs 1	rune stone, 170 cm	granite	PR1		—	belongs together with Vs 2
Gs 13	rune stone, 225 cm	Gävle sandstone	PR2	Sveinn, Ásmundr	copy on the original site	
G 135	rune stone, 163 cm	limestone	PR4	Bótbjǫrn	—	shape of a picture stone, belongs together with G 134 and G 136†
G 138F	rune stone, (two fragments)	limestone	?		—	
G 207F	rune stone, now 163 cm (originally around 250 cm)	limestone	?		—	
G 220F	rune stone, now 65 cm	limestone	PR4		—	
DR 37F	rune stone, now 80 cm	granite	RAK, Jelling		—	
DR 55	rune stone, 245 cm	granite	RAK, Jelling		—	
DR 63F	rune stone, now 65 cm	granite	RAK, Post-Jelling		—	
DR 66	rune stone, 160 cm	granite	RAK, Post-Jelling		—	decorative image of a mask
DR 66	rune stone, 160 cm	granite	RAK, Post-Jelling		—	
DR 68	rune stone, 157 cm	granite	RAK?, Post-Jelling		—	
DR 117	rune stone, 138 cm	granite	RAK, Jelling		—	
DR 216	rune stone, 254 cm	granite	RAK, Jelling		—	
DR 217	rune stone, 174 cm	granite	RAK, Jelling		—	
DR 220	rune stone, 79 cm	granite	RAK, Post-Jelling		—	decorative image of a ship
DR 259	rune stone, 105 cm	granite	RAK, Post-Jelling		+	
DR 279	rune stone, 154 cm	granite	RAK, Post-Jelling		—	
DR 295	rune stone, 133 cm (visible height)	sandstone	RAK, Post-Jelling		—	
DR 344	rune stone, 171 cm	sandstone	PR4, Early Medieval	Swedish carver	—	
DR 380	rune stone, 186 cm	sandstone	RAK		—	
N 62	rune stone, ca. 250 cm	Ringerike sandstone	?		—	on the same stone N 61
N 239	rune stone, 265 cm		RAK		—	

B. Transliterated, normalised and translated texts

Texts are given according to *Samnordisk Runtextdatabas*, unless specified. Swedish runic inscriptions are normalised to RS, Danish runic inscriptions to RD and Norwegian inscriptions to ON.

1. Öl 1, Karlevi

+ s-a... --ṣ- iạṣ · satr · aiftir · siḅạ · kuḅạ · sun · fultars · in hons ·· liḅi · sati · at · u · -ausa-ḅ-... +: fulkin : likr : hins : fulkḅu : flaistr ;· uisi · ḅat · maistar · taiḅir · tulka · ḅruḅar : traukr · i : ḅaimsi · huki · munat : raiḅ:uiḅur : raḅa : ruk:starkr · i · tanmarku : --ntils : iarmun··kruntar : urkrontari : lonti

S[t]æ[inn] [sa]s[i] es sattr æftiR Sibba Goða, sun Fuldars, en hans liði satti at ... ... Fulginn liggR hinns fylgðu, flæstr vissi þat, mæstaR dæðiR dolga ÞruðaR draugR i þæimsi haugi; munat Ræið-Viðurr raða rogstarkR i Danmarku [Æ]ndils iarmungrundaR uRgrandaRi landi.

This stone is placed in memory of Sibbi the Good, Foldarr's son, and his retainer placed on Öland this memorial to honour the dead. Hidden in this mound lies one, an executor of the goddess of battles [valkyrie → warrior], whom the greatest deeds followed (most knew that). No strife-strong god of the wagon of Endill's wide ground [sea → ship → captain] will rule land in Denmark more faultlessly (Jesch 2001: 2).

2. Öl 28, Gårdby

harḅruḅr + raisti + stain + ḅinsa + aiftiʀ + sun + sin + sṃiḅ + trak + kuḅan + halfburin + bruḅiʀ ans + sitr + karḅum brantr + rit- x iak ḅu raḅa + khn

Version I: *Hærþruðr ræisti stæin þennsa æftiR sun sinn Smið, dræng goðan. Halfborinn, broðiR hans, sitr Garðum. Brandr rett hiogg, þy raða kann.*

Version II: *Hærþruðr ræisti stæin þennsa æftiR sun sinn Smið, dræng goðan. Halfborinn, broðiR hans, sitr Garðum Brandr. Rett [i] hiogg, þy raða kann.*

Herþrúðr raised this stone in memory of her son Smiðr, a good valiant man. Halfborinn, his brother, sits in Garðar. Brandr cut rightly, for whomever can interpret (the runes). / Herþrúðr raised this stone in memory of her son Smiðr, a good valiant man. His halfbrother Brandr sits in Garðar. Cut rightly into, for whomever can interpret (the runes).

3. Ög 81, Högby

§A · ḅukir · resḅi · stin · ḅansi · eftiʀ · asur · sin · muḅur·bruḅur · sin · iaʀ · eataḅis · austr · i · krikum · §B · kuḅr · karl · kuli · kat · fim · suni · feal · o · furi · frukn · treks · asmutr · aitaḅis · asur · austr · i krikum · uarḅ · o hulmi · halftan · tribin · kari · uarḅ · at uti · §C auk · tauḅr · bui · ḅurkil · rist · runaʀ

§A Þorgærðr(?) ræisþi stæin þannsi æftiR Assur, sinn moðurbroður sinn, eR ændaðis austr i Grikkium. §B Goðr karl Gulli gat fæm syni. Fioll a Fyri(?) frøkn drængR Asmundr, ændaðis Assurr austr i Grikkium, varð a Holmi Halfdan drepinn, Kari varð at Uddi(?) §C ok dauðr Boi. Þorkell ræist runaR.

§A Þorgerðr(?) raised this stone in memory of Qzurr, her mother's brother. He met his end in the east in Greece. §B The

good man Gulli got five sons. The brave valiant man Ásmundr fell at Fœri(?);Qzurr met his end in the east in Greece; Halfdan was killed at Holmr (Bornholm?); Kári was (killed) at Oddr(?); §C also dead (is) Búi. Þorkell carved the runes.

4. Sö 16, Kattnäs

§A … …uḅin · han · unʀ · tauḅr · i[hail]… … [iḅaby] halbi · kuḅ · aat · §B aʀ/ma

§A ... [A]uðin/[L]uðin. Hann vaR dauðr ... ... [H]æiðaby. Hialpi Guð and. §B aʀ/ma

... Auðin/Loðin. He died ... ... Hedeby. May God help (his) spirit.

5. Sö 39, Åda

: hermoḅr : lit : hagua : at : barkuiḅ : bruḅur : sin : h[an] trukn-ḅi : [a] lf:lanti :

Hærmoðr let haggva at Bergvið/Barkvið, broður sinn. Hann drunkn[a]ði a Liflandi.

Hermóðr had (the rock) cut in memory of Bergviðr/Barkviðr, his brother. He drowned in Lífland.

6. Sö 40, Västerljung

haunefʀ + raisti · at · kaiʀmar · faḅur · sin + haa · iʀ intaḅr · o · ḅiusti · skamals · hiak · runaʀ ḅaʀsi +

HonæfR ræisti at GæiRmar, faður sinn. Hann eR ændaðr a Þiusti. Skammhals hiogg runaR þaRsi.

Hónefr raised (the stone) in memory of Geirmarr, his father. He met his end in Þjústr. Skammhals cut these runes.

7. Sö 45, Stora Släbro

: kaiʀf...tr : aistfari : raisþu : stain : þansi : eftiʀ : frayst[ain : faþur :] sin : auk at ruakn : bruþur si:n

ṇ...br : uinurniʀ

*GæiRf[as]tr, Æistfari ræisþu stæin þannsi æftiR Frøystæin, faður sinn, ok at Vrang/Vagn/Vranga, broður sinn. ... **uinurniʀ**.*

Geirfastr (and) Eistfari raised this stone in memory of Freysteinn, their father, and in memory of Rangr/Vagn/Rangi, their brother...

8. Sö 47, Vålsta

[ry]...ʀ : kiarþi : kuml : þat:si : eftiʀ : osmunt : sun : sin + han : is : krafin : o · ku... rauʀ uart : at : ryʀ:iks : sun

*Hrø[Rik]R giærði kumbl þatsi æftiR Asmund, sun sinn. Hann es grafinn a Gu[tlandi]/ku[mbli] rauR **uart** at HrøRiks sun.*

Hrœríkr made this monument in memory of Ásmundr, his son. He is buried in Gotland/the monument(?) ...cairn(?) in memory of Hrœríkr's son.

9. Sö 130, Hagstugan

§A fiuriʀ : kirþu : at : faþur : kuþan : tyrþ : trikela : at : tumara : miltan : urþa uk : mataʀ kuþan : þat · ṇ-ḥ---ṇ--ṇ̣ḳþ §B �ﬁã lฑˉ kirþu o

§A FiuriR gærðu at faður goðan dyrð drængila at Domara/domara, mildan orða ok mataR goðan, þat ... §B Hann(?) fiall(?) [i(?)] Garðum(?) ...

§A Four (sons) made the magnificence in memory of (their) good father, valiantly in memory of Dómari/the judge, gentle in speech and free with food ... §B He(?) fell(?) in(?) Garðar(?) ...

10. Sö 148, Innberga

þiuþulfʀ : bui : þaiʀ : raisþu : stain þansi : at : farulf : faþur : sin : han uas antaþ austr i kaþ̣ṃ̣

ÞiuðulfR, Boi, þæiR ræisþu stæin þannsi at Farulf, faður sinn. Hann vas ændaðr austr i Garðum.

Þjóðulfr (and) Búi, they raised this stone in memory of Farulfr, their father. He met his end in the east in Garðar.

11. Sö 166, Grinda

: kriutkarþr : ainriþi : suniʀ : kiarþu : at : faþur : snialan : kuþuiʀ : uaʀ uastr : a : aklati : kialti : skifti : burkiʀ : a : sahks:lanti : suti : kaula

Griutgarðr, Æinriði, syniR, giærðu at faður sniallan. GuðveR vaR vestr a Ænglandi, gialdi skifti, borgiR a Saxlandi sotti karla.

Grjótgarðr (and) Einriði, the sons made (the stone) in memory of (their) able father. Guðvér was in the west; divided (up) payment in England; manfully attacked townships in Saxony.

12. Sö 171, Esta

inkịf̣ạ[s]tr · l[i]ṭ ḥaku... sṭạ...n · eftiʀ · sihuiþ · faþ-r · si[n · han · fial · i h]ulm[karþi · skaiþaʀ · uisi mi]þ · ski...ra

Ingifastr let haggv[a] stæ[i]n æftiR Sigvið, fað[u]r sinn. Hann fioll i Holmgarði, skæiðaR visi með skipara.

Ingifastr had the stone cut in memory of Sigviðr, his father. He fell in Holmgarðr, the ship's leader with the seamen.

13. Sö 174, Aspö

[ub]lubʀ · lit · kira : kuml : likhus : auk : bru : at sun sin : biurn : uaʀ trebin : a : kut:lanti : þy : lit : fiur · sit : fluþu : kankiʀ : þaiʀ uiþ[ulkuʀ] · uiltu iki halta · kuþ : hilbi : anta : hans

OlafR(?)/Oblauðr(?)/UpplaupR(?)let gæra kumbl, likhus/liknhus ok bro at sun sinn Biorn, vaR dræpinn a Gutlandi. Þy let fior sitt, flyðu gængiR, þæiR ... vildu ækki halda. Guð hialpi anda hans.

Ólafr(?)/Óblauðr(?)/Upphlaupr(?) had the monument and sarcophagus/hospice and bridge made in memory of his son Bjǫrn, (who) was killed on Gotland. Because his followers fled, he lost his life; they ... would not hold. May God help his spirit.

14. Sö 198, Mervalla

siriþ · lit · resa · stan · [þin]ạ [·] ạṭ · suen · sin · [b]unta · h[n] · uft · siklt · til · simkạḷạ · ṭuru[m] · knari · um · tumisnis

Sigrið let ræisa stæin þenna at Svæin, sinn bonda. Hann oft siglt til Sæimgala, dyrum knærri, um Domisnæs.

Sigríðr had this stone raised in memory of Sveinn, her husbandman. He often sailed a valued cargo-ship to Seimgalir, around Dómisnes.

15. Sö 333, Ärja

: amuit · rsti · sina · þina · yti · suna · sina · rnulfu/unulfu· aku · hrenki bruþur · sena · uarþi · uti ·
terebina · i · kalmarna · sutuma · furu · afu · skani xx eski · rsti · runa · þasi x

Amundi(?) ræisti stæin þenna at(?) sun sinn Runulf/Unnulf ok Hring(?), broður sinn. Varð uti drepinn i Kalmarna sundum,
foru af Skanøy. Æskell risti runaʀ þaRsi.

Ámundi(?) raised this stone in memory of(?) his son Rúnulfr/Unnulfr, and Hringr(?), his brother. (He) was killed out in the
Kalmarnir sound, (as they) travelled from Scania. Áskell carved these runes.

16. Sö 338, Turinge

§A · ketil : auk + biorn + þaiʀ + raistu + stain + þin[a] + at + þourstain : faþur + sin + anuntr + at +
bruþur + sin + auk + hu[skar]laʀ + hifiʀ + iafna + ketilau at + buanta sin · ¶ bruþr uaʀu þaʀ bistra
mana : a : lanti auk : i liþi : uti : hi̱ḻtu sini huskaṛla : ui- + §B han + fial + i + urustu + austr + i +
garþum + lis + furugi + lanmana + bestr

§A Kætill ok Biorn þæiʀ ræistu stæin þenna at Þorstæin, faður sinn, Anundr at broður sinn ok huskarlaʀ æftiʀ(?) iafna,
Kætiløy at boanda sinn. Brøðr vaRu þæiʀ bæstra manna, a landi ok i liði uti, heldu sina huskarla ve[l]. §B Hann fioll i
orrustu austr i Garðum, liðs forungi, landmanna bæstr.

§A Ketill and Bjǫrn, they raised this stone in memory of Þorsteinn, their father; Qnundr in memory of his brother and the
housecarls in memory of the just(?) (and) Ketiley in memory of her husbandman. These brothers were the best of men in
the land and abroad in the retinue, held their housecarls well. §B He fell in battle in the east in Garðar, commander of the
retinue, the best of landholders.

17. SÖ FV1948;289, Aspa

ostriþ : lit : -ira : ku̱m... ...usi ÷ at : anunt ÷ auk : raknualt : sun · sin ÷: urþu : ta...ʀ : - ̱tan...-...ku :
ua-u : rikiʀ : o rauniki : ak : snialastiʀ : i : suiþiuþu

Astrið let [g]æra kum[bl þa]usi at Anund ok Ragnvald, sun sinn. Urðu da[uði]R [i] Dan[mar]ku, va[R]u rikiR a Rauningi ok
sniallastiR i Sveþiuðu.

Ástríðr had these monuments made in memory of Qnundr and Ragnvaldr, her son. (They) died in Denmark, were powerful
in Rauningi and the ablest in Sweden.

18. Sm 52, Forsheda

: rhulf : auk : oskihl : riþu : stin : þo[nsi] : etiʀ : lifstin : fuþur : sin : es : uarþ : tuþr :: o : skonu : ṇ :
karþ:stokum : auk : furþu : o :: finhiþi [:]

HrolfR ok Askell ræistu stæin þannsi æftiʀ Lifstæin, faður sinn, es varð dauðr a Skanøy i Garðstangum, ok førðu a
Finnhæiði.

Hrólfr and Áskell raised this stone in memory of Lífsteinn, their father, who died in Skáney in Garðstangir and (they)
brought (him) to Finnheiðr.

19. Vg 40, Råda

+ þurkil ÷ sati + stin + þasi + itiʀ + kuna + sun · sin + iʀ · uarþ + tuþr + i uristu + iʀ · bþiþus + kunukaʀ
x

Þorkell satti stæin þannsi æftiʀ Gunna, sun sinn. ER varð dauðr i orrustu, eR barðus kunungaR.

Þorkell placed this stone in memory of Gunni, his son, who died in battle when kings fought each other.

20. Vg 181, Frugården

kufi : rsþi : stin : þesi : eftʀ : ulaf : sun : sin · trk · hrþa · kuþan · hn · uarþ · trbin · i · estlatum · hu̱aṛþṛ
· iuk · s---

Gufi ræisti stæin þennsi æftiʀ Olaf, sun sinn, dræng harða goðan. Hann varð drepinn i Æistlandum. Havarðr(?) hiogg
s[tæin].

Gufi raised this stone in memory of Ólafr, his son, a very good valiant man. He was killed in Estonia. Hávarðr(?) cut the
stone.

21. U 130, Nora

biurn · finuiþaʀ sun lit · haukua · hili þisa · aftiʀ ulaif bruþur sin · hon uarþ suikuin o fi̱naiþi · kuþ hialbi
on hons · iʀ þisi biʀ · þaiʀa uþal uk atṛfi · finuþaʀ sun o ilhiastaþum

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Biorn, FinnviðaR sunn, let hoggva hælli þessa æftiR Olæif, broður sinn. Hann varð svikvinn a Finnæiði. Guð hialpi and hans. ER þessi byR þæiRa oðal ok ættærfi, FinnviðaR suna a Ælgiastaðum.

Bjǫrn, Finnviðr's son, had this rock-slab cut in memory of Óleifr, his brother. He was betrayed at Finnheiðr. May God help his spirit. This estate is the allodial land and family inheritance of Finnviðr's sons at Elgjastaðir.

22. U 180, Össeby-Garn

+ sihatr · uk + þurbiorn + uk · þurkriṃ + uk · erinmontr ·x litu x reisn + stein + aftiʀ + broþur + sin + sikstnin + hn to i uibuṛkum

SighvatR ok Þorbiorn ok ÞorgrimR ok ÆrinmundR letu ræisa stæin æftiR broður sinn Sigstæin. Hann do i Viborgum.

Sighvatr and Þorbjǫrn and Þorgrímr and Erinmundr had the stone raised in memory of their brother Sigsteinn. He died in Véborg.

23. U 209, Veda

þurtsain x kiarþi| |ifxtiʀ irinmunt x sun sin auk| |kaubti þinsa bu x auk x aflaþi x austr i karþum

Þorstæinn gærði æftiR Ærinmund, sun sinn, ok køypti þennsa by ok aflaði austr i Garðum.

Þorsteinn made (the stone) in memory of Erinmundr, his son, and bought this estate and earned (wealth) in the east in Garðar.

24. U 214, Vallentuna

… uk x inkiber x eftiʀ x buanta x sin · han · troknaþi ÷ a · holms · hafi · skreþ · knar · hans · i · kaf þriʀ · eniʀ · kamo · af

... ok Ingebærg æftiR boanda sinn. Hann drunknaði a Holms hafi, skræið knarr hans i kaf, þriR æiniR kvamu af.

...and Ingibjǫrg in memory of her husbandman. He drowned in Holmr's sea – his cargo-ship drifted to the sea-bottom - only three came out (alive).

25. U 346†, Frösunda

[raḥnfriþr · lit rt stain þino · aftir biurno sun þairạ kitilmuntaʀ · hon · fil a urlati · kuþ hialbi hons ant auk| |kuþs muþir · osmunr mar·kaþi runaʀ ritar]

Ragnfriðr let retta stæin þenna æftiR Biorn, sun þæiRa KætilmundaR. Hann fell a Virlandi. Guð hialpi hans and ok Guðs moðiR. Asmundr markaði runaR rettaR.

Ragnfríðr had this stone erected in memory of Bjǫrn, her son and Ketilmundr's. He fell in Virland. May God and God's mother help his spirit. Ásmundr marked the right runes.

26. U 356, Ängby

raḥnfriþr · lit rasa stain þino · aftiʀ biurn · sun þaiʀa · kitilmunṭaʀ · kuþ mialbi hons ant auk| |kuþs ṃuþir hon fil a uirlanti · in osmuntr markaþi

Ragnfriðr let ræisa stæin þenna æftiR Biorn, sun þæiRa KætilmundaR. Guð hialpi hans and ok Guðs moðiR. Hann fell a Virlandi. En Asmundr markaði.

Ragnfríðr had this stone raised in memory of Bjǫrn, her son and Ketilmundr's. May God and God's mother help his spirit. He fell in Virland. And Ásmundr marked.

27. U 375, Vidbo

sikfastr · auk| |kinla-h þauh litu rita staiṇ þino aftiʀ uinoman sun si- in hon uarþ tauþr i buhi

Sigfastr ok Ginnla[u]g þaun letu retta stæin þenna æftiR Vinaman, sun si[nn]. En hann varð dauðr i Bógi(?).

Sigfastr and Ginnlaug, they had this stone erected in memory of Vinaman, their son. And he died in Bógi(?).

28. U 414†, Norrsunda

[f… …ntr · þiʀ · fyrþu · stin · þina · af · kutlanti · uk · r… …ftir · si-…t · bruþur sin · on iti · þisa · h…]

... ... þæiR førðu stæin þenna af Gutlandi ok ... [æ]ftiR ... broður sinn. Hann atti(?) þessa ...

... they brought this stone from Gotland and ... in memory of ... their brother. He owned(?)this ...

29. U 518, Västra Ledinge

þurkir x uk x suin x þu litu x risa x stin x þina x iftir x urmiʀ x uk x urmulf x uk x frikiʀ x on x etaþis x i silu x nur x ian þiʀ antriʀ x ut i x krikum x kuþ ihlbi --ʀạ ot x uk salu

Þorgærðr ok Svæinn þau letu ræisa stæin þenna æftiR OrmæiR ok Ormulf ok FrøygæiR. Hann ændaðis i Silu nor en þæiR andriR uti i Grikkium. Guð hialpi [þæi]Ra ok salu.

Þorgerðr and Sveinn, they had this stone raised in memory of Ormgeirr and Ormulfr and Freygeirr. He met his end in the sound of Sila (Selaön), and the others abroad in Greece. May God help their spirits and souls.

30. U 527, Frötuna

· ayiti … […si] atir : faþuṛ …ḳ : sut : ọ : kutloti : hkni : o : syk[um : in : ur : basti] : buti : uhlmstan :

Øyndr ... [þann]si æftiR faður, [to]k sott a Gutlandi, Hagni(?)/Agni(?) a Sikum(?). Hann(?) vaR bæzti bondi. Holmstæinn.

Eyndr ... this in memory of ... father ... was taken ill on Gotland, Hagni(?) (Agni (?) of Sikum(?). He(?) was the best of husbandmen. Holmsteinn.

31. U 533, Roslags-Bro

· sigruþ · lit + raisa · stain · eftir + anunt · sun · sin · han uas · tribin + a + uirlanti

Sigruð let ræisa stæin æftiR Anund, sun sinn. Hann vas drepinn a Virlandi.

English: Sigþrúðr had the stone raised in memory of Ǫnundr, her son. He was killed in Virland.

32. U 539, Husby-Sjuhundra

§A tiarfʀ x uki x urika x uk · uiki x uk x iukiʀ x uk x kiʀialmʀ x þiʀ bryþr x aliʀ x litu x risa x §B stin þina x iftiʀ x suin x bruþur x sin x saʀ x uarþ x tuþr a x iutḻati x on skulti §C fara x til x iklanþs x kuþ x ialbi x ọns x at uk salu x uk⎮ x⎮ kus muþiʀ x betr x þan an karþi til

§A DiarfR ok Orøkia ok Vigi ok IogæiRR ok GæiRhialmR, þæiR brøðr alliR letu ræisa §B stæin þenna æftiR Svæin, broður sinn. SaR varð dauðr a Iutlandi. Hann skuldi §C fara til Ænglands. Guð hialpi hans and ok salu ok Guðs moðiR bætr þan hann gærði til.

§A Djarfr and Órœkja and Vígi and Jógeirr and Geirhjalmr, all of these brothers had §B this stone raised in memory of Sveinn, their brother. He died in Jútland. He meant to §C travel to England. May God and God's mother help his spirit and soul better than he deserved.

33. U 582†, Söderby-Karl

[biarn huk · ikulfriþ : raistu : stain : aftʀ : utrik : sun : sain · han · uaʀ : tribin : o : fin·lonti]

Biorn ok Igulfrið ræistu stæin æftiR Otrygg, sun sinn. Hann vaR drepinn a Finnlandi.

Bjǫrn and Ígulfríðr raised the stone in memory of Ótryggr, their son. He was killed in Finland.

34. U 611, Tibble

biurn : auk : stnfriþ : litu : arisa s--n : afti : kisila : han : uti : fial : i liþi : frekis ·

Biorn ok Stæinfrið letu ræisa s[tæi]n æftiR Gisla. Hann uti fioll i liði FrøygæiRs(?).

Bjǫrn and Steinfríðr had the stone raised in memory of Gísli. He fell abroad in Freygeirr's(?) retinue.

35. U 614, Torsätra

· skuli · auk · folki · lata · reisa · þinsa · stein · iftʀ · broþur · sin · husbiorn · hn us⎮ ⎮siok · uti · þa þiʀ · kialt · toku · a kutlanti ·

Skuli ok Folki lata ræisa þennsa stæin æftiR broður sinn Husbiorn/Asbiorn. Hann vas siukR uti, þa þæiR giald toku a Gutlandi.

Skúli and Folki have raised this stone in memory of their brother Húsbjǫrn/Ásbjǫrn. He was sick abroad when they took payment on Gotland.

36. U 636, Låddersta

alui · lit · risa · stn · þtin · at · arfast · sun sin · hn · fur · ausʀ · i karþa

Alvi let ræisa stæin þenna at Arnfast, sun sinn. Hann for austr i Garða.

Ǫlvé had this stone raised in memory of Arnfast, his son. He travelled to the east to Garðar.

37. U 687, Sjusta

runa · lit kiara · mirki at · sbialbuþa · uk · at · suain · uk · at · antuit · uk at · raknaʀ · suni · sin · uk · ekla · uk · siriþ · at · sbialbuþa · bonta sin an uaʀ · tauþr · i hulmkarþi · i olafs · kriki · ubiʀ · risti · ru

Runa let gæra mærki at Spiallbuða ok at Svæin ok at Andvett ok at Ragnar, syni sina ok Hælga/Ægla/Ængla, ok Sigrið at Spiallbuða, bonda sinn. Hann vaR dauðr i Holmgarði i Olafs kirkiu. ØpiR risti runaR.

Rúna had the landmark made in memory of Spjallboði and in memory of Sveinn and in memory of Andvéttr and in memory of Ragnarr, sons of her and Helgi/Egli/Engli; and Sigríðr in memory of Spjallboði, her husbandman. He died in Holmgarðr in Ólafr's church. Œpir carved the runes.

38. U 698†, Veckholm

Version I: [**sufar lit : aristn · þin · afir · askir sun · sin : han · ut fai : a liflai|n|þ|i| |i| |i|n|þ|i · frai…**]

Version II: [**sufar lit : aristn · þin · afir · askir sun : sin : han · ut fai : a liflai|n|þ| i| |i|n|þ|i · frai…**]

Version I: **sufar** *let ræisa stæin æftiR AsgæiR, sun sinn. Hann uti fioll a Liflandi i liði Frøy[gæiRs](?).*

Version II: **sufar** *let ræisa stæin æftiR AsgæiR, sun sinn. Hann ut fioll a Lifland i liði Frøy[gæiRs](?).*

sufar had the stone raised in memory of Ásgeirr, his son. He fell in Lífland, abroad in Freygeirr's(?) retinue.

39. U 699, Amnö

[**ikilaif · let · r]as[a · st-- at · bruna · boanta ·] s[in] · ha̧n : u̧arþ [·] tauþr · a t[an]m̧arku · i huita·uaþum [· bal]i · [-r]ist…**

Ingilæif let ræisa st[æin] at Bruna, boanda sinn. Hann varð dauðr a Danmarku i hvitavaðum. Balli rist[i].

Ingileif had the stone raised in memory of Brúni, her husbandman. He died in christening robes in Denmark. Balli carved.

40. U 896, Håga

… [l]itu raisa stain + fir · ont · iy--m + sun + sain + tauþr + fita+faþum · i tai·ma… riþ runaʀ ubir

... [l]etu ræisa stæin fyr and Øy[nda]R(?), sun sinn, dauðr [i] hvitavaðum i Danma[rku](?). Reð runaR ØpiR.

... had the stone raised for the spirit of Eyndar(?), their son, (who) died in christening robes in Denmark(?). Œpir arranged the runes.

41. U 1048, Björklinge

kilauk · lit · hakua · at · io̧rut · sun sin · t̠o · i haiþaby

Gillaug let haggva at Iorund, sun sinn, do i Hæiðaby.

Gillaug had (the stone) cut in memory of Jǫrundr, her son. (He) died in Hedeby.

42. U FV1912;8, Sigtuna

§A **tiarfr x fik af x simskum x moni x skalaʀ x þis[aʀ] i …o̧ti̠ x in uirmuntr x fa̧þi x runor x þisar** §B **fuhl x ualua x slait x f̠aluon x fon kauk x o nos au-a**

§A *DiarfR fækk af semskum manni skalaR þessaR i(?) ...[l]andi. En Værmundr faði runaR þessaR.* §B *Fugl vælva slæit falvan: fann gauk a nas au[k]a.*

§A Diarfr got from a man from Samland / Semgallen these scales in(?) ...[l]and. And Vermundr coloured these runes. §B The bird tore apart the pale thief: (One) found (ie observed) the increase (ie from eating) in the corpse-cuckoo (raven).

43. Vs 1, Stora Ryttern

+ kuþlefʀ + seti : stff : auk : sena : þasi : uftiʀ slakua : sun : sia : etaþr : austr · i · karusm ·

GuðlæifR satti staf ok stæina þasi æftiR Slagva, sun sinn, ændaðr austr i Garðum(?)/Chorezm(?).

Guðleifr placed the staff and these stones in memory of Slagvi, his son, (who) met his end in the east in Garðar(?)/Chorezm(?).

44. Gs 13, Söderby

x brusi lit rita s-… … [a̠]b--ʀ i̠h̠i̠l brur sin : in h-n uarþ tauþr a tafstalonti x þo brusi furþi lank lans · abtiʀ [br]ur sin ho̠[n] fur m̠iʀ fraukiʀi kuþ hialbi hons| |salu| |uk| |kuþs m̠u̠[þiʀ · suain · uk osmunrt · þaiʀ markaþu] +

Brusi let retta s[tæin þenna] æftiR Ægil, broður sinn. En hann varð dauðr a Tafæistalandi, þa Brusi førði læiðang(?) lands æftiR broður sinn. Hann for með FrøygæiRi. Guð hialpi hans salu ok Guðs moðiR. Svæinn ok Asmundr þæiR markaðu.

Brúsi had this stone erected in memory of Egill, his brother. And he died in Tafeistaland, when Brúsi brought (= led?) the land's levy(?) (= army) in memory of, his brother. He travelled with Freygeirr. May God and God's mother help his soul. Sveinn and Ásmundr, they marked.

45. G 135, Sjonhem

þina : eftir : ai̠--- : --- : --rþ : tauþr : a : ui̠tau : systrir : [tuaʀ] …-ʀ : bryþr : þria : roþanþr : auk : roþkutr : roþar : auk : þorstain : þiʀ : iʀu : faþur:bryþr

Þenna æftiR Æi... ... [va]rð dauðr a Vindau/Vindö. SystriR tvaR ... brøðr þria. Hroðvaldr(?) ok Hroðgautr, Hroðarr ok Þorstæinn, þæiR eRu faðurbrøðr.

This (one) in memory of Ei... (who) died at Vindey/Vindö. Two sisters ... three brothers. Hróðvaldr(?) and Hróðgautr, Hróðarr and Þorsteinn, they are the father's brothers.

46. G 138, Halla

…rti : legiʀ : koþṛ : ---… …-na : has : lit : rist : kuml : ɑ- : ḳaiʀielmʀ : … : ainika : sun : þaiʀa ·: trabu : leybika- : … …naʀ : at : feþrka : baþa : kuþ : -ẹ… …

... lækiʀ(?) goðr ... [ko]na hans let rista/ræisa kumbl a[t] GæiʀHialm ... æiniga sun þæiRa drapu leybika[R] ... [stæi]naR(?) at fæðrga baða. Guð [hi]a[lpi] ...

... good doctor(?) ... his wife had the monument raised/carved in memory of Geirhjalmr ... people from Lübeck killed their only son ... stones in memory of both their both, father and son. May God help ...

47. G 207, Stenkumla

butmuntr : auk : butraifʀ : auk : kunu[ar : þaiʀ : raistu : stain …arþi : karþ] : auk : sunarla : sat : miþ : skinum : auk : han : entaþis : at : ulfshala : þa : [han : hilḳ̣ị…]

Botmundr ok BotræifR ok Gunnvarr þæiR ræistu stæin ... garð ok sunnarla sat með skinnum. Ok hann ændaðis at Ulfshala/Ulvshale ... ...

Bótmundr and Bótreifr and Gunnvarr, they raised the stone ... farm and sat in the south with the skins (=traded fur). And he met his end at Ulfshala/Ulvshale...

48. G 220, Hallfrede

… …tkaiʀ : ɑʀ : to i : hulmka-… …iḅị : -…

... [U]ddgæiR/[Bo]tgæiR. ER do i Holmga[rði] ... ...

.. Oddgeirr/Bótgeirr. He died in Holmgarðr ...

49. DR 37, Egtved

… … …at · faịṇ [·] ṭu ÷ i suiu · raist ¶ … …uþiʀ · aft · bruþur ¶ stain · sasi · skarni · …

... ... Fain, do i Swiu. Rest ... [br]oþiR æft broþur. Sten sasi ... ...

... ... (the) Coloured, (who) died in Svía. Carved... brother in memory of brother. This stone ... ...

50. DR 55, Sønder Vissing

tufa · lʀt · kaurua · kubl ¶ mistiuis · tutiʀ · uft · muþur ¶ sina · ¶ kuna ¶ harats · hins · kuþa · kurms ¶ sunɑʀ

Tofa let gørwa kumbl, Mistiwis dottiR, æft moþur sina, kona Haralds hins Goþa, Gorms sonaR.

Tófa, Mistivir's daughter, wife of Haraldr the good, Gormr's son, had the monument made in memory of her mother.

51. DR 63, Århus

…ʀ : þigsla : … ¶ …n : þonsi : i-… ¶ …ʀ : omutɑ : … ¶ …s : uɑ-̣ : ̣u… ¶ …ṭ : hiþabu …

... Þæxla ... ... þænsi ... ... Amunda ... ... Heðaby ...

... (the) Adze ... ... this ... ... Ámundi ... ... Hedeby ...

52. DR 66, Århus

§A · kunulfʀ · auk · augutr · auk · aslakʀ · auk · rulfʀ · risþu §B · stin · þansi · eftiʀ x ful · felaḳa · sin · ¶ · iaʀ · uarþ ̣: …y-- x tuþr · §C þo · kunukaʀ x ¶ barþusk ·

§A GunulfR ok Øgotr/Øþgotr ok AslakR ok RolfR resþu §B sten þænsi æftiR Ful, felaga sin, æR warþ ... døþr, §C þa kunungaR barþusk.

§A Gunnulfr and Eygautr/Auðgautr and Áslakr and Hrólfr raised §B this stone in memory of Fúl, their partner, who died §C when kings fought.

53. DR 68, Århus

§A ̣-usti x auk x hufi x auk x þir x frebiurn x risþu x stin x þonsi x eftir x ¶ x osur x saksa x filaka x sin x harþa x §B kuþan x trik x saʀ x tu x ¶ x mana x mest x uniþikʀ x ¶ saʀ x ati x skib x miþ x arno +

§A [T]osti ok Hofi ok þeR Frøbiorn resþu sten þænsi æftiR Azur Saxa, felaga sin, harþa §B goþan dræng. SaR do manna mæst uniþingR, saR atti skip mæþ Arna.

§A Tosti and Hofi and Freybjǫrn, they raised this stone in memory of Ǫzurr Saxon / Sword(-wielder), their partner, a very §B good valiant man. He died as the most unvillainous of men; he owned a ship with Árni.

54. DR 117, Mejlby

oni : risþ : stin : þansi : aft : o¶skl : sun : sin : ias : tauþr ¶ uarþ : maþ : þuri : i : ura:¶:suti :

Ani resþi sten þænsi æft Æskel, sun sin, æs døþr warþ mæþ Þori i Ørasundi.

Áni raised this stone in memory of Áskell, his son, who died with Þórir in the Sound.

55. DR 216, Tirsted

§A osraþr auk hiltu·-ʀ ¶ raisþu stain þansi ¶ aft froþa fronti sin ¶ sin ian han uas þo foink ¶ uaiʀa §B ian han uarþ tauþr o suo¶þiauþu auk uas furs ¶ i frikis ioþi þo aliʀ uikikaʀ

§A *Asraþr ok Hildu[ng]ʀ/Hildv[ig]ʀ/Hildu[lf]ʀ resþu sten þænsi æft Fraþa/Fræþa, frænda sin sin, æn han was þa fækn(?) wæʀa,* §B *æn han warþ døþr a Sweþiuþu ok was fyrst(?) i(?) Friggis(?) liði(?) þa alliʀ wikingaʀ.*

§A Ástráðr and Hildu[ng]r/Hildv[íg]r/Hildu[lf]r raised this stone in memory of Fraði/Freði, their kinsman. And he was then the terror(?) of men. §B And he died in Sweden and was thereafter the first(?) in(?) Friggr's(?) retinue(?) and then: all vikings.

56. DR 217, Sædinge

§A þurui : kat : kauruan ː ¶ stain : þansi : ---ː ¶ k̠ṛ̠u̠k̠ · §B uiar ː sin : ian : han ː uas ¶ -- alra · triu--... §C s̠utrsuia ː auk̠ : suþr[tana ·] ¶ kuaul : at : ha- af nur¶minum som §D baistr : han uas ¶ ... sutrsuia : ·-uk ·

§A *Þorwi gat gørwan sten þænsi ... Krok,* §B *wæʀ sin, æn han was [þa](?) allra driu[gastr](?)* §C *sundrswea ok suþrdana. Kwol at ha[l]/ha[nn], af normannum sæm* §D *bæztr. Han was [þa](?) sundrswea [l]ok/ok.*

§A Þorvé got this stone made ... Krókr, §B her husband, and he was [then](?) the most resolute(?) of all §C Sunder-Swedes and South Danes. Torment ate/ to(?) him/ the hero, the best of Northmen. §D He was [there/ then](?) the Sunder-Swedes end / yoke(?).

57. DR 220, Sønder Kirkeby

·-sur : sati : stin : ¶ þinsi : haft : osku... ¶ bruþur : sin : ian : ... ¶ uarþ : tuþr : o : ku... ¶ þ=u=r : u=i=k=i̠ ː ṛ=u=n=ɑ=ʀ ː ...

[Sa]sur satti sten þænsi æft Asgo[t] broþur sin, æn [hann] warþ døþr a Go[tlandi]. Þor wigi runaʀ [þæssaʀ].

Sassur placed this stone in memory of Ásgautr his brother, and [he] died on Go[tland]. May Þórr hallow [these] runes.

58. DR 259, Fuglie

· autr · risþi · stin · þonsi · ¶ · auftiʀ · auþa · bruþur · ¶ · sin · han · uarþ · tauþr · ¶ · o · kutlati · kuþ · hialbi · hạns · silu

Øndr resþi sten þænsi æftiʀ Øþa, broþur sin, han warþ døþr a Gotlandi. Guþ hialpi hans sælu.

Eyndr raised this stone in memory of Auði, his brother. He died in Gotland. May God help his soul.

59. DR 279, Sjörup

[+ sa]ksi : sati : st[in] : þasi : huftiʀ : o[s]biurn : ṣin : filago · ¶ ṭu-a[s : sun :] ¶ saʀ : flu : aki : a[t :] ub:salum : an : ua : maþ : an : u¶abn : aḟþi ·

Saxi satti sten þæssi æftiʀ Æsbiorn, sin felaga, To[f]a/To[k]a sun. Saʀ flo ægi at Upsalum, æn wa mæþ han wapn hafþi.

Saxi placed this stone in memory of Ásbjǫrn Tófi's/Tóki's son, his partner. He did not flee at Uppsala, but slaughtered as long as he had a weapon.

60. DR 295, Hällestad

§A askil : sati : stin : þansi : ift[iʀ] ¶ : tuka : kurms : sun : saʀ : hulan · ¶ trutin : saʀ : flu : aigi : at : ub:¶:salum §B satu : trikaʀ : iftir : sin : bruþr ¶ stin : o : biarki : stuþan : runum : þir : §C k̠urmṣ : ṭuka : kiku : nịṣṭ[iʀ]

§A *Æskel satti sten þænsi æftiʀ Toka Gorms sun, seʀ hullan drottin. Saʀ flo ægi at Upsalum* §B *sattu drængiaʀ æftiʀ sin broþur sten a biargi støþan runum. Þeʀ* §C *Gorms Toka gingu næstiʀ.*

§A Áskell placed this stone in memory of Tóki Gormr's son, to him a faithful lord. He did not flee at Uppsala. §B Valiant men placed in memory of their brother the stone on the hill, steadied by runes. They §C went closest to Gormr's Tóki.

61. DR 344, Simris

· biarngaiʀ x lit ː raisa · stain · þina · eftiʀ · rafn · broþur · sin · suịn · kunụ--s · ɑ suiþiuþu

BiarngeR let resa sten þænna æftiʀ Rafn, broþur sin, swen Gunu[lf]s a Sweþiuþu.

Bjǫrngeirr had this stone raised in memory of Hrafn, his brother, Gunnu[lfr]'s lad in Sweden.

62. DR 380, Ny Larsker

kobu:suain : raisti : stain : þena : aḟtir : bausa : sun : sin : trị... ...n : þan : is : tribin : uarþ : i : ụrostu : at : ut:lan̠kiu : kuþ : trụtin : hịalbi : hans : ont : auk : sata : mikial :

Kopu-(?)Swen resþi sten þænna æftiR Bøsa, sun sin, dræ[ng] [goþa]n, þan æs dræpin warþ i orrostu at Utlængiu. Guþ drottin hialpi hans ond ok santa Mihael.

Sveinn (of the hooded cloak? son of Kápa?) raised this stone in memory of Bausi, his son, a good valiant man, who was killed in battle at Útlengia. May Lord God and Saint Michael help his spirit.

63. N 62, Alstad (after Spurkland 2001: 114-115)

x ikli x reisti stein þana eftir x þoral[t] sunsin isuarþ tauþr x iuitahol[mi] miþli ustaulms auk karþa x

Engli reisti stein þenna eptir Þórald, sun sinn, er varð dauðr í Vitaholmi, miðli Ustaholm ok Garða.

Engli raised this stone in memory of Þóraldr, his son, who died in Vitaholmr – between Ustaholmr and Garðar.

64. N 239, Stangeland

þurḅiu̯rṇ : skalt : raị̣sti sṭn ḅọnạ aft : sọi-÷þuri : sun : sin : is o : ṭonṃarku ̤: f̣il

*Þorbjǫrn Skald reisti stein þenna ept **soi**-þóri, son sinn, er á Danmǫrku fell.*

Þorbjǫrn Skald raised this stone in memory of **soi**-þórir, his son, who fell in Denmark.

Appendix IV

List of Norwegian and Danish rulers mentioned in skaldic poetry, *Heimskringla* and *Knýtlinga saga*

Information concerning the estimated dates stems from Bagge (1991: 253-254) and Pálsson & Edwards (1986: 10-11).

Norwegian rulers:
Hálfdan svarti (850-860)
Haraldr hárfagri (860-933)
Eiríkr blóðøx (930-935)
Hákon góði (934-960)
Haraldr gráfeldr and the Eiríkssons (960-975)
Hákon Sigurðarson, jarl (975-995)
Óláfr Tryggvason (995-1000)
Eiríkr and Sveinn Hákonarsonar, jarls (1000-1015)
Óláfr Haraldsson (Óláfr helgi, 1015-1030)
Knútr ríki (1028-1035)
Magnús góði (1035-1047)
Haraldr harðráði (1046-1066)
Óláfr kyrri (1066-1093)
Magnús berfœttr (1093-1103)
Eysteinn Magnússon (1103-1122)
Sigurðr Magnússon (1103-1130)
Óláfr Magnússon (1103-1115)
Magnús blindi (1130-1135, 1136-1139)
Haraldr gilli (1130-1136)
Ingi Haraldsson (1136-1161)
Sigurðr munnr (1136-1155)
Eysteinn Haraldsson (1142-1157)
Sigurðr slembidjákn (1136-1139)
Hákon herðibreiðr (1157-1162)
Magnús Erlingsson (1161-1184)

Danish rulers:
Haraldr Gormsson (940-986)
Sveinn Haraldsson (Sveinn tjúguskegg, 986-1014)
Haraldr Sveinsson (1014-1018)
Knútr ríki (1018-1035)
Hǫrða-Knútr Knútsson (1035-1042)
Magnus góði (1042-1047)
Sveinn Úlfsson (Sveinn Ástriðarson, 1047-1074)
Haraldr Sveinsson (1074-1080)
Knútr Sveinsson (1080-1086)
Óláfr Sveinsson (1086-1095)
Eiríkr Sveinsson (Eiríkr eygóði, 1095-1103)
Nikulás Sveinsson (1104-1134)
Eiríkr Eiríksson (Eiríkr eymuni, 1134-1137)
Eiríkr Hákonarson (1137-1146)
Óláfr Haraldsson (1140-1143)
Sveinn Eiríksson (1146-1157)
Knútr Magnússon (1146-1157)
Valdamarr Knútsson (1157-1182)
Knútr Valdamarsson (1182-1202)

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name	Kristel Zilmer
Date and place of birth	27.05.1974, Tartu
Nationality	Estonian
Address	Section of Nordic Philology, University of Tartu,
	Ülikooli 17, Tartu 51014
	Kristel.Zilmer@ut.ee
Current job	University of Tartu, Department for Germanic and Romance Languages and Literatures, assistant (Norwegian philology)

Educational History

2000-2005	University of Tartu, Department for Germanic and Romance Languages and Literatures, doctoral studies in Scandinavian Studies
1998-2000	University of Tartu, Department for Germanic and Romance Languages and Literatures, MA in Scandinavian Studies, *cum laude*
1999	University of Oslo, "Nordic Viking and Medieval Culture"
1995-1997	University of Oslo, "Norwegian language and literature for foreign learners, foundation subject"
1992-1998	University of Tartu, Department for Germanic and Romance Languages and Literatures, BA in Scandinavian Studies (Norwegian Language and Literature), *cum laude*
1981-1992	Tartu Secondary School No. 2, graduated with gold medal

Experience

2002-2005	University of Tartu, assistant (Norwegian philology)
1997-2002	University of Tartu, teacher of Norwegian
1994-present	Freelance translator and interpreter (Norwegian-Estonian, Estonian-Norwegian

Scientific activity

Coordinator of an international project "Dialogues with tradition: studying the Nordic saga seritage" (2004); main organiser of an international saga seminar within the framework of this project (April 15-16, 2004). Editor of the project's forthcoming publication.

Coordinator of an international project "Interdisciplinary approaches to text: combining philology, history and communication theories" (2001-2003); main organiser of a runic seminar (March 31- April 1, 2003), a seminar on translation (May 7, 2003), a doctoral seminar (May 21-22, 2003) and an international symposium "Text and context: combining philology, history and cultural studies" (May 17-18, 2002). Editor of the project's publication *Perspectives on Text and Context: Report from an International Symposium Held at the University of Tartu, Estonia, 17-18 May 2002* (2003).

Member of the organising committee of the 7th international conference "Svenska språkets historia" (April 25-26, 2002).
Member of the organising committee of an international seminar "Nordic Days" (April 8-9, 1999).

Courses attended

Summer course in Norwegian language and literature for teachers, University of Oslo (July 1998)
Summer course in Icelandic language and literature, University of Reykjavík (June 2001).
Intensive course for Nordic doctoral students in scholarly editing I, Oslo (August 2002).
Intensive course for Nordic doctoral students in scholarly editing II, Visby (August 2003).
Pedagogical course "Learning and Teaching at University", University of Tartu (November 2003 and February 2004).
Interdisciplinary course Socrates 2004 "Cultures in Contact: Northern Europe 700-1200 AD", University of Tartu (August 2004).

CURRICULUM VITAE

Nimi	Kristel Zilmer
Sünniaeg ja -koht	27.05.1974, Tartu
Kodakondsus	Eesti
Aadress	Skandinavistika, Tartu Ülikool, Ülikooli 17, Tartu 51014 Kristel.Zilmer@ut.ee
Praegune töökoht	Tartu Ülikool, Germaani-romaani filoloogia osakond, norra filoloogia assistent

Haridus

2000-2005	TÜ Germaani-romaani filoloogia osakonna skandinavistika eriharu doktoriõpe
1998-2000	TÜ Germaani-romaani filoloogia osakonna skandinavistika eriharu, MA, *cum laude*
1999	Oslo Ülikool, „Nordic Viking and Medieval Culture"
1995-1997	Oslo Ülikool, „Norwegian language and literature for foreign learners, foundation subject"
1992-1998	TÜ Germaani-romaani filoloogia osakonna skandinavistika eriharu, BA (norra keel ja kirjandus), *cum laude*
1981-1992	Tartu Miina Härma nimeline 2. keskkool, lõpetatud kuldmedaliga

Teenistuskäik

2002-2005	TÜ, norra filoloogia assistent
1997-2002	TÜ norra keele õpetaja
1994-k.a	Vabakutseline tõlk (kirjalik ja suuline tõlge, norra-eesti, eesti-norra)

Teaduslik ja arendustegevus

1. Peamised uurimisvaldkonnad:
Põhjamaade varaste allikate (ruunikirjade, skaldiluule, saagade) kultuuriajalooline analüüs rõhuasetusega Läänemere regiooni kommunikatsioonivormide kujutamisele, reisimotiivi tähendusele narratiivis ning ruunikivide puhul ka selle visuaalsele väljendusele. Hermeneutilise metodoloogia arendamine tekstide kultuuriajaloolisel uurimisel.

2. Saadud uurimistoetused:
Põhjamaade Ministrite Nõukogu grantiprogramm *Nordic Grant Scheme*, projekt „Det konjugala nätverk", uurimisstipendium Kopenhaagenis, 2001. aasta august.
Põhjamaade Ministrite Nõukogu grantiprogramm *Nordic Grant Scheme*, projekt „Historical connections in the Baltic region", uurimisstipendium Uppsala Ülikoolis, 2002. aasta veebruar-september.
Põhjamaade Ministrite Nõukogu grantiprogramm *Nordic Grant Scheme*, projekt „Interdisciplinary approaches to text: combining philology, history and communication theories" 2001-2003, põhitäitja.

Põhjamaade Ministrite Nõukogu grantiprogramm *Programme for Nordic Studies Abroad*, projekt „Dialogues with tradition: studying the Nordic saga heritage" 2004, põhitäitja.

3. **Muu teaduslik organisatsiooniline ja erialane tegevus:**

Rahvusvahelise koostööprojekti „Dialogues with tradition: studying the Nordic saga seritage" (2004) koordinaator. Projekti raames korraldatud rahvusvahelise saagaseminari (15-16. aprill, 2004) peakorraldaja.

Rahvusvahelise koostööprojekti „Interdisciplinary approaches to text: combining philology, history and communication theories" (2001-2003) koordinaator.

Viimatinimetatud projekti raames korraldatud ruuniseminari (31. märts-1. aprill, 2003), tõlkeseminari (7. mai, 2003) ja doktorandide seminari (21-22. mai, 2003, Tartu) korraldaja.

Rahvusvahelise sümpoosioni „Text and context: combining philology, history and cultural studies" (17-18. mai, 2002) peakorraldaja. VII rahvusvahelise konverentsi „Svenska språkets historia" (25-26. aprill, 2002) korralduskomitee liige. Rahvusvahelise seminari „Nordiske dager" (8-9. aprill, 1999, Tartu) korralduskomitee liige.

Erialane enesetäiendus

Norra keele ja kirjanduse täiendkursus Oslo ülikoolis (juuli 1998).

Islandi keele ja kirjanduse kursus Reykjaviki ülikoolis (juuni 2001).

Põhjamaade doktorandide intensiivkursus "Nordisk forskerkurs i nyspråklig edisjonsfilologi I" (Oslo, august 2002).

Põhjamaade doktorandide intensiivkursus "Nordisk forskerkurs i nyspråklig edisjonsfilologi II" (Visby, august 2003).

Koolitus „Õppimine ja õpetamine kõrgkoolis" (Tartu Ülikool, november 2003 ja veebruar 2004).

Rahvusvaheline interdistsiplinaarne kursus Socrates 2004 „Cultures in Contact: Northern Europe 700-1200 AD" (Tartu Ülikool, august 2004).

Ühiskondlik ja publitsistlik tegevus

Ettekanded Skandinaaviamaade kohta erinevatel seminaridel, avaldanud Skandinaaviateemalisi artikleid väljaannetes *Postimees* ja *Estlands-nytt*.

PUBLICATIONS

1. Zilmer, Kristel. 2002. *Kristne runeinnskrifter i dynamisk sammenheng: tekstuelle utviklingslinjer og kulturhistorisk kontekst*. Nordistica Tartuensia VI. Tartu: Tartu University Press.

2. Zilmer, Kristel. 2002. "Nordiske runeinnskrifters opplysninger om kontakter innenfor Østersjøområdet i vikingtiden og tidlig middelalder." In: Svante Lagman & Stig Örjan Ohlsson & Viivika Voodla (Eds.). *Svenska språkets historia i Östersjöområdet*. Studier i svensk språkhistoria VII & Nordistica Tartuensia VII. Tartu: Tartu University Press, Rätt Satt Hård & Lagman HB.

3. Zilmer, Kristel. 2003. "Learning about Places and People: Representations of Travelling Connections and Communication Situation in the Sagas of Icelanders." In: Stefanie Würth & Tõnno Jonuks & Axel Kristinsson (Eds.). *Sagas and Societies: International Conference at Borgarnes, Iceland. September 5-9, 2002*. University of Tübingen, electronic book: http://w210.ub.uni-tuebingen.de/portal/sagas.

4. Zilmer, Kristel. 2003. "Representations of Intercultural Communication in the Sagas of Icelanders." In: Rudolf Simek & Judith Meurer (Eds.). *Scandinavia and Christian Europe in the Middle Ages. Papers of the 12th International Saga Conference, Bonn/Germany, 28th July-2nd August 2003*. Bonn: Hausdruckerei der Universität Bonn. 549-556.

5. Zilmer, Kristel. 2003. "Texts and Historical Tradition: A Hermeneutical Approach." In: Kristel Zilmer & Stig Örjan Ohlsson (Eds.). *Perspectives on Text and Context: Report from an International Symposium Held at the University of Tartu, Estonia, 17-18 May 2002*. Nordistica Tartuensia VIII. Tartu: Tartu University Press. 53-68.

6. Zilmer, Kristel & Stig Örjan Ohlsson 2003. (Eds.). Perspectives on Text and Context: Report from an International Symposium Held at the University of Tartu, Estonia, 17-18 May 2002. Nordistica Tartuensia VIII. Tartu: Tartu University Press.

7. Zilmer, Kristel. 2005. "Christian Runic Inscriptions in a Dynamic Context." In: Marie Stoklund et al. (Eds.). *Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium on Runes and Runic Inscriptions. Jelling, Denmark, 16-20 August 2000*. København. In press.

8. Zilmer, Kristel. 2005. "The Motive of Travelling in Saga Narrative." In: Kristel Zilmer (Ed.). *Dialogues with Tradition: Studying the Nordic Saga Heritage*. Nordistica Tartuensia. Tartu: Tartu University Press. Forthcoming.

9. Zilmer, Kristel. 2005. (Ed.). *Dialogues with Tradition: Studying the Nordic Saga Heritage*. Nordistica Tartuensia. Tartu: Tartu University Press. Forthcoming.

10. Zilmer, Kristel. "Kommunikatsioonist ja kontaktidest Läänemere piirkonnas islandlaste saagade andmetel." In: Mare Kõiva (Ed.). *Sator 3: Artikleid usundi- ja kombeloost*. Tartu. Submitted.

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PLACE NAMES AND INHABITANT NAMES

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