A Viking saga – a story of pre-histories

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A Viking Saga – A story of pre-histories –

In the 17th century the kingdom of Sweden became a great power and the king, Gustav II Adolf, wanted to strengthen the spirit of national community. He enlarged upon an already existing tradition of the use of the past for political purposes in Scandinavia, where the Danish and the Swedish kings had both made use of history to accentuate their own national distinctiveness and strengthen their patriotic arguments (Moberg 1969:36f). This need for national community and pride led to the institution of the 'Placat och Pâbudh Om Gamble Monumenter och Antiquiteter' (Law of Old Monuments and Antiquities) in 1666, which has been regarded as the first embryo of today's powerful laws for protection of cultural heritage in Sweden (Janson 1974:9f; Cleere 1984:126).

To be continued on page 3.
EDITORIAL

In this issue we will take time to consider the myths surrounding the Viking. As we know, the Vikings and their culture have been used and exposed to an extensive creation of myths in different contexts. They are used in every possible connection, for instance, for marketing purposes, sporting events and on a wide range of products, due, of course, to their symbolic strength. Unfortunately, some of the Viking and Norse symbols have also been used for occult purposes. In this issue Anna Källén discusses the Romanticist image of the Viking as established within the Romanticist literature tradition in Scandinavia in the beginning of the 19th century. An image that may be explained by the political turbulence due to the break-up in the union between Denmark and Norway, and the corresponding split up of Sweden and Finland, that gave rise to a political focus on the establishment of new nations. She also makes comparisons with today's image of the Viking as used in TV-programs and in educational materials.

We have finally the pleasure of presenting pictures and information about the picture stone that was discovered in Silte, Gotland October last year. At the present, interpretations of the pictures on the stone are being made together with the necessary preservation measures. The county museum has plans for making a copy of the picture stone. All future interpretation and any painting will be done on this facsimile in order to preserve the original. There have been discussions about possibly transporting the copy to the place where the original stone was found. The local inhabitants have shown an active interest in this matter. We will report on coming steps in a later issue.

With the arrival of summer, activities in Viking villages and Viking societies increase. A large number of markets and events are being held during a few intensive months for thousands of participants and visitors. We also present some of these markets in this issue.

Since the next issue of the newsletter will be published in September we would like to wish all our members enjoyable reading and a pleasant summer.

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A Viking Saga

A story of pre-histories —

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Continued from front page.

Thus there is a long and strong tradition in Sweden of using the past as a past that has changed through time, that has been disrupted and incorporated into new political structures and new systems of thought. In this tradition many influential stories of prehistory were created. Perhaps the most potent of them all is the Viking saga.

However, before we begin examining this story of the past more closely, I need to clarify some terms. The word myth (in the Viking context replaced with the word saga) will be used frequently. It is used as a general term for stories of the past incorporated into a new historical context. By this choice of words I wish to avoid placing myth in contrast with history (as in history and myth; us and them; true and false) (cf. Eriksen 1996:19). I can see no reason to make such a distinction, but rather, I define history as one kind of myth that is based on a scientific foundation.

The Viking Saga

Nowadays it is said that the Vikings were a people living in Scandinavia during the Viking Age, i.e. AD 800-1050. We know them through finds from their settlements, their ships and their burials, but also from historical sources from what is Iceland today, the European continent and the British Isles. The image of the Viking is well described by Raphael Samuel (1994:27): “a man wading ashore from a longboat; dressed in a horned helmet, and grasping a broadsword in his right hand: he is off to sack a village”. The myth of blond, heroic and adventurous men raiding and trading in far-away lands has been and is still one of the most well-used myths of prehistory in both Europe and North America.

The Viking Age is, however, a concept that appears rather late in history, and although the word Viking occurs in some contemporary written records, it is never used to describe a whole group of people. Scholars are not even sure what the word originally stood for. Nor are there any indications in the archaeological material that these people called themselves Vikings or that they had a feeling of belonging to a specific delimited group, inhabiting a great part of Scandinavia for three centuries (Harding Sørensen 1990:6; Cederlund in press:66f, 138ff). We have thus no reason to believe that the people inhabiting southern Scandinavia in the 9th to 11th centuries were what we would call an ethnic group named Vikings.

Instead we must look at more recent history to find the appearance of the Viking society.

The Viking Age

The Viking as we know him today (for the stereotype Viking is almost exclusively male) was born in the beginning of the 19th century within the Romantist literature tradition in Scandinavia. It was a time of political turbulence; Denmark and Norway split up their union as did Sweden and Finland, placing a lot of political focus on the establishment of new nations. It was also at the same time, at the turn of the century, that the concepts of the nation-state as well as the idea of the free and independent individual person were born (Harding Sørensen 1990:6, Frykman 1993:134). The concept of the Viking Age was invented and equated with prehistory as a whole. It was presented as the glorious past of the Scandinavian nations, with strong and individualistic men conquering the world. The Swedish Romantist poets Erik Gustaf Geijer and Esaias Tegnére wrote about these former glorious days of heroism and bravery and their works Vikings and Frithiofs Saga from the early 19th century, together with numerous romantic paintings from the Scandinavian countries have remained the main source of influence for later images of Viking society (Frykman 1993:138ff, Cederlund in press).

The heritage from these 19th century romantic poets can easily be traced in modern depictions of the Viking Age, for example in the chapter on Teutonic mythology in The Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology (1996:269). A photograph of a broad river running through the woodlands of northern Scandinavia is accompanied by the text:

"Typical Viking country... It is from such inhospitable shores as these that they sailed in their longships a thousand years ago. The great saga literature of medieval Iceland preserves the spirit of this heroic age while the old pagan religion was kept alive by them long after the rest of Europe had been converted to Christianity."

About a century later this same image of the Vikings was incorporated into Nazi propaganda as the prototype for the Aryan race; blond, powerful, individualistic and heroic men conquering the European continent. A picture that very well suited the ends of Nazi ideology (Harding Sørensen 1990:10f, 17ff; Cederlund in press:4). This propagandising of the Vikings occurred in all Scandinavian countries, but was most strongly expressed in Norway during the German occupation, and even today there is a greater reluctance in Norway than in Sweden and Denmark to make use of the Viking past (Eriksen 1996:38). With the horrible results of this use of the Viking myth fresh in their memories, Scandinavian scholars working with the Viking Age in the post-war period have tried to avoid reinforcing the stereotype. Instead, post-war research has been characterised by an unwritten law emphasising that the late Iron Age society itself had been far more varied than the propaganda images of the Viking had shown, and there has been a shift in focus towards the ordinary daily life of the Viking Age: on settlements, market places, women and
families. But since a lot of archaeologists during the war period played an active part in the creation of these propaganda pictures it was too sensitive a subject to be brought up for public discussion. Instead, direct critique of the political use of the past was avoided until the last two decades when many of the theoretical discussions within archaeology have been concerned with the political dimension of the results we present to the public. But this has been discussed mainly "behind closed doors" inside the discipline of archaeology, while the Viking saga and other myths of prehistory live on among the general public.

In the autumn of 1998 the scientific program, Vetenskapsens Vrld (World of Science), on one of the non-commercial Swedish TV channels showed a brand-new production in two parts called "The Viking Saga". The film was also produced in an English version, with an American commentator, with the intention of being exported, preferably to the USA. It makes a grandiose start with the words: "The Viking mystery - civilisation and conquest a thousand years ago... Archaeological evidence from the rivers of Russia to the icebergs of Greenland uncovering: The Viking Saga".

In the first of the two parts we follow the Vikings who went westward, and there are screenplay versions of raids and conquests by weather-beaten men with long hair, who are seen building and sailing their technologically superb ships. These dramatisations are mixed with pictures of archaeological finds, authoritative explanations of archaeological methods and computerised sequences reconstructing ships and villages; all accompanied by adventurous music and magnificent panoramic pictures of mountains and fjords. The intentions are obviously serious, that is, not to reproduce the Viking stereotype, but to incorporate recent research results and modern science in a popular narrative. The result, however, is for the most part precisely a reproduction of those stereotypes and the discipline of archaeology is presented as more or less a caricature of itself:

"The remains of Viking society lie buried in the ground, age upon age like pages in a book... a hidden archive of civilisation beneath our feet for the archaeologists to open up"

It is quite evident that archaeologists and their complicated research methods are shown, not with an explanatory purpose, but rather to give scientific legitimacy to the picture that is shown of the Vikings and their society: a picture of male power and dominance, heroism and individual bravery; which we can easily recognise from 19th century Romanticist poems. The almost inevitable nationalistic touch is also present, and is well-represented by Dr. Patrick Wallace standing in front of an impressive archaeological trench in central Dublin, talking about the remains of a ship found in Denmark that dendrochronological analysis indicates was made on the island that is Ireland today:

"That ship has been shown to have been made here in Dublin, in Viking Dublin. It's a pure Viking ship, it's the longest one known. It was made here in Dublin. It's now in a Danish museum, identified by Danish scholars for us [emphasised by a gesture with his hand on his heart] Irish to take pride in."

The second part of the film tells us about the journeys of the Vikings on the rivers in what is today Russia, and in this part we get a more profound description of the current state of research and we see clearly how the
Viking myth has been incorporated into the Russian society of today. Leonid Genadji Petrovich, a submarine captain from St Peters burg says: "I have little knowledge of the history of the Vikings. But what appeals to me is their courage and their love of freedom, and that makes me feel close to them". Two young blond men traveling on the rivers on a Viking ship replica say furthermore:

"The Vikings of the 10th century - our forefathers were a sort of bridge between cultures and lands.
- They were a free people and yes, I think they were happy.
- They took problems on their own shoulders. If something had to be done, "do it yourself". In that sense we are Vikings too. Vikings of the 20th century. Modern Vikings."

It is clear that the Viking myth lives on to be incorporated into different contexts. The stable political situation in Scandinavia at present renders no need for strong national symbols for political purposes. Jonas Frykman says about Sweden that its society has been so stable that the nation has become vague, simply because there has been no need for a raised voice (Frykman 1993:139). But material symbols attributed to the Viking myth; ships, decorations, not to mention the horned helmets that have never belonged to the period AD 800-1050, are all used in different contexts today to signify the values associated with this mythical past. For commercial purposes we see a Viking ship selling Vodka with the name Explorer, and various products from shoe polish to lotteries are marketed with the name or image of the Vikings (Kristiansen 1992:4; Cederlund 1997:29; in press:3). Vikings also occur in right-wing extremist propaganda both in Europe and in the USA, and these groups use mainly the pre-Christian Norse mythology (Cederlund in press:4). But where we mainly see Vikings nowadays is in the stands of sports arenas, where fans dress in helmets with horns (?) to mark their national sympathies, and to show which nation has the strongest and most victorious sports(wo)men. In a politically stable nation state it is often in sport events that patriotism flourishes,

and is allowed to flourish (Ehn 1993:206ff, Eriksen 1996:60ff). Words like bravery, heroism and triumph are common words in the terminology of sports journalists (Ehn 1993:208), and it is not hard to see why the Viking myth has fallen on fertile ground there.

At first glance the Vikings of sport arenas have nothing in common with the fascist propaganda Vikings, and it might be said that this is a 'good' or innocent use of the past. At the same time, we can easily identify the Viking myth as we know it from the Romantic poets, still alive and hardly even altered. It is exactly the same picture of the Viking that is expressed in both Frithiofs Saga, in Nazi propaganda images, in sports arenas and in the Viking Saga. Only the change of political and social circumstances can determine whether it is innocent or dangerous.

This was the first part of the article. The second part will be published in the next issue of the "Viking Heritage Newsletter".
The picturestone from Silte, Gotland

By Nils-Gustaf Nydolf, Gotlands Fornsål, Mellangatan 19, S-621 56 Visby, Sweden

This mushroom-shaped picture-stone was found in the beginning of October 1998. It is made of limestone with a height of 3,05 metres, a maximum width at the base of 1,66 metres and with a thickness of 20-25 centimetres. It weighs about 3,5 tons. Stones of this type are usually dated to around 7-800 AD but recent research has questioned this more and more.

The place it was found is called Stenbro in the parish of Silte. The picturestone was found in an aggregation of stones that constitute the southern foundation of the stone bridge leading over a small watercourse. The present road section is very old and may be pre-historic. At the north bridge abutment there is already one smaller, today blind, picture-stone with a height of 1,2 metres. This stone is not situated exactly on its original position, but it must be very close. This stone was also found during roadwork at the roadside in the 1880's.

The recently found stone was found while laying a cable at a depth of about 0,4 metres along the western roadside. It was lying with the picture-side downwards, croswise to the road direction among a lot of stones. The excavator operators are the only ones with information about the circumstances surrounding the find. The trench had been filled in and the stone had been lifted when the staff from the museum arrived on the spot.

GEAB and Vattenfall (the local power companies) were responsible for laying the cable, a technically interesting story in itself. This cable will supply the power system with the electrical power produced by wind power generators in the southern parts of Gotland (Nät), since the present system doesn't have the capacity to transport all newly-produced power. The direct current cable is also interesting because it is a totally new type and construction, used here for the first time.

The path of the cable, a total of 70 kilometres, was investigated archaeologically before they began to lay the cable, which implies that preliminary investigations or special inventories had been carried out in several stages. However investigations at the place where the stone was found had been completed and there were no archaeologists present. Nevertheless the operators acted in an exemplary manner by immediately reporting the find to the museum as soon as they had identified it as a picture-stone. This must be regarded as an exploit considering that the trench was only 0,5 metres wide and that the visible backside of the stone was crude and rough. The excavator operator detected the small curve in the stone's edge between the "leg" and the "head" and understood what it was.

The stone is now located in the museum's storehouse where interpretations of its pictures have begun. There are parts of "usual" pictures; at the bottom there is a ship with highly-bowed stems and a visible rudder. Under the ship are a number of rhombuses with uncertain meaning. Usually there are waves, but these rhombuses are difficult to interpret as waves.

The ship has a mast and a large chequered square sail extending from one border edge on the stone to the other.

Above the ship is a surface almost free from pictures (at least so far), with only some traces of geometrical figures on the left side. On a level with the transition between the "leg" and the "head" are fragments of a border and higher up a four-legged horse can be seen running to the right. The horse has a very strong neck and a small head with distinct reins. There is also a spear but no traces of a horseman. There is only a rough unfinished surface on the place where a horseman should have been. In front of the horse's head there are two women standing with long dresses and long hair (?). The woman in front is offering the assaulting horseman...
man a raised (mead-)horn. In front of the horse’s hooves there is a smaller four-legged animal; a dog or a wolf.

Above the women there is a triangular knot, also common on other stones. At the top of the stone are traces of a border. A border of wave-patterns or geometrical triangles edges the entire face of the stone.

Many of the pictures appear through relief-technique, that is to say the stone-surfaces surrounding the figures have been cut smooth and countersunk.

From a stonemason’s point of view the stone is of a quite poor quality. The surface is rough and flakes easily and it contains quite a lot of fossils which cause bumps and cavities. One idea is that the stone never was completed. The stonemason gave up! There are no traces of colour, and the stone’s root is very short compared with its total height, implying that it must have stood rather unstably and probably fell over quite soon after it was erected. The place it was found and its original location are probably the same.

So far the stone has been photographed in low-angle lighting with a digital camera and the interpretations of the pictures have been made in a computer based on the photographs.

This summer the stone will be conserved, meaning that the flakes will be fastened and cracks glued. After that a cast of the stone will be taken. The mould will be made in silicon rubber. A copy will be moulded of coloured reinforced concrete. After that further interpretations will be made, by rubbing the surface (of the copy) with paint, so that all irregularities in the surface appear in sharp contrast. This method was developed in Italy and has been used earlier successfully on both rock-carvings and picture-stones, revealing more information than the low-angle lighting method.

Preliminary plans at present are to exhibit the original stone at the Gotlands Fornsal museum this summer. The original stone is of such poor quality that it not can be exposed to external climate for any length of time. Hopefully the copy will be erected in Silte, but the exact location has not been determined. It would be most interesting to re-create a milieu with the watercourse, the stone bridge and picture-stones on both sides, perhaps connected with a parking place. There is great interest in the parish to get “its stone back”. There are also plans to conduct an archaeological investigation of the find location, since this probably will not differ from its original location.

A controversial question involves painting the traces on the stone. Bearing in mind that painting on the picture stone is a subjective interpretation and that many of the picture traces are difficult to interpret it would be wrong to become locked into one definite interpretation. One idea is to light the original with low-angle lighting so that observers can make their own interpretations. On the other hand, painting the traces on the copy could be conceivable.

Finding this stone has initiated other projects, for instance making an inventory of and eventually preserving, the remaining stones that still are standing in open air. There are also plans to arrange an international symposium on
picture stones in a few years.

Picture stones are found almost only on Gotland. We know of 375, of which many are only fragments. Only a few are still standing in their original locations. The stones have served as both gravestones and as honour memorials in connection with graves, or visible along roads, or as in Silte at a bridge where the bridge builder perhaps wanted to erect a memorial of himself. Several stones have been recycled in one piece or as fragments in church walls. It is possible that this was done on purpose, to manifest the new faith's power over the old.

Picture stones appear for the first time in the 5th century AD. They were a strict axe-like form with pictures of geometrically performed “sun-wheels” and rowing ships. This shape can also be found around the Mediterranean, first of all in Spain. Direct import is not impossible.

Soon after, smaller axe-shaped stones also appeared as well as stones with a curved top, most often used for grave coffins. This latter shape, as well as the mushroom-shaped ones, which appear in the 8th century AD have shapes that can be associated with Arabic forms. Lively cultural contacts existed with both the Mediterranean countries and the Orient. The mushroom-shaped stones had a rare metaphorical language. Themes from the sagas are often depicted, recognised from the Icelandic sagas, which were written down in the 13th century AD. With Christianity's breakthrough the pagan pictures disappeared and were replaced by the Christian cross and long runiform decorations describing the stone's purpose and by and for whom it was erected. However the stone's shape was retained despite the change in religion.
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Vikings in Gotlands Fornsal 1999
By Maria Herlin-Karnell, Gotlands Fornsal, Mellangatan 19, S-621 56 Visby, Sweden

Thanks to the Island Games with its Viking theme, Gotlands Fornsal, the Historical Museum of Gotland, will be presenting a smaller Viking exhibition this summer. Viking-age sports were not only skiing, skating, shooting, rowing and swimming but also the art of writing poetry and playing the harp.

Ships were the precondition for the Viking expansion during the 9th to 11th centuries, either westwards or eastwards. There was a high level of knowledge in the field of navigation. In the exhibition the visitor can test how to navigate with the help of the stars or how to take a bearing with a reconstructed instrument. Viking-age religion and the exciting transition period between paganism and Christianity is also presented.

The Treasury in Gotlands Fornsal
Gotland has aptly been called the world's largest treasure chamber. In proportion to its area, the island has the greatest abundance of treasure hoards in the world. Of the more than 225,850 Viking coins found to date in Sweden, more than 145,450 have been unearthed on Gotland. From the Viking Age alone, over 700 hoards have been discovered. See some of these in The Treasury.

The Hall of Picture Stones in Gotlands Fornsal
For well over a millennium and a half, the Gotlanders erected skillfully carved stones decorated with symbols of renown, death and resurrection, dramatic scenes and entwined dragons filled with runes. They were probably erected both in memoria and honour of the deceased, and to foster the contemporaneous cults. Today, these Gotlandic picture stones constitute unique monuments from our prehistory. Together they comprise an important source of knowledge about our ancestors' world of myths and sagas, simultaneously providing us with valuable information about daily life during prehistory.

The signs and figures on the picture stones illustrate religious conceptions, housing, clothing, domestic animals and weapons. They provide us with increased knowledge of the design of the contemporary ships and their equipment, wagons and sledges. Male-figures with well-groomed beards wearing helmets without horns and women with long, plaited hair both provide a very different picture to that conjured up by many a modern imagination. Scenes of battles and sacrifice reveal an alas far too common occurrence of violence.

Time and place
Over 400 picture stones have been discovered to date. A few remain standing on their original site, others are on exhibition at the Historical Museum of Gotland, the National Museum of Antiquities in Stockholm and the open-air museum at Bunge, in northern Gotland. A number of stones have been 'recycled' at a later date, having been utilised for building churches, bridges, prehistoric graves and fireplaces.

The earliest picture stones were erected some time during the 5th century and the latest during the 12th century. Dating is based on comparison with adjoining graves and their contents, or on the designs and patterns on the stones. While the earlier stones were placed on the burial sites, although rarely in the actual graves, the later stones were placed - often in groups - beside roads, bridges, sacrificial and assembly places. Their conspicuous position in the Gotlandic landscape probably attracted a great deal of attention.

The picture stones may have had an important function in religious ceremonies, constituting memorials to men who were highly respected in the prehistoric community. Smaller burial cists with small decorated stone slabs are thought to be women's graves.

The picture stone from Hunninge in Klinte
The interpretation of the figures on the Hunninge stone is debatable, the prime question being whether they should be read from the top down or vice versa. As opposed to other large stones with their jumbled figures, the depictions on the Hunninge stone are distributed among clearly defined panels. This method of narrating in a series of scenes with a coherent story - similar to present day comic strips - might be said to be the equivalent of the ancient Nordic epic poetry with a main thread running through the story. Since the figures at the top of the stone can be clearly connected to Valhall, the final 'heaven' for heroes who died in battle, it would be feasible to presume that the story ends there.

In the bottom right hand corner of the pictorial face a battle is raging. A farm with several houses and surrounded by a palisade is being defended by men armed with bows. In readiness for the fight, the cattle have been led away to shelter and tethered up in the enclosure. In the left hand corner are the attackers, some of them unfortunately almost totally abraded, but one man can be clearly seen with a bow in his hand. The man seems to be falling backwards (hit?) and it might be his bird-like soul that is leaving the body behind him. Or is it Odin's spirit in the form of a bird who is somehow intervening in the battle? A woman with serpent-like object in her hand also
The silver hoard from Ocksarne in Hemse. Discovered in 1997. Dated to post 999 AD, this being the date of the most recent coin in the hoard. The composition of the hoard is unique and includes large quantities of so-called bundles of silver, entwining rods and objects from the Russian Empire. The total weight of the hoard is 5 kilos. Photo: Raymond Heydström, Gotlands Fornsal.

seems to be involved in the event – can she be a witch? Might it be a valkyrie on the scene of the battle?

In the scene above can be found a motif that is well known from the Edda. In the poems about Sigurd the Dragon Slayer, the story is told of Gunnar, who married Brynhild. She was already betrothed to Sigurd. Sigurd, however, had been given an amnesial potion, so he actually assisted his friend Gunnar in marrying Brynhild. Sigurd himself married Gunnar’s sister Gudrun. This complicated story ends with Gunnar being thrown into a snake pit, while his sister stands by watching. An alternative interpretation is that the motif portrays the punished god Loki (Loke), chained to a cliff beneath a snake dropping venom. Beside him, his faithful wife Sigyn is collecting the venom in a bowl.

The centre panel contains the recurrent ship, the actual or the symbolic funerary ship, here sailing forth in the foaming sea. The sail is rectangular and chequered, woven in long strips that have been plaited together diagonally to produce a lozenge effect, rather like splint baskets. This construction produced a sturdy sail, well able to withstand strong winds. The ship is crewed by a number of men with pointed beards, convex helmets and protective shields.

That the final voyage to Valhalla would be undertaken by boat was quite obvious in the minds of all Gotlanders. Valhalla was the great hall in Asgard, where Odin lived and whither the dead and honourable warriors came. With the valkyries in continuous attendance the combatants in this “paradise” were invited to happy hunts, battle games and feasts of pork from the boar Sårinmör.
Picture stone from Hunnings, Klinte. This stone is one of the best preserved, figurally rich picture stones from the 8th and 9th centuries. It was recovered from the ground where it was lying face down, thus protected from weathering.
The fifth "Nordisk Vikingmarked"

9 - 11 July at Borre, Norway
Do you want to experience a Viking market just like it could have been about 1000 years ago? Borre Vikinglag will be arranging their fifth "Nordisk Vikingmarked" on the shore of "viken" (the bay). The market area is idyllically located just outside Borre National Park which contains the largest number of grave mounds from the Viking Age in Scandinavia.

In the market area you will meet Vikings from all over Scandinavia and England carrying on a high quality trade just like the real Vikings did during their time. For instance: Iron extraction and working, and wood working like making wooden vessels, etc. You might also see comb-, bead- and bow-manufacturing, dressing of fur skins, dressmaking, the shoemaker's workshop, weaving and so on.

You will also experience how Vikings, fully dressed for battle, practice a struggle "for life or death" on the battlefield. Throwing an axe is also a spectacular example of the skills on this year's programme. During the market an archery contest with real longbows will be going on and in this arena visitors will have the opportunity of testing the noble skill of archery.

Visitors wishing to try one or two crafts can do so in a special area within the market place. There you can ask and get instructions from the Vikings about the different craft techniques or simply try them yourself. Children might just like going for a horseback ride.

How to find the "Nordisk Vikingmarked" at Borre: Located at Borre National Park about 3 km south of Horten. Take national highway 19 and exit at the sign for Borre church.

Opening hours
July 9 - 11: 12 – 8 p.m.

Entry fee:
Children 30:- KNR
Adults 50:- KNR
Family ticket (4 pers) 150:- KNR

The Viking Market at Foteviken

July 2 - 4 1999
The Viking Market at Foteviken 1999 will be held for the fourth time. This year it will be the only one held in Scania. The Viking reservation is open for historical activities all year-round. The market opens Friday July 2 when Vikings from near and far will gather to prepare for the market days.

As in previous years the market will be characterised by a lot of activities such as enactments and games. The best "Foteviking" will be chosen among the winners in some of the minor competitions that are held on Saturday and Sunday. The chiefness will appoint the winner, who will receive the richly-decorated battle-axe as a challenge trophy. There will also be competitions in Fighting, Archery, Hook the Bottom, the Viking Rush, Log Throwing, King of the Hill, Tug of war, Large Cod Throwing, Axe throwing and Heftpastaf. There will also be a large feast in the Valhall on the Saturday evening.

Market hours: Friday: all day long, Saturday: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Sunday: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.
For more information:
http://www.foteviken.se

The 5th Viking Festival Wolin - Jomsborg

Welin, an island at the mouth of the Oder, was one of the largest urban settlements along the southern Baltic coast, extending over some 20 hectares in all. The Scandinavians knew Wolin as Jomsborg and, during the tenth century, it may have been the base of the semi-legendary pirate band of warrior Vikings known from the sagas as the Jomsvikings. In the 8th century Wolin was a simple fishing settlement but it had developed into a centre of craftsmen by as early as about 800 AD. Archaeologists have uncovered the well-preserved remains of a waterside town - the wooden houses and streets surrounded by a semi-circular rampart with palisade defences closely resembling those of contemporary Viking towns at Hedehy and Ribe.

The fifth Viking festival in Wolin takes place July 16-18 1999. The organisers would like to invite more re-enactors and Viking groups to participate. So far re-enactors from Poland, Germany, Denmark, Russia and Lithuania will be attending. You will meet with:
• about 70 warriors
• two Viking ships and longboats
• two early Medieval music groups
• two early Medieval ceremony groups
• 35 early Medieval craftsmen
• the large, well-known archaeological excavation.

The organisers will provide the visitors with full accommodation and will also pay for transport by ferry, bus, etc. Transport to the island of Wolin from Sweden and Denmark is very easy. There are ferries from Copenahgen and Ystad, Sweden to Swinoujscie, Poland. From Swinoujscie it takes only 30 minutes by bus to Wolin (38 kilometres).

For further information, you can also contact:
The offices in Germany:
Berlin: Henryk Wolski, phone: +49 306 215 545
Schlesw./Erhard Drapatz, phone/fax: +49 432 342 08
NEW BOOKS!


Else Roedahl is professor of Medieval Archaeology at the Arhus University in Denmark and honorary doctor at the Trinity College in Dublin. She enjoys a position of great standing within historical circles as a scientist and author. She has more than 20 years experience of arranging Viking exhibitions in England, France, Germany and in the Nordic countries. "The Vikings" is a revised edition of her Danish book that came out in 1987. It gives a splendid summary of the Viking as a phenomenon in its proper historical context with lots of thorough descriptions of the Viking Age society's organisation and unique manifestations.

Vikingetidens metalbearbejdning by Bjarne Lenborg (Odense University Press 1998). (Address: Campusvej 55, DK-5230 Odense M, Denmark). 146 pages (of which 31 are the English summary), 87 figs. Price DKK 150.-

This present study of Viking Period metal techniques is a product of many years' work. The author has a professional background as silversmith, followed by a long career in the Preservation Dept. of Odense By's Museer, Denmark. Thus, the artefact material studies are mainly Danish, but the results and implications are of general interest for the whole "Viking Area". The book describes a surprisingly wide range of metal techniques. It is based on detailed visual observations, analyses, and experiments, but an important supplement is the comparison with the detailed descriptions given by the 12th century monk Theophilus' work, "De diversis artibus", a veritable handbook in various crafts. The author makes many fine observations and does his best in order to explain these in everyday language. His rather late dating of the Mästermyr tool kit will no doubt be discussed and criticised by Swedish archaeologists. However, the book as a whole is a fine and very interesting all-round introduction to a topic area that most usually is dealt with only in short and rather specialised articles. Thus Bjarne Lenborg's book deserves a wide circulation.

Dragons et Drakkars, Le mythe Viking de la Scandinavie à la Normandie XVIIe - XXe siècles (Musée de Normandie, Caen 1996).

It is well known that the Vikings have made a profound impression on reality as well as in the mythical world. Few periods in our prehistory can show such extensive creation of myths as the Viking Age.

The view of the Vikings has changed over time, but still the image of the berserk stands firm; a savage that plundered and raped Europe in a way no one had experienced before. A strange fact is that the further away we get from the Vikings' native countries, the wilder and more bloodthirsty they are described.

Several aspects attest to how greatly exaggerated this picture is. The Vikings were hardly worse than any other people in Europe when it comes to plundering and burning. The written sources on the Vikings are mostly from people and countries who were affected by the Viking expansion. They had, for natural reasons, hardly any reason for being objective in their judgement of the Vikings. A book dealing with the Viking myth was published a couple of years ago at the Musée de Normandie in Caen, France: "Dragons et Drakkars. Le Mythe Viking de la Scandinavie à la Normandie XVIIe - XXe siècles". The book is written in French by a number of experts on the Viking Age. The book is richly illustrated with pictures that in a most explicit way present a picture of how the Vikings have been used in different connections during the last 300 years, by history writers as well as politicians and businessmen.
A trelleborg in Trelleborg

By Emma Kristina Stilje

The trelleborg in Trelleborg, Skåne is the fifth Viking Age fortress found, but the first one in Sweden. During the Viking Age, the province of Skåne was part of the Danish kingdom, and the other four fortresses or trelleborgs were all found in Denmark.

During excavations in central Trelleborg 1988-1991, traces of a Viking Age fortress were found. According to dendrochronological analysis, the fortress dates back to 980 AD, when king Harald Bluetooth ruled. He had just "won for himself all Denmark and Norway and made the Danes Christian", as he tells us on the runestones of Jelling. King Harald is said to have initiated the other four trelleborgs excavated in different parts of Denmark.

A circular rampart lined with a wooden palisade, pierced by four gate openings is characteristic of the trelleborg-fortresses. The interior is divided by wooden roads into four equal quarters, each quarter containing a block of four houses enclosing a courtyard. These long-houses are called trelleborg-houses after the first found fortress, Trelleborg on Sjælland near Slagelse in Denmark, excavated in 1934-42. The complex consisted of an outer fort, which partly surrounded the circular main fort.

Agerborg in north Jutland on the Limfjord is the largest trelleborg found, but only a lesser part of it has been excavated and therefore the archaeological material is not extensive. Fyrkat on the northeast of Jutland and Nonnebacken in Odense, on the island of Fyn are the two smallest fortresses with an internal diameter of 120 metres. Nonnebacken is not widely known, as there are no visible traces; it is the only fortress in Denmark without any houses found in the courtyard of the rampart.

The trelleborg in Trelleborg bears likeness to the others found in Denmark. The fortress had an outer diameter of 143 metres, surrounded by a moat on the outside. No contemporary buildings have been found in the courtyard of the fortress, but artefacts show that the area had settlements dating back to before as well as after the existence of the fortress, the oldest found dating back to the Stone Age. The fortress in Trelleborg is not quite as geometrically strict as the Danish ones; the rampart in Trelleborg being not quite circular is interpreted as a second construction built on top of an older one. A long-house, dating back to the 14th century was excavated in the courtyard and has been reconstructed in situ, based on the excavation's archaeological evidence. Traces of pit dwellings dating back to the 7th and 8th centuries have been excavated in the area surrounding the fortress, as well as a bit further south, just on the shore.

After excavating the fortress and displaying it to the interested public, discussions to the tune of "something must be done to preserve this cultural heritage" flourished almost daily in the local newspapers for some time. But the time a greater public began to realise the importance of the fortress, the process of building modern houses in the area had already begun, even in the actual courtyard of the fortress. As protests from the public became more and more pronounced, the "Association of the trelleborg in Trelleborg" was founded during spring 1992. The primal aim of the association was to work for a reconstruction of the fortress in situ. Furthermore, the aim has been to spread knowledge about the fortress and its historical importance. Over the years, we have initiated seminars and lectures on Viking Age subjects in general, such as Viking textiles and boating. We have continued to do so even after the reconstruction of the fortress in 1994-1995.

Since the process of building houses in the area had already begun before action was taken to save it, only about a quarter of the fortress has been reconstructed, part of the two ramparts along with the west port opening. The port opening was built, inspired by the Bayeux tapestries along with inspiration from contemporary fortresses and churches in early medieval Europe. The remaining part of the fortress remains underground, under houses and gardens, preserved for the future if not already destroyed by former building-processes, awaiting scientific discoveries of tomorrow. Perhaps some day in the future, we will be able to see the entire trelleborg in Trelleborg reconstructed.

Reconstruction of the fortress's building phases. Drawing: Annika Jeppson
Welcome to experience the Viking Age at close quarters in Trelleborg

During the 1999 season, the trelleborg in Trelleborg offers several shows and activities along with guided tours of the area. You are welcome to participate in many Viking activities, for example different workshops (textiles, ceramics, wood, glass) and outdoor theatre. Many activities also focus on children.

The shop in the medieval long-house is open 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. daily (15/5-29/8).

Guided tours
• 15/5-6/6 Saturday and Sunday 1 & 3 p.m. (Swedish)
• 7/6-29/8 Daily 11 a.m., 1 & 3 p.m. (Swedish) and 12, 2 & 4 p.m. (German)
• English-speaking staff will also be on hand to serve you.

• A children’s theatre is performing during July, in the Viking Age tent.

• During the month of August, the “trelleborgspelet” play will be performed in the amphitheatre outdoors, just outside the fortress (both free admission).

• A Summer Fête will be celebrated on Saturday 19th of June, beginning at 4 p.m. and continuing at least until sunset. Come and partake of food & drink, dance & music and watch the plays and jesters.

For further information, please contact the Tourist Information in Trelleborg
Phone: +46 410 533 22 or mail me at ark97eks@student3.lu.se

References:

The Danish fortresses and their structure. From SKALK nr 3, 1980.

The map shows Denmark’s Viking Age strongholds; "trelleborggar”, the Danevirke, town fortifications (Hedeby, Ribe and Arhus) and water-way barricades. From Jensen 1992; completed with data from Roesdahl 1980 and Rieck 1991.
VIKING HERITAGE
a network for Viking-related knowledge

The objectives of the network are:

- To develop and maintain the Council of Europe’s Viking Routes project.
- To co-operate with schools, universities etc in the field of education and training in the study of the Vikings.
- To collect information of present Viking history activities, and to distribute information about Vikings and their history.
- To create a fund for The Annual Viking Management Prize to the best Cultural Heritage Management of Viking History.

In promoting these aims, VIKING HERITAGE has begun an information service for its members with the newsletter Viking Heritage Newsletter. It will organize conferences and seminars and act as a monitoring and advisory body on all issues relating to an enhanced understanding of the Viking history, operating at both international and national levels.

Viking Heritage
A network for Viking-related knowledge

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