Editorial

Springtime in the North brings new light after a long dark winter, as true today as it was in the Viking Age. It is now time to put the projects that have been planned during cold winter nights into action. What does this new season have in store?

Welcome to the first issue of the year! And a special welcome to our new collaboration partner, the Destination Viking Saga Lands project that was launched on Iceland this February. Their contributions, as well as those from the other Destination Viking projects, will promote this magazine’s becoming the topical forum of the Viking world of today.

Within the Destination Viking projects, Viking sites and attractions will be improved and marketed for the benefit and pleasure of a growing interested public. New ideas for using the Viking heritage theme in the tourist industry will be introduced. One example can be found in the article by Jan Lundgren, where he discusses the idea of cruise-ship travel as “journeys into the unknown - exploratory tourism travel with an edge - a truly different experience”, an idea that has recently been tried on a small scale.

In the reconstruction of history many different aspects and issues arise, for instance, how archaeological remains and other sources are interpreted and understood. Recreating parts of a society of 1000 years ago is a complicated matter as you can read in several of the articles in this issue. We gladly accept contributions to this important debate.

I hope this issue will give you thought-provoking, fruitful and pleasant reading!

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A SYMBOL OF KINGS

The Use of Golden Vanes in Viking Ships

TEXT AND PHOTO:
Olaf T. Engvig

Introduction
Since well before the turn of the 10th century, Vikings from Norway had been venturing over the vast Northern Sea. Voyages to Britland, Ireland and the islands west and north of Scotland, and further on to remote areas like the Faeroes, Iceland and Greenland were so common that only crossings that went astray were mentioned in the Sagas, along with expeditions that found new land, and ventures for settlement. Regular passages to and from Iceland, Greenland and other destinations in the North Atlantic were hardly worth mentioning. After the first expeditions, sailings to Vinland are not recorded, even if we know the Vikings did call on at least one community in Newfoundland for many years.

While people from the Mediterranean ruled the southern seas mostly by coastal explorations, the many Norsemen conquered the northern seas by crossing vast areas of open, cold and hostile waters where seafarers from other cultures would not dream of staking out a course. This is even more impressive as they went head on out to sea, in lightly built, low-riding, open boats completely exposed to the elements of nature, and with little to guide them in navigation. Their maritime bravery has never ceased to amaze us.

How could they do it, and what type of navigational aids did they carry along to find their way to the other side? Part of the explanation is related to the ships they used. Over centuries of shipbuilding, techniques had developed with the combined use of wood and iron in a sophisticated but simple construction where all parts of a ship fitted and strengthened each other. The Northerners had excellent building material including iron, which was used for riveting together a light, flexible and strong hull that could withstand punishment over a long time on the high seas and stay afloat. On arrival their ships could be hauled ashore, or dry out during low tide, preventing the shipworms from eating the wood. The bottom could also be cleaned of marine growth before the return.

The answer to the navigational question is more difficult. Modern navigators and researchers have presented many arguments in this regard. Most of the work has been done behind the desk in an office or on board new commercial tonnage. Little emphasis has been given to practical research by navigating open boats on the high seas. It is also important to bear in mind that many extensive excavations carried out on sites from the Viking Age have produced thousands of artifacts depicting all aspects of life during that period. What they have failed to come up with is any great quantity of navigational instruments, as we know them from medieval and modern excavations and antique collections. The simple conclusion would be that they had no advanced equipment on board that could tell them where they were, or the way to go.

Consequently, I came to believe that the Vikings did not use such items but relied on their common sense in much the same way we did when we set sail on the ocean without any gadgets to aid us in finding the way. They had learned about the Northern Sea and were confident how to navigate it. They could tell the time and direction from the movement of the sun and the moon, the boat’s speed, and they followed the wind, knowing when and where they would land. Nowadays such knowledge is usually defined as know-how or having the experience needed. If the
wind changed and they were blown back, they would set out again when the weather was favorable.

In earlier articles in the Viking Heritage Magazine (VHM 2/00, 1/01, 2/01, 4/01) I have described how we sailed in open longboats of the Viking design, trying to find our way by navigating in the same way we believed the Vikings did. We carried Viking tools and copies of artifacts that we knew would have been present on board Viking ships. We then sailed due west into the open ocean. We took no maps, compass or any time-measuring device like a clock, only wind vanes like the Vikings carried on their ships. We also refrained from taking other things like odd discs with compass marks, sunstones and other artifacts that some people believe the Vikings navigated with on their voyages. There is no proof that any such device was ever used for navigation on board a Viking ship heading out on the ocean.

The rather small open boats that they utilized in sailing the big waves on the high seas had a low freeboard, and were therefore a very wet, exhausting, constantly rocking and rolling place. Operating any sophisticated instruments in such an environment is very difficult if not impossible. When we had learned to trust our "Viking knowledge" of navigation without any modern aids or instruments, it proved to be not so difficult to find the way.

The other challenge was to find out how the "weather" vanes, reportedly found on board Viking ships, worked.

For the purpose and use of the gilded vanes that this article will describe, our belief after years of sailing and practical use is that they were useless as "weather vanes" and would never work as such on a ship at sea. But for observation and signaling at sea, or between ship and land they might well have had a function. With a vane at the masthead, ships would be spotted from land even before they could be seen, giving the people ashore early information on their arrival. Even the oblique shape, we believe, served a purpose. Obviously they also had an identification, status, and decorative function and served as the ship’s standard and the chieftain’s or the king’s pennant or marker.

Vanes on Viking Ships
A good deal of literature is published on the golden vanes from the late Viking Age, especially in Scandinavian papers. Scholars agree that the golden vanes were first used on Viking ships. The golden or gilded vanes are often called vedrviti. Some of them survived because they ended up in churches. These worn out and modified originals dating back to the Viking Age came from vessels and became wind indicators, symbols or decorative pieces on top of churches. Vanes surviving into modern times ended up in historic collections and on display. Vanes or fixed standards are depicted on picture stones and on gravestones. They are reproduced on a wooden stick, a game piece, on tapestry and as graffiti from the Viking and Medieval Ages. They are seen at the masthead of a Viking ship with a square sail, and are found in the bow or stern of a decorative ship "model" candelabrum. The Sagas and other sources mention vanes in connection with ships and sailing several times and on different occasions. At least one vane, placed in the ship’s bow, was lost during a collision. They are sometimes mentioned in plural, which indicates that there could be more than one on a single ship. All this tells us that they must have been an important part of a major ship’s gear or equipment. Later records state that they were deposited in the church together with other armory items for use under special circumstances. The vanes are described as gilded or coated with gold and the recorder obviously deems them worth mentioning.

The work and finish on the old Scandinavian vanes show that they must have been expensive and highly priced artifacts. Four of them had a distinct angled upper edge, namely the two Swedish vanes from Källunge and Söderala churches and two of the five Norwegian vanes, the ones found on the churches at Heggan and Tingelstad. These four vanes had an angle of about 96–99 degrees between the mounting side and the upper edge, which gives a slant angle of between 6–9 degrees upwards on the upper edge. The Hoyjord vane has an upper angle of about 94 degrees between its back and upper edge while the last two have a 90-degree angle. They are considered younger, made later during the Middle Ages, and they could have been "weather vane copies". Since golden vanes were in use on the stems and masts of Viking ships, we decided to supply our ships with vanes. We wanted to perform practical tests and research how they would work under the different parts of our voyages in a coastal environment and across the open ocean to Great Britain, the Irish Sea, the islands west and north of Scotland and beyond. We would try to find out why they were used on ships, and what their purpose was when placed at the top of the mast or in the stem or stern? The only way to find out was to put them to work.

Our Viking Way Vanes
I had a fine metal smith make me two identical replicas using the shape of the Heggan vane after I had done visual tests with cut-out cardboard patterns of several different vanes and sizes mounted in different areas on my two largest longboats. I finally decided to make them the same size as the present Heggan vane. They were made from 1.2 mm sheet copper plate and given reinforcement on the upper and inner rim similar to the original, attached
with 21 copper rivets that also secured the two cylindrical fittings or hinges for mounting on a 10 mm round iron rod. An animal facing out on the outer top edge was made from double plating with a hole in its breast and a ring for weights to be attached for the purpose of doing stability tests with different weights. The outer curved edge was fitted with 11 holes, 5 mm in diameter, with handmade copper rings attached in each hole. Everything was made from copper. The height was 190 mm, length 260 mm, and the upper angle was 96 degrees. Our Heggen vane weighs 1.5 lbs, while the other vane is 1.3 lbs.

One vane was mounted on a 2250 mm long, and 10 mm round, solid iron rod. It rested directly on a forged and soldered brass ring, secured by a splint going straight through the ring and the rod. After being mounted, a nut was screwed onto the top of the bar to secure it. An extra removable ring, kept in place with a splint, was added about a foot lower down the rod for the purpose of placing the two vanes together. This rod with the vane on top was easily mounted next to the aft part of the tall straight prow of the "Hitra", resting on a wooden clamp with a groove at the bottom and with a locking band around the stem above the bowline fitting. The other vane was rigged and mounted in the same way on a 250 mm long iron rod that was driven well into the top of the mast of the "Froya". Both vanes were displayed vertically when the boats were sitting on an even keel.

The first few tests showed us that the slanting shape of the upper edge of the vane and the weight of the animal on the outer top made them extremely unstable. They would start to swing at the slightest movement of the ship even while the boats were at a pier with no wind in the harbor. We also soon learned that the highly polished red copper surface would not stand up against the salt North Atlantic Ocean. In a surprisingly short time, the surface would dull. But they would still give a good reflection. Keeping the brightness by continuously polishing the copper became a nightmare. I realized that only an expensive coating of gold would do for a vane on board a longboat at sea. But even if they had some marks and scratches on the surface and the copper was almost gone, they would still give a good reflection. Keeping the brightness by continuously polishing the copper became a nightmare. I realized that only an expensive coating of gold would do for a vane on board a longboat at sea. But even if they had some marks and scratches on the surface, the bright flash or glare each time the vane would swing 360 degrees around a rod, was highly admired by everyone who saw them.

The first year of testing encouraged me to continue and refine the objects by making at least one of the vanes as close to the original as possible. An art craftsman was engaged to copy the motif of the Heggen vane by piercing or engraving the original patterns from my drawings of the animal side and the bird side of one vane. For the other vane I selected a perforated pattern as in some of the other original vanes. To personalise it I decided to use my sailing logo. This consists of my initials T and W and the year 1985 below. My middle initial T has the shape of a Thor's hammer. After all of this rather expensive decorative work had been done, the vanes were taken to a guilder. He polished them and then gave each vane an electrolytic bath, leaving a 3-mm coating of 24 carat gold on the surface. Decorative black velvet cords were attached to the 11 rings along the curved edge of the Heggen vane. They were about 8 mm broad and 150 mm long at the outer edge, gradually decreasing till about 50 mm in length close to the rod. The length was chosen so the cords would not get tangled in the fitting. The cords were knotted at the outer end to resemble the depicted vanes. For decorative textiles on the OTE-vane I selected alternate red and white cords the same length as on the first one. The length would be a functional proportion for a vane that could swing 360 degrees around a rod. Needless to say the vanes looked gorgeous and were highly admired by everyone who saw them.

Even with all these preparations the gold surface was vulnerable to the exposure of the air at sea, the salt water, and handling during our voyage. We treated them by washing the salt off using mild soap and water. When that was not enough we gently polished them with toothpaste. The result was very much better than the year before with only the copper surface. After more than three weeks at sea the vanes looked good with the brightness of gold, even if they had some marks and scratches on the surface and the copper was almost shining through in places. We were told that only gilding by flames and mercury would make the golden surface last if used outdoors and over time. Our final option was to polish and gild the entire two vanes once more. This time the guilder gave them a bath of pure silver and then applied a new coat of pure gold on top of the silver coating. Finally we added several coats of clear lacquer to further protect the surface against deterioration. This treatment worked well. Recent pictures presented to VHM show that they are almost as good as new even many years later, and after having been used on the boats at sea and later on display at Viking exhibitions in York, England and Reykjavik, Iceland as well as in Norway and the USA.

Tests and Observations

Already on the first evening, under sail out of port westward on the ocean and heading for the sunset, we received a remarkable impression of the vanes' signaling effect. From the leading "Hitra" we could only admire the bright flash or glare each time the vane on the "Froya" swung around. As the ship worked under sail with the wind from behind the mast, our vanes would not stand down the direction of the wind as they would do when mounted on a church.
but kept swinging from side to side and spinning full turns before stopping, then turning back the other way or continuing to swing the same way part of the distance or another full circle. It was simply not possible that these objects could have worked as weather vanes on a Viking ship at sea.

We soon discovered a different function for the vanes. With our two boats far apart and hidden between waves we would easily know where the “Froya” was because of the distinctive flash each time her vane swung around, which happened incessantly. That vane was placed on the masthead about 7 meters up and was exposed to quite violent movements as a result of the boat working in the sea. It would swing forcefully until a counter movement stopped it just to start it on another turn. Even later during speedy passages or with wind from the side and the mast heeling over, the vane would often swing vigorously. The boats’ movement would naturally increase as the wind grew stronger and the seas became vaster. Even in hard wind with a reefed-down sail, which would give a stabilizing effect to the boat, the vane would move all the time and swing violently. Rarely did they point downwind like a wind indicator and if they did, it would only be for a short time.

One particular aspect became a nuisance. The crew on board the “Froya” and even the “Hitra” could clearly hear the squeaking noise the vane made each time it moved. We had no way of getting grease to the area so the squeaking continued. This noise was transmitted quite a distance at sea. We joked about hearing the boat before we could see it. This would never be popular during long voyages at sea. Even if greased the lubricant would wear off after some time and the noise would be back. Perhaps the Vikings got used to it? Our crew didn’t. They complained to me about it several times.

The vane in the bow of the “Hitra” was sitting about 3 meters above sea level. It behaved much the same way as the one on top of the mast of the “Froya”, but did not experience quite the same rotational force even if it did make complete turns. This vane tended to stay to the lee side more often when the wind was from the side indicating the direction of the wind as reported from the person in the front of the ship. Observation of the ship’s vane would be obscured for the coxswain (hovedman) aft by the sail at all times when sailing. Only when the boat was rowed would the helmsman or the man at the steering-oar be able to see a vane in the bow. This copy was not as noisy as the vane on board the “Froya”. The hinges were made slightly different. The “Heggen” vane on the “Hitra” rested directly on its outer edge and only three layers of copper plate would be in contact with the supporting ring, while five layers made this contact on the “Froya’s” OTE vane, as the lower hinge was mounted on the bottom of the vane. We could have applied lubricant to “Hitra’s” vane but didn’t, as we wanted to compare similar data from the two vanes. The conclusion would be that the height above water gives more resonance from the mast and more violent movement, thus producing more noise. But even the friction from five layers of plate might have added to this.

The signaling effect was also good for a vane placed in the bow of the “Hitra”. It moved sufficiently for any person in front or to the side of the ship to observe its distinct flashes. But people at the aft quarter or behind the ship would be unable to see this. Only with a vane in each end of the ship would the vessel obtain the same effect as on board a ship with a vane at the top of the mast.

The vane’s appearance became very different after they had been given a coat of gold. They glowed in a way that greatly surprised and impressed us all. Not only did they sparkle in bright sunlight. Even in overcast or dull skies their flashing or signaling effect was worth recording as outstanding. Most impressive was their appearance when the sun was low on the horizon. It was almost frightening how the vanes sent off beams of light like the lightning from Thor’s hammer. The strong reflecting blink of light from the little vane could clearly be seen all the way to the horizon and beyond, which would be a distance of 15–20 nautical miles or more.

We were only separated once but this made for great frustration to the following “Froya” as we sailed ahead. They couldn’t see us for a long time and thought we had left them alone.

Later experience with sailing on inland lakes, rivers and canals in England and Scotland as well as coastal sailings on the North Sea, the British Isles, the Irish Sea and crossing the ocean gave us further proof of the vanes’ attention and signaling function. They were probably placed on board Viking ships to impress, transmit social status and inform about who is coming. The obvious signaling effect must have been an important function of the vanes.

After only 56 hours of use on board the “Froya”, however, its vane showed distinct signs of wear in its lower fitting where it rested against the brass ring of the supporting rod. This could be seen even more on the vane on board the “Hitra”. About 1 mm of the edge of the supporting rim had been eaten away, leaving a distinct sign of wear on the vane. This was the result of the constant and often forceful movements of the vane when the boats were at sea. With such a speed of deterioration the vanes would have to be repaired or modified after a few longer voyages if they had been in constant use on the high seas with the boats experiencing the same rough weather we had had.

On several occasions “Hitra’s” vane was supplied with smaller lead weights attached to the ring in the chest of the animal. Common fishing sinkers were used, weighing 10, 15 and 20 grams. This was done to see if the weight of the animal in any way affected the practical function of the vane. We were not able to decide if the weight of the animal was important or had

"Froya" sailing close with the "Hitra" on her starboard side. A big wave is between us and we can only see the top of the sail and the vane. At times only the vane was showing above the waves.
much impact on the movement of the vane.

The goal of placing one vane in the mast and another in the bow was to investigate different sources depicting vanes in these places on board Viking ships. These tests and the fact that the vanes could be observed from all different positions, from away out near the horizon to close by, especially when sailing in the open sea, gave us a good idea of their function and usefulness on board a boat.

The boats often swapped places for photo shoots and due to individual sailing, but always kept company. Also I managed to sail on board the “Froya” observing the “Hitra” from a distance and was able to take pictures. This gave a background for comparative study and observation with regard to the sun, land, and the horizon.

Years after the vanes were in use on the Northern Sea their gilded surface makes them flash a bright and golden beam of sunlight as Hakon demonstrates in this present-day picture. This major characteristic reflects wealth and power and would evidently be a symbol worthy of a Viking-age King.

To be continued with Part 2 in the next issue of VHM.

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Heritage & Identity
Shaping the Nations of the North

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This volume is based on papers given at the Heritage Convention 2001 in Norway. The theme of the conference was identity, as an issue of how New Europe is evolving and the questions dealt with were for example: Was it military force, trade, religion or democratic ways that governed the formation of nation states in Northern Europe? In what way have cultural exchanges between Scandinavia and the British Isles helped in shaping the historic identities? How have modern institutions like tourism and commercial marketing affected national identity of today?

There are 23 authors contributing to this edition. One of them, the late Thor Heyerdahl, a side from the chapter based on his final lecture about his search for the origins of Odin’s people, has also written the foreword.

To highlight the necessity of being conscious of the history when future cultural policy, brand profiles and marketing strategies are being developed.
The North Atlantic Viking Heritage Resource and Cruise Ship Itineraries

By Jan O. Lundgren

1. The historic setting of Viking North Atlantic crossings

In Eric Wahlgren’s opus “The Vikings and America” (1985) the chapter titled “The Stepping stones” describes the significance of convenient sailing distances – and sailing times – that the Viking sea farers experienced in their discovery quest along the “Vestervegen – the Western Route” as well as with their subsequent development of the transatlantic – and predominantly inter-island-based Viking North Atlantic shipping/trading system. Rather than the time-wise endless and lonely hauls experienced by Columbus and his crew while establishing the more southerly east-west Atlantic traverse, the North Atlantic offered tantalizing advantages – during summertime – with its relatively short inter-island distances thanks to the strategic “stepping stones” islands en route, steady winds and daylight “round the clock”.

Thus, the experienced skipper of a fully loaded knarr addressed crew and passengers alike with his “sailing order of the day” in the mid summer of 1050 as the ship cast its moorings, hoisted sail, and gently drifted out of the sheltered harbor bay at Knarrevik – a modern place name – a Viking village just outside Bergen in year 1050 – toward the open sea and the truly long-haul Greenland passage, some 1821 nautical miles westward:

“...we depart the Hordaland fjord heading for the Shetland Islands 195 nautical miles due west; from there we aim for the Faeroes, a similar distance further west; thereafter, we embark upon the longest leg of the voyage to Iceland, almost 300 nautical miles, on a slightly more northerly course, which will take us more than halfway across the North Atlantic.”

“We follow the shoreline of Iceland toward Reykjavik, another 270 nautical miles before reaching that port, where we revitalize, and combine work with the pleasure of visiting old relatives and friends. Then we strike out anew, westward past the landmark of Snæfelljökull mountain (1446 m. elevation) northwest of Reykjavik for another 325 nautical miles. Our first Greenland landmark is most likely its huge ice cap, in less than a day’s sailing. We expect to make our Greenland landfall at the Angmagssalik mountain (elevation 3.483 meters)”. The rest of the voyage is tedious and chilly, even in the Summer, chilly due to the huge Greenland ice cap and drifting icebergs - all easy coastal sailing southward, though, for some 400 plus nautical miles until we round Cape Farewell”.

“From thereon, we are in Norse home waters, at the southern edge of the Eastern settlement, a short sail of some 100 nautical miles from Eiriksfjord and the Brattahlid settlement. Approximate total sailing distance: 1820 nautical miles” – “Good sailing and good luck to us all!”

2. The Viking era transport patterns cruise itinerary implications?

Assuming an overall sailing distance of some 2000 nautical miles for the Norway – Iceland – Greenland crossing and sailing at steady 6 knots gives us a total sailing time of 333 hours, excluding land visits. Using the 24 hours a day - the Norse “doegr” measurement for sailing – the number of sailing doegr involved amounts to a fortnight (333 hours/24 doegr = 13.8) – less than half the time it took Columbus’ Santa Maria to reach the New World. The knarr’s voyage must have been easy with safe navigation due to the three land stops en route – the Shetlands, the Faeroes – and Reykjavik on Iceland.

M akin g the most of steady favourable southwesterly winds, which after Iceland gradually change to an northwesterly when you come close to the “Greenland High”, the stepping stones strategy made the voyage a “piece of cake”, swift but cool even at the height of summer with temperatures hovering between 5–10 degrees Celsius.

For the Europeans who chose the North Atlantic as the regular transatlantic sailing route, notably the Norse Vikings, uncertainty and boredom must have been less of an irritant thanks to the “stepping stone” navigation except for the first couple of crossings before the sailors acclimatized to travel time and distances. Therefore, as the Norse crossings transformed from exploration and discovery to more regular and administered “standard passages”, similar to the scheduled and trans-Atlantic packet shipping of the 19th century and even modern cruise ship itineraries – traffic must have increased as a function of the principal needs of the various settlement participants. A loose trading network emerged.

Among the Norse North Atlantic islands, Iceland, the largest after Greenland, was a pivot for the traffic due to its location and general agricultural/seafaring provisioning economy. The smaller “stepping stone” islands – the Faeroes, and the Shetlands, as well as faraway Greenland – were also active. They had to be - in order to survive! The larger European mainland units in the network – the Norwegian coast, Denmark and the North Sea coast of the British Isles - also participated but for them the North Atlantic sector was only one of many active trading links. Trade with northwestern Europe in general was growing in importance, and through territorial conquest Viking domains existed in the British Isles, Ireland, the Isle of Man as well as on the Channel coast, notably Normandy, all participating to varying degrees in the trading system.

Iceland was a “nearby” entrepôt and important trading partner for the Greenland settlement further west, but also a long-distance trader in general. The island was the North Atlantic “link-pin” in trading due to its resource base and its “halfway” location. The fact that both Iceland and other Norse island settlements at an early stage of colonization already developed deficiencies in the most important of strategic resource for a trading/trading society – shipbuilding timber - must have made regular eastward trading a matter of survival (the primeval tracts of forest vegetation were decimated quickly by the very first waves of Iceland settlers). Thus, only imports from Norway could solve the timber supply problem.

For the second largest participant in the trading system, the Norse Greenland settlement, the strategic resource situation was even worse. Shipbuilding timber could be obtained from the Labrador coast, some 550 nautical miles (return), a major seasonal undertaking in its own right. The Norse Greenlanders also had a second major problem; the marginal environment with a climate that made the survival of the settlements a sedentary society at the rim of Greenland’s continental ice sheet hazardous. Also, the extreme Western position of the settlements toward the North American continent, being the “last” in the ocean-spanning transport/trading chain, resulted in long lines of communications to other trading partners for both imports and exports. Stated in modern international trade terminology: the terms of trade for the Greenlanders were always negative - they had to pay proportionally more for every imported item than what they earned for each export item. In addition, the level of interaction is always a function of distance

http://viking.hgo.se 8
and accessibility. On both points the Greenlanders suffered.

To our modern world, clearly, the adventurous and skillful long-distance seamanship and North Atlantic sailing by the Vikings in open or half-decked boats, and with less than adequate navigational aids, constitutes a fascinating, drama-filled real-life “adventure” tourist attraction, which, since the first crossing in a replica Viking ship in 1893, has been repeated many times. These reenactment “sailings” can be seen as precursors to today’s commercial cruises with itineraries that have stretched over the past couple of years far into remote and peripheral seas. In our case they have preferred going North rather than continuing to sail repetitive and well-trodden routes in the Mediterranean, the Caribbean or doing coast-hugging continental cruises elsewhere, usually in regions where weather conditions are balmier, land visits more history-laden, and above all, where the cruise experience in general is more comfortable than those found on the higher latitudes of the North Atlantic.

In contrast, Denmark Straits, Cape Farewell with the sculptured icebergs drifting by, the other side of Greenland and Baffin island, north of Iceland toward Spitsbergen, the western edges of the North Sea or the Norwegian Sea off a fjord-perforated Norwegian coastline represent to most potential tourists “journeys into the unknown” – exploratory tourism travel with an edge – a truly different experience!

A considerable interest in incorporating the North Atlantic and its Viking heritage into modern tourism travel exists and one way to achieve this objective is through various forms of cruise ship travel.

3. Tourist use of the Viking cultural heritage resources of the North Atlantic

The history of the North Atlantic Viking heritage galaxy lies at the root of today's interest in Viking cultural heritage as a tourist product and tourist destination “system”. The Millennium celebration in Year 2000 of Erik the Red’s discovery of the New World has accelerated the general public's interest in the Viking phenomenon. Thus, the North Atlantic Viking heritage today is a first-class internationally based tourist product/attraction ready to be more systematically harvested.

During the past decade, the Western Viking Route corridor straddling the North Atlantic has increasingly been identified as a principal tourist target, albeit spatially dispersed, for commercial tourism, and notably accessible, as it should be, through cruise ship operations. Since cruise travel began to become popular in the 1970’s this mode of travel has successfully conquered most international waters, but usually on latitudes with more congenial weather and more pleasant sailing conditions than those found on more northern Atlantic latitudes. However, in the past few years, numerous cruise lines have specifically targeted the far-flung North Atlantic Viking heritage, launching cruises from both the North American and European sides of the Atlantic.

Fig. 1 approximates the contemporary spatial relationship between cruise ship port-of-calls and the historically defined North Atlantic Viking heritage range. A distinct historically derived regionalization of the North Atlantic Viking phenomenon reflects partly the historic Scandinavian homelands of the Vikings, partly well known regional Viking “action thrusts”, partly the trading links discussed above.

A) Regional loops:
Four regional sections – regional loops – developed on the basis of historic proximity of historic trading movements – can be visualized:

The BALTIC SEA BASIN – the historical staging area for eastbound Viking forays via the river systems eastward and southeast toward the Black Sea, combined with considerable east-west long-distance trading via famous trading centers, Birka, Gotland, Hedeby, Ribe et al.

The Baltic Sea has experienced cruise ship operations since the 1950’s. Today most Baltic cruises include a minimum of 6 ports of call – from Copenhagen in the Southwest
to St-Petersburg in the Northeast. The number of cruise ship arrivals for the port cities involved can be quite staggering considering the short summer tourist season: Hanseatic Visby on the Viking island of Gotland, strategically centered in the middle of Baltic, scored over 100 landings last year (2002), Stockholm, with major Viking sites such as Birka in its surroundings, 168 for the same year.

The NORTH SEA – a historic Viking transport surface linking together numerous national shorelines of today with substantial Viking heritage resources. Surprisingly though, the present cruise ship services greatly under-utilize coastal areas/regions facing the North Sea, rather preferring the “outside” Atlantic side of the British Isles, the Irish Sea, on the whole bypassing, with some exception, the Norwegian Viking coast (the Stavanger - Bergen section). However, Oslo is a popular stop and so are the “stepping stone” islands north of Scotland. Remarkably, there are more cruise ship port-of-calls along the Norwegian coast going NORTH than between ports around the shores of the North Sea.

The ICELAND-GREENLAND REGIONAL LOOP has a reputation of unreliable summer weather at best as well as remoteness in the eyes of the Europe-based cruise itinerary planners. However, if you go the distance to Iceland you might as well continue westward “all the way” toward the Greenland and Labrador shores and the haunting Viking history site at L’Anse aux Meadows, and finish the cruise in the rich Viking heritage on the Atlantic’utilisation hardly qualifies as major Viking locations, Stockholm and Gotland being the exceptions.

Cruise ships sailing out into the North Atlantic usually head for Iceland with its obvious Viking heritage, and from there follow the old Icelandic Saga routes of Norse – Icelandic voyages to the east coast of Greenland before turning southwest toward journey’s ends in North America.

The DAVIS STRAITS GREENLAND/LABRA DOR REGION is the most remote and most northern destination region from a European perspective. However, this very Arctic loop offers convenient access for cruise ship travelers starting their voyage from the north-eastern US and Canadian seaboard. The region is vast in its geographic dimensions involving long coastal-hugging voyages alternating with long sea voyages. The itineraries tend to focus upon exploring the easternmost regional loop all the way to Baffin Island with the Arctic town of Iqaluit and beyond as well as Greenland’s long west coast, from Cape Farewell to Disco Island. However, Lat. 76 degrees N. is an “obygdir” in the extreme that you rarely visit for pleasure!

B) Types of cruise itineraries:

Obviously, a modern “Viking cruise” can be either regional/loop-based or transatlantic in scope (Fig.2), depending upon the tourist market segment one is aiming for. The regional cruise can be done in a relatively short period of time, max. 10-12 days, depending upon point of departure, the longer cruises typically in 14-15 days.

The shorter and regional version usually departs from the Copenhagen cruising hub, the longer from London, England. Before entering the Baltic with its standard set of port visits the shorter regional cruise usually crosses the North Sea to Oslo (Fig. 2). Surprisingly, the Oсло visit is short on land time and no land excursions seem to be made to the rich Viking heritage on the nearby Vestfold shore, which includes the famous Oseberg mound, the world’s best-preserved Viking grave which included the Oseberg Viking-ship find in 1904 and numerous other archaeological sites along the fjord coast. In the Baltic Sea basin, the typical ports-of-call hardly qualify as major Viking locations, Stockholm and Gotland being the exceptions.

The longer westerly cruises – also 12-day affairs – overlap the North Sea regional loop with that of Iceland - Greenland (Fig. 2). They tend to follow in the footsteps of the historically developed “stepping stone” Viking sailing strategy with stopovers in the smaller island-groupings of the outer North Sea before encircling Iceland. Usually, two Icelandic locales are visited, a special fjord hugging and generally long sailing days reduce the experience to a small time portion of Viking content and very long periods of open sea sailing.

A final itinerary sample: the Canada-based Atlantic Saga voyage with a regional focus on the Canadian seaboard – Canadian Arctic – the Greenland west coast – Iceland – back to home port (St.John’s, Nfld.). Here, maximal use of the Viking heritage is made, as it is represented both by major archaeological finds and by the Iceland Sagas’ fascinating story-telling of Norse sailings in the area, all the way north toward Baffin Island, both shorelines of the Oavis Strait, the Greenland Viking settlements plus Iceland and L’Anse aux Meadows.

Of all examples of cruise itineraries this most westerly of cruise voyages is making the most of a quite limited archaeological
4. Conclusions

The Viking North Atlantic Heritage represents an exciting historical resource for contemporary tourism. The fact that the heritage is far flung, transatlantic and usually difficult to access makes the tourist attraction even more tantalizing and adventurously colored, especially in a shrinking world, where most attractions are easy to come by. Here lie - perhaps - the appeal of the Viking North Atlantic heritage as a tourist resource.

The effort to shape the Viking tourist resource into a tourist experience has been tried most recently by the modern cruise ship industry, with some success, as witnessed above. However, considering the archaeologically and historically evidenced Vikings, improvements could be made, especially in the way the heritage is used as a tourist attraction by the cruise ship industry involved.

There are glaring examples of underutilization of the Viking locales accessed by the cruise ships. The principal reason seems to lie in the “over-reach” in terms of overall voyage dimensions. In the case of Gotland in the Baltic, the land visit amounts to 5–6 hours, for Dublin approx. 10 hours, in Reykjavik a variable 6–12 hours. Much land time is wasted on traditional - and obvious - tourist pastimes rather than Viking heritage - a city bus tour, look-out visits, a general round trip in the area - often at the expense of a more serious effort to unlock the local Viking heritage.

Thus, the tourist’s gaze has to be more effectively directed and more clearly focused - and explained - if he/she wishes to truly appreciate the historic past of the Viking Heritage in the North Atlantic - and get a bigger bang for his/her buck.

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About the author

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Visby itself indicate a society under construction, from which some hundred years later the richest town in Scandinavia has risen.”

These words were written as early as 1928 by Professor Nils Lithberg about the prehistoric finds that had been found at the seashore just south of Visby. They came from Viking-age graves at a grave-field that came to be known as Kopparsvik. This grave-field which is one of the biggest and richest from the Viking-age on Gotland was...
known since the end of the 19th century. At that time, quite a lot of objects were sold to the British Museum, where the finds from five female graves now are kept.

Sporadic excavations have taken place since 1918. In the late 60s the oil cisterns that still stand at the harbour were to be erected and in 1964–66 extensive excavations were carried out. About 350 graves were examined but the grave-field probably contained 400 graves. Some 50 graves had already been destroyed through plundering and gravel pits. With that, the grave-field at Kopparsvik is one of the few totally examined grave-fields on Gotland.

The dead were buried in the rubble on the seashore, mainly with their heads to the south. Either they lay on their backs, on their faces, or on one side with their legs pulled up or straight out.

The skeletons are very well preserved. No graves had marks above the surface, which of course might once have been the case. About 75% were men, the rest women. Noteworthy is that in the part closest to Visby there were as much as 90% men while on the southern part the percentage was 50/50. There are no children’s graves, but in three female graves lay two foetuses and one infant. However some “teen-agers” had their own graves.

More than a thousand objects, mainly jewellery and tools have been taken into custody. They have an obvious Gotlandic character but there are a few Baltic brooches. Some graves are very rich; others contained just a few objects. It seems that either these objects are of the very best quality or they are rather simple. Half of the graves contained no grave gifts at all.

In the female graves the jewellery is so homogeneous that one can speak of a special Gotlandic fashion or even a folk costume: animal-headed, box-shaped brooches and pins.

In the men’s graves there was also a kind of standard or uniform equipment: penannular brooches, belt-buckles, belt-dividers and belt-end mountings. These men seem to have had a certain weakness for belts with bronze tassels from the other side of the Baltic Sea. As to the rest, there were combs, knives, keys and beads that the dead might have needed in their next life.

There are a few exceptions from the normal furnishings. In one female grave 12 Arabic silver-coins were spread over the corpse, in another a silver cross had been placed – perhaps a first contact with the new religion, perhaps just a beautiful strange object. In one of the men’s graves there was a little scale and a set of weights – the merchants’ most important tools. In the same grave there also was a fine little padlock. A few weapons have also been found: an axe, a spear and big knife.

Who were those people who were buried in the rubble from the end of the 9th century and during the whole 10th century? This question is of course impossible to answer. As weapon graves are unusual it seems to have been a
peaceful population. According to all the scientists who have investigated the origins of Visby, these men devoted themselves to trade, which Lithberg already established. Moreover, the ancient Gotlandic word kaupa means to buy, which might be seen as a further hint.

One theory is that the men buried closest to Visby were the first to arrive. They came during the trading season (spring to autumn), became more and more assimilated and finally stayed – "neutralised Gotlanders". Others think that it might be those Gotlanders who, besides farming devoted themselves to trade mainly eastwards and who passed away on their temporary visit in Visby and were buried there. However one can ask oneself if Gotland is so large that one could not be buried in one's native district.

My point of view is that some of them perhaps were Gotlandic farmers living nearby but it was mainly the early foreign traders. They arrived, wanted to fit and dressed in the "Gotlandic dress". They quite simply adopted current fashion just as the Viking on the picture-stone from Broa in Halla parish wears Arabic "puff-trousers". This also explains the lack of women; the men were the first to arrive.

What indicates that they were merchants/tradesmen? Many of the objects are of the very best quality and indicate certain richness, but can one lone grave with the tools of a merchant the scale and the weights be a representative for a whole class of merchants? Can it rather be that these objects represent a high status? Scales and weights are normally found in settlements and not in graves. Keys, however, are rather common while padlocks are very rare.

Where and how to read the signs of far-away trade? There is really nothing that confirms it because most of the objects in the graves with very few exceptions are genuine Gotlandic. The most exotic objects are the scale, the weights and the little padlock in "the merchant’s grave", all of which have their origins in the Orient, as well as the Arabic silver-coins. Objects that we associate with far-away trade such as oriental mountings, glass, silver braids etc that have been found in other graves on Gotland are missing. Some brooches and the typical belts with bronze – tassels, that seem to have been valued among Gotlandic men originate from the Baltic coast and are not surprising. It is more surprising that there are so few Baltic objects as there were many intense connections eastwards. With good fair wind it took no more than about 15 hours across the sea to the Baltic coast. Gotlandic objects, especially in Latvia, indicate frequent contacts.

The lack of children's graves at the Kopparvik grave field is not different from other Viking-age grave fields. It seems to be the rule that there are no children's graves during this period. When we find them is it either as foetuses together with a woman or as children with a special status. The "common" children seem to have been buried elsewhere.

However one can reflect on the absence of two kinds of objects.

The lack of weapons must point out a peaceful population but does the lack of gaming-boards and dice mean a more serious attitude than the people of Birka, where a lot of gaming-sets have been found. Archaeologists often compare with Birka but there is one great difference. Birka was a typical marketplace, perhaps like early Visby, but in the next phase Visby becomes a place or town with contacts with the surrounding countryside with a permanent population throughout the whole year. A visitor to Birka brought his gaming-board as a pastime and also took all his possessions to his grave. On Gotland the gambling took place at home on the farm and only the most personal things followed the deceased to the grave.

Another problem is the empty graves. Were they graves after those very first foreign visitors who came just for the season, trying to make a living but dying here or were they just cadavers? Some of them were surely drowned people. That 50% of the graves were empty is rather much. Still the question of who those people were remains unanswered. Instead there are a lot of new questions. However it is obvious that the grave-field has some connection to the early society that became the town of Visby.

Keys and padlocks

In many of the graves keys were found and in one of them a padlock. It is a small padlock made out of little iron sheets that are soldered together. It is quadrangular with a T-shaped opening through which the key can act on the spring. The key is unfortunately missing. The origin of this type of padlock is to be found in the Orient and it was brought to Scandinavia by the Vikings. It was used for locking smaller boxes and cases. Such a lock functioned in the same way until the beginning of the 18th century when the Swedish inventor Christoffer Polhem (born on Gotland) invented the so-called security lock which could not be picked or opened with a false key.

During the Viking Age it seems to have been fallen on the woman’s lot to protect house and home. The Gotlandic women always wore a special brooch with chains on which a knife, keys etc. were attached. In their graves there are often one or more keys – the sign of responsibility. However the padlock was found in a man’s grave – perhaps a sign of status.

Photo: Raymond Hejdstrom, Gotlands Fornsal

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Men armed with weapons led the way in warfare. Women were in charge of the household and held the keys to the home. This sums up the general perception of Viking-age gender roles, a perception held by both laymen and most archaeologists. This is very likely to represent the truth about the majority of the Scandinavian population a thousand years ago. But the total picture may be somewhat more complicated.

A number of prehistoric graves from Scandinavia, Holland and England challenge traditional assumptions about gender roles in the Viking Age. These prehistoric graves contain men buried in women’s clothes and with what we perceive as typical female grave goods; and in death women have been supplied with weapons for their journey to the other side.

Since archaeology was established as a science in the first half of the 19th century, it has been common practice to look primarily at the grave goods when seeking to determine the sex of a buried individual. Traditionally archaeologists have had a very rigid perception of the division of labour between women and men. A consequence of this is ascribing certain artefacts to male individuals and other artefacts to female individuals. Thus the presence of jewellery, sewing needles etc. in a grave makes it a female burial whereas the presence of weapons and/or tools indicates a male burial. This method is called archaeological sex determination.

Fortunately modern natural sciences have provided us with more objective and reliable methods of sex determination. Today it is possible to determine the sex of a buried individual by osteological investigations (by investigating the pelvis and skull characteristics of well-preserved adult skeletal remains, it is possible to determine the sex to 97%) or by extraction of DNA. However the archaeological sex determination is still the most common method used. This is partly due to the lack of well-preserved bone material, and partly due to conservatism. And, in terms of expensive DNA-testing, due to the ubiquitous lack of money, of course.

As the following archaeological material will show, the method of archaeological sex determination is certainly not trustworthy. On the contrary it serves to maintain a perception of prehistoric gender roles that might be wrong, or at least inadequate.

**Viking-age burials**

Near the Danish village of Gerdrup, north of Roskilde, a Viking-age (early 9th century) double grave was excavated in 1981. The grave contained two well-preserved skeletons, according to osteological investigation, a male and a female. The 35–40-year old male probably suffered a violent death by hanging. Furthermore it seemed as if he had his legs tied together. Probably he was a sacrificed slave. The c. 40-year old female was buried more peacefully with an iron knife, a needle box of bone and a spear as grave goods. Iron knives are the most common Viking-age grave goods and occur in both female and male burials; and – according to archaeological sex determination – needle boxes are female artefacts, while spears are male artefacts. Thus the Gerdrup-grave is a somewhat diverging grave with artefacts traditionally regarded as belonging to the female sphere found together with corresponding male artefacts. It has been proposed that the deceased woman was a female warrior or more likely a woman with some kind of male status – as head of a family lacking a man because of travel business or death. Some of the women depicted on the tapestry of the Oseberg ship burial also carry spears (Christensen 1981).

Female burials with weapons from the 11th–12th century also occur in Balticum and Finland. Among them are a number of female graves from the Estonian island of Saaremaa, mainly wealthy graves, where the most common weapon is an axe, but spears and javelins also appear. In two graves from Finland – from Kälvola and Tyrvää – swords are found together with rich typically women’s ornaments. In the grave-field of Luistari grave no. 35 contained a female with an axe; and in no. 404 the skull and limb bones of a male – two axes were placed beneath him – was lying at the feet of a female skeleton (Mägi...
From Norway a number of similar burials containing “mixed” artefacts are known. Many of these graves were excavated in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, and are therefore not as well documented as the one from Gerdrup. A complete overview does not yet exist, but at least 20 graves of this kind can be traced (in Petersen 1928). All of these graves contain the well-known oval brooches together with weapons. The majority of these graves are from the early 9th century. Sometimes one weapon occurs, but it is not uncommon to see two or three weapons in a single burial. The most common weapon is the axe, but swords as well as spears often appear. This is the same picture as in the Viking-age weapon burials seen as a whole.

But what are these Norwegian graves? The traditional answer is that these graves are double graves with female and male burials mixed together - due to poor documentation, poor preservation or maybe disturbances. This could be the truth concerning some of the graves. But, seen in the light of the Danish Gerdrup-grave and the Baltic graves, it might also be a poor excuse for not raising a debate about the perception of Viking-age gender roles.

Anglo-Saxon burials
A number of Anglo-Saxon graves show the same problems about sex determination as the above-mentioned Viking-age graves.

On the Dutch grave-field of Oosterbeintum in Friesland, grave no. 398 contained a male skeleton (osteological determination) with “female” grave goods. This man was buried with two brooches, 40 beads and a bracelet - almost identical to the ornaments found in most of the other female graves in the cemetery. The dating of this grave is 450-550 AD (Knol et al. 1996).

From the British Isles several burials of this kind are known. In Buckland, Dover, 11 burials containing grave goods not corresponding to the osteological sex determination were excavated. Seven males were buried with brooches, keys, pearls, bracelets etc. Three females were buried with spears and one with a shield boss (Evison 1987). The same was true in Sewerby, Yorkshire, where three male graves held jewellery (Hirst 1985), and in West Heslerton where osteology determined that three weapon burials with spears were female (Houghton & Powlesland 1999). From Kempston in Bedfordshire and Harwell in Berkshire burials with “mixed” grave goods are known - that is weapons and female jewellery (Meaney 1964).
ignore the possibility of the existence of individuals who cross-dressed in the Viking Age. But if we accept cross-dressing as a possibility, how are we to explain this behaviour?

Cultural construction of gender

Ethnographic accounts show that certain cultures have more than the two biologically determined gender categories, male/female. In our modern Western culture sex determination is done when a child is born – according to its sexual genitals – and after that it never changes. Unless of course an individual chooses to undergo a surgical sex transformation, or in rare cases where a child is born with the genitals of both sexes. But, even if a person in our culture has had a surgical sex transformation, most people find it difficult to accept the person as belonging to the other sex just like that. In our Western culture there is only room for two gender categories, the biologically determined ones. But 3rd or even 4th genders have existed for over a thousand years. A few examples in short:

An example of 3rd gender is known from India. Here the term Hijra has existed for more than 1000 years. Hijra can be translated as eunuch or intersexual. The hijras are devotees of the Mother Goddess Bahuchara Mata. Men become hijras because they do not fit in with the traditional patriarchal way of living in India. Maybe because they are impotent, homosexuals or intersexed, circumstances that make it impossible for them to have a family of their own and fit in with the castes in Indian society. The hijras dress and act like women and undergo emasculation. Hijras perform on various occasions e.g. the birth of a male child and at weddings and they serve the goddess at her temple. Hijras engage in occupations that neither “normal” women nor men in the Indian society engage in and thus they constitute an alternative gender category in society. Hijras earn their living by performing at college events, prostitution with men and by begging. Today India is becoming more and more secularized due to influences from Western cultures. Because of this, hijras have lost a great deal of respect and they now have the lowest status in Indian society. Emasculation is now illegal in India and it is quite possible that hijras as an alternative gender category will soon become extinct (Herdt 1994).

Another example of gender crossing is known from the Balkans. In some cases where the male heir (and future patriarch) of a family has died, or has never been born, women can carry on the traditional male role. Thus they wear men’s clothing and weapons; they attend to the traditional male obligations in society, including warfare. Often these women are buried in men’s clothes (Herdt 1994).

Which scenario fits the Viking Age?
The problem stated in this article does not necessarily mean that we have to totally redefine Viking-age gender roles - that all men were fancy queers and all women bloodthirsty Amazon warriors. But it certainly ought to give food for thought.

As mentioned above, we cannot know what the grave goods really symbolized. This fact is an eternal uncertainty, though we can still put forward some qualified ideas. To suggest the Viking-age society as being matriarchal would not be serious, but to perceive some nuances in the gender roles would only enrich our image of this period.

In this article we have dealt with three categories of burials: 1) women buried with male artefacts; 2) men buried with female artefacts; 3) graves with mixed male and female artefacts, but no skeletal remains. These categories are the result of our traditional way of thinking about gender-specific artefacts. We could be wrong ascribing certain artefacts to men and others to women. But if our general assumptions about the above-mentioned graves are correct, we must seek to explain why some people cross-dressed or were buried with mixed grave goods during the Viking Age. Women buried with weapons might be “masculine women” – women interested in traditional male activities and therefore having the opportunity to become female warriors. Or perhaps the answer is more like the Balkan example: women taking over traditional male activities. Likewise “feminine men” could be an explanation: men with special skills for traditional female handicrafts. Physical disabilities, like blindness, could be a reason, too.

Finally a quotation from Saxo serves to remind us to stop projecting our own contemporary perceptions of gender roles onto prehistoric cultures. Future archaeological research must deal more open-mindedly with gender roles and stop relying exclusively on archaeological sex determination.

“There were, in days of yore among the Danes, women who changed their female beauty into male being, and devoted most of their time to martial arts, so that the disease of effeminacy should not dull their courage. For they hated all kinds of voluptuous life style and hardened body and soul continuously by the means of endurance and exertion. And, thus giving up all female weakness, forced their souls to achieve male cruelty, and they were so keen on warfare that you might think that they were no longer women. Mostly they were women with strong souls or slim, tall figures who choose that way of life. As if they forgot the traditions into which they were born, and preferred harshness instead of soft words, battle instead of care, thirsted after blood instead of kisses, practised the art of war instead of the art of love, and held spears in those hands which should have been occupied by weaving, and they did not think about the marriage bed, but death, and attacked...
with sharp weapons the men, whom they could have pleased with their beauty.”
(Saxo, 7th Book – “Sigar”. Authors’ translation from Danish)

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A Viking-age Tumour

By CAROLA LIEBE-HARKORT

History
For many years an analysis of the Viking-
age harbour and trading place at Fröjel on 
the island of Gotland, has been included 
in the work with the project “Fröjel 
Discovery Programme”. This project is 
part of the main project “Harbours and 
trading places on Gotland 600–1100 
AD”. Within this project a number of 
graves have been analysed by the author.

In 1997, during the osteological 
analysis of a double grave (a man, 25–45 
years of age, and a woman, 35–45 years of 
age) a remarkable find was made. In the 
soil contained in the pelvic cavity of the 
woman and covering her pelvis, a bone 
capsule and six malformed teeth were 
found. The bone capsule measures 24 x 
15 x 15 mm. The teeth are different in 
form and size, although the biggest one is 
less than 12 mm from the tip of the root 
to the occlusal surface.

After comparing the teeth with 
reference material at the Archaeo-
osteological Research Laboratory at 
Stockholm University, it was established 
that the teeth did not belong to any 
familiar animal nor did they resemble 

human teeth. When the teeth were shown 
to a professor in oral histology at the 
School of Dentistry in Stockholm, he 
thought it likely that they were part of a 
dermoid cyst, a benign tumour of the 
avary. A pathologist in gynaecology at the 
Karolinska Hospital in Stockholm, later 
confirmed this.

Pathology
The dermoid cyst is a benign (mature) 
cyctic tumour, a teratoma. By radiology it 
can be seen as a rounded soft tissue mass 
in the pelvic cavity or lower abdomen. 
The cyst has a sharply defined capsule and 
contains dental or bony structure.

Dermoid cysts comprise approximately 
10% of all ovarian tumours and are 
therefore the most common ovarian germ 
cell. In women under 20 years of age they 
are the most frequently encountered type 
of ovarian tumour.

The benign cystic teratoma is 
characterized by a thick, well-formed 
capsule that is lined completely, or nearly 
completely, by flattened plate-like 
epithelium (the covering of internal and 
external surfaces of the body) of varying 
thickness. Within the capsule a variety of 
tissues can be found; of which cartilage,
bone, teeth tissue, stomach-intestinal and respiratory epithelium and tissues pertaining to nerves are the most common.

Perhaps the most drastic of all findings of mature cystic teratomas are those with teeth.

All different tooth-types can be found although incisors are less frequently noted. Teeth have been found in 31% and bone in 41% of mature cystic teratoma.

In about 1% of cases the benign teratoma can change into a malignant form of mature cystic teratoma.

Teratomas containing immature tissues are usually solid and occur in children and young adults; although these tumours are malignant many patient are now being treated successfully by chemotherapy. In 23% of cases benign cystic teratomas are asymptomatic. The rest result in pain and sometimes also with an abdominal mass or abnormal uterine bleeding. Of all benign cystic teratomas 18% are bilateral and 80% are 10 cm or less in diameter.

Conclusion
A discovery like this from the Iron Age is very unusual and exciting and gives us osteologists valuable information about health in prehistoric societies. To my knowledge there has never before been a find like this in Sweden. During a conference in August 2002 in Coimbra, Portugal I had the opportunity to show the teeth and the bone capsule to some of the leading pathologist in the field of osteology who confirmed that there is reason to believe that these were actually remains of a dermoid cyst.

About the author
Carola Liebe-Harkort, MA in osteology, is now working at the Archaeo-osteology Research Laboratory, Stockholm University, as an assistant and lecturer. From this semester she is also a PhD student at the Archaeo-osteology Research Laboratory. Her special interest in human osteology is teeth and dental pathology.

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In the summer of 2002 the last of three extensive excavation seasons was carried out at the Viking-age site of Kaupang, near the outlet of the Oslo fjord. Excavations of the settlement in 2000 and 2001 gave large amounts of finds and remains of houses, ditches, wells and latrines (see VHM 4/2001). As we returned to excavate the earliest phases of the settlement we were especially anxious to get a better understanding of the settlement.

A challenge
The most important task last summer was to get to the bottom of the cultural deposits in time. The excavation had to be finished by the first of September and although the depth of the deposited layers was thoroughly calculated, the joy and pain of archaeology is that you never know what you will find before you actually get there.

A fine example of an irish goldsmith’s art from the Viking Age. Photo: M. Rakke
Latest news from Kaupang – the first urban settlement in Norway

This year we arrived at Kaupang well aware of the difficulties in understanding the sparse remains. Unfortunately the Viking-age settlement is rather poorly preserved. The coastal climate and a millennium of agricultural activities have eroded the soil and broken down almost all the organic material. Where other similar sites have well-preserved wooden floors, thresholds and walls, Kaupang can only offer layers of soil with slightly different colours and textures.

To compensate we brought with us a competent group of archaeologist and archaeology students, all with experience from the previous excavations at Kaupang. We also joined forces with several specialists.

Environmental archaeology
Geo-archaeologists from Cambridge and zoo-archaeologists from York supplied the most important support. Zoo-archaeologists identify animal bones, insects and plant remains. A PhD-student from York worked with us for two months and was responsible for the sampling.

Soil samples were carefully washed through a fine-meshed net to collect tiny remains of insects, parasites and seeds (fig 2). The final results from the analyses will give us information about the living conditions in Viking-age Kaupang. The animal bones bring to light the inhabitants’ diet and may indicate whether livestock were kept inside the settlement. Insects and parasites can tell us more about hygiene and diseases.

The geo-archaeologists stayed at the excavation for a couple of days and taught us how to collect different types of soil samples. By analysing these samples chemically and under a microscope they are able to trace remains of human activity invisible to the naked eye. The analyses can reveal for example the presence of walls or floors we were unable to detect when excavating.

A permanent settlement
After much hard work we reached the natural subsoil and managed to finish the excavation prior to the deadline. We are still in the middle of excavating the post, but some preliminary results can be presented. Foremost the last season gave a better understanding of the settlement and confirmed that the excavated area was divided into plots by ditches and fences.

Preserved footprints of humans and animals (see VH M 3/02) in one of the ditches showed that it was used as a passageway down to the harbour. Solid houses with permanent hearths were built on some of the plots. These houses were suitable for winter habitation, unlike structures found at Kaupang during excavations in the 1950s and 1960s. Contradictory to what was earlier assumed, Kaupang appears to be a structured and permanently settled site similar in layout to Viking-age towns like Birka and Hedeby.

New finds
By the end of the summer the total number of finds from the excavations during 2000–2002 exceeded 100,000. As in previous years more than 95% of the finds were washed out of the soil at the sieving station. Local youths were hired to gather all the bits and pieces. Finds like animal bones, burned clay, slag and flint quickly became a part of their daily routines, but each day also yielded finds like glass beads, fragments of drinking glasses, pottery or honeys of slate.

Every now and then an outstanding find came to light, accompanied by loud shouts of joy. A filigree work in gold, made in Ireland, is among the most beautiful objects found in 2002. Other special finds include the pommel of a sword, two working axes, a large gaming piece and two silver bracelets. A couple of net sinkers also received much attention. They have been reused as grinding stones, and thereafter placed in postholes belonging to fences or houses. We will probably never grasp the full meaning behind the deposition of the sinkers, but it is possible that they were building sacrifices and reflect Viking-age beliefs.

Crafts
A minor concentration of glass beads and waste from glass bead production was...
uncovered on one of the plots. The material, mostly in blue and white, probably stems from a workshop used for a short period of time in the vicinity. Waste from several different craft activities indicates Viking-age Kaupang as an important production centre. Craftsmen at Kaupang supplied local inhabitants and visitors with glass and amber beads, bronze brooches, textiles and iron tools. Waste from iron smithing and metal casting is particularly dominant.

In the same way as many archaeology students have had their first excavation experience at Kaupang, some finds suggest that others might have had their first professional experience at Kaupang 1200 years ago. While Viking-age bronze casting was a specialized craft and several finds from Kaupang show the presence of skilled workers, other finds, like the rather rough mould for metal ingots point towards an apprentice’s work.

**International contacts**

The Viking Age is a period characterized by a high degree of mobility. It is impossible to understand the society at Kaupang without a glimpse at the North European network of similar sites. In the Viking Age goods came to Kaupang from far and near. Objects found at Kaupang have been produced on the Continent, on the British Isles, in the Middle East and in Asia.

The Kaupang Excavation Project has had a clear international profile, with an international advisory committee, archaeologists and archaeology students from several universities. Having a crew with different backgrounds and experiences has been a great advantage. This summer we found a bronze object, unknown to most of us, but Liliane and Mathieu from France could give us an explanation right away. It was a common Frankish brooch-type found for the first time at Kaupang. We hope that Viking-age research will reap the benefits of the international collaboration in the years to come.

**This is it?**

The 2000–2002 investigations at Kaupang covered only a minor part of the settlement area. So far excavations have been concentrated on what was dry land during the Viking Age. Most likely Kaupang also had a substantial harbour. Goods must have been brought in from the rest of Europe by ship and Scandinavia provided raw material during the Viking Age as it does today. If there is a sunken ship in the harbour it might reveal whether iron, slate or soapstone was shipped out from Kaupang.

In the spring of 2003 systematic Geo-radar surveys (GPR) will be carried out in the ancient harbour area at Kaupang. Such a non-destructive survey might locate jetties and quays and will provide a better overall picture of Viking-age Kaupang. To test the significance of the results, small-scale excavations will follow.

This brief presentation of the 2000–2002 excavations is a preliminary sketch. The excavations are only the first phase of the Kaupang Excavation Project. There is a lot more fun to come! Ahead of us is four years of post excavation analyses and research from which to gain more knowledge of the settlement's complexity and its domestic and international contacts.

An international research group with experienced Viking Age scholars and PhD students has been established and will have their first meeting in March 2003. The remains of the settlement and the finds will be studied thoroughly from different angles to gain information of all the aspects of life at Kaupang and its role in Viking-age society. This will provide approaches to themes like craftsmanship, trade, international relations and urbanism.

The research projects form the basis for scientific publication of the results from the excavation. Passing the knowledge we gain on to the public, is...
also an important part of the excavation project, and this will be given greater emphasis in the publication phase. We consider it of prime importance to present the research results to people outside the University circle and to spread up-to-date information about the Viking-age society to the public. As a part of this work a popular book is in production, and a Kaupang exhibition will take place at the Historical Museum of Oslo during the summer of 2004.

The cultural heritage
Further excavations provide an opportunity to continue the school project we have developed in cooperation with the local museum and the local historical association. Our ambition is to increase local knowledge of archaeology and the cultural heritage, as well as to challenge popular preconceptions about Viking Age.

Every primary school in the county of Vestfold has been invited to participate. We are very conscious that the schoolchildren of today will be tomorrow’s guardians of the cultural heritage at Kaupang. During the summer of 2002 more than 1300 schoolchildren visited the excavation. We received hundreds of drawings and noted that several children brought their friends and parents back for a guided tour. Judging from the enthusiasm, interest and knowledge of our youngest visitors, Kaupang has a bright future.

About the author
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Meet the wood-carving artist, Jay Haavik

Fascinated with the art of the Northwest Coast Native Americans, Jay Haavik, a Norwegian-American native of Seattle, Washington, shifted his career from the Lutheran ministry to professional artist in the 1970s. His large totem poles, containers, masks and fine furniture appeared in gallery and museum shows and earned widespread respect. Teaching his craft to others was another important part of his life.

Recently Haavik has chosen to explore his own Scandinavian heritage. He explains, "After my second trip to Norway I wanted to make a shift. I wanted to do the kind of carving that's my heritage". He began to create his own style, melding themes of the Viking era with those of the Northwest Coast. "I see similarities in how craftsmen of both cultures use positive and negative space. Their skill in working with wood is highly developed. And the stories behind the carvings are compelling."

In May, 2002, he displayed his unique work in "Cultures Connect! Seeking the Similar in Viking and Northwest Style Native Art" at Seattle's Nordic Heritage Museum. The exhibit featured wood sculpture, furniture and paintings that explore artistic similarities between the two cultures. "After the show, I made a third trip to Norway. I visited stave churches and was struck by the complex and elaborate carvings. The carvings on the portals of the Urnes stave church in Sogn og Fjordene in the commune of Luster is as sophisticated as anything done today."

Haavik now focuses on Viking art. "I find this type of carving a challenge. It's satisfying; it's part of my ethnic heritage. I respect the skill of the Viking artists and I'm willing to take the time to learn their motifs and master their tools." Respectful of the original designs, Haavik now creates reproductions as well as vibrant contemporary wood sculptures.

This summer Haavik goes to the Viking Ship Museum affiliated with the University of Oslo. There he will study carving in the Viking style with the museum's master carvers. His new work appears in local galleries and is being rapidly purchased for private collections.

When asked about the importance of his work, Haavik explains, "By combining the old techniques with new designs we can keep our heritage alive."

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Odin's ravens
Odin, foremost of the Aesir, god of poetry, battle and death, is the central sculpted face on this panel. Flanking him are his ravens, Hugin (Thought) and Munin (Memory). Each morning they fly out then return to report to Odin on the state of the world. Odin's two wolves, also his companions, are painted in negative space, in Northwest Coast native style, on each side of the panel. The face on the bottom is Mimir at whose well Odin made the trade of his left eye for the gift of wisdom. Copyright all photos: Jay Haavik

Urnes II.
Yellow cedar, dyed rope. This carved panel was inspired by the Urnes Stave Church portals. This church is found on Norway's west coast and dates from 800 AD. The significance of the deep relief carved panels remains unknown. Historians suggest they might represent struggles between good and evil or are perhaps an artistic interplay between abstract dragons. The motif's form is unique to stave church portals and is the origin of the "Urnes" style of Viking art.

Headpost
The headpost of a replica of the bed found in the Oseberg excavation.

Oseberg
"Oseberg" oval bowl, red cedar and cedar root. The tine is a familiar style of Norwegian folk container. In this work the handles used to open the lid are sculpted heads based on the head posts found in the Oseberg ship now in the Viking Ship Museum in Oslo. Excavated in the early 1900's, the Oseberg ship, dating from the 9th century contained many examples of fine Viking-era carving. The tine's lid reflects additional influences of the Oseberg ship. The knot design on the bowl's sides is of a later Scandinavian-Celtic style.
**Vikingar i Vinlandia**

*a Viking Living History Society in USA*

**Vikingar i Vinlandia** is a Viking Living History Society based in the state of Connecticut in the United States of America. The Society portrays Vikings of the 11th century, during the lifetime of Leifr Eiríksson, circa 1000 AD.

The Society, “Vikingar i Vinlandia” or Vikings in Vinland was conceived to promote Leifr Eiríksson Day, October 9th, a holiday most states in the USA recognize, but which generally goes by unnoticed. It is our objective to braise public awareness to the Vinland voyages of Bjarni Herolfsson, the first Norseman to sight Vinland; Leifr Eiríksson, the first Norseman to land in Vinland; and the subsequent Norse voyages of Thorvald Eiríksson and Thorfinn Karlsefni as told in the *Vinland Sagas.*

The Society plans on participating at Scandinavian Festivals, Fairs, Living History Events and parades. We also plan on school presentations to promote the Norse discovery of America, and Norse culture.

Feeling the opportunity was at hand for a Viking Society in Connecticut, Vikingar i Vinlandia was born. One of the early challenges was to come up with an appropriate name, and keeping it Vinland-based. The term “Vinlandia” comes from Thormod Torfason’s 1705 work on the Vinland Voyages, Vikingar i Vinland just did not have the same ring.

Our Society logo depicts a Norse dragon entwined with the grape vines of Vinland. In the field we also bear the popular Raven Banner, depicting a raven in flight carrying a grape vine in its beak.

As a society we have tried to be as accurate as possible using as much archaeological evidence as we can find, and by having all our members subscribe to Viking Heritage, which publishes an invaluable source of material on the Viking Age. We are new, but I expect our membership to rise as we participate in more events. In any case, we will have a lot of fun.

By Todd L. Gjerlander
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http://viking.hgo.se
Blood of the Vikings – The Riddle at Riccall

By Richard A Hall

In September 1066 King Harald Hardraada of Norway brought his invasion fleet of 300 ships up the River Ouse to Riccall, where he made a base camp. On September 20th York submitted after its defenders were defeated in a ferocious battle at Fulford, just south of the city. On September 25th Harald's army was eventually routed by the English at the Battle of Stamford Bridge. In the words of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle... “the Norwegians who survived took flight; and the English attacked them fiercely as they pursued them until some got to the ships. Some were drowned, and some burned and some destroyed in various ways so that few survived... and the king [Harold of England] let them go home with 24 ships”

In 1956 a farmer digging mangel-wurzel clumps near the River Ouse at Riccall uncovered human skeletons. The York historian and archaeologist Peter Wenham excavated remains of at least 39 individuals, 28 of whom could be identified as men, 2 as women and 5 as children. With no settlement nearby, he suggested tentatively that they were the dead from the Battle of Stamford Bridge and its aftermath who had been buried where they fell.

In 1985 Yorkshire Water undertook work on the river bank at Riccall, and revealed a further group of 23 skeletons which York Archaeological Trust recovered. These too are presumed to be from this same mysterious burial ground.

In 2001 the BBC, in researching a new series Blood of the Vikings, contacted York Archaeological Trust to discuss possible content. The Riccall skeletons were quickly a focus of interest, and it was arranged that Paul Budd of Durham University should undertake oxygen isotope analysis of samples of teeth in the hope of pinpointing where in the world these people had originated. Tooth enamel is a guide to this because it varies according to the geographical area where individuals spent their childhood.

Six samples from six different individuals were tested. The analysis showed that none of these people had been born in the British Isles. Instead, they apparently originated in a geographical zone which includes Norway and areas around the Baltic Sea. This startling 100% result automatically suggests that there really could be a link between the stirring events of 1066 and the cemetery. If the burials were later, after all, wouldn't the dead have been buried in the Norman church in Riccall village? So could this be that rare archaeological phenomenon - a battle cemetery from the Viking Age?

Some Glimpses from York –

General view of burial at Riccall, exposed during contractors’ earthmoving to make a flood defence.
Copyright York Archaeological Trust

Map showing the build-up to the Battle of Stamford Bridge. Copyright York Archaeological Trust
The Viking Age City of Jorvik

One of the skeletons exposed at Riccall. Copyright York Archaeological Trust

About the author
Dr Richard Hall is Deputy Director of York Archaeological Trust. He directed ‘The Viking Dig’ at Coppergate in York 1976 - 81 and was part of the team that created the JORVIK VIKING CENTRE. He is currently Honorary Secretary of the Council for British Archaeology and President of the Society for Medieval Archaeology.

www.yorkarchaeology.co.uk

God, the Vikings and St Benet

By Richard A Hall

In 1990, in the street of Swinegate, York, excavations were undertaken by York Archaeological Trust on behalf of the General Accident Insurance Company before the building of Swinegate Court and associated retail shop units. As well as the foundations of a series of medieval buildings which survived more or less at the modern surface level, some deeper trenches investigated the area’s earlier history, penetrating as far back as the Roman period.

One of the more remarkable discoveries was an unknown medieval cemetery, which we assume was associated with the “lost” church of St Benet’s (St Benedict’s). This church, first mentioned in 1154, was apparently shut by about 1300, as King Edward granted to Archbishop Meldon (1317–40) a piece of ground called Benet Place, where the church had formerly stood. In this vicinity also were Benet’s Rents, named after buildings put up so that income from their rents could pay priests to say prayers for the dead. Benet’s Rents were near the corner of Swinegate and Grape Lane, and it has often been thought that St Benet’s church stood on the south-west side of Swinegate to the west of Back Swinegate – an area not redeveloped in 1990 and therefore not investigated. The cemetery which York Archaeological Trust uncovered was not far away, but on the north-east side of Swinegate, opposite the junction with Back Swinegate.

Most unusually, moist peaty soils had preserved wooden coffins intact. Not only can we see how they were made - planks held together with wooden pegs, not nails - but we have been able to send timber samples for tree-ring dating. And now, for the first time, we have a clear indication that this cemetery was in use before the Norman Conquest. Talya Bagwell and Ian Tyers of ARCUS Dendrochronology at the University of Sheffield have analysed samples from 23 oak coffins out of the total of 44 that were excavated. Dates for the felling of the timber could be worked out for seven of the coffins. One had a timber felled 975–1001; other dates cannot be quite so precise, but all were in the range c. 890–1050. All this suggests that the coffins were made and used in the Anglo-Scandinavian period. The only uncertainty is whether the coffin makers re-used old timbers. This is possible - a lot of Coppergate-style plank-lined semi-basement buildings could theoretically have been dismantled and the timbers re-used, but this is unlikely.

On balance it seems more likely that the cemetery is of Viking Age date and therefore that the church for which it was the burial ground – presumably St Benet’s – was also an Anglo-Scandinavian foundation. This would fit the pattern of many other York churches, like the “lost” church represented by the cemetery York Archaeological Trust found next to the Female Prison at York Castle in 1992. Contrary to popular belief, the Viking-age city of Jorvik was obviously a place where church building was a normal activity.

(First published in Yorkshire Archaeology Today magazine, January 2002)
**KNÁTTLEIKR – THE RULES OF THE GAME**

Note: The Vlachernai variations are bracketed and in italics.

1) Field details.
   - The field is rectangular in shape, measuring 40 by 15 paces, with rugby style goals at either end, with the cross bar set at six feet above the ground.

2) The Ball.
   - The ball is made from leather or cloth, about the size of a tennis ball.
   - During the game the ball may be kicked, thrown, or hit with the bat.
   - The ball may be carried in the hand for up to five paces.

3) The Bats.
   - All players are issued with wooden bats.
     (The bats are similar to ‘rounders’ bat in shape and size. Approximately 40 cm long, 10 cm wide and 1 cm thick.)

4) Out of bounds.
   - Players may freely cross the boundary lines but if the ball crosses the boundary lines the ball is thrown in by a member of the opposing team to the last player to touch the ball.

5) Player identification.
   - The teams will wear identifying head bands of different colours.

6) Player deployment.
   - At the start of the game each team member is assigned an opposing team member to play against.
   - The exchange of players from the reserves can take place at any time during the game. The player on the field leaves the field and hits the bat against that of his replacement.

7) Teams.
   - The game is played by two teams of five members on the field.
   - Reserve players may consist of any number agreed on at the start of play by both teams.
   - Each team appoints a captain and the captainship can switch to another player at any time during the game.

8) The Umpire.
   - The Umpire is chosen with the agreement of the two teams.
   - The Umpire may call a halt to play if it becomes too fierce (or boring) and restart the game, (or if any of the rules is infringed upon.)

9) Starting the Game.
   - At the start of the game the ball is placed on the ground in the centre of the field. (or To start the game the ball is thrown up into the air between the two captains by the umpire.)
   - The captains stand five paces from the ball on the opposing teams half of the field.
   - All other players remain in their own half until the start of the game.
   - When the Umpire blows the horn the captains’ battle for control of the ball.

10) Scoring and Winning the Game.
    - The ball must be hit with the bat over the goals horizontal bar and between the two uprights.
    - The first team to score three goals wins.

11) Player Contact.
    - Players may tackle opponents but only with the upper body. (A tackle on an opponent must only be made between the hips and the shoulders.)
    - Players are not allowed to hit or kick an opponent.
    - The bats may not be used to hit an opponent.

**By Stephen Wyley**

Firstly, Knáttleikr is a Viking ball game with similarities to the Irish Hurley or the North American Indian Lacrosse. It is mentioned a number of times in the Viking Sagas and from that a set of rules have been gleaned. In this article I have transcribed the original rules put together by Kaare Johannessen (curator at the Trelleborg Museum, Denmark) and included some of the variations used by the Vlachernai Garrison of the New Varangian Guard Inc. Kaare has allowed me to publish these rules to bring them to a wider audience, to this I have added a web page [http://www.geocities.com/svenskildbiter/Viking/knattleikr.html](http://www.geocities.com/svenskildbiter/Viking/knattleikr.html).

At the end of this document I have included a number of links to similar historical ball games which offer an interesting comparison. It should also be noted that there is a contention that Knáttleikr shows a link with the Vikings and the North American Indians with their game of Lacrosse.

This all started for my part after reading the article by Kaare Johannessen in the third edition of the Viking Heritage Magazine for 2002. We attempted to try the game ourselves in early November 2002 at our Siege and Skirmish Event (in Australia).

Over the event we played two games with a great time had by all. We had men, women and teenagers participating which engendered less vigorous displays of male testosterone. The games took on the feel of an Australian Rules football match with players forming forward and back lines and the winning teams having a good passing game.

The injury rate was very low, a hit hand from...
Knáttleikr – the Trelleborg Rules with Vlachernai Variations

someone with a overzealous bat and a strained arm bent the wrong way in a tackle. The use of the ball up at the start, and subsequent re-starts made it a bit safer. Here beside I have transcribed the rules first set out by Johannessen and add the variations we used are bracketed.

The Vlachernai variations included;
- dimensions for the bats, a qualification of the umpires’ powers, a ball up to start the game and a definition of the target for tackling.

I made the bats we used from timber I had in the shed at home but the size was based on a rounder’s bat, and if we are going to have matches played (even against international teams) it would be good to have a standard size.

The section on umpiring was added to make sure the umpire could rule on all areas of rule infringement, thus ensuring some semblance of order (or is that being too much of a modernist). By consensus we decided that placing the ball was too dangerous and went with the Australian rules Football “ball up” by the umpire between the two captains, there is still a clash but without the same level of risk.

The Trelleborg rules state that “Players may tackle opponents but only with the upper body” this was interpreted to mean that you could tackle and trip opponents. We went for a close definition where you could only tackle an opponent “between the hips and the shoulders”, this also reduced the risk of injury. It was noted that there was no mention about tackling someone with or without the ball, so we allow tackling off the ball, the outcome was similar to “Salute the Jugger” (a 1989 movie with Rutger Hauer).

Following mention of our games on the Living History email list it came to light that some New Zealanders had also tried the game with enjoyable results. I have also put it to the organising committee of the 2003 Australian Medieval Conference that we play a display game during the event. This suggestion has been taken on board by the committee and all we now need some volunteers to take on the might (and bulk) of the New Varangian Guard Inc.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Kaare Johannessen, the re-enactor at Trelleborg and Kinglake West and Viking Heritage.

Reference
http://viking.hgo.se

Links
Bandy - http://www.geocities.com/Colosseum/track/2049/English/Bandyhistory.html
Viking America: The Norse Crossings and Their Legacy by, James Robert Enterline
http://www.vnlnet.net/author/EJo2A972.htm

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Stephen Wyley is a historical re-enactor with the New Varangian Guard Inc. in Australia since 1984. Specialising in military architecture, archery, tents, and replicas in wood and leather.
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Destination Viking

Destination Viking is a concept for presenting the Vikings and the Viking Age. It includes museums, visitor centres, prehistoric villages, re-enactment groups etc., and is working with research, presentation and the development of a trans-national tourist destination.

Destination Viking includes a number of separate projects, currently the Destination Viking Baltic Stories, funded by the Interreg IIIB Baltic Sea Region programme and the Destination Viking Sagalands project, funded by the Interreg IIIB Northern Periphery programme. An application for Interreg IIIB North Sea Region funding for a Destination Viking Waterlinks project will be submitted by March 3rd.

The Destination Viking projects are co-publishers of Viking Heritage Magazine, and Viking Heritage is a partner of Destination Viking.

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Destination Viking – Sagalands
Kick off in Hot Tub and Hurricane

By Geir Sør-Reime

A Destination Viking project called Sagalands or Sagas and Storytelling was approved for Interreg IIIB funding in the Northern Periphery region just before Christmas. The project has partners from Iceland, Greenland, the Faroes, Shetland Island, Orkneys and Northern Norway. In addition, Newfoundland is about to join, and the project has also an associate partner in Southern Norway and a permanent observer from the Isle of Man.

Lead-partner of the project is the Institute of Regional Development in Iceland. This is the first time ever that an Interreg project has been led by an Icelandic partner, as Iceland did not join the Interreg programme until last April.

The project had its kick-off meeting, the first partner meeting in Iceland from 6th through 10th February 2003. A mild winter with light rain greeted us when arriving at Keflavik airport close to Reykjavik. The hard work of the meeting agenda started almost immediately after arrival, with a guided tour through the Viking exhibit at the Cultural House in Reykjavik by Dr Gísli Sigurðsson, followed by a visit to the exhibit of old Icelandic sagas and other manuscripts in the vaults of the same house. The Icelandic Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr Árni Þorsteinn Valbergur Sverrisdóttir then greeted us and underlined the great importance Icelandic authorities attach to the project. She also presented “Mr. Viking” (Geir Sør-Reime) with a splendid gift, the complete Icelandic sagas in five volumes. The publishers also received orders for 13 sets of these books from the participants at the meeting.

In the evening, all the partners got to experience more traditional Icelandic-Viking food at the Naust (boat-house) restaurant. For most of us, the sour shark went down only when accompanied by a generous amount of Svartidauði (Black Death), the “Viking soft drink”. Early next morning, the party departed on a full-day excursion through the southeast Icelandic areas, including the Njáls Saga Centre in Hvolsvöllur. Here, the Njáls Saga is related in posters and exhibits, with extensive use of sound and narrations. The director, Mr Árni Þorsteinn Valbergur Bollason guided us through the exhibits. We were also informed about the musical based on the Njáls Saga that has been produced at the centre and which has now been touring in several countries.

The next stop was the Keldur Farm, where traditional Icelandic farmhouses with turf walls are still standing. The National Museum has uncovered Viking-age remains underneath the houses.

After lunch, hosted by Mrs Ingunn Guðmundsdóttir, the director of Skógar and Gúverjahreppur Municipality, we departed on a daring journey to the famous Stöng farm. This early medieval farm was covered by volcanic ashes and deserted. A Nordic archaeological team carried out excavations at the site in 1938, and there is now a
protective building covering the excavation site of the dwelling house. Outside this protective building you can still see the byre and the smithy, and in the ground are also remains of a small church.

Thjóðár Valley (Þjórsárdalur) where Stöng is situated was covered with snow while we were there, and our bus went into a snowdrift around 5 km from the site. We had to dig the bus out, and then the driver had to keep the bus off the road for long distances in order to reach our destination. Fortunately, the sun was shining most of the time!

After this rather dramatic trip, we went back to the main road and to the site where a replica of the Stöng farmhouse has been set up. Here we were served coffee and traditional Icelandic cakes while listening to old songs and studying the reconstruction.

Late in the evening we reached Skálholt, one of the two original bishop seats in Iceland. There is even a Cathedral there now, built in the 1950s. In medieval times, one of the largest wooden buildings in the world stood here and served as the main cathedral of Iceland. Today, the Bishop of Iceland resides in Reykjavik, but there are Vice-Bishops at both Skálholt and the other medieval bishop residence at Hólar in northern Iceland.

Then we arrived at Geysir Hotel where we spent the next few days.

The first partner meeting proper of the project commenced on Saturday morning. After lunch there was a public seminar on Sagas and Tourism Development.

The seminar included papers by Mr Sumarlöði Ísleifsson an historian at the Reykjavik Academy, who spoke on the image of Iceland and the Sagas, Mr Axel Kristinsson, Director of Borgarfjörður Culture House speaking on the use of literature: from sagas to storytelling in medieval Iceland, and Ms Anne Karine Sandmo, County Conservation Officer of Trøms County Council (Norway) presenting "The Man who killed the King - Tore Hund and the northernmost Chiefdom in Norway".

After a coffee break, further papers were presented:

"Viking-age harbours and trading places on the island of Gotland", by Mr Dan Carlsson, Associate Professor at Gotland University (Sweden), "The Vikings and Norse in the Isle of Man", by Dr Andrew Foxon, Head of Professional Services, Manx National Heritage (Isle of Man), "Reconstructions of three Viking farms" by Mr Guðmundur Ólafsson, Head of Archaeological Department of the National Museum of Iceland, "L’Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site of Canada: Bringing Archaeology to Life", by Mr Geoff Hancock, Superintendent of National Historic Sites for Western Newfoundland and Labrador, Parks Canada and "The Viking Trail in Newfoundland and Labrador" by Mr John Hull, Executive Director, Viking Trail Tourism Association (Canada).

The seminar was concluded by a brief summary of some exciting Icelandic projects in literature, theatre and film presenting the Saga heritage.

In the evening, the Mayor of Bláskógabyggð Municipality, Mr Ragnar Sævar Ragnarsson, hosted a dinner for the group.

The partner meeting continued on Sunday morning, and included discussions on the various themes that the project covers, including telling and presenting sagas and...
To live the past is to enrich the future

BY YNGVE ERIK LUNDIN, STORHOLMEN VIKING VILLAGE

Storholmen Viking Village

Storholmen Viking Village is an outdoor museum located beside Lake Erken, seventy kilometres north of Stockholm, close to the Baltic Sea. Storholmen is run by a foundation without local authority or government grants. Storholmen is a Viking village under construction and its goal is to provide insight into the everyday life of the people who lived during the Viking Age. The visitors get to see and try prehistoric handicraft techniques and learn about the Viking Age.

The village consists of a clay pit house, a cooking house, an outdoor forge, a henhouse, a stage for acting, and an exhibition hall with a smaller stage and room for 210 people. A larger blacksmith’s smithy is under construction. There are also fences for animals and storage sheds in the village. The reconstruction of a longhouse from the late Viking period is being planned. Plans are being made in collaboration with Uppsala University. In the village there is also a “Viking life” exhibition about clothes, food, handicrafts, religion, and about the region around Lake Erken, archaeological finds, rune stones etc.

Next to the village lies an Iron-age burial ground, with 166 graves and burrows, in a nature reserve with old oak trees.

The activities in the Viking village are based on experimental archaeology and ethnology. We reconstruct buildings, environments and handicrafts from the Viking Age into a living Viking museum.

In spring and autumn we have educational activities for school children and in summer the village is open for tourists. Then the visitors can try ancient handicrafts like forging and textile work. There are also storytelling, prehistoric music and dance, lectures and Viking games in which the visitors can participate. We write and put on plays in the village for children and adults. We also have lectures and guided tours for groups. Visits to the Viking village can be booked all year around.

The village is created partly by idealistic efforts and a great interest in ancient culture and history, and partly by commercial activities like feasts, Viking events, courses, guiding etc.
The network NSLF, the living prehistory of Sweden

Storholmen Norden Foundation is one of the founders of the network NSLF “Sveriges Levande Forntid” which means “Sweden’s Living Prehistory”. Most of the prehistoric villages, centres and outdoor museums in Sweden are part of this network. NSLF works for:
- improved quality in dissemination of prehistory knowledge
- making prehistory come to life in an intriguing and compelling way
- improved training for educationalists for this purpose
- collaboration in marketing in and outside of Sweden.

NSLF has established contact with the European network for prehistoric villages and centres, EXARC. It has more than 8 million visitors every year at over 300 ancient destinations.

Culture – Tourism

Storholmen Viking village was born because an idealistic tourism association, involving important parts from the tourism industry, decided that the region needed a establishment that had something to offer visitors all year round, not only in the summer. The theme would be a Viking village.

A team from the “Roslagens turistintressenter” association (Tourism improvement in Roslagen) arranged a tenancy contract with the local government for land use, and with the help of a team from the idealistic prehistoric-medieval club “Aquila Marimus” a foundation was created committed to developing the cultural and historical investment in the Viking village.

We soon became aware that it would be difficult to get government grants to develop this project. In this region of Sweden, close to the capital, Stockholm, even the merchants and businessmen, who normally take initiatives when it comes to investments in tourism, are rather uninterested in getting travelling visitors to stay in the region because there are a lot of weekend cottage owners who shop for things like nails and wallpaper, not postcards and T-shirts. Consequently, the merchants have enough customers. In the Norrtälje district alone there are about 29,000 weekend/summer houses.

A good project idea cannot live on only contributions and grants. At the start of a project investments are needed, but after awhile the project should run on its own. When we started our Viking village in 1996 we had already reckoned that possible contributions from the local authority, for example, could be part of our income, but we did not want to be dependent on contributions. This would be marginal money that to some extent could help lift the project when necessary. In order to get permission to lease the land from the local authority in the introductory phase we had to guarantee that we would not be dependent on contributions from the local government.

We began to notice even then that the going was tougher for museums that depended solely on contributions from government and local authorities. Museums must accept the ideas that influence our society today. This also holds true for the business trade, where new concrete cooperation projects are
desired in the future. Nowadays it is not so much a question of money in exchange for commerce and marketing, but that culture workers and business people need to take advantage of each other’s knowledge in a real way. The market for experiences is steadily growing, and companies are finding it more difficult to satisfy their increasingly fastidious employees, customers and investors.

Culture and commercialism have to unite

Cultural projects and commercial projects have to come closer to each other, and there is also need for decision-makers who understand the new era and can hopefully explain to us what the social economy concept really means.

It is said that there is a democratic power within social economy that is important to present. How?

It is important to see the big picture within the social economy and get a feeling for the special sort of thing that is growing and simmering between the public sector and the private sector, consequently a third sector that has a great intrinsic value. We often connect social economy with idealistic work that emerges where the public sector has failed. Is social economy a complementary alternative?

Ulrica Messing, the Minister responsible for social economy in Sweden, thinks that the tourism trade has a close connection to social economy.

With Storholmen, from the beginning we have aimed our sights at a level we are able to reach. If we can afford it, we invest; if we cannot, we maintain a low profile. Unfortunately this makes for very unstable long-term planning, and the project depends on the idealistic forces at work in such a project having the stamina to endure.

We also think that tourism produces businesses that result in culture. Politicians and businessmen have to try to understand that it is possible to work in a cultural heritage project with commercial means parallel to cultural arrangements. Culture and commercialism must share the space.

Cultural workers should not see themselves as public-supported employees. They have to dare to be part of the economy as participants in actual cooperation projects. They need some of businesses’ experience in leading projects and marketing. And of course, they need some of the companies’ resources to work with.

For the companies it is no longer enough to mass-produce and market. They need more of the creativity that the culture stands for. They have to be able to communicate with people at the emotional level. Customers want real freedom of options, and real quality. Employees want to feel inspired about their jobs and the company-owners want to invest their money in projects that carry the company and the world forward. All the parts have to be motivated to do their best.

New rules

Politically, the tax system and authority regulations should be examined. As it is now, new legislation is introduced which, instead of encouraging creativity, stifles it. Our partnership in the European union has given us many new rules, but we are even adding new ones of our own. For example: After this year, if we want to have animals in the village on exhibition for more than seven days, we have to pay a 200 € (2000 SEK) application fee to the Department of Agriculture, Office for Animal Protection, in Jönköping and then at least 440 € (4,400 SEK) for a permit. If it involves the use of more than one space requiring more in-depth investigation, the permit cost rises to 2460 € (24,600 SEK), and the possible inspection fee to 1140 € (11,400 SEK).

If a village is open for visitors for one month with goats and hens in the village and has 3,200 paying visitors, the entrance cost for the visitors has to be raised by 1,5-2 € (15-20 SEK) a visitor to meet the cost due to the authority. This does not encourage tourism investments.

Decision-makers in Sweden must realize that tourism is one of the world’s biggest industries, and that they have to allow better opportunities and resources for us who are trying to unite tourism, culture and business in our efforts.

For more information about the Storholmen Viking village: www.storholmen.org
Viking-age architecture is characterized by the boat-shaped longhouse, a house with convex outer walls and straight gable walls. Such a longhouse is now under construction at Ale. The wall posts are in place, following the strong curvature of the layout as documented from the archaeological site where it was found. We also can see the double row of the inner roof-bearing posts, reflecting the curvature of this building in the vertical plane, highest in the middle and lower towards the gable ends.

Ethnographic research has documented a very close connection between a specific cultural entity and their house form. As long as these cultures existed in their own right, they have retained their house forms. This strong connection is underlined by the fact that these cultures re-established their particular house form wherever they settled, even when neither climate nor access to suitable building material favored it. When the house form is modified, it reflects changes within the culture. When a house form disappears, a specific cultural identity dies. This development, which is noted in ethnographic research, we can actually observe in the course of the Viking Age when examining the Viking settlements in the North Atlantic area and Central Europe.

The boat-shaped longhouse as the main architectural expression of the Viking culture is found everywhere in the wake of their colonization. This form emerged in the course of the Early Iron Age and prevailed in different areas as long as there were people living there who felt the need to preserve their own cultural identity. The Christianization of the pagan culture put a definite end to this house form, clearly indicating the death of a cultural identity.

The most probable assumption, based on geometrical, historical and ethnographical evidence, is that the boat-shaped form is not limited to the two-dimensional plane, but that these ground plans are projections of a boat-shaped architecture that involved the buildings as a whole. This means that the roof was a kind of double curved shell, composed of curved rafters. This construction allows for considerable downsizing of the dimensions of materials used.

If we examine the housing landscapes of different pre-industrial cultures, we notice that the advantages of this building principle based on single or double curved roofs have been confirmed and utilized all over the world. Furthermore we have evidence in the historical documents from our own area depicting Late Iron Age houses with curved roofs. One can choose whether or not to believe in all this evidence, but there is mathematical proof that these curved rafters were in fact in use in the Viking Age. This proof is found in another type of building, the big halls that show traces of outer slanting posts accompanying the convex walls. This proof will be shown in a forthcoming article about the main building at the Ale Viking site, the hall.
What kind of community and social organization existed during the Viking Age? How much do we actually know today about the Vikings? Is the present knowledge concerning Viking life one thousand years ago somewhat limited? Will future generations laugh at the reconstructions and knowledge gained today about the Vikings, compared to the knowledge they will have acquired in the future?

There are many issues connected to this particular subject. However, let us first examine the level of attainments in Sweden two hundred years ago concerning the Vikings.

In the late 18th century, King Gustav III was monarch in Sweden. He was very interested in the theatre and wrote an opera about the Vikings. He called it "Frigga". When writing this opera, the king was inspired by a place called Old Uppsala, situated just sixty kilometres to the north of Stockholm. In a preserved manuscript dating back to about 1070, the priest and historian Adam of Bremen referred to a famous pagan temple situated at this location. Presumably, it must have been a timbered building but two hundred years ago this fact would not have been known. Archaeology had not yet evolved as a discipline. A couple of minor investigations had been carried out in Italy but there were no scholarly interpretations of these particular excavations. If any attempt was to be made to make history a "living" entity, during the 18th century, there were only the preserved manuscripts and written accounts dating back to the early medieval period available as a source of reference.

King Gustav III needed scenery for his opera. He called upon a French artist and the picture shows the result (see fig. 1). It was supposed to portray a typical Viking temple. At least it was how the king believed it would look. He based his beliefs on contemporary knowledge concerning temples, which of course had to be constructed of stone like those in Greece or Italy, temples which still remained standing. The countryside surrounding the temple was typical of the landscape north of Lake Mälaren one thousand years ago! It represents a Swedish wilderness with seas, deep forests and alpine mountains! Observe the cave. It is very important for the understanding of this painting. From this mysterious cave the ancient force flows out, informing the onlooker that Sweden was the origin of all civilization on earth. In the late sixteenth century Swedish scholars were attempting to make an international statement, concluding that the land surrounding Lake Mälaren and Stockholm was the biblical Garden of Eden.

The king was not pleased with the first drawings for his opera. He thought something was missing. It was not convincing scenery for a Viking opera. He had to change the drawings. Now the audience was placed inside a cave and were looking out at the landscape and temple. The king had a typical Swedish animal as a symbol placed outside the temple to protect it. This was the type of animal believed to have existed in a typical Swedish forest during the Viking Age - the lion!

But still the king was not satisfied. At the premier, the scenery was altered once again. The temple was now situated inside the cave, a cave symbolizing the power of God, originating from the forces in the old Swedish landscape (see fig. 2). The king had placed two rune stones in front of the cave. Another rune stone was cut into the mountain. The audience was supposed to make the connection here with Moses and the holy tablets of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written. The mountain in the Bible where this took place was of course once situated at Old Uppsala in Sweden.

If you were to ask anyone in Sweden in 1788, they would have answered that this was exactly the way things looked during the Viking Age, because the authorities had said that this was so.

Now we know that this is just a good story, but what about present-day knowledge? What will people think in two
hundred years’ time about the present day hypotheses and interpretations concerning this period of history? There are no kings telling us the “truth”. Instead there are scholars, publishing and informing us about history and the “true interpretation of history”.

There is also an organized cultural bureaucracy often trying to prevent us from forming other ideas and hypotheses than those generally accepted today. For example, in the countryside, signs placed at ancient monuments often look the same no matter where you go in Sweden because the government has decided that it should be so.

As an archaeologist and as a museum scholar, two special occasions have changed my views concerning the interpretation of history and archaeology.

The first took place in 1984. We were making a series of TV-programs concerning the prehistory of southern Scandinavia. Early one morning the film team visited an archaeological excavation at a place called Illerup situated to the south of the city of Aarhus, on Jutland, in Denmark.

We arrived just at the right moment. The archaeologists had been waiting all night to start work on a number of artefacts found at the site. The cameraman did not know where to start. There were so many really important and valuable objects, silver, weapons and so on. They were the remains of a large army that had tried to invade Jutland during the 4th or 5th century. This army had been defeated and the equipment had been sacrificed to the gods. There were hundreds of iron spears with a particular design, indicating that the origin of the fleet and the army was western Sweden and southern Norway.

If you consider the amount of artefacts of that same period, it is not possible to find very many at sites in native districts of this army; a few pole holes and foundation remains, some graves containing pottery, burned bones and small, rusty knives and the like.

Of course these remains are very valuable for making interpretations of the particular settlement. But on Jutland, a catastrophe had obviously taken place and a different view could now be gained of the particular period.

How difficult is it not to gain an idea of what life really was like during a particular period of prehistory, using only ordinary archaeological finds? There are a lot of serious limitations on this particular discipline.

The other occasion that changed my mind was when the Museum of Foteviken embarked on a new project; the reconstruction and building of a cog (a medieval merchant ship), in 1998. All of a sudden we experienced the building of a large oak ship.

I realized then for the first time as an archaeologist, the true dimension of life in those days. Building one of these ships required a lot of skilled carpenters and craftsmen as well as an excellent organization. All the different-shaped timbers had to be collected. All the iron to make about twenty thousand long nails had to be produced and all the carpenters and craftsmen had to be employed. In those days, there were many ships built each year, not only one. Many thousands of people must have worked with shipbuilding. However, nothing of this is mentioned in the preserved manuscripts and written sources.

Now, as an archaeologist and a person very familiar with history, I am able to perceive a totally new dimension of daily life in those days. I was unable to gain this kind of information and these facts from the available archaeological material alone. I acquired it from working with the building of a replica of an archaeological find, a wreck of a medieval cog.

When working with reconstructions at the Viking Reserve at Foteviken, the same kind of knowledge concerning history is acquired. It opens up a new dimension that I consider to be very important, not only for the tourist visiting Foteviken but also for those working professionally with archaeology and history.
When would Åland (the Åland Islands) have been mentioned for the first time in the historical documents that have been saved to present time?

The question has been puzzling me for some time considering that tiny Åland has more than 10,000 grave sites from the Bronze Age onwards and an abundance of artefacts from the Viking era. To find the answer I read most of the 13th century chronicles by the Icelandic poet Snorre Sturluson. But nowhere did he mention the name Åland. I continued my research, reading different Danish and Swedish translations of Saxo Grammaticus. But no luck this time either. I knew, however, that a British researcher, O. Elton (1861-1945), also had translated Saxo and therefore turned to the Berkley Digital Library’s website before Åland came up. To my astonishment I discovered that O. Elton had not spent much time browsing through the Library’s web site before Åland came up. To my astonishment I discovered that O. Elton mentioned Åland twice in his translation of “The Nine Books of the Danish History of Saxo Grammaticus” (Norrøna Society, New York 1905). The section that interested me describes the battle at Bråvalla (where the town of Norrköping is situated) in the year 750. The battle was between two powerful kings, the Swede Sigurd Ring and the Dane Harald Hildetand who saw his army being crushed before he himself was brutally slain by one of his own men. When Saxo wrote in O. Elton’s translation, describes the fearsome encounter he mentions several warriors by name and descent, among them the Ålanders. He tells of the furious Harald Haraldsson who fought on the Danish side.

A conscientious translator

Overwhelmed by my discovery I decided to double-check with the corresponding section in Saxo’s text (written in Latin). I realised that O. Elton had translated “ex Hathica vero provincia” to “from the province of Åland”, while Swedish and Danish translators had interpreted the same phrase simply as “from Hadeland”. Strange, I thought, that they ignored “province” but guessed it was a simplification since Hadeland, which is in Norway, was never a Danish province. O. Elton, however, translated Saxo’s text literally and did not ignore “province”. After presumably methodical studies he concluded that Saxo by “Hathica” meant nothing less than Åland. Elton’s conclusion is logical for at least the following reasons: 1. Åland was a Danish province during this time.

Mind-boggling

Among many notable warriors, Saxo’s captivating chronicle of the battle at Bråvalla also depicts furiously fighting Valkyries, intrepid berserks and, last but not least, the undefeatable warrior-poet Starkad the old whose cunningness ensured King Sigurd the victory. For an Ålander the mind boggles when realising that earlier Ålanders fought against the legendary Starkad who in his childhood stood eye to eye with none other than Asa Thor himself.

Torbjörn Sundblom
ÅLAND

The author and certainly others would be very interested to know if any of our readers can provide an explanation of why translators have interpreted the part about “the province of Åland” in such different ways. If you venture an explanation, please contact the editor.

Greetings from the Viking
News from the Vikings

You would hardly believe what we all did during the winter days. While most of the Viking groups just buy their stuff somewhere, we try to make it ourselves to experience the fabrication and usage, to discover new possibilities, but most of all to question actual ideas about using the item. For example one of the bad customs in Viking groups is wasting good food….

History of the Oseberg cauldron and the soup...

To make our Viking soup we needed a cauldron and for this reason we searched for a way of making our own cauldron. Finally one of our members made a replica of the Oseberg cauldron. It exists of several pieces that are riveted together, just like the real one. We can make some 30 litres of soup in it. First we had to discover how Vikings made their cauldrons rustproof, because when you cook something based on water in an iron cauldron, it starts rusting very quickly (from the first use). No one could help us because most Viking groups just buy their cauldrons at the blacksmith who does this work for them. This is the right way: you have to rub some vegetable oil on the inside and outside of the cauldron. Take care that the whole surface is oiled. Then hang the cauldron over the fire, until it becomes really hot. The oil can catch on fire; if so just let it burn out (never put water on burning oil!). Now you have to take the cauldron off the fire. Empty the cauldron, in case there is still some oil in it and clean it out with a clean natural cloth (linen is best). Next problem to solve was how to make it watertight. Thanks to my connections with the Svinesund Vikings, I knew we had to use a kind of watery porridge, which should be boiled in the cauldron. So, we tried it out….

The best and cheapest way for doing it is as
The discipline of archaeological excavation is without doubt, at times, a demanding taskmaster. An objective may be determined by the need to address or resolve a particular question, idea or to prove or eliminate a hypothesis. In the process of such research excavation allows for the collection and collation of evidential materials and/or substances which may then be studied and interpreted within an objective context. The site and attendant data may then be published in a number of formats. It is this latter stage of the design that may provide interested contemporaries and the general public with documented access to a particular site and its resultant study. Yet the interpretation of evidence remains, in certain factors, to be fickle and rarely at rest, being ever acted upon by its relationship, assumed or otherwise, with gathering objective or subjective interpretations.

Such may be highlighted by the recent reportage in the UK popular press of a piece of slate (found in two parts with a year between the finding of each half) bearing the image of, what is perceived to be, a man bound in chains and holding what appears to be a reliquary, the finding of each half) bearing the image of, what is perceived to be, a man bound in chains and holding what appears to be a reliquary, the finding of each half being led by an armoured clad Viking warrior. In the foreground is a waiting ship with oars at rest. The find was unearthed on the Island of Inchmarnock which lies off the western coast of Scotland.

The press in such cases may provide those not directly involved with the excavation with a “snapshot” view of the evidence from an archaeological process but, I feel, it becomes tainted somewhat when the respective author then feels it incumbent upon themselves to dramatise or infuse an understandably limited and often primary discourse in such a manner to distinguish itself in the form of a number of paragraphs which declare that such a find, in this instance the Inchmarnock “Hostage Stone” as it is now known, strongly argues for the “traditionalist” view of Viking-age Scandinavians as being plundering, marauding savages bent upon the destruction and subjugation of defenceless, indigenous peoples. Vikings in the collective context of such press reportage may be understood to be an aspect of Scandinavian society.

One is aware that in periods of lulls within the community of popular media archaeological and historical bodies may be trawled by reporters who are seeking “a good story”. Yet it is how such information is then disseminated that may impart a lasting interpretation upon the public of a subject rather than a considered demonstration of the evidence within a contextual framework and academic geography.

The respective piece on the “Hostage Stone” also defines those who see Scandinavian settlement and interaction within the context of Scotland as generally limited in terms of force as being “revisionists”. Surely such a position defines Scandinavian freebooters as having been without contemporaries in Western Europe which is just not the case.

To return to the “Hostage Stone” itself. The find does provide one with a, to date, unique and important pictorial recording of a presumed incident, especially as this is the only example of a reliquary recorded upon such a contextual medium, all to familiar with the contemporaneous writings found within the Annals of Ulster and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the latter colouring the freebooters with apocalyptic portents.

In all it is certainly refreshing to find a publication such as Viking Heritage which provides a disciplined shoring upon which archaeological and historical evidence may break and, in turn, be made available to a wide and varied readership who share a common interest. It is with hope that those who involve themselves in the reportage of archaeological finds in the future may be “educated” as appropriate and to a degree by excavators during their contact with same.

The report on the “Hostage Stone” draws to a close with the statement that “The latest discovery, however, suggests that the enduring image of burly thugs in horned helmets who raped and pillaged much of the Western Isles is closer to the truth.” As such the stereotype prevails it seems.

By Michael Cunningham,
Archaeologist, Ireland

Genootschap! in Flanders

follows: put water in the cauldron. When it is hot enough you add the oats. When this starts warming up you have to add more water and oats to it so you can fill the slits. The mixture must be like porridge.

Most of the re-enactor groups throw this porridge into the fire or spoil it by putting it in the garbage. But because we know that it took Vikings a lot of energy and time to cultivate oats or wheat – agriculture and farming were very labour-intensive in those days – we did not want to waste the watery porridge and… used it as the base and binding ingredient for our soup! The result was fascinating: “watery-porridge meat and vegetable Viking soup”.

People who had seen how we made our soup didn’t dare to taste it…. But as soon they saw we were still alive after having eaten it, they tried it out, tasted it and…. Bingo!

Erik De Quick
(King Erik Blåtand)
Viking Genootschap
ESONORM

http://www.headlandarchaeology.com
The Vikings have conquered America

The Viking exhibition “Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga” has been touring around North America since April 1999 and has now reached its final stop (See articles published in VH M 1/2000, 3/2000). The exhibition opened in November 2002 at the Science Museum of M Innesota and will continue until May 2003. When it closes in May, over 3 million Americans will have visited the exhibition!

The enthusiasm for the Vikings and the exhibition has been immense throughout the tour but perhaps the biggest interest has been shown in Saint Paul, M Innesota since there are a large number of Swedish descendants living in this area.

Source: Dagens Nyheter, 22/11 2002

The Spillings silver hoard – a gold mine!

In 1998 a farmer, Björn Engström, found some silver and bronze objects in his field in Spillings on Gotland. The County Museum of Gotland excavated the site and it turned out to be the world’s largest Viking-age silver hoard ever found – the Spillings silver hoard! (See articles published in VH M 3/99, 4/99, 1/2000, 4/2000, 3/2002)

The Swedish National Heritage Board has determined that the Spillings silver hoard is of national interest and that it has a high scientific value. Apart from a redemption of 800,000 SEK (around 85,700 EUR or 92,600 USD), the landowner Björn Engström, also received a reward of 1,200,000 SEK (around 128,500 EUR or 138,900 USD). It turned out that Björn had a real gold mine in his field!

Source: Gotlands Tidningar, 23/12 2002

Wanted! Viking Ship Builders!

Dear People,
I am writing to you from St. Petersburg. I am a freelance journalist, writer and traveller and also a carpenter. I used to build Russian Bania, which means saunas in old Russian style. Several times I’ve been visiting Sweden and Denmark as a traveller and occasional worker.

I am a poor Russian Viking and my big dream is to learn how to build a Viking ship. I could work as a volunteer in this special area. In June this year I hope to arrive in Sweden on a sailing boat together with the captain. If there is any possibility to work for free in some ship-building project, answer me please.

Respect
Vasiliya Spasskaya
Tel +7 (812) 2332231

Vasiliya Spassky

The National Geographic makes a documentary about the Vikings

During the month of January a British television team, Darlow Smithson Film and Television Production, on mission for the National Geographic, has been on tour in Scandinavia to make a documentary film about the Vikings. The purpose of the British programme is to try to explain the enormous impact the Vikings made around the world. The team has been travelling around in Sweden, Norway and Denmark in an attempt to distinguish between the different objectives the Vikings had in different places. The producer, Chris Lent, is of the opinion that the Vikings’ great successes depended very much on their ships, on which they could load and transfer a large quantity of goods.

The Gotlandic Vikings, for example, made their fortune by trading. The island was a centre for almost all trading in the Baltic Sea. When the team visited Gotland their principal interest was in the Viking-age picture stones on which depicted ships are common. Also the immense number of silver hoards that indicates the Gotlandic Vikings’ great wealth caught the team’s attention.

The documentary will be two one-hour episodes and shown on National Geographic International channel, probably in the end of the summer 2003. Over a hundred million viewers around the world will have the opportunity to learn more about the Vikings.
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Other issues

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