Editorial

DEAR READERS,

With this magazine’s base on Gotland and the new year close at hand, of course we have to colour this issue with the coming year’s special happening: Gotland Viking Island 2005!

Gotland – with the largest concentration of Viking-age finds in the world, including almost 700 silver hoards and more than 400 discovered picture stones – is the ultimate place to meet, experience and learn more about the Vikings. And we welcome you to come and visit our beautiful island in person, to participate and contribute to the Viking year!

Even now you can broaden your knowledge by reading the articles included here; about the old law on Gotland called Gutalagen and about the names given to Viking-age Gotlanders. You will also get facts about the treasure hoards and become acquainted with Paviken, the first excavated trading and harbour site on the island.

Although much of the focus is on Gotland in this issue, the Destination Viking projects present other activities along the Viking theme. I would especially like to call your attention to Kristina Carlsson’s article discussing the quality, authenticity and purpose of the reconstructions of ancient settlements. I know that many of you have opinions on this topic and I do hope that you will share them with the rest of us. So we eagerly await your contributions to this debate!

Have an enjoyable read!

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Words of Wisdom

THE USE OF POWER

A prudent man wields his power in modest measure.
With brave men he finds that none is foremost or excels in all things.

From Hávamál
( Words from “The High One”)

About the front page
Welcome to the warmth of the hearth, in the Year of the Vikings, 2005! Photo Helga Jonsson
2005 will be the year of the Viking on Gotland, Sweden, a year filled with events and experiences, seminars, Viking-age handicraft and much more. The events will be held around the island at sites of historical importance, where similar activities once were held. There are numerous visitor’s sites and ancient monuments waiting to tell their story all year around.


By Catharina Lübeck and Olle Hoffman, project coordinators
Gotland is also famous for Viking-age artefacts and decoration styles that cannot be found elsewhere. Despite the fact that the Vikings and the Viking Age may perhaps be the most internationally known phenomenon in the Scandinavian history, this epoch still is relatively unexploited as a cultural historical attraction and regional resource on Gotland.

A new tourism profile
In the summer of 2001 a working team was formed for the purpose of presenting cultural heritage from the Viking Age and strengthening the regional profile. The first step involved creating a smoothly functioning network among the existing businesses and other private parties with a Viking theme on Gotland. The number of the network’s participants is increasing constantly. From the start there were representatives from five different businesses and government authorities but nowadays there are representatives from more than 20 different parties. The participants come from widely differing areas, which means that there is a great breadth of knowledge and resources, such as marketing, tourism, history, living history, ships, textiles and much more.

The Gotland Viking Island project aims to raise the awareness of the rich Viking cultural heritage. One of the main goals with the Viking Year 2005 is that visitors will be tempted to visit Gotland outside the traditional tourist season, and to spread the tourism out on the countryside where the Viking remains are most clearly visible.

Another goal is to coordinate different cultural activities on Gotland towards a new tourism profile as Gotland Viking Island.

The year of 2005 is just a beginning, several of the events are expected to be recurrent and the development of the Viking theme will continue.

During the year many kinds of events of will take place all over the island. A few examples you will find on page 40 and 41. Further information on the website www.vikinggotland.com

The Viking cultural heritage
The island’s Viking heritage has always held great international interest. Most famous are perhaps the unique picture-stones and the hundreds of silver hoards that have been found.
GOTLAND UNIVERSITY is centrally located in Visby, a town on Unesco’s World Heritage list. In this unique medieval setting, high priority is given to closeness between students, teachers and the Gotlandic community, as well as excellent international relations.

Gotland University offers a growing choice of independent courses and interdisciplinary programmes in English. We have both full and part-time Internet courses, most of them without compulsory attendance in Visby (apart from field courses). Internet-based education gives the same qualifications and degree status as “ordinary” university courses.

In many cases research at Gotland University is interdisciplinary and carried out in networks with researchers at other Swedish and foreign universities.

Study Archaeology at Gotland University!

More decentralized regional decision-making involves an increasing demand for competent staff with an archaeological education. The Archaeology programme, 180 ECTS, and the Osteology programme, 180 ECTS, both aim to give students the tools to undertake cultural heritage management in the labour market as well as a good base for further studies at the PhD level.

Gotland is one of the areas in Europe with the most dense occurrence of ancient monuments from the Stone Age through the Viking Age up until the Middle Ages. Thanks to the island’s calcareous soil the preservation of bones is unique and gives the osteologists material for analyses, which can be examined in detail in the DNA laboratory at the University.

The University’s location near the Historical Museum on Gotland and the local National Heritage Board offers a wide range of opportunities for cooperation.

The use of modern IT-based technology and interdisciplinary collaboration is central to education and research projects. Research is well integrated into the undergraduate level and many of the projects have firmly established international contacts. This gives the students the chance both to study abroad and also to take part in international field courses.

We welcome international students, issue invitations to foreign lecturers from our partner universities, and arrange international conferences and meetings. All this provides the University with a rich, productive atmosphere for research, study and network building that will continue to work for your benefit for many years to come.

Welcome!

Guided tour at the Viking graves in Fröjel.
Photo Dan Carlsson

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Courses in English
- Introduction to Osteology, 10 ECTS – Summer 2005, full time.
  Application Code 00110
- The Viking Society, 15 ECTS, Autumn 2005, distance course, full time.
  Application Code D0126
- The Viking Society, 15 ECTS, Spring 2006, distance course, full time.
  Application Code D0127
- Towns and regions in Scandinavian history, AD 800-1800, 7,5 ECTS, Autumn 2005 distance course, part time.
  Application Code D0518
- Viking Archaeology and Field Methodology, 15 ECTS, Summer 2005, full time.
  Application code 00109
On the basis of Gutalagen, Gotland’s oldest written law, dating from the 13th century, as well as of the Icelandic sagas, the everyday life of the Gotlanders and their view of women are examined in this article. It was first published in Swedish, in the annual book Gotländskt Arkiv 2004, this year called Gotland Vikingaön (Gotland Viking Island). Publisher: The County Museum of Gotland.
“SHOULD A MAN COMMIT ADULTERY…”
The Viking’s everyday life and view of women on Gotland

By Gun Westholm

The Viking Age, which lasted some 300–350 years, has been described in countless scripts. But almost all the accounts are based on the Viking’s – the man’s – living circumstances. Considerably fewer sources give a picture of the life and everyday existence of women at that time.

The Icelandic sagas and Gutalagen
Finding written material that gives knowledge about the Nordic women’s situation over a thousand years ago may seem an almost impossible mission. But sources from which knowledge can be retrieved actually do exist.

Admittedly the Icelandic sagas are not entirely reliable when it comes to individual events. But if they are read as a form of ethnological document they present another picture. Then a society and everyday life emerge that perhaps the author was entirely unconscious of using as a background to the tales themselves.

Old law texts also provide a lot of knowledge. On Gotland, we are fortunate – a preserved medieval written law, Gutalagen (Gotlandic law) exists here. In the following article I will present examples from primarily the Icelandic sagas and Gutalagen.

Gutalagen was written down in its oldest form after 1220 and seems to have very little to do with Viking-age circumstances. But several of the chapters have a clearly ancient character and go back to the transitional period between Viking Age and the Middle Ages.

There are no preserved written law texts from the Nordic Viking Age and it is unlikely that any ever existed. In a letter from Archbishop Andreas Suneson in Lund (1201–1228) to Bishop Bengt in Linköping, the advantage of having the law documented in writing is emphasised. Moreover letter states:

So it is, that just as the island of Gotland is separated from other countries by a long stretch of sea, so its inhabitants differ greatly from other people in terms of established laws and common law, in daily life as well as in spiritual matters.

The pre-Christian society was not lawless, and the law that was documented during 13th century was based on old laws with new Christian elements.

If we look at Iceland during Viking Age, there are many examples of how the laws were maintained without written documents. In Njal’s saga, the most extensive of the Icelandic sagas, events from the early 11th century are dealt with. On several occasions there are descriptions of how manslaughter is dealt with at the Thing. At the “trial” after the arson at Bergtorshval, when Njal and his wife Bergtora and others were burnt to death, the relatives look for sage lawmen to represent their case at the Thing. These wise men had learned the laws by heart and it was important to link themselves to the lawman who best knew the law, its weaknesses and possible loopholes.

We can suspect that the law texts passed down to us earlier were first compiled in written form during the 13th century on Gotland.

In Gutalagen, as in other provincial laws, crime against property is very heavily penalised. For small thefts the sentence was a fine for petty robbery while, for more valuable thefts, the thief was taken to the Thing, marked by the maiming of certain limbs and sentenced to high fines. If someone stole again after having been marked, the thief was sentenced to death by hanging even if the stolen property was of little value. On the other hand manslaughter was punished by fines!

The landed gentry are described in Gutalagen as free inhabitants of Gotland. Another group was non-Gotlandic men and women – they did not have same legal protection and social status as the inhabitants of Gotland. Then there were the lower groups on the social scale – the servants and thralls.

That thralls still existed at the time of the creation of the Gutalagen is clearly visible in several sections of the law, for example in the paragraph about infanticide, see below, and in chapter 32 About the purchase of men:

If you buy someone’s man for your farm, you then try him for six days. But on the seventh you must pay the purchase price or take him back if you are not satisfied.

The text in the chapters of Gutalagen about infanticide shows that slavery lasted for a limited time and that later on thralls were released.

A change in the Gotlandic social standards comes during Viking Age with the establishment of harbour settlements. From a social point of view, these places – Paviken, Fröjel, Visby, Bandelundeviken, Bogevikten and others, meant that a new social class grew up – a class that later was to be called burghers.

These people probably still had strong ties to the countryside’s farms if they were of Gotlandic origin. We can assume that they returned to their farms after sailing season was finished, but that they spent a lot of their time from late spring to autumn at the harbour settlements, where they made a living at ship building, shipping, trade and handicrafts.
Archaeological investigations in Visby and the grave field at Kopparsvik south of the town show that mainly men used the harbour site at an earlier stage. When Visby became a more permanent settlement during the 11th century women show up in the material.

These places also attracted people from other parts of the Baltic Sea region – non-Gotlanders according to the law. During excavations of the oldest culture layer in Visby only objects of Gotlandic origin were found in the area near the port, while objects from Finland, the Baltic areas and Russia were found directly outside the core owned by the Gotlanders.

**Life on the farm**

Gotland's isolated location forced its inhabitants to become skilled seamen and dexterous ship builders, these being the basic requirements for life on a remote island. It used to be said that the sea united people in ancient times – this is true of course, but at the same time long-distance sailing across the open seas was avoided. Few, non-residents of Gotland can be assumed to have visited the island in ancient times. So despite contacts with the surrounding world we can assume that isolation characterised the Gotlanders' everyday existence.

We can also assume that news from the surrounding world was just as appreciated then as it is nowadays. News was spread by word of mouth, told at celebrations, things and markets and of course at the places where boats were landing along the coast. The news was then spread between the farms on the island.

Even life on the farm was characterized by isolation. The farms lay spread out as single units, in good land areas sometime within sight of each other, while the forest farmers might have had several kilometres to their nearest neighbour. The isolated situation had both advantages and disadvantages. One of the advantages was security! Change seldom happened quickly; agriculture was carried out in the same way for a long line of generations. You knew your rights and obligations; you could predict your children's, grandchildren's and great-grandchildren's futures.

The farms' ancient location at the same place, for generation after generation since the early Iron Age, made for strong ties to relatives and family that also were maintained through the inheritance laws.

The farm was the heart of society and basis of the family, which is reflected in the early law texts with sections about the violation of the privacy of the home, about changes of boundary markers between farms, about fences and roads, forestry disputes, wells, fields, pasture lands and livestock. "No one is allowed to sell land, unless necessity craves it", Gutalagen states in chapter 28 and then the necessity will first be examined by the nearest of kin as well as parish elders and family relatives.

The child killer therefore got away with a fine and children in the different social classes had different monetary value! If we go further ahead in history to later laws, infanticide leads unconditionally to a death penalty.

Otherwise, our knowledge of how children were looked upon and their upbringing is scarce. In the Icelandic sagas children seldom appear in the stories, but when they sometimes do, we can sense the same parental pride and hopes for their future as parents have today.

In the Gutalagen there is a chapter About fruits. If minors break the ban against picking fruit before Maria mass (September 8), they are obliged to pay half of an adult fine to the parish leader. Even in other parts of the law are there are differences between adult and non-adult persons, when it comes to dealing out punishment.

In the chapter about inheritance it is shown that sons came of age at 15 and that one is obliged to take care of minors under one's roof. At 15 years of age they receive pung och skällar (money and personal property).

Viking-age toys from Gotland's Viking Age are rare, but that doesn't mean that children didn't play. The need for games and competition was just as important for children of those days as it is today. Several of the Gotlandic games have their roots in prehistoric time. Stone throwing-disks (svarpar) have been found in the Viking-age culture layer and ball games for youths are mentioned in the Icelandic sagas. One such game is called Knattleikr and was played on ice – one against one – with hard balls and clubs of wood. We can read about young boys that organized ball games on a large scale in Grette Amundssons saga.
These young men organized ball games at Midfjardarvatn. There came people from Midfjording and Vididal and also many from Vestrop and Vatnsnäs as well as from Hrutafjord. Those who came a long way, stayed there as long as the games lasted. Those who were equally strong were pitted against each other, and nearly every autumn this was popular entertainment.

The Nordic sagas do not mention that girls participated in games and competitions, but we can assume that their games were of a different character.

The woman's role
Viking Age is readily presented as a "Macho period" of our history. Was it hostile towards women and can we create a picture of women's position from the preserved material? In Eddan, Snorre tells about the goddesses' position in relation to the Æsir gods: The Æsir goddesses are not less holy, nor are they less powerful (than the gods), which seems to indicate that a certain degree of equality ruled in Asgård, which was the gods' country.

In one way, Freya, the goddess of love, can be seen as Oden's equal: they divided the fallen warriors equally between themselves in Valhalla. Freya also took care of women, on the condition that they suffered an honourable and often self-chosen death.

The Icelandic sagas deal mainly with the men and their exploits while women play most often a minor role. When they are mentioned, they often appear as strong-willed with minds of their own!

Some examples from Njals saga will be mentioned. About Njals mother, Asgerd, it is written that she came out to Iceland and took land east of Markarfjot. Here a woman, not a man, is described as new settler.

When Njal is going to choose a bride – Flose's brother's daughter Hildegunn – for his foster son, Hoskuld Hvitanäsgode, it is told:

She was powerful and wise and very beautiful. She was so skilful that few women were her equals. She was tougher and more obstinate than other women, but noble-minded, when necessary.

Hildegunn is asked about marriage plans and she replies:

"I have a proud mind, and I do not know how I will be satisfied when I have to deal with such people. And there is another thing too, and that is, that the man does not have chieftainship. You have said that you will not marry me to a man without "godord" (chieftainship)." "If you don't want to be married, said Flose, that is a good enough reason for me to say no."

She can clearly influence the marriage. Even men were married off in similar way by the head of the family, who could be an older brother. Njal's saga tells about Hoskuld who promised his brother Hrut to Unn, without asking Hrut himself. The marriage was not happy. Unn ran away home to her father's farm and the marriage was dissolved. Later Unn remarried Valgard without consulting any of her relatives.

Men skilled in handwriting began to record the Icelandic sagas during 12th century. There were also women who were versed in the Sagas, but probably not with writing skills, for instance, Thur´idr (died around 1112), Snorre the Good's daughter.

About Bishop Thórlakr Thórhallson's mother Halla it is said that Thórlakr learned the history of generations and people from her as a young student.

Life on the farms followed the passing seasons just as the life has always done for peasants. Peasant life meant (and means) in a way more equality in their way of living than for other groups in society. All the family members – men as well as women – could read the signs in nature and knew when it was time to take out the plough in the spring or to put the animals out to pasture.

This kind of society made it possible for the women to take part in production. It meant that, as a widow or one left behind when her husband went out on long trips, she could manage the work on the farm without great difficulty on her own with the help of servants and thralls.

There were also women who inherited farms established as early as the Swedish Viking Age. It is also in the women's graves that the Viking-age keys are found, very rarely in men's graves. They had probably responsibilities for larders and stores whether the farmer was at home or not (picture 2).

Chapter 20 of the Gutalagen deals with inheritances:

§4 where there are no sons on the farm, the daughter inherits after her father, mother and grandmothers ....... if sons do not exist on the farm, then the closest blood relatives inherit, whether it is a man or woman, however no longer than to the fourth generation of women.

§10 concerning women's inheritance, it is inherited by daughters or daughters' children. If none exist, then an aunt or aunt's children inherit. If they don't exist, then the nearest blood relative inherits as far as the fourth generation.
generation and no longer. If these do not exist, then the farm will stay with the relatives. If there is no male heir and it has been passed on to women, whether from brother or sister, and both are equally related, then both of them inherit.

In all probability Gutalagen inheritance laws go back to a pre-historical situation. Can the text in §10 be the background to the Gotlandic Kvinnogårde (female farm names)?

The women’s legal inheritance status still seems to have been strong during the early Middle Ages. But how is their position in other respects? Did the Viking-age women know how to read and write?

A sandstone slab from the early 12th century bears the inscription Rodiaud made me for her son. Likewis owns me (picture 3). We know that Rodiaud is a female name, and this is the only female rune carver known by name on Gotland, but there are many examples of women erecting stones after children or husbands. Moreover many carved rune stones from the Viking Age – Middle Age transition stage are erected in remembrance of women.

Was the Viking-age woman tied to the farm or could she follow her husband on his travels over the seas? Traces of Gotlandic women have been found at several places in the Baltic Sea area. At Grobin (Grohina in Kurland in western Latvia) several graves with Gotlandic female jewellery have been found from the Vendel period and early Viking Age (650–850). At Elbing in northern Poland graves with Gotlandic female jewellery have also been investigated, as well as in Lithuania, at Apuole. These finds have been interpreted as Gotlandic families settling down in this area and living here for a long time.

In an account of a journey from a combined diplomatic and missionary trip in Turkish areas during the years 921–22, the Caliph Muktadir’s representative, Ibn Fadlan writes about his meeting with Norsemen, that here went by the name of Rus, … that they had come there on business and set up residence by the river Atil. I have never seen such perfect bodies; they are like palm-trees, blond and ruddy.

Further on in the text it becomes evident that women also participated in the business travel:

All their women have a box fastened on their breast, of iron, silver, copper or gold, according to the man’s fortune and income. Each box brooch has a ring on which a knife is fastened, also at the breast. Around their necks they have a necklace of gold or silver (picture 4).

A later transcript of Ibn Fadlan’s text, by Amin Razi, has approximately the same text, but differs in certain details. Amin Razi writes for instance: that they use Siberian grey squirrel pelts instead of gold in circulation at coins, and for their purchases.

In another place distribution of the inheritance after a deceased is taken up, then women are not left without a share:

When he died, they burn him in the following way: First he is left to lie in the grave for ten days. They divide his property in three parts. One part goes to his daughters and wives, one to the suits, that are sewn to adorn the corpse; one to cover the costs for the drinks, that are consumed during this time, days, during which they feast and make music.

There are details in these over thousand-year-old texts that can be compared with what we know about Gotland’s inhabitants during the Viking Age. They are rich, their suits are like the Gotlandic ones, they trade with grey pelts – the product that became the basis of Gotland’s inhabitants’ trade during early Middle Ages. Women’s inheritance is also interesting, as Amin Razi described it. But what argues against them being Gotlanders is the funeral rituals, which seem to be more continental Swedish customs.

What was Gotlandic Viking-age women’s position in other legal issues? Rape of married Gotlandic woman required the perpetrator to forfeit his life, according to Gutalagen. Rape of unmarried woman was heavily fined. Rape cases were taken directly up to highest sentencing authority – the Althing or the county council – just like crimes that could result in outlawry, or manslaughter in certain cases, matters concerning double adultery and for seducing another’s daughter.

That Gutalagen’s strict views on rape go back to a Viking-age court practice can be suspected due to a documented act of violence from 1034. The event occurred in Thrakesion – a military area on the Asian side of the Bosporos, where Väringar (Nordic mercenaries in Constantinople) gathered. It is described by Skylitzes, the chronicer:

A man among the Väringarna, who were gathered in winter quarters in the province of Thrakesion, met a local woman at a private place and tried to seduce her; and when he could not take her voluntarily he tried to rape her, but the got bold of the stranger’s sword and stabbed him through the heart with it, so that he died at once. When the event became known, the Väringarna gathered and honoured the woman by giving her everything that belonged to the one who tried to rape her, and they disposed of his body without a funeral, according to the law dealing with suicides (picture 5).

Crimes of adultery are mentioned in several chapters of Gutalagen:

If a man is caught in the act of committing adultery with an unmarried Gotlandic woman, then he is to be put in the stocks and held captive for three days and nights and a message sent to his relatives. They are allowed to free his hand or foot for 6 marks of silver or let them be cut off if he is not able to pay for their release.

If a Gotlander is caught openly committing adultery with a non-Gotlandic woman, then she should receive 3 marks from him.

Should a man commit adultery, then he pays a fine of three marks to the Thing and six marks to the injured party… If a man, educated or not, be caught in the very act of adultery with another man’s wife, he must pay with either forty marks or his life, and the injured party is allowed to choose to take his possessions or his life.

Note that under no circumstances does the Gutalagen place the blame on the woman for crimes of adultery!

There are even sections of the law that deal with mistreatment and molesting of women. All kinds of molesting are included here – from her clothing being pulled in disarray or buckles, loops and ties being torn off. If she had been pushed the fine was bigger the more her body was exposed. Molesting a free and freeborn non-Gotlandic woman was penalised with half the fine compared with if it happen to a Gotlandic woman.
The situation for women as reflected by Gutalagen seems to be rather unaffected by the new negative view of women that was introduced with Christianity and which is most clearly evident in the Old Testament. As early as Magnus Eriksson’s town and country law from about 1350, as well as in Visby town law, women were given a greater blame with regards crimes of adultery.

The Visby town law only applied to Visby and Magnus Eriksson’s national laws had no impact on Gotland’s rural area. Gutalagen seems to be rather unaffected by the new negative view of women that was introduced with Christianity and which is most clearly evident in the Old Testament.

Apart from individual coins, there are almost 700 hoards of precious metal from the Viking Age known on Gotland. This does not take into account an unknown number that are never turned in to the museums.

Objects of gold occur in 64 hoards of which 9 contain both gold and silver. The rest are, in other words, pure silver hoards. 165 hoards comprise individual arm rings, armlets, jewellery or similar objects, while approximately 500 contain a total of 166,100 silver coins. Added to this are tens of thousands of silver objects, meaning jewellery, spirals, parallel bars (small silver plates) and silver fragments.

The bulk of the coins are imported mainly from Arabic countries and England and Germany, while most of the jewellery is probably produced on Gotland.

Ways of finding a silver hoard vary. Treasure hoards are found when taking sand from pits, digging house foundations, by rabbits digging holes in the ground, under storm-felled trees, when taking away stumps, constructing golf courses etc. For the most part however the hoards are found by farmers tilling their fields. Only in exceptional cases do they exist as grave gifts in Viking-age graves. Then it is possible to take the remains of the treasure hiding-place into the laboratory encased in plaster.

The Gotlandic Viking-age treasure hoards are dated to the period between approximately 800 and 1140 AD, with certain concentrations during different times. The late silver hoards are one of the reasons that researchers in general have felt that the transition between the Viking Age and the Middle Ages on Gotland lies about 1150, differing from the Swedish mainland where change is set at around 1050.

The older hoards are uniformly distributed over Gotland. Probably most of the island’s farms have taken part in the silver import in one way or another. However at the middle of 11th century the

About the author
Gun Westholm is the Senior Curator and responsible for the exhibitions at the County Museum of Gotland. She is an archaeologist and the author of numerous articles dealing with the Viking and Medieval history of Gotland. Her thesis dissertation on Viking-age Visby, was published in 1989.
Gotlandic silver hoards become fewer but bigger, at the same time as they are found along the coasts to a greater degree. Clearly, the silver import is concentrated to fewer and fewer actors. Even other sources (investigated settlements, pollen analyses etc.) indicate that the inhabitants of Gotland at this time are forced to or choose to specialize. Probably more pronounced occupational groups are developing, like merchants, artisans and farmers.

Around 1140 the import of silver coins ceases; at the same time that people on Gotland start to mint their own coins, “penningar”, with nominal value. As far as we can tell the minting was carried out under the direction of the Allthing and probably because the Baltic Sea trade required a more sophisticated means of payment.

The coins that reached Scandinavia were not used here as coins in the proper sense. They were used as means of payment by weight and silver content and were therefore weighed along with fragments of silver on bronze balancing scales. Even whole pieces of jewellery, such as armrings and armbands, have been used as means of payment, since they seem to be tailored to certain weights. Moreover there are silver hoards that clearly show that several fragments of jewellery and rods were joined to make bigger weight units.

Treasure hoards – settlement finds

Treasure hoards have always fascinated not only the public but also archaeologists and historians. For decades, various researchers have discussed the reasons behind the many silver hoards found on Gotland. Through my own research and several archaeological surveys of hoard sites carried out in recent years, however, it has been possible to demonstrate, with few exceptions, a direct link between the hoards and remains of contemporary settlement.

The most probable reason for the many silver hoards on Gotland is, to my opinion, that they constitute a result of trade. It was during the Viking Age that the inhabitants of Gotland, or “Gutar” as the Gotlanders are called in old sources, laid the foundation for the leading position in the Baltic Sea trade that Gotland enjoyed in the Middle Ages during the early Hanseatic period. The many silver hoards should be seen as a surplus from this transit trade.

By playing down the silver hoards and their value in Viking-age society, they can be placed on a level with other settlement objects of different nature and materials. Even though they had a special function as means of payment, they were also used as raw material in, for instance, jewellery production.

The silver hoards should however have been individual persons’ properties, a surplus kept in their homes. Silver seems to have been common on Gotlandic farms in the Viking Age. Moreover precious metal hoards are known from all times.

Hiding treasures has probably always been a natural phenomenon, to a certain extent also in an economically well developed society. Not only silver nor gold have been hidden away and then left behind, but also a wide variety of objects of different kinds and materials. It is therefore not necessary – generally – to discuss either sacrifices to the gods, own assets after death, events of war or sudden death as reasons for why the Viking-age silver hoards were left hidden. Just like other objects of bronze and iron, silver objects have been left on settlement sites for different reasons, when people built new homes or moved.

Some short comments

The following short comments can be made about Gotlandic treasures from the Viking Age:

Oldest is the silver treasure from Hammar’s in Färö parish, found in 1863, dated to after 804/805.

Youngest is the silver treasure from Burge in Lummelunda, discovered in 1967, dated to after about 1143. Moreover the oldest known example of the first Gotlandic coin with nominal value was found in the hoard.

Minting on Gotland was started about 1140. Earliest find at a known find site, according to written information, is the silver hoard with Arabic coins that was found in 1676 at Visborg’s castle, when the Danes who temporarily occupied the town, strengthened fortifications.

Latest find is the silver hoard that was found in January 2004 at Kroks in Tofa parish, when a stump was taken away on a new lot near the entrance to a newly built house. The hoard, containing 364 coins, is dated to after 1053.

The second heaviest hoard (after the Spillings hoard found in 1999) is the silver hoard from Burge in Lummelunda parish, weighing 10.4 kg.

The second largest number of coins (after the Spillings hoard) comes from the silver treasure from Stale in Rome with 5,922 coins, of which 5,304 are German and 421 English coins. The hoard was found in 1838 and can be dated to after 1070.

The world’s largest Viking-age silver hoard was found in 1999 at Spillings in Othem parish. The hoard’s weight prior to conservation was 67 kg and it contains among other things about 14,300 coins.

The most Swedish and Scandinavian coins come from the silver hoard from Sälle in Fröjel with 118 fragments. Several are embossed on square planchet and probably originate from Olaf Skötkonung’s mint in Sigtuna, which was started about 995.

The silver hoard, weighing just over three kg, was found in 1987 and can be dated to after 1016.

The biggest single gold object is the arm ring that was found at Tore in Sundre parish and which was handed over to Gotland’s Fornsal (County Historical Museum) in 1997 by the joint owners of an estate. The golden arm ring, weighing 205 grams, is now part of Gotland’s Fornsal’s permanent exhibition.

Viking-age silver coins and silver hoards have been found in all of the parishes on Gotland except Hejdeby.

The most Viking-age treasure hoards have been found in Grötlingbo and Stenkyrka parish, each having approximately 25 finds.

Spillings in Othem – the world’s biggest Viking-age silver hoard

The world’s biggest Viking-age silver hoard was found during an archaeological investigation on Friday, July 16, 1999 in a
field at the Spillings farm in Othem parish. The find site is located just north of Bogeviken, which was one of Gotland’s most important and best-sheltered ports during the Viking Age.

The silver hoard is dated to the time just after 870 AD and the weight of the hoard prior to conservation was approximately 67 kg.

The hoard has been divided up into two depots (27 respectively 40 kg), which have then been hidden three meters from each other under the floorboards of a Viking-age house. No remains of containers were found, but the shape of the deposits, with slightly rounded corners (approximately 40 x 50 cm) can indicate that the silver objects were kept in bags of textile, skin or leather. In the small depot lay the remains of a wooden box, approximately 17 x 18 cm, in which mainly coins have been kept.

The objects in the big depot were all well preserved, while most of the objects in the small hoard were in poor shape since the surface had been transformed to silver chloride, making the objects fragile. The reason for this can probably be found in local soil conditions.

The silver hoard contains in all about 14,300 coins (approximately 17 kg all Arabic coins, with few exceptions), 486 armrings, 25 finger rings, 34 rods and a large number of spiral rings and other silver fragments. The objects are mainly Scandinavian but even Eastern and Western Europe are also represented.

All the objects can be considered to be purely as means of payment, valued according to weight and silver content. Large parts of the material have been joined together into even weight units that build on the Viking-age weight system, where a “mark” of silver corresponds to 200 grams. It seems as though the silver hoard constitutes an exceptionally large store of raw material and means of payment that, for some reason, never were used.

The weight of approximately 67 kg (335 marks of silver) can be compared with the Gutasagan information that all the inhabitants of Gotland paid a sum of 60 marks silver (12 kg) in tax to the Swedish king every year. This would mean about 8 grams per farm and years (there ought to have been at least 1500 farms on the Viking-age Gotland).

Several of the coins in the Spillings hoard are sensational. This is especially true of one of the coins that was embossed for the Khazars and which constitutes the first archaeological object linking the Jewish religion to the Khazars. This makes the coin...
unique in the world and extremely important for numismatic and historical research.

In connection with the investigation of the find site, another depot was also found, hidden under the floor in the remains of the same Viking-age building, only 1.5 meters from the larger silver hoard. This depot comprises just over 20 kg of complete and fragmentary bronze objects, all of Baltic origin. Most of the objects are more or less melted together into a big irregular lump of metal.

The bronze depot had been kept in a massive chest of spruce wood (only minor remains were preserved). The chest had been fitted with heavy hardware and a sophisticated and well-preserved iron lock. A 14C-analysis of the wood fragments dates the wood in the chest to the 7th century, but the objects are younger.

The building (approximately 15 x 8 meters), in which the three depots were hidden, has obviously been an outhouse, probably a storehouse, on a Viking-age farm. The house seems to have had a roof that went down all the way to the ground. According to 14C-dating the building was in use between approximately 540 and 1040 AD.

The silver hoard from Sälle in Fröjel parish was found in 1987. It contains more Swedish and Scandinavian coins, 118 pieces, than any other Viking-age silver hoard on Gotland. Several of the Swedish coins are embossed on square planchet and can probably be traced to Olof Skötkonung’s mint in Sigtuna started about 995. Thus the Sälle hoard constitutes an important contribution to research concerning the first Swedish coinage. It weighs just over three kg, contains among other things more than 1000 coins, can be dated to after 1016 and has been kept in a rough clay vessel. Photo Ulf Abramsson.

References

About the author
Majvor Östergren, Ph.D. and archaeologist, formerly Museum Director (County Museum of Gotland and Norrbotten’s Museum). For many years she was employed by the National Board of Antiquities with a special project investigating sites of Viking-age silver hoard finds on Gotland. The results of these investigations were the basis of her dissertation in 1989. She is now working for the County Administration of Gotland.

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The world’s biggest Viking-age silver hoard, found in 1999 at Spillings in Othem parish, contains, among other things, 486 armrings and armbands. Photo Göran Ström.
Some of these 50-odd known sites show a very strong expansion beginning as early as the 8th century. Some of them like Paviken, Fröjel and Bogeviken must be considered bigger ports with distant contacts while others were just small fishing villages.

Those Gotlanders who left their island for exotic journeys on the Russian rivers down to the Caliphate were mostly farmers who engaged in trade as a supplement to farming and fishing. They sailed with their boats loaded with goods such as swords, furs, wool, animal hides, grain and tar, wares all highly appreciated by the customers in faraway countries. In return they received the coveted silver.

Paviken
Some 25 kilometres south of Visby on the west coast, there is a well-protected lagoon, now called Paviken. It is connected in the south to the sea by a channel and in the northeast to inland water systems by a small river.

This was a perfect place for a port, situated at the mouth of the former river, now a small stream, and on dry land. The sea was easily accessible and the site well protected by the lagoon. As far as we know activity was established here during the 9th century and by the end of the 11th century it was at its height. The settlement was probably used only during the summer seasons. The bay freezes in the winter and is consequently inaccessible from the sea.

The whole area is about 15000 square metres but only 1000 square meters have been excavated. More than 10,000 objects have been found. They tell us about the main activities on this place namely the building/repair of ships, trade and handicrafts.
enough space for cargo.

The builders of the Viking ships had generations of shipbuilders behind them. They used good but simple tools such as axes, hammers, drills and chisels. They also had the skill and a knack for choosing the right timber and making good use of it. The ships were clinker-built – that is the boards overlapped each other and were easy to caulk. The length of timber limited the length of the keel – it could not be jointed. The collapsible mast was put up in a so-called mast fish, a block of oak in the bottom of the ship. The broad, rectangular sail was made of rough homespun woollen cloth reinforced with bands. The sheet was made of hemp.

The sandy beach at the bay in Paviken was perfect to land and haul boats. On a small “cape” thousands of iron boat rivets and washers have been found. These rivets and washers are in such quantity and different kinds that they prove the existence of a yard for building and, above all, repairing ships. Most of these nails have been broken into pieces. Rotten or damaged boards were replaced by cutting the rivet heads. Most interesting is the specialised tool used for this kind of work. A “nail-seeker” has been found – the same kind of tool that still is used today when building wooden boats.

Furthermore there are also two long stone foundations of slips or boathouses side by side at right angles to the shore.

Trading and handicraft

Gotland’s location in the middle of the Baltic was perfect as a centre for the long distance trade, especially eastwards. Contacts with surrounding areas were lively and trade flourished during the entire Viking Age.

Paviken was one of the big centres of trade and handicrafts on the island. Raw material and objects from near and far have been found here: slate from northern Sweden, flint from southern Sweden, sandstone from southern Gotland, soapstone from Norway, amber from the southern Baltic coast, garnets from western Sweden, different pieces of glass from the factories in northern Germany and glass mosaics from Tuscany, pieces of glass goblets, and jewellery from the Swedish mainland, southern Russia and the Baltic countries.

Silver must also have been imported since deer have never been existed on this island. In 950 AD the Arabic chronicler, Ibn Rustah, tells that “they live exclusively on slave trade”, which is not quite true. Furs, wool, hides, grain and tar were common merchandise for export. However they do not leave any traces. Silver coins, mostly Arabic, cut into pieces as well as smaller silver pieces and a set of scales with weights show the presence of merchants.

The above-mentioned material is not only a proof of trade but also points out the lively and different kinds of handicrafts that have been carried out at this site besides repairing ships, for instance forging iron. Gotlanders imported iron from central Sweden, forged weapons and tools for further export to the southeast. Their swords were especially appreciated.

Melting bronze for different kinds of jewellery was also quite common. One of the outstanding objects is a magnificent bronze spur, evidently waiting to be repaired. Comb-makers and bead makers worked intensely. Traces of daily life can be seen in pottery, needles, flint for making fire, spin whirls, keys, amulets like Thor’s hammer and of course lots of different kinds of tools.

There were also traces of simple wooden houses or maybe fishing huts. Fishing hooks, harpoons and net-stones (weights) tell us something about their food supply.

As far as I know, Paviken is the only excavated site of this kind in Scandinavia. Excavations took place here during 1969–73 under the leadership of Per Lundström, director of the Maritime Museum and Jan-

Map of the Paviken area. From P Lundström: De foro vida

About the author

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Peder Lamm, senior curator of the Historical Museum, both in Stockholm. All field material as well as the finds is kept in the County Museum of Gotland.

The mysterious wall

On the other side of Paviken at the mouth of the channel is a half-circle-shaped wall. It is about a 1000 metres long, built of sand over a wall of stones. It shows an obvious similarity to the Viking-age walls of Birka in Sweden and Hedeby in northern Germany (on the border to Denmark). The wall is turned towards land and open to the sea. It has about ten openings. The area within this wall is 600 x 200 metres – the same as Birka.

However the cultural layer within this wall is rather thin and only very few Viking and medieval finds have been found, quite the opposite situation to the above-mentioned sites.

Today a medieval church and a defence tower dominate the area, where a number of residential homes have been built.

The problem is when and why the wall was constructed and also its possible connection to Paviken. According Per Lundström it must have been established during late Viking Age and existed at the same time.

Rivets and an iron "nail-seeker" for repairing boats. Photo: Raymond Hejdström.
No Gute by the name of

About personal names in Viking-age runic inscriptions

BY THORGUNN SNAEDAL

Gairalv
In the storehouse of the National Historical Museum in Tumba, south of Stockholm, a large number of stone monuments from different epochs in Sweden's history are kept. Among the more unremarkable are four small sandstone fragments (fig. 1), constituting the sad remains of a rune-carved stone, which was probably originally part of a coffin-shaped monument similar to the Ardre stone coffin.

The small stone pieces, that all together cover a surface not more than approximately 30x40 centimetres, were found in autumn 1867 in a field just south of Hemse church, Gotland. Remains of black and red original colour can still be seen on the carving that can probably be dated back to the beginning or the first half of the 11th century.

On a couple of the fragments traces of two men in procession with tools in their hands can be seen. It is clear that there was a third man leading the procession carrying a spear thanks to the spear point preserved on one of the rune-carved fragments1. In all, there are seven runes that together form a word, a man's name, Gairalv.

Suddenly you feel as though you are in the 8th century, at Brâviken (near Norrköping) where the famous battle at Brâvalla was fought between the Danish king, Harald Hildetand and King Sigurd from Uppsala. Both kings had many warriors on their side, precisely listed in the sagas. Among those on Harald’s side was a Valkyrie who is presented in the following way in an Icelandic source:

“A Valkyrie called Vebjörg came to King Harald with a big army from Gotland and among her followers were many warriors and the greatest of them were Ubbe the Friesian, Bratt the Irish, Bo, the English. Are, the one-eyed, Gairalv…”2

Despite help of Vebjörg, who fought bravely against many warriors and in the end fell in hand-to-hand combat with King Sigurd. King Harald lost the battle and was laid to rest on the spot. The sources say nothing about Gairalv's destiny.

Without doubt the stories about the Brâvalla battle were just as well known on Gotland as in other parts of Scandinavia. Several of the warriors who are said to have participated in the battle are well known from other sagas and therefore it is likely that there have been stories on Gotland about the Gotlander Gairalv’s efforts in battle of Brâvalla fighting on Vebjörg, the Valkyrian’s side. The Gairalv in the inscription from Hemse, can therefore very well have been named after this renown hero. The name is entirely unknown in the rest of Scandinavia.

Härryd and Vivil
Another name that is not found in runic inscriptions outside of Gotland is Härryd, which occurs on a fragmentary runestone from Grötlingbo (fig. 2). In its West Nordic form, however, Härröd is a common name in Norway and on Iceland during the Viking Age while on the Swedish continent it is only used in place names, for example Vivelsta in the parish of Marksö north of Stockholm, where the name can have got its original meaning from an ancient Nordic priest's title.

The name Vivil also conjures up exciting associations, being the man who led the ill-fated expedition described on the stone from Pilgårds (fig. 3), when Rafn lost his life in the dangerous Dnepr rapids Afur, “the ever furious”. His brothers Hegbjarn, Redvil, Austain and Emund erected memorial stones after him in the vicinity of the scene of the accident.

Vivil is quite well known as a personal name in Norway and on Iceland during the early Viking Age while on the Swedish continent it is only used in place names, for example Vivelsta in the parish of Marksö north of Stockholm, where we have got its original meaning from an ancient Nordic priest’s title.

The name Vivil on the stone from Pilgårds shows that the name was also used on Gotland about the year 1000.

Ormika and Mutifu
The unique name suggests that Ormika, in the inscription on the small whetstone that was found in the summer of 1940 at Timans in Roma, is identical with Ormika of Hejnum mentioned in the Gotlandic Saga, who donated “12 male sheep and other treasures” to Olav the Holy and in return got “2 drink horns and a broad axe” (picture 4).

The name is not mentioned elsewhere but the suffix –ika shows that the name has been lent to Gotland from England or Frisian on the southern coast of the North Sea. Gotlanders had lively trade contacts with both these countries during the Viking Age.

Possibly a borrowed name is also hidden behind the runic signs mutifu. It is clearly a male name judging from other preserved bits
of inscriptions on a fragment from Smiss in Kräklingbo, announcing that a couple, whose names are lost, erected the stone after mutifu, their son. The name ends with a –u in accusative and the nominative form has therefore ended with an a. A name corresponding to this text does not exist in the ancient Nordic name treasury. Possibly the son received his name after a person the father got to know on his Viking travels in a faraway country.

Other Gotlandic names
In the barely 100 Gotlandic rune inscriptions from the Viking Age and mission era (approximately 800–1150) about 80 certain male names and 12 female names are found (see list at the end of the article). A review of these names shows that 46 of the male names and 10 of the female names cannot be found in runic inscriptions from other parts of Scandinavia. Two female names Gunnhed and Rodlög, which are found outside Gotland, occur only once each; in inscriptions from Uppland and Närke respectively.

Of the 34 male names that do occur outside Gotland, 11 are found only once and, of the remaining just over 20 names, only a few are common in runic inscriptions on the Swedish mainland: Gunnar, Sigvat, Sighjärn, Sigwund, Sigut and Torsten.

Particularly the prefix Tor-, used frequently in the rest of Scandinavia, never seems to have become popular on Gotland. It occurs in only two names, Torsten and Torlaiv, and is missing entirely in the medieval runic inscriptions, despite the fact that the name Tor occurs in several place names, for instance the mighty Torsburgen.

However Thor's hammer is seldom included in the Gotlandic silver hoards and has never, as far as it is known, been found in Gotlandic graves, otherwise a relatively common occurrence on mainland. Possibly Tor's popularity had waned during the 9th and 10th century and the cult of Oden taken over instead, clearly evident from the many Valhalla scenes on the picture-stones.

Non-compound names and short names are relatively few: Dan, Rafu, Udd, Ate, Aude, Fruite, Isak, Libbe, Leika, Ragne, Rane, Unne, Simpa.

The remarkable name Simpa, probably identical with the name of the fish, is known as a surname in Sweden in the Middle Ages. Exciting names such as Leika and Leiknar were attributed to a father and son in Hangvar, and Isak in Gothem must have been among the first on Gotland to have this biblical name.

The particular characteristic of the Gotlandic manner of naming is also indicated by the fact that the most common non-compound names in other Scandinavian runic inscriptions are completely absent on Gotland. No inhabitant of Gotland seems to have become baptized as Björn, Karl, Sven, Sten or Ulf.

Quite simply the inhabitants of Gotland seem to have been not particularly fond of short names since they are quite rare even during the Middle Ages.

Common prefixes and suffixes
The most common prefix in both male and female names is Rod – (<Hród-), “praise, renown” in eight male names and three female names. Judging from the evidence, names with the word gairr “spear” either as a prefix or suffix have been very popular. Seven male names include this as prefix and four as suffix.

Names with Bot – “improvement, help” that occurs in six male names and two female ones seem to have held a very special position in the Gotlandic name treasury, although they were rare in the rest of Scandinavia during the Viking Age. It is also common in farm names and becomes even more dominant in the Gotlandic name treasury during the Middle Ages. Bot- names have probably been common on Gotland as early as pre-Christianity since many Bot- farms have grave fields in their vicinity.
Specifically Gotlandic is also the prefix *Hail* – “hail, happiness” in names like Hailgair and Hailvi.

Almost exclusively Gotlandic are names with *Lik* (n) – ot – *likn*, “goodness, grace”, found in four male names and two female names.

The Ardre coffin is erected by Liknati (<Likhnvat) sons, Ottar and Gervat in honour of Ailikn, theirs and Liknvi’s mother. Liknat and Ailikn have therefore adopted the quite common custom in Scandinavia of giving their children names which contain the same elements as their own. The sons Gervat and Aivat (his name is found on the G 113-stone, which the sons raised in honour of their father but not on the Ardre coffin) have names with same suffix as their father while the daughter Liknvi is named after both her parents.

Rodvisl and Rodele, who raised the three runestones at Sjonhem after their three sons, of which the eldest was Rodfo, also used this custom.

Even the family behind the stone at Hogrän has followed the tradition. That stone was raised by Sigmund in honour of his brothers Sigbjärn, Botraiv and Sigravit and their father Ahbjärn. Names with the prefix *Sig* – “victory” and suffixes – *bjarn*, “bjørn” and – *niv* “kind, fond” have thus been popular in that family.

Female names

Female names are so few that they cannot give a clear picture of which names the women on Gotland had during the Viking Age and mission era. But names with the suffix – vi “holy place” clearly seem to have been popular, thanks to its being part of four of the 12 preserved female names.

*Rodland* is the most popular woman name on Gotland during the Viking Age and mission era as well as the Middle Ages but unknown outside of Gotland.

The female name Bydny, found on the bottom plate of a box brooch from Tyrvalds farm in Klinte parish fires the imagination. The prefix *Byg*, ancient Nordic *Björn*-“battle”, is well known in Scandinavia in male names like *Björn* and *Björn* but only in one female name: *Bödvild*, which was not the name of a real woman, however, but a saga figure.

The Edda poem, *The Lay of Volund* tells about how the smith Volund is caught by a king called Nidud who cuts off Volund’s Achilles tendons so that he will not be able to escape and forces him to make valuables for him. In order to take revenge Volund lures the three king’s children to him, kills for him. In order to take revenge Volund lures the three king’s children to him, kills. To the right lie both brothers with their heads chopped off while Volund leaves the smithy in his guise of a bird through an aperture in the smithy’s left wall. Before him stands a woman’s figure that is probably Bödvild herself. Possibly, the story about her has led to Bydny getting a name with this prefix.

**Conclusion**

The picture of the names of Gotlanders that appear in runic inscriptions is in many ways fragmentary but it clearly shows that the names used on Gotland were not common in the rest of Scandinavia, and that Gotlanders remained faithful to these names to a large extent also during the Middle Ages.

**About the author**

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**Footnotes**

1. The image seems to correspond quite exactly to the picture on the picture-stone from Sanda, that probably was also included in a chest-formed monument. Three men are walking in a procession, the leader carrying a spear and the other two carrying tools that look to be a club or spade and a sickle respectively, see Nylén & Lamm, Bildstenar p. 60.

2. The ancient West-Nordic form Geir – corresponds to Gair - in Gotlandic. The Bråvalla battle is described in Fornaldarsaga Nordurlanda, volume 2, p 126. Sigurðr of fornkonungum í Dana – og Skálavíg is included in Fornaldarsagorna. A piece of this paragraph is the only preserved fragment of the Skildungsaga that described the Danish kings’ dynasties from Skold, the son of Oden, to Gorm the Old. The Bråvalla battle is also described by the Danish chronicler Saxo. Both sources go back to a Norwegian poem from the 11th century, see Larsson 1998 p. 80f.

3. Fornaldarsagar is one of the central groups in the Icelandic saga literature, telling about events in Scandinavia during the Migratory Ages. The content is most often heroic or mythical. The sagas originate in Norway or Sweden, or remote more or less mythical countries, and tell about kings, chieftains and heroes and their exploits.
In the previous issue of Viking Heritage Magazine I examined the various forms of sorcery and magic that are described in the Old Norse sources. Here we can go on to consider how these different rituals fitted together with their practice and practitioners.

Practice and practitioner
As we have seen, in the Old Norse texts many of the sorcerous episodes relate to the abilities and adventures of the god Odin, but there are also a great many human figures that are mentioned in the sources as performing magic.

It is difficult to attempt to compile a collective terminology of Norse sorcery with its plurality of meanings, but it is nevertheless possible to distinguish between different types of practice and practitioner. While each of the sorcerers described in the sources is different, they also fall into patterns – some broad, some more clearly defined. The chronology and contemporaneity of the texts is problematic, of course, but they serve as an outline on which to build.

One of the most important elements of Viking Age sorcery seems to have been a complex network of social and sexual restrictions, encoded at every level of its practice. These are described at length in the written sources, but in brief they limited its ‘proper’ performance to women, and to a small group of men seen as different from the morally acceptable norm.

Male sorcerers were clearly regarded as homosexual – or rather, as taking the passive, ‘female’ role in homosexual acts – which was viewed extremely negatively in Viking society (a state of affairs seen, for example, in the fact that a false accusation of homosexuality was a crime legally equivalent to murder).

Male magic also involved highly complex concepts of dishonour and martial cowardice, and was seen as ‘unmanly’ in every possible way. It conferred a special state of being called ergi, and there is a suggestion of other genders, constructed in connection with this across and between the boundaries of the sexes through an induction into the mysteries of seiðr, the primary form of sorcery examined in the previous issue.

However, male sorcery also provided its practitioners with a uniquely terrible power that could not be obtained in any other way, and therein lay its attraction. We see this particularly in the apparent contradiction of Odin’s role as both a male god and the master of seiðr – these rituals that were primarily the province of women – and it was precisely this dangerous duality that gave him such extensive power over the minds and movements of others.

Terms for sorcerers
If we examine the sagas and poems in detail, we find several specific terms for sorcerers or magic-workers, all of whom seem to use seiðr and the other kinds of Odinic magic, but in different ways. These are also gender-specific words, and include a range of different terms for men and women. Among those for male sorcerers we find the following:

- seiðmaðr ‘seiðr-man’
- seiðskratt ‘evil-seiðr-sorcerer’?
- seiðberendr ‘seiðr-carrier’? (with obscene connotations?)
- spámaðr ‘prophecy-man’
- falispámaðr ‘false prophecy-man’, or ‘man who prophecies falsely’
- villispámaðr ‘false prophecy-man’, or ‘man who prophecies falsely’
- galdramaðr ‘galdr-man’
- galdrukarl ‘galdr-man’
- galdruinsmaðr ‘galdr-smith’
- galdrunumr ‘great-galdr-man’
- galdumeistari ‘galdr-master’
- galdruvæng ‘galdr-attendant’?

A reconstruction of grave Bj. 845 from Birka, Sweden, a mid-twelfth-century burial of a woman seated in a chair. The staff in her hands suggests that she may have been a sorceress. Drawing: Thórhallur Thráinsson, author’s copyright.

By Neil Price
• vitki sorcerer
• fjölyngismár sorcerer
• fjölyngisberendr ‘sorcery-bearer’
• gandr ‘gandr-man’, ‘gandr-warrior’
• kunáttaumár ‘man who knows magic’
• visendamár ‘man who knows’
• tauframár ‘charm-man’
• gerningamár sorcerer

Here we clearly find terms for men who performed seiðr and galdr, and also for those who did so in positive and negative ways. We also find terms for diviners, and for those who provide false prophecies – an interesting twist.

The sexual overtones of male seiðr are emphasised in terms such as seiðberendr, with its connotations of obscenity, and in the last group of terms we find a reflection of the general ‘background noise’ of popular magic that we saw in the previous article.

Terms for sorceresses

The terms for sorceresses are more detailed:

• völva ‘staff-bearer’, seeress, sibyl?
• seiðkona ‘seiðr-woman’
• spákona ‘prophecy-woman’
• spákerling ‘old prophecy-woman’
• kveldriða ‘evening-rider’
• trollriða ‘rider of witchcraft’
• myrkriða ‘night-rider’
• munniða ‘mouth-rider’
• þúnriða ‘fence-rider’ or ‘roof-rider’
• kaldiða ‘cold-rider’
• galdrakona ‘galdr-woman’
• galdrakerling ‘old-galdr-woman’
• galdrasnót ‘galdr-lady’
• galdrakind ‘galdr-creature’? (i.e. sorceress, with negative connotations?)
• vitka* sorceress
• fjölyngiskona ‘wise woman’, ‘woman who knows’
• heiðr sorceress (with positive connotations?)
• fordæða evil witch?
• flag(kona) evil witch?
• fála witch? (with negative connotations)
• ðógr witch? (with negative connotations)
• húla witch? (with negative connotations)
• skass witch? (with negative connotations)

The primary group of terms refer to diviners, of which the best known were the völur (sing. völva), women skilled in clairvoyance and the prediction of future events.

An interesting group of terms mentions ‘Riders’ of various kinds. This ‘riding’ would seem to refer to the soul journey in some way, and there is a verse from the Eddic poem Hávamál that mentions Odin ‘seeing’ such people up in the sky – presumably their spirit forms. These women were almost always viewed negatively, and the ‘riding’ could also refer to a form of spiritual attack, as when the mana, or Nightmare, would ‘ride’ its victims in the night.

Again we see terms for women using seiðr and galdr, and also the more general group of undefined sorceress and witches.

Looking at this material in total, we can see then that the Viking Age Scandinavians did not just have specialist ritual performers, they seem to have had different types of them, with specific
functions and skills, including specifically 'good' and 'evil' sorcerers.

Both sexes were involved, with evidence for different and precise social roles for men and women, together with the existence of complex sexual, social and gender constructions.

The archaeological material
But how much of this can we see in the material culture, in the archaeology? The excavated material that directly relates to sorcery and its performers can be divided into two broad categories:

- individual objects that may be interpreted either as tools for the working of sorcery or as otherwise connected with its practice
- the graves of possible sorcerers

The latter category can be defined as such due to the presence of the former, and by evidence of unusual mortuary behaviour, but the material culture of Nordic sorcery is also found in archaeological contexts unassociated with graves.

Very many burials from Viking Age Scandinavia contain objects that were probably associated with spiritual belief in some way, most typically 'amulets' of various kinds such as Thor's hammers, miniature sickles and so on. There is little to suggest that these artefacts were directly associated with magic, though some of them may have symbolised aspects of its practice.

In interpreting a grave as that of a 'sorcerer', we must therefore seek to locate objects that were actually employed in performance.

The staff
The most useful of these for our purposes is probably the staff, which seems to have been the main attribute of the Norse sorcerer. Staffs are mentioned in a great many sources, but even here we find far more detail and variation than we're really prepared for. There are not just staffs, there are different kinds of them – in fact no less than nine distinct types described in the texts, again used by different people for different purposes.

For over a hundred years now, archaeologists have been finding strange staffs of iron and bronze in high-status women's graves. Interpretations of them have ranged from measuring rods to roasting spits, but it may be that these objects are in fact the staffs of sorcery mentioned in the written sources, and that these burials are those of sorceresses.

This reading of the staffs is strengthened by the fact that they are often associated either with grave goods and/or unusual funerary rituals that mark the dead person as special in some way: these include finds of amulets, 'charms' made of animal bones and body parts, elaborate and exotic clothing, and drugs.

Three typical examples of such staffs have been found at Birka, recovered from chamber graves. All slightly under 80 cm in length, they are made of square-section iron bars broadening at one end into a cage-like structure of separate iron rods. At either end of the 'cage', and at intervals along the shafts, are bronze polyhedral mounts, decorated with various patterns.

Around 40 staffs of this kind are known from Viking Age graves from the Scandinavian homelands and colonies, including some from Ireland, Iceland and Russia. Their distribution clusters around the Norwegian west coast, and to a lesser extent, the Mälar valley region of Sweden.

Each staff is unique in form, though with similarities between them. Sometimes the bronze mounts are absent, or present in greater quantities. The 'cage' structure is occasionally flatter, or hung with rings and other pendants, even sometimes Thor's hammer amulets. Some of the mounts and 'cages' have small holes drilled in them, wide enough only for a thin wire or a ribbon: clearly the staffs once had other elements to them, probably organic and now decayed or removed.

The largest of them was found in a cremation grave at Klinta on the island of Öland, off the southern coast of Sweden. This staff was considerably thicker than the others, and its 'cage' appears some way down the shaft rather than at one end. One terminal of the object is also surmounted by a small model building in bronze, though what this might signify is unclear.

It is worth remembering how these objects would originally have appeared, with the matt blacked iron of the shafts off-setting the bronze mounts that would have shone like gold – these would have been very imposing pieces indeed. The 'roasting spit' interpretation is problematic for several reasons, not least the difficulty in forcing meat past the bronze mounts on the shafts. A function as measuring rods is contradicted by the fact that none of the spacing intervals on the different objects represents a consistent unit.

The 'cage' structure is interesting, and has often been interpreted as a handle. This is supported by the fact that an exactly similar construction appears without doubt as the handle of certain kinds of Viking Age keys. However, here again there are practical difficulties, because some of the 'handles' on the staffs are too broad to be grasped comfortably in the hand.

Interestingly, the staffs have a whole series of resonances with other objects. The 'cage' design also occurs as an element in the links of some unusual chains found on the Oseberg ship, and there are equally close parallels between the form of the bronze mounts and polyhedral weights.

An interpretation of the staffs as tools of sorcery can be made partly on the basis of close literary parallels, but especially in the light of their archaeological context. Almost all of them have been recovered from female graves, often of the highest social status.

These burials are frequently spectacular in their own right, as in the case of two of the Birka chamber graves where the women were interred sitting in chairs (one of them even sitting on top of a man – two people in the same stool!). These women were all richly dressed, with magnificent clothes decorated with gold and silver thread.

In some of the burials the women are wearing amulets of various kinds, or exotic jewellery such as toe-rings or a nose piercing. Finds of tiny pendants in the form of miniature chairs are not uncommon, perhaps referring to a god's throne or the seat of the norns.

At Fyrkat in Denmark, a woman was buried with a staff and also a collection of...
Indeed, in resemblance to the sorceresses of the sagas, these people begin to take on a very close (such as in the dead woman's hands), then positioned very prominently in the graves. If we combine this with the staffs themselves, often narcotics and the amulets. If we combine powers suggested by finds such as the tenth century. From their clothes and other grave-goods the women in these burials clearly stand out as remarkable in some way, with an overtone of special roles suggested by finds such as the narcotics and the amulets. If we combine this with the staffs themselves, often positioned very prominently in the graves (such as in the dead woman's hands), then these people begin to take on a very close resemblance to the sorceresses of the sagas. Indeed, in Laxdaela Saga there is even a description of the discovery of a völva's grave, distinguishable as such because it contains a staff!

In a social context
If this is the archaeological reality behind the sorcerers of the sagas – and the material presented here provides only the briefest summary – then what social context can we set this in? If we are to consider this magic and those who worked with it in the context of shamanism, we need to broaden our frames of reference.

Very similar patterns of magical functions, and much of the same material culture expressed in local artistic forms, can be found in the circumpolar ethnographies. Among the Sámi, among Siberian peoples such as the Chukchi, and on the Canadian Northwest Coast, we encounter the same diversity of both practice and practitioners as we see in Viking sorcery.

But still, we must be cautious in our drawing of such parallels. Above all, we should avoid monolithic interpretations and simple definitions. We must always remember that we do not know exactly what seiðr meant to the early medieval Norse.

It should also be clear that the whole question of sorcery is ultimately linked to the very fabric of Old Norse society itself – how it was constructed and how the articulation of power and identity functioned within it. This should not surprise us, because – again – the shamanic belief systems of the circumpolar area are also socially embedded in precisely this way.

If we look at this on a larger scale still, the Nordic populations of Scandinavia, or at least Norway and Sweden, were situated at a meeting point of two utterly different cultural spheres: the northern extremity of the Germanic cultures of northwest Europe, and the circumpolar cultures of the arctic and sub-arctic, the latter in the form of the Sámi.

What we may be seeing in the context of Viking sorcery is the blending of those two cultural complexes, and their transformation into something different and special. The Vikings were not like the circumpolar cultures, but they were not entirely like the European ones either, at least not in world-view.

Conclusion
In one sense, of course, the acknowledgement of sorcery’s importance in the Old Norse belief system, and the whole shamanic debate that comes with it, does not fundamentally change our understanding of the Viking Age. In another sense however, the implications are profound.

A close look at magic changes our perception of the way in which the Vikings may have thought about human beings and other living creatures, about what we would regard as inanimate objects, and even about the nature of reality itself; it changes our view of the role that ritual played in society.

Faced then with a much broader field of study that opens up the idea of sorcery set in a universal social context for the Viking Age North, it may be that the archaeology of seiðr and its related rituals can provide one of our best hopes for the future investigation of the intricacies and sophistication of the Viking mind.

Further reading
The sorcerers’ graves discussed here, as well as the various forms of Viking magic, are explored at detailed length in the author’s book, listed below, alongside other recent works on Old Norse sorcery.

A traveller’s experiences

Exploring the Viking heritage – used for supporting cultural tourism

By Bruce Bennison,

A Travelling Fellowship
In the spring of 2004 I was awarded a Travelling Fellowship, from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust in England, to allow me to explore the ways in which the Viking heritage is used for supporting cultural tourism in Scandinavia and Greenland.

The intention was to learn about the best practice and bring some good examples back to the County of Cumbria in the North West of England.

Cumbria has a rich Viking heritage from the 10th and 11th centuries. It can be found in its archaeological remains, as witness the recent Viking burials at Cumwhitton near the City of Carlisle in the north of the county, and it also has placenames, traditions, customs and dialect that show distinct origins in the Viking period.

The Lake District National Park – the tourist destination second only to London on the popularity index for visiting tourists - forms the centre of the county and no doubt provided a familiar landscape for the Vikings as they settled here either voluntarily or were forced out of Ireland as second generation settlers.

The English Lake District – a vulnerable tourism industry
However whilst the county may well be successful as a tourist destination, tourism proved very vulnerable to unforeseen damage when the Foot and Mouth Crisis struck in 2001. Access to the fells was restricted and the tourism industry was seriously affected.

That has led to a reappraisal of the diversity of the tourism product and an interest in new ways of attracting and fulfilling tourist opportunities.

This factor lay behind my proposal for wanting to visit Sweden, Denmark and Greenland to see what was being done in the way of using the Viking heritage, through the reconstruction of Viking farms and settlements and in the development of trails and museums, to see if the same approach could be taken in Cumbria.

Competing heritage on Gotland?
The Fellowship lasted four weeks in August and September 2004 and first involved visiting Sweden, in particular the Island of Gotland in the Baltic, Birka and Gunnes gård near Stockholm. Meetings were also held with staff at the National Historiska Museet in Stockholm.

The visit to Gotland was based on a desire to learn more about the Viking Island Project for 2005 and see the display at the County Museum in Visby. One surprising feature of these visits was the fact that even, in such apparent strongholds of Viking culture, reconstruction sites such as Vikingabyn near Tøfta and the County Museum in Visby were competing with the more visually impressive but far less specific celebration of the ‘medieval’ history in their promotion of the Viking period on Gotland.

New important Viking site discovered in Cumbria

A remarkable Viking burial site has recently been discovered in Cumbria, near Barrow. It contains artefacts dating back to the 10th century, among them a unique find of a merchant’s weight with a dragon design showing two figures. It is of very high quality and the British Museum has already declared it exceptional. Archaeologists say that the site could be the country’s most important Viking burial site.

Last summer another Viking burial site was excavated in Cumbria, near Cumwhitton village, where six Viking graves were discovered containing artefacts such as swords, jewellery and riding equipment.

Both sites were found by metal detector enthusiasts.

Source: BBC News
Birka's Hemlanden – the forest of ghosts
When I moved on to Birka west of Stockholm it was readily admitted that new ideas were needed in order to promote the site and make it more engaging for the visitors who travelled by boat from the city. The stunning archaeology of the Hemlanden area needed a more imaginative approach to portray the fascinating story of the burials and thus the people who once lived in this important centre of the Viking world.

Perhaps it learn something from the wonderful Gunnar’s gård, which, whilst relatively small and with limited resources, had nevertheless (at least for me) achieved much in the way of an imaginative approach to portraying one particular aspect of Viking life.

Comparison with the English experience as regards visitor numbers is not easy or particularly relevant when the overall population of the respective countries is considered. With a population approaching 60 million the UK far outstrips both Sweden and Denmark but I suspect proportionally the numbers visiting museums and Viking sites were evenly balanced.

Enterprise and endeavour at the edge of the world
The next destination was Greenland, in particular the Eastern Settlement area around Narsaq, Gardar and Brattahlid. I was particularly keen to see how the Viking settlers had interacted with the landscape, a landscape that turned out to be remarkably similar in many ways to that of the central Lake District in Cumbria. Just take away our trees and add some icebergs and glaciers and you could easily confuse the two!

The reconstructions at Brattahlid of the longhouse and Thjodhild’s church stood out as superb examples of both the art and science of reconstruction. (Even if the result for the longhouse seemed to be regarded as more Icelandic than Greenlandic, they do share common origins after all!).

It was patently obvious even at the end of the tourist season in September that the site was the focus for tourism in the Narsarsuaq area. The mix of tourists staying at the airport hotel at Narsarsuaq seemed relatively elderly and included Spanish, French and Japanese nationalities. Thus the easy physical access to the site meant it had become a focal point for these visitors, supported by an enterprising local Greenland ‘Outfitter’ with boats capable of taking large numbers of visitors to the various local sites.

A chance opportunity to visit Gardar was taken up, even though the fjord was literally freezing over as we crossed the water, the hour’s moderate walk to Igaliuku was all the more pleasant on a stunning late summer day. However the distance and nature of the walk would rule out all but the relatively fit to achieve it, but the effort was well rewarded however by the quality of the remains of the Bishop’s Palace, even if the rhubarb growing in the centre of his former dwelling indicated a pragmatic but practical attitude to the remains by at least one of the local Greenlanders!

Tourism as an economic driver
At Narsaq the curator of the local museum, Rie Oldenburg, proved an extremely knowledgeable and welcoming host for learning more about life in the eastern settlement and the care and attention she has paid to establishing one of the best local museums I saw during my travels deserves more recognition.

There is obviously an opportunity for a coordinated approach to joining up the various Viking sites in the area of Narsaq and Narsarsuaq into a coherent trail, accessible to tourists either individually or as visiting groups. The chance to incorporate a wider landscape and ecological theme into that trail is unique and could, taken together, offer a tremendous opportunity to generate further tourism income.

However this must be taken in the context of the need to recognise that the Inuit culture also needs careful representation and presentation to visitors. I see no reason why a story cannot be told that portrays the endeavour and enterprise that this unique and fascinating country has fostered over thousands of years. A careful mix of the Viking and Inuit storylines has much to offer a world seeking answers to many questions about identity, ecology and the impact of humanity on fragile landscapes.

It was hard to leave Greenland; it seemed so familiar to someone who comes from a landscape with shared origins from the scouring of glaciers and a complex geological past.

A new ship and an experimental centre
The next destination however was, as expected, a complete contrast. I hope the Danes will forgive me if I say that the relatively flat landscape and ordered society of Denmark seemed so different to Greenland. Perhaps they maintain their links to the latter to provide some space (literally and metaphorically) to remind them of their turbulent past!

The last week of my travels remained as inspiring and valuable as the previous ones.
many years of experimentation at Lejre undoubtedly leads to an effective and atmospheric reconstruction of past times, in a controlled environment which provides much for the visitor and researcher. It is not a technique often found in Great Britain where the first principle seems often driven by the economic rather than the educational. A viewpoint often reinforced by the access to levels of funding necessary to develop such sites being similarly linked to economic development.

There is not necessarily an easily understood relationship between the heritage and economic development as may seem obvious to our European colleagues. An exception to this is the availability of Heritage Lottery funding, an arm of the National Lottery, which is much more concerned with conservation and interpretation of, and access to, of the heritage first and foremost. Much more on the reconstructions and other interpretative material.

A hidden gem
At this point a gap in my schedule allowed me to return to Copenhagen to see the National Museum and experience some of the Greenland Norse finds that were previously only pictures in the books I had read.

This I have to say proved a little disappointing, as the Greenland Viking displays were in a side room with an air of being long overdue for a more imaginative display. Given their mute evidence of the enterprise and endevour of the Norse in reaching and colonising Greenland I expected a more prominent display, perhaps their story is no longer politically correct?

Generally however I have to say the National Museum represented a stunning example of contemporary museum display technique and well worth the visit.

needs to done imaginatively with these sources of funding if we are ever to approach a similar level of knowledge through practical example in this country.

The next stop in Denmark was Trelleborg Fortress. Here the lessons of the past 60 years have led to a proposed reinterpretation of the design of the spectacular reconstructed longhouse, erected around 60 years ago, the more modern interpretation producing a method of construction rather like the timber cruck-frame style popular in some parts of 16th and 17th century England. This revision has yet to be brought to practical fruition but at least the original longhouse stands in testimony to the vision and enterprise of the initial attempt.

The museum contains many finds from the excavations at the site but interestingly these were not regarded as being central to the interpretation.

No doubt there is much scope for debate between museum curators and the educational establishment over the merits of having real objects on site and in their original context. Many visitors fail to appreciate the connection and concentrate on the reconstruction centres that I saw on my travels. This is not to deny the quality of any of the others, rather to acknowledge what can be done with a vision given the time, resources and support of may people.

My abiding memory of the Ribe Viking Centre is being inside one of the longhouses with the sun striking through the windows sending beams of smoke-filled light onto the goods and chattels of a Viking family. It was like stepping back a thousand years, the smells, sounds and sights all conspiring to create a fitting end to my travels.

Cumbria – A long-term vision
The experience at the Ribe Viking Centre reinforced my determination to see what we can do in Cumbria. At the very least we need to examine what we can do with what we have already got, the sculptured stones, and the less tangible evidence of placenames, dialect and customs.

Style and substance in Denmark
Back to the original itinerary and I moved on the Ribe, the final stage of my month long journey and in many ways the pinnacle of the whole trip as regards both the Viking Museum and the Viking Centre.

The museum presents the varied and long history of Ribe in a stylish and comprehensive way. Although, as Jakob Kieffer Olson the Director of Den Antikvariske Samling pointed out, you can see the ‘join’ as regards the differing approaches taken by the Viking specialists and the medievalists in the resultant display content!

Contrasting with, but entirely complementing the museum, is the Viking Centre just on the outskirts of the town. Well known to most people taking an interest in the Viking age, this was a first visit for me and the first impression was memorable.

The dedication and original vision in establishing this Centre, managing it not only as a tourist attraction but also developing as a training resource for young people, shines through. Given its scale and content, I have to admit that it was the best}

About the author
Bruce Bennison is Head of Cultural Policy for Cumbria County Council in the North West of England. He is an archaeologist and museum curator by training and has worked in Cumbria for 15 years. The opportunity of the Churchill Fellowship has enabled him to rekindle an interest in heritage interpretation and education, particularly in respect of cultural tourism.

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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 transnational tourist destination.

Destination Viking includes a number of separate projects, currently the Destination Viking Living History (former 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 was submitted in March.

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

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School Children and Iron-age Life at Gunnes gård

BY GUN BJURBERG, GUNNES GÅRD

The drum beats rhythmically and the horn sounds over the grave-mounds as children step into the Iron Age for a day.

The children preparing food. Photo: Gunnes gård
The school children begin their journey 1000 years back in time by changing into tunics, shawls and caps. Now they are headed toward the sacrificial place that lies behind the grave-field at the Gunnes gård Viking farmstead. Thor, Frey and Freya are standing there waiting for their votive offerings.

The children are given their Viking-age names, taken from nearby rune stones, in a ceremony in which their offering to the gods consists of grain to ask for a good day’s work on our little farm.

The various work groups are divided up and start the day’s chores immediately. Some of them must prepare the food, others work at the forge, while the third group takes care of leather working or other handicrafts.

As an educator at a Viking farmstead, there is a lot to think about in terms of what should be conveyed and how that should be done. What ideas do the children already have when they come to us and what kind of information should we provide them with? Every day we see how children’s theoretical knowledge is tested, discussed, revised and deepened.

When we stand at the forge, we are quickly told where iron comes from and how it should be worked to produce a sword, a knife or some other weapon – the children possess great knowledge. The questions we then must ask are: Is there any reason for us (living on a farm) to forge weapons? If so, what kind of weapons? On a farm like this, what do we need most?

After some discussion, the children soon understand that weapons of war were not particularly commonplace. The majority of Vikings lived on farms and needed tools for agriculture, hunting and slaughtering. Imagine the progress when a wooden shovel could be iron shod!

So now when we set to work with iron and hammer, most often a clothes hook to hang on a wall is forged. This is an appropriate task for a beginner.

In our contemporary society, children often lack personal experience as to why it is important to preserve the resources in their immediate environment.

This becomes more apparent when we talk about the source of water used in cooking or how the animals can be fattened up so that we can slaughter them for meat. It becomes even clearer when it is time to prepare food and we gather the vegetables and herbs we have cultivated ourselves.

The vegetables that existed 1000 years ago are not always the same kinds eaten today!

The cooking fire, smoke, and aromas from a simmering pot of root vegetables all make it easy to imagine what life and work were like at that time.

Quite a bit of imagination is necessary to think that all of the chores on a Viking-age farm like ours were carried out only by women.

Could the women have been blacksmiths? Did the boys help prepare food in the cookhouse? Where are the men on the farm?

How were things, actually? What did the women do while the men were away hunting for weeks at a time or traveling eastward to conquer riches?

On our farm, the problem is resolved by having many children do the daily farm chores with us women. Just like today, 11th century women were self-supporting, but in a different way. It was a matter of doing all of the farm chores – from cooking and tending animals, to smithing and carpentry.

The fact that only women are working on the farm at present is due to entirely different reasons than hunting or Viking raids. Gunnes gård is run by the municipality of Upplands Väsby and is a workplace where employment changes can occur.
The animals play an important role in understanding the work on the farm. Opportunities to discuss the best ways to use the animals – when alive or slaughtered – are presented at the dinner table as well as when doing textile handicrafts.

Many children know that cows and goats can be milked to make cheese and butter, but fewer are aware that we also use the dung to fertilize the vegetables that will become food.

While a sheep is alive we shear its wool to card, felt, and spin, and after it is slaughtered we have a useful sheepskin.

We use bones and horns for flutes and jewelry, intestines for lampshades, the ram’s scrotum for a pouch, and sheep tallow as lamp oil – the list goes on and on and the children’s inquiring minds never tire.

Of course children can read about these things in school, but seeing, feeling, smelling and doing provides another type of information that is more easily remembered.

The drum and the horn call us together again and the day’s work is finished in the company of the gods. We thank them for a good day’s work and offer bread so that the gods will protect us during the night.

The children who have worked all day must now embark on a very long journey. Not physically, but mentally we move 1000 years forward in time to return to the present.

Everyone is quite satisfied with the day and sometimes we receive a report in return:

“It was fun to make food, and there was a lot of poop on the ground too. The pig was cute but big. The clothes were ugly. And we learned a lot too. It was fun living 1000 years ago. The names were strange and it was hard to remember the names. But the snack was yummy. The little chicks were so cute. We learned a lot about rune stones.”

Anna Carl blowing the horn for us to gather. Photo: Julien Siri

In Qassiarsuk, South West Greenland – Erik the Red’s Brattahlid – a new phenomenon is seeing the light of the day: a possible pilgrimage centre dedicated to the memory of a stout Viking woman with a high profile in the saga.

The first Christian church in the New World
In the summer of the year 1000, Vikings built the first Christian church in the New World. This took place in Brattahlid, shortly after the first Europeans set foot on the North American continent – almost five centuries before Christopher Columbus.

In the 1960s, archaeologists located the site of this first church, and in 1999 a reconstruction was built by a group of Icelandic specialists in Viking architecture.

This church – a small chapel, we really should say – was consecrated in the summer of year 2000, exactly 1000 years after the first foundations were laid. It is called Tjodhilde’s Church, after the Viking woman who is the first recorded convert to the Christian faith in the New World. According to Eric the Red’s Saga, it was she who had it built, much to the dismay of her husband who stood by Odin and Thor at any time and openly disapproved of the new religion.

A pilgrimage centre
There is no doubt that Tjodhilde was a strong character. She couldn’t tolerate her short-tempered husband’s dictating her personal beliefs and preferences, and she stood her ground. But ... is that enough in itself, a thousand years later, to try and market her as a kind of beacon to our day and age as well?

That remains to be seen. Pilgrimage centres mostly build on traditions attached to wonder-working or famous persons who are known to have had an extraordinary influence in their time and beyond. Not so here. The attempt to create a pilgrimage centre in Qassiarsuk has another rationale and background: the need to have, on Greenland soil, a window to the outside world through which people can glimpse the light of a multi-faceted world of spirituality from beyond Greenland’s icy mountains.
We can be reasonably certain that this is the spot where the first recorded baptism in Greenland took place. Also, at the time when this little church was built, there were none of the divisions in contemporary Christendom, which we all know so well. Thus, morally, Tjodhilde’s Church belongs to everybody. Every Christian community has an equal right of access to this little chapel, which is modelled after the first church structure built by the very first baptized persons in North America.

**An international framework**

This has given rise to a millenium initiative by the then premier of Greenland, a Lutheran pastor himself, to create an international framework around this little chapel. In connection with the festivities in year 2000, he established the *Tjodhilde Committee*, which is ecumenical in its composition: the bishops of Roskilde in Denmark, Trondheim/Nidaros in Norway, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland (all Lutheran), the Anglican bishop of the Arctic in Eqaluit, Canada, and the Roman-Catholic archbishop/cardinal of Chicago together with the archbishop of Anchorage, Alaska. The establishment of this committee warrants the interest and support from our neighbours on the Nordic as well as on the North American side.

Everyday business is conducted in collaboration between the *Tjodhilde Committee secretariat* and *Destination South Greenland*, not least with regard to involvement with the “Saga and Story-telling Project” of the Northern Periphery Programme. The secretariat is also supported by the municipality of Narsaq.

**Tjodhilde – a feminist**

Again, where all this interest and commitment will take us remains to be seen. Tjodhilde was a fine woman, no doubt about that, but nobody has ever called her a saint. However, to the minds of most Nordics, less can suffice. She was a steadfast wife and mother who gave Erik three children, of whom the sagas have only fine words to say. She was a faithful wife, which is more than can be said of Erik. His daughter out of wedlock is not spoken well of, to say the least.

Tjodhilde belonged to the large group of Viking women who beyond a doubt must have been tired to death of the Hells Angels’ behaviour of their often so ill-mannered husbands. No sooner did her favourite son Leif bring a priest back home with him from Norway, did she say: yes, please! – and requested baptism. Almost immediately. Tidings of a God and Master who honoured soft values, but who was stronger than Thor, must have made quite an impression.

One could say that this picture of a fine woman, sensing the right values and ready to stand on her own against traditional culture, opening up new trails, surely ought to convey a message to the feminists of our day and age.

Whether it suffices to bring pilgrim tourists to Qassiarsuk, time will tell.

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**The reconstruction of Tjodhilde’s church. Pilgrim tourists from afar. Photo/Copyright Gardar Foundation**

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**The site. Bottom left: Reconstruction, corner of Eric the Red’s longhouse. In the center: Reconstruction of Tjodhilde’s church. To the right: Norse ruin, byre or barn. Background: The village of Qassiarsuk. Photo/Copyright Gardar Foundation**
By Geir Sør-Reime
Project consultant for Destination Viking projects

The fifth ordinary partner meeting of the Destination Viking Living History project was held in Russia October 1-5, 2004.

Partners in Russia
Destination Viking Living History includes two partners in Russia, the Institute of Material History of the Russian Academy of Science and “The Prince’s Druzhina” Historical Re-enactment Society.

Regrettably, several obstacles have prevented these partners from participating in previous partner meetings. Last year, however, they hosted the visit of Scandinavian Vikings to St. Petersburg to participate in the celebration of the city’s 300th anniversary. It was therefore a great pleasure for all partners of Destination Viking Living History to be welcomed to Russia and to meet our friends and partners there.

The trip to Russia was organised by ResoRingen with Maria Bessmert as co-ordinator, and in co-operation with our Russian partners and friends.

The visit to Russia was based in St. Petersburg, with study visits to Staraya Ladoga and Novgorod, the famous Viking sites.

St. Petersburg
We departed from Stockholm or Copenhagen the morning of October 1st and arrived in St. Petersburg two hours later. Here, we were welcomed by our local guide, Tatjana, and installed in our hotel. Shortly afterwards, the first session of the partner meeting began in the meeting room of the hotel. From the meeting, we went directly for dinner in the hotel’s restaurant. Here we got our first, but not the last taste of Russian cooking.

The next morning, immediately after breakfast we boarded our bus again for a visit to the city of Pushkin and the Summer Palace of the Russian czars. The palace traces its origins back to Empress Catherine the Great (wife of Peter the Great), but has been expanded throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. One of its most well known features is the Marble Room.

After lunch in Pushkin, we travelled back to St.Petersburg to visit the small museum called “Landskrona, Novskoe Ustye, Nyenskans 700 years”. The area of present-day St.Petersburg was recognized as Novgorod territory for centuries, but 700 years ago, the Swedes advanced and established a fortress there.

Photos from the DVLH visit to Russia in October 2004. All photos Björn M Jakobsen
called Landskrona. It was destroyed by Novgorodian forces a few years later, and replaced by a Novgorod settlement named Novskoe Ustye. The Swedes destroyed this in turn, and for a long time, the area remained unfortified. Then, the Swedes established the Nyenskans (new fort) with a small town around it. Later it was destroyed by the Russians and present-day St. Petersburg is located in the same area.

Outside the museum, members of the “The Prince’s Druzhina” Historical Re-enactment group demonstrated man-to-man fighting.

In the museum, we continued our meeting, with several of our Russian friends presenting short papers on a number of interesting subjects.

In the evening, we had dinner in a restaurant serving traditional Russian food, accompanied by a folklore show.

The next day we again boarded the bus after breakfast, this time to travel to the Peter & Paul Fortress, where we continued our partner meeting in one of the conference rooms there. Then followed a brief visit to the Cathedral of Sts Peter and Paul. Here all the Russian Czars, from Peter the Great onwards, and their wives, are buried.

Staraya Ladoga

From St. Petersburg we then travelled some 3–4 hours to Staraya (or Old) Ladoga. This is one of the oldest Viking settlements in Russia. Originally a centre for various Slavonic and Finnish tribes such as the Slovens, Krivachi, Meria, Ves and Chud, in AD 862 it became the capital of northern Russia.

Here Rurik and his followers established their dynasty which ruled Russia for 700 years. Rurik is said to be buried in the huge Rurik mound just outside the fortress of Staraya Ladoga. There is also a mound said to contain the remains of Olof (or Oleg), his brother.

At Staraya Ladoga, archaeological investigations have been carried out for several years and evidence of the town’s old history has been found.

Novgorod

On Monday morning, we got on the bus again after breakfast, this time heading for the city of Novgorod, or His Majesty Lord Novgorod the Great which is its official title.

Arriving there, we first had lunch in the Kremlin (or fortress) of Novgorod, followed by a quick walk to the monument “Millenary of the Russian State”. This monument, from 1862 shows important characters of Russian history, starting with a huge statue of Rurik, the founder of the modern Russian state.

The monument is placed between the main entrance to the Kremlin and Saint Sophia Cathedral. The cathedral, built in AD 1045 is the oldest surviving Russian stone building.

After a short visit to the Museum of Russian Wooden Architecture in Vituslavlity, we had a brief meeting with the Mayor of the City of Novgorod. The meeting was covered in full by local media.

The Mayor expressed his great interest in the history of Novgorod and its links with Scandinavia and had already been on several visits to Sweden and Denmark to renew these ancient links. Novgorod also has a Hanseatic heritage and is a member of the New Hanseatic League.

After the meeting with the City Mayor, we went to the cultural centre of Novgorod and met a number of people from the city to discuss future co-operation.

After checking in at our hotel in Novgorod, we drove to the Novgorod Media House to visit the TV Slavia company. They recently produced a TV series on the history of Russia, and in the first part, on Rurik and the Scandinavian legacy of Russia, a good deal of the filming had taken place at our Swedish partners, Storholmen and Gunnes Gård. A number of people from these two Viking farms participated in the film as actors. After viewing the film, they were presented with copies of it.

The evening and night were spent discussing future co-operation with Russian friends.

Tuesday morning we headed back for St. Petersburg, but spent most of our time on the bus working in smaller groups, discussing marketing strategies.

The meeting very successfully incorporated our Russian partners and friends into our network, and we are looking forward to increased co-operation between Scandinavia and Russia.
Thoughts about reconstructed ancient settlements – about quality, authenticity and purpose

By Kristina Carlsson

Quality and authenticity are terms that are frequently used in our work with and study of reconstructed ancient settlements. But what do we mean when we use the words ‘quality’ and “authenticity”. Do we need further discussions to help clarify these issues? I think we do – and this article is intended to be a contribution to just such a discussion.

Background
Over the past few years, I have been responsible for dealing with questions relating to how we can ensure quality and authenticity in our work with Viking-age material – work that has been conducted within the framework for the Destination Viking – Baltic project (more specifically The Ale Viking Age Project).

Another one of my tasks has been to conduct a special study intended to elucidate the future role of the reconstructed ancient settlements in the Vastra Gotaland region. In both these connections, questions relating to quality and authenticity stand out today as highly central concepts – but what do we really mean?

In traditional museums, the physical archaeological materials always attract tremendous interest and visitors marvel over the remains of this material culture – over “what they could do in the past”. Being able to display “the original” has been profitable for both quality and authenticity.

Archaeological research continues to work assiduously to place these material remains in a more immaterial context – e.g. by illuminating functional, social or historical contexts. That is when the difficult questions arise and the simplified view, that the material remains tell us everything about how it used to be in the past, starts to appear slightly more complicated.

The interest in history
The enormous interest in history that has emerged in recent years has created a greater thirst for history and for knowledge about the past. Sometimes it seems that research isn’t moving ahead fast enough – we want to know more – often far more than what the scientists and researchers can tell us.

All reservations, that the archaeological experts have previously contended, constitute a troublesome element when history is to be “brought to life”. Discussing classic criticism of one’s sources only takes unnecessary time when you want to be dramatising history and showing the “true picture of history” – how people used to live, what they felt, thought and believed. If you’re going to make history exciting, you need to brush away all that “old museum dust” – don’t you?

History is fun, exciting and it affects all of us – but what are we brushing away. Surely it’s not the attitude toward criticism of sources – the contexts surrounding the physical traces that are to be simplified or removed?

We really have to keep on asking ourselves why we write history. Is it to amuse ourselves, or is it just to allow the collective experiences of life to play a role in how we build both the present and the future? Who can write history? And whose history can be written? Can we benefit from history in any other way than as an exciting experience? And who will pay for the writing of history?

We can never fully recreate the past. We can only depict a “puzzle picture”, well aware that some of the pieces are missing and will always be missing.

In order to popularise history and bring it to life, we need a certain amount of imagination, experience of life and a sense of humour, as well as knowledge. But how far can we go? When does the pendulum swing from history to pure fiction?

Discussing quality
I believe it is at this point that we need to bring in a discussion about quality. If all of us who work with history want our increasingly knowledgeable and interested clients to see us as being credible, we may have to take an initial and essential step towards developing methods for quality work that make it possible to frankly and explicitly account for source materials, interpretation models and the dividing line between known fact and fiction.

I feel that such candour will contribute to a distinctness that may also stimulate both the historical experience and the current creative debate about our roots. In my opinion, this ought to be a minimum requirement, at least in all history-related activities that receive and are dependent on public funding.

Quality documentation
In our project, we have devised a model for quality documentation, specially intended for the products and the activities that take place at reconstructed ancient settlements – sites where the focus is on bringing the past to life and where questions of quality and authenticity are, as we have said, highly relevant. The fundamental idea is that it should be possible to reconstruct buildings and objects for both the indoor and outdoor environment, and conduct more work-oriented activities, that are based on different degrees of authenticity and where this open show serves as a stamp of quality.

The documentation allows room for an account of the archaeological/historical originals that have been used and which interpretations of the originals have been adopted. It gives scope for describing which lines of argument and opinions lie behind any products or activities for which there are no originals, or where it has been necessary to make compromises, e.g. in order to improve performance, safety or for financial considerations.

The document also gives details about the production processes, accounting for everything from raw materials, tools and the producer’s background to information about what the product is functioning today. There is also room to report on any modifications or adjustments that have been made after...
the function of an object has been tested, based on the basic knowledge we have today. This documentation is supplemented with pictures of processes, plans, outlines, photographs of originals and of the actual products that have been produced.

**Experimental archaeology**

It is here that questions about so-called “experimental archaeology” come in. We often talk about this work yet, at the same time, it is something to which few people apply themselves more systematically. The dialogue between the many practicians, the researchers from the universities is still somewhat lame.

And this is in spite of the University of Bäckadalen (Sweden) arranging regular courses in this subject, the Department of Archaeology at the University of Lund (Sweden) having a 10-credit course in the subject and the fact that the Department of Archaeology at the University of Gothenburg (Sweden) is collaborating with Ekehagen's Prehistoric Village in the Swedish province of Västergötland.

Perhaps it’s time to allow experimental archaeology to become part of the university’s so-called third task – conducting a dialogue about its work with as wide an audience as possible.

Museums and ancient settlements could actually be excellent arenas for joint projects of this kind, providing a location where all those involved could converge to share and develop their specialist knowledge. The question is: who wants to become involved?

The above-mentioned report on Ancient Settlements in Västra Götaland discusses these possibilities in more detail. The quality documentation that I advocate should rather be seen as a tool – a means of smoothing the way for such a dialogue. The working model is based on openly communicating experience with one another, working collaboratively to build up this knowledge, and driving the search for knowledge in a combined effort.

**Clothing and heating – some examples**

Here it might be appropriate with a few illustrative examples.

What we know about personal clothing during the Iron Age, Viking Age and early Middle Ages is almost entirely based on the study of findings from ancient graves. In actual fact, it is only a few articles of clothing or, to be more precise, fragments of clothing that have been the model for the image of ancient fashion that we now see in the most imaginative creations. Moreover, these so-called originals represent the clothing over several hundred years, during which there may have been many changes of fashion.

It is also frequently the case that interpretations of the archaeological findings were often made back in the 1920s and 30s. It is not uncommon that these still represent the “truth” about how they dressed in the past, even though new research methods produce totally different interpretations.

Furthermore, it’s probably so that the things we feel don’t work today were probably quite alright then! After all, there are plenty of “impractical” details and features even on today’s fashion articles.

Another popular question that is frequently discussed amongst building designers and constructors is how they managed to heat and light these ancient buildings.

The problem of smoke in these buildings is the subject of many, long discussions. The focus is usually on the construction of the fireplace, its position, air supply and so on. What rarely comes up for discussion are the methods used to make fires, the quality of the firewood and the fact that these ancient dwellings were continually inhabited and constantly heated.

Obviously these fireplaces were an important source of light too, yet today there are discussions about how there must have been larger and far more openings in these buildings to let the light enter than was previously believed (with evidence for this, for example, in medieval buildings that still stand today).

How did they let in the light or create enough light to see sufficiently well for doing jobs inside these buildings, particularly during the darker months – at a time when “people didn’t even have glasses”. There must surely have been people with poor eyesight then too? Weren’t there other solutions to these problems than the ones we can find? May it not have been so that the hand’s sensitivity and dexterity were greater than the eye’s?

**Approaching the past**

We almost always approach the past with today’s notions of how things must have been in those days. All based on mankind’s present-day values, our knowledge base and our needs. In days gone by, they had other
knowledge about things that have been generally forgotten today.

It’s not so long since we started dividing our days up into hours and then into hundreds of seconds. In those days, long before the arrival of digital watches and when daytime was day and night-time was night, mankind depended on the laws of Nature in a completely different way.

Since it’s likely that the capacity for thinking and the thirst for knowledge was no less than in our days, we can only guess at the amount of “other knowledge” they had then. It was a time when hands-on experience was the most common way of learning and the development of skills was based on verbally passing on experience to the next generation. That makes it likely that the collective long-term memory was preserved in a way that is so totally different to what we know today. Now we go searching for the information we need on the Internet – information that hardly makes us skilled experts.

I mean that it is not entirely easy to apply the term “authenticity” to life in the past – “living history”. There are numerous aspects that we don’t think about, so much knowledge about nature handed down from generation to generation, so many values that have virtually disappeared in the recent decades.

History is always written afterwards, on the basis of the interpretation models that we choose (to believe that one is not choosing is also a choice) and it is tinged to a lesser or greater extent by the writer of history’s perception of reality.

So what is authentic? What is right and what is wrong? There are no straightforward answers to these questions. Quality work – an awareness of the importance of an open and comprehensible report of what one’s conclusions are based on helps make it clearer what the authors actually intend with what we know today. Now we go searching for the information we need on the Internet – information that hardly makes us skilled experts.

We can and should try to give an account of life in ancient times, as well as we are able. But we should always ask ourselves the reasons for doing so. To allow history to interest and entertain us is one perfectly satisfactory reason – but all true humour is based on a genuine self-insight and humility towards the shortcomings in our own lives and a present-day lack of knowledge, as well as respect for what other people have also accomplished in days gone by.

Conclusion
Many of our reconstructed ancient settlements are engaged in what is known today as “living history” – a term, that in my opinion, is far too pretentious. Let these settlements be places where we can experience a picture of the past, preferably spiced with a touch of genuine humour – a trait that was not unknown amongst the Scandinavian folk of old.

But if these activities are going to survive and continue into the future (and are considered worth all the millions of public funds that are currently being poured into the many different projects) then it ought to be reasonable for visitors to these sites, the tax-payers who pay for them, to expect to see an openness and transparency in the questions of quality and authenticity.

In spite of this, these projects can never form the basis for the collective memory bank that we need in order to influence and safeguard our shared future in a democratic way in a modern, multi-cultural society.

Scientific research and the role of the ‘normal’ museums as the memory banks of society cannot be replaced by an historical experience, no matter how interesting or how much it fires the imagination.

About the author
Kristina Carlsson, Ph. lic. and a candidate for a doctorate in historian archaeology, University of Lund. Her research deals with changes in the archaeological material as a mirror of power and shifts of power in western Sweden during the Viking Age and early Middle Ages.

Throughout the years she has worked with many different types of archaeological material and questions – everything from ceramics to urbanisation processes, and with material from the Viking Age until modern times. Questions concerning the ancient Nordic border area around the Gota river have often been discussed in her works.

For many years she worked for the National Heritage Board of Sweden, with responsibility for historian archaeology in western Sweden, especially with research about Old Lodöse and Kungshälla. During 2000-2004 she was the antiquarian leader of the project, “Ale in the Viking Age”. Email: kristinacarlsson@telia.com
The second KNOT project meeting took place in Stryn municipality in the Nordfjord area of Sogn og Fjordane County in Norway, September 23-26, 2004.

The main theme
Although this is not a Viking project per se, both Destination Viking Living History and Destination Viking Sagalands participate as full partners in the KNOT project.

The main theme of the second meeting was the sharing of information between projects and their websites. The KNOT project proposes to establish a kind of web ring, where participating projects and partners may tag their information with co-ordinate details and key words, to enable symbols to pop up on interactive maps on the websites of any participating project/partner.

At the meeting, which started at Hotel Alexandra in the village of Loen, the partners agreed on basic technical and indexing principles, and a project site will be established to test these ideas in practice.

It is also intended to link this system with a mobile phone information provision system, so that the same type of information can be available on site through your mobile phone.

The theme of the knowledge building seminar of this second KNOT meeting was really something knotting partners together: the relation between natural heritage attractions, tourism heritage traditions and modern tourism.

The glacier tourism
The example we could study in the Stryn area was glacier tourism. From the early 19th century on, English tourists have been coming to the area to experience the fjord and especially the large glaciers of the area. The Jostedalsbre glacier is the largest glacier in mainland Europe and is easily accessible. Several of its arms can be touched at the end of valleys once formed by progressing and retreating glaciers.

Today, the Jostedal Glacier is a National Park, and a National Park centre has also been established east of Stryn. Here, we could learn about the natural heritage of glacial regions, but also about the exploration and tourism associated with natural heritage.

Our last day in Stryn was concluded with a walk on one of the most famous side glaciers of the Jostedal Glacier, the Briksdal Glacier. It took almost an hour to get equipped for the two-hour walk up and around the glacier, but it gave a fantastic insight into natural processes and suddenly all of us understood why so many visitors have been attracted to these icy environments!

And as we were all knotted together with a rope, we really felt as if this was the core of the KNOT project.

VIKINGS ON ICE

By Geir Sør-Reime
Project manager KNOT

This interest in natural wonders of Norway led in turn to the building of a series of wooden hotels in so-called Swiss or Dragon style in areas close to glaciers. Hotel Alexandra in Loen is one such hotel, tracing its history back to the pioneering days of fjord and glacier tourism. This is now converted into a huge convention hotel.

For the two last nights of our meeting, we changed to Visnes Hotel in Stryn itself. This hotel, in Swiss style, is still run by the family who established it in 1850. Here, the hotel still displays 1850/1920 interiors. The hotel has been awarded the stamp of quality of the Norwegian Cultural Heritage Foundation.

From the KNOT project meeting in Stryn, Norway. Photo Bjørn M Jakobsen
The book follows up and expands the hypotheses put forward by the Icelandic scholar Einar Pålsson that geometric ideas, mainly attributed to Pythagorean and Neo-Platonist philosophy, were well known in Icelandic medieval society and during the settlement period of Iceland.

The author expands the ideas and aims at finding out to what extent geometric ideas were used by the Scandinavians when they chose the location of important sites. By investigating a number of important central places mainly in Sweden and Denmark and their geometrical settings, the author comes to the conclusion that Scandinavians in the first millennium AD were profoundly influenced by ideas that can be traced to the ancient Mediterranean cultures.

Dan Carlsson

Egyptian influence and sacred geometry in ancient and medieval Scandinavia

Written by Einar Gunnar Birgisson
Published by the author
Email: egb@mmedia.is
ISBN 9979 60 757 2

Den skånska historien
Vikingarna

Written by Sven Rosborn
Published by Fotevikens Museum and Region Skåne.
ISBN 91-973777-1-6

Den skånska historien Vikingarna

Scania (Skåne, the southern part of Sweden, a part of Denmark during the Viking Age) and the Viking Age are definitely connected. The province was one of the richest in all of Scandinavia in the Viking Age. The powerful kings who ruled here until the end of 9th century are almost all unknown to us.

This book is an interesting overview of the Viking Age in Scania, but in order to help the reader understand the context the author has also extended the perspective to cover Norway, Denmark and Sweden.

The author, Sven Rosborn, has put forward many interesting and in certain cases controversial interpretations about the Viking history in Scania. Sven Rosborn is a medieval archaeologist from the University of Lund and the book is published by Fotevikens Museum. It is available only in Swedish, but holds a huge number of pictures and illustrations.

Worthy of special mention is the author’s interpretation of the so-called Pagan Temple, that has been found at the excavations in Uppåkra.

Dan Carlsson

New books!

NordicArts
Fine tribal arts from Northern Europe

Viking jewelry and imported gifts from Scandinavia and Northern Europe. All our jewelry is handcrafted and faithfully reproduced from the originals by esteemed jewellers Museums Kjøp-Smykker of Denmark and Birfrost of Sweden, many of which are produced in co-operation with National Museums in Scandinavia.

We also range a huge selection of quality Scandinavian knives by Marttini, Iisakki Järvenpää, and Samhail, as well as unique Sámi jewelry and highest grade reindeer furs from Lapland. We accept all major credit cards on our secure server, and ship worldwide, tax-free to the US and countries outside the EC!

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Telephone: +44 (0) 7961 154 832 Email: sales@nordicarts.com VAT reg. GB 802 3212 88

www.nordicarts.com
Gotland is an island in the middle of the Baltic Sea with a most interesting cultural history. During the Viking Age Gotland could offer many good harbours and for that reason was an important trading center. Fröjel was one of the largest trading places in the Baltic region and is often mentioned in connection with Birka, Ribe and Hedeby. Every summer visitors from all over the world come to Fröjel because of the Vikings. They hope to get a glimpse of the Viking and his world by taking part in – or just taking a look at – archaeological excavations at the site.

You too, ought to make a visit – you’ll not be disappointed!

For more information visit our website: www.toftagarden.se

E-mail: info@toftagarden.se • Phone: +46-498-297000 • Fax: +46-498-265666

Hotel Toftagården
Tofta Strand, SE-621 98
Visby, SWEDEN.

Archaeological excavations. There is a great interest in participating in the excavations of the Viking-age harbour and trading centre, and every summer the University of Gotland arranges courses for archaeology students. The place has been excavated for more than ten years and during this period 40,000 registered items have been found. So far only two percent of the area in question has been excavated...

Archaeology for children. Presumably Fröjel is the only place where children can practice excavating today. – Book a time!

Lectures. A series of lectures about Vikings and the Viking Age is going to take place at the Visitor’s Centre at Fröjel in the former school. The programme will be published during the spring.

Guided tours. "Where is the harbour?" This is the most common question from visitors to Fröjel. Just follow one of our guided tours to the excavations, and the guide will transport you back more than 1000 years to the Viking Age!

Exhibition. After the acclaimed exhibitions, ’I Vikingarnas spår” (In the Tracks of the Vikings), ’Vikingarnas värld’ (World of the Vikings) and ’Järnålder i Fröjel’ (Iron Age at Fröjel), this year we focus on the result from the many years of excavations at Fröjel. – Don’t miss the opportunity to have a look at some of the fantastic items shown in the Visitor’s Centre!

Café and shop. While the children are playing in the garden, you can relax overlooking a fascinating view. If you would like a souvenir we sell copies of various Viking-age items.

FRÖJEL – a Viking-age tradingplace

Gotland is an island in the middle of the Baltic Sea with a most interesting cultural history. During the Viking Age Gotland could offer many good harbours and for that reason was an important trading center. Fröjel was one of the largest trading places in the Baltic region and is often mentioned in connection with Birka, Ribe and Hedeby. Every summer visitors from all over the world come to Fröjel because of the Vikings. They hope to get a glimpse of the Viking and his world by taking part in – or just taking a look at – archaeological excavations at the site.

You too, ought to make a visit – you’ll not be disappointed!

This is a sample of what you’ll find.

Photo: Ulf Nygren, Gotlands kommun/BUF
Opening ceremony

Friday, February 25, 2005
At 4:30 p.m. The first bonfire is lit on Grogarnsberget on the east coast of Gotland by the Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden. This is followed by the lighting of bonfires around the entire coast of Gotland.

At 6 p.m. Fire arrives at Lojsta. A Viking wedding takes place. When the bonfires are all lit, there will be a wedding between Jaroslav and Ingegerd (anno 1019) at Lojsta. Olof Skötkonung, Ingegerd’s father and former Viking king of Sweden, is keen to marry off his daughter to Rus, the great country to the East but Ingegerd isn’t quite so enthusiastic. She was promised to Olav of Norway but her father didn’t approve. Her wedding guests mingle and the Russians are on their way.

Follow the events by firelight. Theatre plays, music, activities and market.

At 8 p.m. Viking feast in Vikingabyn in Tofta. Contact the Viking Village, see advert page 41.

Saturday and Sunday, February 26-27
The opening ceremony continues in the Viking Village in Tofta which is lit by torches and filled with artisans selling their wares. Sacrifice for the wedding couple, sorcery and much more. The visitor can also try swinging an axe or shooting with a bow and arrow. Guided tours of the village.

Events
Gotland Viking Island 2005
The program is growing apace.
We think that there is already something for every taste and the agenda is growing every day. To recommend a specific event is hard; there is the Opening Ceremony with Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden in attendance, the opening of the Spillings hoard-exhibition, Midwinter in the Viking Village, the revival of the Gotlandic Althing, not to mention excavations, theatre plays, markets and everything else that is going on. There will be many events during 2005 that we know are going to be unforgettable.

If you have questions about any particular item on the program, please don’t hesitate to contact us. All events are in Swedish but many can be understood by those who don’t speak the language.

Further information
www.vikinggotland.com

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GOTLAND VIKING
Welcome to The Viking Village!
THE PLACE WHERE YOU MEET THE VIKINGS!

2005 is celebrated as the year of the Vikings on Gotland. Vikingabyn is a part of the Gotland Viking Island network and will introduce several exciting events such as markets and festivals over the next year, for updates look at our homepage.

WE GIVE OUR GUESTS THE CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN ALL SORTS OF ACTIVITIES SUCH AS GAMES OF SKILLS, HANDICRAFTS AND EVERYDAY LIFE.

For more information www.vikinggotland.com

Would you like to take part?

Do you belong to a Viking association, are you a musician or live-actor? Do you ride Icelandic horses? Are you an expert at Viking costumes or something else? If you’ve already looked at our programme you know that there is plenty of opportunity to participate several times during the year. Especially during the opening in February, the Althing in July and at Viking Days in När in September.

Get in touch! We welcome all suggestions and are pleased to put you in contact with others.

Do you want to participate in the markets? Contact Ludwig Balassa who is in charge of most of the Viking markets during the year. E-mail: ludwig.balassa@telia.com

Further information www.vikinggotland.com

All over Gotland

"In the tracks of the Vikings" June 23
Join a trip in the tracks of the Vikings on Gotland – a whole day’s road tour by car. We will visit Viking harbours, a Viking farm, a defence fortification and a graveyard with plenty of atmosphere. Compulsory pre-registration. Organised by the Gotland County Museum.

Clearing and setting up signs
A project under the auspices of the County Administration on Gotland clears away undergrowth and setting up information signs at the Viking historical monuments on the island. Signs in Swedish and English will be available to make things easier for those who want to discover the Viking heritage on Gotland on their own by car or bike.

The Year of the Viking Horse
June 15 – August 30 at Norbys Museum Farm in Våle 20 km south of Visby.

Horse breeds stemming back to the Viking era are on display at Norbys all summer long.

Theatre and music
"From creation to apocalypse"
January 20, February 10 and April 21, at the Gotland County Museum

With special chosen texts from the Icelandic Edda verses – Volvans prophecy, as well as Snorre Sturlasson’s Edda, the Viking ideas about the world’s creation and apocalypse are matched with the same theme in Genesis and the Book of Revelations in the Bible. The music and lighting both reinforce the dramatic nature of the texts.

Would you like to take part?

Do you belong to a Viking association, are you a musician or live-actor? Do you ride Icelandic horses? Are you an expert at Viking costumes or something else? If you’ve already looked at our programme you know that there is plenty of opportunity to participate several times during the year. Especially during the opening in February, the Althing in July and at Viking Days in När in September.

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Further information www.vikinggotland.com

"Volund"
Dates in April not yet set
By the Gotland County Theatre Company

Gotlandic folk music drama about the powerful, cruel smith Volund in Edda, a saga that has been told in northern Europe for over a thousand years.

"The Snakewoman’s Child"
Opening Night July 14
In När parish, at the mouth of Närsån stream.

The drama is based on Dagmar Edqvist’s novel “The Man from the Sea” that takes place in the mid-900s in a time of transition between belief in the Æsir cult and Christianity. Produced by Gotland County Theatre Company, När together, the inhabitants of När, the Närevyn theatre group, and the När local folklore association.

Medieval Week
August 7 to 14, 2005

Medieval Week has made Gotland famous. Reenactors all over the world travel to Gotland every year in August to take part. Aside from its ordinary program, this year the Medieval Week will focus on the transition between the Viking era and Middle Ages. The transition will be the theme of several lectures, theatre performances and music.

Clearing and setting up signs
A project under the auspices of the County Administration on Gotland clears away undergrowth and setting up information signs at the Viking historical monuments on the island. Signs in Swedish and English will be available to make things easier for those who want to discover the Viking heritage on Gotland on their own by car or bike.

The Year of the Viking Horse
June 15 – August 30 at Norbys Museum Farm in Våle 20 km south of Visby.

Horse breeds stemming back to the Viking era are on display at Norbys all summer long.

Theatre and music
"From creation to apocalypse"
January 20, February 10 and April 21, at the Gotland County Museum

With special chosen texts from the Icelandic Edda verses – Volvans prophecy, as well as Snorre Sturlasson’s Edda, the Viking ideas about the world’s creation and apocalypse are matched with the same theme in Genesis and the Book of Revelations in the Bible. The music and lighting both reinforce the dramatic nature of the texts.

Would you like to take part?

Do you belong to a Viking association, are you a musician or live-actor? Do you ride Icelandic horses? Are you an expert at Viking costumes or something else? If you’ve already looked at our programme you know that there is plenty of opportunity to participate several times during the year. Especially during the opening in February, the Althing in July and at Viking Days in När in September.

Get in touch! We welcome all suggestions and are pleased to put you in contact with others.

Do you want to participate in the markets? Contact Ludwig Balassa who is in charge of most of the Viking markets during the year. E-mail: ludwig.balassa@telia.com

Further information www.vikinggotland.com
Three hours to Gotland

The ferry trip to Gotland takes approximately three hours. With our new fast ferries the trip is both fast and comfortable. We have several daily departures from Nynäshamn and Oskarshamn on the Swedish mainland. Our on board comforts include various seating arrangements, food market, bistro and shop.

You find more information at www.destinationgotland.se. For reservation please call +46 771 22 33 00.

Welcome on board.

www.destinationgotland.se
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www.gotland.info
Tourist Information Centre on the Internet

When visiting Gotland, welcome to Visby Tourist Information Centre. You will find us at Visby harbour.

- Tickets to special events
- Guided city walks
- Tourist information and souvenir shop

Visby Tourist Information Centre
Tel: 0046-498-201700
E-mail: info@gotland.info
Address: Skeppsbron 4-6, SE-621 25 VISBY

The County Museum of Gotland - Viking Year 2005

Viking hoards and Spillings - the biggest of them all
The Gotlandic Viking hoards and the huge hoard from Spillings are among the most sensational archaeological finds in Sweden. The new exhibition shows you the hoards and the theories surrounding them. Opening May 15.
Fornsalen County Museum of Gotland, Visby

The Worlds of the Vikings
The Gotlandic Vikings are portrayed based on the picture-stones, graves and the rich artefact collection. Opening May 15. Fornsalen County Museum of Gotland, Visby

The Viking horses
Myths, horsemanship and horse breeds are presented in the exhibition. The program features a demonstration of riding skills with living horses whose ancestors Vikings could possibly have ridden… Opening June 15. Norrby’s Farm Museum, Väte

Our whole program is available at www.lansmuseetgotland.se
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