Editorial

Chilly winds, the colourful leaves of autumn and the growing darkness here in the North, all remind us of the approaching winter. What we need this time of the year is a warming fireplace and some good reading. And here you are dear readers – all over the globe and in whatever climate you are living in – a new well-filled issue of Viking Heritage Magazine!

Let’s start with the two articles dealing with archaeological finds from the Viking Age, one about the rock crystal lenses found on Gotland and the other about the popular Thor’s hammer pendants. It is really amazing how much knowledge of the past we can get by doing extensive research on just one type of artefact.

Many times we can see that mythology is involved in the practical use of an artefact, as is the case with the Thor’s hammer. As a continuation of the article about Nordic religion in the last issue of this magazine, we are happy to present an article about Viking Folklore in this issue. Throughout the ages folklore has been a way of interpreting reality and making it understandable.

In this issue we also take a closer look at some of the people of the Viking Age who are rarely mentioned, the thralls or the slaves. This is the first of two articles, presenting the living conditions for slaves on Iceland. The next article will be published in 4/00.

As usual there is information about how the Vikings’ heritage is dealt with in different places. The past summer has seen so many kinds of events regarding Vikings, that we cannot begin to mention them all. All these highlights and the growing interest in Vikings and the Viking Age make it even more important to keep up this opportunity for spreading the results of different kinds of scientific research and investigations as well as an insight into what is happening in the Viking world of today. So, feel welcome to contact us with your news, ideas, and suggestions!

I hope you will have a relaxing reading!

Marita E Ekman
Editor
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Words of Wisdom

To a false friend the footpath winds
Though his house be on the highway.
To a sure friend there is a short cut,
Though he live a long way off.

From "Hávamál"
(Words of "The High One")

About the front page:
Rock crystal lenses from the Viking Age, found on Gotland. Read about them on page 3. Photo: Raymond Hejdström. © Gotlands Fornsal.
Unique for Gotland
On Gotland some 30 so-called lenses of rock crystal from the very late Viking period have been found. Some of them are round or oval and slightly convex, others are spherical. Some of them are mounted in beautiful silver settings and used as pendants. All of them are of a very high quality. Until recently these lenses were only known from Gotland but today we know of a few finds from the Swedish island of Öland as well as from Finland, Latvia and Estonia; an eastern extension.

The lenses are mostly found in pure jewellery hoards or in "normal", ie mixed, silver hoards from that very period. If found in graves, they originate from the so-called "churchyard finds". During the transition between the Viking period and the Middle Ages, there were some very rich Viking graves in the churchyard, north of the church. Under protection of the church, Christian women were buried but in a pagan way with their personal belongings, among those silver-mounted rock crystal lenses.

Lately a great interest has been focused on these crystals. A proposed hypothesis about the Vikings having used them in telescopes or binoculars has prompted an intensive discussion in the mass media.

But let us start from the beginning. How did these very special objects end up on Gotland in the first place and where did they come from?

Slaves for silver
Särkland, the Norse name for the Arab Caliphate, was the most powerful state during the Viking period, politically, economically and culturally. It stretched from Spain in the west to India in the east. This enormous empire with Baghdad as capital was held together by common religion, Islam.

Especially during the 7th and 8th centuries silver mines in Tashkent and Afghanistan provided the market with silver. In the form of coins, dirhams, jewellery, and raw material as bars and rods, silver started to flow into north-east Europe and became the most valuable metal used as means of payment.

Bulgar at the bend of the river Volga, Attil in the land of the Chazars and Miklagârd, ("The big city " – Old Norse for Constantinople/Istanbul) capital of the Christian empire of Byzans, were the most important marketplaces. To these lively and international centres the Vikings arrived via the Russian rivers, loaded with goods to sell. An Arabic author Ibn Rustah, (around 950 AD) tells that "they live exclusively from trade with slaves" which might not be quite true. They also brought weapons, especially swords, wax and furs, highly appreciated by their customers. In return they received the coveted silver. Most of it was brought home and hidden in the Gotlandic soil. Surely some of it was used for buying the tempting luxury of the Orient such as silk, multicoloured glass-beads and semiprecious stones. This is were the lenses fit into the context.

Persian crystal
Rock crystal was quarried in Persia during prehistoric times. The town of Basra was a well-known centre for rock crystal grinding. It is a colourless, water-clear, well-crystallized kind of quartz which occurs quite commonly in different kinds of rock, where it is formed in cracks and cavities. In Europe larger deposits have been found in the Alp regions. However it is more likely that the Gotlandic lenses originate from ancient Persia and...
reached Gotland in the pockets of the Viking tradesmen. On the other hand - since they appear very suddenly at the end of the 11th century and disappear just as suddenly some hundred years later they may have been arrived in one lot and at the same time.

The question of where the silver settings were made is a bit of a problem. The ornamentation has a Slavonic character, and might have been created in Russia. As no such pendants have been found there, they might even have been set in silver here on Gotland, inspired by other Russian items.

**Luxurious jewellery**

Wealthy women could only make a big show of magnificent necklaces. Just a few examples: A beautiful set of seven lenses and silver pearls comes from a hoard at Hejslunds in Havdhem parish hidden only shortly before 1100. From Lilla Rone in Lye parish a necklace could be created from 11 round or oval lenses and 10 silver beads. Another three spherical lenses belong to the hoard.

The most impressive one, with a diameter of 4.8 cm comes from Gustaf in the parish of Kålleryds (in the neighbourhood of the Fröjel excavations). It is the largest ever found on Gotland. It was found in the earth in the 1960’s by Ivan Lagergren while ploughing. More than 30 years later it was donated by his children to the Historical Museum of Gotland (Fornsalen), upon his wishes.

It can be assumed that not everyone could afford such luxury. However a merchant who had made his fortune trading eastwards would surely boast of his success.

**Children’s work?**

It has been long known that the rock-crystal lenses can also be used as a tinder glass and that they also posses a magnifying effect. This spring one big round convex lens from Krasse in the parish of Guldraup was brought to Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm and examined by laser. The examination showed that the lens can magnify up to 12 times, and that it can also serve as a very good tinder glass. It is of an extremely high quality, even better than lenses made a hundred years ago!

Most interesting is that the knowledge of “applied optics” was known by craftsmen over 1000 years ago, several hundred years earlier than historians and physicians were aware of until now.

The Guldraup lens was found in circumstances which establishes its use beyond all doubt.

A gravel pit contained one large convex lens of rock crystal, some scrap metal, a (bronze) knife, a pair of tweezers, and some iron punches. Besides that there were some animal teeth, probably used for polishing and gilding.

This can also explain the very high quality of Gotlandic goldsmith work during the Viking period: the goldsmith used a magnifier! It has even been suggested that children with their tiny fingers carried out that kind of fine art.

**A Viking-age telescope?**

The Icelandic sagas tell about a “sun-stone” made of some clear material – maybe rock crystal – which was used to find the position of the sun when sailing in cloudy weather. This idea has been discussed very much. Neither this theory nor the one about the Vikings using lenses as telescope or binoculars is very likely. There were easier ways of navigating: the sun and the stars, flight of birds, clouds and streams.

**Conclusion**

I think the most probable conclusion is that the rock crystal lenses originate from Persian mines. Even if one can not reject the possibility that the Vikings were able to manufacture these lenses themselves it seems most likely that they were manufactured by specialists within the Caliphate, maybe some of them originally as magnifiers.

They were exported, the Vikings found them at the marketplaces, and because of their beauty brought them home. They may also have served as a kind of payment to the Emperor’s Varjagirgard in Miklagård/ Constantinople. The question of where the silver settings were made can not be answered, even if it seems most likely that they were made on Gotland. The discovery of the magnifying effect became very useful while making the exquisite work of the gold-smiths.

The mere existence of these luxurious objects points out the important role Gotland played within the world-trade by the end of the Viking period and the possibilities it gave Gotlandic merchants to make a fortune.

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**About the author:**

Malin Lindquist is senior curator and responsible for exhibitions at Gotlands Fornsald. As an archaeologist, she has worked many years mainly on Gotland. She has contributed to Viking Heritage Magazine several times, the last time in 2002 with the article "Eastwards – about the background to some Viking Age items in Gotlands Fornsald, The Historical Museum of Gotland".

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**The Mästermyr Find**

- **A Viking-age Tool Chest from Gotland**

**Now available again!**

**BY GRETA ARWIDSSON AND GÖSTA BERG**

Publisher: Larson Publishing Company, 5426 E. Hwy 246, Lompoc, CA 93436, USA.

E-mail: larbooks@impulse.net

specialises in books on blacksmithing and decorative ironwork has reprinted it.

The book describes the find in detail with both informative text and clear photographs and drawings. This makes it excellent to use for reproductions and it is considered to be a great treasure to blacksmiths and woodworkers alike. But this book is a source of great knowledge also for others interested in the late Iron Age.

Right now a group of blacksmiths in USA has started a project to reproduce the chest and the tools for a blacksmithing conference taking place in 2002. Around 50 handicraftsmen are involved in making items for the project. In coming issues of this magazine we will hopefully have the possibility to follow this project.

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Now available again! New book!
New Discoveries in Norwich

By Brian Ayers
Norfolk Archaeological Unit

In England, the North Sea Viking Legacy Project is focussing on the county of Norfolk, the city of Norwich and the town of Thetford. Norfolk was solidly within the Danelaw of Anglo-Scandinavian England and the project is seeking to make visible the ‘invisible’ legacy of the Vikings.

The Anglo-Scandinavian legacy within Norwich is considerable although often inadvertently hidden from the general public. While documentary evidence is scanty, in common with that for much of East Anglia in the Anglo-Scandinavian period, there is other evidence to be explored such as the street pattern, defences, place-names, churches and artefacts.

Archaeologists have been studying various sites of Anglo-Scandinavian potential over the last thirty years (including work on a defensive alignment on the north bank of the river Wensum) and recently three sites, excavated by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit in different parts of the city, have produced further indications of activity.

Evaluation work south of the river off King Street uncovered 11th-century consolidation of the bank of a small stream (or cockey, the local dialect word) close to its confluence with the River Wensum. This consolidation had been effected by re-use of wood (oak) from a clinker-built boat which had been broken up to form revetting timber. It is thought that the wood may represent a small vessel of 10th-century date although dendrochronological analysis is awaited. Further excavation is currently planned for late 2000.

Work has also taken place at the north end of Fye Bridge, probably the earliest crossing of the river. Antiquarian observations in 1896 had recorded an oaken piled causeway across the river and its marshes. Timbers were recovered then and photographed but not retained; in consequence modern dating techniques could not be applied to them. Although the antiquarian record suggested a Roman date for construction, it is highly probable that the structure dated to the 10th or 11th century, within the Anglo-Scandinavian period.

Work to install a below-ground pumping station close to St Clement’s church, itself a probable Danish dedication, gave the opportunity for minor excavation to check the antiquarian record and recover further timbers. A pile was excavated and sent for dendrochronological analysis. Unfortunately, despite very good preservation (including bark) the ring sequence could not be located within known dated sequences, a common problem in East Anglia. The data will be retained for cross-reference in the future.

The most startling discovery has taken place in an area thought to be outside that of Danish settlement, lying to the west of the later Norman castle in that part of Norwich known as the ‘French Borough’ in the Middle Ages (after the Norman-French burgesses who settled there in the second half of the 11th century). Extensive excavation in advance of a new library uncovered evidence for pre-Norman activity, including a small gold ingot for which parallels have to be sought in northern Scotland and Sweden (previously, only silver ingots have been found in Norfolk).

The object is a mere 3cm in length and was found in a deposit used as bedding for an 18th-century floor. It was therefore thought to have been brought to the site by accident within the deposit but subsequently a sherd of Thetford-type pottery was located some 6m to the south which had gold residue adhering to its surface. It seems unlikely that two finds linked to gold working should be the results of re-deposition and trace analysis is currently in progress in an attempt to establish whether the two artefacts are linked.

Such recent discoveries, together with previous work and analysis of the topography and place-names, are being used within the Norwich Area Heritage Strategy to enhance public appreciation of the Viking past of Norwich and thus foster the growth of cultural tourism for the future.

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Already by the end of the 19th century archaeologists associated the hammer-shaped amulets of the Viking Age with Thor’s hammer from Norse mythology. The Swede, Oskar Montelius, emphasized the hammer as a pagan symbol and compared it to the cross, the symbol of the Christians. Since that time, many scientists have worked on this subject, but still not all mysteries surrounding the Thor’s hammers have been solved. In the following article I will try to present a short but detailed description of the Thor’s hammers’ motif and their history.

The motif of the Thor’s hammer is well known from many different objects; both Thor’s hammer rings and single Thor’s hammer amulets as well as engravings or drawings on runic – and picture stones. Furthermore the motif appears on coins, loom weights and on metal- and pottery vessels. Thor and his hammer, Mjollnir (the crusher?) play an important role in Norse mythology and even the Icelandic sagas contain references to it.

**Mythology**

In order to understand the significance of Thor’s hammer it is necessary to take a closer look at Norse mythology. Thor was one of the most popular gods during the Viking Age, maybe even the most popular. Thor was impartial, upright and good-natured, but sometimes also simple-minded. He was the defender of the gods and mankind against the dangerous powers from Utgard, especially against the giants and the world serpent, Midgardorm. Thor’s adventures were written down by the Icelanders, Snorri Sturlason, in short mythological stories and in the younger Edda poems (e.g. Trymskvida). The Mjollnir hammer, forged by dwarves, plays a large part in these adventures; it is the most powerful weapon in the world and can kill even giants with just one blow.

Thor’s popularity in the Viking period can be judged by the number of towns and villages in Scandinavia named after the god, such as Torslunda on Öland or Thorsberg in Danmark. And about a quarter of the about 4000 persons mentioned in the Landnámabók (the book about the colonization of Iceland), have names built on Thor- (e.g. Thorbjörn, Thorkel).

**Thor’s hammer rings**

In contrast to single Thor’s hammers, the geographical spreading of Thor’s hammer rings is quite limited. Altogether there are about 450 known Thor’s hammer rings. This ring, consisting of a bent iron bar and a lock to open it, featured several hammer-shaped iron amulets hanging from it. However there are also axe- or club-shaped amulets known to be attached to such rings. The discovery sites are concentrated in the region of Birka, where 58 rings were found.

About 95% of all rings were found in the regions Uppland, Västmanland and Södermanland in Sweden. Some were also found in Dalarna, Småland and on Öland. Outside of Sweden about ten rings are known from the Åland islands, and along the eastern trade routes several Thor’s hammer rings came to Finland and Russia. It is extraordinary that no rings are known from Denmark, Norway or Iceland. Nearly 95% of all Thor’s hammer rings were discovered in cremation graves; the rest in inhumation graves or in villages.

The fact that the rings were made with a lock to open them is a good indication that the rings were neck rings. Their size (Ø = ca. 15 cm) seems to support this theory, although they could have been used for another purpose. In Risnä, Sundbyberg a large Thor’s hammer ring (Ø = 28cm) was discovered; perhaps the ring had been designed for a wooden sculpture.

Here literature has some interesting aspects to offer as well. In the Beowulf-Epos the death ship Skölds has the epithet "hringedstefna", which means "with ring-equipped prow". And Snorri names the ship on which the god Balder was burned, "Hringhorni", which means "ring at the prow".

The date of the Thor’s hammer rings shows a concentration in the 9th and 10th centuries. But the existence of such rings can be verified as early as the late 8th century in the area around Lake Mälar. However most of the findings date to the 9th century, while they gradually disappear again during the 10th century. Thor’s hammer rings occur, therefore, earlier than the single Thor’s hammer amulets. The fact that the spreading of the Thor’s hammer rings is mainly limited to the areas around Lake Mälar, indicates a common faith and maybe a ritual unity, while in other areas (Norway, Denmark) other traditions developed. The reason why the Thor’s hammer rings emerged has not yet been investigated but the cause may be the early missions of the church in Scandinavia.

**Single Thor’s hammer amulets**

Altogether there are about 120 single Thor’s hammer amulets known to archaeologists, about 100 examples from the Scandinavian countries, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Iceland. The other amulets were discovered in Viking-influenced regions, such as England, Ireland, Russia and Poland. Most of the single Thor’s hammers were found in Denmark and Sweden, while surprisingly few were discovered in Norway, and only a single one in Iceland!

Thor’s hammers were made of different
materials. Most of them are made of cast silver, followed by hammers of wrought iron. But there are also Thor's hammers of amber, bronze, lead or sometimes even gold. It is also certainly possible that Thor's hammers made of transitory material like wood or bone could have existed.

Some of the hammers are plain, but most of them are decorated, for example with punch-marks or niello inlay. It is likely that blacksmithe made the hammers for their customers. A casting mould for Thor's hammers, discovered in a grave of a blacksmith in Norway could confirm that. On average the Thor's hammers were 3 cm long and 2 cm wide, while their weight varies quite significantly, depending on the material and size, between 0.84 and 36.66 g, the average being about 10g. Because of their form, material and decoration, the hammers can be classified into different types, but it is noticeable that no hammer is identical to the others; all Thor's hammers have been made individually.

Five Thor's hammers discovered in Sweden and Denmark featured especially remarkable decoration: Cross-symbols were engraved or – punch-marked. In addition, two casting moulds are known from Haithabu and Trelleborg, with which the craftsman was able to cast both cross-amulets and Thor's hammer amulets. Today, these phenomena are generally interpreted as some kind of expression of a certain syncretism between the old pagan and the new Christian faiths.

**Thor's hammers in hoards**

Most of the hammers discovered in Scandinavia were part of hoards, fewer were discovered in graves, and only a few originate from village excavations such as Haithabu. The amulets that were found in the hoards are silver without exception, and most of them are from Denmark or Sweden.

A subject of burning discussion has been why the hammers were found in hoards.

**Thor's hammers in graves**

Just as in the case of hoard finds, most Thor's hammers that were found in graves are inhumation graves. It is remarkable that the majority of the discovered graves are inhumation graves, while there are only a few cremation graves featuring such amulets (Thor's hammer rings were, on the other hand, placed mostly in cremation graves).

Among these inhumation graves, female-graves dominate. If we take a closer look at the artifacts in the graves, we can see a remarkable difference between male-graves and female-graves. All the male-graves are very richly equipped: swords, axes, shield-bosses and arrowheads show that the buried person was a warrior, while spurs, stirrups and bridles mark the person as a horseman. In one case nails and rivets were discovered, indicating that this was a boat burial, a ritual reserved only for wealthy persons.

Among the female-graves we find both very richly-equipped graves with lots of jewelry (e.g. oval brooches made of silver), but also poorly-equipped graves with only a Thor's hammer and a simple iron knife.

But why do the Thor's hammers dominate in female graves? Could it be that the Thor's hammer was presented to the bride at her wedding connected with a certain ritual? Literature sources could support that.

We know, for example, from the Håkonar saga, that Thor's hammer could protect both the living and the dead and that the hammer, as a sign of fertility, played a part in wedding ceremonies; here we also find the term "Hammarseng" (hammer-benediction). And in Trymskvíða, Thor's hammer Mjöllner is used to consecrate the bride. Thor's hammers have never been found in children's graves.

It is also revealing to examine the location of the hammers in inhumation graves. In most cases the hammer hung, together with a chain, round the neck of the dead. In three graves - all found in Birka - the hammer was probably laying in a leather pouch, and was placed by the legs of the dead, reminiscent of the description in Halfred's saga, where a picture of Thor was kept in a pouch.

We also know from this saga that the hammer could be worn around the neck or on clothing. Additionally, Thor's hammers were found next to the head or by the feet of the dead. My opinion is that the different positions of the hammers in the graves reflect the individual's way of wearing these amulets.

With the exception of two Thor's hammers from Gilton, England, which date to the 6th century, most of the single Thor's hammer amulets date to the 10th–11th century. Occasionally some hammers from Scandinavia date to the 8th and 9th century.

This leads to the general opinion today that the single Thor's hammer amulets are a sign of reaction to the missionary work of the church in Scandinavia. The Christian cross-pendants forced the heathens to create their own symbol for their religion; they chose the Hammer of Thor! But at the end of the 11th century Thor's hammers gradually disappear, therefore it seems that mission no longer encountered wide resistance; the church had successfully completed its triumphant march into Scandinavia.
To understand the Vikings and their views on supernatural beings, other than the gods, it can be helpful to know a little more about their conception of the world. For them the center of the world was the big world tree, Yggdrasil. Its three roots stood in three different worlds, one in Midgård, the home of humans, one in Asgård, the home of the gods, and the third in Utgård, the home of giants, trolls and monsters. These names tell a story of the humans’ view of themselves as living in the middle and all the monsters living outside their realm. This conception is duplicated around every micro-cosmos denoted by a farm. There were benevolent beings inside the farm boundaries who helped the farmers by looking after their houses, cattle and so on. Dangers roamed in the pasturlands, the border zones between human territory and nature, both in form of animals like wolves and bears and more supernatural beings like giants. The gods lived in Asgård, from where they protected both themselves and humans. We can now see how macro- and micro-cosmos are reflections of each other.

In the micro-cosmos, the farm, elves and gnomes protected the humans, but only if they got what they wanted in return and were not offended or frightened in any way. In the saga of Egill Skallagrímsson there is a story of how Egill wanted revenge on the king and his family. The Vikings also respected their gnomes in that regard, so that they removed the dragonheads from their boat stems when returning from raids.

The giants are often described in Icelandic poetry and sagas. They were the first beings, older than the gods and in many ways related to them. They were wise and civilised, but yet held powers of chaos and destruction. I like to see them as the personified forces of nature, as in the story of Thor’s visit to Utgardaloki, a giant, whose household members were fire, old age, thought and other things that Thor could not compete with. This story is largely a game of words, but the thought strikes you that there might be more to it than that. Thor is the champion of the gods in their battle against giants and he was always travelling the world to overthrow chaos.

Other well-known giants were the sea-king and queen, Ágir and Ran. Ran captured drowned seamen in her giant fishing net and Ágir held great feasts for the gods. One of these feasts is the setting for the Eddic poem, Lokasenna, where Loki insults all the gods and goddesses. Thor, the champion of the gods, was the recipient of offerings from seamen who wanted good luck in their journeys.

One of the wisest giants was Mimir, in whose well Odin sacrificed an eye to acquire greater wisdom. The Asir often needed help from the giants, but they did not want to repay them. When Balder was buried, the gods could not get his ship into sea without the help of a terrible and frightful giantess, Hyrrokin, who came riding on a wolf. Another giant, Farbaute, helped the Asir to build a wall, but when it looked like he would have it ready in time, the gods did not want to give him his salary (part of which was marrying Freja). They got Loki to slow the work down by turning himself into a mare in order to distract the giant’s steed from working. This union resulted in Odin’s horse, Sleipnir.

The belief in gnomes is still very much alive in Iceland, and can be observed in many ways. One consequences this is that roads often take turns around hills instead of going right through them. It was also still active in the late 19 century, even in other parts of Scandinavia for example in Gotland. Here the gnomes were called “di sma undar jordi” – “the little ones under the ground”. This conception seems to be a mixture between elves, gnomes and trolls, when you read stories about human encounters with “di sma”. But I wonder, is it a modern mix-up or was it an accepted conception even during the Viking age? Folklorists today discuss this to some extent, but it is hard to find an answer.

Elves are the most obscure beings in Icelandic literature. Are they gods or lower beings? In Snorra Edda they are described as...
two kinds. The elves of light live with Frey in Alvheim and the elves of darkness live under earth. Then the most well-known elf of darkness would be the master smith, Volund, called prince of the elves in Volundarkvida of the poetic Edda. But in other texts it is the dwarfs who are dark, live under earth and become master smiths. Creatures that can master both fire and metal are powerful and useful to humans and gods. The smith was a powerful man in olden times, and a person who was invaluable to society. But, like Volund, he could be dangerous. Volund creates, among other things, a sword that will set the world on fire during Ragnarök, and he takes a terrible revenge on king Nidud, who imprisoned him. He kills his two sons and rapes his daughter before escaping in the shape of a bird. This story is depicted on one of the Gotlandic picture stones.

Elves are otherwise described as bright beings, dressed in colourful clothes enjoying music and parties. In the Icelandic sagas a man who enjoyed bright and colourful clothes and who was slightly vain was called an “alfr”. People sacrificed to them in the autumn, and these rites seem to have been conducted by the housewife, similar to many rites concerning the Vanir. Many scholars have discussed whether the elves could be spirits of the dead, since they are said to live in hills and mounds, similar to grave mounds. In Scandinavia there is a story about these mounds and how someone saw them rise from the ground on golden pillars with the elves inside feasting. In Iceland the same story is told about the dead in the grave mound. But this does not necessarily mean that the dead and the elves are the same. In Scandinavia we have a lot of old mounds, from the Bronze age, but in Iceland the only mounds are those of their forefathers. So in Iceland the story has been slightly altered in order to function in the new surroundings.

Another theory is that the elves are spirits of fertility, similar to the vanir and perhaps subordinate to Frey. They are often connected in many ways, as we have seen, and in the Icelandic poetry they are often exchanged of beings named together with the Asir.

What kind of creatures were the dwarfs then? According to some scholars they can be seen as equivalent to the elves of darkness. They are often the creators of beautiful and useful things possessed by the gods. They created Frey’s foldable ship, Skidbladner, Sif’s golden hair, Odin’s ring, Draupner, which produced three new rings every night and of course Freya’s golden necklace, Brisingamen. They seemed to be just as keen on goddesses as the giants, for instance three of them sold Brisingamen to Freya for one night each with them. They lived under earth, in rocks or hills. There is no evidence of sacrifices on their behalf, nor in the case of the giants. Therefore they seem to fall somewhat in the same category as the giants, useful but not liked and possibly dangerous supernatural beings. They also lived outside of the borders between Midgård and Utgård, while the elves lived inside. However there are exceptions, the three dwarfs who made Brisingamen are said to live inside a big rock just next to Odin’s house, where Freya meets them one morning while Odin is away on one of his many journeys.

People today recognise many of the traits from later fairytales and fantasy stories like Tolkien’s. JRR Tolkien was much inspired by Icelandic sagas and poetry himself and took, among other things, the names of the dwarfs visiting Bilbo from Völuspa. But when studying sagas, poetry and later folkloristic tales there is a large gap between all three genres. In the poetry most of the encounters are between gods and these other beings, in the sagas and the folklore it is between humans and supernatural beings. Unfortunately the material in sagas concerning such encounters is very scarce, and therefore we often must make use of later folkloristic material, often 800 years later, from the 19th century. This of course is a big problem, but I mean that we can and must use this material anyway.

About the author:
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Norse Mythology: Plundering the Vikings for Centuries

By Charlie Langton

On September 1, a major new exhibition opening at Vesterheim will examine how the world view of Norse myths has resonated throughout history and into the twenty-first century.

"Echoes of Odin: Norse Mythology in Scandinavia and America," guest-curated by Douglas "Dag" and Sharon Rossman in collaboration with the museum's chief curator Darrell Henning, will explore the dramatic and at first bewildering mythological backdrop of Viking life and how it is reflected even today in both serious and popular culture. The exhibition is made possible in part through a $6,500 gift from the Fred Carlson Company, Inc.

To illustrate the continuous impact Norse myths have had throughout history, the exhibition will zero in on three basic time periods: the Viking era itself, when the stories were interwoven with the daily religious and social fabric of Scandinavia; the Romantic Revival, from the 1600s to about 1920, when the myths found new life in literature, art, music, and architecture; and the present day, for the myths continue to have remarkable contemporary relevance.

This special relevance to our own day is a major reason why the Rossmans first came up with the idea for the exhibition and helps explain their powerful personal connection to these ancient stories. "There is a lot of meaty philosophical stuff in the myths," according to Dag Rossman, who is mainly responsible for the interpretation in the exhibit. "The stories have a pretty good handle on the way the world works, and the way people should shape their own lives in order to live in the world, both as a community and as individuals."

"Technology may serve our creature comforts, but it does not address our psychological and spiritual needs -- or equip us to face the giants and trolls in our lives," Rossmann says. "Myths do just that." Although some might think that Scandinavian mythology has a peculiarly dark cast, Dag explains that the stories accept that life can be difficult, that suffering occurs and bad things happen, but they also show how we can face such situations with nobility and courage.

"Technology may serve our creature comforts, but it does not address our psychological and spiritual needs -- or equip us to face the giants and trolls in our lives," Rossmann says. "Myths do just that." Although some might think that Scandinavian mythology has a peculiarly dark cast, Dag explains that the stories accept that life can be difficult, that suffering occurs and bad things happen, but they also show how we can face such situations with nobility and courage.

Dag has long been interested in mythology and the ways in which it can still serve our lives, but initially it was Native-American myths that attracted him. "I felt like a privileged visitor in somebody else's culture," he says. But when he was around 40 years old, "I discovered my own culture," he continues, and he has immersed himself in Norse myths and stories ever since.

The Rossmans recently moved to Decorah from Louisiana, where Dag was a biology professor at Louisiana State University for more than 35 years, but Dag is an old favorite with Nordic Fest audiences, where his retelling of myths and legends of the Viking Age pack the house with young and old alike. He has recorded these tales on a series of audio cassettes, and together the Rossmans are authors of Valhalla in America: Norse Myths in Wood at Rock Island State Park, Wisconsin, which Vesterheim uses as a premium for members of its Valhalla Society.

As the exhibition's designer, Sharon Rossman explains how the show will be laid out. "The centerpiece will be a floor-to-ceiling, three-dimensional diorama of Yggdrasil, the World Tree, and the Nine Worlds it connects."

"The diorama will be an exciting and fun way to capture the complexity and interconnectedness of the Viking world view," Sharon explains -- a

http://viking.hgo.se
complexity encompassing the struggle between light and darkness, order and chaos, life and death, and imaginatively populated with elves and dwarves, giants and trolls, dragons, and not one, but two, families of gods.

Norse mythology basically portrays the cosmic conflict between eternal polarities as an ongoing struggle between the gods and their allies versus the giants and Loki, blood-brother to Odin, the shape-changer and trickster. According to Sharon, the seeds of this conflict originated at creation, and near the diorama she plans a display outlining the Viking creation myth.

Large sections of the exhibit also will take a closer look at the major players in this struggle, Sharon says. "One section will be dedicated to Odin, Thor, Frigg, and the Aesir Gods, another to Njörd, Frey, Freya, and the Vanir gods." Other sections will delve into Loki and his children, runestones, dragons, and Sigurd the dragonslayer.

And then there is Ragnarök – the "Doom of the Gods," the Viking end-of-the-world when, after three successive harsh winters, with no growing season in between, the final battle between order and chaos begins with Heimdal blowing the Gjallerhorn. A popular subject in these uncertain times, Ragnarök has recently turned up even in such improbable places as T.V.'s Hercules: The Legendary Journeys, in an episode where the Greek hero apocryphally helps the Norse gods stave off the end of the world. At Ragnarök, humans turn on each other while gods, giants, and serpents do battle, and Yggdrasil, the World Tree, is destroyed except for its trunk. There are very, very few survivors. This horrible conflagration is not without hope, however. Thor's sons and Henir do survive, Balder and Hód are resurrected from the dead, and two humans escape the carnage, too, hidden in Yggdrasil's trunk. From these life begins again.

Dag also points out that we should not necessarily consider ourselves descendants of these survivors, for the description of Ragnarök is only presented as a prophecy given to Odin by an oracle and may not even have happened yet!

The exhibition, which will include over 100 photographs, replicas, and artifacts, also examines how western art and culture have drawn on Norse mythology almost continuously since the 1600s – except for a brief period during the first half of this century when, as Dag explains, "abuse of the mythological symbols by totalitarian militants (especially Hitler and the Nazis) caused any interest in the Norse myths and their symbols to be suspect in Scandinavia and America." Motifs from the myths can be found in furniture, architecture, painting, music, sculpture, weaving, and in a few less serious media as well, like comic books and playing cards. All are part of our Viking inheritance.

This dramatic, fantastic, edifying, and thoroughly entertaining exhibition of Norse mythology, then and now, will be on display in the Anna Hong Fine Art Gallery on the third floor of Vesterheim's main building through January 15, 2001.

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In order to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of slavery we have to get to know the structures of Icelandic society. Its background is deeply rooted in the time when Iceland was colonised. In a country lacking executive institutions, the survival of the individual is strongly dependent on the power of his clan. If a person has been found guilty of a serious crime, he is denied legal protection by his kinsmen. He becomes a skógarmaðr (outlaw), which entitles anyone to take revenge on him without retribution. In that respect, Icelandic law matches perfectly with the Viking conception of the world, dividing the cosmos into inner- and outer spheres. The slave lived under the same conditions as the skógarmaðr. He was practically without rights and stood outside of law and society. There was only one reason for protecting a slave and that was because he was the personal property of a member of society...

Our main sources of information describing the slaves’ situation are the elder Norse texts. We need mention the Icelandic Grágás as most important, but law texts from the Norwegian colonists’ home districts are also of great interest. Especially in earlier times, scientists also preferred to view literature like the landnámabók and the Sagas as historical sources. However they underestimated their character as independent pieces of art. In actual fact, the Sagas were not written down until centuries after slavery had disappeared. This casts some doubt on the picture of slavery as introduced in the Sagas. We will return to this question at a later stage.

By decision of the great Althing, Icelandic law was written down during the years 1117-18. Prior to the law book, the duties of Grágás, one of the law speakers – the symbolic head of the free state – was to recite the common laws. Among the three things, the Althing had national importance; it was the place for political and juridical disputes. It became the meeting point for Icelandic leadership.

When referring to the leading classes, we need to mention the þingmenn, meaning the farmers who were rich enough to follow their godi to the Althing. The godi was a kind of chieftain, this power was held by a limited number of men. Aside from making laws and electing judges at the Althing, the godi also held a key-position in Icelandic society in many other ways. Every þingmenn was obligated to affiliate himself with a godi. However he could choose freely, making a godi’s power strongly dependent on the number of his followers. Since it was an inherited privilege, the godi’s power was based on prestige rather than wealth. In that respect the godi was a kind of “primus inter pares”. As already mentioned, the Icelandic upper class consisted of the richest farmers (bænd). Nevertheless, in the context of the great Althing the þingmenn also represented all members of free Icelandic society.

To name the members of a bændi’s household in order of importance we must begin with the free tenants, the leiglendingar. The bæðsettunemenn were dependent to much greater extent and had to make a living by working on the landowners’ properties. To round off the picture we mustn’t forget the people who lived on charity (ómagi). Dating back to the situation at the time of the land acquisition, all free men were regarded as having equal rights. On the other hand, political influence had become a question of economical power. Accordingly, the free state seems to be an attempt to unify two different realities: a democratic- and an aristocratic one. Later on, the tension between these two concepts will cause the final breakdown of Icelandic society.

In contrast to all the other classes, slaves were not subject to the great Althing. To the Icelandic people, a slave (þræll; female = ambát) stood outside society; explaining why he never could be a legal person. Instead he was considered to be someone else’s property, just like cattle - and was protected on the same conditions, so to say. Of course, no one can expect a human being to behave in the same way as an animal. This gave the slave a rather ambiguous position, somewhere between person and thing.
Sagas and society I.

About slavery on Iceland

Before we consider any exceptional cases we have to describe the ordinary situation. Generally speaking, a slave was not responsible for his actions. He could be bought, rented or used as currency. Killing one’s own slave was a legal action, at least if the homicide was announced within the same day. Hurting someone else’s slave on the other hand, was treated as a capital crime. In case of beating, a fine for insult had to be paid to the owner. For wounding or killing the slave the offender was required to replace the lost manpower, which in the worst case meant not more than the slave’s trading value.

However more severe punishment could be expected if the slave died protecting his master (skógarmaðr). The fact that a slave couldn’t be punished for larceny if he committed the crime together with a free man demonstrates perfectly the extent to which slaves were regarded as nothing more than tools. In cases of homicide the slave’s owner would be held responsible as long as he didn’t dissociate himself from the slave. There is probably no better regulation to express the common contempt for slaves: In cases of larceny, the Íneill and ambót would be automatically regarded as guilty unless proven innocent.

On the other hand there are some regulations which do not fit into the picture, suggesting some legal status for slaves. For example, a slave was entitled to acquire wealth – within limits, of course. However he could also lose his money quite soon if his master refused responsibility for his behaviour. In case of a fight between two slaves, the beaten one got 1/3 of the fine, meanwhile his master was entitled to 2/3. But there is one situation in which a slave had more rights than the free man: “A slave can kill for his wife, even though she is a slave. But a free man is not allowed to, not even if the slave was his wife.” By taking on the husband’s role, the committer of the crime also left his social sphere making him the slave’s equal. One can wonder about all cases when a slave was punished for his actions like a free man – perhaps just because he had entered the sphere of the freeborn?

Like a member of society when killing his master, a slave turns into a skógarmaðr. However we have to conclude that the incidences in which a slave appeared to be treated as a person were strictly limited to mostly personal business. Generally speaking, a slave stood outside the law and was subject to his master’s mood.

The same idea is also reflected in the procedure of manumission. As a first step we must mention the free-giving by the owner, motivated by either benevolence or payment. As we already have learned, the slave was allowed to save some money of his own. However, to receive a fully-legal manumission, the freed man had to swear an oath in front of the godi at the vørðing, one of the smaller things in addition to the great Althing. This procedure was known as “entering into the law”. However, we can hardly speak of a true emancipation: being a part of his ínægi, the former owner was obligated to support his freed man in cases of need. On the other hand he could crave blood money for his dependent and furthermore he was also entitled to inherit if there were no children. Actually, it would seem that the conceptual ties are not severed until the next generation.

Debtors were condemned to a sort of temporary enslavement. Thus they did not form a class of their own. However the debtor’s freedom was greatly restricted. He could be forced to work, while the profits went to his creditor. One of the creditor’s obligations was to support his debtor’s dependents, which was certainly no hinder to forcing them to work as well. The only exception would be the debtor’s wife. According to the spirit of the marriage-contract she just had been given to her husband as a kind of ward. This meant that the creditor had to get her family’s permission. Furthermore he had to support his debtor for a lifetime if he released him when he was too old to support himself. With regards inheritance, the debtor only could inherit movable goods; this was to protect the integrity of the family land. Similar to a slave, the debtor became a skógarmaðr when he killed his master: he should be maimed.

Finally we also have to mention some important laws meant to protect debtors. Logically, they could either be sold outside the country or for a prize higher than the debt. Nevertheless the limitations were beyond recall: By running away the debt-slave would step outside society irrevocably.

Other than the liberated, considering children of mixed unions of freeborn and slaves as a separate class can be regarded more or less as a new invention caused by the special conditions on Iceland. The need to define one’s ancestry exactly can probably be explained by the risk for extensive social mobility otherwise. In this respect law is a great instrument in cementing social constructions.

The importance of a person’s ancestry is most obvious in questions of inheritance. In this context it seems quite surprising that Icelandic law also pays some consideration to illegitimate children, not without dealing them some disadvantages, of course. However, children of mixed unions are not entitled to inherit from their free parent at all. In that context it seems that it is the mother’s social background that determines a child’s social status. Hence the child of a free man and a slave woman (bríuðang) is considered a slave, while the descendant of a freed woman can acquire legal status by swearing the oath in front of the godi.

Inversely, the child of a free woman is always a free one, independent of the father’s status. In any case a child of a slave/freed man (börnangr) can not receive any inheritance from the maternal ætt. One can wonder if this special definition of a child’s social status might reflect an older – so to say – matriarchal conception of society. On the other hand it seems more logical if we remember that a woman, in the eyes of the Icelanders, could never establish a legal extra-maternal relationship. Paradoxically, it was fully legal for any man to keep a few slave mistresses (karnambúr). The real character of marriage as an alliance is revealed in the wedding act, one of the most obvious laws meant to protect debtors. Nevertheless living kinsmen can be expected to be more important to a person than dead ones. On Iceland one of the ætt obligations was to manage the family land. Hence the soðal belonged to all family members. Logically, land could never be sold as personal property. The real character of marriage as an alliance of two ætt is revealed in the wedding act, when the bride is given to her husband as a...
kind of ward, i.e. completely dependent. On Iceland, the integration of the invidual in the ætt is most essential for his (or her) survival. We have already mentioned the total lack of executive structures in the Icelandic free state. This leaves the family as the only institution that guarantees personal security and enforces one's legal interests. The stronger one's family the better for the individual. Hence an offence against one person was punished like an offence against the whole family. It will be no surprise that this made an excellent hotbed for bloody feuds. To prevent this, in cases of homicide the offender's ætt was obligated to pay a fine of penance to five male relatives of the victim. Payment was made to those men who were expected to take most revenge for their dead kinsman. This would also explain, why the slave son of the deceased is also counted as one of the five sakaukar...

In the next issue, the article will continue under the title: The fall of the free state and the end of slavery. How credible is the picture of slavery in Icelandic literature?

Literature source: Haustrup, Culture and History on medieval Iceland, 1985; Wilde-Stockmeyer, Sklaverei auf Island, 1978

About the author:
Michael Neiß has studied Archaeology and Scandinavian studies at the Humboldt University of Berlin. In 1998 he continued his studies of Archaeology at the University of Stockholm and now he is a student of comparative religion at the same University. His special interests are: later Iron Age, ornamental art and iconography interspersed with religion and society.

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Midgard – Historical Center in Vestfold, Norway was officially opened May 27th

BY JAN LINDB

Midgard – historical center in Vestfold, a one hour drive south of Oslo, is a visitors’ center at the gravemounds of Borre, aimed at presenting the cultural remains of the county of Vestfold to the public. It is centred primarily around remains from the late Iron Age and the Viking Age. With household names like Oseberg, Gokstad, Borre and Kaupang, this period of Norwegian heritage is well represented in Vestfold county.

The County Council has set aside NOK 25 million (about EURO 3.1 million) for the project. The total cost for the centre is estimated to about NOK 32 million.

The Centre
The visitors’ centre, designed by Lund&Slaatto in Oslo, covers an area of 1,050 square meters, of which the exhibition area, auditorium and other public areas cover about 550 sq.m., the café 100 sq.m., administration 100 sq.m. and workshops and technical rooms etc. 150 sq.m. The Midgard Centre is no traditional museum, but an information centre linked to the Borre mounds. Naturally therefore, the presentation will focus on the huge burial mounds in the Borre National Park (“on-site information”), but the centre will also present the rest of the county’s cultural history of the period with a short presentation of the overall cultural history of Vestfold: “10.000 years in Vestfold”.

Borre as a centre of power is very much in focus, as is Snorri’s history of the Vestfold kings. The main principles and content guidelines have been evaluated and accepted by the project’s panel of experts consisting of Professors Ulf Nasman, Århus, Bjørn Myhre, Cambridge and Gro Steinsland, Oslo and Eli Ulriksen, M.A., Tønsberg.

“Everyday life in the Viking Age” and “The Norse Religion, Worldview and Mythology” are other subjects in the exhibitions that were opened May 27th by Queen Sonja of Norway. So far the center has been a success. On its first day open to the public Midgard had more than 850 visitors, and by the middle of July we have had 7.000 visitors.

Target groups
Vestfold is an active county offering a wide
range of cultural sites and excellent recreational activities in the countryside. In addition, Vestfold is a holiday destination for many people – to the extent that the county’s population doubles at certain times of the year. We therefore want to define the target group as loosely as possible as being Vestfold’s residents and visitors. Next year we hope it will be possible for us to invite every 5th form from the primary schools in Vestfold to visit us and participate in a role-play on daily life in late Iron Age. Next year we also want to develop an archaeological playground outside the center.

It is, of course, of interest to attract tourists as well, but the philosophy of the project has been that Midgard will awake an awareness among the population of Vestfold. If you don’t have inhabitants who are aware of the meaning of the monuments of the past – it is hard to sell the attraction to visitors.

Improvement measures at Midgard

Only few days after the opening we have listed plans for improvements. We would like to able to present information about the cultural remains electronically to visitors of all kinds. Someone interested in local history may ask what is known of remains on his property, another may ask what archaeological excavations are going on just now, and yet another may ask where it would be interesting to take a Sunday walk to experience some of the county’s prehistory.

Further a broad multimedia presentation of Vestfold’s cultural history in the auditorium is desirable. Both general introduction and answers to visitors’ specific questions should be provided here.

Exhibitions.
From the long light hall the visitors have a grand view of the Borre mound area.
Photo: J Lindh.

It is also necessary to upgrade the information given outside of the centre in the entire historical landscape surrounding it. In the same area we want to build an archaeology playground for children.

Finally, public access to the area, including the car parking area, must be improved. Today, these obscure the visual experience of the burial mounds and the whole National Park.

Some visions for the future

As part of the North Sea Viking Legacy programme, Midgard wishes to develop an electronic information system for other archaeological sites in the county, to enable visitors to plan visits to other attractions in the county. Database information is to include details about authentic physical remains – that is to say, cultural relics or remains of civilisations of a less material nature such as farm names, literary reviews etc. Any hypotheses will be based upon research results and will be accurately reproduced. Additionally, information will be presented in an attractive and easy-to-understand way. We would like the presentation to stimulate interest in Vestfold’s history and thereby increase understanding for both material and immaterial remains, and give visitors to the centre an extra experience whereby they can refresh their own experience and update their knowledge. An important part of future improvements is to support schools with materials for studies in advance of/after visits and with planning of excursions.

About the author:

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North Sea Viking Heritage Fifth Board Meeting held on Shetland, July 2000

By Marita E Ekman

A Viking exhibition, produced by Viking Heritage, Gotland University College, was on display this summer at the "Paolo Giovio" Archaeological Museum in Como, Italy. It was part of the larger exhibition "Intrecci di popoli. Longobardi, Vichinghi e Normanni dal Baltico all'Italia Mediterranea" (Interlacing between people. Longobards, Vikings and Normands, from the Baltic Sea to the Italian Mediterranean), and was linked to the exhibition CHARLEMAGNE; The making of Europe.

The aim of the Viking section was to furnish the audience with information about the Vikings in a broad sense, and also to highlight their travels and contacts with other people. In accordance with these aims the exhibition was divided into two parts; one with twelve panels describing the Vikings and the Viking world with text and photos, and

Viking exhibition in Como, Italy

By Geir Sør-Reime

The fifth Board Meeting of the North Sea Viking Legacy Project was held on Shetland during the weekend of July 22-24 this year. As usual, representatives from the 20 partners in the project from Scotland, England, Denmark, Sweden and Norway attended together with the permanent observers from the North Atlantic partnership, the Baltic Via Viking Project and the Dutch Viking Foundation.

This time the meeting was hosted by our Shetland partnership, foremost the Shetland Amenity Trust and Shetland Enterprise. As very few of our board members had ever been to Shetland, most of them opted for a prolonged stay, and our hosts had a busy time showing us around.

The programme started with a lunch at our hotel, the Glen Orchy House in Lerwick. Immediately thereafter we embarked on our first excursion. Travelling north from Lerwick we first headed for the Lunna peninsula. Some years ago, a number of mounds were registered here. They lie close to a broch site (pre-Viking circular stone fort) site by Lunna Kirk. These mounds may be burial mounds from the Viking settlers of the area, although no definite conclusions can be drawn at the moment.

Heading south again, we stopped at Thingwall. On Law Thing Holm was the site of the Viking-age all-Shetland thing. Final stop was Scalloway, the old Viking and medieval capital of Shetland. Although no remains from the Viking period are visible, we visited the ruins of the late medieval castle there.

The next day we had our business meeting, making a break at lunch to visit the Up-Helly-Aa exhibition. The Up-Helly-Aa is a midwinter festival with strong Viking elements. The exhibition tells the story of this event from the last century onwards. After dinner, we had planned to go to Mousa, but due to heavy winds, we drove south instead to the soapstone quarry by Catpund. Here recent excavations have revealed a rather large quarry area dating from both pre-Viking and Viking times.

The following day we drove north to Unst, the northernmost isle of Britain. Only in recent years has its rich Viking heritage been systematically inventoried. A number of Viking house remains have been recorded, and we visited two, one at Sand Wick and one at Underhoull.

Among other attractions we visited on Unst was the Unst Boat Haven, a collection of small fishing boats, most of them used on Shetland.

The final day was set aside for visits to some of the most spectacular prehistoric sites of Shetland. We started with Jarlshof, this enormous collection of a broch, several wheel-houses, Pictish houses and even Viking long-houses. Close to Jarlshof lies Old Scatness. Here excavations on a similar site have been carried on annually since 1995. In addition to the excavation area, a large presentation project has been developed on the site. Here reconstructions of the excavated houses are being built. A number of skilled people also give narrative demonstrations of prehistoric techniques and living conditions.

This day, the weather permitted landing on Mousa and we were able to get a first hand experience of this best-preserved broch site. Although of pre-Viking origin, it has a definitive Viking connection, as related by Snorri.

At the board meeting, a number of important issues were discussed. The project manager reminded all partners to speed up

The panels describing the Vikings and the Viking Age. From the Archaeological Museum "Paolo Giovio" in Como, Italy, July 2000. Photo: Dan Carlsson

http://viking.hgo.se
A vital question on the agenda was the road ahead. Everyone agreed that the project should continue beyond the current Interreg IHC period. There is also a general agreement that a new bid should include the Baltic Sea area, the North Sea area, the North Atlantic area and the British Isles all in one joint project. Interreg IIIB/C seems to be the most relevant funding source, but partial projects may find Culture 2000 a better alternative.

North Sea Viking Legacy plans a conference in Gothenburg in April 2001 on the theme of heritage and tourism. The plans for this conference were discussed, and the planning group will come up with a revised draft as soon as possible. The Baltic Sea BALDER project will probably be a co-organiser of this conference. We are still awaiting more details concerning the planned conference on heritage and spatial planning, to be organised by the Kings of the North Sea project. Here, North Sea Viking Legacy will be a minor co-organiser. This conference will now probably be held in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in April 2001.

Most of the partner projects seem to be progressing very well. Many projects have recently finished important elements of their plans. We can mention the newly released guide book on runic stones in Mid-Jutland, produced by Mette Iversen of the Viborg County Museum. In Thetford, a Viking exhibition was opened in June, produced by Brian Ayers of the Norfolk County Council. In Norwich, a signboard telling the story of Viking Norwich has been set up by Norwich City Council, and in Haugesund, Norway, six new signboards at the Harald’s Mound are up. In Vestfold, Norway, the new Midgard Historical Centre officially opened in late May. Our Swedish partner in Ale has carried out large test-excavations at the site for the planned Viking Farm reconstruction, and plans for the reconstruction are under way. On Iceland, the Viking-age replica house at Eiríksstadir has opened, and a heritage map for this area has been produced. We watched a TV production on the Viking Heritage from the Netherlands.

The sixth Board meeting will be held in Norwich from January 11–14, 2001.

About the author:
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A ship comes a-sailing

*The story behind the "Viking Ship" find in Nattviken, Härnösand, Sweden*

**By Seth Jansson**

It all began in 1994, when a member of the “Botten” (The Bottom) skin-diving club mentioned that he had happened to come upon a shipwreck in a bay called Nattviken, close to the town centre of Härnösand. At the time the author of this article was serving as an antiquarian at the County Museum of Västernorrland.

The first inspection indicated that the wreck was most likely medieval, because the breadth of the frame spacing was about 50 cm. One of the stem timbers of the ship could be seen in the mud. The stem component indicated that this must be a medieval ship. The stem was made up with stepped notches where the individual stakes were fastened, totally in keeping with ships from the later part of our Iron Age (the Viking Age) and onwards. In medieval times most Nordic ships were built in the same way.

Whenever local papers are lacking news, they often call museums to ask if there is anything happening. In 1996 this resulted in a big centre-spread in a local paper, where the wreck in Nattviken was described as being Viking-style. Four years later the same thing happened again. The same find was once highlighted again in an article about Härnösand as a maritime centre with navigation, shipbuilding activities etc. The difference was that this time the reporter wrote "A Viking ship in Nattviken". This article caused an stir throughout the Swedish media.

**The location of the wreck**

The shipwreck is situated about 20 meters off the beach on the west side of Nattviken. There are two other wrecks lying on top of it. The wreck site is chaotic. The Viking-style medieval ship is at the very bottom. The shipwreck has not yet been investigated in detail, because 99% of it is hidden by mud and sediment. However some frame tops, which most likely belong to the bottom timbers, stick up and it is possible to feel the planking when running your hands through the sediment. The ship is probably built out of pine and caulked with cowhair soaked with some kind of pitch. And of course the ship is clinker-built, an original Nordic tradition.

Lying on top of the ship there are sections of another clinker-built ship, judged to be a ship from Roslagen (part of Stockholm's archipelago) with a curved keel. Parts of a carvel-built ship are also present.

The media’s high praise of the find aroused the interest of the County administrative board and the Central Board of the Swedish National Antiquities in dating the ship and they have agreed to contribute the necessary funds. Personnel from the Central Board of the Swedish National Antiquities will carry out the investigation.

**The old harbour of Härnösand**

Not far from the wreck site, about 25 meters, a large caisson was found. This construction is situated further out in the bay and is about 40 meters long and 2 meters high. It consists of a few horizontal logs, about 50 cm in diameter, with spaces in between. The logs seem to lack notches and are fastened together with strong wooden pins. The upper parts of the construction lie at a depth of 2 meters.

Finally

The area is most interesting because of its location as a well-protected natural harbour between the mainland and Hernön island. The natives of Säbro used this area when they engaged in trade until the town was founded during the 16th century. A further nine shipwrecks have been found within the find area, deep down in the mud. Possibly, a true "Viking ship" is hidden in the muddy bottom of Nattviken.

**About the author:**

Seth Jansson is an archaeologist.
The Braid – A Unique Manx Farmstead

By Manx National Trust

The Braid is the only known archaeological site on the Isle of Man to combine above-ground evidence for both Celtic Iron Age and Norse house structures.

The site comprises a circular stone structure and two large rectangular features, one of which has curiously curved sides. For many years, it was thought these stone structures at The Braaid were prehistoric, and represented a circle of standing stones and two stone alignments or avenues.

Excavations in 1935-6 suggested that the circular structure could be an Iron Age roundhouse. Archaeological investigations in 1962 confirmed that the rectangular features were the remains of Norse longhouses.

The larger rectangular building has curved or bowed walls, comparable to other "boat-shaped" houses known throughout the Viking world. The house is nearly 20 metres long and almost 9 metres broad at its widest internally. The side walls are massive, some two metres thick, and their bowed shape is designed to absorb the sideways thrust of roof timbers and to bolster the insubstantial gable walls, built either of turf or timber.

The other rectangular building was a large cattle byre, complete with stone stalls along the north wall. It measures almost 18 by 8 metres externally, making it much narrower than the house. It had a low, lightweight roof which did not require the curved walls of its neighbour.

Inside both buildings are smaller, temporary structures which are the remains of late-medieval or even post-medieval occupation once the house and byre had fallen into disrepair.

The circular structure, now believed to be an Iron Age domestic roundhouse, is 16.6 metres in diameter. For structural strength, the roundhouse relied on massive standing stones placed around its circumference, between which walling faced with stone and filled with an earth core was built up. It is presumed that the roof would have been a low turf structure supported on a network of timber posts, rafters and brushwood.

The Braaid site recently benefited from new on-site interpretation and improved public access. In 1998, the Friends of Manx National Heritage bought both the monument, additional land surrounding it, and an access way along the side of the field. Two newly installed interpretation panels, featuring detailed reconstruction drawings, enable visitors to understand the significance of the site and appreciate how it may have looked over a thousand years ago.

Speaking at the official site presentation, Chairman of the Trustees of Manx National Heritage, Mr Bernard Caine said "This is a particularly significant project in the work of Manx National Heritage. We see here a new phase of activity to acquire and make accessible in the countryside the rich archaeological heritage of the Isle of Man. By presenting monuments in this way, we will encourage all who live here or visit here to understand far more about how the Island has developed and changed over the millennia. These historic field monuments are the next link in presenting a "Story of Mann" which genuinely encompasses the whole Island".

The individual structures at The Braaid are the largest examples of their kind known on the Isle of Man. In combination they are unique, and embody a critical moment in the Island's history – the merging of native and Scandinavian traditions, representing the beginning of what has grown to be the distinctive Manx culture.

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Reconstruction drawing of the Iron Age roundhouse. Copyright: Manx National Heritage.

Reconstruction drawing of the Viking longhouse. Copyright: Manx National Heritage.
Reflections upon the Vikings!

1000 Years event

By Olle Hoffman

For a few hours on July 28, the world’s attention was focused on L’Anse aux Meadows. About 17,000 visitors joined by television viewers around the world, were witnesses to an event of historical significance. A fleet of 14 Viking replica ships, the largest gathering of its kind in the world, sailed into Norstead to commemorate the 1,000th anniversary of the arrival of Vikings to the north tip of the Great Northern Peninsula.

This year the Vikings have been more in focus than ever before owing to the 1000th anniversary of the Vikings arrival in North America. L’Anse aux Meadows has been the focal point of a series of events. In addition the communities along the Viking Trail region, which includes the Northern Peninsula and Southern Labrador, have been holding a number of regional events. As a proud member in one of the Viking ships I would like to emphasise two of them.

Four of the Viking ship replicas from Scandinavia and USA; Mjøsen Lange, Tälja, Krampmacken and Norseman participated in Viking Sail 2000. The ships were transported on trailers from Newfoundland to L’Anse au Diable in Labrador. Around noon on July 22 they started their voyage towards Red Bay, a National Historic Site, 30 kilometres further north. The days in Labrador were used for sailing around the coast but also for necessary preparations before the voyage across the Strait of Belle Isle. Nautical charts were studied closely together with information on tides, winds and weather. The weather in the region can be quite unpredictable with fog and strong winds and the traffic in the strait is something that required proper preparation. For that reason the small fleet needed assistance from a couple of local fishing boats and the supply vessel, Viking Saga.

During our days in Labrador we certainly experienced the well-known hospitality, and active local support and interest. Activities were arranged almost every evening, and often large receptions including food and entertainment took place together with locals. On the morning of the 26th a large number of people had gathered to see the ships’ departure from the harbour in Red Bay in spite of the early hour. The morning was a bit cloudy with almost no wind later resulting in the ships without auxiliary engines having to be towed across the strait. Despite poor sailing conditions the voyage was very interesting, thanks to our being able to see several whales and an iceberg. The ships arrived safely at L’Anse aux Meadows in the late afternoon after about 9 hours’ voyage. Then they joined up with the ships and the crews that already had arrived at the Grand Encampment in Norstead.

July 28 was a sunny day with favourable winds, something that all of us had hoped for. The arrival of the Viking fleet would be much easier to accomplish with favourable winds. Everyone had been prepared for a hectic day with a great number of visitors and immense media attention. All our expectations were surpassed when we met with the literal invasion of visitors. The organisers estimated the visitors to about 17,000!

Reporters from the major American, British and Canadian TV-companies and more than 100 newspapers were present.

After their arrival the captains and members of the crews were led to a stage where the official welcoming ceremony was held. Among the numerous greetings and speeches, one in particular aroused special feelings. Benedicte Ingstad, daughter of Helge and Anne Stine Ingstad, Presenting the official runestone to the VTTA president, Barb Genge. Copyright: Kalle Runristare
delivered greetings from her father, emphasising the strong connection the Ingstad couple felt existed between the lifestyle, occupation and tenacity of the coastal people of Norway and those of Newfoundland and Labrador. Above all they wanted to see that their historical finds would benefit to the modern-day inhabitants of this coast. The arrival ceremony was also rich in culture and heritage. Among the performers were local groups and choirs but also a combined choir of singers from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Conne River Mi’kmaq and the Newfoundland Symphony Youth Choir who performed the number, "Full Circle".

You could say that the time in the Grand Encampment was made up to a large extent of a number of interesting meetings. On one hand, the meeting between the Viking ship crews and the re-enactment societies (which is in no way an obvious constellation on other occasions) and on the other, the meetings between different nationalities. The most symbolic meeting however was the one between the descendants of the Vikings and the province’s aboriginal community. Chief Misel Joe of the Conne River Mi’kmaq acknowledged that "history was made on this spot for all people" and suggested that the reunification of aboriginals and Vikings at Norstead was "an opportunity to make things right".

The following days at the Grand Encampment were devoted to sailing around the coast and performances by re-enactors. There was plenty of time to walk around the camp and study the newly-built huts, the church and the boat-shed and the activities within them. The development of Norstead will hopefully continue in help from the local re-enactors who will continue creating Viking daily life. An important part of the event was that the organisers wanted the participating crews to leave their mark on the encampment. This involved both a lively communication between the participants and the visitors, but also things that the crews wanted to leave at the site. The organisers had ordered a rune-stone from Sweden to be placed on the site. The result is that after the event there are now two rune-stones and one picture-stone at the site. Norstead also received many other gifts from the crews.

The organisers now hope that they have succeeded in placing L’Anse aux Meadows on the map and that the tourism industry in the region will get into full swing with Norstead as the "tourism-magnet" they have been hoping for. The future of the region depends to a large extent on the tourism industry since the fishing industry has radically decreased. The importance of tourism was emphasised during the welcoming ceremony by the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Brian Tobin. He praised the organisers, the Viking Trail Tourism Association and both levels of governments for creating Norstead, “a remarkable, animated recreation of a Viking village”. To the participants from the Viking homelands he said: "This exciting new tourist attraction gives us all a tantalising look at what history might have been if you fellows hadn’t turned around and gone home a thousand years ago". The small fishing village, L’Anse aux Meadows, was soon restored to peace and order again and its 35 residents have gone back to their daily routines. But the Vikings visits at the two latest turns of the millennium (and the media coverage during the latest visit) will certainly mean that the residents need to get accustomed to an increased number of visitors in the future.

Olle Hoffman is the webmaster of Viking Heritage Server and Database

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A thrilling find of runes carved in a bone was made in this summer’s excavation at the Viking-age town Birka, Sweden. It was found in the remains of a very big house (19 x 9 m), the so-called The Warriors’ Hall. The runebone, dated from the 10th century A.D., is the first runic inscription found in Birka, other than fragments of a few runestones. The piece of bone is 6 cm long and is presumably an animal rib. Rune bones in the Viking Age were used for notes, different kinds of messages or purely scribbling.

The some 15 runes on the bone have not yet been interpreted, but they can possibly be interpreted as a woman’s name or a warrior’s incantation. The runes were carved very purposefully. The lines were first carved with a fine knife and then made deeper.

The Warriors’ Hall is the biggest house excavated so far in Birka. The unique and numerous finds indicate that the house was an assembly hall for soldiers. Extensive finds of weapons have been made, such as pieces of armours and swords, shields, arrowheads and spearheads. Traces of fire and fights have also been discovered which would indicate that the house had been burnt down, probably after an attack from the seaside. The place was then abandoned and all the valuable weapons left behind.

The result of this year’s investigation also indicates that Birka was fortified when it was first built, contrary to the interpretations from previous investigations.
the names of the local inhabitants in the 9th c. AD, taken from the inventory list of St. Martin’s Church of Utrecht, the museum is simply a must. New for 2000 is the permanent display of the second Viking silver hoard (Westerklief II). A fine copy of the first hoard, deposited in the Wieringen soil, can also be seen.

The second hoard consists of 319 grams of silver, made up of ingots and hack-silver (165 gr), 17 complete and 3 incomplete Carolingian coins and fragments (including coins minted in Dorestad), 61 Arab coins and fragments, all probably buried in a Badorf pot.

The Huis van de Aarde Museum is located in a typical Wieringen farmhouse at Havenstraat 18a, 1779 AM Den Oever and may be contacted at (0031)224 511191.

Opening times: 1 May – 1 September: Tuesday-Sunday 12 – 5 p.m. closed Mondays. Groups, excursions and other opening times subject to prior arrangement. The museum is an excellent start and finish for exploring the unique (pre)historic countryside by bicycle or on foot.

The Huis van de Aarde Museum has a website: www.huisvandeaarde.nl

Wijk bij Duurstede: Dorestad Museum

Dorestad (modern: Wijk bij Duurstede) is the best known early medieval site in the Netherlands, mentioned in historical and archaeological publications on Frisian and Frankish times. It was geographically situated in the centre of continental and insular trading routes, and was a major emporium for several centuries. The locality has been excavated and researched. A fine collection of antiquities and other remains from the results of excavations and scientific research is on display in the local museum.

Newer policies by the trustees and the director have resulted in interactive displays and an innovative introduction of archaeology to a broad public, and all in all, in an evocative exhibition on various aspects of the history of Dorestad from its earliest days onwards. The rise and decline of Dorestad as a major emporium on the early medieval continent is illustrated by a plentiful selection of archaeological finds as one might expect in the remains of a once-busy mercantile port, even in those early days. It reached its economic heyday during the reign of Charlemagne, when the emporium was part of the Frankish empire.

There is an open area with shelves displaying typical kinds of pottery: e.g. Badorf, Pingdorf and the rare Tating ware. An introduction of early medieval rubbish is illustrated by a modern dustbin full of animal remains, pottery shards etc. Informative panels on early crafts accompany this part of the exhibition. Unfortunately, the world famous Dorestad brooch can only be admired from a copy; the original is in Leiden.

An enjoyable, unusual part of display is a video animation depicting the rise, development and decline of Dorestad. It is both educational and amusing, and will appeal to many people.

The new exhibition is illustrative of the different (pre)historical periods of the area, by a comprehensive selection of objects from different periods. The general appeal of the museum and its new exhibitions is the atmosphere created by a combination of the right selection of objects, well-exhibited with just the necessary information, and stored in spacious rooms.

The Dorestad Museum is in the originally 15th C. Huize Amstelwijk in Wijk bij Duurstede, Munstraat 42, 3961 AL Wijk bij Duurstede

Tel: (0031) 343 571448 Fax (0031) 343 554342.

Opening times: Tuesday – Sunday 1:30 - 5 p.m.. Other opening times for groups by prior arrangement. The city of Wijk bij Duurstede is full of monuments and other elements of cultural history, and is well-worth a visit (situated only 25 km from the City of Utrecht).

An extensive article on the emporium of Dorestad is scheduled for one of the forthcoming issues.

Finally: the Dutch Learning Channel (TELEAC/NOT) has produced an educational programme for the upper forms of the primary schools in the Netherlands, “The Vikings are coming……Vikings in the Netherlands”. This programme, a collaboration between the Stichting Weg van de Vikingen and the Huis van de Aarde Museum, was shot in Wieringen, and also provides information about Dorestad.

About the author:

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New museum in Sweden –
The Old Uppsala Historical Center

In May this year a new museum, involving the Viking Age, opened in Old Uppsala, Sweden, about one hour’s drive north-east of Stockholm. It is located at the three huge and legendary gravehills from the pre-Viking age (400-550 AD), known as “Kungshögarna” (the Kings’ mounds). The museum has become an excellent complement to the rich surroundings of the ancient remains.

The place of the gravehills is one of the most legendary cult sites in the Nordic countries, a place that was a living community even in prehistoric times and where people have been buried for far more than 1000 years. It became a centre for trading and handicraft, for religious and profane power with a large Crown demesne and a magnificent banquet hall, and it is considered to be one of the most important centers of what was later to become Sweden. When Sweden was christianised Old Uppsala was one of the most important places for the encounter between the old and new religions. This place has held a central position in Swedish cultural history and also in the writing of history over several centuries.

In the museum visitors meet the myths and reality that surround the place. The theme of the exhibitions this first display year is “Myth, power and human beings in Old Uppsala over 2000 years”. The exhibits deal with life and death, about the courage of people in meeting the unknown, about royal power and about the striving of scholars to interpret the place.

For more information (only in Swedish):
http://www.raa.se/gamlauppsala/
http://res.till.uppland.nu/turist/eng/index.html

The Old Uppsala Historical Center was inaugurated by King Carl Gustaf of Sweden, on May 18. Here the King studies an old object. Photo: Mark Earthy/SCANPIX, Sweden
New find of a Viking-age sword

At the beginning of September two amateur divers made the sensational find of a Viking-age sword in Vättern lake, the second biggest lake of Sweden. The tip of the sword was broken when they pulled it from the bottom because it had been firmly stuck in the mud. Similar finds have been made before, but this sword is exceptionally well-preserved.

The length of the sword is about 80 cm and it is dated to the 10th century. The sheath, made of leather, still remains intact together with some remnants of cloth making this find sensational because the handle and sheath are usually missing. The sword has now been sent to the Historical Museum of Stockholm, Sweden for conservation.

From Östgöta Correspondenten’s webpages, 5/9 2000

Viking Find in White Russia

Archaeologists in White Russia have found artefacts, in the Borisov region north-east of Minsk, that probably belonged to a Viking-age merchant in the 10th century. The find consists, among other things, of a set of weights for weighing silver. 183 undamaged coins, 77 pieces of high quality silver coins, a silver bracelet and a sword with silver-mountings. At that time silver coins, weights and a sword were basic equipment for a travelling merchant.

From Popular Arkeologis Nyhetsbrev, week 36, 2000

“Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga” now on Internet

Now you will be able to visit a Viking exhibition on Internet! The Smithsonian Institution of the National Museum of Natural History, Washington D.C., USA, has produced a digital version of the extensive exhibition ”Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga”. Here you can, among other things, take a guided tour through the exhibition.

www.mnh.si.edu/vikings

”Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga”, exhibit tour schedule


Houston  July 13–October 14, 2001 Houston Museum of Natural Science

Los Angeles  November 23, 2001- March 16, 2002 Los Angeles County Museum

Ottawa/Hull  May 16-October 14, 2002 Canadian Museum of Civilisation

For more information about Jelling: http://viking.hgo.se

Gorm the Old, the first king of Denmark buried for the third time

On August 30, Gorm the Old who is regarded as the first king of Denmark was reburied for the third time in a ceremony attended by the Danish Royal family and the Prime Minister of Danmark. His mortal remains were placed in a burial chamber in the church of Jelling. In the middle of the Viking period Jelling was, at least for a few decades, the residence of the Danish kings. Gorm the Old is thought to be the oldest known forefather of the Danish royal family.

According to historians, Gorm the Old died in 958. He was originally buried in one of the two mounds at Jelling, the so-called northern mound. When his son, Harald Bluetooth, converted to Christianity, he raised a big wooden church and moved his father’s corpse there. In an archaeological excavation of the old church in 1979, the remains of Gorm were found and have been kept at the University of Copenhagen and in the National Museum of Denmark until now.

From Berlingske Tidende August 31, 2000
WebMead Mania!!

Searching the web for reliable online games can be a frustrating chore. You’ve struggled with downloads for hours and it still doesn’t work. The answer is Meadshock.

"The world’s first Web Viking-Mead-Bodega!” as Tore Danielsson, administrator of NorseMen’s Fury puts it.

Just enter the site and play! Without tricky downloads or messing around with logins or registration forms! (The only requirement is properly installed Flashplayer 4.)

“Vikings and mead go hand in hand”, says game designer, Sverker Holmqvist and continues, "So the idea of a online game where You as a player serve thirsty Vikings mead at an increasing speed came about pretty quickly when Olle (Hoffman, Webmaster at Viking Heritage, ed. note) gave us at NorseMen’s Fury a call!”

"Meadshock is programmed and created exclusively in Macromedia Flash 4 so the whole thing is pretty on-the-edge technically speaking”, says programmer, Jerker Drottenmyr.

So you better keep those Vikings happy with their mead, otherwise they’ll smash the place “Viking-style”! Be sure to serve the extremely dried-up MeadGod his golden horn as he enters the “bodega” through the fire! The whole place shivers and shakes as You probably will too!!

http://viking.hgo.se/meadshock/index.html

Feel free to drop a line to meadshock@spray.se!!

Genetic research for Vikings in Britain

2,500 men from 25 different locations across Britain will be tested to find out how much Viking blood is left in the UK. The research is being done for a new BBC documentary, Blood of the Viking, and will be carried out by genetic scientists at University College London (UCL).

By comparing mouth swabs from British-based volunteers with DNA samples from Scandinavian locals, the researchers hope to reveal more information about the Vikings in Britain, how many settled there and where they lived. Only men will be tested, because the interesting information is found in the Y chromosome, which women don’t have.

"Genetics can actually start to look back in history”, Paul Bradshaw, the producer of the BBC documentary, says. Through this genetic project, the scientists will finally know whether or not genetics can track culture. The documentary will be screened on BBC next year.


http://news6.thd0.bbc.co.uk/h/englis h/uk/newsid%5F868000/868479.stm

Brought home from the Orient – a small exhibition about the Vikings’ meeting with the Far East

This exhibition is a part of a larger project: The meeting between Sweden and the Islamic world. On display are artefacts found on Gotland, most likely brought home by Vikings on their trading voyages. The exhibition will be on from Oct 6, 2000 to Jan 7, 2001, in the Treasure Chamber of the Historical Museum of Gotland (Gotlands Fornsal).
Evidence from cartography and archeology supports the theory that Viking settlements in the New World were thriving at the time of Columbus. When King Haakon IV of Norway-Sweden heard about discovery of “New Lands” in the Far West, he promptly declared sovereignty over the region in 1261. The new lands were called “Nyaland” or “Landanu” — meaning “New Land”. Icelandic sagas said this land was southwest of Iceland or in the vicinity of modern-day Newfoundland or Nova Scotia. This great province of New Land appears on the Albertin DeVirga map of 1414 where it is called “Norveca”. English Franciscans mapped the region from Greenland to Florida between 1330-1360. Early 16th century maps called the region “Norueba” or “Nova Noruega”. Later, this name was modified to “Norumbega” — a name that signified a fur-trading settlement.

In 1880, Eben Horsford excavated “Nordic” ruins near Boston; Arlington Mallery excavated Nordic artifacts and iron furnaces in the St. Lawrence region; Thomas Lee excavated Nordic ruins in Labrador; and the Ingstads excavated Nordic ruins in Newfoundland. The “Vinland” colony was a common feature on English and German Medieval maps including the Rudimentum Novitiorum during the time of Columbus.

Half-scale ship in full-scale waves

Our ship, VIKING PLYM, has Gokstad lines in her hull as many others have. When the Gokstad Vikings went to sea in rough weather in the old days we don’t think they had any problems with safety – but in a half-scale ship we surely do. She moves like a canoe through heavy waves and sometimes we really long for a full-scale size.

Of course a very important difference is also that our ship is totally stiff and lacks the flexible hull, which gave the old ships their incredible character.

Sailing at sea in strong winds is a great challenge and demands a skilled and responsible skipper. Though we have several such Vikings we are hoping for moderate winds at two big events this summer. In July when we meet the Tall Ships Race at sea outside Sandhamn and in September when sailing into New York in a small Viking fleet!

With greetings from Täby Vikinga Skeppslag
CARL BRÅVALLA (NORBERG)
The objectives of the network are:

- To develop and maintain the European Institute of Cultural Routes project.

- To co-operate with schools, universities etc. in the field of education and training in the study of the Vikings.

- To collect information of present Viking history activities, and to distribute information about Vikings and their history.

Viking Heritage is acting as a monitoring and advisory body on all issues relating to an enhanced understanding of the Viking history.

In promoting these aims, VIKING HERITAGE provides an information service with the magazine VIKING HERITAGE MAGAZINE in co-operation with NORTH SEA VIKING LEGACY.

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Denmark, Finland, Norway and the Baltic countries: 210 SEK
Other countries: 250 SEK

As a new subscriber to Viking Heritage Newsletter you will receive a complimentary copy of the guidebook Follow the Vikings, Highlights of the Viking World. The book contains 50 of the most important destinations in different countries, selected by an international group of archaeologists and is richly illustrated in full colour.

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