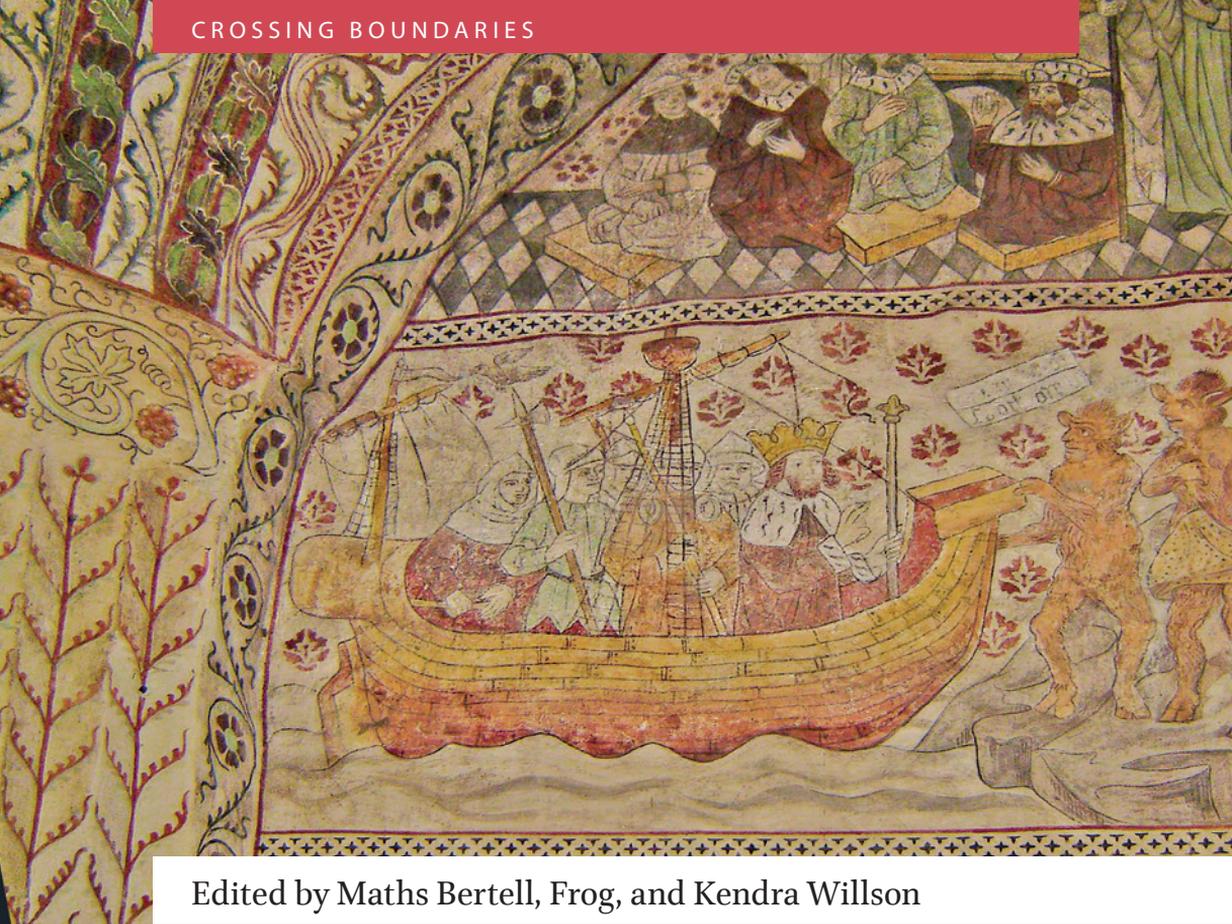


CROSSING BOUNDARIES



Edited by Maths Bertell, Frog, and Kendra Willson

Contacts and Networks in the Baltic Sea Region

Austmarr as a Northern
mare nostrum, ca. 500-1500 AD

Amsterdam
University



Contacts and Networks in the Baltic Sea Region

Crossing Boundaries

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The series from the Turku Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies (TUCEMEMS) publishes monographs and collective volumes placed at the intersection of disciplinary boundaries, introducing fresh connections between established fields of study. The series especially welcomes research combining or juxtaposing different kinds of primary sources and new methodological solutions to deal with problems presented by them. Encouraged themes and approaches include, but are not limited to, identity formation in medieval/early modern communities and the analysis of texts and other cultural products as a communicative process comprising shared symbols and meanings.

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Cover illustration: Fifteenth-century painting from the church in Odensala, Sweden, depicting the mid-twelfth-century arrival of Erik the Holy and the missionary bishop St. Henrik in Finland

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Note on alphabetisation

The alphabetisation throughout the book follows a Nordic practice. Å, Ä/Æ Ö/Ø are listed at the end of the alphabet (also for German names). Þ is alphabetised after Z and before the diacritic vowels. Icelanders are listed under first name. No other diacritics affect alphabetisation.

Preface

Since prehistoric times, the Baltic Sea has functioned as a northern *Mare nostrum*, connecting the people who live on its shores in ways analogous to the more widely known Mediterranean Sea. Millennia of contacts have crucially shaped the languages, folklore, mythology, religions, technology, and institutions of the people living in this part of the world. The long history of interactions has contributed fundamentally to forming modern ethnic and linguistic identities among Baltic, Finnic, Germanic, Sámi, and Slavic peoples of the North. Understanding any one of these cultures depends on understanding its context in the history of the Circum-Baltic arena.

The present volume is a product of the Austmarr Network. *Austmarr*, literally ‘East Sea’, is an Old Norse term for the Baltic Sea that reflects the Network’s geographical focus on the Baltic Sea Region as an arena of cultural contacts and interaction. The term also relates to the Network’s historical emphasis on the period *ca.* AD 500-1500. At the initiative of Professor Daniel Sävborg of the University of Tartu, the Network was initially formed by a small, international group of medieval philologists, folklorists, linguists, archaeologists, and historians, who were united by interests in exploring the role of contacts in shaping cultures, cultural practices, ideologies, and identities through cross-disciplinary dialogue and cooperation. The Network’s growth has been nurtured through annual meetings that move around the Baltic. The founding meeting was held in Tartu, Estonia, in 2011, followed by a symposium in Helsinki, Finland, in 2012; in Härnösand, Sweden, in 2013; in Sundsvall, Sweden, in 2014; in Visby, Gotland, in 2015; and back in to Helsinki for a symposium and workshop in 2016. The largest meeting to date was on returning to Tartu in 2017 with close to 100 participants; the 2018 meeting was held in Stockholm, Sweden; and the 2019 meeting will be in Klaipėda, Lithuania. As the network is an offspring of the Retrospective Methods Network, the work done by participants pays attention to methods and the compatibility of methods across disciplinary frameworks. A central aim of the Network has been to synthesise knowledge about the past produced in different disciplines and national scholarship traditions in order to advance toward truly interdisciplinary reconstructions of human history in the Baltic Sea region.

The present collection was precipitated by discussions following the third Austmarr meeting in Härnösand, where a decisive interest was expressed in developing a volume around discussions at the symposia. Some of the contributions to this volume are based on presentations at the symposia in

Härnösand and Helsinki. The many voices and perspectives brought together here enter into dialogue with one another as their accumulating insights build new ways of looking at the Baltic Sea region in all of its dynamism.

We would like to thank the many anonymous reviewers who devoted much-appreciated time and energy to assessing and commenting on individual papers. We would also like to thank those who have contributed to establishing and developing the Austmarr Network.

We sincerely hope, dear reader, that you will find the works collected in this volume interesting and stimulating, leading to new ideas and arguments that can carry discussion into the future.

The Editors

Introduction

Looking across the Baltic Sea and over linguistic fences

Frog, Kendra Willson, and Maths Bertell

Abstract

The introduction presents a history of the current state of scholarship on cultural contacts in the Baltic prior to the High Middle Ages. We discuss the challenges of bringing together the separate disciplinary and national traditions. Each academic subject has evolved largely as a separate practice across much of the twentieth century, with only gradual and often limited integration with the more recent movements toward interdisciplinarity. Furthermore, each discipline operates to a great extent within national traditions, maintained by language barriers and funding structures, making international dialogues crucially important. This introduction is intended as a steppingstone for gaining perspective on the diverse contributions to the present volume.

Keywords: Baltic Sea, language, culture, contact, networks, multidisciplinary reconstruction

1 Introduction

For well over ten thousand years, the Baltic Sea region has been a lively contact zone for diverse languages and cultures. Following the Last Glacial Maxim, the first human beings arrived on the eastern and western shores of the Baltic Sea from different parts of Europe (Carpelan and Parpola 2001: 78). From that time onwards, peoples of different cultures have met and influenced each others' language and poetics, technologies and material cultures, social organisation and subsistence strategies, mythology and religion, and so forth (see e.g. Salo 2000; Dahl and Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001;

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Bertell 2003; Ahola and Frog 2014). The patterns of influence range from borrowings and hybridisation to amplifying contrast and othering – influences that reflect histories of power relations, competing valorisations, cultural ideologies, and social dynamics between the groups concerned. This history of contacts also unites the region: the cultures identified with Baltic, Germanic, and Slavic subfamilies of Indo-European and Sámi and Finnic subfamilies of the Uralic languages (also called Finno-Ugric¹) have evolved features that link them to one another while setting them apart from other Indo-European and Uralic groups. The filtering in of significant outside influences, for example from the Roman Empire (see e.g. DuBois 1999; Fischer 2005), as well as impacts from otherwise extinct cultures and languages, such as speakers of so-called Palaeo-European languages that were neither Indo-European nor Uralic, have also fed into this process across the millennia. The Circum-Baltic arena thus presents a rich laboratory within which the dynamics of historical processes can be explored, producing knowledge about specific events, cultures, and identities, but simultaneously providing a historical space in which researchers can test and develop methods and theories with wider applicability.

The present volume brings together a multidisciplinary variety of studies that develop our understanding of the Baltic Sea region and its populations during the Late Iron Age and the medieval period (*ca.* AD 500-1500). The nation-states and their populations in this part of the world are the most recent outcomes of this region's history. Fundamental aspects of the identities that are today connected with modern linguistic and ethnic labels for peoples in this part of the world underwent fundamental developments during this crucial period. This is the period when Christianity began penetrating the region, carrying with it the manuscript technologies that were appropriated for vernacular literature among Scandinavians and the Rus', while it concludes on the cusp of writing as a medium for Finnic, Sámi, and most Baltic languages following the Reformation. Thus, this period spans the threshold between history, in the narrow sense of an era from which written records are available, and prehistory, as an era before indigenous written histories, a period that must be accessed through non-textual sources and their collation and reconciliation with textual sources from outsider

1 Uralic initially designated a distinct collective language phase thought to have split into Finno-Ugric and Samoyedic language branches. Samoyedic is accepted as belonging to the same language family, but is no longer commonly considered the earliest branch among Uralicists, with the consequence that Finno-Ugric gets used as a synonym for Uralic. Although Finno-Ugric is the term more widely recognized across disciplines, Uralic has become the preferred term.

perspectives such as those of Roman authors. It is also during this time that the Circum-Baltic world became integrated with the continent of Europe and that Europe, as the geopolitical space is understood today, was first defined (Heininen *et al.* 2014). On the one hand, the Circum-Baltic perspective is a necessary context for approaching any single language, culture, or society belonging to it. On the other hand, the lack of contemporary vernacular written sources for much of this period presents significant methodological challenges, for which solutions are of potential value to researchers facing similar issues in the same or different materials.

2 Mental maps

Today, we are inclined to conceive of the Baltic Sea region in absolute terms of geologically defined space, concisely measured and describable with current technologies. Geography, however, is socially constructed, defining and situating places and spaces relative to one another. In pre-modern environments, geography would most often be construed from an anthropocentric perspective in dialectic with circulating discourse. The result is what can be described as a *mental map*, an imaginal understanding of situated relations of places and spaces. Although imaginal understandings may be subjective, mental maps as organised representations can also be communicated, even if they are not visually represented from above.

It is very difficult to reconstruct more than traces of such constructions prior to written sources, and thus our first substantial knowledge of mental maps of the Baltic Sea region comes from the Classical world. Historically, the construction and communication of mental maps extending to the Circum-Baltic area were most likely connected with long-distance trade networks, combining knowledge of travel routes with populations and cultures encountered there (Valtonen 2008). In pre-modern environments, frameworks of modern scientifically defined ontologies did not apply. Consequently, people were not categorised as ‘human’ on an empirical basis of biology but rather on an ethnocentric basis of ‘people like us’ as opposed to ‘others’, differentiated by fractional increments in both physically observable and imaginal qualities (Lévi-Strauss 1952: 11-16; de Castro 1998: 474-477; Lindow 1995). In the place of our fundamental, scientifically based distinction between ‘real’ and ‘not real’, there operated imaginal constructions of the world. These constructions participated in the evolution of mental maps and the populations inhabiting the places that these maps organised, which allowed otherworld locations to be situated in geographical

space and empirically explorable places to be conceived as a realm of the supernatural (Frog 2019). From the perspective of the Classical world, remote, geologically material locations blended with imaginal otherworlds within broader cosmological models, as is clearly apparent in the sources surveyed and discussed here by Aleksandr Podossinov in ‘The northern part of the Ocean in the eyes of ancient geographers’.

Mental maps are social constructions providing shared frames of reference. The information interfaced with these maps in the present is often founded on traditional modelling with a *longue durée* (see also Heininen *et al.* 2014: 298-299). As a consequence, perceived relations between places may be historically encoded with information about perceptions of the organisation of the world. This is illustrated by Tatjana Jackson in ‘*Austmarr* on the mental map of medieval Scandinavians’, which shows that, in Old Norse texts, differences between cardinal directions and the use of terms of directions relative to Denmark implicitly reflect a vernacular model for the division of the world into regions. At the same time, places are sites to which historical and mytho-historical knowledge is moored in discourse, which reciprocally constructs those places, their significance and relationships to one another (Basso 1996). Such circulating knowledge is an integral part of much of our early literary sources for the history of the North, as is evident in Old Norse saga literature. This is exemplified by Sirpa Aalto in ‘The connection between geographical space and collective memory in *Jómsvíkinga saga*’, which explores the use of geographical names as markers for memory in a saga that features a band of ‘Vikings’ in what is now Poland. As contributions to this volume show, understandings of how people have perceived and organised places and spaces is a social process to which we require at least some access if we wish to understand historical processes of mobility, contacts, interactions, and relations in the Circum-Baltic arena and how these are reflected in the sources.

3 Mobility

The relevance of remote locations on mental maps and a precondition of contacts on a Circum-Baltic level is mobility. Mobility seems to have been stimulated during the sixth century, following the so-called climate catastrophe of AD 536-537, which resulted in, for example, massive reorganisation of the social landscape in Sweden (Line 2007: 39), immigration from Sweden to the Åland Islands (Ahola *et al.* 2014) and the Eura river basin in Finland (Lehtosalo-Hilander 1984-2000), populations of south-west Finland becoming

active in long-distance trade (Tvauri 2014), and so forth. Many of these processes remain obscure, including the factors that produced the draw east and the founding of the famed trading centre known as Staraja Ladoga in *ca.* AD 750 (Kuz'min 2008), followed by the opening of the *Austrvegr* (Old Norse) or Eastern Route through what is now Russia to the Middle East (Ahola and Frog 2014). The Viking Age is customarily considered to end with the conversion of Scandinavian kingdoms to Christianity. The processes that carried conversion through Scandinavian polities did not advance in the same manner east of the Baltic, where broad regions and their populations were annexed into the Middle Ages through the Northern Crusades. These Crusades not only extended political and religious spheres of authority, they also provided essential conditions for the (Christian) Hanseatic League, a confederated trade network that emerged from those that had developed during the Viking Age, and which in its turn has had implications through today. The period AD 500-1500 was thus a crucial era across which contact networks both underwent fundamental developments within the Circum-Baltic area and integrated the Circum-Baltic area into long-distance networks.

Although the Eastern Route affected lives at the level of individuals, processes connected with it also operated at the level of geopolitics, of which mobility is a significant factor. Geopolitics at this time was not among modern nations but among polities of different organisation and scope (Heininen *et al.* 2014). East of the Baltic, Finnic and Baltic cultures were positioned between the rapid centralisation of power in Scandinavia and the emerging Slavic centres such as Novgorod. Economic and political interests in the West became linked to religious agendas, giving rise to the Northern Crusades. These crusades allowed the increasingly centralised kingdoms united by Christianity to expand their authority across the more dispersed Finnic and Baltic societies under the aegis of Christianising them. The Viking Age and Middle Ages saw a transformation in the political ecology of the Baltic Sea region as the centralisation of power, new administrative structures, and advances in sea-faring technologies allowed polities to extend their reach and gradually evolve into states.

The mobility of individuals is observable in a variety of contexts and seems to be motivated by an assortment of factors. In 'Rune carvers traversing *Austmarr?*', Laila Kitzler Åhfeldt emphasises that political situations and the current power relations between polities also affected the movement of individuals: evidence from rune-carving techniques reveals that rune carvers brought their skills from central Sweden to Gotland. Among the elite of society, individuals could symbolically embody alliances between polities

through marriage. Such a marriage invested enormous political significance in the movement of a single person from one household to another. It also impacted the identity of members of especially the receiving family and its networks of personal relations for generations to come. This type of process is explored by Leszek Słupecki in the case of ‘Polish noble families and noblemen of Scandinavian origin in the eleventh and twelfth centuries: The case of the Awdańcy family: By which route did they come to Poland and why?’ This article concerns evidence of the hypothetical Scandinavian origin of some prominent Polish families, as well as ways in which the image of Scandinavian origin has been cultivated in later times. At the opposite end of the social spectrum were, of course, individuals exchanged unambiguously as commodities, as slaves. Slavery in the Circum-Baltic area of the Late Iron Age was significantly impacted by mobility: slaves in these societies were probably moderate in number, whereas channels of long-distance trade opened lucrative markets for trafficking in captured people (see also Brink 2008; Korpela 2014). Jukka Korpela’s ‘A medieval trade in female slaves from the north along the Volga’ reveals the dynamics of trade from the Baltic Sea region to the Mediterranean in the historical record of the Middle Ages. It shows both the economic value of especially blonde women on this market as well as aspects of how the slave trade engaged with religious identities, as only religiously ‘other’ people could be traded as slaves. However, across all of these cases, the changes through the Viking Age and Middle Ages increasingly related the mobility of individuals to larger political entities, such as kingdoms or emerging states and the Church.

4 Language

The Circum-Baltic region is historically identified with languages belonging to several branches of the Indo-European and Uralic language families. Effects of prolonged close contacts among speakers of different languages are seen on many levels, from vocabulary to syntax. The Circum-Baltic area has been discussed as a linguistic region or *Sprachbund* analogous to the Balkans (Dahl and Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001). Although we tend to imagine the distribution of languages in the past through their distribution today, changes in the linguistic geography of the region have been quite dramatic, especially across the Iron Age. We also tend to correlate language with culture and ethnic identity and refer to cultures and ethnic identities by language, which easily obscures more than it reveals, especially east and north of the Baltic Sea. The direct correlation of an archaeologically

observable culture with speakers of a reconstructed language like Proto-Finnic has been shown to be methodologically unsound and produced models that are incompatible with how languages vary and evolve. The absolute chronology of linguistic changes generally remains uncertain where it cannot be ultimately linked to written evidence, and even then there are questions about variation by dialect or even differences in how language is used in speech as opposed to writing. Signals of abrupt changes in the archaeological, genetic, and linguistic records seem to show a discrepancy of as much as a thousand years. There is also ample evidence that a shift in language can occur without clear impacts on the archaeological record, that a transformation of culture can occur without exchanging one language for another, and that different groups speaking the same language can appear as multiple cultures in the archaeological record or vice versa. (See further e.g. Saarikivi and Lavento 2012.) Because some perspective on language history is crucial for understanding many of the discussions in the present volume, aspects of the history of languages in the Circum-Baltic region will be outlined here in very broad (and thus simplified) strokes.

Indo-European is only thought to have arrived in the Baltic Sea region in the third millennium BC. Dialects on the (south-)west side of the Baltic evolved into the Germanic languages while the Balto-Slavic languages evolved on the (south-)east, with Slavic eventually becoming distinct to the south. Germanic and Baltic are generally considered to have continuity in these areas from that time, although Baltic languages were earlier also spoken much farther to the east. (See e.g. Carpelan and Parpola 2001: 79; Siiriäinen 2003; Anthony 2007: 367-368, and cf. 379-382). The arrival of Uralic languages is less clear. Proto-Uralic emerged after the break-up of Indo-European, probably toward the end of the third millennium (Kallio 2006b). The dialect from which Sámi languages evolved likely arrived among mobile hunter-gatherers, although it is unclear when (cf. Aikio 2012). The dialect from which Finnic languages emerged first developed elsewhere and subsequently spread through an area where a now-extinct branch of Baltic language was spoken, probably in its arrival in the Circum-Baltic region from the south-east (Kallio, forthcoming). Without going into detail, Proto-Sámi is likely to have emerged in a relatively small speech community in a southern inland region of Finland and/or Karelia around the beginning of the present era. It then spread rapidly through Finland, Karelia, Lapland, and the Scandinavian and Kola Peninsulas, and indigenous populations gradually underwent language shifts. The earlier languages spoken are largely unknown, although some of them are considered as Palaeo-European – i.e. neither Indo-European nor Uralic in origin (see further Aikio 2012; Frog and

Saarikivi 2015). Proto-Sámi seems to have spread primarily as a medium for inter-group communication: there is a lack of positive evidence for a spread of a full array of culture (Frog 2017). It is unclear why, but loanword evidence suggests that the most intensive period of Scandinavian influence on both Proto-Sámi and Proto-Finnic (which was still east of the Baltic) was some time during the third century to around the beginning of the sixth century, waning by the Viking Age (Aikio 2012; Kallio 2015). It is also unclear when Finnic languages reached south-east Finland, but the dialect of Proto-Finnic spoken there seems to have become a language of inter-group communication at the opening of the Eastern Route, at a time when the territories to the east and south-east were a continuum of Uralic languages (Frog and Saarikivi 2015). The opening of the Eastern Route also produced the first major contacts of Finnic with Slavic (Kallio 2006a); although the Rus' had a Scandinavian elite, Slavic languages rapidly become dominant on the Eastern Route, gradually leading speakers of many Uralic and also Baltic languages to undergo language shifts in what is now Russia. Also beginning especially from the Viking Age, the dialects that came to characterise Finnish and Karelian cultures spread extensively to the north, where mobile groups underwent shifts in language in conjunction with shifts in culture (Ahola and Frog 2014; Frog and Saarikivi 2015). With the Northern Crusades, the sphere of Germanic languages grew along with the expanding Christian world: immigration in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries established Swedish-speaking areas in Finland and Estonia while other Germanic languages became important further south, followed by the rising significance of the Hanseatic League and role of Low German within it.

Language provides crucial evidence for contacts as well as for the social dynamics of contacts through evidence ranging from ways of using and representing language, contemporary representations of linguistic text, and, of course, through more direct impacts of one language on another. Written vernaculars in the Circum-Baltic region begin with runic inscriptions from roughly the beginning of the first millennium AD. Runic inscriptions were often relatively short texts normally consisting of only a word or two or of a few sentences at most. However, they provide crucial if limited evidence for an absolute chronology of Germanic languages to which the chronologies of Uralic languages are linked through loanword evidence. Considering the richness of linguistic and cultural influences of Scandinavians on speakers of Finnic and Sámi languages, it is striking that runic writing does not appear among these. The paucity of any evidence of Uralic languages or even their speakers utilising this writing technology is further highlighted by Kendra Willson in 'Ahti on the Nydam strap-ring? On the possibility of

Finnic elements in runic inscriptions', which explores a potential example of a Finnic word – in this case a personal name – in a runic inscription.

Trade and trade networks present a vital context for languages to impact one another in relation to the structuring of participant identities and the language ideologies of participant speakers. Following the great trade networks of the Viking Age, the Middle Ages saw the emergence of the Hanseatic League, which carried Low German influence through the Circum-Baltic area, such as those loanwords observable in Finnish discussed in Mikko Bentlin's 'Low German and Finnish revisited'. The wide range of evidence associated with language, from written text to etymologies, provides invaluable data for exploring the history of contacts in this part of the world.

5 Mythology and religion

Alongside language, groups around the Baltic Sea exhibit a rich history of interaction and exchange concerning mythology and religious practice, which has been a lively area of discussion and debate. There has been a long-standing tendency to generalise one language for one culture, one mythology, and one religion, and a tendency to view mythologies and religions as static and ideal entities that are mutually exclusive. The reality tends to be far more complex. Much as languages affect one another at the level of individual words or their meanings, features of pronunciation, or grammar, mythologies and ritual practices affect one another at the level of images, motifs, and stories or their episodes, what these mean and conceptual models to which they link, or how they are organised and related to, represented, or actualised as practice, for example as a ritual or a constituent of a ritual. Most contact-based influence occurs at this level, whereas conversion is analogous to a language shift: one system of mythology, practices, and ideology being adopted in the place of another, most probably resulting in individual elements or features of the earlier system being filtered into the new one. For example, the motif of the creation of celestial bodies from an egg in Finnic mythology does not seem to have either a Uralic or an Indo-European pedigree. This motif is found represented in Stone Age petroglyphs on Lake Onega, identifying it with a Palaeo-European culture of the region, which implies that its position in Finnic cosmogony is related to contacts with mythologies of other peoples (Lahelma 2008: 155-157; Valk 2000: 154; Frog 2012: 213). Elements of mythology and religious practice can have astoundingly long histories, but they are also continuously being adapted to suit contemporary societies, and potentially asserted or manipulated in communication as powerful symbols linked to meanings and identities.

Approaching non-Christian mythology, ritual, and religion relies heavily on textual sources, without which symbols in iconography, burials, and so forth remain so abstract that any interpretation is highly speculative. Even runic inscriptions are in general so laconic that references to mythology or religious practice require careful contextualisation. Other written sources, however, are dependent on the technology of writing that accompanied the spread of Christianity and were produced by Christians for Christians who viewed vernacular mythology and religion as 'other', first as 'pagan', and later from a modern perspective as heritage preserved among 'the folk'. This situation presents methodological challenges, particularly when approaching Baltic, Finnic, and Sámi traditions, which are at a much greater historical remove from the Iron Age. Folklore studies as a discipline emerged in the Nordic countries with a historical emphasis and explicit aim of reconstructing an *Urform*, or 'original form', and identifying its time and place of origin. This type of investigation became stigmatised and was largely abandoned when the interpretive frameworks of such research became unviable in light of changing understandings of how oral traditions are transmitted (Frog 2013). However, there has been a recent revival in interest in comparative analysis under the aegis of 'retrospective methods' (e.g. Heide and Bek-Pedersen 2014).

Methodology is now foregrounded in historical comparative studies of later source materials such as nineteenth- and twentieth-century folklore and linguistic data. The result has been new trends in research across the fields of folklore studies, linguistics, and comparative religion that have been developing especially in today's academic networks spanning the Baltic Sea. Approaching diachronic investigation through current theoretical frameworks and research interests has broken down the earlier aim of a single historical target and the very idea of an *Urform*. In its place, attention has turned to stratification as an ever-evolving historical process that reciprocally reveals information about changes in society and performance culture, and contact history with other groups and networks. Indicators of historical relations are patterns of symbolism that link a phenomenon to a certain image or conception, such as identifying the shadows on the moon as a girl carrying pails of water, or it may manifest more directly as a calque across languages, such as referring to the Milky Way as a 'path of birds' (Berezkin 2010). Historical relationships become particularly salient when the symbolic model for such imaginal understanding can be linked to the etymology of a name, word, or phrase. Conversely, a tradition may exhibit patterns of development in which the history of individual images and motifs may remain open to question, but collectively a pattern of contacts or historical change becomes evident that is not dependent on the interpretation of any single image or motif. This

is no different from the fact that etymologies of individual words may be challenged without affecting the view of significant Scandinavian impacts on Finnic and Sámi languages during the Iron Age. Thus, in spite of the methodological challenges, comparisons of more recent source materials can be applied at different levels of complexity and scope with a variety of aims.

Several ways in which influences among mythological models can be discerned behind supernatural entities, interpretations of nature, ritual sites, and other images and motifs are explored by Lauri Harvilahti in 'Mythic logic and meta-discursive practices in the Scandinavian and Baltic regions'. This contribution reveals how things perceived in nature can themselves operate as signs – i.e. can be interpreted as meaningful – much as smoke is a sign indicative of fire, but concern here is with apprehension as mythological signs such as recognising thunder as a product of supernatural agency. Karolina Kouvola then illustrates the potential for variation in more complex narratives and their poetic forms to offer insights into the dynamics of historical change of a tradition in 'The artificial maiden on both sides of the Gulf of Finland: *The Golden Maiden* in Finno-Karelian and Estonian folk poetry'. Of course, language is only one medium through which symbols may be expressed. Maths Bertell's 'Local Sámi bear ceremonialism in a Circum-Baltic perspective' brings into focus symbols in performative action and as material objects connected with Sámi shaman drums in order to situate variation connected to bear ceremonialism in relation to current ideas about the rapid spread of Sámi language. Processes of change and exchange can be at different levels of scope and complexity as well as affect other elements of mythology and practices within a system. Frog elucidates the dynamics of interactions between mythologies in long-term perspective in 'Mythologies in transformation: symbolic transfer, hybridisation and creolisation in the Circum-Baltic arena (illustrated through the changing roles of **Tīwaz*, **Ilma*, and *Óðinn*, the fishing adventure of the Thunder-God, and a Finno-Karelian creolisation of North Germanic religion)'. The millennia of contacts and interactions among different groups in the Baltic Sea region have had profound effects on mythologies and practices that create connections between them, of which the spread of Christianity and subsequent Reformation are only among the most recent.

6 Crossing linguistic and disciplinary boundaries

The period AD 500-1500 saw profound metamorphosis of cultures and societies in the Baltic Sea region. It was an era during which the Baltic Sea

region became increasingly perceived in the broader context of northern Europe and in relation to cultures of continental Europe more generally. Changes in seafaring technologies and new long-distance networks yielded an unprecedented degree of connectivity that also affected the groups it united. This connectivity was interfaced with social and political changes that gradually generated new types of power relations with transformative effects on societies and their cultures. The impacts can be seen reflected in features of language, mythology, and religious practice. Exploring these processes is the concern of numerous disciplines, such as archaeology, folklore studies, history, linguistics, onomastics, philology, and religious studies. The practices, priorities, and paradigms have not always been in step or even compatible across these fields, and each field also varies to greater or lesser degrees by national scholarship. It has become increasingly apparent in recent decades that each of these disciplines is reliant on knowledge produced by others in order to appropriately analyse and interpret data relevant to that past. There are nevertheless disagreements about how to reconcile textual and non-textual sources and methodological debates on how to relate archaeological evidence to linguistic data and documentary sources. A crucial concern has become the development of methodologies for reconstructing the human past that are compatible across disciplines and able to produce enduring knowledge. These issues are so complex and wide-ranging that they cannot all be covered in a single volume, particularly as they remain in ongoing negotiation, continuously evolving through new insights. If the history of research has shown anything conclusively, it is that there is no single, final, and absolute solution to such questions of methodology. Instead, the present volume is constituted of diverse case studies from numerous perspectives that illustrate the variety of methods available and their potential. Together, these contributions create a picture of a dynamic region where contacts and mobility have had a pervasive impact on cultural developments in many spheres. Rather than a conclusion to research, this volume presents a platform for engaging and furthering discussion on these significant topics, of which so much remains to be explored.

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Section 1

Mental maps

1 The northern part of the Ocean in the eyes of ancient geographers

Aleksandr Podossinov

Abstract

The paper is devoted to ancient ideas concerning the Ocean, its origin, location, functions and especially its navigability. From archaic times until late antiquity we find a belief in the possibility of navigation through the Ocean that was thought to surround the habitable world. The situation regarding the Northern Ocean was more complicated. The heroes of epic poetry were supposed to sail through the Northern Ocean during their fantastic wanderings. Only in the Augustean epoch did the Roman navy get as far as Jutland, and it was the remotest point reached in antiquity in the Northern Ocean, which they identified with the Baltic Sea.

Keywords: antiquity, Northern Ocean, travels of ancient heroes, literary persons and militars in Northern ocean, scientific knowledge about the north of Europe

1 Introduction

This article is devoted to ancient ideas concerning the Ocean, its origin, location, functions, and especially its navigability. From archaic times until late antiquity we find a belief in the possibility of navigation through the Ocean that was thought to surround the habitable world. While the southern and western (Atlantic) parts of the Ocean were at an early stage explored and traversed by Phoenician, Greek, and Roman sailors from India to Britain (with the exception of the southern African seas), the eastern part of the Ocean remained unknown until the end of ancient times. The situation regarding the northern Ocean was still more complicated. The

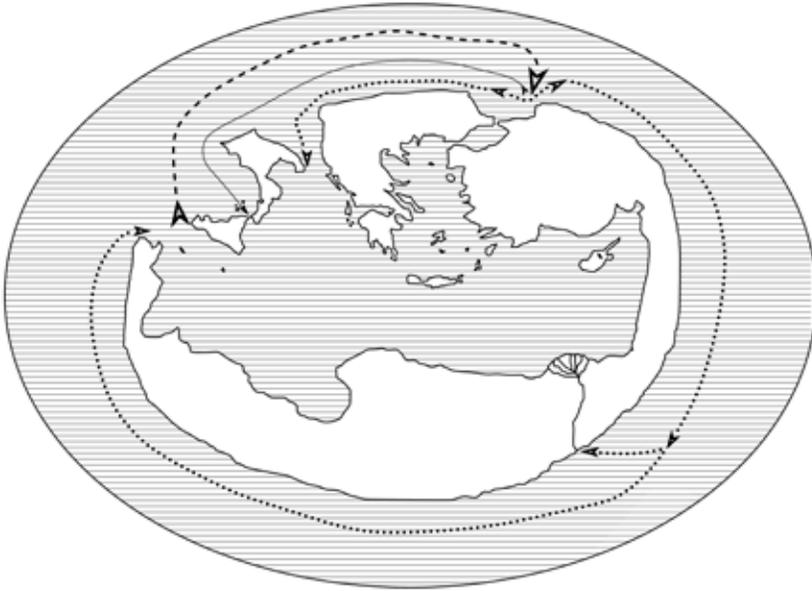
northern sea route, passing through the Arctic Ocean along Eurasia from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, was discovered only in the nineteenth century; the whole northern sea route was travelled for the first time in 1878-1879 by A.E. Nordenskiöld on the barge 'Vega'. In 1914-1915 the first Russian expedition, led by Boris Vilkitsky, navigated this route from east to west on the icebreakers Tajmyr and Vajgač. Despite these facts, we find plenty of evidence in antiquity of the belief in the possibility of navigation across the northern Ocean. The heroes of epic poetry (Odysseus, Heracles, the Argonauts) were supposed to sail through the northern Ocean during their fantastic wanderings. The possibility of navigation there was supported by cosmological and pseudo-scientific theories about the location of the Ocean (Pytheas, Poseidonius, Pomponius Mela, Pliny the Elder). The same can be said of ancient utopian and adventure novels (by Theopompus, Euhemerus, Hecataeus of Abdera, Iambulos, Herodorus, Antonius Diogenes), the heroes of which, in search of the unknown and remote islands and lands, sail through all the seas of the world. Only in the Augustean epoch did the Roman navy get as far as Jutland, the remotest point in the northern Ocean reached in antiquity, which they identified with the Baltic Sea.

2 Mythic cosmology

There were reasons for early views (however unrealistic) that navigation along the northern Ocean was possible. One is the impact of Greek mythic cosmology. An important feature of the archaic worldview was a belief that the *oecumene* was surrounded on all sides by a single Ocean, which resembled a huge river. Thus, in the earliest Greek (and European) literary work, the *Iliad* by Homer, the whole earth is surrounded by the Ocean on the west (*Iliad* VII, 421-423), the east (V, 6), the south (I, 422-424), and the north (XVIII, 489).¹ This is indicated in many statements by Homer (*Iliad* XIV, 201 and 302; XIV, 246; XVIII, 607; *Odyssey* XI, 639; XII, 1). The famous shield of Achilles, described in book XVIII of the *Iliad* and showing the whole world, depicts land surrounded by the river-Ocean: "Ἐν δὲ τίθει ποταμοῖο μέγα σθένος Ὠκεανοῖο ἄντυγα πᾶρ πυμάτην σάκεος πύκα ποιητοῖο" ('He made on it the great strength of the Ocean River (ποταμοῖο μέγα σθένος Ὠκεανοῖο) / which ran around the uttermost rim of the shield's strong structure') (Lattimore 1951: 391). Hesiod also tells of the circular flow of

1 See the discussion and evidence that Homer considered the land surrounded by the Ocean, in Strabo (*Geographia* I, 1, 3, 7-8).

Map 1 Routes of the oceanic voyages of Odysseus, marked with an unbroken line; the Argonauts, marked with a dotted line; and Hercules, marked with a dashed line



Illustrated by Oona Oceana Schwanekamp

the Ocean (see *Theogony* 776).² The Ocean is described by Aristotle as a ‘τὸν ποταμὸν [...] τὸν κύκλῳ ρέοντα περὶ τὴν γῆν’ (‘river flowing around the earth’) (*Meteorologica* 347a.5-7; translations are by the present author unless otherwise indicated). The whole ancient literature (with some exceptions) shared the view of such a configuration of land and the Ocean, according to which land was an island washed on all sides by the Ocean. This was the view of Eratosthenes, Pytheas, Crates of Mallos, Poseidonius, Strabo, Mela, Pliny the Elder, to name only the most prominent geographers and scientists (Olshausen 1999: 171). Out of this cosmological postulate originates the presentation by Homer and by the early Greek poets of the possibility of oceanic voyages. Thus, many Greek heroes (Odysseus, Hercules, the Argonauts) could sail around Europe and Asia, including their northern parts (see Map 1).

² Cf. in Hesiod’s *Theogony* (314-315): ‘ἀμφὶ δ’ ἴτυν ῥέεν Ὠκεανὸς πλήθοντι ἑοικώς, / πᾶν δὲ συνεῖχε σάκος πολυδαίδαλον’ (‘And round the rim Ocean was flowing, with a full stream as it seemed, and enclosed all the cunning work of the shield’) (White 1936: 243); see also *Orphici Hymni* 84.

Odysseus, after wandering in the Mediterranean around Sicily, sails from the Adriatic Sea, which, apparently, was regarded as a gulf of the Ocean, to the Black Sea, which was also seen as an oceanic gulf.³ Then he voyaged back to the Mediterranean Sea through the northern Ocean (see further Podossinov 2013: 205-236). After six days of passage from the Ionian Sea, Odysseus finds himself in the land of Laestrygonians, where ‘ἐγγὺς γὰρ νυκτός τε καὶ ἡματός εἰσι κέλευθοι’ (‘the ways of the day and the night come together’) (*Odyssey* X.86), which is often interpreted as ‘in the northern latitudes’ (Hölscher 1988: 144-145), i.e. in the northern Ocean. From there he soon reaches the island of Circe, Aeaea. There, in the northern Ocean, in the land of the Cimmerians, which is usually located on the northern Black Sea coast, Odysseus finds an entrance to the realm of the dead. Hades appears with all its attributes, such as the rivers Phlegethon, Acheron, and Cocytus, and the rulers Hades and Persephone (*Odyssey* X, 513-515; 534); thus, situated in the north of the *oecumene* where the sun rarely or never appears, it does not look out of place (see Wilamowitz-Moellendorf 1884: 165). From there, Odysseus returns to the island of Circe, located in the east of the *oecumene*, ‘ἔθι [...] ἀντολαὶ Ἡελίοιο [εἰσι]’ (‘where risings of the sun are’).⁴ He then goes back to the western Mediterranean, as the first persons that he faces are the singing Sirens (*Odyssey* XII, 39-40) traditionally located in the west (mostly in Italy), and thence to the strait of Scylla and Charybdis (*Odyssey* XII, 85-111), and then to Ithaca. This return voyage progresses quickly: according to the description in the *Odyssey* (XII, 145-169), we can suggest that sailing from the island of Circe to the island of the sirens and to Scylla and Charybdis took only one day (see also Ballabriga 1986: 142), which may indicate that, in the eyes of Homer, the distance between the north and west of the *oecumene* was not great.

3 Thus, Strabo writes: ‘ἀπλῶς δ’ οἱ τότε τὸ πέλαγος τὸ Ποντικὸν ὡσπερ ἄλλον τινὰ ὠκεανὸν ὑπελάμβανον, καὶ τοὺς πλείοντας ἐκεῖσε ὁμοίως ἐκτοπιζέειν ἐδόκουν ὡσπερ τοὺς ἕξω στηλῶν ἐπὶ πολὺ προϊόντας· καὶ γὰρ μέγιστον τῶν καθ’ ἡμᾶς ἐνομίζετο, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο κατ’ ἐξοχὴν ἰδίως πόντον προσηγόρευον, ὡς ποιητὴν Ὅμηρον. Ἰσως οὖν καὶ διὰ τοῦτο μετήνευγε τὰ ἐκ τοῦ Πόντου πρὸς τὸν ὠκεανὸν ὡς εὐπαράδεκτα διὰ τὴν κατέχουσιν δόξαν’ (‘The men of Homer’s day, in general, regarded the Pontic Sea as a kind of second Oceanus, and they thought that those who voyaged thither got beyond the limits of the inhabited world just as much as those who voyaged far beyond the pillars of Heracles; the Pontic Sea was thought to be the largest of the seas in our part of the world, and for that reason they applied to this particular sea the term “The Pontus” [...]. Perhaps it was for that very reason that Homer transferred to Oceanus things that were true of the Pontus, in the belief that such a change would prove acceptable because of the prevailing notions in regard to the Pontus’) (*Geographia* I, 2, 10; trans. Jones 1918: 77).

4 See *Odyssey* XII, 1-4: ‘νῆσόν τ’ Αἰαίην, ἔθι τ’ Ἡοῦς ἠριγενείης οἰκία καὶ χοροὶ εἰσι καὶ ἀντολαὶ Ἡελίοιο’ (‘the Aeaeian island, where is the dwelling of early Dawn and her dancing places, and the risings of the Sun’).

The oceanic route of Odysseus sailing from the western Mediterranean over the northern Ocean to the east of the *oecumene* and back suggests that the normal way there through the Bosphorus and the Black Sea seemed impossible. And it is difficult to imagine that Odysseus would have gone practically all the way from Ithaca again around the Peloponnese past Cape Malea, across the Aegean, drifted again past the recently abandoned Troy, and then come to the Black Sea (Hennig 1934: 84). Merely sailing in the Ocean that surrounds the earth makes possible convergence among the regions – in this case the north-west and the north-east. U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff (1884: 166) was the first, to my knowledge, to formulate a similar point of view, namely, ‘dass Odysseus durch den Okeanos in das Westmeer fährt, nördlich um die ἤπειρος herum, denselben weg also, den die Argonauten gefahren sind’ (‘that Odysseus sails in the Ocean into the West Sea, skirting from the north (Balkan) mainland, that is, in the same way as the Argonauts did’). Some later scholars have shared his opinion (Meuli 1921: 15-16; 104; Lesky 1949: 24-25; Wehrli 1955: 155; El’nitskij 1962: 10; Ivanchik 2005: 67-107).

As for the journey of the Argonauts, ancient legends describe their sailing in the Black Sea for the Golden Fleece, just as Odysseus travels – as sailing in the Ocean, into the hereafter. The fact that the Argonauts sailed to the Ocean, or through the Ocean, was already known to Pindar (*Pythionica* IV, 251) and Mimnermus (Fragment 11), i.e. the land of Aeetes (*Aeaea*) was perceived as lying on the Ocean. Of great interest to us is the return voyage of the Argonauts from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. One of the oldest ways (see Radermacher 1938: 221) leads them across the River Phasis (now Rioni); it was believed to have a connection with the northern Ocean through which the return journey of the Argonauts was believed to have taken place, so a scholiast adds to the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes (IV, 259): ‘Ἡσίοδος δὲ, καὶ Πίνδαρος ἐν Πυθιονίκαις, καὶ Ἀντίμαχος ἐν Λυδῇ διὰ τοῦ ὠκεανοῦ φησὶν ἐλθεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς Λιβύην, καὶ βαστάσαντας τὴν Ἀργὴν εἰς τὸ ἡμέτερον πέλαγος γενέσθαι’ (‘Hesiod, Pindar in *Pythionica* and Antimachus in *Lide* say that the Argonauts arrived in Libya through the Ocean and, moving (on the shoulders of) Argo, found themselves on our sea’). In IV, 284, the same scholiast reports that ‘Ἡσίοδος δὲ φησι, διὰ Φάσιδος αὐτοὺς πεπελευκέναι’ (‘Hesiod says that they sailed through Phasis’). Hence from the northern limits of the *oecumene*, reaching the northern Ocean through Phasis, the Argonauts were able to get immediately (or quickly) to the southern coast of Africa in the southern Ocean. Another route led the Argonauts from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean along the Tanais (modern Don) in the northern

Ocean and then along the European coast of the Ocean to the Straits of Gibraltar. This is reported by Diodorus Siculus (*Bibliotheca historica* IV, 56, 3) with reference to Timaeus of Tauromenion (fourth century BC) and Scymnus of Chios (Apollonius, *Argonautica* IV, 284). The Orphic *Argonautica* (lines 1035-1245) also relates that the Argonauts sail from the Black Sea through the Sea of Azov and Tanais to the shore of the Arctic Ocean, and then around Europe to Gibraltar (see Map 1). Thus, the mere oceanic sailing made it possible to move quickly from the most easterly part of the Mediterranean to the most westerly.⁵

Hercules, who visited, according to the myths, many parts of the *oecumene*, also undertook ocean voyages. So, when performing the tenth feat, he killed Geryones, drove his oxen and transported them from Gibraltar ... to Scythia (!). According to Herodotus, the Greeks who dwell about the Pontus relate that “Ἡρακλέα ἐλαύνοντα τὰς Γηρυόνηω βοῦς ἀπικέσθαι ἐς γῆν ταύτην ἐοῦσαν ἐρήμην, ἣν τινα νῦν Σκύθαι νέμονται” (‘Hercules, when he was carrying off the cows of Geryon, arrived in the region which is now inhabited by the Scyths’) (IV, 8; trans. Rawlinson 1859 III: 6). It is not specified whether it was by land or by sea, but Herodotus says immediately after this: “Γηρυόνην δὲ οἰκείειν ἔξω τοῦ Πόντου, κατοικημένον τὴν Ἑλληνες λέγουσι Ἐρυθθεῖαν νῆσον, τὴν πρὸς Γηδεῖροισι τοῖσι ἔξω Ἡρακλέων στηλέων ἐπὶ τῷ Ὀκεανῷ· τὸν δὲ Ὀκεανὸν λόγῳ μὲν λέγουσι ἀπὸ ἡλίου ἀνατολέων ἀρξάμενον γῆν περιπάσαν ῥέειν, ἔργῳ δὲ οὐκ ἀποδεικνύουσι” (‘Geryon lived outside the Pontus, in an island called by the Greeks Erytheia, near Gades, which is beyond the Pillars of Hercules upon the Ocean. Now some people say that the Ocean begins in the east, and runs the whole way round the world; but they give no proof that this is really so’) (IV, 8; trans. Rawlinson 1859 III: 6). Herodotus’s next sentence is “ἐνθεῦτεν τὸν Ἡρακλέα ἀπικέσθαι ἐς τὴν νῦν Σκυθίην χώραν καλεομένην” (‘Hercules came from thence into the region now called Scythia’) (IV, 8; trans. Rawlinson 1859 III: 6), which shows that the scientific and mythological excursus about the Ocean could easily relate to the travel route of Hercules (Ivanchik 2005: 100-102). Recall that there are several mythological stories on the presence of

5 See Völcker (1830: 134): “Nach dem Allen ist es nicht zu kühn, und es bleibt uns auch wirklich nichts anderes übrig, wenn wir über Griechenland, so gut wie über Italien, ein großes Meer sich ausdehnen lassen, auf welchem die Homerischen Argonauten von Äetes nördlich über den genannten Ländern in das Westmeer hinter Sicilien zur Circe kamen” (‘It is not too bold, and we have no other choice, if we suppose that behind Greece, as well as behind Italy, a great sea is stretching, on which the Homeric Argonauts came from Aetes north over the mentioned countries in the western sea to Circe behind Sicily’); cf. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf’s (1924: 320) view that the way from the realm of Aetes to the Adriatic passed directly over the Ocean, and that was the oldest version of the Corinthian myth of the Argonauts.

Hercules in Scythia.⁶ According to Apollodorus, even more difficulties are presented in Hercules' travel route when performing the eleventh feat – to bring back the golden apples of the Hesperides. Hercules, after walking for a long time in Macedonia, Illyria, Libya, Egypt, Asia, Arabia, and Ethiopia, was once again in Libya, and 'διὰ τῆς Λιβύης πορευθεὶς ἐπὶ τὴν ἔξω θάλασσαν παρ' Ἡλίου τὸ δέπας καταλαμβάνει. καὶ περαιωθεὶς ἐπὶ τὴν ἤπειρον τὴν ἀντικρὺ κατετόξευσεν ἐπὶ τοῦ Καυκάσου τὸν ἐσθιοντα τὸ τοῦ Προμηθέως ἦπαρ ἀετόν' ('after he had crossed Libya, he came to the Outer sea, where he took the cup of Helios. Having crossed over to the mainland opposite, he shot in the Caucasus from a bow the eagle that was pecking Prometheus's liver') (*Bibliotheca* II, 5, 11).⁷ So, from western Libya on a boat (cup) of Helios, who was transported in it to the east every night, Hercules sails 'to the mainland opposite', and finds himself ... in the Caucasus, which is generally thought to be in the extreme north-east. This can be understood only if the Caucasus was located not on the Black Sea, but on the shores of the outer Ocean, where, protruding like a peninsula, it would form a gulf. The journey through the Ocean from the far west to the north-east, where the Caucasus was thought to be, is similar to the journey of the Argonauts through the Ocean, also from the Caucasus, where Phasis flew, to the south of Libya, or in the opposite direction – to Gibraltar.

3 Greek novels and utopia

From these epic stories originate the oceanic travels of the heroes of Greek utopian⁸ novels and adventure stories, as they tell of a fantastic journey to unknown lands, because Odysseus and the Argonauts also travelled for the most part through the unknown, fantastic oceanic space.⁹ At the beginning

6 Of the recent works on Hercules in the northern Black Sea, see Braund (2010: 89-101).

7 The same account is presented in Pherecydes (3 F 17 Jacoby): 'καθ' ἧρας δε τὴν Λιβύην, κατέβη ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν τὴν ἔξω κειμένην. καὶ λαβὼν χρυσοῦν δέπας παρὰ Ἡλίου, διαβαίνει ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς Πέρην, [διὰ τε τῆς ἔξω τῆς γῆς θαλάσσης,] διὰ τε γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης, καὶ διὰ τοῦ Ἰλκεανοῦ πλέων' ('Coming to Libya, he made his way to the outer sea and took a golden cup from Helios, sailed in it to the opposite bank by land and sea, sailing on the Ocean').

8 On the general problems of the presentation of geographical knowledge of Utopia see Geus (2000: 55-90).

9 In his *True Story*, Lucian, very wittily and, as always, sarcastically, mocks the authors who write novels about fictional travel in fantastic lands, when he observes: 'ἀρχηγὸς δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ διδάσκαλος τῆς τοιαύτης βωμολοχίας ὁ τοῦ Ὀμήρου Ὀδυσσεύς, τοῖς περὶ τὸν Ἀλκίονον διηγούμενος ἀνέμων τε δουλείαν καὶ μονοφθάλμους καὶ ὠμοφάγους καὶ ἀγρίους τινὰς ἀνθρώπους, ἔτι δὲ πολυκέφαλα ζῶα καὶ τὰς ὑπὸ φαρμάκων τῶν ἑταίρων μεταβολάς, οἷς πολλὰ ἐκεῖνος πρὸς ἰδιώτας ἀνθρώπους τοὺς

of the 'utopian' tradition stood, of course, Plato with his Atlantis (Rohde 1876: 197-199), which was located on an island (or islands) somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean. One of the first after Plato was Theopompus, who told of the mythical land Meropis. A number of other authors also worked in this genre are Euhemerus of Messena, who described in his work the non-existent island Panchaea; Herodorus, who handled in a rational manner the story of Hercules, and Iambulus, who described his journey to the Islands of the Blessed (on these utopias, see Clay and Purvis 1999; Holzberg 1996: 621-653). It is interesting to note that all the authors of utopian novels placed the islands with fantastic peoples in the Ocean: Plato's Atlantis is in the Atlantic Ocean; Theopompus's Meropis lies in the western or northern Ocean; the island of Euhemerus, Panchaea, in the eastern Ocean; Iambulus's Islands of the Blessed in the southern Ocean; Lucian of Samosata's fantastic islands in the parody *A True Story* in the western Ocean.

There are two novels that are in line with this kind of literature, in which the characters sail in search of the mysterious and legendary islands (of the Hyperboreans and Thule) in the Ocean, including the northern sea route: the novel of Hecataeus of Abdera 'On the Hyperboreans' (Περὶ Ὑπερβορέων) and the novel of Antonius Diogenes 'The Wonders beyond Thule' (Τὰ ὑπὲρ Θούλην ἄπιστα). Only a few fragments of Hecataeus's novel (fourth-third centuries BC) have reached us (see further Podossinov 2012: 146-185). If we try to build a travel itinerary, the following picture appears: The author, or character of the novel, sets out for some reason (most likely, for cognitive reasons) for the land of the Hyperboreans, and sails there, probably through the Black Sea, the Cimmerian Bosphorus (now the Straits of Kerch). Then his way (already semi-fantastic) leads probably to the Sea of Azov and the lower reaches of the Tanais-Don, and then through the Kuma-Manych depression into the Caspian Sea. The Caspian Sea was in ancient times usually considered to be connected to the northern Ocean by a strait; that is why the hero was able to go through the northern Ocean along the coast of Western Europe. Hecataeus calls the northern Ocean *Amalchius*, which in Scythian means 'Frozen'. After sailing through the northern Ocean to the north-western borders of Europe, the traveller finds himself on an island located north of the Celtic coast and no less than Sicily in size. This is the geographic

Φαίακας ἑτεροτεύσατο' ('Their guide and instructor in this sort of charlatanry is Homer's Odysseus, who tells Alcinous and his court about winds in bondage, one-eyed men, cannibals and savages; also about animals with many heads, and transformations of his comrades wrought with drugs. This stuff, and much more like it, is what our friend humbugged the illiterate Phaeacians with!') (*True Story* I.3, trans. Harmon 1913).

outline of the novel 'On the Hyperboreans'. To Antonius Diogenes, who must have lived in the first century AD, is attributed a novel known from ninth-century extractions of the Byzantine patriarch Photius and fragments in three papyri (on the novel, see Morgan 1982: 475-490). This work (after Photius, 109a.13-14) tells the story of Deinias, who left his homeland with his son Demochares and, by passing through the Pontus (Black Sea), came from the Caspian and Hyrcanian sea to the mountains, called the Rhipheans, and to the mouth of the river Tanais (modern Don). Then, because of the extreme cold, they turned to the northern Ocean, and finally went to the east and came to the place of the sunrise. Then, wandering for a long time and having experienced many different adventures, they passed to the coast of the Outer Sea surrounding the earth. They arrived at the island of Thule and there stopped for a while. Besides this travel, protagonists of Antonius Diogenes' novel made other long trips in many parts of the *oecumene*.

In both novels, as in the *Odyssey* and in the *Argonautica*, oceanic sailing is assumed (cf. Romm 1992: 204-211): the two heroes travel through the northern Ocean, both in pursuit of scientific knowledge, but Deinias sails from eastern Europe to the east around Asia and Africa, arriving back in the northern Ocean, while Hecataeus sails from the same Caspian Sea to the west. So, from Homer to Antonius Diogenes sailing in the northern Ocean (which is in fact the Baltic Sea) was considered possible.

4 Ancient geography

Finally, scientific and geographical works of ancient authors strengthened the belief in the possibility of navigation along the northern sea route, which is understandable, since people until the end of antiquity and in the Middle Ages continued to believe that the earth (*oecumene*) was surrounded by the Ocean. I am referring to the 'scientific' works of Pytheas of Massalia, Poseidonius, Pomponius Mela, Pliny the Elder, and others.

While Herodotus wrote that 'ἡ δὲ Εὐρώπη οὔτε εἰ περίρρυτος ἐστὶ γινώσκειται πρὸς οὐδαμῶν ἀνθρώπων' ('the boundaries of Europe are quite unknown, and there is not a man who can say whether any sea girds it round either on the north or on the east') (IV, 45; trans. Rawlinson 1859 III: 32), Pytheas, at the end of the fourth century BC, sailed along the coast of western Europe to the north, described the legendary island of Thule and the surrounding area, and reported that he had sailed along the northern coast of Europe to the border of Europe and Asia, to the River Tanais (Strabo, *Geographia* II, 4, 1). Despite the long tradition of viewing the northern Ocean as the northern

border of Europe, some subsequent writers (e.g. Dicaearchus, Polybius, Artemidorus, Strabo) gave no credence to the reports of Pytheas. Only at the turn of the eras and later, when the Roman fleet travelled from the Lower Rhine to the northern sea and then to the coast of Jutland, did the existence of the Sea-Ocean in the north of Europe become a firm fact. The idea of the northern (Scythian, Kronius, Ice) Ocean bordering the north of Eurasia made possible – of course, only speculatively – sea traffic along the northern sea route. As proof of the possibility of such a voyage the Roman author Pomponius Mela of the first century AD tells the following story:

Ultra Caspium sinum quidnam esset, ambiguum aliquamdiu fuit, idemne oceanus an tellus infesta frigoribus sine ambitu ac sine fine proiecta. Sed praeter physicos Homerumque qui universum orbem mari circumfusum esse dixerunt, Cornelius Nepos ut recentior, auctoritate sic certior; testem autem rei Quintum Metellum Celerem adicit, eumque ita rettulisse commemorat: cum Galliae pro consule praeesset, Indos quosdam a rege Botorum dono sibi datos; unde in eas terras devenissent requirendo cognosse, vi tempestatum ex Indicis aequoribus abreptos, emensosque quae intererant, tandem in Germaniae litora exisse. Restat ergo pelagus, sed reliqua lateris eiusdem adsiduo gelu durantur et ideo deserta sunt. (*De chorographia* III, 44-45)

For quite some time it was unclear what lay beyond Caspian Bay, whether it was the same Ocean or a hostile, cold land that extended without a border and without end. But in addition to natural philosophers and Homer [cf. *Iliad* XXI, 195-197], who all said that the entire known world was surrounded by sea, there is Cornelius Nepos, who is more dependable as an authority because he is more modern. Nepos, however, adduces Quintus Metellus Celer as witness of the fact, and he records that Metellus reported it as follows. When Celer was proconsul of Gaul, certain Indians were presented to him as a gift by the king of the Boii.¹⁰ By asking what route they had followed to reach there, Celer learned that they had been snatched by storm from Indian waters, that they had traversed the intervening region, and that finally they had arrived on the shores of Germany. Ergo, the sea is continuous, but the rest of that same coast is frozen by the unremitting cold and is therefore deserted. (Romer 1998: 113-114)

10 *Boii* – Reynold's conjecture (1711). Bots (*Boti*), as they are called by Mela, are not mentioned by other ancient authors, so they are often identified with the German tribe *Boii* who lived on the middle reaches of the Danube.

By the ‘natural philosophers’ (*physici*), Mela apparently means early Ionic scientists, about whom Herodotus wrote:

Γελῶ δὲ ὀρέων γῆς περιόδους γράψαντας πολλοὺς ἤδη καὶ οὐδένα νόον ἔχόντως ἐξηγησάμενον, οἱ Ὠκεανόν τε ῥέοντα γράφουσι πέριξ τὴν γῆν, ἐοῦσαν κυκλοτερέα ὡς ἀπὸ τόρνου.

For my part, I cannot but laugh when I see numbers of persons drawing maps of the world without having any reason to guide them; making, as they do, the ocean-stream to run all round the earth, and the earth itself to be an exact circle, as if described by a pair of compasses. (IV, 36; trans. Rawlinson 1859 III: 25-26)

In the passage of Mela, reference is made to an unknown work by Cornelius Nepos (d. ca. 27 BC): judging by the numerous references to his opinions in geographical books by Pliny, we can conclude that Nepos wrote a geographical work, which could be *Exempla* or *Chorographia* (Detlefsen 1909: 153-154; Luisi 1988: 41-51). Quintus Caecilius Metellus Celer was pro-consul of Gallia Cisalpina in northern Italy in 62 BC.

A quarter-century later, the Roman scholar Pliny the Elder repeated this story with a few changes:

Idem Nepos de septentrionali circuitu tradit Quinto Metello Celeri, Afranii in consulatu conlegae, sed tum Galliae proconsuli, Indos a rege Suevorum (variant: Sueborum) dono datos, qui ex India commercii causa navigantes tempestatibus essent in Germaniam abrepti. (*Naturalis Historia* II, 170)

Nepos also records as to the northern circuit that Quintus Metellus Celer, colleague of Afranius in the consulship, but at the time pro-consul of Gaul, received from the King of the Swabians (Sueui or Suebi) a present of some Indians, who on a trade voyage had been carried off their course by storms to Germany. (Rackham 1949: 305)

Thus, we have quite a fantastic story of how some Indians were brought by storm to the Atlantic (or Baltic) shores of Europe in the year 62 BC (on this dating, see André 1982: 46-48) when Metellus was a pro-consul of Gallia Cisalpina. These people are said to have come from India along the northern sea route (see Thomson 1948: 199). This story has recently generated much speculation about who those Indians were and from where they came to the north coast of Germany. I am not going to discuss all these hypotheses here; it is enough to mention that the Indians were viewed sometimes as

Eskimos, or North American Indians, or as Indians of India who came to northern Europe through Central Asia, the Caspian Sea, southern Russian steppes and eastern Europe, or through the Red Sea and the Mediterranean and the Straits of Gibraltar, or as Celts, or Finns, or Wends.

And here is how the ‘intensive navigation’ through the northern sea passage is described by Pliny the Elder in the second book of his *Natural History*:

A Gadibus columnisque Herculis Hispaniae et Galliarum circuitu totus hodie navigatur occidens. septentrionalis vero oceanus maiore ex parte navigatus est, auspiciis Divi Augusti Germaniam classe circumvecta ad Cimbrorum promunturium et inde inmenso mari prospecto aut fama cognito Scythicam ad plagam et umore nimio rigentia. propter quod minime verisimile est illic maria deficere, ubi umoris vis superet. iuxta vero ab ortu ex Indico mari sub eodem sidere pars tota vergens in Caspium mare pernavigata est Macedonum armis Seleuco atque Antiocho regnantibus, qui et Seleucida et Antiochida ab ipsis appellari voluere. et circa Caspium multa oceani litora explorata parvoque brevius quam totus hinc aut illinc septentrio eremigatus [...] (*Naturalis Historia* II, 67-68)

Today the whole of the West is navigated from Cadiz and the Straits of Gibraltar all round Spain and France. But the larger part of the Northern Ocean was explored under the patronage of his late Majesty Augustus¹¹, when a fleet sailed round Germany to the promontory of the Cimbri, and thence seeing a vast sea in front of them or learning of it by report, reached the region of Scythia and localities numb with excessive moisture.

11 This was a campaign of the Roman fleet in AD 5 under the rule of Tiberius Caesar Augustus. Listing in his autobiography the most significant developments in the years of his reign, Augustus also mentions this: ‘Classis mea per Oceanum ab ostio Rheni ad solis orientis regionem usque ad fines Cimbrorum navigavit, quo neque terra neque mari quisquam Romanus ante ide tempus adit’ (‘I sailed my ships on the ocean from the mouth of the Rhine to the east region up to the borders of the Cimbri, where no Roman had gone before that time by land or sea’) (Augustus, *RGDA* 26, trans. Bushnell 1998). Strabo reported on the embassy and gifts brought by the Cimbri to Augustus (*Geographia* VII, 2, 1). Roman sources also tell us about the campaign of Drusus Germanicus, who may have reached the tip of Jutland in 11 BC (see Tacitus, *Germania* 34; Velleius Paterculus, II, 106, 3; Suetonius, *Claudius* 1; Dio Cassius, LIV). Van Son (1962: 146-152) believes that Tiberius in AD 5 reached the Norwegian coast via the Skagen peninsula, and Pliny used in his report some archives of the imperial navy. According to L. Weibull, the Roman fleet only reached the mouth of the River Elbe, where Cimbri lived (1934: 80-143), other scholars (e.g. Melin 1960: 3-4) argue that the Romans sailed to Cape Skagen in Jutland where the view of the Baltic Sea opened to them. E. Shtehov thinks that as a result of the expedition of AD 12 Romans entered the mouth of the Oder (Stechow 1948: 240-241). On geographical data obtained during the campaign Tiberius, see Bernecker (1989); cf. recently Geus/Tupikova (2013: 125-143).

On this account it is extremely improbable that there is no sea in those parts, as there is a superabundance of the moist element there. But next, on the Eastward side, the whole quarter under the same star stretching from the Indian Ocean to the Caspian Sea was navigated throughout by Macedonian forces in the reigns of Seleucus and Antiochus, who desired that it should be called both Seleucis and Antiochis after themselves. And many coasts of Ocean round the Caspian have been explored, and very nearly the whole of the North has been completely traversed from one side to the other by galleys [...] (Rackham 1949: 303)

Here, Pliny apparently speaks of the famous voyage of Patrocles in the Caspian Sea (see also *Naturalis Historia* VI, 31), which he made between 285 and 282 BC for research purposes on behalf of Seleucus I and Antiochus I (cf. Strabo, *Geographia* II, 1, 6; XI, 7, 1; Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* VI, 58; see Bunbury 1879: 568, 572-574; El'nitskij 1962: 72-75).¹² Reaching 'the region of Scythia' refers to northern Pontic Scythia seen from the Baltic Sea. Like Gaul, reaching with its sides the coasts of two seas (the Mediterranean and the northern Ocean), Scythia (or later Sarmatia) was seen in Roman times as a location of the area between the two seas. The reference to traversing the north 'from one side to the other' reflects an idea of eastern and western coastal parts of the 'mouth' of the Caspian Sea: Pliny was of the opinion, widely held in the ancient world, that the Caspian Sea was a gulf of the Arctic Ocean and not an inland body of water. In this account, according to Pliny (here and in *Naturalis Historia* IV, 97), the Romans reached in Jutland the most northern peninsula Cape Skagen (= Cape of Cimbri) and from there saw and heard the stories of the Baltic Sea. Ptolemy's knowledge about this region makes it plausible that the Romans made reconnaissance missions in the Baltic Sea.

One reason for such a view of northern Eurasia and the northern Ocean is the fact that India, Scythia, and Celtica were considered to be neighbours on the mental map of ancient authors, so communication among them by sea seemed quite possible. For example, Diodorus refers to the Scythians who inhabit the country bordering upon India (Diodorus, *Bibliotheca historica* II, 43) and Plutarch states: 'εἰσὶ δ' οἱ τὴν Κελτικὴν διὰ βάθος χώρας καὶ μέγεθος ἀπὸ τῆς ἕξω θαλάσσης καὶ τῶν ὑπαρκτίων κλιμάτων πρὸς ἥλιον ἀνίσχοντα κατὰ τὴν Μαιώτιν ἐπιστρέφουσιν ἀπτεσθαι τῆς Ποντικῆς Σκυθίας λέγουσι, κάκειθεν

¹² The names *Seleucian* and *Antiochian Sea* appeared in the early third century BC: Seleucus I Nicator, one of the famous companions of Alexander the Great, was the founder of the Seleucid kingdom. Antiochus I Soter, his son, ruled part of this kingdom during the life of his father, and after his father's death in 281 he ruled the whole state until 261 BC.

Map 2 The contours of Eurasia according to ancient ideas. The dashed line superimposed on a modern map indicates generally conceived limits of cartographic space.



Based on Dion 1977: 220; illustrated by Oona Oceana Schwanekamp

τὰ γένη μεμείχθαι' ('There are some who say that Gaul was wide and large enough to reach from the outer sea and the subarctic regions to the Maeotic Lake on the east, where it bordered on Pontic Scythia, and that from that point on Gauls and Scythians were mingled') (*Marius* XI, 4; trans. Perrin 1920: 489). It must be borne in mind that ancient authors did not know Scandinavia as a peninsula; at best, it was known as an island (already in the works of Pomponius Mela and Pliny). The Baltic Sea, thus, practically served for the greater part of Europe as the northern Ocean.

The analysis of geographical texts shows that the real proportions of northern Eurasia were minimised by geographers to a great degree. The northern borders of Eurasia, imposed on a modern map, would run from the west in an eastbound direction along the Baltic coast (without Scandinavia and north-eastern Europe), then turn southwards to the northern Caspian

region (the mouth of the Volga), then cross the lands of Bactria and Choresm in Middle Asia, which were well known after the campaign of Alexander the Great, and go straight southwards to the east of India. This means that practically the whole territory of Siberia, the Far East, China and South-East Asia were, so to say, cut off (Podossinov 2002: 183-191) (see Map 2).

Hence, we can say that in ancient times there was an idea of navigability of the Arctic Ocean and the opportunity to pass through the northern Ocean passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific, even if this view was based on cosmological and utopian ideas of the northern end of the *oecumene*.

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2 *Austmarr* on the mental map of medieval Scandinavians

Tatjana Jackson

Abstract

Austmarr, according to the sagas, belonged to the *Austrhálfu* ('the Eastern quarter') of the oecumene of medieval Scandinavians. The article deals with the 'mental map' of medieval Scandinavians as it is reflected in Old Norse-Icelandic texts, primarily sagas. It shows that the early Scandinavians imagined the inhabited world (or the world visited by them) as consisting of four segments, in accordance with the four routes, corresponding to the four cardinal directions, North, South, East and West. The quadripartite division of the oecumene has found its reflection, among other things, in a number of place-names with cardinal points as their main component.

Keywords: *Austmarr* ('the Eastern Sea'), the Baltic Sea, Old Norse-Icelandic literature, skaldic poetry, Þjóðólfr ór Hvini, *Ynglingatal*, Old Norse spatial ideas, four-partial world picture, *Austrhálfu* ('the Eastern quarter [of the world]'), mental map of medieval Scandinavians

1 Introduction

The key notion uniting a group of scholars into the *Austmarr* network (see <http://www.austmarr.org/>) – *Austmarr* – is in fact a *hapax legomenon* since it occurs only once in the written record of the Old Norse-Icelandic literature. Nevertheless, it is easy to decipher: posing no problems in translation, the hydronym is traditionally understood as a designation of the Baltic Sea. Old Norse-Icelandic literature has reached us in a large number of works, written mostly in the vernacular, that belong to a variety of genres. These

are runic inscriptions of the tenth and eleventh centuries, skaldic verses composed in the ninth to eleventh centuries but preserved in the sagas written down in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, the sagas of several sub-genres (the Icelandic Family Sagas, *Íslendingasögur*, describing life in Iceland after the settlement of the island; the kings' sagas, *konungasögur*, writing the history of Norway; the *fornaldarsögur*, sagas of ancient times, etc.), Norwegian chronicles and Icelandic historical works of the twelfth century; and many more (see McTurk 2005). Thematically these texts are connected with Norse mythology and history, but they also contain some information significant for a historian of Eastern Europe, and particularly interesting in this respect are the toponymic data (see Jackson 2003). The Baltic Sea in all these sources (with the exception of a Latin chronicle *Historia Norwegie* where it bears the name of *mare Balticum*) is attested as the Eastern Sea (*Austmarr*, *Eystrasalt*). The main argument of this article is that this particular naming corresponds with the general complex of Old Norse spatial ideas.

2 *Austmarr* ('The Eastern Sea')

The only mention of the hydronym *Austmarr* belongs to the Icelandic skald Þjóðólfr of Hvinir in his poem *Ynglingatal*, which is thought by the majority of scholars (see Åkerlund 1939; Turville-Petre 1982) to have been the main source of *Ynglinga saga*, the first saga of the compendium of the Kings' Sagas, *Heimskringla*, by Snorri Sturluson (ca. 1230), whence this poem is known to us. Out of 32 skaldic stanzas quoted in the saga, 27 are by Þjóðólfr. The saga opens with a description of the world circle (*kringla heimsins*) in accordance with medieval geographical ideas. This is followed by the original presentation, found nowhere else in this form in the Old Norse corpus, of a learned legend concerning the settlement of Scandinavia by the immigrants from Asia – pagan gods headed by Óðinn. Then follows the most detailed account of the Yngling dynasty that got its name from Freyr:

Freyr hét Yngvi qðru nafni. Yngva nafn var lengi síðan haft í hans ætt fyrir tígnarnafn, ok Ynglingar váru síðan kallaðir hans ættmenn. (*Hkr* 1941: 24)

Another name for Freyr was Yngvi. The name Yngvi was used in his family long after as honorific title, and his descendants were called Ynglingar. (*Hkr* 2011: 14)

The account includes information on the nature of their rule and on the circumstances of the death of each representative of the dynasty. The list starts with Óðinn, and the last to be named is Rognvaldr heiðumhæri:

Rognvaldr hét son Óláfs, er konungr var á Vestfold eptir fozður sinn. Hann var kallaðr heiðumhæri. Um hann orti Þjóðólfr inn hvinverski *Ynglingatal*. Þar segir hann svá:

Pat veitk bazt
und blóum himni
kenninafn,
svát konungr eigi,
es Rognvaldr
reiðar stjóri
heiðumhór
of heitinn er (*Hkr* 1941: 83)

The son of Óláfr, who was king in Vestfold after his father, was called Rognvaldr. He was known as *heiðumhæri* ('Nobly Grey'). In his honour Þjóðólfr of Hvinir composed *Ynglingatal*. In it he says this:

32. I know to be best *Ynglingatal* 37
under blue skies
the byname
borne by the king,
for Rognvaldr,
ruler of the host,
'Nobly Grey'
has as his name (*Hkr* 2011: 47).

Þjóðólfr of Hvinir was an Icelandic skald of the late ninth century, and the prevailing view allowed no doubt in this dating of his poem. However, Claus Krag (1991) put forward the idea of a much later origin of *Ynglingatal*, claiming it to have been a learned compilation of the twelfth century written with the aim of proving the legitimacy of the Norwegian kings. His reasons were accepted and even supported with extra argumentation by Peter Sawyer (1992). The contrary opinion was expressed simultaneously by Gro Steinsland (1991), who was not familiar with Krag's work. Decisive and strong disagreement with Krag's conclusions on the date of *Ynglingatal* was formulated by Bjarni Fidjestøl (1994), C.D. Sapp (2002), Olof Sundqvist (2002), John McKinnell (2009: 124-125, n.4), and some others. To my mind, the latter arguments sound more convincing, and I will add below my own argument in support of the early dating.

In chapter 32 of his *Ynglinga saga* Snorri Sturluson quotes a strophe by Þjóðólfr:

Yngvarr hét sonr Eysteins konungs, er þá var konungr yfir Svíaveldi. Hann var hermaðr mikill ok var opt á herskipum, því at þá var áðr Svíaríki mjök herskátt, bæði af Dǫnum ok Austrvegsmonnum. Yngvarr konungr gerði frið við Dani, tók þá at herja um Austrvegu. Á einu sumri hafði hann her úti ok fór til Eistlands ok herjaði þar um sumarit, sem heitir at Steini. Þá kómu Eistr ofan með mikinn her, ok áttu þeir orrostu. Var þá landherrinn svá drjúgr, at Svíar fengu eigi mótstöðu. Fell þá Yngvarr konungr, en lið hans flýði. Hann er heygðr þar við sjá sjálfan. Þat er á Aðalsýslu. Fóru Svíar heim eptir ósigr þenna. Svá segir Þjóðólfr:

Þat stókk upp,
at Yngvari
Sýslu kind
of sóit hafði
ok ljóshǫmum
við lagar hjarta
herr eistneskr
at hilmi vá,
ok austmarr
jǫfri fǫllnum
Gymis ljóð
at gamni kveðr (*Hkr* 1941: 61-62).

The son of King Eysteinn, who was king over the realm of the *Svíar* then, was called Yngvarr. He was a great warrior and was often out on warships, because up to that time the land of the *Svíar* had been very much subject to raids, both from Danes and the eastern Baltic peoples. King Yngvarr made peace with the Danes, and then began to raid around the Baltic. One summer he took out an army and went to Eistland (Estonia) and raided during the summer, at the place called Steinn. Then *Eistr* (Estonians) came down with a large army, and they had a battle. The native army was so numerous that the *Svíar* could put up no resistance. Then King Yngvarr died and his army fled. He is buried in a mound there, close by the sea. This is in *Aðalsýsla*. The *Svíar* went home after this defeat. So says Þjóðólfr:

23. It was said *Ynglingatal* (25)
that Yngvarr was
by Sýsla people

put to death,
 and off 'sea's heart'
 the host of Eistr
 slew the leader,
 the light-hued one,
 and the eastern sea
 sings the lay
 of Gyimir to cheer
 the fallen king (*Hkr 2011*: 34, with my emendations).

The hydronym *Austmarr* is formed from *austr* ('east') and *marr* ('the sea'). Richard Cleasby and Guðbrandr Vigfússon define it as 'the east sea, the east Baltic' and point for comparison to *Estmere* in Wulfstan's account in King Alfred's Old English *Orosius* (*IED*: 35). The meaning of the latter is somewhat narrower, as the *Estmere* is thought to have been a designation of the Vistula Lagoon, or the whole Gdansk Bay (cf. *Svod* 1991: 140), although their origin might have been the same: both names could have emerged as a designation of a 'gulf that stretches from the Western Ocean towards the east', to quote the *Vita Karoli magni* (*VKM*, written ca. 817-836) by the Frankish scholar Einhard: 'Sinus quidam ab occidentali oceano orientem versus porrigitur' (ch. 12) ('A certain gulf runs from the western ocean towards the east').

Returning to our text, let us start with the skaldic strophe. It relates that Yngvarr goes to *Eistland* (Estonia): he is killed by the people of *Sýsla* (*Sýslu kind*) and an Estonian force (*herr eistneskr*). *Sýsla* is an abbreviation of the Old Norse name for the island of Saaremaa (Ösel), *Eysýsla* (see *IED*: 616). I can hardly agree with Henrik Schück that *sýsla* in Þjóðólfr's strophe was not a place-name, but a special term for the designation of *skattland* (Schück 1910). To my mind, the identity of *Sýsla* and *Eysýsla* in Þjóðólfr's strophe can be verified by the anonymous chronicle *Historia Norwegie* written down in the 1160s or 1170s (see Mortensen 2011: 59), thus predating Snorri's writing, and to some extent independent of saga tradition. The place of Yngvarr's death is also called here *Eycisla*: 'Huius filius Ynguar, qui cognominatus est Canutus, in expeditione occisus est in quadam insula Baltici Maris, que ab indigenis Eycisla uocatur' ('His son Yngvar, nicknamed the Hoary, was killed by the inhabitants while campaigning on an island in the Baltic called Ösel' [*HN* 2003: 78-79]). *Lagar hjarta* ('the heart of the water') is a kenning used to denote a stone or an island. Snorri is likely to have given preference to the first meaning ('a stone') and designated the place where Yngvarr had fallen with a popular Scandinavian place-name *at Steini* (used by him three more times: for a farmstead in *Svǫþjóð hin mikla* and two places in Norway; *Hkr*

1941: 27, 93; 1945: 76), while the skald might have meant ‘an island’, i.e. *Sýsla* (‘Saaremaa’) (see Schück 1910: 144; Åkerlund 1939: 105; *Hkr* 1893-1901 IV: 19).

Snorri, in turn, sends Yngvarr from Denmark around the Baltic (*um Austrvegu*). He mentions *Eistland*, since (according to his skaldic source of information) Yngvarr was killed by the Estonian force (*herr eistneskr*). But he reads the skaldic *Sýsla* as an abbreviation of *Aðalsýsla*, a designation for the Estonian mainland lying across the Väinameri Strait from the Lääne-Eesti saarestik (i.e. the western Estonian archipelago = Moonsund archipelago) to which Saaremaa belongs, namely Läänemaa. Regardless of whose reading is correct, that of Snorri or of the majority of scholars, why should the waters in the Vistula Lagoon sing the songs of Gymir to the delight of the Swedish ruler who perished on Saaremaa or in Läänemaa? Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson quite correctly, in my opinion, renders *Austmarr* as *Eystrasalt* (*Hkr* 1941: 62), using a widespread Old Norse designation for the Baltic Sea: *hit eystra salt* (literally ‘the more easterly sea’). I will not deal here with the latter name, as it has been discussed in great detail by Kristel Zilmer (2006). As for the former name, it occupies a justifiable place in the semantic row of place-names with the root *aust-* that was being formed in the early stages of Scandinavian movement towards the east and their penetration into Eastern Europe (see Jackson 2003), which corroborates my opinion of the early origin of the poem *Ynglingatal*. As Kristel Zilmer writes in her other article on the Baltic Sea, where she shares my outline of the Old Norse mental map, ‘the general concept of the East Sea accords with the Old Norse mental map showing the sea as part of the eastern quarter of the world’ (Zilmer 2010: 117).

3 *Austrhálfa* (‘The Eastern quarter [of the world]’)

In several works of Old Norse literature, the earth (*oecumene*) is divided into three parts (cf. the opening phrases of geographical treatises, the beginning of *Ynglinga saga*, the Prologue to Snorri’s *Edda* and some others). The division of the *oecumene* into three ‘parts’, associated with Noah’s sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet (analogous to the ancient subdivision of the land into three continents, Asia, Europe, and Africa), became traditional in the medieval Latin cosmography of Europe. (On corresponding Classical cosmography, see Podossinov, this volume.) In those cases where a Scandinavian author wrote a ‘learned’ introduction to his work within the framework of this tradition, the world was divided into three parts. By contrast, in describing geographical objects, distant voyages, and sea routes Scandinavians exploited the idea, traditional for them as well as for other Germanic and even Indo-European

peoples, that the world was divided into four segments according to the four cardinal directions. The four-part world picture of medieval Scandinavians finds its reflection in the division of countries, towns, provinces, and regions in the Germanic North, and the earth itself into four quarters, stated by historians (Müller 1938: 73). Appeal to the four cardinal directions is attested in many rituals and magical ceremonies of the ancient Germans, in their folklore and popular traditions (Stegemann 1931-1932: 32-34).

Many years ago, my attention was attracted by one saga text. In *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*, written by Sturla Þórðarson in 1264-1265, which belongs to the Icelandic kings' sagas and is famous for its documentary character as it describes the events of a very recent past based both on real eyewitness reports and on the archives of the Royal Chancellery, there occurs a very peculiar passage, from the point of view of spatial orientation:

Sumar þetta foru þeir herferd til Biarmalandz, Andres skialldarband ok Jvar vtuik. Þeir hofdu jfff skip. En su sok var til ferdar þeirrar, at hofdu farit kaupferd til Biarmalandz nockurum vetrum adr, Andres af Sannmelingum ok Sueinn Sigridarson, Augmundr af Spanheime ok margir adrir. Þeir hofdu jj skip ok foru aptur vm haustit, Andres ok Sueinn. Enn þeir satu eptir med annat skipit, Helge Bogransson ok skiparar hans. Augmundr af Spanheime var ok eptir ok for vm haustit austr j Sudrdalariki med sueinvn sinum ok varnade. En Haleygar voru missattir vid Biarmakong. En vm vetrin fara Biarmar at þeim ok drapu alla skipshofnina. Enn er Augmundr spurdi þat, for hann austr j Holmgarda ok þadan et eystra vt til hafis ok letti eigi, fyr en hann kom til Jorsala. (*HákHák* 1910-1987: 371-372)

That summer they, Andrew shieldband and Ivar outwick set off on warfare for Bjarmaland. They had four ships. But that was the cause of their going that these men had fared some winters before on a trading voyage to Bjarmaland, Andrew of Seven-times, and Sweyn Sigurd's son, and Augmund of Spanheim, and many others. They had two ships. And Andrew and Sweyn came back in the autumn; but the rest sat behind with the other ship, and Helgi Borgan's son and his shipmates. Augmund of Spanheim also stayed behind, and fared in the autumn *east* into Sudrdalerick with his men and traded. But the men of Halogaland were at variance with the king of the Bjarmir. But in the winter the Bjarmir fell on them and slew all the ship's company. But when Augmund heard that he fared *east* to Holmgardar and thence *by the eastern route* to the sea; and did not stay till he came to Jerusalem (*Icelandic Sagas* 1894: 73, with my emendations and emphasis added).

Even with the slightest idea of a map of Eastern Europe, one can understand that the directions indicated have nothing to do with the real ones: from *Bjarmaland*, a land near the White Sea, Augmundr goes *austr* ('east') to *Suðrdalaríki* ('the land of Suzdal'), and thence *austr* ('east') to *Hólmgarðr* ('the land of Novgorod'), and from there *hit eystra* ('by the eastern, or more easterly, route') to the sea, and thus as far as *Jórsalir* ('Jerusalem'). The number of examples of this kind could easily be expanded. Thus, we read in *Fagrskinna* of Earl Eiríkr Hákonarson that from *Aldeigjuborg* ('Ladoga') he moved further *austr* ('east') to *Garðaríki* ('Land of the Rus') (which in fact is *south*); Snorri Sturluson tells that Magnús Ólafsson travelled *austan* ('from the east') from *Hólmgarðr* to *Aldeigjuborg* (which in fact is *north*); *Kristni saga* relates that Þorvaldr Koðránsson and Stefnir Þorgilsson travelled from Norway as far as *Jórsalaheimr* ('Palestine'), and thence to *Miklagarðr* ('Constantinople'), then to *Kænugarðr* ('Kiev') and from there *hit eystra* ('by the eastern, or more easterly, route') to *Nepr* ('the Dnieper') (which in fact is *north-west*), and he died not far from *Pallteskja* ('Polotsk'); in *Hálfðanar saga Eysteinnssonar* Úlfkell's route from Lake Ladoga to Norway is described as a way *norðr* ('north') (which in fact is *west*). These examples are taken from sagas of very different character, which emphasises the fact that the practice seems to have been rather consistent over time and independent of the subject matter.

The question naturally arises whether saga authors possessed inaccurate information about the lands lying to the east of Scandinavia. The picture can be clarified if we pay attention to voyages in other directions, for instance, to the west. Snorri Sturluson gives a good example of this kind in chapter 30 of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*:

Síðan hélt Óláfr Tryggvason til Englands ok herjaði víða um landit. Hann sigldi allt norðr til Norðimbralands ok herjaði þar. Þaðan hélt hann norðr til Skotlands ok herjaði þar víða. Þaðan sigldi hann til Suðreyja ok átti þar nokkurar orrostur. Síðan hélt hann suðr til Manar ok barðisk þar. Hann herjaði ok víða um Írland. Þá hélt hann til Bretlands ok herjaði víða þat land ok svá þar, er kallat er Kumraland. Þaðan sigldi hann vestr til Vallands ok herjaði þar. Þá sigldi hann vestan ok ætlaði til Englands. Þá kom hann í eyjar þær, er Syllingar heita, vestr í hafit frá Englandi (*Hkr* 1941: 264).

After that, Ólaf Tryggvason sailed to England, harrying far and wide in that land. He sailed all the way north to Northumberland and harried there. From there he sailed north to Scotland and harried there far and wide. Then he set his course to the Hebrides, where he had some battles. From

there he sailed south to the Isle of Man and had some engagements there. He also harried far and wide in Ireland. Then he sailed to Wales, harrying that land far and wide, and also the country called Cumberland. From there he sailed west [south] to Valland [France] and harried there. Thereupon he steered east [north], intending to reach England. Then he arrived at the Scilly Islands, which lie in the sea west of England (*Hkr* 1964: 169).

So we see that Óláfr Tryggvason came to England from Norway, sailed north to Northumberland, then again north to Scotland, from there south to the Isle of Man, and then to Wales. But suddenly he sails *vestr* ('west'), from Wales to France, and *vestan* ('from the west') from France to England. These directions are not simply 'incorrect', but are in strong opposition to the 'correct' ones (note how Lee M. Hollander gives in brackets in his translation those directions that he thinks Snorri should have used, and how inaccurate he is in translating the Old Icelandic terms of direction, replacing *vestan* ('from the west') of the original with the English *east*). One can naturally find two possible explanations of this 'incorrectness' on Snorri's part: 1) either he was merely mistaken, or, 2) in his understanding, France belonged to the Western lands (*Vestrland*), and a trip to France is described not in its relationship to England, where the hero has just been, but on the basis of some other principles of orientation.

In fact, this is not an accidental mistake made by Snorri. France is understood as a western country not only by him, but also by the anonymous author of another compendium, *Fagrskinna*. Thus, speaking about Sigurðr Jórsalafari ('the Crusader'), both authors tell us that Sigurðr had come from Norway to England and that the next spring he sailed 'vestr til Vallands' ('west to France'). His further trip to Spain also turns out to be a western journey. He comes 'to Lisbon' ('til Lizibónar'), which is now in Portugal, but was then 'a large city in Spain' ('borg mikil á Spáni'), where 'heathen Spain was separated from Christian Spain' ('skilr Spán kristna ok Spán heiðna'). 'Eru þau herqð heiðin ǫll, er vestr liggja þaðan' ('All the districts west of that are heathen'), writes the thirteenth-century Icelander Snorri, and he has grounds for this statement, as this is how people in his time imagined the world. By contrast, the twentieth-century Icelander, the editor of *Heimskringla*, Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (*Hkr* 1951: 242, note 1), comments on this usage in the following way: 'Rétt væri: suðr' ('*Suðr* would be correct'), and he proceeds with a specification that 'Áin Tajo greindi lengi sundur land kristinna manna og Múhameðstrúarmanna' ('For a long time the river Tagus separated the lands of Christians and Muslims'). Lee M. Hollander again supplements his translation with the would-be correct version: 'west [south]'. If we look at the map, we can see that this river runs from east to

west, and into the Atlantic Ocean. Thus, the lands lie to the north and to the south of it, and here both the editor and the translator are quite right. But I do not think that Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson is right to draw our attention just to this particular place in the sagas, since there are too many other cases in which the indicated direction is in contradiction to the real one. We should either make our comments in each such case or accept the picture of the world as it was in the eyes of medieval Icelanders.

My next step was to turn to scholarly literature on the Old Norse system of spatial orientation. What I came across were published discussions of specifically *Icelandic* orientation, i.e. the semantics of orientation with regard to Iceland and to coastal navigation as reflected in the Icelandic Family Sagas. Two papers by Stefán Einarsson (1942 and 1944) are purely descriptive, but they have been brilliantly summarised and generalised by Einar Haugen (1957). Haugen's material, in its turn, has been re-presented and partially commented upon by Kirsten Hastrup (1985: 51-57). As follows from the analysis of the *Íslendingasögur*, terms of cardinal direction were not monosemantic in Iceland; their meaning depended on the context in which they were used. Directions expressed using those terms could either correspond or not correspond to the compass. This means that the terms of direction could be used by the Icelanders with both 'correct' (or, rather, 'approximately correct') and 'incorrect' meanings. In summarising the material collected by Stefán Einarsson, Einar Haugen distinguishes two types of orientation in space. He called them 'proximate' and 'ultimate'.

'Proximate' orientation is based on visual experience, both in the vicinity and on the open sea, where celestial observation is the only possible way of defining one's location and of finding one's way. Cardinal terms are in this case used 'correctly'. It is worth noting in this respect that the proper directions had been well known to the Icelanders since the time of their migration from Norway in the ninth century. They brought along with them not only the names of the four cardinal directions (*norðr*, *austr*, *suðr*, *vestr*), but also the names of the intermediate ones, those that reflected the peculiarities of the western coast of Norway. Thus, *landnorðr* ('north by land') meant north-east, *útnorðr* ('north and out, away') meant north-west; correspondingly, *landsuðr* ('south by land') meant 'south-east', and *útsuðr* ('south and out, away') meant 'south-west' (cf. Stefán Einarsson 1942: 46; Haugen 1957: 451).

'Ultimate' orientation in space developed in connection with land travel and coastal navigation between the four quarters (*fjórðungar*) into which Iceland was divided in 965 and which were named after the four cardinal directions. Going 'west' (from any geographical point within Iceland) meant movement towards the Western Quarter, going 'north', towards the Northern

Quarter, and so on. Accordingly, cardinal terms are used here ‘incorrectly’, and the directions are described in terms of a goal (each quarter being a goal). Kirsten Hastrup stresses that through such usage social coordinates enter into the physical (‘objective’) coordinates of space. According to Hastrup’s precise characterisation, ‘ultimate’ orientation was ‘society-centred’, as opposed to ‘ego-centred’, ‘proximate’ orientation (Hastrup 1985: 55, 57).

Since my interests mostly concentrate on the Icelandic Kings’ Sagas, I decided to examine those on the same subject. The heroes of the Kings’ Sagas, primarily kings and earls, in preparing themselves for battles, carrying out the Christianisation of their lands, and solving their political problems, move from one place to another (within Norway) along its coastline, but they also go on long trips to the Baltic Sea, to the Atlantic Ocean, or to the Mediterranean Sea. The directions of the saga characters’ movements are often indicated by saga writers. When sagas describe journeys within Norway, cardinal terms are used ‘correctly’. Accordingly, what is used here is ‘proximate’ orientation, in Einar Haugen’s terminology, although it is not restricted to local use but rather is extended to apply to directions throughout the large country of Norway. When sagas describe journeys outside Norway, it reminds us of ‘ultimate’ orientation. We can see that saga authors imagined the inhabited world (or the world visited by their heroes) as consisting of four sections with an invariable set of lands in each, in accordance with the four directions corresponding to the four cardinal points. The western segment of this mental map includes all the Atlantic lands, such as England, the Orkney and Shetland Islands, France, Spain, and even Africa. The eastern lands are the Baltic lands and the territories far beyond the Baltic Sea, such as Russia and Byzantium. The southern lands are Denmark and Saxony, Flanders, and Rome. The northern part is formed by Norway itself, but also by Finnmark and, sometimes, by *Bjarmaland*.

To prove that this quadripartite division of the *oecumene* is a real thing, and not merely a scholarly construct, we have to pay attention to the fact that it has found its reflection in a number of place-names. Old Norse sources have preserved the names of all four segments. They are *Austrhálfa* (‘the eastern quarter [of the world]’), *Vestr(h)álfa* (‘the western quarter’), *Suðr(h)álfa* (‘the southern quarter’), and *Norðr(h)álfa* (‘the northern quarter’) (see Metzenthin 1941: 8–9, 76, 117; *IED*: 35, 457, 603, 700). There are still more place-names in Old Norse literature that are connected with cardinal points and with a corresponding subdivision of the surrounding world. These are compounds ending in *-lǫnd* (‘lands’), the plural form of *land* (‘land’) (*Austrlǫnd*, *Vestrlǫnd*, *Suðrlǫnd*, and *Norðrlǫnd*), *-ríki* (‘kingdom, state’) (*Austrríki* and *Suðrríki*), and *-vegr/vegir* (*vegar*) (‘way/s, road/s’) (*Austrvegr*, *Vestrvegir*, *Suðrvegar*, *Nóregr* < **Norðrvegr*) (see Jackson 2001; 2009).

Where did the starting point of all these *ways* lie? Where was the centre of this, so to say, *wind-rose*? Tatjana Jackson and Alexander Podossinov have made an attempt to answer this question (Jackson and Podossinov 1997). They argue this could hardly have been Norway because the country itself was understood as one of those *ways*, the way towards the north (from the North Sea and the Skagerrak in the south to Finnmark in the north). It is evident that the original names of the country and its inhabitants, **Norðrvegr* and *Norðmenn*, could not have been autochthonous, as no peoples call themselves 'northern' or 'southern'. The name had to have originated to the south of Norway, somewhere in the north of Europe (on northern Jutland, or in the northern part of the Danish islands) or in the south of the Scandinavian peninsula. This is likely to have happened long before the sources in question were written down. It is a well-known fact that the main centre of North Germanic settlements in ancient times was the south of the Scandinavian peninsula (the so-called island *Scania*, or *Scandza*), as well as the northern part of Jutland and Sjælland. From here, mostly along the coast, Germanic tribes advanced slowly and in small groups to the north of Scandinavia, moving along the **Norðrvegr*. Norway is likely to have received its name in the late fourth century AD, as this was the period when, according to archaeological data, new groups of Germanic tribes (those, at least, that gave names to the provinces of Hordaland and Rogaland) migrated from the continent to the north-west coast of Norway (see Oxenstierna 1967). The easiest route to the Scandinavian peninsula led through the Danish islands and straits. This particular area, the centre of trade communications for Northern Europe (see, for instance, Thrane 1976; Jensen 1981), could have been the birthplace of the specific wind-rose that reflected the existence of sea routes leading to the east (the Baltic) and to the west (the North Sea, the Atlantic Ocean), and of land routes through Denmark in the south and through Norway in the north.

Movements from one segment into another are defined not according to the compass points, but according to the accepted naming of these segments. This means that spatial orientation is described in terms of a goal. Thus, when somebody goes from Sweden to Denmark, he is said either to go *suðr* ('to the south'), because Denmark belongs to the southern segment, or to go *austan* 'from the east', because Sweden belongs to the eastern segment of the world. A good example gives the story of an alliance between the Danish king, Sveinn tjúguskegg ('Forkbeard'), King Óláfr sönski ('of Sweden'), and the Norwegian earl, Eiríkr Hákonarson. I here quote from C.R. Unger's edition, since, to my mind, this is the only text with the correct reading as *herr*

Svíakonungs ('army/fleet of the Swedish king') instead of *herr Danakonungs* ('the army/fleet of the Danish king') (as in *Hkr* 1941: 351):

En Ólafr Svíakonungr ok Eiríkr jarl váru þessarrar ferðar albúnir, ok drógu þá saman skipaher mikinn af Svíaveldi, fóru því liði suðr til Danmerkr ok kómu þar svá, at Ólafr konungr Tryggvason hafði áðr *austr* siglt. [...] Ferr þá Sigvaldi jarl leið sína, ok kom fram á Vindlandi [...] en er hann kom sér í ráðagerð við Ólaf konung, þá dvaldi hann mjök ferðina hans *austan* at sigla [...] Sigvaldi jarl fékk njósn leyniliga af Danmörk, at þá var *austan* kominn herr Svíakonungs ... (*Hkr* 1868: 205-206, emphasis added).

The king of Sweden and the earl were quite ready to join this enterprise. They gathered a large fleet in Sweden and with it sailed south to Denmark, arriving there after King Ólaf had sailed *east* [*south*] (= to Wendland. – *T.J.*). [...] So Earl Sigvaldi betook himself to Wendland [...] And as he came to know the plans of King Ólaf, he managed to delay his sailing *west* [*north*] [...] Earl Sigvaldi secretly received the message from Denmark that the fleet of the Swedish king had arrived *from the east*... (*Hkr* 1964: 229-230, emphasis added and 'Danish king' emended to 'Swedish king').

To put all this in plain words, Ólafr Tryggvason had sailed *austr* ('to the east'), i.e. from Norway to Wendland. There came Earl Sigvaldi, and his task was for some time to keep the king from going back *austan* ('from the east'), i.e. from Wendland back to Norway, as, according to the secret news he received, the fleet of the Swedish king had arrived in Denmark *austan* ('from the east'), i.e. from Sweden, and a trap for Ólafr prepared by his three opponents was ready. Reading the text with the four-part world scheme in mind, we have no problems in understanding it. But one can easily see what great difficulties Lee M. Hollander had in rendering the cardinal directions used by the saga author. An important feature that has to be noted is that such pairs of adverbs as *austan* – *vestr* ('from the east' – 'to the west'), or *suðr* – *norðan* ('to the south' – 'from the north'), and the like, which are synonyms in a general sense, were by no means pairs of synonyms for medieval Scandinavians when they described world-wide travels: one term in such a pair could not substitute for the other. It would make no sense in the example above to denote movements from Wendland to Norway or from Sweden to Denmark with the term *vestr* ('west') (instead of *austan*), as this would mean 'to England, or some other islands in the Atlantic'. In these two cases *austan* could have been replaced only by *norðr* (to Norway) and *suðr* (to Denmark), correspondingly.

It is hardly possible that the authors of the ninth to the thirteenth centuries had in front of them real maps that they would use in compiling their descriptions, but their mental map of a four-part world was quite concrete, permanent, and common to the authors of a large number of Old Norse texts.

4 Concluding observations

Works of Old Norse-Icelandic literature, and the Kings' Sagas in particular, written down in Iceland in the late twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, had for a long time been transmitted orally. The written texts that we have today at our disposal build at least to some extent on the diverse traditional material from the time prior to the discovery and settlement of Iceland. Among other things the sagas have preserved the North Germanic spatial idea of the world divided into four quarters. The presence of 'the eastern quarter', which is of primary interest to us, on the mental map of medieval Icelanders might be revealed not only through logical reconstructions based on the fact that the adverb *austr* 'east' is persistently used in descriptions of voyages to Sweden, Baltic lands, Old Rus', and Greece, but also from the existence of a large number of place-names with the root *aust-*. Keeping in mind that place-names have always been among the prime markers in the process of structuring space, we notice that side by side with the designation of the eastern quarter of the world, *Austrhálf*, there occur in the sagas *Austrlǫnd* ('the eastern lands'), *Austrríki* ('the eastern kingdom'), and *Austrvegir/Austrveg* ('the eastern ways'/'the eastern way'). One example of each usage follows:

En i Gorðum austr oc *austrholfunni* veri hann xi ar. (*ÓTrOdd* 1932: 25)

And in Old Rus' and the Eastern part of the world he was for eleven years.

Eirík Uppsalakonung Emundarson ... fór til ýmissa landa ok lagði undir sik Finnland ok Kirjálaland, Eistland ok Kúrland ok víða um *Austrlǫnd*. (*Hkr* 1945: 115)

Eirík Emundarson, king in Uppsala ... had a levy every summer and proceeded to various lands, subjecting to his sway Finnland and Kirjálaland, Eistland and Kúrland and wide reaches of other lands in the east. (*Hkr* 1964: 320)

Sveinn jarl ... vildi herja um sumarit í *Austrríki*, ok svá gørði hann. Ok er hausta tók var hann kominn austr í Kirjálaland ... (*Fsk* 1985: 177-178)

Jarl Sveinn ... wanted to go raiding in Austrríki in the summer, and he did so, and when autumn began he had got east to Kirjálaland ... (*Fsk* 2004: 142)

Hann var kallaðr Gøngu-Hrólf. Hann herjaði mjøk í *Austrvegu*. (*Hkr* 1941: 123)

He was called Ganger-Hrólf. He harried much in Baltic lands (literally: 'eastern ways' – *TJ*). (*Hkr* 1964: 79)

Hálfðan svarti ok Hálfðan hvíti lágu í víking ok herjuðu um *Austrveg*. Þeir áttu orrostu mikla á Eistlandi ... (*Hkr* 1941: 134)

Hálfðan the Black and Hálfðan the White were on Viking expeditions and harried in the lands east of the Baltic (literally: 'Eastern way'. – *TJ*). They fought a great battle in Esthland ... (*Hkr* 1964: 85-86)

The latter place-name occurs in both the plural (*Austrvegir* – in the early sources) and the singular (*Austrvegr* – in later sources), the earliest mention being the plural form in *Ynglingatal*. The sources bear witness to the fact that the initial pattern had been 'cardinal direction + *vegir/vegar* (plural of *vegr* "way")'. Originally, this name might have served as a designation of various actual ways (routes) in an easterly direction. However, over time it changed its meaning and through the denotation of all Eastern European lands along the famous 'Way from the Varangians to the Greeks' came to denote in the works of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries only the eastern Baltic lands. Accordingly, the term *Austrvegsmenn* ('the inhabitants of *Austrvegr*') is used in the sagas as a designation of the Finns, the Karelians, the Estonians, the Kuronians, and the Wends. The Baltic Sea that united and at the same time separated the peoples living on its shores and served for the Scandinavians as a perfectly mastered road to the east, was a kind of *mare nostrum* for the Baltic peoples, the epicentre of life in the eastern quarter of the world. Naming it 'the Eastern Sea' (*Austmarr*, *Eystrasalt*) perfectly agreed with this mental map, and the traditional character of Icelandic culture has resulted in our still finding *Eystrasalt* ('The More Easterly Sea') on the modern Icelandic map.

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Abbreviations

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3 The connection between geographical space and collective memory in *Jómsvíkinga saga*

Sirpa Aalto

Abstract

The article discusses how toponyms are related to concepts of collective memory, using toponyms in one particular saga, *Jómsvíkinga saga*, to show that toponyms gave reliability to the saga and that they functioned as memory places which helped in memorising the saga. The saga's action concentrates on Denmark and Norway, so toponyms in these respective realms are analyzed. The analysis is based on comparison between different versions of the saga, which shows that some toponyms are common to all versions of the saga. This could be evidence that they were indispensable for learning and remembering the saga plot. Methodologically the discussion and analysis are connected to memory studies and Francis Yates' ideas about toponyms as 'furniture of mind' and *aide-mémoires*.

Keywords: saga literature, *Jómsvíkinga saga*, memory studies, cultural memory

1 Introduction

Geographical space and toponyms in saga literature have interested historians and archaeologists mainly as a way to connect the sagas to the physical world. Toponyms in sagas that depict past events have functioned for scholars as evidence that the sources are historical and have some kind of reliability. (See for instance the discussion in Rory McTurk 1994-1997: 164-172.) The main objective of research has thus been to identify toponyms and place them on the map.

In fact, most of the toponyms in the sagas can be identified without problems, but not all sagas provide accurate information about geographical conditions. For instance, legendary sagas are often set in distant and imagined places, but these are usually designated by 'real' place-names. In these cases, the imagined environment is part of the story that conveys the fantastic and does not aim to be credible but enhances the supernatural and fantastic in the saga (Marold 1996).

In addition to this very concrete function that the toponyms have in the sagas – namely, to give a setting for the story – I argue that the toponyms functioned also as a way to remember stories. Ancient authors spoke of different techniques for memorisation and these texts were known to medieval authors. For instance, Thomas of Aquinas wrote that a place could be used as a source for reminiscence. Frances Yates, who has written about mnemotechnical details that were used and developed by medieval authors as well as artists, speaks of different ways to remember things. She takes as an example medieval imagery used in manuscripts and art in general, emphasising the connection between vision and memory. Yates has developed this idea further in her investigation of Aquinas's four precepts for memory: his rules, she argues, are based on the places and images of artificial memory and he borrows – or actually develops – his ideas on the basis of Classical authors. Thomas was concerned about memory techniques in general as a way to put things, i.e. memories in this case, in order. Yates takes this idea further: 'we are at liberty to imagine places and images of the artificial memory as in some way the "sensible" furniture of a mind' (Yates 1966: 72). I propose, then, that toponyms can function as memory places – as a type of 'furniture of mind' – in Old Norse-Icelandic sagas.

I investigate toponyms in one particular saga, *Jómsvíkinga saga*, in order to find out *what role they have in the process of learning and remembering the story*. If the toponyms function as memory places, we should be able to identify at least some toponyms that are found in all the redactions of the saga. I discuss how toponyms relate to the concept of collective memory and contribute to the ongoing discussion of memory studies in saga literature. (Harris 2010: 120-133; Hermann and Mitchell 2013; Hermann *et al.* 2014.)

Jómsvíkinga saga is well suited for this purpose because it is recorded in more than one manuscript, making it possible to compare the two main lines of the stemma (see § 3). Yet the number of manuscripts is limited, which makes the overall study of toponyms in different redactions manageable. The purpose of the comparison is to investigate whether there are toponyms that are shared by all redactions of *Jómsvíkinga saga* and what this means for the saga narrative and cultural memory. This also applies in the opposite direction. What can we deduce from those toponyms that appear only in one or a few redactions of the saga?

2 *Jómsvíkinga saga* and its background

Jómsvíkinga saga is thought to have been written down early in the 1200s, but the core of the story may have appeared in the form of a *drápa* earlier or around the same time. *Jómsvíkingadrápa* was composed by Bishop Bjarni Kolbeinsson (1188-1223), most probably at the end of the twelfth century (Fidjestøl 1993: 48).¹ The saga is set in the latter half of the tenth century in Denmark and Norway. At the core of the story is a Danish nobleman, Pálna-Tóki, who becomes the enemy of his former foster-son, King Sveinn Forkbeard of Denmark (ruled *ca.* 986-1014). Pálna-Tóki flees Denmark and goes on Viking raids with his crew. In Wendland (the West Slavic area on the southern coast of the Baltic Sea) he is offered an island, Jóm, by Prince Búrizláfr. Pálna-Tóki's duty is to defend Búrizláfr's realm from other Vikings, so he builds a fortress on the island.

The Vikings of the island of Jóm, Jómsvikings, become famous for their strict law code and their fierce fighting. After the death of Pálna-Tóki, the new leader, Sigvaldi, is eager to marry Prince Búrizláfr's daughter but Búrizláfr sets one condition for the marriage: Sigvaldi must bring King Sveinn to Wendland. Búrizláfr is tired of paying tribute to the Danes, and he wants the king to cease to demand it. Sigvaldi, himself also of the Danish upper class, lures Sveinn to his ship, kidnaps him, and brings him to Búrizláfr's court. Sveinn has no choice but to accept the terms. The deal is confirmed with marriage alliances, so that Sveinn is to marry one of Búrizláfr's daughters and Búrizláfr himself will marry Sveinn's sister.

King Sveinn wants to avenge Sigvaldi's treacherous act, so he invites the Jómsvikings to a feast where they will drink in honour of Sigvaldi's deceased father. At this feast the Jómsvikings become heavily intoxicated and Sveinn persuades them to promise that they will attack his enemy, Earl Hákon of Norway. After the feast the Jómsvikings realise that their promise has to be fulfilled or they will lose their honour. They set out on the expedition with the Danish fleet immediately after the feast, before the earl could hear about their boasting.

The saga climaxes with the battle of Hjørungavágr somewhere on the west coast of Norway. According to the saga, Earl Hákon must rely on his protective goddess Þorgerðr Hølgabrúðr in order to win the battle: the goddess and her sister Irpa raise a hailstorm which changes the tide of the battle. Sigvaldi flees with part of the fleet, while some of the Jómsvikings are captured. The end of the saga concentrates on depicting the beheading

1 On the oral background of the saga, see Finlay (2006: 250); Lethbridge (2012: 954).

of the prisoners and how the rest of them survive because of their brave attitude.

All in all, *Jómsvíkinga saga* is an entertaining saga with a clear connection with historical events (Morawiec 2009: 139; Bagge 2010: 26-27). The entertaining side of the saga has affected its later reception. When the saga was supposedly written down, around the year 1200, saga writing had just begun in the form of hagiographies and kings' sagas, which could also explain why the saga is difficult to place in any one saga genre (Berman 1985; Aalto 2014). Apparently, the saga was supposed to combine a good story and past events. Even if *Jómsvíkinga saga* may have been intended to be a historical work, it later became entertainment (Aalto 2014).

The saga concentrates in the beginning on events in Denmark, because the plot of the saga is intimately connected to the Danish royal house. Although the Jómsvíking's base is situated in Wendland, it does not play a prominent role as a place for action. At the end of the saga, Norway is in the focus of action, which is clearly manifested in the toponyms.

3 Sources

The stemma of *Jómsvíkinga saga* has been reconstructed most recently in 2000 (Megaard 2000). The saga survives in A- and B-redactions. It is unclear whether there was one common original version. A-redactions include the saga compilations *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla*, which are customarily dated to ca. 1220 and ca. 1235 respectively. The B-redactions are the manuscripts AM 291 4to (latter half of the thirteenth century), Stockholm Pergament No. 7 4to (beginning of the fourteenth century), and AM 510 4to (mid-sixteenth century). *Jómsvíkinga saga* is also incorporated into *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* in *Flateyjarbók*, which is dated to 1387. *Jómsvíkingadrápa* is used as a source as well, but it does not have much significance, because it contains only three toponyms. In this article I will use the aforementioned sources to answer the following questions:

- Is it possible to find toponyms that appear in all the redactions?
- If so, what kind of functions do they have in the saga?
- Is it possible to connect their functions to the concept of collective memory or the learning and remembering of history?
- If there are toponyms that can be found in only one redaction, what kind of role do these play in the saga narrative?

4 *Jóm/Jómsborg* – the pivotal toponym in the saga

Because *Jómsvíkinga saga* concentrates on events in Denmark and Norway, toponyms related to these realms have been taken as a point of departure in this investigation. The different redactions of the saga mention some toponyms² outside this sphere, such as *Bretland* (Britain), *Saxland* (Germany), and *Eystrasalt* (the Baltic, on which see Jackson, this volume), but the purpose of the present investigation is to examine those Norwegian and Danish toponyms that are essential for the saga plot and compare them to each other and across redactions. However, one exception is made: the toponyms *Jóm* and *Jómsborg*, which are pivotal to the saga, are taken into account and will be analysed first. As these are the most central toponyms in *Jómsvíkinga saga*, efforts have been made to establish the geographical locations of these two places (Finlay 2006: 252).

The island of *Jóm*, which gives its name to the *Jómsvíking*s, is mentioned in all redactions of *Jómsvíkinga saga* except *Heimskringla*. This may be due to the fact that in *Heimskringla*, *Jómsvíkinga saga* is embedded in *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, which means that the author Snorri Sturluson has not devoted much attention to *Jómsvíkinga saga* in general. *Jómsvíkinga saga* is, of course, embedded in another compilation as well, namely in *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* in *Flateyjarbók*, but in a much more extensive form than in *Heimskringla*. However, the absence of the toponym *Jóm* in *Heimskringla* is not a decisive difference, considering that *Heimskringla* does mention *Jómsborg*. *Heimskringla* states that when Sveinn (Forkbeard) was accepted as king, Sigvaldi was earl over *Jómsborg* in *Vinðland* (*Hkr I*: 272). This gives the impression that the audience was expected to know *Jómsvíkinga saga* from elsewhere, because the *Jómsvíking*s and their background are not introduced in the saga (cf. Clover 1985: 293). *Jómsborg*, on the other hand, is mentioned in all other saga redactions, but is absent from *Jómsvíkingadrápa*, which, however, mentions the toponym *Jóm*. It could be argued that *Jóm* is chosen in the poem instead of *Jómsborg* for artistic and metrical reasons.³ Petrulevich gives similar examples of toponym variants that can be epexegetic additions, e.g. *Jómi* [*Jóm*]: *Jómsborg* in the case of *Jómsvíkinga saga*, or *Kotskógaborg*: *Kotskógr* in *Knýtlinga saga* (Petrulevich 2013).

The location of *Jóm/Jómsborg* in the sources is very approximate. It is mentioned that it was located in *Vinðland* ('Wendland'), or that it was given

2 Toponyms will be given in the form in which they appear in the saga. If the toponym is inflected, the nominative form will be given in brackets.

3 On the etymology of *Jómsborg*, see Petrulevich (2016: 170–173).

as a fief to Pálna-Tóki by the Wendish prince, Búrizláfr. Wendland seems to lie somewhere on the outskirts of the 'known' world – that is, it is an extension of the Scandinavian world (Aalto 2010: 115, 208). Some redactions of *Jómsvíkinga saga* describe how the fortress of Jóm sborg looked but these depictions hardly have any connection to reality. They tend to exaggerate the size of the fortress (for instance, claiming that the harbour was protected by a stone arch and iron doors: AM 291: 63).

All in all, Jóm and Jóm sborg do not play a role in the saga after the Jóm svikings are established as a group. Nothing special takes place there, yet it is still surprising how little attention is given to Jóm and its surroundings. One reason could be that the location of the island/fortress was forgotten by the time the saga was written down. As Alexandra Petrulevich has argued, the saga authors at the beginning of the thirteenth century and thereafter only knew the name *Jóm/Jóm sborg* from the story (which must have thus been in oral tradition), but they could not connect it to places that they knew (Petrulevich 2009). No other Viking group is known by a name that connects a toponym to their name, so the Jóm svikings are a case of their own in saga literature.

The island of Wolin in Poland has been the primary candidate for Jóm. Archaeological excavations have shown that there was a lively trading place on the island and that there seems to have been a building that was inhabited by warriors (Petrulevich 2009; Stanisławski 2003). The trading place on the island was abandoned around the 1040s, according to archaeological excavations. This fits well with the information from written sources, which tell that King Magnús (the Good) made an expedition to Jóm sborg around that time. Considering this background, it seems that *Jóm/Jóm sborg* is an excellent example of how toponyms could continue to live on in (oral) tradition, although they do not testify *per se* that *Jómsvíkinga saga* as such is a reliable historical record. But the saga does not rely only on this toponym: depending on the redaction, there are other toponyms that are even more interesting from the point of view of their role in the collective memory connected to the Jóm svikings. The next sections deal with the toponyms in Denmark and Norway.

5 Toponyms connected with the Danish realm

The toponyms *Jóm* and *Jóm sborg* thus occupy a key position in *Jómsvíkinga saga* and can be found in one form or another in all the saga redactions, but when it comes to other toponyms there is more variation among the

different redactions of the saga. We begin by examining the toponyms connected to Denmark.

The Danish kingdom⁴ at the end of the tenth century consisted of several parts, but Sjælland may have played the key role at that time. There was no capital in the realm, but there were several central places, such as Viborg in Jutland and Lejre in Sjælland. The importance of these central places has been questioned – there may have been other, equally important places in the Danish kingdom in the Viking Age, but they have not emerged in archaeological excavations (Lihammer 2007). When looking at the Danish toponyms in *Jómsvíkinga saga*, it is clear that Sjælland (*Hkr I*: 272; *Fsk*: 122; *AM* 291: 52; *Stock. Perg. no. 7*: 11; *AM* 510: 13; *Flb I*: 160) and Bornholm are the most relevant for the saga. Bornholm, with its solitary location, may not have been central for the Danish kings, but according to *Jómsvíkinga saga*, two famous Jómsvíkings, Búi digri and his brother Sigurðr, came from Bornholm (*Hkr I*: 272.; *Fsk*: 167; *AM* 291: 65; *Stock. Perg. no. 7*: 15; *AM* 510: 30; *Flb I*: 167).⁵ Other central places in the Danish realm are mentioned as well, such as Funen, which is mentioned in all other redactions of *Jómsvíkinga saga* except *Heimskringla* (*Fsk*: 123; *AM* 291: 36; *Stock. Perg. no. 7*: 72; *AM* 510: 3; *Flb I*: 153). It is often forgotten that the southern part of present-day Sweden was part of the Danish realm until the mid-seventeenth century. Skåne, for instance, is mentioned in *Heimskringla*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Flateyjarbók* (*Hkr I*: 272; *Fsk*: 124; *Flb I*: 98). Halland is mentioned in three redactions of *Jómsvíkinga saga* (*AM* 291: 50; *Stock. Perg. no. 7*: 11; *Flb I*: 98).

The Danish mainland is not at the centre of action, but Jutland is mentioned sporadically, as well as Hǫrð and Viborg, which were located there (*Fsk*: 124). *Flateyjarbók* explains that Harða-Knútr got his name from Hǫrð, which was located in Jutland and where he was born. *AM* 510 is the only redaction that mentions Viborg (*Vébjörg*) (*AM* 510: 21). It tells that Sveinn Forkbeard was accepted as king of the Danes at the assembly in Viborg. This information is in line with historical facts because it appears that the Danish kings had to be accepted at three assemblies: first in Viborg, then in Sjælland (Ringsted?), and then in Skåne. The other redactions mention that Sveinn travelled to *Íseyrarþing* (with varying forms, such as *Seyrarþing* and *Íseyri* [*Íseyrr*]) to obtain confirmation of his kingship, or that he travelled

4 The Danish kingdom at the end of the ninth century included areas that belong to present-day Sweden (such as Skåne and Halland) and Germany (Holtsetaland, i.e. Schleswig-Holstein).

5 It is still debated when Bornholm actually became part of the Danish kingdom. Depending on one's viewpoint, this could have taken place between the tenth and the twelfth centuries (Lihammer 2007: 240).

around Denmark to get his kingship confirmed (*Hkr I*: 272; AM 291: 72; Stock. Perg. no. 7: 65; AM 510: 36-37; *Flb I*: 170).

Another place-name that seems to have a central position in the *Jómsvíkinga saga* lore is Limfjord in northern Jutland. It is mentioned in all sources except *Fagrskinna* and AM 510. It is from here the Jómsvíkings set out for their expedition to Norway (*Hkr I*: 277) and which Earl Haraldr had to cross when travelling to meet his daughter Queen Pyra and her husband King Gormr (*Flb I*: 102; AM 291: 7; Stock. Perg. no. 7: 4). In AM 291 it is mentioned that Earl Haraldr of Holtsetaland (Holstein) travelled to meet his daughter Queen Pyra and her husband King Gormr and that he had to pass Limfjord. This would mean that the king and the queen were residing north of Limfjord, which is not the most obvious place for a royal residence. The ring fortress of Aggersborg is situated just on the northern side of Limfjord, but it is customarily dated to the latter half of the tenth century (to ca. AD 980), so its dating suggests that it cannot have been there during King Gormr's time. Moreover, it is questionable whether Aggersborg would have functioned as a winter residence for the king, as its function is usually connected to Sveinn Forkbeard's plundering expeditions to England. Another element in the saga that is not logical is that Earl Haraldr travels on horseback through Jutland to Limfjord, while one would guess that it would have been easier to sail to Limfjord from south to north. This episode involving Earl Haraldr and his travel to Limfjord can also be found in Stockholm Perg. no. 7 4to and in *Flateyjarbók* (Stock. Perg. no. 7: 56; *Flb I*: 102). All in all, Limfjord – although it must have been famous for Norwegians and Icelanders – seems to have another function in the saga than to demonstrate the historical reliability of events. This liminal aspect of Limfjord will be returned to later in this article.

Beyond the aforementioned toponyms in Denmark, there are some differences among the redactions in toponyms connected with Denmark. All the manuscripts mention toponyms in the Danish realm, but in many cases, there is no equivalent passage in other redactions. In *Heimskringla*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Flateyjarbók* these toponyms are sporadic (*Hkr I*: 272 (*Ísafjörð* [*Ísafjörðr*]); *Fsk*: 124 (*Hringstoðum* [*Hringstaðir*]); *Flb I*: 98 (*Hörð*)), but in AM 291 and AM 510 there is more than one Danish toponym that cannot be found in other redactions. In AM 291, the place where King Haraldr and the emperor fought is specified with the toponyms *Slesdýr* and *Ægisdýr*, which were located in the southern part of Jutland, present-day Schleswig. It describes how the rampart of Danevirke was built between *Ægisdýr* and *Slesmynni* (*Slesmunni*) (AM 291: 24-27). In AM 510 we can read that Sveinn (Forkbeard) receives ships from his foster-father Pálna-Tóki and his father

King Haraldr Bluetooth. He sets out on a plundering expedition to Denmark, and in this context the toponyms *Eyiar-lond* (*Eyiar-land*), *Langa-land*, *Sæland*, and *Maun*, all of them Danish islands, are mentioned (AM 510: 13).

Fagrskinna mentions two Danish toponyms that are lacking in other versions. First of all, it mentions that King Sveinn invited the Jómsvikings to his feast in Ringsted on Sjælland, which sounds plausible, considering the central position that the island had in the Danish realm. Secondly, the saga mentions that Þyra, sister of King Sveinn, held possessions on Danish islands, among others on Falster (*Fsk*: 123-124). Later, when Þyra flees from Prince Búrizláfr, whom she does not wish to marry, and instead marries King Óláfr Tryggvason, her dowry (which presumably consists of land possessions) is negotiated by King Óláfr and his former father-in-law Prince Búrizláfr.

These toponyms show fairly accurate knowledge of Danish geography. *Ægisdýr*, *Slesmynni* and *Slesdýr* are mentioned only in AM 291 and the islands *Langa-land* and *Maun* only in AM 510. This could indicate that those who copied or modified the saga added their own information, or that they had in hand, or had heard, versions containing these details. This can never be proven and remains an educated guess. We also have defective details about Danish geography, for instance the suspected location of Limfjord. AM 510 does not mention it at all, because the manuscript lacks the ‘introduction’ – i.e. the early history of the Danish royal house before Haraldr Bluetooth – included in other redactions. Nor does it mention Limfjord as a place from which the Jómsvikings would have set out on their expedition to Norway. In general, the differences among the Danish toponyms found in different redactions of *Jómsvíkinga saga* are not great. For instance, AM 291 mentions four toponyms that cannot be found in other versions, while AM 510 mentions three, *Fagrskinna* two, and *Flateyjarbók* one.

All in all, we can say that although the Danish toponyms in different redactions of *Jómsvíkinga saga* are not very precise and tend to mention just a few larger places such as islands, there are also small differences among the redactions. Of all the Danish toponyms, only two are mentioned in all redactions, namely Sjælland and Bornholm. As the examples of AM 291 and AM 510 show, for some reason the authors of these manuscripts added geographical details that are lacking in other redactions. Were they more aware of the geographical context of the saga in general? How important was it for the story to present Danish toponyms? I argue that the Danish toponyms were not as important as Norwegian ones because the saga climaxes in Norway. A comparison between the Norwegian and Danish toponyms used in the saga may therefore cast light on this matter.

6 Toponyms connected within Norway

It is interesting to see what kind of pattern the redactions of *Jómsvíkinga saga* display in relation to Norwegian toponyms. Are AM 291 and AM 510 more precise than other manuscripts with toponyms in Norway, as they are with Danish toponyms? Again, quantitatively the differences are not great. AM 291 mentions two toponyms (*Liðandisnes*, *Solundir*) that are not attested in other *Jómsvíkinga saga* redactions, while AM 510 mentions two toponyms unique to that version (*Eyrjar*, *Mannhaugr*). The compendia that contain *Jómsvíkinga saga* also include unique toponyms: *Heimskringla* has three (*Hkr I*: 275-277, 286: *Raumaríki*, *Uppland* [*Upplönd*], *Qgðum* [*Agðir*], *Fagrskinna* has one (*Fsk*: 128: *Elptrum* [*Elptrar*], and *Flateyjarbók* has three (*Flb I*: 185, 188: *Hjörungur*, *Fialafylke* [*Fialafylki*], and *Fliodum* [*Fliodar*]). We can, of course, ask, whether a form such as *Hjörungur* in *Flateyjarbók* is significantly different from *Hjörungavágr* and *Hjörungafjörðr*. Contextually, it refers to the same place as *Hjörungavágr* and *Hjörungafjörðr*, and *Flateyjarbók* also gives the more familiar name *Hjörungavágr*. In addition, four redactions of *Jómsvíkinga saga* give another variant: *Hjörund* (AM 291: 108; Stock. Perg. no. 7: 72; AM 510: 70; *Flb I*: 187). Again, this kind of variation in toponyms reveals that the tradition may have existed in several forms, others being just epexegetic additions (Petrulevich 2013).

When we examine all the Norwegian toponyms mentioned in different redactions of *Jómsvíkinga saga*, six toponyms are common to all versions: *Gimsar*, *Hereyjar*, *Hjörungavágr*, *Naumudalr*, *Staðir/-ir*, and *Vík*. If we analyse these one by one, we can note the following: *Hereyjar* is mentioned when the route to *Hjörungavágr* is described (*Hkr I*: 279; *Fsk*: 127; AM 291: 106-107; Stock. Perg. no. 7: 71-72; AM 510: 67-68; *Flb I*: 186). *Staðir* is mentioned when the Jómsvikings and the Danes arrive in Norway, and when their army was north of *Staðir* and stayed in *Hereyjar* (*Hkr I*: 278; *Fsk*: 127, 131; AM 291: 105-106; Stock. Perg. no. 7: 71; AM 510: 66, 71; *Flb I*: 186).

Hjörungavágr itself is central to the story, which means that it would be impossible to conceive of the saga without it. *Gimsar* is mentioned when the saga tells about the origin of Earl Hákon's man Styrkárr af Gimsum (*Hkr I*: 278; *Fsk*: 131; AM 291: 109; Stock. Perg. no. 7: 72; AM 510: 71; *Flb I*: 188). *Naumudalr* is mentioned when Earl Hákon sends his son Eiríkr to collect men from different parts of Norway to fight the Danes (*Hkr I*: 276; *Fsk*: 131; AM 291: 104; Stock. Perg. no. 7: 71; AM 510: 65; *Flb I*: 185). *Vík* is important because the main antagonist of Vagn Ákason is Þorkell leira from *Vík* (*Hkr I*: 279; *Fsk*: 127, 131; AM 291: 34; Stock. Perg. no. 7: 71, 77; AM 510: 60; *Flb I*: 181).

7 Analysing the toponyms

These aforementioned toponyms can *in general* be divided into the following categories: 1) toponyms in Danish and Norwegian realms that give general background for the saga; 2) toponyms that describe the route (from Denmark) to Hjørungavágr that the Jómsvikings and Danes took; 3) toponyms that indicate where saga characters came from; 4) single toponyms (Limfjord, Primsignd) that have other functions.

As has been pointed out, the *common* toponyms for the saga redactions are not many: two connected to the Danish realm and six connected to the Norwegian. From examining the context of these toponyms, the following remarks can be made: the Danish toponyms Sjælland and Bornholm function as background information for the saga plot. Some of the events take place on Sjælland, and Bornholm was, as mentioned, the home island of Búi digri and Sigurðr. Roughly half of the toponyms relate to the route from Limfjord to Hjørungavágr. Although only two of them – Hereyjar and Staðir – are mentioned in all redactions, the redactions do mention other toponyms on the route, but there is slight variation in which toponyms appear in them. My conclusion based on this evidence is that we can claim that the common toponyms form an integral part of the *Jómsvíkinga saga* lore that climaxes in the battle of Hjørungavágr.

The depiction of the route to Hjørungavágr could be compared with the poem *Togdrápa* by Þórarinn loftunga. The poem tells about the voyage that King Knútr inn ríki (Knútr the Great) undertook between 1028 and 1030 as he assumed control over Norway. It has an itinerary-like structure and it enumerates toponyms on Norwegian coast as the voyage proceeds from south to north (Townend 2012: 851-863). The poem has only two toponyms in common with the redactions of *Jómsvíkinga saga*. The two common toponyms are: *Limaþjóðr* ('Limfjord') (dative *Limaþjóð*, st. 1) which is located in Denmark but which is the starting point for King Knútr's voyage as well as for the Jómsvikings, except in *Fagrskinna* and AM 510, and *Staðr* ('Stad') (dative *Stað*, st. 4), which is found in all redactions of *Jómsvíkinga saga*. This comparison would support the claim that at least Stað(ir) plays an important role in the saga, as it is one of the key locations where the Jómsvikings and Danes stop before the decisive battle.

Category 3, which consists of toponyms connected to personal names, is typical of saga literature. The geographical origin of a character is one way of differentiating him from other characters with the same name. In addition, where a character comes from would inevitably reveal something about his loyalties. The *Jómsvíkinga saga* redactions (except *Heimskringla*)

even specify where those Icelanders who participated in the battle came from (*Fsk*: 131; AM 291: 111; Stock 7: 72; AM 510: 73, 101; *Flb*: 188, 203).

Category 4 consists of two individual toponyms that are difficult to put in the aforementioned categories, or that have an aspect that makes them special. These toponyms are Limfjord and Primsignd. Limfjord is, obviously, important in many ways because it is often connected to turning points in the saga: it is the place where Earl Harald tries to cross the fjord to meet his daughter and son-in-law, where Earl Hákon of Norway and Gull-Harald fight, and from which the Jómsvikings set out on their journey to Norway. It is also a place that seems to have a function as a gate to liminal space in *Jómsvíkinga saga*. It is a passage between this world and the otherworld. For example, when Earl Harald of Holtsetaland is trying to travel to meet his daughter Queen Þyra and travel across Limfjord, he is hindered by several supernatural omens.

Another liminal space in *Jómsvíkinga saga* could be the island of Primsignd. The name refers to the Latin term *prima signatio*, which was used for those who were willing to accept teaching in Christianity but were not yet baptised. Dramatically, this island is the place where Earl Hákon takes his youngest son and offers him to his protecting goddess Þorgerðr Hølgabrúðr. *Primsignd*, which appears only in Stock. perg. no. 7, AM 510 and in *Flateyjarbók*, is probably invented to give a dramatic background for the horrible sacrificial scene: a pagan sacrifice is made on an island that is connected to conversion. This emphasises Earl Hákon's character as an archetype of a pagan leader.

8 Differences between the A- and B-redactions

As has been pointed out in earlier research, the manuscripts of *Jómsvíkinga saga* can be divided into two main groups, the so-called A- and B-redactions (Megaard 2000). It is relevant to compare these with one another in order to see whether they share toponyms. Indeed, there are some similarities. For instance, the A-redactions *Heimskringla* and *Fagrskinna* mention the following toponyms that are lacking in B-redactions of the stemma: *Ærvík* (*Hkr I*: 279; *Fsk*: 131), *Yrjar* (*Hkr I*: 279; *Fsk*: 131), and *Valdres* (*Hkr I*: 285; *Fsk*: 131). As the references show, all these toponyms occur in the same passage, which mentions men on Earl Hákon's side and where they came from.

The B-redactions (manuscripts AM 291 4to, Stock. Perg. no. 7 4to, AM 510 4to, *Flb*) have the following shared toponyms: *Hqrund* (AM 291: 108; Stock. Perg. no. 7: 72; AM 510: 70; *Flb I*: 187), *Sunnmøre* (AM 291: 105; Stock.

Perg. no. 7: 71; AM 510: 64-65; *Flb I*: 186), *Túnsberg* (AM 291: 100; Stock. Perg. no. 7: 71; AM 510: 60; *Flb I*: 183), and *Dalir* (AM 291: 109; Stock. Perg. no. 7: 72; AM 510: 88-90; *Flb I*: 188). These toponyms are also connected to the final events in Norway. The *Jómsvíking*s arrive first in *Túnsberg* (Tønsberg) and continue to Sunnmøre. *Hǫrund* is described in relation to *Hjǫrungafjǫrðr* and *Hjǫrungavágr*, where the battle takes place. *Dalir* is the place where one of Earl Hákon's supporters, *Guðbrandr*, comes from.

This division of common toponyms in the B-redactions shows similarities to common toponyms in the A-redactions: they all relate either to the Norwegian geography that is described when the *Jómsvíking*s are looking for Earl Hákon in Norway, or they are toponyms related to introducing characters. This, again, would suggest that they had meaning for the tradition of the saga. It would point to two slightly different traditions of *Jómsvíkinga saga* and support the division into A- and B-manuscripts.

It could be concluded that in particular the toponyms common to all saga versions must constitute some kind of reminiscence of the core of the *Jómsvíking* tradition. This study does not aim to confirm the relationships between the different saga manuscripts, i.e. the stemma. Nonetheless, it should not be disregarded that there exists a set of toponyms that is shared on the one hand by all the redactions and on the other hand, there are toponyms and can be found only in A- or B-redactions. A similar comparison between A- and B-redactions could be made for personal names.

9 Discussion: toponyms as *aide-mémoires*

My hypothesis is that the toponyms in *Jómsvíkinga saga* constitute an aid for remembering the story, based on the ideas of Frances Yates, who has introduced the concept of places as 'sensible furniture of mind'. Anchoring the story to certain places helps the author to remember the rest of the story (Carruthers 2008: 158). It could be asked whether it could work the other way around as well: toponyms help recall stories in the landscape. This is certainly true when it comes to the connection between landscape and memory in relation to one's immediate surroundings, but how about places that one has never been to? The authors/copyists of *Jómsvíkinga saga* probably did not visit *Hjǫrungavágr*, but they were able to recite the route there. I would claim that Carruthers' statement applies when we consider places that are not in our vicinity, which excludes the possibility that one could recall a story by looking at the landscape. For instance, the toponyms in *Jómsvíkinga saga* would be distant for Icelanders. Retelling the saga

would require that certain pivotal toponyms, at least *Jóm/Jómsborg* and *Hjörungavágr*, would be part of the story, and that would require memorisation of the core of the saga.

The toponyms in *Jómsvíkinga saga* are concerned with presenting places of action and the backgrounds of characters. In spite of differences among different redactions, it can be said that the Norwegian toponyms are more specific than the Danish ones. It has been assumed that this is due to the Icelanders that brought the story to Iceland and continued to cherish it (Hollander 2008: 20).⁶ This is a plausible explanation, but it is worth considering the mnemonic value of toponyms: it is very crucial for the plot of the saga to depict the direction from which the Jómsvikings approached Earl Hákon and the place where the final battle took place. This is not to say that the authors/copyists (or the audience) themselves could necessarily locate the toponyms accurately. For instance, *Jóm/Jómsborg* was most probably a very distant, almost abstract, place to them. However, *Jómsvíkinga saga* was remembered exactly with help of the essential toponyms *Jóm/Jómsborg* and *Hjörungavágr*, and based on my previous suggestion, also some other common toponyms found in the redactions. It would have been important for the saga plot to remember that the Jómsvikings made a stop at *Staðir*, or that the men who participated in the battle on Earl Hákon's side were *Guðbrandr* from Dalir and *Þorkell leira* from Viken.

While I argue that *Jómsvíkinga saga* uses common toponyms as a way to aid remembering, I cannot confirm without further research that this is the case with other sagas too, although I consider it to be most probable. How, then, to explain then the differences among the redactions? Memory is sometimes compared to a leaky bucket, reflecting how memory diminishes and things can drop out of memory over time (Hermann 2014: 25). This metaphor would explain how some toponyms could drop out of a saga, especially if they are not vital for the plot. This works the other way around too: the author/copyist could also add new information that did not belong to oral tradition. Alexandra Petrulevich has pointed out that sometimes the toponyms in the sagas may be later inventions by scribes that do not necessarily reflect oral tradition (Petrulevich 2013).

As an example of the complex connection between oral tradition and place-names we may take *Landnámabók*, in which there are instances where 'ancestors' and their deeds have been extrapolated from place-names, demonstrating that oral tradition can be misleading or even intentionally

6 Some Icelanders participated in the Battle of *Hjörungavágr*, giving *Jómsvíkinga saga* relevance to their kin.

falsified. Falsified or not, oral stories and folk legends make use of place-names. They give historical depth to their surroundings. As the example of *Landnámabók* shows, *local* history is rooted in place and landscape. In many cases, place-name etymologies refer to the first inhabitants of the region or the early events there (Gunnell 2008: 15, 57-58; cf. discussion in McTurk 1994-1997). *Landnámabók* may not be the best comparison to *Jómsvíkinga saga*, as the background and context of the sagas are different: *Landnámabók* was written by Icelanders who were concerned about their own past in their own country, whereas *Jómsvíkinga saga* represents a different saga genre. Yet it, too, was part of the building of Icelandic identity and past.

10 Memory studies

It seems likely that early Scandinavians would have shared with many other oral societies the process of remembering by generative reconstruction of a work's component elements rather than by rote learning (Goody 1987: 167-190). This question is connected to the concept of collective memory. The concept of collective memory was introduced by Maurice Halbwachs, who published the book *La mémoire collective* in 1950. Collective memory is understood to refer to memories and information that individuals in a given group share with each other. Halbwachs suggested that each generation creates its own identity by comparing it to the constructed past. Collectivity holds a community together with the help of the shared past and ceremonies that confirm the collective identity of the group members. This means that collective historical memory encompasses both continuity and new ways of interpreting the past (Cosser 1992: 24-27).

If collective memory is essentially a social construction, what was considered to be worth remembering and by whom? This question cannot be answered comprehensively in this article and answering it is by no means my purpose, but it is certainly worth considering the meaning of *Jómsvíkinga saga* for the Norse-Icelandic tradition and culture. Indeed, the sagas have been compared to memory, since they comprise knowledge and narratives (Hermann 2013: 350; Hermann *et al.* 2014: ix-x). *Jómsvíkinga saga* seems to have been viewed as worth remembering, inasmuch as it was included in two saga compilations and also survives as a separate, 'independent' saga in several manuscripts. It could be part of the Icelandic interest in history and identity building through history, or simply indicative of their love for adventurous stories as an expression of escapism (Aalto 2014; Clunies Ross 2009). Based on this, it would seem that *Jómsvíkinga saga* was part of

collective memory. The different versions of the saga show that it was never 'canonised', which means that they could carry on adapting (Assmann 2006: 39).⁷

The common toponyms in *Jómsvíkinga saga* redactions reflect collective memory because 1) they functioned as memory places that connected the story to physical place (which, of course, could be either real or imaginary), and 2) they are an important part of the plot in the sagas. To apply Yates's expression 'furniture of mind', certain pieces of furniture are indispensable for the memory. Toponyms as pieces of 'furniture of mind' help the audience to locate the story either on a concrete or on an abstract level. Pernille Hermann has compared the spatial dimension in Old Norse-Icelandic literature with 'mnemonic places' or 'mnemonic images' that most likely had an organisational function for the literature (Hermann 2014: 29). Jóm/Jómsborg and Hjørungavágr are without doubt 'mnemonic places' in Old Norse-Icelandic literature. For instance, *Knýtlinga saga*, which describes very briefly how Jómsvíkings set out on the military expedition against Earl Hákon, mentions only Hjørungavágr and none of the other important toponyms in *Jómsvíkinga saga* redactions (*Knýtlinga saga*: 97).

Collective memory participates in construction of collective group identity, which is based on shared things such as ideas, values and memories (about the past). Kirsten Hastrup has said that the landscape is the *topos* of identity (Hastrup 1998: 112), which connects fittingly how places and landscape are part of group – and also individual – identities. Hastrup's statement concerned perhaps mostly the Sagas of Icelanders, but certainly sagas in general participated in identity construction among Icelanders. Through sagas Icelanders built their group identity and important part of it was reflecting it with the outer world and groups living there (Sverrir Jakobsson 2005). To widen Hastrup's idea, not just landscape in Iceland but also the world outside of Iceland was part of Icelanders' identity building. It could be asked how *Jómsvíkinga saga* contributed to the construction of the Icelandic identity – at least it was important for Icelanders to mention which Icelanders participated in the final battle and who brought the story to Iceland.

It is clear that there are certain toponyms in the saga literature that stand out from others and that are associated with certain events as part of the collective memory, as seen in *Jómsvíkinga saga*. Such toponyms could include Svold (*Svolder*, *Svöld*), which is an unknown place in the southern part of the Baltic Sea where King Óláfr Tryggvason was defeated,

7 Assmann (2006: 39) points out that the canonization of texts fundamentally changes their cultural continuity.

or Stiklastaðir, where King Óláfr Haraldsson lost his life (see also Morawiec 2009: 117). These toponyms, even with obscure geographical locations like Svold or Jóm/Jómsborg, have become important *lieux de mémoire* in Old Norse tradition (Nora 1989: 12).⁸ As Jürg Glauser has pointed out, sagas semioticise landscape – they map it and transform nature into landscape. In the end, semioticisation of landscape forms a trope of memory (Glauser 2009: 209; see also Glauser on ‘spatial modes of thought’ in Glauser 2007: 19–20). I think that some of the *lieux de mémoire* in Old Norse tradition have become such tropes – it would be enough to hear the place-name and it would evoke points of resemblance to particular sagas.

Admittedly, toponyms are far from being the only aids for memory. A narrative may employ various techniques to highlight a story, but, as Margaret Clunies Ross has argued, this requires a mental model that assumes the existence of a unique pattern of events occurring over time. Toponyms are essential for the narrative, whether it is assumed to be fictional or historical, because the audience has to be capable of interpreting the story. Therefore, the narrative has to have the property of being able to represent a comprehensible world for the audience (Clunies Ross 1994: 24).

11 Concluding remarks

Certain toponyms in *Jómsvíkinga saga* are crucial for the saga, such as Jóm/Jómsborg, where the Jómsvikings are founded, and Hjǫrungavágr, where they are defeated. As I have shown above, these toponyms hold an important place in the different saga redactions, and they are mentioned in all of them in one form or another. The analysis of Danish and Norwegian toponyms in *Jómsvíkinga saga* shows that there is a certain core of toponyms that can be found in all the different redactions. This core is not very large in number (only six common Norwegian and two Danish toponyms).

Based on the analysis of toponyms in *Jómsvíkinga saga* I suggest that the toponyms have different functions in the saga. On the one hand they form background for events and characters, which is obvious but nevertheless important to point out for they define how engaged the redaction in question is in terms of framing the plot. On the other hand, the toponyms common to all redactions show that they serve as memory aids for the narrative and

8 Pierre Nora (1989: 12) has used the term *lieux de mémoire* to describe concrete (museums, archives) and abstract (festivals, anniversaries) places that disseminate and reconstruct collective memory.

they become part of the collective memory. I have applied in this article Frances Yates's concept of toponyms as 'furniture of mind' meaning that the toponyms function as mnemonic places that help remember the saga plot. Certain 'furniture' in the plot are irreplaceable – in this case the common core toponyms. Without them the saga would not be the same. Differences in toponyms, that is, toponyms that appear in one or only in few redactions, can be interpreted as a sign of either different traditions (A- and B-redactions), or personal knowledge on the part of the author-copyist, who wanted to be more specific with toponyms and added them. As I have suggested, similar experiment could be made with personal names because toponyms are by no means the only mnemonic places in the sagas. This kind of investigation would show which characters stand in the core of tradition, and whether the A- and B-redactions differ in a similar way to how they do with toponyms.

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Section 2

Mobility

4 Rune carvers traversing *Austmarr*?

Laila Kitzler Åhfeldt

Abstract

In the eleventh century AD, the picture stone tradition on Gotland is replaced by a runestone tradition similar to that of the Mälars valley on the Swedish mainland. It has been suggested that the Gotlandic runestones can be traced to the treaty between the Gotlanders and the Svear that was probably agreed upon in around AD 1030. Since the runestone tradition continues longer on Gotland, it has been suggested that rune carvers from the mainland found a new arena on Gotland. This article argues that the constellations of rune carvers may reflect power relations, territorial limits, centers for literacy and social relations. The results indicate co-operation and areas of mutual exchange.

Keywords: Runestone, picture stone, Gotland, Viking Age, 3D scanning, rune carvers

1 Introduction

In the late eleventh century AD, a picture-stone tradition with a strong local character on Gotland is transformed into a runestone tradition similar to that of the Mälars area on the Swedish mainland. Gotland places its own distinguishing mark on the runestone tradition by imitating the mushroom or door shape of the slab just as on earlier picture stones, but the runic ornament is similar to that of runestones of the Mälars area.

In her dissertation on the language and chronology of the Gotlandic runic inscriptions (Snædal 2002), Thorgunn Snædal reaches the conclusion that the background to Gotlandic runestones of central Scandinavian runestone style lies in Swedish influence on Gotland resulting from the treaty between Gotlanders (*gutar*) and Swedes (*svear*), supposed to have been agreed upon in ca. AD 1030 (Snædal 2002: 230). Snædal further suggests that the fading of the

runestone tradition on the Swedish mainland induced the Upplandic rune carvers to look around for another area and find a new arena on Gotland, resulting in an increase in runic monuments on Gotland (Snædal 2004b: 62; cf. 2002: 230). To my mind, this is a rather bold suggestion, which awakens curiosity. This implies that some rune carvers who were earlier active in Uppland would have left traces on Gotland, which is very interesting in the perspective of mobility. Was there an actual influx of rune carvers? Would it be possible to trace them back to the mainland?

My point of departure is that the mobility and constellations of rune carvers, as members of households and in possession of special skills, i.e. literacy, artistic talent, and stone-carving skills, may reflect power relations, territorial limits, centres for literacy, and social relations. The rune carvers' mobility patterns reflect their role and status. We can easily imagine the difference in mobility and travel between a chief who attended the thing assembly and his thralls who herded the animals in the vicinity. Earlier research on mobility in low-technology societies has discussed travel from the perspective of worldview (Harrison 1996), reach (Stenqvist Millde 2007), and social prestige (Retsö 2007).¹ The reach of an individual depends on his or her experience and capacities, social rules, economic position, knowledge, and social circumstances (Stenqvist Millde 2007: 114). Geographical mobility also has consequences for social mobility (Retsö 2007: 11). In her investigation of how sea traffic in the Baltic (*Eystrasalt* or *Austmarr*)² is described in Norse narrative sources, Kristel Zilmer has identified various kinds of travel and the underlying motives for this mobility – sometimes undertaken freely, sometimes forced upon reluctant travellers (Zilmer 2006: 239, 242-244). The rune carvers' opportunities as well as their inclination to travel and to carve monuments in new regions would probably have been influenced by power relations between territories and the power spheres of families and households. Travelling routes are likely to be closed or opened depending on varying circumstances. In light of this, it is interesting to explore whether rune carvers from the Swedish mainland may have found opportunities to take up their craft on Gotland.

Travelling routes around Gotland can be traced in some runic inscriptions: DR259, Sö174, U375, U414, U527, and U614. Gotland has possibly also been mentioned on Sö47 and DR220, but these two instances are uncertain since only two runes remain (**ku**) of the essential word in question on both

1 For further discussion of rune carvers in relation to earlier research on mobility, see Kitzler Ähfeldt 2015.

2 For further discussion of these terms, see Jackson in this volume.

of these stones. They testify to travels to Gotland from the Mälars area, Skåne, and possibly Falster. Travellers from Gotland headed to Ulfshala in Denmark (G207), Vindau (G135), Holmgård (G220), and Lübeck (G138). (Snædal Brink and Jansson 1983: 438-445; Zilmer 2006: 265). But to travel somewhere for trade or a short visit only, and for the purpose of placing a monument there, are two different matters. Runestones are very much associated with land-ownership. Birgit Sawyer may have hit the mark exactly with her wording that ‘to “raise a stone” was “to raise a claim ...”’ (Sawyer 1991: 97), or, as a colleague remarked during the Austmarr workshop in 2013: ‘it is like planting the American flag’. If rune carvers from the Mälars area were allowed to raise monuments on Gotland, they must have been welcomed or at least protected.

In order to investigate the rune carvers’ mobility and networks, I use a method for analysis of the carving technique involving 3D-scanning and multivariate statistical analyses (see e.g. Kitzler Åhfeldt 2002; 2012: 67-69; 2015: 151-155). Carving techniques reflect connections between craft traditions, and thus between people. The results can indicate co-operation, areas of mutual exchange, and, in favourable cases, even connections on an individual level. In what follows, I investigate whether any conclusions can be drawn regarding the relationship between rune carvers on Gotland and the Swedish mainland based on carving techniques. While earlier studies of carving techniques on runestones have been rather local, in this case carving technique will be seen as a part of a craft tradition with common characteristics over large regions. We cannot expect to identify relations between rune carvers on Gotland and the Swedish mainland on an individual level, but Gotland may share its craft tradition with some particular area or with an identifiable carver group or workshop in the Mälars area.

There is evidence for political relations between Gotland and eleventh-century *Svíþjóð* in *Guta saga*, dated by Hallencreutz to the 1220s (Hallencreutz 1981: 90; cf. Holmbäck and Wessén 1943: lxxi). The Gotlanders were to pay tax in exchange for exemption from tolls and for protection (Holmbäck and Wessén 1943: 304; Wessén 1945: 155). Various historical and archaeological sources have been considered in the scholarly discussion of the relation between Gotland and the Mälars area. This has led to a debate between scholars and locals on Gotland and the so-called Stockholm school over Gotland’s distinctive character and independence (see Stæcker 1997: 218; Andrén 2009: 35; Siltberg 2012: 211-214, 221). Whereas one side wishes to tone down the unique character of Gotland, with its lack of nobility and presumed egalitarian society (e.g. Kyhlberg 1991: 9, 237; Hyenstrand 1989: 13), the other emphasises Gotland as a kind of peasant republic (e.g. Nylén 1979; Lindquist 2009; for an overview of

differing views, see Andréén 2009: 33-35). Since it is beyond my competence to judge the medieval written sources and I have not studied the archaeological material from this perspective, I do not take sides in this debate. My aim is methodological. It concerns the rune carvers and their mobility, as a reflection of their role, status, and capacities. Would it be possible to use carving technique as a parameter for comparisons between regions and for discussions about relations across large distances? If so, the carving technique might possibly contribute to the discussion, even though mobility is in focus here.

2 Rune stones connecting Gotland and *Svíþjóð*

The runologist Sven B.F. Jansson writes about striking similarities between Gotlandic and Upplandic runestones; for example, the runestones from Atlingbo (G200) and Sjonhem (G134-136) are given special mention (Jansson 1945: 148-149). Elisabeth Svärdström describes the ornament on the runestone from Atlingbo as alien to Gotlandic runestone art and points out its similarity to fairly late Upplandic runestones in the style of the rune carver Öpir (G200, GR II: 169). The language of the runic inscriptions is similar to that of the *Guta lag*, but there seems to be some influence from runic Swedish (Snædal 2002: 240). The relationship between Gotland and *Svíþjóð* is also seen in the content of some runic inscriptions and in the import of runestones from Gotland (Snædal Brink and Jansson 1983: 441).

The archaeologist Anne-Sofie Gräslund has established a relative chronology for runestones based on the runic animals (animal shaped decorative bands surrounding the runic text), and assigned the styles absolute datings using archaeological finds (Gräslund 1992; 2006). In the following, I refer to Gräslund's style-groups for an indication of dating and a relative order. The groups concerned here are Pr1 (ca. AD 1010-1040), Pr2 (ca. 1020-1050), Pr3 (ca. 1050-1080), and Pr4 (ca. 1070-1100). These groups should be regarded as approximate time horizons, with different chronological foci, and not exact absolute datings.

One runestone mentions a Björn who was actually killed on Gotland (Sö174, style Pr1). The inscription indicates a fight and not entirely peaceful relations. Still, some people in Uppland seem to have been impressed by the Gotlandic monument tradition. From Johannes Bureus, the first national antiquarian of Sweden, who started collecting and describing runic inscriptions at the end of the sixteenth century, we know of a picture-stone-shaped runestone from the same period at the church in Norrsunda in Uppland (U414), which according to the inscription was brought from Gotland (Jansson 1945: 149; U414 in SRI VII: 193, style Pr1).

Figure 1 U614



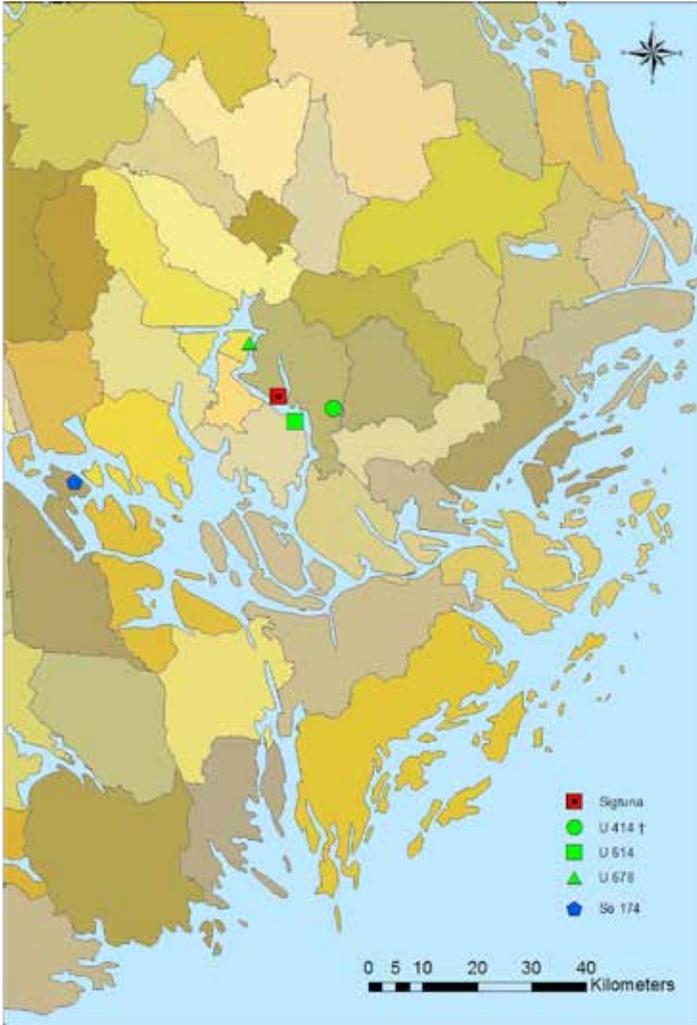
Photo: Bengt A Lundberg, Kulturmiljöbild, Swedish National Heritage Board

Moving on a little further into the eleventh century, we find yet another runic inscription that tells of Gotland, this time about Husbjörn, who became ill abroad when they – not specified who, but presumably Husbjörn and his companions – took payment (or collected tax) on Gotland (U614, style Pr3; Figure 1). In runic Swedish, the inscription reads ‘Skúli ok Folki lata ræisa þenna stæin æftir broður sinn Husbiorn/Asbiorn. Hann vas siukr uti, þa þær giald toku a Gutlandi’ (‘Skúli and Folki have raised this stone in memory of their brother Húsbjörn/Ásbjörn. He was sick abroad when they took payment on Gotland’, *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*).

A runestone in Skokloster in Uppland (U678) is a special case, in which the mounted warrior, the shape of the border ornament (on the side without runes), and the horizontal rune strip closely adhere to the fashion of Gotland’s picture stones. It is not a Gotlandic picture stone, but it appears to have been inspired by the picture stones and borrowed some elements from them. The outer contour of the slab itself is not mushroom-shaped, but the border ornament bears a resemblance, as has been noted earlier by Sune Lindqvist (1941: 133). Mounted warriors, rather similar with their positions leaning back and bearing swords or spears, are abundant on the Gotlandic picture stones (see for example Ardre VIII, Alskog Tjängvide, Halla Broa III, Stenkyrka Lillbjärs I or Klinte Hunninge I in Lindqvist 1941). Bertil Almgren believed that it is a Vendel-period picture stone that has been recut (Almgren 1940: 155; see also Nerman 1947: 126), but this view was strongly rejected by Elias Wessén based on his own examination (see U678, SRI VIII: 179-180). This stone has been signed by Fot, a well-known Uppland carver who produced several Uppland-style carvings, but this one is evidently much inspired by Gotlandic picture stones. The carving is of uncertain date. Fot’s other carvings range from style Pr2 to Pr4, but most of them belong to Pr3.

These four mainland runestones with a Gotland connection are all situated near Lake Mälaren, three of them within eleven kilometres of Sigtuna, one on the island Aspö, around 41 kilometres from Sigtuna (Figure 2), pointing to an area possibly involved in tribute relations and monument import.

It has often been noted that runestone carving intensified in central Sweden during the eleventh century AD, when it was already fading or gone altogether in southern parts of Scandinavia. The general distribution of runic monuments with runic animals in style Pr4, ca. 1070-1100, is intriguing (Figure 3). Looking at the map, we can easily imagine the rune carvers sailing along the coast and traversing *Austmarr* to Gotland (but never having the opportunity to put up monuments on the eastern side of *Austmarr*). The

Figure 2 Runestones associated with Gotland by inscription or ornament

interesting thing here is that for the style group Pr₄ the distribution is, with a few exceptions,³ limited to Uppland, the islands in Lake Mälaren, the Baltic islands Öland and Gotland, and finally a few monuments concentrated around the Kalmar strait (Hossmo church). In Simrishamn in Skåne, we find one solitary Pr₄-stone outside the main distribution area in Uppland.

³ The exceptions concern grave slabs (Nä4, Sö371, Sm95, Sm166, Sm167), often made of limestone (not Nä4).

Figure 3 Runic monuments classified as Gräslund's style group Pr4 (ca. AD 1070-1100) according to *Samnordisk runtextdatabas 2.7*



As an explanation for its odd placement, the inscription itself states that it has been raised after Ravn, 'svein Gunnú[lf]s á Svíþjóðu' ('Gunnúlfr's attendant in Sweden') (DR344).

In comparing runic monuments on Gotland and the Swedish mainland, we must take the relationship between picture stones and runestones into account. The picture stone tradition on Gotland can be traced back to the Roman Iron Age, their motifs connecting them with the Classical world (Andrén 2012: 50; Varenius 2012: 47; Oehrl 2019: 23-26). The Vendel and Viking-period picture stones are often regarded as pagan, while the eleventh-century runestones are undoubtedly Christian monuments. The runestones are contemporary with the first churches and the so-called churchyard finds and are often mentioned in discussion of the Christianisation of Gotland (Snædal 2002; Rundkvist 2003 see *inter alia*).

There are several types of runic monuments on Gotland. The Vendel and Viking Age period picture stones with their formulaic motif panels seem

Figure 4 G373 Sproge

Photo: SRI

to be connected to a primarily oral culture, where the runic inscriptions are exceptions, while the runestones put much more focus on the runic inscription itself. It might be fruitful to study the motifs of the picture stones in the context of the observations made by literary historian Daniel Sävborg about conventions and types in eddic poetry in the form of stereotypical scenes in order to express certain atmospheres in the story (Sävborg 1997: 241-256). Picture stones with occasional runic inscriptions are sometimes called runic picture stones (Figure 4), in contrast to runestones (Figure 5). Although few, these inscriptions make up a large proportion of the known short-twig inscriptions in Sweden (Källström 2012: 119) and everything that can be learnt about their date and context is important.⁴ We may expect to learn more about the picture stones' context and function in the near future through Alexander Andreeff's archaeological excavations of picture-stone sites (Andreeff 2012 and forthcoming).

4 For an overview of recent picture-stone research, see papers in Karnell 2012.

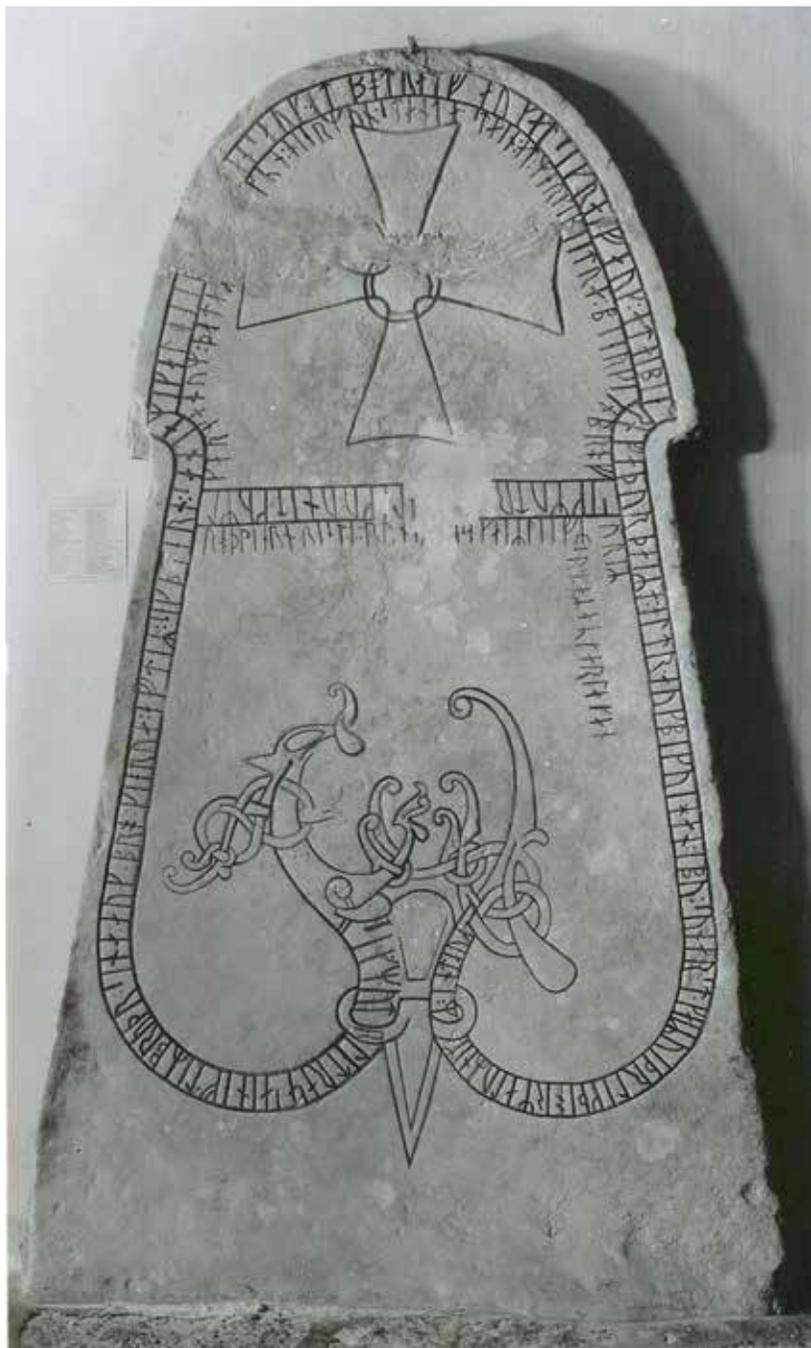
Figure 5 G203 Hogrån

Photo: SRI

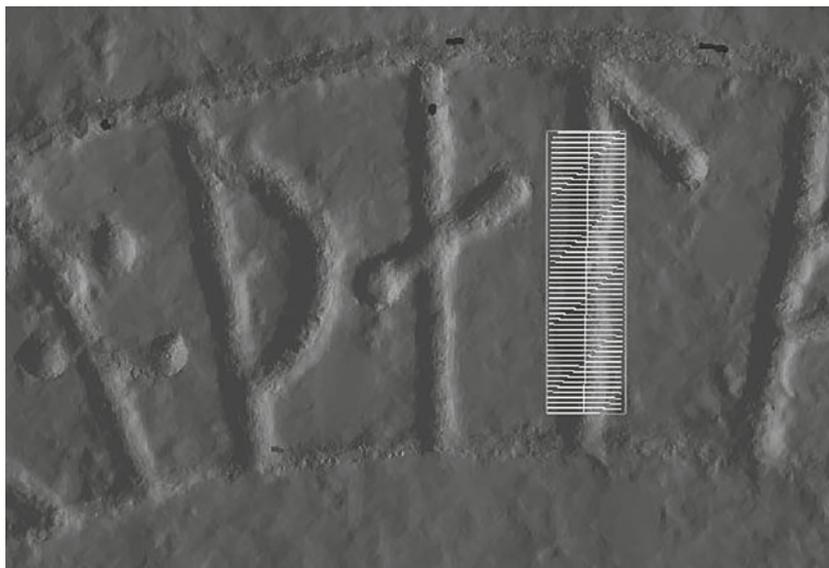
On Gotland, we also find a special kind of churchyard monument in the shape of open stone cists – boxes with four sides but no top, here represented by the Ardre cist (G114). According to Jansson, the cist was probably situated inside the church, in view of the traces of original colour (GR I: 201, 211). Snædal has proposed that the shape of the Ardre cist imitates contemporary wagons used on Gotland, inspired by the heathen belief that women went to the afterlife in wagons. This motif appears in the *Poetic Edda*, in *Helreið Brynhildar*, and there is archaeological evidence for wagon graves in the Viking period (Snædal 2004b: 60; 2010: 446; Svanberg 1999: 57-58). Beata Böttger-Niendenzu has suggested that both motifs and inscriptions pointed to women (Böttger-Niendenzu 1982: 16-18, 46-48) and Anders Andrén has compared the shape of the cist stones to that of animal-head brooches, a type of female Gotlandic jewellery (Andrén 1999: 291). Cist stones were produced during the whole of the picture-stone period, from the Roman Iron Age until the eleventh century AD (Lindqvist 1962; Herlin Karnell 2012: 14-15). Furthermore, there are the so-called dwarf stones found on the southern part of Gotland – small churchyard monuments consisting of one single raised stone or a stone pair. Many of these are made of sandstone (GR I: 50). There is good reason to investigate further the relationship between these grave and churchyard monuments and the runestones, as well as their connections to the late sandstone runestones in Uppland (Hagenfeldt and Palm 1996). Cecilia Ljung has shown that there are similarities between the monument traditions on the Baltic islands Öland and Gotland, as well as in the Mälars area in eastern Sweden (Ljung 2016 I: 137, 165-166, 168).

3 Analysis of carving technique

Even if we cannot identify specific individual rune carvers who traversed Austmarr to or from Gotland, we may be able to detect general similarities in carving technique, indicating that carvers met and learnt from one another.

The carving technique has been analysed using 3D-scanning and multivariate statistical analysis according to a method presented in detail in other works (Kitzler Åhfeldt 2002; 2012: 67-69; 2013). The runic monuments have been 3D-scanned with an optical 3D-scanner (models ATOS I and ATOS II; Kitzler Åhfeldt 2013). In the 3D model, a number of runes and sections of ornament have been selected for analysis (Figure 6). For some of the mainland reference material, casts of runes and ornament

Figure 6 Application of the function *Groove Measure* on a rune



instead have been scanned with an older type of laser scanner (Kitzler Ähfeldt 2002), but the data are comparable. The shape of the grooves is described by a number of mathematical variables (Figure 7). Some variables refer to the cross-section of the groove, while others refer to the cutting rhythm.⁵

The analysis is based on twelve Gotland runic monuments (including runestones, cist monuments, and dwarf stones)⁶ which have been compared to runic monuments on the Swedish mainland. They will mainly be compared to runic monuments in the Mälars area, but some monuments in the provinces of Västergötland, Östergötland, Öland, and on the island Visingsö in Småland have been included in the reference material.

Some peculiarities of Gotlandic monuments can be observed with the naked eye. The carving surfaces are usually naturally smooth, but in some cases, there are traces of polishing – what Lindqvist called ‘a remarkable innovation’ (Lindqvist 1941: 54, my translation). Polished rune slabs (probably

5 The variables are extracted by a special function for analysis of tool marks, Groove Measure, which is integrated in the software DeskArtes Design Expert. The database with mathematically defined parameters for the carving technique on runestones presently includes ca. 2700 samples of ca. 240 runic monuments, collected over the period 1995-2013 in different investigations.

6 G59, G94, G111, G112, G114, G181, G134, G135, G200, G203, G370, and G373.

Figure 7

Fig. 7a. Variables in cross section

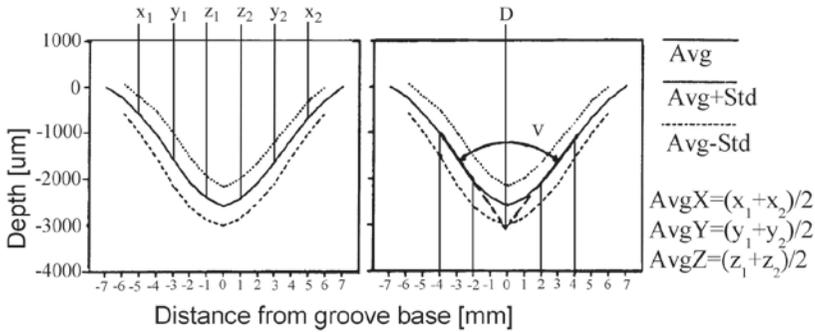
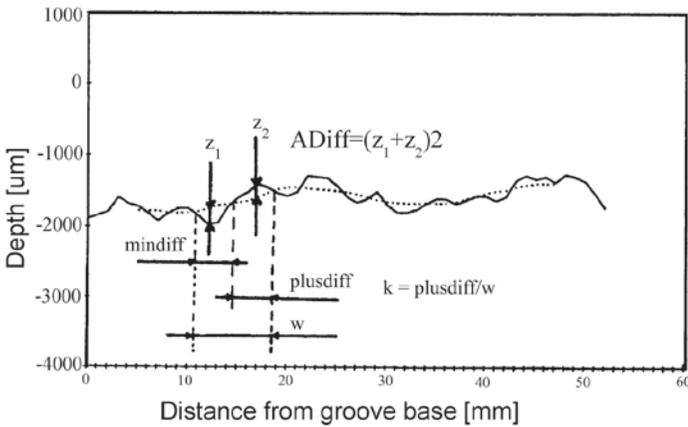


Fig. 7b. Variables along the cutting direction (longitudinal)



churchyard monuments) are also to be found in Köping on the Baltic island of Öland. Drilled holes at the endpoints of the runic by-staffs on some stones are typical of Gotland and can also be observed on the metal weathervanes from Källunge and Söderala (Lindqvist 1941: 55).

The runic monuments have been grouped according to style. The information about style in *Samnordisk runtextdatabas* has been discussed with, and in some cases corrected by, Anne-Sofie Gräslund directly (Gräslund email, 15 October 2013). In the case of ambiguity between two styles, the runestone has been included in both groups, such as G373. This means that a stone like G111, where it is difficult to identify the runic animal as either Pr2 or

Pr₃ can be tested against both groups. Runestones with ambiguous style can thus be seen in different constellations, which is in fact an advantage in view of the overlap among the style groups. Some of the classifications of style group Pr₃ are uncertain. For example, the runic animal on G₁₁₃ is not typical. G₉₄ lacks the head of a runic animal, but has been tentatively included in the Pr₃ group.

4 Results

The results can be summarised as follows: Only a few examples of the results of the analysis can be shown here.

In the Pr₁ group,⁷ the results indicate that the mainland monuments are all more similar to one another, with respect to carving technique, than to the Gotland stone from Sproge G₃₇₃. The mainland monuments form a cluster, whereas G₃₇₃ is on its own and quite separate from the others.

In the Pr₂ group,⁸ too, runestones from different provinces on the mainland have more in common with each other than with those from Gotland (cf. also G₃₇₃), even though they are far apart geographically (Figure 8). This reinforces the impression that, in the first part of the eleventh century, Gotland follows its own craft tradition and has little contact with other carvers, when it comes to the practical matter of stone-carving.

In the following phase, something happens. In the Pr₃ group,⁹ the Gotland stones are divided into two groups (Figure 9). Some Gotland monuments clearly deviate from the mainland stones, but the stones from Hablingbo seem to relate to them. We may notice that Hailgi mentioned in the inscription on G₃₇₀ has ‘travelled in the west with the Vikings’. On one side, G₅₉ is decorated with a ship with clear similarities to picture stones. It is the other side, the one with a runic inscription and Pr₃-style ornament, which has been analysed with the 3D scanner. Its carving technique is similar to that of the stones from the Swedish mainland. It has to be mentioned, however, that the Pr₃ group mostly includes runestones in metamorphic rock (gneiss and granite) sampled in earlier studies, while the Gotland monuments in

7 The Pr₁-group includes G₃₇₃, U₂₂₆, U₄₅₇, Vg₂₇, Vg₄₁, Ög₈₁, and Ög₈₂.

8 The Pr₂-group includes G₁₁₁, G₁₈₁, G₃₇₃ (also compared to Pr₁ stones), Sö₁₀₇, Sö₁₂₈, Sö₁₇₃, Sö₂₇₇, Sö₂₇₉, Sö₂₈₁, SöATA₃₂₂₋₄₂₃₇₋₂₀₁₁, U₁, U₃₇, U₂₁₂, U₄₄₈, U₄₅₉, Vg₅₀, Ög₈₃, and Ög₂₀₉.

9 The Pr₃ group includes G₅₉, G₉₄, G₁₁₁, G₁₁₂, G₃₇₀, Sm₁₂₄, Sö₂₀₈, Sö₃₇₇, U₆ (the Birka monument joined together as one monument from the fragments U₆, U₇, U₈, UFv_{1993:230}, and a recent find made in 2012; see Andersson *et al.* 2016), U₄₃, U₁₆₇, U₃₂₉, U₃₃₀, U₃₃₁, U₃₉₃, U₄₅₃, U₄₅₄, U₄₅₅, U₄₆₀, U₄₆₃, U₁₁₄₂, UFv_{1958:250}, and Ög₂₀₉.

Figure 8 Result of analysis: The Pr2-group

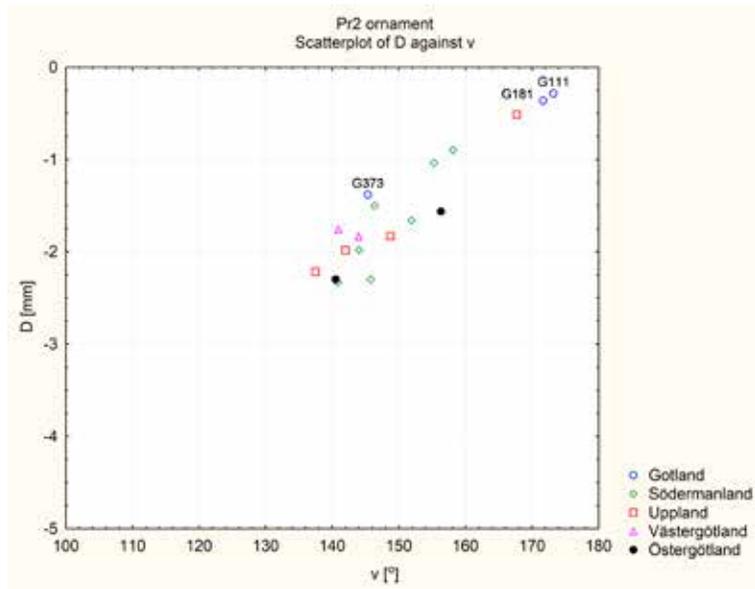


Figure 9 Result of analysis: The Pr3-group

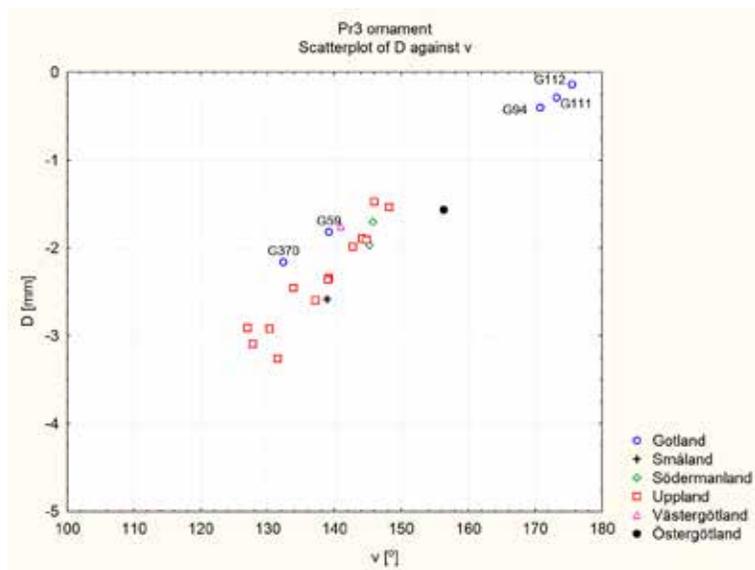
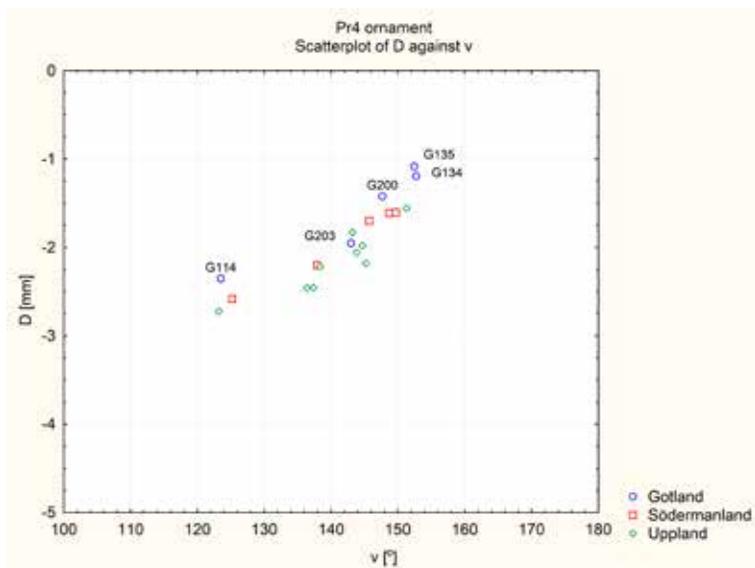


Figure 10 Result of analysis: The Pr4-group

this group were carved in sedimentary rock (limestone). This seems to have been no hindrance to creating similar grooves if the carvers wanted to.

In the last phase, the situation is different. The runestones in the Pr4 group¹⁰ form a tight cluster (Figure 10), which indicates that the carving techniques have become more similar. The runestones seem to have converged both technically and aesthetically. This might indicate increased contact and perhaps an influx of carvers from the Mälars area. The runestones from Sjonhem G134 and G135 are included in this group, as G136 would have been, had it not been lost. According to Jansson, all three runestones G134-G136 were made by the same carver, and with great skill (Jansson 1945: 150). G136 was signed by two carvers, where *Botbiærn* is a typical Gotlandic name, whereas the other is *Dan*. The name *Dan* does not appear in any other runic inscription on Gotland, but is quite common in the province of Uppland, particularly in the south-eastern part (GR I: 273; Snædal 2002: 75; 2004a: 36). However, there is no runecarver named *Dan* on the mainland either. The runestone G203 Hogrån is in the middle of the cluster of Uppland runestones and rune-carved rocks. The Ardre cist G114 is more similar to Sö Fv1954:19 Vrena and U1072 Bälinge. This is interesting because Sö Fv1954:19, made of

¹⁰ The Pr4-group includes G114, G134, G135, G200, G203, Sö205, Sö206, Sö208, Sö371, SöFv1954:19, U1036, U1072, U1140, U210, U229, U267, U29, U445, and U687.

limestone, is also a part of a cist, evidently the lid (Ljung 2016 II: 44, no. 54; Källström 2016: 175).

A source of error that must be taken into consideration is that the monuments have been carved in different kinds of rock. We face the problem that the Gotland monuments are made of sedimentary rock (sandstone and limestone), while the mainland monuments were made either of metamorphic (granite and gneiss) or sedimentary rock. Is it then possible to compare the carving technique? At first glance, this may seem an obstacle that cannot easily be overcome. Nevertheless, the results are interesting and deserve to be discussed. If the kind of rock were the one decisive factor, all Gotland stones should have been most similar to the limestone grave slab from Södermanland (Sö Fv1954:19), but this is not the case.

One way to investigate the influence of the kind of rock is to compare sedimentary and metamorphic runestones within a group of similar date. Systematic and significant differences are lacking in the variables most influential for the aesthetic impression (*v* and *D*). One explanation may be that the carvers were particular about the end result and would not be hindered by the stone material. The carvers may have striven for a similar aesthetic impression even when working in different kinds of rock, following a perceived model of how the grooves should look. The Gotland runestones have their own distinct characteristics, but still some aspects of the carving technique are remarkably like their Upplandic counterparts.

Another complication for this approach is that the styles may not necessarily have the same dating on Gotland as in the Mälars area. Firstly, styles on Gotland may have appeared only after some delay. Secondly, there are discrepancies between stylistic and runological dating. For example, the Ardre stones have been runologically dated to 1100-1130 (Snædal 2002: 94, 100). This dating is at variance with the central Sweden runestone chronology, where the style Pr₄ would indicate a dating to *ca.* 1070-1100 (Gräslund 2002: 144). The applicability of the style groups outside the Mälars area has been discussed earlier (Gräslund 2002: 146; Källström 2007: 68). It is an advantage to this study that some of the archaeological objects used for the chronological framework have actually been found on Gotland. This especially applies to the style groups Pr₃ and Pr₄ (Gräslund 1992: 195-197).

On the other hand, the runological datings gain support from Lena Thunmark-Nylén's archaeological dating of Gotlandic finds, which stretches the runestone style into the middle of the twelfth century. Thunmark-Nylén redates the so-called runestone style on a certain type of Gotlandic brooch shaped like an animal's head to not earlier than 1150. This results in a considerably later dating also for Gotlandic runestones with similar

ornament than the generally accepted dating in Uppland, implying that the runestone style was in use longer on Gotland than in Uppland (Thunmark-Nylén 1991: 190-191). Westphal suggests that we should assume an altogether independent picture- and runestone style on Gotland (Westphal 2004: 422). The peculiarities of Gotland have formerly been explained by the so-called Gotland paradox, signifying that the Gotlanders had to go abroad, but other people did not need to go to Gotland (Thunmark-Nylén 1985: 286). The discrepancy between runological and archaeological dating is, however, an old issue (Thunmark-Nylén 1991: 191; Gustavson 2012: 108, 111; Källström 2012: 121), which needs to be investigated more thoroughly than is possible here.

Källström, basing his opinion on the division of labour, the treatment of the stone, and relief carving, regards some runic monuments as having been produced in workshops (Källström 2007: 302). The rather late dating of some of the runic monuments has the consequence that late Viking-style rune carvers might be associated with the first attempts at a stone industry which later blossomed into the export of baptismal fonts (Roosval 1916: 228-229; Svanberg 1995: 180-181; Lundquist 2012: 7; Gustafsson 2013: 114).

5 Discussion

It has been suspected that the thirteenth-century *Guta saga* may describe a more advantageous and voluntary situation for the Gotlanders than actually was the case when the treaty between Swedes and Gotlanders was agreed upon in *ca.* AD 1030. We might consider the expression by Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson, 'Tribute was institutionalised plunder, and as such provided a more regular income' (Hedenstierna-Jonson 2006: 33). The contemporary runic inscriptions seem to speak of animosities. Nevertheless, the Gotland monuments were evidently a source for inspiration and were even imported.

Considering the carving technique as another independent source, no special relation may be discerned in this particular aspect in the early part of the eleventh century. Gotland had its own craft tradition for rune-carving and seems to have had little exchange with the Swedish mainland in this particular field. In a middle phase, represented by the Pr3 group, the runestones in Hablingbo were carved in a technique similar to mainland runestones, but the other Gotland stones sampled form a cluster of their own. In the last phase (represented by Pr4 stones, *ca.* AD 1070-1100), Gotland and the mainland instead share some common traits in the carving technique. The reason for this may be sought in more frequent personal contacts between craftsmen, perhaps even a confirmation of Snædal's

hypothesis regarding rune carvers from the Mälars area actually arriving in Gotland (Snædal 2004b: 62).

From a starting point of large differences, the rune carvers seem to have approached one another and the carving techniques became more similar. My interpretation of this result is that it tells us something about communication patterns in the eleventh century and that the carvers have adapted to cultural and/or political circumstances. During the period when there is evidence for killing and payments, there is no direct relation between the rune carvers either. Only in the late eleventh century did relations improve enough to allow rune carvers to co-operate. In his dissertation on metalworking on Gotland, Gustafson suggests that Gotland was rather closed to newcomers in the Viking period, with the exception of some sites, but opened up at the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth century (Gustafsson 2013: 90, 109, 112-113). This fits well with the results of the present analysis.

The relationship between Gotland and the Swedish mainland may be discussed from different perspectives – historical, runological, and archaeological. While the historical sources may provide a political framework, runic inscriptions are contemporary eyewitness reports and the carving, finally, tells about direct relations between people (Table 1). With due reservation for the sources of errors concerning stone material and possible discrepancies in stylistic dating mentioned above, a possible interpretation of the results is that a change in contact patterns between craftsmen concerned with epigraphic rune carving took place during the course of the eleventh century.

Table 1 Sources for the relationship between Gotland and the Swedish mainland in the eleventh century

Dating or style group	Source	Content
ca. AD 1030	<i>Guta saga</i> 13th ca. AD	Treaty between Svear and Gutar in ca. AD 1030
Pr1 (ca.1010-1040)	Inscription Sö174	uaR trebin : a : kut:lanti (‘was killed on Gotland’)
Pr1?	Inscription U414	þiR · fyrþu · stin · þina · af · kutlanti (‘they brought this stone from Gotland’)
Pr 2 (ca.1020-1050)	Carving technique	Different carving techniques
Pr3 (ca.1050-1080)	Inscription U614	þa þiR * kialt * toku * a kutlanti (‘when they took payment on Gotland’)
Pr3 (ca.1050-1080)	Carving technique	Ambivalent: Hablingbo similar, others very different
Pr2-Pr4 (signed by Fot)	Ornament U678	Uppland stone with Gotland characteristics
Pr4	Carving technique	Similar carving techniques

6 Summary

Here I have shown how to apply a method for analysis of carving technique to investigate relations over large distances. The carving technique on a number of runic monuments has been analysed using 3D-scanning and statistical methods, in an attempt to judge the degree of contact between Gotland and the Mälars area from the perspective of rune-carving. The carving technique is thought to reflect craft traditions and the mobility of the rune carvers concerned with epigraphic writing on different kinds of runic monuments.

Results indicate that the Gotlandic carvers during the first half of the eleventh century used similar styles to the carvers from Middle Sweden, but from a craft perspective they were different. Whereas the mainland regions shared a similar craft tradition, the rune carvers on Gotland followed their own customs, with roots in the picture-stone tradition. Some decades later in the eleventh century (represented by runestones with style Pr4), something happened. Gotland and the Mälars area converged in carving technique. With reservation for the sources of error depending of various stone materials, there seems to have been an exchange at a craft level. From a rune-carving craft perspective, Gotland's contacts with the Mälars area (*Svíþjóð*) thus seem to intensify in the late eleventh century. This co-operation between rune carvers may imply that there were also peaceful relations between their sponsors – that is, most probably rather well-off estate owners – on both sides of *Austmarr*.

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Abbreviations

DR = Lis Jacobsen and Erik Moltke with Anders Bæksted and Karl Martin Nielsen, *Danmarks runeindskrifter, I: Text; II: Atlas; III: Registre*. København: E. Munksgaard, 1941-1942.

G, GR = Elias Wessén, Sven B.F. Jansson and Elisabeth Svärdström, *Gotlands runinskrifter*, I-II. SRI 11-12. Uppsala: Almqvist och Wiksell, 1962-1978. For inscriptions with higher numbers than 222, see Helmer Gustavson and Thorgunn Snædal, manuscript of *Gotlands runinskrifter* III. <http://www.raa.se/kulturarvet/arkeologi-fornlamningar-och-fynd/runstenar/digitala-sveriges-runinskrifter/gotlands-runinskrifter-3/> (accessed 2 February 2017).

Nä = Sven B.F. Jansson, *Närkes runinskrifter*. SRI 14. Uppsala: Almqvist och Wiksell, 1975.

Sm = Ragnar Kinander, *Smålands runinskrifter*. SRI 4. Stockholm: Almqvist och Wiksell, 1935-1961.

SRI = *Sveriges runinskrifter*, ed. Kungl. Vitterhets Historie- och Antikvitetsakademien I-ongoing. Stockholm: Almqvist och Wiksell, 1900-ongoing.

Sö, SöR = Erik Brate and Elias Wessén, *Södermanlands runinskrifter*. SRI 3. Stockholm: Almqvist och Wiksell, 1924-1936.

U = Elias Wessén and Sven B.F. Jansson, *Upplands runinskrifter*. SRI 6-9. Stockholm: Almqvist och Wiksell, 1940-1958.

Vg = Hugo Jungner and Elisabeth Svärdström, *Västergötlands runinskrifter*. SRI 5. Uppsala: Almqvist och Wiksell, 1958-1970.

Ög = Erik Brate, *Östergötlands runinskrifter*. SRI 2. Stockholm: Kungl. Boktryckeriet, P.A. Nordstedt och Söner, 1911-1918.

Öl = Sven Söderberg and Erik Brate, *Ölands runinskrifter*. SRI 1. Stockholm: Kungl. Boktryckeriet, P.A. Nordstedt och Söner, 1900-1906.

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5 Polish noble families and noblemen of Scandinavian origin in the eleventh and twelfth centuries

The case of the Awdańcy family: by which route did they come to Poland and why?

Leszek Stupecki

Abstract

Polish historiography has accepted the theory of the Scandinavian origins of the Awdańcy family, one of the most powerful aristocratic families in Poland during the Middle Ages. Those facts have been well known to Polish medievalists for nearly a century, but remain largely neglected by Scandinavian scholars. This article discusses possible routes by which the Awdańcy may have reached Poland and their possible original role, before they came into a position of power. Furthermore, it shows that the Awdańcy were not a totally unique case, in relation to efforts to clarify the origin of a certain Magnus and the hypothesis regarding his possible Scandinavian roots.

Keywords: Awdancy, Poland, Noble families, Viking Period, Scandinavians

1 Introduction

This article begins with a short survey of known contacts between Poland (emerging at that time as a state) and Scandinavia and Scandinavians in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The focus of the discussion is, however, on the problem of the possible Scandinavian origin of the Awdańcy family, which was one of the most powerful noble families in the first part of the twelfth century in Poland. While familiar to Polish medievalists, this question remains almost

unknown among Scandinavian scholars. The article presents a hypothesis of Polish scholarship about a possible route by which the Awdańcy could have come to Poland (via Rus' in the early eleventh century) and speculation about their role before the family rose to the height of political power. It is also shown that the Awdańcy were not a totally unique case in Poland, presenting an example of a Polish *comes* Magnus, a nobleman bearing a very unusual name and a powerful person probably with Scandinavian or even Anglo-Saxon roots.

The contacts between early medieval Polish territories and Scandinavia have been analysed frequently in the last two decades.¹ I do not intend to summarise in this short article all the important questions already more or less investigated. This means that: 1. I will not address Jónsborg following Jakub Morawiec's book (2009b; cf. Słupecki 2000: 49-60).² 2. I am not going to discuss archaeological sites in Poland with some Scandinavian elements, or Scandinavian or Scandinavian-like artefacts (although there is a lot to say about new discoveries and new investigations).³ 3. I will not address Scandinavian merchants and travel routes, although there is still a lot to say and a lot to discuss (e.g. concerning the famous information by Ibrahim ibn Ya'qub about the merchants' road from Rus' (not simply from Kiev) to Prague via Kraków. For Ibrahim the city of Prague is 'the richest place with goods. Russians and Slavs come there from Kraków with goods ...' (following the translation in Mishin 1996: 186). And precisely in Kraków archaeologists have found a deposit of iron bars weighing more than 3 tons.⁴ 4. I will not discuss Scandinavian warriors employed in Poland in the army of the first Polish rulers (which is a relatively widely discussed topic) and in the navy (which is a rather neglected topic). 5. I am also not going to discuss dynastic marriages (and possible alliances coming to the light in that way) beginning from Eiríkr the victorious's and Sveinn Forkbeard's Polish wife (wrongly called Świętosława), the mother of Óláfr skotkonungr and Knútr the Great (Morawiec 2009a: 93-115; Hare 2000: 261-278; Uspenskij 2014: 377-381).

My intention here is to turn to a different problem, known in Polish medieval studies for at least a century, but neglected in international Scandinavian

1 A good overview of the present state of research is found in the article by Duczko (2013: 19-31).

2 Rather controversial is the new book of Stanisławski 2013. On Jónsborg, see also Aalto, this volume.

3 The problem has recently been summarized in the articles collected in Moździoch *et al.* 2013. Finally, new and extensive publications on excavations in Truso and Wolin have appeared (Jagodziński 2010; Filipowiak and Stanisławski 2013).

4 It consists of 4212 (*sic*) iron bars weighing 3630 kilograms (*sic*) found in Kraków during rescue excavations at Kanonicza Street. The find is from precisely the same time as Ibrahim's account, which is worth consideration and is decidedly in need of more serious international research, as similar artefacts are known from Scandinavia and Great Moravia (see Zaitz 1981: 139-152; Szmoniewski 2010: 290).

studies: the question of the possible Scandinavian origins of some Polish noble families of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁵ We know about 30 Polish noble families of that time playing a very important role in the politics and economy of the country. It is only two or three of these families that Polish medievalists have suspected as being of Scandinavian origin. But in just one case it is in fact certain. I am talking about the Awdańcy family (Semkowicz 1914: 19-20; 1920; Kiersnowska 1992: 57-72; Karp 2013). Polish medievalists reconstruct the earlier history of the Awdańcy, trying to link them to King Bolesław II, called the Generous (Szczodry). After his fall in 1079 (when the throne was assumed by his brother Władysław) some members of the family probably accompanied him in exile to Hungary (where he died), but came back to Poland in 1086 with his son Mieszko, who was unfortunately murdered by poison in 1089. So far I have reported the speculations of Polish historians (see especially Semkowicz 1920; Bieniak 1985: 27-28; Kiersnowska 1992; for a survey of research, see Karp 2013).

The facts are as follows: the Awdańcy undoubtedly joined, at the end of the eleventh century, the Polish duke Bolesław III the Wrymouth (Krzywousty), one of two Władysław sons, first supporting him and his brother Zbigniew against their father and his powerful palatine Sieciech; later, and after the sons of the old ruler were victorious, the Awdańcy supported Bolesław III against his brother Zbigniew. With the duke Bolesław III the Awdańcy evidently start their career in Poland (Semkowicz 1920: 171-176). In the early twelfth century they belong to the top of the Polish elite. One of the members of the family was a bishop and chancellor Michał (Michel) (Semkowicz 1920: 173); another, Skarbimir, was first active as *paedagogus* of the future ruler Bolesław Wrymouth, then as his *comes palatinus* (*wojewoda*) and chief commander of the army, but finally ended as a rebel who was punished for his rebellion in 1117 by being blinded – which marked the collapse of the power of the whole family (Bieniak 1997: 27-31; Karp 2013). It was at the same time the beginning of the career of another competing family also suspected of Scandinavian pedigree (far less convincingly), namely the family of Łabędzie ('Swans') with *comes* Piotr Włostowicon as its head (Bieniak 1987: 9-31).

2 The evidence of names

Why are the Awdańcy suspected of being of Scandinavian origin? Simply because we know the names of some of the first members of that family,

5 It should be stressed here that, in addition to narrative sources, from the twelfth century onwards we already have the first Polish charters and documents at our disposal.

Figure 11 Coat of arms of the Awdańcy family



After Piekosiński 1899: 22, 23, 24

the name of the family itself and the name of their coat of arms (still used by the family today). There are quite strong arguments. Some scholars speculated even further, analysing the main motif on the coat of arms (I will address this question later).

Let us start with the name of the family, Awdańcy, which is the same as the name of their summon and the name of their coat of arms – *Habdank* or *Abdank*, which, however, in the first records from the fourteenth century appears as *Audank* (Friedberg 1930: 69; Semkowicz 1920: 31-33). The etymology can be derived from Old Norse *auðr* ('wealth, treasure, hoard') and so on (de Vries 1962: 18). But the ending brings some problems – the origin of the name Awdańcy is not simply the noun *auðr*, but rather some derivative of it, something like a (singular) personal name *Auðun* or – perhaps even more convincingly – it can be reconstructed as a plural name **Auðingjar*, which could be the original name of the Awdańcy family. What is more, the same semantic meaning of 'wealth, treasure, hoard' appears already in the Slavic names of some Awdańcy family members, used frequently even up to modern times, such as the personal name *Skarbek* (or *Skarbimir*). The point is in the sense of the name, as *skarb* means in Polish precisely 'treasure, hoard', and the name seems to be simply a translation of the Old Norse personal name *Auðr* or *Auðun*. Interestingly, even in the fifteenth century (1463) there lived in Lwów a member of this family, a canon and royal notary, who simply used the name *Jan Auda* (Rudnicki 1938: 270). It is quite possible that family members remembered for a long time that *auðr/auda* meant the same as *skarb*.

The first list of the names of the Awdańcy family members is known thanks to the *Liber Fraternalitatis Lubinensis*. This is a Latin manuscript of the twelfth century recording the names of the founders and benefactors of the Benedictine monastery in Lubin (as it was the duty of monks to pray

for their souls). In the first places in the list of benefactors there of course appear rulers with their wives; then, however, comes the list of the members of the Awdańcy family. In the past it was supposed in scholarship that the Awdańcy were the main and real founders of the monastery (Semkowicz 1920: 14), and the Polish king Bolesław II (there called simply a duke) just added his name to the list of benefactors – but actually it is accepted in Polish medieval studies that the monastery was indeed a royal foundation, which was, however, at the same time supported by the Awdańcy family (Derwich 1996: 15-16).

The names of the benefactors are as follows:

Dux Bolezlauus cum uxore [with wife]. Dux Wladizlaus cum uxore. *Scarbimirus. Iascotel. Scarbimirus. Preduoy. Herincus. Caderic. Michael. Pacozlau. Voyzlauus cum uxore (...)* (*Liber Fraternitatis Lubinensis* 1888: 572; cf. Semkowicz 1920: 15) (emphasis mine)

Then the list continues. We may search for more names; and Władysław Semkowicz, who first noticed the Scandinavian traces in the Awdańcy family pedigree, did so already one hundred years ago. However, for this short article the oldest testimony will be enough, and we concentrate on the first nine names of family members (of course leaving aside dukes from the royal family of Piasts). We can observe in the list three, or in fact even five kinds of names:

- Germanic or Anglo-Saxon (*Caderic*);
- Scandinavian (*Herincus, Iascotel*);
- Christian, but possibly linked to Scandinavians (*Michael*);
- Slavic, but translating a Scandinavian original (*Scarbimirus*, repeated twice);
- Slavic (*Preduoy, Pacozlau, Voyzlauus*).

Leaving aside Slavic names, we turn first to *Caderic*. Semkowicz identifies it as the same name as Polish *Szczedrzyk*, which is a Slavicised form of Germanic *Theodoric*, in fact also popular in Scandinavia as *Thidrek* (Semkowicz 1920: 30). But there is also another possibility, namely an Anglo-Saxon name *Cedric*, which should also be taken into consideration (see below).

Herincus is here not simply *Henry*, but rather *Hæringr*⁶ (Łowmiański 1973: 464, after Vasmer 1932: 1).

6 According to de Vries (1962: 277), *hærr* means simply *grauhaarig* ('grey-haired').

Iascotel is a name which appears later on in a Slavicised form *Jasztott*. Semkowicz suggested that the name *Iascotel* (later on *Jasztott*) possibly stemmed ultimately from Old Norse *Hǫskuldr*, but one should recall here also Varangian *Askold* (Semkowicz 1920: 30-31). The last possibility seems to be the most interesting. Why? If we accept the idea that the Awdańcy had Scandinavian roots, the question arises of how, when, and why they came to Poland, or rather when they came into the service of the Polish royal family of the Piasts. Semkowicz tried to connect the Awdańcy family to Jómshorg and hypothetical Polish-Danish relations through and around this town around the mid-tenth century and consequently tried to search for the ancestral home of the family in Denmark (Semkowicz 1920: 35). In fact (and mostly thanks to archaeology) it is possible to reject such an assumption, as there are few Scandinavian traces from that period in Poland.⁷

As stated in the Primary Chronicle (*Povest' vremennykh let, sub anno 1018*), the Polish king Bolesław conquered Kiev (Kollinger 2014) and not only plundered the town but also forced members of church and secular elites to serve him and go with him back to Poland. For me really intriguing here is the possibility of comparing the name *Iascotel* (*Jasztott*) to *Askold*, the Kievan rival (together with *Dir*) of the Rurik royal family. *Askold* is mentioned in *Povest' vremennykh let (sub annis 862, 866, 882)*. To say that the Awdańcy are remote descendants of *Askold* from Rus' is surely too bold a proposal based only on the appearance of one and the same name in Kievan tradition (recorded at the turn of the eleventh to twelfth century) and in the list of names of Awdańcy members from the *Liber fraternitatis Lubinensis* (written down around the same time). Nevertheless, the period around and a little after 1020 seems to be the time to which most of our Scandinavian findings from early medieval Poland belong. So, it seems that archaeology speaks in favour of Henryk Łowmiański's old theory of the 'Russian' origins of the Awdańcy family in Poland (Łowmiański 1973: 465), which in fact suggests that they had Swedish roots (as Rus' was colonised from Sweden) (Duczko 2004.)

The next question is why search for Anglo-Saxon roots in the case of Caderick in the aforementioned list. It is because of Magnus, *comes* in Wrocław in 1093, who – precisely like the Awdańcy – supported the ambitions of the sons of the old duke Władysław, and – finally – moved from Silesia to Masovia, appearing there as *comes* for the last time in 1109. From his personal name comes the name of the Masovian village Magnuszew. In

7 Stanisławski (2013: 219-300) is of a different opinion, but he is wrong. For a well-balanced view see Duczko (2013: 23).

German historiography it was many years ago proposed that this enigmatic person was a son of the Norwegian king Magnus Haraldsson and the ancestor of Piotr Włostowic (who was the founding father of the Łąbędzie family). Polish historiography was of the opinion that he was Slavic up to the time when Tomasz Jurek argued quite convincingly that the name Magnus is in Poland absolutely unique at this point (as it is first of all a Norwegian dynastic name) (Jurek 1997: 181-192; Uspenskij 2004). But Jurek finds another candidate among persons in Europe bearing the name Magnus: Magnus, son of the Anglo-Saxon king Harold II Godwinson by his first (and unofficial) wife Eadgytha; his sister was Gytha, and brothers were Godwin and Edmund). After the death of their father in 1066 the brothers escaped to Ireland, then tried in 1068 to take Bristol, but in vain. The next year they failed again and finally landed in Denmark and that is the end of any information about them. But in 1069 in a Danish expedition against William the Conqueror and England appear some Polish troops, recorded under the same year by Ordericus Vitalis in his *Chronicle*. This expedition also failed. But in Poland some years later our *comes* Magnus appears. He seems to be politically located in the same constellation as the Awdańcy family. What is more, a very special chamber grave discovered in Czersk in Masovia (not far from the village of Magnuszew) was interpreted as Magnus's grave, which is a seductive but still very (and perhaps too) brave an interpretation (Śłupecki 2006: 13-15). But if an Anglo-Saxon Magnus in Poland is possible, why not a Cedric?

What about Michael? We need to turn here to the question of the coat of arms of the Awdańcy family. The first testimony existence comes from a *sigillum* (seal) from 1212 (Semkowicz 1920: 145).⁸ The main motif on it, which is 'W', is in the family tradition interpreted as 'M' turned around (which happens with coats of arms when the family is divided into branches). Semkowicz interprets it, following the tradition of the family, as an initial of the name *Michael*, frequent among the first family members, but – according to Semkowicz – connected first of all to the *comes* Michel as his sign or sign of property. Franciszek Piekosiński, however, who at the end of the nineteenth century tried to find runes on Polish coats of arms, interpreted it as a runic letter, but as the rune *ehwaz*. Piekosinski's theory was never accepted in Polish historiography (although he was indeed a very good editor of medieval charters and documents).⁹ At least his runic explanation of the coat of arms of the Awdańcy family does not seem to be very convincing. Yes, the letter 'W' from the coat of arms turned around looks

8 Then follow numerous examples of this coat of arms from seals and in medieval iconography.

9 On his heraldic runic theory (or rather heraldic runomania) see Boroń (2013: 38-39).

like 'M', but why interpret it as *ehwaz* (which indeed looks like that) and not simply as 'M'? And why should the rune *ehwaz* be appropriate for the family of *Auðingjar/Awdańcy? If it were a runic initial, it should rather be *áss*; if it had a meaning close to *auðr* ('wealth') it might eventually be *óðal* ('inherited wealth, property'). Latin 'M' is here undoubtedly much less problematic. Therefore, the connection of the sign on the coat of arms with the initial of the name *Michel*, as the family tradition says, seems to be more probable. To end with heraldic motifs, in the sources it should be added that the name of the coat of arms and the summon of the family, which appears as *Abdank* and *Habdank*, is directly connected to the name of the family.¹⁰

The name *Michel*, which is frequent among the Awdańcy from the beginning, is in fact one of the most frequent early Christian names among Scandinavians, including in Sweden, where St Michel appears in inscriptions on runestones. This Christian name, which is of course popular in all of Christendom, may also have a Scandinavian flavour. The same can be said (as was stated above) about the name *Scarbimirus* (*Skarbimír*) or *Skarbek*. Polish *skarb* means simply 'treasure, hoard' (Boryś 2005: 550)¹¹ and consequently seems to be a calque of Old Norse *auðr*.

3 Conclusion

To sum up: the name of the Awdańcy family is obviously Scandinavian and related somehow to *auðr*. The personal names of the first members of the Awdańcy family include two Scandinavian names (*Herincus* and *Iascotel*), one Germanic or Anglo-Saxon name (*Caderic*), and one (*Scarbimir*) which is a calque of some Scandinavian name, surely connected in its meaning to the name of the family and eventually to some Scandinavian personal name which was used in this family, eventually repeating the name of its protoplast. Like the name *Michel*, the coat of arms of the family and its summon (*Abdank*) is connected to the name of the family itself and in consequence to the word *auðr*. But the 'runic' trace on this coat of arms seems to be very problematic. Nevertheless, there are enough arguments to say that the Awdańcy family was of Scandinavian origin, probably Swedish via Rus'.

10 The name of the coat of arms is *Abdank* or *Habdank* and it appears from the beginning of the fifteenth century onwards, see Piekosiński (1899: 23). On the medieval heraldic materials, see especially Friedberg (1930: 69).

11 Interestingly, *skarb* as 'treasure' is a very Polish meaning of this word, which in other Slavic languages has connections to parsimony; this in fact fits perfectly well with the mythology of treasure and hoard, including Old Norse mythology.

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6 A medieval trade in female slaves from the north along the Volga

Jukka Korpela

Abstract

This article explores evidence of the medieval slave trade in the trade networks that had evolved from the Viking Age 'Eastern Route', linking the Baltic Sea to the Middle East. These trade networks were fundamental to the development of later Slavic states in Russia and also to the spread of Christianity. The focus is on the type of slaves referred to as *nemci*, which in some languages became specifically used for white, blonde slaves of northern or Scandinavian type, who were sold at remarkably high cost as luxury items in the south. This study contextualises trade in 'nemci' slaves within the context of the spread of Christianity through the north and the extending power of Christian states.

Keywords: Russian slave trade, child slaves, Russia

1 Introduction

The trade in non-baptised *nemci* ('German' or 'foreign', understood as 'northern European') formed a luxury business and was profitable even over long distances. This kind of slave trade did not start only in the sixteenth century along Russian rivers, as appears in written sources, but is continuous from the age of the Vikings. The reason for the expansion in the written records is merely state formation and the growth of administration, which produced new kinds of written material. In fact, this process led to prohibition of the old business. The prominent role of *nemci* in the slave trade did not mean that Germans or Swedes had some special qualifications that were especially in demand in the Middle East. The concept only distinguished blonde slaves from others in the trade on the Volga. 'White' (i.e. fair-coloured) slaves

were especially expensive in the southern markets. Baptism formed one restriction in the business from the perspective of a rising state power. The concern was not religious, but baptised people were the ruler's taxpayers and so part of his wealth, according to the thinking of mercantilist economists.

2 *Nemci* girls for sale

When the Nogai ruler Izmail-bek sent a delegation headed by the high-ranking diplomats Temer and Bek-Cūra to Moscow in the late summer of 1561, one of the things he ordered Bek-Cūra to buy for him was two *nemci* girls (*Gramoty*: 174). The Persian delegation of Kaya and hadži Hosrev was ordered to buy three girls and three *nemci* slaves in Moscow for Safavid Šah Abbās in 1592-1593 and a further 30 *nemci* slaves in Kazan' on their journey home. The next winter, the Safavid ambassador hadži Iskender had a long shopping list from the Šah to request in Moscow, including 20 slaves in addition to various kinds of furs, wax, birch bark, and many other items. In this case, the Muscovites allowed hadži Iskender to buy five 'more *nemci*' slaves on his way home (Veselovskij 1890: 165, 170, 190, 204, 213-214).

Such stories are many in the diplomatic documents of these years and it is clear that Nogai, Tatar, Persian, Caucasian, and Turkmen nobles and tradesmen were interested in *nemci* slaves, especially female ones, who were a very expensive luxury. Izmail-bek gave for his envoys Temer and Bek-Cūra 400 rubles for two girls, whereas according to Novosel'skij the average price for a good slave in Crimea was 40-80 rubles (*Gramoty*: 178, Novosel'skij 1948: 434-436).

Muhammad-Ali, ambassador of the Buhārān Khan Abdallāh, was allowed to buy *nemci* slaves in 1589 but forbidden to take baptised ones, while the Muscovite officials refused to sell hadži Iskender baptised slaves and insisted that he should buy unbaptised ones. The authorities even followed the delegation of Andi-bek, Ali Hosrov, and hadži Hussein along the Volga to ensure that no baptised *nemci* slaves were taken to Persia. Likewise, in 1600, the Moscow authorities allowed the trader Muhammed to buy only unbaptised *nemci* (girl) slaves for Šah Abbās (*Materialy*: I, no. 12; Veselovskij 1890: 214, 306, 310, 312; 1892: 57-58).

The eastern European trade in slaves was old and big business. The water routes of the area formed the core of the Vikings' long-distance trade routes. Slaves were one of their main trading items. This business is documented in many Byzantine, Near Eastern and West European sources. Young girls were a special item in this business, according to many sources. After the Viking Age, this trade did not stop but only took on new forms, and the

trade in young females along the Volga is documented in Russian chronicles (Korpela 2014b: 60-66, 126-128; 2018: 57-83).

From late medieval and early modern sources, we know that tens of thousands of prisoners were transported yearly from Crimea and Kazan'/ Astrakhan to the markets of Central Asia, Asia Minor and the Mediterranean area, and finally even to India. Most slaves originated from the Russian-Ukrainian lands, but some prisoners were transported even from northern European forests, because of their exceptional qualifications. The wars of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries increased the number of northern slaves in the Muscovite/Volga markets (Korpela 2014a: 85-86, 104-106; 2014b: 75-76, 78-83, 92-96; 2015; 2018: 83-108).

The slaves in the trade were divided into two main categories. First there was ordinary cheap manpower and secondly there were extraordinary cases, who were bought for the harems for noble families and as a luxury. The luxury slaves were young, because they had to be trained for their duties. Skin colour mattered too (Michalonis Litvani 1854 [1615]: 22; Korpela 2014a: 93-99). The blonde or white colour was especially important in the markets of the south. According to Ibn Battuta and Afanasij Nikitin, white female slaves were expensive and valuable in the Indian markets. They were more expensive in the Italian markets than black ones and white slaves were more highly valued than others in Egypt, too (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa 1993-2000: 595-596; Kozlov *et al.* 2003: 102-103, 106, 109-110; Gioffré 1971: 185-326; Imhaus 1997: 120-121; Marmon 1995: 26, 39, 126n.48, 133n.103). The markets for white slaves were mostly in eastern Europe. Such exceptional cases were worth transportation even over long distances. When in the Karelian isthmus a kidnapped girl cost five altyn in the mid-sixteenth century and the price level in Moscow was 200 rubles, as in our example above, the business was profitable and sound, as 200 rubles is equal to 6666 altyn. This made for big business (*Patriaršaja*: 7064 [1556]; Filjushkin 2008: 147; Korpela 2014a: 94-95, 114). There are, however, some strange aspects to this. Firstly, was the trade in blonde girls only a novelty of the sixteenth century, as the sources suggest? Secondly, what difference did baptism make to this business? Thirdly, what kind of special qualifications did the *nemci* have?

3 *Nemci* in Muscovite society

The term *nemci* in the Old Russian language refers basically to a people whose speech is not understandable. In early medieval times it referred especially to western Europeans (Germans). After the late twelfth century Scandinavians were also called *nemci*, and from the fourteenth century onwards, Finns under

the rule of the king of Sweden were *nemci*. Estonians, Latvians, and other Baltic people were *nemci* after they had joined the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, in late medieval usage the concept simply meant Western Christians. Siberian and northern pagans were called by ethnic names and Slavic Orthodox Christians Rus'. The only exception in this respect were Roman Catholic Slavic speakers, who were called by ethnic names (Korpela 2008: 42-55). The ambassador of Tsar Feodor, Prince Andrej Dmitrievič Zvenigorodskij, explained to Šah Abbās on 15 January 1594 what a rich land Siberia was and what development efforts had taken place there. According to the prince, there were also many Lithuanian and *nemci* inhabitants (Veselovskij 1890: 265; Burton 1997: 79-80). The register of townspeople in Kazan' compiled in 1565-1568 contains some *nemci puškar*, i.e. gunmen and mercenary soldiers (*Piscovye knigi*: 21-22, 183). At the beginning of the seventeenth century there were already other *nemci* people. The persons named Griška and Ondrjuška in Korotaj and Isengil'dejko in Nižnjaja Aiša were from Livonia (*latyš*), Griška and Isengil'dejko being referred to with the epithet *prihodec* ('newcomer'), while Anca Kutlejarov and Danilko in Ursek, Matyš in Starye Menger, and Khristofor Kondrat'ev in Unba were *nemci*. The *nemci* Anca Sontaleev and *latyš* Jakuško Derbyšev were both living in Ursek (*Piscovaja* 1978: 103ob., 104, 109, 132ob., 138, 138ob., 177, 180ob., 220ob.).

The sources also mention a few *nemci* slaves. The Tatar civil servant Bek-bulat Begišev had a *nemeckoj (latyš) polon* on his estate in the region of Svijažkoj, near Kazan', who had escaped with his wife and children in 1621 (Mel'nikov 1856: no. 7). *Nemci* are no longer recorded in the register for Kazan' by the mid-seventeenth century, but some family names refer to *nemci*, e.g. Ontoška Prokof'ev Nemcin, and there was a village called Nemčino on the *Nogajskaja doroga* ('The Road to Nogaj Tatars') (*Piscovaja* 2001: 162, 387ob.).

Records for Nižnij Novgorod are available only after the 1620s. A village called *Staraja Nemeckaja sloboda* ('Old Village of *Nemci*') and a burial ground *nemeckoe kladbišče* ('The Graveyard of *Nemci*') were located on the River Oka, and there were several people referred to as *nemeč* living in the area, some of whom were *novokreščen* ('newly baptised') and had typical Russian names, such as Ivan Jakovlev. Further along the River Oka, there was a village described as *Sloboda nižegorodckih nemeč i litvy* ('the village of *Nemci* and Lithuanians from Nižegorod'), with an explanation that it was inhabited by *inozemci* ('foreigners'). These foreigners were also called *nemci* even though their names were mostly Russian, with certain exceptions, such as Ganko Prokoev, Tomilko Ostač'ev, Adam Svideretckij, Adam Ivanov, and Indrik Miller. These people were from Livonia or Sweden and may have been free migrants, prisoners of war, slaves or a combination of all of these (*Piscovaja* 1896: 173-178).

The tax books of the region of Staraja Russa contain little material from the late fifteenth century but much more from the early seventeenth century. The registers contain few ethnic references, but those that do exist are family names such as Ivaško Nemčin, Mikhal Litvin, Jakim Koreljanin, Jakim Latyš and Bogdan Latyš (Ankudinov *et al.* 2009: 4 [l. 140 ob.], 4 [l. 141], 26 [l. 94 ob.], 35 [l. 4], 36 [l. 7], 43 [l. 29], 52 [l. 63], 104 [l. 285], 136 [l. 60], 151 [l. 93], 254 [l. 348ob.]). The expression *nemci* is used in these registers exclusively to denote the foreign troops who devastated the area in the early seventeenth century (see e.g. Ankudinov *et al.* 2009: 146, 151, 164, 169, 170). The documents of the city of Novgorod from the early seventeenth century do not alter this picture. There were western tradesmen such as Grigorij Grigor'ev, who was a house owner in the Sofia district, and a *galanskie zemli nemčin*, a Dutchman, but otherwise the ethnic references to *nemci* concern the devastation of the city by Swedish troops (Ankudinov and Bulanin 2003: 1-65, references on pp. 6, 10-11).

The copybook of Novgorod *d'jak Aljab'jev* opens up a perspective on the roles of slaves of various kinds (debt, voluntary, service, prisoners) in local society. The book was compiled in the late sixteenth century but contains documents (appeals, administrative decisions, court orders) starting from the end of the fifteenth century.

The local society in the territory of Novgorod consisted of free farmers and slaves (*holop*). There were also a lot of children who had been born while one of their parents was a slave and were therefore slaves themselves (*Zapisnaja kniga* 1898: col. 3). This slave population included some people who were prisoners from Sweden or the Baltic region. Marinka, mentioned in 1588, was a *kholop* and a Lithuanian prisoner, Palagijca, the daughter of Petrov, was a Livonian taken prisoner in 1578, and Jurka a Western Christian and prisoner abducted from Vyborg in 1593. Ovdokimko, mentioned in 1597, was a *nemčin* and a prisoner from Tartu, while Ofimka was a Livonian girl taken prisoner in 1565. Another Ofimia was a Livonian girl prisoner captured in 1566, and Oleško a prisoner from Polock in 1565. Mitka, mentioned in 1595, was a prisoner from Pärnu (*Zapisnaja kniga* 1898: col. 14 [no. 41], col. 18 [no. 54], col. 18-19 [no. 55], col. 101 [no. 284], col. 104 [no. 292], col. 165 [no. 449], col. 195 [no. 526]).

The register of *Aljab'jev* and other similar source collections (*Akty zapisanye* I: 1-3; III: 1-3; IV: 10, 12, 20, 21; IX: 1, 3) confirm the picture obtained from the tax registers. Prisoners were sold in the countryside and became workers and servants there. They were like all the other ordinary people: free peasants, immigrants, and debt slaves. They married and had families; they joined the local society. The memory of their origins must have eventually disappeared after a few generations and a language shift, and they became ordinary Russians.

All in all, there were many and various kinds of *nemci* living in Russia. Thus such persons were available for the trade in slaves. The term *nemci* in connection with the Muslim trade documents is, however, something extraordinary.

The concept is mentioned in this connection only in the sixteenth-century Russian sources. Probably somebody had translated the request of a Persian trader into Old Russian with deficient language skills; these were often criticised in official documents (Korpela: 2014b: 29-30). The basic meaning of the word may have been completely obscure for the Persians and Caucasians, as we can conclude from the use of national terminology by the Ottoman travellers in eastern Europe (*Evlja čelebi kniga*: 48, 301n.10; Korpela 2014b: 169; 2018: 203-207).

In any case, in the Tatar slave trade, the term *nemci* seems to have acquired a special meaning that differs from its everyday use in contemporary Russian. It was a special type of slave, who was very expensive and valuable in the world of the Central Asian traders. It is certain that these exceptional qualifications had nothing to do with the native language or factual ethnicity of the trading object, because none of the trading partners understood any northern languages. According to the stereotypic description of Ibn-Khaldūn, we could imagine white or blonde prisoners, who naturally came mostly from the North (Ibn Khaldūn 1980 I: 170-172).

Nemci was a trademark for qualifications that were unusual and highly valued in Central Asian markets. There were not, however, any *nemci* slaves in the Central Asian registers, and therefore we can assume that the concept was only used in the trading context in Russia. These slaves were re-categorised in the east using other terminology, most probably as Russians (Korpela 2014b: 170; cf. e.g. Fitrat and Sergeev 1937: no. 15, 17; Morgan and Coote 1886 I: 95). Nor is the word used in Crimean sources. On the other hand, there were lots of blonde northern slaves available. Most probably these traders did not need this kind of national definition, but only used colours, which were the real point in the trade (Korpela 2014b: 170; 2018: 203-207, 220-222). The reason for the use of the term *nemci* may lie in the legal framework of the business. The Russian tsar tried to prohibit the selling of his own subjects into slavery, but foreigners formed a 'borderline case'. The terminology was used only in the Volga trade, because it was already a part of the Muscovite economic system, while the Crimean trade was based on kidnappings, war, and raiding. Along the Volga, the trade was legal and subject to rules, while the business in Crimea was pure criminality from the Muscovite perspective.

4 The baptism

Religion was an issue in the slave trade. Since Islam did not permit the enslaving of Muslims, the Islamic realms were forced to buy Christian or pagan slaves. On the other hand, as Christians were similarly barred from selling other Christians into slavery, Jewish traders and Muslim corsairs played an active role in this business in the Mediterranean. Although these regulations were bypassed in many ways and there were many Christian as well as Muslim slaves for sale in the markets, these rules directed the trading more towards Africa and the Russian steppes, because there were in any case suitable people available there (pagans, heretics, etc.) (Heers 1961: 69-72; Verlinden 1979: 158-161; Rotman 2009: 42-43, 57-58, 62, 64, 66-67; *Régestes* I: 468, 683; III: 2956; Korpela 2014b: 67-68; 2018: 66-68, 218-22).

Table 2 Numbers of ethnic denotations in the Kazan' region tax register of 1602-1603¹

Newly baptised	Cheremis	Chuvash	Tatars	<i>Nemci</i>	Others	Total
180	10	204	139	10	537	1080

A newly baptised category is to be found here and there in the registers up to the northern territories of Karelia, Dvina, and Kola. The registration of a person as newly baptised may indicate a non-Orthodox prisoner, an immigrant, or equally well a Tatar who had integrated into Muscovite society.

It was common all over the Christian world to rebaptise and rename slaves (Imhaus 1997: 37, 435-562; Heers 1961: 98-103; Gioffré 1971: 185-326). Islamic societies also practised the renaming of slaves (Mukminova 1985: 122). The documents tell directly of some Finnish and Baltic prisoners who were rebaptised into Orthodox Christianity. The Baltic prisoner Indrik was renamed Ivaško in 1544, and the Vyborg prisoner Feklitsa became Avdotija in 1597. Matts Manuelsson and Anna Michælsdotter became Lev and Olenka in 1591. Piritka (Birgitta) from Vyborg likewise came to be known as Solomanitka after an Orthodox baptism in 1593 (*Zapisnaja kniga* 1898: col. 37 (no. 109), col. 63-64 (no. 177), col. 142-143 (no. 388), col. 165 (no. 448)).

Forty Armenian businessmen appealed to Tsar Aleksej in 1666. They explained how they conducted business in the lands of *qizilbāš* (Persia), in

¹ The numbers are collected from the index of the edition and therefore only approximate figures.

the Ottoman empire, India, and in the lands of the *nemci* (western Europe). Everywhere they were able to follow their Orthodox Christian Armenian faith except in Moscow. Here they were not allowed to go to church and no priest would visit a dying Armenian and pray with him (Parsamjan 1953: no. 9, pp. 42-43). Indeed, at least after the Makarian reforms in the mid-sixteenth century, the Muscovite church regarded all other Christians except the members of the Moscow Orthodox church, including other Orthodox, as non-Christians.

Therefore, many of those who arrived freely at the service or for a more permanent stay in Muscovy usually undertook a rebaptism. Thereafter they were *novokreščen*, like the Armenian Serkis Avanesian, who arrived from Crimea in 1632 and received a new name, Kirill Avanesov (Parsamjan 1953: no. 2, p. 4). In the central areas of the slave trade there were even villages of *nemci* where large numbers of newly baptised people were living (*Piscovaja* 1896: 173-178).

A large group consisted of those Tatars who took baptism. Partly it may have been easier in local society to be a peasant among other Christian peasants; partly they were Tatar nobles who joined the Muscovite service and were eager to be promoted in the hierarchy. Some of the baptised had Tatar names, such as Vasilij Hasanmurzin, and sometimes Tatars and newly baptised people were put into the same group, for example 'the 40 houses of newly baptised, translators, and service Tatars', or 'the villages of the people of the archbishop, monastery people, newly baptised, Tatars and Chuvash' (*Piscovye knigi*: 18, 20, 28, 29, 35, 51, 61, 196).

The Muscovite church did not separate the newly baptised and rebaptised from each other. All former Western Christians, Muslims, and Animists belonged to the same group. From the perspective of prisoners of war and other immigrants, an Orthodox baptism was a security measure that was worth taking. Besides gaining the protection of the church, the people became subjects of the ruler. As the Swedish peace delegation was told in 1556, the Livonian chronicler, Balthasar Russow, recorded in 1560 and the Danish ambassador, Jacob Uhlfeldt, noted in 1578, many prisoners were sold directly to the land of the Tatars, where the Muscovite regulations were not in force, and thus the supply and demand matched perfectly when the priests had no time to baptise the prisoners (Lihačev and Majkov 1910: 41, 104; Russow 1857 [1584]: 49a; Jacobi 2002 [1608]: 203, 207-208).

This phenomenon belongs only to the late sixteenth century. State formation had created the baptism as a criterion for being a subject of the ruler ('a primitive citizenship'), and, as a side product, protection against the slave trade.

5 The limits of the trade

The Safavid Šah Abbās ordered his envoy Kaya to buy in Moscow ‘clean’ (*rabjat čistyh*) female and girl slaves. The term obviously refers to legitimate slaves (Veselovskij 1890: 165, 170). As mentioned at the beginning, several delegations from Central Asia and Persia received only limited permission to buy *nemci* slaves, unbaptised ones, and sometimes the Muscovite administration even set some escort troops as convoys to the delegations to ensure that no baptised and unlicensed slaves were exported (*Materialy*: I, no. 12; Veselovskij 1890: 214, 306, 310, 312; Veselovskij 1892: 57-58).

New rules are visible in the letter of Nogai Khan Izmail to Tsar Ivan IV. The khan’s servant Yanbulat had bought a slave girl in Šigaleev (Kasimov), but the Muscovite authorities confiscated the slave, because Yanbulat did not have an export licence (*Gramoty*: 52, 65). The English trader Anthony Jenkinson also faced customs problems in Kazan’ in the 1560s (Morgan and Coote 1886 I: 321).

A modern sovereign ruler started to control his realm, which meant that he claimed ultimate rule over all resources, land, and people within a geographical area. For this purpose the ruler organised a modern permanent administration, army, and legal system. The ruler standardised processes and started an active economic policy that is described by the term mercantilism. As a part of this the export of strategic and valuable goods was limited and foreign trade was regulated (Brezis 2003: 482-485; Kotilaine 2004: 143-144). The prohibited items were referred to in Muscovy as *zapovednye tovary*. The lists of these goods changed but among them were falcons, arms, furs, spices, wines etc. (Burton 1997: 463, 469-470, 473-475, 489-490, 495-496; Šumilov 2006: 209-211; Fehner 1952: 69, 75-76, 134-135).

The grand prince (tsar) of Muscovy had expanded his control and power over the eastern Slavs after the late fourteenth century. The Hanseatic League was closed down in Novgorod after its conquest in 1494, and the Baltic trade submitted to the control of Moscow. The Crimea was put under an embargo in the 1490s and direct contacts established with Constantinople. Vasilij III started to restrict the trade to the Volga, which started to have an impact step by step (Dollinger 1981: 402-403; von Herberstein 1571: 157; Tiberg 1995: 63-66, 134; Bogorodickaja 1979: 179). The next step was to issue privileges for certain traders to conduct business with specified goods and areas and to restrict trade by foreign traders in certain places (von Herberstein 1571: 57-58, 78; Muljukin 1909: 194-197; Fehner 1952: 62-63, 119-129, 135-136; Šumilov 2006: 187-196, 209-211; Romaniello 2012: 56).

Mercantilism had the most serious impact on the slave trade. Medieval rulers were not much concerned about human kidnappings. Now the rulers

started to regard the humans – free as well as unfree ones – as their own resources as taxpayers and workers of the economy. Moreover, the late medieval food crises even encouraged the ruler to organise the production of food, which required manpower. The Muscovite administration started to buy the freedom of slaves from Tatar markets and realms, and slave matters were organised under one administrative body in the central administration (Hellie 1982: 292-294). Thus, the export of ‘baptised *nemci* slaves’ became totally prohibited and the trade in ‘unbaptised *nemci* slaves’ was limited with export licences after the mid-sixteenth century.

The rise of the modern realm resulted in the decline of the slave trade and its marginalisation to remote areas. In Siberia trade in taxpayers (*yasak*) was prohibited, but forest dwellers remained trading objects still in the late seventeenth century (Gataullina *et al.* 1959: no. 12; Burton 1997: 469-470, 483-484, 489, 533). The difference between luxury and ordinary slaves may have become most clear with the export restrictions, and therefore the trade in the former disappeared first. The kidnapping of ordinary people from forests and during wartime and transporting them even from Finland to Persia continued until the eighteenth century (Burton 1997: 493-496; Korpela 2014b: 193-194, 198; 2018: 236-238).

This rise of the administration, however, inaugurated the production of our sources concerning the trade in female slaves along the Volga. Earlier chronicles describe it in general but not in detail. The restrictions and export licences recorded the individual facts, and although it limited, prohibited, and finally stopped the business, it made the earlier invisible trade visible.

6 Summary

The points to take away from the preceding discussion are:

- 1 The slave trade in blonde (*nemci*) girls must have been a significant issue throughout the whole of the Middle Ages, because the trade in girls and females along the Volga is described in general terms in the sources on Viking trade and later in Russian chronicles. Its manifestation in the sources of the sixteenth century reflects its significance, but the reason for the records is that there was no such system of recording earlier.
- 2 The religion of the objects of trade was a theological concern but there were many ways to bypass the problem.
- 3 State formation in early modern Europe also restricted the slave trade, because the government considered people of the territory as royal resources: they were taxpayers, soldiers, and manpower.

- 4 Because religion became a criterion in state formation, it accidentally also became a qualification of the slave trade.

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Section 3

Language

7 Ahti on the Nydam strap-ring

On the possibility of Finnic elements in runic inscriptions

Kendra Willson

Abstract

Elmer Antonsen's suggestion that a fourth-century runic inscription on a bronze strapring (part of a swordsheath) from Nydam, Jutland, might contain the Finnish and Karelian divine/heroic name *Ahti* (a god of the sea and a warrior-hero conflated with Lemminkäinen in Elias Lönnrot's *Kalevala*) is not impossible but uncertain at best. This example provides an opportunity to outline the methodological issues involved in evaluating a proposed interpretation of a runic inscription that identifies it with a non-Germanic (and non-Latin) language.

Keywords: Runic inscriptions, Early Norse, weapons deposits, Nydam bog, language contact, Finnic names, theonyms

1 Introduction

The suggestion that a fourth-century runic inscription on a bronze strap-ring (attachment for a sword-sheath) from the bog site at Nydam in south-eastern Jutland may contain the Finnish divine/heroic name *Ahti* (a god of the sea and a warrior-hero conflated with Lemminkäinen in Elias Lönnrot's *Kalevala* [1835; 1849]) is mentioned by Elmer Antonsen (2002: 114) as a possibility that 'deserves a serious follow-up investigation' (Antonsen 2002: 114); Grünzweig (2004: 85) echoes this. From the point of view of Finnic historical linguistics, the interpretation is possible, although the fourth century is early for a Finnish *-i* stem and the etymology of the name *Ahti* is disputed.

A number of other interpretations for the sequence have been proposed, all with their own uncertainties. Eichner (1996: 15) interprets **ahti** in the Nydam strap-ring as a past-tense 3 sg. form of *eigan* ('to own') (< PGmc. **aihtai*, cf. Old Norse *átti*), although Stoklund (1995: 276) finds an ownership formula in the past tense pragmatically odd, and the Germanic diphthongs would be expected to be preserved at this early date. Heikkilä (2013: 76) views the sequence in the inscription as the dative form of a Germanic personal name derived from the same root, one of several sources (in his complex account) for the Finnish name.

Alternatively, the word could be an accusative or dative form of Proto-Norse *aihtir* > Old Norse *ætt*, *átt* ('family, lineage; direction'). Elsewhere on the same artefact is found **anula**, tentatively connected by Grünzweig (2004: 86) with Old Norse *unna* ('to love, not to begrudge'), probably an *an*-stem noun with a diminutive suffix. If read as part of the same utterance, the inscription could identify Harkilaz as **ahti anula** ('beloved to the family').

While the possibility of Finnic names in early runic inscriptions should not be rejected off-hand, the evidence remains inconclusive at best in the absence of parallels or additional evidence. The other names from the same site that Antonsen (2002: 114) mentions as having parallels in modern Finnish, **harkilaz-ahti** and **rawsijo**, would be anachronistic as Finnish names and are more easily explained as Germanic.

2 Background

Finnic and Sámi languages were in close contact with the Germanic languages spoken in Scandinavia during the main periods of runic production (starting early in the Common Era). However, the possibility of Finnic or Sámi elements in runic inscriptions has rarely been seriously considered. Occasionally a suggestion is made in the literature mentioning such a possibility, perhaps citing another scholar as an oral source (e.g. Antonsen 2002: 114; Källström 2014: 117n.).

Here I analyse one inscription for which a Finnish interpretation has been suggested. While the proposal is intriguing and the form not impossible, the evidence is at best inconclusive in the absence of corroborative examples. Uncertainty on the origin and age of the Finnish name further compound the difficulties. This case study provides an occasion to discuss the methodological issues at stake in proposing interpretations based on non-Germanic languages other than Latin. I also discuss other potential interpretations of the inscription.

2.1 Contacts

Finnic and Sámi languages are known to have been in close contact with Germanic languages for at least two millennia. This is seen not least in the very large number of Germanic loanwords from different periods found in Finnic (*LägLoS*; Kallio 2015) and Sámi (Sköld 1983; Aikio 2012). Linguistic influence on other areas of grammar, in all directions, has been proposed at various times but is difficult to prove (cf. e.g. Kusmenko 2004; 2010; Aikio 2006).

Traditionally it has been thought that the Germanic languages constituted a clear superstrate, a language with higher social status (Posti 1953), and that the main direction of influence would have been from superstrate to substrate. Recent work re-examines the prehistoric contact situation and presents a more complex picture of the linguistic relations in the region (Kallio 1997; 2000). Hyllested argues for lexical borrowings from Sámi into Scandinavian (2008) and from Finnic into Proto-Germanic (2014: 99-107). While it is clear that many more Germanic loans entered Finnic than vice-versa, we cannot assume that influences of any type will be entirely unidirectional.

There is also archaeological evidence of contacts between Scandinavians and Finns in the Migration Period and Viking Age. Scandinavian weapons and ornaments appear in some rich graves in Finland from the Late Roman Iron Age and Migration Period (Schauman-Lönnqvist 1991: 83; Fischer 2003: 56). Finnish-type artefacts are found in roughly 47 of around 1100 graves (*ca.* 4 per cent) in the early Viking Age town of Birka in central Sweden (Gustin 2012: 97). However, Finland remained relatively marginal to the Viking world (Raninen and Wessman 2014).

The finds at the Nydam bog deposit site in south-eastern Jutland, where the strap-ring was found, indicate invaders from the north and east whose weapons were destroyed before being deposited in the bog. Ilkjær (1991: 280-281) states that the dominant direction of contact seen in younger bog deposits is north and east from the Baltic, although many artefact types have a wide distribution and their origin cannot be identified precisely. According to Antonsen (2002: 114) the possible origin of the artefacts found at the Nydam site encompasses the whole Baltic area, including Estonia and Finland.

The geographical distribution of language groups around the Baltic was quite different in the fourth century from today. Proto-Finnic had just recently spread from the south side of the Gulf of Finland (present-day Estonia) into coastal areas of southern Finland. Sámi languages were spreading north from southern Finland, displacing Palaeo-European languages. Other West Uralic languages were probably also spoken in the region east of the Baltic (see further Frog and Saarikivi 2015; Ahola and Frog 2014: 51).

2.2 Runes

The runic alphabet emerged near the start of the Common Era. It is generally thought to have emerged through limited exposure to a Mediterranean alphabet on the part of Germanic peoples in the northern parts of the Roman Empire. Roughly 200 inscriptions in the so-called elder futhork, dating from the second to the eighth century AD, have been found scattered over a large area of Europe, with the highest concentration in Denmark. Much more numerous Viking Age and medieval inscriptions are found mainly in Scandinavia.

Many runic inscriptions have not been deciphered. Early inscriptions, representing the dawn of a literate culture, seem to show an especially high proportion of incomprehensible inscriptions; Looijenga (1997: 57) classifies 34 of the 201 early inscriptions in her corpus, or 17 per cent, as illegible or uninterpretable. Some of these probably reflect imperfect mastery of the writing system; the early inscriptions also represent stages in the development of the Germanic languages that are less well known.

Incomprehensible inscriptions have been interpreted variously as magical charms (cf. Bæksted 1952), deliberately encrypted, or incompetent efforts by illiterate carvers. Holm (1981) suggests the Hjalsta stone (U811) to be the work of an aphasiac; Olsen (1953) proposes some rune carvers to have been dyslexic. In some cases, the runic monument may not have been intended to convey a linguistic message (Bianchi 2010). Bianchi (2010) discusses Late Viking Age inscriptions which do not appear to contain any linguistic message, but which nonetheless share with other runestones general elements of design and some pragmatic and semiotic functions.

Although runes are strongly associated with Germanic languages, there are numerous medieval runic inscriptions in Latin (Gustavson 1994; Knirk 1998). Other languages are hardly represented. Nielsen (1994) finds little evidence for foreign influence in the personal names attested in Danish runic inscriptions, mainly limited to one Slavic name, *Mistivis*, in the tenth-century Sønder-Vissing stone (164-166, 184). Some inscriptions from the British Isles contain Celtic names, and it has been suggested that the slightly odd Norse grammar of the Kirk Michael III inscription from the Island of Man shows some influence from a Celtic language (Jesch 2015: 71-72). However, no runic inscription written in a Celtic language has been identified.

Indeed, the possibility that a runic inscription might represent a language other than a Germanic language or Latin has only rarely been seriously considered. Eliasson (2014) proposes criteria that may help determine whether an inscription is written in some natural language even if we

cannot read it, based on statistical methods used in cryptography. In an earlier work, Eliasson (2007) applies cryptographic methods to compare the undeciphered inscription on the Sørby stone, an eleventh-century runestone from Denmark, to different European languages. He finds the best match in Basque, and proposes a partial reading of the inscription as a Basque rendition of a typical runic memorial formula. As an isolated example and in the absence of corroborative evidence (archaeological, documentary, and/or onomastic), this remains first and foremost a provocative methodological challenge. A larger body of inscriptions showing similar patterns would provide corroborative evidence for Eliasson's theory. (Eliasson 2014 presents some potential but problematic candidates.) However, it remains a problem that a Basque presence in Scandinavia has not been established for that early date, although Basque fishermen did reach Newfoundland by the fifteenth century and no complete picture of their travels in the Middle Ages has been formed. For Finnic and Sámi languages, by contrast, there is substantial evidence for intense and continual contact with Scandinavian languages.

An analogous example of a Finnic language appearing in a type of document that was mainly used for other languages and at a time when no Finnic language had a written tradition is represented by the Novgorod birchbark letter no. 292, dated to the mid-thirteenth century (Laakso 1999; Saarikivi 2007). While most of the 959 birchbark documents from eleventh- to fourteenth-century Novgorod are in Slavic or Latin, no. 292 appears to be a charm connected with thunder in a Finnic language, and no. 403 a 'Finnic-Slavic business traveler's lexicon' (Laakso 1999; Saarikivi 2007: 197). Some of the other birchbark documents contain Finnic names (Saarikivi 2007: 198). One birchbark letter has been found in Turku, Finland, dated to the fourteenth century and in Latin (Harjula 2012).

The most developed Sámi interpretation of a runic inscription in the runic literature is Olsen and Bergsland (1943), who interpreted the sequence **boattiat** in a twelfth-century inscription from Iceland as the Sámi *boahit* ('to come'). This interpretation was rejected by later runologists (Marstrander 1945), treated as a joke by Kristján Eldjárn (1962: ch. 72), and not even mentioned in Þórgunnur Snædal's (2003: 40) overview of runic inscriptions from Iceland. While Olsen and Bergsland's interpretation suffers from anachronisms owing to the limited understanding of Sámi language history at the time, the immediate dismissal of their idea may also reflect tacit assumptions about ethnic homogeneity, the relations between Scandinavians and Sámi, and the association of runes with Germanic languages (see Willson 2012).

3 The Nydam strap-ring

The Nydam strap-ring is one of nine runic finds on weapons and weapon accessories from the Migration Era site in south-western Jutland excavated in the 1990s (see Stoklund 1995; 1998a; 1999; on other Nydam finds also Stoklund 1993; 1994; 1996; 1997; 1998b; on the Nydam site and excavations see Rieck *et al.* 1999, Jørgensen and Petersen 2003). The site is known especially for the early fourth-century oaken boat, found in 1863 during the first excavation (1859-1863), which is the oldest known clinker-built boat and the oldest rowing vessel found in northern Europe. The sacrificial bog was in use from *ca.* AD 200 to 550. The find shows evidence of invaders from the Baltic and from north of Skåne, whose weapons were destroyed before they were buried. The origins of artefacts in the bog deposits range over a broad area and many are of types with a wide distribution. Some deposits emphasise Roman finds, others from the area of modern-day Poland (Møller-Wiering 2011: 31-32, 40). Presumably the runes were carved by or for the owners.

The strap-ring was discovered in 1995. The associated sword-sheath was made of hazelwood, leather, and gilded silver with glass inlay (Grünzweig 2004: 84). It stands out from the others in its elaborate decoration (Jørgensen and Petersen 2003: 266-268).

The first inscription reads, from right to left:

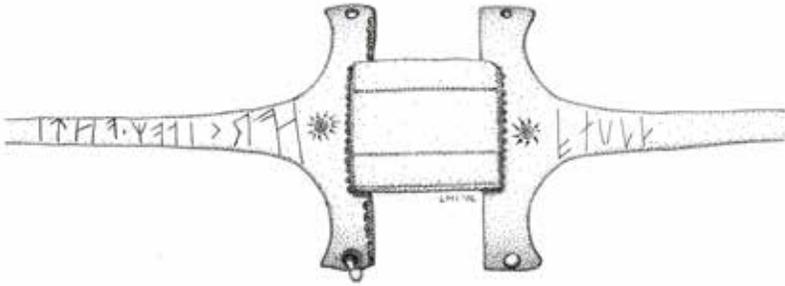
(1) **h̄arkilaz·ahti**

On the other side of the fastener is a second inscription:

(2) **anulą**

The last rune is uncertain; it appears to be missing the upper branch seen in the other a's.

The second inscription is upside down relative to the first and also reads right to left starting from the centre of the fastener. It is unclear whether the two inscriptions are meant to be read together or separately. There is at least one example of an early inscription (the rosette-fibula from Skovgårde in southern Sjælland, dated to *ca.* AD 200) which contains segments running in different directions within a single line that have nonetheless been interpreted as a single utterance: **talgida : omal** read as *lamo talgida* ('Lamo (the lame) carved') (Antonsen 2003: 15). Stoklund (1995: 275-276; 1998a: 91-93) only discusses the first inscription on the Nydam strap-ring (in (1) above). The sequence **h̄arkilaz** appears to be a personal name (see below). **anulą** is most likely the nominative of an *an*-stem, perhaps a diminutive connected with Norse *unna* ('to love, not to begrudge'). It could be a hypocoristic name or an endearment like 'beloved'. Imer (2015a: 76; 2015b: 194) regards the sequence as a personal name. **anulą** could also be interpreted as derived

Figure 12 The Nydam strapping

Illustrated by Lisbeth Imer

from **anu-* ('forefather'); cf. ON *á-* ('ancestor' (possibly reflected in Old Norse *á-* as a prefix in personal names, although several alternative etymologies for this prefix have been proposed, cf. de Vries 1962: 1 s.v. 'á 5'), with a diminutive suffix, and cf. the name *Óli/Áli*, which is either a diminutive of *Óláfr* < **anu-laibar* ('ancestor-heir') or derived from **anu-* with a diminutive suffix (Janzén 1947: 58) describing a relationship. Grünzweig (2004: 86) also suggests that *anulā* could be a rearrangement (*Umstellung*) of the (presumed) magical word *alu* ('ale') that recurs in older runic inscriptions. A connection with Latin *anulus* ('ring') seems unlikely.

Antonsen (2002: 114) says that *ahti* 'presents formidable problems from a Germanic point of view, both phonologically and morphologically'. Antonsen (2002: 114) quotes Illkjær (personal communication) on a suggested connection with the Finnish name *Ahti*:

Harkilar [*sic*] Ahti og Rawsijo fra krigsbytteofringerne i Nydam er fundet på genstande hvis oprindelse er Østersøområdet jvf. Illerup Bd. 3 S. 384. Men det foreslåede område er for småt; vi må tillige inddrage Estland og Finland i det mulige oprindelseområde, idet vi må antage et indslag af finsk i Nydam indskrifterne.

[Antonsen's translation:] Harkilar [*sic*] Ahti and Rawsijo from the war-booty offerings in Nydam are found on objects whose origin is the area; cf. Illerup vol. 3, page 384. But the suggested area is too small; we must also include Estonia and Finland in the possible area of origin, since we may hypothesize Finnish influence in the Nydam inscriptions. (Antonsen 2002: 114)

Antonsen adds:

Ilkjær had found that both Ahti and Rausio are Finnish/Estonian proper names, and that the name Harkila is found in present-day Finland. This suggestion deserves a serious follow-up investigation. (Antonsen 2002: 114)

Below, I discuss the proposal and considerations to be addressed in assessing it, as well as reviewing alternative interpretations of the sequence **ahti**.

4 The name *Ahti*

The name *Ahti* is included in the list of gods of the Häme people in Mikael Agricola's verse prologue to his 1548 New Testament translation: 'Ahti vedhest caloia toi' ('Ahti brought fish from the water'). Ahti has been interpreted as a god associated with water, or specifically with the sea or with fishing. Ahti also appears in the charm tradition in connection with water and the sea (Siikala 2012: 373). He is called the king of the waves (*aaltojen kuningas*) and is the consort of the female water-spirit Vellamo. (Mentions of Ahti as a water god appear in Kuusi *et al.* 1977: 100, 175, 278.) Ahti also appears as a supernatural being in charms in a few other contexts on a regional basis. These are considered extensions of his relevance in inland forested regions (Frog 2010: 188-191).

The warrior Ahti Saarelainen ('Ahti Islander') is also known from Finnish epic poetry. He frequently appears as the host of a feast that is disrupted in the epic of Lemminkäinen (see e.g. poem 34 'Lemminkäinen I' in Kuusi *et al.* 1977: 205-211). Ahti is also the protagonist in a poorly attested epic ('The Bond') in which he exchanges vows with his wife Kyllikki that he will not go raiding and in turn she will not go about in the village. After Kyllikki breaks her vow, Ahti sets sail for war. This part blends with an epic in which Ahti is frozen on his voyage, connected with incantations telling of the origin of frost. Poems 39 ('Vala I', pp. 238-239) and 40 ('Vala II', pp. 240-242) in *Finnish Folk Poetry: Epic* include mentions of skis and frost.

The themes attached to Ahti are tentatively dated to the Iron Age (Kuusi 1963: 129-215; 1975). The warrior Ahti is conflated with Lemminkäinen in Elias Lönnrot's *Kalevala* (Frog 2014a). The relationship between the god and the hero is obscure (Siikala 2012: 374). Kaarle Krohn (1903-1910: 832-833) considered the epic of Ahti and Kyllikki to be among the poems that 'reflect trade relations with Gotland, raids on the Baltic Sea, and hostile terms between the Finns and the Swedes on the south-west coast of Finland' (Krohn 1903-1910: 832, cited by Ahola 2014: 370). Krohn dated these poems

on linguistic grounds to the final centuries before the conversion of Finland. Under Krohn's view, the epic would be later than the Nydam inscription (though the figure and the name could of course be older), but the connection with cultural contacts with Scandinavians fits with the name spreading to the western side of the Baltic.

However, the inclination to divide characters into distinct divine and heroic beings with the same name (e.g. Krohn 1932: 62-63, 65-66) belongs to early twentieth-century presuppositions about gods and heroes that do not hold for Finnic cultures (Frog 2014b: 455). Such distinctions are clearly artificial in the cases of more central characters, and the clear associations in the oral tradition between Ahti the god and Ahti of martial adventures make it probable that these all reflect a single supernatural being (Frog 2010: 190-191). Name variants such as *Ahto* and *Haahti* are found in the poetry, but *Ahti* is the primary form.

Ahti is also a personal name that appears in medieval farm names. Heikkilä (2013: 74) accepts Nissilä's (1980) view that this name is borrowed from an Old Saxon, Middle Low German, and Frisian name *Ahti*, *Ahto*, and *Achte*, derived from Greek *Autonomos* ('autocrat'). In this view the personal name would be unrelated to the name found in epic poetry and would be considerably younger than the Nydam inscription. Since the late nineteenth century, the name *Ahti* has been revived as a National Romantic name based on the mythic figure.

The etymology of the mythological name *Ahti* is disputed. The entry in the etymological dictionary *Suomen sanojen alkuperä* (SSA) dismisses a large body of speculation:

Sanan alkuperä on varmaa selitystä vailla. Vanhat etym. vertaukset eräisiin kr:n ja muidenkin ieur kielten sanoihin ovat joko kokonaan erheellisiä tai aivan epävarmoja, kuten myös esitetty etym. rinnastukset muihin sm. ja vi. sanoihin. (SSA I: 55-56 s.v. 'ahti')

The origin of the word lacks a confident explanation. Old etymological comparisons to various words in Greek and other ancient Indo-European languages are either entirely erroneous or entirely uncertain, as are the etymological comparisons presented to other Finnish and Estonian words.

Proposals in the literature are diverse. Kaarle Krohn (1918: 27-29) connected the name to *ajatar* ('hostile female supernatural being in the forest'), from *ajaa* ('to drive'). Holmberg (1939) relates the name to that of a sea-chief *Atsur*. Both of these accounts suffer from poor phonetic matches. A connection with the Finnish verb *ahtaa* ('stuff, fill, pack full, cram') (< Proto-Finno-Ugric

**akta-*) has been suggested several times (Loorits 1932: 84; 1935: 268; Ariste 1937: 34; *SKES* I: 7, s.v. 'Ahti'). An older meaning of *ahtaa* is 'to hang up to dry' (Häkkinen 1990: 46), which would be consistent with the notion of Ahti as a god associated with fishing. (The semantic change may be due to a secondary connection with the Baltic loanword *ahdas* ('narrow') [Häkkinen 1990: 46].)

If the name is related to the Finnish verb *ahtaa* ('to stuff'), the *kt > ht* change which applies across Finnic languages except for South Estonian (Kallio 2007: 243) would have taken place by this time, so that the stem would appear as *aht-*. Heikkilä (2013: 73) rejects the connection with *ahtaa* ('to stuff') on the basis of irregular phonology, as the expected outcome would be ***Ahtoi* or ***Aksi*, depending on the type of derivative. However, the name in modern Finnish has a final *-i* that does not alternate with *-e* in the oblique cases (*Ahti*: gen. *Ahdin*). This stem type has long been considered a mark of a loan word; Mägiste (1958) dates the type to the first half of the first millennium AD, but Scandinavian loan words in this stem class usually postdate syncope and would thus be from the second half of the millennium. If the name is young enough to have originated as an *i*-stem, it would postdate the **ti > si* change and the expected nominative would be *Ahti*. Analogical levelling is also a possibility. Personal names in Finnish generally show simplified alternations relative to common nouns, even when they are homophonous with and transparently derived from nouns that are in frequent use. It is also possible that the name *Ahti* could have changed stem classes at a later time.

Heikkilä (2013: 75-76) suggests that the heroic name *Ahti* is borrowed from a Germanic name represented precisely (and only) by the Nydam strap-ring, while the divine name is borrowed into Finnish from Sámi **āhččē* ('father') (an inherited Finno-Ugric word). Heikkilä (2013: 75-76) interprets the inscription on the Nydam strap-ring as containing the source for the heroic name *Ahti*: the dative form of a Germanic masculine *i*-stem personal name **AhtiR* < PGmc **aihtiz*, related to Old Norse *ætt* ('family, lineage'), Gothic *aihts* ('property') (see below). Such a name is not attested elsewhere in Old Norse written sources (Lind 1905-1931) or in the runic record (Peterson 2007: 34); nor does *átt/ætt* appear generally as a stem in Norse personal names (cf. Guðrún Kvaran and Sigurður Jónsson frá Arnarvatni 1991: 136, 603) (though Lind 1905-1931: 93 lists a name *Áti* or *Atti*).

If the string *ahti* is viewed as a name, then the inscription simply concatenates names, implying a connection between the beings named and/or between them and the object. *Ahti* could be either a nominative (if the name were unassimilated) or an accusative or dative (if it were adapted to Germanic as a masculine *i*-stem). The connection between the two parts of the inscription is uncertain.

5 *Harkilaz and Rawsijo*

As mentioned above, Antonsen mentions as possible corroboration for the Finnic interpretation of **ah**ti the namee **h**arkilaz found in the same inscription and the name **raw**sijo found in another inscription from the Nydam depositions. However, these parallels are anachronistic.

In both cases, Germanic etymologies for the roots are available and plausible within the onomastic system, whereas Finnic explanations are difficult. This illustrates the importance of maintaining a diachronic view of the onomastic system and considering potential names in relation to the naming practices of the time. Both names would be place-names (in modern times used as surnames) in Finnish, whereas personal names are much more prevalent in early runic inscriptions.

5.1 *Harkilaz*

Viewed as a Germanic name, *Harkilaz* has been explained as derived from a Germanic /*hark-/ < PIE /*ker-g/, cf. OIce *hark* (n. 'harsh treatment, tumult'), Low German *harken* ('to scrape, scratch'), German *Harke* ('rake') (Antonsen 2002: 113), with the *-ila-* derivational suffix, which has many functions in Germanic; Antonsen (2002: 113) describes it here as a 'name-forming suffix'. According to Nedoma (1997: 114) the strong-declension form ending in *-ilaz* points to a byname.

The expected Old West Norse outcome **Herkill* is not attested as a personal name, although the well-attested *Hergils* ('warrior-hostage') has a similar appearance and the names could possibly affect each other by folk etymology. A name *Hergill* arose in Iceland in the 1970s, probably through a blending of *Her-* names and *Egill* or other names with an *-ill* suffix such as *Vifill* (Guðrún Kvaran and Sigurður Jónsson frá Arnarvatni 1991: 292). A masculine *ja*-stem *Herkir* and feminine *jōn*-stem *Herkia* both occur in Old Norse sources. Lind (1905-1931: 522) regards both as derived from *hark* ('buller [noise]').

Looijenga (1997: 53) suggests that **h**arkilaz may have been intended as **hau**kilaz, related to 'hawk':

[O]ne may speculate as to speculate on whether the name **harkilaz** of the Nydam sheath plate contains a scribal error; perhaps it should represent **haukilaz**, provided the third rune should be read as **u**, nor **r** (its shape, however, is that of an 'open' **r** rune **ᚱ**). If so, it could be interpreted as a reference to the *Chauci*. Besides, ON *hark-* 'tumult' is difficult to explain as a name-element. (Looijenga 1997: 53)

Looijenga (1997: 53) does not explain what is objectionable about *hark-* as a name element.

Harkkila is found as a surname in modern Finland, presumably based on a farm name (like other names with the suffix *-la/lä*). There is no obvious Finnic root for the name and it is likely to be a borrowing. Nor is it common – as of 2015 the surname *Harkkila* was held by twenty individuals in Finland and *Harkila* by seven (Nimipalvelu).

The name *Harkilaz* is superficially reminiscent of *Hercules* and could conceivably represent a Germanicisation of the name Hercules (Frog, personal communication) (cf. folk-etymologisation of Slavic names such as *Vladimir* > *Valdemarr*, synchronically in Norse as ‘power-gift’, and the partial folk-etymologisation of *Jaroslav* > *Jarisleifr*, with the Norse name stem *leif-* ‘heir’). Latin inscriptions with references to Hercules have been found in Germanic areas occupied by the Roman Empire and have been thought perhaps to refer to Þórr through a version of *interpretatio Romana* (Simek 1993: 140-142). If the string **ah̄ti** can be connected with the Finnic god and hero, then the inscription would contain the names of two ‘foreign’ mythic heroes.

5.2 *Rawsijo*

Looijenga (2003: 168-169) suggests that the name **rawsijo** may be connected with Old Norse *reyr* ‘reed’, used in skaldic poetry as a *heiti* (poetic synonym) for ‘spear’ (a weapon linked to Óðinn and associated also with the staff used in *seiðr* magic, Gardela 2016).

If **rawsijo** is a name, one may think of a name derived from a tribal name, in analogy with **wagnijo** and **harja**, for instance. Perhaps the name can be compared to the name of the Hasding brothers, Raus (the other was called Raptus). Gothic *raus* means ‘tube, hollow stem’, perhaps a metaphor for ‘spear’, cf also the Liebenau inscription **ra[u]zwi** (Looijenga 2003: 168-169).

The Liebenau inscription is also found on a sword accoutrement, and Looijenga (2003: 245-246) suggests a connection to a warriors’ cult:

Liebenau (Niedersachsen, Germany). [...] Silver disc possibly part of a sword belt. Dated 4th c. [...] **R̄F̄ȲȲl̄**. Düwel (1972: 134-141) read and interpreted **ra[u]zwi** < Gmc **rauzwih* ‘der Rohr (=Speer)-Geweih̄te’; cf. Gmc **rauza/rausa* ‘tube, hollow stem’. *rauz-* may mean ‘spear’ or ‘sword’, cf. ON *reyr* ‘reed’, in metaphorical sense ‘spear, sword’. The second part *-wī* may either be connected with OHG *wihen*, OS *wihian* ‘to consecrate’ (cf.

above, EICHTETTEN, nr. 15) or *-wī* may be derived from **wīgan* ‘to fight’. If it is a PN, it is perhaps short for *Rauzwī(gaz)*, nsm. *a*-stem, which may mean either ‘The one who is consecrated to the spear’ or ‘Spear- c.q. Swordfighter’. A name connected with some warriors’ cult? *Raus* is also known as the name of one of the Hasding brothers (see also Nydam V, found in 1997, with the legend **rawsijo**). (Looijenga 2003: 245-246)

Losquiño (2015: 39-40) prefers to avoid a reading as a tribal name and views the inscription as corroborative evidence that the nominative *-o* in masculine *an*-stems is a West Germanic innovation.

Rausio occurs as a rare Finnish surname (as of 2015 held by twelve individuals (Nimipalvelu)), but I have not found an explanation of its source. Finnish hydronyms in *-io/iö* are generally very young. The older form of the place-name *Raisio* is *Raisa*. The sequence **raus-* would not be a possible root in the Middle Proto-Finnic of the fourth-century AD. *-au-* diphthongs in modern Finnish arise from the vocalisation of a consonant. The word *rasva* (‘fat, grease’) < PGmc **krausa-* shows metathesis as an earlier strategy for adapting a Germanic diphthong.

6 Germanic interpretations of ahti

6.1 Proto-Norse **aihtai* (‘owned’)

Stoklund (1995: 276) rejects the possibility that **ahti** could reflect a past tense form of Early Norse *aigan* (‘to own’), both because the form would be anachronistic and because the past tense is not justified.

6.1.1 *Phonological and morphological considerations*

No past-tense forms of Gmc. **aiyan* are attested in the older runic corpus according to Krause and Jankuhn (1966).¹ The only form of Early Norse *aigan* (‘to own’) listed in Krause’s (1937: 676-678) list of words attested in the runic inscriptions with the elder Futhark is pres. 3 sg. *aih* (‘owns’) (cf. Old Norse *á*), attested in the Myklebostad stone from western Norway (Krause 1937: nr. 59, pp. 547-551; Krause and Jankuhn 1966: 178-180), which Krause

¹ Alexander Jóhannesson (1923: 89-90) suggested that the Fyn bracteate (Stephens Nr. 56) contains a first-person preterite form: **aa(ta) átta** (< **aihto*: 1. sg. ind. pret.) (‘I owned’), with the bracteate itself as the implicit object. The inscription and this interpretation present issues that are beyond the range of the present article.

dates to around AD 400, noting other archaic features in that inscription ‘entsprechend der sehr altertümlichen Lautform *aih*’ (1966: 180) (‘consistent with the very archaic form *aih*’) Marstrander (1929: 230) had also interpreted the third-century Vimose scabbard chape (Krause 1937: nr. 79, pp. 602-605; Krause and Jankuhn 1966: nr. 22, 57-58) as containing an *aih* miswritten as **hai**. The axe handle from Nydam, part of the same third-century site as the spear, has also been argued by Grønvik (2000) to contain the present tense form **aih** (Old Norse *á*).

Nedoma (1997: 114) mentions a possible interpretation of Nydam **ahti** as a past tense of **aigan*:

Falls man darin nun tatsächlich mit Heiner Eichner eine Besitzerinschrift *Harkilaz a(i)ht(a)i* ‘H. besaß’ (aisl. **Herkill átti*) erblicken darf, wäre hier in vergleichsweise später Zeit noch das ursprüngliche diphthongische Personalkennzeichen *-ai* (als Archaismus?) belegt. (Nedoma 1997: 114)

If one is really in fact allowed to see in it, with Heiner Eichner, an ownership inscription *Harkilaz a(i)ht(a)i* ‘H. possessed’ (ON **Herkill átti*), then the original diphthongal personal ending *-ai* would here be attested (as an archaism?) at a relatively late date.

The (*i*)’s in parentheses indicate that this would be an early time for monophthongisation, as syncope is generally dated to a couple of centuries later. Imer (2015b: 194) gives this interpretation with a question mark. Eichner (1996: 15), however, is confident that **ahti** represents a form of *aigan*:

The inscription **harkilaz ahti** (Nydam, 4th century) ‘Harkilaz owned’ found on a scabbard mount in 1995 in Denmark affords new evidence for the *-i* in the third person singular of the Germanic weak preterite. There is no doubt that **ahti** means ‘owned’ (equal to OE runic **ahte**), the spelling somehow being based on **aihtai*. So **a(i)ht(a)i* confirms **talgidai** (Nøvling, 3 c.) and shows that the ending Gothic *-da* etc. does not continue Indo-European **dheh₁t* exclusively. There must be some trace here of the Indo-European middle *-toi, -oi*. (Eichner 1996: 15)

The North Germanic monophthongisation of Proto-Germanic *ai* > *ā* before *h* is commonly dated to the early Migration Period, between the fourth and sixth centuries AD; Antonsen (1975: 15) lists the example *fāhidē*, found in the Halskov bracteate: **fahidelapop** (‘wrote the citation’) (DR56; cf Krause and Jankuhn 1966: 267).

Heikkilä (2013: 76) dates the borrowing of the heroic name *Ahti* into Finnish to after the monophthongisation *ai* > *ā* / *_h* but before *i*-umlaut and the assimilation of *ht* > *tt*. He places this between AD 300 and 500. Heikkilä's absolute chronology assumes relative uniformity across the early Norse linguistic area, as has been conventional in Germanic historical linguistics, although the possibility of dialect variation may have been overlooked. Heikkilä assumes that Germanic diphthongs will be rendered as diphthongs in Finnic and monophthongs as monophthongs. Heikkilä (2013) mentions a number of place-names containing *Ahti*- or the pre-monophthongisation version *Aiht*-, regarded by Heikkilä as a slightly earlier borrowing.

Krause (1937) lists four inscriptions with monophthongal forms of *fahi*- and three with preserved diphthongs *faihi*-. He dates the diphthongal forms to before 400 and the monophthongal forms later. However, precisely this sound change is one of the dating criteria, at the same time as these inscriptions provide central evidence for dating the sound change. It is possible also that a preserved diphthong could be represented by a monophthong (although writing tends to be conservative relative to speech) or that a is an 'invisible bind-rune' *ai̯*.

As historical *ht* clusters, believed to have assimilated to *tt* in Common Scandinavian, are realised as preaspirated long *t* [ht] in modern Icelandic, there has been some debate as to whether preaspiration is an inherited feature that is old in Icelandic (hence the assimilation would have to post-date the ninth-century settlement of Iceland, at least in some Common Scandinavian dialects) or an innovation that postdates the medieval period (Steblyn-Kamenskij 1974; Goblirsch 2001). A form *ahti* is also found in the tenth-century Alvstad inscription, which Riessler (2004: 209) regards as representing preaspiration (Kusmenko 2010: 147). Contact influences between Sámi and Scandinavian in the development of preaspiration have also been suggested (in both directions) (Gunnar Ólafur Hansson 2001; Riessler 2004).

6.1.2 *An owner formula in the past tense?*

The object of 'owned' would presumably be unexpressed but implicitly the sword or sheath itself. Imer (2015a: 76) suggests that Harkilaz is the previous owner and Anula the later one.

Alternatively, *anula* could be viewed as an accusative singular of an *a*-stem **anular* – possibly with the same meanings as mentioned for the putative weak-declension noun, although a weak declension seems more likely there, or possibly connected to Old Icelandic *ál*, *ól* (f. 'band, strap')? The uncertain reading of the final rune adds further difficulties.

Owner formulae are normally in the present tense. According to Peterson (1994: 78), the 3 sg. preterite form *ātti* ('[he/she] had') of Runic Swedish *æiga* is attested around 20 times Viking Age inscriptions and the 3 pl. preterite *āttu* ('[they] had') in two. In most cases, the verb *eiga* here appears to refer to ownership of a *bú* (farm or residence), and occasionally of a ship, not of the carved object. In a few cases it refers to having a wife. This reflects the differences between the monumental runic tradition of the Viking Age and earlier inscriptions on movable objects.

In his discussion of the Nydam strap-ring, Nedoma (1997: 114) gives a potential explanation for a possible pragmatic function for a past tense form of an owner formula: perhaps the power and strength of the former owner was intended to transfer to the new one.

Die Präteritalform *a(i)ht(a)i* in einer Besitzerinschrift überrascht zwar einigermaßen, ist aber keineswegs undenkbar: so etwa könnte intendiert sein, mit der Nennung des Vorbesitzers dessen Kraft, Geschick, Fähigkeiten o.ä. 'virtuell' auf den nunmehrigen Eigner des Stücks zu übertragen. (Aus ähnlichen Gründen tragen heutzutage Jugendliche Sportdressen mit den Namen [und Nummern] bestimmter Fußball- oder Basketballspieler.) (Nedoma 1997: 114)

The past tense form *a(i)ht(a)i* in an ownership inscription is admittedly somewhat surprising, but is, however, not at all inconceivable: something could be intended along the lines of 'virtually' transferring, through the naming of the previous owner, his strength, skill, abilities etc. to the current owner of the piece. (For similar reasons, young people today wear sports uniforms with the names [and numbers] of specific football or basketball players.

If *Harkilaz* can be associated with Hercules (see 5.1 above) then the object would be connected with a great warrior whose former ownership could be thought to give it additional value and powers. Old Norse literature shows numerous examples of 'special' weapons transmitted among different owners (e.g. Gramr in *Völsunga saga*, Grásiða in *Gísla saga Súrssonar*), where the history of the sword as well as its inherent qualities appear to be important.

6.2 **aihtir* ('lineage')

Stoklund (1995: 276) briefly mentions the possibility that *ahti* could be a dative or accusative form of a feminine *i*-stem noun related to Old Norse

ætt ('family, lineage') and Gothic *aihts* ('property'). She does not, however, attempt to analyse the inscription syntactically. If the two inscriptions are to be construed together, *hārkilaz ahti anulā* could be interpreted as 'Harkilaz, beloved to the family'. This may be the least problematic of the proposed readings. It has the advantage of syntactic coherence. The use of the dative can be viewed as an example of the 'Dativ des Interesses' ('dative of interest') which Krause (1971: 131) finds the most amply attested type in the early Norse inscriptions.

Old Norse *ætt* ('family, lineage') and *átt* ('family, lineage; direction') are doublets, the former showing i-umlaut (fronting) and the latter not. Feminine *i*-stems sometimes have double forms like this, reflecting paradigm leveling in early Norse. The form *ahti* could be either accusative or dative. The dative ending of the *i*-stems in early Norse is uncertain (Alexander Jóhannesson 1923: 51) and there are questions about the development of this ending in North-west Germanic (Grønvik 1987).

The word is not otherwise attested in the limited corpus of early runic inscriptions. In Swedish Viking Age runestones, *ætt* has been argued to appear in the form *it* in Ög66 (Bjälbro), though the last part of this inscription is not unambiguously interpreted. The compound *ættmaðr* ('relative') appears in Sm75 as *atmenr* (nom. pl. *ættmænnr*) and *ættærfi* ('family inheritance') (*ättarv*) as *atrfi* in U130 (Peterson 1994: 79).

6.3 **ahti* ('attack')

Grünzweig (2004) also mentions the possibility that *ahti* could be a verb from Gmc **aht-* ('attack'), cf. OHG *āhten*, OE *ēhtan* ('pursue'), ON *at* (n. 'battle'), possibly a 2 sg. imperative form of a *jan*-stem. Krause (1971: 127) gives *wali* as a sample Early Norse imperative form for *waljan* ('to choose') (ON *velja*). Very few imperative forms are attested in early runic inscriptions; Krause (1971: 122) mentions only two highly uncertain imperatives, both from strong verbs. This interpretation is a better phonological match inasmuch as the monophthongs are expected. *h* is preserved in the position before a voiceless stop in inscriptions from a similar time (e.g. *worahto worahtō* ('ich wirkte') in the Tune inscription from ca. 400 (Krause 1971: 44)). However, the syntax of the overall inscription would be obscure under this interpretation.²

2 An anonymous reviewer suggested an additional possibility: that *ahti* could be a miscarving for *hati*, i.e. *haiti* ('I am named').

7 Conclusion

The Nydam bog finds show evidence of cultural meetings in a network spanning the Roman area and the Baltic. Some of the artefacts are of types that are widespread in the Circum-Baltic region.

The linguistic form *Ahti* is possible for an ancestor of Finnish for the time and would not present the difficulties which the absence of diphthongs poses for a reading based on Germanic **aigan* ('to own') or a derivative of it. Antonsen's (2002: 114) suggestion that *harkilaz* and *rawsijo* could also relate to Finnic names, on the other hand, suffers from the common problem of anachronism due to the runologist's unfamiliarity with the history of Finnic languages and naming systems.

However, there are many uncertainties. The age of the name *Ahti* is unknown, and its etymology is disputed. The nature of the contact situation that would lead to a Finnic name appearing in a runic inscription in Migration Age Jutland has yet to be clarified. In any event, the presence of such a name would not imply runic literacy on the part of Finnic speakers.

The idea of a Finnic name, especially a mythic one, appearing in an early runic inscription is intriguing. However, in the absence of further corroborative evidence, postulating this name in the Nydam inscription is speculative. Despite difficulties, a Germanic interpretation remains the *lectio facillior*. If, however, other inscriptions are discovered – perhaps among the hitherto undeciphered ones among the bog finds – that can be demonstrated to contain Finnic elements, it may be worth reassessing the Nydam strap-ring in this light.

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Abbreviations

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8 Low German and Finnish revisited

Mikko Bentlin

Abstract

This chapter explores the stratum of Low German loanwords in Finnish that can be identified with the contact networks of the Hanseatic League. The chapter opens with some background on the issue of this loanword stratum and comments on recent research. It then explores some new etymologies and revisits others. Comments on methodology are made before closing with a brief conclusion.

Keywords: linguistics, etymology, loanword, language contacts

1 Introduction

From the perspective of a relatively scarcely populated region on the southern shore of *Austmarr*, the Baltic Sea, away from the main European traffic streams of today, one may have the impression of being at the periphery of the modern world, far away from the cultural and political centres that spread new trends. It seems hard to imagine that it was indeed this very region, with its Hanseatic cities, that gave or at least mediated the major cultural and political impulses to the Nordic countries, including Finland, over several centuries.¹ For Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, as well as the Baltic countries of Estonia and Latvia, this has never been doubted. In the field of political, religious, and material culture, Finland joins this circle naturally. With respect to language contact, however, the direct influence of Low German on Finnish has often been denied or at least intentionally

1 As an illustrative example, let me just mention the extraordinarily influential sixteenth-century songbook *Piae Cantiones*, which was edited by a Finnish student of the University of Rostock, Theodoricus Petri Nylandensis (Rwtha) and printed in Greifswald in 1582 (see further Lehtonen 2002: 281).

minimised, although the first attempts to establish Low German loanwords in Finnish date from the beginning of the twentieth century (e.g. Karsten 1909: 244; cf. Bentlin 2008: 29). Instead, the existence of words of Low German origin was ascribed to mediation through Swedish. Therefore, it can be seen as a major outcome of the reception of my Ph.D. thesis (2008) that linguistic evidence can be seen as so strong that reasonable doubt about Low German influence on Finnish can no longer be maintained (cf. Stellmacher 2008: 301; Häkkinen 2013: 25). Consequently, the first introductory books for students have accepted the Low German loanword layer in Finnish as a fact to be added to the traditionally listed strata when talking about loans in Finnish (see e.g. Häkkinen 2011: 81-82).

Despite the generally very positive reception that this thesis has received, I am not aware of any attempts to investigate further any questions in this specific linguistic context. Therefore, I see good reason to revisit the topic at a distance of several years since the first publication.

2 Recent research on contacts between Low Germans and Finns

In his paper titled 'Sweden, Hansa and Core-Periphery Networks in the Late Medieval Baltic Sea Region' at the second meeting of the Austmarr Network in Helsinki in 2012, Ilkka Leskelä pointed out the great relevance of the contacts between the citizens of Finnish towns and Low German-speaking Hanseatic cities, especially Danzig (nowadays Gdańsk, Poland). Via this connection, Turku-based merchants became a part of an international network of influential persons throughout northern Europe. The relatively well-documented contacts between the merchants Paulus Scheele in Turku and Hans Chonnert in Danzig are mentioned as well by Walta (2010: 322-323) in a volume that, had it already existed while I was writing my thesis, would have provided quite a lot of additional valuable information on the arrival of written culture to Finland, including the role of the Low German linguistic area as a provider of many decisive impulses.

In the same work, *Kirjallinen kulttuuri keskiajan Suomessa* ('Written Culture in Medieval Finland'), the editor Tuomas Heikkilä casts some light on the linguistic diversity of medieval documents written in Finland (Heikkilä 2010). As the author states, the choice of the language to be used depended largely on the addressee (Heikkilä 2010: 344) and the context (Heikkilä 2010: 349). The relevant literary languages for Finland were Swedish, Low German, and Latin, the latter especially for ecclesiastical affairs. Finnish as the majority language

got its first preserved written documents as late as in the sixteenth century. It is also important to see that language contact even in its written form was still contact between dialects, given the lack of standardisation of the vernaculars. In that sense it is regrettable that Heikkilä does not consistently distinguish between *saksa* ('German') and *alaksaksa* ('Low German'), which at times leads to the impression that documents could have been formulated in High German as well – or at least does not clearly indicate that this was not the case.

Like the aforementioned work, *Keskiajan avain* ('Key to the Middle Ages') (Lamberg *et al.* 2009) also aims to present a comprehensive picture of how the Middle Ages are dealt with in different disciplines. In her contribution, 'Keskialaksaksa' ('Middle Low German') Hanna-Leena Sainio points out the relevance of this language form for the Finnish context, with great mastery of the topic and in an accessible way for the Finnish reader. Unfortunately, she seems not to have been aware of my thesis, published the year before, as she presents a long list of relevant contributions about Middle Low German with a special section for Low German in medieval Finland (Sainio 2009: 488–489), but does not include my dissertation. Otherwise she should have discussed the issue of language contact on a larger scale. The aforementioned list, however, contains a number of minor contributions, of which Katara 1936 is the only one in which the process of borrowing from Low German into Finnish is considered at all. Such relevant contributions as Koivulehto (2002), Mäkeläinen (1977), and Vilkuna (1964) – to mention only some of the most central ones – are missing.² Moreover, Sainio's claim (2009: 478) that Modern Low German was not used in written form or taught at schools can easily be proved to be wrong (e.g. *Leitfaden Niederdeutsch*, 2013³). It must, however, be admitted that the resources spent on the promotion of Low German language are far too small to keep the language alive in the long term.

Another relatively recent Finnish work in which Low German plays a central role is Mikko Kauko's master's thesis in the field of German philology with the title 'Ghescrefen to Abo. Zur Verwendung des Mittelniederdeutschen im 14. Jahrhundert' (University of Turku, 2009). Though not actually addressing the topic of loanwords, it is worthwhile noting that this work treats the Low German language in Finland and its speakers as actors in language

2 I could easily add Kantola (1989), Ritter (1989), and Tandefelt (2002), which also focus on linguistic evidence of direct contacts between Low Germans and Finns. Depending on how far from the focus of the topic one is prepared to go, several more publications would come into consideration to expand the list.

3 This is the manual for the instruction of Low German at primary schools in the German state of Schleswig-Holstein. The other federal states of the Low German area provide similar manuals and strategic papers.

contact that in themselves are of scholarly interest instead of merely stating the presence of Germans in Finland, whatever language they spoke. With this approach, it is possible to ascribe language contact and language itself a much more decisive role for the course of history in general.

While I deliberately did not include any toponyms in the set of words to be etymologised in my thesis (cf. Bentlin 2008: 31-34) and expressed my scepticism towards several proposed Low German etymologies for Finnish place-names,⁴ I am still convinced that place-names coined in Low German by speakers of Low German do exist in the historically Finnish-speaking areas. This can be supported by the fact that several place-names in Finland are derived from Low German personal names (e.g. Ainiala *et al.* 2008: 116-117). Their identification, however, poses some problems that are less easy to overcome than in the case of the appellative lexicon. Probably one has to consider the possibility of calques to a much greater extent as well.⁵ It is only in the light of such reflections that it makes sense also to compare street names of medieval cities, as Kirsi-Maria Nummila does in an article published in *Sananjalka* in 2012. Nummila takes her examples from street names that were documented in the medieval Finnish towns and compares them with names from Stockholm, Söderköping, Uppsala, Lund (Sweden), Hamburg, Lübeck, Rostock (Germany), Tallinn, Tartu, and Pärnu (Estonia). The author acknowledges that there were several more culturally important towns such as Danzig, Copenhagen, and Riga, but does not consider them in her article 'for practical reasons' (Nummila 2012: 14). In the light of what has been said especially about the role of Danzig above, it would, however, have been very fruitful to consult e.g. Stephan (1911). My personal opinion is that many more parallels can be drawn between the street names of Turku that Nummila examines and those of medieval Danzig than to most of the other mentioned places. I will not go into details here but rather discuss my ideas on some other occasion.

As a conclusion to this, Finnish toponyms are a field in which Low German elements still need to be examined. However, it is obvious that they will be very difficult to detect as a result of many disturbing factors such as calques and possible influences that have affected both Finnish and Swedish toponymy. More thorough research is necessary.

4 For references to works suggesting a Low German origin for various Finnish place-names see Bentlin (2008: 31-34).

5 In this context I would like to mention the numerous Finnish-Swedish pairs that are still in use nowadays such as *Kirkkonummi ~ Kyrkslätt, Järvenpää ~ Träskända*. Calques are even used when naming new places in both Finnish and Swedish, cf. *Lintuvaara ~ Fågelberga, Itäkeskus ~ Östra centrum*.

3 Additional Low German etymologies

As stated in Bentlin (2008), research on Low German loanwords in Finnish is still far from complete, and the work has rather to be regarded as the opening of a discussion that unfortunately seems to have attracted only positive reception instead of active additional research work. Interesting comments about a few words can, however, even be found in later publications such as the third volume of *Lexikon der älteren germanischen Lehnwörter in den ostseefinnischen Sprachen (LägLoS)*, which was published in 2012, or material that has not yet been explored, namely the notes about probable Swedish loanwords in Finnish that Osmo Nikkilä (1933-2002) left behind.⁶ Both *LägLoS* and Nikkilä come up with remarks that should be commented on with special respect to possible Low German influence in the context of borrowing into Finnish. Here, the space of this article does not allow me to suggest additional Middle Low German etymologies for more than just a few Finnish words. In this section, I will present new etymologies for the Finnish dialectal and colloquial adverb *vek(e)* ('away') and the noun *siekki* ('poorhouse').

Vek(e) has been explained as a Swedish loan by *SKES* (VI: 1680) and put in a row with several phonetically similar words, but in the following I will try to explain why this view should be corrected. *LägLoS* (III: 386-387) mentions the dialectal noun *veko*, *veku*, which is attested in the collocation *mennä sitä ~ yhtä vekoa ~ vekua* ('to go away, continuously, without a break'). While in 1915, Karsten (1915: 254) derived this word from Proto-Norse, he later (Karsten 1943-1944: 591-592) corrected his view and argued for a Finland Swedish dialectal origin. The latter view is shared by *SKES* (VI: 1689), which, however, considers a descriptive origin as well, and by *LägLoS*. Probably they are right, as all the attested equivalents in Finland Swedish based on the noun *väg* ('way') are used in a similar idiomatic way and always marked as nouns by either a demonstrative pronoun (cf. *SKES* VI: 1680) or a preposition plus case suffix (cf. Vendell 1904-1907 VI: 1120; Wessman 1925-1932 II: 554-555).⁷ The forms with a long first-syllable vowel, which in *SKES* are treated s.v.

6 Nikkilä's material has been in the hands of Prof. Kaisa Häkkinen at the University of Turku since Nikkilä passed away. A project to edit a lexicon of Swedish loanwords in Finnish based on this material started in spring 2015 under my responsibility with the financial aid of the Finnish Cultural Foundation.

7 Although case suffixes have generally been abolished in standard Swedish for a long time, they have partly survived in some Finland Swedish dialects. The expressions cited by Vendell (*var o vägun*) and Wessman (in simplified orthography: *va i vägom*), both 'to be on one's way', show the ending of the dative plural.

‘veeken’ (VI:1680), should therefore not be treated separately from *veko*, *veku* although they are restricted to the western Finnish dialects. On the other hand, we have the adverb *vek(e)*, which does not mean anything but ‘away’, never shows up with a long vowel and has a rather eastern distribution in the Finnish language area – just like the other adverbs with the stem *veke*⁸ that *SKES* again treats under *veko*. So, it is not quite clear why this adverb should be treated under the same lemma as the noun *veeken* etc., as does *SKES*. In fact, this kind of use is never encountered for Swedish *väg* or its derivatives, as Swedish *bort* (‘away’) and its North Germanic equivalents are based on a synonym Old Norse *braut* (‘way’) (cf. Hellquist 1957: 93; Falk and Torp 1960: 70 s.v. ‘bort’). The most exact Germanic equivalent for Finnish dialect *vek(e)* (‘away’) seems therefore to be found in the German-speaking area. If one considers the possibility of a direct loan into Finnish, we can propose a parallel borrowing into Danish and Norwegian (cf. Falk and Torp 1960: 999 s.v. ‘væk’), but only rather marginally into Swedish, which otherwise would have been an ideal mediator for a German word. However, the rather easterly distribution of *veke*-stem adverbs seems to me relatively typical of Low German loans, and like the greeting *moi* (see Bentlin 2008: 234–235) it has been attested in Helsinki slang from the first decade of the twentieth century onwards (Paunonen 2000: 1277). Moreover, there is an attested Middle Low German form *wege* (‘away’) with short vowel and ending in *-e* beside the standard variants *wech* and *wēge* (Köbler 2013), whereas the stem-final *-e* cannot be explained on the basis of Swedish. The further development seems to have been relatively parallel to that of *moi* in Finland.

In Nikkilä’s material I have found a note on Finnish *siekki*, which is attested in the nineteenth-century Finnish-Swedish dictionaries by Eurén and Lönnrot and is translated as *fattighus* (‘poorhouse’). Nikkilä compares it with Swedish *sjuk* and Middle Low German *sêk* ‘sick’, paying special attention to composites like *sjukstuva* resp. *sêkenstöven* (‘hospital’), and adds: ‘ruotsista vai suoraan alasaksasta lainattu?’ (‘borrowed from Swedish or directly from Low German?’). I think that Nikkilä probably was on the right path, as the later poorhouses of the Nordic countries indeed developed from earlier Christian hospitals (*RGA* I: 444). Moreover, I am convinced that Nikkilä’s question about the direct provenance of the loan can be resolved as well. Firstly, Nikkilä misreads the sixteenth-century Swedish records *swkästwan* (1523) and *i swkestwna* (1529) (‘hospital, poorhouse’, which are mentioned in *SAOB* (s.v. ‘sjuk’) as *swäkstwa* and *i swekestuwa*, respectively. Actually, in the position between two consonants, <w> has to be read as some [u]-like

8 The variant *vekke-* may be due to gemination in the respective dialects.

vowel; this poses a severe obstacle for a development into *ie* in Finnish, which, however, would have to be supposed. Even an original etymon according to Nikkilä's reading could hardly have produced Finnish *siekki*. On the other hand, Middle Low German *sék* should almost inevitably have been realised as *siekki* when borrowed into Finnish. The fact that the word is attested only in dictionaries does not necessarily weaken its relevance, as the word may very well have been dialectal and died out in the course of the nineteenth century before systematic recording of dialects in Finland began. There are other probable or possible Low German loanwords in Finnish with few or no attestations in modern dialect recordings as well (cf. my comments on the words *asikko* and *pieti*, Bentlin 2008: 212, 242). With regard to semantics, it must be admitted that the shift from 'hospital' to 'poorhouse' has been recorded for Swedish as well, but is not attested in Middle Low German. However, this should not make my etymology less probable, as the regional variant of Middle Low German, as it was used in Finland, is very poorly attested, and on the other hand a use according to a Swedish model is absolutely possible.

4 Corrections to previously expressed views

It is important to be critical towards oneself when revisiting the topic of one's own earlier publications. In this context, I have to admit honestly that my attempt to save Karsten's Low German etymology of Finnish *nuotio* ('campfire' etc.) (Karsten 1943-1944: 349-350) was constructed on relatively weak grounds and that the explanation of the word as a Sámi loanword by Ante Aikio (2009: 124-127) is much more convincing. While Karsten and myself (Bentlin 2008: 77-78) tried to derive *nuotio* from Old Low German *nōd-fiur* ('emergency fire, signal fire'), Aikio comes to the conclusion that the most likely original is to be found in Proto-Sámi **nuoðššō*. This explanation is easier and more regular in respect to both phonetics and semantics and follows better the distribution in the Finnic languages. I have already published this change of my view in a footnote to a book review (Bentlin 2011: 285), where, however, it may not be easy to find. Additionally, I have to state that this word was one of my main arguments in favour of direct contacts between Middle Low German and Veps. Unless stronger evidence can be presented, it seems to be necessary to abandon this thought as well.

Of course, there may be some more etymologies that would need to be revised in similar ways. In that light, cooperation in networks like Austmarr is absolutely necessary, as simply no single scholar can be expected to have

the same expertise in all the possibly relevant languages. Once such a step has been taken, it seems to me that the path will be easier to tread.

5 Comments on methods of contemporary Finnish loanword research

When looking at contemporary Finnish loanword research on a slightly wider scale, one may find it somewhat surprising that there seems to be a general tendency to return to the roots of comparative linguistics. Thus, the Neogrammarian idea that sound changes apply without exceptions seems to have gained support again. For example, after having almost completely been abandoned for a long time since Collinder's famous work of 1932, the idea that even the stem final vowels of Germanic loanwords in Finnish may imply indications about different forms of Germanic that they probably belong to is experiencing a revival. In my own work, I have expressed the view that borrowed Germanic weak feminines originally ending in *-a* would regularly end in Finnish *-u/-y* when borrowed from Swedish, as opposed to the Middle Low German layer, where final *-a/-ä* was placed in the same position.⁹ This difference can be explained through the fact that the Germanic oblique case ending *-u* disappeared quite early in Low German (at least before the appearance of the Middle Low German written language), whereas it was retained until modern times in some Swedish dialects. Therefore, sound changes that appear exceptional at first sight may indeed be regular if one only manages to identify exactly the language forms involved – which in the case of prehistoric loans are dialects rather than any kind of 'standard proto-language' that of course never existed in a pure form.

Views of this kind are quite commonly expressed in works by other authors as well, while it is obvious that each scholar has come to similar conclusions independently, as this has happened in the context of very different kinds of language contact at different stages of history and prehistory. To take just one example, let me mention Mikko Heikkilä's *Bidrag till Fennoskandens språkliga förhistoria i tid och rum* (2014), in which the author aims to date linguistic developments within the triangle Finnic-Germanic-Sámi with the help of loanwords. Here the mere number of prehistoric sound changes involved is so high that it is very difficult to believe that it should indeed be so easy to make up a scheme of the developments of all three language groups

9 The concrete realization in Finnish always depends on the vocalism of the previous syllables, according to the rules of vowel harmony.

without any contradictions. At times, I get the impression that Heikkilä may have forgotten that he is not dealing with standardised languages and that one development can have come into effect at one end of a linguistic area while the other end may still be unaffected by it but rather another development starts from here.

In fact, as soon as the reader is not fully familiar with some of the internal developments in one of the languages involved, it becomes very challenging to follow Heikkilä's thoughts. Nevertheless, after having managed it, I felt that there was probably some truth in the absolute chronology presented by Heikkilä. On the contrary, even though one may not agree in every detail, it can be concluded that simply the possibility of having such a common absolute chronology for three neighbouring language groups marks a great step forward in the exploration of our linguistic past. Still, one must accept that any theory of this degree of relevance cannot be regarded as the absolute truth, and further research may always reveal counterevidence for parts of the puzzle. As long as one accepts this, it is generally very fruitful for any field of research to be challenged with provocative new thoughts, which tend to inspire other scholars to make new findings when trying either to support or to repudiate the ideas promoted.

6 Conclusions

As we have seen, the linguistic contacts between Finnish and Low German are still waiting for detailed exploration in spite of a couple of good attempts and promising approaches. Especially the field of toponymy would need further investigation, although traditional methods alone seem not to lead to very convincing results here. Another problem that, on the other hand, might be possible to cope with is dating certain developments of both languages involved so exactly that a more exact dating of single loans can be established and thus shed some more light on the historical contacts with respect to time and place.

What did medieval everyday life look like for Finns and Low Germans in touch with each other? This is another question to which a thorough study of loanwords might provide some answers. Even a few new etymologies may complement our present views on certain issues.

What does all this mean for the further research on the contacts between Finnish and Low German? The capacities of the small number of people that possibly could be involved in further research seem to be by far too limited to fill the existing gaps within a couple of years, as all of them are bound

up in their own projects which cover other aspects of the Finnish language and its history. Therefore, the fact that no substantial new contributions on the field have been published in recent years does not necessarily mean that no further progress can be expected in the future, but rather that the issue will probably be returning in a few years' time as soon as the next step is ready to be taken.

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RGA = *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, I-XXXV. 2nd rev. and expanded edn. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1973-2007.

SAOB = *Svenska Akademiens Ordbok*. Available at: <https://www.saob.se/>.

SKES = *Suomen kielen etymologinen sanakirja*, I-VII. Helsinki: Suomalais-Ugrilainen Seura, 1955-1981.

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Section 4

Myth and religion formation

9 Mythic logic and meta-discursive practices in the Scandinavian and Baltic regions

Lauri Harvilahti

Abstract

This article aims to explore the logic of mythical thinking conveyed by ethnocultural mythical traditions. I use the term mythical logic to denote a network of phenomena explained as caused by supernatural powers. In exploring the mechanisms of the register of mythical language and thinking, the notion of *mythical logic* complements the notion of *mythic discourse* in relation to mythology as a *symbolic matrix*. Further, I will cast some light to the intercultural contacts and long-term mutual influences between old folk religions and the Christianity. I will reveal meta-discursive practices that have, serving the changing political needs or scholarly paradigms, influenced ideological and scientific interpretations of mythological sources.

Keywords: myth, topos, motif, thunder god, mythical logic, mythical knowledge, metadiscursive practices, interpretatio Romana, interpretatio Christiana

1 Introduction

Ideological discourses and scholarly paradigms have often forced mythic knowledge into the form of stable and petrified systems consisting of trinities and pantheons of local gods, or constructions that correspond to the systems typical for religions. Charles Briggs uses the notion of *meta-discursive practices* (Briggs 1993: 387-434) to denote the dominant approaches that have represented the research material in a modified or reconstructed form, according to the prevailing ideological tendencies or political and didactic aims.

It is essential to disclose the ideological aims looming in the background of the text in order to evaluate the scholarly, mythological writings (cf. Briggs 1993: 420; Honko 1998: 160 *et passim*). This article aims to elucidate with some examples the difference between the meanings conveyed by the ethnocultural mythic tradition and the dominant ideological approaches that have attempted to reconstruct and reuse the traditional cultural elements according to prevailing ideological aims and research priorities.

Ethnocultural, mythic discourse does not follow the rational, modern, literary logic. Anna-Leena Siikala emphasises that shamanic mode of thought and mythic consciousness, i.e. the logic of mythic thinking, is not organised into concepts logically interlinked, but as 'sensory images concerning mythic objects and being' (Siikala 2002: 48 *et passim*). In this article I use the term *mythic logic* to denote a network of ethnocultural expressions of phenomena explained as caused by supernatural powers. In the examples in this article, *mythic logic* enabled the Sámi shaman (*noaide*) to send an insect to enter the mouth of the one on whom the *noaide* had cast a spell. The same type of logic explains a wading bird that flies actively before the thunderstorm as the messenger of the god of thunder. Mythic logic links together traditional meanings that belong to the local mythic symbolic matrix (see Frog 2015: 39 and in this volume).

For the first, I will present some examples of the old folk religion related to the god of thunder in sections 2-4. These examples attempt to show how mythic logic links symbolic and ritualistic elements into networks of traditional meaning. In sections 5-7, I will cast some light on intercultural contacts and long-term mutual influences of old folk religions on one another and in interaction with Christianity. In sections 8-9, I will problematise the theories of the 'pagan' temples erected for the worship of the (alleged) trinities of gods in the Baltic Sea region. Finally, in section 10, I will briefly look at the meta-discursive practices that, serving the changing political needs or scholarly paradigms, have influenced the ideological and scientific interpretations of the mythological sources.

2 The attributes of the god of thunder

Thunder has been conceived of in many parts of the world as a sound caused by a divine being. One of the manifestations of this divinity was a giant bird, as among the North American Indians and some Siberian peoples. In East Asia, thunder is thought of as a winged and scaly dragon.

Many peoples conceive of a god in anthropomorphic form in command of storms and of the weather and climate in general (Harva 1948: 74-75, 90).

The personification of thunder is an attempt to explain an inexplicable natural phenomenon, as in the following verses of the *Origin of the Fire* of Finnish folk poetry (cf. Siikala 2002: 207; Heide 2006: 295):

Iski tult[a] I[lmarinen],	Struck fire Ilmarinen,
Välkytteli V[äinämöinen]	Flashed Väinämöinen,
Pääl[lä] taiv[osen] 9.	Above nine skies.
...	...
Iski tulta kyntehensä,	Struck fire on its claw,
(SKVR I ₄ 270, lines 1-4)	

The *Ukko* and *Ukkonen* ('Thunder') of the Finns allude precisely to an anthropomorphic bringer of thunderstorms. Thunder was interpreted as the rumbling of an enraged god, with lightning as his weapon (an axe, chisel, sword, or arrow) for striking the evil spirits that seek to hide in trees or natural nooks and crannies, but also in dwellings and animate beings. Out of this developed a mythic sequence about a fight between the god of thunder and the evil spirits that was repeated and renewed by ritual means. According to Siikala (2002: 204-207) and Haavio (1967: 174-178, 338) the Finno-Karelian *tietäjä* (the vernacular ritual specialist who wielded incantations) possessed Ukko's 'force' or 'power' (*Ukonväki*) and his attributes, including sword, club, shield, harness, protective fence, and clothing, as in the following (Siikala 2002: 205):

Oi Ukk[o] ylij[umala],	Oh Ukko, highest god
...	...
Puota putki taivahast[a],	Drop a tube from heaven,
Umpiputkehen pujotame,	I slip myself in the closed tube,
U[mpi]vaskehen valame,	I pour myself in the closed copper tube,
Panun paitoihin paneme:	I don a fiery shirt:
P[anun] paioiss' on paremp[i],	In the fiery shirt it is better,
Umpilukuss' on luj[empi]	In the closed lock one is stronger
(SKVR I ₄ 502, lines 49, 56-61)	

The worship to Ukko is mentioned already in the list of Finnish pagan gods in the preface of David's psalter (*Dauidin psaltari*, Agricola 1987 [1551]). There, Mikael Agricola comments on the rites called *Ukon wacka* ('Ukko's basket') and the heavy drinking on the part of both men and women during the ritual (Agricola 1987 [1551]: 213; Harvilahti 2013: 209). There are many reports of Ukko's baskets from different parts of Finland, and from Estonia and Latvia, too. Common features of the feast include the gathering beforehand of food

and drink, communal participation, drinking of ale, sacrificing of cattle, and organising the feast on a hill that was worshipped as the abode of the god of thunder. *Ilja* (St Elijah) was often used as a Christianised version of the thunder god among the Orthodox Karelians, the Eastern Slavs and the Balts (see Harvilahti 2013: 209-213; Frog 2015: 45; Hammarstedt 1916; Harva 1948).

3 The Baltic god of thunder Perkūnas/Pērkons in the Finnic languages

The Finnish word *perkele* (*perkule*, *perkeles*, etc.) is Baltic in origin and derived from the name for the Baltic god of thunder (Lithuanian *perkiness*, Latvian *pērkons*, Old Prussian *percunis*) (Häkkinen 2004: 903). The Estonian cognate words are *pergel* or *põrgel* ('devil') and *põrgu* ('hell'). The etymology is a little uncertain, since Estonian *põrgu* seems to reflect the stem word from which *perkele* would also derive. However, Est. *põrgu* may be a back-formation from *põrgel* (Kalima 1936: 147). Whatever the case, in Finnish the word has come to mean 'devil'. The same also holds true for another Finnish word for devil, *piru*, which is of (later) East Slavic origin, derived from the name of the thunder god *Perun*. The name used by another ethnic group for a god has probably come to denote a counterforce, a being endowed with the antithetical attributes, i.e. a devil. This corresponds with findings on Finno-Ugrian mythic names. The name of the antithesis of the sky god is often a loan of a positive god in another culture. (See further Ajkhenvald *et al.* 1989: 155-159.)

There are numerous other words in Finnic languages denoting 'devil' (cf. the discussion of Estonian 'devil' by Valk: 2001: 11-15). The Northern Sámi *baergalak* ('devil') has been borrowed from Finnish (Kalima 1936: 147). In contrast, the Mordvin words *puŕgiŕne*, *puŕgiŕni*, *piŕgeŕne*, *piŕgiŕne*, *piŕgimä* (Erzya Mordvin), *puŕgəŕnä*, *pəŕgəŕnä* ('thunder'), and *puŕgiŕne-paz* ('thunder god') (Moksha Mordvin) are loans from the Balts (see Grünthal 2012: 324-325 *et passim*) and have retained the meaning related to the thunder god. Similarly, the other Mordvin word for thunder, *Jondol*, is derived from *Dundulis*, another Baltic name for the same god. There has, on the other hand, been some confusion between *Perkūnas* and devil in the Baltic concepts. Thunder was sometimes called the devil's chariot or devil's music. These texts, however, probably arose among the Balts with the coming of Christianity. As a result of the arrival of the new religion, the devil became a strong, dominant figure that may well have inherited motifs from former gods such as Old Slavic *veles/volos*, Lithuanian *velnias* (see in more detail e.g. Mansikka 1967 [1922]: 386-391; Velius 1989). Folklore surrounding *perkūnas/pērkons* abounds among the Balts. He

appears in Lithuanian and Latvian mythological tales, legends and songs, and in folk songs (*daina*), proverbs, incantations, curses, beliefs, and folk medicine.

4 The zoomorphic helpers of the thunder god in the light of mythic logic

Mythic animal helpers peculiar to a tradition belong to the cornerstones of the old mythic logic (see in detail Siikala 2002: 134-141). One of the most common animal helpers of the thunder god in the Scandinavian and Baltic traditions is the ram or goat. As discussed in the (rather bookish) work of Keyser (1854: 94), Thor is described as driving a chariot drawn by two goats, hence the name *Oku-Þórr* ('Driving Thor'). Keyser (1854: 198) further mentions the statue of Thor in Inner Trondheim, adorned with gold and silver, sitting in a chariot to which two goats were attached (*Flateyjarbók* 1860: 319-320). According to Lithuanian folklore, the thunder god *Perkūnas* holds a ram on a rope in one hand, and an axe in the other. It was also believed that *Perkūnas* rode on a ram or buck in the clouds, or drove a car drawn by two goats or bucks (Balys 1937; 1939). The oak tree, goats, and fire have been described as sacred to the thunder god in Nordic, Baltic, and Russian traditions (Cohen 1966: 469; Chadwick 1900: 22-44).

One auxiliary spirit of the thunder god is a bird, for which a relatively common name in Finland is *taivaanvuohi*, meaning 'snipe' but literally 'sky goat', a species of wading bird (*Capella callinago*). Most of the time it is a timid bird and rarely seen, but its mating flight is so eye-catching that anyone roaming through the wetlands in the spring and early summer can hardly help but see it. The mating male first soars steeply before plunging down again, and in the process its tail feathers make a bleating sound. It is most active at dawn and dusk, and particularly before a thunderstorm. The bird is known in Karelia and Ingria as *Ukon oinas* ('Ukko's ram'), *Ukon lamma*s ('Ukko's ram' or 'sheep') (see Harva 1948: 102), and *Pyhän Iljan vuohi* ('St Elijah's goat'), and in Livonian as *pitkiz-kabrikki*, in which *pitkiz* ('long one') is a euphemism for thunder (Finnish *pitkänen*) and *kabrikki* is 'goat'. In Lithuanian, the name of the bird is *Perkuno oželis* ('Perkunas's goat'), *Dievo ožys* ('God's goat'), or *Dangaus ožys* ('sky goat'). Latvian also knows the name *Perkonkaza* ('Perkunas's goat') and Estonian *taeva kits* ('sky goat').¹ The name of the bird suggests that because it is particularly active

1 For more detail, see Hoffmann-Krayer and Bächtold-Stäubli (1932-1933: 81-82); cf. Vélius (1989: 98) and Harva (1948: 102).

before a thunderstorm, it is a messenger of the god of thunder. Beliefs have been recorded in Lithuania according to which the snipe is not only able to announce a pending thunderstorm but also a storm of its own raising (Balys 1939). Like Finnic and Baltic speakers, Germanic speakers also associated this bird with the goat of the god of thunder, as reflected in the name *Donnerziege*. Swedish *horsgök* and Icelandic *hrossagaukr* ('horse cuckoo') have similar connotations, since the word may be derived from a form of the name *Pórr* ('Thor') (**Porsgök* > *horsgök*, see Hoffmann-Krayer and Bächtold-Stäubli 1932-1933: 81-82). The Karelian *Pyhän Iljan vuohi* ('St Elijah's goat') derives from the aforementioned Christianised notions originally associated with the god of thunder.

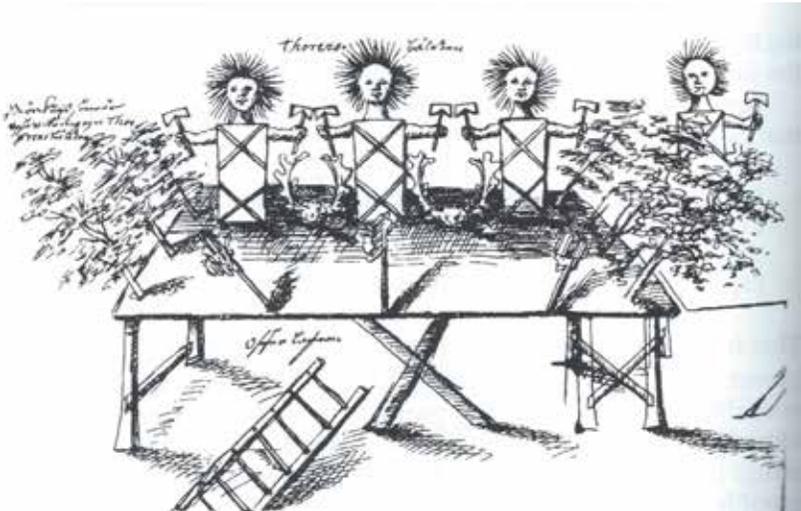
This bird opens the door on a world of mythic logic, in which animals behaving in unusual ways, eye-catching trees and plants, and strange natural formations and phenomena are interpreted as manifestations of the work of gods. The mythic mental images of the peoples of northern Europe have much in common, and many concepts date back thousands of years. As Frog (2015: 39) has noted, the mythic motifs relating to thunder could pass between these cultures easily, since they shared the general framework related to conceptions about thunder. The symbolic matrix of the vernacular mythology (Frog 2015: 39) explains the mechanism of mythic logic. Sensory images of mythic objects and beings are used within the local mythic register (cf. Siikala 2002: 48).

5 Mythic logic in Sámi religious concepts

In the Old Norse and Sámi religious practices, diviners and shamans consulted spirits and gods on special platforms, or on the tops of mountains. In the following I will show in the light of some examples that the long-term intercultural influence between the mythic practices of the Norwegians and Sámi shamanism was based on the symbolic network of mythic logic.

The drawings of Samuel Rheen (1867 [1671]) offer rare references to the archaic Sámi religious traditions. One of the drawings depicts the Lule Sámi altar, dedicated to the Sámi thunder god. The picture is followed by Rheen's description of the reindeer sacrifice. The platform-like altars were adorned with birch-twigs and idols of Thor (*thorens båleten*) were seated on it sprinkled with blood, with crosses across the breasts. Reindeer horns and bones were set on the back of the altar.²

2 Rheen (1897 [1671]: 37) writes: 'När Reenerna som the offra willia ähro slachtade, Vpreesa the een lafwa baak för sine kottar tree allnar högh från jorden, och Vpsättia wackert biörkRijss rundt

Figure 13 The Idols of Thor

Reproduced from Rheen 1867: 36

The number of the idols of Thor corresponds to the number of reindeer offered (Rheen 1867: 37). The idols do not refer to a religious system representing for example a trinity of gods (see also Parpola 2004: 264; Haavio 1967: 163; Siikala 2002: 208), although even this has been suggested.

In 1742, Mallmer describes the platforms *gälder* (*hjällar*), built on four pillars, in which bones and horns of the reindeer were placed (see Manker 1957: 27). Friis (1871: 140) mentions enclosures in Finnmark made of stone with a *seita*-mound made of stone in the middle. There are other examples, as well. In the Porsanger area, Friis found such an enclosure with the remains of a wooden fence that had been placed above it, and a mound of stone with a hole in the middle of the stones, which according to him was made for the idol.

In an interdisciplinary article on Old Norse *seiðr* and its possible cognate *seita* (with many linguistic variants in Finnish and Sámi), Asko Parpola (2004) comments on de Vries's (1956 I: 234, 347-348) and Saxo Grammaticus's

kringom lafwan. Item the ströo och biörkRijss alt ifrån sine kottar in til lafwan på marcken ther the skole framföra offret. På bemelte lafwa Opsättia the Thorens bäleten medh blodh bestruckna, sampt medh några korsk på des bröst; baak för bäleten Vpsättia the hornen och the förnämsta hufwudbeenen och fötterna'. 'When the reindeer they want to sacrifice are slaughtered, they raise a table behind their tents, 1.8 metres high above ground, with beautiful birch twigs around. They also litter the ground from their tents to the sacrificial spot with birch twigs. On the mentioned table they raise the idols of Thor, with crosses on its chest, smeared with blood. Behind the idols they put the antlers and skulls and the feet [of the sacrificed animals]' (transl. Maths Bertell).

(I, 22) descriptions of the Scandinavian burial mounds and crowning places of the kings. He notes the analogy between the king's seat on the top of a high burial mound (de Vries 1956 I: 346) and the seat of a sorcerer and diviner, Old Norse *hjallr*, and mentions the cognate word in Old Norse *hjalli* ('mountain terrace'). According to Tolley (2009: 544-545, 586-587), *seiðhjallr* denotes the platform where a *vǫlva* performed, and it parallels the world tree of a shaman.

According to Parpola, *seiðhjallr* can be compared to the platform made of wood used in the worship of some **sejda* idols of the Sámi. He further refers to the discussion of holy mountains dedicated to specific gods (Odin, Thor) by the Scandinavians and by the Sámi in their holy mountains (*sieid*). Parpola concludes (2004: 266-267) that Finnish *seita* is borrowed from the Sámi **sejda*. Linguistic criteria would suggest that the Sámi word was borrowed probably in the thirteenth century from Norwegian (Old Norse *seiðr* > *seid*) in northern Scandinavia. Parpola concludes his article by stating: 'In both the Germanic and Sámi religion, diviners consulted spirits of dead sorcerers, who dwelt specially on tops of high mountains or in stones.' According to Parpola this is exactly what the Old Norse word *seiðr* means: 'witchcraft', 'divination', and 'white and black magic'. As a whole, Parpola's article makes possible a vision of a long-lasting intercultural influence and a religious assimilation between the religion of the Norwegians and Sámi shamanism, with special reference to the *seiðr* institution.

However, there is a debate on the etymology of the word, according to which *seiðr* should be connected with the meaning of 'thread', 'yarn', 'to spin', and also 'spell', 'witchcraft' (see in detail Heide 2006: 238-258). The aforementioned intercultural relations are thoroughly discussed in Eldar Heide's work (2006; 2007) on mythological interpretations of words like (Old Norse) *gandr* and *seiðr* and (Norwegian) *gandfluge*, and '*seiðr* spirits' (Norwegian *seid-ånder*). Tolley (2009: 264, 271) maintains that *gandr* is the main spirit of a shamanic nature, a word also applied to the Sámi shamanic spirits by the Norsemen to denote something between the soul of the shaman wandering during the trance and his helping spirit. According to Heide (2006: 312) *seiðr* in Old Norse is a form of magic, and *seiða/síða* denotes use of this kind of magic. The word *gandr*, in contrast, was used in the Middle Ages in the meaning of 'magical projectile' (e.g. during the *seiðr* séance), the other meanings denoting a variety of mythic uses connected with (*ánde*)*storm* ('a storm created by witchcraft') and in many other meanings (Heide 2006: 312; see also Heide 2006: 22, 142-143; *Historia Norwegie* 2003: 60-62.). The magic shot *finnkula* may cause a bang that might be compared to, or have its origin in, the magical notion of giving rise to a storm. Heide notes that concepts

related to folk religion should not be interpreted using modern angular, *firkanta* ('square') logic, or by following the logic of the natural sciences (Heide 2006: 111, 158). Thus, the projectile of a Sámi shaman (*noaide*) may take the form of a flying insect (*gandfluge*) that attempts to enter the nose or mouth of the one on to whom the *noaide* has casted a spell, or it might be called *trollskot* ('magic shot') (Heide 2006: 155-160, 267-295 *et passim*; cf. for discussion, Lid 1927; 1944; Honko 1959: 111-112).

6 Long-term intercultural contacts and mythic discourse

Mythology is manifested and functions as symbolic resources, rather than as something singular and static. Christianity did not merely displace the old 'pagan' world, since the encounter resulted in a long mythic discourse of actively using each other's symbols (Frog 2015: 33, 44). It is therefore useful to look at the encounter between vernacular religion and Christianity in a comparative and interdisciplinary context offered by new interpretations of the old sources and by acquiring a synthesis on the basis of the accumulated experience of various disciplines. Thomas DuBois (1999: 29-68) proposes an approach that would take into account extensive, long-term intercultural contacts between Old Norse and Christian religious practices. DuBois writes (1999: 59-60):

Rivalry between the cults of Þórr and Christ figures prominently in both Swedish archaeological findings and the saga accounts of Iceland and the Atlantic settlements. *Landnámabók* includes a description of the settler Helgi the Lean, who worship both deities, depending on whether he is on land or sea. On migrating to Iceland from Ireland, Helgi is said to have called upon Þórr to guide his landing and advise him in selecting a place to settle. Once settled, however, he names his district *Kristnes* (Christ's Headland), and said to have remained as Christian until his dying day. In the tenth century Greenland of *Eiríks saga rauða*, Þórr worship is pitted against Christianity through the secret backsliding of nominally Christianized converts. Christian and pagan vie with each other by comparing the ways in each deity provides for them during their sojourn in Vinland. In *Njáls saga* the pagan Steinunn even claims that Þórr had challenged Christ to a duel. The latter, she asserts, had proved too cowardly to fight. Her description pits the ideal warrior behaviour of Þórr against the ideal pacifism of Christ, distilling key elements of each religion's code of ethics. (DuBois 1999: 59-60)

I have cited DuBois at length just to give an example of religious practices that form a network of meanings altering according to the mythic logic. This kind of network or matrix involves the strategies of adapting Christian (or other religious) elements to the old mythic worldview of northern Europe.

7 Accounts of ancient myths of the Baltic peoples

The first attempts at the Christianisation of Lithuania and Latvia (between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries) brought about a collision between the local mythic traditions and the new religion. The Christian missionaries encountered in the Baltic region a varying and flourishing mythic folk culture with sacred groves, holy trees, sacrifices, rituals, and a great number of gods. The first reaction of the missionaries was to ban and destroy the 'ungodly' practices. In the course of time the names of the vernacular gods were translated by using names of Roman gods, in the same manner as happened with the Old Norse names of gods (cf. Frog 2015: 41).³

The old rituals and sacrifices continued their existence side by side with Christianity up to recent times, and even into our days. In Lithuania one of the most assiduous champions of Christianity was the Camaldoli monk Hieronymus Ioannis Silvanus Pragensis, who enjoyed the patronage of the Lithuanian court from 1392 to 1398 (Hirsch *et al.* 1870: 189-240; Janulaitis 1928: 58-63). His travel reports describe the grass snakes regarded as holy, the eternal fire, and the Lithuanians' sacred groves, in the centre of which grew an age-old oak in which the gods were thought to reside (see Greimas 1992: 103-104, 199-201; Harvilahti 1991: 69; Rowell 2004: 122). At first, no one dared to touch the oak, but finally the whole forest was felled. Hieronymus hastened to fell other sacred groves in the region as well. This so incited the local people that they complained to Vytautas that the groves in which they were accustomed to seek help from the gods and to be granted fair weather or rain had been destroyed. They would, they said, sooner abandon the lands and hearths of their fathers than cease worshipping their gods. They did not know where to find their gods now that the divine abodes had been destroyed. In the end Vytautas decided to banish the over-zealous Hieronymus, explaining to him that Christ could manage better without the faithful than he could without his people (Brückner 1979: 75, 78-79, and notes 31, 39).

3 See further Bojtár (1999: 307 *et passim*) on the notion of *interpretatio classica/Romana*.

Hieronymus nevertheless left to posterity a host of interesting accounts of the ancient beliefs of the Lithuanians. It was in the holy oak groves that they worshipped Perkūnas, the god of thunder, and other gods. Deep in the Lithuanian heartlands Hieronymus came across another tribe that worshipped the sun and an enormous iron hammer.⁴ Hieronymus asked the sacrificial priests about the purpose of the rite and was informed that a mighty king had once imprisoned the sun for several months in the strongest of towers, but that the signs of the zodiac had come to its assistance and smashed the tower with a hammer, thereby liberating the sun (Brückner 1979: 74-75). However, according to Bojtár (1999: 294-296) the intent to entertain colours Hieronymus's description, and the enormous hammer is a typical *hapax legomenon*, extending this term from single words also to a story that does not occur anywhere else.

In the texts of the medieval travel reports and chronicles there are two apparent tendencies of interpretation of the local religious forms (See Bojtár 1999: 269-307; Harmening 1979). The first is the Christian bias of *interpretatio Christiana*. This interpretation, pointing out the 'sinful character of paganism', justified the violent conversion of the pagans to the realm of God, *civitas Dei* ('city of God'), from the ungodly *civitas diabolica* ('diabolical city') where they lived. The other tendency is *interpretatio Romana/Graeca/classica*, which superimposed the Graeco-Roman polytheistic mythology on the Baltic mythic beings and religious practices. *Interpretatio Romana* resulted in transforming the Baltic mythic folk religion into a polytheistic pantheon, with equivalents in the Roman mythology. The following chapters provide examples of the both interpretations, which sometimes were intermingled in travel reports or chronicles.

Interpretatio Romana. In 1583 the Jesuits began missionary work in Žemaitija (the western part of Lithuania). Their reports bear a note of despair:

The state of the congregation is pitiful; in the villages almost no one could even name a Christian. The old superstitions still prevail: Perkunas, a god of thunder akin to *Jupiter*, ancient oaks, rowan trees, or again a giant rock. They light holy eternal fires to Perkunas in the forests like the *Vestal virgins* in Rome. (Brückner 1979: 70)

The Lithuanian gods were compared with the Roman ones in the fifteenth century: Perkunas was regarded as a parallel to *Jupiter*, and the worship of

4 Cf. Bertell (2003: 77) on similar remarks by Olaus Magnus, and in Sweden by Saxo Grammaticus (ca. 1200) (Saxo Grammaticus 1931: XIV.v.5).

fire, groves and snakes of the Lithuanians were compared to the ancient Roman *Vulcanus*, *Silvanus*, and *Aesculapius/Asklepios*. Even the Latin forms of Lithuania and Lithuanians (*Litua* and *Lituani*) were interpreted as 'Italian': *l'Italia, gli italiani* (Brückner 1979: 70, 114.).

Interpretatio Christiana. In the seventeenth century the missionary work organised by the Jesuits came up against rites in what is now Latvia that differed greatly from the Christian. The bewildered missionaries described ungodly worshippers that paid homage to sacred trees and groves, making all kinds of sacrifices to them. Finally, they found a kind of priest, who was at least 90 years old. When he was asked how many gods they had, he replied:

We have various gods that differ from one region to another and also depending on the person and need. We have a god in heaven, and also a god that rules the earth. The one highest on earth is assisted by various lesser, lower gods. One gives us fish, another game. We have gods of the corn, fields, gardens and cattle. The sacrifices made to them differ: some get bigger ones, others smaller, each according to his kind. All the sacrifices are made to specific trees and groves – we call the sacrificial trees holy. Two trees are worshipped in particular: the oak and the lime. The oak is the men's sacrificial tree and beneath it a couple of eggs are placed at certain times. The lime, by contrast, is the women's tree and to that we sacrifice butter, milk, cheese, and fat to ensure the salvation and health of ourselves and our children. (Lohmeyer 1891: 16; Brückner 1979: 131-132)

Elsewhere is an account of how the Jesuits felled the holy trees, both the oaks and the limes.

Both interpretations (*Christiana* and *Romana*) resulted in commonplaces (*topoi*), i.e. reuses of storylines, narrative patterns, and choices of words across different texts.

8 The holy places of the Lithuanian thunder god and the cathedral of Vilnius

The cultural contacts between the old mythic worldviews and Christianity need to be viewed as a continuous variety of mutual influences, an interplay between antagonism and syncretistic coexistence. The same is true of the process of building religious temples and monuments. In Lithuania the relatively slow process of Christianisation enabled an interesting interplay between the old worship of Perkūnas and Christianity. As we will see from

the history of the cathedral of Vilnius, the advent of Christianity did not mean the ultimate victory of the new religion.

At the beginning of the 1250s Mindaugas, the duke of Lithuania, built a small cathedral in Vilnius after his conversion to Christianity, in order to strengthen a new alliance with the Livonian Order and with the Volhynian and some of the Samogitian kingdoms (Laurinkienė 1996: 82; Jurginis and Lukšaitė 1981: 32). Mindaugas was able to unite the Balts and was crowned king of Lithuania in 1253. According to some chronicles (see Brückner 1979: 69, 71), he was an apostate, and retained his old religious ceremonies and beliefs. Mindaugas was assassinated in 1263, and after his death the cathedral was rebuilt as a temple of the old gods (Kitkauskas 1989; Laurinkienė 1996: 82-86; Rowell 2004: 51-52).

There are some sources that describe the temple in detail. Unfortunately, some of them may be falsifications and invented by nationalistic-romantic scholars. A square, roofless temple has been (implausibly) described by Rivius, the late seventeenth-century annalist, based on the account of the 'lost' manuscript of Augustus Rotundus. According to this description, at the back of this temple, made of stone, behind a square altar with twelve steps, stood a wooden idol of Perkūnas. The temple was thought to have been built in 1285. It appears that Rivius did not exist, and even the manuscript was a result of the patriotic enthusiasm of T. Narbut (Narbutas) (see Dubonis 1997; Bojtár 1999: 324; Mickūnaitė 2006: 218, notes 108-109).

The holy places dedicated to Perkūnas have been described in other chronicles as well. It was believed that in pre-Christian times the temple of Perkūnas had existed in the same location as where the cathedral was built. One of these chronicles is written by Matthias Striicovius (M.O. Strykowski), who, according to Bojtár (1999: 324) 'heaped together all the sources and non-sources'. His Polish, Lithuanian, and Žemaitian Chronicle written in the latter half of the sixteenth century tells of a temple built by Gediminas (reigned in 1314-1341) in an oak grove in Vilnius, at the place where the cathedral was later situated (Rowell 2004: 134-135; Striicovius 1985: 373). Rowell writes (2004: 137):

Gediminas, who from his patronage of Christians (for purely non-religious reasons such as trade with the west and the governance of Orthodox Rus') was familiar with the building of centres for cult practices, was very probably influenced by church-building in his ordering of the pagan cult. It appears to be an attempt to focus the decentralised cult for the benefit of the new ruling clan. (Rowell 2004: 137)

This would explain the background to the establishment of a pagan temple on the place that had earlier in history, even before the first cathedral was

built, served as a ritual place for the cult of the pagan gods. Bojtár agrees that there was a need to revert the Christian church to a temple of Perkūnas as a reaction to the Christian churches, both Catholic and Orthodox. However, the temple was earlier, being built in the late thirteenth century (Bojtár 1999: 325).

The conversion of the Lithuanians to Christianity is reckoned as beginning in 1386, when Prince Jogaila (Jagiello) and his cousin Vytautas were baptised in Kraków. The reason for adopting this new religion lay in a political marriage of Jogaila to Jadwiga, heir to the Polish throne. According to the Polish historian Ioannis Dlugossius (Jan Długosz), writing in the fifteenth century, Jogaila gave an order in 1387 to extinguish the holy fire in Vilnius that was said to be eternal, and to destroy all the temples and altars for offerings, to cut down the trees and groves that were regarded as holy, and to kill all the grass snakes or green snakes (*žaltys*) that were kept in every house as guardian spirits (Dlugossius X: 163; Harvilahti 1991: 59). The Lithuanians lamented and were in despair when they saw their idols and gods destroyed, but they did not dare to rise up against the order of their king. Dlugossius continues by stating that the people had sense enough to notice that their gods did not resist or take revenge, not even when the Christians were destroying all their altars. And one of them proposed that it would be the right time to leave the old gods and their worship and to join those who regarded the Polish god as the holiest and strongest one (Dlugossius X: 163; Rowell 2002: 134-135; Brückner 1979: 80-81; cf. Bojtár 1999: 324-325). The description of Dlugossius looks to be, again, a *topos*: the missionaries destroyed the altars and idols, the people were in despair, but finally came to understand the value of the new religion. In the following I will provide one further example of using this type of *topos* in the Russian *Primary Chronicle* and other early Russian chronicles. According to the *Primary Chronicle*, in 988 St Vladimir gave an order to destroy the idols of Kiev, including the one of Perun, the god of thunder. When the idol of Perun was thrown into the Dniepr, the people were crying after him. After that Vladimir organised a mass baptism of the people and ordered churches to be built in the places where the idols had sat, and he erected a church in honour of St Basil on the hill on which the idol of Perun had stood. The pattern of smashing the altars/idols and drawing/throwing them into rivers is repeated in a large number of the Old Russian codices (see Mansikka 1967 [1922]: 50-66; 2005: 81-93; Harvilahti 2012: 44-48.).

As for the later history of the cathedral of Vilnius, after the year 1387 the second Gothic-style cathedral with five chapels was erected. As Nijolė Laurinkienė (1996) states, the cathedral was destroyed several times in the course of history, but it has always been renovated or rebuilt in the same place. In its present form

the cathedral dates from the eighteenth century. Archaeological excavations carried out under the ground of the oldest part of the cathedral began in 1984, and in 1986 it was revealed that an ancient temple was probably situated in that place. Archaeologists found the contours of the floor of the temple site, and six hearths used in ceremonies, with bones of sacrificed animals. Three of the hearths can be dated roughly to the first millennium AD, three others to the second millennium AD. In addition, remnants of an altar were found, as well as part of the stairs leading to the altar. According to Laurinkienė (1996: 83), a fence may have encircled the temple, and probably it had no roof.

9 The motif of desecration and consecration, and mythological logic

From the point of view of the Lithuanian local mythic worldview the groves and altars regarded as holy were *desecrated* during the 1250s by building a Christian church in the place of worship of Perkūnas, whereas from the Christian point of view the ungodly pagan place for rituals was *consecrated* by building the cathedral. After the death of Mindaugas, the church was *re-consecrated* as the temple of the local gods and then again *consecrated* as a Christian church. Thus, the process of *desecration* and *consecration* was repeated a couple of times during history.

The *motif of desecration and consecration* is reminiscent of the *acquiring and returning motif* that S. Ju. Nekljudov has used in his analysis of the Tibetan epic hero Gesar's campaign against the Mistress of the North (Nekljudov 1996: 137). In the following I present Nekljudov's idea in a simplified form. An 'alien' world is ruled by an aggressive demon that has to be rendered harmless, destroyed, and purified, since the whole world in principle belongs to the protagonist (in this case the hero Gesar), and all that is 'alien' to it (demonic) must be deemed unlawful and destroyed. According to Nekljudov this motif represents the mythological logic that is universal and by no means restricted to epic traditions, but is to be found even in the religious and political life of our own times (Nekljudov 1996: 137).

Following Nekljudov's model, the motif of desecration and consecration can be summarised as follows:

- 1 An evil force rules the 'other', and it must be de-demonised and returned to the world of the righteous ones by the protagonist.
- 2 The mythic world of the antagonist is by nature aggressive and a potential threat to the harmony and existence of the protagonist's own world and must therefore be rendered harmless and destroyed (= desecrated).

- 3 The world of the antagonist can be purified, consecrated, and used as part of the hero's own world.
- 4 The otherworld in principle has always belonged to the protagonist, and all that is 'alien' to it must be deemed unlawful and (re-)consecrated.

This motif is to be found all over the world in various contexts. In addition to the examples mentioned above from the Baltic region and Rus', Mansikka (1967 [1922]: 52) mentions 2 Chronicles 15:16, 1 Kings 15: 13, and 2 Kings, which actually involve the longest description of destroying the altars of the former religion in the Old Testament. In 2 Kings and the Lithuanian and Old Slavonic chronicles we find many similar passages referring to destruction of altars by the order of the ruler, and the beating or burning of the remains. In recent times, events resembling the motif of desecration and consecration include the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan by the Taliban in 2001, and attempts to rebuild the monuments, and the destruction of some of the religious buildings of Palmyra by ISIS. In the history of human civilization there is, obviously, no lack of parallels dealing with desecrating and destroying gods/idols of the other/former religion, and (re-)consecrating the cult place.

10 Meta-discursive practices and ideological interpretations of mythic knowledge

During the nineteenth century some proponents of the comparative mythology school regarded myths as static and primitive (E.B. Tylor, Max Müller), whereas some mythologists romanticised mythic thinking by creating coherent and exclusive mythological systems on the basis of the mythic sources (cf. Frog 2015: 34). This process created authoritative discourses according to which only the given dominant school or paradigm led to reliable results. An example of the dominant meta-discursive practices is the romanticised history of the so-called 'Teutonic' peoples, an idea promoted by Leopold von Ranke, who was influenced by Schelling, Schlegel, Hegel, and the Classical studies of his time (von Ranke 1824; 1973). The romantic trends also played a significant role in re-interpreting old sources, including the medieval chronicles, Old Norse sagas, ancient epics, and mythological texts.

There are many examples of works in which diverse Old Norse mythological materials representing the pagan worldview have been gathered into one large volume in order to present an overall system of pre-Christian religion, as if that religion would have formed a concise doctrine or tenet in the minds of the people.

In his book discussing a five-century period (from the ninth to the thirteenth century) of Nordic religions during the Viking Age, DuBois writes:

So generous are the saga writers in supplying details on these past traditions that it became easy to bracket or dismiss entirely the Christian ‘coloring’ of their accounts. In a nearly archaeological fashion, scholars hoped to peel off the Christian layer of beliefs to gaze without obstruction at prior modes of religious experience. (DuBois 1999: 205)

This holds true even for Elias Lönnrot’s epic, the *Kalevala* (1835; 1849). While editing the Finnish national epic on the basis of the collected original materials, Lönnrot omitted the Christian elements in order to be able to produce a ‘genuine’ and in his mind coherent epic representing a true picture of the ancient times of the Finnish people.

New interpretations of medieval chronicles resulted in fantastic theories on the history of northern Europe. Indeed, very often research practices have been based on ideological axioms or dominant research paradigms or other tendencies currently in fashion. Henrik Janson points out (2013: 172) that German Romanticism has since the publication of Jacob Grimm’s *Deutsche Mythologie* (1835) ‘held a firm grip around the interpretations of the pre-Christian religion of the Scandinavian North’. In another context Janson underlines the need for source criticism when dealing with information about pagans in the Early and High Middle Ages. One of his examples is the well-known description (written in the latter half of the eleventh century AD) by Adam of Bremen (Adamus Bremensis) of the Uppsala pagan cult, a sanctuary with three primary gods Thor, Odin, and Frey.

As Janson has it: ‘The sources may not say what we read’ (Janson 2005: 148-152). François-Xavier Dillmann offers an alternative, interdisciplinary interpretation of the description of the Uppsala cult place. In his opinion the cult seemed to be a religion of the upper classes, but at the same time religious festive celebrations for large numbers of people would have been organised, so that the openness of the religious cult would have held together the frames of Old Norse religious life. He also puts emphasis on Adam of Bremen’s note that there was a sacred sacrificial grove near the cult place. In Adam of Bremen’s text there is an alternative use of the words *templum* (‘temple’) and *triclinium* (‘hall of festivities’) (Dillman 1997: 51-73; Adamus Bremensis, *Gesta IV*: 26-27; Bertell 2003: 89-90, 130-131). This could be interpreted to mean that there was no temple in the place, but rather a kind of hall for ritual eating and drinking. The archaeological investigations

under and around the medieval old church of Old Uppsala provide some evidence for this theory.⁵

The question of the triadic principle of the ancient gods described by Adam of Bremen and many other authors is part of an ancient debate that continues today. This triadic model, examples of which include the Indian gods Indra, Varuna, and Mithra, or the Roman Jupiter, Mars, and Quirinus, has been repeated as a *topos* in a large number of sources time and again (see Dumézil 1992: 69-115). Greimas accepts the model of archaic tri-functional ideology of Indo-European gods presented by George Dumézil. According to that model there were three sovereign spheres of social classes (priests, warriors, and cultivators), as seen for example in the Indian mythology (see Greimas 1992: 203-204).

In the mythological writings concerning the Baltic regions, there are some allusions to the existence of such trinities of gods. However, these cases have turned out to be fallacious. According to the chronicle of Simon Grunau (sixteenth century AD), three major gods, Patrimpas, Patulas, and Percunis, formed the trinity of Old Prussian gods. It has been argued that the pattern of the Prussian gods is copied from Adam of Bremen's chronicle, and put into fabricated Prussian clothing (Grunau 1876-1896: 76-97; Greimas 1992: 102; Brückner 1979: 63; Rowell 2004: 38-39, 126-127; Bojtár 1999: 313-315). The pagan cult described in the *Chronicon Terrae Prussicae* by Peter von Dusburg (before AD 1326, see Hirsch *et al.* 1870: 53) offers a further interesting example. This pagan cult was allegedly headed by a pagan pope Criwe in a place called Romove in Nadruvia (Nadrowia), Prussia. As Dusburg has it, the place-name *Romove* or *Romow* was derived from the word Rome: 'trahens nomen suum a Roma'. The cultic centre of Romove has never been found, or even been described by anybody else. The 'pagan pope', the religious leader whom everybody in the Baltic region ought to have obeyed, never existed, and the whole cult was most probably P. von Dusburg's own invention (Rowell 2004: 38-39, 125-128; Bojtár 1999: 321; Brückner 1979: 22). Rowell writes: 'It is a means of explaining to Christians at war with the pagans and in disobedience to the real Pope of Rome how the pagans worship and how they are pious in their own way' (Rowell 2004: 38). The description is a kind of pagan inversion of Christianity, written for political purposes. Temples were imagined as built in places where the 'pagans' did not erect them. There is evidence of altars with idols that were worshipped, but these practices are still very far from an organised religious cult with trinities of

5 Cf. Cohen (1966: 468), and the account of the Slavic temples of Rügen, written by Saxo Grammaticus ca. 1200 (Saxo Grammaticus 1931: XIX 39, xxxix).

gods and adorned temples. In addition, in cultures that were farm-centred, many rituals of society took place regularly at the farms in order to ensure good harvest and favourable weather conditions. The Old Norse *hof*, or the *edes sacras* mentioned in the Prussian chronicles, may have served as buildings for religious observances for the community, but not as temples comparable to Christian churches or to the religious buildings of any other world religion.

11 Conclusion

In the Nordic and Baltic regions, the ancient religious observances may have included the worship of the mythological beings that governed or dominated the realms such as the sky, fire, earth, water, and the underworld. This kind of worship is not comparable with the triadic principle of gods of the three spheres (priests, warriors, and cultivators) that is known of ancient Greek, Roman, or Indian mythology. The complexity of mythic thinking is beyond our reach without a careful analysis of original sources.

In exploring the mechanisms of the register of mythic language and thinking, the notion of *mythic logic* complements the notion of *mythic discourse within a symbolic matrix* (see Frog 2015: 35-38 and in this volume). The examples provided in this article show that mythic conceptions do not consist of fixed, petrified systems constructed on the basis of scholarly axioms, ideological constructions, or other meta-discursive practices, but rather constitute a multi-dimensional and multi-level network of forms of manifestation and interdependences enabling the choice of possible realisations in the mythic discourse (see Bauman and Briggs 1990: 59-88; Harvilahti 2013: 213). This kind of network of meanings even involved the strategies of adapting Christian elements to the mythic worldview.

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Abbreviation

SKVR = *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot*, I-XV. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1908-1997.

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10 The artificial bride on both sides of the Gulf of Finland

The Golden Maiden in Finno-Karelian and Estonian folk poetry

Karolina Kouvola

Abstract

This article examines the theme of forging of a golden maiden in the Estonian, Ingrian and Finno-Karelian epic poems of *Kultamorsiamen taonta* (Engl. *Forging of the Golden Bride*) and *Kuldnaine* (Engl. *The Golden Woman*). The Parallax Approach used is based on the historical-geographical method. Every period of culture contains ethno-cultural substrates. These substrates are made up of cultural features and materials that were inherited from earlier periods and adapted to newer periods. The Forging of the Golden Bride poem includes several layers that have formed over centuries – if not a millennium. By studying these layers, it is possible to trace the historical continuities and alterations in individual elements in the poem.

Keywords: Kalevalaic poetry, parallax approach, epic poetry, Finno-Karelian tradition

1 Introduction

This article explores the stratified history of the narrative poem known as *The Golden Maiden* (Est. *Kuldnaine*, Fi. *Kultaneito*) in the Estonian, Ingrian, Karelian, and Savonian-Finnish traditions. During the first half of the twentieth century, variants of this poem were studied with an emphasis on reconstructing its history. Research paradigms in folklore studies then shifted, with the result that the poem's background has not been examined

in the light of the most recent methods and theories of tradition transmission. Instead of trying to find or reconstruct the most original version, scholarly interest now focuses more on viewing traditions as part of society as well as trying to understand why the poems were important to their performers and audiences and how they have been used. The current paradigm tends to focus narrowly on local communities, as opposed to looking at relationships among all different forms of a tradition. Here, a brief overview of the tradition will be followed by a discussion of comparative methods that have been applied to it and an introduction to the historically oriented comparative method called the Parallax Approach (Frog 2012a) that will be applied here. A series of different features and associations of the tradition will then be reviewed in subsequent sections followed by a general overview assessment as a conclusion.

The Golden Maiden is a narrative constituted of particular motifs that belongs historically to Finnic epic poetry. Finnic epic was a short epic form: epics circulated as poems or texts of recognisable lines and groups of lines that, when recorded in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, were normally about 75-300 lines in performance, depending on the poem and the region (Frog 2016: 65-66). *The Golden Maiden* has a simple plot and thus tends to be shorter in itself, but the documented poems in which it occurs can sometimes be quite long because it was recorded both as a single poem and combined with other poem types in all regions where it was documented. The current study is based on 146 Karelian variants or fragments of *The Golden Maiden* in Karelian, ranging in length from 2 to 452 lines, 10 variants or fragments from the Savo region of Finland ranging from 11 to 65 lines, 137 Ingrian variants or fragments of 2 to 220 lines, and 95 Estonian variants or fragments of 6 to 200 lines.

In Finland and Karelia, the epic form was maintained longest in northern Orthodox regions of Karelia. There is evidence that similar traditions were also current in Lutheran Finland, although the traditions had largely disappeared by the nineteenth century (Siikala 2012: 81, 102), when interest in documenting them began. Especially in the remote northern region called Viena Karelia, epics and *historiolae* (i.e. epic narration in incantations) were mediums for vernacular mythology and linked to ritual practices (Siikala 2012: 142). Impacts from organised Christianity began earlier and were greater in regions to the south, as were cultural influences and changes in societal organisation. In Ingria, the poetry shifted to a women's tradition and epic was no longer a primary medium for mythology or mythic representations that provide models for understanding empirical, social, and unseen worlds, their origins and significance. Epic songs are recognisable at a textual level, but they merged with other narrative genres, evolving into a so-called 'lyric-epic'

form, altering or omitting fantastic elements, and not infrequently filling protagonist roles with 'Jesus' or 'the daughter of a smith', or narrating the plot in the first person (Siikala 2012: 127-128). This process was still more advanced in Estonia, where few traces of the vernacular mythology of gods and divine heroes were preserved in the poetry (Siikala 2012: 129-130).

The Golden Maiden is one of a handful of narratives that relate to mythology in northern regions, and is also found in Estonian traditions. As such, it is remarkably well documented. According to Tiiu Jaago (1993: 7), almost 150 variants have been collected in Estonia. These come especially from the Kuusalu parish in northern Estonia, from the Väike-Maarja township in West Viru county, from Karksi parish in Viljandi county, from Sangaste township in Valga county, and from Põlva parish in Põlva county. For the present study, 95 variants of this poem were found under the song type 'Kuldnaime' through the digitalised database of the Estonian folklore archives (EKÜ). In Karelia this poem has been found mostly in Viena (83/146 variants) as well as in North Karelia (19/146 variants), on the Karelian isthmus (18/146 variants), in Aunus/Olonets (17/146 variants), and in Ladoga Karelia (11/146 variants). In Ingria, the poem has been preserved among the Orthodox Izhorians (Salminen 1929: 182). Most of the Ingrian variants are from Soikkola and Narvusi in western Ingria (59/137 variants) from Lempaala in northern Ingria (20/137). Otherwise, the Ingrian variants are found more or less evenly scattered through Central Ingria. It was documented as an independent epic or song, a mythic event in a more complex epic sequence or cycle, and also performed in combination with other song material in all regions. As with other poems, traditions of Finland, Karelia, and Ingria are clearly related at the level of verses in dialects of a common poetic idiom.

Researchers have tended to view *The Golden Maiden* as reflecting a single tradition that developed variations. In all linguistic-cultural areas, almost all local forms present the same key elements:

- 1 A man needs a bride.
- 2 Slaves strike the bellows.
- 3 A series of objects is produced.
- 4 The creation of a golden maiden concludes the series.
- 5 The golden maiden is not an adequate replacement for a living bride.

Väinö Salminen thus considered the common origin of the poem to be transparent in spite of local and regional variations (1929: 183-184). Earlier comparative studies were made within the framework of the Historical-Geographic Method. These studies had the aim of reconstructing an 'original' form of the poem and whether it should be viewed as part of the common

Finnic heritage or spread through Finnic cultures later. In the latter case, researchers sought to identify the historical period when and region where the poem was first established and how it spread from region to region across Finnic language areas. The question is complicated by a distinct form of the plot found in Estonia: rather than the maiden being made entirely from precious materials, she is made from wood and ornamented with metal (33/95 variants). Such differences in plot gave rise to the alternative view advocated by Oskar Loo that, rather than originating from the same poem, there were two stories originating in different periods that were later mixed, one about a highborn man who makes a wooden bride and another about a smith who makes a bride out of metal (1946: 164-165, 166). The present article will review evidence regarding *The Golden Maiden* in light of current methodology and reassess what can and cannot be said about the stratified history of this tradition.

The idea of creating an artificial woman is of course not unique to Finnic peoples. The same theme is known from Ovid's narrative of the sculptor Pygmalion, who falls in love with a statue he has created (*Metamorphoses* X.243-297; Haavio 1967: 141; Kiuru 1990). Comparison has also been made to Persian and Indian themes of creating a woman from metals or wood (Haavio 1967: 139-146), and to the Old Norse narrative of growing hair of gold made by dwarfs for the goddess Sif (Snorri Sturluson 1998: 40-41; cf. Frog 2011: 31). However, the present article will concentrate more narrowly on the Finnic traditions, which are characterised by a distinct system of motifs and transmission, not just as a story but as an oral-poetic text. The article opens with a short survey of different methodological approaches to this narrative, which presents a frame for an overview and discussion of the different versions of the poem recorded in Estonia, Ingria, and Karelia, followed by general conclusions.

2 Historically oriented comparative methodology

The Historical-Geographical Method (HGM) or Finnish Method in folklore research was formalised by Kaarle Krohn first in Finnish (1918) and then in his *Die folkloristische Arbeitsmethod* ('Working Method for Folkloristics') (1926; 1971), building on his father Julius Krohn's research methodology (1883) and synthesising advances by other Nordic researchers. The HGM is based on the idea that the historical development of a story or folkloric text can be reverse-engineered back to a place and time of origin through the analysis of attested variant forms and their geographical distribution. The HGM was formulated as a full methodological package that, as Frog has stressed, included 'methods,

research tools, theories and quite narrowly prescribed research questions'. (2013a: 18). It thus became methodologically problematic in the light of changing theories and controversial as scholars wished to ask different questions. Consequently, it was abandoned, and historical comparative research became stigmatised more generally as an outcome of this controversy (Frog 2013a: 21-22). However, methods can be distinguished from theories and research questions, and thus methods of the HGM can be re-evaluated and tested in relation to current understanding of folklore transmission (Frog 2013a: 18-19).

Historically oriented analyses of *The Golden Maiden* have been built on the HGM, its antecedents, and variations. These include Kaarle Krohn's studies (1903-1910: 247-279; 1924-1928 III: 69-98), Matti Kuusi's 'typological analysis', which reversed the order of analysis, with formal comparisons preceding the review by geographical location (1949: 284-293, 344, 349-350), Martti Haavio's 'motif-historical analysis', tracing narrative elements on a global scale (1967: 139-147), and Anna-Leena Siikala's study of historical stratification in relation to changing social contexts of practice (2012: 120-126). Methodologically, research across much of the twentieth century treated variants in isolation from situational and societal contexts, or only related them abstractly and intuitively, idealising traditions as textual heritage-objects (Frog 2013a: 20), while failing to take social factors into account when analysing variation. Societal factors only gradually came into focus (cf. Kuusi 1963). When performer roles and performance situations came into focus, it revealed the problem that nineteenth-century collectors of Finnic poetry were only interested in recording texts and tracing their origins, so they documented relatively little information about how the poems were learned and used (Virtanen 1980: 135). It also revealed that we cannot be sure of the exact content of the poems or precisely how they were performed in the centuries before they were recorded (Harvilahti 2004: 195). In the wake of the controversy of comparative methods, Siikala, in her seminal study on the historical stratification of mythic images in these traditions, did not explicitly mention her methods at all (2002a).

The Parallax Approach is a methodological framework developed by Frog that unites historical-geographic methods (plural) with current theories on folklore and additional methodological tools for diachronic analysis (2012a). Frog refines and formalises the unelaborated methodology of Siikala (2002a), complemented by Lauri Harvilahti's ethnocultural substratum theory (2003: 90, 110-115; see also Frog 2011). Traditions are viewed as evolving products of small-group communities in networks of the same and different cultures. HGMs produce a typological map of the features in a data-set of source material. The researcher constructs the dataset and determines

the features for mapping, which may be anything from formulaic lines of verse or narrative motifs to metadata such as performer gender, collector, geographical provenance, or recording date. The Parallax Approach adapts models from historical linguistics that can be applied to elements of tradition rather than just words of language. From the feature mapping of HGMs, this methodology builds probable relative chronologies of development for elements of tradition from formulae and motifs to genres and poetic systems. Unlike the classic Historical-Geographical Method, the Parallax Approach contextualises traditions in contemporary social processes, acknowledging their transmission through situated practices (Frog 2012a: 41). *The Golden Maiden* is preserved in a substantial number of variants collected from across different Finnic-speaking cultures, which makes it very suitable for this methodology (Frog 2012a: 47-50).

Importantly, this approach allows for elements within a tradition, such as a particular motif in an epic or line of verse in a poem, to have a distinct history: it may either have much more ancient roots than the poem or be a recent innovation. Rather than focusing on the reconstruction of an original form of a tradition, the focus is on developing a continuum of distinguishable developments for elements of a tradition, with the hope of being able to correlate developments across different traditions. Periods on such a chronology are approached in terms of what Harvilahti calls an ethnocultural substrate or substratum, a model of the full range of expressive resources available in a culture at a certain time, whether archaic or newly assimilated (see also Harvilahti in this volume). Historically, each substratum emerges from the one preceding it, characterised by continuities and discontinuities, innovations and the assimilation of new influences. The more distant from the present, the broader and more abstract these substratum models become (Frog 2012a: 54-56).

Comparisons are also assessed according to degrees of relative probability rather than presuming absolute knowledge of the past, and the researcher is responsible for balancing the qualitative value of individual items relative to quantitative assessment in the corpus (Frog 2012a: 47-48). The historical background of traditional items assessed is a relevant factor in a scientifically credible comparison. The framework can be applied to a large corpus from which individual items can be selected for a more detailed survey or analysed individually within the corpus as a context for considering the relationship to the tradition (Frog 2013a: 23-24). Complex patterns of correspondence are potential indicators of cross-cultural exchange, particularly where images or motifs are more or less specific to that context. Alternatively, indicators of change from an earlier substratum may be decisive when building a systematic continuum of historical developments.

3 Connections with other poems

The Golden Maiden is documented as an independent poem, but it was also commonly combined with other poems or poetic material. When it is connected with another poem in Estonia, this is with *The Creation* (*Loomine*, 9/95 variants), which reflects the Finnic tradition of the creation of the world from an egg (e.g. Kuusi 1963: 61-73; Frog 2012b: 222-226), and also with a poem of a smith (called *Viru sepp* or *Sepp*, 12/95 variants; see also Jaago 1993: 11). From 95 variants selected for this article, both of these poems appeared combined with *The Golden Maiden* in 7/95 variants. In one variant from Ingria, Soikkola (*SKVR* III, 1203), and in two variants from Viena, both from Kiimasjärvi (*SKVR* I, 157; I, 21), the poem is connected with fragments of *The World Creation* poem (Fi. *Maailmansyntyruno*). However, the data is too thin and fragmentary to draw any further conclusions on connections with Estonian tradition, especially when the poems from Viena also include other poem material not found in the Estonian or Ingrian variants.

In Viena Karelia, *The Golden Maiden* is often linked with *The Courtship Competition* (Fi. *Kilpakosinta*, 34/83 variants), a mythological narrative in which the gods or mythic heroes Ilmarinen and Väinämöinen compete for the maiden in the otherworld realm of Pohjola. In Ingria, the number of variants connected with *The Courtship Competition* is only 3/137 (*SKVR* III, 1199; *SKVR* IV, 574; *SKVR* IV, 1151); *The Courtship Competition* is not found at all in Savo or other parts of Karelia. However, other poems that tell about courting have been very popular in connection with *The Golden Maiden*. For example, *A Proposal from Hiitola* or *Hiisi* (Fi. *Hiitolasta/Hüdestä kosinta*) has been connected with *The Golden Maiden* in 7/146 variants from Karelia (e.g. *SKVR* II 106; *SKVR* VII, 440). In Ingria, it is connected with *A Proposal from Kontu* in 2/137 variants (*SKVR* V, 235; *SKVR* III, 642) and *A Proposal from Tuonela* in 4/137 variants (e.g. *SKVR* IV, 1355; *SKVR* III, 674). Another poem type that relates the finding of an unsuitable partner is *Incest* (Fi. *Rutsa*), in which a brother sleeps with his sister, which has been recorded as connected with *The Golden Maiden* in Ingria in 5/137 variants (e.g. *SKVR* IV, 1691; *SKVR* V, 364), on the Karelia isthmus in 5/146 Karelian variants (e.g. *SKVR* XIII, 401; *SKVR* XIII, 505), and one variant each recorded in both Aunus Karelia (*SKVR* II 247) and Viena Karelia (*SKVR* V, 364). However, these variants of the *Incest* poem mentioned above include rather fragmented examples. It seems that because of its theme, *The Golden Maiden* has been naturally connected with poems that have a theme of finding an (unsuitable) partner.

The Karelian poem is clearly linked to a cycle of mythological events connected with Ilmarinen and Väinämöinen, as shown by Matti Kuusi

(1949). Eino Kiuru argues that the poem was performed independently of other poems in Estonia (1990: 165) and asserts that its association with *The Courtship Competition* is a secondary development (1990: 191). Kiuru also stresses that the Karelian singing tradition was characteristically mythological and that is why *The Golden Maiden* became connected with the incantation *The Origin of Iron* in Karelia (17/146 variants) (1990: 181-182). However, *The Golden Maiden* could be performed as an independent poem in all regions, which is unsurprising for this tradition. When mythological poems generally did not survive in Estonian traditions, negative evidence of a connection with mythological epic is highly ambiguous. Contrary to Kiuru, the connection of *The Golden Maiden* with *The Creation* in Estonia links it to cosmogony and the mythological sphere. Also 12/82 variants from Viena that one way or another connect this poem to the Sampo Cycle may indicate a mythological reception of this poem (e.g. SKVR I₁ 535; SKVR I₁ 442; SKVR I₁ 24). Whether or not this poem originated with a mythological background will be considered in the current survey. At this stage, the poems or incantations with which *The Golden Maiden* has been connected in Finno-Karelian variants is an indicator that it was connected with mythology at least in the era of collection.

4 Location: the town of Riga as a tool for dating the narrative?

Locations identified in the poem have been important in discussing its history. A particular location in the real world is mentioned in Estonian variants: the town of Riga, or, to be more precise, its church and the cross atop it. The cross of Riga's church might seem like a suitable indicator for dating the poem. However, corresponding locations are absent from Finno-Karelian variants. E.N. Setälä argues that verses mentioning the cross on the church of Riga are a later addition to the narrative and cannot tell anything about its origins in Estonia (1932: 106). Furthermore, Väinö Salminen stresses that mention of the cross is also rare, and is found only on two or three variants recorded on Muhu Island (2/95 variants in the data analysed here) (1929: 183). Researchers so concerned with this feature had an aim of reconstructing the 'original' poem, and thus dismissed this feature as uninteresting when it was interpreted as 'late'. Within the Parallax Approach, this feature recovers interest as an innovation, potentially specific to Muhu Island, on the continuum of the evolution of the tradition's different forms.

5 The protagonist

A central question in assessing the history of this tradition is who fills the role of the smith. In Estonia and Ingria, the golden maiden is most often forged by a common village smith whereas in the north, throughout Karelia, the smith is identified as a mythological culture hero.

The identity of the forger varies across different parts of Estonia although he is described in several Estonian variants with an epithet 'ilus seppa ilma tark' (e.g. EKÜ H II 35, 616/9 (379); EKÜ H III 5; 702/4 (7); Leoke 5, 84 (16)) ('beautiful smith all-wise').¹ The smith has no specific identity in poems collected from Muhu Island (e.g. EKÜ H II 6, 668 (36); EKÜ H II 6, 692/5 (46)), or in the several variants from Saaremaa (e.g. EKÜ H II 35, 305/6; EKÜ H II 35, 312/4 (178)). On the mainland and in some variants from Saaremaa, the forger is the singer's brother (e.g. EKÜ H III 1, 707/11 (6); EKÜ E 48741 (6)), and the poem can be sung in the first person (e.g. EKÜ H III 1, 707/11 (6); EKÜ E 48741 (6)) so that the singer tells about her brothers and how one of them forges a golden maiden or how the smith has crafted her as a fiancée (e.g. EKÜ E 7871/2 (1); EKÜ E 40193). It seems that the gender of the poem's ego correlates with the gender of the singer, even though in some cases the singer may comment on happenings from the smith's point of view. There are a few Estonian examples in which the smith is named. Kaarle Krohn drew attention to these as identifying the smith as a mythic or mytho-heroic agent (1927: 82). The smith is once referred to as 'Lemming poega poisikene' (EKÜ H III 10, 431/3 (1)) ('Lemming, lad, dear boy'), a name potentially connected with mythology, equivalent to Finno-Karelian *Lemminkäinen*. He is also referred to as *Kalevi poeg* (EKÜ H II 9, 719/20 (99); EKÜ H II 11, 884 (9); EKÜ H II 12, 101/2 (55)) ('son of Kalev'), identifying him as an agent of mythic proportions. All three variants in the data of this study that call the smith *Kalevi poeg* are from the Väike-Maarja parish in West Viru county. In one example, his mythic status is also highlighted by calling him *Tagoja Jumalgi tarka* (EKÜ H II 1, 71/2 (85)) ('Forger, wise God'). In variants that tell of making a wooden woman, the protagonist and other settings are similar to those in which the woman is made out of metals. The difference is that the woman is made from different types of wood instead of different metals.

There is a great deal of variation in identifications of the smith in Ingria. In western and central Ingria, the smith remained unnamed or is sometimes called *Ilmar* or *Ilmarinen* and their local variations (e.g. *Ismaro*

1 In Viru, Harju, and Pärnu Counties as well as on the islands of Saaremaa and Muhu.

= *Ilmari*). He may be identified as the smith *Aatarlainen* or with a similar name (*Aartsalainen, Artsalainen, Atsalainen, Aatsalainen, Atsallainen*), who can also be called *Ilmaro* or *Ismaro* (e.g. *SKVR* IV₁ 555) (Krohn 1914: 337). Krohn has surveyed this name as well as other names that appear in different Finno-Karelian poems. Without reference to the original source, Krohn claims that ‘some singer’ has said that he or she could not explain who *Aatarlainen* was, but that might be a name for a family or folk (Krohn 1914: 337; *-lainen* is the normal affix attached to a place-name to identify a person from that place). However, the protagonist could be identified as the singer’s brother (*SKVR* III₃ 2855) and the song could be performed in the first person (e.g. *SKVR* III₃ 2855; *SKVR* III₁ 734). On the Karelia isthmus, in Ladoga Karelia, and in East Ingria, identification of the smith as Iivana son of Kojonen is a distinct regional development (40 variants, e.g. *SKVR* I₁ 80; *SKVR* I₁ 491; *SKVR* VII₁ 510; *SKVR* XIII₁ 401). This is the name of the protagonist of a poem about acquiring and murdering a bride, also found combined with *The Golden Maiden* in one variant from western Ingria (*SKVR* III₂ 1255). Identification of the protagonist as Jesus is also found with other Ingrian poems historically linked to vernacular mythology and is a potential indicator of the mythic status of the narrative at the time when this innovation took place.

The smith’s identity in Finno-Karelian variants connects the narrative with Ilmarinen and Väinämöinen, agents of the mythic sphere. In two variants from Kiuruvesi, northern Savo, the smith is named as Väinämöinen (*SKVR* VI₁ 40; *SKVR* VI₁ 41), which is associated with a distinctive local structuring of the mythology (see further Siikala 2012: 134). However, there are 27/83 variants from Viena that name Väinämöinen as the protagonist as well (e.g. *SKVR* I₁ 508; *SKVR* I₁ 658; *SKVR* I₂ 871). On the Karelian isthmus and in Ladoga and Aunus Karelia, the smith is most often Ilmarinen (e.g. *SKVR* II 108; *SKVR* VII₁ 505; *SKVR* XIII₁ 510; *SKVR* XIII₁ 515), whereas in Viena Karelia to the north, both Väinämöinen and Ilmarinen appear as the protagonist in different variants.

Within the Karelian material, Väinämöinen was asserted as a protagonist locally in relation to broader developments in the mythology, but all the variations seem to derive from a tradition of a smith called Ilmarinen or an equivalent name (Kuusi 1963: 157; Salminen 1929: 184). For example, Krohn argues that the smith was originally unnamed as in the Estonian tradition, situating the smith’s identification with Ilmarinen within Krohn’s broader (if quite dated) model of the historical development of Ilmarinen’s identity (1903-1910: 279, 250-251; 1918 I: 18). A difficulty with Krohn’s theory is that it suggests that the poem emerged as a secular folktale and advanced into the

mythology because the protagonist was a smith like Ilmarinen. However, Krohn and others have ignored the social implications of status as mythology, which makes the advance from secular to mythological status far more exceptional than the reverse. Even mythic themes tend not to maintain their status when they enter new cultural environments unless the new environment has a compatible framework for mythology or it is communicated with such a framework in religious change (Frog 2012a: 43-44, 46-47). When gods and cultural heroes of the Finno-Karelian tradition are largely secularised in traditions in Ingria and they or their counterparts had largely disappeared from Estonian traditions by the time the poetry was documented, it is far more likely that the narrative had an earlier mythological status in these regions that was lost owing to historical changes in religion and society. It is thus most probable that the protagonist was in earlier times a mythological agent. Generalising this agent as 'Ilmarinen' is nevertheless problematic because Ilmarinen of the Finno-Karelian traditions may have differed considerably from the corresponding agent current earlier in Estonia (e.g. Frog 2013b: 68-72).

6 Motivation

A motif common across the diverse versions of *The Golden Maiden* is that the smith is somehow ridiculed or seen as 'other' because he does not have a wife. In western Ingria, the smith is upset because he is ridiculed, and he forges a golden maiden to quieten his mockers (Hakamies 2012: 192). In Karelia, the smith starts to make himself a woman after a failed proposal attempt in Hiisi (e.g. *SKVR* II 109a; *SKVR* II 115) or there is no special motivation mentioned in the poem for forging the golden maiden; instead, the smith gets right down to work (e.g. *SKVR* XIII₁ 511; *SKVR* XIII₁ 515). Also, in the variants from Savo, the smith simply makes a forge out of his clothes and starts work (e.g. *SKVR* VI₁ 35; *SKVR* VI₁ 38), except in one variant from Kiuruvesi, which begins with another poem, *The Burning of Katriina* (Fi. *Katriinan poltto*) (*SKVR* VI₁ 41). In Estonia, the social need for a partner is more explicitly stated as the smith's motivation, or the person's motivation who needs a partner and whom the smith can help. Krohn went so far as to propose that this is the only feature that remained consistent across both Finno-Karelian and Estonian traditions while everything else evolved independently on either side of the Gulf of Finland (Krohn 1918 I: 174, 218). The consistency of this feature across regions makes it possible that it has continuity with an early stage of the tradition.

7 The material from which the woman is made

The majority of forms of *The Golden Maiden* describe the woman as wholly created from metal and a product of – or one might even say born from – the forge. However, within the traditions in Estonia there is a parallel form in which the woman is carved from wood and is ornamented with gold and silver (33/95 variants) (Krohn 1903-1910: 250-252; Jaago 1993: 27). Geographically, the maiden is made of gold and silver in the western islands and across the northern half of Estonia while the wooden maiden appears in some variants from the southern and northern half of Estonia.² However, in terms of material gathered for this article, it seems that the number of variants with wooden maidens is slightly higher than with maidens made out of metal (49 from wood / 46 from metal). The wooden-maiden tradition includes references to different kinds of wood. Even though the number of types of wood might vary, oak and alder are most common types from which the maiden is manufactured. They could be compared with gold and silver in the metal-maiden variants of this poem.

The wooden-maiden tradition exhibits several variations that allow it to be situated in relation to the broader tradition. At the level of verses, singers sometimes link the different types of wood to women's names through alliteration e.g. 'Haava puusta Annekesta, Maarja puusta Marikesta' (EKÜ H I 2, 407 (20)) ('from aspen wood to Anneke, from berry tree to Marike'). A more fundamental difference is that the smith only produces the maiden as opposed to a series of objects, and, as a consequence, wooden-maiden variants are often shorter. Wooden-maiden variants also lack some other motifs of the Estonian metal-maiden poems, such as the singer's three brothers or the motif that the smith becomes angry before making the golden maiden. Nevertheless, the broader narrative of *The Golden Maiden* is unaffected by whether the woman is made from wood or metal or by the variation of motifs associated with this (Jaago 1993: 26-27). As in the metal-maiden variants, imperfections of the maiden are acknowledged whether by asking others what she lacks or by lying next to her. Krohn was of the view that the wooden maiden developed from the tradition of creating the maiden from metal, pointing out that the verse in which she is said to be cold refers specifically to gold (1903-1910: 252; see also Krohn 1883: 478).

2 Five or more variants have been recorded in Parishes of Põlva, Valga, Viljandi and West Viru. Geographically these are concentrated in South Estonia, except for West Viru.

8 Preparing and working the forge

Several forms of the tradition specify the establishment of the forge. In Ingria and on the Karelia isthmus, the smith establishes the forge on a liminal strip of land (67/137 Ingrian variants; 3/146 Karelian variants). Estonian variants do not mention land strips at all. In a couple of variants from Karelia, Ilmarinen places his furnace near an iron-ore deposit (2/146 variants; *SKVR* VII₁ 501; *SKVR* VII₃ 436), which parallels other poems linked to working iron, such as the historioidae of the healing incantations *Blood-Stopping Words* (Fi. *Verensulkusanat*) and *The Origin of Iron* (Fi. *Raudan synty*) (Kiuru 1990: 176-177, 178). In Karelian and Savonian variants, Väinämöinen or Ilmarinen builds the forge from his own limbs and clothes (8/146 Karelian variants; 6/10 variants from Savo). Establishing the forge near an iron-ore deposit is a trope that could be easily transposed to contexts of establishing a forge, while the hero's creation of a smithy from his own body is strongly connected to Väinämöinen building a forge when trapped in the sorcerer Vipunen's stomach (Kiuru 1990: 170-171). Accounts of establishing the forge seem to have varied from region to region according to the tradition environment, allowing different forms to be distinguished as historical innovations without allowing access to probable earlier forms of this feature in the tradition.

The forge is initially worked by slaves in a variant from Pärnu as well as in Valga parish, Estonia (EKÜ H III 10, 377/8 (2); EKÜ H III 5, 702/4 (7)) and in one without a location (Leoke 5, 84 (16)). The word used in Estonia is *orjad* ('slaves'). In Finno-Karelian and Ingrian material, the slaves are mentioned in 62/137 Ingrian variants, in 63/146 Karelian variants and in 9/10 variants from Savo. Slavery is a social institution that could be considered relevant for dating (Krohn 1918 I: 218). However, the word for 'slave' (Fi. *orja*, Est. *ori*) was probably borrowed already in the Bronze Age (Joki 1973: 197) and this motif may simply reflect that ideal working conditions for an esteemed ironsmith included having assistants. Across Finno-Karelian variants, this motif is complemented by the slaves' insufficiency, after which Ilmarinen (or Väinämöinen) is shown as the only one who can successfully work the bellows (24/146 Karelian variants, 2/10 variants from Savo). This motif can also be found in 10/137 Ingrian variants that name the smith as Iivana son of Koljonen. Siikala asserts that this underlines Ilmarinen's might as a god and especially as a god of wind (Siikala 2012: 120-121, 122). This might suggest the mythic status of the protagonist, even though Iivana is not a mythic being. In this case, it would underline the poem's mythic status in Karelia.

9 Objects from the forge

Krohn suggests that the most suitable details for historical comparison are the things that come out of the forge before the golden maiden. In Estonia, the variants are more focused on how the smith's family gathers the materials needed. The importance of the forge and smith's skills are not in focus as they are in other regions. In Estonian variants, the smith becomes angry and forges a woman or someone asks the smith to forge a maiden/fiancée. The wonderful and strange objects that appear from the forge are not present in Estonian variants, which have more realistic features (cf. Loorits 1945: 170).

In Ingria there may be from one to three animals that appear from the forge before the golden maiden (rarely after). These animals are a horse/stallion, a cow/ox, a pig, or a rooster. When there is only one animal, it is most often the horse (9/137), when there are two animals, they are most often a horse and a cow (15/137), and when there are three, they are most often a pig, an ox, and a stallion (11/137). A motif in Ingria that is not found in Estonian variants is the appearance of a sledge (Fi. *saani*) from the forge before the golden maiden. It seems probable that an Estonian poem about making a sledge has been connected to the forging of a golden maiden in Ingrian variants (Krohn 1903-1910: 259; Loorits 1945-1946: 169-170).

In Karelian variants, the number of items is from one to three, but most often two (51/146 variants). The items are most often a stallion and a boat (7/146 variants), and in variants from Viena the items are stallion and sword before the maiden (36 variants from Viena/146 variants). Krohn interprets the latter variation as a later development that emphasises the contrasting nature of items and their qualities (1903-1910: 272-274). Finno-Karelian epics exhibit a number of features rooted in an Iron Age cultural milieu (Ahola 2014), which may also be the background of the sword, boat, and stallion as things that emerge from the forge before the golden maiden (Kuusi 1963: 250). The stallion appears in almost every variant across Finno-Karelian region (75/87 variants that mention the objects coming out of the forge), which suggests that this feature has been maintained as part of the poem across diverse communities and historical conditions.

In Finno-Karelia, the objects produced from the forge prior to the forging of the maiden are welcomed by the villagers or the smith's relatives, but the smith himself is not satisfied with them. In Viena, in the stallion-sword-maiden type, the smith is a mythic agent such as Vainämöinen or Ilmarinen and the objects that appear from the forge have almost supernatural properties: the sword kills as many men as possible (in 14/44 variants that mention sword), and is thus socially destructive; the stallion kills as many mares

as it can (in 14/44 variants that mention stallion in Viena the stallion acts inappropriately), rather than being reproductive. The motif of fantastic destructive potential seems to be geographically restricted to roughly the Viena region, suggesting it is an innovation of a later ethnocultural substratum that may also relate to other innovations in mythological poems of this region (see Siikala 2002b; Frog 2010: 73-74, 377, 389-391). However, the motif of a dangerous sword and stallion can also be found in Savo, in the variants from Kiuruvesi mentioned above (*SKVR* VI₁ 40; *SKVR* VI₁ 41). Otherwise the stallion is mentioned in 4/10 variants from Savo and the sword only once. This innovation may be an extension of the fundamental motif that the smith is somehow 'other' because he does not have a wife, as well as anticipating the unsuitability of the golden maiden as a bedfellow. The stallion and sword are as useless as the maiden is.

More widespread fantastic features of the forging process are that, in addition to gold and silver, the smith is also able to forge objects from animals such as a ewe and hare (8/146 Karelian variants, 2/10 variants from Savo, e.g. *SKVR* VII₁ 933; 3/137 Ingrian variants, e.g. *SKVR* IV₂ 1897). This motif is not found in Estonia. These materials may link this poem on an associative level with other epic poems in which a mythic hero manufactures objects from animals, such as *The Origin of the Kantele*, in which Väinämöinen produces the first harp (*kantele*) from a pike. In fact, three variants from Uhtua, in Viena Karelia, mention that a *kantele* (or *soittu*) is made at the smith's forge (*SKVR* I₁ 546; *SKVR* I₁ 548; *SKVR* I₁ 667). Such products advance the smith's work to a supernatural feat, reinforcing the probability that the identity of the smith was as a supernatural agent.

The objects that appear from the forge in Ingrian variants align more with the objects in Karelian variants than those in Estonian variants. The importance of the stallion is interesting to note and it seems that connecting the stallion with a sword is a development that happened especially in Viena.

10 The maiden

A consistent feature across all forms of *The Golden Maiden* is that the golden maiden is not suitable as a wife. In Estonia, the smith takes the maiden to the villagers and asks them what she lacks, and they respond that she lacks vital organs which allow her to fully engage in human social interaction, such as a tongue for speaking, a mind for thinking, a heart, and a spirit in her heart (Krohn 1903-1910: 247; e.g. EKÜ E 45792/4 (2); 8/95 variants). Within the narrative, a contrast develops whereby the villagers and the smith

have opposite views on each object produced. This contrast underlines the difference between the smith and his society, which is ultimately shown to have been correct. A dialogue about what the golden maiden lacks is never found in variants in Ingria or Karelia, and this may be a development particular to traditions south of the Gulf of Finland.

A consistent feature found in variants across Estonia (30/95), Ingria (30/137), Savo (7/10), and Karelia (64/156) is that the maiden is cold in bed, which the smith discovers after sleeping with her. In Savo, for example, this is described with the verses:

Se oli kylki kyllä lämmin, joss oli viiet villavaipat Se oli kylki kyllä kylmä, joss oli kulta kumppanina, (SKVR VI, 40)	The side was certainly warm, which was next to five blankets, the side was certainly cold, which was next to the gold
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This idea is also found expressed in equivalent verses in Estonian variants (30/95 variants), as in the following example from Viru parish:

mis oli külge kulla poole see oli külge külma poole mis oli külge vaiba poole, see oli külge sooja poole (EKÜ F 232a II 51 (32).)	where the side was next to the gold it was a cold side where the side was covered that was a warm side
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In Finno-Karelian (46/156), Ingrian (12/137), and Estonian (2/95) variants, this discovery is in many cases followed by a prohibition against making a woman from gold. The prohibition is more emphatic when it comes from a culture hero, but it also reveals an ideology in which even a culture hero can act foolishly when desperate for a wife, which simultaneously underscores the importance of marriage relations in society. A similar warning is often found in other narratives that tell about the manufacture of an artificial human being, which characteristically lacks something that is profoundly human (Hakamies 2012: 201-202; Looirits 1946: 176). This moral didactic conclusion of the poem has also been addressed in dating the poem. Kiuru views this rhetoric, its implicit order to raise a family, and what he sees as more general emotional concerns, as grounds to believe that the poem originated among women relatively late; from his perspective, the poem certainly cannot be from even as early as the thirteenth century, when Finland and Estonia were being brought into the Middle Ages through the Baltic Crusades (Kiuru 1990: 191).

Even though the smith is able to produce living animals, he cannot produce a living woman. The smith's discovery that a golden maiden is not a proper woman seems to belong to the basic core of the narrative. The maiden's defectiveness may belong to its earliest distinguishable substratum of narrative in Finnic cultures (Krohn 1924-1928: 76).

11 Historical connections with metallurgy?

The Golden Maiden describes a fantastic feat of metalworking and is thus dependent on that technology, which presents a potential *terminus post quem* for the establishment of the narrative (see also Frog in this volume). Kaarle Krohn used this to suggest a date in the Viking Age, which would also have been a time when groups in Estonia had close contacts with Finnic groups of north of the Gulf of Finland (Krohn 1918 I: 174). Looirts, on the other hand, proposed that the narrative had evolved in Finnic traditions for two thousand years, originating when metallurgy was first flourishing in Estonia, a time when it would have had a great impact on singers of poetry (Looirts 1946: 166-167). Frog contextualises *The Golden Maiden* as one of several mythological narratives that are probably connected with an ethnocultural substratum linked to the spread of iron-working technology (2011: 31; 2013b: 69-72). However, Frog emphasises that the substratum connected with iron-working also created conditions which would also allow relevant narratives to enter the culture and spread later, making the identification of the particular period of any single narrative problematic (2011: 28, 32). He also points out that the description of forging activity involves only placing things into the forge and removing them as completed products without hammering, a description which would be consistent with casting bronze. The story could thus potentially have emerged in connection with an earlier technology, whether in Finnic traditions or elsewhere, and only later received in connection with other mythology linked to iron-working (2011: 32; see also Frog 2013b: 69-72). Consequently, the connection with metallurgy alone is not valuable for dating the tradition.

12 Emphasis, interpretations and social significance

The Golden Maiden was not simply a story in the sense of a plot or text: it was told, retold, and adapted because it was meaningful for the people who sang it (Siikala 2012: 120-126). Regional differences may be indicators of

social interests or interpretations that have shaped the poem in a historical process of transmission. Estonian versions present dialogues about what the maiden lacks from being human. Verses representing the villagers' views and the smith's interactions with them form a prominent portion of the texts. This suggests the emphasis was on social views of the smith and his creation. In Ingria and Karelia, emphasis is laid instead on the description of forging. Although this places the emphasis on the feat of the smith (cf. Siikala 2012: 125), Siikala finds it of interest that the story appears to have increasingly been viewed as a fantasy tale in the post-medieval period; she considers that its original meaning was mythic, but that this aspect was gradually lost and transformed across the centuries and thus, especially in Estonia and Ingria, the poem emphasises relationships within villages and families (Siikala 2012: 126).

The potential meanings and significance of this tradition must be approached on the singing communities' own terms. For example, Kristiina Ehin sees the golden maiden as a symbol for the unattainable woman who is easily modified, submissive, and passive in the hands of her creator (Ehin 2002: 69). The stability of the relevant motifs might seem to support Ehin's view, but applying modern views of gender to pre-modern cultures easily becomes anachronistic, even if the approaches have potential to offer new perspectives. The communities were at least self-defined as Christian even where vernacular mythology was most vital. *The Golden Maiden* thus had potential to be interpreted through Christian frameworks. The prohibition against attempting to forge a woman of gold could thus have been interpreted in a similar way to the biblical story of the golden calf and the prohibition against worshipping false idols (Exodus 34). The smith's supernatural potential could be perceived in contrast to the Christian God's, who was responsible for the creation of human beings. This is never explicit in any variant, but such a Christian interpretation was possible for the tradition bearers. However, doctrinal distinctions between Christian and pagan penetrated Finnic areas at very different rates: in nineteenth-century Karelia, the Christian God and the celestial god of thunder had hybridised as *Ukko* 'Old Man' or *Jumala* 'God' (see Frog in this volume). In many regions, this God remained complementary to Ilmarinen and Väinämöinen rather than being viewed as belonging to a competing and mutually exclusive religious system. Although this story presents limitations to the smith's power, there was no corresponding creation story of human beings with which it was contrasted (and in the northern regions, Väinämöinen rather than Ukko/God was responsible for creating the world). Thus, interpretations of this narrative as asserting

a hierarchy of power between the Christian God and vernacular mythic agents should be viewed as potential, and perhaps as situational, rather than a stable part of the tradition.

Even where the smith's feats remained connected to the mythological sphere in northern regions of Karelia, the smith's creations are characterised as destructive to relationships rather than producing them. The crux of the narrative in all regions seems to centre on the issue of social integration through marriage, which even the most skilled mythic agent cannot resolve without interacting with other people. In this respect, the narrative is complementary to bridal-quest narratives like *The Courtship Competition*, in which a hero proves himself through an exemplar of exogamy. This crux is placed in tension with the smith's exceptional potential, which seems most likely to have been of mythological proportions at earlier stages of the tradition in all regions. It is from the changing social significance and interpretations of especially these features that the majority of variation in the traditions seems to derive.

13 Conclusion

The Golden Maiden must have evolved into different variants already during prehistoric times. The similarity in structure, motifs, and even some verses and groups of verses indicate close connections between the traditions from Estonia to northern regions of Karelia. Despite the cultural differences between the sedentary farming in Ingria and in Estonia and the mobile slash-and-burn cultivation in Finland and Karelia, *The Golden Maiden* remained quite similar across these cultural areas. The transformations of the poem can to some degree be reverse-engineered through cultural changes. For example, the impacts in Estonia and Ingria that resulted in the shift of the tradition to a women's singing culture appear linked to underlining the social network of the village and families in this song (Siikala 2012: 126; see also Harvilahti 2004: 209). These same processes are also linked to the eclipsing of vernacular mythology and its agents from traditions of Estonia and much of Finland, which also affected the Finnish Lutheran immigrant culture in Ingria. As with other mythological poetic material that survived in these areas, the mythological background of the poem seems to have been displaced and shifted to use with different social relevance as an entertaining story of the fantastic. The story is not found in a comparable form outside Finnic traditions, which makes a medieval or later loan from another culture highly improbable. In addition, scenarios

that a medieval or later secular narrative became identified with 'pagan' mythology as it spread north is less convincing than the converse, that during this period a 'pagan' mythological narrative became secularised as it spread south. When viewed across regions, variations in *The Golden Maiden* correlate with the historical changes in different regional singing cultures. The degree of identification with mythological agents and content in forms of this poem is consistent with changes undergone by a mythological narrative through the social and historical processes of the respective regions.

In earlier periods, the poem's protagonist appears to have been a supernatural agent, identifiable as Ilmarinen in the North Finnic traditions of Ingria, Karelia, and Finland, and presumably also as the corresponding god in traditions of Estonia, although this is unclear. The story seems likely to have been connected to other events and may have been part of a cycle, possibly connected with the cosmogony in some way. The contrast between the smith and comrades or a community seems to be fundamental to the tradition, and connected with his need for a bride. Variation in making the bride from wood or gold reflects an innovation, although it is unclear which has developed from the other. In trying to resolve his situation through metalworking, the smith produces a series of objects from the forge. Although these cannot be reconstructed, it seems more likely that one of these was a living animal, and that this fantastic element was changed in Estonian traditions; otherwise it would seem to be an arbitrary and counter-intuitive innovation in North Finnic traditions. The golden maiden was then discovered to be inadequate and cold by its creator.

If the poem's history extends back to any degree into the Iron Age, it would already have developed regional variations before the Middle Ages. The coherence of the tradition through Karelia, (with far less evidence) Finland, and its forms in Ingria is consistent with the tradition spreading with these languages. According to current opinion, this branch of Finnic (North Finnic) spread from Estonia across the Gulf of Finland to south-west Finland some time during the Iron Age (for discussion, see Frog and Saarikivi 2015). In the mid-eighth century, immigration to the Karelian isthmus and Ladoga region led to the emergence of Karelian culture, part of which spread to Ingria, producing the Ižorian language and culture (Frog and Saarikivi 2015: 88-98). Frog has elsewhere argued that the inherited mythology was radically restructured in the northern dialect of Proto-Finnic, effectively producing a new religion before this spread to Karelia (Frog 2013b; see also Frog in this volume). If the poem spread

with this language and religion, *The Golden Maiden* is more likely than not to already have been established in some form when the mythology was transformed. The markedly greater diversity of *The Golden Maiden* in Estonia, where traditions of making the maiden from metal and from wood are both found, is also consistent with the much greater language diversity in these areas (Frog and Saarikivi 2015: 69-70. 83-88). These considerations suggest that the tradition was established already well before the Viking Age.

Although it was observed at the beginning of this article that traditions of fabricating a woman or human being are widely found, Finnic traditions remain quite distinct among these: the woman is made using metal-working technologies, she is the last of a series of objects produced from the forge, and the final work is inevitably a failure. Frog has, however, proposed comparison with a Scandinavian tradition in which it is not a bride that is created but living hair of gold for Þórr's wife Sif (told in Snorri Sturluson's *Skáldskaparmál*, ch. 35). Shifting focus from the bride, Frog attends to the description of creation: as in *The Golden Maiden*, a mythic smith creates a series of three mythic objects, each of which is flawed; an assistant works the bellows, and each completed object is removed from the forge without hammering or other activity by the smith. This sequence is complex and exclusive to the narrative in each culture, and Frog situates it as one of a number of narrative cores linked to metal-working and associated with Scandinavian Þórr, the Baltic thunder-god Perkūnas/Pērkons, and Finnic Ilmarinen. The broader Finnic and Scandinavian narratives are distinct, but they both concern a female counterpart of the respective god. (Frog 2011: 31 and personal communication; see also Frog 2013b: 69-72.) In addition, one of the objects produced by the Scandinavian smith is a living animal (the boar of the god Freyr). The complexity of parallels and their exclusivity to a particular mythological narrative in each culture is unlikely to be accidental. If they are related, this would potentially be an indicator of an earlier substratum than could be accessed through comparison of the Finnic material alone, even if certain elements of such a plot can be construed. *The Golden Maiden* seems to have evolved with dialects of the Proto-Finnic language and spread with the associated oral culture already before the arrival of Christianity. Although its earlier history remains obscure, that history potentially connects with, or may even be rooted in, trans-Baltic contacts that resulted in mythological narrative material – if not whole narratives as such – being shared across Finnic and Scandinavian groups.

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Abbreviations

EKÜ = Eestimaa Kirjanduslik Ühing ('Literary Society of Estonia'). EKÜ's folklore collection is stored at the Estonian Folklore Archives. Digitalised materials available at: <http://www.folklore.ee/regilaul/andmebaas/> (accessed 15 December 2016).
 SKVR = *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot*, I-XV. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1908-1997.

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11 Local Sámi bear ceremonialism in a Circum-Baltic perspective

Maths Bertell

Abstract

The article deals with the preserved Sámi drums from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Sweden and their relationship to the written sources of the period. The main focus is on the bear ritual and its mythology and possible connection to the appearance of the drums. Pehr Fjellström tells us in his 1755 recollection of the ritual that there is a special connection between the bear and the drums. This is strongly verified, but the drum tradition also shows a clear regionality, dividing south from north. This result correlates with recent research on the development and emergence of the Sámi languages on the Scandinavian Peninsula in the Iron Age. The results are contextualised with the Baltic mythological discourse on bear motifs.

Keywords: Bear ceremony, Sámi mythology, Circum-Baltic, religious regionality

1 Introduction

The preserved Sámi drums from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are a precious first-hand source on indigenous Sámi religion. I will discuss how recent discoveries in linguistic and mythological research may relate to the drums of the seventeenth century and after. The timespan of the article will be from early in the Common Era to the eighteenth century, showing that the regionality of the drums may go back to the formation of what we today identify as Sámi ethnicity. I will then widen the discussion of the Sámi bear-hunt ritual and the drums to incorporate a Circum-Baltic perspective. The long timeframe will hence show the beginning and the

end of a long, slow process over the period covered by this book, as well as the processes within the geographical area of the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Bothnia.

The drums are probably the most well-known artefacts of the indigenous Sámi religion. They are also mentioned in the written sources, and Pehr Fjellström claims in his description of the bear ritual (1755) that the drums are closely associated with the bear-hunting ritual. I intend to show that Fjellström's text is corroborated by the preserved drums and the strong variation in regional expression.

2 The linguistic connection

Ante Aikio suggests that the Sámi language originated in the Lakeland district Finland and spread north; this would be a relatively late development occurring around AD 300-800, a time of great change in the region. Aikio suggests that the current Sámi languages stem from 'proto-Sámi' in southern Finland, moving north and mixing with 'palaeo-Laplandic' in Lapland, an unknown but most probably non-Uralic language. Here is where Sámi ethnicity, as we know it from historical sources, formed. This correlates with the 'archaeological invisibility' of the time period (Aikio 2012: 63). Aikio shows that it is problematic to identify language and ethnicity, which is central in the discussion of the development of the region as a whole during the Iron Age. Proto-Sámi, he says, may have been spoken in groups radically different from the historical Sámi. To speak about 'Sámi culture' is only possible when we have groups using Sámi language for in-group communication. Therefore, Sámi culture may not have existed before the Sámi language. This is of course true for other groups as well: culture is similar to language, and languages as we know them today have a relatively short history. Hence, no groups that exist today could have existed during the Stone Age (Aikio 2012: 66).

By using the evidence of place-names and loanwords, Aikio offers a model of Sámi linguistic development in which the Sámi ethnogenesis emerges over time. The loanwords in South Sámi and North Sámi suggest that there was a Sámi presence in Scandinavia during the first half of the first millennium AD. The loanwords are concentrated in connection with everyday matters, such as sea and seafaring, domestic animals, agricultural products, iron, the fur trade, marriage, and the family. Aikio argues that this tells us something about how these came to be a part of the Sámi languages. Most of them must have arrived through trade, since the Sámi are not likely to have been engaged in agriculture at this point, nor in gathering iron or

manufacturing iron products. Words connected to family and marriage point to intercultural marriages, which are also attested in later sources. These borrowings are not to be found in northeastern dialects (Aikio 2012: 77-78). Aikio continues to discuss possible unknown groups living in Lapland at the time, not speaking Sámi, but having elements of what later would be perceived as Sámi culture. The groups, probably numerous, converged, and the former shifted to speaking proto-Sámi. Aikio finds evidence for this in a large group of words of obscure etymology, mainly connected to reindeer and reindeer-herding. Another set of evidence is a group of place-names denoting natural places, such as rivers, lakes, fjords, and mountains. This would suggest that they are of great age (Aikio 2012: 86). Surprisingly, these words seem to be contemporary with the loan of Scandinavian words. Aikio dates them to around AD 500 (Aikio 2012: 87). Also, the proto-Sámi presence in southern Finland's Lakeland district is evident in the place-name material, and suggests a Sámi 'urheimat' in the area (Aikio 2012: 90-91). Taking these things into consideration, the Sámi migration into Scandinavia must have passed over the Gulf of Bothnia, with a separate development from a parallel movement to the north and north-east.

When is it possible to speak of a Sámi ethnicity? There is a problem, reasons Aikio, with identifying lingual borders with archaeological borders. There is reason to believe that the constitution of the societies may have involved several languages within the same material expression, though it is also possible that there was just one. We thus face difficulties in determining when Sámi ethnicity emerges (Aikio 2012: 102). Aikio ends his article by suggesting five phases in the development of the Sámi languages:

- 1 *The emergent phase*, during which Pre-Proto-Sámi emerged as a distinct language from the Finno-Sámic dialect continuum.
- 2 *The transformative phase*, during which major linguistic innovations transformed the language into Proto-Sámi.
- 3 *The dispersal phase*, during which the Proto-Sámi language broke up and early forms of Sámi spread over a vast area comprising the Finnish and Karelian Lakeland as well as Lapland.
- 4 *The diversification phase*, during which the Sámi dialect continuum diverged into many local Sámi languages spoken in Lapland and the Lakeland.
- 5 *The marginalisation phase* in medieval and early modern times, during which Lakeland Sámi languages became extinct as a result of the spread of Finnish and Karelian.

(Aikio 2012: 102-103)

Through toponyms, the movement of groups can be observed (Frog and Saarikivi 2015: 66-67). Frog and Saarikivi use an orienting principle they call *descendant-historical reconstruction* methodology, where each step in the reconstruction of a historical past must be based on the reconstruction of the more recent past. The linguistic data is used in a step-by-step method. To be able to achieve a result – a prehistoric map of a particular region – the methodologies of areal linguistics, linguistic taxonomy, palaeo-linguistics, and language contact must be combined with sources and data from bordering disciplines of a more historically oriented kind (Frog and Saarikivi 2015: 67-68). They also point out that today's view of ethnicity and mother tongue as closely connected is a fairly recent construct. Different kinds of mapping of languages and graphical expressions of lingual relationships may be deceptive (Frog and Saarikivi 2015: 68-69; see also Svonni *et al.* 2015). The diversity among languages shows a structure if mapped in their known historical dialectal varieties, thus adding a dimension of complexity when it comes to ethnicity and culture (Frog and Saarikivi 2015: 69-70).

At the end of the first millennium AD, the Scandinavian Peninsula and today's Finland and Karelia were inhabited by nomadic groups, without permanent settlements. These groups are hence not clearly defined in the written sources. They appear in the archaeological sources, which are still vague, but show that the cultural borders and the east-west trade route made groups blend together. This trade route opened early in the eighth century and is significant for the movement of groups in the area (Frog and Saarikivi 2015: 80-81). The Sámi may be well attested in the sources, but are nonetheless problematic to define as an ethnic group. In the medieval sources, the Sámi are usually referred to as *Finnar*, old English *Finnas*, medieval Latin *Finni*. This word later came to shift in eastern dialects of Old Norse to mean people from Finland, and Sámi came to be known as *Lappir*, later sw. *lappar*. In Ohthere (late ninth century) *Finnas* are distinguished from *Terfinnas* (*Ter-* also being used for Sámi in the Kola peninsula). Tacitus (late first century AD) mentions *Fenni*, and in post-classical geography, as later translated into Old English, there is also the compound *Scridefinnas*. These groups are often interpreted as speakers of an early variety of Sámi, but the names seem rather to denote nomadic fisher-hunter groups, rather than speakers of a specific language. As recent research has shown, the groups Tacitus mentions may be a little too early to be Sámi speakers (Frog and Saarikivi 2015: 81). As Aikio suggests above, the contacts between Sámi speakers and Germanic groups began around AD 200 at the earliest. In medieval sources, the Norwegians were in contact with *Finnar*, but as Frog and Saarikivi argue, these recollections seem more to have been a fixed literary image that does not seem to be completely accurate in its connection with ethnographic reality. In later Swedish sources,

Lapp is a label put on people depending on their livelihood, rather than their ethnicity (Frog and Saarikivi 2015: 81). This is also the case in Värmland in western Sweden, bordering on Norway, where *Finne* in tax annals is a person engaged in slash-and-burn farming methods rather than a person with Finnish ancestry. In these records, a person may shift from *lapp* to *nybonde*, and the other way around. This makes it likely that the mention of any group in the written sources is determined by occupation and way of living (Frog and Saarikivi 2015: 81). Our way of reading the sources seems to be based on anachronistic trains of thought, inherited from a western, colonial heritage, stemming from the birth of modern research in the nineteenth century.

The mobile groups mentioned by Aikio and also in the article by Frog and Saarikivi seem to have covered a large area on the Scandinavian peninsula, but probably moved in repetitive patterns with seasonal dwelling places. Their livelihoods were based on hunting, fishing, and gathering. By the end of the first millennium AD, most of these groups are likely to have spoken variants of Sámi, but in the late Iron Age, the borders between spoken languages are unclear (Frog and Saarikivi 2015: 83). Thus, the ethnicity of these groups may not be determined from a modern perspective, but must be discussed on the basis of these circumstances.

3 The written sources and their authors

The Sámi bear ritual is known from written sources from the late seventeenth century up to the twentieth century. The sources here are unique in that they describe the ritual under different circumstances and time periods, and we know the myth behind the ritual. Usually the sources offer either the ritual or the myth, but not both, or perhaps most frequently, only fragments. This is not only the case for Sámi pre-Christian religion, but in general for religions orally transmitted. The first to mention the ritual is Samuel Rheen in 1671 in the Lule Sámi district, and onwards to Paproth's informants in the twentieth century, but at that time only fragments and a few details remain of the concept (Rheen 1897 [1671]; Paproth 1964). Most researchers who have written about the bear ritual have limited their studies to the bear-hunt context. Paproth, for instance, has drawn parallels with Siberian traditions and shown the relationship to the east. Drake concentrates on the inner context of Sámi culture and the bear (see for example Paproth 1964 and Drake 1918). As a part of Sámi discourse through time and space, the bear complex also leads us further and may increase our knowledge and understanding of different traditions and regional variants of Sámi indigenous religion.

The bear ritual was a feast and an occasion for the entire village to celebrate – men, women, and children. The alder bark used for the chewing and ritual spitting has sometimes been considered to symbolise bear blood, given its red colour, in connection with the painting of symbols on the drumheads. This is one of many ways that drums are connected with the bear and the bear ritual.

In the early 1670s, the scholar Johannes Schefferus took up the task of documenting Sámi culture, religion, and economics. He collected material by sending out requests to the representatives of the Swedish Lutheran state church. Samuel Rheen answered the call and became one of the most important sources for Schefferus's *Lapponia*, published in 1673. Rheen's text is generally considered a very reliable source, but some questions around Rheen remain unanswered. We do not know if Rheen spoke or understood Sámi, nor how frequently he encountered the Sámi traditions in his profession as a preacher in Jokkmokk and Kvikkjokk. So even if his intention may very well have been good, the quality of his insights into Sámi culture and religion as a non-Sámi representing the church is hard to estimate. However, as far as we know, he did not re-use others' material, but collected his own (Rydving 1995: 20). As Louise Bäckman points out in the commentary to Pehr Fjellström's text from 1755, he himself admits to having read Schefferus's book, in which Rheen's account of the bear ceremony is quoted to a large extent (Bäckman 1981: 44-5). Fjellström also tells us that some of the practices described by Rheen are not known in the southern parts of Lappmark (Fjellström 1981 [1755]: 9-10). Fjellström, who came to Lycksele as a teacher, had good knowledge of the Sámi language and published a grammar, a dictionary, and a primer for children, as well as translations of several church-related texts such as the New Testament (Rydving 1995: 38). Knowing this, we may assume that both writers have an intention to write about a ceremony unique to their time and area.

4 Shamanism and bears

The Sámi religion has often been interpreted as a shamanistic religion. The definition of shamanism has been heavily debated, but it could be summarised as a religious practice in which an ecstatic religious specialist is central, working as a link between the human and the spirit worlds. During séances the shaman falls into extatic trance and operates as link between the supernatural and human realms (Tolley 2009: 68). Drumming and drums are an important part of many shamanic cultures, but it is not clear whether all of the drum owners among the Sámi actually were shamans or acted in a typical shamanic fashion.

5 Fjellström's description of the southern Sámi bear myth

Even though the ritual is mentioned in several places over time, it is Fjellström who offers the most detailed description of the myth behind the ritual. In the myth, a girl is shown the door by her brothers and is forced to spend the winter in the woods. She seeks shelter in a bear's lair, spends the winter together with him, and ends up marrying him. The marriage is also blessed with a son. The boy grows up to be a hunter; the bear has marked himself with a brass ring to make it possible for his son to recognise him and not kill his father by accident. When the bear feels that age is hindering him, he decides to die by the bullets of his wife's brothers. When spring arrives, he lets himself be tracked down and killed by the brothers. His wife sits close by as the brothers take care of the dead bear, skinning it and boiling the meat. She covers her face and eyes with a piece of fabric and only glances every now and then towards the brothers and the slain bear husband. As we shall see below, this set of motifs connects the myth to a larger complex.

6 Fjellström's description of the southern Sámi bear-hunting ritual

In the ritual, the bear is linked with alder, blood, and brass, and connects to an almost universal concept of blood as a powerful substance, also found among other peoples (see Edsman 1994; Hagberg 1937). The hunters bring the bear to the village and the bear is treated with great respect. The bear is considered dangerous to the women, who may only glance at the animal through a brass ring. When the hunters approach the village, the women are made aware that they have shot a bear, and as they enter the camp, they are greeted by the women, who spit in their faces with chewed alder bark mixed with saliva into a reddish-brown substance. They protect themselves with brass rings. Fjellström writes:

När de då skola se på björnkarlarne, skier det ej med upptäckt ansikte, utan de taga hvardera en mässing ring, den de hålla för ena ögat, genom hvilken de se, och i det samma spruta de tuggad ahlbarck alla björnkarlar i ögonen, så ock på hundarna: De hafva ock tilförne besprängt och krossat sig sielfva i ögonen med ahlbark. Efter denna bestänckelse stoffera och pryda qvinfolken alla karlar med mässings ringar, och länker af mässings käd på tråd fästade, dem binda de på karlarna om halsen, ena handen och ena benet inom böxerna, detta kallas Kaltek. (Fjellström 1981 [1755]: 21)

When they see the bear hunters, they do not cover their faces, but they each take a brass ring and hold it in front of their eye and look through it. At the same time they spit chewed alder bark in the face of the men and at the dogs. They have also stained themselves in the faces with the alder bark. After this the women decorate the men with brass rings, and brass chains fastened on strings around their necks, one of the hands and one of legs, inside the trousers, which is called Kaltek.

Both men and women are coloured by the alder-bark mixture, as well as the dogs. The bear is cooked and eaten in ritual ways.

In his 1755 text about the Sámi bear ritual, Pehr Fjellström mentions a connection between the bear and the drum. In the ritual, small brass rings and chains play an important part as a protection for women against the power of the bear.

dock bortlöses först de mässingsringar och kädje-länkar, dem de nu ej få tillbakas, utan förvaras at sättjas såsom prydnung och hjälpemedel, vid spåtrumman. (Fjellström 1981 [1755]: 21)

however, the rings of brass and the chains are taken off, and they do not get them back, but they are kept to be put at the divination drum as decoration and help.

The brass details are not only put on the drum as a witness of bear rituals, but also seem to say something about the drum's power. It is obvious that the bear and the drum have a special relationship on several levels.

Fjellström's account is partly corroborated by other southern sources. Schnitler, for instance, writes in 1742 that in Tydalen in Sörtröndelag the drum was 'behængt med Ringe og nogle Fugle-Fjære' ('adorned with Rings and a few bird feathers') (Schnitler [1742], in Edsman 1994: 75). In a slightly younger source from 1775 we find a variant in which the reindeer oxen dragging the bear body home are also stained with the alder bark:

När de renoxar är hemkomna, som dragit björnen, hängs på dem ullgarnsändar, färgade med albark på tre ställen. Besynnerligt nog, att tretalet har varit och är mycket i bruk även hos lapparna. Och sedan detta tecken är hängt på oxarna, sjunger kvinnfolken denna sång: Karlarna färgar de renoxar, som dragit hem björnen, med albark, tuggad i en skål, och gör röda ränder på dem, i huvudet, på halsen, litet nedanför bogarna, och än bättre bort mellan bogarna. Under det att

lappgubbarna har att syssla härmed, sjunger kvinnfolken denna visa:
[...] (in Edsman 1994: 75)

When the reindeer oxen who have dragged the bear have arrived at home, they are decorated with wool yarn, coloured by alder bark in three places. Peculiarly enough, the number three has always been in great use among the Sámi and still is. And when this sign is hung upon the oxes, the women sing this song: [...] The men colours the reindeer oxen who have dragged the bear home with alder bark chewed and put in a bowl, they make three stripes upon them: at their head, the throat, the shoulders and a little further down. While the Sámi men do this the women sing this song: [...]

Brass from the drum is also used as powerful amulets in other circumstances, as told by Lundius in 1674-1679 in Lycksele, Åsele Lappmark:

De förgiöra och hwar annars not till lika att han icke kan få fisk i det de sätia i noten 3 läncker eller 4 af ett mässingkiöd för den andra som de bruka på trumman eller ett hufwudhår. Wid desse twenne ting de äre i noten kan de inga fiskar få eller bekomma. (Lundius 1905 [before 1700]: 19)

They [the Sámi] destroy other people's nets and make it so that they cannot capture any fish, by putting into them 3 or 4 links from a chain of brass from the drum or a piece of hair from the head. When these two things are in the net, they cannot catch or lure any fish.

A court record from Åsele from 1689, in connection with collecting drums, tells that a Sámi, Pehr Olofsson, delivered a drum with 'åthskillige knyten, hwar wthi war håår af Allehanda slagz diur som skutne och fågne warit' ('several bundles, in which there were hair of all kinds of animals that had been shot or captured'). Another Sámi, Pehr Jonsson, gave the court a drum onto which he had 'bundit en heel hop med Biörnpesar dhet han giordt effter fadrens befallningh' ('tied a whole bunch of bear furs the way his father had requested') (Södra Ångermanlands domböcker, Riksarkivet, Stockholm).

Tin tacks are said to be nailed to the drum according to how many bears have been killed thanks to the prophesies from that particular drum. However, Fjellström does not mention them at all, and only one source tells us about this. The source is from the first half of the eighteenth century. It says:

De smaae Tinn-Nagler, paa den anden Ende af Ovalen i Træet findes ind-drevne, viiser hvor mange Børne efter denne Runne-Bommes prophetie ere fældede. (Randulf 1903 [1723]: 67)

The small tin nails that are found driven into the other end of the wood show how many bears have been caught thanks to the prophecies of this drum.

Even though this is an isolated statement, similar customs have been observed in connection with bear hunts: tin tacks or cuts in rifles or knives for each bear. Manker discusses a possibility that the tacks were thought to empower the drum for each bear, as with the pendants (Manker 1938: 296).

7 Samuel Rheen's description of the central/northern Sámi bear ritual

The drum is only mentioned once in connection with the bear ritual in Samuel Rheen's account from 1671 from Lule Lappmark. When the bear is to be located, the hierarchy of the Sámi community decides who will use the drum for divination:

Först skall den som förnämst och konstigast trumslagaren är, slå på trumban och see till om the skole fåå biörn. (Rheen 1897 [1671]: 43)

First shall the one who is the noblest and most skilled person hit the drum and see if they will get a bear.

When a bear is located, the order of the party is decided by the successful diviner. The account does not tell us what happens if the divining person fails, but hints that the next in rank may get to try the drum:

lappen som hafwer Ringat biörnen skall gåå allfremst, och den skall hafwa een kiap I handen på huilken een Messingz Ringh är bunden. (Rheen 1897 [1671]: 43)

the Sámi who has found the bear shall go in front, and shall carry a stick in his hand to which a brass ring is tied.

As in Fjellström's account, the reindeer involved in transporting the animal to the village is also 'polluted' and may not be in close contact with women:

Men medh den Reen som drager Biörn, må ingen qwinnos pehrsson ååka på dett åhret. (Rheen 1897 [1671]: 44)

But with the reindeer that drags the bear shall no female person travel in that year.

In the next passage we get several interesting details. As in Fjellström's account, the brass ring and the alder bark juice are evident, and this time connected to blood:

Sedan biuda hustrorna sina Män i sin kotta, men intett fåår någon mans pehrsson ingåå igenom den rätta dören, uthan the rijfwa ett hooll baak påå kottan, ther koxar han in som biörn Ringatt hafwer, huilken blifwer af Ahlbarck, som een lapp hustru i sin mun tuggat hafwer bestänck, dhet som således tillgåår. Een af Lapphustrorna håller tillsamman sitt wänstra ögha, och för sitt högra Öga håller hon een Messingz Ringh, såsom man syftar till måls medh een byssa, och spottar så i ansichtet af Ahlbarckz safft lijka som medh blodh, på den lappen som först inkoxar och inkommer. (Rheen 1897 [1671]: 44-45)

The wives invite their men into their tent, but no male person may pass through the regular door; instead they tear a hole in the back of the tent, where he who has found the reindeer peeks in, and gets sprinkled with alder bark, which a Sámi wife has chewed in her mouth, as is needed. One of the Sámi wives closes her left eye and holds a brass ring in front of her right, as when you take aim with a rifle, and then spits alder-bark juice, which is the same as blood in the face of the Sámi who first peeks in and enters.

Brass is used to protect the participants from the bear's powers, or to keep them under control. As Rheen continues, brass is also used during the preparation of the meal. In this passage, it becomes even more apparent that the brass keeps the bear's power under control and that the amount of brass is regulated for each bear:

doch måste alla kiärill hwar uthi flåttet sijlas, wara medh messing beslagne; Ähr thet een biörn som dräpin är skall kiärrillet wara beslaget medh ett stycke messing, men äro flera Biörnar dräpne, skole och flera stycken wara på kiärrillet slagne. (Rheen 1897 [1671]: 45)

but all vessels in which the fat is filtered must be clad with brass; if there is one bear that has been killed, the vessel must be clad with one piece of brass, but if there are many bears killed, the vessel must be clad with many pieces.

But the brass is not connected with the drum, and no recollection of keeping track or commemorating the bears killed is mentioned at all. The closest we get to the rings put on the drum in Fjellström's account is this:

Den samma hustron skall söma på klädhe så manga kors af teenrådth, efter Biörnernes taall som dråpos, huilka hon skall hängia på alla the lappars halls, som hafwa warit medh at dräpa Biörnerna, desse bem:te kors skohle lapparna låtha hängia på sine hallssar alt in till aftonen på tredie dagen emoth Sohlenes nedergångh. (Rheen 1897 [1671]: 45-6)

The same wife shall sew tin-thread crosses on a piece of fabric, equal to the number of bears killed, and hang the fabric around the necks of the Sámi who have participated in killing the bears, and these crosses mentioned should be carried around their necks until the evening of the third day when the sun sets.

But what happens to those pieces of fabric after the ritual is never told. The connection with a common practice in hunting rites is present in Rheen's account, when the unbroken bones are gathered and buried:

När kiöttet är förtärdt, sambla the alla benen tillsammans, them the icke sönderslå, uthan them alla nedergrafwa. (Rheen 1897 [1671]: 46)

When the meat is eaten, they collect all the bones together, the ones they do not break [possibly: the ones they are not allowed to break], and bury them.

To summarise, the Rheen text is clear on the connection between alder, bears, and brass, but differs from Fjellström in the relationship between the ritual and the drum. This could be a matter of north-south variation, since traditions in rural societies tend not to change this drastically over a period of 85 years, which is relatively short, and all we have here are two examples (cf. Tarkka 2013: *passim*).

Baardsen says in his account from Finnmark in 1627 that 'en Klov af alle de Slags Dyr, her er i Landet at bekomme, som hænger omkring paa

samme Bomme' ('a claw of all kinds of animals there are in this country hang on the same drum') (Baardsen 1888 [1627]: 100-1). Niurenus states some time before 1645, unfortunately without specifying a location, that claws and bones from all kinds of captured animals were fastened to the drum (Niurenus 1905 [before 1645]: 21). Continuing into the eighteenth century, Isaac Olsen writes about a shell drum from Finnmarken that he says has 'ad skillige messing prydelser' ('several brass adornments') 'og hun skal være prydet, med messing kiæder og Ringer alt om kring [...] som skal give skrald og klang naar de slaar paa Runebommen' ('and she shall be adorned with brass chains and rings all around [...] that shall make noises and sounds when the drum is struck') (Qvigstad 1910: 43). In Finnmark, Norway, Knag says about Anders Poulsen's shell drum, no. 71: 'Ved Enderne af den hænger et Ræveøre, noch et Ræveøre, et Rævetryne og en Ræveklo, som han siger skal være Prunket paa Runebommen' ('by the ends hangs a fox ear, another fox ear, a fox nose and a fox claw, which he says adorn the drum') (Knag 1903 [1693]: 71). Forbus writes in 1727 in Torne Lappmark that when a woman came in the way for a drum, a small sacrifice must be made: 'med offer försonas och med begåfning til Laptrumman af litet stycke silfwer, half elr en hel dals wärde' ('to be reconciled with a small offering and adorn the drum with a small piece of silver of a half or whole *daler's* worth'). Wegelius tells us about circumstances in Torne and Kemi Lappmark during the period 1726-1757:

Ringar hafwa bordt till trumman skänckas hwilka sedan blifwit hängande omkring samma trumma. Så hafwa ock de trummor, som till sådant bruk ofta blifwit nyttjade funnits med ringar af åtskillig metall omhänge. (Kungliga Biblioteket: M 37:4. Wegelius Beskrifning om Lapp-Trumman)

Rings should have been given and hung around the same drum. This is also the case with the drums that have been used for such purposes, they have been adorned with rings of much metal all around.

Knud Leem contributes the following in 1767, without any information on location, but probably from the Alta area, where Leem had his position:

inde i den sidder en Hob Baand, fæstede med sine øverste, men hengende løs og ned med sine nederste Ender, hvortil Messing-Ringe, samt andet mere, som andre Lapper have foræret Ruune-Bommen til Zirat, og maskee tillige, paa det at, formedelst Ringene en større Larm kunde opvekkes, ved Ruuningen ere anhæftede. (Leem 1767: 464)

in it there is a bunch of bands, fastened in their upper ends, hanging loose with brass rings in the lower end, and other things that other Sámi have given the drum to Zirát, and it may be that cause more noise when the drum is played.

The same year as Leem, but with no indication from where, Jessen gives us the following account from the Norwegian Lappmark: 'naar Dreng- og Børnene oppnaaede Skiels Aar og Alder, hengte de det ved deres Rune-Bommer, som en kraftig Ting' ('when the boys enters manhood, they hang it (a *Nabma-Skiello*), a baptismal gift, usually a ring or something similar you get when you are child) onto the drum as a powerful thing') (Jessen 1767: 37). Nensén has received information from an old Sámi woman that silver pieces (*silb-libja*) were fastened around a drum (Drake 1918: 358).

The inference from this short survey must be that the difference between these groups of written sources lies in the missing connection between the bear-hunting ritual and the drum in the north. The sources do speak about empowering the drum with hunting trophies, but do not seem to be connected to a particular ritual, and additionally the trophies are not as evident as on the preserved drums as in the southern parts of the Sámi area.

8 The drums and their origin

In 1938 and 1950 Ernst Manker, the chief antiquarian at the Nordic Museum in Stockholm, published two huge books on the preserved Sámi drums. These very informative volumes contain photographs and drawings of the drums, not only showing the famous drumhead figures but also the drums in their full splendor, with beautiful carvings and ritual paraphernalia. There are several photographs of each drum, which give a valuable overview of the preserved drums. Manker has included all the information possible on the drums and also added maps of their origin. Each drum has its own history and has found its way to the Nordic Museum in a different way. This adds possible uncertainty to the material, and I will comment on each case of interest. The drums nevertheless make it possible to see character traits for different regions and possibly help us to understand the internal differences in Sámi religions and to approach the written sources from the officials of the church in both Sweden and Norway in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The drumskin pictures are a classic problem in the Sámi history of religion, since only two drums are commented on by their owners, and in addition to this, one of those drums bears little resemblance to any other of the preserved drums. But the drumskin quite clearly follow regional patterns and different traditions and styles. Basically, none of the preserved drums has been manufactured in a vacuum; even though each drum is individual in its appearance, it relates to its surroundings. It has been argued that the drums were tailor-made to fit their user, but this is contradicted by the fact that a drum was considered to grow more powerful with age. This does not exclude the possibility that each new owner interpreted an inherited drum differently, to fit his reality and needs. It also sheds light on the main problem of the drum pictures: how the owner interpreted them and how we interpret his drum. I write his drum, because this is an all-male affair. No drums are known to have been owned by women. Even though we see patterns and traditions from drum to drum, we cannot be positive about the interpretation in all cases, or rather, in most cases. Pictures in general are of an elusive character, but tempting to interpret. We may recognise a reindeer, or several reindeer. But what are they: herded animals, sacrificial animals, or divine apparitions of celestial entities? The main focus of this article is not the drumskin pictures, but tin tacks in the drum frames and brass pendants attached to the drum frame as traces of the bear ritual.

9 Patterns and possible regional differences in the preserved drums

In the following, I discuss whether it is possible to detect the rings and chains of brass on the preserved drums and what can we learn from this, as well as other ways of decorating the drums. The drums presented below each have connections to the bear, leaving ritual marks on them. They either have pendants or tin tacks, symbolising captured bears. The pendants connect to the aforementioned ritual, but the tacks do not. The pendants also show greater variation than is mentioned in the written sources. Drums not included in the table are not considered in the analysis.

Each of the 71 preserved drums considered 'genuine' by Manker is thoroughly described and pictured in his 1938 classic *Die lappische Zaubertrommel*. I will present the drums with pendants to see if there is a correlation between the written sources and the drums. The drums without any form of pendants will be left out. This leaves us with 28 drums to examine.

10 Drums with decorations that differ

Most of the drums follow a certain pattern, which can be seen in the table below, while some have characteristics that make them more special.

Drum 41 is of unknown origin, but the shape and handicraft of the drum points to Åsele. An unusual detail is the wooden lid that covers the back of the drum with only a centre hole and no traditional handle, only a thin piece of wood inside the hole. Manker consider the handle too weak for such a heavy drum. A few pendants are attached to the top through holes in the lid. The pendants include a brass knob and a brass plate. There are no bear tacks. The painting on the drum is of a peculiar but not entirely unique style. Reuterskiöld has his doubts about how genuine the drum is, but Manker points to details in the manufacturing that point to true Sámi craftsmanship. It is uncertain whether the drum was meant to be used, or if it was commissioned by someone for other reasons (Manker 1938: 669-71.; Reuterskiöld 1927: 19).

The drum pictures on no. 42 distinguish it from the other drums. In a unique style and without the expected sun cross in the middle and without the finesse of other drums, this drum gives an impression of being sketchy and half-done. But it is clearly a finished and used drum we have here. It bears clear marks of drumming and is also patched in the top right part (Manker 1938: 676-7). This is definitely a real drum of substantial age and is most likely from the south Sámi area even though the frame construction and the style of the drum figures differ from other drums.

Drum no. 42 is the drum that most clearly carries rings of brass on its pendants. Its history and age are more uncertain; it was bought as late as 1911 by O.D. Hanson in Östersund. The appearance of the drum makes it stand out among the other drums in general. The form is not the usual egg shape but rather irregular. The drums are usually made of bent pine-wood planks, but this one is not. It is rather two pieces cut out of an irregular block and put together with wooden nails. On its back, the drum carries 20 pendants with several straps; 41 pieces of metal: 9 copper plates, 30 made of brass and among them 11 rings, and three bones from bear and fox. In addition, there are several pieces of other objects of brass and a few made of iron (Manker 1938: 683). There are no bear tacks.

Drum 46 is a different kind of drum from the aforementioned. It is more robust and is not put together in the same way. It is made from one piece of wood, carved as a bowl with holes in it, with artistic woodwork. While the drums above are made from pine, this one is made from fir. It is very small, only 24.4 x 17.4 cm and almost round in shape. It is 7.5 cm deep. The

paintings on the drum hide are vague and hard to grasp. It has five brass pieces and brass pointer fastened in the triangular wholes by leather straps. It is probably from the northern part of the Åsele district, or the Sorsele district. There are no bear tacks (Manker 1938: 706-8).

Drums 48 and 62 are of the same kind as drum 46, but with drumhead pictures pointing further north towards Lule Lappmark. They do hold brass chains (48) and brass rings (62), but these are fastened to the wood holes in a pattern. This probably means that they were attached to the drum with a different purpose from on the other drums. On those two, the brass ornaments are more likely to make a rattling sound while playing, something that would not be possible on the south Sámi drums. The differences between the northern and southern tradition are considerable, in both drum pictures and in the frame. This also suggests differences in how they were used.

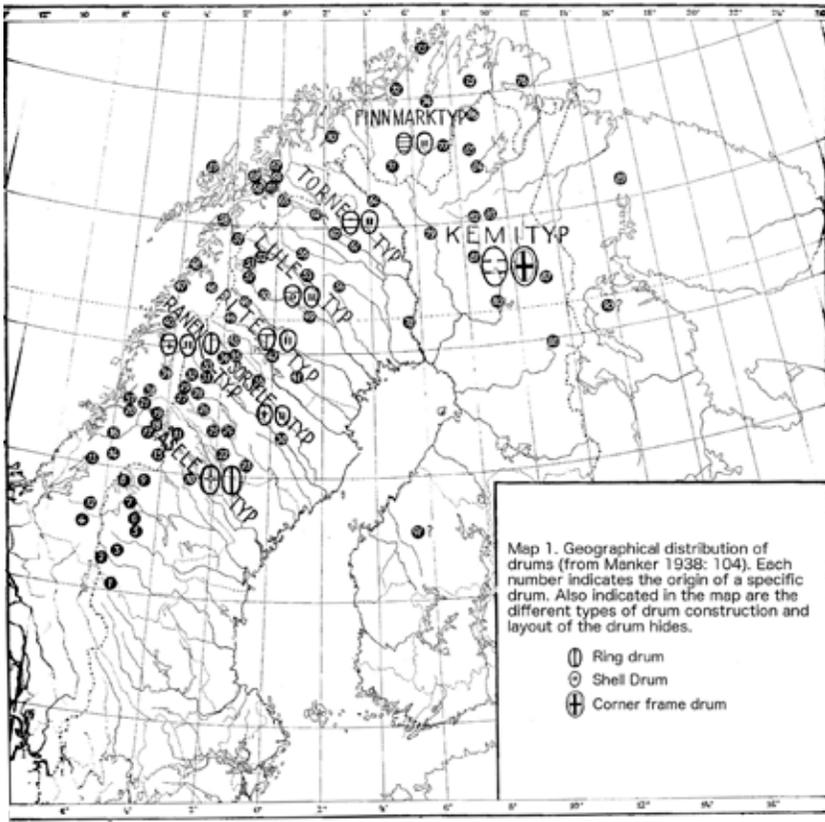
Drum 52 carries five bear claws and two bear teeth as pendants. The drum stems from Ranen, the Norwegian side of the Lule Sámi area. In the table below, only the drums with pendants or drums within the expected pendant area are commented on. The shell drums do not carry pendants or bear tacks.

Table 3 The drums from Manker (1938) used in this study, numbered from south to north, with date of first mention and indications of type of decoration

Drum no. (year first mentioned)	Rings	Plates	Chains	Animal parts	Bear tacks	Other
1 (1688)	–	–	–	–	–	No traces of pendants
2 (1725)	–	X	–	–	–	–
3 (1725)	–	X	X	–	X	–
4 (1725)	–	–	–	–	X (holes only)	–
5 (1725)	–	–	–	–	–	No traces of pendants
6 (1724)	–	–	–	–	X (7)	–
7 (1725)	–	–	–	–	X	–
8 (1696)	–	–	–	–	–	Fabric
9 (1725)	–	–	–	–	–	Holes for pendants, but only one remains
10 (1867)	–	X	X	–	X	–
11 (1725)	–	X	X	–	X (6)	–

Drum no. (year first mentioned)	Rings	Plates	Chains	Animal parts	Bear tacks	Other
12 (1761)	-	-	-	-	-	Holes possibly for pendants
13 (1725)	-	X	-	-	X (6)	-
14 (1879)	-	-	-	-	-	Only traces
15 (1725)	-	-	-	-	X	-
16 (1725)	-	X	-	-	-	-
17 (1867)	-	X	X	-	-	-
18 (1725)	-	-	-	-	X	-
19 (1725)	-	X	X	-	X (2)	-
20 (1723)	-	X	X	-	-	-
21 (1725)	-	-	-	-	X	-
22 (1916)	-	-	-	-	X	-
23 (1725)	-	X	-	-	-	-
24 (1725)	-	X	X	-	X (2 holes only)	-
25 (1725)	X	X	X	-	-	-
26 (1725)	-	-	-	-	-	Possible holes for Pendants
27 (1725)	-	-	-	-	X (2)	-
28 (1725)	-	-	-	-	X (3)	-
29 (1725)	X	-	X	-	X (5)	Yarn
30 (1723)	X	-	-	Bear blood?	X	-
31 (1739)	X	X	X	-	X	Coins
32 (1795)	-	-	-	-	X	-
33 (1793)	-	-	-	-	-	Only remnants
34 (1831)	-	-	-	-	X	-
35 (1725)	-	-	-	-	X	-
36 (1869)	X	X	X	-	-	-
37 (1725)	-	X	X	-	X (7)	Blue fabric, Yarn
38 (1729)	-	X	-	3 bear penis bones	X (19)	-
39 (1730)	X	-	-	4 bear penis bones	X	Yarn
40 (1725)	-	-	X	-	X	Brass pointer
41 (18th c.)	-	X	-	-	-	Brass and tin balls
42 (1911)	X	X	-	3 bear penis bones 1 fox penis bone	-	-
46 (1725)	-	X	X	-	-	-
52 (1710)	-	-	-	Bear claws and teeth	-	-

Map 3



When the distribution of drums is compared as in the table above and the following map, it is obvious that the ritual mark on the drums with pendants is a clearly southern tradition. The ritual tradition of accrediting the drum with bear tacks seems to be from the same area. This is, as far as I know, not mentioned in the sources. There may be several reasons for this. Firstly, the tacks are small and not very eye-catching; secondly, the tacks indicate the efficiency of the drum. Therefore, they might not have been spoken of much, especially in circumstances where Sámi men were interrogated by the church. It is interesting to note that there seems not to be a clear correlation between the pendants and the tacks: we have examples of drums with tacks but no pendants and the other way around, as well as drums with both or with neither from the same area. The frame drum dominates in the southern parts, and exclusively in the pendant and tack traditions.

11 The Circum-Baltic perspective

As in the Sámi myth about the young woman above, the bear has been venerated in several places in the Baltic region, but to a larger extent in the east. Bear ceremonialism probably dates far back in these Sámi and other Uralic groups, with a long continuity from Uralic/Finno-Ugric cultural heritage and possibly pre-dates the Sámi on the Scandinavian peninsula (Frog 2014; Kuusi 1963: 41-51; Honko 1993; Pentikäinen 2007). In general, the bear's resemblance to a human, standing up when fighting, and its hibernation in a cave have led to several myths about humans and bears holding a special bond. The motif of the girl marrying a bear is widespread in northern Europe, not only amongst Sámi and Uralic groups. This image of the bear is original, and not shared with other predators, such as the wolf or wolverine. The bear is believed to have been able to understand human language, but not able to speak. The bear 'mumbles' and seems therefore humanlike and with a 'personhood', more so than other predators (Frog 2014: 387). Variations of the hunting ritual contain ideas of kinship between humans and bears and ritual weddings between the slain bear and a member of the community. This would make the bear a part of the community and, as such, also an ancestor (Frog 2014: 387; Honko 1993: 126; Janhunen 2003: 13-14; Pentikäinen 2007: 43-129).

In the Åland Islands in the Baltic Sea, bears have always been lacking, but despite this fact, the animal seems to have a mythological importance. In Iron Age graves, so-called clay paws have been found. The clay paws, baked at low temperatures, have been considered to represent bears' paws. The absence of bears could thus increase interest in the mythological creature. The bear's position is, however, quite different in Germanic religion from Uralic. It is not integrated into any central mythology; nor is it attested in rituals. Somehow it is elusive. It is present in by-names of Óðinn and Þórr and personal names as a symbol of strength among warriors, but it is hard to find anything more substantial. Textual evidence is vague, and archaeological evidence is also lacking (Frog 2014: 389-390).

Bear myths date back far in the history of Europe. Already in Stone Age paintings and Bronze Age rock carvings, there is evidence of man-bear relations. But it is not until Antiquity that we have written sources on bear myths. In the tale of Callisto, the maiden turned into the Great Bear, as told by Ovid, a young girl accidentally upsets Juno after giving birth to a son; as punishment, she is turned into a bear by the furious goddess. She roams the woods in her new shape and her son grows up oblivious of her destiny. Not knowing the bear's identity, he attempts to kill his mother with his spear,

but is stopped by Jove. Instead they are taken up into the heavens and made into star signs (Pentikäinen 2007: 18-9). The story of Callisto echoes the myth of the Sámi, dealing with the relationship between humans and bears. In the myth of Polyphonte we find similar features as in the Callisto tale, but Polyphonte falls in love with a bear through a trick by Diana and gets pregnant. She delivers twin boys at her father's house, and the boys carry traces of their wilderness heritage in their behaviour (Pentikäinen 2007: 21).

In Scandinavian mythology, the bear is not divine, but it is still connected with the supernatural. In the case of the berserker in the tale of Bǫðvarr bjarki in *Hrólfs saga kraka* and in Saxo, Bǫðvarr is of bear descent, and in the latter turns into a bear in battle, or possibly it is his soul taking the shape of a bear (Pentikäinen 2007: 25-6). Clive Tolley has shown that the motifs surrounding the bear are very much shared by the different populations in the Baltic sea area, and the cult of the bear is close to universal. The motif of the bear-woman relationship is very much a circumpolar motif spread over vast distances. Taking his starting point in *Hrólfs saga kraka*, Tolley shows how closely related the *fornaldarsaga* is to the Sámi myth told by Pehr Fjellström (Tolley 2007; cf. Edsman 1994: 85). It is questionable how much the Sámi influence is of any religious significance, as opposed to motifs only adapted as a folktale element into the *fornaldarsaga*. The bear is not native to Iceland and does not have any important participation in the mythological texts such as the Eddas. The bear in the saga material is also closely connected to warrior culture and not to the heritage of humans or human relationship to prey, as has been suggested elsewhere. Tolley is sceptical of any ritual background to the *Hrólfs saga kraka*, such as initiation, and, as the ritual of the Sámi does not seem to have any connection to Icelandic traditions, the story has been used but has not had any connection to any religious activity. The interest in bears where bears are not native (see also Frog 2014: 389-390) shows the impact of the bears as narrative characters. In Åland in the Baltic Sea, there even seem to have been rituals with bear elements, despite the lack of bears on the islands. So, all in all, the bear occupies a special position among beasts of prey, and the Sámi relationship to the animal differs in many ways from that of the Germanic population of the Scandinavian peninsula. This connects the Sámi with the Finnic-speaking groups across the Gulf of Bothnia, in a way that probably dates back far in history.

In Finnish and Karelian traditions, even though they are recorded later than most Sámi sources, we have information on both ritual and myth. The slain bear's bones are attended to ritually and lamented over in 'the bear's wake'. A marriage between a bear and a girl is staged and performed

with two chosen adolescents (Pentikäinen 2007: 63-64). The bear is not only considered a hunted prey, but mythologically seen as a forefather, an ancestor. 'The great bear in the sky' is a concept shared by Finnish, Karelian, and Sámi traditions in Finland. Pentikäinen is of the opinion that the main focus in the bear's wake was not the slaying of the bear, but the wedding, creating a totem of the tribe from the unification of the ancestral mother and the bear. The shamanistic society's religious leader maintained the contact with the totem and thus created hunting luck for the community (Pentikäinen 2007: 65). Without elaborating too much on the significance of the bear in Finland and its folk traditions, we can say that it is central in the folk poetry collections and has also had an impact in the place-name material throughout present-day Finland, revealing a long tradition (Pentikäinen 2007: 101-102).

This would mean that any development of the southern Sámi bear tradition is likely to have arisen out of its Uralic heritage, rather than contacts with the Scandinavian population.

12 Discussion and results

Of all the frame and ring drums (1-41 in Manker's catalogue) only one (no. 1) lacks pendants or traces of pendants. The rest have pendants in varying states from traces (drum no. 2) to fully (?) preserved (drum no. 31). In the ends of each pendant (tin wired tendons or leather straps) most of them have a small ring to which to fasten a piece of metal or chain (Manker 1938: 267). The end pieces vary to some extent and several of them relate to the written sources. The most common type would be brass and copper plates in different shapes; rectangles, triangles, rhomboids, axe-shaped, hammer-like, cut up, and square. Usually they are of poor quality and not a lot of effort has been put into them when manufactured. Sometimes there are scratches on them, but no real ornaments, and there are also examples of plates with holes punched through them, round or triangular (Manker 1938: 357-455 pictures). Other variants include the chains of brass, sometimes of iron, and rings of brass, copper and tin. We also find bell-shaped end pieces and tin threads in different shapes. Different kinds of fabric and yarn are also among the variants of the end pieces. Something that does stand out, and points in the direction of the fertility aspects of the bear mythology, are the three cases of bear penis bones (baculum) found on drums (38, 39, and 42). On drum 42 we also find a fox penis bone (Manker 1938: 271). On drums no. 52 and 71 we find animal teeth and claws; on the former, two teeth and

five claws from bears and on the latter claws from foxes, according to the owner Anders Poulsen (Manker 1938: 275).

The 25 drums from Åsele that were handed in to the cathedral chapter in Härnösand in 1725 constitute a large portion of the preserved drums (Manker 1938: 72). In the material they stand out from the general pattern for several reasons; in many cases we know the name of the owner, and the area where the drum had been used and probably manufactured. We know exactly when the drums came to the awareness of the authorities. In short, we know a fair bit about them. Several of these drums have pendants and end pieces. It is obvious when examining these drums that history has treated them in different ways. In some cases, they seem to be almost intact, but in most cases the common treatment is the opposite; several drums seem to be well treated when it comes to the drum itself, but not the adornments. The pendants and their end pieces are of course vulnerable to transport and any kind of handling, but may also have been considered to be of less importance in later handling. On the other hand, knowing their function in empowering the drum, the authorities may also have treated them harshly just for that reason. Manker views several of the drums as having been rather violently treated, with the pendants being ripped off, and for good reason. The tin-wrapped pendants are quite durable and should not be possible to loosen without considerable force, despite being old.

The written sources divided into northern and southern Sámi sectors would show that the close connection between the drum, brass and the bear myth is mainly a southern Sámi idea. With the written sources divided into two groups, a northern and a southern group, without taking traditional divisions into consideration, the material clearly shows geographical differences. Only a few of the drums in the southern group carry actual brass rings, but many carry brass plates with holes in them or brass chain rings that could serve the same purpose. As we have seen in other examples, brass itself seems to offer some sort of protection or control over the bear's power. But looking through the brass is essential, as represented in both Fjällström's and Rheen's accounts. Both geographical groups are represented over the same period of time. There is no possibility of seeing any change from early sources to late sources. The drums from the central/northern parts of the Sámi area show clearer signs of being rhythm instruments, where added rings to a larger extent are attached in a way that would increase the amount of sound when played.

In general, the brass-ring ritual behaviour does not manifest itself to any great extent on the drums. But the drums that do show this trait correlate well with the geographical origin mentioned in Fjellström's account. But

it is also interesting to note that these four drums lie on the border of the northern tradition, where pendants of this kind are more or less non-existent. All the drums within the pendant tradition are found south of these drums. More than half of the drums characterised as genuine by Manker (40 out of 71) are part of the pendant tradition and they all belong to the frame drum tradition, with only a few exceptions. They also coincide with the tradition of the bear tacks of tin, showing how many bears the drum has directed its owner to. Drum 42 has several rings but also other objects, hanging leather straps and in some cases leather/tin straps. It originates from the area identified by Manker with Pite type drums: north of Lycksele, where Fjellström operated, but clearly in a southern Sámi area. There are fifteen drums with a clear status as carriers of brass objects and they all originate from the same southern Sámi area, by Manker called Pite, Ranen Sorsele or Åsele type of drums.

Since the southern tradition marks its successful hunt on the drum, and expresses the performance of a rite on the drum with the brass objects, the use of the drum in different ways in a tradition that is supposed to be unified, can only be explained as two parallel systems, not regional differences. The parallel systems, here called the southern and northern, seem to fit with Aikio's suggestion of a parallel development of the Sámi languages in the late Iron Age, in which a southern group travelled across the Gulf of Bothnia and another moved north through present-day Finland. At the time of the collecting of the drums, these traditions had no influence on each other, but had developed in different directions. The painting of drums with alder-bark juice as such is a common feature, but the relationship to the bear ritual is not. Nor is the way the drums were manufactured, or the style in which the drum hides have been painted. The first Sámi drum ever mentioned, in *Historia Norwegie*, about 400-500 years earlier, also differs in the depicted animals from the preserved drums. This fact may suggest that, even though only a single drum is mentioned, the development in drum manufacturing traditions did change radically over this time, which would explain the divergence between the southern and northern traditions. This survey also raises new questions. How do bear tacks and pendants correlate? Since the bear tacks supposedly show how many bears the drum has helped to find, why do some of the drums with tacks lack pendants and vice versa? This may, together with the paintings and pendants, help us regionalise the drums more precisely. It may also help us to understand the connections between the different rituals: the finding of the bear and the bear feast.

The difference between the traditions of the south and the north is not a consequence of cultural contacts with Germanic Scandinavians. The bear

seems to have had very different symbolic value in the Icelandic sources from what it did for the Sámi. For some reason, the drum tradition never spread to the Germanic Scandinavians.

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12 Mythologies in transformation

Symbolic transfer, hybridisation, and creolisation in the Circum-Baltic arena (illustrated through the changing roles of **Tīwaz*, **Ilma*, and *Óðinn*, the fishing adventure of the thunder god, and a Finno-Karelian creolisation of North Germanic religion)

Frog

Abstract

This paper explores the concept of ‘Circum-Baltic mythology’ as an outcome of long-term contacts between cultures in the Baltic Sea region. Regional variations in the mythology of a culture are approached as “dialects” and the mythologies of cultures of the Baltic Sea region are approached as “macro-dialects” with both shared features and differences. Case studies mentioned in the title are presented to illustrate different types of contact-based developments in these macro-dialects of mythology.

Keywords: mythology, religion, Circum-Baltic, hybridisation, stratification

1 Introduction

Some years ago, I posed the question of whether ‘Circum-Baltic’ mythology is a valid concept for approaching mythologies in the Baltic Sea region (Frog 2011a; see also Frog 2014b). I proposed that Circum-Baltic mythology was an outcome of millennia of the complex contact history between different linguistic-cultural groups. Basically, the idea is that a distinct macro-regional system of mythology (Witzel 2012: 65–68) evolved through the long-term interaction of different Indo-European and Uralic cultures as well as the other cultures that these encountered as they arrived and spread through this part of the world. Here, the concept of Circum-Baltic mythology will be illustrated and explored through a variety of cases, some of which I have elaborated in more detail

elsewhere. The present article extends the theoretical and methodological framework that I have developed across the course of this research.

I approach mythology through mythic discourse, or mythology as it is used, communicated, and manipulated by people in situated practices. I thus treat it in terms of symbols that can be communicated by language, iconography, and/or performance (see further Frog 2015). Circum-Baltic mythology thus refers to the outcome of cross-culturally shared symbols, frameworks for combining those symbols, and resulting frames of reference. For example, the motif THUNDER STRIKES DEVIL (SMALL CAPITALS indicate minimal symbolic units) was a fundamental symbol of all mythologies in the Baltic Sea region (Uther 1997-1999: 763). This does not mean that the specific forms of mythology are identical across cultures. The image of THUNDER would vary by region while names for that image would vary by language and dialect. The motif THUNDER STRIKES DEVIL could thus be held in common although the images of THUNDER and DEVIL could vary by culture, region and network. At the same time, variation in these images also evolved through the history of contacts that enabled features or partials of the symbol THUNDER, such as attributes of CHARIOT, AXE OR HAMMER, SUPERNATURAL STRENGTH and so on, to be shared across regions and cultures, not to mention stories that shaped understandings of THUNDER (see also Bertell 2003). Of course, such images were not uniform throughout the Circum-Baltic region, nor were all symbols shared. In order to address this phenomenon, I have taken up Anna-Leena Siikala's observation that 'mythology has dialects which cannot be traced back to a single *Urform*' (2012: 15) and extended it from regional variation in the mythology identified with a linguistic-cultural group to variation by linguistic-cultural group and broader patterns of areal variation in mythology as macro-dialects of Circum-Baltic mythology. The current article considers both the stratification of these macro-dialects and the contact-based processes that have resulted in shared innovations and the development of common features and structures (see also Harvilahti in this volume). The discussion has a methodological emphasis. It explores cases related to the images of gods, narrative motifs, and plots, showing that the development of mythologies in this part of the world is far more complex than is often assumed.

2 Basic terms and concepts for approaching mythic discourse and historical change

The approach used here builds on my earlier work for analysing mythology in term of systems of symbols that form what I describe as a *symbolic matrix*

(Frog 2015). When mythology is viewed through mythic discourse – i.e. as it is used by people in society – it becomes impractical to consider mythology exclusively in terms of ideal, complex stories. The symbolic matrix is constituted of all of the mythic symbols within a cultural environment, whether this is calibrated in scope to a local village community in the 1920s or to the Baltic Sea region in the Iron Age. This inclusive approach avoids the problem of treating symbols identified with different language groups or religions in isolation from one another. It also avoids marginalising or devaluing the transfer, appropriation, and hybridisation of symbols and systems of symbols across languages or religions. Variation by region or community is approached in terms of *dialects of mythology* (Siikala 2012), while variation across larger regions and across linguistic-cultural groups is approached in terms of *macro-dialects of mythology*. It has recently been shown that, rather than being uniform within a community, mythology varies between specialists and the registers and genres of discourse associated with them (Stepanova 2012). Such variation is approached here in terms of different perspectives within the symbolic matrix while the associated genres and discourses are characterised by *registers of mythology* (Frog 2015). Different groups can share symbols but ascribe them quite different values and meanings. This becomes particularly apparent when symbols associated with a particular religion are engaged by people identified with another religion or language group. For example, the approach here views the arrival of Christianity into a cultural environment as increasing the symbols in the matrix linked to particular perspectives and registers of mythology. In this context, the symbol ÓÐINN could be viewed positively in registers of vernacular Scandinavian religion while Christians took up this symbol and contested its significance, asserting its identification with the symbol (CHRISTIAN) DEVIL (see also Lassen 2011). When mythology is approached in terms of a symbolic matrix, the symbol ÓÐINN can be viewed as having long-term continuity through the transition to Christianity. The introduction of Christianity affected the broader symbolic matrix, significantly expanding it. Registers of mythology linked to Christian agents with authority gradually became dominant while registers which earlier valorised ÓÐINN were displaced or transformed; the symbolic matrix was reduced again, leaving ÓÐINN known and understood through the (predominantly Christian) discourses in which ÓÐINN was maintained.

Mythic symbols are differentiated here according to formal types. This facilitates analysis of symbols' relations to one another when they are combined. An *image* is a unit corresponding to the linguistic category of a noun while a *motif* contains one or more images or slots for images and the category of a verb. Mythic images and motifs can be quite complex and encoded with

information related to their significance. A *symbolic partial* is a symbolic element that is built into a mythic image or motif. For example, the image ÞÓRR includes the partial SUPERNATURAL STRENGTH, which is also identified with the god's giant-adversaries but does not occur independent of some image – i.e. someone or something that is supernaturally strong. On the other hand, the lightning-weapon MJQLLNIR is an established attribute of the god and a partial of the image ÞÓRR although MJQLLNIR is itself an image that can be separated from the god. The conventional Scandinavian variant of THUNDER STRIKES DEVIL could be described as ÞÓRR SLAYS GIANT, and this motif is also so strongly identified with the god that it forms a partial GIANT-SLAYER of the image ÞÓRR. A *diagrammatic schema* is here considered static like an image but places images in a relation that informs the meaning of the images involved (e.g. FATHER-SON, or THUNDER-DEVIL). A *theme* is a regular constellation of images and motifs or equivalent sets of these that form a distinct unitary symbol of the mythology while a *narrative pattern* is a formally more complex unit that can incorporate or repeat themes. A *plot* or *plot-type* is a theme or narrative pattern that is customarily used as a complete story from complication to resolution.

The term *religion* is a practical means to refer to a general system of behaviours, ideology, mythology, and ritual practices within a culture or that spreads across cultures with a distinct religious identity. However, this term is most appropriate for addressing an institutionalised religion like Christianity as officially advocated by the Church. Potentially significant variation by dialect and register as well as the potential for symbolic systems of different 'religions' to interpenetrate makes it often more appropriate to talk about such variations as *religion formations* (see also Frog 2015: 35).

The focus in this article is on contact-based change in religion and in mythology in particular. *Symbolic transfer* describes the adoption and use of individual symbolic elements or rules for their combination from one religion formation to another. *Hybridisation* is often involved in this process, as the assimilated symbolic element is combined with vernacular elements or merges with established symbols or rules of combination. A convergence of religion formations or the restructuring of one in relation to another that produces something new can be described as *creolisation of mythology* or *of a religion formation*, which normally occurs in an asymmetrical relation of power.¹ Creolisation is a social phenomenon that is an outcome of mythic discourse.

Traditions become historically stratified through internal innovations and external influences. Lauri Harvilahti's concept of *ethnocultural substrate* or

1 On the creolization of culture and religion, see Chaudenson with Mufwene (2001) and Haring (2004).

substratum (2003: 90-115 and see also this volume) is used here to describe the full range of semiotic resources in a tradition environment. In historical research, ethnocultural substrata can be modelled for earlier periods, although these are often abstracted for broad eras on a relative rather than absolute chronology (Frog 2011b). Modelling an ethnocultural substratum requires identifying relevant indicators of significant changes that would mark difference between substrata. Technologies, for example, can present potential indicators of a *terminus post quem* for particular images and motifs, and thus may immediately situate the development of relevant units on a chronology. For example, images and motifs linked to iron and iron-working are dependent on the technology of iron, even if some of them may have taken shape earlier in relation to, for instance, bronze-working (Frog 2011b: 32). The impacts of iron-working technology were so radical and pervasive (Salo 2006: 3; Hakamies 2012: 196) that its assimilation presents a distinct center for modelling an ethnocultural substratum, correlating linguistic, archaeological, and folklore evidence. I have elsewhere discussed a 'package' of mythic symbols surrounding a SMITH OF HEAVEN identity that spread cross-culturally with this technology, which both integrated iron-working and its significance into the mythology and restructured the imaginal modelling system of the world in relation to the technology (Frog 2011b: 31-32; 2013c: 69-72). Modelling substrata leads to broad frames of reference within which cultural eras become organised on a chronology. Substrata can then be organised on a continuum to assess historical continuity and change.

3 Images of sky-gods and their interfaces

The approach to mythic images on a continuum of ethnocultural substrata can be illustrated by exploring the stages of development in sky-gods of some cultures of the Circum-Baltic area. Proto-Indo-European (PIE) and Proto-Uralic (PU) are in general the earliest substrata relevant to the Baltic Sea region that can be reasonably construed (although see also Witzel 2012; Berezkin 2015). These have been extensively researched and allow a relatively developed frame of reference for such remote periods. The name **Dyéus* ('Sky') can be reconstructed for the central PIE sky-god (West 2007: 166-170). Uralic languages generally exhibit a phenomenon of semantic correlation, extending the use of borrowed names for the sky-god to the phenomenon SKY, which allows the reconstruction of the name **Ilma* ('Sky, Weather') for the central PU sky-god (Frog 2012a; 2017). In Old Norse mythology, Óðinn appears in the role of PIE **Dyéus*. However, Óðinn appears to have originally been a god associated with death, ecstasy and poetry rather than a celestial

figure. This comparison indicates a change of image filling this role, and the change can be considered significant, even if the period of change remains uncertain.² Proto-Finnic (PF) exhibits a disambiguation of the name of the sky-god from the phenomenon SKY, in which PU **Ilma* divided into PF **Ilma-ri* ‘Sky-Being’ and **ilma* ‘sky, air, world’, which for reasons of historical phonology seems to have happened in Late Proto-Finnic (LPF) (ca. AD 200-800) (see Frog 2012a: 32-34; 2017: 96-99).³ In Finno-Karelian mythology, Ukko (‘Old Man’) appears as the central sky-god while Ilmari(nen)⁴ functions only exceptionally as a sky-god and most often appears as a mythic smith who is subordinate to other characters (Frog 2013c: 72-74). Exploring these cases opens into the interface of images of sky-gods with conceptual modelling, with particular motifs and plots, and with broader religion formations.

3.1 When SKY became GOD

Remote changes since PIE and PU can sometimes be distinguished through linguistic evidence. PIE **Dyéus* and the corresponding common noun **dyéus* (‘sky’) disappear from Germanic and Baltic languages. Instead, the adjectival derive **deiwós* (‘heavenly one, god’) appears as the theonym Proto-Baltic **Deivas* and this appears to correspond to Proto-Germanic (PG) **Tīwaz*, who has been thought to have been the central celestial god before the rise of Odin/Óðinn.⁵ Etymological evidence in the Finnic lexicon suggests a corresponding process in an Indo-Iranian language where the main celestial deity was called ‘God’ (**Daivas* < PIE **deiwós*) rather than ‘Sky’, and was then borrowed into Proto-Finnic (PF).⁶ In the Uralic languages Proto-Mari and

2 Whatever the early background of this development, the widespread ascendancy of Óðinn to a dominant figure in the mythology tends to be identified with the Migration Period (see e.g. de Vries 1933: 190-216; Helm 1913-1953 II₂: 251ff.; North 1997: 78-79; Hultgård 2009; Gunnell 2013).

3 I would like to thank Mikko Heikkilä for drawing to my attention to the fact that the *-ri* would have an inflectional form *-re-* if it were established in Middle Proto-Finnic or earlier.

4 The diminutive suffix *-nen* makes a four-syllable form of the name appropriate to Kalevala-metre poetry.

5 The case of **Deivas* receives relatively little debate because the identification of the name with the role of PIE **Dyéus* is relatively transparent (West 2007: 167, 170-171; cf. also Biezais 1972; Vélius 1989). **Tīwaz* is generally identified with the role of PIE **Dyéus* (e.g. Simek 1996: 337) but Óðinn appears in the position of the dominant god rather than cognates of **Tīwaz* such as Old Norse *Týr*, thus identification remains controversial owing to the lack of evidence from within Germanic mythologies (see e.g. de Vries 1957 II: 25-26; cf. Höfler 1992 [1979]; West 2007: 167n; Zimmer 2007).

6 The loan produced Finnic nouns for ‘heaven, sky’ (e.g. Fi. *taivas*, Est. *taevas*). The hypothesis that PIE **deiwós* (‘god, (one) of the sky’) became a simple synonym of **dyéus* (‘sky’) in the contact language (for discussion, see Frog 2017: 102-104; cf. Joki 1973: 323; West 2007: 167) is unnecessary:

(apparently) Proto-Mordvin, the PU name and noun **Ilma* ('Sky') similarly disappears and a Proto-Indo-Iranian (PII) loan 'god' became the theonym (PII **dyumna-* ('celestial, bright') > Mordvin **Jumi*, Mari *Jumo* ('God, sky'), PF *juma-la* ('god')) (Frog 2012a: 29-32; 2017: 102-111). Together, these innovations seem to form an isogloss, grouping these languages together while separating them from their respective language families. The implication is that the image of the sky-god SKY changed, or was replaced by GOD.

It is not clear when SKY became GOD among speakers of these languages, and it seems unlikely to have happened simultaneously across so many cultures and over such a large area. It was probably before the present era in PG, at a time when **Tīwaz* would have been more significant and before **tīwaz* was superseded by other terms as a common noun 'god'. In any case, the pattern of change from SKY to GOD affected a key identity in the mythology of a number of cultures and potentially reflects some sort of significant shift in religion or conversion (see further Frog 2017: 100-111). However, it lacks correlation with any other change that would allow its identification with a particular ethnocultural substratum.

3.2 The rise of Óðinn

The change in the status and role of Óðinn seems to have occurred subsequent to the transition from SKY to GOD. Although a symbolic matrix is not homogeneous, units form networks in connection with different cultural practices, so especially changes in central areas of the mythology will have resounding effects elsewhere. For example, Óðinn's imposition as a central sky-god presumably involved displacing another god from that role – most likely PG *Tīwaz* or his North Germanic equivalent – in a process that eventually produced Old Norse Týr as a peripheral god. Symbolic partials reconstructed for PIE **Dyḗus*, such as partriarchal epithets, found identified with Óðinn, may have long-term continuity with the image of this structurally exclusive SKY-GOD identity (de Vries 1957 II: 84, cf. 38-39; West 2007: 170-171). Schematic relations may also have such continuities, such as the position of SKY-GOD in the assembly of the gods and *hieros gamos* union of SKY and EARTH (West 2007: 181-183), even if the symbolic

Uralic languages exhibit the semantic correlation of borrowed theonyms for the sky-god with the corresponding phenomenon, with the result that the god's name becomes a common noun for the sky or celestial sphere (Frog 2012a; 2017). It is not clear that the term was borrowed directly into Proto-Finnic: it may have been mediated through a language-dialect chain, potentially only used as a common noun by Proto-Finnic speakers, leaving continued use of the noun **ilma* and theonym **Ilma* ambiguous (see below).

significance of the latter has changed.⁷ Presumably also related to his change in role is Óðinn's position in the creation of the world and of human beings (or at least the absence from these of the preceding identity in the role of SKY-GOD) (cf. Snorri Sturluson's *Gylfaginning*, *Völuspá*). Óðinn appears to have been imposed in the structurally exclusive role of SKY-GOD, with a consequence that motifs, themes and diagrammatic schemata, with which the image SKY-GOD had long-standing interfaces, were identified with the image ODIN (before evolving the form known later as Óðinn), reciprocally reshaping that image to fill the role SKY-GOD.⁸

Some of these historical changes affected diagrammatic relations. For example, Óðinn's identification as the father of Þórr also affected the image THOR. Týr, on the other hand, seems marginalised: little is preserved about him except in relation to his role in fostering the mythic wolf Fenrir and losing his hand in binding that monster. Fenrir nevertheless shows up as the adversary and slayer of Óðinn rather than of Týr in the battle at the end of the world.⁹ Although Fenrir otherwise appears integrated into the mythology connected with Óðinn, the binding of the wolf entails the motif FENRIR BITES OFF TÝR'S HAND, which is the basis for ONE-HANDED as an emblematic symbolic partial of TÝR (de Vries 1957 II: 23-25). The centrality of an emblematic partial of TÝR in this narrative accounts for Týr's continued association with the story: exchanging TÝR for the image of another god within that particular narrative would require either transferring the symbolic partial ONE-HANDED or altering the plot. It therefore seems likely that Týr was the adversary of Fenrir before being displaced from his central role by Óðinn (cf. de Vries 1957 II: 404), but this plot resisted a transposition of the image of ÓÐINN in the place of TÝR because the role entailed an aetiology of the partial emblematic of the latter god.

It is doubtful that all developments connected with the rise of Óðinn occurred simultaneously or evenly: those mentioned here are only probable and possible indicators of transition between broad ethnocultural substrata, a transition that established essential conditions for subsequent, related innovations. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that the assertion of Óðinn in the role SKY-GOD was conscious and strategic, establishing a perspective in the contemporary symbolic matrix that affected a variety of symbols and

7 On the *hieros gamos* in Old Norse, see also Clunies Ross (1987: 120), Steinsland (1991), and Abram (2011).

8 Extension of Óðinn's identity was not limited to the identity SKY-GOD (see also Gunnell 2013: 169-171).

9 Both these events are relatively well attested through a variety of references and narrated in Snorri Sturluson's *Gylfaginning* (chs. 34 and 51).

their relationships to one another. This process likely began in particular dialects and registers, but it entailed radical restructuring of the constellations of mythic symbols, their relative valorisations and interpretations on a social scale that spread across registers. The spread of a religion formation that advanced Óðinn's central status may have been nothing less than a conversion process (see also Gunnell 2013).

The perspective on this process linked to Óðinn provides a framework against which the displacement of the PG equivalent of **Dyéus* by **Tīwaz* can also be viewed. The change of the role SKY-GOD from SKY to GOD was potentially no less radical with no fewer impacts on the mythology as it apparently spread from culture to culture even across language families, clearly indicating some sort of shift in religion.

3.3 The Finno-Karelian creolisation of an Odinic religion formation

The development from PU ILMA as SKY-GOD to ILMARI(NEN) as MYTHIC SMITH seems to have resulted from a series of broad developments in the mythology in which different ethnocultural substrata can be distinguished.

As mentioned above, the spread of iron-working technology linked to transformative impacts on the mythology. The role SMITH OF HEAVEN became connected with the role SKY-GOD or THUNDER-GOD, carrying a whole 'package' of motifs and plots with which this identity was interfaced (see also Kouvola in this volume). It is not clear when the SMITH OF HEAVEN identity spread, but, east of the Baltic Sea, it has a *terminus post quem* of the introduction of iron-working technologies (*ca.* 500 BC). PF speakers augmented the identity and authority of Middle Proto-Finnic (MPF) ILMA or LPF ILMARI with SMITH OF HEAVEN. The identification of SKY-GOD (ILMA/-RI) as SMITH OF HEAVEN belongs to an ethnocultural substratum of developments that correlate with the 'technological quantum leap' (Salo 2006: 31) of iron-working (Frog 2012b: 216-218; 2013c: 69-72).

At some point following the identification of ILMA/-RI as SMITH OF HEAVEN, speakers of a North Proto-Finnic dialect appropriated and acculturated a North Germanic language-based technology of incantations and associated rite techniques and ritual practices. The process involved adapting the technology to the vernacular poetic system and extended to restructuring the mythology in relation to Germanic models (for discussion, see Frog 2012b; 2013c; see also Siikala 2002). Within this process, the inherited diagrammatic schema of SKY-GOD-ANTITHESIS broke down. ILMARI was displaced or simply deleted from inherited roles of SKY-GOD except in some context-specific

functions and references: the expansion of the identity SKY-GOD with SMITH OF HEAVEN was thus reduced to MYTHIC SMITH (Frog 2012b: 215-218; 2013c: 68-74). The earlier antithesis VÄINÖ/VÄINÄMÖINEN was asserted as the central figure of mythological epic and as the sole demiurge. Earlier narratives were transformed, new narrative material was assimilated, and new narratives were also produced to form a mythology of the new type of ritual specialist. This new mythology projected and affirmed the specialist's ideology. It constructed an identity model for this specialist in contrast to the power of the 'other', which was characterised by images and motifs of classic shamanism. It also asserted a mythological history including the origins of incantations and of first beginnings as sources of the specialist's power. (See Frog 2012b: 218-242; 2013c: 75-83; cf. Frog 2010: 118-141, 191-196.) Alongside these innovations in narrative mythology, a new image UKKO appears for the structurally exclusive THUNDER-GOD as SKY-GOD and as the primary source of power in ritual activity and center of ritual attention (Frog 2013c: 72-74).

The outcome of these processes was that the earlier antithesis of the sky-god emerges as the central figure of narrative mythology: Väinämöinen is the demiurge, provides the identity-model of both poet and ritual specialist, and is responsible for the origins of his art. These developments directly parallel the change of Óðinn in Scandinavian mythology in terms of his significance, role in the cosmogony, and relationship to poetry and magical practices. The (new) Finno-Karelian thunder-god correspondingly became the central god of attention and activity and source of power operating in the current world order, comparable to Pórr (Frog 2013c: 79-80, 86). These changes were profound and pervasive. However, they only operated as changes on a broad social level: a new religious register emerged with the creation of a new type of specialist. The symbolic matrix was expanded with a rich variety of North Germanic symbols and the new specialist asserted a perspective that sought to radically restructure the matrix from the perspective of other views (Frog 2010: 352-364; 2012b: 240-242; 2013c: 84-86). The new specialist emerged in relation to established ritual institutions with their own technologies. Social change seems to have centrally occurred as the new specialists, with their respective religion formation, displaced the established, competing counterparts. As a result, whole areas of the symbolic matrix linked to competing specialist institutions atrophied and disappeared. The religion formation that became dominant nevertheless continued to coexist with other religion formations with which it did not compete, such as that of lamenters (see also Stepanova 2012; Frog 2015).

Although the precise process is unclear, it involved the valorisation of North Germanic models and presumably of a North Germanic religion formation

that was translated through and adapted to vernacular systems of verbal art, practices and mythic symbols. This emergence of a new, unique religion formation can be considered a form of creolisation. Dating the process is problematic, but it seems most likely to have occurred when intensive contacts with North Germanic produced a linguistic superstrate in LPF (*ca.* AD 200-800), which may have had greater impact before the changes in Proto-Scandinavian *ca.* AD 500 (Kallio 2015: 26-27). As I have argued elsewhere, it seems likely to have been carried from south-west Finland in the population movements *ca.* AD 750 that gave rise to Karelian culture, which rapidly became distinct from cultures in Finland (Frog 2013c: 78-91; Frog and Saarikivi 2015: 88-91). It is also unclear how the chronology of this ethnocultural substratum aligns with the Scandinavian substratum characterised by the rise of Óðinn. Nevertheless, this creolisation in North Finnic culture can be seen as an extension of the development in Scandinavia insofar as the reinvention of VÄINÖ suggests a model image ÓÐINN that seems already to have been advancing to dominance. There is such a rich body of data for these traditions that this historically remote development can be modelled with a reasonable degree of confidence.

This creolisation of religion can be compared to Christian impacts on the same North Finnic religion formation. Medieval Christian traditions clearly augmented the symbolic matrix in their time. The symbolic transfer of images, motifs and narrative material from Christian mythology is prominent as an integrated part of the incantation tradition, hybridised in their assimilation to the technology and its symbolic system (e.g. Siikala 2002). Christian epics were also maintained, but their cycles remained separate from those of vernacular gods: Väinämöinen and Mary did not meet.¹⁰ The thunder-god of incantations is also the Christian God, but the Christian image GOD seems to have been assimilated to the vernacular image THUNDER/SKY-GOD and hybridised behind semantically ambiguous names like *Ukko* 'Old Man'. The Christian image certainly affected the vernacular image of THUNDER, for example potentially making him more of a *deus otiosus*, but these impacts are layered onto the creolisation of North Germanic religion rather than restructuring its core. In other words, the epics of Väinämöinen remained the models for understanding the creation of the world and establishment of its social order, and, rather than creolising Christianity, these models were instead gradually displaced as formalised forms of Christianity extended their reach (Frog 2013c; cf. Siikala 2002). The differences between impacts of North Germanic traditions and Christianity highlight the process of creolisation in the contacts

10 In the corpus of thousands of examples, exceptions can be found (e.g. Siikala 2012: 295), but these remain exceptional within the larger body of evidence.

with an Odinic religion formation. Elements of the Christian mythology were apparently assimilated into a dominant framework of vernacular mythology while, in the earlier process, the Odinic religion formation seems to have been asserted as a dominant framework that was translated through vernacular systems, such as identifying ODIN with/as VÄINÖ. These cases raise important questions about how many times such processes occurred among the different populations in the Circum-Baltic area across millennia of cultural encounters.

4 Narratives of the thunder-god

Looking at images of gods and their stratified histories brings two important points into focus. First, transformative impacts on religion through contacts have occurred throughout history rather than being limited to the relatively recent spread of Christianity. Second, and of central concern here, images of gods did not change in isolation, but rather in relation to the spread, continuities, and discontinuities of other elements of mythology such as motifs, themes, and plots that connect with roles and identities. The symbols we refer to as gods are minimal units in the symbolic matrix. Corresponding stratification can also be observed in more complex units such as narrative themes and plots. The better attested a particular unit of mythology, the greater the potential to identify variation in the evidence as indicative of historical development and to model some sort of relative chronology. The difficulty with more complex units of mythology is that they are often not sufficiently attested to yield convincing results in analysis. One exception to this is the complex plot-type the Theft of the Thunder Instrument, known as Aarne-Thompson-Uther (ATU) tale-type 1148b and the associated theme concerning the thunder-god's fishing adventure. Stories of the thunder-god will be taken up here as an illustrative example for tracing narrative units rather than images.

4.1 The theft of the thunder instrument (ATU 1148b) as a Circum-Baltic plot

ATU 1148b is widely documented in Baltic, Finnic, Sámi, and Scandinavian traditions (Balys 1939; Frog 2011a; 2014b). It does not appear to be of either Indo-European or Uralic pedigree. The plot is organised around and interfaced with a mysterious image of thunder as literally or metaphorically 'played' on a (musical) instrument, which also cannot be identified with a particular linguistic-cultural heritage (Frog 2014b: 128, 130). It is not possible to reconstruct the origin of ATU 1148b or how and why it spread cross-culturally.

Nevertheless, historical innovations become apparent when the different forms of the tradition are contextualised within the full range of evidence. Rather than an unambiguous stemma of forms that separated from one another and evolved in isolation, the innovation processes are blurred by long-term contacts both within and across language groups. The result can be described as dialectal forms of a Circum-Baltic tradition. In some cases, it is possible to place innovations characterising a particular dialectal form on a relative chronology, although it is only possible to develop the most general model of the common tradition in which these are rooted (Frog 2011a).

The form of the tradition most widely known today is found in the Old Norse eddic poem *Þrymskviða* and later folklore (the *rimur Þrymlur* and Scandinavian Medieval Ballad type E126). *Þrymskviða* presents Þórr humiliatingly disguised as a goddess pretending to marry a giant in order to recover his lost hammer. Within the context of the Circum-Baltic tradition, this emerges as a radical innovation: it is the only form in which the god is humiliated and also appears divorced from mythology as a modelling system (e.g. giants do not fear THUNDER), making it most probably a product of mythic discourse in the context of Christian conversion (see Frog 2014b: 142-146). This redaction emerged alongside existing forms of the tradition that also seem to have undergone innovations distinctive to the Scandinavian material, linking the plot to an aetiology of thunder and lightning connected with iron-working technology, suggesting an earlier innovation (Frog 2014b: 135-141, 154-156). For the most part, the internal chronology of ATU 1148b traditions remains relative because the plot's background is so obscure. In most cases, there is nothing to link innovations to particular ethnocultural substrata. In the Scandinavian material, however, the connection of exchanged images and motifs with iron-working technology presents a *terminus post quem*, as noted above. These changes presumably occurred before the adaptations that produced *Þrymskviða*, probably in a conversion context after the Viking Age (see Frog 2014b). Distinguishing two stages of innovation or transformation identifies three phases on a relative chronology.

4.2 Þórr's fishing adventure and God fishing up Leviathan in Circum-Baltic context

Another narrative that has been of great interest for comparison is Þórr's adventure of fishing for the Miðgarðsormr ('World Serpent'), which has a potential parallel in the Christian story of fishing up Leviathan. Discussion has tended to debate whether one of these is a borrowing of the other or the two are independent (e.g. Bugge 1881-1889: 11; Brøndsted 1882; Krohn 1922:

157-160; Gschwantler 1968; Bertell 2003; Janson 2005; 2013). The approach employed here differs first by situating comparison on a continuum and second by conceiving contact processes in terms of mythic discourse engaging a symbolic matrix. Such an approach allows the development of a more dynamic model than has been done in the past.

Þórr's fishing adventure presents a narrative pattern with a number of themes. The basic narrative pattern is organised as *a*) the god's arrival to the home of the giant Hymir; *b*) a series of themes illustrating the god's strength or power that culminate in the theme surrounding THOR FISHES FOR WORLD SERPENT, and *c*) Þórr's departure as a conclusion.¹¹ At least some of these themes and also the narrative whole are distinct symbols that index one another. The core motifs of central themes (e.g. THOR TAKES OX'S HEAD FOR BAIT, THOR ROWS WITH EXCEPTIONAL STRENGTH, THOR FISHES FOR WORLD SERPENT) also operate as emblematic of whole themes which are in turn emblematic of the narrative pattern or plot of the whole adventure.

The identification of Leviathan with the Miðgarðsormr in medieval Iceland is indicated by the name Leviathan being glossed *Miðgarðsormr* ('World Serpent') (Marchand 1975: 329, 331-332, 335n.4); the version of the Christian story in the Old Norse *Niðrstigningar saga* also describes the size of Leviathan in terms of encircling the earth, apparently envisioned through the vernacular WORLD SERPENT image.¹² Formally, however, the narratives are quite different. The Christian story is a striking allegory: Jesus on the Cross is God's consciously deceptive bait that lures Leviathan to try to swallow Jesus, and the monster is caught on the divinity of Jesus as a hook (i.e. Leviathan is deceived by the death of Jesus, and thus seeks to devour him, but Jesus has eternal life and thus the monster is caught on the cross). Þórr's adventure seems to have been associated with a disguise as a young lad,¹³ but an ox's head is used as bait and there is nothing supernatural

11 The narrative is presented in complete forms in Snorri Sturluson's *Gylfaginning* ch. 48 and the eddic poem *Hymiskviða*; images, motifs and themes from the adventure are also preserved in a number of skaldic stanzas and other references as well as four generally accepted representations on picture stones, among which the Gotlandic picture stone Ardre VIII appears to represent, in addition to THOR FISHES FOR WORLD SERPENT itself, THOR TAKES OX'S HEAD FOR BAIT and perhaps other motifs in separate scenes. (For overviews, see e.g. Meulengracht Sørensen 2001 [1986]; Gíslí Sigurðsson 2004: 10-17; Kopár 2016: 200-209).

12 This is not, however, as transparent as it might at first seem (see the discussion of the Orobos in Oehrl 2013).

13 The disguise is explicit in the prose narration of Snorri Sturluson's *Gylfaginning*. In the eddic poem *Hymiskviða*, the fishing adventure is embedded in a larger narrative frame, where it seems to be reduced to one in a series of strength feats; the unexplained disappearance of Þórr's companion in the framing adventure from the stanzas of the fishing adventure is a potential

about it or the hook; Þórr has a companion on his adventure, a giant with whom he rows to distant waters; Þórr raises the serpent above the water, using such strength that his foot or feet go through the bottom of the boat; the serpent does not try to eat either Þórr or the giant. Comparison is at the level of a general theme of two motifs GOD FISHES FOR WATER-MONSTER WITH BAIT → GOD CATCHES WATER-MONSTER ON HOOK.

Þórr's battle with the Miðgarðsormr appears to be a Scandinavian form of a PIE tradition of a battle between a sky-god wielding the lightning-weapon and a dragon (Watkins 1995; West 2007).¹⁴ However, it is the only form of this conflict as a fishing trip, which would be an innovation from PIE. Contact with Christianity could account for this development, which appears directly associated with the parallels between traditions.¹⁵ Within a symbolic matrix where a form of the PIE narrative was prominent, a GOD FISHES FOR WATER-MONSTER WITH BAIT motif would not be able to be assimilated without being interpreted through the established tradition of THOR SLAYS WATER-MONSTER or synthesising with it. Although the Christian tradition may account for the motifs compared, it does not seem to account for the complex narrative of Þórr's fishing adventure, which raises the question of other models.

The Scandinavian narrative pattern also has parallels in Finnic ATU 1148b traditions, where the disguised thunder-god goes fishing with a companion and performs feats of strength. In Estonian and Seto forms, the thunder-god takes on a disguise and becomes the servant of a fisherman after his thunder-instrument is stolen; he catches his adversary or a servant of his adversary while fishing (FISHING THUNDER CATCHES DEVIL), which leads the god's master to be invited to a feast in the home of his adversary

indicator that these have been transposed into the larger narrative poem (cf. the *Völuspá inn skamma* section in *Hyndluljóð*). Reference to Þórr as *sveinn* ('lad; servant boy') in *Hymiskviða* 18.3 thus quite possibly reflects a disguise in the background of the eddic version that otherwise disappeared with the change in the narrative frame.

14 Two such mythological narratives are likely, one concerning the release of the captured sun and the other a release of waters (West 2007: 261; Lyle 2012: 107).

15 An exceptional theme is found in Karelian kalevalaic epic: in which a sea-monster Iku Turso raises his head from the sea, Jesus confronts him in dialogue and banishes him, forbidding him to raise his head again (*SKVR* I, 339). The limited evidence for this tradition warrants comprehensive review, but it seems to be so poorly attested in such a large corpus that it is difficult to say anything about its history. Nevertheless, it is formally interesting because it looks like Leviathan's confrontation with Jesus on a sailing adventure comparable to Þórr's fishing. However, this could perhaps more likely be an adaptation of the Leviathan theme into this context on analogy to Väinämöinen's encounter with a giant pike, which is linked to poetry of the voyage and which was fairly popular.

(for review, see Frog 2011a: 82-83). The fishing adventure has a structural role in the plot: the god's master is invited to a wedding in the adversary's home where the disguised god can recover his stolen instrument. In the Finno-Karelian tradition, the fishing adventure has converged with the episode of recovering the instrument in the home of the adversary: the disguised god enters the service of his adversary directly and the fishing adventure is associated with strength feats including THUNDER DISPLAYS STRENGTH ROWING (= ATU 1087) and THUNDER'S STRENGTH DESTROYS BOAT as on Þórr's fishing adventure (for review, see Frog 2011a: 82).

Comparing only the Finnic and Scandinavian traditions leaves it unclear whether the Finnic traditions adapted an adventure about Þórr into their ATU 1148b traditions or whether Þórr's fishing adventure was adapted from a Scandinavian ATU 1148b episode into a new narrative as the ATU 1148b tradition underwent other changes.¹⁶ When this comparison is considered in relation to the Christian parallel to Þórr's fishing adventure, the possibility emerges that the theme GOD FISHES FOR WATER-MONSTER WITH BAIT → GOD CATCHES WATER-MONSTER ON HOOK could have been assimilated into an established narrative pattern of a fishing adventure of the thunder-god. That narrative pattern could have been an episode of ATU 1148b or an independent adventure, of which some form became integrated into ATU 1148b in Finnic traditions. If the episode were an integrated part of ATU 1148b or filled a similar structural function in an equivalent plot, this would account for a) the disguise assumed by Þórr, b) the elaborate and otherwise unmotivated companionship with a giant on the fishing expedition,¹⁷ c) fishing with a line rather than with nets as in Finnic traditions as an innovation under the Christian model, whereas an innovation to nets from a line in Finnic forms would be difficult to explain, and also would be d) consistent with evidence of the innovation and breakup of episodes in Scandinavian ATU 1148b traditions (see Frog 2014b: 135-141, 154-156).

16 Comparison of these traditions has a long history of discussion, which in earlier scholarship tended to be assumed to have belonged to a Viking Age or later flow of cultural influences from Scandinavia across the Baltic (e.g. Krohn 1931; Looiits 1932; Anderson 1939; Balys 1939).

17 Þórr is frequently associated with travel companions (Bertell 2013: 48), but the companion is not otherwise an adversary whom he later kills. The narrative situation is clearly not derived from the Leviathan legend where there is no fishing companion. It looks instead more like a motif DISGUISED GOD BECOMES COMPANION OF GIANT FOR GAIN (cf. Óðinn as Þolverkr in Snorri Sturluson's *Skáldskaparmál* G58). This would be consistent with the function of the episode in Finnic ATU traditions, whereas in this adventure of Þórr's fishing, the giant does not seem to help, support or enable Þórr to reach his aims in any way; he resists them and his only act is to (attempt to) cut the fishing line.

Whatever the case ultimately was, contacts with Christianity increased the available resources in the symbolic matrix, and – with whatever was happening in mythic discourse at that time – produced new configurations in combination with vernacular units of mythology. When attempting to reverse-engineer the potential background of these traditions, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that the outcomes were products of individuals with intentions – individual who were making associations that could then become socially established: the Christian story would have to be seen as significant, and that significance led to presumably conscious hybridisation through association and combination with vernacular symbols.

4.3 Þórr's fishing adventure within an ethnocultural substratum?

Christian impact on Þórr's fishing adventure seems fairly sure even if its precise background is not. The earliest evidence of Þórr's fishing adventure is found already in skaldic verses attributed to the earliest known skaldic poets and it seems to be represented on the Gotlandic picture stone Ardre VIII. It is thus attested in culturally distinct areas of Scandinavia already around the beginning of the Viking Age, making it probable that it was widely current already at that time as a *terminus ante quem*. A *terminus post quem* is less clear, but the development seems unlikely before about the mid-fourth century, when Christianity rose to dominance in the Roman Empire. This generally antedates the period when Christian religion is imagined to have had significant impact in Scandinavia. It seems most probable that the Christian theme as a narrative core was integrated into a narrative pattern that was an established unit in Scandinavian mythology, and this unit was more probably than not an episode of the ATU 1148b tradition (or at least its equivalent). Although only a probability, this development can be correlated with the fuzzy stemma of the ATU 1148b tradition and kept in dialogue with it as a relevant possibility connected with the history of ATU 1148b's development in both Scandinavian and Finnic traditions, where the fishing episode seems to have had a parallel development. No tradition's history can be reconstructed with certainty. However, correlating and balancing probabilities of models for different traditions has potential to significantly augment or break down the relative probabilities of individual models. Viewing potential models for the history of Þórr's fishing adventure in relation to those for ATU 1148b affects relative probabilities of individual models for each, and these might be further augmented by additional models.

The development of Þórr's fishing adventure perhaps mirroring the Christian Leviathan tradition might be compared to so-called Thor's hammers as

emblems linked to religious identity that seem to have emerged in response to uses of the cross by Christians. However, the Thor's hammers date to the Viking Age, and if the present model is correct, the innovation of Þórr's fishing adventure seems to belong to an earlier ethnocultural substratum and potentially a quite different context of encounters. The question it raises is whether this innovation might be linked to additional parallels between Scandinavian and Christian mythology, such as between: Óðinn's sacrifice of himself to himself on the image of the world tree and God's sacrifice of Jesus on the cross; the suspension of the dying god's resurrection until the end of the world seen in both Baldr and Jesus; a vision of world time culminating in the mobilisation of the dead and a battle of two forces between which the world is divided in both the Christian Apocalypse and *ragna rök*; and so forth.¹⁸ This question may ultimately be unanswerable, but it remains interesting because of the possibility of a substratum of development in Scandinavian religion characterised by hybridisation or even creolisation. In some respects, these questions may appear to return to models constructed of these mythologies that were largely abandoned long ago (e.g. Bugge 1881-1889; Krohn 1922). Rather than seeking to resurrect those models, the proposal here is that the questions on which they were based can be reopened in the light of current theories and methodologies – with much more developed and extensive knowledge than was previously available – thereby opening avenues to innovative new understandings.

5 The Circum-Baltic region as a dialect continuum of mythology?

The preceding discussion has highlighted processes of symbolic transfer, hybridisation and creolisation that have occurred in the mythologies of the Baltic Sea region through history. Waves of changes and innovation have repeatedly moved across the linguistic-cultural groups in the Baltic Sea region. Modernisation, the Reformation, and earlier Christianisation are only the most recent major phases; beyond these, the earlier ethnocultural substrata become increasingly difficult to distinguish, but waves of transformative changes probably happened with no less frequency in prior

18 In fact, the earliest evidence of a vernacular(ized) Germanic Oroboros image, which is at least later emblematic of the world-encircling *Miðgarðsormr*, is from Migration Period bracteates, which are themselves a phenomenon resulting from contacts with the (Christian) Roman Empire (Oehrl 2013: 458).

millennia. Across this long period, ongoing contacts between cultures have complemented the fits and starts of radical change with the continuous negotiation of convergence and contrast. As a consequence, mythologies within different cultures of this region have gradually evolved to have far more in common with those of their neighbours than with the earliest stages of linguistic-cultural heritage.

The approach implemented here avoids isolating the mythology of one culture or religion and treating it separately from others. Instead, what would be 'multiple mythologies' in a contact zone or contact network are reconceived as an expansive symbolic matrix comprised of socially accessible symbols. These symbols are engaged from different perspectives in constellations that can include interpretations and evaluative or epistemological stances. At a social level, conventional perspectival engagements with a symbolic matrix connect with religion formations that may be complementary or competing in the society. Engagements with these symbols can thus be reciprocally emblematic of identification with one religion formation or religious identity as opposed to another. Individuals employ mythic discourse to create social alignments and disalignments in their stances toward different units of mythology and how they engage with them in relation to the social perception of such alignments. At the same time, the symbols of the matrix provide resources for negotiating relations between different religion formations. The examples reviewed above are illustrative of the outcomes of mythic discourse that led different symbols of varying complexity to pass from one religion formation to another as well as to more comprehensive creolisation. Although the social processes that resulted in these outcomes are beyond reconstruction, viewing the material in the light of mythic discourse offers new perspectives on the history behind these traditions.

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Abbreviation

SKVR = *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot*, I-XV. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1908-1997.

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Contributors

Sirpa Aalto (University of Oulu)

Laila Kitzler Åhfeldt (Swedish National Heritage Board)

Mikko Bentlin (University of Greifswald)

Maths Bertell (Mid-Sweden University)

Frog (University of Helsinki)

Lauri Harvilahti (Finnish Literature Society (SKS))

Tatjana Jackson (Institute of World History, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow)

Jukka Korpela (University of Eastern Finland)

Karolina Kouvola (University of Helsinki)

Aleksandr Podossinov (Institute of World History, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow)

Leszek Śłupecki (University of Rzeszów)

Kendra Willson (University of Turku)

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