

Summaries

Hrafnunga-Tófi as a Viking, a sponsor of rune-stones and a myth

By Michael Lerche Nielsen

South-Western Jutland possesses a number of spectacular runic finds dating from c. 200 AD to c. 1300 AD. Among these three Late Viking-Age rune-stones from this area raised by a certain Hrafnunga-Tófi have long attracted particular scholarly attention. These rune-stones from Læborg, DR 26, Bække, DR 29, and Horne, DR 34, are atypical with respect to both the formulation of the inscriptions and the variation in their lay-out. One, possibly, two inscriptions, from Bække and Horne, mention that a mound was made in memory of a woman named Þórvé. The third rune-stone from Læborg is raised by Hrafnunga-Tófi after Þórvé, »his *dróttning*« i.e. mistress or queen.

Not surprisingly, earlier scholars have linked Hrafnunga-Tófi's rune-stones with Queen Thyra of the Jelling Dynasty north of Bække and Læborg. There have been problems, however, regarding the dating of the rune-stones of the Hrafnunga-Tófi group and this led the editors of Danmarks Runeindskrifter to reject any connection between Hrafnunga-Tófi and Queen Thyra. A hypercritical historical attitude has led to the result that several surveys on the Jelling dynasty leave Hrafnunga-Tófi's rune-stones entirely out of the discussion.

Recently, Birgit Sawyer has suggested that there is in fact a connection, namely that Hrafnunga-Tófi married the widowed Queen Thyra after Gorm's death, and that Harold Bluetooth later had a rune-stone put up in Jelling in his father's name in order to claim his right to inherit Denmark. This hypothesis must in my opinion be rejected because of the formulation »*dróttning sína*« on the Læborg stone, which implies a subordination rather than a marriage. However, the nature of Hrafnunga-Tófi's rune-stones and the coincidence of the name Þórvé as well as linguistic features in the inscriptions indicate that there might well be a link between the Jelling Dynasty and Hrafnunga-Tófi.

Based on the datings of the Jelling mounds to c. 958 (camber grave in the Northern Mound) and c. 970 (initial construction of the cenotaph, the Southern Mound) it seems most likely that Hrafnunga-Tófi was either a steward, »*bryti*«, or a thane serving under the Jelling King. A neighbouring and contemporary rune-stone from Randbøl, DR 40, which is raised by a »*bryti*«, could be seen as a parallel. Furthermore, the impressive bridge in Ravning Enge built in 979/80 could be seen as a strengthening of the geographical link between Jelling and the area where we find Hrafnunga-Tófi's rune-stones. In fact, Hrafnunga-Tófi himself may be named after the geographical name Ravning rather than to be explained as »a descendent of Hrafn«.

How can rune inscriptions belong together?

By Per Stille

This article deals with the question of how runic monuments could be related. Are they parts of the same monument? Are the persons mentioned in some texts identical? Are monuments carved by the same rune-carver? The Danish runic monuments have little ornamentation and attribution to specific rune-carvers must rely heavily on linguistic observations. Still, it is not an impossible task and it could be very helpful in finding solutions to many runological problems. Here it is suggested that Ravnunga-Tove is not the carver of Læborg, Bække and Horne rune-stones but one of the commemorators.

Thyre, Harald och Ravnunge-Tue

Av Birgit Sawyer

I århundraden har de två Jelling-stenarna (DR 41 och 42) varit föremål för livliga diskussioner, men såvitt jag vet har ingen hittills ställt frågan varför två danska kungar efter varandra varit så noggranna med att hedra Thyre, Gorms hustru och Haralds mor. I mitt bidrag ställs just denna fråga (1) samt ytterligare tio följdfrågor, som alla gäller den s.k. Jelling-dynastien:

2. Vad menade Harald med att ha »vunnit hela Danmark för sig själv«?

3. Vem var Thyre? Vem var Ravnunge-Tue, och varför hedrade han henne med två (ev. tre) runstenar?

4. Var är Thyre begravd?

5. Varför började Harald bygga sydhögen i Jelling efter att han blivit döpt?

6. Varför uppvisar Gorm-stenen yngre drag än Haralds?

7. Var stod Gorm-stenen ursprungligen?

8. Varför refererar inte Harald till sin far som »kung«?

9. Vem var Harald gift med?

10. Vem var Toke Gormsson i Hällestad?

Artikeln mynnar inte ut i några svar, utan min avsikt har varit att ifrågasätta tidigare tolkningar och understryka vissa omständigheter, som kommande diskussioner måste taga hänsyn till:

Det var ovanligt att kvinnor hedrades med runstenar, och vi kan därför utgå ifrån att, när så skedde, vi har med ovanliga kvinnor att göra. Om Harald övertog det danska kungariket efter Gorm, menade han sannolikt att han med »Danmark« vunnit något i tillägg till detta, rimligen områden öster om Stora Bält (möjligen genom sin mor). Det kan inte uteslutas att Thyre Danebod var identisk med den Thyre, som Ravnunge-Tue hedrat, och vars gravhög han säger sig ha byggt. Att resa *en* runsten var en statushandling; att resa två eller fler indicerar mycket hög status. Ravnunge-Tue, som reste tre (kanske t.o.m. fyra) runstenar var tydligen en mäktig man och representerar sannolikt en rivaliserande härskardynasti, baserad i bl.a. Bække.

Min tolkning av runstenar som kris-symptom bör beaktas i tolkningen av alla de stenar som restes under en så kort period, karaktäriserad av intensiv maktkamp (i hela Skandinavien), och i denna maktkamp spelade giftermål, arv och ägande en central roll.

The interpretation of the Bække, Læborg and Jelling inscriptions and the significance of erecting rune-stones

By Marie Stoklund

In an interdisciplinary discussion of rune-stones, power and memorials in Denmark, Birgit Sawyer's *The Viking-Age Rune-stones* no doubt needs consideration as a central contribution. However, her suggestion that the runic inscriptions from Bække, Læborg and Jelling bear witness of a »tug-of-war over Thyre« between two of the leading families in the tenth century must invite critical consideration. According to Birgit Sawyer, Thyre from 'Denmark' had not only been married to King Gorm in Jelling but also to Ravnunge-Tue in Bække, another center of power in Jutland, competing with Jelling. In addition it was King Harald who had the smaller Jelling stone raised in Gorm's name to justify his claims as Thyre's legitimate heir.

These highly improbable presumptions are based on (and assumed to establish) Birgit Sawyer's general hypothesis that the runic inscriptions virtually all reflect sponsors' inheritance claims. However, a closer investigation of the Bække-Læborg-Jelling inscriptions and the Danish material in general not only gives rise to serious doubts concerning the tug-of-war over Thyre but also questions the general validity of Birgit Sawyer's premises.

Late Viking Age magnates

By Niels Lund

What is the likelihood that a family known from a few runic inscriptions in Jutland could rival the Jelling dynasty so seriously that Harald Bluetooth would go to the length of forging a runic inscription to convey the impression that his mother was dead, while she was in fact married to a new husband?

In the ninth century multiple kingship was the rule in Denmark rather than the exception. However, this implied sharing power, not carving up the kingdom. Archaeology suggests that Denmark may have had a group of magnates that could rival the king. A burial like that of Ladby might be that of a local king, the impressive complex at Lejre has prompted its excavator to suggest that it might have been the residence of a king of Sjælland, or at least of a powerful local magnate, while the excavator of Kalmergården at Tissø thinks of this as a royal manor, i.e. controlled by and serving a medieval peripatetic king. Runic inscriptions like those from Tryggevælde and Glavendrup also suggest the existence of magnates.

It is impossible to decide whether the evidence points to a powerful king in tight control of his country or to a king with many rivals. However, there is much else to suggest that Harald Bluetooth was powerful enough not to have to worry about claims on his throne from those who built a mound to Thyre.

Memorials in late Viking-Age Denmark (c. 950-1050) – when? why? where?

By Else Roesdahl

The article discusses the reasons for the popularity of memorials in parts of Denmark during the conversion period (c. 950-990). The forms chosen are considered, as is the subsequent ‘absence’ of memorials until the middle and second half of the eleventh century. Apart from rune-stones, which continued to be raised until c. 1025/50, and some churches, few memorials are known from the first half of the eleventh century. Likewise, very few memorials are known from Denmark’s early Viking Age, the most prominent being the Hedeby boat-chamber grave and the Ladby ship-burial.

The tenth-century monumental memorials considered are *kuml* (sign, token, monument), aristocratic burials, rune-stones, ship-settings, mounds, bridges, fortresses and churches. All such memorials, save burials and fortresses, are mentioned on rune-stones. Such memorials relate (as far as we know) to death and burial, family, religion, landscape and power – and probably sometimes law. Also discussed are the Jellinge monuments in relation to Lejre; regional diversity within Denmark; reasons for the building or absence of memorials; the inspiration for new monument types – they were often based on ancient forms – and the re-use of ancient monuments. Questions of when, why and where memorials were created are discussed against the background of the changing religious-cultural-political situation of the period, in relation to anthropological theory and by comparison with the conversion period in England.

The Iconography of the Rune Stones

By Signe Horn Fuglesang

The paper reviews the iconographic themes which were used for Scandinavian runic memorial stones of the Viking period. The surviving material is classified into rider, ship, and narrative scenes. Each motif is discussed in the light of (i) its origins, (ii) its chronological and regional distribution, (iii) each stone’s inscription, (iv) Scandinavian images surviving in other materials, (v) contemporary iconographic types in the British Isles, and (vi) contemporary verbal sources. For the early and middle Viking period, such comparisons suggest that the same programmes were used for both memorials and magnates’ halls, and that the main content emphasised strength, power and leadership. In the 11th century all motifs were to some degree changed: the ship and rider were used separately, in non-narrative scenes; narrative iconography was rejuvenated through models from the British Isles, and those mythological scenes which continued in use may be better interpreted in a framework of status symbols than as signs of surviving pagan religion.

Mindesmærker i ord og på skrift

Af Judith Jesch

For tusinder af de runesten, der er rejst i hele Skandinavien i yngre vikingetid, har den primære funktion været at mindes de døde ved hjælp af runeindskrifter. Denne praksis sammenlignes med en anden udbredt praksis i vikingetiden, nemlig den at mindes de døde ved hjælp af skjaldedigtning, oprindeligt kompone-

ret og udført mundtligt. På trods af forskelle i både situationen, som mindet kommunikeredes i (den ene mundtlig og foran et kendt publikum, den anden skriftlig og for ukendte læsere) og i geografisk og social udbredelse har de to former for kommunikation, verbal og visuel, meget til fælles. Både skjaldedigtningens faste former og runetegnene ristet i granit sikrede, at den dødes navn og bedrifter dokumenteredes for samtiden og, især, for eftertiden. Begge gør brug af underforstået kulturel viden, og adskillige danske indskrifter afspejler et kognitivt problem, der ligner skjaldedigtningens, når indskrifternes layout skal udredes.

Rune Stones and Power in Eastern Jutland

By Gunhild Øby Nielsen

Rune stones are obvious examples of interdisciplinary source material. Text and language, pictures and ornamentation, location and distribution, as well as

the political, social and cultural context are different angles of incidence that combine to make the rune stones source material for philologists, archaeologists and historians of art, religion etc. The interdisciplinary method has proved to be fruitful but it has also unveiled a need for clarification and communication between the researchers. It is the aim of the present publication to contribute to that.

One angle of incidence is the obviously uneven distribution of rune stones. In the present article I discuss this and present as an example the rune stones' concentration in Eastern Jutland. The argument is that the rune stones must be seen in their different contexts, both in regard to time and space, rather than as an aggregate group which spreads continuously from the south to the north, in a synchronic rather than in a diachronic perspective.

Earlier proposed theories regarding the rune stones in Eastern Jutland are presented and discussed and on the whole rejected: The rune stones in the region do not reflect social or economic conditions.